

Soiled Sinema

Articles

100 YEARS OF ADOLF HITLER AND THE DANGERS OF IDEALISTIC ART FAGS

Scandalous German director Christoph Schlingensiefel's *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* (1989) is an absurdist mockery of Adolf Hitler's last days in the Führerbunker. The film takes a fairly schizophrenic approach to Hitler's final hours, especially in comparison to Oliver Hirschbiegel's recent big budget German production *Downfall* (2004). While *Downfall* almost comes close to glamorizing Adolf Hitler and the destructive conclusion of the Third Reich, *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* makes a sick slapstick joke out of it. From the beginning of the film, you know that Schlingensiefel is a bold and uncompromising artist. *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* is full of incest, cross dressing, drug use, suicide, and other offensive things that are treated in a completely comical manner. The film begins with a speech by German director Wim Wenders (*Wings of Desire*, *Paris Texas*) saying, "We can improve the pictures of the world and with that, this world can be improved." I think it is safe to say that Schlingensiefel is also mocking German cinema with the inclusion of Wender's embarrassingly idealistic and generic speech. Despite my love for many of Wender's films, he seems like a turd of a man. *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* is the first film I have seen of Schlingensiefel's and I found it to be a masterpiece, especially for a film with a 16 hour production time. The film is shot in B/W and executed in a theatric manner with spotlights focusing in on actors lurking in the shadows of a desolate bunker. Legendary Gay German Actor Udo Kier (a former lover of Rainer Werner Fassbinder) stars as a fairly emotionless and surprisingly unexpressive Adolf Hitler. The rest of the caricatures of the Nazi bunch seem to be in a constant state of pathological hedonism and greed. They continuously bicker about who will take power and such ideological fantasies as the promise of a "3000 year Reich." Their insane stream of consciousness arguments make the three stooges look like courteous debaters. During their stay in the bunker, the outrageous Nazi heavy weights get involved in a variety of comical situations. The most heartwarming of these wacky scenarios involves the singing of Christmas carols around a Christmas tree. It surely wasn't a silent night in the deep dark abyss that is the Führerbunker. Schlingensiefel even makes the poisoning of the Goebbels children by their mother a comical yet still disturbing scenario. I assume that like many Germans, Schlingensiefel is incapable (and rightfully so) of completely articulating all the horrible things that happened during the end of the Third Reich. In that regard, Christoph Schlingensiefel is the most honest of the German directors in expressing his feelings about the aftermath of Nazi Germany. National Socialism (Nazism) was probably the only political movement based on aesthetics. Documentary filmmaker Peter Cohen's film *The Architecture of Doom*, although somewhat flawed, goes in depth about Nazi ideology and its obsession with beauty. As Walter C. Langer's wartime psychoanalysis of the real Adolf Hitler, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* states, the Führer

had the mind and emotions of an artist (although a failed one). Before Adolf Hitler's suicide in 100 Years of Adolf Hitler, he makes his final artistic masterpiece by pulling his pants down and covering his bare bottom with sloppy fecal looking paint. The Führer then stamps a piece of paper taped to the wall with his paint covered ass. This final ugly art piece by Hitler sums up his contribution to Germany. The feminine peasant artist from Austria could only lead Germany to destruction as the bankers that funded him probably expected. Adolf Hitler essentially left a stain on Germany that will last 100 years. Hence the title for the film, 100 Years of Adolf Hitler. Art Fag Wim Wenders Christoph Schlingensief concludes 100 Years of Adolf Hitler with the same bullshit speech by Wim Wenders featured in the beginning of the film. Following Wenders, a German fellow discusses the German people being both historically romantic and idealistic. The man also states, "The Germans have always shown their greatest skill in times of hardship, hunger, and war." The man finally goes on to talk about the Germans needing to be less enchanted, less romantic, and less idealistic (as these things have led to their downfall). Director Wim Wenders has always been an outspoken against Nazism and very idealistic in nature. I think it would be safe to say that Schlingensief was making a point that despite Wenders anti-Nazi attitude, he is just another artistically idealistic art fag like the Führer himself. The moral of the 100 Years of Adolf Hitler story is to never let an art fag in a position of power.

-Ty E

9 REASONS WHY MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM'S 9 SONGS IS BEST LEFT UNSUNG
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1. 9 Songs utilizes a cheap and unsuccessful gimmick: Don't get me wrong; I appreciate a director (like John Waters) who can successfully utilize a gimmick, yet the cheap pseudo-erotic sex scenes featured in 9 Songs – which are about as sexually alluring as the putrid meat of roadkill – add nothing of value to this ultimately deplorable film. Not even unsimulated gratuitous sex could save this shallow and pathetically pretentious work of would-be erotic art. I certainly was not surprised when the female protagonist asks her banal boy toy, "Do you think I look like a boy." Indeed, she does. Despite its inability to titillate, 9 Songs was considered (by the Guardian) the most "sexually explicit" mainstream film upon its initial release. I guess the folks at the Guardian have yet to see Larry Clark's Ken Park. Unlike Clark's sleazy, yet undeniably entertaining (and still unreleased in the U.S.) film Ken Park, 9 song features no redeeming qualities.

2. All 9 Songs suck: 9 Songs is divided into 9 chapters via 9 concert performances. If you like mediocre mainstream "indie" music (from bands like Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and the Dandy Warhols), 9 Songs is a film that you might enjoy. I personally found the music to be so repellent that I had to forward through most of the maladroitly shot (the concert footage resembles the kind of cellphone-camera-shot bootleg videos that you find on YouTube) concert scenes. I assume the bands featured in the film are supposed to be sexy rock acts that perform equally titillating songs, but, of course, I would rather dump cold water on my crotch than have to listen such musical platitudes again. The only thing I learned while watching 9 Songs is that certain people become hypnotized at rock concerts and end up hooking up with unstable sex partners. Maybe all those eccentric Southern Baptist groups that protested against rock 'n' roll during the 1960s were right in regards to their belief that musical genre has sinister hypnotic qualities.

3. 9 Songs is a prosaic work of pseudo-poetry: Despite attempting to construct 9 Songs as a digital video poem of sorts; Michael Winterbottom created a flick that does the total opposite of poetry: dulling the senses and degrading the organic, thus turning sex into a cheap commodity. Instead of portraying sex in a more extravagant light, Winterbottom demotes it to a level comparable to that of a man defecating on a toilet after an all-night buffet at a Chinese restaurant. Of course - in the modern world - amateurishly shot sex scenes are generally considered high art.

4. Porn is better: Despite the contrived and inauthentic nature of porn, most of it is certainly more erotic than 9 Songs. The only type of person that would revere 9 Songs is someone who is too snooty to watch honest porn, so they use the film as a poor substitute for the real thing.

5. 9 Songs is nothing new: European directors have been producing artsy

fartsy pornography for decades that is actually quite erotic. Maybe someone should have lent Michael Winterbottom a film directed by a master "erotic art house" auteur like Tinto Brass or a Radley Metzger film before the uninspired filmmaker made the artistic mistake of directing a gutter-grade film like *9 Songs*.

6. The film wallows in memories that are unmemorable: Through sex and song, boring protagonist Matt stewes in a cold potboiler and reflects on the unremarkable. Of course, it is purely the director's fault that *9 Songs* fails to make an adequate case for the purported remarkableness of the protagonist's fading memories.

7. Putting a homely hoe on a pedestal: In one particularly telling scene in *9 Songs*, the boyish female protagonist tells her boyfriend about all the foreign lovers she has been with, as if her many sexual partners are sparkling trophies that confirm her imagined intercultural refinement. She is also a drug addict who snorts various things up her nose. The tragedy contained within *9 Songs* is not that the protagonist loses his lover, but that he glorifies such a blatantly inglorious and cumbersome quasi-harlot.

8. *9 Songs* is too long: Although the film is only about an hour in length, *9 Songs* feels like a 3 hour journey into cinema purgatory. Everything that is expressed in the film could have been accomplished in a 5 minute montage. In fact, the sex-laden European vacation montage (which is approximately 4 minutes in length) featured in Robert Avary's adaptation of *The Rules of Attraction* features more depth and content than in all 69 (that number is no doubt a cheap pun) minutes of *9 Songs*. It seems like Michael Winterbottom came up with an idea for a film with 9 concert songs, 9 romance scenes and a 69 minute running time, yet neglected to equip *9 Songs* with vital thematic and aesthetic content.

9. *9 Songs* is as aesthetically appealing as Steven Spielberg's *Rabbinic Beard*: If *9 Songs* manages to accomplish anything, it is offering the viewer an eclectically unappealing collection of carnal sights and strepitous sounds. Indeed, *9 Songs* is a philistine journey into the void of one couple's unhealthy relationship, thus one expects a certain stark artiness to the film, yet the ultimate aesthetic effect is nil. *9 Songs* has about as much beauty and content as camcorder recorded autopsy footage.

In Conclusion: *9 Songs* is an unremarkable film about a guy who is apparently smart (he is a climatologist), but suffers from unrefined taste in women. Mr. Matt is a character that fails to conjure up empathy nor disdain in the viewer, as he is ultimately a forgettable man that lacks even the slightest inkling of a personality. Although *9 Songs* has been masqueraded as a work of art (by a marginal few); it is nothing more than crudely shot melodramatic smut. If you have an interest in seeing real-life ejaculation and cunnilingus on your TV screen; skip *9 Songs* and watch real pornography.

-Ty E

A CLOSER LOOK AT BLAXPLOITATION
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Blaxploitation is one of the more colorful genres of films that instead of exploiting nuns or frequent sex, it exploits blacks. The genre of "Blaxploitation" was born in the early 70's from with the urban youth in mind. Arguably, the very first Blaxploitation film was "Sweet Sweetback's BAADASSSSSS Song". Many claim due to it being directed by a Negro, it refutes the whole purpose. If you notice, Whites & Jews directed many of the cult or more obscure blaxploitation films. For instance, Note Williamson's classic "Boss Nigger" being directed by Jack Arnold, the infamous director of Universal classic "Creature from the Black Lagoon". This was a tactic picked up to make a mass amount of money by appealing to the urban kids. Upon the discovery of this, there was a "boom" in the market spawning Superfly, Black Caesar, and other classic titles. Bone from Larry Cohen is another film of this stature. The massive meaning of this film aims towards being an anti-white film and mainstreaming racism. Aside from Bone, Cohen also directed the rebirth mash-up "Original Gangstas" with classic Blaxploitation stars such as Pam Grier, Fred Williamson, Richard Roundtree, and Jim Brown. The film is an interesting view on urbanization. If you view each of the characters, you can imagine them actually coming back to the "hood" to find it in flames. It seems like a loose ending to every Blaxploitation film they have starred in. They once were hood rats, now they have come back to clean up the streets. The afore-mentioned Boss Nigger was one of the Blaxploitation films that showed its militant black character on a step above whites with the slogan "Black Man's Law in a White Man's Town" In this film, Fred Williamson and D'urville Marin play a duo of bounty hunters who force the role of sheriff and deputy among themselves. Through out their journey, Williamson beds up with a white teacher and Martin with an obese lady; exaggerating the fact that black men love a big woman. The director of the cult-animated spoof "Coonskin" was born in what is now Israel. Coonskin was the main target for controversy due to the mass amounts of character models based off of Jolson's immortalization of blackface. Coonskin was not the first animated feature to use the "coon" archetype. In fact, Disney was doing it long before. Many now banned clips feature blackface caricatures devouring watermelons in church then in turn, spitting them on the poor white folk in front of him. The influence of Blaxploitation soon spread, generating Richard Roundtree's classic SHAFT featuring a magnificent score from Isaac Hayes, thus paving the way for soul and funk soundtracks for these features. The formula for these films involves urban violence, explicit profanity, frequent drug use, and the famed "pimp" role. Rudy Ray Moore played the most notable role of a pimp in his hit "Dolemite" based off one of his stand-up characters. Dolemite was such a hit; it spawned countless sequels, records, and a new film due out later this year called "The Dolemite Explosion!" The plot of Dolemite is simple and campy. Dolemite is released from prison to catch

the man who framed him there in the first place, Willy Green. Along the way, he will train all his "bitches" in the art of Kung-Fu, come across crooked white cops, and manages to keep his wardrobe colorful and distinguished. Rudy R. Moore might have even created the look for a pimp with this series. Many of these Blaxploitation films have a political message, if you notice, either a major or minor villain is set against stereotype. I.E: The perfect white crooked cops in Dolemite who abuse their power and ultimately get their ass beat by Dolemite. Us genre-fans are not the only ones that Dolemite has entertained. More mainstream rap artists such as Snoop Dogg and Wu-Tang Clan have admitted their inspiration from Dolemite. To quote Snoop Dogg, "Without Rudy Ray Moore, there would be no Snoop Dogg, and that's for real." - Snoop Dogg Even after all this time, Blaxploitation is not dead, nor does it look like it will die in the near future. Films like "Black Devil Doll" ensure the snagging of new fans to the genre. This one sports the excessive nudity, frequent profanity, and the lost language of jive. Director Jonathan Lewis obviously wants the urban feel, hence his incorporating the funk group "Bamboo Gods" in the soundtrack. Blaxploitation has come a long way from being directed by white men to make blacks mainstream. It's only very exciting to see what effects time will have on this genre.

-Maq

A LAUD FOR HANS LANDA
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I expected Quentin Tarantino's film *Inglorious Basterds* to be the pop-director's most culturally-despicable film yet. His entry in the Grindhouse project was bad enough, but a Philo-Semitic war epic full of Jew porn schizophrenia and blood-thirsty Semitic murderous indulgence?!? Degenerate hack Horror HEEBie-Jeebie Eli Roth has made it known that "holocaust education" was a big part of his upbringing as a Jewish supremacist. In *Inglorious Basterds* he ecstatically displays his love of bashing in the skulls of heroic (and restrained by a Jew Crew, of course) Aryan blond beasts via his Jude-bat. I may be wrong, but I always thought Jews were generally fairly pathetic when it comes to athletics, heroism, courage, and fighting their own battles in general, but I guess that is why *Inglorious Basterds* is a War fantasy film. Due to my repelled feeling towards anything involving Tarantino or Roth, it was practically a given to me before watching *Inglorious Basterds* that the film would be indistinguishable from Elie Wiesel's favorite wet dream after an all-NIGHT party in Israel involving the most attractive of blond Slavic sex-slaves owned by the Judaic mafia and a couple rusty razorblades. That was until I watched the film and was soon introduced to Tarantino's best written character ever; SS-Standartenführer Hans Landa.

Quentin Tarantino for once almost stated something true about film when he said that Hans Landa may be the best character he has ever written. My own personal disgust with Tarantino comes from the fact that despite many years of his own personal "VHS-Tape Film School", Tarantino seems to have the least refined and most eclectically all around trashy taste in film. Don't get me wrong, I like a good film noir or horror film like the next guy, but Tarantino obsesses over pure stylized-Scheiße, hence why his films are soulless (with no human feeling aside from excitement and "coolness") big-budget piles of shit. Hollywood has been pretty much always fundamentally anti-art and anti-organic kultur as they like to contrive their own culturally-hollow-Hollywood "reality" so that the masses erroneously imitates these "ideal" pseudo-realities, like the mindlessly good little unconscious comrades they are. With the character of Hans Landa, for once it seems that Tarantino has refrained from obsessing over cool wacky Negro characters, alpha-females, and arrogant beaners. This time Tarantino attempted to put his self in the position of an Austrian Aryan, but Tarantino's Aryan is of course a psychological abstraction of sorts. After all, one could never expect Tarantino to understand the natural psyche of a Teuton for it would have probably induced a suicide-reflex. Right from the get go, Hans Landa identifies himself as an Aryan who can "think like a Jew." By this, Landa recognizes that Jews will just about do and say anything to get their way. After all, how could such a small tribe of Judaics (with a slave morality to boot) be able to almost completely monopolize the international wealth of the world? Nowadays, we live in the miserable reign of the Tschandala, a "postmodern" nightmare where

weaknesses, failure, deformity, victim hood, and other pathetic attributes are worshiped as the height of virtue. Hans Landa recognizes that once a soul loses dignity, he/she is capable of the most (pathetically) amazing of feats. No matter how rich or successful a Jew is, there is still the memory of the Ghetto and the gutter. There never was nor will there ever be a true Jewish aristocracy, for a true aristocracy comes about through strength gained from being the fittest (both physically and mentally) person within ones own blood/soil environment, something that has become pretty much obsolete in the postmodern Western world (a healthy Western would never allow third world immigration) and elsewhere. All Jewish power is derived from the manipulation of capital, linguistics, psychology, and other intellectual abstractions. Whether it be Marx, Einstein, or Freud, all of these great "Jewish geniuses" derived their theories through the iconoclasm of the existing Occidental model which Hebrew-incinerators so instinctively destroyed. As the great Francis Parker Yockey once stated, "An insatiable lust for revenge was born in the soul of the parasite through centuries of silent sufferance of the unassailable superiority of the host. When defeated Europe - and in particular, the most vital part of it, the bearer of the grand European Idea of the 20th century - lay at the feet of this totally alien conqueror from a Culture of the past, no feelings of magnanimity, chivalry, generosity or mercy were in his exultant soul. There was only there the gall which he had been drinking for a thousand years while he had bided his time under the arrogance of the alien Western peoples whom he had always considered, and still considers, barbarians, goyim." Hans Landa acts as model for all aspiring "Jew Hunters" out there. Skinheads and other related ilk will always fail as they refuse to even attempt to understand the psychology of God's chosen Hebrew as shown in Henry Bean's *The Believer*. Anyone who has taken the time to study the German National Socialist leadership will understand there is a pathological pattern starting with the movements spiritual father Richard Wagner (who meta-politically influenced both Adolf Hitler and political Zionist Founder Theodor Herzl's almost identical goal of a racially pure *Übermensch* state). Like Zionism (although this movement will never be truly successful for it is fundamentally at odds with the true nature of Jews/Judaism), National Socialism was inspired by identifying and rejecting the stereotypical traits of Jewish effeminacy and amorality, hence why many Mischling (part-Jews) eagerly became the most committed of Antisemites. National Socialist propagandist and "World Jew-Baiter No. 1" Julius Streicher is noted to have once recognized his Jewish ancestry as the best weapon in fighting the Jews. The honorable and stoic Aryan is no match for the moral bankruptcy that slithered out of the ghettos of Eastern Europe. The Aryan, in all his honesty, will fight for his people and his country whereas the typical Zio-poodle always contracts someone else to do his dirty work. Hans Landa also understands this psychology as shown in *Inglorious Bastards* by "single-handily toppling the Third Reich" when he recognizes that Germany defeat is now in-

A LAUD FOR HANS LANDA

evitable. Aside from the unfortunate swastika mark permanently engraved into his head, he is the only top National Socialist to survive a Jewish murder rampage at a cute French cinema. Not many people are good at suavely pulling off both a good ol' froggy ratonnade and an one-man conditional armistice in the same lifetime.

Hans Landa is a man that is always about twenty steps above his contemporaries just as Friedrich Nietzsche and Francis Parker Yockey were, two other Sages of the Jewish Question. There truly is a thin-line between authentic Antisemitism and Philo-Semitism as "Second-Generation holocaust survivor" Norman Finklestein has recognized. Hollywood did itself a service when they released *American History X*, a film that romanticizes the skinhead movement for the skinhead is a true friend of Zion. Skinheads and Ku Klux Klaners save your average Rabbi a trip to the Jewish cemetery where he no longer has to spray paint swastikas on Jewish tombstones for evidence of "growing Antisemitism." Your average "White Power" skinhead is a foot soldier of Zion and just another pawn in the game, similar to some Clown-Azz-House-Negroes like Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton. Hans Landa is a cold, calculating, and obscenely conscious man who has talents that cannot be contrived. He laughs at the mind of a German soldier as his soldierly honor is now obsolete (at least as far as leadership goes) in our world of technological and political bureaucracy, for such a honorable man (naive to the behavior of those with a conspiring nature) will always be used as pawn to whoever is in power. Hopefully, the character of Hans Landa will awaken those out there with the mental capacity as to the proper etiquette when dealing with conspiring cultural distorters. Herr Landa's motivations may have been unsavory but his methods were almost pristine. Landa's *Weltanschauung* is probably best symbolically expressed when he laughs at double-agent Bridget von Hammersmark's lie about how she broke her leg stereotypically (German) by mountain climbing. Hans Landa has learned how to read people better than the chief Rabbi of Israel questions his Talmud and better than how depraved Sigmund Freud was able (or at least pretended to be able) to analyze the psychosexuality of children.

-Ty E

A PACT WITH LUCIFER: OTTO RAHN AND THE QUEST FOR THE

Many young American boys (and of course more adventurous girls) over nearly three decades now permanently have the image of Nazis soldiers faces melting all the way down to the skull ingrained in their memories for a lifetime. These Nazis soldiers were on a crusade to find the much desired and legendary Ark of the Covenant in hopes to have an invincible army. This image of death and a literal Holocaust takes place in a fairly popular film directed by Steven Spielberg and produced by George Lucas known as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. One could say that these deaths via supernatural ark have become iconic. The melting of a group of Teutonic faces is a much warmer occurrence than the reality of a young man who froze to death on a mountainside near Söll in Austria. That unusual adventurer was SS-Obersturmführer Otto Rahn, whose lifetime of searching would lead to a Faustian pact with The Third Reich and a short life shrouded in mystery.

Although Steven Spielberg and George Lucas have never spoken of Nazi archaeologist Otto Rahn, he undoubtedly comes closest to being a real-life Indiana Jones. Rahn was an artistic man that was obsessed with the history of the Cathars and the suffering they faced during the crusades as heretics. Otto Rahn believed that the Cathars guarded the Holy Grail in their castle at Montsegur located in Southern France. The best evidence of Rahn being an artist at heart is his belief that Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval epic *Parzival* held the key to the mysteries of the Cathars and where they were secretly hiding the Holy Grail. Rahn's book *Crusade Against the Grail* is a bizarre work of history that combines poetry, anti-catholic sentiment, and wild speculation for a truly original look at medieval Catharism. Otto Rahn traveled to the Pyrenees region of Southern France in 1931 to complete his research for *Crusade Against the Grail* which was completed in 1933. It should be noted that *Crusade Against the Grail* was published three years before Otto Rahn would join Heinrich Himmler's sinister SS. Rahn came to the attention of Heinrich Himmler after Gabriele Dechend, private SS secretary of secret(occult) king Karl Maria Wiligut, read *Crusade Against the Grail* and gave it to Wiligut. Karl Maria Wiligut was impressed by *Crusade Against the Grail* and immediately informed SS leader Heinrich Himmler of the book. Himmler was highly impressed by the book and summoned Otto Rahn to meet him in Berlin, Germany. At the time of meeting Himmler, France had just denied Rahn his much desired visa. Otto Rahn, to his embarrassment, had also just gotten dropped by his publisher. One could not find better timing for a Faustian pact with a metaphorical devil known as Heinrich Himmler. Heinrich Himmler's elite SS would give Otto Rahn the opportunity to travel Europe and write in a travel diary which would later become his second (and final) book *Lucifer's Court* (1937). Rahn believed that Lucifer was bearer of light and true illumination and his journeys recorded in *Lucifer's Court* were meant to shed light

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on “the ghosts of the pagans and heretics who were (his) ancestors.” Otto Rahn’s work *Lucifer’s Court* was made required reading by SS leader Heinrich Himmler for the Nazi elite and higher. One could say that Rahn was responsible for writing part of the gospel for the short lived but eternally remembered Third Reich. The SS also required Otto Rahn to do something that one might consider much physically and emotionally stressful than reading merely about heretics of the past. Rahn was forced to do four months’ military service with the SS-Death’s Head Division ‘Oberbayern’ at Dachau concentration camp, an experience that apparently forever changed the romantic young man for the worst. Otto Rahn’s personal life would also find him to be an enemy of the Nazi state. Rahn did not do much to hide his homosexuality which would eventually result in the most undesirable of fates. Rahn was caught twice engaged in homosexuality activities which Heinrich Himmler warned him against. SS secretary Gabriele Dechend believed that Otto Rahn was being spied by someone in the SS that was jealous of Rahn. Dechend speculates that on Himmler’s third time catching Rahn engaged in homosexual activities resulted having to “save his honor” via suicide. Surprisingly, the Judeo-Christian propaganda book *The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in the Nazi Party*, a work that argues the Nazi war machine was fueled by German homosexuality, forgets to mention Otto Rahn’s sexual persuasion. Otto Rahn’s mother, who knitted her son a sweater which displayed a lightning bolt similar to that found in the SS emblem, was also found out to be Jewish. The 2001 documentary on Otto Rahn, *The Secret Glory* directed by Richard Stanley (*Dust Devil, The White Darkness*), reveals that Rahn was Jewish although he may have not known that until he did his genealogical research for the SS. According to rabbinical law (and of course the Nuremberg racial laws), Otto Rahn was Jewish. It would be very hard to find a stranger and unconventional character as Otto Rahn in the SS. But then again, Emil Maurice who founded the *Stosstrupp Adolf* (which later became the SS) with Adolf Hitler, also was of Jewish ancestry. Maurice was also apparently bisexual, something you would not expect from someone that was partly responsible for founding the SS. When Heinrich Himmler brought to the attention of Adolf Hitler that Emil Maurice had Jewish ancestry, Hitler responded “in this one exception case” Maurice could stay in the SS. After all Emil Maurice was one of the first members of the Nazi party and one of oldest friends. Indeed, fact is truly stranger than fiction.

Many proto-Nazi and Nazi authors had a much different interpretations of the Holy Grail than Otto Rahn. Nordacist writers would interpret the blood of Christ with Aryan blood which is interesting as Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg would later claim that Jesus Christ was not Jewish (but Aryan) in his best selling book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1929). Ultimately, Aryan propagandists finally brought forth the thesis that the “Aryan” grail would only begin to shine again with the Nordic races return to racial purity. At the conclu-

sion of *Crusade Against the Grail*, Rahn stated, "What happened to the Grail, the Occitan Mani?" According to Pyrenean legend, the Grail moves farther away from this world, and upward toward the sky, when humanity is no longer worthy of it." Instead of finding the grail, Otto Rahn's escapades led him to a tragic departure from this world and ultimately the destruction of the Third Reich. Certainly, the grail moved farther the earth as Rahn's life progressed. Drawing of Otto Rahn by his friend Paul Ladame Before becoming involved with searching for the Holy Grail and later his fatal decision to join the SS, Otto Rahn had an interest in the art of cinema. Otto Rahn played an extra in the G.W. Pabst (Director of *Pandora's Box* starring Louise Brooks) film *Westfront 1918* (1930) with his friend Paul Ladame. Rahn and Ladame also collaborated on a screenplay for *Drehbuch von Klabund's marriage comedy XYZ* but were unfortunately unable to financial backing for production of the film. Otto Rahn was also hoping to have an acting role in *XYZ*, a film which was collaboration between a German and French company. Now, the question is when is Hollywood going to make the ultimate Otto Rahn bio-pic? Unfortunately, I think the Indiana Jones series is as close to get as Hollywood will get to a serious film about Otto Rahn. If only there were courageous European director such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Pier Paolo Pasolini still living. Then maybe a serious film about Otto Rahn will be made.

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ALIEN VS. ALIENS
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Aliens is one of those few film sequels that is more highly regarded than the original film. I would have to disagree with that popular opinion as I see Alien as a more innovative and important film. Alien is a film that has its setting in a Sci-Fi background but owes more to haunted house horror. Aliens is more of a sci-fi and war film hybrid. Both films go against expected genre conventions. I just recently viewed Aliens for the first time over the past couple days (I would call it long term procrastination). Alien is a film that I watch at least once a year. It is a film that no doubt gets better with each viewing. Its entire atmosphere demands the viewer to suspend all belief for a subconsciously sexual look at killer extraterrestrial life forms. H.R. Giger provided the disturbing sexual aesthetics that give Alien a good portion of its nightmarish and dark fetishistic appeal. Had he not been involved in the imagery in the alien film franchise, the films would be crucially lacking in both appeal and power. The phallic headed Aliens found in the Alien films are the ultimate enemy of ambiguous lesbian and virtual mother Ripley (quite an odd dichotomy). Ripley acts as a mediator and leader to even the most authoritarian of male personalities found in the films. In Aliens her motherly intuition becomes even more apparent with her rescue of a lone little girl (as her colony had been slaughtered by the Aliens). Ripley lacks the stereotypes types generally attributed to Hollywood heroines. She is stoic, clear minded, assertive, and fully capable of controlling her own life (while also guiding others). One aspect of the alien films that obviously had an effect on the difference in films is the change in directors. Ridley Scott was the director of the first film. This is no surprise when taking into consideration that Scott is known for his heavy emphasis on aesthetics and set design (look at Blade Runner for example). A good percentage of the cinematic power Alien has is the result of Ridley Scott's eye for set design. Ridley Scott is notorious for directing films that are heavily weighed down by his obsession with aesthetics. Scott's films are generally overwhelming in that regard. You can't help to focus on the visuals and almost forget the film actually has a story. Aliens director James Cameron is best known for his ability to make tons of money with exciting and fast paced action films. For the most part, with Cameron's cinematic visuals, what you see is what you get. Aliens lacks the subconscious sexual elements so strongly prevalent in the original film. Aliens is an exciting action film that only requires attention. The film also plays with reflexive elements of the original film (as most sequels do). A token and unnecessary dream sequence features an alien popping out of Ripley's abdomen and gives the audience what they expect. The human robot found in Aliens conflicts with that found in the original film. This robot becomes a hero and an important asset to the rescue team. The original robot of course lost his manmade mind and decided it was time to kill. Both of the robots, of course, have semen like blood. The ending of Aliens also heavily parallels that

of the one found in the original. The cinematic comparisons go on and on. In conclusion, I find Alien to be a much better film. As much as I enjoyed both films, Alien had a much stronger impact on me and the cinema world in general. Aliens is still an exception in that it contradicts the stereotype that sequels are god awful (which most are). Now I just hope I don't get death threats (it's long overdue) for my conflicting film preference.

-Ty E

AN ODIOS ODE TO HORRORIST HANNS
AN ODIOS ODE TO HORRORIST HANNS

Esoteric Mythmaker of Uncle Adolf's Minute-Long Millennial ReichDefender
of SINema, the novice art of Mass Communal Phantasmagorical RiteInter-
national NationalVoyeur of Vodun Island SacrificeParticipant in New Orleans
Necro NachtAryan DegenerateWarring AestheticKamerad of SatanNo Enemy
of THY
-Ty E

BRAIN DAMAGE FILMS INTRODUCTION

Another day, another cinematic torture. This time, I didn't even make it to the film. In fact, I was treated with an introduction forged in the Underworld by Hades himself. To delve a bit into what I will explain with an article on Brain Damage in the future, the screener DVD's I have received have a very "colorful" introduction that is almost as bad as the films themselves. Allow me to go off-topic to explain Brain Damage Films to you in case you haven't read a review of their films. Many review sites see the easy way to fame is to applaud horrible film efforts for a cheap shot for a quote on a DVD cover. As nifty as that sounds, Our readers time is more important than us being noticed. I have seen the worst that world cinema has to offer; fish porn and extreme scat to name a few, but for some damn reason, I cannot find it in me to finish a Brain Damage film. (X-STREAM Editing Part I) My remedy to this type of bullshit is closing my eyes with happy thoughts of watching Ving Rhames in a boxing match against Wesley Snipes. Before you think that Brain Damage Films is just a film company who is plagued by bad luck, might I point out some scenes in their introduction. The intro begins with a film company scene with the text written in blood reading "Terror TV" If you listen closely, It's obvious that the sound clip that shamelessly stole was from Static-X's song "Loser" Then it moves on to the fictional mascot for Brain Damage Films, aptly named "Brain Damage" If by brain damage, they mean retarded, Then yes, This is a retarded film company with a retarded mascot. In their future, I see..... Shortbus of Terror. They already made a film entitled Goth, It wouldn't surprise me to see them tackle that familiar subject that they deal with; Low IQ's. When Brain Damage walks out, the actor is making the best Quentin Tarantino face he can. While straining, the camera begins to auto-focus and zoom in/out to create this wild effect of purgatory. Brain Damage then introduces himself as a fanatic - no, scratch that, a "FREAK" of horror films. I guess this character loves his labels twisted. Personally, I can't imagine someone who has ruined the face of independent horror to look so highly to the genre. He then calls his fans "GOREHOUNDS" Again with the CAPS key. He likes to make a solid point. I might have seen 4 - 5 Brain Damage films, and as I can remember, none of them had gore, save for the Shockumentary's and Traces of Death series. (X-STREAM Editing Part II: This Time It's Personal!) His next method of making himself seem important is him boasting in a forced raspy voice about how many e-mails and film submissions he gets from fat guys with pony-tail's all around the world. After this contrived segment explaining how people from third-world countries love his films, he begins to ramble in his heavy metal voice about how successful Brain Damage Films is. Just as Romero before, BD brags about how his fame is derived from the "INTERNET *echo*" and how there are hundreds of reviews for all his distributions and productions. Good Heavens, If he actually took the

BRAIN DAMAGE FILMS INTRODUCTION

time to read some, like the ones I write, he might pack his bags and become a security guard. Brain Damage, if he has done one thing, it's stereotyping and insulting his fans. After exclaiming that Brain Damage Film's target audience is through the years 18 - 25, he then shouts that they "LIVE ON THE INTERNET" Nice, a man who ruins horror is telling me I have no life. I might have believed that this character was a somewhat iconic fake-punk who is in dire need of Rogaine and a fruitcake at best, but when he makes another exclamation, he grabs a plastic skull and using all the homosexuality in his body, barely taps it on the table, I lost it. The most fun I've had with Brain Damage Films, is dissecting this clever ruse which is nothing but an extreme fabrication and exaggeration of what Brain Damage Films really is. When he tells me to "Turn down the lights, Crank up the volume, and Hold on to your seats" I realize that there is no punishment worse than having to listen to DIY trash at a high volume level while not moving in a darkened room where my attention span can't wander. It's final; Horror truly is dead and hasn't even hit first base.

-mAQ

BRANDO FLIRTED WITH FASCISM?

In Marlon Brando's early years, he could have made the ideal Aryan superman. Brando was tall and handsome which would make him suitable for being the poster boy of an American Nazi movement. The reality is, however, that Brando has always taken up the liberal and civil right causes. In body he may have been Aryan but in mind is a completely different story. With Marlon Brando's acting abilities, it's apparent that he was a very emotive person who lacked the ideal stoicism for someone of his appearance. Brando was the great American "rebel" and new kind of man that Hollywood pushed. Marlon's brilliant and suave performance in *The Wild One* made it cool to be a rebel and even cooler to do it with style. Marlon Brando starred in the banal American World War II propaganda film *The Young Lions*. The highlight and only redeeming quality of the film is seeing Brando in a Nazi officer uniform. In the film, Brando carries a horrible German accent and his hair is bleached a peculiar blond. Marlon plays a tragic character in *The Young Lions* that starts out as an ambitious German peasant who wants to bring up his social status which National Socialism has promised him. Essentially, Marlon Brando is the "nice" Nazi who "sold his soul" to the evil Third Reich and pays for his mistake with his life in the end. *The Young Lions* even features an obviously Yiddish Jewish actor playing a Nazi concentration camp leader who brags about all the Jews that have been gassed. Marlon Brando was disappointed with the arrogance of the writer of *The Young Lions*, Irwin Shaw. Brando felt annoyed by the fact that Shaw felt that all Germans were to blame for what came to be known as the Nazi holocaust. Marlon stated about Shaw's book, "if you pick out a whole people and say, all the Germans are this, all the Jews do this, that's exactly what Hitler did. If you start thinking and feeling in broad terms like that then it's very dangerous, That was clear in Shaw's book, in his bitterness and anger." After making statements like this, Marlon Brando would be haunted with the typical slur of being labeled an "Anti-Semite" for the rest of his career. Brando never even knew what the purpose or the real meaning behind the word "Anti-Semite" was. Marlon Brando stated of Anti-Semitism, "Anti-Semitism? I used to have to ask people what that was. I didn't understand the word, I could never figure it out. It's still a problem to figure out."

Marlon Brando, Celia Adler, and Paul Muni in *A Flag is Born*

Knowing Marlon Brando's track record with the Jewish community and his Civil Rights activism, it would be absurd to call Brando an "Anti-Semite." Despite whatever things Marlon may have said in his life, his contribution to the Jews and other minority groups rights are tremendous. Brando helped raise money for the Israeli terrorist group *Irgun Zvai Leumi* by performing in a play called *A Flag is Born* by Ben Hecht. The profits from the play were used to buy arms and ammunition. *Irgun* would be responsible for the deaths of many Arabs and British soldiers. Marlon Brando also stated of his involvement with

BRANDO FLIRTED WITH FASCISM?

Irgun that, “We had to take six weeks’ course and learn about Israel and how it was formed, how it became a state, the Balfour Declaration and the presence of the British, the position of the Arabs.” For the Jewish community to label Marlon Brando, an early supporter of Israeli terrorism, an Anti-Semite is nothing more than an ungrateful stab in the back. George Lincoln Rockwell Marlon Brando was also known for his contribution to and mobilization of Civil Rights activists. In California in 1963, Brando led a small group of CORE marchers to protest for Civil Rights. Also present at the event were troops of George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party. One of the American storm troopers carried a sign that stated “Marlon Brando is a Nigger-Loving Creep.” It is a surprise that none of the American Nazi Party members carried a sign about Brando’s alleged homosexuality. Brando would later pay his respects to the American Nazi Party by portraying George Lincoln Rockwell in the television adaptation of Alex Haley’s book *Roots*.

Marlon Brando in *Roots* Marlon Brando’s performance as George Lincoln Rockwell in *Roots* is strange to say the least. Brando portrays Rockwell as a slurring deranged racist who likes to hide in the shadows of swastikas. Brando acts nothing like the real Rockwell whose father was a vaudevillian comedian. Rockwell’s father “Doc” was friends with such vaudevillian Jewish performers as Benny Goodman, Groucho Marx, Jack Benny, and the perverted propagandist Walter Winchell. George Lincoln Rockwell was more a gag comedian than he was a Nazi leader. As a joke and to discredit the holocaust, Rockwell once wrote a bunch of lies about Nazi medical experiments pretending to be an SS officer. He sent the article to the Jewish magazine *Sir!* and they published it even including stock holocaust death camp photographs. George Lincoln Rockwell also was known for his offensive cartoons of stereotypical Jews and Negroes. Despite inaccurately portraying George Lincoln Rockwell as a humorless psycho in *Roots: The Next Generations*, Brando won an Emmy for the performance for “Outstanding Supporting Actor.” The same year he won the Emmy award for his performance in *Roots: The Next Generations*, Marlon Brando was once again labeled an “Anti-Semite” because of a *Playboy Magazine* article he did. In the article Marlon Brando stated, “You’ve seen every single race besmirched, but you never saw an [unfavorable] image of the kike because the Jews were ever so watchful for that—and rightly so. They never allowed it to be shown on screen. The Jews have done so much for the world that, I suppose, you get extra disappointed because they didn’t pay attention to that.” Almost twenty years later, in 1996 Marlon Brando’s thought on the Jews and Hollywood didn’t change. On Larry King live in April 1996 Brando stated, “Hollywood is run by Jews; it is owned by Jews, and they should have a greater sensitivity about the issue — of people who are suffering. Because they’ve exploited — we have seen the Nigger and Greaseball, we’ve seen the Chink, we’ve seen the slit-eyed dangerous Jap, we have seen the wily Filipino, we’ve seen everything but we never saw

the Kike. Because they knew perfectly well, that that is where you draw the wagons around." By now Brando should have known that without mentioning the Jews unless it's in regard to their "suffering" or "achievements" is borderline "Anti-Semitism." Marlon Brando was easily one of America's greatest acting sons and possibly an "Anti-Semite." Brando was a rebel in the truest sense in that he sought to destroy whatever institution or group was dominant whether it be through protest or financial support. Marlon Brando is the perfect example of someone who has suffered from the irrational and childish slander technique of being labeled with stereotypical "Anti-Semite" canard. Brando was sure no fascist as he was a strange and peculiar individualist. Hollywood should be roman saluting his grave for all the help Brando gave them whether it be moneymaking, activism, or political subversion.

-Ty E

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS FINALLY GET THEIR DUE!
CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS FINALLY
GET THEIR DUE!

Cannibal Holocaust is the definitive Italian cannibal film. Anyone that has ever been interested in underground horror, exploitation, and other related cinema perversities has seen or at least heard of the film. Cannibal Holocaust also has a good amount of interesting truths and tall tales surrounding the film. Director Ruggero Deodato was arrested for obscenities after first being premiered in Italy. Rumors were later spread that Cannibal Holocaust was a snuff film and that the actors involved were really killed. Of course (and unfortunately), none of this was true. Various critics have supported the film as they see it as an excellent social commentary on the civilized world. When watching Cannibal Holocaust, the social commentaries are quite apparent and obvious (just how mainstream critics like it). Cannibal Holocaust concludes with a cowardly morale note of 'who are the real monsters – the cannibals or us?' To be honest, I enjoy Cannibal Holocaust for it's extreme revolutionary killings and complete disregard for spineless political correctness. But I also enjoy it for another hidden reason. The mainstream critics always forget to mention one crucial element of Cannibal Holocaust and it's "social commentary." As everyone who has seen Cannibal Holocaust knows, the film follows a group of sick anthropologists as they exploit the savagery of the native savage. These scientists have PhD's, yet lack any type of moral consciousness. They actually do represent the contemporary forms of Anthropology, cultural Anthropology. Cultural anthropology was invented by self-loathing German Jew Franz Boas who wouldn't even acknowledge his Jewish background. He was a product of assimilation during the period of German enlightenment. Franz Boas was also heavily influenced by the anti-reason philosophies of Emmanuel Kant. Novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand stated the following of Kant and his contribution to Western civilization, "I have mentioned in many articles that Kant is the chief destroyer of the modern world... You will find that on every fundamental issue, Kant's philosophy is the exact opposite of Objectivism." When dissecting the irrationality that is modern academia, you will find that Rand is accurate in her assertion. Tragically, Kantian Franz Boas is considered the "father" of modern day anthropology. Cultural anthropology is often considered in union with Sigmund Freud's invention of psychoanalysis.

Franz Boas being scientific It is not surprising to see the often correlation between cultural anthropology and psychoanalysis as they are both pseudo sciences. Cultural anthropology emphasizes the "science" of culture. They consider race to be a "social construct" with no biological basis. Anyone that has ever taken the most basic of university level biology classes will know the only truth is in genetics. For anyone to call something like "race" a social construct, is both irrational and ignorant. Especially when considering that most supporters of

cultural anthropology also strongly believe in evolution. Sigmund Freud plotting destruction So one might ask, why would these two pseudo sciences (cultural anthropology and psychoanalysis) be so highly regarded and practiced in modern day academia? The reason for this is they are both political movements bent on subverting Western civilization in hopes of establishing an internationalist one world government (called "Globalization"). Cultural anthropology and psychoanalysis both ignore the scientific method giving the excuse that "science" is racist. They deny reality with the horrible lie that they are virtuously promoting diversity and international harmony. The cultural anthropologists featured in Cannibal Holocaust act as a great example of the subversive and immoral practices utilized by those "scientists." During the early 1960's, cultural anthropologists began an unofficial competition of sorts to find unstudied cultures around the world and document them. In the process they ended up destroying all of these cultures as they were exposed to western culture. Very few hunter-gatherer tribes contemporarily exist due to the "scientific investigation" of a few neo-Bolshevik propagandists. The rape, murder, and destruction found in Cannibal Holocaust symbolically emphasizes the destruction of culture so hatefully practiced by cultural anthropologists. A group of individuals that sought to subvert "white western ethnocentrism" in hopes of establishing international global harmony and eventually racial hegemony, have done the world a great disservice. The killer "savages" found in Cannibal Holocaust are heroes of the highest degree. They acted to protect their people and culture from the contamination of cosmopolitan degeneracy (whether they knew it or not). Director Ruggero Deodato almost perfectly captured the atmosphere of cinema vérité popularized by French cultural anthropologist Jean Rouch. Rouch would later have a huge influence on commie directors Jean-Luc Godard and Béla Tarr. Deodato's unapologetic attitude towards the likes of cultural anthropologists should be held in the highest regard to those considering themselves friends of humanity. When someone tells you they are fighting against "oppression" they are usually fighting for it.

-Ty E

CHRIS TUCKER IS RUBY RHOD
CHRIS TUCKER IS RUBY RHOD

The Fifth Element, to me, is a perfect film. Not necessarily artistic or rewarding, but an amazing science fiction epic teeming with zany characters, explosions and aliens, and my favorite - Bruce Willis playing John McClane in space. Willis might be flamed for taking the same role with dysfunctions into a quirky film, The Fifth Element should have been Die Hard in Space. Even though I would have rather seen Korben Dallas been the central show-stealer, that role is handed on a silver platter to Chris Tucker's metro sexual diva Ruby Rhod. Chris Tucker lends his natural pitch inflation to the character which gives him a feeling of spunk when he graces the screen. Albeit, the character is generally annoying as fuck, it's hard to not enjoy the screen time you spend with him. In many Hollywood scripts, roles are written exclusively for a single actor they have in mind. While this practice seems flawed unless you are backed behind a project and budget they can't refuse, I would say it's safe to assume that Luc Besson wrote this role for the hyper Negro Chris Tucker. While Chris Tucker's stand up comedy only manages to be moderately funny, he has found a way to transfer all his personality into a single character that is hilarious and awkward.

No doubt that Ruby Rhod is the Jar Jar Binks of this actioner, but if there were two key differences, it would be comedic timing and helpfulness. Several highlight scenes include Rhod's impromptu rap about the recent winner of a vacation of a lifetime and his almost-remix of Lionel Richie's All Night Long, and when Rhod manages to kill an alien with a gun on accident. Whether it be the annoying "BzzZZZZZZ" that emanates from his scrawny chest, or the flamboyant hair that suits his outrageous costumes, Chris Tucker has created a personal character from the depths of pseudo-homo eroticism hell. Ruby Rhod is arguably the most enjoyable character from The Fifth Element, other than the ultra-sexy Milla Jovovich.

-mAQ

COMMANDO: A HOMOSEXUAL ACTION FILM

I am writing about the beginning of insanity amongst character roles. Vernon Welles plays a mysterious mercenary named Bennett in the Hollywood action film and cult classic COMMANDO. He is the antagonist of a normal screenplay that sounds like anything Tom Clancy would do. What differs from this film between other action films? I'll tell you what. The character Vernon was one of the first closet homosexuals in action cinema. It's not some over analysis that leads to it, it is common knowledge. In many scenes, we are given hints that he seems to adore Matrix of both his handiwork and determination.

He set the stone for both Dennis Hopper and Gary Oldman. Until this film came out, there were no complicated villains with backdrops or some sort of psychosis. Vernon Welles plays the role according to script while giving it that "umph", you can tell from his stunning performance. Basically, Bennett has kidnapped John Matrix's daughter and is holding her hostage. Schwarzenegger plays Matrix and of course, steals the show, but what motivates Bennett? Why is he such a mystery? Nothing is known about him other than he is a deranged, sadistic killing machine who has no problem killing a child, but fears confronting Matrix. Another fine example of this is Kakihara of ICHI THE KILLER. Both are prime examples of sado-masochists that get excited to feel the terror of the ultimate showdown. Bennett himself had a chance to shoot Matrix but instead chose to settle it like a man. A classic knife fight, which in my opinion, is one of the best original knife fights. Not since THE HUNTED has there been such a realistic fight with blades. Not only sporting just his derangement, but he also experiences a death that is so over the top, you just can't help but feel bad for the guy and is also followed by one of Schwarzenegger's classic one liners. The only problem I have with him in this movie is the lack of screen time. In one particular scene, some of the Latin American soldiers are discussing slitting a girl's throats, he tells them to shut the fuck up. He then begins to tell the dictator how his men mean nothing to him and Matrix will kill all of them. The dictator then makes his point by saying he doesn't fear Matrix. Bennett quickly comes back and tells him "You should. I do". In another scene near the end, Matrix told Bennett to kill him with a knife; to man up. Bennett's face then contorted to pain and maniacal glee. A really effective emotion that got the point across. To hold my point even further, during the closing lines, Bennett said "I'm going to shoot you in between the eyes...No...I'm going to shoot you in between the balls!". His face then turned to rage and he quickly met his demise. Matrix: "You can beat me... You want to put a knife in me. Look me in the eyes. See what's going on in there while you turn it. That's what you want to do to me, right? Come on, let the girl go. You and me. Don't deprive yourself of some pleasure. Come on Bennett; let's party." Bennett: "I don't need the girl -- I don't need the girl!" Bennett is such a feminine character. When you watch him throw

COMMANDO: A HOMOSEXUAL ACTION FILM

weapons, he seems to have a limp wrist go about. Not to stereotype, but it all adds together in a package. Many people derive humor from that casting choice but to me it is something more to fear. You have to give props to Vernon Welles and Mark Lester for not conforming to the standard villain. What we have hear is how villains should be perceived, Dysfunctional and insane.Chain mail has never looked so bad-ass.

-Maq

CROWLEY RISING: KENNETH ANGER'S THE MAN WE WANT TO HANG AND BRUSH OF BAPHOMET

Biologist-turned-Sexologist Alfred C. Kinsey (left) and Kenneth Anger (right) at the Abbey of Thelema in 1955

Homo-Occultist auteur Kenneth Anger has always had a lifelong admiration for The Great Beast Aleister Crowley. As a matter of fact, Anger is also a follower of Crowley's Thelema - a religion which would play a major influence on the independent filmmaker's cinema-magick experiments. Anger's stunningly colorful and ambitious work *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1953) includes a variety of Crowleyite and Thelemite inspired themes and also features the mysterious Scarlet Woman Marjorie Cameron (whom would later live with Anger for a small period of time) - the widow of NASA rocket scientist Thelemite Jack Parsons (whom accidentally blew himself up in his home laboratory) on the eve. In 1955, Kenneth Anger traveled to Sicily, Italy (with his fellow hedonistic friend Alfred Kinsey) so that he could direct a documentary on the Abbey of Thelema - a small house that Aleister Crowley used as a Temple for his religion in 1920 during one of his various self-imposed exiles. Italian II Duce Benito Mussolini would later have Aleister Crowley thrown out of fascist Italy and subsequently the religious murals created by the English Occultist were painted over by locals. Although Kenneth Anger would later restore the murals for his documentary *Thelema Abbey* (1955), unfortunately, a British television channel lost the film. Kenneth Anger's most ambitious Thelema themed film is undoubtedly *Lucifer Rising* - an extraordinary esoteric work that would take over a decade to make, but was certainly worth the long wait as it is arguably the American auteur filmmaker's cinematic magnum opus. *Lucifer Rising* - which was shot in Germany and at various ancient Egyptian temples - is a symbolic interpretation of Aeon of Horus - a new period in human history prophesied by Aleister Crowley in his Thelemic unholy holy book, *The Book of Law*. Apparently, at the dawn of the Aeon of Horus - which began in 1904 - humans would become devoted solely to individual liberty, following Crowley's law "Do What Thou Wilt." Despite being a nonbeliever with little interest in the Thelemite self-gratifying faith, I think it is obvious to most people that self-worship is indubitably a virtue of the modern Occidental world, thus coincidentally fulfilling Crowley's prophecy.

The Man We Want To Hang (2002)

After about twenty years of retirement, Kenneth Anger returned to filmmaking at the genesis of the new millennium and eventually released the short film *The Man We Want To Hang* (2002) - a work which encompasses a good number of phallogocentric painting created Aleister Crowley during his lifetime that had been displayed at an exhibit Bloomsbury, London. Additionally, in 2009, Anger released *Brush of Baphomet*, yet another film comprised of various painting (from a 2008 exhibit in Paris) created by Aleister Crowley. Although shorter

in length than its predecessor, *Brush of Baphomet* is the more wickedly sweeter of the two Crowley painting tributes. As for Crowley's art: although the paintings leave much to be desired in the way of technique, they vividly scream out the Great Beast's undeniably distorted view of humanity, as well as his playful fixation and notorious historical participation with sexual depravity. I especially enjoyed a painting featured in *Brush of Baphomet* of a nude savage Negress jovially grabbing the phallic nose of a man who resembles Pinocchio. Whereas *The Man We Want To Hang* features Crowley's most iconic artistic works, *Brush of Baphomet* features The Great Beast's more complex and expressionistic oil murals. In 2000, Dutch filmmaker Nico B. paid homage to Kenneth Anger's infamous book *Hollywood Babylon* by documenting an exhibition dedicated to the gossipy work at the Museum of Death in California. Thus, I would not be surprised if Kenneth Anger received his initial inspiration to document the two Aleister Crowley painting exhibits from Nico B. Interestingly enough, in an interview we (*Soiled Sinema*) conducted with Nico B., the Dutchman stated about his friendship with Kenneth Anger, "Afterwards he (Anger) met my then wife and child. We even celebrated Christmas together. Then out of nowhere, in some dark moment he called me and was upset about something. Anger said he would put a spell on my family and I asked him to never contact me again."

Brush of Baphomet (2009)

Kenneth Anger lecturing on Aleister Crowley

Although Kenneth Anger's post-career shorts *The Man We Want To Hang* and *Brush of Baphomet* might not seem like anything special - they are beyond a shadow of doubt - loving tributes to a wicked man whose Occult influence is uniquely grand and ultimately incalculable. In a way, Aleister Crowley was the hidden guru behind the counter-culture "revolution" and the hippie movement. After all, Mr. Crowley is featured on the cover of the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album with other various historical figures that The Beatles admitted to admiring. In 1971, Jimmy Page - guitarist of Led Zepelin - moved into Crowley's former house in Loch Ness, Scotland and he even engaged in sex magick rituals, but later found such Occult activities no longer fun (replacing them with heroin). In fact, Page was originally hired by Kenneth Anger to provide the soundtrack for *Lucifer Rising*, but his wife later had a cat fight with the Occultnik filmmaker, so consequently, the famous guitar player was fired from the film (despite the fact that Page had already composed a score, which was inevitably left unused). In retaliation, Kenneth Anger belittled Jimmy Page to the press and even threatened to attack him with a black magic curse. After his falling out with Jimmy Page, Kenneth Anger hired convicted murderer and Manson family associate Bobby Beausoleil to score and record the soundtrack for *Lucifer Rising* in prison (Beausoleil was given permission by the institution to do so). Beausoleil also stars in Anger's short *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969) - a film made from an agglomerate of scrap footage

from Anger's original 1966 failed attempt at directing *Lucifer Rising*. On top of being heavily Thelemic in both theme and imagery, *Invocation of My Demon Brother* features Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey (whom plays "His Satanic Majesty"), as well as random concert clips of Mick Jagger - who also composed the Moog Synthesizer-driven score for the film. After all, Mick Jagger is the man that gained much fame by writing (with some minor help from Keith Richards) and confidently singing the 1968 controversial hit song "Sympathy for the Devil." What better way for Lucifer to subliminally trick people than through the aesthetically pleasing hypnotism of music?! Aleister Crowley would also influence industrial music (Throbbing Gristle, Coil), as well as neo-folk groups (Death in June, Current 93). In the late nineteenth century, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated that god was dead. Instead of embracing their traditional Christian cultural backgrounds, many of the great artists of the twentieth culture fell in love with the self-worshipping gospel of Aleister Crowley. 'Tis no wonder the modern world is so pridefully and enthusiastically unholy, for that we can partially thank Aleister Crowley.

Aleister Crowley on the cover of The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's album
-Ty E

CULTURAL POP ICON QUENTIN TARANTINO TACKLES THE HOLOCAUST WITH INGLORIOUS BASTARDS

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Quentin "I love kissing Kosher ass" Tarantino is about the begin production of his latest schizophrenic pop culture movie *Inglorious Bastards*. In the long awaited film, eight Jews take on evil Nazis Zio-Style! Only Tarantino could come up with idea of making a fantasy holocaust action film featuring tough Jews kicking Kraut ass. Zionist filmmaker Steven Spielberg's American propaganda slime *Saving Private Ryan* (essentially a weak remake of Darryl F. Zanuck's *The Longest Day*) only featured a little footage of Kosher commando Private Stanley Mellish (played by the whiney Adam Goldberg) fighting a devilish German Nazi one on one. Knowing Tarantino's love for old and horrible action films (and film in general), one can expect to see Nazi heads and limbs flying in *Inglorious Bastards*. Jewish Hack horror director and Tarantino lover Eli Roth will be playing "a baseball bat-swinging Nazi hunter" in *Inglorious Bastards*. God's chosen have always been followers of the "eye for an eye" law. Goy boy toy Brad Pitt will also be starring in the film as "a hillbilly from Tennessee who puts together a team of eight Jewish-American soldiers." The Jews of *Inglorious Bastards* aren't your stereotypical draft dodgers! They are lean, mean, chutzpah filled killing machines. One of Quentin Tarantino's influences for this holocaust epic? The plot of *Inglorious Bastards* is as follows, "Two story lines... converge: One follows a group of prisoners-turned-soldiers whose mission is to take down a group of Nazis, and the other follows a young Jewish woman who seeks to avenge the death of her parents by this Nazi group. German film critic Tobias Kniebe has described the film as "This is pop culture meets Nazi Germany and the Holocaust." Only Quentin Tarantino could reinvent the holocaust film for this generations tough and militant Zionist Hebrews. Sadly, Jewish funny boy Adam Sandler will no longer be starring in *Inglorious Bastards* as expected. A scheduling conflict has caused Sandler's dropout of the film so no one will be able to see the comedians homicidal kraut killing side. Quentin Tarantino with brothers Weinstein Instead of dramatic scenes featuring Yiddish children being led to the gas chambers, *Inglorious Bastards* will feature torture, revenge, and Tarantino style slaughters. Tarantino's *Kill Bill* Volume 1 and 2 reminded me of a really long and bloody Asian car commercial. I don't think it would be far fetched to assume that Tarantino will be "borrowing" some scenes from *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS*. After all, the pop culture icon director has never thought about making a personal and serious film in his entire life. Tarantino has also considered titling the film *Once Upon a Time in Nazi-Occupied France*. Something tells me that Sergio Leone would have considered Quentin Tarantino a mediocre and soulless director. *Inglorious Bastards* will be distributed by the lovable and bloated Weinstein brothers. Everyone knows that Quentin Tarantino has always had the best connections in Hollywood. For Tarantino to truly leave his mark

in Hollywood, a film about the holocaust is mandatory. After all, Tarantino has always been a fan of tough World War II vet and Jewish pulp filmmaker Samuel Fuller. Tarantino has managed to steal many of Fuller's signature pulp film making themes and techniques so he only owes it the director to make a holocaust film.

-Ty E

DANIELLE HARRIS: A TALE OF TWO MICHAEL'S
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In the fall of 1988, *Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers* was released to an anticipating public. With the star being of young Jewish talent, Danielle Harris put up an admirable role as the little girl who wouldn't stop screaming. Logically, she had every right to but the kicker was that she was very good at acting in hysterics. After this role, she would reprise the Jamie Lloyd character in *Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers* then found a more generous market in such films as *Free Willy*, *Urban Legend*, and my personal favorite - *The Last Boy Scout*. Starting in the 90s, Danielle Harris began receiving out-of-the-ordinary fan mail. A stalker had been admiring her from afar in her home in Houston. Can't blame a simple man for wanting someone who's beautiful, successful, and earnest (Or so it seems). To play a character for a role, she cut her hair shorter. In retaliation, the hardened creeper sent spiteful comments separating "old" Danielle with the "new" Danielle, calling her newly used alter-ego a slut. From here on out, the letters got increasingly more savage and morbid with fantastical tales of cutting her delicate body into pieces. The irony lies solely on the eerie occurrence of her first starring roles being that of a stalker victim. Perhaps this crazed fan idolized Michael Myers more than Danielle Harris? The truth may never be known. The entire incident had been kept under tight wraps. Names, dates, and other gossip necessities are unavailable. In the final incident of violence, the man showed up at her house with a Teddy Bear and a shotgun. Danielle's mom feared for her life as she received a threatening call in the night. Police arrived and promptly arrested the man. Many restraining orders later, she continued to receive fan letters from the stranger begging for forgiveness.

Things seemed good for Danielle Harris after the foul-mouthed efforts of her crazed fan. She appeared on the Dr. Phil show relaying her experiences for a laughable stalker crowd (Highlight is the black woman expressing her love for Jay Z). In the epilogue of this sentimental talk, she basically summarizes the plot of Jennifer Lopez's *Enough*, in which Lopez embraces her femininity and is trained by a karate master to kick her husband's ass. The move of this perhaps may have strengthened already feeble Oprah fans but only proved to be mildly laughable.

As for the possibility that the stalker could have been mesmerized with Michael Myers, it is very plausible. Take his core in retrospect. He's a menacing yet respectable character of terror. This allows him to have power over any mere mortal. As seen in *Halloween 5*, he experiences a kiss of love meant for someone else. Such emotional foreplay is his only apparent weakness. Michael Myers is a cold soulless killer whose only weakness is the never-ending psychic link with his relatives. Perhaps pursuing her in a stern and serious manner was his only real chance at being with her. Love does crazy things, eh? I find it fascinating that some hold stalking as the highest form of flattery. A logic that

is neither deceptive nor misleading. In 2007, Rob Zombie began produced and directing his own "spin" on Carpenter's classic Halloween tale of horror simply called Halloween. His idea to revamp the film took what made it a "Halloween" film and redesigned it with more action and more swearing, which isn't a good thing. To appeal to harsh cynical Myers fans, he placed Danielle Harris in the film as a teenager (Whom is actually 30 years old and has never looked better). The equivalent of this role boils down to Harris cock-teasing the screen with her small-town hipster look then running out of a house screaming baring her breasts. When watching Halloween 4 & 5 back-to-back with Halloween (2007), the expeditious jump from childhood innocence to middle-age sex symbol is brazenly apparent mixed with a hint of eroticism and forbidden fruitions that spring to mind. Danielle Harris has the same symbolic phases that every genre diva has been through. They will encounter a childhood stardom, hit a busy scandalous phase, then to finally settle down. Danielle Harris hit a stint in the horror genre then recently exploded back with a vengeance thanks to Rob Zombie's casting in Halloween (2007). Now she's scheduled for a plethora of horror films, mainly reboots of classic B-movie fare. Judging by the Prank teaser poster, I could wildly assume that Danielle Harris forgot which Halloween film she starred in.

This guy points too much and I don't think Danielle even watches horror films. Ever since the stalker situation, Danielle Harris' life will never be the same. She was stalked, obsessed over, and emotionally abused. Threatened if she changed and followed to the grave, this deep love will never fade and Rob Zombie's choice to have her bare all was the only exploitative and interesting factor of Halloween (2007). Apart from the real to life stalking incident, Danielle Harris is only a human being who is more beautiful than some others. Time can only tell if this mysterious stalker will "come home" to claim his "reimagined" prize, or other stalkers for that matter. Not a very intelligent move on Ms. Harris' part.

-mAQ

DIRECTOR OF THE APOCALYPSE: GASPAR NOÉ
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There is no doubt that French filmmaker Gaspar Noé is one of the most controversial contemporary directors of French and international cinema. Film critics have done everything from praising him as an innovative filmmaker to condemning him as a fascist offender. One thing is true about Gaspar Noé, he is a filmmaker with his own set of themes and characteristics that define him as a cinematic auteur. He is a filmmaker that has set out to make films with his own individual vision. Very few contemporary film directors can say that they have the same type of freedom and artistic integrity as Gaspar Noé. In a world where dollars signs are more appealing to a director than ones desire to express their most potent of obsessions, Noé has shown no reluctance in continuing his individualistic approach. The auteur signatures found in Gaspar Noé's films are both viciously graphic and tragically human. Noé likes to look at both ends of the emotional spectrum that humans are capable of. Whether it be the violent racist hatred displayed by an incestuous father in a jealous rage or the beautiful intimacy of two lovers in each others arms, Gaspar Noé's films are no doubt of the human nature. He grew up in an artistic family as his father Luis Felipe Noé is a renowned neo-figurative painter (Gabbey 37). Gaspar Noé has also stated that his father, Luis, wanted him to be what is typically referred to as an "artist." Of course, he ended up being one of the most subversive and controversial filmmakers of recent time. Gaspar Noé, unlike a lot of underground filmmakers, had formal training in film production and cinematography. He trained at one of the most famous schools in France for cinematography (Gabbey 37). He entered school at the ripe young age of seventeen and by the time he was nineteen had a graduated with a highly beneficial understanding of the technical aspects of filmmaking. Not only is Noé subversive with the content and story format of his films, but also the construction and techniques of the films. Gaspar Noé's formal film production helps to explain his unconventional and revolutionary techniques. It is good to know the rules so that you know how to break them. Various film critics have called Gaspar Noé's films both existential and anti-French (Gabbey 38). Quite ironic considering many of the greatest existentialist philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir were French. Gaspar Noé has denied claims that his films are anti-French, stating of his first feature length film *I Stand Alone*(1998), "Actually, the film isn't anti-French at all... There's a subculture in France that is rarely portrayed on the screen... At the time, fifteen percent of the people voted for the National Front (French fascist party), and many of the other people were as racist as the National Front." Gaspar Noé is speaking of the racist remarks of the lead character simply named "The Butcher." I would have to agree with Gaspar Noé's remark as "The Butcher" is far from a positively portrayed character. This character is also featured in Noé's films *Carne*(1991) and *Irreversible*(2002). *Carne* is

a medium length film Noé made about “the Butcher” before *I Stand Alone*. In *Carne*, the butcher stabs an Arab construction worker in the mouth with a knife, mistaking the man for someone that harassed his daughter. In *I Stand Alone*, the butcher continues his attacks on Arabs and other minorities. The irony is that the butcher’s father was a French resistance fighter who was killed by the Nazis during the second world war. Although Gaspar Noé’s films aren’t necessarily anti-French, they feature subcultures of France that might not be considered the most flattering representation of the once powerful empire. In fact, I would argue that Noé is one of the most French (although originally from Argentina) of filmmakers as he presents the country in a more realistic way. A country in racial and political turmoil. A place where crime, prostitution, unemployment, and hate run rampant. Gaspar Noé is a director that displays controversial issues facing a nation in an objective way which bothers many people. Offering no type of real moral messages, audiences are both intimidated and offended by his films. It is up to the audience to make up their opinion about Gaspar Noé’s films content. Gaspar Noé stated in an interview, “The French movies that are promoted abroad are the ones that give like a trendy, cultural, petit-bourgeois, upper class image of France, but it’s true that people who are poor in France are the same as in New York or in India. People who are poor, they are poor and they suffer a lot (Thrower 44).” Gaspar Noé’s honest statement about the suffering of the poor in France reflects the brutal and often offensive truth surrounding contemporary France. Bizarre and graphic sexuality are themes found in the works of Gaspar Noé. Two of his shorts, *Sodomites* (1998) and *We F**K Alone* (2006) are just subversive porn films. *Carne* and *I Stand Alone* feature scenes of father and daughter incest. *Irreversible* features scenes that range from sensual lovemaking between two lovers and a brutal sodomy rape committed by a homosexual pimp on a woman. Gaspar Noé once again doesn’t relent in his subversive content when looking at human sexual relationships. Gaspar Noé’s short *Sodomites* was commissioned by the French Administration Health strangely enough (Gabbey 37). The short is part of five shorts that were concocted by the French government to promote the use of condoms amongst heterosexuals. The French government was uninterested in having porn directors producing the shorts and asked exclusively artistic directors (including Jean-Luc Godard who declined) to be involved in the project. *Sodomites* features the actual act of sodomy between a female and a wolf masked male. During the sex acts, a group of bikers cheer them on. I couldn’t imagine an artistic American director like Wes Anderson directing a porn short for and funded by the American government. Gaspar Noé’s short *We F**ck Alone* was featured on a compilation of porn shorts by artistic directors around the world. The short features two very different individuals (a cutesy girl and a dirty punk) masturbating to the same pornographic film. The short is quite an interesting concept in the way of form. Furthermore, the cinematic technique used is quite unique. A camera

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that seems to be floating weaves in and out of scenes of the individuals in the middle of sexual acts (having a similar feeling to Noé's *Irreversible*). Despite their content, both of Gaspar Noé's porn short films feature odd techniques and auteur signatures so often associated with the young director. *Irreversible* (Noé's most recent feature length film) features many of the subversive ingredients so prevalent in Gaspar Noé's earlier films. The film unfolds in backwards order revealing how time can change everything. As the film progresses, you find that a woman who has been brutally raped is also pregnant. Unfortunately you can assume that the woman experiences a miscarriage. During the May 2002 Cannes screening of *Irreversible*, apparently around 250 out of 2,400 audience members either fainted or walked out on the film (Brottman 160). Like Gaspar Noé's earlier films, *Irreversible* takes a look at France on the verge of apocalyptic chaos. The film features a variety of scenes involving racial conflicts, brutality and killing of homosexuals, beating of a transgendered prostitute, and the killing rape of a beautiful woman by a drug fueled pimp. Gaspar Noé opens the viewer up to a world of subversive and widely unknown subcultures. French director Mathieu Kassovitz also examines different subcultures of France in the Cannes winning (drama) *La Haine* (1995) (focusing on immigrant ghettos). The difference between Kassovitz's *La Haine* and Gaspar Noé *Irreversible* is that the later film takes a more nihilist approach. *Irreversible* is a film that makes it look like its only a matter of time before France explodes into a world of chaos whereas *La Haine* merely displays the problem. *Irreversible* has a seamless flow from scene to scene that owes a little to Alfred Hitchcock's experimental cinematic masterpiece *Rope* (1948). The camera floats from scene to scene in a way that parallels the detached nature of the overall film. Fatalism, nihilism, and powerlessness are the trinity of secular apocalyptic thought according to scholar Daniel Wojcik (Brottman 167). These characteristics are also quite prevalent in both the content of *Irreversible* and the emotional output of the technique in the film. All of these things add up to the auteur characteristics on an individual looking at the world (especially France) with a view of unfortunate apocalyptic inevitability and realism. Gaspar Noé is an individual that is unafraid of looking at the world through lenses that see human darkness. He displays images and truths that others have tried so hard to ignore and cover-up. Many film critics have written him off as someone that merely offends to offend. I find Gaspar Noé to be a realist of the nihilist sort. Someone that will offend and disturb the typical filmgoer (whether intentional or not). Of course, the greatest filmmakers have always caused major controversy and public outcry.

-Ty E

EASTERN PROMISES OF WHITE SLAVERY

David Cronenberg's feature-length film *Eastern Promises* may be his greatest "mainstream" film yet. The film mixes a very bizarre love triangle (which many people seem to not notice), the "Russian Mafia," and an orphaned child for a truly "thrilling" experience. I found David Cronenberg's portrayal of the Russian Mafia to be very interesting as he did not glamorize these international criminals as most filmmakers seem to do. I also believe *Eastern Promises* to be the "best mafia film of the decade" as I have yet to see a mafia film of the 2000s come even close to the power and quality of the film. I also believe David Cronenberg to be a courageous director for intimately tackling *Eastern Promises* in the manner he did.

In the biography *David Cronenberg: A Delicate Balance* it is revealed that Cronenberg was an outsider in relation to his upper middleclass Jewish community located in Toronto, Canada. To this day, David Cronenberg still considers himself merely an "Atheist" and lives his life in such a way. One could even call David Cronenberg the "Sigmund Freud of cinema" as both men are atheist Hebrews obsessed with the Psycho-Sexual. In fact, the only time David Cronenberg has seemed to acknowledge his heritage is in the recent short *At the Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World* made for the film anthology *To Each His Own Cinema*. Cronenberg stated of the film, "I've never thought of myself as a Philip Roth whose subject was his Jewishness, but I've never denied it." Cronenberg was responding to a Hezbollah mission statement and he went further on to state, "It's pretty interesting to hear someone say our goal is to kill every Jew in the world wherever they are. That means me and my children. It does evoke a reaction." I bring up David Cronenberg's "Jewishness" as I found it interesting that he directed a film about the so called "Russian Mafia." The only thing "Russian" about the "Russian" mafia is that many of its members are Jews from Russia. Anyone who has studied the Russian mafia knows this and I found it particularly interesting that David Cronenberg would direct a film about it. Former president of Russia and current prime minister of Russia Vladimir Putin flushed Russia's toilets a couple years back when he expelled much of the "Russian" Mafia and the infamous Jewish Oligarchs (who bought Russia for pennies when the Soviet Union fell). Like in *Eastern Promises*, many members of the Russian Mafia with the Jewish oligarchs, moved to England. One very arrogant Jewish Oligarch exiled in England, Boris Berezovsky, claims he is going to run a "second Russian Revolution" against Putin. Due to Vladimir Putin actually caring about his country (he also apparently banned "EMO" and "South Park") by kicking out parasitical criminals, the American and Western press have been giving Putin negative coverage. *Eastern Promises* exposes how the Jewish Russian Mafia have been using the Slavic women of eastern Europe as sex slaves. For some reason Hollywood

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doesn't seem to care about contemporary international slavery of white women. In the Zionist propaganda film *Taken*, it is unsurprisingly Albanians that are running the slave trade of girls. Why does Hollywood need to lie about who is really behind stealing Slavic girls, getting them addicted to Heroin, and selling (and killing) them to people around the world? Jewish horror clown Eli Roth also did his part in portraying Slavic Eastern Europeans (and Europeans in general) as barbaric monsters that torture (in Neo-Death Camps) and kill Americans for profit in his soulless *Hostel* films. Jewish author Robert I. Friedman released a book *Red Mafiya: How the Russian Mob Has Invaded America* about the Jewish Russian Mafia and their international crimes. Apparently, the American FBI won't even keep files or go after the Jewish mafia because the Jewish "anti-hate" group The Anti-Defamation League persuaded the FBI not to as it would "foster Anti-Semitism." Forget about an America (or England) that actually takes care of its own citizens against criminal alien elements. One has to wonder why David Cronenberg did not have *Eastern Promises* take place in the United States. Maybe the film's material was a little bit "too close to home?" The Jewish Russian mafia members in America have certainly done their fair share of crime. For example, Jewish Mafia boss Semion Mogilevich, who had very profitable slave prostitution rings in Eastern Europe and Israel, masterminded a 7 billion dollar money laundering scheme (the largest at that time). Unsurprisingly, Mogilevich stole the money from the Bank of New York, one of the owners of the Federal Reserve. Of course, US congress met a "dead end" in their investigation against Mogilevich. Viggo Mortensen's character in *Eastern Promises* has a Jesus tattoo, but Mortensen mentions on the film's DVD release that the tattoo's meaning has nothing to do with Christianity. Of course, the average viewer watching *Eastern Promises* will interpret Mortensen's tattoo in a way that will lead them to believe that the Russian Mafia is full of criminal Christians. Although disgusting and inhumane, the international sex slave trade of Slavic women seems to be unimportant to Hollywood and the Media. After all, it is only white women in slavery and they would rather talk about Darfur or pathetic Somalian pirates (who should be shot on the spot like white pirates used to be). Steven Spielberg also brought us the wretched and lie of a film *Amistad*. One doesn't have to look far to find out that the Jewish community (mainly from Holland, Spain, and Portugal) also dominated the slave trade of Africans which only whites get the blame for. The book *The Secret Relationship of Blacks and Jews* provides more than a plentiful amount of evidence as to who should carry the majority of the blame for Slavery of Blacks. After forty years of filmmaking, David Cronenberg has maintained his ability to direct both original and quality films. *Eastern Promises* is one of Cronenberg's many mainstream films and probably his best. Although at first glance, *Eastern Promises* may not seem like a film full of risk taking, it no doubt is. What outrage it would spark if the typical American and Englishman were to be completely enlightened to the true

problem of the “Russian” Mafia and how our governments have been tolerating these criminals. As shown in Eastern Promises, the Russian Security Services (FSB which was formerly the KGB), has taken it upon themselves to stop these international criminals. Stopping the “Russian” Mafia is a true promise of the FSB from the East.

-Ty E

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RACE RELATIONS IN BAMBOOZLED
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One of the most interesting aspects of Spike Lee's much-maligned *Bamboozled* is that it neglects to mention that in the original blackface minstrel shows of early America, some of them were put on by abolitionist advocates and used the blackface format as a means to portray the situation of blacks in a sympathetic light, often pointing out white American double-standards and injustices against black people. The film itself contains a wealth of cultural references, historical information, and general awareness of all race issues in general, and it never points out this fact. But it doesn't really matter at all. The omission of this fact seems completely deliberate as the film innately shows awareness to this irony in its main message. All broadcasted or even written information lives as a virus, and film itself is perhaps the most powerful form of all information. When information is disseminated enough, the simple ideas being communicated are what stick to people's minds, not the sophistication or intellectual subtlety behind these ideas. That is what *Bamboozled* is chiefly about, and that is why the film works so incredibly well on so many different levels. Perhaps the greatest mark of Lee's success in this film is the overwhelming amount of negative criticism the film garnered at the hands of white and Jewish liberal intellectuals. Leftists in general cannot handle the idea that art can be anything more than just art. When anyone points out that information has an impact on the people who view it, whether it's through children becoming more violent after watching *Home Alone* or women acting dumber and more whorish in the wake of the countless feminist "female empowerment" movies like *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, you can be sure that a chord will have been struck with the modern leftist. It is not enough to simply view *Bamboozled*, because a full appreciation of this film cannot be attained unless one sees the confused and noticeably insecure reviews of it as well. It is my own belief that if *Bamboozled* was greeted with nothing but overwhelming positivity from the very people that Lee is satirizing, he would have failed miserably. But fortunately, this is not the case. The two most common issues with the film that I have observed from *Bamboozled*'s many negative reviews are that the film has a "confused message," and that it is not funny. Both of these criticisms are absolutely wrong: *Bamboozled* has a very consistent message, and it also is extremely funny.

The film is about a black television executive named Pierre DeLacroix (Damon Wayans), a man with a contrived white accent, who is frustrated at the network for refusing his various show ideas for legitimate entertainment that does not degrade or pejoratively portray blacks. His boss is a condescending young go-getter named Dunwitty (Michael Rappaport) who masks his own racism by appropriating his own interest in black culture. He frequently says the word "nigger," and although he makes no attempt to rationalize it other than by say-

ing “it’s just a word,” he noticeably feels a sense of entitlement as shown through his interest in black sports figures, black entertainment, and his own black wife and two biracial children. As he puts it to Pierre, “Brother man, I’m blacker than you.” Pierre’s big idea is to create a variety show so extraordinarily offensive that it will accomplish two main objectives: to reveal the network for being as racist and obscene as it is, and to get himself fired. Pierre concocts a blackface minstrel variety show entitled *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show* and what actually happens is the exact opposite of what he thought would happen. Not only does the show do extremely well, but Pierre becomes enraptured in the surprising success, turning himself into Hollywood’s new favorite Negro.

The pilot episode is perhaps the most telling part of the entire movie, giving an explanation to the logic behind the show’s success. *Mantan* and his partner *Sleep’n’Eat*, two down-on-their-luck street performers (formerly known as *Manray* and *Womack*) who get hired for the show, explain to the audience that they want to take them back to a time when “niggers knew their place.” *Mantan* then instructs the audience to yell out of their windows, “I’m tired of the drugs. I’m tired of the crack babies born out of wedlock to crackhead AIDS-infested parents. I’m tired of the inflated welfare rolls while good wholesome Americans bring less and less of their paycheck home every two weeks.” In the same monologue, *Mantan* chastises (presumably black) professional athletes for having sex with prostitutes and doing drugs while claiming to be Christian. He then concludes the monologue by instructing the audience to yell, “I’m sick and tired of niggers and I’m not gonna take it anymore.” Now, while the internal logic of the show is confused, the element of satire within the show’s presentation becomes quite apparent. The message of *Mantan* is that any attempt to try and improve the lives of black Americans is akin to bringing them back to the days of slavery and robbing them of their freedom, that the whole idea behind trying to get blacks off of drugs and into the job market is simply a way for whites to continue to enslave them and rob them of their own unique culture. And, of course, the idea behind *Bamboozled* is that sentiments such as these are complete bullshit.

Nevertheless, white and black liberals watching the show absolutely love it, presumably because they identify with this idea, and the critics universally hail the show as a fearless comedy that breaks boundaries and barriers. One of the reasons *Bamboozled* confuses so many people is because it is a satire that satirizes a satire, and the two messages of each presentation are extremely different. To add to the complexity of the film, *Mantan’s New Millennium Minstrel Show* is not portrayed as aesthetically bad. Rather, the opposite is true: it’s aesthetically wonderful. The writing is slick, the dancing and music performances are excellent, the sets are well-crafted, and the comedy is hilarious. Spike Lee even highlights this idea by having the segments of *Mantan* shot in 35mm film, while the rest of *Bamboozled* is shot in very ugly and crude digital film. Ultimately, however, despite its positive qualities, the message of *Mantan* leaves a devastat-

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ing impact on the community. *Mantan* is more than a fictitious minstrel show: it is an allegory for almost all corporate black entertainment in the 21st century. It makes use of talented black entertainers but utilizes their talents to communicate all the wrong messages. Thus, in the film, Lee equates gangsta rap with minstrel shows and plays a heavy role in attacking rap culture. One example is in an ad for Timmy Hillnigger clothes (a play on Tommy Hilfiger) in which Hillnigger himself tells his black consumers, "If you want to keep it really real, never get out of the ghetto, stay broke, and continue to add to my multibillion dollar corporation."

To add another level of complexity, Lee introduces an afrocentric rap group called the Mau-Maus who absolutely hate *Mantan* but are nevertheless a product of its influence. The Mau-Maus, while auditioning for the show in hopes of landing the role for a band called "The Alabama Porch Monkeys," explain exactly what they are all about in their own lyrics: "Freedom, reparation and apologies, from Africa to America odysseys, guerilla-type tactics on that socialistic fallacy, the devastation of the social darwinistic thought to keep a brown man down sport." In spite of their grandiose mission statement, the Mau-Maus are equally led astray by the mass bombardment of harmful media images. At one point, they are shown drinking Da Bomb Malt Liquor, a beverage advertised specifically for black people in the ghetto. Showing similar hypocrisy near the end of the film in a far less subtle fashion, the Mau-Maus kidnap and murder *Mantan* while each wearing blackface minstrel Halloween masks. The idea behind their presence in the film then becomes very clear, which is that even well-intentioned people can be warped enough by media to the point where they become everything they are trying to fight against.

Another aspect of the film that people believe to be counterintuitive to its message is within the presence of a Jewish media relations consultant. Since New York Magazine film critic David Edelstein did such a fantastic job of explaining the scenario, I will use his writing to lay it out:

"When the network brings in a Jewish consultant named Myrna Goldfarb (Dina Pearlman) to advise on a public-relations strategy, her mere presence is treated as an affront. In an attempt to defend her perspective, she mentions having lived with a black man and adds that her parents had marched with Martin Luther King Jr. at Selma, Ala. But Sloan and De-La don't buy her empathy, and neither does the movie. I'd like to say that any Jews who'd appear in a Spike Lee "joint" are traitors to their people, but I'm afraid I'd sound too much like Lee. Does he want that to be his legacy? He makes it so much easier to resign ourselves to our racism."

While Edelstein does a great job at offering his frothing, confounded perspective on how a Hollywood movie could actually portray a Jewish person as less than 100% morally altruistic, he also hints at one of the great truths to the movie. Failing to note that Myrna instructs Pierre to hire only black employees, wear

kente cloth, invoke the name of Dr. Martin Luther King, and use the word 'community' when talking about Mantan, Edelstein has picked up on the fact that she represents a Jewish stereotype – a neglected, archaic, obscure stereotype rarely found in any mainstream media, but a stereotype nonetheless. *Bamboozled* is not any attempt to encourage a strengthened sense of staunch political correctness in America, but rather an attempt to encourage responsibility and taking pride in one's actions and behaviors. Black people are far more likely to give birth out of wedlock, commit homicide, commit rape, or commit robbery than the Jews, and their unemployment and poverty levels are also much higher as well. For Dina Pearlman, the stakes are relatively low for her strengthening the idea that Jews are shrewd, amoral corporate shills. For a black actor to accept a role as a slovenly, ignorant or violent human being, the stakes are much higher for the message being communicated. Moreover, the bombardment of negative black images marketed as supposedly being by, for, and about the black community is quite common in today's culture. The ivy-league educated Pierre DeLacroix could be a premature parody of Reggie Hudlin with his Harvard degree, five years before becoming the BET Programming Chief, but ultimately, it does not matter. When Edelstein writes, "[Spike Lee] makes it so much easier to resign ourselves to our racism," what he actually means is, "Spike Lee is pointing out that racial issues are still relevant today, and this offends me." This lack of responsibility from all sides is a phenomenon much too common in American culture.

The subtlety of *Bamboozled* is perhaps at its strongest when the name of Martin Luther King is evoked, but not in a very endearing way. As previously mentioned, the Jewish media relations consultant exploits her own parents' work as a means to make herself look less racist, and true enough, the Jews did play a major role alongside Dr. King's activities in the Civil Rights movement. DeLacroix himself also explains, while rationalizing the intent of the show to the two main actors, that, "The good Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King did not enjoy seeing his people beaten on the 6:00 news. However, white people needed to see that in order to move this country to change. They need to see this show for that exact same reason." It seems as though Lee is asking if anything has seriously changed since then. He is not complimenting the tactics of King, but instead criticizing them through DeLacroix's appraisal. The days of Malcolm X have long since ended, and his ideas have been thoroughly kicked aside by just about everyone with the exception of a small and dwindling number of cultural figures. *Bamboozled* takes place in a post-Malcolm X society, where his ideas are alluded to here and there (such as in the title of the film), but his name is never mentioned once. It does not seem to be any kind of coincidence that Malcolm X once called Dr. King an Uncle Tom, and in the film we see King's name used by only the most smarmy and avaricious of intellectuals for no real altruistic purpose whatsoever. Dr. King's name is actually used to justify the most

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racist images one could possibly imagine on television. This is probably the most important and offensive touch to the film: Lee is not championing the sort of Civil Rights causes that sought to find acceptance and tolerance from white people by being passive and complacent. He is advocating responsibility, personal empowerment, and strength. These are ideas that most white and Jewish liberals simply cannot handle, or even find frightening.

Of course, the movie does have its flaws. The sentimentality does run a bit thick at times near the end, and viewers might find some of the funniest dialogue to be in the most poignant scenes, which can admittedly be jarring. For example, while Pierre's dignified, intelligent comedian father (Paul Mooney) talks to him about responsibility, he tells Pierre that in every black man is a born entertainer. I found this understated line pretty funny in an otherwise serious context. Another (unintentionally?) hilarious moment occurs when, after the police have shot nearly all of the Mau-Maus to death, the sole remaining member, a white man named 1/16th Blak, screams out, "I'm black too... it only takes one drop of black blood." Perhaps the idea should have been moved to an earlier scene, so the audience could simply watch on, aghast at the brutal fallout of this minstrel show. The most biting commentary and subversive dialogue happens at places where perhaps the film should refrain from being controversial. But it is also the controversial element of the film that cements its relevance today, especially in a country where it is frowned upon to discuss racial issues in any meaningful manner. Spike Lee had to show an overwhelming level of audacity for Bamboozled to be made, and sure enough, the studios responded by allowing it only to be made on a shoestring budget. Rather than hurting it overall, it is entirely because of this intellectual audacity within studio constraints and outside pressures that Bamboozled stands as a classic, not only as Spike Lee's greatest film, but also one of the greatest films on race relations ever made.

-Blind Lame OKB

FRENCH TERRORISTS DESTROYING AMERICAN HORROR

It never really occurred to me how the average French directors are slowly destroying all things great or tolerable about horror. It hit me once I decided that I'd been a bad boy and needed to punish myself by forcing *Alien: Resurrection* into my corneas. You see, the "special edition" version of this film (Which is by no means special) has an introduction from Jean-Pierre Jeunet. The director of *The City of Lost Children* and *Amélie* decided to separate these two better-than-good films with a shocking blunder of a horror film. What's worse is that he hammered the final nail into the coffin of the *Alien* franchise. Not that it was particularly going anywhere or had created anything decent after *Aliens*, but it was still a depressing time in 1997. The introduction opened with the frog in a theater discussing how proud he is of this feminist sci-fi classic. The introduction alone revived long suppressed memories of the cinematic atrocities this film committed. Sigourney Weaver is the woman's answer to a Rambo and shows off her B-Ball skills against the manly Ron Perlman. French citizens have always been known to hate America. The quickest "terrorist" attack is to adapt all classic cinema's into a steamy pile of trash so faggy art students run to shitty films like *Paris, je t'aime* or any other piece of "French art" This attack on American cinema does include films like *The Eye*, *Hitman*, and the recent *Mirrors*, along with the script for *P2*. Alexandre Aja (A noted Jew) was among the first noted French horror directors and infiltrated studios with his surprisingly mint remake of *The Hills Have Eyes*. This stealthy attack also includes him to Americanize his name by changing it to just "Alex" With the American success of *Haute Tension* (*High Tension*) and the release of *THHE*, he secured his and his fellow frenchie's foot in the door and thus began to auction off properties and rights to all sorts of creations to be slaughtered. Rights such as a 3D remake to the Corman Classic *Piranha* and the remake of a South Korean horror film *Mirrors* were sold to Aja. He seems to have his hands full Easternizing all things wonderful about terror. Directors of fellow gorehound's favorite *Inside* were scheduled to direct the *Hellraiser* remake. As much as I'd like to think it would have been successful, chances are they'd just ruin the franchise so we'd run to films produced by their economy such as the upcoming *Martyrs* and *Ils (Them)* What the French are creating is a multi-level attack on world cinema. Think the terrorism in *Live Free or Die Hard* but directed towards film. Timothy Olyphant (*Villain of LFDH*) was even the main actor in Xavier Gens (*Frontières*) *Hitman*. Another successful attempt to destroy Western cinema. The French horror boom is in no way successful by it's own part. Look at films like *Frontière(s)* and *Them*. After seeing trash like *The Ruins* and such escape out of their cages into theaters, we turn to ultra-violent over-the-top French carnage. I'll be the first to admit that upon the first viewing, you think to yourself "Wow, that was fucking awesome!" but I never let it got that far. The *After Dark Horrorfest* is all complete

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shit with the exception of a moderate title here and there. As soon as I was done with *Frontière(s)*, I noticed how contrived the killer Nazi plot had been and the anti-big-business opening which is a fabled attempt to create a political tide was contrived and a feeble attempt to create a horror *La Haine*. The French have no respect for our own horror cinema and no respect for themselves. The only French people I admire are people like Jean Reno (Who sticks to his grassroots within the Action Genre) and Vincent Cassel (Who actually brought something new to horror with *Sheitan*.) The French will not stop until a systematic relapse of all originality is reset in Hollywood. It won't stop with *Mirrors* and *Martyrs*. It didn't stop with *High Tension* or *The Hills Have Eyes*. For every shitty American film they direct, they will plant a seed which leads to a new shocking French horror film that will be lauded by *Rue Morgue* and *Shocktillyou* drop until it cannot accept anymore praise. They've made it so that whenever a hot new French feminist-survival film is dropped, the gorehounds will scatter to find a copy only to be disappointed and continue to fall into the same trap over and over again. What a depressing cycle. Only when the population wises to this tactic is when the fans will revolt. Seeing as how people are actually looking forward to seeing Disaster Movie, It seems Judgment Day is at hand.

-mAQ

GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST CINEMA AS UNINTENTIONAL NAZI PROPAGANDA

Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1934) and *Olympia* (1938) are most often considered the masterpieces of National Socialist (Nazi) Germany. Both of these films epitomized the idealized view of Nazism and its obsession with aesthetics. Anti-Semitism is nowhere to be found in *Triumph of the Will* or *Olympia*. Fritz Hippler's *The Eternal Jew* (1940), a film that did not hide Nazi Germany's anti-Semitism, was a failure in Germany. Germans seemed to be more concerned with a once again powerful Germany than their hatred of the Jews. Before the Nazi era in Germany, German expressionist cinema was already bringing up the idea of the "evil outsider" and the Jewish other (whether intentional or not). Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen's *Der Golem* (1915) predicted a threat to European Jewry and what would later erupt in the holocaust. In this essay, I will examine two German expressionist masterpieces and their psychological effects on the German audience (whether being conscious or subconscious).

F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) and Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) both focus on a subversive element hiding in the shadows of German cities. These films were able to strike fear in the German audience while at the same time promising the triumph of "good" over "evil." The Nazis considered German expressionism (and expressionist cinema), for the most part, the result of Jewish mental illness and deemed it "degenerate" art (Kracauer, 1947). Nazi minister of propaganda Dr. Joseph Goebbels had many German expressionism films banned (Eisner, 1976). Ironically, he was so impressed with Fritz Lang's dystopia masterpiece *Metropolis* (1927) that he offered Fritz Lang the job of being the head of Nazi Germany's propaganda film industry despite Lang being of Jewish ancestry (in which he mentioned to Goebbels). Lang fled Germany almost immediately after the offer from the Nazi propagandist (Eisner, 1976).

I chose *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) and *M* (1931) to examine for their more realistic expressionist sets in contrast to the ultra surrealist and nightmare like sets found in German expressionist films such as Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and Murnau's *Faust* (1926). I found the dark realist aesthetic of both *Nosferatu* and *M* to be taken more literally by the German audience than expressionist films dealing with what seems like more of a nightmare. Murnau even utilized the real ruins of a Slovakian castle to more realistically portray the immortal decay of an outsider that desires new blood.

Although F.W. Murnau was not of Jewish ancestry, he was a closet homosexual (Anger, 1981). The Nazis deemed homosexuals also as degenerates resulting in many of their deaths in the holocaust. Murnau left Germany in 1926 to work for Fox studio before the rise of Nazism in Germany. Murnau (like Lang) is often cited as being one the most important innovators of cinema and the directors

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as author (auteur). His contribution to cinema is immeasurable.

Nosferatu is based on the novel Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Count Orlok (a pseudonym for *Dracula*) desires to acquire real estate in the fictional German city of Wisborg. He is a royal outsider from Transylvania, Romania (although filmed in Slovakia). Upon Count Orlok's arrival in Wisborg, a series of deaths occur in the city which are blamed on the plague. It is important to note that the plague (the black death) was accused of being an international conspiracy of Jewry to poison European Christendom. This anti-Semitic lie closely parallels the "behind the shadows" blood draining carried out by Count Orlok. F.W. Murnau's niche for evil that lurks behind shadows acts as a metaphorical representation of the myth of Jewish backstabbing during the first World War. The citizens of Wisborg are obsessed with finding the source of the creeping death that has plagued the city. Real estate employer Knock eventually becomes a scapegoat (just as the Jews were after the second world war) for the mysterious deaths of the peoples of Wisborg.

Rosa Luxemburg

Another fear of Germans after the first world war was the threat of international bolshevism. German-Jewish communists (called Spartacists) such as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were calling for a revolution in Germany which ultimately failed (Craig, 1982). The ultra right wing Nationalist Freikorps eventually had both Luxemburg and Liebknecht assassinated. This ended any potential German proletarian (or more accurately banker) revolution. Although Jewish communists made up a very small minority of German Jewry, Nazis used what they called "Judeo Bolshevism" to their propaganda advantage (Rosenberg, 1982). The majority of Jewish Bolsheviks were atheists that had already been far removed from the Jewish collective. Jewish Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union (another source of propaganda) were also known to be anti-Semitic despite the ethnically Jewish dominated government (Solzhenitsyn, 2007). Nazi theorists such as Alfred Rosenberg claimed that the Bolshevik revolution was organized in attempts to destroy Western civilization through subversive and violent means (Rosenberg, 1982). Nazis took full advantage of "Judeo Bolshevik" propaganda.

F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* uses the fear of the infiltrating outsider to scare the audience. Count Orlok could easily be looked at as the impending Bolshevik threat. The vampire is a foreign subversive element that is bent on destruction through unconventional means (blood sucking). Although I doubt that it was Murnau's intent to scare the audience with the threat of Bolshevism, the psychological fear that *Nosferatu* conjures up is the same. The audience expects an invasion that lurks behind shadows that uses strange and unpredictable methods to acquire its goal of destruction. Subconsciously, the viewer would have acquired the fear that Nazis also used in the propaganda against Jews.

Fritz Lang's *M* also captures the audience in a world where a dark element hiding behind the shadows of a German city. The film was originally titled *Mur-*

derers Amongst Us and Nazis used that title to their full advantage. Fritz Lang, in the middle of negotiations of the film, seized the manager's lapel and found a Nazi badge on its reverse (Eisner, 1976). Nazis had used the original title in reference to German Jewry (and Fritz Lang and star Peter Lorre himself). The Nazi propaganda film *The Eternal Jew* also featured the end speech by Peter Lorre in *M* as proof of Jewish proneness to criminality. Quite absurd propaganda indeed, Fritz Lang's *M* was also labeled as Jewish "degenerate" art (among other Fritz Lang films).

The "heroes" of *M* are the underground organized crime elements that are found in the city that the killer stalks. These heroes could easily be looked at as the Nazi "heroes" that saved Germany from bolshevism (which would later ultimately prove to end in Germany's destruction). Peter Lorre epitomized what the Nazis thought of as the degenerate Jew. It makes me wonder why Fritz Lang would have directed such a film when only 2 years later (1933) the Nazis would take power in Germany. The Nazi threat by this time was quite obvious. I would argue that *M* has done more in the way of Nazi propaganda than any of the actual Nazi propaganda films (aside from the ones used as "entertainment"). Lang would later immigrate to the United States and direct the anti-Nazi propaganda film *Hangmen Also Die* (1943) which was loosely based on the assassination of Nazi chief Holocaust architect Reinhard Heydrich.

The child murderer in *M* also is stamped with an M (for murderer) in the film. German Jewry would also face a similar fate when forced to wear Star of David badges to signify their background. The mark of "M" and the "Star of David" are emblems of a target. They let the population know that these individuals are outsiders and an abstraction from collective society. German-Language Jewish fiction writer Franz Kafka brought up a similar feeling with his novel *The Trial*. The Jew has become an object of judgment for a crime that he has not committed. He is "guilty" because he is a Jew. The same feeling was experienced by German Jewry in their horrific fate throughout Nazi rule.

Whereas F.W. Murnau's count Orlok is a monster of horrible and obvious evil, Fritz Lang's child murderer is a pathetic and weak individual. The child murderer acts as a conspirator of subversive hedonistic pleasures. He admits that he cannot control his perverse urges (another reason why Nazis used *M* as propaganda). The German psyche would respond to such a character as someone to look out for in everyday life. After watching the film, the German citizen might take a second glance at the "ordinary" German. Everyone (especially the Jew) becomes a potential threat to the German way of life. The child murderer in *M* is more horrifying than any monster because he is the person we would least expect to commit such a crime.

Although I don't believe it was intentional, the German expressionist film movement fueled fear that would result in anti-Semitic eruptions. Eruptions that would ultimately lead to the Holocaust and stain Germany's reputation for-

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ever. The filmmakers of the German expressionist movement for the most part, were far removed from the Nazi ideology (many fleeing Germany in the process). After the second world war, the German expressionist aesthetic is even more powerful and relevant now, than it was during its existence. The dark political and psychological elements surrounding this time period I believe, are best captured in these important films.

-Ty E

GUMMO AND THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Harmony Korine's directorial debut *Gummo* is a contemporary masterpiece. It is an art film that reflects contemporary western civilization (or the destruction of) better than any other of its kind (it is one of a kind). Mainstream film critics (petty propagandists) have almost unanimously attacked *Gummo* calling it everything from "pretentious trash" to a "sick joke" on the directors part. I slightly agree with the latter assertion. Harmony Korine comes from a Jewish atheist background and like many Jewish atheists, he also comes from a communist background. Korine stated the following about his mother's Jewish background, "My mother's side was a bit more liberal, from Eastern Europe, like Communist Trotskyites." Trotskyite is in reference to to Marxist philosophies of Jewish Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky (born Lev Davidovich Bronstein). Trotsky was responsible (with his Bolshevik buddies) for the deaths of tens of millions of White Russians. Josef Stalin later had an ice axe driven into Trotsky's skull. Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda with Trotsky as a servant of death Jewish atheists often are communists because the political belief replaces the religion of Judaism. Communism calls for the destruction of all religions (calling religion "the opiate of the masses") and international revolution. These two characteristics greatly reflect an unofficial form of secular Judaism. Harmony Korine commented the following on being a Jew, "I'm half-Ashkenazi, half-Sephardic. I was barmitzvahed, I went to temple, but I always felt more of a kinship with the culture than I did with the texts." Jewish Soviet general and brother in law of Josef Stalin, Lazar Kaganovich (born Kogan) made the conscious decision to have up to between 7-10 million Ukrainians starved to death in the Holodomor (taking place 1932-1933). Although an atheist Jew and long deracinated from the Jewish collective, Kaganovich admitted that famine was an act of revenge against many years of Ukrainian Christian (Kulaks) antisemitism. The Kulaks represented the farming bourgeoisie and were deemed "unfit" for Soviet collectivization. This genocidal Holocaust has become virtually unknown in the west and represents an example of the many mass murders carried out by communists over the past century that have been hidden from the American population. The amount of deaths that can be attributed to Lazar Kaganovich's reign of terror (aside from Holodomor) is conservatively estimated at 14,500,000 dead. Don't expect to see Steven Spielberg directing films about those holocausts.

Karl Marx

When Karl Marx invented communism (born Moses Levy Mordecai, or Mordecai Levi, it is unclear what his real name was), he knew that he would be destroying Christianity and the power of the European monarchical nation states in the process. Karl Marx was descended from a long line of Rabbi Talmud scholars and Judaism (although often criticizing himself) played a crucial part in the philosophies of Marxism. The Talmud preaches of a tribal form of socialism with

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ownership of property to be controlled by elders of the community (which is actually practiced in Israel today in the form of Kibbutz communes). Now we have to take a look at the consequences of communist revolutions and their effects on Western Civilization. After the second World War, European nationalism became a taboo of sorts (because of the failure of Fascist and National Socialist governments). Most of the great nations of Europe were in ruins and all the countries were built up again to be socialized via the Marshall Plan. Now Europe is taking on a similar system to that of the Soviet Union with the anti nationalist European Union. Christianity has lost a good amount of its original stranglehold over Europe also. The same subversive occurrences have also taken place in the United States. America has experienced a flood of international immigration and monetary outsourcing. The United States is steadily entering a future (which we almost are) police state style neo-Bolshevism (called "globalization"). America will soon no longer be a country for "Americans." A North American Union is currently in the works.

Harmony Korine makes all these unfortunate circumstances obvious in Gummo (named after the least famous Marx brother). The Aryans in the film have taken up glue sniffing, Satan worshiping, cat killing, and other associated degenerate acts. Christianity has clearly all but disappeared (except for an unconsciously humble retarded woman) from the life of these miserable human beings. All situations found in Gummo reflect the disappearance of European Christianity and the values that it upholds. The defeat of Western civilization is confirmed in one pivotal scene in which a gay black Dwarf (wearing an Israel shirt) beats a drunken white trash Aryan in an arm wrestling match. It is clear here that Western European civilization has been weakened to such an extent that the most obscure of minorities (a gay black dwarf) has no problem beating a towering Aryan monster. Avraham Stern The Israel shirt worn by the black Dwarf symbolically represents this. Israel is a fundamentally Jewish secular society that really has no strong religious ties. The nation was founded on terrorism by those schooled in Bolshevism terrorist thought. Avraham Stern's (who was eventually assassinated by the British) NMO "Stern Gang" even offered to fight for the Nazis during World War II in hopes of getting more Jews evacuated to Palestine. Stern was also a promoter of the socialist kibbutz movement (as most underground Zionists at the time were).

Walter Winchell Another important scene in Gummo is when a perverted Jewish gossip columnist who claims to be the brother of Freddie Prinze scams a group of white trash girls in taking a ride with him. He attempts to put his hand up one of the bleach blonde haired girls skirt and is immediately denied his perverted desires. The girls escape the car of this sleaze bag gossip columnist and he shouts at them "nothing new for trash like you" in a triumphant display of arrogance. This Gossip columnist can easily be looked at as the protégé of Jewish gossip columnist Walter Winchell. Winchell played a significant role in

getting America into both World War 1 and 2 with a hateful attack of slanderous propaganda against Germans (calling them Huns and such). The power of media had yet to infiltrate so many American households as it did during the early 1900s and there after. People didn't realize at the time the almost unlimited power of media and the influence on the psyche of the everyday individual. Most people don't expect to be lied too.

Walter Winchell made his original debut in the Jewish American ghettos performing vaudeville acts (something that can be still seen in the form of Hollywood movie comedies). This is interesting as Gummo is like one big deranged vaudeville comedy act. The charismatic character of Tumbler (from Yiddish tumler, from tumlen 'make a racket') in Gummo performs a vaudevillian stand-up comedy routine for a Jewish pimp (who is pimping out his Blonde haired wife with downs syndrome) played by Jewish philistine actor Max Perlich. In numerous parts of Gummo you can find photos of vaudevillian performers in black face placed randomly throughout the film. Jewish entertainers utilized blackface as a means of becoming more "white" in a time when the Anglo elite still dominated the United States. Harmony Korine knows his roots and is schizophrenically obsessed with them.

Legendary and important contemporary filmmakers such as Werner Herzog, John Waters, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Gus Van Sant have all championed Harmony Korine as one of the most important directors of his generation. Mainstream film critics know (in most cases I suspect) exactly where Korine is getting at with his films and they will do anything to slander, degrade, discredit, and not even acknowledge the young auteur. They fear directors like Harmony Korine who have exposed the truths that they hope to be so neatly tucked under an iron and sickle rug. May Korine continue his "revolution" of artistic integrity and cinematic truth for years to come. Hopefully he won't have an overdose anytime soon.

-Ty E

HEATH LEDGER IS THE JOKER
HEATH LEDGER IS THE JOKER

After actor Heath Ledger died, it was almost instantly confirmed that his performance as the Joker in *The Dark Knight* would be the stuff of legends. Like Brandon Lee before him, Ledger died before his comic book cinema performance would be seen by the masses. With that, it is usually hard to separate that unfortunate legacy left behind such a death and the quality of the performance itself. Everyone goes into *The Dark Knight* knowing that Heath Ledger died of an accidental drug cocktail overdose, so how can the actor's performance compare to that gossipy reality? I must say that Heath Ledger's performance in *The Dark Knight* is the best that I have seen come out of Hollywood this year. Hell, I don't think it would be a gross exaggeration to say that Ledger's performance as the Joker was the single greatest performance in cinema history for a character adapted from a comic book. In all honesty, I find most comic book and superhero based movies to be fairly banal. They are generally the rehashing of the same trite material that seems to spring up every decade or so. But for the role of the Joker, Heath Ledger made it his mission to design a character that expresses in his own words, "a psychopathic, mass murdering, schizophrenic clown with zero empathy."

Apparently, Mr. Ledger was inspired by both Malcom McDowell's performance as Alex Delarge in *A Clockwork Orange* and punk rock junkie legend Sid Vicious. But with Ledger's performance in *The Dark Knight*, I see neither of these influences really shine through. The Joker's maniacal fanaticism in *The Dark Knight* left me astonished with such a direct feeling of warped individual psychology that I can't compare it to any performance. Ledger's performance is one of those timeless expressive performances that stands alone, such as Conrad Veidt's role as the noble Compracicho in *The Man Who Laughs*(1928) and Max Schreck as the decaying Count Orlok in *Nosferatu*(1922). Despite Ledger's morbidly beautiful linguistic skills as the Joker, his most powerful acting talents are in his physical expressions. One of the most powerful scenes being when the Joker gets away from the police station he has just blown up and sticks his head out of a stolen cop car in a sort of proud maniac euphoria in complete silence. Unlike most mass murderers, the Joker is a man that loves to get his hands dirty. He wants to be the one to press the button on the bomb that blows up the hospital and assassinate the public official. The Joker would be a nihilist if he didn't believe in chaos for chaos sake. He simply wants to see the "world burn" and has no rules in obtaining that self-entertaining goal. He calls cops and mafia guys schemers as they are all following a personal path for power. The Joker's power is that of destroying power, making him the ultimate villain. The Joker is comparable to Bolshevik revolutionary and mass murderer Leon Trotsky (real name David Bronstein) in that regard. Trotsky had a goal of destroying all nation states in the world in which he promoted with his theory of "perma-

ment revolution.” No matter how many arguments or theories Trotsky had to support his aspirations, ultimately he was just striving to destroy both man and civilization by brute force. Like the Joker, Leon Trotsky was an intelligent individual that could use his “gift” to cause morally inconceivable human destruction and irrational chaos. Most people forget that even the most depraved and deranged of individuals can make their aspirations seem rational. Heath Ledger’s performance as the Joker in *The Dark Knight* easily outweighed all the other talent featured in the film. This even includes the role of Christian Bale as Batman. Keep in mind, I thought that most of the performances by the leads were extraordinary. It is really hard to compete with the acting abilities of a man who can pull-off a mutilated clown in nurse drag that nonchalantly blows up a hospital for kicks. Sorry Jack Nicholson, but your performance as the Joker in Tim Burton’s *Batman* is for the most part, one dimensional in comparison to Mr. Ledger’s. *The Dark Knight* is a comic book adaptation that actually demands both respect and notoriety. It is not merely mindless and forgettable superhero entertainment, but a unique study in varying philosophical world views executed by actors not afraid to challenge the mainstream Hollywood limitations of acting. Heath Ledger, to me, is now *The Joker*. No other actor will ever be able to champion Mr. Ledger’s performance as the Joker as it is a work of individual expressive genius. How many other people could play both a gay stoic cowboy and *The Joker* with such natural precession? Unfortunately, it was probably the kind of genius that also caused his fancy of drug cocktails that would take away his life.

-Ty E

I'D RATHER HUMPH TRASH INSTEAD OF WATCHING ANOTHER MOVIE ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST
I'D RATHER HUMPH TRASH INSTEAD OF WATCHING ANOTHER
MOVIE ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

I cannot lie, I am losing faith in cinema. Sometimes I feel like I have lost complete faith in cinema. Will there ever be another director that compares in artistic integrity and real artistic progress (a career that noticeably developed with each groundbreaking film) as F.W. Murnau? Everyone that is truly serious about cinema knows that Europe is responsible for the bulk of the masterpieces of cinema history. How could a "great" Hollywood artisan like John Ford ever compare to the brilliance and auteur artistry of Carl Th. Dreyer? Is Steven Spielberg an auteur because he has "Spielberg-esque" traits in his films like often having socially retarded children play lead characters? Is Spielberg an middle aged socially retarded child? Who wants to pay \$10.50 a movie ticket to see a made up socially retarded child? Would Spielberg?

Nowadays, 12 year old kids are making two minute and thirty second long short films that are more entertaining than your typical Michael Bay or Spielberg film. Youtube is flooded with those type of videos. Hollywood refuses to display real humanity. Instead, they offer us propaganda that is coated with sentimentalism so the lies don't taste bad while being digested. Those 12 year old filmmakers that are fucking around with their family camcorder have more to offer humanity than Steven Spielberg. The 12 year old creates for the enjoyment of those he cares about (and of course himself). Spielberg makes films to help his politically aligned kinfolk rob Swiss banks and to show the "moral superiority" of those same swindlers. For some reason, Spielberg also enjoyed portraying black males as the ultimate misogynists while promoting the "strengths" of sista-sista style lesbianism. Why else would Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah star in *The Color Purple*? The question is, does humanity really benefit from the big budget degeneracy that is the Hollywood studio system? Most Hollywood films are criminal products whose makers deserve a special type of punishment.

A couple contemporary filmmakers give me "hope" for the future of film. I have no hope that there will ever be aesthetically pleasing films like *Triumph of the Will* every again, that are full of beauty that cannot be impersonated or contrived by classless Hollywood. I believe that it was that dirty and precise Kraut F.W. Murnau that directed probably the most beautiful film to ever come out of Hollywood. The film won the super unique (only offered at the first ever Academy Awards) Academy Award for Unique and Artistic Production. That was a very longtime ago when the United States did not resemble a third world sewer and people actually had some (granted many times banal) values. So the question is, can cinematic art (and art in general) exist in a cultureless world that has complete and utter contempt for natural beauty?!? Of course, Harmony Korine and Giuseppe Andrews are the two new leaders of a new type of degenerate realist art that speaks to the soul of the "forgotten" part of America.

No doubt, Harmony Korine's directorial debut *Gummo* is a masterpiece that the world needed. What better way to get rid of the icky feeling of a film like *Schindler's List* than to watch *Gummo* right after. Just like *Gummo* Marx, Harmony Korine is the odd Jew out in the world of filmmaking. Korine follows in the tradition of such honest "chosen" gentlemen as Otto Weininger and Carlo Michelstaedter (minus suicide, thankfully Korine came off heroin completely unscathed). When *Gummo* first came out, the cultural Marxist film "critics" acted as if Korine was worthy of a one man pogrom. Was it the fact Korine showed what the many American whites really live like (in poverty)? Was it the fact that a gay black dwarf insulted Israel by wearing an Israeli flag t-shirt? Or more importantly, did the critics hate *Gummo* because Harmony Korine was able to bring vaudeville to the slums of Tennessee?

After watching Harmony Korine's recent effort *Mr. Lonely* I felt that maybe the young auteur had grown soft. That was until I saw the trailer for upcoming picture *Trash Humpers*. It seems Korine is reverting back to his earlier and stronger filmmaking days when his drug addiction hadn't fully caught up with him. I bet Bavarian Werner Herzog is very proud of his young Yiddish buddy Korine's upcoming effort, a film influenced in some way by Herzog of course. Herzog is a brilliant filmmaker that turned *Cinéma vérité* into a sideshow. Of course, Korine turned that sideshow into modern day vaudeville. After all, Harmony doesn't pay tribute to Al Jolson and blackface for nothing!

Western civilization is a rotting corpse covered in international maggots (the chosen maggots have entered the corpse deepest of course) of all slimy stripes. What was once beautiful and strong, has now become just another thing for those that cannot create to exploit. Do Giuseppe Andrews and Harmony Korine exploit those unfortunate subjects that they make films about? No, I honestly believe they do not. I believe that both video camera auteurs have a certain amount of empathy for their truly interesting and one of a kind stars. I would compare Korine's and Andrews' portrayal of his stars to that of Tod Browning in his masterpiece *Freaks*. On top of that, Korine and Andrews don't have to coat their films in sentimentalism. Korine wasn't selling a lie when he showed that young cowboys hate queer rabbits. Andrews wasn't selling a lie when he showed that Bill Nowlin had no problem showing off his chode while drinking a beer in his trailer shower. In the age of Kali Yuga, what kind of art can one really expect?

-Ty E

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For about a decade or so, I have tried to steer completely clear of Hollywood movies in general, especially nasty anti-white agitprop of the brain-dead neo-nutzi sort where skinheads and other ostensibly pro-white tattooed losers demonstrate that they are even less articulate and cultured than the ghetto negro crackhead and dope dealers that they so ruthlessly and venomously hate yet somehow I forced myself to watch the innately insipid and inane idiotic *Imperium* (2016) directed by young Hebraic hack Daniel Ragussis who demonstrated a prior interest in Judaic studies with his short *Haber* (2008) starring Teutonic mischling Christian Berkel in the titular role as German-Jewish chemical warfare pioneer Fritz Haber. In fact, my main reason for enduring such fiercely phony ADL-approved celluloid shit is due to it being seemingly named after Francis Parker Yockey's wonderfully arcane neo-Spenglerian tome *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics* (1948), which is hardly the sort of book that is read by the tattooed neo-nazi degenerates, neo-confederates, and the various other sorts of terminally retarded and completely culturally deracinated would-be-stormtroopers that make up the so-called 'white supremacism' movement. In fact, while a copy of Yockey's classic text *Imperium* can be briefly seen quite preposterously alongside *Essays of a Klansman* (1983) by Louis Beam (whose maritime KKK actions against Vietnamese immigrant fishermen seems to have partly inspired Louie Malle's shockingly horrendous late-era agitprop piece *Alamo Bay* (1985)), it has nothing to do with the film and simply seems to be the expression of the filmmaker's fear of an almost mystical book that, quite unlike the cartoonish white nationalism of George Lincoln Rockwell, represents the zenith of post-Third Reich pro-Europid revolutionary thought as a 600-page metapolitical philosophical text as written by an American lawyer turned virtual one-man-revolution that, among other things, abandoned his post as a post-trial review attorney for the Nuremberg Trials while fighting against the Allied Occupation of Germany and later even wrote anti-Zionist propaganda for the Egyptian Information Ministry after an inspiring meeting with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. In short, Yockey, who had a genius IQ of 170 according to his extensive FBI records, is the sort of fearless Faustian Renaissance man that hysterical Hebraic types wish did not exist and the film is ultimately a piss poor pathetic attempt to ostensibly confront that 'neo-nazis' are not only people, but also that some happen to be intelligent and even extremely cultivated and far from the deranged dipsomaniac bonehead stereotype that absurdly finds a sense of racial identity by chanting Skrewdriver lyrics while chugging cheap canned beer with his similarly boorish bros. Not surprisingly, the film fails in virtually every single regard while quite ironically and unintentionally making the neo-nazis, or at least the more cultivated ones, seem like the good guys, which

is funny for a film that uses the played-out and oftentimes misattributed quote, “For evil to triumph, it only takes good men to do nothing” as a tagline. In fact, the only thing that could make the movie more carelessly cliché and intellectually bankrupt is if it featured some George Santayana quote about history or whatever.

Released around the time of 2016 United States presidential election when Donald Trump was still promoting borderline white nationalist ideals and the so-called alt-right and related groups horrified Hollywood and the mainstream media by revealing that pro-white subcultures are now actually cool and somewhat evolved since the largely lumpenprole days of less than elegant ex-con skinheads and bearded pseudo-Odinist LARPerS, *Imperium* is less a serious movie than a considerably clueless PSA that was meant with the disingenuous intent to strike fear in Judaic and leftist elites about the very real possibility of a new white American consciousness that completely rejects the completely counterfeit multiculti globalist con and corrupt kritarchy that America has become as a result of the undeniably steady decline of its elite Anglo-Saxon founders. A frivolous failure in virtually every single objective it seeks out to accomplish, the film ultimately also somewhat paradoxically attempts to comfort the sort of compulsively complacent idiots that believe in Hollywood negro scientists, reflexively reference the pseudo-scientific turds of Jared Diamond, and read *The New Yorker* like it were scripture, which is ironic when one considers the sheer cluelessness of this feckless filmic fart as a movie that confirms that the enemies of white nationalism simply do not understand as to why there is an organic reawakening of the blond beast despite being a largely racially European yet culturally mongrelized country where Nietzsche has never (and will never) be a household name. Of course, one should not expect anything less from a movie meant to appeal to the sort of bourgeois lemming losers that unwittingly adopted degenerate leftist politics as a result reading *Harry Potter* as children.

Despite being a preposterously flaccid and superficially melodramatic pseudo-thriller sans action and suspense that has literally nothing going on for it, *Imperium* curiously seems to have been heavily promoted among the mainstream liberal intellectual elite as demonstrated by the extra features of the blu ray release of the film, which includes two different 30-minute *The New York Times*’ *TimesTalks* with Daniel Ragussis and Daniel Radcliffe where the non-auteur and his similarly intellectually languid lead actor try in vain to explain the idiosyncrasies of what is oftentimes described as the white nationalist movement as if they are trying to explain the behavior of exotic animals in a zoo. Undoubtedly, what becomes clear in these superficial interviews is that, aside from having an intrinsic racial disdain for these movements, Ragussis and Radcliffe have real no innate understanding of the contra-kosher subculture that they supposedly spent many months, if not years, apparently researching. For example, there is not a single reference to Yockey and his tome *Imperium* despite the lat-

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ter strangely acting the inspiration for the name of the marvelously mediocre movie. Of course, the reality is that Imperium inspired many strange things both inside and outside the largely bankrupt WN movement. For example, before providing hipster cred to dead-eyed porn star Sasha Grey—a proud ostensible bad girl with a boy bod that is big on anal—David Tibet created an entire album entitled Imperium (1987) for his longtime neofolk project Current 93 in tribute to Yockey's book and it features lyrics like: "The jews they crucified the Christ...And the jews they crucified the Christ...And nailed him to a tree...Imperium...Imperium...Imperium." Additionally, before he ruined his life by getting involved with the so-called Manson Family, psychedelic musician Bobby Beausoleil—a tragic 'acid fascist' that created one of the greatest film soundtrack in cinema history for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972) from the comfort of prison—found influence in Yockey and his book.

As for actual neo-nazis, Imperium has influenced figures ranging from National Renaissance Party leader James H. Madole to lone wolf advocate James Mason of Siege infamy yet his influence on these neo-nazi misfits seems to be more symbolic/superficial than truly (meta)political. Hardly an advocate of the stereotypical (neo)nazi view of race, Yockey—a dark-haired dude of mostly German and Irish stock that grew up in a cultivated Anglophile family—aggressively rejected 'racial materialism' in favor of a more 'spiritual' idea of race and thus has inspired some more seriously racially dubious stormtroopers over the years, including kosher Nazi Dan Burros, whose tragic life inspired Henry Bean's *The Believer* (2001) starring Ryan Gosling, as well as tragic mulatto neo-nazi and would-be-terrorist Leo Felton. Of course, nothing in the moronic movie Imperium gives any idea as to the strange, singular, and oftentimes arcane influence of Yockey, which is, in a way, strangely fitting as the film dares to sympathize with the morally bankrupt plight of an unashamedly underhanded undercover FBI agent and the neo-Spenglerian philosopher was himself the victim of FBI oppression, which ultimately led to his mysterious death.

The sad reality is that most films about neo-nazis/skinheads seem to be, at best, poor philistine attempts at reexamining the more sensational elements of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)—a film largely inspired by its celebrated NYC Jewish director's own conflicted view of Faustian man—in a painfully literal and one-dimensional fashion as is especially exemplified by the decidedly dumb yet somewhat entertaining Australian flick *Romper Stomper* (1992). Of course, whacked-out Hebrew Tony Kaye's overrated Edward Norton vehicle *American History X* (1998) is the most popular and beloved of these films and it fails miserably in its objective by somehow unintentionally romanticizing the white prole power subculture. Undoubtedly, Greek-French commie Costa-Gavras did a more respectable job with *Betrayed* (1988)—a film inspired by the real-life outfit *The Order* (aka *Brüder Schweigen*) and its founder/leader Robert Jay Mathews (who, notably, was burned alive by FBI agents during a dis-

astrous standoff in December 8, 1984)—where the FBI is arguably portrayed as more criminal and terroristic than a neo-nazi terrorist group. Despite the film's director and actors constantly attempting to claim one of their main objectives with the film was to try to humanize its rather stereotypical collection of neo-nazis characters, *Imperium* is no more successful in this regard to similar flicks to the point where Jeremy Saulnier's *Green Room* (2015)—a neo-Carpenterian genre-crusher with vague arthouse qualities—takes a more nuanced approach to depicting skinheads despite being a horror-thriller where heroin-dealing neo-nazis utilize dogs to kill some dumb punk kids.

Although based on the professional experiences of a real-life ex-FBI agent by the name Michael German as detailed in his book *Thinking Like a Terrorist: Insights of a Former FBI Undercover Agent* (2008), *Imperium* never manages to seem like it is anything more than the careless and confused result of some SPLC researcher glancing over a couple Wikipedia articles on the most bland sort of white nationalist groups and then assembling what feels like a third rate detective story sans any serious detective work. Indeed, the only thing one really learns by watching the film is that FBI agents live pathetic lives that involve treachery and emotional exploitative and that they are much closer to the losers of Martin Ritt's classic John le Carré adaptation *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* (1965) than some glamorous alpha-male James Bond type as only the morally defective and uniquely unprincipled could pretend to be something they are not while exploiting the trust of people that already find so little to trust in the world. In that sense, it is a sick irony that such a film would be named after the magnum opus of Yockey who had so little trust for the government of his nation that he went renegade by defending the conquered people that said nation destroyed during the so-called Nuremberg Trials, thereupon completely throwing away a very potentially prestigious and lucrative law career in the process.

If it was not obvious from his appearance and overall essence, Daniel Radcliffe is notably a chosenite so it naturally seemed like an absurd prospect when I initially discovered that he of all people would be pretending to be an undercover FBI agent LARPing as a neo-nazi. While I have personally known some rather racially dubious individuals associated with certain 'pro-white' and counter-kosher subcultures, including half-Jews and hapas, as it is a scene that—rather unfortunately but unsurprisingly—tends to attract a lot of unhinged and/or terribly troubled individuals, Radcliffe is just too painfully banal and mirthlessly milk-toast in his Judaic essence to ever be even remotely believable as an American neo-nutzi, hence one of the many reasons that *Imperium* is a fundamentally flawed celluloid shitshow that, at best, would only appeal to the already (kosher) converted. Admittedly, the idea of Harry Potter hanging out with tatted Hitlerites did seem like it could be potentially humorous in an unintentionally absurdist fashion, but the film even manages to fail in that regard as insufferably runty Radcliffe simply lacks the command and charisma of someone like Otto

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Preminger in terms of a Jew preposterously portraying a nazi. Hell, even with his relatively small secondary role as a paranoid neo-Nazi in Costa-Gavras' *Betrayed*, self-described "hillbilly Jew" Ted Levine makes a seemingly infinitely more convincing and captivating neo-brownshirt. I, for one, certainly have no problem with members of the tribe playing various types of National Socialists and anti-Semites so long as they bring the sort of fierce flare typical of Erich von Stroheim when he was depicting pernicious Prussian officers and Nietzschean monsters, but little boy Radcliffe has about as much life and potency as a meth-addled tranny's chemically-castrated cock, but I digress.

Undoubtedly, Radcliffe's glaring lack of believability as a soulless FBI stooge posing as a neo-brownshit is only transcended by the sheer and utter unlikability of the 'good guys,' especially the shady bitch boy protagonist's feministic FBI handler Angela Zamparo (Toni Collette). Indeed, when FBI agent Zamparo—an obnoxiously proud 'naughty women' that is certainly a painful reminder of Yockey's words from *Imperium*, "Feminism liberated women from the natural dignity of their sex and turned them into inferior men"—notices that pussy protagonist Nate Foster (Daniel Radcliffe), who is, quite unsurprisingly, the annoyingly introverted and effete product of a single mother, seems particularly sympathetic towards a decidedly dark-skinned Jihadiŝt that is more or less entrapped by some scheming FBI goons, she absurdly assumes he is autistic enough to go completely underground and learn to sympathize with neo-nazi types despite his strange affection for said dark-skinned Jihadiŝt. Needless to say, nancy boy Nate is not initially up for the job as he lacks both the testicular fortitude and sense of conviction it takes to pretend to be a hardcore Mein Kampf fan-boy, but the insufferably pushy Zamparo, who clearly suffers from a perennial case of Penisneid, eventually gets her way in what ultimately proves to be one of the most less than uniquely underwhelming and stale spy scenarios in cinema history to the point where the film seems like a personal affront to Alfred Hitchcock as a master of suspense. In short, *Imperium* lacks virtually everything that makes Hitchcock's anti-nazi spy flick *Notorious* (1946) great and I say that as someone that has never had a hard-on for Hitch.

Starting nearly at the bottom of the white nationalist scene, Nate—a worm of a lad that is hardly the posterboy for white power prowess—first hooks up with a small-time neo-nazi leader named Vince Sargent (Pawel Szajda) while proclaiming to be a disgruntled Iraq War veteran that, due to his experience as a "WMD squad" bro, can offer special security to the less than motley skinhead crew. Although painfully idiotic in a cartoonish sort of fashion, Vince's security guy Roy (Seth Numrich)—the sort of rabidly retarded, insanely irrational, and ultraviolent one-dimensional type that you tend to expect from a Hollywood neo-nazi flick—immediately rightly suspects that there is something fishy about Nate, but luckily the protagonist soon moves up the ranks of the white nationalist movement which, of course, has rather low standards and thus he only has

limited interactions with the exceedingly erratic troglodyte Hitlerite. In the hope of entrapping them in a terrorist plot, Nate simultaneously attempts to court both an odiously opportunistic white nationalist shock jock named Dallas Wolf (Tracy Letts)—a sort of Hal Turner type (who, of course, was a real-life FBI informant)—and a rather rotund white nationalist leader named Andrew Blackwell (Chris Sullivan) who is the national director of a group called ‘Aryan Alliance’ that espouses a sort of archaic Christian Identity Weltanschauung (of course, this group is modeled after the long-irrelevant neo-nazi organization Aryan Nations founded by shady porn star fan Richard Butler). Needless to say, like in the real-life white nationalist scene, infighting and wild posturing is common but terrorist behavior is a rarity, so Nate wastes a good deal of time before he can find some poor unwitting idealist to bust with his bullshit FBI scheme. Rather preposterously, in the fiercely flaccid kosher-certified Hollywood fantasy that is *Imperium*, it is ultimately the most successful, cultivated, and respectable neo-nazi types that are involved in a terrorist plot.

In a film that trades in the probable for the pathetically propagandistic, it should be no surprise that the least likely sort of white nationalist type—a loving and well-educated family man of the highly intellectual, soft-spoken, and loving sort—is the one that ultimately gets busted in a monstrous terrorist plot. Indeed, gentleman Aryan Gerry Conway (Sam Trammell of *True Blood*)—an almost perturbingly pleasant pretty boy—is so wholesome that he detests when his skinhead comrades cuss and smoke around children and he is even cultured enough to confess that Leonard Bernstein is his favorite conductor when it comes to the musical compositions of Tchaikovsky (whereas the skinhead characters absurdly refuse to wear Levi’s jeans simply due to their Judaic origins), yet he is totally enamored with the prospect of getting involved in a suicidal terrorist plot that involves utilizing caesium for a dirty bomb, as if such a senselessly destructive scenario will somehow bring about some sort of Aryan utopia and guarantee his place in Valhalla (notably, the film strangely uses Gerry’s suicidal terrorist plot comments to allude to belated National Alliance founder William Luther Pierce via his favorite ancient Norse proverb and, in turn, the title of his bio *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds* (2001) by Robert S. Griffin). While the Pierce-inspired Norse proverb is too good to be in the film, the following words do pay apt tribute to Yockey: “Cattle die and kinsmen die, and so must one die oneself. But I know one thing that never dies: the fame of a dead man’s deeds.”

Needless to say, FBI stooge Nate is shocked that a mensch as calmly charismatic and cultured as Gerry could be a true blue Nazi but, as the family man explains, a youthful reading of a book called *Which Way European Man* (which is a clear reference to William Gayley Simpson’s classic WN tome *Which Way Western Man?* (1978)) and experiences living among black Africans in Kenya imbued him with a strong racial consciousness, especially in terms of his firm belief in terms of the cultural and, in turn, racial superiority of Occidental man.

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While there have been a couple American neo-nazi terrorist types like David Lane that were certainly not dumb, there has certainly never been one like white bread suburban racial warrior Gerry Conway and one can only come to the conclusion that the character has been contrived to strike fear in stupid normie lemming types that their relatively successful Nietzsche-reading neighbor might be a potential terrorist that wants to violently exterminate mamzers and other untermenschen from the world. In fact, Imperium concludes with Nate's FBI buddies busting Gerry and other neo-nazi professional types in what can only be seen as a fantasy scenario for Hebraic Hollywood types that would love nothing more than for successful racially-conscious whites to die in prison and their kids be spiritually and psychologically (and probably physically) defiled the sickos of Sunset Boulevard. Indeed, the title of the film only makes sense when one considers how the FBI destroyed Francis Parker Yockey, who was unequivocally the most intelligent and cultivated person ever associated with American white nationalism and a rare example of an American WN that was, as Savtri Devi would describe, a 'Man Above Time' who exhibited creative life-affirming qualities and sought to transcend the process of Occidental decay. Of course, Yockey was a somewhat mystifying rebel with certain libertine qualities and hardly a family man type like Gerry. While Imperium revels in lies and half-truths, probably the most hyper hypocritical and all-around nonsensical message of the film is the claim that the "one essential ingredient to fascism" is "victimhood," as if that is not really basis for virtually all forms of leftist politics and, in turn, identity politics. Indeed, considering we now live in a country with a slave-morality and victim culture where one's supposed moral superiority is based on what victim group they belong to, it is pretty hilarious that the film would accuse fascists of playing victim when many modern-day fascists were largely inspired to become fascists due to their disgust with victim politics and phony concepts like "equality," which ultimately drags society down to the lowest common denominator at the expense of superiority. While there are undoubtedly various WN types with victim mentalities, it is simply a form of racial projection (especially in Hollywood's case) to accuse racially conscious whites of suffering from a victim mentality simply because they have identified a hostile group that is working against their interests. Indeed, one does not need to be a neo-nazi to clearly see that there is currently a war against America's largely silent white majority.

Undoubtedly, the petty propagandistic nature of Imperium becomes quite clear when one considers that the film's ex-FBI agent co-writer Michael German and co-writer/director Daniel Ragussis were interviewed by the anti-white goons of the moronically misnamed Southern Poverty Law Center. Somewhat shockingly, German goes against the grain of the SPLC agenda in the interview and argues against the de-platforming of WNs and other right-wingers, stating, "The vast majority of neo-Nazis strongly believe what they believe and don't want to share that side of themselves with the rest of society. They're com-

pletely peaceful and have their website, where they can go invent their ethnoState and [organize their] conference once a year. I'm completely fine with that and more power to them; I will defend their right to do that. This idea that we have now of twitter-takedowns and social media-takedowns I think is very dangerous. From my experience within the violent fringe of this movement, that's exactly what they want. As soon as people feel like they can't express themselves and can't engage with others about their ideas, that's when the person on the fringe who says, 'No, you have to use violence to change things,' becomes more convincing." Of course, this interview was conducted in February 2017 a number of months before the disastrous Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, which led to the hysterical unprecedented mass-banning of WNs from social media sites, banning of alt-right sites like The Daily Stormer by several domain registrars, and complete deplatforming of pro-white politics from pretty much everywhere on the internet aside from the fringes. In short, the Tech companies, mainstream media, Hollywood, and United States government have colluded to create a sort of post-bolshevik softcore authoritarianism that will ironically guarantee the rise of WN terrorists who, feeling they have nothing to lose, will lash out, but maybe that is the point. After all, it does not exactly help the white identitarian movement for unhinged nut-jobs to go on rampages, so it is rather curious that Imperium somehow depicts the nicest and most morally pristine of white nationalist types as a potential mass-murdering terrorist.

Notably, as recounted in the book *Manson: The Unholy Trail of Charlie and the Family* (2000) co-written by John Gilmore and Ron Kenner, Bobby Beausoleil, who once appeared as 'Lucifer' alongside experimental auteur Kenneth Anger as he waves a swastika flag in the film *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969), declared a somewhat conflicted affection for Yockey and Imperium. Indeed, Beausoleil, who was originally given the death sentence for killing his leftist hippie dope dealer friend Gary Hinman, once stated, "I had this image in my mind of a sword—like it's pictured on the cover of a book called IMPERIUM, by a guy the FBI was hounding and busted into infinity . . . a hated and feared man by the name of Francis Yockey. He wrote that book under the name of Ulick Varange, a pen name. It was a big book and I read it a lot—studied it and tried to make as much of it as I could—but my course was different. There was something about it—some passive idea that kept me put off by it. I finally would come to believe that I was a man of action, I had to go through things no matter what they were or how dangerous they may have seemed to someone on the outside." While Beausoleil would go on to create one of the greatest original film scores of all-time for Anger's *Lucifer Rising*—a film he was originally also supposed to play the titular the role of—he more or less completely wasted his life by getting involved with the misfit Manson Family and would have probably led a more artistically fruitful life had he stuck with Imperium, which inspired the late-1960s proto-neofolk group Changes led by cousins Robert N. Taylor

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and Nicholas Tesluk. Indeed, contrary to the confused covert message that the film attempts (and fails) to make about the tome—a virtual real-life Necronomicon for white nationalists (notably, like Yockey, H.P. Lovecraft was heavily influenced by Spengler)—Imperium is a metapolitical text of great artistry that has proven to greatly inspire an artist's complete Weltanschauung. As for the movie Imperium, it can only inspire disdain for Hollywood and the FBI, which is completely fitting since both are largely Hebraic harbingers of anti-aesthetic authoritarianism and asininity.

While Yockey originally wrote Imperium in 1948 long before the internet was created, his following words are still fairly accurate, "The techniques of American propaganda is inclusive of every form of communication. The leading instrument is the cinema [...] During the period of war-preparation, 1933-1939, the cinemas produced an endless succession of hate pictures directed against the European Revolution of 1933, and its 20th century outlook and actualizations." Needless to say, even Imperium—a film that repeats the lie that Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was some sort of white supremacist terrorist simply because he sold copies of *The Turner Diaries* (1978)—proves that Yockey was clearly right and that little has changed in terms of agitprop when he wrote in regard to WWII era propaganda, "The propaganda was entirely free from any cultural basis, and was completely cynical with regard to the facts. Precisely as the cinema-factories of Hollywood ground out lying plays and 'newsreels,' the propagandists of the press created what 'facts' they need." When an autistic part-Jewish nerd diagnosed with schizophrenia by the name of James Fields panicked and crashed his car into some far-left protesters at the 2017 Unite the Right rally in a scenario that is, in some ways, eerily similar to a scene in Imperium and it resulted in the death of a protester, the mainstream media immediately used the opportunity to unleash a nonstop war on white nationalists and the FBI director at that time even absurdly called it an act of domestic terrorism, thereupon leading to countless frivolous arrests and lawsuits against WN leaders that never even heard of troubled mischling Fields. Of course, a movie like Imperium gives one the impression that such a stupid tragic scenario would inevitably happen, as if the movie was specifically made with the intent of psychologically conditioning Americans for a major clampdown on pro-white voices. Either way, as Yockey's lead demonstrated, both rallies and protesting are completely worthless and can only lead to negative press, among other things.

One reason that Imperium is a strangely fitting, if not incredibly insulting, name for the film is that there exists more than a thousand pages of once-classified FBI documents on Yockey and his revolutionary internationalist exploits as a renegade neo-Spenglerian on the run. In fact, in many ways, Yockey would have made for a great FBI undercover spy as he engaged in purported fascist espionage with a sense of humor. An individual described by the FBI as a loner and "secretive individual who did not tolerate anyone who would not whole-

heartedly agree with his solution to world problems,” Yockey never used his real name when phoning associates and even signed his letters with the pseudonym “Torquemada” in tribute to the Spanish Grand Inquisitor of Jewish descent from the Middle Ages who persecuted Jews. Somewhat perversely, Yockey even was a sort of warped James Bond when it came to the ladies and even apparently bashed the gashes of wealthy Hebraic Heiresses for cash or as Martin A. Lee explained in the book *The Beast Reawakens* (1997), “A relentless womanizer, Yockey had plenty of bed partners when he came to New York, including Hazel Guggenheim (sister of Peggy, the famous art collector and philanthropist). An oft-married Jewish woman of rather large proportions, Hazel dyed her hair blond, wore heavy purple eyeliner, and smoked cigarettes in a long cigarette holder. Apparently she liked young men and found the idea of sleeping with a fascist particularly appealing. ‘I am sure he received some financial remuneration for any services rendered to her,’ alleged [Harold Keith] Thompson.” Of course, all this talk of Yockey points to the fact that there should exist a very different film entitled *Imperium* as Yockey’s real-life is infinitely more interesting than the dubiously shadowy tactics of any shady FBI spook. Indeed, in a sane world, Yockey would hold the reputation that some shadowy commie revolutionary like Che Guevara—a sociopathic rich kid of the hardly racially sensitive sort that has countless crappy films directed by whorish hacks ranging from Richard Fleischer (*Che!* (1969)) to Steven Soderbergh (*Che* (2008)) made about him—maintains today among rebellious teenagers as his face would certainly look much better on a t-shirt (though, of course, Yockey is too good for such tacky corporate branding), but we unfortunately live in a morally and spiritually inverted world where many young kids have their aesthetic and moral tastes destroyed by hokey Harry Potter films where the villain Lord Voldemort is of course a fiendish blood-obsessed fascist Führer of sorts. After all, in a sensible world, Daniel Radcliffe would portray resentment-ridden evil nerds instead of mercurial heroes but, as Yockey would have noted, such is one of the many consequences of the rise of the culture-distorter as a result of Europe being completely destroyed in two World Wars.

In an unpublished 1940 manuscript entitled ‘Life as an Art’ that he wrote at 23-years-old while still a student at Notre Dame University, Yockey made it quite clear the difference between himself and a FBI stooge like the hero of *Imperium* when he wrote, “Higher men and lower men—the few called to rule and the masses born in order that the higher men may actualize a grander destiny—differ in spirituality so much that they cannot be comprehended otherwise than as two different species. In all reverence it can be said the lower men rely on God and the higher men on themselves. This basic natural hierarchy is the fundament upon which rests all practical philosophy of human nature. It must therefore be definitively set forth.” After all, whereas Yockey lived and died for his quite singular metapolitical vision, Daniel Radcliffe’s character is such a superlatively

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soulless little worm that he is even willing to get a Nazi tattoo that represents something he completely hates just so that he can play the good little whore of a government agency that is rarely associated with any sort of good. While Yockey was right when he recognized that Hollywood trash movies spread the message of “the total significance of the isolated individual, stateless and rootless, outside of society and family, whose life is simply, the pursuit of money and erotic pleasure,” the one exception to this spiritually moribund message of passive hedonistic nihilism is moronic agitprop movies like *Imperium* and *American History X* where the white American is taught they should always actively fight against the interests of their own race as well as against those white individuals that dare to fight for their race, as if it is totally sane and normal for any other living organism to fight against its own survival.

As a literal genius and highly cultivated artist of the somewhat wanton and womanizing sort that spent a good portion of his life traveling the world in the hope of helping to create a Europid Imperium, Yockey breaks virtually all the tired stereotypes associated with (neo)fascist types and that is why it was so important for Hollywood types to disgracefully name a film after the book he is best known for. Considering he was once punched in the nose by (in)famous British Union of Fascists leader Sir Oswald Ernald Mosley, had a propensity for imitating misanthropic film comedian W.C. Fields, enjoyed holding fascist meetings at expensive Jewish luncheonettes, and remains the most exceedingly enigmatic neo-fascist figure in history despite having two lengthy biographies dedicated to him, Yockey is a name that demands an epic biopic but, rather unfortunately, that is probably even less likely to happen than his dream of an *Imperium*, though somehow I can see Johnny Depp of all people playing the role. After all, both Jodie Foster and Steven Soderbergh have attempted to create a Leni Riefenstahl biopic. In terms of living filmmakers, only Teutonic auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg is intelligent, politically astute, and creative enough to assemble a truly visionary depiction of Yockey’s somewhat tragic and stranger-than-fiction life and considering that the American political revolutionary—a man that tried to help German philosopher Carl Schmitt escape political persecution during the Nuremberg Trials and later even earned the respect of German ace fighter-pilot Hans-Ulrich Rudel—was such a hardcore Teutonophile, it would only be fitting.

The patent absurdity of a film about modern-day neo-nazis being entitled *Imperium* becomes quite clear when one considers that American Nazi Party Führer George Lincoln Rockwell—arguably the single most influential figure on the largely pathetic joke that is post-WWII American neo-nazi scene who was curiously the son of a vaudeville performer that was pals with celebrated Jewish comedians like Groucho Marx—was vocal in his hatred for Yockey who he described as a “Strasserite” in anti-tribute to Uncle Adolf’s ‘left-wing nazi’ rivals Gregor and Otto Strasser. Even four years after Yockey’s death, Rock-

well, who was himself assassinated a couple years later under dubious circumstances supposedly by a disgruntled Greek-American (ex)stormtrooper, would complain, “There is rising all over the world, among hard-core National Socialists, a new cult of what I call Yockeyism. I found much of interest in Yockey’s book *IMPERIUM* and actually helped promote it. But the cult founded on this man is dangerous and, I believe, in some ways downright evil.” Of course, both brain-dead neo-nutzis and kosher commies alike probably have nothing to fear as it has been over 70 years since the publication of Yockey’s magnum opus *Imperium* and it is quite unlikely that it will ever become a sort of new *Mein Kampf* as it is just too arcane and aesthetically pleasing to ever appeal to the masses, even if the white nationalist ideas began to flourish among the American mainstream. After all, in Nazi Germany, *Mein Kampf* was much more popular than National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg’s innately more interesting and intelligent tome *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930), just as Rockwell’s own virtual *Mein Kampf*, *This Time the World* (1961), is considerably more popular than *Imperium* among WN types today. Needless to say, Yockey is not only hated among raging Rockwellite types as he oftentimes is referenced in a negative sense by neo-fascist and neo-nazi types even though very few have actually read his work. For example, while white nationalist scholar and professor Revilo P. Oliver—an old school far-right intellectual and professor with a legit palindromic name who once testified before the Warren Commission in regard to the JFK assassination—went to the effort of carefully criticizing Yockey’s views with an entire book entitled *The Enemy Of Our Enemies* (1979), the majority of his critics simply rely on libel, dubious rumors, and downright ludicrous lies like in the obscenely dumb anti-occult text *Satanism and its Allies: The Nationalist Movement Under Attack* (1998) anonymously co-authored by writers from the British neo-nazi magazine *Final Conflict* who describe Yockey as “part-Jewish and homosexual” despite the *Imperium* author’s well-known womanizing escapades and hardcore counter-kosher activism. In the end, it might be best think that Ludwig II of Bavaria was also practically speaking for Yockey when he once famously stated, “I wish to remain an eternal enigma to myself and to others.” Incidentally, Yockey once wrote, “The articulation of the Culture has three aspects: the Idea itself, the transmitting stratum, those to whom it is transmitted [...] Who knows whether we would have Wagner’s greatest works but for Ludwig II? [...] Not everyone can play a great role, but the right to give meaning to his life cannot be taken from a man.” Somehow, despite his relative obscure, I think the full meaning of Yockey’s life remains to be seen.

Unlike glorified agitprop director Daniel Ragussis and most of the rabble associated with supposed neo-nazism, Yockey was first and foremost an artist so it is only natural that *Imperium*—a book that, not surprisingly, is more talked about than actually read—will forever remain a text appreciated by a special sort of artistic type that dreams of a world that will never be. Somewhat absurdly optimistic

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for a Spenglerian, Yockey, like all serious artists, lived to create a completely new world so it comes as a great insult that a film bearing the name of his revolutionary text could only dream up a painfully banal and superlatively soulless vision of the ghettoized neo-nazi scene that the philosopher-cum-revolutionary's intellectual nemesis Rockwell is largely responsible for inspiring. Of course, considering Rockwell's background as a cartoonist, it almost seems like tragicomical kismet that his ultimate legacy would be something akin to the grotesque image of a morbidly obese Amero-mutt sporting a homemade SS Halloween costume while hysterically screaming lowbrow racial slurs to similarly unsightly and racially dubious protestors. While Francis Parker Yockey will never be a household name, he has at least inspired some interesting art from the likes of Current 93 and NON/Boyd Rice and will probably continue to inspire it well into the future considering the unfortunately imperative rise of racial consciousness among American Euro-pids—a mongrelized group that, as Yockey noticed, is unfortunately decidedly more deracinated and culturally retarded than its mainland European brothers—in the zio-globalist age of Occident decline.

Rather unfortunately, modern-day pro-white movements tend to focus on the negative and critiques and thus are starting to resembling the sort of leftist anti-culture that Yockey critiqued when he wrote, "Liberalism can only be defined negatively. It is a mere critique, not a living idea." Undoubtedly, one of the greatest things that one can learn from Yockey comes from his words, "But creative force—this will remain forever incomprehensible to those, far more than 99% of humanity—who cannot see deeply into the soul of Culture-man—IS AT BOTTOM ARTISTIC. In the deeps the will-to-power merges with the aesthetic instinct. In the brief moment of satisfaction which follows the completion of a work—a novel, a building, a suspension bridge, a symphony, a victorious battle, the soul of a higher man feels an intense and profound aesthetic satisfaction in the form of self-reverence and a feeling of union with the essence of Being." While just speculation, somehow I doubt the creators of Imperium felt the 'profound aesthetic satisfaction' that Yockey speaks of when they completed their aimless agitprop abortion. Indeed, politics aside, the film can, at best, be seen as an excremental exercise in anti-aesthetic whoredom where artistic, intellectual, and philosophical integrity are completely compromised in a fundamental fashion that speaks to the superlative soullessness of its creators, but I guess one should not expect anything less from an FBI-approved neo-nazi spy flick starring Harry Potter. While the film attempts to make a profound statement about cultivated Yockey-esque types with the Lord Byron quote, "This should have been a noble creature: he hath all the energy which would have made a goodly frame of glorious elements, had they been wisely mingled," the creators are not even worthy of such a remark as they lack any noble or glorious elements and instead symbolize midbrow mediocrity at its most self-deceptively dull, unwittingly disingenuous, and cowardly conformist as a movie that even has less

value than the vintage (anti)neo-nazi doc *Blood in the Face* (1991). Instead of watching the movie, I recommend that one read Yockey's *Imperium* and other texts, the anti-Yockey bio *Dreamer of the Day* (1999) by Kevin Coogan and pro-Yockey bio *Yockey: A Fascist Odyssey* (2018) by Kerry Bolton, and then contemplate the great sort of film that could be made about his life and struggle. Unfortunately, I fear there will soon be a time in a generation or two when few, if any, understand Yockey's words because, as his great intellectual influence Oswald Spengler once recognized in regard to the precarious nature of art, "One day the last portrait of Rembrandt and the last bar of Mozart will have ceased to be—though possibly a colored canvas and a sheet of notes will remain—because the last eye and the last ear accessible to their message will have gone."

-Ty E

INDIA'S COMING OF AGE IN SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
INDIA'S COMING OF AGE IN SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

A few years back I had the "privilege" of running tech and audio for a convention celebrating Indian and Southeastern Asian "Americans." I had the impression that the event would be full of the typical minority overcoming "oppressive" white America speeches and testimonials. Instead, the convention was full of bragging about how these various groups of Asians are taking over America via international marketplace. One of the Indian speakers bragged that all of his relatives owned an Exxon or a 7-Eleven. Basically, he played on the type of stereotypes that would get a European-American thrown out of such an event.

After watching *Slumdog Millionaire* last night courtesy of mad dog mAQ allowing me to get in for free, I couldn't help but think of the Indian and Southeastern Asian event I had attended years before. *Slumdog Millionaire* is a coming of age story about an Indian boy named Jamal who basically goes from being an inhabitant of Mumbai third world sewer to a millionaire. With the boy's rise to adulthood in the world, also comes the development of India into a serious global economic player. Jamal even takes a job at one of those outsourcing telephone service companies. I am sure everyone has had the annoying opportunity to call a company and having to deal with a telephone operator who has a hard time both speaking English and understanding what you are talking about. Typical annoying and worthless protesters. In all honesty, *Slumdog Millionaire* is a well contrived and constructed film but highly overrated like most of director Danny Boyle's work. Also, the film is one of few honest major motion picture films. Aside from the sickening "we are the world" propaganda in many Hollywood movies, few mainstream films address the age globalization and the new world order we are entering. Now even Hindus and Muslims can watch trash American TV shows like *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* *Slumdog Millionaire* makes it clear that the world is becoming homogenized and with it the dissolution of culture. Through Jamal's life of struggle, he accidentally becomes a player in the international market and for the "citizen of the world" that is the only thing left to obtain in our new materialist world. I won't be giving away any "spoilers" by saying that *Slumdog Millionaire* ends with a triumphant Bollywood style dance featuring Jamal (plus his girl) and a group of random street dwellers. I found this silly ending of the film to be interesting because I saw a similar thing take place at the Indian and Southeastern Asian convention I attended. Aside from bragging about India's success internationally, the only evidence of Indian culture were the goofy Bollywood dances these people performed. Just like many other "up and coming" third world nations of the world, they are trading in their old culture for economic and industrial development. The Bollywood dance is merely a last remnant of what Indian culture was. One could say that Karl Marx's dream of a materialistic and cultureless international world is coming true. One only has to go to a local gas station to see one of the many "American" members

of the Indian diaspora. The wise Indian has his eye on the money and he's willing to work 12 hour days serving hostile American blacks (Indians really seem to hate them) and whites to get it. Slumdog Millionaire is a film about both the triumph of a Young man and his country. The film, like the Indian-American, is a hybrid of both east and west. Slumdog Millionaire features both the Hindi and English language. Like the film, the borders between nations and cultures are becoming blurred. For those third world peoples that are lucky enough to "immigrate" to America, they have a better life to look forward to. For those members not lucky enough to find a good outsourced job in India or ability to make a living in America, the future probably looks bleak. Just like the lower classes in the United States, with the dissolution of culture, they have not much to look forward to except maybe watching films featuring Bollywood style dances.

-Ty E

INTERVIEW WITH ALVIN ECARMA
INTERVIEW WITH ALVIN ECARMA

Alvin Ecarma is the director of the TLA/Unearthed release of LETHAL FORCE. SS: What inspired you to make this spoofish film? Did you just wake up one day and decide to make the mad-cap action blast "LETHAL FORCE"? AE: I was a couple of years out of film school and I had spent the intervening time hustling my short films and spec scripts. When those went past their freshness date, I decided it was time to make a feature using Robert Rodriguez's "El Mariachi" as a model. And concurrent to all this, I had been compiling a dossier on people in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area who had skills that would come in handy for a project like this, and I also had become friends with Teddy Chao and the Johns Hopkins Film Society in Baltimore, Maryland. So my desire to make a film and finding a core crew to make the film with dovetailed together nicely into A Perfect Moment, never to happen again. The script itself is born out of my affection for action movies of all sorts with an emphasis on HK heroic bloodshed (which I believe to this day to be the absolute zenith of the Action genre) with riffs on 80's Cop movies, Kung fu, blaxploitation, Spaghetti Western and the odd Japanese Yakuza bit. And because we were dealing with limited resources, the screenplay was very lean and barebones since I had to be flexible in dealing with casting and budgetary restrictions. Basically I went for "clever and smart" rather than "noisy and loud" since the former is always easier (and cheaper.) The mild tongue-in-cheek tone was always present but it read a bit harder on page than it does on screen; in any event, the quiet absurdity gave the film a free pass with most audiences since there was an acknowledgement that we know that the audience knows that this movie is verrry cheap (but without being over-bearing and obvious about it.) SS: How did you come up with the design for the henchmen? It seems you tease the audience with their identity. AE: This was artistic inspiration meshed with logistical pragmatism. Not only was it a comment on the general faceless nature of action-movie henchman, it was just easier to plug in people whenever bodies were needed without worrying about continuity or worrying if an actor was going to show up or not. SS: Is the nemesis purposely given a teutonic appearance? AE: Funny story. The first guy we had for the Big Bad was this hairy, beefy, beast of a man who, two weeks before production began, demanded a \$100 for every day we went over schedule, a travel stipend, a costume stipend and 3% of the gross. Now everybody who was working on this movie knew it was a volunteer/credit/copy-of-the-movie deal but apparently this fat headed prima donna bastard was the King of Rockville, Maryland dinner theater and it was head shot next to the chipped beef on toast at the Lazy Susan. Of course, we fired him but he continued to try and sabotage things by telling the rest of his acquaintences on the cast that I was secretly planning to set them all on fire and leave their charred corpses in a mass grave at Seneca Creek State Park. Tragically, some of them listened but I don't harbor

any ill will toward any of them and I wish them all the best of luck in whatever impoverished, half-assed community theater production of "Starlight Express" they find themselves in. Anyhoo, we eyeballed the remaining cast, trying to figure out who looked the most freaky, and it turned out that person was Andy Hewitt, God Love Him, that Aryan Ubermench. Generally speaking, there was a bit of casting drama with a sizeable amount of people abandoning the movie because the script was so shockingly offensive to their genteel sensibilities, but that's the Washington, DC Metro area for ya. It's the milquetoast and Wonder Bread Capital of the World. SS: Do you have anything written down for the sequel? And how would that work considering the ending? AE: If I made a sequel, it would just start with Savitch alive and punching people. He'd be an eternal, immortal, unkillable archetype like Santa or Fu Manchu. SS: Do you have anything planned out for your film making career? AE: I am very quietly working on something that's not a sequel, but a thematic follow-up. It's in the same mold of LETHAL FORCE with the exception that I'm writing more well-rounded characters rather than just flat out "types". More importantly, the script will have a "scalability" meaning that it could be mounted effectively with either no money or with lots of money (of course, the latter would be nicer). The script should be done in the coming year and we'll take it from there. SS: Thanks a lot for your time. AE: Straight backatchya!

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREY ISKANOV
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Andrey Iskanov is a film maker from Russia best known for his micro budget films *NAILS* and *VISIONS OF SUFFERING* released on Uearthed Films. His upcoming film *Philosophy of a Knife* has been met with a lot of hype and he is currently working on a Sci-Fi horror called *THE TOURIST*. He took the time for an interview concerning *POAK*.

SS: Hello Andrey, thank you very much for taking the time for this interview. To start it off, How did you get started in film making and what inspired this incredible style that you taint your film with? AI: I always had dream about making my own movie, which for someone else years back here was practically impracticable. Therefore I started to master the work of a photographer, as being something close to cinema. The photo became for me my small cinema in which I could be engaged completely independently and imperceptibly. You should also notice, that already after some years, I have achieved the certain successes on a field of photoart. Besides I started to specialize from the first (and the last) in Russia of photofilms of horror, I also photographed girls for competitions of beauty, did advertising photos for girls which were sent in the Korean, Chinese or Japanese night clubs (though actually they were brothels), was thephotographer of the criminal chronicle in the local newspaper and much more. Besides that, I wrote horror novels (dilogy of Odour of blood) and a set of fine stories and also have written set of a revue of the western films of horror. I constantly required money and could not make the following logical step in any way. To this time I have suddenly lost the work in the newspaper (now they use free-of-charge photos from internet) and to continue to shoot girls wishing to become models and girls for the Chinese brothels at me any desire already was gone. I didn't have enough money for the following step: to start to make own film. It would be underground, guerrilla film production. But it did not frighten me because I knew completely precisely: nobody will give me money for my own film. Once I even talked in this occasion to one guy from Russian mafia. He has told me, that can give money for film and it does not make for him any problem. But he should know, how soon I can return the money and what will be his profit? Certainly I have refused his help because profit from horror films in Russia practically zero and I never could return his money. However from the end of 90's, I wrote scripts for own films and waited for a suitable chance. At last, in the beginning of 2003, light ahead began to dawn. Irina Nikitina, my good familiar from time of my photofilms, has given me money for my first film. In total about two thousand dollars. And I started to write the script of maximum cheap and simple film with a minimum of characters but with potential for some interesting effects which I could create with my own hands. Thus, almost one thousand dollars left on purchase of the camera, one thousand more dollars was spent for tickets from Kiev up to Khabarovsk (From Europe to Asia) for

Alexander Shevchenko who should write music and edit the film, subsequently he also has acted also the main hero. And for ten days, i had only two hundred dollars for my disposal and to survive on. This film which today is known as Nails. Precisely why I have made Nails I can not tell. Today I look at this film absolutely differently than then, and now I would make all my films completely different. Who my influence is exactly is difficult to tell now. Obviously it was Dario Argento with his magical Inferno and Suspiria. But also many other directors, and also musical pop video clips, photographic advertising of the 70-s' years etc.SS: With the release of Philosophy of a Knife edging closer and closer, what do you think about your finished project? Is it the bona fide source on the information on the atrocities that occurred at Unit 731?AI: I wanted to be completely fair, both before my own conscience, and before the memory of victims of Unit 731. And if in the film there is no invented dialogue, it's only because I did not want to burden fiction and conjecture this history. And if in film there is a nice young girl in prison of Unit and the young Japanese militarist sympathizing her it at all was not elements of a romantic plot. Similar characters existed in a reality. Only I have dared to change some details for creation of the atmosphere necessary to me and the moods. The correct mood of film at times very much depends on those or other visual details. For example, I have shown in the film Unit 731 as the gloomy started place with dirty, covered with blood and rusted walls. This image was necessary for transfer for the spectator of my sensation of this place impregnated with pain, fears and suffering. In a reality of a room of Unit 731 it was sterile pure, had snow-white tiled walls and a floor. It is sure, that they were very similar to modern stomatologic studies. All is clean, sterile, accurate and is fresh. Anywhere there are no traces of blood and a tortured body are not crumpled in stacks in a corner. But it was one of few changes or simplifications of the real facts which I has admitted meaningfully. In all the rest, my film follows exact chronicles and can be seen as the bible of Unit 731 studying a history, from for abundances of the original staff and memoirs of eyewitness Anatoliy Protasov. In my opinion, my film is best of all films existing today about Unit 731. It the most detailed, artistic and fair from all existing today.SS: Since POAK is in fact a shockumentary, are you going to include the visual flair that you are famous for?AI: Visual flair? It so refers to? To tell the truth, when I look on something a subject that, I perceive it almost just as then I show in the films. I simply try to see usual things under a unusual corner of sight. In Philosophy of a knife I tried to avoid all that I did for Nails and Visions of suffering. I dont know as far as well I have succeeded in it, but I wanted to make a realistic film as soon as it is possible. I did not want to do film of horror, I wanted to make a detailed historical film.SS: After watching the clips and such for The Tourist, it seems that you are eventually going to make a film in almost every genre with your own surrealist flair, is there any truth behind that?AI: It is very possible, that so it and is. Right now I would like to make a comedy. I'm

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREY ISKANOV

probably a little tired of violence. To work with stages of violence is rather hard. Therefore the Philosophy of a knife is most my difficult and heavy project. SS: Who were your film making influences? and how is the market for Cult/Gore films in Russia? It seems like an incredibly hard place to market films of your caliber. AI: Who rendered the greatest influence on Philosophy of a knife? Buddhism, I think. The released approach to death and violence has helped me to show that I have shown working on film. The Japanese from Unit 731 were Buddhists, besides others. Studying on Buddhism and Shintoism during work on the film has considerably expanded my outlook and has helped me to look at many things under another other corner of sight. For example from the point of view of Japanese. I did not want to make a film reflecting European mentality. I wanted to make a film close to the Japanese mentality. I think, that a surface of Mars would be a more successful market for films of horror than Russia. A shame for this country! I still can not look set of excellent films at all my efforts which you saw. I don't do entertaining films, therefore i am possibly the worst director for Russia. The horror movies are not entertainment for all family but only such films have here popularity. Fuck Russia! SS: My only guess is that all of the violence in POAK is unflinching and is documented without the camera turning away, such as T.F. Mou's film Men Behind The Sun. Care to explain the process of the violence? AI: I show violence without patriotism, even with cynicism and gloomy irony, with all details which you can see on place of crimes. If you will try to show murder in details, you will come besides to what I have come also. I never would use real murders of animals to make the film more effective. Any film in the world and any idea or true in the world do not cost murders or sufferings of animals. This does not have justifications and it is not necessary to try to search for them. They simply do not exist. Film can not become better if in it somebody kills in the real. It can become worse only. I do not have complexes in relation to display of violence to films, I dont get frightened with cinema violence in films. But I do not bear violence in real life. The violence in film demands as much attention how many statement of small performance or creation of a picture. Usually I write all key elements and details of a stage before I start to shoot on a paper. I in general never start to work, yet I shall not see the internal sight all main elements, signs of a concrete scene. More often those details which the spectator can be at all in detail undersign notices or does not pay to them any attention. But they are in film. And they make a basis of a stage. SS: Fellow friend and star, Alexander Shevchenko, has been in all of your films so far? How did this friendship/business relationship begin? AI: Alexander did music for all my films but acted in Nails and Visions of suffering only, he also has a cameo in The Tourist As TV news announcer. Also Alexander did amazing digital effects for my films, especially great work for POAK. I have got acquainted with him in 2000 or 2001, through net. He was the fan of horror, same as well as me and had casually read on the internet my review of

Xtro. As it was the unique positive review of this film in Russian, he has written to me. All began from it. Then, I have found out, that he as successfully tries himself in the literature and is the professional artist. We loved the same films, therefore I have decided, that it will be better if we shall try to work together on my then project about people appeared in installed death which I have named Necro. Unfortunately, bastards from Moscow have deceived us and this project so never and were not filmed. After Visions of suffering and Nails we support contact through internet and we discuss work too through net. He developed digital effects in Kiev, Ukraine. I did render them in Khabarovsk, Russia, on the other end of the earth. We work on the Tourist precisely the same as and on Philosophy of a knife. Through net. The tourist became the first film in which besides his music will sound like music from other authors. So I have tried to adopt experience of use of music from such films Dario Argento as the Opera or the Phenomena.SS: How long does the process of thinking of these bizarre plots take? For example, the "new" style of vampires shown in Visions Of Suffering.AI: I have thought up the plot of Nails for 10 minutes and the script has written for three days. The Plot of Visions Of Suffering I have dreamed. So they havent borrowed a lot of time. Style of vampires was inspired by "men in black" real supernatural phenomena. Unfortunately I cant control the dreams to see as much as possible interesting plots. Its healthy has facilitated my work. But in general that, with everything, as to imagination I do not test special problems. I can imagine everything. Only on a plot of Philosophy of a knife I worked longly, as very attentively it was required to study set of original documents what to find points of a support and to size up own opinion. It is very important to have own opinion when you work above such difficult theme as the second world war and Unit 731. I saw one Russian documentary TV - film about Unit 731 and it was full shit. Typical propagation and pathos a syllable. I hate pathos and propagation.SS: Have you ever thought about making a film based on the murders of the bolshevik's gulags death camps?AI: Sometimes I think about it. And if someday somebody will offer to me make such project i shall not to refuse. Im sure, that I know about it more than any from the western directors. Only good script and very good actors is necessary. You know for example, that when prisoners run from camps in Magadan, they take with themselves the young and inexperienced prisoner whom named "cow" If fugitives water or meal come to an end, They kill him to drink his blood and eat his meat. This practice is kept till now and it is the naked truth.SS: Well Andrey, We thank you very much for your time and patience. I can only barely hold back my excitement for viewing POAK and The Tourist. Anything you'd like to add before you go?AI: The evil is not belonging of the Japanese race, it belongs to all mankind. People create evil without dependence from race, religions and preferences. Each person is potentially the murderer. Do not overlook about it when will look Philosophy of a knife.

INTERVIEW WITH ANTONELLO GIALLO
INTERVIEW WITH ANTONELLO GIALLO

Isle of the Damned, shot on location in Argentina in 1980, brought filmmaker Antonello Giallo under fire yet again... this time by the Argentinean government, who issued a warrant for Giallo's arrest under suspicions of abuse of the native peoples. Giallo fled the country before he could go to trial. The film has been long out of print, but is presented here in a digitally remastered form. This is an interview with Antonello Giallo in regard to his "lost" masterpiece Isle of the Damned.SS: So Antonello, what made you decided to direct the epic Cannibal film that is Isle of the Damned?AG: Well when I first met my wife... me make vacation in Argentina. We go on a safari with native guide who show us to eat genitals of pig. I take my 8mm camera and make home movie of this and other rituals. I use this footage in Isola del Maledetto, and create a story about these adventure men who go to island but instead of eating pig genitals, is their genitals which becomes food.SS: Did you ever hear Ruggero Deodato, director of Cannibal Holocaust, response to Isle of the Damned?AG: I know Ruggero from when we both were working on diarrhea art film. He knew my script before he make his film. I show him my home movies, and behind my back he steal idea and get very rich. Then Isola come out and Ruggero say I steal his story. Bastardo!SS: What Italian filmmakers influenced your filmmaking?AG: I like the films of Mario Bava... when I younger I work on the set of his movie, Ercole al centro della terra.SS: Did any stupid American filmmakers influence your filmmaking?AG: I enjoy films make by Alfred Hitchcock, and very much the films of George Romero, also I like very much the films of Howard Hawks.SS: Who is the dumbest American working in Hollywood?AG: I no like this new movie Star Wars... it very unrealistic.

SS: I hear you have a new Italian masterpiece in the works? Tell me about this Antonello.AG: Right now we make new film, in USA called, City of the Damned. It very exciting, very big budget. Based on true story of what happens when teenage boys play too much this Dungeons and Dragons and demons rise from underworld to enslave many men.SS: Did you ever get the chance to meet Pier Paolo Pasolini before his untimely death? Did you see his final masterpiece "Salo or the 120 Days of Sodom"?AG: Yes, I like this film. I often think what it would be like to do this what the actors of the film do. Is very fun vacation but I think my wife not like.SS: Antonello, I have heard you used to wine and dine with Lucio Fulci?AG: Yes, but he never phone me no more. I not sure this reason.SS: Can you tell us anything personal about the actors from Isle of the Damned?AG: People say very mean, untrue thing about the actors of this film... and I would like to say that I never made control of actors with LSD for Isola del Maledetto. They all good people who is very much dedication to art and acting.SS: Did you indulge in any hedonistic activities during the filming of Isle of the Damned?AG: We prepare our minds for this jungle travelling. The film com-

pare man versus beast and civilization versus savage. Anything we did in the film was being done already by the Yamma Yamma, but hedonistic... no. Was natural, yes?SS: What can we expect from you in the future?AG: Once I make City of the Damned, next I probably do script called Barbarian Sex Warriors, movie about outerspace gladiator mans who enjoy very much to punish woman sexually.For more info on Isle of the Damned and Antonello Giallo[CLICK HERE](#)

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE LABRUCE
INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE LABRUCE

Undoubtedly, one of the most subversive and iconoclastic 'gay' auteur filmmakers working in the world today, Canadian auteur Bruce LaBruce has managed to assemble the perfect insanely idiosyncratic marriage between arthouse and pornography and sardonic satire and biting political incorrectness with aesthetically and thematically revolutionary works like *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993), *Hustler White* (1996), *The Raspberry Reich* (2004), and *Otto; or Up with Dead People* (2008). His upcoming film, *Gerontophilia* (2013), will be LaBruce's most mainstream work to date which, although not featuring any of the aberrant-garde pornographic imagery typical of his previous works, deals with a totally taboo sexual relationship between a young white twink and an old black man and has already been described as a sort of 'gay Harold and Maude.' In this interview, *Soiled Sinema* asks LaBruce about his cinematic influences and singularly eclectic filmmaking career, as well as his thoughts on the 'mainstreaming' of gay culture.

Soiled Sinema: Kurt Cobain apparently hailed you as his favorite filmmaker after seeing your feature-length debut *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993). Do you have any other infamous/famous fans?

Bruce LaBruce: Georgina Spelvin and Camilla Sparv. But seriously, one big thrill for me was when somebody contacted me on facebook and told me that he had taken the brilliant playwright Edward Albee to see my movie "Otto; or, Up with Dead People" in New York, and he had been quite entranced by it. So I asked them if I could get a blurb from Mr. Albee for the back of the DVD, and he did it! I think a lot of people think I just made it up, but it's really from him. I was over the moon because I love his plays so much.

SS: You co-directed *Hustler White* (1996) with photographer Rick Castro. How did you share the directing duties?

BLB: Very carefully. Actually, the writing and shooting wasn't too bad, but in post-production it got a little messy. I was also the co-star and a co-producer, and the post process was extremely difficult because we had so little money, so I really had to work hard with my editor to get it completed for its Sundance world premier. Co-directed presented a lot of complications. Let's just say I vowed never to co-direct anything ever again after that experience.

SS: What were the main film influences for *Hustler White*? Does it owe more to Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) or Paul Morrissey's *Heat* (1972)? Were you also inspired by *The Blind Owl* (1992) directed by Reza Abdoh?

BLB: The main influence for *Hustler White* was real life, followed closely by *Sunset Boulevard*, *Whatever Happened To Baby Jane?*, and Warhol's *Flesh and Heat*, with a little *Alice in Wonderland* thrown in for good measure. We actually shot the final scene of the movie at the same location where Aldrich shot the ending of *Whatever Happened To Baby Jane?*, which we were clearly

referencing. Zuma Beach, or El Matador, I can't remember which now. We also threw in a little Death in Venice there for good measure, like when the black hair dye is running down my face. I've never seen The Blind Owl, but it sounds delicious.

SS: A number of your films have dealt with neo-nazism. Do you have any plans for similarly themed works in the future? How about a Ernst Röhm biopic?

BLB: I feel like I really explored the neo-Nazi theme, and the relationship between homosexuality and fascism, in my movie Skin Flick, and its hardcore version, Skin Gang. I mean, when you have a scene in your movie of a neo-Nazi skinhead jerking off to a copy of Mein Kampf, as I did, it kind of says it all. But actually I am making an experimental film in the near future called Ulrike's Brain which, in a minor subplot - a B-movie-within-the-movie - pits the RAF's Ulrike Meinhof's re-animated brain against the re-animated ashes of Michael Kuhnen, the gay German neo-Nazi leader of the eighties who died of AIDS in 1991. The movie-within-the-movie is a cross between They Saved Hitler's Brain and The Brain That Would Not Die, two famous B-movies of the sixties. I've already shot parts of it, in Hamburg, as part of the Die Untoten: Life Sciences and Pulp Fiction Kongress at Kampnagel, curated by my friend Hannah Hurtzig.

SS: You have portrayed/parodied both fascists and communists with your films. What political persuasion do you find more "erotic" and/or "fetishistic" and why?

BLB: An excellent question. Obviously politically I'm more in sympathy with communism than fascism, to say the least, but erotically and fetishistically it's a real toss-up. I love the stylish uniformity and militancy of both movements, but for different reasons. I like the simplicity and starkness of both styles, but obviously fascists - the Nazis, for example - were more interested in power and wealth as an expression of style, so they also borrowed from the baroque, both in architecture and in the use of sadomasochistic black leather coats, hats and trimming and fetishistic adornments. Charlotte Rampling in The Night Porter, with her long black gloves, suspenders, and shiny black patent leather Gestapo hat, is one of the ultimate expressions of this style. The gay leather movement was clearly influenced by fascist style. In terms of communism, I love the simplicity and the plainness of the design, whether it be the Mao suit with everything in uniform grey, including the buttons, or the Soviet proletariat uniform with its clean lines and industrial purposefulness. So although the ideologies may be repugnant, the style is undeniably sexy. I am a Marxist-sympathizer, but obviously I don't support any form of totalitarianism. However, totalitarians can have great style.

SS: What inspired you to direct two quasi-pornographic zombie films? Are you a fan of the subgenre or slightly more ambivalent? What are your favorite zombie flicks and did any of these inspire Otto; or Up With Dead People (2008) and L.A. Zombie (2010)?

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE LABRUCE

BLB: I was interested in exploring a more popular idiom at that time, so the hot horror genre and the even hotter zombie sub-genre seemed like the way to go. I've always been a fan of the horror genre, and I do love zombie movies, especially when they're used as political and social allegories. But I also like to explore genre conventions, and mix up the conventions of seemingly irreconcilable or incompatible genres. So I have mixed porn with political satire, or porn with romantic comedy, or gore with porn (gorn), like in *Otto* and *L.A. Zombie*, or in the case of *Hu\$tlers White*, the underground art movie with classical Hollywood melodrama. Ambivalence is my middle name, so I always approach each genre with some ambivalent feelings. I hate zombie movies that merely use the zombie as a kind of distasteful replica of the homeless, who can be laughed at or killed for sport. So in my zombie movies I made the titular zombies ambiguous characters - they could be interpreted as homeless schizophrenics who perceive themselves as zombies, or whom others perceive as such, or they could be viewed as "real" zombies. I love Romero's hyper-political zombie films (I wrote an article about them, with an emphasis on *Diary of the Dead*, for *Fangoria* magazine), and I love the British miniseries *Dead Set*. I also love Romero's teenage vampire movie "Martin", which was another inspiration for *Otto*.

SS: With the mainstreaming of 'LGBT culture,' have you felt a rising backlash from critics? Have you ever been accused of being a 'self-loathing homosexual?'

BLB: I am self-loathing homosexual, but I embrace it! I love my self-loathing! I had a party during Pride Week a few years ago in Toronto called the Self-Loathing Party. It was quite popular. Actually, I would probably be self-loathing even if I weren't homosexual. It's not really self-loathing, but more of an existentialist honesty, along the lines of Mersault in Camus' *The Outsider*. (I just watched Visconti's film version of it on YouTube last night. Marcello Mastroianni is brilliant as Mersault, and Anna Karina is fantastic as his long-suffering girlfriend.) I think there should be a little more self-loathing these days with the gays and a little less mindless self-affirmation and brainwashed conformity. A healthy bit of self-doubt, ambivalence or well-delivered sarcasm has always been one of the great strengths of the homosexual psyche. But my movies have generally been so far away from the gay mainstream that I've long been accustomed to disapproval and marginalization even within the historically marginalized gay movement. My friends and I were more aligned with the punk movement in the eighties because even back then we found the mainstream gay world hopelessly conformist and assimilationist and bourgeois. Now that gays have become even more mainstream and reactionary, I feel I have less in common with them than with a younger generation that eschews any type of sexual identification and is more interested in political or social upheaval. My films have always been about characters who aren't necessarily gay-identified, but who nonetheless have homosexual sex (*hu\$tlers*, neo-Nazi skinheads, extreme left wing revolutionaries, gerontophiles, etc.). So even though I'm a Kinsey 9 or so, I've long since given

up identification with any gay orthodoxy.

SS: You're undoubtedly the most prolific filmmaker of the "Queercore" (aka homocore) movement. What links homosexuality and punk rock? Do you believe that Darby Crash's 'gayness' was an innate attribute of his art?

BLB: I'm also really over this idea of the queercore or homocore movement being enshrined as some kind of unassailable, pure, and idealistic political moment. It's absolute historical revisionism. Sure, it had its day, and its moments of excellence, but there was also tons of in-fighting, gossip, questionable ideological posturing, and out and out hypocrisy. What was so great about particularly American punk rock was that it refused to be categorized or pinned down in terms of its ideology, its political orthodoxy, or what it stood for. It was a very eclectic, diverse, and ambivalent group of individuals united by a certain amazing and inventive and countercultural style. Great style refuses to be limited to a single meaning or unilateral signification. Punk was confrontational, ambiguous, intense, sometimes violent, and always anti-corporate. It was the last great cohesively incohesive, starkly anti-establishment youth movement. The word punk came from prison slang meaning a passive bum-boy, and also derived from a name for the wood that was used to burn witches and homosexuals at the stake. The original radically political gay movement had lots in common with the countercultural punk movement, so it was only inevitable that the overlap between the two would emerge as the homocore movement. But it was a queer romance that soon became entrenched and co-opted by the art world and political orthodoxy. Darby Crash was the ultimate queer punk because he crashed and burned before he could be co-opted or tamed.

SS: What are your thoughts on popular mainstream gay films like *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and its effect on society as a whole?

BLB: *Brokeback Mountain* was okay, but I thought it was mainly Heath Ledger who really nailed the agony of repressed homosexual longing, just as River Phoenix did before him in *My Own Private Idaho*. It's so strange that both actors Darby Crash and Phoenix died so young. I love the scenes toward the end when Ledger cries clutching his dead male lover's jacket, and then when he asks his daughter if she's sure the man she's going to marry loves her, and assures her he will attend her wedding. It's so touching and melancholy. As to how it effected society, I guess it was a bit of a breakthrough in terms of the tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality, particularly as they were working class, salt-of-the-earth characters without any gay "affectations". But of course when someone tolerates you, it's time to reach for your pistol.

SS: Politically speaking, what inspired you to direct *The Raspberry Reich* (2004)? Were you in any way inspired by Fassbinder's *The Third Generation* (1979)?

BLB: Yes, of course! The main movies I studied when I was writing *The Raspberry Reich* were Fassbinder's *The Third Generation*, Dusan Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, and Godard's *La Chinoise* (and the last part

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of Weekend). I particularly love Fassbinder's playful, farcical approach to the wannabe extreme left wing revolutionaries, and his willingness to expose all the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of the radical left. I wrote *The Raspberry Reich* in the few years following 9/11, when leftist rhetoric had largely been silenced and the radical left proved to be ineffectual against the tide of paranoia and fear capitalized on by western capitalist interests. So I wanted to make an agit-prop movie that both screamed a lot of leftist revolutionary rhetoric but also critiqued the radical left for allowing itself to be diluted, co-opted and exploited by fashion, art, and other capitalistically entrenched institutions. The film operates as both a nostalgia for the no-nonsense, rational discourse of the traditional left - espousing equality, anti-authoritarianism, anti-corporatism, etc. - and as a bitter critique of the left's inability to stave off the global scourge of unbridled, unregulated capitalist hegemony.

SS: You have directed a number of films in Germany using mostly German actors. Is there any reason why? Do you prefer working in Germany as opposed to American/Canada?

BLB: I go where the money is! I mean, you have to have some capitalist impulses to make movies! After my first two feature length films, which were sexually explicit, I couldn't find any funding in Canada, which was also censoring my work like crazy. My producer, Jurgen Bruning, was based in Berlin, and he was able to secure me some modest financing in Germany and from getting recoupable advances from a number of my international distributors. But there is a certain freedom in working in Berlin, which is a much more permissive and free atmosphere for difficult and controversial work. It's also cheaper to shoot there, and there is no shortage of spectacular locations. I also made two films in L.A., also co-produced by Mr. Bruning, which is another city where you can get away with a lot (if you stay under the radar) and which has a preponderance of stunning and unusual locations.

SS: With great gay auteur filmmakers like R.W. Fassbinder, Werner Schroeter, Rosa von Praunheim, Ulrike Ottinger, and Frank Ripplloh, etc. making quite a number of great and revolutionary works during the 1970s and 1980s, it seems that West Germany used to have the greatest 'gay' filmmakers in the world. Why do you think this trend has died out in recent decades?

BLB: Well, you could also say that cinema in general in Germany hasn't been the same since the "New German Cinema" of the seventies, with the films of that era by Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders, Kluge, Syberberg, von Trotta, Schlöndorff, etc. German cinema of the seventies was perhaps a reaction against a certain amnesia that Germany had developed about its recent history, with a lot of denial happening about what had gone in German society that allowed the horrible ascendance of the Third Reich, and the failure to teach the new generations about that history in schools. The seventies were also the great heyday of the gay movement, the pre-AIDS era of unbridled, revolutionary hedonism and militant

activism, which had a very strong expression in Berlin in particular.

SS: Where are your films most popular? Do you have a larger fan base in Europe or North America?

BLB: I probably have a stronger "fan base", or more accurately, cult following, in Europe, but also strangely in South America, where *The Raspberry Reich* was particularly revered in certain circles. *Hustler White* was very popular in France, and Italy and Spain have also always been very supportive of my work, as has Mexico. In the last couple of years I've been invited to mainstream festivals in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey.

SS: Although I know you do not consider yourself a part of it, what do you think happened to "New Queer Cinema?" Do you foresee a new generation of subversive gay auteur filmmakers in the future, or has political correctness and mainstreaming killed such a possibility?

BLB: I often joke quite seriously that "gay culture" is essentially dead. The net result of the gay assimilationist movement is that gays have now been integrated into the fabric of mainstream culture, so it no longer has the same iconoclastic, oppositional, and subversive impetus that it once had. In fact, you could argue that the gay movement has overcompensated by espousing and supporting reactionary and conservative values and institutions, to the point where political correctness and the idea of presenting a non-threatening, innocuous "family values" image has undermined the previously well-developed political and aesthetic avant-garde character of homosexuality. Which is fine. Not everyone has the stomach for a daily struggle against oppressive institutions and nature. I never really minded being considered part of the New Queer Cinema, although I was the only one of the group who was making pornographic and largely underground movies. I felt more aligned with the likes of the Kuchar Brothers, Curt McDowell, Wakefield Poole, Peter de Rome, John Waters, Fred Halsted, etc. - the pornographic and the avant-garde.

SS: You have directed a number of films that have been described as "art porn." Do you see any intrinsic similarities between pornography and arthouse films? What directors do you think were most successful in synthesizing the two?

BLB: Lately I've come to the conclusion that I don't think there really is or should be a distinction between art and pornography. Re-reading Camille Paglia's astounding book *Sexual Personae*, I remember now that she is in complete agreement. They are both mediations of reality made by creative people. The arthouse cinema that emerged in the sixties and seventies crossed over somewhat with the softcore porn genre, with films like *Emmanuelle* and *Bilitis* and the films of Jess Franco mixing with sexually perverse movies like *Luna* and *The Tin Drum* and *Salò*. And then porn filmmakers like Peter De Rome, Wakefield Poole, Fred Halsted, etc. were making very avant-garde porn films. Even Warhol made a sexually explicit film, *Blue Movie*, and Paul Morrissey's films were very sexually frank. That was the heyday.

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE LABRUCE

SS: Do you believe that porn can make for potent political propaganda? Can you name any examples?

BLB: Only in the Godardian sense, i.e., sex is always political. That's one of the other reasons I made *Skin Flick* and *The Raspberry Reich*, which are both overtly political. I found it astounding that more people haven't used pornography as a tool of political propaganda. So many people watch porn that it would seem like the perfect means to spread a political message as widely as possible. Maybe it will happen some day...

SS: What are your thoughts on mainstream heterosexual actor James Franco directing a gay S&M flick like *Interior. Leather Bar.* (2013), a work inspired by the cut scenes of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980)?

BLB: Actually, Mr. Franco and I had already discussed making a super 8 remake of *Cruising* together before he made that film, but we couldn't get the rights to the script and the idea kind of fizzled. I haven't had a chance to see it, but I think people should make films about all sorts of sexuality and not box themselves into one category. It's all about not fixing your sexual identity or imagination.

SS: Your upcoming film *Gerontophilia* (2013) has already been described as the "gay Harold and Maude." What inspired you to direct this film and when can we expect it to be released?

BLB: *Gerontophilia* has a few references to Harold and Maude, a great film by a great director, but it also gives a nod to *Lolita* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Mostly I was trying to make a film with a seventies vibe, aesthetically and thematically. I see it in some modest ways as a kind of reverse *Lolita*. It will be done by the end of summer, when it will start playing at film festivals.

SS: What can we expect from you in the future?

BLB: *Gerontophilia* is my first film financed by larger funding bodies, my first union picture - in a sense, a film made more inside the film industry paradigm with a bit of a bigger budget for me. I think I've explored porn and guerrilla filmmaking quite a bit, so I would like to try make another industry film. I have a great script, if anyone is interested in co-producing. But I'll probably never give up the underground altogether. It's a freedom difficult to renounce.

For more on Bruce LaBruce and his films/projects, checkout his official website <http://www.brucelabruce.com/>

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER ALAN BROADSTONE

Christopher Alan Broadstone recently agreed to an interview with Soiled Sinema. He is best known as the aspiring filmmaker of the award winning trilogy "3 DEAD GIRLS!"

SS: Thanks for doing this interview. How did you get started with your filmmaking and what advice would you give to any would-be independent filmmaker?

CAB: I was born in Oklahoma City and raised in Dallas, Texas. Many years ago I moved to L.A. with my band, THE JUDAS ENGINE. Although TJE had a CD under its belt, was playing gigs regularly, and had a new demo recorded, it was brutally murdered by circumstances about eight months after our arrival in California. I was suddenly a lost soul and too burned out to pursue music anymore. My only opportunity lay in some good luck I'd had in meeting two professional film producers. They read the unpublished (at the time) manuscript of my novel PUZZLEMAN, liked the story, and wanted to get it into script form ASAP. I took the challenge and launched into an endless screenplay writing exercise that eventually went nowhere. I could never please two producers of different minds and myself too. I also wrote a second feature, LOVE ME, based on an old short story I'd written many years before, but was nearly thrashed to death by criticism upon completion of the first draft. It was then that I realized the only way anyone was ever going to take my cinematic visions seriously, or even understand them, was if I took control and made a film myself. My first choice was SCREAM FOR ME, based on another of my short stories — a little tale that people either loved or absolutely hated. I had quite a bit to prove to the world, as well as to myself, so I wanted to shoot a movie that broke rules. In the case of SFM, that meant dealing with controversial subject matter, male nudity, sexual violence, excessive language, back-to-back monologues, a one-room location, and a lead character that constantly wore reflective mirror sunglasses. Most all of those challenges are considered bad luck for a first-time filmmaker. (Or even a pro.) As for my advice to would-be independent filmmakers? Uhhhhh, don't even start. If you can keep from it. Get out while you can!!! While you still have your sanity. Danger, Will Robinson! Danger! LOL! Thing is I can't really give advice, because my films have come from my heart, and a whole lot of thought (translation: lying in bed for endless hours, staring at nothing, and trying to see everything), and also from suffering with the project itself. That last statement, in translation, means: (simply) I'm married to the project. In other words, I'm ultimately committed. But I'm also ultimately committed to make the marriage work. Divorce is not an option. I either go down with the bitch (the ship), or I figure out how to keep a sinking, potential goddess afloat. Fortunately, with all three films, I've done enough Hitchcockian fore planning to have guaranteed a reasonably successful voyage. Of course, the designers of the Titanic would've said the same thing. Difference is, at least with filmmaking, you can take the time — if you want to (if you have

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the will power, the patience, or the insanity to) – to simply let the ship sink. And then you can reevaluate the disaster and figure out that you sometimes just have to reinvent the wheel. That means going back to your original ideas (your script) and putting it all together as you had hopefully planned to do. It's really so simple, but also incredibly, painfully complicated. Everything you need will be there, if you just plan ahead enough. Even so, you always have to find it all again, in the end. In the editing. So here is my real snippet of advice, it's better to shoot something than nothing at all. You can't edit a shot if you don't have anything to work with. Simple as that.

SS: How exactly do you think up these variations of classic tales but with a Clive Barker-ish twist?

CAB: I was writing the first draft of my novel, PUZZLEMAN, many years ago, and was trying to sleep one night but couldn't. So I picked up the first BOOK OF BLOOD and read the MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN and I realized that what I was already trying to do was possible. I realized that gore and death could be poetic and beautiful, as well as motivation for story. That's the really important part. If the gore/brutality doesn't drive the story forward, then it's useless. It's just a joke. A shock factor. A laugh. As it is in most horror films. I think that's why what I've done has worked. The gore (or lack thereof) in connection with the story elements and characters creates an environment that sucks in the viewer and then doesn't let them go. Before they know it, they themselves are part of the story. But that also comes down to technical issues as well. You can't have even one bad edit or any bad audio. Because no matter how powerful your characters and story, in this modern age, picture and audio quality can make or break a film. Simply put, everything (story, characters, acting, shots, editing, and audio) has to work perfectly to make even a reasonably good film. Even a reasonably good, bad film.

LOL!SS: I really liked the impish camera work in the short "HUMAN NO MORE". Did you string a camera up or crawl around the ceiling? How did you do that? Seems similar to the non-linear camera style of Irreversible.

CAB: Yes, extremely nonlinear (as with all my films). HNM was very, very hard work and required tremendous pre planning. Every shot was choreographed to marry up to every other shot, in a way that would imply a single, endless perspective (a continuous POV). And yes, if you watch the HNM extras on the DVD, you'll see that I really was crawling around at the ceiling -- on homemade catwalks and peering through many pipes. In many sequences, the pipes were used as a cutaway to marry different shots and to make them seem like a continuous perspective. In post-production, I also used many different experimental methods in Final Cut Pro to make the production footage marry together even more seamlessly. I nearly drove myself mad with it, to be honest. But in the end, I did not divorce the project and I made the marriage work. And I think the film works. I realize it's not the most popular of all three of my films, but it is the most personal – and the one drawn from my deepest pain. And, with the amazing performance of Tony Simmons, I think that one day true fans will see this is

my VERTIGO. Hitchcock's best film, in my opinion. It's also one of his most personal films and, until recently, one of his most unappreciated. SS: The mask in MY SKIN! looks almost exactly like the one in the upcoming Hollywood addition to the over-used snuff category "The Poughkeepsie Tapes". Is it me or does that seem like a total rip-off? CAB: No rip-off. Not intentionally, anyway. I don't even know what you're talking about, and I also made MY SKIN many years ago. The mask, however, is an old school tradition in Venice at carnival time. I ran across it at a store up on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood and fell in love with it. I still have it, in fact. For me it was a way to make MY SKIN! and the character of death surreal and theatrical, which would immediately sell the over-the-top, uber-stylized, and somewhat campy, Hammer horror-esque nature of the film. I just wish I could have used the mask more. Maybe this "The Poughkeepsie Tapes" is ripping me off. Of course, I'm just ripping off human history. So let's sue each other, for godsake! SS: How the hell did you find that creepy bastard Tony Simmons? His each performance horrified me a little bit and how did you alter his appearance so easy? From being incredibly muscular and menacing as Madman to old, attention to detailed, and howling as Death. CAB: I met Tony by the sheer luck of fate. I'd put out a casting call for SFM in "Backstage West", a trade mag here in L.A. When I submitted the ad info I stated that the film contained "some nudity" and that there was "no pay" for the actors. When the ad was printed, however, it read as "some nudity" and "some pay". I freaked out and called immediately to complain. "Backstage West" now informed me that because of increasing sexual abuse issues at auditions, they had recently changed their policy on films with nudity: if an actor has to perform nude, he/she has to get paid something. Now exactly how problems of sexual abuse would be solved by offering "some pay" is still beyond me, but whatever. At the time, I was mainly concerned with having to explain to the actors I called to audition that "Backstage West" had misprinted the ad and there was actually no money to be had at all. What an embarrassment. To my surprise, however, everyone I called (about 30 people for each of the three parts) accepted the chance to audition anyway — including a very mean and scary looking guy named Tony Simmons. I fell in love with his headshot immediately, but was terrified by the fact that he looked like he'd enjoy nothing better than beating the hell out of anyone that looked his direction — especially some no-name filmmaker suddenly telling him sorry, there really is no pay. I was also terrified that because he so looked the part of Madman, he probably couldn't act worth a shit. But my fears were unfounded — Tony's audition blew me away. No other actor even came close. The following week I offered Tony the part, and he accepted immediately. A couple years later, when we were shooting MY SKIN, he confessed that he never answered ads that stated "no pay". So, that's why I say that the sheer luck of fate brought us together. If "Backstage West" hadn't changed their policy, and arbitrarily changed my ad info, Tony never would've

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sent his headshot. He also told me that the only reason he went through with the audition was that when he read the sides I'd put out for the call, he was blown away by my writing; especially the voice of Madman. A match made in heaven. Or maybe I should say hell, considering the content of SFM. As for changing him into Death for MY SKIN!, it was really just a matter of lighting, camera angles, a little makeup, and the brilliant Tony Simmons inhabiting the character. Viola!SS: I noticed you wrote a lot of the lyrics and performed most of the music on the OST's. How did you manage to do that so efficiently?CAB: As for my lyrics and music...I did write the lyrics for IN THE MOONLIGHT (MY SKIN!) and SOUL IN A HOLE (HUMAN NO MORE), but the amazing Brian Sussman wrote and performed the music. I was, however, a professional musician for many years and used some of my previous band's (THE JUDAS ENGINE's) tunes, which I also wrote the lyrics for. In SFM I used the song WORLD SCREAM (from our debut CD) and in HUMAN NO MORE I used a never distributed track called I AM A WALL. Both tunes are available for download at: <http://blackcabproductions.com/MP3.TJE.html>Alas, a past life much missed. Enjoy!SS: How did the audience reactions to SCREAM FOR ME vary? You should have seen my face when I found out what was happening. Did anyone leave the showing?CAB: Yes, some have walked out. LOL! When the film screened at the New York City Horror Film Festival (at which it won Best Short Film) I know five people walked out in the first 10 minutes. Ironically, I ran into two of them as they were going back into the fest later. It was two women complaining about the violence of the film and wondering how and why anyone could make such a terrible thing. I then shook their hands, gave them a DVD, and said I was the writer and director. LOL! The look on their faces was worth a million dollars.SS: You mentioned that these films were very personal and could be an exorcism of your own demons. Care to explain?CAB: Well, in some ways there's not really much to explain. On the other hand, the personal part has really been about the challenge of just making a solid, good film. One that connects with me and, hopefully, one that will magically connect with others. But with every film...well, it's turned into the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. Technically, philosophically, emotionally. I wonder why I even want to continue sometimes. But it's simply something that's in me. And it has to come out one way or another, or I'll die. Whether it's through music, writing, or filmmaking, it has to come out. It's the only way I know how to justify my existence. (For whatever that's worth.)SS: After writing a novel (PUZZLEMAN), do you have any more planned exploits in film?CAB: For years I've been about 300 manuscript pages into writing a novel called HEATHER'S TREEHOUSE. It isn't nearly as complex of a story as PUZZLEMAN, but it's definitely as visceral and graphic. It's also less angry and philosophically gloomy. It should be a fun read, if I can ever get the time to finish it. Speaking of which, I'm about 60 pages into a shorter novel I plan to call M. That one is a very personal story and

is written in first person with a stream of conscious feel to it — definitely very different from PUZZLEMAN or HEATHER'S TREEHOUSE. I also have two feature screenplays I'm dying to direct, LOVE ME and RETARD (Best Horror Feature Screenplay – A.K.A Shriekfest 2004) which I wrote with actor/writer John Franklin (who played Isaac in CHILDREN OF THE CORN and CHILDREN OF THE CORN 666). And I have two more scripts I need to finish writing – which will hopefully star Tony Simmons. And a couple children's stories I'd like to do. And the list goes on. There's lot's and lot's to do. But whether or not these projects are produced by Black Cab Productions, or some bigger studio or publisher, is up in the air right now.SS: Last but not least, what is your process of coming up with such a terrific monologue ala HUMAN NO MORE? It is near impossible to not be affected by that scene. Many thanks for this interview. I look forward to your name slapped on more cinema in the future.CAB: Thank you for that. The monologue was something I worked on very hard. Very, very hard. I really had to externalize my own pain – really get to my core emotions and stare straight into the abyss. And, I'm afraid it's true, the abyss did stare back into me – and it showed me two faces. The 9/11 disaster and the love-of-my-life suddenly walking out on me without any warning. I was angry at the world already, and then I was thrown into a dark basement, not unlike Detective Nemo in HUMAN NO MORE, without a soul to hold onto. I did have my family, fortunately (although long distance), but I had lost the most precious gift I'd ever been given. It was like being addicted to the most powerful drug in the world, and then suddenly having it taken away. Detoxing hasn't been easy. Part of that detox was the making of HUMAN NO MORE and the writing of the infamous monologue. I thought it would release me. But, sadly, it really hasn't. I've been told I have an amazing ability to externalize my pain through writing. And I guess that is my true gift. But it is rarely a pleasant one. So enjoy. I'm just here to entertain. :)Be sure to check out his award winning collection at Black Cab Productions

INTERVIEW WITH CRISPIN GLOVER
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It comes as a great honor that we at Soiled Sinema bring you this insightful interview with modern day Renaissance man Crispin Glover. Although best known as an actor and for playing standout roles in films like *Back to the Future* (1985), *River's Edge* (1986), *Charlie's Angels* (2000) and *Willard* (2003), Mr. Glover is also a distinguished filmmaker/screenwriter, author, recording artist, and publisher. In this interview, Crispin discusses his *It?* Trilogy and his extremely exceptional and fruitful career.

Soiled Sinema: How did the tragic premature passing of *It is Fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE* writer/actor Steven C. Stewart affect the conclusion of the trilogy you both set out together to complete?

You had also mentioned that Steven C. Stewart was subject to cruel abuse which bled over into much of the work you two created. Care to elaborate?

Crispin Glover: Steve Stewart only wrote "It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE." I incorporated Steve in to *What is it?* to make his screenplay a sequel and part of the trilogy. Steve did not have any involvement in writing "What is it?" or "IT IS MINE."

Steven C. Stewart wrote and is the main actor in part two of the trilogy titled *It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE*. I put Steve in to the cast of *What is it?* because he had written this screenplay which I read in 1987. When I turned *What is it?* from a short film in to a feature I realized there were certain thematic elements in the film that related to what Steven C. Stewart's screenplay dealt with. Steve had been locked in a nursing home for about ten years when his mother died. He had been born with a severe case of cerebral palsy and he was very difficult to understand. People that were caring for him in the nursing home would derisively call him an "M.R." short for "Mental Retard". This is not a nice thing to say to anyone, but Steve was of normal intelligence. When he did get out he wrote his screenplay. Although it is written in the genre of a murder detective thriller truths of his own existence come through much more clearly than if he had written it as a standard autobiography. As I have stated, I put Steven C. Stewart in to *What is it?* When I turned *What is it?* in to a feature film. Originally *What is it?* Was going to be a short film to promote the concept to corporate film funding entities that working with a cast wherein most characters are played by actors with Down's Syndrome. Steve had written his screenplay in in the late 1970's. I read it in 1987 and as soon as I had read it I knew I had to produce the film. Steven C. Stewart died within a month after we finished shooting the film. Cerebral palsy is not generative but Steve was 62 when we shot the film. One of Steve's lungs had collapsed because he had started choking on his own saliva and he got pneumonia. I specifically started funding my own films with the money I make from the films I act in when Steven C.

Stewart's lung collapsed in the year 2000 this was around the same time that the first Charlie's Angels film was coming to me. I realized with the money I made from that film I could put straight in to the Steven C. Stewart film. That is exactly what happened. I finished acting in Charlie's Angels and then went to Salt Lake City where Steven C. Stewart lived. I met with Steve and David Brothers with whom I co-directed the film. I went back to LA and acted in an lower budget film for about five weeks and David Brothers started building the sets. Then I went straight back to Salt Lake and we completed shooting the film within about six months in three separate smaller productions. Then Steve died within a month after we finished shooting. I am relieved to have gotten this film finally completed because ever since I read the screenplay in 1987 I knew I had to produce the film and also produce it correctly. I would not have felt right about myself if we had not gotten Steve's film made, I would have felt that I had done something wrong and that I had actually done a bad thing if I had not gotten it made. So I am greatly relieved to have completed it especially since I am very pleased with how well the film has turned out. We shot It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE. while I was still completing What it? And this is partly why What is it? took a long time to complete. I am very proud of the film as I am of What is it? I feel It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE. will probably be the best film I will have anything to do with in my entire career. People who are interested in when I will be back should join up on the e mail list at CrispinGlover.com as they will be emailed with information as to where I will be where with whatever film I tour with. It is by far the best way to know how to see the films.

After Charlie's Angels came out it did very well financially and was good for my acting career. I started getting better roles that also paid better and I could continue using that money to finance my films that I am so truly passionate about. I have been able to divorce myself from the content of the films that I act in and look at acting as a craft that I am helping other filmmakers to accomplish what it is that they want to do. Usually filmmakers have hired me because there is something they have felt would be interesting to accomplish with using me in their film and usually I can try to do something interesting as an actor. If for some reason the director is not truly interested in doing something that I personally find interesting with the character then I can console myself that with the money I am making to be in their production I can help to fund my own films that I am so truly passionate about. Usually though I feel as though I am able to get something across as an actor that I feel good about. It has worked out well.

SS: Do you see yourself -- years from now -- after all of the legendary tours have become history, releasing the films for the public in any sort of home format?

CG: Right now I have no plans to stop touring. The tour is the way people should see the films. People can find out where I will be touring by signing up

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for my newsletter on CrispinGlover.com

SS: At a past Big Slide Show, you mentioned how you initially happened to make the acquaintance

of Steven C. Stewart. Would you care to reiterate this story for Soiled Sinema readers? How did this personal relationship develop into the creation of the It? Trilogy?

CG: When I was 19 I was acting in a film made at the AFI called *The Orkly Kid*. The character I was playing was based on a person the director had made a documentary about when he was working on a television show in Salt Lake Utah. He was friends with another filmmaker from Salt Lake named Larry Roberts who had made a documentary on Steven C Stewart when Steve was still not able to get out of the nursing home. When Steve got out of the nursing home he told Larry that he wanted to make a movie. Larry was an interesting filmmaker, but was older and doing other things and he introduced Steve to another younger Salt Lake filmmaker that was making unusual movies and said maybe they could work on it together. I had also been shown some of David Brother's films by Larry and the director of the *Orkly Kid*. It was around this time that I had been wanting to make a movie from one of my books and I had very much liked David Brother's movies he was making on video. So I met up with David Brothers and we started making a movie of one of my books called *The Backward Swing*. We started shooting this on video in 1987. Actually this will be the next movie I edit together as the films took over. In any case while we were working on *The Backward Swing* David showed me the script for *Everything is fine!* and as soon as I read it I knew it was a movie I had to produce.

Steven C. Stewart's own true story was fascinating and then the beautiful story and the naïve including his fascination of women with long hair and the graphic violence and sexuality and the revealing truth of his psyche from the screenplay were all combined. A specific marriage proposal scene was the scene I remember reading that made me think "I will have to be the person to produce/finance this film."

SS: Would you say there is a connection (whether it be aesthetic, idealistic, or otherwise) between elements of your films and your concept album *The Big Problem ≠ The Solution. The Solution = Let It Be*?

CG: My films, books and album "*The Big Problem ≠ The Solution. The Solution = Let It Be?*" contain questions or let people come up with their own questions.

SS: Is it safe to say that most true artists are competent in a variety of mediums?

CG: It is possible and it is also possible that many artists are far better at one medium than another, but I have noticed that many good artists are good in multiple mediums.

SS: Your father, Bruce Glover, is in the second film of your trilogy *It is Fine! Everything is Fine..* How was the experience of directing your own father, who we can assume had much weight in steering you towards your current occupation?

CG: My father was easy to direct in "*It is Fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE.*" My mother is also in the film. When I was born she retired as an actress and primarily a dancer. "Steering" would be the wrong word to use about my choice of profession. My mother did want me to become involved in dance when I was a child. I went to one dance class that she taught and she said "Alright girls... and... boy." and I never went again.

So my parents were not really able to steer me in an occupational direction.

I am very satisfied with my profession/professions. The one thing I wanted to be before figuring out that it would be a good idea to enter in to acting professionally at age 13, was a geologist. My idea of the profession was that I would find geodes and fascinating geological rocks and formations. I then realized that a geologist at the time I was thinking about it, which was the 1970's would probably need to work for a multinational oil corporation finding oil deposits. That did not seem as interesting to me. I am glad I continued on doing what I do. I still have great interest in the tectonic plates and volcanoes and geological formations. My publishing company is called "Volcanic Eruptions"

My father is what I would describe as a blue-collar or working-class actor. I witnessed my father's struggles as an actor and did not look at the business in a glamorous way.

I made a pragmatic choice to pursue acting as a career when I was quite young around 11 or 12. I got an agent when I was 13 and got my first professional job that year. Having grown up around the business it seemed like something that I would be able to do. My father also teaches acting and has since before I was born. I never formally studied with my father but I am certain that hearing him speak about things had influence. I would say that my personality type is not that of a standard actor's personality type that would more be someone who enjoys attention for attention's sake. That in fact makes me rather uncomfortable. For me it is important to have an idea that can be supported with performance or even for media publicity. Because of this I believe that if my parents had not been in the business and I was born with the personality type that I have, I probably would have pursued a very different career path.

> I became a professional actor at age 13 by my own choice. I emphasize that because there is a large difference in that from when a child is forced in to acting by parents who choose that career for a child. I began studying in a professional acting class at age 15. At age 16 I viewed many revival films of the 1920's through the 1970's at the revival theaters that were popular in the early 1980's before the advent of VHS competition that led to most of the revival houses closing. While watching many of the films and being in acting class I began to understand film

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and acting as art.

SS: How does your father feel about your ambitious taboo-breaking cinema?

CG: My parents have come to see the films and live shows on multiple occasions and are supportive of both the live shows and films.

SS: Censorship and context are both reasons for your choice in creating and controlling the screenings and distribution of your films. How would you imagine a general audience perceiving your film if it was promoted and released like your typical Hollywood Blockbuster?

CG: I love showing at museums, universities, cinematheques and vaudeville theaters. As I tour through the world it is apparent that as much as multiplexes and home theater has become ubiquitous that the single screen cultural center is absolutely vital to a specific audience that is looking to have a thoughtful experience at the theater be it live or by film. Museums can attract particularly thoughtful crowds. The forums are greatly appreciated by audience members. In vaudeville there was an energetic exchange between the performers and audience. The audience is part of the experience as opposed to merely being an audience that has no interaction when alone at home. The Q and A portion of the shows are extremely helpful with the films, particularly "What is it?" which can generate a particular amount of demand from the audience in forms of questions.

All currently corporately funded films by US film ratings must be made for the viewership of children. The reason for this is that when the NC-17 rating came about to replace the X rating multiplexes had become a norm. In the 1960's and 1970's films like *A Clockwork Orange* and *Midnight Cowboy* were given the X rating in the US. At that time it was easy to control if children were able to get in to a single screen theater or not. When multiplexes came in to being and X was changed to NC-17 the corporations that ran the multiplexes became concerned that a child could walk down the hall and easily enter in to an NC-17 film and they could be sued. So they stated that they would not show films rated NC-17. Being that multiplexes had become the main source of recoupment for the film distributors it was no longer viable to distribute NC-17 films. Without viable distribution of an NC-17 rated film no corporate entities would fund films they cannot recoup on. So at this point in time corporate funding and distribution entities in the US will only fund films that are rated G, PG, PG13, and R. R means under 18 accompanied by an adult. Therefore all corporately funded films in the US must be made with concept that those under the age of 18 are able to view the film. This means all corporately funded films in the US are made for the eyes of children. There is certainly nothing wrong with films that are specifically made for children, but it certainly is questionable when there is not a corporately funded film company that will fund and distribute films that are specifically for the eyes of adults.

Unfortunately I see the corporately funded and distributed films industry cur-

rently as having a hugely propagandizing effect on the US population at large. It is an enormous topic. I recently read the book "Propaganda" written in 1925 by Edward Bernays. Bernays was Sigmund Freud's nephew and utilized his uncle's understanding of the subconscious and became the literal founder of the "Public Relations" industry. Bernays came up with the word combination "Public Relations" to replace the word propaganda. The book is not an expose but an instruction manual for the monied and privileged class through psychological "Public relations"/propaganda techniques to get the lower class masses to serve the privileged class with the disguise of democracy. I feel like this book should be mandatory reading for everyone in high school so people in the US would have a better understanding of how things genuinely work in the media.

Stanley Kubrick made some of the most beautiful, thoughtful and questioning cinematic films ever in the corporately funded and distributed studio films system. He is fascinating to study. The culture ebbs and flows and waxes and wanes in terms of how much questioning can happen in media. We are in a particularly restrictive time right now with what will be corporately funded and distributed. Questioning could become even more restricted or less restricted. It sort of depends on how much people become concerned about the restrictions. Most current media that is corporately funded and distributed now is designed to make people not question.

I am not against the basic concept of corporations, but I have come to notice a similarity to the "Occupy Movement" and what "What is it?" is essentially protesting. It seems that the "Occupy Movement" is protesting business interests having an influence in what has basically become a legalized form of bribery by corporate/business/banking interests in politicians/political elements which is of course against the concept of basic democracy.

Relatedly "What is it?" is a protest to the corporate corporate/business/banking interests in the content of film/media which ends up leading to corporate/business/banking interest's propaganda.

SS: For as long as I can remember, *River's Edge* (1986) directed by Tim Hunter has been one of my favorite films. Naturally, it goes without saying that your performance as Layne is for me (and most other fans of the film), one of the most (if not the most) potent and memorable aspects of the film. How did you prepare for the role of Layne and what are your personal thoughts on the character?

CG: The way the character was written made me think of a certain regional dialect that I had grown up hearing. I am proud of that film. There was an intention change in the character from the way it had been written. The character could have been played as a person who sincerely wanted the best for the murderer character. But I made the choice to play the character as a person who wanted people to believe that intentions of the character were sincere in order for positive attention to be put on to himself. That is a different intention than

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what was written. The dialogue was not changed but the intentions was changed. There was a certain dynamic that this brought about in the character within the film. I like my performance in that film and I like the film as a whole.

SS: You mentioned the mainstream media's influence on Columbine High school massacre killers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold in your article *What Is It?* Would you consider Layne a "proto-Columbine killer" of sorts?

CG: The repressive culture brings out troublesome actions. The character in *River's Edge* and the film itself is not a repressive film but an explorative film and film that brings up questions which is healthy for the culture. I think right now most films are not explorative and unfortunately are more dictatorial in the approach as to how the audience is approached as to how to think about the subject matter. The business interest's control on how they want the culture to work for their own benefit. I would say that sort of media control can bring out negative repressed actions from people.

SS: How/when did you get interested in writing/designing books?

CG: The live aspect of the shows I perform before the films I tour with are not to be underestimated. This is a large part of how I bring audiences in to the theater and a majority of how I recoup is by what is charged for the live show and what I make from selling the books after the shows.

For "Crispin Hellion Glover's Big Slide Show" I perform a one hour dramatic narration of eight different books I have made over the years. The books are taken from old books from the 1800's that have been changed in to different books from what they originally were. They are heavily illustrated with original drawings and reworked images and photographs.

I started making my books in 1983 for my own enjoyment without the concept of publishing them. I had always written and drawn and the books came as an accidental outgrowth of that. I was in an acting class in 1982 and down the block was an art gallery that had a book store upstairs. In the book store there was a book for sale that was an old binding taken from the 1800's and someone had put their art work inside the binding. I thought this was a good idea and set out to do the same thing. I worked a lot with India ink at the time and was using the India ink on the original pages to make various art. I had always liked words in art and left some of the words on one of the pages. I did this again a few pages later and then when I turned the pages I noticed that a story started to naturally form and so I continued with this. When I was finished with the book I was pleased with the results and kept making more of them. I made most of the books in the 80's and very early 90's. Some of the books utilize text from the binding it was taken from and some of them are basically completely original text. Sometimes I would find images that I was inspired to create stories for or sometimes it was the binding or sometimes it was portions of the texts that were interesting. Altogether, I made about twenty of them. When I was editing my first feature film "What is it?" There was a reminiscent quality to the way I

worked with the books because as I was expanding the film in to a feature from what was originally going to be a short, I was taking film material that I had shot for a different purpose originally and re-purposed it for a different idea and I was writing and shooting and ultimately editing at the same time. Somehow I was comfortable with this because of similar experiences with making my books.

When I first started publishing the books in 1988 people said I should have book readings. But the books are so heavily illustrated and the way the illustrations are used within the books they help to tell the story so the only way for the books to make sense was to have visually representations of the images. This is why I knew a slide show was necessary. It took a while but in 1992 I started performing what I now call Crispin Hellion Glover's Big Slide Show Part 1. The content of that show has not changed since I first started performing it. But the performance of the show has become more dramatic as opposed to more of a reading.

People sometimes get confused as to what "Crispin Hellion Glover's Big Slide Show (Parts 1&2)" is so now I always let it be known that it is a one hour dramatic narration of eight different profusely illustrated books that I have made over the years. The illustrations from the books are projected behind me as I perform the show. There is a second slide show now that also has 8 books. Part 2 is performed if I have a show with Part 1 of the "IT" trilogy and then on the subsequent night I will perform the second slide show and Part 2 of the "IT" trilogy. The second slide show has been developed over the last several years and the content has changed as it has been developed, but I am very happy with the content of the second slide show now.

The fact that I tour with the film helps the distribution element. I consider what I am doing to be following in the steps of vaudeville performers. Vaudeville was the main form of entertainment for most of the history of the US. It has only relatively recently stopped being the main source of entertainment, but that does not mean this live element mixed with other media is no longer viable. In fact it is apparent that it is sorely missed.

I definitely have been aware of the element of utilizing the fact that I am known from work in the corporate media I have done in the last 25 years or so. This is something I rely on for when I go on tour with my films. It lets me go to various places and have the local media cover the fact that I will be performing a one hour live dramatic narration of eight different books which are profusely illustrated and projected as I go through them, then show the film either What is it? Being 72 minutes or It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE being 74 minutes. Then having a Q and A and then a book signing. As I funded the films I knew that this is how I would recoup my investment even if it a slow process.

Volcanic Eruptions was a business I started in Los Angeles in 1988 as Crispin Hellion Glover doing business as Volcanic Eruptions. It was a name to use for my book publishing company. About a year later I had a record/CD come out

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with a corporation called Restless Records. About when I had sold the same amount of books as CD/records had sold it was very clear to me that because I had published my own books that I had a far greater profit margin. It made me very suspicious of working with corporations as a business model. Financing/Producing my own films is based on the basic business model of my own publishing company. There are benefits and drawbacks about self distributing my own films. In this economy it seems like a touring with the live show and showing the films with a book signing is a very good basic safety net for recouping the monies I have invested in the films

There are other beneficial aspects of touring with the shows other than monetary elements. There are benefits that I am in control of the distribution and personally supervise the monetary intake of the films that I am touring with. I also control piracy in this way because digital copy of this film is stolen material and highly prosecutable. It is enjoyable to travel and visit places, meet people, perform the shows and have interaction with the audiences and discussions about the films afterwards. The forum after the show is also not to under-estimated as a very important part of the show for for the audience. This also makes me much more personally grateful to the individuals who come to my shows as there is no corporate intermediary. The drawbacks are that a significant amount of time and energy to promote and travel and perform the shows. Also the amount of people seeing the films is much smaller than if I were to distribute the films in a more traditional sense.

The way I distribute my films is certainly not traditional in the contemporary sense of film distribution but perhaps is very traditional when looking further back at vaudeville era film distribution. If there are any filmmakers that are able to utilize aspects of what I am doing then that is good. It has taken many years to organically develop what I am doing now as far as my distribution goes.

SS: On top of appearing in *What Is It?*, Feral House owner Adam Parfrey published your essay *What Is It?* in his book *Apocalypse Culture II*. What is your relationship with Parfrey and do you have any plans to once again collaborate with him in the future -- be it in film or otherwise?

CG: I am friends with Adam Parfrey and he has influence on both the article in "*Apocalypse Culture II*" and content in the film "*What is it?*" I am always open to collaboration with intelligent people that I have had positive relations with. So I certainly would be up to collaborating with Adam Parfrey again.

SS: How does your brilliant article *What is It?* relate to your 2005 film of the same name? Is the film an abstract surrealist portrayal of some of the ideas expressed in your article?

CG: The article in *What is it?* was written in 1999 after the feature film "*What is it?*" had been locked as a picture edit. It was conceived as an entertainment essay for Adam Parfrey's book "*Apocalypse Culture II*" that would also promote the film "*What is it?*"

SS: In your film *What is It?*, one of the roles you played was that of the "Dueling Demi-God Auteur." What are your thoughts on auteur theory and auteur filmmaking in general? Is it safe to say that the films (and upcoming film) in the *It?* Trilogy are a rare modern example of pure and personal "auteur" works?

CG: On some level the word "Auteur" was used for entertainment purposes with a sense of humor. Although it is true that Steve is the original "Auteur" of "It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE."

I am very careful to make it quite clear that *What is it?* is not a film about Down's Syndrome but my psychological reaction to the corporate restraints that have happened in the last 20 to 30 years in film making. Specifically anything that can possibly make an audience uncomfortable is necessarily excised or the film will not be corporately funded or distributed. This is damaging to the culture because it is the very moment when an audience member sits back in their chair looks up at the screen and thinks to their self "Is this right what I am watching? Is this wrong what I am watching? Should I be here? Should the filmmaker have made this? What is it?" -and that is the title of the film. What is it that is taboo in the culture? What does it mean that taboo has been ubiquitously excised in this culture's media? What does it mean to the culture when it does not properly process taboo in it's media? It is a bad thing because when questions are not being asked because these kinds of questions are when people are having a truly educational experience. For the culture to not be able to ask questions leads towards a non educational experience and that is what is happening in this culture. This stupefies this culture and that is of course a bad thing. So *What is it?* Is a direct reaction to the contents this culture's media. I would like people to think for themselves.

SS: What are thoughts on the blatant decline of great auteur filmmakers in the modern Occidental world? Undoubtedly, you have helped to fill the void in our mostly auteur-less era. Do you believe that Hollywood has consciously sought out to destroy the auteur filmmaker -- and organic art in general?

CG: Consciousness in corporately funded and distributed filmmaking for the most part is difficult to define as propagandized thought processes end up infusing in to what the sensibility of the corporately funded and distributed film entity decides on what is put forth to the population. Every once in a while a film will come out from the corporately funded and distributed filmmaking business from a filmmaker that is both intelligent and deft at making cinematic decisions that have positive cultural messages. It is rare and difficult for that to happen, but when it does I applaud those film makers.

The way that US propaganda works is difficult to describe.

Unfortunately the corporately funded and distributed films industry currently is having a hugely propagandizing effect on the US population at large. It is an enormous topic.

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I recently read the book “Propaganda” written in 1925 by Edward Bernays. I recommend everyone read it. The first sentence of the book is “THE conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.”

Bernays was Sigmund Freud’s nephew and utilized his uncle’s understanding of the subconscious and became the literal founder of the “Public Relations” industry. Bernays came up with the word combination “Public Relations” to replace the word propaganda. He brought his uncle’s ideas and introduced Sigmund Freud to the US to help influence US corporations, Academia and the government. The book is not an expose but an instruction manual for the monied and privileged class through psychological “Public relations”/propaganda techniques to get the lower class masses to serve the privileged class with the disguise of democracy. I feel like this book should be mandatory reading for everyone in high school so people in the US would have a better understanding of how things genuinely work in the media. Once anyone reads this book they will not be able to see the function of US media the same way again.

The difficult part of the US propaganda is the way it is put in to effect is not be committee dictation but by the way corporate/business interests utilize money to essentially legally bribe people/government/academia/media to do that which is in the corporate/business interest.

SS: What are some of the struggles you have had to dealt with in your ambitious career of simultaneously working within the Hollywood studio system, but also creating uncompromising artistic works independently in various mediums? You seem to be one of the few people that has been able to successfully do that. Why do you think this is?

CG: There is a strange mix of being brought up working within the media business and becoming aware of the amount of control that corporate interests were having on the content of film in general.

The first time I used discretion about choosing films was not till after “Back to the Future” came out in 1985. After that film came out and had made so much money I felt a certain obligation towards finding films that somehow reflected what my own psychologically interested were. The first film I acted in after that was “River’s Edge.” I am not critical of the concept of corporations. I am critical when the result of corporate control causes people to think less or for media in general to come out with less questioning or question causing content. Corporations do not necessarily cause this, but it currently is happening in great quantity. There are times when corporate entities have been behind great questioning films like “A Clockwork Orange” or “2001 a Space Odyssey.” I prefer to not be overly political. I concern myself with things that affect me directly.

The film industry I had thought I had stepped in to was the spirit of when I

was a teenager attending the various revival theaters that were so popular in Los Angeles in the 1980's before home theater business competition forced most 35 mm venues to close. I did not realize at the time that I stepped in to working as an actor that the kinds of films that were being funded and distributed had changed.

As soon as I got my driver's license when I was 16 in 1980 I attended screenings at revival theaters that were quite popular in LA before VHS competition cleared many of them away. Many of these revival theaters no longer exist such as, one of my favorites, the beautiful Fox Venice with a wide cinemascope screen on Lincoln Blvd.

The films I saw that played in these venues tended to question culturally accepted truths with performances that underscored these concepts.

Films played such as:

Ken Russel's *The Devils*,

Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* and *Chinatown*,

Frederico Fellini's *8 1/2* and *Cassanova*,

John Cassavete's *A woman under the influence*,

Orson Welles' *F is for Fake* and *Citizen Kane*,

Billy Wilder's *The Apartment* and *Sunset Blvd*,

John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* and *Desperate Living*,

Todd Browning's *Freaks*,

Stanley Kubrick's *2001* and *Clockwork Orange* and *Dr. Strangelove*,

Werner Herzog's *Aguirre Wrath of God*, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* and *Fata Morgana*.

I was a regular attendee of David Lynch's *Eraserhead* at midnight on Fridays at the Nuart.

I studied actors giving performances like:

Jack Nicholson in *Five Easy Pieces* and *Easy Rider*,

Timothy Carey in Marlon Brando's *One Eyed Jacks* and Elia Kazan's *East of Eden*,

Charles Laughton in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

Brad Dourif in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* and *Wise Blood*,

Peter Lorre in *M*

Emil Jannings in *The Last Laugh*

and Klaus Kinski in *Aguirre Wrath of God*.

These films and performances characterized the atmosphere of cinema and acting I believed I was stepping into as a young actor. By 1982, at age 18, I began to act in feature films. At this time I believed contemporary culture's film's main purpose was to question suspect things in our culture. I enthusiastically supported the idea of questioning our culture. To help support the idea, I also questioned the film industry's and media's messages. Sometimes I felt scorned and isolated; other times I felt accepted and admired. Then, at one point, in the

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midst of my career, I realized that the types of films the industry was financing and distributing had changed almost diametrically from the types of films I had watched when I was 18.

Now, I have put my artistic passions and questions in to my own filmmaking with films like "What is it?" and its sequel "It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE."

SS: Can Hollywood filmmakers like Steven Spielberg and Michael Bay be considered auteur filmmakers due to their somewhat consistent and ambiguously "personal" themes? Or would you consider them "anti-auteur" filmmakers due to their intrinsic lack of thematic, aesthetic, and artistic complexity? In other words, are Blockbuster filmmakers merely soulless and totally lacking in genuine expression and/or are they merely appealing to the lowest common denominator with the sole goal of obtaining a substantial monetary return?

CG: I specifically do not use the term "Hollywood film" because it is overly generalized and "Hollywood" for me is a place I have lived, so I think of that more as a geographical place. The specific term I use is "Corporately funded and distributed film." I am not so familiar with Michael Bay's films. I am far more familiar with the films of Steven Spielberg. Looking both of their credits up on IMDB, which can be inaccurate, it seems that Michael Bay had not written any of the films that he has directed. But the definition I understand of "Auteur" this would mean Michael Bay would not be that. The film that Steven Spielberg solely wrote the screenplay and directed is "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" By and by the definition of "Auteur" it would make him that definition.

I would think all films whether one likes the expression held within them or not are forms of expression. It may be that some filmmakers forms of expression are more aligned with business interests. It can be argued whether their personal interests naturally align to business interest or if the business interest had caused what is their personal interest has become.

SS: You have stated in the past that you're a fan of German New Wave filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog. Historically, what do you think are the main differences between Hollywood and European cinema? Why do you think there has been a decline in great European films and filmmakers?

CG: I admire both Herzog's and Fassbinder's work as filmmakers and it has been a great honor and pleasure to know Werner Herzog. Herzog of course is still making great films to this day so he is still a fantastic force. I am sure if Fassbinder were still alive he would also be a great force. The decline you may be feeling is probably a general worldwide waxing of control by business interests and control over the content of film.

SS: Are there any modern films/filmmakers that you admire/respect?

CG: There certainly are.

SS: What films and filmmakers have inspired you? Trilogy? Have any

writers, philosophers, or otherwise inspired the Trilogy?

CG: Some of the filmmakers mentioned above certainly have had influence on my thoughts.

“What is it?” started production as a short film in 1996. It took 9.5 years from the first day of shooting on the short film to having a 35 mm print of the feature film. I wrote it as a short film originally to promote the viability of having a majority of the characters that do not necessarily have Down’s Syndrome to be played by actors with Down’s Syndrome.

The way this came about was this. In 1996. I was approached by two young writers and aspiring filmmakers who were from Phoenix to act in a film they wanted to produce and direct. They made a monetary offer to my agents which they really should not have done as they did not actually have financing. Nonetheless it did get me to read the screenplay which I found to be interesting. This screenplay was not What is it? I found interesting things about the screenplay and was interested in the project, but I thought there were things about the screenplay that did not work. I came up with solutions that needed re working of the screenplay and I told them I would be interested in acting in the film if I directed it. They came to LA and met with me and wanted to know my thoughts. There were quite a few things but the main things was that most of the character were to be played by actors with Down’s Syndrome. They were fine with this concept and I set about to re writing the screenplay. David Lynch then agreed to executive produce the film for me to direct. This was very helpful and I went to one of the larger corporate entities in Los Angeles that finances films and met with them. They were interested in the project but after a number of meetings and conversations they let me know that they were concerned about financing a project wherein most of the characters were played by actors with Down’s Syndrome. The title of this screenplay at this point had become IT IS MINE. And will become part three of the “IT” trilogy. It was known yet at this time that there would be a trilogy but it was decided that I should write a short screenplay to promote that the concept of having a majority of the characters played by actors with Down’s Syndrome was a viable things to do for corporate entities to invest in.

This is when I wrote a short screenplay entitled What is it? We shot this short screenplay in four days. I edited that over a period of six months and the first edit came in at 84 minutes. The final feature length film of What is it? is 72 minutes. So the first version of the short film is longer than the final version of the feature film, and it was too long for the material I had at the time, but I could see with more work and more material I could turn it in to a feature film. Over approximately the next two years I shot 8 more days and edited this in to what is now the final version of the film. I locked the edit of the film about three years after the first day of shooting what was supposed to be a short film. Then there were a number of years of very frustrating technical problems that mainly had to

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do with SMPTE time code. Originally I was going to make the film the now old fashioned way of a complete photochemical process and not digital intermediate. An optical house in New York that did not give me enough information to let me know that the SMPTE time code had not been properly put on when the film was telecined. During this time I worked patiently on the final sound edit of the film with a number of interns. Finally that sound edit was finished and it became apparent that the film optical house was not telling me the truth and prices had fallen during this time so I was able to make the film using a digital intermediate to ultimately go out to a 35 mm print of the film. So from the first day of shooting what was to be a short film to having a 35 mm print for the film took 9.5 years.

> Sometimes people ask me if the length of time it took for me to make the film had to do with working with actors with Down's Syndrome. This was not the case. Even though the film took many years to make much of the delay were technical issues. What is it was actually shot in a total of twelve days which was spread over several years. Twelve days is actually a very short amount of shooting days for a feature film. The most important thing about working with an actor whether they have Down's Syndrome or not is if they have enthusiasm. Everyone in I worked with had incredible enthusiasm so they were all great to work with.

SS: What can we expect from *It Is Mine*? Do you have any specific goals you would like to reveal regarding the final chapter of your *It?* Trilogy? Do you have any plans for directing films after you complete the *It?* Trilogy that you would like to reveal?

CG: I should not go in to detail for "*IT IS MINE.*" yet and I will not shoot that next. There are other projects outside of the trilogy that I will shoot next. The Czech Republic is another culture and another language and I need to build up to complex productions like "*What is it?*" and the existing sequel "*It is fine! EVERYTHING IS FINE.*" *IT IS MINE.* Is an even more complex project than those two films were so it will be a while yet for that production. I will step outside of the trilogy for a number of films that deal with different thematic elements.

The sets for my next film productions have started construction. At the same time the sets are being built I am in the process of continuing to develop the screenplay for myself and my father to act in together on these very sets. He is also an actor and that is the next film I am planning to make as a director/producer. This will be the first role I write for myself to act in that will be written as an acting role as opposed to a role that was written for the character I play to merely serve the structure. But even still on some level I am writing the screenplay to be something that I can afford to make. There are two other projects I am currently developing to shoot on sets at my property in the Czech Republic. The cost of the set building will determine which one I actually shoot next. They will all be relatively affordable yet still cinematically pleasing.

SS: Would you ever consider directing a film within the mostly strict confines of the Hollywood studio system? Additionally, are there any characters (be they historical figures or fictional) that you have always wanted to play?

CG: It may come about naturally that corporately funded and distributed film's interests will naturally come in to alignment with my own interests. There have been waxing and waning periods of corporate control of the content of film and right now we are in a severe waxing of control. We shall see what the future holds.

For more info on Crispin Glover's Big Slide Show, his company Volcanic Eruptions, and the It? Trilogy, please visit: <http://www.crispinglover.com/>

INTERVIEW WITH FSUDOL
INTERVIEW WITH FSUDOL

FSUDOL is the director of both animated zombie horror films *City of Rott* and the upcoming *Dead Fury*. His work has been seen and acclaimed for mixing homages with toilet humor. His more known work would be on the *South Park* film. We had a chance to discuss his new film *DEAD FURY* and a mutual love for zombies.

SS: You seem to have an avid appetite for zombie carnage. When did all start, and what were your inspirations?FS: Romero's *Day of the Dead* on VHS back in the 80's is one of the biggest inspirations for my gore filled cartoons. Along with *Evil Dead* and a few others. Really enjoy the gory films.SS: What exactly is the process for creating your own animated horror film? I can imagine the work for drawing alone to be tedious.FS: First thing is the idea, then writing the story, drawing the characters and pieces by hand on paper, scanning it all into the computer, then using photoshop to animate and a few movie programs to piece it together. Currently focused more on telling a better story. Looking back, *City of Rott* was a start, but could really use improvement in the plot department. The animation is intentionally limited, not going for anything too fluid right now. Animating the gore and action scenes is the most fun. On a side note, I like some of the changes made to the gore FX in *Dead Fury*.SS: You do plan on releasing *DEAD FURY* on Unerthed, correct? Do you have any more ideas planned for film?FS: Unerthed Films will be bringing *Dead Fury* out on DVD sometime in August 2008. Currently working on a third, gory animated apocalyptic film. I'll see what happens for the future.SS: What is your favorite version of *Zombie* seen on film?FS: Favorite zombies are Savini's zombies in *Day of the Dead*. The gritty make up effects and gore are my favorite. They really look like they've been dead for awhile, but can still get around with what's left of their rotten muscles. When I make another zombie film in the future, it'll have much improved zombies in that style, but animated.SS: When you worked on the *South Park* film, how was the experience, and what exactly was your job?FS: It was a great experience. I started doing lip synching for the characters with a team, and soon had the chance to do scene set ups, some 2D character set ups, texture and color stuff, etc. While working on the scene with Terrance and Phillip in Canadian traffic, I threw an animated cartoon version of myself dressed in black, near the front of the scene at the very last line. Overall, learned a lot about putting it all together. Much credit to the cast and crew's hard work on the short deadlines. Matt and Trey were there often, working on the film, but not much chance to interact with most of the crew.SS: Is Max's (*Dead Fury*) character inspired by Ash from *The Evil Dead*?FS: Max was inspired by Ash, but instead of trying to match Ash's voice, personality and one liners, I took it a different route. Although *Dead Fury* is in the parody style, I can't even come close to matching Bruce Campbell's brilliant character performance. Ash and

Evil Dead rule.SS: What made you decide to carry the Old man character from your previous effort City of Rott to Dead Fury? Are they the same character?FS: I get a laugh out of older characters, so decided to bring him back for a secondary role. He can be a bit annoying, but it's intentional mostly. The idea is, I consider these animated characters as actors, so they can play different roles in future films if I need to bring them back. But no, Fred and Pop are two different characters played by the same cartoon actor so to speak. He may or may not show up in the third animated film I'm working on. If he does, it'll be a smaller part.SS: How did you go about creating all the sound effects for the gore that slops around? One might call them sickening.FS: I used plenty of household objects like filling a bowl with water, rattling metal parts around, tearing paper, stuff like that. Then bring it into the computer and edit the sounds. I'm not satisfied with some of the gore sounds from City of Rott compared to Dead Fury, which is a nice improvement in my opinion. Sound is very important, but I still could use better equipment balancing it all out with the sound FX, music and voices.SS: Have you ever thought about delving into Claymation?FS: I used to work on claymation as a kid, Gumby super 8 movies I made with my brother. I probably won't get into claymation again, as it's not quite what I'm looking for in style. Speaking of claymation and zombies, I saw "Clay of the Dead" online, which is a neat idea. I'm inspired by the limited style of older Hanna Barbera Cartoons. For now, my style is similar to South Park's "stop frame" animation, based on budget, time, style, etc.SS: If you could kill a real zombie in any way, which weapon would you use to do the deed?FS: To finish off a zombie with only one weapon... A shotgun for the movies, a spear if it was real; less contagious zombie mess.FS: I just want to finish by saying Dead Fury offers an improved story(compared to COR) and plenty of gore, inspired by the great classics like Evil Dead, The Hills Have Eyes, and a few others, but with a number of original ideas thrown in as well. Unearthed Films should be releasing the Dead Fury DVD sometime near August, 2008. It's also premiering early at the Philadelphia Film Festival April 9th, 2008, which is a great opportunity.FS: Thanks for the interview and the early film fest review!Be sure to see Dead Fury, whether on it's DVD release, or its premiere at the Philyfest.

INTERVIEW WITH GIUSEPPE ANDREWS
INTERVIEW WITH GIUSEPPE ANDREWS

Most people know Giuseppe Andrews as one of the Stoner Kiss fans in Detroit Rock City and his kid role in Independence Day. It's a shame considering Andrews is one of the most original auteur filmmakers out there. He shoots his films on a Sony camcorder and for the most part has them set in his trailer park. Hollywood beware!SS: So Giuseppe, What made you decide to be a filmmaker? Has it always been an ambition you have had?GA: I've been chosen by the cosmos.SS: What camera are you currently shooting on? What do you like about?GA: the same camera ive shot with for 10 years, it's sony, i don't know the model. i like that it films an image with sound.

SS: I have noticed you are a fan of the late German New Wave auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder. As directors, both of you have the ability turn the most limited of sets (the trailer) into extraordinary scenes of drama. What attracted you to Fassbinder? Does his filmmaking influence yours?GA: His style and his ideas and yes.SS: The trailer park is a place not often seen in Hollywood films but more representative of American than say New York City. What compels you to shoot in the trailer park? Do you think the average American has a sort of fear of the Trailer Park?GA: The cosmos chose it. I do make films in other places, but I shoot alot in the trailer park because i live there and im reclusive.SS: In your films, you have some of the most interesting characters/real people (Bill Nowlin, Tyree, Walt Dongo, Vietnam Ron, etc.). Did you know any of them personally before they became your stars?GA: yes, all of them.

SS: What other directors (if any) have inspired you or have had an influence on your filmmaking? What are some of your favorite films and/or directors?GA: here are the films i own:50 movie pack of western classicsthe singing dectectivepennies from heavenlamb of god - live!steven allen davis - livethe ed wood collectionzontarthe first films of samuel fullerel topothe fassbinder collection 2berlin alexander platzthe giant clawplay timerififitownes van zandt documentaryinland empirethe african queenmi!ster hulot's holidayfilm noir box setI have had thousands of films in my trailer, but these are the only ones that remainSS: I have noticed that you have been doing acting for some horror films lately. Are you a fan of the genre and if so, what are some of your favorite films and filmmakers?GA: i like night of the living deadSS: You have some interesting tattoos. I especially like the war tattoo and noticed that start Bill Nowlin has a similar tattoo. Is there a story behind that?GA: i got it right after i made my first movie, touch me in the morning, to remind myself that i was entering a war against the old establishment of cinema. as years went by, it's meaning changed to symbolize war against other things such as addicition and demons. now, it just makes me smile for pure punk value.SS: You are also a musician. What inspires you to play music? Do you have any type of process you go through when creating music?GA: i can only answer this question like this: walks, talks.SS: Troma has

released a couple of your films. A while back they were supposed to release a box set of your films. What happened with that? Are you a Troma fan?GA: I think they're having distributing and financial problems.no.SS: Do you have any advice for aspiring filmmakers?GA: "be prepared to bleed" -joni mitchellSS: What can we expect from Giuseppe Andrews in the future?GA: alot of films and alot of music. and one big-ass novel.Check out Giuseppe Andrews site

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN R. HAND
INTERVIEW WITH JOHN R. HAND

I recently got an interview with the director of the pseudo-surreal nightmare that is Frankenstein's Bloody Nightmare. SS: Hello, John. I noticed the way you filmed Frankenstein's Bloody Nightmare looked inspired and original. How did you decide how you wanted it to look and feel? JRH: Well I definitely wanted the film to look and sound like it came from another planet. At first I was just going for a kind of vintage or retro vibe because I'd seen some films where all the press kept pushing the whole vintage/retro/seventies angle and I'd just watch these films and I knew these people hadn't seen an issue of Cinemagic, just totally lifeless to me. I mean I'm sure they were fine people and artists but come on, vintage is more than just some grain and endless digital scratches. So part of it was the know-it-all in my thinking I could do better. Then another part of it was my love of films like Begotten, films which exists in another world. So I think a certain set of happy accidents along with my experimental tendencies pushed what started more as a kind of homage to eurohorror into something a little stranger. SS: In the one scene where Victor went to his friends with the formaldehyde, his friend said, "Wait a minute" and I began to count the seconds. It strangely was close to exactly one minute. Was there anything behind that or just a goof? JRH: It wasn't exactly a goof, I mean I purposely directed Billy to just kind of take this very odd pause and let the music play out behind him in order to build a little atmosphere. He also turns the volume down by rotating it clockwise, which usually turns the volume up. Even that still makes sense to me. That was a horrible night man, because I'd spent all day dressing up that room with all kind of texture, character stuff, in-jokes, etc., and there was supposed to be about three or four other actors coming down and giving this very seedy vibe to the whole thing along with these little vignettes which you could see Victor to and kind of help to build his character, but I didn't know these people so I also invited my friend Wade to come along to kind of corral these people that I didn't know. Well that wasn't a problem because none of them showed up and I just basically put Wade in the costume and he played the role. Then I dubbed his voice using the voice of my cameraman Brian, just to give it a strange, otherworldly feel. Wade is also wearing a very large shirt in the scene which was actually a movie prop I bought at an estate sale - it was a shirt that Tyrese wore in 2 Fast, 2 Furious, which someone won from a Starz movie contest or something, at least that's what the certificate of authenticity states. I'm sure they probably had a couple dozen replica shirts so who knows if that exact shirt was used in the film but if you study the shirt it really looks like a movie prop because all the identifying tags and everything have been carefully trimmed off and if you look at some press photos of Tyrese from the film and then watch my movie it's pretty clear that they're the same style shirt. SS: Did you borrow anything traits/habits from yourself to fit the character Victor? JRH: Victor has a few of my character

traits in that he's this kind of introverted little guy. He's also incredibly paranoid - throughout the film he's constantly glancing around, wondering if someone's watching him. I don't think we're ever really sure if someone actually is or if these heat video displays are just his internal idea of what the people watching him are seeing. I'm kind of glad you picked up on some of that in your review because it seems like most people can't even get that and I don't even think it's that hard to grasp. Basically the film is this - it's just one guy's descent into madness. I think I'm a little paranoid, I used to be morose, but I think I brought a lot of that paranoid energy to the core of the role and to the core of the film itself.

SS: How did you decide on the origins of the beast? Was he brainwashed of sorts?

JRH: I think many people are little unclear of the who/what the beast is. It's pretty laid out in a very logical way by Victor at the end of the film during his little heatgram monologue but if you read every synopsis or review you find that each critic kind of interprets the plot a little different, which I think is neat, because this is not necessarily a true-blue experimental film - it DOES have a plot, so it's kind of weird that there's this strange leeway in the plot for different interpretations. Some people think the monster is even Victoria. Anyway, my story on this is basically Victor's - he's just some guy that Victor found that he was able to revive and control. I don't think he was really brainwashed per se, but he didn't really have any higher brain functions beyond those sparks of memory which comprise that weird black-and-red experimental film sequence. There's kind of an Astrozombies vibe to the beast, and he was also supposed to have more a presence until that head I built was much too large so I kept cutting him back, also he was supposed play prominently at the end of the film and I cut that all out as well when I found the chemical burn technique for the photos.

SS: Any word on the next project you will do, do you see it being released under Unearthed, and will it be filmed in Super8?

JRH: I'd like to work with Unearthed again but maybe next time I'd have to be under a decent budget. They're always looking to move into production so who knows, stranger things have happened. I really like Super-8 but right now I've just getting my camera and lighting equipment together for this new film I'm making and I'm shooting in HD, 1080p, just because you can't get such quality along with the shots that you can get using these lightweight HD cameras. Basically the camera I've got is about twice the size of my tiny little Chinon Super-8 camera but it's shooting 1080p. It's just incredible to me.

SS: The film is obviously inspired by Frankenstein but I couldn't help but noticing similarities in Buio Omega. Anything behind that?

JRH: I was heavily inspired by that film, which actually for me provided that initial spark to put together thing film. Some people it's Spielberg or Kevin Smith. For me it's Buio Omega. Of course you've got the superficial similarities, like the guy with his girlfriend who dies and then kind of comes back her sisters, other certain elements, but as I said at the beginning I took my initial ideas to such a strange place that it doesn't really resemble Buio Omega anymore. Also, I

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was interesting in taking that sketch of an idea, the guy with the girl, and then exploring the psychosexual identity of guy - did he really even love this girl, or did she even exist beyond his tangled delusional framework? That's why the whole scene with the guys in the alley has this really strange sexual edge to me, like it's this character confronting his masculinity against the cold blue night - blue, the color of a kind of emotional sleep. My next film's going to be really blue, by the way. I think there were number of additional scenes which could've fleshed Victor out a little more but by the end of the film I had run out of steam and also I was always looking for things to cut out of the film in order to make the film feel a little more vague and internal, not to confuse people but so that some people might even relate to better. Some people, I guess, maybe not everyone, but that's okay.

SS: Many thanks for the interview John. Best wishes for your directorial future. Any final words for our readers?

JRH: Well I just hope people like the next film I'm making. That's about it. You know, you say that this film is ripe for a prequel or sequel and I'd like to tell you that I'd love to do a sequel maybe a decade or so later but this time it'd be like an Italian horror film in a castle with my midget friend that I give birth to who hits people with a hammer - he doesn't really kill anyone, he just hits them with the hammer and laughs like a maniac. Check out John R. Hand's debut film **FRANKENSTEIN'S BLOODY NIGHTMARE** from Uearthed Films.

INTERVIEW WITH JÖRG BUTTGEREIT

Illustration: Rainer Engel

Soiled Sinema is very pleased to bring you an interview with German auteur Jörg Buttgereit of *Nekromantik* fame. It is not an exaggeration for us at SS to say that Jörg Buttgereit is one of our favorite directors and without groundbreaking filmmakers like him, this website would not exist.

After a 16 year hiatus from feature-length filmmaking, Buttgereit released *CAPTAIN BERLIN VS. HITLER*. Following in the tradition of German filmmakers like Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, *CAPTAIN BERLIN VS. HITLER* was shot on a stage-play.

set of *Nekromantik* (C) Jörg Buttgereit

SS: When I first discovered your work, I was amazed by your keen ability to successfully combine sex and death in an artistic manner whilst still maintaining a sense of humor. Personally, I think you're a modern auteur coming from a rich tradition of German cinema. Believe it or not, your films (especially *Nekromantik*) remind of the great silent German expressionist masterpieces, in their ability to hypnotize and transport the viewer to a transcendent world of the macabre. When I watch a German film like *Run Lola Run*, it seems like the same film could have been made in Hollywood or France. Do you see yourself as a culturally German filmmaker (to any degree), influenced by your native land and culture? Was your own style of filmmaking influenced by German filmmakers of the past, whether it be the German expressionists or German New Wave or any other German film movement/genre?

JB: Its hard to judge your own influence. I think it is quite normal to check out your own limits when you are young. That is why Horror-movies are so appealing to younger people. But *NEKROMANTIK* was also a protest against the strict censorship movement in Germany. During the 80s all Horror films were cut or banned in Germany and we were fighting for our right to get those movies uncensored in our country. Adults should decide on their own what they want to see and what not. Censorship can't prevent people from seeing what they want anyway. It's an old fashioned concept that does not work anymore. I was not so much influenced by other movies. Real live Horror was always more disturbing to me. I think it is important for my films that they are shot on actual film stock. The grainy 16mm and Super 8 film stock definitely works for the atmosphere of the films. We did a lot of screen-tests with the prop of the corpse before choosing the right film stock for *NEKROMANTIK*. It was very important to me to have a believable atmosphere for my story.

(C) Jörg Buttgereit

SS: In an interview featured in the book *Sex, Murder, Art: The Films of Joerg Buttgereit*, you mentioned that German audiences are not too fond of German films/filmmakers unless the directors are dead (like Fassbinder) or the films are

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praised by international critics. Why do you think Germans react this way to films created by their fellow countrymen? Over the years, has your popularity and status as a filmmaker increased in Germany? Do you have a strong and loyal German fan base?

JB: I do have a fan base in Germany that follows my work in Radio Plays, acting and all the books and film reviews I do. That part of my work that is invisible to my fans outside of Germany 'cause its all in German language. Over here I am more known as a maker of Stage-plays and radio-plays.

SS: I know that you traveled to Japan to write an extensive book on Japanese Monster films. Do you have plans for writing more books in the future, whether it be on film or otherwise?

JB: I am more involved in new projects for the stage which is very exciting to me.

(C) Jörg Buttgerreit

SS: You originally introduced Captain Berlin in a short of the same name in 1982. In 2009, you released CAPTAIN BERLIN VS. HITLER. How did the creative process come about for CAPTAIN BERLIN VS. HITLER? Were you always planning to do a feature-length film about the adventures of Captain Berlin? Do you have plans for any new Captain Berlin films in the future?

JB: I think the fun of CAPTAIN BERLIN VERSUS HITLER is the fact that it is a stage-play that was filmed for a DVD release. The plot goes like this: Adolf Hitler's brain has survived. The crazy Nazi-doctor Ilse von Blitzen hires the master of life and death: Dracula himself. He is supposed to resuscitate Teutonic human material with his bite. The reward that has been chosen is the virgin Maria – Captain Berlin's daughter. Superhero Captain Berlin now has to confront these two monsters. Since the 1940s he wants to eliminate Hitler, but now he first has to save his daughter from the vampire. I documented the play on video and made a film out of it. Its a mix between film and stage-play and it is available on DVD with English subtitles from the German distributor "media target". Extras include my old Super 8 shorts "Captain Berlin" + "Captain Berlin vs Hyxar", a backstage report, a film about the world premiere, a photo gallery and a comic based on the film. The DVD is region-free. The film looks a little bit like one of those crazy Mexican wrestler movies. I really can't think of getting money for a real feature film with Captain Berlin. But who knows...

SS: Was there any controversy in Germany when you released CAPTAIN BERLIN VS. HITLER regarding Adolf Hitler (despite obviously being negatively portrayed)? Additionally, did anyone in Germany criticize the Nazi-exploitation parody in Der Todesking, the Hitler Youth outfit worn by Monika in Schramm, or your early short BLOODY EXCESS IN THE LEADERS BUNKER?

JB: There was no real controversy about me dealing with Hitler. If you do something on stage in Germany it is labeled as art and you are free to express

yourself. Regarding my films, the depiction of violence was more difficult to deal with.

SS: I have read past interviews where you spoke about the possibility of a third Nekromantik film? Will there be a Nekromantik trilogy? Also, do you have any other film projects planned for the future that we can anticipate?

JB: You have to keep in mind that because of censorship restrictions my films are still only legally available in a handful of countries. I don't see how to get my money back for an independent film like NEKROMANTIK nowadays. If I would do a part 3 it would be all over the internet the day after a DVD release. Bootlegs and illegal downloads have made it impossible for me to do independent films like I did in the 1980s.

(C) Jörg Buttgereit

For more info on Jörg Buttgereit visit his official website

Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead (C) Jörg Buttgereit

INTERVIEW WITH LUCIFER VALENTINE
INTERVIEW WITH LUCIFER VALENTINE

Lucifer Valentine is no doubt a talented director. Regardless if you're a fan of his works or not, he is competent and skilled in what he makes; VOMIT GORE. A new genre of terror which uses bodily fluids in a perverse and Satanic manner. His first film Slaughtered Vomit Dolls rocked the underground horror movement and now his second film (Available to download for free on <http://regoregitatedsacrifice.com/>) ReGOREgitated Sacrifice continues the reverberations.

SS: Hello Dr. Valentine. Many people know you as the relentless marketing man who promotes your "VOMIT GORE" films - Slaughtered Vomit Dolls and your new film - ReGOREgitated Sacrifice. Care to tell our "virgins" about these films and your intentions?

LV: Sure, I created a film genre called Vomit Gore and I am making a Vomit Gore Trilogy; Slaughtered Vomit Dolls is the first movie in the Trilogy and ReGOREgitated Sacrifice is the second ! Vomit Gore came into existence because I am an Emetophile (which means I am sexually attracted to Vomit or Vomiting) and because I wanted to create a personal artistic venue for myself in which I can make any kind of movie I want exactly how I want !

SS: Both of your films reflect your own beliefs in Satanism, correct? And could you describe your beliefs? Did you make one of these sacred pacts that these women make?

LV: There's a quote on my Myspace that I wrote that sums up my belief in Satanism, which is the following: "To me Satan means whatever people can't fathom or understand; the Unknown, whatever breaks the commonplace and predictable mental patterns of conventional thought and experience; Satan represents the opposite of people's fears, weakness, and crushing self-doubt about their world and the entire Universe." My parents are Satanists and I was raised with their beliefs instilled in me throughout my formative years; and, I think in my movies it is sometimes apparent that the movie was made by a Satanist, but that's just my personal characteristics naturally coming out through the artistic process and it's not necessarily important to me that my movies seem Satanic. Ironically, in Slaughtered Vomit Dolls (SVD) and ReGOREgitated Sacrifice (RS), the two "Satanic Pact" scenes are prime examples of me, an actual Satanist, interpreting what non-satanists think Satanism is ! So for example, in SVD, when Angela/Ameara makes her Pact with the Devil, that is my interpretation showing the mythological notion, based on what I saw in the "Satanic Panic" episodes of the Geraldo Rivera talk show from the 1980's, of a teenager making a pact with Satan and giving her life and soul to him. It's ironic to me because that scene with Angela is a pure fear image conjured and realized by non-satanist parents, Christians mostly, to give themselves the comfort of hatred and ignorance toward something they do not understand, thereby actually creating a self-fulfilling prophesy of teenage rebellion by making dark realms like Satanism a taboo to be sought out by their children. In ReGOREgitated Sacrifice, the "Whore" character is forced by a serial killer to recite a Satanic Pact

to do with his obsession of destroying beauty. Again this is not necessarily my idea of real Satanism as I know it, but it is my interpretation of how some serial killers take on a very distorted view of Satanism as a justification premise to allow themselves mental leeway, if you will, to commit various acts of violence and murder.SS: I understand you were born and raised in South Africa. How did you get along with your community? Did you hide your beliefs and fetishes from the public?LV: No. My family did not hide our beliefs from anyone, and we had a lot of great friends in the small fishing village of Arniston. My parents were quite well-respected in the community and people found them to be quite interesting because they were terrestrial invertebrate researchers (they studied bugs) and often they'd show our neighbors strange and rare bugs they had collected for study. My parents are scholars and very serious professionals so they didn't walk around in black robes conducting the Black Mass in our backyard or anything like that; but if anyone asked, or the subject of spiritual beliefs came up in conversation, my parents would never shy away or pretend to be something they are not in order to not scare someone, they are proud to be Satanic.My parents did travel quite extensively throughout their careers and so I was in charge of raising my nearly blind little sister Cinderella who had ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorders), with the supervision of a nanny/nurse, and so I didn't really have time to notice or even care about what people thought of me or my beliefs, I was completely consumed in the well-being of Cinderella.SS: I'm sure you've answered this one a million times, but is your birth name Lucifer Valentine? And if so, I'm extremely curious to hear your middle name!LV: Lucifer Valentine is the name I gave to my character in Slaughtered Vomit Dolls as Angela/Ameara's childhood imaginary friend; Lucifer Valentine is the projected manifested image from the archetype of the neglected, traumatized, abused and exploited teenage runaway stripper-turned prostitute-turned hardcore porn star. The idea of Lucifer Valentine is that as Angela Aberdeen is disassociating from herself and her body as a child due to her physical/mental/sexual abuse from everyone who ever was in a position to take care of her, she begins the fragmented process of compartmentalization of her feelings and begins to create alternate selves and personalities to displace and deal with her feelings of profound sadness and trauma; the first personality Angela created was the closest to her, an imaginary best friend/confessor/father figure/dominator/confidant: LUCIFER VALENTINE.SS: Do the surreal elements in ReGOREgitated Sacrifice come from your dreams or some cerebral exercise?LV: The surreal scenes in RS come from the process of weaving the story of Angela unconsciously and recognizing when ideas and elements rise to the surface of my conscious mind to be collected and represented on camera. I'll have basic signposts or landmarks in my mind about a movie, like RS for example, of scenes or major ideas that I want to elaborate on, and I'll make notes of the main ideas knowing that my unconscious mind will "fill in the blanks", connecting the dots, if you will, over the course of

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making the movie. I don't always know or understand what everything means in totality when I'm making a movie, but I always trust my instincts and my kinds of movies are very intuitive that way where I have to oftentimes go with the flow of what feels good and pay no mind at all to anything logical as I feel that does not apply to me at all.

SS: What on your thoughts on Ipecac? I have several bottles. How should I use these (If I do)?

LV: Well Ipecac is a great record label owned by Mike Patton !! I've never actually used the Vomit-inducing liquid, I prefer to ram my cock down girls' throats to make them puke.

SS: The editing in your films is very hyper-kinetic and vibrant. Approximately how long does post-production take for one of your films?

LV: Usually about six months.

SS: In several scenes, I noticed you liked to focus the camera directly under the vomiting person or persons. Did any get on you? Did you do this so you can work and be pleased at the same time?

LV: Ha ha, well I really love getting shots of Vomit coming right at the camera and seeming to hit the lens of the camera. I love these Vomit-cam shots and it does turn me on, but I don't quite get the same sexual charge from it as I would normally when I'd be fucking a girl and she'd puke right on me, but it's still nice !

SS: I recently discovered about the untimely death of your sibling Cinderella. It's very heart-breaking and unfortunate. Care to talk about it?

LV: Cinderella took her own life New year's Eve 2006; she drown herself in a bath tub after overdosing on various prescription drugs. Cinderella and I had an incest relationship for many years and, understandably, she was very possessive of me as I was the only person she had ever been with sexually and I had become the absolute center of her Universe as her caretaker and best friend throughout her life. I had mentioned to Cinderella that I thought the scene in SVD in which Angela/Ameara drowns herself was one of the most beautiful scenes I've ever done and she got very upset and was crying uncontrollably and said that she wanted to be the only beautiful thing in my life so she would drown herself just like Ameara did so I'd love her more. Cinderella demonstrated this drowning for me many times and I videotaped it and used one version of it in RS at the end in black and white footage connecting the drowning of Angela and the archetype of "Angela" in a broader sense. I found my sister's body floating in a bath tub from drowning herself New Year's day 2007; I didn't think she would ever do this for real because I didn't think she'd ever want to be separated physically from me in this world, but it's complicated and she was mentally unstable so I've had to accept this reality over the course of many painful months. I love my sister more anything in the world and I am eternally horrified at the loss of her life in this form of reality but we are still together forever in multitudes of other realms so our relationship doesn't ever really "end" for me in that sense, I just don't get to actually have her sitting here in my lap like she normally would like a cat while I do these interviews.

SS: How old were you when you two first made love?

LV: YOUNG.

SS: What ever happened to your parents?

LV: I actually have a legal agreement with my parents to not discuss them, except for basic agreed

upon details such as the things I've already described here, in the press for many reasons, obviously not everyone in this world is as open-minded about Satanism and incest as I am, and my parents simply don't want to be hassled by the rest of the world so I definitely respect that.SS: Does Ameara know about Cinderella's reason for taking her life, and if so, does she feel horrible? I can imagine that weighing heavy on ones shoulders.LV: Yes Ameara knows all about Cinderella's passing, she was horrified and saddened, she always loved Cinderella and never wanted there to be any jealousy; Ameara and I have always been great friends and have worked together for many years since we were in a relationship and she thought Cinderella was so cool and brilliant, but, me and Ameara have both seen a lot of Death in our lives so we are sadly well-equipped to deal with it.SS: Since Cinderella could only see shadows, did you ever think about using this element in a horrific sense? Maybe make a shadow vomit film next?LV: Interesting idea, I'll likely make a movie more specific to her at some time so we'll "see" . . .SS: Only one more film till the VOMIT GORE trilogy is done. What do you plan on doing after that? Continue filming I hope. Vomit Comedy? Better yet, Vomedy?LV: Ha ha well I've already shot two non-Vomit Gore films: A PERFECT CHILD OF SATAN, which is about Date Rape, and BLACK METAL VEINS, which is a documentary about heroine addiction; I am very very excited to release these two films and they are definitely at the top of my list !!SS: Anything you'd like to say to our readers at this point. Anything?LV: I'd like to say THANKS to everyone for their interest in me and my movies !! I really appreciate it and THANKS to you for this interview !!

INTERVIEW WITH MAGISTER JAMES D. SASS
INTERVIEW WITH MAGISTER JAMES D. SASS

Fascist, Satanist, Occultist, Antiquarian, Bibliomaniac, Autodidact, Teetotaler, AntiCommunist, AntiLiberal, Dissident Right Wing Political & Social Critic, Social Darwinist, Weaponer, Experimental Noise/Musician, Film Buff, Amateur Philosopher and Historian. Born in 1965. Affiliated with the Church of Satan in 1992. Appointed to the Priesthood of the Church of Satan by Dr. Anton Szandor LaVey in 1996. Appointed to the degree of Magister in the Church of Satan by High Priest Peter H. Gilmore in 2005. Author of Essays in Satanism, the afterword to the Underworld Amusments edition of H.L. Mencken's translation of *The Anti-Christ* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Other works in progress.

SS: In the most general terms, what makes a film Satanic?

JDS: A film is "Satanic" insofar as it deals with themes of Satanism, such as productive alienation, stratification, nonconformity, total environments, artificial human companions, justice, revenge, incursions of the irrational, misanthropy, etc. in a productive or insightful manner that frequently paints the outsider-antihero in a sympathetic light (intentionally or not) in contrast with the bland mediocre conformists. Aesthetics are also a huge part of what makes a film "Satanic." A film such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* would still be "Satanic" to some degree if it were an entirely different story using the same aesthetics and psychological devices in sets (*The Law of the Trapezoid*), photography (*The Command to Look*), editing and whatnot.

Another thing I would point out, although it digresses from your question, more than how Satanism features in films, I think it is interesting to observe how film features in Satanism as a legitimate recognized religion. I cannot think of any other religion that considers a body of film work as a primary source or example of its doctrine, aesthetics, and ideals. This is one of the truly unique aspects of Satanism. Other religions have music and art, I can't think of any that have films they regard as centrally related to their religion as does the Church of Satan.

SS: Can a Satanic film come from any genre? Are there certain genres that feature Satanic films more prevalently? If so, which genres?

JDS: Yes, I cannot think of a genre that would be incapable of fitting a Satanic film within its parameters. Skimming over the "official" Church of Satan film list we see everything from horror and gangster films to comedies, musicals, and children's cartoons. Of course for obvious reasons Film Noir and classic Horror feature Satanic themes more explicitly, because they are based in the "dark side" of human nature, or depict man as "just another animal... worse than those that go on all fours," and frequently center around themes of obsession, justice, and revenge.

SS: Would you describe the post-World War I German expressionist move-

ment as Satanic?

JDS: Personally, I cannot think of one German expressionist without some type of Satanic theme in it.

Most definitely, and this is explicitly stated by Dr. LaVey in more than one place in his writings, especially pertaining to the Law of the Trapezoid. It is also important to note how much of this was intentional on the part of the film makers, directors, and art directors of these films. Even later films by the same people made in the USA follow the same line of thought. F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise* for example is outwardly a simple love story with a happy ending, yet there are Satanic undercurrents in the story, and the aesthetics are extremely Satanic.

SS: Many of the filmmakers and actors that were involved in making low budget Hollywood film noir films immigrated from Germany and Austria to the United States. Many (if not the majority) of these filmmakers were German expressionists. Do you believe that these European directors helped to bring a Satanic element to American films that was lacking before?

JDS: Of course! This is all well-documented. The influence of German expressionist ideas on Universal Classics such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Wolf Man*, and a slew of others is indisputable. The German expressionists coined the aesthetic that would define Film Noir and Horror. The films of Carl Lemele, James Whale, Val Lewton, Howard Hawkes, etc. are all saturated with the expressionist aesthetic.

SS: In your book *Essays in Satanism*, you make no lie about the fact that you're a horror film connoisseur. Were horror films an early obsession of yours?

JDS: I cannot over-emphasize how strongly horror films were an early obsession of mine. My mother still has drawings I made when I was four years old of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, the two-headed man, and others. I lived for this stuff. I was in second grade when I watched my first *Creature Feature* episode, and never missed it until it went off the air some ten years later. I also had a huge collection of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* from before I could read because I liked the pictures. I was very much a "Monster Kid" of the 70s.

SS: In *Essays in Satanism*, you talk about how younger horror fans just cannot appreciate the genius of the Satanic themes featured in older films. Do you believe there is any hope for these sad individuals?

JDS: Probably not – I have no idea what is wrong with someone who still cannot tell the difference when they have seen the classics, or who dismiss them as "slow" or "boring." Don't get me wrong, I'm a huge fan of John Carpenter, Wes Craven, and a lot of the "post-classic" horror films, I just get disgusted with people who can't appreciate something like *The Ghoul*, while at the same time praise some filmic atrocity like Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, or worse, some mindless schlock like the *Friday the 13th* sequels. I appreciate the humor element in horror, this is even present in classics such as *Bride of Frankenstein* and *The Old Dark House*, but when it becomes the dominant element in the

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genre something has been lost. Then on the flipside there are films that take themselves too seriously, trying to be hard-edged horror, and fall face-down. It is also appalling that there are so many dumb kids stumbling around who have seen all the bad remakes of films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Psycho*, *House of Wax*, and think they are somehow in touch with the “tradition” without ever having seen the originals. Or worse, they think the remakes are better! There is no hope for them.

SS: Is Rosemary’s Baby the definitive Satanic film? What are your personal thoughts on the film?

JDS: The gathering of eccentric Satanists at the end could literally have been home movies of a Church of Satan event, in terms of the cast of personalities involved. Compare it for instance with the Church of Satan individuals interviewed in *Satanis*. Really not far off the mark!

SS: The good doctor Anton LaVey has been said to have given new life to old and forgotten films like *Tod Browning’s Freaks*. Can you tell us anymore about LaVey’s endorsement of films that would probably otherwise have been forgotten?

JDS: It’s funny because there are so many films that are still forgotten even after Dr. LaVey’s endorsement! Even within the Church of Satan, the individuals who have systematically worked their way through the recommended film lists are few and far between. I can think of just a handful of people who have actually watched *The Boy With Green Hair*. As far as keeping some films alive: Just about anyone I’ve met who has seen *The Ruling Class* heard about it from Church of Satan sources, likewise *Night of the Generals* and a handful of others. There are others that until recently were very hard to come by, including *Island of Lost Souls*, *Svengali*, *The Most Dangerous Game*, etc.

SS: What are your thoughts on Kenneth Anger and his filmography? I was personally happy to see Anton LaVey’s appearance in Kenneth Anger’s *Invocation of my Demon Brother*. Is he (or was he ever) a member of the Church of Satan?

JDS: I’m a huge Kenneth Anger fan. I was very pleased to see his collected films finally released on DVD with the supplementary material they deserved. Anger had been something of a secret influence on so many film makers, more than suspected by most fans attracted to his work because of occult connotations. It is impossible not to see signs of *Scorpio Rising* in the work of Lynch, or the influence of *Kustom Kar Kommandos* on specific scenes in Scorsese’s *Goodfellas*.

Kenneth Anger and Anton LaVey were personal friends since childhood. In spite of false reports in some gossipy journalism, Anger has to my knowledge never uttered a negative word about Dr. LaVey. Somewhere in *The Devil’s Notebook*, I think LaVey refers to Anger as a “magus”, although I’m sure he meant it in the sense of being a magician and master of his art rather than as

the technical title of a degree within the Church of Satan, although I'm also fairly certain Anger was an honorary member, even though his interests rant more toward Aleister Crowley, which has little or nothing to do with Satanism. But on that note I would add that Anger has, from my perspective anyway, done more than anyone to present the symbolism of Crowley's work in an aesthetically interesting and "magically charged" way.

SS: In your book *Essays in Satanism*, you have listed 200 Essential horror films. I must admit that I have yet to see another list of horror films with such refined and eclectic taste. It is not everyday that you find someone that is a fan of both *Der Golem* (1915) and *Clean, Shaven* (1993). That being said, could you narrow down a list to your top 5 essential films and why a serious horror fan should see these particular films?

JDS: Narrowing it down to a list of five would be nearly impossible. The five I would list today might not be identical to the five I would list tomorrow.

1. *Nosferatu*
2. *Frankenstein*
3. *Dracula*
4. *Freaks*

Like I said, restricting it to five is impossible, conceptually, and forces it to be a very flawed list.

SS: On your 200 Essential horror films list you have David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), and *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) listed. What are your thoughts on David Lynch as an American filmmaker and his unconventional cinematic portraits of America? Do you believe that David Lynch is someone that is primarily interested in Satanic themes?

JDS: You are the only person to catch that. I put Lynch on the list because, while he is not exactly a "horror" filmmaker, he incorporates horrific elements and genuinely terrifying manifestations of the supernatural or irrational in a way most contemporary horror filmmakers could stand to learn a lot from. Without being a horror filmmaker, he does horror better than most horror film makers. He also orchestrates a genuinely disturbing atmosphere, whereas most contemporary horror filmmakers would have to look up "atmosphere" in a dictionary and probably still be at a loss how to incorporate it into film. That is a huge disjunct between guys now and the old classics. Lynch also deals with psychological themes, intrusion of the irrational, and compulsions that make him of Satanic interest for the same reasons that makes someone like Alfred Hitchcock a categorically Satanic filmmaker, and Hitchcock similarly was better at "horror" than most horror filmmakers, without being a horror filmmaker himself. He and Lynch share a visceral understanding of the monstrousness in human nature, even though their overt "shock tactics" are dissimilar.

Of the Lynch films included on my list, *Fire Walk With Me* was hated by critics, and *Mulholland Dr.* is hated by most Lynch fans I know. Both contain

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the best examples of Lynch's effective use of horrific imagery, and I'm continually impressed by the way he depicts the intrusion of the irrational or supernatural into normal consciousness. The burned-witch episode in *Mulholland Dr.* stands out as one of the most horrific moments in film that I can think of. I had a friend who had nightmares about that after I reminded him of it, and he hadn't seen the film in years. I get the feeling Lynch incorporates nightmare material from his personal unconscious into his art in a manner similar to H.P. Lovecraft, his work is more authentic because of it, even if only those elements. I would add *Inland Empire* alongside *Mulholland Dr.* for the same reasons. I am the only person I know who has anything good to say about *Inland Empire*, but it hinges on these same themes, and has some of Lynch's strongest material along these lines. The film is entirely self-indulgent, and his most irrational film, which is why most people detest it or can't follow it, and also why I liked it.

SS: As someone that owns over 30,000 books, you're obviously a bibliophile. About how many of these books are on cinema? Do you have any favorite books or authors(or critics) that are dedicated to the art of cinema? Better yet, are there any certain film critics/authors that you hate?

JDS: I have surprisingly few books on film, probably less than 100 and I haven't read most of them. I will mention one book, *American Movie Critics: An Anthology from the Silents Until Now*, edited by Philip Lopate and published by The Library of America, that is a fantastic collection of film writing, including such unlikely things as a review of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* by Carl Sandburg.

SS: About how many films (in any format) do you own? Is your film collection anywhere near the size of your book collection?

JDS: I really have no idea how many films I own or have owned in my personal collection, probably 1000 or more, which isn't very many. I probably have thirty times that many books.

SS: What are your thoughts on the future of cinema? Do you see any parallels between the decline of the west and film as an art form?

JDS: The future of cinema holds a lot of potential, especially considering the advances made in digital technology, the quality of digital filmmaking and editing is continually improving and becoming more affordable. The more ability placed in the hands of filmmakers without having to go through the suppressive distortion of the studio system, or the marketing system. I suspect even more creative filmmakers will develop their own cottage industry marketing their own work through the internet. At least I hope so.

SS: Can you mention a couple mandatory films for those interested in Satanism, *The Church of Satan*, and *Anton LaVey*? Why are these films essential viewing?

JDS: The two documentaries about the Church of Satan, *Satanis* and *Speak of the Devil!* would be at the top of the list, followed by the cream of the Church of

Satan film-list in terms of exerting the most overt influence on the Satanic philosophy, or embodying it; *The Black Cat*, *The Seventh Victim*, *Freaks*, *The Most Dangerous Game*, *The Sea Wolf* etc. Really it is hard to narrow it down from the CoS film list because they are all relevant in some way. The two abovementioned documentaries are essential for being the story straight from the horse's mouth so to speak. Edward G. Robinson's portrayal of Wolf Larson in *The Sea Wolf* is probably the most quintessentially Satanic character in film or literature. Once someone gets a grasp of what authentic Satanism is about, you start noticing Satanic themes and characters in various places and films – usually there is one character that will stand out in almost any film as being more “Satanic” than the others, although I'm sure there are mainstream “feel-good” films, or comedies lambasting average mopes, that feature NO Satanic characters but are still “Satanically” relevant films for the way they treat normal people.

SS: Are you planning any future projects related to film? I know that I am sure as hell interested in reading a book on cinema and/or a film directed by Magister James D. Sass.

JDS: Actually, just because you mentioned it, I gathered together everything I've written so far into one document and it is already over a hundred pages, so the answer is yes, I probably will put out a collection of film writing when I have enough material. You will be to blame!

INTERVIEW WITH MANFRED O. JELINSKI
INTERVIEW WITH MANFRED O. JELINSKI

Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead (C) Jörg Buttgereit

Manfred O. Jelinski is best known in the horror cinema world for his collaborations with German auteur director Jörg Buttgereit. Jelinski was the producer behind *Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*, *Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead*, and *Schramm*. Jelinski also worked as a cinematographer, editor, and even as an actor during his collaborations with Buttgereit. Soiled Sinema is very pleased to bring you this interview with Manfred O. Jelinski.

SS: How did your filmmaking partnership/collaboration come about with Jörg Buttgereit? Did you know Buttgereit before you first collaborated with him on the original *Nekromantik* film?

MJ: Uwe Bohrer and I had a company for Film Service since the late seventies. We designed a way of filmmaking on a nearly no budget basis. After we had everything under control, we looked out for a potential director. Jörg Buttgereit was a customer who needed film copies from us. I noticed he had potential and I liked his films, so I asked him to make a film. It turned out very well.

(C) Jörg Buttgereit

SS: What is your favorite film that you worked with Buttgereit on? Why that particular film?

MJ: I like *Schramm* very much. Everything came easy. Watch the making of *Schramm*. We had developed a deep understanding of filmmaking by the time we made *Schramm*. Most problems we had were with *Nekromantik*: At the set, with the editing, with every part. But it was fun in the end to see it all come together. Actually, none of the films were a problem. Each one gave me new inspiration. Each one was special.

SS: *Nekromantik II* was the first film seized in Germany since the Nazi era. What kind of trouble did you get into with *Nekromantik II*? Is the film still banned in Germany today?

MJ: We were accused, but won in the end. So it was never really banned but it always sounds fine for advertisement. But we had to work about a year to make the film... illegally. It's difficult to explain, needs more space. We had spread the material, negatives, prints among six of our friends, a hidden flat etc. Man, what a time!

(C) Jörg Buttgereit

SS: Personally, the films you created with Buttgereit remind me of German expressionist films due to their dark, yet powerful expressive aesthetic. Are you a fan of German expressionist films from directors to F.W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, Robert Wiene, etc.?

MJ: No. Not really. I like Murnau and Lang as heroes of their time and expression. But I always tried not to copy someone's style.

SS: Are there any horror films from the so called "German New Wave" move-

ment that inspired you and/or that you liked? For example, did Lommel's "The Tenderness of Wolves" (which was a loose remake of Fritz Lang's "M") inspire you?

MJ: No. Same reason as above. I avoided seeing too many films. They leave too big of an impression on the brain. To admire someone doesn't mean to copy him. Each film needs its own unique design.

(C) Manfred O. Jelinski

SS: Besides producing films, you have also directed a couple films. Can you tell us about the short "mein Schones Husum" and the documentary "So war das S.O.36?" Are these films currently available with English subtitles?

MJ: No. Husum is a short which shows a local city in an unconventional light. SO36 is about German Punk Music, stuff that no one would be interested in seeing outside of Germany.

SS: You were the cinematographer behind the beautifully shot films Der Todesskipping, Nekromantik II, and Schramm. Did any particular cinematographers inspire your style of filmmaking?

MJ: Not really. I tried to avoid it. I love Antonioni, Kubrick and Polanski (and Russ Meyer). But for low budget films you need different concepts. You have different materials of stock, less light, people to handle and so on. You cannot stylize low-budget films in a way similar to Hollywood.

(C) Jörg Buttgerit

SS: Are there any particular German filmmakers from the past that you admire? Aside from German filmmakers, do you have any other favorite filmmakers (from around the world)?

MJ: Well, I don't know. If I really grab inside my mind, I would say, I admire Wenzel Storch. He is outstanding and lovingly crazy.

SS: Would you like to create a third Nekromantik film with Buttgerit? Also, do you hope to work with Buttgerit on new films in the future?

MJ: Well, we talked about it. All the actors and other people that have survived would love it. In fact, that is not the point which drives a decision. We are not sure if it will work ... in many ways. On the other hand, I would not be able to split from my family for long because I have two very little children. (But "Yes!", said my wife.)

(C) Jörg Buttgerit

SS: I noticed that you sell Spanish director Nacho Cerda's 1994 film "Aftermath" on your site "Jelinski & Buttgerit." Are you a fan of "Aftermath?" Are you friends with Cerda?

MJ: We shot the interview with Jörg at my house in North Frisia. Nacho is a nice guy, really. We had fun.

SS: Are there any contemporary German horror films/film directors that you can recommend?

MJ: No. Ask Jörg, he is more into that. I don't like "horror", it has limited

INTERVIEW WITH MANFRED O. JELINSKI

dimensions.

Nekromantik (C) Jörg Buttgerit

SS: Do you have any upcoming film projects in the works?

MJ: I'm writing books now. Very different stuff. Remote Viewing and Quantum physics. Scientific stuff and novels. As for my novels, people say you can read them like films. Whatever that means.

For more info on Jelinski and Buttgerit, check out: Jelinski & Buttgerit

INTERVIEW WITH MARK COLEGROVE

Mark Colegrove is a low budget filmmaker who has found himself a niche. Obviously a film junkie, Colegrove has taken Italian horror influences of the late 1970's and early 1980s and made them into hilarious parodies. It is rare to find a low budget filmmaker who is actually doing something interesting. Any filmmaker that brings cannibal castration back can't be bad.

SS: Isle of the Damned is your upcoming film. Is it a sequel of sorts to Pleasures of the Damned?MC: Yeah, it's a direct sequel featuring the further adventures of private investigator Jack Steele from "Pleasures." Although this time do to scheduling conflicts, he's played by a different actor (Larry Gamber in this film). I figure if Batman can be played by a different actor in each film, surely we can get away with it in our cheap garbage movie! We've changed the setting this time around, and dropped Jack off on a cannibal island, so "Isle" is designed to be a parody of the Italian cannibal films of the late 70s, early 80s. Mark Leake, who wrote the script, is looking to spoof a niche genre within Italian horror with each of the "Damned" films. If we get around to doing a 3rd one, it'll be more of a mid-eighties thing along the lines of "Demons."

SS: Your films seem to be heavily influenced and inspired by Italian exploitations of the late 1970's and early 1980s. What made you to decide to do this?MC: It's a time period where filmmakers were able to get away with a lot more in terms of sleaze. Also, since the majority of films from that time period (with a few notable exceptions) are generally pretty bad and cheesy, it's ripe for parody. Also, I think those types of films hold a special place in the hearts of everyone involved with the flick.SS: Being a low budget filmmaker, you don't have access to as much time and money as say Michael Bay. What is your creative process? Do you film when you're able to secure funds?MC: We generally go from paycheck to paycheck to fund these things. All the money was put up by myself and Mark Leake, with no outside funding. That's something that we'd like to change down the road, because actually having a real budget to pay our cast and crew would enable us to shoot for a month solid, rather than just on the weekends over a year and a half. What we've done on Isle probably could have been done in a month if scheduling wasn't such a nightmare.SS: What filmmakers have inspired you as a director?MC: I'm a huge Peter Jackson fan... particularly to see his humble beginnings making "Bad Taste," which was shot over a period of 4 years on his own money, on the weekends, with his friends. That's what we're doing (although I might hang myself if it got stretched out over 4 years), but that's pretty inspiring. It's the same thing with Eraserhead, or the first Evil Dead film. I also grew up watching the Star Wars films, John Woo (his Hong Kong stuff). I volunteered with Troma for a few gigs, and was able to learn a lot from Lloyd Kaufman, by seeing first hand how they operate. I'm also just really inspired by my friends who are getting out there and making stuff

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on micro-budgets, like Doug Sakmann (Punk Rock Holocaust), Alvin Ecarma (Lethal Force), Ryan Graham (Livelihood), and other local guys like Dave Kratz (who is shooting *Isle with us*), Armando Valle, Sillicon, and Better Hollywood Productions. SS: Pleasures of the Damned featured many American taboos. Do you consider yourself a fighter of political correctness? MC: Well the films we're spoofing are sleazy, so it was done more out of parody... we're not out looking to offend anyone, and hopefully the goofy execution of the script for Pleasures and *Isle* shows that everything is done as a goof. Obviously the films are not for everyone, but the folks that enjoy that little niche of Grindhouse style stuff usually enjoy it. SS: Are your films meant to be watched while intoxicated? MC: It probably helps... Pleasures was designed to be a film where the audience can provide their own running commentary along the lines of MST3K. SS: What advice do you have for aspiring independent filmmakers? MC: Get out there and make something! You'll learn way more by "doing" than you will from a textbook. Also, I always hear people talking about waiting for investors so they can do their dream project, and then it never gets made... it's all talk. Just do it... figure out a way around your budget limitations. Keep your locations easy to access and your actors down to just a few. It only takes one dude to call up and cancel, and then you have to call 10 other folks to tell them the shoot's off. Also, just watch a lot of movies... not just the "good" ones. See what works and what doesn't. Go to film fests, and watch other micro-budget stuff. Network with other filmmakers in your area. Don't set out to make a "Hollywood" movie because if someone's given the option between watching "The Omen" or your cheesy \$1000 knock off, they're gonna pick "The Omen." You should revel in the fact that you have the opportunity to do something different, since you're in total control.

SS: When can we expect *Isle of the Damned* to be finished? MC: We should be finished shooting in September, and then we've got a lot of editing and sound design work to do (also low budget filmmakers should remember that sound is half of your picture, it's not just about the visual), so hopefully end of '07 or early '08. I'll keep you posted, so long as I don't hang myself first!

Dire Wit Films Website

Isle of the Damned Trailer

INTERVIEW WITH NICO B.

Nico B. is the renowned director of the experimental cult film PIG. This macabre masterpiece was a collaboration between Nico B. and the legendary Christian Death front man Rozz Williams. Nico B. is also the founder and owner of the film distribution company CULT EPICS which has released PIG, VIVA LA MUERTE, IN A GLASS CAGE and a variety of other subversive masterpieces. Shortly after PIG was finished, Christian Death's Rozz Williams took his own life. "All truth is parallel" -Rozz Williams

SS: Nico B, you're originally from Holland. What made you decide to move to the United States?

NB: I was living at the time with Gitane Demone (of Christian Death) in Holland and she suggested the move as she wanted to pursue her career further in the states. I liked the idea as I could concentrate on making some films I had been thinking about.

SS: Were you involved with film in the Netherlands?

NB: When I was in my early 20's I went to film school. My teacher, who was a Buddhist, and former lover of Abel Ferrara and Bob Dylan, became a good friend of mine. She gave me the crucial advice after finishing my first short film to make money first and then make films. She said nobody was gonna finance my films as my ideas were too radical, so I started the idea of Cult Video, distributing cult films on video by mail order. Shortly afterwards I opened a few stores in Holland and started my film company Cult Epics which distributed unreleased rare Cult films like Bettie Page and Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer films. I still run the company to this day, but now only in the US and Canada.

SS: How did you meet the late and great Rozz Williams?

NB: I saw Rozz play when I was 18 (we were the same age). I didn't meet him at that show. Ten years later I was living with Gitane. I heard he was gonna play in Germany and I suggested to her to meet him and make up (the two had a falling out). She did and after that I booked a tour with them together. I also produced their collaboration CD Dream Home Heartache and again organized a world tour for both of them. I captured some amazing footage of her and Rozz. It will be released later this year on a DVD compilation I am producing with Gitane at the moment.

SS: What was the process you and Rozz used when collaborating on the masterpiece PIG?

NB: I moved to the United States in late 1996. Rozz suggested we make a film together and I liked his ideas. I told him to make a film we needed to transform his ideas more clearly into script form. We started meeting every day at Canter's in Hollywood around the corner where he lived. After about a month we had a final script. The film was originally intended to be projected on screen behind a PE (Premature Ejaculation) or a Heltir performance. Rozz was supposed to improvise the films soundtrack live. Of course, this never happened and the film was released later with music edited by Chuck Collison (PE) out of sound collages recorded by Rozz Williams.

SS: What can you tell us about Rozz for those that didn't know him?

NB: He was the sweetest and kindest person I ever met. Ironically, he also

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had one of the darkest minds I ever came across, much like my own. Like me, he was interested in serial killers and I guess that's why we got along so well. At the end of his life, Rozz told me that he was in love with me. Of course, the sexual part I could not do much with which I had to tell him. I think it hurt him as we were very close in the last year of his life. I know he wanted somebody to love him and have a relationship with, especially a man. He felt guilty about something that happened when he was a teenager and he never really got over it. I think that and the lack of love made him kill himself.

SS: Were you a fan of Christian Death before meeting Rozz?

NB: I never was a fan of anybody. When I got older I met many "known" people. This happened at first when I became an editor for a music magazine. Later I became a music and film distributor. Pretty soon I saw that the people behind the music and films that I was a fan of were rather disappointing in real life. Although, I must say Rozz lived up to his legacy and we also had some things in common.

SS: I saw your short Hollywood Babylon. How did you come into contact with Kenneth Anger?

NB: PIG was advertised at the American Cinematheque in 2000 in Los Angeles. Kenneth called me up and I invited him to the screening. I did a Q&A and he was the main person at the sold out house to ask questions. Afterwards we met and he asked me if I had a film camera. I still had the same 16mm Ariflex Camera that I used for PIG and later on BETTIE PAGE DARK ANGEL. Strangely enough the camera was used for a 70's TV series in Holland that I loved when I was a kid. It was about the misfortunes of a boy named Bartje. Anger eventually invited me to come to the Museum of Death, to film his exhibit Hollywood Babylon.

SS: Can you tell us about your experience meeting with Anger?

NB: Afterwards he met my then wife and child. We even celebrated Christmas together. Then out of nowhere, in some dark moment he called me and was upset about something. Anger said he would put a spell on my family and I ask him to never contact me again.

SS: What filmmakers and films have inspired you personally?

NB: Not sure as my film making is mainly subconscious. Consciously maybe Jean Cocteau. Like myself he was not really a traditional filmmaker. He used film as merely an instrument to visualize his dreams (or as he said slumbers), visions, and clairvoyant experiences (like myself). Currently I am also inspired by early century Vintage Erotic films. They inspired the visualization of my new film SIN.

SS: What do you think about the digital age that we have entered into? How do you feel about filmmakers using film less and less?

NB: It's not that important. If it fits the subject and it works, then that's great. If you are trying to make a HD look like film, you are missing the point. For my film BETTIE PAGE DARK ANGEL, I shot partly Digitally for the kitschy recreation of scenes as how I saw Bettie Page and the 50's in a Cinemascope color aspect. However, for the recreation of the bondage films I used the traditional 16mm b&w film that were used in those days.

SS: Are there any filmmakers that you believe that we should be watching out for? Anyone that you think has something new to express/say?

NB: Olivier

Smolders, from whom I released his films (with Cult Epics) SPIRITUAL EXERCISES and BLACK NIGHT. His ideas are extremely interesting and dark. He is a lot like David Lynch but much more organic. I first released his short film ADORATION about the Japanese real life cannibal on the CINEMA OF DEATH DVD. This is the same DVD collection in which I released the second edition of PIG (as the first release has been out of print for a long time) and HOLLYWOOD BABYLON. People really loved his short so I contacted and told him that we should release his other films. I love his short films specifically. They can be seen SPIRITUAL EXERCISES DVD.SS: What upcoming projects are you working on?NB: My new film SIN is a collection of 3 stories told from my own personal experiences with women I have been with. I put the protagonist of each film in a different time and changed their professional ambitions. All three I shot on Super 8 to get that early century artistic feeling. All three are also very surreal and erotic (and of course controversial). In one story a nun gives an on camera blow job to a priest. I believe this is the first art film to show this on screen. The scene is a tribute to Rozz of Christian Death (both of us being brought up with Christian beliefs). Also, the religious ending of Bettie Page Dark Angel is also a reference to the scene in SIN.SS: Your use of real depicted violence and sexual mutilation in PIG has been known to shock. How did that scene go about being filmed? I can imagine that being an awkward set-up.NB: It was hard to find a victim who would agree to being in these scenes. After interviewing several people, everybody had some kind of phobia. This one guy eventually came along and said we could do anything to him as long as we didn't kill him. He was a huge fan of Rozz. We shot all the torture scenes in one day. I believe the first day of shooting was the day after I got married and I had just got back from Las Vegas. It was shot in Rozz's basement. I wasn't always sure what Rozz would do next. He would not only follow the script, but would improvise, and I would direct him visually in the scenes. The torture victim had the title of the movie PIG carved in his chest. He also had a syringe put thru his nipples and penis (and a tube inside his penis). He also had a syringe inside the veins of his arms. Rozz missed the vein in one of the torture victims arms and he did come to the point of changing his mind. He started screaming "no more torture, I will do anything else." This was fine because at that point we already got what we needed.

R.I.P Rozz

-Nico B

INTERVIEW WITH SHAWN LEWIS
INTERVIEW WITH SHAWN LEWIS

As you may or may not know, Shawn Lewis is the proprietor of Rotten Cotton, an online shirt company specializing in horror, cult, and exploitation shirts. His brother and him recently got together to direct a blaxploitation killer doll film called BLACK DEVIL DOLL. If there is one thing i have to say, it's "Boy this film is going to piss some people off." SS: So Shawn, what made you decide to get into filmmaking? SL: Well I've been a horror fan most of my life, as young as I can remember, my mother raised me on Creature Features, a Bay Area Saturday night horror TV show... I attended film school at SF State but ended up dropping out, school just wasn't for me. I always had intended on making my own films but when Rotten Cotton took off, I found very little time for it. That all changed when my youngest brother Jonathan started film school this past year, he was looking for something to direct and the rest is history. SS: How did you decide on want to make a blaxploitation doll film? SL: I am a huge fan of killer puppet/doll films, I try to collect all of them, even the shitty ones. And it has always been my dream to contribute to that sub-genre. Once we all agreed that our film would be in the killer doll genre, then we went back and watch every single one I had in my collection. We wanted to do something different with ours and thats how the Blaxploitation/Grindhouse thing happened. There has never been a doll film that combined those genres. So we took our doll idea and combined it with a Blaxploitation vibe and a little Russ Meyer'ish flavor too... It worked better than we could have ever imagined. SS: What films inspired Black Devil Doll? Did anything else besides film inspire BDD? SL: Our major inspirations are things like Trilogy of Terror, Black Devil Doll From Hell, Dolls, and Meet The Feebles from the doll era. And stuff like Dolemite, Sweetback, The Spook Who Sat By The Door... and too many 70's Grindhouse films to mention... SS: Has their been any controversy surrounding Black Devil Doll? SL: Well not so much controversy, well maybe a little. Everyone wants to think our film is a remake of Chester Turner's Black Devil Doll From Hell. Its not. People are stupid. Other than that, King Magazine compared our film to Birth Of A Nation. Fucking clueless. SS: Do you have any plans for other films besides Black Devil Doll? SL: We are working on a sequel to BDD now. And we are in the script stages of a film called She's A Whore. Its a retro 70's female revenge film in the vein of Thriller: They Call Her One Eye... SS: How did you get into the horror t-shirt business ? SL: I just do whatever I gotta do to keep from getting a real job. A friend was selling a t-shirt company years ago, I bought and I got lucky, it took off. SS: How did you get jive translated for the screen? Do you or your brother speak jive? SL: Nigga please. SS: If this film were to be taken to the MPAA, do you think it would be rated X? SL: Shit, the first 5 minutes would get it an X. There is no XXX penetration on camera but its packed with nudity, gore, sex, and violence. Oh and lots of RAPE. It

would be an NC-17 for the nudity and gore for sure.SS: You seem like a true proponent of freedom of speech with your anti-politically correct clothing line and now a film. What do you have to say about political correctness?SL: Fuck political correctness. Its the number one problem with our society, actually its number 2, religion is the biggest problem, anyway... Whoever said that as an individual in our society that you have the right not to be offended? You don't. People need a thicker skin and they need to learn how to change the channel and shut the fuck up.SS: What would you like to see different in the horror and film in general?SL: More puppet rape.SS: What can we expect from Rotten Cotton in the future?SL: A t-shirt with this:"When a person is delusional, they call him insane. When a group of people are delusional, they call it a religion..."SS: Anything else that you would like to say?SL: Go to <http://www.blackdevildoll.com> and <http://www.myspace.com/blackdevildoll>Support puppet rape! I gotta go take a shit.

INTERVIEW WITH THISTLE HARLEQUIN
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Thistle Harlequin is an accomplished professional body piercer and star of the shock viral video Putrid Sex Object. For more information on him, visit Thistle-Harlequin.com

SS: How did the director convince you to star in Putrid Sex Object? TH: This is actually a funny story. I find it quite sexy. I was visiting my friend and watching her dance at some local hole in the wall bikini bar. She mentioned that her ex-boyfriend wanted to talk to me about filming me fuck a pigs head for \$30 or whatever. I was intrigued, and I called him the next morning.

SS: How would you describe the experience? Is it something that you would do again? TH: It's actually something I've sorta done before. Not the actual ejaculating and fucking the eye socket of a skinned cows head but I've go-go danced drenched in cows blood with other animal body parts (nothing you can't find at the butcher, though sometimes special order) and have performed body modification rituals with AMF at some clubs/bars in Hollywood. It's just meat, it's just like jacking off with a piece of uncooked meat. Same thing, different body parts.

SS: What is the response that you have gotten from those that have seen the film? TH: I get more haters than lovers. I love reading the haters remarks, a lot of them are like mad at world or themselves or something because they say they want to kill me and they will if they find out where I live (so they say) but if that were the case why haven't they killed me already? And they all claim to themselves that I was molested when I was child, when I really wasn't but I think it's just them that got raped or something and they are taking their hatred out on me for whatever reason, but maybe they're just jealous because a hott guy like me (that looks like a hot female) fucked a skinned cows head and they can't even get laid because they're soo ugly, so they're mad. Anyways, the lovers are some great people, very supportive and want to be informed of what's next. Some of the lovers get a little bit creepy at times because they think I'm really into fucking animals and they want like details and what else do I do and blah blah blah...I'm sure they want to hear things that they do that I don't do, so they have someone to talk about their experiences and so they don't feel ashamed. But whatever, lol... they're talking to the wrong person. I was on a bunch of Xanax too when we filmed (I do have a prescription, by the way) but we made the film during the time I was abusing alcohol and Xanax just for fun. You know, kids these days...

SS: Have you ever received "hate mail" from an animal rights activist? If so, How did that go? TH: Luckily, no hate mail from Animal Rights people. And the video has been on the net for about 3 years, so I think it's too late anyways.

SS: How did you manage to stimulate yourself for the scene? TH: Actually...I really didn't. Maybe it was because I was drunk and my friend, the camera guy, was a guy, and I like guys and he was watching my masturbate? I dunno...it felt kinda stupid really, but I just did what I thought I had to do. Also we took a travel DVD player and I took some porn, but since I'm a cheap ass

and my gay pornos are burnt DVD's, they didn't play on the DVD player so I got stuck rubbing pig intestines around my ass. That actually did feel good...SS: Where did you happen to acquire a cow head?TH: My friend, who's idea it was (the camera guy) ordered it from the local Mexican meat market. It took like 5 days to special order it and we originally wanted a pigs head but it was like 4x's more expensive and it would have taken longer to receive also (I don't know why). And before we shot, it was in his fridge for like 5 days, because it wouldn't fit in his freezer...so it probably wasn't that sanitary...oh well. lolSS: Has anyone in your family seen the film?TH: That's a funny question. My boyfriend of 5 years at the time wanted to break up with me because he was sooo disgusted by it. I kept trying to explain to him that I used to do this before I met him and it's just performance, not something I'm into. He still to this day hates it and talks shit about it, but we're still together. We've moved on, it's not that big of a deal, I don't think it's anything to make a fuzz about at all. But he's raised Christian, I was raised Catholic though (guess that sums it up, huh?) lol Anyways, I know my little sister has seen it, she's 16 right now and she was 14 when she saw it. She looks up to me, she knows me, she knows how I am... and she hasn't told my parents about it, even she knows not to tell them because they are really strict Mexican Catholic Old School Traditional... so even she knows not to tell them because she'll get in trouble to watching it. She's a smart girl. I have an older sister too, she's actually a teacher at my High School (she was training when I was in school) and we haven't talked about it, but I'm sure she's seen it too. And if my parents do see it, I think they'll be over it. I don't think I can surprise them anymore, they kicked me out of my house 4 days after graduation after searching my room and finding a photo shoot set. It was either "burn these pictures or get the fuck out of our roof" and I really loved that photo shoot, it was my 2nd one, though illegal cuz I was 15 and nude in them, but I decided to leave. And my dad came back 2 min. later with boxes and told me to start packing. 4 days later, they begged me to move back, but I had discovered the Hollywood party lifestyle, so I chose to stay living on my own. (I did have a job and I was couch hopping)SS: Did any particular actors, film makers, or films influence you during the production of Putrid Sex Object?TH: Ummm...maybe just Divine and John Waters. And maybe my friend Lenora Claire. I've kinda looked up to her since she's started out young and in Hollywood and in the same scene just like myself.SS: Do you have any plans for acting and possibly directing films in the future? If so, what are some ideas that you have?TH: I don't have any plans other than just being in more underground "cult" films like this. I hope to be in more and I hope be like the "next" Divine, not necessarily her, but along the same lines. "Future Cult Icon Thistle Harlequin"...of course I love Edith Massey too, and well John Waters and I have the same birth date, that's ironic.SS: Do you see yourself as someone that may start a new type of subversive art in regards to film making and beyond?TH: Nah... There's a lot of Japanese porn out there that's

INTERVIEW WITH THISTLE HARLEQUIN

pretty gross, like with eels and stuff. I've seen other stuff with guts too, after I made this film. Unless we come up with something totally new, but it seems like everything's already been done, and I'm not down to fuck live chickens. That's really disgusting (to me) so is getting fucked by a horse. I stay away from any animal genitals. It grosses me out when I see my hairless cat licking his cock, he sticks it out and it's all pink and pointy. SS: What are your other interests besides film and modeling? TH: I'm a professional body piercer. I'm into the Occult, into the paranormal, taxidermy and postmortem 1800's Victorian funeral memorabilia type of stuff, I have the most beautiful coffin in my bedroom and it's been used too. I like racist jokes (but I'm not racist-- those are just the funniest) & jokes about stereotypes. I like opiates too..oops is that too much info? Oh and I love vintage gay porn! SS: How did you get into modeling and come up with your Thistle character? TH: I kinda came up with Thistle, I liked it and got it from this "gothic" poetry magazine from back when I was a teen (95) cuz the drawing of the goth boy on the cover looked like me (skinny frail boy) and it's been my nickname every since. I then came up with the Harlequin part about a decade later when I was trying to make a "club kid" name for myself. An online friend helped me pick it out, and it just fit. The rest is history. It's become my character. When I go out to clubs and bars and well just in general in the club scene, especially the deathrock scene, everyone knows who I am, they know me by Thistle Harlequin. I started young. SS: Thanks for your time, Thistle. Any last statements you'd like to say to any aspiring fetishists or potential leaders of a new form of art? TH: Say NO to Drugs! You can view Putrid Sex Object directly on Thistle Harlequin's site. Photo's courtesy of ThistleHarlequin.com

INTERVIEW WITH ULLI LOMMEL

Love him or hate him, no other actor/director can boast a life so diverse and seemingly contradictory as German-born actor-turned-director Ulli Lommel. As the man who directed one of the greatest and most gruesome serial killer films ever made *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*, as well as the "most hated film" ever made, *Daniel - Der Zauberer* (2004), Lommel certainly has experienced the positive and the negative as a filmmaker. As someone who worked with both German New Cinema master filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder and famous American 'Pop Art' leader Andy Warhol, Lommel is not exactly someone that will be forgotten by film history. As an individual who has starred in and directed some of our favorite films, including *Whity* (1971), *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973), *World on a Wire* (1973), *Shadow of Angels* (1976), *Satan's Brew* (1976), and *Melancholie der Engel* (2009), among countless others, *Soiled Sinema* is quite proud to bring you this interview with Ulli Lommel.

Soiled Sinema: Your father was a famous comedian and your mother was an actress. What was your upbringing like?

Ulli Lommel: It felt normal, because I didn't know anything else. And it was fun, because I grew up right after WWII and Germany was completely destroyed and all the people that survived this madness were so happy and stuck together and helped each other, there was a lot of love and sudden peace, even though we had nothing for years to come, but we were content with what we had. Today nobody seems happy, nobody seems content, with few exceptions. There is way too much of everything today. Too many songs that are terrible and too many awful movies, week after week, bombarding us and that's almost worse than being bombarded by the allies in WWII.

SS: You originally got your start in cinema as an actor. Did you always have plans to become a film director?

UL: Ever since I saw *VERTIGO* at age 12 I knew I wanted to make movies. *VERTIGO* had an amazing influence on me and two of my favorite films, *OLIVIA* and *BRAINWAVES*, deal with the *VERTIGO* trauma, the *VERTIGO* theme. Plus I adore Hitchcock. He and Kubrick and Peckinpah are my top three directors.

SS: Your first feature was *Haytabo* (1971). How did you get involved with directing the film and what were the influences behind the film?

UL: I had gotten tired of working as a movie actor with a whole slew of idiotic directors and I had become quite impossible to deal with, because I had such a hard time accepting their stupidity. So instead of continuing to have such an awful time as an actor I decided to make movies myself. I has just met Eddie Constantine, the star of my first movie *HAYTABO*, and when he accepted the

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role I had the financing for the film. Constantine had made several very successful films in France, including Godard's ALPHAVILLE and so it was easy to get the money for my first film.

SS: Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) was based on the hectic experience of making *Whity* (1971). As someone who acted in both films, do you think *Beware of a Holy Whore* features a realistic portrayal of what happened during the making of *Whity*?

UL: No, not at all, it's complete fantasy, and anyway, Fassbinder was always drunk during *WHITY* and probably didn't remember a thing. I actually co-produced *WHITY* and due to Fassbinder's insane actions which went way beyond being drunk on and off the set non-stop, it almost ruined me. But I forgave him.

SS: How did critics in Germany respond to *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) when it was released? Were you the first New German Cinema director to direct a horror film about a serial killer? What did Fassbinder think of the film?

UL: It opened the Berlin Film Festival in 1973 and became an instant scandal. It was highly controversial with some critics adoring the film and others hating it. Fassbinder loved it, I think. Critics in London, Paris and NY loved it, and so I was invited to NY and met Warhol, because Vincent Canby, the star critic of the NY Times had written that *TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES* reminded him of the early Warhol films, only that it was much better. So Warhol got curious, went to a screening, loved the film and invited me to work at the Factory in Manhattan for three years, where we did Art, Polaroids and Movies (*BLANK GENERATION* and *COCAINE COWBOYS*). So in a way, *TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES* was my break-through. As to other German serial killer movies I believe I was not the first, there were others, but I don't remember the titles right now.

SS: Your third feature was *Adolf and Marlene* (1977). Can you describe this film to our readers? I once read the film is 'lost.' Will it ever be released on DVD?

UL: The Fassbinder Foundation is currently restoring *ADOLF & MARLENE* (it's a Fassbinder production). I met with Fassbinder in Paris in 1976 in a famous brothel and told him that I had discovered the diary of Eva Braun, Hitler's girlfriend and Fassbinder said let's make a movie! It's a very dark comedy, Michael Ballhaus did the camera and Kurt Raab, the male lead of *TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES*, plays Hitler. I myself play Goebbels. The movie was compared to Ernst Lubitsch *TO BE OR NOT TO BE*. It's one of my dearest films.

SS: What was your relationship like with Fassbinder?

UL: Everything one can imagine and more, that's all I can say. He asked me to star in his first film *LOVE IS COLDER THAN DEATH* so he could get the financing since I had already become a teenage idol with covers on teen mags etc. and I was box office. I accepted and for the next 10 years collaborated on

21 Fassbinder productions. He was a true genius, with all the madness and the good, the bad and the ugly.

SS: Which of the Fassbinder films that you personally starred are you most proud of?

UL: I love EFFI BRIEST, LOVE COLDER THAN DEATH and CHINESE ROULETTE the most.

SS: What was your relationship like with Warhol?

UL: Warhol was the opposite of Fassbinder. While Fassbinder tried to jail you in his own prison of the mind, Warhol gave you the key and set you free. I owe Warhol more than I will ever be able to imagine, not to mention the few pieces of Warhol Pop Art I have in my possession and Warhol Polaroids. Warhol was and is out of this universe for me.

SS: You worked with Warhol on Cocaine Cowboys (1979) and Blank Generation (1980). How was he involved (aside from acting)? What were his thoughts on the films?

UL: Warhol was very much involved in his own way, his quiet way, he told people that Ulli Lommel was his favorite new director and that opened all the doors for me. he raised the money, he acted in both movies, I was his "Soup Du Jour" for several years. And when some people trashed my films Andy said so what, they trashed mine too and look what happened, where are they now and where am I? I kind of feel the same. I love and adore Andy Warhol!!! BLANK GENERATION and COCAINE COWBOYS have become cult classics, selling over and over again and again world-wide with audiences loving it and critics as well, it's so much fun to be so closely connected to these two films. Andy rules!!!

SS: Did you expect The Boogeyman (1980) to be such a hit? What inspired you to direct the film?

UL: After the first sneak previews where audiences went crazy we knew we had a winner, but that it would be THAT big, nobody could've ever expected. What inspired me were the Brothers Grimm and their dark fairy tales. Boogeyman to me is a fairy tale. Next year I'm making BOOGEYMAN 4D - why 4D? It plays in the forth dimension, Sci-Fi /Adventure genre and not R-rated but PG-13. Budget \$24 million to be filmed in 3D.

SS: You made a number of films, including Olivia (1981), BrainWaves (1982), and The Devonville Terror (1983) with your then-wife Suzanna Love. What was it like directing your own wife?

UL: Oh, we had such fun! She was perfect in all those films. Ten great years and ten wonderful movies. Wonderful to make and enjoy. Wonderful times. Unforgettable...

SS: Your underrated cult musical Phantoms of Paradise (1984) seems to be a more 'personal' work. Do you agree? What was the inspiration behind the film?

UL: We just completed the German version and it should come out in Ger-

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many later this year. Yes, it's very personal, political, rebellious...I think. I love this film and I loved making it.

SS: You worked with popular German pop singer Daniel Küblböck for your film *Daniel – Der Zauberer* (2004). How did that collaboration come about and what was it like to work with Küblböck?

UL: He was hated by millions of Germans and I was fascinated by that type of hate towards such an innocent young man and I decided to defend him and stand up for him and make a movie to set the record straight. Needless to say, the haters voted it worst movie ever made, hahahahah! But I like it a lot. Always will. And it got some great reviews too. So what the hell, right? And it made money. Hahahahah!!!

SS: You dedicated *Absolute Evil - Final Exit* (2009) to Fassbinder. Is there any particular reason why? Are you still planning to direct an "Absolute Evil Trilogy?"

UL: Because Fassbinder's madness was similar to Carradine's. After his death I stopped thinking trilogy. RIP David and RIP Fassbinder.

SS: Out of all the films you have directed, which ones are you most proud of? Why?

UL: Proud is a word I don't know what to do with. But I love almost all the films I made, just like they were my children.

SS: You still make films in Germany from time to time. Do you prefer working there or in the United States?

UL: I love making movies in America, especially LA, which is my favorite place. I love LA, I made over 40 films in LA. Germany is different, more dark and analytical and stuff, right now I'm making theater in Berlin combined with 3D movies, almost like a new genre. It's called FUCKING LIBERTY which means fucking great or fucking beautiful and it's 500 years America in 100 minutes with lots of music and dance celebrating "my" America.

SS: How has filmmaking changed since when you first started? Where do you see cinema heading in the future?

UL: When I started it was much more precious with far less films coming out every week and I much prefer that. The future is something I rarely speculate about, I love memories, I love the past, it's all we have. The present is only an illusion and the future has not arrived yet, we can only dream about it. But every split second the future turns into the past, without ever stopping in the present.

SS: The movie genre that you always come back to is horror. Did you always have an interest in horror? What are some of your personal favorite horror flicks?

UL: I don't go to the movies much more any longer. Plus I do not consider my films horror films, for me they are experimental films, maybe that's why some hate my "horror" films, because they're disappointed that they didn't get a horror film. And maybe it's Lions Gate's fault to market and sell them as horror films, just made people mad I think. Some at least. Sorry for that...

SS: You appeared as an actor in German horror auteur Marian Dora's *Melancholie der Engel* (2009). How did you get involved with the film? Have any of your films had an influence on Dora?UL: I think Dora likes my films, he's a very cool guy. And when he asked me to do him a favor I said yes.

SS: What can we expect from you in the future (be it film or otherwise)? Do you plan on writing an autobiography?

UL: My biography came out in Germany two years ago and it's a huge success, it's called "Tenderness of the Wolves", how fittingly, right? Other than that I'm working on a bio pic and of course BOOGYMAN 4D. Cool questions BTW. Thanks!

For more info on Ulli Lommel, checkout his official website UlliLommel.com

JUDEA DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY
JUDEA DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY

Judea Declares War on Germany is an ultra offensive documentary created by Australian Dr. Frederick Töben of the Adelaide Institute. Mainstream media and “scholars” have vilified both Töben and the Adelaide Institute as “holocaust deniers.” Mr. Töben has spent his career attempting (and in some ways succeeding) to debunk certain facts and details centered around what today is called “the holocaust.” Töben’s low budget documentary Judea Declares war on Germany takes an in depth look at Dr.Töben’s findings. Since “the holocaust” is a faith and dogma based historical event, Dr. Töben has decided to take a critical look at all the facts surrounding the only historical event that Europeans are forced to believe to the very least detail by law. Dr. Töben (and other historians) has been jailed for this research.It is no surprise that Judea Declares War on Germany has been banned in many parts of the world. The documentary features the swimming pools, post office, library, theaters, and other luxury services provided by the Germans at Auschwitz “Death Camp.” The documentary also goes into detail about how international Jewry declared war on Germany in 1933 via global boycott which cutoff 2/3 of Germany’s food supply (which was imported). No wonder why citizens of Israel have compared Judea Declares War on Germany to “pornography” and “pedophilia.” After all, the Israelis should know as they (and their international brothers) are the biggest producers (and promoters) of both porn and it’s underage illegal molested stepbrother (kiddy porn).

Footage of a real NAZI DEATH CAMP during World War IIThe reality of “the holocaust” is that any research done on it contrary to the “Russian” Bolshevik postwar propaganda is automatically labeled anti-Semitic, denying the holocaust, and Nazis. Ad Hominem’s attacks are very typical of modern academia and it’s “scholarly” supporters. Faith has always been more powerful than the actual facts. In the documentary, Dr. Töben visits the most barbaric of the death camps and talks to experts on the methods used by the Nazis to exterminate Jews. Dr. Töben also brings up how international Jewry tried to claim that 6 million Jews were exterminated in 1919 after World War 1. Jewish prophecies in the Torah claim that 6 million Jews are supposed to “vanish” before the state of Israel can be established. That being said, without the holocaust Israel would have never been recognized as a Jewish state in 1948. This is in despite the fact that most of the original Zionists founders of Israel are atheist Jews that base Judaism on “Jewish blood” and not religious beliefs. Essentially, “the holocaust” and the “six million dead Jews” are a kabbalistic (and scriptural) reasoning for the existence of Israel.Dr. Fredrick TöbenHistorians should never cease studying and critically researching historical events. This should be especially true for historical events that are promoted everyday on MTV commercials, Hollywood movies, and are forced parts of the curriculum in American public schools (despite Jews making up only 2 % of America’s population). After viewing Judea

Declares War on Germany, I can see that it is easily more scholarly (despite it's lack of production values) than most documentaries and books I have read on "the holocaust." The media has done a great job portraying international Jewry as the eternal passive "victim" despite how Israelis shoot Palestinian children like it's target practice on a daily basis. It's odd how the same people that promote the official "holocaust" story also promote drug use, pornography, abortion, materialism, hedonism, greed, ignorance, and weakness. Hollywood really is full of a bunch of virtue promoting do-gooders. Judea Declares War on Germany is an interesting documentary that I recommend for anyone looking to see that other side of the argument. Dr. Töben does not try to "deny" the holocaust. He merely argues with the Soviet invented details centered around it. I can't say I agree with everything featured in the documentary, but I most surely don't believe in the Hollywood version of the "holocaust" either. Especially considering the "liberating" allies killed up to 11 million (4 million ethnically cleansed throughout eastern Europe, 5 million starved to death in occupied Germany, and 2 million soldiers died in slave labor captivity) Germans after World War 2 and then boast about morals. Around 72 million people (the majority being civilians) died in World War 2, yet we are only expected to recognize 6 million. Funny how World War II caused the destruction of Europe (all empires and nations fell) and the birth of Israel. World War II really had a nice monetary and power return for those notorious international bankers.

Watch Judea Declares War on Germany

-The Ghost of Varange

LUCHINO VISCONTI'S VERSION OF "THE NIGHT OF LONG KNIVES"
LUCHINO VISCONTI'S VERSION OF "THE NIGHT OF LONG KNIVES"

Not long ago, perhaps about two years, I first heard of *The Night of Long Knives* via an alternative media show. Yes, it had a cool sounding title, but it was the description of what it actually was that riveted me stone-straight in my car seat. We've all been taught textbook versions of Nazi Germany, of Hitler, and of the Holocaust, but what wasn't discussed in an open classroom environment (even in college) was the massacre of homosexual Nazis by another group of Nazis. After typing that, it's understandable why a teacher would want to keep such an event out of his or her lesson plans. Gays... Nazis... massacres. These aren't words teachers want students taking home from their classrooms.

Briefly, *The Night of Long Knives* was when Hitler ordered the SS to kill the SA. The former caught the latter off guard by ambushing them the morning after an exhausting and extensive gay orgy. [NOTE: My interest in this event was also sparked by a documentary review here on Soiled Sinema. Ty E or mAQ will have to amend this to let me (us) know what the title of it was, but it had something to do with homosexuality and Nazism.] Apparently, the SA did a lot of Hitler's dirty work, and for whatever reason (again, I'm not well versed on this) after they completed the job, he decided to dispose of them.

In the first half of the twentieth century, many a European felt the breeze of rolling Fascism and Communism. Sometimes both. Often both. Luchino Visconti's brother was a member of Mussolini's army, so it isn't unlikely that a young Luchino often found himself posing in Blackshirts for the mirror. But as an adult, Visconti became a devoted Communist. You can find this type of ideological slip-n-sliddin' all over Italian cinema (see Bertolucci's 1900). Visconti was also born into money and lived in a castle with his family. Knowing this background, it's easy to read a bit of fictional autobiography into his 1969 film *The Damned*. The movie is a tough one. Messy, and at times laborious, *The Damned* traces the rise of Nazism through the melodrama of a corrupt and family-owned steel corporation. Imagine Pasolini doing a signature, personal interpretation of *The Godfather*... but poorly, and with incest.

Well, sometimes Netflix queues can bring about sweet coincidence, because when I popped in *The Damned*, I was unaware it included a whole chapter on this historically hushed about event. But while Visconti's interpretation is still the kind that would likely infuriate gay activist groups today, the overall sequence is actually pretty tame and lazily executed. Like the entirety of *The Damned*, "The Night of Long Knives" chapter doesn't live up to its gargantuan title. But at least we have it.

After a heavy night of cuddly drinking and pub-chanting, Visconti shows wasted members of the SA taking each other to bed: some crossed-dressed, some bare-chested and blonde, some old, paunchy, and Bear-like hairy. Cut to the SS arriving on boats, motorbikes, and jeeps. Without hesitation they enter the

compound and execute the homosexual SA members at first sight. Despite a few expressive shots, most of the violence feels disjointed and clumsy. But what sticks with you is the imagery of penis-shaped helmet Nazis walking over (and on) their once fellow Nazis... now bare-bottomed and bleeding. I'm left wanting more after watching Visconti's version of the event, but the fact that at least one depiction of it exists on film is good to know. Now, to know more, get out those books, do research, check sources, and keep the curiosity of this historically significant event alive, because the establishment - all across the board - sure seem like they want it to die.

-The Man With No Name

MY FRIDAY THE 13TH ADVENTURE WITH NEGRO SMILEY
MY FRIDAY THE 13TH ADVENTURE WITH NEGRO SMILEY

Tonight I had the opportunity to view the new Friday the 13th remake for free. I probably would not have seen the movie if it weren't for mAQ sneaking me in. As I predicted, the film was nothing special. But then again, are any of the Friday the 13th movies anything special? Anyways, during my viewing of Friday the 13th, a young gay black man also happened to be in the theater. For virtually the whole movie, this loud young fellow "added his own soundtrack." This boisterous fellow I nicknamed "Smiley." I never got a good look at the endearing Smiley. This is probably because the theater was very dark and so was Smiley. However, his voice alone shined enough of this character through to make him more interesting than the majority of American citizens. Loud black people in movie theaters is nothing new. If you go to any horror flick at a theater you can be sure to expect to hear some brothas speaking nonsense. Probably the most common thing one will hear from the "African American" community at the movie theater is loud and obnoxious out of place laughter. Unsurprisingly, Smiley did his fair share of laughing at Friday the 13th that also made me giggle in delight. I will even go as far as saying that Smiley's commentary during Friday the 13th was as entertaining as the ones John Waters does for his own movies.³ Spoiled (but not soiled) Degenerate Aryans with "Uncle Tom" and "Goofy Asian" Friday the 13th featured a group of lame ass contemporary white people that obviously get picked off one by one by the very special ed. Jason Voorhees. There are two new contemporary additions to the group however. One is a goofy Asian and the other is a very racially conscious black Uncle Tom. Like in real life, the white group of friends in Friday the 13th have minority friends as evidence that they aren't racist. The Uncle Tom in the group constantly says such things to his white friends as "Is it because I'm black?" Naturally, Smiley couldn't contain his laughter every time Uncle Tom spoke. Smiley also seemed to have a special spot for the goofy Asian, but with Uncle Tom he really let his laughter rip. Uncle Tom isn't exactly an illiterate big black buck like most white girls seems to go for nowadays. Due to Uncle Tom's lack of ladies man talents, he ends up taking a bong hit and then decides to masturbate. At this point in the movie, Smiley sounded like he was going to have a heart attack. But I mean, who can blame him? Uncle Tom and the goofy Asian were really the best characters in Friday the 13th. In fact, I will even go as far as saying that they are both the most interesting characters in any Friday the 13th movies (aside from maybe Corey "Tommy Jarvis" Feldman and Crispin "Jimbo Anderson" Glover's character in Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter). After watching Friday the 13th, I was separated by the genius that is Smiley's voice forever. Where is Smiley right now? What is Smiley doing? Does he eat the same food as me? Does he abstain from basketball because he's gay? I doubt I will ever know the answers to any of these questions. One thing I do know is if I ever decide to watch the remake of Friday

the 13th again, my memories of Smiley will be with me.
-Ty E

ON DVD: MAN ON WIRE
ON DVD: MAN ON WIRE

Tight-ropeing. Suspending yourself in virtual mid-air while an audience looks up at you admirably. What a perfect gig for a narcissist like Philippe Petit.

Late in this crowd-pleasing documentary, there is a still of Petit infamously walking across the twin towers of the World Trade Center sneering a smirk on his face as the NYPD wait for him to cross. Like a child, or post-Boho 60's pseudo-radical, Petit plays cat and mouse with the law. Unintentionally, this scene is symbolic of Petit's true character. He pretends to be a pure artiste-bad boy, but as he balances between these two towers of international commerce he knows this stunt will bring him overnight fortune.

After Petit finishes this act, he's hounded by the media with questions, yet Petit feigns disinterest with an upturned wink of the eye. Like most of the maneuvers by this Frenchman, there is always the calculated signs of sneaky self-promotion. It's also betrayal. You can see this in the tears of his former best mate Jean-Louis and in the regret of his ex-girlfriend Annie.

These were people who gave full efforts, put their reputations on the line, and stood in the way of danger for someone who was doing something admittedly remarkable, but really rather irrelevant. Yet what does Petit do after accomplishing his "dream"? He goes and f*cks the first local that whispers in his ear while his friends strain their necks looking for him.

I've given up on trying to make sense of the enthusiasm that surrounds documentaries these days. The formula towards acclaim seems simple enough. Either: A.) Be sensational - glorify daredevils, pedophiles, murderers, bestiality, etc. OR B.) Have talking heads spout leftist politics. These two options will cinch you red carpet rollouts to festivals and just maybe an Academy Awards nomination.

[FINAL NOTE: If you doubt my claim that Philippe Petit is a flaming narcissist, watch the interview with him on the special features section of the DVD.]

-The Man With No Name

POSTMODERN TECHNIQUES IN THE FRIEDBERG AND SELTZER FILMS

The team of Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer should be a force to be reckoned with, perhaps as the most corrosive duo in all 21st century art. Their three films *Date Movie*, *Epic Movie*, and *Meet the Spartans* have each drawn in over double their respective budgets, and the latter two debuted as the #1 film in the United States. All three of these films have been critically panned, and *Date Movie* has the highest rating of 6% on RottenTomatoes.com. This might seem perplexing to one unfamiliar with the technique behind these movies, or for that matter, the nature of all of contemporary culture, but to those of us predisposed to the awful truths of 21st century America, it is quite obvious that Friedberg and Seltzer are masters of their craft. They are, in fact, the harbingers of true genuine postmodern film and the cryptic intellectual artisans ready to contribute bringing all culture to its knees through strictly postmodernist action.

For those who may not know, these three movies are “spoof films” that carry their weight entirely on gross-out gags, minor T&A, and references to other contemporaneous films, television shows, popular news items, popular catch phrases, and even popular advertisements. I feel it is important to at least provide some background information to help explain the nature of this strictly technical phenomenon. In an increasingly technological society, the role of art inevitably diminishes into a means to encourage mindless consumption and servant-like passiveness until it eventually disappears entirely. This is not controlled by humans in a concrete sense, but rather, the techniques necessary to sustain such a society. People need to be burdened with constant distractions in order to ensure a distinct conformity with which to properly operate in the technological society. Whereas technology allowed a certain breathing room for art to have spiritual and philosophical depth at one point, the tightening of circumstance has forced art to become a product of its increasingly technicized culture by being more technicized itself. Moreover, this technicization of art is not new, nor is it a radical shift, but part of a long ongoing process. Consider modernism, for example. As Jacques Ellul explains,

modern art expresses the subconscious precisely to the degree that the subconscious has been influenced by the machine. The artist is in fact a seismograph that records the fluctuations of man and society. The cubist and abstract schools of art (as, in poetry, dadaism and oneirism) are aspects of this deep reality. With very different forms, Chapiro, Leger, and Marcel Duchamp, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, show us the coupling of machine and person. They show too the absurdity of the mechanical world, however rational it may be, and the impossibility of an aesthetic based on the technical movement unless it is an aesthetic of madness.

Given that Ellul wrote this in 1964 and had no way to predict the oncoming

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vicissitudes for art forms, it is thus my own belief that postmodernism represents that aesthetic of madness that Ellul describes. All of the prerequisites for postmodern cinema are met in these three Friedberg and Seltzer films. They constantly reference (not necessarily condemn or salute, but merely reference) cultural items, giving weight to the postmodern belief that all possible ideas have been expressed and thus can only be archetypically represented in one form or another in any new medium. They show reflexivity and self-awareness, playing with the conventions of the film medium itself, and therefore questioning the very foundations of reality through metaphysics in the way postmodernists often do. The plot of these films will irrationally jump around between time and space, enabling a reference point from any corner of the world or time in history to surface, reinforcing the postmodern belief that all things are connected somehow and in some way. But most importantly, these films bring absolutely nothing new to the table and provide literally no valuable insights on anything at all whatsoever. Their purpose would be more comparable to the utilitarian art of the Soviet Union than any art meant to express human spirit or creativity. In my opinion, that is perhaps the most postmodern element to these films above all else.

Think, for example, of how classical music began to be composed in the 20th century. It started to become designed by technique, as cold and sterile as machinery itself. Pieces of music began to be composed through computerized Markov chains or through merely the rolling of dice. Although the production of this art was technicized and impersonal, the message could be interpreted in a number of ways, and often the interpretation would prove meaningful to life and the human condition. The Friedberg and Seltzer duo, in a true act of postmodernism, are able to take the creation of art through technique and strip it bare of all provocations. The purpose of the film, to make a lot of money, is obvious, and moreover, it becomes obvious entirely because of the technique in which it is made. Around the end of the year, before the Oscars come on television, people begin to consider the best films of that year. Beyond this, they begin to question the best anything of the year – music, TV shows, advertisements, whatever – and so a demand arises for a recap of some sort to summarize the year in pop culture. The brilliance of these manufactured spoof films has nothing to do with their writing or production values, but within the fact that they specifically market the technique of spoofing movies itself. *Date Movie* stays largely contemporaneous, but the very title gives away the fact that it seeks to parody romance comedy films. Nobody cares about date movies enough to really watch a spoof on it, but the fact that a movie is coming out with such perfect timing, promising to be rife with pop culture references is reason enough to go spend \$8 or \$9 on it. And as it indirectly promises through advertising, it offers many references to pop culture items of the past year.

In this regard, *Meet the Spartans* represents the ultimate in perfection of this

technique. It strips away a genre-specific title, pinpoints only one major film (in this case 300), and uses that film as a vehicle to insert whatever miscellaneous debris is deemed necessary and important. In addition to the newfound elasticity of this concept, it also invokes the spirit of old novelty records that used to focus on one particular film and “comment” on it by throwing in sound bytes of contemporaneous pop songs interspersed along a largely pointless narration. These novelty records were never meant to be particularly intelligent, nor were they meant to satirize one genre or film in particular. In all three movies, techniques from those records are employed. The Friedberg and Seltzer team manage to make their films combine an irrational story element with song and dance sequences featuring musical content reminiscent of the Now! CD compilations. The major difference between those old novelty records and these films is that the novelty records in question would only make pop culture allusions, but these films more analytically allude to the techniques behind these products of pop culture. Because of this, the novelty records would only appeal to 8-12 year olds then, whereas these films are marketed toward teenagers and young adults now. Any child would enjoy these Friedberg and Seltzer movies despite the grotesque humor and degradation of women, and another technical triumph of *Meet the Spartans* is its PG-13 rating as opposed to the previous films’ R ratings. Children will learn to enjoy just about anything, but the fact that more mature people are enjoying this indicates a growing understanding of the basic framework that makes up film itself. The more man knows, the easier it is to manipulate him. As soon as man learns to read, he can be manipulated through writing. As soon as man understands percentages, he can be manipulated through statistics. And most importantly for Friedberg and Seltzer, as soon as man understands the conventions of film, he can be manipulated by the subversion of these conventions. The latter tactic simply molests the mind of man with no real attainable goal other than pure sterile calculation. Once man begins to think with a more technically-oriented point of view, morality, spirituality, and artistry become less and less relevant.

This subversion is exactly what people are looking to get when they buy the tickets for these films. Since people are not really looking for parodies of “date” or “epic” films specifically, it can only be deduced that they are looking for the technique of subversion to be shown to them in addition to simply being reminded of the products’ existence in the first place. As long as the pop culture item is still fresh in the people’s minds, the technique of subverting pre-existing techniques will suffice with no other added content. It is safe to say that this has already been popularized by TV shows like *Robot Chicken* and *Family Guy* as well as other spoof movies of the past. This sort of subversive nihilism is what people are looking for, and so by keeping all possibilities open tied around one theme, *Meet the Spartans* accomplishes this nihilism the most effectively of all three films. At one point in the Stone and Parker movie *Team America: World*

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Police, a song is featured set to a montage sequence explaining what a montage is and how it is used. The intent of the joke is to say that people are already familiar with montages, so the filmmakers are therefore hip enough to see the silliness of this convention. *Meet the Spartans* represents a full-length film adaptation of this joke in many respects. The apex of this principle occurs when a member of the Spartan army carries around a large green screen showing that this particular technological item allows for the illusion that there is a much larger army, when in reality it is mere computer wizardry that does the trick. The joke is so telling that it is actually used twice. And, of course, throughout the entire movie itself, the backdrops of each set are created through the use of green screens.

In addition to the thematic open-endedness in which *Meet the Spartans* presents itself, it also is superior to the other two because of its efficiency as a film. Supposedly it was created on a budget of \$30 million, but I don't believe this for one second. Whereas *Date Movie* and *Epic Movie* (which both cost \$20 million) feature a multitude of different on-location sets, costume arrangements, and special effects, *Meet the Spartans* is stripped down and bland. The special effects are largely nowhere to be found and the sets are all pretty much the same. If it really did cost \$30 million, the difference would most likely be in marketing. *Meet the Spartans* also claims to be an 84-minute film, which is not true. It is actually around 64 minutes, but the ending credits roll so slowly, that they clearly are part of a technique to artificially bloat up the running time. This technique is used to a lesser extent in *Date Movie* and *Epic Movie*, but the credits are only a mere ten minutes in those films as opposed to the audacious twenty in *Meet the Spartans*. Also worth noting is the much more intense use of product placement in the third film, whereas the first two use it sparsely. Popular commercials are mocked in all three films, but the first two often refrain from having the actual product being used during this mockery. *Meet the Spartans* does have some commercial spoofs with the product absent, but it compensates by throwing in a fair amount of other products at other points in the film. This idea is largely absent from its two predecessors. It also represents a technical subversion of conventions as previously noted: the products are advertised so blatantly that the film makes it appear as if it is trying to communicate that product placement in films can be silly and obvious. Nevertheless, this technique is still being employed.

My initial goal was to watch all three of these films in one sitting, but it proved too aggravating of an experience. I had to wait a week before watching *Meet the Spartans*. It is perhaps not enough to explain the difficulty of this project by saying what the films were about, because they weren't really about anything, or what they consisted of, which was essentially nothing, and I was anticipating all of this quite readily. What blindsighted me personally was how extraordinarily hateful toward the audience these films were within the realms of their own reflexivity and self-awareness. The key is to understand that although many pop-

ular culture items and techniques are “spoofed,” they are at once simultaneously condoned. Nothing about the jokes (in what presents itself as a satire) are really critical of the status quo, but more at the audience for partaking in it. Once the films start to show their own cynicisms, the real butt of all of these jokes proves to be the viewer. Take, for example, the preponderance of gross-out gags in all three of these films. It was not out of intellectual laziness that the writers decided to rely on them – many of them had no deliberate comedic value that I could discern in the first place. So why use them at all? Imagine any seemingly vile scenario, and more than likely it can be found in these films. A woman projectile vomits on many people at a party. A hump growing on Paris Hilton is revealed to be a purulent growth, which is popped. A nude shapeshifting woman on top of someone grows a unibrow and about a hundred pounds heavier at his request. A woman pops a particularly large pimple. A man eats raw sewage believing it to be a river of chocolate. A cat sits on a toilet and makes loud shitting sounds. A heavy woman slurps her own liposuctioned fat through a tube coming from a large vat labeled ‘mayonnaise.’ At first, these occurrences seem cryptic and inexplicable, but after a while, their existence seems to prove the efficiency of the aforementioned techniques. Since a large part of the appeal for the audience is recognizing the target of reference, these grotesque elements to the film seem to serve as a sadomasochistic test of faith. If the viewer can sit through a completely disgusting scene, he will feel more psychologically rewarded when he is able to recognize Paris Hilton holding her Maltese dog and talking on her cell phone. The best part is that if he is not able somehow to catch the reference, then typically the reference will be openly said out loud so as to eliminate any confusion. This element of psychological difficulty thus makes each of these films very “challenging” for the viewer, resulting in feelings of accomplishment and fulfillment after they end.

If anything, the elements of gross-out humor prove that if the technique of subverting other techniques had not been pre-popularized by other films and media, these films simply never would have worked. If a film, for example, with an identical structure and 50’s pop culture references had come out in the 1950’s, it would have failed, and the reason is because people’s brains would not have been sufficiently prepared for the acquiescence of technical sterility necessary to derive appreciation from these pseudofilms today. Even without the scatological elements, the conventions of TV Westerns and successful commercials would not be fully grasped by the American public, and so they would merely prove confusing to the average viewer when pointed out or alluded to. It would actually take a fairly advanced person to understand what is happening. But this is not the 1950’s and we as filmgoers are now privy to pop culture conventions and understand the techniques behind these films and television shows. Never let it be said that as soon as we understand the workings of the media, it automatically will leave us more enlightened and critical. Friedberg and Seltzer prove that this

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understanding can actually prime us to be less conscious of reality and more easily distracted. That is essentially what postmodernism is all about. Even with a more cohesive plot structure, genuine wit, and popularity from previous films, Mel Brooks's *Spaceballs* only raked in around one third of the amount that *Meet the Spartans* was able to in the opening weekend and considerably less in total box office. The reason is because even as recently as the 1980's, postmodernism did not have the relevance it does today. As information becomes decentralized and the secrets to techniques become disseminated, art simply loses its meaning.

It would be folly to dismiss these asinine parody films as mere anomalies. Every single one is very much ahead of its time, and the innovations of Friedberg and Seltzer as pioneered in *Meet the Spartans* hit the bullseye on a target so distant from our understanding that people don't even know it's there. The lack of positive reviews do not really matter, because as history has shown, people's opinions can be easily molded by sheer repetition anyhow. As Sylvester Graham points out in his manifesto *A Treatise on Bread and Breadmaking* from 1894, assembly-line produced white bread was initially met with negative response, but the negativity certainly didn't last very long. The sheer repetition and constant technical reproduction eventually led people to prefer this nutrient-deficient, bland, tasteless bread as opposed to naturally-grown bread with fiber, whole grain, complex carbohydrates, and a hearty taste with character to it. Right now, the only positive review for *Meet the Spartans* on *RottenTomatoes.com* (which makes up its 2% positive rating) comes from some woman from an obscure website called "News Blaze" who says, "Don't expect anything of depth and you won't be disappointed by this predigested pabulum. Mental bubblegum for the brain whose cinematic taste lasts only about as long as the viewing." Given the low costs, high profits, and intellectual laziness it takes to pump out these films, it is safe to say that this woman represents the critical voice of the future. But what will the future hold for us when art begins to seep further and further into the nihilistic realms of meta-narrative? When the people have been so narcotized as to believe that any idea can be characterized by sheer archetype, what will this say of us? What will we have to judge ourselves by when the only art we can produce will be in the innovations of scientific applications and mathematical equations? Would we even be human, or the product of some far-reaching abstraction? If there really is salvation to be found in the possibilities of some sort of technological utopia, then do you really want to be saved?

-Blind Lame OKB

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA APPOINTS BROTHER OF HOLLYWOOD SLEAZE AGENT TO WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF

I once made the mistake of pretending to get along with an individual that I truly hated. I only decided to mask my true feelings because this parasitical individual would be living with me for over 6 months. He once brought home a newspaper and bragged about how Israel had bombed Lebanon. Hearing that his favorite country killed innocent women and children brought a smile to his face similar to that of a young child about to receive presents on his Birthday. This feminine and ultimately sadistic fellow also introduced me to some of his favorite movies and TV shows. Naturally, his favorite filmmaker was Steven Spielberg and he loved to watch poker tournaments.

One day this individual went too far and showed me the degenerate HBO series *Entourage*. Never in my life had I seen such worthless and despicable human beings featured on one TV show. The most repulsive and disgusting character on this show is hands down Ari Gold. Talk about Jewish stereotypes, Ari is the type of Hebrew that Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels could have easily exploited in his aggressive newspaper *Der Angriff*. In these mixed up times that we now live in, Ari Gold is considered a role model for today's disillusioned and materialistic youth. Talk about the apocalypse, Satan is already waiting at the gates.

Emmanuel Rahm

Leave it to newly elected and first mulatto president Barack Obama to hire the brother of the man that inspired the character Ari Gold. Yes, Ari Gold is based on real "talent" agent and conman Ari Emanuel. Ari represents such Zionist favorites as Michael Moore and Zio-clown Sacha Baron Cohen. Americans can now sleep easy knowing that on November 6, 2008, Ari's brother Rahm Emanuel accepted the position of White House Chief of Staff for Barack Obama. Having a brother like Ari "Gold" Emmanuel really shows that Rahm is a man looking after the welfare of America and it's reputation in the international world.

Like fellow Talmudist Michael Chertoff, secretary of United States Homeland Security, Rahm Emanuel also holds Israeli citizenship. Anyone that knows anything about or anyone in the Zionist community knows where their true loyalties lay. After all, no man can possibly serve two Gods. Rahm Emanuel's father also happened to be in the Zionist terrorist organization Irgun which did an excellent job blowing up trains, hotels, and countless other buildings in Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s. During these bombings, Irgun also killed many British soldiers and Palestinians in hopes to steal land that would be recognized as the Jewish state of Israel in 1948.

Rahm Emanuel doesn't have the nickname "Rahmbo" for nothing. With a terrorist for a father and filth promoter for a brother, Rahm will be sure to make

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA APPOINTS BROTHER OF HOLLYWOOD SLEAZE AGENT TO WHITE HOUSE
his mark in American history. Watch out Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and
Vladimir Putin of Russia, Rahmbo is coming for you! Barack Obama needs all
the “advising” he can get.

-Ty E

SCHINDLER'S LIST AND STEVEN SPIELBERG'S HOLOCAUST MYTH MAKING CAMPAIGN

Steven Spielberg is the unofficial international minister of propaganda. An individual that has done more to hurt humanity's ability to decipher between fiction and reality than anyone before him. His movie *Schindler's List* (1993) is quite possibly the most hateful and misleading of his moneymaking propaganda accomplishments. *Schindler's List* acts as the ultimate pity party of the notorious "crime against humanity," the "Holocaust." First one has to examine the history of the Holocaust as Zionist (supporters of the Jewish state in Palestine) propaganda. After World War II, what came to be known as the Holocaust was for the most part instantly forgotten. American Jewry decided to look the other way at the crimes committed by Germans in hopes of making business deals with western Germany. American political scientist Norman Finkelstein (the son of Holocaust survivors) admitted that the American Jewish community looked at the Nazi Holocaust with apathy. It wasn't until the Israeli success of the so-called Six-Day War that American Jewry became serious Zionists. The military achievements of Israel (thanks to special U.S. help) confirmed that the tiny state had much promise in the future. Almost immediately after, the Nazi Holocaust became a symbol of Jewish suffering and Israel's right to exist. After American Jewry's almost virtual unanimous support of the state Israel, Nazi Holocaust propaganda started its unrelenting storm of self pity. Holocaust education became a required part of public school curriculum (yet Jews only make up approximately 2% of the American population). Now seven year olds are taught that their blond haired and blue eyed ancestors were guilty of putting Jewish children in gas chambers and feeding them to rabid dogs. The Nazi Holocaust has turned into a early brainwashing technique used to stifle any possible criticism of Israeli's numerous crimes against humanity. *Schindler's List* gives the impression that every Jew was a victim of the Nazi Holocaust. Holocaust survivor and propagandist Eli Wiesel is quoted as saying, "not every victim was a Jew but every Jew was a victim" in regards to World War II. This blasphemous statement on Wiesel's part is evidence of his own "Holocaust denial." The truth is that many "Holocausts" occurred over the last century and that Jews played a crucial role in most of them (including the "Nazi" Holocaust). Now I will take the time to examine some of these. The first Holocaust I want to look at is the Armenian Genocide committed by the Young Turks in 1915. The leaders of the "Young Turks" were for the most part not Turks at all as virtually all of them were Jewish. A couple of the Young Turks were openly Jewish and most others were Crypto-Jews (Jews that were outwardly Muslim but practiced Judaism in private). Young Turks displaying their "trophies" The Jewish conspirators involved in the Armenian Genocide are as follows: Talaat Pasha "Donmeh" Jew. Interior Minister of Turkey during WW I. Chief architect of the Armenian Holocaust. Djavid Bey "Donmeh Jew." Ta-

laa't's Finance Minister. Messim Russo was Assistant to Djavaid Bey. Refik Bey: Editor of Young Turk newspaper Revolutionary Press; Prime Minister of Turkey in 1939. Emanuel Carasso: Jewish propagandist for The Jewish Young Turks. Vladimir Jabotinsky: Russian Bolshevik and Zionist who moved to Turkey in 1908. Editor of the newspaper Young Turk. Alexander Helphand: Liaison of the Rothschilds. Editor of The Turkish Homeland. Mustafa Kemal Attaturk: A Jew of Sephardic origin. Attaturk attended the Jewish Elementary school known as the Semsı Effendi School run by the Jew Simon Zvi. During the last year, the Armenian Holocaust has made quite the controversy in the news. Many American politicians and Jewish groups were quick to not acknowledge the genocide as a "genocide." Aside from monopolizing Holocausts, Zionist propagandist didn't want the names and backgrounds of the perpetrators reaching American minds. The ADL (Anti-Defamation League), a Jewish "anti-hate" group, took a firm stance in denying the recognition of the Armenian Holocaust. Abraham H. Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) issued the following statement August 21, 2007: "we continue to firmly believe that a Congressional resolution on such matters is a counterproductive diversion and will not foster reconciliation between Turks and Armenians and may put at risk the Turkish Jewish community and the important multilateral relationship between Turkey, Israel and the United States." Estimates of those that perished in the Armenian Holocaust range between 300,000 and 1,500,000 (some estimates reaching 3 million dead). Lazar Kaganovich The second Holocaust that I want to look at is the Ukrainian famine (Holodomor) of 1932-33. The number dead in this famine reach as high as 7-10 million dead but are more conservatively to be estimated at 6 million dead. The Jews involved in this genocide are as follows: Lazar Kaganovich: Stalin's political figurehead of the Central Committee. In 1928, Kaganovich led the implementation in the Ukraine of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan. Genrikh Yagoda: Founder of the NKVD (Soviet Secret Police). Assisted in the first Five-Year Plan of starving Ukrainian peasants. Nikolai Yezhov: Appointed by Yagoda as Head of the NKVD. Assisted in the first Five-Year Plan of starving Ukrainian peasants. (Yezhov took on a "Russian" name like most Bolshevik Jews. His wife was an active Jew). In the Baltimore Jewish Times, Nov 14 2007 The Ukraine's chief Rabbi Yakov Dov Bleich said: "We can't equate the Holocaust of the Jews in Germany with the Holodomor in Ukraine. Ukrainian Jewish leaders do not support recognizing the Holodomor as genocide." The arrogance and Holocaust denial of Rabbi Yakov Dov Bleich speaks a great deal about the apathy towards non-Jewish human tragedies so commonly seen in the world. Genrikh Yagoda (second to the left) and his assistant butcher- Jewish Bolshevik Genrikh Yagoda was not only a mass murderer of Ukrainians but of also a good number of white Russians. Yagoda was notorious for showing up in black vans with Bolshevik goons at the homes of individuals in St. Petersburg and having them executed where they stood (he usually had them buried

in the woods). It is estimated that he is responsible for the deaths of at least 10 million people. Genrikh was also responsible for setting up the Bolshevik Gulag death camps in the Siberia. The Gulag death camps were responsible for more deaths than all of the Nazi concentration camps combined. Jewish Bolshevik Lev Inzhir was commissar for Soviet death camp transit and administration. Jews Firin, Rappoport, Kogan, and Zhuk ran the death camps and concocted the mass murdering plan for the construction of the White Sea--Baltic Canal (Hoffman II, 2006). Of course, you will never learn of this in an American public school. Hollywood has always acknowledged the crucial role that Jews played in Bolshevism. The horrible 2001 war drama *Enemy at the Gates* paints Jewish Bolsheviks as heroes. Woody Allen let's the whole world know that Bolsheviks even had family ties in New York City (Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky even lived there for some years) with *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. Warren Beatty found Jewish love in the form of a Jewish Bolshevik in *Reds*. Hollywood knows it's roots! The last Holocaust I want to look at is a one closer to home. Jewish author and Manhattan-born businessman Theodore N. Kaufman wrote the book *Germany Must Perish!* This hateful book describes a plan on how to exterminate the German race over a couple of generations. Nazi Germany's propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, exploited the book to his fullest, "This Jew [Kaufman] has done a disservice to the enemy." Jewish Secretary of the Treasury of the United States utilized *Germany Must Perish!* in creating his hateful plan for the Germans known as The Morgenthau Plan.

The plan originally called for the depopulation of Germany (which had already lost 12.5% of its population which had perished in the war) and dismantling of all of Germany's industry. In early 1947 four million German soldiers were still being used as slave labor in the UK, France, and the Soviet Union to repair damage made by Nazi Germany. Nearly one million of these POWs were killed in Dwight D. Eisenhower's Death camps due to starvation and horrible living conditions. Eisenhower made the erroneous mistake of acknowledging his Swedish Jewish heritage in his West Point Military Academy graduating class yearbook, published in 1915. He is quoted as referring to himself as a "terrible Swedish Jew." I won't even go into the millions of ethnic Germans killed throughout Eastern Europe by Stalin and his Bolshevik thugs.

So now we can see that ALL Jews were not victims of the Holocaust as some constructed their own. These subversive Jewish killers in no way represent the Jewish collective but still need to be acknowledged as important players in recent world history. Now I am going to examine Schindler's List and its wealth of historical inaccuracies and misleading circumstances. Schindler's List is in no way a realistic portrayal of what has come to be known as "The Holocaust." The first thing one has to acknowledge is that the source material that Schindler's List is based on is a novel (work of fiction) originally titled *Schindler's Ark*. The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has designated the novel as follows:

SCHINDLER'S LIST AND STEVEN SPIELBERG'S HOLOCAUST MYTH MAKING CAMPAIGN

Keneally, Thomas. *Schindler's List*. 1. Schindler, Oskar, 1908-1974--fiction. 2. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--fiction. 3. World war, 1939-1945--fiction. Although Oskar Schindler and his Jewish prisoners were obviously real, the circumstances surrounding the novel are for the most part fantasy. The real Oskar Schindler The real Schindler was a traitor, black market criminal, extortionist and pedophile who molested young Jewish slave girls. The only reason Oskar Schindler became a "savior of the Jews" and "righteous gentile" was to save himself from the fate of being charged as a war criminal (it was obvious Germany had already lost the war before Schindler's act of virtue). The Nazis themselves were preparing to have Schindler arrested for a variety of crimes (against his slaves and the Reich). Rudolf Kaštner Steven Spielberg conveniently left out Jewish Hungarian Nazi collaborator Rudolf Kaštner who worked with Nazi "exterminator" and "architect of the Holocaust" Adolf Eichmann. Kaštner helped Eichmann deport hundreds of thousands of Jews to Auschwitz in hopes of saving some "richer" Jews. As a child, Adolf Eichmann was persecuted for looking Jewish. Other less scholarly sources (such as Hitler: founder of Israel by Kardel) having stated that Eichmann was in fact Jewish. Adolf Eichmann also spoke perfect Hebrew and visited Palestine in preparation of having Jews from Germany immigrate to Palestine. Two Jewish films dealing with Jewish self-hatred also allude to Eichmann being of Jewish ancestry. Henry Bean's *The Believer* and Arthur Hiller's *The Man in the Glass Booth* bring up various philosophical questions on the topic of Jewish self-hatred. Baby Eichmann The "Jewish Looking" Adolf Eichmann Eichmann in his later years before Israel hanged him Furthermore, SS Lieutenant general Horst Hoyer submitted a report in 1952 on the role Jews played in the Holocaust. Jews helping to plan the final solution were Walter Sonnenschein, Zuckerhorn, Spitze, Lowenstein, Gregor and Feckler. Hoyer was offered 30,000 DM to suppress the facts and turned it down. He was eventually murdered (Makow, 2007). Jewish Communist Lenni Brenner's *51 Documents: Zionist Collaboration With the Nazis* also incriminates Jewish Zionists (who only made up 3% of Germany Jewry at the time) as enemies of their own people.

The Jewish Emil Maurice founded the SS. Adolf Hitler became member #1 and Maurice #2

Ironically, the founder of the SS (Schutzstaffel) was a Jew by the name of Emil Maurice. Adolf Hitler and Maurice were friends dating back to at least 1919. Emil Maurice (with the help of Rudolf Hess) also transcribed Adolf Hitler's oration of his political testament *Mein Kampf* (he didn't actually write it) during their imprisonment after the failed Beer Hall Putsch coup d'état. The SS was also in charge of the concentration camps and carrying out the "final solution." Jewish Dr. Eleke (Fritz) Scherwitz was in charge of Lenta-Kaiserwald concentration camp and fellow kinsman Arthur Pisk was in charge of Westerbork concentration camp. Holocaust icon Anne Frank was shipped to Auschwitz from

Westerbork. Arthur Pisk with all of his fellow Jewish concentration camp officials

One other common myth associated with Germans of partial Jewish descent (having at least one Jewish grandparent) is they were also escorted to concentration camps. This assertion is far from reality as over 150,000 Germans of Jewish descent (Mischlinge) fought for Hitler in World War II. 20 Jews were awarded Hitler's highest military honor, the Knights Cross. At least 2 field marshals and fifteen generals were also of Jewish descent (commanding up to 100,000 troops.) One also needs to take in consideration that only 600,000 Germans claimed to be Jewish before the Nazi era.

1/2 Jewish ideal Aryan poster boy Werner Goldberg Another vital fact that Spielberg chose to withhold from the movie going audience is that September of 1944, Amon Goeth was arrested by the Central Office of the SS Judiciary and imprisoned on charges of theft and the murder of concentration camp inmates (Hoffman, 1994). Spielberg portrays all Germans (aside from Schindler of course) as blood thirsty monsters bent on the extermination of European Jewry. The reality is sadists only made up less than 10% of concentration camp guards and employees. Spielberg even goes as far as to falsify his own religious book the Talmud. "He who saves a single life, saves the entire world," (found in the film and on movie posters) is supposedly a verse found in the Talmud. The actual verse states, "Whosoever preserves a single soul of Israel, Scripture ascribes to him as if he had preserved a complete world" (Tractate Sanherdin 37a). This means that the verse is only in reference to Jews. Steven Spielberg is a Zionist supremacist and an open racist. In his book of interviews (Steven Spielberg Interviews, Pg. 50), Spielberg refers to a blond haired woman as a "Shiksa" (a derogatory Yiddish word for female gentiles meaning "abomination," "impure," or "object of loathing"). When analyzing Schindler's List analytically (and not viewing with a childlike sentimentalism that Spielberg strategically employs), the lies and hate are quite obvious. Human tragedies should not be exclusively acknowledged for one group. The last century brought the deaths of hundreds of millions of people. Steven Spielberg is only interested in letting the world know that 6 million died. He is a Holocaust denier of the elite and untouchable sort.

-Ty E

SERGEI EISENSTEIN, JUDEO-BOLSHEVISM, AND GENOCIDE DENIAL
SERGEI EISENSTEIN, JUDEO-BOLSHEVISM, AND GENOCIDE
DENIAL

In my life, I have seen my fair share of deranged and perverse films. Whether it be some sick film from Japan involving naked women and eels or the artistic necrophilia of Jörg Buttgerit, I feel that I have desensitized myself to the artistic depravity of notable subversive artists. I must admit that none of these films have remotely disturbed me or even really shocked me. It wasn't until I saw Soviet revolutionary director Sergei Eisenstein's *Bezhin Meadow* (1937) did I question the morality of a filmmaker. The content of *Bezhin Meadow* is not what makes the film morally irresponsible but what the film neglects to tell you historically.

A Deranged Kulak from *Bezhin Meadow*

Bezhin Meadow portrays the Ukrainian Kulak farmers as Christian patriarchal parasites who suffer from a certain monstrous derangement. Sergei Eisenstein shows the Kulaks as Christians that utilized their religion to beat their women to death and physically abuse their children. Eisenstein once even stated that the murder of a young revolutionary named Stepok by his father was "reminiscent of Abraham's sacrifice of Issac." Eisenstein portrays the children in *Bezhin Meadow* as liberators who support the good Bolshevik fight of "liberation" and destroy their own fathers. The young Bolsheviks also take their local church and turn it into some child fantasy Bolshevik clubhouse. What really happened to the Kulaks, however, is a much different reality than Sergei Eisenstein portrays.

Victims of Holodomor

What really happened to the Kulaks was not a "joyous" and "progressive" revolution but a Soviet executed famine that killed millions of innocent people known as Holodomor that took place 1932-1933. The chief architect of this genocide was a Jewish Soviet politician Lazar Kaganovich. Kaganovich was notorious for killing tens of millions of people and burning every Christian church he could find. Keep in mind not one synagogue was burned down or destroyed during the Russian revolution. After burning down the great Cathedral of Christ the Savior Lazar Kaganovich boasted, "Mother Russia is cast down. We have ripped away her skirts."

Lazar Kaganovich "Butcher of the Ukraine"

Unlike the child revolutionaries of *Bezhin Meadow*, the children were the first to starve to death during Holodomor. Cannibalism was also prevalent and it was not unheard of for children to go "missing." Ukrainian born Russian serial killer Andrei Chikatilo's older brother was supposedly eaten by his starving neighbors. Despite being one of the most horrific events of human history, the average American has never heard about this event or the killers that executed it. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that the killers were Jewish and to admit this even happened would be deemed as anti-Semitic. Despite contemporary claims

that the Soviet Union was “anti-Semitic,” Jews were overrepresented in the Soviet leadership. After the famine, Jewish Yiddish culture thrived in the Ukraine whereas the Kulaks were all but destroyed. Lazar Kaganovich even admitted that Holodomor was payback for centuries of “Ukrainian Anti-Semitism.”

A Leon Trotsky lookalike from Bezhin Meadow

Like Lazar Kaganovich, Sergei Eisenstein was a Judeo-Bolshevik revolutionary. Eisenstein had the anti-proletarian luxury of growing up in a prosperous and cosmopolitan family. His ancestors were successful German Jews who eventually relocated to Latvia. In Eisenstein’s masterpiece *The Battleship Potemkin*, an evil bourgeois states, ‘Down with Jews.’ Obviously, Sergei Eisenstein was not going to ignore the anti-Semitism within the repressive bourgeois Slavic majority. Eisenstein’s Jewish pal Isaac Babel would also help him co-write *Bezhin Meadow*. In Babel’s story *How It Was Done in Odessa*, a character states in a Woody Allen-esque manner, “Wasn’t it a mistake on God’s part to settle Jews in Russia so they suffer in Hell?” Sergei Eisenstein was also a huge fan of Yiddish slang and Yiddish humor.

Sergei Eisenstein also did a stint in Hollywood, like many other Jewish Bolshevik filmmakers who immigrated from the Soviet Union. Eisenstein completed a script in 1930 for an adaptation of Theodore Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy* but paramount studios was not too keen on the script so Eisenstein left Hollywood for Mexico. In July 1941, Eisenstein once again appeared in America to speak on a radio program called ‘To Brother Jews of All the World’ as a Soviet Jew. One could say that Sergei Eisenstein did more for Jewish international propaganda than Steven Spielberg ever could. Spielberg may have invented the modern cinematic interpretation of the holocaust, but Eisenstein was able to cover up a Jewish executed Holocaust via *Bezhin Meadow*. *Bezhin Meadow* is now forever lost in its complete form. The film now only exists in a “silent film-cum-slide show.” Essentially, the film is just now clips from the actual film with the film’s original score intact. The modern day film school student is introduced to Sergei Eisenstein and usually looks at the director as a boring old fossil. If film schools actually put Eisenstein’s work in context with the socio-political elements that surround them, maybe Eisenstein would still be more of interest to new filmmakers. Also, one can’t forget that Sergei Eisenstein’s Soviet montage editing style that Hollywood has made no lie about utilizing is probably responsible for the so called ADHD epidemic that has plagued the United States.

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SEX MURDER ART: OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT UNCLE ADOLF AND LOVE TEUTONIC NECROPHILIA

SEX MURDER ART: OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING
ABOUT UNCLE ADOLF AND LOVE TEUTONIC NECROPHILIA

While my taste in cinema has naturally become more cultivated as the years have passed and I have become somewhat more increasingly unrepentant in my prejudices, some things have certainly remained the same, especially in regard to my great affection for the truly singular cinematic oeuvre of Berlin blond beast Jörg Buttgereit. Indeed, Buttgereit's four feature-length arthouse-splatter films—NEKRomantik (1987), *Der Todesking* (1989), NEKRomantik 2: *Die Rückkehr der liebenden Toten* (1991) aka NEKRomantik 2 - *Return of the Loving Dead*, and *Schramm* (1993)—are longtime personal favorites of mine that I revere for a number of reasons, but mainly because they were the first films that I had ever saw that I felt immaculately reconciled my childhood love of horror and exploitation with my later adult appreciation for mostly melancholic European arthouse cinema. In short, Buttgereit's films made me realize that it was not exactly insane to be a fan of both Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978) and Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980). As a result of the generosity of Dutch-born filmmaker and film distributor Nico B (Pig, Bettie Page: *Dark Angel*), I recently had the splendid luxury of re-watching all of Buttgereit's films in HD after receiving the excellent *Cult Epics Blu-ray box-set Sex Murder Art: The Films Of Jörg Buttgereit* where the Teutonic enfant terrible auteur justly receives the Criterion Collection-esque treatment. A four Blu-Ray and two CD box-set that includes an informative 40-page booklet and a wealth of mostly imperative extra features, *Sex Murder Art* not only includes the director's first four features, but also the soundtracks for all four of the films, audio commentary tracks and introductions, fairly lengthy vintage making-of featurettes, the medium-length absurdist pre-NEKRomantik anti-romance *Hot Love* (1985), and other short films and music videos, among other things that can hardly be described as mere junk filler. Seeing as I have not seen most of these films in a couple years, it was a somewhat nostalgic experience devouring this entire boxset over the course of one single weekend while coming to realize that I love Buttgereit's films just as much as I love the cinematic works of my favorite 'legitimate' arthouse directors like Fassbinder, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Werner Schroeter, Carl Th. Dreyer, and even Ingmar Bergman. On top of everything else, I must confess that I have come to the conclusion that I sincerely believe that Buttgereit is the greatest German 'horror filmmaker' since F.W. Murnau. Of course, re-watching all of these films reminded me of the quite dejecting fact that Buttgereit completely gave up filmmaking when he was in his prime after his masterful serial killer flick *Schramm* because he felt burnt out and was tired of having no money to work with. Indeed, while Buttgereit did indeed return to filmmaking in a sense in 1999 to direct an episode of the Canadian science fiction TV series *Lexx* and he would go on to direct various documentaries

like *Monsterland* (2009), the goofy filmed theater piece *Captain Berlin versus Hitler* (2010), the superlatively silly stageplay triptych *Monsters of Arthouse* (2013), and one of the three segments of the horror anthology *German Angst* (2015), none of these films aside from possibly the latter contain the same distinctly Teutonic seriousness, innately instinctual and visceral artsy, unrelenting obsessiveness, gorgeously grotesque clarity of vision and all-around idiosyncratic economic filmmaking that epitomizes his four feature-length works. While Buttgerit discussed in an interview with Loris Curci in *Shockmasters Of The Cinema* (1996) about how he was working on both a film about a TV show host and a much anticipated cinematic work entitled *NEKRomantik 3* (apparently, he even penned two different scripts for the latter), neither of these projects ever came to fruition. In short, Buttgerit more or less committed suicide as a cinematic auteur, which is somewhat ironic considering that he is currently at the height of his international popularity and even has such a loyal following that a number of these fans have demonstrated their dedication to his films by vandalizing their own bodies with *NEKRomantik* and *Der Todesking* tattoos.

While New German Cinema unofficially ended in 1982 when the movement's figurative 'heart' Fassbinder died under somewhat dubious circumstances that hint towards subconscious suicide, Buttgerit would ultimately transcend their objective in terms of creating a truly subversive non-commercial underground cinema that would put the works of the most controversial filmmakers of that era like Ulrike Ottinger and Rosa von Praunheim to abject shame. Indeed, quite unlike Ottinger and von Praunheim, Buttgerit did not have the convenient excuse of being 'campy' or gay to get away with his truly transgressive themes and imagery. In fact, in terms of his distinctly German Romanticism and keen obsessiveness with Germany's dark past and stark present, Buttgerit is also somewhat ironically the most German of German filmmakers, even though he was mostly influenced by American sources. As a filmmaker once made a short mocking his own father entitled *Mein Papi* (1981), Buttgerit also follows in the post-WWII German tradition of depicting a figurative "fatherless society" and a homeland with no true "Heimat" where a true German identity has become intangible due to the ghosts of the Second World War. Notably, while watching the audio commentary for his short *Horror Heaven* (1984), Buttgerit made a point to recognize that he, like many West Germans of his era, grew up on American trash culture as opposed to traditional German culture, yet amazingly the Teutonic essence of his artistry bleeds through every single frame of his four features as if he was under the subconscious influence of Wotan in a fashion not unlike how Nietzsche was described by C.G. Jung in his 1936 essay on the Aryan war god. Indeed, while Buttgerit might not be aware of these figures, he is indubitably an heir to great German artists of the aesthetically pleasingly grotesque, including bisexual Satanic novelist and screenwriter Hanns Heinz Ewers and Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn, who both became more or less

unofficially blacklisted after World War II due to their temporary support of National Socialism, even though both men would eventually be persecuted by the regime. Without even knowing it, Buttgereit would demonstrate a certain solidarity with Ewers and Benn early in his career by daring to direct decidedly iconoclastic films like *Blutige Exzesse im Führerbunker* (1984) aka *Bloody Excess in the Leader's Bunker*, which depicts a sort of mad scientist Uncle Adolf attempting to regain power with the help of Eva Braun and the director himself. Notably, Buttgereit was so disinterested in appeasing the authoritarians of political correctness that the filmmaker once dared to screen the short alongside concentration camp footage. Of course, more obviously, Buttgereit is an underground heir to the great German Expressionist filmmakers, especially F.W. Murnau, as well as the German emigrants that came to Hollywood and influenced everything from horror to film noir.

If you listen to the audio commentary tracks featured on the *Sex Murder Art Blu-Rays*, it becomes quite clear that Buttgereit has a certain latent German pride, but I have my suspicions that he has a special affinity for famous American serial killers of German descent, as if they act as a sort of special imperative link for him between his homeland and the country that culturally colonized his nation after the Second World War. Indeed, aside from the fact that Schramm opens with a quote by serial killer and sadistic sodomaniac Carl Panzram—a sort of Nietzsche of serial killers who had his own personal unhinged Übermensch philosophy of hatred and misanthropy whose parents were from East Prussia—Buttgereit has demonstrated a lifelong obsession with Aryan-blooded macabre momma's boy Ed Gein, whose both maternal and paternal grandparents were German Lutheran immigrants. In fact, not only did Buttgereit pay tribute to Gein with an entire true-crime-tragedy play entitled *Kannibale Und Liebe* about the necrophile that is set during 1957, but he also actually traveled to his unmarked grave in Plainfield, Wisconsin in July 2012, which he documented with his rather respectful and quite literally titled 2-minute short *A Moment of Silence at the Grave of Ed Gein* (2012). In an interview with *Cinedelphia.com* in September 2013, Buttgereit would rightly remark regarding the real-life ghoul and his overall importance on the horror genre as a whole, "I think Ed Gein is the first American Horror-character. Monsters like Frankenstein, Dracula or the Mummy came from the outside. But Gein came from the inside of America [...] I love *PSYCHO*, *TCM* and *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*. Every film deals with a different aspect of this weird character." Notably, Buttgereit was not the first Teuton to develop a deep interest in the infamous real-life necromantic, as Bavarian wild mensch auteur Werner Herzog met up with Hebraic documentarian Errol Morris in 1975 in Plainfield to work on a film where they planned to dig up Gein's mother's corpse to test their theory that the cross-dressing proto-Leatherface had already dug up his mommy. Unfortunately, Morris wussed out, but Herzog ultimately paid tribute to Gein in his own special way by filming

part of his masterpiece *Stroszek* (1977) in the infamous cross-dressing killer's hometown.

Undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing yet commercially and critically deleterious aspects of Buttgereit's films is that they feature a completely seamless incorporation of both arthouse and exploitation/horror elements. In other words, many braindead glue-snuffing gorehounds find his films to be too 'boring' and 'artsy' while mainstream film critics and academics find them to be too obscenely offensive, politically incorrect, and repugnant to take seriously. Indeed, not surprisingly, German film critics acted like timid little uptight bitches when *Schramm* was screened at the prestigious Max Ophüls Prize Film Festival, or as David Kerekes explained in his book *Sex Murder Art*, "Some are convinced that *SCHRAMM* promises a bright, blood-free film future for the director, but not so the critics at the Max Ophüls Prize Film Festival. Buttgereit tells the author that it's nothing short of a scandal for a film such as his to be playing a 'serious' festival like this. Sure enough, the consensus is that Buttgereit has nothing to say, and his whole film just an excuse to present meaningless violence." Naturally, it should be no surprise that Austrian one-time-auteur Gerald Kargl's arthouse-horror piece *Angst* (1983)—a truly masterful serial killer flick if there ever was one that would ultimately have a huge influence on the overall style and aesthetic of the films of Gaspar Noé—was also poorly received upon its release, as if most people in the German-speaking world cannot handle films about serial killers because it reminds them too much of the sort of cartoonish genocidal Nazi maniacs depicted in Hollywood films. Of course, arguably more obviously and rudely than any other German filmmaker of the post-WWII era, Buttgereit has unwittingly demolished kosher commie and tiresome Teutonphobe Theodor W. Adorno's decidedly dickheaded dictum (translation: goy golden rule), "Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" in a most deliciously savage fashion, as an auteur that managed to create, among other things, erotic cinematic poetry in the form of a voluptuous Aryanness wearing a Hitler Youth outfit while in bondage as depicted at the very conclusion of *Schramm*. Additionally, Buttgereit's wickedly darkly humorous satirizing of Nazisplotation trash like *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1974) in *Der Todesking* would have probably so severely irked dildo Adorno that it would have possibly inspired him to write another extensive esoteric essay on the ostensible innate evilness of krauts and how they should spend the rest of eternity repenting for their sins against Judea.

While Adorno would have certainly loathed Buttgereit's films, his shabbos goy protégé Alexander Kluge (*Abschied von gestern* - (*Anita G.*) aka *Yesterday Girl*, *Der Starke Ferdinand* aka *Strongman Ferdinand*)—a lawyer turned cinematic auteur that is arguably the most overtly 'intellectual' filmmaker in German history and who was one of twenty-six signatories to the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, which more or less marked the launch of the New German Cinema and a renaissance in German cinema—had enough appreciation for *Der Tode-*

sking to include the infamous Nazisplotation castration in his 20-minute short *Das Goldene Vlies*, which won the prestigious Adolf Grimme Award. In fact, Kluge caused a scandal of sorts when he managed to get the short screened on television, though a dubious “freak weather accident” conveniently resulted in five minutes of the film to being blacked out, including the infamous Nazi castration scene. Somewhat interestingly, it seems that Kluge saw some genuine talent and inspiration in Buttgereit, as he not only had him on his talk show, but also hired him to direct at least three documentaries. Undoubtedly, for Kluge to work with Buttgereit would be somewhat akin to Godard working with Jean Rollin or Woody Allen collaborating with Jim Van Bebber, but then again I personally believe that the Teutonic auteur clearly has more genuine artistic talent and originality than his French and American counterparts. Indeed, had Buttgereit not been brought up on a steady diet of American trash culture and instead was exposed to traditional German culture, one could argue that he might have evolved into a sort of Franz von Stuck of cinema. After all, Fassbinder also received a similar American cinematic education as demonstrated by his imperative influence from Hollywood auteur filmmakers ranging from Raoul Walsh to Douglas Sirk.

A somewhat prominent figure of the 1980s Berlin punk rock scene, Buttgereit started out directing goofy anarchic Super-8 shorts like *Der explodierende Turnschuh* (1980) aka *The Exploding Sports Shoe*, *Der trend - Punkrocker Erzählen aus ihrem leben* (198) aka *The Trend - Punkrockers Speak About Their Lives*, and *Manne the Mowie* (1981) and even co-directed the feature-length doc *So war das S.O.36* (1985), which features a number of important *Neue Deutsche Welle*, Punk, and Industrial bands of the time like *Einstürzenden Neubauten*, *Lorenz Lorenz*, *Betoncombo*, *Die tödliche Doris*, *Malaria*, and *Die Gelbs*. In fact, a good percentage of the people that have appeared in Buttgereit’s films are from the Berlin music scene. Indeed, only in a Buttgereit film like *Der Tode-sking* will you see weirdo black-haired kraut musician Hermann Kopp naked and committing suicide in a scene that he actually composed the music in a scenario that was based on the dubious death of disgraced West German politician Uwe Barschel. In short, Buttgereit is a true D.I.Y. artist and thankfully he does not go around bragging about this fact as if it were some sort of grand virtue like certain posturing leftwing scenester wimps tend to do. Also, it should not be overlooked that Buttgereit has ties to the queer avant-garde in the form of his handful of collaborations with Michael Bryntrup, who looks like he could practicably be the filmmaker’s twin brother (incidentally, Bryntrup claims on his website bio that he had a identical twin brother that was stillborn). Arguably the two most archotypically Aryan looking filmmakers that have ever lived, Bryntrup fittingly contracted Buttgereit to direct the crucifixion scene for his rather ambitious 35-episode experimental Super-8 epic *Jesus - Der Film* (1986). Ultimately, Buttgereit returned the favor by having Bryntrup play a less than mer-

ciful Aryan Christ at the end of Schramm. Notably, like Buttgereit, Bryntrup also has a sort of reluctant nostalgia for Germany and his family as indicated by his short DER RHEIN - ein deutsches Märchen (1983) aka THE RHINE - A German Fairy Tale, which tells the sad and somewhat sentimental story about how he never got the opportunity to meet his pretty boy uncle Karl-Anton because he was senselessly killed during the last days of the Second World War when he was just 18 years old while defending a toll castle on an island in the Rhine called Pfalzgrafenstein Castle.

From the comic book heroes of Jews like Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster (e.g. Superman) and Stan Lee (e.g. Marvel Comics) to the sub-schlocky exploitation films of Herschell Gordon Lewis and David F. Friedman like Blood Feast (1963), Buttgereit is somewhat ironically a product of the very same kosher cultural colonization that Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels so often warned of during his rather eloquent propaganda speeches, yet he has managed to take these virtually aesthetically worthless ingredients and sire something inordinately cultivated and singular, sort of the way that Hans-Jürgen Syberberg managed to do the seemingly impossible by combining the distinctly Teutonic Romanticism of Richard Wagner with the audience-alienating cultural Bolshevism of kraut commie Bertolt Brecht. Of course, also like Syberberg, Buttgereit has also remained a controversial figure that will probably not get his total due, at least while he is still alive (incidentally, Buttgereit once stated, "If you show an American film in Germany then it's not so interesting, unless you're dead like Fassbinder, then it's okay," thus underscoring modern degenerate Germany's sad, pathetic and innately irrational loathing for its own great living artists). Of course, it can be argued that, also like Syberberg, Buttgereit has attempted to symbolically salvage German kultur from the Nazis. Indeed, not unlike Syberberg in his mammoth magnum opus Hitler: A Film from Germany (1977), Buttgereit's Captain Berlin versus Hitler is an example of a filmmaker exorcising Hitlerite demons and reclaiming German history and culture.

As his films, especially NEKRomantik and NEKRomantik 2, aggressively demonstrate, it is like Buttgereit has taken the title of Syberberg's decidedly damning 1977 essay "We Live in a Dead Country" quite literally, as if the auteur subconsciously came to the conclusion that necrophilia would be the greatest metaphor for spiritual and cultural decay that plagues many modern-day Teutons. Notably, as Syberberg quite accurately remarked in his essay, "German cinema is finished in its present structure and the rats are leaving the sinking ship. This country is not only dead, it is not even a country any longer. Centerless. Without a spirituality identity [...] A country deserted by the Jewish intellectuals of film and nevertheless with such a large mafia? In my book I speak of a mafia of the subconscious. Our filmbuffs [sic] are grotesque in their refutation of the efforts of the anti-Semites. The Jews left, the mafia remained." Of course, Syberberg is speaking of the sort of ethno-masochistic kraut philo-

Semites that incessantly kiss kosher ass as an ostensible means to atone for the holocaust, as if that will every change the fact that Hollywood and the majority of Hebrews in general have a totally visceral undying hatred of all-things-Teutonic. Naturally, only the underground could have sired a German filmmaker as subversive as Buttgereit who, not unlike Syberberg, is not afraid to reveal the present necrotizing state of the German Volksgeist. If we are to believe National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg when he wrote, "Every race has its soul and every soul its race," then I think it is safe to say that, as far as post-WWII directors are concerned, Buttgereit's films embody the most visceral and uncensored expression of the German collective unconscious. Indeed, in their collective unwillingness to reproduce and open embracing of innately hostile aliens with primitive savage religions that are turning their cities into third world hell-holes, the Germans long for death as both a nation and people and one could certainly argue that the passing of this truly great race began with the capitulation of the Wehrmacht 6th Army during the Battle of Stalingrad (indeed, it is no coincidence that Stalingrad is a major motif in Kluge's films, as if it represents a sort of very real reoccurring nightmare for both him and his nation's clearly haunted collective subconscious).

In his fairly short but immaculately sweet autobiography *My Last Sigh* (1983), great Spanish maestro Luis Buñuel, who had a fairly big influence on some of Buttgereit's films, wrote regarding the imperative influence that his Catholic upbringing and Jesuit education would have on his life and art, "Ironically, this implacable prohibition inspired a feeling of sin which for me was positively voluptuous. And although I'm not sure why, I also have always felt a secret but constant link between the sexual act and death. I've tried to translate this inexplicable feeling into images, as in *UN CHIEN ANDALOU* when the man caresses the woman's bare breasts as his face slowly changes into a death mask." Judging by Buñuel's rather bold confession, one could argue that Buttgereit has a somewhat similar outlook and that he totally transcended the Spanish surrealist maestro into terms of cinematically expressing the innate link between sex and death. Of course, life begins with sex and ends with death, hence Nietzschean anarchist Georges Bataille's remark, "Death is really the opposite process to the process ending in birth, yet these opposite processes can be reconciled." When it comes to necrophilia, there is no potential for reproduction, thus highlighting its sort of potential poetic appeal for a filmmaker like Buttgereit who seems to loathe his family (or at least his father) and who lives in a suicidal national where antinatalism—an anti-life position that was notably endorsed by Teutonic pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer about a century before it became vogue—seems to be a sort of rampant metaphysical affliction that will only disappear when, somewhat ironically, the last German disappears. In fact, aside from Japan, Germany has the lowest birth rate in the entire world. Indeed, while a mass suicide wave that hit Germany in 1945 when the Red Army began invading the

country during the final days of the Second World War (for example, on May 1, 1945, hundreds of people committed mass suicide in the town of Demmin as a result of the Soviets invading the area and committing atrocities, including mass rapes and destroying 80% of the town in a mere three days), one could argue that this disturbing trend still lives on today, albeit in a sort of passive and largely anti-natalist form. Of course, Buttgereit's darkly delightful cinematic *Danse Macabre Der Todesking*—a truly one-of-a-kind piece of cinema that is arguably the director's greatest contribution to the medium—is probably the most potent example of Germany's tragic tradition of post-Nazi self-slaughter and possibly the most poetic celluloid reminder that transgenerational epigenetic inheritance is real and that virtually every single contemporary German has arguably been accursed with the wartime traumas of their ancestors. In fact, I would not be surprised if all of Buttgereit's four features were the unconscious expression of inherited traumas, but I digress.

Undoubtedly, in some ways I am a hopeless luddite of sorts as demonstrated by the fact that I only just recently got a Blu-ray player, but I certainly do not regret it as it was put to great use for *Sex Murder Art*, which will indubitably become one of my most used and abused box-sets. If there was anything that I immediately realized after re-watching Buttgereit's films, it is that, quite unlike a lot of the horror movies I loved when I was younger, my appreciation from them has only grown all the more as the years have passed as it is easier for me to see the German auteur's imperative experimental and arthouse influences. Indeed, only Buttgereit could make a film like *Schramm* that was heavily influenced by a fairly underrated and largely forgotten French arthouse flick like Claude Sautet's *Les Choses de la Vie* (1970) aka *The Things of Life* starring Michel Piccoli and Romy Schneider. Likewise, only could Buttgereit not only pay sort of post-punk tribute to Louis Malle's *My Dinner with Andre* (1981) in a romance film about necrophilia, but do it with a sort of superlatively surreal twist that even outdoes Buñuel in terms of absurdity. In terms of his mastery of poetic cinematic oneiricism on a beggar's budget and seemingly innate and discernibly Germanic talent for decidedly grim Gothic horror, Buttgereit is like a punk F.W. Murnau, albeit seemingly more sexually perverse and nihilistic. Additionally, Buttgereit has probably come closer than any other contemporary horror filmmaker to being a Jean Cocteau of the genre, as his quite clever and creative special effects and camera tricks, as well as shockingly delectable use of dream-sequences, certainly make his films an excellent choice to watch alongside the French poet-cum-filmmaker's singular Orphic Trilogy.

As far as I am concerned, Buttgereit, not unlike the late great Christoph Schlingensiefel (*Terror 2000 - Intensivstation Deutschland, United Trash*), succeeded in many ways where the would-be-revolutionary filmmakers of New German Cinema failed by concocting an intrinsically subversive and aggressively anti-commercial style of insanely idiosyncratic auteur filmmaking that still man-

ages to fall in the grand Teutonic tradition of irrational Romanticism. Indeed, instead of falling into the sort of commie ghetto of conformity that has severely dated many of the cinematic works of popular New German Cinema filmmakers like Volker Schlöndorff and his bitchy ex-wife Margarethe von Trotta, Buttgerreit embraced a distinct punk Weltanschauung that inspired him to break all taboos, including those relating to Germany's Nazi past, albeit in a keenly cultivated fashion where it is apparent that he is not just out to shock people. In fact, as Buttgerreit explained to Kerekes regard to his utilization of real animal-killings and sort of anti-exploitation approach to gore, "I thought it important to put the rabbit sequence in because there has to be a scene that people are positive is not faked – that it isn't fun anymore. That's why I don't understand this 'Glorifying Violence' argument leveled at us, because every time we cut something up it's a mess. When somebody gets killed, it's a mess. It even takes hours to dig up a grave." While people can say many things about Buttgerreit's films, there is no denying that his features lack the sort of sensational pornographic thrills featured in exploitation films that seem to arouse certain gorehounds, hence his lack of popularity among various horror fiend philistines.

Notably, in an interview with Marcus Stiglegger featured in the book *Caligari's Heirs* (2007) edited by Steffen Hantke, Buttgerreit remarked in regard as to why he specifically sought to parody Nazisplotation cinema in *Der Todesking*, "I think of this as an act of liberation, an homage to all those things that were kept from us in Germany presumably for our own good. Once you discover that these things exist, you are equally horrified and intrigued. ILSA was punk rock for me—same thing as Sid Vicious with his swastika." While some might interpret Buttgerreit's attitude to Nazism as reckless or immature, it is indubitably more healthy than the seeming majority of contemporary German filmmakers, who seem to bask in their own completely shameless ethno-masochism and patently pathetic post-holocaust guilt despite the fact that they were not even alive during the Third Reich. Of course, it is most likely this sort of spiritual necrophilia regarding long dead Jews that the NEKRomantik films even exist. As the films of the somewhat mysterious pseudonymous auteur Marian Dora (*Cannibal, Melancholie der Engel*)—Buttgerreit's virtual cinematic heir—demonstrate, it seems the post-shoah metaphysical affliction has only grown darker and more hysterical and irrational in Deutschland since the release of NEKRomantik, but that is probably to be expected in the era of globalization where Hollywood cultural colonization has guaranteed that Germans and whites in general will be incessantly bombarded with sickeningly sensational big budget agitprop of the holy holocaust oriented sort where the big bad goyim is expected to pay tribute to the glorious six million while ignoring both the many great Hebraic mass murderers of the pasty century like Lazar Kaganovich (who carried his own little holocaust against the Ukrainians called "Holodomor") and Genrikh Yagoda and Israel's staunchly Zionist longtime ethnic cleansing campaign.

While Hollywood continues pouring salt onto old Aryan wounds by incessantly defecting out fictional holocaust film after fictional holocaust film, Buttgereit has intriguingly used the most critically maligned film genre as a means to create the most visceral and curious of Trauerarbeit pieces, as if the auteur had been engulfed in the darkest corners of the German national psyche and felt instinctively compelled to artistically express the morbidly melancholic spirit that was eating away at his soul (notably, Buttgereit eventually developed a stomach ulcer from the stress of filmmaking). After all, arguably the most offensive aspect of Buttgereit's films is the surprising seriousness and inordinate pulchritude that he brings to these totally taboo themes. Of course, in a once proud nation where a good percentage of the people hate themselves so much that they suicidally welcome their own displacement and genocide by refusing to reproduce and embracing the colonization of their country by hostile medieval-minded Muslims that think that all women that do not wear towels on their heads are dirty whores, it is only natural that beauty would come in the form of the moribund, grotesque, and eclectically unnatural. Undoubtedly, it should be noted that the murders in Buttgereit's films more resemble ritualistic sacrifices than mere killings, which is interesting when one considers Bataille's words, "It is the common business of sacrifice to bring life and death into harmony, to give death the upsurge of life, life the momentousness and the vertigo of death opening on to the unknown. Here life is mingled with death, but simultaneously death is a sight of life, a way into the infinite." Indeed, judging by Bataille's remark, one could argue that Buttgereit's single greatest philosophical feat as a filmmaker is that he has managed to make cinematic works about corpse-fucking that are strangely life-affirming.

-Ty E

SHIVERS / RABID: DOUBLE FEATURE
SHIVERS / RABID: DOUBLE FEATURE

David Cronenberg is one of the most versatile and greatest auteurs currently still working/breathing. His record of great filmmaking is seamless, save for one hiccup, his second theatrical release, *Rabid*. Starring Marilyn Chambers, *Rabid* begins all so quickly. The film literally opens with a motorcycle being driven off the road, severely burning Rose with an explosion. Taken to the nearby cosmetic alteration clinic, a doctor with more than a few screws loose, ironically named Keloid, opts to submit her to a radical, untested procedure, grafting flesh over the burns with hopes to differentiate the flesh and regenerate tissue. At the time, Cronenberg's pseudo-scientific physical aberrations were a bit artistically repressed but already lacking in the plausibility category. The metaphysical horrors that occupy Rose include a puckering wound located in the host's armpit that emits a tendril fitted with a stinger used to drain the blood out of victims. The sexuality is present but restricted, as was the decision of the CFDC (Canadian Film Development Corporation) after *Shivers* horrified their noble tastes. The parasitic sexual frenzy within *Shivers* had disgusted financiers alike and it seemed no one at the time could understand Cronenberg's artistic vision. To capture the carnal demand for *Rabid* was both the casting of a porn-star and the lust-driven acts of violence committed on screen. Horrific phallicentrism in tow with the insect-like black widow pattern of the diseased Rose, the same blueprint was transfixed from *Shivers* to *Rabid*, the "companion" piece to *Shivers*.

Rabid is a film that can be blindly defended due to the illustrious techniques later employed by Cronenberg. One would be dedicated enough to claim he never made a "bad" film. If these ignorant fools could get their heads out of their asses and face *Rabid* with a keen eye for a sense of style, they'd discover that there isn't any to be found. Apart from being aesthetically dry or based upon an unbelievable horror premise that coos to "bad biology" (whose best bet for impact relies on the flaws of cellular science), *Rabid* simply isn't a good film by any standards. Sure, there are "zombies", violence, sexuality, and all of those later assets owed to the king of body-horror's throne, but *Rabid* is a film suffered by drought and ever-watchful eyes, which affect the script and execution. *The Brood* brought slick lighting and a sinking feeling of dread. Similar science in *The Brood* included the incubation of beasts in the mold of a child, what one perceives as the most harmless being of all - perfection and innocence incarnate. *Rabid* doesn't break any molds with its minimalism in terror, however, *Rabid* features systematic attacks of "the dead" which is the main facet lifted from *Shivers*. Instead of an infection as found in *Rabid*, parasites created by an ambitious doctor are the reason for duress in *Shivers*. Despite my hostile offensive taken against *Rabid*, at least it remains leaps and bounds better than similar Romero's post-Night of... diuretic concoction, *The Crazies*.

The lusts of men are the victims of *Rabid*, not Rose as a character. You'd

consider that *Rabid* held in esteem the fate of Rose, carrier mother of the apocalypse. But you'd be wrong to believe so. Cronenberg makes no attempt to shove her into the doleful eyes of the audience. When one considers her plight and the urges she cannot control, a whim of empathy is planted. But once she begins to feed, yet again, all pity felt towards this slovenly beast is shed. *Shivers*, on the contrary, features a cast of characters with whom you can establish a connection to. After all, *Shivers* is an attack on the middle class and the sexuality confined. These are victims that could be you and I, with the temptation of anonymous sex and parasitic ecstasy. Within the sterile walls of the Starliner Towers, a mega-resort for the bourgeois, lives a terrifying abomination, a parasite designed for the benefits of mankind but might ultimately become its downfall. This plot fixture of *Shivers* provides immense horror and my highest form of adulation. Ringing with terror towards this strain of venereal disease, promiscuity and the disasters of polyamory, and the confined environment of the self-sufficient, *Shivers* is such a marvel of its time - a dateless entity that retains the same sociological impact of that when it was released. It's sister, *Rabid*, is a disgrace in comparison to the intellectual property of *Shivers*. Only in the final 3 minutes does *Rabid* supersede its past ill effect and present the only image that could be deemed as "haunting."

The genesis of Cronenberg's body-horror hit full force with *Shivers*, though. I can shower *Shivers* with as much praise as I can muster for its daunting schematic of sex and organic assimilation. Adolescent mistresses and a deranged incestuous tableaux await with *Shivers*. Something as brilliant as *Shivers* denounces the interpretations one might assess from the early title of *The Parasite Murders*. When you juxtapose both *Shivers* and *Rabid*, the results are of a notable degree of differentiating theories of sexuality. I fancy Cronenberg to be more Freudian than anything, further evidence includes his upcoming film, *A Dangerous Method*, based around Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. Jung's philosophies were based with more of a spiritual bite whereas Freud was the materialistic of the two. Cronenberg's thesis of physicality aligns him up nicely with Freud's line of work. Fellow auteur, David Lynch, is admittedly more of a Carl Jung fellow, himself stating that his work isn't intellectual but rather stems from his subconscious. "You don't work with any kind of intellectual thing." Several scenes of aberrant sexuality are frequently at play in *Shivers* and further the suspense of consummation. Where *Shivers* had this slimy fear of coupling, *Rabid* was a one-note female power play in which Marilyn Chambers seduced and destroyed whomever she wanted. Only when she refrained from advancing on her (ex)boyfriend (morphogenetics will do that to you) was the slightest of control displayed for the succubus.

I can honor both films as ending on an excellent note - both desperate and dismal. However, *Rabid*'s finale focused more on the fate of the titular character and the dwelling of mankind was to be done at your leisure. *Shivers*' affirms that

SHIVERS / RABID: DOUBLE FEATURE

even "old flesh . . . is erotic flesh" and those dwelling within the modern architecture deemed safe are at the mercy of science and eroticism. Both of these prove to be pivotal forces in Cronenberg's early career centered around obviously structured linear experimentalism. While my words and harsh demeanor towards Rabid may be misconstrued as "unfair" or that "I just didn't get it," I'll have you know that if Rabid held 1/4th of the finesse used in the creation of Shivers, I'd be more keen to let the flat story speak for itself, and not the staleness. David Cronenberg created two films within two years that have been deemed companion pieces. I condemn the term "companion" with regards to both films, withal, both films create not an experience but that similar of a Venn diagram - two vastly different but recognizable instances of sexually-charged horror. On one hand, Rabid is a dynamically flawed film discoursing an allegory for the woman, a literal blood-sucker who flings with other men unbeknownst to the partner in search for a hunger within to be quenched. On the other hand is Shivers, the predecessor to Rabid, ultimately more refined and envisioned, which catapulted Cronenberg into a debut virtuoso. What Shivers does, Rabid doesn't. Not only does Shivers appear timeless, Shivers, to this day, is Cronenberg's best literal (and purest) work of horror.

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SUNRISE: A MASTERPIECE LOST IN TIME

The early masters of cinema are fading in time with each passing year. The world has changed a lot since the silent years of cinema and the film audience has also changed. Ironically, not much has changed in the way of storytelling. People still desire to see a story about a couple in love and the conflicts they encounter. F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) is no doubt one of the greatest love stories to have ever graced the silver screen. The film's German Director F.W. Murnau managed to import elements of German expressionist cinema and bring them to the Hollywood studio resulting in a tale of aesthetically powerful and engaging rediscovered love. *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is a film that emphasizes the triumph of true love over sham of new subversive love, a film depicting the battle of the old rural life against the promises of a new life found in the form of a cosmopolitan city. In its essence, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is a film expressing various related dichotomies facing human beings both during the time of the film's release and even at the present. F.W. Murnau stated in 1927, "It is very strange to me that we have a generation born and grown manhood since the motion pictures were invented, and yet so far, no great poet of the new art has arisen (Fischer 52)." I don't know whether Murnau spoke these words out of pretension or when subconsciously thinking of himself. My belief is that F.W. Murnau was the first great artist and poet of cinema. Although cinematic artists came before him, Murnau was the first to truly master his art before his tragic and untimely death. When viewing F.W. Murnau's small lexicon of films (most of his first being lost), it is obvious that there was an artistic progression with each film. The artist known as F.W. Murnau was born F.W. Plumpe in Bielefeld, Westphalia. He adopted the pseudo surname of Murnau after a small Bavarian town in Germany famous for its artists' colony, the Blaue Reiter group (Fischer 10). Murnau was educated as he graduated from the University of Heidelberg studying literature and art history. His background in history would eventually inspire his artistry as a filmmaker (Fischer 56). In fact, many filmmakers have compared Murnau's *mise en scène* to that of still life compositions. This is also obvious when considering Murnau's name change. The Bavarian town associated with the famous Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) movement in Germany of the early 1900's (Fischer 57). It can be expected that a student of art history would have known of the famous art movement and its painters. The Blaue Reiter group was led by Russian immigrant painter Wassily Kandinsky and featured such other painters as Alexei von Jawlensky, Paul Klee, August Macke, Franz Marc, Gabriele Muntz, and Marianne von Werefkin (Fischer 57). While most film directors seemed to be influenced by the theater, Murnau seemed to take influence primarily from painters. This is something that set him apart from most filmmakers of his time (and before him) and even the German expressionist film movement that he was a part of. *Sunrise:*

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A Song of Two Humans was the first film that F.W. Murnau would direct in America and for Fox Film Corporation founder William Fox. Fox's biographer claims that the legendary producer stated Murnau was "the genius of his age" and that his previous German film *The Last Laugh* was "the greatest motion picture of all time (Allen and Gomery 93)." These are quite bold statements from a man of William Fox's American cinema pioneering stature. Fox made a very risky move when deciding to import F.W. Murnau and many of his German filmmaking associates to make films for him at Fox Film Corporation. Unfortunately for both Fox and Murnau, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* failed to even recoup its costs as it was the most expensive silent film made by Fox at that time (Allen and Gomery 91). F.W. Murnau would only make two more films (*Four Devils* and *City Girl*) at Fox Film Corporation that both suffered from director's nightmare of studio interference. Murnau's last film would be a co-direction with documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty appropriately titled *Tabu*. Soon after the completion (and before the premiere), F.W. Murnau would tragically die in an automobile accident. Although a financial failure, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is one of the greatest artistic achievements in cinema history. The very first Academy Awards (1929) took notice as *Sunrise* received an Oscar (among other awards) for "Unique and Artistic Production" despite the film's lack of monetary success (Fischer 14). The award predated the "Best Picture" Oscar. Englishman Charles Rosher and German Karl Struss also received the first Academy Award for Cinematography (Fischer 15). To call the cinematography work in *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* breathtaking would be an understatement. Englishman Charles Rosher learned a lot of his craft and techniques from German cinematographer Carl Hoffman while working on F.W. Murnau's adaptation of *Faust* (1926). Rosher stated of Hoffman, 'I took several ideas back, including a dolly suspended from railway tracks in the ceiling which I adapted for *Sunrise*.' Rosher's assertion is no surprise when taking a look at the seamless and flawless long shots so prevalent in *Faust*. I would be lying to not acknowledge the crew members that contributed to *Sunrise* in very crucial ways. F.W. Murnau

The story for *Sunrise* was written by Murnau collaborator Carl Mayer, which he adapted from a story written by Hermann Sudermann (Fischer 12). Carl Mayer, an Austrian writer, was a major player in German expressionist cinema and even co-authored the script of the iconic *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*. Mayer decided to stay in Germany during the production of *Sunrise* (Fischer 12). Another important member of the *Sunrise* team was set designer Rochus Gliese, who contributed a lot to the overall look of the expressive film. I can't imagine a contemporary set designer putting as much detail as the atmospheric swamp found in the rural farm in *Sunrise*. This is a scene that no doubt caused a cold chill to sneak up the back of audience member's necks upon viewing the film. F.W. Murnau wasn't the only German director to pack his bags for America. Out of all the other German Expressionist filmmakers to decide it

was time to work in Hollywood, Fritz Lang is the only other one worth praise in the same league as Murnau. Lang's German films were of a much grander scale than most of Murnau's, as seen in *Die Nibelungen* (1924), *Metropolis* (1927), and the sound film *M* (1931). Fritz Lang's influence on contemporary Sci-fi films is obvious upon viewing (especially *Metropolis*). Lang even made cinematic politic attacks against Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party with his film *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933). Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels said of the film: 'I shall ban this film...because it proves that a group of men who are determined to the last...could succeed in overturning any government by brute force (Eisner 130).' Unlike Lang, F.W. Murnau was a fairly apolitical film director that thankfully never saw the day that Adolf Hitler took power in his homeland. Fritz Lang was also supposedly offered (according to Lang himself) by Goebbels to be the head of the Nazi propaganda film industry despite being of half Jewish ancestry (Eisner 131). Lang would eventually make his way to America and direct Anti-Nazi propaganda film such as *Man Hunt* (1941) and *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943). Unlike Murnau, Fritz Lang had a very long film career spanning four decades. Lang had his largest and most lavish production during his German era. Unfortunately, most of his American films are considered B films and some later ones even unwatchable. Fritz Lang did, however, direct some of his best films in America (despite their budgets). Lang's *Scarlet Street* (1945) is one of the greatest and most brutal film noirs to ever be made. A film that echoes back to Lang's shadowy German child murder masterpiece *M* starring Peter Lorre as the pathetic killer. Despite working in the same genres and film movements, Murnau and Lang are fairly different directors. Murnau's films are much more soft focused and atmospheric in nature. F.W. Murnau was an individual more interested in artistic elements of the film being very specific to the very last detail. Fritz Lang seemed more interested in telling a very dark story and emphasizing the visual power (but not necessarily artistic power) of special effects. Fritz Lang's influence can be easily seen in more recent Sci-fi films such as *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* (1977) and *Dark City* (1998). F.W. Murnau's influence on cinema is much harder to find (aside from *Nosferatu*) nowadays. Of course, Fritz Lang's career lasted much longer than Murnau's, so who knows what type of influence (if any at all) Murnau may have had if he had lived a full life. Both F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang have contributed a wealth of important films to the history of motion pictures. To accurately compare them in terms of significance and quality would be pointless.

Fritz Lang

The year that Fritz Lang directed the first in his Mabuse series (*Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*) was the year F.W. Murnau released his most widely known film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922). *Nosferatu* is in many ways the polar opposite film in way of approach to *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*. *Nosferatu* (based on the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker) takes a realistic approach to a supernatural story whereas *Sunrise* takes a sometimes dreamlike

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approach to a fairly realistic story. F.W. Murnau utilized real castles in ruins found in Eastern Europe to give *Nosferatu* an authentic feeling of gothic horror. This was in extreme contrast to the often elaborate sets designed for the typical German expressionist film. *Sunrise* uses a variety of dreamlike and surreal scenes to derive emotions you wouldn't expect from such a simple story. Contemporary American auteur Martin Scorsese called *Sunrise* a 'super production, an experimental film and visionary poet (Fischer 52).' Quite powerful words from a man often considered one of America's greatest filmmakers. After a scene of making up between man and wife in *Sunrise*, they stroll down a busy street full of traffic that magically turns into a beautiful country field. The scene derives emotions of natural and pleasant love via surrealism. When one thinks of surrealism, they generally think of an image that is initially surprising and even absurd. Early surrealist directors such as Luis Buñuel (*An Andalusian Dog*, 1929) and Jean Cocteau (*Blood of a Poet*, 1930) utilized surrealism and dream sequences as an unconscious ambiguous art. F.W. Murnau manages to use this abrupt appearance of the country field as a sign of a love that was thought to be lost, once again appearing. Scenes like this one (and countless other found within *Sunrise*) are a true testament to the magic of cinema. Another important scene using the surreal (or dreamlike) is when identifying the dichotomy of differences between the city and the rural. The femme fatale vamp makes her intentions and desires apparent early on in *Sunrise*. During a very atmospheric scene bordering on gothic horror, the farmer protagonist of *Sunrise* meets the city girl (dressed like a flapper) in a secluded swamp. She convinces the farmer that he must drown his wife so that she and the man can move to the city together. A dreamlike image (playing like a movie screen for the farmer and the vamp) is then superimposed over the swamp featuring the farmer's wife falling into a river with the inter title "couldn't she get drowned?" Images of the city also float over the swamp to entice the farmer of a new life in a developing city. Like the images superimposed over this, the promise of a new life seems more dreamlike than real in the first place. The super fantasy element of living a life in the city is more a dream of the farmer than something he will actually commit to (which of course, he doesn't). The farmer finally realizes the errors of his ways and almost ends up killing the city girl. *Sunrise* wasn't the only film that F.W. Murnau directed dealing with the "purity" of the rural and the appealing modern vices of the city. Murnau's third and final film with Fox Film Corporation, *City Girl* (1930), originally titled *Our Daily Bread*, also confronts the crucial differences between the rural and the city (and the people in each). Murnau's final film *Tabu* (1931) also deals with a similar theme. The sudden appearance of civilized Westerners comes to jeopardize the sacredness of Polynesian islanders and their spirituality. This also works hand in hand with the two Polynesian couples desire to go forward with a forbidden love (the ultimate "Tabu") that predictably ends in tragedy. Many of Murnau's films put trust more into nature (and its unexplainable natural mysti-

cism) than that of science and logic. F.W. Murnau's gothic vampire masterpiece *Nosferatu* also takes view. Initially, the people of the fictitious German city Wisborg, blame the sudden occurrences of death of the townspeople on the plague. Their rational and logical assumption is proven to be untrue when they realize that the killer is no other than the horrifying vampire Count Orlock. F.W. Murnau, a man that received a formal university education, still felt more compelled to look at the horrors affecting in a supernatural way than a logical one. This type of psychological escapism is most likely part of the same genius that made Murnau the cinematic genius that he was: a genius that was never truly understood in Hollywood. Like many other German and Austrian immigrants who came to America to work in the Hollywood studio system, F.W. Murnau was a victim of discrimination. This antagonistic attitude occurred almost immediately when the towering and lanky director began working on his first American film *Sunrise*. Many of the European directors were seen as 'Prima Donnas' and their unique craft was seen as "weird" instead of innovative (Fischer 19). It can only be assumed that Americans were full of jealousy and intimidation when confronted with European filmmakers. After all, *Sunrise* combines elements of Europe and America into a hybrid of the highest of form of cinematic art. Fox studio head William Fox (who was an immigrant from Hungary) also felt it was necessary to make a statement about the discrimination and stereotypical labels that Americans placed on European filmmakers. Fox denied *Sunrise* being a "strange" and "weird" film. His reasoning for making this statement was, "because of the exotic and sometimes freakish character of the majority of foreign films which have been shown in this country (Allen and Gomery 102)." William Fox's statement is obviously geared towards the common American filmgoer and critics as he felt Murnau's innovative film *The Last Laugh* (as stated earlier) was "the greatest motion picture of all time (Allen and Gomery 93). It is obvious that F.W. Murnau had no type (at least openly) of hostility towards the United States upon viewing *Sunrise* and his subsequent films. The trend of discriminating against European film directors and crewmembers didn't stop during the silent and early sound Hollywood studio era. Later exports like Roman Polanski would also face similar discrimination (prior to the charges brought against him). It is understandable that American born filmmakers working in the Hollywood studio system would be in fear of foreign born filmmakers making more impressive and superior films in their indigenous countries. During the release of *Sunrise*, The United States was still a fairly puritanical nation in fear of the foreign "other." This would explain the contrived moral element found in *Sunrise* in context of both female love interests. The farmer's wife is a very traditional puritan looking woman. She seems to have completely dedicated herself to both her family and husband. Her long blond hair is tied back and her choice of dress is very conservative. The woman from the city, on the other hand, is in complete contrast to these puritanical elements. She is a woman that dresses

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in all black (very obvious symbolism for the time) and isn't someone you would want to bring home to your mother. The woman from the city also has very short hair that flappers of that time period would have. Flappers were known to be very "loose" women who indulged in hedonistic activities. American flapper actress Louise Brooks, who starred in the German film production *Pandora's Box* (directed by German G. W. Pabst), even posed nude during that socially restrictive time period. Louise Brooks During the silent era, women were generally split into two opposing categories, the virgin (pure in action) and the whore (usually a Vamp). When examining *Sunrise*, the farmer's wife obviously being the virgin (despite having a child), and the promiscuous city girl as the whore. The "pure" woman of the silent era was often considered to be childlike, fulfilling the Victorian ideal of what a woman should be (Fischer 41). The farmer's wife is certainly someone of that nature. The city girl, on the other hand, is independent. She has spent time conspiring and has concocted a plan for the farmer to kill his wife and go with her to the city. Feminist film critic Janet Staiger stated of the female character of the Vamp, "The character of the vamp seems almost to be merely a foil for an extensive examination of the power of sex, women's rights in this new age, and the crumbling belief in the assertion that some nineteenth century notions of the family's behavior were still pertinent for twentieth-century America (Fischer 43). When examining F.W. Murnau's film lexicon (often visually and thematically subversive in nature) and his own personal background (he was a Homosexual and family black sheep), it becomes apparent the dichotomy of women found in *Sunrise* was most likely formed by pressure put on Murnau. As I stated before, Murnau's films were also fairly apolitical in nature and his mind strictly geared toward artistry (first and foremost). The thought of a woman that thinks independently is really not something you would expect Murnau to fear. Despite condemning independent and promiscuous women in his films, F.W. Murnau befriended these types of women in real life. Swedish actress Greta Garbo was a good friend of Murnau. She was such a good friend of Murnau that she commissioned a death mask to be made of the director after his death (Anger 246). The mask would stay on top of her desk during all of her years at Hollywood (Anger 246). Greta Garbo was also assumed to be a bisexual and had various relationships with women including Hollywood actress and screenwriter Salka Viertel (Anger 246). Growing up in a proper family background, F.W. Murnau learned how to adapt to certain repressive and proper backgrounds. Having to do this in the Hollywood studio system for American audiences would have been no problem for the director. Despite having to submit to the moral conformity of American culture and the Hollywood film studio system, F.W. Murnau had the potential to change the look of the Hollywood film. Had *Sunrise* been popular with the American film going audience, the aesthetic of American film would have most likely changed with it. William Fox took the chance with the "German genius" and the end result was not to

his monetary liking. *Sunrise* was doomed (like the director) from the beginning. The film was poorly promoted and released during the time when Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer* had changed the way Americans watched (and listened) films (Allen and Gomery 103). Although *Sunrise* features a variety of complimentary music and sounds, it was no match for the one man singing shows performed by the legendary Al Jolson. On top of competition with other groundbreaking films, *Sunrise* was just too European for American audiences. America's animosity towards the European "other" (despite most Americans being of European descent) just didn't help to make *Sunrise* appealing. F.W. Murnau's early death only caused the director to be forgotten in America much sooner. Considering only two of his American films survive in their entirety (*Sunrise* and *Tabu*) and the lack of public interest in the silent era, the chance of the average contemporary filmgoer stumbling upon Murnau's work is very slim. The death of F.W. Murnau is even one of mystery and confusion. Rumors surrounding Murnau's death in an automobile range from the late director crashing the car himself, to the director's hired fourteen-year-old Filipino valet Garcia Stevenson riding off the road as Murnau performed fellatio on the teenager (Anger 246). The mystery of F.W. Murnau's death parallels lack of information on who the German born director was and where he ultimately derived his genius from. The influence of *Sunrise* on American cinema today is virtually (if not completely) nonexistent. F.W. Murnau's most influential film (in an American and international context) can be assumed to be *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*. Most filmgoers can vouch for having at least seen an image of the frightening grotesque and icon vampire Count Orlok. German New Wave director Werner Herzog would pay tribute to his German cinematic grandfather with his remake *Nosferatu: The Vampyre* (1979). A recent Hollywood vampire film, *30 Days of Night* (2007), features a variety of vampires that were obviously influenced by the ghastly stare of Count Orlok. Hollywood film *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000) also tells a fictional tale of F.W. Murnau and his cinematic quest to direct *Nosferatu* starring a real vampire. My introduction to Murnau was also with *Nosferatu*. *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is a film all serious fans of cinema should take upon themselves to view. A cinematic poem, *Sunrise* is a film which gave evidence that the form of the cinema could be changed. This is a film that showed much promise for the future of cinematic and aesthetic achievements. Sadly, Hollywood found the film incapable of producing large sums of money. Hollywood has become less and less interested in art over the years and more interested in sneaking in advertisements in scenes. I hope that F.W. Murnau has no ghost as he would be haunted by what Fox Film Corporation has turned into.

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SUNRISE: A MASTERPIECE LOST IN TIME

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans. London: BFI, 1998.-Ty E

THE ANTI-AESTHETIC APPROACH OF PAUL MORRISSEY

The average moviegoer usually expects to be sensationalized and wowed when going to see the latest product pumped out by the showman in Hollywood. They judge a film's quality a lot of the time by how innovative the special effects are and how much money is put in the film. The reason for this is that when looking at a film from the perspective of someone who doesn't have an educational background in film studies, the most obvious aspect of the film is its visual power. The undeniable revolutionary success of James Cameron's *The Titanic* and Michael Bay's *Armageddon* are a testament to that.

Cult auteur Paul Morrissey never had it in his mind to create the most visually stunning of films. I don't think he even had it in his mind to even learn the basics of cinematic technique and editing. His *Flesh* trilogy is more of an artistic attack on the "peace and love" generation than a display of his cinematic sense. Paul Morrissey's aesthetic is one of crudely exhibiting hedonistic nihilism and despair. The unconventional director merely placed his camera in a spot and captured a lost generation. A group of individuals that have given up the security of a Bourgeoisie life for the promise of a drug "mind expanding" and "free love" society. Paul Morrissey's "Flesh" trilogy is an assault on those that fell prey to the promise of "liberation" from the fascism of Western Civilization and Christianity.

Auteur Paul Morrissey refused to work with any individuals using drugs when producing films for the legendary pop art icon Andy Warhol (Yacowar 1). Morrissey may be the most hated artist that Warhol "discovered." Surviving member of Warhol's entourage Stephen Koch stated of Paul Morrissey, "A very typical young man in a hurry. That was not really the Factory style: pushiness was out (Yacowar 2)." Paul Morrissey's decidedly reserved and rather traditionally conservative manner was in complete opposition to what you expect in Andy Warhol's army of artists. Paul Morrissey introduced a stripped down version of America cinema that emphasized the emptiness and absurdness of the love generation, and turned it into a revolutionary art.

Paul Morrissey was mainly interested in exposing the failure and de-evolution of the late 1960's love movement. He was also obsessed with body worship and the sexual appeal of drug addict little Joe Dallesandro. Morrissey made an exception to his "no drug addicts allowed" rule when casting real drug addicts to portray the pathetic habits of addicts. Joe Dallesandro's sexual appeal and charisma worked to capture audience members that might be put off by Paul Morrissey's obvious assault on the love generation. One could say that Paul Morrissey's *Flesh* trilogy films are anti-drug porn flicks disguised as a Cinéma-

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vérité document. No matter what way you look at it, Paul Morrissey captures an almost depressingly realist world that is so bizarre and disconnected that it borders on the surreal.

Novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand brought up in her book *The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution*, a collection of criticism of the late 1960's peace generation and her famous anti-Kantian philosophies, the fact that the average college student was more interested in going to Woodstock and getting high off various drugs than the Apollo 11 moon landing (Rand 75). Not only did the average American college student show little interest in the moon landing, but they also dismissed it as "mere technology (Rand 75)." This example that Rand emphasized goes perfect with the criticisms that Paul Morrissey displays in his *Flesh* trilogy. The love generation is more interested in having fun than taking responsibility for themselves and the progression of mankind.

The same individuals criticized in Paul Morrissey's *Flesh* trilogy and Ayn Rand's philosophies often refer to themselves as humanitarians and altruists working towards "progression." The reality couldn't be farther from the truth (especially when in context with the *flesh* trilogy). The first thing to look at is that the love generation was commonly enslaved to their hedonistic tendencies and vices. Little Joe in the *Flesh* trilogy can barely get off his couch and is many times naked. He doesn't mind being a slave to his own addiction. His actions parallel that of his naked baby featured in Paul Morrissey's first film in the *flesh* trilogy *Flesh*. Like his baby (who appears to be not much older than one year), he crawls around naked and his only real focus is food (for Joe it's mainly drugs). Little Joe is essentially an adult age baby. If this is a sign of progression, than the world may really be heading towards an apocalypse.

Ayn Rand said that the "New Left" also portrays their admittance of not wanting to live in reality as they choose to be drug addicts. Furthermore, Rand emphasizes that hippies that call themselves "individuals" but are in reality pathetically docile conformists. She goes on to say, "unable to generate a thought of their own, they have accepted the philosophical of their elders as unchallenged dogma-as, in earlier generations, the weakest among the young conformed to the fundamentalist view of the bible (Rand 77)." Little Joe in Paul Morrissey's second film *Trash* (a word used to emphasize the drug addicts in the film) has conformed to the worthless and reality disconnected world of a full blown heroin addict. His only ambition is to obtain money in order to buy drugs.

Many of the individuals of the hippie generation were inspired by the anti-reason philosophies of German Immanuel Kant. Ayn Rand even went as far as calling Kant the first hippie (Rand 65). Kant's anti-reason philosophies would

go on to inspire Karl Marx and Marx's theories would go on to cause the largest amount of deaths in humanity history (especially in the Soviet Union and China). Kant's collectivist theories would also go on to inspire fascism and national socialism (Nazism). Whether it be hippies, Nazis, or communists, Immanuel Kant's anti-reason and anti-individualistic theories have only caused destruction.

I doubt little Joe is a fan of philosophy, but he is no doubt a product of it. The environment Joe lives in is one of desperation and neglect. I think it would be safe to say that Paul Morrissey had to do very little in the way of set design (of course this working to the films advantage). Little Joe lives in a one room apartment in *Flesh* and he can't even seem to keep it maintained. He has a child with a girlfriend who needs to borrow money for her friend's abortion. The idea of abortion seems like a necessity when taking in consideration the lifestyle that these two "parents" have taken up. Two individuals that can't even function together (or on their own) have no right bringing up a child.

A topless female friend of little Joe even states, "the more you learn, the less you will be happy." With this scene, Paul Morrissey makes it clear that "the love generation" prefers ignorance and hedonistic escapes over reality. The young woman also goes on to talk about how she wants silicone breast implants. For this scene (and the majority of other scenes in the *Flesh* trilogy), Paul Morrissey merely lets the camera roll as a virtual voyeur to capture the de-evolutionary nihilism of the peace movement.

Heat, the final film in Paul Morrissey's *Flesh* trilogy, examines a washed up child actor (played by little Joe) and his relationship with a washed up star. The film is essentially a loose remake of Billy Wilder's film noir masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard*. The washed up star (who can be assumed to be around 50 years old) also has a daughter who has decided she hates men and has turned into a lesbian. The daughter now has a girlfriend and a child. Paul Morrissey attacks the woman's liberation movement and free love with this character. Like Joe, the girl is sexually free (even performing a sexual act on a mentally retarded young man she just met) and has no control of her life. All characters in *Heat* are a mess as they can't even control their most archaic of sexual instincts.

In *Heat*, little Joe uses sex as a way to get what he wants (as he does in the rest of the *flesh* trilogy). He has sexual encounters with both his unflatteringly overweight landlord and the aging star. Little Joe obviously has no type of self respect or integrity. He is only interested in obtaining what he needs by doing as little as work as possible (usually with sexual acts). *Heat* is Paul Morrissey's most aesthetically daring film (at least in his *flesh* trilogy). The film actually features a somewhat memorable soundtrack and is filmed in more than just a few rooms. An old mansion is even used similar to the one found in *Sunset Boulevard*. Paul

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Morrissey attacks Hollywood and the way they treat their stars once they are no longer of any type of monetary value.

Paul Morrissey's flesh trilogy is both an attack on the cultural subversion of the late 1960's and the film industry that supported it. Morrissey portrays flower children as irrational and ignorant existentialists always looking to satisfy their hedonistic pleasures. The characters featured in the flesh trilogy are presented as so pathetic that it's absurd such individuals would be allowed to have any type of ideological view (let alone tell anyone else how to live). Paul Morrissey's anti-aesthetic parallels the hollowness and desperation that the characters in the flesh trilogy exhibit. I seriously doubt that Mr. Morrissey had any type of respect for the late 1960's hippies and the Hollywood films (Easy Rider, Woodstock documentary, etc.) that promoted them.

-Ty E

THE ANTIFASCIST WAR FILM

All war films have an agenda. Whether it is anti-war or pro-war, these thematic propaganda pieces center themselves around one major purpose. One of the most prevalent of the war films is the antifascist war film. The first of the antifascist war films started springing up before and during the Second World War. This was in response to the spreading of fascism in Europe which was a response to the Bolshevik internationalists calling for global revolution. Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* (1937), Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* (1942), Fritz Lang's *Hangmen Also Die* (1943 film based on the assassination SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich), and William Wellman's *The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945) are excellent examples of effective antifascist world war II cinema. Interestingly enough, the majority of antifascist war films came from Hollywood (as opposed to the Soviet Union). In post war Europe, antifascist war films started popping up almost immediately. Italian director Robert Rossellini's (originally a director of fascist propaganda films) *Open City* (1945) and Germany Year Zero (1948) were effective Italian neorealist film's that used the ruins of Europe as its settings. Both of these films contained an authenticity that has never been matched in their presentation of a destroyed Europe. The antifascist war film has taken various approaches in conveying its message. Unfortunately, the majority of these films are highly unintelligent, fundamentally flawed, and lacking any type of cohesive message. Some of these films are even so ridiculous that they would fit better in the fantasy adventure genre (with Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Many of these films also use the same characteristics supposedly utilized by fascists and their propaganda. A "black and white" look at war is obviously the most effective and straightforward form of propaganda. You can analyze any Hollywood war film (or Hollywood film in general) and figure that out. American and International war films greatly differ. Whether it is execution, political agenda, artistic integrity, or set design, global perspectives on film making greatly vary. This is no different for the war film and the antifascist war film. For this essay, I will analyze two antifascist war films from the United States and two antifascist war films from Europe. The first being Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) which I believe to be the most straightforward and symbolic of America's interpretation of the second World War. The second American World War II film I will be examining is Samuel Fuller's *The Big Red One* (1980). I believe this film to be the most realistic and holistic view of America's involvement in the Second World War. The two European anti-fascist war films I have chosen take much different approaches in getting their messages across. The first being Soviet propaganda film Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (1985). This film uses an unconventional combination of the real and surreal to get its hellish, lucid dream message across. The second international film I will analyze is Italian Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salo, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975). This film

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takes the most unconventional approach to both the war and antifascist film. Its artistic usage of human sexual and physical degradation acts as metaphorical symbolism for fascism. Not something you would expect from the typical American antifascist war film. Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* is one of the most popular, if not the most popular of American World War II films (and American films in general). Despite its violence and use of obscene words, ABC aired the film uncut and with limited commercial interruption on Veteran's Day from 2001-2004 (de Moraes, 2004). It's safe to say that most Americans have seen or at the very least heard of *Saving Private Ryan*. At the academy awards the film also won awards for Best Cinematography, Best Sound, Best Sound Editing, Best Editing and Best director for Spielberg (Clarke, 2006). *Saving Private Ryan* takes a fairly simple and direct approach to the American World War II combat propaganda film. The film starts with an old man visiting the cemetery of Americans who died in Normandy. Next thing you know its June 1944 and American's (The English contribution was not acknowledged) are landing in Normandy. Body parts and blood start flying immediately. These scenes come out more resembling a cheap and gory horror film than as the dramatic deaths of U.S. soldiers. A Unit of U.S. soldiers are on the search for Private Ryan. All of Private Ryan's brother's have died in the war and they want the last of the brothers to go back home. Most of the units of U.S. soldiers are killed in their mission to locate Ryan. At the end, you find out that the old man from the opening of *Saving Private Ryan* is the elderly Ryan. The only thing the film seemed to accomplish was embarrassing sentimentalism, naive patriotism, and an extremely distorted and inaccurate view of history. The only political element to *Saving Private Ryan* was the acknowledgment of anti-Semitism in National Socialist Germany. The way that this is responded to is immature at best. A Jewish Private Stanley Mellish lets German POWs know that he is tough by waving his "Star of David", while chanting "Juden" repeatedly. Later in the film Mellish dies heroically fighting a German one on one. This scene was in contradiction to Spielberg's "every Jew is a victim" theme found in Schindler's list. I also doubt Spielberg would ever mention that over 150,000 Germans of Jewish descent fought in Hitler's army (Rigg, 2004). It seems that Spielberg was trying to allude that the United States got into World War II to save the Jews. He also tried to create a similar myth in his film *Amistad* by attempting to make the viewer assume that the American Civil War was fought to free the slaves. Steven Spielberg seems to want Americans to think that every war fought in the past couple hundred years was to battle racism. This works hand in hand with Spielberg's utilization of sentimentalism that he has helped to contaminate Hollywood with. Steven Spielberg wants Americans to have an idealist and illogical view of the world. He wants Americans to think they are "progressing" in their battle against evil. That's probably why he's the master of fantasy and adventure. "The good war" wouldn't be complete without allied myths and distorted

tions. Because of course, the bad wars were fought against Communism (Korea, Vietnam, etc). The Wehrmacht (mostly comprised of conscripts) German Army is seen as cowardly and evil. The U.S. soldiers learn their lesson when they don't kill an unarmed POW Wehrmacht soldier (which Spielberg strategically used the ugliest German possible for). Later the captain is killed by that same POW. The message Spielberg is giving is not to spare one German soldier's life as they are all enemies. The German language in Saving Private Ryan is referred to as "filthy pig Latin." For Spielberg even the German language is a forbidden taboo. Spielberg also had the German language substituted in Schindler's List for the more friendly English language. I don't think he wanted to scare anyone with the mean and "hunnish" German language. Spielberg's token attempt to humanize German soldiers is through the babbling of "betty bop" and other childish things. But it really isn't to humanize Germans. It's just to discredit German stoicism and strength which self determination promotes. Spielberg also didn't want to give credit to Nationalist Socialist Germany's Swastika. It is only seen once in the film (graffiti on a wall). I guess even acknowledgement of the enemies symbol would be too extreme. But factual acknowledgements aren't Spielberg's objective. He proved that in Schindler's List, when he conveniently forgot to acknowledge that the mentally ill Commander of Krakau-Plaszow (Amon Goeth) was arrested by the SS for brutality against inmates (Critchley, 1997). Saving Private Ryan's "battling against Nazi fascism" theme has no substance or intelligence. You never really get an answer as to why you're supposed to hate Nazis and Fascists. The only accomplishment of the film was the respectful acknowledgement of those that died in World War II for the United States. I don't believe Steven Spielberg was mature enough to handle such material. He should stick to making kid's films. Director Samuel Fuller was another Jewish American to tackle the antifascist World War II combat film. The major difference between Fuller and Spielberg is that Fuller actually participated in the war (Spielberg wasn't even born until 1946). Fuller's The Big Red One follows U.S. soldier's through North Africa, Sicily, D-Day landings, and eventually the liberation of Falkenau concentration camp. This gives the viewer a more realistic, holistic, and complete view of the United States involvement in Europe during World War II (in comparison to other World War II films). In The Big Red One, the German enemy is at least acknowledged as human (unlike Spielberg's films). The politics of the war are for the most part, neglected as the soldiers see each other as fighting other soldiers. At the end of The Big Red One a German soldier is even saved by American soldiers. The narration by Mark Hamill goes on to say that he had more in common with the German soldier than many of the American soldiers (since he had lived the war so long). This was a bold move on Samuel Fuller's part as he crossed the barrier of "black and white" that most American war films subscribe to. Fuller tackles the Nazi holocaust in a more mature way than most films on the subject. After liberating Falkenau concentration camp,

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a soldier notices an oven (which we can assume bodies were burned in). The soldier then finds a German soldier inside it and shooting. He continues to do this for a while as his emotions have overwhelmed him. His shock has turned to hatred which is a truly human response. In comparison to other World War II films, *The Big Red One* is not as highly recognized. This came as a shock to me after watching it as it gave me the most historically informative perspective on the war (like *Patton*). Since *The Big Red One* was recently reconstructed (the original version being heavily cut), it may finally get its due. After watching the film I didn't feel like I had just watched a hateful and hypocritical film, like when I watched *Saving Private Ryan*. Most American films dealing with World War II are generally combat films (like *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Big Red One*). I can assume one of the reasons for this is monetary. Films that bring up intellectual and philosophical questions regarding politics and war are most likely not going to make money. Hollywood films (since its beginning) for the most part have always appealed to the lowest common denominator as the American film industry is a business. Although *Saving Private Ryan* is first and foremost a money making product, it is also a propaganda piece (and effective at that). Americans are entertained by its cheap violence, sentimentalism, and patriotism. World War II was the last war the United States really won and to watch *Saving Private Ryan* is to make a proud American. No intellectual thought is regarded to enjoy the film and that makes the best propaganda. I personally would like to see an American that intellectually tackles fascism. A film that takes an unconventional approach that raises both philosophical and intellectual questions. American society needs to be challenged. If you hate something, you should at least know a little bit about it. International war films, I have to admit, are my true love. There is such a variety of films produced globally that offer so much to the viewer, film's that have something new with each viewing. I am not one for overused conventions. International war films offer me countless cinematic structures relative to nation of origin, auteur (most of these films are auteur pieces), culture, and socio-political climate (but not limited to). The two international war films (*Come and See* and *Salo, or 120 Days of Sodom*) I will analyze are from the Marxist perspective. Since the directors involved in these films were obviously not interested in money, art and propaganda was their priority. Being Marxist in nature, neither director was afraid to experiment as proved in the originality of the films. With most Marxist War films, the antifascist element is obvious and direct. The fascist being the eternal enemy of the Marxist, is given the relatively proper treatment in these films. The difference in these two films is the approach and execution. Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (1985) was one of many films in a series to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Germany's surrender (Chambers, 1996). In the film, a young teenage boy named "Flora" is forced into joining Soviet Partisans in resistance against the *Waffen SS*. Throughout the film Flora experiences the horrors

of war. As *Come and See* progresses, Flora's face becomes increasingly horrified, complimenting the tone of the film. *Come and See* was done in a quite realist fashion. The film was shot on Steadicam allowing the viewer to feel as if they were watching a documentary (Chamber, 1996). This style of realism echoes back to the films of Soviet Cinéma vérité pioneer Dziga Vertov. Like Vertov's films, *Come and See* is a realist film that at the same time is surreal. This combination of opposites created a truly disturbing look at war, making *Apocalypse Now* look like it was directed by Michael Bay. To add to the film's realism, most of the SS uniforms used in *Come and See* were originals worn by German and German contracted (Slavs, Poles, Russians, etc) soldiers in World War II. Live ammunition was also used. Aleksei Kravchenko, the actor that played Flora, stated in a video interview (found on the Kino DVD release), that bullets were passing 10 centimeters above his head. It seems that the Soviet Union didn't have as much problems with insurance companies like Hollywood. Since *Come and See* is shot from the perspective of a young teenager, it is initially apolitical. Flora knows there is a war and eventually to his horror starts seeing dead bodies. The worst is seen through his eyes when he sees a whole village burned a live in one building. As this point, Flora seems almost completely detached from the world. So many things he couldn't possibly comprehend he has witnessed with his own eyes. The true antifascist sentiment of the film comes when the remaining members of a recently destroyed SS unit are captured. The angry and vengeful partisans question the soldiers about their actions. One of the SS leaders cowardly calls out "kill the fascist pigs" in hopes that they will spare his life. An older German SS Major (Sturmbahnführer) tries to convince the partisans that he's an old grandfather that just wants to get back to his family. After seeing the atrocities committed earlier in *Come and See* it is crazy on their part to even contemplate mercy. Finally another SS man speaks with his true beliefs. Earlier in the film he told people in the building (that was eventually burned down containing the entire village) that they could leave if they didn't have children. One of the partisans inquires the SS man on his reason for saying this. The SS man goes on to talk about how that the Bolshevism starts with the children. He goes on about how parasite races spread the Bolshevik disease. Almost immediately afterwards the partisans unload bullets on all the captured SS men. One characteristic of *Come and See* that is comparable to *Saving Private Ryan* is the presentation of German soldiers. The soldiers are ugly, maniacally laughing, and take pleasure in killing. At one point a German soldier starts repeatedly shaking his head from left to right with his lips flapping in the air. When he finally stops he laughs barbarically almost mimicking a baboon. *Saving Private Ryan's* presentation of German soldiers was tame in comparison to *Come and See*. *Come and See* presents the fight against fascism as a means for Slavic survival. It wasn't a matter of them disliking fascism; they just wanted to spread bolshevism. Fighting fascism was fundamental to Soviet survival. At

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this point in the *Come and See* Flora understands what the war is about and has finally accepted his roles as a partisan soldier. The film was able to present a clear and logical reason for its antifascist propaganda. Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salo or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) has a very unusual and unconventional format to get across its strong antifascist sentiment. The title of *Salo* is derived from The Republic of Salo, the Fascist state which was set up in the German-occupied portion of Italy in 1944. Salo is also the area where Pasolini's brother Guido was killed during the Second World War (Schwartz, 1992). This fact adds to the already very personal production of *Salo*. *Salo* features some of the most depraved and disturbing scenes ever committed to celluloid. Rape, sodomy, and sexual dehumanization are seen throughout. The victims of these acts are eighteen young men and women. Throughout virtually the entire film, all of them are naked and under the complete sexual dominance of their fascist controllers. At one point a girl is even forced to eat the feces of the duke. Later, all the fascist leaders have a huge dinner with the prisoners where they all dine on feces. The president has much enjoyment eating feces and flirting with one of his young male prisoners seated across from him. Pasolini presents fascism as the dehumanization and destruction of the individual. None of the sex scenes in *Salo* are even remotely erotic. Sex has become something that is done at the command of the fascist government without warning. Humans are turned into objects of pleasure for fascist leaders who can't control their own power. Throughout the film the young prisoners are also forced to hear perverted sex stories from middle aged prostitutes. Pasolini felt that the language of Power in fascist Italy corrupted, degraded, and brought with it the objectification of the body (Schwartz, 1992). The narration by the prostitutes gets so out of hand that it perfectly complements the bad dream feeling of the overall film. As the viewer you even feel dehumanized. Pier Paolo Pasolini succeeded in delivering his antifascist message via sexual nightmare. Europeans seem to have a more clear view on Fascism having experienced it firsthand. This is obvious viewing the countless European films dealing with it. Americans never experienced firsthand the repressiveness and horrors of fascism. American soldier's toured Europe and battled its soldiers, but never knew what it felt like to be a victim of it. American war films reflect that. As brought up before, the majority of American war films are combat films (as they should be). They provide the viewer with entertainment, mostly unnecessary melodrama, and American patriotism (even in the antiwar films). It will be interesting to see what the future holds for American war films.

-Ty E

THE BANKING SCAM OF MULTICULTURALISM AND THE DEATH OF THEO VAN GOGH

Nothing has cost the Western World more destruction (aside from war) than cultural Marxist idealists and movements. I just got done watching Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* again after various viewings this year (one of my all time favorite films), and I can't help to laugh at the beating Alex gives to the cosmopolitan intellectual husband and wife in their very home at the beginning of the film. Alex scams the couple into letting the gang of droogs in after claiming "there was a terrible accident" and minutes later their world falls apart. I laugh not because of the beating they take but how their naïve intellectual idealism is what leads ultimately to their downfall. As we find out later in *A Clockwork Orange*, the husband is crippled and the wife is dead. Still the "intellectual" has retained his altruistic idealism and claims that poor Alex is "a victim of the state." Of course, this old geezer is quick to change his mind when he finds out that Alex was the leader of the gang that put the man in his wheelchair and his wife in a coffin.

But as we all know, *A Clockwork Orange* is a work of dystopian fiction. I'm going to now take a look at an event that is film related that happened just a couple years ago. In 2004, Muslim extremist Mohammed Bouyeri brutally murdered Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh. Van Gogh, a descendent of Vincent van Gogh, had recently directed a short film that appeared on Dutch public broadcasting network television which criticized the obvious misogyny and double standards found in Islam. The short *Submission* was written by Dutch feminist Ayaan Hirsi Ali and directed by Theo van Gogh. Theo van Gogh with only ONE Beer Left Theo van Gogh Dead *Submission* is just over 10 minutes in length and features a naked woman covered in verse from the Koran. The woman plays the voice of four different women that suffered abuse from their power hungry radical Islamic father. The woman's only wearing a veil over her face (and nothing covering her body) is obviously symbolic of Islam's treatment of women as a sexual object and not an individual. One of the testimonials involves a woman talking about how "Allah" likes women to be "pure" and "clean" yet various men (like her Husband's brother) have defiled her. Unsurprisingly, the literal translation of "Islam" is "Submission". Hence, the film's completely appropriate title. The Islamic killer Mohammed Bouyeri apparently has a thing for amputee and necrophilia pornography. I don't believe that the rotting and legless have that much in the way of "purity." Maybe Bouyeri thought that killing an infidel Dutchman would boost his sexual desire for a woman that actually has all her limbs and even possibly is alive. The questions I have for Allah is if a woman has a female circumcision, is she still pure? Dutch liberals have welcomed many different cultures into Holland. This ongoing trend of "Globalization" has flooded Europe with immigrants from abroad, and from the look of things it has only

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caused damage. For an individual like Theo van Gogh to be murdered in his own country for having an opinion, is a sign of a serious problem. Van Gogh is artistic royalty in his homeland and for an ethnic Moroccan (who has "Dutch" citizenship) to silence him with death is an outrage. For the international bankers, it has brought them almost unlimited power with very little fight from European (and American) nationals. Racial tensions are things that internationalists love to instigate. They really don't believe that multiculturalism, feminism, and other cultural Marxist "isms" will work. The bankers fund these subversive political and social movements so that they can destroy nationalism and loot these countries for what little they have left. Islam has no place in Europe as its Archaic and barbaric nature isn't even up to date with the mores of Europe hundreds of years ago. The Dutch thought that they were being "open minded" by allowing such "diasporas" infiltrate their country and now the "melting pot" is starting to boil. Neo-Nazis have been starting to gain momentum in Holland and abroad as "multiculturalism" only causes racial tensions, not destroys them. The same thing has been going on in the United States for decades and it is inevitable that chaos will ignite. You can guarantee that the bankers are counting on it.

-Ty E

THE CRUDE REVOLUTIONARY AESTHETIC OF SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG

Many film critics and historians have called Melvin Van Peebles *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* the first blaxploitation film. I slightly agree and disagree with that assertion. The subsequent so-called blaxploitation films were for the most part directed by whites in Hollywood after they realized the monetary success of SSBS. The film was unexpectedly a huge financial success and the businessmen in Hollywood took notice. Although only budgeted at \$50,000.00 (most of the money coming from people in the black entertainment community), SSBS grossed over \$15 million dollars (Merritt 218). SSBS would change the way the Hollywood film industry looked at the American black community and film audiences there on out. Hollywood knew that they could cash in.

Novice filmmaker Melvin Van Peebles starred, wrote, produced, directed, composed, and edited *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. I think it is safe to say that SSBS is an auteur piece. Van Peebles had only directed two films before the successful SSBS. His first feature length film was a 1967 adaptation of his novel *The Story of a Three Day Pass* (Merritt 216). Extremely controversial for its time, the film was a romance about a black American soldier who falls in love with a white French girl (which was filmed in France). Melvin Van Peebles second feature was produced by Columbia pictures in Hollywood. *Watermelon Man* (1970) is a race comedy about a white racist who unexpectedly wakes up to find himself black. Although both of Van Peebles first two features were controversial and possibly offensive to white audiences during their releases, neither films came close to the powerful cinematic assault of *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. Black Panther leader Huey Newton even called SSBS "a great revolutionary document (Merritt 218)."

Mel Gussow of the *New York Times* stated of Melvin Van Peebles and the success of *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, "The first black man in show business to beat the white man at his own game (Van Peebles 7)." Gussow's bold statement resonates quite true. Melvin Van Peebles succeeded in creating a low budget film that had a better return than most big budget Hollywood studio system films of that time period. SSBS's is also an unconventional (especially at the time of its release) film that questions the calculated "aesthetics" of Hollywood. Like other unconventional filmmakers of the late 1960's and early 1970's, SSBS takes a different angle in constructing a cinematic work. Low budget auteur directors Paul Morrissey (the *Flesh* trilogy), John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*), and even Dennis Hopper (*Easy Rider*) also paved the way for future subversive directors.

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song was shot on 16mm resulting in an aesthetically gritty film that compliments its controversial content. For the most part, SSBS uses non actors and other individuals that weren't part of Hollywood

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unions (Van Peebles 73). Melvin Van Peebles also told Hollywood unions that he was making a black porno film so that they would have nothing to do with it (Van Peebles 73). By casting non actors, Van Peebles was able to capture a certain realism that Hollywood has never been capable of capturing. The aesthetic realism of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song echoes back to the days of Italian Neo-Realist such as Vittorio De Sica (*The Bicycle Thief*), Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Accattone*, *Mama Roma*), and Roberto Rossellini (*Open City*, *Germany Year Zero*). Like the Italian Neo-Realist directors before him, Melvin Van Peebles was able to create a film that captures the true essence of the proletariat and his natural environment.

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song is also a film that appealed to more than just the black American film audience. The film features a variety of acid washed color shots that would appeal to the hippie drug crowd. Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (which features similar acid color sequences near the film's conclusion) also appealed to the hippie audience and utilized the obvious drug advertising line, "the ultimate trip." Furthermore, Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song features a soundtrack by Earth, Wind & Fire, a group popular among both blacks and white hippies. White hippies were generally more accepting of radical ideals and revolutionary movements. Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song was a film that the hippie movement could appreciate.

Due to the film's fairly low budget and for the most part inexperienced crew, Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song has its fair share of cinematic and aesthetic blemishes. A good number of the night sequences are fairly underexposed and somewhat visually confusing. At the same time many of these sequences emphasize the character and action in the scene. This is especially true when Sweetback kills two cops who have just assaulted a black revolutionary. The character and action are emphasized in a way that forces the viewer to focus on the action. This scene almost has a supernatural feel as Sweetback kills the police officers with their own handcuffs. Unintentional blemishes can sometimes work to a film's advantage. French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard made no lie of his accidental blessing during the editing of *Breathless*, resulting in the ever so popular jump cut.

A good portion of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song involved Sweetback running through various terrains from the cops. Throughout these often occurring sequences, the Neo-Jazz soundtrack accents Sweetback's run from oppression. These sequences predate the MTV music video and have a very fluid power. Film critics and historians have compared these sequences to the hymn of pain and transcendence that were firmly part of the tradition of African-American songs and literature (Merritt 217-218). Melvin Van Peebles stated of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, "The message of Sweetback is that if you can get it together and stand up to the Man, you can win." During the conclusion of SSBS, Sweetback escapes the white cops and crosses the border to Mexico. Al-

though Sweetback isn't much of a role model for the black community (as he is a murderer, hustler, and womanizer), it was important to have a film where a black man actually stood up to the notoriously ruthless "man."

Another controversial sequence in Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song is when young Sweetback, taking place during the American depression era (played by Melvin Van Peebles son Mario), has simulated sex with a full grown woman. The pre-teen Mario is completely nude as is his much more mature first sexual partner. During sexual intercourse, the woman screams that young sweetback has a "sweetback." Hence, the reason why the protagonist is called Sweetback. Had this film been released today, it would have been called "child pornography." This scene is crucial however as it affirms to the audience Sweetback's sexual powers. Throughout Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song you see how Sweetback sexually dominates every woman that he comes in contact with. It is no doubt that one of Sweetback's biggest appeals is high performance hustler sexual persona.

Another interesting element of Sweetback's aesthetic appeal is his hustler outfit. His complete wardrobe looks like someone took the outfit out of an early Western and stylized it for a cooler than cool black hero. Like the ideal Western hero (or antihero), Sweetback is a stoic lone man that speaks little and acts with a purpose. The women love him and the men fear him. White cops will do anything to stop him as they see him as a serious threat (and as a cop killer). Had Sweetback worn generic clothing, his appeal would have been much less powerful. He is an enigma and is often one of few clues (besides his actions) that let the viewer know who Sweetback really is.

One of the most crucial aspects of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song is the setting of the film. Melvin Van Peebles made sure to film SSBS in an urban black area to capture a realistic view of Sweetback and his community. The cast of the film is credited as "starring the black community." Like casting non actors, real urban settings work the same way atmospherically as the Italian Neo-Realist films did. You get an authentic feel of the streets. I couldn't imagine Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song being filmed in a studio with generic gritty streets and nice new exploding cars. The fact that Melvin Van Peebles worked with such a low budget only added to the film. When a filmmaker lacks funds, they have to think more inventively and creatively. Mr. Van Peebles thoughtfully had his mind set on the proper settings for Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song.

Melvin Van Peebles's son Mario recently directed a biographical film on the making of Sweetback titled appropriately Baadasssss! (2003). The film is an enlightening and very entertaining look at the problems Melvin Van Peebles (starring son Mario) encountered before and after the production of SSBS. The film is based on the book by Van Peebles Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song: A Guerilla Filmmaking Manifesto. Like Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, Baadasssss! features a variety of political and controversial circumstances sur-

THE CRUDE REVOLUTIONARY AESTHETIC OF SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG

rounding the early 1970's. I feel that Baadasssss! is the perfect companion piece to SSBS and an excellent update for new generations. Baadasssss! is a testament to the power of one man and his crusade to break crucial grounds both in a cinematic and socio-political manner.

Revolutionary and Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton stated, "On many levels Van Peebles is attempting to communicate some crucial ideas, and motivate us to a deeper understanding and then action based upon that understanding (in reference to SSBS)." Although I wouldn't agree with all of Sweetback's methods (some being counterproductive), Huey P. Newton is right in his assertion. Newton went on to say, "He has certainly made effective use of one of the most popular forms of communication-the movie-and he is dealing in revolutionary terms (Van Peebles 5)." Mr. Newton no doubt understands the crucial power and impact of the film medium. Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song is one of the most powerful films to ever grace the screen of the movie theater. The film's crude and gritty aesthetic gave the viewer a powerful message in a realistic context. Not many American films can say the same thing.

-Ty E

THE GAY JEWISH NAZI THAT INSPIRED STEVEN SPIELBERG'S INDIANA JONES

Steven Spielberg has been utilizing the medium of film for decades now to express a variety of his juvenile driven obsessions. His most obvious (at least for some) and successful obsession is coming back in touch (if he ever left) with childlike sentimentalism. There has yet to be another "filmmaker" who has done as much as Spielberg to infantile the mind of the average American (and international) film goer. Another big obsession of Steven Spielberg is fiercely dehumanizing Nazis (and Germans in general) collectively to the point of absurd monster caricatures. Unfortunately, this obsession of Steven Spielberg has come back to bite him in the ass. Spielberg's Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark is one of the biggest franchises in international film history. The film's hero and protagonist Indy is a powerful man that has the ability to survive any natural obstacle thrown at him. Indy is said to be modeled after Nazi SS Obersturmführer and German medievalist Otto Rahn. Like Indian Jones, Rahn set out to find ancient human legends. Of course, there is more to Otto Rahn that might give Spielberg more problems than a little bit of anxiety.

Despite being an SS man, Otto Rahn was an open homosexual and this inevitably led to his downfall. In 1937 Rahn was forced to work at Dachau concentration after getting in a drunken homosexual quarrel. This wasn't the worst of Rahn's unfortunate problems as the young scholar also happened to be Jewish. This was revealed in Richard Stanley's documentary on Otto Rahn *The Secret Glory*. Being a Jewish homosexual in the SS must have been hard on Rahn as he committed suicide on 1939. He was found frozen to death near a mountain region in Tyrol, Austria. Otto Rahn had no restraints in letting his later disgust with the SS be known. Otto Rahn quit the SS in 1938 and in his diary he wrote: "There is much sorrow in my country. Impossible for a tolerant, liberal man like me to live in the nation that my native country has become." I think that is safe to say that Otto Rahn's involvement in the SS was merely a way for the young medievalist to pursue his goal of finding the Holy Grail. Asiatic eyed Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler felt Otto Rahn was the right man for the job in handling occult ventures for the Third Reich. I don't think Steven Spielberg would enjoy hearing that the real Indiana Jones was a gay Jewish Nazi. Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark is a much more interesting film when looking at it in context to the historical facts relating to the film. At the end of the film, Nazi's faces burn off in Steven Spielberg's hopes that the movie going audience will cheer in joy. Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark features a few gruesome Nazi deaths yet it received a PG rating. So my question for Spielberg is, does a gay Jewish Nazi also deserve to get his face burned off?

Watch Video Excerpt on Otto Rahn's Jewish Ancestry

-Ty E

THE LAST ARYAN ALIVE: ROY BATTY
THE LAST ARYAN ALIVE: ROY BATTY

Rutger Hauer's performance as Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* is without doubt the most emotionally powerful one in film. Before Batty's death, he recites a beautiful speech to Rick Deckhard (while also sparing the "Blade Runner's" life). Batty tells Deckhard in his remaining minutes of life, "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I've watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser Gate. All those... moments will be lost in time... like... tears... in rain." After the poetic speech Batty accepts his fate and says his final words "Time... to die." Afterwards, his head merely falls down in the rain and his dead hand releases a white dove. But I believe that Batty's death is more symbolic than that of "Human and replicant" relations, for Roy Batty is the last Aryan alive. The world featured in *Blade Runner* is one of postmodern filth and the end of culture. America is now completely inhabited by third world street dwellers that don't seem to mind the streets being flooded with overwhelming amounts of trash. All forms of past culture are jumbled together in a degree that their roots are impossible to distinguish. For example, a group of midget sized gang members speak German among one another as they go on a journey of thievery. The past of that language has been deracinated to the point that the language itself might as well have not existed in the first place. The neo-Bolshevik scam known as "Globalization" has truly conquered the world in its destruction. Roy Batty is a human engineered "Aryan Superman" and the "prodigal son" of Eldon Tyrell. Tyrell makes no lie in his arrogant pride for his "replicant" inventions. Roy Batty, being Tyrell's greatest "invention," only ends up killing his father. Roy Batty is only putting Eldon Tyrell out of his own ugly misery when he gouges his eyes out and crushes his skull. Roy Batty, although human engineered, has far exceeded his father in intelligence, beauty, humanity, and strength. In Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (the book *Blade Runner* is based on), the Tyrell corporation was originally called the Rosen corporation. It can be assumed that Hollywood would have nothing to do with a Jewish surname being used for the name of an evil "Godly" inventor and his earth destroying corporation. Hollywood would rather have you believe that the evil Anglo "Tyrell" was the root of such diabolical international destruction. But the reality is the Rothschilds (through their headquarters in London finance in their own bloody words), "governments, corporations throughout the world." The Rothschilds have paid for and caused more death than any group in history. I am sure they would be offended to be called "Anglo-Saxon." In the world of *Blade Runner*, "Aryans" no longer exist. They have been dissolved from the earth (as they are being now), by a series of cultural Marxist subversive political movements, third world international influx, and lack of overall international morals. The Joseph Goebbels' advertised "master race" fell to an outside group of self-proclaimed chosen "masters." Rutger Hauer

was the appropriate choice for Roy Batty because as a Dutchman he represents one of the highest points of Germanic culture. Long ago detached from Germany and the Germans, the Dutch established their own rich history of cultural achievements that ever since the end of World War II have been "fading into history." Eldon Tyrell (or more appropriately Rosen) gave birth to a new type of Aryan that only his materialistic god complex could fathom. The man whose corporation destroyed the whole world has now met his demise in the form of his own monster. Roy Batty, a replicant designed for off-world combat, and the brutal battlefields of war. Tyrell (like The Rothschilds), have never confronted the horrors firsthand that their money cowardly paid for. Eventually, the master will have nothing left to destroy but himself. Roy Batty, the ideal Superman, destroys the aesthetically and emotionally appalling destroyer...

-Ty E

THE LEGACY OF NEKROMANTIK
THE LEGACY OF NEKROMANTIK

Super 8 mm has become an almost extinct film format. Released in 1965 as an improvement over 8 mm film, Super 8 mm provided American (and abroad) families with a clearer format for home movies. Oddly enough (or not so when considering monetary factors), Super 8 mm would be later utilized by underground horror guerilla filmmakers. The inexpensive and easy to use Super 8 mm film format only accented the already gritty nature of countless macabre masterpieces. The greatest of these films being German auteur Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik*.

Nekromantik grabbed my attention due to its reputation for its controversial subject matter (Necrophilia isn't the most common subject found in films) and disturbingly perverse cover art. After viewing the film for the first time, I was surprised by its beauty and artistic merit. I expected it to be more on the lines of cheap Euro trash exploitation such as *SS Hell Camp* and *Erotic Nights of the Living Dead*. Director Jörg Buttgerit is not only obviously a fan of horror, but of European master directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Ingmar Bergman, and Jean-Luc Godard. Witnessing the killing and skinning of a rabbit at a young aged might cause some undesirable psychological effects. *Nekromantik* protagonist "Rob" was certainly effected as he has incorporated death into his sexual activities. Rob takes a job at a street cleaning agency and decides to bring a fairly rotten body with him. Girlfriend "Betty" has become aroused by the dead causing a truly bizarre love triangle. It seems very unlikely that necrophilia (and the blood that drips out of it), could look so good on anything other than Super 8. Of course Buttgerit proved this theory wrong in his sequel *Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead*.

Jörg Buttgerit's three subsequent films: *Der Todesking* (1989), *Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead* (1991), and *Schramm* (1993) prove his progressiveness and maturity as a director over the years. It's a shame that it has been so long since he has produced a feature (he has been director TV episodes for over nearly 10 years). One has to wonder whether or not Mr. Buttgerit is unable to secure finances or decided to call it quits after making four masterpieces. *Nekromantik* has already shown its inspiration in the German production *Cannibal* (based on the 2001 real videotape of German cannibal Armin Meiwes and his lunch/willing victim) directed by Marian Dora. Buttgerit's influence has no doubt also become international. Russian Director Andrey Iskanov (*Nails, Visions of Suffering, and Philosophy of the Knife*) and Spanish director Nacho Cedra (*Aftermath, Genesis, and The Abandoned*) are two other auteurs that have combined sex, death, and art to give viewers the most sensual of cinematic experiences. The Bloody Hitler mustache sporting Ilsa - She Wolf of the SS parody featured in *Der Todesking*. When I think of the true New German cinema (or at least over the past 25 years of it), I don't think of Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola*

Run or Wolfgang Becker's Good Bye, Lenin! Nekromantik is a truly German film. Its dichotomy of the beautiful and the rotted, the empathic and the brutal, and live and the dead speak more about a country with a conflicting history. Jörg Buttgerit is also one of few German directors to confront Germany's National Socialist past. He goes even far as to make a joke about it (with the pseudo snuff Nazi exploitation film seen in Der Todesking). Jörg Buttgerit is not afraid of showing blond haired, blue eyed boys and girls in the middle of postmortem sexual activities. Nekromantik is not the only great horror film shot on super 8. Leif Jonker's Darkness: The Vampire Version (1993), J.R. Bookwalter's The Dead Next Door (1988, Sam Raimi secretly produced), and more the recently John R. Hand's experimental Frankenstein's Bloody Nightmare offer the horror fan a different way to look at the genre. Canadian psychosexual auteur Guy Maddin has also utilized Super 8 in various shorts and features he has created (Cowards Bend the Knee 2003, Brand Upon the Brain 2006). These films made me realize that super 8 is a highly neglected format in regards to its possibilities in film. Although these various films and directors greatly differ, they all guarantee the most demanding of horror fans a different world to become enthralled in. The future of the Super 8 mm format (and film in general) looks bleak. If Jörg Buttgerit were to finally make a fifth feature, would it be shot on DV? If so, it is safe to say that Nekromantik would still dominate that feature aesthetically. A lot of great Hollywood filmmakers have even gone the route, including David Lynch who vows he will never shot on film again. Super 8mm will always have a place in film history. There is something special about a film when it looks like it was dead and buried then unearthed from hell.

-Ty E

THE LEGEND OF DOLEMITE: NOT AS BIG OR BAD
THE LEGEND OF DOLEMITE: NOT AS BIG OR BAD

Since the dawn of mankind and its wondrous inventions, Black people have been mocked, parodied, portrayed as less than intelligent, beaten down, spit on, and many other horrible, horrible things. No act of atrociousness will ever be able to independently relieve the humor spring-loaded behind the entire culture. Even from the early remnants of film has the Negro been made to look a damn fool and with role models like these, where else is there to go but down? In fact, the public image of the average African-American has been relentlessly haltered by hillarriouss news articles depicting a rather "retarded" love for a certain fried poultry. As to not get started on a down-key note, Rudy Ray Moore is a fellow I can appreciate. His morals, humor, ghetto tell-all attitude, and brazen yell only add to his ability to stick to his dreams. He is a man who had an insatiable appetite for all forms of art, branching from modeling for his "Party records" to acting/producing/and editing his own creations of soul. In all his forms of ghetto art, there hasn't been a proper chronicling of his achievements and life story. God knows that the Biography Channel would rather swallow a mouth full of testicles than to report on an icon that made "nigger" a household phrase. What kills is the irony when Rudy Ray Moore decided within the last months of his life that this word was unacceptable and should never be uttered again, all the while I'm watching The Human Tornado listening to every other character exclaim about a "nigger" in the vicinity. The Legend of Dolemite: Bigger & Badder is the documentary I'm "reporting" on. For being a blissful "retrospective" of his entire career, I found this feature to be numbingly boring and only worthy of a make-shift prop to put an end to that wobble in your antique coffee table. At least this documentary succeeds in being informative, right? While I don't love this documentary as much as newcomer Fox loved Man On Wire, I do find very minuscule facets of this film to be enough to sake me into continuing rather than shutting off my television set and fantasizing about watching a film that doesn't completely bore me. The main outlet for entertainment are the "interviews" shot on cellphone quality cameras with no tripod nor stand. Everything from low-brow rappers to second-rate comedians compliment the legacy that Dolemite has left. Checklist. Trashy amateur interviews? Check. A Microsoft PowerPoint-like presentation? Check. Recycled footage from Dolemite DVD's we already own canceling most of the actual run time out to a mere 20 minutes? Check. What Xenon Pictures has funded* is completely oblivious and soulless at the same time; a role that hasn't been filled since the birth of Helen Keller (Yes, I accept hate mail). When this documentary isn't focusing on a rather boring middle school scenery drape with an elderly Dolemite intersected with clips of him in rather Kwanzaa-enthusiastic outfits, this film does absolutely nothing else. That's another secret. You will have your time wasted with such valor. Rather than continuing to verbally slaughter this documentary, allow me to move on the

topic of the missed late great Rudy Ray Moore. Here is my disclaimer of dissatisfaction towards an adored icon that decided to change his pleasurable ways at the nearsight of death. Fact: The events transpiring in this screenshot are as unnecessary as watching the "documentary" discussed throughout. I found that the longer Rudy Ray Moore drew breath, the more radical his thoughts were becoming. It's as if the politically incorrect facility that was his train of thought had gone bankrupt and opted to serve as a soup kitchen instead. After all, it's all for the children. Rudy Ray Moore is like a scornful father to a genre that he influenced, crafted, and molded into his own personal blend of humor, subtle racism, and ghetto folklore. Within the questioning, Dolemite is quick to call the genre of blaxploitation "crude". He starts rambling like an angry Protestant swearing death upon those that labeled his films such. If "The Godfather isn't considered Italian exploitation" (This quote is a loose version of what he said which brings about the exact same point) then his Dolemite films shouldn't be called a Black exploitation film. Well my dear Rudy, The Godfather doesn't feature and preoccupy itself with artful imagery of "niggas" running amok, fucking white desperate housewives, and pimping karate hoes. "Well, that isn't apart of Italian culture" is what I could see him feebly responding with to which my reply would shoot forth calling him a bigoted racist ultimately turning the race card on him after all these years of "Kill Whitey" mentality and label him the father of a dead end culture. Rudy Ray Moore succumbed to the specifically lethal complications of diabetes in October before seeing his final Halloween. It's venomously lethal to consider The Legend of Dolemite: Bigger & Badder to be his definitive legacy put on film. Hopefully we'll see a Hollywood adaption of his life on the big screen in twenty or so years. Considering the rate that Will Smith's parasite child Jaden is acquiring roles to butcher, we might have to see this "Karate Kid" ruining one of our favorite blaxploitation star's image. The only act his "documentary" pulled was a vanishing trick right before teaching Dolemite a brief lesson of humility. From allowing him to contradict himself and demonstrating a film editor's ability to render the same jokes used in three different stand-up performances, I cannot tell what the most dismal asset of this film is, or perhaps the end of his career and sadly, his life. Looking forward to the Dolemite Explosion, I have but little to hold on to other than the blissful memories of Petey Wheatstraw. As I've said, I love Rudy Ray Moore to death but I lack the compassion to forgive a lethal case of senility.*It's impossible to tell what this DVD company partakes in seeing as how many Special Feature content lists are inaccurate and the improper scene selections plague many copies.

-mAQ

THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE FROM THE SS
THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE FROM THE SS

American media, especially electronic media, has always been a forbidden place for those with a different worldview. If you never liked Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, or MTV, you are immediately seen as suspect by the gate keepers of thought control. Modern universities have become psychological gulags where even the most slight differing of opinions is seen as criminal. Those that preach tolerance are always the least tolerant. However, technology has always had a way of doing things that it's maker never intended to. Stanley Kubrick knew it when he directed 2001: A Space Odyssey.

The internet is a form of media that has presented a problem for those who seek to mold minds into cattle lines. Individuals on both sides of our so called "two party system" are already calling for censorship. The H.R. 1955 Violent Radicalization & Homegrown "Terrorism" Prevention Act of 2007 is on it's way to silence the voices of those individuals that actually value their "right of free speech." But why censor voices when there is nothing to hide? The recently deceased author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn quickly realized the dangers of being vocal in a place that values serfdom as his masterpiece The Gulag Archipelago demonstrates. At Soiled Sinema, we value freedom of speech and research. We also value the challenging of contemporary norms, mores, and history. Soiled Sinema is a blog dedicated to those cinema fans that aren't afraid to look at modern film and film history critically. Soiled Sinema is also a place that attempts to note films that are taboo, under appreciated, over appreciated, or have never seen the light of day. We only ask that the serious and sometimes not so serious fan of cinema at least seriously consider what we have to say. With our blog, the writers of Soiled Sinema have taken risks to deliver forbidden knowledge, subversive speculation, critical analysis, and taboo art.

Soiled Sinema has just passed it's first year of existence. We regret nothing that we have written, nor will we ever. Soiled Sinema is here to stay and only plans to grow. Italian poet, intellectual, film director and writer Pier Paolo Pasolini was a man that truly did what he felt. He may have died for his masterpiece Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom, but he never cowered to accepted public opinion. Neither did Jean Cocteau, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, or even Lucio Fulci(at least from what I know). Out of respect to our favorite filmmakers, we at Soiled Sinema will continue to write our personal honest opinions and research on the art of cinema. After one year of existence, we owe our fans(and haters) a big THANK YOU! Sincerely, Ty E and maQ

THE PERSONAL AESTHETIC INFLUENCES OF JEAN COCTEAU

Legendary and pioneering film director Jean Cocteau considered himself a poet first and foremost. Cinema just happened to be the medium the late artist most excelled in. Cocteau's stance on cinema as a poetic medium enabled for the director to take a much different approach to the art of cinematic aesthetics. This is obvious when viewing the director's small film lexicon which spanned over 30 years resulting in only seven feature length films. Cocteau's films engage the viewer in a world of lucid dreams and spectacular fantasy. A lifelong opium addict, Cocteau's films feature a world of realistic detachment paralleling his own detachment.

Another obsession and influence of Jean Cocteau was his lead actor and real life lover Jean Marais. Marais no doubt was an object of Scopophilia for Cocteau. In what I will argue are Cocteau's greatest films, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Orpheus*, Marais plays the crucial role of a confident yet conflicted lead character. In *Beauty and the Beast*, he even played three roles (including the masked beast). Jean Marais perfectly carries the roles that Cocteau gave to him. It is as if Jean Cocteau already had in his mind (which he may have) the way Marais would walk and talk in perfect synch with Cocteau's unconventional film directing.

Jean Cocteau made sure to emphasize his thoughts on approach and technique when directing films. In his book *The Art of Cinema*, Cocteau stated, "I don't think, therefore I am" (Cocteau 164). In that statement, Cocteau makes it clear that he is not a proponent of incorporating intellectualism within film production. Cocteau goes on further to say, "All thought paralyzes action, and a film is a succession of acts." Cocteau's emphasis on the intuitive and subconscious artist reveals his thoughts on the dire importance of the "purity" of the art. When an individual is directing a film without a concrete, thought out technique and strategy, the end result will be the most true and pure. The final product may not be perfect (as none of Cocteau's films are or any other persons films for that matter), but the artist allowed for a more intimate and honest film.

Jean Cocteau also emphasized the purity of the poet in his works. As film was just one of Cocteau's poetic mediums, his thoughts on poetry and film generally follow the same rules. Cocteau stated, "Poetry is the opposite of poetic. As soon as someone aspires to being a poet, that person ceases to be one and the poetry makes it's escape (Cocteau 15)." I picked up subconsciously on Cocteau's cinematic philosophies when first viewing his films. I knew when watching his films that I wasn't watching anything too contrived, and it was something that came from some ones soul. Cocteau's films immediately struck me as auteur pieces, but not in the way that I conventionally look at that theory.

When ones watches a film, say, by master craftsman Stanley Kubrick, you can see the authorship of Kubrick all over the film. His scenes are strategically calculated and thought out to even the most smallest of details. Furthermore,

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when one watches a Kubrick film, you can also tell that Stanley Kubrick is an intellectual. Someone that has read every book relating to the subject of the film. I don't see Kubrick as someone that would take the chance of improvisation and serious experimentation (he would have to do much studying before trying something new). Therefore, whereas auteur Stanley Kubrick is a studious master craftsman, Jean Cocteau is ambitious child (not to sound insulting) that puts his true self unconsciously and completely (to the extent that one can do so) into the film.

During the production of Jean Cocteau's adaptation of the French fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*, he kept a diary of the film's production. Cocteau made confession, "I am not a real director and probably never shall be. I get too interested in what is happening." Although this statement sounds unflatteringly incriminating on Cocteau's part, it also lets the audience know that Cocteau has no real idea about the fundamental roles of the director. Jean Cocteau goes into creating films with a sort of voyeurs eye and becomes engulfed in his own creation. This only adds to Cocteau's authenticity and purity as a film director.

Jean Cocteau made the conscious decision to become a filmmaker when he was being weaned off of opium (Cocteau 115). His addiction to opium at the very least was partly the result of his heartbreak when his young poet friend and collaborator Raymond Radiguet died of typhoid fever at the very young age of twenty. Cocteau's literary style greatly changed during his addiction and weaning off of opium. It would have been interesting if he had directed a film before his introduction to opium, and compared it to his post drug addiction works. Opium was no doubt one of Cocteau's biggest cinematic and aesthetic influences.

Opium: *The Diary of His Cure* is one of Cocteau's most dark and honest confessional documents. The book reads an obsessed addiction with a drug that had a huge influence on Cocteau's life and work. Cocteau wrote both *Opium* and his novel *Les Enfants Terribles* during his opium weaning experience. Both of these works are widely considered some of Cocteau's best literary works. If he had not been introduced to opium, one has to wonder if Jean Cocteau would have produced the variety of masterpieces that he did.

I am going to look at three cinematic works that Cocteau was involved with: *Beauty and the Beast* (1946), *Orpheus* (1949) and *Les Enfants terribles* (1950). I chose the first two films as I believe they are Cocteau's greatest works. Although I believe his surrealist directorial debut *Blood of a Poet* is an equally important film of Cocteau's, I want to examine his films that have a more cohesive plot. *Les Enfants Terribles* was not directed by Cocteau, but was adapted from a novel of the same title by Jean-Pierre Melville.

Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* was produced shortly after the liberation of France by the United States during the second world war. France lacked many resources after its liberation and film equipment was also very scarce (Cocteau

6). The production of *Beauty and the Beast* also faced many other problems involving power outages, lack of set materials, and disruption by outside (and sometimes inside) variables. Despite the hectic problems associated with the film, Jean Cocteau found the conclusion of the production of *Beauty and the Beast* to be heartbreaking. He stated, "I know of nothing so sad as the end of a film and a unit that has worked well together breaking up." Cocteau's passion for film production and collaboration was very strong to say the least.

Jean Marais

As stated before, Jean Cocteau's lover Jean Marais played three of the roles in *Beauty and the Beast*. Jean Cocteau did not miss any opportunity to feature the face (when not covered by a beast mask) of his love obsession. Cocteau's aesthetic influence in *Beauty and the Beast* is obviously a personal and intimate choice. The roles Marais plays perfectly blend into the overall feeling of the film. When the beast transforms into a man, it becomes Cocteau's ultimate testimony to the beauty of one's soul. The beast is built up to be an evil monster of sorts. When Belle is forced to live with the beast, she discovers a beauty not at all obvious on the outside. A cliché tale indeed, but its conclusion has more power than most contemporary films could even hope for.

Jean Cocteau utilized a variety of his usual simple, yet extremely effective special effects. Faces appear in mirrors, statues come to life, and human bodies float. I can see these occurrences as something Cocteau might have conceptualized while under the influence of opium. On the other hand, most scenes featured in *Beauty and the Beast* that do not occur at the Beast's castle have a very realistic (although taking place some time ago) and standard aesthetic. These scenes have the feeling of an outdated period piece that incorporates melodrama and slight comedy. The dichotomy of worlds; the real and the surreal give *Beauty and the Beast* a great deal of its power. Had the film taken place merely at the beast's castle, it would have lacked the power that a setting of contrast helps accent.

Jean Cocteau's Orpheus (based on the Greek classic myth) finds itself for the most part in the world of the supernatural. A middle aged naked Orpheus poet (played by Jean Marais) finds competition in a new young and celebrated poet. When the young poet dies, Orpheus comes in contact with Death, who falls in love with him. Death is an attractive female (Cocteau's ultimate competition for Marais) who takes the young dead poet and turns him into her servant. Orpheus's wife Eurydice has great admiration and love for her husband. She states, "he's very handsome and very famous. It's a miracle that he's still faithful to me." I got the feeling that Cocteau was implying that Orpheus possibly had homosexual feelings as Eurydice's random quote hints at.

Heurtebise, an associate of death, falls in love with Eurydice. He has fallen victim to love in the past that resulted in his suicide (by lethal gases). This causes a particularly bizarre love conflict. Two dead spirits fall in love with two live spirits (Eurydice is killed and taken to the underworld eventually). Jean Cocteau's

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obsession with unconventional love affairs most likely reflects his own homosexual relationships. At one point Orpheus states "Women adore complications." I found this dialogue to be very telling on his view of the female as the potential enemy.

The final film I am going to look at is *Les Enfants Terribles* directed by Jean-Pierre Melville. Melville is most well known for his gangster films, so I found it particularly odd that he would direct an adaptation of a Cocteau novel. *Les Enfants Terribles* features many of the themes so deeply associated with the works of Cocteau but lacking the aesthetic power. The film follows an ambiguous incest brother and sister relationship. The sibling duo in *Les Enfants Terribles* have made it their life goal to play games and jokes on others. They have involved others in their conspiracies and eventually the sister goes against her own partner (brother). This results in a very tragic ending.

Les Enfants Terribles lacks any of the dreamlike special effects so deeply associated with Jean Cocteau. The film's dramatic ending is the only scene that felt as if Cocteau could have possibly directed (in which did a very small number of scenes). Director Jean-Pierre Melville is known for being very minimalist in nature. That is why I believe that *Les Enfants Terribles* lacks the "magic" films directed by Jean Cocteau have. Just as in *Orpheus*, a female becomes the conflict bringer in the game of love. And just as seen in *Orpheus*, the female causes her own relationship's (and personal) demise. I think it would be safe to say that Jean Cocteau had some hostility against woman.

Jean Cocteau was a film director that seemed to have very little aesthetic influence from others' films or film directors. His biggest aesthetic influences seem to lie in his loss of love, experience with opium, his sexual persuasion, and the tragic circumstances surrounding his life. When *Orpheus* is asked what a poet is, he responds with, "to write without being a writer." That statement sums up Jean Cocteau as a film director.

-Ty E

THE SATANIC NEO-NAZI THAT PLAYED A BAR MITZVAH

The documentary *Charles Manson SuperStar* is easily the most interesting and intimate cinematic (or videomatic) look at Mr. Charlie Manson. The documentary was directed by a man named Nikolas Schreck who also happens to be the lead singer of the band Radio Werewolf and also used to run a Satanic outfit known as "The Werewolf Order." At first glance most people are likely to assume that "Nikolas Schreck" is not that Sataniſt Neo-Nazi rocker's real name and they would be right. The real name of the man that calls himself "Nikolas Schreck" is the much tamer (but more appropriate) Barry Dubin. Mr. Dubin seems to have borrowed Schreck from Julius Schreck (the first leader of the SS before Heinrich Himmler) and Max Shreck (who played the vampire in F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*). But then again, most of Schreck's "career" and "efforts" seemed to have been borrowed from the fruits and labors of other artists.

Julius Schreck

Before finishing *Charles Manson SuperStar*, Nikolas Schreck's contribution to the art of film was his appearance in the embarrassingly banal horror comedy *Mortuary Academy* (1988). I found Nikolas Schreck and Radio Werewolf's appearance in the film to be interesting as they are playing at a Jewish kid's Bar Mitzvah. *Mortuary Academy* also had a production designer by the name of Jonathan Rothschild. One can only wonder if he is a member of that famous international banking family. But anyways, it is a pretty strange occurrence if you consider a year earlier Schreck (with "Evil Wilhelm" of Radio Werewolf) appeared on so-called Neo-Nazi Tom Metzger's show "Race and Reason." On *Race and Reason*, Nikolas Schreck goes on megalomaniacal tirades about how he and Radio Werewolf are going to take over the world. Schreck refers to other people as mortals (Maybe Schreck really is the reincarnation of Julius Schreck) and talks about how he is a member of the "true elite." I guess everyone feels like an elitist when they get the chance to make it on a public access television show.

Nikolas Schreck and Radio Werewolf in *Mortuary Academy* During the episode of *Race and Reason*, footage of Radio Werewolf is shown featuring swastika flags and Nikolas Schreck giving Nazi "Hail Victory" salutes. Despite the attempt of being a Nazi Gothic act, the music comes out sounding more like a deranged Jewish Gothic Carney performing in an abandoned warehouse in the Warsaw ghetto. It seems that Radio Werewolf stole a good amount of their sound and aesthetic from death rock group 45 Grave which appeared about a decade before. Tom Metzger seems to take the music of Radio Werewolf as serious as Nikolas Schreck. Throughout the *Race and Reason* show, Metzger subtly mocks Schreck and his Schizo-style arrogance. Despite what people say about Tom Metzger, he surely has a gentleman grandfather quality that even arrogant weakling and British Broadcast Louis Theroux took notice of.

THE SATANIC NEO-NAZI THAT PLAYED A BAR MITZVAH

Nikolas Schreck and Evil Wilhelm on Race and Reason After Nikolas Schreck's appearance on Race and Reason, Tom Metzger found out something that he probably wasn't too surprised about. When talking about Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, Metzger said: "I personally have met the daughter, Zeena. Both she and her son are not Aryan and have the Semitic look. She married a man called Schreck, who promoted the Nazi line. Too bad he turned out to be a Jew, it (Werewolf Order) was pretty good. He is the son of a furniture dealer in Tarzana, California." Interestingly enough, Zeena LaVey (who now goes by Zeena Schreck) would later denounce the Church of Satan and her father Anton. Current High Priest of the Church of Satan Peter Gilmore also stated, "Zeena, along with her companion Barry 'Nikolas Schreck' Dubin, wanted to ease Dr. LaVey into retirement so that they could assume his position. Neither was suited for this role, and Dr. LaVey was quite firmly in control. So when their efforts failed, they made a big show out of departing the 'corrupt' Church of Satan and leaving the United States behind for 'Fortress Europa.' I do not think it is hard for one to believe after watching the Race and Reason footage of Nikolas Schreck that he is of the "scheming" nature.

Nikolas and Zeena "Schreck"

Instead of taking over the world, Nikolas Schreck's only success has been in editing a couple books and releasing a few CDs that no one has ever heard. Instead of actually coming up with material of his own, it seems Schreck is more like a community college professor of the Occult. Although he has done a handful of excellent book compilations like The Manson File (probably the best book on Charles Manson), Schreck seems to be lacking in actually having an original thought of his own. I guess you cannot blame the poor "undead Aryan" for trying.

"If you are scared of Radio Werewolf then there is something in yourself that you fear" - Nikolas Schreck Nikolas Schreck also apparently rarely ever appears out of his crypt in Berlin, Germany. There is good reason though as apparently he's afraid to go out in public ever since someone cut off one of his ears while he was rolling down his car window. I guess the losing of one's ear can really put one's "mortality" in perspective. If only the people that hate Schreck realized that he is just a poor self-loathing Jewish boy, they might cut him some slack and he might still have two ears. Instead, he has to go on being the head of the world's most acclaimed occult organization and has to settle for having his greatest populist achievement being featured in a forgotten horror comedy.

-Ty E

THE STAR PERSONA OF MARILYN MONROE

Marilyn Monroe is the iconic dumb blonde. She paved the way for dumb blonde stereotypes that still carry a lot of resonance today. Marilyn Monroe wasn't even a natural blonde (but a redhead). I doubt she had much confliction about the affect that her film characters have influenced American (and international) societies view of blonde females. I believe that her film characters are a little more complicated than they let on. Despite her film characters persistent joy and absent mindedness, I think that they had another underlying layer. The best evidence of this theory is the theme of psychoanalysis found in Marilyn Monroe's film *The Seven Year Itch*. Marilyn Monroe's characters are able to seduce a man in seconds with her suggestive (many times in a subtle way) gestures. She can put a man in a trance within less than a seconds time. Whether her characters are conscious or subconscious of this is irrelevant (the real Marilyn Monroe was obviously conscious of this). Marilyn Monroe's characters have the ability to sexually entice any man resulting in her benefit. If it wasn't for this "tool" of sorts, the success at the very least, would be somewhat weakened. If Marilyn Monroe's characters had a mean and cold persona than her popularity would wane to some degree. In the film *The Seven Year Itch* directed by Billy Wilder, psychoanalysis becomes a weapon. Marilyn Monroe's character in the film has caused a married man to swoon for her. After just meeting Marilyn Monroe's character (who is listed as "the girl"), the male protagonist becomes instantly obsessed with her and every little movement she makes. A psychiatrist diagnoses the protagonist with "the seven year itch." The married man blames the girl for his weak spot and obsession with her. The man believes that everything that happened is the result of subconscious decisions. Somehow the girl seems to have an intuitive knack for knowing what is going on and how to respond. Her beauty has become an engulfing trance inducing weapon just as the vampire in *Dracula* does when seducing his victims. Marilyn Monroe wasn't the first women to use her beauty as a weapon to entice males to the point of complete dominance. German actress Marlene Dietrich also seduces an older man in her film *The Blue Angel* (among other films) directed by Josef von Sternberg. In the film, a strict and authoritarian like teacher meets a seductive dancer by the name of Lola and doesn't look back. He quits his job teaching and eventually becomes a circus clown for Lola's cabaret. Like Marilyn Monroe's characters, Lola has the ability to make any man satisfy her desires. I can only assume that Lola was an influence on Marilyn Monroe's characters and her film career. Marilyn Monroe's character in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* also knows what she wants. She uses her sex appeal and suggestive nature to obtain what she wants from a rich man. Monroe's character is engaged to a not so handsome guy. One can only assume she is in it for the money and in the end she marries the suitor. The man's father disapproves of Marilyn Monroe and he believes that she just wants to get married for money.

THE STAR PERSONA OF MARILYN MONROE

Monroe's character states to her suitors father, "I don't want to marry your son for his money, I want to marry him for your money." I found this hard to believe and just as more evidence of Monroe's cunning sexual persona. I believe Marilyn Monroe's characters to be ironic examples of women's empowerment. Her characters seem to have an objective (whether conscious or subconscious) and carry them out to her benefit. Many viewers just assume that Monroe just plays the role of a dumb blonde, but she is also the one that always comes out on top. The male protagonist in *The Seven Year Itch* states, "Everything happens for a reason." Going on that statement, it can be rest assured that Monroe knows how to get what she wants. I wouldn't necessarily call Marilyn Monroe's characters feminists, but they do not accept the role of the dominated female (she is the dominator). The female stars of previous Fox studio films were somewhat different from the roles that Marilyn Monroe played. The film *In Old Chicago* features the aggressive female played by Alice Faye. She supports herself and is the master of her own destiny. Only a criminally minded Irish American can tame her and turn her into a loving lady. Marilyn Monroe, on the other hand, gives the impression that she is a sweet and innocent girl. In the end, Monroe's characters always end up dominating the males. The character of Laura (played by Gene Tierney) in the film *Laura* (directed by Otto Preminger) is sort of a ghost of intrigue. Thought to be dead at first, Laura reappears and has three men fall in love with her. Three men try to obtain Laura due to their love and infatuation with her. Her alluring power is almost as strong as Marilyn Monroe's, but Laura doesn't need to be sexually suggestive in her way. One of the men even falls in love with Laura while thinking that she's dead. Laura's powers are almost supernatural. There is no doubt that there is more that meets the eye in regards to the character played by Marilyn Monroe. Her success just didn't appear from her good looks. Monroe's characters obtained what they wanted anytime they wanted. Marilyn Monroe was an unconventional symbol of female empowerment and success.

-Ty E

THE STENCH OF INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

I have never had any interest in reviewing “trailers” but Quentin Tarantino’s upcoming tour-de-fart war film *Inglourious Basterds* deserves soiled acknowledgement. After watching the trailer, it is apparent that Tarantino is hoping to achieve an all time low in cinematic defecation. Tarantino has always been a filmmaker that has been hostile to art and genuine human emotions but *Inglourious Basterds* seems to be evidence that Tarantino has snorted too much cocaine while simultaneously frying his “brain” on ecstasy. *Inglourious Basterds* is a film about a group of Jews who take revenge on evil German Nazis and scalp them. Talk about Science Fiction, *Inglourious Basterds* seems to feature fantasies that only a deranged Israeli IDF soldier could dream of after wasting an 8 year old Palestinian girl with a bullet to the head.

Fellow hack “director” and Tarantino ass kisser Eli Roth plays a Jew that kills Germans with a baseball bat in *Inglourious Basterds*. In the film trailer, Roth makes a stereotypical sinister Jewish smile that would have made great propaganda for the German National Socialists of 1933. Speaking of Nazi propaganda, Eli Roth also directed a fictional Joseph Goebbels Nazi propaganda film titled *Stolz der Nation* for *Inglourious Basterds*. Something tells me this will be Eli Roth’s greatest contribution to film yet. The real Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels wasn’t nicknamed “The Rabbi” in college for nothing. Self-loathing Jewish mentality can go a long way. Just ask Woody Allen, he made a career of it.

This poster would look much cooler with the Swastika intact. Tarantino has never been someone that valued aesthetics.

Despite what Hollywood tells the world, “Aryans” were the ones that won World War II for the United States. German-Americans made up the largest ethnic group to fight for the United States in the war and the majority of the rest of soldiers were of Nordic descent. *Inglourious Basterds* is just an attempt by Tarantino to kiss the horrendous asses of his Hollywood masters due to his declining popularity. Instead of the passive-Jew-gets-shoved-into-the-gas-chamber angle Steven Spielberg practically invented, Tarantino wants to make up a myth that Jews collectively fought the Germans man-to-man in the second World War. To be fair, Jews did take their revenge against the Germans after World War II. For example, Jewish Zgoda death camp commander Salomon Morel killed about 1,695 Germans (and a handful of Poles) for mere pleasure. He killed the German refugees by ill treatment, torture, and outright murder. One of his favorite ways of killing Germans was bashing their brains out with the end of a chair leg. Poland attempted to have Morel extradited from Israel for “crimes against humanity” but of course Israel declined. Naturally, Morel felt that he was a victim of an “anti-Semitic” plot.

Brad Pitt is fighting for the wrong side!

THE STENCH OF INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

Inglourious Basterd looks like nothing new but just rehashing of the same kosher trash World War II propaganda. Don't get me wrong, Ilsa, She Wolf the SS is a fun flick and Liliana Cavani's The Night Porter is a sexy film. When is Hollywood going to realize that no one cares about the holocaust as much Israel's economy depends on it? There is one new holocaust film that I would like to see. A concentration camp comedy in the tradition of Billy Wilder's Stalag 17 could be fun. Imagine Woody Allen and Larry David having starring roles where they complain about the condition of the concentration camps. I believe that it could be the funniest Jewish comedy since A Night in Casablanca by the Marx brothers.

-Ty E

THE TERROR OF FRIDAY THE 13TH

Friday the 13th is a scary, scary day indeed. Never have I thought about resembling one with superstitious beliefs until now. I've never quite written something similar to the medium of analysis as I am scouring through right now but the tragic downfall is horrifying. In order to set the scene, a brief synopsis and run-down of my job (and theater) is due. I support creative writing as much as the next lush so my story is simple. It begins with a decrepit six screen theater with Friday the 13th in auditorium 1 and The Pink Panther 2 in auditorium 2. Previously two nights before, Friday the 13th was screened in auditorium 2. This leads to the eventual and eventful conclusion to the tale. After noticing that no one purchased tickets for the morning show of Pink Panther 2, a co-worker and I began conversing in the empty theater aided only by the incredibly unfunny performance of Steve Martin. His humor sure has fallen to such a slump since The Jerk and Bowfinger. After walking upstairs back into my territory accompanied by my favorite cinematic phylum's, I realized something was out of the ordinary - the lamp in auditorium 2 was off. Running over in a frantic frenzy, I soon realized that no one was in the theater so my stress soon there after evaporated into a colorful mist. It was a good feeling. Then I went to start the second Friday the 13th showing, but that was during the time I began thinking about what I had stupidly said earlier. Earlier that day, I boasted almost competitively "Haha! It would be funny if Friday the 13th fucked up on Friday the 13th!". This was the last thing I said before I pushed a loose button into the correct positioning. The light discharged a soft pop and my torso was showered with sparks. I couldn't believe it. A showing with a decent amount of people had just been cursed to be canceled. Or had it? Working with the manager, we decided to switch it to the already faulty theater 2 since the last showing of Pink Panther 2 had been canceled. Rethreading the projector, I had my doubts. Keep in mind, the projector screwed up not too long ago. Starting it in 2 was a death trap but we went ahead anyways. Number 2 went fine, for 20 minutes that is. While attempting to fix the bulb in projector number 1, I brought up the fact that I screened Friday the 13th in theater 2 previously and that might explain the misfortune. I laughed and sighed, inexplicably, I witnessed the bulb blow in projector 2, I started cursing aloud and looked though the port glass window to see an angry crowd. Number 1 and 2 were both down for the count and we still had a print to motor through. Perplexed at the amount of anti-luck I'd experienced only through half of the day, I was sure I was to go home and drown my black cat of 15 years. As soon as all the refunds were done, wouldn't you know it, number 1 kicked back on. After troubleshooting both projectors, both had little to no errors. Now, I have skipped over many parts of the day but know this - Friday the 13th is now a day I fear. Bubble wrap seems to be a good choice for clothing on this day. This isn't so much an article displaying literary academia but a confession of someone who

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focuses on Cryptozoology and has finally been swayed by the effects of superstition and the likes. I realize that every projector that the print of Friday the 13th has touched has become defunct. This isn't some bizarre effect of possession but a true form of "jinxing" something. I refuse to ever work a Friday the 13th ever again and this event has made a scared man of me. It could be mere coincidence but I enjoy harvesting feelings of fear and cowardice. I'd never let something so bold go to waste. Plainly, this movie's fucking evil.

-mAQ

TRIBUTE TO JEAN RENO

Jean Reno killed Godzilla. With those four words, I begin my quest in bringing his character to notice. Jean Reno in short terms is a bad motherfucker. A lot of people criticize how he plays stereotypical roles in all his films. No matter what role he is, playing French detectives or the key bad ass, he always delivers quality entertainment and personality to every character. Whether it is in such garbage film like *The Pink Panther* or *Godzilla*, Jean Reno never lets fans down.

My love for this Moroccan native first came when I saw *The Professional* when I had matured. I had seen this movie as a child and forgotten about the visual excitement and tragedy it brought. When re-watching it, I realized how great this film was. I then sought after the Extended cut entitled *Leon*, which is two separate movies in my opinion. After that I rented *Wasabi* and was blown away with his ability to make every movie an instant classic. Without Jean Reno, all these movies would be mediocre at best. Not only is he a towering monolith of testosterone, he encompasses all the culture of the French without being it himself but he also out shines Sean Connery in the category of attractive unshaven elderly men by standards of modern women. Jean Reno's extensive library of acting roles places him from outlandish scripts to video game likenesses. His talent has been exploited in the most fruitful of ways. Bringing light to his films is the greatest thing you could do for a friend. Hallmark should buy out the Jean Reno image to use as product placement. In an alternate universe, I can see people buying loved ones Jean Reno bobbleheads and other various merchandise. A man once told me I was a faggot for admiring a male. I sent him a link to the *Wasabi* trailer and he shut up quick.

Most people are either a Beatles or Elvis fan. Jean Reno is an Elvis man and because of that, so am I. His strangest role by far was in Luc Besson's first directorial effort dubbed *Le Dernier Combat*. In this role he played "The Brute", a man wandering a wasteland of mute people in search of the protagonist. This "dude" wasn't in a film called *The Moroccan Stallion* for nothing. In closing remarks, all anybody needs to know is that if you see Jean Reno pasted anywhere, that shit is a gold mine and popcorn flick to boot.

-mAQ

TRIBUTE TO LLOYD KAUFMAN
TRIBUTE TO LLOYD KAUFMAN

Lloyd Kaufman is probably the most shameless swindler in the film industry. The swindler is his persona and he does it well. Anyone that's obsessed with film knows who Lloyd is. You don't even have to like Troma films to be a fan of him. Lloyd Kaufman is Troma studios. His long (Troma is the longest running Independent film studio) involvement in the film industry alone demands respect.

Lloyd has also brought us the iconic Toxie monster hero of *The Toxic Avenger*. Toxie even made his way to being a kid's action figure. That's a pretty extreme change from the same guy that had peddled cheap sex (he still does this). His newest film *Poultrygeist* (shot on 35mm) has supposedly put Lloyd in the monetary crapper (he used his own money for it). Hopefully the film will make it to more theaters and make Lloyd some of his well earned bread back.

Tonight, I watched *The Toxic Avenger* for the fourth or fifth time. It's a complete piece of cheap trash and I love every minute of it. The film features everything you could ever desire in being entertained. The killing of animals (and on top of it a seeing eye dog), child killing, senior citizen beating / killing, homicidal hero, and transgendered criminals. The best part of all these taboo filled scenes is that they are featured in a film that has a very formulaic Hollywood structure (and Lloyd still screwed that up). These sub versions of Hollywood nos have enabled Mr. Kaufman to make a name for his self in film history.

Lloyd also lets the viewer know that he's not a fan of Richard Nixon, mean jocks, fast food (which he goes back to in his new film *Poultrygeist*), Nazi cops, and nuclear waste being transported by fans of the rich man's candy. Lloyd Kaufman is no doubt an auteur. Many of Lloyds themes of perverted sex, bodily dismemberment, car crashes, ugly guys wearing makeup, and animal abuse (he's also a proud supporter of PETA) can be seen in his sizable library of films. *Class of Nuke 'Em High*, *Troma's War*, *Tromeo and Juliet*, and *Terror Firmer* are other great films Lloyd has brought us. I just hope he decides to make an autobiographical film based on his long career (directed by Giuseppe Andrews).

-Ty E Poultrygeist Teaser Trailer

TRIBUTE TO ROY SCHEIDER

I had been thinking awhile about which person deserves a tribute to post on Soiled Sinema. After hearing of the death of this fellow American, i realized how much of an influence he had on my life. As i look around my colorful room, i see an original JAWS stuffed animal, my JAWS boxers, and my JAWS DVD set. Roy Scheider, along with the two other leads, made this movie, not the shark. As i look on his Wiki article, i see now that he was scheduled to play John Rambo in First Blood. Pretty funny coincidence as i just re watched the new Rambo film. This would have been an interesting future to see. Who knows? Roy might have done it better. He sure did have the charisma. The two roles that i see Roy Scheider as, are "Herr" Benway in Cronenberg's film Naked Lunch and Brody in Jaws and Jaws 2. He definitely brought an essence to both films. Dr. Benway was a genius creation of Burroughs and was brought to screen with the perfect cast choice. Schieder. In fact, Roy Scheider should have been in every movie ever made. I can imagine his face superimposed over E.T's face, Sean Connery's face, Hell. Scheider would have made an impressive Bond. He's got the suave feel to him, the looks, and looks damn good smoking a pipe. That is definitely something that should have been. Roy Scheider will be remembered, if not through his badass film acting style, then definitely for one of the most remembered one-liners ever. "Smile you son-of-a-bitch"

-Maq

TRIBUTE TO VINCENT CASSEL
TRIBUTE TO VINCENT CASSEL

What can be said about Vincent Cassel that hasn't already been said? Probably not that much, but that doesn't stop me discussing the greats of this Frenchman. Vincent Cassel brings a lot to modern art-house cinema. Not only is he a great fucking actor and has an angelic wife, but he has a great taste in film. I was first introduced to Cassel with the introduction of HATE (La Haine) via an old VHS tape. Upon watching this film, it blew me away. The intensity of Vinz's role is actually a stepping stone along the way to the cinema that I watch now.

After watching this film and being marked, I began to hunt down more of his films, stumbling upon Irreversible, Doberman, Sheitan, and The Crimson Rivers. Each of these films are amazing in different aspects but tie in on his roles. Let's go through his variety of acting.

La Haine - A misunderstood Jewish sociopath with vengeance on the mind.
The Crimson Rivers - A tough Paris cop who teams up with Jean Reno (Instant Points)
L'Appartenance - A man who is searching for the truth (Mindfuck Film)
Sheitan - A satanic Shepard who is trying to flock in some college sacrifices.
Irreversible - A homophobic bastard who loves cocaine and gay bashing
Derailed - A French smooth-mother-fucker who is a master conman.

These are just some of the many roles he can play. Sheitan was an amazing film in overview but did have its flaws. If it wasn't for Cassel's deep pockets and his ability to fund the film, we wouldn't have seen this macabre masterpiece. Not only does Vincent Cassel and his wife Monica Bellucci form an amazing family, but his brother is a part of French rap group ASSASSIN codenamed Rockin Squat. I highly anticipated his role in Cronenberg's new crime masterpiece EASTERN PROMISES and after viewing, he made that film. Kirill was an amazing character. Not only did he handle the homosexual undertones with class, but he also made such a monster a character you actually feel for. It's really amusing to watch a Frenchman playing a Russian, Jew, Frenchie, and a cartoon character off of Shrek. Such a wide range of capabilities shouldn't go unrewarded. Vincent Cassel is an amazing actor and indeed one of the finest. His name alone is worth a rent.

-Maq

VIN DIESEL: MONGREL "ACTION" HERO

Every year Hollywood gets more and more degenerate. Obviously, Hollywood has to keep up with the lowest common denominator individuals that they have produced over many decades. Nothing is better for a large collective of cattle than a good stupid laugh, cheap sex, glamorized crime, "bad ass" special effects, and the triumph of "the little guy." A lot of Americans (and people abroad) get their ideas of what is "cool", trendy, and to be strived for by watching the latest film churned out of the little hell known as Hollywoodland. One trend I couldn't help but notice in the recent years is the MONGRELIZATION of Hollywood stars. The NEW face of America? I recently saw a putrid and unbelievably mind numbing piece of visual diarrhea of a film called Babylon A.D. directed by hack Mathieu Kassovitz. I must admit that I have never seen a film starring the new action film star Vin Diesel. After seeing the piece of filth known as Babylon A.D., I can say that he is one of the ugliest and most unappealing actors to ever "grace" the movie screen. I can only see Vin Diesel as an action "hero" appealing to criminals locked up in county prison. Vin Diesel is truly a man that only an alcoholic stepmother could love. What happened to the Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone's? I know these two men got old, but I am sure someone more appealing than Vin Diesel can replace them. Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone are guys that you can be "proud to be American" by watching them. Willis is the German-American hero that kicks real kraut ass in Die Hard. Sylvester Stallone is the Italian-American hero that turned slightly deranged by having too many tours of Vietnam. Vin Diesel has a name that sounds like some cheap third world sports car. Hollywood may want America to turn into a nation of criminal mongrels, but Vin Diesel will never be a true action hero. Vin Diesel is a fellow mixed of "black and Italian" with a bunch of other ambiguous pedigrees. He is obviously a poster boy for the new world order. A cultureless world of internationalism and nihilistic hedonism. Vin Diesel's character in Babylon A.D. lacks any real virtue or values. He just sports a bunch of tacky looking "hard" tattoos and has the stoicism of an ape. Young boys and men should look up like to someone like Vin Diesel and produce bad ass mongrel children that know how to obtain exotic Aryan women from Russia. I get disgusted by most action films and other related garbage that "explodes" out Hollywood's Luciferian vaults every week. Obviously, most of the time I choose not to watch these films. I seek films out of interest and try to ensure that I have at least somewhat pleasant cinema viewing experience. Every once in a while I will watch a film like Babylon A.D. and realize that Hollywood really does get dumber and more degenerate with every passing day. Vin Diesel is not a hero, but the ideal slavish brute that minister of international propaganda Rupert Murdoch hopes will one day inhabit the earth in vast numbers. Vin Diesel looks like the poster boy for a new soldier barbarian for a new technological dark age.

VIN DIESEL: MONGREL "ACTION" HERO

-Ty E

VIRAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES EXPLOITED IN CLOVERFIELD

During the year 2007 in the month of July, All theaters were being ran as normal. Popcorn being popped and concession items being sold. The only real difference is the long-awaited arrival of Michael Bay's Transformers. During these summer slams, big-budget movies always deliver the action and stars. While the cheerful audience awaited for their re-vamping of a nostalgic tale of machines to begin, their pleasant experience was ruined, savaged, and raped by a little teaser called 01-18-08. This conundrum wrapped tightly in its own carriage was an untitled film with no discernible plot. All we bare witness to is a group of New Yorkers at a party for a friend named Rob. While they are drinking and mingling with the socialite crowd, a loud and strange earthquake and explosion is heard. Upon going to the roof, Our mysterious cameraman exclaims "Looks like you should have left town a little bit earlier" This foreshadowing is of the most menacing kind and leaves you speechless as you see the head of our Statue of Liberty crash down a street. This video was then recorded by every sort of device known to mankind and mirrored to any site it could, only to be pulled by Paramount days later. Questions began popping up all over forums and discussions. People started to gossip about the endless possibilities. Unsound theories showed no remorse as they popped up everywhere, vastly covering up any possible theories on the film. Voltron, Cthulhu, Dodo, and Godzilla are just a few examples of what this creature was interpreted to be. The hysteria of the cinema community wouldn't be extinguished even after Abrams revealed in an interview that the creature would be entirely original. The biggest impact of the trailer might be the New Yorker screaming "I saw it! It's alive! It's huge!" Cause of the teasers short time it had to be filmed, the word was slightly slurred and many people derived the word "Lion" out of it. Not only did we have rabid fans thinking it was a Lovecraft film but now we had them thinking a giant lion was destroying NYC. Numerology even took a turn when YouTube videos and blogs were posted explaining the amount of numbers in certain key phrases and deducting a hidden meaning. After all of these were debunked, all the theories were taken down by the original writer, for shame i guess. LOST theorists even began trying to add it up. JJ Abrams, after all, is a hype machine. The man lives for the climax and always delivers. In the teaser, Rob's brother is wearing a Slusho shirt. As you might know, Slusho exists in the ALIAS universe, also belonging to Abrams. Once you delve into the official Slusho website, you are greeted with smiling cartoon sea creatures. Possibly a horrifying environment depending on how you associate this lovable drink with a creature capable of total absolute annihilation. Early on, theories of the monster being attracted to a sweet nectar used in Slusho sprang forth, giving the film new life and a ridiculous tone. People backed up this speculation and others dismissed it from the get-go, whereas the element of Deep-Sea drilling did fit. It was only a matter of time before the

VIRAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES EXPLOITED IN CLOVERFIELD

film got released in theaters. Viral marketing sites appeared all over the Internet. Blogs began popping up including Ethan Haas Was Right. This site in particular was falsely connected to the mythology that already begun to surround the untitled project. Abrams had an interview conducted with him not too long after that stating while there were sites out there, Ethan Haas was not one of them. This is when the first official site was noticed. Several pictures were scattered amongst a flash canvas of black. You could interact with these pictures; dragging them around and flipping them over to see the contents on the back. We started out with pictures of the friends at the party and then several which were a bit more in depth. One of two women's faces, both contorted in horror, staring at something monstrous and another of a Japanese chef with a recipe on the back. People immediately began dissecting these photos and several even went as far as to find a pattern in hair between the girls heads and trace a gargoyle face. Time was counting down till that day in January and people still didn't know what to call this film. Around this time, a teaser poster started popping up in various places including Comic-con. The poster featured a headless Statue of Liberty standing defeated while being ground to a ripple in the water which leads to the shore of a devastated New York. Many fake names like 01-18-08, Slusho, Cloverfield, Cheese, Monstrous, Furious, Colossus, The Parasite, and Grayshot were all proposed and used to distract the outside world from gathering more information than they initially wanted or even expected. Around this time, word of a trailer attached to Beowulf with an official title began to leak. The response was enormous. The film was finally titled; Cloverfield. Cloverfield is the military name for the project, and it is also a road Abrams uses to get to his Santa Monica house. The success of controlling the information surrounding this film was all thanks due to the cast and crew. When the auditions were held, the actors were told nothing of the script and were given a piece of script from ALIAS to work with. Controversy encircled the film after the pinnacle release of the trailer. 9/11 allusions were all tied in. People would be whispering "It's too soon..." for a while now. More pictures debuted on the mysterious site. If you left it open for 6 minutes, a chilling roar rips through your speakers leaving you slightly unnerved. Each of these photos in time-stamped to relay a series of unfortunate events. These times would conflict with the dates presented in the film, but I applaud their efforts on all other planes. This is when Tagruato made its viral release. It is a Japanese drilling company which has been linked to the awakening of the monster. Its logo is a simple one that can be seen in the film and is linked to the fate of Rob. Soon after the release of the film, many things were noticed. The satellite falling from the sky, the graffiti Slusho, and the reversible audio clip at the end of the credits. All of these expand your Cloverfield experience and offers arguable destinies for every character. T.I.D.O. wave websites began to be born from the terrors of the Tagruato company. These two warring factions over eco-terrorism continue to write blogs and tie the film in

further; For example, after the release of the film, Tagruato's page was experiencing technical difficulties due to a downed satellite. All the characters in the film had an adjacent Myspace on which they blogged and conversed like every one from this contemporary generation would. On the release of the film, they stopped visiting their respected Myspace's due to the events and most of them dying off. After the film premiered and Hud was bit in half by the monster, his height changed from 6'something to 2'9. Quite a comedic effort on their part. In this .gif below, we can see clearly what befalls the lovable cameraman. Jamie and Teddy (password: jllovesth) is a website featuring the woman who appears passed out on the couch during the film. During these viral videos that are sent to Teddy from Jamie, we see many hardships and heartbreaks which boil down to a tape from Teddy saying he has been captured by Tagruato and which leads to the climax of Jamie going to the Rob's party (Lily's Party). So amongst a plot device of deception and terrorism from foreign companies comes a Cloverfield manga called Cloverfield/Kishin. The manga is in 4 installments with the fourth not out yet. It sheds a gratuitous amount of light on all these strange ongoingings. As for the origin of the monster, not much is explained. We see a Tagruato ship dragging the creature under the ocean. Kishin is a boy who is motherless and is constantly bullied. After an incident at sea, Clover breaks free and begins to jump (Yes, jump. That explains how it got around NYC so fast) towards Tokyo in order to find the strange feeling that it senses. After some Slusho frames, Kishin's biological father meets up with him and explains how his mother put the "God's Vestige" into Kishin's body. This is explained by a bizarre cult that worships Clover as a god. The Vestige is a piece of the "gods" DNA and creates a psychic link between Clover and the boy. After you discover that his mother was killed, he is saved by his father, only to be put in a suicide bombing situation involving his father. His father understands the power in which he holds is leading the creature into the heart of Japan and decides to sacrifice him and his son. Right as he pulls the trigger, Clover's hands burst through the building and shields the young Kishin. After his madness snaps, he climbs atop of the impressionable Clover and begins to march toward the destruction of earth. The fact that Clover has attacked a city before the fateful night in New York is questionable. If this happened, wouldn't we have heard about it?

This is a video from the Spanish version of Cloverfield. While from an American view, nothing seems out of place but something is afoot. The reporters in the background dialogue is translated to "We have some news about other city's who was already attacked, but we don't know what it's happening... the communications from some sites were cut..." Most people will immediately dismiss this because our government tells us everything. If you recall any viral materials involving Tagruato, it is proven that this company is capable of deceit, murder, and kidnapping. Surely this hazardous company can conceal an incident. In the manga, we see Clover attack Tokyo, ripping it apart. The creature manages to

VIRAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES EXPLOITED IN CLOVERFIELD

kill his worshipers, innocent civilians, and is even shown to purposefully pull the parasites off of its body to attack and flank the panicked city. Clover is intelligent and is fully aware of what he is doing. In some scenes in the comic, he is shown being shackled up and captured, thinking aloud not to wake him. He grabs people and eats them, squashes helicopters, and is being controlled by a young boy. The main character in the film, Rob, would have been a victim each way. Hud's infamous line "Looks like you should have left town earlier" was previously mentioned in regards to being mysterious. That line is also the most ironic line in cinema history. Had Rob left town earlier, he would have just ended up in Tokyo when the monster made its explosive debut. So now that we know Rob is a doomed character and chose the better route; dying with love. In recent Cloverfield news, the main website has been altered. The trailer begins as normal but is cut off 6 seconds or so in with an alternate ending. The way its prominence is shown on the site suggests that even though it is alternate, it still is affective in the right reality. Beth might still be alive, and due to the clip at the end of the credits, it is heard that Rob was still alive too, but the harsh reality is that the mysterious face is probably a member of the military. The latest viral site is <http://www.usgx8810b467233px.com/>. This website requires a username and a password which was found to be on every copy of Cloverfield sans the Steelbook edition that everyone pines over. The username is alysehanssen and the password is 11112014349. The index directory lists three deep-sea photographs which show Clover's positioning at the incident of the Chuai station. The second photograph is a Tagruato submersible "shedding some light" on the parasites. This may or may not be on the ocean floor. It would be highly convenient if it was found on the back of Clover. Despite having been out on DVD for a couple of weeks, the viral marketing is going strong. Cloverfield opened this path for many films now. The Dark Knight used some of these techniques to its advantage before the untimely death of star Heath Ledger. There are many more questions that circle this limitless mythology of Cloverfield, for example, What is the mysterious new symbol which resembles a sword with a 6 or 9 on it? It might be impossible to discuss every hidden aspect surrounding the film. Cloverfield is an amazing experience, but it stops short unless you pay attention to the happenings in its universe. Special thanks goes out to the folks at CloverfieldClues for keeping us all up to date.

-mAQ

WHY IS HOLLYWOOD "OBSESSED" WITH GARBAGE?

The Hollywood film industry has never been interested in art. They only seem to be interested in social subversion, agitation, blatant degeneracy, arrogant parodies and of course one cannot forget profits. Hollywood has also convinced white girls that it's okay to be a dirty whore and partake in recreational miscegenation. Elia Kazan's film *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) taught teens that if they do not have sex before marriage then they may go insane. Now Hollywood is teaching us that blond haired Aryan women are very "obsessed" with black men.

Hollywood's latest assault on Americans of European descent is a piece of filth called *Obsessed*. In this cinematic shitfest, not only is the deranged white bitch obsessed with a Negro but she puts his life and family in jeopardy. Funny, have any of the clowns that work in Hollywood actually looked at the yearly statistics of black men raping white women? You can be sure that you will never see a film about grotesque and obese Jewish bull dykes that stalk little blond girls. You can also be sure to never see a film about the typical local Negro that targets college freshman for rape yet somehow the worthless multicultural "cops" can never arrest this bestial thug.

Yes, Hollywood is obsessed with its hatred of Western civilization. Hollywood is run by cowardly weaklings who have serious "mommy" issues. The only subjects that Hollywood can treat seriously is the so called holocaust and "minorities" overcoming evil prejudices. It is sad that white America is stupid enough to eat up this sentimental garbage that even the Hollywood producers doubtfully take seriously. If a white woman were to become criminally obsessed with a black man hopefully she will be blessed with AIDS.

After watching the trailer for *Obsessed*, I really wonder if the world is coming to an end. Seriously, how can a society that takes pleasure in watching such garbage ever expect to survive the next century (or next couple of decades)? Had a film like *Obsessed* been released a hundred years ago, you can be guaranteed that all those "talented" people working in Hollywood would be hanging from telephone poles all across Sunset Boulevard. White America has just become too degenerate, valueless, cultureless, and apathetic to care about the blatant anti-white sentiment behind films like *Obsessed*.

A truly beautiful couple with a long future ahead of them

On second thought, maybe white women are becoming dangerous for black men. I am sure everyone has noticed the rise in mulatto children in public over the past couple years. Will whorish white women be responsible for the extermination of the true 100% black race via miscegenation? Are white women conspiring a "silent holocaust" for the black male "victims" of America? I doubt it.

-Ty E

Reviews

THE VIENNA AKTIONISTS COLLECTION
THE VIENNA AKTIONISTS COLLECTION

?? (1970)

In a world where I've seen the most extreme, bizarre, and unkempt acts performed, I always find ways to one up my own expectations. Well, today, I fear that I have reached the end of the line, folks. I present to you, the most foul, erotic, beautiful, and extreme collection of art that I've ever encountered before. So much, that I myself don't know what to make of it upon initial viewing. I keep retracing my steps, questioning my own beliefs and morals.

Call it a video mixtape if you will, created by five Viennese artists of the strictest caliber. Otto Muehl, Gunter Brus, Kurt Kren, Rudolf Schwarzkogler & Otmar Bauer all responded with an outlash of violent art aimed to destroy the very fabric of "Art" which we encountered. Their message was simple; change performance art as we know it and crush simplicity. It's a shame these artists aren't more renowned in this day and age. The collection is based off of visual imagery so allow me to paint a canvas for you. A man has his face tied up while having layer after layer of plaster, goo, slime, and other various liquid solids smeared over his face for an insane amount of time. A time long enough for you to doubt his breathing capabilities. A room full where existential artists gather. One is bottomless while receiving a handjob from random males while a baby's diaper is changed just feet away. Lurid and foul homo-eroticism at its finest. Cut to quick frames of vaginal torture with a flawlessly executed score. 12 inch needles impaled in a females labia. The after result is a malformed vagina which is then drowned in various substances and smacked. A bold statement is then made with the female position in the household as a pathetic female behind backs into a tiny room. The male quickly denies "the only asset in which a woman makes her worth" and continues reading. This same "asset" looks for solace in another man.

Erotic statues of nuclear family's are erected as a mother, while holding a baby, gives a male a handjob while the infant stare inquisitively. Art of this form has only been documented with photos until now. Foul oral tubes leading from ones rectum to own ass are on display with enough body horror to give David Cronenberg nightmares for life. We see the evolution of simple flesh into a form of grainy art Nouveau. Confectionery delights are used to an extreme that surpasses Sweet Movie. Beatings and oral sex with eggs, mass orgies to same sex art pieces, I find my self unable to process this much at any time. Women covered in feces and hyper-editing of disgusting emetophilia and corophila are enacted resulting in a hellish assault on all senses. What Muehl & co. has created is simply an erotic form of transgressive art. Showcasing the body as a canvas in which sexual freedom runs rampant. This often results from extreme fetishism to horrific acts which one cannot help but to find erotic but ashamed. From every fetish you can imagine, The Vienna Aktionists Collection puts the term "aktion" into a

three hour degrading art piece and breathes life into it, creating the most expressive and disgusting form of film I've ever seen. THE VIENNA AKTIONISTS COLLECTION VOLUME 1 on DVD and THE VIENNA AKTIONISTS COLLECTION VOLUME 2 on DVD exclusively at wtfdvds.com

-mAQ

BAT PUSSY
BAT PUSSY

??? (1973) Where can I possibly begin. This film is so incredibly awful that I don't know what to say. 1973 was an eventful year; Nixon decided it was time to reconsider America's place in 'Nam, The Roe v. Wade case empowers women across the globe, and Picasso passed away. Of all the things I'd be most likely to remember about this year, It would be the release of Bat Pussy. Take the adult cast of Roseanne and Married with Children and force them to have awkward 69 scenes. The deficient offspring would be Bat Pussy.

Buddy: "I want HOT pussy on the grill!" That is the kind of dialogue we are treated with. Most pornographic videos tries to build a story with under 10 actual lines, but no, Bat Pussy is 50 goddamn minutes of non-stop child support threatening redneck action. Buddy and Sam are an average American couple, rolling around in their bed complaining about bills and how slutty each other are. There lines are often confused and the sound is cut as the poor cast looks towards the crew for their next lines. My pal Pete told me this film was bad, but I didn't realize a spectrum of film this horrible existed. I have found the 4th dimension of horror and she's called Bat Pussy. You'll know her when her twat twitches. That's when she senses a crime in progress. Such as a couple filming an amateur smut film without her. Buddy: "BATWOMAN!!" Sam: "...it's Bat Pussy" Buddy: "BAT PUSSY!" Buddy has a little problem. He suffers from erectile dysfunction. Not so much a hardcore film as they are just chewing on each others genitalia for 50 minutes screaming at each other, threatening to file for divorce the next day and how big Sam's pussy is. I've never seen a porn where the star stays limp dick the entire duration of the film. It seems to defy physics. Bat Pussy is utterly unwatchable but the replay value is so high. This is a film that exceeds its own limitations, thus becoming a wildly quotable film. I could never recommend a film and warn them at the same time until I saw Bat Pussy. Dora Dildo is the only good looking face in this film and that's not saying much. Watching her tumble on her Hoppity-Hop is too damn hilarious. Bat Pussy is a masterpiece porn spoof of a downright terrible caliber.

-mAQ

BOX BALL

??? (1977)

Box Ball is the living endowment of "anti-porn." To listen closely as a lady with a nasally vocal system describe in vivid and vulgar detail her fantastical experiences involving bringing a lucky male home to twist his "pendulous" balls over and over in the fashion of a rope forming a "grotesticle" anomaly is the true definition of home entertainment terror. Filmed in 1977, Box Ball is one of the better roughies I've been unlucky enough to witness and with this condolence, I give you my short and inebriated thoughts on the subject. Now with calling the film a "better" roughie, I find it necessary to examine the word closer as to get a feeling of pride in knowing you're about to watch a project that only Satan can be proud of. Box Ball is a film that I could ultimately go without seeing ever again but for a man to climax as the horrors of the world are being unleashed on his family jewels is something that needs to be seen to be believed. You will admire painted pastels decorate the film stock along with much needed grain and VHS reproduction tracking errors. This is something of an accidental aesthetic and it actually benefits the case of Box Ball and that case is beyond my, or any man's, comprehension. Only thing I know is that whatever they had in mind to create was successful with the invention of Box Ball - a film that dictates a strict character of monogamy. It's practically blurting out a sermon warning of the dangers of recreational sex. God only knows how many romantic comedies should take after Box Ball, one of the first classics of the genre. For being a porno short, Box Ball is efficient in building up such an aberrant argument against the sexual affliction. Women require the need of diversity. Hence why most of female kind seems to lean towards doggy style and bullish black men. It's this lingering curiosity that leads to the sexual experimentation in Box Ball. Speaking of women's fixation with diversity, that brings to mind the domineering role of a modern day fellatio-giver. Women love to feel in charge, to feel empowered - Hell, most of us do and it's in this similar staple for men to commonly enjoy the thought of power-play (rape). Men enjoy rape fantasies and women have testicle-twisting fantasies. Let's hope the last statement isn't accurate or both sexes are screwed. It's in this similar vein of vice versa squirming lovers experiencing a tipping scale of fetishism that the philosophy of Box Ball occurs. The leading lady loves to twist his testicles tight into a sliver and forcefully lift up his body by noted "organ." This scene in particular is the most arduous scene Box Ball has to offer. For being an archaic look at a masochistic male and sadistic slut, Box Ball is an absorbing film(?) if not for being inclusively fucked up and the antithesis of common placed arousal.

-mAQ

JIGGA JONES
JIGGA JONES

?? (2006)

I normally stray from the temptation of creative film writings while intoxicated. When I watched internet meme Jiggaboo Jones' film Jigga Jones several days ago, I owed it to myself to pick up myself some O.E., slam it back, and write about my racial learnings in the heart of a forged urban environment where the streets can kill you. For the general population who hasn't heard of him, he's an African man parading around in a Jheri curl talkin' bout some bitches and hoes, based solely on his existing fan base. Far from post-blaxploitation, Jigga Jones is a caricature of African's while not quite being pro-White. In this barely feature length film, we follow a first person perspective of a documentation on Jiggaboo Jones. This ex-con has recruited a camera man (ala Man Bites Dog) to film him while he robs, jacks, snatches, flips, twists, and hustles the common man, all for a buck. The original edit of this film would have been made notorious, for it featured around 700 curse words, which would have propelled it into the number one profane film on retail distribution. They didn't, but with this current cut, I learned how to make the "\$1.89" which might be an experiment I myself might partake in.

The "\$1.89" is a weapon for thugs with little to no money, or any dawg that simply loves to cause unexpected destruction. This recipe of death follows this mold. Acquire an empty soda bottle, preferably a dark cola. Spray paint the inside a black color with a couple coats. Purchase a 12 inch metal rod, insert it into the bottle after drilling two holes near the bottom, then fill with cement. As Jiggaboo Jones explains, what you are now equipped with is not only a devastating weapon, but one that disguises its wielder as a soda-loving nigga, that is, until he attacks and unwittingly steals all your cash. Jigga Jones is a short film. One should be advised to not pay full price for this film. While being hilarious, an urban satire, and an all-out attack on the "Definitive" black culture, this is far too short to spend full price on. In comparison, The Dragonball Z "films" that barely clock in at 48 minutes that have you paying up to 17 dollars a piece. Jigga Jones is entertaining and happens to teach you homegrown and sarcastic street smarts. If anyone is stupid enough to reenact anything in this film, they deserve the jail time. This is worth your time if given the chance. Jiggaboo Jones will always be "the #1 nigger in America". Kill Whitey.

-mAQ

KON KIN PLEAD 3

??? (???) WARNING: Animal Cruelty

Judging from the foreboding logo sprawled in red during the introduction to PETA hell, I'd like to assume this is a documentary discussing the horrors of humanity ala Jacopetti's Mondo Cane. Language differences block any and all source of comfort, thus making this film's mixed messages much harder to stomach. You're probably asking yourself, "What the hell is Kon Kin Plead 3?". The answer isn't easy. From a bird's-eye view, my best guess is to call it a documentary of delicacies in the form of wildlife. In between the Pirates of the Caribbean stolen score that appears every so often, the result is a quite tragic piece of film making. Had I known what they were saying, I might have been able to simply dismiss this film as useless but my curiosity overwhelmed me to such a degree, that simply shutting this off wouldn't have sufficed. Remember the infamous turtle evisceration scene in Cannibal Holocaust? Well, Kon Kin Plead 3 is an extended and lost in translation version of that extended to a mind-numbing length of 50 minutes. According to my sources, Kon Kin Plead is a reality show of sorts. One that involves Thai reporters traveling to film their neighbors - the Cambodians - indulge in exotic treats of various forest critters. I'd like to get this out of the way. I love animals. I respect all phylum's and all shapes. Unlike a 16 year old girl and her fear of spiders, I respect all life to a degree. Fear should only be used as a tool of utmost respect anyhow. Watching such widely despised creatures like tarantulas and snakes getting devoured, sometimes while alive, is horridly upsetting to both your principles and your digestive system. I believe I read this film being called a "Crazy Critter Cuisine" somewhere on this wonderful wide web. All this blood-draining is getting to me. It's not that I'm queasy, it's the fact that this film is useless. I may not know what they're saying and that these events are directed towards realism, but the "Arterial spray sound effect" needn't be applied to the throat slitting of a serpent. That's down right low, even for a wannabe mondo film. Kon Kin Plead 3 might have been a culturally fascinating, albeit graphic documentary, had I been reassured that there was a point behind all this savagery.

-mAQ

THE E.T. PORNO
THE E.T. PORNO

???) (???)

When I first heard of an E.T. porno, I was confused and horrified. How could someone take a children's classic family film and convert its basic principles from friendship and adaptation, into getting off in each other's mouth? It seems to be quite simple. During my viewing of E.T., I loathed the film. It's use of horrible thematic elements and lack of any personality left this film as dry as bargain bin beef jerky. E.T. was always asexual to me, if not masculine. This came as a surprise to see E.T. in this porn knock off, with a brown shriveled vagina. So, the pieces of plot that I picked up from the hours of hardcore sex and foreplay were that colonial people loved to have sex, and then E.T. came along. E.T. observed and became fascinated by our copious amount to procreate, minus the fertilization. E.T. decided in order to blend in, She must do the same. So this all boils down to your favorite family's hero sucking colonial reproductive organs. The effects in the film are quite horrible. E.T. is clearly a tall woman with full body makeup. I guess it was to incorporate this without hiring a midget. That might have been too much. The film is quite a miscarriage on screen. It certainly doesn't arouse in any aspect and is only really good for the few laughs and the bragging rights of seeing it. I am glad I watched this, for now every time I think of Spielberg, I think of raunchy sex and cheap Hollywood knock-offs, which is what most of his films consist of, save for Jaws. The only thing I can really hope for is a Schindler's List porno.

-Maq

DANDY DUST

A. Hans Scheirl (1998)

As far as quality films/filmmakers go, very few works by lesbian and transgendered 'ladies' are at the top of my list of important flicks as it seems oftentimes such emotionally and politically-driven works are merely a temporary outlet for the bush-league agitator to 'sass and harass the cis', but not much else, at least where artistic merit is concerned. After all, one would have to be a master of pussy-licking puffery to argue that critically-revered American lesbian films like Rose Troche's *Go Fish* (1994) and Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* (1996) have any sort of aesthetic or artistic assets aside from lipstick lezy g Guinevere Turner's ass. It was not until about a month ago after being introduced to the unyielding low-budget trans-lesbo sci-fi epic entitled *Dandy Dust* (1998), a British-Austrian co-production directed by sexually anomalous Aryan auteur A. Hans Scheirl (now known as 'Angel Hans') that I reconsidered my mostly generous assessment of contemporary dyke directors. Whatever Scheirl's true objective with the film was, *Dandy Dust* feels like the Germanic lipstick mafia equivalent of Shinya Tsukamoto's classic homoerotic Japanese cyberpunk flick *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989), except featuring an aberrant kaleidoscope of colors and an even more incoherent and antagonizing plot. Starring director Scheirl in the title role as 'Dandy Dust' (and he/she certainly has the dandy wardrobe and demeanor to live up to the name), *Dandy Dust* is a decidedly deranged cinematic nachtmahr where sexual perversity – and especially degenerative hermaphroditism – is a norm of the future inter-sexual inter-galaxy. Filmed over a 5 ½ year period using a variety of film formats and techniques, including (but not limited to) Super 8 film stock, black-and-white film stock, early video, stop-motion animation, and digital animation; and eventually blown-up on 16mm for the finished cut, *Dandy Dust* is a carnal collage of meticulously constructed images that potently permeate a certain loopy and many times schizophrenic idiosyncrasy that – for better or for worse – few, if any, other films can claim.

Dandy Dust follows the cosmic cunt-licking journey of Dandy Dust, a "split-personality cyborg of fluid gender" whose memory has been erased, but to its dismay, is randomly reappearing in his/her arenose mind. After crash-landing on the hermaphroditic and inorganic manmade sphere of 3075, Dust who – through a series of real and/or imaginary childhood flashbacks during her upbringing on the Planet of Blood and Swelling (a menstruating matriarchal planet, perhaps?) – comes to realize that he/she was sexually used and abused by her incestuous father who was, in turn, murdered by the guy/gal's Xanthippe mother during a jealous and prepossessed crime of passion. The orgasmic sphere of 3075 features a variety of gaudy and gay characters that include, lesbo-Negro identical twins Mao and Lisa; scientist sistas with an aptness for reanimating phallic-like

DANDY DUST

mummies, surly and sadistic Super-Mother Cyniborg; a ghoulish and (unfortunately) unclothed being obsessed with constructing a heretical hermaphrodite army that includes Dust, and father Sir Sidore; a sexually-repressed yet remarkably decadent 18th century aristocrat with a prudish and pompous persona. Of course, Dandy Dust is such an overwhelming overload of audacious aesthetic debauchery that it is nearly impossible to make any sense of the film's plot, at least upon an initial viewing of the film. Admittedly, it took me a couple tries to actually finish the film due to its tumultuously condensed and compacted cluster of unflattering intersexual nudes, frightful lesbian fetishism, and overall deluge of eclectic seizure-inducing neon polychromasia.

Like the more inaugural films of the silent era (especially, German expressionist works) and the equally masturbatory works of contemporary Canadian auteur Guy Maddin, Dandy Dust is primarily a visual experience that reminds the viewer why that film is a virtually unlimited artistic medium that has been barely explored, at least as far as narrative structure (or lack thereof) and the mise-en-scène is concerned. Although a low-budget effort shot in a quasi-dilettantish and embarrassingly intimate manner not unlike James Bidgood's *Pink Narcissus* (1971), David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), and E. Elias Merhige's *Begotten* (1990), Dandy Dust, like the previously mentioned films, is a flick that venturesomely pushed the envelope of filmmaking, thus making its paraded status is a work of 'Queer cinema' of only secondary and circumstantial importance. As a result, the film will be ultimately more appealing and rewarding to ardent cinephiles than the confused teenage tomgirl who just got her first taste of her friend's meat-curtain. Like any meritorious work of art, Dandy Dust is a candid and uncompromising – if non compos mentis – expression of the filmmaker; a dignified quality that few modern celluloid works strive for, let alone possess.

-Ty E

UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

Aaeon Aites, Audrey Ewell (2008)

Norwegian black metal holds a special place in my heart and by that I do not merely mean the music (but mainly the spirit). Growing up watching MTV during my elementary school years, I soon became disillusioned by the messages of peace and tolerance promoted by the majority of white artists I was exposed to. After all, all the Negro “musicians” promoted violence and the will to power (albeit, in a way I could never relate to). For me, it was simply a question of, “Why are all white musicians a bunch of pussy hippies?!” Of course, I grew older and discovered aggressive music on my own but it was not until I discovered black metal that I realized the power (for better or for worst) a music scene could have. I was first exposed to black metal after watching Harmony Korine’s *Gummo* about 7 years ago, a cinematic experience that changed my life in more than one way (the discovery of black metal being one of those ways). I soon realized black metal was an expression of an atavistic reawakening in the Nordic countries, the European dream that German Friedrich Nietzsche had hoped for, only on a much smaller (and somewhat degenerate) scale.

The black metal musicians have done much more than most people that simply describe themselves as “musicians.” They burned down churches, murdered homosexuals, committed suicide and even murdered each other. The little Jewish auteur from Tennessee, Harmony Korine, even stated that the black metal musicians killed their Messiah. As a tribute to black metal musicians and their neo-heathen imagery, Korine even exhibited his photography project *The Sigil of the Cloven Hoof Marks Thy Path* whilst tap-dancing in black-metal-face. Korine’s project can be seen in the 2009 documentary on the history of Norwegian black metal *Until the Light Takes Us*. Surely, the greatest and most innovative musician involved with black metal is Varg “Count Grishnackh” Vikernes. Varg is best known for his musical outfit *Burzum* as well as the killing of his musical rival Euronymous, the man Harmony Korine named the messiah of black metal. The documentary *Until the Light Takes Us* helps to separate the facts and myths surrounding black metal culture.

Aside from the killings and church burnings, the only other thing most people associate black metal with is Satanism. Of course, the media was behind associating black metal with Satanism as Varg Vikernes makes clear in *Until the Light Takes Us*. The real motivation behind the anti-Christian sentiment associated with black metal is the reawakening of the pre-Christian Nordic soul. As explained by Varg and various other musicians in the documentary, black metal musicians hate Christianity due to the fact that the Christians destroyed their original cultures and replaced it with the religion of Christ. Not only do the black metal musicians despise Christ but they also hate egalitarian globalism and how it is being spread like cancer in a similar manner they feel Christianity

UNTIL THE LIGHT TAKES US

was, destroying what is organically theirs and replacing it with “peaceful” universal internationalism. In *Until the Light Takes Us*, Varg Vikernes describes how as a child, when he saw a McDonalds fast food restaurant built in his town, his immediate reaction was to shoot it with a rifle with his comrades. In fact, Varg and his fellow musicians, although taught lies of equality growing up, felt with their truest instincts that globalization was wrong, hence reacting to it in the most violent manner, whether it was by creating raw black metal or catching a church on fire.

Varg in prison

The black metal musician Fenriz sums up the Norwegian soul as one of extreme individualism and isolation. Surely, the modern internationalized world is causing dissonance in the Northern soul with third world immigrants (who are generally collectivist races that lack individualism) flooding into first world nations. As the world gets more globalized and even more groups of people that have nothing in common (both culturally and racially) are cramped together, one can most certainly expect much more violent and powerful resistances to internationalism in the future, for black metal is only the beginning. Since the events discussed in *Until the Light Takes Us* happened sometime ago, the documentary mainly acts as a reflection of the black metal movement during the early days of a globalized Norway. Recently, Varg Vikernes has even described metal culture as “Nigger Culture” and is now mainly involved with creating dark ambient synthesizer-based (something he has always experimented with) and folkish music, as well as writing books on Heathenism.

The best source for the history of black metal is the book *Lords of Chaos* written by Michael Moynihan (with the help of Norwegian Didrik Söderlind). Much like the documentary *Until the Light Takes Us*, *Lords of Chaos* is fairly objectively done, allowing for the main creators of black metal to tell their own stories. I had already read the book before watching the documentary *Until the Light Takes Us* so I didn't really learn anything new by watching it (but at the very least, I was once again treated to the fantastic aesthetic package of black metal). Apparently, Japanese auteur Sion Sono (*Suicide Club*, *Strange Circus*) will be directing a film based on *Lords of Chaos*. For now, treat yourself to *Until the Light Takes Us*.

-Ty E

OMEGA SHELL

Aarón Soto (2001)

Deemed a "Cyberpunk Spaghetti Western", this film is directed by "newbie" Aaron Soto. The entrance of the film picks up strong, conspiring to grasp our deep attention with an intro that could only be imagined and performed by an experimental band like Fantômas mixed with the influences of early Tsukamoto. The beginning of the actual film takes a boring turn as a dirty Mexican is wrapped up with VHS tape. Perhaps a metaphor that this "underground classic" is the death of modern film as we know it? He eats rocks, digs holes, and trips around a vast nothingness in Tijuana. The surrealism is forced and bland. Hyper-edited to try and keep your attention. This is one film that doesn't know what it is. At first, our subject is clumsy and inanimate posture, shuffling across the desert. Next he is ghetto-rigging some sort of machine in a vain attempt at making a cyberpunk film. The visuals are mostly there, but this short lacks heart and a discernible story line. This isn't a film like *Begotten* in which you can deeply admire the pretentious thoughts surrounding the film, it's more like "Wow. I like what they are aiming for, but there is nothing really here for me to like besides a couple of interesting scenes." And that is the fault. Interesting does not mean good. Such a statement could be frowned upon, but in case of this short, the victor is obvious. Where *Tetsuo* amazed with its amazing visuals, the protagonist of this story looks like Luis Guzmán just crawled out of a chimney.

Along his pointless journey to nowhere, Tapeman meets a chemo patient who hands him a tablet/book thing with something scribbled on it. World Surrealism seems to be long but dead. Every other film to come out of the avant-garde genre is a mock-up of *Tetsuo*. Goddamn, these directors need to get a new influence. Soon the film ends, and you feel suicidal for putting up with the semi-hyped garbage. There is no mistake that somewhere out there, someone must love this film for what it is- Pointless. I mean, isn't that why people watch "B movies"? I'm a fan of all things cinema, be it romantic comedies to blaxploitation to even extreme nihilistic horror's. One thing that jerks my chain is film that exercises its ever-so-noticeable right to be annoyingly cryptic. So, the plot is meant to be a future-laden desperado with some phallic apparatus. Not only did he fail on mentioning that at all, but he also failed in his attempt to enthrall his viewers with the promise of fetching mysticism similar to *El Topo*. Suffice to say, his other films show a great increase in promise. Move along, Nothing to see here.

-mAQ

RHINOCEROS EYES
RHINOCEROS EYES

Aaron Woodley* (2004)

Aaron Woodley's career in film no doubt has been pampered by his uncle, who you may know, David Cronenberg. After making several short films, Woodley jumped into his feature debut with *Rhinoceros Eyes*, yet another shell in which Michael Pitt struts his god-given eccentricity as horn-rimmed bespectacled liberal arts ladies coo in unison. In *Rhinoceros Eyes*, the mystery and wonder behind the title is soon revealed as nothing more than a manipulating wench puppet play. Pitt stars as Chep, an introverted autistic prop assistant who resides in the very prop house that he commits his daily activities to. After being confronted by a woman whose artistic integrity leads her to this very same prop house in hopes for authentic rhinoceros eyes, Chep's debilitating mental illness leads him to reach into pockets of excess he was unaware of in order to do anything to aid his confused obsession. Several comparisons can be drawn from *Rhinoceros Eyes* and Bertolucci's *The Dreamers*. Not only does Michael Pitt express his love for cinema in both films but he is equally as mentally deficient in the roles of Chep and Matthew. At least in *Rhinoceros Eyes* Pitt didn't shame me by having his pants removed while Bertolucci gawks at his flaccid member.

Being the nephew to David Cronenberg does not entitle you with a hereditary disposition towards crown cinema. Woodley needs to realize this and any fan that is endeared to this film as well. *Rhinoceros Eyes* isn't a good film in any regards. I was able to finish it but this alone does not certify as entertainment. *Rhinoceros Eyes* consists of two "realities". The first is the dark, pain, dark lifestyle that Michael Pitt lives and expects you to conform to being interested in. The second is his strange hallucinations of various trinkets taking animation and forming into patchwork reflections of his very own image. Hardly inspired by the stop-motion greats, these scenes will leave you groaning, more so than the faux-sentimentality at work in what must be Michael Pitt's worst role. Gondry's *Science of Sleep* did this infinitely better than *Rhinoceros Eyes* flails to achieve. If *Rhinoceros Eyes* succeeds in any aspect, it's making romance tasteless and tame yet again. Soon after acquiring the rhinoceros eyes, the woman begins milking the retard for more elaborate pieces for their art film: a memorable prop being an Irish carved prosthetic arm, who Chet's neighbor coincidentally owns and beats her husband with every night.

What is accomplished within Woodley's debut is creating something with the intentions of being a film, but plagued by every possible nuisance of modern filmmaking, an aesthetic in drought, intellectually void, plot inconsistencies, and an ending involving a decision that should have been made from the start, rendering the later half of the film null. If you have a significant other that favors films such as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* then *Rhinoceros Eyes* might be the perfect film to delude respect towards in exchange for late night sex. Guilty

of more than one crime, Rhinoceros Eyes also shares some strange similarities with Donnie Darko, released 2 years prior. Same stigma as most pretentious cinema that reaches out to vulnerable females susceptible to romance, Rhinoceros Eyes is hollow cinema, driven only to conceptualize an ending that Woodley thought was "sick" or "awesome". To be forward, the ending was the only bright side of this piece of film, in fact, watching Michael Pitt withstand a remarkable amount of pain was oddly the most satisfying thing I'd recently viewed. But it's all in vain, Rhinoceros Eyes still remains one of the worst films I've struggled through.

-mAQ

9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY
9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY

Abel Ferrara (1976)

Since he is a supposed crackhead (or as Vincent Gallo once noted, “Abel Ferrara was on so much crack when I did *THE FUNERAL*, he was never on set. He was in my room trying to pick-pocket me.”) who has directed some of the most unwaveringly sleazy works of celluloid art-trash to slither out of the busted bowels of NYC, it should be no surprise that the McGuido auteur Abel Ferrara (Ms. 45, *Bad Lieutenant*) started his filmmaking career in pornography, with his first feature being the incest-themed blue movie *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* (1976). Indeed, Ferrara certainly went ‘all the way’ with his first feature film, as the somewhat strange fuck flick not only features the director’s then-girlfriend getting boned by other people, but the director himself being cinematically debased (though many reviewers assume Ferrara hired a cock-double for his scenes, the filmmaker revealed in his obscure 2010 documentary *Mulberry St.* that he bravely used his own member for the scenes, thus demonstrating his unwavering ‘commitment’ as a true, if not seemingly terribly troubled, auteurist filmmaker). As Italian actress-turned-auteur Asia Argento, who starred in Ferrara’s little mess of a movie *New Rose Hotel* (1998), stated in 2001 regarding her colleague, “Mr. Ferrara will not speak about his porn film. He says that now he has two daughters and that’s why he will not allow it to be re-released or talk about in interviews,” yet since then, the director has discussed the film, even complaining about the experience of making the film in a 2010 interview with the *Guardian*, “It’s bad enough paying a guy \$200 to fuck your girlfriend, then he can’t get it up.” In fact, Ferrara had mentioned *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* in interviews long before 2010 because, as noted by biographer Brad Steven in his work *Abel Ferrara: The Moral Vision* (2004), the director told a French journalist in 1988 who asked whether or not the film was a thriller, “Some episodes were sort of like something you’d find in a thriller, but otherwise it was rather an erotic movie. It was my first feature, one of the first things I shot in 35mm. It was a sexy portmanteau drama about three or four women we knew, their sexual adventures. It consisted of seven episodes, ten minutes each.” David Pirell, who played the cold husband of the main character of the film, speculated that *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy*, “was a way of raising funds to do *The Driller Killer*. That movie (in my opinion) had redeeming social value, although it was basically a grade B porno. It was filmed during Fall 1975. We had a great time making it, because we were all beginning our careers and had been friends for many years. Abel was a good and unique director. I remember the film opening at a theatre in the city: everyone attended this screening and laughed at how stupid this movie was, but we believed it would lead to better things. We all learned a lot about the film process, and I learned what I did not want to do.” Originally made under the working titles ‘*White Women*’ and ‘*Nothing Sacred*’, *9 Lives of a Wet*

Pussy is somewhat in the spirit of the semi-artsy/quasi-narrative-driven works of auteur-pornographers Armand Weston (*The Defiance of Good, Take Off*) and Cecil Howard (*Neon Nights, Scoundrels*), albeit somewhat more degenerate and incoherent. Indeed, featuring Abel Ferrara in a scene where he plays a deeply religious old Polack man (he was 25 at the time!) whose daughters take turns raping him after he gets too drunk on wine, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* features a debauched mix of daughter-on-father incest, lesbo miscegenation and lily-licking of the black blue blood sort, superficial occult themes (including dubious tarot card readings and Nigerian 'black' magic), and aesthetically vulgar 1970s hairdos (sometimes it is hard to tell if it is a man or woman that is giving a blowjob), *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* is by no means a lost masterpiece from a great American auteur, but simply evidence that proves Abel Ferrara has always been an 'exploitation' filmmaker with a wayward moral compass.

Beginning with close-up shots of a negress massaging oily white tits and a high yellow chick sucking on a white cock, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* at first seems like another miserable miscegenation porn movie, but things change quite quickly after the title screen disappears, at least temporarily. Narrated and presented by a hippie-like chick named 'Gypsy' (Dominique Santos), who reads out letters written to her by her former lesbian lover Pauline (Pauline LaMonde), *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* is a curiously convoluted tale of compulsive carpet-munching, anticlimactic cumshots, and rather tedious tarot readings. As Pauline confesses in a letter to Gypsy, she is cheating on her husband David (David Pirell) with a French stable boy (Shaker Lewis), stating of the erotic experience, "oh god, how I love it when he cums and cums... Oh Gypsy, you must really learn to love men again." As Gypsy states to the viewer after reading Pauline's letter, "Learn to love men again? That's Pauline. She does nothing but have intercourse all day long. Then she writes letters about it as if I might be interested." Indeed, while reasonably beautiful, Gypsy is a devout dyke and has nil interest in men. Instead, Gypsy spends her days all by her lonesome playing with her kitty cat and tarots cards in the hope that Pauline will one day come back to her so they can rekindle their 'cunning linguist' games. After smoking opium from an exotic peace pipe, Gypsy reads a letter from Pauline where she complains regarding her hubby, "Oh we still make love together when he's not snorting coke with Rachel or balling his mistresses and boyfriends," adding regarding the dubious status of their relationship, "But this cold detachment of his, which derives me wild when we are in bed, makes the rest of my life unbearable." Indeed, while taking a leak at a gas station bathroom, Pauline decides to counteract her husband's 'cold detachment' by having sex with a random stranger. Reading tarot cards in a supposed 'Hungarian fashion,' Gypsy also describes how savage salaciousness is in Pauline's blood, remarking, "I know Pauline, she has her grandmother's soul. They even say she has her grandmother's face. You see, Pauline's great-grandfather and two daughters came to America in 1903 from Poland. Pauline's

9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY

great-grandfather was a very strict Christian. He was really overprotective with the two girls. When the old man would go out to work, he would lock them up in the apartment. The only time they could leave the house was under his chaperon. Life was pretty lonely and...the older they got, the more curious they became." Indeed, Pauline's great-grandfather (played by auteur Abel Ferrara, who sports a rather unbelievable grey wig) was sexually ravaged by his own two daughters after he had too much holy wine to drink. Gypsy then goes on to complain about how Pauline had a steamy love affair with a virginal Nigerian princess named Nacala (Joy Silver) and how she "was afraid of that black bitch" and her double black magic. In one of the more would-be-depraved scenes of the film in what is a less than dreamy dream sequence, Gypsy morphs into a man (of course, this is not actually depicted in the film) and literally begins biting Pauline's beaver. In the end, Pauline somehow 'magically' appears at Gypsy's apartment. After getting all pseudo-philosophical and stoically stating, "There is no reality except human reality," Gypsy walks over to Pauline's naked body and states, "Sister, I have been waiting...It has been lonely and dark for me here since you left."

While I was hoping *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* would be a wanton lost masterpiece, it ultimately proved to be one of Abel Ferrara's worst cinematic efforts to date. While it attempts to tell a sordid story in an experimental way, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* ultimately seems like a haphazardly constructed collection of banal fuck scenes that Ferrara attempted to piece together with a Sapphic pseudo-occult storyline. Indeed, when everything is said and done, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* is nothing more than a botched celluloid orgasm with a rather misleading title that, with the exception of sexual degeneracy and cheap exploitation, gives little, if any, indication of what sort of filmmaker Ferrara would evolve into. Of course, as musical composer Joe Delia, who would go on to write music for most of Ferrara's films, revealed regarding the film, "it was never anyone's intention to make an intellectual statement with this production. I always had the feeling that it was a means to get to the next level, which was to get another film made." As early Ferrara collaborator Douglas Merov would also insightfully reveal, "The only reason Abel made *9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY* was because that's the only kind of film he could get money for. Arthur Weisberg, an old porno producer from Detroit, gave him the money. Why he's not credited, who knows? Tax reasons, maybe. Arthur was a character, boy – a truly tough, no-nonsense Jew [...] I saw the film and laughed my ass off at the sight of my friends in powdered wigs and beards showing their private parts for all the perverts in the world to see." Indeed, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* is nothing short of an abject embarrassment, so it should be no surprise that Ferrara tends to tell people that his arthouse-slasher flick *The Driller Killer* (1979) was his first film, though the director apparently told Brad Stevens, "I'm not ashamed of having made a porn film, but if I hadn't directed anything except *9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY*, you wouldn't be writing a book about me." A work that

ranks below Stanley Kubrick's *Fear and Desire* (1953) and John Waters' *Mondo Trasho* (1969) in terms of embarrassing first features, *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* is ultimately a potent reminder of what can happen when you get involved with Jewish pornographers.

-Ty E

THE DRILLER KILLER
THE DRILLER KILLER

Abel Ferrara (1979)

I do not know when NYC-based auteur Abel Ferrara (*Bad Lieutenant*, 4:44 *Last Day on Earth*) became a full-fledged crackhead, but he certainly seemed like he was smoking rocks at the time he directed and starred in his first 'official' film *The Driller Killer* (1979), even though the film pre-dates the crack epidemic of the mid-1980s. Indeed, while Ferrara had the opportunity to use 35mm film stock for his rather disappointing porn flick *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* (1976), he shot his quasi-arthouse slasher flick *The Driller Killer* on cheap 16mm film stock, which would prove to only further accentuate the film's already glaring grittiness and sometimes *cinéma vérité*-like feel, especially during scenes featuring deranged dipsomaniac bums regurgitating on shitty city street corners. Admittedly, when I first saw *The Driller Killer* about a decade or so ago, I thought it was a plodding pile of totally forgettable homeless vomit (and, indeed, the film has its fair share of wino bile), yet as a fan of a number of Ferrara's films, I felt it was about time I give the film another chance, especially after watching *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* and seeing for myself why the director wanted to distance himself from his first unofficial film. A sort of superlatively sordid and sleazy yet suavely stylized work of unhinged aesthetic wickedness set in an urban post-industrial wasteland that seems like a cross between Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982) as directed by a crack addicted Paul Morrissey with an affinity for the killer kaleidoscopic cinematic works of great Guido horror masters like Mario Bava and Dario Argento, *The Driller Killer* is offensive simply due to the fact that it is an artsy slasher flick that uses blood the same way porn flicks use cum shots and Picasso used paint. Additionally, Ferrara seems so innately irrational, hysterical, and hopped up on who knows what during his performance in the film that it seems virtually unthinkable that he was actually responsible for directing the work, but then again, *The Driller Killer* also has a sometimes punk rock documentary-like vibe, as if it was made over a couple weekends at the director's favorite party spots and friends' homes. Despite being a bottom-of-the-barrel avant-garde exploitation flick that seems to have influenced lesser NYC filmmakers of the 'no wave' and Cinema of Transgression movements, *The Driller Killer* was labeled a 'video nasty' and banned in the UK, with Mike Bor—the pansy Principal Examiner at the British Board of Film Classification—stating of the film, "The Driller Killer was almost single-handedly responsible for the Video Recordings Act 1984." A vehemently vile piece of 'vigilante' anti-justice about a mentally perturbed painter who goes around wasting winos with a cordless electric drill, *The Driller Killer* is an aesthetically and thematically reckless work of low-class celluloid nihilism with the sort of gutter trash cultivation that only an old school street rat like Abel Ferrara is capable of. Although mere speculation on my part, I have to assume that

The Driller Killer is a semi-autobiographical work directed by a struggling artist about a struggling artist, as what can be seen as Ferrara's excrement-ridden equivalent to David Lynch's masterpiece *Eraserhead* (1977). Filmed in NYC's little Italy by Martin Scorsese's half-Irish tweaker bastard son, *The Driller Killer*—a work that was hilariously, 'Dedicated To The People of New York – "The City of Hope"'—is, if nothing else, a tastelessly charming, celluloid cultural artifact that is mandatory viewing for anyone who thinks Andy Milligan's *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973) features one of the most important and honest historical depictions of the rotten Big Apple.

Erratic social retard and loser loudmouth Reno Miller (played by Abel Ferrara under the pseudonym 'Jimmy Laine'), who looks sort of like a Jewish crackhead version of Mick Jagger, is a down-and-out degenerate painter who gets quite a shock when he enters a fancy Catholic Church and an old 'Father-Christ' figure grabs his hand, as if he knows the young artist is about to become a portable-drill-wielding psycho killer. When Reno's girlfriend Carol (Carolyn Marz) asks him who the old man at the church was, the painter eloquently replies, "Who knows, some fucking degenerate bum wino." Reno lives in a dilapidated Union Square apartment with his girlfriend Carol and her 'punk pixie' lesbo lover Pamela (Baybi Day) and they cannot afford to pay the rent nor phone bill. To top everything off, Reno hates the fact that his area is infested with perennially barfing, beer-binging bums who have little respect for civilization, let alone bathing. In the hope of getting money to pay his bills, Reno conspires to get a \$500 advance from a flaming fag art dealer named Dalton Briggs (Harry Schultz II) in regard to a giant surreal buffalo painting (Ferrara claims this painting is now in the National Gallery in Washington D.C.) he is putting his finishing touches on, but he is snidely turned down by the pretentious degenerate art queen. When Reno's girlfriend complains that he should finish the painting now so they can get money to pay the bills, the exceedingly emotionally erratic artist flips out and screams at his best beloved, "Since when did you become such an expert on painting?! I mean, you're telling me its finished? [...] You know nothing about painting, man. You know what you know about? You know how to bitch, and how to eat, and how to bitch and how to shit and how to bitch, but you don't know nothing about painting, so you don't know when its gonna be done." To make matters worse, a no-talent punk band in the spirit of the New York Dolls/Television that is fronted by a narcissistic mascara-wearing wop named 'Tony Coca-Cola' (D.A. Metrov) has just moved into Reno's apartment building and they practice until 2am when the painter is trying in vain to concentrate on his work. After seeing a commercial for a Porto-Pak wireless electric drill and finding temporary solace in playing with the flayed corpse of a mutilated bunny rabbit (which resembles the skinned bunny from Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965), as well as the mutant baby from Lynch's *Eraserhead*), Reno comes up with the bright idea to let off some steam by killing the bums that have been

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stinking up his neighborhood. Indeed, as an artist, Reno is a visionary and a creator and opts for taking it upon himself to create a new world that is free of parasitic subhuman rabble, but the problem is that he loses control and starts killing off more people than just bums.

As *The Driller Killer* progresses into deranging aesthetic debauchery and angst-ridden antihero Reno suffers a number of schizophrenic hallucinations and nasty nightmares, the quasi-psychosexually insane social reject begins perniciously penetrating bums and drunks via his trusty portable driller. Indeed, Reno drives his wacky weapon of choice into winos as if he is literally fucking their brains and guts out, even approaching one unsuspecting bum from behind as if he is bugging him. When Reno finally decides to kill pretentious art fag Dalton after he describes his finished buffalo painting as follows, "... this isn't right...this is nothing...this is SHIT. Where is the impact, it is just a god damn buffalo. This is nothing like your other works...this is far from your best stuff and the size can't hide it. Reno, the worst thing that can happen to a painter is happening to you...You are becoming simply a technician. There's nothing there...there's no feeling, there's no drama, there's no passion," he gets all ritualistic and sexually confused and makes sure to put on some pink lipstick and mascara before literally 'sticking it' to the anally retentive sodomite. Indeed, Reno even seduces Dalton over the phone before the killer climax by making it seem as if the two are going to make love, but the only penetration the art dealer receives is with a state-of-the-art consume grade electric drill. Meanwhile, after a series of nasty fights with his girlfriend Carol and various failed attempts at reconciliation (Reno paints her a childish painting with the words 'I Am Sorry' written on it), Reno finds himself without a girlfriend, so he kills his little lady's lily-licking lover Pamela and plots his revenge. Carol has gotten back with her estranged husband Stephen (Richard Howorth), so Reno pays a visit to the two at their apartment. After killing Stephen, Reno sneaks into the couple's bed and waits for Carol to arrive. Ultimately, *The Driller Killer* ends with Carol getting in bed and romantically whispering, "Stephen... come here" to what she assumes is her husband, not realizing her reject artist ex-boyfriend Reno is laying in the bed with his trusty drill.

More 'art-addled' than Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* and too gory and ultra-violent to appease the passive appetites of Francophile cinephiles who religiously masturbate to the cover art of the latest Criterion Collection release, *The Driller Killer* really is a film without an audience that was directed by a man who is not pretentious nor phony enough to market his films for art galley poofs and pansies, thus making it all the more significant that an art fag is brutally slaughtered in the film. Aside from possibly his philosophical 'postmodern' vampire flick *The Addiction* (1995), *The Driller Killer* is easily Ferrara's most arthouse oriented work to date, yet it is the sort of aberrant arthouse work that could only have been shit out by a decidedly degenerate low-life from NYC, hence

the film's greatest appeal as a rude and morally unredeeming window into an American metropolitan maniac microcosm where all hope has been flushed into the sewer and where discriminatory homicide seems like the only reasonable answer. Indeed, *The Driller Killer* is not the Jewish bourgeois intellectual New York City of Woody Allen and half-Heeb hipster Lena Dunham, but the visceral and violent racially/culturally mongrelized McWop Catholic quasi-human cesspool of committed crackhead Abel Ferrara where municipal mental illness, mayhem, and murder are just as important cultural ingredients as pizza, crucifixes, and crack rocks. Forget the posturing moral righteousness of Slavic-Tatar Charles Bronson in *Death Wish* (1974), *The Driller Killer* is real and unadulterated depiction of what vicious vigilante dreams are made of. Like George A. Romero's hit midnight movie *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *The Driller Killer* would fall into the public domain due to some lawyer's negligence, but if you have the opportunity, try to track down the French DVD release of the film featuring an audio commentary track from Abel Ferrara where the auteur gives a discernibly stoned recap of the film and hilariously mocks his own work, as if it is no more culturally significant than an antique ashtray. A true piece of American proletarian art without tradition or cultivation, *The Driller Killer* is a positively potent sub-avant-garde expression of the fact that American history, even that of a multicultural hellhole like New Amsterdam, was forged in blood, and oftentimes nonsensically so, as the troubled history of the Big Apple demonstrates.

-Ty E

Ms. 45

Ms. 45

Abel Ferrara (1981)

Ms. 45 is a revenge masterpiece directed by former pornographer (Nine Lives of a Wet Pussy) and Italian-American Abel Ferrara. The film's female lead is the tragically beautiful baby faced mute Thana (played by Zoë Tamerlis Lund) as a woman out for revenge against all men. Thana is a seamstress that is brutally raped in the typically degenerate human Zoo of New York City. After the rape, she enters her apartment and is raped yet again by a burglar. This time around Thana fights back and wastes the killer by beating him with an Iron. The brutal attacks transform this young woman into something completely different. Thana becomes a feminist in a very real sense. Like many Feminists were, she is a victim of male brutality. Feminists are from normal people as the "theory" of Feminism is a Lesbian one. Every Feminist that I have had the misfortune of meeting, had some very serious issues and a special place for young ladies. They expect the world to conform to their social abstraction, thus destroying the nuclear family in the process. The "god playing" Rockefeller foundation funded their subversive cause also known as "The Woman's Liberation" movement. Feminism, like the killer Thana, is social abstraction at the most brutal low. Thana has made all males her enemies and all females her allies (even ones attempting to kill her). She is incapable of feeling any type of empathy for the opposite sex. The irony being, that as a male viewer, I felt completely heartbroken by her character. A tragic beautiful woman that can no longer function in society is not the most heartwarming thing to see. It becomes clear from the beginning that Thana's "transformation" has essentially ended her life in the normal sense. Ms. 45 is truly a film of nihilistic horrors. Actress Zoë Tamerlis Lund would later go on to co-write the script for psycho, drug-addict cop flick Bad Lieutenant with Abel Ferrara. Like her character in Bad Lieutenant, Zoë Tamerlis Lund had a problem with needles and later transferred that horrible vice to cocaine. She died of a heart attack resulting from a Cocaine overdose in 1997. I believe that the "acting" Zoë Tamerlis Lund does in Ms. 45 is more real than one wants to believe. After watching Ms. 45 for the first time, I can easily say that it is the greatest American female revenge film.

-Ty E

CHINA GIRL

Abel Ferrara (1987)

I have always had a soft spot for Italian-Americans (or more specifically Sicilian-Americans). One of my best friends growing up was a Sicilian-American who had a natural knack for subversion, crime, lying, and the best fucked up ideas ever. By the age of 5 years old he was already a ladies man smooth talking young blond girls like a natural. After I saw Abel Ferrara's film *China Girl* I couldn't help but think of my childhood friend. Unlike the lead Tony in the film, my Sicilian friend was far from sweet. My friend was more like that older Sicilian-Americans in *China Girl* that waste Chinks for sport.

China Girl is quite the unconventional "Romeo and Juliet" style story. Nowadays there are plenty of interracial films where a white whore wants to screw a Negro or Latino for recreational fun. I don't think there is, however, another film about a forbidden love between an Italian boy and Chinese girl. One could say that this odd relationship is even a bit heartwarming. Amongst the hatred of rival racial gangs, these two abstractions find love in the most unconventional of places. One also can't help but enjoy seeing Italians and Chinese guys kicking each others asses. *China Girl* is one of Abel Ferrara's more "Hollywood" style films. Still, the film has a good balance between Ferrara's signature gritty urban style and studio production values. I must admit that *China Girl* is a much better film than Ferrara's infamous film *Driller Killer*. I also found *China Girl* to be fairly modern despite being over twenty years old. With the progressing influence of hostile third world "immigrants," city racial tensions are on a rise. I only wish other directors would make films featuring realistic fights between rivaling minorities.

With the unconventional and dangerous relationship in *China Girl*, one can usually only expect tragic results. Despite the drama, *China Girl* is still a film about the strength of the "human spirit (or something like that)." Spike Lee's film *Jungle Fever* was a film featuring an Italian woman and black man that "hook up." Despite the film being unintentionally funny, the film lacked any type of "soul." Maybe Spike Lee should treat Abel Ferrara to a basketball game and Ferrara might give him some directing tips.

-Ty E

KING OF NEW YORK
KING OF NEW YORK

Abel Ferrara (1990)

Watching films directed by some of New York City's finest auteur filmmakers, I get the feeling that many of these directors, to quote anti-hero Travis Bickle of *Taxi Driver* (1976), would like to live to see the day when "a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets," but in an absolutely abject area of cultural and racial chaos where the only thing that people have in common is their propensity for fucking everyone and anyone over just to grab a couple extra shekles, one can only guess who would have the moral and testicular fortitude and selflessness to give the miserable apocalyptic metropolis a nice cleansing via figurative acid rain. It seems that delightfully deranged mick-wop auteur Abel Ferrara (*Bad Lieutenant*, 4:44 - *Last Day on Earth*)—a man that undoubtedly owes his unhinged worldview and gritty aesthetic to his home city—has it in his mind that a white race-mixing drug lord with an all-Negro criminal outfit of fiercely fresh gangstas would be the valiant postmodern knight in shining black-and-white armor to clean up the mean streets of its most corrupt criminals and cops and give some of the drug-money profits to the meek, or at least one would assume so after see what is probably the director's most popular cinematic work, *King of New York* (1990), a contemporary update of the Robin Hood legend that reminds viewers why America is the foremost promoter of racial Armageddon and savage moral retardation. Like a speed-addled exploitation flick on steroids directed by a patently paranoid crackhead megalomaniac who came to a half-baked epiphany to solve all the problems of the rotten Big Apple after a lonely and otherworldly night on an angel dust high, *King of New York* has a pair of big yet busted celluloid testicles that could only have been conjured up by a chemically-influenced mad man with little concern for his health and reputation. A work so offensive to the morals of the seemingly amoral in the mainstream movie world that it inspired a number of audience members, including Abel Ferrara's own wife, to walk out of its premiere at the New York Film Festival, *King of New York* is a perversely potent piece of totally uncompromising and suavely stylized celluloid sadism disguised as saintly street justice that, unlike more popular gangster flicks *Scarface* (1983), *GoodFellas* (1990), *Carlito's Way* (1993), and *The Departed* (2006), does not give a shit about appealing to anyone aside from the director himself. That being said, as far as I am concerned, when it comes to uncompromising semi-mainstream auteur filmmakers, Abel Ferrara is the 'King of New York,' even if he has released a number of tedious celluloid turds since the release of *King of New York*, which probably largely has to do with the fact they he severed his longtime artistic relationship with screenwriter Nicholas St. John (*Ms. 45*, *The Funeral*) about half a decade after completing his modern day mafioso masterpiece. Starring Christopher Walken in one of his most iconic gangster roles and Laurence Fishburne in one of his most naughty

Negro roles, *King of New York* features some of Hollywood's best crime actors at their most lovably scummy.

Big time drug lord and classy classless glorified wigger Frank White (Christopher Walken) has spent half his life in prison and has just been released from Sing Sing and, quite naturally, he is determined to reign as both the king of the underworld and social justice, at least in his warped sort of unpredictable anti-hero way. A man who is extremely bitter because he has lost a lot of time due to his imprisonment, Frank wastes not a single second of time exterminating the criminal competition and on his first night out of the pen, he has his crucial killer crew slaughter a big-time Colombian drug dealer named Emilio El Zapa and his compatriot King Tito and steals their cocaine during a decidedly dirty drug deal that leaves a hotel room covered in a bloody mess of maimed and murdered Mestizos. Not long after, Frank gets a 'welcoming home' visit from his all-black criminal entourage, including a court jester sort of jigaboo named Jimmy Jump (Laurence Fishburne) and a nefarious nerd named Test Tube (Steve Buscemi), who warmly congratulate him on his release and give him a welcome-back present of Colombian coke. Frank wants to be the major of NYC and discusses his seemingly unlikely plans with his two corrupt lawyers, mulatto Puerto Rican Joey Dalesio (Paul Calderón, who also co-wrote Abel Ferrara's 1992 masterpiece of misanthropy *Bad Lieutenant*) and Nordic blonde babe Jennifer (Janet Julian). Dalesio is told by his boss to go to Little Italy to set up a meeting with mafia boss Arty Clay (Frank Gio) about running for mayor, but the anti-miscegenation Mafioso states, "I don't talk to nigger lovers" and literally pisses on the part-black lawyer's shoes as a message to his negrophiliac employer, so Frank comes by and unloads an absurd amount of rounds on the racist crime leader, thus making him a major enemy among organized crime leaders everywhere. When Frank attempts to make a drug deal with a Chinese drug leader named Larry Wong—a fan of F.W. Murnau's bloodsucker masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922) who has private screenings of the film with his chink whores—for \$15 million worth of cocaine, things get ugly due to the arrogance of the criminal Chinaman, so he and his crew are naturally exterminated on their own turf in Chinatown at the same area featured in Abel Ferrara's *China Girl* (1987). Indeed, love him or hate him (I tend to do a little of both), nobody makes a more interesting and unpredictable mafioso than Christopher Walken, whose gaunt appearance and idiosyncratic emotional mixture of stoicism and stuttering are realized to the fullest in *King of New York*.

With all the competition wiped out in a totally "no bullshit" type of manner, Frank White certainly becomes the unofficial 'King of New York,' but a group of cops, who are the first to verbally recognize this fact, including Detectives Roy Bishop (Victor Argo), Dennis Gilley (David Caruso), and Thomas Flanigan (Wesley Snipes, who was apparently living in his car during the production of the film), decide to take justice into their own hands. After having Jimmy Jump and some of Frank's lieutenants arrested for murder when a bodyguard from

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the Colombian gang miraculously survives and acts as a witness, Frank White has their bail posted at a million dollars a head, which makes the police realize that the “whole system favors the scum bag.” Corrupt cops Gilley and Flanigan get together a police crew posing as black gang bangers and bribe Dalesio so they can approach Frank’s gang under false pretenses and wipe them out. Of course, things go wrong and a number of cops and gangsters, including Uncle Tom Flanigan and fried chicken addict Jimmy Jumpy, are left dead. At the funeral for cop Flanigan, Frank White personally blows distraught policeman Gilley’s brains out in an impulsive act that leaves no doubt that he is no longer sound of mind, but a man on a mission for total self-destruction. Not long after, Frank White pays a personal visit to uncorrupt cop Roy Bishop’s apartment and expresses his reasoning for killing his criminal compatriots, stating, “When the D.A.’s office investigated the sudden death of Arty Clay, they found that he left a \$13 million estate. How do you explain that? There there’s Larry Wong, who owned half of Chinatown when he passed away. Larry used to rent his tenements to Asian refugees, his own people, for \$800 a month to share a single toilet on the same floor. How ’bout King Tito? He had thirteen-year-old girls hooking for him on the street. Those guys are dead because I don’t want to make money that way. Emil Zappa, the Mata brothers, they’re dead because they were running this city into the ground.” Unimpressed by Frank White’s deranged sense of vigilantly justice, detective Roy Bishop has a final showdown with the King of New York in a subway car. In the end, it seems that neither crime nor fighting crime, pay.

When watching a reckless film like *King of New York*, as well as pretty much any of Abel Ferrara’s previous films, I see everything I love and hate about an atom-bomb-worthy metropolis like NYC because, while the film features no Jewish/liberal intellectuals, wussy Woody Allen types, hipsters/hippies, political poofs nor frigid feminists, it does feature an apocalyptic multicultural nightmare that is central to the miserable metropolis’ sociopolitical degeneracy. For an alpha-crook like Frank White to think he could bring any solace to the suffering of the populous of the city just goes to show how forsaken the area is and that there is nothing worth saving once a big apple has become rotten. The fact that a bloated barbarian like the Notorious B.I.G used the name “Frank White” as a racially-confused moniker in many of his songs only goes to show the retarded romance with renegade gangsters that have become quite popular in America—the land of the moral-free and socially-depraved. In a film where gangsters discuss drug deals in a children’s hospital that one of them has helped saved from going out of business via drug money and where cops pop more pills than criminals, *King of New York* is crime film iconoclasm at its finest and least fleeting and a striking example as to why a bunch of towelheads declared jihad against democratic Great Satan and flew planes into the World Trade Center. A gratuitously enthralling and totally unsentimental look at the darker side of the American

dream, King of New York is a cultural cringe inspiring piece of unadulterated Americana of the post-Euro-American sort where a race-blind white man leads a colorful collection of Negro Übermensch into destroying every shade of grey, thus making it a virtual celluloid bible for aspiring wiggers/white rappers everywhere, but also a thrilling tragicomedy for cultural nihilists and pessimistic Faustian men.

-Ty E

BAD LIEUTENANT
BAD LIEUTENANT

Abel Ferrara (1992)

Although I seriously doubt it was the director's intention, *Bad Lieutenant* (1992) directed by McWop pornographer-turned-filmmaker Abel Ferrara (*The Driller Killer*, *King of New York*)—for better or worse—has to be one of the most hilarious and degenerate crime dramas ever made as a sort of aesthetically and thematically 'copsploitation' flick of the crude and embarrassingly Catholic sort. Co-penned by tragic model/actress Zoë Tamerlis Lund (*Special Effects*, *Exquisite Corpses*) who previously starred in Ferrara's raunchy rape and revenge flick *Ms. 45* (1981) aka *Angel of Vengeance* and who died at the rather premature age of 37 in 1999 after suffering from a heart attack caused by too much cocaine, *Bad Lieutenant* is a compulsively Catholic-guilt-ridden corrupt cop flick starring tiny yet tough Hebrew Harvey Keitel about a perverted police detective with more than one unhealthy addiction who attempts to seek redemption after two superlatively swarthy untermensch thugs brutally rape a nun, including with a crucifix *The Exorcist*-style. By no means a 'feel-good' nor uplifting flick, *Bad Lieutenant* is the kind of cinematic work that real-life nightmares are made as a work written and directed by damned drug addicts of the decidedly dispirited and uniquely unsentimental sort who seem to have more faith in self-destructive nihilism than the *Virgin Mary*. A work of stylishly sleazy maniac melodrama that works best as a brazen black comedy and was blessed with a NC-17 rating upon its release, *Bad Lieutenant* features an intemperate and drug-addled cop who masturbates on the street, gambles his money and dignity away, snorts coke and shoots heroin, engages in seedy motel threesomes, and robs robbers and crime scenes, all the while trying to keep up the absurd semblance of being a serious cop and Catholic family man and falling further and further into an existential hell as god's most lonely lunatic lieutenant. Arguably the greatest and certainly one of the most degenerate films directed by Abel Ferrara, *Bad Lieutenant* is indisputable proof the Italian Renaissance man Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Mamma Roma*, *Salo*, or the *120 Days of Sodom*), whose life the American auteur is planning to depict in an upcoming biopic, is not the only filmmaker who had a somewhat nasty knack for corrupting Catholic themes in curious celluloid form.

During the beginning of *Bad Lieutenant*, one might assume that anti-hero 'The Lieutenant' (Harvey Keitel) is just another agitated, overworked, and patently pessimistic cop as he has a reasonably nice suburban home, listens to sportscasters on the radio, and drives his two young sons to Catholic school, but in reality, this completely corrupt officer of the law lives a second life as a seemingly psychopathic criminal whose addiction to sex, drugs, and gambling only grows larger with each passing day and who is undoubtedly on an unholy path to self-destruction and inevitable annihilation. After being assigned to investigate a

grizzly double homicide, the Lieutenant chases down a couple drug dealers and meets one of them in a dark alleyway, where he gives the racially dubious pusher a bag of drugs to sell and proceeds to smoke some of the street crack himself. Later that night, the Lieutenant gets drunk and engages in a less than thrilling threesome with two ladies who would probably be described as 'damaged goods' and crusty crack whores. Meanwhile, a redheaded virgin Nun (Frankie Thorn) of the uncommonly voluptuous sort is raped by two ugly mongrel teenagers with a crucifix and the Lieutenant is assigned to the investigation and watches voyeuristically when the defiled holy woman is given a rape test at a hospital following the odious ordeal. In her own deluded mind, the Nun believes that she has been bequeathed with the grace of god and holds no animosity towards the rapists, or so she tells the Lieutenant, who makes it his mission to hunt down and serve justice to the sick defilers. The next day while lounging with his young daughters at home, the Lieutenant learns via TV that he has just lost a ton of cash via a bet regarding a National League Championship Series game between the Mets and the Dodgers he gambled on, but he cannot afford to pay it so it decides to bring the wager up to \$30,000 for an upcoming game, which he does not even have enough cash to pay for. While drinking and driving, the Lieutenant learns he lost a second bet and shoots out his car stereo. Assumedly to recoup lost funds, the LT attempts to steal a kilo from a car at a crime scene, but he is so wasted that his motor skills fail him and he accidentally drops the stash in a ditch right in front of his cop coworkers, but manages to weasel his way out of the situation by telling them to collect the drugs as evidence. At the First Communion of one of his children, the Lieutenant doubles the wager to \$60,000 because, as he tells his cop friend who acts as a middleman for his bets, the Mets cannot continue to win because apparently no baseball team has ever come back from three straight losses to win a series. On his way home, the Lieutenant pulls over two underage girls without drivers licenses and forces them to show their naughty bits while he jerks off while standing in the middle of the street. Indeed, if anyone is 'ridin' dirty,' it is the Bad Lieutenant.

After losing another gamble, the Lieutenant, who preposterously professes to find a kindred spirit of sorts in Darryl Strawberry and still adamantly believes the Mets cannot win the series, attempts to double his wager again to the hefty sum of \$120,000, which his friend advises him against as the bookie will most likely murder him if he fails to pay. While extremely high and drunk, the Lieutenant wanders into a Catholic church, where he finds the Nun rape victim and offers to kill the two sexually pillagers for her, but she continues to proclaim she has forgiven the brown beasts. Not long after, the Lieutenant hallucinates and sees a vision of bloody Jesus Christ at the church and proceeds to throw curse words, including "fuck" and "rat-fuck," at the imaginary son of God, but eventually breaks down, confessing his guilt and proclaims he is too weak to do the right thing and asks for forgiveness. When he goes to kiss Christ's feet, he fi-

BAD LIEUTENANT

nally realizes it is just a random old black woman holding a gold chalice who tells the corrupt cop that the two nun rapists, whose names are apparently Julio and Paulo and live right across the street from the church, pawned the holy object at her husband's store. Using the new lead, the Lieutenant manages to track down the two racially indiscernible Hispanic rapists, who live like dirty animals in a pigsty. Instead of booking the rapists at Port Authority or killing them on the site, the Lieutenant offers them the seemingly improbable chance of redemption by giving them \$30,000 he earned from selling 'evidence' (aka cocaine) and forcing them to leave on a bus heading out of town, telling them never to come back to New York City. Unfortunately, the bad Lieutenant is not afforded the same opportunity as someone drops by his car and yells "Hey, cop!" and unloads a couple bullets on the corrupt cop, thereupon killing him in the process.

Despite being a totally thrilling work with a number of tragicomic and sometimes cruel twists, *Bad Lieutenant* fails to be as rewarding as Werner Herzog's non-sequel *The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call - New Orleans* (2009), even if Harvey Keitel gave a much superior performance. Not surprisingly, Abel Ferrara was not too happy upon initially hearing about the pseudo-sequel to his iconic cult flick, stating regarding those involved with *The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call - New Orleans*, "As far as remakes go ... I wish these people die in Hell. I hope they're all in the same streetcar, and it blows up," which Herzog later richly retorted to with, "I've never seen a film by him [Ferrara]. I have no idea who he is." Additionally, the homoerotic Italian giallo *Copkiller* (1983) aka *Copkiller (l'assassino dei poliziotti)* aka *Corrupt Lieutenant* aka *Bad Cop Chronicles #2: Corrupt*—a work directed by commie Guido auteur Roberto Faenza also starring Keitel, alongside *The Sex Pistols* frontman John Lydon in his sole film role, that is a sort of prototype for *Bad Lieutenant* in its depiction of a degenerate police officer—is, at least in my opinion, a superior work to Abel Ferrara's fucked catholic-splottation cop flick. Of course, all three of these corrupt cop cult flicks make for great celluloid companion pieces to one another, even if *Bad Lieutenant* is the only one of the films to have the grand distinction of featuring Harvey Keitel totally naked with his kosher chode in full view as the actor suffers a mental meltdown of the embarrassingly (both for the viewer and the actor) humorous variety. Of course, next to the malignant, if not oftentimes accidentally merry, macho melancholy of *Bad Lieutenant*, *The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call - New Orleans* and *Copkiller* seem too contrived and stylized to dispirit the viewer as much as Ferrara's flick. Like a number of Ferrara's films, *Bad Lieutenant* is too professionally directed and thematically serious to be a mere exploitation film, yet it is also the sort of work that would prove to be a major discomfort to a good portion of American mainstream filmgoers. Named by fellow wop NYC filmmaker Martin Scorsese (*Taxi Driver*, *Goodfellas*) as the fifth best film of the 1990s, *Bad Lieutenant* acts as a sort of 'spiritual sequel' and more nihilistic update of *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967) in its

depiction of an ostensibly Italian-American character played by Harvey Keitel whose anti-sex Catholic guilt makes him react rather ridiculously to the fact a woman is raped. As someone who was not brought up Catholic, it is hard for me to relate to the subversive themes of *Bad Lieutenant*, but if one thing is for sure, I think the eponymous anti-hero played by Keitel should not have given into Christ's cuckolded word because, after all, any down-and-out druggie can fall for the con of religion. Of course, most people do not watch a film like *Bad Lieutenant* for its Catholic themes, but to see Harvey Keitel cry and yell like an infant on meth while buck naked and yelling stuff at the crucified Christ like, "Mutt! You got something that you want to say to me? You fuck! You ratfuck, you ratfuck! Here's your... What? Say something, I know you're just standing there. What am I gonna do? You gotta say something! Something! You fuck, you fucking stand there and you want me to do every fucking thing! Where were you? Where the fuck were you? Where were you? Where the hell were you?" Of course, Christ was nowhere to be found when little Harvey got blown away by a bunch of bullets, but that is the small price one pays for faith, or at least in the wanton and wicked wack-job world of Abel Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant*, a sort of anti-Christ's take on American proletarian Catholicism.

-Ty E

ADDICTION
ADDICTION

Abel Ferrara (1995) Another day, another Brain Damage film. This time, Not only was I surprised to find a film that doesn't suck all the way, but I was also alerted when a faint trace of effort lingered from the final cut of this film. While I'm on the topic concerning cuts and edits of a certain film, This is another in the long line of films that brandishes a bloody logo reading "UNRATED" in an attempt to draw up controversy or to spark an illusion for something that simply isn't there. Addiction isn't bloody in the slightest. There is more blood in the ever popular Halo franchise than there is in the entirety of this film. An abnormally normal office worker stabs a filthy homeless negro and becomes obsessed with the rush of killing and stabbing. Taking cues from the ending of Nekromantik, films these days always try to elaborate some deep psycho-fetish for death, but never pay up its inspirations. Largely a character portrait, I didn't appreciate how this film was a direct copy/paste from Mamet's Edmond (stage play). Similarities: Both involve a normal man with a normal marriage Both get fed up and somehow get separated Both acquire a knife and begin stabbing people using rage Both kill negroes who try and rob them Both have a psychosis effect Both have a huge falling out Both get disheveled and pick up prostitutes in an effort to smooth out. Regardless of James Tucker's original intentions, his subconscious played a huge role on the film by making the majority of his killings racially charged. First he kills a rough Dave Chappelle looking man who attempts to rob him. The tables are turned when Whitey returns the blow and leaves the black man whimpering in a corner. Then he encounters a vagabond who wants to die. Our anti-hero acquiesce half-heartedly to a homeless man's request. All around the world, fans of the Cosby Show cried. Brain Damage Films has released a decent film which is ripe with unfinished side stories and rips off an amazing stage play which was transformed into a film in 2005 starring William H. Macy. That comes highly recommended, more so than this low budget soap opera. While being an "alright" film, It doesn't meet hardly any requirements to make it a must see. Barely being worthy of a rental, it sure was nice to see some acting that wasn't too horrible.

-mAQ

THE ADDICTION

Abel Ferrara (1995)

With his undoubtedly most idiosyncratic and inaccessible celluloid work *The Addiction* (1995), NYC Catholic nihilist auteur Abel Ferrara (9 Lives of a Wet Pussy, King of New York) managed to homogenize Gothic Grit with wayward wit in an innately anomalous vampire flick that has the ability to scare viewers away from doing drugs and studying philosophy. The virtual sister film to Ferrara's *The Funeral* (1996) in that both films were apparently inspired by the tragic death of screenwriter Nicholas St. John's son, *The Addiction* is a decidedly dreary and maliciously melancholy work that mischievously mediates on sex, death, drugs, and religion to the point of inspiring abject disgust and misanthropy in the viewer. An aberrant arthouse bloodsucker flick shot in suavely stylized black-and-white, *The Addiction* is much like the David Lynch produced work *Nadja* (1994) directed by Michael Almereyda in its total deconstruction of the vampire subgenre, except with a vulgar and seemingly oxymoronic rap soundtrack (which was probably inspired by the fact that Russell Simmons of all people executive produced the film) as opposed to soothing shoegaze and all the more philosophically penetrating, like a dispiriting stake in the heart of Occidental philosophy. Starring the ever so homely and unappealing Lili Taylor (*Arizona Dream*, Pecker)—an actress who is only second to Sandra Bernhard in terms of being an anti-diva who literally brings physical disgust to my stomach any time I see her—*The Addiction* follows an ugly graduate philosophy student who does ugly things after being bitten by a beautiful babe of the unhinged and undead sort. Addicted to blood and books, as well as searching for the meaning of life, death, and the reason for man's eternal violence against his fellow man, the physically and mentally perturbed plasma-addict vampire of *The Addiction* goes through an odyssey of the body and soul that cannot simply be learned by spending one's free time reading in an academic library. Featuring quotes and references to Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Feuerbach, Descartes, Dante, Charles Baudelaire, and William S. Burroughs, as well as stock footage from the atrocities of Auschwitz concentration camp and the My Lai Massacre, *The Addiction* is a mystifying and misery-inspiring piece of allegorical celluloid metaphysics that reminds one that, to quote Christopher Walken's character's seemingly contrived but charming reference of Nietzsche, "Mankind is driven to exist beyond good and evil...From the beginning." While I never saw Abel Ferrara as a man interested in German philosophy and arthouse vampire flicks, *The Addiction* is filled with enough drug-addled derangement, cultural pessimism, and an unromantic view of NYC to remind viewers who directed it, even if the philosophical meat of the film was clearly a result of screenwriter Nicholas St. John's uncompromising contribution to this seedy exercise in post-Victorian bloodlust.

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Kathleen Conklin (Lili Taylor) is a promising yet hopelessly naive graduate student at the philosophy department of New York University, but she has a hard time understanding why a bunch of American soldiers wasted a bunch of gooks at Vietnam and an even harder time fathoming why only one fellow was brought to justice for his infamous war crimes. It is only when she is passively bitten by a voluptuous vamp named Casanova (Annabella Sciorra) during a nefarious NYC night that Kathleen begins to understand the meaning of a life of lechery and bloodlust, later learning from an elder vampire played by Christopher Walken, that "The entire world's a graveyard, and we, the birds of prey picking at the bones. That's all we are. We're the ones who let the dying know the hour has come." While Casanova even tells Kathleen to "order me to go away" before she sinks her teeth into her neck, the grad student is far too pathetically lifeless and intellectually pedantic to merely verbally defend herself, even at the request of her victimizer (who calls her a "collaborator" due to her pathetic passivity in an unholy crime against her soul), thus her transformation into a bloodlusting vampire is just what she needed, at least when it comes to being a cannibal as opposed to mincemeat in the rotten Big Apple. Unfortunately, being addicted to human hemoglobin, Kathleen must satisfy her cravings by abandoning empathy and stoically taking victims, including her best friend Jean (Edie Falco), pompous philosophy professor and a Negro gangster named "Black" (played by rapper Fredro Starr) who rather vulgarly offers her a bit of "jungle fever," who provides her with some tasty dark meat. When a pretentious anthropology student quotes Protagoras' famous and once-infamous proto-humanist "man is the measure of all things," Kathleen teaches the sucker of a idealistic college student man's true worth by draining her of her sacred sanguine fluid. When the anthropology student freaks out over the fact a piece of flesh has been ripped out of her neck, Kathleen snidely remarks, "It was your decision. Your friend Feuerbach wrote that all men counting stars are equivalent in every way to God. My indifference is not the concern here. It's your astonishment that needs studying," thus displaying her new and improved intellectual insights as a postmodern active-nihilist philosopher with a master morality as opposed to a slave morality (like she once had before as a feeble human). Of course, being a fiending blood addict, Kathleen suffers major withdrawals when not getting enough of the biological fluids she needs and an older and wiser Nietzschean vampire named Peina (Christopher Walken) recommends that she read trust-fund junky William S. Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959) to help her cope with addiction. A recovering vampire addict who only need to take a 'maintenance dose' of blood to survive, Peina is proud to admit to Kathleen that he is a rare bloodsucker that defecates and that he lives a rather 'human existence' and that she has all of her immortal lifetime to master her diseased soul. A studious sadist of the vampiric sort, Kathleen graduates and has a party to celebrate and admits to her professor and colleges, "I'd like to share a little bit of what I've learned," thereupon ushering

in an ominous yet orgasmic bloodsucker orgy with her vampire compatriots (including Casanova and her many victims, who are now vampires as well). Being a bloodthirsty broad who must spread moral decay and a daunting degenerative disease of the immortal sort to survive, Kathleen inevitably comes to the conclusion that suicide is the only answer, but her maker, Casanova—an unlikely fan of Calvinist theologian/philosopher R. C. Sproul—is not going to let her philosophical progeny make the mistake of an endless lifetime. In the end, Kathleen sheds her human mortality, which is really a small price to pay to be perennially undead in at a time when god is dead.

A rare vampire flick lacking in romance (as well as a romantic subplot), aristocratic elegance, and an easy-to-read black-and-white moral compass, *The Addiction* is more focused on the need to live an egoless, colorless, and nondualist life as depicted through the torturous trials and tribulations of a vamp that is initially too interested in social prestige and hemoglobin to see the bigger picture, but finally comes around when her overwhelming bloodlust almost destroys her. Indeed, it is no surprise that the film concludes with Kathleen walking by her own tombstone, which has the inscription John 11:25 as one witnesses the vampiress' death, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection. Of course, with its quoting of everyone from Nietzsche to a Calvinist kook, one would be quite wrong to describe *The Addiction* as a 'Christian' film, but more like a work of Perennialism as promoted by Aldous Huxley due to its portrayal of all religions sharing a singular truth, thus ultimately making the film a strangely spiritual work with a positive message, which is rather ironic for a work featuring vulgar academic-eating vampire orgies, historical snuff footage, cliché Nietzschean ramblings, and a rather retarded rap soundtrack. For a film featuring a curious character whose aberrant actions are more disturbing than real-life footage of genocide and war, *The Addiction* must be doing something right as an unwonted bloodsucker and soul-sucking flick that trades in supernatural superstition and folklore for perennial philosophy and gritty street realism of the quasi-apocalyptic. In comparison to similarly themed works like Jeffrey Arsenault's *Night Owl* (1993) and Larry Fessenden's *The Habit* (1995), *The Addiction* is certainly the king of American metropolitan metaphysical vampire flicks. With a short but brilliantly bittersweet performance from Christopher Walken that is almost in league with German actor Max Schreck in *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) directed by F.W. Murnau in terms of vampiric authenticity, as well as shadowy and phantasmagorical imagery in the spirit of the German expressionist movement except contained with a largely "black" and negrophilic world, *The Addiction* is a rare postmodern 'horror' flick that does not inspire me to barf, even though it features a ghastly ghoul of a gal like Lili Taylor in the leading role, which is typically a cruel curse for any celluloid work. One of the few American films ever made—be it from the horror genre or otherwise—with some intellectual meat to it, which makes it all the more diacritic and in-

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accessible since it is a quasi-horror flick of sorts, *The Addiction* is undoubtedly habit-forming, although Lili Taylor and Feuerbach certainly leave a bad taste in one's mouth.

-Ty E

THE FUNERAL

Abel Ferrara (1996)

Although I rather enjoy mafia films, I have always been bothered by the lack of thematic diversity in the genre. Sure, most wop and Judaic mafia men are barbaric psychopaths that will kill just about anyone to make an extra buck, yet one would think that there would be more diversity of dago characters in such colorful and moral-free cinematic works. Admittedly, I loved the HBO series *The Sopranos* due to its more intimate and family oriented look at New Jersey's finest goombah thugs, but, unfortunately, the show was canceled years ago. A couple days ago, I finally got around to seeing Abel Ferrara's *The Funeral* (1996) – an excellent mafia flick that is like no other – breaking all the conventions and stereotypes so closely associated with the extremely formulaic genre. What better auteur than Abel Ferrara to direct one of the grittiest and darkest mafia films ever made? In *The Funeral*, Ferrara does for the mafia what he did for corrupt cops in *Bad Lieutenant* (1992). Proving his undeniable integrity as a serious filmmaker; Ferrara refrained from glorifying and romanticizing the organized crime life, and instead deconstructs the genre; portraying the mafia brothers during their weakest and most pathetic moments. Like many characters featured in works directed by Abel Ferrara, the *GINZO* Bros. featured in *The Funeral* are plagued with Catholic guilt. Throughout *The Funeral*, the anti-hero mafia brothers are shown at their most vulnerable times of guilt and impotent moments of self doubt, but also during moment of domineering brutality. The three “Tempio” mafia brothers are as follows: Eldest brother Raimundo aka “Ray” (played by Christopher Walken), middle brother Cesarino aka “Chez” (played by Chris Penn), and baby brother Giovanni aka Johnny (played by Vincent Gallo). After brother Johnny dies, the two remaining brothers look towards redemption whilst recollecting over their brutal and blatantly blasphemous lives. At one point, Ray even acknowledges that he is destined for hell. At the most fundamental level, *The Funeral* boldly asks

hard questions regarding immorality that most previous mafia films refused to even acknowledge.

Despite being blood brothers, the three Tempio boys are quite contrary in character, consequently resulting in constant family feuds among the brothers. Alpha-Mafioso Ray - who is the strongest and most intelligent of the brothers – clearly runs and holds the crime family together. Overweight Chez is a loose cannon of sorts and is easily the most deranged of the brothers, which is no surprise as the middle child usually tends to be the craziest. Due to his explicitly erratic performance as Chez in *The Funeral*, Chris Penn deservedly won Best Supporting Actor at the 2006 Venice Film Festival. However, the strangest and most individualistically peculiar of the brothers is Johnny – a communist whose political idealism is glaringly detrimental to the family business. As indicated in

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the title of the film, *The Funeral* begins with the funeral of recently murdered Johnny, thereupon the rest of the film unravels the mystery behind his dubious death. I must admit that seeing Vincent Gallo (who is one of my favorite actors) laying in a coffin was something I found to be unintentionally humorous. Proving their true brotherly loyalty to Johnny; Ray and Chez proceed (albeit in totally different ways) to avenge their little brother's untimely death. After the introductory funeral scene, *The Funeral* cuts back to the past, unfolding what led to Johnny's death in the first place. It becomes clear that Johnny was bound to end up six foot under (as his brother Ray acknowledges to him as he lays dead in the coffin) – as he gave his brothers much grief due to his unruly behavior, on top of making numerous enemies due to his narcissistic and idealistic demeanor. Of course, the film eventually zooms back to the present, as Ray finds out who murdered his baby brother. At the tragic conclusion of *The Funeral*, all three brothers are finally vindicated of their family demons.

The Funeral is the ultimate anti-mafia film, as it creatively breaks every convention of the genre, thus reinventing the entire genre in the process. In fact, I would go as far as saying that *The Funeral* is "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962) of mafia films" – as both films are quite anarchistic in their defiance against the conventions of their respective genres. Personally, I have always wondered about the guilt and psychological insanity one must suffer as a mass-murdering career criminal, yet very few mafia films even begin to portray such serious, yet ultimately anti-romantic scenarios. Although the three brothers featured in *The Funeral* are exposed in the most unflattering of lights; the film also gives these characters a certain humanity that is often times lacking in the genre. The almost mystical stoicism that is so typical of characters in mafia films is destroyed in the best sense in *The Funeral*; a wonderful greaseball tragedy about a family that is genetically cursed. In fact, the source of the family curse is exposed in the film during a very stark and telling scene that signifies the loss of innocence among the three brothers. In this key scene, a flashback shows the three brothers as children under the corrupt guidance of their mafia thug father; a psychopathic delinquent who forces young Ray to shoot and kill a helpless man that is tied to a chair. After that life changing dark day (both figuratively and metaphorically), the three brothers have continuously suffered from the crimes of their father, thus inheriting his sins and maintaining his severely tainted legacy of criminality. All three men have their own way of coping with their hidden suffering: Johnny becomes a true believer in the Marxist internationalist working-class utopia dream, Chez is less stable in his suffering; outlandishly abusing women (accusing them of "selling their souls") in a feeble attempt to expel his inter self-hatred, and Roy stoically hides his suffering, until he confronts the young man that killed his younger brother. By the end of *The Funeral*, all three brothers meet their peace, henceforth leaving their already broken female companions to carry the burden, but isn't that what families are

for?
-Ty E

PASOLINI
PASOLINI

Abel Ferrara (2014)

Aside from finding their political beliefs to be autistically naïve, unwaveringly faith-based, or just plain disingenuous, I tend to have a natural instinct towards hating communist artists and commie-created art, yet I have always regarded gay Guido Marxist Renaissance man Pier Paolo Pasolini (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, *The Decameron*) as one of my favorite artists and see him as the sort of Jean Cocteau of his nation and zeitgeist, but of course he was no ordinary pinko poof as a man who had a deep respect for his cultural and spiritual heritage as reflected in quotes like, “If you know that I am an unbeliever, then you know me better than I do myself. I may be an unbeliever, but I am an unbeliever who has a nostalgia for a belief.” Of course, Pasolini’s rather idiosyncratic brand of filmmaking, not unlike that of many popular Mao-fetishizing Italian and French arthouse filmmakers of the late-1960s and 1970s like Godard and Bertolucci, was hardly in tune with the banal commie art movements of real so-called socialist ‘utopias’ like Soviet Social Realism or the East German DEFA films, but like many great artists, the Italian filmmaker was a man of great contradictions as one certainly realizes while watching American McGuido auteur Abel Ferrara’s long in the making and eagerly awaited quasi-biopic Pasolini (2014) starring Willem Dafoe as the eponymous lead. Set mostly during the last day of Pasolini’s life on 2 November 1975 when he was murdered and run over with his own car under dubious circumstances by a 17-year-old hustler named Pino Pelosi (who in 2005 retracted his murder confession) on the beach of Ostia on the outskirts of Rome, Ferrara’s work is not the first film depicting the tragic and mystifying, if not strangely fitting, death of the ill-fated filmmaker, but it is certainly the most aesthetically and thematically ambitious, structurally intricate, perversely poetic, strangely respectful, and relatively adequately budgeted. Excluding documentaries, the first film about the death of Pasolini was the reasonably worthwhile yet glaringly amateurish homo-heavy British student short Ostia (1991) directed by Julian Cole (who later went on to direct the doc *With Gilbert & George* (2008) about the eponymous degenerate queer ‘living statues’) and starring English auteur filmmaker Derek Jarman as the lead in a role where one great filmmaker ultimately pays tribute to another filmmaker who is ultimately depicted as being barbarically assassinated by homme fatale Pelosi and some older bat-wielding and fag-bashing ‘breeder’ thugs. The second film about the poet’s grisly demise is the made-for-TV French-Italian crime-drama-thriller *Who Killed Pasolini?* (1995) aka *Pasolini, un delitto italiano* aka *Pasolini, an Italian Crime* directed by Marco Tullio Giordana, which is based on Enzo Siciliano’s celebrated biography and apparently inspired the reopening of the murder case in light of the new evidence it revealed. A sort of meta-biopic featuring both a film-within-a-film and novel-within-a-film, Pasolini is certainly ambi-

tious in that it adapts excerpts from the filmmaker's final two unrealized works that include his unfinished posthumously released novel *Petrolio* and film *Porno-Teo-Kolossal* (1976), which was a quasi-sequel to *Uccellacci e uccellini* (1966) aka *The Hawks and the Sparrows* starring veteran actor, writer, and director *Edoardo De Filippo* and the director's one-time boy toy *Ninetto Davoli* that never reached past pre-production. While Ferrara is probably my favorite crackhead and an artist I have always liked, I do not think he has ever directed anything approximating a true cinematic masterpiece, at least by art fag standards, and the same can be certainly said of his *Pasolini* biopic, but as a cinephile and diehard fan of the cocksucking commie artistic genius I could not help but love the film, which was clearly directed by a mensch who deeply respects his subject. As a man who once described *Pasolini* as the filmmaker who was most influential to him, "because he filmed his visions and did it without qualifications," it should be no surprise that Ferrara was somewhat hesitant about even directing the virtually lifelong dream project, even once confessing to fellow NYC-based filmmaker *Julian Schnabel* in an interview featured in *Interview* magazine, "Sometimes I think, why am I doing this? Here's this guy who's dead, didn't know me, never met me – where do I come off robbing this guy's grave? I mean would you want someone making movies of your life?" Of course, considering the superlatively sleazy subject matter and the strong Roman Catholic roots of both the legendary Italian poet and the American auteur, there probably was no better suited person to direct *Pasolini* than Mr. Ferrara.

Featuring *Willem Dafoe* in an undeniably iconic role that Ferrara apparently originally planned to cast model-turned-actress *Zoë Lund* for (as revealed in *Brad Stevens'* book *Abel Ferrara: The Moral Vision* (2004), *Lund* apparently felt a close connection to *Pasolini* because her ex-lover *Edouard DeLaurot* was supposed to meet with the filmmaker the night he was killed), *Pasolini* is like a cinophile's wet dream that unfortunately climaxes too early (the film is only about 80 minutes but could have easily been twice as long). To prepare himself both spiritually and culturally for the film, Ferrara frequently visited Italy over the past decade or so and even shot a couple movies there, including *Mary* (2005), which was partly filmed in Rome, and the gritty documentary *Napoli, Napoli, Napoli* (2009). I think Ferrara's time in Italy, especially Rome, paid off as *Pasolini* does not feel like a contrived Hollywood-esque outsider's view of the city that you would typically expect from an American filmmaker, but instead a work that acts as a sort of aesthetic antidote to the pseudo-chic pageantry-plagued goombah buffoonery of *Paolo Sorrentino's* obscenely overrated work *The Great Beauty* (2013) aka *La grande bellezz*, which is more or less *La Dolce Vita* 2.0 with none of the organic beauty, character, or substance of the classic *Fellini* flick. Notably, the writer, cinematographer, and editor of the work were all indigenous dagos, thus also adding to the film's authenticity. Although seemingly 'softcore' for a Ferrara flick in some regards (though it does feature a somewhat rough blowjob

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scene, as well as a Bacchanalian orgy), Pasolini was unequivocally made with buckets of blood, sweat, and tears and is a work that, despite its various flaws, is surely one of the greatest and most sensitive tributes from one filmmaker to another. Directed by a half-breed Amero-wop that ultimately managed to create a direct celluloid link to the old world of his paternal ancestors, Ferrara's filmic micro-odyssey is also a testament to the fact that blood trumps everything else, though one must also not discount the guilt-tripping power of Guido's style Roman Catholicism. After all, Ferrara's previous effort *Welcome to New York* (2014) failed because he attempted to interpret the carnal crimes of a powerful kosher creep with a Catholic lens. In *Pasolini*, Catholicism is just as important to the film as it was to the works of the titular 'nostalgic atheist' filmmaker.

One thing that might seem odd to viewers watching *Pasolini* is that the film sometimes has a 'fascistic' aesthetic tone about it due to its almost Riefenstahl-esque shots of neo-classical sculptures and architecture, but it is certainly something the Italian poet turned filmmaker experienced every day as a Marxist that strangely opted to live in such an aesthetic environment. Indeed, somewhat curiously, Pasolini lived right next to the EUR, which is a district in Rome featuring fascist architecture that was planned by Benito Mussolini in celebration of twenty years of fascism (the 1942 world's fair was supposed to be held there but World War II put an end to that). Also not mentioned in the film is the fact that P.P.P.'s army lieutenant father Carlo Alberto Pasolini became famous for saving Mussolini's life after a 15-year-old anarchist named Anteo Zamboni attempted to assassinate him in 1926. Of course, fascism is constantly in the air in Ferrara's *Pasolini*, which depicts the protagonist as having a perpetual forlorn feeling regarding his own demise, with both fascist and commie terrorism haunting him wherever he goes, be it while reading a newspaper on his couch or while talking to one of his friends at his favorite restaurant. While being interviewed by an obnoxiously arrogant French journalist at the beginning of the film, Pasolini stoically declares, "I think to scandalize is a right...to be scandalized is a pleasure, and those who refuse to be scandalized are moralists. The so called moralists." Somewhat inexplicably, the French journalist attends a dubbing of Pasolini's latest and most controversial work *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), yet he has the gall to accuse the auteur of being soft and no longer politically transgressive. Not only does Pasolini confirm that people still attack and insult him for his politics, but that he also thrives on such attacks, thus reflecting his undeniable sadomasochistic essence (notably, Genoese writer/poet Edoardo Sanguineti once described Pasolini's death as "delegated suicide" and even the filmmaker's own fellow gay poet cousin Nico Naldini said something along the same lines). In a letter to a friend, Pasolini states regarding the novel he is working on that it "...is of no use to my life anymore...it is not a proclamation. It is the preamble to a testament...the testimony of that little bit of knowledge that a man has gathered, a totally different knowledge from what he had expected

it to be or wondered.” In the novel, the glaringly sexually depraved protagonist Carlo (Roberto Zibetti) smiles with a sort of wickedly debauched masochistic glee after being violently fucked in the mouth by a degenerate longhaired leather-clad hustler. Quite notably, when the hustler whips his cock out, unsavory sod Carlo stares at it with a huge maniacal smile and says “love,” thus reflecting Pasolini’s own warped sense of sexuality. Indeed, anyone who thinks sucking the very potentially STD-ridden cocks of random hustler criminals that routinely debase themselves with strangers for money is a form of “love” has a seriously unhinged view of romance and human emotions. Ultimately, this seemingly random excerpt from the novel will ultimately foreshadow Pasolini’s own death on the beaches of Ostia at the hands of a leather-clad hustler and his equally pernicious homo-hating comrades.

Like many gay men, Pasolini is depicted as a mama’s boy and despite being a middle-aged man, he lives with his overindulgent mother Susanna (Adriana Asti), who wakes him up in the morning as if he is still an adolescent schoolboy who still needs help living his day-to-day life. Of course, being a handsome, charming, kind and highly intelligent queer, Pasolini also has diva-like muses as is especially epitomized by the rather raunchy goombah blonde Laura Betti (Maria De Medeiros), who pays a visit to the filmmaker’s apartment and humorously states regarding her experience working on Miklós Jancsó’s Yugoslav production *Private Vices, Public Pleasures* (1976) aka *Vizi privati, pubbliche virtù*, “Ah socialist actresses, such a wonder, eh...I adore them, they’re real professionals! They put this hemorrhoid cream on their pussies to hide the wrinkles.” Unquestionably, the most sensitive and introverted woman in Pasolini’s life is his housekeeper/secretary cousin Graziella Chiarocci (fittingly played by Dafoe’s Italian wife Giada Colagrande), who is more or less like the protagonist’s female alter-ego. Indeed, despite being responsible for carrying out meager jobs for her cousin like pouring him cups of coffee and whatnot, Graziella is a woman whose intellect Pasolini clearly respects as demonstrated by the fact that he recommends that she borrow his copy of far-left anti-mafia novelist Leonardo Sciascia’s latest work. Graziella is also responsible for managing Pasolini’s personal and professional relationships as indicated by the fact that she informs him that Jewish anti-fascist painter Carlo Levi called to say hi (notably, Levi was already dead at the time). If Pasolini was not a poof, Graziella would almost certainly be his wife.

One of the things I appreciated most about Ferrara’s film is that it exposes Pasolini’s vulnerability and seemingly masked melancholia, which was hidden by an oftentimes glacial borderline scowl. Unquestionably one of the most penetratingly somber and dejecting scenes in the entire film is when Pasolini holds the newborn baby of his ‘great love’ Ninetto Davoli (portrayed by Riccardo Scamarcio in a ridiculously moody and broody hipster-esque fashion in what is indubitably an annoyingly miscast role), who is now living the life of a bourgeois

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heterosexual father. While Pasolini and the baby are smiling during the scene, it is apparent that the protagonist is just smiling to disguise his perennial sadness as he probably realizes that he will never know the joys and happiness of being a father and that his great love has moved on to live the sort of life that he is innately incapable of living. Of course, it should be no surprise that Pasolini cruises around Rome's red light district right after his meeting with Ninetto and his family. It is a well known fact that Pasolini had a pathological predilection for criminally-inclined teenage proletarian boys who were mostly heterosexual and, unlike the protagonist, would go on to get married and have children after growing out of their poverty-induced 'hustler' stage. In that sense, it is as if Pasolini never matured beyond his teenage years, at least as far as his romantic life was concerned. This becomes especially clear in a brief yet strangely charming scene where Pasolini plays soccer with a bunch of teenage boys as if he is just one of the gang and not some middle-aged Marxist intellectual that still lives with his mother. Another scene I found to be particularly awkward and dejecting is when Pasolini is eating with his murderer, teenage hustler Pino Pelosi (Damiano Tamilia), and he asks the boy about his girlfriend as if jealous of the girl yet at the same time completely ignoring the fact that he plans to fuck the lad later that night. Ultimately, Pasolini is murdered by Pelosi with the help of three comrades who randomly show up on the beach in Ostia while the protagonist is caressing the two-faced hustler. After getting his cock and balls stomped in by one of the brutes (who screams, "Imma gonna break your dick" at his victim in between incessantly calling him a "faggot") and taking a deleterious blow to the face with a piece of wood by Pelosi, Pasolini is finished off when his 'date' runs him over with his own car. Naturally, Pasolini's beloved mother is completely hysterical when she hears the news.

Using the filmmaker's unrealized final film *Porno-Teo-Kolossal* as a template, Pasolini intriguingly attempts to depict the Italian Renaissance man's sense of spirituality and post-Catholic interpretation of the afterlife. In an unintentionally absurd scenario featuring the real Ninetto Davoli portraying a goofy elderly Guido prole named Epifanio who believes the messiah has come and has left his morbidly obese bitch of a wife to take a pilgrimage to a sexually sacred city with the poorly played fictional young Ninetto portrayed by Riccardo Scamacio, Pasolini's idea of a utopia is depicted in the form of an all-gay Dionysian micro-metropolis called Sodomia where "gays make out with gays and lesbians make out with lesbians, all year long," except during the annual fertility festival where the fags and dykes have sex with one another for reproductive purposes to preserve the human race. During the festival, handsome yet hysterical homos stand on one side and shout, "Cunt, cunt, fuck you!" while busty yet bitchy bean-flickers stand on the other side and shout back "Dick, dick, fuck you!" as both rival groups watch their respective comrades perform ceremonial heterosexual coitus. Ultimately, Ninetto and pseudo-Ninetto, who is actually an angel,

attempt to reach heaven but never get there because, as the latter states, “There’s no such thing as an end.” Indeed, one gets the sense while watching Pasolini that the filmmaker’s greatest fear was death and the nothingness upon nothingness that accompanies it as reflected in a scene where old man Ninetto stares down at earth while standing on a literal endless stairway-to-heaven and finally realizes the intrinsic value of the irreplaceable mortal human life he so eagerly and foolishly left behind.

While by no means an immaculate masterpiece, Pasolini certainly features Abel Ferrara at his peak in maturity as both a filmmaker and an individual. Considering the rampantly heterosexual nature of virtually all his previous cinematic works, it seems almost inconceivable that Ferrara would be able to put himself in the surely strange-fitting shoes of an eccentric gay middle-aged Marxist momma’s boy that just happened to be one of the finest and most uncompromising Italian artists of his zeitgeist. Certainly, Pasolini is also Ferrara’s most ‘cryptic’ and subtextual work to date as it seems almost impossible to truly appreciate the film without at least having a general understanding of the eponymous subject and his work. I also must admit that I respect Ferrara for not attempting to ape the Italian filmmaker by making an overtly ‘Pasolinian’ work. Indeed, in its subtle implementation of heroic fascist imagery and fairly visceral as opposed to hyper-intellectual execution, Pasolini features an aesthetically subversive approach to its subject that few, if any, other filmmakers would have the testicular fortitude to try to pull off. Not unlike Frank White in *King of New York* (1990), the titular corrupt cop of *Bad Lieutenant* (1992), or even the crazed killer ‘Reno Miller’ played by Ferrara himself in *The Driller Killer* (1979), P.P.P. is ultimately portrayed in Ferrara’s biopic as a sort of tragic and self-destructive antihero whose subversive behavior and charismatic persona is only transcended by his perennial sense of loneliness and metaphysical detachment from the world. Indeed, while Pasolini surely hated the fascist era, he certainly found the 1970s to be even worse as revealed in outlandish statements he made like, “I consider consumerism to be a worse form of fascism than the classic variety” (unfortunately, it seems that, like many commies, Pasolini would oftentimes label things he didn’t like as being ‘fascist’). Personally, I see it as only fitting that Bronx-bred filmmaker Abel Ferrara—a true American proletarian filmmaker if there ever was one as less than eloquently expressed in candid personal remarks like, “I grew up in a very idyllic, beautiful neighborhood full of Mafiosi, and was raised to be a nasty motherfucker. Everyone’s your enemy, it’s a siege mentality. Fuck everybody. If you gotta kill them, great. Kill them before they come back and kill you. That kind of idiocy. So I’m sure it’s reflected in my work”—would ultimately be the person to direct the most lavish and important film about a man that had a lifelong obsession with the (sub)lumpenproletariat and who, unlike most card-carrying commies, actually helped members of peasantry as indicated by his jumpstarting of the careers of Ninetto Davoli and the

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Citti brothers (notably, Sergio Citti, who once stated, “If I hadn’t met Pier Paolo I’d have probably ended up as a delinquent,” was the one and only true disciple of the Pasolinian style of filmmaker). Of course, while it might be in poor taste to admit, it is also only fitting that Pasolini died at the hands of one of his teenage twink fuckboys, for there could be no sweeter or more symbolic death for a man who had a nihilistic self-destructive lust for discernibly dangerous sub-literate juvenile delinquents who ironically gave him the feeling of being fearless and invincible. Indeed, if there is anything to be learned from watching Pasolini, it is that the truth behind the Italian filmmaker’s death does not really matter as he probably would have inevitably died some other way around the same time, as no one that could direct a film such as *Salò* could have been in a healthy state of mind, which is something that Ferrara—a man with his own fair share of personal demons who started his filmmaking career directing a porn flick where he actually paid some guy to fuck his then-girlfriend—surely recognized..

-Ty E

WELCOME TO NEW YORK

Abel Ferrara (2014)

Very rarely does one see movies, especially Hollywood movies, made about high-profile Hebraic criminals. Of course, when such films actually do get made, like Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), which depicts the hedonistic Quaalude-addled times of psychopathic stockbroker Jordan Belfort in a 'fun' and 'cool' way, the kosher conman is portrayed in an absurdly favorable light, as if the chosen amongst God's chosen are held to a different standard when they commit crimes. Like *The Wolf of Wall Street*, Abel Ferrara's latest feature *Welcome to New York* (2014) depicts the lies and crimes of a Jewish criminal, but luckily this film makes no pathetic pandering attempts to bend over for world Zion. Indeed, based on the 2011 arrest of former IMF chief and French presidential contender Dominique Strauss-Kahn—a pseudo-Frenchman of Alsatian Jewish and Sephardic Jewish extraction who is not surprisingly a member of the French Socialist Party (PS)—for sexual assault and attempted rape, *Welcome to New York* has already been condemned as being supposedly "anti-Semitic" and faces a dubious future in terms of an American theatrical release. Indeed, Strauss-Kahn's ex-wife Anne Sinclair—a big financial supporter of Israel who comes from a family of wealthy Jewish art dealers based in Paris and New York City (she is the maternal granddaughter of Paul Rosenberg, who represented Pablo Picasso, and made a ton of money during the Second World War)—complained in an editorial that Ferrara's film is an "anti-Semitic" work where the "filmmakers project their fantasies about money and Jews." Although he has never seen the film and claims he never plans to, Strauss-Kahn recently had his lawyer Jean Veil reveal on France's Europe 1 Radio that he is getting ready to sue the makers of *Welcome to New York* for supposed "defamation owing to the accusations of rape and insinuations which run throughout the film." After watching Ferrara's Strauss-Kahn flick, I have to say it is, rather unfortunately, not at all anti-Semitic, unless one is deranged enough to believe that portraying a man of Jewish blood who is convicted of attempted rape in a negative light is anti-Semitic. Indeed, like most of Ferrara's work, *Welcome to New York* deals with the very Catholic theme of redemption, but as the film reveals, there is no redemption for an over-privileged and obscenely arrogant sex addict with seemingly infinite power who can afford to do whatever the hell he wants, or so he thinks until he attempts to molest the wrong poor negress maid. A work where Ferrara goes back to his unflattering roots, *Welcome to New York* is easily the director's most sexually explicit work since his debut porn flick *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* (1976). Rather unfortunately, the film is not the comeback masterpiece that the director probably hoped it would be, even if it is infinitely more interesting than Ferrara's previous pseudo-apocalyptic abortion *4:44 - Last Day on Earth* (2011). More than anything, *Welcome to New York* is an unintentionally

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humorous frog sideshow act set in modern-day Sodom where a morbidly obese Gérard Depardieu grunts, humps, and flaunts his shriveled penis and bulging gut off in a rather foul fashion that is more likely to humor the viewer than make them deeply consider the moral failings of a powerful Franco-kosher sex addict. Indeed, a largely improvised work, or as Ferrara revealed in an interview with the *Hollywood Reporter*: “Every performance is an improvisation. The writing of a script is an improvisation. We wrote the script and we worked on the scenes. Chris Zois, the writer, was on the set. He was there with the actors. OK for some of the actors, Baby Jackie [Jacqueline Bisset], the lines were important. For Gerard, the lines weren’t important. For me, I don’t want to hear the fucking script, especially if I worked on it,” *Welcome to New York* is a decidedly degenerate little mess of a strangely merry yet misanthropy-inspiring movie where Depardieu proves that, despite his rather odious obesity, he can still act with a singular sort of anarchic tenacity that reminds the viewer why the French have historically romanticized criminals and egomaniacal sexual deviants.

As Gérard Depardieu tells some journalists at the beginning of *Welcome to New York* as to why he chose to portray Dominique Strauss-Kahn (under the pseudonym ‘John Devereaux’): “Because I don’t like him [...] I don’t trust politics. I’m an individualist...I’m an anarchist. I don’t like people that mix politics...I hate them.” Indeed, debauched IMF chief Devereaux hopes to be the next president of France and his power-hungry Zionist supremacist wife Simone (Jacqueline Bisset) is determined to make sure he achieves that goal. Unfortunately for him and his much suffering family, Devereaux is a self-professed “sex addict” who even gets excited upon hearing about his daughter’s sex life. Indeed, Devereaux may be so repulsively fat that he even has trouble walking a couple feet without perspiring, but he has a little friend named Viagra that gives him the sexual pseudo-potency he needs to engage in multiple orgies and threesomes every single damn day. The first place we see the antihero display his debauchery and self-entitled arrogance is at his international bank’s Washington, D.C. headquarters, which he has turned into a not so discrete high-class makeshift whorehouse of sorts that is occupied by tall Nordic callgirls with tasteless tramp stamps who offer free blowjobs to more dignified clients of the bank. Of course, the party does not really get started until Devereaux flies to NYC and goes to an orgy where he, a small and effeminate frog of the stereotypically swarthy sort, and a small French-speaking Capoid-like negro indulge in a number of expensive streetwalkers in a luxury hotel room. Looking for a little bit of privacy, the IMF chief takes a prostitute into a backroom, forces her to give him head in a ridiculously rough fashion (he almost seems to pass out in the process since he is so fat), slaps her large tits fairly hard, and finishes the happy hooker off by performing cunnilingus on her. After drinking some whisky-cognac-Viagra milkshakes with his multicultural entourage, Devereaux ends the hotel party, but the party has just begun for him, as he has two high-dollar Russian hookers come

to his hotel room later that night. After watching the two Slavic skanks engage in streamy Sapphic sensuality, Devereaux joins the fun by penetrating one of the girls' doggy-style while she performs cunnilingus on her comrade. Clearly not satisfied with the multiple orgies he has partaken in during that single day, Devereaux attempts to force a less than homely negro maid to give him a blowjob after she unwittingly walks into the quasi-demonic degenerate's room after he gets out of the shower. Addled with arrogance and sexual aggression, the IMF pig declares "do you know who I am?" to the Maid, but she begs "no please" and eventually manages to flee the room after being semi-molested. After eating at a fancy French restaurant with his daughter and her new boyfriend and bragging to them about how he confessed to the press that he is a proud womanizer, Devereaux heads to JFK airport, but he does not make the flight as two cops, a black and East Asian, arrest him after being charged with attempting to rape the black maid the night before. Indeed, at least momentarily, the party has ended for the Semitic socialist party animal.

Of course, in his unwaveringly arrogance, Devereaux proclaims he has "diplomatic immunity" upon being arrested, but the hardened NYC cops are immune to his pathetic pleas of pretense. Being too fat for normal handcuffs, Devereaux complains his hands hurt and a tough cop rightfully retorts with the remark, "too fucking bad." After endlessly bitching to the cops that he wants to make a phone call, Devereaux is finally able to get in contact with his family, with his no less arrogant Zionist wife Simone complaining upon hearing the bad news, "I should just let him sit in jail...he's destroyed everything I've worked for." After being denied bail (they don't want him to pull a Roman Polanski and run off to France or Israel), Devereaux is taken to prison by two black cops who mock him for being so pathetically fat and slow. One of the black cops also yells at the IMF pimp for his arrogance, warning him, "You ain't no tough guy here, man...stop that shit." After being pushed around by a couple negro thugs in a holding cell, Devereaux faces the complete and utter humiliation of being strip searched by two black officers, who laugh at his incapacity for putting his clothes on in a timely fashion, with one of the policeman jokingly remarking, "Some workout, huh, putting your clothes back on." Since he is a stinking wealthy swine, Devereaux eventually manages to get out of prison after paying \$1 million dollars in bail and agreeing to pay \$60,000 a month for a court-approved apartment. Naturally, Devereaux is verbally reamed by his wife Simone, who clearly wears the pants in the relationship, upon being reunited with her. When Devereaux attempts to play the victim to his beloved by stating his life has been turned upside down by the recent series of events, Simone becomes infuriated and shouts, "Your life has been upside down since the day you were born. I tried...God knows I tried...YEARS...to make you into a man. Do you know what a man is? You don't know what a man is. A man knows about consequences...protecting the wife...a man doesn't follow his dick into every dark alleyway and whore that

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crosses his path.” Of course, Devereaux also uses the excuse that he is a “sex addict,” adding, “I didn’t get a blowjob, you know...it was a setup [...] I just jerk on her mouth...that’s all. That’s my sickness.” Naturally, as a man who believes he suffers from a sickness, the disgraced IMF pig feels no need to cease his depravity, even while embroiled in an international sex scandal.

Naturally, Devereaux immediately goes back to banging random women, including a statuesque French-speaking negress that he meets at a ‘ethnic’ art museum. After watching a private screening of François Truffaut’s *Bed & Board* (1970) aka *Domicile conjugal* in his lavish apartment, Devereaux is once again verbally attacked by his wife Simone. After rationalizing his sex crimes by pleading to his wife, “It’s a crime that I want to feel young?,” Devereaux proceeds to attack his beloved’s family for being war profiteers, so Simone hatefully states to her hyper horny hubby, “You couldn’t put your face where my father put his ass.” Of course, Devereaux eventually gets around to sexually assaulting another woman, even in a manner more violent than he attempted with the black Maid, but luckily the young lady gets away. Naturally, Devereaux is eventually cleared of all charges after the Maid is discredited (which was his lawyer’s goal from the get go), thus saving the sexual predator from being the sexual prey of hordes of dark-colored honky-hating prisoners (indeed, the IMF head would have served a 20 year sentence had he been convicted of rape). When Devereaux goes to a psychiatrist, he complains that his wife wants to leave him, his girlfriends have left him, and that no one returns his calls, as if it is a big surprise. When the psychiatrist asks the dejected Judaic frog about his feelings on the whole ordeal, Devereaux passionately states: “I’m sorry to say that, but I feel nothing. I don’t feel guilty, I don’t give a shit about the people [...] No one can save anyone. And, do you know why doctor? Do you know why? Because...no one wants to be saved. That is the irony I only recently understood...no one wants to be saved.” Indeed, at least Devereaux is honest. After Devereaux accuses his wife of paying someone off to free him of the sexual assault and rape charges, Simone harps on about her disappointment in her hubby, stating to him, “I didn’t want to be president...I wanted you to be president...you would have taken France in another direction,” as if a sick socialist sex predator is the kind of leader an already degenerate, malignantly multicultural, and conspicuously corrupt nation like Frogland needs. To Simone’s credit, she certainly has a point when she says to her husband, “You’re expendable because you act a certain way [...] What I will say is...so much has been done for you...and you didn’t appreciate it.” In the end, Devereaux manages to have a conversation with a young Hispanic maid named Marti (Raquel Toro) that does not result in the obese Hebraic ogre attempting to rape her.

When Abel Ferrara was recently interviewed by AFPTV and asked whether or not his film *Welcome to New York* was anti-Semitic, the auteur attempted to portray himself as a philo-Semite and responded in his typically verbally spastic

fashion by stating, "Am I anti-Semitic? No, I was raised by...well, you know, I hope not, okay. I was raised by Jewish women, so as an Italian boy...I'm like, you know...I'm not an official member of the tribe but I'm there, you know." In fact, during the same interview, Ferrara stated in a quite groveling manner in defense of his depiction of Strauss-Kahn's wife's art dealer father Paul Rosenberg, "He was not a collaborator. He was almost killed by the Gestapo. He was completely the opposite. He was very nearly killed like six million Jews." Indeed, aside from one single scene that most filmgoers would not understand, Ferrara's film gives no indication that Dominique Strauss-Kahn and his (ex)wife Anne Sinclair (who divorced him in March 2013) are members of the Hebrew tribe. Of course, what the film does do is demonstrate that Strauss-Kahn and Sinclair are exceedingly arrogant international parasites who, for what was probably the first time in their entire lives, faced minor hardship after the Hebraic presidential hopeful attempted to stick his circumcised prick in the wrong brown prole hole. As with most of his cinematic antiheroes, Ferrara chose not to portray DSK in a cliché one-dimensional fashion, but instead as a weak and pathetic pig who, when everything is said and done, seems rather lonely and unloved (after all, his wealthy wife is a mega-bitch), hence his love of soulless lechery. Unquestionably, the film's greatest merit lies in star Gérard Depardieu's crazed, flamboyant, grotesque, and even absurd improvised performance. Indeed, not since his quasi-pornographic role in Marco Ferreri's *The Last Woman* (1976) aka *La Dernière femme* aka *L'ultima donna*, where the French actor waves around his erect member, has Depardieu given such a delightfully depraved and uniquely unhinged performance. If anything, DSK should thank Depardieu for portraying him in such a memorable way, as *Welcome to New York* surely makes the disgraced French socialist politician seem more interesting and likeable than he really is. Apparently, when Guido commie auteur Bernardo Bertolucci saw Ferrara's work, he stated, "This film reminds me of a Warhol film." Indeed, as its sardonic title indicates, *Welcome to New York* features a damning depiction of the rotten Big Apple that is no less unflattering than the films of Paul Morrissey, as a work that is just as much about NYC as DSK. In that regard, Ferrara is one of the most important filmmakers that New York City has ever produced, as a sort of gutter poet who makes mostly honest celluloid anti-tributes to the superlatively shitty city and its eclectic collection of uniquely unsavory inhabitants. That being said, I can only guess how Ferrara's upcoming Pier Paolo Pasolini biopic will turnout, but at least a gay communist Guido poet/filmmaker with a nostalgia for his Catholic roots makes for a more interesting subject than a powerful Jewish sex addict. Indeed, Ferrara's bargain bin Catholic morality is certainly lost on Judaic subjects as *Welcome to New York* demonstrates.

-Ty E

DER NACHTMAHR
DER NACHTMAHR

Achim Bornhak (2015)

It is a long story, but somehow I used to know a gay Sicilian-American that somewhat resembled a young Julius Evola who became a mystical-minded neo-eugenicist of sorts because he was so obsessively disturbed by the low quality of young women in his native NYC and was quite rightly convinced that many of these debutantes were forsaken whores and too hopelessly drug-and-dick-ridden to actually sire healthy offspring. Convinced that he was on some sort of holy mission in a decidedly dysgenic age where Western governments subsidize the proliferation of racial untermenschen at the expense of the mostly Europid taxpayers, this superlatively strange gay guido, who once told me in all seriousness that he believed that Soiled Sinema was one of the darkest and most depressing website on the internet, had personally known his fair share of dumb party bitches that took too much ecstasy and felt it was his sort of quasi-spiritual duty to preserve superior genetic material that had not been despoiled by modernity. Undoubtedly, this eccentric homo wop eugenicist, who had obvious maternal instincts and clearly suffered from an advanced form of 'ovary envy,' was thinking about the sort of teenage kraut raver sluts featured in the experimental Teutonic horror-sci-fi-fantasy *Der Nachtmahr* (2015) aka *The Nightmare* directed by 'Akiz' aka Achim Bornhak (*Das wilde Leben* aka *Eight Miles High*, *Shakespeare's letzte Runde* aka *Will's Grill*) when he decried the reproductive unsuitability of many modern women. Quite provocatively and fittingly, Bornhak's feature, which features a bizarrely lovable yet somewhat tragic gargoyle-like fetus monster of sorts, deals with themes of birth, death, motherhood, and womanhood, thus making it a cinematic work that is certainly more socially pertinent than it might seem upon a superficial glance. Set in a nation that is committing collective suicide via to its rapidly declining racially indigenous birthrates and released around the time of the racially apocalyptic so-called 'migrant crisis,' *Der Nachtmahr*—a not-so-orgasmic odyssey about a vapid teenage raver slut with seemingly nil authentic personality that starts losing her mind while simultaneously developing a strong connection to the somewhat enigmatic fetus monster—is indubitably an auspicious cinematic work in a somewhat perversely preternatural form where raw and visceral teenage sexual appeal collides with ostensibly banal things like motherhood and reproduction. Indeed, for better or worse, there is no film quite like Bornhak's somewhat unclassifiable feature, even if it features some glaring cinematic influences.

Part arthouse, part exploitation, and part exercise in spastic genre-defilement, the film certainly surprised me when I first saw it as I am familiar with Bornhak's most popular flick *Das wilde Leben* (2007) aka *Eight Miles High*—a fairly generic biopic about dark-haired German 68er-Bewegung hippie icon and model Uschi Obermaier—which lacks any sort of genuine artistic merit or orig-

inality and feels like it could have been directed by any nameless soulless for-hire hack. A seeming expression of the same culturally retarded (pre)apocalyptic post-nihilistic Europa that produces tragic melancholic Nordic wigger rappers like Yung Lean, multicultural British alt-pop groups like Young Fathers, ethnomasochistic antifa-supporting far-leftist half-breed filmmakers like German-Greek auteur Nikias Chryssos (*Der Bunker*), and intriguingly unhinged yet talented Dionysian divas like Italian actress-cum-auteur Asia Argento, *Der Nachtmahr* is unequivocally a potent example of a sick and deracinated Americanized Occident that has lost its soul, succumbed to debauchery and complying with every base instinct, and completely forgotten its rich history and cultural legacy. Indeed, Bornhak, who has been supported by people ranging from David Lynch to artistically bankrupt urban scribbler clown Banksy, is clearly a degenerate of sorts, but some brutal truths bleed through his film in a way as if the auteur somehow managed to expose the hidden screams and cries of the decidedly diseased German collective unconscious. In fact, although assuredly a victim of modernity himself, Bornhak has been influenced by the writings of 'Aryan Christ' Carl Jung and his film offers an esoteric view of the excesses of Berlin youth culture and the soulless spiritual void that is (post)modernity.

Set in a decidedly deracinated trash-covered 'post-racial' Berlin that makes the Weimar Republic seem like the height of class and cultivation by comparison and featuring an inordinately sexy 'heroin chic' female lead that looks like a Russian sex slave and plastic multicultural cast that includes (but is not limited to) gooks, towelheads, uppity high yellow negroes, assorted mystery meat, and a seemingly self-loathing kraut with a fake Hispanic name (babyface rocker Wilson Gonzalez), *Der Nachtmahr* could not be more appropriately titled in both the literal and figurative sense. Part of an anti-intellectual romantic genre-conscious trend in contemporary German cinema that includes similarly generically titled films as diverse as queer auteur Till Kleinert's art-horror fever dream *Der Samurai* (2014) and Greek-German Nikias Chryssos' dank dark comedy *Der Bunker* (2015), Bornhak's artsploitation experiment can certainly be enjoyed by those individuals that either loathe or loathe art (translation: it has entertainment value). Somehow managing to combine elements of David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) and Gaspar Noé's *Enter the Void* (2009), the film is a sort of forsaken Fräulein Donnie Darko for a nihilistic age where young women seem to more prefer to get drunk and high and sleep with countless guys than do something so deplorably anachronistic as actually get married and have children. Undoubtedly, it would also be fair to describe the film as being like a marriage between Frank Henenlotter's classic exploitation flick *Basket Case* (1982) and Harmony Korine's *Spring Breakers* (2012). In short, auteur Bornhak seems to have eclectic taste in cinema, including American arthouse, exploitation, cult, and even mainstream big budgets blockbusters, or so one would assume while watching his rather am-

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biguous feature. In an interview with AFI, Bornhak notably confessed, “There are plenty of filmmakers I truly adore. But none of their films have been a direct influence on DER NACHTMAHR. At least I was not aware of that while I was working on this film. Looking back at DER NACHTMAHR, I can see some influences from E.T., which was a film I saw when I was a kid. Some say DER NACHTMAHR is like E.T. on acid. SPRING BREAKERS and IT FOLLOWS came out when we already had picture lock in the editing room, and I haven’t even seen IT FOLLOWS yet. My greatest filmmaker role models are David Lynch, Gaspar Noé, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Werner Herzog, Chris Cunningham and Stanley Kubrick.” In the same interview, the auteur would also reveal that he came up with the idea for the fetus monster long before he ever decided to create a film centering around said creature. In that sense, Bornhak follows in the footsteps of his hero David Lynch in terms of taking an incremental approach to filmmaking that involves obsessing over certain single ideas and images that ultimately act as a genesis to a more intricate cinematic creation (for example, Blue Velvet was sired from a number of ideas, including Lynch’s obsession with spying on a girl while hiding in her closet). Apparently borrowing its antiquated Teutonic title from the 1781 oil painting of the same name by Swiss artist Johann Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825) that features a demonic apelike incubus crouched on the chest of a beautiful young woman in a deep sleep, Der Nachtmahr is also interesting in the sense that it is a hopelessly modern take on Germany’s great history of dark romanticism. Indeed, if Teutonic Art Nouveau painter Franz Ritter von Stuck had grown up in modern times and developed a hedonistic obsession with teenage flesh, shitty vacuous rave music, and designer drugs, he might direct a film like Bornhak’s.

Beginning with a sensational disclaimer reading, “WARNING – The following film contains flashing lights and patterns which can cause epilepsy! Warning – This film contains isochronous sounds and binaural frequencies! Anyway – this film should be played loud!” Der Nachtmahr immediately announces to the viewer that they are about to experience a harsh and grating yet aesthetically pleasing audio-visual drug of the transcendental sort. Ultimately, the viewer is exposed to the increasingly unreliable mind of teenage protagonist Tina Petersen (Carolyn Genzkow) after she encounters a strange little creature and becomes increasingly alienated from her clueless parents and good-for-nothing dope fiend friends. To be somewhat blunt, tiny Tina seems like your typical dumb teenage party bitch, as she has no problem pissing in the middle of the street and exposing her shaved pussy in public after she gets good and wasted. At the beginning of the film, we are introduced to Tina and her two equally vapid best friends ‘Moni’ aka Monika (Lynn Femme) and Barbara (Sina Tkotsch) as they act like spastic hens and talk about stupid shit while they are driving to a pool party to celebrate the protagonist’s birthday. Among other things, Tina discusses deformed fetuses that she and Monika were exposed to at school earlier that day. While by no

means a serious student or scholar, Tina seems to have been deeply affected by one of these barely human miscreations of god. When Monika—a loudmouthed Asian that seems to be the most domineering of the thickheaded threesome—dares to make a .GIF of Tina transferring into an especially grotesque fetus, the protagonist is immediately disturbed and demands that her friend immediately delete the photo, as if she has a premonition of things to come. When they finally arrive at the party, Tina gets drunk, pops some pills (assumedly ecstasy), and then gets all moody and broody about a dopey dork rocker named Adam ('Wilson Gonzalez' Ochsenknecht) that she has an unhealthy crush on. Unfortunately for Tina, an aggressive negress also has a crush on Adam, but all of the teens seem to be too lost and immature to main a serious relationship and are barely even able to communicate with one another in any meaningful way, hence their love of mindless rave parties. Unfortunately, Tina will soon have much more serious and morbid things on her mind. Indeed, upon taking a piss in the middle of a street and flashing her teenage twat, Tina becomes horrified when the fetus she saw from school suddenly moves through a bush after a trail of her urine hits the creature. Somewhat predictably, things only get weirder from there, as Tina is soon plowed down by a very fast sportscar car while she is picking up a necklace with an occult-like medallion that she dropped in the middle of the street. Considering Tina should have been killed but is depicted in the next scene merely lying in the street as if she got too drunk and passed out, the film only gets more convoluted from there as Tina's mind begins to deteriorate and the fine line between reality and nightmare is ripped to shreds. From there, Tina finds herself increasingly haunted by the mutant fetus, who she eventually becomes extremely close to in a truly transcendental way.

A girl from a nice banal bourgeois home with loving but seemingly clueless parents, Tina, not unlike many people her age, naturally feels alienated, but it is only when the grotesque fetus enters her life that she truly comes to understand what it really means to be alone in the world. Indeed, somewhat ironically, Tina even seems detached and alienated at a rave party—a celebration of mindless extroversion that is supposed to bring people 'together'—but when she begins seeing a tiny monster that no one else can see that she is forced to confront her own loneliness and, in the process, eventually obtains self-acceptance, self-esteem, and personal sovereignty. The first time that Tina is confronted face-to-face with the ambiguously friendly fetus after the incident at the party, she is horrified that he has raided her fridge and has made a nasty mess on the kitchen floor. As a result of talking to her psychiatrist, who inspired her to attempt to communicate with the strange creature, Tina asks it, "What do you want from me?" and it responds by non-verbally offering her an egg, but she bitches, "No, I don't want an egg. They give me a rash. All over. Do you understand?," in an arguably symbolic scene of dialogue that may or may not hint at the protagonist's lack of suitability for motherhood and overall warped female instincts. Notably,

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Tina's friends call when she is in the company of the fetus and she attempts to show them it when they arrive at her house, but the little monster is gone so she opts to smoke some blunts and take bong rips with her completely and utterly worthless friends. As time passes, the fetus becomes Tina's virtual hermetic roommate and the only living being that sees the seemingly forlorn heroine for who she really is. When the fetus opts to use a razor on his arm and accidentally cuts himself, Tina immediately acquires the same exact wound on the same exact area of her body, thus hinting the two have a deep otherworldly connection and possibly that they are even the same person. Indeed, as the film progresses, it becomes more and more apparent that the fetus is Tina's sort of Jungian shadow (aka 'shadow aspect') and the grotesque bodily version of her entire collective unconscious. Needless to say, it is only a matter of time before Tina completely embraces the fetus and succumbs to the darker elements of her unconscious.

When her bossy busybody father busts into her room and finds her sleeping with the fetus, Tina realizes that other people can actually also see her little buddy, though they do not take too kindly to him. Indeed, Tina's father stabs the fetus with a rod and then a medical crew shows up and has them both tranquilized. From there, the creature is seemingly imprisoned in a hospital and has unexplained experiments done on it. Meanwhile, Tina's parents consider having her institutionalized. When Tina returns to school after a long unexplained absence, she is berated by her somewhat sympathetic blonde American teacher (Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth in a rare acting role) for missing a month and half of class. During class, Tina is exposed to 18th-century English poet William Blake's 'prophetic books,' which are a series of lengthy, interrelated poetic works drawing upon Blake's own personal mythology. Notably, part of the poem reads, "A shriek ran thro' Eternity, And a paralytic stroke, At the birth of the Human shadow," thus alluding to the fetus being Tina's shadow. Eventually, Tina totally snaps late one night, physically transforms herself into a sort of strong and super sassy neo-gothic supervillainous, steals her parents' car, and then sneaks into a hospital to free her fetus friend. In Jungian terms, Tina seems to have achieved total 'individuation' as she has achieved a complete transformation, fully embraced the fetus and, in turn, her own dark unconscious self. Coming full circle, the film concludes at Tina's eighteenth birthday party where she unexpectedly arrives and horrifies her friends by introducing both her fetus friend and new (and seemingly true) self. Luckily, Adam is happy to see Tina and tells her, "You look great." Naturally, the two kiss, but things get ugly from there, as Tina's friends seem somewhat perturbed by her new sense of self-confidence and grotesque gargoyle-like friend. Indeed, Tina's friends try to prevent her from touching the fetus, but she proudly cradles the creature like a baby and even kisses it while they look on in horror and abject disgust. Unfortunately, Tina's parents eventually crash the party and her absurdly anally retentive father seemingly kills the fetus. Notably, the fetus is also depicted being run over with a car just like Tina was

at the beginning of the film. In the end, Tina is depicted lying in the backseat of a sports car while the fetus drives in what is indubitably a symbolic scene that underscores the fact that the heroine's unconscious has completely taken over.

Depicting a morally inverted world where the protagonist's father is such a petty politically correct pussy that he is actually offended by the word "freak" and even complains "'Freak' is stupid and derogatory," yet he does not concern himself with real serious problems and seems to have no clue that his daughter is a hedonistic whore that loves popping pills, pissing in public, and playing hard to get with pudgy-faced stoners, *Der Nachtmahr* ultimately unwittingly reveals, at least to some extent, how Germany has become so valueless, suicidal, and nihilistic that a good percentage of its populous welcomes the flooding of their once-great-nation with low IQ *untermensch* invaders from the third world. In fact, the heroine of the film seems exactly like the sort of girl that would get gang-raped by these primitively misogynistic Muslim invaders where she to attend a New Year's Eve celebration or take an evening stroll down the wrong Berlin alley. Of course, being that her parents are weak bourgeois liberals and she friends with a curious clique of multicultural dope fiends that value nothing aside from their own hedonistic self-indulgence, it is easy to see why the heroine was so psychologically feeble that she needed a sort of transcendental intervention that resulted in her more or less abandoning everyone in her life, at least emotionally, for a sensitive fetus that ultimately teaches her the singular joys of early motherhood, among other things. In that sense, *Der Nachtmahr* is a shockingly hopeful film with a largely positive message about the importance of true individuality and the bottomless void that is modern youth (anti)culture. Unfortunately, somehow I think the message of the film will be lost on most teenage girls, but then again, I think the flick is probably the most influential on the subconscious level, which seems to be the director's intent.

Upon doing some research on auteur Achim Bornhak, I discovered that he is indeed a C.G. Jung fan and even advertises such on his facebook page, though I have to wonder if he sees *Der Nachtmahr* as depicting the Wotan archetype as personified by an all-too-petite teen with terribly tiny titties. Indeed, unlike all the other characters in the film, heroine Tina, who initially suffers repressed psychic complexes, arguably has the old gods in her reawakened when the fetus enters her life and exposes to her everything about herself that was once hopelessly buried in a toxic cesspool of soul-numbing ecstasy, generic EDM, and erotomania. As Jung once noted regarding the importance of these perennial archetypal "Gods, Demons and Illusions" and their influence on both the conscious and subconscious, "...they exist and function and are born anew with every generation. They have an enormous influence on individual as well as collective life and despite their familiarity they are curiously non-human. This latter characteristic is the reason why they are called Gods and Demons in the past and why they are understood in our 'scientific' age as the psychical manifestations

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of the instincts, in as much as they represent habitual and universally occurring attitudes and thought forms. They are the basic forms, but not the manifest, personified or otherwise concretised images. They have a high degree of autonomy, which does not disappear, when the manifest images change." While one could argue that National Socialism was a reemergence of the repressed Germanic god Wotan, the fetus in Bornhak's film makes for an even more interesting archetype representing Aryan fertility, as if it an expression of repressed maternity in an ungodly age of philosemitic Americanism, abortion-on-demand feminism, neo-liberalism, and cultural Marxism where motherhood is frowned upon and seen as anachronistic and unprogressive while soulless sexual promiscuity and miscegenation seen as has 'hip' and 'progressive.' Undoubtedly, the Teutonic collective unconscious is sick and repressed and heroine Tina's arguable involuntary date with ancestral memory is a blessing in disguise. Needless to say, it is only natural and exceedingly fitting that the heroine's nemesis is a nasty negress who, as a racial alien, naturally lacks the genetic capacity for encountering such archetypes (after all, were goofy kraut turd Wilson Gonzalez to have a child with a negress, it would indubitably be more horrifying than the fetus in the film, but I digress). Interestingly, the grotesque fetus in *Der Nachtmahr* looks like it could have been one of the ghouls featured in Franz von Stuck's classic 1889 painting 'Wild Chase,' which is notable for featuring a prophetic Hitler-esque Wotan on horseback. Notably, in an interview with the American Film Institute, auteur Bornhak revealed that he always intended *Der Nachtmahr* to be a film that was open to interpretation, stating, "There is a lot of guessing and discussing what the creature stands for, or what it symbolizes. Some say it's an incarnation of a symbol of bulimia (fat belly, Tina throws up, it is constantly eating, Tina is feeding him junk food, etc.); some others see the fear of an abortion or an involuntary pregnancy. Some think it represents Hades, the god who guides the living to the realm of the dead. It was always important to me to keep the interpretation open to the audience so everybody could come up with their own interpretation. For me, the creature was always something that appears between two different worlds. He is like a doorman, like a Fata Morgana that appears in the space between the ground and hot air. He never sleeps but at the same time he never seems to be really awake." Of course, as Jung revealed in regard to his belief that Friedrich Nietzsche was under the subconscious influence of Wotan despite his lack of familiarity with Wotan, "Nietzsche's case is certainly a peculiar one. He had no knowledge of Germanic literature; he discovered the "cultural Philistine"; and the announcement that "God is dead" led to Zarathustra's meeting with an unknown god in unexpected form, who approached him sometimes as an enemy and sometimes disguised as Zarathustra himself. Zarathustra, too, was a soothsayer, a magician, and the storm-wind..." Personally, I like to think that Bornhak had a sort of atavistic awakening and discovered the old gods while assembling *Der Nachtmahr*.

While I am more than just a little bit pessimistic, especially since the nation is flooded with hostile Islamic hordes, *Der Nachtmahr* hints at a sort of cool atavistic reawakening in Deutschland that actually appeals to young people. Undoubtedly, Till Kleinert's *Cowboy* (2008) and especially *Der Samurai* (2014) accomplished something similar, albeit in a sort of gay Männerbünde fashion. At the very least, these relatively idiosyncratic Teutonic neo-romantic films represent a healthy change of pace in German cinema and are certainly a major improvement over the spiritually sick films of the so-called 'Berliner Schule,' which is a movement that gives a good indication of the sort of metaphysical malaise, collective social alienation, racial and cultural deracination, and overall self-loathing that has led to so many Germans being completely happy with their nation being overrun by brown barbarians that are not exactly too fond of static and plotless kraut art cinema. Surely, unlike the German era fantasy films of German-born homo Hebrew Roland Emmerich—a master hack that was once nicknamed 'Swabian Spielberg' due to the Schwaben region around his native Stuttgart and his fetish for making childish generic genre garbage—most notably *Joey* (1985) aka *Ghost Chase*, *Der Nachtmahr* is a consistently foreboding flick with a certain unmistakable Teutonic flavor, albeit a somewhat mongrelized one that reminds the viewer of S. Spielberg's pernicious international influence. Undoubtedly, Spielberg's morally dubious, spiritually retarded, and sexually autistic films have played an imperative role in creating the sort of decidedly dull and deracinated infantile teens depicted in Bornhak's film. While *Der Nachtmahr* might be vaguely Spielbergian in terms of cute yet grotesquely friendly monster, the film is, on closer inspection, ultimately as traditionally Teutonic as the strange tales of H.H. Ewers, Expressionistic poetry of Gottfried Benn, the classic West German fantasy flick *Die unendliche Geschichte* (1984) aka *The NeverEnding Story* directed by Wolfgang Petersen, and even the dark folklore of Brothers Grimm. Indeed, Bornhak might not be the next Hans-Jürgen Syberberg or even Niklaus Schilling, but he does have enough artistic prowess and originality that he managed to sire a genuinely hypnotic and enthralling piece of neo-romantic cinema that involves teenage girls barfing and pissing in the streets, which is certainly no small accomplishment.

-Ty E

HATCHET
HATCHET

Adam Green (2006)

I've only linked the term "red-blooded" towards film a minuscule amount of occasions. One being Jeremiah Johnson and the other being *There Will Be Blood*. The very idea of American citizens calling *Hatchet* a distinctive "American" horror film is insulting. *Hatchet* is anti patriotic in every sense and a low blow to rural America in the guise of a contemporary slasher farce. *Hatchet* isn't very "old school" or "mind-blowing" as other critics hailed it but *Hatchet* is constantly entertaining and manages to be something unheard of in its genre - truly funny.

Joel David Moore plays the main "hero" of sorts. He is a charming yet awkward man attempting to get over a love once lost. Together with his token black friend, they decide to escape from the crowded streets of New Orleans by taking a haunted swamp ride hosted by none other than that Asian in *Better Luck Tomorrow*. From the opening credits, what wraps around a pleasing horror spoof is a circle jerk horror icon fest. We have constant cameos of Kane Hodder, Tony Todd, and Robert Englund. I wouldn't be surprised if Douglas Bradley was key grip. The villainous creature Victor Crowley is a barbaric inbred who misses his daddy. He's stuck in the same horrific night as the one in which his father died, so he stalks all the trespassers, murdering them in various grotesque ways. It's blatantly obvious that the name Crowley was derived from infamous occultist Aleister Crowley, who was also referenced and defeated in PlayStation video game *Nightmare Creatures*. If it weren't the comic effect, this film would be nothing but a horrible homage to the slasher genre. Thankfully, the film has the technical footnote on call and manages to amuse, both in terror and humor. Many of the fine folks at my employment lighten up the day with many various "inside jokes" relevant only to the regs. of our theater. It came as a great surprise to see many of our jokes used in action to such an advantage. Many scenes actually made me spit up with laughter. *Hatchet* isn't something new, but the creative arrogance behind the film's production certainly allows it to stand above the rest. *Hatchet* isn't a revelation in horror and it's a cocky piece of cinema violence, very similar to *Feast*, but *Hatchet* has an equivocal beauty about it. By no means an art piece, what you see is what you get in what might be the most shallow horror film to date. That doesn't mean it isn't immensely entertaining though.

-mAQ

CARNOSAUR

Adam Simon, Darren Moloney (1993)

Carnosaur might be the greatest dinosaur film ever made. Instead of material focused on subverting race or religion, It ascends into archaic carnage. It's like the Carnosaur just said "Fuck your gender, Imma eat you anyways." And for this, I have great respect. Carnosaur was one of those films you'd rent in your favorite video store as a child. Knowing nothing about it, you wouldn't even realize that these women were giving birth to raptor-rexes. The plot involved the frequented mad scientist, only this time, she was a crazy female. She created some reborn dinosaurs and managed to spread it like a disease. So not only do we have a killer animatronic baby dinosaur running around, ripping lustful teenage boy's nads off, but we got immaculate dino-conception. This provides an amazing biblical "fuck you." I wonder if this is where the "Raptor Jesus" meme was born. When Carnosaur was released, Ebert, Film Threat, and even Fangoria loved it. Now it just seems that with the release of the CGI-induced Jurassic Park, everyone forgot about the classics. I am bringing up no new point here, for it seems that this generation are all about the modern cinema. Carnosaur is also one of the older films to have a nihilistic, and sadistic ending. Carnosaur, besides being cheesy, has a strong commentary behind it. It's a slap in the face of people who try to play god. Keep aneye out for the out-of-control violence towards Hippies. Scene goes as follows. Hippie sees dinosaur. Hippie says "Peace Green Brother." Hippie gets eaten. End of scene. Diane Ladd is at her peak in this film, giving it the edge for acting it needs. This film relies mostly on screaming humans and prehistoric roars. Dinosaurs don't get much better than this. Carnosaur is the exclusive dinosaur film that features an epic showdown of Lizard VS. Machine. I wouldn't ask for anything else.

-Maq

THE GUEST
THE GUEST

Adam Wingard (2014)

Lately, there has been a strange trend among a couple American mumblecore hacks and independent horror pseudo-auteurs to collaborate on ostensibly quirky genre-bending cinematic works made for rural hipsters and slightly more discerning horror fans who do not need to wallow in buckets of blood to appreciate a film. Indeed, Adam Wingard (*Pop Skull*, *A Horrible Way to Die*), Ti West (*The House of the Devil*, *The Innkeepers*), and Joe Swanberg (*Silver Bullets*, *Drinking Buddies*) represent a sort of rising dynasty of pseudo-auteurist degeneracy that pumps out a lot of pointless films over a short time, sort of like a group of yank Fassbinders, albeit minus the genius and talent for histrionic melodrama. Arguably, the three directors are probably best known for the 'found-footage' horror anthology *V/H/S* (2012), as well as the darkly comedic 'slasher' flick *You're Next* (2011) directed by Wingard and starring Swanberg and West, with the latter work certainly being their best collaboration to date. Though he and his buddy Swanberg demonstrated they have the sexual maturity of autistic middle schoolers with their pseudo-erotic hipster digital diarrhea abortion *Autoerotic*, Wingard has certainly proven to be the most talented of his pansy pals with not only *You're Next*, but especially his latest feature *The Guest* (2014) which, not surprisingly, neither of his pals had any involvement with whatsoever. Penned by fellow hipster horror homeboy Simon Barrett (*Dead Birds*, *V/H/S*), Wingard's latest work may be typical of his previous films in that it was thrown together in a fairly sloppy fashion, features more than its fair share of overtly amateurish acting, basks in postmodern posturing and cross-genre masturbation, and is conspicuously flawed on the most fundamental level, yet it is also his most endlessly enthralling cinematic effort to date. Wingard's sort of celluloid equivalent to Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011) in terms of its hodgepodge of film and genre references, as well as its retro 1980s synthesizer-driven soundtrack featuring songs by industrial and goth groups like D.A.F. (*Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft*), Love and Rockets, The Sisters of Mercy, Clan of Xymox, and Front 242, among various groups, *The Guest* is a short and sweet action-packed movie miscreation plagued by patently preposterous fanboy logic, rather retarded murder rampages, and mentally vacant pot-addled teenybopper morons, yet I somehow liked it enough that I watched it twice, which is something I never thought I would do with a Wingard flick. Like an American philistine take on Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968) meets John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) and James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984) as starring the more suave and macho yet no less demented little brother of the eponymous serial killer of the hit TV-series *Dexter* (2006-2013), Wingard's little wonder flick has about as much aesthetic merit as a Mountain Dew commercial and the sophistication and moral prowess of a Michael Bay blockbuster, but it also reminds the viewer

that somewhat decent popcorn flicks can be made on fairly modest budgets. A genre-confused action-thriller-antiwar-horror hybrid made more or less for the same sort of mindlessly hedonistic teenagers it somewhat unflatteringly portrays, albeit with a nostalgia for the 1980s that somehow manages not to be radically repugnant, *The Guest* is certainly the best pomo jerk-off piece of at least the last couple years, as a work that Rob Zombie, Eli Roth, and Quentin Tarantino could learn a thing or two from in terms of 'relatively' seamlessly combining cinematic influences and tweaking genre expectations.

A strong, smart, suave, stoic and respectful ex-soldier named David Andersen Collins (English actor Dan Steven of the British post-Edwardian period drama TV series *Downton Abbey*) stops by the secluded country home of the Peterson family and informs the matriarch, Laura (Sheila Kelley), that he is a friend of her deceased son Caleb who was killed in the disastrous Zionist war in Afghanistan. After confirming that David is telling the truth by looking at a picture of her perished progeny's army platoon and seeing him standing with her dead son, Laura invites the seemingly harmless guest to stay at her humble abode. Before Laura and her scrawny beta-male softcore dipsomaniac husband Spencer (Leland Orser) know it, David, who is not shy when it comes to doing domestic chores around the house and spending quality time with the family, becomes more or less their surrogate son, as a seemingly morally pristine confederate Aryan Christ of sorts who knows what to say and do at all times, especially when it comes to a grieving family that has been socially splintered by the tragic death of their oldest son. Of course, suffering from John Hughes-esque teenage angst and whatnot, the Peterson's children Luke (Brendan Meyer) and Anna (Maika Monroe) need a little more time to adjust to perennial do-gooder David's old-fashioned charms.

Luke is an intelligent yet seemingly half-autistic teenage turd who is constantly bullied at school, but when David singlehandedly beats up an entire group of jocks that regularly torment him, his self-esteem improves dramatically and he grows an almost boyish crush for the elder gentleman. 20-year-old prima donna waitress Anna is somewhat harder to please, but she creams her little pink panties after seeing David topless. When Anna's mother forces her to bring David to a party at the home of her friend Kristen (Tabatha Shaun), the ex-commando smokes a little weed, drinks a couple brews, and even manages to screw the party host after beating up an aggressive ex-boyfriend to heckle her. At the party, David also befriends a burnout dope dealer named Craig (Joel David Moore) who he asks if he can find someone to buy illegal weapons from. David also learns that Kristen is secretly still dating her no-good drug dealer/would-be-rock star (ex)boyfriend Zeke (Chase Williamson) behind her parents' back, but the valiant war veteran agrees not to tell anyone. On the way home from their party, Anna complains about the fact that her boyfriend is a loser, so perennial gentleman David tries to cheer her up with the following cheesy compliment,

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“If I had a girl like you at home, I would not have gone over to the middle east and got shot at.” To display her gratitude after he sweet talks her, Anna agrees to make David a CD mix featuring a variety of synth-driven industrial groups. Of course, little does Anna realize that David will blast the same compilation while he is attempting to hunt down her and her brother Luke.

When David meets up with dullard drug dealer Craig and his ex-navy black market gun dealer pal, he reveals his true character by killing the two small cons and stealing the latter’s various weapons, which included a couple barrettes, a 9mm, and two grenades, among other things. Ultimately, David frames Anna’s boyfriend Zeke for the crime by planting the murder weapon in his car. David also takes the liberty of killing Spencer’s boss after hearing the patriarch complain about how he stole his job. Meanwhile, Kristen decides to do some snooping and calls the military where she learns that David apparently died the week before in a hospital fire. Using her female intuition, Anna deduces that David framed her degenerate boy toy and then reveals to her parents that their guest is supposed to be dead, but the ex-commando tells the Petersons a half-lie about being part of some top secret mission and they naturally believe him since they like him so much. Meanwhile, Anna’s call to the military base alerts an authoritarian negro military police leader named Major Carver (Lance Reddick) who is apparently looking for David and will stop at nothing to find him. Set during the holiday season, Major Carver becomes a sort of Dr. Sam Loomis to David’s Michael Myers-like character. As Carver later explains to Anna, who is certainly no Laurie Strode though she is infinitely more attractive, David was the subject of a military medical experiment of sorts to create the ultimate super soldier and he has a “neurological condition” that compels him to clean up all “loose ends” and kill anyone that might compromise the top secret project. Indeed, were it not for Anna’s snooping around and attempt to get her loser druggy beau out of prison, David would have never began brutally murdering everyone she loves. Somewhat ironically, Luke does not care when he learns that David is not the person he thought he was but instead a coldblooded killer who had plastic surgery to change his appearance and to get rid of his fingerprints. Like in virtually every slasher flick, nearly all of the characters croak in the end and the work concludes with more than enough room for a sequel.

If one learns anything from watching *The Guest*, it is that young girls will go to absurd lengths to support their delinquent doper boyfriends and ‘sensitive’ bullied teens tend to take on borderline psychopathic qualities after being called a “faggot” one too many times. Cinematically speaking, the film teaches the viewer that a sleek, stylish, and consistently enthralling film can be made by tweaking some of the most inane and insipid Hollywood film genre conventions, by featuring a handsome and charming likable mass murderer and a hopelessly stupid cutesy girl whose bad blonde hair dye jobs seem to have given her brain damage, and by having a narcotizing retro goth/industrial soundtrack. Indeed,

the film surely owes a large percentage of its darkly quasi-erotic potency to its vintage score, which the majority of the American mainstream filmgoing audience has certainly never heard before. As someone who couldn't care less about the Halloween franchise (there is even a blatant homage to the 'black sheep' of the series, Halloween III: Season of the Witch, thus reflecting the director's unconventional interest in the horror genre), the Terminator franchise, and the various other corporate celluloid crap that the film pays playful homage to, I have to confess that *The Guest* is pomo pastiche that actually works in a fashion that does not make the viewer feel like they have been spiritually raped by the pernicious aesthetic plague of pop (pseudo)culture. I have to admit that the film is more thoughtful than most works of its particular celluloid breed, as director Adam Wingard does not give away as many clues and answers than the work leads the viewer to think. Indeed, there is more than enough evidence to indicate that the eponymous killing machine is, in fact, the Peterson family's dead son Caleb, though Wingard thankfully never reveals the curious character's true identity. If one thing is for sure, it is that the titular character fights an urge not to kill the Petersons, though he seems to have no qualms about killing anyone else for the most insignificant of reasons. Unquestionably, the best compliment I can pay *The Guest* is that it is the first film that has ever made me question my thoughts on American independent film and a seemingly hipster filmmaker like Wingard, who seems to be the only member of his cinematic clique that has evolved as a filmmaker. Undoubtedly, it is surely an accomplishment to make metacinema entertaining and not like posturing pseudo-intellectual twaddle that is made to impress film critics and fap-happy fanboys who masturbate to the latest cover art put out by the Criterion Collection. Indeed, if you're tired of mentally retarded slasher killers with moronic masks or aesthetically sterile autism-packed action-thrillers featuring cardboard villains and heroes and generic pseudo-neo-classical scores, you might benefit from spending a little valuable time with *The Guest*.

-Ty E

THAT WAY TO MADRA
THAT WAY TO MADRA

Adriaan Ditvoorst (1965)

Although not exactly one of the director's best films (in fact, I would argue that it is one of his worst and most primitive works), *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra* directed by criminally underrated auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst (*De blinde Fotograaf* aka *The Blind Photographer*, Flanagan) is considered such an important and revolutionary work of Dutch cinema history that it was selected as one of the sixteen films included in the 'Canon of Dutch Cinema' (aka *Canon van de Nederlandse Film*), which also includes Joris Ivens' *Rain* (1929), Fons Rademakers' *Like Two Drops of Water* (1963) aka *Als twee druppels water*, Frans Zwartjes' *Living* (1971), Paul Verhoeven's *Turkish Delight* (1973) aka *Turks fruit*, and Alex van Warmerdam's *The Northerners* (1992) aka *De Noorderlingen*, among various other works spanning all of Netherlandish film history. Indeed, Ditvoorst's film is important not only because it won tons of prizes and made a name for its director, but also because it totally revolutionized Dutch cinema and introduced the auteur theory as inspired by *La Nouvelle Vague* to the Netherlands, which was completely behind much of Europe in terms of filmmaking. As a work that was praised by none other than Jean-Luc Godard, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Joris Ivens, Bernardo Bertolucci and other top European arthouse filmmakers of that time, *That Way to Madra* more or less single-handedly put Dutch cinema on the map, or as Suriname-born Sephardic Jewish auteur Pim de la Parra (*Frank en Eva*, *Wan Pipel* aka *One People*)—a man that helped revolutionize Dutch cinema in his own way by creating salacious sexploitation works with his oftentimes collaborator Wim Verstappen—stated in Thom Hoffman's excellent documentary *De Domeinen Ditvoorst* (1992) aka *Ditvoorst Domains* regarding the director's imperative influence, "He was one of the reasons that new Dutch films appeared in magazines. *Cahiers du cinema*, *Sight & sound*, and Italian and German magazines wrote about Adriaan's work." Like most of Ditvoorst's work, the less than 30-minute-long short is unflatteringly, albeit somewhat cryptically, autobiographical and expresses that director's innate anti-authority *weltanschauung* and iconoclastic approach to the cinematic language. Somewhat shockingly for a man that later lived completely off the grid and became a drug-addled dipsomaniac bum of sorts that hung out with punks and skinheads, Ditvoorst was a Dutch army officer before he ever became a filmmaker, so it should be no surprise that *That Way to Madra* takes place in a nightmarishly bureaucratic military setting where following protocol trumps the importance of life-and-death situations concerning loved ones. Beginning in a relatively straightforward, if not flagrantly cynical, fashion, Ditvoorst's film abandons convention and logic at about the midway point and delightfully degenerates into a sort of Kafkaesque magical realist nightmare that not only attacks the Dutch military, but Dutch so-

ciety in general, as well as the Roman Catholic Church that the southern Dutch director was reared in.

That Way to Madra begins banally enough with a dorky old fart military officer with a bald head and small frame giving a lecture to a classroom full of young cadets that involves stating cliché things like, "If you want to get such results you must realize...that it's your duty to obey your superiors. Obedience means subordination. Herein lies the soul of our military affairs." After his pathologically pedantic spiel, the old officer states, "I'll show another recording. You'll see how these soldiers who are ready for battle...were able to carry out their orders," and then screens an absurd compilation of authentic stock war footage that is not only of Dutch soldiers (who were easily defeated during the Second World War, as Germany took over the Netherlands and its provinces in less than a week), but also German Wehrmacht soldiers during WWII. During the screening someone yells out, "Telephone for private Oosterhuis" and the viewer is then introduced to the rather goofy and less-than-handsome protagonist Private Hans Oosterhuis (played by Hans Oosterhuis, who later became a 'prop master' that worked on films ranging from the campy thriller *Mascara* (1987) directed by Patrick Conrad to Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (2006)). Hans has been summoned because he has received a telephone call and when he gets on the phone he discovers that his beautiful young wife Yvonne (Yvonne Grosfeld) has been in an accident and that he must travel to a hospital in Madra immediately, though the person who has called the protagonist refuses to give him any details regarding his spouse's condition. Before he can leave for Madra, Hans has to go through the bureaucratic process of being granted leave and after hearing an officer bitch to him, "Just imagine...Just on the eve of a full scale military exercise. You know how important that is," the protagonist is finally given the go ahead by a captain. Unfortunately for Hans, his day from hell has just begun as a series of absurd situations and circumstances are ultimately going to prevent him from getting to his beloved.

Whilst running like hell to get to the local railroad station before the train leaves, Hans passes a Catholic Church where a priest absurdly preaches, "The past keeps us busy. The present is a torment. And the future scares us. So don't stop praying. Those who'll pray, will be blessed." When Hans gets to the train station, he discovers that the train has already left and the next one won't be along for another hour, so the protagonist makes the mistake of breaking army rules by attempting to hitchhike. Indeed, right before getting in a truck he has just waved down on the side of the road, an authoritarian MP of the super Aryan-looking sort pops out of nowhere and states, "You were hitchhiking. You know that's forbidden. You're committing an offense. You're not allowed to stand here." Determined to get to his injured wife no matter what, Hans decides to brutally beat the nosy asshole MP until he is unconscious and then is subsequently nearly hit by a car upon running right in front of it in a desperate

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attempt to flag it down for a ride. Luckily, the driver is not angered by Hans' dangerous behavior and gives him a ride, though he is a rather weird and annoyingly talkative fellow who forces the protagonist to take a temporary break from their trip at a diner even though he is in a hurry. When the driver remarks, "You know, I live in a combination of the present and the past. It's a good way to idealize things. As a child I had a great time. I remember it with pleasure," Hans begins remembering events from his own adolescent years, like when his father once went on an impassioned rant about how he is unable to communicate with him and how Dutch youth are spoiled rotten compared to his generation. Indeed, in a scene that is simultaneously a parody of the older generation and an assault on contemporary Dutch society, Hans' father complains, "Today you curse your father and tomorrow you're back for help. That's the way it goes. I can say it once or five times, that's what it comes down to. You can't compare it with the old days. We had nothing, you have too much of everything. This economic climate isn't good for young people. Neither for older people. People become insensitive because they get too much and can get too much. That's the big difference with our time." Notably, as alluded to later in the film, auteur Ditvoorst's father died in a car wreck when he was only a boy, thus giving Hans' father's rant an extra eerie dynamic when viewed from that perspective.

When Hans remarks, "The memories, the useless conversations. I don't know if they understood me. I wanted to be free," the faceless driver retorts, "You want to be free and have nothing to do with other people. Just think: that means you're totally dependent. I don't believe there is such thing as happiness. In that case you would feel free and dependent." From there in a scene reflecting Ditvoorst's troubled relationship with his own family (before killing himself, the director had not seen his family in about two decades) and suicidal tendencies, Hans recites the followings lines which were supposedly taken from some recently found unpublished work by Kafka: "I would give myself the deadly injection. My sister promised to stay silent. After my funeral she would commit suicide. She said she loved me. Maybe so, but I never knew what love was." When Hans finally arrives at the hospital in Madra, the building seems all but completely empty and his wife is nowhere to be found. While Hans runs through the hospital, the film abruptly cuts to the scene of a beachside car accident where Yvonne has assumedly died and then to a beach setting where a priest carries out a funeral for the protagonist's supposedly dead wife. After the surreal beach funeral procession, the film cuts to Hans being brought back to the military base to be disciplined. Indeed, as it turns out, Hans never beat up the MP or hitchhiked to the hospital. Additionally, Yvonne never died or had a funeral on the beach. Hans is brought to a Nordic sergeant with the curious Jewish surname 'Cohen' who calls a captain to inform him of the protagonist's ungodly crime of 'hitchhiking.'

While waiting for the captain to come by and assess the severity of his sup-

posed 'crime' and hand out appropriate punishment, Hans recalls a letter from his wife Yvonne where she bitched, "If you think I'm happy, you're wrong. I'm not happy at all. You would be home this weekend, but now you write: Another useless exercise. Not even God knows how long it will take. I know I'm unreasonable. I'm not even able to write something cheerful. I'm afraid, Hans. I'm afraid." Notably, Yvonne's narration of the letter is juxtaposed with footage of her dressing in drag with her husband's army uniform in what is ultimately an absurd, albeit strangely lighthearted and even sentimental, scene that is not exactly typical of a Ditvoorst flick. When the captain finally arrives, he sternly states to Hans, "How stupid of you to go hitchhiking" and then yells at the busybody MP for giving the protagonist trouble in the first place. After Hans throws a cigarette at the MP, Ditvoorst totally deconstructs the film by having the camera move away to reveal that the characters are not at an actual military base but are in fact on a cheaply-made stage. After Hans walks off the stage and kicks his military knapsack like it is a soccer ball, a narrator states in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, "Oosterhuis was told through the phone that his wife Yvonne was saved. Gift doctors at the hospital of Madra succeeded in operating on her. Science stops at nothing."

Rather sadly and absurdly, especially considering the unrivaled artistic genius of many of his later cinematic efforts, *That Way to Madra* was the only commercially and critically successful film of Adriaan Ditvoorst's less than prolific, if not totally singular, filmmaking career. As his friends described in the doc *Ditvoorst Domains*, Ditvoorst hoped throughout his entire career that he could at least once again capture the same amount of praise and prestige that his first film had acquired, but it never happened and it was only many years after he killed himself in October 1987 that he received some posthumous critical acclaim, though he is hardly a household name in his homeland of the Netherlands or elsewhere. Not only was Ditvoorst's first feature *Paranoia* (1967) a flop, but even when he attempted to make an artistic compromise with the relatively accessible Tim Krabbé adaptation *Flanagan* (1975), he still failed to succeed commercially. In fact, the failure of *Flanagan* led to Ditvoorst becoming a complete social recluse who slept all day and only went outside late at night to go to his favorite bar. It should be noted that, during his early years, Ditvoorst was rather enthusiastic about being a filmmaker as demonstrated by the fact he once wrote, "Filming is settling accounts, ridding yourself of obstacles. Obsessions begging for solutions. Screaming for a climax. I want to make 3000, three thousand films!" yet instead of making three thousand cinematic works, he only had the opportunity to make ten, which includes shorts. Of course, as *That Way to Madra* clearly reveals, Ditvoorst was innately anti-authority, including when it came to the rules of filmmaking, so he had an impossible time trying to find funding for his films (interestingly, his Pasolinian Biblical satire *De mantel der Liefde* (1978) *The Mantle of Love* was produced by a drug dealer that he was

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friends with) yet he somehow managed to make some of the greatest Dutch films of all-time.

Indeed, although I only saw it for the first time just a couple months ago, I regard Ditvoorst's swansong *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*—a work that is sort of like an exceedingly esoteric cinematic suicide letter that references everything from the director's love of Comte de Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror* and Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* to his loser lifestyle as a dope-addled quasi-bum who spent most of his free time hanging out with young punks and skinheads—is easily one of my favorite films of all time and it features many of the same themes explored in his first film, albeit taken to much further extremes. Notably, in *That Way to Madra*, Ditvoorst alludes to the fact that his father died in a car wreck, but for whatever reason, the filmmaker also thought that his dad's death was an act of self-slaughter, which was ultimately the way he would conclude his life. Undoubtedly, one of the most eerie scenes *That Way to Madra* is the surreal beach funeral, especially considering the fact that Ditvoorst would commit suicide by walking into the Scheldt River and drowning himself. Quite notably, actor Thom Hoffman, who played the lead role in *White Madness*, would later recreate the beach scene from Ditvoorst's first film for his directorial debut *Ditvoorst Domains* during a segment in the doc where the filmmaker's friends discuss his suicide. Of course, maybe if Ditvoorst had stayed in the Dutch army and lived the reasonably comfortable life of a commissioned officer instead of becoming a filmmaker he might not have walked into the sea, but then he would have deprived the world of some of the most ideally idiosyncratic films ever made. It should be noted that *That Way to Madra* was the first film that Dutch arthouse cinematographer turned blockbuster director Jan de Bont (*Speed*, *Twister*) had ever worked on. Of course, the fact that a hack like de Bont went on to become a rich and world famous Hollywood filmmaker while Ditvoorst died poor, destitute, and drug-addled is just one more of the many absurdities of life and surely something that the *That Way to Madra* director could have appreciated in his own weird way as a true starving artist and spiritual heir to Vincent van Gogh.

-Ty E

PARANOIA

Adriaan Ditvoorst (1967)

While highly influenced during his formative years by the cinematic revolution of the *La Nouvelle Vague*, Dutch avant-garde auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst (*Lucifer*, *De witte waan* aka *White Madness*) adamantly rejected the Marxist-Leninist politics endorsed by the likes of filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard and in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* as he was anti-authority on a more metaphysical level and considered such far-leftist ideologies to be the height of submitting to authority and conformity. Ironically, many top card-carrying commie European arthouse filmmakers like Godard, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Joris Ivens were so impressed by Ditvoorst's 22-minute experimental directorial debut *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra* that they regarded him as the most important talent working in the Netherlands at the time. With his innately incendiary and iconoclastic feature-length debut *Paranoia* (1967), the filmmaker would not only reveal his aesthetic influence from the Frog New Wave, but also his seething cynicism towards the pseudo-rebelliousness and trendy far-left politics of the time, as well as the taboo of the collective guilt of the Dutch for failing to do much to stop the horrors of World War II. A decidedly dark yet almost sadistically sardonic depiction of abolition through self-destruction, Ditvoorst's devastating transcendental debut depicts a deranged Dutch veteran with a persecution complex who has not recovered from the Second World War and falls deeper and deeper into insanity after suffering the delusion that he is a fugitive Waffen-SS soldier who escaped from an internment camp after the war. Based on the short story of the same name written by Willem Frederik Hermans, who Ditvoorst butted heads with when the writer visited the set of the production (though the director would adapt another Hermans story for his subsequent feature *De Blinde Fotograaf* aka *The Blind Photographer*), *Paranoia* was made when the auteur was only 27-years-old and is surely a formative work, yet it features most of the major themes and idiosyncrasies of Ditvoorst's later film as the director's sort of equivalent to Godard's *Breathless* (1960) aka *À bout de souffle*, albeit all the more subversive and iconoclastic. Like a stripped down no bullshit Dutch Taxi Driver, except without redemption, meets a nihilistic *The Tenant*, as channeled through the warped and uprooted psyche of the post-WWII generation, Ditvoorst expresses the collective guilt of the Netherlands for the Nazi takeover in a rather visceral fashion that takes no prisoners. As lead actor Kees van Eyck stated regarding the character he played in *Paranoia* and its connection to the director in the documentary *De domeinen Ditvoorst* (1992) aka *The Ditvoorst Domains*: "Adriaan clearly identified very much with the main character of the film. Given what we now know about him, growing gloomier...this identification becomes all the more harrowing." Featuring a far-leftist protestor being run over with a car after

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giving a preposterously contrived one-man demonstration, a goofy parrot that yells "Heil Hitler!," and a patently perturbed protagonist who commits suicide by jumping out of his apartment window without so much as screaming, but not before murdering his anal retentive landlord and worried waif of a girlfriend, Ditvoorst's weltschmerz-ridden existentialist nightmare ultimately viscerally depicts the worst and darkest of the post-WWII Dutch collective unconscious.

Paranoia begins prosaically enough with blond protagonist Arnold Cleever (Kees van Eyck in his first and last film role) in a Dutch army uniform waiting for a train to take him to war to fight against the German invasion of May 10 1940 (The Germans completed their invasion on May 17th in an occupation that would last about five years and claim the lives of about 210,000 Dutchmen). After that, a silly Robinson Crusoe postcard appears on the screen that Arnold wrote to himself from the warfront where he complains about his uniform smelling like mothballs and being so far away from his hometown in Amsterdam. Arnold also discusses how he bumped into a woman who told him how the "whole world would blow up" and that he is deathly "afraid." On top of the fact he absurdly sent the postcard to himself, Arnold did not even buy postage for it, hoping that "perhaps it will be delivered anyway." Indeed, Arnold is clearly a bit "funny," but his current state of mind is nothing compared to how his fragile sanity will progressively deteriorate after the Second World War is over. After the credits scenes, which feature shots of buildings around Amsterdam juxtaposed with the sounds of a banging acoustic guitar that almost sounds like proto-punk music, an inter-tile appears reading "Several Years Later" and Arnold is depicted at a record shop during the post-WWII era where Americanization and rock 'n' roll have surely left their mark on the Netherlands. As demonstrated by the fact that he seems to hear a dozen or so songs playing at once while hanging at the record shop, Arnold is clearly not of sound mind. Of course, hearing a horrid rock storm will ultimately be the least of poor Arnold's problems.

While Arnold is afraid of being thrown out of his apartment, his girlfriend Anna (played by 'Pamela Rose' aka Pamela Koevoets, who would go on to appear in most of Ditvoorst's subsequent films) is worried about him, stating in an overtly concerned fashion, "Because you're so afraid...I don't know what to say to you anymore." Arnold attempts to calm Anna's worries by promising, "If everything goes right, we can be married next year," but the protagonist's mind will completely deteriorate way before the next year and neither of the characters will be alive by the end of the film. While waiting to meet with his lard ass quasi-pornographer uncle (Paul Murk), Arnold casually flips through a newspaper and literally jumps out of his seat when he notices his picture next to an article about a fugitive Dutch Waffen-SS soldier named Cornelis Dirk van Maanen who was put in an internment camp after the Second World War, but managed to escape and has been a wanted man ever since. Arnold also reads regarding the fugitive

SS man that, “Due to shellshock, he is only able to whisper when he talks,” so he spends the rest of the film talking with a whisper. To his minor credit, Arnold has some good reason to suffer a persecution complex, as his uncle’s slutty post-MILF wife hatefully states to him, “you know I don’t like you.” When Arnold finally gets to speak with his uncle, he finds the old fat man, who is annoyed by his nephew’s incessant whispering, dining on an entire table of food that could easily feed an entire family. While the uncle is looking around for film reels to show to Arnold, the protagonist finds a revolver in a drawer and steals it. After the uncle finally finds the film reels, he shows his nephew footage of Gestapo-like Dutch cops in suave uniforms bombarding families and arresting large groups of young men. When Arnold gets home from his strange meeting with his uncle, he pretends to kill cops by pointing his new stolen revolver at photographs of police officers.

For the rest of the film, Arnold never leaves the apartment as he does not want to be seen as he truly believes he is the wanted Waffen-SS fugitive. Needless to say, Arnold’s bizarre behavior worries his sensitive girlfriend Anna, who is forced to buy groceries for her bat-shit crazy beau since he refuses to leave his flat. While out, Anna stops by a bar where she somberly watches an elderly couple, including an old Jewish looking woman with two broke arms (!), slow-dancing, and also spots an old man violently slaughtering his wife with a butcher knife in a nearby window. Out of nowhere, a far-leftist protestor barges into the bar and carries out a one-man demonstration where he declares “it’s a good thing there’s police,” complains that there are “31, 492 homeless people,” and then runs out into the street where he is hilariously run over by a car instantly. While sitting outside of her parent’s home while looking tragically forlorn, Anna hears her pet parrot state, “Heil! Heil! Heil Hitler!,” which somewhat upsets the girl’s fairly bourgeois father (Ton Vos of the Dutch TV series *Floris* (1969) starring Rutger Hauer), so he tells his daughter that his friend Wester knows her boyfriend Arnold and can attest to the fact that he has always been a weirdo. As Anna’s father remarks, according to Wester, who was once her boyfriend’s teacher, Arnold “had already been a strange boy at school. Shy of people...and didn’t hang out with anybody.” After revealing to Anna that Arnold was never in the Waffen-SS, her father also describes how his friend Wester was in the same army unit as Arnold and the boy apparently never recovered from the experience of the Second World War. Indeed, as Anna’s father states regarding the pathetic failure of the Dutch army, “The fact is, they had to beat it before they had seen one German...It got to Arnold so hard, he took blame for all the crimes committed by the SS.”

When Anna gets back to Arnold’s apartment, he accuses her of being involved in a conspiracy against him and screwing his much hated elderly landlord, absurdly stating, “I can always smell it when you have been with him.” Needless to say, Anna gets fed up with Arnold’s schizophrenic bizarre, hits him in the

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face with a bouquet of flowers, and tells him he is not an SS man and that he needs to see a doctor. While snooping around her boyfriend's apartment, Anna eventually finds the newspaper article that Arnold told her about regarding the Waffen-SS man, but the picture looks nothing like her beau. Despite the fact that Anna seems extremely afraid of her boyfriend and Arnold seems a tad bit too schizophrenically paranoid to be intimate with another person, the two end up making passionate love for the first and last time in the film. Unfortunately, carnal pleasure does nothing to calm Arnold's deleterious paranoia and pathological nervousness and the loony lad soon locks Anna, who is completely naked, in a room where she routinely cries for him to let her out, but he never does. When Arnold's landlord and a cop show up to evict the antihero from the apartment, he reacts rather drastically by shooting both of the men in a disturbingly calm fashion. Of course, Anna cries when she hears the gunshots, so Arnold shoots her too. After his fairly calmly executed murder spree, Arnold commits suicide by jumping out of his window.

As *Paranoia* lead Kees van Eyck stated regarding director Adriaan Dittvoorst in the documentary *The Dittvoorst Domains*: "Adriaan was strongly anti-establishment. He rebelled against everything organized or official. The church, bureaucracy, government. He strongly opposed it all. Not with political theories. It was more of an emotional matter." Indeed, Dittvoorst's directorial debut features none of the sort of groveling to far-left ideologies that were especially popular among European arthouse directors of that zeitgeist, thus demonstrating that the auteur was one of the very few true wholly subversive, anarchistic, and individualistic filmmakers of his time. As French actor/writer Michel Delahaye—a fellow who, like his comrades of the French New Wave, got his start in film writing for *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*—states in *The Dittvoorst Domains* regarding the difference between Dittvoorst and his commie frog comrades: "Dittvoorst's *PARANOIA*, like *LES CAHIERS*, displays fascination with destruction. A fascination with destruction and submission, as was the trend then. At that time, the trend was Marxist-Leninism where individuality doesn't count. We submitted totally. *LES CAHIERS* surrendered to the enemy. We collaborated with the enemy."

Notably, in terms of themes and aesthetics, Dittvoorst's first feature most closely resembles the once-banned Italian avant-garde work *A mosca cieca* (1966) aka *The Blind Fly* aka *Ricordati di Haron* directed by avant-gardist turned exploitation auteur Romano Scavolini, which was lauded by none other than Guido futurist/fascist poet Giuseppe Ungaretti. Like *Paranoia*, *A Blind Fly* is a gritty black-and-white work featuring erratic editing and a virtually nonexistent plot that centers around a morbidly melancholy young man of the mentally degenerate sort who has a dubious relationship with his loving girlfriend and who steals a handgun which he plays around with in a masturbatory fashion before going on a senseless murder spree. As the grandson of a Dutch resistance fighter who

seemed destroyed by the Second World War and who had cousins in the Dutch Waffen-SS, I found Ditvoorst's film particularly provocative, as it made me experience a sort of tragicomedic déjà vu based on fantasies I have had regarding the wartime experiences of my ancestors from the Netherlands. As Paranoia female lead Pamela Koevoets remarked regarding the film and its relevance to her and Ditvoorst's generation: "Our generation still lives in the shadow of the last World War. Our parents were silent. We had to stake new claims in the world. Build a new society, create new conventions. Our generation had to do so much. We were cut loose, as though born from a black hole. You had to find your own way." Judging by Paranoia and the rest of Ditvoorst's dark and doomful life and oeuvre, it seems that the auteur never managed to find his way out of the black hole.

-Ty E

THE BLIND PHOTOGRAPHER
THE BLIND PHOTOGRAPHER

Adriaan Ditvoorst (1973)

Like many Dutch 'war children' who grew up knowing hunger, defeat, and occupation by various foreign entities including the krauts and yanks, auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst (Flanagan, De Witte Waan aka White Madness) was a great fan of writer Willem Frederik Hermans and even adapted one of his stories for his debut feature *Paranoia* (1967), but when the writer came on the set of the film and began interfering with things, the two great creative egos naturally collided, so it seemed more than a little bit dubious that the two Dutchmen would ever collaborate together again. Luckily, a certain arrogant scheming producer named Rob du Mee was committed to making a W.F. Hermans celluloid triptych and he felt that Ditvoorst was the only right man for the job since they had both worked together on *Paranoia* which, although a pathetic commercial failure, proved the auteur had a certain uncompromising vision that complimented the novelist's distinctly dark and nihilistic post-WWII Dutch worldview. At the strange 'medium-length' of just under 50-minutes and featuring a sort of distinct and almost 'Gothic' doom and gloom black-and-white film stock, *De blinde fotograaf* (1973) aka *The Blind Photographer*—a work based on the short story of the same name taken from the Hermans short story collection *Een landingspoging op Newfoundland* (1957) aka *An Attemptive Landing on Newfoundland*—seems like it was specially tailored to be an abject commercial failure as a paranoia-plagued piece of darkly mirthful existentialist eccentricity that falls somewhere between Franz Kafka and early David Lynch, albeit with a distinctly Dutch sort of terror-tinged absurdity. Both anti-media and anti-art-faggotry, Ditvoorst's strange little filmic freak show is like an episode of *The Twilight Zone* for nocturnal nihilists and autistic acidheads, as a work with its own singularly loony logic, distinctly deranged cinematic language, and delightfully unsettling atmosphere of the farcical yet equally foreboding sort. Created at a time when 'social realism,' *cinéma vérité*, and other forms of largely static and aesthetically sterile cinematic styles were vogue in Europe, *The Blind Photographer* is most certainly one of Ditvoorst's most perversely potent pieces of celluloid rebellion, or as his friend/collaborator Thom Hoffman—the star of the director's swansong and magnum opus *De Witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*—stated in his documentary *De domeinen Ditvoorst* (1992) aka *The Ditvoorst Domains* regarding the demented flick and its equally demented director: "Realism fared well in the cinema. Adriaan was instinctively drawn to the absurd, the Kafkaesque. Mystery. Surrealism. He said: 'I despise everything superficial. Certainly when it sneaks up on you.' Again he turned to Hermans, the chronicler of Dutch impotence." Indeed, Ditvoorst's film transforms the seemingly banal into the deranged, the everyday into the eccentric, and the pedestrian into the preposterous as a work that, in terms of tone and visuals, seems like it

was seen by David Lynch when he was assembling *Eraserhead* (1977), as work that does for the ancient proletarian ghettos of Amsterdam what the American auteur's first feature did for the post-industrial rot of Philadelphia. The story of an ass-licking yellow journalist who is assigned to cover a story about a visually impaired photographer of the somewhat enigmatic sort whose creepily coddling parents have turned their home into a gigantic darkroom, *The Blind Photographer* is truly a work that transcends the line between humor and horror, as well as art and anti-art as a sort of absurdist Gothic parable with sometimes Expressionistic overtones.

Beginning simply enough with the mundane inter-title "A Day in the Life of a Reporter," *The Blind Photographer* soon introduces the super smug and obscenely arrogant anti-protagonist 'Journalist' (Gees Linnebank, who played a 'homosexual' in Paul Verhoeven's *Spetters* (1980) and had a small role in Dick Maas' *Flodders 3* (1995)), who bitches upon waking up in the morning, "Damn it, I have to get up!" and then proceeds to complain to his half-asleep wife about not being able to find his cufflinks. Before leaving for work, the Journalist's wife tells him that her mother will be coming over for dinner sometime in the evening and then asks him when he will be home from work, but he claims to have no idea. Of course, little does the Journalist realize that he will never be coming home from work after being assigned to do some investigative reporting on a famous blind photographer that still lives with his parents in a pre-multicultural Amsterdam ghetto. While walking to work, the Journalist, who walks like a spastic chicken with his head bobbing in and out, bumps into a beautiful blonde and he does not even have enough courtesy to apologize to the delightful little dame, thus reflecting his generally repugnant character. When the protagonist finally arrives at work, his slob of a boss says "I found an article...*The Blind Photographer*" and recommends "We add someone else's picture. He won't notice anyway." After a strange and unsettling walk, the Journalist arrives at the *Blind Photographer's* house and is greeted by a somewhat unfriendly old man (Frans Vorstman of Fons Rademakers' *De aanslag* (1986) aka *The Assault* and Alex van Warmerdam's *De jurk* (1986) aka *The Dress*) who tells him that he is the boy's father and then reluctantly invites him into his home. Unbeknownst to the scummy reporter, the *Blind Photographer* and his parent's know all the tricks of the trade when it comes to yellow journalism and he is about to get lost in a labyrinthine nightmare realm of no return.

Upon entering the *Blind Photographer's* home, the father asks what the Journalist wants to know and he replies like a true media whore, "Everything. Everything interests me. I'd like to have a chat with your son. The man behind the work, if you know what I mean," to which the patriarch strangely replies, "Talking to him is one thing, but seeing him is another. Why see him? He's blind. He can't see you. So, why should you see him? Something's wrong, Mr. Journo." When the Journalist absurdly argues that he would be willing to wear a

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blindfold to see their son, the Blind Photographer's mother (Elizabeth Hoytink, who also appeared in van Warmerdam's *The Dress*)—an initially seemingly introverted but ultimately exceedingly extroverted woman who hasn't said a word up until this point as she has been engaged in some hardcore knitting in a rocking chair—abruptly yells out of nowhere “Entrance fee is a buck,” so the protagonist hands over the money and the viewer is soon startled to hear the illusive eponymous character yell, “Well done, mother” in the background. After hearing the Blind Photographer, the Journalist asks if he is coming out and his father hilariously replies in a matter of fact fashion, “He's a photographer, you know. A photographer is in his dark room. That's where he feels good. That's why he is blind. You don't know much about life. Mr. Press Parasite” and the mother adds, “The paper's always full of bullshit.” Despite paying the entrance free, the parents are still reluctant to introduce the Journalist to their mysterious son and instead brag about their dark home, which they have more or less turned into a gigantic darkroom in tribute to their superstar son. After calling the journalist a “little newspaper brat” and belching in a fairly rude and raunchy fashion, the father tells the protagonist that he needs to purchase a lantern if he wants see their son since he lives in the darkness, even preposterously bragging regarding his family's lack of flashlights, “You can go buy one. We don't have one and we are proud of it.”

When the Journalist goes to a local bike shop under the Blind Photographer's father recommendation to buy a lantern, he discovers that they only have broken ones, with the shop owner arguing, “black light is sufficient when meeting a blind photographer,” so the protagonist thanks the proprietor for his “black light bullshit” and goes on his merry way to a local bar so he can contact someone at his work about getting a properly working flashlight. After bumping into an old fart with slicked back white hair passionately singing some exceedingly intolerable oldie song, the Journalist goes to use the telephone at the back of the bar and discovers a wayward young woman (Pamela Koevoets, who appeared in most of Ditvoorst's films) on the phone crying to her assumed lover, “so I won't see you again?” and then proceeding to mumble gibberish while succumbing to a total mental breakdown. Ultimately, the loony lovelorn lady covers her lips and face with lipstick in a sloppy fashion à la *Blue Velvet* (1986), wraps a scarf around her eyes as if she is a heartbroken fan-girl of the elusive Blind Photographer, and runs out of the bar where she bump into various walls and buildings. After calling someone at his work to tell them to bring him a lantern, the Journalist leaves the bar and is soon approached by an overtly salacious semi-butch prostitute with a dyke haircut and strange eye makeup who ultimately gives him a handjob for ten guilders. After having his pecker waxed by a sub-proletarian pussy-peddler, the Journalist goes into middle of the streets and laughs hysterically while looking fairly proud of the fact that he was just jerked-off by a dirty dame with dude hair. After receiving the lantern from a fat man who also buys some time with

the streetwalker, the Journalist is now 'ready' to meet the Blind Photographer, though he has no clue what he is getting into.

After going back to the Blind Photographer's home, the Journalist must endure a number of sentimental stories from the eponymous character's highly hysterical mother. Indeed, as the mother states regarding her son while lying in bed like an elderly cripple, "Please don't think we locked him in permanently. In the past he did not even photograph. We used to go out. Together. I remember going to De Rijp. Taking the bus. Happily next to each other. He wore binoculars." The mother also brags that her son used to wear "normal glasses...special glasses, made by a professor. Real blind people's glasses" and "People thought he could see very well. That nothing was wrong with him," which causes the Journalist to laugh hysterically in a rather disrespectful fashion. The Mother also tells a seemingly fanciful story about how she saved up 15,000 coupons so that she could get her son a "free camera." When the mother gave her son the camera, apparently, "He photographed like a mad man. Each day we went out. He was so delighted. Sometimes a thumb before the lens, but happiness counted. Photography is expensive. A rich man's hobby. We didn't care. We would do anything to please him. Until the moment came, we told him: 'a real photographer belongs in a dark room.' Then we gave him that large back room. Dark as hell." When the mother hears her husband coming, she warns the Journalist that he must leave, so he makes his way to the Blind Photographer's 'darkroom' where he takes a seemingly endless hallway that resembles a dark abyss. When the Journalist trips over something and complains of losing his suitcase, the Blind Photographer (Dutch TV actor Roelant Radier) laughs maniacally and is finally revealed.

While the Journalist flashes his lantern in the blind man's face, the titular character states in a somewhat sinister fashion, "Everybody does what I tell them...And they don't regret it," as if bragging of the talent that some artists have in regard to coercing people into doing stupid and nonsensical things for their art. When the Blind Photographer asks the journalist how he found his way to his room, he replies, "I wonder myself. Straight ahead all the time, so to say." The Blind Photographer, who seems to suffer from Asperger syndrome, does not like the Journalist's answer, so he states "Straight lines don't exist" and then proceeds to deliver the following philosophical tangent: "A circle is the geometric place in which all points are at equal distance to a given point. The so-called center point. Every diameter ends at the center point on one end. Why talk of endless circles when there are no circles like that? And every diameter ends at the center point. Nobody will ever be able to point out the center of an endless circle. Then we would have to cut eternity in half...Which can only be done if times comes to a halt...But time doesn't stand still." After the Blind Photographer's longwinded rant, the Journalist remarks that he would like to hear about his work, so the eponymous character shows the reporter a gigantic

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lens and states, "I have this to thank for everything. A lens made by the famous Petzval. Ingenious object." Needless to say, the Blind Photographer acts offended when the Journalist is reluctant to write down his mathematical "optical calculations" for his story. Naturally, the Blind Photographer becomes even more offended when the Journalist remarks "I don't think my paper is interested. Your mother's story was beautiful. The mother figure is sacred. How can you expect me to write that it's all lies?" after he tells him that all of his mother's sentimental stories all complete fabrications. Indeed, the Journalist and Blind Photographer both have their own bullshit interpretations of reality as men that make a living off of fabricating false realities and perspectives, thus they naturally butt heads when in one another's company.

When the Blind Photographer asks the reporter, "What are you writing about? A mother or a blind photographer?" he replies "Perhaps about neither of them. I only write what my audience wants to read about. I don't care about who." Not surprisingly considering his profession as a blatant public novelty and absurd gimmick as a mensch who cannot see yet snaps photos for a living, the Blind Photographer also reveals that he was already famous before anyone had even seen his pictures, adding regarding his parents' supposed scheme to have him imprisoned in their home after he became a household name, "Suddenly it was a good idea to have the film developed...With all the double exposures...Afraid that I would ask for more, they decided to lock me up. I can't make any new pictures...[I] have to chew on old fame." According to the the Blind Photographer, he is a perennial prisoner in his own home and his parents do not even have the decency to buy him new film stock. On top of that, apparently to save the money, the Blind Photographer's father merely reloaded his son's camera with the same film over and over again, thus created warped double exposed photographs. When the Journalist asks the Blind Photographer how he knows that his father did this since, after all, he cannot see, the titular character gets rather offended, gets out of his chair, and says to the reporter while approaching him in a menacing and almost vampire-like fashion, "You think I'm blind as a bat? How I found out...I saw it! It's not that I can't see. It's that I cannot look. You're a big crook like I am...And an asshole too! You think I didn't see it." From there, the Blind Photographer flashes the lantern light in the Journalist's face and begins choking him. While the Journalist laughs hysterically while being choked to death, the Blind Photographer is revealed to have ominous and particularly penetrating completely white pupil-less eyes that radiate a certain sinister soullessness. As the Journalist dies while he is being strangled, his laughter wanes while transcendental neo-classical music plays in the background in what is ultimately an almost sinisterly sardonic climax to a sinisterly sardonic film. In the end, the Journalist is finally able to 'see the light' (or something).

In the documentary *The Ditvoorst Domains*, The Blind Photographer producer Rob du Mee states regarding auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst and his relation

to the second Hermans adaptation they collaborated on, “He was a strange guy. He was a poser. Always withdrawing. This was often entertaining. Charming in a way. A con artist. But that’s film.” Apparently, Ditvoorst acted a lot like the eponymous character of his film while directing the work, with du Mee also remarking in the doc regarding the director, “The more bizarre it was, the more he started to giggle. He would really get a kick out of that.” Not surprisingly, du Mee never got to finish his planned W.F. Hermans trilogy, as he and Ditvoorst never collaborated together on another film again. Interestingly and almost somewhat unbelievably, *The Blind Photographer* was shot by none other than world-class Dutch cinematographer Jan de Bonet who also shot Paul Verhoeven’s classic arthouse (anti)romance *Turks fruit* (1973) aka *Turkish Delight*—a work that is not only considered the most successful Dutch film of all time, but also received the award for ‘Best Dutch Film of the Century’ in 1999 at the Netherlands Film Festival—the same year. It is kind of hard for me to wrap my head around the fact that the same man that did the cinematography for Ditvoorst’s *The Blind Photographer* would also go on to shoot Hollywood blockbusters like *Die Hard* (1988), *The Hunt for Red October* (1990), and *Basic Instinct* (1992), but that just goes to show the kind of serious whoring a European artist has to do if they want to be in anyway monetarily successful in this Americanized day and age. Of course, this also explains why Ditvoorst—a filmmaker that is well known for hating producers and not caring about what audiences thought of his work—only directed a mere ten films (including his shorts) during his nearly twenty year filmmaking career despite the fact he originally intended to direct 3,000(!).

As the grandson of a blind woman, I found *The Blind Photographer* to be an especially idiosyncratic experience that straddled a strange line somewhere between absurdist surrealism and horrifying hyperrealism. Indeed, on top of the titular character’s mother’s fanciful stories reminding me of my own grandmother’s fanciful stories, the *Blind Photographer*’s borderline ‘sixth sense’ gave me an eerie reminder of what it was like to be in the company of someone that is more than just a little bit visually impaired. Undoubtedly, it is somewhat of an awkward experience for a blind person to call you handsome or know that you’re are doing something that shouldn’t be as a child even though they cannot actually see you doing it. Of course, Ditvoorst’s film is more about the oftentimes overlapping con-artistry of both journalists and artists than the perennial darkness that the blind must endure. When it comes down to it, *The Blind Photographer* is a somewhat short and rather savagely sweet celluloid joke at the expense of not only both the journalist and artist, but the viewer as well. Indeed, unlike most serious avant-gardist, naughty nihilist Ditvoorst was fully willing to admit that there was a certain amount of preposterous pretentiousness and bullshitting that comes with being an artist. After all, what kind of cynical trickster makes a film about a blind photographer?!

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-Ty E

LOLITA

Adrian Lyne (1997)

Adrian Lyne's adaptation of *Lolita* is more "revealing" than Kubrick's film. Don't expect to see much from Lolita (though she bares some skin). Super pervert Clare Quilty exposes his horrible floppy cock in an unflattering drunken stupor (while attempting to escape execution). Lyne's version of the novel stays truer to its source material than Kubrick's ultra tame 1962 version. I felt that Lyne's version was more of an anti-Kubrick film. I respect screenwriter Steven Schiff and director Adrian Lyne's attempt at being original. Jeremy Irons pulls off an Anglo pedophile in a completely natural manner. Irons' effeminate nature has always worked to his advantage when playing sexual deviants (I.e. David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers*). His role as Humbert Humbert in *Lolita* is "fitting" to say the least. I found disgust in his ability to masquerade as a man of high manners while concealing the soul of a conspiratorial coward. Young Lolita (played by the talented Dominique Swain) sees through Humbert as clearly as Humbert would like to see through her dress. Unlike Kubrick's version of *Lolita*, the character of Clare Quilty has a much more minor role. Lyne's version of the film primarily focuses on Humbert Humbert and the pathetic infatuated state that guides his life into hopelessness. Stanley Kubrick seemed more focused on Clare Quilty because he no doubt wanted to give Peter Sellers more screen time. Chameleon Sellers would have never accepted such a minor role (when comparing to the novel and remake). Lyne's version of *Lolita* is a worthy update of the novel. I found more intensity in his version than Kubrick's version (and I generally believe less is more). Adrian Lyne has proven that he has the ability to make the most odd of situations erotic (I.e. *Jacob's Ladder*). Although I still enjoy Kubrick's version, it is somewhat dated and lagging. I am a product of the degenerate age. Lyne's *Lolita* is worthy of being considered one of the best contemporary erotic films.

-Ty E

GRIM
GRIM

Adrian Santiago (2010)

By now you should be acquainted with Troma, that oh-so exquisite branch of shameless horror that recycles footage and plasters DVD releases with painful introductions with fart-dubs and self-appointed scream queens. Grim is a recent film picked up for distribution by Troma, which more-or-less means that director Adrian Santiago gave the rights to his film away for a very small amount of cash, if any at all. Now, Grim falls alongside many of the classic exploitation films for a simple reason; the exaggerative marketing ploy. Branded across the back of the case, in big, bold letters, reads "The Most F*cked Up Film of the Year", a quote in which no person admits stating. We've all seen this used before but to a similar comedic effect, whether it be Banned in 492 Countries! atop the Isle of the Damned poster or the better known Cannibal Ferox purportedly banned in 31 countries. This path of methodical marketing works wonders, especially if the film actually contains a fraction of what it reports. Sadly, Santiago's Grim offers nothing apart from character impotence and a hack-job attempt at recreating Mexican uprising ala Machete.

Grim opens up with a shoddy pick-up truck speeding down a long, lonely desert road in Texas. In the bed cowers a family with gun sights aimed down upon them. For reasons unclear at first, the parents are brutally executed and the boy is left with a nasty pipe wound on his forehead. Found by an ex-lawman, Nicolas Grim is raised a proper boy. Or so we're left to assume because Grim has a nasty habit of skipping large chunks of time and then hides behind an alleged dystopian atmosphere hinted at through contrived pieces of dialogue. Once Grim is of age he reflects the murderous compassion held by his parents killers when they return to take the lives of his adopted guardians. Grim soon discovers that the militia held responsible for such savagery is a rogue union known as the United American Brigade. From here Grim escalates into third-rate slaughter in the terrible form of digital video. Santiago's priorities should be ashamed, all talk and no aesthetic. Not once does Grim resemble a project higher in class or charm than a student film. Simple scenes of gunshot wounds are turned into a fallacy all its own when 2 foot long streams of tomato soup blow out the back like a renegade squib. Not to mention the daft production in which a simple set piece of obstinate musing falls victim to relentless set echo.

Classy...

When you tally what Grim would hope to achieve and contrast it to its successes, this would be the point at which you'd look down to discover an empty looseleaf page. Grim is stubborn filmmaking at its worst. Juggling through comedy, mexploitation, thriller, and post-USA, you begin to realize that all of these classifications are simply too good for Grim. Whatever Santiago had in mind for Grim withered before the film could even take off into the ignorant

land of postmodern exploitation garbage it hoped to populate. I can safely refute the existence of aspiration in Adrian Santiago's future career in film. If he hopes to achieve anything in the business of horror at all he must set aside his atrocious digital dreams and rework his childish ideologies on a better format. Doomed economy or not, Grim is convicted for a litany of transgressions - crimes against cinema. The likes of which I could never forgive. What's more is that Grim manages to be unspeakably boring. Don't take my word for it, simply pick up a copy for yourself @TLACULT and attempt to muster appreciation for Grim's diseased cause. Unless, of course, you happen to be a purebred film masochist. Positively speaking, Troma is getting quite skilled at masking their products under beautiful cover art. I've always had an aesthetic fascination with art & marketing and that is about all that can be said for Grim.

-mAQ

EUROPA EUROPA
EUROPA EUROPA

Agnieszka Holland* (1990)

Europa has easily produced the greatest of World War II films. This is no surprise as unlike the average American, most Europeans suffered the horrors of war firsthand. Whether it be occupied Holland or war torn Poland, the average European most likely suffered in one way or another. ½ Jewish Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland's *Europa Europa* is one of the many masterpiece World War II films to come out of Europe. *Europa Europa* follows the bizarre true story of Solomon Perel, a Jew boy who pretended to be an Aryan and fought for Germany in the second World War. Solomon Perel is not the only Jew to have fought for Hitler in the second World War. It is estimated that around 150,000 men of Jewish descent fought in the German Army during World War II. Bryan Mark Rigg's book *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers* does a great job documenting this publicly unknown and neglected part of history. Solomon Perel was different from many of the Jews that fought for Hitler in World War II in that he was a full practicing Jew that had to hide his identity. His biggest problem with hiding his identity was trying to hide his circumcised penis from his Aryan comrades in Hitler's youth. Despite their obvious anti-Semitism, Solomon Perel seems to sympathize with the Nazis in *Europa Europa*. He has seen the slaughtered bodies of ethnic Germans killed by Bolshevik death squads and has grown a certain empathy for his biological enemies. They have accepted him as a fellow Aryan and he is proud of it. I found that the perspective of Solomon Perel to be one of the most original and interesting perspectives in a World War II film. Not only does Perel fight for the German Army and train with Hitler's youth, but he also stays at a Soviet orphanage. From Perel's perspective, the viewer gets to see both extremes of the political groups that were competing to takeover Europe. Solomon Perel seems to sympathize with the Nazis more than the communists. *Europa Europa* director Agnieszka Holland offers some creative directing in the film that should be noted. I especially like a dream sequence featuring a dance between Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler. These were the two men that were responsible for the tearing apart of Poland during World War II and Holland couldn't have come up with more a ironic dream moment. It feels as if *Europa Europa* has two authors, Agnieszka as the imaginative director and Solomon Perel with the driving true life story. Agnieszka also couldn't help but get *Europa Europa* star Marco Hofschneider nude every chance she got. *Europa Europa* is a dreamlike World War II odyssey that I have no problem coming back to at least once a year. Steven Spielberg should have taken notice of *Europa Europa* instead of ripping off old Hollywood studio films like *The Longest Day*. When I watched *Europa Europa*, I felt that Agnieszka Holland really cared about her subject and the complicated circumstances surrounding him. When I watch a film like *Saving Private Ryan* directed by Spielberg, it feels like a film directed by a petty anti-German propa-

gandišt. Europa Europa is a film for anyone that loves good cinema.
-Ty E

TOTAL ECLIPSE
TOTAL ECLIPSE

Agnieszka Holland* (1995)

Arthur Rimbaud was the greatest and most revolutionary poet of his time in part because unlike most artists, he was not a member of the bourgeois class. As the degenerate French philosopher Foucault once mentioned, Rimbaud's mother came from the peasant class and eagerly wanted to become part of the bourgeois. She constantly treated Rimbaud as a potential criminal, instilling a sense of guilt in the young poet that would no doubt have an influence on the decadent poet's prose. Rimbaud felt that he was "exempt from all morality" and lived a short life of wandering decadence. In the film *Total Eclipse* directed by Agnieszka Holland, the most creative period of Rimbaud's life is chronicled as well his eventual downfall after struggling with a form of cancer that resulted in the amputation of his leg. Despite his highly influential and revolutionary contribution to the art of poetry, Arthur Rimbaud completely quit writing by the age of 21 and died at the young age of 37. Surely not a long life, but his artistic contributions to the world can be matched by very few.

I had some reservations when I found out Leonard DiCaprio played the role of Arthur Rimbaud in *Total Eclipse*. Of course, DiCaprio did a fine and believable job playing a energetic retard in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?* Unfortunately for Leo, his reputation is largely based (or at least was) on the awakening sexuality of prepubescent girls and less based on his actual talent as a serious actor. After watching *Total Eclipse*, it is quite apparent DiCaprio was the right man for the job in regards to playing Rimbaud. Despite being part of a decadent artistic circle, Rimbaud was known for even offending his fellow poets and artists. In *Total Eclipse*, Rimbaud states of a group of fellow French poets that they are "more bourgeois than the bourgeois" and he was right. Where he differed from his contemporaries is that he saw no limits and no boundaries, hence why he broke new ground in poetry. In *Total Eclipse*, Leonardo DiCaprio is quite young and even more of a smart ass. In fact, throughout the film, DiCaprio's character becomes rather annoying, displaying a certain hostile and improperly channeled form of energy that was only best expressed in Rimbaud's poetry.

The main plot behind *Total Eclipse* is Arthur Rimbaud's relationship with the older poet Paul Verlaine. Despite being much older than Rimbaud, Verlaine is a weaker poet and man. In fact, Verlaine is such a weak man that he allows Rimbaud to ruin his family and marriage, on top of being sodomized by the younger poet. It is clear from the start of *Total Eclipse* that the artistically superior teenage Rimbaud uses Verlaine for his money which allows the two men to travel the world together. The very ugly Paul Verlaine (played without shame by David Thewlis) is obviously in love with the young Arthur Rimbaud. Rimbaud never returns the love, but instead taunts Verlaine for his mediocrity and ugliness, eventually driving him to the verge of insanity and even attempted mur-

der. The greatest gifts Rimbaud gave to the world were with his hands so it was quite fitting that the drunk Paul Verlaine would shoot him in one of those poetic hands. The chemistry between DiCaprio and Thewlis during these various dramatic and sometimes brutal scenes is certainly powerful to say the least, making one feel the urge to take a break from the film various times to emotionally collect oneself. It is sad to think that DiCaprio had more chemistry with David Thewlis than he did with Kate Winslet in Titanic but I guess that is the magic of the movies.

In a letter to a friend, Rimbaud once stated, "I am condemned; have always been, forever." That single sentence briefly tells the autobiography of the decadent poet's short life. The older poet Paul Verlaine would never truly win over his young friend, but at the conclusion of Total Eclipse he seems to come to terms with this by realizing he was probably the man who best understood and respected the work of Arthur Rimbaud. Seeing as Rimbaud's work was already superior to Verlaine's in his teenage years, his life would also eclipse that of his older friend, leaving the older man to die alone in a drunken stupor. During the conclusion of the film, Paul Verlaine sits pathetically at a bar drunk on absinthe imagining the young Arthur Rimbaud sitting in front of him. Rimbaud's early death was only appropriate for no one could ever keep up with him but he was also marked as the first to go, surely the tragedy of a great poet.

-Ty E

THE SEA
THE SEA

Agustí Villaronga° (2000)

Although his first feature *Tras el cristal* (1987) aka *In a Glass Cage* is his most idiosyncratically and artistically stylized and thematically terrorizing, Agustí Villaronga's sixth film *El Mar* (2000) aka *The Sea* – based on a novel of the same named by Blai Bonet – is assuredly the Spanish auteur filmmaker's most emotionally grating and draining, yet startlingly spiritual work as a sort of wicked fantasy/nefarious nightmare of the Spanish auteur come to life in celluloid form. Indubitably, the unofficial master of stark sadomasochistic coming-of-age films – the strikingly sordid sort that no impressionable children see lest they turn out like the emotionally broken children of the Spanish filmmaker's cinematic works – Villaronga opens *El Mar* with the introduction of five decisively damned grade school children who shed their innocence long before they can reach puberty or drive a car as they become secondary victims of the fratricidal terror and trauma of the Spanish Civil war. During the summer of 1936, the violence of the war finally hits a tiny village in Mallorca in a way that will touch the children for the remainder of their ill-fated lives. After four of the children – boys Andreu Ramallo, Manuel Tur, Pau Inglada and a girl Francisca – witness the execution of leftist revolutionaries by pro-Franco partisans, they decide to take revenge against Julià Ballester; the young son of one of the Nationalist executioners. Pau is especially possessed by a commanding sense of street justice as his father was one of the men that was executed, thus his personal vendetta against Julià runs blood deep and is of a wholly visceral and innately irrational nature. Originally planning to torture boy jerk-off Julià by forcing him to drink ungodly amounts of castor oil, things take a turn for the worst when the arrogant son-of-a-bitch mocks the fervent and fuming fatherless boy. Instead of merely lubing Julià's vile vocal chords, Pau brutally bashes his archenemy's brains against a boulder and mercilessly finishes him off by stabbing him repeatedly in the throat in a most malicious and ultimately murderous manner. Totally unable to psychologically deal with what he has done at such a young age, poor Paul commits self-slaughter by jumping to his prepubescent death via a deep hole in the cave. Although Julià and Pau have perished into eternity, three collateral victims of war remain – Andreu Ramallo, Manuel Tur, and Francisca – all of whom deal with the tragedy in different, albeit similarly radical, ways.

Over a decade later, the three victims are brought together by happenstance which eventually results in the most unhappy and unfading of consequences, at least for the two males Ramallo and Manuel Tur. In the early stage of tuberculosis, Ramallo (Roger Casamayor) – now a cocky and cryptically-cock-sucking fellow – goes to a sanatorium in Mallorca to recuperate during the early stages of TB, thereupon randomly running into Manuel (David Lozano) and Francisca (Victoria Verger) who have already reunited through faith and circumstances.

Clearly internally scarred by the events that transpired over a decade ago, Manuel is now pathologically obsessed with Catholicism, which he uses to keep his latent homosexual tendencies in check. Although no longer with her hymen intact, Francisca is even more fanatical about Mother Mary and her virginal birth than Manuel, so much so that she has become a nun and helps nurse sick TB patients back to health, while also providing comfort to those unlucky patients on the verge of death. A victim of sin and sodomy, Ramallo receives unwanted visits from ex-boss Don Eugeni Morel – a middle-aged molester and smuggler of contraband – who the young man previously relied on as a fiendish father-figure of sorts. Despite the very different but equally peculiar paths in life, it is quite apparent during *The Sea* that they are all still spiritually united by the events that transpired during that calamitous day of the Spanish Civil War. Their by chance meeting coupled with themes of engulfing Catholic guilt make *The Sea* seem like the threesomes' reunion was foreordained by sinister forces, especially when one considers the exceedingly grim yet fitting end of the film that parallels what happened to the children during their childhood years. In a sense, both Ramallo and Manuel Tur would go on to face a fate more deplorable and vexing than that of Julià and Pau because at least their suffering was only short-lived. Charming and charismatic yet ultimately mentally unstable due to the two deaths he witnessed as a child and the sexual abuse he experienced thereafter, Ramallo brutally beats Manuel's cat an inch away from death. Being a man of unflinching faith, Manuel uses the dying animal as the opportunity to reconcile with his childhood friend. Forcing Ramallo to put the nearly dead feline out of its misery, Manuel and his belligerent boyhood friend both bury the cat in a symbolic gesture that temporarily restores their friendship, but the scars and sins sown in childhood henceforth prove to run too deep. Eventually, Ramallo goes on a rampage of slaying and forced sodomy that proves to be even too powerful for marvelous Manuel's holy miracle of self-induced stigmata. In the end, only Francisca – a modern day Mother Mary figure not unlike Amanda Krueger of *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors* (1987) – has transcended the wages of fear, fury, and fatality.

Incidentally, director Agustí Villaronga's father was a child during the Spanish Civil War, so one can speculate that these events had a penetrating, if terribly traumatizing, effect on his son as expressed in films like *The Sea* and his most critically and financially successful work *Pa negre* (2010) aka *Black Bread*; both of which were filmed in the Catalan language and set during the civil war between 1936-1939. Although sleekly stylized and decidedly thrilling and chilling, *The Sea* is essentially a work of aesthetically keen kitsch of the sleazy yet sophisticated soap opera sort, especially when compared to Villaronga's greatest aesthetic achievement *In a Glass Cage* – an audaciously atypical arthouse horror flick that earned him the Manfred Salzberg Award at the Berlin film festival – and the sordid cinematic storytelling of *Black Bread*; the film that would earn

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the Spanish auteur thirteen Gaudí Awards and nine Goya Awards, including best film, best director and best adapted screenplay, as well as a nomination for Best Foreign Language Film at the 84th Academy Awards (making it the first Catalan-language film be nominated for the prestigious award). Although I doubt it was Villaronga's intention, *The Sea* shares a similar 'dream logic' in a manner that would predominate the director's second feature-length work *El niño de la luna* (1989) aka *Moon Child*; a wonderful fantasy flick that would prove to be the filmmaker's least sombre and sinister cinematic effort. Make no mistake about it, *The Sea* is a pure and unadulterated Agustí Villaronga auteur piece, hence why the film oftentimes feels like a softcore sadomasochistic porn flick of the guilt-ridden and consciously Catholic sort, but an uncompromising and courageous one nonetheless. That being said, if Pedro Almodóvar (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *The Skin I Live In*) is the Spanish queen of camp cinema, Villaronga is surely the Catalan prince of pernicious coming-of-age carnage. If you're a naive novice to the foreboding films of Agustí Villaronga, *The Sea* surely makes for an unsettling and unforgettable introduction to the Spanish filmmaker's taboo-taunting themes and oftentimes afflicting yet abnormally attractive aesthetic.

-Ty E

IN A GLASS CAGE

Agustí Villaronga° (1987)

A number of years ago, I made a valiant attempt to hunt down and see every sexually perverse Nazi-themed arthouse film ever created in post-WWII Europe. Naturally, I viewed and savored Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969), Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), but none of these films compared to the antipodal aesthetically-pleasing unsightliness, thematic depravity, and overall solemn gloominess of the Spanish film *In a Glass Cage* (1987) aka *Tras el cristal* directed by Balearic auteur Agustí Villaronga (Moon Child, Black Bread). Without a doubt, Villaronga is the greatest director of stark and ruthless coming-of-age films, but none of his subsequent works quite compare to the grim, emotionally-draining and uniquely uncompromising nature of his directorial debut *In a Glass Cage*; a work that John Waters – the Baltimorean auteur who once directed a pot-addled and unflatteringly overweight drag queen eating steaming dog feces – once described as, “a great film, but I’m scared to show it to my friends.” *In a Glass Cage* focuses on a pedophilic ex-Nazi doctor named Klaus (Günter Meisner) who is permanently constrained to an archaic iron lung (the ‘glass cage’) due to being paralyzed after a botched suicide attempt. Upon a superficial glance, Klaus – a robust and impeccably dressed family man with a wife and a daughter – seems quite bourgeois, but underneath his clean exterior lies a soul modeled after infamous child murderer Gilles de Rais heart. In fact, Villaronga was partly inspired to create *In a Glass Cage* after reading Georges Batailles’ book on the Breton knight leader and companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc turned prolific serial killer. Instead of setting the film during the Hundred Years’ War, Villaronga decided to study Nazi concentration camp experiments on child, which inevitably inspired the script for *In a Glass Cage*; a work that makes Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993) seem like a mundane melodramatic television mini-series on monetary-steroids. Despite being easily one of the most emotionally grueling and unsettling films ever made, Villaronga’s film features less nudity and violence than Spielberg’s artless and overly sentimental zio-ganda epic, thus, unlike *The Damned* and *The Night Porter*, one can hardly make the argument that *In a Glass Cage* is a work of exploitation masquerading as art. Needless to say, do not watch *In a Glass Cage* if you’re looking to gratify a fetishistic compulsion for images of gratuitous torture or hoping to find a kinky masturbation aid, as you will be certainly disappointed, unless you happen to be someone like Albert Fish or Victor Salva.

Ultimately, *In a Glass Cage* is a tale about the vicious circle of abuse where the victim become victimizer; a relatively common and unfortunate occurrence that few people want to recognize. Klaus has had many victims over the years but few probably compare to Angelo (David Suñé); a seemingly angelic boy who

IN A GLASS CAGE

shows up to the ex-Nazi doctor's house anonymously as an adult to volunteer as a nurse. Immediately upon arriving at the pedo's pigpen, Klaus' neurotic wife Griselda (María Paredes) treats Angelo as a contemptible nuisance with dubious motives. Indeed, grizzly Griselda – a less than delightful lady whose ever-present resentment seems to be the result of extreme sexual repression – is correct when it comes to her female intuition, but little does she know that Angelo plans to become the new man of the house and he is not looking for a nagging wife. Out of all those living at the house, Klaus' daughter Rena (Gisèle Echevarría) – being a highly impressionable prepubescent girl with a rather pathetic, physically immobile and suicidal father – is most impressed with Angelo and his intriguing, haunting aura. After the Second World War, Klaus went into exile with his family in Catalonia, Spain and continued to molest and murder young boys; an aberrant addiction he must have had an overwhelming guilty conscious about, hence his bungled attempt at self-slaughter via jumping off a tower. Sometime before attempting suicide, Klaus sexually tortured and eventually murdered a young boy with a mere blow to the head, which was witnessed by adolescent Angelo; another victim of the good doctor who escaped from and stole the pathologically perverse pedophiles incriminating diaries and torture photographs. Clearly physically (as signified by a scar over his eyebrow) and emotionally scarred by the odious ordeal of his childhood, Angelo – who is incontestably now more mentally deranged than Klaus – begins bringing young boys to Klaus' haus and murdering them before his very weary eyes while reading fiendish excerpts from the stolen experiment diaries, thus both ironically horrifying and further compounding the irrevocable guilt of the stiff Nazi doc in the process. As his already fragile sanity wanes and his coldblooded ruthlessness becomes more pronounced, Angelo's appearance changes dramatically as he goes from looking positively pusillanimous and wearing drab clothing to looking like some sort of stoic New Wave Nazi chic dictator. Of course, with Griselda gone and with Rena under his spell, Angelo is now indeed the Führer of the house and he celebrates by interior decorating the place in a strikingly complimentary fashion; adorning the now almost-phantasmagorical abode with tons of barbed wire and gloomy blue wallpaper, henceforth making it seem like an extravagant post-apocalyptic art deco concentration camp for deathrockers. It is quite apparent as *In a Glass Cage* progresses that Angelo is in the midst of completing his metamorphosis from petrified child to prudent perpetrator. In the end, Angelo's self-prophesying future looks bleak, but he has an accidental protege of sorts to take his place.

Not unsurprisingly but certainly unfortunately, *In a Glass Cage* has been often compared to *Apt Pupil* (1998) directed by Bryan Singer and based on a novella by Stephen King, yet unlike its predecessor, the propagandistic Hollywood film is not the least bit artful nor subtle. As an obscenely candid and unsentimental work of celluloid art, *In a Glass Cage*, like in deplorable crimes of similar na-

ture in the real world, offers no sort of reconciliation, thus leaving the viewer with a paralyzing feeling of fretfulness that haunts one literally years thereafter. Despite its disconcerting persuasion, *In a Glass Cage* is also an aesthetically dynamic work that has aged most gracefully since it was released about ¼ a century ago. In short, there is no other film in existence that is quite like *In a Glass Cage* that has the ability to both dazzle and dishearten the filmgoer in a most penetrating and audaciously austere manner. It should be no surprise that *In a Glass Cage*, much like the considerably inferior American homosexual serial killer *Frisk* (1995) directed by Todd Verow, was met with ample animus when it was screened at various gay and lesbian film festivals upon its initial 1987 release. Thankfully, unlike Tom Kalin's *Swoon* (1992) – an American arthouse work based on the real-life thrill killing of a child by infamous rich gay Jewish homosexual lovers Leopold and Loeb – *In a Glass Cage* does not feature any sort of sociopolitical message, hence the controversy it stirred amongst certain overly prissy politically correct aberrosexuals. Considering its often hardboiled portrayals of child abuse and murder, *In a Glass Cage* is not a film I would recommend to real-life victims of similar craven crimes. In fact, although it has been nearly a decade since I first saw the film, I am still baffled that *In a Glass Cage* – a work that is like a cross between the dolorous stock-footage featured in the HBO documentary *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996) and the high camp of German New Wave auteur Werner Schroeter's *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* – even exists, yet it does as a brutal and beautiful work of cinematic bliss.

-Ty E

HOT ROD
HOT ROD

Akiva Schaffer* (2007)

I've said it before and I'll say it again; I hate reviewing comedies. As long as there's free will, tastes will change and vary from anothers. I might bring about a point of a certain joke revolving around the heydays of slapstick comedy and one might snap back with a comment putting Apatow on a pedestal. So rather than expecting you to enjoy this comedy, I'm merely reiterating my thoughts on this film down on digital paper, more so as a personal exorcism. This has been a long time coming. Hot Rod is the film created by the now famous Lonely Island trio of Akiva Schaffer, Andy Samberg, and Jorma Taccone. This group smashed into the mainstream with videos for both "Dick in a Box" and "Jizz in my Pants". As juvenile as these videos are, one can't help but to laugh. Hot Rod stars Andy Samberg as a struggling stunt man attempting to raise money for his step father's "conveniently priced surgery". Before you think this film has layers of sentiment, this is all so he can beat his step-father's ass without him dying. The subplot of Hot Rod is a dignified father/son machismo tournament where winner takes all. The weapons available are shurikens, dry wall, Rhodesian fighting sticks, ultimate punches, and Vietnam flashbacks. Hot Rod really is one of a kind. For scenes of clever and dry comedy, Hot Rod is the purveyor of such. Danny McBride churns out line after line, each presenting something new, quotable, and dead hilarious. Hot Rod, as a scene collective, is the greatest buddy comedy ever. Watch this with as many friends as you can as the experience is one to appreciate. When I saw this film in theaters, it was between this and Superbad. Knowing that Superbad was going to be trashy, foul, and uninspired, I decided to go for the underdog. Let me tell you, that decision is a glowing point in my life. During one wooded glen Footloose scene in particular, a fall occurs over an extended period of time and I've never laughed so hard in my entire meaningless existence. I was hunched over a stadium seat crying from violent fits of laughter. I wouldn't be surprised if I was retching.

Apart from this scene, so much more stands out. Brief improvisations such as "Pools are perfect for holding water, man..." or Rico's dream description in which he describes him dreaming about punching a thousand wizards as hard as he can in the face so they explode. He then goes into detail about how the wizard wives all come out wanting to have sex with him. Who writes this stuff? Give it time and Hot Rod will finally be realized as comedy gold. All great things realized over time eventually get their due. All these scenes don't even scratch the surface. The golden treat of this film is the retro soundtrack that passes vibes like Hurricane Katrina passes levees. Too soon? Reviewing comedies is like telling someone their opinion is wrong, which in some cases is necessary. You hate my comedies and I probably don't like yours. If there ever were a film to topple the quote king Anchorman, Hot Rod is that golden messiah, but with a cape and

a stick-on mustache. With quiet hits like Space Olympics, Blizzard Man, and Jizz in my Pants, Andy Samberg is quickly becoming an honest comical figure. I'd much prefer his glorification than Seth Rogen making the same faces and starring in one-note films. Best of all? I never tire of Hot Rod. I could watch this film on repeat.

-mAQ

ZOO ZÉRO
ZOO ZÉRO

Alain Fleischer (1979)

When not feuding with fellow mixed-blood German Werner Herzog on their various classic film collaborations – simultaneously playing the role of actor and as the filmmaker’s own personal Rasputin – Polish-German actor Klaus Kinski appeared in a number of Euro-Sleaze exploitation and arthouse flicks, a good portion of which are forgotten and rightfully so, yet there a couple exceptions. Undoubtedly, the more irregular and incoherent the film, the more interesting Kinski’s performance tended to be as he always accentuated the already aberrant aura of the film. Personally, one of my favorite obscure Kinski flicks is the sorely neglected dystopian sci-fi arthouse flick *Zoo zéro* (1979) directed by unsung French auteur Alain Fleischer (Dehors-dedans, Rome Roméo), who would later (and somewhat ironically considering the nature of his previous works) have a relatively successful career in documentary filmmaking (Bernard Rapp’s *Un siècle d’écrivains* TV series, *Morceaux de conversations* series). In a typically typecast role, Kinski plays Yavé, a kinky megalomaniac who moonlights as a cabaret director at a post-apocalyptic night club/zoo. Undoubtedly a mental and verbal cripple, Yavé speaks through a vocoder, thus evoking the ambiance of a suavely dressed, Kraftwerk-esque fascist dictator as a result. Opening with a narrated passage regarding the Noah’s Ark myth from the Book of Genesis and other (and eventually inaudible) esoteric gibberish, *Zoo zéro* hereafter begins with images of a dim, destitute, and drizzly street of a futuristic French neo-noir metropolis (that more resembles a necropolis) featuring a dark cabaret club named “Noah’s Ark.” On this night at the curious club, an androgynous cabaret singer named Eva (played by Catherine Jourdan) with a neon-orange butch cut gives a performance that is like a cross between Marlene Dietrich’s in Josef von Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel* (1930) aka *Der blaue Engel* and Charlotte Rampling’s deranged topless performance of a Dietrich song for concentration camp guards in Liliana Cavani’s *The Night Porter* (1974). Emotionally detached and literally robotic in her movements, Eva attempts to drown her sorrows by drinking wine straight out of the bottle and watering plants in her dressing room as an effete negro friend looks on with the most gravest concern. A mysterious, mumbling fellow named Ivo comes to visit Eva and reminds of her less debauched days as a dignified singer of Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute* in Salzburg, Austria but her wee midget manager “Uwe” (played by Pieral of the Cocteau-penned 1943 flick *L’Éternel retour* aka *The Eternal Return* and Buñuel final 1977 effort *That Obscure Object of Desire*) reminds her that the past is best left forgotten, especially when you’re questionable future is perpetually rotten.

Somewhat peculiarly but undoubtedly working in the film’s favor, *Zoo zéro* has a striking aesthetic resemblance to Ridley Scott’s Tech-noir masterpiece *Blade Runner* (1982) though more subdued, as do many of the lugubrious yet ex-

pressionistic characters in the film, but contained within such a relentless realm of Weltschmerz-inspiring dreariness that I wouldn't be at all surprised if the British director's younger brother Tony watched this obscure French flick before jumping off the Vincent Thomas Bridge. *Zoo zéro* even concludes with a sort of "tears in the rain" sequence that anticipates the ending of Scott's classic Hollywood cyberpunk flick. Even more strangely, many of the indoor sequences with exotic zoo animals and soulless nihilistic erotic scenarios resemble and invoke a similar atmosphere to those featured in Tony Scott's comparably stylized yet more slapdash, postmodern deathrock-inspired vampire flick *The Hunger* (1983), but *Zoo zéro* – with its sparse dialogue, lack of sympathetic characters, and deep-seated discordant structure – is ultimately a much less accessible work that does more to capture the spiritually and culturally-cadaverous apocalyptic zeitgeist of post-industrial Europa as foreordained by the likes of Spengler and Evola as opposed to infatuation over a couple of ancient aristocratic supernatural degenerates. *Zoo zéro* also contains an infertile fictional forthcoming that makes the dystopian reality featured in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) seem relatively modern and even quite tame, so it should be no surprise the film concludes in a manner echoing the iconic opening of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and the ending of *Planet of the Apes* (1968), albeit with all the more forlornness and unsentimentality. Like Ludwig van Beethoven in *A Clockwork Orange*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his work *The Magic Flute*, one of German composer's most beloved achievements in his operatic repertoire, becomes a vague cultural remnant and a symbol of a moribund continent's lost glory and complete and utter collective devitalization, hence why the lead protagonist merely reworks tired and decayed cabaret acts from (presumably) over a century ago in a New Wave form.

It goes without saying that Klaus Kinski looks quite dapper as Yavé, le directeur du zoo, as if he is the direct progeny of decadent German horror author Hanns Heinz Ewers, but like most people in the city, his future is predestined to desperation as mother nature and her animals reclaim the world for themselves. In a vague sense, *Zoo zéro* features a glimmer of hope and prospect for rebirth, at least as far as the earth in its entirety is concerned. Humans, the most conscious and cancerous of God's creations, through their deluded self-worship and grandiose greed, have ushered in their own mass suicide so it is only fitting that Klaus Kinski would be directing an allegorical dirge for humanity's (and his own) funeral; a theme he would later return to in his last film and directorial debut *Kinski Paganini* (1989). Transcendental, nonlinear, and nightmarish in structure like the kindred obscure (but somewhat inferior) French surrealist horror flick *Clash* (1984) directed by Raphaël Delpard but especially reminiscent of the nearly immaculate post-apocalyptic French-Canadian sci-fi short *The City Without Windows* (2002) aka *La dernière voix* directed by Julien Fonfrede and Karim Hussain, the postmortem bluish blends of Agustí Villaronga's of *In a*

ZOO ZÉRO

Glass Cage (1987), as well as capturing the carnivalesque characters and wayfarer wandering essence of Walter Hill's *The Warriors* (1979) and Enzo G. Castellari 1990: *The Bronx Warriors* (1982), minus the mindless action and street gangs, *Zoo zéro* is a rare and wildly idiosyncratic (and consequently flawed) arthouse entry in the unofficial existential dystopian neo-noir subgenre. Probably in part due to its unwaveringly artiness and absurdness, as well as its staunch somberness, *Zoo zéro* – a demanding and dispiriting Delphian odyssey with a tolerable tinge of zoophilia that is bound to inspire profound ennui in the everyday filmgoer – has been plagued by obscurity since its release in 1979, but, I for one, can say that I am one of the film's greatest admirers.

-Ty E

STRANGER BY THE LAKE

Alain Guiraudie° (2013)

Undoubtedly, unsimulated sex is a dubious gimmick that has been used by European arthouse directors, namely that of the ill-restrained yet pedantic French persuasion, for sometime now and has had some rather preposterous and strangely banal results as demonstrated by mostly worthless works like Virginie Despentes' *Baise-moi* (2000) aka *Fuck Me*, Michael Winterbottom's *9 Songs* (2004), Carlos Reygadas' *Battle in Heaven* (2005) aka *Batalla en el Cielo*, and John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus* (2006), but recently I got quite a shock after viewing one such cum-covered work, *L'Inconnu du lac* (2013) aka *Stranger by the Lake* directed by French auteur Alain Guiraudie (*No Rest for the Brave* aka *Pas de repos pour les braves*, *The King of Escape* aka *Le Roi de l'évasion*), as it proved pornographic scenes can be utilized effectively in films if done in a passing and nuanced fashion that adds to the overall essence of a cinematic work. Although I am not familiar with any of auteur Guiraudie's previous celluloid efforts, I can safely say that *Stranger by the Lake* is nearly immaculate in its sometimes macabre minimalistic construction as a gut-wrenching work that manages to transfer the homicidal homo themes of William Friedkin's leather-fag slasher flick *Cruising* (1980) to a sunny and scenic frog lake. The gently paced story of a lapsed twink (or 'twunk') who begins cruising an almost otherworldly lake and eventually falls for a stoic yet unhinged Freddy Mercury-look-alike, only to soon learn that his best beau is a psychopathic murderer who killed his last lover, *Stranger by the Lake* is a strikingly charming psychosexual thriller of the semi-politically-incorrect sort that subtly highlights the impossibility of homosexual monogamy and how lust trumps love in a recklessly wanton world where depraved dudes seek their own little sunny Sodom in public. Originally intended to be a heterosexual film, *Stranger by the Lake* eventually evolved into a fag-themed flick after Guiraudie decided the original story did not work and that such a seemingly senseless tale would have been a grave mistake considering women do not typically go cruising for anonymous sex in public areas. As someone whose girlfriend somewhat recently took me to a local park to show the social epidemic of mostly redneck closeted homosexuals cruising around the area and audibly bugging in the bushes and disappearing in the woods, I found *Stranger by the Lake* to be an aesthetically misleading work of scenic sadomasochism that is quite comparable to a more recent Ulrich Seidl flick like *Paradies: Liebe* (2012) aka *Paradise: Love*, albeit with a more visceral and personalized soul (in fact, Guiraudie has cited it as a highly personal work) that does not make the copout mistake of detaching the viewer from the characters like so many European arthouse flicks tend to do. A Dogme 95-esque work (minus the shitty homevideo quality) that was shot by a mere 20 person crew (neither hairdressers nor makeup artists were used) and featuring no music (be it diegetic or non-diegetic) and only

STRANGER BY THE LAKE

organic sounds (i.e. wind, water, etc.) that were shot on-location, *The Stranger by the Lake* demonstrates that, indeed, some modern day French filmmakers have souls, even if warped ones, hence why the work was named the No.1 film of 2013 by Cahiers du Cinéma.

Franck (Pierre de Ladonchamps) is a 30-something-year-old gay man that seems no more effeminate than the average heterosexual Frenchman (not that it says much) and he has just found his new favorite hideout in the form of an ethereal French lake with a rock beach surrounded by a forest where nudists and cruising cocksuckers wallow in less than sensationalistic exhibitionism amongst one another as if living on their own secluded poof planet. On his first day there, Franck watches men screw like wild animals in the woods, but more importantly, he meets a rather rotund gentleman named Henri (Patrick d'Assunção) who is old enough to be his father. An old overweight fellow who not even the most depraved of shit-stabbers would touch with a ten-foot condom-covered dildo, Henri is mostly a voyeur who apparently used to cruise men in the company of his wife, but she left him and he seems no longer bold enough to approach other men for carnal pleasure, which seems largely the result of his lack of esteem. A closet queen, Henri cannot wrap his head around the fact that Franck is an out-of-the-closet cocksucker who has nil interest in men. Indeed, there is certainly a wide and protruding generation gap between the two as old man Henri grew up at a time where homos got married and had kids, whereas Franck leads a self-indulgent life where he does not feel the need to hide his flagrant homosexuality. As Franck explains to Henri, it is "always the same story, I always like those that are not available" and his experience at the lake proves to be no different as he falls for a semi-masculine man with a mustache with the unfortunate name Michel (Christophe Paou) who has a jealous queen of a 'boyfriend' named Pascal (François-Renaud Labarthe). Luckily for Franck, Pascal is soon drowned in the lake one night, but the problem is that Michel was the man responsible for committing the unprovoked murder. Before long, a prying detective named Damroder (Jérôme Chappatte) begins hanging around the lake to investigate the murder and Franck, who has just started a strictly sexual relationship with Michel, ends up lying to the cops to protect his new boy toy. Indeed, Franck actually witnessed the murder of Pascal by maniac Michel in the lake from afar, but that does not stop him from getting hot and heavy with a homicidal homo. Naturally, Franck develops a passionate romance with Michel that includes backwoods bareback sex, but he will not agree to meet him anywhere aside from the isolated cruising spot. Being a perennial voyeur who never engages in sex with the other cruisers because, as he himself states, "I'm alone because no one comes," Henri has figured out everything regarding the murder and warns Franck, "In your shoes, I would be very scared," but his words fall on deaf ears as the romantic twink is totally unwilling to betray his lunatic lover, even if he cheats on him and allows some fat slob to suck him off. Eventually, Henri confronts Michel

and lets him know that he is “not subtle” and that he knows he is the murderer. Seeming to have a death wish of sorts as a lonely man in love with the intangible (he confesses his love to Franck), Henri goes to the woods and looks back at Michel as if gesturing him to come kill him. And, indeed, Michel tears Henri apart and Franck finds his blood-soaked friend lying in a grass-covered ditch, dying. Franck runs further into the woods and Michel follows, even stabbing to death inspector Damroder on the way during a random forest run-in with the cop. While looking for Franck, Michel shouts about he only needs love and he even wants to spend the night with him. Despite everything, Franck eventually goes looking for Michel in the dark, but fails to elicit any response after routinely shouting his name. In an alternate ending to *Stranger by the Lake* that was filmed but not used in the film, Franck and Michel end up reuniting and driving away together in what is undoubtedly a deranged sort of happy ending.

Aside from the films of so-called New French Extremity auteur filmmakers Philippe Grandrieux (*Sombre, La vie nouvelle* aka *A New Life, Un Lac*), Gaspar Noé (*I Stand Alone, Irréversible*), Marina de Van (*Dans ma peau* aka *In My Skin*), and Bruno Dumont (*Twentynine Palms, Camille Claudel 1915*), *Stranger by the Lake* is one of the few contemporary frog films that has left any sort of impression on me in some time, thus demonstrating that, somewhat unfortunately, France is once again the dominant nation when it comes to true European national cinema. Undoubtedly, the genius of the film is that it is strikingly simplistic as a film set over an easy-to-follow ten-day period and set in a hermetic universe of self-destructive sexual deviance where the inhabitants have their own distinct language of gesture, thus making for a viscerally voyeuristic film where the viewer must interact with the characters whether they want to or not. Indeed, while featuring erect cocks ejaculating (the original 2 hour and 18 minute featured much more sex, but Alain Guiraudie thankfully opted for cutting much of it out) and incessant, unflattering nudity (including various scenes of a fat man named ‘Eric’ played by Mathieu Vervisch with a borderline micro-penis who passively masturbates while watching other men bugger), I would be hesitant to describe *Stranger by the Lake* as ‘queer cinema’ as it is a highly accessible work that transcends the best of reality TV and cinéma vérité in terms of transferring to the center of the aberrant action. While described by various reviewers as a ‘Hitchcockian thriller’ and whatnot, *Stranger by the Lake* is far too naturalistic, genuinely suffocating, anti-psychoanalytic (indeed, no quack Freudian symbolism and pop psychology here) to be compared to such innately contrived and fantasy-driven drivel. In short, *Stranger by the Lake* makes Hitchcock seem like a skilled theorist and artisan as opposed to an active artist with a penetrating artistic vision. An uncompromising yet slightly open-ended character study about the innately irrational behavior associated with love, sex, and death, *Stranger by the Lake* is one of a few somewhat recent films that I have seen that dares to tackle homosexuality head on without resorting to pathetic

STRANGER BY THE LAKE

poof social critiques about how society hates sodomites, but instead depicts it as the height of human sadomasochism where even a scenic lakeside beach is no escape from the perennial paradox that is human nature where some men long for love just as much as death and where others simply prefer to act as harbingers of death yet still need love. If nothing else, *Stranger by the Lake* demonstrates that, to steal a truism from Fassbinder, love is colder than death. Forget aesthetically impotent sentimentalist faggot shit like Andrew Haigh's *Weekend* (2011), Alain Guiraudie managed to make a gay-themed film that can actually be enjoyed by people who do not feel the need to get involved in the cultural cold war against Russia and Putin sired by the heebz Hollywood and the gatekeepers of LGBT authoritarianism.

-Ty E

NIGHT AND FOG

Alain Resnais (1956)

Night and Fog is a French documentary directed by Alain Resnais. The documentary shows the concentration camps 10 years after their liberation in vibrant colors with the greenest of grass fields. Resnais then compares that footage to the older footage of the concentration camps and starved naked bodies sitting in piles. The old concentration camp footage is often scratched giving it even more of a chaotic feel. That being said, Night and Fog is undeniably a powerful documentary.

Night and Fog is narrated by a froggy voice in French that can easily put the viewer off. Instead of stating facts and statistics, the narration is full of existential garbage about the evils men do to other men. The narrator makes it seem as if all Europeans were victims of Nazi atrocities. The narrator must have forgot that at best 10% of French citizens were part of any resistance. The narrator also forgot about the French Waffen SS troops and the French Vichy collaborationist government.

Night and Fog would have been a much better and honest film had it presented atrocities from all sides of the world. For example, Dwight David Eisenhower had German POW's thrown into a muddy field with a heavily guarded fence around it where at least 750,000 died (some estimates 1.7 million killed). The French army took 630,000 German soldiers as "labor reparation" of which around 250,000 died. I don't think I even need to go into the atrocities of the Soviet Union. Like most documentaries on "the Holocaust", Night and Fog looks at history in an irrational and Bolshevik manner. The documentary also featured the Dutch internment camp Westerbork camp which was run completely by Jews (the guards were referred to as the "Jewish SS").

The "Jewish SS"

Of course, Night and Fog has some historical inaccuracies. The claims of making soap of Jewish bodies has long been discredited as have the stories of regarding skin lampshades. The scenes featuring these lies border on the comical. Night and Fog is best looked at as a piece of art and not a documentary. It features all the same holocaust footage and pictures that have been recycled again and again.

-Ty E

BABY BLOOD
BABY BLOOD

Alain Robak (1990)

Every so often, I need a break from the art house and avant-garde realm and feel the need to wallow in the sort of tasteless and morally retarded horror trash that caused me to develop cinephilia in the first place but I find most of such works absolutely intolerable nowadays and am quite discerning when it comes to what sort of celluloid trash I choose to devour. While the French have never exactly been masters of horror, I decided it was about time I give the oftentimes lauded, if not equally times hated, body horror flick *Baby Blood* (1990) aka *The Evil Within* directed by Alain Robak a watch due to its reputation as a rather raunchy and darkly mirthful piece of 'reproduction horror.' Of course, as a completely Judaic produced and directed work that depicts virtually all French women as desperate whores and French men as superlatively sleazy untermenschen vermin that use whatever means necessary to get into a strange pregnant woman's seemingly never washed panties, the film is about as organically French as Serge Gainsbourg. Indeed, *Baby Blood* more or less does for the French what Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) did for German Jewry, albeit in a more seedy and of course less melodramatic fashion as a stereotype-driven piece of racial caricature that reminds the viewer that the Hebrew nation has yet to get over the petty Dreyfus affair. On top of that, the film has the honor of being probably the first quasi-feminist body horror film ever made, as a work where virtually every male character attempts to defile the pregnant female lead, who becomes stronger and stronger each time she slaughters an imbecilic male character. As a socially scathing and darkly comedic film where an ancient and rather talkative parasite of the rather pernicious sort takes over the protagonist's body and forces them to 'feed' (aka kill) for them, *Baby Blood* is surely the closest thing to a French equivalent to Frank Henenlotter's crusty cult classic *Brian Damage* (1988), albeit featuring a voluptuous frog babe instead of an all-American turdboy. Indeed, for those that enjoy seeing completely unclad babes with large bosoms and an equally plentiful derriere killing men while drenched in blood, *Baby Blood* is probably your film but expecting mothers should probably stay clear of such a work, as it depicts pregnancy as something that is all the more grotesque than in vaguely related works like Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), Larry Cohen's *It's Alive* (1974), Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed* (1977), and David Cronenberg's *The Brood* (1979), and Norman J. Warren's *Inseminoid* (1981) aka *Horror Planet*. Of course, in its portrayal of a fetus as a sort of murderous parasite, the film might wet the all-too-dry panties of bull-dyke pro-abortion activists and other fecund-free aberrant females.

Baby Blood begins with the ancient parasitic antagonist declaring, "At the beginning of the world, earth was just a planet...which had just cooled down covered by ugly vegetation...and hideous gargoyles fighting for their food...under

the star-filled sky. At the beginning of the world, appeared the first life forms...around the hole of a lost African swamp. And all of them started to reproduce. All except one. Me, who was deprived of one thing. Birth." In the hope of being born, the creature takes over the body of a Central African leopard, which is ultimately shipped to a carnival in the North of France to be sold to a traveling circus. Ultimately, the parasite, which resembles a sort of grotesque snake, will enter the vagina of a beautiful, if not intellectually challenged, dame named Yanka aka 'Bianca' (Emmanuelle Escourrou) while she is sleeping in her trailer. Bianca 'works' at a traveling carnival owned by an abusive little prick with the Judaic surname 'Lohman' (Christian Sinniger), who beats the female protagonist for ostensibly acting like a whore while treating her like a whore at the same time. The very night the infected leopard is brought to the circus, the parasite escapes its body by blowing it up and then invades Bianca's nether-regions, which causes the protagonist to wake up startled. Upon going to a doctor and discovering that she is pregnant, Bianca decides to leave the circus and Lohman behind for good and then flees to a city where she lives in squalor in a rat-fest dump of an apartment in a third world-esque ghetto.

Not unlike feminism, albeit in a more innately absurd way, the parasite in Bianca's womb gives her a warped sense of independence that makes her feel the need to look at man as a perennial enemy who she must destroy before he destroys her. Indeed, everything changes for the protagonist when Lohman hunts her down in the apartment building and the creature that has invaded her cunt coerces her into stabbing to death her ex-beau. The ancient parasite in Bianca's stomach has the power to make her feel great pain if she does not follow his deranged demands of killing men and drinking their blood so that the creature can be properly nourished. While Bianca initially attempts to commit suicide by drowning herself, she merely gets her clothes wet and ultimately hitches a ride with a 'reformed gay' trucker of Portuguese ancestry who ultimately ditches her for two much younger kraut babes. Like many downtrodden (future) single mothers, Bianca is forced to take a degrading job as a waitress and eventually slaughters a degenerate downtrodden would-be Don Juan that lives off of women named Richard (Jean-François Gallotte) after she has less than charming coitus with the fellow and he later proclaims that he would like to have children with her. Meanwhile, Bianca begins to develop a sort of bizarre attachment to the parasite in her womb, who ultimately becomes her best friend. When the parasite asks her if she likes men, Bianca strangely replies, "The eyes, a sad look, I like when they are unhappy." A somewhat melancholy monster with a soft spot for his beyond hospitable host, the parasite confesses to Bianca, "Sometimes I am unhappy."

Throughout *Baby Blood*, Bianca takes on a number of odd jobs and even odder murders. At one point, Bianca becomes a taxi-driver, which ultimately becomes a handy trade as she later carjacks a medical bus. When Bianca accidentally

BABY BLOOD

crashes the bus after an unruly blood donor takes his revenge against her for stealing his vital fluids, she ends up dropping dead, but the parasite gets extremely lonely and somehow brings her back to life while she is in an ambulance. After coming back to life, Bianca brutally murders the EMTs, even bashing one's brains in with a fire extinguisher. While lying in the blood splattered ambulance, Bianca manages to give birth to a happy baby boy and subsequently steals a car that soon breaks down. While attempting to get a mechanic to fix her car, Bianca's baby is blown to bits when the parasite explodes out of its body. Ultimately, the parasite manages to slither its way into a bus full of sleazy soccer players that Bianca also manages to hitch a ride from. The lard ass alcoholic driver of the bus allows Bianca to ride the bus on the condition that she does not wake up the players. Of course, when one of the sportsmen wakes up and spots Bianca, he wakes up all his comrades and they begin pawing at the protagonist as if they plan to gang rape her while singing lyrics like "fondle my dick." While Bianca attempts to warn the hyper horny soccer stars about the creature on the bus, the parasite randomly jumps on the fat fuck bus driver's head in an Alien-esque fashion and begins draining his blood. As the now petrified players bang on the back of the bus window, Bianca attempts to stop the vehicle from crashing, but it ultimately does and explodes. While Bianca presumably perishes in the accident, the parasite manages to realize its goal of reaching the sea.

Undoubtedly, as a work of cryptically Hebraic horror of the morally retarded yet darkly humorous sort where bodily dismemberment becomes a sort of nihilistic slapstick routine, *Baby Blood* is probably the closest thing to a 'French' equivalent to Judaic auteur Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* trilogy. In fact, the scene in Robak's film where the parasite enters the protagonist's pussy seems to be a homage to the infamous 'tree rape' scene from *The Evil Dead* (1981). Of course, aside from the films of Raimi and Henenlotter, *Baby Blood* also deserves comparisons to the early works of Peter Jackson like *Bad Taste* (1987) and *Dead Alive* (1992) aka *Braindead*. Horror fans should note that Robak's film also features a cameo role from not only the screenwriter of the French arthouse splatter flick *Baxter* (1989), but also the eponymous bull terrier that appeared in the film, though this should be no surprise since Judaic frog Ariel Zeitoun produced both of the films. In keeping with the film's somewhat inconspicuously kosher flavor, Jewish actor and sometimes director Alain Chabat also has a cameo in the film. With a Béatrice Dalle lookalike as the protagonist, all-too-stylish direction, and a somewhat cynical modernist depiction of France, *Baby Blood* is like the horror-comedy equivalent to the mainstream art house works of Jean-Jacques Beineix. Naturally, not unlike most of the films of Beineix, Robak's film has more style and substance and thus is a work that ultimately has about as much artistic merit as the classic frog fuck flick *Le sexe qui parle* (1975) aka *Pussy Talk*. As a work that portrays the majority of Frenchmen as sleazy scumbags and potential rapists, *Baby Blood* demonstrates that, despite whatever country or film genre, Jewish

filmmakers are always looking to undermine the people and culture of their host nation. Undoubtedly, fellow Franco-Hebrew filmmaker Alexandre Aja would continue Robak's kosher trend of degrading French culture with the sick-for-sick's-sake celluloid abortion *Haute tension* (2003) aka *High Tension*. Notably, *Baby Blood* was followed by two sequels directed by horror hack Jean-Marc Vincent that include *Lady Blood* (2008) and *Eject* (2010) but they are both so appallingly horrendous that I would not even recommend them to schlock-loving completists. Undoubtedly, the best thing I can say about *Baby Blood* is that it makes the perfect antidote for anyone that has ever had to suffer watching the rather retarded romcom *Look Who's Talking* (1989).

-Ty E

TOWELHEAD
TOWELHEAD

Alan Ball° (2008)

Kike and Nigger are titles for movies that you will never see anytime soon. The Jews do not want you to know that the “k word” even exists. How many times in those “realistic” World War II films do you hear an Aryan superman yell “kike” at the Jew he is about to execute? “Nigger” will never be the title of a movie because that is the proper spelling of the “most evil word ever.” Instead, an “African American” director will have a film with the ironic “Nigga” as a display of empowerment. There is, however, a movie called “Towelhead.” Towelhead is the latest movie from writer Alan Ball of American Beauty fame. The film follows a ½ Lebanese girl as she comes to terms with her sexuality at the ripe age of 13 years old. I bet this “islamofascists” are getting what they really deserve with taste of freedom loving democratic filmmaking. After watching Towelhead, the viewer will feel “liberated” in their hatred of Arab Muslims and their misogynistic culture. You find that Arab girls can love screwing black boys at the age of 13 (otherwise it would be racist), get raped by evil rednecks, and be protected by warm “open minded” white liberals. I didn’t think that Arabs were capable of that! Towelhead features a lot of raunchy scenes for those viewers that like to feel turned on by girls that have just hit their teenage years. It shows that one is cultured when they can have a cinematic experience of viewing an Arab teen girl’s hymen getting broken via the hands of an Aryan redneck. We also cannot forget how sensitive black teens can be while shaving the pubic area of a raghead girl. This high class negro makes his first move on this Arab girl by calling her a “sand nigger.” Maybe he felt they were both persecuted by the evil rednecks of Texas? After Towelhead, you will learn that Muslims can be Americans too. Just like white Americans, a Muslim man has to allow a Negro buck to ravage his daughter. The raghead also has to make sure to hate the evil rednecks that fight all the phony wars for a country. Despite the redneck making up the majority of America’s population (but not for long says the “progressive liberal” globalists), he must be looked down on as an evil literal and metaphorical rapist (despite having any real power). Maybe an underground filmmaker needs to make a gore film entitled “Yid’s Revenge: The Story of Abe’s Holocaust against Western Civilization.” I am sure a short film with such a title would make international news.

-Ty E

KILLER'S MOON

Alan Birkinshaw (1978)

What has *Killer's Moon* done to deserve this sentence of being grouped in with comparisons towards *A Clockwork Orange*? Surely the only grounds to give way to such silly accusations are the white coats suiting the escaped mental patients. Maybe the cunning and, dare I say, terrifying intellect of the mad rapists who have been treated with large doses of LSD. These minuscule factors do not equate to a larger picture worthy of slinging the terms of "droog" around, regardless of how many DVD copies it will sell. Any person expecting anything along the lines of Kubrick's vision of *A Clockwork Orange* would be sorely mistaken and stupid enough to warrant the blind purchase. To cut down to the bone, *Killer's Moon* is devoid of any and all morals, carving a rather intoxicating product of objectification with the case being nubile teenagers. The simplicity of the narrative can be evidenced with a rather short synopsis - A hotel holding up stranded schoolgirls for the night becomes the target of 4 escaped mental patients whose mental condition can be likened to "tripping balls". Thus is the portrait of fleshy desires that *Killer's Moon* colors in. Opinion towards *Killer's Moon* stretches from outrage to acceptance, leaving no room for compromise and that is the beauty of it - uncompromising, misogynistic, misanthropic, and dreamlike, not for the visuals but for the strange fantasy these men are indulging in.

Poetic, philosophizing rapists prowl the woodlands. Roughly sounds to be the breadth of a popular urban legend but for these very unfortunate young girls, it would seem to be that their god abandoned them tonight to the lusts of a handful. The very thought of a man, driven by rage, fearing no consequence towards his actions, raping the daughters of fathers, sends a chill down my spine. *Killer's Moon* certainly has its appeal, in both the context of eroticism and incredibly abrasive dialogue credited to be written by famous author Fay Weldon who has had much experience in thrusting women "in oppressive situations". One of the offenders mumbles to himself, reassurance, "only a figment.. only a figment". *Killer's Moon* has been called many things and many things it is. For reportedly having such a low budget, *Killer's Moon* is gifted with a vintage aesthetic. Most likely, not on purpose, but the soft grain of the film stock adds a higher level of endearment to be had as age aids as salve, especially when nightdresses presume to get ripped, revealing tender, pink flesh underneath. This is probably the highest form of entertainment *Killer's Moon* is indebted to bearing - the, at the time, graphic depictions of rape. I am currently in the position to praise the violation on screen without a sigh in regards to retaliation because for what other reason would you be reading about *Killer's Moon*? This British shocker's lifeblood is gorgeous women being sexually assaulted, with an addition of wonderfully insensitive dialogue such as "Look, you were only raped, as long as you

KILLER'S MOON

don't tell anyone about it you'll be alright. You pretend it never happened, I'll pretend I never saw it and if we get out of this alive, well, maybe we'll both live to be wives and mothers". This brings to mind the smear campaign ran by Clayton Williams running for Texan Governor in which he takes a stab at John McCain for comparing weather to rape - "As long as it's inevitable, you might as well lie back and enjoy it". Killer's Moon is just ripe with subtext and discussion and arguably one of the best exhibitions of retro breasts that I can recall.

Killer's Moon is a very fine form of classy trash, - a thoughtful representation of the perturbed disturbed not without its frequent injections of savage sadism. Watching scallywags empty their tanks of fluid and spoken prose upon wriggling jailbait does come at a cost of immoral obligation but certainly not without its charm. Accompanied by a jazzy, pseudo-orchestral soundtrack that occasional evolves into lounge-like tunes, Killer's Moon benefits from its humdrum opening sequences of giggling girls. Take comfort in the fact that a select few will be chosen for raping, and let the suspense stew. Those prone to rash outbursts upon hearing or viewing "insensitive material" would be best to avoid Killer's Moon as I am not looking forward to mopping up the saliva of a frothing feminist anytime in the near future. Killer's Moon maintains its composure right before the very final scene, when it suddenly changes face to a different beast, ending on a note of the macabre - a distanced view of a lone police officer, oblivious to the world, inquiring as to the shaken nature of the survivors. All the while, a female body is strewn across a bench with a knife protruding from her back in close proximity to the camera. This is just a visual memento of the terrifying night that will forever haunt these girl's dreams, whether or not they are manifested through substance abuse. Knowing full well of the indignity that is Killer's Moon, I can't refute the blatant evidence of vile filmmaking, all I can do is embrace such carnal chaos.

-mAQ

SCUM

Alan Clarke (1979)

After respectfully viewing both the 1977 BBC broadcast and the 1979 feature film version of *Scum*, I find the true victor of the content wars to be neither nor. *Scum* is a shattering view of the Borstal system in which both inmate and warden are under constant oppression from all eyes. This "oppression" is an omnipotent idea that we soon let go grudges with and grasp the fact that everyone involved in this situation is doomed to British pansy hellfire and racially and politically charged themes of homosexuality, "black bastards," and many suicide attempts that were either ill-fated from the start or simply lost all power through moving images in regards to the porting of this once and always classic story of stripped brutality. "A brutal story of today" is now nothing more than an archaic tale of someones third-person depiction of a violent scenario which, try as you might, would never really change. As it is, *Scum* isn't a genius envisioning or one of the greatest motion pictures of all time; I don't even see it to be all that great. What *Scum* has going for it though is a compelling tale of British pansy opportunist queers and a tale of inner-sanctum power struggles boiling up over the top. A Borstal is glorified as a dog eat dog world envisioned by unsavory youth and Alan Clarke. His method of inputting violence and how it should be portrayed in truthful cinema is mostly reduced to contradictory fluff when he decides to add more rape, more violence, and more death to his production in order to give *Scum* that superficial theater-worthy entertainment. A bad move on *Scum*'s behalf, I found the BBC version to gain the provincial higher rank of blistering engagement. After all, Toyne's discovery of his recently departed wife, Candy, was all the more punishing on the viewers when we were treated with the most poignant stare cinema had to offer at the time rather than some ludicrous attempted suicide scene with some ballistic Negro running, screaming, spraying blood all over the off-white walls. Perhaps the strangest notion of the reshot feature length presentation of *Scum* is the absence of the choice actors David Threlfall as Archer and Martin Philips as Davis. Threlfall's performance as Archer was something of a sole guiding light to Carlin, the self-defending homosexual daddy. Without Archer, Carlin wouldn't be the daddy and would be without guidance. Threlfall's charisma and condescending persona really adds to the mystery of how many of these seemingly innocent boys get into such a hellhole. There's really no option other than to rebel against society within the concrete walls. Philips as Davis was a darker turn over the blond haired weasel that gets the short straw in homosexual rape. The BBC Davis was a dark haired mousy-visaged innocent minor whose screams of emotional distress can indeed pierce the reflective screen of our television set and the walls of the Borstal. To award the 1979 remake it's due, the idea of having Davis ring the bell one last time after his fatal decision added to the stunning retrospective typology of sui-

SCUM

cide. In the BBC version, he hesitated before chiming to the "screw" and decided he'd rather die in the "bird." Scum's highlight moments consist of Carlin's chronic predatory performances that arise out of mostly racially-charged fighting moments. Securing realism in both action choreography and the dominance between whites and blacks, Carlin takes both tool and "snooker" balls to his enemies leaving him the authoritative figure in this anarchic cage-like disposition of a public building. The initial daddy before Carlin is simply known as Banks, a rotund figure that lacks a real intimidating posture and tone. His kind is known simply as a catharter; the figure who releases violence in an effort to subdue the side-effects of negativity and a release of accumulated emotion. Ray Winstone's career changing role in both Scum features marks the beginning of an important actor who has been grandly seen in the so-so *Sexy Beast* and the gritty-as-hell *Nil by Mouth*. Taking both films in consideration, I could consider much of Scum's past and future apparitions to be contrived and pseudo-societal. The effect of this film in today's culture is nowhere to be found. Marketed as an exploitation film by a company mainly hailed for their exploitation, Scum has found a fan base in entirely wrong hands. With a passive approach to dissecting violence within chaos, race, and power struggles, Scum manages to be important and fascinating for mostly wrong reasons. That's not to say that most won't find this film appealing but if you have an incredible aversion to "British pansy queers," It's within your best interest to avoid this film as you wouldn't have missed anything more potent than *La Haine* and that's me speaking within the dialect of violence portrayed or as I prefer, glamorized, in cinema.

-mAQ

MADE IN BRITAIN

Alan Clarke (1982)

What a great biting irony of history that Great Britain—the fallen empire that declared war against Uncle Adolf's Aryan utopia after it invaded Poland in 1939 in what would prove to be a distinctly deleterious war that would ultimately lead to the country's decline as a global power—would ultimately be responsible for producing the most degenerate neo-Nazis in the world, skinheads, who seemed to personify everything the real German National Socialist were against as aesthetically repugnant untermenschen who, with their shaved heads and tattoos, more or less resembled concentration camp survivors on steroids. Instead of curtained haircuts, super suave uniforms, and Richard Wagner, the skinheads had shaved heads, the ultimate proletarian 'uniform' as partly inspired by Jamaican Negros, and third rate punk rock bands like Skrewdriver. Of course, the skinhead movement was probably the most catastrophic thing to happen to National Socialism since Stalingrad and in the social realist 'television play' *Tales Out of School: Made in Britain* aka *Made in Britain* (1982) directed by British left-wing filmmaker Alan Clarke (*Scum*, *Billy the Kid* and *the Green Baize Vampire*) one gets a small idea of the sort of social misfits that the degenerate skinhead lifestyle appeals to. Starring Tim Roth—a fellow who, despite his big nose and German Jewish surname (notably, the actor's card-carrying communist father changed the family name from Smith to Roth in the 1940s, "partly through solidarity with the victims of the Holocaust, partly because the English were far from welcome in some of the countries to which his job took him"), is not actually a member of the Hebraic tribe—in his debut film role as a scrawny yet tough and primitively intelligent skinhead punk who unwittingly proves the failure of the establishment to deal with the working-class and society in general after causing all sorts of havoc around his town after being placed in an exceedingly ineffective detention unit run by weak bureaucrats, Clarke's film depicts the archetypical neo-Nazi skinhead as a impulsive nihilist, small-time criminal, and born failure who wages a one-man war in vain against a bloated bureaucratic system that does not even know he exists. Notably, the skinhead antihero is not so much of a National Socialist as he is a disgruntled antisocial teenage tosser that resents the fact that Pakis and other wogs who do not even speak English have successful businesses in his neighborhood while he and most people his age cannot even find an entry-level job. Featuring music by the Scottish punk band *The Exploited* instead of shitty neo-Nazi punks like Skrewdriver, the cynically titled *Made in Britain* paints a particularly pathetic portrait of Thatcher era England as an abject failure of a multicultural sewer full of pissed off proles and a disillusioned yet ass-kissing middle-class. One of the first British films of its kind shot by cinematographer Chris Menges (Ken Loach's *Kes*, Stephen Frears' *Bloody Kids*) on a Steadicam, Clarke's film is like a gritty punk take on kitchen

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sink realism, albeit without any of the juvenile posturing and wankery that one might expect had the film been directed by an actual punk.

Trevor (Tim Roth) is a 16-year-old skinhead with a Manson-esque swastika tattooed to his forehead that gets his kicks breaking into cars and going on joy rides, getting high huffing glue, and throwing bricks through store windows, especially at businesses owned by wogs. As punishment for throwing a brick through a lounge window and hitting its Paki owner Mr. Shahnawaz in the head, Trevor is sent to a place called Hooper Street Residential Assessment Center for six weeks where he will wait to receive his punishment for another charge in regard to theft of cassettes from a department store called Harrods. When the judge at his sentencing reads off his list of previous offenses and remarks, "It's a long, depressing list. Are you not ashamed of yourself?," the perennially grinning Trevor gives an affirmative "no." Unfortunately for Trevor, his personal social worker Harry Parker (Eric Richard)—the only adult that the antihero seems to respect in any sort of meaningful way—is going on vacation to the Greek island of Corfu, thus leaving the skinhead to feel abandoned and even more prone to criminality. When Trevor is brought to the assessment center to be 'assessed,' the social worker in charge, Peter Clive (Bill Stewart), acts discernibly annoyed by the fact that he has to deal with yet another juvenile delinquent, thus reflecting the general attitude of those that run the juvenile justice system. Somewhat humorously but certainly not surprisingly, Trevor's roommate is a dopey negro named Errol Duprey (Terry Richards) who remarks in a somewhat shocked fashion upon seeing his new roommate, "You got a swastika on your head," but does not seem particularly bothered about the white boy's antipathy towards wogs like himself. Under the pretense of seeking employment at a work center, Trevor leaves the assessment center and takes Errol to steal a car and huff Evo-Stik glue. While Errol is nodding out in the car after inhaling too much sticky stuff, Trevor goes inside the work center where he ultimately decides to throw a brick through the front window after becoming annoyed with the two-minute-long job search, especially after talking to the intolerably bitchy and passive-aggressive secretary who works there. From there, Trevor takes Errol to an abandoned indoor pool where he has stored a set of keys and tools for stealing cars and subsequently allows the wog to pick out the next car that they will steal together, though he kicks him out before going on a joy ride.

When Trevor gets back to the assessment center, Peter sees him getting out of the stolen car and demands that he take it back. After facing resistance from the skinhead, pansy pushover Peter ultimately makes a compromise with Trevor that he just get rid of the car instead of taking it back to where he stole it from and when the social worker later asks him what he did with the car, he sarcastically replies, "I gave it to Oxfam. They're using it to ship wogs back to Zululand." When Trevor is denied lunch after he arrives back at the assessment center too late, he becomes ballistic, begins kicking in doors, and assaults

the cook (Jim Dunk) whilst screaming “I want my lunch!” like a tyrannical toddler, so Peter and two other men subdue him and lock him in a room where he tediously walks around in circles while practically foaming at the mouth like a rabid animal. After some time has passed, Peter, a care worker named Barry Giller (Sean Chapman), and the assessment center superintendent (Geoffrey Hutchings) come into the room and the latter explains to Trevor how he is being given a “second chance,” but he also lets the skinhead know that his future will probably be one big vicious circle revolving around thieving, prison, and the dole. After the Superintendent concludes his self-righteous spiel and leaves, Trevor gets in an argument with Barry and mocks his liberal mainstream mentality, stating, “I’m more British than you, fuck face! You hate the blacks as much as I do, only you don’t admit it. You hate the blacks more than I do, ‘cause they frighten you. That’s why you lock them up. You lock up anything that frightens you.” Barry concludes regarding Trevor that “he’s a sod. He’s psychotic” and recommends to Peter that he be transferred to a “secure unit” so that someone else can deal with him. In an attempt to “keep the peace” with Trevor, Peter reluctantly agrees to allow him to drive in a banger racing event, but he also makes the following threat, “If you let me down, I’ll kill you. With help, that is. I’ll get the chef and some of the biggest lads I can find. And Wankers United will bring you down here and, together, collectively, we’ll duff you up.”

Needless to say, Trevor is not in the least bit happy when the engine of his car conks out after crashing into another car during the banger racing event and even though Peter offers to help him join a racing team so that he won’t have to bother stealing cars anymore, the self-destructive skinhead makes no reply to his offer and instead decides to steal the hopelessly naive social worker’s keys. Upon getting back to the assessment center, Trevor wakes up Errol and brings him to the file room of the building which he opens with the stolen keys. While reading through Errol’s files, Trevor is delighted to learn that his colored comrade was busted for “racist remarks.” Trevor decides to make his own racist remark by calling Errol a “fuckin’ baboon” when he asks him if he can read and he replies “not very well, no.” To show their disgust with the intrusive system that keeps less than flattering tabs on them, Trevor ceremoniously pisses on his files while Errol defecates on his and the two subsequently steal the assessment center van and head to the city where they throw bricks through the windows of homes in a Paki neighborhood. Of course, Trevor specifically targets the home of Mr. Shahnawaz who he blames for getting him sent to the assessment center. Rather humorously, nig-nog Errol yells things like “You Paki bastards!” and “black nigger bastards” while throwing rocks through the windows, thus revealing that Trevor’s influence has rubbed off on him. After getting done chucking rocks, Trevor decides to crash the stolen van into some squad cars in front of a police station and poor Errol is knocked unconscious in the process. Trevor flees the car and intentionally leaves his colored comrade behind, thus Errol is soon busted by

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a cop who hatefully states “you little black bastard” and takes him to jail. After admiring a middleclass mannequin family in a store window and attacking a car in a tunnel while yelling “wanker,” Trevor heads to his social worker pal Harry Parker’s apartment to turn himself in and ultimately burn his final bridge.

Naturally, Harry, who is about to go on vacation, is pissed when Trevor shows up at his door, so he calls him a “nerd” and immediately begins berating him. While in Harry’s apartment, it is obvious that Trevor is jealous of Harry’s children and middleclass lifestyle, which the skinhead has intentionally invaded in a pathetic attempt to intimidate the social worker. After Trevor arrogantly brags about all of the crimes he has committed over the past day or so, Harry tells him that he is an “asshole” whose “not worth a piss,” thus confirming that the antihero has finally burnt his last bridge and has lost the one person that actually seemed to care about him. Ultimately, Trevor is sent to a real prison for the first time in his miserable life. While in a holding cell, Trevor annoys the guards by incessantly pressing the buzzer in his cell room, so two guards eventually come in and the shorter of the two, a rather authoritarian fellow named A.C. Anson (Christopher Fulford), informs the skinhead, after he complains that he is juvenile, that he cannot be kept at an adult prison and that he is not going back to the assessment center but a borstal and when he gets out, he will be sent to real prison where he promises, “we can screw you, and we will. We got ya now.” When Anson threatens to fingerprint Trevor after he gets out of the borstal so that he can connect him to all the car thefts in the local area, the skinhead sarcastically replies, “sounds great!,” thus causing the now fully enraged prison guard to smack him on the kneecap with a baton. While looking discernibly broken and defeated for the first time in the film after taking a brutal blow to the knee, Anson mocks Trevor by remarking “You think you’re fucking hard” and then proceeds to tell him that he needs to learn to respect authority and the law like everyone else in society. After Anson and his pal leave, Trevor regains his iconic deranged grin, as if to demonstrate that physical violence has only strengthened his criminality and his unwavering desire to wage war against society.

Despite being a small and scrawny pedomorphic weakling (he apparently was 21 at the time of shooting yet looks barely old enough to be a teenager), Tim Roth did a fairly believable job in *Made in Britain* portraying a self-destructively nihilistic skinhead of the totally toxic sort who, unlike many juvenile delinquents, quite consciously decides to make all the worst decisions in whatever situation he may happen to be in. Of course, Roth’s performance is just a testament to his acting talents, with the actor being the complete opposite of his character as reflected in his remark during the audio commentary track on the *Blue Underground* DVD release of the film regarding his own personal interactions with skinheads, “I unfortunately went to school with a few of those...and got beaten up by many skinheads during the punk time...horrendous, horrendous

people.” Apparently, Roth’s communist father also cried after seeing his son in the film after it debuted on British television, as the sight of his beloved son portraying a violent neo-Nazi thug was just too much for the old philo-Semitic commie to take. Ironically, after starring in *Made in Britain*, Roth had skinheads chasing him down the street for his autograph instead of kicking his ass like they apparently did when he was in high school. In the *Blue Underground* audio commentary, Roth also explains how the film was apparently a hit with both left-wingers and right-wingers, though some in the latter group were naturally disappointed with how the film portrayed them.

Despite director Alan Clarke’s obvious intention to not romanticize skinheads or their dead-end lifestyle, antihero Trevor is easily one of the most strangely likeable, if not most likeable, skinheads of cinema history, as a character who, despite his overall vulgar nature, is more tolerable and empathetic than most of the rest of the characters in the film, which certainly seems to reflect the director’s disgust with Britain’s social and legal system. Indeed, while Edward Norton’s character in *American History X* (1998) seems too phony and contrived and Ryan Gosling’s character in *The Believer* (2001) is just too plain schizophrenically Jewish, Trevor of *Made in Britain* seems to completely embody the sort of troubled individual of reasonable intelligence and wit who makes the seemingly insane decision to have a swastika tattooed to his forehead. Of course, aside from a murdered wog here and a burned down Paki-owned restaurant there, the skinheads ultimately proved to be not much of a threat to Britain in the long run, especially when compared to the trouble that Pakis and various other sorts of brown-skinned Muslims have brought to their adopted nation, which includes everything from brutal terrorist attacks involving the decapitation of white British soldiers to white sex slavery rings comprised of barely-teenage British girls, not to mention the total ghettoization of all major British cities, especially London, which now has a non-white majority population. Of course, Alan Clarke probably would have never directed a film about white sex slavery or the new color of urban decay as it would have been a conflict of interests for him, but it would certainly be interesting to see a filmmaker direct such works in the gritty in-your-face Clarkeian style just as Gus Van Sant somewhat did with his 2003 *Columbine High School Massacre Elephant* (which borrowed its name from the 1989 Clarke short of the same name). Apparently, *Made in Britain* screenwriter David Leland wrote a screenplay for a sequel about Trevor as a middle-aged man, but no one was interested in producing the film and, of course, Clarke died a very long time ago. Call me crazy, but I would not be surprised if Trevor ended up turning into a dope dealer with mulatto kids as spawned from a relationship he had with a Jamaican hooker. After all, the skinheads of yesteryear are the chavs and wiggers of today, with the antihero of *Made in Britain* growing up at a time before Britain had been completely ‘culturally enriched’ by the members of its ex-colonies.

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TROUBLE IN MIND

Alan Rudolph (1985)

Sometimes I find myself appreciating a filmmaker and his craft, even though I sense an innate distaste, if not downright hatred, for their character and overall essence as an individual. For example, I see Billy Wilder as a subversive little semite that, aside from physically resembling a sort of kosher Jean-Paul Sartre, made films that reek of an intolerable venomous bitterness, primitive misanthropy, and covert anti-shiksa vile, yet there is no denying he made some fairly worthwhile films *The Lost Weekend* (1945) and *Ace in the Hole* (1951) that say something relatively profound about the (in)human condition. Additionally, while I like *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1972) and *Paris, Texas* (1984), I basically cannot watch a Wim Wenders flick without fantasizing about violently slapping the terminally tedious Teutonic auteur in the face for being such a meandering wimp that seems to have forgotten he has a pair of testicles. As for American auteur Alan Rudolph (*The Moderns*, *Breakfast of Champions*)—arguably the only true authentic protégé of great freewheeling American auteur Robert Altman—I would be lying if I did not admit that I also see him as a sort of wimpy weasel that would probably benefit from a gym membership and a steady dose of red meat but, unlike the spiritually comatose Wenders, he at least has something of a heart and has directed some truly romantic films that, quite unlike the typical Hebraic rom-com or historical romance à la Miloš Forman's *Valmont* (1989) and *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), actually manages to make romance seem cool and sophisticated. The son of filmmaker Oscar Rudolph who directed the Lenny Bruce-penned low-budget sci-fi oddity *The Rocket Man* (1954), Rudolph may be of a certain dubious Hollywood pedigree but he is also an unequivocal artiste and cinematic auteur that, naturally, was always more respected in Europe than the United States. Despite being a pussy pothead of sorts, Rudolph has managed to assemble a fairly idiosyncratic oeuvre that pillages the best from film noir and melodrama (not to mention various European new waves) in style, as if attempting to demonstrate to Godard the proper way to shamelessly recycle certain genre conventions without seemingly like a pedantic poindexter with an undying contempt for cinema. Politically speaking, one might assume that Rudolph is a man of the left (and you're probably right, though his films are fairly apolitical), but his arguable magnum opus *Trouble in Mind* (1985)—a film that seems to beg for a curious combination of lachrymose and awkward laughs yet ultimately inspires spiritual rejuvenation—would be considered 'reactionary' by today's rather ridiculous standards. Indeed, in the film, cities are a seedy and soulless cesspool of sin that turn good men bad, nonwhite foreigners run most of the criminal realm, beta males get their women stolen by alpha males, art has been reduced to a primitive childish level, and an exceedingly effete evil fat queen portrayed by Divine of *Pink Flamingos* (1972)

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and *Female Trouble* (1974) infamy in a rare male (yet nonetheless glaringly gay) role is the most loathsomely ruthless of underworld crime bosses.

More importantly, Rudolph's film is the cinematic work that I originally hoped Godard's *Alphaville* (1965)—a virtual tribute to German Expressionism and its masters like F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang—would be as a superlatively stylish and genuinely romantic dystopian sci-fi flick where love conquers all in the end and not in a phony emotionally counterfeit sort of fashion (although Godard's film literally concludes with the words, "Je vous aime" aka "I love you," it does not ring true like at the end of Rudolph's flick where no words are needed to express the life-changing love that the antihero feels). Undoubtedly, more than just a sort of more stylish 1980s American *Alphaville*, *Trouble in Mind* is like an anti-*Blade Runner* as a relatively laid-back, laconic, and low-key film of the aesthetically understated sort that is more dedicated to somewhat hermetic melodrama and poetical pathos than a meticulous *mise-en-scène* and oneiric atmospheres that manages to, not unlike Ridley Scott's film, completely swallow up the storyline (which, of course, is of secondary importance in the case of *Blade Runner*). Indeed, while Scott's arguable magnum opus manages to provide the viewer with someone akin to a drugless high due to its overwhelming aesthetic allure and initially inexplicably foreboding atmosphere as a film that sincerely feels like it could be set in some dystopian future despite being released nearly forty years ago, Rudolph's film is first and foremost a story about love and the power of love and its dystopian setting is largely symbolic and secondary to its story, or as the auteur once explained himself, "To me, love is always the turning point, the best hope for any future. And my favorite subject for a film. If nothing else, I hope *TROUBLE IN MIND* convinces you of that." While I can only assume due to what I know about him that there is very little that the quirky auteur and I would agree on, I unequivocally agree due to sheer personal experience when it comes to his assessment of love and his film—one of the most leisurely and idiosyncratically romantic films ever made—certainly strengthens his argument. Featuring an ex-cop-cum-ex-con antihero, ditzy yet well-meaning dame with a baby and degenerate baby-daddy as the female love interest, and a violently misogynistic queer queen as the villain, *Trouble In Mind* might be an eccentric film with an eclectic collection of eccentric characters yet its insights regarding love and human motivations certainly ring true, as if the film was directed by a self-loathing humanist with an unshakeable film noir fetish that wanted to make a feature-length melodrama to accompany the latest New Order album.

For better or worse (and in true pothead style), Alan Rudolph has had one of the most uniquely uneven and less than ideally idiosyncratic filmmaking careers in cinema history and *Trouble In Mind* is certainly the crowning achievement of said artistically troubling career. Beginning his directing career with the personally disowned hippie horror flicks *Premonition* (1972) aka *Head* aka *The Impure* and *Nightmare Circus* (1974) aka *The Barn of the Naked Dead* aka *Ter-*

ror Circus, Rudolph did not seem to take the art of filmmaking seriously until he became the protégé of Robert Altman and acted as an assistant director on such Altman classics as *The Long Goodbye* (1973), *California Split* (1974), and *Nashville* (1975). In fact, Rudolph's first true auteur effort *Welcome to L.A.* (1976)—an Altman-produced production that does not coincidentally star such Altman superstars as Keith Carradine, Sally Kellerman, and Geraldine Chaplin, among others—is like a West Coast spiritual sequel to *Nashville*, albeit somewhat more romantic and, in turn, precisely narratively structured in a fashion that has been compared to Arthur Schnitzler's play *La Ronde* (in fact, it would not be an exaggeration to describe Rudolph as a sort of preternatural heir of Schnitzler and, in turn, Max Ophüls who of course cinematically adapted *La Ronde* (1950) and directed some of the most stylish (dis)romances ever made). While Rudolph is a clear protégé of Altman, by the time he was directing films like *Choose Me* (1984)—the director's sole hit film—he had already developed his own distinct cinematic worldview, which would only further evolve as the years passed in between occasionally accepting for-hire hack work (e.g. *Mortal Thoughts* (1991) starring Demi Moore). Although *Welcome to L.A.* is undoubtedly the auteur's first true auteur piece, Rudolph was still relegated to directing some passable hack work like the pseudo-horror-thriller *Endangered Species* (1982)—a film dealing with cattle mutilation conspiracy sans aliens (!)—and the Sydney Pollack-produced *Songwriter* (1984), which is an important yet artistically forgettable film in the director's career in that sense that it introduced the auteur to singularly stoic *Trouble In Mind* lead Kris Kristofferson. While he might have started out as a singer-songwriter and demonstrated a natural talent for so-called revisionist westerns like Sam Peckinpah's regrettably uneven *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1973) and Michael Cimino's watchable yet plodding box-office disaster *Heaven's Gate* (1980), Kristofferson—probably the only cowboy to get down with Mishima in the unjustly overlooked *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea* (1976)—demonstrates in Rudolph's flick that he was born to be the film noir antihero par excellence. As for his mischling costar and Altman/Rudolph regular Keith Carradine, he once again demonstrates that he is the vaguely creepy dorky weirdo par excellence. Indeed, not unlike his buddy Altman, Rudolph has a knack for perfectly casting actors, even when it comes to against-type roles (for example, while Lori Singer plays a relatively innocent and naive girl in *Trouble In Mind*, she would effectively play the complete opposite in the director's later *Equinox*, which is also notable for Matthew Modine portraying central two roles in the form of long lost twin brothers that could not be more different in terms of character).

Naturally, as I have gotten older, my perspective of certain films—and the way I look at films in general—has changed drastically. For example, I once tried to watch *Trouble In Mind* about a decade ago before I was familiar with Rudolph's work and could not even get into it as it seemed like cartoonish kitsch

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noir and apparently I am not the only one. Indeed, as Richard Ness explained in his text *Alan Rudolph: Romance and a Crazy World* (1996), “As much as *CHOOSE ME* seemed to excite critics, *TROUBLE IN MIND* (1986) appeared to alienate them. While the film received some strong notices and a few critics, including Roger Ebert, numbered it among the best of the year, many were unsure whether Rudolph intended the film as a serious revision of film noir or a parody of the genre. Although there are comic elements in the film (such as the increasingly odd appearance of Keith Carradine’s character), they end to grow out of the absurdity of the situations, whereas the humor in *CHOOSE ME* grew out of the honesty of the characters [...] Although it anticipates a whole cycle of later new-wave noir films (producer Carolyn Pfeiffer described it as existing somewhere between Bogie and Bowie). *TROUBLE IN MIND* also serves as a summation of Rudolph’s work to date.” While the film is, to some degree, absurdly aesthetically goofy in a manner that would anticipate Rudolph’s later films like *Made in Heaven* (1987) where Debra Winger of all people appears in drag as a sort of neo-greaser guardian angel of sorts, it is also quite deadly serious when it comes to love and the ways of the world. Undoubtedly, it is no coincidence that Divine, in what is probably the most underrated role of his all-too-brief and unfortunately largely terminally typecast career, plays a murderously neurotic queer underworld boss that, owing to his hatred of his own mother and humanity in general, lacks the capacity to love, hence his erratically evil pussy-repulsed essence. Additionally, the film dares to demonstrate that it is much better for a woman to leave the father of her baby for a stronger man than to stay with him, especially if the baby-daddy is a despicable bitch of the constantly criminally bungling and dopey dope-addled sort that curiously resembles a New Romantic drag king.

While the product of a pothead that used to share joints with the belated auteur of the comfortably dumb *O.C. and Stiggs* (1985) and even co-penned the insipidly anti-white celluloid abortion *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull’s History Lesson* (1976), *Trouble In Mind* is also surprisingly red-pilled in many respects, as if the largely apolitical auteur unconsciously came to a number of truths and naturally could not help but disseminate them due to tackling the dystopian realms. Indeed, Teutonic philosopher Oswald Spengler might as well have been speaking of the dystopian ‘Rain City’ (aka Seattle) of the film when he once wrote, “Long ago the country bore the country-town and nourished it with her best blood. Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country.” As the viewer soon discovers as the film progress, the film’s antihero lead John ‘Hawk’ Hawkins (Kris Kristofferson)—an ex-cop that is released from prison after serving eight hard years on a murder rap that involved gunning down a bigwig gangster for his ladylove—might be a somewhat cynical killer, but his ugly urban environment

forced him to become tough and ruthless and it is only when he discovers love in the form of a relatively innocent young lady that he is given a true chance at redemption instead the predictable figurative road to katabasis. Aside from Hawk, the viewer witnesses how city newcomer 'Coop' (Keith Carradine)—a country boy that not coincidentally declares at the beginning of the film, "I've been to plenty of cities...And they ain't nothing but trouble"—completely morally and psychologically deteriorates after reluctantly moving to the miserable metropolis at the behest of his young naïve wife 'Georgia' (Lori Singer) who foolishly believes the city will provide a bright future for their baby son 'Spike.' Somewhat ironically, the young family's move to the city ultimately leads to a bizarre love triangle the concludes with Georgia leaving Coop for Hawk in what is a bitter-sweet scenario where love conquers all but a baby boy loses his loser beta-boy father. Needless to say, had Coop never listened to his wife's dubious advice and relocated the family to a big shitty city, he probably would have never hooked up with black criminals that deal in stolen goods smuggled by Koreans and turned into a deranged dope fiend dork that loses his entire family in the end. Indeed, not unlike Blade Runner, *Trouble in Mind* is set in a grotesquely mongrelized multicultural realm where black neo-gangster speak Korean and curiously practice Buddhism and an overall lack of cultural and, in turn, moral, consistency (and, of course, racial homogeneity), leads to a gynophobic gay queen becoming both a powerful man and proud patron of the (rather entartete) arts. Needless to say, the film hardly depicts so-called multiculturalism in a flattering light and the central dystopian city is something akin to H.P. Lovecraft's view of NYC, albeit nowhere as paranoically portrayed. Not unlike his comrade Altman, Rudolph has a certain inordinate respect for audiences and does not dare to attempt to force the viewer to accept a sort of dichotomous perspective of completely 'good' and 'bad' in regard to characters as everyone of them displays a certain 'humanity,' not matter how vulgar or unflattering. For example, when Coop's colored criminal comrade 'Solo' (Joe Morton of John Sayles's vaguely comparable Afrofuturist cult classic *The Brother from Another Planet* (1984)) spiritually foresees his own demise via being drowned inside his own car (!), one cannot help feel the character's pain. Aesthetically speaking, the film can obviously be compared to Slava Tsukerman's kaleidoscopic sci-fi cult item *Liquid Sky* (1982) and Alyce Wittenstein's neo-Godardian hipster joke *Betaville* (1986), but it seems to be of a more artistically sophisticated pedigree than these two flicks. Indeed, aside from sharing some aesthetic similarities with Germanic cinematic works like Niki Lišt's exceedingly eccentric cult flick *Malaria* (1982) and mischling dyke Ulrike Ottinger's collaboration with her then-muse Tabea Blumenschein like *Bildnis einer Trinkerin* (1979) aka *Ticket of no Return* and *Freak Orlando* (1981), the film demonstrates somewhat of an understanding of modern art history and its relation to the decline of the Occident. For example, numerous wholesome and romantic scenes in the film depicted from the outside perspective of a diner seem

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like they were dreamed up by American realist painter Edward Hopper. Rather fittingly, much of the urban graffiti and art gallery paintings in the film, which certainly symbolize cultural and spiritual decay in a rather goofy otherworldly way, seem to be modeled after the *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke* movements associated with German Expressionism. Additionally, the colorfully grotesque sculptures featured at the art gallery mansion of the film's gay villain bear a striking resemblance to those of debauched French-American feminist sculpture and occasional filmmaker Niki de Saint Phalle (Daddy). While one could try to make the largely pointless argument that Rudolph is, to some extent, himself a degenerate artist, *Trouble in Mind* is hardly respectful to degenerate art and ultimately carries a fairly aesthetically and morally conservative message of the rather perennial sort.

As for Hawk, who more or less has the total opposite experience as his much younger rival Coop, it is only when he rejects the sickness of the city that he finally achieves his dream of discovering his dream girl and leaving the urban hellhole behind for good. To accomplish this dream love affair, Hawk agrees to save the mostly worthless life of the guy he is cuckolding as Georgia might be leaving Coop but she is a good girl and does not want her no-good-bastard baby-daddy to die despite it being his own fault when he becomes a marked man after robbing a powerful gangster. A blunt man of gristled honor with a stern chiseled face that practically screams indelible stoical strength, Hawk even matter-of-factly declares to his love interest Georgia in regard to reluctantly agreeing to save her worthless husband Coop but also keeping her as his beloved prize, "I'll save the poor son-of-a-bitch but you'll owe me something I want. And I've just spent too many years wanting and wanting and never having. So once I fix this up and send him on his way, you belong to me—completely. You'll live with me...and I'll take care of you and the kid and we'll have something. Otherwise, let him get what he deserves. Let everybody get what they deserve." In the end, practically everyone indeed gets what they deserve and luckily hardened cynic Hawk finds true love despite losing love in the past due to his criminal impulses. In fact, Hawk lost his previous lover Wanda (Geneviève Bujold), who incidentally employs Georgia at her café, as a result of heading to the slammer upon murdering a criminal in cold blood and the two fuck soon after the antihero is released from prison at the beginning of the film but the long-awaited sexual reunion is short-lived. Upset about their seemingly complicated tragic past that includes the antihero receiving a hefty prison sentence after killing a mobster named 'Fat Adolph' (Gailard Sartain) to defend his beloved's honor, Wanda refuses to continue the sexual relationship after their first fuck, complaining with the sort of fiery fury of a wounded woman that still loves a man but knows she cannot be with him, "It's got nothing to do with hunger, Thickhead! It's a matter of philosophy." Needless to say, young, fertile, and relatively innocent Georgia is a much better choice for Hawk as she offers the sort of comfort and

nurturing qualities that a bitter old bitch like Wanda simply can no longer provide. A lonely little lady that has let her life slip away, Wanda is still a character of strength that, somewhat curiously, provides Hawk and Georgia with the 'philosophy' they need to start a healthy romance. By the end of the film, Wanda has abandoned her café and disappeared, as if her one job in life was to hook up her ex-flame Hawk with a much younger dame. Of course, as Otto Weininger noted, women first and foremost excel at being matchmakers.

If I was a bitchy queer, I might conclude that Alan Rudolph is some sort of hipster homo-hater after watching *Trouble In Mind* as the film's fittingly named antagonist Hilly Blue (Divine)—a sort of obscenely campy Sydney Greenstreet type—is arguably the most ravenously repugnant gay villain in cinema history as a sort of sod spiritual son of kosher carpet-muncher Madame Spivy's similarly sleazily sexually sinister villain 'Ma Greeny' in Ralph Nelson's Rod Serling film adaptation *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1962). While Rudolph's film is littered with great highly quotable dialogue, Divine certainly steals the show with Hilly Blue with prissily pugnacious lines like, "People that say they care about other people are hypocrites. I prefer priests; they're at least real hypocrites. I prefer two-faced people who show it." Notably, Hilly Blue is a morbidly miserable character of the compulsively cynical and homicidally hysterical sort and although he spouts wacky womb-envy-oriented misogyny like, "Women are despicable...especially mothers," he is not enjoying his life as an ostensibly all-powerful poofster crime lord and even displays glaring weakness by hysterically shouting in front of his entire entourage in regard to a criminal comrade as if complaining about a lover, "Everything between me and Nate is desolation, sadness, disappointment after disappointment." Undoubtedly, Hilly is a sort of symbol of Hawk's old immoral life and naturally he violently berates the antihero for wanting to go straight, stating, "You are capable of almost anything, John, but mainly anything bad. You have nothing but bad qualities and, yet, you think you have a heart." When Hawk expresses his desire to spare Coop's life, Hilly loses it and declares, "You're so predictable. You make me want to vomit. The only way you can ever live up to this ideal you have of yourself is from a hole in the ground." Naturally, it proves to be a symbolic act when Hawk kills Hilly by putting a bullet in his brain. Indeed, out of his love for a young mother, Hawk kills a homo that hates mothers. Notably, Hilly's murder sparks an extravagant absurdist shootout-cum-riot in the villain's virtually magical mansion that is surely the centerpiece of the film and is comparable to the legendary climatic hall-of-mirrors shootout in Orson Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947) in terms of great film noir climaxes.

I am not the only one that has noticed the film's somewhat idiosyncratic contra cocksucker subtext. Indeed, as Richard Ness noted in regard to the sexual and, in turn, moral degeneration of one of the main characters, "Coop's increasingly androgynous appearance suggest that his loss of identity may owe in part to a

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sense of sexual confusion as he goes from a traditional family environment with Georgia and their child to consorting with male companions and attempting to reaffirm his heterosexual identity through liaisons with prostitutes. His androgyny is paralleled by the casting of transvestite Divine in the nondrag role of Hilly Blue. If Coop's coif becomes a reflection of his search for identity, Hilly's baldness suggests an emasculated state, and his need for power and control appears to stem from a lack of affection from his mother." Interestingly, unlike his obscenely over-the-top and low-camp killer dookie-downing characters in classic John Waters flicks like *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Female Trouble* (1974), Divine, who was eager to finally play a male character and defy his drag stereotype, comes off as sincerely demented and disturbing to the point where his violent murder comes off as a relief to both the viewer and his character as if he was practically begging to be put out of his misery. Indeed, while Divine's Hilly Blue declares, "Everybody wants to go to Heaven; nobody wants to die," one suspects he wanted to die even though there was no way in hell that he would get into heaven.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *Trouble In Mind* such an organically romantic film despite its tendency towards artifice and preternatural pageantry is that, unlike many films—be they romantic-comedies, film noirs, or otherwise—it actually depicts what a couple needs for a healthy love affair. Indeed, when Georgia reveals her reason for leaving her husband by stating in regard to Hawk, "Him and me feel safe together," she is expressing what every woman instinctively wants and needs. While Georgia's young husband Coop goes from being an unemployed loser to erratic egodystonic dork that tries in vain to be a cool criminal yet fails in every regard, Hawk—in his impenetrable stoicism—radiates strength and demonstrates through deed and demeanor that he can be the real strong man that she so desperately needs. Like any good woman, Georgia also inspires Hawk's greatness and goodness with remarks like, "I think you're a good man that's had bad luck and I think all that can change. The luck, I mean." Although a man that sincerely believes, "A little bit of everybody belongs in hell," Hawks also discovers heaven through Georgia and the two even symbolically enter romantic nirvana by leaving Rain City at the end of the film (though, to be fair, said ending is somewhat ambiguous, but their strength of their mutual love is unquestionable). While I am not sort of moron that believes that people can sincerely change in any meaningful way for the better, *Trouble In Mind* rightly reminds the viewer in a refreshingly understated way that certain good qualities of a person are deeply buried and sometimes it takes love and the right inspirational lady to dig up such long submerged qualities. In that sense, *Trouble In Mind* is a rather hopeful film despite being made during what its director felt was a rather hopeless time. Indeed, as Rudolph stated in regard to the metapolitical influence for the film during the 1980s, "My opinion at the time was that despite the warm rhetoric and political smoke screens, our

society's increasingly cold blood could easily turn to ice [...] What's important and desirable would soon be hidden, forgotten or missing altogether. Escape would mostly come through daydream reality, memory imagination. Whether our fictional replica appears more within reach now compared to the soothing form of avarice of the 1980s is for someone else to decide. Where, you might ask, would human affection fit into this bizarre and harsh environment? Would it be worth searching for? Or even possible? To me, love is always the turning point, the best hope for any future. And my favorite subject for a film. If nothing else, I hope *TROUBLE IN MIND* convinces you of that." To my surprise, pot-head Rudolph's film—and, of course (and obviously more importantly), real-life experience—has certainly convinced me of that.

While most of Rudolph's post-*Welcome to L.A.* output is mostly comprised of highly watchable auteur pieces, *Trouble In Mind* is probably his only film aside from his later romance neo-noir *Love at Large* (1990) that I would dare to describe as a personal favorite of sorts and something I could re-watch at least on a yearly basis, even though I would probably stop short of describing it as a masterpiece. Beyond my personal taste, the film represents Rudolph at the height of his auteur powers as a film that, totally transcending the Altmanian influence, could have only been directed by the filmmaker who, naturally being an idiosyncratic auteur, has never really gotten his due and is largely best remembered today among cinephiles as a loyal compatriot of Robert Altman. While the auteur would turn to more ambitious art faggotry the 'Lost Generation' flick *The Moderns* (1988), which is dripping with bohemian chic style and attitude, and even an unconventional biopic on red mischling Dorothy Parker entitled *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle* (1994) starring Jennifer Jason Leigh in arguably the greatest performance of her rather eclectic career as the titular lead, these films fail to capture the shameless romantic resonance and dazzling oneiric aesthetic allure of *Trouble In Mind*. While his playfully preternatural fantasy flick *Made in Heaven* (1987) is undoubtedly romantic to the core, it is just too gimmicky, silly, and full of too many wussy rockers like Tom Petty and Neil Young to be taken as seriously as his great romances. In terms of aesthetics, positive approach to romance, and successfully subversive genre-tweaking, *Trouble in Mind* strangely reminds me of a sort of counterpiece film to Peckinpah's masterpiece *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974) which, incidentally, features Kris Kristofferson in a small but unforgettable role as a rapist that gets his just deserts. While I typically subscribe to the Peckinpah School when it comes to patently pessimistic depictions of life and romance, *Trouble In Mind* is just pessimist and culturally nihilistic enough for one to reasonably accept its unconventionally hopeful happy ending in regard to love. Notably, Rudolph was not so optimistic about love's healing capacity and ability to save the sick and broken in his subsequent work *Equinox* (1992) where the quasi-autistic hero loses his chance at serious romance when his would-be-lady-love regretfully fails to

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flee with him for the Grand Canyon upon being forced to make a split-second decision about the future of their relationship. Of course, the antihero of *Trouble In Mind* is older and wiser than the lead of *Equinox* and thus does not waste time in securing his future. As Rudolph's own filmmaking career demonstrates, oftentimes with age comes wisdom, but pain and regrets regarding love can sometimes last a lifetime and *Trouble In Mind* seems to organically express that while remaining optimistic in regard to the quest for love in a seemingly loveless world of softcore authoritarian asininity where society is shit and culture and art are crap. In that sense, the film is more hopeful and inspiring than when it was originally released some 35 years ago.

Throughout his career, director Alan Rudolph has made no lie about the fact that his unique utilization of absurd humor and equally atypical aesthetics reflects his belief that real-life society is absurd and should symbolically depicted as such, or as he once stated in a 1993 *Film Comment* interview recounted by Richard Ness, "Once I realized I was going to take the leap with *Divine*, this was not going to be a conventional film. When Keith got involved we started talking about how this guy should go through these transformations. I never realized we would take it to such an exaggerated level, but then it seemed to be the way to do the story without taking it totally seriously. If you do these retro story plot ideas and take them terribly seriously, then you've made another exercise. The times seemed to be going through that culturally, with Reagan and all that; it just seemed to be an unfamiliar terrain that we were living in. There was an absurdity to the whole film that I kind of enjoyed—people talking funny languages, all the gangsters were inarticulate people who don't even use words so they growl. . . . What it really is is this thing that gets me in trouble all the time, which is this simultaneous serious-humorous. If you ask me to make a film that is the most accurate reflection that you see of our condition right now, I'd make a version of *TROUBLE IN MIND* or *EQUINOX*. I see it—it's absurd." Undoubtedly, in his tendency toward taking an absurdist approach to our putrid (post)modern milieu, Rudolph is practically sugarcoating cyanide, thereupon making the intolerable at least tolerable enough to be eccentrically engrossing in a way where the spiritual and cultural morbidity of modernity is at least recognized but thankfully not embraced in what is ultimately a sort of form of anti-escapism that manages to entertain even the exceedingly alienated and/or ludicrously lovelorn. Of course, in an absurd society, there is also a morally ambiguous blurring between cop and criminal as completely personified by antihero Hawk who, due to the degenerate world he lives in, had to learn to be a little bit of both and does it well. In that sense, I could not help but reminded of the Ernst Röhm quote, "The soldier turns away from this kind of false morality in disgust. What mattered to me in the field was not whether a soldier measured up to society's morals, but only whether he was a dependable man or not. An immoral man who achieves something is far more acceptable to me than a 'morally upright' fellow who ac-

completes nothing. So-called society commits no greater sin and inflicts no greater harm than it does in this way. Suicides of the best people speak only too eloquently here.” In his sort of neoclassical historical fiction play *My Friend Hitler* (1968), Yukio Mishima speculated that Röhm foolishly stayed in Nazi Germany despite the high probability that he would be killed—as he ultimately was during the infamous so-called the Night of the Long Knives—out of a gay love and romantic allegiance to Uncle Adolf. Of course, cop or criminal, Hawk is, probably unlike tragic rectum-reamer Röhm, a great man and that is why he gets the girl in the end and he does not allow moral questions to get in the way of that fact, but both *Trouble In Mind* and *My Friend Hitler* demonstrate that the only truly timeless and respectable sacrifice is for love and death—or at least a willingness to dance with death—is a more worthy route than to betray said love and succumb to soulless mediocrity.

-Ty E

PREHYSTERIA 2
PREHYSTERIA 2

Albert Band* (1994)

Moonbeam Entertainment is that film company you remember from when you were a child. They released such classics as Josh Kirby: Time Warrior, Pet Shop, Prehysteria, and Adventures in Dinosaur City. These films are all ones that i remembered but could never find a title anywhere. Prehysteria 2 is the sequel to the original that broke rental records. The second is being helmed by Albert Band, who i will assume is Charles Band's butler. I'd like to assume this for comedic value. In the second coming, the story ditches the original little boy who has a strange likeness to Jonathan Taylor-Thomas, and instead focuses on a rich brat who later became the wardrobe designer for The Matrix. He uses his money to purchase a crate of raisins which contains a handful of "Rock'N'Roll" dinosaurs. These mischievous dinosaurs are all named after musical artists, some more popular than the rest. There is Jagger, Madonna, Hammer, Paula, and Elvis. ("The One" on his way to Zion) All of the characters fit the horrible stereotypes. The strict grandmother, the foreign gardener, the dad who has no time for his son, and the bumbling exterminators. Perhaps the worst stereotype of all is the token Goofy Jap. In all modern films, there lies at least one retarded Oriental. This one screams his name "Hiro!" over and over again and likes to sing really loud while preparing food. They exercise this stereotype even in modern films, like Disturbia. Even in films that embrace their own culture does evidence remain of this. The one surprise that i never expected was to see Giuseppe Andrews in this film. Yes, lil' Joey is in this film, sporting a plaid jacket as the gang leader of a bunch of miscreants. I noticed that most ringleaders of young crime grow up to become successful actors; such as Jack Black in The Neverending Story 3, as the pseudo skinhead. I thought i had seen it all too. (Giuseppe Andrews; 2nd from the right) When these films premiered, they were magical and brought you into a world of fantasy. As an adult, these films are just very ridiculous. Upon my second viewing of 3 Ninjas Kick Back, i found the film to just be one of the worst films i have ever seen. It sounds unlikely that i had liked it when i was a child. Prehysteria 2 isn't as good and magical as the first, but it is still entertaining and retains some charm.

-mAQ

BERNIE

Albert Dupontel (1996)

Bernie is a film directed and starring Albert Dupontel. You might have heard of Dupontel in his supporting acting role in the French art house drama *Irreversible*. Due to Dupontel's recent career as a stand up comedian, he has the talent in order to make people laugh. Well now, he is using to to make us laugh at inhuman things. Similar in style to *Bonnie & Clyde* and *2LDK*, this story follows Bernie Christmas. He is an orphaned 30 year old who suffers from a case of mental retardation. Not as extreme as it sounds, but this doesn't stop him from making up invisible mafia plots and an excuse to find his parents; at any cost. Dupontel shines in this role. His sadism is cleverly masked by his charming sweet smile. Definitely one of the better psychopaths to be on screen. When i say that this film is a dark comedy, I mean black comedy. As in, this film is more taboo than even *Visitor Q* or *Happiness*. Dupontel succeeds at making it's viewer laugh at violence, rape, and dismemberments. It's easy to say that even the most jaded cinema viewer will have something new to shock & offend them. Whether it be butt-fuck rape, a certain wheelchair accident, or it's hilarious look at Africans living in France. The one scene in instance is when Bernie wishes to find his home. He encounters his old room, which is now home to a sprawling Negro family who doesn't seem to speak any language. Hilarity ensues as he goes down in the garbage chute on to have a syringe stick him in the face. While being from another apartment, I cannot help but to laugh at this could-be accidental AID's joke. Despite being a film that has bits of humor and horror in it, It also a quirky love story. It seems not all is right in this little man's head. Many of his adventures were even recorded on his personal tapes. When it boils down to the formula, Bernie is a rip-roaring sinister voyage into the gates of hell.

-Maq

CYBORG
CYBORG

Albert Pyun (1989)

"The muscles from Brussels" is indeed one of my favorite action stars. His action isn't exaggerated or falsified. In a time where action moguls (Tony Jaa, whom I love) rip the screen with unprecedented acrobatics, Van Damme was still printing enjoyable film after enjoyable film with insane plots and ridiculous dialogue that led to another fight scene, each better than the last. Cyborg is a film that markets the term "Cyborg" with the face of a battered Van Damme. For those who've seen this film, we all know that this film has very little to do with a Cyborg. Gibson Rickenbacker is a hired martial-artist/bodyguard that is seeking vengeance on a dread locked gang leader of a group called "Pirates". His quest will lead him to saving the life (er...) of a Cyborg carrying the cure of the plague that has destroyed most of humanity. Most of the humanitarian aspect of this film has been sacrificed for gun fights and high jump kicks. Where they could have taken the escort mission far, the plot is squandered for cheap thrills, but they do satisfy. Director Albert Pyun had been busy directing both Spiderman and Masters of the Universe 2. When the copyrights to both Mattel and Marvel became void, the recycled sets and such became home to a script dubbed Cyborg. The rest is history. Well, as historical as a less-than-memorable science fiction/action film can get. The enchanting asset to Cyborg is how young Van Damme looked at the end of the 80s. After watching Cyborg, It dawned to me just how well he would have fit into a role as Peter Pan. He might have even brought unspeakable entertainment to such film. Cyborg is by no means the definition or even the guideline of a classic. The action is indeed well filmed but the "good overpowers all" cycle is easily tiring. In fact, I couldn't recommend this film for anything other than Van Damme kicking dirty people repeatedly in the face. The Dystopian genre has been plagued, not from a mysterious illness, but from shoddy film making that is cleverly hidden so that the recycled plot/script isn't too noticeable to the fans of both Jean-Claude and fans of post-apocalyptic scenarios.

-mAQ

LE SALAMANDRE

Alberto Cavallone (1969)

With his risqué interracial-love-story-turned-homicidal-rampage *Le salamandre* (1969), Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone (*Man, Woman and Beast*, *Blow Job*) announced his potent and steadfast arrival in the world of Italian cinema. On top of making Cavallone a hot name (at least as far as producers were concerned) for the one and only time in his filmmaking career due to the film's surprisingly successful monetary gain at the box offices (earning 500 million liras), *Le salamandre* also launched the (albeit brief) careers of lead actresses Erna Schürer (*Summer Love*, *Scream of the Demon Lover*) and Beryl Cunningham (*Il dio serpente*, *The Black Decameron*). Despite its various scenes of gratuitous nudity (which seem quite tame by today's standards) and preposterous scenarios of lipstick lesbian pseudo-love, *Le salamandre* – which is mostly set at a post-colonial Tunisian vacation spot – is fundamentally a staunchly defiant socio-political work with a biting and acrimonious message targeting the white colonial oppressor. The film opens with a conspicuously consternating dream-sequence featuring a young black man being violently beaten and eventually castrated by three good ol' white boys on a serene and scenic beach. This whole scenario is witnessed by black American female protagonist Uta (Cunningham) as she hides in terror behind a bush like a wild bushwoman. Not long after seeing one of her brothers literally losing his manhood, Uta is welcomed with literal open-arms in a absurdly sympathetic manner by her white female lover Ursula (Schürer); a Swedish-American photographer with lady-licking proclivities. Apparently, this direful and sardonically symbolic dream-sequence, as well as the rest of *Le salamandre* was inspired by Cavallone's reading of French-Algerian philosopher Frantz Fanon's revolutionary work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961); a volatile pseudo-Freudian/Marxist tirade that blames African male impotence on the (apparently) psychologically-emasculating brutality of colonizing white man. Considering the epidemic of rape and AIDS in most modern Africa nations, as well as starvation-stirring population booms, one can only assume the white devil's super sterilizing powers have only swayed since the decolonization of the dark continent. Despite the sometimes anachronistic nature of the film, *Le salamandre* does offer some seemingly moldy food for thought that most filmmakers in our toddler-like times of authoritarian political-correctness would barely consider, especially in regard to the still somewhat prevalent phenomenon of master-slave relationships between whites and blacks.

Starting on the first draft of *Le salamandre* in 1967 with collaborator Sergio Lentati, the film – ultimately for commercial reasons – became notably more erotic and increasingly less political when the finished product was completed, yet the political subtext is still quite potent and an intrinsic attribute of the work. In a most antagonistic manner, Cavallone described the message of *Le salamandre*

LE SALAMANDRE

dre as follows: “You came to see this film just to see two naked women... you have a colonialist mentality. Nothing’s changed, the only way to change things is to kill you.” Indeed, *Le salamandre* ends on a murderous and sadistically psychosexual note that is bound to offend certain superficially liberal folks who see the antidote to centuries of hostile race relations as skin-deep physical love and miscegenation. The character of Uta learns everything she needs to know about whiteness through her sexual relationships with Ursula and later psychologist Henri Duval (Antony Vernon); an intellectually inquisitive middle-aged man who randomly meets the twosome on the beach (when Ursula is topless, of course), thus eventually forming a torrid and tumultuous threesome. However different each white lover may initially seem to Uta, she discovers that most of them view her as nothing more than an exotic and sexually stimulating novelty of sorts and not as an individual with any inkling of personal merit. While watching *Le salamandre* one learns that Ursula ‘rescued’ and brought up Uta from being a penniless nothing to a renowned international model. Ursula also fails to hide her overwhelming feeling of superiority and sense of ownership over Uta, as if the black girl owes her body to her rescuing and ever so resourceful master. Initially, Uta is afraid of Henri and his psychoanalytic speculations, but she eventually comes to realize some less than flattering things about herself and her melanin-deprived lovers via these theories, to the eventual detriment of the good doctor. Cavallone also spliced in real stock-footage of executions as ghostly symbols of the colonial past that Uta seems to feel in a metaphysical manner (it seems Cavallone envisioned the mystical ‘supernatural Negro’ idea long before films like *The Green Mile* and *The Legend of Bagger Vance* were ever created), but fails to affect her perfectly comfortable and always hedonistic white compatriots. It is only when all the discommodious emotions brewing within her soul become intolerable that Uta is able to collect herself and take action in a seemingly unbecoming style that is no less audacious than the ending featured in Melvin Van Peebles’ revolutionary work *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (1971). Like Van Peebles’ socially influential and economically successful film, *Le salamandre* was not intended as a ‘feel good’ exploitation work, but as a serious ‘call to arms’ of the violent nation-imploding persuasion.

Despite its abrupt and unduly unpleasant ending (at least for white folks), *Le salamandre* also concludes with the revelation by Cavallone that the viewer is watching a mere work of fiction created by a filmmaker in a fashion not unlike the one featured at the conclusion of fellow Italian auteur filmmaker Federico Fellini’s late masterpiece *E la nave va* (1983) aka *And the Ship Sails On*. Although one of Cavallone’s earliest works, *Le salamandre* is also certainly one of his most complex, mixing discordant phantasmagorical dream-sequences, hyper-realist stock-footage of authentic mass murder, and sleekly stylized scenes of sensational lesbian erotica in a film that – in terms of execution and overall quality – totally eclipses the director’s later Africa-based post-colonial work *Afrika* (1973).

Unsurprisingly, few of the filmgoers who originally saw *Le salamandre* upon its original premiere cared for its keen socio-political complexity. Although a film producer offered Cavallone the job of directing another film in the spirit of *Le salamandre* starring Florinda Bolkan, the Italian auteur declined and instead directed *Dal nostro inviato a Copenaghen* (1970) aka *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent*; a patently anti-American work about two U.S. army deserters who try to survive while taking refuge from the Vietnam war in Copenhagen. Of course, one of Alberto Cavallone's greatest attributes as a filmmaker was his uncompromising artistic vision, even if he sometimes failed in his cinematic experiments, thus *Le salamandre* is an especially must-see work as it comes as one of the Italian filmmaker's most adept efforts.

-Ty E

FROM OUR COPENHAGEN'S CORRESPONDENT
FROM OUR COPENHAGEN'S CORRESPONDENT

Alberto Cavallone (1970)

Long before Francis Ford Coppola, Oliver Stone, and Stanley Kubrick directed myth making films where they more or less dictated to the audience what they thought the Vietnam War was all about and how evil it was, a little known subversive Guido auteur by the name of Alberto Cavallone (*Man, Woman and Beast*, *Blue Movie*) directed a scathing low-budget shocker entitled *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* (1970) aka *Dal nostro inviato a Copenaghen* aka *Sindrome Infernal* aka *Così U.S.A.*, which depicts the madness and misery that ensues when two shell-shocked American GIs that saw action in Vietnam desert their post in Wiesbaden, West Germany and hide in Copenhagen with the help of a far-left group with dubious intentions by posing as graduate students working on their thesis. Audaciously anti-American as demonstrated by its alternate title 'Così U.S.A.' (which, according to Cavallone scholar Roberto Curti, is a wordplay on the phrase "così usa", which in Italian means "that's the way it goes"), as well as critical of both the left and right and the pornography industry, Cavallone's film may look like an ambitiously directed piece of dago diarrhea, but it also makes Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and Stone's *Platoon* (1986) seem like sentimental humanist flicks by comparison. Cavallone's subsequent film after the racially-charged Sapphic hit *Le salamandre* (1969)—a work depicting a messed up miscegenation-based ménage-à-trois between a blonde Swedish-American photographer, her murderous negress lover, and a frog psychologist that temporarily made the filmmaker seem bankable in Italy for the first and last time in his distinctly uneven career—*From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* proved that the auteur, who turned down an offer to direct another lesbo exploitation flick starring Florinda Bolkan, refused to play by the rules and would try in vain to be the master of his own destiny. Cavallone's film depicts two men who also attempt to become masters of their own destinies, only to find themselves physical and metaphysical prisoners in a foreign Nordic nation where they succumb to poverty, predatory married middle-aged homosexuals, the Danish porn industry, Nam' and childhood incest flashbacks (in that sense, the film has a lot in common with the Amero Brothers' phantasmagoric 1971 blue movie *Bacchanale*), murderous impulses, and mental illness. An intentionally ugly film that was made all the more effective for me due to the horrendous bootleg print I watched, *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* is, for better or worse, arguably the most nasty and nihilistic Vietnam War flick ever made, as a sort of grating Guido equivalent to Michael Verhoeven's kraut artsploitation flick *O.K.* (1970), albeit all the more misanthropic and histrionically acted.

After seeing the corpse of their comrade, whose skull was crushed and body ran over by two fellow GIs, American GIs Nick Valenti (played by Tony Di Mitri, who fittingly had an uncredited role in Luchino Visconti's 1954 master-

piece Senso) and William Cole (played by one-time Pasolini production assistant Walter Fabrizio who, being a Guido Klaus Kinski clone of sorts, was credited in the film as 'Alain N. Kalsyj') get scared and opt to go AWOL and leave their base in Wiesbaden, West Germany to Copenhagen, Denmark where a group of leftists have a secret underground network that harbors deserters and other military misfits. Unfortunately, since both men, especially William, saw action in Vietnam and were deeply affected by the sight of gook Napalm victims and child corpses, they will have a hard time camouflaging themselves among the general populous in the seemingly sleazy Nordic city where perverts, swindlers, and sadists seem to be lurking around every corner. Unquestionably, Amerowop Nick is easily the most mentally stable of the two men and acts as a sort of surrogate parent to pseudo-WASP William (indeed, while a blonde boy, 'Kalsyj' is clearly a dirty dago posing as an all-American Anglo), who is a hopeless neurotic with more than a couple screws loose and thus probably not the most ideal man to have been sent to the Asiatic third world to blow away goofy gooks and whatnot. While Nick has real problems with the guy harboring him, William finds himself to be the object of desire of a Danish married couple named the Gustavsens.

When Mr. Gustavsen tries to get in William's pants, he merely smashes the crypto-cocksucker in the balls, but when Mrs. Gustavsen (played by Cavallone's wife Maria Pia Luzi, who starred in a number of the director's films) takes out her tits, he reluctantly gives in and finds himself having hallucinations of napalm and gooks being blown to pieces while having sex. After commencing a sloppy coitus session with Mrs. Gustavsen, William seems to become possessed, nonsensically stating, "I get the urge to shoot and shoot. BANG! BANG! BANG! [...] This is my sound, I love this sound...BANG! BANG! BANG!," and proceeds to attempt to brutally murder the unhappily married woman. Meanwhile, due to the fact he has run out of money and cannot find legal employment since he is a so-called 'undocumented worker,' Nicky boy begins starring in porn films featuring two chicks and, somewhat symbolically, a Guinea pig. The pornographer Nick works for is a sort of debauched pseudo-Freudian crackpot who rationalizes his scummy line of work with the following absurd theory: "We live in a society starved of tits. We see them everywhere; lemons, oranges, grapefruit...All women must have tits; natural or made of rubber...Of course. Far from Twiggy. The reason lies in breastfeeding...Instead of breasts, they put a baby's bottle in their mouths when they return from the hospital...So what happens? A trauma." Of course, the only one really suffering from a trauma in the film is William, though it has more to do with his scandalously sordid relationship with his sister than his mother's lack of breastfeeding.

While in the wild jungles of Gookland, William engaged in torture, including the removable of Vietcong members' entire fingernails with pliers and whatnot, but he seems more plagued by the patently perverse relationship he had with his

FROM OUR COPENHAGEN'S CORRESPONDENT

sister than engaging in sadistic forms of warfare. After discovering that William attempted to kill the young wife that provided him with sanctuary, Nick brings his comrade to stay with an unsavory pinko left-wing psychologist named Dr. Max Borg (played by Spaghetti western star Antonio Casale, who worked as an assistant director on Cavallone's previous film *Le salamandre*)—a despicable dude that keeps decrepit elderly catatonic cripples and lavish hardcover editions of C.G. Jung books around his office—who diagnoses the deranged deserter as being schizophrenic and immediately begins using him as a guinea pig for his sadistic psychological experiments. Borg is married to a young babe named Ulla and she has much empathy for William, who thinks she is his sister. After discovering incest with his sister is the root of William's psychosis, Dr. Borg coerces his wife Ulla to play along and pretend she is the mentally perturbed GI's beloved sister Kate. After telling her to call him 'squirrel' (he also describes himself as being, "Tough like a lobster, a crab, a turtle"), William begins talking about his love for his sister and the atrocities that he committed in the war, including offering \$200 to the man who killed the most gooks during battle. While somewhat rightly describing Dr. Borg as wanting to kill him (the good doctor may not want to personally kill him, but he is willing to sacrifice him for 'science'), William also begins fantasizing about suicide when not frolicking around in fields with his pseudo-sister Ulla. Eventually, Nick reveals to Borg that most of his platoon was accidentally annihilated in 'friendly fire,' with the same army helicopter that bombed them into oblivion also picking up the surviving members of the doomed brigade. Nick also theorizes that the American helicopter intentionally attacked his platoon so as to stir hatred against the Vietcong. In the end, William is reunited with his sister and the unethical psychologist Dr. Borg finally begins to question not only the conscience of his patient, but his own.

As an anarchic work that deals with common yet rarely cinematically depicted plagues that infected American GIs during the Vietnam War, including heroin addiction, 'friendly fire,' the coldblooded murder of commanders by the troops, the perennial problem of posttraumatic stress disorder, the use of post-WWII Europe as an exploited vassal of the anti-Occidental American military-industrial complex, and the disgusting treatment of American soldiers by effete left-wing academics who did nothing about war yet feel the need to always offer their purely bullshit theories about it, *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* was surely ahead of its time and probably attempts to tackle more issues than any other film of its kind, which is unfortunate considering the film is such an eccentric mess of gratuitous shock value, grating Guido histrionics, and glaring incoherence as a signature Cavallone work that is equal parts socio-political agitprop, aberrant avant-garde celluloid art, and excessive exploitation trash. Undoubtedly, one of the most annoying yet sometimes unintentionally humorous aspects of the film is its incessant use of zoom shots, with Cavallone

himself even stating of the film some years later in an interview regarding the work: "It looks as if the director had just discovered the use of the zoom lens." With its use of cheap stock war footage, the Italian countryside in place of the jungles of Vietnam, conspicuously Italian cast to play Americans and Danes, and rather ridiculous dubbed dialogue, the film is just too blatantly cheap and thrown together for most viewers to take its heavy socio-political issues seriously. At the same time, Cavallone's work has a partial 'neo-neorealist' essence about it, especially during a scene that was shot on a handheld camera of wayward character William going around to anonymous Danes and absurdly asking them, "Who am I?" Ultimately, *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* is an innately incendiary and iconoclastic work that belongs in the same category of forgotten misfit Vietnam War movies like Verhoeven's *O.K.*, but also Amero-Guido Buddy Giovinazzo's *Combat Shock* (1984) and even Burr Jerger's *General Massacre* (1973). Of course, for Cavallone's small but loyal fan base, *From Our Copenhagen's Correspondent* certainly beats another re-watching of *Platoon*, as a work that may be technically inept and oftentimes tedious but ultimately has more testicular fortitude than 10,000 Goombah left-wing terrorists.

-Ty E

MAN, WOMAN AND BEAST
MAN, WOMAN AND BEAST

Alberto Cavallone (1977)

Man, Woman and Beast (1977) aka *L'uomo la donna e la bestia* aka *Spell - Dolce mattatoio* is most assuredly one of the most lavishly, methodically, and harmoniously crafted works of lecherous high-sleaze ever concocted. Directed by Alberto Cavallone of *Blue Movie* (1978) infamy, *Man, Woman and Beast* has all the aberrant auteur ingredients one would expect from the unabashedly debauched Italian filmmaker: killer sex (both literally and figuratively), sexually impotent artists, apprehensive commie verbal spew, and immoderately crude scatological fixations. Easily Cavallone's most well-known and most artistically eclectic effort, *Man, Woman and Beast* manages to do the seemingly insurmountable by seamlessly hybridizing both the sensational surrealism and quasi-cinéma vérité realism that the filmmaker is celebrated for. Unlike the mental maestro's subsequent effort *Blue Movie* – a work that was essentially assembled in an improvised manner on a nonexistent budget over the course of a week or so – *Man, Woman and Beast* has the certified picturesque stamp of an idiosyncratic 1970s masterpiece of Italian cinema, as it features obsessive direction and polished technique that is surely in *recherché* company with the 'self-indulgent' later works of Federico Fellini, yet it also includes incendiary libertine content that rivals that of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975), except executed in a charmingly campy fashion that is more akin to Dada than to de Sade. In fact, *Man, Woman and Beast* is a work that pays humble, if equally intimately perverse, homage to its aesthetic influences. Featuring appearances of artistic works by artists including Hans Bellmer, Salvador Dalí, Gustave Courbet, and José Posada, as well as thematic nods to literary lechers including Comte de Lautréamont, Jean Genet, Georges Bataille, and to a somewhat less noticeable and more anachronistic extent – Marquis de Sade – *Man, Woman and Beast* is a work that although culturally cultivated, does not attempt to mask its influences in a borderline plagiaristic fashion. Out of all its morally execrable influences, a delightfully deleterious tribute to Georges Bataille's short novella *Story of the Eye* (1928) is ultimately the most assuredly memorable, negligently nefarious, and perversely potent. Despite its many scenes of somber and severe sadism, *Man, Woman and Beast* is indubitably a mischievously mirthful work that has few contemporaries in regards to its bodacious bestialized badinage and overall ribald absurdism. In short, *Man, Woman and Beast* is an ungodly and exceedingly audacious avant-garde work that pays paradisiacal homage to Dadaism like no other cinematic work before nor after it. In fact, Marcel Duchamp himself could not have done a more desirable job capturing the essence of the innately irrational art movement in celluloid form.

Upon superficial glance, *Man, Woman and Beast* seems like a domesticated Italian neo-neo-realist work due to its sometimes everyday portrayal of a seem-

ingly traditional and typical Italian Catholic village, but underneath the thin veneer of normality lies a copious collection of vicious, violent, untamed, and even murderous sexual pathologies that would even astound the most seasoned of Reichian psychoanalysts and cannibalistic gay pornstars. In the village of wanton vulgarity featured in *Man, Woman and Beast*, a butcher packs his meat with his own unkosher meat, an Electra complex is utterly appeased via incestuous progeny-begetting familial relations, a lapsed-Marxist maniac attempts to tame his even more deranged wife, and a conspiring priest uses images of saints and the labor of unsuspecting children as a parasitic means to sell lottery tickets. Unsurprisingly, *Man, Woman and Beast* was filmed around the period of the so-called 'Anni di Piombo' (aka Leaden Years) during the mid-1970s in Italy when a nation-revamping revolution seemed like a very real possibility and when right-wing and left-wing were in unofficial camaraderie in their campaign to blow-up as many government buildings and officials as possible. *Man, Woman and Beast* does a most decorous job expressing this corrosive countrywide phenomenon at the community-level by the way of man's most rudimentary, if base, form of social interaction: sexual intercourse. What becomes most apparent while watching the mostly sadistic sexcapades featured in *Man, Woman, and Beast* is that not one of the characters featured in the film approaches eroticism from a natural and utilitarian manner, hence the predominant theme of a society in disorder. In *Man, Woman and Beast*, sacrilegious sexual dysfunction and frivolous fetishism become sport and societal degeneration an uncontested, if unspoken and strategically veiled, matter-of-fact. Cavallone did a marvelous job highlighting this perturbing paradox by assembling a series of contradictory collages and montages comparing society of the old (outdoors and in public) and new (indoors and in privacy). For example, toward the end of *Man, Woman and Beast*, footage of jubilant villagers dancing jovially during an annual religious festival is spliced together with images of a young woman murdering her unsuspecting partner with scissors and scheid during an impassioned session of sexual intercourse. Strangely (but most appropriately), the film ends with the melancholy face of an impressionable young lad who is undoubtedly symbolic of Italy's problematic future. It is not unlikely that this boy would grow up to be like Marco Corbelli; the lurid cross-dressing lunatic behind the Italian noise project *Atrax Morgue* who committed suicide by the way of hanging in 2007 after a lifetime of necrosis fetishism.

Director Alberto Cavallone once admitted that the character of a Christ-like homeless man featured in *Man, Woman and Beast* was his alter-ego. Fittingly, this mystery man is a herald of change, but – unfortunately for the villagers and himself – their damned futures are already foretold. The uncanny wanderer also meets a deplorable doom that would anticipate the thoroughly demented defecation-phile anti-hero of Cavallone's successive film *Blue Movie*. Indeed, in the wretched realm of *Man, Woman and Beast*, god has died a most unflat-

MAN, WOMAN AND BEAST

tering death and has gone to waste in literal human waste. Even the fanatical godless commie of the film has lost his faith in Marxist propaganda and the world revolution, as expressed by him vocally and when he superimposes an image of Vladimir Lenin over a picture of a woman's sin flower, which is most certainly a bantam and frolicsome expression of Cavallone's own newfound political disillusionment. Unquestionably, *Man, Woman and Beast* is an uncompromising expression of nihilism and a bold testament to the apocalyptic arrival of *der letzte Mensch*, but also a work of active artistic nihilism that had the potential to spark a revolution in cinema that was only vaguely hinted at by future subversive arthouse filmmakers like Jörg Buttgerit, Karim Hussain, and Andrey Iskanov. Disenchanted with commercial success and (arguably) cinematic artistry in general, Cavallone would later give total way to his abased aesthetic proclivities as expressed by the hardcore pornographic nature of most of his later works. Aside from possibly his lost masterpiece *Maldoror* (1977), *Man, Woman and Beast* is unmistakably Cavallone's crowning achievement as a filmmaker and his celluloid magna opera. Like his vital influence Georges Bataille, Cavallone is one of few artists that successfully proved that artistically-refined works can be pornographic and vice versa. If it were not for his later propensity for creating mostly incoherent esoteric hardcore pornography, Cavallone may have gone onto consummate a reputation as grand and venerated as fellow Italian filmmakers Federico Fellini and Pier Paolo Pasolini, as he certainly deserves it, even if only for *Man, Woman and Beast*; a blissfully carnal phantasmagorical work that does the seemingly inconceivable by vigorously raping the senses in a spellbinding and inordinately multi-orgasmic way with salacious sin-ridden scenes of grotesque human depravity. As Nietzsche's Zarathustra once preached, "as for me, I rejoice in great sin as in my great solace."

-Ty E

BLUE MOVIE

Alberto Cavallone (1978)

I first became conscious of the devalued and often derided Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone (1938-1997) after researching cinematic adaptations of Comte de Lautréamont's six cantos poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* (The Songs of Maldoror). Although dismayed upon learning that Cavallone's *Maldoror* (1975) was never ever actually released due to petty monetary reasons (even though the blessed few who have actually seen the film regard it as the filmmaker's celluloid opus magnum), I was at least introduced to the seemingly lunatic libertine filmmaker's consistently controversial yet cinematically diverse filmography that includes everything from esoteric hardcore pornography (*Baby Sitter* aka *Il nano erotico*) to less-than-action-packed-post-colonial-homoerotic-race-mixing-adventure flicks (*Afrika*) to kaleidoscopic *Bataille*-esque avant-garde surrealist works (*Man, Woman And Beast* aka *L'uomo la donna e la bestia* aka *Spell*). Recently, I had the extraordinarily effete aristocratic pleasure of watching Cavallone's *Blue Movie* (1978); a lurid scatological celluloid phantasm that the filmmaker made during a turning point in his career before gaining the distinction of being one of Italy's most enigmatic hermetic hardcore pornographers. Borrowing its name from Andy Warhol's amateurish sex flick of the same name (Cavallone would do the same with his later *Cocteau*-esque surrealist sleaze flick *Blow Job*), *Blue Movie* was created in a similar perfunctory fashion as many of the earlier films directed by the famous American homo hack artiste. Apparently assembled on a whim inspired by a bet made by producer Martial Boschero, *Blue Movie* – a work that foretells the *Dogme 95* movement – was made in a lackadaisical Roger Corman-style manner (production lasted a week) on a nonexistent budget with mostly non-actors, yet the film is very possibly Cavallone's most unscrupulous and discombobulated work. Despite featuring scenes of hardcore pornography (which were subsequently cut at the behest of the Italian Board of Censors), a decidedly incoherent plot, a depraved 'anti-hero' with a fecal fetish, and exceedingly somber themes of staggering hyper-nihilism, *Blue Movie* would go on to become a box-office hit of sorts in Italy. After watching *Blue Movie* a couple times, I find it quite unimaginable that such a debauched film featuring naked Italian beauties eating shit would prove to be palatable for public consumption, but I can't say I don't like the idea of such a ruthless eremitic work obtaining semi-mainstream notoriety. In short, *Blue Movie* proved to be a work that lives up to its underground cult cinema infamy.

Blue Movie follows cunning Claudio, a serious newspaper photographer turned mechanic (while moonlighting as a shutterbug pornographer) who derives venerate and aesthetic pleasure from humiliating graceful statuesque women. While talking to a prospective sex-slave, Claudio matter-of-factly states to the lovely little lady, "Your beauty is absurd and I can't stand beauty. I love to see fear

BLUE MOVIE

on people's faces. Degradation. Its then that they become human." Indeed, throughout *Blue Movie*, Claudio proves his propensity towards 'humanizing' women through a variety of fetishistic dehumanizing methods that only a completely unhinged sadomasochist with an uncontrollable urge could execute so keenly and unwaveringly. After being nearly turbulently raped by a malicious masked man in the woods, a young beautiful named Silvia is picked up randomly by Claudio as he cruises down a desolate road in his beloved automobile. Little does stunned Silvia know that her personal nightmare is going to be compounded by a manipulative man who finds alleviation in footage of genocide and delights in taking photographs of girls drenched in toxic dung. As a man of exquisite refined taste, Claudio incessantly plays the musical compositions of German composer Johann Sebastian Bach as his own personal soundtrack (which acts as the score for the film). Like many patrons of the arts, Claudio is a committed cinephile of sorts who luxuriates in watching forgotten silent vaudeville comedies and slow-motion stock-footage of Vietnamese Mahāyāna Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức burning himself to death. Not content with just using Silvia as his own personal Devil's plaything, Claudio recruits an alluring model and an attractive homeless gal as disposable accessories for his scantily furnished scat-house. While the later two are mostly pleased with Claudio's omnipresent charm and confident courteousness, Silvia – who seems to be suffering from delusions brought upon by post-traumatic stress – cannot shake-off visions of encroaching faceless rapists and milky blood filling up the bathtub. Luckily, Silvia has a gay black male companion (who carries around a skull in a bag) who is looking out for her interests, but he essentially proves to be no more useful than the Negro elder from Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). Speaking of Kubrick, Cavallone must have been a fan of *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) as *Blue Movie* also features an amorous spasmodic montage coupled with Teutonic classical music; the main difference being that while droog dictator Alex can more than aptly sexually service a tenacious twosome a number of times during a single sexual session, Claudio cannot even get off from a mere passive hand-job, hence the source of his preternatural proclivities. That being said, one can only guess how much of Alberto Cavallone's own personality was channeled into the character of Claudio, as *Blue Movie* is undoubtedly an utterly frustrated expression of Weltschmerz and irremediable impotence. Forget fellow Italian filmmaker Romano Scavolini's 1981 slasher flick, *Blue Movie* is a truly unflinching and wholly unequivocal expression of Nightmares in a Damaged Brain.

The relative commercial success of *Blue Movie* turned out to be just as big of surprise to Cavallone as the film itself is to most uninitiated viewers as expressed by the filmmaker introspective quote, "I was bewildered by the box office results. *Blue Movie* was meant to piss off the raincoat crowd, it was such an antagonist film..." Indubitably, one of the film's greatest attributes is its abiding carnal cruelty and deep-rooted misanthropy and misogyny. Although the world positively

suffers due to the lack of materialization of Cavallone's unreleased masterpiece *Maldoror* (which has essentially vanished without a trace), *Blue Movie* makes for a germane celluloid panorama of Comte de Lautréamont's clamorous influence on the venturesome Italian auteur, as it is a work that features a quasi-Satanic steady stream-of-consciousness (non) narrative and hypnagogic sexual deviance; two glaring traits that helped earn the tragic pseudo-Count posthumous immortality. Despite its grody dreamlike imagery and disconcerting schizophrenic editing, *Blue Movie*, not unlike Roger Watkins' more or less tamer work *Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), often has the begrimed aura of a genuine vintage snuff/found footage, but incongruous with authentic stock-footage, one never really knows whether the scenarios played out in the film are real or imaginary, let alone discerning which character's mind/reality we are peering into. Outstandingly, *Blue Movie* is often humorous (and seemingly intentionally so), in spite of the film's loony licentiousness, but then again, such a fundamentally anti-human work would probably be rather intolerable without a little tenebrous comic relief. Like many of Cavallone's earlier films, *Blue Movie* features Marxist political commentary about consumerism, but I won't bore you with specifics as it ultimately, in my opinion, detracts from the film, but I will say it is more subtly executed than anything that George A. Romero has ever done. It should be noted that virtually from the get-go of *Blue Movie*, it is more than apparent that all the women featured in the film are absolute material objects for cagey Claudio to defile, hence the appearance of various symbolic toy dolls and figurines that somehow mysteriously change position as time passes on. It is only when semi-psychotic Silvia forgets her foreordained subservient role that Claudio's Section 8 microcosm comes tumbling down. In the end, cursed Claudio finally achieves the climactic consolation that he failed to acquire from normal sexual intercourse. If you're keen on watching films that rape your senses and berate your moral compass, make yourself some cold chocolate milk and cuddle with a love one to an intimate screening of *Blue Movie*; an original romantic comedy for less inhibited and more ambitious lovers.

-Ty E

BLOW JOB – SOFFIO EROTICO
BLOW JOB – SOFFIO EROTICO

Alberto Cavallone (1980)

Worthwhile works of Gothic horror-core are quite hard to come by, thus Alberto Cavallone's phantasmagoric porn flick *Blow Job - Soffio erotico* (1980) – although intrinsically inferior to the Italian filmmaker's previous films – comes as notable exception. Directed by the nearly forgotten arthouse smut auteur who brought us such mostly unsung cult classics as *Zelda* (1974) and *Blue Movie* (1978), *Blow Job* signified the steady artistic and monetary decline of Cavallone's – at best – marginally successful film career. The production of the film was cursed from the beginning as one of the film's producers committed suicide (as if he was an anti-hero in one of Cavallone's films) during the filming of *Blow Job*, which is indubitably a shining, albeit tragic (at least as far as the film's budget was concerned) example of life imitating art, at least for those individuals that have seen the film. Essentially divided into two halves, *Blow Job* begins as what initially seems to be a generic Italian smut flick and later morphs into what is one of the most ridiculously wanton and discombobulated Gothic horror films ever created. Following in the delightfully despoiled footsteps of the Amero brother's gothic LSD trip *Bacchanale* (1970) and anticipating Stanley Kubrick's final effort *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), *Blow Job* is a spasmodically sleazy yet swimmingly surreal cinematic wet dream where everything is not as it seems; at least, for the film's oversexed and mentally obscured protagonist; a flagrant fellow who could pass as Jim Morrison's swarthy and less attractive Italian ½ brother. Like the poetry and lyrics of Mr. Morrison, *Blow Job* is a haunting expression of an erotically-obsessed and esoteric escapist mind that is thematically naughty and aesthetically nice. Cavallone stated of *Blow Job*, "the whole film was focused on the possibility of escaping from our own bodies, by modifying sensorial perceptions through the use of drugs or self-concentration," thus, it should be no epiphany that the film is best viewed while one's intellect is totally tuned out; or at least when one is reasonably inebriated.

Blue Job begins with the introduction of actors/lovers Stefano and Diana frolicking around stark-naked in a scarcely furnished hotel room that they do not even enough money to pay for. Although Diana makes quite the first impression when she crawls on the floor while in the bare like a seductive sex kitten on the prowl, she cannot compare to the various nefarious nymphomaniacs who will eventually ransack Latin lover Stefano's crotch. Naturally, Stefano and Diana find themselves in trouble when they fail to pay their hotel bill, but they manage to escape unscathed after a woman randomly falls to her death from the balcony of the building. The couple's luck seems to change for the better when they encounter an eccentric middle-aged woman named Angela at a race-track who has a keen eye for foretelling the winning racehorse. After profiting from the fruitful predictions of lady luck, Stefano and Diana follow Angela to

her lavish countryside villa, a somewhat chilling yet chimerical spot with seemingly shady characters whose dubious intentions appear less than savory. Not long after arriving at this majestic maniac mansion, Angela's put Diana under an incapacitating spell that ultimately uncouples her from Stefano. After being separated from his inamorata, Stefano enters through a series of literal and figurative doors of perception that become increasingly nonsensical and indiscreetly erotic. Among other things, Italian stallion Stefano encounters a quaint she-devil on wheels with a kitschy totenkopf mask who rides her motorcycle in the mansion during a lunatic's ball; and a one-eyed erotomaniac who enjoys teasing the man with her grotesque facial deformity and devouring his body. In the divinely demented Gothic delusional realm of *Blow Job*, nothing is as it seems, thus making for a rare quasi-porn flick that concludes in an abrupt and fantastic fashion that is worthy of being compared to such cinematic classics as the German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and Herk Harvey's extremely influential cult horror flick *Carnival of Souls* (1962).

Compared to Alberto Cavallone's previous works *Man, Woman and Beast* (1977) and *Blue Movie* (1978), *Blow Job* – despite its various scenes of hardcore and not so hardcore sex – is a relatively harmless yet sporadically tasteless work directed by a once politically and socially concerned man who – like many creative and revolutionary individuals of his era – settled for escaping in his own manifestly tainted psyche via irrational metaphysical mumbo-jumbo and mind-altering chemicals as testified by the film. Of course, *Blow Job* is a much more artistically ambitious, campy and erotically-charged work than the Andy Warhol 1963 short it was inane named after. Additionally, *Blow Job* seems like an immaculate masterpiece of erotic arthouse cinema when compared to the awfully artless yet somehow more popular works of fellow Mediterranean libertine filmmakers Joe D'Amato and Jess Franco. Watching *Blow Job* may not be as gratifying as receiving actual fellatio, but it does feature an oftentimes entrancing diacritic Arcadia all of its own.

-Ty E

BEING CAPTURED
BEING CAPTURED

Alberto Cavallone (1982) *Being Captured* is yet another euro-trash obscurity that really doesn't make a lick of sense. The plot line follows a woman who gets hired to babysit a supposed child while the wife has an affair with her chauffeur. The only conflicting problem is that the child is a midget in a sailor outfit with a blowgun armed with poison dart. That's right. This piece of cinema is among many that have been lost and discredited due to obvious reasons, but the truth is that *Being Captured* is a form of sleazy anti-art. The film's narration follows the victim as she is explaining what happened to her friend; a lawyer. A story that involves a strip-teasing kidnapping midget who has a numerous amount of eccentric fetishes including rape and sodomy. The film is from a VHS transfer available from VSoM, but this version is subbed and cut, so you can imagine how horrible the quality is. The obscurity for the film is the most appealing asset besides the midget's array of trashy fetishes. This is just one of few films that doesn't have an IMDb page. Watching a woman trying to escape from a midget and fail is pretty funny. It is almost as horrible as watching a tiny doll overpower a full-grown man as seen in *Child's Play*. The film has a pretty horrible approach on midgets. She constantly screams, "Dirty midget" while he attempts to sodomize her. The name of the game is stupidity. Sabrina has so many chances to escape but is plagued with naivety, as are most characters on film in similar situations. The soundtrack is reminiscent to most low budget Euro-trash films. Keep in mind this film has an extreme amount of nudity. In fact, Sabrina is only clothed for around 9 minutes of its hour-long runtime. Italian filmmaker Alberto Cavallone credits his name as Baron Corvo when he directed this film. It must be to hide his name from this absurdity. *Being Captured* is a rare find that will appease anyone who is a fan of the down right bizarre. Keep in mind though; the ending is basically a lifetime film when it comes down to federal officials. My advice is watch the first 50 minutes, then turn it off.

-mAQ

TESIS

Alejandro Amenábar° (1996)

The thing about reviewing thriller films is finding the words to express the film as best as you can. In every review for a suspense film, you will find words like "first-rate" or tense & taut". The lack of variety in detailing leaves for an unsure mind in need of a recommendation. Natural Born Killers was once heralded for its abrasive look at violence in the media. Allow this film to step aside for a film depicting violence in a small environment, Tesis is here to stay amongst the classics.

A film more realistic and mentally explosive than 8mm, Tesis provides countless progression to keep the mood intact and the story tense. A film student is developing a thesis on violence in film. She then uncovers a snuff film and is led into a labyrinth of betrayal, lust, and deceit. She eventually uncovers a snuff ring and the truth may be more horrifying than she originally expected.

Besides from our inquisitive female lead Ana Torrent, the cast is composed of Spanish unknowns and one happens to eerily resemble Johnny Depp. Tesis is one of few films to give the snuff mythology the proper treatment to film. It's quite ironic that a video tape featuring a death recorded for entertainment and/or to sell is one of the hardest horror subjects to adapt into film. As for the speculation that snuff films don't exist, that's utter nonsense. The coercion of other films on snuff include the basement mixtape gritty filming style. Killing someone on film wouldn't have to be so nightmare inducing if you were killing someone for entertainment, which is the exact reason when a film on snuff tries to make you feel "Seedy" for watching the material, you feel like you're watching a normal film on snuff. Tesis, on the other hand, puts the illegal ring around a secure location and increases the absurdity and suspense of it all. Tesis as a film completely surprised me. Do not expect a new age art in the guise of a thrilling film. It is an extravagant look at how a murderer could be amongst your midst and increases that very existent paranoia. Tesis is an extremely average film that might surpass 8mm. It's hard to surpass Joaquin Phoenix in a punk fashion.

-mAQ

EL TOPO
EL TOPO

Alejandro Jodorowsky* (1970)

I have almost always had somewhat mixed feelings about Jewish-Chilean-French auteur Alejandro Jodorowsky (*Fando y Lis*, *The Holy Mountain*) and certainly get a feeling of decided disgust when I encounter his more devout disciples, yet I respect him, if for nothing else, as a filmmaker with a distinct and uncompromising vision. Indeed, as a man who wore a special pair of underwear (apparently, black silk underpants with holes exposing his testicles and penis head, as well as a green circle over the area covering the anus) so he would not mimic the contrived cowboy cockiness of John Wayne, picked out a short yet thick rock in the shape of a chode for the set that resembled his own penis, made filmic love to a Mexican dwarf and apparently actually really raped his female costar for ostensible 'realism' during a rape scene, forced his real-life pre-pubescent son to star in the film completely naked in a role also as his onscreen son, and utilized countless dead, and oftentimes mutilated, animal corpses (as the director admitted himself, he killed 300 bunny rabbits with 'karate blows' to the neck), as well as Mexican cripples, dwarves, and other human freaks, for his magnum opus *El Topo* (1970) aka *The Mole* aka *The Gopher*, Alejandro Jodorowsky was not merely playing around, as the director once had the gall to make the exceedingly egomaniacal claim: "If you are great, 'El Topo' is a great picture. If you are limited, 'El Topo' is limited." Judging by Jodorowsky's remark, I suspect the average American filmgoer is rather limited, as they would probably find the film to be grotesque garbage of the perversely pretentious sort, if not a total insult to their faith and nation. Personally, after recently re-watching the film for the fourth time, I must admit that I think *El Topo* is nothing short of a morbid masterpiece that manages to create a marvelously misbegotten marriage between the amorality and beautiful bodily dismemberment of the Grand Guignol, the allegorical iconoclastic surrealism of Luis Buñuel, the nihilistic western ultra-violence of Sam Peckinpah, the human freakiness of Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), the atmospheric celluloid spirituality of Sergei Parajanov, and the obsessive attention to detail of Stanley Kubrick, albeit in a Mestizo dime-store form. Directed by a true 'wandering Jew' who was born in Chile in 1929 to Ukrainian Jewish parents (Jodorowsky claims he was the product of his father raping his mother) in Chile who moved to Paris, France in the early 1950s and ultimately co-founded (with fellow surrealist western director Fernando Arrabal and Roland Topor) the Dadaist-inspired anarchistic avant-garde Panic Movement before moving to Mexico to direct his first feature *Fando y Lis* (1968), *El Topo* is undoubtedly a 'messianic' cinematic work where auteur Jodorowsky plays an (anti)Christ-like figure who learns from and then kills four different spiritual/philosophical gurus (whose dogmas range from Eastern philosophy to Catholic mysticism to Nietzscheanism), only to be resurrected and act as the

revolutionary saint of a group of Mexican cripples, freaks, and dwarves. Quite arguably a work of absurdist Jewish messianism (Hassidic belief states that in every generation a potential Messiah exists, with Jodorowsky being the messiah of his own film), *El Topo* changed the way people looked at movies as a hit on the Midnight Movie circuit that mystified the counter-culture generation with its insanely idiosyncratic blend of celluloid outlaw esotericism and aesthetic and thematic acid anarchism. Unavailable for over 30 years after Jodorowsky had a falling out with copyright owner/producer Allen Klein (who had *El Topo* and the director's subsequent work *The Holy Mountain* (1973) banned after he refused to adapt Pauline Réage's classic S&M novel *Story of O* 1954)), *El Topo* is in many ways the ultimate 'cult film,' as the sort of arcane cinematic work that people could literally worship in our decidedly degenerate postmodern age.

Divided into four pseudo-Biblical chapters (Genesis, Prophets, Psalms, Apocalypse), *El Topo* follows an eponymous spiritual outlaw (Alejandro Jodorowsky)—an initially stoic avenger who sports an all-black leather rebel cowboy outfit—as he travels through the desert on horseback with his naked son Brontis (played by the director's real-life son Brontis Jodorowsky). After *El Topo* tells his son, "You are seven years old. You are a man. Bury your first toy and your mother's picture," the little lad follows his dad's command and the following allegorical words are narrated, "The mole digs tunnels under the earth, looking for the sun. Sometimes, he gets to the surface. When he sees the sun, he is blinded." From there, *El Topo* and his son enter a town where the entire population has been massacred aside from a dying man who begs the dark leather-clad cowboy to help him, but he gets his son Brontis to put the man out of his misery. Meanwhile, three degenerate banditos who were involved in the massacre—a freak with a serious female shoe fetish, a guy that likes slicing bananas with his sword, and a sexually depraved loser that makes an image of a naked woman out of rocks and proceeds to hump the erotic rock formation—are lurking near the town. When *El Topo* runs into the banditos, he immediately kills two of them and leaves the foot fetishist alive long enough to find out where his leader is located. *El Topo* learns that a fellow named the Colonel (David Silva, who later appeared in *The Holy Mountain* and Juan López Moctezuma's *Alucarda* (1977)) has overrun a Catholic Mission where his depraved untermensch goons are engaged in sexually torturing the monks (forcing them to dress like Mother Mary in drag) and raping and torturing women. Needless to say, *El Topo* shows up at the Franciscan Mission and confronts the Colonel. When the Colonel asks *El Topo*, "Who are you to judge me?," to which the renegade cowboy replies, "I am God," *El Topo* proceeds to castrate the degenerate bandito dictator in a blood-gushing fashion. Literally and figuratively no longer a man, the Colonel commits suicide by blowing his brains out with a shotgun and *El Topo* takes the dead eunuch's sex slave, who he renames Mara (Mara Lorenzo), and proceeds to do the seemingly unthinkable by abandoning his naked son Brontis with the rather effete

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monks of the mission.

El Topo and Mara head to the desert and the messianic cowboy performs live-saving miracles like shooting a stone with his revolver and making water gush out of it, so that the two do not die of dehydration. For whatever reason, El Topo decides to violently rape Mara (in the audio commentary for a recent bluray release of the film, the director confesses he really brutally raped the actress, stating, "It looks less spectacular than a choreographed one."). Not long after, El Topo confesses he loves Mara and she replies with the following demand, "So that I may love you, you have to be the best. Four great gun masters live in this desert. You've got to look for them, and kill them." Although El Topo is ill-equipped to take on the great gun masters, Mara convinces him to play dirty and use trickery to defeat them. The first Master El Topo takes on is a young blind hippie-like guru (played by Mexican rock musician Héctor Martínez) who wears nothing but a loincloth, has a legless cripple for a servant who is strapped to an armless cripple, and is seemingly immune to bullets. El Topo defeats the Master #1 by digging a hole, which the unwittingly blind guru falls into, thus giving him the opportunity to put a bullet in his brain with very little effort. After Master #1 is killed, a 'Woman in Black' (Paula Romo) who is the virtual female counterpart (or Jungian 'anima') to El Topo shows up and agrees to guide him to the second Master. Master #2 (played by theatre director Juan José Gurrola) is a Sufi goldsmith with a serious Oedipal complex who is quite in love with his rather rough gypsy-like Mother (Bertha Lomelí), who has a man's voice. Once again determined to win by cheating, El Topo places broken glass on the ground for the Mother step on and when momma's boy Master #2 turns around to see if his mommy is hurt, the Mole shoots the unlucky guru when he is not looking. Master #3 is a rabbit-obsessed perfectionist whose countless bunny rabbits drop dead upon El Topo's arrival, as the dark cowboy seems to bring a metaphysical plague with him. Knowing that Master #3 (played by Mexican antique dealer Víctor Fosado) only has one shot and plans to shoot him in the chest, El Topo places a copper plate over his heart. After surviving being shot in the chest, El Topo jumps back up in joy like a shameless braggart, shoots Master #3, and arrogantly states, "Too much perfection is a mistake" (the director once stated in an interview regarding that quote, "All Oriental culture is in that sentence") as the guru dies. Master #4 (played by retired alcoholic actor Agustín Isunza) is a half-naked toothless old bum who is so fast he can catch El Topo's bullets in a net and fling them back at him. Luckily for El Topo, Master #4 does not care about life and proves it to El Topo by snatching his gun and blowing his brains out. While El Topo succeeds in swiftly killing all four masters, he becomes overwhelmed with grief for using such cowardly trickery to kill four gurus who provided him with priceless esoteric knowledge, so he smashes his revolver and goes completely mad, even revisiting the sites of the great men he maliciously murdered and mourning over their rotten corpse. On top of that, the 'Lady in

Black' challenges El Topo to a duel and proceeds to shoot him in his hands, feet, and side ('the wounds of Christ'). Turned into a callous carpet-muncher by the lesbo Lady in Black, Mara also shoots El Topo and as he dies he sees visions of the two sapphic she-bitches making lurid lesbian love. Luckily, a grotesque gang of Mexican cripples, midgets, and horribly deformed individuals find El Topo's corpse and bring him to a cave where he is 'resurrected' like Christ, ultimately reawakening 20-years-later with a blond Jew-fro and drag queen makeup, thereupon resembling what looks like the most aesthetically repugnant Marilyn Monroe impersonator in history.

Upon his great reawakening, El Topo is told by a female dwarf (Jacqueline Luis) of the cripples that he is their savior and he will build a tunnel through the mountain cave that will help the cripples escape their imprisonment and go to a local town. After shaving his Aryan Jew-fro and sharing a beetle with an old wise woman, El Topo is fully resurrected and powerful enough to carry out his Christ-like duties. To fund the operation, El Topo and the Dwarf go to a discernibly decadent town where they 'beg' (i.e. put on Vaudeville-like performances) for change from the locals. A sort of maniac microcosm of the most infamously degenerate aspects of the United States, the town is a place where buck negroes are bought and sold into sex slavery for the perverse pleasures of old fat bourgeois white women and where people play Russian roulette at the local church where it is declared a 'miracle' each time a player of the game manages not to blow their brains out (though a young boy inevitably does). The flag of the village is the 'all-seeing eye of God' of the dollar bill, which is a sort of stand-in for the swastika of Nazi Germany (Jodorowsky once stated regarding the image, "I used it in the film as a symbol of guilt: the eye says, 'You are guilty, you are guilty.' Yes, a guilty society. In the film. It was a very nice symbol"). While begging in the town, El Topo and the Dwarf are taken hostage and forced to perform sex with each other in a sort of makeshift basement orgy room, thus resulting in the little person becoming pregnant. El Topo agrees to marry the Dwarf, but their priest ends up being the cowboy's son Brontis, who is now a grown man and attempts to kill his father. After the Dwarf convinces Brontis that El Topo is a savior who plans to liberate the cripples by building the tunnel, the prodigal son agrees to wait to kill his father until after the tunnel is finished. Brontis also agrees to help beg and dig the tunnel to speed up the process of liberating the cripples, but when they finish, the son cannot bring himself to kill his papa, stating, "I cannot kill my master." When the cripples escape via the tunnel and enter the village, they are exterminated by the local police (who are obese scat-obsessed homosexuals), which infuriates El Topo so much that he massacres all the inhabitants of the village (like his enemy the Colonel did at the beginning, thus becoming what he always hated) and proceeds to commit self-immolation à la Thich Quang Đức. Indeed, El Topo forgot to take notice of the over-quoted words of warning from Nietzsche, "Beware that, when fighting

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monsters, you yourself do not become a monster... for when you gaze long into the abyss. The abyss gazes also into you." Meanwhile, the Dwarf gives birth and she, Brontis (who is now dressed like his father and has taken over his persona), and the baby leave the village on horseback.

While *Santa Sangre* (1989) is my favorite Alejandro Jodorowsky flick, I am not going to pretend that *El Topo* is not the director's most important and immaculate work. Additionally, I would go so far as saying that *El Topo* is not only the best film to have ever been sired in Mexico, but one of the most, if not the most, artistically genuine and ambitious of films ever directed by a Jewish filmmaker. Indeed, despite coming from a similar background (poor Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europa), Jodorowsky is contra to everything that the big Hebraic Hollywood moguls like Adolph Zukor, William Fox, Samuel Goldwyn, and Louis B. Mayer stood for. While the Goldwyns and Mayers made an absurd amount of money turning cinema into a cheap product and artistically unmerited form of entertainment meant to appeal to the lowest common denominator, even popularizing the dreaded musical (not to mention the western), Jodorowsky approached the medium of film from almost a quasi-spiritual angle and waged a sort of celluloid revolution against the Hollywood western genre as well as the so-called 'American Dream', which was also dreamed up by the Judaic bigwigs of Tinseltown. In its depiction of an anarchistic outsider who kills four spiritual gurus (and thus symbolically destroys four religions), supports the weak (i.e. the cripples) against the strong, and totally exterminates a town run and inhabited by white people, *El Topo* ultimately reads like a sick Semitic fantasy that is as old as Judaism itself, yet Jodorowsky expresses sorrow and guilt for his character's actions. After all, after killing the four Masters, he is plagued by his guilt and goes completely insane. Additionally, *El Topo* commits suicide after exterminating the white village, which, rather unfortunately, is certainly not something that the great Jewish communist mass murderers of history like Leon Trotsky, Lazar Kaganovich, Genrikh Yagoda, and Béla Kun ever considered doing. As demonstrated by his quoting of French traditionalist/metaphysician René Guénon in the book *El Topo: A Book of the Film* (1971) and incessant quoting of various religious figures and events, Jodorowsky's respect for various forms of spirituality is indisputable (he has described himself as an 'atheistic mystic') and *El Topo* represents his sort of cinematic Torah, with The Holy Mountain being his New Testament. As for what the experience of making the film meant to him, Jodorowsky gave the following answer in an interview featured in *El Topo: A Book of the film*: "I was born. A new life. Really, a new life. I think my brain opened up. When I started this interview, I spoke about my skull dividing into eight pieces, and the butterfly that came ... Maybe the butterfly was the movie. Maybe when you do something, you are changed. When I shaved my head, and when I found the landscapes, for example, those were very strong experiences -- Jungian experiences." And, indeed, speaking of

Jung, Jodorowky managed to create his own archetypes (while utilizing ancient ones) with El Topo that very few other films in cinema can boast. While I am somewhat skeptical about the idea, one can only speculate whether or not the sequel Son of El Topo will ever be made (Jodorowsky has been talking about it pretty much ever since the release of El Topo), but if one thing is for sure, it is that El Topo is and will always remain an unrivaled work of cinema, as well as the perfect antidote to the passive peace and love of the counter-culture zeitgeist.

-Ty E

FANDO Y LIS
FANDO Y LIS

Alejandro Jodorowsky* (1970)

Longtime friend of Jodorowsky's, Fernando Arrabal, once wrote a play entitled *Fando y Lis*. Jodorowsky felt strongly towards the idea of adapting the play into his first feature length film using his memories of the performance and a one page script. The result is his greatest film in substance with meaningful and harrowing imagery with a score drowning in mystique. While being of the surreal genre, the film has a sideshow mystique emanating from it which in turn creates a sprawling epic of abuse and passion. I use the word epic freely. Not a traditional epic but a vast odyssey of the masks of comedy and tragedy, both. If you want the feel of theater perfectly captured, *Fando y Lis* would be your luckiest endeavor. Fando and Lis are an unconventional coupling of handicaps. Fando has a statuesque face made for the silver screen (Similar to icon James Dean) and Lis is as gentle and kind as a china doll and also paraplegic. Due to this, she becomes a burden on the passive Fando. *Maladolescenza* brought this film to mind. Both characters seem saintly, but Fando is constantly spiraling downwards to an inevitable ending which is already written in the threads of fate. Their personal journey towards the "lost city of Tar" brings to mind many questions - of course, relating to society. The very figment of a society is nowhere to be found. Barroom singers and musicians play their beloved melody to a cultured world devastated by debris and rubble, sanctioned by miserable mud men and populated with slutty elderly folks. Jodorowsky's world is a world I could populate as well. But many can clash with this perspective. During the premiere and screening, riots continuously broke out leaving Jodorowsky escaping into a limo. One might wonder how a first time full-lengther would escape into a limo, but this even adds to the delirious cosmic force of Jodorowsky. Surely a mystic man has reached a personal limit of enlightenment. I've encountered situations similar to the journey towards Tar. As a child, I've found myself wandering aimlessly around the forest with friends, not knowing where I was heading but slowly careening towards my destination anyways. With as much ferocity presented in its simple black & white picturesque, I too felt a greater need of purpose. Such simple antiquities has Jodorowsky captured with his camera's lens. As cunning as the director may be, he has fallen under a spell of bad publicity due to this film. The star of Fando, Sergio Kleiner, claims that Jodorowsky was indeed of vampiric descent as he craved real blood for a scene. Every portion of this 3 hour surrealist spectacle is needed to fully flesh out the torments, characters, and the faceless journey. *Fando y Lis* is his most linear film to date, save for *The Rainbow Thief*. While being extremely engaging regardless of what is going on, the possessive need for analytics is still there. A somber, mellow mood steadily creeps towards a more aggressive standpoint until the sorrowful finale. Many spite Jodorowsky due to his lack of a cohesive storyline. Many cannot sit without squirming thanks to

abundant visual eccentricities. What James Joyce did with wordsmithing, Jodorowsky does with moving pictures. In a sense, Jodorowsky is the original visual auteur. No one did it as fast and as furious as him. Even to this date, *Fando y Lis* & *The Holy Mountain* still best the likes of *Un Chien Andalou* and such Maya Deren films. A romantic story never phases me. Sought out love in celluloid is a thing of the past. Now, with a suggestive plot like that, you're treated to Vince Vaughn being a retarded piece of shit for an hour and a half as a slutty A-list celebrity imposes the idea that failures such as him get laid. Too personal for a screen presentation? Hardly. Ty E's recommendation of *Sunrise: A Tale of Two Humans* proved to be a most intimate performance. During the dawn of a cinema eclipse, it will be films such as *Fando y Lis* that will brandish the crown of time. This my friends, is a work of intimate genius.

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SANTA SANGRE
SANTA SANGRE

Alejandro Jodorowsky* (1989)

Admittedly, I have become quite disillusioned with the films and character of “acid-garde” auteur turned comic writer/would-be-guru Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo*, *The Holy Mountain*) over the past couple years or so, but strangely, at the same time, I have found a new affinity for his Mexican-Italian surrealist thriller-horror film *Santa Sangre* (1989) aka *Holy Blood*; a work I was so annoyed with upon my initially viewing of it some 8 or 9 years ago that I did not even make it to the midpoint before turning it off. The first film he directed in almost a decade after his failed children’s filmic fable *Tusk* (1980) and his aborted attempt at cinematically adapting Frank Herbert’s epic 1965 science fiction novel *Dune*, *Santa Sangre* – a work co-written and produced by Claudio Argento (the younger brother of Italian giallo maestro Dario Argento, who produced many of his big bro’s films, including *Suspiria* and *Mother of Tears*) – was a sort of “comeback” effort for Jodorowsky, but it was, unfortunately, a short-lived one as his subsequent attempt at creating a cinematic blockbuster, *The Rainbow Thief* (1990), was an abject failure of the first order, both artistically and especially financially speaking. Featuring the sort of sordid sideshow surrealism and gross and gory yet gorgeous grotesquery fans have come to love and expect from Jodorowsky yet with a much more coherent narrative than *El Topo* (1970) and *The Holy Mountain* (1973), *Santa Sangre* arguably makes for the seemingly megalomaniacal avant-garde auteur’s most accessible and, dare I say, eclectically and endlessly entertaining work, thus making it the perfect introduction to his odd and oftentimes oneiric yet ominously obscene cinematic oeuvre. Although often described as a Chilean, Latino, and/or French filmmaker, Jodorowsky is undoubtedly the virtual archetypical “wandering Jew,” as someone who was born to Ukrainian Jewish immigrants that learned to dislike the natives of Chile due to their mistrust of his ‘foreign’ character, as well as the American mining industrialists that mistreated the natives, thus developing a dual hatred for American imperialism and its victims, which bleeds deeply through his celluloid works, including *Santa Sangre*; a film that portrays the majority of Mexicans as savage scavengers, filthy freaks, and, at best, suave criminals and charismatic psychopaths. A man that was apparently, according to himself, the product of rape after his father sexually ravaged his mother, Jodorowsky (who once claimed to have literally raped the heroine for a scene in *El Topo*, thus following in the foul footsteps of his fiendish father) was naturally resented by the woman that rather reluctantly gave birth to him, which most certainly seems to shine through in *Santa Sangre*; a film about a child magician turned bestial adult mental patient and malicious murderer who thinks he is a phoenix and is horribly haunted by his armless and merciless mother. Featuring a visual feast of human freaks of the genetically dubious sort, hungry mobs of mud-covered Mexicans who are

hellbent for the foul flesh of dead elephants, voluptuous zombie babes, kooky coke-snorting beaners with Down syndrome, a super slavish religious cult that worships a girl that who was raped and had both her arms cut off by two bodacious buggering brothers, and meta-Fellini-esque carnival and murder scenarios probably inspired by psychedelic drugs and even more mind-penetrating personal memories, *Santa Sangre* is a surrealistically sound film that convinced me that Jodorowsky is more than just a pretentious psychopath who is addicted to his own deluded, drug-addled pseudo-spirituality of "psychoshamanism."

Fenix (Axel Jodorowsky; the director's son, who bares a striking resemblance to his father thus making for the perfect alter-ego for the auteur) is all fucked up and like many deranged people, his mental affliction started after a rather tragic series of events he experienced during his completely corrupting childhood during those especially critical coming-of-age years. Rather prestigious and wise for a child carnay, young Fenix (Adan Jodorowsky; another one of the director's sons) works as a "child magician" at a Gringo-owned (as advertised) Mexican carnival run by his semi-nefarious knife-throwing father Orgo (Guy Stockwell) and whose best friend is a middle-aged Mexi-midget named Aladin. Fenix's mother Concha (Blanca Guerra) also works at the carnival as a trapeze artist and aerialist, but her real passion is being the leader of a renegade religious cult that has a raped and dismembered girl (who has no arms) as its patently perverse and preposterous patron saint. On top of suffering from spiritual insanity, Concha suffers from self-imposed sexual repression and totally hates a tattooed woman (Thelma Tixou) that also works at the carnival because her husband Orgo has a rather dubious and risque relationship with her that includes throwing knives only a couple inches away from her illustrated meat-curtain. The tattooed woman also has an adopted daughter named Alma (Faviola Elenka Tapia); a blonde-haired, deaf mute tightrope walker that Fenix is feverishly fond of. Naturally, little Fenix's life begins to take a dramatic turn for the worst when one of his friends, a small elephant, dies and is given a public funeral where it is paraded through the city streets in its campy coffin like all great Mexican folk heroes and is subsequently dumped in a trash pit, where a virtual army of dirty mestizo savages (played by real poor people whose sole costume for the film was mud splattered across their clothes and for whom the director apparently gave real beef to quench their hunger) rip the deceased beast to shreds so they can eat its rancid meat, thereupon traumatizing the little magician, yet the downward spiral that is his late childhood has only begun to turn into a very real nightmare. To simultaneously console and make a man out of his son, ogre-like blond beast Orgo tattoos a large spread-eagled phoenix (a symbol typically used as a sign of "resurrection" or an "exceptional man") onto the boy's chest that is identical to his own chest tat via his favorite knife and some bloody red ink in what is a symbolic mark that will perpetuate a family curse. In retaliation for seeing Ogor fondling and fornicating with the tattooed woman, Concha pours sulphuric acid

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onto her husband's Orgo's disloyal dick and balls and he retaliates by cutting her arms off, thereupon turning her into a mommy martyr in the form of her favorite limbless rape victim saint. With his manhood mangled and ruined, Ogor – who is no Adonis as a large and in charge fellow with an exceptionally unflattering and badly bulging beer gut – walks naked into the street while grasping his disfigured genitals and slits his own throat with his favorite phallic throwing knife, all while Fenix watches to horror while helplessly locked in a trailer.

Flash forward a decade or so into the present, Fenix is now a funny feral-like fellow who thinks he is a phoenix as an emotionally monotone maniac who stands crouched down and perched on a tree and eats raw fish in a mental institution where he seems to be the only patient who does not suffer from Down syndrome. One night, when he and the merry mongoloids are taken on a night field trip to a local movie theater, he and his crazy comrades are given cocaine by a suave pimp (Teo Jodorowsky; undoubtedly the director's least ugly son) with his hair slicked back like a greaser who has an obese prostitute as a girlfriend. The pimp takes them to the more sleazy side of the superlatively shitty city, where Fenix sees the tattooed woman, who now works as a fleshpeddler, trying to sell cheap tricks on the seedy sunset strip, which throws him into a fit of rage. His encounter with the tattooed whore must have awoken something deep inside of his subconscious because he regains the strength and will to live, but also sees the ghost of his dead mother, who calls out to him, so naturally he escapes from the less than secure mental hospital and rejoins his mommy to begin his new life of murder and mayhem. To his decided dismay, Fenix witnesses the tattooed women trying to teach now-grownup Alma the trick of the trade of a hooker, but before long, the ex-carny covered in salacious tats is brutally mutilated by an unseen woman's hands with red finger nails. Together mother and son go on vengeful seek-and-destroy missions, but is the armless Madonna just really a figment of the marvelously mad man's macabre and murderous imagination?! Can lifelong love interest Alma prove that 'love conquers all,' by getting Fenix to stop fetishizing his freaky mom?! Through a series of trials and errors, including attempting to take on the identity of the 'Invisible Man' and giving way to his bi-curious side by dating and courting a massive and muscular cross-dressing wrestler, Fenix comes to realize that his mother is not of the nice, nurturing sort and that he needs to finally come to terms with his unpleasant past, even if it means eradicating his phantasmagorical procreator for a woman of the more physical and less homicidal and incestuous sort.

Like Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) meets Steve Balderson's *Firecracker* (2005) as directed by a younger, more vivacious Luis Buñuel on LSD attempting to direct a film in the spirit of Dario Argento, *Santa Sangre* is a psychedelic psychosexual cinematic tale about the irrevocable consequences of one man's stunted and terribly tragicomic coming-of-age that ultimately had murderous consequences of the ominous oedipal sort, which also seemed to have plagued director

Alejandro Jodorowsky; a man whose mommy resented him since birth since he was the rather unwanted product of rape, even once telling him, "I cannot love you." Of course, while Fenix dealt with his demons by killing people, Jodorowsky creatively and cleverly concocted some of the most gnarled and grotesque yet strangely gorgeous scenarios ever captured on celluloid with those featured in *Santa Sangre* being some of his most seemingly personal. Whereas someone like Steven Spielberg makes mundane and absurdly artificial coming-of-age movies that portray childhood as a positively pleasant period of majestic perfection of the literally supernatural and non-allegorical sort where everything works out immaculately in the end and is saturated with severely soulless and superficial sentimentalism, Jodorowsky bares his determinedly damaged inner-child with *Santa Sangre*; a film with the message that, to quote Morrissey, "Barbarism Begins at Home," and that one must get over these childhood ills if they ever hope to move on with their lives. In a 2008 interview with *Bright Lights Film Journal*, Jodorowsky admitted regarding his film and the difference between he and the Hollywood Shoah-man of Show biz, "In *Santa Sangre*, I shot in the streets where all the thieves and the criminals and the drunks are, I went there to shoot. It's a very . . . you know, you are not you when you are shooting. The person who made those pictures is not me. I was a completely different person when I made these pictures: I would see no one, I would sleep only four hours a day, I didn't drink, I didn't take drugs, I didn't have a woman — nothing. I ate very little. The only thing I did was make the pictures. They are honest pictures. They are good, they are bad — they are something which happened there, which is honest... But, say, Spielberg is not honest. I hate Spielberg, because none of his movies are honest. His violence is ill, it's not honest. He shows an ill violence, as though he was the father of history. He hates Jews, because he is Jewish. He is making business with that, with Europe. He is fascist, because America is the centre of his world. If I can kill Spielberg, I will kill Spielberg." Indeed, any film that led Jodorowsky to lay off the psychedelic drugs for an extended period of time must have been an important and even spiritual work as a sort of personal cinematic 'exorcising' ritual and quite possibly the most honest and strangely hopeful work the seemingly damned director has ever created. That being said, until the day comes when S. Spielberg directs an extra-erotic big-budget 'kids-ploitation' film celebrating the triumph of Judea and the destruction of Europa and Occidental civilization, as well as the spiritual and financial enslavement of the Goyim, will he have reached a degree of personal and artistic integrity that is anywhere near as great as his renegade messianic kinsman Alejandro Jodorowsky.

-Ty E

THE DANCE OF REALITY
THE DANCE OF REALITY

Alejandro Jodorowsky* (2013)

Despite the fact that most of his films are in some way autobiographical, Chilean-born auteur/movie metaphysician, comics writer/artist, and spiritual guru Alejandro Jodorowsky (*Fando y Lis*, *El Topo*) has rarely made reference to his Ukrainian-Jewish origins in his cinematic works aside from fleeting esoteric references to the cabbala in *The Holy Mountain* (1973), at least until recently. Indeed, for his first feature in well over two decades, *The Dance of Reality* (2013) aka *La danza de la realidad*—a film based on the director's 400+ page 'psychomagical autobiography' of the same name—Jodorowsky depicted his uniquely unhappy, if not equally magical and fantastic, 'coming-of-age' as a Ukrainian Jew who had the rare experience of growing up in a small and destitute Chilean town and suffering the emotionally and physical brutality of his sadistic and highly hypocritical Stalinist storeowner father. Quite obviously the director's most overtly personal, intimate, and even 'sentimental' work to date as a film where the filmmaker and self-proclaimed "atheist mystic" makes random abrupt appearances throughout the film where he attempts to console his younger self in what some might describe as a bittersweet mix of nostalgia and self-pity, *The Dance of Reality* is somewhat predictably the product of a much tamer and less hysterically hermetic Jodorowsky, even if it features a middle-aged Amazonian-like woman with meaty bosoms urinating on her husband and a talking burnt corpse that is covered with maggots and snails. Sort of like a deranged Disney coming-of-age flick that turns into a spiritual quest halfway through as directed by a Chilean Fellini who had the grand misfortune of being the sole Jewish boy in a remote area inhabited by savage Indian boys who were not too sympathetic to his 'mushroom-shaped' circumcised cock, Jodorowsky's latest film may not be the great long-awaited masterpiece that his fans have been eagerly expecting since his last excellent effort 1989 *Santa Sangre* (Jodorowsky directed *The Rainbow Thief* in 1990, but he ultimately disowned the film because his artistic freedom was taken away by executive producer Alexander Salkind, whose wife penned the screenplay), but it certainly offers a potent glimpse of the artist's extremely vulnerable naked soul, so it is only fitting that the 84-year-old posted a video of himself naked to promote the film. Easily the most idiosyncratic and pleasantly unhinged autobiographical film by an auteur filmmaker since belated German dandy Werner Schroeter's totally impenetrable penultimate work *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*, Jodorowsky's cinematic journey may have been shot on kitschy digital video and features absolutely aesthetically repugnant CGI special effects, but there is no mistaking the artistic integrity of the mensch that created it. Starring the director's own son Brontis Jodorowsky (who is best known for playing Jodorowsky's naked son in *El Topo*) in the role of the director's father, the film may feature cliché Freudian overtones, but it is unquestionable that it is an in-

nately anti-Hollywood work, as a celluloid spiritual quest in the spirit of what Aldous Huxley described as the, "Perennial Philosophy." Indeed, on top of being autobiographical, the film pays tribute to the fact that all religions share a single universal truth, thus demonstrating the director's lifelong obsession with arcane knowledge and all things relating to the spiritual and metaphysical. Shot on location in the director's hometown of Tocopilla and set in 1930s depression era Chile, *The Dance of Reality* is part political-thriller, part Fellini-esque fantasy, part absurdist comedy, part culturally confused allegory for Jewish assimilation, and part grotesque freak show, but it is also 100% Jodorowsky and that is certainly what matters most.

Young Alejandro Jodorowsky (Jeremías Herskovits) is a strange and severely sensitive little boy who lives a nightmarish yet fantastic and magical life with his unhappily married Jewish-Ukrainian parents Jaime (Brontis Jodorowsky) and Sara (Pamela Flores) in Tocopilla, Chile, which is a third world hellhole that is mostly populated by half-crazed mestizos, Indians, and cripples. Jaime is a diehard Stalinist who, despite his ostensible hatred of capitalism and affinity for dressing like a commie dictator, owns a successful bourgeois shoe and clothing store called "House of Ukraine" where a portrait of Joseph Stalin absurdly hangs on the wall as if it were a religious icon like a cross or a portrait of Christ. An unrepentant atheist true believer whose life philosophy is "you die and you rot" and who berates his son anytime he demonstrates an interest in religious matters, Jaime is ultimately a spiritual cripple and aggressively nihilistic materialist who uses communism as a sort of pseudo-religion. Indeed, while he never outright says it, Jaime seems to think that a communist overthrow of the Chilean government will lead to him becoming a bolshevik god. A former boxer and rope-climber for the local circus, Jaime hates the fact that the locals think of him as a weak foreign Jew who has no real love for the poor (indeed, during one especially scene, Jaime hatefully attacks a homeless cripple whose hands were blown off in a mining explosion), so he wants his seemingly effeminate son Alejandro to toughen up and forces the boy to cut off his big viking-like blond mane, which he inherited from his maternal grandfather, hence why his mother Sara—a spiritually-inclined woman who literally talks to god and sings in an operatic fashion every time she opens her mouth—strangely refers to her son as her "father," at least until he gets a haircut. To the chagrin of Jaime, Sara thinks that her father has been reincarnated via her son. Indeed, after his marvelous mane is murdered via non-haircut (the barber simply pulls a wig off the boy's head!), mother Sara calls poor Alejandro a "traitor." Indeed, after tragically losing his glistening golden locks, Alejandro is forced to be a tough son as opposed to a whiny momma's boy. After teaching his son to overcome pain by various methods ranging from being tickled with a feather to being smacked in the face to the point where he cracks a tooth, Alejandro is given the honor of becoming the "mascot" of the local fire department, which his father belongs to, but when the

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little lad witnesses the burnt corpse of a firefighter at the sight of a burned down home and later hallucinates seeing the corpse talking to him during a funeral ceremony for said burnt corpse, he disgraces his padre by fainting and not awaking for two entire days. Indeed, after Alejandro's pathetic display at the funeral ceremony, two of Jaime's firefighter comrades mock him by remarking that, "Even dressed up as a fireman, a Jew is a Jew," thus inspiring the Judaic Stalinist to go on a journey to deliver water to countless crippled refugees to prove his supposed dedication to the proletariat, but when he arrives, the poor people kill and eat his donkey and give him the plague, which is only cured when his wife Sara urinates on his face and bare toso. Ultimately, Jaime decides that killing Chilean president Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (Baštian Bodenhofer) will be the best way to prove his manhood and demonstrate his dedication to Chile and the commie cause. Of course, as a bourgeois-bred kosher capitalist, Jaime will ultimately fail in his dubious mission to liberate the masses via senseless assassination.

Jaime belongs to an underground Stalinist terrorist group—a curiously eclectic collection of cripples, beatniks, homos, lardos, trannies, and other social defective untermenschen that rather symbolically meet in whorehouses and masonic lodges (indeed, aside from the fact that brothels reflect some of the worst elements of capitalist exploitation, some believe that Freemasons were responsible for funding various communist revolutions)—and with his pinko cronies he attempts to figure out the best way to assassinate Ibáñez. After learning that the President loves his horse more than anything else, Jaime figures out his enemy's 'Achilles heel' and leaves his family to carry the assassination out, but a problem arises when one of the member of his commie clique, 'The Anarchist' (the director's rocker son Adan Jodorowsky, who played young Fenix in *Santa Sangre*), pulls a gun on him and says a foreign Jew should not have the right to kill the Chilean leader. After learning that the Anarchist wants to avenge his journalist father, who was executed by Ibáñez's men for writing unflattering things about the dictator's regime, Jaime agree to help his comrade carry out the assassination. Somewhat absurdly, the Anarchist attempts to assassinate Ibáñez at a dog show where canines are judged by how they look in goofy clothing, but Jaime stops him right before he shoots the dictator at close-range. After stating, "I don't want to live in a world with dressed up dogs," the Anarchist commits suicide by shooting himself with the same gun that he planned to assassinate the dictator with. For ostensibly risking his life to save him, President Ibáñez honors Jaime's request to be his personal horse trainer. Indeed, since the original horse trainer Don Aquiles (Andres Cox) plans to retire, Jaime is sent to train with him before he dies (Aquiles later has Jaime bury him alive). While Jaime loves the beautiful white stallion 'Bucephalus,' he decides to poison the horse by encouraging it to eat poisonous yellow flowers as a way to get Ibáñez to come by the farm in the middle of the night so that he can shoot him, but when the Stalinist gets the opportunity to kill his supposed oppressor, his hands become paralyzed and

he literally loses his mind. From there, Jaime will go on a Christ-like spiritual odyssey that will teach him how to be a humble man and loving father.

After Sara covers Alejandro's body with black paint in what is easily one of the strangest and most perverse blackface scenes in film history, the boy is able to get over his fear of the dark. Indeed, Sarah is a born healer with a spiritual touch and like with her son, she will ultimately save her husband Jaime from his seemingly malignant spiritual sickness. Sara also helps her son get over his fear of mestizos after being beaten up for being a Jew by stating to him, "Out with Pinocchio. Out with the Jew. Out with the nose and white skin!" and subsequently telling Alejandro that he is invisible. Indeed, after Sarah goes to the bar where Alejandro was beaten up, strips off all her clothes, and walks around the place like she owns it, no one touches the scrawny Jewish boy again. With the help of an eccentric and heavily tattooed shaman that resembles a Hindu sadhu named the 'Theosophist' (played by the director's son Axel Jodorowsky, who played the adult Fenix in *Santa Sangre*), Sara and Alejandro are able to send Jaime a message telling him to come back home. When Jaime receives the message, he snaps out of his amnesia and finds himself in a dilapidated shack in a third world ghetto lying next to a crippled midget who later explains to him that she found him half-starved wandering the streets. Flattered by the fact that Jaime seemed unaware of her glaring deformities and short stature, the crippled midget made him her live-in lover. Upset that Jaime's memory has come back and that he will no longer want to have sex with her, the midget commits suicide via hanging and the Stalinist is blamed for the death by the locals, thus he is forced to immediately flee from the shantytown.

After being tormented by seemingly rabid Catholic schoolgirls and being treated like a lowly beggar, Jaime happens upon a building called "Sacred Wood Carpenters" where he meets a humble old Christian carpenter named Don Jose who helps him to rehabilitate his paralyzed hands by teaching him to make wooden chairs that will be given to a local Catholic Church. When Jaime and Don Jose give 26 wooden chairs that they created to the Catholic Church, they are warmly honored by the priest and congregation. During the festivities, Don Jose unexpectedly drops dead and Jaime becomes so touched by the experience that he cries and gives away all his money to the church to help pay for Don Jose's funeral. With nowhere to go, Jaime hits the streets and sees Nazi brown-shirts parading down the block yet despite being a Judeo-Bolshevik, he decides to warmly salute the Chilean fascists. When a SS officer beats Jaime for supposedly disgracing the fascist salute by doing it with a crippled hand, the lapsed Stalinist becomes a true 'man of steel' and beats up an entire brigade of brown-shirts and forces the SS officer to hail Don Jose. After beating the Latino Nazis, Jaime is arrested by Ibáñez's secret service men and undergoes grueling torture, including receiving electrical charges to his genitals, but luckily he is saved by a group of commie resistance fighters just before one of his tormentors puts a

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bullet in his brain. As it turns out, due to public uprisings, Ibáñez decided to relinquish his power and flee to Argentina. With the help of the communist resistance fighters, Jaime manages to get back home to his family, but Alejandro and Sara are saddened to see that their once proud and stoic Stalinist is now a weak, broken, and crippled untermensch that looks like a poor man's Jesus and cries like an autistic little girl. With Sara's spiritual guidance, Jaime begins to learn the error of his ways. After Sarah says, "you found all you admired in Ibáñez in Stalin. And here you are...You are the same as they are!," a guilt-ridden Jaime cries out in terror and shoots a portrait of himself where he looks like a commie dictator, which causes a fire that burns his portrait, as well as portraits of Ibáñez and Stalin, thus ritualistically ridding himself of his old commie dictator self. In the end, Alejandro and his family leave Tocopilla, though the memories that the filmmaker received there never left him as he describes at the conclusion of the film.

In the book *Anarchy and Alchemy: The Films of Alejandro Jodorowsky* (2007) by Ben Cobb, Alejandro Jodorowsky is quoted regarding his rather complicated origins: "My parents were Russian...I was born in Chile...the [Chilean] children didn't accept me because I was 'Russian'...the young men didn't accept me because I was a 'Jew'...the French didn't accept me because I was a 'Chilean'...the Mexicans didn't accept me because I was 'French'...the Americans think I am 'Mexican'...after ten years, I will move to another planet. They won't accept me because they will think I am an 'American'." Indeed, it is quite apparent while watching *The Dance of Reality* that Jodorowsky is a born eccentric and perennial loner and that he did not fit in anywhere, including Chile and especially his own family home (interestingly, the director decided not to include his much resented elder sister as a character in the film). Jodorowsky even went so far as more or less rejecting his Jewishness and opting out of following in family tradition, remarking in Cobb's book in broken English regarding his decision to quite college: "I realized the scientific way or the logic way, rationalism...was not my way. My way was imagination. My father...was a businessman [who] want to have a child who can be in the university. Like all the Yiddish...they start to sell shoes and the second-generation [become] psychoanalysts. I didn't want to do that." Additionally, Jodorowsky would also later criticize the 'Jewishness' of Hollywood and Spielberg by remarking in an interview with *Bright Lights Film Journal*: "I like pictures that are honest. Like some Hong Kong pictures — those filmmakers are honest thieves, they are making business, and they are so honest about it, it's fantastic. But, say, Spielberg is not honest. I hate Spielberg, because none of his movies are honest. His violence is ill, it's not honest. He shows an ill violence, as though he was the father of history. He hates Jews, because he is Jewish. He is making business with that, with Europe. He is fascist, because America is the centre of his world. If I can kill Spielberg, I will kill Spielberg." Indeed, love it or hate it, there is no denying that *The Dance of Reality* is hon-

est filmmaking from one of the most idiosyncratic auteur filmmakers that the artistic medium has ever produced.

If you're tired of seeing countless hokey holocaust films and period pieces where Jews are depicted as morally righteous god-like beings who were persecuted by Europeans simply because they are Jewish, checkout Jodorowsky's film and learns that many Jews of the 1930s were not commies simply because they cared for the poor stupid goyim, but because they resent strong gentile leaders and opulent Aryans and want to rule over white gentile cattle. Ironically, it is only when antihero Jaime lives like Christ that he is able to get over his Hebraic megalomania, thus make *The Dance of Reality* pure heresy to Zionist supremacist types. Speaking of megalomania, Jodorowsky recently met with revolting negro rapper Kanye West, who apparently considers the filmmaker one of his greatest influences and even modeled the aesthetic of his 'Yeezus Tour' after the filmmaker's counter-culture classic *The Holy Mountain*. If Jodorowsky receives the gracious respect of a uniquely untalented yet stinking rich neo-minstrel entertainer like West, one would hope that someone will give him the money to make his long-awaited *El Topo* sequel, *Abel Cain aka Sons of El Topo*, as *The Dance of Reality* may be a worthwhile effort for an old artist reminiscing over his life, but he still has yet to create his last great masterpiece. Aside from being one of the greatest, if not the greatest, films of 2013, Jodorowsky's coming-of-age is a visceral attack against Hollywood and its soulless and materialistic weltanschauung of deracinating globalist anti-cultural and philo-Semitic hegemony. Notably, the director publicly stated that he hoped the film would lose money and intentionally made the film through donations without the backing of studios. While it might seem like some sort of sick joke that the Jewish director is featured at the beginning of the film taking about money while gold shekels falling from the sky and into his hands, Jodorowsky makes it quite clear what he thinks of monetary matters when he remarks: "Money is like blood, it gives life if it flows. Money is like Christ, it blesses you if you share it. Money is like Buddha, if you don't work, you don't get it. Money enlightens those who use it to open the flower of the world, and damns those who glorify it, confounding riches with the soul...There is no difference between money and conscience. There is no difference between conscience and death...There is no difference between death and wealth." Indeed, like Christ, Jodorowsky understands the moneychangers all too well, which, as depicted in the film, is something he learned at an early age via his abusive father, thus making the film a sort of metaphysical cinematic expression of what transformed the auteur into the uncompromising artist that he is today.

While it would be easy to describe Jodorowsky as a 'self-loathing Jew' after watching a film like *The Dance of Reality* where the boy protagonist is literally exorcised of his Jewishness by his mother, I like to think that the cinematic shaman transcended his Judaic roots as an anti-materialistic/anti-Marxist He-

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brew that seems to have recognized that his 'Ātman' (one's 'inner-self' or 'true self') is identical with his 'Brahman' ('transcendent self'). Of course, the director's father failed to obtain this level of spirituality maturity, hence the great misery he suffered as depicted in the film. Indeed, *The Dance of Reality* makes the perfect comparison piece to French-Polish Jew Jean-Pierre Mocky's similarly surreal and darkly humorous 'folk horror' flick *Litan* (1982), which depicts religion, especially Catholicism, as the most malignant and deadly of diseases. As the films demonstrate, while Jodorowsky got over his spiritual sickness as a mere child and grew to become a deeply devout practitioner of the perennial philosophy, Mocky seems plagued with spiritual retardation for eternity. Indeed, while it may sound absurd, it seems that Jodorowsky's rather unconventional childhood as a Jewish boy who suffered regular cruelty from mestizos who mocked his circumcised cock was, in the long run, one of the best things that ever happened to him.

-Ty E

THE CHEKIST

Aleksandr Rogozhkin (1992)

For a number of years, I have been trying to find a reasonably historically accurate and ironfisted film depiction that does not shy away from unearthing the atrocities of the so-called 'Russian' revolution, Bolsheviks, and the Soviet Union, so it was quite a surprise when this film turned out to be Russian. Centering around a small town Cheka – the first secret police in the Soviet Union set up by decree by Vladimir Lenin himself – *The Chekist* (1992) aka ~~XXXXXXXX~~ directed by Russian auteur Alexander Rogozhkin (*The Cuckoo* aka *Kukushka*, *Peculiarities of the National Hunt*) is an unflinchingly brutal and obscenely un-sentimental depiction of Soviet state sadism that makes Hollywood holocaust flicks like *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Pianist* (2002) seem like big-budget melodramatic afterschool specials by comparison. More hecatically hardboiled, decisively deadpan, and vigilantly violent than Elem Klimov's Soviet war masterpiece *Come and See* (1985), *The Chekist* is the sort of film that would even make debauched horror fans cringe and consume them with a rare sense of guilt due to its unrelenting realism and overall lack of gratuitous entertainment value. Focusing on a small-time Cheka leader named Andrey Srubov (played masterfully by Igor Sergeev) and his mass-murdering underlings as they secretly exterminate masses of naked people by way of underground firing squad, *The Chekist* is a relatively minimalistic work with a steady burning foreboding story and fiercely forlorn aesthetic that portrays the emotionally-draining monotony of old school red mass-slaughter and how it slowly but steadily eats away at the souls of the perpetrators. Srubov describes the philosophy of the charming Cheka as follows: "To quell the chaos this country needs a strong, even cruel executive....in the basement, in secret without reading the appeal, with no public impact, morally destroys the individual. After his death, nothing remains; neither the body nor the grave, or any details of his death." Throughout *The Chekist*, one sees scene after scene of Srubov and his mostly mundane yet largely sadomasochistic men carrying out these killings in a barbaric, heartless, and mechanical fashion. After forcing the prisoners to strip, lines of five naked prisoners are forced to stand with their face against the wall and are subsequently shot. Like dead animals in a butcher shop, a rope is attached around the body of the still warm cadaver, which is then dragged out of the basement while hanging upside down in an opprobrious fashion and thrown into the back of a large truck with hundreds of other naked 'counter-revolutionaries.' As can be expected from such a gruesome and appalling yet undeniably potent film, *The Chekist* makes for a singularly degrading and literally sickening cinematic experience, thus it comes fully and highly recommended.

There are many reasons why Hollywood has never and will never make a film like *The Chekist*, not least of all because a number of their ancestors actively

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supported such perverted political movements, but the most obvious and important reason being that the victims of the Cheka – which mainly included white, heterosexual Christians like Imperial Russia civil servants and military officers (including their children and wives), all members of the clergy, aristocrats, anyone suspected of not supporting the Soviet government, and any person whose property amounted to more than 10,000 rubles, among various others – are the same sort of people that the detestable dream-makers of Tinseltown target today in many of their malicious movies. Of course, the Cheka – as depicted in *The Chekišt* – also persecuted a couple members of certain minority groups, including a handful of rich, anti-communist Jews, but, in reality, the Soviet leadership, especially during the early years, was made up of a large number of genocidal Jews. For example, the first president of the Soviet Republic (later the Soviet Union), Yakov Sverdlov – a Bolshevik party leader and an ethnic Jew – ordered the murder of the Czar Nicholas II and his family, which was subsequently carried out by fellow atheistic Israelite Yakov Yurovsky and his Semitic assassins Medvedev, Nikulin, Yermakov, and Vaganov. The two greatest killers of the Soviet Union – Genrikh Yagoda and Lazar Kaganovich who were responsible for no less than ten million deaths apiece – were also down with the Hebrew hammer as somewhat recently recognized by a surprisingly honest Israeli journalist in the worthwhile article *Stalin's Jews*. *The Chekišt* is also one of only a handful of films to make light of the Jewish connection with the Jewish Cheka leader Isaac Katz; an old Bolshevik who was responsible for Srubov's father's death during the early days of the revolution. In one particularly unintentionally surreal scene, Katz teases a Jewish jewelry dealer about his Jewish origins, subsequently inspiring the wretched small fry capitalist to call out the Cheka man on his absurdly glaring self-hatred. Of course, while virtually all church buildings in the Soviet Union were blown up and over 50,000 priests were either executed or sent to the Gulags (Soviet concentration camps) during the 1920s through the 1930s, not a single synagogue was harmed. In *The Chekišt*, a large percentage of the prisoners that are stripped and executed are holy men, which even forces one Cheka man to trade shooting spots with a less god-fearing comrade of the innately atheistic Marxist faith, thus showing how so many everyday individuals, especially opportunists, would ignore their spirituality just to fall in favor with the new Russian leadership. The Cheka group is also startled when a young woman in her early 20s proclaims that “she wants to live” and “she has so much life,” thus causing the generally amoral assassins to hesitate, but Srubov – who usually only decides one's fate and never does any of the actual killings – does not dillydally when it comes to putting a bullet between her weary, big bourgeois eyes. Clearly a totally demoralized individual with some sort of all-consuming psychosis, Srubov brings his kosher compatriot Katz – the man who executed his father – to his mother's home for dinner, which she is naturally offended by, but the Cheka leader is more disgruntled with her for cooking meat. It seems

when carrying the executions of hundreds of human cattle each day, one has a reasonably hard time devouring a medium-cooked steak.

Undoubtedly, *The Chekišt* is a film that needed to be made a longtime ago, but surely Hollywood, which has always had a more sympathetic view of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and continues to back the persecution of any individual that is white, Christian, and wealthy, hence their need to make a new hysterical holocaust film every week, as well as ethno-masochistic Western Europeans of the usually neo-Trotskyite sort, would never dare make such a damning and disconcerting film. If the average white American was aware of the sort of thing that happened in *The Chekišt* and that certain alien elements in Germany and elsewhere in Europe were trying to bring the same thing outside of Eastern Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, it would be doubtful that they would be so sympathetic towards that latest overly sentimental Shoah flick from the anti-Occidental showmen of Hebraic Hollywood. As a low-rank Cheka man states quite ironically (and unintentionally so) and in complete opposition to how Srubov states how what they do “morally destroys the individual,” there is no doubt in his mind that, “The revolution has taught our people to die with dignity.” Of course, there is nothing respectable about being stripped, facing a basement wall, and going to one’s death without even putting up a fight. With its unwavering sepia-tone-like browns and all around lack of spirited color, *The Chekišt* is a film that is deathly dreary and dehumanizing in terms of both theme and aesthetic. That being said and relatively speaking, *The Chekišt* is a nearly immaculate work that cleverly uses ‘Soviet realism’ against itself in a manner better than most of the commie state filmmakers ever could in portraying the cruel and cryptic deaths of those inflexible individuals who could not fit in with Lenin’s ideal ‘New Soviet Man’; a malleable slave that can be programmed to do anything, including killing one’s kin and befriending the slaughterer of one’s own father. Accordingly to *The Chekišt* lead character Srubov, “The Revolution has nothing to do with philosophy” and by the end of the film, neither does the Cheka’s killings as a black heart needs no intellectual justification. Unfortunately, *The Chekišt* director Alexander Rogozhkin went on to create less serious films about what Russians love best: vodka and hunting, but with this one film he proved he could direct like a man of steel.

-Ty E

MOTHER AND SON
MOTHER AND SON

Aleksandr Sokurov (1997) *Mother and Son* (1997) directed by Aleksandr Sokurov is now on my list of favorite Russian dreamlike films (is this all Russian films?). The back of the Kino DVD has written, "Visuals that make Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven* look like a home movie." This is what made me decide to watch *Mother and Son*. I was thrown out of the class I originally saw *Days of Heaven* in. If they had screened *Mother and Son*, the philistine teacher would have screamed "revolution."

Russia proves they are one of few nations producing their own cultural films. Maybe its their new sense of nationalism. I doubt that's true though. Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* was doing more interesting things in 1975. But whereas *The Mirror* is a poem of the stream of consciousness, *Mother and Son* is a collage of beautiful paintings. But this beauty is distorted.

Mother and Son is honestly one of the most disturbing films I have seen recently. The film is like *Oedipus Rex* from hell. The relationship between Mother and Son is quite intimate throughout. The son carries his dying Mother around the outdoors. They sporadically talk of the Mother's inevitable death. The images follow the gloomy tone of the film. *Mother and Son* wasn't the easiest to digest. But that is a good thing. Director Aleksandr Sokurov brought up life questions and philosophies that even became darker than the most misanthropic films of Ingmar Bergman. *Mother and Son* is not misanthropic however. It just takes you to a experience that most wouldn't dare look into. Too bad its inevitable.

Mother and Son derives much of its emotion through its utilization of special camera lenses , stained glasses, and mirror effects. Don't expect much plot. The film is rich in artistry. You'll feel from beginning to end. Watch *Mother and Son* before World War III happens! Putin approves.

-Ty E

REPO MAN

Alex Cox (1984)

Undoubtedly, if I were to guess what film that I have seen the most times, it would surely be Alex Cox's absurdist and sardonic dystopian punk sci-fi masterpiece *Repo Man* (1984)—a work that I have no problem admitting that I watched at least twice a day for about a month a couple years back. Although I first saw *Repo Man* when I was around 12 or 13 years old, it would be a decade before I developed the deep admiration and obsession with the film that I have today, which is rather odd considering my teenage appreciation for early 1980s punk/hardcore has all but totally fizzled out since then yet Cox's film is one of the very few 'punk' films that actually has the authentic attitude as a fiercely farcical work where legendary "man's man" John Wayne—the Irish-American draft-dodger who provided the countless American males with enough romancing of battlefields to fight it in virtually every war of the second half of the twentieth century—is described as a fag and where Emilio Estevez sings the Black Flags 'blues.' With uniquely unhinged references to UFOs, Jungian psychology, rabid Reaganism, Televangelism, Scientology and other chic cults, the 'Reconquista' of California by Mexico, psychotic yuppie materialism, crackpot conspiracy theories, nuclear war, youthful middleclass nihilism, and the apocalypse in a world of aberrant spirituality, pathological paranoia, and all out cultural chaos, it is nothing short of absolutely amazing that *Repo Man* was ever released by Universal Studios—a studio that stands for everything that Cox's film is against as a work with an unlikeable anti-hero as a protagonist and a cast of totally corrupt characters, an anti-romantic subplot, and an unwaveringly anarchic, misanthropic, and pessimistic essence where the American dream has been replaced with a pleasantly pernicious punk rock nightmare of the tragicomic sort. Released in the fitting Orwellian year of 1984, *Repo Man* features a world all the more negative and nihilistic than that of the Orwell novel as the characters of Cox's are far too apathetic and infantile to have thought-crimes and are far more interested in beer, money, drugs, joyless sex, infantile rock n roll, television, and pseudo-religions/cults to get involved in any sort of humanistic people's revolution. Featuring a punk/hardcore soundtrack that acts as an imperative ingredient of the film, including songs from Black Flag, the Circle Jerks, Iggy Pop, Suicidal Tendencies, and the Plugs, *Repo Man*, despite being directed by a Brit, probably does the best job out of any film of its time at portraying its particular zeitgeist because it depicts all groups and subcultures that Hollywood never gave a 'serious' voice, including braindead punks, mischievous mestizos, middle-aged ex-hippie burnouts turned Christian burnouts, trendy cult groups, and members of various loveable lunatic fringe groups. Indeed, the genius of *Repo Man* is that by using absurdist Buñuel-esque satire and anarchic sardonic slapstick of the very vaguely Italian Neorealist and Spaghetti Western sort, Cox was able to hysteri-

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cally and humorously highlight everything that made the 1980s one of the most repugnant eras of the twentieth century, even if it sired a timeless cult classic like Repo Man as a result of such culturally crappy circumstances.

Dullard punk rock dude Otto Maddox (Emilio Estevez) has one of the worst days of his rather mundane and aimless life after he is fired from his job as sales clerk at a grocery store and later walks in on his beautiful yet bitchy dark-skinned punkette girlfriend Debbi (Jennifer Balgobin) making out with his dumb-ass small-time crook best friend Duke (Rick Rude) at a suburban punk rock party hosted by his nerdy ass-kissing friend Kevin (Zander Schloss)—a goofy fellow who bears a striking resemblance to Napoleon Dynamite. With neither a job nor a girlfriend, Otto aimlessly walks through a Mexican ghetto and is approached by a corpse-like conman named Bud (Harry Dean Stanton), who offers him \$25.00 to drive ‘his’ other car to another location and becomes a repo man in the process after unwittingly repossessing the car of a deadbeat Hispanic for an absurdly generically titled repo company called “Helping Hand Acceptance Corporation.” Although initially ambivalent to brazen bitter bastard Bud and his motley crew of wisecracking repo men, and only deciding to take the job after finding out his ex-hippie pothead parents donated all his graduation money to a megalomaniacal televangelist, Otto eventually comes to appreciate the fact that “the life of a repo man is always intense.” Otto becomes the protégé of Bud, who teaches him the “Repo Code,” and the two subsequently snort coke, battle a rival gang of Hispanic repo men named the Rodriguez Brothers (Del Zamora and Eddie Velez), get involved in “real-life car chases” and repossess countless cars together. A sassy (and apparently Sapphic) black chick named Marlene (Vonetta McGee) also works at the repo company, but she is a secret traitor in cahoots with the Rodriguez brothers as a Marxist revolutionary of sorts from people varying from pompous preppy pricks to kindly old black grandmothers. Otto also learns the trick of the trade from a pimp-like black repo man named Lite (played by Cox regular Sy Richardson)—a man who literally breaks every segment of the “Repo Code”—and reluctantly takes spiritual advice from deranged junkyard guru named Miller (Tracey Walter) who promotes pseudo-Jungian theories, including “the lattice of coincidence” and something he calls the “cosmic unconsciousness,” which is clearly a bastardized take on Jung’s psychoanalytic theory of the collective unconscious. Meanwhile, Otto’s ex-best friend Duke, ex-girlfriend Debbi, and another Mohawk-sporting punk named Archie (Cox regular Miguel Sandoval) have formed a criminal punk gang that commits a number of armed robberies against various convenience stores and factories. Otto also starts a rather ridiculous non-romantic relationship with a bat-shit crazy and exceedingly annoying bitch named Leila (Olivia Barash) who is part of a “secret network” under the aptly titled named “United Fruitcake Outlet” that is dedicated to exposing the U.S. government’s cover-up of UFOs and space aliens. Leila also tells Otto about a mysterious 1964 Chevrolet Malibu

from Roswell, New Mexico that contains four dead yet decidedly dead space aliens in the truck. Although Otto thinks the little lady has more than a couple screws loose (despite screwing her), the next day he learns there is a \$20,000 reward for the recovering of the Malibu, which is being driven by a determinedly deranged dude named J. Frank Parnell (Fox Harris) who stole the alien corpses from a Los Alamos National Laboratory and whose acute cognitive dissonance is the result of a lobotomy, as well as extraterrestrial radiation that is seeping out of his truck.

Naturally, a number of parties start searching for the radioactive Malibu, including Otto and Budd, the Rodriguez brothers, Leila and her loony friends, Debbi and Duke's gang (who actually just steal the lucky car by happenstance), but also a group of all-blond Aryan federal agents led by a frigid fuhrer bitch with a bionic New Romanticist-style hand named Agent Rogersz (Susan Barnes), whose character seems to be modeled after fashion designer Anna Wintour and who rightfully proclaims, "No one is innocent," at least in the ridiculous realm of Repo Man where everyone is looking out for #1. Even loveable bastard Bud begins to break his own code when his ever growing fanaticism for obtaining the hefty monetary reward for the Malibu gets the better of him, thereupon leading to his inevitable demise, but leaves with the sagely words of wisdom, "I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees." In the end, it is the wildly idiosyncratic, idiot savant crank Miller—the man who stoically proclaims "John Wayne is a fag" and "the more you drive the less intelligent you become"—who is the only person who has the power to master and maneuver the extraterrestrial-fueled Malibu and Otto—the formerly apathetic yet nihilistic and hateful suburban punk—has finally found a calling in his life, thus also enabling him to take a ride in the alien automobile, thus concluding on a rather positive note for a film that restlessly wallows in cultural pessimism of the apocalyptic sort.

In an interview featured in the book *Destroy All Movies!!! The Complete Guide to Punks on Film* (2010), Repo Man director Alex Cox stated, "I was certainly interested in punk, but as a revolutionary movement rather than a fashion thing. In that sense, as Buñuel said about Surrealism, the movement completely failed. But it was inspiration for a while." And, indeed, while being the indisputable quintessential 'punk film,' Repo Man makes a mockery of the fact a good percentage of punks are spoiled middleclass morons who have no real reason to wage a mindless war against society, especially since Mexicans and hobos are literally dropping like flies in the gutter in the film. As for the protagonist of Repo Man, Cox stated, "Otto is more a blank page than an everyman, I think. What I found interesting in his character was how a supposedly 'counterculture' character like a punk rocker could be quickly assimilated into a reactionary and hierarchical system—in this case the repo business, but it could also be the military, say—without even changing his appearance; the Suicidal Tendencies T-shirt was replaced by a suit jacket but the haircut remained the

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same.” Rather ironically, despite Cox’s talk of a “reactionary” system, it is only when Otto learns the “Repo Code” from Bud and learns to master his job that his life develops meaning and that he is able to shed his uncultivated hatred and nihilism, hence why he later symbolically states later in the film “I can’t believe I used to like these guys,” in regard to the alpha punk group the Circle Jerks, who have now degenerated into a goofy lounge act (in real-life, the band actually devolved into a second-rate metal group). On top of that, it is through supposed wack-job messiah Miller that he develops the sense of spirituality that he so bitterly fought against throughout Repo Man. Indeed, it seems that while punk rockers always glorify disorder, mindless and fruitless libertinism, and anarchy, their innate inner need to rebel against society is a direct result of their hatred for the spiritually degenerate and cultureless society full of chaos and dysfunction that makes up the modern world, where nothing is sacred and those that claim to be are carnal frauds and false prophets who like to earn large profits like the televangelists and Scientologists. Indeed, it is only the biggest losers of losers who never grow out of punk as it is a sign of a sheer and utter lack of maturity and self-control, hence why Otto’s punk friends meet grizzly and patently pointless ends.

Released the same years as the other big LA punk rock flick, *Suburbia* (1984) directed by Penelope Spheeris, Cox’s *Repo Man* topples over its cinematic counterpart in aesthetic, sentiment, and attitude. While *Suburbia* has a slave-morality-driven, victim-based attitude of ‘Tis a Pity We Are Poor Punk Who Get Beat Up By Rednecks,’ *Repo Man* takes a look in the figurative punk rock mirror and reevaluates the whole *Weltanschauung* for the disastrous dead-end drive into a dilapidated ghetto brick-wall that it is. That being said, *Repo Man* is one of the few artifacts of punk—be it film or otherwise—that has aged quite gracefully as a potent piece of charmingly cynical celluloid that totally philosophically destroys the degenerate subculture it depicts, while having more of a punk attitude than the majority of things that are labeled ‘punk,’ including the bands featured on the film’s soundtrack. As much as I absolutely loath automatons who incessantly quote stupid Hebraic Hollywood comedies and other culture-distorting swill, I would be lying if I did not admit that *Repo Man* is one of the most compulsively quotable films ever made as one would be a pretentious poof not to admit that such lunatic lines like “Goddamn-dipshit-Rodriguez-gypsy-dildo-punks” and “You hear the most outrageous lies about it. Half-baked goggle-box do-gooders telling everybody it’s bad for you. Pernicious nonsense. Everybody could stand a hundred chest X-rays a year. They ought to have them, too,” are words of charmingly crude, comedic genius. Indeed, director Alex Cox must have been an alchemist during a previous life, as he turns everything that is American *Kulturscheisse* into jarringly jocular celluloid gold via *Repo Man*, so it is a shame that his long-in-the-make non-sequel *Repo Chick* (2009) is one darkly retarded piece of undignified digital diarrhea that should be absolutely avoided at all costs,

especially if one values their personal integrity and/or god given right to think. As a proto-X-Files except all the more mirthful and conspiracy-driven, a hysterical history lesson in common counterculture spirituality, a jaded jukebox of the best of 1980s LA punk rock, a celluloid rehab program for dumb young punks everywhere to reconsider their worldview, a politically incorrect lesson in Yank class and racial relations, and a rare, highly quotable comedy that does not result in the cinematic equivalent of a lobotomy, Repo Man is indisputable proof that the death of the West can be looked at as a tragicomedy that one can learn many lessons from, at least until an apocalypse or space aliens wipe us out.

As psychoanalyst C.G. Jung wrote, whose theories are not playfully parodied in Repo Man for nothing, "Our present day observations of Saucers coincide – mutatis mutandis – with the many reports going back into antiquity, though not in such astonishing frequency as in these times. But the possibility of the destruction of a whole continent, which today is in the hands of politicians, has never existed previously." One of the first major thinkers to take the post-WWII UFO phenomenon seriously and actually study it, Jung ultimately came to the conclusion that, although not completely rejecting the idea of real-life little green men from outer-space, UFOs might have a primarily spiritual and psychological basis as he believed modern Occidental man was suffering from a crisis of the mind and soul. Indeed, when maniac Miller seemingly schizophrenically states, "There ain't no difference between a flying saucer and a time machine. People get so hung up on specifics they miss out on seeing the whole thing," he is essentially pointing to the fact—whether he knows it or not—that all these weird phenomena and alien sightings have a common origin; an all-encompassing Weltschmerz and deadlock of the Western collective unconsciousness. That being said, it would not be an exaggeration to say that every Western man is seeking to obtain what Otto achieves by the conclusion of Repo Man as a middle-class nihilist man who achieves spiritual and emotional ecstasy by finally riding in the radiation-run Malibu spaceship/time-machine as opposed to merely getting a mere passing glimpse of it. Of course, as Miller once so famously stated, "The life of a repo man is always intense."

-Ty E

STRAIGHT TO HELL
STRAIGHT TO HELL

Alex Cox (1987)

When I first saw British cult auteur Alex Cox's anarchistic surrealist slapstick Western *Straight to Hell* (1987)—a work titled after the 1982 Clash song of the same name—I thought it was one of the most incomprehensible cinematic failures of the director's career (I had yet to see most of the filmmaker's post-*El Patrullero* (1992) oeuvre), especially when compared to his debut feature-length masterpiece *Repo Man* (1984), but I have given it a couple subsequent viewings since then and the film has grown on me like a juicy cyst that is just waiting to be popped. Co-written by Dick Rude (A Cox regular who played protagonist Otto's skinheaded criminal punk friend "Duke" in *Repo Man*) and Cox over a mere three day period of apparent coffee addiction and sexual tension (apparently, the two writers were entranced by a woman sunbathing in a hotel room nearby their own) and shot over a four week period in Almería, Spain—the place where many great Spaghetti Westerns were filmed, including a number directed by Dago master auteur Sergio Leone (*A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*)—*Straight to Hell* was not originally intended as a film, but a concert tour of Nicaragua of all things in support of the quasi-commie Sandinistas against the USA (like most ethno-masochistic whites/Europeans, Cox has had a lifelong obsession with leftist Latin American revolutionary movements), yet things fell through due to lack of funds and political reasons, and it was also probably decided that it would be much easier to raise money by making a feature-length with rock stars being cinematically killed opposed to being literally killed at concerts very few people would probably attend. With all the musicians already around that were supposed to support the unofficial "Rock for Communism" festival, including Joe Strummer of the Clash, Elvis Costello, and Grace Jones, as well as members of the The Pogues, Amazulu, and The Circle Jerks, *Straight to Hell* already had a punk rock star cast for a punk rock parody of Spaghetti Westerns in the spirit of *Repo Man* (1984), albeit with much less pre-production planning. An extremely loose remake of the criminally underrated Spaghetti Western *Django Kill... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967) directed by comp-symp auteur Giulio Questi—a gothic surrealist Western featuring a gay gang of fascistic blackshirt bandits—*Straight to Hell* is all the more nihilistic than the film that inspired it in its loving antagonism of the Guido cowboy genre that it is pathologically obsessed with. Advertised with the more than literal tagline, "A story of blood, money, guns, coffee, and sexual tension," *Straight to Hell* is the closest in spirit to Cox's masterpiece *Repo Man*, aside from possibly Walker (1987), albeit all the more uncompromisingly cynical, misanthropic, aesthetically malicious, and thematically anarchic, yet that does not also necessarily make it the lapsed punk filmmaker's greatest film either, but it does not make a bad way to waste about 80 minutes or so. A torrid and sardonic pseudo-Spaghetti

Western about four innately ill-starred and incompetent hit men/bank robbers who hide out in a peculiar desert town inhabited by the decidedly deranged and degenerate, *Straight to Hell*—a work director Alex Cox once described as an “anti-capitalist, anti-world trade, political parable”—is a classic story of what human beings do best, killing each other, and the altruistic big businesses that support them doing it.

Straight to Hell opens with the introduction of three goofy hitmen, Willy, Norwood, and Simms (played by co-writer Dick Rude, Cox regular Sy Richardson, and the Clash frontman Joe Strummer) as they prove from the get go they are incompetent criminals by botching a hit against an ostensibly Jewish businessman named Mr. Greenberg by oversleeping after an all-night alcohol binge. Norwood—a swag-driven middle-aged black man who happens to be the oldest and wisest, if not equally self-destructive of the criminal clan—also has brought along his brazen and bitchy pregnant old lady/bride Velma (played by pre-Hole Courtney Love) for the wild and reckless ride. In fear for what might happen to them after their suavely-dressed employer Amos Dade (played by filmmaker Jim Jarmusch) learns they really fucked up the job, the four fiercely fallible felons rob a bank and head for the desert, but their car breaks down so they bury their money and head for a seeming ghost town “till the heat blows down,” where they are silently greeted by a turned over car that looks much like their own with a dead man still in the driver’s seat, thus offering a potent premonition of their dubious futures. The next day, the goofy hit men have a bloody showdown with a gang of outlaw bandits named the McMahan clan (made up of Celtic punk band the Pogues) who are addicted to killing and coffee. After mindlessly killing a couple of people, the hit men earn the respect of the mad and murderous McMahans and their crudely charismatic leader Frank (Biff Yeager), thus resulting in a dubious truce for the next couple days in the rather treacherous tradition of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Not long after, Simms and Willy fall in love with two local women from the town, Fabienne (Jennifer Balgobin)—the French wife of an insanely paranoid ex-war veteran turned hardware shop owner—and Louise (Michele Winstanley)—a British bitch that is quite adamant about finding out where the hit men’s money is buried as opposed to what is hidden in the horny hit man’s pants. When the McMahans’ respected patriarch, a disgruntled old man, is killed by his own deranged granddaughter Sabrina McMahon (Kathy Burke), who pops her pop-pop over the head and knocks him off a roof just for the hell of it, the blood gets flowing and starts flying. Naturally, with *Straight to Hell* being a spoof of the Spaghetti Western genre, a quasi-metaphysical and festive funeral is held where a friend of Amos, Whitey, makes the mistake of showing up at the wrong place at the wrong time as he is looking for the renegade hit men and is subsequently hanged as he is blamed by the bloodlusting and vengeful McMahans for being a “stranger” and, naturally, the death of dear old grandpa. Not long after, a supposed house manufacturer named I.G. Far-

STRAIGHT TO HELL

ben (Dennis Hopper) and his genteel wife Sonia (Grace Jones) show up to the town and delivers a number of high-tech weapons that everyone in the town will inevitably use to exterminate one another in one of the most erratically eccentric and needlessly nonsensical battle scenes ever filmed in cinema history. When Amos Dade shows up at the town, the cat is finally let out of the bag in regard to the hit men's deceit and the bullets begin flying in a less than civil, civil war between the townspeople, the hit men, and Amos' criminal crew. Frank McMahon inevitably sides with Amos in reconciliation for mistakenly hanging Whitey for the death of grandpa McMahon and the hit men are essentially all by their lonesome, including among themselves as treachery reigns. Velma proves that Courtney Love was always a whore and Willy and Simms put holes in a holy man and one of the two men eventually betrays the other. In the end, only Norwood—whose wanton wife has cheated on him and ultimately pays the ultimate price via a karma-based car explosion—and a couple cute prostitutes are left standing. In the end, only the mysterious I.G. Farben and his big oil company win.

The key to the anti-capitalist/anti-globalist 'message' of *Straight to Hell* is the character I.G. Farben played by Dennis Hooper. Hooper's character is named after the German chemical industry conglomerate of the same name that had the patent for the Jew-iciding gas Zyklon B which was found guilty of war crimes and seized by the Allies in 1945 and liquidated in 1952 (now only existing as an asset-less shell that pays 'reparations' to its victims). I.G. Farben was also in cahoots with John D. Rockefeller's United States-based Standard Oil Company and possibly had ties with DuPont, a major investor in and producer of leaded gasoline, United States Industrial Alcohol Company and its subsidiary, Cuba Distilling Co., as well as countless other "Allied" companies, but the kraut company would ultimately act as the scapegoat for all the other cancerous corporations who have only become all the more powerful and world-conquering today. *Straight to Hell* points to the fact, using a maniac microcosm of the pseudo-Spaghetti Western as the context, that while big corporations on opposing sides were getting rich together exploiting their nation's war effort, the civilians of each respective nation were the ones that ultimately paid the price for an illusionary war (or the 'Grand Illusion' as famed French auteur Jean Renoir once called it) established to do one thing and one thing only—to make the rich even richer at the expense of everyone below them, especially the philistine peasant. Indeed, the overall 'message' of *Straight to Hell* is a bit preachy in the quasi-punk fashion, even if few viewers of the film actually seem to notice it, thus making for one of the many reasons why the film just cannot compare with Cox's celluloid magnum opus *Repo Man*—a celluloid goldmine of nihilistic ideas and absurdist comedy—but the two together do make for an ideally idiosyncratic double-feature (and a triple-feature with Walker (1987) makes for all the more farcical fun). Although *Straight to Hell* concludes with promise of a

sequel with the inter-title “COMING SOON: BACK TO HELL,” Cox would never get around to making it but he did create a rather pointless ‘director’s cut’ of the original film. Inspired by Francis Ford Coppola’s disastrous “Redux” version of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Cox released a director’s cut of his Spaghetti Western parody entitled *Straight to Hell Returns* (2010) a couple years back, which features a couple deleted scenes, new CGI scenes of skeleton wolves and dogs, and a slightly upgraded soundtrack. Considering Alex Cox’s filmmaking career has plummeted to unimaginable depths of celluloid ineptitude with the marvelously mundane anti-Western melodrama *Searchers 2.0* (2007) and his blasphemously bad non-sequel to *Repo Man*, *Repo Chick* (2009), one can only assume he needed to find a way so his electricity would not get cut off and *Straight to Hell Returns* was the rather unfortunate answer. Still, I found *Straight to Hell Returns* to be infinitely more enjoyable and inventive than a masturbatory porno fanboy flick like Quentin Tarantino’s negrophiliac celluloid defecation on Spaghetti Westerns, *Django Unchained* (2012). After all, where Alex Cox admits he is a pussy “pacifist” (he even had the gall to personally tell Neutron bomb inventor Samuel T. Cohen this), which *Straight to Hell* fully illustrates in a meaty manner that actually has testicular fortitude (even if the director has none in a real world context), Tarantino, despite his incessant celluloid licking of black and brown butts and women’s feet, has yet to fully embrace his inner beta-male and direct a two-volume piece of big budget interracial cuckold porn. In short, I will always prefer going *Straight to Hell* to seeing *Django Unchained*.

-Ty E

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

Alex Cox (1991)

It was no surprise to me when I found out that Alex Cox directed a film about a Mexican Highway Patrolman. After all, a Mexican Highway Patrolman is easily comparable to an American Repo Man. Like Repo Man before it, Alex Cox's Highway Patrolman follows a young man as he encounters the many dangerous adventures of the open roads. Unlike Repo Man, Highway Patrolman features a man trying to uphold the law, albeit in a lawless country. Otto in Repo Man was enticed to a career as a Repo Man due to the ambiguous legality of the job. After all, Otto was a punk rocker who loved to skank and mosh to the lovely punk hardcore group The Circle Jerks. Pedro Rojas, the lead and idealistic cop of Highway Patrolman, on the other hand is a Mexican patriot that is truly looking to cleanup up crime and grime of his beloved ancestral homeland.

Pedro is a Patrolman who truly thinks Mexico is a great country. When a Gringo offers Pedro and his partner some German beers, Pedro proclaims the best beer is Mexican. Of course, when the Gringo and his Gringo comrade leave, Pedro and his Mexican comrade guzzle down the Kraut Brewski as if they were dying in their quest for aqua. After all, whether you be an Injun, Mestizo, or Negro, it is wise to hide partaking in the altruistic welfare of a Gringo. One must never let the Gringo know that your existence relies on his generosity, even if he is a "racist." Pedro not only loves his wonderful sandbox Nation, but he also carries about the beautiful Chicas that live in it, especially female prostitutes with cocaine addictions. After marrying a Mexican broad and implanting his zesty ranch sauce in her meaty fajita, Pedro becomes a father. At this point, Pedro realizes he will now have to get his sex elsewhere as he cannot stand his Punta wife and her firecracker-style bitching.

Not long after starting his career as a Highway Patrolman, Pedro's fanatical idealism starts to wear thinner than a .50 cent piñata. And like a piñata, once Pedro's idealism breaks, he explodes with an eclectic array of colorful surprises. After Pedro's partner is killed, he goes vigilante and hunts down the drug peddling culprits. Pedro also makes sure to steal some drugs and cash from the dealers as he feels he owes it to his mistress prostitute girlfriend. Pedro may have to work a little overtime to get the job done, but I guess that is what one has to expect when bedding down two spicy ladies. Surprisingly, Pedro somehow is able to single-handedly bring down a group of drug dealers. Maybe Alex Cox was shooting for the Sci-Fi angle a little bit with Highway Patrolman just as he did with Repo Man. After all, everyone knows that there ain't no Mexican cops stopping drugs from getting into the glorious United States of America.

Highway Patrolman is no doubt one of Alex Cox's better films but certainly not his best. I can only assume that Highway Patrolman was made as a somewhat serious film for Mexicans, yet the film is full of hilarious scenes that proba-

bly only a Gringo could love. I also having a feeling that despite being directed by an outsider (and Brit to boot), Highway Patrolman offers a somewhat realistic look at Mexico and the typical daily hell the average Mexican faces. Shirtless grade school children skipping school to sell wild Iguanas, rabid dogs that need to be shot, a family of Mexicans gutting a recently dead pig, and a variety of other depressing/disgusting scenarios give meaning to the life of a Highway Patrolman. I certainly would rather be an American Repo Man rather than a Mexican Highway Patrolman. I can't wait to see how great this country looks in a couple decades from now with all the Illegal (and Legal) immigrants. One can certainly expect a rise in Repo Men and Highway Patrolmen as a result.

-Ty E

PERDITA DURANGO
PERDITA DURANGO

Álex de la Iglesia (1997)

Before becoming the king of international Spanish-Language cinema, a relatively unknown Javier Bardem played the lead role of Romeo Dolorosa – a cracked character with most likely the most hideous haircut in cinema history – in the criminally underrated film *Perdita Durango* (1997) aka *Dance with the Devil* directed by Álex de la Iglesia (*The Day of the Beast*, *The Last Circus*); a film based on the Barry Gifford's novel *59° and Raining: The Story of Perdita Durango*. Gifford's ultra-venomous femme fatale character *Perdita Durango* made her first cinematic appearance in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990) and was originally portrayed by the beautiful Swedish/Italian actress Isabella Rossellini. Upon first discovering that beady-eyed Afro-Puerto Rican actress Rosie Perez played *Perdita Durango* in *Perdita Durango*, I was more than a tad bit disappointed. After all, few actresses can level up to the hypnotic beautiful insanity of Rossellini's performances, especially someone as seemingly unappealing as the woman who played Spike Lee's bitchy Baby Momma in *Do the Right Thing* (1989) yet Perez, like Bardem, manages to give a performance that is nothing short of fully artistically committed and stripped (both literally and figuratively) in *Perdita Durango*. In the film, Bardem and Perez star as the Hispanic equivalent of *Bonnie and Clyde*, the main difference being that the leading man's sexual potency is fully intact and that he is a Santeria witch doctor. Showing their undying commitment to *meszito* pride, the loco Latino couple kidnaps a young bourgeois WASP couple and uses them as their own personal sexual playthings. Despite their instinctive proclivity towards psychopathic criminality, *Romeo Dolorosa* and *Perdita Durango* – like their killer couple forebears *Bonnie and Clyde* – are extremely likeable anti-heroes whose charisma and charm is only rivaled by their moral instability. As one would expect from a film directed by Spanish auteur Álex de la Iglesia, *Perdita Durango* is as carnivalesque as a Fellini film and as sardonically (yet sillily) surreal as a work by Jodorowsky and Buñuel, but assembled in a more cohesive and linear manner, thus making the film accessible to both cultural philistines and snobbish cinephiles alike.

On top of all the cross-genre and thematic insanity of the work, *Perdita Durango* also features macabre Negro singer *Screamin' Jay Hawkins* as a spooky Santeria spook that certainly "puts a spell on you" despite his somewhat brief appearance in the film. Naturally, *Perdita Durango* also features music by *Screamin' Jay Hawkins* which – like the musical score by Simon Boswell – compliments the overall vivacious and equally visceral feel of the film. *Perdita Durango* also features an underweight James Gandolfini as a Drug Enforcement Administration officer who has a knack for getting hit by cars like *Wile E. Coyote* and an ironic cameo from Brit punk auteur Alex Cox as a cop. I am not usually one to describe a film as "cool", but *Perdita Durango* permeates divine derangement

and subtle (and not so subtle) cultural references throughout, thus it is the kind of work that such would-be-cool contrivers like Quentin Tarantino and Oliver Stone wish they could make but lack the organic-suaveness to do so. After all, I cannot think of another film in the vein of *Perdita Durango* where race-based Stockholm syndrome is sexy and killing is kinky. In fact, I would go as far as saying that *Perdita Durango* is the ultimate action-packed cinematic “Meszito-Negro-Europid Western-spiritual” as it is a work that mongrelizes an eclectic collection of cultural, genre, and spiritual ingredients in a melting-pot that, for once, does not reek of repellant anti-cultural decay but smells like a most refined dish of the most delicious exotic and erotic kind. Needless to say, *Perdita Durango* is just another great example as to why Álex de la Iglesia is one of the greatest – if not the greatest – Spanish directors working today. If Luis Buñuel were alive today, I am sure he would take De La Iglesia out for some fine Spanish cuisine.

Although I am an unwavering fan of David Lynch’s film, I must admit that De La Iglesia’s *Perdita Durango* is more wild at heart than *Wild at Heart*. Apparently, a lot of Álex de la Iglesia’s Spanish fans felt that the *Perdita Durango* was a “sell-out” film and that the director was pandering to mainstream North American audiences for mere monetary gain. I find such masturbatory fan-boy sentiments to be nothing short of patently absurd. When watching *Perdita Durango*, it feels as if Álex de la Iglesia is boisterously and jovially raping American cultural values, especially mundane white middle-class mores with his uncompromising Spaniard flare, hence the somewhat obscure status of the film in the USA. It can only be assumed that the cult following for *Perdita Durango* will grow steadily as the years pass as it is surely one of the most underrated films of the 1990s. Luckily, Javier Bardem has finally earned the reputation he deserves as one of the greatest actors working today, but it is still most unfortunate that few have seen his unrivaled performance as the romantic homicidal rapist loon and Herb Alpert fan Romeo Dolorosa. Additionally, it is obvious that Rosie Perez will never again bare her derriere in a film as gloriously gory as *Perdita Durango*. Although a hyperbolic work, *Perdita Durango* is celluloid on speed at the peak of the high and a flick that never leaves the viewer adrift in a muddy swamp of action-packed banality. *Perdita Durango* is a lusty and lurid romance film for those that absolutely loathe romance films and for that reason alone (among many others), it must not be overlooked.

-Ty E

THE CROW
THE CROW

Alex Proyas (1994)

Seeing *The Crow* as a kid of about eight or nine in the theaters was pretty pivotal. Aside from *Jurassic Park*, it was the first movie I had really anticipated prior to its release, for any number of reasons (I was already well on my way to being a goth-lite social reject, it was based on a comic book, my dad and his girlfriend deemed it cool and at the time I had a raging crush on her and didn't yet long to crush my dad's head with a cinderblock, the "Lee family curse" the media kept on and on about). As the months ticked by, I would scour the magazines at the Tower Records magazine rack for any passing mention, taped episodes of tacky tabloid news shows exploiting the on-set slaying of star Brandon Lee, and tried on at least two occasions to steal copies of the graphic novel because the assholes at the comic store deemed me too young to read it and my parents were too lazy to accompany me to the store so I could read a comic where the hero dispatches bad guys with Joy Division quotes in place of the usual groan-inducing puns. By the time the flick hit theaters, my excitement had reached a fever pitch, and as genuinely stoked as dad and his flame were to see it, I was positively obnoxious, wanting to go the very first matinee showing in clown makeup (my dad drew the line at the idea of his son wearing makeup of any kind) and reciting the entire plot to people waiting in line as I understood it from *Entertainment Weekly* articles and my own imagination. Two hours later, give or take, the lights came on and I begged my dad to watch it again. As his girlfriend had been giving him a handjob through his pants throughout the entire movie, he relented, and showed me where to hide in the theater to wait for the next showing and promised to come back for me in a couple of hours. For months I would proclaim my love of *The Crow* to anyone and everyone, adult and classmate alike, without provocation. Something about a guy in a goth get-up blowing away a multi-cultural gang of goons in an endlessly raining, nigh post-apocalyptic Gotham-esque shithole spoke to me on many levels, mainly that of how cool it was to see the goth guy, instead of being spindly and getting molested by jocks in a locker room after refusing to dress out for Phys Ed, running on rooftops and looking good with his shirt off and saying shit like "Victims aren't we all?" before fucking some dude's shit up something fierce.

Flash-forward to this past weekend. While scavenging through a box of old VHS tapes my mom had deemed either garbage or storage worthy, I rescued all manner of perennial childhood favorites- *The Toxic Avenger*, *Face/Off*, *Taxi Driver*, *Godzilla Vs. Megalon*, *The City of Lost Children*, and yes, *The Crow*. With my girlfriend over and having ample time to kill, we decided to dig in and watch a few tapes, first *Taxi Driver* (still resonates perfectly after all these years- Paul Schrader might very well be the screenwriter I relate to most) and then, after the requisite jokes about Hot Topic to distance myself and preserve

my illusion of "cool", I popped in *The Crow*...

...and it too held up after all these years. But for different reasons. No longer do I love *The Crow* because it is a cut above other comic adaptations, or for its "deep" themes, or because with Brandon Lee's passing I can attach a greater meaning to it all a la how Joy Division resonated so much more to 14-year old me when I read up on Ian Curtis' suicide. No, my love for *The Crow* continues unabated because it is charmingly awful - a mid-nineties time capsule that is the perfect ode to how silly the post-Dark Knight Returns "gritty" comic book thing got, stuffed to the gills with plot holes and inexplicable behavior all in the name of coming across as "edgy" and "alternative."

Eric Draven is some photogenic grunge rocker dude with a hot fiancée, Shelly, who wants to bring about housing reform but then the night before Halloween, or maybe it's Halloween night, or the night after (somewhere in that general time frame), a multi-cultural gang of uniquely nineties miscreants including a black guy with dreads and a leather overcoat and throwing knives, a retarded speedfreak named Skank, and two others I've already kind of forgotten break into their fancy loft and rape and kill Shelly (as choir music hums over the soundtrack to underscore the tragedy of it all) and shoot Eric, who goes through the ornate, gothic window and plummets to the ground. Their skateboarding alterna-kid friend Sarah shows up at the scene, all tough and exchanging last words with a dying Shelly, and is consoled by Ernie Hudson, playing the dedicated, bumbling black cop with his heart of gold on his sleeve. A year goes by and in keeping with some opening narration from the kid, Sarah, sometimes when a crime is so heinous a crow will bring a person back to life a year-to-the-day of when they shuffled off and that person will show no signs of decomposition whatsoever and will crawl from the grave shivering with rock hard abs and strands of their long, rocker mop all plastered to their face and then they'll wander back to their formerly fancy loft that has been left as is and that no one has moved into (a lucrative piece of real estate, too- like ten floors up, very top floor, penthouse perfection all the way) and with *The Cure* moaning over the soundtrack slather on some white face paint, dab some black around the eyes, tear up some black duds all Edward Scissorhands-like, and hunt down the baddies one-by-one, supplanting tough guy one-liners with Edgar Allan Poe quotes and shit because, even though judging from the flashback scenes and press photo of his band the guy was anything BUT a goth (more a second-rate pretty boy Cobain-aper a la the guy in *Bush*), I guess if *Nine Inch Nails* covering *Joy Division* is going to blare on the soundtrack whenever you run around rain-soaked rooftops looking for revenge, you'd better affect the leather pants and talking like a Freshman Lit major with a hard-on for Clive Barker vibe, plus I reckon dead, raped girlfriend is an acceptable reason to wear eyeliner as having no real prom prospects or snarky Columbine jokes or whatever it is nowadays that convinces kids to stay out of the sun and blare *Sisters of Mercy* when borrowing dad's car to drive to the mall

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("Woe is me, forced to adorn the thorny crown of Hot Dog on a Stick").

Anyways, in one poorly conceived, anti-climactic kill scene after another, Draven (Draven...sigh) totally mindfucks his killers by regenerating after being stabbed or shot (bullet through the hand, looks through the hole as it closes, and might have made a quip about Jesus, but then again, might have been me making a quip about Jesus to my girlfriend between guffaws) and has to continually go through great lengths to remind them of who he is despite apparently having the power (as he illustrates to his new best bud, Ernie Hudson) to grab someones hand and make them re-live his death, or his fiancée's death, or something like that. Turns out this Crow fella has some very ill-defined powers. To the best of my comprehension these abilities include CGI-enhanced regeneration, super-speed, the ability to wig out friendly black cops, to see through the eyes of his companion crow, and to lecture everyone all self-righteously about not smoking and doing drugs and shit because, um, Crows don't do drugs or because he is trying to impart some wisdom from beyond or something? Maybe it's supposed to be ironic? Whatever it is, it definitely neuters the guy as an undead vigilante some- what the fuck does he care if the cop smokes or if Sarah's mom is a junkie? He came back to kick ass, not to be a DARE spokesman in corpse paint. At one point, he even drains the morphine from Sarah's mom's arm after incapacitating one of the bad guys, whom she happens to be fucking, (apparently another of his powers? what else can this fucker do- unscrew lightbulbs with his mind? drink a case of beer without a hangover? wait...no...Crow's got the edge), prompting her to make scrambled eggs for Sarah in the morning. That's cool, I guess. Your mom is a morphine-addicted whore barmaid draining the balls of a guy who raped and killed your friends, but some scrambled eggs should prevent costly therapist visits and rehab stints, no? Speaking of Sarah, with all of the advice this guy doles out, why does he never think to mention to her that skateboarding in the rain all the time is a bad idea? When I was a young skatepunk about her age I made the mistake of skating in the rain a few times and it fucked up my trucks, completely undid my grip tape. And maybe someone should give Mr. Draven some advice when he takes some down time to shred on his guitar atop a building...motherfucker, it's sprinkling out, the rooftop is soaked, and yet you have your amp and tons of electrical cords everywhere? I know this won't affect you, dude, you're dead, but lead by example. That shit is dangerous, and you are doing it for no other reason than to look cool (does your Slash-lite solo-ing further the plot any?), which is definitely in line with, say, puffing on the occasional cigarette, you hypocritical prick.

Tangent aside, as Draven works his way through the gang we come to realize via clumsy expository dialogue that they were only acting on orders of their boss, Top Dollar (Michael Wincott, one of the sole bright lights of the film), a comically confused gangster who is equal parts Southern gentleman (his accent and delivery), Samurai (his mane, sword, and Asian half-sister fucktoy, played

by Bai Ling), with just a dash of Trent Reznor for good goth measure. Wincott invests what is a fairly laughable only-in-a-Hollywood action movie/comic book kind of role with a degree of menace and charm that definitely had me wishing the guy had more screentime and a better written role, or maybe a starring vehicle as a half-Taiwanese fur-trapper/cocaine dealer or something. Whatever the case, Top Dollar makes it his mission to bye bye Birdy Brandon Lee, The Crow's powers, whatever they are, begin to waver near the climax, and, to quote Sarah quoting a song of Eric's band earlier in the film "It can't rain all the time." (Again, for all the goth-posturing, this non-cigarette smoking bore wrote a song about how it can't rain all the time? Come on!)

All snark aside, Brandon Lee's on-set shooting death was quite tragic and without a doubt the reason this movie carries some of the weight it does. It is hard not to wince a little in every scene where Draven is shot, even with the knowledge that the offending footage was not used in the film. Death aside, Lee turns in as good a performance as anyone could with such an underwritten character, and is quite adept at laying on the charm or unhinged mania whenever the scene calls for it. With his leading-man good looks Lee could have likely turned in another big screen action performance or two before drifting into DTV-obscurity, and it's a real shame he didn't get the chance, leaving behind a fiancée of his own (which also adds some weight to the proceedings, making one wish these real-life parallels were matched up to a better film). I could also use this space to get into the graphic novel and the real-life tragedy that inspired it, but the book is similar to the film in that, despite having such weighty real-life events tied into its creation (in the case of the book, the drunk driving related death of author James O' Barr's girlfriend), it just...isn't...that...good, unfortunately. I should also point out that even the films detractors tend to point out the visual style of director Alex Proyas, and I will say- the film does do well in creating its rain-soaked noir atmosphere of a dying cityscape on the brink of extinction, a lot of which is rendered moot by some painfully dated nineties-isms like the cheesy industrial club that exists only in the imaginations of forty year old production designers that would rollerblade to work circa 1992, 1993, but still, the film looks nice, moves at a good clip, and judging from some DVD extras I saw back in the day, a few of the action scenes would potentially have been pretty good (especially the scene with Lee vs. the gangsters seated at the table in Top Dollar's board room) had they not needed to be pared down due to matters of sensitivity to Lee's death, MPAA, inability to do re-shoots, etc.

As it stands, while all of this may come across as a pretty harsh drubbing, it is actually still an enjoyable film. A frame of reference- at about the time I first saw this film, I absolutely adored Glenn Danzig. I listened to nothing but the first four Danzig records, Samhain, and The Misfits, and even made Danzig the topic of my first zine (I was eight...my cover lobbied for Danzig getting the role as Wolverine if an X-Men movie should ever come to pass)(sigh). As I got a bit

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older, I became pretty embarrassed by all of this, and rejected Danzig outright. "I only enjoy refined, critic-proof ART" became my unspoken motto. But in the past couple of years, I've come around. Fuck it, I love Danzig. Sure he's cheesy, and fails miserably at being the imposing figure his 5'4" frame wants to put across. Yeah, searching "Danzig's Book Collection" on Youtube should make milk come out the nose of even those who aren't drinking milk. But fuck, I know all of his songs by heart and as silly as much of it is, I can't help but love it.. Not everything in black and white- some things, like Glenn Danzig or The Crow, exist in that weird grey space somewhere alongside nostalgia and "so bad it's good", neither of which quite explain the appeal. All I know is that my girlfriend and I got some good laughs out of it and I'm not as ashamed as being on this movie's nuts as an eight or nine year old as I would had I been fifteen or twenty-four when I first caught it, and while part of me almost wants to bemoan the dearth of truly badass undead goth vigilantes (though I will say that The Crow is about a thousand times more hardcore than Edward and Bella and co.), um, fuck goths. Dudes with pasty skin wearing fishnet shirts and black lipstick fetishizing death while continuing to live in their parents' basements don't deserve a kickass cinematic analogue. Just uncomfortably homoerotic bro-pummeling, and lots of it, until they either grow a pair and fight back and stop supporting Cleopatra Records or give in and join Ian Curtis and Rozz Williams for absinthe and sullen shuffling in the great goth club in the sky.

-Jon-Christian

THE NORTHERNERS

Alex van Warmerdam (1992)

Although my grandfather was a native Dutchman, he decided to immigrate to the United States after the Netherlands went kaput as a result of the Second World War and eventually started an 'American' family with a woman of old English, German, and Irish stock. Probably like many foreigners, especially those from Western Europe, my grandfather regretted moving to the United States and naturally took trips back to the Netherlands long after he had acquired American citizenship and started a family. Needless to say, I thought it would be interesting to watch a Dutch film set during the post-WWII reconstruction period in the exact year my mother was born in 1960 and luckily the delightfully debasing Dutch dark comedy *De noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners* directed by Alex van Warmerdam (Kleine Teun aka Little Tony, Borgman) offered me that completely rare and ultimately rather bizarre opportunity. Admittedly, I was not that impressed with van Warmerdam's *De Jurk* (1996) aka *The Dress*, nor his extra loose 'postmodern' Brothers Grimm adaptation *Grimm* (2003), but considering the context of the film and the fact it is oftentimes considered the director's best work, *The Northerners* was something that I could not help but see, especially after learning that iconoclastic auteur Theo van Gogh appears in the film as a mischievous moped-riding man-child. Van Warmerdam's second feature following his shockingly successful hit directorial debut *Abel* (1986) aka *Voyeur*, the film is more or less the Dutch equivalent of a German anti-Heimat film, as a work that depicts a small Dutch village as an unrelentingly claustrophobic and ridiculously repressive virtual hell-on-earth that is haunted by the metaphysical plague of both Catholicism and Calvinism, but especially the latter. Somewhat ironically produced by mainstream Dutch writer, director, and producer Dick Maas (*De Lift* aka *The Lift*, *Amsterdamned*)—a mensch that is about as far as away from the arthouse world as a filmmaker from Holland could be as the creator of the internationally successful *Flodder* film franchise and as someone that makes poor and pointless Hollywood remakes of his own films (i.e. *Down* (2001) aka *The Shaft* starring Naomi Watts)—and featuring a relatively large budget for a Dutch production (4.7 million Dutch guilders, which was a little bit over \$2.6 million) that enabled the work to be shot entirely in a studio located near the tiny and relatively new planned city of Almere, *The Northerners* features a somewhat unnerving, hyperrealistic aesthetic that feels like an Edward Hopper painting come to life as assembled by the sadistically sardonic spawn of Luis Buñuel and Jacques Tati, albeit with a discernibly Dutch flavor that will certainly dumbfound and probably upset the majority of American Hollywood-lobotomized viewers. Unquestionably, the film feels like a work that could have been directed by perennial hipster Wes Anderson (*The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*) were he Dutch and had some actual testicular fortitude

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(in fact, I am willing to bet my life that *The Northerners* and *van Warmerdam* are both Mr. Anderson's greatest 'cryptic' influences). Set in a superlatively sterile and conspicuously contrived realm of static nothingness just before the Netherlands embraced sexual liberation and all other forms of post-WWII degeneracy in a no bullshit fashion that surely transcended their neighbors, *The Northerners* follows in a strong but largely unknown tradition of Dutch savage (anti)humor that makes it rather clear that the Dutch tend to find things funny that would certainly make numerous other peoples and cultures cry and wallow in disgust. Notably, at the end of the 17th century, the Dutch Reformed Church denounced humor and laughing out loud as poor public etiquette in a curious trend that lasted at least until the Second World War when occupying American GIs were warned not to tell the Dutch jokes, as they would not understand them. Certainly, *The Northerners* is a truly absurd and sardonically surreal depiction of the singular essence and unrivaled idiosyncrasies of the once-humor-hungry people from Holland.

The Northerners begins simply enough with a family posing for a photograph and the photographer telling them they should look less gloomy and more "hopeful." When the father asks, "Hopeful, for what?" the photographer replies, "For the future, of course," which inspires the family to smile in an exaggeratedly phony fashion typical of Americans. In the next scene, the portrait of the family is featured on a billboard reading "2000 Apartments to Be Realized in 1958," yet it is the summer of 1960 and only 9 apartments have been built in the seemingly aborted town, which has such a small population that everyone knows everything about anyone, whether they want to or not. Indeed, privacy is virtually nonexistent in the world of *The Northerners*, except for a quasi-magical wooded area nearby that seems like a parody of a völkisch National Socialist propaganda film like *Ewiger Wald* (1936) aka *Enchanted Forest* co-directed by Hanns Springer and Rolf von Sonjevski-Jamrowski. More like warped archetypes than real and nuanced individuals, the people of the town all have their own glaring quirks and vices which ultimately make for explosive combinations when mixed together, as a series of misunderstandings between the characters ultimately leads to death and tragedy. Auteur *van Warmerdam* also seems to believe that sexual repression as brought on by religious psychosis can lead to rape. While the town is as sterile and contrived as humanly possible, a nearby forest features a Grimmian fantasy realm that inspire rape, murder, and mutilation in the locals. If there is anyone resembling a sort of central protagonist to the film, it is a 12-year-old boy named Thomas (Leonard Lucieer) who regularly sports blackface and jungle garb in tribute to his hero, Congolese independence leader and Pan-African revolutionary Patrice Émery Lumumba, who by the end of the film will be dead. Thomas does not like his butcher father Jacob (Jack Wouterse)—a visceral man with a big beer belly and iconic mustache—because he is constantly fighting with his devout Catholic wife Martha (*van Warmerdam's* wife Annet

Alherbe) over the fact that she will not even let him touch her rather larger derriere, let alone have sex with him. Indeed, while Jacob worships Martha's sizable rump, she equally fanatically worships Jesus Christ at a makeshift altar she has assembled in the home. Possibly a sufferer of schizophrenia, Martha imagines seeing inanimate figurines on her altar of a saint and a red bird coming to life, thus further confirming her belief in the Lord and Savior and, in turn, causing her butcher hubby to suffer a prolonged case of blue balls that ultimately incites him to attempt to rape local women. Although just a preteen, Thomas' best friend is a rather nihilistic and anarchistic middle-aged mailman named Plagge (fittingly played by director van Warmerdam who, like his character in the film, is a mastermind of pernicious absurdist situational chaos), who regularly reads his neighbors' mail and sometimes even burns it for fun. Plagge also regularly spies on his neighbors so he has dirt to use against them, thereupon making him a much loathed man in the neighborhood. Plagge's archenemy is a local four-eyed 'fascistic' hunter named Anton (Rudolf Lucieer) who, despite having a hot and loving Aryan blonde wife named Elizabeth (Loes Wouterson), is sexually impotent and thus cannot sire the progeny he and his wifey so hysterically desire, hence the rather large chip on his shoulder. Anton is a human ticking time-bomb of the literally impotent sort and it is only a matter of time before the nefarious nerd explodes on someone. Unfortunately, it is ultimately the most innocent of individuals that succumbs to Anton's infertile fury and deep-seated seething hatred.

The more butcher Jacob's wife Martha begins to suffer surreal and seemingly schizophrenic religious hallucinations, the less sexual relief he receives, thus resulting in ultimately violent tensions to build up in their household that are unreleased in the most irrational of ways. In fact, Jacob becomes so sexually frustrated that he decides to lock the door of his butcher shop and then coerces a young big bosomed blonde female employee to come into his office where he forces himself upon her. Needless to say, the big breasted blonde storms out of the butcher shop screaming after being nearly raped in an embarrassing scenario that is witnessed by every single woman in town. Instead of being repulsed by Jacob, the women of the town begin regularly visiting the Butcher and symbolically buy large phallic-like pieces of meat from him, thus giving him the typically esoteric feminine signal that they would like him to penetrate their gravy-giving meat-curtains with his beefy blue-veined steak. Since she's desperate to have a child, the hunter Anton's wife Elizabeth becomes especially interested in receiving Jacob's throbbing knockwurst and naturally the beefy Butcher cannot deny her attention. Meanwhile, Thomas discovers a graceful fairy-like feral waif that lives in the forest named Agnes (Veerle Dobbelaere) who likes showing off her derriere in a merrily mischievous fashion while hiding behind trees. Agnes is unquestionably the sole bright light in the town, so it is only natural that she is senselessly snuffed out by asshole hunter Anton, who accidentally shoots her,

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ties her corpse to a large boulder, and rolls it into a pond where the quasi-fairy girl loved to swim. Before killing Agnes, Anton also manages to get his nemesis, mailman Plagege, arrested and imprisoned after catching him burning mail and reading a 'nudišt' magazine that he has stolen from one of his neighbors. Meanwhile, Thomas' mother Martha falls into a bedridden borderline catatonic state after her husband confronts her regarding her cock-blocking spiritual cramp and manhandles her in front of the entire town.

While little Thomas naturally never gets to meet his ebony hero Lumumba, he experiences the next best thing when two dubious bearded Belgian Catholic missionaries come to his town with a nicotine-loving caged negro warrior (Dary Some), who they put on display for the townspeople as if he is some sort of rare exotic panther that caught after entering the mysterious jungles of the Dark Continent. Naturally, as a proud Lumumbaphile, Thomas helps the negro escape from his cage and of course hunter Anton makes it his business to find him in what ultimately proves to be a failed manhunt. As a feral man from feral-land, the negro makes the forest his home and soon creates various boob-traps and paints primitive Africa art around the area, thereupon bringing a little slice of the Global South to the Nordic north. Unbeknownst to Anton, the Negro witnesses him murdering Agnes while hiding in the woods and he takes it upon himself to avenge the fellow nature-lover's death at the hands of a nature-hating hothead. When Anton later makes the mistake of pulling a gun on Thomas, the Negro uses a makeshift Zulu spear to gouge his eyes out, thus blinding the hunter and, in turn, destroying his livelihood as a woodsman in the process. Meanwhile, to the abject disgust of the Butcher, his house becomes a religious shrine of sorts, with his rotting bedridden wife becoming the object of vigils and adoration by all the local women, who seem to use the borderline catatonic woman as a therapeutic source of solace for their own sexual repression. Meanwhile, the butcher gets so hopelessly horny that he attempts to violently rape a nearly-elderly woman, but he is ultimately stopped after suffering the major embarrassment of his son Thomas witnessing him in the act. Luckily, as van Warmerdam's film seems to more than hint, the sexual revolution, women's lib, and birth control will eventually save the frigid chicks and pulsating dicks of the Netherlands from the shackles of Christian patriarchal oppression and whatnot.

A sort of 'evil fairytale' and (anti)folk fable that is as shamelessly Dutch as it is anti-Dutch, *The Northerners* demonstrates that, despite their rather (in)famous reputation for being some of the rudest 'finger-waving' people in Europe, the people of the Netherlands also happen to be some of the most self-deprecating people around. In a somewhat unwitting way, van Warmerdam's film depicts many of the mental pathologies and vices that the Dutch possess today. Indeed, in his love for 'black Jesus' Lumumba, the character Thomas exhibits the sort of rampant xenophilia that is common among more 'enlightened' Dutchmen today. Also, the Negro character that Thomas befriends who ultimately decides to live

on the outskirts of the town in the forest is symbolic of the Netherlands' new 'post-racial' citizenry, as he certainly has a major problem assimilating into the mainstream population and probably never will. Of course, the tragic 2004 assassination of *The Northerners* star Theo van Gogh, himself a vocal critic of multiculturalism and the Islamization of the Occident, made it quite clear that the racial assimilation of the 'racial other' is a preposterous liberal humanist fantasy and Zio-American globalist scheme (notably, van Gogh's assassin was born and raised in Amsterdam, thus demonstrating that you can take the camel jockey out of the desert but not the desert out of the camel jockey). As for the sources of distinctly Dutch pathologies, van Warmerdam seems to blame over four centuries of Calvinism and, to a lesser extent, Catholicism. Of course, in its uniquely unflattering depiction of Belgian Roman Catholic missionaries with goofy beards bringing caged negroes to the Netherlands, van Warmerdam also attacks Catholicism for colonization. More recently, the Catholic Church, like most post-WWII brands of European Christianity, has done its part in promoting multiculturalism and proliferating the flooding of Europe with mostly uneducated and oftentimes medieval-minded citizens from the Global South. In its almost oneiric depiction of a somnambulist-like middle-class population that suffers from more mental pathologies than an Israeli mental institution, *The Northerners* vaguely resembles the dystopian anti-Heimat flick *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich* (1971) aka *I Love You, I Kill You* directed by Uwe Brandner, but aside from that I can only really draw comparisons to van Warmerdam's oeuvre and works by other Dutch arthouse filmmakers. Indeed, Dutch couple Maartje Seyferth and Victor Nieuwenhuijs' pitch black absurdist comedy *Vlees* (2010) aka *Meat*—a work featuring a horny hog-like butcher who likes playing with all sorts of meat, especially of the youthful flesh-flower sort—almost seems like a modernist update of van Warmerdam's film and thus it is all the more unhinged because of it. Notably, *The Northerners* won the Golden Calf (aka 'Gouden Kalf')—The Dutch equivalent of an Oscar—for "Best Director," thus reflecting the drastically different mindsets between the Dutch and Americans. Certainly, the commercial and critical success of van Warmerdam's in the Netherlands is the equivalent of Todd Solondz's unsung masterpiece *Palindromes* (2004) becoming a blockbuster film in the United States. While some, if not most, of my Dutch grandfather's children and grandchildren would probably have a hard time appreciating, let alone understanding, *The Northerners*, to me the film seemed almost too restrained, thus reflecting the whimsical nature of genetic inheritance. Indeed, I don't know much about Calvinism, but somehow I suspect that it has contaminated by blood and van Warmerdam's iconoclastic celluloid romp has only reinforced my suspicions.

-Ty E

BORGMAN
BORGMAN

Alex van Warmerdam (2013)

Dutch auteur Alex van Warmerdam (Abel aka *Voyeur*, De Jurk aka *The Dress*) is a filmmaker whose works I tend to consider hit or miss, but are certainly never boring. Personally, I was ready to give up on van Warmerdam after *Grimm*—a botched modernist reworking of the popular European fairytale *Brother and Sister* written by the Brothers Grimm, who have most certainly been one of the greatest influences on the Dutch filmmaker—but then he made his near-masterpiece *Borgman* (2013), which is certainly his greatest and most ambitious effort since his second feature *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners*. Like most of van Warmerdam's films, *Borgman* is a darkly humorous, nihilistic, and rather misanthropic anti-bourgeois neo-fable of sorts, but what makes it somewhat different than the director's previous works is that it is his closest thing to a 'horror' film, though certainly not in the conventional sense of the genre. The first Dutch film in 38 years to be selected to compete in the Cannes Film Festival for the coveted *Palme d'Or* (Jos Stelling's beautifully brutal directorial debut *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (1974) was the first and last film to compete in the festival before van Warmerdam's film was accepted), the film is a pernicious piece of antichrist celluloid metaphysics where pure and unadulterated, yet admittedly charming and sophisticated, evil prevails in the end. Indeed, aside from its idiosyncratically incendiary humor and post-Grimmian storytelling, van Warmerdam's fiercely farcical filmic fable is anti-Hollywood to its cold black dead core in that all of modern Americanized western man's dreams are meticulously destroyed in an intriguingly slow-burning fashion that destroys the viewer's world and takes them to hell in about 110 minutes or so.

In a June 5, 2014 interview featured at *Dangerous Minds*, van Warmerdam confesses regarding the eponymous 'antihero': "He is an evil version of myself. He does what I would do if I were him." In a storyline that is superficially similar to Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), *Borgman* depicts an enigmatic stranger entering an oh-so ostensibly perfect bourgeois home and slowly but surely 'seducing' virtually every single family member in a somewhat inexplicable, quasi-supernatural fashion. Featuring blatant references to Swiss painter Henry Fuseli's masterwork *The Nightmare* (1781), the film features an antihero that looks like a deranged hobo but is ultimately an evil being whose behavior resembles that of the incubus-like 'Alp' of German folklore. It should also be noted that the titular character's first name is 'Camiel' and he becomes the gardener of the main family featured in the film, as 'Camael' is one of the seven archangels of the Bible and is claimed to be the leader of the forces that got Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden. Notably, van Warmerdam was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, which refuses to recognize Camael because of the Vatican's decision to ban the veneration of angels that are not mentioned in the

Bible, thus reflecting the Dutch auteur filmmaker's innately heretical essence. Indeed, *Borgman* is a work where the figurative 'Adam and Eve' are 'banished' from their suburban 'paradise' on earth, the bourgeois utopian ideal is deconstructed and ripped to shreds, and the bad guys win, among various other uniquely unsavory and superlatively subversive sacrilegious things that make van Warmerdam seem like one of the most spiritually forsaken yet comically clever filmmakers in cinema history.

Opening with the foreboding pseudo-Biblical quote, "And they descended upon the earth to strengthen their ranks," *Borgman* instantly establishes a supernatural horror mood that is only further accentuated when a super stoic Catholic priest (Pierre Bokma) with a shotgun and two brutish looking dudes with bad ass attitudes attempt to hunt down and presumably kill a hobo that lives in a sort of makeshift bunker in the woods. The hobo in question is named 'Camiel Borgman' (Belgian actor Jan Bijvoet) and he bears a striking resemblance to the eponymous character played by John Barrymore in *Svengali* (1931). Unluckily for the main middle-class family featured in the film, Borgman manages to escape from the martial priest via a tunnel connected to his underground home and subsequently warns his equally hobo-like comrades Ludwig (director Alex van Warmerdam) and Pascal (Tom Dewispelaere) to escape as well. Somewhat strangely, Borgman thinks it is a good idea to enter an opulent bourgeoisie neighborhood with large houses featuring modern architecture where he proceeds to knock on the doors of random people and asks them if he can bathe in their homes, which he is routinely denied. When Borgman knocks on the door of a middle-age corporate workaholic family man named Richard (Jeroen Perceval) and pretends to be know his blonde wife Marina (Hadewych Minis), he is nearly beaten half to death and then subsequently disappears seconds later seemingly into thin air, though the sinisterly manipulative meta-Machiavellian hobo never actually leaves the property. Indeed, Richard seems to wisely sense there is something ominous and threatening about Borgman and instinctively physically ravages the blatantly dubious vagrant, who actually has the gall to get smart and arrogant with the man whose bathtub he so arrogantly demands to use. Falling victim to irrational female style empathy and the sort of liberal humanist brainwashing you tend to suffer if you watch too much TV or attend a liberal arts college, Marina feels sorry for dirty bum bastard Borgman and when she notices the antagonist squatting in her shed later that night while her husband is at work, she does not call the police but instead absurdly invites him into her home to take a luxury bath where he enjoys a nice meal, wine, and cable television while sitting in the tub. Of course, little does hopelessly naive Marina realize that Borgman will eventually take over her home, family, and entire life, among other things.

Despite the fact that she does not work and spends most of her time playing around and creating degenerate Pollack-esque paintings by literally fling-

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ing paint on a large canvas, Marina has her three small grade school children watched and taken care of by a young maid named Stine (Sara Hjort Ditlevsen), who the female protagonist warns to not tell her husband about the fact that Borgman is squatting in their shed. Rather curiously, Marina's youngest daughter Isolde (Elve Lijbaart) falls ill after Borgman moves in and the seemingly demonic antihero soon uses the opportunity to brainwash the young girl with seemingly satanic stories like 'The Story of the White Child that Floats Above the Clouds.' In fact, Borgman begins regularly telling all three children nighttime stories about how Jesus Christ is a liar and a banal narcissist who does not care about anyone but himself. Ultimately, by telling the children these stories, Borgman manages to become the sole paternal influence, as the kids' father is also depicted telling them stories but he is nowhere as near as good of a storyteller and seems like an over-the-hill meathead jock philistine compared to the spiritually deleterious vagrant, who utilizes lies and superficial charm to corrupt the souls of his all-too-human prey. Aside from being able to brainwash Marina to begin hating her husband by sitting unclad on her body while she is asleep like the incubus in Fuseli's painting *The Nightmare*, Borgman also has the power to talk to animals, namely dogs, who soon begin roaming the bourgeois family's home and may or may not be the antihero's comrades Ludwig and Pascal in animal form. Aside from Ludwig and Pascal, two similarly swarthy guidette-like women, the middle-aged Brenda (van Warmerdam's wife Annet Malherbe) and 30-something-year-old Ilonka (Eva van de Wijdeven), also 'work' for Borgman, who he communicates with via cellphone. Ultimately, Borgman will use his loyal menacing collectivist-minded minions to help him take over both Richard and Marina's home and family. Quite notably, all of the members of Borgman's group have a scar on their back near their shoulder blade, as if they have been given some sort of satanic surgery that has programmed them to become evil followers of the almost seemingly undead sort. Naturally, Richard and Marina's children and maid Stine will also become unwitting victims to this exceedingly energuminal esoteric influence.

Needless to say, it does not take Marina long to completely fall under Borgman's uniquely unscrupulous spell and when the antihero decides to leave after complaining that he is bored because he cannot roam around her house freely, the pathetically lonely and seemingly sex-starved housewife becomes desperate and agrees to a curious arrangement that ultimately results in the slow and painful death of the nice elderly family gardener. With the help of his demonesses Brenda and Ilonka, Borgman kills the gardener and his wife, drops their corpses in a lake after attaching a plant pot full of cement to their heads, and then takes over their home as if they are assuming their identities. By shaving his head and beard and sporting a fancy new suit, Borgman manages to obfuscate his identity and is instantly hired by superficial and vain 'bourgeois-minded' Richard, as the new gardener, though Ludwig and Pascal also help him obtain the job.

Indeed, knowing that Richard is a 'racist' who does not want dirty untermenschen roaming around his property and have easy access to his young children and frigid wife, Ludwig and Pascal pay shabbily-dressed bum-like Arabs and negroes to apply for the gardener job so that Borgman comes out looking like the only decent and worthy candidate. When a nice looking old white fellow attempts to apply for the job, Ludwig grabs him before he reaches the front-door of Richard's home and proceeds to brutally beat him. When Richard and Marina's youngest daughter Isolde, who has completely fallen under Borgman's sinister spell and whose eyes indicate that she seems dead inside, later finds the old man in the woods, she kills the poor old bastard by crushing his skull with a cement block. Ultimately, moronic Richard is so impressed with Borgman that he not only hires him for the gardening job, but also allows him to stay in a luxury room in their family home and Ludwig and Pascal are soon brought in as 'assistants.' While transforming Richard and Marina's garden from a suburban Garden in Eden into a subtly ominous Garden of Evil, Borgman and his chthonian comrades begin putting the final touches on their metaphysically malefic master plan that only the children seem to truly understand.

Naturally, when workaholic Richard unexpectedly loses his much cherished job as an ass-licking corporate whore, he is destroyed, so when maid Stine brings her masculine military recruit boyfriend Arthur Stornebrink (Mike Weerts) over for dinner one night and the family man realizes he is the son of the boss that fired him, a fight breaks out that rather repels Marina, who now hates her hubby and has become completely infatuated with Borgman, who tells her that he will not have sex with her until the time is right, as if the carnal act will be of spiritual proportions. Of course, Borgman has nil interest in Marina and is just stringing the hopelessly horny housewife along so that he can fulfill his particularly pernicious plan. When all three of the children become ill, Borgman has his demoness Brenda come by in the guise of a doctor and she somewhat humorously describes the kid's sicknesses as being the result of being "overtired" from the "modern world," adding, "Don't forget they have a lot to cope with these days: TV, internet, school. In the holidays the child's body will give up." To keep Marina and her children in check, Borgman and his pals also begin drugging the family, with Ludwig and Pascal even taking the three kids into a sewer where they supply them with a dubious red liquid that resembles Kool-Aid. When Borgman induces a nightmare in Marina where she has her skin ripped off her flesh by her husband during a heated sex session, she wakes up enraged and nonsensically punches her sleeping hubby in the head, so the decidedly disrespected family man fights back by smacking her around and then subsequently drags her into a bathroom where he forces her to take a cold shower. Needless to say, Marina is rather pissed about being smacked around by her much hated hubby Richard, so she asks Borgman to kill him. Ultimately, Richard is poisoned after Borgman's minions perform a sort of sinisterly high-camp garden-based opera

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featuring Ilonka performing ballet and Ludwig and Pascal in drag sporting tights and tutus. After Richard croaks, Borgman's demons perform 'back surgery' on Stine and assumedly the kids, thus leaving them with the same back scars as the antihero and his comrades. While Marina expects sex from Borgman, the antihero predictably poisons her as well. In the end after Richard and Marina are killed and buried in their yard, Borgman leaves the home with his comrades and brings the three children and Stine with them. Like all evil psychopathic leaders ranging from Trotsky to Obama that thrive on lies to maintain power and to get their followers to mindlessly support and/or carry out the most daft and despicable of deeds, Borgman understands that to make someone your spiritual slave they still have to be young and impressionable enough, hence his decision to spare none of the adults just as the bolsheviks spared none of the white Russians, especially not the priests, intellectuals, and members of the aristocracy. In that sense, in few other films does evil triumph in such an effortless and seemingly immaculate fashion than in Borgman.

Unquestionably, Borgman can be interpreted in a variety of ways, both materialistically and metaphysically, but some things are quite certain like its flagrant anti-bourgeois and ultimately ethno-masochistic message. Indeed, aside from a scene where Richard is depicted as a big mean racist who turns down poor brown people of various shades for the gardener job, the same character defends his so-called 'white privilege' after his wife complains she feels guilty due to their European opulence by stating, "We were born in the West, and the West happens to be affluent. We can't help it." Of course, auteur Alex van Warmerdam demonstrated his sad groveling sense of white guilt and ethno-masochism in *The Northerners*, which not only portrays traditionalist Dutch folk as sadistic perverts, rapists, murderers, and schizophrenic religious fanatics but also pays quirky tribute to Congolese independence leader and Pan-African revolutionary Patrice Émery Lumumba, as well as features a negro tribesman blinding a 'fascistic' hunter of the symbolically sexually impotent sort. Despite the film's dubious, convoluted message, Borgman can luckily also be interpreted in the opposite way that the director probably intended, especially considering that the eponymous villain looks just like Svengali who, as depicted in George du Maurier's 1895 novel *Trilby*, is a Jew with Eastern European origins who, aside from seducing and manipulating young girls, also bullies and utilizes cynical humor like the character in van Warmerdam's film. The fact that the antihero also first targets the women and children while sneakily isolating them from the unwitting father is also a method that the Judaic cultural marxists of the Frankfurt School have used to undermine and destroy white western man via feminism, multiculturalism, so-called 'sexual liberation,' and various other slave-morality-inclined underhanded weapons based on great lies that only the figurative synagogue of satan could contrive. After all, like Borgman, world Judea tends to corrupt a society from within, infecting and subverting every imperative cultural, moral,

and spiritual tradition of its host until it is only a distorted shell of what is used to be as especially reflected in the contemporary West. The fact that Borgman drugs his victims just like contemporary western school teachers and psychiatrists recommend parents do to their children if they have a hard time adjusting to the globalist anti-Occidental multiculturalist LGBT-friendly program just goes to show that van Warmerdam's work is probably the only modern filmic fable that manages to capture spiritual afflictions of our conspicuously corrupt and amazingly morally inverted contemporary zeitgeist, which absurdly values the weak over the strong and emphasizes the minority over the majority. Interestingly, the family featured in the film is not very sympathetic, thus hinting that the West is already so forsaken in its malignant moral bankruptcy that its defeat by pure evil is nothing short of inevitable. Of course, the greatest irony is that Borgman and the rest of van Warmerdam's oeuvre could have only been created in a spiritually sick and racially and culturally deracinated nation that has succumbed to the darker side, thus the Dutch auteur must feel blessed in his own warped sort of way. Despite van Warmerdam's questionable views of his own people and culture, Borgman indubitably follows in a rich Dutch artistic tradition dating back to paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and Jan Brueghel the Elder in its modernist interpretation of the Garden of Eden. Indeed, as much as van Warmerdam might resent it, he is unquestionably a product of his culture, people, and religion as is so idiosyncratically and iconoclastically expressed in Borgman, which is a work that could only have been directed by a degenerate post-WWII Germanic mensch who can only laugh at the idea of a figurative hell on earth and world in flames.

-Ty E

STAR TIME
STAR TIME

Alexander Cassini (1992)

I have no scientific way of proving it, but I am going to have to assume that aside from possibly western musicals and breakdance films, the slasher film has to be the most uniquely unsophisticated, fiercely formulaic, and prosaically primitive of the various film subgenres, so I never thought anyone would attempt to take an arthouse, experimental and/or avant-garde approach to the innately artless and absurdly asinine horror style. While Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) does feature some Buñuel-esque dream-sequences, but that film is a rare exception and certainly a work that totally transcends the aesthetic norms and thematic conventions of the slasher subgenre, hence its much desired popularity. Recently, I discovered a far from popular flick that is superficially a slasher flick that ultimately proves that the subgenre has a lot more potential than one would suspect. Indeed, totally unknown auteur Alexander Cassini's directorial debut *Star Time* (1992) is a sort of darkly satirical art-(anti)slasher flick that is like a hodgepodge of David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1983), and Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985) as seen through the lens of Marshall McLuhan's media criticisms where a seemingly autistic man-child of the assumedly virginal sort takes a "tune in, turn on, and drop out" approach to serial-killing and realizes his lifelong dream of becoming an (in)famous 'TV star' as a result. Featuring arguably the most bizarrely nightmarish depiction of Hollywood since the Expressionistic horror-noir cult classic *Dementia* (1955) aka *Daughter of Horror* directed by John Parker, Cassini's film mixes elements from German Expressionism, film noir, tacky TV gameshows, and even video art in a work that ultimately attempts to juggle classic horror scares, savage satire, and aberrant art faggotry in an admittedly ambitious fashion that only semi-succeeds in its aims but certainly never fails to intrigue in its sardonic approach to slasher cinema. Notably, the genesis of *Star Time* was a 30-minute short that, like Lynch with *Eraserhead*, was produced at the American Film Institute (AFI) while Cassini was a student there, so it is only fitting the murderous antihero of the work is named 'Henry' and he is a little lonely, socially retarded, and suffers from a bit of good old-fashioned 'female trouble' of the non-menstrual oriented sort. Undoubtedly *Star Time* feels like the project of an enterprising novice auteur that knows a great deal about filmmaking and film history and wanted to make a work that would display his talents and personal obsessions but would also appeal to a more mainstream audience, hence its less than sincere 'exploitation' of obscenely outmoded slasher conventions. Indeed, with its almost complete and utter lack of graphic murders sequences and violence, emphasis on morality and philosophy over mindless stalking and killing scenes, and patently pathetic and autistic killer, *Star Time* is not exactly the sort of slasher flick that will appeal to thoroughly debased gorehounds who like to herkin the gherkin to

any of the countless worthless Friday of the 13th sequels, though it might appeal to a handful of people that thought great goombah character actor Joe Spinell's performance in *Maniac* (1980) was something bordering on true 'performance art.' A sort of macabre slasher mutilation of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) with an antihero that seems like the murderously moronic nephew of the loony lead characters of Hal Ashby's *Being There* (1979) and Martin Scorsese's *The King of Comedy* (1982), Cassini's proudly perverse parable about the perversion of the mainstream media and Hollywood is ultimately a rare horror flick that attempts to make the viewer ashamed of being a horror fan.

Henry Pinkle (Michael St. Gerard of John Waters' *Hairspray* (1988) and the TV series *Elvis* (1990)) is a superlatively socially retarded man-child with no friends or family who is morbidly depressed because his sole reason for living—the discernibly outmoded black-and-white TV sitcom *The Robertson Family*—has been cancelled, so he has decided to end it all by killing himself. While walking to the building he plans to jump off of in a scene seeming like a nocturnal version of the opening scene from *Eraserhead* in terms of its combination of awkwardness and ominousness, Henry passes large piles of debris and decaying buildings that make Hollywood seem like the world's loneliest post-industrial hellhole. While Henry is a pretty boy guido type that sort of resembles a more macho and masculine Sal Mineo, he is far from your typical charismatic wop and is most likely a virgin as hinted at by the fact that he has a blowup doll lying on his bed. Right before Henry jumps off a building and splatters his brains on the concrete, a charismatic old fart of the seemingly incessantly bullshitting Hebraic sort named Sam Bones (John P. Ryan of Larry Cohen's *It's Alive* (1974) and Andrey Konchalovskiy's *Runaway Train* (1985)) yells to him in a comforting manner, "It hurts when you're robbed...or they take away what's yours. I once thought about putting an end to it too, pal, and do you know what saved me? YOU. Yeah, you and every single human being who carries the cross of awareness in this world." Sam Bones is a show business icon who makes a living lying to people on television and, somewhat inexplicably, he wants Henry to become the latest and greatest TV star, as if an autistic man-child has what it takes to captivate mainstream America audiences (maybe he does!). Unfortunately, the catch is that Sam wants Henry to become a serial killer who wears a creepy baby doll mask and exterminates entire suburban families in their homes while they are watching TV. Indeed, Henry becomes 'The Baby Mask Killer' and he takes a more visceral approach to killing by brutally slaughtering his victims with an ax. Before Henry's first slaughter, Sam says to him, "You're not quite Rembrandt. You forgot your paint brush" and hands him his ax. While Henry gets scared the first time he attempts to kill and runs out of the victim's home like a retarded child, Sam gives him an uplifting pep talk that gives him the confidence he needs to kill without remorse.

While psychopathic Hollywood showman Sam acts as a sort of pernicious pa-

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ternal figure to Henry, he also has a maternal figure in the form of a kindhearted yet semi-butch social worker named Wendy (played by Cassini's then-wife Maureen Teefy of *Grease 2* (1982) and *Supergirl* (1984)). In fact, Henry likes Wendy so much that one of the reasons he originally intended to kill himself is because she moved away to be with a lover. Unfortunately, things did not work out with Wendy's lover and naturally she was rather perturbed when she received a 'suicide letter' in VHS form from Henry where he jovially states, "They cancelled THE ROBERTSON FAMILY, so I'm dead now, but you can see me anytime you want...on your TV." Indeed, in Henry's mind, television is more real than reality, so sending Wendy the VHS tape was a sign of his great affection towards her. Henry also has a strange frog fetish that he acquired as a result of Wendy once giving him a toy frog. In a scene in the spirit of Swiss artist Henry Fuseli's classic painting *The Nightmare* (1781) of an incubus hovering over a beautiful sleeping woman, Henry sits perched on a desk while staring down at Wendy while she sleeps naked in her bed. Like a good percentage of the scenes in *Star Time*, the viewer does not know if Wendy is merely having a bad dream or if she has become a passive victim to Henry's ominous unhinged reality.

Aside from Sam and Wendy, Henry has a third individual in his life, though it is not a real living and breathing person, but a pitch black room full of a couple dozen televisions with a sexy female voice that could be the little slutty sister of sentient computer Hal of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Since the TV screens feature footage of tender tits, delectable derrieres, and faceless women fingering their furry main veins, Henry is totally entranced by the television room which also successfully attempts to seduce the protagonist by salaciously stating, "It's safe to want me, Henry. I don't have any diseases...and I won't break your heart ever again. I can see into your heart, Henry, and I can see that you need so much, so much. You need what only I can give you. I want you inside me, Henry, I want to feel you as a part of me. I'm so hungry for what you can give." When Henry makes a pathetic attempt at touching one of the televised titties, the unclad chicks disappear off all of the screens and are replaced with TV noise and the room demands that the hopelessly horny antihero "earn the right" to defile the screen. Naturally, Henry agrees to do whatever the TV room wants him to do and soon blood, gore, and serial killers appear on the television screens. Of course, all the classic killers appear on the TVs, including Charles Manson, James Dean wannabe Charles Starkweather (himself a victim of Hollywoodization), Nguyễn Ngọc Loan, and various others. As the room tells Henry regarding Manson & Company, "These children of mine are your ancestors. They will show you the way." Of course, Henry has no problem following in the footsteps of his fatally dangerous forebearers, but problems arise when Wendy reluctantly comes back into the antihero's life and Sam is not happy with it. Needless to say, *Star Time* concludes on a down note in a work that, quite unlike your typical bullshit Hollywood celluloid bile, demonstrates that

losers never become winners in real-life and that not all 'underdogs' are good guys.

For better or worse, *Star Time* is an unequivocal downer featuring a totally tragic antihero who meets a particularly pathetic but much needed end in a work that will ultimately dishearten and deject most viewers due to its patent cultural pessimism, demystification of Hollywood glamor, and sardonic mockery of mainstream America's fucked fetish for all-things true crime. Indeed, no one can finish Cassini's decidedly dark and intentionally debasing directorial debut without feeling ridden with pangs of guilt and abject disgust, thus making for an innately anti-Hollywood work that most Americans will hate right from the start. Clearly director Cassini was attempting to go for some sort of mainstream accessibility, no matter how slight, when he made the film, which is somewhat disappointing as he might as well have gone all the way in terms of aesthetic iconoclasm as there is no way in hell the flick would have ever gained any sort of serious following, let alone commercial success, as it is just too plain dark and depressing for the masses who watch movies purely as a cheap form of escapism from their largely miserable lives (but of course, that is one of the many pathetic points that the film makes). Aside from directing a couple episodes for TV shows like *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and *Deadline*, Cassini has only directed one other film and it is not exactly as ambitious or as intriguing as his rather worthwhile debut. Somewhat curiously, Cassini's second feature, the USA-Romanian coproduction *The Incredible Genie* (1999), is a cheap and tacky family film that the director probably made with his child with actress Maureen Teefy in mind. Despite being a failure commercially that has yet to even get a DVD release (though a long out-of-print VHS tape exists), *Star Time* got mostly favorable reviews upon its release, with relatively respectable critic Jonathan Rosenbaum (co-author of the classic text *Midnight Movies*) describing it as "An exceedingly odd first feature" that "Played half as arty allegory, half as satiric comedy, and generally as some species of midnight madness, this gaga independent item is most daring in refusing to focus on the violence that's its subject, while getting us to think plenty about what it means. Recommended."

Notably, *Star Time* features strangely hypnotic chiaroscuro style scenes featuring a wall of TVs playing mostly pornographic imagery that bear a strikingly resemblance to South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's early Dutch era 'pornology' short *The Solipsist* (1991). Whether Cassini saw Kaganof's film or not is rather questionable, but the similarities between both films is quite striking and undeniable. Of course, Cassini's film also features some aesthetic similarities with works associated with the Cinema of Transgression, especially the collaborations of Scott B and Beth B (*Black Box*, *Vortex*). In its incendiary and iconoclastic in-your-face approach to criticizing television and its singular lobotomizing power, Cassini's film is also comparable to Beth B's first solo feature *Salvation!: Have You Said Your Prayers Today?* (1987), though I would have to

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acknowledge that Cassini's flick is indubitably more successful on both an aesthetic and satirical level, as *Star Time* is certainly nowhere as convoluted. In fact, the biggest flaw of Cassini's film is that it is not long enough and could have certainly benefited from even more intricate themes and esoteric imagery. Of course, the film's lack of details regarding the antihero's particular upbringing and parents ultimately makes *Star Time* a work where the viewer's imagination is able to run wild, which is certainly a rarity in the horror (and especially the slasher) realm. At the very least, Cassini revealed with his directorial debut that he could have evolved into a formidable auteur filmmaker with a distinct and potent vision, but instead his career just seemed to wither away before it even really ignited, which is sad but assuredly not surprising considering no one gets paid to be a serious auteur in Tinseltown. I certainly would not be surprised if the creators of *The Cable Guy* (1996) starring Jim Carrey saw Cassini's film and felt it would be a fairly safe work to steal ideas from. Ultimately, *Star Time* belongs in the same virtually nonexistent category as Elly Kenner and Norman Thaddeus Vane's *The Black Room* (1983) as an oh-so rare and unbelievable avant-garde-slasher that probably should not exist but somehow thankfully does.

-Ty E

ARSENAL

Alexander Dovzhenko (1928)

Alexander Dovzhenko's *Arsenal* (1928) is a Bolshevik hate filled propaganda masterpiece. It's presentation of German Kaiser soldiers as laughing toothless maniacs shows the real "equality" banker Jacob Schiff paid for. New York City banker Jacob Schiff gave Leon Trotsky 20 Million dollars to run the 1917 red revolution. This "revolution" killed around 10 million people alone. The Bolsheviks committed many mass murders for decades and decades more.

Arsenal is set during the Ukrainian Civil War (based on an actual incident from 1918). This is quite ironic considering Holodomor (Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933) occurred a couple years after the film's release. Holodomor resulted in the intentional (man made famine) starvation of between 7-10 million Ukrainian Kulaks. The war criminal Soviet leaders benefited greatly from the famine. It eliminated the cultural elite of the Ukraine thus resulting in forced collectivism. Communists hated national self-determination because it went against their goal of "international revolution." Insane mind controlling editing and lack of plot make *Arsenal* the ultimate nightmare. After watching it, I would have let the Bolsheviks kill me. The early Soviet directors had a very odd take on film theory and its psychological effects on viewers. It is obvious that they wanted the proletariat ignorant and impulsive when defending collective enterprise. Compared to other early Soviet propaganda, *Arsenal* is fairly tame in its propaganda. Soviet montage madman Sergei Eisenstein's film *Bezhin Meadow* portrayed Christian kulaks as hideous and homicidal son killers. Of course, *Bezhin Meadow* neglects to let the viewer know that the Soviets intentionally starved to death between 7-10 million of those evil kulaks. *Arsenal* is an oddly political and surreal look into the past. Knowing the history surrounding the film only makes it more interesting. I felt sick and lied to after viewing *Arsenal*. Piles of starved skeleton corpses perfectly compliment it.

-Ty E

Watch *Arsenal*

YESTERDAY GIRL
YESTERDAY GIRL

Alexander Kluge (1966)

Without question, there is no great metaphor for German New Cinema 'father figure' Alexander Kluge's filmmaking career as a cultural cuckold, shabbos goy, and pedantic ethno-masochistic lunatic other than the fact he decided to cast own Aryan sister, Alexandra Kluge, in the role of a down-and-out Jewish daughter of holocaust survivors for his first feature-length film *Yesterday Girl* (1966) aka *Abschied von gestern* - (Anita G.), a patently plodding 'modernist' celluloid work that is just as much inspired by French New Wave auteur filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard as it is by the static Theatrical Marxism of Brecht and cultural Marxism of the Hebraic kraut-hammering Frankfurt School. Directed by a fiercely philo-Semitic far-left lawyer turned filmmaker who once proudly and pretentiously proclaimed, "I don't know what an artist is. I'd say, my roots are in Hebrew theology; in the Critical Theory of Horkheimer, Adorno, Oscar Negt; in Walter Benjamin," *Yesterday Girl* is a cinematic work that is so superlatively soulless in terms of its pedantic politics and shockingly static aesthetics that it acts as a potent reminder of how German cinema has degenerated since the days of F.W. Murnau, Leni Riefenstahl, and even Veit Harlan. Clearly taking his buddy Adorno's infamously idiotic words of Hebrew hostility, "Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," to heart, *Yesterday Girl* is about as poetic as a cattle prod to the prick and as aesthetically audacious as the syphilis-ridden brain of a purged Bolshevik revolutionary's corpse. Essentially the German New Cinema equivalent of Godard's obscenely overrated first feature *Breathless* (1960) aka *À bout de souffle*—the supposed French New Wave classic where the director proved that even Marxist morons can love capitalist Hollywood and stupid Americans as demonstrated by the film's counterfeit frog Humphrey Bogart-wannabe—*Yesterday Girl* is the sort of innately insipid and ultimately pointless pseudo-iconoclastic work that gives arthouse cinema a bad name due to its putrid and pansy political posturing and patently prosaic aesthetics, and overall brazenly banal story. The hopelessly mundane and meandering celluloid non-story of a young and rather annoying East German Jewess with large Anna Karina-like eyes, *Yesterday Girl* is not only an inane indictment of West German capitalism and democracy, but an assault on 'bourgeois' Teutonic society in general that, more than anything else, accuses the German system and populous of harboring 'everyday fascism'.

As explained by a judge during a court case regarding her supposed theft of a cardigan sweater and some other items from a coworker's locker, "Anita G., born April 2, 1937, unemployed, no fixed abode, single, with no prior convictions, appears before the Braunschweig Court as she is duly suspected of having had the intention to take and carry away movable property." During the trial, Anita also uses the race card, though she denies it is her intent, by bringing up

the fact her kosher parents' factory was taken away from them by the naughty Nazis and the trauma of said events inevitably led her to leave East Germany to seek her (un)fortune in West Germany, but the rather physically grotesque kraut swine judge has no sympathy for the children of holocaust survivors, so her Jewishness does not save her as one might expect it to in the real world. Ditzzy and compulsively 'cute,' Anita is certainly not someone you would peg as a kleptomaniac Jewess, but then again the celluloid realm of attorney at law turned auteur Alexander Kluge has always been more of a place of sterile ideas and theories and intentionally lackluster direction as opposed to aesthetically pleasing magic and true (as opposed to imaginary Marxist) social realism. The story of Yesterday Girl is fairly simple and especially anticlimactic as it basically depicts the failure of a commie-trained kosher chick to integrate herself into society and find a decent boyfriend/job, so she goes from job to job and boyfriend to boyfriend, until she eventually gets arrested for theft (of course, probably in Kluge's mind "property is theft" or something like that), thus demonstrating the supposedly brutal authoritarianism of capitalist krautland. At her first apartment in West Germany, Anita is kicked out for failing to pay the rent on time, thus beginning a series of temporary stays at various motels and apartments as she is a born screw up, though, of course, director Alexander Kluge clearly expects the viewer to believe capitalism, latent fascism, and anti-Semitism are to blame for the little lass' failures. Undoubtedly, Kluge also reveals that Anita is Jewish, despite her appearance to the contrary, to demonstrate that were she not both a direct and indirect victim of the holocaust, she probably would not be a petty criminal or something along those lines and that her criminality is even justified considering her special Semitic situation. Of course, all the crypto-anti-Semites in the film give her no breaks. Dealing with everything from a brief stint with pussy-peddling to a bastard boyfriend that gives her the gift of bruises, Anita is certainly used and is abused, but because of Kluge's pedantic and sterile direction and the director's sister's lack of acting talent, it is all but impossible to empathize with the tragic girl and her terribly trying situation. Concluding with the inter-title, "We are all to blame for everything, but if everyone knew it, we would have paradise on earth," one wonders if Alexander Kluge is one of the most, if not the most, whiniest and self-righteous filmmaker who has ever lived. Naturally, I blame Kluge for making an empty film for empty people.

Judging by *Yesterday Girl* and *Part-Time Work of a Domestic Slave* (1973) aka *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin*, which also stars the director's sister Alexandra Kluge, one must question auteur Alexander Kluge's dubious quasi-incestuous direction of his sis, but if one thing is for sure—sister lover or not—he is a filmmaker with a special knack for making the most clinically assembled celluloid works ever, as if he were a cultural mortician and Aryan Uncle Tom hired by his Hebraic homeboys at the Frankfurt School to deconstruct and ultimately destroy Germany's deep and singular legacy of romanticism and historical myths.

YESTERDAY GIRL

Incidentally, Kluge, who once served as a shabbos goy legal counsel for the Frankfurt School, was encouraged by Theodor W. Adorno—the Guido-Hebrew cultural Marxist messiah who spent a good percentage of his time criticizing German/European kultur with his ‘Critical theory’ and trashing the German people for the holocaust (hence his dickheaded 1949 dictum “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric”)—to become a filmmaker in the first place, thus knowing that the lawyer-turned-auteur would never become the next Veit Harlan, but a sort of intellectually masturbating, anti-aestheticist who would degrade Teutonic culture and cinema for the greater good of the chosen amongst god’s chosen. One of 26 signers of the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, Kluge undeniably helped launch German New Cinema, but as the naked melodramas of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, darkly romantic adventurist works of Werner Herzog, and the anti-leftist Wagnerian works of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg demonstrate, the kraut new wave thrived in spite of Kluge and not because of him. Despite Kluge’s cultural Marxist filmmaking career and supposed support of fellow directors of German New Cinema, Czech animator/auteur Vlado Krištl, who won the main prize at the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival for his work *Don Kihot* (1961), once revealed the *Yesterday Girl* director was not a Marxist who practiced what he preached, stating, “Even though they claimed to be socialists, Kluge and a few others were almost careless in the way they showed their true face.” Indeed, as a proud anti-Marxist/anti-leftist myself, I have no problem admitting some of my favorite filmmakers, including Pier Paolo Pasolini, were card-carrying commies, yet Kluge’s films are as materialistic, mundane, soulless, and—most importantly—culturally corrosive as his political beliefs. With a pointless dream-sequence involving SA Nazi stormtroopers and American GIs chasing Anita and then Anita subsequently stomping on a good Christian woman’s hand (with gorehound-esque blood spattering and all!) being the most enthralling aspect of *Yesterday Girl*, it is probably safe to say that Alexander Kluge is one of the most aesthetically inartistic, unappealing and autistic filmmakers to have ever lived, hence why very few people watch his films today, yet names like Herzog, Fassbinder, and Wenders will be remembered forever.

-Ty E

STRONGMAN FERDINAND

Alexander Kluge (1976)

Out of all the filmmakers associated with German New Cinema, the movement's 'father figure' Alexander Kluge (*Yesterday Girl*, *Mensch 2.0*) was probably the one who spent the most time chilling in an ivory tower of his arcane neo-Marxist imagination, yet the auteur somehow absurdly thought he was some sort of champion of the proletariat and voice of the Teutonic collective, even once stating in 1980 regarding his enemies and his hopes for the future of German cinema: "...we still have three enemies: the American companies, the bureaucracies—our sacrosanct national bureaucracy—and finally the individualism of the filmmakers. These filmmakers present themselves as auteurs, and their subjectivity becomes the primary point, which in fact this subjectivity is always less than the cinema itself. The cinema is its spectators, the collective imaginary. From now on, it will be necessary to move ahead to a new stage and to make not personal films but collective films. . . . One should make collective films that bear on daily life. Such a cinema could ultimately be the cinema of spectators which is my goal." Of course, as the son of a bourgeois doctor and quasi-neo-Marxist intellectual who worked as a lawyer for the Frankfurt School and who was influenced to become a filmmaker by his kosher communist comrade Theodor W. Adorno, Kluge did not exactly come from the sort of background where he could relate to the common working-class kraut, hence why, unlike Fassbinder's works, virtually none of his films have become classics among the general German populous. With his 'offbeat' anti-fascist comedy *Strongman Ferdinand* (1976) aka *Der starke Ferdinand*—a satire inspired by the near civil war that occurred in West Germany during the 1970s as a result of far-left terrorists like the Red Army Faction about a tragicomic buffoonish cop turned security chief who provides security for a private company in an ostensibly 'fascistic fashion' and ultimately ironically becomes a terrorist in the end to prove the ineffectiveness of contemporary law and order in the socio-politically chaotic Fatherland—Kluge tried extra hard to make a highly accessible film that would be a mainstream hit and even went so far as to go back and reedit the film to make it even more palatable to less sophisticated prole viewers, yet the film was still a failure in the end, thus demonstrating how out of touch the auteur was with the general public, especially the bread-and-circus-loving working-class. While Kluge probably hoped the film would be the German New Cinema's answer to Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), *Strongman Ferdinand* is only vaguely less hyper-intellectualized than the director's previous cinematic offerings, as a work that may lack the Eisenstein-esque montages that the filmmaker is particularly fond of yet wallows in banal Brechtian audience-alienating distancing techniques and horribly dry humor that would probably only appeal to a handful of old school German far-leftist academic types from the late-1960s. Starring the

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rather Jewish-looking German character actor Heinz Schubert, who apparently used to collaborate with Bertolt Brecht before the building of the Berlin Wall and would go on to play both Uncle Adolf and Heinrich Himmler in Syberberg's magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), *Strongman Ferdinand* is indeed Kluge's most accessible and formulaic work to date, yet it features an antihero that is so less than empathetic and a storyline that is so severely stale and conspicuous that the film might as well have been directed by a humorless Leninist robot.

After a cop comrade and a criminal are killed during a terrorist break-in, tiny 50-year-old strongman Ferdinand Rieche (Heinz Schubert) decides to quit being a cop because, as he tells his commander, he is fed up with the police department's, "bloody tactics [...] Just to satisfy the press and the courts," and due to the fact that the bureaucratic legal system's, "ridiculous regulations make criminal prosecution impossible" for him. When hanging out with his morbidly obese sergeant friend Kniebeling (Joachim Hackethal), Rieche demonstrates he is a 'corrupt' cop in the spirit of William Friedkin's *The French Connection* (1971) by breaking into an apartment without a warrant. Rieche may be an unwittingly goofy little mensch, but he is not a complete idiot and regularly visits communist book stores, as he has a keenness for not only voraciously reading works on security and policing theories, but also studying his enemy, whose attacks he eagerly awaits. As narrated in a typically goofy fashion by director Alexander Kluge, Rieche "knows all there is to know, and can't comprehend that others don't." Indeed, Rieche takes his job very seriously and can only see the world through the lens of a security-obsessed policeman. Even in terms of his own personal life, Rieche divides everything into five "Security Zones," which include: "Zone 1: Rieche himself, Zone 2: His flat, Zone 3: His job, Zone 4: Police work in its entirety, Zone 5: everything in its entirety." After the previous security chief, Berthold, is fired from a private chemical company for causing a scandal (a big "no, no" when it comes to these companies), Rieche replaces him and within 48 hours the ex-cop already has the entire factory building under check. Unlike the previous security chief, Rieche forces his underlings to learn security theory because, as he states, "As working security men, you can't use your hands; you have to use your head." Of course, Rieche has no problem breaking the rules when necessary, as demonstrated by the fact he forces a girl at the factory to submit to a urine test under false pretenses, so he can turn said urine in for a physical examination that is required by the Brussels-based parent company that owns his employer, so as to prove he is healthy. In what is easily one of the more humorous scenes of the film, Rieche is told by the doctor upon receiving the results of his urinalysis that, "If you weren't a man, I'd say you were 3 months pregnant."

Undoubtedly, one of the more dubious things that Rieche does during his employment is that he more or less coerces a young blonde babe named Gertie

Kahlmann (Véronice Rudolph) into becoming his live-in lover/girlfriend after he catches her routinely stealing food from the company. Indeed, while Rieche complains to Gertie that she “exploits positions of trust,” he does the same by not only blackmailing the young country girl, who says she’d rather commit suicide than have to go back to the hinterland after losing her job, but also by not reporting to his employer that his girlfriend is a morally retarded kleptomaniac. As Kluge narrates: “Rieche ponders the question with hindsight: How do you reconcile a thieving girlfriend with security?” While dating Gertie, Rieche learns that many of the people that work at his company find him so repugnant that they would not even dare be seen drinking beer with him in public. Ultimately, Rieche proves to be a somewhat loving and supportive, if not authoritarian, boyfriend, as he buys Gertie a taxi so she can start a new business, but inevitably his controlling behavior eventually pushes her away. As Kluge explains, “Rieche is fenced in by the law. Rieche needs a crisis. If nothing happens, he lies dormant,” but luckily some terrorist strikes and blows up part of the factory, so the security chief assembles the most elite security team in all of West Germany. Just for practice, Rieche has his loyal team strike a rival company where they successfully remove 26 crates of electronics and store them in the woods. The more Rieche becomes obsessed with security, the more paranoid he gets. After receiving a box of chocolates from his boss, Rieche decides to have them tested in a laboratory, so as to confirm they are not laced with poison. To test his security team’s effectiveness, the Strongman puts a pair of pantyhose over his head and attacks his own factory, ultimately allowing himself to be captured in the end. Indeed, while Rieche would have probably made for a marvelous National Socialist, American-style capitalism ultimately proves to deter the Strongman’s advancements in security. As one of the heads at Rieche’s company notes, it would be cheaper to simply buy insurance for the factory than to employ a security chief and entire security team.

When Rieche provides security for his boss Ganter (Heinz Schimmelpfennig) at an opera performance of Puccini, he becomes so paranoid and agitated during a scene in the performance of Tosca killing Scarpia that he whips out his pistol and prepares to fire at an imaginary adversary. Rieche also learns while at the opera from Ganter that the company is not happy with his work and that he might be fired after his six month trial at the company is over with unless he learns “to do more” but “not to do too much.” It seems the big wigs at the company are somewhat disturbed by Rieche’s fanatical security methods and see him as a liability, not to mention a potential source for bad press. Meanwhile, Rieche begins to describe certain fish in his own personal fish tank as enemies, absurdly (but hilariously) stating regarding some of his gill-bearing pets: “The little one: The communist party, The black one: An Arab, The dotted one: All Eastern spies together.” When Rieche becomes suspicious of a young female scientist working at his company who he believes is trading scientific information

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to enemies, he manhandles her, takes her hostage, and locks her in a room at the factory. When Rieche's cop friend Kniebeling accuses him of having the young female scientist imprisoned somewhere, the security chief decides to let her go, though he refuses to confess to any wrongdoing. When Rieche begins stalking his scheming corporate whore boss Wilutzki (Gert Günther Hoffmann), who is the vice president of the entire company, he learns that his boss is attempting a merger with another company, so he has him kidnapped and imprisoned against his own will. Rieche attempts to tell Ganter about Wilutzki's underhanded tactics, but the boss seems unimpressed and confesses that he knows little of multinational business transactions. Of course, the merger goes through and Rieche not only loses his job (which is given to his friend turned enemy Kniebeling), but his girlfriend as well, who dumps him after he screams at her like a maniac for selling some of his old personal belongings. After writing Gertrude a letter with the pathetically poetic remark, "I drag my soul behind me like a big St. Bernard dog," Rieche attempts to assassinate a politician, who he ultimately hits in the cheek but does not kill. When asked about his motives by a journalist after being detained by the police, Rieche states, "Security-political. To show that an assassin could get to the minister despite all security, and, if we were allowed to lead the opposing side, that we would be able to do it. This proves the need for our services. I'm really sorry I hit the minister in the cheek. I was aiming for the wall behind the minister." Ironically, while Rieche believes, "Radical security has nothing to do with radicalism," he ultimately proves that he is not much different than his commie terrorist enemies. In the end, Rieche reveals that he is a nihilist by remarking regarding his deleterious actions, "I shot him in the cheek because there is no real meaning to our life. For this reason, you can't always shoot straight."

While auteur Alexander Kluge probably hoped to hit two birds (fascism and capitalism) with one filmic stone with *Strongman Ferdinand*, the film is ultimately a convoluted cinematic mess that, like many of the director's more intricate works, attempts to say and do so many things at once, but fails on most accounts, especially in terms of satire, though the work does have its occasional moments of tragicomic charm. Indeed, compared to Fassbinder's similarly themed work *Die dritte Generation* (1979) aka *The Third Generation*, which also depicts both the police and terrorists as unwitting pawns of big corporations who only strengthen capitalist tyranny, Kluge's work seems like a hopelessly restrained and patently pedantic exercise in left-wing bourgeois banality that ultimately makes the director seem more paranoid than the crazed antihero of his film. Indeed, only a left-wing academic could believe that a working-class security chief spends his free time voraciously reading communist texts and planning mock terrorist attacks. In one especially awkward and ultimately pointless scene in the film, the eponymous protagonist's fat ass friend Kniebeling remarks while flipping through communist books, "nothing but Bolshevik propaganda" and

then changes the subject by nostalgically stating, "We just celebrated the 37th anniversary of our Fuehrer's 50th birthday," to which Kluge directly responds to the character off-screen (!) by stating, "That's rubbish, too." Interestingly, Austrian actor/auteur Paulus Manker (Weininger's *Last Night*, *The Moor's Head*), who starred in Kluge's flick *Die Macht der Gefühle* (1983) aka *The Power of Emotion*, also directed an underrated little film entitled *Schmutz* (1987) aka *Dirt* about a mentally unhinged security man, but it takes a totally different approach from *Strongman Ferdinand* by utilizing a sort of visceral metaphysical horror that manages to express so much more with visceral feeling, post-industrial landscapes, and quasi-expressionistic aesthetics than the other film ever could. While Kluge once stated, "cinema has one possibility other arts don't have. Because it's rather trivial and derives from the fairground . . . it hasn't been developed from the viewpoint of a small, educated society; it's made for the plebeian people, for the proletarian component," *Strongman Ferdinand* ultimately demonstrates that the auteur has nil understanding of the "plebeian people." Indeed, maybe it is because I am a bit prejudiced but working as an attorney for the Frankfurt School seems like probably the worst training someone can get for being a filmmaker, especially when it comes to making films that are meant to appeal to plebs. While I would not exactly call myself a Kluge fan, I have to say that the director's more arcane and impenetrable works like *The Power of Emotion* and *Die Patriotin* (1979) aka *The Patriot* are infinitely more interesting, provocative, and artistically genuine than *Strongman Ferdinand*, which, aside from being a mostly prosaic piece of hopelessly sterile satire, ultimately patronizes the very people it was made for, the Lumpenproletariat. Indeed, the proles want their bread and circus and the only thing Kluge could offer them was boredom and contempt of the anti-action-packed sort, with *Strongman Ferdinand* ultimately being a sort of contra work to the working-class blockbuster favorite *Die Hard* (1988).

-Ty E

BURIAL GROUND
BURIAL GROUND

Alexander Shevchenko (2007)

Before you begin getting all excited that i am talking about the Italian zombie film, let me tell you this is not the same film. Alexander Shevchenko (Nails and Visions of Suffering) has had an illustrious acting career already and has worked on music and digital effects for most of Andrey Iskanov's filmography. His short "Burial Ground" is without a doubt in my mind, the most horrifying 7 minutes i have ever spent in my life. Not only did this short alarm me with it's gratuitous static and radiation noises, but it made me fear things that cannot be explained. I will not bother to explain the plot for then the effect will be gone. Your best bet is to watch this on your own, without hearing anything about it. This film and another of his shorts "HOMUNCULUS" will be on The Tourist DVD, and believe me, it is worth the wait. Burial Ground features some of the most bleak, aesthetic shots i have witnessed, and the sound effects of the wind, radiation meter, distorted breathing and noises make for a terrifying treat. Not only has Alex proved his acting worth by playing a trepanning hitman, but he has also proved that he has what it takes to be a visual idealist in the world of horror. I applaud this short for scaring me shitless. Bravo. Burial Ground is a visual dystopian poem.

-Maq

PIRANHA 3D

Alexandre Aja* (2010)

I watch horror films for two reasons, both harkening back to childhood. One reason is to get in touch with the primal, sleepless night-inducing fear of, say, watching *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* for the first time (the day before Halloween, 1995, aired on a local television station. Being nine and naïve the opening ‘based on a true story’ crawl narrated by John Laquett had me convinced I wasn’t watching a ‘scary movie’ but true crime along the lines of *Helter Skelter*. By the end of the scene where they pick up the hitchhiker I was nearly in tears). On the other hand, there is the “Do you like see-food?” appeal of films that, while not particularly scary, appeal to the twelve year old in all of us who lived for nothing more than throwing bricks at the dead cat behind the cafeteria dumpster after school to see if we could dislodge some maggots before skulking over to a friend’s house to thumb through his older brother’s worn copies of *Hustler*. Flicks that are big, dumb, gross, and awkward as we were when stuck in the painful expanse between our childhood perception of what constitutes cool (roadkill, fighting robots, armpit farts) and our young adult perception of what constitutes cool (girls) and all that entails (mostly masturbation, humiliation, and acne scars). Flicks that one must put away with the childish things if one ever wants to know the love of a woman (Corinthians 13, I think), but can indulge in every once in awhile to satisfy the adolescent weirdo with the peach fuzz ‘stache that resides at the base of our brain.

Of course, you can always indulge and wear Fulci Lives shirts and argue on message boards about how the laserdisc of a *Blind Dead* movie omits a second-and-a-half transitional scene and blare *Cannibal Corpse* on your way to your graveyard shift retail job, but this will ensure that in the odd event your penis ever lands in a vagina and you aren’t paying for it that said vagina will belong to a woman that outweighs you considerably and is every bit the nerd you are and you’ll despise her for it and feel like you’re slumming and she’ll feel the exact same about you but you’ll stay together because no one else could possibly be interested in fucking either of you because you prattle on for hours like a couple of fucking *Aspies* about meathooks going through breasts and *Goblin* soundtracks but never bother to expand the scope of your interests beyond something someone that rides a bike with a baseball card in the fucking spokes would think is “pretty siiick.” A more successful approach? Watch movies with substance, subtitles, and/or subtlety. Watch stuff that you could imagine girls you’ve always wanted to cum in might enjoy or at the very least tolerate, but which won’t make their vagina’s arid at the mere mention of. Respect cinema as an art form and appreciate the nuances of a particular director or camera movement or something, anything beyond “dude, he removes their kneecaps and then sews her mouth to the one girl’s butt and then that girl’s mouth to the guy’s butt

PIRANHA 3D

and...” I guess what I’m trying to say is it is more than okay to like something puerile and disgusting, but don’t let that be the sum of your interest in movies because (a) you aren’t twelve years old and (b) being a movie nerd, or nerd of any kind really, stacks the odds pretty high against you in terms of getting laid by anything remotely human in appearance, but being a nerd whose development peaked at twelve years old, i.e. horror geek, comic book guy, etc, you are pretty much guaranteeing yourself a life of quiet desolation, disappointment, and actually attending conventions and shit. Grow the fuck up. It is okay to like comic books or horror movies, but if you are 35-going-on-12, no one wants to fuck you. Did girls want to fuck you when you were twelve? Of course not, and they certainly won’t want to now that you wear a hockey jersey as “going out” wear and use a goatee to disguise how fat you’ve gotten since you dropped out of community college eight years ago. The only people that want to fuck twelve year old boys are creepy old men, and even they don’t want to fuck you because while you are emotionally stunted at an age when things made sense and you didn’t have to slave away all night cleaning chili dispensers and selling smokes to tweakers to afford your Fangoria subscription you don’t possess an untapped butthole and pimples and puppy tails or whatever the fuck it is pedophiles are into because you are an adult man, you fucking fuck. I don’t know who to pity more, the washed up “horror icons” who have to stand arm in arm with you for a photo op at the convention center or you for having to part with twenty-five bucks for such a unique privilege. Ultimately I pity your parents, anything with self-esteem low enough to allow you to wiggle around your puny pecker inside of it, society as a whole, but mostly yours truly for having had to endure so many terrible conversations with so many of you fucking losers over the years.

Okay, so perhaps this (maybe) misguided rant is the result of my (definitely) misguided attempt to discuss movies with a guy at work wearing a Friday the 13th shirt whose eyes glossed over whenever I’d mention a movie that didn’t feature disembowelings and grotesquely augmented breasts, the guy who thinks Argento is a hack because Fulci “brought it” in terms of gore and who looked completely dumbfounded when I mentioned anything remotely outside that of which could constitute Necro lyrics. We did, however, find some brief common ground in my most recent adventure to the multiplex, Piranha 3D. My friend had just been fired from her job under the worst possible circumstances. Said friend needed some cheering up, and nothing cheers one up better, if you ask me, than putting adult notions of good taste and responsibility to the side and enjoying some disembowelings and grotesquely augmented breasts for about an hour and a half, even better if it’s in 3D. Of course, like Lifetime movies or greasy post-hangover grub, this is the kind of empty calorie awesomeness that is best enjoyed sparingly, but taken in the right frame of mind (drunk, high) really hits the spot.

Piranha 3D, like the Joe Dante flick on which it is based, is essentially Jaws

helmed by someone who doesn't want to fuck twelve year old boys (or be Peter Pan or whatever the fuck Spielberg's deal is) but rather by someone who understands what twelve year old boys want to see, in this case Alexandre Aja (director of the overrated *Haute Tension* and *The Hills Have Eyes*, maybe the gold standard against which all other horror remakes should be measured). As was the case with *The Hills Have Eyes*, Aja recognizes what worked in the original film but is able to improve on it both stylistically and in terms of gore. With *The Hills Have Eyes*, Aja was able to translate the Vietnam-era anger of Craven's first films into a political parable that was less preachy than just really lean, mean, and jarringly brutal. With *Piranha 3D*, Aja knows as well as you and I do that there is nothing intelligent to mine from a flick that existed solely to improve on *Jaws* by way of blood and titties, so he goes the exact opposite route of *Hills* and injects *Piranha 3D*'s scant running time with wall-to-wall ass, titties, gore, moronic humor, and a couple of great cameos, all of this again, in three glorious dimensions. Steve McQueen's grandson is the Pixies-shirt clad good guy, who blah blah likes this girl yadda yadda his mom is the sheriff and an earthquake dislodges prehistoric cannibalistic demon fish from an underwater lake just in time for Spring Break and Jerry O'Connell plays a thinly veiled Joe Francis of *Girls Gone Wild* infamy (here called, if I remember correctly, *Wild Wild Girls*) so Steve McQueen's grandson gets on board with the girl he likes as a tour guide and the fish eat everyone you'd expect them to eat and a "twist" ending sets it up for a sequel but don't stick around for the end credits because all that happens is a skull floats by so fuck that.

There are two things I really took away from *Piranha 3D*, or rather, two things I still remember about it (aside from that we had a great time and laughed and guffawed and made "bo-o-o-i-i-ing" sound effects to represent our boners throughout). One is the genius of casting Jerry O'Connell as Joe Francis. Spoilers abound, but when O'Connell's coked out, obnoxious character bites the dust, we are treated to the spectacular sight of his severed penis floating past our face, being swallowed by a piranha, and then coughed out over our heads before being bitten in half. As the fat kid from *Stand By Me* and Joe Francis should be at the top of anyone's list of people who should never be allowed to procreate, this is crowd-pleasing at its finest, plus it is refreshing to know that we live in an age where hundreds upon thousands of dollars will be spent to realistically thrust severed cocks in the faces of moviegoers. The other thing I can recall about this movie was the big climactic massacre scene where Spring Break is interrupted by bloodthirsty piranhas but because the 3D process kinda makes a lot of the underwater stuff a bit murky, the best deaths are caused by humor error, including one death-by-hair-caught-in-boat-motor that is so great it belongs in a hastily-edited, grindcore-scored Youtube video along with clips from *Dead Alive* and *Guinea Pig* films or something. I'm sure the guy from my work is hard-at-work compiling it as you read this. Did I mention that he declared this the best film

PIRANHA 3D

he'd seen all year? Like, really? I mean, it was fun. The nude underwater ballet scene where two chicks with tits bigger than, well, the guy from my work's tits, is pretty amazing, and the Spring Break massacre, O'Connell cock- it all added up to a very satisfying, imminently forgettable timewaster. It will satiate your inner-adolescent appetite for mayhem and female nudity (also 3D vomit), but it isn't something you'll ever really consider watching more than once, or sober, or at home even (at least I wouldn't - if Jerry O'Connell's meat isn't plastered to your forehead, it really isn't the optimal Piranha 3D experience).

That said, Aja continues to be a capable director, my friend seemed sufficiently cheered, and the lack of anything substantive to say about the flick itself has allowed me to tackle one of my least favorite archetypes at length, so if it is still in theaters, check it out, and if the DVD comes with little 3D glasses or something check it out or if you find a torrent and can skip to the above mentioned scenes, by all means, but don't buy it or think it is some kind of masterpiece or invite an attractive co-worker to dinner and breathlessly recount your favorite parts of the movie with your fucking mouth open (see? food! haha) while she recoils in (actual) horror and wishes someone, anyone would text her so she can make an excuse to get away from you but you're so convinced you're getting laid tonight that you are already plotting how to get through the hallway and past mom and dad's room without waking them and are forming a mental picture of a post-coital snuggle sesh in which she's wearing your favorite death metal shirt watching Nekromantik but really this will be like every other night of your life since you were a pre-teen and you'll masturbate furiously, cluelessly into a tube-sock and feel curiously empty and fill the void by clicking Buy It Now and now you've gotta make room on your wall for another autographed Bruce Campbell poster - fuck.

-Jon-Christian

IN THE SOUP

Alexandre Rockwell (1992)

In the Soup is one of the greatest American comedies in the past 20 years. It also won the Sundance Grand Jury Prize: Dramatic in 1992 (does this even matter?). Steve Buscemi stars as Adolfo Rollo, a loser trying to make a pretentious art film. He puts an ad out looking to sell his 500 page film script and a crazy Jewish gangster by the name of Joe responds. Joe brings Adolfo on a ride of thievery and crime. Joe is a sociopath out to make tons of money at the expense of Adolfo's weak personality (to raise for the film?). Joe is charismatic, cunning, and conspiratorial. He would probably even be good friends with Meyer Lansky. Adolfo makes for an easy target with his lack of assertiveness and confidence. Adolfo helps bring out the "man" in Joe to some extent. My only complaint with In the Soup is that it was shot in black and white. There was no reason for this as it doesn't add to its independent "credibility." I assume it was an economic choice which is reasonable. The only comedies that work in black and white are Jim Jarmusch's Down By Law and Stranger Than Paradise. Coffee and Cigarettes was a pretentious and pointless piece of shit. In the Soup is truly a heartwarming film and a humanistic film. Rarely do I find these qualities in films and especially in regard to American comedies. Hack comedy director Todd Phillips makes me almost hope that a nuclear apocalypse will wipe out humanity as he is evidence that the human race is in terrible danger. In the Soup almost makes me want to atone for my sins.

-Ty E

LIFEBOAT
LIFEBOAT

Alfred Hitchcock (1944)

Alfred Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* (1944) still holds the world record for having the smallest film set ever to be used for a feature length motion picture. Seeing as Hitchcock was the director of the film, I was not surprised to find this out. Alfred Hitchcock is notorious for his master of situational psychology. In *Lifeboat*, a group of American and British seeks refuge in a small survivor boat. Soon after they all become acquainted, an unlikely refugee comes aboard the ship. The German U-boat captain tricks the collective of allies to believe he is merely a sailor. Before the end of the film, the German captain becomes Der Führer of the raggedy lifeboat. *Lifeboat* is clearly a propaganda film but apparently when it came out people were offended that it seemed not completely anti-German (as in portraying them as actual human beings). I guess that makes Alfred Hitchcock a better filmmaker than the wretched and overrated studio propagandist director Lewis Milestone (real name Lev Milstein). *Lifeboat* takes a more complex road in the way character interaction between the enemy and his dependent co-refugees. The German captain Willi plays his enemies as long as he can in playing ignorance (for example, pretending to not know English). A self-loathing German-American proudly admits that he changed his family name from Schmidt to Smith. Willi later reveals what he really thinks of such ancestral "traitors" ultimately resulting in the captain's downfall. *Lifeboat* is also the only World War 2 film that I can remember seeing acknowledging the German-American role as those American Krauts were the largest ethnic group (upwards of 40% of all soldiers) to fight for the USA in WW2. It seems Hollywood is only interested in finding all the handful of minorities under rocks for recent fantasy World War II big budget films. Tallulah Bankhead does an extraordinary job as an aging madame who has been able to live a fairly successful life living off married men. She sports a very fancy bracelet that turns off a younger tattoo covered sailor who has a working class inferiority complex. The brilliance of the film lies in these varying individuals that you wouldn't normally expect to see in the same room (or boat) with one another. The most neglected character was probably the black man on the boat that saved a white woman. For the boat, he provides entertainment and is persuaded by the shipmates to steal a watch (which was really a compass) from the German captain. I would like to hear Spike Lee's commentary on this character. Hitch's Cameo Due to its original small release, *Lifeboat* has not gotten the recognition that it deserves. The film clearly holds up with the best of Alfred Hitchcock's excessive film lexicon. *Lifeboat* is an experiment in how a collective of individuals are incapable of making important decisions that will benefit all. The Nazi captain being the most proactive and helping (despite his cryptic behavior) of the group, confirms this. *Lifeboat* also demonstrates that one man can be much stronger than a whole group (a theme

also found in Billy Wilder's concentration camp comedy Stalag 17).
-Ty E

ROPE
ROPE

Alfred Hitchcock (1948)

Rope(1948)was Alfred Hitchcock's first film to be shot on color(luscious Technicolor to be exact). The film is loosely based on gay Jewish child murderers and lovers, Leopold and Loeb. The two young men in Rope, like the real-life lovers Leopold and Loeb, were inspired by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's "superman" theory which the Nazis always ironically utilized. The gay lovers in Rope, the dominant and passive(or the "Butch" and the "Femme") have an ambiguous gay relationship that obviously couldn't have been blatant for American audiences of the late 1940s. The questionable sexuality of the two gay lovers only adds to the film's psychological power.Alfred Hitchcock also experiments with Rope by making it seem in "real time." The film has only ten shots giving it a more "trapped" feeling that might cause the contemporary filmgoer to have a panic attack. The gay lovers, Brandon and David, decide to play a game with the family of the young friend they just killed. They hide the young man's body inside a chest which is also used as a table for their food buffet. Brandon constantly taunts the guests talking about the "art of killing" and the "superman." The two young men's professor, Rupert(played by James Stewart), picks up almost immediately what Brandon is getting at.Although only running a little over 80 minutes, Rope seems much longer. The reason for this is most likely in it's limited amount of cuts and that the entire film is essentially shot in one room. Alfred Hitchcock was a master of psychology and suspense, and Rope is a perfect demonstration of that. Rope is a good example of the theory that ambiguity is much more powerful than being blatant. This is the main reason why "Hitchcock rip off" hack Brian De Palma will never come close to Hitchcock's greatness.Alfred Hitchcock would later tackle the odd sexuality of Norman Bates in his masterpiece Psycho(1960). But Unlike Bates, the young men in Rope are completely conscious of their sadistic behavior. As the viewer(or at least for me), I couldn't decide whether or not I wanted the two young men to be caught. Either way, the suspense leading up to the film's conclusion was brilliant. Alfred Hitchcock was a director much more interested in planning the stages(as he had stated himself)of filmmaking than the actual directing, and Rope is a perfect example. The film is an experiment in cinematic technique and the questionable behavior of a so-called diseased brain(like Nietzsche himself).

-Ty E

VERTIGO

Alfred Hitchcock (1958)

I consider myself generally fearless. Nothing sways my vulnerability like heights. Like Scottie in *Vertigo*, I too have a crippling fear of heights. Although it is one of the most daunting phobias in terms of actual legitimate danger, it is also the most common fear save for arachnophobia. I haven't experienced much of Hitchcock's filmography but I know this fact already; *Vertigo* is an absolute masterpiece in every possible department from the riveting suspense that Hitchcock is acclaimed for, to his precise spinning of a human psyche evident on screen. Over time, people finally began to understand how important this film is to the idea of cinema as a whole. Detective work is a honest days work for an honest dollar. When Scottie realizes his severe fear of heights, he becomes disabled in such a way that he leaves his line of work. When an ill-fated contract comes his way for a bit of private investigation, Scottie finds himself in a web of deceit, love, and a whole lot more headed your way. More so than you could ever begin to expect. For those knowledgeable of the films *L'appartement* and the American hipster remake *Wicker Park*, the generally philosophy of venomous and disguised love wears the same, following *L'appartement* more to the root whereas *Wicker Park* is a diluted version of both masterpieces. Other than Scottie's celebrated acrophobia, he also avoids flirtatious advances with Marjorie, which leads to the idea that he is also advocates a mild Philophobia. This only further conflicts his love affair with the manipulative Madeleine and her tale of personal madness. From the characters to the sets, *Vertigo* isn't your common tale of film noir. Being wrapped around a Hitchcock tale of unrequited passion, he sets new mediums for film to surpass, leaving most other films lacking such vivid integrity. The only companion piece this film is lacking is this femme fatale armed with a gun. The presentation of acrophobia is terminally flawless. Hitchcock employs suspended cameras in between gaps of stairwells while using a drop-zoom effect to create a suspended fear that beats with a pulse, much like the victim of a flawed psyche. Early on in the film after the traumatizing events, Scottie is in Midge's living room/study and demonstrates a method of progressive therapy by tackling heights early on. After reaching the third step, he begins to falter and seizes. Much can be said about *Vertigo* but words can only do so much when trying to explain the varietal impact that this film causes. *Vertigo* is surprisingly best with multiple viewings. This is so you can view each layer of *Vertigo* with as much appreciation and thought to detail that you give the straight-forward plot line. Each character deserves their own study. Hitchcock offers this to you quite generously with a dream-like experiment in fear. Presently, *Vertigo* is Hitchcock's masterwork of his immortalized brand of suspense and a film noir amalgam of a terror that isn't physically manifested but lies dormant waiting for a key incident to spark within your cerebrum only to spark and spread like wild

VERTIGO

fire. Recently, the Coen brothers decided to "borrow" the very minimalistic, yet imaginative poster scheme for their film *Burn After Reading*. I would like to hope that *Burn After Reading* would be worthy of carrying a piece of *Vertigo*'s torch but the truth points opposite. *Vertigo* is unmatched on all planes and is definitive of a classic.

-mAQ

PSYCHO

Alfred Hitchcock (1960)

Generally, I have two modes of film viewing: serious and unserious. While I tend to reserve arthouse films and 'heavy stuff' for my more serious film experiences, I also like to binge-watch old horror and sci-fi series like *The Twilight Zone* (1959–1964) and *Tales from the Darkside* (1983–1988) when I am feeling less serious and am simply looking for something nice and cozy to play in the background when I am working on other things, eating, or whatever. While many film nerds and film academics swear that he is unequivocally the greatest cinematic auteur that has ever lived and a virtual god among mere mortals, Hitchcock—a man that would arguably ultimately become better known as a brand than a simple filmmaker—is not exactly an all-time-favorite filmmaker of mine, which I recently further confirmed after having a long Hitch marathon of his mostly late-era top-shelf stuff during a number of my 'unserious' viewing sessions over the course of two weeks. Although there is no denying that Hitchcock was some sort of master craftsmen in a way probably comparable to Dutch graphic artist Maurits Cornelis Escher was in his field in terms of playing with things like symmetry and perspective and mastering *découpage* to an almost mathematical degree, it is hard for me to take him serious the way I do highly idiosyncratic auteur filmmakers like Carl Theodor Dreyer, Robert Bresson, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Werner Schroeter as his films are simply too glaringly contrived, cold, artificial, superficial, unbecomingly garish and just plain too old-fashioned for my tastes, hence why it does not surprise me that the man was a virtual brand and that he was the progenitor of a hit TV series entitled *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (later known as *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*) that lasted ten seasons as he mastered a sort of gimmicky form of entertainment which, to his credit, he did better than anyone else. In fact, I would argue that even a classic *The Outer Limits* episode like 'The Man Who Was Never Born' displays more a 'soul' than the average Hitch flick, but I digress. Somehow I can imagine that even during sex (which he apparently had very little of during his life), Hitch would have to at least spend 20 minutes getting ready and putting on the right specially selected bondage gear just to get down and dirty as normal sensual things like passion and spontaneity probably totally escaped him. Indeed, at the risk of sounding like a pretentious prick and/or contrarian cunt, I found it nearly impossible to take most of Hitchcock's films any more serious than any other seriously reasonably entertaining horror and thriller flicks as they lack a certain heaviness, rely too much on pop psychology and bastardized true crime tales, and just do not hit me the way a great Bresson and Fassbinder flick does (indeed, compare Fassbinder's Cornell Woolrich adaptation *Martha* (1974) to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) and it becomes quite crystal clear who is the more painfully serious and completely uncompromising artist). Similarly, Re-

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becca (1940) is undoubtedly one of Hitch's greatest and most elegant films, but fellow English filmmaker Nicolas Roeg went much further with his Daphne du Maurier adaptation *Don't Look Now* (1973) and seamlessly assembled a singular combination of pathos, tenderness, eroticism, and virtual avant-garde horror that would simply confound the *Notorious* (1946) director as he seemed to lack a sense of artistic vigor, hence his self-admitted boredom while actually directing films. Still, if you are looking for the cinematic equivalent of a fun amusement park ride that takes your mind off the greater miseries of life, Hitchcock's films indubitably provide and his countless imitators of various stripes prove this. In fact, like it or not, there is no denying that *Psycho* (1960)—a film that arguably represents the auteur at his most subversive, daring, and uncompromising—is simply one of the most influential films of all-time, though the overall value of said influence is somewhat dubious (after all, is there a more decidedly disposable and artistically bankrupt (sub)genre than the slasher film?!).

After my recent half-ass Hitch marathon, I think I tend to agree with the popular consensus that *Psycho*—along with *Vertigo* (1958) and *The Birds* (1963)—is one of Hitchcock's greatest, if not greatest, masterpiece and a film that has aged relatively gracefully despite the large virtual garbage dump of senseless cinematic trash that it has influenced, which is somewhat ironic since it is certainly the one film that has completely escaped its creator's grasp and developed a life of its own as demonstrated by the various Hitch-unapproved sequels and TV series that have haunted it, not unlike Norman Bates being perversely haunted by the memory of his dead mommy. Of course, more importantly, *Psycho* has had a totally unquantifiable influence on the art of cinema as a film that, aside from the obvious example of *guido giallos* and its American bastard offspring—the wretched slasher film—has been paid tribute (and anti-tribute) to in films ranging from William Wyler's *The Collector* (1965) to George Kuchar's high-camp avant-fart short *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970) to Fassbinder's debut feature *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) to the Amero brothers' psychedelic hardcore horror flick *Bacchanale* (1970) to Maurice Pialat's anti-romance *We Won't Grow Old Together* (1972) to Robert Altman's *Images* (1972) to Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* (1972) to Jonathan Demme's underrated *Last Embrace* (1979) to Brian De Palma's Hitch homage *Dressed to Kill* (1980) to Ken Russell's *Crimes of Passion* (1984) featuring Anthony Perkins in a virtual meta-commentary role of his Bates character, among countless other examples. In short, Hitchcock's arguable magnum opus is a film that has influenced an eclectic range of filmmakers, though there is no denying that its sexual perversion angle is indubitably one of its greatest sources of influence as a work of great indelible penetration where Hitchcock does not fuck around when it comes to depicting a freaky fuck that, probably not unlike the filmmaker, suffered the fate of living too much inside of his own head where he imagined many beautiful blonde babes dead.

Needless to say, *Psycho* was not the first film where Hitchcock dealt with

the perils and problems of the seriously sexually sick, though he was certainly more covert, if not sometimes downright esoteric, when dealing with such material in the past. Indeed, even with his third feature and first worthwhile flick *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927)—an Expressionistic silent feature where the auteur revealed his crucial Teutonic influence (for example, Hitch once spent weeks on the set of *The Last Laugh* (1924) watching F.W. Murnau direct)—Hitchcock had the rather androgynous and openly gay Ivor Novello play the titular lead. While I am totally opposed to the modern-day mainstream academic trend of attempting to prove that great dead artists were secretly gay, Hitchcock's films just give too many damn clues that he was a closet queen and gay film critic Robin Wood makes a pretty good case in his classic text *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (1989) that these signs are apparent starting with *The Lodger* and his second lesser known Novello collaboration *Downhill* (1927). In Woods' obviously biased blow-boy mind, Hitchcock got really fat and married Alma Reville at the same time he worked with Novello as a means to repress his sexual desire for the flaming Welsh actor, or as the film critic argues, "Why, in fact, did Hitchcock put on so much weight? No clear medical evidence has been produced, as far as I know. There seems to be abundant testimony that Hitchcock, throughout his life, longed to be attractive to women an experienced agonies of frustration over his fatness. The Psychoanalytical evidence seems to point in the opposite direction, to a hysterical resistance to being physically attractive to anyone." Indeed, it is also hard to imagine a straight man stating things like, "The trouble today is that we don't torture women enough" and taking so much sadistic glee in the brutalization and/or death/murder of beautiful blondes in films like *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Vertigo* which are, not coincidentally, the filmmaker's greatest (and, for the most part, most personal) works.

Of course, with his great experiment in (non)editing *Rope* (1948)—a film penned by kosher cocksucker Arthur Laurents—Hitchcock paid (anti)tribute to infamous Hebraic homo childkillers Leopold and Loeb and their failed attempt at a mundanely murderous pseudo-Nietzschean Übermensch lifestyle. Even more incriminating, after his commercial critical flops with *Marnie* (1964) and *Torn Curtain* (1966), Hitchcock planned to direct a covertly gay necrophiliac serial killer film entitled *Kaleidoscope* (aka *Frenzy*)—a film project that apparently even disturbed #1 Hitchcock fan-boy Truffaut—but apparently Universal Studios bigwig Lew Wasserman felt a film involving an unhinged killer with an unhealthy addiction to beefcake bodybuilding magazines who gets caught masturbating by his own mother was not commercial enough so the filmmaker was unfortunately persuaded to direct the all-too-cold Cold War thriller *Topaz* (1969), which is indubitably one of his worst and most forgettable films, instead. Of course, Hitchcock's oeuvre is, relatively speaking, a clever cocksucking cinephile's wet dream as it features much hermetic homoisms. For example, Hitch's first feature *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) features an exceedingly effete

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costume designer, *Murder!* (1930) is notable for a half-breed transvestite killer, *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) has a curious cricket (and seemingly cock) obsessed male couple, *Strangers on a Train* (1951) features a titular bromance that borders on the homoromantic, and Martin Landau plays a murderously jealous queen of sorts in *North by Northwest* (1959), among various other examples. Needless to say, in terms of implied homosexuality and gay coding, there's a lot of creepy covert cocksuckers when it comes to the cinema of Hitchcock and, as *Psycho* certainly demonstrates, this one of the most interesting and entertaining aspects of the filmmaker's oeuvre.

Undoubtedly, the casting of actor Anthony Perkins—a painfully shy and weirdly wiry fellow that, not surprisingly, was involved in strictly same-sex relationships until his late-30s—was a stroke of genius and one can only assume that old Hitchcock had a great gaydar as it is simply impossible to imagine, say, Paul Newman (who later appeared in Hitchcock's uneven *Torn Curtain* (1966)) or any another top leading man portraying the unconventionally iconic role of Norman Bates who is indubitably one of the great unforgettable characters of cinema history. Rather revealingly, Bates suffers from the stereotypically homosexual psychological problem of mommy issues and, as Jewish feminist Paula Marantz Cohen complains in her book *Alfred Hitchcock: The Legacy of Victorianism* (1995), the film is arguably at least partially the auteur's response to 'Momism'—a term coined by psychologist Erik Erikson (who had his own special lifelong mommy issues as the bastard broad of a Jewess and Danish Aryan father)—and the deleterious nature of an obscenely overly-controlling maternal influence. Of course, not unlike many of Hitchcock's greatest films, most of the female characters in *Psycho* are unlikable, if not downright loathsome, including an insufferable secretary played by the director's own daughter Pat Hitchcock (apparently, the filmmaker was not too happy when his daughter got married in 1952 and their relationship permanently suffered as a result). While most of the male characters are not much better, one gets the sense that Hitchcock is somewhat rooting for Bates Motel master Bates and that he is nothing if not the demented victim of gynocentrism in its most natural and unfortunately unchecked form. While some perennially dry and soulless fecund-free feminist types might go as far as describing the film as misogynistic, I think it would be more accurate to describe *Psycho* as a fairly successful experiment in merrily macabre misanthropy where a relatively tasteful tongue-in-cheek approach is taken to the idiosyncrasies of the rather retarded enigma that is (in)humanity. Undoubtedly one of the most artfully executed cinematic trolls in Hollywood history, *Psycho* is a proto-tranny-tinged anti-tribute to the tediously terrible turd pile that is (most of) humanity. In short, the film is where Hitchcock revealed what sort of beast he really is and he curiously utilized a knife-wielding dude in a dress to do it. In modern post-internet speak, *Psycho* is the tragic tale of a young erratic incel of the obviously autistic sort (hence his bird fetish) that confronts his vir-

tual female sexual marketplace opposite—a desperate unmarried and childless dame of the seemingly highly sexually experienced sort that is about to ‘hit the wall,’ hence her desperate motivation behind impulsively stealing \$40,000 from a crude capitalist cowboy—in a confrontation between the sexes that would have been rather unlikely were it not for the absurdity of fate. Indeed, real-estate secretary Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) has good reason to be so deleteriously desperate as her biological clock is ticking and her divorced boy toy Sam Loomis (John Gavin)—a somewhat dumb yet likeable hunk that makes most Hitchcock heroes seem like effete pussies by comparison—is in serious debt on top of having to pay alimony to his ex-wife, thus it seems unlikely that she will have the means to start a family anytime soon. In that sense, Marion’s brutal murder at the hands of Normans Bates (Anthony Perkins) almost seems like an unintentional act of compassion as the quasi-heroine, who seems to have very little prospects in life aside from great lunchtime sex in sleazy hotel rooms, is put out of her misery and it is only fitting that the culling process is carried out by a miserable man-boy that is unlikely to reproduce himself due to being psychologically castrated by his mother who he, rather fittingly, killed. Notably, after Marion dies, her sister Lila Crane (Vera Miles) hooks up with boyfriend Sam to search for her and it is quite clear the two have great chemistry and will probably make for a great couple in the future. Notably, when Marion and her beau Sam are depicted at the very beginning of the film during a brief post-coital exchange, it almost seems like the end of a transaction between a whore and her john, but one would never sense such a sleazy display between sister Lila and Sam. In that sense, *Psycho* is not unlike Fassbinder’s *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1972) of all films in terms of its ironical depiction of a healthier couple being formed as direct a result of the death of the protagonist. In short, sometimes tragic murders have positive consequences and sometimes lethally lonely lunatics can make positive contributions to society; or such are some of the more delectable absurdities of some of Hitchcock’s greatest films. After all, in *The Birds*, the most benign of creatures—feathered warm-blooded vertebrates that remind one of nature’s harmony, purity, and beauty—provide the viewer with the delight of going on a bloody rampage and collectively attacking obnoxious spoiled people in what might be best described as the anti-monster movie par excellence. Undoubtedly, films like *Psycho* and *The Birds* demonstrate that Hitch derived his greatest sense of humanity in his inhumanity, misanthropy, and misogyny, as there would be very little emotionally left in his films were it not for these audaciously asocial attributes cloaked in dark sardonic humor.

Aside from taking the pink pill and attempting to reveal what sort of queen the knighted English auteur really is after coming out of the closet himself, gay Hitchcock scholar Robin Wood has done a pretty interesting job dissecting the filmmaker’s psychological motivations and compulsions in general, especially as it relates to his most famous flick *Psycho*. Unfortunately but not surprisingly,

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Wood takes a pathetically politically correct and absurdly academic approach and even attempts to link the film to the holocaust and the abandoned British government-produced agitprop doc *German Concentration Camps Factual Survey* (1945) that Hitchcock worked as a supposed ‘treatment advisor’ on. Indeed, as Wood curiously argues at the very end of his chapter on the film in *Hitchcock’s Films Revisited*, “PSYCHO is one of the key works of our age. Its themes are of course not new—obvious forerunners include *MACBETH* and Conrad’s *HEART OF DARKNESS*—but the intensity and horror of their treatment and the fact that they are here grounded in sex belong to the age that has witnessed on the one hand the discoveries of Freudian psychology and on the other the Nazi concentration camps. I do not think I am being callous in citing the camps in relation to a work of popular entertainment. Hitchcock himself in fact accepted a commission to make a compilation film of captured Nazi material about the camps [...] But one cannot contemplate the camps without confronting two aspects of this horror: the utter helplessness and innocence of the victims, and the fact that human beings, whose potentialities all of us in some measure share, were their tormentors and butchers [...] PSYCHO is founded on, precisely, these twin horrors. For Hitchcock it was a ‘fun’ picture, and a streak of macabre humor (‘Mother . . . what is the phrase? . . . isn’t quite herself today’) certainly runs through it. Is it, then, some monstrous perversion? Many have found it so, and their reaction seems to be more defensible than that of those (must we include Hitchcock himself?) who are merely amused by it [...] No film conveys—to those not afraid to expose themselves fully to it—a greater sense of desolation, yet it does so from an exceptionally mature and secure emotional viewpoint. And an essential part of this viewpoint is the detached sardonic humor. It enables the film to contemplate the ultimate horrors without hysteria, with a poised, almost serene detachment. This is probably not what Hitchcock meant when he said that one cannot appreciate PSYCHO without a sense of humor, but it is what he should have meant [...] For the maker of PSYCHO to regard it as a ‘fun’ picture can be taken as his means of preserving his sanity; for the critic to do so—and to give it his approval on these grounds—is quite understandable. Hitchcock (again, if his interviews are to be trusted) is a much greater artist than he knows.” Somehow, I doubt shoah saints like Claude Lanzmann would approve of Wood’s attempts to connect Hitch’s masterpiece to the Big H, but I have to respect the film critic’s preternatural passion for Psycho.

While I can appreciate Wood’s hardcore (Hitch)cockphilia as a fellow cinephile and argue that Hitch mastered a sort of majestic detachment like no other, I cannot help but feel that, as hinted at in the biopic *Hitchcock* (2012), the filmmaker derived a great sense of sadistic glee from Psycho and that the film is largely an expression of the all-too-deceptively-effete filmmaker’s great contempt for his audience and humanity in general to the degree where a killer momma’s boy in a dress is arguably more sympathetic than his victims. Indeed, while I do not typi-

cally find much to agree on with feminist Hebrewesses, I cannot help but mostly concur with Paula Marantz Cohen when she argued in regard to the savagely yet stylishly sadistic essence of Hitchcock's classic cinematic work, "The gaze that the film directs back at the audience in *PSYCHO* is, in [William] Rothman's phrase, 'murderous' precisely because it envisions the gaze of the spectator to be, like Norman Bates's mother, not capable of the right response—imaginatively, if not literally, dead. This being so, the film can only engage in acts of vengeance against the spectator, acts that is also attributes to the spectator as if seeking to animate it (Norman's strategy with his mother's corpse). Thus *PSYCHO* seeks both to animate us into an identification with the murderous Norman and to prove through doing so that we are morally empty in our ability to shift our investment from Marion to Norman and, finally, to accept meekly the posturing paternal verdict of the psychiatrist. The film works to ventriloquize our response, to animate it in order to kill it again. The 'construction of a mental process' that Hitchcock had linked to the look in *REAR WINDOW* has been placed by its opposite, the dismantling or murder of the look. One critic has made a relevant observation with regard to the look in *PSYCHO*: 'What is remarkable . . . is that most of the characters who stare at the public are dead when they do so.' Even the sophisticated montage technique in the *PSYCHO* shower scene is a model of its deconstructive method [...] If montage in its traditional usage conditioned us to see an integrated reality, montage in *PSYCHO* conditions us to see an unintegrated one—to expect the inexplicable and gratuitous." While Jimmy Stewart is an obvious stand-in for Hitchcock in films like *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*, I have always felt he was living somewhat vicariously through the John Dall character in *Rope* as if getting away with (a homoerotic) murder is one of his greatest fantasies, hence the sense of contrived insincerity of the ending where the lead denounces his previous (pseudo)Nietzschean philosophy after discovering that his (ex)students have actually dared to put his Übermensch philosophy into practice. Either way, *Psycho*, not unlike much of Hitchcock's films, reeks of fetishism and psychosexual sickness; it is just a question of what the filmmaker's true repressed impulses really were. After all, as a relatively cultivated Victorian gentleman, Hitchcock was a bit more intelligent and civilized than Ed Gein—the real-life momma's boy quasi-necrophile influence for Norman Bates—and one can only assume that he would not act on such impulses, which arguably acted as the source of his arguable genius as a master of cinematically depicting mentally defective criminality of the sort that might have been inspired by the various case studies featured in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). In fact, I do not think it would be much of a stretch to describe Hitchcock as a sort of covert modern Uranian artist, but there is no way in hell that the filmmaker would have ever accepted such a label, even if he had been unequivocally exposed as being engaged in tearoom action or buying bussy from young twink hustlers.

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Notably, in an essay entitled ‘Must We Believe in Hitchcock?’, celebrated French film critic André Bazin—a great cineaste intellect that, quite unlike his Cahiers du cinéma comrades like Claude Chabrol and Truffaut, had somewhat mixed feelings about the Psycho director—made a great point about the filmmaker that underscores what I both love and loathe about him, arguing with great no bullshit penetrating insight, “We know that Hitchcock has one idiosyncrasy: he appears in all his films for a brief moment. In LIFEBOAT, he is seen in a magazine photograph that is stained with oil and floating among the wreckage of the ship. In STRANGERS ON A TRAIN, we see him as a musician glimpsed boarding the train with an enormous bass fiddle. We have to take this as more than a superstition or a director’s trademark. A point of irony touching his entire oeuvre is the reminder of a certain between-the-lines reading of the scenario by those who can see beyond the most obvious effects. Nonetheless, at times this marvelously oiled mechanism grates strangely on one’s ears. Through the rhetorical, conventional, and, in a word, reassuring sadism of American films, Hitchcock sometimes makes you hear, over the victim’s terrified screams, the true cry of joy that does not deceive you—his own.” Indeed, Hitchcock’s greatest films almost mockingly hint at the perversions of the man that created them, as if he is so arrogantly rewarding those special individuals that are not total dumb asses and can see the camp and dysfunction hidden underneath—like Norman Bates’ erotic member under his mother’s dress as he penetrates with dumb bimbo with a knife—with a window into his true perverted personality. In fact, this aspect of Hitchcock’s films—and not the brilliant Psycho shower scene montage or oneiric essence of Vertigo—is the one thing that keeps me interested in his films and has kept me from the strong temptation to write him off as an obscenely overrated (yet undeniably technically talented) artisan that has had more of a negative than positive influence on the art of cinema (from the senseless schlock of the slasher genre to the *The Bourne Identity*, Hitch has inspired a lot of completely soulless/tasteless cinematic shit).

While critics have oftentimes argued that Hitchcock’s intent with Psycho and many of his other films was to, somewhat hypocritically, implicate the voyeurism of his audience (whereas his wop spiritual son Brian De Palma would simply use cinema to wallow in his own self-admitted fetish for voyeurism), the real intrigue of a Hitch flick is what cannot be seen: the debauched director’s deep dark desires. In Psycho and Hitchcock’s penultimate *Frenzy* (1972)—a virtual exercise in perversely playful self-parody where the auteur finally got to expose real unclad female flesh—the filmmaker probably comes the closest to revealing the real rampaging gynophobic queen hidden beneath the makeup. In that sense, that is why the psychiatrist scene at the end of Psycho is especially annoying and obnoxious as it not only insults the viewer’s intelligence, but also seems like a form of obfuscation upon the auteur’s part as if he wanted to clearly separate himself from the sexually psychotic nature of his film. It is also no coincidence

that Hitchcock directed his most personal films while working in Hollywood as he would have surely faced a similar hysterical backlash to the sort that was heaped on *Peeping Tom* (1960)—a film that, for various obvious reasons, is oftentimes compared to *Psycho* (in fact, the film's heroine Anna Massey would later rather fittingly star in Hitch's *Frenzy*)—in the UK that more or less ruined its once-well-respected auteur Michael Powell's career had he dared to direct his gender-bending proto-slasher flick in his native land. In short, had Hitchcock grown up in a different era, he might have done for the thriller and horror genres what Fred Halsted did for homo hardcore as the man was just too innately Victorian and a product of his time to completely break out of his shell. Undoubtedly, Norman Bates might as well be speaking for Hitchcock when he so passionately proclaims, "You know what I think? I think that we're all in our private traps, clamped in them, and none of us can ever get out. We scratch and we claw, but only at the air, only at each other, and for all of it, we never budge an inch." While Hitch would actually dare to 'budge an inch' (or two or three) with *Psycho*, one can only assume the sort of unhinged cinematic assault he might have assembled had he been more comfortable with embracing his inner pervert. Personally, while it might sound insane, I actually find it is easier to fully embrace a no-budget Andy Milligan genre movie than a Hitchcock one as I feel like I am not being lied to or bullshitted as the gay gutter auteur might have had a somewhat 'spastic' directing style but he could not help but be himself. Indeed, Milligan may have been a monster of the absurdly technically inept sort but, quite unlike Hitchcock, at least he fully embraced it with great gusto.

While, in my opinion, Hitchcock never directed a cinematic work quite as artfully unnerving or perfectly pitch black as Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Les diaboliques* (1955)—a film that would heavily influence *Psycho*, especially the filmmaker's decision to shoot it in black-and-white—I think it is safe to say that he transcended his French influence in terms of being a morbid master of manipulation (though Clouzot was clearly the more delectably misanthropic of the two filmmakers). Indeed, as Robert P. Kolker argued in his text *The Extraordinary Image: Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, and the Reimagining of Cinema* (2016) in regard to Hitchcock's arguable magnum opus, "*PSYCHO* is, like all Hitchcock, highly manipulative; it takes us exactly where it wants us to go but on subsequent viewing allows us in on the joke at *PSYCHO*'s heart. In the parlor scene, where Norman and Marion meet and she first hears Mother's voice yelling at her son, the conformation exposes who Norman is and pretty much what is going to happen to Marion. The sequence is worth looking at in detail." But of course, being a master of manipulation and 'campy' dark humor (which itself was oftentimes a result of said manipulation) just further confirms my suspicion that Hitchcock was a homo or, at the very least, a sort of 'spiritual sod' of sorts, but of course the same can be said of many of Hitchcock's film heroes. After all, while various film critics and scholars (including

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filmmaker William Friedkin in his DVD audio commentary for the film) have speculated that *Vertigo* is largely inspired by the sense that Hitch felt haunted by the unattainability of beautiful platinum blonde babes due his trademark portly physique, one could just as easily argue that said unattainability was the result of his sexuality and that he was more jealous of said beauties than desirous of them. After all, Hitch's gleeful brutality of Tippi Hedren in *The Birds* makes a lot more sense if one sees it from the perspective of a jealous gay man that is using cinema as a cunty covert means to attack stupid dames that he sees as rivals (additionally, due to his curious mommy issues, strange attitude, and dubious dress sense, Rod Taylor's character also seems fairly queer).

While undoubtedly 'Hitchcockian' in the best sort of way, there is a certain irony in *Psycho* being the director's arguable magnum opus as it owes so much to so many other talented artists and, not unlike Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976)—a film that, incidentally, Bernard Herrmann also scored—has more than one auteur (indeed, screenwriter Paul Schrader was the real 'brain' behind the film). Indeed, aside from the iconic title designs by Saul Bass (who, rather revealingly, also storyboarded the shower scene), uniquely unforgettable musical score by Herrmann, and source novel by Robert Bloch (as penned for the screen by *The Outer Limits* writer-producer Joseph Stefano), the film is impossible to imagine without lead actor Anthony Perkins who, as far as I am concerned, IS Norman Bates as the character is nothing without the actor's perturbingly preternatural essence. After all, as Orson Welles' Kafka adaptation *The Trial* (1962), *Pretty Poison* (1968), *WUSA* (1970), Curtis Harrington's *How Awful About Allan* (1970), and *Crimes of Passion* (1984) surely demonstrate, Perkins excelled like no one when it came to portraying unnervingly awkward introverts of the oftentimes morbidly mentally unsound sort. In fact, even in Jules Dassin's *Phaedra* (1962) where Perkins plays an atypical hunk that cuckolds his own powerful bigwig shipping tycoon father, the actor bleeds a sort of highly visceral vulnerability that screams crazed cracked queer. While they might be obvious examples of cinematic sacrilege, I even find the three *Psycho* sequels tolerable simply because of Perkins' presence (notably, Perkins also directed *Psycho III* (1986), thereupon further cementing his claim to *Psycho* auteur status). While I have admittedly fantasized about other leading men aside from Jimmy Stewart and Cary Grant being in Hitchcock's other great films, *Psycho* would be simply unimaginable without Perkins who proved that sometimes being a waywardly wimpy weirdo has its advantages. Additionally, Gus Van Sant's soulless virtual shot-for-shot *Psycho* (1998) remake is worth seeing just to see how appallingly horrendous Vince Vaughn is as Norman Bates compared to Anthony Perkins. Indeed, Vaughn, who Van Sant clearly wanted to fuck (among other things, the camera pointlessly focuses on the actor's ass as he walks up a set of stairs), seems like he is doing his best impression of what he thinks stereotypical gay men are like (in S. Craig Zahler's *Brawl in Cell Block 99* (2017)), the

actor would prove he is not bad at acting so long as he is playing a masculine character).

Somewhat recently, not long after re-watching *Psycho* for probably the fifth or sixth time in my entire life, I happened to rewatch Joseph Losey's beautifully bizarre failure *Secret Ceremony* (1968) for the first time and I could not help but notice the similarities and dissimilarities in how they deal with the theme of monstrous mothers as both films feature tragic young characters who grew up to be unhinged due to their mothers' dubious relationships with sexually domineering men that dominated their lives at the expense of their children. While *Psycho* is clearly the superior and more immaculate film, I could not help but feel more impressed with the artistic integrity of *Secret Ceremony*—a meditative, somewhat ambiguous, sometimes dreamlike, and oftentimes quite beautiful film—despite it being a glaring artistic failure that sometimes borders on unintentional camp. Additionally, Nicolas Roeg's uneven yet underrated *Track 29* (1988) acts as a nice thematic counterpoint to *Psycho* as a film where a sexually repressed wife is both literally (?) and figuratively haunted by the long lost son she gave up for adoption 15 years before. Needless to say, Roeg's film is both more thematically and artistically ambitious in depiction of the psychosexually unsound, especially as it relates to the morbidly maternal. In short, I find it somewhat hard to like Hitchcock as both an artist and as a man as his films are oftentimes as cold and calculating as his carefully contrived cool-as-a-corpse character. In fact, I cannot help but agree with David Thomson—a lifelong Hitchcock fan that even devoted an entire worthwhile book to *Psycho*—when he wrote at the conclusion of his entry on the director in *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (1975), "His great films are only partly his; they also belong to the minds that interpret them. There is an artistic timidity in Hitchcock that, having put the audience through it, must allow them to come to terms with the experience. But his own personality is withdrawn, cold, insecure, and uncharitable. The method, despite its brilliance, is equally privative and restrictive. To plan so much that the shooting becomes a chore is an abuse not just of actors and crew, but of cinema's predilection for the momentary. It is, in fact, the style of an immense, premeditative artist—a Bach, a Proust, or a Rembrandt. And beside those masters, Hitchcock seems an impoverished inventor of thumbscrews who shows us the human capacity for inflicting pain, but not more. Such precision can only avoid seeming overbearing and misanthropic if it is accompanied by creative untidiness. In the last resort, his realized blueprints affirm film's yearning for doubt and open endings." In short, Hitch had the virtual emotional depth of a tick, the artistic passion of a mathematician, and the humanity of an over-educated executioner, but of course these are some of the things that also make him interesting and distinct as a filmmaker.

Despite the contrived nature of his films, Hitchcock actually demonstrated in a 1960 article entitled 'Why I Am Afraid of the Dark' a somewhat surpris-

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ing appreciation for the proto-Surrealist literature of Comte de Lautréamont and surreal cinema of Luis Buñuel, René Clair, Jean Epstein, and Jean Cocteau, thereupon making his seeming incapacity to take serious artistic risks all the more perturbing but such seems to be typical and quite expected of his carefully contrived character. Indeed, somehow I think I would like Hitchcock more if it was revealed that he was not totally unlike the Norman Bates preposterously portrayed by Vince Vaughn in Van Sant's *Psycho* remake and prone to masturbating while playing peeping tom as it at least would reveal a certain vulnerability and, in turn, humanity. Of course, somehow I suspect the real Hitchcock was a mix of motel master Bates and 'Scottie' in *Vertigo* as a man that rather see an inordinately beautiful blonde dead than lying naked in his bed. While Hitch might have been a fag, he was surely no serious art fag and I will continue to enjoy *Psycho* like my favorite episodes of *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* while trying to forget that certain film scholars and even great filmmakers somehow regard him as one of the great cinematic masters as if he was working on the same level as a F.W. Murnau, Bresson, Dreyer, or even P.P. Pasolini. While it is easy to understand why Hitch's films are so commonly taught in film schools as they are so meticulously and obviously manufactured with great geometric precision, there is no way one can truly teach the gifts of a Bresson, Federico Fellini, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, or Werner Schroeter. Still, many filmmakers have tried to make their own equivalent to *Psycho* and various other Hitchcock films (e.g. D.J. Caruso's *Disturbia* (2007) is a tedious teenage reworking of *Rear Window*), yet Hitch still did it best (sorry, Maestro De Palma). In fact, even François Truffaut had to rightly admit that his Hitchcock homage *The Bride Wore Black* (1968)—a film scored by Bernard Herrmann and based on a novel by Cornell Woolrich who of course also provided the source material for *Rear Window*—was an artistic failure.

In *Psycho*, the female lead portrayed by Janet Leigh is brutally studied in the way women judge other women for about forty minutes and then slaughtered like a pig while in a most vulnerable position by a man in a dress with a serious negative Oedipus complex. While Hitch's own sexuality is a matter of speculation, I think it is only fair that film scholars recognize his masterpiece as a classic piece of queer cinema that arguably demonstrates what Jean Cocteau meant when he stated of himself in *Vanity Fair* in 1922 that he is a, "lie that tells the truth" as it a sometimes campy fictional cinematic work that gets to the heart of certain homosexual truths in regard to sex, misogyny, and mommy issues, among other things, hence why top New Queer Cinema auteur Gus Van Sant—an artsy fartsy director that does much better with loose nonlinear narratives than more convention linear ones as confirmed by his greatest films like *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) and *Elephant* (2003)—was given the decidedly dubious job of directing the terrifying tacky remake (which is ultimately gay in the worst sort of way). In her magnum opus *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence*

from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson (1990), Camille Paglia attempts to make the case for elevating Hitch's film to the level of high art by arguing, "The finale of *THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN EYES* anticipates a classic moment of cinema. Paquita is not just killed but slaughtered, butchered, as in the murder scene of Alfred Hitchcock's *PSYCHO* (1960). In Hitchcock as in Balzac, a knife-wielding hermaphrodite [...] compulsively slashes the body of a beautiful woman enclosed in a female bower [...] The horror of the two scenes comes from the mutilation of a sensuous female body around which an erotic aura has been painstakingly built up, in Balzac by the stressing of Paquita's 'luminous' beauty and in Hitchcock by the voyeuristic display of half-naked Janet Leigh, who models lingerie from the first scene on [...] Balzac and Hitchcock turn the beautiful woman into an object. Marion's blood flows indifferently with the bathwater down the drain. Her body falls awkwardly over the edge of the tub. Her cheek is deformed by the tile floor. And the last we see of her is her dead eye, lingered over by the camera until it has the iconicism of Paquita's golden eyes. Cold and marmoreal but still glittering with beauty, Marion's eye belongs to a fallen statue, an art object vandalized and abandoned. Balzac and Hitchcock record symbolic sex acts by megalomaniacal but phallically impotent cultists. Norman Bates, like the Marquise, has his own sequestered ritual love-object—the body of his mummified mother!" Of course, it would not be a stretch to assume that Hitch was an impotent megalomaniac that was enslaved to some Oedipal trauma and thus a real 'psycho' of sorts, which I hope is true as it certainly makes him more interesting as both a man and artist.

-Ty E

THE BIRDS
THE BIRDS

Alfred Hitchcock (1963)

While I have never particularly cared for monster movies one way or another (and I find most killer animals films to be rather retarded), I think it is safe to say that Alfred Hitchcock was taking a big quasi-artistic risk when he decided to make a horror flick about birds as they are, at least to my mind, the most benignly beautiful of god's creatures and hardly beings that inspire feelings of fear and terror. After all, unless you are someone that suffers from the acute aesthetic ailment of liking Troma trash like *Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead* (2006), there is not another single decent killer bird flick aside from Hitch's *The Birds* (1963), but of course the film has much more to offer than the seemingly goofy thrill of uniquely unlucky humans suffering the less than dignified fate of being liquidated by fierce feathered flocks as the film's title—a clear reference to British slang for women—surely hints. Indeed, the film seems like what might happen if anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vilar's classic anti-vag quasi-manifesto *The Manipulated Man* (1971) aka *Der Dressierte Mann* was used as the philosophical inspiration for the anti-monster film par excellence as a curiously quirky yet strangely sexually cruel cinematic work where the viewer roots for the killer birds, especially when they attack obnoxious human birds and the dumb easily manipulated men that love them. In fact, the real 'monster' of the film is women and femininity as an oftentimes cleverly cryptic cinematic work that reveals womankind without its figurative makeup, not unlike Norman Bates' mummified mommy's face in Hitch's arguable magnum opus *Psycho* (1960). Speaking of *Psycho*, the film also certainly does not leave the less fairer sex off the hook as the dubious dating habits of a nearly-middle-aged momma's boy ultimately leads to the doom of no less than two hot dames in the film. In short, *The Birds* is a masterwork in mainstream movie misanthropy where the real monster is humanity to the point where one does not really question why the birds want to wipe humans out despite it being an obviously absurdly silly premise, hence the understatedly eccentric brilliance of the film; or so I learned during a recent re-watching of the film for the first time since I was a young kid.

One of the things that I find particularly annoying about Hitchcock's films in general is that, aside from their glaring artificiality, I rarely ever find myself identifying with any aspect of them, but on my recent re-watching of the famously bloated British auteur's feathery flick I was bombarded with seagulls, which I am certainly familiar with. Indeed, as someone that has the luxury of living at the beach, I have also had the luxury of regularly encountering gulls—a seabird that is so unsavory that is known to engage in kleptoparasitism—and can certainly say they are the ideal bird type when it comes to apocalyptic feathered dinosaur flicks. Aside from seagulls crashing into my car windshield at least a couple times, I have personally witnessed these parasitic winged creatures eat cigarette butts,

shit on small children at the local boardwalk, and steal french-fries right out of the hands of unsuspecting vacationers. In short, gulls—or ‘mews’ as they were once called—are a bird of an oftentimes stunning natural beauty that is betrayed by their grotesquely aggressive behavior, which Hitch’s flick really underscores. Of course, the main characters of the film make these killer birds—whether they be seagull or otherwise—seem like totally angelic beasts by comparison as it is a stylishly savage cinematic work where much of the frivolousness that defines civilization is both literally and figuratively ripped to shreds by seemingly god-ordained creatures that force said main characters to confront nature in all its unsentimental brutality for what is probably the first time in their entire exceedingly sheltered lives. While it is well known that character development is not exactly key when it comes to creature features, *The Birds* largely works because Hitchcock goes to great pains to teach the viewer to hate the main characters in all their agonizingly all-too-human glory. Seemingly at least partly fueled by hatred and resentment for the sort of hot blonde bitch that Hitch—a sexually dubious dude that infamously obsessed over his leading ladies and personal secretaries in rather creepy ways—could never get despite his great fame and fortune, the film is also a great example as to why Hitchcock biographer Donald Spoto went so far as in tome *The Dark Side Of Genius: The Life Of Alfred Hitchcock* (1983) to describe his cinematic works as, “astonishingly personal documents.”

In fact, Spoto makes it very clear at the beginning of his extensive biography that Hitchcock was a highly secretive chap that, despite his fame and intelligence, left very little behind in the way of journals and letters, as if he was deathly paranoid that someone might glean some special insight in regard to his psyche and/or personal life, among other things. In that sense, Hitchcock’s films can be somewhat fun to analyze in an auteurist sense as they are indubitably the works of a pervert, misogynist, misanthrope, and sadist, albeit one that seemingly lacked the gall and balls to truly practice such tendencies in real-life to any serious degree (for example, as Spoto also notes, Hitch’s wife more or less wore the pants in the marriage). Notably, as Spoto mentions in his bio, Hitch actually dared to offer some rare thematic insight in regard to *The Birds* when he stated, “The girl represents complacency. The mother panics because she starts off being so strong, but she is not strong, it is a facade: she has been substituting her son for her husband. She is the weak character in the story. But the girl shows that people can be strong when they face up to the situations. . . . But as a group they were the victims of Judgment Day. . . . I felt that after *PSYCHO* people would expect something to top it.” In the film, the almost insufferably sassy socialite heroine Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren)—a rich bitch that loves playing practical jokes who becomes the unwitting butt of the joke in the end—travels about an hour-away over the weekend to see and ultimately attempt to ensnare a vaguely hunky lawyer named Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor) that she barely knows, only to discover he is the son of an obscenely overprotective widowed bitch named Ly-

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dia (Jessica Tandy) who seems intent on forever carrying her grownup baby boy's balls in her purse (of course, as Norman Bates insightfully states in *Psycho*, "A son is a poor substitute for a lover."). Luckily, Hitchcock uses the killer birds to ruthlessly murder the romantic melodrama and, in the process, puts these pretty yet putrid people in their place in an almost therapeutically apocalyptic scenario where the petty problems and plotlines of pretty prosaic people are deemed irrelevant as a peroxide blonde cutie goes from being insufferably comfortably smug and confidant to catatonic in a single scenic weekend. In that sense, Hitch exposes himself as a sort of spiritual (proto)incel, though his observations in regard to the so-called fairer sex seem very close to that of a bitchy gay man à la Rainer Werner Fassbinder or even Andy Milligan (who, of course, also utilized horror genre conventions to express misanthropic and misogynistic sentiments) than some virginal heterosexual gamer. Needless to say, I do not think it would be a stretch to describe Hitchcock as the real monster of *The Birds*, but he is such a marvelous monster that he thankfully trades in tired genre tropes for sexual terror. Also proving that he did not need Bernard Herrmann or a traditional musical score in general to make a great cinematic work, the film is also notable for its exquisitely eerie electronic proto-synthesizer Trautonium anti-soundtrack as composed by kooky krauts Oskar Sala and Remi Gassmann. In that sense, the film goes back to Hitch's early cinematic roots as a student of German Expressionism which is fitting since it was a movement that imbued the horror genre with artistic merit.

While Hitchcock certainly took a frisky, if not downright fierce (albeit somewhat covert), approach when depicting those of the feminine persuasion, *The Birds* is arguably his most ruthlessly 'gyno-ambivalent' flick in both the covert and overt sense. For example, as Camille Paglia argued in her magnum opus *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (1990), "The Harpies are servants of the Furies. They are 'the Snatchers' (from *harpazo*, 'snatch'), airborne pirates, befouling men with their droppings. They represent the aspect of femaleness that clutches and kills in order to feed itself. The archetypal power of Alfred Hitchcock's *THE BIRDS*, comes from its reactivation of the Harpy myth, shown as both bird and woman." While Paglia might be committing puffery and giving too much credit to an oftentimes goofy horror flick (indeed, compare Hitch's flick to Belgian auteur Raoul Servais' delectably disturbing animated short *Harpya* (1979)), her BFI Film Classics book *The Birds* (1998) provide a number of positively penetrating insights about the monstrous tendencies of the so-called fairer sex. Indeed, while I have to agree with Woody Allen of all people when he stated in a Sight and Sound Hitchcock tribute, "I delighted in about five of Hitchcock's movies and enjoyed a few others pretty much, but there are many I have no interest in, including some revered ones. They are all very light entertainment, fun like airport books or, as he referred to them, 'slices of cake,'" it is ironically *The Birds*—a film with a premise that is

so patently absurd and seemingly silly that it screams excremental exploitation trash—of all films where Hitch arguably reveals the most about his own personal Weltanschauung in terms of both elegantly and intricately expressing his great contempt for humanity and especially the opposite sex. A monster movie for people that do not necessarily give a shit about monster movies, the film is mostly worthy of Paglia's praise of the film as "a perverse ode to woman's sexual glamour, which Hitchcock shows in all its seductive phases, from brittle artifice to melting vulnerability." Of course, Paglia is a fiery guidette carpet-muncher and while I agree with her that Tippi Hedren is indubitably the greatest and most beautiful of the haute Hitch hoes, I think it would be more accurate to describe the film as a delightfully devastating deconstruction of the intricate perennial lie that is woman's sexual glamour, which Hitchcock soaks in blood and bird shit in what is ultimately a rather ruthless film where a hot twat 'peroxide blonde' faces struggle for the first time in her putridly privileged San Francisco socialite life and naturally completely mentally deteriorates in the process, thereupon exposing both the innate frivolity and fragility of femininity. In short, *The Birds* demonstrates that it is a man's world and the veneer of civilization, which is completely demolished in Hitch's film, is the only thing keeping people from remembering that simple fact, hence the lack of so-called feminism among primitive peoples. After all, it is only the hocus pocus of feminine glamour, which is clearly and cleverly depicted in the film, that causes man to yield his power as most women would have very little if it was not handed to them by a dumb horny men that have foolishly fallen under their spell.

While it is impossible to completely hate her, blonde bombshell bon vivant Melanie Daniels—a vapid San Francisco vamp that lives a life of luxury due to her father owning a successful newspaper—immediately announces her sickening sense of self-absorption at the beginning of the film when a little boy whistles at her and she responds by proudly smiling, as if she thrives completely on male attention, including even that of a cheeky kid that is clearly old enough to be her son. While she never verbally expresses it, Melanie is clearly husband-shopping as she is getting pretty old for a debutante and she even immediately begins attempting to capture her prey upon meeting a young bachelor named Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor) while shopping for Indian mynah birds at a local pet store. Despite (or, probably more accurately, because of) the fact that Mitch makes a total moron of her by pretending to think she is a store employee and letting her perform an entire bullshit seduction routine, Melanie is immediately enamored with the young hunk who, as a lawyer, recognized her from court in regard to a case he describes to her as, "one of your practical jokes that resulted in the smashing of a plate-glass window." When Mitch states things like, "Back in your gilded cage, Melanie Daniels" and "The judge should have put you behind bars," you can practically imagine the heroine getting her panties soaked at the sense of stern male authority and her subsequent actions certainly hint at such a

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reaction as she utilizes her father's newspaper power to find out who the hunk is simply by writing down his license plate. Determined to entangle Mitch in her virtual bourgeois femme fatale web, Melanie symbolically buys him lovebirds, but she only learns later from a neighbor that, despite being a hardly-young professional, the young bachelor curiously spends his weekends at his mother's house in Bodega Bay. Despite being about 60 miles away from SF and Mitch expressing no serious desire to be with her, Melanie absurdly decides to head to Bodega Bay with the lovebirds in what ultimately proves to be the worst mistake of her entire life. While she does seem to achieve her objective of ensnaring Mitch the oedipally curious bitch, she will never be the same woman again as a poor little rich girl that now has bird-induced PTSD.

Although heroine Melanie Daniels is, to a certain degree, vaguely likeable, Hitch makes it quite clear that she is a half-crazed spoiled cunt that, among other things, engages in stalking, emotional blackmail, lying and deception, and various forms of deleterious tomfoolery. Of course, such is to be expected of a pretty peroxide blonde and as Paglia noted in regard to the character in the context of Hitchcockian cinema, "As a bottle blonde herself, she seems to gain strength from the peroxide, which operates on her like a transfusion of plasma. They dye theme appears in Hitchcock as early as *THE LODGER* [...] Hitchcock treats blonde as a beautiful, false color, symbolizing women's lack of fidelity and trustworthiness." Despite being riddled with a good percentage of negative female stereotypes, Melanie also expresses absurd pretenses towards (proto)feminist folly, or as Paglia noted, "Miffed at Lydia's frostiness, Melanie digs in her heels and refuses to let Mitch pick her up for dinner: 'I can find my own way,' she says, in what could stand as a manifesto of feminist independence." Needless to say, Melanie is not the only insufferable chick in the flick, as Mitch's widowed mother Lydia Brenner (Jessica Tandy)—a woman that, not coincidentally, bears a striking resemblance to the heroine, albeit a couple decades older—is every young debutante's worst nightmare as a stuck-up old bitch that treats her son as if he were her hubby. Despite the fact she looks borderline elderly, Lydia has a banally conformist adolescent daughter named Cathy (Veronica Cartwright) who Melanie strategically buys lovebirds for as a birthday gift even though said birds are really clearly a symbolic gift to Mitch who she plans to capture via her feminine wiles. Out of all the main female characters in the film, a young single schoolteacher named Annie Hayworth (Suzanne Pleshette)—a buxom brunette of the subtly bitchy yet rather sexy sort—is probably the most tolerable yet ultimately most tragic. An old flame of Mitch's who actually relocated to Bodega Bay because of him, Annie was no match for the momma boy Mitch's momma Lydia yet she still cannot get over him, hence why she has stayed in the area. Luckily for Melanie, the titular feathered terrors take care of the competition as the heroine and Mitch eventually suffering the shock of finding the ravaged remains of still-beauteous Annie's bloody bird-brutalized body.

Arguably more ravishing and certainly strangely sexier than Melanie, Annie is assuredly one of the most interesting of the Hitchcock chicks and as Paglia noted in regard to the character, “Suzanne Pleshette, with her savvy Jewish Freudianism, puts all the right shadings into her marvelous depiction of the articulate, hyperconscious, but slightly depressive Annie.” In fact, Annie goes as far as arguably hinting that her ex-lover is gay when she states, “Maybe there’s never been anything between Mitch and any girl.” Needless to say, when Annie states in regard to San Francisco—the virtual cocksucker capital of the world—“I guess that’s where everyone meets Mitch,” one cannot help but feel that is once again hinting at his dubious sexuality (notably, in her new foreword to the 2nd edition of her BFI Film Classics book *The Birds*, Paglia would even describe a neighbor of Mitch’s portrayed by Richard Deacon as “a waspish, fashion-savvy gay connoisseur who recognizes the supreme sexual power of a woman as cult object without yielding to it”).

While *The Birds* undoubtedly portrays leading lady Melanie Daniels as an inordinately manipulative and exceedingly entitled bitch that is used to getting what she wants whenever she because she realizes that she has a pricey pussy and is more intrinsically important—both in terms of class and genetics—than most of humanity, her female inferiors, which includes women of all ages (but certainly not coincidentally, especially older women), actually prove to be the greater monsters to the point where they irrationally accuse her of causing the virtual bird apocalypse after all hell breaks loose. Indeed, one hyper hysterical mother portrayed by Doreen Lang even dares to scream in Melanie’s face at a diner, “Why are they doing this? Why are they doing this? They said when you got here, the whole thing started. Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? I think you’re the cause of all this. I think you’re evil! EVIL!” Of course, in stereotypical negative female fashion, this sensually sapless bitch just seems to be utilizing the situation to unload her (potentially subconscious) sexual jealousy onto a feisty *Fräulein* that is both much younger and more beautiful than she is, yet Hitchcock makes sure it is almost impossible not to feel a certain *schadenfreude* at Melanie’s expense as it is about time that the preternaturally pretty heroine be smacked in the face with reality and learn what it means to truly suffer. Additionally, Melanie has something metaphysically (fe)malefic about her and as Paglia noted in regard to the diner scene with Doreen Lang, “The shrill mother, like a witch-baiter in *THE CRUCIBLE*, advances on Melanie, whose point of view is taken by the camera and therefore us [...] Melanie, having had quite enough of impossible mothers, smacks her solidly in the face—which breaks the spell, but there is still no movement to Melanie’s side. While the woman’s charges are too irrational and sensational to accept in naturalistic terms, they have a mythic power that cannot be shaken off: on some level, Melanie really is a kind of vampire attuned to nature’s occult messages.”

Undoubtedly, until she is brutalized by the birds, Melanie wears a perennial

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smile of self-satisfaction as if there is no doubt in her mind that the world is her oyster, which is in stark contrast to Mitch's constantly moody and broody bitch mom Lydia who immediately expresses a guarded glacial demeanor to the heroine that only begins to dissipate as the feathered apocalypse begins to get fierce. In that sense, Paglia makes an interesting argument when she mentions, "Crisscross (the theme of *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*): literally from the moment Melanie crosses her legs, the bird attack begins. Has Lydia's witchy malice evoked it? [...] Lydia 'panics,' Hitchcock told Bogdanovich, because 'she is not strong, it is a façade': so architecturally, she is crumbling." In short, female strength comes with a sunny smile as opposed to a fierce frown as exemplified by the stark contrast between the young and fertile Melanie and old and postmenopausal widow Lydia (who is so desperate for a man that she has succumbed to covert incest and has irrationally attempted to shield her son from a female mate so that she can perversely keep him for herself). Indeed, one can sense that Lydia innately understands (but, due to very personal reasons, does not want to accept) that her son has found a most apt sexual mate when she states to Melanie, "I feel as if I don't understand you at all, and I want so much to understand. Because my son seems to be very fond of you, and I don't quite know how I feel about it. I don't even know if I like you or not [...] Mitch is important to me. I want to like whatever girl he chooses." Needless to say, were it not for the beaked holocaust and Melanie's behavior during said beaked holocaust, it is dubious as to whether or not Lydia would have ever embraced the heroine as the almost quasi-biblical experience seems to force the fiercely frigid old hag to finally come out of her shell. Notably, the film concludes with Lydia caressing a catatonic Melanie as the lead characters escape Bodega Bay in a car driven by Mitch and one can only assume that the older woman's display of compassion is somewhat deceptive as it can be rightly assumed that the widow no longer feels threatened that her much beloved substitute husband—her own son—will be taken away from her, at least not completely. For example, as Paglia argued, "At the end of *THE BIRDS*, who wields the claw? I agree with Margret M. Horwitz's view that Lydia certainly appears 'victorious' and that she and the birds have 'achieved dominance.' Melanie is now damaged goods, which Madonna Lydia prefers for her pieta," but, of course, part of the brilliance of the film is Hitchcock's quite intentional ambiguity. After all, the film would have probably not been such a big hit, especially among chicks, if it was made completely unequivocal that woman are obscenely opportunistic, cold, calculating, callous and craven creatures that only get all the more so with age. Of course, the great irony of the filmmaker's understated misogynistic brilliance is that his film is as coldly covert and cryptic as the monstrous women it portrays and in that sense, Hitch is the real monster of *The Birds*.

Whether intentional or not (I certainly believe the former), it is certainly fitting that, not unlike Jacques Tourneur/Val Letwon with *Cat People* (1942) and

Paul Schrader with his 1982 remake, *The Birds* connects horror with the primordial horror of femininity, which makes perfect sense when considers the closer link that the fairer sex has with nature. Indeed, as Otto Weininger—a virtually blacklisted philosopher that, not unlike with Oswald Spengler, Paglia certainly borrowed a thing or two from—argued in his magnum opus *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles* (1903), “Women are closer to nature in their unconscious than man. The flowers are their sisters, and they are less far removed from animals than Man, as is proved by the fact that they are surely more strongly inclined to bestiality than he is (remember the myths of Leda and Pasiphae; and women’s relationship with their lapdog is also much more sensual than is general believed).” And, of course, what better symbol of femininity than the angelic parasite known as the seagull and its flying sisters?! While *The Birds* heroine is constantly conspiring and plotting her next move, her main goal is clearly completely instinctual and that is to find a man and procreate, which she literally dedicates all her efforts to in her absurd pursuit of momma’s boy Mitch. After all, as Weininger once wrote (and Hitchcock would surely agree with), “Woman seeks her fulfillment as an object. She is the chattel, either of the man or of the child, and all she wants to be taken for is a chattel, despite all her attempts to hide this. There is no surer way to misunderstand what Woman really wants than by being interested in what goes on inside her and sympathizing with her emotions and her hopes, her experiences and her inner nature. Woman does not want to be treated as a subject. All she ever wants—and that is what makes her Woman—is to remain passive and to feel a will directed toward her. She does not want to be treated either timidly or gently. Nor does she want to be respected. Rather, she needs to be desired merely as a body and to be the sole possession of another. Just as a mere sensation only assumes reality when it becomes a concept—that is, an object—so Woman only acquires her existence, and a sense of her existence, when she is elevated by a man or a child—a subject—to his object, and thus has an existence bestowed on her.” Of course, this explains why Melanie is totally turned on by Mitch’s initial rather arrogant insults (and why women in general are totally disgusted by ostensible ‘nice guy’ types) to the point where she fabricates an entire journey to be with him (despite knowing next to nil about him). Indeed, as far as nature is concerned, Melanie’s only real mistake is being attracted to a momma’s boy, which is probably the deleterious subconscious result of having a troubled relationship with her own estranged mother who abandoned her. Ironically, in the end, Melanie does acquire a surrogate mother of sorts but it is dubious at best that she, Mitch, and mommy Lydia will live ‘happy ever after’ in the end, especially since she has already made the unforgivable mistake of exposing weakness to the old lady. After all, as Hitch knew, trust no birds/bitches.

Just the other day, I saw a redneck truck plow down two seagulls on the main road in my hometown and there was a certain ironical poetry to these bright

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white bird bodies as these dead winged parasites still demonstrated more beauty than all the humans around them despite dying such undignified deaths. Indeed, while I am not particularly fond of gulls, they are undoubtedly less obnoxious and purer than the mostly putrid people that have turned their habitat—a resort town—into a hedonistic wasteland where (sub)humans come to bask in booze at the beach and other senseless shit that has less intrinsic value than bird shit. In short, the people I regularly encounter in real-life are certainly more worthy of a bird apocalypse than the characters in *The Birds*, which says a lot since I feel hardly sympathetic towards the characters of Hitch's flick. Needless to say, a sequel exists but the made-for-TV turd *The Birds II: Land's End* (1994) directed by Hebraic Halloween sequel hack Rick Rosenthal is even worse than one might presume despite also featuring Tippi Hedren (who, rather curiously, does not reprise her Melanie Daniels character). Indeed, as much as I like seaside horror cinema, *The Birds II* provides less entertainment than staring at seagull roadkill for 90 minutes or so. Instead, Jean Renoir's *The Woman on the Beach* (1947), Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* (1961), Ken Wiederhorn's *Shock Waves* (1977), Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* (1979), John Carpenter's *The Fog* (1980), and Joel Schumacher's *The Lost Boys* (1987), among a couple other examples, make for a nice companion to Hitchcock's classic if you enjoy fun horror in the sun this summer. In that sense, *The Birds* might be, for me, Hitch's most enjoyable film. As for Robert Eggers' latest *The Lighthouse* (2019)—a film that feels like what the mongrelized mutant offspring of H.P. Lovecraft and F.W. Murnau might make if attempting to take a grotesquely gynophobic approach to Harrington's *Night Tide* and *The Birds*—it is probably the greatest killer seagull flick since Hitch's classic, which of course does not say all that much but I can certainly recommend it. Notably, during his pre-*The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) years, British auteur Peter Greenaway paid tribute to both Hitchcock and *The Birds* in various experimental collage-like films. In fact, Greenaway's absurdly ambitious first feature *The Falls* (1980)—an eccentrically and oftentimes esoterically epic 195-minute avant-garde docucomedy of sorts—can be seen, in part, as a sort of absurdist (anti)sequel to *The Birds* that, aside from being set in a post-apocalyptic realm where characters have bird-like mutations and are obsessed with birds and flights, makes numerous references to the classic Hitch flick. For example, a film character named Obsian Fallicutt—a fanatical film editor that, not unlike Greenaway, becomes obsessed with films with ornithological themes—is described as believing that Hitch faked the mysterious apocalyptic scenario that is central to the film. Indeed, as the film's narrator states, "Obsian Fallicutt had a theory that the V.U.E. [Violent Unknown Event] was an expensive, elaborate hoax perpetrated by A.J. Hitchcock to give some credibility to the unsettling and unsatisfactory ending of his film *THE BIRDS*." Needless to say, *The Falls* is mandatory-viewing for anyone with an acute autistic obsession with birds and/or *The Birds*.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *The Birds* so inordinately enjoyable and artistically singular, especially in the context of Hitch's overall oeuvre, is its strangely foreboding ambiguity. Indeed, as Robin Wood notes in his classic text *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (1989) in regard to the conclusion of the film, "A bleak enough message; and in the last sequence of the film—the departure by car through the massed, waiting birds—the effect of bleakness is intensified by the uncertainties. For uncertainty is the keynote of the film: Hitchcock allows himself and us no easy comfort. Under this sense of judgment, of intense scrutiny, every action becomes ambiguous. The carrying of the lovebirds out to the car: is it a touching gesture (through the child) of continuing faith, despite all, in the goodness of nature and the possibility of order, or an absurd clinging to a sentimental view of life, a refusal still to face reality? The mother's cradling of Melanie in her arms and the shot of their interlocking hands: is it a gesture of acceptance (hence creative and fertile) or a new manifestation of maternal possessiveness? Melanie's broken condition: does it represent the possibility of development into true womanhood, or a final relapse into infantile dependence? All these questions are left open: if we demand a resolution of them we have missed the whole tone and temper of the film. We can say, at best, that there is a suggestion of a new depth, a new fertility in the relationships—Lydia has become the mother Melanie never had. The point about the ending is that the degree of optimism or pessimism it is felt to contain must depend on ourselves: what Hitchcock gives us is the questions." Of course, as a proud (cultural) pessimist, I can only interpret the film's conclusion as being nothing more than a sort of figurative 'calm before the storm' where the main characters receive a temporary reprieve before the misery commences. As to whether it is the birds or their own self-destructive behavior and/or dysfunctional relationships that destroys them, it remains to be seen. In that sense, one must at least give credit to Rick Rosenthal for not reprising the original characters in his steaming celluloid seagull shit *The Birds II* as it would have surely contributed to the destruction of the mystique of the original film, hence the true unmitigated horror of most horror sequels.

Probably the greatest compliment I can pay to *The Birds* is that its greatest scenes resemble a sort of goofy warped take on a landscape painting by great Swiss Symbolist artist Arnold Böcklin who Weininger once described as "one feels that mountains are dead and is mightily attracted only to the sea with its eternal motion." Of course, as from its eternal motion, the sea represents a sort of escape from humanity as an unconquerable realm that virtually separates worlds, hence the genius of using birds as an apocalyptic catalyst as not even water can offer a chance of escape. Naturally, it is also extremely fitting that it was also directed by the man behind the idiosyncratic anti-Nazi propaganda piece *Lifeboat* (1944) where the sea become a sort of perennial psychodramatic prison where man's sanity and civilization are put to the ultimate test. Surely, *The Birds*—a

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film that has aged somewhat gracefully over nearly 60 years—can be seen as a sort of allegorical cinematic ‘canary in a coal mine’ in regard to a sort of sexual apocalypse that has afflicted the Occident for sometime but certainly went into overdrive during the dreaded 1960s. Indeed, as Weininger—a Viennese Jew whose somewhat predictable suicide Spengler once poetically described as death, “in a spiritual struggle of essentially Magian experience is one of the noblest spectacles ever presented by a Late religiousness”—foresaw over a century ago, “Our age is not only the most Jewish, but also the most effeminate of all ages; an age in which art only provides a sudarium for its moods and which has derived the artistic urge in humans from the games played by animals; an age of the most credulous anarchism, an age without any appreciation of the state and law, an age of species ethic, an age of the shallowest of all imaginable interpretations of history (historical materialism), an age of capitalism and Marxism, an age for which history, life, science, everything, has become nothing but economics and technology: an age that has declared genius to be a form of madness, but which no longer has one great artist or one great philosopher, an age that is most devoid of originality, but which chases most frantically after originality; an age that has replaced the idea of virginity with the cult of the demivierge. This age also has the distinction of being the first to have not only affirmed and worshiped sexual intercourse, but to have practically made it a duty, not as a way of achieving oblivion, as the Romans or Greeks did in their bacchanals, but in order to find itself and to give its own dreariness a meaning.” Despite Hitchcock’s Roman Catholic background and formative Jesuit education that he once described to mischling Peter Bogdanovich as being so highly influential in the sense that, “The Jesuits taught me organization, control and, to some degree, analysis,” there is no question of the Freudian factor of his oeuvre and his various crucial collaborations with Hebrews that include Ealing Studios head Michael Balcon, composer Bernard Herrmann, businessman Sidney Bernstein, screenwriters Arthur Laurents and Ben Hecht, and graphic designer Saul Bass, among countless others, reveals that the filmmaker is—for better or worse—a glaring product/symptom of Judaic modernity.

Undoubtedly, to various degrees, Hitch’s films absolutely epitomize this spiritually necrotic disease, but at least *The Birds* arguably recognizes it on a sort of ambiguous subtextual level as a flick where a scheming debutante, momma’s boy lawyer, and covertly incestuous mother seem to get their just deserts; or at least they are forced to pull their heads out of the asses for the first time in their entire pathetic lives due to the curious circumstance of a wonderfully nonsensical Neornithes nightmare. Of course, in the end, flocks of fatally fierce feathered friends attacking people seems less patently absurd than the petty and patently prosaic concerns of the pretty plastic people of *The Birds* who are forced by a sort of goofy Armageddon to, at least temporarily, end their innate inertia. As Guido Gore maestro Lucio Fulci’s *The Exorcist* rip-off *Manhattan Baby* (1982)—a film

that manages to pay tribute to both Hitch's *Psycho* and *The Birds* in a single scene in its depiction of stuffed birds coming alive and killing their master—surely demonstrates, killer winged beasts are not interesting enough to make a film worthwhile but they make a nice backdrop to a film marinated in misanthropy and ostensible misogyny where one cannot help but root for the birds, including seagulls. While I hardly would describe most of Hitch's film as art and find very little to admire about the life and work of Pablo Picasso, I think the Spanish artist could have certainly been talking about *The Birds* when he once stated, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life," as it is a film that gives a soul to the soulless and takes a pleasantly preposterous approach to giving a sort of human vulnerability to the only superficially human. Indeed, the film might make Hitchcock seem rather unflattering in that it seems like his savagely sadistic reaction to a lifetime of being rejected by premium grade pussy, but he does somewhat paradoxically demonstrate that pretty peroxide blondes also have feelings (or whatever), which the filmmaker took to even further extremes with lead Tippi Hedren in his underrated subsequent film *Marnie* (1964). After all, Hitchcock—a lifelong sadistic practical joker—seemed to most enjoy cinematically abusing female birds and he apparently even acted like a monster to Hedren in real-life, so it is only natural that a high-point in his career would involve literal birds brutalizing people in what is arguably the most playfully pernicious cinematic pun in cinema history. Of course, in a seemingly apocalyptic age that is increasingly decadent and feminine where relationships between the sexes have reached an all-time high in terms of dysfunction to the point where the birth rate is dropping rapidly in the West and divorce is the norm and marriage is considered a joke, *The Birds*—a film where it takes a literal bird apocalypse for the heroine to become more passive and her male love interest to take real action and act like a man—is certainly more relevant today than when it was first released and thus more pleasantly punishing than *Psycho*. After all, we need a world with more pretty birds and less men in dresses.

-Ty E

MARNIE
MARNIE

Alfred Hitchcock (1964)

Alfred Hitchcock is a director that I grow to appreciate more and more as the years go by. I am more often sickened by a new big special effects film than I am "wowed" by it. I wouldn't say that I am a fan of cinema that is obsessed with "minimalist" films, but I am certainly someone that can appreciate a film more for the thought put into it than the money. Alfred Hitchcock is someone I value as a director because he is a master of psychology, suspense, mystery, and all those other wonderful things that people give him credit for. I recently saw Hitchcock's film Marnie and I must say that I was impressed.

Anyone that has ever been to Baltimore city knows it's a shithole that probably should have been demolished about a century ago when it pretty much stopped developing. What better place for a deranged kleptomaniac girl to grow up than the city of piss tasting natty boh beer and rednecks that live in the city? The character Marnie from the film Marnie obviously had a bad childhood. In Hitchcock's brilliant film, you see how Marnie got to be the warped female criminal that she is. Although she doesn't fancy ladies like most female criminals, Marnie also can't stand the intimate touch of a man. Only a young Sean Connery is of any hope of awakening this sexually depraved female. Marnie is not as big of a film of old Hitchcock's as say Psycho, Birds, or North by Northwest. That being said, I believe Marnie to be one of Hitchcock's most underrated. Although the film has some slow parts, in its entirety it works especially well. Marnie also may have the greatest conclusion for an Alfred Hitchcock film. The fact that a film such as this could have a PG rating shows Hitchcock's genius ability of giving the audience more by showing nothing. I am not surprised that Alfred Hitchcock suffered from obesity as he spent all his time using his mind and thinking how to manipulate others. I have yet to see all of Alfred Hitchcock's films and I don't plan to. Nothing is more depressing than seeing a director's later works when their minds and soul start to decline. I wouldn't be surprised and I am willing to be that Marnie was Hitchcock's last great film. Although Marnie may have some silly special effects and montages (ex. Marnie's spill off her horse), the film puts to shame what contemporary Hollywood calls "psychological thrillers".

-Ty E

HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD

Alfred L. Werker (1934)

House of Rothschild (1934) is a film produced by Twentieth Century Fox's greatest heavyweight producer and unimpressive looking gentile Darryl F. Zanuck. The film follows the Rothschild family as they go from being the richest Jews in the ghetto (in the film called "Jew Street") to establishing a financial empire all across Europe. The Rothschilds were able to takeover all of Europe's economy by establishing banks in all major European nations. Contemporarily, The Rothschilds have established banks in virtually all major cities in the world. House of Rothschild was released one year after Adolf Hitler's and the National Socialist party's (Nazi) rise to power in Germany. French master auteur Jean Renoir would also make a film on the topic of anti-Semitism and Jewish international banking in Europe. Grand Illusion (1937) is a film that any serious fan of film history knows and usually cherishes. But Grand Illusion takes a much different approach than House of Rothschild. Whereas Grand Illusion is a humanistic pacifist film, House of Rothschild is essentially a bragging piece on how the Rothschild became rich due to their funding of wars that cost many Europeans their lives. Excerpts of House of Rothschild can even be found in the Nazi propaganda film The Eternal Jew (1940) directed by Fritz Hippler. The Smiling and Cunning Nathaniel Rothschild in House of Rothschild Mayer Rothschild tells his five young sons to establish five banks in five different countries across Europe. He tells his sons, "Money is power, money is the only weapon the Jew has to defend himself." He finally tells his sons to always "remember the ghetto." Interestingly enough, it was Rabbis that were the biggest proponent of keeping Jews confined to the poverty of Ghettos in Europe. After Mayer Rothschild's emotional request to his sons about fighting Europeans with money, House of Rothschild flashes forward to a couple decades later where the Rothschild sons have become important players in international European banking. At the head of the family is Nathaniel Rothschild (played by George Arliss who also played Mayer Rothschild) located in England. When House of Rothschild concludes, Darryl F. Zanuck makes it clear that the Rothschilds beat Europe and ultimately defeated "anti-Semitism." Of course, the only anti-Semitism that the Rothschilds encounter in the film is being called a "Jew" and not being allowed to be involved in certain business deals (which Nathan Rothschild eventually takes advantage of). Nathan Rothschild states, "Europe hides its head in shame because it borrows from the Jews." This statement from Mr. Rothschild is a clear message to Mr. Hitler and the German nation (and Europe as a whole). The Five Rothschild Brothers The Rothschilds, of course, have been involved in much more than just the European economy. For example, the American Federal Reserve bank is a Rothschild headed bank. There is nothing "federal" about the Federal Reserve at all. The nine private banks that make up the Federal Reserve are all private

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and internationalist owned. They are as follows: 1. Rothschild Banks of London and Berlin, 2. Lazard Brothers Banks of Paris, 3. Israel Moses Seif Banks of Italy, 4. Warburg Bank of Hamburg and Amsterdam, 5. Lehman Brothers of NY, 6. Kuhn, Loeb Bank of NY (Now Shearson American Express), 7. Goldman, Sachs of NY, 8. National Bank of Commerce NY/Morgan Guaranty Trust (J. P. Morgan Bank - Equitable Life - Levi P. Morton are principal shareholders), 9. Hanover Trust of NY (William and David Rockefeller & Chase National Bank NY are principal shareholders). The Rothschilds also took complete control of Great Britain's economy in 1814. They have established a private financial corporation in England called "The City." Here they control everything from The Central Bank of England to the London Stock Exchange. The genius of the Rothschilds banking dynasty is their secrecy and behind the scenes operations. They plug in the puppet politicians that do their biddings. For example, president hopeful John McCain just recently flew to England to meet with Lord Rothschild and Nathaniel Rothschild at London's Spencer House. As can be expected, the Rothschilds showered McCain with generous donations (as they do with all presidential candidates). The Rothschilds were also most responsible for funding and setting up the state of Israel. At a recent AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) Lobby "Show" all presidential candidates confirmed their commitment to Israel. Barack Obama even wore a cute pin with the American and Israeli flag joined together. Quite a symbolic gesture on Obama's part. If you think your vote or interests as an American citizen count, you're sadly mistaken.

Salomon Mayer von Rothschild

Many dark secrets and conspiracies surround the Rothschild banking dynasty. So many that I can't even bring up a significant fraction of them in this essay. I will, however, bring up one of the most bizarre and disconcerting conspiracies in the history of the Rothschilds. The rumor is that Adolf Hitler was the grandson of Salomon Mayer von Rothschild. According to American psychoanalyst Walter C. Langer (among other historians and authors), Hitler's grandmother Maria Anna Schicklgruber was a servant in the home of Baron Rothschild. The story is that she became pregnant by Salomon Rothschild while working as a servant in the Rothschild home in Vienna. Furthermore, Austrian Chancellor, Dolfuss, was the one that ordered the investigation that found out about Hitler's "Rothschild" heritage. Dolfuss was later assassinated by the Gestapo. Evidence also exists that Adolf Hitler was funded by the Rothschilds via The Bank of England and Kuhn, Loeb Bank of NY. The Rothschilds have always been notorious for funding wars on both sides and monetarily (among other things) benefiting from each nation's destruction. The Man that proved Adolf Hitler was a Rothschild chancellor of Austria Engelbert Dollfus shot Dead. Some may ask, "Why would a Jewish banking family fund Hitler?" First, Hitler brought about the destruction of most of Europe. This includes dramatic population reductions,

destruction of nationalism (and the great European empires), and overall chaos in Europe. Adolf Hitler was also responsible for pushing the Jewish population out of Europe and into Palestine. The fact of the matter is this: if Adolf Hitler never existed there would be no state of Israel (which was made official in 1948). Before World War II, only 3% of the German Jewish population were Zionists (Jews for a Jewish homeland). Now virtually all Jews around the world are Zionists. The Jews that died in the second World War, for the most part, were poor ghetto Jews that rabid Zionists openly admitted were genetically inferior and unfit for assimilation (read early Zionist eugenics writings). Zionist Aryan Adolf Eichmann It is also very well documented that the early Zionist collaborated with the Nazis. Adolf "Holocaust Architect" Eichmann considered himself a staunch Zionist and even attended Zionist founder Theodor Herzl's 35 year death anniversary. Before becoming a member of the SS, Eichmann worked for Vacuum Oil Company which is owned by the Rockefellers. The Rockefellers are longtime associates and married in with the Rothschilds. Adolf Eichmann continued to work for Vacuum Oil Company after becoming a Nazi for sometime despite his Jewish employers knowing of his Nazi party membership. Eichmann eventually opened up the Nazi SS Central Office for Jewish Immigration at Rothschild Palais in Vienna, Austria. The Jewish collective has never made a lie of their power that they have gained through their persecution. Zionist Scientist Albert Einstein stated the following, "Anti-Semitism will be a psychological phenomenon as long as Jews come in contact with non-Jews—what harm can there be in that? Perhaps it is due to anti-Semitism that we survive as a race: at least that is what I believe."—(The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein, Volume 7, Document 37, Princeton University Press, (2002), p. 159). My opinion of House of Rothschild is that it is one of the most neglected films in film history. I think this is for obvious reasons, but still it is a shame. The Rothschild banking dynasty is an international family that everyone should be aware of. The Rothschilds make the world turn and the wars happen. Most people have forgotten that wars are the greatest moneymakers. Where would historical puppet mass murderers like Vladimir Lenin, Adolf Hitler, and Mao Zedong be without the bankers that backed them?

-Ty E

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Allen Baron* (1961)

While I recently felt a certain degree of long buried nostalgia upon re-watching the classic Xmas TV movie special *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* (1977)—an inordinately cute, clever, and shockingly kindhearted production courtesy of none other than great muppet auteur Jim Henson—as it is one of my earliest film memories and something I probably have not seen in well over twenty years, I would be lying if I tried to pass it off as reflecting my current mentality or how I feel about the so-called holiday season. Surely, it is keeping with my current cynicism that I was not at all that surprised to just learn that the film's 1971 source children's book of the same name was penned by chosenite Russell Hoban (which explains the film's somewhat grating 'class consciousness') and mischling hack Frank Oz had to taint the film with his voice, but I digress. Feeling like I might be able to tap into a smidgen of Xmas spirit with a quasi-arthouse slasher featuring a bunch of Warhol Superstars in the quite fitting roles of mental patients, I decided to re-watch Theodore Gershuny's *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1972), but it reminded me more of hokey Halloween hijinks than jingle bells and red-nosed reindeer. Hell, I even gave Joe Dante's *Gremlins* (1984) a re-watch after two decades or so, but I was distracted by its odd neo-Orientalism and the fact that the recent PSYOP-like emergence of 'Baby Yoda'—a sad unintentional symbol of Werner Herzog's strange newfound Hollywood whore status (though, to be fair, the Bavarian auteur started heading into this direction with his soullessly sentimental Spielberg-esque shoah shit show *Invincible* (2001))—has forever tainted the memory of the film in my mind. Indeed, I am somewhat ashamed to admit it, but the only film that could get me into the Christmas spirit—or, more specifically, the anti-Christmas spirit—is the nasty little neo-noir *Blast of Silence* (1961) directed by one-anti-hit-wonder Allen Baron who also acted as the film's writer and antihero. Despite being a relatively obscure figure that was mainly involved in doing completely irrelevant hack directing for popular (and not so popular) TV shows including *The Brady Bunch*, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, *Charlie's Angels*, and *The Love Boat*, Baron was recently a casualty of the yeast-infected *Me Too* campaign at the ancient age of 91 after being exposed by his former personal assistant Anna Dey who not only accused him of doing disgusting things like throwing cum-rags at her, but also curiously accused him of the following in a July 2018 lawsuit: "Baron is a person of Jewish faith and expressly discussed his disdain for [Dey's] Christian religion." Of course, any non-pozzed thinking person that has seen *Blast of Silence* will see this as no big surprise as the film is devoutly anti-Christmas in a sort of marvelously mean-spirited and misanthropic fashion as if the writer-director fantasizes about a sort of semitic (anti)Santa Claus using his magical Kabbalah-charged sleigh with evil Golem-like Reindeer to drop a nuke on happy Christmas carolers. Indeed,

Baron's debut feature offers the viewer the opportunity of spending Christmas with a half-crazed coldblooded hitman killer of the absurdly alienated and perverted sort who glorifies solitude and ultimately achieves a perennial sort of solitariness with his much-warranted grisly demise. In short, there is no doubt in your mind that Baron absolutely loathes Jesus Christ's b-day and the great joy, happiness, and spirituality associated with it, thus making the film a must-see film for 'spiritual Ebenezer Scrooge' types. Like a more morbidly mental Melville movie for sleazy American philistines created years after the release of Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958) when film noir had already more or less died, the film is no immaculate masterpiece yet it manages to bleed alienation, despair, and a certain hardboiled nihilistic fervor that makes this film an apt experience for those less than jolly beings that can't get into the Christmas spirit but don't necessarily want to blow their brains out. Whereas sadistic sod gutter auteur Andy Milligan's proto-slasher *Seeds* (1968) offers the ultimate depiction of family dysfunction where hate epitomizes the holidays, *Blast of Silence* wallows in a lethal sort of loneliness where murder is merry, at least for the absurdly aberrant antihero.

Aside from obvious racial and cultural reasons, I have always been counter-kosher for largely aesthetic reasons because I cannot stand the innate artificiality and overall phoniness that plagues Judaic artists, especially filmmakers ranging from Mel Brooks to Steven Spielberg to Darren Aronofsky to J.J. Abrams. Indeed, as Ludwig Wittgenstein noted in a more articulate fashion, to be kosher is to be cosmopolitan and, in turn, completely culturally bankrupt which leads to soullessly 'universalizing' the art of the people of their host nation, hence the oftentimes obnoxious Judaic propensity towards satire and parody where an artistic model is manipulated and subverted for (at least partly) comedic (but more often subversive) ends. Over the years, I have realized that the Hebraic filmmakers that I actually do like, quite unlike softboys like Spielberg or Abrams, tend to come from rougher backgrounds where their art comes from the rather organic source of the streets. Indeed, even in their big budget films, the street smarts of tough Jews like William Friedkin and Michael Mann is quite apparent (whereas Spielberg's films reek of a certain insipid suburban soullessness and sapless artificiality). Before switching to artless Zionist propaganda, streetwise semite Peter Emmanuel Goldman almost made the desperation and nihilism of gutter-dwelling counterculture types seem cool in underrated films like *Echoes of Silence* (1965) and *Wheel of Ashes* (1968) in between whoring himself out for sexploitation trash like *The Sensualist* (1966). Indeed, it is hard to imagine that early Martin Scorsese flicks, especially his first feature *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967), would exist were it not for Goldman's largely unknown influence. Similarly, Actors Studio co-founder Jack Garfein—a supposed Shoah survivor that had a certain glaring contempt for white America—demonstrated with his two fictional features *The Strange One* (1957) and *Something Wild*

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(1961) a certain singularly scathing depiction of human psychology and abnormal behavior that makes the films of John Cassavetes seem like sentimental children's films by comparison. Needless to say, Baron does for film noir with *Blast of Silence* what Goldman did for underground arthouse cinema and Garfein did for adult drama in terms of bringing a certain uncompromising vehemence and viscerality to the medium. As to the defining trait of Baron's first and only worthwhile feature—a film that makes *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947) seem quite campy and Henry Hathaway's *Kiss of Death* (1947) seem humanistic by comparison—it is its pure and unadulterated venom as if the filmmaker needed to create it lest he commit a mass murder spree.

Just judging by the opening scene of *Blast of Silence*, one might suspect it would be more fitting for the film to have the Cioranian title *The Trouble with Being Born* as a nasty and nihilistic virtual antinatalist film noir where the strangely angsty antihero 'Baby boy Frankie Bono' (writer-director Allen Baron)—a covert wop character that is, somewhat believably, portrayed by a Jew—immediately begins narrating his great displeasure with being born juxtaposed with a train emerging from a pitch black tunnel like a bastard baby being violently blasted out of its mother's monstrous womb. Indeed, as Frankie narrates (by way of blacklisted kosher card-carrying commie Lionel Stander), "Remembering, out of the black silence...you were born in pain [...] You were born with hate and anger built in." Needless to say, Frankie will also die in pain with his hatred and anger still intact as if it was a fate he instinctively understood all along. A deranged hitman that, unfortunately for him considering the particularly perturbed state of his psyche, largely lives in his own mind as highlighted by the film's exceedingly effective and superlatively sleazy narrated 'internal monologue' (notably, celebrated screenwriter Waldo Salt of *Midnight Cowboy* fame wrote the narration under the pseudonym 'Mel Davenport') where fucked Frankie boy practically seems like his head might explode at any moment. Indeed, Frankie is a virtual ticking time bomb, but some other gentlemen do him the honor of extinguishing him before he can explode on his own in what ultimately proves to be a pathetic end to a patently pathetic life. A resentful ex-orphan that seemingly spent his entire childhood in an orphanage and thus never received critical things like love and affection as a childhood, Frankie naturally has mixed emotions about traveling all the way from Cleveland to his hometown in Manhattan to execute a hit on a mid-level goombah gangster. As Frankie gloats to himself in a self-deluding manner upon first arriving via train while suavely sucking on a cigarette, "You're alone. But you don't mind that. You're a loner. That's the way it should be. You've always been alone. By now it's your trademark. You like it that way." Unfortunately for Frankie, he won't be alone for long as he bumps into some old childhood friends by mere chance, including an old love interest, thus leaving him vulnerable and warping his plans in an ultimately rather pathetic scenario that underscores the angst-ridden antihero's incapacity to completely

connect with other people on any meaningful level. In that sense, it is surely fitting that splenetic psycho Frankie meets a miserable end on a cold and rainy day in a scenario that hardly inspires lachrymose in the viewer. Like a rabid dog that is begging to be put down, Frankie's somewhat predictable yet nonetheless delicious demise ultimately acts as a source of solace for the viewer. In short, Frankie is a sick animal and his great suffering finally ends when he is put down.

Although Frankie would certainly agree with Baron's racial kinsman Heinrich Heine words, "Sleep is good, death is better but of course, the best thing would to have never been born at all," his boastful street philosophy of misanthropy and self-isolation are clearly the defensive psychological tools of a forsaken literal and figurative bastard that has no good reason to be happy about life as a poorly socialized lapsed orphan that is ill-equipped to deal with life, hence why he has dedicated his career to taking the lives of others as if he is unwittingly offering his victims the sweet sort of death that his sick self-destructive subconscious is driving him towards. Before executing his murder contracts, Frankie likes to channel all of his internalized hatred into these forsaken fellows. Indeed, when first mentioning his target Troiano (Peter Clune), Frankie states while practically dripping vile, "You know the type. Second-string syndicate boss with too much ambition...and a mustache to hide the fact he has lips like a woman...the kind of race you hate." While stalking Troiano, Frankie also rationalizes the murder he is about to carry out by hatefully stating of his target, "He runs the girls and the dope and the books and the numbers. There's a guy you could really learn to hate." Although not his initial intention, Troiano is not the first scumbag that Frankie wastes as he impulsively yet still rather sneakily brutally beats and strangles to death an 'old friend' named 'Big Ralph (Larry Tucker)—a fiercely foul and seemingly fecally unsound fat fuck that owns multiple pet street rats—that dares to attempt rip him off for a "thirty-eight with a silencer" after already agreeing to a contract. Indeed, while being a contract killer is technically Frankie's job, one certainly gets the sense that he simply chose the career as an opportunistic outlet for his overwhelming bloodlust. Needless to say, a woman also helps inspire Frankie's homicidal rage after temporarily softening his cold black heart during a moment of weakness that clearly contributes to his demise.

While incessantly complaining about his need for solitude, Frankie somewhat changes his tune upon being reunited with an old female friend named Lori (Molly McCarthy)—a hot dame that is able to have a rare ataraxic effect on the seemingly impenetrable antihero—and instantly falls for her. When Lori invites Frankie over for Christmas out of what seems to be nothing more than an altruistic sense of pity, he more or less attempts to rape her, but not before going on an insane rant that exposes him as a perturbingly pathetic whack-job that cannot even hold a conversation with a woman without it ending in disaster of the mutually embarrassing sort. Undoubtedly, Lori is right when she recommends that Frankie get a girlfriend as it would at least warm his seemingly half-rotten

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heart and give him a temporary relief from his hate-ridden psychosis, but he seems to be too hopelessly socially alienated and emotionally retarded to maintain any sort of sane love interest. Aside from killing Big Ralph, Frankie also makes the mistake of attempting to renege on his contract and is immediately threatened by the guy that hired him with the carefully expressed words, "All right. Now listen careful, Cleveland. Item one: For just thinkin' what you just said...you're in real trouble...and they're gonna hear about this call. Item two: You made a contract with us, so you'll do the job and you'll do it right. Then we'll listen to your problems. You've got till New Year's Eve. And remember, you're in trouble now." While Frankie manages to commit the contract hit on Troiano with a certain savagely sadistic gusto that involves shooting the mobster while he is carrying a plush panda for his mistress and then kicking over his corpse while on the way out the door, he does not manage to escape from NYC alive as the men that hired him decide to assumedly cover their tracks by executing him. Indeed, despite being clearly threatened over the phone by the mobster that hired him, Frankie does not think twice about meeting him at a secluded pier outside the city where he is jumped by two hoods that, rather fittingly, look just like him. After being shot by the two doppelgängers and falling from a pier into the sea, Frankie tries in vain to climb out of the water by grasping for mud as the two killers continue to blast him into silence, or as the now-dead-narrator states at the very end of the film, "'God moves in mysterious ways,' they said. Maybe he is on your side, the way it all worked out. Remembering other Christmases...wishing for something, something important, something special. And this is it, baby boy Frankie Bono. You're alone now. All alone. The scream is dead. There's no pain. You're home again. Back in the cold, black silence."

For whatever reason, I recently decided to re-watch Dan Gilroy's somewhat overrated *Nightcrawler* (2014)—a film that seems to have made with the objective of petrifying tech industry dorks and other spiritually neutered types—and was amazed at how much more unlikable Jake Gyllenhaal's exceedingly effete sociopathic 'gutter capitalist' character is compared to the crazed contract killer of *Blast of Silence*. Indeed, while Allen Baron's film is a singularly dark and nihilistic neo-noir that ends in a fittingly dejecting fashion, there's at least a certain underlying humanity to the proceedings whereas good goy Gilroy's film is almost as sterilely cynical as its sociopathic antihero as if it is a (pseudo)arthouse film made specifically to remind long-suffering office bureaucrats that they might not actually be autistic automatons after all despite all evidence to the contrary. In short, Baron's film is sympathetic towards its aberrant antihero to the extent that, unlike Gyllenhaal's stone cold yet sapless character, he wants to love and fuck just like anyone else despite his comments to the contrary. Additionally, Hebraic hack Ariel Vromen's superlatively shallow hitman flick *The Iceman* (2012) seems like an insipidly stylized piece of shit by comparison despite feeble attempts at pathos and poignancy. In short, most contemporary film villains, especially in

neo-noir, are unsympathetic garbage that are rarely worthy of even being described as caricatures as they lack more substance than a Looney Tunes cartoon character and Baron's film—where an exceedingly erratic ex-orphan expounds on his perturbing primitive prole philosophy in a manner worthy of Panzram—arguably underscores this better than any films of its era. While English auteur John Boorman's masterful *Point Blank* (1967) is certainly the superior tragic hit-man flick in almost every regard, Baron's dementedly daring directorial debut is certainly on another level in terms of tapping into the almost-evil essence of a damned dude that lives for death and personifies the Christian phrase: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Despite being an irreligious film with an anti-Christmas spirit as directed by a racially conscious Jew, *Blast of Silence* ultimately has a certain strange spiritual dimension if we listen to Emil Cioran, or as the Franco-Romanian philosopher once wrote in a piece entitled 'Annihilation by Deliverance' featured in his classic book *A Short History of Decay* (1949): "A doctrine of salvation has meaning only if we start from the equation 'existence equals suffering.' It is neither a sudden realization, nor a series of reasonings which lead us to this equation, but the unconscious elaboration of our every moment, the contribution of all our experiences, minute or crucial. When we carry germs of disappointments and a kind of thirst to see them develop, the desire that the world should undermine our hopes at each step multiplies the voluptuous verifications of the disease. The arguments come later; the doctrine is constructed: there still remains only the danger of 'wisdom.' But, supposed we do not want to be free of suffering nor to conquer our contradictions and conflicts—what if we prefer the nuances of the incomplete and an affective dialectic to the evenness of sublime impasse? Salvation ends everything; and ends us. Who, once saved, dares still call himself alive? We really live only by the temptation of irreligiosity. Salvation haunts only assassins and saints, those who have killed or transcended the creature; the rest wallow—dead drunk—in imperfection." Indeed, in his own sick sad way, Baby boy Frankie Bono—the most lonely of god's losers and a virtual spiritual brother to Travis Bickle of *Taxi Driver* (1975) fame—achieves salvation and, in turn, total transcendence in the end. Speaking of Scorsese, the famous guido filmmaker apparently once described *Blast of Silence* as, "my favorite New York City movie," which says a lot considering the filmmaker once directed a cocaine-fueled musical entitled *New York, New York* (1977) and later a slightly better film entitled *Gangs of New York* (2002). Additionally, the camera operator for Baron's film, Erich Kollmar, acted as the cinematographer of Scorsese's mentor John Cassavetes' jazzy debut feature *Shadows* (1958).

As a film that makes the grittiest of Sam Fuller flicks seem about as hardcore as a transman's neo-penis and features a fiercely foreboding fatalism that might inspire suicide in less psychologically sound viewers, *Blast of Silence*—a

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minor masterpiece of misery and misanthropy where hate manages to effortlessly metastasize as the film progresses—is probably the ultimate anti-Xmas trip and a fittingly aesthetically abrasive testament to the soul-sucking power of solitude, especially when you are a lonely individual during what is supposedly the happiest time of the year. In short, *Black Christmas* (1974) seems like director Bob Clark's later Fellini-esque classic *A Christmas Story* (1983) when compared to the stark and dark spiritual decrepitude that engulfs Baron's virtual cinematic bomb. Considering that Baron spent the rest of his career being a for-hire hack that only managed to direct a couple mostly worthless films, including the uncharacteristically anti-cosmopolitan *Foxfire Light* (1982) where a rich city slut is tamed by a Southern rancher, one can only assume that *Blast of Silence* is the filmmaker's sole auteur work and a true reflection of his seemingly twisted soul. Aside from apparently bragging about various dubious sexual conquests, including scamming his way into then-Charlie's Angels star Farrah Fawcett's panties, the July 2018 lawsuit filed against him by his ex-assistant alleges that, "Baron also claimed to have forced numerous Cuban women to have sexual intercourse with him in exchange for roles in the 1959 movie *CUBAN REBEL GIRLS*." Needless to say, for better or worse, the recent allegations against Baron only add to the creep factor of *Blast of Silence* where the completely socially sick antihero seems to absurdly believe that dancing with a girl somehow immediately leads to aggressively trying to fuck them.

While I don't really believe in New Year's resolutions and can never deny the raw aesthetic power of *Blast of Silence*, I think my goal for next year is to make sure that I have no desire to watch the film ever again, at least not during the Christmas season. Indeed, I am perfectly fine with making Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985) my reliable Christmastime favorite lest I succumb to a 'schism of the heart,' or as Cioran once so pitilessly described, "We are doomed to perdition each time life does not reveal itself as a miracle, each time the moment no longer moans in a supernatural shudder [...] And it is not the miracle which determines tradition and our substance, but the void of a universe frustrated of its flames, engulfed in its own absences, exclusive object of our rumination: a lonely universe before a lonely heart, each predestined to disjoin and to exasperate each other in the antithesis. When the solitude is intensified to the point of constituting not so much our datum as our sole faith, we cease to be integral with the whole: heretics of existence, we are banished from the community of the living, whose sole virtue is to wait, gasping, for something which is not death. But we, emancipated from the fascination of such waiting, rejected from the ecumenicity of illusion—we are the most heretical sect of all, for our soul itself is born in heresy." In fact, I think I am going to spend Christmas day re-watching Ronald Neame's classic Charles Dickens adaptation *Scrooge* (1970) starring British screen legends Albert Finney and Alec Guinness and just try to be grateful that my ancestors derive from the Western European countryside instead of dreary Eastern Euro-

pean shtetls which clearly provided a sort of atavistic spiritual influence on a film like *Blast of Silence* where man is completely deracinated and an abstracted slave that is no longer in tune with nature. Needless to say, re-watching Carroll Ballard's *Nutcracker: The Motion Picture* (1986)—a near-masterpiece of sight and sound that is like the 1980s Christmas equivalent of classic Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger productions like *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1951)—helped to cleanse my soul after watching Baron's gleefully seedy celluloid bomb and it also reminded that the right film can help even the most Scrooge-esque of individuals find some small glimmer of the yuletide spirit. Indeed, despite the virtually malefic message a film like *Blast of Silence* might communicate, it is important to remember that the world is not a shtetl and that Christmas can even be enjoyed by spiritually and/or seasonally sick niggas that, despite hating Hollywood in general, can still enjoy Clive Donner's Dickens adaptation *A Christmas Carol* (1984) starring George C. Scott without succumbing to the figurative wizard of poz that is hollyweird. Still, I have more faith in someone that prefers Baron's film to fiercely phony crypto-kosher Christmas crap like mischling hack Jon Favreau's *Elf* (2003)—a radically retarded film that was written, directed, and largely starring members of the tribe—where Santa Claus is portrayed by Ed Asner who, not coincidentally, could easily pass for Baron's brother. After all, there is something innately sinister about a world where Will Ferrell is considered funny and *Blast of Silence*—an inordinately metaphysically aggressive film that acts like acid on the psyche in terms of completely wiping away what might have previously been on your mind—acts a sort of ideally corrosive antidote to such mesmerizingly moronic crypto-anti-Xmas insipidity. After all, better a Christmas-tide cynic than a buffoonish shabbos goy fairy like Ferrell.

-Ty E

HOLLYWOODLAND
HOLLYWOODLAND

Allen Coulter (2006)

The stories behind the real-life movers and shakers of Hollywood have always been more interesting than the actual films. Let's face it, Hollywood has never made a lie of the fact that it is first and foremost a business. The seedy place has always attracted the most degenerate and desperate of individuals. Prostitutes, murderers, the mafia, white collar criminals, drug fiends, homosexuals, lesbians, war profiteers, communists and a whole large cast of other social parasites. Kenneth Anger's wonderful book *Hollywood Babylon I and II* goes into depth on a variety of things. *Hollywoodland* is one of the few films to come out of Hollywood that reflects on the dark past of the ghostly streets of Sunset Boulevard.

Hollywoodland is a "biopic" of sorts attempting to examine the mysterious death of TV Superman George Reeves. The silly and embarrassingly bad actor Ben Affleck stars as the slightly out of shape Mr. Reeves. I must say that the casting of Affleck as Reeves was indeed appropriate. Like Affleck, George Reeves seemed to be an actor that took himself far too seriously as acting goes. Affleck probably finds his biggest fan base in Kevin Smith fans whereas Reeves found his fan base with little boys. Both men seem to attract males that have a hard time finding members of the opposite sex.

An arrogant and wannabe tough guy Adrien Brody stars in *Hollywoodland* as Louis Simo, a somewhat of a loser private detective. I wouldn't be surprised if Simo was a relative of sleazebag gossip columnist Walter Winchall. Simo really has nothing going for him in life but he is determined to prove that George Reeves did not commit suicide. Simo's "brave" style of personal investigating is a result of his nothing to live for mentality. Also, Simo unsurprisingly has a soft spot for paper money. Other than receiving a few bucks here and there, Simo's life sucks. His young son doesn't want much to do with him and he always seems to get his ass kicked.

Hollywoodland's strength lie in it's unpleasant story of an over glamorized place. Many children and even adults dream of going to Hollywood where all the great American stars once stood. But when one takes a look at what Hollywood was built on and the tragedies surrounding it(such as the death of George Reeves), Hollywood loses its magic. When an ugly troll of a criminal states "he makes movies" near *Hollywoodland's* conclusion, one gets a bitter feeling in their stomach. How could such an ugly man control what played on American silver screens?

I have never thought of Ben Affleck as the "cool" guy he pretends to be in movies. Like the late George Reeves, Affleck must know of his limitations as a so called "talent." Despite Reeves's story being told through a series of flashbacks, his character sticks out. He was a man that wanted to be much bigger than he could have ever dreamed of. It would have been no surprise if he re-

ally killed himself but many still reject this. Whether he killed himself or not, George Reeves most likely had a death wish. Hollywoodland makes it clear that he did not have much more to live for. Although a sometimes banal film, Hollywoodland at least offers the viewer something to think about.

-Ty E

CREATURES FROM THE ABYSS
CREATURES FROM THE ABYSS

Alvaro Passeri (1994)

Creatures From The Abyss (Plankton) is a "THE THING" inspired Italian-trash horror film set in a nautical environment. The film is directed by Massimiliano Cerchi who made 3 other films that i especially don't care about. The plot features the worst acting i have ever witnessed, dubbed or not. The things these characters do are ridiculous. I dare to say this film was made on a budget of at least \$500.00. I like his pseudonym. Yes, it is that bad. The film revolves around 5 teenagers being played by adults that i don't care for at all, as you can obviously tell.

The Characters:

Mike: The nerd with a mullet. Bobby: The old Zac Efron look-a-like who is an asshole jock. Margaret: Mike's fiance. Dorothy: I don't care. Julie: Sister to someone.

They push each other on the beach and giggle and some gay shit like that. Then they leave without Mike and makes him chase them out. In this confusion of teenage stupidity, they leave the gas can on the shore. I have no idea where they were trying to go on a little raft, or why they ended up in the Atlantic Ocean, but this is only a small problem with the film. They soon get stranded and get pissed off at each other and drop the motor to start paddling. Soon after getting tired, their oar gets stuck on a dead body that looks sort of like Lon Chaney in The Phantom of the Opera. Hysteria is performed and they see a light from a yacht. Closer inspection reveals this yacht is an oceanographic institute of research. All the meanwhile they stare, we are bombarded with shitty flash-editing of tentacles, screaming, open mouths, and useless Amoebas. When they finally board, they declare it part time since there seems to be no crew aboard. They begin to listen to shitty dance music and drink alcohol water. Bobby is still trying to get laid by seducing all the women. After Mike tells the women to GB2Kitchen and make him food, they see fish that they cook up screaming and catch on fire. They blame it on simple hallucinations. After thoroughly searching the cabin they encounter two incredibly annoying objects. One is a clock named Cutie Time. If you walk by it it wakes up and begins to talk to you about various foreshadowing plot points which gets really fucking annoying. Two is the fish eye camera slithering on the ground watching the characters extremely closely. Even when they look right at it, they don't see the creature. I don't remember there being an invisible fish in the film. After sitting down and eating and watching Bobby eat like a pig making stupid jokes, all the women seem to love him. I want him to teach me his secrets. One of the women characters whom i don't care about eats the fish she fried and begins to have stomach pains later that night which leads to a great vomit scene with bugs in her upchuck making vomit angels. A very great squirm able scene. While the boys check out the

crawlspace below they find a drooling, foaming, old man with frizzled hair who is a chemist. When i say chemist, it sounds normal and you probably don't take another look at the word but after hearing Mike say chemist, i don't think i can ever hear this word and not laugh to my self again. They drag him up to the deck while he bleeds and foams a lot. This only leads up to Bobby's conclusion that the ship was a cover to create drugs. After tasting some "cocaine" which we later find out to be mutated plankton, we only begin to taste his fate. While Mike is in the lab looking at a Tron looking screen, he realizes there is a mutant fish aboard. Key the scene with the flying fish comes alive and latches on his future-wifes throat biting it a little teensy bit. After witnessing a fish fly through the air looking like a paper cut-out, you wonder how worse can this film get. Mike then goes crazy with a giant jaw bone and destroys all the fish and manages to hit one in a meat grinder which results prove satisfactory. He misses the huge freezer of these fish which evades me and proves him to be a stupid nerd. Then Bobby has his way with _____ (Insert Big Busted Female) and apparently she is a virgin (questionable). He then gets a recently de-thawed fish in the back of his skull which spikes protrude and impregnates _____ with lots of fish eggs and disappears. These scenes are only the mere catalyst for such a pile of shit. I cannot ruin the ending because you must see it so you can come to a conclusion by yourself. All right, to square the review down let me ask myself, what didn't work? Everything. This film had the most atrocious acting ever printed to film and given a proper release. The dubbing is pure shit. The story is uninspired. The characters are retarded. The scares are none. The only things i really like about it was the animation and the effects. Some of them that is, less we not forget the flying fish. Creatures of the Abyss is a funny movie because of how fucking shitty it was. Is it a grand old film that has lots of tits and blood? Yes. Would i recommend it to anyone i cared about in the slightest? No.

-Maq

LETHAL FORCE
LETHAL FORCE

Alvin Ecarma (2002)

Imagine a pure-octane action movie with a lot of throwbacks to the grand days of discovering Riki-Oh. Finding Lethal Force for sale is the only thing you can possibly do to get that same grand feeling of watching something so over-the-top yet hilariously brilliant and violent at the same time. Alvin Ecarma's Lethal Force is a spoof film that is just a little bit serious. It parodies blaxploitation films, kung-fu classics, and the ridiculous early crime films. The plot is something we have heard of before. A gangster is forced to turn in his best friend who also happens to be a hitman, after his wife was murdered and son was taken hostage. The hitman with the name of Savitch (Get it?) is the placeholder of all the action scenes. This includes catching knives in his teeth and squishing eye goo out of putty-lookalike henchmen's faces. While some of the acting is quite atrocious, it semi-works due to the wardrobe. They look the part therefore they must fit. Cash Flagg Jr. is amazing as Savitch. Not only is he the badass, cold minded killer who has a soft spot for his time in 'Nam but he has suave one liners and the ability to deflect bullets with knives sticking out of his palm. Cash Flagg Jr. would fit perfectly in the live action cast of a Dragonball Z film. The characters in this film that decorate the beautiful artwork are extremely eccentric and are amongst the enormous appeal. We have a little boy who is thrown into a quick draw match to the death, an obese lady with a humongous fez on her head. The crippled shaded villian who reminds me of a scientist, the soul powered Foxy Brown parody and let us not forget the henchmen. Their uniform is a black suit with kabuki masks. Very iconic and should be delved into in the sequel. They remind me of Putty's. The sheer absurdity is amazing and goes down well with intoxication. The whole reason the shaded man wants Savitch for revenge is explained in the funniest assassin scene ever. The villian went to the public mail drop box and puts his letter in. He turned around and it opened and flew out. After this happening a couple more times, you see Savitch's face inside and he shoots the man in the face, scarring him for life. Lethal Force is a must for any fan of action or comedy. Look for this off the wall kooky film at a store near you. You can only benefit with a film as wise as this one.

-Maq

DEATH SHIP

Alvin Rakoff* (1980)

Anyone that has watched the History Channel has heard about the horrible automobile-Auschwitzs, vans that apparently drove around gassing Jews around the clock while strolling the block. These portable Death-Camps are just one of the many tales told after the second World War that make young children cry and the dreaded perpetrators want to die. But what if there was a Death-Camp sailing the mysterious seas today? What about an Evil Nazi ship that makes the Titanic look like the lush luxury ship that it was? In the 1980 movie Death Ship the horrors of the Hollywood concocted Evil-Supernatural-Nazi-Mythos enters the uncharted territories of a truly dead sea. Maybe Herr Goebbels should have taken some propaganda lessons from the masters of Hollywood for The Eternal Jew and Jew Süß are far too tame in comparison to the dreaded Death Ship!

Actor George Kennedy has come a long way since his performance as the goofy and loveable redneck Dragline in Cool Hand Luke. In Death Ship, an older Kennedy plays a deranged ship Captain named Ashland (a possible allusion to Auschwitz!?) who becomes possessed by the ghostly SS (both kinds) spirit of a German Kriegsmarine ship. While making the killings happen as the captain, the refugee passengers of the Toten-Ship attempt to escape with their lives intact. Little do these passengers realize the powerful spirit of National Socialism has consumed Ashland's ogre size body. While on the ship, the passengers are shocked with horror to see aesthetically pleasing red rooms with Swastikas and a micro-movie theater projecting unstoppable Nazi archive footage. SSooky SSstuff!

One of the "best" and most standout scenes in Death Ship is when the Holocaust victims are found on the ship. The skeletons of victims are scattered around and there is even a box found with the gold teeth of rich Jews!!!! The filmmakers must have taken a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., because their commitment to historical accuracy is impeccable. I couldn't forget a scene involving a woman with a fat ass (check screenshot) taking a warm and bloody shower. The allusions to the Holocaust were with me throughout the scene. Without a doubt, Death Ship is pure Hollywood-GOLD in its unintentional commitment to being mildly humorous!

"Those who survive the ghost ship are better off dead!" is the zany and wonderfully wild tagline to the movie poster of Death Ship. I just wonder if the producers of Death Ship feel the same way about the survivors of the real Holocaust. Like the 1977 film Shock Waves before it, Death Ship is a film where the SS Ship of the Sea meets the SS of Heinrich Himmler's genocidal glee. Unfortunately, aside from Captain Ashland, no awesome Nazi uniforms are present in Death Ship which is a must in any film dealing with the SS. All in All, Death Ship is another passable pile of cinema feces, but still preferable to Swindler's

DEATH SHIP

List.
-Ty E

BETAVILLE

Alyce Wittenstein* (1986)

While the daughters of Hebraic lawyers are not exactly the sort of people you would typically expect to be involved in any half-serious avant-garde cinema movement, such is certainly the case with Alyce Wittenstein (*Rent a Wreck*, *Multiple Futures*), who is one of the more obscure figures associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement and who was apparently once labeled the, “Queen of the New York Underground.” Like many of the films associated with both the No Wave and Cinema of Transgression scenes, Wittenstein’s fairly obscure cinematic works are not exactly easy to find, yet I managed to stumble upon her kaleidoscopic 20-minute dystopian farce *Betaville* (1986), which was marketed as “A Post-Modern Nightmare” and is probably best described as a satire of Jean-Luc Godard’s obnoxiously minimalistic (anti)sci-fi flick *Alphaville*, *une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution* (1965) aka *Alphaville: A Strange Adventure of Lemmy Caution* as directed by an overly scene conscious chick who seemed more interested in making a sequel to Slava Tsukerman’s *Liquid Sky* (1982) than lampooning the style of some unintentionally goofy frog comic filmmaker. While directed, co-written, and produced by Wittenstein, the film owes a great deal of its charm, character, and aesthetic integrity to lead actor Steve Ostringer, who also acted as the co-writer and production designer (in fact, he would work in the same capacity on virtually every one of Wittenstein’s other films, thus one could argue that all of these cinematic works really have two central auteurs). As its ironical title somewhat hints, *Betaville* is set in a dystopian realm of perennially sneering beta-bitch man-pussies, albeit of the somewhat idiosyncratic stripe as most of these exceedingly effete fellows look as if they had been run over a by an ice cream truck that was driven by Klaus Nomi and John Sex while the former was inseminating the latter with AIDS. In other words, the flagrantly fairy-like fellows featured in Wittenstein’s fairly politically incorrect flick are not even fit to shine Eddie ‘Lemmy Caution’ Constantine’s shoes, or so the outmoded pseudo-alpha-male protagonist of the film discovers as he watches in compulsively cynical horror as his beloved city degenerates into one big gigantic fag New Romanticiſt-esque fashion show where traditional film noir men fall prey to salacious sluts with dyke haircuts who prefer jumping the bones of androgynous wimps that wear more makeup than they do. While a regime of logical science where free thought, love, poetry, and emotion are banned rules in the titular dystopian metropolis featured in Godard’s *Alphaville*, Wittenstein’s film features a pompous poof urban pandemonium where radio networks dictate fashion sensibilities and a person’s worth is judged by how flamboyantly they dress. Indeed, *Betaville* may not make any serious statements about the collective *Weltschmerz* that is plaguing the metaphysical corpse that is Occidental man, but it does provide charming and witty campy fun and of-

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fers the closest thing to a neo-noir equivalent to Mark L. Lester's *Class of 1984* (1982), Troma's *Class of Nuke 'Em High* (1986), Stanley Lewis's *Punk Vacation* (1990), and various other 1980s cult flicks where the bad guys resembled rabid psychopathic punks. Somewhat bizarrely, the fashion victims in Wittenstein's film probably most resemble those featured in the aberrosexual hardcore porn flick *Squalor Motel* (1985) directed by tranny pornographer Kim Christy. Surely the most intriguing short but sweet avant-garde micro-noir since Cabaret Voltaire scored 22-minute celluloid cult item *Johnny YesNo* (1982) directed by Peter Care, *Betaville* is probably the most pleasantly playful cinematic work on the fringes on the Cinema of Transgression movement.

Betaville begins with protagonist 'Coman Gettme' (Steve Ostringer) driving around in his car with a little lady simply known as 'The Girl' (Holly Adams of Richard Kern's *Horoscope* (1991) and Charles Pinion's *Red Spirit Lake* (1993)), who he states to, "I'm glad we're outta that pile of transistors" and "You're lucky I had some business there...Or you'd still be plucking at those circuit boards with those little tweezers." Indeed, as depicted in a black-and-white flashback scene from the day before, Coman saved the girl by picking her up from the pavement and giving her a lift in his car after she was thrown to the concrete in pouring down rain after her fat old factory manager caught her reading a Superman comic when she was supposed to be putting together transistors like her fellow serfs in the futuristic sweatshop where she worked. As demonstrated by the fact that scenes set in the Girl's home are in black-and-white, the female lead is from a place that resembles Godard's *Alphaville* and which Coman describes as a "Bauhausian boobyhatch" and "technological tour-de-farce." A sort of metropolitan nationalist that loathes leaving his home turf, Coman loves his city and is quite vocal about this love as reflected in his remark to the Girl, "I've never really loved anything except this city. The graphics on the neighborhood drugstore...The linoleum in the lobby of the Bijou...The curious expressions on the faces of the kids...The lonely ladies on the barstools...The lonely men that try to talk to them...The sound of the garbage trucks in the morning...The traffic in midday...And the sirens at night. Out of it all, everything's different...interesting...it gives me something to think about. Some people say it is all a bit too much...But to me, anything else is a bit too little." Unbeknownst to citylicker Coman, a pernicious plague has infested *Betaville* and when he finally arrives back to his hometown, the social cancer of underground fashion trends will completely consume the hopelessly vain and stupid Girl, who comes from a literally colorless world where reading a stupid comic book will get you thrown in the street like a pile of rotting garbage.

Upon sneaking the Girl into *Betaville* by hiding her under his dashboard since she does not have a passport to show a border guard (who is actually a dubious blonde chick in disguise who will stalk the protagonist for the rest of the film), Coman turns on the radio and is distressed to discover that every single

station is playing what he describes as, “the same lousy tune.” Indeed, the radio stations are spreading a message of authoritarian ‘fashionism’ as reflected in one announcer’s ludicrously languidly spoken declaration, “Green may not be worn with blue. Fashion is the dictum of a free people. The substance of a nation is style.” As Coman states, “Betaville’s always been a place where a guy can feel at home... Full of quaint little bars and cafes where you can feel human again,” but little does the protagonist realize that his beloved hometown has been invaded by hedonistic homos, fierce fag hags, and pretentious postmodernist artists and that he will soon will feel like nothing more than outmoded human garbage that fell out of fashion decades ago. While Coman hopes to take the Girl to his favorite diner to get some home-style chipped beef not longer after arriving back to Betaville, he only finds a disappointing modern pizza joint that has pretentious painters, New Wave hookers, and swarthy Guido-esque pimps lurking around it. While eating slices of pizza with the girl at the less than class pizza place, Coman has his first encounter with what he less than flatteringly describes as, “the new elite... nouveau homos, so to speak.” Indeed, Coman is approached by three particularly pompous-looking poofs, including a longhaired chap carrying a purse and sporting an extra tight blue sports bra, a sort of sod pseudo-sailor with a silver glittery ‘uniform,’ and funny fellow in a giant yellow suit jacket and swarthy complexion that the protagonist describes as looking like “Reginald Van Gleason III from Mars.” Needless to say, Coman is disgusted when the Girl licks her lips at the perennially posturing queersome threesome, especially after ‘Reginald’ gives her an invitation to a show, though the protagonist is also somewhat confused by the entire dubious encounter, thinking to himself, “I couldn’t figure if they were after the girl... or just trying to bone me.” As Coman narrates, “going to a party with these futuristic fops of the funny pages wasn’t exactly what I had in mind,” but he is willing to do anything to please the girl, especially after he takes her back to his apartment at a place called the ‘Skyline’ and she jumps his bones. Indeed, like most film noir heros, Coman seems fairly hopeless when it comes to reading the minds of the members of the opposite sex, but luckily the Girl takes it upon herself to change into some lingerie, sit on his desk in a provocative fashion, and then literally jump into his lap, thus making it quite clear to the protagonist what she really wants. Unfortunately for Coman, it is not only the first but also the last night he will be spending with the Girl.

The next day, Coman is rather dismayed when he takes the Girl to a seemingly pessimistic place called ‘Schopenhauer Square Park’ and discovers it has been transformed into a landfill. Indeed, it seems that the bombastically dressed beta boys that have infiltrated that city not only have poor taste in clothing and haircuts, but philosophy as well. Out of supposedly sheer “masochistic curiosity,” Coman decides to take the Girl to the club that fashion victim Reginald gave the latter an invite to and naturally the protagonist is surprised to see the patently preposterously sight of a group of New Romanticiſt ſtyle perverts danc-

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ing to generic synthesizer-driven New Wave music. While the Girl wallows in the entertainment and dances provocatively with various strange and seemingly queer men, Coman eventually “decides to make a quick getaway” and leaves by himself after suffering the shame of dancing all by his lonesome for a minute or two while sticking out like a sore thumb next to all the cyber-punk fashionistas at the club. After shooting a man dead for daring to break a bottle over his head after he simply asks him for a light, the rather reluctantly lovelorn Coman becomes somewhat emotionally vulnerable and attempts to call the Girl, but she says literally nothing and immediately hangs up on him upon picking up the phone because she wants to continue making love to and drinking wine with some borderline tranny in a glittery outfit with an absolutely appalling avant-garde Jew-fro. At this point, Coman rightly realizes that he is a “stranger in this town,” but rather wrongly assumes that the Girl needs to be saved by him because she is supposedly “naïve and vulnerable” when, in fact, she is a cold and calculating femme fatale cunt who wants him dead. Meanwhile, Coman realizes that a strange blonde (director Wittenstein) has been stalking him, which he finds somewhat annoying since he, “hates blondes.”

While hoping that the Girl will realize that Betaville has transformed into a perturbingly preposterous “postmodern nightmare” as a result of “fashion” (or what he describes as “contamination”), Coman has let love contaminate his mind and is suffering from a stereotypical heterosexual film noir hero delusion that ultimately gets him killed. Indeed, in the film’s intentionally anti-climatic climax, Coman senselessly runs inside a futuristic building to save the Girl even though he has no clue as to who and/or what awaits him inside the seemingly pernicious place. In the end, Coman is immediately shot dead when he enters the building and comes face to face with his ladylove, who barely even bothers to acknowledge him upon killing him. After shooting Coman, the Girl hands her murder weapon to the mysterious blonde woman and somehow the gun manages to vanish in thin air immediately after being placed on the golden girl’s palm. After a scene featuring close-up headshots of various automaton-like fashion victims, including the Girl, who seem like they they are a New Romanticiſt equivalent to the extraterrestrial alien duplicates in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the film concludes with an audio recording of Coman stating, “This isn’t in exactly what I had in mind.”

It should be noted that Betaville is the first chapter in a satirical lo-fi sci-fi trilogy entitled *Multiple Futures* starring Holly Adams that was followed by *No Such Thing As Gravity* (1989) and *The Deflowering* (1994). In fact, although these films are more of sequels in terms of theme as opposed to characters and storyline, Wittenstein later decided to combine all three films and release them as the 100-minute feature *Multiple Futures* (1995). While I cannot really comment on *The Deflowering* since I could not locate a copy (though I do know that it features a quote from Guido commie theorist Antonio Gramsci’s posthu-

mously published work *Prison Notebooks*), *No Such Thing As Gravity* is notable for featuring the special novelty of featuring Cinema of Transgression anti-messiah Nick Zedd portraying a fairly normal and level-headed hero, as well as featuring one-time Warhol superstar Taylor Mead (Gregory J. Markopoulos' *The Illiac Passion*, Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboy*) and eccentric dwarf Michael J. Anderson of David Lynch fame in a rare pre-*Twin Peaks* role. Somewhat strangely for someone that collaborated with Mr. Zedd and was associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement, director Wittenstein would go on to become both a yoga teacher for babies and a member of her father's law firm Wittenstein & Wittenstein in Queens, NYC. Of course, a good portion of the appeal of Wittenstein's films charm and potency are a result of the neo-retro sci-fi visuals, which were created by Steve Ostringer, who also co-wrote all the scripts, thus they are, at best, collaborative works between two main individuals and not true auteur pieces. While not exactly the most bizarre of the various neo-noir flicks associated with the No Wave and Cinema of Transgression movements (Mexican-born auteur Manuel DeLanda's *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980) is simply one of the most one of the most preternatural and absurd neo-noir pieces ever made), Betaville is arguably the most addicting, especially for cinephiles, including someone like myself who does not exactly have a hard-on for Godard or Alphaville. Far too tongue-in-cheek and just plain goofy to be truly subversive despite its overt anti-technocratic message (indeed, one could argue that the film is a direct attack against Italian Futurism, even if seems to be somewhat aesthetically influenced by Futurist flicks like *Thais* (1917) directed by Anton Giulio Bragaglia), Wittenstein's short is like the NYC underground equivalent of a Friedberg and Seltzer flick, albeit actually sometimes humorous and witty and with an actual smidgen of artistic integrity. More or less feeling like the quite curious result of a heterosexual Jewish American princess who wanted to rebel against her hopelessly bourgeois background by attempting to create a campy sci-fi flick in the spirit of the films of underground queer goyim filmmakers like the Kuchar brothers and Jack Smith, Betaville ultimately makes art fags seem like a menace that is ten times worse than the plague, which is certainly something I can appreciate, especially in our real-life dystopian era when there is a rather queen-ish double-bastard as the U.S. president who decided to display his own aesthetic (and possibly sexual) sensibilities when he had the White House lit up with gay rainbow lights. While I rather much prefer re-watching *Kamikaze 1989* (1982) featuring Fassbinder in his very last acting role when I am feeling inclined to see a sardonically satirical cyber-punk flick, Wittenstein's film deserves to be credited as the closest thing to a *Blade Runner* of the Cinema of Transgression scene. Of course, like Ridley Scott's classic cult film, Betaville is inordinately memorable and begs for repeat viewings.

-Ty E

AROUND FLESH, TRASH /& HEAT
AROUND FLESH, TRASH /& HEAT

Amaury Voslion (2003)

Aside from the book *The Films of Paul Morrissey* (1993) written by Maurice Yacowar – which is the only serious academic study of the Warhol Factory filmmaker – and the feature-length ‘video-memoir’ document *Factory Days: Paul Morrissey Remembers the Sixties* (2006), the French documentary anthology *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat* (2003) by French documentarian filmmaker Amaury Voslion is indubitably one of the best sources for information on the “Paul Morrissey Trilogy” produced by Andy Warhol. *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat* also features information on Morrissey’s experience as the manager of *The Velvet Underground* and Nico, footage from the famous concert *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* that took in NYC in May 1967 directed by Ronald Nameth, and the 36-minute documentary *Scenes from the life of Andy Warhol: Friends and Intersections* (1982) directed by Jonas Mekas (*Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania, Lost Lost Lost*). Quite frankly, the films by Nameth and Mekas add virtually nothing to *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat* and reflect the sort of Warholian monster that has followed Paul Morrissey throughout his career, thereupon giving credit where credit is not due because the Warhol brandname was written in large letters for films the pop-con-artist had no part in writing, filming, or directing. As Morrissey once stated, “Andy would just give me the money and let me do what I wanted. He had an encouraging tendency, always asking what he could do for you...He wasn’t stupid but he didn’t come across intelligent. But he was. He knew what he could do and what he couldn’t.” After directing, editing, shooting, and distributing so-called Warhol films like *Chelsea Girls* (1966), *I, a Man* (1967), *Bike Boy* (1967), *The Nude Restaurant* (1967), and *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968), Morrissey was finally able to develop a distinctive and pioneering auteur style of filmmaking with a gritty and sometimes grating ‘anti-aesthetic’ that complimented the filmmaker’s astute satire and social commentary on the sexual revolution and counter-culture movements that were terribly trendy at that time. As a proud and uncompromising right-wing conservative, Morrissey was able to do the seemingly impossible while working with virtually nil budget by making curiously campy comedies that de-romanticized and deconstructed the gutter-level glamour of sex, drugs, & rock ‘n’ roll, which amusingly generally appealed to the sort of viewers that they lampooned. Needless to say, with his relatively successful career in comedic filmmaking, Paul Morrissey inevitably had the last laugh.

As Morrissey explains in the segment “About Flesh” in *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat*, Andy Warhol was the one giving the budding conservative filmmaker the encouragement to make the first film in his classic trilogy *Flesh* (1968). While working as a manager at the Warhol Factory, Morrissey was responsible for gathering up Warhol Superstars as extras for the later infamous pseudo-

Warhol-esque hippie artist party scene (which features Viva, Ultra Violet, etc.) in John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). After Morrissey explained to Warhol that *Midnight Cowboy* was about a male prostitute (a subject previously covered by Warhol in the 1965 film *My Hustler*), the pop-artist recommended to his young 'protégé' that he beat John Schlesinger to the chance and make an independent cinematic work in a similar vein, but releasing it before to the Hollywood film. Of course, Morrissey did and the film was *Flesh* (1968) starring then-relatively unknown hustler-turned-actor Joe Dallesandro in the lead role. As Morrissey explains in *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat*, *Flesh* was the first film in cinema history where an audience was handcuffed and arrested after a Nigerian distributor made the mistake of having the film screened in jolly old England. Little Joe would also go on to star in the second two films in the Paul Morrissey Trilogy as well: *Trash* (1970) and *Heat* (1972). Ironically, for a film that literally describes the counter-culture it sardonically spoofs as "worthless garbage" with its title, *Trash* would be described by *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1970 as the "Best Film of the Year" and turned Dallesandro into a sex icon among youth culture and the so-called sexual revolution.

As he clearly states in *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat*, what ties all the films in Morrissey's trilogy together, aside from Dallesandro's presence, is that all the films feature a "world where sex is dead" due the fact that the lead character is a product/victim of the sexual revolution (aka sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll) because, as an idiot idealist who bought into mindless hedonism, he has become a heroin addict who can't get an erection, even with all the pussy and cocks that are incessantly waved in front of his face. Each one of the films focuses on the three main ingredients of the sexual revolution: *Flesh* being about sex, *Trash* being about drugs, and *Heat* being about rock 'n' roll with the films in the Paul Morrissey trilogy offering a less than nostalgic view of this trend that still lingers today among youth. Despite being constantly described as a loose remake of Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), Morrissey described the final film in his trilogy *Heat* as being intrinsically influenced by Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930) aka *Der blaue Engel* starring Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich, albeit with the gender roles reversed (instead of a young cabaret whore using and destroying an esteemed educator like in Sternberg's film, a drugged-out would-be-rock-star uses a washed-up actress to finance his career) with Sylvia Miles and Joe Dallesandro as the stars. In *Heat*, the anti-hero Joey Davis (Dallesandro) – a hustler and former child star – wants to jumpstart his rock star career so he superficially seduces an older Sally Todd (Miles) with the most patently pitiable yet perversely playful of results. Naturally, Paul Morrissey would continue to satirize the complete and utter worthlessness and corrosiveness of liberalism and counter-culture with his more professionally directed works like *Forty Deuce* (1982), *Mixed Blood* (1985), and *Spike of Bensonhurst* (1988).

As Paul Morrissey makes quite clear in *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat*, he al-

AROUND FLESH, TRASH /& HEAT

most singlehandedly ran Warhol's factory for a number of years, but especially everything and anything related to filmmaking. Eventually, Morrissey became the manager and producer of The Velvet Underground and even made the crucial recommendation of adding German singer Nico (born Christa Päffgen), thereupon resulting in the film *The Velvet Underground and Nico: A Symphony of Sound* (1966), the revolutionary 'art rock' album *The Velvet Underground & Nico* (1967) and the seemingly thaumaturgic and quasi-psychedelic multi-media event *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (1966-1967), where the Factory filmmaker (with the help of forgotten filmmaker Danny Williams) would project footage he shot on the wall while the band performed. As Morrissey explained, in the documentary *Factory Days: Paul Morrissey Remembers the Sixties* (2006), The Velvet Underground inevitably disbanded because Lou Reed had a pestering and overwhelming jealousy of Nico, but the filmmaker would continue to work as the singer's manager for some time thereafter. Essentially, *Around Flesh, Trash & Heat* makes for a great introduction to the work, philosophy, and influence of Paul Morrissey, especially in regard to his original trilogy, so it is a shame that the French documentary is not exactly easily accessible, which is undoubtedly another sign of Andy Warhol's undeserved and unearned legacy haunting the anti-revolutionary revolutionary auteur filmmaker's work.

-Ty E

DEVARIM

Amos Gitai* (1995)

Devarim is the first film I have viewed from Israel. It takes a realist aesthetic to provide a very intimate look into the lives of three Israeli's and their hang-ups entering middle age. Devarim is sort of like Federico Fellini's *I Vitelloni* except more centered around desperation and less flamboyant. Director Amos Gitai seems to have also taken cues from the Italian neorealists, French New Wave, and even German New Wave. The shot composition of the film is very standard (reminding me of Fassbinder) and used to focus the scenes on the intense (yet for the most part monotone) drama between characters. Many shots featuring no dialogue and a character simply walking down the street in a lonely way. Most conversations in Devarim are quite dark as suicide and the inevitability of death are discussed quite often. It is interesting seeing personal drama Tel Aviv while knowing that the IDF is trying to hunt down "militants" in the same city. These topics are only briefly discussed. Devarim is not going to appeal to most audiences as it is up to the viewer to derive meaning from the film. Although intellectually stimulating, the film is quite dark and depressing. The older the character in the film, the more they have realized the torment of life and it's unpredictable tragedies. Suicide becomes the only way to beat death at it's own game as one character in Devarim brings up. An older woman in the film brings up her lifelong belief in atheism and she is obviously unhappy. Does it hurt one to believe in something false and die happy? Director Amos Gitai might have promise as a director as he develops his niche with each subsequent film he creates (of course I would have to see his others). I can respect any director that can turn nothing into something. Paul Morrissey, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Giuseppe Andrews, and Pier Paolo Pasolini are some directors I truly respect for that reason. Exploding heads become old very quickly.

-Ty E

FIONA
FIONA

Amos Kollek* (1998)

Unquestionably, Amos Kollek (*Goodbye, New York, Fast Food Fast Women*) is one of the worst Israeli filmmakers who has ever lived which certainly says a lot. Indeed, Israeli cinema as a whole pretty much discredits the stereotype that the members of god's chosen tribe make better filmmakers. It should be noted that Kollek is not just any random Hebrew, as he is the son of Hungarian-born Hebraic politician Theodor "Teddy" Kollek who, on top of being named in tribute to Zionist founder Theodor Herzl and being the longtime mayor of Jerusalem (1965 - 1993), was once described as "the greatest builder of Jerusalem since Herod." In fact, the director even made a documentary about his father with the rather lazy title *Teddy Kollek* (1995). Indubitably, any talent Teddy might have had as a keen observer of society and culture was lost on his seemingly prodigal son Amos, who has dedicated his life to making innately immoral quasi-pornographic smut disguised as socially redeeming avant-garde cinema. Indeed, a sort of Judaic Abel Ferrara meets a less pretentious Henry Jaglom, Kollek largely makes pseudo-controversial failed cult films that only seem to be released in Europe revolving around a tragic female protagonist in trouble who is more or less a pathetic product of the society in which she lives. In his rightfully long forgotten would-be-cult-hit *Forever, Lulu* (1987), Kollek demonstrated just how truly untalented he is by making a film starring Fassbinder's muse Hanna Schygulla and Deborah 'Blondie' Harry that actually manages to be singularly unsexy, reliably banal, and sickeningly soulless. Indeed, despite being from the same tribe as kosher funnymen like the Marx Brothers, Woody Allen, and Harmony Korine, Kollek somehow absurdly thought that titillating Teuton Schygulla would be capable of playing a comedic lead. While I am convinced that Kollek has less artistic talent than his religious brother Michael Bay, he has made a handful of films that are reasonably entertaining, if not for all the wrong reasons. Indeed, *Fiona* (1998), starring the director's dud-diva Anna Levine (aka 'Anna Thomsen')—a mostly untalented yet artificially busted art-house pseudo-superstar who has starred in works ranging from Mary Harron's feminist filmic feces *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996) and French fag auteur François Ozon's decidedly disappointing Fassbinder adaptation *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* (2000) where she plays a post-op tranny—is a plainly pathetic celluloid turd that pretends to be a "hard drama" about a drug-addled bisexual hooker that reeks of moral retardation and sordid and sleazy sensationalism, as a work of hokey 'hookersploitation' in a gritty realist quasi-documentary-like style that is undeniably entertaining but has about as much artistic merit as fossilized dog dung.

Fiona (Anna Levine) is a sassy streetwalker with a voracious appetite for drugs and pussy who seems like she has had a lot of plastic surgery done despite the

fact she is more or less a down-and-out bum who crashes at her bull dyke lesbian friends' seedy apartments. Fiona's sorry lot in life started practically after birth when her hooker mother abandoned her as a baby by leaving her in a NYC alley in her stroller. As she describes the event, "I remember being left out on the street by my mother. Most people don't think a 6 month old baby can remember anything, but I really do. I remember everything. She left me there to die, I mean...I remember the feeling. Only her face I don't remember so clearly. It was hidden by glasses." Probably partially due to the fact that she was eventually adopted by a family of which the father routinely raped her, Fiona would love to put a bullet in the brain of her biological mother. Due to being molested at such a young age, Fiona came to the conclusion that, "sex is the answer to everything" and that she will use her decidedly defiled body to, "get out of this miserable place." Unfortunately, prostitution has only landed her in a personal pandemonium involving drug addiction, carpet-munching, self-destruction, suicide attempts, and inevitably death. To make a little bit of cash, Fiona is willing to do more than just peddle her overused gash, as she does things like lick the toes of her bull-dyke friend to satisfy more particular patrons. Fiona is also an ungrateful little lady, as she describes a young male that saves her life during a suicide attempt as a "secondary creature." Indeed, as a victim of regular sexual abuse, Fiona prefers to be around lady-licker junkies and crackheads as opposed to a male that seems genuinely concerned about her safety.

During one of the most absurd scenes of Fiona, the heroin-addled eponymous anti-heroine pulls a gun on a poor man's Mickey Rourke who she seems to fancy in the middle of a busy restaurant. Indeed, despite initially threatening to kill the Rourke-wannabe, she saves him from prison time by killing a couple cops that show up to arrest him, stating of her nonsensical actions, "I shot them because I hate cops...pure and simple...I just acted instinctively; I didn't think or anything. Some things I've done I am sure I shouldn't have done but I really can't make any apologies. I've always just went with my emotions. I'm not really a coldhearted person or anything." Indeed, retarded Rourke flatters Fiona in his own sleazy NYC proletarian way by remarking to her, "Why do you talk like that...like your mouth is right out of the sewer? You know what...cuz you're not like that. I can tell...underneath all of this you're like a sweet tender person...I know this." Of course, he eventually blows Fiona off, even though she wastes a couple pigs for him, thus aborting their romance before it even begins. Unquestionably, Fiona's greatest love affair is with a 30-year-old fellow hooker junky who lost her "life in a couple months" after her husband was imprisoned for drug charges and her little boy was taken away, thus she now lives an unhinged life off the grid. Of course, Fiona's loser lady-lover friend eventually overdoses on junk, but like most tragedies in her life, the forsaken streetwalker gets over her premature death rather quickly.

In a rather unlikely scenario of seemingly magical happenstance, Fiona bumps

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into her mother at a restaurant, though she does not realize until it is too late that she is the woman who give birth to and subsequently abandoned her. Indeed, after paying her super sub-homely crackhead mommy a penny to dance for her, Fiona unwittingly makes incestuous mother-daughter love with her equally perverse progenitor. Rather unfortunately, by the time Fiona wakes up the next day and finds her own baby picture near her bed, mommy dearest has already committed suicide by jumping off a building. Of course, like all the horrible things that happen in her loser life, Fiona does not seem particularly affected by the rather senseless death of her mother. After blowing off a young bourgeois boy who tells her that he loves her and asks for her hand in marriage, Fiona decides to steal a vintage red Chevy and head to a near-elderly black cop's apartment who she previously befriended. Although he is married and plans to start a bed-and-breakfast with his wife when he retires, the colored cock agrees to drop his spouse and head to California with Fiona using cash he stole from drug busts. While the black pig packs stuff and tells his wife that he is leaving her, Fiona heads to a convenience where she regularly steals worthless junk food like Doritos and she is shot by the racially ambiguous brown untermensch storeowner while attempting to make her getaway. While Fiona and her spade sugar daddy begin their journey to California, the hopelessly unlucky hooker assumedly dies from her wounds on the way. In the end, Fiona ends pseudo-poetically with a shot of Fiona as a baby in a stroller, as if to demonstrate that she was not always a Sapphic cum-fueled scumbag. If one learns anything from the film, it is the rather obvious fact that trash begets trash, with Fiona being no different from the worthless crackhead mother that she hated for abandoning her.

Somewhat in the aesthetic spirit of the Warhol-produced "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" (Flesh, Trash, Heat), albeit minus Joe Dallesandro's dong and a sardonically hilarious anti-counter-culture essence, Fiona is the unintentionally entertaining result of what happens when a morally vacant perennial dilettante pretends to make a serious, socially-conscious film about cliché urban plagues ranging from prostitution to drug addiction just so he can get his lead actress naked as many times as possible. Indeed, somewhat resembling an anorexic drag queen with bigger silicone tits than brains, lead Anna Levine is certainly responsible for any charisma or entertainment value the film might have, albeit in a fashion comparable to that of chimp drinking its own piss or one of the countless phony black scientist characters in Hollywood movies. Featuring insanely insipid dialogue like a scene where a braindead crackhead makes the elementary school joke, "Why can a prostitute make more money than a crack dealer? All she's gotta do is wash off her crack and use it again," Fiona really has to be seen to be believed as a rare ostensible arthouse work that is so bad, it's almost good. If you're looking for a fucked urban hooker-on-heroin flick somewhat in the dispiriting spirit of Abel Ferrara, albeit more needlessly nihilistic and minus the glaring McWop Catholic guilt, Fiona is probably your film. As a work directed by the

son of the ex-mayor of the Jewish capital of the world, Kollek's film also acts as a sort of accidental aberrant allegory from America as a whole. Indeed, acting as a sort of cinematic pimp, Zionist Israeli Kollek coerced a bunch of real goy crackheads and prostitutes to exploit their unglory in America's unofficial Jewish capital. Somewhat notably, with his later equally recklessly wanton and witless work *Restless* (2008)—a film that managed to upset some Israelis due to its sometimes unflattering depictions of Israelites—Kollek would depict the strong Judaic connection between NYC and the unholy holyland. While Kollek's feelings towards Israel are somewhat ambiguous at best, his love of drug-addled pussy-peddlers is undeniable as demonstrated by the plodding yet sometimes playful softcore poverty-and-prostitution porn piece that is *Fiona*.

-Ty E

THE FOREIGNER
THE FOREIGNER

Amos Poe (1978)

Just as it had influenced a number of New German Cinema filmmakers and their early films, including Alexander Kluge with his debut feature *Abschied von gestern* (1966) aka *Yesterday Girl* and Rainer Werner Fassbinder with his debut feature *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* (1969) aka *Love is Colder Than Death*, the French New Wave would have a crucial influence on the New York City underground, especially the No Wave Cinema movement. Indeed, the movement's founder was arguably Israeli-born auteur Amos Poe (*Subway Riders*, *Triple Bogey on a Par Five Hole*) who early works *Night Lunch* (1975) and *The Blank Generation* (1976) were more or less punk rock homemovies starring then-unknown musicians ranging from the Ramones to Richard Hell to Blondie and whose first narrative feature *Unmade Beds* (1976) was the sort of *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* of the No Wave scene, with the art fag protagonist absurdly believing that he is Jean-Paul Belmondo's character from Godard's flick (in fact, when the film was released on DVD by Eclectic DVD Distribution, it featured the tagline, "Godard's BREATHLESS re-made by the avatar of the "New" New Wave!"). Of course, not unlike Kluge and Fassbinder, Poe did not really become an intriguing filmmaker until he began to dispose of his fetish for the frog filmmakers of *La Nouvelle Vague*. In fact, with his second narrative feature *The Foreigner* (1978) starring French-born auteur Eric Mitchell (*Kidnapped*, *Underground U.S.A.*), Poe virtually single-handedly gave birth to the No Wave movement, or as the film's female lead Patti Astor—an underground actress turned gallery owner whose real-life promotion of urban negro culture is reflected in Charlie Ahearn's proto-hip-hop flick *Wild Style* (1983)—stated in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Céline Danhier, "You really have to give Amos Poe the credit for starting the next independent film movement after Andy Warhol." Even Poe himself credits the film as inspiring all of his compatriots in the NYC underground as revealed by his remarks in *Blank City*, but more importantly said compatriots have also said the same thing. While para-punk auteur Scott B (*Black Box*, *Vortex*) said of the flick, "THE FOREIGNER was very fast, very tough and really there in the moment," alpha-hipster Jim Jarmusch was even more generous when he stated, "One of my favorite films, that actually encouraged me to make films, was Amos Poe's THE FOREIGNER. When I saw that, in 1978 or so, I got really inspired because he had made a feature film for about \$5,000. It was so loose and raw, so close to the idea of the music of the late Seventies - so-called punk music where musicianship wasn't important, virtuosity wasn't the main criterion, it was "I have something I want to express." It's a very loose story about a guy, played by Eric Mitchell, who's being chased most of the film. He has real short hair, bleached blond, and there's a great scene where he's walking down an alley and he walks by

Debbie Harry, who plays a hooker; she's really gorgeous and she has a cigarette and she says, "You got a light, blondie?" I haven't seen it in years, but it really gave me a lot of energy. It was my favorite New York punk movie - I hate to use that kind of label - of that period."

Somewhat ironically, despite being directed by a Hebraic hipster that was born in Tel Aviv, *The Foreigner*, not unlike Poe's subsequent feature *Subway Riders* (1981), owes a great deal of its style and aesthetic potency to its Austrian-born Germanic assistant director, associate DP, and editor Johanna Heer, who went on to shoot important European cult works like Hungarian auteur Gábor Bódy's epic punk swansong *Kutya éji dala* (1983) aka *The Dog's Night Song* and the kaleidoscopic kraut flick *Decoder* (1984) directed by Muscha and featuring various drug-addled cult figures like Christiane Felscherinow, FM Einheit, a pre-tranny Genesis P-Orridge, and even William S. Burroughs. Not unlike *Subway Riders* and *Decoder*, *The Foreigner* features a sort of highly stylized low-budget neo-Expressionist aesthetic with Warholian undertones. Luckily, the Aryan influences do not end there, as the film is about a nihilistic European blond beast that comes to NYC as a sort of disgraced terrorist agent to get away from his continental compatriots, but ultimately finds himself alone recording himself reading Hermann Hesse in his hotel room and suffering from a decidedly debilitating case of *Weltschmerz*. A sort of neo-Expressionist punk anti-noir (or 'no noir') with vague horror elements where perennial loneliness, malignant paranoia, collective social autism, senseless nihilistic violence, and sexual and romantic dysfunction are the name of the game, Poe's film is like a cryptically Teutonized No Wave equivalent to Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), albeit starring a frog in an American film as opposed to a American in a frog film, meets Hesse's novel *Steppenwolf* (1927) and Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger* (1942) with a tad bit of metaphysical influence from *The Rebel* (1951). While probably not a masterpiece of any sort outside of the mostly mediocre No Wave realm, *The Foreigner* is a goldmine for fans of punk as a work that features the members of the proto-psychobilly group *The Cramps* giving the film's lead a sadomasochistic beating that is nothing if not fetishistic, among various other distinctly memorable moments that demonstrate what true cult cinema is all about. Also, the musical score by Czech-American musician Ivan Král (who previously co-directed *The Blank Generation* with Poe) is actually quite good and certainly infinitely superior to the sort of degenerate pseudo-avant-garde jazz that plagues much of Poe's films and No Wave cinema in general.

The Foreigners somewhat fittingly begins on Halloween 1977 with angst-ridden antihero 'Max Menace' (No Wave auteur Eric Mitchell with his hair dyed bleach blond)—a moody and broody European spy/terrorist of the seemingly innately inept sort that looks like the morbidly depressed loser grandson of Laurence Olivier—arriving in NYC via airplane in a slightly tacky all-white suit and walking through an airport in a scene juxtaposed with increasingly ominous

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ambient noise that hints that the character is about to enter a sort of metaphysical pandemonium that he will probably not survive. When Max is picked up by a taxi, he answers virtually everyone of the driver's questions with a simple robotic "yes," as if he is plagued by paranoia and would prefer not to giveaway personal details. Max wants to go to Manhattan, but when the taxi driver asks him the specific location he is headed to, he curiously replies, "Just drive." Unbeknownst to Max, the taxi driver, who is dressed like a leather-fag, is actually an operative of a dubious unnamed group of druggo punks led by a faggy fellow named 'King Bag' aka 'Shake' (painter Duncan Hannah, who played the lead role in Poe's first feature *Unmade Beds*) that wants to hunt down the lead for an unexplained reason. Of course, it is also unexplained as to why he has flown to NYC or what he plans to do there, but it seems pretty obvious from the beginning that he will be dead by the end in an unfriendly city where social alienation is a way of life and where sensitive souls have no chance of surviving. Not long after arriving in the shitty east coast city, Max meets a kraut contact on a beach (German photographer Klaus Mettig) who tells him when he asks if he can still help him, "Well, I tell you, for the moment it is practically impossible. The police and the underground are constantly harassing us. I'm not in such a hot position either, but I'll give you the name of a friend that might help you, but be careful." As Max will soon discover, he is majorly fucked as he is ultimately led on a merry-go-round of abject neglect and apathy where each contact he encounters proves to be more worthless than the last, not to mention the fact that a motley crew of deranged punk rock dope fiends are attempting to hunt him down.

Max may be a murderous spy of sorts, but he gets a kick out of watching punk docs while lying around the seedy hotel room he is renting. Indeed, after watching a performance of "Fan Club" by UK punk band The Damned on a tiny black-and-white TV, Max listens to a narrator hilariously stating, "It is a rare punk performance that doesn't wind up with someone hurt or something destroyed, usually for no discernible reason. At this performance by The Damned, fans were having such fun crashing into each other that they ripped off the ceiling and the electrical wiring. It was the totally mindless action of which punk rockers seemed inordinately proud. They can't do anything else...they can destroy. They count it an accomplishment." The narrator of the doc also says something about punks that epitomizes the senselessly nihilistic psyches of Shake, describing them as follows, "What seems to worry the British is not that punk rock fans have rejected the older generation's values, but that they have rejected all values. They are anti-everything. They will tell you at the drop of a safety pin that they have no future and that society offers them nothing." As for Max, he is not so much "anti-everything" as he is just disillusioned with the world in general and everyone he encounters. If Max was not a misanthrope before, his time in NYC will certainly lead him to believing that a nuclear apocalypse might be exactly what humanity needs.

Unbeknownst to Max, an East Asian femme fatale in a skintight all-black leather outfit named 'Doll' (Anya Phillips of James Nares' *Rome 78* (1978)) has paid a big bosomed broad named Fili Harlow (Patti Astor of Mitchell's *Underground U.S.A.* (1980) and *Assault of the Killer Bimbos* (1988)) five grand to follow him and everything he does and make sure he does not leave town. Meanwhile, Shake declares to his punk minions in regard to the eponymous protagonist, "The foreigner is for the birds. We're going to snip...snip his head off." As a bunch of bongo-playing pansies who wish they were James Dean and like to play with electric powerdrills, light off firecrackers that they have fastened to their butt-tight denim jeans, and say absurdly retarded pseudo-poetic things like, "...his clenched asshole warned me," Shake's sickeningly dress-conscious leather-clad sub-beta-males minions seem like a said excuse for a hermetic collective of assassins, but of course that is largely one of the things that largely gives the film its inordinately charming character and pathologically offbeat essence. As for Max, when he goes to see the contact that the kraut on the beach gave him, he discovers the fellow does not speak a word of English. When he goes to see another contact (Ronny Stefan) outside of a gay bar, he is rudely asked, "What do you think I am...the Salvation Army?," told "I can't help you," and warned, "Watch your ass." Likewise, upon meeting another contact sporting an absurd cowboy hat named 'Mr. Kool' (the film's cinematographer Chirine El Khadem, who was also the DP of Susan Seidelman's *Smithereens* (1982)) at the sight of the World Trade Center buildings, he is told "You're on your own." Naturally, virtually everyone else Max encounters tells him the same thing, so he begins to accept that he is a lone urban existentialist Euro-cowboy trapped in a city full of bloodthirsty assassins, schizophrenic fashion victims, babbling philistines, rabid mercenaries, cunt-chic femme fatales, and other various sorts of highly deleterious undesirables that are native to NYC.

When not attempting in vain to get help from worthless weirdos around the city, Max enjoys lying around his hotel room and listening to tape recordings he has made of himself. Indeed, Max seems particularly forlorn upon listening to a tape of himself somberly reciting, "When we dream that we dream, we're beginning to wake-up. Bourgeoisie civilization and all of its inanities are always a great joke. The dead...the dead do not discriminate. A coward cannot be free. A coward cannot lose. A coward cannot win. A coward cannot be. Each one carries the remains of his birth, slime and eggshells, with him to the end. That's Hermann Hesse." On the same recording, Max can also be heard bitching things like "every time I think I've found someone, they die" and "I'm only driven by eternal defeat," so it almost seems like he would not mind being assassinated and that his trip to NYC is really a form of unconscious suicide. Certainly, if nothing else, it seems that Max has listened to the Sex Pistols song "No Future" one too many times. When Max takes a ride on a ferry during one particularly sunny November day, he receives an old school shoeshine and is eventually approached

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by an annoyingly extroverted dame of the discernibly dubious sort named 'Zazu Weather' (French TV actress Terens Séverine) who talks him into going to a bar with her and eventually going back to her apartment with her where she ultimately makes him her personal prisoner. The first blatant sign that Zazu might be unhinged is when she complains, "White socks. I never like anything white. I hate it. It disgusts me" and then compliments Max on being filthy and recommends that he not take a bath, but then immediately goes on to complain about how she hates anything that is dirty or filthy and then demands that he take a bath. Not only does Zazu lock Max in her apartment, but she also deprives him of food for two days and ties him to a chair in a manner that makes him seem like the masochistic partner in a stereotypical game of BDSM. Luckily, Zazu is eventually killed while she is playfully eating a sandwich on her bed by a faceless assassin who shoots her about a dozen times. Naturally, Max celebrates Zazu's death by freeing himself from the chair he is tied to and finishing the sandwich that was in the bat-shit crazy broad's hand while she was getting shot. Unfortunately for Max, despite managing to escape from the wrath of Zazu, he is no less safe on the streets.

While walking down the street, a prostitute named 'Dee Trik' (Deborah Harry of Blondie) humorously asks Max, "Hey, Blondie. Have a cigarette?" and of course the protagonist obliges the beautiful street slut. After lighting her a cigarette, Ms. Trik repays Max by singing him a somber take on the German-language song "Bilbao Song" from Bertolt Brecht's and Kurt Weill's three-act commie musical comedy *Happy End* (1929) and then tells him "Thanks soldier." Not surprisingly, Max's brief yet solacing encounter with Dee Trik is probably the happiest moment the character has during the entire film, as everything goes drastically downhill from there as the protagonist is immersed in a deluge of visceral street violence. Indeed, shortly after his encounter with the pseudo-blonde streetwalker, Max is brutally beaten by the members of The Cramps in the bathroom of CBGBs while the band the Erasers plays on stage. Indeed, The Cramps singer Lux Interior even cuts off Max's shirt and then slices up his chest in a somewhat fetishistic fashion. Meanwhile, while looking for Max, who she has been stalking for most of the film, Harlow is knocked out by a faceless person after suffering the shock of discovering her Asiatic friend Doll dead. When Harlow wakes up, she discovers that Doll's corpse has mysteriously disappeared and immediately goes looking for Max. Upon arriving at Max's hotel room, Harlow warns him by shouting to him outside his door, "You're in big trouble, baby [...] Don't move until I come back. I'm the only one that can get you out of here alive." Of course, considering all the pain and suffering he has experienced at the hands of various nefarious ghetto-dwelling New Yorkers, Max hardly trusts Harlow and fails to take heed of her warning. In the end, Max is chased by a car as someone shoots at him while Harlow tries in vain to get to him before it is too late. Rather fittingly, Max is eventually shot in the back multiple times by

Shake's goons while running through Battery Park. Upon collapsing from his wounds, Max grabs onto a fence and stares at the Statue of Liberty in a ending that might be described as quasi-poetically anti-American.

Notably, in a January 1981 interview with BOMB Magazine, Amos Poe somewhat pretentiously stated regarding his film, "THE FOREIGNER remains a mystery to me now, a very cloudy space where questions are allowed to go. Say you call it a genre, where the typical film tells a story by giving certain facts. THE FOREIGNER tells a story by leaving out the facts, a cloudy space where ambiguity, most fears, and emotions exist. If the film is successful at all, in any sense, it's only if that occurs, that type of mystery." To Poe's credit, the film's mystique does to some extent largely lie in its ambiguity and inexplicable foreboding atmosphere, but also its absurdity. Indeed, what is more absurd than a bunch of drug-addled hipster and punk degenerate portraying evil government agents and assassins who have been professionally trained to kill?! Of course, Poe's film is a work that emphasizes preternatural and pleasantly grating style over substance. In terms of its idiosyncratic take on Godard and the French New Wave, *The Foreigner* is certainly comparable to the early works of Fassbinder, especially his black-and-white 'Franz Walsch' gangster trilogy that includes *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969), *Gods of the Plague* (1970), and *The American Soldier* (1970). Interestingly, Fassbinder superstar turned auteur Ulli Lommel came to the United States in the late-1970s and directed *Blank Generation* (1980), which, aside from sharing the same name as Poe's second doc and depicting the same NYC music scene (among other things, Richard Hell appears in both films), also features imperative No Wave influence Andy Warhol. Poe would also pay tribute to Fassbinder at the end of *Subway Riders* during a climatic scene with a shot of a movie theater marquee advertising the Teutonic auteur's classic (anti)Wirtschaftswunder film *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) starring Hanna Schygulla. Notably, both Poe/No Wave scene and Fassbinder would be somewhat linked together in a less than ideal fashion when short moon-faced blonde divas Schygulla and Deborah Harry co-starred together (with Patti Astor) in the botched pseudo-quirky comedy *Forever, Lulu* (1987) directed by Israeli degenerate Amos Kollek, who was clearly influenced by both Warhol/Morrissey and the filmmakers of the NYC underground like fellow Israeli Poe.

Somewhat respectably, Poe would reveal in an interview with BOMB Magazine that he felt his film influenced many other works of the No Wave scene, stating, "I think the B's intentionally or unintentionally copied THE FOREIGNER, in some of their films...there were a whole rash of films for a while about terrorists and kidnappings when that was in the news. Michael Oblowitz uses stereotypes and camera movements that are a lot like THE FOREIGNER's, except they're cleaner." Indeed, both Beth B and Scott B's oeuvre, as well as Oblowitz's early films like *Minus Zero* (1979) and *King Blank* (1983), feature

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various glaring aesthetic and thematic similarities with Poe's flick, albeit executed in a more sensational and, in turn, stupid and superficial way that would ultimately influence the filmmakers of the Cinema of Transgression movement, who also had a hard-on for Warhol yet had seemingly little interest in both the French New Wave and New German Cinema. While *The Foreigner* is certainly one of his best films, I believe that Poe did not reach his peak until his subsequent work *Subway Riders*, which highly benefited from featuring kaleidoscopic cinematography, cult character actors like Susan Tyrrell and John Waters superstar Cookie Mueller, and various idiosyncratic subplots. For a film that was shot guerilla-style in chronological order over the course of only eight days on a mere \$5000 budget that the auteur procured via a phony car loan, Poe's gritty little 'No Noir' flick proves that a little bit of passion goes a long way when siring celluloid art. Interestingly, Poe is somewhat ambivalent of *The Foreigner* and his other early works being labelled 'No Wave,' or as the filmmaker stated in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, "The thing about making an experimental film is having enough stuff and then just going with the accident," he said. "You can look back and say it was all 'No Wave. We certainly didn't have a name for it at the time. We didn't feel part of anything." Admittedly, I can understand Poe's sentiment to a certain degree, as his film is far too 'cinematic' to be lumped in with the pseudo-avant-garde torture porn of Beth B and Scott B and glorified homemovies of Irish feminist Vivienne Dick, among various other examples. Ultimately, as a work that was shot at the World Trader Center buildings and various other iconic NYC landmarks, *The Foreigner* makes for a fitting film to watch on the upcoming anniversary of 9/11 attacks as a sort of modernist horror flick that, at least to some degree, does for the rotten Big Apple what Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) did for Weimar era Berlin. In the other hand, as a work that features European-Americans who express so-called 'xenophobic' sentiments against a curiously dressed European from the Old World, Poe's film will probably induce feelings of nostalgia in viewers who are not too keen on the fact that most American cities are degenerating into third world hellholes that would never produce real art or cinema movements, including those as minor as the No Wave.

-Ty E

SUBWAY RIDERS

Amos Poe (1981)

While I am not a big fan of their music, I have always had a special place in my heart for the hardcore punk band Fear because they not only enjoy pissing off morose leftist pussies by using fascistic imagery, but also because they wrote songs with excellent titles like “New York’s Alright If You Like Saxophones,” which they performed on Saturday Night Live on Halloween in 1981 in an infamous event where they incited a group of slam-dancing NYC-hating punks to hilariously cause \$20,000 worth of damage to the studio. Of course, the song, which has great lyrics like “New York’s alright, If you like art and jazz...New York’s alright, If you’re a homosexual,” is clearly in reference to the too-cool-for-school ‘avant-garde’ No Wave scene, which was comprised of negrophiliac individuals who seemed incapable of directing a single film or composing a single song without including some pretentious saxophonist playing obnoxious discordant noise (apparently, certain half-crazed crippled NYC Hebrews are less tolerant of trumpets). Incidentally, the same year that Fear trashed the Saturday Night Live studio, NYC auteur Amos Poe (Unmade Beds, Alphabet City)—a French New Wave fanboy who has probably done more than any American filmmaker to influence the dreaded Mumblecore movement—released a film that epitomizes more than any other No Wave flick the racially and culturally nihilistic ‘white negro’ obsession with degenerate jazz. Indeed, Poe’s *Subway Riders* (1981) is a sort of unintended film-within-a-film about a hipster serial killer who lures in his victims with his saxophone playing when he is not penning a cryptically autobiographical screenplay about the same thing. A sort of more nihilistic and cynical NYC underground equivalent to the classic slasher flick *Maniac* (1980) starring Joe Spinell, this now obscenely outmoded NOIR-ish ‘hipster horror’ flick is quite arguably Poe’s most ambitious and aesthetically accomplished work to date, as a rare No Wave flick with a sometimes entrancing *mise-en-scène*, somewhat nuanced storyline, and fairly idiosyncratic characters who do not seem like neo-bohemian bums simply portraying themselves. Starring a number of prominent actors, including John Lurie (*Stranger Than Paradise*, *Down By Law*), Susan Tyrrell (*Fat City*, *Forbidden Zone*), tragic Warhol superstar/dope-dealer Cookie Mueller (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*), avant-garde artist William ‘Bill’ Rice (*Manhattan Love Suicides*, *Coffee and Cigarettes*, and even Hollywood star Robbie Coltrane (*GoldenEye*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*) as a resentful cop with the cinephiliac name Fritz Langley, *Subway Riders* is like Fritz Lang’s *M* (1931) meets Warhol and Morrissey’s *Chelsea Girls* (1966) meets an adamantly anti-cop *The French Connection* (1971) meets a more metaphysically sick *Taxi Driver* (in fact, Paul Schrader is even referenced at the beginning of the film), albeit nowhere as amazing as it sounds. Featuring both auteur Poe and Lurie portraying the exact same role because the latter had the audacity to quit

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the film in the middle of production to work on his degenerate jazz music, the film indubitably features one of the most nightmarishly visceral and gorgeously gritty portrayals of early 1980s NYC as a work that makes Martin Scorsese's coke-fueled flick *After Hours* (1985) seem like an unpleasantly polished Spielberg flick, as a strangely melodically melancholic midnight movie that is indeed best suited for watching at midnight.

Described by Poe himself as belonging to "a genre unto itself," *Subway Riders* certainly features a hodgepodge of various different (sub)genres but it is ultimately a pathologically moody mood piece that attempts to pierce the heart of its decidedly despairing zeitgeist of cultural, moral, and romantic nihilism where corrupt cops are married to mudshark junky whores, melancholic saxophonists kill random strangers because their hooker flatmates are mean to them, and young lovelorn single mothers stalk serial killers, among other things. A phantasmagoric and oneiric film with a strangely comforting yet foreboding narcotizing tone that makes early 1980s NYC seem like some sort of post-punk existentialist pandemonium that is closer to hell than heaven, Poe's work actually manages to do the seemingly impossible by making the rotten Big Apple seem somewhat cool. Featuring an unconventionally sympathetic serial killer whose sax seems like a sorry masturbatory outlet for his sexual repression, *Subway Riders* ultimately reminds the viewer why, "New York's Alright If You Like Saxophones." Promoted with the line, "I think we are in rats' alley where the dead men lost their bones," from T.S. Eliot's masterful poem *The Waste Land* (1922), Poe's film was notably only ever released in Germany on VHS and is all but totally forgotten today, yet it ultimately acts as one of the most aesthetically potent and darkly humorous indictments of the nihilistic necropolis that was early 1980s NYC, where everyone seemed more or less metaphysically dead and a serial killer could arguably act as a sort of dark savior and humanist hero who provided the forsaken living dead with a final resting place and, in turn, perennial peace and quiet.

Pathologically posturing and particularly mentally perturbed protagonist Anthony Zindo (Amos Poe) is an Italian-American avant-garde jazz player who has not been happy since the day he and his family arrived via boat in NYC from Italy when he was a young kid, thus demonstrating that the city at least played some role in molding him into the mumbling misanthropic murderer he is today. At the beginning of the film, Anthony meets with a sleazy Hebraic Hollywood producer named Mr. Leo Gallstone (Bill Rice) who he is attempting to sell his crypto-autobiographical screenplay about a saxophonist that moonlights as a serial killer, but when the morally bankrupt movie man discusses Jack Nicholson or Warren Beatty playing the lead, Diane Keaton playing a "mind-reading woman," Jane Fonda playing a junky, and Marlon Brando playing a cop, the protagonist seems to be much less interested. Of course, all the characters that Gallstone mentions from Anthony's screenplays are also featured in *Subway Riders*.

ers, though they are not played by glamorous Hollywood stars like Nicholson and Brando. Gallstone loves working in Hollywood because it is a business that, unlike a clothing store, the customer enters the building but leaves with nothing, or as the seemingly pernicious producer states, "That's what this business is about: It's about money and nothing." When Gallstone promises getting Paul Schrader or some other screenwriter to take over his script, Anthony decides to leave abruptly and seems to give up his dubious dream of working in Hollywood. Just before the film's credit sequence rolls, Anthony allegorically states regarding NYC, "Home is where the heart is... The Deskman is dressed in black." Of course, Anthony not only dresses in black, but is also a sort of self-appointed ghetto Grim Reaper who lures people in with his degenerate jazz playing and then wastes them with his snub-nosed revolver.

According to a nameless hobo street poet (played by AIDS victim Emilio Cubeiro, who is probably best known for the Lydia Lunch produced album 'Death of an Asshole') regarding the people of NYC, "No life left anywhere... Only zombies." Indeed, if any of the characters in the film have anything in common, it is that they are spiritually comatose and merely drift through life like superlatively sullen somnambulists who can only find solace in vice. Antihero Anthony lives in the same apartment building as a Sapphic statuesque streetwalker who sometimes stars in exploitation films named Penelope Trasher (Cookie Mueller) who is nothing if not a brazen bitch that enjoys gnawing on female naughty bits. When Gallstone 'buys' Penelope, he brazenly lets her know that if his daughter was in the same trade as her he would be shattered, stating, "I don't know if I would shoot her or hang myself." While Penelope is not too offended by Gallstone's rather unflattering comment, she is exceedingly annoyed with Anthony's sax playing, describing it as a "bang-at-the-moon" and "disco music" and then recommends that he sell his "tuba" so that he can get a heater because, "It might even sound better." As the viewer eventually learns, Penelope's resentment towards him is one of the things that has provoked Anthony to kill. Indeed, not long after his argument with Penelope, Anthony murders a man that attempts to rob him with a machete. Of course, the police are looking for Anthony and it is only a matter of time before they catch up with him.

Aside from dedicating most of his time to hunting the "psycho killer" (as Anthony is described by the media) that is ravaging NYC, Detective Fritz Langley (Robbie Coltrane) has to deal with the pathological degeneracy of his junky wife Eleanor (Susan Tyrrell) who hangs out with "junky niggers" and pimps with goofy names like Pinky Marbles. Fritz is offended by the fact that his wifey hangs out with junky jigabbos and complains to her, "You've got to see the light of it, Eleanor. I'm a cop. What do you think it does to me when I hear you're running around with a guy whose a killer [...] you're a thoroughbred, Eleanor... What are you running around with these mutts for?" but Eleanor is a loony libertine who respects her negro pimp pal Pinky Marbles and replies to her hubby by self-

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righteously stating, "What are you, life's big winner?! You're no different than he is. You're a white rat and he's a black rat. You're both caught in the same trap. I don't give a rat's ass." In fact, Eleanor has such little respect for a hubby that she pulls his service revolver on him when he is showering and states, "You should never take a shower without your gun. Even cops die." Naturally, Fritz will eventually realize that his wanton wife's words ring true.

Upon murdering a complete stranger and subsequently hearing police sirens, Anthony opts to enter the passenger seat of a car that has stopped at a crosswalk and soon discovers that it is driven by a strange bleached blonde babe named Claire Smith (Charlene Kaleina) who does not seem particularly alarmed by the fact that a seemingly dangerous stranger has entered her automobile without asking. As Anthony says to Claire, "Downtown lady. Don't be scared, my name's Anthony. Just give me a ride back, alright," but she does become somewhat alarmed when she notices that the antihero has a revolver that he has named 'Beatrice.' Ultimately, Claire gives Anthony a ride back to his apartment and the protagonist rewards her by informing her that she can drop by his place anytime she wants. Before parting ways, Anthony asks Claire where she was originally driving to and she replies in a somewhat existentialistic manner, "I don't know where I was going." Indeed, as a lovelorn single mother who has not gotten over her great love 'Bobby' and who had to quit her dream of becoming a doctor to take care of her young daughter, Claire no longer has any plans and merely floats through life without a purpose as a sort of living ghost that forgot to die and still has a human body. A somewhat phantom-like lady who seems to be able to appear and disappear from places without warning, Claire more or less instantly realizes that Anthony is the "psycho killer," yet she opts to begin stalking him and entering his home without warning via windows. Notably, while sneaking into Anthony's apartment, Claire cries to herself regarding her 'great love,' "Bobby...Oh, Bobby, what did you do to my life? I was so alone. Talk to me Bobby." One almost suspects that Claire wants Anthony to put her out of her misery, but fate has different plans.

When Claire randomly shows up at Anthony's apartment the first time, the two have a sort of somewhat metaphysical philosophical conversation about NYC, with the former stating to the latter, "I know that the only people that are not afraid in this town are the innocent and guilty. Take you: You jump in my car...I look at you and you're nervous but not afraid. And take me: I'm not afraid...but then I'm naive. Take you: You are not naive...You're guilty." Suspecting that she might know that he is the killer, Anthony frankly states to Claire, "Lady, I don't know if it is the beer or cold, but you're off your rocker," and she somewhat esoterically replies, "Me...You...All of us. Everybody riding subways...waiting for stations...when do you get off?" Anthony's curious conversation ultimately inspires him to get pathetically drunk and imagine that he is John Lurie (who is his sort of literary alter-ego). Meanwhile, junky cop's wife

Eleanor injects a mixture of heroin and a cocktail drink into her tongue and complains regarding his hubby Fritz, "Funny, he used to be a human being...warm and funny. He actually used to have a sense of humor but it has all turned to ugliness and cynicism. He's grotesque, stupid, ugly. Blind and arrogant [...] I'm sick of his sadism. I'm sick of tough guys who are uncharitable and unfair." Indeed, Eleanor is so fed up with her tough guy spouse that she even fantasizes about him dying, thinking to herself, "He's not my problem anymore. Yeah, sure, I'll go to the funeral...when they tell me his brain has been blown into some gutter or corner of this town. Sure, I'll be the cop's widow dressed in black. I'll play the role in that charade but I ain't holding tears that have been shed a longtime ago."

With carpet-munching hooker Penelope continuing to rebuff his rather retarded romantic advances, Anthony naturally continues to drink and kill. Somewhat ironically, Penelope actually secretly likes Anthony and his music and describes her antagonistic behavior towards him as a mere "game" to her lesbo girlfriend, even justifying her behavior by arguing, "In this city, you can't give inch. You go into a restaurant and you order tea and waiter brings you coffee, you just have to make a fuss. You can't EVER let yourself be easy." Somewhat humorously, Penelope's ladylove is so offended by her attitude that she not only bitchily retorts, "There's a subtle difference between being hard and being a bitch," but also dumps her and resentfully states to her while walking out her front door for good, "So long, Trash. When the door closes behind you, remember I loved you...But you love yourself even more and I'm the jealous type." Meanwhile, old school cop Detective Fritz becomes exceedingly annoyed with having to use modern crime technology to track down the killer and complains to his boss about the fact that the mayor's nephew works for IBM and that he hates using a computer, bitching, "You tell me to go and get this guy. What have I got. I got a computer...vomiting out all of this garbage all day. Profiles, data, information, nothing." Using his seemingly 'immaculately flawed' cop intuition, Fritz eventually comes to the conclusion that "The Saxophonist" (which was notably the original name of Poe's film) has to be the killer. With his wife leaving him by writing a simple note reading, "Fritz...There's Nothing Left Anymore," the rather rotund detective is all the more determined to take out his rage on the psycho killer. Of course, it is only a matter of time before there is a final showdown between Fritz and Anthony.

In their final quasi-philosophical meeting at the antihero's apartment, Claire states to Anthony after revealing her story about how she had to quit her life-long dream of becoming a nurse after she got knocked up and her deadbeat beau Bobby screwed her over, "The funny thing is when you lose interest in dreams, you kind of lose interest in everything. Sometimes, kids really understand the essence of everything." Indeed, the NYC depicted in the film is a place of dead dreams and real-life nightmares, yet Claire and Anthony's 'non-romance' seems

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to be an example of fate, at least at first. Claire attempts to reason with Anthony about his unspeakable crimes by warning him regarding his questionable fate, "...When they catch you...and they will...you're gonna suffer...and you're really gonna suffer." When Claire asks why he committed the killings, Anthony complains about how Penelope has treated him and how she reminds him of his mother, complaining, "I just really wanna play my sax. She won't let me. My mother was just like that." While not exactly the same type of serial killer, it seems that Anthony suffers from mommy problems just like Norman Bates and Ed Gein. When Anthony makes the mistake of deciding to go out to waste another innocent victim, he is ultimately chased down and severely wounded by Detective Fritz during a somewhat spastic and incoherent shootout. Luckily, Claire seems to have a sort of sixth sense and waits for him inside her car outside a movie theater playing Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) and a fictional sexploitation film entitled "A Bitch In Heat" starring streetwalker Penelope Trash. Indeed, Claire manages to help seemingly mortally wounded Anthony into a car and drive him to safety. The next morning, Claire inexplicably attempts to save the serial killer Anthony by setting him up with a helicopter out of NYC, but somewhat unfortunately the protagonist succumbs to his wounds only seconds after flying over the city, mumbling before he dies, "Too many things. Just too many things."

Undoubtedly, *Subway Riders* owes most of its aesthetic potency to the neon-lit cinematography of the film's Austrian co-producer/editor Johanna Heer, who notably worked as an assistant director, editor, and associate director of photography on Poe's *The Foreigner* (1978), but even more notably later shot shot Hungarian auteur Gábor Bódy's epic punk swan song *Kutya éji dala* (1983) aka *The Dog's Night Song*, as well as the underrated Teutonic cyberpunk flick *Decoder* (1984) directed by Muscha. Aside from Heer acting as the DP on the kraut cult flick, which bares striking aesthetic similarities to Poe's 'kaleidoscopic noir' film despite being set in Berlin instead of NYC, *Decoder* also stars *Subway Riders* star Will Rice in one of the lead roles. Surely, without Heer's talent for shooting reds and pinks that practically bleed through the screen despite being set in shadowy rooms, the film would be lacking aesthetically, which is somewhat ironic considering Poe hated her, or as he was quoted on the book *Trash-film Roadshows* (2002) by Johannes Schönherr, "She is the worst person in the world." To Poe's credit, Heer was apparently rather vocal about her personal belief that her cinematography is more important than the filmmaker's direction, or so stated Schönherr in his book. Still, as a rather psychotic, schizoid, paranoid, and perverted film about a psychotic, schizoid, paranoid, and perverted sort of 'folk antihero' that was unequivocally dreamed up by seemingly paranoid hipster pervert Poe, one should certainly credit the director for his role in this rare melodic yet malefic nihilist melodrama, which is indubitably one of the most idiosyncratic serial killer flicks ever made.

While describing the original script as “a kind of demonic action urban picture” with “a very straight narrative,” Poe began using a lot of improvisation while directing *Subway Riders*, stating of the film’s narrative in a January 1981 interview with *BOMB* magazine, “...though at first I hoped to make it like Dante’s *Inferno* and *Paradiso* and like that, in terms of literature, it was well...poetically, mythologically bent.” Poe followed up the film by attempting to enter the mainstream with the stylish yet ultimately all-too-superficial feature *Alphabet City* (1984) starring Vincent Spano, which originally featured a much more brutal and nihilistic ending but the director copped out at the request of the producers (who wanted him to make a “urban teen flick”). Of course, as a conspicuously culturally pessimistic and spiritually apocalyptic work with a ridiculously darkly (anti)romantic spirit and almost tragic, cynical ending, *Subway Riders* is not only Poe’s most iconoclastic, misanthropic, and aesthetically ambitious work, but also a film that makes for a great antidote to the neurotic Jewish intellectual rom-coms by Woody Allen and the shallow ‘cocaine cowboy’ pieces by Martin Scorsese that were being made in NYC around the same time. Indeed, for better or worse, Poe’s slow-burning serial killer picture probably better personifies its particular zeitgeist than any other film of that time, so it is almost fitting that the auteur subsequently bought into his own version of Reaganism and unsuccessfully attempted to sellout (though, to the director’s credit, he freely admitted to work in Hollywood, stating “Yeah. That would be ideal,” when asked if he wanted financing from Hollywood during his interview with *BOMB* magazine). While I would not exactly call *Subway Riders* a masterpiece, it is certainly the closest thing that an American filmmaker has come to creating a pure and unadulterated arthouse work of its time, as a sort of NYC equivalent to what the filmmakers of New German Cinema were doing back then (in that regard, it is fitting that the film features a movie theater marquee advertising Fassbinder’s *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, which probably influenced Poe at that time). To quote the *Fear* song again, Poe’s flick thankfully, grisly depicts the sentiment, “New York’s alright, If you wanna get mugged or murdered...New York’s alright, If you like saxophones.” Somewhat inexplicably, despite being someone that loathes both NYC and saxophones (though murder is not always bad), I surprisingly enjoyed wallowing in the the slime, sin, and jazzy serial-killing of *Subway Riders*. Indeed, maybe if more white saxophonists were philosophizing serial killers instead of culturally cuckolded hipster dorks, the sax would not be such a hopelessly lame instrument, but of course that is probably about as likely as NYC producing an important underground film movement sometime soon.

-Ty E

AN AMERICAN HIPPIE IN ISRAEL
AN AMERICAN HIPPIE IN ISRAEL

Amos Sefer* (1972)

Personally, I cannot think of many film titles that are more humorous and simultaneously intriguing yet repulsive than *An American Hippie in Israel* (1972) directed by one-time Israeli auteur Amos Sefer. While I would not exactly call myself a connoisseur of Israeli cinema and I have done little in the way of attempting to study the Hebrew nation's rather unremarkable film history, Sefer's strikingly hypnotic hippieexploitation flick certainly has to be one of the strangest, silliest, and unintentionally amusing films ever (mis)begotten in the so-called 'holy land.' The schlocky and ultimately somewhat shocking tale of a NYC-bred Vietnam War vet/idealistic hippie who travels to Israel to recruit a bunch of Hebraic hippies and create an ostensibly flower child utopia in the middle of the desert, *An American Hippie in Israel* aka *Ha-Trempiš* aka *The Hitch Hiker* is notable in that, unlike the always phony and soulless celluloid swill directed by the culture-distorting Hebrew Zionists in Hollywood who tend to depict the counter-culture zeitgeist as some sort of meta-holy Golden Age that 'liberated' the evil racist goyim from their innate authoritarianism and Christian morals, it has a rather nihilistic and pessimistic ending and depicts ideas like "world peace" and "harmony" as an intangible idealistic joke dreamed up by decidedly deluded and debauched dreamers who are attempting to run away from the problems in their own loser lives. Make no mistake about it, Sefer's celluloid affair is a B(ad)-movie of the obscenely outmoded and unintentionally humorous sort, but it has a sort of idiosyncratic character about it that is hard to ignore, even if the prospect of being around hippies, heebies, and/or the holy land makes you cringe, as it does me. While certainly nowhere near "the most psychedelic movie ever made" as advertised on the poster art released by Grindhouse Releasing, *An American Hippie in Israel* is most certainly the "most psychedelic Jewish movie ever made," which may not say much, but certainly has a bizarre ring to it, no matter which way you look at it. Featuring a deadly duo of phantom-like mimes with hippie-extminating machineguns and technocratic machine-men, Sefer's cinematic hybrid is part sci-fi, part horror, part adventure, part action, and part unintentional comedy but all kosher kookiness. A film that makes Israel seem like a paradisiacal ghost town inhabited by the spirit of Hebraic gangsters like Meyer Lansky that is quite hostile to naïve American hippies who think they can find peace in a place ravaged by perennial hatred and war, *An American Hippie in Israel* certainly somehow makes the holy land way more entrancing than those rather repellant pictures of various culturally-cuckolded shabbos goy celebrities and politicians pretending to wail at the Wailing Wall.

Beginning with title scenes featuring flowers being crushed by a steamroller juxtaposed with sounds of gunfire and warfare in a somewhat eerie scenario reminiscent of the bulldozing of Palestinian homes by Israelis carrying out Zio-style

'Lebensraum,' An American Hippie in Israel then introduces the bearded 'American Hippie' Mike (Asher Tzarfati), who is flying into the holy land in the hopes of establishing a hippie utopia. With not a dime to his name, Mike immediately begins hitchhiking when he lands in Israel and he is soon picked up by a beautiful actress named Elizabeth (Lily Avidan), who asks him if he is a hippie, to which he stereotypically replies, "You might say so. Right on." While on the road, Mike is followed by two deathly pale mystery men sporting gangster-like zoot suit outfits and top-hats and wielding menacing machineguns, who he calls "scum buckets" and "shitheads" and yells at for following him everywhere around the world, though he does not really know why. As Mike explains to Elizabeth, he was born and bred in New York City, but has spent the last two years or so floating around Europe. A disillusioned Vietnam War veteran, Mike also explains to Elizabeth that he resents the fact that he was turned into a "murdering machine" by the U.S. military and killed some anonymous gook at age 19, which was before he even lost his virginity, hence his new found delusional love for 'free love' and unconscious attempt to atone for his sins via promoting peace and selfless communal living. After demonstrating flower power to Elizabeth by pounding her flesh flower, Mike explains his ultimate dream as follows: "I'm looking for a place faraway from everything. A place where I can live with a bunch of people that think like me without anyone telling us what to do." Indeed, before they know it, Mike and Elizabeth have established a kosher commune of sorts full of dozens of Hebrew hippies engaging in dope-smoking and free love, but that is cut short when the mysterious mime duo shows up and kills every single person present aside from Mike, Elizabeth, and an Israeli hippie couple (played by Tzila Karney and Shmuel Wolf, the latter of whom only speaks Hebrew) that was responsible for introducing the now-dead deadheads to the protagonist.

Although all their hip hippie homeboys were exterminated in a storm of bullets, that does not stop Mike, Elizabeth, Tzila, and Shmuel from carrying on their glorious utopian dreams of a simpler world without technology and war. After Mike declares, "from now on, we're one family" and that they are "free," the four peaceniks make their way out to the desert in Elizabeth's rather bourgeois convertible in search of their own little hippie Heimat. After Mike awakens from a couple nightmares involving battling machines with human legs (indeed, Mike literally 'rages against the machine'!!!) and seeing Palestinians imprisoned in surreal mirage-like desert-based jail cells and execution squads, among other things, the four flower children buy some hippie gear, including a little goat, from some Arab vendors and make their way further into the desert where they find a serenely surreal island comprised entirely of jagged rocks and a couple pieces of ancient ruined buildings, which the self-appointed flower power Führer declares their new home, stating, "Man, this is really fantastic...really out-of-sight" and to which his automaton-like followers jubilantly declare, "Finally, we're free!" as if they are excited grade school children who have found the perfect spot to build

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a tree fort. That night, the less than fierce foursome huddle together during a bonfire where Mike self-righteously proclaims to his comrades like the corny charlatan that he is, "I want this place to serve as a living symbol for the whole world. We'll show the world that it is possible to live without war...without violence...without machines with buttons...the only sounds that will be coming out of this place will be those of song, joy, and laughter."

Despite his initial positive attitude, Mike then proceeds to go on a rather juvenile nihilistic beatnik rant, hatefully stating in the most pansy way possible: "Let's say something to the whole world! World, you're so full of shit...you're so badly contaminated that it is impossible to find a corner free of smell, especially the stench of dead bodies...that's why I hate you. There are millions that hate you...millions that want to escape to another place...a place in which they can breathe air, pure and clean, but you find them, kill them, torture them...the day of reckoning will come. You will be doomed. You will destroy yourself with your own hands...you stinking world." Elizabeth reveals how brainwashed she is by Mike by responding to his speech with the following mindless gibberish: "I love Mike and believe in him...and if he says you're doomed, you'd better watch out!" not realizing that her new beatnik boy toy will be the one that is ultimately responsible for her and the rest of the group's doom. While Shmuel does not really say anything since he only speaks Hebrew, Tzila also expresses her slavish mentality by declaring: "You're a meek world [...] good riddance to bad rubbish." After they all give their poorly articulated little 'anti-world' spiels, the four friends engage in an orgy to usher in the beginning of their new utopia, but little do they realize that they have reached the beginning of the end of their vapid existences as people who yearn for simpler lives yet can barely tie their shoes. Indeed, these big-nosed beatniks are in store for both a literal and figurative rude awakening that will conclude in their own *Lord of the Flies*-esque demise.

Upon awakening the next morning after the first night at their island utopia, the hymie hippies notice that the small shitty boat that they used to get to their micro-homeland has disappeared, thus cutting them off not only from the land, but also from food and fresh water. To prove his prowess as a leader and dedication to self-sacrifice, Mike volunteers to swim back to the homeland to get supplies for his fellow Dead Sea pedestrians, but he ultimately pansies out while swimming across after bumping into two ominous sharks that may or not be the mystery mime men in anthropomorphized form. After complaining to his comrades, "Bummer. If it wasn't for those damn sharks, everything would be ok" and absurdly berating the deadly fish by shouting at them, "Blasted creeps...Get out of here, you bastards!" Mike begins acting like the sort of authoritarian dictators he claims to hate and forces his meek followers to scavenge for food. Ultimately, only Mike finds food in the form of measly limpets, which the others refuse to eat, with Elizabeth pompously proclaiming, "You'll never get me to eat one

of those. Those disgust me.” Indeed, due to their sheltered and pampered up-bringsings, the ‘bobos’ (bourgeois bohemians) would rather starve to death than eat something that might gross them out. After Tzila accuses Mike of using “smooth talk” to con them into coming to the island, a pathetic fight breaks out between the two couples that results in each set of lovers occupying one side of the island. Rather absurdly, a four person civil war breaks out between the two couples, with Mike and Shmuel threatening to kill one another if they dare to set foot on the other’s side of the island. After each couple sharpens some jagged rocks, there is a showdown between the two couples to kill the little goat for food. In the end, all four of the hippies end up killing each other, with Mike screaming like a wounded animal before he perishes. After the deadly micro-civil war that ends with all four hippies and the goat lying in a holocaust-esque heap of untermensch death, the two mysterious gangster mimes show up and steal Elizabeth’s convertible. The film concludes with a giant “END” appearing on the island of lost hippie souls.

Rather ironically, the only other counter-culture-themed films I know of aside from *An American Hippie in Israel* that are set in Israel are both German and nowhere as kitschy as Sefer’s truly awe-inspiring celluloid oddity. Indeed, aside from kraut cult auteur Roland Klick’s underrated ‘acid western’ *Deadlock* (1970) featuring a great score by Can and starring perennial screen villain Mario Adorf and West German counter-culture figures Marquard Bohm and Mascha Rabben, Veit Relin’s *Chamsin* (1972)—a psychedelic reworking of German poet/playwright Friedrich Schiller’s tragedy *Die Braut von Messina* aka *The Bride of Messina* (1803) starring Maria Schell (whose then-husband directed the film) and featuring a score by pioneering krautrockers Amon Düül II—was also filmed in Israel. Unquestionably, the major difference between the two German films and Sefer’s work is that while *Deadlock* and *Chamsin* are authentic works of counter-culture cinema made by counter-culture types for counter-culture types, *An American Hippie in Israel* is an innately anti-hippie celluloid affair that not only makes a major mockery of hippiedom, but also attempts to condemn the whole hippie *Weltanschauung* as an idiotically idealistic pipedream that is totally incompatible with the innate nature of mankind. Ironically, National Socialism, Zionism, and the American and European counter-culture movements were all in part inspired by the *Weltanschauung* and aesthetics of the German *Wandervogel* movement—a youth movement promoting a ‘back-to-nature’ ideology that became popular in 1896 and lasted until 1933 when the Nazis had the groups banned and replaced with the Hitler Youth—thus all three films make for interesting viewing when watched back-to-back.

While all three films feature a certain apocalyptic nihilism where neo-paganism reigns and music has more or less replaced religion as the opiate of the masses, only *An American Hippie in Israel* goes as far as primarily focusing on the counter-culture movement and its failure to make any real difference in the

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world, albeit in a slightly esoteric and allegorical sort of way. In that sense, Israel—the virtual epicenter for racial, religious, and cultural hatred and warfare in the world—is probably the best setting for a (anti)hippie cinematic parable about the failing of humanity and the naivety of those that believe there can be peace on earth and everlasting good will among men. In its unflattering depiction of Americans as unworldly morons who think that they have the god given right to go to foreign lands and change them however they see fit, as well as its darkly humorous portrayal of the hippie way life as an oftentimes deadly road to nowhere, Sefer's film also makes for the perfect double feature with the somewhat superior and surely underrated Spanish surrealist quasi-giallo *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* aka *The Sky Is Falling* directed by Italian-Canadian auteur Silvio Narizzano, which depicts the bizarre demise of a middle-aged American hippie (played by Dennis Hopper) and a couple American expatriates who arrogantly defile a Spanish island with their spiritual and sexual degeneracy. Sefer's hallucinatory hippieexploitation nightmare is also notable for being a work that will appeal to both would-be-hippies and hippie-haters alike, as a glaringly flawed yet undeniably unforgettable filmic fever dream set in a figurative hippie Hades where 'The Man' takes on ghostly, robotic, and even anthropomorphic forms. Indeed, if you enjoy truly idiosyncratic exploitation flicks and/or seeing hippies having an apocalyptic 'bummer' during an existential pilgrimage, *An American Hippie in Israel* is certainly worth your time.

-Ty E

THE LONG ISLAND FOUR

Anders Grafstrom (1980)

For what is probably his most popular song, "Total Eclipse", Bavarian-born kraut new wave countertenor Klaus Nomi included the extremely controversial (especially for a post-WW2 Teuton of the hyper-homo sort) yet considerably catchy line, "hotter than a holocaust." Being born in early 1944 just over a year before Germany's brutal cataclysmic defeat and virtual total destruction, Nomi certainly grew up in a place and time of collective misery and unspoken guilt, thus I do not think it is a stretch to say that the singer's distinct performer persona was largely the result of his desire to live in a state of total escapism and, ultimately, quasi-transhumanism as a mensch who gave off the impression that he was literally out of this world. When I discovered that Klaus Nomi played the role of a Nazi officer in the campy No Wave flick *The Long Island Four* (1980) directed by onetime-auteur Anders Grafstrom, I naturally made it my mission to track down a copy of the film. After all, few films can boast of featuring Klaus Nomi as a Nazi chic National Socialist who moonlights as a classy cross-dresser and crowd pleasing Jazz singer. Based on a true story about Nazi saboteur spies who infiltrated Long Island, New York in 1942 and were eventually caught and executed, *The Long Island Four* is a film that cares more about jovial sexual ambiguity (or not so ambiguous) than any sort of historical accuracy. I am certainly not the kind of person who throws around the word "camp" when describing a film, but *The Long Island Four* is camp to the core. In fact, I think the film would be best described as a work of "death camp" as the film combines queer-ness, National Socialism, and death like never before, even making the exploitative Hitlerite homoeroticism featured in Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) seem quite bland and less than campy by comparison. Although *The Long Island Four* features next to nil in the way of nudity and blood-gushing brutality, the film has an incomparable cinematic aura of camp eccentricity that would probably even make Soft Cell frontman Marc Almond quiver. French poet Jean Cocteau once described camp as, "The lie that tells the truth" but in *The Long Island Four*, this truism is exquisitely inversed in a work where conspicuous cock-suckers attempt to portray a little known historical truth regarding a failed Nazi spy operations in one of the most Hebraic areas of the world. Although playing the roles of nonfictional Nazi spies who express an affinity for heterosexual activities, the queenish gayness of the actors (who aside from Klaus Nomi, all have goofy American accents) is so shamelessly and hopelessly glaring that while watching the film, I wondered to myself if they were early AIDS victims (like Nomi himself). The celestially odd character of *The Long Island Four* is further accentuated by the gritty Super 8 film stock that it was shot on. Despite the somewhat anarchistic nature of *The Long Island Four*, the film is hardly of an anachronistic nature as one would expect from such a film. In fact, while watch-

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ing the film, I would sometimes forget that it was created nearly four decades after the time period that it is set in.

The Long Island Four starts when a small brigade of Nazi spy saboteurs land in Long Island. Upon arrival, one of the lisp lips Nazis states, "It's a perfect day to become an American" but as the viewer finds out whilst watching the film, this terrible Teuton has spoken too soon. Although all four spies enter Amerikkka with the sole objective of selflessly devoting their lives to the Third Reich at whatever cost, these kamerads soon learn that they cannot abstain from the sinister hedonistic self-worshipping lifestyle that American democracy has to offer. Of course, the actors playing these committed National Socialists look like natural born degenerates who see decadence as a civic right and duty, but they make for exceedingly charming fellows, nonetheless. One of the spies wears an eye patch in the tradition of 1/2 Aryan filmmaker Fritz Lang. Naturally, Klaus Nomi's character is the most multifaceted and mysterious Nazi featured in The Long Island Four. X-man Nomi acts as a X employed voyeur and committed scopophile who spies on the newly arrived Nazi recruits in a curiously cunning and keenly discreet manner. Thankfully, Nomi's singing talents can be also heard in The Long Island Four. When not checking up on his Nazi underlings, Nomi sings his classic pop love song "Falling In Love Again" in a dimly lit night club and later to his drag queen self while narcissistically gazing into a mirror. Klaus Nomi may not sport his iconic wardrobe and signature hairdo in The Long Island Four but his charismatic persona is fully intact throughout the film. With his small/slender frame, pale skin, and black hair; Nomi kind of looks like a junkie version of Joseph Goebbels in the film. As Nomi's character states in the film, "the true god can have no friends", which no doubt can be said of his character in The Long Island Four and in his short real-life. Although Nomi steals the show, most of the actors featured in the film must be praised for their memorable performances. Dasch, the dainty leader of the four Nazi spies, hilariously tells his American Frau early on in the film that in Germany, "we have big ovens, our ovens are very big." Indeed, such Xatrical dialogue is, as Nomi himself sang so many times, "hot as a holocaust."

If anything can be learned from watching The Long Island Four, it is that America can deracinate even the most rooted of genocidal nationalists. Whether fornicating with blonde beastesses with lesbo haircuts or crawling into a Chinese opium shotgun, the Nazi saboteurs of the film cannot help but enthusiastically knock on death's door in their unconscious quest for unquenchable pleasure. The real National Socialists themselves looked upon cities as training grounds for turning moral rural folk into immoral rootless cosmopolitans, hence their "blood and soil" ideology, thus The Long Island Four is a film that is more conscious (whether intentional or not) of Nazism than it initially appears to be. Although the film tends to fall short of the flashy X uniforms one would expect from a film featuring ostensibly nefarious Nazis, The Long Island Four radiates the sort

of strangely charming and classiccamp that would even make Uncle Adolf giggle with glee. Unfortunately, director Anders Grafstrom died tragically in a car accident during a trip to Mexico shortly after the completion of the film, hence his rather small one-film-oeuvre. Of course, by creating *The Long Island Four* – the apotheosis of true artsy fartsy camp and No Wave cinema – Grafstrom achieved more artistically than most filmmakers do in a lifetime, thus, his premature passing was not in vain. After all, it is quite an achievement for a filmmaker to make a brilliant work of camp while remaining subtle and abstaining from using too much nonstop nudity and endless gratuitous bodily dismemberment. *The Long Island Four* is also another example as to why Nomi's early death was a tremendous loss for the NYC (and beyond) art world as he could have had a somewhat successful acting career like his fellow musician and performing arts pal David Bowie. With all the forgettable and worthless exploitation films that have received fancy dvd releases over the past decade, it is undoubtedly a shame that *The Long Island Four* has yet to be digitally remastered and re-released. If you only had the opportunity to watch one No Wave film, make it *The Long Island Four*.

-Ty E

THE MAN WHO HAD HIS HAIR CUT SHORT
THE MAN WHO HAD HIS HAIR CUT SHORT

André Delvaux (1966)

If there was a single film that would usher in the decidedly dark path Belgian cinema would take as reflected in such eclectically wonderfully wicked works as Roland Lethem's *La Fée Sanguinaire* (1968) aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, Thierry Zéno's *Wedding Trough* (1975) aka *Vase de nocés* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie*, Rob Van Eyck's *The Afterman* (1985), Dominique Deruddere's *Crazy Love* (1987), and more recently Fabrice Du Welz's *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal*, it would have to be *De man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* (1965) aka *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* aka *The Man with the Shaven Head* directed by André Delvaux (*Un Soir, un Train* aka *One Night... a Train, Rendez-vous à Bray*). Indeed, not only was the film responsible for sending Belgian film on a morbid and melancholic course of no return, but Delvaux's debut feature is also credited as putting modern Belgian cinema on the international map. Based on the supposedly unfilmable 1947 novel of the same name by Belgian magic realist writer and respected film critic Johan Daisne, the film also established magic realism as a mainstay of Belgian cinema long before Harry Kümel (*Malpertuis, De komst van Joachim Stiller* aka *The Arrival of Joachim Stiller*) ever began working in the style. Sort of like a feature-length Ingmar Bergman dream-sequence, albeit more raw, grotesque, and ridden with rot and decay, *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* depicts the nightmare life of a physically and mentally middle-aged poindexter professor who begins becoming decidedly deranged as a result of the delusional unrequited love he has for a beautiful blonde student and soon begins having a hard time discerning between reality and hallucination. A tale of obscene obsession that was fittingly shot in cold and lifeless black-and-white and somehow managed to do the seemingly inexplicable by translating the stream-of-conscious structure of its source novel to the silver screen, Delvaux's film is one of those rare films that reminds you that David Lynch is not as idiosyncratic of a filmmaker as you thought he was, as well as a work that confirms that Hollywood is no less than half a century behind a little insignificant country like Belgium in terms of articulating certain complex human emotions, presenting perturbing and unsettling philosophical themes, and portraying desire in its most patently pathetic and deranging form as a work about a metaphysical cuckold who is ultimately the last fellow in line to meet his great crush, or so he thinks. Of course, the film follows in a tradition much older than both Hollywood and magical realism, as a work that Tom Milne stated in *BFI's Monthly Film Bulletin* would appeal to, "admirers of Bosch, Breughel, Ghelderode and the Flemish genius for finding horror and beauty hand-in-hand," though one must also acknowledge its influence from Symbolism, German Romanticism, and the French New Wave as well. Like a Flemish take on *Lolita* meets Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961),

albeit with seemingly infinite more substance and creepy character, as a sort of work of Gothic magical realism that also acts as a kind of aberrant allegory for an innately divided and schizophrenic nation in its uniquely unflattering depiction of an antihero with a schizoid personality, *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* is, if nothing else, a perversely poetic masterpiece from the Lowland country of mud and rot.

The very first word fairly introverted protagonist Govert Miereveld (Senne Rouffaer) says at the beginning of *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* is the name of his titillating teenage crush Eufrazia 'Fran' Veerman (Beata Tyszkiewicz), but the very last word he says at the end of the film is the name of his neglected wife Corra (Annemarie Van Dijk). Govert is a rather impressive middle-aged man and Belgian Goebbels lookalike with a small and scrawny frame, pale skin, and a badly balding head of dark thin hair. Somehow, in Govert's mind he has a chance of initiating a hot and heavy romance with a beautiful underage blonde who is one of the most popular girls at her school and who aspires to be a famous singer/actress. Rather curiously, Govert, who is certainly no moron as a certified lawyer with a degree, does not seem the least bit worried about what might happen to his career as a teacher and lawyer or his relationship with his wife and two young daughters were he to begin an affair with Fran, thus indicating the absurdity of his all-consuming obsession. Like many naive men who mindlessly worship the feminine object of their romantic desire, Govert does not really know anything about Fran aside from the superficial persona that she projects while she is at school. Govert plans to declare his love for Fran at a special graduation event at his school, as it will be the last chance when he will get the opportunity to do so, so he decides to clean himself up a little bit by getting a pseudo-suave haircut right before he heads to the big event. While riding a public bus on the way to the barber, Govert thinks to himself, "Fran, I feel as if I've always known you. How can I tell you...what you mean to me. How? I can't see you until I know how to tell you." Unfortunately, it seems Govert will never have any clue how to tell her.

While getting his extra short haircut that he thinks will feel good in "wind and rain," Govert chats with the rather creepy and effete sounding barber whose face is initially off-screen thus adding all the more to the almost Svengali-like nature of the fellow, but it is eventually revealed that the hair stylist is just as grotesque in his physical appearance as his undeniably unnerving voice suggests. As the barber somewhat ironically states to Govert in a scene the strangely foreshadows the protagonist's break with sanity, "People like you, who use their head, should have it looked after. Piano players do the same with their fingers and cyclists with their calves." After finishing cutting Govert's hair, the barber gives the protagonist an almost 'erotic' massage while a weird contraption called a 'vibro-massage device' is strapped to his hands. After the super sensual head massage given by the seemingly malevolent barber who seems like he should be running

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a gay whorehouse in hell full of AIDS victims, Govert simply states “wonderful” and goes on his merry way. Upon arriving at the school, Govert suffers the real-life nightmare of making an ass of himself by being noticeably late for the event and failing to get onstage with the rest of the teachers and administrators before the festivities begin, thus he is left standing in front of the entire school in plain view like a moron as everyone gets up to sing the institution’s anthem. While sitting on the stage with the rest of the teachers and administrators as diplomas are being handed out to graduating students, Govert perversely stares at Fran and states in his own mind in a most hysterical fashion, “Fran...Fran...Look at me, Fran. Please, look at me, now. Now. It’s our last day, Fran. You know it is, you know how much I love you. Fran. Fran.” After the award ceremony, Govert wanders around looking for Fran under the pretense of giving her a book as a gift but he runs into another girl that is dressed like a flapper named Beps (Hilde Uitterlinden) instead who takes the present from the protagonist’s hand without asking and promises to give it to her. While Govert sees Fran sing a Kurt Weill-esque song entitled ‘The Ballad of Real Life’ in the style of the score from Bertolt Brecht’s popular 1928 *The Threepenny Opera* (notably, director Delvaux considered the music to be such an imperative aspect of the film that he began working with musical composer Frédéric Devreese before he even wrote the screenplay), he never gets the chance to talk to her, so he goes to his classroom to sulk while thinking to himself, “I’ll never see her again. Goodbye. Fran. You were too beautiful for me. I couldn’t reach you. You were too far away for me.” Notably, the lyrics of the song that Fran sings were actually written by auteur Delvaux and feature an eerie esoteric reference to something that will be revealed later in the film via the line, “three Kings suffered shipwreck for me.” The ‘three Kings’ that Fran sings of are a triptych of middle-aged men that have had an imperative impact on her development into a full-grown woman and they include her father, a once highly respected fellow named Judge Brantink (François Bernard) who was presented a ‘hand of justice’ at the award ceremony in ostensible tribute to his contributions to the institution, and protagonist Govert, who has no idea what kind of young woman he is in love with, or so he will eventually learn in a most morbid way. After a happenstance meeting at a hotel towards the end of the film, Fran will ultimately reveal the true meaning of the lyrics behind ‘The Ballad of Real Life’, as well as the sort of sick and sordid impact that the ‘three Kings’ had on her relatively debased womanhood.

Flash forward a couple years later and Govert still has not gotten over the fact that he did not get to profess his love to Fran, or as he somberly narrates himself, “The night that closed around me then, lasted for years.” Indeed, the event had such a deleterious effect on his discernibly damaged psyche that he had to give up his dual profession as a lawyer-cum-teacher because he could no longer handle the stress of the work, so he moved his family to a new town and started working in the lowly position of a court clerk, though he claims regarding his

new job, "I don't feel degraded." Through his job, Govert befriends an extremely extroverted medical examiner named Professor Mato (Hector Camerlynck) who manages to coerce the protagonist into traveling to the Dutch border with him and his assistant (Paul S'Jongers) to perform an autopsy on a badly decomposed corpse that may or may not be the corpse of a bank teller that mysteriously disappeared six months earlier. Needless to say, Govert becomes quite perturbed when Professor Mato and his assistant play with their autopsy tools and the protagonist suffers the delusion that an electric bone-cutting saw resembles the 'vibromassage device' that he liked so much at the barber. Ultimately, Govert is forced to endure the ultimately traumatic experience of watching Mato and his buddy performing an outdoors autopsy on a freshly unearthed rotting corpse that is still inside the casket in a fairly surreal and foreboding scene that more than hints that the protagonist's fragile sanity has become compromised. If Govert had been like a normal man and had had enough testicular fortitude, he could have merely declined to watch the autopsy, but he ultimately watches it in all its grueling detail because he is afraid to be rude to Mato and his comrade. Of course, if Mato had any idea of how big a lunatic Govert really is, he would not have invited him in the first place. Needless to say, seeing a rotting corpse sliced, diced, and surgically butchered is the last straw for Govert, who comes to unwittingly 'embrace' his slow-burning break with sanity.

While Govert attempts to wear a mask of sanity while in the company of his comrades and even goes so far as to tell Mato that he was not the least bit phased by seeing him defiling a vulgarly smelling deteriorating corpse, he ultimately learns he cannot escape from his inner pandemonium when he is unexpectedly forced to confront a particularly pulchritudinous ghost from his past. Indeed, while Govert obviously quit his job and moved to another town in the hope of erasing Fran from his mind once and for all, it only resulted in him becoming all the more possessed by her almost ghostly memory, not to mention the fact that it has caused his rather fragile mind to slowly but surely collapse under the weight of lovelorn repression and schizophrenic obsession. By mere happenstance, Govert bumps into Fran while staying at a local luxury hotel and is intrigued to learn from Mato that she is now a superstar singer/actress of sorts. While Govert goes out and buys a pair of fancy new dress shoes for Fran, he gets 'cold feet' about giving them to her and decides to drop them in a dam literally a minute or two after purchasing them. When Govert arrives at Fran's room after wasting a bunch of time attempting to get the gall to face her, he immediately professes his longstanding and seemingly perennial undying love for her as the two drink wine, stating things like "I hope that I may tell you everything, that I have always loved you" and "To me you're beauty incarnate." Rather senselessly, Govert also says some rather unflattering things about himself, including that his daughters, "... still don't understand what a failure their father is." Somewhat unbelievably, Fran confesses to Govert that she was also in love with him, but

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berates him for never getting the balls to profess his love to her, stating, "I loved you and expected everything from you. Happiness within our reach, perfect, too perfect." Of course, Govert is not the least bit happy when Fran reveals to him that there were other men she also loved who eventually debased her in a most morally and emotionally irreparable way.

While the one-on-one confessional begins to get rather intimate to the point where Govert is lying side-by-side with his dreamlover in bed, Fran ultimately demystifies the perturbed protagonist's romantic view of her by revealing to him that she is a lecherous lady who ruined no less than three older men's lives. Of course, it takes two to tango and the men Fran mentions were also equally responsible for destroying her life, even if she is now a famous actress. Too prove what she is saying, Fran pulls out three keepsakes that represent each one of her victims/victimizers, including a luger handgun given to her by her disgraced father, the 'hand of justice' statue that was awarded to Judge Brantink (François Bernard) who was forced to resign his position at the school after getting caught having an affair with her, and the book that Govert bought for her as a graduation present but did not actually have the opportunity to give to her. After learning that the rotten corpse Professor Mato and his partner performed an autopsy on was actually that of Fran's father who dubiously disappeared one day but whose corpse was never recovered, Govert becomes visibly distraught and begins frantically pacing back and forth in the hotel room like a mad man on the verge of a massive panic attack. As she describes in a most morose manner, Fran's father gave her the gun because he wanted her to kill herself but she did not have the nerve, so she asks Govert to do it, pleading like a sort of pernicious little princess, "Govert, you wanted it to reach right up into heaven, didn't you? This meeting can turn into something wonderful if you will see me off. Yes, that is the meaning of you coming to me so late." Of course, Govert abides in what is easily one of the most bizarrely oneiric 'murder scenes' in cinema history. Shortly after the protagonist pulls the trigger, Professor Mato and his mate walk in the room and Govert runs up to them and pleads while on his knees in a most meek yet hyper hysterical fashion, "Don't cut her up. Don't cut her up. No autopsy." Ultimately, Govert, who now calls himself 'Godfried' (or as he says himself, 'God Fried') ends up in a mental institution where he lives a fairly peaceful and productive life as a gardener, especially after coming to realize that he probably did not kill Fran after all. In one of his very last lines of dialogue, Govert reveals he is an unequivocal schizophrenic with a split-personality when he confesses to himself, "The world always seems so vague. I see the truth, in duplicate, in triplicate. But that vagueness, that's what I believe in."

Interestingly, source writer Johan Daisne once stated regarding his source novel *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* that, "It's not a novel about a madman. This man is not deranged. He's neurotic, an oversensitive person, who feels what we all feel, but more intensely. He suffers as a result, he becomes

a perfectionist, and because of that perfectionism he feels too second-rate for everything he has to do.” While Daisne denies that antihero Govert is crazy, the novel itself seems like it was written by a raving madman as it is over 200 pages yet does not feature any paragraphs or chapters, but is instead structured in a manner that is like one long stream-of-consciousness rant. Indubitably, the genius of André Delvaux’s cinematic adaptation and the way that it traps the viewer into entering the mind of a madman is that the protagonist initially seems like a harmless pathetic pencil-pushing wimp that deserves the audience’s pity and not a completely unhinged nut of the potentially homicidal sort, thus enabling the viewer to empathize with him and ultimately experience his progressive mental degeneration, which is certainly a quality that few, if any, other films can boast, at least to any notable degree. While the film was mostly trashed by Belgians film critics upon its initial release, it ultimately earned much well deserved international success as a work that was praised by Jean-Luc Godard and even won the British Film Institute award for the ‘most original and imaginative film,’ thereupon putting both Belgian cinema and director Delvaux on the map in the cinema world, though the filmmaker would never again have another work that was just as successful, even if he did direct a couple more masterpieces in and outside of Belgium (indeed, Delvaux would later go on to direct a couple films in France). In its change in style at about the midway point from a sort of quasi-neorealism to magic realism, *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* somehow manages to take an approach to mental illness that is, somewhat paradoxically, both seemingly rather realistic and completely mystifying. Indeed, aside from possibly Ingmar Bergman’s classic *Såsom i en spegel* (1961) aka *Through a Glass Darkly*, Delvaux’s debut is easily the most mature, hypnotic, and artful film I have ever seen on the subject of a person succumbing to schizophrenia. Naturally, *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* also makes Ron Howard’s four-time Academy Award winning blockbuster *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) and other related overrated Hollywood works revolving around the subject of schizophrenia seem like aesthetically autistic and arrogantly asinine exercises in schizoid fetishism and social retard romanticism. Indeed, post-WWII Belgium may not be good for much, but the country is most certainly responsible for producing some of the darkest and most disturbing cinematic works around, which is probably normal for a culturally schizophrenic country with two different main cultures that speak two different languages.

-Ty E

ONE NIGHT... A TRAIN
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André Delvaux (1968)

Rather unfortunately for me and other people that cannot stand frog-speak, Belgian filmmakers tend to film their works in French instead of Flemish/Dutch because it makes the works much more commercially viable, yet master auteur André Delvaux dared to shoot his masterful first feature *De man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* (1966) aka *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* in the goofy Lowland Germanic language and the film ironically not only turned out to be the most commercially and critically successful film of the auteur filmmaker's career, but also more or less singlehandedly put modern cinema from the culturally schizophrenic Lowland nation on the international map. Sadly, Delvaux would only shoot one more film, *Een Vrouw Tussen Hond en Wolf* (1979) aka *Woman in a Twilight Garden*, in Flemish, though some of his other works were partly shot in the Dutch, including the auteur filmmaker's second feature and arguable magnum opus *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... a Train* aka *De trein der traagheid*. A French-Belgian co-production featuring two relatively big French-language stars, including Italian-born leading man Yves Montand (*Le salaire de la peur* aka *The Wages of Fear*, *Manon des sources* aka *Manon of the Spring*) and exotic Fellini graduate Anouk Aimée (*La Dolce Vita*, 8 ½), Delvaux's ominously oneiric second feature ultimately managed to receive frog commercial support because his debut *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* was so critically and commercially successful in France, with *La Nouvelle Vague* gatekeeper Jean-Luc Godard even giving the work great praise. Ironically, despite receiving French commercial support and featuring two big name international film stars, *One Night... a Train* failed to receive Belgian ministerial support like the director's previous film for seemingly absurd linguistic reasons that also happen to be a major theme of the film. Indeed, conflicts between the Dutch-speaking Flemish and French-speaking Walloons in terms of linguistic turmoil and rivalry reached such a volatile level the same year that Delvaux's film was released that the Belgian government actually managed to collapse. In *One Night... a Train*, a titular locomotive containing Belgians of various cultural backgrounds crashes and causes a 'Danse Macabre' in what is indubitably an allegory for a culturally schizophrenic nation on the verge of catastrophe where everyone, despite language or culture, burns in the end because, as the film demonstrates, there is nothing more universal than death. Centering around a reluctantly nationalistic and pathetically pedantic Flemish professor played by Montand whose once-seemingly-magical romance with his regrettably French theater director lover played by Aimée is beginning to wither away due to both political and personal reasons that largely have to do with the male protagonist's lack of real principles and seeming incapacity for embracing happiness, Delvaux's second masterpiece is all the more forebodingly surreal as his first masterpiece *The Man Who Had*

His Hair Cut Short (which, incidentally, was also based on a work by Flemish magical realist writer Johan Daisne, though the first half of *One Night... a Train* was written entirely by Delvaux), as a sort of strangely narcotizing nightmare and 'magical realist' fever dream that is most certainly the closest thing to a European arthouse *Carnival of Souls* (1962), albeit more immaculately tragic, not to mention aberrantly allegorical.

A feverishly forlorn odyssey of figurative lost souls that become literal lost souls, *One Night... a Train* begins normally enough with middle-aged Flemish protagonist Mathias Bremen (Yves Montand) being bitched out by his exceedingly elderly and frail mother, who annoyingly complains "I never forgot about that" because he refused to go to the movies with her when he was ten years old because he didn't like the hat she was wearing. Of course, Mathias' mother's seemingly irrelevant remark reveals a great deal about the protagonist's personality, as he is a curious man who, like many intellectuals, concerns himself with the more petty things in life while failing to be able to see the bigger picture. Mathias' mother also complains that he does not have children and then makes him promise that he will lay chrysanthemums on his beloved father's grave, but by the end of the film, not only will the protagonist fail to put the flowers on his dead daddy's resting place because he is unable to find it, but it also becomes clear that he will never have children, at least not with his French ladylove Anne (Anouk Aimée). Mathias and Anne are total opposites as especially demonstrated by the fact that the former is a sort of pedantic softcore nihilist with no real strong principles or beliefs and the latter believes in god and is full of passion for life and love, hence her recent decided disillusionment with her relationship with the protagonist. At the beginning of the film after meeting with his mother, Mathias—a linguistics professor who lectures in French—heads to his classroom to teach, only to learn that only a handful of students, mostly negroes and Asians, have attended class that day, as the Flemish majority has decided to strike. A minute or so after beginning his lecture, an attractive female student comes into the classroom to tell Mathias that the Flemish teachers and students are leading a strike and that classes are cancelled, so the protagonist ends class by stating to his students, "I'm very sorry. I'm astonished to see so few here! It looks like your Flemish colleagues are on strike this afternoon. I understand their reactions against the ecclesiastical authorities in this affair, but I am more concerned about their position regarding their francophone colleagues. Otherwise I support them wholeheartedly. Well, I am most happy to discuss linguistic matters. Gentlemen, till next time!"

When a fellow professor comes up to Mathias after he cancels class and recommends that they both show support to the protesting Flemish students by joining a demonstration, the protagonist displays his glaring cowardice by self-righteously declaring, "Is it solidarity, to persecute a minority? Apartheid, racism, wait, doesn't that remind you of something?," thus revealing that he

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is certainly no Flemish chauvinist, but a loner of sorts that never joins sides, though it is more because he is a passive fellow with no heart and not because he is some sort of virtuous individualist. Due to his influence as a professor, Mathias has managed to get his lover a job as a theater director via his friend Werner (Domien De Gruyter), so he decides to visit both of them while they are working. After leaving the university, Mathias goes to see Anne while she is working on rehearsals for a production of the 15th-century morality play *Elckerlijc* aka *Elckerlyc* aka *Everyman* by Flemish playwright Peter van Dieft that the protagonist has specially adapted for her. Despite discussing his adaptation of *Everyman* for months with Mathias, Anne does not like his version because, as the protagonist states later in the film, “She thought that it was not enough to be conscious and lucid when confronted by Death.” Indeed, Death is one of the characters in the play and is described by Werner’s friend as being, “... neither Dracula nor Nosferatu, but a disquieting figure,” while the eponymous *Everyman* is depicted as stronger than both Death and God, which Anne rightfully thinks is patently absurd. While the Death character in the play version physically resembles a cross between Dracula and Nosferatu, both Mathias and Anne will later confront a real and literal ‘Death’ and it is certainly no vampiric fellow that looks like Anton LaVey sans goatee, thus revealing that the latter was certainly right when she complained to the protagonist that it was not enough to be conscious and lucid when confronted with it.

After leaving the rehearsal for *Everyman*, Mathias and Anne go home together and eat an extravagant meal at their cultivated, if somewhat bourgeois, apartment which is adorned with classical Greek and surrealist statues, as well as various foreshadowing images of ‘Death,’ but while the protagonist is deeply immersed in eating his oysters and drinking his wine, his lover seems quite melancholy and plagued by something that has long been on her mind. When Anne says that she thinks the most “beautiful” and “admirable” line from *Everyman* is, “The Angels spreads its wings and says, ‘I pluck the soul out from the body. Its substance is pure and light. I bear it skyward into the blue, there where we will all be reunited,’” and asks her clearly apathetic lover why he does not like it, Mathias disheartens her by tastelessly replying, “Angels have no sex.” Of course, Mathias does not believe in angels and has no problem mocking Anne’s superstitious beliefs, which she does not take lightly as demonstrated by the fact that she denies his overt sexual advances after he mocks her. Mathias is leaving for a trip to meet up with some “old nationalist” buddies at a Flemish university in the north and he does not want Anne to come because of her alien frog tongue and culture, even stating to her while on a bus ride, “You know how they react down there. Old school nationalists, closed minds. I can’t even introduce you.” Needless to say, Anne is not happy with the fact that the man who she loves most seems ashamed of her and her rather unfortunate heritage, so she starts a fight with him, even proposing they break up, stating, “It would be to the detriment

of your career for us to be closely linked. I can't be your French wife, because it's immoral not to be Flemish." Indeed, Anne defensively proclaims that she is "not an object" and "I feel so lonely in your land...I know nothing and nobody...No friends, no child." Mathias attempts to comfort Anne after she claims that one day he will leave her and disappear, but she ultimately decides to act irrationally and run away, so he is forced to visit his father's grave by himself. When Mathias arrives at the graveyard, he fails to locate his father's grave, so he just gives up after searching for only a couple minutes, drops the flowers in a random place on the ground, and gets on a train so that he will not be late for meeting up with his old friends that evening as he planned.

While on the train, Mathias is quite delighted when Anne randomly shows up, so he smiles at her and she warmly smirks back. While Anne apologizes for her somewhat hysterical behavior and blames it on being "under strain," Mathias replies, "You know, probably it's going to last forever this evening. You shouldn't wait for me at the station" and she agrees to take the next train back home. While on the train, Mathias becomes sleepy and begins recollecting past events from his relationship with Anne, including a melancholic trip to London that reminded both of them of the fact that they have no kids and probably never will, but also happier and more romantic moments like when they once kissed in a wooded area near a Bruegel-esque farm. As Mathias begins falling asleep, a montage appears that inter-splices images of a disastrous train wreck with shots of the protagonist warmly embracing his lover. When Mathias finally wakes up from his spontaneous slumber, he is startled to discover that Anne has disappeared and is nowhere to be found on the train. Although both Mathias and the viewer do not know it yet, the protagonist is no longer in reality. Indeed, aside from the last couple minutes of the film, the second half of *One Night... a Train* is set in an otherworldly dream realm where nothing is as it seems and the only thing that makes sense is no sense. On his temporary odyssey in a sort of nightmarish purgatory that is slightly more like hell than heaven, Mathias will meet up with two very different men of two very different ages that he knew at different points in his life and all three fellows will soon discover that they are trapped in an absurdist anti-Arcadia where people act like autistic somnambulists and speak insufferable gibberish.

While looking for Anne on the train, Mathias bumps into a retired history teacher of religion from Tübingen named Gotfried Hernhutter (Hector Camerlynck) that he used to know, though the old man does not at all remember him and seems offended by the fact that the protagonist recognizes that he used to be a professor, as if it shames the old man to be reminded of the fact that he spent his entire life reading and grading papers. While Mathias and Gotfried are talking, the train stops and a handsome young man with blond hair and a Nordic physique in his early 20s named Val (François Beukelaers) standing outside begins talking to them, so the two get out and speak with him, but when they

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do the locomotive suddenly begins moving again and ultimately leaves them behind. Just like Hernhutter does not remember him, Mathias fails to remember Val when the friendly young man informs him that he took a college course with him two years before. Stranded in the middle of nowhere after treading through mud, the three men, who are unquestionably symbolic of the three major stages of adulthood (early adulthood, middle-age, and old age), decide to start a fire at night to cook some potatoes since they are hungry and naturally they begin going into detail about their private lives, especially Mathias, who has a lot to be concerned about since he is on the brink of losing his great love. Of course, Mathias discusses his trouble with Anne to the two men and his fear that she might leave him for good if he does not get back to the train station in time. After bragging that she is a "real woman" who has given him the "best years" of his life, Mathias describes how he was introduced to Anne several years ago around Christmas by some actor friends at a Catholic church on the Spanish border. When Val decides to go look for some help, Hernhutter warns him to be safe, to which the young man replies in a fashion that reveals one of the major philosophical themes of the film, "Everything that happens is foreordained. There is no risk." While Val is away, Hernhutter rather perturbs Mathias by confessing to him, "My ancestors, the Hernhutters, were Protestants from Bohemia...very attached to the doctrines of Jan Hus. They never mourned because for them death was the occasion for great hope. The Hernhutter clan have a grand mausoleum in the commune garden. I have never done wrong to anyone, and when I visit that garden I feel less alone." Luckily for Hernhutter, he will be permanently 'relocating' to the garden very soon.

After what seems like only a couple minutes or so, Val comes back and lets Mathias and Hernhutter know that he has located a nearby town, but when the three arrive there they find what amounts to an angst-inducing *The Twilight Zone*-esque ghost town where the only evidence of the presence of life comes in the rather annoying form of an incessantly ringing alarm. Eventually, the noticeably disturbed yet equally intrigued threesome happens upon a dilapidated movie theater from virtual hell, which they enter and soon discover mostly elderly and foreign nonwhite people watching a terribly disturbing film featuring a skydiver falling through the sky juxtaposed with a sort of exceedingly unnerving ambient noise. When the film abruptly stops with no ending or credits sequence, the audience members nonsensically jump out of their seats in a spastic fashion and start a mini-riot-cum-brawl of sorts among one another as if they have rabies and are collectively high on a killer cocktail of crack, PCP, and cheap vodka. Upon leaving the theater, Mathias attempts to ask an Arab-like audience member for directions to a hotel but he does not understand him as he speaks some sort of gibberish language (apparently, the actual language used is Farsi). Ultimately, Mathias and his two new buddies end up at a bizarre ancient two-floor bar that one might expect to see in an old school Hollywood western that is inhabited

by mostly elderly people that also speak gibberish. When Mathias becomes agitated and loudly asks them in broken English, “What this place?,” every single person at the bar stares at him and his friends in an intimidating straight-faced fashion that clearly disturbs the protagonist and his two buds. Without even asking, a young male waiter serves Mathias and his two friends glasses of red wine and eventually an exotic chicken dinner that they do not have to pay money for. While they are eating and getting drunk, Mathias more or less reveals himself to be a nihilist without any ideals after explaining how he was initially proud to join the resistance at the conclusion of the Second World War, but eventually he stopped believing in the cause after he was involved in arresting female collaborators and imprisoning them in abandoned lions cages at the zoo since the local prison was closed. After telling his story about his short-lived association with the resistance, Mathias goes on to explain to Hernhutter and Val that his lover Anne began believing in god during the same war because she skipped school on the very same day that every single one of her classmates were killed after a bomb was dropped on their cafeteria.

While they are hanging out at the bar, Val’s youthful sex-drive kicks in and he becomes hopelessly obsessed with a super sexy and seductive, if not seemingly sinister, young statuesque blonde barmaid and against Mathias and Hernhutter’s advice, he goes up to her and she ultimately puts him in a sort of incredibly intense demonic trance and eventually gets him to follow her lead in a truly devilish dance set to evil yet undeniably hypnotic discordant music. In what amounts to both a literal and figurative ‘Danse Macabre’ aka ‘Dance of Death’—an allegory on the universality of death—every single person in the bar, both young and old, immediately stops what they are doing and begin dancing with Val and the bodacious blonde barmaid. Naturally, this strange display disturbs Mathias, so he goes up to Val and tries to stop him, but he merely ignores what he says and replies like a lobotomized madman in regard to his sinisterly sensual dancer partner, “Her name is Moira...And I understand her language. It’s a miracle!” When Mathias complains that he still does not know why the train stopped and left them, Val confidently replies, “I’ll explain it to you, Mathias,” but he ultimately never gets the chance. When a whistle randomly blows and the music stops, every single person stops dancing and leaves the bar in a hasty fashion as if they are under some sort of oppressive curfew, with Mathias and devilish diva Moira (played by Romanian actress Adriana Bogdan, who later played the eponymous role in André Delvaux’s *Belle* (1973)) being the sole two people left in the bar. Of course, against his better judgement, petrified Mathias walks up to menacing Moira and before he knows it, he is fainting on the strange woman, who attempts to reassure him by stating, “It’s nothing, you are not injured.” When Mathias regains his consciousness, he realizes that he is no longer at a bar in some strange otherworldly town, but at the site of a tragic train crash. Indeed, Mathias was in a dream realm but now he is stuck in a real-life living

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nightmare and naturally he immediately begins looking for his beloved Anne and soon notices that some of the paramedics and firefighters at the scene of the accident were some of the same people in the dream bar. After walking around in an exceedingly forlorn fashion while passing the inflamed wreckage, Mathias wanders into a sort of shed and finds three corpses covered with blankets lying on the ground, with two of the bodies obviously being Hernhutter and Val as indicated by the shoes they are wearing. When Mathias lifts the blanket off of the third corpse, he finds Anne, breaks down, and caresses her cold pale dead body. Obviously, it is now too late for Mathias to get his priorities straight and fix things with Anne, thus the protagonist might as well be dead like his lover, Hernhutter, and Val.

Although few pretentious limp-wristed cinephiles would be willing to admit it, *One Night... a Train* is unequivocally a horror flick and an exceedingly eerie, esoteric, and darkly erotic one at that that does not follow in the tradition of classic tales like *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, but instead belongs to one much older and all the more morbid and morose. Indeed, as blatantly highlighted near the conclusion of the film during the waywardly 'infernal' dance scene, Delvaux's devilishly delectable masterpiece is certainly a rare cinematic work that closely follows in the late-medieval allegorical artistic genre of the 'Danse Macabre,' which emphasizes the universality of death and was designed to remind people of the fragility of morality and how vain the earthly glories of life are. Indeed, protagonist Mathias certainly learns this harsh lesson in the end as he spent his life caring about such petty things like his Flemish nationalist friends' opinions regarding his French lover, only to lose said lover before he could discover the error of his ways and reconcile with her. More importantly, to the longstanding chagrin and resentment of his much suffering lover, the protagonist spent his life caring about frivolous things instead of doing the things that, for most people, make life worth living, like getting married, having kids, starting a family, and, in turn, creating a genetic and cultural legacy. While the film arguably carries various pessimistic messages, including allusions to the decidedly deleterious and culturally corrosive nature of so-called 'multiculturalism' (indeed, I don't think it is coincidence that most of the people in the nightmarish movie theater scene are either Arabs or elderly, thus reflecting the changing demographics of Belgium), I think *One Night... a Train* ultimately carries at least one positive cautionary message about the need for one to live life to the fullest and to put one's life in perspective so as to not let unimportant and arbitrary things get in the way of a great love and/or destiny. Of course, it is no coincidence that the protagonist of Delvaux's film is a professor—a man that teaches instead of does and talks instead of creates—as he absolutely personifies the pedantic pussy who may be the most sophisticated linguist in town, but ultimately lacks the most rudimentary elements of common sense and cannot see the voluptuous human treasure that stands constantly before his eyes, as intellect oftentimes comes at the price

of unhappiness and incapacitation. Indubitably, *One Night... a Train* is more relevant today than when it was released nearly half a century ago, as the protagonist absolutely personifies the archetypal contemporary Western European as a decadent, passive, nihilistic, unprincipled, deracinated, gluttonous, and overly sophisticated pansy who has no desire to get married, have children, and carry on the legacy that his ancestors bequeathed to him, hence why he is too lazy to even look for his father's grave and instead symbolically tosses the flowers in the dirt.

German auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg geared his filmmaking career towards following in Richard Wagner's footsteps by attempting to create the ultimate celluloid 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (or 'total work of art'), but I think André Delvaux came closer to this artistic ideal as *One Night... a Train* is a work that seamlessly weaves elements of film, theater, literature, poetry, music, painting, and even the culinary arts (the film features a number of exquisite food scenes) in a cinematic 'Danse Macabre' with a stark Symbolist flair that manages to reconcile the works of Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder (whose 1562 painting *The Triumph of Death* arguably features the greatest portrayal of the 'Dance of Death' ever dreamed up by an artist) with the surrealist nocturnal erotica of the director's Walloon namesake Paul Delvaux. Cinematically speaking, Delvaux's work will either interest or bewilder fans of cinematic works as diverse as Walter Forde's *The Ghost Train* (1941) adaptation, Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962), Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz's *Messiah of Evil* (1973) aka *Dead People*, Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder* (1990), and M. Night Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense* (1999), among various others, but of course *One Night... a Train* is a work that is innately superior to every single one of these films. Interestingly but not surprisingly considering the deep cultural roots that most Belgian filmmakers seem to have in comparison to their European counterparts, Walloon auteur Fabrice Du Welz would pay tribute to Delvaux's film with the bizarre bar sequence in his brutal yet beautiful quasi-arthouse horror flick *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal*. With all the films I see, I rarely come across a work that I would describe as an unquestionable masterpiece, but *One Night... a Train* is the real decidedly delectable celluloid deal as a work that is as romantic as it is cynical, eccentric as it is true to life, dark as it is sensitive, fiercely fatalistic as it is wonderfully fantastic, and beautiful as it is bleak. Indeed, the film is just another one of the various examples of why Delvaux is one of the most criminally underrated filmmakers of all time.

-Ty E

RENDEZ-VOUS À BRAY
RENDEZ-VOUS À BRAY

André Delvaux (1971)

While Belgian auteur André Delvaux (*The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, *Un soir, un train* aka *One Night... A Train*) has quickly become one of my favorite filmmakers, I must confess that I was eager to see his third feature *Rendez-vous à Bray* (1971) aka *Appointment in Bray* aka *Rendezvous at Bray* for the most hopelessly base of reasons. Indeed, after I saw a screenshot from the film featuring a rather petite unclad woman with an hourglass figure and a fairly ample *derriere*, I just could not get it out of my mind, so I had to immediately watch the film and see said fairly ample *derriere* in moving image form. As someone who can only seem to tolerate women that have rather largely and shapely backsides, seeing that delectable *derriere* in Delvaux's film was like a sort of otherworldly *déjà vu* as if the director could read my mind almost fifteen years before I was actually born. Rather fittingly for me considering my initial impression of the work, Delvaux considered *Rendez-vous à Bray* his most joyous and uplifting work, stating that it is, "without doubt my happiest film, calls to mind a finally mastered form, where music and characters, grafted on a correct time line, marry perfectly." Indubitably, the film is also Delvaux's most successful attempt at a cinematic 'Gesamtkunstwerk' as a work that seamlessly weaves together virtually all artistic mediums and confirms cinema's status as the 'seventh art' as well as the sum of all other arts, not to mention the fact that it pays charming tribute to the early days of film via sepia-tone scenes and excerpts from Louis Feuillade's five serial French silent masterpiece *Fantômas*. As a work that, although technically a French-Belgian-German co-production, is completely set in France and stars top *La Nouvelle Vague* divas Anna Karina and Bulle Ogier, the film is also Delvaux's most 'French' work, even if it is also a classic piece of Belgian magical realism. Based on the short story *Le Roi Cophetua* (1970) aka *King Cophetua* by French novelist Julien Gracq, *Rendez-vous à Bray* tells a story set near the conclusion of World War I about an eclectically repressed and introverted young Luxembourgian pianist and music journalist that lives in Paris who receives a telegram from his extroverted airman best friend asking him to meet him at his country chateau in a fictional town called Bray, but when he arrives his friend is not there and he ultimately spends his entire time reflecting on the past and spending company with his comrade's seemingly forlorn and emotionally distant beautiful maid, who he eventually has sex with, thus making the failed rendezvous rather worthwhile after all in the end. Arguably the Delvaux's most personal work as a film featuring intimate anecdotes from his own personal life, an uncredited cameo from his daughter, and a reference to the fact that he used to perform live scores on piano for silent films at the *Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique* before ever becoming Belgium's most celebrated auteur filmmaker, *Rendez-vous à Bray* is also probably the best example of how

the director was able to turn a writer's work into his own in a rather clever, highly personalized, and idiosyncratic fashion that even puts Kubrick to shame. Like a Gothic ghost story sans ghosts where the only phantasms are the protagonist's oftentimes bitter but sometimes sweet memories of self-denial and self-loathing while in the company of his quasi-aristocrat French comrade and said comrade's beautiful blonde bimbo girlfriend, *Rendez-vous à Bray* is ultimately an elegant piece of celluloid anti-puritanism as a life-affirming work that celebrates Occidental art and culture yet also reminds the viewer that one must sometimes give into carnality or otherwise life a non-life a monotonous misery.

Pedantic pretty boy protagonist Julien Eschenbach (Mathieu Carrière of Volker Schlöndorff's *Young Törless* (1966) and Harry Kümel's *Malpertuis* (1971))—a character whose surname is probably a reference by Delvaux (notably, the narrator of Gracq's source story is nameless) to the similarly repressed and Apollonian-oriented protagonist Gustav von Aschenbach of Thomas Mann's classic novella *Death in Venice* (1911)—is an enterprising young pianist and music journalist who has dedicated his life to overcoming his meager Luxembourgish proletarian roots to such a stern and serious degree that he denies himself every single worldly pleasure, especially women and sex, as if he is afraid of these self-forbidden things. Indeed, Julien is more or less the complete opposite of his best friend and musical collaborator Jacques Neuil (Roger Van Hool, who later starred in Delvaux's *Woman in a Twilight Garden* (1979) aka *Een vrouw tussen hond en wolf*), who is a wealthy Frenchman of seemingly blueblood stock who never turns down an enticing woman or drink and, oftentimes to the chagrin of the life-denying protagonist, likes to live life to the fullest as demonstrated by his tendency to drive his car like a daredevil and eagerness to join the war effort as an airman during the ultimately fratricidal so-called Great War. At the beginning of the film in a scene shot in a sepia-tone silent film style juxtaposed with Brahms' intermezzo in B minor, Julien reads a letter from Jacques telling him to meet him at his family chateau in rural Bray on December 28th because he has a couple days of leave from the airforce. Upon Jacques enrolling in the airforce three years earlier, Julien agreed to take over his job as a music journalist in Paris, but the protagonist does not seem quite cut out for the job as he is berated by his boss for being too cowardly to write in one of his articles that a group of rather rude Wagnerians were hissing at Debussy fans during a performance of works of César Franck and Claude Debussy by a group called the Capet quartet. Of course, as it makes reference to various times throughout the film, Julien is very self-conscious of his Germanic accent due to World War I and uses it as an excuse as to why he was not accepted to volunteer for the French military, even though he is a citizen of the neutral nation of Luxembourg.

While taking a train ride to Bray, Julien talks with a French soldier who claims that an offensive will be launched nearby sometime soon, thus striking a certain foreboding fear in the fairly cowardly protagonist that will haunt him

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for most of the rest of the film. Julien also tells the soldier about his relationship with Jacques and his blonde lady friend Odile (Bulle Ogier of Jacques Rivette's *Celine and Julie Go Boating* (1974)), who the latter the protagonist treats with contempt because she comes from a humble proletarian background similar to his own. When the soldier asks Julien regarding Jacques, "Is it him you're going to meet?," the protagonist seems quite startled by the question and retorts, "How did you know?" in a somewhat paranoid fashion as if he has just seen a ghost. Julien also takes a special interest in the soldier's mostly silent and somewhat beautiful female friend, as if he is infatuated with her as reflected by remarks he makes about her later in the film. When Julien finally gets off the train at the station in Bray, he asks a couple young boys if they know where Julien's house his, but they treat him in a discernibly suspicious fashion due to his accent and are of no help. When Julien eventually arrives at Jacques' somewhat dilapidated chateau, he is greeted at the gate by his friend's exotically beautiful and almost ghoulishly angelic dark-haired maid Elle (Anna Karina of Godard's *Band of Outsiders* (1964) and *Alphaville* (1965)), who almost seems like she is floating around like a sort of melancholy ghost. Naturally, Julien is disheartened when Elle informs him that his comrade Jacques has not arrived back yet from the war but that he is expecting him. Elle is a sort of dreamgirl with a fiercely flat affect who seems to be lost in some of metaphysical nightmare and she acts as the perfect groveling servant for Julien, who is certainly not used to any sort of stunning woman giving him such close attention, but she does not even show the slightest inkling of emotion as if she is a wandering dead soul who will disappear into thin air at any moment. Despite her seeming emotional vapidness, Elle will ultimately change Julien's life like no one before and teach him that there is more to living than practicing piano and writing second rate music reviews.

Not long after Julien enters his friend's home, he is somewhat spooked by a sort of ghostly presence in the living room and soon finds a Nocturne-like musical piece in the style of the protagonist's favorite composer Brahms that Jacques has written in tribute to him. After playing the piece of music, Julien remembers once arguing with Jacques over the dubious future over their musical quartet as a result of the war, with the protagonist rightly fearing that it will have an irrevocably deleterious effect on not only their lives and friendship, but Europe in generally. Jacques attempts to comfort Julien by telling him regarding their music quartet, "The war will end. We will practice again." When Julien later enters the kitchen, he finds Elle looking all forlorn with her hand over her face as if she has discovered that Jacques dead or something like that, which inspires the protagonist to consider leaving the chateau. Ultimately, Julien decides to head outside and look for a phone at the seemingly unpopulated and somewhat ruined local town nearby but the one he finds does not work, so he heads back and stares at Elle from a window and then recollects a less than happy and rather embarrassing episode from his life when Jacques discovered him playing piano

live during a screening of the second segment, *Juve Against Fantômas* (1913), of Louis Feuillade's classic 5 ½ hour five serial silent epic *Fantômas*. Indeed, Jacques is offended that Julien would hide such a lowly job from him and aggressively attacks the protagonist with the remark, "I think it's despicable that you hide what you do here from me." Jacques also sarcastically states to the protagonist that he is free to waste his life and free to wear out his fingers on a "tinny theatre piano," to which Julien replies in a most arrogant fashion, "It's typically bourgeois to think that playing in a cinema is degrading." Needless to say, play-boy Jacques is not happy with Julien's remark, so he viciously rebukes him by retorting, "Jesus from Luxembourg. No alcohol, no women, no concessions to philistines." When Julien learns that it was Odile who told Jacques about his secret profession, the protagonist calls her "Judas" when in reality the young girl likes him a lot and was actually trying to help him start a series career. Indeed, Odile was helping Jacques to look for Julien because he got him a respectable gig playing for a rich kraut named Monsieur Hausmann (Pierre Vernier) and he equally opulent friends.

While Julien attempts to turn down the gig because he has an inferiority complex of sorts and resents playing for rich people and rather play for uncultivated proles at the movie theater, he ultimately gives in and receives a standing ovation following his solo performance at Hausmann's high-class party. While Monsieur Hausmann compliments Julien's performance by telling Jacques that it is the "the epitome of youthfulness," his wife Mme Hausmann (Martine Sarcey) takes an extra special liking to the protagonist to the point where she remarks to him that he reminds her of someone special from her youth and then attempts to seduce him, but he just stands there coldly as if he is about to receive the kiss of death, thus offending the rich broad, who seemed convinced that she could defile the young man. When Monsieur Hausmann compliments Julien on his performance and attempts to hand him a glass of alcohol and a thick wad of cash in payment for his services, the protagonist becomes infuriated because he feels like he is being patronized, loses his cool, and slaps the alcoholic beverage out of wealthy man's hand, thus causing a majorly disgraceful scene at the party that is not exactly appreciated by Jacques, who has a prestigious reputation to uphold. Meanwhile, Odile tries in vain to 'properly' eat a piece of chicken on a plate while standing up at the party, thus revealing her less than well-to-do class background. As demonstrated by a previous flashback scene where the protagonist incessantly corrects her mispronunciation of words and names while she is speaking passionately about *Fantômas*, Julien has sheer and utter contempt for Odile because, while he tries very hard to disguise his peasant origins, she seems to make no effort at all and totally embarrasses him by her mere presence as she reminds him of where he really comes from. In another flashback scene, Jacques attempts to coerce Julien into having sex with Odile, but he becomes rather annoyed by the request and flatly turns the offer down as if it is an offense against

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his character. In the final and most happy flashback, Julien, Jacques, and Odile go skinny-dipping in a river in a forest in an almost fantasy-oriented scenario, with Bulle Ogier's bare voluptuous ass certainly being the highlight of scene and arguably the highlight of the entire film. Rather shockingly, it is prude Julien of all people that strips first and initiates the almost heavenly skinny-dipping session, thus revealing that there is a wild and adventurous fellow lurking somewhere beneath his hopelessly serious and rather prosaic exterior.

Towards the end of *Rendez-vous à Bray*, Elle serves Julien an extravagant three course meal and the maid manages to smile for the first time in the entire film after the protagonist compliments her on her cooking and warmly smiles. After dinner, while Julien gets drunk on various sorts of expensive liquor that Jacques has stocked at his home, Elle abruptly enters the room while carrying a candelabra and wearing nothing but a blue robe to gesture to the seemingly impenetrable protagonist that she wants sex and then lures him to an upstairs bedroom where they make passionate love. The next day, Julien wakes up and Elle is nowhere in sight, so he quickly puts on his clothes and heads to the train station where a seemingly disillusioned French army unit is hanging out. After borrowing a newspaper from one of the soldiers, Julien discovers that the airmen have not flown in three entire days, thus it seems unlikely that Jacques is dead as the protagonist had presumed. In fact, it almost seems as if Jacques setup a scenario where Julien was asked to come over with the intention of Elle seducing him and freeing him of his assumed virginity. After all, virtually all of the flashback scenes are comprised of Jacques attempting to get Julien to live a more free, happy, and ultimately hedonistic lifestyle. For whatever reason, instead of taking the train back to Paris, Julien decides to stay behind in Bray. Whether Julien hopes to screw Elle again, finally fulfill his planned rendezvous with Jacques, or something else is anyone's guess, but if one thing is for sure it is that the protagonist's one-night-stand with his friend's maid has turned him into a new and more lively man with a great appreciation for life. In the final scene of the film, a shot of Julien stand outside the train station in Bray is juxtapose with a little girl singing the lyrics, "We will meet in hell again [...] Paradise is not for you [...] Paradise is for the King."

Among countless other aesthetic idiosyncrasies that the film features, *Rendez-vous à Bray* is notable for being in the structure of a musical 'rondo' in terms of how it weaves scenes together from the past and present in a cinematically irregular fashion (instead of having an 'ABCD' structure, they have an ABA, ACA, ADA structure). Of course, in its implementation of musical works by and/or inspired by Frédéric Devereese, Johannes Brahms, and César Franck, the film makes it more than clear that auteur André Delvaux was a true music connoisseur with a strong background in the artistic medium. Naturally, the film also demonstrates Delvaux deep love for other artistic mediums, namely painting. Indeed, two relatively famous paintings play a prominent in the film, with

British Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones' *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* (1884), which is mentioned prominently Gracq's source story, indubitably being the more important of the two. Notably, Burne-Jones was heavily influenced by Hegel's master-slave dialectic, which is quite clear in his painting, which features a powerful King kneeling before a beautiful beggar-maid that superficially resembles Anna Karina's character in a sort of ironic role reversal that demonstrates the cryptic powers that attractive women, not matter how poor or destitute, can wield over even the most powerful and prestigious of respected men. The other painting featured in Delvaux's film is Goya's *Mala noche* (1799) aka *A Bad Night* and it is featured in a somewhat obscured fashion in the bedroom where the protagonist has sex with the maid played by Anna Karina. Of course, the greatest and most organic piece of art in the film is Bulle Ogier's bare bum and considering how much emphasis he put on it and the way he directed it, I think Delvaux would certainly concur. After all, *Rendez-vous à Bray* is about an uptight young man of the Apollonian sort who does not really become a real man until at the end when he is quasi-seduced by a somnambulist-like Anna Karina and develops a more Dionysian outlook towards life. Notably, as revealed in the featurette *Rendez-vous avec André Delvaux*, out of all his works, *Rendez-vous à Bray* was the film that Delvaux requested should be the first to be restored and released on DVD, thus suggesting that it was the Belgian auteur filmmaker's favorite and most cherished work. Indubitably, it is certainly his most uplifting, arguably his most accessible, and seemingly his most immaculately structured, thereupon making it the perfect work for Delvaux novices. After all, even if you don't enjoy the film, you still have the grand honor of gazing at petite yet buxom blonde beauty Bulle Ogier's bare buttocks.

-Ty E

WOMAN IN A TWILIGHT GARDEN
WOMAN IN A TWILIGHT GARDEN

André Delvaux (1979)

One important fact about World War II that most contemporary liberalized Europeans seem to have amnesia about and what world Jewry, which does not hypocritically promote multiculturalism for the Occident while at the same time promoting Zionism (aka Jewish racial nationalism) for no reason, has hardly forgotten about is that Uncle Adolf considered all Western European people to be 'Aryan' and planned to incorporate all of their nations, including nations as seemingly different as Iceland and Bohemia, into Germany in what would have been a pan-Germanic empire called 'Greater Germanic Reich of the German Nation.' Additionally, a much larger number of people from these countries than most contemporary Europeans would like to admit supported the Third Reich, as they saw it as their only hope against the spread of godless red bolshevism from the East. Of course, the Allies ultimately won the war and the rest of Europe ironically decided to use Germany as a scapegoat for their own shameful sins and/or cowardice, with many people in countries like the Netherlands and Belgium pretending to have been victims of Nazism and/or members of the resistance after the war, even though only a handful of largely disorganized people were involved with the latter. Of course, aside from a handful of cinematic works of mainly Dutch origin like Adriaan Ditvoorst's debut feature *Paranoia* (1967), Paul Verhoeven's *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange* and to a lesser extent Fons Rademakers' Harry Mulisch adaptation *De aanslag* (1986) aka *The Assault*, very few European films have been made depicting the precarious circumstances and strange alliances that many people of Western Europe found themselves making during WWII. Not surprisingly, the Germanic Dutch-speaking Flemish part of Belgium was going to be incorporated into Hitler's thousand-year Aryan empire, though no contemporary Belgian film would ever reveal this. Ironically, it was a French-speaking Walloon fellow, Waffen-SS Standartenführer Léon Degrelle, who not only becomes the most (in)famous Belgian National Socialist, but also one of the most popular and well known figures of the post-WWII European fascist movement.

Luckily, in the Belgian-French coproduction *Woman in a Twilight Garden* (1979) aka *Een vrouw tussen hond en wolf* aka *Woman Between Wolf and Dog* aka *Femme entre chien et loup* directed by Belgian maestro André Delvaux (*Un Soir, un Train* aka *One Night... a Train, Rendez-vous à Bray*), the viewer thankfully gets a refreshing 'no bullshit' look at Belgium during the Second World War as seen mostly from the perspective of an archotypically Aryan-looking housewife who falls for a somewhat swarthy French-speaking Walloon communist 'resistance fighter' after her fascist blond beast husband leaves home and goes to lead a Waffen-SS unit on the Eastern Front. Delvaux's only Dutch-language film aside from his masterful debut feature *De man die zijn haar kort liet knip-*

pen (1965) aka *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, the film not only depicts the curious position of Dutch-speaking Flanders before, during, and after WWII in a cinematic tale that spans over a 15 year period that begins in 1940 and concludes in 1955, but also the schizophrenic cultural divide between the Flemish and the Walloons as allegorically personified in the Nazi husband and Marxist resistance fighter. Directed by a proudly apolitical filmmaker who may have been the first Belgian 'modernist' filmmaker but was certainly no leftist ideologue or culture-distorter as a mensch that subscribed to the Flemish artistic tradition of magic realism, *Woman in a Twilight Garden* thankfully does not glorify the resistance nor condemn the collaborators, but instead depicts the rarely good, sometimes bad, and ultimately fairly ugly of the Second World War, which turned neighbors into enemies, criminals into heroes, and respected citizens into much maligned murderers. Indeed, unlike virtually all Hollywood WWII films, *Woman in a Twilight Garden*—a work based on the 1977 Ivo Michiels novel of the same name—demonstrates that the Second World War only had a negative effect on Belgium, even if those nefarious Nazi demons were defeated. Featuring famous Dutch actor Rutger Hauer in an against-type performance that is completely contra to his legendary character in *Soldier of Orange* in a fragmented role as a Nazi diehard who disappears for about an hour or so, the film may be the most accessible work of Delvaux's singular filmmaking career, but it is also one of the most subversive European WWII flicks ever made, as the kind of work that has the power to make an entire nation feel hopelessly embarrassed and ashamed.

Despite the fact that they do not seem to really love one another, not to mention the fact they are never depicted fucking, Flemish nationalist Adriaan (Rutger Hauer) and equally blonde and Aryan-looking Lieve (Marie-Christine Barrault) decide to get married during the beginning of the Second World War at a time where Belgium is still neutral and England and France are at war with Germany. Adriaan is a local Flemish fascist leader in Antwerp who plays piano for his comrades during rallies and, to the slight chagrin of his seemingly sexually repressed wifey, makes impassioned speeches like, "Beautiful, but sad. That was our motto. But we didn't like the South... We're a northern people. Our poets know it. We should listen to them and choose our friends carefully. The South is our natural enemy. Our historical enemy. And if a voice calls me, I won't hesitate for a second for it's the voice of my conscience... the voice of history. We are only worth what we are prepared to sacrifice. And what do the lives of the few matter in the eternal scheme of things? If I go, I go for my country. For you. My life is your life." Rather curiously, Adriaan has nowhere near as much passion for his wife as he does for fascism and the two do not even seem interested in having children, as they never mention the subject. When Germany invades Western Europe in August 1940 and subsequently occupies the Lowland countries, including Belgium, it does not take Adriaan long to realize that he has

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to go to Germany and join up with the Waffen-SS so that he can play his part in annihilating the red menace. Needless to say, Lieve is not happy with her hubby's decision, but he reassures her by stating, "It won't be for long. It's a little war. It's already won" and then walks out the door while his wife is still talking to him. When Adriaan walks out the door, Lieve grasps around her naughty bits as if her womanhood has been compromised. Little does Lieve realize that she will soon fall in love with a card-carrying commie enemy who is in the Belgian resistance.

Almost as soon as her husband lives for Deutschland, Lieve is shunned by almost everyone in Antwerp except for the local butcher, who is a Nazi supporter and provides the young wife with free fresh cuts of meat and much needed emotional support. The locals also seem to be jealous of the fact that Lieve has a nice large bourgeois home with an extravagant garden and greenhouse. When Lieve sees a black cat roaming outside while she is tending the garden, she rightly sees it as a bad omen as reflected in a petrified look that she has on her face. At first, Adriaan mails Lieve money but fails to include letters, but when he actually does send a letter, he seems more interested in his piano than his wife as expressed in his words, "I miss you very much...I also miss my piano. I have no time for music here." At one point, Adriaan sends an SS man (played by German actor Mathieu Carrière) to help Lieve, but she seems to resent him, especially after he remarks regarding her emotionally negligent husband that, "We all think a lot of him. He sacrifices everything for us, for the group." Indeed, Lieve seems to be trapped in a sort of internal pandemonium as a socially scorned woman whose husband is not around to protect her, or at least until a young fugitive commie resistance fighter named François (Roger Van Hool) literally sweeps her off her feet and forces her to let him hide in her home. While Lieve initially wants François out of her home ASAP, she ultimately decides to seek shelter in the charming commie's arms after her own family ends up treating her like a piece of trash. Indeed, shortly after leaving a nice dinner with her family, Lieve turns around and goes back after realizing she has left her bag, only to walk in on her loved ones, including the family dog, sinking their teeth in large servings of beef that they had hid from her. Despite being the wife of a Nazi, Lieve receives total romantic devotion from self-described 'socialist' François, who only ever leaves her humble abode to engage in resistance actions, which include gun fights. Ultimately, it is Lieve's relationship with François that will spare her from persecution after the war concludes.

When the war finally ends, members of the resistance walk through the streets like heroes and exact their revenge on Nazi collaborators, including the Butcher, who pulls a Goebbels and kills his family and himself before his enemies can get to him. Notably, before killing himself and his family, the Butcher asked Lieve if she knew anyone that could take care of his kids if something were to happen to him as a result of his pro-Nazi sympathies, but she completely ignored his plea

for help even though he had helped her throughout the war. Suddenly after the war concludes, people who had no direct involvement in the resistance pretend to be heroes and use the German defeat as an opportunity to act sadistically against their neighbors, especially pretty women, who take great pride in shaving the heads of women that had affairs with German men. These pseudo-resistance fighters also take the opportunity to destroy the personal belongings of neighbors whose wealth they are jealous of, including smashing windows and throwing expensive pianos out of four-storey buildings. In fact, a rabid brigade of seething wenches show up at Lieve's home and attempt to attack her, but François sets them straight and informs them of the crucial help she provided to the resistance. Meanwhile, it is learned that Adriaan is still alive and Lieve coerces François into using his political influence to make sure her husband is not executed via firing squad. Indeed, despite the fact that she clearly loves François more than Adriaan and they seem way more sexually compatible, she decides to stay with her husband, who is released from prison in a fairly physically unscathed state, though he is far from mentally sound as one of the few survivors of a thoroughly decimated army brigade, as well as a man who is now regarded by his neighbors as a traitor, war criminal, and sinister Semite-slaughterer.

To his credit, Adriaan proves he is no opportunist by remaining an unrepentant National Socialist, but that also means that he refuses to move forward with the future and live his life. Indeed, while Lieve runs the family furniture store, Adriaan stewes in his study, which is adorned with fascist and Christian paraphernalia, and writes his 'magnum opus,' which he calls, "Notes, memories, my defense." When his repugnantly effete Catholic priest cousin attempts to get him to repent, Adriaan rubs the holy man's hypocrisy in his face by stating, "Did you know which side you were on? Your songs evoke the great Flemish people...And yet you surrendered. Belgium shall be Latin or nothing at all." Adriaan even hates his customers, describing them as "parasites" after his wife tells him that most of their buyers are lawyers, architects, and various other sorts of professionals. Although Adriaan has very little interest in his wife and rather resents the fact that she maintains a strong friendship with her ex-beau François, who is now a powerful politician, he manages to get her pregnant and the two have a little blond Aryan boy. While Lieve showers their son with love even when he is bad, Adriaan finds it hard to even interact with his son in a fatherly way. Meanwhile, Adriaan forces Lieve to listen to his writings but she does not seem particularly impressed when he gives the following speech: "Looking back, and deep inside myself, I still don't understand what it is I am guilty of. They say I betrayed my nation. But what do those accusations mean? I say I served my people. They say I collaborated with the enemy. But how can a nation which has armed itself to defend the culture of the western world, be an enemy nation? They say that we were thinking of our own interests...But how is that possible when you believe in a new world, a new society? When you have sacrificed

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everything for that. When you have given up your career, your family...your own life." Of course, being a woman, Lieve does not understand the concept of true self-sacrifice and completely resents the fact that her hubby devoted himself more to his country and comrades than her. Ultimately, Adriaan cannot live with the fact that his struggle amounted to nothing, mumbling to himself, "All in vain. All those fallen comrades... in vain." Eventually, Lieve goes crazy after listening to one of Adriaan's speeches, goes on a bitch-fest about Dachau and the Jews, and smashes every single Jesus statue in his room and even goes to hit him, but stops when she realizes how weak and pathetic he looks. In the end, Lieve leaves her husband for good while he is chopping wood. The film closes with the inter-title: "Fifteen years in the life of Lieve."

Notably, auteur André Delvaux once described his work *Woman in a Twilight Garden* as an "intimist" film, adding: "We have set the story... in the stirring years of Flanders so that the echo of uproar and fury gives more power to its intimacy and its terrible fragility. We want to bear testimony to this piece of history that has never been dwelt on by the Belgian Cinema. A sensitive testimony, above all, for it is more a question of subtle differences of memory than of History. The sounds and colors of our memory: a Flemish house and garden but also Antwerp during the war, its silences and its noises, its voices and its music, perceived from this look-out station in a garden by night." Judging from his film alone, it seems that Delvaux felt that the war had brought out the worst in everyone, especially the everyday lemming citizen, who put up no real resistance when the Nazis took over yet pathetically pretended to be heroes when the war ended and the National Socialists were regulated to the losing side of world history. Indeed, in the film, the citizens of Antwerp run through the streets and hatefully attack and assault both real and imagined collaborators in a most self-righteous manner as if to convince themselves they are not the true blue cowards that they actually are, as the sort of opportunistic two-faced individuals who would have most certainly treated the members of the resistance just as harshly had Germany won the war instead. Unquestionably, the genius of *Woman in a Twilight Garden* is that, despite being an aesthetically resplendent and visually solacing work that is really quite not like any other WWII flick, it is actually a subtly misanthropic film that only displays sheer and utter contempt for the majority of humanity and does not really feature a single likeable character, thus making it true to real-life. Indeed, even the somewhat homely female protagonist is hard to empathize with, but that is also what makes her more true to life as a woman that encompasses many of the flaws of Western European womanhood. Of course, as someone who is easily the most masculine and stoic character at the beginning of the film yet later degenerates into an irreparably broken man as a result of the German defeat, forlorn ex-Waffen-SS man Adriaan acts as a sort of allegorical symbol for the death of masculinity in Europe, especially when one considers that he is incapable of taking care of his son and

no longer has the power to instil masculine values in future generations of Flemish men like he once did before the war when he was a fascist leader. Indeed, ultimately Adriaan is the most tragic character of the film as a mensch who is just as much of a casualty of the Second World War as his comrades that had fallen on the Eastern Front. Somewhat curiously, resistance fighter François, who is a nihilist at heart, becomes a sort of sneering political bureaucrat in the end who ironically resents the new phony cosmopolitan Belgium that he helped to create, thus symbolizing that Belgium's post-war leadership was a sad and pathetic joke. Although I doubt it was intentional on Delvaux's part, the only thing I could think about after watching *Woman in a Twilight Garden* is if Flanders and, in turn, all of Western Europe, might have been better off if Germany had won the war. Naturally, considering the Flemish, like most Europeans, are committing population suicide and have long been the cultural cuckolds of the culturally retarded philo-Semitic mongrel anti-nation known as the United States, I think the answer is pretty obvious, though no contemporary 'Aryan' would ever have the gall to admit it.

-Ty E

THE TROLL HUNTER
THE TROLL HUNTER

André Øvredal (2010)

After peeping the promotional footage on Twitchfilm, I was immediately taken aback by the digital lawlessness that *The Troll Hunter* so proudly flaunts. The empty canals of the Norwegian film industry are quickly being populated with directors wielding vigor but at a steep price, complete eradication of national culture, save for brief context of storytelling. With *Dead Snow*, *Cold Prey*, *Hora*, and now *The Troll Hunter*, the complete emergence of Hollywood blockbuster ideals within Norway is imminent and what, with most of Scandinavia pardoning these excuses to turn a profit, it won't be long before traditional artistry and aesthetic in Europe are replaced with car chases scenes involving a colossal troll. But I don't dare impute the fact that *The Troll Hunter* is a massive slice of entertainment. Like the best action films of North America, *The Troll Hunter* only aims to please and does so scrupulously. The Scandinavian mythology of trolls as both beast and spirits of nature follow suit with the musings of "the troll hunter", Hans, and many of the weaknesses as detailed by ancient tomes appears to be verified. In a nutshell, that is the basis of *The Troll Hunter*, a feeble shell of Nordic beliefs stuffed with American trash. The director even has the gall to namedrop the fat slob Michael Moore as a positive influence on their short-lived career as documentarians.

The plot is quite simple and leaves much more space for the sequential mythological adventure to take place instead of bogging the film down with trivial ideas of cinema such as "plot progression" and "character depth." Thomas leads a small film crew to document the mysterious poaching of bears and winds up tailing a shady fellow named Hans who vanishes all hours of the night only to return in a fashion undeniably introspective. Not a huge surprise that the veterinarian has such a "thing" for the heavyweight of *The Troll Hunter*. Soon spotting Hans leaving at the dead of night, they follow his vehicle past a government zone warning of blast testing. They soon hear cracking trees, ravenous and guttural growls and witness Hans sprinting from the tree-line screaming "Troll!" Soon after conspiracies and cover-ups from the government are revealed with religious zeal an appetizer to the meal Hans cautiously cooks. Christian blood is a scent trolls can determine to be a source of food. This regard is the only instance except for sunlight that the fables ring credibility. *The Troll Hunter* evolved into the very same popcorn spectacle that I anticipated from the impression the trailer left. This film is hardly extraordinary but a damn fine way to kill a couple of hours safe from regret.

I greatly enjoy when feedback towards a film hailing from Europe such as *The Troll Hunter* is greeted with such a smarmy retort as "Hopefully Hollywood won't ruin it!" Statements like this only make me wish I could backhand such an asinine character who cannot connect the very plain dots linking the globaliza-

tion of world cinema to the plague-ridden cinema of the West. From the first sighting of a troll to the final sighting, we, the audience, are swept into a vortex of diner breakfast, noisome slime, calcified creatures, and the hairy beasts of Nordic yore. The Troll Hunter even goes as far as to facetiously include a swift nod to a classic parable of trolls, Three Billy Goats Gruff by Asbjørnsen and Moe, who are commonly referred to as untrustworthy of their text by our troll hunter, Hans. The shining force of The Troll Hunter has to be the incredibly endearing character of Hans as he is a figure of hope in an otherwise soulless tableaux of mega-monster films. The inclusion of a Muslim in the final roster of crew is a wasted opportunity of mocking the Muslim community in retaliation to the taint left on European countries. Even understanding the Muslim's fate ringing not a bang but a whimper, this retaliation towards the rape epidemic centering on Norwegian victims, the crimes committed largely by minorities, especially Islamic 'citizens.' Argue against statistics all you'd like but I imagine you would have a great difficult time explaining the sudden inclusion of a token Muslim character, only to be given a handful of lines and disappear into a government vehicle as fast as she appeared on screen.

The Troll Hunter is vastly superior to the atrocious Dead Snow which collected an excellent idea and left it out to spoil. Taking the already soiled product and covering it with decorations did not help Dead Snow's hopeless cause one bit, but for The Troll Hunter, things are extravagantly different. Despite containing absolutely nothing of intellectual value other than a director who read several parables involving trolls, The Troll Hunter is the usual jerk-fest involving cryptozoology and paranoid government figures. Perhaps the same characters you'd encounter if The Mothman Prophecies was filmed from a third-person perspective and not an omniscient figure wielding authoritative control of the camera. Despite suffering the flaws of a director with dreams of big-top Americana, The Troll Hunter is immensely entertaining and is often humorous and thrilling. The film's emotive stance on exploration of mythology switches gears from perky fun to drastic, consequential drama quickly and effectively. By the end of The Troll Hunter, you will either be immensely entertained or disappointed by the fact that you just watched a competent American film in another language.

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BURIAL GROUND: THE NIGHTS OF TERROR
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Andrea Bianchi (1981)

Out of all the Italian zombie films I have seen, *Burial Ground: The Nights of Terror* (1981) aka *Le notti del terrore* aka *Zombie 3* (one of a number of films released under this name!) aka *The Zombie Dead* aka *The Nights of Terror* directed by Andrea Bianchi (*Strip Nude for Your Killer*, *Confessions of a Frustrated Housewife*) and written by Piero Regnoli (*Navajo Joe*, *Nightmare City*) has to be the most innately and inately idiotic, aesthetically repugnant, morally irredeemable, patently preposterous, and unintentionally entertaining zombie flick ever made, as a rip off of both the films of George A. Romero and Lucio Fulci, as well as the Spanish zombie flick Amando de Ossorio's *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971). To the minor credit of the film, the special effects for *Burial Ground* were done by Gino De Rossi who, on top of working on respectable films like *The Last Emperor* (1987) directed by Bernardo Bertolucci and *Casino Royale* (2006), created the standout special effects for a number of Guido exploitation flicks, including *Cannibal Ferox* (1981), but also Lucio Fulci's *Zombie* (1979) aka *Zombi 2* and *City of the Living Dead* (1980) aka *Paura nella città dei morti viventi*, thereupon making this miserable maggot-infested zombie film mandatory viewing for any serious zombiphile. Aside from featuring Fulci-esque zombies with real maggots and worms crawling out of their eye sockets, *Burial Ground* is probably best remembered for featuring a 26-year-old Italian midget that looks like a more fetus-like version of Dario Argento (incidentally, a workshop featured in the film was also used in Dario Argento's *Inferno* (1980)) playing the role of a 13-year-old boy with an odious Oedipus complex who has never gotten over his love of suckling on his wanton whore mother's mature tits. Featuring an intolerably obnoxious cast of Hightalian jet-set degenerates of the imbecilic and lecherous sort, *Burial Ground* is also a rare distinguished low-class trash celluloid treat in that the voracious cadaverous flesheaters eat the decadent upper-class humans in what amounts to an anti-bourgeois permanent revolution in zombie form. Before the internet made it so that C-grade exploitation films like it were made somewhat readily available, I managed to secure a copy of *Burial Ground* by chance while still a preteen and I was left in a state of awe by how absurdly amateurish, sleazy, and morally retarded the film was, as if it was a reactionary zombie flick made in petty protest to the superficial civil-rights-saluting of Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and the pseudo-Marxist anti-capitalist subtext of *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). A horrendously hokey and haphazardly assembled horror fest where every single character is dismembered and devoured by cloaked undead cannibals, *Burial Ground* is a hopeless film with an equally hopeless message of schlocky gloom and doom that never fails to entertain, even if it fails in every single other regard as a sort of Plan 9 from Outer Space of Guido zombie flicks.

A swarthy Professor Ayres (Raimondo Barbieri) who looks like a poor goy's rabbi has made a major discovery (apparently, he is "the only one who knows the secret") at an ancient Etruscan crypt he has been rigorously studying and he has invited three couples, who seem to have little interest in ancient history (let alone thinking!) to his quaint mansion to see said magnificent discovery, but he is already dead by the time they have arrived because he has accidentally unleashed a corpse-reanimating curse. Hyper hedonistic and recklessly lecherous jet-set jackasses that seem like a poor Sicilian man's equivalent to the voracious suicidal eaters of Marco Ferreri's *La Grande Bouffe* (1973), the Prof's guests are the last people you would expect to survive a zombie apocalypse and sure enough, they do not, but some of them do put up a fight with the flesheaters in between sniffing wine and having lackluster sex. The most interesting of the couples is fetus-like preteen pervert Michael (played by wily wop midget Peter Bark) and his sub-MILF mommy Evelyn (Mariangela Giordano), who has just gotten married to a weak man (he is the first person aside from the professor to be killed) who does not love his wife nearly as much as his new stepson does. Jealous of any man that courts his mommy dearest, Michael intentionally walks in on his mother while she is sharing carnal knowledge with her new hubby. Luckily for little Mikey, his mother's new husband is the first one to be made into zombie meat, thus enabling the incestuous boy to keep the matriarch all to himself, at least for a momentary period of time. Of course, Michael is not the only degenerate at the manor as a fellow named James (Simone Mattioli) also demonstrates his love and respect for his girlfriend Leslie (Antonella Antinori) by telling her, "You look just like a little whore but, I like that in a girl." The youngest couple is Mark (Gianluigi Chirizzi) and Janet (Karin Well), hence probably why they end up living the longest.

Rather ridiculously and ultimately hilariously, micro-man Michael unwittingly prophesies the presence of the zombies after smelling an old piece of cloth and pseudo-poetically stating, "Mom, this thing...it smells of death," as if he found a pair of skidmark-stained zombie underwear. When the zombies attack the mansion, the brilliant couples barricade themselves inside the lavish home in a Romero-esque fashion and despite ostensibly fighting for their lives, they still demand that the maid brings them beverages and whatnot, as if the hordes of flesheaters will retreat in no time. When the maid is killed after a zombie somehow pins her to a window via throwing a knife (!) at her hand (as if the zombie is a world champion dart player) and subsequently decapitating her pretty little head with a scythe, the infantile inhabitants at the house realize they have reached an all-time low in terms of comfort. Michael, on the other hand, seems to be at his most comfortable and confident as he makes an audacious attempt to seduce his mother by groping her breasts and going down her panties, confessing to her, "Oh Mom, I love you so much. I need to feel you near me. To touch you...When I was a boy, remember? You always held me to your breast.

BURIAL GROUND: THE NIGHTS OF TERROR

I liked your breasts a lot,” for which he is rightfully rewarded with a slap to the face, thus causing the little fetus boy to run away crying like the little whiny shit momma’s boy that he is. Of course, mother Evelyn later rather regrets denying her son her flesh because not longer after slapping him, she finds Leslie, who is now a flesh-fiending zombie, dining on little Michael’s tiny dismembered arm. In the end, the survivors—Mark, Janet, and Evelyn—make their way to an ancient monastery where they discover all of the monks have joined the ranks of the living dead and are devouring human body parts in a seemingly ritualistic fashion. Eventually, Michael, who is now zombified and more hungry for his mother’s flesh than ever, shows up at the monastery, and Evelyn, who suffered more than just a little nervous breakdown after her son’s death, wastes no time whipping out her tits for her undead progeny, thus inspiring her creepy cadaver of a son to bite her nipple off. In the end, Mark and Janet also succumb to hordes of horndog zombies and *Burial Ground* concludes with the ridiculously misspelled quote, “The earth shall tremble...graves shall open...they shall come among the living as messengers of death and there shall be the nights of terror...” from the so-called (and also misspelled) *Prophecy of the Black Spiders*, as if attempting to rip off Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* with pseudo-theological apocalyptic mumbo jumbo.

Featuring marvelously mediocre acting, over-the-hill actresses of the marginally attractive sort, pudgy pussy male actors who manage to be simultaneously fat and skinny (boney arms yet huge guts and fat faces), fetus-like, testosterone-deprived midgets playing creepy children, zonked out zombies whose skulls (which are made of what seems to be cement) are much larger than the average size human head (this might explain why they are more intelligent than the humans), unfitting degenerate jazz music (thankfully this is only played towards the beginning), and a uniquely unhappy ending where every single character is slaughtered by reanimated corpses, *Burial Ground: The Nights of Terror* is, if nothing else, one of the most unforgettably incompetently directed cinematic works ever made and a true curious cult item of filmic flesheater crap. An incoherent rip-off of an incoherent rip-off, *Burial Ground* is like George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) meets Fulci’s *Zombi 2* (1979) meets Amando de Ossorio’s *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971) as directed by a man who seems to have just as little interest in zombies as Steven Spielberg does when it comes to historical fact. Admittedly, upon first viewing *Burial Ground* in middle school, I was awe-stricken as I thought it was easily the worst and most radically repugnant film that I had ever seen, yet it has never left me as the sort of cinematic equivalent of a chickenpox scar that one grows to feel a bit nostalgic for as the years pass. Indeed, with its pseudo-eccentric combination of extra-retarded-looking paper mache-like zombies, Guido midget Peter Bark, unattractive females and even more unattractive males, extra-one-dimensional characters, and mostly anti-climatic death scenes, *Burial Ground* is one of the very few films I

would describe as being 'so bad that it is good' (typically, when I read or hear someone describe a film this way, I discover the film is pure celluloid shit with no redeeming qualities). In its depiction of ancient Etruscan and monk zombies killing uncultivated members of the bloated booboise, one could argue that *Burial Ground* acts as a pro-Traditionalist work where the undead ancestors of modern Italians get revenge for the degeneration of Mediterranean kultur and spirituality, but of course, that would be giving director Andrea Bianchi, who is clearly not the most artistically-inclined of 'auteur' filmmakers, a bit too much credit; nonetheless, it's a notable sentiment regardless of the creator's true intentions. Either way, *Burial Ground* makes for a must-see zombie movie simply for poor little Peter Bark's performance in what is easily one of the most eerie yet needless and nonsensical incest scenarios ever depicted in celluloid.

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Andreas Bethmann (1998) In the tradition of I Spit On Your Grave, Der Todesengel (Angel of Death) features a scantily clad female who gets raped by a couple of men. After this traumatic experience, she decides to rebel against the opposite gender and seduce men into sexual situations only to murder them. Due to the lack of subtitles, dialogue is incomprehensible and utterly worthless. The only thing you might be missing out on is the possible lesbian nature of the main character. It tries to make the connection between Sex and death that Nekromantik did so well. The tendency to fornicate with the dead leads to an addiction that normal sex cannot quench. So begins the murders. As far as a sexploitation trash film goes, Der Todesengel doesn't disappoint too bad. It features explicit shitty gore, including a hilarious head exploding scene. Der Todesengel features an audacious amount of German T & A. Unlike the rivaling title Der Todesking, which exhibits the deterioration of even death, this film has nowhere near any of the pure Teutonic values that came from Buttgerit's film. The fact that this German film's title came from the moniker which was given to Josef Mengele, a Nazi physician who enjoyed activities as castrating young boys. This being speculation and reports from survivors of "The Holocaust" Needless to say, reading about the real "Angel of Death" is more interesting than this film. At least Uncle Mengele gives you delicious sweets for good behavior. Andreas Bethmann brings nothing new to the genre and doesn't try to make up for his faults with effective visuals. Most of the sets look like his mother's basement or rather his backyard. There is no soundtrack to be heard, as I recall. Bethmann has more artistic merit than lets say, Andreas Schnaas, who just creates cinematic shit. While it is a simple sex-and-death film that tries to capture the notoriety of other films like Baise Moi, it doesn't succeed and is just another forgettable rape revenge film. Der Todesengel is as bad as it sounds, but has some entertainment factor. I hate how the German language sounds on DIY film. Sounds like a slurred accent being put through an emotional blender.

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DER STRASS

Andreas Höntsch (1991)

While I have always had a special innate and visceral obsession with various forms of Teutonic cinema that ranges from German Expressionism to New German Cinema to obscure avant-gardists like Klaus Wyborny and Lutz Momartz to the low-budget aberrant arthouse splatter of Jörg Buttgerit and Marian Dora, I have come to the conclusion that the majority of the cinema produced by the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) and its state-owned studio Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA) is, aesthetically speaking, entirely worthless and largely indicative of the overall repressive and dreadfully banal essence of that failed dystopian Soviet satellite state. Surely, it is very telling of East German cinema and its dubious history that one of its most famous 'auteur' filmmakers, Konrad Wolf (*Sterne aka Stars, Solo Sunny*), was a Jew who fought in the Soviet Red Army during WWII whose brother was a famous Stasi spy master. Likewise, it is probably no coincidence that the GDR was also responsible for the Holocaust classic *Jakob der Lügner* (1975) aka *Jacob the Liar*, which was so impressive to the supposedly capitalistic Zionist fat cats of Hollywood that they produced a remake in 1999 starring tragic goofy goy Robin Williams as the eponymous Judaic deceiver. Like in most Eastern Bloc countries, the so-called 'Red Western' (aka 'Borscht Western')—a virtual cultural inversion of Hollywood westerns where the Indians are depicted as the good guys and the whites are mostly evil genocidal capitalists—was very popular as demonstrated by hit East German films like the anti-Fordian *Die Söhne der großen Bärin* (1966) aka *The Sons of Great Bear* directed by actor turned director Josef Mach. Undoubtedly, most of the East German films that I have had the misfortune of encountering are even more contrived and emotionally phony than the typical Hollywood hack work of the same era despite their glaring anti-American sentiments. Not surprisingly, virtually any East German filmmaker that attempted to be artistically distinct, experimental, and/or culturally subversive found their work banned, hence the lack of artistic innovation in GDR cinema. For example, painter and documentarian Jürgen Böttcher's sole narrative feature *Jahrgang '45* (1965) aka *Born in '45*—a sort of GDR answer to the French New Wave—was immediately banned upon completion and did not even receive its premiere until 1990 after the reunification. Of course, it should be no surprise that some of the most controversial and experimental films of the Teutonic Eastern Bloc country were made during the GDR's final years when it became obvious that Soviet style communism was on its deathbed. In fact, DEFA's first and last gay film, *Coming Out* (1989) directed by Heiner Carow (who was also responsible for the slightly subversive DEFA classic *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (1973) aka *The Legend of Paul and Paula*), had its premiere the very same night the Berlin Wall came down as is briefly referenced

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in Rosa von Praunheim's *Ich bin meine eigene Frau* (1992) aka *I Am My Own Woman* starring East Germany's most legendary tranny Charlotte von Mahlsdorf. Naturally, it should be no surprise that the DEFA's most controversial and experimental film was released not long after when the GDR was already in ruins.

Indeed, as much as I loathe East German cinema, *Der Strass* (1990) aka *Rhinestones* directed by Andreas Höntsch is unequivocally a lost classic of East kraut cinema that is more intriguing and unconventional than the majority of West German cinema of that same era. Like Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Grosstadt* (1927) aka *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* meets Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977) meets Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) meets Martin Scorsese's *After Hours* (1985), Höntsch's first and last feature might be best described as a sort of 'experimental romantic-dramedy,' but that would be selling it short as both a piece of cinematic art and social criticism as it is the sort of film that could have only been made during a particular time and place by a seemingly artistically repressed auteur that was finally able express himself in a candid and artistically free fashion. Apparently inspired by a 1985 article in *Sonntag* magazine about an exotic dancer named Miss Albena, the film tells the largely pathetic yet nonetheless humorous tale of a 30-year-old photo journalist that becomes obsessed with a rather flexible exotic dancer that he does not even know and ultimately exploits his position as a newspaper photographer as a means to incessantly stalk her, even though she seems to have next to nil genuine interest in him as an individual. Featuring incessant occurrences of what might be best described as 'slapstick magical realism,' the film features the striking novelty of surreal tragicomic scenarios that represent the protagonist's oftentimes absurdly pessimistic, neurotic, and delusional perspective of the world, especially in regard to the enigma of the opposite sex. The film also features a rather effective novelty in the spirit of Luis Buñuel's masterful swansong *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) in that the lead (anti)heroine is portrayed by two different actresses. In its surreally darkly humorous approach to depicting sexual humiliation and the banality of bureaucratic office work, the film can only be really compared to obscure cinematic works like Austrian auteur Philip Brophy's piece of pleasantly pernicious cinematic iconoclasm *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* (1988). In short, *Der Strass* is a fittingly anarchistic swansong to the end of the GDR as directed by an ambivalently nostalgic man that cannot bring himself to completely hate the authoritarian Soviet puppet state that he grew up in.

If Rolf Thiele's *Moral 63* (1963)—a somewhat underrated pulpy artsploitation piece that shares some aesthetics similarities with Höntsch's debut feature—demonstrated that West Germany was already a decidedly decadent hellhole by the early 1960s, *Der Strass* reveals that East Germany is slowly but surely catching up, or at least so one would assume when seen through the eyes of the film's

fairly young and horny dark-haired photo journalist protagonist Georg Bastian (Thomas Pötzsch). After a sort of seemingly intentionally lame opening post-Soviet Socialist realism montage depicting the bloody misbegotten birth and history of the GDR, including footage of the ultra lame DDR rock band the Puhdys, the viewer is introduced to gregarious Georg during his big 30th birthday party where he is congratulated by friends who do not really seem like real friends at all, including his true believer commie boss and two dudes drinking bong water in a bathroom. After the festivities end and everyone goes home, Georg's supposed two best friends leave him stranded inside a highway tunnel, but his luck soon changes when a beautiful white stallion leads him to a beautiful swarthy woman that looks like she could be Anne Frank's surprisingly stunning sister. Indeed, while looking at creepy mannequins in a storefront window that somehow end up moving on their own, Georg catches a glimpse of the woman and follows her all the way to a bar where she does an erotic striptease to Arab-like music (which is actually music by Israeli Ofra Haza, whose Yemenite Jewish influenced music is apparently beloved by both Jews and Arabs alike) while an audience of old people in mostly pagan-like The Wicker Man-esque animal masks watches on in eerie casual delight. Unfortunately, Georg is soon rudely thrown out of the venue by a bouncer dressed like Santa Claus, but luckily he discovers the name of the mystery lady via a poster on the outside of the building. Indeed, the enigmatic beauty's name is 'Miss Albena GDR' (Sylvia Frank) and Georg instantly develops a deep and all-consuming obsession with her that eventually puts both his job and entire life in jeopardy. Of course, Georg is the sad and pathetic kind of fellow that tends to put pussy on a pedestal. As hinted by the fact that Miss Albena is sometimes portrayed by a somewhat more homely actress (Claudia Maria Meyer) that hardly seems sexually mystifying, Georg has an insanely idealized view of her where he sees her as the most beautiful of literal goddesses, but unfortunately for him she never really reciprocates his warped romantic feelings. After all, Georg is a goofy neurotic mess of a man and most women do not even seem to like him, including those that dare to sleep with him.

As the film eventually reveals via striking chiaroscuro style flashbacks, Georg was abandoned when he was just a wee little boy by his careerist Wagernian opera singer mother, hence his obsession with strong and powerful unattainable women that would not typically give him the time of the day were he not a noted photographer that might help their careers. In fact, at the beginning of the film, Georg makes a total ass out of himself by attempting to get a woman named Steffi (Claudia Wenzel) to spend the night at his flat after they have what the viewer assumes is lame awkward sex by playing one of his mother's records, but of course his lady friend is naturally revolted by his serious mommy issues and immediately leaves his apartment while he is completely naked and his flaccid cock is awkwardly hanging out. While Steffi immediately stops seeing Georg,

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she uses her connections as a showgirl to do him the dubious favor of finding out Miss Albena's personal address, thus giving the protagonist the information he needs to begin his obsessive Oedipal odyssey that eventually leads him to learning important insights in regard to the opposite sex, though very little sex is actually involved. In short, Georg will come to learn the difference between a woman and a vagina and how a vagina has more than one use, namely that it produces life. Under the pretense of acting as her own personal glamour photographer, Georg basks in the highly intimate glory of having one-on-one photo shoots with Miss Albena that involve her posing in a variety of less than subtly alluring fashions where she demonstrates that she can flex her body so freely that her she could practically kiss her own pussy lips. While Miss Albena poses for his camera, which seems to be more important to him than his cock as a sort of substitute phallus (indeed, the film is full of tons of overt Freudian symbolism), Georg imagines all sorts of fantastic things, including oceanic waves projected off her rather tan tits and derriere. Of course, the protagonist is always both literally and figuratively chasing his highly flexible crush, even if she fairly blatantly demonstrates that she has no interest in him outside of a purely professional capacity. Indeed, when Georg offers to buy her some fancy wine, she swiftly blows him off like he is an annoying yet ultimately irrelevant little gnat. Somewhat inexplicably, Georg even manages to get his boss (Eberhard Mellies)—a proud 'Socialist Unity Party of Germany' member that enjoys swimming with the protagonist and taking showers with him in a curious unisex collectivist bathhouse—to let him do an entire article on Miss Albena for their newspaper under the innately dubious subject of, "exoticism in socialism." While Georg's boss—a seemingly gynophobic man who strangely regularly swims and showers with his favorite young employee—complains he feels "sick in my stomach" upon seeing a portrait of the exotic dancer, he likes his employee too much to deny him the opportunity, henceforth eventually leading to conflict when the protagonist spends more time following around Miss Albena than actually working.

Naturally, when Georg's boss denies him the opportunity to follow Miss Albena around Europa and he is instead assigned to travel to Nicaragua to cover kraut commie propaganda parades, he does not take it too well. Indeed, Georg even prepares an elaborate phony pro-Marxist speech where he does his greatest Trotsky impression and declares with not the slightest bit of irony, "Can an artistic dancer, raised from the soil of our Socialist society hold her ground in the landscapes of Capitalism? Where woman's beauty, even woman herself, is only a commodity. How will she present herself? Well, our country, our morals, our point of view, regarding the relations of the sexes, a universal subject, a touchstone where we could assert our superiority, our tireless striving for equality, the unity of economy and social politics for the benefit of the workers, to protect peace and the socialist accomplishments," but he is ultimately turned down and forced to travel to the Mestizo majority Central American hellhole where he

gets so fed up with his work and the blatant propaganda that it entails that he destroys all of his rolls of film before they are even developed. Meanwhile, Georg begins a seemingly less than serious sexual relationship with a blond co-worker with a goofy face and even goofier haircut named Fräulein Schneider (Catharina Krautz), but that naturally goes nowhere. As similarly socially awkward quasi-autistic individuals that work at the same newspaper, Georg and Fräulein Schneider seem like a perfect couple, but the protagonist is too pigheaded, delusional, and lovesick to recognize that she might as well be his soulmate. When Georg finally manages to catch up with Miss Albena in a sort of exceedingly ethereal pastoral fairytale setting where wild stallions are running around, she confesses to him in regard to her mysterious lack of boyfriend and overall lack of social life, "A husband and family. I can't afford all that with my profession. I'm on the road far too often. And friends? They can almost never reach me at home. And when I turn up somewhere, sometime, they would have to be very patient. And if I get pregnant everything's over anyway." Of course, unbeknownst to Georg, Miss Albena will soon get pregnant, just not by him. To Georg's credit, it seems to be at least partially his influence that makes Miss Albena realize that there is more to life than sleazy bars and pink titty tassels.

Despite being nothing more than an annoying little cuck that she barely knows or even acknowledges yet creepily follows her around like a scared little puppy dog, Georg soon becomes extremely overprotective with Miss Albena and tries to rough up some sleazy old fart that attempts to molest her after a striptease routine where one of her titty tassels accidentally falls off. While the would-be molester dares to complain, "First she turns you on, wiggling her arse, and then it's all fake," Georg will eventually realize what he says is all too true, but not before masturbating while thinking about doing exactly what the would-be molester attempted to do with Miss Albena. When Georg decides to pay Miss Albena a surprise visit with the cute thoughtful gift of two baby chicks due to suffering from lovelorn insomnia, he gets quite the surprise when he catches her virtually fucking a handsome trapeze artist outside in the rain. When Georg makes the mistake of confronting and punching the much taller and more masculine trapeze artist, he gets punched back even harder, though Miss Albena ultimately leaves both men cold and wet in the rain. With no real friends, Georg makes the mistake of complaining about his romance life to his less than understanding boss, stating in a delusional manner in regard to Miss Albena, "I'm losing her. She's accepted an engagement in a circus. She's so naive, she'll refrain from nothing. A circus! She'll be on the road all the time, abroad, wherever. I could ever follow her tracks." In response, Georg's boss informs him that he has been assigned to do a story on a "feeding program" and that he should forget about Miss Albena by getting a "shave" and a "girl in a bikini," so the protagonist tells his employer to "[go] fuck yourself." It seems that Georg's boss has great love for his best boy, as he blames himself for the protagonist's flagrant indiscre-

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tions. When Georg goes to see Miss Albena after bitching out his boss, she tells him “We won’t see each other again” but somewhat surprisingly thanks him and then reveals that the trapeze artist got her pregnant by exposing her baby bump, thus confirming her career as an extra exotic glorified stripper is all but completely over. Meanwhile, two of Georg’s friends attempt to coerce him into not quitting his job, but he soon learns that his (ex)boss put him them up to it, thus reflecting the sort of hive-minded Stasi-esque spy society that the protagonist lives in where no one can be trusted. As a result of his romantic misadventures with Miss Albena, Georg just cannot seem to tolerate playing the conspicuously socially contrived collectivist commie game anymore as he has realized that there is much more to life than being a productive member of an ostensibly classless society, especially when deep emotions and pathos are involved.

While Miss Albena explicitly explained to the protagonist that they would never see each other again, things do not go quite as planned for the exotic dancer as Georg notices her being wheeled inside an ambulance while walking by her apartment and decides to follow to her a hospital where he poses as the father of her unborn child while she gives birth. Indeed, while Georg was unable to realize his dream of being her lover, he at least gets to temporarily act as Miss Albena’s sort of cuckold pseudo-baby-daddy while she is giving birth, thus giving him the opportunity to finally gaze at her gash in all of its glory, albeit under less than glamorous circumstances. Among other things, Georg watches as a nurse shaves off all of Miss Albena’s pubic hair in a symbolic scene where she also sheds her former identity as an exotic dancer. When some of Miss Albena’s pubic hair falls to the ground and Georg goes to pick it up, he notably finds the sort of pink feather that was part of her dancer outfit instead of dark Jewess-like pubes. Ultimately, the experience of watching Miss Albena give birth proves to be too much for Georg, as he realizes that she is more than a magical piece of shiny carnal flesh and reacts accordingly by running home and hysterically destroying every single photograph that he has ever taken of her. With the great Miss Albena completely demystified, Georg now sees her first and foremost as a mother and acts accordingly by hanging up a large photo of her pregnant figure where a sexy dance photo once hung. In the end, Miss Albena’s birth seems to be a major revelation for Georg as he now seems to realize that, unlike his own negligent famous opera singer mother, women are oftentimes more than just untouchable enigmatic sex objects and thus he begins a new and seemingly liberating career as a maternity photographer. In the end, the Berlin Wall finally comes down and Georg is depicted at the entrance where East meets West giving away all of his old photos in a scene juxtaposed with “Dido’s Lament” in a highly allegorical scenario where Purcell’s words “Remember me, remember me, but ah! forget my fate” surely echo auteur Andreas Höntsch’s feelings regarding the end of the GDR. Indubitably, when it comes to East Germany, “Death is now a welcome guest,” though there is certainly a sort of foreboding melancholy in

air, as if the filmmaker senses that the German reunification will have less than utopian results, which the last two decades have proven.

Undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing aspects of *Der Strass* is its reluctantly nostalgic depiction of East Berlin, as I expected it to take a more hate than love approach to the GDR, especially considering the thoroughly negative depiction of the western side of Germany as depicted by West German filmmakers ranging from Fassbinder to Buttgereit. In fact, I do not think it is that big of an exaggeration to say that the East Berlin of Höntsch's film seems like a heavenly utopia in comparison to the sort of perennially dark and grim dystopian post-industrial hell that is West Berlin in Sohrab Shahid Saless' *Utopia* (1983) and Wim Wenders' *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987) aka *Wings Of Desire*, the hellish pre-apocalyptic Hamburg of Klaus Lemke's *Paul* (1974) and Roland Klick's *Supermarkt* (1974), and the eerily evil post-holocaust Frankfurt of Daniel Schmid's classic Fassbinder adaptation *Schatten der Engel* (1976) aka *Shadow of Angels*, among countless other examples. Although the protagonist of the film is somewhat neurotic on a personal and especially sexual level, neither he or director Höntsch seem to suffer from the sort of malignant melancholy or ethno-masochism that is typical of much post-WWII German cinema. As I discovered from talking to an Austrian-German friend, despite living in a commie nation that was set up by Jews, Slavs, and German communist traitors, East Germans were never brainwashed with the sort of anti-German guilt that was and is still quite typical in so-called free Germany, hence why PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) is a largely East German movement. In fact, West Germany's most unrepentantly nationalistic and right-wing filmmaker, Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*, *Parsifal*), was born in the GDR and spent nearly the first two decades of his life there. Of course, the great American neo-Spengerlian political theorist and revolutionary Francis Parker Yockey long ago predicated that American culture-distorting would ultimately have a more deleterious effect on the peoples of Western European than communist tyranny would have on Eastern Europe. As Cora Stephan wrote in an article that was later translated by Sarah Farmer for an article entitled *Symbols that Face Two Ways: Commemorating the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen* in regard to the lack of self-loathing among East Germans, "The state ideology of the antifascist resistance [...] exonerated East Germans from guilt [for] Nazi crimes since, according to the [antifascist] myth, their country was free of malefactors, the high-level Nazis having fled west at the end of the war. Since the roots of fascism had been eradicated in the GDR, where antifascists had won out and established a state committed to peace, there was nothing to apologize for. This sense of distance from the Nazi perpetrators and of moral superiority [over] the Federal Republic permitted some in the post-war generation of East Germans to develop a sense of national pride rare among their West German counter-

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parts.” Certainly, quite unlike much of West German cinema, one does not get the sense while watching *Der Strass* that the director is plagued with guilt and/or has a deep-seated death wish. In fact, the film even features excerpts from the Siegfried’s funeral march segment of Richard Wagner’s “*Götterdämmerung*,” which would be somewhat taboo in West Germany due to the great Romantic composer’s associations with the Third Reich as was made obnoxiously apparent in sexually degenerate Judaic Bryan Singer’s big budget agitprop piece *Valkyrie* (2008).

Despite its experimental structure and sometimes crude and risqué humor, *Der Strass* ultimately features a shockingly wholesome message that you will be hard-pressed to find in most West German arthouse cinema. Indeed, as a cinematic work that celebrates motherhood in all of its majesty, it is surely not the sort of film you would find in today’s spiritually moribund exceedingly ethnosuicidal Germany, which has one of the lowest birthrates in the world and which actively welcomes its own demise via the absorbing of highly hostile brown hordes with extremely low IQs and high birthrates. As a sexually neurotic and largely clueless beta-boy that comes (but does not cum) to discover that women are slightly more than just warm wet holes for his prick and that said warm wet holes are actually the spring of life, the protagonist of the film is, by the conclusion, indubitably wiser and more mature than the average porn-addicted modern-day American or Western European male. In fact, *Der Strass* is almost like a surreal adult sex education film made for emotionally immature young adult males as directed by the cheerfully disillusioned East German lovechild of Stanley Kubrick and Woody Allen. While you will probably learn more about the facts of the innately corrupt commie police state that was the GDR by watching Frankfurt-born Hebrew Marcel Ophüls’ doc *Novembertage* (1991) aka *November Days* or even Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s popular kraut blockbuster *Das Leben der Anderen* (2006) aka *The Lives of Others*, Höntsch’s ambitious debut is indubitably the best film to see if you are a young mensch that wants to experience how much it sucked for a young horny mensch to live in East Berlin during the final year or so of the GDR. Unfortunately, not unlike the seemingly semi-autobiographical protagonist of his film, Höntsch’s filmmaking career seemed to more or less end soon after the dissolution of the GDR as he would never get the opportunity to direct another film aside from the WDR TV movie *Die Vergebung* (1994) aka *Forgiveness* starring Lena Stolze and Sylvester Groth. Notably, DEFA apparently produced about 950 features between its founding in 1946 and demise in 1992, so it is only a great irony of kraut commie film history that the studio’s first film created after the collapse of the GDR, *Der Strass*, is probably the freshest and most idiosyncratic, challenging, titillating, and aesthetically intriguing cinematic work that they ever produced. An oneiric one-man journey set in a decaying urban dystopia that truly gives off the powerfull illusion that grass is always greener on the other

side of the fence (or, in this case, the other side of the wall), Höntsch's film is ultimately an unforgettable obituary for a wholly inorganic nation that should have never existed yet nonetheless still managed to produce at least one good film during its all too long existence.

-Ty E

HUNTING CREATURES
HUNTING CREATURES

Andreas Pape (2001) Due to the gorehounds' love for a certain recipe, namely being gore, it's easy to suck them into buying any piece of trash that features a couple decapitations. *Hunting Creatures* is no exception. Unearthed Films' recent DVD release is a rare German splatter film that should have stayed lost and forgotten where it belonged. I will describe the storyline to you in plain speaking. A experiment at a rave that has about 6 people there goes wrong, turning these losers into zombies (Guys with orange food coloring on their face.) 4 or 5 gay German guys go around with fake guns for an hour, shooting zombies with incredibly contrived camera angles and situations. The result is the most horrendous zombie film ever made. The climax of the film results in a homosexual picking up a retarded zombie and administering some horrible, butchered wrestling move. That is the only thing worth of value because with that one scene, you have some spark of hope that this film wasn't serious. Bad news, this film is too serious. You discover this when you view them all crying in a minivan. You think that's bad? What about the one scene with a camouflaged man walking with a gun discovers a zombie, shoots him, and then begins to puff a cigarette that clearly wasn't there before in some half-ass attempt to regulate some sort of noir-ish, even badass feel. *Hunting Creatures* is pathetic. Don't be fooled by the cover art. This is stagnant trash.

It would be one thing if this group of Germanic youth had high inspirations, but in several scenes, we see a room decorated with *Carrie 2: The Rage* and *Face/Off* posters. Inspiration is clearly not one of their strong points.

Unearthed Films is also due out *Das Komabrutalle Duel*. With hope, they will quickly abandon these "splatter" titles in order to pick something up with merit or quality.

-Maq

VIOLENT SHIT

Andreas Schnaas (1989) Low budget can be a fickle thing. When you watch a low budget performance, it no doubt shows, but thank god we have such a thing as "acting" to create stories and drive emotions. Low budget and gore are two words that should never mix ever again after watching Violent Shit. Andreas Schnaas was a gorehound as a child, so i guess he got some false inspiration to create the lamest film alive and give it a "shocking" title. So Karl Shitter is a shitty boy who gets punished by his mom and he hacks her up. Some boring stuff happens and he is grown up and cuts a lot of Styrofoam arms off. The film is stark with stupid acting and horrible settings that look like someone found a stolen video camera, and got a bunch of high school jerk-off friends in my backyard and decided to make an abomination. I honestly cannot write paragraph after paragraph plotting out why you should never see this film other than the brutal truth. Andreas Schnaas has killed the genre of splatter for me. Now i am terrified of watching Olaf Ittenbach. Everytime i see a European splatter film, i honestly crawl into the fetal position and cry. The chances of the sequels being any better are high, but the chances of them being watchable are still in the negatives.

I only thank Schnaas for the appropriate title.

-Maq

VIOLENT SHIT II
VIOLENT SHIT II

Andreas Schnaas (1992)

Germans are so misunderstood. Their polarized and complex identity easily rivals the schizophrenic and more accepted Japanese culture. In reviewing *Violent Shit II*, I can't help but comment on the seedier, darker dynamic of German cinema. You can't learn everything about a group's culture from watching one film, but you can learn how some of how it ticks. And I think watching old school, SOV German gore porn is a great place to do this. The plot is simple: The son of the killer in the original *Violent Shit* must kill people to sexually satisfy his aging mother. What follows is a story worshiping bloodshed, the hatred of humanity, the sick preservation of physical dominance and the degradation of women... all with a joyful intensity. It can be nauseating, but it has a camp aspect that mocks the attitude it seems to be glorifying. This is what elevates it from something like the August Underground films. At one point the killer is carrying a corpse singing "I am the Greatest, I am the Best" and the film ends with goofy, blood-soaked outtakes and rainbow-colored titles! The film is mostly a loose collection of gritty, fetishistic murder sequences, but told with a furious lack of artistry and pretension and sporting a bizarre, complex psychology that makes it a supreme B-Movie in my book. I actually hated this film until watching it after Giuseppe Andrews' similar work "Period Piece". *Violent Shit II* is a fun, confessional, dirty little movie made for no one's entertainment but its filmmakers, and it works.

After WWII, the Germans, Japanese and Italians seemed compelled (out of guilt?) to showcase their darkest, most savage motives in their cinema. I think it's admirable that they never sugarcoat or downplay their sexism, shallowness, racism, rudeness or more moronic nature. If America had a voice this honest, we could address these issues openly and intelligently. This brutal honesty is what gives German art/entertainment their uniquely beautiful edge. It teaches me to be at peace with the dark animal nature and immorality that exists in everyone. *Violent Shit II* seems to be celebrating this and mocking this when the killer beholds a Japanese warrior a'la the Baby Cart movies and quips, "You were good, but I am better... I am Karl the Butcher... Junior!" (cue opening theme "VIOLENT!SHIT!"). The killer, Karl the Butcher Jr. (perfect name) is a great slasher character. He's a tall psycho with a body like concrete and a crude Iron Maiden mask. Karl Jr. has to be one of the first collage-type characters created to wear his influences on his sleeve, which is now common in a post-Tarantino world. He jokes like Freddy, looks like Jason and takes a sensual pleasure in his evil deeds like Leatherface. What is really charming is how the killer spends so much time belittling and taunting his victims. There can't be a more verbally abusive horror character out there, even if he's not the most clever or eloquent.

My favorite bit is where Karl blasts a man's head apart and groans, "Bullseye, dickhead!"

Violent Shit II is a film you can put on, turn on MUTE and then play your favorite angry, vile or decadent piece of music. It's pure visual splendor: non-stop horrific simulated murders in grainy VHS detail with the occasional absurd subtitle like "Bye, Chubby. Say Hello to the worms". Violent Shit II is not really a slasher film in classic terms. It's more of a homemade work of video art. If John Waters was a younger, sexually repressed, heterosexual German, he might make films like Violent Shit II. I enjoyed Violent Shit II. Why? Because it constantly entertains. Its sensibilities should be so foreign to me, yet they hit home HARD. Of course I can only recommend it to very few types of film-goers: fans of lofi/low tech cinema, gore-hounds and the most cynical and nihilistic lovers of splatter. As poorly shot, sloppily edited and badly acted as it can get, Violent Shit II does what any good film does: It keeps you glued to the screen AND reminds us we are alive.

-Q

IVAN Z

IVAN Z

Andrés Duque (2004)

Beyond a shadow of doubt, the cinematically reflexive Spanish auteur-piece *Arrebato* (1980) aka *Rapture* directed by eclectic Basque artist Iván Zulueta (*Un, Dos, Tres, Al Escondite Inglés* aka *Hide and Seek*, *Leo Es Pardo* aka *Leo is Dark*) is one of my favorites films, even if I only first saw it about 6 months ago, so it goes without saying that I consider it nothing short of an artistic tragedy that the eccentric genius behind the film would never again direct a feature-length film before dying in 2009 at the somewhat premature age of 66. Plagued by a lifelong lingering addiction to heroin – which played a central role in the direction and themes of *Arrebato* – Zulueta only found enough energy to direct a couple shorts and TV episodes and design art for a couple movie posters (including early works of Pedro Almodóvar), but would never achieve anything even remotely as groundbreaking and artistically dignified as the 1980 film he is best remembered for. In the 52-minute documentary *Ivan Z* (2004) directed by Spanish-Venezuelan documentary filmmaker Andrés Duque (*La constelación Bartleby*, *Dress Rehearsal for Utopia*), one is treated to a rare and intimate interview with Zulueta at his parents' house regarding his lifelong film fanaticism, filmmaking, family, and the soul-destroying nature of heroin. Suffering from a perennial case of Peter Pan syndrome well into his 60s, which he is more than willing to own up to, Ivan Zulueta has no qualms about describing his many failures in life and his lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of continuing filmmaking after completing *Arrebato*. As big of a cinephile as ever, Zulueta spends more time talking about films that paralleled and changed his life than discussing friends and relatives. As he explains at the inception of *Ivan Z*, Zulueta described the power and influence of cinema as follows, "I haven't had a better time with anything than with watching films. There was nothing better. Well...I spent the whole day in theatres." Undoubtedly, such enthusiasm for the silver screen would ultimately be a central and guiding theme for his modern masterpiece *Arrebato*.

The son of a rich and successful lawyer who somewhat strangely moonlighted as a director of The San Sebastián International Film Festival and a mother that dabbled in painting, Ivan Zulueta was destined to a life of leisure, cinema, and art before his birth. Roaming around in his charming childhood home in a blue bathrobe at the beginning of *Ivan Z*, Zulueta shows off vintage film posters he designed for films like the classic West German anti-war flick *Die Brücke* (1959) aka *The Bridge* directed by Austrian auteur Bernhard Wicki, the British romantic-comedy *The Grass Is Greener* (1960) directed by Stanley Donen (*Singin' in the Rain*, *On the Town*) and the Spanish-Mexican black comedy *Viridiana* (1961) directed by Luis Buñuel, among many others. Zulueta also reveals paintings done by his mother and it is quite apparent that her aesthetic in-

fluence had a major impact on her son. Zulueta describes watching the progress of his mother's paintings as a child as being exciting as watching the progress of a movie. Lovingly calling his mother "loopy" after the Hanna-Barbera's theatrical cartoon short series *Loopy De Loop* (1959-1965), as well as *And the Ship Sails On* after Federico Fellini's late-period 1983 minor masterpiece because he jokingly states that he hopes she one day moves, Zulueta seems to have an especially close relationship with his mum, even if he refuses to call her "mom." Although the Spanish auteur admits, "I've really had a perfect life here" in regard to his family and childhood, he feels it was ultimately harmful in his development as an adult. Judging by Zulueta's highly vocal disdain for "keeping busy," I have no doubt he is right, but, of course, it inevitably lead to his direction of *Arrebato* as no working-class individual would ever consider being an artist a legitimate form of work. Indeed, Ivan Zulueta may have wasted and thrown away most of his life, but relatively speaking, he has achieved more than most by directing ones of the greatest films of the 1980s period, thus it was ultimately worth it in the end. After all, how many human beings can say they will be forever immortalized due to there art?!

Towards the conclusion of *Ivan Z*, Zulueta admits that he always admired the scene in Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979) where the lead character Joe Gideon, an overworked theatre director, opens up his medicine cabinet and takes his narcotic happy pills. Although Zulueta would not have as fruitful of a directing career as Gideon, he would get his own bottle of prescribed methadone tablets, which he proudly displays in what is one of the most distastefully uproarious scenes in the entire documentary. Despite Zulueta's generally positive attitude and charming persona, I found *Ivan Z* to be a doleful documentary about a somewhat tragic individual who, in my humble opinion, had the potential to be one of the greatest filmmaker who ever lived, but instead opted for a less than luxurious life of aimlessness and addiction. Referencing Alice's Restaurant (1969) directed by Arthur Penn as an example, Zulueta freely admits that he was well aware of heroin's destructive essence and how it partially led up the dissolution of the hippie movement, yet he couldn't help embracing what he describes as, "the ultimate drug, the last frontier." Indeed, indubitably a man with an addictive personality, film and filmmaking also acted as a sort of a drug for Zulueta as they gave him an arguably 'safe' high, but, then again, the Spanish auteur depicts quite a different scenario in *Arrebato*; a film where a young avant-garde is eventually totally drained of his youthful vitality to be vampiric Super 8 camera. Using a Super 8 camera himself for the greater part of his years as a filmmaker, the character Pedro (Will More) in *Arrebato* is more obviously modeled after Zulueta than the lead José Sirgado; a hack horror filmmaker who is more interested in monetary stability than artistic integrity. Discussing past conversations he had with *Arrebato* star Will More, Zulueta readily admits that regarding junk, "It's simple. If you take it you can't fuck, you can't go to the

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movies, you can't travel, you can't move. There are lots of things you can't do." Of course, for Zulueta it cost him a potentially unparalleled filmmaking career, but at least we still have the enrapturing Spanish masterpiece that is *Arrebato*.

-Ty E

FUNNY HA HA

Andrew Bujalski* (2002)

I recently discovered an American independent film movement known as “mumblecore.” Last night I had the misfortune of watching *Funny Ha Ha*, the very first mumblecore film. I assume the name of the movement has to do with the fact that the pathetic actors featured in the films, despite being college graduates, have a hard time speaking proper English as they constantly mumble, whisper, stutter, and have an overall difficulty being linguistically assertive whilst speaking. The main character in *Funny Ha Ha*, a girl named Marnie whose cutesy good looks are ruined by her feebleminded personality, certainly personifies the verbal mumble to the very core. The question I had to ask myself after watching *Funny Ha Ha* is how anyone could find anything at all interesting or engaging about the film. I assume the title of the film is supposed to be ironic in the most hipster fashion. The fact that critics have compared the banal realism of mumblecore films to the gritty realism of the works of John Cassavetes is nothing short of cinematic blasphemy and complete ignorance in regards to authentic emotions. After all, Cassavetes’s film *A Woman Under the Influence* has more emotion in 2 seconds of Gena Rowlands desperate cries than all of the silly slacker scene-stealer scenes in *Funny Ha Ha* combined.

The protagonist Marnie in *Funny Ha Ha* is a recent college graduate who cannot find work nor a decent man. As a college graduate myself, I can honestly say that I have met some of the stupidest and most impressionable people (both students and professors) whilst obtaining my liberal arts degree. Marnie certainly shares many of the characteristics of the typical hipster dullard girl that one could easily find while roaming a college campus. Probably the only thing of value I learned in college is the way of the enemy and the overall intellectual bankruptcy of modern academia. Although I am the sure New-Left counter-culture revolution of the late 1960s might have been entertaining for students during those times as it was something new, now these Frankfurt school inspired ideas have turned into the dogma and gospel of banality, fundamentally flawed ideas to start with that have never advanced past their initial theories for they are mere critiques and not living ideas. As the great German political philosopher Carl Schmitt once wrote, “The essence of liberalism is negotiation, a cautious half measure, in the hope that the definitive dispute, the decisive bloody battle, can be transformed into a parliamentary debate and permit the decision to be suspended forever in an everlasting discussion.” Schmitt’s statement about liberalism certainly holds true in regards to the liberal nihilists of *Funny Ha Ha* as they endlessly talk about nothing, giving no evidence that they have real personalities, let alone the will to power.

Marnie knows that she needs a real job and a boyfriend but is completely unable to assert herself in actively fulfilling her desires. To say she does things half-

FUNNY HA HA

ass would be too generous of a description in regards to Marnie's monotonous behavior. Marnie is obsessed with an equally pathetic slacker named Alex. Unlike Marnie, Alex cannot make his mind up whether or not he should start a relationship with a beautiful lady that fancies him like no other. Out of nowhere, Alex ends up marrying a Jewish American princess without telling his friends and family. I found Alex's quick marriage to be the most enlightening aspect of Funny Ha Ha. After all, most liberal ideas (both young and old) are of Jewish origin (especially those promoted in academia) whether it be Spinoza, Marx, Trotsky, Marcuse, or Tim Wise. Although liberals describe themselves as "progressive," one does not have to look too hard to realize that the rise of liberalism parallels the decline of the occident. Europe became powerful through hard work, tradition, self-control, and with strong uncompromising idealism. Of course, liberalism promotes self-gratification of the individual, cosmopolitanism, weakness, acceptance of most things degenerate, and various other poisons that have sickened the Western world. The Jews, being an alien group to Europeans, do well in a liberal globalized world as they could never collectively live up to the standards of the traditional western world, hence why they were early proponents of liberal ideas in the first place. European Jewry reached it's peak in power in Weimer Republic Germany, the most degenerate era (up to that point) in German history. That being said, it is not hard to understand why many German nationalists saw Jewry as their greatest enemy. In Funny Ha Ha, the Jewish girl certainly knew what she wanted and married herself a good little goy boy while in her aimless Marnie could not even find the energy to attract Alex with anything more daring than infantile fart jokes. I guess all those feminist classes really destroyed Marnie's female instinctual seducing powers.

If I did not know that Funny Ha Ha was supposed to be a serious critically acclaimed art film, I would have assumed it was an exploitative parody of the all-embracing impotence of white liberals. If the average white college graduate is as pathetic as those featured in the film, maybe the white race deserves to cease to exist. One of the flaws of your modern white person (especially college educated) is listening to and honestly believing wholeheartedly in the lies of the liberalism that are being fed to them. While your average "minority" knows that liberalism is a tool (used by those with slave moralities, who cannot take control by merit/action but instead demand rights as a "victims") of war used against whiteness for power and the destruction of everything that is of European origin, liberal whites actually believe the fantasy of world peace and equality. As the great German philosopher/historian Oswald Spengler, a man that predicted many of the modern ills that now contaminate the West, long ago wrote, "Pacifism means letting the non-pacifists have control ... Pacifism will remain an ideal, war a fact. If the white races are resolved never to wage war again, the colored races will act differently and become rulers of the world." Marnie and her friends cannot rule their own lives, let alone provide stability for future generations to

fight for their very existence. After watching Funny Ha Ha, I felt that I was mediocly mumbled at to the core, hopefully never again will I have to endure such a deplorable cinematic chore. At the end of the film I truly felt sorry for Marnie, an undeniably beautiful girl lost in a sterile sea of purposelessness.

-Ty E

THE MUTILATION MAN
THE MUTILATION MAN

Andrew Copp (1998)

While 'arthouse-splatter' might sound like an oxymoronic description for a film, a couple filmmakers have managed to somewhat successfully create such works that merge serious artistic pretense with sleazy celluloid trash. Indeed, underground filmmakers like Jörg Buttgerit (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*), Andrey Iskanov (*Visions of Suffering*, *Philosophy of a Knife*), Marian Dora (*Cannibal*, *Melancholie der Engel*), Nacho Cerdà (*Aftermath*, *Genesis*), and Karim Hussain (*Subconscious Cruelty*, *The Beautiful Beast*) have, to varying degrees, been aesthetically fruitful with cinematically juggling gore and poetry. To me, a successful 'arthouse-splatter' flick manages to depict something morbid and grotesque in an aesthetically pleasing fashion to the point where it offends viewers who are not used to such works and feel outraged that they were 'tricked' into finding pulchritude in perversity. Naturally, as a fairly artistically and culturally vacant nation of the largely proletarian sort with virtually no great aesthetic traditions aside from a few scattered artists and novelists, America has not produced many, if any, notable filmmakers who have dared to make celluloid depravity delectable, but of course, some have tried and, for the most part, they have failed hard. A case in point is belated Dayton, Ohio-based filmmaker, horror fanatic, fanzine writer/blogger, and community college film professor Andy Copp (*Black Sun*, *Quiet Nights of Blood and Pain*), who is probably best known for his micro-budget directorial debut *The Mutilation Man* (1998), which I recently had the grating displeasure of viewing. Considering it stars underground cult auteur Jim Van Bebber (*Deadbeat at Dawn*, *The Manson Family*) as an abusive alcoholic father who beats children and rapes women after he has a little too much to drink, Copp's first feature is something I wanted to like, but there is no way I can polish this turd and write a puffer-plagued appraisal about its virtually nonexistent merits as a mixed media fever dream of the gratuitously bloody and gory masochist sort. Indeed, as a disturbingly personal work created by a man who clearly suffered inner torment as demonstrated by his seemingly senseless suicide in early 2013 at age 40, I hate to trash *The Mutilation Man*, but it ultimately reminded me of something I would have created when I was in high school and not the dream project of a artistically enterprising man on a mission who spent four years of his life to assemble it. Shot on 16mm negative film and Super-8, which was absurdly transferred to VHS(!) for editing purposes, Copp's film looks like a product of some sort of ungodly early-1990s heavy metal mullet hell. Featuring real stock-footage from the holocaust and Vietnam War randomly spliced in throughout, Copp's work wallows in bad taste and senseless sensationalism and thus might give a semi-hard-on to some lonely jaded gorehound, but it left me feeling like I endured a tedious torture test of the aesthetically insipid and uniquely vapid sort. The embarrassing 'confessional'

non-story of a morbid masochist who travels around a barren post-apocalyptic countryside and mutilates himself for small adoring sub-retarded metalhead and grunge dork audiences, *The Mutilation Man* is a sort of carelessly convoluted 'metaphysical manifesto' from an American-bred born-again nihilist who clearly has a lot of internal pain and agony but clearly has no practical or positive way to express it. Indeed, it may be the only film that made me consider that horror movies and trashy thrash metal might have a devastating effect on American youth.

Ivan (played by Terek Puckett, who previously played the murderous metalhead moron sidekick in Van Bebber's absolutely hilarious 1994 short *My Sweet Satan*) is an ugly, swarthy, and out-of-shape beta-male G.G. Allin wannabe who seems to have the same barber as Kevin Smith and who is so emotionally damaged from the emotional and physical abuse that he endured from his dip-somaniac rapist father (Jim Van Bebber) that he has dedicated his non-life to mutilating his body for young sadistic audiences in what one might describe a traveling 'postmodern post-apocalyptic performance art show.' Indeed, Ivan is a sort of troubadour for a fallen zeitgeist of atavistic depravity where love, beauty, poetry, and creativity have become a distant memory. In a scene that will only make sense to people who have listened to the director's audio commentary for the Sub Rosa Studios DVD release of the film, young Ivan (Robbie Crellin) digs a grave and somehow buries himself (while standing over his own body at the same time!) in a symbolic scene representing the character's attempt to bury his traumatic past into his subconscious, so that he can put his ugly childhood to rest and be reborn. Flash forward a couple years later and Ivan arises from the grave completely naked as a full-grown adult and immediately encounters a post-apocalyptic hellhole where the landscape is covered with the unclad bodies of countless homely young girls. A collage and montage heavy work shot from three different yet intertwined perspectives (1. Reality 2. Ivan's Memories 3. Ivan's Hallucinations) that are jumbled together in a completely convoluted fashion that makes little, if any, sense (aside from reflecting the cognitive dissonance of the protagonist/director), *The Mutilation Man* ultimately seems like a hokey yet mostly humorless hodgepodge of the director's dreams, fantasies, horror film fanboyism, and plaguing post-traumatic stress. Indeed, while watching the film, one certainly gets the impression that the director has a lot of bad memories as a result of child traumas and failed romantic relationships. In other words, things get a little bit ugly.

Ultimately, *The Mutilation Man* is mainly comprised of mentally perturbed protagonist Ivan treading along in a morbidly depressed lackluster fashion and doing a couple of ostensibly perverse performance art shows, as well as the character's quasi-spiritual interaction with two very different and seemingly imaginary women that more or less subconsciously guide his messed up mind. Indeed, Ivan is compelled by both good and evil as represented by these dichotomous female

THE MUTILATION MAN

beings. The first woman is credited as 'Fetish Demon' (Kristy Bowersock) and she is a discernibly sadistic soul-sucking mutilated bitch with a pseudo-Gothic outfit who looks like she got gang-raped at a Skinny Puppy concert. The second woman is the 'Angel' (Jollie Scott) and she is a loving 'guardian angel' and a sort of spiritual arch enemy to 'Fetish Demon' because she wants Ivan to follow a positive path whereas the demoness merely contributes to his self-destruction and spiritual degeneration. As depicted in mostly dimly lit nightmarish flashback scenes that are incessantly spliced in throughout the entire film, Ivan owes virtually all of his malignant masochism to the fact his Father—a lanky lunatic that looks like a cross between Charles Manson and tragic Gothic prince Rozz Williams—was an abusive alcoholic asshole who raped him, his mother, and a prostitute, hence why the film opens with the quote: "THE SINS OF THE FATHERS SHALL BE VISITED UPON THE CHILDREN." If it were not for the degenerate dipsomaniac daddy that got him addicted to masochism in the first place, Ivan would probably would not want to deal with an unhinged bitch like 'Fetish Demon,' but his appetite for self-disintegration is an innate part of his being and compels him to be attracted to bat-shit crazy bitches who leave him in stitches. In the end, the post-apocalyptic femme fatale 'Fetish Demon' gets bored with brutalizing and torturing Ivan, but luckily the protagonist manages to find so much needed redemption by saving a pregnant woman from some goofy looking borreby untermensch who starts an impromptu massacre during one of the mutilation man shows. In what is a quasi-happy ending to a uniquely unhappy movie, Ivan walks in front of the 'Angel' while heading towards a new chapter in his life, thus reflecting that he has finally taken lead of his own destiny.

While shot over a four year period and aiming to be a sort of wildly idiosyncratic splatter-tinged Jodorowskyian mystical quest that also pays homage to great Guido gore masters like Lucio Fulci and Ruggero Deodato, *The Mutilation Man* ultimately seems like a hokey homemade horror mix-tape that was haphazardly assembled over a couple weekends while the director was drinking cheap beer and dropping acid with his buddies. Naturally, the fact that Jim Van Bebber, who was drunk for at least part of the production, is constantly featured in the film drinking beer and liquor only all the more adds to this glaring 'beer buddy' vibe. Of course, I would be lying if I did not admit that I found the film at least partially disturbing, albeit not in the way that the director probably originally intended. Indeed, while I was watching *The Mutilation Man*, I got the sense that the director is a troubled fellow with low self-esteem and a lot of emotional battle scars and internal open wounds who does not have a real outlet for his emotional and mental afflictions aside from watching old school horror flicks, listening to soulless heavy metal music, and making no-budget 'auteur' pieces. As director Andy Copp describes in the audio commentary for the DVD release of the film, he grew up in a poor white trash ghetto where

he was routinely tormented by his abusive father (who the director lovingly describes as “my son-of-a-bitch dad”) and ironically grew up eating the same sort of cheap meat that was used as special effects for the film. Undoubtedly, for better or worse, the film brings new meaning to the famous The Wizard of Oz line: “There’s no place like home”

While the film would have probably been a little bit better if Copp had chosen to cut and edit the work together the traditional way by using a flatbed editor as opposed to transferring it onto video (after all, what is the point of shooting on real film in the first place if it is eventually going to be degraded to VHS quality?!), *The Mutilation Man* is ultimately a mutilated movie made for masochists and misfits that is full of half-baked ideas and fanboy horror fantasies and that was directed by a man that clearly loved horror and film in general but lacked the artistic talent and focus of vision to create something truly worthwhile. Indeed, something is certainly wrong with a film when its own director states of it: “I don’t know how clear it is in the film...and some people get it and some people don’t...I think it is more of my fault as a director for just not shooting it and editing it in such a way that it comes across...” For fans of jumbled video horror trash like the shot-on-video collage pieces of Charles Pinion (*Twisted Issues*, *Red Spirit Lake*), *The Mutilation Man* might seem like an unsung masterpiece, but I guess I am just not masochistic enough to truly dig such a aesthetically degrading work. Of course, there is one good thing I can say about the film and that is that it has a highly personalized essence about it that might inspire aspiring filmmaker to get off their asses and spill their guts. Indeed, *The Mutilation Man* may not be my cup of tea, but it managed to attract a loyal, if not marginal, fan base. After all, America is a place full of damaged individuals who were brutalized as children and somehow found solace in the seemingly unlikely world of horror cinema. While Copp’s film is in no way comparable to Jodorowsky’s films, it is surely a rare example of American ‘proletarian art,’ as a less than literate and rather visceral expression of a forlorn horror fan that was bred in a white ghetto who managed to slightly rise out of the cesspool he was spawned in, though as *The Mutilation Man* readily demonstrates, the cesspool never left him.

-Ty E

ALL GOOD THINGS
ALL GOOD THINGS

Andrew Jarecki* (2010)

I usually stay away from Hollywood dramas with big name stars in them as I tend to appreciate authentic human emotion (when it is done right, of course), not the contrived pseudo-emotions and sentimentalism concocted by the culture-distorting movie wizards of Sunset Boulevard. Of course, every once in a while I will watch a Hollywood drama that at least mildly interests me. When I found out the film *All Good Things* was based on the true story of Robert Durst, a rich and sadistic Jewish New York City realtor who got away with murdering his Aryan Shiksa wife, I knew that I had to see the film. I was also excited when I found out that Mormon Ryan Gosling would once again be playing a deranged Jew (see Henry Bean's *The Believer* for Gosling's greatest cinematic performance as a Jewish Neo-Nazi) in the film. After hearing Kirsten Dunst finally exposed her voluptuous bosoms in *All Good Things*, I figured even if it is a mediocre film, at least I get to see the tits of the little vamp featured in *Interview with the Vampire*.

Instead of properly including the real name of failed Realtor heir Robert Durst, *All Good Things* features the pseudonym David Marks (played by Gosling) in reference to the pothead wife killer. Being the homely son of a rich Jewish real estate tycoon, David plays it smart and marries himself an obedient working class beautiful blond named Katie. After all, not many males have enough patience to tolerate the nagging campaigns of your typical Jewish American Princess. After David Marks introduces his prize Nordic beauty to his Jewish female friend Deborah Lehrman (based on Susan Berman, the daughter of a Jewish Las Vegas mafia boss, who Robert Durst would also be responsible for killing), the obnoxiously narcissistic Jewess says to David, "You surprised me a little, you're married to a nice blond shiksa (A derogatory Yiddish word for female gentiles meaning "abomination", "impure," or "object of loathing")." David is surely obsessed and even respectful of his little shiksa but that all changes when Katie decides she wants a little independence and enrolls in medical school.

David Marks reminds me a Jew I used to live who was also named David. Like the David featured in *All Good Things*, my ex-roommate had a beautiful Aryan girlfriend that he used to keep incapacitated by providing her with a steady flow of high grade Marijuana. Also like David Marks, my ex-roommate would fly into erratic fits of rage (despite all the estrogen flowing in his body), pounding punches into the ribs of his shiksa girlfriend's cute American Eskimo dog. Unfortunately for Katie in *All Good Things*, her husband David Marks is less restrained than my Judaic ex-roommate as he beats his blond goy toy regularly, eventually murdering her and getting away with it. Maybe if some money grubbing Barbie shiksas watch *All Good Things*, they will think twice about marrying effeminate and unattractive Jewish men for their blood money, but in

this materialistic and highly degenerated anti-kultur post-post-modern world, I find that highly doubtful.

All Good Things director Andrew Jarecki (who is also Jewish) is also responsible for directing the documentary *Capturing The Friedmans*, a repulsive and infuriating film that is all too sympathetic to its pedophile subjects, a Jewish son and Father duo who committed serial child sex abuse against many children that they were supposed to be giving computer lessons to. Like *Capturing The Friedmans*, *All Good Things* is a film that provides no criticism or condemnation when it comes to savage criminals members of God's Chosen (for what?) race. Interestingly enough, the real David Marks, Robert Durst, felt *All Good Things* was an excellent film, surely a moving picture trophy to his legacy as a spoiled brat that got away with murdering his wife. Whereas *Capturing The Friedmans* is sympathetic towards the Friedman family, providing sentimental home movies of the pedophilic family as well as portraying the police as evil men conducting a (anti-Semitic?) witch hunt, *All Good Things* shows the fairly lucky life of a murder and drug indulgent sadist. Despite being responsible for the deaths of three people (his wife, female friend, and an elderly man), Durst was only ever convicted of bond jumping and evidence tampering which resulted in a 5 year prison sentence. Apparently, Ryan Gosling made no effort in attempting to promote *All Good Things* and I would not be surprised if his lack of enthusiasm for the film was the result of the gifted actor realizing he played the main character in an ultimately immoral cinematic abomination (on top of being mediocre film). Also, I doubt Gosling was proud about having to dress as a middle aged drag queen (as Robert Durst did in real-life to "conceal his identity"). As for Kirsten Dunst, God was generous enough to endow her with marvelous mammary glands.

-Ty E

THE FLOCK
THE FLOCK

Andrew Lau (2007)

The Flock is a film starring real-life sex pervert Richard Gere who plays an aggressive and eccentric employee of the Department of Public Safety that checks up on sex offenders. Mr. Gere goes by the name of Agent Babbage in the film which is as silly of a name as the man himself. Agent Babbage really hates sex offenders and seems to have some repressed desires. One could even theorize that he may be taking out his impulse for unholy acts on perverts that he may have something in common with. The ever so boring Claire Danes plays the role of a young female replacement named Allison that has been partnered up with the soon to be retired Agent Babbage. The two agents are as different as two individuals can be thus resulting in expected character conflict. It is not until Ms. Allison realizes that perverts are permanently fucked up people that she loses her naïve leftist idealism. She almost becomes the victim of a pornographer that likes to take pictures of amputated and decomposing body parts. The Flock is a fairly tame film for its subject matter. It doesn't glorify the grotesque as David Fincher's overrated serial killer film *Seven* does. It also lacks the psychological "depth" of say *The Silence of the Lambs*. After all, any film featuring Richard Gere can't be taken too seriously. Mr. Gere hasn't been involved in such a "dark" film moment as *The Flock* since his friend committed suicide in *An Officer and a Gentleman*. The Flock is easily comparable to any good television show about cops that have to deal with unpredictable deranged individuals. The Flock is a splendid film to watch after eating a cup of strawberry yogurt and a bowl of old bay seasoned Tuna Fish. Serious and action packed melodrama is not to be expected with *The Flock*. Any film featuring the death of a chipped tooth Avril Lavigne is at least worth a leisurely viewing.

-Ty E

LEGEND OF THE FIST: THE RETURN OF CHEN ZHEN

Andrew Lau (2010)

Legend of the Fist highlights the status of Donnie Yen's increasingly successful career to a point. Reprising the incredibly popular spirit of Chen Zhen while filling the shoes worn by both Bruce Lee and Jet Li, Donnie Yen's titular interpretation takes place seven years after the events of his own television series Fists of Fury. Set during the Second Sino-Japanese War, the torch of martial art's legend Chen Zhen is in safe hands because as we all know, Donnie Yen isn't just an artist of the body but one that can dramatize damn near any role. So while he may get caught up on the burlesque portrayal of the cruel Japanese or the visually stimulating violence, it's been declared a safe passage which allows for some of the greatest recent escapism to flood through your nostrils and soak your brain in hair-pin mixed martial arts. And for what it's worth, The Return of Chen Zhen houses an indescribable charm, potent and out of place for this historically fantastical oddity.

Beginning abruptly in a war zone, the impoverished Chinese are panicking while attempting to take cover behind sandbags littered across what seems to have resembled a courtyard at one point. While their numbers dwindle and the need for ammunition becomes unbearable, the camera begins to fixate on Donnie Yen and if you didn't know any better, this is the scene to elect him as the hero of our story, Chen Zhen. After losing several of his friends to the faceless Germans nesting in several buildings surrounding them, Chen Zhen impacts a reserve of glandular focus and sprints at a break-neck speed across the battlefield with several blades. Performing various free-running maneuvers while blending a bit of meta-wuxia within his rhythm, he glides and twirls to reach his murderous destination within the base, singlehandedly killing every German with his affable Asiatic prowess. For a fair and default representation of the Germans, Legend of the Fist receives high marks from me for providing both an action spectacle and a display of warfare and not the warped politics behind the veil. This only further incriminates the sensitive pussies who claim that Legend of the Fist contains a sharp racial animosity towards the Japanese yet fails to even acknowledge the cinematic abuse of Germans since the Cinematographe decided to employ counter-propaganda.

These allegations haven't impeded the success or longevity of talk-back concerning Legend of the Fist but I found them peculiar and irrational enough to discuss within my written reflection. Within the elements of Legend of the Fist exists a storyline all too political concerning China's struggle with the Japanese vowing to occupy and control the "weaker" of their yellow brethren. The truth couldn't really be any closer to what is displayed in this film. The never-ending conflict between the Japanese and Chinese has been revisited many times within the years and I've recently finished Iris Chang's chilling documentation of the

LEGEND OF THE FIST: THE RETURN OF CHEN ZHEN

cruelty the Japanese have perpetrated in *The Rape of Nanking*. With the fresh ideals of a "better" holocaust in mind, *Legend of the Fist* doesn't offend or betray anyone with the depiction of the Japanese and if anything at all, serves as a mixed drink to be consumed by damn near anyone, especially after the realization of how diluted the product is in retrospect. The absurdity of these claims reaches a new peak as my tangent switches rails from the incredible choreographed fight scenes with Chen Zhen donning Kato's costume from *The Green Hornet* to the reverse-engineered understandable resentment of the Japanese by the Chinese. To be blunt, I'm relieved at the absence of the asinine German crowd control that most cliched villainry seems to adopt with doe in their eyes. And seeing as the Eastern film industry has been modeled meticulously after our own, do we not enjoy staring back at the beast?

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To jump ship from the strenuous rant I've just exhausted, *Legend of the Fist* is an accelerated period piece with enough action to entertain even the most nit-picky arthouse squealer as he reorganizes his Criterion collection ritualistically, by spine number or what have you? This recent exploit from the Chinese fascist of action marks a continuing trend of mobilizing even the most stalwart of screenplays. Not to riff on the alternate-history of war and society's low times but it becomes painfully obvious that absolutely no one could have pulled this character off as well as Donnie Yen has in the *Return of Chen Zhen*. It's predictable, marvelous, bottom-heavy near the climax, and yet not long enough, but I find something new to love about this film with every thought that pops into my head throughout the day, whether it be the hilarious usage of the infamous feral growl that has found itself to be nature's Wilhelm Scream or the brutal race to save as many as the Japanese kill in a race for a country. Certainly not Donnie Yen's best performance but I'm proud to say I cannot say the same for the fight scenes. Call me giddy but I felt this incredible rush of energy throughout each and every frenetic and implausible blow to the merciless Japanese. *Return of Chen Zhen* marks yet another highly satisfying tale of a one-man army.

-mAQ

NAILS
NAILS

Andrey Iskanov (2003) It gets harder and harder to find contemporary directors that are worth following. Novice Russian director Andrey Iskanov is one of few worth mentioning. His dreamlike and surrealist films bring the viewer in a new world of pain. Hailing from modern day Russia alone could cause one to be easily influenced by the dark and perverse. Only a cinematic genius could shoot such masterpieces on budgets around a couple hundred US dollars. Nails is a short and sweet masterpiece by Iskanov. Driving nails through your skull and into your brain can produce a better trip than any acid trip. Using an electric drill on your brain can become a serious matter. Iskanov took Nails plot from a real life story. I guess you come to accept stories like that when you live in a country that has more abortions a year than births.

Nails was shot on digital video. I am generally against digital as I believe film will always have more character. Iskanov proves that you can make good of digital as a filmmaker on a low budget. He was able to do more with Nails than David Lynch could with his first digital movie Inland Empire. Digital video has opened the doors so that anyone could be a filmmaker. Imagine the talent that would have never have gotten discovered without it.

Andrey Iskanov is also a artist. Painting your protagonist into a wall is very effective when trying to derive a new type of emotion out of an audience. Watching a drill entering inside a brain also can be exciting. I also don't want to forget to mention the delicious looking entrees Nails protagonist gets out of a can.

There is nothing tasteless about any of these scenes. The visuals in Nails are the sign of a true auteur. Andrey Iskanov obvious knows what he wants to do with him and goes about trying to accomplish his goals. He is taking film to new boundaries and breaking down barriers (especially in horror). I think in disgust how Iskanov can do what he does with so little money when undeniable hacks like Eli Roth get millions. I guess Hollywood doesn't like Ruskies.

-Ty E

VISIONS OF SUFFERING

Andrey Iskanov (2006)

"A dream is a reality, rejected by our mind" Having watched this film, i couldn't help but feel marked. The film viewing experience is certainly a unique one. I don't know if that is the right word because i have never seen anything like this. Boasting an entirely unique plot, taking a stale label and boosting it's cult status, and showing us masterful abstraction and surrealism like no other, Andrey Iskanov is a new kind of auteur. One that doesn't have visible modesty and seems to be inspired by few. The loose narrative plot follows a troubled noir-ish man played by Alexander Shevchenko who has two things on his mind, sleep and the occasional cigarette. While not much in character development, we definitely feel claustrophobic in his dull existence. Lately, he has been host to the most neurotic nightmares ever filmed. Strange pulsing pods have been chasing him followed by a hulking figure without a face. Truly a horrifying sequence. Not since "This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse" has such a horrifying scene been shot with severe colors. After all is said and done, the man feels like his life is coming to an end so he decides to call his girlfriend at the frenetic nightclub DELIRIUM (Aptly named), his phone soon breaks. So what does any disturbed young chain smoking man do? Call the phone repairman. He goes next door to find a creepy fucking old guy who rasps at him madly until he leaves. As soon as that madness is over, the man soon arrives and fixes his phone. Dreams are brought up. Rain is discussed. The man tells him that the vampires are given flesh when it rains. What this man doesn't realize is that he sealed his doom. Whenever it rains these "Vampires" are given flesh and powers to do what they feel. In a NOES turn, they can kill you in your sleep through your dreams. All this leads to his discovery of horrendous horrors involving black clothed men standing outside his apartment and violent whispers on the other end of a phone line. Our camera shows us many angles and characters around this rainy city in Russia. Many tortured faces, souls, and scenes. One in particular at this nightclub where you pay money to beat the living shit out of a woman which can be seen as strangely erotic. All this combines in a truly unique film. Visions of Suffering is only one part of his HalluCinoGeNnN film series that can be described as artfully directed gore masterpieces that qualify him as a master of surrealism. This and the fact that he makes these films for slightly over 200 dollars USD. Andrey should direct his own version of the shit fest "WHITE NOISE" which would turn out to be quite horrifying. Russian Horror is all but rare. Only having seen his films and TRACKMAN, he is defying all odds and supporting a dead genre in his motherland all by himself. Visions of Suffering is available from Unearthed Films, a grand releasing company and i suggest you pick this up immediately. Look out for his new and last film in the series "PHILOSOPHY OF A KNIFE"

VISIONS OF SUFFERING

-Maq

PHILOSOPHY OF A KNIFE

Andrey Iskanov (2008)

Long have I been waiting for Iskanov's psycho-medical envisioning of the horrific events that took place at Unit 731. This latest outing of Iskanov might be his magnum opus. Driven by archive footage, narrated to explain the timeline, and part feature, POAK is a true documentary, for it takes you into things that should never be forgotten. For those of you who have no idea about the incident, what happened was that the Japanese set up a classified facility that housed some of the worst experimentations and chemical warfare crimes of the century. These were carried out on Russian and Chinese P.O.W's between the years of 1937 - 1945. The purpose was to form weapons against China and possibly Bolshevik Russia. As we can see from some of the tortures; they seemed hardly educational but served their purpose as meaningless and revolting. For example; injecting horse urine into a human kidney. The film is about 4 hours long, which spans two episodes; which should be finished over the span of a day or two. Many of the films that explain the same atrocities contain too many elements of trash and exploitation. For example, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* didn't focus on the history or the atrocities; it was just like a violent over the top Jonathan Taylor Thomas film. *Men Behind The Sun* is guilty of the same thing, but still manages to be an exceptional film. POAK opens with two Japanese soldiers escorting a lone Russian POW through thick snow, before executing him by way of the blade. The realist performances enough are alone to initiate brainstorming. Much of the film is archived footage, so Iskanov being the new wave genius that he is, films many of the brutal scenes the same way. Through out the film, many horrible acts of putrid experimentation are being done, and it is hard to pick out between the real and the fake. There is no way around it, *Philosophy of a Knife* is the most violent and harrowing film I have ever seen, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Iskanov mixed with Shevchenko is the formula for the editing, which is at hand here. Many scratches and artificial debris clutter the screen, but only adds to the superficial beauty of it. The opening credits alone are a wet dream for all lovers of the macabre. Iskanov hand wraps this film with the feel of a Japanese film, including scrawling Japanese symbols mixing with bizarre blueprints of medical tools and torture devices. Large black-goggled men are dimly lit with luminescence set to a droning track of blips and beeps. A master soundtrack at the core, I haven't enjoyed a handcrafted soundtrack such as this since *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*. Manoush (From *Amelie* and *Cannibal*) plays a narration role of the female nurse, who is one of the tortured ones, but for the wrong reasons; she is directly involved with what is at hand. She performs bizarre sexual experiments, which cause her to lose her sanity. It shows how one sided this situation was. If you weren't with the Japanese, you weren't with anything; they made sure of that. Iskanov recorded over 13,000 sound effects for

PHILOSOPHY OF A KNIFE

this film, none of them being used twice. A completely fresh feeling, mixed with horrible sadness. The film chronicles the experimentations and tortures committed by the Japanese, giving us an unflinching eye as to what was afoot in the real "Death Camp". Sexually transmitted diseases, pounds of plagues and tons of cholera were used in association with creating a plague shrapnel bomb that was to be used with a biological WMD. Scenes of narration on the historical aspect are intertwined with interview scenes from Anatoliy Protasov who experienced this all as a doctor of medicine, then scenes of soldier's interactions with the victims and the sorts of tortures. The beautiful thing about the variety of tortures in this film is the attention to every detail. Instead of being a splatter fest, we see it like it actually is. Instead of the highly unlikely intestinal discharge in MBTS, we are given the real deal, with bubbling flesh, eye stress, and the ultimate flesh-fire. These scenes show that not everyone really had a say in this. Most of the soldiers seem to come from the invaded town of Manchuria. Each horrific scene is spliced with even more unnerving footage of deterioration and madness. Philosophy of a Knife is biological insanity printed on film. It is really as simple as that. There will never be another film like this one. The set pieces of the film compliment the age-old incident. Ancient machines decorate the stained furniture and walls. On a technical side of the film, it is bathed in a starkly glorious light, which really expunges the colors and textures of the mutilation and tortures. This also serves its purpose as it magnifies the facial expressions of many of the doctors and victims. When the most graphic torture scenes ever filmed are over, morbidly poetic scenes of destruction then assault us. It presents itself with utmost importance, just to remind us that there are "no such things as monsters". Pointing out that this film is indeed a highly regarded film in my eyes, it doesn't mean it is always entertaining. Just as history is, segments will move slower than others. Watching this film for the gore value would be enough, but you'd miss the complete experience of it. A word of advice; don't walk into this film expecting a bloody romp with a colorful cast of dysfunctional characters. If you just want to just see some more "fucked up shit", you are almost stooping as low as the monstrosities depicted in this film. Andrey Iskanov is a pure-bred surrealist that is taking the world by storm. Whether you are on his side is your choice.

-mAQ

IN AN OLD MANOR HOUSE OR THE INDEPENDENCE OF TRIANGLES

Andrzej Kotkowski (1985)

As an American of solely Western European stock, I find there to be a certain alien quality to virtually all things Slavic and I say that as someone that has spent much time around actual Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians, thus I find their to be a certain extra eerie quality to Eastern European horror cinema, especially of the Polish sort. Indeed, even simply looking at vintage Polish film posters, one can sense that there is something singularly dark and moribund about the Polish collective unconscious. With my recent enthrallment with the delightfully decadent anti-communist cult classic *Pożegnanie jesieni* (1990) aka *Farewell to Autumn* directed by Mariusz Trelinski, I decided to track down more film adaptation of works by the film's source writer Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (aka 'Witkacy') and eventually happened upon a particularly preternatural piece of Polish horror that mixes philosophy, metaphysics, and politics in a psychosexually sick yet almost shockingly cultivated supernatural form that pays respectful tribute to the man whose plays the work is based on. Indeed, the regrettably absurdly unknown work *W starym dworku czyli niepodleglosc trójkątów* (1984) aka *In an Old Manor House or The Independence of Triangles* aka *In the Old Manor House* directed by Andrzej Kotkowski is based on two plays by Witkacy, including *W małym dworku* (1921) aka *Country House* and *Kurka Wodna* (1921) aka *The Water Hen*, and it offers a particularly aesthetically refined instance of what one might describe as Polish absurdist Gothic horror that includes, among other things, themes of cross-generational incest and cuckoldry, uxoricide and filicide, spectrophilia, and class warfare of the mass murderous commie sort. A work that somehow manages to do the seemingly impossible by seamlessly interweaving Gothic horror with (meta)politics and philosophy, Kotkowski's film is indubitably an underrated classic of sorts that would surely gain a cult following outside of Poland if it actually had some sort of international distribution. Beginning with a wealthy patriarch murdering his second wife with a shotgun after discovering her making love to his somewhat effete adult art fag son from a previous marriage, *In an Old Manor House* tells the obsessively atmospheric and eerily and oftentimes eccentrically erotic tale of a vengeful whore ghost who haunts the Polish countryside while seducing and slaying men in most bizarre fashions. Set in turn of the century Poland before the peasants mindlessly revolted and featuring an impotent artist as the central protagonist, the film also seems to express Witkacy's less than flattering philosophy on the place of the artist in society as a whole, albeit from a intriguing post-revolution perspective after the commies had wiped out so-called bourgeois degeneracy and installed their delightful little real-life dystopia. Starring actors and actresses that were featured in various great European dark arthouse

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works, including Beata Tyszkiewicz of André Delvaux's *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* (1966) aka *De man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* and Guław Holoubek of Wojciech Haś' *The Hourglass Sanatorium* (1973) aka *Sanatorium pod klepsydra*, *In an Old Manor House* sometimes feels like a classic fairytale on acid with its mystical wooded setting, catchy songs, and supernatural elements, albeit with a dubious moral compass and dark sexuality that reminds the viewer of the seemingly irreparable spiritual and cultural damage that communism has had on Poland.

Undoubtedly, you know you're a cowardly cuckold of a half-man when your prepubescent daughters mock you over the fact that your wife is secretly carrying on a hot and heavy romance with your exceedingly effete artist son. Indeed, such is the superlatively sorry situation of powerful businessman, aristocrat, and patriarch Dyapanazy Nibek, who blows away his recklessly wanton wife Anařtazja (Beata Tyszkiewicz) with a shotgun after catching her having sex with his surely scrawny art fag son Jezory. While Jezory begs his father not to kill his beloved stepmother, Dyapanazy simply replies, "I won't let her destroy your life the way she destroyed mine," ultimately not realizing that his audacious act of cold-blooded murder will have rather deleterious consequences for both him, his son, and the rest of the family. After killing his wife, Dyapanazy decides to invite his recently widowed cousin Aneta aka 'Annette Wesiewiczowna-Nevermore' (Grazyna Szapolowska of Krzysztof Kieslowski's *A Short Film About Love* (1988) aka *Krótki film o miłości*) to stay with him and his family at his large ancient country mansion in the hope she will eventually become his wife, but ultimately, not unlike Anařtazja, the woman will become the lover of the patriarch's pansy son Jezory. Notably, Jezory and Aneta are about the same age as they both first met one another as young kids and it is insinuated that they sexually experimented with one another. Meanwhile, after their mother is killed by their father Dyapanazy, mischievous preteen little girls Zosia and Marysia, who have certainly inherited the subversive spirit of their progenitor Anařtazja, decide to bury their baby dolls while singing a most morbid nursery rhyme with lyrics like, "La La – three small kittens...their brains eaten by grey maggots. La La – four small kittens...dad went away to a wretched woman." Undoubtedly, Zosia and Marysia seem to realize in a subconscious sort of way that they will soon be joining their mother for eternity.

The day that cousin Aneta arrives at the Mansion, she unwittingly ruins dinner and starts a fight between father and son by asking about Anařtazja, with Jezory stating of his deceased mistress-cum-stepmother, "She was brilliant and beautiful. What dad did to her was terrible [...] Why is my own father such a bastard," and Dyapanazy angrily retorting to his progeny, "Watch your tongue, you sissy." After berating his art fag son, Dyapanazy opts to reveal to Aneta that he indeed killed Anařtazja, proudly stating, "Yes, I killed her. I shot her like a dog in heat. I married her against the family's wishes. And she was lying to me.

Can you imagine? I couldn't stand it. To make things worse, Jezory was her lover. My wife's lover. And that's why I killed her." Rather inexplicably, after the proud patriarch boasts of killing his wife, deceased dame Anaŝtazja appears out of nowhere in ghost form and contradicts her homicidal hubby by stating, "It's not true, Dyapanazy. I died of my own free will. I wanted to die...and I died." Not only does Anaŝtazja contradict Dyapanazy, but she also reveals that she was the mistress of his best employee Ignacy Kozdron, who is the manager of his business and who the she-bitch ghost lovingly describes as, "my Romeo with abacus." To demonstrate his love for her, Jezory reads Anaŝtazja poetry that he has written for her, somberly stating, "Bloodless paleface...sublime death mask...Candles burning in the final hour..." but the sensual spirit is less than impressed with his literary longings. In fact, Anaŝtazja breaks Jezory's heart by telling him that she never loved him and describes his belief that she loved him as one of his many "artistic delusions." Ultimately, Anaŝtazja visits Jezory that night and tells him that he must forget about her and marry his cousin Aneta, which he ultimately does. Jezory has been unable to paint or write poetry every since Anaŝtazja died, but Aneta ultimately restores his questionable artistic prowess, or lack thereof. Rather unfortunately for him and his entire family, Jezory's artistic inspiration does not last long. While Anaŝtazja gives him the artistic advice, "The most beautiful and powerful art is the art of lying. All artists should be aware of that," Jezory ultimately never takes heed of her insights and ultimately stays true to himself, thereupon ultimately having rather horrific consequences.

When Anaŝtazja coerces her two young daughters Zosia and Marysia to drink green poison and the two little girls ultimately die, Jezory decides it is time that he murder his dead lover/stepmother for a second time. While Dyapanazy theorizes that Zosia and Marysia deaths are "Anaŝtazja's revenge," the ghost rationalizes her murdering of her two daughters by stating to Jezory, "You'd seduce them if it wasn't for your cousin who was ready to seduce you first." Somewhat curiously, Anaŝtazja goads Jezory into killing her by stating, "Shoot me now or I'll despise you forever like you were a dog," so the artist shoots her in the stomach with a shotgun. Rather bizarrely, as Anaŝtazja succumbs to her wounds, a hand appears out of the ground and before Jezory knows it, a large old tree is uprooted and a somewhat dorky four-eyed teenage boy with a dead serious facial expression appears from under it. The boy is Jezory and Anaŝtazja's posthumously 'born' bastard son Tadeusz and he will eventually become the ultimate prodigal son as an angry young man who leads a revolution against his entire family in tribute to his forsaken mother. As Jezory curiously states upon seeing the boy for the first time, "I might be his father, though I hate children." When Jezory brings Tadeusz back home, Dyapanazy asks his son who the "worm" is and the artist replies, "He's Tadeusz. He came out of the ground" and reveals that he is his son. After Dyapanazy says he likes Tadeusz and Aneta is intro-

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duced as the boy's 'mother,' Jerzory states to himself, "Finally I created my own family. I can start a new life...But can I stand this?" Of course, Jerzory's family will be an abject failure.

After Jerzory and Aneta have a large public wedding, a local peasant describes how he wishes he was the artist and how he feels like "manure," to which another prole resentfully replies to by describing the artist and his family as "maggots" that are "on the carcass of some prize cow from the past." From there, the subversive peasant goes on a rant about creating a utopian "new order" that rejects everything from the past and creates "Everything new. New machines, New paintings...Symphonies, poems, dances, everything." While the peasants are talking, the ghost of Anaŝtazja once again appears and attempts to incite the proletarians by poetically stating, "Society is a woman. She needs a male to rape her. Am I wrong?" After he talk with the peasants, Anaŝtazja seduces her old lover Ignancy Kozdron and intentionally causes him to drown in the process, thereupon causing Dyapanazy to lose his best employee. To the chagrin of Jerzory, an exceedingly arrogant psychopath named Ryszard Korbowski is brought in to replace Ignancy and he soon begins a lurid love affair with the artist's wife Aneta. After calling his weak nemesis a "cheap painter," Ryszard proudly states to Jerzory regarding his wife, "I'm her lover...And thanks to her dead husband...I have a salary too." Ryszard is a 'fascist' of sorts who states regarding any citizen that dares to rebel against his planned utopia, "...And if you don't want to work, a bullet in the head. A risky experiment perhaps...But we'll have to sacrifice ourselves." When Dyapanazy questions whether or not Ryszard's planned political system will be a democracy, he replies, "It would be a so-called democracy but without parliament's bluff. What people need is a true fictional religion. Not some kind of substitute dream of a general strike. People yearn for a new religion. But we must control it. Make it a social matter." Notably, when Jerzory asks Ryszard what place "truth and beauty" will have in his proposed utopian society, the smug fascist true believer replies, "The future will not need that. They'll be happy. Isn't that enough?," thereupon causing the artist to laugh hysterically. Indeed, Jerzory ultimately becomes both a sexual and cultural cuckold of sorts while Ryszard is in charge.

Naturally, phantasmagoric femme fatale Anaŝtazja continues killing men around the countryside, including Dyapanazy's servant Mr. Maszejko. When Anaŝtazja visits Jerzory and asks him about his love affair with his wife Aneta, the artist replies, "Don't even talk about love. I'm just a marionette. I've nothing to do with that. I'm in pain worse than ever. I've started a new life." Jerzory also reveals to the ghost that he is having a hard time bonding with his son Tadeusz, stating, "I'm attached to him...but he doesn't love me." Needless to say, Tadeusz becomes quite upset when he walks in on his (step)mother Aneta having sex with Ryszard and says to the latter, "I hope you burst." Ultimately, Tadeusz completely loses faith in both his father and family in general, especially

after having sex with his birth mother Anaŝtazja during an act of spectrophiliac incest. While making love to her son, Anaŝtazja tells Tadeusz, "Be the best in whatever you choose to do." When Jerzory finds Anaŝtazja and Tadeusz together, the latter remarks regarding his ghost mother, "I'm in love with her and I want to marry her." Anaŝtazja justifies her proposed marriage with their mutual son by stating to Jerzory, "His soul is beautiful. With me he'll become great."

Of course, everything begins to fall apart for the Nibek family after a successful communist revolution occurs and all private property is made illegal. Not surprisingly, Aneta 'officially' leaves Jerzory for his rival Ryszard and when the artist accuses her of being a "peasant's mistress" and "spy," she hatefully replies, "I'd prefer the vilest man to one chickenhearted like you. Painter!" In fact, Aneta goes so far as completely destroying Jerzory's entire character, stating to him, "You're repulsive...Neither musician nor painter. The very sound of your name kills art." Despite originally being a fascist of sorts, perennial opportunist Ryszard naturally becomes a diehard commie revolutionary after the revolution. Meanwhile, Dyapanazy wisely states regarding Ryszard and 'workers' in general, "servants will always be servants," as if to insinuate that communism only left the working-class all the more locked firmly in place in its chains. When Tadeusz decides to leave for good with his mother/lover Anaŝtazja, his father Jerzory attempts to warn him by stating, "If you leave with her, you're lost," but the boy will not budge and retorts, "You only say that because you're jealous. I'll do as I please." Of course, Tadeusz decides to completely part ways with his family for good and wage war against them after Jerzory shoots and kills Anaŝtazja with a shotgun. Indeed, Tadeusz hatefully states to his father, "I see now. Your fake crimes, fake people, fake emotions. Everything's fake. I won't be like that. I won't [...] I'll never forgive you."

Towards the end of the film, Jerzory asks his father Dyapanazy why he did not kill him the day he killed Anaŝtazja after finding the two having sex and the old patriarch replies, "I hoped you'd write, paint. I couldn't let her destroy your life the way she destroyed mine. You have to be an artist. That was your mother's wish." Ultimately, Jerzory must confess that he is a failure as both a man and as an artist, stating, "I suffered, but it wasn't artistic suffering. The last thing left for me in this life is death. The last thing to do." When the ghosts of Anaŝtazja and his two dead young daughters Zosia and Marysia appear at the family mansion, Dyapanazy somewhat humorously declares a toast to, "three failed generations," as if he has finally accepted that all is lost in terms of his life and the future of his family. In the end, prodigal son Tadeusz leads a proletarian lynch mob carrying pitchforks to the Nibek home and self-righteously declares like some mini Trotsky, "Listen, what are you afraid of? They're garbage not your masters. We, the people, don't need this democracy. We can govern ourselves. We'll create a real paradise. Without leaders and work. There's no room for individuality or personality. The self has no place. Long live the masses." Of

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course, the angry mob of bloodthirsty lumpenproles invades the Nibek home and exterminates what is left of the forsaken family. Before he can be butchered by a brigade of braindead bolsheviks, Jerzory somberly says to himself, "If I could paint I'd be scared less. But all this has no form. Only zigzags in eternal space" and then proceeds to kill himself by slitting his own throat with a straight razor. While Jerzory never had much control over his own life, he was at least able to end it on his own terms. Notably, Jerzory looks quite peaceful after committing suicide, as if he has finally reached the sense of solace that he had always searched for but could never find. As for Anaŝtazja, she calmly walks away from the smoldering ruins of the Nibek estate with her two daughters as if her vengeful metaphysical mission as a haunting harlot has finally been fully realized.

Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *In an Old Manor House or The Independence of Triangles* such a penetrating piece of poetic cinematic horror is that it was inspired by about half a century of real-life commie horror and the curious social circumstances of aristocratic decadence that partially led to communism in the first place. Aside from being inspired by the anti-commie/anti-authoritarian writings of Witkacy—a man who, not unlike the protagonist Jerzory of the film, ended his own life when the Bolshevik butchers invaded his homeland—the flick seems to be influenced by Italian philosopher, sociologist, and economist Vilfredo Pareto's classic text *The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*, which influenced Mussolini's rise to power and describes how elites typically bring about their own demises via progressive moral degeneracy and absurdly supporting political movements that call for the destruction of the very class that they belong to (indeed, as Spengler rightly noted, Marx was a failed member of the bourgeoisie who never worked a single day in his entire life, not to mention the fact that Trotsky was the son of a wealthy kosher capitalist). Of course, Kotkowski's film depicts the demise of the central family as the result of the hateful revenge of a forsaken prodigal son who was sinisterly sired via a sort inter-generational sin that involved incest, deceit, and even murder, among other things. Indubitably, *In an Old Manor House* also reveals Witkacy's influence from Otto Weininger in terms of its relentless depictions of misogyny. Indeed, ghost Anaŝtazja practically channels anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vilar when she states, "All beautiful and healthy women lie all their life [...] You can't say what's true and what's a lie. The only certain thing in the world is a lie [...] Only hunchbacked and crippled girls don't lie. Perhaps they want to...but no one believes them. That's why they're so frustrated." While only mere speculation on my part, I am sure that Witkacy would have appreciated Kotkowski's film, which manages to do the seemingly impossible by channeling the delightfully decadent aesthetic and philosophical spirit of pre-commie Europe without seeming like an obscenely outmoded absurdity.

Aside from being based on two of the Polish artistic Renaissance man's clas-

sic plays, *In an Old Manor House* will also surely interest Witkacy fans due to the fact that some of the scenes resemble some of the artist's paintings and especially self-portraits (for example, a scene featuring protagonist Jerzory's image being reflected from various different angles via a mirror bears a striking resemblance to Witkacy's iconic 1915-1917 work *Multiple Self-Portrait in Mirrors*). In terms of the film's emphasis on the suffering of an artist as a result of his ultimately tragic decisions, darkly erotic approach to necromancy and spectrophilia, singular darkly romantic aesthetic elegance and foreboding and oftentimes chiaroscuro-like arthouse approach to horror cinema, the only other film I can compare Kotkowski's work to is the rather underrated British Sheridan Le Fanu adaptation *Schalcken the Painter* (1979) directed by Leslie Megahey. If Wojciech Has' *The Hour-Glass Sanatorium* (1973), which is based on a work by Witkacy's kosher comrade Bruno Schulz, is a sort of celluloid nightmare haunted by the ghosts of pre-holocaust Polish Jewry, *In an Old Manor House* is a sort of celluloid Hades depicting the forsaken lost souls of the foredoomed pre-communist aristocracy. While Kotkowski's film undoubtedly features an exceedingly unflattering depiction of the Polish aristocracy, it is arguably even less sympathetic to communists, who are more or less depicted as a mob of misguided and resentful philistine thugs that are ironically led by members of the upper-classes whose thirst for revolution has been sown in personal hatred for their own family members, thus reflecting the absurdity of the commie revolution in Poland and communism in general. Of course, as *In an Old Manor House* delightfully demonstrates, Witkacy knew all too well that communism was a sinister scam that was born out of hatred and resentment and could only bring hell on earth, especially to those that longed for it the most. Undoubtedly, it is only fitting that the film is a ghost story, as the legacy of communism will probably continue to haunt Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe for centuries to come, thereupon securing Witkacy's rightful place as the most important and prophetic Polish artist of his rather tragic zeitgeist.

-Ty E

THAT MOST IMPORTANT THING: LOVE
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Andrzej Żuławski (1975)

After a recent one-man Andrzej Żuławski marathon, I came to the somewhat ironical conclusion that the director's (arguably) most accessible and aesthetically conventional film, *L'important c'est d'aimer* (1975) aka *That Most Important Thing: Love* aka *The Main Thing Is to Love* aka *Nachtblende*—a love story for the terminally lovesick and romantically nihilistic based on the novel *La Nuit américaine* by the film's frog co-screenwriter Christopher Frank—is also one of his greatest and most immaculate accomplishments as an artist. Of course, like many of the director's cinematic works, including his most popular and well known feature *Possession* (1981), the French-Italian-German co-production deals with the timeless Żuławskian theme of 'love as pain' and the rather romantic notion of true love being a grave metaphysical affliction that can bring death and self-destruction, among other less than desirable things. Indeed, the sort of love depicted in a Żuławski flick is more deleteriously addictive and all-consuming in the poetic sense than the way poet and cine-magician Jean Cocteau described the eponymous narcotic in his classic text *Opium: Diary of a Cure* (1930). Of course, being a Żuławski flick, it is a cinematic work that practically redefines the romance film as it feels more fierce, frantic, violent, and fast-paced than the latest Hollywood action film, albeit non-retarded and packed with almost painfully penetrating pathos. Additionally, only in Żuławski's film does the random anecdote, which is not even depicted onscreen, of a pathetic commie intellectual reciting Rimbaud as his last words on his deathbed become one of many so memorable moments, as if the auteur was able to fit three or four films into one. Depicting a bizarre love triangle between a wash-up Austrian exploitation actress, her exceedingly emasculated and perennially unemployed beta-male frog husband, and a French alpha-male photographer protagonist that is determined to make her his beloved, *That Most Important Thing: Love* is also a film about how women, including old and used up ones, can completely destroy men without even the slightest bit of effort or concern for the forsaken fellows that suffered the misfortune of falling in love with them. In short, the film brings a certain poetic truth to Friedrich Nietzsche's oftentimes quoted words, "Ah, women. They make the highs higher and the lows more frequent." Unfortunately for the film's male protagonist and the goofy guy he cuckolds, the heroine—played by Austrian diva Romy Schneider in a performance that would rightly earn her a 'frog Oscar' (aka César Award)—is too much of a sad solipsistic emotional mess of a woman to be too concerned with the fact that she is tearing up the souls of the two men that matter the most to her in life.

Admittedly, it felt somewhat like kismet when I recently watched *That Most Important Thing: Love* for the first time as I had a somewhat recent romantic experience that is, at least superficially, comparable to that of the protagonist.

Indeed, I began a brief yet somewhat passionate romance with a girl that found herself unable to breakup with her longtime cuckold fiancé despite her completely sexless and largely pathetic relationship with him, as she could not break an old routine with a loser that she openly admitted that she was completely sexually disgusted with. Incidentally, this same girl bears a superficial resemblance to Romy Schneider. Needless to say, after watching the film and experiencing something similar firsthand, I have resolved to never ever again deal with a damaged dame that lacks the strength and decisiveness to stick with one man. In the film, Schneider's character—an ex-whore of sorts that makes a living flaunting her flesh in disreputable Jean Rollin-esque art-horror-erotica—feels obligated to stay completely faithful to her husband despite the fact that they have nil sex life and he is a weak and pathetic unemployed man that collects Hollywood publicity shots like some old queen-ish antique dealer. In short, the heroine—a woman that is clearly well past her prime in terms of pulchritude—finds herself practically creaming her pants at first sight when she meets the masculine alpha-male photographer protagonist played by Italian Stallion Fabio Testi (who apparently was some sort of macho male bimbo in real-life), who makes the iconic character played by David Hemmings in Michelangelo Antonioni's counterculture classic *Blow-Up* (1966) seem like a sapless Brit prick bitch pussy by comparison. Although a dark love story, it is also a film about broken people where no character is unforgettable but virtually every single one seems to have been either forgotten, disposed of, and/or beaten down by society. Set in a largely dark and dreary Parisian underworld inhabited by overly intellectual communist cuckolds, puritanical black market pornographers, megalomaniacal theater faggots, impotent cinephiles, childish gangsters, and other losers and freaks, *That Most Important Thing: Love* ultimately makes love seem like a painfully rare and important thing that demands great sacrifice due to the ugliness, failure, and stupidity that seems to consume most of humanity; or so one discover in the unforgettably zany Żuławskian realm.

In a somewhat incriminating interview included as an extra feature of the *Mondo Vision* DVD of *That Most Important Thing: Love*, Żuławski states, "It's true that I'm more gripped by the characters who are perhaps good people at heart, but who end up going down a slippery slope, and don't ever manage to fit into society." Indeed, every single character in the film is a misfit of sorts that is connection to a group of misfits, including pornographers, theater poofs, and gangsters, yet Żuławski somehow manages to give most of these individuals a certain degree of humanity. Undoubtedly, the film's tall, dark, and handsome protagonist, Servais Mont (Fabio Testi of Vittorio de Sica's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (1970))—a two-time war veteran and stoic yet not exactly sophisticated alpha-male of sorts—is the most seemingly normal of these characters and he is a fairly lonely guy with a drug addict bum for a father who makes his living taking pornographic photos involving such unsavory things as homo mis-

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cegenation involving muscular negroes and Brit tranny freaks with Isaac Asimov fetishes. At the very beginning of the film, Servais sneaks into a porno shoot to take bootleg photos of its female star Nadine Chevalier (Romy Schneider) straddling a bloody corpse, but he is instantly taken aback when the failed actress stares directly at him and states to him while sobbing with a certain inordinate emotive intensity, "No photos please. I'm an actress, I do good stuff. I only do this to... to eat." While Servais manages to escape from the film set with the snapshots after getting in a brawl with a couple film crew members and being kicked out of the production, he immediately becomes obsessed with Nadine to the point where he wastes no time in finding out where she lives and then randomly shows up there unannounced. Luckily for Servais, Nadine seems to be just as interested in him, but unfortunately she has certain moral obligations to her unemployed beta-boy husband Jacques Chevalier (musician turned actor Jacques Dutronc in his second acting role) and has also adopted a sort of self-stylized Puritanism as an assumed psychological defense mechanism due to her decidedly debasing career as an exploitation slut. A childless c grade actress that lies multiple times to Servais by claiming she is only 30 even though she is clearly about a decade older and thus has very little sexual market value left to any man that is serious about having children, Nadine is clearly at a miserable place in her life, so naturally the handsome protagonist is very tempting to her. Unfortunately, Nadine's husband is a serious obstacle, at least until he becomes seriously suicidal.

While poor old Jacques is a seemingly impotent loser that cannot even bear to fuck his wife even when she is literally on her knees begging for it while repeatedly declaring "Fuck me!," he certainly understands Nadine as indicated by his remark to Servais in regard to her seeming hypocritical occupation as a porn star, "Nadine does them but doesn't like them because she's a puritan. Understand that? She's done everything and showed everything and is getting more and more puritanical. She discovered she had principles. Now, you can strip her of her pants, but not her principles. She couldn't explain her principles. They're just there...like rails and Nadine sticks to them even if they burn her feet like right now." Of course, Jacques' passive-aggressively expressed words reveal why Nadine is initially hesitant to engage in carnal passions with Servais despite their clear strong mutual attraction for one another. As a man that begrudgingly snaps shots of orgies for an elderly effete gangster he despises named 'Mazelli' (Claude Dauphin)—a reluctant pornographer that also happens to be a prissy little prude—Servais certainly has more in common with Nadine than a mere mutual attraction, as they are both individuals that really loathe their jobs because they are forced to routinely debase themselves just to get a paycheck. Two seemingly innately moral people that have been degraded by the demands and influences of a degenerate demonic world inhabited by freaks, faggots, and fucks-ups, Nadine and Servais seem like they could be soul mates in some ideal

alternate universe, but they are ultimately trapped in a living nightmare of isolation, morbid melancholy, and just plain bad luck. Like her husband Jacques, who apparently acquired her love and affection by saving her from a self-destructive life of hedonism and whoredom, Servais wants to be Nadine's own personal savior and decides to put himself in a precarious situation to accomplish that goal by borrowing a bunch of money from his much hated gangster 'boss' Marzelli so that he can financially back a play and thus secure his would-be-ladylove the prestigious lead female role of Lady Anne in an avant-garde theatrical production of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Indeed, somewhat ironically, Servais gets sucked further into the slimy subterranean realm of pornography so that he can rescue Nadine, who initially has no clue that he is even responsible for getting her the role.

On top of going into great debt and virtually selling his soul to a boss that he absolutely loathes, Servais also makes some other sacrifices to get Nadine the role in *Richard III*, including befriending a theater troupe of flaming fag degenerates that include an absurdly arrogant German aristocrat named Karl-Heinz Zimmer (Klaus Kinski) and his cross-dressing director pal named Laurent Messala (Guy Mairesse). In fact, despite the fact that he is clearly a rampantly heterosexual frog buck, Servais even attempts to convince Nadine that he is an old friend of queen Messala so that he has an excuse to hang around the rehearsals for *Richard III* and thus spend time with her. Of course, as a man with a criminal drug addict father (Roger Blin) that longs after mulattoes, Servais is not too picky with who he hangs out with, though he certainly has somewhat curious friends in general. To his minor discredit, the protagonist, who has his own flaws and annoying idiosyncrasies, also has no problem cuckolding his best friend Raymond Lapade (Michel Robin)—an unhinged Marxist dork and all-around failed intellectual that, somewhat ironically, gives him romance advice and inspires his quest to get Nadine to play the lead in *Richard III*—even though he does not seem particularly fond of his beautiful wife Luce (Nicoletta Machiavelli) and quickly forgets about fucking her when Nadine enters the picture. In fact, pussy does not seem to be something that is particularly hard for Servais to acquire as he also sleeps with a hot Vietnamese whore (Hong Kong model Sin May Zao), but all these fuck-buddies disappear when he falls in love with Nadine. When it comes down to it, Servais is ultimately a loner that does not seem particularly fond of his friends or fuck-buddies, thereupon making it all the more apparent that his obsessive love for Nadine is real and not simply some form of misguided infatuation.

Aside from also wanting to be her savior, Nadine's pathetic husband Jacques is more or less the complete opposite of Servais in practically every way imaginable. Indeed, while Servais is tall, strong, stoic, hardworking, and seemingly humorless, Jacques is a short goofy cinephile that seems to be allergic to work and incessantly acts like a clown to the point where he literally sports clown

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make-up at one point in the film. While Jacques is completely financially supported by his wife, who cinematically peddles her puss for a living in trashy films with titles like *Nymphocula*, Servais is willing to go into extreme debt with an unsavory gangster he hates in the hope that he can simply make his seemingly perennially dejected would-be-lover happy. In that sense, Servais is certainly the more ideal lover for Nadine, who has been forced to take on the sexually inverted role of breadwinner. While Jacques is a pathetically laughable loser that lives his life like it is one big joke because he seems to be quite conscious that he is a joke, he is certainly no moron and almost immediately realizes that Servais will soon replace him. Notably, in an attempt to rationalize her sad and pathetic marriage to an unemployed film dork, Nadine describes her dubious relationship with Jacques as follows to Servais, "I'm neither a victim nor a prisoner. My life is what it is even if you don't think it adds up to much. About the ghost in my last play, six years ago. I married him and I love him." Rather unfortunately for him and his wife, Jacques also refuses to fuck Nadine and it is hinted that he is all but completely impotent despite his worship of manly fictional heroes like Zorro and the Italian silent era cinema hero Maciste created by proto-fascist hero Gabriele d'Annunzio and Giovanni Pastrone. Of course, it is obvious that Jacques lives in a fantasy world of cinema and superheroes because he needs to escape from his own miserable unmanly existence, hence his boyish reverence of Zorro and Maciste. In short, Servais is the man that Jacques never was and everyone in the bizarre love triangle seems to be painfully aware of this, though the protagonist would never be so arrogant as to actually state this.

Needless to say, Nadine is the only thing that Jacques has to live for, so naturally suicide becomes the only serious viable option when he poses to lose her. Indeed, when Nadine realizes that Servais must truly love her after he turns down her pussy when she offers it to him as payment after learning that he secretly funded the *Richard III* project so that she would secure the lead female role, Jacques also comes to the cold realization that his wife is hopelessly in love with a strong and protective man and she will be moving on. Right before killing himself, Jacques finally drops the pathetic clown routine and confronts Nadine in regard to her true feelings for him, stating, "You know what the lousiest thing is? The most disgusting. Pity. Because it's terminal. I know what you think of me. Of all my bullshit. There's a word for it. I found it in my leather bound and gilded dictionary. Contempt." Jacques also tells Nadine, "I can do anything for you except... live," so naturally he must die and he does so by intentionally overdosing on drugs in the bathroom of the very same restaurant where they had the intense post-breakup conversation only minutes before. In a sick and pathetically passive-aggressive twist, Jacques sets it up so that his replacement Servais is the first to discover his corpse in what is ultimately a most loathsome craven attempt at revenge. While staring at Jacques' corpse at the morgue, Servais becomes emotionally erratic for the first time in the film, declares in front of

Nadine, “What a jerk!” and then proceeds to scream in his ladylove’s face after she physically attacks him, “Why did he do it? He should have done it before! Before he met you! Why did he do it? He should have done it before knowing you! Do you understand?”

Love kills, or so one certainly learns at the end of the ultimately somewhat bitterly brutally titled *That Most Important Thing: Love*, which concludes with Jacques successfully committing suicide and Servais being beaten within an inch of his life by a motley crew of gangsters at the behest of his (ex)boss Marzelli. While Nadine finally tells Servais that she loves him and caresses his badly brutalized body, it remains to be seen whether or not the male protagonist survives the ordeal, though one can certainly see the two being happily married if he does; or at least as happy as two outcasts can be. For better or worse, Servais ultimately proved his dedication and paid a hefty price to be with Nadine, who initially let her sentimentalism for a spiritually castrated cinophile blind her from a very great future. On the other hand, the innate irrationality of heterosexual love seems completely sane when compared to the almost otherworldly narcissism and all-around megalomaniacal madness of the homosexual characters in the film, namely the kraut queen Karl-Heinz Zimmer as personified by the one and only Klaus Kinski. Indeed, after discovering that his play is a critical bomb, Karl-Heinz needs to repair his ego and thus decides to brutally beat a couple boorish heterosexual men and then, despite his fagdom, proceeds to take home said boorish heterosexual men’s women and fuck them in a threesome. Notably, before beating up the men under the dubious pretense of one of them touching his coat, Karl-Heinz states to them with a sort of exceedingly eloquent understated rage, “My overcoat, sir. You touched it [...] I paid a lot for this overcoat! Since I’m a well-bred homosexual, I care a lot for my things. Silence. I don’t like your type. You touched me with your proletarian fingers.” Undoubtedly, as the film reveal, homosexual insanity makes lovelorn lunacy seem rather tame by comparison, especially in regard to Teutonic dick-downing dandies.

While *That Most Important Thing: Love* depicts female protagonist Nadine in a relatively favorable light, I cannot help but think of her husband’s suicide and be reminded of the H.L. Mencken quote, “No matter how much a woman loved a man, it would still give her a glow to see him commit suicide for her.” Indeed, as the popularity of websites and apps like Instagram, Twitter, and Tinder demonstrate, female narcissism and solipsism knows no bounds. Taking this into consideration, one cannot help but speculate Żuławski and source writer/co-screenwriter Christopher Frank’s intent as to why the fierce fag played by Kinski randomly declares, “Philosophically speaking, if you don’t count St. Thomas Aquinas, the medieval period was a catastrophe but we owe it a certain conception of women’s dignity.” Of course, with his later film *Possession*, which could also be called *That Most Insane Thing: Love*, Żuławski would reveal a more cynical view of love and especially marriage. Additionally, in an interview included

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with the Mondo Vision Blu-ray release of the filmmaker's somewhat neglected feature *La note bleue* (1991) aka *The Blue Note*—a film that depicts with an almost annoying degree of artistic license the bitter end of the romantic relationship between Polish composer Frédéric Chopin and pseudonymous French novelist George Sand—Żuławski concludes in regard to the real-life protagonist of his film, “After this day depicted. . . filmed. . . in *LA NOTE BLEUE*, he never wrote any kind of new music. He went through Europe, went to Scotland, went to England, went to . . .—while adding some notes here and retracting some notes there—and he died, which means for me only one thing; if you're in a profound, real love relationship with somebody, be this somebody good or bad, you'll die of it.” Naturally, Żuławski's remark seems somewhat curious when one considers that he seems to have been fueled by the romantic ideal of ‘Liebestod,’ but then again maybe he never ever really experienced a “profound, real love relationship,” though I sincerely doubt it. After all, the auteur was in a long-term artistically fruitful romance with singular French beauty Sophie Marceau and one can only assume he suffered greatly at some point in that relationship, hence the increasingly romantically nihilistic nature of his films. While *That Most Important Thing: Love* is indubitably a dark romance that concludes in a fittingly unsettling fashion, it ultimately seems like a sentimental rom-com when compared to the bloody bacchanalian brutality and Yandere insanity of Żuławski's later Polish feature *Szamanka* (1996) aka *She-Shaman*.

Notably, Żuławski would state of the importance of *That Most Important Thing: Love* in the context of his entire filmmaking career, “It's a film that has stayed very close to me, because of its humanity. The final feelings it leaves me with are very human, and not artificial.” Undoubtedly, the film features the auteur's warmest and most sympathetic female character and not the sort of demonically possessed sort of bitches in his later works like *Possession* and *Szamanka*. Indeed, the film is ‘humanistic’ in the best sense of the word as a cinematic work where the scab of lovesick humanity is ruthlessly ripped off and the open wound is allowed to freely bleed into the viewer's soul. After all, even when Nadine declares to Servais, “You see, you were right. A woman can always be bought. Whatever they say,” one cannot help but respect the vulnerability in her honesty and I say that as someone that finds poetry in the words of Otto Weininger. Rather embarrassingly, I am not really familiar with much of Romy Schneider's work, but she certainly reveals in Żuławski's film that she was the height of feminine elegance and the sort of actress that seems painfully nonexistent nowadays. While Schneider's character Nadine might be a porno whore that is certainly long past her peak in terms of pulchritude and fertility, I think it is safe to say that many men, including myself, long to be with a woman of such bargain bin diva divinity. Romantic intrigues aside, the film also carries a very important message about the tragedy of true individuality in a socially oppressive world where both literal and figurative serfdom and whoredom seems to

be the norm. Indeed, while his eccentric entourage of eclectic goons are brutally beating Servais to a bloody pulp at the end of the film, villain Marzelli exposes his own personal Weltanschauung and declares to the protagonist, "You know kid, normally people like us don't exist. I know it but I'm the only one. Each morning when I see myself, I say: 'this is not real.' So, since we don't exist we must find a way to be accepted, right? That's what you're doing now. You're accepting." Considering Marzelli's words, one can only come to the conclusion that *That Most Important Thing: Love* is a film about accepting the fact that life sucks and then you die, but if you're lucky you might snag a Romy Schneider-tier babe at some point during your miserable existence.

-Ty E

POSSESSION
POSSESSION

Andrzej Żuławski (1981)

Have you ever stumbled upon a film that entranced you, not just with the plot progression or stellar casting, but with a tale of murmuring madness? Going into *Possession* with the knowledge only of a feminine hatred uprising, I concluded that this film was to chronicle a break-up and how right I was. Directed in the eye of the storm, Andrzej Żuławski continues his (unknown to me) cosmically surreal ascension into philosophical tripe masked with a "blasphemous" swipe to the construct of puritanism - all in the span of his own terribly messy divorce! As Infinite Jest^{er} would spread it, "Isn't *Possession* the perfect break-up movie?" This continues my autumn habit of not reading a synopsis and indulging tastes with a blindfold, lucky for me that *Possession* breaks tides in its berserk ambiguity. As regarded by a select group of people who can stomach the events and forgo an unnecessary criticism for something that transcends a physical manifestation of the supernatural, *Possession* was an arthouse classic destined for the guillotine.

First thing I'd like to bring up and discuss is Anna's (Isabelle Adjani) role throughout *Possession* as the sole agitator and let's not even bring to surface the intentions of the film's title. Starting out, Mark (Sam Neill) is in a meeting with his previous employers and resigning against their wishes to return home to his wife and son in Berlin. Upon arriving, Mark discovers a certain air around Anna; she's leaving him with mention unearthing of a German dandy she has been sleeping with, name of Heinrich. Not to concern oneself with dispelling the great treasures this film has to offer, Mark gradually exorcises his pedantic nature in turn for a more primal and instinctual defensive to better suit the fluctuating needs and desires of his precious whore. Turn after turn, the opposition proves fierce and we are graced with what might be the sole continuum of the body horror filmic turn and a film that shields its own misogynistic(?) claims in a sometimes muddled allegory towards marital bliss and lack thereof. With the familiarity of heart break and spousal abandonment, it's safe to assume that Żuławski not only played his part of concerning husband but also that *Possession* also treads the boards of a medium for his anguish and rage, something I am only too familiar with, which is what most of you men can agree with me on.

Possession is a fright. I found myself genuinely disturbed and a slimy ooze creeping down my back during the subway scene of miscarriage interpretive dance. It's ultimately at this point where the thin line between reality and fictional prurience becomes blurred and shuffled over; a worthy conflict. As the title so reads, *Possession* takes on a tale of a domicile possession. It's very unclear whether or not an existing presence other than menstruation possessed Anna to do the deeds she did. Further highlighting the excuses at work, the masquerade

of feminine blood-lust, Isabelle Adjani is reported to have attempted suicide after seeing the finished product of *Possession*, as told by the director himself in the DVD audio commentary. Is Anna really such a distant and unrelenting character or is Isabelle Adjani just another woman afflicted with the possible parasite of ladyhood? As we continue this primordial descent into tactical manipulation at the hands of "Barbara" and other such succubi, *Possession* points out a question only homosexuals ever ask - "Is it really worth it?"

To retain previous discussion towards the earlier events of the film, I'd like to point out the technical achievements of Andrzej Żuławski and his sweeping throes of woeful congregation. The camerawork featured in *Possession* recounts a trait that seems entirely extraterrestrial - camera work based on continuity. Whether or not the recurring shots of twisted and voyeuristic embrace actually pose as an accelerator to the many thoughts and theories lay jumbled in the mess is another situation and topic that is overthrown by the sheer velocity of which *Possession* strikes. A frequent meandering of broadcasting insatiable images, Żuławski features many scenes in which his compelling nature of filming isolates the subjects from settings temporarily leaving me bewildered and aroused. Playing coy and innocent, I'd also like to point out the marvelous score collected by Andrzej Korzyski, a man proven genius that pains me that I've never heard of his work sooner. His cloying and clouding of playground instrumentals ripples through subspheres of what can only be intermittently described as carny organs and dandy flutes. While I agree wholeheartedly that specific temperatures of films aren't made for everyone, I have deemed it impossible not to appreciate the remarkable technical achievement in which Żuławski has secured permanently.

I mentioned misogyny and you guffawed. *Possession* formally accepts all of the traits and habitual rituals of the female kind and precociously envies the freedom they have to look stupid and not be judged by their effervescent taste in shoes and luxuries. During many scenes of Mark wading through Anna's insecurities, he chivalrously attempts to meet in the middle to discuss what could come. Mark tells her that they can work it out while she squirms and resists his passes for emotional convergence. Once her defensive stature and hysterics withdraw from sheer amount of mutilated use, she sleeps easy in their bed as they both lay naked, secured with a nice and calming sheet only for Żuławski to implement a flip psychosis trick on the viewer in which the symmetrical shape of the room and the exiting furniture flips suddenly to present his empty bed with a note from his dearly departed wife. Alas, Mark. There is no saving the wretch now. Enter scene of subway corridors ghostlike in filming. Anna struts through these smooth-cold tiled walls carrying a bag of groceries with a sadistic and sprawled grin of regalement. The actions of Anna soon spiral into a blistering nothingness in what seems to take an infinite amount of time for her "possession" to fully take place. As she whips her groceries into a wall and is showered with

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goods and services, she begins screaming uncontrollably - writhing and convulsing which brings to light the earlier scenes of high-velocity kitchenware in one of our couples many fights. And to think that this notorious subway scene was universally set in our same world with many of mans own inventions, machinery and otherworldly oddities, . . . can they really coexist?

Accent so thick and dementia so bloomed, it's as if Anna were communicating in a form of tongues. Through the "misogyny", through the shroud of cinema prose, it becomes adamantly clear that this film is the most brave, inventive, and conniving of all "possession" films as it deals with a very close-to-home approach of married life and to think I just recommended this film to a lady who has been recently married. A film with such a title defies all paranormal ties except for brief instances of dubious measure on behalf of the stricken and old-age Kali Yuga in which man suffers for his sins and to be controlled by women, which happens on so many occasions within the teasingly-heretic film of Possession. Relapsing back, Possession is a film that cannot be disregarded as anything and especially not as a supernatural reflection of the nuclear family. By the last half-an-hour mark it becomes unclear that if the "possession", so to speak, is a singular occurrence or a dual possession. The belligerent way in which Żuławski captures the going-ons prevents us from allowing such meticulous ideas to become apparent. The scene involving the sacrilegious miscarriage could lay waste to many theories revolving around the film but alas, another director whose own esoteric mindplay is a manipulating game even to us, his devoted audience.

Possession is one of the few films generally regarded as a "mindfuck" that I feel I could revisit over and over again. From the mysteries of the Jewish fellow with the pink socks to the entirely audacious ending with the self-destructive nature of a son who has seen more than we are let on to (given the previous story development of him screaming in his sleep, stammering for his mother), Possession is a film that can be enjoyed regardless of the deceitful and depressing nature of this handicap heartbreak. Even the fate of prissy-Tantric boy Heinrich can be traced back to the cut/copy traits of the now-infamous stylizing of black widows. Did he really witness a creature in which Cronenberg is probably idling over himself for not imagining it first, or was that just a realization of his "loved one's" real gutter instincts? Hedonism is dually explained earlier in the film but is actually manifested upon later with what can only be uttered as "Naked Lunch...?" near the ending of the film. It's at this point where Possession skydives into marital imperfections and a pre-nuclear Bonnie and Clyde tale of monstrous, lustful appetites and double standards as to how one woman envisions how her husband should be, darkened pupils and all. Possession is astoundingly one of those films where you hold tight, let your mind flood, sensors buckle, and try to scramble your way out of this erratic yet brilliant masterpiece with all your previous morals intact. Good luck.

-mAQ

VAPORS

Andy Milligan* (1965)

Out of the 27 or so films gay gutter-auteur Andy Milligan directed, *Vapors* (1965) – his first featurette – is quite possibly his most honest, intimate, and damning work. Written by Hope Stansbury – who would later star in subsequent Milligan efforts like *The Degenerates* (1967) and *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* (1972) – *Vapors* is a work “From the Tearoom to the Steamroom” (poster tagline) about a couple qualm-ridden queers as they get-on in a homo-hotspot; a steamy yet mostly static steamroom full of hysterical and horny queens. Glaringly more serious and melodramatic than most of Milligan’s subsequent works, aside from his once-lost-but-now-found British masterpiece *Nightbirds* (1969) – the director’s last black-and-white film – *Vapor* is a suitably gritty and amateurishly directed 32-minute 16mm b/w short that gives the viewer a pithy yet punchy glimpse into Milligan’s stunted artistic potential as the director that would later focus almost exclusively on crazy and crappy camp as opposed to the omnipresent debauchery that consumed his personal life and inevitably led to his demise via AIDs during the early cockcrow hours of June 3, 1991, thus resulting in an ignoble burial in an unmarked grave somewhere in Los Angeles. With unflattering black comedies like Bruce Kessler’s *The Gay Deceivers* (1969) and William Friedkin’s *The Boys in the Band* (1970) being quite prevalent during the late-1960s/early-1970s – works that expressed the self-loathing trials and tribulations a homo in a pomo world – Milligan’s *Vapors* proves to be a more brash, glum, and dispiriting work that is scantily side-splitting but often unintentionally silly, thus it is no surprise to me that the exploitation director chose to focus his filmmaking career on the exceedingly degenerate (at least, for the time) world of sexploitation and dimestore horror like his better known works *The Ghastly Ones* (1968), *Guru, the Mad Monk* (1970), and *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973). Originally getting his start working on sadomasochistic, hyper-camp renditions of plays like Lord Dunsany’s *The Glittering Gates* and Jean Genet’s *The Maids with the Caffe Cino* – a small café-based theatrical group composed of an assortment of aberrosexuals – Milligan also owned and operated a clothing boutique named *Ad Lib*; both of which activities would act as a crucial source of inspiration and training for the hapless filmmaker. Of course, arguably the greatest influence behind *Vapors* – a work set in New York’s St. Mark’s bathhouse – was Milligan’s own personal erotic exploits in tearooms and steamrooms that involved anonymous, unprotected sex, which he would ultimately pay for with his life and dignity.

As someone who grew up with a physically and emotionally abusive alcoholic mother of a hefty, bovine build, it is no surprise that *Vapors* features the following line from a steamroom attendant early on in the film, “Well, you can’t trust your own mother these days. How ya gonna trust..uh..a recent ac-

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quaintance?" The steamroom employee must have gotten to know his customers very well as foreboding paranoia and distrust, especially of women, act as deep-seated themes of *Vapors*. As the sometimes prissy and always pessimistic protagonist Thomas (Gerald Jaccuzzo) states early on in *Vapors* to his prospective lover Mr. Jaffee (Robert Dahdah), "Do you get the strange felling someone is staring at us?" To his credit, indeed, a virtual parade troupe of queens and sexual inverts are watching the two men in a viciously voyeuristic fashion as they snidely giggle like a pack of Pop-Rocks-addicted toddlers at a nudie bar, thus making it seem as if the viewer of *Vapors* is in on the same sleazy action with them. Although a totally different film with an inherently different agenda, *Vapors* often feels like a neurotic and anti-erotic adaptation of Jean Genet's sole (and disowned) cinematic effort *Un chant d'amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*. Like the hypnagogic libertine short directed by the gay ex-con frog writer, *Vapors* is a work that would anticipate the sexually-charged films of Andy Warhol. Of course, gay-ghetto-based homoeroticism is not the only indulgent ingredient of *Vapors* that would later appear in the works of Warhol, as Milligan packed the short with a bitter cocktail of misogyny and misery. For instance, during *Vapors* Mr. Jaffee discusses in detail his disdain for his wife's less than dainty feet and her abiding inability to throwaway soiled menstrual sanitary pads. Jaffee also fondly reminisces to Thomas about his prematurely deceased son, a handsome and soft-skinned high school football player that the man speculates may not have been his actual progeny due to his lack of physical resemblance who died in a freak drowning accident and whose corpse was subsequently mutilated by hungry snakes. Needless to say, *Vapors* concludes in an appropriately anti-climatic manner, as if Kenneth Anger's celluloid wet-dream *Fireworks* (1947) merely feebly fizzled instead of exploding in a most fiercely phallogocentric fashion.

Ultimately, *Vapors* is a bleak yet puissant testament to the emptiness and humiliation of gay life during the pre-Stonewall era, henceforth acting as an unofficial fictional melodramatic supplement to the real-life anonymous sexual excursions featured in the William E. James presented document *Tearoom* (1962). Thus, it is shame that Milligan, a misunderstood man whose film *The Ghastly Ones* (1968) was described by popular hack horror author Stephen King as, "...the work of morons with cameras," never fully bloomed into the "sort of a Douglas Sirk figure" that Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn (*Valhalla Rising*, *Drive*) so cordially described him as, yet *Vapors* and *Nightbirds*, which also unfortunately happen to be two of the trash-auteur filmmaker's least-seen films, are a testament to the fact that underneath all the fairy dressmaking and illegally solicited sodomy was a serious cinematic artist with something truly ghastly to express.

-Ty E

SEEDS OF SIN

Andy Milligan* (1968)

Surely, there is nothing more depressing to a cinephile than the fact that one of their favorite filmmaker's potential masterpieces has been butchered, botched, and/or just never plain released for whatever reason. For example, Guido exploitation auteur Alberto Cavallone's supposed masterpiece *Maldoror* (1977)—a loose psychedelic reworking of the rather mysterious French poet Comte de Lautréamont's proto-surrealist late 19th-century poetical novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror*—has never been released in any form despite the fact it was actually completed and is considered by those handful of people that have had the truly singular honor of seeing it to be the auteur's greatest masterpiece. While most of gutter auteur Andy Milligan's early sexploitation films, as well as his rare 1967 uncompleted arthouse film *Compass Rose* (which can actually be found by collectors, though the print is horrible and inaudible) and apparently highly worthwhile campy homo bloodsucker flick *Dragula* (1971) are completely lost, arguably the greatest aesthetic tragedy is the fact that the director's would-be magnum opus, *Seeds* (1968) aka *Seeds of Sin*, only exists today in a senselessly butchered form because the film's monetary-motivated Guido producer, Allen Bazzini—a restaurateur and sometimes cherry farmer who wanted to break into the movie business whose sole other film credit is for acting as the 'presenter' of the exploitation flick *The Blue Sextet* (1971) directed by gay pornographer and exploitation auteur David E. Durston (*I Drink Your Blood*, *Manhole*)—later inserted softcore sex scenes that were not directed by the sub-infamous gutter auteur featuring actors that were not even originally in the film and also cut key scenes from the flick to make way for the added smut, thus making the work somewhat incomprehensible in some respects (though not much more incoherent than a lot of exploitation flicks from that era). Indeed, as Milligan's friend and biographer Jimmy McDonough wrote in *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), regarding the work: "SEEDS is Milligan's MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS—meaning that what exists of the film only frustrates after reading a nearly complete script. This was to be Andy's sickest masterwork yet." After watching the butchered cut, I can happily report that it is still one of Milligan's greatest and most memorable works, as a cracked window into the sod filmmaker's dark and depraved soul.

Indeed, despite being one of the handful of works that Milligan directed that was not produced by Hebraic smut-peddler William Mishkin (whose asshole lawyer son Lew would later be responsible for intentionally destroying most of the Milligan films that are now lost), who often fiddled with and molested the director's work in various ways in the hope of cashing in, *Seeds of Sin*—a work that was advertised with the eloquent tagline, "Sown in Incest! Harvested in hate!"—was still perniciously defiled and now exists today as a curious cel-

SEEDS OF SIN

luloid oddity that feels like an unhinged family soap opera from Sodom that is routinely interrupted by lighthearted 'commercial breaks' of random unclad hippie-like people (including platinum blonde Swedish exploitation diva Uta Erickson of the Amero brothers' classic 1971 psychedelic gothic hardcore flick *Bacchanale*) rolling around on top of each other and unconvincingly attempting to make the viewer think that they are actually fucking. A work that was indeed "sown in incest" and "harvested in hate," the film is, like many of Milligan's works, a thinly disguised attack against the director's own deranged and highly abusive mother and family members and revolves around a crippled and considerably cunty wheelchair-bound old hag matriarch who self-righteously describes her own children as "a bunch of bad seeds" and who foresees the destruction of the entire family after her seemingly half-autistic incest-inclined daughter invites the rest of the family over for Christmas in a fucked family affair wherein virtually everyone dies a mirthfully gruesome death at the hands of one of their (un)loved ones. Black-and-white celluloid vile spat from the warped mind of one of exploitation cinema's few true 'serious' artists (before becoming a filmmaker, Milligan directed off-off-Broadway adaptations of works by Jean Cocteau and Jean Genet, among others), *Seeds of Sin* was somewhat fittingly written for Milligan's one-time wife Candy Hammond (indeed, like Fassbinder, despite being a gay sadomasochist, Milligan got married to one of his screen divas), who is a horse-faced girl with a butch dyke haircut that prances around the film naked and acts like an all-around socially retarded individual, and more or less represents the director's final word on family matters (not that the auteur quit making raunchy and hate-driven family reunion flicks after it was released), as a work featuring black market abortions, intricate incest-based bizarre love triangles, and inter-familial mass murder, including fratricide, sororicide, and matricide, among other things.

When her live-in adult daughter Carol (Milligan's wife Candy Hammond) invites the rest of the family over for Christmas without telling her, wheelchair-bound matriarch Claris Manning (elderly Milligan superstar Maggie Rogers, who died two years after the film was released)—a seemingly rotting old violent hag who resembles an elderly high yellow negro tranny sporting a Warhol-esque blonde wig who would make for a great girlfriend for 'grandfather' of Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974)—states the forebodingly prophetic warns to her scheming progeny, "You mark my words, you've destroyed us." As a girl who started having sex with her blood brother Michael (Anthony Moscini of Milligan's *Compass Rose* and the lost 1968 flick *Gutter Trash*) when she was just 13 and he was 17, Carol—a dyke-like chick with an aesthetically repellant butch haircut who masturbates to the sort of vintage muscle mags that were big with fags before the deluge of homo hardcore flicks that followed the release of Wakefield Poole's classic crossover cocksucker flick *Boys in the Sand* (1971)—has her own reasons for wanting the family back over for the holidays

and it is not just because she wants to reboot her unsavory sex-scapes with her big bro, who is now unhappily married to a lying bitch. A hate-driven and glaringly grotesque old repulsive über-wench who looks like she would radiate a rather revolting stench while stewing in her wheelchair, mad matriarch Claris receives constant help from her one-eyed servant/cuckold/baby-daddy Mortimer (Jesse Bigelow of *Gutter Trash*) and a crooked crackpot doctor named Dr. Kram (Paul Eden of *Gutter Trash* and pornographic auteur Peter De Rome's 1976 hardcore psychedelic horror Poe adaptation *The Destroying Angel*), who performs regular blood transfusions on the old hag. Dr. Kram also performs an emergency illegal coat-hanger abortion on a hysterical young chick named Bonita (Magie Dominic of the lost 1968 Milligan flick *The Filthy Five*) after her husband Drew (David Hazard) makes a botched attempt himself. To pay for the \$1,500 abortion, Drew, who is the gay boyfriend of Ma Manning's youngest son Buster (though the viewer will not be able to figure this out by watching the film), steals his girlfriend's bracelet and gives it to Dr. Kram as payment. When Bonita screams hysterically just as Dr. Kram gets in between her legs to abort the unborn baby, Drew punches her in the face and knocks her out, thus eradicating the need for anesthesia.

When all the siblings and their partners arrive at the matriarch's house and meet for dinner, Ma Manning is wheeled out and makes the following seethingly hateful speech to her progeny after getting seated: "I might as well make it clear right here and now; I didn't invite any of you. Don't get your hopes up. Carol, I guess thought she was doing me a favor when she asked you here. There isn't anyone at this table that I give two cents for. Well, it's not entirely your fault...Its mostly mine. I spoiled you when you were children. I spoiled you rotten. The good book says "he shall reap what he thou sow." [...] You're a bunch of bad seeds! Well, you ruined my life and now I've just ruined your dinner [laughs sinisterly] Go ahead and eat! [continues laughing maniacally]," to which one of her children mockingly replies, "To our dear sweet mother, long may she live." When Claris remarks that she could outlive all her children, her eldest child Margaret (Lucy Silvey)—a blonde bitch who married a dumb and violent Guido ex-gang leader named Jonathan (who hilariously later states with a glaring NYC dago draw to his wife, "I love you so much I could kill you") because he is a "beautiful animal" with "sadiſtic urges"—states, "I don't think nature would allow that." Rather nonsensically, Margaret slaps one-eyed cuckold Mortimer on the face after he insults her momma and asks, "who do you think you are?," so mother Manning grabs her, smacks her in the face in an even more violent fashion, and says "he's your father," thus revealing the dark family secret that she is the bastard spawn of her mommy's 'kept-man' and all-around bitch. Of course, that is just one of the many sick secrets regarding the family.

That night, brother Matthew (Milligan superstar Neil Flanagan)—a gay priest who molested his own military school cadet brother Buster (Gene Connolly of

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Tommy Goetz's 1969 film *A Bride for Brenda* and C. Walsh's *Sweet Taste of Joy* (1970)—is totally oblivious to the fact that his nymphomaniac girlfriend Barbara (Milligan superstar Susan Cassidy) has snuck into his brother Michael's room and seduced him. After screwing Mike, who has no qualms about cheating on his wife Susan (Eileen Hayes of *The Ghastly Ones*) since he resents her and the fact that he had to marry her when she got pregnant (apparently, with another man's baby), Barbara goes to take a bath to assumedly wash all the spilled seeds out of her overworked snatch so her Catholic cocksucker boyfriend does not notice, but before she finishes someone knocks a radio playing degenerate jazz into the bathtub, thus electrocuting and killing the debauched dame. After getting done talking to Ma Manning and learning that her husband's father—the matriarch's second husband—is imprisoned in a house for the criminally insane, Susan goes back to her hubby Michael and accuses him of cheating on her, so he unleashes a tidal wave of verbal venom and reveals that he never wanted to marry her in the first place and that he started an incestuous sexual affair with his sister Carol when he was a teenager and she was barely a teen. Totally horrified by what her hubby has just told her, Susan runs out of the room and grabs a butcher knife in the kitchen so she can stab her already broken heart, but she does not have to finish the job as some mysterious killer slams a door into the handle of the weapon, thus killing the hysterical wife instantly. Although Dr. Kram absurdly writes off the deaths as suicides, Ma Manning knows better and tells her cuckolded servant/lover Mortimer, "everyone in this house is capable of murder, including you and me" and then proceeds to burn a \$100 dollar bill while proclaiming that if she knew that she would die tomorrow (ironically, she does die the next day), she would burn all her money just to spite her children.

When Mamma Manning tells her gay pervert criminal son Buster—a pedomorphic bibliophile and military school cadet who has been kicked out of every school on the east coast yet absurdly sports a West Point uniform—that she has not written him into her will and then berates him for being kicked out of multiple private schools for having sod sex with and blackmailing other boys, among other things, the loony lad flies into a hysterical queenish rage, runs outside while flailing his arms and screaming about wanting to kill himself, and then proceeds to slit his own wrist with a broken bottle while laughing maniacally. Meanwhile, matriarch Manning's two young servants, Peter (Jonathan East of Milligan's lost 1968 film *Tricks of the Trade*) and Jessica (Patricia Dillon of Milligan's *Gutter Trash* and 1970 medieval horror flick *Torture Dungeon*), who are carrying on a lurid love affair behind their employer's back, have forged their boss' will and are plotting to poison her, but right before they attempt to do so, someone ironically poisons them. Meanwhile, sister Margaret reveals to her bohunk hubby Jonathan that her mother is a cripple because some unknown person pushed her down the stairs, thus breaking her neck and spine in the process. Margaret also states regarding the incident, "nothing can kill a bitch like momma. Ever since

that day she's grown more and more hateful. Like a cancer on the whole family. It was as if we were the puppets and she controlled the strings, making us share her pattern of hate." Margaret also discusses how her little sister Carol has always hated her because she is jealous of her beauty. Indeed, Margaret is right because not long after telling her husband about her bitchy little sister, Carol kills her by throwing acid in her face and then proceeds to kill Jonathan, although she is not revealed to be the killer for a couple more scenes. From there, Carol seduces her bro Michael and they make ostensibly passionate love after flirting like grade school children for a little bit, but when the big brother kicks her out of the bedroom when she gets too lovey-dovey, she flips out and starts singing "step on a crack, break your mother's back" while standing topless in the hallway in a discernibly deranged state. When Ma Manning calls for her daughter while in an absurdly drunken state, Carol pops out of nowhere like a rabid cheetah and pushes her down the stairs in her wheelchair, thus killing the mad matriarch (apparently, elderly actress Maggie Rogers was actually seriously hurt during this scene, as the film crew members lost control of her wheelchair and she ran directly into a wall after falling down the steps), who realizes just before she kicks the bucket that her favorite child is the one that is responsible for crippling her. When Michael walks in the room to see that his sister has just killed their mother, he becomes so enraged that he strangles her to death, thus making him the only surviving member of the family.

Although the only known existing print of *Seeds of Sin* is the butchered version I viewed featuring the added softcore sex scenes and excised key scenes, Something Weird Video released a double-feature DVD of the work and its spiritual brother film *The Ghastly Ones* that also includes Andy Milligan's old workprint of the film as an extra feature, thus the viewer can mentally fill in a number of blanks themselves in regard to the missing scenes from the bogus Bazzini cut. For instance, one of the excised subplots involves the gay incestuous pedo priest character Matthew being seduced by his little sister Carol, who spits in his mouth when he requests that she 'punish' him with a good beating. Later, in a rather darkly humorous scene, unholy holy man Matthew goes to commit suicide via hanging, but he pussies out at the last minute and ultimately dies anyway when his feet accidentally slip from a chair while he still has a noose wrapped around his neck. Another scene missing from both the film and the workprint apparently involves priest Matthew and his girlfriend Barbara engaging in a "sacrilegious love scene in the rectory." The worksprint also features an ultra-cynical extended ending where Michael cradles his sister Carol while singing a nursery rhyme to her after strangling her while Mortimer proceeds to call the police with a smirk on his face, as if he knows that he is going to inherit the family fortune after getting the surviving brother locked up in prison. Despite being blatantly butchered and featuring long and pointless sex inserts featuring random anonymous people who are not even characters in the film (in-

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cluding a negress!), *Seeds of Sin* as it exists today still manages to be a perversely potent piece of ceaseless anti-family celluloid hate and malignant misanthropy that makes the viewer realize that there is no question that auteur Milligan was himself sown from a forsaken heritage of hate.

Indeed, on top of having a sadistic crippled mother who used him as an emotional and physical punching-bag and forced him to regularly clean between her toes because she was so morbidly obese (at 300+ pounds, she was a fairly big momma, especially for her time period when it was actually shameful to be a lard ass) when he was just a young child, Milligan, like some of the characters of *Seeds of Sin*, did not find out his older brother Harley LeRoy Hull, who was a successful businessman that served multiple long prisons sentences after being convicted of serial pedophilia (interestingly, when biographer Jimmy McDonough called Hull to get information on Milligan for his bio, he recommended writing a book about his life instead and even proposed the Milliganesque title 'The Wayward Pedophile'), was not his full brother but actually his half-brother from his mother's previous failed marriage to a Jewish bigamist (apparently, Milligan's father resented the fact that his stepson was a mischling Jew). Unquestionably, Milligan's then-wife Candy Hammond gives a most believable performance in the film as a cracked cunt who kills all her family members just so she can have her beloved brother/deflowerer all to herself. As Milligan would state of Hammond in one of the rare occasions where he said something semi-nice about a woman, "SEEDS was written for Candy. Candy's not an ordinary woman. She's self-made, always was. Left home at a young age. Candy would talk wild, act wild, but she's really a prude. Not about nudity—sex. She's afraid of men in a way [...] Candy and I got along well, and one day I asked if she wanted to get married. It was convenience. I knew she was gonna go back." Indeed, one can only assume that a woman who would marry a notoriously bitchy and sadomasochistic sodomite who was constantly cruising for tricks and pricks and wanted nothing to do with women, especially in the bedroom, would have to be suffering from some sort of hang-up in regard to men and their members. Indubitably, it is quite unfortunate that Mr. Milligan did not get the gall to hump Hammond and produce a "seed of sin" of his own as the kid would surely have grown up to be more interesting and very potentially more murderous than the debauched and depraved demons seeds of his degenerate daddy's films. Of course, oftentimes filmmakers will describe their films as their 'children,' with *Seeds of Sin* indubitably being Milligan's most nasty, rotten, and marvelously misbegotten little mongrel bastard celluloid abortion.

-Ty E

THE GHASTLY ONES

Andy Milligan* (1968)

Before the hysterically melodramatic bourgeoisie-bashing flicks of Bavarian bad boy Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the somewhat recent would-be-demented independent dysfunctional family reunion *You're Next* (2011) directed by Adam Wingard, there was *The Ghastly Ones* (1968) aka *Blood Rites* aka *Blood Orgy* directed by sub-(in)famous gutter auteur Andy Milligan (*Vapors*, *Nightbirds*). Advertised as being shot "In Cranium-Cleaving Color!", *The Ghastly Ones* was mad man Milligan's first color feature and a semi-psychedelic one at that, but more importantly it is the sort of fucked family film that the sadomasochistic sodomite did best as a work directed by a man who spent virtually his entire life estranged from family and scorning the memory of his obese mother by modelling most of his cinematic villains after her. Described by then-unknown horror filmmaker Joe Dante (*The Howling*, *Gremlins*) in *Film Bulletin* as being, "like a home movie from Bedlam and gives evidence of being processed in a dirty bathtub," *The Ghastly Ones* is an oftentimes unintentionally hilarious piece of low-class, low-camp celluloid trash sass masquerading as a high melodrama, albeit with absurdly inane exploitation gross-out scenes. Indeed, *The Ghastly Ones* is the sort of film that can only be appreciated by the already Milligan initiated as a murderous melodrama for the morally insane that wallows in decided disdain for the nuclear family, especially of the bombastic bourgeois sort. A whacked-out work of garbage camp lunacy penned and directed by cinema history's most marvelously misogynistic and hysterically hateful homo, *The Ghastly Ones* is probably best known in the horror world as a film that somehow managed to make the UK's 'Video Nasty' list under the inferior alternate title *Blood Rites*, yet the film will probably be best enjoyed by those looking for an aesthetically malevolent mutation of the melodrama as a work that did for exploitation cinema what Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), and especially *Martha* (1974) did for German New Cinema as a damning work that defiles and denigrates the moral fiber of the family with the sort of venomous vengeance that one could only expect from a pissed poof with a large pink chip on both shoulders. The sordid story of three upper-middle class sisters who go with their equally banal cuckolded husbands to their deceased father's manor for a three-day rendezvous of bloody murder to ostensibly collect their inheritance, *The Ghastly Ones* demonstrates that lies, greed, jealousy, hypocrisy, and hatred are the things that make families stick together like flies on dog shit.

Vicky (Milligan superstar Anne Linden) has been married to her lawyer hubby Rich (Fib LaBlaque) for seven long years yet her homo pastor brother-in-law Walter (Hal Sherwood) still has the gall to say to her like a true queen bitch, "You know, when Richard married you, I was furious with him. I didn't think

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you were good enough for him...but I'm sure in time you'll prove me wrong." As hinted, Rich and his bro Walt once buggered one another, but he has more pressing problems to worry about as a man with a law firm who is somewhat broke, but luckily his wife Vicky is about to inherit a handsome sum via her father's death. With her sister Liz (Carol Vogel), who has been married to her husband Don (Richard Romanus, who would go on to star in Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1973)) for five years, and other sister Veronica (Eileen Hayes), who has been married to her husband Bill (Don Williams) for three years, Vicky meets with a grotesque lawyer named Dobbs (Milligan superstar Neil Flanagan in cheap Halloween makeup) to hear the reading of her belated father's will. In the will, the father Crenshaw hilariously states, "My dearest darlings, by now you're all happily married—something I never was. You loved your mother; I never did. She was a good mother but a bad wife. She was possessive, selfish, and frigid." In the will, it is stipulated that the three sisters must "reside at the Crenshaw house in sexual harmony for a period of 3 days" and that "in case any unforeseeable events occur, the eldest heir shall re-disperse according to her best wishes." When the sisters and their husbands arrive at Crenshaw manor, they are greeted by two maids, Martha (Veronica Radburn, who is best known for playing Annie's psychiatrist in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977)) and Ruth Trask (Milligan superstar Maggie Rogers), and their hunchback brother Colin (Milligan superstar Hal Borske), who resembles a retarded gay werewolf and is featured at the beginning of *The Ghastly Ones* massacring a loving dandy couple.

The first night at the home, Veronica and Bill are treated to a dead rabbit in their bed with a note reading, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit." Meanwhile, Rich and Vicky find a 'X' written in blood on their bedroom door and Don goes to investigate. Ultimately, Don collapses after being drugged and Rich is found dead hanging upside down like Mussolini in the basement by his wife Vicky, with the viewer assuming retard Colin has committed the grizzly crimes. The next day, Don and Collin chop wood together and after the former finds a plank of wood with a bloody 'X' on it, he is gagged and disemboweled by a cloaked figure. Wondering where Don and Elizabeth have disappeared to, the guests proceed to eat dinner and find Elizabeth's decapitated head on a platter. While rummaging through old photos, Bill discovers something interesting about the Crenshaw family but Colin snatches a particularly incriminating photo away from him and he is gutted with a pitchfork not long after. Servant Martha later discovers the very same picture and realizes an awful truth, but she is butchered with a sizeable hatchet before being able to tell someone. Not long after, the cloaked killer is revealed to be servant Ruth, whose real name is Hattie and who is not a mere maid but the fourth and oldest Crenshaw sister, who states to the two surviving sisters, Vicky and Veronica, "Meet your sister, Hattie! That's right...your sister. You didn't know that did you?... 31 years ago I was the first born in this house. My momma died giving birth to me. My

father, our papa, loved my momma very much. He was so alone he married again, but he was so heart broken, he stayed away aside from five visits and he laid in there with that woman. That bitch! Your mother. Out of those five visits, 3 girls were conceived.” Hattie also reveals that her stepmother lied to her and convinced her she was one of the Trask children. Hoping to take the inheritance she believes is rightfully hers as the eldest Crenshaw daughter, Hattie planned to kill all her sisters and frame demented dullard Colin for the crime. Of course, she ultimately fails because Colin knocks her down the stairs and kills her while Vicky and Veronica stare in horror.

As star Hal Borske (who played hunchback ‘Colin’) revealed in the audio commentary for the *Something Weird Video* DVD release of *The Ghastly Ones*, the killer of the film, Hattie, like most of Milligan’s filmic villains, is based on auteur Andy Milligan’s own mother. As a man who had a physically and emotionally (and even sexually) abusive alcoholic mother (Milligan apparently shouted she was a “bitch” at her funeral), a bitchy sister (whose boyfriend once beat the shit out of the director in 1969, thus resulting in brother and sister never seeing each other again), and a half-Jewish pedophile half-brother, Milligan indubitably had a warped view on family matters and that is certainly quite clear in *The Ghastly Ones*. As one-time Milligan collaborator Jimmy McDonough wrote in his bio *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), “Utilizing his Staten Island regulars, Milligan made yet another forgettable period horror movie in 1978, *LEGACY OF BLOOD*, and, improbably enough, it’s a nicely shot but pointless remake of his own *GHASTLY ONES*.” Additionally, Milligan’s early work *Seeds* (1968) aka *Seeds of Sin*, which only survives today as a butchered print featuring inserted sex scenes that have literally nothing to do with the film (Milligan oftentimes worked for Jewish exploitation distributor William Mishkin and his scumbag lawyer son Lew, who butchered/lost/destroyed most of the filmmaker’s works), is a sort of prototype for *The Ghastly Ones* in its depiction of a nasty and ultimately quite murderous family reunion. Undoubtedly, in terms of Milligan’s surviving films, *The Ghastly Ones* is a borderline ‘cream of the crop’ work that only falls behind *Vapors* (1965), *Nightbirds* (1970), *The Body Beneath* (1970), and *Fleshspot on 42 Street* (1973) in terms of its marvelous melodramatic malice. I think Milligan biographer McDonough paid Milligan the greatest compliment when he stated, “In terms of aesthetic, technique, and temperament, Andy Milligan and Rainer Werner Fassbinder are eerily similar. While far more sophisticated, movies like *THE STATIONMASTER’S WIFE* or *MARTHA* don’t seem all that far from *Seeds*, and entire sections of *BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ* feel as if Milligan could have been lurking behind the camera. People talk and talk without ever getting close to one another,” Christian Braad Thomsen wrote of one particularly pungent Fassbinder creation. It’s a description that fits any Andy picture.” Featuring charmingly cynical one-liners like, “It always takes money to bring

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people together, doesn't it," "When you have been married as long as Richard and I, you will think twice about sexual demonstrations in public," and "I want what's coming to me...I'll do anything to get what I want," The Ghastly Ones ultimately demonstrates that when it comes to families, every member is more or less a ghastly one with some sort of unsavory ulterior motive.

-Ty E

BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS

Andy Milligan* (1970)

While taking a sabbatical over the pond in merry old England in part to get away from his swindling Jewish producer/distributor William Mishkin (only to be swindled by a British Jewish producer and to go crawling back to Mishkin), sadomasochistic sodomite gutter auteur Andy Milligan managed to squeeze out no less than five films, including a couple of his 'masterpieces' like his most avant-garde work *Nightbirds* (1969), as well as the Gothic vampire flick *The Body Beneath* (1970), which concludes with a Jack Smith-esque Bacchanalian food orgy where a bunch of fat, bitchy British bloodsucker broads complain about how America is a shithole overflowing with dipsomaniacs and bums. Mr. Milligan must have found the incessant rain, bad teeth, and urban decay in London to be quite delightfully dejecting in some way, as it was there that he also directed what is arguably his most hateful and mean-spirited work, *Bloodthirsty Butchers* (1970), which is a dimestore reworking of *Sweeney Todd* with a decidedly dickheaded nod to Dickens. Advertised with the patently preposterous puffery, "MORE SAVAGE—MORE VIOLENT than anything written by the MARQUIS de SADE" and "Their prime cuts were curiously erotic...but thoroughly brutal!" the film was promoted as unadulterated celluloid sadomasochism of the bawdy body dismemberment-based sort, but it is really just a miserable melodrama of the majorly misanthropic and misogynistic sort featuring scheming social savages, cunty old bitches that probably haven't eaten a cock in a decade or two, and pernicious proletarian capitalists who practice a meta-predatory form of capitalism involved killing of their customers so they can use their bodies for meat pies. Starring Milligan's real-life bud John Miranda, who helped pay the medical bills when the director was dying of AIDS and who, quite fittingly, met the auteur when they were both cast for a Gillette commercial considering he would play a man that would slit people's throats with a shaving razor, *Bloodthirsty Butchers* is a big ugly smelly celluloid turd that is ostensibly set during Victorian times but seems like a homemade play put on by mental patients in the basement of a nut ward as opposed to a period piece. Shot over a mere seven day period on a budget star Miranda described as "thirty-nine cents and a box of green stamps," this non-adaptation of *Sweeney Todd* is a putrid piece of no-budget misanthropic high-sleaze celluloid poetry that is infinitely more pernicious than Tim Burton's Johnny Depp dud *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007) and an excellent argument for gutter auteur Milligan being the most hateful, pessimistic, cynical, misanthropic, misogynistic, and brazenly bitchy filmmaker who has ever plagued this world.

Beginning with a horrendous, shaky handheld shot of the murderous antihero's crypto-butcher barber shop on Fleet Street in dreary London, *Bloodthirsty Butchers* then introduces Sir Sweeney Todd (John Miranda, who had

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small roles in big budget sci-fi flicks like *Innerspace* (1987) starring Dennis Quaid and *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986) directed by Leonard Nimoy), who is cutting the hair of a pretentious young twat of a customer who reveals that he has been in the city for “about a fortnight” and “London is not what I thought it would be.” Mr. Todd begins admiring the young man’s ruby ring, which he reveals was inherited from his great-grandfather. After listening to the young man talk in a self-righteous, bitter way as if he is some sage of cynicism, Sweeney Todd puts an extra steamy shaving towel around the young man’s face, but instead of shaving the unwitting fellow’s neck, he violently slits his throat and proceeds to steal his ring, which he does the hard way by hacking the still warm corpse’s finger off. Although unhappily married to a bitchy blonde broad named Becky (Linda Driver) who regularly brutally beats him because she is a hysterical dipsomaniac who clearly cannot handle her gin and tonic, Sir Todd is a degenerate Brit Don Juan of sorts who, when not cutting up his customers and stealing their cash and prized family heirlooms, is hanging out with one of his two mistresses.

On top of defiling a slutty and equally cunt-y actress named Anna (Susan Cassidy of Milligan’s *Seeds* (1968), *Gutter Trash* (1969), and *Torture Dungeon* (1970)) who lives off her husky and violently jealous yet meek and cuckolded theater director/owner sugar daddy who is put in his place by a daring drag queen named Corky (George Barry, whose sole other role was in the useless 1984 Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep romance *Falling in Love*), Todd is partners-in-crime with a fire-crotched post-menopausal cunt named Maggie Lovett (Jane Hilary of the British 1970s TV series *Poldark*) who is married to a kind cuckolded cripple named John (Jonathan Holt) and who, using the some “258 people” her bad beau has butchered, sells human-based “meat pies” to unsuspecting customers at her quite quaint bakery. A redhead that looks like she could be Maggie’s strikingly more stunning daughter named Johanna Jeffrey (Annabella Wood of José Ramón Larraz’s *The House That Vanished* (1974) aka *Scream... and Die!*) also works at the bakery and is deeply in love with her seafarer fiancée Jarvis Williams (Michael Cox), who is about to return from sea. Mr. Todd and Mrs. Lovett also use a deranged bitch boy named Tobias Ragg (Berwick Kaler of Milligan’s once-lost masterpiece *Nightbirds* and Michael Winterbottom’s 1996 tragic celluloid turd of a romance *Jude*), who is discernibly more unhinged than his mass murderer employers and never misses an opportunity when he sees one, like when he catches Johanna in the back room of the business and decides to sexually ravage her despite the fact that his crazy bitch girlfriend Rosie (Ann Arrow) would kill him if she knew what he did.

When gentleman Jarvis gets back from sea, he does not waste time buying an exceedingly expensive pearl necklace for his beloved Johanna, though the jeweler warns him to flash it around lest he be the victim of a deadly theft. Of course, Jarvis does not listen and before he knows it, Tobias is stalking him. On top of

that, Jarvis makes the unwitting mistake of taking a walk down Fleet Street and getting a haircut at Sweeney Todd's bloody brutal barbershop where he brags about his upcoming marriage and the expensive necklace he has bought for his fiancé. When Todd gives Jarvis asshole marriage advice like "just screw 'em" and laments on his nightmarish drunkard spouse, the young man says to the barber, "you sound like a cynic," to which he eloquently replies, "well, I'm a man who's had experience." Unquestionably, the best advice misanthropic misogynist Todd gives Jarvis is as follows: "Women can't stand happiness for more than three days at a time. It drives them wild. So you have to know when to upset things before they do. And then - you forgive them, you screw them, and you watch out for the next three days!" When Jarvis moronically shows Todd the pearl necklace he has bought his sweetheart Johanna, Todd warns him about thieves and then hilariously proceeds to attack, with Tobias soon showing up at barbershop and helping his boss to restrain the young man. Unfortunately for Todd, he makes the mistake of imprisoning Jarvis in his cellar instead of killing him right away. When Tobias' girlfriend Rosie reveals she is pregnant, he decides to literally and figuratively stab her in the back, but not before coercing her into writing a letter to her mother about going on an imaginary vacation and sardonically stating the following before driving the knife in her back, "I want you to remember this for the rest of your life."

Meanwhile, a married couple is surprised to find real breast meat in one of the meat pies they bought from the bakery, so they go to the police and bump into Johanna who is pleading with the cops to find her missing fiancée. Hoping to start a new life with him after having him liquidate her crippled husband, Mrs. Lovett convinces Todd to kill his wife Becky. Luckily, Becky arrives at the bakery a couple minutes later and attempts to blackmail Mrs. Lovett regarding the corpses in the cellar, so her hubby hacks her up. Of course, considering this is a gritty misanthropic Milligan movie, Becky is not the only one who attempts blackmail, as Tobias soon shows up and demands 5000 pounds from Mrs. Lovett and Todd or else he is going to the cops regarding the murders so that he can flee town since he just liquidated his pregnant girlfriend. While Mrs. Lovett acts like he is going to give him the money, Todd gets a weapon instead, though when he attacks Tobias, he gets a butcher knife to the face. In a twist happy ending for a Milligan film, Jarvis manages to escape before he is butchered and is reunited with Johanna, with whom he plans to move to America. In a biting conclusion, a fat woman brings the couple a pie and, forgetting that Jarvis and Johanna were almost made into mince meat by a serial killer and his queen bitch baker mistress, states regarding their plans to move to America, "Won't that be something. It's such a new country, but you be careful now, they've got Indians there...I've heard tales...there's cannibals. I heard they get your head off and eat you up."

Surely a piece of obscenely outmoded celluloid sewage, Bloodthirsty Butch-

BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS

ers is also one of the various examples as to why Andy Milligan was the greatest director of so-bad-it's-good movies who has ever lived. Indeed, only from Mr. Milligan could one expect for his most hateful and misanthropic films to also feature one of his rather rare 'happy endings.' Apparently, the film was a huge hit with the perverts, hustlers, drag queens, black prostitutes, cruising cocksuckers, and other related urban bottomfeeders that used to lurk around 42nd Street in Manhattan, New York City, because it fueled their visceral hatred and disillusionment with life, or as Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford noted in their classic text on exploitation fair, *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002), regarding the work: "A film called BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS was a frequent replay at the Lyric. A threadbare version of SWEENEY TODD that first appeared in 1970, it kicked around for years, and the Lyric audience always got a charge out of its aggressive, insistently mean tone and jack-in-the-box gore scenes. When SWEENEY TODD itself opened as a Broadway play in the late 1970s, BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS played at the Lyric one chilly Friday night, with the same title slapped on as a draw for a less affluent theater district crowd. When a sadistic Sweeney is about to slit the throat of an unlucky customer in his barber's chair, a bad splice appears and the film jumps—the gore scene had been chopped out by its distributor to get the film an official MPAA "R" rating. The Lyric didn't generally attract troublemakers, but the audience had loved this film in its uncut version and felt cheated out of its gruesome kicks. The crowd became agitated. Suddenly, a small refrigerator was hurled from the balcony, hitting the screen amid a mass of jeers, laughs, and boos." Certainly, Burton's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* nor any of the other Sweeney Todd adaptation ever received such an 'enthusiastic' response.

Andy Milligan's good friend and the star of the film, John Miranda, thought the film was more or less trash and would never be released, or as he stated in an interview featured in Jimmy McDonough's masterful Milligan bio *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Miligan* (2001) regarding the production: "I thought this was all madness; it was ridiculous, nobody's ever gonna go see this and he's not gonna be able to sell it - and here I am with my head split open, holding the axe by the handle, blood was dripping down and Andy was saying, 'Good! Good!' [...] When it played on Broadway I had to stand in line." Even the master himself, Milligan, was not too keen on the conspicuously cruel and callous piece of superlatively seedy pseudo-Victorian celluloid crud, stating that it was, "very claustrophobic, it doesn't have quality to it ... the reason you work so close in low budget is there's no sets, you can't show anything." When it comes down to it, the real 'bloodthirsty butcher' of the film is auteur Milligan himself, who more or less used the film to malevolently metaphysically 'murder' filmgoers with his perversely and perniciously pessimistic view of humanity, seemingly murderous misogyny/misanthropy (in-

deed, everyone killed in the film deserves it and their deaths serve as a sort of 'therapy' for more misanthropic viewers), and rather ridiculous portrayal of heterosexual love affairs to the point where the viewer laughs like it is a big fat stupid joke in regard to the plastic engaged couple surviving in the end. For better or worse, Milligan was a serious auteur with a distinct vision that bleeds through every grueling second of his fiercely fucked films. Indeed, when one watches *Bloodthirsty Butchers* they probably would not be startled to realize that its director was a deranged dude who celebrated his sham marriage to one of his actors by spending their honeymoon by himself cruising gay bars, laughed in the faces of actresses who cried after he slapped them in the face for giving bad performances (Milligan was a "one take" kind of guy who would include a scene in a film even if it was botched), was friends with abortion clinic bomber Dennis Malvasi, regularly brutally beat underage twinkles during sadomasochistic sod sex, and was ultimately buried in an unmarked grave after burning all the bridges in his life and succumbing to AIDS in 1991. If you ever wondered what an Ed Wood flick would be like had the auteur been a raging sadomasochist queen with seemingly serial killer-like tendencies and not a goofy cross-dressing drunk who thought he was the next Orson Welles, bask in the brazen banality of *Bloodthirsty Butchers*.

-Ty E

GURU, THE MAD MONK
GURU, THE MAD MONK

Andy Milligan* (1970)

While I'm certainly no believer, I would most certainly rather listen to some sub-liberate Baptist preacher give a sermon than suffer some obnoxiously asinine anti-Christian rant given by some arrogant Christ-hating (or, should I say Christ-killing?!) left-wing Judaic, resentful cocksucking faggot who is pissed the bible rejects boy-on-boy buggery, or deracinated white liberal weakling who has merely replaced Christ with some other egomaniacal kosher conman like Marx, Trotsky, Bob Dylan, or Jon Stewart. Indeed, nothing is weaker or more conformist and banal than Christ-bashing, so it really takes a special sort of Christ-bashing to catch my attention. While I typically prefer some Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Mencken, I recently decided to endure the antichrist polemics of gay gutter auteur and seasoned sadist Andy Milligan (*The Body Beneath*, *The Rats Are Coming!* *The Werewolves Are Here!*), and his delightfully titled feature *Guru, the Mad Monk* (1970) aka *Garu, the Mad Monk*—a work that clearly borrowed its title from Don Sharp's pseudo-biopic *Rasputin: The Mad Monk* (1966) starring Christopher Lee and Barbara Shelley—which is more or less the director's final word on Christianity and religious institutions in general. Aside from being the mad megalomaniac Milligan's most flagrantly anti-Christian work to date, the film also has the distinction of being the first film that the director shot on 35mm, which he managed to do on a mere \$11,000, as well as the only film where he not only acted as the director, cinematographer, and editor, but also producer and distributor, thus making it, at least technically speaking, the most eclectically 'auteurist' work of his career. Unfortunately, due to the fact that he switched from a small Auricon 16mm sound-on-film camera, which were usually used by news reporters and recorded both picture and sound at the same, to using a 35mm camera and a Nagra recorder and having to record picture and sound separately, this also meant that Milligan had to get rid of his erratic signature handheld 'swirl camera' style, including his intrusive in-your-face close-ups, intentionally cockeyed shot sex scenes, and obnoxious snuff-like ultra-up-close murder scenes, among other things, thus giving the film a more 'conventional' yet, somewhat paradoxically, amateurish style that makes the direction seem more like that of the typical horror hack than the man who directed the pathologically gritty and almost *cinéma-vérité*-like romance *Nightbirds* (1969). Due to his technical trouble in both production (while the director managed to shoot about twelve minutes a day on his Auricon, he only shot about six or seven with the 35mm camera) and post-production, Milligan ultimately disowned *Guru, the Mad Monk* and somewhat absurdly wrote it off as his single worst film yet, as the director's friend/biographer Jimmy McDonough wrote in his book *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001) regarding the film: "although it tends to run

out of steam toward the end of its hour-plus and features a rather, uh, Methody lead performance by Paul Lieber, GURU is a scream and Milligan's most overt attack on organized religion [...] Strip away the medieval costumes and canned music in GURU and everything can be viewed in terms of a street pickup. The exchanges are all so sleazy and desperate. Don't trust anyone, every man for himself, perhaps I'll do for you if you do for me."

Milligan's first film after getting back from his exodus over the pond where he shot five films in London, including classics like *Nightbirds* (1969), the Sweeney Todd adaptation *Bloodthirsty Butchers* (1970), *The Body Beneath* (1970), and the radically raw *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* reworking *The Man with Two Heads* (1972), and the first the filmmaker made through his own short-lived movie company Nova International Pictures (since Milligan had been incessantly cheated out of money by his kosher producer/distributor William Mishkin, he decided to produce and distribute his films himself, though he made the mistake of borrowing money from another kosher conman, "some character named Maibaum"), *Guru, the Mad Monk* is another nasty melodrama disguised as a medieval horror costume piece but what distinguishes it from the director's other work is that it attacks traditional western religious institutions while at the same time mocking the then-trendy counterculture-based 'new age' and occult movements, particularly the obsession with eastern mysticism, hence the film's initially seemingly nonsensical title. The story of a young lover that works at a corrupt church prison who agrees to procure corpses for the eponymous monk antihero in exchange for helping him to save his beloved from a very certain death via execution for the false charge of murdering a bastard child that was born stillborn, the film follows in the tradition of *Bloodthirsty Butchers* in that it depicts two seemingly respectable citizens, a corrupt male named 'Guru' and his equally amoral female accomplice 'Olga', using their power of authority to ruin an evil black market empire just so they can survive and possibly even thrive during a time of great economic hardship, while also killing people just for kicks. Shot in a striking and rather idiosyncratic Manhattan church with kaleidoscopic stained glass windows that members of the Black Panther Party were apparently hiding out at when Milligan began shooting that almost passes for the medieval Slavic church in which the viewer is supposed to believe it takes place, *Guru, the Mad Monk* is a spiritually retarded hate screen from the deep and dark abysses of Mr. Milligan's forlorn sod soul.

Opening with the witch-like hand of a woman opening a book that features the title screen and credits on the pages in a strikingly elegant fashion typical of old school Hollywood Golden Age era masterpieces, *Guru, the Mad Monk* certainly strives for a little bit of cultivated class, even if it is a piece of conspicuously kitschy and campy celluloid trash. The year is 1480 and on the fictional Slavic island of Mortavia exists a church prison that was built after the "great plague" of 1438 called the 'The Lost Souls Church of Mortavia' that is ruled by a sinisterly

GURU, THE MAD MONK

self-interested and Id-driven chaplain named Father Guru (played with a sort of effortlessly effete eloquence by Milligan superstar Neil Flanagan) who gives prisoners their last rites before they are executed. When a young dame named Nadja (one-hit wonder Judith Israel) is falsely accused of infanticide by a jealous old bitch after she gives birth to a stillborn bastard boy, she is condemned to death and sent to the island where she runs into her former lover, Carl (played by Hebrew Paul Lieber, who went on to play small but more respectable roles in kosher comedies like *King of California* (2007) starring Michael Douglas and even Larry David's hit show *Curb Your Enthusiasm*), who works there as a jailor and whose job it is to look after the prisoners and to make sure they are buried in the ostensibly holy church graveyard after they are brutally executed. Upon talking to Nadja, Carl learns that she was kidnapped by a band of ruthless rapist thieving intermensch gypsies who forced her to steal and sexually pillaged her, thus resulting in her pregnancy. Aside from getting her knocked up, the gypsies discarded her and forced her to give birth on her own, but luckily the misbegotten half-gypsy bastard was stillborn and saved her the shame of having to raise such a hated-sired beast. Hoping to save Nadja, Carl goes to his master Father Guru for help, who offers to save his beloved if he procures corpses to sell on the black market, or as the immoral religious leader states himself, "I need your help. Our church is poor...Mother Church has seen fit not to send enough money to survive on, perhaps that's why we're looked down upon by all of Eastern Europe. The lowest of all humanity is sent to us to be executed. It's not a very pretty island, but it's all that we have, therefore we must make the most of it. A stench of death makes other people turn their noses up at us and, in turn, turn their backs on us. I need extra money. It is not easily come by, but there is a need for bodies...human bodies for medical study. With your help, it would be much easier for me to supply these bodies to the medical schools." Rather reluctantly, Carl obliges and a Faustian pact is made that inspires Father Guru to somewhat sinisterly but more sardonically state, "Thank god. there are many ways to work little miracles."

To save Nadja's life, Carl must obtain a potion from the Guru's crazed cunt collaborator Olga aka 'Nosferatu' aka 'Soul of Darkness' (Jacqueline Webb) that will be used by the Father during the "last rites" and make her heart temporarily stop, thus making it seem like she has already died before she is executed and thus preventing her execution. Of course, Olga—an overweight middle-aged cunt who is equally as ugly on the exterior as the interior—is secretly a vampire and she makes Paul do a literal blood pact by pricking his skin to make sure that he carries out his promise of obtaining human blood in return for the potion. While the Guru manages to spare Nadja from execution during last rites by giving her the magic potion, which is hidden in a ring on his finger, with wine, he has ulterior motives. As he tells Carl regarding his personal philosophy, "I preach that god takes care of those that believe in him, but I have discovered that

all my years of believing haven't helped me one bit. Mother Church sends me little money to exist on and even then it doesn't arrive when it's supposed to, so I preach one thing and continue to believe another...SELF-SURVIVAL. You will do well to remember this." Indeed, Guru is closer to a LaVeyan satanist than a Christian monk. Aside from being monetary-motivated, Father Guru also has an unquenchable thirst for blood and brutally murders any desperate person that makes the fatal mistake of attempting to seek spiritual refuge and redemption in the church. Guru is also a schizophrenic Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde-like character with at least two personalities, with his 'good' side oftentimes arguing with his 'bad' side, which has more or less taken over, while he stares in the mirror. Aside from dyke vamp Olga, the Guru's sole company is a retarded hunchback with grotesque physical and facial deformities named Igor (Jack Spencer), to whom he states, "I can say anything to you, you ignorant bastard, and you just smile. Maybe god was kind to you when he made you this way. Maybe god knew what he was doing when he gave you to me to take care of. Maybe god knew how desolate and forsaken this place was when he gave you to me to talk to, to keep me from going out of my mind." A two-faced schemer, the Guru tries to entice Igor to receive a "favor or two" from Nadja, who essentially becomes a prisoner of the church while Carl is away and she instantly notices the Father's proclivity towards pernicious murder. Luckily, Igor is a kind and selfless man whose grotesque appearance and seeming mental retardation betrays his truly valiant character. Meanwhile, Carl takes a pilgrimage to a medical hospital to deliver corpses to fulfill his part of his deal with Guru, thus leaving his beloved Nadja vulnerable, Olga, and their menacing minions.

When an old queen of a church leader sporting a gigantic German Iron Cross (!?) around his neck named Bishop Kopel (played by Frank Echols, whose sole other film credit was playing a doorman in Tim Burton's classic 1994 biopic Ed Wood) shows up with a young blond queen named Father Polanski (played by Milligan regular Gerald Jacuzzo) to replace Guru at the Lost Souls Church of Mortavia due to the fact that he is committing blasphemy by harboring evil vampiress Olga, the Mad Monk begins seeing red and plots to kill the two so that he can keep his post and marvelous underground murder empire. After Bishop Kopel comments about how the island church is used so that "the rest of middle Europe is able to get rid of their...undesirables" and discusses how the Mother Church hides the fact that even those prisoners that are not sentenced to death somehow end up dying as well, he tells Father Polanski to leave so he can begin viciously berating Guru about his decadent and flamboyant fashion sense (he sports a silk blood red robe like he is some sort of demonic drag diva out of a horror flick directed by Werner Schroeter) and lets him know that he has been fired and replaced by the younger Chaplain, so the Mad Monk states, "I'm not going anywhere and neither are you," in a superlatively sassy fashion and subsequently decapitates him. Indeed, Father Guru is one mean and ruthless

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bitch and he is willing to kill anyone or anything that gets in his way, no matter how insignificant.

Meanwhile, pedo-like priest Polanski runs into Nadja, who tells him that she suspects people are being murdered by Guru and his disciples at the church. Although Polanski consoles Nadja and gives her a temporary feeling of relief after telling her that he is replacing Guru and that she will be safe soon, little does the priest realize that his comrade Bishop Kopel has already lost his head and he's next. When Polanski goes looking for the Bishop, he finds bloodsucking she-bitch Olga, who gives him the shock of his life by violently murdering him without warning, but not before showing him Kopel's bloody decapitating dome on a platter. After that, Olga has a verbal bitch fight with Nadja and then proceeds to 'glamour' the poor girl, but luckily kindhearted cripple Igor breaks the vampire's mind-control powers over the little lady and saves her life. When Guru learns of Igor's betrayal, he wastes no time ruthlessly punishing the kindly monster by crucifying him on a large door with the help of Olga. When Guru tells Olga that he plans to run away and live in complete secrecy by himself, and that he wants nothing to do with her and has no use for her anymore, the vampire's innate female hysteria and jealousy gets the best of her and she attempts murdering the Mad Monk, but he swiftly grabs her knife and kills her with it. Meanwhile, Carl finally gets back from his Jonathan Harker-esque journey (which is never actually depicted in the film) and Nadja tells him about everything that has happened. Although Igor manages to free himself and attack Guru, the Mad Monk manages to grab his knife and, to add insult to injury, murders him by repeatedly stabbing him in his deformed hunchback. While Guru attempts to escape from Carl, the lapsed jailor merely grabs him and ties the rope of the church bell around his neck, thus lynching the murderously schizophrenic monk, whose dangling corpse hilariously rings the bell. In the end, Carl and Nadja leave the church and assumedly live happily ever after in a rare Milligan flick like it's brother film *Bloodthirsty Butchers* where a rampantly heterosexual couple proves that love conquers all, even exceedingly effete killer holy men.

As Milligan would reveal in McDonough's bio regarding his innate heretical character even as a young boy, "I went to German Lutheran School. I was forced to believe. The first class was religion. We had a nasty old German guy with gout, big red nose, must've drank. Used to hit your knuckles with a ruler. He'd go on about Adam and Eve and they had two sons and I'd raise my hand and say, "If they had two sons, well, who did they marry and have kids by?" Whack! I'd always ask about the holes in the Bible. "If the ark was only a hundred-something feet long and they had all the animals in the world, how could they all get on the ark?" Whack! Hee Hee. I was always in the corner. Always asking questions." Indeed, unlike similarly themed Hebraic Hollywood celluloid swill, *Guru, The Mad Monk* does not attempt to obscure its seething hatred for organized religion and all that it stands for, while at the same time making the eponymous

'Mad Monk' seem more intriguing, complex, and 'human' than the typical filmic priest. Also, unlike Hollywood films, Milligan's virtual anti-church manifesto gives reasons for the Mad Monk's hypocritical behavior. Notably, at various points in the film, Guru and his partner Olga say hypocritical things like, "you can't trust people these days" to the point of unnerving repetition, but this is also a major theme of the film and a glaring element of the Andy Milligan Weltanschauung. Indeed, the eponymous villain/antihero is a sort of stand-in for Milligan who's personal philosophy is pretty much exactly the same as Guru as demonstrated by his remark in McDonough's bio while talking about himself and his films in the third-person: "Milligan pictures are very moral pictures, actually. Extremely moral. They show what happens if you fuck around. Even Elmer Gantry—if you get hooked on religion it becomes a drug and you become destroyed by it, too [...] The answer is to go back to the basics of religion—try to be as nice as you can be daily. That's what it comes down to. But if you get crass, nasty people, you can't turn the other cheek to them, you have to kick them in the other cheek. You have to be as low and depraved as they are. They don't understand anything else." Notably, when Milligan was in the hospital in mid-1991 dying from AIDS, McDonough visited him daily and recorded him stating the following, "Everybody has religion, everybody...I wish I could believe. Life is so full of emptiness." Like Guru, Milligan lost the faith long ago, which basically gave him the license to become an insanely intemperate sexual sadist and one of the most hateful and morally curious filmmakers who has ever lived, but unlike the sort of fat, weak, and impotent atheistic Richard Dawkins, Neil deGrasse Tyson, and Christopher Hitchens fanboys who pride themselves on senselessly attempting to make people feel as miserable and nihilistic as they are and who probably spend 24/7 trying to artificially boost their fragile egos by pointlessly and ultimately fruitlessly attacking true believer Christian evangelists on the internet while lurking in their grandmother's basement, the gutter auteur was at least man enough and rational enough to recognize the value and purpose that religion gives to certain people's lives. Of course, if Guru, The Mad Monk was made today in Hebraic Hollywood, the eponymous villain would be portrayed as a deranged dude drunk on Christ as opposed to a schizophrenic charlatan who lost his faith. Indeed, more than anything, Guru, The Mad Monk, like much of the director's work, is a semi-cryptic celluloid confession as to why Milligan became the raging sadistic queen, godless misanthropic misfit, and mad micro-budget moviemaker that he was.

-Ty E

NIGHTBIRDS
NIGHTBIRDS

Andy Milligan* (1970)

Until last week, I thought Andy Milligan was one of the most irredeemable, talentless, and inconsequential filmmakers who had ever made the unfortunate mistake of picking up a Bolex 16mm camera. The fact that he has a marginal but loyal following baffled me as most of his inept cinematic works would not even be worthy of a minor Troma direct-to-video release. Of course, that was before I saw his extremely sordid yet queerly charming x-rated anti-romantic drama *Nightbirds* (1970); a mostly unseen work that was once considered lost until Milligan biographer Jimmy McDonough revealed a 16mm print of the film that he would later sell to Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn (*Valhalla Rising*, *Drive*); who would later help with the restored release of the film (with Milligan's campy vampire flick *The Body Beneath*) on dvd/bluray by actively petitioning the British Film Institute (BFI). If it hadn't been for Refn's serious commitment as both a filmmaker and a cinephile, I am fairly certain that I would have never attempted to watch another Andy Milligan smut-piece again after my last grueling experience with his appropriately titled yet surprisingly banal work *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1972). In fact, the sole reason (aside from a recommendation by *Phantom of Pulp*) why I decided to give *Nightbirds* a chance was due to Refn's name being on the front cover of the new BFI release because, unlike unrefined cinephile Quentin Tarantino, the Danish auteur filmmaker is someone whose taste in cinema I can trust and count on. Indeed, *Nightbirds* proved to be a magnificent piece of gritty melodramatic misogyny that totally took me by surprise; so much so that I ended up watching the film no less than three times over the course of a one week period. I don't know whether or not Milligan was experimenting with a different kind of drug, amidst a breakup with his latest boy toy, or emotionally influenced by the wet and dreary London air, but with *Nightbirds* he proved that behind all the vapid degeneracy and technical incompetency was a serious and uncompromising artist with something profound yet inordinately pessimistic to express, even if it was a stereotypically gay contempt for womankind and heterosexual love. Mr. Refn stated of maniac Milligan: "He was sort of a Douglas Sirk figure." Indeed, *Nightbirds* is a quasi-Sirkian work for degenerates, delinquents, dandies, and other socially defective individuals that makes Todd Haynes' Sirk-inspired work *Far From Heaven* (2002) seem quite restrained and prosaic by comparison. *Nightbirds* follows the spontaneous and aimless rise and deadly fall of an ephemeral relationship between two lanky British blondes: Dink (Berwick Kaler) and Dee (Julie Shaw). Right from the beginning of *Nightbirds*, it is blatantly apparent that goofy momma's boy Dink is submissive to all of Dee's self-indulgent desires. Sensing and eventually exploiting his kindheartedness and gentlemanly demeanor, Dee – an opportunistic succubus who uses her beautiful body as a man-eating weapon – takes Dink's

heart hostage and drains his feeble soul. Squatting on the top-floor of a decrepit apartment building owned by a young slumlord named Ginger, the twosome spends their days and nights having mostly one-sided impassioned sex, but unlike kindly Dink, Dee has no other expectations nor desires for a relationship other than erotic debauchery where her body is treated as a precious temple of worship and her groveling man is nothing more than a glorified vibrator with arms and legs that makes whining noises.

Like the equally unseen and shameless British film *Duffer* (1971) directed by Joseph Despins and William Dumaesq, *Nightbirds* is a gloomy and gritty work depicting the peculiar perversity of the non-working urban proletariat. Neither Dee nor Dink were born in the working-class, hence their abhorrence of work and failure in regards to self-sufficiency. Unable to deal with the neurotic ramblings of his distraught widowed mommy, sweet and humble man-child Dink chooses homelessness over reasonably plush bourgeois comfort and eventually bumps into ferocious femme fatale Dee by mere chance, thus beginning their manifestly foreordained relationship. Leading desultory lives with nil goals for the foreseeable future, the curious couple of *Nightbirds* sees nihilistic sex as a way of life and working and building a family as a gross pestilence. As a socially retarded would-be-romantic at heart, Dink is willing to overlook the fact that his quasi-sociopathic girlfriend is an unsentimental ice queen of the most unrelenting and thoroughly demoralized kind. In his pathetic and ultimately self-destructive naivety, Dink is willing to do anything and everything to please his idolized girlfriend as long as it does not involve working, including grovelingly kissing her feet and performing cunnilingus on Dee's command and masochistically accepting her venomous verbal reproaching, whilst totally oblivious to the fact that Dee sees him as nothing more than a momentary fling and a semi-entertaining sexual novelty. Unable to provide for himself, let alone his girlfriend, Dink relies on Dee's crafty flirtations with other men and shoplifting to survive. Essentially, Dink and Dee – as a product of the post-WW2 generation – are an unstable couple that are totally at odds with every characteristic that was once expected of traditional and healthy western societies. Naturally, the couple would also feel at home in the sort of degenerate hipster ghetto microcosm of false values mindless sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll contained within the early cinematic works of Paul Morrissey. Unlike Morrissey's pseudo-cinéma vérité works *Flesh* (1968) and *Trash* (1970), *Nightbirds* has a fairly potent, penetrating and expressive atmosphere, even if most of the film is constrained to a single and relatively unfurnished room. Originally shot on grainy greyish 16mm film stock, *Nightbirds* – like *Duffer* – is as aesthetically dispirited and decayed as it is thematically, thus near-perfectly accentuating the lifelessness of the demoralized characters and post-industrial setting the film so candidly portrays. *Nightbirds* also features a sometimes erratic and disjointed editing style that is analogous to the despoiled psyches of its lead characters. Needless to say, *Nightbirds* is a film

NIGHTBIRDS

that will appeal more to antinatalists than hopeless romantics.

Like Andy Milligan's first film *Vapors* (1965), *Nightbirds* is considered to be one of the hysterical homo auteur filmmaker's most personal and unprecedented efforts, sort of like Fassbinder-meets-grindhouse-kitsch. As a rabid misogynist who was raised an exceedingly cold and emotionally and physically abusive alcoholic mother, *Nightbirds* features one of the most naturalistic and inexorable depictions of a vicious vixen of a woman ever captured on 16mm film. Although evidence of Dee's sadistic personality is sprinkled throughout *Nightbirds*, it is not until the remaining minutes of the film that one learns the true extent of her utter soullessness and sheer depravity. Like all great exploitation works, *Nightbirds* features a tragic conclusion that is guaranteed to fully agitate less than demanding filmgoers. Although featuring scenes of sex and nudity throughout, *Nightbirds* is about as erotically stimulating as a vintage Polaroid of Steven Spielberg in a bikini and as romantic as a winter season coathanger abortion. I can honestly say that *Nightbirds* is one of few films that has inspired me to reexamine the work of a director that I was once vehemently dismissive of, so if you're an Andy Milligan virgin, make sure that you pop your cherry with *Nightbirds*. For an auteur that boasted of never directing a film that cost over \$10,000.00, *Nightbirds* is certainly no small achievement.

-Ty E

THE BODY BENEATH

Andy Milligan* (1970)

After completing his typically wretched work *Torture Dungeon* (1969), low-camp auteur Andy Milligan (*Vapors*, *Guru*, *the Mad Monk*) would make a deal with British producer Leslie Elliot and move across the pond to England. During his exile in England, Milligan directed two of his “greatest” and most original films: *Nightbirds* (1969) and *The Body Beneath* (1970). Once presumed-lost, but now found thanks to dandy Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn (*Valhalla Rising*, *Drive*), *Nightbirds* is arguably Milligan’s most mature and artistically-merited yet strikingly stark and maliciously misogynistic work that – not unlike his debut featurette *Vapors* (1965) – takes a more audacious and uncompromising look at the frailty of the human condition, especially among sexual degenerates; a subject the debauched director knew all too well. Being a sadomasochistic sodomite with a terribly torrid and troubled personal life, Milligan ultimately opted for directing escapist exploitation flicks and bloody bad period pieces, but with *The Body Beneath*, the technically-incompetent visionary created a more serious and – dare I say – more classy film in the Grand Guignol-esque cinematically fantastic style he is infamous for. “Filmed in the graveyards of England” in “bone-chilling color” and featuring “sexually rampant ghouls, depraved souls...and blood-red roses,” *The Body Beneath* is a modern vampire flick with traditional folklore elements about an ancient family of inbred bloodsuckers that is looking for some new, mortal inter-family blood, so as to rejuvenate their current degenerating state. Led by a charismatic yet physically unremarkable “Reverend” who likes to quote Oscar Wilde (although forgetting his name due to his advanced undead age) and protected by a fearsome threesome of green-faced barbarian Barbarella-like lady vamps, the frightfully fabulous Ford family takes residence in the Carfax Abbey; a Gothic monastery with an ancient graveyard that is haunted by the bloodsucking ghouls. Reasonably paced and surprisingly coherent in structure for an Andy Milligan monster movie, *The Body Beneath* is a welcome relief from the emotionally and aesthetically sterile Hammer horror films that were flooding the British film market at that time.

Reverend Alexander Algernon Ford (Gavin Reed) is quite the charming blood-sucker in a religious shepherd’s clothing, as he has a wonderful way with words as displayed early on in *The Body Beneath* when he declares in the most grand pomposity that, “I know everything dear boy!” and “it isn’t easy being right all the time” and, indeed, it would seem that he does, especially when it comes to his family’s extensive genealogical records. Looking to recruit some fresh mortal for the immortal vampiric Ford family that goes back no less than 21 centuries, the good Reverend aggressively recruits long-distance mortal relatives against their will and is especially interested in female Fords as he will use them – not unlike the National Socialist Schutzstaffel Lebensborn breeding program – to

THE BODY BENEATH

sire a rejuvenated generation of immaculate god-men that the Rev fervidly describes as “godlike in appearance.” To help him with the less glamorous work associated with kidnapping, torture, and murder, the Reverend uses a slavish, shy, and seemingly half-retarded hunchback named Spool (played by Berwick Kaler of Milligan’s *Nightbirds*). Spool may be a ridiculously repulsive monster-man that does daftly and dirty deeds for vampires, but that does not stop him from being hopeless romantic that eventually falls prey to the temptations of a beauty mortal girl that the Reverend has held captive. Featuring less than erotic gratuitous sex scenes, violent yet exceedingly schlockish death scenes, and mind-numbingly maladroit melodrama, *The Body Beneath* is a film of unintentionally delightful distinction. Undoubtedly, the greatest part of the film is when the entire Ford family congregates into a giant crypt and engages in a Dionysian orgiastic feast of blood and debate as to whether they should move to America. Bearing a suitably campy resemblance to the faggy and fairy varmint of Jack Smith’s revolutionary and sexually-ambiguous featurette *Flaming Creatures* (1963), except filmed in a quasi-psychedelic and notably atmospheric color that further accentuates Milligan’s costume design talents, *The Body Beneath* – although inferior to the auteur’s other British trash masterpiece *Nightbirds* – concludes in a sinisterly climatic fashion.

Sneeringly attacking his nation of origin, Milligan decided to present the land of the free as a virtual hellhole inhabited by the “scum of the earth”; full of socially and physically defective pimps, prostitutes, vagrants, and medieval religious fanatics, but I guess that is what one would expect from the miserable, misanthropic auteur who gave us *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1972). In the rather risible realm of *The Body Beneath*, ghastly bloodsucking ghouls are the most valiant of heroes and all things pure and untainted are determinedly defiled. That being said, I wouldn’t be surprised if the persnickety Reverend Ford was an alter-ego of Andy Milligan and the rest of the vamps being symbolic of his off-Broadway performers. As Milligan fanatic Nicolas Winding Refn once stated regarding the schlockmeister filmmaker’s horror works: “They have these strange scenes of violence, poorly done but so charming and campy, and all conveyed with such sincerity.” Indeed, one of the main appeals of Milligan’s marginal cinematic works, especially *Vapors*, *Nightbirds*, and *The Body Beneath*, is that – unlike the similarly incompetently directed gore flicks of Herschell Gordon Lewis (*Blood Feast*, *Color Me Blood Red*) – they have a distinct and blatant wholehearted essence behind their direction, hence the gutter-auteur’s posthumous popularity in the underground. With *The Body Beneath*, Milligan was indubitably at his most preeminent, which might not mean much in context with his mostly wholly worthless filmography, but as contemporary alpha-auteur Nicolas Winding Refn sentimentally declared regarding the ghastly filmmaker: “Few filmmakers can boast of having a recognisable style, but when you see a Milligan movie, you are in no doubt whose film it is.”

-Ty E

TORTURE DUNGEON
TORTURE DUNGEON

Andy Milligan* (1970)

Lately, due to my increasingly disturbing and admittedly unhealthy obsession with the superlatively shitty films of gay American gutter auteur and well-seasoned misanthropic sadomasochistic sodomite Andy Milligan (*The Rats Are Coming!*, *The Werewolves Are Here!*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*), I feel like a junky who has hit rock bottom and am willing to trudge to the deepest and darkest of untermenschen abysses to get my filmic fix and I say that as someone who originally wrote the director off as the obscenely overrated darling of autistic schlock cinema fanboys like Nicolas Winding Refn and jaded exploitation fans who wallow in celluloid excrement. While I have no doubt that most of his fans are indeed autistic fanboys and people that like to play with filmic feces, I now can fully understand the appeal of Milligan's undeniably singular oeuvre, so I have made it my mission to see every single one of his films as soon as possible as if the *Dracula* (1971) director is as important an auteur as Pasolini and Fassbinder, both of whom he had more in common with aside from their shared sexual vice(s). At the recommendation of the director's biographer and one-time friend, Jimmy McDonough, who stated in his biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001) regarding the work that it is "Milligan at his most unhinged, and it may be my favorite Andy picture of all time," I decided to watch *Torture Dungeon* (1970) aka *Dungeon of Death*. A medieval costume horror piece about literally cutthroat royals and ostensibly set in olde England yet actually starring proletarian American guidos and shot on the pathetic (non)beaches of Staten Island, the thrift store micro-epic is notable for, among other things, its mesmerizing melodramatic misanthropy, anti-aristocratic inanity, prole-pleasing perversity, and loony low-camp cruelty. An immaculately excreted Bolex-shot 16mm celluloid turd with a mere budget of \$15,000 (apparently, the budget for a typical Milligan production) that manages to elevate 'bad taste' to an artform, *Torture Dungeon* may seem like it was directed by a dyslexic gay dago hairdresser from New Jersey, but it is really the product of an eccentric ex-dressmaker who directed superlatively shitty period piece horror flicks just so that he would have an excuse to design lavish, if not rather kitschy, homemade costumes. The decidedly debasing tale of a demented bastard duke and literal son-of-a-whore of the self-described "trisexual" yet sterile sort who has his flagrantly faggy flower-picking half-brother decapitated and then plots to have his rather retarded bug-and-booger-eating other half-brother get married to a local big bosomed peasant babe with a loving boyfriend so that he can spawn an heir so that the degenerating plague-ridden family Kingdom can once again thrive, *Torture Dungeon* is a classic "evil family" Milligan flick where the auteur demonstrates why being spawned and raised by a morbidly obese psychopathic alcoholic bitch of the emotionally and physically

(and some believe sexually) abusive sort was probably the best preparation he could have for becoming one of the most, if not the most, overtly misanthropic and misogynistic filmmaker who has ever lived.

While picking daisies like a seasoned fairy and queenishly arguing with one of his servants over whether or not it is going to rain, faggy monarch Lord Harkin is decapitated by a mysterious being with a large axe. At Harkin's carnivalesque funeral procession, one of the pallbearers, the deceased's retarded blond beast brother Duke Albert of Aberthy (Milligan superstar Hal Borske, who even appeared in the director's 1965 cinematic debut *Vapors*)—a forsaken fellow that seems to have a lot in common with real-life 17th-century retarded cripple King Charles II of Spain—picks his nose and eats his boogers while carrying his big brother's royal fruit-adorned casket. Albert also has a thing for gorging on live bugs when he is not spending his time picking and devouring his boogers in a dainty fashion. While sub-half-wit Albert has no clue who killed his brother Lord Harkin, his sister Lady Jane (Patricia Dillon of Milligan's *Seeds* (1968) and *Gutter Trash* (1969)) is all too aware and even accuses the culprit, her evil libertine bastard half-brother Duke Norman of Norwich (Milligan regular Gerald Jacuzzi, who penned a couple of the gutter auteur's late-1960s efforts, including *The Degenerates*, *The Filthy Five*, and *Tricks of the Trade*)—a deranged and tastelessly charming sadomasochist that is more or less a stand-in for director Milligan—who resents his half-siblings due to the fact that he is a sexually sterile son-of-a-whore who is last in line to become the ruler of the family Kingdom due to the fact that his regrettable birth was unsanctioned. Naturally, the Duke's ultimate goal is to wipe out every single one of his half-siblings so he can be king. To male-nympho Norman's credit, the Kingdom is in drastic decline as a result of the plague, which has impoverished the monarchy and wiped out a good percentage of the peasantry. As someone that was in love with and just secretly impregnated by her belated brother Harkin, Lady Jane absolutely loathes Norman and plots with her sister Lady Agatha (Donna Whitfield) to take down their bastard of a bastard brother. Of course, as someone that is pregnant with the unborn inbred spawn of her dead brother, 'good gal' Lady Jane is not all that different from her deranged half-bro, at least when it comes to carnal knowledge. Meanwhile, Duke Norman plots with some similarly evil aristocrats to have his brother Alfred, who will "rule in name only" since he is a bug-and-booger-eating retard, marry a local girl that is "fertile, healthy, beautiful and—above all—untouched by the plague" because he is unfortunately the "last chance for the Kingdom's survival" and "if he does not conceive a male heir all is lost." Ultimately, the Duke and his co-conspirators decide on a big bosomed brunette peasant babe named Heather MacGregor (played by Milligan regular Susan Cassidy, who was one of the few women the director did not hate), who has no clue what sort of evil and blueblooded debauchery that she is in store for.

TORTURE DUNGEON

Although a rather poor mate for a royal as a somewhat chubby and soft Scottish girl that was adopted (an elderly handmaiden warns her that “I won’t tell if you don’t” regarding her unfortunate ancestry), Heather is forced to wed mental invalid Albert after her adopted father is paid 30 pieces of gold by the Kingdom. Rather unfortunately, on top of having a hot yet mentally feeble fuckbuddy named Marvin (George Box), Heather already has a boy toy named William (Dan Lyra), so Duke Norman has him liquidated by two of his muscular cloaked goons, who first crucify him and then drive a pitchfork into the loverboy’s throat in a classically poorly directed Milligan-esque death scene. Although Heather initially finds the Duke to be a kind and hospitable fellow, she is soon startled to learn from his two half-sisters, Lady Jane and Lady Agatha, that she should, “always be wary of him...never trust him” and “always think the worst and you’ll survive.” Indeed, as he declares to his royal whore and virtual slave Rosemary (Patricia Garvey) after telling her that, “I could so easily love you but I won’t let myself. See, that’s where you and I differ, my dear. I have a very strong mind...a very strong will power and I can turn my love into hatred or the other way around. All my life I have never been able to love. I take that back, I do love one thing: power, power...,” Duke Norman is a deviant sex addict, or as he states himself, “I live for pleasure...only second to power, of course. And I’ll try anything. I’m not a homosexual...I’m not a heterosexual...I’m not asexual...I’m trisexual. Yes, that’s it...I’ll try anything once.” Among other things, the Duke forces his (un)beloved Rosemary to engage in a ménage à trios with him and his best friend/groveling servant ‘Ivan the Hunchback’ (Richard Mason) in what he describes as “one big happy family” and also has a dark and damp S&M-themed torture chamber where he derives sexual gratification from torturing and killing his enemies and even his servants.

When Heather finally marries spastic retard Albert, the mentally disabled monarch has to be physically forced to kiss the bride at the wedding because he is too retarded to figure out how to do it on his own. During the honeymoon night, Albert refuses to screw his bride because he would much rather eat greasy chicken and drink wine, so the Duke shows up and tells Heather “I rely on you, my dear, to direct the consummation” because “my unfortunate half-brother was pushed or fell on his head at the age of 6 under mysterious circumstances,” thus hinting that he was the one who turned his brother into a babbling booger-fetisizing buffoon. While the two manage to consummate under the Duke’s observation, Albert is killed the next morning by a muscle-bound cloaked goon who hammers a stake into his heart. Realizing they will be next after discovering the bloody corpse of their mentally invalid brother, Lady Jane and Lady Agatha plot to make their getaway before they two are sacrificed to the Duke’s cruel conspiracy, but the latter is soon killed after she is caught by her homicidal half-homo half-brother. Meanwhile, Lady Jane seeks sanctuary with Heather’s father Mr. MacGregor and a one-eyed old hag Margaret (Milli-

gan regular Maggie Rogers of the lost unfinished 1967 arthouse flick *Compass Rose*), who wants to seek revenge against the Duke after discovering his torture dungeon, declaring of the bastard blueblood, “The Duke? Who else but treachery himself, the son-of-a bitch. His mother was Satan, his father was King...a skunk should smell as sweet.” In the end, Mr. MacGregor and hag Margaret save Heather from the whip-wielding Duke, who perishes in a rather pathetic fashion. In a twist ending, it is revealed that mono-eye hag Margaret is not only Heather’s biological mother, but also the original queen who was disposed of, thus making her daughter the rightful queen and true heir to the Kingdom. Unfortunately, Margaret perishes from wounds she received from her “half-son” the Duke (how a person can be someone’s half-son is anyone’s guess, but these are Margaret’s words, not mine) only seconds after telling her story.

As Milligan biographer Jimmy McDonough hilariously noted regarding the production of *Torture Dungeon*, “Andy rounded out the cast with a bunch of Staten Island nonactors possessing the worst (and most nonmedieval) accents ever, particularly a “dese, dem, and dose” duo playing the medieval potentates, Andy inexplicably dubbed Peter the Ear and Peter the Nose (and eye-patched Neil Flanagan was Peter the Eye). The locals were swept away by the promise of stardom—until they actually saw the film. “They were a bunch of lower-class Italians who owned hardware stores,” recalled Matt Baylor. “They wanted to strangle Andy. They were gonna lynch him, I swear to God. He stayed away from Staten Island for about a month.”” Indeed, it is certainly an amazing prospect to think about a bunch of vulgarly narcissistic proletarian goombahs being bossed around by a raging blond queen like Mr. Milligan. Somewhat curiously, Milligan’s film resembles a poor man’s version of Sapphic kraut-kickass Ulrike Ottinger’s epic avant-garde freakophile masterpiece *Freak Orlando* (1981) in terms of its campy and colorful neo-medieval costumes and seemingly pathological sadomasochistic imagery. Certainly, out of all the films in Milligan’s oeuvre, *Torture Dungeon* comes the closest to featuring its own waywardly distinct cinematic universe, as a work that is like a campy no-budget 1970s version of HBO’s hit show *Game of Thrones* directed by and starring mental patients that have been institutionalized for horribly heinous sex crimes. Notably, the film was also an underground hit of sorts, which was largely the result of the advertising campaign and marketing techniques of Hebraic producer/distributor William Mishkin, or as Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford revealed in their book *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002): “Mishkin packaged *TORTURE DUNGEON* with such a provocative (if misleading) S&M-slanted campaign that it kept popping up on 42nd Street for a decade after its initial release.” Milligan also seemed to be particularly proud of the film as he had a character mention it in his gritty 1973 masterpiece *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (an over-the-hill tranny hooker played by Milligan superstar Neil Flanagan remarks, “Let’s go see *Torture Dungeon* play-

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ing on a double bill with Bloodthirsty Butchers down at The Waverly”) and once proudly stated regarding the unconventional shooting of the work: “TORTURE DUNGEON—Staten Island looks like the coast of England, doesn’t it? That’s under Mt. Loretta in Tottenville, the southernmost point in Staten Island. We didn’t look like we were making a film. That’s the secret of doing nonunion. I never advertise anything..”

Featuring various highly quotable Milligan aphorisms like, “Always think the worst and you will survive” and “I see beauty only in decadence, for only decadence is the mother of invention,” the film is a virtual celluloid treasure-trove for Milliganphiles and/or proud misanthropes. While I think Russ Meyer was a crypto-feminist pig who was spiritually cuckolded by big bosomed broads and Herschel Gordon Lewis (who once proudly stated, “I see filmmaking as a business, and I pity anyone who regards it as an art form”) and Doris Dishman were Semitic swindlers who used exploitation cinema as a means to make a quick easy buck and to further a Judaic anti-WASP agenda (after all, Hersch was the man that directed overtly hick-hating exploitation trash like *Two Thousand Maniacs!* (1964) and *The Gore Gore Girls* (1972) and even made the dubious claim in the 2010 documentary *Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Godfather of Gore* that he personally beat up some supposed antisemites), I consider Andy Milligan a real auteur and outsider artist as his patently perverse personality is just as much a part of his films as the glaringly amateurish special effects, gratingly bad acting, and shaky handheld cinematography and probably no other work is covered with the director’s sticky auteur fingerprints than *Torture Dungeon*, which is the virtual *Gone with the Wind* (1939) of late-1960s/early-1970s American exploitation trash. Indeed, only Milligan would have directed a campy medieval melodrama about a murderously resentful “trisexual” bastard aristocrat who plots to murder his retarded brother and all his other half-siblings and then attempt to disguise the film as a sleazy sexploitation-horror hybrid. If you thought the Teutonic blueblood von Essenbeck family of Luchino Visconti’s *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei* were nasty, debauched, incestuous, and insanely treacherous, you have yet to experience the fucked family affair contained in Milligan’s contagious gutter-grade celluloid *Götterdämmerung*.

-Ty E

THE MAN WITH TWO HEADS

Andy Milligan* (1972)

If his bargain bin Sweeney Todd adaptation *Bloodthirsty Butchers* is his most overtly hateful and misanthropic film, *The Man with Two Heads* (1972) aka *The Man with Two Faces* aka *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Blood*—an aberrant adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic Victorian era Gothic novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) that begins with a dapperly dressed British gent brutally mutilating and murdering a blonde prostitute in a somewhat Jack the Ripper-esque fashion—is gay American gutter auteur Andy Milligan’s most violently misogynistic, perversely personal, and sexually incriminating work. Slightly butchered in post-production to receive a PG-rating and titled *The Man with Two Heads* by Hebraic producer/distributor William Mishkin to cash in on the popularity of Lee Frost’s race-baiting blaxploitation-horror-sci-fi-comedy hybrid celluloid turd *The Thing with Two Heads* (1972) even though the work does not feature a dude with two noggins, the film may have been defiled for monetary reasons yet it is still pure and unadulterated Milligan and certainly one of the filmmaker’s ‘classics.’ One of the director’s five films, which also include *Nightbirds* (1969), *The Body Beneath* (1970), *Bloodthirsty Butchers* (1970), and *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* (1972), that he created when he relocated to London, England to get away from his regular producer Mishkin to work with Anglo-Semite Leslie Elliot at Cinemedia, only to have the relationship fall apart in the middle of the second film (apparently, Elliot’s father accused Milligan of making an “anti-Semitic attack” after the auteur remarked, “I know your type from New York City and I’ve never been fazed by your type”) and forcing the filmmaker to rekindle his Faustian pact with the NYC smut-peddler, *The Man with Two Heads* is certainly a classic among the auteur’s oeuvre, as well as one of the sadomasochistic creator’s own personal favorites among his own work. In his excellent biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), Jimmy McDonough probably paid the film its best compliment when he wrote about it and the influence of its director, ““Insanity represents a form of hope in Douglas Sirk’s works,” wrote Fassbinder. The same seems true for Milligan. “Andy had a thing about the mentally insane,” said SEEDS producer Allen Bazzini. “He used to frighten me with that. When he’d talk about it, his eyes lit up.”” After watching a print of the film that looks like it stewed in a concentration camp porta-potty for a couple decades before being violently defecated onto the world, I can happily report that *The Man with Two Heads* is a gritty and visceral piece of venomous celluloid hate in an ostensibly elegant pseudo-Victorian package that completely lacks the camp and goofy queer elements that are typical of Milligan’s other films. The sordid story of an atheistic egomaniac who attempts to play god and sires a murderously sadistic misogynistic monster in his own body

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that takes over without warning and forces the antihero to malevolently torture and kill unsuspecting streetwalkers and winos, the work ultimately reflects Milligan's own very personal war against god, society, and conventional sexuality.

Opening with a dapper yet deranged and deadly dandy-like gentleman (Jim Wilson of 1977 family-horror turd *Return to Boggy Creek* and *Jaws 2* (1978)) being asked by a blonde hooker, "do you happen to know what time it is?" and then proceeding to take a walk with her back to her apartment where he begins violently manhandling her on the way and then sadistically slaughters her after she complains, "Hold on, I don't go in for this rough stuff," *The Man with Two Heads* immediately establishes a tone of unnervingly brutal, if not innately ineptly directed, contempt for the more monetary motivated-members of the fairer sex, who Mr. Milligan seems to have nil sympathy for. The elegantly dressed whore-killer is soon caught and decides to hang himself in his jail cell, but his woman-hating homicidal spirit is resurrected in another person's body after an enterprising young scientist named Dr. William Jekyll (Denis DeMarne) decides out of desperation to inject the evil part of the man's brain into his own body so that he can test his revolutionary evil-eradicating serum, thus ultimately having terrible consequences for the already debased and downtrodden streetwalkers of 1835 London. After he reveals in a pompous rant he makes while talking with a certain Inspector Wolfe (Laurence Davies) while procuring the corpse of the whore-killer for his experiments, Dr. Jekyll is a sort of nihilist who hates spirituality, or as he himself states, "I do not believe in a soul. I believe in facts, I believe what I can see and touch, what is real. This thing 'soul' as you call it, is a figment of man's imagination. Something brought on by himself to help his everyday existence. Man has invented this soul to help him get out of today's difficulties...to transport him to a hereafter...a hereafter that doesn't exist [...] I'm a man of medicine. I have no time for such things as souls and religions. I believe in science and medicine and only in that." In fact, Jekyll is so tirelessly dedicated to sterile science that he incessantly misses meetings with his beautiful and rather dainty (especially for a Milligan film!) fiancée Mary Ann Marsden (Gay Feld) and her family. Judging by his glacial manner of speaking with his beloved, one might suspect that Dr. Jekyll is borderline impotent or, at the very least, has very little, if any, sex drive. Indeed, Dr. Jekyll has made an unofficial Faustian pact with science and he will ultimately pay for it with his life, but not before he has a bit of good clean sadomasochistic libertine fun of the de Sadean sort after developing a second, more sinister personality after he becomes a victim of his own dubious scientific research.

Dr. Jekyll hates his beloved Mary Ann's scientist father and men like him, or as he states to his fiancée, "It's men like your father in our profession that hold back men like your brother and me. Every time we come up with something new, your father and some of his old cronies down at the medical league refuse to even listen to us [...] Therefore, we have to seek financing by becoming

either second rate doctors to anyone at any price—giving up our experiments—or taking on private students as I've been forced to do." Indeed, Dr. Jekyll is a professor with six students, though one of them, a prissy queen named John Murphy (Milligan superstar Gerald Jacuzzi), decides to quit when his professor's experiments regarding eradicating evil become more dubious, warning his pedantic teacher, "I think it's my duty to warn you...you're playing with things that are no concern of yours. They belong to one Supreme Being, God, and you have no right to tamper with nature as he gave it. God will punish you, you'll see. I'm warning you." Of course, god (or tragic happenstance) does punish the good doctor. Indeed, when Dr. Jekyll believes he has perfected a serum that can isolate good and evil in man's brain, he becomes so eager to test it that he cannot wait for the latest shipment of lab rats and other animals, which are on backorder, so he absurdly opts to try it on himself, but trouble arises when his dimwitted assistant Jack Smithers (genuinely talented Nightbirds star Berwick Kaler, who is probably the only Milligan star to go on to real mainstream success) absent-mindedly drops the formula and then subsequently ruins the data for it after spilling chemicals on it, thus forcing the scientist to develop the evil alter-ego Mr. Danny Blood, who is a born master of a macabre form of misogyny that he credits as being heavily influenced by the Marquis de Sade.

After transforming into his evil alter-ego, Dr. Jekyll-as-Mr. Blood strolls down to a bawdy bordello and immediately begins suavely hitting on the lead performer, April Connors (Julia Stratton), who he tells that he will "teach" some of the things he learned from his spiritual mentor de Sade. When April's boorish drunken boyfriend shows up at the bordello and causes trouble with the demented doc, Blood brutally beats the man to death with his cane and then sarcastically states in a sinisterly sardonic fashion, "I knew you'd see it my way, old man." From there, Blood takes April back to a dilapidated apartment and tells her to wash off her makeup because he thinks she looks like a "cheap little tramp." Of course, Blood does not stop his verbal venom there, as he tells April she is not only "scum" but also "the defecation of the slums of London." Blood also makes April his own personal "dog" and forces her sit at his feet and bark. When Dr. Jekyll unexpectedly transforms into Blood during one of his lectures, he also unleashes his rabid misogyny on his sole female student, Victoria Crenshaw (Jennifer Summerfield), declaring to her in front of the entire class, "You're privileged...to be a female medical student in this day and age. After all, we all know you should be at home looking after snot-nosed little brats [...] What makes you think you should be a doctor...standing up there as if you knew what you were talking about?! All women should be in bed...to be used." Meanwhile, assistant Smithers reveals to the brain-damaged doc's fiancée Mary Ann about Dr. Jekyll's new sinisterly schizophrenic mentality. When Mary Ann confronts Dr. Jekyll about this, the doctor becomes enraged and inevitably transforms into Mr. Blood and pays Smithers a visit that results in the absent-minded assis-

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tant being burned and butchered to death. Dr. Jekyll also begins frequenting a curiously quaint S&M pleasuredome, the 'House of Degradation' (as it was advertised on the poster released for the film), where he engages in smoke-fueled sadomasochistic orgies in a semi-psychedelic scene that certainly seems to reflect Milligan's 'unconventional' sexual proclivities as is especially demonstrated by the fact that virtually all of the torture victims are men. Of course, after hacking off his whore April's head with a butcher knife and sexually assaulting his medical student Victoria, Jekyll finds himself a marked man. When Dr. Jekyll turns into Blood and attempts to ravage his fiancée Mary Ann, a lynch mob shoots him dead.

As biographer Jimmy McDonough wrote regarding the significance of the scene in *The Man with Two Heads* where Mr. Blood first goes out for a night on the town and meets his future slave April: "On first kissing her at the club, he bites her lip. "Call me Daddy," he then tells her (which, as Joe Davis reported, was the nickname Andy demanded from his own street conquests." Apparently, when McDonough confronted Milligan about the "Call me Daddy" scene, the auteur "got all worked up" and stated, "Stop it, babe, you're givin' me a hard-on," thus signifying the unsavory 'subtextual' nature of the film. Indeed, there is no question that Mr. Milligan was a sort of Mr. Blood in the bedroom (or alley or tearoom) and as a man that apparently could be quite sweet and kind who suffered heavy physical and emotional abuse virtually since birth from his half-crazed and morbidly obese odious ogre of a mother, it seems that the auteur also had developed a second personality as a result of his youthful struggles, hence why *The Man with Two Heads* is arguably the filmmaker's most personal work. Apparently, the film used to baffle audience members when it was screened at the Lyric Theatre on 42 Street in NYC, or as Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford wrote in their book *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002) regarding what they witnessed firsthand: "Dr. Jekyll is a bushy-haired misogynist who constantly yells at this female students. One Lyric audience member yelled back, "Go fuck yourself!" [...] Though the film is mostly asleep, Andy tosses in a psychedelic S&M orgy scene out of nowhere, which elicited cries of "What the hell?!" and gales of laughter from the audience." Indeed, if there is any filmmaker and film that would have made for a great case study for Austro-Teutonic psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing's classic forensic reference book *Psychopathia Sexualis: Sexual Psychopathy: A Clinical-Forensic Study* (1886), it is most certainly Milligan and *The Man with Two Heads*, with the exquisitely eccentric, if not oftentimes equally banal, misbegotten movie being a virtual celluloid pathology as dreamed up from the deepest and darkest desires of the debauched director. Like all of Milligan's greatest works, his merrily misanthropic Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde mutation is a perversely potent celluloid punch of culturally pessimistic perniciousness and savage playfulness that reminds one why psychopaths, debauchees, retards, whores,

and intemperate megalomaniacs make for more interesting characters than normal folk. After all, a patent piece of cinematic shit like *The Man with Two Heads* would not be so crudely enthralling were it not directed by a vicious sado-masochistic sodomite who derived pleasure from beating underage boys and was a bigger bitch than an overweight chain-smoking negro wench with borderline personality disorder and a nasty crack addiction.

-Ty E

THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE!
THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE!

Andy Milligan* (1972)

Certainly, you cannot fuck with a film with a title like *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* (1972), or so I thought while attempting to watch every single one of the surviving films of sadomasochistic queer gutter auteur Andy Milligan (*The Ghastly Ones*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*). Easily the worst of the films that the fucked filmmaker made while taking a temporary sabbatical over the pond in London (the others being *Nightbirds*, *The Body Beneath*, *Bloodthirsty Butchers*, *The Man With Two Heads*), the film is, somewhat absurdly, a lycanthropic anti-family melodrama of the ostensibly period piece oriented sort that was originally titled *The Curse of the Full Moon* and was shot in 1969, but the producer/distributor thought the film was too banal for even Milligan standards and later had the auteur shoot a series of pointless scenes in the director's then-hometown of Staten Island involving two rats that were actually named 'Willard' and 'Ben' to capitalize off the success of *Willard* (1971) and *Ben* (1972) and was finally released in 1972. Moneyman Mishkin did the same thing with Milligan's superior English era work *The Man With Two Heads* (1972), which, despite being a reworking of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and being originally fittingly named *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Blood*, was renamed to cash in on the unwarranted popularity of Lee Frost's race-baiting blaxploitation-horror-sci-fi-comedy hybrid celluloid turd *The Thing with Two Heads* (1972) and released a couple years after it was actually completed. Admittedly, aside from wanting to complete my viewing of the director's entire oeuvre, my main interest in seeing *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* is due to the fact that it features auteur Milligan in a cameo role as a ghetto-dwelling arms dealer, which, at least in my less than humble opinion, is worth the price of admission alone, even if it is one of the filmmaker's more second rate fucked filmic family affairs. Unquestionably, the world's greatest (and probably only) werewolf melodrama and, for better or worse, easily more 'idiosyncratic' than the other American-directed London-set lycanthropic film *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), the flick will certainly satisfy Milligan maniacs, but probably no one else, not even spastic Troma fanboys. The film depicts in slow and painfully hetero-hating detail the suffering that an ancient English family suffers as a result of a longstanding curse of both the literal and figurative sort. Featuring a decidedly degenerating werewolf family led by a morbidly and elderly half-dead patriarch who is attempting to assemble a formula to cure the family curse, as well as an eclectic collection of siblings, including a belligerent beast-man who is fed live chickens and lives in a cage with said chickens, as well as a savagely sadistic sister who gets off to slaughtering both rats and peasants, *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* is a vaguely fleetingly charming and charismatic piece of celluloid crap directed by the horror genre's most

exquisitely misanthropic and cynical anti-gentleman.

The Mooneys are a very ancient aristocratic family from “Northern Europe” who have been cursed ever since one of the patriarchs was bitten by a wild beast and developed a degenerative disease that he would pass on to every newborn family member. The family used to be much larger, but now only one line exists. It is the early 1900s and the current patriarch of the surviving family is Pa Mooney (Douglas Phair) and due to a formula he created that he is regularly injected with by his eldest daughter Phoebe (British TV actress Joan Ogden of James Mitchell’s thriller series *Callan* (1967-1972)), he is 180-years-old, though he seems like he will croak at any moment. The eldest son of the family, Mortimer (Noel Collins), who seems like the humorous twin brother of Mr. Bean, is responsible for maintaining the family finances. Unquestionably, the most demented of the Mooney siblings is middle sister Monica (played by Milligan regular Hope Stansbury, who was responsible for penning the director’s debut 1965 queer short *Vapors*), who is a sadist that wallows in morbidly mutilating and murdering her pet rats and torturing her younger brother Malcolm (Berwick Kaler of Milligan’s 1969 arthouse masterpiece *Nightbirds*), who is the youngest and most animal-like member of the family. Indeed, Malcolm is so majorly messed up that his family members keep him locked up in a cage and feed him live chickens. When the youngest daughter Diana (Jackie Skarvellis of Milligan’s *The Body Beneath* and Michael Sarne’s *The Punk* and *The Princess* (1993) aka *The Punk*) returns home from medical school in Scotland with a husband Gerald (Ian Innes), she surprises the entire family, not least of all Pa Mooney, who sent his daughter away so that she could learn enough to help him with his scientific research and certainly not so she could bring home an outsider. Since Gerald is a starving artist of sorts, Diana thought it would be a good idea that she and her hubby move in with Pa so that they will be financially supported. Of course, little does Gerald realize that his wife’s family is comprised of a bunch of loony lycanthropes that are just as liable to rip out the throats of each other as they are that of strangers and enemies. Indeed, as ruthless, degenerate blueblood rabble, the Mooneys are more or less incestuous cannibals who eat and fuck one another (indeed, as the eldest sister Phoebe reveals towards the end of the film, she and Pa used to practice father-daughter coitus).

Monica, a deranged bitch with a murderously sadistic streak, introduces herself by humorously stating, “Hello, I’m Monica, the middle sister...the bitch. The one they always talk about behind her back,” and attempts to warn Gerald about his wife by telling him that his wife/her sister Diana is a self-centered bitch who only cares about herself. She also informs him that the Mooney family has a curse that he “better find out about now.” Instead of taking heed of Monica’s advice, Gerald says to his wife, “She has a few problems, doesn’t she?!” and then proceeds to ask her about her retarded brother Malcolm, who she describes as follows, “He’s a year older than me and he’s not quite normal. He’s

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almost animal-like. We don't know how it happened...the genes got mixed up in conception and he never developed into a normal baby. When he was a youngster, we had to keep him locked up in a room. He has the instincts of an animal. Oh, he's not dangerous or anything like that, but to this day we keep him locked up in a room." Diana also reveals that Monica hates her because they have different mothers and that her mother was mysteriously poisoned after she was born. Vowing to no longer keep secrets from one another, Gerald also describes his own rather unsavory family background, stating, "My father deserted my mother when I was five. Two years later, he was arrested for raping and murdering a six year-old girl!" for which he was subsequently hanged where "he hung there for two weeks. His body became so hideous that they had to cut it down for health reasons. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the yard of an insane asylum. Two weeks later my mother died of grief and shame." After his mother died, Gerald was shipped to an orphanage in Scotland where he was regularly stripped naked and beaten by sexually sadistic nuns. Instead of being turned off and disturbed by her husband's story, Diana declares, "my god, I love you so much" and embraces Gerald, who has no idea that his wife is a two-faced wench that has pernicious plans for him and her family.

Eventually, Pa Mooney gets around to berating his daughter Diana, telling her that she is "playing with fire" due to her marriage and proclaiming, "...the Mooney's are a selfish lot...but we need that selfishness in order to exist. When we think of the family continuing, we must not think of ourselves but the family as a whole. We're the last of the Mooneys and we must protect our heritage. Society does not accept us because of what we are, so we're an enemy of society and we must protect ourselves by being self-sufficient." Of course, Pa loves his youngest daughter more than any of his other children and sees the rest of the family as completely expendable. After dealing with enough of his wife's family's demented behavior, Gerald confesses, "I'm not happy here" and "there's something not normal here, I don't like it" and even offers to give up painting and get a real job if she agrees to move out of Mooney manor, but she refuses. On top of that, Phoebe and various other family members encourage Gerald to divorce Diana, but he flatly refuses, even after discovering the mangled and dismembered corpses of chickens that retarded beast brother Malcolm has rabidly slaughtered and devoured. When brother Mortimer attempts to comfort Diana and recommends she divorce Gerald for the sake of the family, she responds, "I don't think this family stands much chance of surviving as a whole for much longer. I think we're on the verge of destroying ourselves."

Meanwhile, in a pointless subplot, Monica goes to a shop after killing her pet rat "Ben" with a butcher knife (since Hope Stansbury refused to kill the animal, Milligan apparently coerced a boy sporting a dress into killing the rodent) and buys a couple human-eating rodents from the cripple vendor Mr. Micawber (Chris Shore), who lost his arm and part of his face (which is partly black, as if

Milligan was too cheap to get the actor's face completely covered in blackface) after his rats got a hold of him when he was asleep. After killing the rats, penny-pinching mad cunt Monica attempts to return them to Mr. Micawber because she doesn't want any "ungrateful rats," but he adamantly refuses as he spent all the money on booze, so she malevolently murders him. Meanwhile, Diana goes to a curious queen 'gunsmith' (played by Mr. Milligan) and has her hubby Gerald's silver cross turned into silver bullets, as she expects all her siblings to transform into wolves as a result of the full moon. Meanwhile, Pa Mooney finally kicks the bucket and eldest sister Phoebe becomes so upset that she reveals that she and her father carried on a love affair and that she also poisoned Diana's mother out of jealousy. From there, Phoebe then transforms into a werewolf and all the other siblings follow except Diana. While most of the siblings end up killing each other while in lycanthrope mode, Gerald ends up shooting Mortimer with the silver bullets that were made from his mother's cross. In a twist ending, Diana finally reveals her true character by telling Gerald that she no longer has any use for him because he has impregnated her, declaring, "I'm different from the rest of my family...I can change myself at will," transforms herself into a werewolf, and slaughters her beloved.

In his biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), Milligan's comrade Jimmy McDonough wrote in regard to his decided dissatisfaction with *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!*, "RATS is hampered by a talky script; flat, amateurish performances; and effects that are bad even by Milligan standards. Seeing Hope Stansbury and the rest of the cast skulk through the shadows in very cheap werewolf makeup is funny for about a second, but the film meanders. It just doesn't possess the crazed energy one expects from Milligan in this period." Indeed, aside from dark-haired diva Stansbury, who seems like a meta-bitch prom queen high on coke and PCP, all of the performances in the film are conspicuously plagued by just plain bad and seemingly unending mediocrity and banality, not to mention the fact that the direction is shockingly dull and oftentimes nonsensical (with many of the scenes being far too dark to see anything), and the special effects and makeup are akin to that of a play put on by autistic preschoolers, yet the work will ultimately at least slightly wet the lips and semi-satisfy anyone that has gotten used to the nasty habit of devouring Milligan's misanthropic family melodramas. Notable for being Milligan's first PG-rated work despite featuring a pointless scene where a real rat is tortured and killed with a knife, *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* is arguably the most impotent and insipid werewolf flick ever made as a work where the lycanthropes are slow and clumsy like Special Olympics contestants and ultimately meet their demise in exceedingly anti-climactic ways that make it quite clear that the director had little, if any, interest in the horror elements of the film and was much more interested in the venomous verbal (and sometimes physical) bitch fights between the rather re-

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pellant female characters. Additionally, the film is also notable for the fact that the female leads look more like New Jersey-debased guidettes than cultivated members of a Northern European aristocracy, with the pseudo-medieval England of *Torture Dungeon* (1970), which was shot on the quasi-beaches of Staten Island and starred a number of sub-literate working-class wops, being even more believable. Indeed, despite being shot at the scenic Hampstead Heath estate in London, which was also used for Milligan's previous film *The Body Beneath* as well as Joseph Losey's big budget psychological-thriller *Secret Ceremony* (1968) starring Elizabeth Taylor and Mia Farrow, the film has about as much 'Gothic' atmosphere as an early 1990s mestizo boy band. If Tennessee Williams suffered brain damage after a car wreck, got addicted to Roger Corman horror turds and queer style misogyny, and was sent to England with a couple thousand bucks given to him by some scheming Semitic exploitation producer like David F. Friedman to direct a cheap quickie lycanthrope flick, it would have probably resembled *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!*, which is certifiably Milligan-esque in all the wrong ways!

-Ty E

FLESHPOT ON 42ND STREET

Andy Milligan* (1973)

Admittedly, when I first saw gutter-auteur Andy Milligan's *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1972), I thought it was one of the biggest pieces of sleazy, stinking celluloid shit that I had ever had the dishonor of spending a single second on and like with most films, I am generally not someone who changes my opinion of a film over time, but that was before I caught the Milligan bug. As a socially repulsive sadomasochistic misogynist who apparently had spontaneous orgasms while literally torturing people, Mr. Milligan is not exactly the sort of person one would be at their greatest as a director of melodramas starring female and pseudo-female leads, but as his biographer and one-time collaborator Jimmy McDonough details in the Milligan bio *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2003), the emotionally and sexually erratic exploitation auteur was a sort of poor man's Fassbinder of filmic filth. Like the German New Cinema giant, Milligan was a high-strung homo yet married one of his lead actresses, got his start in the world of avant-garde off-off-broadway theater, enjoyed engaging in anonymous sex in public bathrooms, churned out movies faster than most people can turn out turds, loved and loathed women, and died prematurely via his self-destructive tendencies (in both cases one could argue self-conscious suicide). Although I do not want to give the seedy serial moviemaker too much credit, Andy Milligan's celluloid equivalent to Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) is mostly certainly *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* due in part to their similar themes (a woman trying to cum up in the world via her body, only to see everything topple down), as well as its relative popularity as a film the 'general' might like despite having no interest in filmmaker's overall oeuvre. Just like with Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* is the one film that people other than Milligan's barely multiple maniacs (fans) might have heard of. His last great sexploitation melodrama, Milligan never really directed a film that was even remotely watchable after *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* as his biographer McDonough had to admit (despite working on his later California monster movies like the aptly titled "Monstrosity" and "Surgikill"), as he moved away from the title street depicted in the film and mostly stuck to directing monstrous gore flicks that appeal to no one, not even fans of the Ghastly One. Like most of his previous films (the majority of which are lost), *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* was shot (and would be the last he shot) on a single hand-held 16-millimeter Auricon sound-on-film news camera, the same crappy cam that was not meant for creating feature-length films that was also utilized by Paul Morrissey and John Waters for their early aesthetically gritty and grating exploitation works. *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* would also mark the last film that Milligan collaborated on with his miserly Hebrew producer Lew Mishkin as the filmmaker refused to concede with creating pornographic

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works with real sex, arguing, "I found it sleazy to shoot a penetration....why not just turn out a Mafia fuck film?" Known as one of the sleaziest men in the movie business, Mishkin caused Milligan hell throughout his filmmaking career, stealing every cent he could get from the mostly destitute director and butchering his films with cheap sex, stating of the filmmaker that he was the, "most moral person I ever met doing immoral films," but he did admit, "that fleshpot is a great minor film," which is no small compliment from a man who was apathetic towards celluloid art and inserted gratuitous nudity scenes in serious melodramas.

Fleshpot on 42nd Street centers around decisively degenerate dame Dusty Cole (Laura Cannon but credited as "Diana Lewis"), a lecherous lady who will do anything to not have to work, including pawn her sole personal belongings, steal from hyper-horny Judaic pawnstore owners, and even peddle her rather homely flesh for a couple ten dollar bills. After her boyfriend demands that she either obtain gainful employment or— at the very least — clean the apartment, Dusty dashes out the front door, but not before jumping the bones of her blue-collar beau one more time, and enters the urban jungle where she encounters a variety of human animals who are only interested in one thing: SEX. After conning a prissy pawnbroker named Sammy (Earle Edgerton) who believes "nice Jews don't divorce," hence his need pay to play with prostitutes, out of a bundle of cash after buying her flesh, Dusty is determined to begin a new life, no matter how pathetic. Luckily or unluckily, less than dainty Dusty meets up with her old friend Cherry Lane (Neil Flanagan of Milligan's *Guru*, the *Mad Monk*); a streetwalking fag in drag who sells its prick at a cheaper price than biological women peddle their percolating pussies. More bitchy than a jaded Jewess on the rag married to a poor fag, Cherry Lane makes it quite clear to Dusty on their rather racy reunion that s/he doesn't like women taking away her away business from her mobile whore house, but ultimately decides her friend might be able to bring in more customers with her genuine vagina. After going out to dinner together and apparently catching a double-bill horror screening of Andy Milligan's *Torture Dungeon* (1969) and *Bloodthirsty Butchers* (1970) — a cheap but charming display of self-advertisement on the *Ghastly One's* part — things seem to be looking up for the terrible trick-turning twosome. Ultimately, the two decide that Dusty will permanently move in and they swap semen together via screwing the same sleazy Johns. As in all Andy Milligan films, heterosexual sex is portrayed as uniquely unhealthy and decidedly disturbing as further accentuated by the sado-homo-auteur's cockeyed camera angels. In fact, when she endures her first pussy-purchaser — an intrepid tranny-chaser who her friend describes as "being a little weird" in the bedroom" — after meeting up with Cherry, she is treated to the beating of her life that might be considered a violent rape of sorts, had she not been paid for the pleasure, but it is in all in a day's work for this 42nd street sex worker. As charming Cherry states, "America ain't no

place for old folks,” at least as far as the cum and blood-covered gutters of old school NYC are concerned. In an instance of fleeting fate, a bright light appears in Dusty’s daunting derelict life in the form of a rather “nice guy” named Bob (credited as being played by “Bob Walters” but really future Deep Throat star Harry Reems; an actor Milligan couldn’t stand working with) – a wholesome fellow who believes in honesty in relationships, even when dating a whore – and falls in some sort of “love” with him, even if he is rather banal in bed as a sensitive individual who is better at making coffee than making love. Of course, being a biological man missing the flesh wound that all men want, Cherry becomes quite jealous of Dusty’s man, relative ‘success’, and newfound happiness, thereupon sparking a feud of fierce femmes (and faux-femmes). As with any Andy Milligan film, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* concludes in a curiously cynical manner where Dusty is eventually left in the dust in a more degenerate and destitute state than she was before, but keeps on peddling that puss.

A rather reckless racist who refused to work with negroes due to his belief that they made lousy works, especially on film sets, Andy Milligan spared no one’s feelings with *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*; a work where a drag fag has no problem warning her gal pals with the incendiary insight of sound advice, “don’t let the niggers see you.” Naturally, the authoritarian authority of Nixon and New York’s finest are also verbally assaulted in one of the best lines in the film: “You can’t suck a cock without a cop looking over your shoulder.” Unlike his much maligned costume horror period pieces, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* is an authentic auteur work as films cum, featuring the sort of shameless street trash that Milligan reluctantly cavorted with in real-life. That being said, Candy’s line “I’m no prize package...I’m a cocksucker...I’m not even a good one...I hide from the world in this getup...It ain’t easy bein’ a freak” is probably the most autobiographically true words he had ever written. The son of an abuse obese mother who quite possibly molested him and a father who was sexually impotent (Andrew Milligan Senior later remarried a Japanese bride who he purportedly never had sex with), a ½ Jewish pedophile brother (the product of Milligan’s mother’s previous ‘marriage’ to a Judaic bigamist with three wives), and a sister he seriously hated, Andy Milligan was born into a world of sadism, sexual perversion, and social dysfunction and would spend his filmmaking career creating cinematic works that reflected a similar seediness with *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* being his crude celluloid crowning achievement and a film that almost brings artistic merit to slums of late-1960s/early-1970s 42nd Street. For a man who fondled and fucked the random flesh of thousands upon thousands of men throughout his life and inevitably paid for it by contracting AIDS and dying a slow and painful death, only to die alone in his hospital bed and have his body buried in an unmarked grave in some foreign land, what better magnum opus of misery and misanthropy than *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*; a work where a woman’s love is literally run over with a car and forgotten the next minute.

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-Ty E

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Andy Milligan* (1984)

I have never really cared much for blockbuster ghost stories like *The Amityville Horror* (1979) and the Steven Spielberg produced (and apparently ‘ghost-directed’) *Poltergeist* (1982), so I was naturally somewhat interested to see how gay gutter auteur Andy Milligan would molest the intolerably formulaic horror subgenre with his hopelessly hokey haunted house rip-off piece (of shit) *Carnage* (1984) aka *Hell House*. Milligan’s first film in about half a decade since the release of *Legacy of Blood* (1978) aka *Legacy of Horror* (which was a mediocre remake of the director’s 1968 ‘classic’ *The Ghastly Ones*) and the failure of his aborted Antebellum Southern Gothic melodrama *House of Seven Belles* (1979), the work is notable for being the director’s second film shot on 35mm (following *Guru*, the *Mad Monk* (1970), which Milligan ultimately disowned) and being the only work where the filmmaker went over budget, or as Jimmy McDonough wrote in *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001) while trashing the film: “Via Lew Mishkin, Milligan hooked up with English producer Michael Lee in 1983 to crank out *CARNAGE*, a forgettable lowball *POLTERGEIST* knockoff that featured regulars from the Troupe. Andy pointed out that it was one of the few Milligan pictures to go substantially over budget—\$32,500 instead of \$30,000.” In October 1977, Milligan bought and moved into a four-story building in Manhattan where he used one of the floors for the Troupe Theatre, which was an Off-Off-Broadway venue that the auteur founded and ran until he closed the place for good in 1985 and made his way to Los Angeles where he would predictably die of AIDS in 1991. Naturally, regulars from Troupe Theatre appear in *Carnage*, which boasts some of the most unattractive actresses and especially actors (Milligan may have been a proud poof, but his choice in men was rather dubious) in a horror film, even for Milligan standards. Notably, one of these actors, Dennis Malvasi—a half-crazed and criminally-inclined Vietnam War vet and demolitions expert who falsely complained to be the son of Jewish bad boy actor John Garfield—would become much more (in)famous outside the Milligan circle, as he led a double life as a member of the Christian extremist group *Our Lady of the Roses* and was involved in four abortion clinic bombings that began in the late 1985 (while Malvasi eventually turned himself in after being declared a fugitive and served his time in prison, he has been in and out of prison ever since then and apparently now lives off the grid somewhere in New Jersey with his wife and three kids). Upon meeting him, Milligan fell in love with Malvasi, whose sole other acting roles include Don Schain’s sexploitation flick *The Abductors* (1972) and frog fag filmmaker Jacques Scandelari’s homo-slasher *Monique* (1978) aka *Flashing Lights*, and made him a member of the Troupe theater despite the fact that he was virtually illiterate and had to ad lib his lines, even dressing up in drag for

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one performance when a female actress failed to show up for a show. Rather unfortunately, Malvasi only had a small and insignificant role in *Carnage* and would not go on to appear in anymore Milligan flicks.

The film will also notable to exploitation fans in that Bill Landis of *Sleazoid Express* infamy worked on the production, or as mentioned in *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002) by Mr. Sleazoid and his wife Michelle Clifford: “Andy’s realization that he still had a dedicated audience revitalized his interest in filmmaking. By the summer of 1983, he was back at work on a horror movie called *CARNAGE*. He photographed for the first time in 35mm, using cut-rate ends of film stock, shooting in Manhattan and Staten Island. Coauthor Landis worked on Andy’s crew, taking time off from his job managing the shoebox adult grindhouse, the *Doll*, on 47th Street and 7th Avenue. The film was an entertaining haunted house escapade that wound up being released directly to home video. On the set, Andy was much like he was with his tiny Bolex in *VAPORS*—a peppery munchkin zooming all over the place, supervising the crew, searching for the best camera angles, acting out scenes for the performers.” A somewhat typical Milligan effort in that the director seems to have put most of his effort into the flower arrangements and misanthropic dialogue, *Carnage* is certainly a work that will appeal to Milligan maniacs and proud proponents of poor celluloid taste, though gorehounds will certainly find it to be the best of the director’s work as it is certainly his most graphic and gory film to date, as a work featuring a sinisterly sassy corpse bride disemboweling a would-be-robber’s intestines, not to mention some pretty cool, if somewhat softcore, suicide scenes.

In a classically mean-spirited Milligan-esque opening scene, a seemingly newlywed groom blows his beautiful blonde bride’s brains out while embracing her and then turns the gun on himself in the house they have assumedly just moved into together. Flash forward three years later and a less than young unwitting married couple, Carol (Leslie Den Dooven of Milligan’s unreleased 1984 TV series *Red Rooster*) and Jonathan Henderson (one-time actor Michael Chiodo), move into the house thinking they got a steal in regard to what little they paid for it, not realizing it is haunted by a pissed off poltergeist who still has not gotten over the fact that her husband blew her brains out on their wedding day (of course, as the viewer later learns, this is not exactly how the scenario played out). Carol and Jonathan do not think anything is out of the ordinary when items like coffee mugs and hedge clippers begin inexplicably moving around the house on their own or when an old phonograph randomly plays wedding music late each night. In fact, when the married couple hires an old maid named Rose Novak (Lola Ross of the 1981 *Troma* turd *Waitress!*) who soon randomly falls into a catatonic state and subsequently slits her own throat with a shaving razor, they still do not suspect that there might be something somewhat ominous about the less than humble abode that they call home. Of course, maid Rose had an

unsettling face-to-face encounter with the ghost Bride, who warned her, "Go! Get out of my house." Unfortunately, the Hendersons were not home when the disgruntled she-bitch spook committed her most surreal slaughter when she telekinetically murdered two would-be robbers, even ripping out the intestines of the unluckier of the two amateur small-time crooks. It is not until their housewarming party that Mr. and Mrs. Henderson begin to consider that they may have been ripped off in regard to their new home.

On the night of their housewarming party, the Henderson's unhappily married friends Walter (John Garitt) and Ann (Chris Baker) are the first to feel the Ghost Bride's wrath. Ann first encounters the ghost while she is brushing her hair, but that does not do enough to scare her away for good. After revealing to her hubby Walter that she is pregnant, shards of glass mysteriously stab her in the arm. That night, Walter decides to take a bath while listening to putrid polka music, but his relaxing moment is ruined when he is electrocuted after the ghost knocks the radio into the tub (notably, the viewer can see that the actor is still wearing underwear while he is being electrocuted!). At this point, Carol finally decides it is wise to do some actual research on the history of her homicidal home, so she goes to city hall where she meets with an eccentric old fart named Willis Karp (Ray Trail) who apologizes for rudely interrupting her while she is on the telephone with her husband and then proceeds to deliver the following classically Milligan-esque rant: "The whole world is rude. Years ago we had manners and beauty about us. Now it's anything ugly that's our way of life. People have forgotten to live with manners, so you do the same thing. You wake-up one fine morning and you find your food just like the rest of them." From Mr. Karp, Carol learns that their home used to be owned by the loving married couple Mark (Chris Georges) and Susan Webb (Deeann Veeder), who he describes as, "such a beautiful couple...they loved each other very dearly." Apparently, Mr. Webb spent years restoring the house and even when the wife Susan had a miscarriage, they still had much hope for their future, with Karp stating of the feeling that loving couple's influence had over the home, "you could feel that house come alive with their love and adoration." When Mrs. Webb was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer, the couple decided to commit suicide on the anniversary of the day they took possession of the house, hence why they haunt the house today.

After realizing their house is hopelessly haunted, the Hendersons decide to have a priest come by the place and he declares that the cursed spirits of the home's former inhabitants have taken over the spirit of the house itself. In a rather cynical Milligan-esque scenario, the priest receives a butcher knife to the skull just as he walks out of the house. Mr. Henderson's newly engaged secretary Judy (Ellen Orchid) also literally loses her head after a flying ghost-wielded ax chops it off in one swift blow. Needless to say, the Hendersons finally decide enough is enough, call it quits on their luxury dream home, and decide to

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leave immediately, but while hubby Jonathan is packing the car with their possessions, Carol is visited by ghost Susan Webb who inexplicably attempts to convince her to stay, stating like a tired toddler with Down syndrome, "Don't...go. We...will...leave...you...alone...if...you...keep...our...house...just...as...it...is." When Jonathan eventually goes back into the house to get his wife, he is shocked to see she is holding hands with the ghosts of Mr. and Mrs. Webb. In a twist ending, the Webbs force the Hendersons to commit suicide in exactly the same fashion that they did some three years before, as if to save them from ever having to suffer the romantic tragedy of their marriage going sour. *Carnage* closes with a low-angle shot stolen directly from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) of the haunted house, which has a "For Sale" sign in front of it, thus hinting that the vicious cycle of spouse-based suicide pacts has just begun. Luckily, Milligan never opted to direct a sequel.

Andy Milligan must have had a truly accursed sod touch, as the old house where he shot *Carnage* reportedly burned down shortly after the film completed production. The film is also notable for being the last film Milligan shot on the east coast before moving to a gay neighborhood in L.A. and defecating his last (and arguably worst) three features—*Monstrosity* (1987), *The Weirdo* (1988), and the horrendous Hebraic-humored horror-comedy *Surgikill* (1988). Although *Carnage* was Milligan's last east coast film, the filmmaker hooked up with a retired chemical engineer turned would-be playwright named Don Tobey who he convinced to allow him to turn his play into a TV series. A patently political incorrect low-camp sitcom about a pre-Viagra drug that helps old farts get their shriveled up cocks hard featuring old homos in drag, Mafioso vermin, and Arab Sheiks, the six-part series *Red Rooster* (1984) and its pilot episode *Adventures of Red Rooster* (1984) were ultimately never bought or released. Unfortunately, *Carnage* is neither as campy nor misanthropic as Milligan's more classic works, which is all the more underscored by its promising opening quasi-high-camp murder-suicide scene between the husband and wife, which seems to be the director's final word on marriage. In respect to Milligan's entire oeuvre, *Carnage* is probably as important as the darkly comedic 2011 chamber piece of the same name is to Roman Polanski's career. Still, I rather enjoyed the film's extra venomous twist ending and would rather re-watch *Carnage* over *The Amityville Horror* or *Poltergeist* any day. One thing I found especially notable about the film is that it does not feature a single child and every married couple featured in the work either suffers a miscarriage or is killed off before they can start a nuclear family, which is a sentiment that I can currently relate to in terms of big familial plans falling through like a stake to the heart or a bullet to the brain. In that sense, the film is autobiographical as, although rampant sadomasochistic homo Milligan married his screen diva Candy Hammond (the true star of the director's 1968 anti-family melodrama *Seeds* aka *Seeds of Sin*), she inevitably left him and the gutter auteur died in the summer of 1991 of AIDS without pro-

ducing an heir. Indeed, *Carnage* practically bleeds of resentment and hatred for happy married heterosexual couples, hence its slight air of fleeting authenticity in comparison to other bullshit haunted house films, which seem to be geared towards phony bourgeois families who go to church every single Sunday. Personally, I would not mind living in a haunted house, especially one haunted by the cute blonde ghost bride of Milligan's *Carnage*.

-Ty E

MONSTROSITY
MONSTROSITY

Andy Milligan* (1987)

Since he exploited, molested, dismembered, and reassembled various classic horror stories, movies, characters, and genre conventions during his nearly a quarter century reign as arguably exploitation cinema's most idiosyncratic and certainly most misanthropic auteur, it should be no surprise that sodomaniacal gutter auteur Andy Milligan (*The Man with Two Heads*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*)—a man who once directed an anti-family monster melodrama, *Blood* (1974), where the degenerate spawn of Count Dracula and the Wolfman are disharmoniously married and ultimately tear each other to shreds in the end as their humble abode burns down—would direct a film tackling the Golem monster of Jewish folklore and its superior European progeny Frankenstein. Indeed, Baron von Frankenstein would make a brief cameo at the conclusion of *Blood*, but it was not until Milligan moved to the West Coast that he took on the Frankenstein legend in full fag force via his antepenultimate work *Monstrosity* (1987) starring longtime Milligan superstar Hal Borske (*Vapors*, *The Ghastly Ones*) as a rather romantic retarded teddy-bear-hugging reanimated corpse named 'Frankie' who goes on a vengeful Rambo-esque murder spree after his creators kill his dazed and confused dope-addled punk slut girlfriend. A pseudo-punk horror-comedy featuring nearly middle-aged no-talent actors portraying young adults and balding old farts unbelievably sporting aesthetically repugnant punk rock costumes that seem like wardrobes rejected by Michael Jackson, Milligan's flatly farcical celluloid Frankenturd could not be more fittingly titled as if the autistic-garde auteur set out to parody his own oeuvre. A work that marked a sort of misbegotten and inauspicious 'rebirth' in the director's career as a gutter-dwelling West Coast direct-to-video hack, *Monstrosity* was largely filmed at Milligan's own small white duplex and the garage and is notable for featuring the director's last 'great love', "Bobby" Wayne Keeton—a borderline retarded yet kindhearted Louisiana-born hick hustler who was nicknamed "the human toothpick" due to his corpse-like gaunt appearance and who died of AIDS in the summer of 1989 almost exactly two years before his filmmaker lover would do the same—in a small cameo role as a drug dealer who gets his throat slit by the main monster. According to Milligan friend and biographer Jimmy McDonough, who worked on the film (even playing a double for the titular monster), Keeton apparently described his acting debut in his lover's film as, "The happiest time of my life," but other crew members remember the work less fondly. Indeed, as McDonough wrote in his bio *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), "As fun as it was to make and to be a part of the Andy experience, his heart just didn't seem to be in it. He hired people to do the stills and gore effects, and bent to the ideas of others." McDonough was no more kind to the finished product, writ-

ing, “MONSTROSITY oozes a certain pained, not-too-with-it zaniness (think of a poverty-row, no-stars version of Otto Preminger’s SKIDOO), but its fascinations are fleeting, with plenty of breathing space in between.” A dreadfully 1980s style hokey horror disaster that is the closest (geographically speaking!) that Milligan ever came to Hollywood featuring a positively painfully addictive synthesizer score, pathetically plastic and shockingly banal would-be witty prep-lead actors with vulgar mullets, and a sentimental hopeless romantic with a ginger Jew-fro wig and a curious stuffed animal fetish as the monster, *Monstrosity* is the only Milligan film that made me feel embarrassed while watching it.

Opening with shots of the iconic ‘Hollywood Sign’, the art deco style Griffith Observatory dome building and the crowded gritty streets of Los Angeles, *Monstrosity* initially seems like a vintage tourism tape for LA, but the film then soon cuts to an old wino fart who likes hanging out in Mexican convenience stores having his withered old throat slit by a sadistic blond beast criminal that looks like a born-again meth addict named Clay Cole (Tommy Voager) as a way to entertain his two comrades after the poor elderly geezer fails to give him any money. Next, Clay goes by the shabby apartment of a young female artist named Ronnie (Audra Marie Ribeiro) and brutally rapes her to the point where she is hospitalized with a concussion and a “fractured left ear,” among other things. When Ronnie makes the mistake of telling the cops about her rapist, Cole sneaks in her hospital room wearing doctor scrubs, complains “you bitch, I show you a good time and you’re gonna put the finger on me!,” and performs surgery on his victim that involves slicing open her stomach and pulling all of her intestines out, thus killing her instantly. Needless to say, Ronnie’s unintentionally goofy prep-lead boyfriend Mark (David Homb) is completely devastated by the whole ordeal and when two exceedingly lazy police detectives fail to catch his girlfriend’s killer, he decides vigilante justice is in order and brainstorms with his two equally annoying comrades. Luckily, Mark’s insufferable religious studies friend ‘Carlos’ (Joe Balogh) states, “I just got an idea. You guys ever hear of a golem?” and proceeds to state the following bullshit dialogue that no real person would ever say in the most monotonous manner imaginable, “Jewish legends from the middle-ages tell of various persons with the power to create a golem—a monster made of clay given life from the proper combinations from the letters of the divine name. The most famous of these creators was a rabbi Judah Loew of Prague from 1512 to 1609. He supposedly created a golem to avenge the enemies of his followers.” Indeed, they decide they will kill Ronnie’s killer with a golem and since none of them is a rebbe or Jewish and Mark’s other comrade Scott (Michael Lunsford) is a medical student, they decide against clay and opt to use the parts of dead human cadavers instead to make their golem monster.

Wisely using the corpse of “some disgusting mutilated pervert” and a bald decapitated head that “looks mongoloid,” the three mullet-adorned pals meticu-

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lously assemble the mongrel golem monster they have lovingly named “Frankie” (Hal Borske) in tribute to Mary Shelley’s classic Gothic horror novel *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) inside of Mark’s cramped garage. When they try every method they can think of (including absurdly reading from *The Book of the Dead*) to get the crappy sewed-together corpse to come alive but nothing works, they give up and decide to dismember their miserable miscreation before someone discovers it rotting in the garage, but just before they begin cutting, Frankie magically comes alive and immediately demonstrates he is a rather personable, if not intellectually challenged fellow. Although Mark and his friends provide Frankie with an extensive training program on becoming a killer monster that involves pointing at film posters for such Regan era classics as *First Blood* (1982) aka *Rambo* and *The Terminator* (1984) and saying “Kill Frankie, Kill,” hopelessly friendly fiend Frankie would rather talk about the Three Little Bears and play with his stuffed animals collection that his makers have provided him with (notably, Milligan’s then-boyfriend Bobby Wayne Keeton was apparently fond of stuffed animals and had a huge collection of them). Meanwhile, crazed killer Clay Cole begins slicing and dicing a small clique of mostly middle-aged punk rockers (!) and just before he slits the throat of a young yet hyper-haggard-looking pint-sized blonde junky punkette named Jaime (Carrie Anita), Frankie pops out, saves her, and dismembers the thug with a butcher knife in a Milligan-esque fashion. Ironically, Mark and his friends never seem to realize that Frankie unwittingly ‘executed’ their mission of bringing Ronnie’s killer to justice. Needless to say, Frankie and Jaime soon fall in love, though the monster gets scared when his lady love lights blunts in front of him because he is afraid of fire. Among other things, Jaime teaches Frankie how to fuck and demonstrates her concern that a transvestite might steal her marvelous monster man away from her. Frankie practically melts Jaime’s heart when she asks him, “What are you in to? Do you do crystal? Speed? I know you don’t like weed” and he sweetly responds by saying, “I like you.” To demonstrate her devotion to him and to help clean up his reasonably grotesque appearance, Jaime gives Frankie a new wardrobe, including a cheap and tacky “I Kick Ass” t-shirt, Hondo headband (to keep his red Jew-fro wig in place), and somewhat homoerotic studded neck choker. When Mark and the boys realize that Frankie has sexual needs after catching him looking at a porn mag, they buy him a blonde blowup doll, but he prefers a real woman and pops the pseudo-woman before even sticking his reanimated monster member in its less than warm vinyl vag.

Of course, everything goes downhill when Mark, Scott, and Carlos become jealous of Jaime after she turns Frankie into all the more of a gentle giant. When Frankie scares Scott’s girlfriend, they decide to punish him by burning his beloved over-sized teddy bear, which makes him cry like an autistic toddler suffering a temper tantrum. In an especially nonsensical scene, Frankie’s stuffed animal collection magically comes alive and he is awakened by an exceedingly extro-

verted fellow named Angelo (played by Joel Weiss who, as someone who appeared in *The Warriors* (1979) and starred in something called *F.A.R.T.: The Movie* (1991), is probably the most 'famous' actor in the entire film) who proclaims to be he and his girlfriend Jaime's special 'Guardian Angel.' According to Angelo, heaven has become so flooded with the souls of aborted fetuses like himself that they don't even have enough wings to go around and his only means of transportation is a bike he stole from "some 14-year-old that overdosed at Venice Beach." Angelo also seems to moonlight as a preacher, as he weds Frankie and Jaime in Mark's garage. Paranoid about Frankie's unpredictable behavior and new love affair, Scott buys a machinegun from some "pro-black guy" and plots a way to get Jaime out of the picture. Ultimately, Scott tempts Jaime with a needle with crystal meth laced with poison and being that she is a psychologically weak drug addict who will do anything for a fix, she immediately shoots it up and ultimately drops dead after dancing around in a spastic fashion for a couple seconds. Naturally enraged over the death of his braindead beloved, Frankie ignores Guardian Angel Angelo's plea not to seek revenge, attacks Scott, grabs his machine gun and kills his three creators Rambo-style just as he was trained and then proceeds to burn down the garage. In the end, Frankie becomes a sloppy wino and gutter philosopher of sorts and spends his free time shooting the shit with his dumpster-diving hobo hag friend Agnes (played by Helen Costa, who later appeared in Henry Jaglom's *Venice/Venice* (1992), as well as the popular corrupt cop show *The Shield* (2002-2008)) while the two share a bottle of cheap rum. When Agnes asks Frankie what he plans to do with his life, he says he wants to "find himself" and then remarks, "It's a big country... Maybe I'll be like you, Agnes, and just walk around," though he also considers being a doctor or preacher. From there, someone yells "Cut. That's a wrap!" and auteur Andy Milligan and the rest of the film crew is revealed in a rather strange and totally unexpected Fourth Wall smashing conclusion 'comparable' to those featured at the end of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966), Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Holy Mountain* (1973), and Federico Fellini's *And The Ship Sails On* (1983). Quite preposterously, at the end of the credit sequence, an inter-title appears reading: "THE END. See the return of Frankie soon in *MONSTROSITY II*."

Aside from the fact that *Monstrosity II* was never made, *Monstrosity* remained unreleased until fairly recently. While one would have thought the video boom of the 1980s would have been the perfect time for Milligan to cash in on his strangely hypnotic horror schlock, all three of his final feature films were abject artistic and commercial failures (like *Monstrosity*, Milligan's next film *The Weirdo* (1989) ends with the promise of a sequel that would ultimately never surface), as the piss poor products of a man whose unique and unrelenting movie misanthropy and misogyny seem to have fallen victim to the mindless 'quirky' escapism that accompanied the Reagan years and was quite typical of both low-budget horror and Hollywood films of that time. It is interesting that Milligan

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decided to include contrived dialogue about golems, late-16th-century Prague Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, and Jewish folklore in *Monstrosity*, as the film was produced by Semitic lawyer and sometimes smut-peddler Lew Mishkin (the son of Milligan's usual producer William Mishkin), who the director hated with a passion comparable to that of the characters in his films. As Jimmy McDonough wrote in his Milligan bio, "Lew Mishkin was, of course, considered the absolute villain of *MONSTROSITY*. Although largely unseen, Milligan cursed his name every chance he got" (interestingly, Mishkin appears in a New Jersey Guido-esque tracksuit at the end of the film where all the cast members appear). Indeed, Milligan's miscreation of a Frankenstein reworking is probably the closest thing to an 'anti-Semitic' horror-comedy, but I doubt that was the director's conscious objective with the work. Unfortunately, *Monstrosity* was not Milligan's only crap-covered pseudo-kosher celluloid excursion in vaudevillian Hebraic horror, as his final work *Surgikill* (1989) aka *Screwball Hospital Central* was penned by a Hebrew hack screenwriter named Sherman Hirsh (who has written negative reviews for the film on both amazon.com and imdb.com) and is plagued by hopelessly juvenile Jewish frat boy humor that would even embarrass Eli Roth. As McDonough somewhat fairly wrote regarding the film, "*MONSTROSITY* may be Andy's best released picture since 1972's *FLESHPOT*, but that's not saying much. Milligan's eager but faceless Hollywood SAG misfits were no substitute for his hand-picked New York eccentrics, and his stuffy, old-school theatricality and aged-in-wood slapstick add up to little more than frumpiness in the end." Despite its abject failure in almost every regard, *Monstrosity* is notable for having an overt anti-Reaganite essence that lampoons the stupidity of 1980s action films and depicts young preppies as two-faced sadists and psychopaths who do not think twice about shooting up poor proletarian punk girls with tainted meth and consider movies like *First Blood* educational, as a sort of *Repo Man* (1984) of retarded horror comedies. In its graphic depiction of violence against women, *Monstrosity* also features classic Milliganian misogyny, though the film lacks the sort of scenes typical of the director's work where some conspicuously cunty chick unleashes a tidal wave of verbal venom. If you ever wondered what it might be like if the Frankenstein monster had a slutty junky punkette girlfriend or how gay gutter auteur Andy Milligan might defile Jewish folklore, *Monstrosity* might be for you, but otherwise steer well clear of this shamelessly schlocky celluloid abomination.

-Ty E

WEIRDO: THE BEGINNING

Andy Milligan* (1989)

In this day in age where every child born seems to be diagnosed with some sort of debilitating mental illness, autism, and/or a peanut allergy, it only seems natural that there should be more horror flicks featuring killers and/or antiheroes suffering from autism, Asperger syndrome (AS), and related forms of social retardation that seem to be dubiously increasingly plaguing American youth with each new generation. On top of seeming to suffer from schizophrenia, perennial momma's boy Norman Bates of *Psycho* (1960) also seemed to be some sort of aspie, hence his unnerving social awkwardness and unhealthily obsessive behavior. Much less known than cross-dressing hotel master Bates but similar in his ominous Oedipal hang-ups and proclivity towards playing a peeping tom is a human dildo by the name of Donnie Raymond of gay gutter auteur Andy Milligan's penultimate celluloid abortion *Weirdo: The Beginning* (1989) aka *The Weirdo* aka Donnie. One of the director's late era works after he finally decided to get out of the seedy slums of New York City during the late-1980s to move to sunny Los Angeles where he was in an unhealthy relationship with his half-retarded white trash hustler boyfriend B. "Bobby" Wayne Keeton aka "The Human Toothpick" that ultimately resulted in both men succumbing to AIDS, *Weirdo* certainly lacks the true grit and sort of superlatively slimy pseudo-snuff aesthetic of his 'classic' celluloid crud, but it at least has one thing in common with the earlier films in that it is an updated 1980s-ized remake of the unfortunately unreleased Milligan flick *The Weirdo*, which the director apparently lost during the early 1970s (indeed, many of Milligan's films from his most prolific period during the late-1960s through early-1970s have been lost forever). Co-produced by "kung fu movie expert" and producer Neva Friedenn who is best known to horror fans as the screenwriter of the somewhat underwhelming video nasty *The Toolbox Murders* (1978), *Weirdo* was marketed to be a monetary success and sets up for a sequence (hence, its original title *Weirdo: The Beginning* and dubious open ending), but the film was an abject failure and Milligan made sure to destroy the possibility of any sequels by burning his bridges with the producers and torturing the young male lead who would never star in a film again. Forced to work with a cast that was hired against his will instead of his regular anti-iconic superstars, Milligan reluctantly assembled a patently pathetic piece of ostensibly serious schlock about a deranged dude with no family who is constantly beat up by a gang of mullet-adorned 30-something-year-old rednecks and who lives in the shed of an elderly woman who incessantly bosses him around. A sort of rare reworking of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Adam Lanzas, Elliot Rodgers, and all the other violent autistic misfits of the world as directed by cinema history's foremost misanthropic and shockingly untalented S&M-inclined semen demon, *Weirdo* is a rather rare dark romance for all those

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sexually repressed and dysfunctional social retards out there who might be prevented from committing some sort of tragic shooting if at least one deranged dame could at least give them a quick handjob. Like the gutter-dwelling west coast cinematic homo hustler step-uncle of Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001) due to its ultimately tragic depiction of an unconventionally dorky yet deranged dude of the absolutely autistic sort named Donnie who finds himself in the seemingly unlucky situation of finding a girl that he loves so much that he is willing to die (and kill) for her, this miserable mess of a micro-budget movie is gratifyingly bad yet shockingly perversely poignant proof of Milligan's singular talent for polishing stinky and slimy celluloid turds.

Upon a superficial glance, 22-year-old perennial loner Donnie (Steve Burington in his first and not surprisingly last film role) seems like a benign retard who merely likes hanging out in the woods and collecting rocks, but underneath his veil of mentally and physically feeble defectiveness is something dark, violent, and dangerously foreboding. The unwanted bastard son of a worthless dipsomaniac mother who lives to drink and kicked her forsaken son out of the family home long ago, dingbat Donnie is taken care of by an extroverted old eccentric named Miss Martins (Naomi Sherwood), who provides the young man with food and shelter in the form of a shed in her backyard. Unfortunately, Donnie is the constant target of degrading violence by a gang of mullet-sporting redneck untermenschen lead by a nefarious nimrod named 'Nails' (Shawn Player) who sports an absurdly tight-fitting denim vest featuring a large confederate flag on the back. At the beginning of the film, Nails and his braindead goons destroy Donnie's rock collection and almost drown him in a shallow creek just for fun. One day way playing in his favorite wooded creek like a spastic toddler, Donnie meets a crippled and seemingly equally autistic yet warmhearted little lady named Jenny (played by Jessica Straus, who went on to become a relatively successful videogame voice actress for games like Joseph D. Kucan's 1997 Philip K. Dick adaptation *Blade Runner*, Chris Mullender's *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick* (2003), and various *World of Warcraft* games). Although Donnie naturally acts like a complete and utter moron around Jenny, she becomes completely smitten with him and his glaring mental 'idiosyncrasies.' As for Donnie, he likes Jenny so much that he ritualistically sniffs a scarf that she gives him and then proceeds to masturbate. While Donnie's lonely loser life seems to be looking up after he meets Jenny, Nail and his gang, Miss Martins, prying priests, and his mother seek to destroy his little piece of happiness.

One day, while taking a box of worthless junk to a reverend at the request of his caretaker Miss Martins, Donnie is once again beaten by Nails and his mulleted minions. Luckily, after being beaten up and thrown around like a ragdoll, Donnie is helped up by his lady love Jenny who accompanies him to the house of worship run by charlatan asshole Reverend Cummings (John Rand, who appeared in pornographer Gregory Dark's 1986 softcore skin flick *In Search of...*

the Perfect '10' and Milligan's sorry 1989 swansong *Surgikill*). Upon talking with Jenny in private, the Reverend puts his hand on her thigh and begins berating her boyfriend, stating, "Donnie will never be a normal friend." When Jenny reveals that both of her parents died in a car wreck that also left her crippled and forced her to live with her bitchy aunt who she unlovingly describes as "my mother's sister," the perniciously patronizing Reverend states, "Oh, I'm sorry but God must have meant for it to be that way." Of course, the pervert Rev is not the only one that will attempt to destroy Donnie and Jenny's blooming love affair. When Donnie gives Jenny a kiss and proceeds to attempt to force himself on her, the young lady freaks out and knocks her loverboy on his ass. After Donnie declares, "I'm sorry, sorry, sorry" over and over again in a spastic fashion, Jenny states, "I wanna belong to you Donnie but not just yet" and proceeds to explain how she lost her virginity at the age of 14 after a boy that incessantly bullied her due to her crippled leg knocked her unconscious and raped her. Not long before getting the opportunity to pseudo-deflower the already deflowered Jenny, Donnie plays peeping tom and jerks off while hiding in a collapsed house and voyeuristically gazing at his enemy Nails nailing his slut girlfriend. After Nails finishes cumming and leaves, his girlfriend, who complains about her boy toy's failure to sexually satisfy her, notices Donnie and attempts to seduce him. After letting Donnie touch her tits, Nails' whore begins mocking the autistic boy and the two get in a pathetic fight. Luckily, after Donnie comes back to his shack and curls up in a fetus position after being beaten up by a big bosomed redneck broad, Jenny soon comes by and takes his virginity. Rather unfortunately, the same day Donnie loses his virginity, he is forced to confront the abusive alcoholic who once threw him away like trash and she has rather heinous plans for her misbegotten boy.

Upon being forced to meet with his estranged progenitor 'Ma Raymond' (Lynne Caryl), Donnie not only learns that he is the inbred spawn of a love affair between his mother and her abusive brother Eddie, but also that his mom/aunt is planning to sell him to a crazy poof pig named Mr. Cycil Price (Carroll Oden, who also appeared in Milligan's final film *Surgikill*) where he will live in Mississippi in sod-based sexual servitude. Indeed, Ma Raymond is selling her sole son for a mere \$1,500 whether Donnie likes it or not. Needless to say, being a rampantly heterosexual autistic man, Donnie refuses to listen to his mad mommy and attempts to escape, so Ma Raymond starts beating him with a whip. Of course, Donnie eventually overpowers her and begins whipping his mother with her own whip, but he does not stop there, as he also hacks off her head with a butcher knife. When Mr. Price arrives to pick up his new half-retarded sexual serf and discovers Ma Raymond has been murdered, Donnie kills the creepy cocksucker by stabbing him in the throat with a shovel. On his way home, Donnie stops by Reverend Cummings' church to drop off some old clothes and is soon threatened by the pseudo-spiritual leader's busybody's wife (Janet Roberts)

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who threatens to destroy his love affair with Jenny, so he decides to treat the old soul-sucking bitch like the vampire she is by driving a giant white crucifix through her seemingly cold, black heart. Reverend Cummings is such a perverted degenerate that when he sees blood on Donnie's clothes, he assumes that it is a result of him deflowering Jenny. When the Rev friendly realizes that Donnie has killed his wife, he locks the boy in a backroom, calls 911, and tells him that he will "burn in hell by the blood of Jesus by nightfall." When the Reverend makes the mistake of belittling Donnie a little too much, he finds himself being strangled to death with a string of Christmas lights.

After getting back to his shack and embracing Jenny, Miss Martins walks in on them and calls the young girl a slut. After that, Miss Martins tells Donnie that she is his aunt/mother's sister and tells him he must move out. When Miss Martins makes the mistake of calling Jenny a "no-good filthy little slut" one-too-many times, Donnie becomes enraged and attacks her, thus resulting in her accidental death when she is set on fire. After killing Miss Martins, Donnie confesses to Jenny about his crimes and she is surprisingly accepting, even declaring her undying love to him. Unfortunately, a couple hicks soon discover Miss Martins and a lynch mob comprised of rabid rednecks, including naughty Neanderthal Nails and his motley crew of mullet men, begin looking for Donnie so they can kill them. When the mob discovers Donnie and his girlfriend (who does a poor job running away since she is a cripple and all), Nails attempts to rape Jenny, but luckily her brave boy toy slits the attempted rapist's throat and cuts off his hands. Of course, Donnie can only hold off the hysterically homicidal hicks for so long and soon meets his grizzly end when about a dozen or so raging rednecks, including women, beat him to death with sticks and boards. Needless to say, Jenny is heart broken when she discovers Donnie's corpse. When Jenny notices a young mother threatening to kill her prepubescent son—a virtual future Donnie in the making—she rhetorically asks herself, "why can't people be nice to one another?!" In a twist ending that sets up for a Weirdo sequel that was ultimately never made, Jenny brings a police officer to the location of her belated boyfriend's brutalized body, only to discover that he is gone and only his clothes remain, this more than hinting that he managed to survive.

A shockingly penetrating dime-store fable that was created by a true antihero who depicts the murder of mothers, religious leaders, and affluent slave-driving sodomites as a more or less righteous act of spiritual retribution as carried out by a truly sad victim of society who could not even carry on a true love affair without the threat of imprisonment and homelessness, Weirdo is not only notable for featuring a rather idiosyncratic moral compass as a work that is essentially a slasher flick from the perspective of the killer, but also for being probably the only Andy Milligan film where a heterosexual romance is portrayed in a positive and even touching way and the female lead is pure and sweet and not some conniving psychopathic cunt like in most of the director's films. Indeed, in its

oddly endearing depiction of a forbidden romance between two forsaken social and mental defectives, Milligan's film is like the David and Lisa (1962) of 1980s horror/exploitation films, albeit thankfully minus the sentimentalizing sermonizing and P.C. pandering. In its decidedly deranged twist on Romero and Juliet featuring mommy issues and perverse murders as carried out by a spiritually castrated and seemingly autistic male lead who falls for an equally whacked out little woman, Milligan's *Weirdo* also superficially resembles the similarly titled French semi-surreal S&M-themed flick *Weird Weirdo* (1969) aka *Le grand cérémonial* directed by Pierre-Alain Jolivet (Bérénice, *Black Mirror*) and based on a play by Spanish auteur Fernando Arrabal (*Viva la muerte, I Will Walk Like a Crazy Horse*). In its relatively subversive depiction of two forsaken young lovers who love hanging out at secluded spots like the woods and go as far as murdering their parents to maintain their rather risky romantic relationship, Milligan's film will also probably interest fans of the comparably harsh and rarely seen flick *Wildwechsel* (1973) aka *Jail Bait* directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (who, aside from also being a sadomasochistic sod that once married one of his actresses and celebrated his honeymoon by engaging in some late night hardcore homo action, also shared a similarly pessimistic Weltanschauung to Milligan and was at his most prolific as a filmmaker during the early 1970s). Directed by the son of an emotionally and physically (and some believe sexually due to the incessantly incestuous nature of his films) abusive crazed alcoholic bitch who made sure that her son would hate women for the rest of his life, *Weirdo* is quasi-esoteric autobiographical anti-Oedipal cinema at its most obsessively odious. Undoubtedly, Norman Bates seems looks like a whiny bourgeois bitch boy compared to Milligan's murderous, mommy-hating Donnie. Indeed, after watching the film, I have to admit that I am now dying to see the original 1970s version that Milligan lost, as it would have most certainly helped *Weirdo* to have been a tad more gritty, especially featuring the director's various anti-superstars and debauched divas.

Somewhat ironically, auteur Andy Milligan apparently treated the lead actor of *Weirdo*: *The Beginning*, Steve Burington, in a sadistic manner not unlike how the eponymous antihero of the film, who seems like a youthful alter-ego of the filmmaker, is treated by everyone he knows, or as Jimmy McDonough noted in his excellent and highly addictive biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001) regarding the torrid production and its tyrannical director: "The fact that the casting choices weren't his own—likewise for a tacked-on ambiguous ending leaving room for a *WEIRDO II*—made Milligan's blood boil. He was especially cruel on *THE WEIRDO* set, reducing at least one person to tears. "Andy hated the actors," said Frank Echols. "The boy playing the lead? Andy screamed at him every day, to the point of no return." Indeed, if there ever was a perfect example of a horror auteur being

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the true monster of his own movies, it was Mr. Milligan, but as *Weirdo* readily demonstrates in its damning depiction of a boy spawned through incest, alcoholism, and various forms of traumatic abuse who was left to die in the streets and was treated as virtual human garbage by everyone he knew, he was created by other monsters who, behind the false facade of legal and spiritual authority, managed to get away with their cruel and violent behavior. With *Weirdo* and virtually every other one of the filmmaker's fucked flicks, Milligan took his therapeutic revenge against these monsters as a sort of faggy Frankenstein monster of nasty no-budget filmmaking. Considering the director's swansong, *Surgikill*, is an absolutely horrendous, Hebraic-humored horror-comedy that has absolutely no redeeming qualities whatsoever (the director's friend/biographer McDonough stated of the film, "...this movie is utterly painful to sit through [...] I'd rather not remember Andy as a gay, gutter-trash Benny Hill..."), I like to think of *Weirdo* as Milligan's last real film as a work that, not unlike his best movies like *Nightbirds* (1970) and *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973), provides more than enough reasoning as to why the director was a proud misanthrope and sadist who got a kick out of cinematically pissing on people's dreams and raining on their parades.

-Ty E

VINYL

Andy Warhol° (1965)

Aside from taking credit for other people's art and making an absurd profit off of it like some Hebraic Hollywood producer or rock manager, American pop (con)artist Andy Warhol's greatest talent as an (anti)creator was taking an existing piece of work and defiling it to the point of being totally unrecognizable, with his cinematic adaptation of Anthony Burgess' 1962 dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange*, *Vinyl* (1965), being an excellent example of this. Indeed, six years before Stanley Kubrick directed his cult masterwork *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and unwittingly incited juvenile delinquency in Great Britain (thus resulting in Kubrick's decision to withdraw the film from distribution in the U.K.), Warhol—who was then somewhat addicted to filmmaking and purportedly spending around \$400 a week on his little film experiments at the time—paid a mere \$3,000 for the rights to Burgess' novel and directed a 63-minute adaptation shot in real time that more or less celebrates the antisocial behavior of the classic 'JD' figure and demonstrates why the pop artist is arguably the most technically inept filmmaker who has ever been given any serious consideration by film critics and historians. Indeed, despite being a pathologically plodding piece of insipid celluloid incoherence starring a bunch of uniquely untalented 'cool people' posturing themselves in a flagrantly narcissistic fashion that is more worthy of being laughed at than emulated (unfortunately, as the wretched No Wave world demonstrated, some people were dumb enough to emulate it), *Vinyl* is easily one of Warhol's greatest, if not greatest, and most filmic pre-Morrissey era film production. Penned by off-off-Broadway Warhol collaborator Ronald Tavel (*Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Chelsea Girls*) over a 2 or 3 day period into a quasi-screenplay (the actors read their lines from cue cards) of what can only be described as a meta-bastardization of Burgess' novel, or as the screenwriter described his creative process, "He [Warhol] gave me the idea behind it because Warhol gave me the Burgess book, *A Clockwork Orange*, and said that he had purchased the film rights from Anthony Burgess, and he wanted me to do it... So, I took the book and read it... but I only used the first half of it because I got bored and just stopped in the middle of the novel," *Vinyl* is a hermetic homoerotic 'chamber piece' from the banal bowels of Warhol Factory hipster hell where two would-be-poet poof pansies, Gerard Malanga (Gregory J. Markopoulos' *Twice a Man*, Michel Auder's *Cleopatra*) and Robert Olivo aka 'Ondine' (*The Loves of Ondine*, *Sugar Cookies*), demonstrate they want to show up American heiress/tragic socialite Edie Sedgwick (*The Andy Warhol Story*, *Ciao! Manhattan*) in terms of charisma and sex appeal, which they ultimately fail to do. Indeed, *Vinyl* is also notable for being the first 'major' film Sedgwick starred in (though her first screen appearance was in the Warhol short *Horse* (1965)) and as screenwriter Tavel explained how she got involved with

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the project, "... somehow, they [Edie and Chuck Wein] showed up on the set of Vinyl... and they showed up to see it being shot... This really pissed me off because I had rehearsed it for a week [...] So, then we rehearsed it for a week... But when she [Sedgwick] showed up with her hair dyed silver, no less... he [Warhol] asked her to sit right on the set. She said, 'What should I do?' He said, 'Well, there's no part for you. So just sit there.' [...] And she ended up stealing the film and becoming a star overnight...," thus demonstrating the hopelessly improvised and amateurish essence of the film. Partly filmed while all the actors were high on poppers (amyl nitrate), which they actually take while on camera, Vinyl is quite arguably the most incriminating cinematic depiction of the drug-addled degeneracy and narcissism-without-talent-to-back-it-up spirit that fueled the pre-Morrissy factory films.

Opening more or less the same way as Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* did with a close-up of the face of lead 'JD' (aka juvenile delinquent) Victor (played Adonis-like Gerard Malanga in the 'Alex DeLarge' role), Vinyl has a strangely ethereal feeling at first, but from there the camera never moves a single other time for the entirety of the film. Indeed, for most of this haphazard piece of cramped celluloid chaos, all of the characters are in the shot, even when they are not acting, with J.D. McDermott (*My Hustler*) as the 'cop' on the left side of the screen smoking a cigarette in a chair, Edie Sedgwick as an 'extra' in the right corner smoking a cigarette, Ondine standing in the center of the back like a creep, and various other 'actors' standing partially onscreen. At about the 3:20 minute mark, an off-screen narrator announces "Andy Warhol's Vinyl" (this is repeated at about 30 minutes when cast is named and at about the 56 minute mark where the crew credits are named) and lead Victor soon declares to his poof partner-in-crime 'Scum Baby' (Ondine), "We'll do whatever comes along, Scum... We'll do whatever comes along, scum baby." From there, Victor heads to an imaginary place (after all, all action in the film takes place in what seems to be a corner in Warhol's factory) and begins to assault a young man carrying 'books' (aka a large stack of muscle man magazines), sarcastically saying to the poor man, "It is uncommon to see someone who knows how to read, sir [...] I have always had the deepest respect for sirs that can read." Needless to say, Victor trashes the young intellectual's books and declares, "Let's have a little bit of the old 'up yours,'" where he, with the help of Scum Baby, proceeds to tie up his victim in chains in an S&M sodomite fashion. After what proves to be a sort of substitute sex act for vice-addict Victor (indeed, he gets a sexual thrill out of handing out beatings), he smokes a joint and declares, "Ok... Ok... I am a JD. So what?! I like to bust things up and carve people up and I dig the old 'up yours' with plenty of violence so it's really tasty. And then, if I get busted by the cops...so what." So, what the hell, I say. You cannot have JD like me running loose all over the city. Then it is me that loses if I get busted."

And, indeed, as Vinyl progresses, Victor ends up losing as he is finally busted

for too much “breaking up China shops and carving up cuties,” but not before dancing like a high hippie moron to Martha and the Vandellas’ “Nowhere to Hide” (which is played not once, but twice in a row!) while an old fart Cop (J.D. McDermott) laughs manically and Edie Sedgwick grooves out in a languid and lackluster fashion. After the retarded dance routine, Victor starts a pussy fight with Sir Scum Baby and calls his compatriot “a pig” and “an ape,” but he ultimately gets his ass kicked. After beating his JD comrade up, Scum Baby calls a Cop and Victor is arrested and when the exaggeratedly odious officer of the law asks him why he tried to kill his friend, the Droog dope fiend pseudo-poetically replies, “Scum is already dead. He was born dead,” as if that is some sort of reasonable defense. After talking a bunch of banal shit like a deranged high school principal that gets a hard-on from dishing out punishment to pupils, the Cop tells Victor, “This is an ethical problem. We are going to convert you into a boy who never wants to do bad.” From there, Victor is strapped to a chair, has his hands tied around his back, his shirt ripped open, and is forced to watch brain-washing films by a devilish Doctor (Tosh Carillo). After telling his tormentor, “I see little children having their teeth pulled out by yellow dwarves. I see virgins with long white gowns and gladiators are setting fire to their gods. I see virgins trying to crawl out of the flames. I see the gladiators attempting to push them back into the flames. I hear their screams: ‘Oh, please stop this, stop this,’” while watching the ‘reprogramming’ films, Victor pleads to the Doctor, “Please stop these flickers, Doctor.” Instead of having his pleas for mercy answered, Victor is forced to sport a leather-fag ‘gimp’ mask à la *Pulp Fiction* (1994) over his head and the torture only gets worse. While being tortured, Victor complains, “How can I be made sane if I feel so much pain now?,” so the Doctor drives his boot into the young man’s genitals in a rather assertive fashion. Ultimately, Victor is ‘cured’ of his affliction and becomes a mindless slave/victim who freely allows people to torture him without any repercussions. Indeed, when Victor attempts to punch the Doctor, he cannot even land the hit and merely gets sick. Ultimately, the last 10 minutes or so of *Vinyl* climaxes into one of the most passive and uneventful homo S&M orgies in cinema history, with Victor being forced to take poppers, having his haircut, and being forcibly danced around and beaten by the Doctor as if he were a lifeless dummy or the victim of a gang-raping.

Believe it nor not, someone actually had the lack of artistic integrity to remake a miserable celluloid mess like *Vinyl*. Indeed, French-born actor/director Eric Mitchell (*Underground U.S.A.*, *The Way It Is*)—a member of the so-called ‘no wave’ movement who acted in films like Amos Poe’s *Unmade Beds* (1976) and *The Foreigner* (1978) and Jim Jarmusch’s *Permanent Vacation* (1980)—directed a quasi-remake of *Vinyl* entitled *Kidnapped* (1978). Unlike *Vinyl*, *Kidnapped* is mostly a pathetic punk fantasy with an atrocious art-punk soundtrack where a group of young degenerates kidnap a businessman RAF-style and proceeds to torture him in a chair like Gerard Malanga was in Warhol’s film. The fact that

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such a technically incompetent and largely incoherent work like *Vinyl* was such a popular work in the vogue 'underground' that it manages to inspire a remake just goes to show how much of a deleterious effect Warhol had on NYC filmmakers (ultimately, inspiring mostly worthless movements like the 'No Wave' and 'Cinema of Transgression'). While largely forgotten and never released in the United States in any home media format (though the Italian company Raro Video did release the film together with the 1966 Warhol directed documentary *The Velvet Underground and Nico*), *Vinyl* was, for whatever reason, included in the film reference book *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* (2003) edited by Steven Jay Schneider.

To Warhol's credit, *Vinyl* is one of the pre-Morrissey efforts that managed to put a smile or two on my face, if not for all the wrong reasons (in my opinion, the work plays out like Warhol-exploitation). While an avant-garde effort, *Vinyl*, unlike something like Jean Marie-Straub's similarly statically directed work *Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter* (1968) aka *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp*, is not the least bit pretentious, but instead, pathologically preposterous to the point where one must respect the auteur's seemingly autistic gall. While I would have liked to have seen nauseatingly narcissistic art fag Gerard Malanga manhandled in sadistic fashion like the demented dick-stabbers of Jacques Scandelari's *New York City Inferno* (1978), the fact the actor/poet was 'tortured' so impotently by his braindead beatnik buds makes Warhol's *Vinyl* all the more entertaining and memorable, as seeing two queens fight always make for a comical scenario. Indeed, *Vinyl* is 16mm celluloid crap, but it 16mm celluloid crap with character, albeit a character that begs to be ridiculed and critically ravaged. Undoubtedly, Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and Warhol's *Vinyl* make the perfect double feature as they represent the alpha and omega of cult cinema. *Vinyl* is indisputable proof that you can promote and make a pretty penny off of anything so long as you can convince people it is 'art.'

-Ty E

CHELSEA GIRLS

Andy Warhol° (1966)

Sometime at the end of my junior year of high school, I first heard junky kraut diva Nico's 1967 bohemian ballad "Chelsea Girls" – a song I would later learn was referential to a 1966 Andy Warhol film of the same name which also starred the singer in what was a mostly silent and somber performance that captured the melancholy essence of the beatnik Brynhildr. While Nico previously made a cameo appearance in Federico Fellini's classic *La Dolce Vita* (1960) as a smiling statuesque Nordic beauty who seemed like she was on her way to the top of the world, her appearance in *Chelsea Girls* (1966) was of a strikingly sullen nature as the seemingly apathetic and negligent mother of a young son, thus illustrating the 'sweet life' was not so sweet after all, at least for one of the most beautiful blonde beautesses in the world. An 'experimental epic' at 3 hours and 15 minutes of the innately improvised, ploddingly plot-less, passively nihilistic, emotionally and aesthetically erratic and seemingly pointless, *Chelsea Girls* would ultimately prove to be Andy Warhol's first big success as a sometimes-filmmaker as the first ostensibly 'underground' film in American history to be played in a mainstream movie theater, yet the work indubitably owes most of its 'cult status' and 'artistic integrity' to its co-director Paul Morrissey (*Blood for Dracula*, *Madame Wang's*), who many believe to be the real 'auteur' of the film. While Warhol came up with the general aesthetic concept for the film, writing to *Chelsea Girls* co-scripter Ronald Tavel (who scripted a mere two segments of the film), "I want to make a movie that is a long movie, that is all black on one side and all white on the other," Morrissey was essentially responsible for everything else, once stating, "Andy was an entrepreneur who wanted to produce something. I was the experimenter who created the experiments for him and then learned from the films that were made. I learned that really interesting personalities were out there and the trick is to let those personalities come out in front of the camera," and, indeed, one of the greatest aspects of the films is its naturalistic, albeit sometimes nauseatingly so, tone of a hotel of burnouts and bummed out beatnik bastards drowning in their own humiliating, and sometimes hysterical, humdrum lives. Warhol himself once stated of *Chelsea Girls*, "The lighting is bad, the camera work is bad, the sound is bad, but the people are beautiful," thus proving his own superficial reading of his 'own' film, but radical right-winger Morrissey managed to pack the film with enough quasi-mundane melodramatic meat to do the seemingly heretical (at least where hippie types were concerned) by unflatteringly demystifying the young, cool, and artistic by portraying them (with seemingly no effort on his part as they 'hang themselves' quite naturally) as the pretty, vacant people that most of them actually were. Featuring an iconic split-screen technique throughout combining both black-and-white and color segments of seemingly unrelated scenes and alternating soundtracks in what is an acciden-

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tal post-structuralist celluloid hippie nightmare where a deep, dark abyss exists where the soul is supposed to be, *Chelsea Girls* features the unhappening happenings of a generation too impotent and idiotic to leave anything of value to subsequent generations, aside from posturing poses and the sometimes hypnotic hysteria of half-men with imbalanced estrogen levels.

Regarding *Chelsea Girls*, Warhol once remarked, "I use superstars in my movies so they can be superstars, portray their spontaneous—uh—talents on the screen," yet the only flair the pretty people of the film have is moody broody complaining and the occasional hysterical freak-out, especially when it comes to hyper homos like early and rather odious Factory Superstar Ondine (Vinyl, *Silent Night*, *Bloody Night*) – a man so innately impotent and mentally unsound that he feels the need to physically and verbally assault women and even has the audacity to try (and fail miserably) and pseudo-philosophize his actions later. Other Warhol Superstars featured in *Chelsea Girls* include Nico, Brigid Berlin, Gerard Malanga, Mary Woronov (playing 'Hanoi Hannah' in one of the two segments of the film scripted by Tavel), Ingrid Superstar, International Velvet and Eric Emerson, as well as a symbolic appearance by experimental filmmaker Marie Menken – who not only influenced Andy Warhol's banal brand of filmmaking, but also Kenneth Anger and Stan Brakhage – as a motherly figure. Whether one wants to acknowledge it or not, one becomes a voyeur-by-default when watching a film and one becomes especially conscious of their pathological scopophilic tendencies while viewing *Chelsea Girls* – a film where nothing and everything happens in a quaint hotel from hippie Hades where everyone is unhappy, except when sadistically molesting someone or procuring and abusing mind-altering substances so as to dull their lack of personal substance. Needless and heedless narcissism is the name of the game in the Hotel Chelsea, a spiritually and emotionally vapid lunatic asylum of the lethargic libertine sort where fags attack fag hags, bitchy blonde bull-dykes bargain large quantities of dope over the phone, wealthy queens manhandle young twinks, sexual experiences and religious beliefs are inanely touched on, and where no one can seem to bother to give a shit about anything but themselves, even if everyone there seems to destroy their minds and bodies with a sad cocktail of sex, drugs, and rock n roll. Assuredly, if someone overdosed on heroin and laid sprawled out with the needle still in their diseased genitals in the Hotel Chelsea, the other tenants of the overly blasé building would be too immersed in an unrelenting anti-nostalgic rant about their sexual awakening to bother to notice. Indeed, if the Chelsea Hotel featured in *Chelsea Girls* burned down with all of its occupants inside, I doubt the viewers or even the occupants would care because at least then they could feel something aside from feeling dead inside and would at least be put out of their misery. Surely, it is no coincidence that junky punk icon Sid Vicious would stab his Jewish prostitute girlfriend Nancy Spungen to death at the Hotel Chelsea twelve years after the release of *Chelsea Girls*. As the

film demonstrates in a slightly less violent fashion, somehow when drug-addled rockers and 'artistes' lock themselves in dark rooms, things get a bit ugly and rather retarded.

In a December 1978 interview with Chelsea Girl star Ondine, who gives a performance that earned him "cult status" as a belligerent bitch boy who feels the need to assault women to assert his broken manhood and even proudly states to the camera "I am a violent person," he described the importance of the film and Warhol's influence as follows, "And in that film, not only in my segment—the culmination of my career at that point. But, quite honestly, he (Warhol) got from everybody involved in the film—everything that they could do. There are people running around wasted on the street now because they did it in that film. They should be, but they're probably dead. [laughing] There's no way out of that film. That film is a living torture test." Of course, Paul Morrissey's more imperative influence as a crypto-director is apparent in the film itself in a scene of Ondine as the prissy "Pope" during one of his real mental breakdowns when he states to the camera/director, "I'm ready to get any kind of confession, Paul. Anyone who wants to confess may confess," as the flamboyant flamer finally becomes clearly conscious of the fact that his less than prudent performance is incriminating and quite embarrassing due to his mindless megalomania and unwarranted assault against an equally mindless young woman. While not as blatant in his later films, *Chelsea Girls* would also be arguably the first film where Paul Morrissey exposed the sexual revolution and the counter-culture as deleterious abject failures that created a spiritual void in those individuals who fell for such self-gratifying degeneracy, yet, quite paradoxically, queer Jewish feminist Kathy Acker believed that his films, "made the art world, then the United States generally, accept, even admire those whom they had formerly condemned: drag queens, strippers, young homeless kids, not hippy pot smokers but actual heroin addicts and welfare victims," so one could argue that the auteur filmmaker's 'political objective' backfired, at least to some degree. Luckily, most kids today lack the attention span to even get through the first 5 minutes of *Chelsea Girls*, so they are going to have to develop their artificial angst and bitter romance for drugs and 'free sex' from illiterate rappers and the latest scatological Hollywood kosher comedy instead as the film has aged quite ungracefully.

After years of procrastination, I finally managed to get through the grueling 3+ hour entirety of *Chelsea Girls* the other day and I can safely say that I doubt I will ever re-watch the film ever again, but if I did, it would be while reading a book and listening to music because, in terms of actual worthwhile content and provocative ideas, the film has a tad bit more depth than vintage wallpaper. In fact, I would go as far as saying that I agree with Roger Ebert's review of the film, where he gave one out of four stars for the work, writing, "...what we have here is 3½ hours of split-screen improvisation poorly photographed, hardly edited at all, employing perversion and sensation like chili sauce to disguise the

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aroma of the meal. Warhol has nothing to say and no technique to say it with. He simply wants to make movies, and he does: hours and hours of them." Of course, Paul Morrissey never made a lie about the fact that *Chelsea Girls* was a cinematic "experiment" and nothing more and nothing less. Morrissey would later put the split-screen technique to better use in his seedy hustler flick *Forty Deuce* (1982) starring a very young and greasy bisexual, heroin-addicted Kevin Bacon in a sardonically sick scenario of a dead child in a bed on one screen and two degenerate dick-peddlers (Bacon being one of them) blackmailing a middle-aged bourgeois John regarding the dead kid in the other screen. More importantly, *Chelsea Girls* would inspire at least two of the greatest directors of German New Cinema, including dandy auteur Werner Schroeter, who utilized the split-screen technique and kaleidoscopic colors (featured prominently at the end of *Chelsea Girls*) in his excellent 35-minute short *Argila* (1969), as well as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who adopted the posturing 'beatnik' attitude (both on and off film) and plodding plot to his semi-autobiographical work *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971). Although once described by *Newsweek* as, "the *Iliad* of the Underground," *Chelsea Girls* is best seen today as an inane yet semi-important artifact of arthouse film history and as one of the least autistic and most 'coherent' films Warhol ever produced, but not as an unparalleled masterpiece of film history. Personally, I still prefer the Nico song.

-Ty E

MY HUSTLER

Andy Warhol^o (1966)

Described by the Factory Führer fag Andy Warhol himself as, “the story of an old fag who brings a butch blond hustler to Fire Island for the weekend and his neighbors all try to lure the hustler away,” and dubiously credited to both Warhol and Chuck Wein (Rainbow Bridge) – who acted as Edie Sedgwick’s promoter (inevitably introducing her to Warhol) – *My Hustler* (1965) is an important film that marked a turning point for the Factory films because, unlike all the of previous films that lingered in plodding plot-less-ness and were generally banal body worship, it actually features a discernible plot, editing, and – relatively speaking – ambitious pan-shots that switch back-and-forth between a gentle giant gigolo on the beach and the backporch of an old bitchy queen’s beach house. What sparked this change in *My Hustler* and practically all subsequent Factory films in terms of narrative structure and the general mise-en-scène is that Paul Morrissey began to take over virtually all stages of the filmmaking process, including directing, editing, producing, and distributing, even once stating in an interviewing, “whatever directing these films had, came from me.” Centering around a shallow yet stoic novice hustler, *My Hustler* – with its less than compassionate portrayal of a strikingly statuesque yet superlatively superficial and stupid stud – would also act as practice for Paul Morrissey first ‘official’ feature-length cinematic work *Flesh* (1968); the inaugural film in his original trilogy (the other two being *Trash* and *Heat*), as well as his rarely-seen post-Factory work *Forty Deuce* (1982) starring a very young and a surpassingly sleazy Kevin Bacon as a hustler/heroin addict. Essentially divided into two separate acts from two different film reels, the first segment of *My Hustler* – which features actual editing – focuses on the catty ravings of a rich bitch old queer and the equally catty remarks of his female ‘friend’ and his aged ex-streetwalker man servant as they gaze voyeuristically at the blond beast on the beach, and the second – which is comprised of a single shot and is of a more distinctly Warholian flavor – focuses on the handsome hunk as he is gawked at and fawned over like a juicy slab of meat, and is propositioned by the three horny and hysterical human hyenas. Although no day at the beach in terms of aesthetic and storyline, it is still a must-see for Morrissey fans as it shows the filmmaker’s ‘technique’ at its most gritty, primitive, and socio-politically scant form.

Undoubtedly, all of the characters featured in *My Hustler* are miserable, misanthropic narcissists of the exceedingly egomaniacal sort with Mr. Man Meat himself being the least nauseating, if only due to the fact that he is a novice to the game of a lecherous life of gay prostitution. Unbeknownst to him, blond hustler hunk Paul played by Paul America – who Warhol himself described as, “unbelievably good-looking - like a comic-strip drawing of Mr. America, clean-cut, handsome, very symmetrical. He seemed to be exactly six feet tall and weigh

MY HUSTLER

some nice round number” – is being spied on by three scopophilic degenerates of the dangerously debauched and devising sort. The old queen – a particularly pretentious and pompous odd fellow with a positively unpleasant appearance being bald and blistered – is a master of mental and rhetorical masturbation, which he makes a point of unleashing on his two cohorts and later Paul. The supernuated queer has a right-hand man and virtual sex serf on the surf named Joe (played by Joseph Campbell aka ‘The Sugar-Plum Fairy’) whose job is to wait hand and knees on both his boss and the boss’ latest acquisition Paul. The third member of the terrible threesome is neighbor Genevieve (Genevieve Charbon) who – being a ferocious fag hag – gets “some kind of perverse psychological enjoyment out of stealing them (twinks) from faggots,” as declared by the old queen. Genevieve is apparently a master at “stealing tricks from hustlers,” which assuredly infuriates the posh poof because not only does she get to sleep with the high dollar twink for free – the same man that the seasoned fag has to pay top dollar for – but she also has the potential of sexually rehabilitating the salesman of his lust for sodomy. Despite stating salaciously that he would love to “run barefoot through all those goldilocks” in regard to Paul, the old queen thinks very little of his bought two-legged beefcake, later remarking that hustlers are, at best, one-dimensional creatures whose only interests are comprised of “leather boots and motorcycles.” Needless to say, the seasoned sodomite is the sort of slave-driving fag-master that abberosexual Aryan auteur Rosa von Praunheim warned about in his curious celluloid manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971). In fact, the pushing poof admits “there are black slaves and there are white slaves,” with the young and dashing Europid being the apple of his erection. If one is to learn anything from *My Hustler*, it is that hustling makes for a humiliating, unstable, and short-lived (and oftentimes life-shortening) occupation, that fag hags make for meager mothers and lifeless lovers, and that ancient queens love to reign supreme over their self-created overripe realms.

I think that most fans of the Trash director will agree that *My Hustler* makes for a meager Morrissey film, but, nonetheless, it is an interesting excursion in the deconstruction of the ‘romantic’ gigolo life, thus making the considerably campy cinematic work mandatory viewing for those interested in the history of the so-called ‘Factory’ filmmaker. According to Gerard Malanga – who worked on a number of early Warhol films, including acting in *Kiss* (1963), *Vinyl* (1965), and *Chelsea Girls* (1966); and co-produced *Bufferin* (1967) – *My Hustler* (along with *Chelsea Girls*) was one of the first Factory films to turn a profit, albeit marginal, which is undoubtedly due in part to Paul Morrissey’s artistic involvement with the film. As for all-American hustler Paul America – who was a fullback and defensive linebacker on his high school football team – he only appeared in one more acting role after *My Hustler* as ‘Paul’ in *Ciao! Manhattan* (1972); a work featuring fellow “Warhol superstar” Edie Sedgwick in her

last acting role before her premature death via barbiturate/alcohol overdose that same year. America lived at the Factory from 1965 to 1968 and to quote odious Warhol superstar Ondine, "Paul America was everybody's lover.... He was the personification of total sexual satisfaction. Without a brain in his head. Just beautifully vapid. He was a wonderful creature. Anybody who wanted anything from Paul could get it. He was there to satisfy. And he did" and according to art curator Henry Geldzahler, by the early 1980s the handsome hunk, "was a wasted creature after they [Warhol's crowd] had finished with him. They finally washed their hands of him and let him float away. He's a poor burned-out thing living in a commune in Indiana and trying to pull himself together." In 1982, Paul America was ran over and killed by a car while on his way to a dental appointment. Needless to say, he never acquired the life of "money, cars, education, travel and beautiful women" that was offered to him by the old queen in My Hustler.

-Ty E

BIKE BOY
BIKE BOY

Andy Warhol° (1967)

Without question, out of all of Andy Warhol's early pre-"Paul Morrissey Trilogy" autistic-garde films, the color feature-length work *Bike Boy* (1967) – a minimalistic drama about a buff, braindead bohunk biker who goes head-to-head verbally with a number of Warhol Superstars – is the greatest and most entertaining, not least of all because the supposed 'cinematographer' (Paul Morrissey) contributed immensely (and some would say solely) to the overall thematic and aesthetic essence of the film. In fact, the filmmaking roles were quite the opposite of what is listed on *imdb.com*, as Paul Morrissey explained in an interview in the book *The Eyeball Compendium* (2003) that: "He himself (Warhol) could not physically, was not capable of making his own experiments, someone else had to make his experiments for him. He wanted them to be experiments. To keep Andy involved with the experiment, he operated the camera. He operated the camera on *LONESOME COWBOYS* and *BIKE BOY* and things like that" and in another interview: "There wasn't much direction in these experiments but whatever directing was done, I did. Andy just aimed the camera." Indeed, *Bike Boy* has the unmistakable feel of a Paul Morrissey work, especially when compared to his original factory film trilogy (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*), albeit more archaic and gritty; traits that ultimately work in the favor of this early experiment in realist pseudo-cinéma vérité anti-aesthetics. Instead of Joe Dallesandro as the beautiful and verbally brutish beefcake star, *Bike Boy* features quasi-wop Joseph Spencer (whose sole other acting credit is a cameo on terribly trashy TV series *Baywatch Nights*) as 'Joe, the Motorcyclist'; a cliché and cryptically gay bonafide 'bad boy' with the tattoo "Born To Lose" branded on his arm. To Warhol's minor credit, the pop-con-artist was apparently heavily influenced by Kenneth Anger's iconic short *Scorpio Rising* (1964); a work that *Bike Boy* seems to be quite conscious of with its flagrant biker fetishism, fearless flaunting of the male body, and flirtation with themes of Nazism, yet depicted in a marvelously mock-heroic fashion. In short, *Bike Boy* decisively deconstructs and demystifies the proto-leather-fag motorcycle rebel that first made its appearance in the American public's conscious via the outlaw biker movie *The Wild One* (1953) starring Marlon Brando as the enigmatic rebel-without-a-cause. Anti-anti-hero Joe of *Bike Boy* is nothing short of a rebel-without-a-brain-and-an-erection who can't even keep up with casual conversations between Warhol's speed-addled Superstars nor does he have the chic fashion sense to pick out an urbane urban uniform without the help of raving and snidely snickering queens, let alone takeover an entire town as Brando and his crew *The Black Rebels Motorcycle Club* do in *The Wild One*. In short, Joe is, at best, a blue-collar fashion victim that is as wild and warring as a wet Chinese wang on Sunday in the dead of winter.

Like with Morrissey's subsequent work *Trash* (1968) starring Joe Dallesan-

dro, Bike Boy begins with a scene of the philistine protagonist in a gratuitous, if gauche, scene totally stark-naked. Joe is neither a gentlemen nor a scholar, but he does know how to use running water as demonstrated by the fact that the first 5 minutes of Bike Boy essentially revolve around him taking a less than sexy shower in an underlit room. Of course, all things go downhill for Joe Schmo biker after he runs into members of Warhol's dick and drug addicted Superstars, not only because they make him feel stupid due to their semi-literate linguistic skills, but also because they are the queens (especially the homo clothing salesmen) of verbal diarrhea and marvelously mundane mental masturbation. After enduring the seemingly unending verbal venom of two clothing store queers – who have a fond time glancing at the bike boy's bulging underwear and discussing perfume on penises, the fertility of flower children, and an imaginary film "Transparent Transvestite" – Joe goes to a flower store and hangs out with a man that proclaims to be a fellow bike boy, listed in the credits as "Joe's Buddy" (Ed Wiener). Joe and his bald-headed buddy discuss such important problems as the recent assassination of American Nazi Party founder and Führer George Lincoln Rockwell (who was killed by a brown-complexion brownshirt of Greek descent named John Patler that was expelled from the party due to his "bolshhevik leanings"), the bike boy's plans to blow-off the head of an enemy with a shotgun, the pros and cons of bestiality (Joe states he would rather fuck a sheep, which he claims to have done once before, than bugger a hefty "horse" aka a big-boned blonde chick), and the merits of being a "cunning linguist" (Joe claims to have a big tongue and be a master of oral sex). Next, Joe has the grand pleasure of engaging in a one-sided conversation with Ingrid Superstar, a hyperactive and seemingly neurotic chick that absurdly proclaims, "That's what I hate about you men, you all know that you're good looking" while clearly but failingly attempting to get in the apathetic bike boy's pants. While Ingrid rants incessantly on a variety of pointless topics like how "soup is so divine," how "men drive her nuts," and her narcissistic claim that "what matters is what I (Ingrid) like, not what you like," Joe merely stares into space, paying literally nil attention to the hyper-horny hysterical broad spewing verbal venom at him. Thoroughly dismayed, Ingrid even pulls her tits out and accuses Joe of being a "faggot" but he is never once phased nor impressed. By far the most repellant Superstar that Joe undergoes is big bloated bitch Brigid Berlin – an arrogant and aggressive amphetamine addict with a passively and seemingly homosexual husband – who accuses the Brando-esque biker of being a "faggot," "motorcycle queen," and "leather lady"; and he describes her as a "Faggot" and "dyke" with "the face of a dyke" (aka "a horny looking face") that likes to "do 69s all the time." Needless to say, Joe blow biker never gets a blow-job from bulky bull Brigid Berlin.

Out of all the gorgeous and not so gaudy gals 'bikey' (as he calls himself) Joey encounters, only Viva – a vehement she-bitch notorious for her vivacious viciousness against the male gender, especially in regard to sexual scenarios – catches

BIKE BOY

his fancy, so much so that attempt to engage in carnal knowledge, but – to the utter amusement of the deranged Warhol darling – the bike boy is no Don Juan and his peeled penis remains noticeably pendulous during the entirety of their exceedingly endless and uneventful sensual encounter. To her credit, Viva seems genuinely interested in Joe, his tattoos, and what little he has to say, thereupon discovering that his swastika tat (which, incidentally, is turned the wrong way) was the result of a drunken night that the bike boy cannot recollect and that he has a 'Born To Lose' brand on his arm because he's a "Born Loser." In the end, like Paul Morrissey's subsequent trilogy with Little Joe and his post-Factory efforts, Bike Boy ridicules, rebukes, and rather harshly but relevantly reams another romanticized but ultimately shallow, sterile (literally in Joe's case), and stupid American rebel icon: the Outlaw Biker. In Bike Boy, Scorpio is falling and he cannot get his dick up; themes that utilize against the counter-culture movements to 'polished' and potent degree via Trash, Flesh, and Heat. If anything makes Bike Boy stick out from Warhol's and Morrissey's other films, it is the 'humanity' that is brought to the character of Joe. Indeed, the would-be-bad bike boy may be a half-retarded wop with an acute case of nauseating narcissism, a broken ego, and sadomasochistic tendencies, but he is certainly more sympathetic and sincere than Warhol's wayward gang and at least he does real work for a living. That being said, if you plan to see one of Warhol's celluloid trainwrecks, make it Bike Boy; a marvelous meandering motion-picture where bombastic bad boys and slap-happy speed-queens play a gay game of survival of the unfittest.

-Ty E

I, A MAN

Andy Warhol° (1967)

In compensation for the fact that he had lost a screenplay that had been lent to him with the rather tasteful Warhol-esque title *Up Your Ass*, pansy pop-artist Andy Warhol cast the would-be-screenwriter in his latest film *I, a Man* (1967). The writer of the screenplay was a deranged bull-dyke named Valerie Solanas—a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic and all-around feminist whack-job who urged women to overthrow the government and exterminate all men in her hyper hysterical self-published polemic, the SCUM Manifesto (the acronym meaning “Society For Cutting Up Men”)—and by early 1968 she would try but ultimately fail to assassinate the man who gave her only two acting roles (Solanas would also have a very small cameo in the Warhol production *Bike Boy* the same year). As for her excuse for wanting to kill the alpha-con-artist, Solanas made two seemingly contradictory statements on two different occasions: “I just wanted him to pay attention to me. Talking to him was like talking to a chair” and “He had too much control of my life,” probably not realizing that, as Paul Morrissey has mentioned in various interviews, that Warhol was socially retarded, if not downright autistic. Ironically, Solanas’ botched assassination attempt would contribute to the end of Warhol’s directing career because, aside from the fact that Paul Morrissey was already ghost-directing most of his films by that time, the beloved soup can fetishist would be too afraid to get involved with active art and working hands-on with superstars after his near-death experience, so he focused on more entrepreneurial matters. Indeed, Morrissey began collaborating with Warhol on films in 1965 at the youthful age of 27 by taking creative control over *My Hustler* (1965) and would secure his place in cinema history a year later by (co)directing the cult classic *Chelsea Girls* (1966) where he introduced a psychedelic split-screen technique, even though his real directing career had yet to begin. Of course, as a work that, according to Morrissey himself, was apparently shot in one day (mainly at night), *I, a Man* is not exactly one of Morrissey’s most innovative and remarkable works, but it would act as a prototype of sorts for his iconic anti-counter-culture trilogy (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) starring Joe Dallesandro and is thus mandatory viewing for fans of the vehemently rightwing auteur’s subversive oeuvre. Apparently, the film was originally supposed to star Jim “The Lizard King” Morrison in the lead role but The Doors singer’s manager was against the idea, so his friend, Hollywood actor Tom Baker (who would later appear in the Italian-French film anthology *Love and Anger* (1969) aka *Amore e rabbia* and Dennis Hopper’s *The Last Movie* (1971), among various other obscure art films) took over the job as the leading man and would ultimately have the honor of being verbally berated by meat-beating Sapphic psycho Solanas in a dark stairwell. Like *Bike Boy*, *I, a Man*, which is a parody of the prosaic piece of now-forgotten Danish-Swedish erotica *I, a Woman* (1965) starring Essy Pers-

I, A MAN

son, is a work of quasi-anti-sexploitation that follows a handsome but hopelessly dumb and superficial stud as he gets with a bunch of equally vapid chicks and they spend more time insulting one another than doing anything even remotely sexually appealing. An early cockeyed vision of Morrissey's mockery of 'toilet culture', the film features, among other things, lesbo lunatics talking about beating their meat, burnout bohemian babes call their breasts fried eggs, young impotent men proudly proclaiming their love of TV and hatred of literature, and a spontaneous séance given in honor of the late great John Wilkes Booth. Indeed, *I, a Man* features a cast of pretty vacant characters who talk, talk, talk, yet have nothing to say, thus acting as a sort of movie microcosm for what the whole Warhol Factory was about.

As can be expected from virtually all of the Morrissey/Warhol collaborations of the mid-to-late-1960s, *I, a Man* begins just abruptly as it concludes with male bimbo bro Tom Baker sleeping in bed with an annoying chick (Cynthia May) who tells him that he has to leave ASAP as her old fashioned parents are arriving soon, but before he actually leaves, the two mentally/erotically challenged love birds decide to play footsies under the bed. A mundane male whore, Tom begs for everything that he can get for free from the hysterical young lady, including cigarettes, coffee, and a shower. By the end of their little love fest, the girl tells Tom that he should, "Jump out of the window before my parents come." When Tom, who is now naked and standing in the chick's kitchen, asks her for some sugar for his coffee, she says "you don't deserve it" in a rather nasty fashion and throws a cup of java in his face. Needless to say, Tom leaves after that and goes looking for another dumb dame to exploit with his imaginary charms. On top of the roof a penthouse, Tom proves to the next girl (Stephanie Graves) that he tries in vain to swoon that he cannot even remember the most rudimentary characteristics of her appearance, stating when she puts him on the spot by remarking that he does not even know the color of her eyes, "Yes I do, they're...the same color they were when I met you." When Tom asks the girl, who lives off the generosity of an older man, if she is a hooker, she simply states, "Well, not really [...] I don't go around and walk the streets," thus revealing that she realizes that she is a whore of sorts, if not a rather successful one with a loyal sugar-daddy. On his next dull date, Tom hooks up with a feisty fire-crotch (Ingrid Superstar aka Ingrid von Schoffen), who shows him her fairly decent tits (which she calls "fried eggs"), to which he responds, "You should take better care of yourself," as if he is the living embodiment of god's gift to women. After grabbing one of Ingrid's breasts and further insulting her appearance, the two attempt to conjure up the spirit of John Wilkes Booth (of course, an infamous real-life assassin will appear later in the film, but no one knew that at the time it was made) during a séance to ask him why he killed Lincoln while the little lady lies on a table with a candle sitting between her legs, but naturally no apparition appears as they clearly have no clue what they are doing.

The next chick Tom hooks up with is tragic German diva Nico (who only originally agreed to be in the film because she thought her then-crush Jim Morrison would star in it, so she demanded Tom Baker star in the film when the Lizard King opted out), who is undoubtedly the most mild mannered and elegant chick in the entire film (though, it should be noted that, unlike all the chicks who used speed, heroin was Nico's drug of choice, hence her calm presence). Despite his innate superficiality and unwarranted arrogance, Tom seems to make a true romantic connection with Nico, who treats him with unwarranted warmth and affection, as if she is desperate for true love yet a bit shy at the same time. The next chick Tom visits is a sweet French babe (played by Ultra Violet aka Isabelle Collin Dufresne, who was Salvador Dalí's muse during the mid-1950s until the surrealist introduced her to Warhol in 1963 and she decided to move into the Factory not long after) who tells him to, "blow hot air on my feet." Tom and Ultra Violet have a short but sweet sensual time that mostly involves them messing around like little children on the latter's apartment floor. Unfortunately for him, the next young lecherous lady Tom hooks up with, Ivy Nicholson aka 'Ms. Tigress' (as she calls herself during the scene), is a bit crazed and proclaims to be strong because she has "Mongol blood" and then proceeds to babble about how Alice in Wonderland is a "funny" and "romantic" novel. Of course, Tom seems no more intelligent, confessing, "I don't like to read much...I watch a lot of television...which is more exciting." It should be noted that Ivy was apparently no less emotionally troubled in real-life because, as Tom would later reveal in an interview regarding working with her, "The first time I sensed impending danger was during a scene with Ivy Nicholson. She had stipulated that she would not appear on camera with me in the nude. Shortly after the scene began I walked out of the frame and removed the towel I was wearing in order to put on my pants. Clad only in unlaundered bikini underwear, Ivy exploded in an emotional fury and stormed out of the room in tears, claiming she had been betrayed. I was talking with Warhol, who was very much perplexed by Ivy's behaviour since, as he casually pointed out, 'Ivy'll cut her wrists for me...'"

In the next and arguably most important scene of *I, a Man*, Tom briefly hooks up with demented dyke Valerie Solanas, yet rather ironically, the actor admitted he had a somewhat nice experience working with the fiercely frigid feminist on the film, stating in an interview, "My third scene was with Valerie Solanas. I felt no personal threat from Valerie. Just the opposite. I found her intelligent, funny, almost charming, and very, very frightened." Of course, anyone who has actually seen the scene will notice that Solanas seems like anything but frightened as she tries with all her man-woman might to emasculate poor Tom boy. Tom and Solanas have their fleeting encounter in a shadowy stairway (which was apparently shot at the Warhol Factory) and the lethal lesbo proceeds to call the man-whore a "fink" and adds, "You know, you've got the most squishiest male ass I've ever seen." Indeed, with her vulgar objectifying remarks and aggressive

I, A MAN

behavior, Solanas seems like a living parody of the sort of misogynist men she proclaimed to want to exterminate in her manifesto. After Solanas reveals, "It all started in the elevator when I grabbed your [Tom's] ass," she confesses "You got me at a weak moment...I'm a pushover for a squishy ass," but she ultimately proves to be all talk as she abandons Tom because, as she states herself, "I gotta go beat my meat." While Warhol/Morrissey should have probably ended *I, a Man* with the Solanas scene, Tom goes to see one more chick, Bettina Coffin, in a brazenly banal scenario that unfortunately takes up the entire final 1/3 of the film. For those viewers looking for fag porn, Tom's uneventful erotic encounter with Bettina is the only scene where he exposes his cock and balls. Of course, instead of getting an erection and boning babe Bettina, he bitches at the chick for killing cockroaches and her unborn baby (she says she had an abortion because she did not want to marry the father of the child). Shockingly, Tom's seemingly unending dialogue with Bettina is the only point in the entire film where he makes any sense and gives evidence that his moral compass is not as busted as one initially suspected. In the end, Bettina attempts to call her brother, who she was supposed to meet for dinner but Tom screwed that up, and the film cuts off abruptly.

A mind-numbingly mundane window into counter-culture-victimized human crud who unwaveringly support 'free love' yet cannot even consummate coitus in a work starring a future rock 'n' roll casualty who would drop dead just like his good bud Jim Morrison via a heroin overdose 15 years after proudly revealing to the entire world that he was an arrogant moron by becoming a one-time Warhol superstar, *I, a Man* is nothing short of static semi-eccentric celluloid excrement that demonstrates why Paul Morrissey would become one of the most important American cultural critics of his generation. As for murderously gynocentric 'lone wolf lesbo' Valerie Solanas, she was apparently embarrassed by her role in the film and would send Warhol a postcard dated August 25, 1967 making the following complaint: "Dear Andy, I've been noticing gross misspellings of my name in articles & reviews connected with 'I, A Man.' Please note correct spelling." Of course, after she cowardly shot Warhol (as well as art critic Mario Amaya) on June 3, 1968 in a stereotypically passive-aggressive female manner while the pop-artist was turned around and talking on the phone, Solanas would not have to worry about people misspelling her name, as she was inevitably immortalized with the sympathetic biopic *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996) directed by Canadian feminist Mary Harron (who later demonstrated her hatred of white Nordic men with *American Psycho* (2000)) and starring the equally sub-homely Lili Taylor in the lead role. In fact, Solanas' performance in *I, a Man* was reenacted in Harron's horrendous film, with Bill Sage portraying Tom Baker. After serving a mere three-year prison sentence (had she been a man, she would have most certainly had a longer and more agonizing prison stay), Solanas was released in 1971 and would continue to stalk Warhol via tele-

phone, thus she was arrested again in November 1971 and spent the rest of her pathetic life drifting between mental institutions and homelessness. In a classically female fashion, Solanas would later express no remorse for her crimes, stating regarding her botched assassination attempt against Warhol, "I consider that a moral act. And I consider it immoral that I missed. I should have done target practice." As for Warhol, he would fittingly relate the attempt against his life to cinema, stating, "Before I was shot, I always thought that I was more half-there than all-there—I always suspected that I was watching TV instead of living life. People sometimes say that the way things happen in movies is unreal, but actually it's the way things happen in life that's unreal. The movies make emotions look so strong and real, whereas when things really do happen to you, it's like watching television—you don't feel anything. Right when I was being shot and ever since, I knew that I was watching television. The channels switch, but it's all television." Of course, *I, a Man*, as well as most of the pre-*Flesh* (1968) films, make real genuine emotions seem like a thing of the past, with the actors being strung-out on speed and always sedentary, and the direction being so innately inept, that the viewer almost suspects they're trapped in some sort of bohemian purgatory of perennial banality. Indeed, if Warhol and Solanas are now in hell together as some might conclude, I would not be surprised if their punishment was to watch unending screenings of *I, a Man* while listening to the pansy pontificating of poof poet/woman-beater/sod superstar Ondine.

-Ty E

THE NUDE RESTAURANT
THE NUDE RESTAURANT

Andy Warhol° (1967)

“You would think Castro did the castrations” or so says the would-be-witty but nonetheless amusing Taylor Mead (Tarzan and Jane Regained...Sort Of, Coffee and Cigarettes) – a Warhol Factory superstar who has the misfortune of looking like a middle-aged fetus – in the oftentimes spastic and surfeiting yet sometimes startlingly stimulating color feature-length film *The Nude Restaurant* (1967) directed by Andy Warhol (Vinyl, Poor Little Rich Girl) and apparently in part ghost-directed by Paul Morrissey (Blood for Dracula, Madame Wang’s). Originally directing two different films at once – one featuring an all-male cast, which was inevitably trashed and a second featuring infamous fag hag Superstar Viva in the starring role aside Taylor Mead, which is the campy culinary cinematic work that exists today – *The Nude Restaurant* is a side-freakish flick featuring an all-partially-nude cast that merely babbles about everything ranging from “European Freudian bullshit” to the rampant heterosexuality of the mick Catholic clergy. Like *Grey Gardens* (1975) directed by Brothers Maysles – a delightful, if disturbing, documentary about Jackie O’s reclusive socialite aunt and first cousin – *The Nude Restaurant* is a work about that is, in part, about the rather repugnant side-effects of growing relatively ritzy and the completely and utterly ineffectual thoughts and cheap trash talk that such privy privileges of a posh upbringing bestows. As she explains in the film, Viva (born Janet Susan Mary Hoffmann) is the reluctant daughter of a wealthy lawyer (who was a loyal follower of senator Joe McCarthy) and once considered being a nun, but ended up posing needlessly nude for the films of an acutely autistic pop-artist instead. During *The Nude Restaurant*, Taylor Mead also confesses that he was born a member of the comfortable class, but the only thing he has to show for it is being a 40-year-old “virgin with possibilities” (both male and female) and being arrested nine times and showing his glaringly grotesque gluteus maximus off for 70-minutes in Warhol’s innately infantile flick *Taylor Mead’s Ass* (1965). In *The Nude Restaurant*, both Viva and Mead give it there all by bombarding the viewer with their particularly puerile and unpleasantly perverse psychobabble in a ferociously fruitless flick that tests the patience of even the most trash-treading (and treasuring) of cinephiles.

Although Viva was never the most studious of Catholic schoolgirls growing, she did develop a particularly close and personal relationship with her priest, who confided in the dirtball diva about “oral intercourse” and even dabbled with her derriere and stuck his whole holy tongue down her teenage throat as she explains in great and glorifying detail in *The Nude Restaurant*. Contrary to contemporary consensus where anytime someone hears the word “pope” or “priest” they think of a puny and peculiar old man in a preposterous dress with a particular predisposition towards altar-boys, Viva claims that her Catholic church was full

of rampantly heterosexual priests with a paralyzing predilection for pubescent pussies, so much so that many of these perverted padres were exiled to cold areas so as to chill their little bishops in turtlenecks. In *The Nude Restaurant*, Viva describes her childhood experiences with Catholicism as “My Memoirs of the Catholic Girlhood,” which she proclaims is superior to Irish-Jewish-American author/political activist Mary Therese McCarthy’s book of a similarly titled name. A hypnotic hypocrite with an idiosyncratic lure, Viva says she’d rather be a lesbo than a hetero – which she associates with sadomasochism – despite stating to her swarthy man-friend Mr. Mead only a couple minutes later, “That’s the trouble with being around homosexuals; you always feel like covering up because you know you aren’t appreciated.” In no way phased regarding her embarrassingly pronounced narcissism, Viva vies for attention against the handful of people in *The Nude Restaurant*, despite the fact that, as a waitress aka softcore slut, hence the comedic “genius” of the film where a poor little rich girl attempts performing the most subservient occupation in the world as a topless server and failing miserably in the process; offering neither sensuality nor service in the process. Of course, Taylor Mead is an even more intrinsically incompetent, inept, wimpy, whiny, and utterly worthless waiter, as no degree of charm could hide the fact that he looks like a proto-AIDS victim and that guy g-string certainly does not do him any favors. Suffice to say, *The Nude Restaurant* does offer a campy carnal feast as advertised in the title, albeit of the Warholian abberosexual proto-hipsters-from-hell sort.

Like in Paul Morrissey’s trilogy and his later works, *The Nude Restaurant* does spoof the innate impotence, irrationalism, indecency, and overall idiocy of the so-called sexual revolution, as well as other counter-movement trends. One of the fellows that is a patron of *The Nude Restaurant* is an absurdly asinine and delusional anti-war activist who makes drug-addled dimwit Taylor Mead seem like an astute professor of philosophy by comparison. At one point in their inane conversation with one another, the slave-morality moralist activist states the following hippie truism, “anyone who doesn’t like war must be beautiful,” to which Mr. Mead replies, “not necessarily,” thereupon bursting the self-satisfied anti-war enthusiast’s bloated and bombastic bubble of pacifistic neo-bolshevik baloney. Viva also makes these fellows seem like yellow-bellied yokels, proclaiming to a white hippie bastard that claims he is related to some prominent Injun chief that, “that’s what they all say,”; “they” meaning all ethno-masochistic counter-culture, hippie, and post-hippie whites who will attempt to ‘uncover’ any nonwhite ancestry they can unearth from their family tree, even if it is total phony puffery of the most paltry and pathetic sort. Of course, the film certainly has something distinctly ‘Warholian’ about it because as a camera whore who would pull out dildos and nude mags while members of the press would photograph him, the basic and seemingly superficial premise of *The Nude Restaurant* – a cinematic work featuring an all-nude diner with penis designs on the menus –

THE NUDE RESTAURANT

is indubitably of the autistic pop-artist's particular persuasion. Although quite tame by today's standards, the film caused a bit of controversy after its initial premiere at the Hudson Theatre on 44th Street in New York. Nowadays, the only thing 'subversive' and 'taboo' about *The Nude Restaurant* is its portrayal of peace activists as pompous, drug-riddled, bourgeois-born retards whose idea of 'political action' is occupying a piece of public pavement, being arrested and subsequently playing the scripted part of a martyr, hence its somewhat lasting value as a film today.

-Ty E

LONESOME COWBOYS

Andy Warhol° (1968)

On top of predating John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Whity* (1971), Paul Bartel's *Lust in the Dust* (1985), and Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) as a curious and campy tale of cock-sucking cowboys on the boy-buggering range, the X-rated cinematic work *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968) co-directed by Paul Morrissey (*Madame Wang's*, *Beethoven's Nephew*) and Andy Warhol is quite possibly the first and only cinematic adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragic play *Romeo and Juliet* set in a vaguely Western setting (it was actually filmed in an Old Tucson cowboy village that John Wayne was purportedly the co-owner of) minus the intoxicated Injun menace. It is also probably the most unconventional and incoherently assembled of the played out Shakespeare play. Of course, *Lonesome Cowboys* is not your typical cowboys flick because, aside from featuring five flaming wang-wranglers, the film also features as passive, cross-dressing sheriff who would rather wear a dress than brandish a gun and an ostensibly loose cowgirl who will fuck anything with a swinging dick, even if they may have a venereal disease from riding more cowboys than horses. Starring weirdo Warhol superstars Viva (*Bike Boy*, *Blue Movie*), Joe Dallesandro (*Blood for Dracula*, *Je t'aime moi non plus*), Eric Emerson (*San Diego Surf*, *Heat*), and Taylor Mead (*Tarzan and Jane Regained... Sort, Taylor Mead's Ass*), among some relative unknowns (*Frankie Francine*, *Tom Hompertz*, etc.), *Lonesome Cowboys* is probably the best film Warhol worked on at that point in his filmmaking career, but it owes most of its enduring entertainment value and sociopolitical/cultural consciousness to Paul Morrissey. Warhol worked on the film during what was undoubtedly a rough patch in his life, at least during the post-production as he was recovering from serious injuries he received after would-be assassin Valerie Solanas (who appeared in Warhol's 1967 film *I, a Man*) of lesbo S.C.U.M. infamy. Paul Morrissey – apparently the real 'director' of *Lonesome Cowboys* – described the process of the downright bush-league direction of the film as follows: "We don't move the camera in, and we don't zoom in, in the shot. We stop the camera, zoom into the close-up, maybe pan to the second actor, turn the camera off, zoom back, to a two-shot, then start the camera again." Indeed, *Lonesome Cowboys* is an audacious yet absolutely amateurishly directed work that is composed of a couple overly long shots that were poorly chosen, thus the film is more of interest to Warhol Factory and/or Paul Morrissey fans as an historical artifact than a serious work of merit in itself.

With its long and incessantly long improvised takes that were typical of such works as *Sleep* (1963), *Blow Job* (1964), and *Vinyl* (1964), Warhol's scopophilic sideliners' 'auteur' presence in *Lonesome Cowboys* is undeniable, yet it seems that the film's greatest moments and sociopolitical subtext are owed to Morris-

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sey's more thoughtful and provocative direction. In fact, Warhol's voyeuristic mindlessness was so detrimental to the film that art critic David Bourdon noted that the pop-icon missed some of the most interesting improvised moments of *Lonesome Cowboys*, stating: "Viva was nearly urinated upon by her antagonist's horse and then, losing her footing in the mud and falling against the hind legs of her horse, nearly trampled upon. Warhol missed both events because he was zooming in on a storefront sign across the street." Undoubtedly, Viva as Ramona D'Alvarez (or "Romeo" in this gender-bending adaptation of Shakespeare's classic story) is one of the most, if not the most interesting character of *Lonesome Cowboys*. After being raped and humiliated in a seemingly never-ending scene in the film, Ramona goes on to subsequently have sex and attempt a suicide pact with a dandy drifter while babbling on needlessly about how she can reach the ocean and eventually the cosmos with sexual intercourse, hence her proud-slut posturing throughout the film. The real-life daughter of well-to-do conservative religious parents who once dreamed of being a nun during her less debauched years, Viva looks especially degenerate and emotionally vacant as she allows her sandy snatch to be exposed in the desert for extended scenes while she nonchalantly recites a bunch of hippie jibberish. Assuredly, Morrissey's conservative Roman-Catholic subtext about the dead end delinquent road of hedonistic hippie liberalism is especially prominent during these scenes and it is especially effective that he was able to utilize Viva – a lapsed member of the same faith – for these scenes. Like the director's later "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" (*Trash*, *Flesh*, *Heat*), *Lonesome Cowboys* is an anti-erotic work disguised as a zany avant-garde sex comedy, as one would be hardpressed to find anything remotely arousing about these films, even with all the close-ups of trot out genitalia. As Viva states in *Lonesome Cowboys*, "What's more important; my hymen or your money?" Judging by the relative monetary success of the film, grossing \$35,000.00-\$40,000.00 during its first week of being screened with only \$9000.00 on advertising, Warhol's money was discernibly more important than Viva's cheaply brandished hymen (or lack thereof).

Although taking credit for directing (as well as acting as the producer, editor, and cinematographer) *Lonesome Cowboys*, Paul Morrissey does not think highly of the film, stating, "I feel it's too silly. It was a real exception, the first film I thought would be a production of sorts...I had this idea of doing Romeo and Juliet with groups of cowboys and cowgirls. But no girls came because they had a quarrel with Viva. We made the film over a Friday morning, Saturday and Sunday morning." And indeed, *Lonesome Cowboys* has the unmistakable feel of a film that was made over a weekend without any sort of serious preproduction planning. As Morrissey and David Bourdon noted, Warhol superstars Brigid Berlin and Ondine were also supposed to appear in *Lonesome Cowboys* but Viva's trouncing egomania prevented that. In fact, despite her rather unremarkable appearance, Viva even manages to upstage Joe Dallesandro

in *Lonesome Cowboys*, which is no small accomplishment considering Little Joe's always commanding screen presence in virtually every other film he starred in. Featuring outlaw ballet that "builds up the buns," macho men in mascara, overextended homoerotic wrestling matches between Little Joe cowboy and the wild boyz, and probably one of the most banal and seemingly unending rape scenes ever filmed in cinema history, *Lonesome Cowboys* is a curiously camp spoof of America's most beloved male genre. Despite being an absurd spoof of the Western film formula, *Lonesome Cowboys* is probably a truer expression of the real-life John Wayne – a draft-dodger who apparently enjoyed dressing in drag – than any of the classic Hollywood John Ford films he starred in. During the film, a character pompously states, "Little Joe was an altar boy, and we all know what happens to altar boys when they grow up." In *Lonesome Cowboys*, they ride gayly off into the sunset with one another plagued to a lifetime of homoerotic aimlessness, leaving a bodacious bitch-in-heat cold as she dreams idiotically about the prospect of mutual martyrdom via suicide pact. Needless to say, *Lonesome Cowboys* – a film where boys-will-do-boys and girls-want-to-be-boys – features none of the harrowing romanticism of Shakespeare.

-Ty E

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Ang Lee (2005)

Brokeback Mountain may be Hollywood's greatest assault against rural America. Turning the manly cowboy gay is the ultimate blasphemy against redneck masculinity. Hollywood was more subtle about this in 1969 with the release of *Midnight Cowboy*. Now Hollywood has the audacity to show Donnie Darko getting sodomized in a shitty tent. Taiwanese director Ang Lee lends his aesthetic talents to *Brokeback Mountain*. Having chosen Lee as the director was another good "move" by Hollywood to legitimize the diversity of the film. I couldn't even pay attention to five minutes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. *Brokeback Mountain* is driven by its gayness. Otherwise the film would be considered a fairly boring love story. After watching the film, one question remains: Were the cowboys really gay? Of course they threw darts back and forth but they enjoyed some ladies. Jack Twist was obviously really gay as he was the receiver. Ennis del Mar had himself a couple of ladies. Throughout *Brokeback Mountain* he was fighting his gayness. I don't think he won. Both of the cowboys were really bisexual. The truth is *Brokeback Mountain* is one of the better Hollywood movies to out in the past couple of years. The piece of trash *Crash* beat *Brokeback Mountain* for Best Picture at the 78th Academy Awards. Both films are cultural Marxist propaganda set on social deconstruction of America (which for the most part has already been achieved). *Brokeback Mountain* at least was a decent film. *Crash* was just another lame and unrealistic look at "multicultural" America. Director Paul Haggis is in dire need of having someone excrement on the top of his shiny evil head. I decided to rewatch *Brokeback Mountain* after the recent death of Heath Ledger. I wonder if he will be immortalized like James Dean. It makes me wonder if Hollywood kills its stars to guarantee never ending franchises. I know Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, and James Dean have made them a hefty sum. Soon you will see gay cowboy Heath Ledger action figures. What else would you expect from Hollywood?

-Ty E

VIVA

Anna Biller (2007)

Admittedly, I find virtually all sexploitation and skin flicks, especially those from the 1960s and 1970s, to be rather dull, but then again, I have never really needed masturbation aids – movie or otherwise – so naturally I was more than a tad bit skeptical about the postmodern retro feminist flick *Viva* (2007); a superficially sexy satire of the sexual revolution written, directed, and starring lady auteur Anna Biller (*The Hypnotist*, *A Visit from the Incubus*). Although inspired by wild and wacky (at least, for that rather tame zeitgeist) films like Luis Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967), Herschell Gordon Lewis' *Suburban Roulette* (1968), and Radley Metzger's *Camille 2000* (1969), Biller cites vintage issues of *Playboy Magazine* as the main aesthetic and cultural influence for *Viva*; a true 'auteur piece' where the director was literally involved in every facet of the filmmaking process, including casting, designing/sewing the wardrobes, painting the sets, and completely baring her body for a variety of filmic perverts; both male and female and young and old. Shot on luscious 35mm film stock, *Viva* features a kaleidoscope of sensual colors that – for better or worse – marvelously mimics the poorly aged films it pays peculiarly potent 'anti-tribute' to. As for her interest in exploitation cinema – a seeming contradiction for a purported feminist filmmaker – Biller stated in an interview, "I noticed that a lot of the 60's exploitation films were about women undergoing sexual trials, and although they were created for the prurient viewing pleasure of men, they are stories about women and what women go through. So the genre really interested me because of that." Centering on a naïve suburban housewife stereotypically named Barbi (but going against the grain in terms of casting since Biller, who plays the lead role, is half-Japanese by ancestry and certainly no blonde bombshell blow-up doll), *Viva* follows a girl in a quaint 'sexually liberated' world of antagonistic authoritarian nudists, bourgeois prostitutes, hysterical hippie manipulators, seemingly gay British rapists, softcore orgy armies, lesbian race-mixers, and homo hairstylists, among various other flaming sexual creatures. A scantily clad scapegoat of the so-called 'women's liberation' period, Barbi (alias *Viva*) unwittingly becomes the pretty plaything of various pernicious perverts who have a propensity for eating up fresh human meat; both literally and figuratively. As narrated in the introduction of the film, *Viva*: "is a story about a housewife during the sexual revolution. The time is 1972... The place is Los Angeles. ..And the people...ordinary."

In the beginning of *Viva*, Barbi (Anna Biller) has a rather sedentary and relaxed lifestyle, which she seems to be getting bored with, especially when comparing it to the colorful and carnal contrived worlds she fantasizes about while reading her favorite magazines. After losing her job upon rejecting a 'promotion' via unwanted penetration from her sleazy and greasy blob of a boss, Anna is virtually imprisoned in her own home. Not long after, she has a verbal fight with her

VIVA

virtual Ken doll of a husband Mark (Jared Sanford), so after being brainwashed by her bimbo blonde neighbor Sheila (Bridget Brno) about the lecherous 'liberating' qualities of 'women's lib,' Barbi and her gorgeous gal pal hit the streets without their brassieres, thereupon shooting for maximum sex appeal. Barbi becomes vivacious "Viva"; an intrinsically ignorant girl lost in a world of predatory pervert beatnik bastards and dirty yet would-be-dapper old men. Pimped out by an old Madame named Mrs. James (Carole Balkan) who claims that she can find her Mr. Right – a sensitive and sexually satisfying guy sired by the sexual revolution – Viva faces daunting disappointment after disappointment, ranging from braggart burnouts in bohemia to less than fresh "British Invaders" who need not ask permission to plow her plush puss. Needless to say, the swinging seventies are not as sexy and savory as she hoped they would be, but Viva never gives up or shuts up, thereupon learning the trick of the trade in the fine art of flesh-peddling. After hooking up with a hyper-hedonistic hippie nudist folk singer named Elmer (Paolo Davanzo) who manhandles her within minutes, Viva realizes she hates this horny humanist of a hanky-panky hustler and goes to her Madame to find a new man, thus leading to a two-sided ménage à trios of sorts. While entering a doomed domestic relationship with a degenerate hack of a puffery-inclined pop-artist named Clyde (Marcus DeAnda), she refuses to engage in explicit eroticism with the arrogant 'artiste' and instead learns carnal knowledge from a busy black girl name Agnes (Robbin Ryan) in this tragicomic episode of Biller's virtual take on *Three's Company*. After a while Clyde decides he no longer wants to be a cuckold whose girlfriend prefers cunt to his cock, so he drugs Viva at an orgy with some unmentioned psychedelic substance, thereupon leading to a date rape of sorts where the frigid lady finally has her first vaginal orgasm. Finally experiencing strength through joy as a virtual 'sexual goddess' who was 'wanted' and 'worshiped,' Viva is finally ready to go back to suburbia, thus becoming "Barbi" again with the intent of reuniting with her blond beast beau Mark. Unfortunately, Viva's friend Sheila's sleaze-bag husband Rick (Chad England) – a grotesque actor with a fierce fondness for much fresher flesh – wants a piece of the light-brown babe's body. Can Barbi resist Rick's rabid rapist wit and stay married to Mark?!?

An epic of the reflective retrograde erotic, I was admittedly quite surprised that I made it through Viva and – dare I say – enjoyed it! In fact, as someone who adamantly despises masturbatory porno flicks like Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's anti-climatic dual-jerk-off double-feature *Grindhouse* (2007), Viva makes for an aesthetically and thematically vibrant exception. Instead of adding contrived scratch marks to her film like perennial fanboy and transparent faker Tarantino did with *Grindhouse*, Biller – who actually has an appreciation for rich celluloid and melodramatic nuance – opted for reproducing the tantalizing technicolor of the mostly inferior films she pays slightly ambivalent tribute to. While Viva would probably work better at 90 minutes as opposed

to its official 120 minute running length, the absurdly sassy celluloid work still manages to keep a plainly pleasant pace that never wallows too far into redundancy (although, I cannot say I was a fan of the over fluffy burlesque dance numbers!). A 102-minute R-rated version of Viva also exists, but I cannot imagine why considering the unrated version of the film I saw shows nothing more risqué than a couple bushy 1970-style beavers and a nudist cocktail of limp cocks. For those looking for cheap titillation and double-penetration, Viva will probably be a brooding bore, even if features more flesh than virtually all of Russ Meyer and Herschell Gordon Lewis' skin flicks combined. Ultimately, Viva is a charmingly campy vision of a less than furious feminist auteur filmmaker's idea of a world that is neither dystopian nor utopian, but something more akin to a ridiculous hyper-reality in vaguely postmodern softcore pessimist form. As director Anna Biller stated at the beginning of her official 'director's statement': "In the film VIVA, I am reworking old sexploitation movies from the 60's and early 70's, from a woman's point of view. Vintage sexploitation films interest me because they revolve around fantasies of a woman's power over the male, her beauty, her desirability, her sex appeal. The idea was to make a movie that seems like a sexploitation movie, and that offers up all the spectacle and lurid promise of that genre, while at the same time talking about what women really go through, their fantasies and sexual trials." Ultimately, a good orgasm (elegantly accentuated by Biller's bold and bloody animation) is all Viva needs to dissolve her debilitating discontent. I guess in the postmodern post-sexual revolution/women's lib world that is the only thing a girl can ask for as hubby is no longer the only one paying all the bills. For more info on Viva, checkout: www.culpepics.com

-Ty E

THE FIGHTER
THE FIGHTER

Anthony Maharaj (1989)

It is so easy to pass a movie off as shit and it be ignored by the general population. Many films do deserve this label but there are some films that are indeed bad but still entertaining. Not this myth of "B Movies". To me, B Movies don't exist. There is a fine line between serious work and silly work. You can call Evil Dead 2 a B Movie, but this is a false, pretentious label that does nothing but belittle the intentions of the director. Nowadays, directors don't even try. Horror comedies are popping up everywhere, being bred like rabbits. The Fighter is a really bad action/martial arts directed by Anthony Maharaj who is an unknown, shitty director who made a couple of shitty action films but none didn't compare to this. The Fighter (Kick Fighter) is a story about Ryan Travers. A thick headed street smart 9 year old kid played by a 37 year old man. Yeah, i know. It gets better though. In a horrible scene, he kills a man over a game of street dice. Therefore, he is sent to jail and we get him screaming while a whole bunch of dirty Thai's hold his shoulder in a shitty scene that almost was as awkward as it's cousin in The Life Aquatic. Ten years or so later, Ryan Travers is exactly the same size, but wearing tighter clothes just to exaggerate his "maturity". His family was murdered by the mob but the time of this is really certain. Other than that, this tragedy doesn't really effect the story but anyways. When he gets out of jail, he meets up with his bombshell sister and Viet-servant aptly named Tien who participates in "cock fights" on the streets. Because of this, he is murdered and the police just...forget about him. He works at a shipyard welding for small change to pay for his sisters conveniently timed heart problem. After a while, he discovers she needs open heart surgery and upon a discovery of a street fight, he gets offered 10000 baht to fight. Of course he is brimming with foreign patriotism and kicks the Filipinos ass. Thus through painful filler scenes, he gets an alcoholic Australian agent. Ryan then fights an extremely ugly guy for 10 minutes. Seriously, this guy is fucking disgusting. After this, he fights a gimp kick boxer and a couple more extremely interesting characters until some drama from the mob comes around. Basically he starts hard core fighting to save her life then she gets kidnapped and it is a shitty loophole. End of plot. Did i mention he had an Asian whore who was important to him but was also erased from the script? "KEKEKEKEKEKE" What worked the most was the fighting. This film had incredibly real fighting and i appreciated that greatly. Benny "The Jet" Urquidez plays the "last boss" of this film and i must say, he terrifies me. That man has the score of 56-1-1 and has never lost. The man is a kickboxing god and has 9 black belts in different martial arts. Ouch. Richard Norton plays Ryan Travers and...does..well, a pretty horrible job. He lacks charisma and acting skills, but still does entertain the fuck out of me with his naivety. The one actor i really did love was Traver's best friend and to be totally honest, i have no

idea who he was. Information on this film is far and between. This film can be analyzed and dismissed as shit, or you can sit back and enjoy the fuck out of this film like i did. I wouldn't go and buy this for over 10 dollars but it is definitely worth a view if you like your action cheese. The Fighter is a realistic street brawling movie with shitty characters, shitty dialogue and shitty everything but don't let this stop you from having fun.

-Maq

CONTROL
CONTROL

Anton Corbijn (2007)

On the eve of his band's first American tour, Joy Division singer Ian Curtis hung himself shortly after watching Werner Herzog's classic German film *Stroszek*. Maybe the film made Curtis feel even more pessimistic about life, with the possibility of failure in America (just as the protagonists of *Stroszek* ultimately failed) looming closely over his haunted head. Of course, any serious Joy Division fans knows that Ian Curtis's suicide was a longtime in the making. The lyrics Curtis wrote for his innovating band are truly an expressions of a "dead soul (also the name of a popular JD song)." With each new Joy Division album, the sound and lyrics of the band would parallel Ian Curtis's further psychological escape into introversion and all-around reclusive behavior, eventually resulting in his own self-prophesized suicide. When I found out that Hollywood completed a film entitled *Control* (2007) about Joy Division and the brief life of poetic singer Ian Curtis, I could not help but cringe. After all, the director of *Control*, Anton Corbijn, is best known for directing music videos, not to mention the fact that the film was distributed by The Weinstein Company. After reluctantly watching *Control*, I can report that the film was not nearly as bad as it could have been, but it is no masterpiece either.

The first thing I noticed about *Control* is that it was pretentiously shot in black-and-white. Joy Division certainly was not a 'colorful' group, so I assume that the director was going for a gloomy aesthetic. Virtually all (if not all) of the artwork featured on Joy Division album covers are also in black-and-white (with shades of gray), certainly complimenting the group's somber music and mournful lyrics. During his early grammar school years, Ian Curtis was recognized for his talent in poetry, even earning a scholarship at the age of 11 for the prestigious The King's School in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England. Although a talented wordsmith, Ian Curtis was not a serious student and never went onto a university. In *Control*, the film begins during the end of Curtis's high school days, showing a young man that could never successfully adapt to adulthood. It also becomes apparent in the film that the root of Ian Curtis's creative talents were also intertwined with the deterioration of his psyche. Not only did Ian Curtis suffer from crippling depression and overall psychological misery; he also suffered from epileptic seizures. In fact, as exhibited in *Control*, Ian Curtis would sometimes have an epileptic seizures during Joy Division performances, in which many people would mistake for his unconventional dance routines. Ian Curtis even wrote a song, *She's Lost Control*, about a girl that he knew (he was a civil servant that helped handicapped people acquire jobs) that had epilepsy. Curtis later called the girl to find out how her new job was going and was horrified when he heard that she died. Contrary to how it is chronologically portrayed in *Control*, Ian Curtis did find out that he had epilepsy until after he wrote the

lyrics to the song *She's Lost Control*. For a man that constantly saw death surrounding him, it must have been a nightmarish experience for Ian Curtis when he was diagnosed with epilepsy, only shortly after finding out a young girl he knew unexpectedly died from it.

Joy Division named themselves after a fictional Nazi-run brothel of Jewish sex slaves featured in the 1955 novella *The House of Dolls* written by Israeli author Yehiel De-Nur. In fact, the first Joy Division EP *An Ideal for Living* featured a drawing of a Hitler Youth member on the cover. Due to the band's name and Nazi imagery, people were speculative about Joy Division's dubious political affiliations. Jewish psychoanalyst Eric Fromm described fascists as people that were consumed by the death-drive and "in love with corpses." Although the quack propagandist theory that Nazis were driven by the desire to die and once again become inanimate is preposterous (to say the least), there is no doubt in my mind that Ian Curtis was driven by the urge to die. As depicted in *Control*, the better his personal and financial life got, the more worse off Ian Curtis became both mentally and physically. Despite having a wife and beautiful child, Curtis could no live up to being a family man, eventually starting another relationship with a woman from Belgium. Ian Curtis also could not deal with the success of Joy Division, killing himself on the eve of his first American tour and before the album *Closer* (1980) and the single "Love Will Tear Us Apart" were released, the group's highest charting releases.

Control is not the first film to characterize the rise and demise of Joy Division. The hyper-cynical film *24 Hour Party People* (2002) portrays the death of Ian Curtis as some type of bad English comedy skit. Although *Control* does a better job interpreting the history of Joy Division and the life of Ian Curtis, it still left me with the feeling that I was cheated out of the definitive Joy Division film. *Control* is comparable to Oliver Stone's *The Doors*, as both films are essentially like feature-length music videos that only manage to pay musical tribute to the subjects they portray, but are lacking in depth and substance when it comes to telling the 'real' story behind band. Although he praised the film, Joy Division drummer Stephen Morris remarked regarding *Control*, "None of it's true really" but somewhat justified the film's inaccuracies by stating, "The truth is boring." After re-watching *Control* a second time last night, I found it much more boring when comparing it to my initial viewing of the film. Still, the film has some intrinsic value in that offers a good introduction for Joy Division's novices and forthcoming generations of fans.

-Ty E

LA CABINA
LA CABINA

Antonio Mercero (1972) Every once in a blue moon, I come across a fickle little oddity. It might reside in a Japanese pinku film or a Russian surrealists vision. This time, it took the disguise of a Television produced Spanish short. Something of a spurious episode of *The Twilight Zone*; *La Cabina* is a whole new nightmare for a mind washed audience. No wear and tear on this mean short. This film was created for one thing and one thing only - a campaign of relentless fear to rip through paranoid peoples minds.

Plot line: A man gets trapped in a telephone booth. Onlookers gather at the hilarity of the situation. Things escalate quickly when the man realizes that something is at work that happens to be unexplainable. The tension scintillates at a fierce exponential rate and the clock doesn't stop ticking. What could have been a mundane character, due to the lack of intimacy with the camera, is transformed into one that bears a more sympathetic persona of which is forced to see the world, albeit confined to a tight, claustrophobic space.

After viewing this short without subtitles, I fear that I may have missed something consequential to our characters outcome or perhaps even a greater understanding at the inanimate menace at large. Great ties seem to have been used to forge the almost similar bizarro novel from auteur Carlton Mellick III entitled *The Menstruating Mall*, in which several people get trapped inside of a mall and cannot leave for some particular reason that is later revealed.

The humans who are featured - other than our forlorn protagonist - are depicted as biased and cruel monster's dedicated to humiliating each others. Among these spectators is where mankind's horrific natures bleed through like wine to cotton. Lurching men steal food from atop a merchant's head. Services are offered to the crowd as this horrible debacle is morphed into a sideshow of freaks staring at what they believe is the main attraction, but alas, the pot is calling the kettle black.

Strictly horrifying and mesmerizing, these 35 minutes have left me marked. I never will stare at a telephone booth with a proud feeling of societal partnership. This film succeeded in making me paranoid at even the most common form of community services. Never again will I doubt a TV production for being "unoriginal" or "a waste of monetary resources", and never again will I be plagued by so much fear. The Emmy speaks for itself.

-mAQ

TOWERS OPEN FIRE

Antony Balch (1963)

In terms of cinematic works that come closest to encapsulating alpha-Beat writer William S. Burroughs' oftentimes discordant, formless, and innately anarchic literary style, you probably cannot do better than the short films of British auteur Antony Balch (*Secrets of Sex* aka *Bizarre*, *Horror Hospital*), who collaborated with the yank junky writer on a couple experimental shorts during the 1960s and was even originally supposed to direct a feature-length adaptation of *Naked Lunch* (1959) starring Mick Jagger, but rather unfortunately, fate had different plans. With his first major cinematic collaboration with Burroughs, *Towers Open Fire* (1964), Balch was the first person in the world to introduce the novelist's 'cut-up technique' to cinema, so at least in that regard, this less than 10 minute long avant-garde short is a cinematically revolutionary work, if only a minor one that will probably baffle most cinephiles. Shot between 1961 and 1962 in Paris and Gibraltar, *Towers Open Fire* premiered at the London Pullman Cinema in 1966 alongside Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932) of all films (actually, Balch, who was originally a film distributor, is the man responsible for getting the ban lifted off of *Freaks* in the UK). Although the short is a mostly incoherent work of cut-up metacinema set in a predictably Burroughs-esque dystopian world, it is mandatory viewing for fans of Burroughs, who not only stars in the film, but says some ironically 'racist' things, gives a very quick demonstration on how to do a 'cut-up,' wanders around while smoking fags as if he is cruising for young fags, shoots some junk, and becomes the victim of an orgasm attack, among other delightfully decadent things. Naturally, the short also features footage of avant-garde painter Brion Gysin's dreamachine invention. Gysin, who introduced Burroughs to the cut-up technique (which was originally utilized by Dadaist artists), came up with the idea for a 'drugless high' of sorts via a stroboscopic flicker effect that creates visual stimuli, with the dreamachine ultimately being the invention he created to achieve this pseudo-psychedelic effect. Beginning with a seemingly unrelated image of director Antony Balch's lifelong hero Bela Lugosi, *Towers Open Fire* is a short but sweet trip of the apocalyptic sort that demonstrates why the largely forgotten filmmaker would have probably made for a more apt director for adapting *Naked Lunch* than David Cronenberg.

After seeing a picture of Bela Lugosi looking typically eccentrically sinister, the viewer is treated to a delightful little monologue by William S. Burroughs, who sardonically states in his typically monotone fashion: "Kid—what are you doing over there with the niggers and the apes? Why don't you straighten out and act like a white man? After all, they're only human cattle, you know that yourself. I hate to see a bright young man fuck up and get off on the wrong track — sure it happens to all of us one time or another. Why the man who

TOWERS OPEN FIRE

went on to invent Shitola was sitting right where you're sitting now twenty-five years ago when I was saying the same thing to him — Well, he straightened out same as you're going to straighten out. You can't deny your blood kid — You're white, white, white — And you can't walk out on life times change there's just no place to go." Notably, Burrough's little monologue was taken from his cut-up novel *The Soft Machine* (1961) and it reminded me why the writer's most racially-charged writing tends to be his most hilarious. The excerpt from *The Soft Machine* is juxtaposed with a headshot of Burroughs, who looks like a half-artistic WASP degenerate, which was more or less what the novelist was, but that is also what makes him so interesting, as a man who more or less embodied Spengler's theory of decline (after all, Burroughs' grandfather was a pioneer who invented the adding machine, yet Burroughs himself invented the 'word virus' and shot his wife in the head, among countless other things).

In the next scene, Burroughs appears as the head of a corporate board meeting and by the end of the film, all the board members will be vaporized into oblivion, as if the novelist infiltrated their little group solely so he could destroy them (of course, this is a rather typical Burroughs fantasy). Juxtaposing images of exotic masks that resemble something out of a Steven N. Arnold film (*The Liberation of the Mannique Mechanique, Luminous Procuress*), a guy masturbating in bed, as well as countless grimy film reel canisters, to the less than soothing sounds of Burroughs mumbling gibberish (apparently, these noisy sound clips were recorded on a cheap Grundig tape recorder), the short gives off a feeling of oppressive audio/visual overload, as if the viewer is being forced to endure the junky queer novelist's various neuroses. After demonstrating the cut-up technique via a newspaper, the film features a crude cut-up montage of Burrough's walking around and spouting nonsense, as if he is a disgruntled old man who cannot think of anything practical to complain about. As demonstrated by a quick shot of a newspaper headline reading "Stock Exchange Suspend Dealings," *Towers Open Fire* depicts a materialistic society on the brink of collapse and naturally Burroughs is quite excited by the prospect, as demonstrated by the fact that he begins waging a lone-wolf war via aesthetic terrorism (i.e. cut-up sound recordings). After a scene featuring Burroughs hanging out at a zoo and checking out some large birds, the novelist discusses the dreamachine while young wild boys get high off the flickering light. In between shots of spinning dreamachines, Burroughs shoots some junk into his arm, as it would not be a Burroughs flick without someone shoving a needle into their flesh. In one of the most climatic scenes of the film, Burroughs, who is in military fatigues (including a gas mask), shows up at a dilapidated old house and proceeds to shoot ping pong balls at old family photos, thus causing people to magically evaporate outside on the street. Indeed, in the end, civilization as we know it ends and everyone evaporates, except a Wild Boy and the Führer of the Wild Boys, Burroughs, who is featured in the final scene waving his ping-pong gun in a shockingly militant fashion, as

if the writer somehow managed to develop a deep sense of testicular fortitude after wiping out humanity.

Featuring Moroccan music (which was apparently recorded by Brion Gysin), shameless Bela Lugosi fanboy worship, William S. Burroughs of all people telling the viewer how to be a white man, and a small storm of incoherent cut-up degeneracy, *Towers Open Fire* is certainly a curious little slice of celluloid insanity that barely gives any sort of hint regarding what kind of filmmaker Antony Balch would eventually evolve into (he is best known nowadays for his campy horror-comedy *Horror Hospital* (1973)). Balch and Burroughs would collaborate on a couple more shorts films, including *Guerrilla Conditions* (uncompleted), *The Cut-Ups* (1967), *Bill and Tony aka Who's Who* (1972), as well as two posthumously released works, *William Buys a Parrott* (1963) and *Ghosts at Number 9* (2005) aka *Ghosts at Number 9 (paris)*, but I have to admit that *Towers Open Fire* is easily my favorite, as a work that, somewhat strangely, seems to have infinite replay value. Like the out-of-control celluloid monster of a mad cinematic scientist, the short ultimately demonstrated to me that the whole cut-up technique seems more effective in film as opposed to novel form. As someone who has personally attempted to endure some of Burroughs' cut-up novels and was rather disappointed (to say the least!), *Towers Open Fire* proved to me that the technique is more than just a pretentious gimmick used by a junky with a confused opium-addled mind who lacks the mental coherence to write anything even remotely linear. In Balch's short, the technique ultimately creates a sort of apocalyptic poetry that, if nothing else, would make for great recruitment material for prospective Wild Boys.

-Ty E

SECRETS OF SEX
SECRETS OF SEX

Antony Balch (1970)

English film distributor turned auteur Antony Balch's dream project was adapting his alpha-Beat bud William S. Burroughs' magnum opus *Naked Lunch* (1959) and although he never achieved that dream due to botched funding, a 'disagreement' with star Mick Jagger (who thought the filmmaker was coming on to him), and an early death (he died of stomach cancer at the premature age of 42 in 1980), he did manage to direct two features in preparation for getting the skills he would need for the film that would never be. Indeed, after collaborating on a series of experimental avant-garde shorts with Burroughs, including *Towers Open Fire* (1963) and *The Cut Ups* (1966), Balch would direct a feature that, like *Naked Lunch*, was comprised of a series of loosely connected petite vignettes of the oftentimes absurdist sort. Originally released under the name *Secrets of Sex* (1970), Balch's film was released under the less seemingly pornographic name *Bizarre* in the United States, but has also been known as *Eros Exploding*, *Erotic Tales from Mummy's Tomb*, *Multiplication*, and *Tales of the Bizarre*. Made at the end of the Swinging London era (although released in 1970, the film was shot in 1969) and paying blatant tribute to queer criminal literary figures like Burroughs and Jean Genet, *Secrets of Sex* certainly has an outrageously outmoded aesthetic and an obscenely goofy essence about it, but those are some of the film's main appeals, as a vintage piece of sardonic and exceedingly eccentric episodic celluloid insanity that cannot really be compared to many other cinematic works. Mistakenly described by beatnik Renaissance man Brion Gysin (who was supposed to write the screenplay for Balch's unrealized *Naked Lunch* adaptation) as "a soft porn, which was too soft by the time it got made," *Secrets of Sex* does indeed have tons of bare bouncy breasts and big bushes, and even dangling dongs, but the work ultimately makes a mockery of sex in a variety of rather clever and inventive darkly comedic ways. Featuring tomatoes being pelted at big bosoms, two sadomasochistic female photographers mutilating a male model's member for the mere aesthetic pleasure, a young cheating husband shoving a phone in the ass of a female would-be-burglar during silly sex while the operator unwittingly listens on the other end, and a rich old man receiving a terminally ill mutant monster baby from his sexy scientist wife, among countless things, *Secrets of Sex* is the sort of celluloid sexploitation skit show you might expect from Paul Morrissey had he been less conservative, obsessed with Burroughs' *The Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead* (1971), and had less of a venomous personality. Indeed, the film is, among other things, a playful cross-genre film anthology of the devilishly mirthful sort narrated by a faceless mummy about the timeless war of the sexes in the age of sexual liberation. A film that truly lives up to its rather generic American title 'Bizarre,' Balch's film is a rare stylish sexploitation flick with wit and lavish direction that makes the films

of Russ Meyer seem like the patently pathetic fantasies of a virginal beta-boy that drools like a dullard over being beaten by women (indeed, Meyer would make for a great character to lampoon in the film). Although the film features dozens upon dozens of perky jumbo jugs, *Secrets of Sex* somehow manages to prove that brains and boobs are not always mutually exclusive, at least when approached by a queer dandy who seems to have an equal cynicism towards both boys and birds, especially when it comes to those of the rampantly heterosexual variety. Written by at least five 'official' writers (as well as various uncredited writers, including Brion Gysin and Ian Cullen), Balch's film demonstrates that there is actually a special place in the world for campy yet cultivated Beat sexploitation comedies.

Opening with three naked Aryans—two guys and a girl—in a haystack embracing in a trance-like fashion and a quote from John Milton's 17-century epic poem *Paradise Lost* (in fact, it is the same one featured at the beginning of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*), *Secrets of Sex* tells the 1000-year-old story of a "wise and elegant" Arab Judge who suspected his young and beautiful wife was hiding a man in a trunk and thus took decisive action to rid the world of this mystery man in a most vengeful fashion. Since the wife refused to unlock the trunk, the Arab Judge had the trunk buried and the key thrown into the ocean. Needless to say, there was a man in the trunk and he went on to become a mummy (played by co-writer Elliott Stein, who proposed the idea of adding a mummy narrator to the film, so as to tie all the various vignettes together in a reasonably coherent fashion), who also happens to be the all-knowing narrator of *Secrets of Sex*, as a sort of undead sexologist. After featuring a scene of a gang of Burroughs-esque 'Wild Boys' (quite notably, aside from the fact that one of the boys is featured reading Burroughs' 1964 cut-up novel *Nova Express*, Balch's film predates *The Wild Boys* by a year) with submachine guns approaching a gang of busty babes who had just been pelted with tomatoes, the Mummy narrator more or less explains that the war of the sexes did not begin with feminism and the counter-culture generation, but is a timeless battle inspired by a dangerous game of desire, infatuation, obsession, and ultimately revenge. Indeed, by the end of the film, a mutant baby will be spawned and various people—both young and old—will die due to issues relating to sex and romance. In that regard, *Secrets of Sex* is one of the goofiest films ever made on the always interesting theme of sex and death.

The first episode of *Secrets of Sex* revolves around a young and rather naive man who makes the major mistake of being a model for two sadomasochistic female (and possible Sapphic?) photographers who decide they are tired of merely simulating images of sexual savagery and ultimately have the boy's member mangled with some sort of sharp torture device, thereupon resulting in his premature death via dyke-like dick destroyers. In the second episode, which is a sort of parody of both melodramas and old school mad scientist horror flicks, a wealthy 69-year-old man stresses his concern to his young fiancée that he would like to have an heir, as his sole son was accidentally killed in a car wreck by his ex-wife.

SECRETS OF SEX

Unfortunately, the old man's fiancée—a smart and sexy scientist who intimidates men due to her intelligence and intimidates women due to her beauty—has some degenerative genetic mutations in her genes and needless to say, after the young lady becomes pregnant to satisfy her over-the-hill sugar daddy's wishes, she inevitably gives birth to a terminally ill mutant baby that looks like a scrotum with bulging blue eyes. In the third episode, a married and exceedingly young man fittingly reading gay frog thief Jean Genet's novel *The Miracle of the Rose* (1946) aka *Miracle de la rose* catches a masked leather-bound criminal attempting to rob his home. Ultimately, the thief offers the man, who most viewers would probably assume is a homo, sex in an attempt to stop him from calling the cops. In the end, the titillating thief, who has a somewhat grotesque scar covering one of her tits, outsmarts the pretentious 'bobo' (bourgeois bohemian) by threatening to tell his wife about his extramarital affair with a lecherous lady of the night. Simultaneously a satire of unintentionally cheesy and intentionally sleazy 1960s British spy films and old silent era slapstick flicks, the fourth episode revolves around a sexy prostitute-like spy of the super sensuous sort named Lindy Leigh who attempts to swindle a horny military attaché, but ultimately finds herself locked up in a safe with countless other salacious (and topless) spies who tried the same damn thing.

In the most bizarre and even vaguely unsettling episode of *Secrets of Sex*, a NYC-born Nerd (played by Jewish co-screenwriter Elliott Stein, who planned to collaborate with Balch on an aborted film entitled *The Sex Life of Adolf Hitler* in which he planned to play a Nazi leader), has a big bosomed blonde streetwalker called to his room, as he hopes she will make love to his beloved pet pangolin. Ultimately, the rather repulsive and seemingly half-autistic Nerd attempts to convince the Hooker to make love to his grotesque pet by absurdly claiming to her that "pangolin swapping" is trendy in NYC, but she is not so degenerate as to let herself be defiled by a scaly anteater. Needless to say, the busty Streetwalker gives the bestiality-obsessed John his money back and runs away, only to notice an old woman kissing a pangolin in the street only moments later, thus confirming the Nerd was right all along regarding the popularity of pangolin-woman love affairs. The sixth and final episode is the most nicely nuanced, bizarre, and kaleidoscopic segment of the film and involves an old man strangling an old wealthy woman to death in her own greenhouse after realizing she sexually took advantage of him many decades back, so as to steal his 'vital fluids.' As the old whore-killer eloquently states, "misappropriation of men's souls is a very serious crime." Ultimately, *Secrets of Sex* concludes with same brigade of Wild Boys from the beginning of the film putting down their submachine guns and fornicating with their jumbo jugged female prisoners, thereupon resulting in literal fireworks of the rather climatic sort. In the end, the Mummy narrator complains, "So it goes on...and on, and on, and on, and on..." in regard to the perennial viciousness when it comes to sex and the different sexes. Indeed,

like the gutter melodramas of sadomasochistic sodomite auteur Andy Milligan (*Vapors*, *The Body Beneath*), Balch's film depicts heterosexual sex as a singularly socially corrosive force that is largely responsible for all the violence, death, and hatred in the world.

Undoubtedly, aside from rather desperate dudes that get hard-ons from the mere sight of bare boobs, *Secrets of Sex* probably makes for a superlatively sorry masturbation aid, but of course, it is rather obvious that auteur Antony Balch was not really interested in making a soulless and pseudo-sensual sexploitation flick for the pathetic pleasure of loser Londoners looking to pull a Pee-wee Herman in one of the director's semen-soaked theaters (in fact, the film played for six consecutive months at the Jacey Cinema in Piccadilly Circus, which is one of the theaters Balch ran). A rather uncommonly honest cinematic artist, Balch once stated on retrospect regarding his debut feature, "this is a very uneven film, but three episodes and a single shot, are good. I liked the ones with the photographer, Elliot Stein, and the Lady in the Greenhouse. The episode of the monster baby is a bore, but the single shot of it, at the end is brilliant." Indeed, if only other filmmakers were so honest, the world would not be overflowing with filmic feces. Make no mistake about it, *Secrets of Sex* is celluloid trash, but it is also charming, perfectly campy, and idiosyncratic trash that seems like it was directed by the strikingly witty, if not equally lowbrow, Brit bastard brother of kraut dandy auteur Werner Schroeter. Sort of like a counter-culture update of the classic British horror omnibus film *Dead of Night* (1945) meets a Brit Beat equivalent to Dušan Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), albeit nowhere near as serious, esoteric, nor socio-politically-oriented, Balch's anthology manages to be truly bizarre without seeming even remotely contrived. Indeed, considering Balch's knack for grotesque humor, obsession with sexual perversion, and talent for combining an eclectic hodgepodge of vignettes into a more or less cohesive and eclectic feature film, he would have been a better person than any to adapt Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, especially considering he was a pal of the novelist (in fact, the Beat novelist gave the director a "special thanks" in his 1962 cut-up novel *The Ticket That Exploded*). For anyone that has wondered what *Tales from the Crypt* might be like if it was transported to Swinging Sixties London and directed by a man with an equal obsession with both horror and arthouse cinema, *Secrets of Sex* is certainly the film to checkout. Indeed, as someone that loathes that era, I found *Secrets of Sex* to be a playfully perverse piece of eccentrically enthralling filmic therapy that reminded me of the abject failure that was the counter-culture zeitgeist.

-Ty E

HORROR HOSPITAL
HORROR HOSPITAL

Antony Balch (1973)

Call me a softcore Anglophobe, but I have an acute aversion to British comedy, especially if it is blended with the horror genre (another genre the Brits seem to have a keenness for making rather banal), with a film like *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) reflecting the height of retarded aesthetic repugnance to me. Needless to say, I have never seen a single limey horror-comedy that I actually enjoyed, at least until recently after inadvertently discovering the strange and largely forgotten figure of Antony Balch while doing research on the Fernando Arrabal-penned S&M-themed erotic arthouse flick *Weird Weirdo* (1969) aka *Le grand ceremonial* directed by Pierre-Alain Jolivet. Balch was originally a film distributor who created catchy English titles for cult, arthouse, exploitation, and foreign sex films like *Weird Weirdo* and *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971) aka *Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal* and screened them in the various movie theaters he ran. A personal friend of many important filmmakers, including Kenneth Anger, Balch got his start in filmmaking collaborating on shorts with junky literary outlaw William S. Burroughs, who he met at Madame Rachou's Beat Hotel. Indeed, after collaborating with Burroughs (who gave the auteur a 'special thanks' in his cut-up 1962 novel *The Ticket That Exploded*) on a couple experimental avant-garde shorts like *Towers Open Fire* (1962–1963), *The Cut-Ups* (1967), and the abandoned documentary project *Guerrilla Conditions*, Balch decided to take up the curious cause of feature-length exploitation filmmaking after hooking up with horror producer Richard Gordon (*Fiend Without a Face*, Radley Metzger's *The Cat and the Canary*). Working with an incomplete script, Gordon and Balch (who provided half of the funding for the film) created the genre-smashing erotic-exploitation-horror-comedy hybrid *Secrets of Sex* (1970) aka *Bizarre*—an offbeat film anthology mocking sex that is narrated by an Egyptian mummy and was co-penned by no less than five people (Burroughs' bud, Brion Gysin, was also apparently involved)—which was a huge success in the UK. It was not until his second and final collaboration with Gordon, *Horror Hospital* (1973) aka *Computer Killers* aka *Doctor Bloodbath* aka *Frankensteins Horror-Klinik*, that Balch managed to direct his first somewhat 'straight' horror flick. Of course, as a work directed by a queer dandy of sorts who was described in Barry Miles' Burroughs bio as being, "gay, well dressed with dark hair and an eager smile. After a few drinks he could be quite camp: 'The trouble with fish is that they are so fisheee!' he once shrieked in a restaurant," *Horror Hospital* is far from your typical UK horror flick, as a conspicuously campy work that mirthfully mocks the counter-culture generation and wallows in witty and playful forms of iconoclasm. Written by Balch and his comrade Alan Watson at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival (the director came up with the alliterative title first before actually dreaming up a storyline), *Horror Hospital* ultimately evolved into a sardonically

campy Gothic horror flick that would predate similar yet much more successful works like *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). Indeed, a fiercely farcical film that seems like it was directed by the Bela Lugosi-obsessed British bastard son of Andy Milligan and Paul Morrissey, *Horror Hospital* is like the *Performance* (1970) of horror comedies, as a work that even features its own Mick Jagger clone (interestingly, Balch's dream-project was to adapt Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, but the film apparently fell apart when its star, Mick Jagger, was concerned that the director might be coming on to him).

Jason Jones (Robin Askwith) is a long-haired rocker with a rather dubious IQ who bares a striking resemblance to Mick Jagger (but acts more like Brian Jones) and who made the major mistake of joining a band with a prissy tranny degenerate as a singer (as portrayed by the film's co-writer Alan Watson in an uncredited role). Indeed, the band stole Jason's song and kicked him out of the group, or as the songwriter complains while watching the band perform his song without him, "Look at that. They stole my song. A week's work up the spout." Jason also makes sure to verbally ream the gender-bending meta-man singer with the following hilarious remark, "Silly little red faggot swirling about in his own smoke. Who does she think she is? Greta Garbo? He looks more like a lemon meringue pie in heat," and he is subsequently beaten by the tranny rocker due to his disparaging remarks. Undoubtedly, Jason is in need of a vacation and after seeing a flyer for a travel agency called "Hairy Holidays," he meets up with a sleazy and exceedingly effete gay travel agent named Mr. Pollack (portrayed by Dennis Price, who is best known for starring in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) and who died the same year *Horror Hospital* was released), who gives the rocker a discounted price to an ostensible health farm called Brittlehurst Manor (the exteriors of the building were shot at English novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton's home) after getting aroused after looking at the bulge in the young man's pants. While riding on a train to the health farm, Jason meets a hot young chick named Judy Peter (Vanessa Shaw), who seems somewhat uneasy around the rocker, at least until he calms her worries by remarking, "There's no need to get so uptight about things. I'm not going to rape you." As Judy explains, she is also going to the health farm, albeit to visit her Aunt Harris (Ellen Pollock), who works there. Judy has never met Aunt Harris because her mother refused to allow her daughter to meet her sister due to the fact that she ran a whorehouse in Hamburg, Germany right before the Second World War. Unfortunately, little do Jason and Judy realize that Brittlehurst Manor is not a health spa, but a house of horror where a wheelchair-bound mad scientist modeled after Bela Lugosi's character from *The Devil Bat* (1940) named Dr. Storm (portrayed by Hammer horror star Michael Gough, who is probably best known for portraying 'Alfred' in all four films of the Hollywood Tim Burton/Joel Schumacher Batman films) does experimental brain surgery on hippies and turns them into mindless yet

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obedient zombies. Naturally, Dr. Storm has a couple of henchmen, including a Jewish midget named Frederick (Skip Martin) that always sports a yarmulke, Judy's Aunt Harris aka 'Madam Olga', and a legion of leather-jacket-adorned Droog-Geſtapo biker zombie thugs.

Upon arriving at Brittlehurſt Manor, Judy is berated by her Aunt Harris for coming (apparently, she wrote her niece a letter telling her not to come, but she never received it, as wily dwarf Frederick disposed of it) and she and Jason are given a room to share together, even though they are not lovers. Needless to say, Jason and Judy soon become hot and heavy lovers, though they both feel a bit uneasy about ſtaying at the health farm, not leaſt of all because they spotted a bloody bed in another room only minutes after arriving there. When Jason and Judy go to eat dinner with the reſt of the hippies ſtaying at the health farm, they notice that their comrades are pale, mute, ſeemingly braindead, and have giant scars on their foreheads. After one of the female gueſts is subdued by the biker zombies after she has a violent freakout, Jason and Judy go back to their rooms, only to discover that blood is coming out of the ſink in their bedroom. After being horrified by the rather unconventional ſight of ſeeing blood flying out of faucets, the two lovers are viſited by Dr. Storm, dwarf Frederick, and Aunt Harris, who warn them not to leave their room. After having hot and ſteamy ſex for the firſt time, Jason and Judy make the major miſtake of leaving their room, thereupon reſulting in both of them ſoon being captured by the leather-bound biker zombies. The next day, travel agent Pollack attempts to blackmail Dr. Storm, ſo the good doctor has him decapitated with his Rolls Royce, which features a large blade on the ſide that cuts off people's heads. When Jason ſees Pollack's corpse from an upſtairs window of the manſion, he violently grabs Frederick and demands that the imp tell him what is going on around the health farm, with the dwarf conſeſſing, "I'm juſt as much a prisoner here as you are...I'll talk to you later." After that, Jason is given a tour of the health farm gymnaſium where the mindleſs zombie hippies do back flips and accept torture without complaining. As Dr. Storm explains regarding his patients, "You ſee...Juſt like puppets, and I'm the puppet maſter...puppets who feel no pain." Dr. Storm then reveals that he has drugged Judy and he plans to give her, and eventually Jason, brain ſurgery. Naturally, Jason runs away and Dr. Storm yells to him, "It's no uſe Jason. You won't get very far." Of course, Dr. Storm is right, as while Jason manages to kill a zombie biker by knocking him into quicksand, two other zombie bikers capture him and put him in a dungeon room where he is tortured with "knock out gas" that cauſes him to hallucinate. Meanwhile, Aunt Harris begins getting paranoid that the police might find out about their experiments, but Dr. Storm warns her that no one gives a ſhit about young hippies diſappearing, ſtating, "As for theſe young people, they come and go like flies theſe days. Dirty ones at that. Their diſappearance will hardly be noticed."

When a ſwarthy hippie dork named Abraham Warren (Kurt Chriſtian aka

'Baron Kurt Christian Von Siengenbergr) shows up at the hospital of horrors looking for his girlfriend, Aunt Harris decides to quit and is soon killed by a grotesque monster that looks like a humanoid turd. Of course, Abraham is also thrown in the dungeon with Jason, but the two young hippies are soon freed when dwarf Frederick gives two zombie biker guards neon green drinks spiked with 'Mickey Finn,' steals the guards' keys, and unlocks the door to the prison cell. Of course, they are caught again after Abraham spots his girlfriend Millie (Barbara Wendy), who has been turned into a zombie, in the company of Dr. Storm and his leather-fag gestapo agents. As the good Doctor explains to his prisoners/guests during dinner, he used to be a handsome lady's man that was the disciple of a revolutionary scientist named Academician Pavlov, but as Storm states, when Stalin came to power, he installed "many young scientists, stupid adolescents who didn't know what they were doing. Very soon my laboratories were overrun by these young turks, and I was made to leave." Dr. Storm decided to go to Helsinki, Finland where he established a zoo where he experimented on animals, but he soon got bored working with furry creatures and began experimenting on humans instead, using Aunt Harris as a means to procure German prostitutes that he used as guinea pigs, explaining regarding his experiments: "In one of my experiments I applied Academician Pavlov's theory of conditioned reflexes to sexual behavior. In my view, Freud had failed. I succeeded in controlling human desire, but there was still a missing link. My subjects could not yet fulfill the desires I had created in them. They were not a very pretty sight after the operation." Dr. Storm also explains that he became a cripple after a "hunting man had the impertinence to enter my fortress" and accidentally set the place on fire, thus paralyzing the deranged doctor in the process. After dinner, Jason, Abraham, and dwarf Frederick are locked in a room together, with the latter revealing that he is the bastard son of one of Dr. Storm's Hamburg hookers and he has been the mad doctor's "whipping dog" ever since. The three manage to escape after Frederick jumps out of a window, kills a zombie guard by hitting him over the head with an ax, and unlocking the door for his two new friends, but the brave dwarf, who always dreamed of being a hero (this is one of the many long running jokes throughout the film), is subsequently killed after he is thrown down some stairs by one of the biker guards. Before he dies, Frederick attempts to tell Jason and Abraham something about Dr. Storm. Indeed, as the hippies soon learn, the Doctor is really a human monster (the 'humanoid turd' I mentioned before) who lost all his skin during the same fire that left him paralyzed. Ultimately, Jason and Abraham catch the undead Doc in his naked fecal-matter-like monster form sexually brutalizing Millie. The boys decide to give Dr. Storm "some of his own medicine" by decapitating him with his own killer Rolls Royce. In the end, Jason, Judy, and Abraham manage to get away and Dr. Storm's decapitated corpse and head sink into quicksand, but somehow the monster mad scientist manages to come alive again, thus setting up for a

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sequel to *Horror Hospital* that was never made.

While *Horror Hospital* was the most successful movie that Antony Balch ever made, the rather idiosyncratic auteur never made another film, though he apparently had a number of projects in mind before he died, including an unkosher comedy entitled *The Sex Life of Adolf Hitler* and a horror flick co-written by Hammer horror screenwriter Christopher Wicking, who once commented regarding a meeting with the eccentric filmmaker in a 1988 interview with *Shock Xpress* magazine: "I had a crazy meeting with him, when he wanted to do some picture or other. He spent most of the time walking across the furniture. Languorously, he would walk across three or four chairs. He went into another little world. He was a sad figure in a way, because he was well before his time." Indeed, rather unfortunately, Balch succumbed to stomach cancer at the premature age of 42 in 1980, thereupon putting a permanent end to his all too brief filmmaking career. Undoubtedly, *Horror Hospital* demonstrates that Balch were certainly a filmmaker that was ahead of his time, as a sort of Werner Schroeter of trashy high-camp horror comedies. In fact, Balch was actually deemed an important enough filmmaker in France that a frog writer named Adrien Clerc recently released a book about his life and career entitled *Guerilla Conditions, la folle épopée cinématographique d'Antony Balch avec William Burroughs, Richard Gordon et tous les autres* (2014). Retarded enough in parts to work as a stoner flick but also rather scathing in its depiction of hippie potheads, *Horror Hospital* is like an anti-Head Head flick that makes one big clever, if not intentionally corny, joke about the counter-counter generation and related subcultures while at the same time totally deconstructing virtually every single classic horror movie cliché. Heavily influenced by Michael Curtiz's *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933) and the works of Bela Lugosi (Balch owned various prints of his films and would screen them at his home) yet set in the post-Beat counter-culture era, *Horror Hospital* ultimately demonstrates how much society, culture, and cinema has degenerated since the end of the Second World War, even if that was not Balch's intention. Featuring the killer queen among killer queens as the main villain (Dr. Storm may proclaim to be rampantly heterosexuality, but he acts like a bitchy old cabaret dancer) and some of the most ludicrous murder and sex scenes of its era, *Horror Hospital* is an excess-ridden exercise in combining the elegant with the risqué and even lowbrow, thus demonstrating that auteur Antony Balch was the foremost dandy of exploitation cinema. Call me crazy, but I think Balch would have also made an adaptation of *Naked Lunch* that would have put Cronenberg's version to shame.

-Ty E

THE DEFIANCE OF GOOD

Armand Weston (1975)

It is not every day that one discovers a hardcore porn flick that viciously assaults everything rotten about the counter-culture generation, especially in regard to their wacky misguided quest to discover new religions and ways of living, but the classic horror-themed S&M blue movie *The Defiance of Good* (1975) aka *Cure Me* aka *Defiance!* directed by pornographic auteur turned horror hack Armand Weston (*The Taking of Christina*, *The Nesting*) does just that, as a rare sadomasochistic skin flick with some socially-redeeming value and entrancing expressionistic undertones. Starring a then-only-17-year-old Jean Jennings (*Case of the Full Moon Murders*, *Virgin Dreams*), who was an ex-cheerleader turned teenage runaway that later married goofy Guido character actor Joe “Maniac” Spinell, and produced by porn star Jason Russell (who started an affair with Jennings that resulted in the dissolving of his marriage to actress Tina Hall, who became so morbidly depressed by the situation that she drank herself to death by age 32), this quite literally and figuratively penetrating fuck flick depicts the insanity that ensues when an overprotective bitch of a bible-lobotomized mother forces her nubile teenage daughter to go to a mental institution after catching her taking her first hit of cocaine, thus resulting in the titillating teen being gang-raped by a couple Charles Manson look-a-likes and eventually coming under the wing of a demented guru who forces her to lead a ludicrously lecherous life of devout sadomasochistic sacrilege. Somewhat interestingly, star Jean Jennings was the granddaughter of a Baptist minister, thus making *The Defiance of Good* a rare example of pornographic art imitating life and vice versa. Additionally, the man who plays the Svengali-like quasi-Manson-esque guru, Fred J. Lincoln, was also a pornographer and like producer Jason Russell and hack pornographer Vinnie Rossi (*Desire*, *Max Bedroom*), claimed that he was the true ‘auteur’ of the film and not Armand Weston, who was certainly a talented pornographer that was more than capable of directing the film. Strangely artsy and unnervingly atmospheric, refreshingly politically incorrect, sinisterly socially conscious, and pornographically phantasmagorical, Weston’s film dares to make a mockery of the counter-culture movement while also ironically being a direct product of it. A sort of pseudo-metaphysical blue movie where a minister who has lost his faith and congregation sires his own hermetic new age S&M church in a megalomaniacal attempt to spiritually and sexually enslave young girls, *The Defiance of Good* is ultimately a rather raunchy reminder why no other zeitgeist has produced more crazed charlatans, unhinged high priests, and megalomaniacal gurus than the spiritually and morally forsaken counter-culture generation.

After her exceedingly bitchy Catholic mother (Carole Holland) catches her with her drug-addled friend Susan snorting her first hit of coke, naïve teen Cathy (Jean Jennings)—a somewhat busty green-eyed blonde and seemingly untainted

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daddy's girl who has no idea how brutal the world really is—finds herself in a mental institution that is plagued by gang-rape, forced miscegenation, aggressive bull-dykes, and demented quack doctors who see Thorazine as the cure for all patients, including those claiming to be the victims of sexual pillaging. Indeed, since Cathy's father ('Roderick Usher' aka Steve Lincoln) is a cowardly old cuckold (indeed, the mother even says to Cathy, "you should know now that your daddy isn't the strongest person in the world") who will not stand-up for his daughter, even though he wants to, the teen is forced to face institutionalization at the psyche ward of a grungy little place called Eastwood General Hospital. During her first couple of minutes at the hospital, Cathy is forced to strip completely naked for a heinous high yellow negro with a sick sense of humor and a contempt for white people who then proceeds to give her a phony "exam" by reaming his dirty dark fingers up her virginal vagina and tight rectum. As a decidedly demented dyke who randomly starts masturbating in front of the teen states regarding the doctors, "They call themselves doctor...They're crazier than the rest of us." Upon talking to a mentally perturbed would-be-poet that looks like a cross between Charles Manson and Jamie Gillis, Cathy is absurdly told: "I am the world's greatest poet. Baudelaire...Rimbaud...William Blake...their blood flows through my veins," thus indicating that The Door front man Jim Morrison has had a rather detrimental effect on the discernibly despoiled baby boomer generation. When Cathy is gang-raped late one night by two Manson look-a-likes and a nefarious token negro, she tells the head doctor, who is an exceedingly effete fat fag that resembles John Waters' man-muse Divine minus the drag, but he does not believe her and orders the nasty negro orderly to put her on a steady dose of Thorazine. Of course, after drugging her, the jigaboo also rapes Cathy, but thankfully the rape in question is not actually depicted in the film, thus indicating that people were sane enough at the time of the film's release to be repulsed by interracial sex scenes. Needless to say, things are not exactly looking up for Cathy, but when she meets a seemingly empathetic, smart, soft-spoken, and 'progressive' physician named Dr. Gabriel (Fred J. Lincoln) who offers the chance to stay at his private sanitarium, she finds her way out of the hospital of hell. Of course, little does Cathy realize that Dr. Gabriel is a loony lapsed minister turned malevolent madman and S&M messiah who forces teenage girls into largely degrading sadomasochistic sexual servitude.

Upon entering Dr. Gabriel's rather strange and perennially shadowy yet elegantly decorated sanitarium, little lamb Cathy is given the following pretentious hippie spiel from the good doctor: "Our task is...to break the stranglehold of the past. We must liberate ourselves from the old traditions and concepts of good and evil that simply have no place...NO PLACE in the modern world. In order to be free, we must unlearn all the moral values that your misguided parents have taught you. You will learn to free your spirit and your flesh! [...] I will be your teacher, your guru...the father that you never had. You will obey me

as a newborn child and I will lead you to knowledge.” Indeed, like a newborn child, Cathy will be doing a lot of crawling around naked. Of course, being a dimwitted gal who lacks even the smallest inkling of intuition and common sense, Cathy has no clue what Gabriel is talking about it, at least not until his assistant Miss Caine (Heather Ellis) brings her into a dark bathroom and attempts to put her in bondage. In no time, Gabriel and his debauched disciples literally whip Cathy into shape by getting her involved in leather-clad orgies featuring whips, chains, bondage, and groveling cunnilingus-inclined male slaves. While being whipped, Cathy is told by Gabriel in a Manson-esque fashion: “You must die so you can be reborn.” Of course, Cathy is eventually reborn and molded into a sort of sexually cultivated automaton with a talent for giving and receiving painful pleasure. When Cathy attempts to get in bed with Gabriel, she is firmly denied, with the deranged and seemingly sexually impotent doc stating, “Don’t ever touch me. My pleasures are in the mind...they are far more exquisite than any temptation of the flesh.” When Cathy tells Gabriel that he sounds like a priest, he concurs and matter-of-factly replies in a pseudo-poetic monotone fashion: “I am a priest...in my own way. My father was a minister. And he made sure I became one too. I will perish is the poorest part of town. Noises from the local whorehouse kept me awake at night...Teasing my mind with the wildest fantasies. I was tormented with sexual horror. My guts ached for the touch of a woman. I tried to fight it...bury it...I had my own congregation at 28...It was a lovely young girl. Anyway, I lost my faith, I lost the church. I tried to resume a normal life but it was too late. Physically, I was useless. I traveled, I read, I studied. I knew what I had to do. This is my church and you, you are part of my new congregation.” Of course, when it comes to his cruelly carnal church, Gabriel has nil tolerance when it comes to heretics and Cathy is about to learn that the hard way.

While Dr. Gabriel eventually tells Cathy that she is free to go since she has been fully initiated into his pseudo-spiritual program of sadomasochistic (dis)pleasure, he also lets her know that if she does decide to leave, she will never be able to come back to the sanitarium of sin. Fully brainwashed by now, Cathy naturally opts to stay, at least a little while longer, but her loyalties are ultimately tested when her friend Susan (Day Jason)—the same girl that gave her the drugs that landed her in the loony bin in the first place—is brought in as a new initiate to the S&M church. After pleasuring Susan’s pussy with her tongue, Cathy bonds with her old friend who, not surprisingly considering the specific set of circumstances, wants to escape from the sanatorium immediately. While Cathy admits that she would like to stay because, as she states to her friend, “I don’t know if you can understand...I’m not really sure I understand myself...but in a certain way, I feel safe here. I feel protected...even needed” (undoubtedly, Cathy’s remark reflects why people join cults/religions in the first place), Susan eventually convinces her to help her to escape from the sanitarium. In a silly,

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if not admittedly momentarily startling, twist ending, it is revealed that Susan setup Cathy all along and that her begging her 'friend' to help her escape from the clutches of Gabriel and his followers was merely a cunning ploy to test the teen's devotion to the church. As to what happens to Cathy after that, one can only guess, but I would not be surprised if the deranged deviants of Gabriel's sexually sadistic congregation burnt her clit off while she was still alive, killed her during some sort of bloody S&M session involving knife-like dildos, and then sodomized her corpse.

While looking up background information on *The Defiance of Good*, I managed to find a vintage *The New York Post* article from Tuesday, January 28, 1975 entitled "A Cheerleader Grows Up" about the film's underage star Jean Jennings and her role in the film. After revealing that Jennings lied about her age to be in the film by signing a release saying she was 23, it is also revealed that the film's distributor Mickey Zaffarano—a morbidly obese mafia man who ran porno theaters and national porn distribution company for the Guido Bonanno family crime family—decided to release the work anyways despite the fact that the lead was underage, with his super sophisticated Sicilian reasoning being as follows: "Now, what do I do? Can the law stop me from exhibiting?" In the same article, Jennings also appears in good spirits about her profession, even claiming that her father supports her career in cinematic carnality, stating, "my father is very proud of me. He hasn't seen the film but he knows what kind of movie it is and he wants to help me in my acting career" (not surprisingly, the newspaper was unable to reach Jennings' parents for comment). Of course, after seeing *The Defiance of Good*, I doubt any parents would be proud of their child being in the film, even as an extra, as the work may make a mockery of the corrosive cocktail of sex, drugs, and gurus associated with the counter-culture generation, but it is still sleazy celluloid filth that makes the viewer feel like they need to take a long cold shower after watching it. Somewhat shockingly, the film was so popular upon its release that, like Jonas Middleton's somewhat superior avant-garde hardcore horror flick *Through The Looking Glass* (1976) starring Jamie Gills, a tie-in novel was subsequently released that was written by the assumedly pseudonymous novelist D.M. Perkins, who was also responsible for penning the tie-in novel for Gerard Damiano's crossover hit *Deep Throat* (1972) starring Linda Lovelace. With his later work *Take Off*—a genre-eclectic pornographic reworking of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)—auteur Armand Weston would prove he was capable of more 'lighthearted' celluloid lechery, but there is no denying that there was a certain sadistic spirit behind *The Defiance of Good*. Indubitably one of the most sensual and sensitively directed S&M fuck flicks that I have ever seen, Weston's film is not disturbing because it features gang-rape, multicultural finger-fucking, and Sapphic sadomasochism but because it depicts the unhinged mentality of an entire generation that, like the protagonist of the film, suffers from Stockholm syndrome and is responsible for

the degenerate post-cultural/post-racial/post-spiritual/post-moral America that exists today.

-Ty E

THE MAN IN THE GLASS BOOTH
THE MAN IN THE GLASS BOOTH

Arthur Hiller* (1975)

Before a then relatively unknown Ryan Gosling, despite his reasonably statuesque Aryan appearance, proved he could play the most volatile and self-destructive Jewish neo-Nazi in American Jew director/screenwriter Henry Bean's rather underrated and underseen work *The Believer* (2001), Germanic actor Maximilian Schell played a similarly self-extinguishing Jew in *The Man in the Glass Booth* (1975), a film based on English actor/novelist Robert Shaw's 1967 novel and 1968 stage play, both of the same name, that tells the hysterical yet highly humorous schizo semite story of a seemingly deranged yet super sophisticated Manhattan-based industrialist of the Hebraic persuasion who is kidnapped by secret agents from the Israeli Mossad and taken to Israel to stand trial in an Eichmann-esque fashion under the dubious charge of being a Nazi war criminal of the mass murdering variety. Although a rather aesthetically theatric work that merely seems like a stage-play on steroids like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) or a Rainer Werner Fassbinder TV-movie like *Women in New York* (1977), *The Man in the Glass Booth* would earn its lead star Maximilian Schell (Judgement at Nuremberg, John Carpenter's *Vampires*) nominations for the Academy Award for "Best Actor" and the Golden Globe Award for "Best Actor - Motion Picture Drama" due to his penetrating performance as a vulgarian genius of a business man that seemingly suffers from a split-personality as a funny fellow who cannot decide whether he is a kosher capitalist or a nefarious National Socialist of the Jew-gassing sort. Undoubtedly one of the most literate and convincing films ever made on the subject of Jewish self-hatred that makes archetypical Judaic nerd Woody Allen's pathological neuroticism seem like the attention-seeking antics of a spoiled little girl who is jealous that her goyish classmates got more presents for Christmas than she got for Hanukah, *The Man in the Glass Booth* has the wonderful gall to look at everything from the argument that Israel would not exist today without Hitler and Auschwitz, to the shameful fact that even the richest of Jews are only a generation away from peddling junk in an impoverished Eastern European ghetto. A work not thematically unlike *Weininger's Nacht* (1990) aka *Weininger's Last Night* directed by Austrian half-Hebrew Paulus Manker and *The Believer* (2001) directed by Henry Bean in that it treads the seemingly thin line between anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism, as well as the perennial link between narcissism and self-hatred, *The Man in the Glass Booth* is indubitably a rare piece of scathing, Jew juicy celluloid that ironically appeals to both Jews and their many enemies alike. Although based on a work written by a gentile Englishman who was against his story being adapted cinematically, *The Man in the Glass Booth* was directed by Jewish-Canadian television/film director Arthur Hiller (*Tobruk*, *The Hospital*) and produced by American Jew Ely Abraham Landau (the Shaw adaptation being one of the fourteen films in the pro-

ducer's American Film Theatre series), and ultimately has a more 'kosher' essence than anything ever directed by philistine Steven Spielberg, the Jewish filmmaker who has done the most to turned the holocaust into a profitable project and a religion for the goyim.

Posh kosher playboy Arthur Goldman (Austrian-born Swiss actor Maximilian Schell) is a ridiculously rich Jewish industrialist who spends a good portion of his time hiding from the real world in his luxuriously lavish Manhattan high-rise and watching people below via binoculars in a patently paranoid manner. An eternally mourning widow who is not that sad over his belated wife's death that it does not stop him from having a different girlfriend for every day of the week (something his wealth allows) and making perverted puns like "the hole is the greater of the sum of its parts" in regard to the fairer sex, as well as an art snob who prefers degenerate Jewish art over the works of Dutch master painter Hieronymus Bosch, Goldman is in many ways the kosher posterboy for a Nazi propaganda like *Der Stürmer*, yet he is a more keen anti-Semite than National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher (who, rather ironically, has been rumored to be of Jewish blood himself). As a holocaust survivor who managed to survive Auschwitz some three decades or so before, Goldman, despite his stinking wealth and having the best security resources in the city, has never been able to forget what it is like to live in fear. Seemingly ashamed of his less than successful pretzel-peddler of an Orthodox Jew father, Goldman tells an associate regarding his father's stay at Auschwitz, "Hymie...Hymie Goldman...was your average middle-aged Jew...so he only last five months...[laughs]...and you know the irony was he really never believed it was happening." During one sunny day while looking at the little people down below, Goldman has a hallucination of seeing his father wheeling around his ghetto pretzel cart, as well as an SS men, which causes him to tremble in shock and horror as a victim of post-traumatic stress. Naturally, the Judaic industrialist's assistants, Charlie Cohn (Lawrence Pressman), a younger Jew of the naive post-WWII-born sort, and Jack (Henry Brown), a young black buck, are quite disturbed by their eccentric employer's exceedingly erratic behavior. For instance, while working out in a public gym, Goldman randomly remarks to his protégé Charlie while handling free weights, "Arbeit macht frei...That's a big joke of the Germans... Arbeit macht frei means 'work makes free.' The only freedom of course was up the chimney...The faster you work the sooner you go to the ovens." Charlie also becomes especially offended when Mr. Goldman when he tells him he is 'third rank' in regard to the Jewish sub-races as a man of Lithuanian-Jewish ancestry. Of course, the biggest shock for Charlie is when the Mossad shows up, anally probes (according to the Mossad man, Herr Hermann Göring shoved a cyanide capsule up his poop chute), and kidnaps Goldman for "crimes against the Jewish people" as the Israeli secret agents believe the Heeb industrialist to be SS Colonel Karl Dorff, the same man who apparently tortured and killed the father of the wealthy holocaust

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survivor.

Upon arriving in Israel, Goldman is visited in his dungeon-like jail cell by an Israeli public prosecutor assigned to his case named Miriam Rosen (Lois Nettleton, who looks strikingly like Barbara Streisand, minus the repellant Ashkenazi beak), a bloodthirsty Jewess of the vengeful, venom-filled “never forget” and “never forgive” sort who wants to see the supposed SS man hanged just like Adolf Eichmann (whose trial and execution largely inspired *The Man in the Glass Booth*). Goldman waves his right to an attorney and asks to defend himself (as he says, “who is better qualified?!”), which he inevitably does in a striking SS uniform after he makes a deal with Miriam. Goldman also gives Hebraic hell to a young male psychologist when he makes the bold statement that “only a Jew could conceive of reading the human soul from ink blots” in regard to a Rorschach test he is given, thus following in the footsteps of so-called “self-loathing Jews” like anti-Freudians Karl Kraus and Thomas Szasz in his criticism of Freudian psychoanalysis. After the shrink gives Goldman the clinical diagnosis of being ‘criminally psychotic,’ the Nazi Jew wisely states “If I’m psychotic, 80 million Germans were psychotic...and half the gentiles, all the Muslims, the black activists, the protestant members...” and “socially approved acts, when committed by a whole nation, are not psychotic,” which infuriates the openly anti-kraut psychologist. Of course, it is not until the Israeli criminal trial for “crimes against the Jewish people” that Arthur Goldman, under the stoically sadomasochistic persona of SS Colonel Karl Dorff in full Nazi regalia, that the industrialist-turned-war criminal, who is placed in a glass booth for his protection, has holocaust survivors and IDF members literally lunging at him to kill him. The only one to come to Goldman’s aid is his personal assistant Charlie, who states he cannot be Aryan Dorff because he is clearly a Jew due to his Hebraic sense of humor and mastery of Yiddish, not to mention that “no gentile could ever be as anti-semitic as Mr. Goldman is,” thus highlighting one of the most potent themes of *The Man in the Glass Booth* in regard to an innate pathological self-hatred in every truly Jewish Jew. In the end, Arthur Goldman, a Jew who barely survived a rather unkind and unkosher concentration camp who would live to become one of the most successful men in the United States of America, succumbs to his own survivor’s guilt and self-hatred as a victim who schizophrenically empathized with the victimizers.

In a 3 out of 4 star review for *The Man in the Glass Booth* written by shabos goy Roger Ebert, the far-left-leaning film critic made the rather blatant yet important observation that: “Films like “*Judgment at Nuremberg*” began with the assumption that morality could be upheld and responsibility assigned. “*The Man in the Glass Booth*” is an infinitely more despairing work.” And, indeed, one of the film’s greatest strengths is that it does not settle for a banal black-and-white view of any of the controversial topics it covers to the point where it even makes the quasi-illegal Israeli show trials seem even rather pointless and redun-

dant with the sole purpose of striking fear in potential anti-semites around the world, hence the worldwide publicity of the Eichmann trial. Even the public prosecutor Miriam Rosen displays the most unflattering attributes of the militaristic Israeli mentality when she states “this time if we go, we won’t go alone” regarding if another ‘holocaust’ were to take place against the Jews, the Jew will take measures to wipe out their enemies as well. Indeed, such seething remarks are not that atypical of contemporary Israeli/Jewish thinkers as the Israeli military historian/theorist Martin van Creveld made the rather apocalyptic remark that sounds like words from a wackjob from Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) in a September 2003 interview in the Dutch weekly, *Elsevier*, that regarding his beyond-an-eye-for-an-eye nation: “We possess several hundred atomic warheads and rockets and can launch them at targets in all directions, perhaps even at Rome. Most European capitals are targets for our air force.... We have the capability to take the world down with us. And I can assure you that that will happen before Israel goes under.” Aside from the rather tame anti-Israeli statements from ‘self-loathing Jews’ like Norman Finkelstein and Gilad Atzmon, it seems like the days of sophisticated self-hating Hebrews suffering from the ‘Jew flu’ are long gone, which is probably largely the result of Europe’s decline in cultural dominance and the rise of Jewish power in the United States as expressed by the flagrant philo-semitism in academia and Hollywood, among other things, thus while *The Man in the Glass Booth* might seem rather outmoded and even inexplicable to modern viewers, it is rather doubtful that anyone could describe the film as a depiction of the so called “banality of evil,” even as a minimalistic courtroom melodrama. For those that ever wondered how or why someone could possibly humor the possibility that Uncle Adolf and friends may have had some Israelite blood, *The Man in the Glass Booth* offers some completely kosher food-for-thought.

-Ty E

LEFT-HANDED
LEFT-HANDED

Arthur Penn* (1958)

It has been my experience that most left-handed people are wacked-out in some striking way or another. In fact, my most criminally-inclined and psychopathic friend growing up was left-handed and when not breaking said left hand/wrist doing a number of idiotically dangerous things, he was certainly used it to thief or to smoke a joint laced with coke or whatever drug of choice he was using at that time. Naturally, I would expect a gay hardcore porn flick entitled *Left-Handed* (1972) to be riddled with unsavory left-handed degenerates doing unsavory things and avant-garde pornographer Jack Deveau's film certainly does not disappoint in that regard as a work of completely callous cocksucking cynicism that does not celebrate gay liberation and related counter-culture crap, but is instead a wonderfully wicked work that portrays the left-handed sodomite lead as predatory and pernicious psychopath who gets off to destroying normal heterosexual relationships, as well as loses interest and drops 'lovers' once they fall in love with him and he has fully debased to a most irreparable degree. The feature-length debut of architectural and graphic designer turned fag filmmaker/producer Jack Deveau (*Drive*, *A Night at the Adonis*), *Left-Handed* is far from the positive poof 'crossover' pictures of Wakefield Poole (*Boys in the Sand*, *Bijou*) and the sodomite S&M-celebrating of Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*), as a work about a long-haired trio of moral and sexual degenerates, including a hustler, antique dealer, and pot dealer, who live for sex, drugs, and rock n roll and ultimately pay the price for such hedonistic idiocy. Essentially the story of a gay hustler who conspires to turn an ostensibly heterosexual drug dealer with a girlfriend into a passive fag bottom, only to leave him in heartbreak in the end, *Left-Handed* is lecherous hardcore homo porn at its most misanthropically melodramatic and nastily nihilistic as the sort of work that, not unlike William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), would have been labeled 'homophobic' by hysterical homo do-gooders had it been directed by a heterosexual man. A dark and bitter tale of aberrant mis-romance with hardcore homo action thrown in between, *Left-Hand* is the film that announced Jack Deveau arrived and that Halsted was not American's only artsy fartsy S&M auteur pornographer.

Heterosexual country boy dope-peddler Bob (Robert Rikas) and super swarthy would-be-hunk hustler Ray (Ray Frank) have never met, but through their mutual 'friend' Larry (Larry Burns)—a dirty hippie antique dealer with an exceedingly annoying voice—the two will meet through happenstance and almost immediately begin a steamy sodomite love affair of the initially bi-curious but ultimately tragic sort. On his way to Larry's shabby knick-knack shack, Ray makes a stop at a public restroom and having some time and semen to waste, he proves his oral versatility to a total stranger. When Ray finally arrives at Larry's store, the antique dealer has already bought a couple kilos of grass from Bob, but the

two strangers spend enough time with one another for the Hustler to get hooked on the Adonis-like Nordic-American dope peddler. Like the stereotypical high school whore, Ray vows to Larry that he will initiate Bob into male buggery sooner or later. Rather impressed with Bob's outdoor hetero hunkness and crude country boy charm, Ray goes home and masturbates while fantasizing in what is an elaborate pornographic black-and-white dream-sequence between the scheming sodomite streetwalker and half-braindead pot dealer. In his innate vulgarity and deep-seated desire to defile country boy Bob, Ray perfectly personifies what Teutonic prophet philosopher of Occidental decline Oswald Spengler meant when he wrote regarding urban anti-folk, "In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is a new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially that highest form of countryman, the country gentleman." One afternoon while walking down the street, Ray bumps into Bob and the two virtual strangers decide to smoke dope at the latter's pathetic apartment, thus resulting in rather raunchy consequences. Bob, who is featured in *Left-Handed* passionately performing cunnilingus on and penetrating his girlfriend (Teri Reardon), gets so pathetically stoned and inhibited that he decides to get naked with Ray and even screws the assumedly STD-stricken hustler's rather ripped rectum.

After converting Bob to play on the pink team, Ray decides to stalk the dope dealer, who lives with his girlfriend, at his quaint farmhouse. With his girlfriend viewing voyeuristically from a window, Bob allows Ray to blow him in a barn and the two continue to fuck furiously around the rural homestead. When big gay Ray leaves, Bob comes to the startling realization that he loves the homo hustler more than his girlfriend, so he drops her and his heterosexuality like a bad habit to begin his new life as a rare masculine rural queer. Naturally, Ray moves into Bob's country home and the two engage in incessant aberrosexual activity that becomes more and more depraved as the days pass. Eventually, born bottom Ray deflowers Bob's bi-curious bunghole, thus leading to the beginning of the end of their raunchy 'romantic' relationship, as the streetwalking sod is mainly attracted to the redneck dope dealer's innocence, which he has enthusiastically destroyed like the immune system of AIDS-addled crackbaby. Meanwhile, prissy antique pusher Larry becomes jealous like a frigid queen upon learning of Bob and Ray's relationship, so he creates a sadistic plan to setup a five-man fag orgy at his apartment where he hopes the dope dealer will walk in on his hustler boy toy getting gangbanged by a brigade of rough and tough buggering boys. Of course, Ray goes to the party and gives into his hyper hedonistic hustler tendencies, and just as lecherous lunatic Larry planned, Bob walks in on his beloved butt-boy being carnally manhandled by a number of anonymous unclad men. In fact, Ray becomes so erotically enamored with the five-cock orgy that he proudly takes some random dude's fist and half of his arm up his ass like a true bitch with a

LEFT-HANDED

sinister itch for morbid masochism. Of course, Bob finally comes to his senses and realizes that Ray was only capable of offering him a 'left-handed' romance, thus concluding *Left-Handed* on a rather depressingly note that is bound to spoil any poor pervert's masturbatory climax.

On top of being the first feature directed by Jack Deveau and the first *Hand-in-Hand* (the film studio Deveau cofounded) production, *Left-Handed* also has the dubious distinction of being the first fully scripted gay porn flick, as well as the first gay porn flick to feature an original musical score, which is not exactly a grand achievement artistically, but considering that in context with the fact that is a terribly dark fuck flick with a less than flattering depiction of fagdom and its seems rather funny. Described by Mallory Callan in the March 16, 1973 issue of *The Reader: Chicago's Free Weekly* as follows, "As pornography goes, the film is remarkable because of its aesthetic sophistication and intellectual curiosity... While taut, the plot is not merely a flimsy premise to introduce one more sexual possibility. The essence of economy, all action advances the obsessional sexual pursuits of the central character, Ray, and all gratuitous 'emotionality' which does not bear directly on the erotic situation has been pruned away," *Left-Handed*, as well as most of Deveau's films, ultimately proved that porn, even gay porn featuring fisting, could rise above the level of a pathetic masturbation aid and reach a sort of visceral 'truth' that most non-pornographic films lack. Made at the end of the hippie era when even the most masculine of men looked like dirty pussy Jesus impersonators, *Left-Handed*, most importantly, demystified the appeal of 'free love', drug addiction, and idiotic haircuts and wardrobes, ultimately depicting these innately inane irrational ingredients as the recipe for a sad self-serving life of soulless sex and destructive relationships that no one, no matter how high, would be proud of. Personally, I think Deveau's second cinematic effort, *Drive* (1974), is superior to *Left-Handed*, but undoubtedly, if the two films have anything in common aside from the obvious homoerotic attractions, it is that they are unwaveringly aesthetically repugnant works from a decidedly deplorable zeitgeist, thus both works should be deemed culturally and historically significant in that they epitomize everything that was damningly degenerate about its excrement-flavored era of excess and eroticism for eroticism's sake. Indeed, if there ever was a 'left-handed' film about a left-handed era, it is most certainly Deveau's *Left-Handed*.

-Ty E

BONNIE AND CLYDE

Arthur Penn* (1967)

Bonnie and Clyde was one of the first revolutionary films of late 1960's "New" Hollywood. This new studio era produced films promoting subversion, promiscuous sex, revolution and overall disdain for authority. It seems that Hollywood was a supporter of the various "liberation" movements going on in America during that time period. In Bonnie and Clyde, Hollywood decided to make a film about real-life depression era outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. The film also just happens to be the best of the "American New Wave" films. Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway were perfect for the roles of title characters. Beatty plays a "cool" outlaw with a hillbilly charm that anyone could get along with. Faye Dunaway is captivating as a stunning vixen that only Warren Beatty could tame. Both characters really do prove that opposites attract and remain bonded till death. The two stars of the film are obviously more appealing than the real outlaw couple. Left: Real-life Bonnie and Clyde Right: Hollywood's Bonnie and Clyde Bonnie and Clyde features a soundtrack of energetic banjo playing that adds auditory perfection to the film's dirt road aesthetic. The simplistic yet radiant cinematography make the film very easy on the eyes. Despite the violent nature of Bonnie and Clyde, the film is fairly calm and soothing. Bonnie and Clyde director Arthur Penn seemed to take some notes from the directors of the European "New Wave" film movements. Bonnie and Clyde is one of few Hollywood studio films that I would consider a masterpiece. Bonnie and Clyde seem to have some problems in the bedroom as Clyde is not much of a "lover boy." From the beginning of the film, it is apparent that Bonnie is sexually repressed and aggressive. Despite Clyde's sexual problems, he is the only man that can satisfy Bonnie. Only near the conclusion of Bonnie and Clyde do the two lovers accomplish a full exercise in physical love. The love "climax" is a fitting scene before the final violent climax of the film.

-Ty E

KYODAI MAKES THE BIG TIME
KYODAI MAKES THE BIG TIME

Aryan Kaganof* (1992)

Long before he de-christened himself 'Aryan Kaganof' (Shabondama Elegy aka Tokyo Elegy, SMS Sugar Man) after meeting his biological father for the first time, the South African auteur formerly known as Ian Kerkhof shocked the Dutch world by winning the 'Golden Calf for Best Long Feature' (the Dutch equivalent to the Oscar) for his minimalistic 16mm low-budget avant-garde debut feature *Kyodai Makes The Big Time* (1992) at the 1992 Netherlands Film Festival. At the time of winning the highly coveted prize, Kaganof was only 28-years-old and a second year student at the Dutch Film and Television Academy, yet he managed to win an award that put him in the company of the top Dutch actors and filmmakers, including Paul Verhoeven, Rutger Hauer, Fons Rademakers, and Alex van Warmerdam, among countless others. Despite winning the most mainstream of Dutch film prizes, Kaganof thankfully opted for becoming more experimental, iconoclastic, and eclectically cinematically subversive over time, with his third film *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994) being like no other film made before or after it, as a sort of foreboding celluloid essay that finds the beauty and intrigue in ugliness, depravity, and inhumanity. Luckily, I was recently able to track down a copy of *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* and can say without hesitation that it seems that Kaganof has always been a celluloid master with an uncompromising vision. An auteur that seems to have skipped his formative years as a filmmaker, Kaganof created a work with *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* that dwells on the impossibility of love and romance in a dull post-counter-culture age where empty sex reigns and where romantic commitment is an act of the 'naïve' (or so says a character in the film). An intentionally slow-moving yet strangely atmospheric piece of unwavering pessimism featuring mostly still static shots that recalls the early films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* is an anti-romantic tale about the metaphysical battle of sexes that manages to make the avant-gardism of Jean-Marie Straub quite palatable by mixing it with a little Warhol/Morrissey-esque degeneracy and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) inspired antisocial youth spirit. A work that is bound to offend both fickle feminists and beta-male manosphere-obsessed misogynists alike, the emotionally-ravaging and romantically tragic spirit of *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* was probably best described by auteur Kaganof himself in an interview: "I am always amazed by women who stay with a man who uses physical violence or is emotionally closed. Men are different. There is always the urge to possess and once you have it you don't want it anymore. That is the constant problem in relationships...in fact men want to fuck all women."

Opening with a scene of muscular and handsome self-absorbed antihero Kyodai Rogerson (Koos Vos) perniciously pounding the puss of his quasi-girlfriend/steady

fucktoy Stephanie aka 'Steph' (played by Janica Draisma, who also won a 'Golden Calf' for her performance in the film) shouting at his beloved romantic things like, "You fucking cunt, I'm fucking your cunt," *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* immediately lets the viewer know they are about to enter a sexually oppressive, if not somewhat pathetic and even humorous, world of misguided male narcissism and female masochism. Indeed, Kyodai is a self-absorbed bourgeois bum of sorts who dreams of being a film actor and rides on a motorcycle. A postmodern Narcissus, Kyodai is so unwaveringly in love with himself that he literally masturbates while staring in the mirror. Presumably to pump up his own self-esteem, Kyodai always surrounds himself with inferiors and hangs out with mostly junky losers (in fact, one of his friends even eloquently asks him, "why the fuck do you hangout with me?"), including a Burroughs-brainwashed dope fiend with long greasy hair who proudly states, "I'm a junkman, I'm a professional. Some people study to become lawyers or doctors or a fucking psychoanalyst...Me, I studied on the streets and became a junky, and one of the best at it." In terms of advice on love, Kyodai turns to his too-cool-for-school hedonist friend Jacques (André Arend van de Noord), who is against love because it is 'serious', stating to his friend, "There's no use in being serious. I mean, it's hard...being serious. Not only is it hard...it's also stupid. Not stupid...but naïve. To be serious, you have to be naïve. If you're not naïve, which you are not, then you have to pretend...and to pretend, you have to be an actor." Of course, as his failed attempt to get into the film acting trade will prove, Kyodai is not much of an actor and will ultimately fail to treat Stephanie in a manner different than that of a mere fuck-buddy.

Used and abused lover girl Steph has no serious hang-ups in terms of her relationship with Kyodai and her man's almost bestial form of buggery, even confessing to her friend Colette (Ysabel Evers) regarding her lover, "I get so turned-on when he cums, he makes these growling sounds like a wolf. Really primitive." As Steph explains to Colette, she does want Kyodai to open up to her, but the more she attempts to be loving and tender with her boyfriend, the more he pushes her away. When Steph pleads to her beloved, "I just wish it wasn't always so violent. Sometimes I just wish you would hold me and be tender," and then asks him, "What are we doing together?...What's the difference between my cunt and Colette's?," Kyodai coldly and callously replies, "I haven't tried Colette's.....yet." Indeed, Kyodai is up his own ass with "James Dean bullshit" and he is not about to change for anyone, especially for an immature teenager with a rather idealistic view of love and romance. Of course, Kyodai is in for a rude awakening when he goes to a casting agency and the lady there tells that, "We need more acting experience than cheek bone." Indeed, Kyodai may have the striking appearance of a Nordic Übermensch, but he has the personality of a braindead psychopath and the morality of a gypsy beggar. Naturally, when Stephanie's friend Colette, who is a jealous bitch who is fed up with "clean cut college guys" looking for her

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clit during cunnilingus, begins a short-lived affair with Kyodai that de-evolves into a banal bizarre love triangle, the two lovers' relationship finally dissolves for good. Strangely, Kyodai unconsciously confesses to his androgynous man-woman mother figure friend Jeff (Jeff Babock)—an exceedingly effete man with long girly hair who loves to feel up his male friend and seems more like a post-menopausal grandmother than a young man—that he indeed loves Stephanie but, of course, it is too late to repair their shattered love affair. In the end, it is revealed that two years after the couple broke up, Kyodai ironically died after crashing his beloved motorcycle, but he called Stephanie right before his death, meekly confessing to her, “I would love nothing more than feeling your breasts rubbing into my back while riding into the big time. The big time, Steph... The big time.” Indeed, Kyodai finally reached the big time, with his whole superficial and senseless rebel-without-a-cause persona resulting in his bitter and ultimately pathetic demise. As for Stephanie, she states in retrospect regarding her troubled romance with Kyodai and his tragic, if not inevitable, death: “I was crying because I had become a woman and would never again become that loving, sweet, fearless girl who was so certain that things would work out for the best. Kyodai had been my rite of passage into the bittersweet world of adulthood. There is not much more to say. I loved Kyodai...passionately, ecstasically... I don't think of him all that often.”

In terms of its depiction of a young woman going through her 'rite of passage' by falling in love with an abusive asshole loser that has a complete and utter incapacity for love, *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* is rather realistic in its essence that expresses in emotional tone and atmosphere more than mere words could ever hope to achieve, as a malignantly melancholy work that manages to reconcile Bresson with Fassbinder. Indeed, a dirty Dutch depiction about how 'love is colder than death' in a country where prostitution is legal and the native indigenous women are less and less interested in their own men, preferring instead to copulate and reproduce with foreign men from the global south, *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* is undoubtedly one of few truthful films of its time, thus making it a work that most people do not want to see lest they have to confront the lies of their own lives. When the film was nominated for 'Golden Calf for Best Long Feature' at the Netherlands Film Festival, it apparently caused some protest, with Dutch film producer Matthijs van Heijningen complaining, “It further increases the already existing gap between Dutch film and the audience,” as if cinema is a distinctly proletarian artistic medium. As Kaganof would also explain, “Some leading Dutch filmmakers this week advised me to withdraw my film from competition as a possible prize could exclude me from getting subsidies for future projects, but I did not listen to them.” Although only speculation on my part, it seems those leading Dutch filmmakers Kaganof spoke of were jealous that some young and upcoming South African that no one ever heard of would show them up at their own national film festival. Of course, *Kyodai Makes the*

Big Time does show its Dutch cinematic influences, as a work with an innate apathy for Hollywood cinema convention, as well as an unflattering depiction of the wanton war of the sexes, that has not been seen in the Netherlands since the beautifully grotesque films of Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training, Living*), whose feature *Pentimento* (1979) inspired hateful protest from feminists. Blowing his entire lifesavings and swallowing his pride and asking his ex-girlfriends and girlfriends for additional funds to finance *Kyodai Makes the Big Time*, Kaganof would be able to create a minor masterpiece that enabled him to make the big time and the auteur would later rub it in the faces of the Dutch by remarking in an interview, "I never understand why more films aren't made in Holland. This must be the easiest country in the world to make films in. Just about everybody has a 16mm camera, and there is loads of old film stock lying around waiting to be used up. If people spent less time in cafes zeiring about other people's lousy films and more time just making their own there would be sprake of a real film culture here." For those that doubt the Netherlands has ever produced a work that rivals the great works of the French New Wave and German New Cinema, check out Kaganof's *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* and bask in the brutal beauty of immature sex and anti-love.

-Ty E

THE MOZART BIRD
THE MOZART BIRD

Aryan Kaganof* (1993)

Like many artists who do not go out of their way to put women on a pedestal and depict them as somehow morally superior to men and/or perennial victims of the pernicious patriarchy, South African auteur Aryan Kaganof aka Ian Kerkhof (Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers, Western 4.33) has been accused of being a dreaded misogynist. Indeed, after doing the seemingly unthinkable by receiving the prestigious Golden Calf—the Dutch equivalent of an Oscar—for his low-budget feature-length directorial debut *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* (1992), Kaganof would follow up his hit film with a work that would be somewhat less well received, *The Mozart Bird* (1993) aka *De Mozart Bird*, which was attacked in the press, including by the director's friends, as somehow not being gynocentric enough for feminists. For instance, in his review of the film with the less than thoughtful title "A Shoddy Film Difficult to Take Seriously," Kaganof's self-professed pal Jeremy Dowson wrote regarding the work and its creator: "It comes as little surprise that *THE MOZART BIRD*, an attempted study of a man's destructive relationship with his lover, contains much of everything I've ever taken issue with him about: misogyny and pretention in the form of smart-arse nods, not only to the likes of Nietzsche but to his own "filmic oeuvre" [...] I cannot take seriously this shoddily edited, ramblingly scripted, stiltedly acted, over-long 16mm exercise in Boy's Own intellectual masturbation." Of course, Kaganof is not the humorless pretentious twat that spiritual eunuch Dowson makes him out to be as demonstrated by the fact that the filmmaker humorously decided to use the negative review as the cover-art for the DVD copy he sent me. Notably, the cover of *The Mozart Bird* also features the wonderful words "a film about cunt cuntness cuntility cuntissue," thus guaranteeing not only cunts, but fun to anyone with an actual sense of humor. A comfortably claustrophobic chamber piece divided by shots of post-industrial architecture and urban decay in gloomy Amsterdam about the rise and fall of a hot, heavy, and eroto-philosophical romance between two slacker expatriates of the overly educated and considerably self-indulgent sort who spend most of their time fucking, fighting, and pseudo-philosophizing when they should be looking for jobs, Kaganof's work is the film that Richard Linklater's pseudo-existentialist celluloid excrement *Slacker* (1991) and *Before Sunrise* and the miserable Mumblecore abortions by infantile would-be-auteur dildos like Joe Swanberg wish they were, as a visceral and even vicious, albeit oftentimes devilishly humorous, no bullshit look at romance and relationships during the age of Occidental nihilism and rampant bourgeois degeneracy. Far from misogynistic, *The Mozart Bird*, not unlike the works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, does not hold back when it comes to dissecting and prodding at the idiosyncrasies of both genders, as the sort of ruthless work that would make the man-children that direct Mum-

blecore malarkey piss their skid-mark-stained Superman panties. Described by Kaganof around the time of its initial release as follows, "It's light! It's uplifting! It's THE MOZART BIRD! My new improved formula feature film. See Howard sulk! See Selene throw a temper tantrum! See people just like you doing all the stuff nobody thought was worth making a film about! See another film about very little...(slowly)," this super subtly tragicomic and shamelessly lurid (anti)love story ultimately manages to find quaint pulchritude in the fine art of mis-romance and emotional immaturity.

Howard (Argentinean actor Daniel Daran, who also appeared in Kaganof's first feature) and Selene (Stacey Grace, who later appeared in Kaganof's third feature *The Turner Revelation* (1995)) are two over-educated expatriate lovers that look like brother and sister who talk a lot but don't say much and suck off the teat of the Dutch welfare state, hence why they have so much time to chatter and chatter about nothing. As a couple that is afraid of being a couple, their romance is doomed to fail. Their relationship began when Selene ripped off Howard's "best summer shirt in front of ten thousand anti-racist demonstrators," which he saw as "an invitation for a fast and furious fuckaboo," so he naturally followed the dame back to her apartment where they spent about ten minutes of pseudo-philosophizing in the dark before having sex. After that first night, Howard basically never left and made Selene's apartment his own. Howard has pretensions towards being some sort of great writer of erotic novellas in the spirit of Alain Robbe-Grillet and approaches life in a soulless and pedantic fashion as a sort of 'perennial observer' and bohemian Don Juan who is afraid to get truly emotionally involved with anything, especially women, who he tends to use until he gets bored and then throws them away. To Howard's minor credit, Selene has rode many different cocks in her life and seeing as she lives in Amsterdam, she has a pretty good idea of the typical bedroom behavior of the native Dutch population, which she describes as follows, "They're not really into eating it [pussy]. The Dutchman is like an in-and-out business like fuck. He likes it without the trappings...as straightforward as possible." Of course, Howard, who is short and swarthy, is certainly no Dutchman and has no problem committing to cunnilingus, even after his girlfriend has confessed to him that she wet her panties after another man stared at her in a seductive fashion, but it is the least he can do since Selene literally worships his feet and has no problem fellating his feet (!), thus reflecting her masochistic side. While Selene more or less prays to Howard's prick, she does not think much of her lover's writing talents, even at one point asking him, "You actually see yourself as a writer? I mean, someone that can contribute to the tradition...to the canon," to which he naturally replies, "God, you're a bitch. A real cuntin' bitch." To Selene's chagrin, Howard will ultimately make her into a character in one of his shitty erotic novels just like he does with all of his sexual conquests, which was her greatest dread, for as she reflects after their relationship concludes, "I still hold onto the idea that being with me was

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different from everyone else,” yet he ultimately treated her as just another token lay for his extensive literary ‘research.’

While *The Mozart Bird* is for the most part in chronological order as a work divided into long and emotionally grueling dramatic sequences in a fashion that is not all that different from an Ingmar Bergman flick, the work is sprinkled with post-relationship narration from Selene in regard to her mixed feelings on her failed romance and how she just feels like another one of Howard’s fuck objects yet at the same time yearns for him to call her. It certainly seems that part of the reason the relationship failed was because Selene was not all that good at stroking Howard’s precious little hipster playboy ego. While lying in bed together, Selene compares Howard’s behavior to Nietzsche’s (failed) attempt to escape from the banality of his sterile existence via the “flight into art” and eventually the “flight into knowledge” and then berates her beau by stating, “if you don’t let yourself get hurt, you’re going to suffer real emotional damage in the long run. You use your life like some small scale reenactment of the mythical dramas you know you’re not capable of writing about,” to which loverboy angrily replies, “You know what I find so sad about you? You think you’re so god damn original.” As Selene later accurately states to Howard regarding their hopelessly banal and somewhat phony relationship, “Did you ever listen to us? Our conversations are like some schoolboy’s conception of self-referential dialogue and the ultimate postmodernist urban wasteland serial. You know, littered with name-dropped debris. We don’t talk, we unclutter.” Indeed, the only time the two lovers seem like they’re not bullshitting is when they are screwing because otherwise they sound like two babbling automatons that have been lobotomized by too much postmodern theory. When Selene does attempt to be more of her real self by discussing her love of Howard the Duck comics and Alan Moore’s *Swamp Thing* series, Howard seems to get turned off, as if such things are beneath him and his towering intellect. Towards the end of the film, Howard forces Selene to read some of his latest writings, but she is more interested in talking about the dubious state of their relationship and remarks when her self-absorbed boyfriend complains about her lack of interest in his work, “you want a standing ovation? I never took you for a couple’s guy, Howie. All that cunt and bitches bullshit...it was all just special effects, like your writing.” Like every time they fight, Howard chalks up Selene’s bitchy mood to ovulating, but little does he realize that it is the beginning of the end of their relationship, which merely fizzles out as opposed to going out in a blaze of glory.

Towards the conclusion of *The Mozart Bird* right before the two lovers break up for good, Howard readily admits he is a total literary fraud that has always been looking to make the big time, or as he arrogantly states himself, “I have always been looking to sell-out. No one was buying then.” When Selene attempts to compliment him by stating, “You’re the first man I ever met that actually enjoyed talking about sex [...] I loved the sound of your voice,” Howard makes

the smart-ass yet totally truthful reply, "I didn't have much to say. Still don't. I just play around with words. Everything that needs to be said has been said and no one noticed." As for romance, Howard describes it as a, "means to an end: fame and wealth; what else," thus reflecting his nihilistically materialistic and superlatively shallow view of life and love. Although Selene "fell in love with a man that didn't care about money," it never occurred to her that that man never existed and that Howard was merely putting up a false front to protect his ego in regard to his sorry lot in life when they were together. During the final scene before the credits, Selene and Howard sit with their backs against a window for a couple minutes while not saying a single word to one another in a scenario reflecting the complete bankruptcy of their romance, which has now reached an exceedingly emotionally impoverished point where the two lapsed love birds no longer even have the desire to talk to one another, not to mention the fact that they no longer seem to like to fuck. When Selene goes to pick up her things from 'her' apartment (Howard moved into the place and ultimately took it completely over, with Selene being the one that had to move out) after their relationship has fizzled out, Howard barely acknowledges her presence and says some typical phony cliché bullshit about how they should remain friends. Needless to say, that never happened and the two went their separate ways without ever looking back. It is dubious as to whether the two ever even really loved one another in the first place as indicated in Selene's confused confession, "There really were a few moments that I felt both of us felt something. I don't know if it was love...but something. Maybe that was why he could infuriate me so much...because I felt he was trying so hard to cancel out those moments...so afraid to just let them be." Selene does not seem to realize that people that are truly in love do not have to question it, as they feel it, thought it is clear that she took the relationship more serious than her less than devoted ex-beau, who was cheating on her with a chick named Robin while they were still together. After the credits scene concludes in *The Mozart Bird*, the viewer is treated to an extra scene where Selene and Howard bump into one another at a bar. Howard is now a successful novelist and absolutely infuriates Selene by proudly letting her know that he has "immortalized" her by using her likeness for one of the characters of his latest hit novel. Indeed, in the end it becomes clear that their relationship was ultimately nothing more than research for Howard's book. Of course, when Howard got successful, he no longer needed Selene anymore, as he was able to obtain much younger and hotter babes. Needless to say, Selene gets a little bit bitchy when Howard introduces her to his new hot young Guido girlfriend. In a singularly memorable ending, *The Mozart Bird* concludes in somber yet completely cathartic fashion with Irish singer Roz George (aka Rosalind George) appearing from the back of the bar and walking towards the camera while singing a lament with the biting lyrics, "...my thoughts shall be with you."

After watching *The Mozart Bird*, I can only see it as baffling that anyone

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could interpret the film as being in any way misogynistic, as the male (anti)hero ultimately comes out looking like a soulless parasite and psychic vampire that drains women of their emotions and exploits their vulnerability just so that he can have material for his hack novels. Indeed, what male would not appreciate a woman that was able to fall in love with a man that did not care about money. Despite the somewhat sullen and somber tone of the film, I often-times found myself laughing, especially during the borderline graphic sex scenes which, although fairly realistic as demonstrated by Selene's completely sweaty sex-drenched body and the numerous shots of the characters going down on each other, would probably turn off most viewers, especially those expecting some sort of pseudo-chic Radley Metzger-esque fuck flick. Kaganof must have found an excellent folly artist, as I have never heard such loud and scratchy 'slurps' during blowjob scenes before, as if the female lead was performing fellatio on a metal pipe covered in cum. In an assumed attempt to mock the contrived naturalism of certain avant-garde filmmakers, Kaganof included a number of extended under lit scenes lasting upwards of ten minutes where virtually nothing can be seen. As his short *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994) demonstrates, Kaganof is a master of mise-en-scène and would not shoot such an exceedingly underexposed scene unless it was completely intentional. Indeed, from the ritualistic cunnilingus scenes to the barside Celtic laments, everything about *The Mozart Bird* is carefully calculated to the point of cryptic self-deprecation where Kaganof mocks his own dialogue and previous 'romance' flick *Kyodai Makes the Big Time*. Described as 'Last Tango in Amsterdam' by various reviewers upon its original release and described by Kaganof himself as an installment in his "urban wasteland serial," the work does what most similarly themed European arthouse works fail to do by expressing the cold hard truth regarding empty relationships based on soulless sex, pathological posturing, and innate dishonesty as personified in shallow characters that cannot even be honest with themselves, let alone a lover. Surely, more so than Bernardo Bertolucci's somewhat overrated Brando vehicle, *The Mozart Bird* eloquently expresses the death of true selfless love and romance in Europa, which is surely not surprising for a corpse of a continent that hates itself and has become more or less a tourist attraction/museum for the United States and a colony of the third world and lazy western expatriates. Notably, the film also playfully pokes fun at the fact that the two protagonists are leeches of the Dutch welfare state whose own romance is literally 'funded' through the generosity of the patronizingly liberal Dutch (as an expatriate himself, Kaganof probably knew this all too well). After all, had the characters actually had to work, they probably would not have had time to waste on dead-end romances and banal intellectual twaddle. Despite being carefully marinated in melancholy and cynicism, *The Mozart Bird* is ultimately a work that somewhat surprisingly concludes with a sort of Bressonian catharsis that reaches its zenith during Ms. George's haunting lament, which is certainly something that

cannot usually be said of most real-life relationships.
-Ty E

TEN MONOLOGUES FROM THE LIVES OF THE SERIAL KILLERS
TEN MONOLOGUES FROM THE LIVES OF THE SERIAL KILLERS

Aryan Kaganof* (1994)

Although most individuals would probably not notice it upon a first superficial glance, South African auteur Aryan Kaganof has a somewhat of an ironic, and arguably even an oxymoronic full name. Everyone knows the sort of negative connotations that come tagged along with the ancient word “Aryan” but the surname Kaganoff – meaning descended from a ‘Kohen’ (aka Jewish priest) – is a tad less obvious. Of course, Aryan Kaganof uses the word “Aryan” in the sense of the original Sanskrit meaning (derived from ‘ārya’) of being “noble” and his version of Kaganoff is missing the last letter as if he is one letter short of being descended from the ancient aristocratic Jewish priesthood but his new self-invented name (apparently created after first meeting with his biological father) is interesting nonetheless. While still working under his original birth name Ian Kerkof, the subversive white South African artist completed his first feature-length film *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994); a work as aesthetically ironic as the name the filmmaker would later adopt. Although comprised of around ten monologues from serial killers (some are from fictional works and mere non-serial killer criminals like Charles Manson), I found *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* to be a relaxing and soothing cinematic affair that never left me remotely shocked nor disgusted as one would expect from the film’s title and dvd cover art. In fact, I found the most obnoxious and repellant aspect of *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* to be the inclusion of the Jeffrey Dahmer-inspired Geto Boys song “Murder Avenue” but that is for my own Eurocentric aesthetic reasons and not because I was offend by any sort of bodily dismemberment or what have you. Sure, the film features a scene of Mr. Kaganof himself jerking off to an unintentionally hilarious monologue of Ted Bundy complaining about the supposedly nefarious influence of pornography and slasher films, yet this scene still manages to hold a certain spiritual transcendence (albeit, in a peculiar away).

Aside from including monologues from such charismatic quasi-carny criminal heavyweights as Ted Bundy, Edmund Kemper, and Charles Manson, *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* also features lucid literary monologues from the likes of J.G. Ballard and Henry Rollins. I found the Rollins monologue especially interesting as I have always found his writings to be the odious expressions of a barely articulate meathead with a soft side and Kaganof makes surprisingly good use of these wretchedly written works. Recently, I viewed a post-popularity video (during one of his various TV commentary cameos) of Rollins mocking singer Morrissey and the British in general, so I was extra thrilled to see a little limey lunatic fellow act out the anti-Anglo ex-Blag-Flag-singer-turned-goofy-minor-mainstream-media-celebrity’s early borderline-psychopathic writings. Kaganof almost managed to do the seemingly impossible by turning

an excerpt from J.G. Ballard's novel *Atrocity Exhibition* into a vivid ole thyme Negro spiritual. The first monologue of *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* is of a matricidal fellow named Mr. Kemper who naturally has mommy issues and has no problem admitting so, even if he does seem a tad bit apathetic while speaking about it in a most monotonously monotone manner. To his credit, this 6'9" tall and 300 pound mommy-killer does give evidence that he is somewhat respectful of his lady kin when after mentioning how he decapitated her, he sentimentally states that he "came out of her vagina" thus by killing her, he "went back in." After watching *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers*, I must admit that I felt no ill will towards any killer, rapist, nor ex-punk icon featured within, and for that, Aryan Kaganof must be commended.

Before David Cronenberg ever directed a somewhat loose cinematic adaptation of J.G. Ballard's *Crash*, Aryan Kaganof already included a homoerotic excerpt from the novel in *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers*, but, of course, the South African filmmaker's portrayal of the same material is figuratively and literally from another continent. Starting with a solid black blank screen and eventually sporadically weaving various excerpts (in a manner more erratic than the most ADHD-driven of Soviet montages) from other monologues in *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers*, Kaganof's brief adaptation of Ballard's *Crash* seems like what a madman's would see if his whole life flashed before him as he died. More than just serial killers, the film is also a peculiar and sometimes absurdist celebration of the marriage between life, death, and sex in a most aesthetically tantalizing yet oftentimes schizophrenic way. I seriously doubt any viewer will go into viewing *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* with certain postulations and having a single one of those expectations met. Not only is the film an ambiguous and idiosyncratic look at the minds and visions of serial killers; *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* is also a warped but wonderful audio/visual roller-coaster through the doors of hopelessly damaged and deranged perception. For more info on *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* and director Aryan Kaganof, please visit: kaganof.com/

-Ty E

THE DEAD MAN 2: RETURN OF THE DEAD MAN
THE DEAD MAN 2: RETURN OF THE DEAD MAN

Aryan Kaganof* (1994)

As far as I am concerned, only one film has ever come close to capturing the perturbing perversity and grating lyrical grotesquery of French quasi-Nietzschean novelist Georges Bataille and it happens to be a short student film directed by South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (when he still used his birth name Ian Kerkhof) as his graduate project at the Netherlands Film and Television Academy. Of course, having just won the coveted 'Golden Calf' award (the Dutch equivalent to the Oscar) for his minimalistic 16mm low-budget avant-garde debut feature *Kyodai Makes The Big Time* (1992) at the 1992 Netherlands Film Festival (NFTVA), Kaganof was no uncultivated amateur in his formative years but a shockingly mature auteur with a distinct and uncompromising vision who had almost singlehandedly started an aesthetic revolution in Dutch Cinema and with his aesthetically brazen and even pornographic yet penetratingly phantasmagorical and ominously oneiric 26-minute Bataille adaptation *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994) demonstrating he played by no set of aesthetic rules, let alone cinematic ones. Loosely yet poetically adapted from stories by Bataille—*Madame Edwarda* (1941), which was published under the pseudonym 'Pierre Angélique,' and the posthumously released story *Le Mort* (1967) aka *The Dead Man*—Kaganof's *The Dead Man 2*, unlike Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn's rather formulaic adaptation *The Deadman* (1987) does not take a cold and calculating literal approach to its superlatively sordid source material, but instead opts for capturing its (anti)erotic essence, while also uniquely updating it for the post-industrial/pre-apocalyptic age of Occidental decay. Indeed, featuring feces-frosted fags vomiting on each other in debasing delight, a subterranean bar inhabited by seemingly decaying freaks where the only thing there to drink is urine straight out of the urethra of sub-homely 'water sports'-inclined shebitches, skulls and skeletons lie on the beach as if the sole remnants of a nuclear holocaust, and an ostensibly 'dead' man in metaphysical pandemonium achieves temporary solace in a golden shower. Featuring a 'musical' score by Japanese noise musician Merzbow, who Kaganof would collaborate with on no less than three other films (*la séquence des barres parallèles*, *Signal to Noise*, and *Beyond Ultra Violence: Uneasy Listening* by Merzbow), *The Dead Man II* is an aesthetically aberrant celluloid necrology for a long senile rotting corpse of civilization in ruins where death-wishing scatological raunchiness has replaced love-based reproduction, revitalizing water has been replaced with toxic human waste, immaculate natural beauty has been eclipsed by defiling ugliness, and love has been ravaged by hate.

Beginning with a grotesque scat-covered sodomite taking the sweaty testicles of another grotesque scat-covered sodomite into his mouth as if he had mistaken the beans for the beef, *The Dead Man II* immediately assaults the viewer with

a fiercely foul form of idiosyncratic aesthetic terrorism upon the viewer's mind that no amount of hard narcotics nor brain damage will ever erase, even though the two fucked fellows begin to joke after the entire scene is over with, as if they themselves are fully aware of their decided depravity and want to shrug it off with a simple laugh. Of course, the two discernibly deviant dick-stabbers, who look like they're squatting in Jeffrey Dahmer's damp dungeon basement in hell, do not stop there as one demands the other to, "give me your fucking puke" and indeed he does with the sort of enthusiastic gusto one would expect from a soccer hooligan (and judging by the physiques of these two deranged dudes, I would not be surprised if they were soccer hooligans). While the one fine fellow regurgitates, his fellow fecal felon comrade masturbates to the point of ejaculation, thereupon leaving a putrid puddle of vomit, semen, and shit on the already sickeningly soiled floor of the dark abyss-like room. From there, the viewer witnesses buildings in flames with real children being burned up in actual stock footage from the so-called 'Waco Siege' (aka Waco Massacre) of 1993 when the ATF/FBI raided a compound owned by the Branch Davidians in a standoff that lasted for 51 days and that ended in the deaths of 76 men, women, and children, including would-be-messiah David Koresh, and that would ultimately inspire the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing that took place exactly two years later. Enter the 'Dead Man' (played by Dutch veteran actor Jaap Hoogstra, who starred in everything from Paul Verhoeven's *Keetje Tippel* (1975) to feminist pseudo-erotic-thriller swill like Marleen Gorris' *Gebroken spiegels* (1984) aka *Broken Mirrors*). As to whether or not the 'Dead Man' is literally dead or not is irrelevant as his life has been clearly exhausted of all potential and his dreams have been replaced with a nightmare, which his rather rotund yet pale and corpse-like body completely complements. Aside from a little lady who he gets to practice his affinity for urophilia with and become a human urinal for at the conclusion of *The Dead Man 2*, the dead man does not communicate with nor actively acknowledge any of the people who he comes into contact with, as if he is a ghost who is in denial that anyone can see him.

From the shadows of a seemingly bottomless pit of nothingness upon nothingness, the Dead Man slowly enters a bar that seems like a cross between the most semen-stained of Weimar cabarets and the favorite dive of the proto-deathrock figures of Dutch Renaissance man Frans Zwartjes' films. Upon taking a seat in the virtual saloon from virtual post-apocalyptic Sodom, the Dead Man is approached by an old butch blonde bitch named Madame Edwarda—the eponymous prostitute character of Bataille's 1941 story of the same name whose vagina is described as a "loathsome squid," among countless other unsavory things—who flashes her absolutely odious genitals in the old geezer's face and demonically declares, "I am God," but she receives no response from her deranged declaration. From there, the building in flames once again appears and then the film cuts back to the netherworld bar, where all the patrons begin to stare at the Dead Man as

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if they expect something from him, but instead of the old fellow communicating with these awfully impolite freaks, a young yet rather physically unappealing woman begins to urinate off a table as if beer was on tap from her bald beaver. The next scene, which is so overexposed that one can barely make out what is going on, the viewer witnesses two lovers (one of whom is presumably the Dead Man when he was young) kissing on the beach, but the happy romantic moment is short lived as skulls and bones are soon revealed lying on the beach. Whether a nuclear apocalypse of sorts incinerated these lovers remains to be seen, but with the next scene being comprised of grungy green post-industrial factories, it certainly seems like Israel has finally let loose their Golem on the world. From there, the Dead Man sits in the backseat of a car going through a car wash as two lecherous lovers make violent love in the front seats. Back at the decadent bar, a sort of lounge act trio of women dressed up like the Goddess Kali—the Hindi mother goddess of Time, Change, and Destruction—give a performance while two old lovers do a dance of death. After the dance, the Dead Man, who seems to be in a most worried and melancholy state, cries out the name ‘Marie’ and an image of a young woman flashes quickly on the screen that the viewer assumes is a great love from the elderly walking corpse’s young days. In the end, the Dead Man meekly yet rapturously drinks what seems to be gallons of urine that is being pissed on his face by a woman standing over him, as if he is drinking from the fountain of youth.

Due to my somewhat marginal interest in Georges Bataille, I have seen virtually any film related to the novelist’s work and *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* is the only one that manages to stand on its own without seeming like it is riding on the laurels of the source writer’s fame as an ‘artistically merited pornographer.’ Indeed, Belgian auteur Patrick Longchamps’ *Simona* (1974)—a work based on Bataille’s *Histoire de l’oeil* (1928) aka *Story of the Eye*—is quite beautiful in many ways and Laura Antonelli’s performance does not hurt, but it is best to watch the film without the source material in mind because otherwise it seems like a shallow literary adaptation at best. As I mentioned before, Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn’s *The Deadman* is an abject pseudo-avant-garde joke that seeks to be provocative but wallows in banality and Andrew Repasky McElhinney’s *Story of the Eye* (2004) is even worse as a putrid piece of pseudo-punk porn poser trash that is not even worthy of Bataille’s postmortem feces. Additionally, *Ma mere* (2004) aka *My Mother* starring Isabelle Huppert and Louis Garrel and co-produced by Bernard-Henri Lévy (!) is the typical shallow French ‘erotic arthouse’ con. With its misleading title (of course, Kaganof never directed a *The Dead Man 1*) that inspires images of C-grade slasher schlock in the viewer’s mind, *The Dead Man 2* is a work that downplays its seriousness and aesthetic prowess if anything and had Bataille seen the film himself he would have probably been flattered that he inspired such unhinged, if not hermetic, celluloid scatology. If *The Dead Man 2* is offensive in any way, it is not due to its un-

simulated scenes of vile sods covered in shit stroking their sausages in vomit, nor haggard looking whores pissing in men's mouths, but rather due to the elegance which Kaganof brought in terms of directing these scenes, thus making the auteur a sort of cinematic alchemist of sorts who turns literal and figurative shit into celluloid gold. Regarding *The Dead Man 2*, auteur Kaganof once stated, "I like to aim for the stomach. If I can't feel a film, feel it very viscerally, then I don't really believe it. Perhaps that has something to do with coming from South Africa, which is a very visceral place. [...] I love the idea of managing to shift a viewer's state of consciousness by creating an out-of-film experience within film. I don't know if it always succeeds but that is definitely what I'm after." Indeed, I would go so far as stating that the perverse poetry of *The Dead Man 2* is more innate and organic than that of the source material and, in that sense, I think the film is closer to Teutonic expressionist poet Gottfried Benn—a medical doctor by profession who dealt firsthand with the venereal diseases, death, and decay he wrote about—than Monsieur Bataille.

-Ty E

NICE TO MEET YOU, PLEASE DON'T RAPE ME!
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Aryan Kaganof* (1995)

I am not exactly sure of the exact idiosyncratic socio-political Weltanschauung that South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (*Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers*, *Beyond Ultra Violence: Uneasy Listening* by Merzbow) has assembled for himself over the years as testified by his thematically complex and ever-changing oeuvre, but I feel that I have found a kindred spirit of sorts in his films, namely because he clearly does what he wants artistically, no matter what the consequences may be. Indeed, with his lovingly titled work *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* (1996), Kaganof caused such a spectacle at the Pan-African Film Festival in Ouagadougou—the largest and most important film festival on the dark continent—that about 900 of the spectators left the venue after being deeply offended by the film and its semi-surreal depiction of white-on-black homosexual forced entry. Advertised with the endlessly endearing tag-line, “From the country that gave you apartheid, now the world’s first rape musical...,” *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* aka *Confession of a Yeoville Rapist* is a fiercely fucked filmic farce of the patently politically incorrect and catchy musical sort that follows three professional multicultural rapists—a Negro, Jew (actually, Kaganof did not mean for this character to be of the Hebraic faith but most reviewers assume he is and I think the film works more effectively if looked at from that perspective), and Englishman—who have been ordered by a South African cabinet minister to bring total equality to the rainbow nation by overcoming ‘rape prejudice’ and transforming the country into a place full of equal opportunity rapists. Indeed, while a deeply and intrinsically South African work that was shot on location in Yeoville, Johannesburg between April 26 and 28 in 1994 during the three days of the first democratic election held in South Africa, which inevitably resulted in Nelson Mandela becoming the first black president of the country, *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* is also relevant to Europe, America, and the rest of the ex-European colonies in that it depicts a world where all races and creeds are ‘equal’ in terms of spiritual slavery and metaphysical rape as carefully carried out by a homogenizing system run by international bankers and other globalist entities. Of course, whether they want to admit it or not, one of the first things most Americans think (aside from AIDS, Mandela, apartheid, etc.) when they hear the words ‘South Africa’ is rape and in Kaganof’s film, sexual pillaging is the country’s sole growth industry and everyone is in on it, including heebs, nig-nogs, and bitchy Brit twits. A disturbingly prophetic, if not singularly comedic, work, *Nice to Meet you, Please Don't Rape Me!* features a whacked-out world where rape has become all the rage in SA, yet Kaganof’s depiction of human depravity seems rather tame when one considers the facts regarding contemporary South Africa and its epidemic rape problem. Indeed, rape has gotten so bad in South Africa since the

film's initial release two decades ago that a piece of untermensch filth actually raped two female paramedics in 2010 while they were attending to the wounds of a burnt toddler, which is a scenario that is as unbelievably absurd as those in Kaganof's marvelously maniacal melodic musical. Powered by the devilishly catchy title theme song "Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me" as sung by a vicious vag-terrorizing trio, the film is nowhere near as ugly as it sounds and is quite arguably Kaganof's most accessible work, as a playful piece that uses Hollywood genre conventions against themselves, ultimately not only 'reverse-raping' rape culture, but also the mass media (in interviews, Kaganof has described the campaign by mainstream liberals to censor dark realities in SA as "the new Stalinism"), globalization, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the pernicious philanthropy of white European liberals, and the sappy delusions of idealistic mainstream leftist morons who thought that Mandela would solve all of South Africa's seemingly perennial problems. Originally planning to make a documentary on hatred against women in SA, Kaganof interviewed 15 rapists and 15 rape victims about their experiences, ultimately deciding that the nonfictional film format was too inadequate for getting his message across, thus siring something completely different, *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!*, which is quite arguably the only film that will make you 'LOL' at rape and South Africa's total deluge into sub-barbarism.

As *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* reveals in an almost sadistically satirical fashion, sexual ravagement is a booming industry in South Africa and is only going to rise with a vengeance with the election of the first black president, so 'progressive' politicians seek to recruit professional rapist soldiers to diversify sexual sadism in the country to make it a true rainbow nation of colorful involuntary coitus. Indeed, a fellow that goes by the title 'Cabinet Minister' (Bill Curry) meets up with a three-man multicultural brigade of rapists at a restaurant and tells them that in South Africa, a rape occurs "every 83 seconds but that simply is not good enough" and that they need to make sure that at least one rape occurs every single minute. The Cabinet Minister then unleashes the following objective to his trio of rapists: "We have to take in cognizance the changing norms and values of society. Indeed, we have to be two steps ahead of the game...always have and always will [...] What I'm saying to you is...your mandate for the future will be to rape everybody regardless of race, sex, creed, color, gender, sex preference, height, looks, qualifications...it simply doesn't matter anymore. Continued funding for our organization by NGOs and the IMF will heavily rely on your total desire to overcome rape prejudice and to see to it that this country becomes a country of equal opportunity rapists." Naturally, the revelation of 'total rape' brings total joy to the three special serial rapists and they leave the restaurant together singing the following lyrics in broad daylight like good little politically correct globalist cattle: "Well, we'll rape you when you're walking on the street...we'll rape you when you're trying to keep your seat..We'll

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rape you when you're trying to make a buck [...] we'll rape you when you're playing your guitar...but I would not feel all afraid because everybody must get raped...everybody must get raped...everybody must get raped...everybody must get raped...everybody must get raped." Indeed, not only will these men rape an eclectic collection of individuals, but also rape each other, as diversified rape is akin to spiritual divinity in a multicultural land where a rampant rape culture trumps true social order and racial harmony.

As *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* progresses, one learns that the trinity of sexual terror might be in solidarity when it comes to indiscriminate rape, but they have little in common otherwise and even begin raping each other—both literally and metaphorically—in what can be described as a sort of metaphysical cannibalism. Going simply by the names Rapiŝt #1 (Eric Miyeni), Rapiŝt #2 (Matthew Oats), and Rapiŝt #3 (Gustav Geldenhuis), the crooning rape soldiers are more like archetypes than real individuals. Indeed, Rapiŝt #1 is a black, Rapiŝt #2 is a white Englishman, and Rapiŝt #3, who acts as the sort of unofficial leader of the group, is a SA Jew (it should be noted that many Jews played a prominent role in the anti-apartheid movement, with Marxist Jew Joe Slovo being a longtime friend/ally of Nelson Mandela who became the 'Minister for Housing' of Mandela's 'democratic' government in 1994). As depicted early on in the film, the terrible threesome abduct white women (which are actually white mannequins, as Kaganof opted for not using real women, so as to not 'excite' certain viewers with realistic portrayals of rape) at gunpoint and then proceed to ritualistically rape them as a militant and specially organized team. Indeed, after kidnapping a chick from her car at gunpoint in a parking garage, the merry melody-making men carry their inanimate victim to the rooftop of a gas station and Rapiŝt #3 proceeds to symbolically cover his white victim's body with black tar (after all, with the end of apartheid, all South Africans are negroes now!) before he sexually savages her. The unhinged trinity also attend 'rapiŝt classes' where they are taught by a 'Feminist' (Winnie Ryall) about what does and does not constitute rape. For a test in class, the rape students must answer 'true' or 'false' to the following scenarios: 1. Women who go to bars alone ask to be raped. 2. A woman who does not report a rape immediately after it happens is lying or has behaved unreasonably. 3. Prostitutes cannot be raped. Instead of turning his test paper in, Rapiŝt #3 (who sits by himself, thus indicating his superior status over the other two rapiŝts) hands the Feminist a paper with the sentence, "A cunt is a hole and a hole is nothing" written on it. A rather stern but fair professor, the Feminist also examines her pupils' flaccid penises to see if they have the proper tools for the job (she gives special attention to black Rapiŝt #3's pecker). One night, Rapiŝt #3 forces Rapiŝt #2 to get drunk on beer, telling him, "You gotta love your own people before you change the world [...] One more for your ancestors," as the seemingly ethno-masochistic English man begins to tear up after suffering a 'psychological rape' of sorts as a

result of having guilt due to his nation's leading role in colonialism and whatnot. Meanwhile, black Rapist #1 ritualistically rapes a white woman that is bound to a chair while sporting a mask of an old white Afrikaner politician in a rather symbolic scene. During the last major scene of *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!*, black Rapist #1 forces Jewish Rapist #3 to brutally whip and bugger him at gunpoint. While being beaten, black Rapist #1 yells, "teach me manners...teach me etiquette...teach me respect...civilize me...teach me to speak mother fucking English." Before taking a vanilla member in his pitch black nether-region, Rapist #1 pleads, "Give me what you think you've got to give me. Give me my freedom. Give it to me up the fucking ass." In the end, black Rapist #3 metaphorically bulldozes the fourth wall and states directly to the viewer: "I know you all just want to be victims. You fucking thrive on it...committed to your own slavery." Indeed, it is really the politically correct rapists who are the real slaves, as demonstrated by various scenes featured in the film of the three-some chained together naked. Not only are they self-deluding victims of their own nation's troubled history, but they must carry the burden of the metaphoric chains of that history into a dubious future where collective rape and genocide is more likely than any sort of real reconciliation amongst the black majority and declining white minority. In their political and spiritual impotence, the rapists take out their angst and hatred on the most defenseless and innocent of victims via rape, thus ironically strengthening the system that enslaved them in the first place.

In an interview conducted years after the release of *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!*, auteur Aryan Kaganof offered the following insights regarding his radical rape musical and the three actors that played the rapist leads: "I get letters from all three actors who are still to an extent dealing with the after effects of the openness with which they dealt with each other during the shooting. I think you can see that clearly in the final scene of the film in which the men are literally chained to each other: despite all the terrible stuff they have done to each other they still have to face the future together. It is a simple metaphor but I wanted it to be clear and I hope that South Africans get the opportunity to see the film. People have found the film extremely pessimistic... but for me it is about the insight that these people are bound together because of the appalling history that they share. So I see it as a hopeful film. Not a pleasant, but definitely an honest film." Of course, it has been two decades since *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* was created and rape, violent racial tensions, and government corruption have only got all the more ugly since the end of apartheid, especially for white Afrikaans, with the group Genocide Watch theorizing that recent attacks against white Boer farmers constitute early signs of an impending genocide against the dying European population. Indeed, aside from many whites being driven into abject poverty as a result of so-called 'Employment Equity' and 'Black Economic Empowerment' legislation, since 1994 when Mandela

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was elected as the first black president of South Africa, about 3,000 (out of a total 40,000) white farmers have been violently murdered by blacks, with a good percentage of these victims being raped and/or tortured before being killed, so it should be no surprise that many whites have opted for leaving the rainbow nation permanently. As for rape, sexual violence and child and infant rape (according to a 2001 report from the South African Police Service, children are the victims of 41 percent of all rapes in the country) in South Africa is now among the highest in the world, with an estimated 500,000 rapes occurring every single year, thus making *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* seem like all the more of a strangely 'optimistic,' if not equally darkly prophetic, work in retrospect. Indeed, with the aesthetic plague of mainstream trash propaganda movies like *Zulu* (2013) featuring American negroes like Forest Whitaker portraying black South Africans, *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* makes for a rare piece of honest and authentic South Africa cinema, which was Kaganof's objective as a filmmaker as demonstrated by his remark regarding the film in an interview: "I wanted people not to see South Africa in the political correct way, like the political parties that say "here's the problem, here's the solution". I have made a film of questions, a document that can make the audience think around what rape might imply, without giving any absolute answer. It's difficult to watch. But whomever you might be I know you will laugh once in a while [...] Political correctness doesn't treat the fact that we are human and that our emotions and sexuality were formed before we were given a political consciousness." An isolated piece of cinematic honesty in a psychologically plundered, Hollywoodized world drunk on spectacular delusion and p.c. puffery on worthless public figures and bogus philanthropic causes that merely obscure the real problems of South Africa, Kaganof's *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* is a rare voice of sardonic sanity that reminds one that the post-apartheid rainbow nation is not the magic multicultural place that Clint Eastwood, Matt Damon, and Morgan Freeman cowardly led you believe it was in the repugnant work of sentimentalist celluloid swill that is *Invictus* (2009), but a sexually and socially sadistic real-life dystopia run by a small 'minority' of modern day slave-masters and inhabited by forsaken slaves of the mind and soul who will not rest until they have raped themselves into oblivion.

-Ty E

WASTED!

Aryan Kaganof* (1996)

Although he managed to survive through the desperation of the Second World War, my grandfather left his homeland of the Netherlands for America during the 1950s and about a decade later he paid a visit to his ancestral land, only to be thoroughly disgusted by how the country drastically degenerated into a culturally vacant vacation spot for Americans and other foreign libertines. That being said, who knows how my grandfather would have responded to South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's film *Wasted!* (1996) aka *Naar de Klote!*—a wanton work of digital video libertinage depicting the decidedly degenerate 'gabber' rave scene in Amsterdam and the parasitic people who flood it with drugs, most specifically ecstasy. The first filmmaker to ever shoot a feature-length work on a mere cell phone with his potent pimp flick *SMS Sugar Man* (2008), Kaganof (who was still going by his birth name 'Jan Kerkhof' at the time) achieved a similarly revolutionary work with his earlier film *Wasted!*—the very first film (or digital video 'non-film') to be shot on mini DV (but later blown up to 35mm film print), which ultimately made for the perfect medium for a work about spastic Dutch drug addicts and ravers with retarded dance moves in a reckless realm of moral morons, pathological materialism, and sheer and utter aesthetic vulgarity of the rainbow colored sort directed by an artistic renegade from the rainbow nation. A neo-neorealist flick for the ADD-riddled and dumb-downed digital age, *Wasted!* wastes no time in depicting a hysterical hurricane of senseless sex, drugs, and raving 'n' roofies as a socially deleterious dead end street of hapless Hollanders addicted to hyper hedonism of the less than gratifying sort that ruins lives and relationships, but never fills the inner void that inspires one to get involved with drugs and joyless sex in the first place. Of course, *Wasted!* is no prissy public service announcement nor a pedantic piece of plastic p.c. sermonizing, but a uniquely unflattering and unhinged digital work featuring a putrid potpourri of pompous euro-wiggers, ostensibly retarded revue raver whores with drag queen make-up, megalomaniacal middle-aged DJs suffering from Peter Pan syndrome, and ungrateful grownup beta-boys who are supported by their philandering, drug-dealing girlfriends, and other quasi-brain philistines who seem to be at the pre-party for the Occidental apocalypse. Set during the mid-1990s at the peak of the Dutch "gabber" (aka "early hardcore") electronic music movement and featuring related music by groups like De Euromasters (whose song "Alles naar de Klote" aka "Everything Wasted!" the film is named after), Party Animals, Flamman & Abraxas, and Deepzone, *Wasted!* would go on to be the biggest Dutch box office hit of 1996, thus illustrating the anti-culture degeneracy that has overtaken the Dutch in terms of the pseudo-Dionysian raver scene and its infectious influence of flying Dutchmen. Indeed, *Wasted!* is just another example of why Americans immediately think of prostitutes and potheads when-

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ever the Netherlands, or more specifically Amsterdam, are mentioned, except Kaganof takes things further with effeminized cuckolds, XTC-dealing breadwinner broads, wacked-out white gangstas, and pill-popping teenage pranksters. Featuring a kaleidoscopic raver rainbow of kitschy 1990s imagery that is often blurred and from a frenzied first-person perspective, *Wasted!*—for better or worse—will have you decidedly drunken with deadbeat Dutch debauchery from its static beginning to its seizure-inducing end.

Jacqueline (Fem van der Elzen) is surrounded by weak and rather wasted males, including her boyfriend Martijn (Tygo Gernandt), who she financially supports, and her deadbeat drinking and driving alcoholic father, who needs to be bailed out of jail, so she must take things into her own hands and her meager store clerk job as a peddler of magic mushrooms and concert tickets is just not cutting it, so she decides to become an ecstasy dealer, which she seems to think is a good way to get rich quick, even if it comes at the price of her womanhood, personal dignity, romantic relationship, and virtually everything else in her life that has true intrinsic value. Jacqueline becomes a low level dealer for a Dutch wigger with a rather ridiculous Vanilla Ice-esque sideburns named JP (Hugo Metsers), a malicious and seemingly psychopathic would-be-gangster who wastes no time in trying to, quite literally, penetrate his female pusher. Of course, Jacqueline's less than ballsy boy toy Martijn suspects that the brazen jerk-off JP wants to get in his girlfriend's pants, especially after she begins spending a lot of time with the dickheaded drug dealer. Although Jacqueline initially rejects JP's conditional offer for her to be one of his pushers after he tells her that "standing in a shop is for wogs," she inevitably gives in, where she begins to make tons of cash by selling 50 pills a week, which she gets half the commission for. Naturally, when he is not watering his pot plant with beer or smashing beer cans against his head like an impotent hippie caveman, Martijn accuses Jacqueline of cheating on him with JP, which she inevitably does. When Martijn moves out of their shared apartment to live with a soulless slut who firmly believes "foreplay's for pensioners... shove it in," Jacqueline reacts rather hysterically by nonsensically flushing her ecstasy supply down the toilet. With neither the money nor drugs, Jacqueline ultimately gets in trouble with JP, whose slavish black assistant states of, "shit man, that white bitch. Let me redecorate her white face man, really," which has no effect on the drug-dealing, counterfeit black man. Luckily, JP has a bigger fish to fry in the form of a black rave club owner/houseparty host named Winston (Mike Libanon), who owes him a ton of money and will not answer his phone. Meanwhile, an aged DJ named Cowboy (played by popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman of Lars von Trier's *Dogville* (2003) and Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (2006)) makes the near fatal mistake of hooking up with a ho named DD (Afke Reijnga) and offering her and a friend named Yoyo (Jorinde Moll) a one-off opportunity to DJ at the hottest rave club, which proves to have a disastrous effect on his career and life-renewing results for the little lecherous ladies,

whose new-found popularity is solely the result of their sleazy and rather dubious sex appeal. Martjin also gets the grand beatdown of a lifetime by JP and his paper gangster goons, not long after the braggart of a drug dealer mentions his sexual conquests with Jacqueline. When finally confronting deadbeat Winston with weapons, the scared club owner pleads, "This is the real world, man...Not a Tarantino movie." In the end, a raver houseparty concludes with a dead club owner, a has-been DJ passed out in a gutter, a tacky red sports car turned into a piece of junkyard scrap by a bunch of "wasted" soccer hooligans and ravers, and proof that love ultimately conquers all, at least for now. What the two lascivious love birds of *Wasted!* learn during their ill-fated fling in the raver realm is that mindless self-indulgence of the sexual and mind-altering sort has a very short expiration date before it starts to rot the body and soul, or as director Aryan Kaganof himself once stated in an interview, "My films are cultural criticisms in the shape of commercial films. If a youth once experiences XTC, he'll end up in speed. What I wanted to say in the film was that the first XTC is the best of all, but the last speed is the worst."

In many ways a revolutionary and (anti)cinematically subversive work, *Wasted!* went on to inspire Argentinean auteur Gaspar Noé, who has referenced Kaganof's flick in the past and its influence is quite apparent in the filmmaker's neo-psychedelic epic *Enter the Void* (2009)—an experimental first-person perspective feature about a DMT-addled American drug dealer whose forsaken soul floats around a hypnotically colorful kaleidoscopic Tokyo, Japan after he is killed as a result of his treacherous friend ratting him out to the police. And, indeed, *Wasted!* is, quite thankfully, "not a Tarantino movie" as it is not a preposterous piece of masturbatory postmodern fanboy posturing, but a penetrating piece of neo-realist surrealism that manages to transfer the viewer to the decadent Dutch rave world without having to suffer from a hangover and some sort of pesky STD. As director Kaganof once stated himself regarding *Wasted!*, "see my film and you don't need drugs...", which hopefully will be the case for most viewers after witnessing the would-be-charismatic conmen and dimwitted druggie dumbasses that make up the characters, but something tells me that these things would appeal to a good percentage of audiences. With *Wasted!*, Kaganof fits in a couple political messages, especially in a scene featuring a Nelson Mandela painting owned by Winston, which symbolically has a safe behind it that hides the character's 'cash money.' Indeed, while Marxist messiah Mandela argued for a Commie Utopia of sorts with South Africa, his 'revolution' was a rather soft one and now, as recently reported by the South African online news resource News24, the ex-terrorist turned sentimental SA president's children and grandchildren are currently active in over 110 companies and are raking in the millions, which is a far cry for the classless society their prestigious patriarch incessantly sermonized about. Additionally, it should be noted that JP's gang-banger buddy is nothing but an Uncle Tom, who despite stating racially charged

WASTED!

verbal vomit against whites in front of his racially Aryan boss, ultimately takes orders from his wigger commander who gets to pretend to be black while retaining the airs of an audaciously arrogant white capitalist, even using words like "nigger" and killing a fellow black brother in front of his subservient African employee. Quite inexplicably, the "gabber" music scene portrayed in Kaganof's film would sire a neo-fascist subculture despite the fact that many of the DJs are non-white, which might explain why a bunch of skinheaded gentlemen destroy jack-off JP's swag-mobile and beat both him and his nefarious Negro friend at the conclusion of *Wasted!*. Undoubtedly, as a man who felt Elvis Presley was a degenerate (or so he told my grandmother due to her affinity for the King's music), my grandfather—who hated Germans (like most Dutch people do) because of the Second World War—would have probably wished his nation was permanently taken over by the Third Reich rather than seeing it become the modern Nordic Sodom and Gomorrah it is today as portrayed in *Wasted!*; a work that even transcends the subversive films of assassinated auteur Theo van Gogh (*Blind Date*, 06/05) in terms of its uncompromising and daunting portrayal of contemporary Dutch debauchery and the self-prophesying suicide of the Occident.

-Ty E

SYLVIA KRISTEL, JAREN LATER...

Aryan Kaganof* (1998)

I'm neither a fag nor feminist but when I hear the name of Dutch sexploitation diva Sylvia Kristel of Emmanuelle fame, the only thing I can think of is a totally tragic woman who, due to her rather heartbreaking background, allowed herself to be used and abused by the more sleazy and less than artistically inclined fellows working in the cinema world. Undoubtedly as avant-garde auteur turned cult filmmaker Curtis Harrington, who worked with her on the botched biopic *Mata Hari* (1985), makes reference to in his memoir *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), Kristel was a less than talented actress with some serious problems that involved a lot of self-destructive drug use and debasing herself with ugly old men. Indeed, as she revealed in her autobiography *Nue aka Nude aka Undressing Emmanuelle: A Memoir*, Kristel, not unlike so many porn stars and so-called 'sex workers,' was the victim of molestation as a child, which happened when she was only 9-years-old after a predatory elderly hotel guest decided to have his way with her. Arguably more traumatic than even being molested, Kristel never got over the fact that her father abandoned her family when she was 14, later stating of the event, "It was the saddest thing that ever happened to me." Like many other women that suffered similar circumstances, Kristel would spend the rest of her life looking for a father figure, hence her affairs with much older men like Belgian author and filmmaker Hugo Claus and English actor Ian McShane, among various others. Unquestionably, the only film I can think of where Kristel gives a genuinely decent performance is Polish auteur Walerian Borowczyk's absurdly underrated work *La marge* (1976) aka *The Margin* aka *The Streetwalker* aka *Emmanuelle 77* where she plays a melancholy Parisian prostitute who starts a doomed love affair with lapsed Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro. While both Kristel and Dallesandro predictably bare their bodies in Borowczyk's work, they ultimately give performances that inspire more pity than scopophilic pleasure, hence why the film was probably such a commercial failure upon its release. Undoubtedly, if there is any film that dares to depict the sad and tragic essence of Kristel in an endlessly empathetic, if not somewhat subtle and even somewhat 'strange,' fashion that hardly reminds the viewer she is the ultimate alpha-diva of Euro-trash sexploitation, it is South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's experimental documentary short *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* (1998) aka *Sylvia Kristel, Years Later...* starring the Emmanuelle star herself, as well as Dutch novelist Oscar van den Boogaard.

In tribute to Kristel's opening for her first exhibition of oil paintings, Kaganof created an installation that involved a room within a room where no more than 18 people were confronted with a 23-minute video of edited sound and image on a continuous loop. Among other things, *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* is a

SYLVIA KRISTEL, JAREN LATER...

sort of archive to this event, which Kaganof described as follows: "More than merely an homage to Madame Kristel, the piece becomes a meditation on the experience of watching. The gaze is interrogated and revealed as not merely a function of sight, but as always being reliant on the ears and memory in order to generate meaning. The emotional impact of the piece is dependent upon the particular relationship between sound and image at any given point, constantly in flux, always organic, soulful and heartfelt." While Kaganof is no stranger to erotically explicit imagery as his works like *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994), *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy*, *Pale Blue Eyes* (2002), and *Dirty Girl in Velvet* (2008), among countless others, demonstrate, Sylvia Kristel, *Jaren Later...* is Kristel at her least sexually exposed yet arguably most intimate in a somewhat arcane and poetic work that ultimately depicts an internally wounded woman with a pathological need for male approval. Indeed, Kaganof's meta-homage depicts the 'unclad' woman behind the wantonness in an almost oneiric and narcotizing fashion that makes the viewer feel as if they are trapped in a bubble of the diva's perennial loneliness. After a nearly five minute long title sequence that juxtaposes slow-motion footage of Kristel and various other images, including a skull, with the haunting and equally hypnotic song "Ghoſtyhead" by Rickie Lee Jones, Dutch novelist Oscar van den Boogaard is featured riding a public bus to the big event. After spending some equality time with Kristel, van den Boogaard concludes the film by sitting at a bus stop in a scene that seems to reflect the fact that the novelist has gotten no closer to the actress, even after spending a day in the company of her and her art.

The majority of Sylvia Kristel, *Jaren Later...* is comprised of muted film scenes and photos of and paintings by the eponymous starlet, who clearly looks much different since her days as the title character of the Emmanuelle films, hence why an inter-title reading "Jaren Later" (aka "Years Later") oftentimes randomly appears on the screen. Instead of engaging in silly salacious sex scenes with attractive playboys, diplomats, and lipsticks lesbians like she is best known for, Kristel's only acts of intimacy in Kaganof's film involve the actress embracing and conversing with van den Boogaard, who is hardly a stud. Juxtaposed with these muted film scenes and paintings/images are words narrated by Kristel herself, who repeats lines that seem to be taken from Brigitte Bardot's character at the beginning of Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mėpris* (1963) aka *Contempt*. Indeed, after softly stating, "In search of her, who is in search of herself. Very slow...whispering," Kristel narrates to an unseen man, "I recently had a dream. A strange dream. We were together. You, and me. We lay together in a bed. Do you love my feet, you asked. I said: yes, I love your feet." For a good portion of the rest of the film, Kristel asks similar questions and then answers them like, "And my buttocks, do you love my buttocks? I love your buttocks very much, I said. Your buttocks are gorgeous." While Kaganof's intent with these scenes

is questionable, I interpreted them as reflecting that Kristel's acting career was based on her deep and dark desire to seek approval from men, namely those that reminded her of her father. After all, it takes a special sort of woman to be willing to expose her unclad body to thousands of people from around the world, but of course it is doubtful that many men thought about this while they were jerking off to Emmanuelle.

Undoubtedly, *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* has an unintentionally eerily foreboding tone to much of it in that it features the titular diva smiling and chatting with van den Boogaard while smoking the same unfiltered cigarettes that would ultimately cut her life short after she contracted throat cancer in 2001 and eventually perished on October 18, 2012 at the premature age of 60 from esophageal and lung cancer. Kristel began smoking at the tender age of 11 and one can only speculate as to whether or not her addiction had the same source as what inspired her to become one of Europe's most prized softcore porn stars. While Kaganof is not himself Dutch, I think it is important that *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* features Kristel speaking in Dutch and was made in the Netherlands, as it reflects one of the many aspects of the actress that her so-called 'fans' are probably unaware of. Indeed, I would be interested to know how many men who have choked their chicken to Madame Kristel know that she was a Dutch dame, even if she lacked what one might describe as archetypical Dutch beauty, as she was a fairly short brunette and certainly not a towering blonde bombshell. Avant-garde filmmaker Cyrus Frisch, who attended the same Dutch film academy as Kaganof, would later have Kristel portray a cracked out anti-diva in his debut *Vergeef me* (2001) aka *Forgive me*. Indubitably, while Frisch's film seems to make a mockery of Kristel by portraying her as more or less the equivalent of a used-up old whore, Kaganof's film attempts to expose her real essence in a somewhat hermetic way that totally transcends a simple film tribute. While Kaganof has sometimes been called a misogynist, including by his own friend Jeremy Dowson in a review of his work *The Mozart Bird* (1993), *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* ultimately demonstrates such a striking sympathy for its somewhat forsaken female subject that one might assume it was made for his mother or grandmother. Indeed, the film might only be 23-minutes long and rendered in a hopelessly avant-garde form, but Kaganof's little tribute probably pays greater tribute to Sylvia Kristel than all of the actress' other films combined. As someone who has never found her particularly enticing, I think that *Sylvia Kristel, Jaren Later...* gets to the true beauty of Kristel and it is not pretty.

-Ty E

RON ATHEY: TROJAN WHORE /& IT'S SCRIPTED
RON ATHEY: TROJAN WHORE /& IT'S SCRIPTED

Aryan Kaganof* (1999)

Ron Athey—a somewhat muscular and fit fellow covered from head to toe with tattoos and self-carved battle scars—is a strange American man whose rather unconventional career as a HIV positive ‘extreme performance artist’ (aka he sheds contaminated blood in a superlatively (sado)masochistic manner for aberrant adoring audiences) I have been following somewhat unintentionally for about a decade or so. I first discovered Athey due to my long interest in the music and art of Rozz Williams (lead singer of the deathrock/goth group Christian Death and co-director of the S&M serial killer flick *Pig* (1998)) as the two subversive sodomite lovers (Athey lived with Rozz at the time) used to collaborate on the industrial music project *Premature Ejaculation* in the early 1980s. Through *Premature Ejaculation*, Athey first demonstrated his perverse prowess as a performance artist by eating a dead cat on stage in 1981. Most infamously, Athey hit the media spotlight in 1994 when Republican senator Jesse Helms accused the poof performance artist of exposing audience members to tainted blood during a show entitled *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis that was partially (and hilariously!) federally funded via the National Endowment for the Arts. To be quite honest, my sole interest in Athey is in regard to his various (oftentimes uncredited!) idiosyncratic performances in mostly underground films, including *The Blind Owl* (1992) directed by Reza Abdoh, *Single White Female* (1992) directed by Barbet Schroeder, *Hustler White* (1996) co-directed by Bruce LaBruce and Rick Castro, *Sex/Life in L.A.* (1998) directed by Jochen Hick, *Shadow Hours* (2000) directed by Isaac H. Eaton, and *No One Sleeps* (2000) directed by Jochen Hick, among various appearances in body modification documentaries. Somewhat recently, I received a copy of the dvd *Two Ron Athey Films* by Aryan Kaganof (1997–1999) aka *Ron Athey: Trojan Whore & It's Scripted*, which includes two rare short documentaries entitled *Ron Athey: It's Scripted* (1997) and *Ron Athey is the Trojan Whore* (1999) directed by South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (though he directed these films when he was still going under his birth name Ian Kerkhof) and featuring Mr. Athey performing his sordid aesthetic brutality in France. Grainy digital video documents from S&M performance art purgatory, *Two Ron Athey Films* by Aryan Kaganof depicts a discernibly damaged and self-damaging man who, despite his theatric ‘bad blood artist’ transgressions, seems like a rather nice fellow with nil pretensions, be it as an ‘artiste’ or as an individual. Seeming like a deranged drag queen equivalent to the Cenobite characters from *Clive Barker Hellraiser* (1987), Ron Athey demonstrates through his flesh-tearing and penis-piercing performances that “There is so many ways to say Hallelujah” and that when you are a fearless sadomasochistic sodomite with gay cancer, brutalizing your body for audiences can have spiritual and transcendental properties in our

aberrant pre-apocalyptic age.

Curiously, the two short docs featured on the *Two Ron Athey Films* by Aryan Kaganof dvd are presented out of chronological order, which I assume was done so South African auteur Kaganof could save the best for last as *Ron Athey: It's Scripted* (1997) is easily the more interesting and informative doc of the two featured on the dvd. Beginning with *Ron Athey is the Trojan Whore* (1999), one sees Mr. Athey come out to perform for a French audience wearing a fancy white wedding dress (with big fake tits to boot!) and at his side is a brazenly butch bull-dyke chick who also enjoys driving metal hooks through her skin as if she is a piece of fresh meat in a butcher shop. As discordant melodies from a violin play in the background, Athey finally 'undresses' and exposes that every part of his body, including his pecker, is bloodied and brutalized. In the end, the performers leave as abruptly as they appeared, as if members of a secret occult congregation à la *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). If *Ron Athey is the Trojan Whore* is a warm-up to the spiritually and aesthetically apocalyptic realm of Ron Athey, *Ron Athey: It's Scripted* (1997), which was filmed at the *Freak Zone* festival in Lille, France in May 1997, is the climatic sadomasochistic sermon, which the perturbed priest-like performer opens up with by soundly stating, "There is so many ways to say Hallelujah." As Athey somewhat shyly (!) reveals in the short doc, he was raised to be a minister in the Pentecostal church in "the desert in California," adding, "I think that makes me have a sort of unique take on things." In *Ron Athey: It's Scripted*, Athey candidly reveals that through his experiences with the Pentecostal Church he was able to learn how to channel automatic writing and that the Christian religion ultimately opened him up to magic and mysticism, which he continues to utilizing today, albeit in the sacrilegious sadomasochistic form of his perturbing performance art. Using his performance art as a mischievous method of "rejecting and redefining spirituality," Athey is probably the first man in the world to codify a 'bad blood'-based religion in the age of AIDS that promotes self-flagellation for self-flagellation's sake. After quitting the Pentecostal church while a teenage and ultimately failing to achieve his supposedly God-ordained right to become a holy minister, Athey was left with a spiritual void that he ultimately filled with his peculiar brand of performance art, thus becoming an unholy minister of sorts. In one particularly telling interview segment of *Ron Athey: It's Scripted*, Athey basically sums up his *Weltanschauung* as follows, "I think it's better to be through a lot of highs and lows in life than to be lukewarm," which is certainly one thing I can agree with him on. At the conclusion of *Ron Athey: It's Scripted*, Athey states regarding his career, "I don't have an agenda... I don't want the whole world to be pierced and tattooed... I don't want the whole world to like my performance work because I am showing the sort of spiritual, ritualistic side of me," thus demonstrating he is not merely out to shock the general public, but to live in his own quasi-religious world as an iconoclastic individual as opposed to a mindless member of the mass

RON ATHEY: TROJAN WHORE /& IT'S SCRIPTED

collective. As a man who was desensitized by Pentecostal insanity and drug addiction (he confesses his family got him hooked on Xanax, Codeine, and various forms of downers) essentially at birth, Athey has certainly transcended any sort of traditional understanding of what taboos are and he does not exactly seem to be proud of it, but at least in *Ron Athey: It's Scripted* he demonstrates that he was able to fill a seemingly perennial void and make a career out of something that would make most people cringe with disgust, which, for better or worse, is a strikingly singular accomplishment of sorts.

Undoubtedly, if nothing else, *Two Ron Athey Films* by Aryan Kaganof offers a short but bittersweet introduction to the life and art of Ron Athey. As someone who associates tattoos and 'body modification' (aka body mutilation) with (ethno)masochism (indeed, it is no coincidence that it is mostly whites that are enamored with this aesthetically displeasing and self-destructive subculture), I can still respect Ron Athey because he seems to be doing what he loves, not to mention having a lot of 'fun' whilst doing it, even if he gets his AIDS-addled blood everywhere in the process. Aside from Kaganof's two shorts and the other films I have already mentioned in this review, Ron Athey fans might also want to check out the 'Georges Bataille tribute' performance art documentaries *The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth* (2007) and its equally perturbing quasi-sequel *Visions of Excess* (2009). Aesthetic terrorism in its most unadulterated form starring and directed by Athey, both *The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth* and *Visions of Excess* are so unrelentingly repulsive in their imagery that they would have probably been found decidedly degenerate by even Monsieur Bataille himself. Although I could not track to a copy of the film myself, the documentary *Hallelujah! Ron Athey: A Story of Deliverance* (1998) co-directed by Catherine Gund and Catherine Saalfield is also purportedly mandatory-viewing for Athey-philes. In terms of being Aryan Kaganof films, *Ron Athey: It's Scripted* and *Ron Athey is the Trojan Whore* are the least auteur-driven works by the South African filmmaker that I have seen thus far, yet they are no less visceral and darkly humorous in terms of subject matter when compared to the director's other films. Indeed, a sort of work of *Cinéma vérité* meets neo-tribal ethnographic film, *Two Ron Athey Films* by Aryan Kaganof is an audacious document of Eurypid derangement during our culture-distorting zeitgeist of globalization and deracination. If Ron Athey is the messiah of a sort of post-national/post-racial tribe and culture, I do not even know what his idea of the apocalypse looks like.

-Ty E

TOKYO ELEGY

Aryan Kaganof* (1999)

In the year 1999, South African avant-garde filmmaker Ian Kerkhof officially changed his name to Aryan Kaganof. During that same year he directed *Tokyo Elegy* (1999) aka *Shabondama Elegy*; a work that was produced by the Japanese porn producers Stance and filmed in the Land of the Rising Sun. Unsurprisingly, *Tokyo Elegy* features graphic anal sex and cum-drenched yellow faces. Still, these details are more than a little bit misleading as *Tokyo Elegy* is a work that totally transcends the formless formulas and penis platitudes of mere Jap jack-off material. In the film, a morally unstable white man named Jack (played by Thom Hoffman who was featured in Kaganof's previous work *Wasted* and later in Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book*) caps a couple chauvinistic Japanese cops (who arrogantly believe Japanese tea is the most supreme) and then subsequently begins a heavy and steamy love affair with a thoroughly degraded porn model named Keiko (Mai Hoshino). When not forcing Keiko to recite satirical bible quotes while sodomizing her, Jack basks in the warmth of Cocteau's kick and unconsciously finds other methods to cease his miserable life of incessant hedonistic nihilism. Kaganof modeled the character of Jack on real-life criminal author Jack Henry Abbott; the born doomed spawn of an Irish-American soldier and a Chinese prostitute who killed himself in 2002 while serving a prison sentence for manslaughter which he received just six weeks after he was released from prison for a previous sentence. Despite his lack of dialogue, Thom Hoffman does an astute job portraying the undeniably haunted and tragic character Jack; an unconsciously suicidal man who anti-ascetically partakes in heavy drug use and wild interracial sexscapades as a way to relieve his unspoken, undying pain. Of course, Jack knows, whether he admits it to himself or not, that dying is the only true way for him to reach the eternal bliss of nirvana.

As one can expect from a film directed by the always experimenting Aryan South African auteur, *Tokyo Elegy* has a form all of its own. Naturally, the film features a nonlinear storyline that is as erratic as the anti-heroes debauched sex-drive. Everyone knows that one of the most appealing aspects of cinema is that one gets to experience voyeurism from the passive safety of a movie theater chair or their couch. In *Tokyo Elegy*, virtual sex is brought to a whole new level as Kaganof employed digital cameras that thrust with the motion of Jack's pulsating Johnson into Keiko's pink pinko arsehole. Indeed, *Tokyo Elegy* seems to come closer to real sex than a big dollar date with a webcam scam virtual hooker. To be honest, I would be lying if I did not admit that Kaganof sometimes brings the graphic sex featured in *Tokyo Elegy* to levels that border on irksome. It also does not help that Keiko is a victim of sexual abuse. I can genuinely say that I was particularly perturbed by a scene in the film where a middle-aged Jap tortures Keiko with his sushi-sized member. Keiko's internal

TOKYO ELEGY

suffering is further accentuated by her off-screen narration of penetrating prose taken from Tricia Warden's *Attack God Inside* (a novel released through Henry Rollin's 2.13.61 publishing company). Although somewhat disturbing, *Tokyo Elegy* is ultimately more humorous than it is unnerving, thus making for a film that is more sweet than bitter and never failing to deliver. The emotional tone of *Tokyo Elegy* is further counterbalanced by a normally revolting but uncommonly complimentary soundtrack featuring Japanese jazz and mediocre country-rock music. Ultimately, *Tokyo Elegy* is a film that defies all categories as it features more sex than your typical degenerate French erotic arthouse film, more art and less sex than the recent works of Bruce LaBruce (*Otto*; or *Up with Dead People*, *L.A. Zombie*), and more humor (albeit somewhat cryptic) than your typical Hollywood comedy. Whereas many independent and arthouse filmmakers seem quite disingenuous and desperate in their attempts to create artistic and groundbreaking works, it is most apparent that Aryan Kaganof's unclassifiable and diverse technique of direction is instinctive and totally organic. In short, I doubt Kaganof could successfully direct your typical bromidic Hollywood production (whether it be an action or drama flick), even if he tried.

After watching about 10 minutes of *Tokyo Elegy*, the viewer finds out that the libertine anti-hero is destined for a fancy unmarked Japanese grave. That being said, it is not a film one watches to see the unfolding of a typical linear story, but a pseudo-Cinéma vérité work of random flashbacks that act as an unpredictable sensory overload for the unsuspecting viewer. *Tokyo Elegy* is also one of few 'pornographic' films that has the potential to make the pleasure-seeking viewer feel guilty (unless they are genuinely a sadist of sorts), as the candid and tormenting psychodramas featured during and between moments of hardcore miscegenation sometimes seem like genuine stock footage from behind doors of a psyche ward. Despite being filmed in my least favorite format (digital video), I was impressed by Kaganof's ability to fully utilize the schlocky recording system to his advantage by assembling a realist work that rightfully distances the viewer from the unrealistic lavish production of a big-budget Hollywood feature. Essentially, *Tokyo Elegy* is a deconstructed film noir (or 'anti-film noir') flick that breaks every convention (both aesthetic and thematic) of the classic style, and for that reason alone (among many others), it is a work that will most likely only appeal to adventurous cinephiles and those that love studying various film theories. Of course, I am sure everyone can find a segment or two of *Tokyo Elegy* that they find enjoyable, most especially the scenes featuring Keiko in the nude being used as the white devil Jack's oriental plaything. Naturally, *Tokyo Elegy* has inspired me further delve into Aryan Kaganof's unparalleled and mostly unpredictable filmography.

-Ty E

WESTERN 4.33

Aryan Kaganof* (2001)

One of the greatest things about the truly singular oeuvre of South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (*Kyodai Makes the Big Time*, *SMS Sugar Man*) is that you never know what to expect when watching one of his films for the first time aside from assuming that it will be in some way an aesthetically and thematically subversive experience that tests the bounds of the cinematic medium. Naturally, when I received a copy of Kaganof's experimental documentary *Western 4.33* (2002), I knew I would be seeing something that totally transcended the nonfiction format as demonstrated by the director's previous S&M-addled experimental documentary effort *Beyond Ultra Violence: Uneasy Listening* by Merzbow (1998), but I did not realize it would manage to turn an ancient colonial slaughter into a elegantly nuanced celluloid poem that ties the past to the present without looking ridiculous or pathetically postmodern. Deriving its name from the classic Hollywood film genre and the best known composition by American experimental composer/Zen Buddhist mystic John Cage, *Western 4.33*—a Dutch-Namibian co-production shot in Namibia that was funded by a grant given by Nederlands Fonds Voor De Film and has gone on to win tons of prizes in both Africa and Europe—is simultaneously a contra Karl May anti-western, transcendental historical re/search project, posthumous collective necrology for the Herero people, and a visceral atavistic expression of the post-colonial Europid geist from a filmmaker with a rather idiosyncratic cultural background. Notably, regarding the western genre, Kaganof once stated, "The most cinematic genre in film is the western genre; there is no precursor in theatre or literature and therefore it is most closely tied to what movies are [...] I have always loved the genre and as I studied it, I realised that it was a propaganda machine to substantiate genocide." Indeed, while Kaganof's daunting avant-garde doc features an arid desert, a foreboding atmosphere, and even a ghost town of sorts, there is no honor for any white man—be he a stoic cowboy or otherwise—as a meditation about an unflattering Teutonic colonial past that does not feature a single Aryan subject. A 'metaphysical documentary' about the tragic deaths of tons of negroes at a German-run Namibia concentration camp during the so-called 'Herero Genocide' between 1904 and 1908 that was sparked after the Herero people decided to revolt against their Aryan masters (somewhat ironically, the revolt was largely led by German-Lutheran-educated king of the Namaqua people, Namibian Hendrik Witbooi, whose tribe often fought with the Herero people and other Namibian tribes), *Western 4.33* attempts to conjure up a meditative and entrancing atmosphere of doom and gloom as opposed to dwelling on sterile statistics that people have a hard time identifying with. Shot on Super-8 film stock that was later blown up to 35mm and featuring a hypnotic musical landscape featuring an eclectic collection of songs by rather diverse artists, including

Alec Empire, Sun Ra, Macy Gray, Calexico, Friedrich Nietzsche, Robert Schumann, Harold Budd and various others, Kaganof's ritualistic doc ultimately manages to do more to honor the memory of the Herero Genocide in 32-minutes than Spielberg's sappy sentimentalist epic of Zio-ganda excess *Swindler's List* does in its nearly 200-minutes of aesthetically insipid sensationalism.

Beginning with a gritty black-and-white shot of a shadowy highway sign at sunset with an inter-title crediting voices to Zola and Blixa Bargeld, one probably would not assume *Western 4.33* is a 'documentary' about the Herero genocide upon watching the first couple of minutes of the work, as it initially seems like some sort of lost avant-garde *Ozploitation* flick, which is only further accented by dreary shots of a deathly dry desert highway that is surrounded by dead bushes and scorching rocks. Of course, that all changes when a headshot of a seemingly melancholy negro sporting a Fila beanie appears. The black man in question is a young truck driver named B.T., who is more or less a symbolic cipher, and he driving from Johannesburg to Luderitz in Namibia in his big rig. Among other things, B.T. is dwelling on the loss of his girlfriend, but he is also thinking about the premature death of his great-grandfather in a German concentration camp on Shark Island off the coastal town of Luderitz. Of course, the viewer will not be able to tell this while B.T. speaks in a South African dialect, as auteur Aryan Kaganof chose not to subtitle these scenes, with his reasoning being: "The Germans never took the trouble to understand what the Herero were saying." Indeed, the viewer will not learn about the fate of the Herero people until at about the 22-minute mark during a completely silent 3 minute and 44 second long scene that is meant to unnerve the Hollywood-lobotomized filmgoer where tri-language subtitles (English, German, and Afrikaans) scroll across an iconic image of starving members of the forsaken tribe. As the subtitles reveal: "There were five concentration camps in Namibia, then called German South West Africa, between 1904 and 1908. In January 1904 war broke out between the Herero Nation and the German colonial administration in Namibia. After the Battle of Waterberg the Herero Nation either succumbed to the desert or were picked up by German patrols and put in concentration camps. The official mortality rate in all five camps was 45% [...] Missionary reports put the death rate at between 12 and 18 a day. As much as 80% of the prisoners sent to the Shark Island concentration camp never left the island. Cold, hunger, thirst, exposure, disease, and madness claimed scores of victims, and cartloads of their bodies were carted every day over to the back beach, buried in a few inches of sand at low tide, and as the tide came in the bodies went out, food for the sharks." With no sound or music during this insightful scene, the viewer is forced in an awkward situation where they are forced to develop their own emotions regarding the facts, though the other scenes in the film make it quite clear that it is not exactly a comfortable feeling, but one of ghastly dread and trauma.

In the only color sequence featured in *Western 4.33*, protagonist B.T.'s (ex)girlfriend

walks alongside a blood red building in slow-motion while provocatively sucking on what seems to be a red popsicle. Apparently, this scene is supposed to be a metaphor for the “rich menstrual blood” of the African woman, who represents “mother Africa” to the human race (of course, the Out-of-Africa Theory has been more or less debunked, not least of all because, unlike Eurasians, Africans lack Neanderthal DNA and contains signs of ancient interbreeding with extinct hominid species). Personally, I found this scene to represent how little ancient genocides matter to lovelorn young men with carnal lust, for with every holocaust there is at least one woman to regenerate the race and move forward with history because although a good percentage of the Herero people were starved, shot, and slaughtered, they ultimately persevered whereas the Germans disappeared from Africa not long after the genocide. Of course, the Germans found no true Heimat in Africa, hence their failure to tame the Dark Continent and its perennially rooted inhabitants. Indeed, much has changed since the days when the Germans were briefly involved in colonial conquests yet the scars still remain in the form of dilapidated concentration camp ruins. Kaganof has attempted to reopen these scars and they bleed throughout his film. Most of Western 4.33 is comprised of elegant yet raw static shots of the ruins of ancient German concentration camps and an old kraut mining town, including a beautiful scene of a seemingly glistening Lutheran church, which is reflected in a small pond in the foreground and represents the faded dream of a New Germania in Africa. At the conclusion of the film, a rich black-and-white shot of the sun setting over the ruins of a concentration camp is juxtaposed with foreboding ambient noise. Ultimately, the film lets the viewer know that the ghosts of the past live on today, even if we are too blind or apathetic to see them.

It should be noted that the Herero Genocide was not officially recognized as a genocide until 1985 when United Nations’ Whitaker Report classified it as such. While the German government apparently recognized the events in 2004, they still refuse to meet the Herero people’s demand of paying reparations (with all the money the Germans have paid to the Jews and Israel, who can blame them?!). Recently, meta-subjective Teutonophobic books like *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (2011) have attempted to follow in the hysterical Hebraic Daniel Goldhagen tradition of depicting Germans as bloodthirsty and innately genocidal maniacs, but of course compared to the French, British, and Belgians, the Krauts only caused minor terror to the Dark Continent. Of course, the so-called Haitian Revolution also demonstrates that genocide is not exactly a distinctly “white thing,” as the cultural Marxists, Afrocentricists, and ethno-masochistic white cultural cuckolds will have you believe. One also cannot forget the current ethnic cleansing of white Afrikaner farmers by blacks, which has been completely ignored and denied by the black-run South African government. Indeed, what Kaganof’s Western 4.33 reminded me was that the tables have turned when it comes to ‘Leben-

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sraum,' with the ghosts of the colonial past making black Africans even more determined to rid themselves of the 'white plague.' Unquestionably, Kaganof has achieved the seemingly impossible with *Western 4.33* by making a pleasingly preternatural doc about a nonwhite tragedy that does not seem like a pandering piece of self-righteous swill, Trotskyite agitprop, or nihilistically neurotic ethno-masochism. Indeed, a sort of work of hypnotic 'humanist horror' (and I am mean 'humanist' in a positive way), Kaganof's film almost seems like the visceral expression of the Herero collective unconscious, which is no small accomplishment considering the director is a white man. Somewhat interestingly, the film became more popular shortly after its release in 2002 due to the fact that a Herero group living in South Africa sued both the German government and several German companies for reparations, thus demonstrating Kaganof's revolutionary vision as a filmmaker. Indeed, if there is a filmmaker that could make a film about the holocaust that does not seem like it was designed as pro-Zionist agitprop piece and/or to coerce European countries into paying reparations (like Switzerland), it is Kaganof, who somehow managed to turn the little known story of how negroes tribesmen were made into shark food into one of the most artful, poetic, expressionistic and visceral documentaries ever made.

-Ty E

SMS SUGAR MAN

Aryan Kaganof* (2008)

Undoubtedly, you know a nation has decisively degenerated for the worse when the formerly subjugated and disenfranchised are bugging the women of their ex-masters or so such is the case in South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (born Ian Kerkhof) most recent film *SMS Sugar Man* (2008); a work about a white pimp who sells vanilla chocolate to dark chocolate throughout Johannesburg's shadowy hotels. A true auteur piece, this work with a thumping theme of perennial loneliness was written, directed, edited by and starring Kaganof in the lead title role as the "sugar man," the film's wandering whoremongering anti-hero is a deep-voiced and masculine yet intellectually mundane and materialistic man who lives by the rather redundant yet personally effective philosophy: "Women are sugars. Men are wallets. Money is god. Life is very simple." Set over the course of a positively paranoid Christmas Eve, things ultimately get a tad bit burdensome for the Sugar Man and his hot ho ho hoes when a rival seeks to dip his hand in his candy jar. Equipped with a bizarre love triangle of individuals who sell and turn tricks, *SMS Sugar Man* is a love story for the unloved and seemingly unlovable. Shot solely on a mere Sony Ericsson W900i Mobile Phone, *SMS Sugar Man* is in fact the first feature-length work directed with a cellphone, which despite seeming like a rather grandiose, if not oftentimes visually grating, gimmick, makes for quite an effective tool for the gritty yet ghetto-glamorous setting in a risqué realm where communication seems to be a sacred lost art, or at least that is the only thing one can conclude from the mélange of unmerry misconceptions and misinformation disseminated throughout the film. Nothing out of the ordinary for South-Afrikan-garde auteur Kaganof, he was also the first filmmaker to shoot a feature-length work, *Wasted!* (1996) aka *Naar de klote!* in the DV tape format. As the filmmaker is unwilling to make artistic compromises with anyone, including with the production company DV8 Films that produced his latest film, and with which the filmmaker was in a dragged out legal battle (the company wanted the director to make changes to the finished film), the release of *SMS Sugar Man* was quite belated as the work was made in December 2005 yet not released until sometime in 2008. In a festive mode, I decided to give Kaganof's salacious and seedy Xmas special a serious viewing to get in the spirit for egg nog and nig-nogs.

As someone who left his native country South Africa for the Netherlands in 1983 to avoid being conscripted into the Apartheid-era army, and working at the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement (AABN) from 1983 to 1986 as a researcher/activist of sorts, only to return in 1999 to finally meet his biological father and change his name (originally born and directing as Ian Kerkhof and unchristening himself "Aryan Kaganof"), Aryan Kaganof has certainly witnessed the dramatic changes of his socially shifting homeland in his lifetime. Admit-

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tedly, SMS Sugar Man is far from the sort of race-mixing melodrama that I would have expected to have been directed by someone who actively fought against apartheid, thereupon leading me to believe that Kaganof has a much more thoughtful and honest view of South African race relations, not unlike satirical Afrikaner comic artist Anton Kannemeyer (aka "Joe Dog") – who while working with blackface and stereotypes of blacks as unsalvageable savages, also portrays the stereotypes of the wretched mainstream 'white liberal' – as the film portrays an unsavory underworld that acts as a metaphor for post-apartheid Africa as a whole; a country where the former subservient blacks are now subjugating their former subjugators. Interestingly enough, many of the Bantu clients in SMS Sugar Man, for a variety of reasons including disdain for father and assumed impotence, don't actually screw the seductive and sensuous sallow sluts that they have bought with their carnal currency. In fact, one of the sapless jiga-boo johns is merely satisfied with having one of the saucy streetwalkers jumping up and down on the bed thereupon mimicking the sounds of heated copulation, while he – fully dressed and nowhere near the voluptuous, lecherous lady – tells his friend on the phone, like a shameless braggart that, "she's loving it, sweet white bitch" in a shallow and doubly impotent display of his schmaltzy power to buy corrupt crack cunts. Indeed, the myth of negro sexual virility is nowhere to be found in SMS Sugar Man and the only true "pimp" as the more learned brothers like to say is the Sugar Man; a dangerous yet dedicated Don Juan that keeps his bitches in check and has even sired a son with one of these sweet yet sour sugars.

Knowing Kaganof's previous cinematic efforts, I honestly thought it was dubious how SMS Sugar Man would play out, especially with the Afrikan Aryan auteur himself as the fierce flesh-peddler, yet the flagrant filmmaker does the seemingly impossible, especially as far as I am concerned as a hater of silverseen whore-hawking anti-heros as seen on MTV, by playing a posolutely palatable, personable and even pleasing pimp. Naturally, being a work that was shot on a consumer grade cellphone camera – a feature generally used by teenage girls to sext salacious shots to their 35-year old gym teachers and by mindless middle-class folks to film their elderly dogs haphazardly humping furniture – the film does feature its fair share of aesthetically unpleasing pixilation, but this ultimately adds to the lavishly stylized sleaze that is SMS Sugar Man, so much so that the 'digital dark' is surely more effective in Kaganof's low-budget work than it was in David Lynch's aesthetically daunting dance in digital diarrhea Inland Empire (2006). If I learn anything more about the director after watching this film, it is that few other modern filmmakers have shown such a keen particular propensity at reinventing their aesthetic, style, and canvas; a seemingly damning and disorderly filmmaking approach with which Kaganof seems to work best. Showing he is no proponent of so-called 'affirmative action' nor does he back slave-morality, Kaganof stated of SMS Sugar Man to a newspaper: "It has really dis-

appointed me that none of the reviews (of the movie) to date has picked up on what I think is a major theme: the way the strategy of BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) serves to emasculate black men, to in fact deny them the very thing it claims to give them. Power cannot be given, it must be exerted." Indeed, the Sugar Man may dip his dick in the same honeypots as his jigga johns, but he also has sovereignty over his saccharine seductresses, which cannot be said of the pitiful pickaninnies that buy them.

-Ty E

CIVILIZATION AND OTHER CHIMERAS OBSERVED DURING THE MAKING OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY ART
CIVILIZATION AND OTHER CHIMERAS OBSERVED DURING THE
MAKING OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY ARTISTIC FEATURE FILM

Aryan Kaganof* (2009)

Undoubtedly there are few types of films that are more banal than the sort of 'making-of' featurettes that oftentimes accompany DVD and Blu-ray releases, as they tend to sterilely demystify cinematic works and reveal filmmaking to be an oftentimes mind-numbingly boring process that involves a lot of standing around and bullshitting. Needless to say, I naturally have about as much of a desire to watch a hour-long making-of featurette about a film I have never seen as I would for having a colonoscopy while tripping on acid, or so I thought until I encountered South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's shockingly philosophical and equally provocative piece *De beschaving en andere hersenspinsels beschouwd tijdens het maken van een uiterst kunstzinnige speelfilm* (2009) aka *Civilization and Other Chimeras Observed During the Making of an Exceptionally Artistic Feature Film*, which depicts the production of a little known Dutch work entitled *Winterland* (2009) directed by fine artist turned filmmaker Dick Tuinder (*Noštalgia and Paranoia, Farewell to the Moon*). Indeed, Tuinder is a fine artist who decided to change artistic mediums and asked his longtime friend, Kaganof, to shoot a making-of documentary for his first feature film, but in the end the South African auteur ultimately sired something that was ironically much more substantial and certainly more intellectually provocative and intricate than the actual film it documents. A film about a film-within-a-film where the writer-director and most of the actors play themselves, *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is a work that demonstrates that there is oftentimes a not-so-fine line between reality and fantasy, as well as real-life people and the fictional roles that they play as actors. In Kaganof's meta-making-of doc, reality and fantasy are obscured to the point where they become meaningless designations, as every single second of the work manages to find some sort of truth about the 'micro-civilization' (aka the film set) where Tuinder rules as the unintentionally goofy and curiously shoeless dictator-cum-director, Dutch mini-diva Tara Elders semi-cryptically reigns with a loudmouth as the princess, and the South African auteur acts as both court jester and warrior-philosopher. By the end of *Civilization and Other Chimeras*, the carefully stylized and absurdly artificial-looking film set of *Winterland* seems like a sort of chaotic human pandemonium plagued by female narcissism and vanity, art fag style megalomania, and white collar slave labor while the organic Dutch countryside resembles something nothing short of heaven, henceforth demonstrating that civilization is a sort of cancer that defiles and ultimately destroys the natural order and replaces it with something that is hopelessly all too human, conspicuously contrived, and hardly godly. In other words, if you ever thought about becoming a filmmaker or working in the film industry in some other capacity, you might want to steer clear of Kaganof's no

bullshit lesson in the cruelly chaotic and hopelessly bureaucratic art of filmmaking and the barrels upon barrels of steaming bullshit that accompany it. In more superficial terms, Kaganof's film easily eclipses Teutonic poof agitator Rosa von Praunheim's debut *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) aka *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* in terms of experimental documentaries with the most awkwardly long-winded titles.

Civilization and Other Chimeras opens with a shot of a mirror with the following quote from French postmodern/post-structuralist philosopher Jean Baudrillard written on it: "There are two-way mirrors which allow you innocently to spy on people. This is one of the finest metaphors for consciousness. There is no two-way screen because there is nothing to see on the other side of the screen, nothing to see without being seen." The quote was written by Kaganof himself on a mirror that a little Asian girl with a absurdly conspicuous blonde bob style wig named Kiriko Mechanicus is looking into in a fairly inquisitive fashion. Kiriko is playing the role of 'Sally de Winter' in fine artist Dick Tuinder's first feature film *Winterland* (2009) and she seems rather bored by the whole filmmaking process, at least when she is not acting. Interestingly, the viewer does not realize Tuinder is the director of the film until we see him flip through a newspaper and read an article on the making of *Winterland*, which is described as a 'homage to Tara Elders,' who, like most of the actors involved in the project, plays herself in the film. Among other things, Elders played the role of a bitchy Turkish-Dutch animal rights extremist in Theo van Gogh's final film *06/05* (2004) aka *May 6th* and were it not for her nudity scenes in that work, her performance would have been completely intolerable. Judging by how she acts in *Civilization and Other Chimeras*, it seems that Elders more or less plays herself when she acts as all she does is bitch and complain throughout the doc, as if her concerns and comfort are of the foremost importance during the production of *Winterland*. In fact, it seems that Tuinder clearly recognizes this and accepts that Elders has a proclivity towards acting like a cunt as indicated in a scene where the actress asks him if she is acting too unpleasant and the director responds in a somewhat curious manner by stating, "No, you may be as unpleasant as you like. Just let it happen," as if her sole strength as an actress lies in her brazen bitchiness. While Elders describes playing herself for *Winterland* as an "impossibility," she seems like an even better actress in real-life than when she is actually playing a film role. Indeed, Kaganof is probably right when he states to Tuinder towards the end of the film regarding Elders, "That's the paradox of the role because she can only exist by playing herself." Of course, as Kaganof's doc oftentimes hints at, the image and perception that people have of someone will always trump the person's true essence, as everyone is acting and playing a role in their lives to some extent, thus it should be no surprise why so many actors and actresses are troubled individuals as their media persona can never be erased

and will always be more important to people than who they really are deep down inside. Indeed, I would not even be surprised if Elders is slightly less bitchy on a personal level.

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting aspects of *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is that Kaganof takes the time to interview people on the film set that are otherwise ignored, including a lighting guy named Daan who insightfully declares, “filmmaking is creating and deſtructing.” One of the most intriguing and enlightening conversations that Kaganof gets into is with an unnamed middle-aged woman with some less than glamorous job on the film who declares, “It really is to be admired, that women become actresses,” to which the South African auteur wisely rhetorically retorts, “Women are all actresses aren’t they?” When Kaganof makes the argument that, “Men aren’t actors by nature... A male actor is almost always a very feminine man,” the woman theorizes that men act out of a supposed “hunger for truth” and women do it because they “want power” and “want to cover up. Acting is the ultimate hiding place.” Indubitably, Tara Elders thinks she has a certain degree of power and privilege as she has the gall to arrogantly declare upon learning that Tuinder has written more lines of dialogue that she has to memorize, “There’ll come a moment when you realize that it would be cheaper to hire a new director,” just as the filmmaker walks into the room in what is ultimately a rather awkward ‘scene.’ As statements that she will make later in the doc demonstrate, Elders seems to think the film is hers and not Dick Tuinder’s. Rather cleverly, Tuinder more or less lets Elders think what she wants to, as he seems to realize that she is an exceedingly temperamental debutante that acts like a spoiled child and needs to be treated in a most cautious fashion if he hopes to get what he wants out of her for his film. After all, Elders is the big star of *Winterland* and, quite unlike little Kiriko, who has not quite reached her teenage years and has yet to learn the power she has over men as a young woman, she most certainly knows it.

While Kiriko and her blonde wig and super girly pink dress are surely the most iconic thing about Tuinder’s *Winterland*, the little lady has absolutely no clue what the film is about or the psychological motivations of her character as reflected by remarks she makes to Kaganof during various interviews. Indeed, Kiriko tells Kaganof that her character ‘Sally’ is smarter than she is because, “... she says things that I don’t understand,” thus there is no chance that she will be able to perform any sort of serious improvisation. Of course, Tuinder ‘invented’ Sally, so one could argue that the character is just one of his alter-egos just as Terry Gilliam once somewhat comically described the little girl protagonist played by Jodelle Ferland in *Tideland* (2005) as his ‘inner child.’ Of course, there are things about the film that even Tuinder does not understand but the director goes so far as to proclaim that does not matter, with his reasoning being, “The film’s about me, isn’t it? And it’s true that I sometimes don’t understand myself, but the confusion isn’t any less when you understand my personal lack

of understanding incorrectly.” Tuinder’s dictum when it comes to filmmaking is, “the deeper the shame, the greater the beauty,” as if the greatest virtue a filmmaker can have is self-exploitation and sheer vulnerability, which is certainly revealed to a degree throughout Kaganof’s distinctly voyeuristic document. Interestingly, when Kaganof asks Tuinder regarding his performance as himself in *Winterland*, “...are you Dick Tuinder the director or are you acting as Dick Tuinder the director?,” the Dutch director replies, “No, I’m absolutely acting, but I act it so well that I believe it myself.” Indeed, it is nearly impossible to discern whether Tuinder is really directing or acting like he is directing.

Out of all the actors featured in *Civilization and Other Chimeras*, Tom Jansen, who has appeared in a number of great works, including Theo van Gogh’s cult classics *Loos* (1989) and *Vals licht* (1993) aka *False Light*, as well as Flemish auteur Harry Kümel’s *Louis Couperus* adaptation *Eline Vere* (1991), is certainly the wisest and most respectable. As Jansen describes in a rather enthusiastic fashion like an excited old grandfather, he decided to become an actor as a little boy after going to a carnival and being absolutely amazed upon seeing the entrancing power that two clowns had in being able to manage to capture the complete attention of a large crowd of people. Jansen is different from most of the actors in *Winterland* in that he was classically trained, though he later enthusiastically embraced modernism, stating of his aesthetically schizophrenic career, “...you could say that I’ve been inconsistent, and it’s true, I have been absolutely inconsistent. And finally, at the advanced age I’ve reached, I am beginning to see the consistency of that. When you’re young you believe, like the Romantics, in the myth of eternal progress. And, you find out that it’s not so, that life is, in fact, much more cyclical.” Certainly, Jansen seems like an old wise sage compared to fellow old-timer Ralph Wingers, who previously starred in works as diverse as Pim de la Parra’s *Lost in Amsterdam* (1989) and Babeth Mondini’s *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* (1990) starring Lydia Lunch and Henry Rollins. To the delight of the viewer, Wingers acts like a jubilant young child throughout the film, but he does make one intriguing remark during the doc. Indeed, whilst holding a camera lens, Wingers states regarding cinema that it is, “The world through a lens.” After all, the set of *Winterland* is nothing if not a sort of maniac microcosm that reflects the current state of the Occident, albeit in an exaggerated yet somewhat lighthearted art fag form.

Since a lot of *Winterland* was created in post-production via CGI (notably, Tuinder states at one point during the doc, “We’ll Find the Solution in the Edit,” thus reflecting his special emphasis on post-production), most of *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is set in an almost obnoxiously artificial green screen realm that seems all the more glaring in its kaleidoscopic grotesquery due to the costumes that the actors wear, especially Kiriko whose blonde wig and pink dress make her seem like a living and breathing Aryanized Anime character from sub-arthouse hell. Notably, a gigantic eyeball hangs in the green screen area and at

one point in the film Kiriko is forced to stare at it. Undoubtedly this dangling all-seeing eye is symbolic of Kaganof as the all-seeing auteur who, although an outsider, ultimately managed to see more during the production of *Winterland* than the film's actual director. While *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is set in an otherworldly film set that was dreamed up by Dick Tuinder, the world ultimately became Kaganof's once he got behind the camera and shot the film from his singularly idiosyncratic perspective. Interestingly, at the end of the doc, Kaganof asks Tuinder if the character Sally is a metaphor for god, but the director refuses to spill the beans on his film and instead states, "I'm not permitted to give an answer to that question. I'm sorry." Whether Sally is a metaphor for god is dubious, but what is for sure is that Tuinder and just about any other self-respecting auteur is the god of their own film. When little Dutch diva Tara Elders bitches at the end of the doc, "It's beginning to look suspiciously like the film is actually an homage to Dick Tuinder himself," she is right, at least in a certain sense as a film is nothing if not a potent expression of its creator, especially if said creator is in any way serious about what they are creating. In stark aesthetic contrast to most of the rest of the film, *Civilization and Other Chimeras* concludes with Kaganof interviewing Tuinder outside in the Dutch countryside during the blue hour in an organically beautiful scene that resembles a work by 19th-century German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich. Of course, this outdoor scene acts as a sort of much needed therapeutic relief from the *Winterland* set, which screams of infantilized postmodern artificiality, post-Spielberg special effects, and culturally mongrelized multicultural chaos.

One of the most unintentionally humorous segments of *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is when director Tuinder's sister, who was responsible for creating the costumes for *Winterland*, describes how her brother was always an introverted fellow who spent most of his time bent over reading and drawing. Tuinder sister's remarks seem all the more comical when one notices that the director has rather poor posture, as if all those years of reading and drawing permanently contorted his back in a way where it looks as if the director is bending over even when he is standing up and smoking a cigarette. Undoubtedly, little details like these that would escape most people demonstrate why Kaganof has such a keen and penetrating eye as a filmmaker. It should be noted that when Kaganof asks Tuinder why he decided to become a filmmaker, he sensibly replies, "Well, it does seem to be the most appropriate medium to describe the current world and the current reality. It fits to this reality we live in now, just as painting very much fitted the 16th and 17th-century reality and literature very much fitted the 19th-century reality [...] I think every era has its dominant art form." One almost gets the sense that Tuinder would rather be creating paintings and sculptures (actually, he more or less did both of these things while creating the sets for *Winterland*) than directing films and dealing with an entire film crew, but that he feels obligated to work in the cinematic realm due to the

popularity of the medium. Admittedly, I have next to no interest in watching *Winterland* and would not exactly call Tuinder my kind of auteur, but I am certainly glad that I saw *Civilization and Other Chimeras* as it is, at the very least, the greatest making-of document since *Les Blank's Burden of Dreams* (1982), which documented the truly catastrophic production of Werner Herzog's Amazonian epic *Fitzcarraldo* (1982). Notably, Kaganof made a sort of sister film to his *Winterland* doc entitled *Sally in Winterland: The Making of Dick Tuinder* (2009), which has been described as a 'virtual road movie,' but unfortunately it has yet to be released with English subtitles. As someone that is fairly familiar with a good portion of Kaganof's singularly eclectic oeuvre, one of the things that I found most interesting about *Civilization and Other Chimeras* is that it documents exactly the sort of film that the South African auteur would never make, so it is endlessly intriguing to see how he takes Tuinder's sort of girly and cartoonish neo-Victorian aesthetic and turns it into something worthy of much more intellectual consideration than one could ever possibly fathom, which is something he also accomplished with his early documentary short *Matthew Barney: Creating Stories* (1995) aka *Matthew Barney in the Emperor's New Clothes*. Indeed, while Kaganof is probably best known among cinephiles for his early features like *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994), *Wasted!* (1996) aka *Naar de klote!*, and *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy*, he is probably the most original and subversive documentarian working in the world today as his avant-garde docs like *Western 4.33* (2002) and *Night Is Coming: Threnody for the Victims of Marikana* (2014) surely demonstrate. During *Civilization and Other Chimeras*, actor Tom Jansen remarks, "That's the greatest achievement, if you can make the simple things magical," which is ultimately what Kaganof achieved with the doc.

-Ty E

GUERRILLA BLUES AND HOLY GHOSTS
GUERRILLA BLUES AND HOLY GHOSTS

Aryan Kaganof* (2012)

Admittedly, I have very little interest in old school cracker-hating black revolutionaries and the history of hip-hop, which I have always found completely intolerable in all its various forms, but somehow I found myself rather excited about watching an experimental documentary about both Afrocentric subjects entitled *Guerilla Blues and Holy Ghosts: A Grammar of Black Suffering, Absence of Presence, and Other Reflections on Dead Weight* (2012) directed by South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (Naar de klote! aka Wasted!, Shabon-dama Elegy aka Tokyo Elegy). Of course, I must confess that my interest in seeing the doc was somewhat superficial and surely a symptom of my voracious cinephilia, especially when it comes to the singular oeuvre of Aryan Kaganof (or the artist formerly known as Ian Kerkhof). Indeed, after seeing *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* (1992) and *The Mozart Bird* (1993), which were the first two chapters in the director's self-described 'Urban Wasteland Serial,' I decided to contact Kaganof to see if I could get a copy of the seemingly mysterious third and final film in his cinematic triptych, *The Turner Revelation* (1995), but he responded by stating the film was, "so terrible that I don't even have a copy of it myself. Just a grueling endless gabfest of moaning. Utterly beyond redemption." Ultimately, Kaganof decided to send me a copy of *Guerilla Blues and Holy Ghosts*, which not only features excerpts from Kaganof's rare lost film, but is also about Gylan Kain who both starred in and penned the racially-charged play that *The Turner Revelation* is based on. Indeed, the film is based on Kain's semi-autobiographical O.J. Simpson inspired play *Ritual for a Poet in B Natural* and tells the tale of a black man named Turner who murders his white wife, subsequently has a conversation with the devil over the telephone and realizes he has killed the wrong woman, and eventually undergoes an eerie court room style interrogation from a young white woman known as 'The Prosecutor/Witchdoctor' where the protagonist ultimately realizes that his mother is the true source of his resentment towards women. Notably, excerpts of the penetrating psychodramatic scenes from Kain's interrogation in *The Turner Revelation* are featured throughout *Guerilla Blues and Holy Ghosts*, which is only fitting considering the documentary features a rather candid and even intrusive depiction of the seemingly forsaken American negro poet's singular life and work. Simultaneously a poet for the people yet a born outsider and rebel who rechristened himself after the first murderer of the Bible, Kain is depicted in Kaganof's documentary as a man of seeming contradictions who ultimately realized after various rebirths that only he, and not the black nationalist movement or even poetry, could save himself from a life of metaphysical hell and internal torment.

I have to confess I knew nothing about Kain or his legendary group *The Last Poets* before watching the doc, which just goes to show Kaganof's keen

talent as a filmmaker as I found *Guerilla Blues* and *Holy Ghosts* to be just as unwaveringly gripping, aesthetically alluring yet iconoclastic, and preternaturally transcendental as the director's greatest and most revered works. Kain is a poet, playwright, spoken word warrior and sometimes actor that is best known as the original leader and one of the founding members of the NYC-based black nationalist oriented group *The Last Poets*, which is credited as being one of the first, if not the first, proto-hip-hop groups, as well as a band that was championed by none other than Jimi Hendrix and Mick Jagger, among various other important mainstream musicians of the counter-culture zeitgeist. Born shortly after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and on the anniversary of Malcolm X's birthday on May 19, 1968 in Marcus Garvey Park, *The Last Poets* are the victims of an undying apocryphal tale that they derived their name from the poem 'Towards a Walk in the Sun' written by black South African revolutionary poet Willie Kgositsile that reads: "This wind you hear is the birth of memory when the movement hatches in time's womb there will be no art talk. The only poem you will hear will be the spearpoint pivoted in the punctured marrow of the villain." While Kain was surely influenced by Kgositsile's poem, which he interpreted as meaning that there will be no need for writing poetry in the future as the black people will become the poetry once that have defeated and destroyed their white oppressor, *The Last Poets* apparently derived their name from a poem written by the group's co-founder David Nelson. Sort of black America's answer to Gabriele D'Annunzio or Yukio Mishima as a 'warrior-poet' who used the spoken word to wage a spiritual war against white America and to spread the message of negro liberation and black power, albeit with a stage presence and vocal delivery style comparable to fellow poet-cum-frontman Jim Morrison of *The Doors*, Kain is certainly the sort of highly literate black cultural crusader that negro networks like BET should be honoring instead of culturally deleterious individuals like Tupac and Kanye West, who might as well be described as neo-minstrel performers.

Shot in three different cities over a decade period, including Amsterdam in 1994, New York City in 1996, and Johannesburg in 2004 and not officially released for almost another decade, *Guerilla Blues* and *Holy Ghosts* is not only a document about the life and work of Kain, but a bizarrely inspiring testament to the seemingly unlikely artistic collaboration between the director and his much older subject. As Kain explains towards the end of the documentary, his revolutionary group *The Last Poets* more or less started to fall apart after he refused to sell-out by working with a white record producer who he felt was attempting to steal black power from him and his comrades, but as Kaganof's film reveals, the seemingly perennially wandering poet has had various rebirths throughout his life, thus reflecting a constantly evolving man that refuses to be labelled or pigeonholed. As a reflected in an allegorical scene featuring a shadowy Kain traveling in a darkened car in slow-motion through what seems like an unend-

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ing green tunnel, life is an ever-changing spiritual journey that lasts until at least you croak. At the highly impressionable age of ten, Kain had his first encounters with the Holy Ghost at a black Christian church (which is a major motif of Kaganof's doc), but his brand of spirituality would only grow more subversive and highly personalized as he grew older. Of course, despite his rebellious behavior, the influence of the Christian Church would never leave Kain as highlighted in various scenes scattered throughout Kaganof's doc featuring a pregnant black woman credited as 'The Ghost That Was Holy' (played by Sybil Jeffries) posing outside of various black churches. As the poet explains himself, shortly after reading Albert Camus' remark in the classic text *The Rebel* (1951) aka *L'Homme révolté* that Cain was the first rebel of the Bible when he was 23 years old, he had another rebirth and had his name legally changed to 'Kain' in symbolic solidarity with the first murderer of the Judeo-Christian holy book. As revealed in an inter-title featured in the doc, "In Dante's *Inferno* the 9th Circle of hell is called Kaina, after Kain, the Bible's first murderer." Ironically, the 9th Circle of hell is for the 'malicious sin' of treachery, which Kain would ultimately suffer at the hands of new band mates, who ultimately took over *The Last Poets*, nearly beat him to death with a hammer, and continued to threaten to kill him and his entire family.

When Kain turned 30, he had a third rebirth of the artistic and metapolitical sort that resulted in the creation of his most important works, including his play *Turner*. As a man who wrote aggressive anti-art-fag lines like, "I am a poet. I hate poetry and love life" and "...rhythm don't fill an empty stomach," Kain was not exactly attempting to follow in any traditional style of western poetry, but instead saw the artistic medium as an empowering weapon that could be used to convert blacks across America to adopt an Afrocentric weltanschauung that emphasized racial nationalism and negro liberation as reflected in inciting lines like, "Time is running out as hastily as niggers run from the man." Kain also had a reluctant interest in classic western poetry as demonstrated in bizarre lines like, "You know, a big stick don't make a shepherd if he can't control the flock. You better rise up Rudyard Kipling." As Kain explains in the doc regarding his artistic agenda with his group, "It was very important that we have a conga player. We almost called ourselves 'The Drum Poets' because we wanted a very clear association with Africa." More interested in spreading a bold and uncompromising black power message than making money or even creating art, Kain naturally could not fathom the idea of recording an album with a successful white record producer named Alan Douglas, who had previously worked with Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis, or as he stoically states in the doc: "Just them saying that Alan Douglas was white just wrote it off of my agenda as being possible. For me, all the poetry that we were doing was even secondary to the machinery behind the poetry. I wanted to build an institution. All across the country it was about building black institutions, black powerbases. I rejected the idea of

Alan Douglas recording us.” Ultimately, Kain’s stern reluctance to work with whitey Douglas caused a schism in the group and a seemingly fiendish Svengali-like fellow named Jalal Mansur Nuriddin (aka Alafia Pudim) was brought in to replace him as the leader of the group. As Kain states of Jalal and the other new members of The Last Poets, “There sense of poetry was not something I thought we were about.” Instead of working with The Lost Poets, Kain decided to record his own solo album entitled *The Blue Guerrilla* (1970), which is an angry and aggressive yet musically eclectic work that one might describe as an audio Afro-apocalypse. After recording a sort of rival album against the new version of The Last Poets (Kain fittingly called his new rival group ‘The Original Last Poets’ and they went on to star in the musical doc *Right On!: Poetry on Film* (1970) directed by Herbert Danska, which was accompanied by a soundtrack of the same name), Kain was apparently nearly beaten to death with a hammer by his rival Jalal (in the doc, Kain describes the experience as, “...the beating of my life”), but luckily a black cop came along and saved his life. Ultimately, the near-death experience caused Kain to become disillusioned with black nationalism and go to a “personal place with himself,” thus resulting his rebirth as ‘Baby Kain,’ which is the name he used for his Dutch era jazz oriented album *Feel This* (1997).

As Kain explains towards the end of *Guerilla Blues* and *Holy Ghosts*, “I’m not a tough guy. I don’t really know how to handle myself in this world out here and yet I feel about myself that I’m a spiritual alley cat because the violence that I have dealt with is an internal violence.” Indeed, judging by Kain’s own words, it seems like it was only a matter of time before he would reject the anti-individualistic collectivist thinking of the black power moment, which constituted a dead-end herd mentality that could never bring the constantly evolving artist the true sense transcendence that he so eagerly sought. Ultimately, it took countless rebirths for Kain to come to the conclusion that, “Nobody can save me but me” and “I could reject everything but I could not reject the experience of the Holy Ghost.” As Kain also explains, “The Holy Ghost is a violent experience but it’s a beautiful experience. I mean, nothing is hurtful about it in the experience itself, but it is a violent internal confrontation with the self which, in the metaphor of the church in the Holy Ghost language, it’s thought of in terms of god and the devil battling for your soul...,” thus emphasizing how his life has ultimately been a spiritual as opposed to political or racial struggle. Ironically considering his previous refusal to work with a white record producer, Kain is featured throughout the documentary performing his spoken word sessions with a white jazz drummer, thus symbolizing his new outlook on life as a lone wolf individualist as opposed to a racial collectivist. Of course, Kain would also go on to working with white filmmakers in Amsterdam and would not only appear in Kaganof’s films *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994), *The Turner Revelation* (1995), and *Reflections on Dead Weight* (1995), but also

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Otakar Votocek's *Wings of Fame* (1990) starring Peter O'Toole and Colin Firth and Dick Maas' *Do Not Disturb* (1999) starring William Hurt. It might also interest cinephiles to know that Kain's song with The Last Poets, "Wake Up, Niggers," was featured on the soundtrack for Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg's counter-culture classic *Performance* (1970).

After watching *Guerrilla Blues and Holy Ghosts*, it is easy for me to see why auteur Aryan Kaganof took such a keen interest in Kain and his work, as the two men seem to be kindred spirits of sorts. Indeed, aside from both men having symbolic rebirths that led to them legally changing their names and living in exile in Amsterdam where they would ultimately collaborate with one another, both men are constantly evolving aesthetic pioneers who abhor pedantic art faggotry and refrain from subscribing to any sort of artistic trends. On a more personal level, Kaganof and Kain also seem kindred spirits in that their works express a deep resentment towards their mothers, or what one might describe as an anti-Oedipal complex. With that being said, I must admit that after watching *Guerrilla Blues and Holy Ghosts*, I am dying to watch Kaganof's *The Turner Revelation* which, as reflected in the handful of excerpts featured in the doc, feels like a haunting and foreboding celluloid chiaroscuro of the psychodramatic sort, with star and playwright Kain himself taking on the Holy Ghost. Notably, Kain was apparently deeply touched by the doc, or as he wrote in an e-mail to Kaganof regarding the film: "...it's late so I will just say that the film troubled me in as much as it brings people back in my view I have long desired nothing but distance from/tremendous distance/but nevertheless have had a number of attempts to look and deal with the work. Finally brought it to the closest friend I've had in this Amsterdam city the last 25 years of my existence. She said: 'It says everything we need to know. It's a document, a testament.' And then she said: 'It's a monument.'" As Kaganof once wrote under his alter-ego Abraxas, "All that is sacred is poetic and all that is poetic is sacred" and he certainly demonstrates this sentiment in *Guerrilla Blues and Holy Ghosts*, which is nothing short of a highly personalized poetic tribute from one poet to another. In its demonstration that two different artists from very different artistic and personal backgrounds can share a sort of common 'truth' and spiritual connection, Kaganof's doc is like a visceral celluloid equivalent to what Aldous Huxley described as the 'Perennial Philosophy.' Undoubtedly, I cannot think of another film or piece of art in another artistic medium that enabled me to connect with a black American artist of the Afrocentric sort in a more accessible and refreshingly confrontational way. Indeed, only Kaganof could direct a potent and rather revealing film about one of the most important culture creators of American Black Nationalist history that depicts an elderly drunken Dutchman as god and features kraut queer New Wave countertenor Klaus Nomi's Henry Purcell cover "Cold Song" juxtaposed with a voyeuristic shot of an old negro hobo eating McDonalds food out of a public trashcan.

-Ty E

3 MERZBOW FILMS
3 MERZBOW FILMS

Aryan Kaganof* (2013)

With his erotic black-and-white avant-garde short *La séquence des barres parallèles* (1992), South African auteur Aryan Kaganof began a collaboration with Japanese noise musician and sadomasochism expert Masami Akita aka 'Merzbow'—a man who borrowed his name from a series of grotto-like artistic rooms entitled 'The Merzbau' created by German dadaist Kurt Schwitters, which were destroyed by Allied bombing in 1943—that would ultimately result in four different films, with the documentary *Beyond Ultraviolence: Uneasy Listening By Merzbow* (1998) being the only feature-length effort sired by the two artists. Despite Merzbow's popularity, *Beyond Ultraviolence* was limited to a handful of VHS copies upon its release and has been somewhat hard to find since then, at least by any official means. After recently deciding that the original 70-minute minute cut of *Beyond Ultraviolence* should be ridden of "purely self-indulgent crap," Kaganof carefully dismembered the film to a mere 15-minute running time, which is featured on the director's quite literally titled DVD release *3 Merzbow Films* (2013). Indeed, aside from the totally singular experimental Georges Bataille adaptation *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994), *3 Merzbow Films* features all the cinematic collaborations between Kaganof and Merzbow. A storm of industrial noise visually accented by, among other things, assassinated auteur Theo van Gogh lusting after a Dutch diva in a rather revealing black rubber dress, seemingly hundreds of S&M bondage images of petite unclad Japanese ladies in rather compromised positions, young Jap chicks simulating hara-kiri, and ironically used quotes by French literary critic Roland Barthes, *3 Merzbow Films* reflects amoral anti-traditionalist art in the innately irreligious post-postmodern age of aesthetic nihilism where only the harshest of noises and most depraved of images can reach modern man's deadened souls. Indeed, *3 Merzbow films* is a marvelously misbegotten meeting between East and West (and considering the continent Kaganof lives on, South) that demonstrates globalization has managed to not only deracinate and devitalize the Occident, but the tiny East Asian island as well.

Seven minutes of fiercely foreboding erotic ecstasy in sleek spine-tingling black-and-white cinematography, *La séquence des barres parallèles* (1992) aka *The Sequence of Parallel Bars*—a film based on a Polish-French erotic novelist/Franz Kafka translator Pierre Klossowski—follows a beautiful rubber-wrapped Dutch dame (Gabrielle Provaas, who would later co-direct the documentary *Meet the Fokkens* (2011) about elderly identical twin prostitutes who worked in the red-light district of Amsterdam for over 40 years) as she enters an abandoned post-industrial warehouse and is followed around by a seemingly sexually depraved Fat Man (played by Dutch Filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who was infamously assassinated by a deranged Muslim terrorist because the director's film

Submission (2004) hurt the insane Islamic untermensch's feelings). After briefly examining the downstairs of the nearly pitch black hellhole, Ms. Provaas walks up a set of stairs and van Gogh grabs her leg, but she keeps walking to her dubious destination. When she reaches the top, she is grabbed by her stalker, who carries her as if he is aping the actions of King Kong, and becomes an object of worship in the pose of Christ on the cross. Van Gogh is a fiendish foot fetishist who licks and caresses Provaas' hooves while drunken with abject infatuation, as if he is some sort of internet fan-boy who has finally met a real live woman in the flesh. Although viewers probably expect something to the contrary, Provaas exits the subterranean pleasure-dome completely unscathed and leaves in a fancy limousine, as if she's a high-class hooker who just performed a service for Theo for a hefty price.

Signal to Noise (1998), which is a sort of sister film to *Beyond Ultraviolence: Uneasy Listening By Merzbow* (the two films were originally released together on VHS), is the most uneventful and minimalistic short featured on 3 Merzbow Films. Shot at the Kamakura Temple, Japan in 1997, *Signal to Noise* begins with a storm of nihilistic noise and erratic editing with aesthetically pleasing footage of Masami Akita and a white dude (Djeff Babcock of *Acéphale*) recording sound for what one assumes is samples for their music. In its depiction of Akita and his bud's public recording sessions, *Signal to Noise* deconstructs the noise-making process, demonstrating the stark contrast between the process (i.e. calmly walking around a historical hotspot as tourists walk and pigeons fly in plain view) and the result. Aside from noise by Merzbow, the experimental documentary features the old school 1930s blues song "Last Kind Word Blues" by black female country blues singer Geechie Wiley and "A Real Slow Rag" composed by American Negro classical composer Scott Joplin and performed by David Boeddinghaus. *Signal to Noise* concludes with the Roland Barthes quote, "Everything has a meaning or nothing has. To put it another way, one could say that art is without noise" (Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative from Image, Music, Text). Indeed, I guess Barthes did not live long enough to listen to the grating and atavistic sounds of Merzbow.

Unquestionably, *Beyond Ultraviolence: Uneasy Listening By Merzbow* (subtitled 'A Short Investigation by: Aryan Kaganof') is the 'main attraction' of 3 Merzbow Films, as it is the key to the aesthetic integrity of the rest of the films. Hearing Masami Akita aka 'Merzbow' talk, one soon realizes that he is more concerned with the 'visceral' and primitive part of life than the intellectual, which his nasty noise clearly reflects. As Akita explains in the spirit of J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973), "Just imagine a car accident. The entrails of the car spill out. When a huge lorry crashes, it's a fascinating sight. In other words...a car needs female hormones. You could compare it to the function of noise. Noise worms its way, as it were into the guts of music. That's the context it should be placed in." From there, Merzbow proceeds to dwell on the wild and wonderful world

3 MERZBOW FILMS

of sadomasochism, explaining, "In the world of SM, military uniforms...torture, corporal punishment...and police academies play a prominent role. In the world of SM, power...and authority...are presented as paranoiac themes. SM exposes the cruelty of absolute power...by showing this cruelty...in a violent way to the viewer. You witness the cruelty of SM practices. But the last thing you need in a war is SM." Aside from noise, Akita discusses how he met his teacher Chimuo Mireki at an 'institute for historic pornographic material' and how they came up with the idea to make pseudo-snuff 'kinbaku' videos of Japanese girls committing suicide, which the musician began working on starting with the second film of perversely erotic self-slaughter. Not surprisingly, Akita goes on to describe how the Japanese are obsessed with the idea of women committing hara-kiri, which he differentiates from seppuku, stating, "Yukio Mishima committed seppuku. In seppuku, the stomach is cut open and then the head is chopped off by someone else." Hara-kiri merely involves the person cutting their stomach and letting their guts fall out, with Akita remarking, "When it was carried out by men...it was seen as a tremendous and magnificent...expression of nationalism. But this is a contemporary view on the subject. Hara-kiri should be considered as a form of fetishism...but it's an ancient primitive form...which focuses primarily on blood and entrails."

During *Beyond Ultraviolence: Uneasy Listening By Merzbow* the following quote from Teutonic painter Kurt Schwitters appears, "Merz stands for freedom from all fetters, for the sake of artistic creation. Freedom is not the lack of restraint, but the product of strict artistic discipline." Indeed, aside their proclivity for subversive aesthetics, Merzbow and Kaganof share a certain compromising artistic discipline that comes from the gut just as it comes from the mind, if not more so. Personally, while I have some interest in industrial/post-industrial groups like Coil and NON, I am certainly no noise connoisseur and I am only vaguely familiar with Merzbow's oeuvre, yet *3 Merzbow Films* is still a strangely enthralling experience, sort of like popping a massive zit and watching the blood and puss squirt out in an unpredictable fashion. In fact, I would go so far as saying that I do not know how anyone could tolerate Merzbow's 'noise sculptures' without the accompaniment of equally harsh and irrational visuals, as it would be like PBJ sandwich without jelly, or more relevantly, guts without blood. Additionally, *3 Merzbow Films* makes for a rather eclectic sampling of both artists' work, as men who negate the artistic medium they work in, with Merzbow destroy all melody and music and with Kaganof destroying (but ultimately reinventing) all editing, narrative, and aesthetic styles. A year after creating *Beyond Ultraviolence*, Kaganof would go back to Japan and put his previous work shot in the *Land of the Rising Sun* to shame with the sexual savagery of *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy*, albeit this time without the help of Merzbow. Undoubtedly, all of Kaganof's Japanese films represent a rare instance where a white man has been able to successfully create art in Japan

without it seeming like a patronizing novelty.
-Ty E

DEGENERAZIONE
DEGENERAZIONE

Asia Argento* (1994)

When the word "portmanteau" is muttered, film fanatics immediately think aloud *Tales from the Crypt*, the arguably better *Tales from the Hood*, or a handful of Hammer Horror projects. Never have I heard mention of *DeGenerazione*, which brings me to my knees after blindly watching it as it is one of the most critically underrated collections of short films that I have ever bore witness to. Composed of 10 short films either blessed with surrealism or weighty with horror, *DeGenerazione* walks at a brisk pace through each story, unconnected in nature, with only a mission to provide fascinating spins on common urban mythology. If *DeGenerazione* were to be known for any two things, it would be that the last short film stars Asia Argento in which she feverishly screams cause for Dario Argento's films or that the technicians and artists appropriated to this gem worked for free - a merit badge, if you will. Opening up on a note of apocalyptic esotericism, our first short film ("pre-credit sequence") begins. *Our Guys are Coming* is the title and what prophecy it holds. A stammering scientist frantically pleads to an anonymous voice on the phone illustrating the drastic nature of future circumstance when suddenly his phone accomplice gurgles and screams. After this, a knock at the door alerts the scientist, all the while a rousing anarchic punk instrumental begins building to a bloody climax. Following the musical cue, a fist breaks through the door and a group of mutated robotic humanoids enter his apartment wearing *DeGenerazione* shirts. The good doctor escapes (for now) while the lot of mutated faces look up at the camera and smile - what wonderful bliss *DeGenerazione* bathes in.

AN ERROR OCCURRED.

Try watching this video on www.youtube.com, or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.

The second short film is entitled *Home Delivery* in which a woman belittles a postal agency for not delivering a package on time. She then demands that the delivery man, on his only day off, pick up labor again and deliver her package. The post master agrees but on one condition - she be home at 6:30 PM to answer the phone. As it would have it, the woman is absent from her humble abode but her husband isn't. With no prior inclination of what to expect (the package is an anniversary present), he humorously prepares dinner when the doorbell angrily echoes throughout the rooms. Taking up arm with cutlery (this very same thought crosses my mind when the door is knocked upon at questionable hours), the man opens the door to find a large, scarred deliveryman who is past perturbed. The deliveryman exclaims "Leave the door open. I'm coming in" and walks down the hall. Armed with light and playful music as well as the hilarious behavior of the effeminate man of the house, he mutters "Whatever" and closes the door. What follows are remnants of a home invasion sequence without cruel intent, just the idiocy of a man who refuses to ask any questions. *Home Delivery* is both light and dark, as well as strange. Although it is a memorable short, it's hardly one of the finer presentations DeGenerazione holds.

Just Another Vampire Story is exactly that, although with twisted, homoerotic roots. With burning counterculture in store for later, a vampire walks along the shore of a beach asking "Have you ever met a drunk vampire?". Transporting the setting to a bar teeming with slave-like boy-toy bartenders, a man notices a vintage-dressed male sitting and sipping alone at a side table. Sending him a drink, the two meet and decide to take their acquainting game back to the young bachelor's pad. It is here where the older gentleman admits to being a vampire, not of the natural mythological kind, but a species of vampire past the cosmos stranded here on Earth - very in tune with addiction and vice. "I have the best Jack Daniels" is the key pick up line. Also, it is not everyday you encounter a film about homosexual vamp-advances, now is it? One of the scenes to follow boasts incredible suspense as the two male figures tease until the harrowing finale (also, on a grander scale of things, enjoyable). *Just Another Vampire Story* pokes and prods at both the feebleness of vampire lore and the flamboyancy of the modern gay. This short might take an acquired taste to digest properly but all-in-all an entertaining spurt of horror counter-machismo.

Is TV Bad for Kids? is one of the masterpieces contained within DeGenerazione. Haughtily displaying a child at home alone watching television, *Is TV Bad for Kids?* then juxtaposes the images of a humored child against the stern

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father demanding the television to be turned off. Concluding the presence of the child is a dinner party of parents arguing the moral decay of children and the harm of television. Several make snide remarks towards the parental practices of each other which makes for a damn fine debate, amongst friends of course. Switching back to the child, now alarmed that her television splurge was cut short by a freak-out shower of static, the girl begins hitting the tube in a vain attempt to get it to switch back on. Fearing boredom, the child slumbers peacefully while the television assumes a purpose of its own and fosters a bewilderingly creepy face as it inches through the hallways - guided as if the combined neglect of every parent was a driving force. The father later scowls over the loss of his television. I, too, would react similarly as the child did had something as terrifying as being stalked by a television with ulterior motives happened to me. "We can't live without a TV!" screams the father, unaware entirely of the horror that hovered through the hallways when they were out getting drunk and entertaining the mass with karaoke. *Is TV Bad for Kids?* is an exceptional entry in a near-perfect archive of cinematic oddities.

Empty Gift follows suit with a short but sweet message applying a retro-futuristic world, still in shambles, that battles overpopulation with a daily lottery of random numbers being selected to ween the life of any and all individuals, had your luck ran dry. That is to assume luck exists in this bleak world. Part *Battle Royale*, part *Scanners*, Empty Gift is weighty, important, and all too conscious of the path we are headed towards. The next brief short is entitled *Prospective* which follows a path of Italian political surrealism. Contained within is a first-person narrative of a woman discovering a familiar figure clad in a diaper positioned under a large umbrella. Inquiring as to what he is doing, he declares that he has gotten a government job and points to his hat labeled 'Prospective'. Implying fellatio or sexual gratification of the sort, the man hands the woman the umbrella and mentions that he will return. Soon after, the woman begins to levitate and hover across the field, directly overhead of two men carrying a mirror - "Inverse perspective" which may or may not be a "psychiatrist invading her mind".

One of my personal favorite shorts to be found within *DeGenerazione* is *Chain* - a title that creates a reality around the general emasculation of men at the hands of the overbearing female populace. Dissecting the fears of all men who are "pussy-whipped", *Chain* subtly takes charge of its strong metaphorical content during a bonfire scene in which the brutish and bullying way of men is shown. Several males mock one another for bearing a curfew to his woman, only to have a POV perspective of a woman wielding a leash, hook into the collar of one of the verbal teasers and drag him off. Noticeably distressed by this, the lead character offers the suggestion of going to a nightclub and grabbing drinks - the freedom of so-called "free birds". The bar scene is the catalyst to domination. *Chain* makes a great defense by comparing and contrasting the nocturnal

activities of both sexes. Men blow foam off of pints and lick buffalo sauce off the side of their lips as women bend and sway, presenting their allure by way of self-objectification. Our lead begins to flirt his way to a pack of she-wolves when he notices they are adorned with chains and leashes. This is one of the few, if not only, examples I can think of in the very specific genre of male horror. These characters aren't so fictional, you'd learn. Just like many of us, they lower themselves to domination - it appears unnatural on film, as it is, but you wouldn't bat an eyelash had you seen anything similar out in public. The dark and strange culture of ownership, the charade men commit to, and the incessant demands of the fickle feminine disease - all these things are given a face within Chain and what a wonderful exhibition it is.

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India 21 is the title of the next short, one of which bears a significant power in our post 9/11 American culture. Taking place almost entirely in a taxi cab, a man is stricken with dismay as he discovers an invisible entity in the back of his seat demanding to be delivered to a certain location, you know, as most passengers would request. The cab driver of India 21 is almost sure of a microphone being hidden somewhere but nothing is to be found except the briefcase in the backseat which carries a disembodied voice barking out commands. Out of all the shorts within DeGenerazione, India 21 manages to be one of the more powerful and pertinent to today's news. I sadly don't have much more to say as this happens to be a short that depends on a viewing in order to critically assess it and to cherish what surprises it carries. Finally Together accompanies the collection next which plays out similarly to the formula of Lars von Trier's later *Antichrist* - a tale of a couple on retreat in the forest in which death and fury follows. After witnessing an act of cruelty against an animal, the woman refuses to accept killing hands. Though similar in ways to *Antichrist*, the ideologies are different. Finally Together embraces the feline and feminine while the man fears the death of intellect. Both have strange visions and phobias of each other harming one another and hopes to settle down after brutality purifies them. Only then can they be "finally together".

The final short film is *Squeak!* in which punk rock assassins/fledgling filmmakers decide to film a snuff movie out of their target. Bashing typical horror tropes with satire, lines like "Chainsaws are outdated", *Squeak!* is the perfect postcard of DeGenerazione which highlights the oft-anarchic and belligerent nature of this anthology. *Squeak!* also features Asia Argento who calls her fellow crusty rock-filmmakers "fucking pigs of whores" while proclaiming her assumed ex-lover lover named Cyclops to be better partners in crime. "We watch movies...Dario Argento!" Wrapping up with a romantic getaway, DeGenerazione represents the highest peak of hidden gems. It really is a shame a film which juggles intense genius and a lack of sensitivity is so incredibly rare and has been swept under the mat of cult films. Also brimming with punk commercial attitude and a likewise soundtrack, DeGenerazione spreads its dusty cheer onto every witness of its splendor. I implore any and all to track down this video library of mutated expressionism as it happens to be one of the more surprising viewings I've had in a similar genre.

-mAQ

SCARLET DIVA

Asia Argento* (2000)

Although a rather absurd and patently pathetic thing to think about and surely symbolic of the decline of great Guido cinema, ever since Italian actress Asia Argento (*New Rose Hotel*, *Last Days*) began directing her own films almost two decades ago when she contributed a segment to the goombah horror anthology *DeGenerazione* (1994), she has become a much more interesting, provocative, artful, and mature auteur filmmaker than her formerly more famous father, giallo maestro Dario Argento (*Suspiria*, *Opera*). Indeed, while Dario's filmmaking career has degenerated to the point of unintentionally parodying his previous and infinitely superior cinematic efforts, even directing a film entitled *Giallo* starring Hebraic hack actor Adrien Brody (who infamously sued the filmmaker and his cohorts for not receiving his full salary for acting in the film), Asia has opted for breaking with the family tradition of directing horror genre flicks and valiantly entered the world of aberrant-garde arthouse cinema, with her semi-autobiographical work *Scarlet Diva* (2000) aka *A Diva Escarlate*, which was the first Italian feature-length film shot entirely on digital video. On top of being the prodigal daughter of Dario Argento—a rather dubious dude who filmed his daughter getting raped in his work *The Stendhal Syndrome* (1996)—Asia also happens to be the granddaughter of 'Italian Leni Riefenstahl' Elio Luxardo and the great-granddaughter of Italian fascist composer Alfredo Casella, but one would hardly suspect that from watching *Scarlet Diva*, a decidedly degenerate digital video 'diary' of sorts from a deeply wounded soul that, among other things, features an unsimulated sex scene of the seemingly self-destructive actress being penetrated doggy-style by a negro named Tyrone (played by the actress' ex-boyfriend) while having her hair pulled. Despite that fact, Dario Argento, who also quasi-incestuously filmed his daughter naked in his anorexia-themed (Dario's stepdaughter/Asia's ½ sister Anna Ceroli suffered from the eating disorder before tragically dying in a car accident a year after the film was released) horror flick *Trauma* (1993), also acted as the producer of *Scarlet Diva* and a video cassette of the film can even be seen in the director's shockingly terrible pseudo-Hitchcockian TV movie *Do You Like Hitchcock?* (2005). Starring Asia Argento herself in the lunatic lead role as an exceedingly lonely and nihilistically self-destructive Italian actress who wants to shed her international sex symbol status and become a serious arthouse filmmaker, *Scarlet Diva* is, if nothing else, a uniquely unflattering example of life imitating art and vice versa. Indeed, if *Scarlet Diva* and her subsequent Korine-esque feature-length flick *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* (2004) are in any way indicative of where Asia Argento is heading in the future as a filmmaker, she indubitably one day might become the most infamous female auteur since Leni Riefenstahl.

24-year-old Italian-born (but of 1/4 Brazilian extraction) International su-

SCARLET DIVA

perstar actress Anna Battista (Asia Argento) had already starred in 20 films by the age of 20 and is regarded as “the year’s best actress” in her homeland, yet she feels like “the most lonely person in the world,” which judging by her handful of bat-shit-crazy friends and dubious relationship with her discernibly fucked show business family, does not seem like that big of an exaggeration. In between being sexually pillaged by buck negroes on film sets and quitting films after being verbally reamed by directors for failing to learn her lines due to being too inebriated, Anna has a patently pathetic social life that involves doing hard drugs bought from American negro dealers and having meaningless sex with total strangers, including lunatic lesbos who she ‘allows’ to ‘rape’ her. Even Anna’s pseudo-blond bimbo best friend Veronica Lanza (Vera Gemma) has a boyfriend, though the fellow is known to keep his girlfriend hogtied naked for two days and slaps her around, but seeing as she is a major masochist, she loves it and even tells him so after he bloodies her lip. One night, Asia goes to a rock concert and falls in love at first sight with the singer of the band, Kirk Vaines (played by Jean Shepard in a role originally created for Vincent Gallo)—a very vain philistine and horrible hack musician whose lack of musical talent is only transcended by his Elvish Presley fetishism and pseudo-hip hippy arrogance—and the two inevitably have sex after the concert, with the actress remarking regarding their brief erotic excursion, “This is the first time in my life I’m making love.” Of course, decadent diva Anna has had sex more times than she can remember, but it is the first time she has felt an emotional connection with someone of the opposite sex as a lonely woman who has no problem confessing, “It’s very hard for me to love someone.” Of course, vainglorious Vaines, who at one point egomaniacally remarks “I won’t let you forget me,” abandons Anna the next morning and forgetting to take her morning-after pill, the lovelorn actress becomes pregnant. Not surprisingly, Anna has been pregnant before, but this is the first time she has not decided to abort her unborn child as she loves its father and has rather grandiose pipedreams about starting a family with the hyper hedonistic rocker. Meanwhile, Anna is attempting to change her image and become a serious artist, so she starts peddling an idea for an autobiographical film entitled ‘Scarlet Diva’ to American producers, including a fiercely foul fellow named Mr. Paar (played by serial killer obsessed painter/performance artist Joe Coleman), who attempts but fails to get the desperate (but not too desperate) would-be-director to “lick his balls.” Anna tries in vain to reunite with her bastard beloved Vaines, even offering to spontaneously fly to Australia to see him, but he repeatedly blows her off. When Anna finally has the opportunity to reunite with Vaines at a concert, she is rather heartbroken to learn that the seemingly half-retarded rocker already has a wife and child, who are also at the concert, and he does not want to see her. In a horribly hysterical state of heartsickness, Anna runs out of the venue into the dark night and eventually down a flight of stairs, ultimately falling on her stomach and losing her unborn child in the process, thus bringing a completely

cataclysmic and miserably melancholy conclusion to *Scarlet Diva*.

Equally amateurishly assembled as it is audaciously autobiographical, *Scarlet Diva* is an auteur flick from a sort of penetratingly personal purgatory that makes a pretty good case that Asia Argento is quite possibly the most unhinged female filmmaker who has ever lived, as well as one of the most interesting and incendiary Italian filmmakers working today. As Asia makes quite clear in a DVD audio commentary for the film, every shot and second of *Scarlet Diva* is of personal significance, including the character of rocker Kurt Vaines (the director refuses to reveal who the real man is), as well as real unsimulated sex scenes with ex-boyfriends and the buying of drugs from real drug dealers. Quite humorously, in a scene early on in the film, Asia steps on a magazine featuring Sicilian-American Renaissance man Vincent Gallo (Buffalo 66, Brown Bunny) in what is a sort of 'cinematic revenge' from the director because the iconoclastic actor/filmmaker bailed out on playing the role of Kurt Vaines as he apparently wanted more money for playing the role. It also should be noted that Asia dedicated *Scarlet Diva* to her deceased ½ sister Anna Ceroli who died tragically in 1994 in a car accident and who is strangely portrayed in flashback scenes in *Scarlet Diva* by a young boy (Asia felt the actor looked a lot like her sis, so she 'transsexualized' her sis cinematically). Since she was working on a budget of next to nil, Asia shot *Scarlet Diva* in a guerilla style, illegally "stealing scenes" (as she calls it) at airports and various European capitals, including Rome and Paris, and even used the real untouched bedroom (which she called "aesthetically perfect") she lived in from age 13-17. Written while Asia was suffering from such severe agoraphobia that she could not leave her apartment for months, stating, "I was afraid to go out of my apartment for a long time; I could only go out to work," *Scarlet Diva* is naked manic and hyper histrionic psychodrama from a discernibly damaged soul who used digital video as a therapeutic outlet like no auteuress before nor after her. Featuring such unholy acts as Asia unclad shaving her hairy hightalian armpits in a flagrantly unflattering manner while her big black beaver is exposed (apparently, she grew her pubes out for the film in the hopes it would be a hit in Japan, which it was), telling her first true love she is "a whore," being quasi-raped by a big breasted lesbo (played by Italian porn star 'Selen'), and buying hash from a Yank Negro, *Scarlet Diva* is auteur aberrance and movie masochism at its finest uncompromisingly delivered by a director who made a point to include the quote "any artist is a prostitute" in her film. Interestingly, early on in *Scarlet Diva*, the protagonist is asked by a reporter, "Do you think Italian cinema is dying?," which it seems to be, especially considering there is no modern day Fellini, Pasolini, or even Fulci, yet Asia Argento has certainly helped fill the void by creating works that epitomize what Italians do best: artful exploitation and stylized sleaze.

-Ty E

THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS
THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS

Asia Argento* (2004)

Undoubtedly, Asia Argento is one of the most interesting and idiosyncratic female filmmakers/actresses working today; and her emotionally afflicting white trash arthouse coming-of-age flick *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* (2004) is one of the best examples as to why. Starring and directed by the exotic Italian auteuress, the film is a much more mature, artistic, and controversial work than her previous autobiographical feature-length work *Scarlet Diva* (2000). Indeed, *Scarlet Diva* may open with footage of Ms. Argento being pounded doggy-style by a bestial Negro (played by her ex-boyfriend) in a most crude and repulsive (and apparently unstimulated) manner, but *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* features a young child named Jeremiah who is repeatedly drugged, sodomized, and otherwise abused in a variety of appalling ways by a number of true blue American degenerates, including his own mother Sarah (played by Asia Argento). Taking its name from King James Version of the Bible, Book of Jeremiah, chapter 17, verse 9 and based on a novel of the same name by JT LeRoy (a fake identity taken by American writer Laura Albert who was sued for fraud right before the release of the film due to her gross literary dishonesty), *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* is a minor masterpiece of independent film with an all-star cast of ambitious actors; both young (Jeremy Renner, Michael Pitt) and old (Peter Fonda). Clearly inspired by the films of Harmony Korine (who is a personal friend of Argento), *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* is like *Gummo* (1997) meets Gregg Araki's *Mysterious Skin* (2004), except ultimately more degrading and emotionally damaging. Asia Argento's maternal great-grandfather Alfred Casella may have been a notable and respected fascist composer, but she is certainly an exponent of exceedingly decadent, degenerate, and hopelessly nihilistic art, as so brazenly expressed in *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things*; a cruel coming-of-age film with such a sadistically sordid tale of a childhood-gone-askew that Henry Lee Lucas probably could have personally identified with it.

After being taken away from his loving and caring foster parents, 7-year-old Jeremiah is reunited with his drug-ridden and sex-crazed biological mother Sarah; a bleach blonde gutter-level harlot who has been long since disowned by her extremist Christian family due to her exceedingly unruly and sinful behavior. Not long after taking him in and causing him to wet his bed due to her innately deplorable lack of mothering skills, Sarah abandons Jeremiah with a melancholy pedophile (Jeremy Renner) – a pathetic man she briefly married but soon dumped after the honeymoon – who shows no mercy in his despicable deflowering of the boy. Needless to say, Jeremiah – who is in a state of absolute confusion that results in out-of-body hallucinations – ends up in the emergency after the ruthless life-altering attack, thus eventually transpiring in

his Christian cult grandparents taking him in. Despite only being in the company of his mother and her many drug-addicted delinquent lovers for a short period of time, Jeremiah – to the dismay of his hyper stoic and strict authoritarian grandfather (Peter Fonda) – already shows glaring signs of being exposed to psychedelic drugs and anti-social punk rock music, as displayed by his random impromptu performance of songs by The Sex Pistols and propensity for spitting on indoor floors. Somewhat surprisingly, Jeremiah does quite well at his holier-than-thou Christian grandparents cult compound and even becomes an eager propagandist for the church, but, to his misfortune, Sarah comes back to reclaim him when he is 11-years-old. Now dating a country-loving reprobate redneck truck driver named Kenny who hates her favorite music genre of punk rock, Sarah takes her son on a relentless road trip where she prostitutes herself out to various rustic would-be-cowboys at an assortment of truck stops so she can support her steady drug consumption. Naturally, country boy Kenny gets tired of Sarah's Subhumans (UK anarcho-punk band) cassettes so he abruptly ditches her and Jeremiah at a less than delightful roadside diner. In what seems to be a dubious attempt to get her son to follow in her slapdash footsteps, Sarah encourages Jeremiah to be her 'little sister' and dresses him in drag. Clearly already mentally unsound due to a lifetime's worth of anomalous personal trauma, Jeremiah embraces his feminine side and seduces his mother's latest boyfriend Jackson (played by a hillbilly-attired Marilyn Manson), henceforth resulting in Sarah erupting into a jealous rage of sorts that involves the throwing of piss-poor beer cans and feeble excuses from Mr. Manson. By the end of *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things*, Jeremiah is once again in the hospital due to his mother's insistence that he drink ipecac while she is in a frantic meth-induced psychosis. Once again, Sarah's proves her dedication as a mother by kidnapping her son and taking him on what one can only assume is another exciting and chemical-driven magical mystery tour.

To say that *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things* is an extraordinarily appalling and decisively disheartening film would be a bit of a distortion as it is easily one of the most dehumanizing flicks I have ever seen, yet a barbarously brilliant, aesthetically dynamic, and undeniably captivating work nonetheless. Unlike her friend Harmony Korine's directorial debut *Gummo*, Asia Argento does not seem to be mocking the poor human rabble that she so keenly and calculatedly depicted. Asia also deserves much praise for her performance as crackhead concubine Sarah because despite her Italian background, she is totally convincing as a thoroughly debauched and awfully abominable Amerikkkan white trash darling with an array of undiagnosed mental illnesses and pathologies. As someone whose own father suspiciously directed her in the bare (Dario Argento's *Trauma*), one can only assume that Argento is desensitized to do just about any and everything on camera as displayed by her unmitigatedly unflattering but acutely enrapturing performance in *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All*

THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS

Things; one of a handful of films that has the capacity to give the viewer spiritual syphilis. In fact, she once stated of acting, "I always thought it was sick to choose looking at yourself on a big screen as your job. There has to be something crooked in your mind to want to be loved by everybody. It's like being a prostitute, to share that intimacy with all those people," so there should be no doubt as to the sort of dauntless and unhampered mind-set Asia had when approaching the role of Sarah. Her father may be regarded as a (once) legendary master of fantastic horror cinema, but his talent pales in comparison to his daughter's ability to direct true to life domestic terror and torment. After nearly a decade of reflection upon my initial viewing of *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things*, I can honestly say that Asia Argento is one of a handful of filmmakers – and the only female filmmaker – whose career I eagerly follow.

-Ty E

HIGHWAY TO HELL

Ate de Jong (1991)

Any film featuring dozens upon dozens of Andy Warhols doing manual slave labor in hell cannot be totally bad, even if it stars a little turd like Chad Lowe pretending to be a macho hero, neo-vaudevillian buffoon Ben Stiller and most of his family portraying lowclass working-class goyim, and singularly obnoxious and spastic Judaic jackass Gilbert Gottfried doing by far the worst and most exceedingly embarrassing Hitler impersonation in all of cinema history. Indeed, *Highway to Hell* (1991) directed by Dutch quasi-arthouse auteur turned failed Hollywood hack Ate de Jong (*Blindgangers* aka *Blind Spot*, *Drop Dead Fred*) is an extravagantly botched celluloid abortion with ridiculously retarded acting as performed by some of the most uniquely insufferable Hollywood whores, fiercely frivolous and seemingly flatulence-driven elevator music, blatantly fetishistic philistine humor, and incessant moronic goofiness, among various irritating things yet somehow I like the film and consider it a kitsch cult classic of sorts. While de Jong's film might also be one big odyssey of the odiously moronic that shits on all of Occidental history and features annoying Jewish kids that look like terminally ill cancer patients and a patently pathetic pint-sized male hero with a silly dog sidekick, it is actually a reasonably bizarre and entertaining loose-as-a-Detroit-crack-whore reworking of the classic ancient Greek myth of Orpheus set in a hermetic route 666 on the way to America's little Sodom of Las Vegas. Much like the Hollywood films of fellow Dutchman Paul Verhoeven and de Jong's most popular work *Drop Dead Fred* (1991), which was incidentally released earlier the same year, *Highway to Hell* is a film with two layers, with one layer that was made to appeal to the lowbrow 'bread and circus' American majority and another layer to appeal to more discerning viewers with some sort of understanding of classic Western philosophy, history, and spirituality, but as the director stated in an interview with Fangoria, "You don't need to comprehend the second level to make this film work for you. If you miss the second level, you missing nothing." Penned and produced by Norwegian-American screenwriter Brian Koppelman who was previously responsible for writing hokey horror trash like *976-EVIL* (1988) directed by Robert 'Freddy Krueger' Englund and *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master* (1988) and who would later go on to write more 'respectable' works like *Mystic River* (2003), this sometimes campy and oftentimes irreverent Orpheus molestation may be plagued by a virtual army of ugly kosher comedians and a storm of infantile humor but it ultimately has a traditional Western heart and spirit beneath all the seemingly Semitic stupidity. Trashed by lapsed Satanist Nikolas Schreck—the estranged son-in-law of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey who was a prominent figure in left-hand path movements in the 1980s and 1990s but eventually renounced Satanism and converted to Tantric Buddhism in 2003—in his book *The Satanic Screen: An*

HIGHWAY TO HELL

Illustrated Guide to the Devil in Cinema (2001) as having "...the filmsy feel of an extended heavy metal music video, and the picture's trite depiction of the Satanic realm is firmly grounded in that juvenile aesthetic" yet failing to realize it is a Orphic flick that mocks the whole "heavy metal music video" aesthetic instead of embracing it, *Highway to Hell* is ultimately an eccentrically epic piece of strangely dignified trash with something bordering on a decent message hidden under all the juvenile Judaic jokes.

Charlie Sykes (Chad Lowe) is a short and scrawny pedomorphic pizza delivery boy with a barely working piece-of-shit car who has somehow managed to make a beautiful blonde babe named Rachel Clark (Kristy Swanson of *Flowers in the Attic* (1987) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992)) not only fall in love with him, but also agree to marry him. Indeed, the ostensible all-American couple are headed to Las Vegas to get hitched on a whim without telling anyone, although Rachel left her mother a note about the big news so that she won't get worried. On the way to Vegas, Charlie becomes paranoid that a cop is following him, so he decides to take an alternate route and eventually stops at a rather remote gas station where a nice, if not somewhat strange, old fart named Sam (Richard Farnsworth of David Lynch's *The Straight Story* (1999)) attempts to warn him and his girlfriend not to take the alternate route and even offers to allow the two to sleep in a cozy cabin that he has behind his store. Of course, chump Charlie does not take heed of Sam's warnings, including that he should keep his eyes out for two Joshua trees and to never pull over for any reason until he passes the second one. Ultimately, Charlie falls asleep at the wheel right before passing the second Joshua tree and subsequently experiences the nightmare of a lifetime after being pulled over by a pernicious policeman named 'The Hellcop' (C. J. Graham, who played Jason Voorhees in *Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives* (1986))—a demonic zombie-like cop from Hades with a pentagram for a badge, discernibly tall Nordic frame and bald dolichocephalic skull with Biblical quotes carved into his skin (notably, FX designer Steven Johnson credited Clive Barker's series *Books of Blood* as the influence for the look)—who rips the passenger door off of his car, pulls Rachel out and locks her in his patrol car, and beats up the protagonist and his fluffy white dog Mr. Ben. Needless to say, startled bitch boy Charlie immediately goes back to old man Ben and learns that his girlfriend has been taken to a supernatural "road within a road" called 'The Highway to Hell' where he has 24 hours to find his girlfriend or both of them will be trapped in hell for eternity. As it turns out, Sam's own fiancée Clara (Pamela Gidley of *Thrashin'* (1986) and Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992)) disappeared on the same road 50 years before and ever since then he has been waiting in vain for her to come back. Ultimately, Sam equips Charlie with a specially made sawed-off shotgun designed by Clara with special ammo and a fancy old antique car with a special attribute that the protagonist neglects to discover until at the very moment he needs to use it most.

To enter the Highway to Hell, Charlie has to first 'believe in it,' so while attempting to break on through to the fire and brimstone side while driving like a maniac, he is pulled by a real cop who he mistakes for the Hell Cop and monotonically pulls his shotgun on, thus resulting in a car chase between two grade A wusses that concludes with the protagonist finally being transported to the desert netherworld. Meanwhile, Hellcop takes Rachel to a sleazy satanic diner called 'Pluto's Donuts' that is inhabited by grotesque dead zombie cops that have been waiting around for what seems like an eternity for service as Ben Stiller's shiksa mother Anne Meara, who plays a whorish waitress with the curious name Medea, dreams of jumping on the skinheaded zombicop's undead cock. Rather fittingly, Jerry Stiller plays a bitchy desk cop whose incessant bitching annoys the perennially mute Hellcop so much that he zaps him with his special gun while Rachel manages to escape by pouring coffee on the zombie handcuffs she is bound to. Upon running out of the diner, Rachel runs into a degenerate archetypal swarthy and greasy white trash cook played by Ben Stiller who cooks food on the hot asphalt and who offers the leading lady a nasty piece of steak which she turns down, thus inspiring the creepy culinary artist to call her a "vegetarian bitch." Of course, it does not take long for Rachel to get captured, as a dickheaded degenerate named Royce (Adam Storke)—a moronic metalhead and true rebel without a cause who is more or less the Devil's failed protégé—and his gang of half-braindead biker bastards soon find her running through the desert and decide to defile her due to her glaring virginal essence. Ultimately, instead of popping her cherry, Royce hands Rachel over to Hellcop, but with the stipulation that he "owes him." Notably, Royce's 'old lady' is Sam's long-lost fiancée Clara, who still has all her beauty intact and takes a Sapphic interest in Rachel, who is clearly not interested. As she later reveals during the film, Clara is not the perfect pussy on a pedestal that Sam imagined her to be, as she was not an actual victim of the devil but instead decided to stay in hell of her own free will because she thought eternal damnation would be cool and did not think she need her fiancé.

After a run-in with cunt-rocker Lita Ford that ends with him having to literally blow off the head of a conspicuously crazed cannibalistic ice cream man that threatens to scoop his brains out, as well as a Rebel Without a Cause (1955) style showdown with Royce and his gang of buffoonish bastard bikers, Charlie finds himself with some serious car damage and needs oil. Luckily, a 'Satanic Mechanic' with an 'AAA' (Anarchy, Armageddon, Annihilation) sticker on his tow truck named 'Beezle' (Irishman Patrick Bergin)—a fellow whose name alludes to his real identity as 'Beelzebub' (otherwise known as the Devil)—offers to fix Charlie's car free of charge. Apparently, Beezle has the power to fix a lot more than just automobiles and he has an adopted sickly Jewish child apprentice named Adam (Jarrett Lennon) that was purportedly brought to him by the Devil to be mentored. Since Charlie is in a hurry, he leaves Beezle's auto-shop

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immediately after he finishes fixing his car, not realizing that little Jewboy Adam has decided to join him and has attached himself to the side of the protagonist's car. On his way to save Rachel, Charlie spots a virtual army of Andy Warhol doppelgangers—retarded blond wig and autistic mannerisms and all—working on the road, guiding traffic, and grinding up murderously salacious sinners in a giant machine that turns their body into mince meat. At around this point, little Adam startles Charlie by jumping into the car and the protagonist subsequently promises to take him back to the mortal realm after finding Rachel.

Eventually after doing much driving on the otherworldly satanic open-road, Charlie ends up at a casino populated by evil historical figures like Hitler (Gilbert Gottfried), Cleopatra (Ben Stiller's sister Amy Stiller), and Attila the Hun (unfortunately, Ben Stiller again) where he finds Rachel trapped inside a stripper cage. Although Charlie manages to get Rachel out of the cage, the lovers' reunion is short-lived as Hell Cop soon shows up and seemingly kills the protagonist by blowing a hole through his stomach with a shotgun. Luckily, Adam takes it upon himself to get help for the protagonist by getting Mr. Fix-It aka Beezle, who manages to perfectly repair Charlie's seemingly fatal wounds while a pathologically neurotic Hitler attempts to convince a vain valley-girl-like Cleopatra that he is not actually Hitler, but a 17-year-old suburban metalhead that likes playing guitar. Great Ugandan dictator Idi Amin also receives a "white courtesy call" at the casino but he never shows up to pick it up. Notably, there are spots reserved at the satanic casino for Imelda Marcos, Muammar Gaddafi, Jerry Lewis, and P.W. Botha. Charlie has to get to Hell City and Bezzle dubiously recommends taking the "Road to Nowhere" as a shortcut where the protagonist ultimately ends up at a cave in the desert where he finds Hellcop's car. Clara shows up at the cave and attempts to warn Charlie to take a different route, but the would-be-pretty-boy protagonist is drunk on heroism and ignores her advice. Upon entering deeper into the cave, Charlie enters a misleadingly angelic pastel pink, white, and yellow room where he finds Rachel gagged and bound to a bed in a S&M/BDSM fashion and he soon fights Hellcop and somehow manages to zap the zombicop to death after being thrown around for a little bit like a little ragdoll. Needless to say, Charlie subsequently unties Rachel from the bed but is startled by his virginal fiancée's uncharacteristic behavior after she aggressively attempts to get him to deflower right then and there. Upon seeing Rachel's reflection in the mirror, he notices she is not his statuesque fiancée but a lethally lecherous demoness that resembles a cross between a gremlin and an elderly negress with grotesquely saggy tits. Luckily, Charlie manages to send her straight to the pits of hell, but he does not have his girlfriend and upon leaving the cave, he realizes everything was an illusion as Hellcop's police car and various other objects randomly disappear into thin air, thus making it quite obvious that he should have followed Clara's advice.

After spending too much idle time on nothing Charlie begins chasing Hell-

cop on the highway to Hell City that is full of speeding vintage Volkswagen car, thus indicating that Hitler must have transferred his auto industry to the underworld after blowing his brains out in his Berlin bunker in 1945. When Charlie eventually gets to the gates to Hell City, he realizes he has to cross water with the electric sign: "Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter," but he is a mortal and not a damned lost soul, so he has to get creative. After his dog Mr. Ben helps him avoid being eaten by a three-headed hellhound by peeing near the beast, Charlie encounters a creepy negro Muslim with his eyes sewed up named Charon (played by Kevin Peter Hall of Predator fame, who died of AIDS the same year that the film was released, in his final acting role) who reluctantly allows him to take the boat ride into Hell City since he believes that rules should be broken. Upon arriving at the Prince of Darkness' palace, Charlie finds Rachel in no time, but instead of being in a prison cell or something like that, his fiancée is living a life of luxury and is learning to become a professional violinist. When the Devil finally arrives, he acts fairly charming and after a small argument he agrees to allow Charlie and Rachel leave so long as they "don't look back." Before going back to earth, Charlie takes Rachel to Beezle's place to honor his promise to bring little Adam back to earth. Ultimately, Charlie soon discovers that Beezle and the Devil are the same guy and he makes a wager that if he can beat Hell Cop in a race, he can take Peter back to earth but if he loses Rachel has to stay in hell on her own free will. Of course, good wins and love conquers all in the end.

Somewhat shockingly, auteur Ate de Jong made one notable, albeit semi-cryptic, reference to his Dutch background towards the end of *Highway to Hell* in a scene where Early Netherlandish painter Hieronymus Bosch's masterpiece triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* can be seen hanging on the wall of Satan's lush palace. Personally, I think that it was a rather wise choice on Jong's part as the film is like a degenerate version of the painting in hopelessly 1990s celluloid form. Also, like the painting, the film features an otherworldly realm that transcends the typically fine line between heaven and hell, as well as paradise and purgatory and the gorgeous and grotesque. After all, I think a good percentage of people would not mind hanging around the surrealist realm contained within film for a little bit of time, as it certainly beats the real-life multicultural hell that exists in the United States and Europe nowadays, plus nobody would turn down the opportunity to see Warhol doing slave labor. Ultimately, *Highway to Hell* is a very strange and surprisingly ambitious and, in turn, convoluted work that was bound to fail commercially in that it features a curious intersection between the most moronic of Hollywood neo-Vaudevillian stupidity, a vague subtextual European arthouse perspective, random slasher conventions (as personified by the iconic killer 'Hellcop'), as well as references or allusions to countless films, including Jean Cocteau's *Orphic Trilogy* (*The Blood of a Poet*, *Orpheus*, *Testament of Orpheus*), *Mad Max* (1979), *Back to the Future* (1985), *The Lost Boys*

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(1987), and *Beetlejuice* (1988), among various other works, thereupon making for one truly peculiar and undeniably entertaining piece of postmodern celluloid purgatory.

Quite shockingly, de Jong's film was not the only American mutation of the Orpheus myth made during the 1990s, as Robert McGinley's little known dystopian cult flick *Shredder Orpheus* (1990) features the eponymous tragic hero as a skaterboarder-cum-rocker who must save his beloved Eurydice in a Hades that is in the fitting form of a television network that is run by Svengali-like individuals that bear a striking resemblance to cocksucking kraut new wave countertenor Klaus Nomi. Of course, there is also other notable cinematic reworking of the classic Greek myth, including the negrified Brazilian *Palme d'Or* and Academy Award winning work *Black Orpheus* (1959) aka *Orfeu Negro* directed by French auteur Marcel Camus, which was later remade by Carlos Diegues as *Orfeu* (1999), as well as the East German 70mm DEFA production *Orpheus in der Unterwelt* (1975) aka *Orpheus in the Underworld* directed by Horst Bonnet and based on a scandalous play by Prussian-born French Jewish composer Jacques Offenbach. Contemporary Greek auteur Nikos Nikolaidis, who is probably best known for his salaciously brutal work *Singapore Sling: The Man Who Loved a Corpse* (1990), also revamped the myth for his debut feature *Evridiki BA 2037* (1975) aka *Euridice BA 2037* and French auteur Jacques Demy even paid tribute to Jean Cocteau's 1950 version *Orpheus* with his rock musical *Parking* (1985). In terms of queer Orphic works, the Belgian-Dutch-French co-production *Mascara* (1987)—a work where hell is depicted as an underground S&M opera house where trans performance for degenerate politicians and other bigwigs—is probably the most flagrant and flamboyant in its flavorsome faggotry. Out of all these various versions of the Orpheus myth, *Highway to Hell* is indubitably the most modernized, arguably the most idiosyncratic, and certainly the most Hollywoodized as a work that provides an absurdist nonsensical happy ending to an ancient Greek tragedy. Although unbelievable to think about nowadays, there was actually talk of a *Highway to Hell* sequel, but of course that never happened because the film was a huge flop. Indubitably, director de Jong had delusional hopes for the film, as he was anticipating the flick would make him famous as reflected by a remark he made in *Fangoria* just before the film was released where he explained, "I'm a nobody right now...When this film comes out, maybe I won't be." Clearly, de Jong had no clue how innately whacked out his film really was, as *Highway to Hell* not only resulted in his swift exit from Hollywood and his return to the Netherlands, but also his banishment to the netherworld of television where he would stay until somewhat recently until he began making much maligned Hollywood-esque Dutch efforts like *Het Bombardement* (2012). Indeed, de Jong might now be an insufferable hack who went from arthouse to the aesthetically autistic and asinine, but he at least managed to direct two American cult classics, *Drop Dead Fred* and *Highway to*

Hell, which temporary offered American youth relief from the aesthetic sterility of Hebraic (un)hollywood. Indeed, if there is a sort of Fellini Satyricon (1969) of horror-comedies in terms of a celluloid odyssey that combines the epic with the eccentric, it is most certainly Highway to Hell.

-Ty E

EXOTICA
EXOTICA

Atom Egoyan (1994)

Canadian director Atom Egoyan's film *Exotica* has a pretty misleading title. Although a good amount of the film takes place in a strip joint, the film won't satisfy the desires of someone looking to get off. For the most part, *Exotica* is a very depressing film that has not a single redeeming character. Mia Kirshner is the least flawed as a formal honor student turned lonely stripper. Elias Koteas (who played Casey Jones in the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movies) plays a asshole strip club DJ (former lover of Kirshner's character). Add a gay criminal pet shop owner and a mentally disturbed middle aged widower (his daughter was also murdered among other things) and you get a film that would destroy any sexual ambitions you may have.

Exotica reminded me of a darker and more stylized film Robert Altman (has anyone realized he died?) may have directed. The editing also owes some credit to Nicholas Roeg (*Man Who Fell To Earth*, *Bad Timing*). But influences are unimportant as *Exotica* stands on its own as an original and quality film. Director Atom Egoyan, no doubt, has talent and I need to look further into his film lexicon. I guess David Cronenberg and Guy Maddin aren't the only good directors to come out of Canada.

My only complaint with *Exotica* is its pretentiousness. Even the greatest works of cinema history let you know life isn't 100% serious hellhole (i.e. *Grand Illusion*, *8 ½*, *Eraserhead*). At no point in *Exotica* does anything become less than serious. Of course, its good to see very serious directors nowadays. We don't need another Todd Phillips.

Mia Kirshner has a thing for older and pregnant women. She even gets turned on when touching the women's stomach. I really hope that Egoyan doesn't have a pregnant woman fetish. It was a conscious decision on his part to put this womb obsessed scene in the film. Although Kirshner's dialog is small, her role and performance are crucial. She's one I also plan to look out for in the future. She was quite the bitch in *Party Monster*.

Exotica is a dark film for those that enjoy well written, directed, and constructed cinema. It has something new to offer with each further viewing. Just don't expect soft core pornography. You can find that on HBO.

-Ty E

CHLOE

Atom Egoyan (2010)

I have been eagerly waiting for sometime to see Atom Egoyan direct another film that even compares to the psycho-sexual electricity of his brilliant work *Exotica*. That being said, I never thought his next best film would be a highly unconventional lipstick lesbian affair between a voluptuous eighteen year old Aryan girl and a middle-aged red-headed housewife. The sexual romance occurs unconsciously (or at least for the older gal) when a wife disillusion-ally suspects her husband of banging his young college students. I guess the wife has reason to suspect when her husband seems more interested in instant-messaging his female students online than engaging in coitus with a woman he used to passionately pound three times a day. To make the film extra-sexually-subversive, Atom Egoyan made sure to have the wife's son have some high quality hard-on time with the woman of his Mother's subconscious dreams. Like *Exotica* before it, *Chloe* is a brilliantly crafted and lavishly paced film that engages the viewer in intercourse during the film's beginning and explodes with a pleasantly fulfilling climax at the end. With most of the beautiful lipstick lesbians I have met in my life, I have noticed a couple things. For one, the lipstick lesbian is not a sexually inverted bulldyke with too much testosterone who wishes to be male, but usually wallows in the wonderful world of female beauty. Secondly, the lipstick-lebso seems to have not been born with a love of female-on-female cunnilingus but instead developed her fetishistic vice through the lack of development of a mother-daughter relationship as a child just as *Chloe* hints at throughout *Chloe*. The married Mother Catherine becomes the perfect motherly replacement for *Chloe*, a woman that in age could be her own mother. When *Chloe* attempts to give Catherine her own Mother's hairpin, she is symbolically asking the older woman to replace her own Mother, even if it is in the form of a behind the curtains night of engaging in each others meat curtains. Wife and Mother Catherine's Lesbian inclinations seem to be the result of her loss of sexual passion for husband and her overall lack of sexual potency as a Mother. She gets aroused at the idea of the young *Chloe* passionately fondling her husband, for it makes her feel like she did when she was young. Also, being a gynecologist and a sage of the Vagina, *Chloe* must have been tempted to go down South more than once during her life. Unfortunately for *Chloe* it seems that Catherine just wanted a taste of the blond beastess. Catherine's eighteen year old son offered *Chloe* some masturbatory fun but the boy toy could never replace a Mother figure. I think Atom Egoyan should be noted as the director of the truly best family affair for *Chloe*'s passionate nuclear family scare is certainly cinematically quite rare. *Chloe* is a brave film and Atom Egoyan is no doubt a brave auteur. Apparently, *Chloe* was a film that either the critics loved or hated. I certainly do not see feminists, bulldyke lesbians, or any other type of prudish wanna-be-men/men-haters enjoying the

CHLOE

film. I have seen more than my fair share of Lesbian-themed films and Chloe is the only one to successfully combine eroticism, sexually-paced storytelling, and passionate-acting for a believable madis-tale that one will think about long after the experience is over. Isn't that what good sex is about?

-Ty E

ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Atsushi Shimizu (1995)

Angel Of Darkness is a live-action adaption of some weird 5 chapter tentacle porn released on DVD in Japan. Those crazy Japs. There is no limit to the amount of absurdity they will cram into a film regardless of how horribly it defines the movie. This is among of the the first of it's kind, along with the uber-cooler Urotsukidoji. So the storyline follows a tormented professor on the campus of a women's schools. This film does nothing but elaborates on how every female is a prostitute and tries really hard to satisfy many fetishes in this hour long affair. After witnessing some of his students getting paid for sex and loving it, gloating about what they will buy next, he suffers some sort of chest pain and blacks out. The same girl gets raped by tentacles and dies in pure ecstasy. More of this happens to females depicted crudely. This one could be seen as misogynistic near the end, when poor possessed Mr. Tomo goes on about how women wait to be pleased. More or less calling them scum of life. The film is a softcore porn with mundane situations, sapping stupidity, horrible effects, overacting involving moaning, and a shitty love story behind it all that it never delved into, so when the end comes around, this whole backstory comes at you sideways. Expect a satirical view at the youth of our generation, passing out sex toys in class, trying to seduce their teachers and such. This film has nothing to do with angels, or darkness for that matter. Other than the fact that i want to curl into the fetal position after watching this lame excuse of a film and even a porno, i am terrified to think there are 5 more of these films. Maybe they improve upon the mistakes. I wouldn't count on it. Having a low budget film is no excuse for an all-around fail.

-Maq

NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T
NOW YOU SEE ME, NOW YOU DON'T

Attila Szász (2005)

“Now You See Me, Now You Don’t” is a film we have seen many times before in those shit mainstream films. This one is different though for the simple fact that it works. “Now You See Me, Now You Don’t” is a masterfully spun hypnotic short showing the deterioration within a family. We see a troubled mother bathed in a harmonious light, smoking and cooking. We see her ignored calls from her husband and her mischievous son playing near the stove. Everything is in place in this Hungarian suburb. The roses need gardening and the stove needs to be attended. This certainly is not an illusion. The husband arrives silently and looks scornful at his own family. This emotion is very similar to the one you felt in Douglas Buck’s Cutting Moments. Every scene is bathed in natural lighting and wonderful, lush vegetation is everywhere to be seen. The cinematography is simply amazing, delivering perpetual angles only heightens the emotion. Director Attila Szasz does an incredible job forming the characters and the dialogue in its 27-minute runtime. After the experiment takes place, you feel alone as the child does. Such a deed can surely be forgotten, but it remains fresh in their minds. I, personally, look forward to any of Szasz’s future projects and hope he sticks to his predestined course. This film shows behind every family can be a dark secret and behind every secret can be forgiveness.

-Maq

EYES OF FIRE

Avery Crouse (1983)

While still in my preteen years, I experienced a life-changing experience when I received a fairly large cardboard box full of horror VHS tapes. Including in the box were such films as Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown* (1989), *From a Whisper to a Scream* aka *The Offspring* (1987), *Burial Ground: The Nights of Terror* (1981), *The Evil Dead Series*, and various other films that I have long forgotten. Naturally, many of these films left a deep impression on my relatively pure soul at the time; the forgotten mystical American pioneer horror flick *Eyes of Fire* (1983) – directed by unknown auteur Avery Crouse – being one of the most memorable and ultimately rewarding. If you ever wondered what a Gothic horror film would be like had it been set in the woods of 1750s American instead of an abandoned Victorian mansion, *Eyes of Fire* may very possibly be the only film to offer such a delightful yet equally deranged experience. Although it must have been a horrifying experience for European Christians to blindly immigrate to the untamed Americas and fall prey to mostly hostile and heretical mongoloid savages, few films have dared to dive deep into the metaphysical horror associated with such true-to-life (but never mentioned) experience. Not only does *Eyes of Fire* feature beastly brown men but it also includes nefarious nude spirits lurking amongst ancient trees and engaged in an unnamed wild hunt. While watching the film as a youngster, I couldn't figure out whether I loved *Eyes of Fire* or loathed it, but I certainly found myself magnetized to it as I couldn't help but insert my Vestron VHS copy of the flick into my VCR in a somewhat religious manner. Although I could not articulate it during my middle school days, I now know that I was awed to the state of virtual hypnosis by the genuinely ominous atmosphere and mystical nature of *Eyes of Fire*. Hell, I found *Eyes of Fire* to be so creepy that I derived nil sexual interest from the full-frontal nudity quite a rare find for me during those virginal days without cable television) featured in the film. Like the lucid weird horror tales of H.P. Lovecraft, eroticism is totally trampled and nonexistent (despite the rampant nudity and occasional sex scenes featured within) in the wild wooded world contained within *Eyes of Fire*. Cheap sex is usually a given in the realm of modern horror cinema, so it is no small feat when a film from the genre has the ability to enamor the viewer without relying on the novelty of botched silicone jobs and tortuously dull torture porn.

Until a couple months ago, I hadn't watched *Eyes of Fire* for well over a decade and I really had no interest in re-watching the film as many of the works that I enjoyed in my childhood bring little more than nostalgia for me nowadays. Like old girlfriends, I generally find it hopelessly redundant to revisit films that flabbergasted me in the past for such emotions can never be captured once the naive wonder of youth has faded with time. Admittedly, *Eyes of Fire* proved to

EYES OF FIRE

be an exception to my mostly full-proof rule. Like Wes Craven's Buñuel-esque surrealist horror masterpiece *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), *Eyes of Fire* still manages to hold most of the same cinematic prowess over me as it did when I was a relatively naïve youngster. In fact, I find *Eyes of Fire* to be a much grander voyeuristic pleasure nowadays than when I first saw the film as a child as it seems much more coherent. After all, it has been nearly a decade since my pre-Fellini-addict days. Like a Fellini flick, Avery Crounse's supernatural American pioneer flick is full of magic but unlike the eccentric character-driven films of everyone's favorite 1/2 Roman circus magician auteur, *Eyes of Fire* is of a quasi-pagan nature where the undeniable majesty of the wilderness has infinite power over the various pseudo-Christ's and crosses carved out of timber featured throughout the film. In *Eyes of Fire*, entire families are lost in the abyss of seemingly shallow streams and children are turned into aesthetically pleasing tree bark. Throughout the film, European Christian settlers also fall prey to the ferocity of bastardized Christian prayers, sober Shawnee Injuns, and the arcane chasm of the wilderness itself. If the film has any message, it is that, depending on the worshiper, any religion has the ability to bring prosperity or pestilence and everything in between. In *Eyes of Fire*, a charlatan Christian reverend (stereotypically named Will Smythe) thinks that it is a blessing that he randomly finds a demonic Indian child that he can baptize, but, instead, he only sparks hell-on-earth for his followers and the wilderness that surrounds them. Maybe if real-life spiritually-intoxicated Christian missionaries took the time to watch *Eyes of Fire*, they would think twice about baptizing exceedingly dirty third world savages with their precious holy water. As one soon learns early on in *Eyes of Fire*, only a somewhat insane feisty fire-crotch named Leah with a knack for white magic has the ability to save these cursed Christians and break the black magic spell, thus, one could argue that the film is of a somewhat pro-pagan nature.

Eyes of Fire may not be a neglected masterpiece of cinema history but it is surely one of the best kept secrets of the most redundant American horror genre. Like most great horror films, *Eyes of Fire* is big on atmosphere and features a disparate netherworld worthy of being compared to the most distinctive of real nightmares. Also, unlike most films (and that includes Hollywood) in general, *Eyes of Fire* is pure Americana, but, thankfully, not in the romantic sense. In fact, *Eyes of Fire* features the kind of atmosphere you would expect from Mr. David "weird Americana" Lynch, minus absurd humor (although, I do suspect that many viewers will find a scene featuring nude entities taking sips from the mammilla of a cow to be somewhat unintentionally humorous) and peculiar sex fetishes (unless you happen to be an individual who finds the great outdoors to be sexually alluring). *Eyes of Fire* is one of those rare horror films that will be in most cases enjoyable to even those individuals who tend to find all-things-horror nothing short of repellant. Of course, due to its age and the relatively low-budget

that it was shot on, *Eyes of Fire* sometimes has a certain cheesy charm that will satisfy those many individuals that are addicted 1980s horror films. If Mother Nature ever contracted a vicious venereal disease it would most likely resemble the ferocious forests featured in *Eyes of Fire*. If any film has the ability to tap into spiritual chaos in Christian and Neo-Pagans alike, it is indubitably *Eyes of Fire*. As for the title "Eyes of Fire" itself, I sincerely doubt I am diving head-first into the pool of absurdity when I state that the film is a pyromaniac's wet dream. Indeed, the film features literal eyes of fire but it also features a fireworks show of some of the most aesthetically delectable pyrotechnics ever committed to the highly flammable medium of celluloid.

-Ty E

KISS NAPOLEON GOODBYE
KISS NAPOLEON GOODBYE

Babeth Mondini (1990)

I must admit that I am a fan of artsy fartsy films and even self-indulgent directors. One strongman is always more powerful than a team of cattle collaborators. Auteur filmmakers such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Pier Paolo Pasolini sought out to direct films with a specific vision to be achieved and not to create products that can be consumed by the unthinking masses. There is, however, a problem with many art films. This problem includes the many self-centered individuals that lack a strong and extremely personal vision. Kiss Napoleon Goodbye (1990) directed by Babeth Mondini is a perfect example of a weak "art" film that offers nothing new to the world of cinema. Kiss Napoleon Goodbye features annoying feminist Lydia Lunch and former Black Flag singer Henry Rollins. Lydia Lunch is nothing special to look at and hearing her doing a "spoken word" performance makes her an even bigger turn-off. Henry Rollins lacks his distinct "salt and pepper" hair as his performance in Kiss Napoleon Goodbye was before he started playing cops in Hollywood films. Another forgettable actor, Don Bajema, plays a bitchy man in the film. Kiss Napoleon Goodbye is a film that basically follows an unconventional couple dissolution when a man named Jackson (played by Rollins) shows up and starts banging the woman of the household. Kiss Napoleon Goodbye is around 30 minutes long and nothing particularly interesting happens in the film. Lydia Lunch baring her gigantic ass in tribute to her feminist pride as a female is probably the most poignant part of the film. I can see how a disgruntled feminist could appreciate Kiss Napoleon Goodbye because it shows how a woman, with her whorish goods, can destroy two men's lives without any real effort, aside from exposing her naked body. Director Babeth got his point across with his portrait of a female dominated bizarre love triangle. He also added a few contrived dream sequences such as a man drilling his own head with an electric drill. Nothing new to see here, folks. I can only recommend Kiss Napoleon Goodbye to fans of Lydia Lunch or Henry Rollins. The film was also filmed by legendary independent filmmaker Mike Kuchar. Of course, aside from its obviously low budget, Kuchar's contribution to the film is virtually hidden due to an overall banal short. Kiss Napoleon Goodbye looks like it was filmed over a weekend without any real preparation. What a waste for a setting considering the short was shot at a former castle of Louis Napoleon in the Netherlands. I can't imagine those involved with the film, especially Henry Rollins, were happy with the results.

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CHICHI RANGERS

Bakunyuu (???) Japan; the wondrous land of the weird. Since the age of time, the Japs have been doing it "bizzaro" style. Whether it being bestiality, squid sex, and plain weirdness. Their off culture has inspired crazy street fashions and presented kooky fetishes to a mainstream audience. With the cartoon intensity of a Peeland-Z concert, I introduce you to Chichi Rangers, a super Sentai porno with Power Ranger influences. Most fans of Dragonball Z will now that Chi Chi is Japanese for breasts. Staying faithful to the name, this trio of crime and sex fighters have removable Styrofoam bras in which are removed in the sex scenes. The film opens up with archived footage feature the stereotyped "goofy Asian" face superimposed over a face. If the Japanese can't take their art seriously, why should I? The film is supposedly a mini-series of sorts, perhaps a collection of three episodes. A Japanese male rapes another male while jumping up and down while making bizarre animal calls. A woman is kidnapped by monochromatic ninjas. She is taken to a warehouse and is then forced to suck off all the disgusting henchmen. A Chichi Ranger who serves as a prostitute follows her and in a confusing twist, ends up jerking off the rest while the crying girl takes pride and helps finish them off. The characters don't seem to make sense and the monsters are wacky and inventive. Even though it lacks subtitles and is in a different language, the majority of dialogue comes from the grandmaster villain. Chichi Rangers is rarely erotic and due to the censorship laws in Japan, it looks every time nudity is shown, that the women are actually fucking/sucking a Space Invader. Pixels might be the true key to the ultimate orgasm. Female masturbation may be considered a myth, but the hilarity of these is not.

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Barbet Schroeder (1976)

Although some might assume otherwise due to some of my writings, I consider myself a dark romantic of sorts and I am somewhat of a sucker for films about 'mad love,' especially of the tragic star-crossed lovers orientated sort. Of course, that also means that I absolutely despise popular Hollywood romantic-comedies like *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989) and *There's Something About Mary* (1998) where some physically weak (and oftentimes Jewish) beta-boy grovels and cons his way into the pretty pink panties of a dumb blonde shiksa that cannot seem to find a real red-blooded mensch that sufficiently sops her undies. Hell, I even consider the unrequited love story depicted in the Hollywood Golden Age classic *Gone with the Wind* (1939) to be far more preferable to enduring the unequivocally soul-draining cinematic torture test of watching some smart-ass semite like Woody Allen or Seth Rogen bullshit their way into defiling some dumb Aryan dame that cannot see past the phony 'nice guy' routine. Needless to say, there are only a handful of romance films that I truly appreciate and one of them I actually watched rather recently. Indeed, while I have mixed feelings about the film's director's oeuvre in general, *Maîtresse* (1975) directed by Swiss auteur Barbet Schroeder (*Barfly*, *Single White Female*) is certainly a rebellious dark romance that I can completely get behind, even though I was not exactly enticed by most of the film's sometimes explicit BDSM and bondage related sexual content (though there is a nice scene where a babe with a delectable derriere is bent over and beat on the bare ass and pussy lips with a leather belt). A strangely yet mirthfully bittersweet love story featuring an endearingly unconventional romance between an uneducated and somewhat boorish yet genuinely kindhearted prole thief and a super chic and sophisticated yet emotionally impenetrable professional dominatrix with an upper-class clientele that is mostly comprised of masochistic aristocrats and businessmen, the film depicts the complicated relationship problems that arise when an ice queen of a whore falls prey to love and has her entire S&M operation put into jeopardy because she actually experiences the warmth of love and thus becomes less impassioned when it comes to exercising her savagely sadistic trade.

Arguably more talented as a documentarian than a feature filmmaker as demonstrated by his previous documentary work *General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait* (1974), Schroeder was somewhat strangely suited to direct *Maîtresse*—the director's first truly successful feature after directing a couple relatively obscure counterculture flicks, including *More* (1969) and *La Vallée* (1972) aka *Obscured By Clouds*—in the sense that the film has a certain unmistakable authenticity as the filmmaker wisely decided to hire real masochists, who apparently happily paid for the (dis)pleasure, to engage in real S&M torture scenes that would be immortalized in celluloid form. Additionally, Schroeder befriended a real-life

dominatrix, who gave him important intimate details regarding both her carnal trade and personal sex life. While I have never been particularly a fan of S&M or having women beat the shit out of me during sex, the fiercely foul fetishistic acts depicted in the film surprisingly act as a nice contrast to the unconventionally tender moments of real romantic love between the two protagonists. Whether intentional or not, the film also features a somewhat subtle, yet nonetheless scathing, critique of the bourgeoisie and its dubious vices. In short, the film makes it seem as if every single upper-class gentleman is a nihilistically uptight sexually degenerate that is so hopelessly masochistic that they enjoy things like role-playing as their own servants and having nails driven into their cocks. On the other hand, not unlike the poof prole played by Rainer Werner Fassbinder in his film *Faustrecht der Freiheit* (1975) aka *Fox and His Friends*, the working-class crook portrayed by Gérard Depardieu in Schroeder's film is an extremely sexually virile and fairly sexually sane individual that is naturally completely baffled by S&M degeneracy.

Featuring costume design by fashion alpha-queen Karl Lagerfeld, cinematography by gay Spanish master cinematographer and AIDS victim Néstor Almendros (*The Wild Child*, *Days of Heaven*), and various masochistic men in bizarre drag, *Maîtresse* is certainly, at least on a superficial level, a quasi-queer flick with certain cultivated camp elements, which is somewhat paradoxical considering its potent heterosexual love story. As demonstrated by French fag flicks that were also made during the 1970s like Philippe Vallois' *Johan - Mon été 75* (1976) and Lionel Soukaz's *Race d'Ep: un siècle d'images de l'homosexualité* (1979) aka *The Homosexual Century*, S&M and bondage was also all the rage among chic cocksuckers during that time. Thankfully, Schroeder's film somewhat unintentionally makes extremely realistic S&M and bondage seem like a sad sick joke when compared to the majesty of organic heterosexual love. Featuring an emotionally glacial heroine that is petrified by love and commitment who soon discovers that her distinguished talent for beating the shit out of men wanes when she falls in love with a man that knows how to sexuality dominate her and make her feel like a real woman as opposed to simply a cruel and callous ice queen, *Maîtresse* could even be described as anti-S&M, though I seriously doubt this was Schroeder's intention. In fact, as Schroeder proudly explains in an interview featured on the Criterion Collection DVD release of the film, many real-life dominatrices complimented on the authenticity of his feature. Of course, Schroeder should be admired for attempting the impossible task of giving respect and dignity to the completely degenerate and undignified.

Undoubtedly, it is only natural that *Maîtresse*—arguably the first film to take a serious and realistic view of dominatrices and S&M subcultures and the sort of people and psychologies that are attracted to such self-debasement—was made in the same nation that produced the debauched aristocratic philosopher, the Marquis de Sade, who is indubitably a timeless source for all-things-

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proudly-impure as the wickedly wanton wordsmith that literally inspired the term 'sadism.' Undoubtedly, in a strange way, de Sade's famous quote, "In order to know virtue, we must first acquaint ourselves with vice," is a major theme of the film in the sense that debauchery and criminality strangely leads to the protagonists' quite virtuous true love romance. Indeed, it is only when the heroine—played by La Nouvelle Vague diva Bulle Ogier in a masterful performance that was arguably foreshadowed in Jacques Baratier's surrealist S&M gothic *Piège* (1968)—actually experiences true love that her talent for sadism declines and she finds herself unable to perform her role as a vamp-like dominatrix that thrives on the sexual suffering of rich and powerful men. While a somewhat unhinged bitch that seems to prefer giving pain over receiving pleasure, the heroine has no problem eventually making the distinction between love and sadomasochism when she actually encounters a man that is worthy enough to make her wet. Of course, the heroine's dominatrix persona is not much more than a protective shield for her deep-seated emotion immaturity and fear of emotional attachment and, in turn, feminine submission. Although other films had previously been made in France about sadomasochism, including Pierre-Alain Jolivet's rarely-seen Fernando Arrabal adaptation *Le Grand Ceremonial* (1968) aka *Weird Weirdo*, film critic Jean-Pierre Bouyxou's experimental underground short *Satan bouche un coin* (1968), and homo exploitation auteur Jacques Scandolari's debauched de Sade adaptation *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (1971) aka *Beyond Love and Evil*, these films are superlatively sensational works that merely use S&M to shock and titillate. Undoubtedly, one of the most shocking aspects of *Maîtresse* is its innate lack of sensationalism and almost detached objectivity in terms of depicting the strictly professional relationship between a dick-nailing and ass-whipping Madame and her mostly morbidly masochistic customers. Not surprisingly, despite Schroeder going out of his way to depict them in as an objective and 'respectful' manner as possible, the masochists still come off seeming like pathetic sexual cripples that would have surely been thrown in a bog by their ancient ancestors, but I digress.

Despite being a quite menacing dominatrix that really knows how to thoroughly brutalize her high paying johns, emotionally glacial (anti)heroine Ariane (Ogier) seems completely incapable of managing anything resembling a normal life and prefers to keep her loved ones at a safe distance. Indeed, as *Maîtresse* unravels, the viewer discovers that, although she has a swarthy live-in maid and beastly Doberman named 'Texas,' Ariane curiously does not live with her own young son and seems scantily involved with his life, at least in a real-life context, despite claiming in regard to the little lad that, "He's the [only] man in my life." In short, while Ariane has no problem beating the shit out of queens, queers, and anally retentive bluebloods, she is terribly afraid of emotional commitment and truly sharing her life with another human-being. As a boorish yet sweet, strong yet sensitive, and low-class yet naturally charismatic

prole crook, muscular male protagonist Olivier (Depardieu) is Ariane's complete opposite and both ultimately prove that opposites truly attract just like sadism and masochism. At the beginning of the film, Olivier and his swarthy conman comrade Mario (André Rouyer) visit various apartments under the false pretense of selling art books as a means to covertly raid various flats and steal valuable objects. As a very hospitable hood-with-a-heart-of-gold, Olivier almost immediately expresses dismay with Mario's criminal plan, but he is also not the sort of guy that likes to let down a friend and thus goes along with the rather stupid scheme. Upon knocking on one door, they are greeted by a semi-hysterical Ariane, who begs them to help her with her plumbing lest her apartment become completely flooded with water. Upon talking to Ariane, Olivier and Mario are delighted to discover that "the old woman downstairs is on vacation" and thus seize the opportunity to rob the supposedly empty apartment. Rather unfortunately (or rather fortunately for Olivier as things turn out), Ariane was lying, as the apartment is actually a sort of secret makeshift S&M dungeon, so naturally Olivier and Mario are somewhat bewildered when they discover bondage gear, torture devices, gimp masks, and even an imprisoned male slave in the lavishly decorated Art Deco (anti)pleasure-dome. Of course, things get even more bizarre when a secret door opens in the ceiling and Ariane, who is sporting a savagely dapper dominatrix outfit, proceeds to walk down a set of stairs that emerges from said door. Needless to say, the two crooks find themselves imprisoned when Ariane's loyal Doberman appears out of nowhere and begins growling at them, but Olivier soon discovers that he has finally become trapped in a prison that he won't mind living in. A woman that lives two very different lives in two very different yet symbolically secretly conjoined apartments that represent a sort of bourgeois heaven and hell, Ariane is a bewildering bitch that completely baffles poor philistine Olivier, yet he is a man that knows what he likes and he instantly takes a special liking to the eloquently eccentric dominatrix dame.

When Ariane first notices the two burglars and realizes that they are the two chaps that helped her fix the plumbing in her apartment, she remarks in a less impassioned fashion, "Oh. You again!" asks them, "Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?" handcuffs them to a furnace, and then declares, "I'll be with you in a moment." Indeed, Ariane is so deeply devoted to her sex work that she opts to torture one of her victims before dealing with the crooks. Somewhat unpredictably, Ariane interrupts her torture session temporarily to approach Olivier and nonchalantly say to him, "I need you. Two hundred francs for three minutes' work." Needless to say, Olivier immediately accepts the unexpected offer, though he is somewhat taken aback when Ariane digs in his pants, grabs his cock, and demands that he piss on her groveling leather-clad man-slave. Notably, in the middle of the urine-drenched torture session in what is undoubtedly one of the most inordinately romantic scenes in cinema history, Ariane and Olivier

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reveal their singular romantic chemistry by passionately making out with one another without even the slightest bit of hesitation, as if they are long-lost lovers that have been reunited after a decade of grueling separation. Indeed, although he is in the middle of pissing on a strange man's face, Olivier's mutual sexual attraction to Ariane is so strong that he cannot help but expressing his overwhelming carnal passion for her with a rather long kiss that more or less symbolically unites them as lovers. For Olivier and Ariane, it is virtually love-at-first-sight. After paying off Mario to leave him alone with money that he was going to use pay for a date, Olivier immediately takes Ariane out on a dinner date at a fancy restaurant where they incessantly shamelessly flirt while drinking tons of wine. During the date, the two reveal some of their more glaring flaws to one another, with Olivier confessing, "I don't really have a past" and Ariane somewhat disturbingly admitting, "You shouldn't ask me questions because either I lie or I don't answer them" and "I'm not the cautious type." As two individuals with uniquely unsavory pasts, it is no surprise that the two new eccentric lovebirds are easily able to overlook each others' flaws, at least at first. Indeed, Ariane does not even mind having to pay for the dinner date that Olivier asked her to go out on. In fact, she is completely flattered when she discovers that Olivier used the dinner date money to pay off Mario so that they could be alone with one another. Needless to say, the two fuck that night and Olivier even goes so far as to get Ariane all hot in bothered by violently grabbing her and threatening, "I could kill you now if I wanted. Just like that. One squeeze and you're dead." Unfortunately for their relationship, Olivier eventually begins to adopt a more passive and masochistic role as the romance develops while Ariane begins to lose her dominatrix talents, thus eventually leading to serious conflict.

During the *l'heure bleue* after their first dinner date together in a scene that almost has a dream-like feel to it, Olivier reveals his ordinate sensitivity and sense of compassion and empathy by confiding to Ariane that he used to work in a slaughterhouse but found the job "awful," so he quit or as he remarks, "After a few days, I started to get used to it, so I quit." Indeed, quite unlike Ariane who basks in brutality, Olivier cannot stand harming living things and will do anything to avoid it. As deathly cold dominatrix that thrives off of hurting and humiliating others, Ariane clearly has no use for compassion and is clearly afraid of having positive feelings of any sort, especially when it comes to other human beings. A hyper hermetic whore with an ominously flat effect that hides behind a sadistic persona and hardly ever expresses any emotions unless they are negative, Ariane also seems terribly afraid of people getting to know her true self and even carefully guards virtually every faucet of her personal life from Olivier despite the fact he lives with her. While it is obvious that Olivier absolutely loves and adores Ariane, she treats him like a sort of glorified fuck-toy and seems ashamed of his working-class wardrobe, hence why she goes out of her way to buy him a fancy suit that he has nil interest in wearing. In fact, Ariane is such a control

freak that she physically attempts to stop Olivier when he drives her car during a trip to the country. Indeed, Ariane has such little trust for men, including the one that she loves, that she cannot even bear to let Olivier take the wheel of her automobile. While she never clearly vocalizes it, Ariane's behavior and actions demonstrate that she is a misandrist as a woman that lives to emasculate men and refuses to submit to any man. Notably, Ariane's strange combination of cold sophistication and anti-male sadism is subtly symbolically depicted by a famous photo of White Russian intellectual whore Lou Andreas-Salomé whipping Teutonic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his suicidal Jewish friend Paul Réé that the heroine has tapped to the headboard of her bed. While Olivier initially tolerates Ariane's odious occupation and even takes part in some of the beatings (including whipping the big bare ass and teasing the clit of some random chick with his belt), he has a very hard time understanding the appeal of such debauchery and eventually becomes jealous, not least of all because the heroine seems more interest in working than fucking.

As time passes, Olivier comes to discover that Ariane has some dubious business arrangement with a somewhat Godot-esque mystery man simply known as 'Gautier' (Holger Löwenadler of Ingmar Bergman's *A Ship to India* (1947) and Louie Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974)). Naturally, Olivier assumes Gautier is Ariane's pimp, especially after he discovers that she has been giving the old man large amounts of cash. Needless to say, Olivier is not happy when Ariane asks him to open a banking account in his name to store some of the whoring money, but he does it anyway because he loves his beloved and hates to cause senseless drama. Not surprisingly, Olivier becomes especially concerned when Ariane calls Gautier after making a half-hearted attempt at suicide via defenestration. Unbeknownst to Olivier, Ariane's erratic self-destructive behavior is a result of the fact that she is losing her talent for sadism due to her love for him. As someone that gets off to feeding her pet Venus flytraps meat and saying cutesy things to the pet plants like, "My darlings are hungry," Ariane is not exactly the sort of women that knows how completely process and live with true love. Indeed, instead of simply buying her flowers and chocolates, Olivier must demonstrate his love to Ariane by engaging in sort of hardcore roleplaying scenarios, including (pseudo)raping her from behind at knife point in a dark alley. As demonstrated by her remark, "It's fascinating to get into people's madness," Ariane lives for the lurid and lecherous, especially when she 'directs' such scenarios while working as a dominatrix. When Olivier gets made at her for attempting to go back to one of her johns only minutes after suffering a mental breakdown and complains to her, "Enough playing the whore and then breaking down!", Ariane has no problem bragging that she is a prostitute and even replying with a certain self-assured arrogance, "I'm not playing the whore. I am a whore, and I like it. I chose this life." After the two get in a short slapping match, Ariane confesses that her johns really mean nothing to her, stating in a somewhat somber fash-

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ion, "It's not them. It's you. I love you, and it scares me." Probably partly due to the fact that she thinks Olivier is a stupid male bimbo and witless philistine, Ariane thinks she can continue her trade and dubious relationship with Gautier while in a relationship with the protagonist, but it is only a matter of time before everything falls apart, including her carefully cultivated persona.

When Ariane brags one day regarding Gautier that, "He's a great horse who wins every race. Thanks to him, we're gonna go on vacation," Olivier finally comes to the point where he can no longer tolerate his lover's secrecy and dubious relationship with a strange fellow that he assumes a pimp. Indeed, after doing some serious snooping and eventually discovering Gautier's address, Olivier pays the mysterious "great horse" an unexpected visit to give him an ultimatum in regard to his relationship with Ariane. Convinced that Gautier is an abusive and exploitative manipulator that has caused Ariane to live a slave-like existence of perpetual fear and debasement, Olivier busts into the old man's business office unannounced, reveals who he is, and firmly states, "This has to stop. I love Ariane. I don't want her to be scared anymore." After Gautier more or less mocks the idea that Ariane is afraid of him, Olivier tells him that he will be the heroine's new and improved pimp, stating, "I have a suggestion. From now on, I take care of her. Same way you do. But I'll take a smaller cut. And I'll really protect her." At this point, Gautier seems somewhat offended and retorts, "Are you sure we both take care of women in the same manner?" but Olivier stands firm and replies, "That's beside the point." Despite clearly annoying Gautier, Olivier demands 10,000 francs from the old man that he believes was stolen from Ariane. Although he protests by rhetorically asking "Do you realize who I am?" and then snidely remarking, "I find you a bit rash," Gautier still gives Olivier the money. Seeming to have subconsciously realized that he has made a serious mistake that will most likely jeopardize his relationship, Olivier immediately gets violently drunk and roams around public until the morning as if he is afraid of going back to Ariane. In a symbolic scene where he reveals his identification with slaughtered horses and, in turn, sense of victimhood, Olivier pays an early morning visit to an abattoir and then subsequently buys three horse steaks that he eats in an almost ritualistic fashion as if he is attempting to consume the brutalization and victimization of the dead animals. Indeed, despite his prole style alpha-male talents when it comes to kicking ass and taking names, Olivier now feels like a slave and acts accordingly in a strangely masochistic fashion as a virtual 'kept man' that is dependent on a dame that seems to value her degenerate job more than him. Clearly empathizing with the brutally slaughtered horses, Olivier seems to feel like a helpless victim and a hapless cog in a metaphysical machine of assembly-line murder. In what ultimately becomes a pathetic self-fulfilling prophecy, Olivier almost seems to have paid Gautier a rather rude visit in a subconscious attempt to completely sabotage his relationship, or so the viewer inevitably assumes.

When Ariane gets an early morning call from Gautier that concludes with her begging for mercy to the old fart on the other line, it becomes obvious that Olivier made a serious mistake when he paid a visit to the old aristocratic pimp. Indeed, after getting off the phone, Ariane gives Olivier a literal rude awakening by throwing clothes at him while he is asleep and bitchily yelling, "You're leaving. I don't want to see you anymore. Pack your things, get dressed, and get out. Understand?" Of course, Ariane does not stop there, as she begins shaking Olivier and screaming in his face like a bipolar bitch on the rag, "You idiot! How could you have done that, imbecile? You had to find out for yourself! Wasn't our relationship more important? More important than satisfying your curiosity? What, are you a cop?" Naturally, like any normal angry woman, Ariane cravenly attempts to wound Olivier's pride by bragging about how great Gautier is and stating, "He loves me enough to let me live the way I want." Not content with merely emotionally abusing her lover, Ariane also insanely headbutts Olivier, though she is ultimately the one that is left most injured with a badly bloodied face. Always the consummate gentleman, Olivier absurdly shows concern for Ariane as a result of the injury she sustains after she headbutts him. Of course, physical injuries are of little concern to both characters as they are both badly internally wounded. When Olivier finally manages to flee the apartment after being bombarded with a quite venomous verbal assault that might have completely spiritually castrated a weaker man, Ariane also begins to cry, thus leaving her with a somewhat aesthetically displeasing combination of blood, sweat, and tears on her face. As the viewer assumes, Ariane's nasty behavior was at least partially an act that was meant to scare Olivier away as it is apparent that Gautier demanded that the male protagonist be kicked out of the apartment. Despite being treated as an emotional punching bag, Olivier is not the kind of guy that is going to accept defeat when loved is involved, so he immediately goes to his local bank, completely empties his bank account, and then puts the cash inside an envelope that reads, "I love you." Unfortunately, when Olivier gets back to Ariane's apartment, he discovers that his beloved is gone and that a couple of hired goons are moving her personal belongings out of the place. As he quite nicely explains to them himself, Olivier does not want to beat the shit out of the goons, but they refuse to tell him where Ariane located is so he beats the shit out of both of them, including an erratic knife-wielding pansy.

After learning that Ariane is located at a remote wooded chateau in the middle of the country, Olivier puts on a fancy suit that his beloved once bought for him but he did not like and takes a long journey deep into the frog hinterland with his moped. Upon arriving at the chateau, Olivier discovers Ariane, Gautier, and their assumed mutual son standing in the yard, thus he quickly decides to drop the "I love you" envelope full of money into the mailbox and leave immediately. Considering that Ariane is absurdly dressed like a proper bourgeois housewife and now seems to even have a traditional nuclear family, Olivier nat-

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urally assumes their relationship is over, but thankfully he underestimates the unpredictability of his ladylove. Luckily, Ariane sees Olivier and decides to follow him in her fancy convertible. Without even thinking twice, Olivier pulls over upon seeing Ariane and then gets inside her car so they can commence an extra special session of car coitus. Indeed, in a rather symbolic scene that reveals that they have finally found a healthy medium in regard to their relationship, the two simultaneously drive while fucking, with Ariane sitting on Olivier's cock and controlling the steering wheel while her lover manages the gas pedal. Not surprisingly, not only are the two dangerous lovers in complete ecstasy, but they also manage to get in a car wreck while they are on the brink of orgasm in a scenario that predates David Cronenberg's classic symphorophiliac J.G Ballard adaptation *Crash* (1996). Thankfully, the two leave the accident fairly unscathed and even laugh upon exiting the wreckage in a final scene that really underscores the majesty of their mad love. Indeed, while Ariane may be a literal whore, it seems that she has finally chosen poor prole Olivier over aristocratic sugar daddy Gautier.

A relatively unclassifiable arthouse flick that features what undoubtedly has to be one of the most strangely endearingly idiosyncratic yet surprisingly believable love affairs in cinema history, *Maîtresse* is, in many ways, the film that Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) attempted to be in terms of depicting both the pleasures and perils of a sadomasochistic romance between two opposites in frogland. Undoubtedly the most brilliant thing about the film is that, unlike Bertolucci's somewhat overrated flick, the love story completely eclipses the scenes of 'authentic' S&M torture in terms of sheer potency and memorability, thus underscoring auteur Barbet Schroeder's somewhat overlooked knack for nuance as a filmmaker (somewhat not surprisingly, the auteur would eventually marry his longtime leading lady Bulle Ogier). Of course, one also cannot forget to mention that the film features one of the most striking, singular, and unforgettable heroines of cinema history as a woman that manages to be neither a completely morally pristine female protagonist or evil scheming femme fatale, but instead a sort of all-too-hopelessly-human emotional cripple that is as cold as ice yet also somehow manages to bleed a sort a perpetual internal woundedness that is barely disguised by her carefully constructed glacial persona. Despite his flagrant boorish and inability to understand the sort of mind that enjoys S&M torture sessions, the film's male protagonist is still able to see his lover for who she really is without being repelled by her, hence the singular charm of their romance. By eventually being able to accept one another in the end despite their mutual glaring personal flaws, the playfully perverse protagonists reveal what true love is all about. Instead of depicting an idiotically idealistic storybook version of love, *Maîtresse* reveals in a fairly unconventional fashion that love requires mutual sacrifice and commitment and that love can indeed conquer all if the right variables (and pheromones) come into play. In a weak and pathetic age where

couples are so quick to break up or divorce when even the mildest discomfort comes into play, Schroeder's S&M flick is a strangely moral film that is certainly more important now than when it was first released over four decades ago.

I must confess that *Maîtresse* probably left a deeper and more personal yet bittersweet impression of me than the average viewer, namely because I felt like I already knew the heroine, or at least some dominant aspect of her, all too well. Indeed, I could certainly identify with protagonist Olivier when it came to his pain and anxiety in regard to the emotionally impenetrable, highly secretive, and hopelessly introverted nature of his beloved to the point where I was sincerely quite shocked by the film's unconventional 'happy ending.' While it would be easy to simply write-off Ariane as a cold soulless bitch that probably diddles herself with sandpaper just so that she can feel some sort of emotion, I ultimately felt pity and the unwavering desire to protect and comfort her just like Olivier. After all, women like Ariane are not born but created via childhood emotional abuse in the form of poor male role models and/or worthless self-absorbed mothers. Indeed, as a dominatrix that refuses to live with her own adolescent son, Ariane is certainly a misandrist of sorts that fears being under the thumb of a man so it is only nature that she becomes instantly attracted to a genuinely sweet and kindhearted crook like Olivier. Undoubtedly, beneath Ariane's icy cold exterior is a lost and scared little girl that completely lacks something emotionally that most other people take for granted. As for Olivier, he was forced against his will to become a street fighter and thief due to his lowly background despite his distaste for violence and brutality, among other things. Of course, it ultimately takes someone with the right amount of toughness and sensitivity like Olivier to be able to handle Ariane's 'eccentric' emotional handicaps.

Unquestionably, in terms of her psyche, intellect, sexual impulses, and overall character, Ariane is a virtual textbook example of the 'prostitute type' that tragic Austrian-Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger was describing in his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character* in regard to the two main archetypal extremes of the so-called fairer sex. In stark contrast to the nurturing qualities of the 'mother type' that Weininger spoke of, Ariane is a cold and cryptic criminally-inclined cunt that is so innately unsuited for motherhood that she cannot even stomach living with her own biological son despite her active interest in his school report cards. Of course, as Weininger wrote, "Great men have always preferred women of the prostitute type," whereas the mother type is typically dumb, childlike, less sexually adventurous, and more or less only suitable for breeding and raising children, an archetypal whore like Ariane is the kind of clever and charming cunt that you can lie naked in bed with and discuss great cinema and philosophers for hours after a great session of coital bonding. In short, despite featuring a great preternatural romance, *Maîtresse* must be praised for depicting the ultimate Weiningerian woman. It seems that auteur Barbet Schroeder's intrinsic talent for psychological insight, especially in an

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artistic context, is genetic as he is the maternal grandson of German psychiatrist and art historian Hans Prinzhorn, who became famous for analyzing the degenerate art of mental patients (in fact, some of Prinzhorn's work was posthumously displayed at the infamous 1937 Nazi 'Entartete Kunst' propaganda exhibition).

Notably, sagely frog degenerate Georges Bataille once wisely argued, "Not every woman is a potential prostitute, but prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude. In so far as she is attractive, a woman is a prey to men's desire. Unless she refuses completely because she is determined to remain chaste, the question is at what price and under what circumstances will she yield. But if the conditions are fulfilled she always offers herself as an object. Prostitution proper only brings in a commercial element. By the care she lavishes on her toilet, by the concern she has for her beauty set off by her adornment, a woman regards herself as an object always trying to attract men's attention. Similarly if she strips naked she reveals the object of a man's desire, an individual and particular object to be prized." Rather revealing, *Maîtresse* heroine Ariane—a literal prostitute that, somewhat paradoxically, does not exhibit the archetypal feminine pussy-peddler traits—need not advertise the carnal goods to immediately make Olivier her prey, thus revealing true sadistic love on her part when it comes to the male protagonist, as if she is devoid of normal instinctual feminine wiles and instead simply must take what she wants by literal force. As for her johns, Ariane dolls herself in less than revealing dominatrix garb and refuses to give her customers anything aside from pure and unadulterated pain and brutality of both the emotional and physical sort. Although she may be a self-professed liar that lives behind a phony persona, Ariane is ultimately more honest than most women when it comes to her hot and heavy romance with Monsieur Olivier. For those cinephiles that ever wanted to see a cold and sadistic bitch like the eponymous anti-heroine of Tony Richardson's somewhat loose Jean Genet adaptation *Mademoiselle* (1966) succumb to love, Schroeder's film is certainly your best bet. Although I don't want to knock Lynch's classic film, but the romance in *Maîtresse* makes the sadomasochistic love affair between Jeffrey Beaumont and Dorothy Vallens in *Blue Velvet* (1986) seem like an absurdist male-fantasy by comparison. Additionally, compared to Schroeder's film, which wallows in a sort of radical yet understated realism, Luis Buñuel's masterful S&M flick *Belle de Jour* (1967) almost seems like an emotionally fraudulent feminist fantasy. Of course, what both Schroeder and Buñuel's films reveal is that virtually all women are plagued by indecision and are constantly torn between wanting a man that instantly can sop their panties and a sexually banal beta-provider-male that can inflate their bank accounts. Either way, innate hypergamic instincts dictates that most women will always find something to complain about and the only place you will find real happy endings to romances is in movies, even in strange sadomasochistic arthouse ones like *Maîtresse*.

-Ty E

PRIVATE ROAD

Barney Platts-Mills (1971)

After reading comparisons to gutter auteur Andy Milligan's once-lost English arthouse anti-romance *Nightbirds* (1970) and Joseph Despins and William Dumas's equally brutal, ruthlessly raw, and culturally pessimistic lost masterpiece *Duffer* (1971), I decided to watch *Private Road* (1971) directed by British auteur Barney Platts-Mills (*Bronco Bullfrog*, *Hero*), which, like the other two films, was saved from celluloid oblivion somewhat recently after it was rightfully restored and reissued on DVD/Blu-ray by the British Film Institute under their BFI Flipside label. Starring British cult writer/director Bruce Robinson (*How to Get Ahead in Advertising*, *The Rum Diary*) in an early pre-fame role as the lead character, Platts-Mills' film is, at least in some ways, a far cry from the darkly comedic anti-bourgeois buffoonery of *Withnail & I* (1987), but then again there are many similarities between the character he played in *Private Road* and his somewhat autobiographical eponymous "I" character played by Paul McGann in his hit directorial debut. In fact, at various screenings, Platts-Mills has confessed that he believes Robinson was figuratively (and very possibly literally) taking notes for *Withnail & I* while working on *Private Road*, which was at a less than ideal time in his life where he was barely getting by and largely living off government social security checks. On the surface a seemingly conventional work of British 'kitchen sink realism,' Platts-Mills' second feature is also a scathing indictment of the degenerate and largely foredoomed generation that bought into hippie hedonism and so-called sexual liberation, as well as a tragic romance about the impossibility of young love in the age of female emancipation, on-demand abortions, the Rolling Stones, hard drugs, and compensatory far-left-wing politics as indulged in by members of the young upper-middleclass. The ultimately rather melancholy and forlorn story of a young 'offbeat' writer who receives a book deal and falls madly in love with an 'enterprising' young blonde secretary who more or less uses him just so she can move out of her parents home and not have to work, only to have reality smack him in the face when his latest novel is rejected, his pregnant girlfriend decides to demonstrate her 'female independence' by dealing with her pregnancy in a most heinous self-centered way, and his comrades degenerate into junkies and humorless far-left revolutionaries who misguidedly think heroin and Trotsky will fill the void in their increasingly sterile and soulless lives, *Private Road* is a somewhat torturous but never dull depiction of a young and rather naive Mick Jagger look-alike's soul being crushed in slow-motion by the realities of adulthood. Indeed, Platts-Mills' film is that rare sort of work that reminds the viewer why most white males in the western world forgo marriage and children nowadays.

Opening with a goofy longhaired hippie named Stephen (Michael Feast of *The Deaths of Ian Stone* (2007)) playing acoustic guitar and singing, "...al-

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ways wanted to be a racing driver...but I never ever, ever liked the smell of cars,” *Private Road* initially seems like it will be some sort of horrendous hippie nightmare romanticizing the “bobo” (aka bourgeois bohemian) lifestyle, but luckily that is not the case, at least for long. The film then cuts to a scene of a pretty yet seemingly empty-headed and bitchy young blonde secretary named Ann Halpern (Susan Penhaligon of Paul Verhoeven *Soldier of Orange* (1977) and Richard Franklin’s Hitchcockian Ozploitation classic *Patrick* (1978)) fiddling with a piece of string while barely acknowledging the polite yet prosaic small talk of her publisher boss Erica Talbot (Patricia Cutts of William Castle’s *The Tingler* (1959) starring Vincent Price). Mrs. Talbot introduces Ann to “a very brilliant young writer” of the longhaired too-cool-for-school bohemian sort named Peter Morrissey (Bruce Robinson) whose short stories she plans to publish. Against his better judgement, Peter attends a small party with Ann where he demonstrates his posturing beatnikness by banally responding with “oh, anything” when a clean-cut chap who seems overly concerned with monetary success and social status asks him what he writes about. After the party, Peter asks Ann if she wants to go back to his place, but she seems to be intimidated by the slightly older and certainly more mature young man and blows him off. The next day, Peter calls Ann up and invites her to his hippie flat where he lives with his equally longhaired comrades Stephen (Michael Feast) and Henry (played by Hollywood composer George Fenton, who has composed music for everything from *Gandhi* (1982) to Terry Gilliam’s *The Zero Theorem* (2013)). After hanging out with the beatnik boys and doing pretty much nothing like beatnik boys do, Peter takes Ann on a romantic all-night stroll around both the city and countryside which results in the two falling in love with one another, though the romance is clearly one-sided. When his friend Stephen later asks him if he has boned Ann, Peter acts discernibly offended and states that he is not interested in sex “because a relationship isn’t based on sex. It’s not a paltry love affair, the sort of thing that you’re used to. It’s a pure, spiritual love. It’s love. I love her.” Meanwhile, Anne’s father Mr. Halpern (Robert Brown of various James Bond films like *Octopussy* (1983))—a well to do businessman of the conspicuously old school conservative sort who is genuinely concerned about his daughter’s well being—rebukes his daughter for disappearing all night without notifying him and she responds like an irrational woman-child by screaming “oh, fuck off!” and throwing her covers over her head like a little girl that is made agitated because her parents did not buy her the baby doll she wanted. Deciding she wants to be a ‘big girl,’ Ann then plots to move-in with Peter, who has just received an advance for a projected novel from Mrs. Talbot and makes for the perfect guy for a young girl who wants her ‘independence’ to leech off of.

A calculating lady who, like any sensible young woman looking to start a ‘career’ for herself, uses her body as currency, Ann officiates their first night living together with her new boyfriend and the seriousness of their relationship in gen-

eral by symbolically stripping her clothes off without any foreplay and somewhat freaks out Peter by coldly and calculatingly giving herself to him in a less than romantic way in what is ultimately their first time having sex with one another. From then on, Ann wants to have sex all the time, even outside in a public square, thus inspiring her boyfriend to jokingly call her a “nymphomaniac.” Meanwhile, Peter is warned by a fellow writer named Alex Marvel (Trevor Adams) to not sell one of his stories to a mainstream Munich-based publishing company called Titan because, as he states, “I thought that story was really very good. And I don’t think you should sell it to Titan of Munich. I’ll tell you why...Because Titan of Munich or any other company like that will just ruin anything. And that story had something. And that story should be kept as it is.” Of course, Peter will soon learn that he will be a loser in life if he stays true to himself and his artistic vision, as writing for an “esoteric audience” does not pay the bills, nor does it meet the demands of a young girlfriend who wants to live a life of leisure. When Ann’s father keeps randomly dropping by their flat and annoying them with his somewhat creepy behavior, Peter offers to move her anywhere she wants, even Greenland where he jokes that she will get “icicles on the end of your titties.” Ultimately, the seemingly loving couple opts to move to a remote cabin in the idyllic Scottish highlands where everything seems perfect, at least for Peter who finds solace in roaming the hillsides hunting rabbits while taking a break from writing, but spoiled brat Ann cannot tolerate having to do dreaded old fashioned things that females use to do like peel potatoes and she even suffers a hysterical freakout after he beloved brings back the corpse of a cute little bunny that he has shot that he wants her to skin for a stew. Of course, dainty dingbat Ann refuses to skin the rabbit and demonstrates that she would make rather pathetic wifey material. After acting increasingly frigid and humorless, Ann finally demands that they move back to the city the next day and that her boyfriend better start making more money on his writing, thus destroying Peter’s dream of an idyllic future of simple and serene pastoral living.

While Peter is somewhat happy to discover that Ann is pregnant upon arriving back in the city, pretty much everything else in the protagonist’s life falls apart from there. Among other things, Peter’s girlfriend has been incessantly bitching at him about writing more stories so that he can bring in more money, so when Mrs. Talbot rejects a novel that he has been working on for over a year because she thinks it is “undisciplined and a little old-fashioned” and needs some “pruning, cutting, shaping, discipline,” he is forced to take a lowly creativity-stunting job as a copywriter at an advertising firm that was given to him by his friend Henry, who is now a sort of self-stylized poser far-left revolutionary that has been cuckolded by his frigid uptight feminist girlfriend and who ironically uses the equipment at his corporate capitalist job to make commie posters. On top of that, Peter’s best friend Stephen is now a full-blown heroin addict who predictably causes Ann to suffer a panic attack after she walks in on him shooting

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up junk in the bathroom. In fact, Stephen is such a desperate junky that he later breaks into Peter and Ann's apartment when they are not home, writes the word "shit" on their wall as if to express his disgust with their bourgeois lifestyle, and steals everything they own except the bed and a couple of worthless books. Of course, Peter panics when he comes home one day from a long hard day at work to discover that Ann, who recently turned down his proposal of marriage, is gone and has taken all of her possessions with her, so he runs to her parents' home and more or less forces himself inside after his sneaky girlfriend's equally sneaky mother attempts to shoo him away in the most phony stereotypically bourgeois sort of way. After barging into the house, Stephen is physically assaulted by Ann's father, who subsequently tells him, "Anne has lost her baby. She came here for help and she got it. I begged you to be careful but you took no notice. You went on your own sweet way."

Indeed, Ann went behind Peter's back and sought sanctuary in daddy dearest, who gladly paid for the abortion of his unborn grandchild, as he knows that his superlatively spoiled, self-centered, and less than sophisticated daughter cannot even take care of herself, let alone a newborn child. At first, Peter seems in denial about the abortion and naively proclaims that Ann, who he has an unnervingly annoying romanticized view of as a young man that clearly still does not understand the way of women, would never do such a thing because she wanted the baby, but Mr. Halpern sets him straight by stating, "She didn't. She would never have been able to cope with the child." Of course, Mr. Halpern is right, as his daughter is nothing but a spoiled little woman-child who would probably be jealous of the baby stealing attention away from her. When Peter visits Ann in the hospital, she is totally ruthlessly remorseless about her sinisterly sneaky and dastardly deed, hatefully stating to her boy toy, "Look, I didn't want the baby. Can you understand that?," thus revealing that Mr. Halpern was right after all. Instead of dumping her and never speaking to her again for going behind his back and aborting their unborn child, Peter becomes a sort of spiritually castrated cuckold who completely gives up on his writing, puts all his energy into working a job he hates, and molds his behavior to the banal bourgeois manners and customs of Daddy Halpern, who is so pleased with the drastic change in his daughter's relationship that he tells her that he is going to buy her and her beloved a house when they get married. In the end, Stephen visits Peter and reveals that he has gotten off of heroin, though he clearly will never completely grow up and live a conventional middleclass life. When Peter reveals that Ann got an abortion and that he quit writing, perennial bohemian Stephen is so bummed out that he steals his friend a typewriter the next day so that he can continue writing. As for Peter and Ann, their future together seems dubious at best. Luckily, the real-life Peter, Bruce Robinson, would go on to do something with his writing and become famous doing it.

Unquestionably, *Private Road* is one of those films that you probably do not

want to watch a second time, though not because it is bad and unmemorable, but because it is a total all-around bummer of a melancholy movie that portrays life as a progressive curse plagued by a perennial series of oftentimes unpredictable and uncontrollable disappointments and tragedies that make antinatalism seem like the only rational and sensible life philosophy for any young person living in the post-WWII West to adopt, thus it should be no surprise that auteur Barney Platts-Mills would have to rent out a theater himself just so the film could be publicly screened upon its initial release, only for the work to languish in obscurity for about 40 years until it was rightfully resurrected by BFI Flipside. Not surprisingly, it would be over a decade before Platts-Mills made another film—the medieval sorcery and witchcraft costume piece *Hero* (1982)—which, although the first film in Scots Gaelic, was an abject failure of the first order that was ridiculed in *Time Out* film magazine as a “clumping village pageant” and ultimately guaranteed the director would not make another film for about about two more decades until he released the unfortunately underwhelming work *Zohra: A Moroccan Fairy Tale* (2010). While his debut feature *Bronco Bullfrog* (1969) is probably equally important in the context of British film history, *Private Road* is unequivocally Platts-Mills’ most immaculate, accomplished, and nuanced work, as a film that captures the dispiriting spirit of an entire generation, or at least a certain segment of it, namely the unsurprisingly increasingly dwindling upper-middleclass, which bought into the bullshit false freedom of the counterculture movement and paid the ultimate price as a result. Indeed, it is refreshing to see a work of British social realism that does not dubiously wallow in poverty porn like some of the works of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach and instead focuses on the certainly different but no less critical problems that plagued the dying bourgeoisie then and still continue to plague it in all the more debasing ways today. After all, unlike the protagonist of *Private Road*, there is not much pressure on lumpenproles when it comes to maintaining a certain standard in terms of wealth, profession, and overall social prestige. I certainly would not want to have to deal with a pretty yet vacant posh princess like the one in Platts-Mills film who expects everything from her man but gives nothing in return aside from abortions, headaches, and cold and soulless sex. Indeed, one can only guess the sort of alimony and child support that the protagonist of *Private Road* would have had to pay if he actually ended up marrying, having children with, and inevitably divorcing his blonde bimbo beloved. In that sense, the film should be mandatory viewing for any middleclass male who is seriously considering getting married and/or having children because otherwise they might end up like the fat deranged slob of Christopher Monger’s criminally underrated classic British cult flick *Voice Over* (1983).

-Ty E

Toys Toys

Barry Levinson (1992)

Robin Williams is one annoying fruitcake. Banal Baltimore director Barry Levinson made the right choice when deciding to collaborate with the middle aged toddler on the perverse Hollywood studio film *Toys*. A film that is one of the most ambitious and odd projects to come out of Hollywood possibly since *The Wizard of Oz*. Like *The Wizard of Oz*, *Toys* has various cryptic and ambiguous messages. The type of messages that you only expect the money men to know about.

Toys is also partly a musical, featuring a couple tunes that will either scare you to death or make you wave your arms with joy. I don't think it would be outrageous to say that the film would fit right at home with a businessman in the child pornography industry. This is another reason why I am not surprised that Robin Williams plays the lead, a grown man-child named Leslie Zevo that has a spectacular yet worthless intellect. Leslie has an archenemy in the form of his uncle Lt. General Leland Zevo. Leland has a mulatto son played by no other than LL Cool J. General Leland has decided he wants to make weapons in the form of toys that children can use to kill tons of people. Due to their young age, the children will not be able to comprehend the moral consequences of their actions. Quite a good idea on Leland's part indeed. Zany Leslie decides he has to stop uncle Leland with a virtual army of toys. Of course we can expect the power of objects that make children smile to triumph over the evil toy weapons. The horribly unattractive Joan Cusack plays the role of Leslie's robot sister (I wonder what else she does for Leslie?). Leslie also has an attractive Aryan girlfriend (who could only be after him for his money). I couldn't imagine Robin Williams with any woman, let alone an attractive one. However, I could see him dressed up in British nanny drag enjoying himself very much. Robin Williams has an asexual first name for a reason. Hans Zimmer (possibly a relative of mAQ) provided the sometimes exciting soundtrack for *Toys*. The set-design for *Toys* is also quite extravagant bordering on a Neo-Fellini ripoff style. I really don't see how Barry Levinson got involved in this project as he is about as boring as Hollywood filmmakers get. I guess his job during the films production was to direct the microphone operators how to stand. *Toys* has a nice new age hippie peace message. Wussy Leslie is a hero because he doesn't like mean toys. Uncle Leland is a super mean guy because he likes to watch stuff explode and possibly see some limbs fly. In the end, *Toys* is an aesthetically entertaining and enjoyable experience. A film that lands somewhere in between a nice surrealist childlike adult film and Michael Jackson's deepest darkest fantasy.

-Ty E

THE BED

Barry Mahon (1968)

While the obscenely offbeat avant-garde horror flick *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* (1977) seems to be a completely original film that one-time auteur George Barry seems to have dreamed up upon reading too much Victorian Gothic horror literature by Sheridan Le Fanu and possibly even Count Eric Stenbock and jerking off to Aubrey Beardsley paintings while tripping on LSD, I am going to have to assume that the filmmaker most certainly was influenced by the later films of American experimental filmmaker James Broughton (*Mother's Day*, *The Pleasure Garden*), especially his hedonistic celluloid celebration of everybody's favorite piece of furniture, *The Bed* (1968). Indeed, *The Bed* is certainly the *Death Bed* of the American avant-garde, as well as the quintessential American counterculture flick as a work that mindlessly celebrates virtually every form of sexual hedonism so as to also 'legitimize' the sexual vices of auteur Broughton who, although married with children, would abandon his wife and children a couple years after completing the film to be with a young man that was 35 years his junior. The genesis of the film was when Belgian film specialist and curator Jacques Ledoux came to the United States in 1967 seeking films for the next year's Experimental Film Competition, which he organized, and came up with the novel idea of giving away free 16mm color film stock to various previous contest participants in the hope they would create new films for the upcoming event, with Broughton being one of those lucky filmmakers who obliged the rather supportive Western European cineaste. *The Bed* also marked the rebirth of Broughton as both an artist and filmmaker. While his work *The Pleasure Garden* (1953)—a "poetic fantasy" shot on black-and-white 35mm film stock and filmed in England in collaboration with the director's then boy toy Kermit Sheets featuring various professionals, including comedic actress Hattie Jacques, filmmaker Lindsay Anderson, and prolific British actor John Le Mesurier—was such a hit that French poet/auteur Jean Cocteau presented Broughton with an award for it at the Cannes Festival Film and the director was even offered the opportunity to direct a film in Hollywood (which he absurdly turned down), *The Bed* is arguably the director's most celebrated, pioneering, and greatest known work to date. Although Broughton was in his mid-50s when he directed it, the film was quite revolutionary for its time in that it supposedly featured more nudity than any other film during its time (in fact, the only film lab to agree to make a print of it was a place known for exploitation films/porn loops). Featuring appearances from British-born philosopher/spiritual sage Alan Watts (a man the filmmaker would credit as being the only person who truly understood him during his lifetime), then-rather-elderly photographer Imogen Cunningham (who is fittingly known for her nude photography), and 'postmodern dance' pioneer Anna Halprin and her entire company, *The Bed* is a sort of absurdist micro-

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epic that reflects the good, the bad, and the just plain ugly of the counterculture zeitgeist as a work that reeks of misguided positivity, childish utopianism, deleterious wishful thinking, goofy dancing, and dreadful fashion senses (indeed, even completely naked, some of the subjects seem obscenely outmoded).

To the otherworldly and uplifting sounds of a musical score composed by counterculture maestro Warner Jepson (who also created the score for Steve Arnold's surrealist celluloid oddity *Luminous Procureess* (1971) starring the Cockettes, as well as the hippie celluloid abortion *Gold* (1972) co-directed by Bill Desloge, who was also incidentally the cinematographer of *The Bed*), a bed magically rolls down a hillside and when it finally reaches the bottom it twirls around in circles like an excited dog. From there, an unclad Adam-like figure appears on the bed and his equally bare Eve follows. After a moment or two on the bed, Adam and Eve leap off, chase each other around the precious piece of furniture, eventually runaway like joyful children and the Greek god of the wild, Pan, appears on the bed-frame playing noisy degenerate jazz while auteur Broughton sits Indian style in his birthday suit next to a snake that slithers around in front of him. Things pick up more momentum when Anna Halprin and her decadent dance troupe encircle the bed, which a fire-crotched gentleman subsequently jumps over. To prepare the bed for carnal initiation, a dyke-like lady with grey hair makes the bed by covering it with sheets. Elderly photographer Imogen Cunningham then comes out and gently puts an infant on the bed, which is soon occupied by a topless pregnant woman. Meanwhile, two young men in suits stand in front of the bed while three young ladies in night gowns stand at the back of it. Of course, all five people eventually get under the covers together and assumedly fuck. A woman in vintage plantation garb brings a flower to her less than adoring poet boyfriend, who is too busy wordsmithing to pay her much mind. A male and female couple use the bed as an opportunity to put on and take off each other's pajamas while a cowboy uses the classic piece of furniture to put his boots on. A heavily dressed fat woman loses both her sleep and bed after discovering an unsavory pervert hiding under her mattress. Indeed, while the fat woman seeks sanctuary in a tree, the goofy pervert basks in the glory of his newly stolen mattress. A seemingly frigid young blonde sporting dorky old spinster clothing consumes her misspent time by prosaically knitting in bed, but as soon as she sees a *The Wild One*-esque leather-clad rebel biker on a motorcycle, she strips off all her clothes like a seasoned groupie and jumps on the lucky fellow's bike and rides away with him. Indeed, director Broughton may have been a hyper homo, but he certainly had the utmost respect for loose and lecherous 'liberated' women.

Meanwhile, a negress with a micro-afro admires a daddy longlegs spider crawling on her fingers and a woman abandons her sister by jumping on a black stallion and riding away. A naked firecrotched fellow gets a pleasant surprise when an unclad succubus with rainbow-colored legs and torso crawls out of a

tree and climbs into his bed to carnally service him. Another fellow also gets a nice surprise when a salamander crawls out of his mouth and turns into a stunning young woman. In a scene of mirthful sacrilege, a disrobed babe holds a crucifix between her tits and a Holy Bible over her beaver. In a hysterically edited homo montage, two unclad gay lovers are featured contorted in a variety of aesthetically displeasing positions where they are occasionally joined by an equally bare lady friend. In unquestionably the most retrograde scene featured in the entire film, a swarthy bearded hippie smokes a blunt while his East Asian girlfriend chomps on a cookie. Naturally, the hippie passes the grass, as he gets the munchies and wants a bite of his oriental babe's cookie. After a lighthearted scene of two elderly Jews playing cards, a woman in the shape of a horse is chased by an elderly cowboy in his PJs, but when the horsey woman surprises the old John Wayne wannabee by jumping on his back and riding him, the old fart runs away like a cowardly cowgirl. In arguably the most odious yet comical scene of the film, a grotesquely chubby Guido dork of the pale yet swarthy sort furiously takes off a girl's socks, begins fondling and licking her feet, and then even attempts to fuck said feet. In a scene that I am sure any ostensible 'African Queen' could admire, a disrobed overweight middle-aged negress smoking a cigarette flapper-style basks in her glory as a white male slave in a fancy suit washes her big black Mammy-esque mammary glands. Indubitably, scenes like these prove that Mr. Broughton was proud to play the white cultural cuckold, thus proving that he was certainly ahead of his time in more than just aesthetic ways.

Ancient photographer Imogen Cunningham eventually floats back into the film and joins a middle-aged grey-haired 'queen' holding an antique baby doll in bed, but not before kissing the seemingly frigid fellow on the head. Alan Watts dressed as a doctor gives an elderly man his last rites and before the old fart kicks the bucket, he covers his own head with the sheet on the bed. In a scenario that probably inspired some horrendous exploitation flick like Lee Frost's *The Thing with Two Heads* (1972), a two-headed half-white-female/half-black-male—a sort of hermaphrodite ying/yang from multicultural hippie hell—kisses itself. Towards the end of the film, a large line of moronically dressed hippies wait in line to be the next to get into bed, which is soon covered with a dozen or so frail stark-naked white hippie lemming bodies. When old man Pan reappears with his dreaded sax, Adam and Eve wander back to bed after their day of play and auteur Broughton seems to pray to the snake, as if paying tribute to the devil. In the end, the bed leaves and goes back whence it once came.

Indubitably, *The Bed* will probably make more sense to the viewer when considering auteur James Broughton's quote, "All the world's a bed, and men and women merely dreamers," but of course some dreams are greater than others and the hippie dream proved to be a delusional nightmare with very few positive contributions to society aside from a film as curious and largely unintentionally entertaining as this. In the documentary *Big Joy: The Adventures*

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of James Broughton (2013), belated underground 'lo-fi' auteur George Kuchar (Hold Me While I'm Naked, The Mongreloid) seems somewhat reluctant to praise Broughton's film and reveals that it was hated by his avant-garde comrades in New York City, remarking, "It had a very 'California' feel to it. Beds outside, oak trees, you know, and grassy hills...people hugging one another. I think it's much despised a lot on the east coast. They consider it ridiculous. It was always happy. Bouncing, you know what I mean? It was like upbeat and bouncy, and any kind of humping was sort of...it wasn't antiseptic, it was neither, it was California in the sunshine." Indeed, in many ways, *The Bed* is a motion picture stereotype that is more effective than any satire or parody could ever be in mocking the 'positively positive positivity' and mindless wantonness-worshipping of the hippies and their allies. Luckily, the film features enough intentional humor in it to not seem like a totally bad beatnik joke (indeed, Broughton may have had a lot of eccentric arcane ideas, but he also had a sense of humor). It was not until a couple years later with his Jungian hermetic fable *Dreamwood* (1972) that Broughton was able to create something more sensible out of the themes, ideas, and aesthetics he introduced with *The Bed*, which is more or less a piece of silly embryonic filmic foreplay for the later longer work, albeit with luxury animated furniture. Indeed, maybe it is due to my steady diet of horror films as a child or my innate and perennial disgust for anything and everything relating to hippies and their bogus weltanschauung, but I will always be more of a Death Bed than *The Bed* kind of guy. Indeed, while beds are used for great fun things like fucking, sleeping, and reproducing, they are also unwittingly used for spreading terminal STDs like AIDS and for bidding one's time while rotting away from glorious terminal illnesses like cancer. As his later films readily demonstrate, Broughton, like the 'summer of love' zeitgeist he latched onto, lived in a fantasy world of his own making, but rather unfortunate realities like gay cancer later put a change to that, thus making *The Bed* seem like a naive joke nowadays, but one cannot deny its aesthetic allure.

-Ty E

SATANTANGO

Béla Tarr (1994)

Begin for a moment, will you, to idealize the enormous growth of joy subsiding in my heart after finishing the morally exhausting *Sátántangó* in two sittings. This Hungarian arthouse epic is directed by Béla Tarr, a man of immense critical acclaim known for (or not) his surreptitious black and white portraits of lower to middle class life; *Sátántangó* falling into the former. The disconnected narrative of *Sátántangó* involves a central character whispered among cattle farmers. The return of he, Irimiás, shocks all of the surrounding farmers as he and his cohort, Petrina, were rumored to have died some time ago. Add in a pinch of scheming swindlers to this messianic tale and you got only the shell of what is known as, arguably, Béla Tarr's *pièce de résistance*. Opening with a scene of a pasture, *Sátántangó* makes no attempt to hide its creeping composition. Béla Tarr estimated that there are in fact only about 160 separate scenes in the film. Uniting this with the prior knowledge of *Sátántangó*'s exhausting run time (7 and a half hours) and you got the smug gesture of your choice. You never really grasp the situation at hand until the final scene, which lends to the ambiguity of the grand picture. Of course you'll have your theories and your alliances but in the end *Sátántangó* is just as likely to surprise you as it will leave you in awe. Concerning itself with several layers of manipulation is what drives the progression through the torrential waves of tragedy and copious amounts of boozing. But hey, that's the Communist era for you.

Allow me to switch relevance to Béla Tarr's utterly unique and intimate sense of directing. As highlighted in the opening scene, Béla Tarr leaves his film victim to circumstance. Shot over 4 long years, *Sátántangó* features many scenes of coincidental, yet genius touches. Simple facets of coexistence lead to scenes of such grave realism that the camera could have been in no way manipulated to capture these naturally occurring instances. For example, flies buzzing about the grimy peasants or newspapers in the wind defying the presence of Irimiás and his almost-prophetic resurrection. These simple touches speak volumes for what you're about to experience. Béla Tarr utilizes a sneaking zoom for focusing on a single subject then slowly retracting the perspective to initiate long-winded segments of lower class turmoil. Tarr's camera movements, rare as they are, act as soft strokes whether balancing bovine or tracing the fields surrounding them. If I were to choose a favorite condition of weather, it would, without a doubt, be rain. For this reason, *Sátántangó* is now an obvious and ideal escape from the warm heat of a summer afternoon. Every single scene lingers and loiters about and this isn't even grazing the self-appointed art form Tarr has created out of his cinematography.

The correlation between the desolate community (if you can call it that) and the impoverished dwellers is touched upon with our first contact of human life.

SATANTANGO

The events of *Sátántangó* literally begin to unfold with a scene of a larger woman squatting over a water pan and cleansing her dry cunt with a wet rag. This introduction sets the standard of development as Tarr makes no excuses in showing a human life during the most tender and obscene of moments. Soon after it is revealed that this woman, Mrs. Schmidt, was having an affair with a man known as Futaki, a terrible plan of thievery sets in place. What next occurs is the primary phase of *Sátántangó* and that is the large sum of money rewarded to those all for a hard years work. Deceit is amidst the tightly woven collective of people incapable of independent thought. The only person exempt from this category is Futaki, slyly spoken of in the final report of Irimiás. Not only are his people left disenfranchised and caught in a never-ending cycle of "government allocation" but his role as savior is both challenged and enforced; a game of gray-scale tug of war. Since *Sátántangó* is told from many perspectives it does indeed become a chore up until the second hour mark. The trials of the Doctor and his quest for fruit brandy evolve into a meandering scene of walking & coughing; only to take a break with the local whores. Disapprove of Béla Tarr's slinking cinematography if you must but his unwavering commitment to unearthing a shining point in each and every degenerate is something I could never reciprocate appreciation to in words, without bathing in pretension, of course.

Your persistence will be paid off most handsomely, I can promise. The several scenes in which something of a thrilling nature is divulged marks a sobering change of pace. Going from a lonely child, skulking in an abandoned attic, admiring the rain and holding in contempt the mother who favors male company more, Béla Tarr switches sights on the possibility of a mental illness being born under the same conditions most serial killers are victim to. This little girl soon takes a stray feline nearby and submits it to a power-play in which she grasps its forelegs and rolls around with it, slamming it into the floorboards. This punishment is necessary to her as the poor cat "crapped". Soon after rat poison is brought into the mix, quite literally. Lacing a dish of milk with the poison, she forces the cats face into the bowl who has no choice but to ingest the sweet milk. Following this aggressive and harrowing scene, the girl backs off slowly. This allows the cat some peace of mind before it lowers its head into the dish and perishes. This scene admits the films second half of notoriety, the first belonging to the daunting runtime. Don't worry though; the cat's ability to act was likely the fault of a sedative and Tarr admits to adopting the beast after the film was shot. Another critical aspect of Béla Tarr's filmmaking is how in tune with rhythm he is, judging by his musical performances and technical achievements within. The quick-drip percussion is caught with applying wandering drops of rainwater to tin. Did I mention the fact that *Sátántangó* is one of the more soothing, therapeutic pieces of cinema? I shouldn't have to; watch any random clip on YouTube for proof of that.

A lonely light on the horizon whispers to the little girl, named Eſtike, but she

knows better. What awaits her isn't a worried mother or a call for supper but an oppressive, drunken wench. Eštika's path will soon mesh with the Dočtor's, and his with Irimiás's. This slug-like progression of a simple story does Tarr's film wonders. Often throughout *Sátántangó* I had hoped for a mind's eye peek into the thought processes of these pained creatures, wagers of sin. When not practicing avid voyeurism, Béla Tarr makes plenty of time to drag surrealism out of the most bare and stricken scenes of bland activities. All of this retrospect upon my viewing of *Sátántangó* must spark fear in the eyes of preordained cinematic disciples, for it is quintessential viewing but selective towards attention spans. To ease the promise of an enthralling experience, I'd like to promise that once the film hits the second hour mark *Sátántangó* softens to the senses and becomes pliable to many calibers of cinephile. A curious thought hit once I began observing the transfer, apparently supervised by Tarr himself. *Sátántangó* was filmed in 35mm and me being a film projectionist, am blessed with knowledge of the format. Now if 35mm runs at approximately 24 frames per second, equating to 1,440 frames a minute, that means that the 450 minute long *Sátántangó* is around 648,000 frames. A Christie platter system couldn't even fit half of the film's runtime. The changeover method would be the only possible way to screen *Sátántangó* and we're looking at about 26 reels worth (if the reels are evenly split).

If *Sátántangó* succeeded at anything besides raw beauty it would be encouraging me to seek the shelter of the bottle. An escape that will surely devour the lot of them, myself included. Do not be fooled by the small offering of scene transitions. Tarr commits to making each more engaging than the last. A scene to discuss would be the Headmaster's dance with the husky Mrs. Schmidt. He tangoes with the goblin, offering in a hushed tone a comfortable life in return for courting her. The Headmaster then praises her tenderness; The joke being that this aspect of her doesn't exist. Mrs. Schmidt is, after all, the village whore. You might have found this review chock full of examples following the uniform, "Béla Tarr [is]...." The reason being that he does so much for us within this indelible 7 hour epic and what did we ask of him? Nothing. At the very least, we requested a competent cult classic but to call *Sátántangó* a cult film would be to shepherd the film into a class unworthy of its presence. And on another note, please, that damn doctor will outlive them all. *Sátántangó* is a film to be stared at in awe for Tarr's (ash)hetic is enough to fuel any feasible genre this film can be sorted in. I greatly look forward to Béla Tarr's swan song, *The Turin Horse*, due out this year. I can say without a doubt in my mind that *Sátántangó* is one of the most rewarding cinematic excursions that I have partaken in.

-mAQ

WILDERNESS
WILDERNESS

Ben Bolt (1996) British werewolf films always seem to get the idea correct behind the myth. Neil Marshall's *Dog Soldiers* throttled his career into less-satisfying films, but i am still thankful for his mark on the "wolfman" genre. Similar to Fawcett's slight feminist tones in *Ginger Snaps*, Ben Bolt bares his teeth in regards to the purity of the female and in the same time, gives her a feral presence. *Wilderness* concerns a young woman who strangely looks like a British Winona Ryder with crooked teeth. This woman believes she is a werewolf. No reasoning behind it, no bite; it almost denounces the theory of an infection of sorts. She was just born into i guess. Same with maturity issues in female horror films, her near rape experience caused her to transform into a Timber Wolf and strike down the boy. Enter her psychiatrist; a man who soon becomes detached from his own life and begins to write about this woman. He strangely becomes obsessed with her while quoting Freud doctrine. He becomes a strong character only to be foolishly detached later and given a quick end. Her boyfriend resembles a disturbing John C. Reilly clone, albeit with a much larger forehead. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, not the director of *Wilderness* though. Ben Bolt has collected some of the most hideous actors ever for this Made-for-TV effort that is better than the rest. Amanda Ooms is mostly nude for the film. Her metamorphosis consists of that hokey morph effect that was so widely used in horrible sitcoms such as *Charmed*. Its biggest contribution was its ending. It makes up for whatever slack it lost throughout its run time. It proves to be an intelligent and thought provoking thriller that builds the bridge through humanity and wildlife.

-mAQ

TROPIC THUNDER

Ben Stiller* (2008)

Typical Hollywood comedy fare; Insert some fart jokes and big name stars in a zany vacation-esque adventure in which friendships are broken and rekindled in the small run time. Unconventional Hollywood comedy fare; Tropic Thunder. Incompetent douche Ben Stiller has not only created a masterpiece in the dying genre of comedy, but he creates a dynamite dissection of the repetitive machine that is Hollywood. Opening the film up is four vignettes composing faux-promotional ads for the fictional actors of Tropic Thunder. Alpa Chino's Booty Sweat energy drink and Bust-A-Nut granola bar are the films openers. These several faux trailers are more entertaining than the entire self-absorbed run time of Grindhouse. The next trailers are several jabs at big films and stars referencing MTV awards and entertainment taboos as recklessness, celebrity nudity, and filmed homosexuals. Jack Black's Jeff Portnoy is an actor who is the white equivalent of Eddie Murphy. This is a man who gets his kick from playing 12+ characters in his films about family's that exhibit several scenes of extensive Negro fart jokes. Well, the racial card is switched as the white family is predominately grossed or disappointed. The Nutty Professor is an abomination and Tropic Thunder recognizes this. The Oscar jokes go hand-in-hand with the neglect that Murphy's role in Dreamgirls received at the Academy Awards. Alpa Chino's role is just one of the surprise breakout roles that are the catalyst for the extreme hilarity you will find in Tropic Thunder. The simple joke jabbed at his name is enough to make me squirm and point out the obvious role that Scarface had on urban society. You see, Black people need a role model. Whereas they cannot find one in some community worker or diligent government worker, they turn to a mediocre entertainer and uses his nihilistic and often drug-induced logic as their bible. It is almost fact that every rapper has a Scarface poster. Now for the kicker. Robert Downey Jr.'s role. I'm sure you've heard of it. RDJ plays the "African-American" soldier Lincoln Osiris. This man goes as far as to quote The Jefferson's theme song. This is the supposed controversial move that has the film crew prepping for massive public outrage. RDJ in a modern Blackface. The performance from this man has me in awe. He can play the serious Kirk Lazarus, and the Kool-Aid loving Sarge himself. Nothing is more perfect than this. Tropic Thunder is either the greatest comedy ever made, or the worst. Together with this magnificent cast including a laugh riot role played surprisingly fucking effective by Tom Cruise, Tropic Thunder will literally make you shit yourself with laughter. This is the deep, sentimental humor that satirizes the stuff in Hollywood that people are afraid of. Tropic Thunder is the first in a (hopefully) long line of audacious comedies that build the barrier against "good taste." Forget all the bad press you may hear. Someone needs to tell the disability groups that you should never go full retard. I could go on for paragraphs

TROPIC THUNDER

due to the movies inconspicuous ways of packing so much comedy into such a normal length film. Take my seeing it twice as a fierce badge of dedication and love to this pristine film. Tropic Thunder is a national treasure of an action film and seamlessly blends genres to create a form of retarded art. Tropic Thunder is the real dope. Get Some!

-mAQ

KILL LIST

Ben Wheatley (2011)

Kill List manifested itself to me in the form of a cautious recommendation pleading for me to remain in the dark. Not long after, the buzz of Kill List took form over the world wide web, brief mutters catching wind of the nonsensical musings of the finale, with so much brevity that visiting my favorite cinema news/review sites proved to be quite the obstacle course. I maintained my position and leaped at Kill List with my all once I noticed its humble emergence. With a cockney swagger, Ben Wheatley directs this somber hit-man drama with a creeping and fleeting eye for family values before thrusting our lead characters into their chore of killing, which at times, proves to be too much with both family and business in tow. Kill List follows the patriarchal rule of most darkly brewed British thriller/dramas with weaving two male British figures and their off-the-pot relationships and values while siding you against the cunty female denizens of unending mischief. In one corner we have Jay, our lead, a thought-upon British soldier who is bewildered by incognizant terrors from war time stress found from a blundered mission in Kiev; who knows what terrors lie in waiting hunger? In the other, we have his more chipper associate-sociopath, Gal, a Ray Winstone if I ever saw one and a through-and-thorough good pal. Together they make up the duo of "mechanics" who have been out of the wind for a decent bit as Jay is balancing financial coordination and family man all too close to each other, obviously mixing business and pleasure since being off his rocker. Gal, on the other hand, seems all too ready for a new life, a new beginning, which makes up for his +1 to Jay's dinner get-together - a sharp featured brunette whose murky motives play out in horrifying grandeur.

Subtle nuances clear the path for Kill List and keep it ambiguously fresh and enjoyable. Whether or not Wheatley intended for Jay & Gal's client to resemble a wispy-haired Angus Scrimm lookalike, the results scream in favor of a meditated casting decision. Proceeding after the occasional segments of "...what?", Kill List regains its momentum as hit after hit are detailed in a sordid and grisly manner; almost as if Wheatley intended to channel the same drive that fueled the doomed lead of *The Horseman* (2008). It is alarmingly clear at the point when the first target is made known to Gal that the gut for taking ones life isn't something that can remain as fortified as a simple talent. We witness this with purpose when Gal is disturbed with the idea of executing an ordained priest - an act of business Jay isn't all too bothered seeing through to completion. Allusions of war are applied directly into the bowels of Jay's opening exposition with his family and friend. Wheatley must have decided that flashbacks would have muddled the sense of linear engagement in this tale of curveball carnage and in place, intermittently injected keywords into idle banter to give sense to it all and avoid a confusion possibly more serious than what the ending might offer to a

KILL LIST

casual viewer. Kill List is a devious joker of cinema, to be quite frank. It ends on such a baffling note that the nearest emotion you might muster up would be a hybrid of anger and bewilderment, as if Kill List had a promise to fulfill other than living up to the elevated hype that has since clouded its release. While the end never seems to justify the means for Kill List and its godforsaken existence, the fate of its characters can be traced back to its opening roots, which speaks volumes in comparison to the brackish body of cinema excess that floods the senses of the modern viewer.

A degree of difficulty can be found in distinguishing the indistinguishable diatribe of Kill List's choice British actors. I found myself constantly on edge tweaking the volume to an acceptable level only to thrash towards the dial when the frequent bouts of domestic disturbances exploded onto the screen, at rarely a moments notice as well. With each "victim" separated into chapters with an appropriately labeled title card, Kill List's pacing, if slow at first, propels towards such an even pacing that reliving the nightmare a second time in the company of friends proved most satisfying as I huddled into the corner, eyes darting to catch every expression that stunk of disbelief. Respected artisans of small-time acting, Neil Maskell and Michael Smiley, respond once the film begins with a spark of friendship that proves charming, even in light of the unexplained incident in Kiev that Jay suffered throughout. The chemistry between the two holds tight, even when Kill List spirals into a sort of inspired madness which must remain unknown until after the film has been ingested. Even the slightest hint of where Kill List draws its life from would go off and spoil one of the more alienating finales in recent memory. Upon my first viewing of Kill List, I admit I felt cheated; I felt myself conjuring a passive fury towards its proposed goal. But upon having it grace my screen for the second time, Kill List warmed its silly cinematic contraband towards my palate. Nonsensical antics in mind, a part of me welcomed in the clumsy culmination of this assassin thriller. While Wheatley handled what he intended to create and project with the elegance of a handicapped athlete, one cannot contest that after examining, scene-by-scene, the good grace of Kill List, that it doesn't reach its finishing line - Even if its visual and lyrical summary liken to a combined hypothesis of every great shocker rolled into one imperceptible package of imperfection. As an added bonus, within Kill List you will find several short glimpses of extreme savagery that had the visitors in my room twitching in repulsion. This more than makes up for the mild misdirection by assuming a role of a grotesque party favor, don't you think?

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DANIEL SCHMID - LE CHAT QUI PENSE

Benny Jaberg (2010)

As far as I am concerned, Swiss auteur/opera director Daniel Schmid (Violanta, Hécate) is one of the most underrated European filmmakers of the post-WWII era and his first three features—*Tonight or Never* (1972) aka *Heute nacht oder nie*, *La Paloma* (1974), and *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel*—are nothing short of strikingly singular high-camp masterpieces that should be made compulsory viewing for any serious cinephile. A friend and collaborator of both Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Schroeter, Schmid spent his formative years in West Germany, but would ultimately return to his homeland and become arguably the most world renowned Swiss filmmaker of all time, even among the Japanese (who he would pay tribute to with his documentary *The Written Face* (1995) aka *Das geschriebene Gesicht*), yet virtually none of his cinematic works have ever been made available in North America and thus virtually his entire oeuvre, especially his early works, are in serious danger of being disposed of in the virtual celluloid ash heap of film history. Luckily, Swiss documentary filmmakers Pascal Hofmann and Benny Jaberg, who previously co-directed the documentary *Wintersong: A Film About Dakota Suite* (2006) about English singer/songwriter Chris Hooson, have attempted to immortalize Daniel Schmid with their surprisingly lyrical love letter dedicated to the life and films of the filmmaker, *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* (2010). Featuring excerpts from Schmid's films and archived footage from the sets, as well as new interviews with the filmmaker, auteur Werner Schroeter, actress/diva Ingrid Caven, cinematographer Renato Berta (who shot most of Schmid's films), and various others, *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* is an important documentary in that, aside from featuring rare film scenes and interviews that can be found nowhere else, the documentary also happens to be the only resource available to English-speaking viewers (although in various languages, the dvd released by T&C Film features English subtitles) on Schmid, as not a single English-language book has been written on the late great auteur. The perfect companion piece to the documentary *Mondo Lux: The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* (2011) aka *Mondo Lux - Die Bilderwelten des Werner Schroeter* directed by Elfi Mikesch—a work chronicling the life and work of Schmid's one-time lover/assistant director and friend Werner Schroeter (whose work *Der Bomberpilot* (1970) Schmid acted as assistant director of)—*Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* is not only a documentary about a criminally underrated filmmaker who the modern world does not deserve, but a cultural history of German-speaking Europe during the post-WWII years, which the filmmaker once stated of, "I live in a decadent era. That is my private belief. I believe that I live in a late chapter of Western history. I have no conception of how things might continue," in front of a bunch of unhappy leftists while giving a press

DANIEL SCHMID - LE CHAT QUI PENSE

conference for his first feature *Tonight or Never*.

Born on 26 December 1941 to a family of hoteliers in the Grison Alps in Switzerland, Daniel Schmid had a somewhat unconventional childhood that revolved around fantasy and matriarchy as his father passed away when he was just a wee lad, but while living in a luxury hotel in a resort spot, he managed to meet many famous people as a child, including Danish-German filmmaker Douglas Sirk (*Written on the Wind*, *All That Heaven Knows*), who would later become his hero and who he would have the opportunity to make the last filmic portrait of with his documentary *Imitation of Life* (1983) aka *Mirage de la vie*. While still a young man in his 20s during the 1960s, Schmid relocated to West Berlin to a politically and socially revolutionary atmosphere that was quite in contrast to his quiet upbringing in the Swiss Alps. Although Schmid appreciated the fact he could be openly gay in counter-culture krautland and even befriended members of the Red Army Faction, he got fed up with the phony socio-political bullshit of the far-left and decided to focus solely on filmmaking, with the medium-length work *Thut alles im Finstern, eurem Herrn das Licht zu ersparen* (1970) aka *Do Everything in the Dark in Order to Save Your Lord the Light*, but it was not until he collaborating with Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who he actually met in 1966 and was briefly lovers with, and his wife Ingrid Caven that he became really serious about filmmaking and began to get noticed around the European arthouse scene. Convinced by Fassbinder to quit film school after being called a “spoilt Swiss Boy,” Schmid decided to make his first film *Tonight or Never* (1972) aka *Heute nacht oder nie*—a high-camp satire of the far-left student movement—with next to nil money after being encouraged by Ingrid Caven, who starred in the film. From there, Schmid directed two more dark melodramatic masterpieces starring his new muse Caven, *La Paloma* (1974), and *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel*, with the former film being described as follows by his friend Werner Schroeter: “‘La Paloma, my happiness that remained.’ The alpine world...It could have gone so wrong...Completely wrong, yet it didn’t. It’s such pure kitsch, and then there’s the grandiose singing of Lotte Lehman and Richard Tauber from the ‘20s. It’s the victory of what Susan Sontag calls camp. These elements become something new that not only has ironic remove, but manages to spring over that, too, so as to find new, expressive force.”

For *Shadow of Angels*, Schmid adapted a controversial play that the filmmaker described as an “evil fairy tale” and Frankfurt Jews protested against for being ostensibly ‘anti-Semitic’ (one of the lead characters is named simply ‘the Rich Jew’), with Schroeter remarking regarding the work: “Fassbinder was very taken by the approach to his play ‘Garbage, the City and Death’, that Daniel filmed as ‘Shadow of Angels’. The film is pure Daniel but also pure Fassbinder.” Indeed, *Shadow of Angels* is undoubtedly one of the most brazenly dark, misanthropic, and simple yet esoteric films of German New Cinema as a work about a melancholy prostitute whose ex-nazi father (portrayed by Austrian actor Adrian

Hoven, who was originally famous for starring in sentimental Heimat films) used to gas Jews during the good old days and now makes a living as a nocturnal third rate drag queen. Due to his keenness for kitsch and high-camp aesthetics, Schmid was attacked as a supposed fascist by leftist filmgoers and critics alike, with Schmid remarking regarding his intent with his first feature at a press conference: "I did have political intentions in making the film. It may sound strange but...the backdrop of political interpretation in front of which I localize the film is, in the best case, only present so as to disconcert the viewer. I live in a decadent era. That is my private belief. I believe that I live in a late chapter of Western history. I have no conception of how things might continue." If anything is apparent while watching his German era films, it is that he was infatuated with divas and you know you have a problem when a queen like Schroeter states of you, "Daniel saw a diva in everyone. He even tried to sell his aunt as an odd diva. Daniel was a diva addict. They were hidden everywhere, and you only had to bring this out in order to draw forth this artificiality and create a diva's pseudo immortality." After completing his Swiss-French work *Hécate* (1982)—a film set in a French Arab colony during the end of colonialism based on a novel by French fascist novelist/diplomat Paul Morand—Schmid permanently relocated back to Switzerland where he made more conventional and less campy works like *Jenatsch* (1987), *Hors saison* (1992) aka *Off Season*, and *Beresina, or the Last Days of Switzerland* (1999). Although Schmid would live until 2006, he would never complete another film after *Beresina*. Ironically, like his friend Werner Schroeter, Schmid died of a form of cancer that obstructed his ability to speak and unfortunately he was unable to realize his final film *Portovero*, which he had already begun shooting.

While I typically find reviewing documentaries, especially those about filmmakers, to be rather redundant, *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* is undoubtedly an imperative work for anyone with an interest in European arthouse cinema of the late-1960s to early 1980s. Admittedly, I have always been disappointed in Schmid's post-Fassbinder era films (though I still have yet to track down *Violanta* (1978), which, as pointed out in the doc, was made during the filmmaker's happiest point in life), yet the Swiss auteur filmmaker's first three features alone are more important than most of his contemporaries' entire oeuvres, but he seemed to realize that himself when he stated in an interview regarding *Tonight or Never*, "The film was severely attacked by the prevailing left "Zeitgeist". It's very strange. I recently talked to an American critic who's now 25. For him the sixties have only survived as a theatrical act – and that's exactly how the comedian in the movie is treated." Indeed, Schmid was an artist who understood that the only real art is highly personalized as demonstrated by his rather revealing remark, "In describing someone else, you are in fact describing yourself ... rather than this stranger, because it is your projection; in actual fact, this says more about you than about this other person, who has long departed (...)," so

DANIEL SCHMID - LE CHAT QUI PENSE

it should be no surprise that he also stated of the filmmakers of his generation, "At the time many of my colleagues – writers, filmmakers – were identifying themselves with a working-class environment they'd never lived or functioned in." Indeed, while one would expect it to be common that there is nothing more pathetic than an idealistic bourgeois boob who has never worked an single day in their entire life pretending to sympathize with the working-class, it seems that Schmid came from an exceedingly ethno-masochistic generation of decadent degenerates who worshipped ugliness and weakness. Of course, Schmid was an authentic fellow who had no problem admitting he was an unrepentant diva and high-camp addict with a sentimental fondness for opera and old hotels and every one of his films, from *Tonight or Never* to *Beresina*, demonstrates this. A surprisingly worthwhile work for Schmid novices and fanatics alike, *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* is as loving a tribute to Schmid as Schmid's own documentary *Tosca's Kiss* (1984) was to the elderly retired opera singers of Casa Verdi that is so candidly portrayed. Despite his affinity for kitsch and camp, Schmid, like the subjects of *Tosca's Kiss*, also had an affinity for classical European kultur which made him stick out among his contemporaries, hence why his works have aged as gracefully as the finest of wines and silent films. Indeed, in that sense, Schmid is worthy of being named in the same sentence with the likes of his heroes F.W. Murnau and Josef von Sternberg.

-Ty E

ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES

Bernard L. Kowalski (1959)

A review in chapters.

-mAQ

CANDYMAN
CANDYMAN

Bernard Rose (1992)

Candyman is one of the most innovative and well made so called "slasher" films. Like Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* before it, Candyman was surprisingly able to reinvent the stagnant and tired slasher sub-genre. The film is based on the short story "The Forbidden" by erotic horror author Clive Barker. Barker is the greatest horror author since HP Lovecraft, so it is no surprise that Candyman has an originally horrifying story that can capture the attention of the most demanding of individuals that watch film solely to see a good story. Tony Todd IS the Candyman. I cannot imagine another individual playing the Candyman nor demanding the attention that Todd's aura of charisma permeates. Tony Todd is a brother with class and that is a true rarity. Nothing is more disgusting than a group of illiterate black gangstas except the fact that degenerate whites see them as their idols. If a self-loathing honky is going to find his role models in colored folks, at least they can idolize a black man that deserves respect like Tony Todd. Then again, Tony Todd preys on the "lesser" of his own people in Candyman. Despite only being in the film for a handful of scenes, Tony Todd dominates Candyman with his performance. The Candyman, unlike most slasher killers, was an innocent during his life. The son of the slave, he surprisingly became an artist and great painter. His talents ultimately led to his demise when he impregnated a white woman who was one of his paintings subjects. The Candyman was a man that overcame the discrimination put against him only to be eventually killed. The Candyman haunts an area full of the most pathetic and unsuccessful of his own people. Though his talents led to his destruction, he hates his own people because of their lack of self-determination and failure. The Candyman is a much more complex slasher killer than people want to give him credit for. The Candyman is the ghostly reminder of a group of people that never brought themselves up whether it be because of prejudice (everyone's favorite excuse) or collective failure. Another sequel to the Candyman series is scheduled for 2011. This will be interesting as the series is set in New Orleans, the area devastated by hurricane Katrina. Was hurricane Katrina one of the fruits of the Candyman's hatred towards his own people? I wouldn't be surprised as the people of New Orleans haven't been proactive about rebuilding their hometowns. It must be a conspiracy of whitey and The Candyman lurking in the shadows.

-Ty E

LAST TANGO IN PARIS

Bernardo Bertolucci (1972)

Make no mistake about it, I am no friend of commies, be they of the kosher or shabbos goy persuasion, yet Italy has somehow managed to produce a red or two that I actually respect, though dago Freudian-Marxist Bernardo Bertolucci (The Conformist aka *Il conformista*, *The Dreamers*) is certainly not one of them. Indeed, while I have always regarded Pier Paolo Pasolini as one of my favorite filmmakers, his fellow poet-turned-filmmaker buddy Bertolucci (whose first film, *La commare secca* (1962) aka *The Grim Reaper*, was penned by Pasolini) has always rubbed me the wrong way. Maybe it is because he degraded the European art-house film by turning into something akin to a cheap Hollywood product, uses degenerate sex (i.e. incest, anus-fingering, etc) as a cheap gimmick to prove the artistic merit of his work among the right far-left intellectuals and film critics, routinely sexually and emotionally exploits his actors and actresses, and/or because he is a rare Guido Francophile, but Bertolucci is a certainly man I love to hate and easily my least favorite of the great post-WWII Italian directors. Of course, as someone who likes to give credit where credit is due, I must admit I rather enjoyed two of the pinko goombah's films, *La commare secca* (1962) aka *The Grim Reaper*, as well as his Franco-Italian 'magnum opus' *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) aka *Ultimo tango a Parigi*. Considering it has been at least a decade since I last saw *Last Tango in Paris*, I recently decided to re-watch it to see if I was not merely hypnotized into liking the film by Maria Schneider's jumbo jugs and Marlon Brando's singular brazen butter-loving post-twink performance. It should be noted that both stars of the film went on to say that they felt raped and manipulated by Bertolucci, with Brando refusing to talk to the director for 15 years after the work's release and Schneider even going so far as to describe the auteur as a "gangster and pimp" and even completely disavowing her involvement in the film that made her a famous and international sex icon, once stating, "*Last Tango ... first major role [...] I regretted my choice since the beginning of my career would have been sweeter, quieter. For Tango, I was not prepared. People have identified with a character that was not me. Butter, about saucy old pigs...Even Marlon with his charisma and class, felt a bit violated, exploited a little in this film. He rejected it for years. And me, I felt it doubly.*"

Indeed, Schneider felt the film "stole her youth" and even described it as her life's only regret (which is pretty telling considering she was a sexually depraved junky who burned many bridges during her uniquely uneven acting career), yet in my humble opinion, it is easily the greatest and most moving performance she has ever given, thus acting as a rare example where Bertolucci's manipulative and exploitative directing style has had a somewhat positive outcome. Of course, the most incriminating claim against the Guido pervert is the fact that a proud sexual outlaw and perennial bad boy like Brando of all people would claim that

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he felt 'raped' by Bertolucci, yet the film also gave the *On the Waterfront* (1954) star his then-stagnating career back. Ultimately, *Last Tango in Paris* is a pretentious and obscenely overrated proto-artsploitation flick that only has slightly more artistic merit than the typical Tinto Brass fuck flick and it is certainly not the "landmark in movie history" and "movie breakthrough" that purportedly "altered the face of an art form" as kosher critic Pauline Kael lauded it as in her famous puffery-ridden *New York Times* review, yet the film is undeniably alluring and even sometimes provocative, if not in an oftentimes unintentionally hilarious manner as a piece of patently perverse celluloid pomposity that reminds one why Bertolucci is a self-professed Freudian. Notably, conservative Factory auteur Paul Morrissey thought the film was so wretched and pathetically pretentious that he included a line in his Warhol-produced horror satire *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) where the eponymous character played by Udo Kier states, "To know death, Otto, you have to fuck life in the gallbladder" to mock a famous scene from Bertolucci's film where Brando absurdly states, "until you go right up into the ass of death; right up in his ass until you find the womb of fear, and then maybe, maybe then you'll be able to find him." Indeed, featuring unsanctioned sodomy of the buttery and unholy sort and Brando taking two fingers up the bum like a seasoned champ of scatology, Bertolucci's somewhat poorly aged film demonstrates that Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman may have been right when he stated the work was "really about homosexuals." Of course, the director has denied that the film was inspired by any sort of latent homosexuality on his part, stating it was based on a personal sexual fantasy of his that was inspired by how he, "once dreamed of seeing a beautiful nameless woman on the street and having sex with her without ever knowing who she was." It should also be noted that the film was co-written by French feminist filmmaker Agnès Varda, who based the ending of the work on the death of Jim Morrison, who overdosed on heroin in Paris the previous year.

Opening with a curious credit sequence featuring two paintings, *Double Portrait of Lucian Freud and Frank Auerback* and *Study for a Portrait*, by gay British figurative painter Francis Bacon, *Last Tango in Paris* immediately lets the viewer know that they are in store for a superlatively sleazy European arthouse film where post-counter-culture sexual degeneracy of the pseudo-romantic sort is the main selling point. After the credits scene, the viewer is introduced to a majorly melancholy middle-aged American flophouse owner named Paul (Marlon Brando), who screams "Fucking God" while walking aimlessly around Pont de Bir-Hakeim in Paris due to the fact that his beauteous blonde French wife Rosa (played by Veronica Lazar, who went on to star in a number of Bertolucci's films, including *La Luna* (1979), *The Sheltering Sky* (1990), and *Besieged* (1998)) has just committed suicide by slitting her wrists in a bathtub. While walking around Pont de Bir-Hakeim, Paul spots a hot young 19-year-old frog chick with big tits named Jeanne (Maria Schneider), who is headed to Left Bank to look for an

apartment for her and her pompous pansy documentary filmmaker fiancée Tom (Jean-Pierre Leaud) to live together in. Ultimately, Paul follows Jeanne to a dilapidated apartment in Left Bank, speaks French to her a bit with a rather rough American accent, remains silent for a couple minutes or so, and out of nowhere decides to forcefully push the young lady against the wall, rip her panties off, and give her a good old forceful fucking in the crummy flat. While Paul soon leaves without so much as even introducing himself, he returns to the apartment the next day and lays out ground rules to Jeanne regarding how they will meet twice a week to improve one another's carnal knowledge, but that they will never get to know one another. Indeed, Paul even bans Jeanne from telling him her name, but naturally curiosity is eventually going to get the best of the cute, if not severely scattered-brained and emotionally erratic, young girl.

Meanwhile, Jeanne is becoming increasingly annoyed by her effeminate fiancée Tom's incessant tendency towards following her around with a film crew and filming every single mundane thing she does. Indeed, Tom wants to make a *cinéma vérité* documentary about Jeanne's deceased father, who was a hero in the French Foreign Legion that was killed during combat in Algeria in 1958. Indeed, since her immature yet artistically pretentious boy toy is more interested in her long dead daddy than her, Jeanne sees it as only natural to begin a relationship with a lecherous and seemingly half-loony macho American man, who also serves as a depraved father-figure of sorts (in fact, Bertolucci attempted to gain publicity for the film by claiming that Schneider developed a real-life "Oedipal fixation with Brando" during the production). Indeed, as a man whose wife cheated on him and committed suicide in the same flophouse they ran together, Paul has his own problems to worry about and having a random "no strings attached" sexual relationship with a seemingly undefiled young girl seems like just the thing he needs at this rather dark and dreary point in his increasingly intolerable life. When Paul meets with Rosa's mother (Maria Michi), who wants her daughter to have a proper Catholic burial and receive absolution from a priest, the whacked out widower becomes enraged and screams at his crying mother-in-law, "No! Rose didn't believe. Nobody believes in the fucking God here! [...] The Priest doesn't want any suicides. The Church doesn't want any suicides, do they?" Of course, it seems like Paul is more irked by the fact that his wife committed suicide without writing a suicide note than the fact her mother wants to give her a traditional Catholic funeral. Indeed, Paul just cannot seem to fathom why his spouse would commit self-slaughter out of the blue, thus hinting that he is a psychopath who lacks the empathy to understand other people, including his own loved ones. Of course, in the end, Paul will also discover that he does not understand his young Parisian fuck buddy and it will ultimately cost him his rather worthless life.

Naturally, after a couple passionate coitus sessions, Jeanne wants to know more about the personal life of the old fart who likes talking about farts (at one

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point, she remarks he has “strong hands,” to which he replies, “The better to squeeze a fart out of you!”) that has been routinely feeding her extra-furry frog pussy. Paul eventually gives into being more confessional after Jeanne describes how she lost her virginity to her first love, who also happened to be her cousin (ironically, the lucky, if not incestuous, fellow’s name was also Paul). After describing his parents as follows, “My father was a drunk. Tough, Whore-fucker, bar-fighter. Super-masculine. And he was tough. My mother was very poetic. Also a drunk” and claiming that one of his earliest memories involved being arrested for being nude in public at his quaint childhood farm community, Jeanne calls him out on what she believes is pure fabricated bullshit and calls him an “egotist,” proclaiming, “your solitude weighs on me.” As punishment for weighing his solitude on her, Jeanne decides to deny Paul sex and proceeds to get kinky all by her lonesome by masturbating. Meanwhile, Paul learns that a degenerate tenant named Marcel (Massimo Girotti) at the flophouse that he and his dead wife managed was carrying on an affair with Rosa around the same time she committed suicide. Of course, Jeanne’s relationship with her fiancée Tom continues to go sour as she is “tired of being raped” by his camera (indeed, it seems Monsieur Leaud was a stand-in of sorts for the director). With both of them suffering from personal misery related to disappointing lovers, Paul decides to spice things up by rubbing butter on Jeanne’s virginal rectum and forcibly sodomizing her while forcing her to chant, “Holy family. Church of good citizens. The children are tortured until they tell their first lie. Where the will is broken by repression. Where freedom is assassinated by egotism.” Needless to say, Jeanne, who is assumedly an anal virgin, sobs like a scared child while being bestially sodomized by her eccentric elder.

While at a wedding rehearsal with her family and fiancée Tom, Jeanne has a hysterical emotional breakdown of sorts and runs to Paul for safety while still wearing her wedding dress. After taking off her wedding dress, gently bathing her body in a bathtub, and explaining to her that love does not exist, Paul decides to reward Jeanne for her audacious anal courage from the previous day by allowing her to shove her fingers up his middle-aged American porthole, though he forces her to cut her fingernails beforehand. When Paul goes to his dead wife Rosa’s wake, he opts for savagely verbally assaulting his postmortem beloved’s cute corpse by calling her a “cheap, goddamn, fucking, godforsaken whore” and a “goddamn, fucking, pig-fucking liar,” but he ultimately realizes he never really understood her and gets all sentimental, calling her his “sweetheart” and whatnot by the end of his rather unconventional attempt at (non)mourning. More than anything, Paul wants to know why Rosa committed suicide in the first place and he also wishes he had the gall to do the same. Luckily, Jeanne will eventually give him the chance to end his miserable life of endless internal suffering. Rather disconcerted by the fact that he cannot make sense of his wife’s suicide, Paul abruptly decides to stop meeting Jeanne at her apartment for salacious sex

sessions, which naturally shatters the rather naïve young girl, so she decides to go patch things up with Tom, who proves to be a bourgeois bore. Of course, Paul eventually has a change of heart and when he randomly spots Jeanne walking down the street one day, he tries to reconcile with her and begins telling her about his personal life as a lonely widower who owns a sleazy hotel, but she tells him that their relationship is over and that she is marrying Tom. While Jeanne eventually confesses to Paul that she loves him, she will not back down regarding her decision to end their relationship, so the exceedingly egotistical American pervert only becomes all the more determined to make her his perennial fuck-buddy, even though he is really only using her as a fleshy tool to get over the untimely self-slaughter of his belated wife. After getting drunk at a café where a tango contest is taking place (hence, the title of the film!), Paul coerces Jeanne into tangoing with him and while they are doing so, she begins to jerk him off, but during mid-hand-job, she has a panic attack and runs away like a scared little girl to her mommy's apartment. Of course, Paul chases Jeanne down and corners her in her mother's apartment. After Paul asks Jeanne her name for the first time and she tells him it, the sexually aggressive American deadbeat decides to lunge at her, thus resulting in romantic tragedy. After assumedly unconsciously deciding she is no longer interested in fucking her sad and pathetic pseudo-father-figure because he is no longer intriguing (after all, she now knows everything she needs to know about him), Jeanne symbolically pulls out her deceased daddy's military service revolver and blows away Brando with a bullet to the belly. Of course, like most desperate and scornful women looking for a rather shameless way to get out of legal trouble relating to a lover who has fallen out of favor, Jeanne cravenly decides that she will tell the police that Paul tried to rape her and that she was only defending herself. Indeed, in the end, Paul ironically went "right up into the ass of death."

After watching *Last Tango in Paris*, it is easy to see why Maria Schneider rapidly degenerated into an emotional trainwreck of a junky with no sex appeal who ruined her chance of being in countless great films, including surrealist maestro Luis Buñuel's masterful swansong *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977). Indeed, among other things, she destroyed Jacques Rivette's *Merry-Go-Round* (1981) and even quit the production before it was actually finished, thus forcing the director to hire a stand-in to play her role. While in Rivette's film Schneider clearly looks like 'damaged goods' with an intolerably bitchy demeanor, she seems quite fresh and virginal in *Last Tango in Paris*, thus hinting that the actress may have been somewhat right when she proclaimed the film ruined her life, even if she was already engaged in hard drug use and sexual debauchery at the time. Shortly after she died from cancer on 3 February 2011 at age 58, Bernardo Bertolucci publicly stated regarding Schneider, "Her death came too soon, before I could hold her again tenderly, and tell her that I felt connected to her as on the first day, and for once, to ask her to forgive me,"

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and even went so far as to admit, “Maria accused me of having robbed her of her youth and only today am I wondering whether there wasn’t some truth to that.” Of course, as his similar dubious use of young actors like American twink Michael Pitt (*Boardwalk Empire*, *Funny Games*), sensual French Jewess Eva Green (*Kingdom of Heaven*, *Casino Royale*), and French avant-garde auteur Philippe Garrel’s son Louis Garrel (whose godfather is *Last Tango* star Jean-Pierre Léaud) in *The Dreamers* (2003) demonstrates, Bertolucci has only grown more eager with age to use youthful actors as masturbatory tools for his own overtly fetishistic fantasies. Indeed, like his epically mundane Marxist epic *1900* (1976) aka *Novecento*, which features two unclad little boys more or less masturbating, *Last Tango in Paris* features naked children, including a completely pointless scene where a little boy proudly defecates in Schneider’s company. Indeed, as much as I think Sigmund Freud was an anti-Aryan quack whose main objective with his studies was subverting the morality of the Occident, it would certainly be interesting to see what he would have to say about Bertolucci’s films, especially *Last Tango in Paris*, which features incest, obsessive anal fixations, scatology (ranging from defecating little boys to buttery yet brutal bum-fucking), eccentric Electra complexes, and rape fantasies, among countless other things that make it quite clear that the director would have probably been put into a gulag if his lifelong dream of Italy degenerating into a communist hellhole had actually been realized. When Ingmar Bergman stated of the film that it “was really about homosexuals, and only in those terms did the film make sense and become interesting,” Bertolucci replied by stating, “I accept all interpretations of my films. The only reality is before the camera. Each film I make is kind of a return to poetry for me, or at least an attempt to create a poem.” Personally, I interpreted the film as celluloid sexual sadism and exceedingly enthusiastic degeneracy disguised as cinematic poetry, but then again, that is arguably the film’s greatest appeal as a piece of unintentionally absurd con-artistry directed by Italy’s foremost commie conman filmmaker.

-Ty E

VERLIERER

Bernd Schadewald (1987)

If Great Britain has been invaded by every dark shade of untermensch from the former colonies and America has been hit the hardest by so-called Hispanics from south of the border, post-WWII Germany has been most accursed with Islamic aliens (or what liberals call 'guest workers') from Turkey. As a German friend once told me, thank Odin that the Fatherland lost their handful of colonies after losing the First World War as the land of the Teutons is not nearly as racially and culturally chaotic as France and the UK, but still they have their fair share of hostile brown problems. Of course, a number of Teutonic filmmakers, especially those of German New Cinema, have touched on the immigrant problem in the past, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder with *Katzelmacher* (1969) aka *Cock Artist* and *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974) aka *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* and Helma Sanders-Brahms with *Shirins Hochzeit* (1976) aka *Shirin's Wedding*, among countless others. Additionally, foreign directors have touched on the problems of Turk-on-Teuton relations as well, with Turkish queer auteur Kutlug Ataman's Fassbinder-esque work *Lola and Billy the Kid* (1999) aka *Lola + Bilidikid* showing the tragedy that results when Turks trannies and hustlers, sodomite skinheads, and cocksucker Counts interact in the multicultural metropolis of Berlin. Of curious, less pretentious and melodramatic films have been made centering around malignant multiculturalism and culture clashes in Deutschland, with the made-for-television cult gang flick *Verlierer* (1987) aka *Losers* directed by TV-auteur Bernd Schadewald (*Angst, Schicksalsspiel*) being one of the most 'accessible,' if not outmoded, works on this rather revolting yet always provocative subject. A proletarian flick made about the lumpenproletariat for the lumpenproletariat, *Verlierer* depicts two gangs—one German and one Turkish—as they nihilistically battle over territory in the post-industrial Ruhr region located in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Starring Ralf Richter (who, aside from appearing as a degenerate sailor in Wolfgang Peterson's *Das Boot* (1981), is the brother of famed musician FM Einheit) and singer Campino of the kraut punk group *Die Toten Hosen* and who more recently starred in Wim Wenders' *Palermo Shooting* (2008), as well as guest appearances and/or music from thrash/metal/punk groups like *Kreator*, *Sodom*, *Violent Force*, and *Killing Joke*, *Verlierer* was practically destined to become a kraut cult flick. A sort of quasi-realist punk/metal rip-off of *The Warriors* (1979) directed by Walter Hill that was produced for the West German public television channel ZDF, *Verlierer* is essentially the working-class equivalent to *Decoder* (1984), which not coincidentally starred lead Ralf Richter's brother FM Einheit, as an ultimately trashy yet tragic celluloid work depicting how German culture has drastically degenerated with the culture-distorting curse of globalization and the American occupation of the Fatherland after the Second World War.

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At the beginning of *Verlierer*, the viewer is introduced to the rival yet similarly dressed Ruhr-based street gangs—the Rats (which is comprised of Turks) and the Ghetto Sharks (which are mainly comprised of indigenous Aryans of the mostly swarthy sort)—who have decided to call a truce for the time being, though any gang member caught in enemy territory is treated with a beating and loses their fancy leather gang vest. Meanwhile, a young teenager named Mücke aka Gnat (Mario Irrek), who resembles the young anti-hero of Peter Kern's pedo-themed coming-of-age flick *Street Kid* (1992) aka *Gossenkind*, is tired of getting beaten by his beefy and boorish dipsomaniac father, so he runs away from home to join the Sharks gang, which his big bad brother Richy (Ralf Richter) is the infamous Führer of. On his way to meet up with his bro, Mücke helps a young Turk teen named Erdal (Yüksel Biciçi) escape from being brutally mutilated by a gang of lard ass neo-nazis with Wesley Snipes-esque flattops, thus siring a slightly homoerotic would-be-Shakespearean subplot between the two boys. Unfortunately for Mücke, his new Turk friend is a proud member of the Rats, so naturally their friendship will be tested in a most vile way. When little man Mücke finally meets up with his big bro Richy, his brother firmly refuses to let him join the gang and kicks him out of his gang headquarters (an abandoned building riddled with rumble, graffiti, and beer cans), as he wants a better future for his little bro. Feeling rather dejected, Mücke hits the streets and eventually once again bumps into Erdal, who introduces the German boy to his Turkish family and the two act like a bunch of wild whippersnappers around town to celebrate their new-found sense of solidarity. Meanwhile, the Rats are hassled and called "Kanake" (a word used by Germans that is more or less the equivalent of calling a Turk a "nigger") by Teutonic Turk-bashing cops, but the leader of the gang, Hasan (Aram Basyurt), who looks strikingly Nordic for an Asiatic mongrel, scares the men-in-blue away. Eventually, Mücke and Erdal have a falling out after the latter calls the former's brother Richy an "asshole," thus prematurely ending their kameradschaft. To finance their criminal enterprise, Richy, who rather resents the bourgeois and is a self-loathing proletarian of sorts who thankfully never bothered to read Marx, takes his gang of street sharks to a fancy yuppie bar where they steal money and alcohol without a single employee/customer putting up a fight. As anyone would guess from the very beginning of the film, *Verlierer* concludes with a battle between the Rats and Sharks, which results in the death of Richy via stabbing, thus leaving Mücke to suffer the loss of both a friend and brother. Instead of rejecting the gang life, Mücke embraces it by taking the leather gang vest off of his brother's corpse and assumedly continuing the vicious circle of barbaric ignorance the left his big brother dead in the first place.

Essentially, a shockingly well directed and culturally authentic after-school-special featuring the sort of decidedly degenerate music and wardrobes of the unsalvageable disgruntled youth it depicts, *Verlierer* is ironically a work that will

most appeal to the sort of individuals it unflatteringly depicts, hence why this little TV movie has gone on to earn cult status in Germany as a sort of 1980s punk/metal equivalent to Rudolf Thome's *Red Sun* (1970) aka *Rote Sonne* and Klaus Lemke's *Rocker* (1972). Indeed, *Verlierer* also makes for mandatory viewing for fans of Eckhart Schmidt films like *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance*, *Loft* (1985), and *Alpha City* (1985), as well as *Supermarkt* (1974) directed by Roland Klick, *Christiane F. - Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) directed by Uli Edel, and *Strike Back* (1981) aka *Kalt wie Eis* directed by Carl Schenkel, as a work of action-packed celluloid anti-art of the angst-addled sort. Although *Verlierer* makes a fairly feeble attempt to condemn so-called 'xenophobia' by depicting Turk and Kraut proletarians as people stuck in the same boat who ostensibly nonsensically fight each other instead of the real enemy (aka rich Germans and capitalists), the film fails to offer any serious answer to the problem of multiculturalism. By no means a masterpiece in any sense of the word, *Verlierer* ultimately makes for a decent way to waste 90 minutes or so, especially if you're like myself and enjoy watching proud degenerates with metalhead mullets destroying not only themselves, but everyone and everything around them. A sad testament to the fact that Deutschland has devolved into a multicultural hellhole where Aryan peasants have fallen to such a meek and patently pathetic degree that they share the same aesthetically disgusting public housing flats as illegal aliens from the third world, *Verlierer* also unwittingly proves that thrash metal music is so aesthetically worthless and deracinated in character that it appealed to both poor Turks and Teutons alike. Ironically, *Verlierer* director Bernd Schade-wald would go on promote the same subculture by directing a music video for the kraut punk band *Die Toten Hosen*, henceforth demonstrating how kaput German kultur is presently.

-Ty E

SALVATION!: HAVE YOU SAID YOUR PRAYERS TODAY?
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Beth B (1987)

Before becoming the high-profile and wealthy silver-screen stud he is today, Danish-American actor Viggo Mortensen starred in a number of surprisingly unflattering, albeit sometimes rather interesting and idiosyncratic, roles, including in the Charles Band produced penitentiary-based horror flick *Prison* (1988) directed by a then-unknown Renny Harlin and the rather impotent TCM sequel *Leatherface: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre III* (1990) directed by horror hack Jeff Burr, but probably his most peculiar (and, incidentally, first starring) role was as a superlatively pissed off proletarian prick in the sacrilegious celluloid satire of televangelism, *Salvation!* (1987) aka *Salvation!: Have You Said Your Prayers Today?* Directed by a seemingly bitchy broad with the strategically banal and pretentious name “Beth B.,” who was originally associated with the so-called “no wave” scene with other artless auteur filmmakers like Amos Poe and Jim Jarmusch and went on to co-found (with her husband Scott B. and cinematic sped Nick Zedd) the aesthetically repugnant “Cinema of Transgression” movement, *Salvation!* is indubitably the feisty female filmmaker’s greatest (non)success as a filmmaker, which I guess does not say much when considering the rest of her largely disposable gritty celluloid works and the pastiche leftist politics that plague them, but I would be lying if I did not admit I had fun watching a rather undignified yet ballsy blue collar Viggo Mortensen going on anti-gay and anti-Christian rants and trying to swindle a tyrannical turd of a televangelist out of his suavely swindled donation money. Featuring a soundtrack that is largely better than the film itself, including songs by New Order (before they were a gay pop group) and Cabaret Voltaire, *Salvation!* is a lovingly lowbrow celluloid artifact directed by a woman who probably finally realized that making pointless and plot-less avant-tard works does not pay the bills, thus she attempted to bring her pseudo-subversive *Weltanschauung* and angst-ridden auteur aesthetic to the mainstream with rather mixed results. Shot on 35mm film with a small but reasonable budget of \$800,000, *Salvation!* is proof that a little bit of money can go a long way, even for hack experimental female filmmakers of the hysterically heretical sort. Made in the wake of the easy-to-satire Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart scandals, *Salvation!* was apparently heavily inspired by Beth B.’s ironic hipster attendance of what she later described as a “evangelist super-conference” at the Rev. Jerry Fallwell’s headquarters in Lynchburg, Virginia, thus the film does have a certain sardonic authenticity to it that makes one get the sense that the director has some vague inkling of “respect” for the rabid reverend she so blatantly and blasphemously portrays in a tastelessly cheap cinematic work that has much in common aesthetically with the televangelist shows it so ludicrously lampoons.

Jerome Stample (Viggo Mortensen) is one pissed off proletarian and he cer-

tainly has a number of reasons to be as his mentally perturbed and mystically minded wife Rhonda (punk diva Exene Cervenka of the LA punk band X, who married Mortensen in 1987 after the two met on the set) donates half of his paycheck to a Christian carny Televangelist named Reverend Edward Randall (Stephen McHattie). On top of that, bourgeois preppie brats in expensive sports cars hassle him, calling Jerome “white trash” and further pushing him over the edge. After Jerome has the supreme dishonor of being fired from his less than prestigious shipyard job, he comes up with a malicious scheme to blackmail the good Reverend Randall, who is a closet porn addict and alcoholic, by using his sexy sister-in-law to seduce the servant of god and entrap him in a saucy sex scandal. A man who is rather perturbed by the fact that “New York City is the least Christian City in the United States” and that Catholics (“these people who are SO CLOSE to being saved...”), Jews (aka “those bankers”), and atheists (“worshippers of the devil”) are the majority in the big rotten multicultural apple, Rev. Randall seems to have even more visceral hatred in his holy soul than Jerome, but things change when a naughty nympho named Lenore (played by marginal musician/actor Dominique Davalos) randomly shows up to the miracle man’s house to relieve him of his metaphysical chastity belt and steaming sexual repression via her rather lecherous and sadomasochistic ways. Of course, lascivious Lenore, who is Jerome’s sassy sister-in-law, has been recruited by the ruthless redneck schemer, who faithfully believes that the positively divine primetime man is “jacking-off your cash, my cash, everybody’s cash so he can dress like a faggot,” thus feeling his blackmail plot is quite morally pristine as some sort of loony left-wing redneck Robin Hood. Naturally, Rev. Randall is no fag and especially no friend of fags, but he does learn that he is into lurid S&M after exploring large legs Lenore’s sin-ridden flesh. The Reverend even tries to rape Lenore, which sends hysterical hillbilly Jerome, who can’t keep his hands off his wifey’s little sis, off the deep end, inspiring him to attempt to murder the horny holy man while rattling off a number of pseudo-Nietzschean philistine diatribes. Like Lenore, gentleman Jerome gets a hick kick out of physically ravaging the Rev, albeit in a less sexual manner, but it is the brazen blue-collar hero’s TV-addicted wife Rhonda who ultimately impresses the religious man. After fleeing from his less than humble abode to escape the flagrant and fetishistic physical abuse of Jerome and his sister-in-law Lenore, Rev Randall hitches a ride with Rhonda by happenstance, whose militant “fight fire with fire” philosophy to Christianity and dealing with its enemies rather impresses the televangelist. Radical Jesus fan Rhonda ultimately talks the Rev into allowing her to be a co-host on his show and the rest is history. Introducing a rather lame form of Christian heavy metal with Rhonda as the fierce frontman, money literally begins to fall from the sky for the Christ-rocker and Reverend Randall, but perennial proletarian loser Jerome gets the short end of the stick via divorce by his unhinged (and now filthy rich) wife in the process.

SALVATION!: HAVE YOU SAID YOUR PRAYERS TODAY?

Beginning in a quasi-politically incorrect and thematically and aesthetically heretical manner, *Salvation!*—a cinematic work that is essentially the (unsurprisingly) less known East Coast equivalent to Alex Cox's immaculate punk cult masterpiece *Repo Man* (1984)—unfortunately devolves quickly into a tedious piece of both intentional and unintentional celluloid anarchism that feels like it will never end until it does end and the viewer is rather shocked by what went wrong in what could have been blasphemous celluloid bliss. Indeed, being someone who previously made experimental short films and a couple feature-length works with her husband, Beth B. was probably ill-equipped to create a normal, quasi-mainstream movie and it certainly shows in *Salvation!*—a film that seems to have fallen from celluloid grace. Additionally, the two lead actresses, Exene Cervenka and Dominique Davalos, who resemble Beth B., as well as the director's god awfully repellent ex-collaborator Lydia Lunch, are almost indistinguishable with their chubby cheeks, unkempt ebony hair, and overwhelming homeliness. Judging by what little I know about her, I would have to assume that like Lydia Lynch—a self-professed 'predatory woman'—Beth B. utilized *Salvation!* as a way to carry out a fantasy of sexually debasing a holy conman via living vicariously through her virtual doppelgänger characters. While Judeo-Christian evangelists have destroyed about ¼ of American brains with their pseudo-mystical minded mumbo jumbo, it pales in comparison to the seemingly irrevocable damage liberals and Trotskyites have done to academia and the entertainment world, not to mention Hollywood's heinous effects on the majority of ADD-addled American minds. Indeed, I cannot help but agree with raunchy redneck Rhonda when she states "Secular humanism...they are the worst type of all" as humanists are just lapsed Christians with a more sophisticated slave-morality or as Nietzsche expressed in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), human rights were designed for the weak to constrain the strong, thus denying the emancipation of life as opposed to its idealistic agenda to further it as they perversely profess.

Whether its backwards medieval style Amerikkkan pseudo-Christianity or atheistic liberal humanism that is to blame for the cultural vacancy and social degeneration that reigns in the glorious United States of America, one must admit that the Reverend Randall was right when he stated, that the "great American dream has turned into a hideous American nightmare." Of course, the Rev was probably on to something when he also stated, "There are more Jews in New York City than there are in the Holy Land. And there are more banks in New York than there are anywhere else in the world," but people like Beth B. would never admit such a thing as it would go outside her 'subversive' comfort zone. After all, what groups are more safe to spit vehement hatred on than Christian and work-classing whites (but especially a combination of the two), which *Salvation!* does rather conservatively, but at least Beth B., unlike the heebs in Hollywood and shabbos goy toys in academia, had the decency to demonstrate that rednecks can make for much better iconoclasts and assertive anti-Christ's as portrayed by

Viggo Mortensen in a curiously charming performance that the actor probably now regrets. One also must give credit to a woman who directs a film with highly quotable lines like “more cash for gash” and “cash for the hungry gash,” even if she meant it to be a biting spoof of lowbrow misogyny or something. Of course, until the day comes when someone makes a holocaust satire in which neurotic Jewboys like Woody Allen or Larry David go around hysterically kvetching in a concentration camp about the lack of kosher food will a truly biting and bodacious cinematic spoof of the first order be born.

-Ty E

CANICHE
CANICHE

Bigas Luna (1979)

This started out without a word; a review without text. I brainstormed upon how I would handle this film in particular, given that it is otherworldly compared to Bigas Luna's other works. *Caniche* (1983) is unlike any that I've seen of his, created in the beginning of his career, raw and abrasive beyond question. It also happened to be the first picture of his that I had seen. *Caniche* ultimately turned me onto Bigas Luna's archives as a whole. From his critically acclaimed stylizing of cuisine and intimacy, Bigas Luna has evolved into quite a contemporary and effeminate force to be reckoned with. From the past comes spilling something blank and furious - *Caniche* is Àngel Jové's testament to his internal abscess, proving with flying colors that rarely an actor can achieve the impassivity of many of his filmic manifestations. I remember this night very vividly. I swallowed sleeping pills as to ensure an early night. I find myself often being distracted by thoughts of film or perusing various resources on the Internet, always expanding my horizons. With promises of a simple experience, I played *Caniche* to a weary host and enjoyed the images so much that I fought the effects of the medication until the film was over.

Without even mentioning, I'll admit that *Caniche* required an additional viewing as what I was feeling and fighting may leave me described as senseless. *Caniche*, as you might know, translates to poodle, as to, Danny the poodle, who might be described as the main character of this little number and the catalyst for the whirlwind to come. Making up the near entirety of the film is a study of the bored bourgeois. Two siblings live under the financial stability provided from their wealthy and withering Aunt Linda. As per usual, man plays beast more than ever and Bernardo (Àngel Jové) wishes death upon his ailing relative. No reason is permitted other than Linda's scolding of his hypochondria and his likeness to his mother. In choice moments, we are given sight at Àngel Jové's character complaining about his teeth and how they pain him. This probably isn't the first situation of unnecessary medical treatment he has found himself in. The rival sister, Eloisa, flaunts and flirts about the small cast of characters and lands a sordid rendezvous with a local veterinarian whose big plans to erect a dog park also lends to the finale of sexual desolation and debauchery. What turns the mixture black is Bigas Luna's incorporation of the ever-foreign zoophilia. This is displayed in many scenes but the most introductory and spoiler-free can be summarized with Eloisa smearing honey on her cunt and beckoning Danny to lick it off, sending Bernardo into a furor. Mutual care taking of Danny is then applied vigorously with Bernardo's jealousy. Asking simple things of Bernardo such as to remove a flea, we witness, clenched teeth and all, excessive force with a set of tweezers as to ensure suffering on Danny's part.

I derived pleasure from listening to the mongrel howl in pain, I'll admit. Bigas Luna has this way with grafting fits of emotion from his lead characters unto you. While Bernardo was naive and an over-aggressor, he was also human and victim to his own desires, however inhuman they may appear. This also leads to my assertion that Caniche is one of the strangest films in his oeuvre (Still need to see Bilbao) as it's more adept in masculinity than other film following. Bigas Luna is especially known for his preaching of the feminine art form, whereas Caniche is a materialization of his most debased and primal of taboos. Despite being such a minimalistic film, Caniche has much subtext of the pathology of deviance. While it might not give scientific reasoning behind the nature of these siblings' actions, it explores this dark crevice and gives it a fitting tribute while not coming off as a hyperbole. For an example that doesn't strafe into spoiler territory, it is implied that the meat these silver spoon-raised brother/sister pair eat is the flesh of minced puppies. In a scene expressing the sorrows of every activist, Eloisa is shown adopting a handful of barely month old puppies and quick-cuts to a chopping block. Subtlety may be utilized but it is hardly compulsory. Caniche is a twisted gem, this is for certain. It serves as a collection of deviations so awry that it is hard to swallow and certainly harder to see it for what it really is - poetic. If your temperament can permit constant bickering between siblings then Caniche might be right up your alley. Don't expect too much aesthetic, however. Early on in his career, Bigas Luna seemed to favor style and design as opposed to polished imagery. This is certainly a diamond in the rough and wholly experimental in contrast with his more refined, modern works of art.

-mAQ

ANGUISH
ANGUISH

Bigas Luna (1987)

In all honesty, *Anguish* (1987) tastes best as a blind leap of faith so if you have any conviction and wish to see this film with its intended effect, stop reading now. For those who have either seen it or just don't give a damn, allow me to divulge many of the visible secrets to Bigas Luna's only straight-laced horror film. *Anguish* is essentially a Spanish envisioning of classic Italian horror tropes, namely Stage Fright and Demons. Opening up with a black screen emblazoned with a warning, the screen threatens the possibility of being victim to subliminal messages or induced hypnosis. We then meet "the Mommy", Alice Pressman (Zelda Rubinstein), as she scolds her large son, John (played by Michael Lerner), for accidentally releasing a bird to flutter about the house. After the two stumble after and catch the flying rodent, Alice then puts on a spiral record and hypnotizes her son to kill and fetch eyeballs from victims. You see, poor John is far gone being myopic and his mother has hopes that stealing the eyes of the city will gift her son with new sight and vengeful sight. This is where the cord is pulled, so to speak. *Anguish* reveals its true(?) intentions by retreating the camera past the screen and revealing that these instances are a popular horror movie known as *The Mommy* being watched by a live audience; an audience that is equally disgusted of John's retina retribution.

I cannot deny the fact that cinema has largely impacted who I am today. Each and every viewing shapes new morality out of me and leaves impressions spanning from fetishes to general outlook. So it comes as no surprise that as I watch out of intrigue, I can understand, even embrace, Patti's nauseousness due to the horrors and blood-letting of the film. During the radical hypnosis spells that *The Mommy* volleys at the screen, Patti's hands clench her side and she surveys the auditorium begging for an exit. It is at this point when she notices she is not the only one reeling from the effects of the reel. Here is where Bigas Luna introduces a favorite among his career, Ángel Jové, reprising since *Caniche* and *Bilbao*. The surprise spills in rather unexpectedly. You watch the screen, playing sick voyeur to Patti's breakdown. It's easy to pass off as a case of paranoia inflated by fictitious slaughter. Once a madman within the theater begins systematically murdering the theater employees and guests to mimic the on-screen shenanigans, however, well, that's when fears are realized and *Anguish* dives into its own wonderful excess. The intricate rhythm of *Anguish* is reflected nicely with the gorgeous poster art. In a retro backdrop using Zelda Rubinstein as an instrument of fear, "The eyes of the city are mine!" scowls the poster. This, of course, is but a glimpse at the brilliance of Bigas Luna, a director who manhandles and breathes life into genres as often dull and formulaic as romance and horror - which also appear at the opposite ends of each other in the genre spectrum.

Inherently, *Anguish* is a film expressing the woes and sorrows of every mother whose

children peep at objectionable material in the cinema. Anguish is worry incarnate. The very topic of sensitization is toppled as Anguish features not one, but several swayed by the effects of cinema and they are not all psychopathic. What Patti begins to succumb to may very well be the early symptoms of the sickness that has spread to Àngel Jové's killer character. As the concessionist exclaims right before she meets her fate, "Boy, you must know this picture by heart!", a seed is planted that which, upon further musing, sprouts a sapling of an idea. It is ultimately an idea that flourishes into what one can call fanaticism. Could someone like you or I be driven into madness as easily as some of the more susceptible viewers? I won't argue the case against fiction but Anguish hits all the right notes as it spirals into some bizarre, radical new demonstration of old concepts. The terror of Patti and her once-daft friend Linda turns tangible and I must comment on Àngel Jové's excellent performance, Comparing and contrasting his roles in Caniche and Anguish, I must express admiration for his daunting performances, as simple as they seem. Both characters express a degree of psychopathy but Anguish removes the compassion and replaces it with a terrible mother complex that begs to question his upbringing. Anguish cuts a swath right through the definition of meta and sutures the wound with tight-knit execution and minimalism within minimalism. For an even sweeter treat, stay through the credits and gasp when you realize that the "reality" is victim to another critical audience, who may or may not be stars in their own right.

-mAQ

THE AGES OF LULU
THE AGES OF LULU

Bigas Luna (1990)

Appointing myself with the task of seeking out select films from the library of Bigas Luna, I stumbled upon *The Ages of Lulu*, my third acquaintance with the Spanish auteur, the first being *Caniche* with *Jamon Jamon* following. Based off of a best-selling erotic novel of the same name, the film chronicles the sexual provocation within our anchor, Lulu. The film starts off rather innocent enough when Lulu eyes her brother's best friend, Pablo, and proceeds to initiate an erotic congregation that turns into blissful marriage but eventually boils into, hands down, one of the strangest and most terrifying finales to be found in the genre of romance. What turns Bigas Luna on to me further is this strange connection I feel with each film of his I view. It resembles a vivid union of his traditional aesthetic - food and sex. Call it soothing familiarity if you will. Tying together his films beyond passion and pain are similarities that outstretch through the many alleys of his oeuvre. In the similarly tragic pieces of love, *Jamon Jamon* and *The Ages of Lulu*, pigs (as well as other forms of cattle) are featured exclusively as important pieces toward development. For Penelope Cruz in *Jamon Jamon*, a double entendre is played with the title, *Jamon* translating to ham and the scene in which Javier Bardem refers to Cruz's breasts tasting that of ham and in *The Ages of Lulu*, a plush pig is squeezed and adored unconditionally. Consider it the last breath of chastity the girl will have.

The Ages of Lulu is a marvel in regards that, being adapted from written form, becomes a film as well as a reference guide on what not to do in a sense, specifically in the case of unleashing your wildest desires and lusts. That is really the horror of it all, the whirlpool from which to escape requires an unbelievable amount of self-control. If the sequential downward spiral in film is where your heart lies than prepare to meet your muse. *The Ages of Lulu* is a very temperamental film, much akin to the mood swings that accompany menstruation. Upon viewing the film, my voyage through the ripples of transgressive sexuality was smooth-sailing to say the least. I figured that this film wouldn't deserve a word on it, not for being of substandard quality but for the absence of subversive material to cover. Once *The Ages of Lulu* hit the hour mark though, I spotted a terrifying trend to become introduced and I had no choice but to hold tight and witness some of the more depraved happenings to a sweet girl since visualized in Jack Ketchum's *The Girl Next Door*. The only difference is that in this case, consent was flagged more often than not, unless of course we count the fact that the very soul of Lulu was being raped throughout the motion picture. A fact of making love to a committed partner involves something known as "body mapping" in which you trace over your lovers body with the utmost importance of sensuality as to connect the dots of what makes their body tick. Bigas Luna's exceptional storytelling has a similar effect on our sweet Lulu, oh so susceptible to fleshy

desires and by films end, we're both outraged, enraged, yet, secure in the comfort of experiencing and knowing her own pleasures. This is gratifying filmmaking at its finest. No doubt magnified by Luna's specialty in design.

The playfulness of *The Ages of Lulu* is part of what makes the conclusion so jarring, a smack to the face, really. The film opens on a note of such maternal beauty that women everywhere would coo and claw softly at the television screen with idle static tickling their fingertips. This shot in particular being an infant placed on a white table. This shot ranges from the sterility of the blinding whites of the room to the almost-obscene nature of the close-up to the infant's genitalia, this child being Lulu, ergo, Vagina. I really only call obscene for my sake cause as I was sitting there the very presence of this made me somewhat uncomfortable, not to mention the fact that the camera looms there for a good portion of time before a figure powders the fertile crescent. This vaporizes pretty quickly once it becomes apparent that moreover *The Ages of Lulu* is the tale of Lulu's cunt, rather than her person. Featured alongside the fantastic and lovely Francesca Neri is Javier Bardem in one of his first feature film performances as a twisted gay hustler. The inclusion of his character is rather nice considering I backtracked from *Jamon Jamon* (in which he is a starring character) to *The Ages of Lulu* (only given a sliver of screen-time but blessed with a weighty character). Another reiteration of Bigas Luna's style is his dwelling on the fault of man and his open-endedness with blame. By near every film's end I'm left attempting to trace back a fault of some kind because I desperately want to blame a given character but again, I'm stumped.

It seems that every film I view on the female sexuality turns heads into a tale of becoming a whore, whether it be blamed on accident or on account of a thirst for bodily fluids that is never quenched. *The Ages of Lulu* is no stranger to this notion as the build up of Lulu's fetishes become ridiculously overbearing on the once sweet girl. From mingling with a transvestite to forcing gay men to consummate with her, there is no end to the depravity that Lulu indulges herself with. It starts off nice as always but once the idea of love becomes expendable Bigas Luna grabs you by the neck and shakes you. No amount of preparation could prepare you for the final twenty minutes. It is such a departure in tone that it borders on a horror film and will leave you scowling at the selfishness of the libido. I will even admit to muttering "what about Ely?" I haven't even mentioned a previous "shocker" in the film when Pablo decides to help a friend out and subjects Lulu's body to one of the more kinky and socially unacceptable taboos out there. *The Ages of Lulu* is prone to dissenters, this I've noticed. While it's easy to sprinkle salt in wounds I figure that *The Ages of Lulu* is exempt from such incessant banter as perfect cinema is as rare as it gets. Here, Bigas Luna captures what makes women tick while keeping the mystery enshrouded. An exemplary work of erotic fiction that doesn't seem too far from reality.

-mAQ

TAPEHEADS
TAPEHEADS

Bill Fishman (1988)

Roman catholic wusses John Cusack and Tim Robbins star in the very American 1980's (1988 to be exact) comedy Tapeheads. Tapeheads is a satire of the music video age and the MTV generation (disgusting). The film also promotes the American virtue of "getting rich doing nothing." Ivan and Josh (played by Cusack and Robbins) decide working a secure job as security guards doesn't really satisfy their uneventful existences (they get fired anyways). The only thing to do is to start making lowbrow music videos in hopes of getting rich quick. Tapeheads is a fairly lame film that seems even dated for when it was released. The film features a soundtrack of then already washed up musicians such as the Circle Jerks, Dead Kennedys, Devo, and Fishbone. I couldn't even pinpoint which horrible generic 1980s song was which band. A shame that such innovative bands turned in to generic 1980s MTV rock. Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra even makes an appearance in Tapeheads as a FBI stating the ironic, "Remember what we did to Jello Biafro." I guess there is always room for Jello. Tapeheads possibly features the first negro "white face" music group. This role reversal of sorts (black men parodying white music) is a sign of the affirmative action times. Two aging brothers look in disgust at the "white face" group and one comments, "the whole place is full of losers and white trash." The Swanky Modes (the two brothers) are a legendary soul duo that Ivan and Josh have decided to resurrect. Tapeheads is a film where average Joes realize it's time to take advantage of American whorey and go for the big bucks. As Ivan states, "cash flow = personal freedom." He has that much right. FBI Agent Jello Biafra showing ID. The 1980s is possibly the worst era for the art of cinema. The complete and utter lack of culture reflects a generation of cheap hedonism and doing everything for a buck. I watched Tapeheads in hopes that I would find something somewhat nostalgic and entertaining (I don't expect a "masterpiece"). I went out of the film feeling like I was going to vomit up VHS tapes. Having an old white man singing a rap about chicken 'n waffles wasn't funny the first time and certainly didn't catch my fancy in the end credits. In conclusion, John Cusack has the gayest mustache ever.

-Ty E

GANJA /& HESS

Bill Gunn (1973)

While truly black directed cinematic works are marginal, Negro arthouse flicks are all but nonexistent, yet, as far as I know at least, there is only one quasi-Blaxploitation arthouse horror hybrid, *Ganja & Hess* (1973) aka *Black Evil* aka *Black Vampire* aka *Blackout: The Moment of Terror* aka *Blood Couple* aka *Double Possession* aka *Vampires of Harlem* directed by Bill Gunn (*Stop, Personal Problems*). Featuring *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) star Duane Jones in what is undoubtedly the black American actor's second most 'famous' and arguably most important role, *Ganja & Hess* is a strikingly marvelous metaphysical vampire flick full of semi-psychedelic surrealist imagery, sanguine sex and blood ecstasy, seemingly inane intellectual psychobabble, pseudo-blaxploitation conventions, striking allegorical imagery, Negro Christian spirituals and racially conscious blood mysticism of the jigaboo fascistic sort. A film undoubtedly made for blacks by blacks, *Ganja & Hess*, not unlike Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), technically cannot be qualified as a blaxploitation work as it did not have a white/Jewish director, white actors (aside from a dubious phantom and druggy hooker of sorts), nor crew member (aside from a token Jewish producer) and was surely not made to capitalize off of the popularity of sassy yet satirical and stereotype-driven spade flicks of that time. In fact, if anything, *Ganja & Hess* has more in common with European New Wave movements of the same time period than any so-called blaxploitation and aside from a couple moments of unintentional humor, Gunn's flick is far from a sardonic Negro minstrel movie, but more like an Afrocentric avant-garde flick that is more focused on a deep love and kinship for one's blood than an aesthetically repellant work rooted in a bloodthirsty hatred of honkies and other melanin-derived individuals whose ancestral roots all derive from the dark continent. A work featuring hallucinatory hottentot dream sequences of African tribes people, with the primary archetypal centerpiece of these surreal scenes being an obese fertility goddess resembling Aunt Jemima, and arcane (but assumedly fictional) African rituals, *Ganja & Hess* is surely a Negro völkisch flick that was apparently inspired by the somber arthouse flicks of Swedish auteur Ingmar Bergman, yet totally, esoterically negrofied. Although originally intended as some sort of *Blacula* (1972) rip-off, *Ganja & Hess* created a totally different film using seemingly possessed improvisation and whatnot, even abandoning the script Gunn had originally assembled to impress the Jewish producer Chiz Schultz, thus assembling one of the truly authentic pre-hip-hop/pre-crack black America flicks as a decidedly diacritic work that is like Ousmane Sembène's *Xala* (1975) meets George A. Romero's *Martin* (1978), except minus a good portion of the Negro negativity that is so typical of most black filmmakers, especially Spike Lee and even Melvin Van Peebles.

GANJA /& HESS

Dr. Hess Green (Duane Jones) is a no bullshit kind of nigga who, as a Christian minister named Reverend Luther Williams (Sam Waymon, who also composed the film's score) who also acts his chauffeur (to help support his family on the side) states, is "an addict" (of intellectual obsession) and "victim" (of whity and his dominant kultur) who is "addicted to blood" (aka racial consciousness and later literal blood) and a brilliant professor of archeology and geology that is overseeing excavation of the ancient (and totally 'invented') Negroid civilization of Myrthia, but things get rather strange when he takes on a high strung, high yellow assistant named George Meda (played by director Bill Gunn). George is a self-described 'neurotic' Negro and a rare suicidal black man (indeed, suicide is much rarer among blacks in comparison to whites) who gives Hess a mess of trouble to take on. While in a seeming hypnotic state, George goes on a number of esoteric Afrocentric rants that seem to horrify and perplex Hess, but the good doctor seems more perturbed by his suicide attempts. First, George seems possessed by the unconscious collective memories of the slave days as he goes to lynch himself, but Herr Hess stops him in his troubled tracks. When Hess attempts to stop George another time, the sophisticated suicidal spade stabs him with an ancient African dagger (subsequently turning Hess into a vampire) and finally succeeds at self-slaughter after taking a sacrificial bath, which involves brushing his teeth in his own dirty bath water. While George is dead, he has left a beautiful black diva of a wife in Amsterdam and she comes to Hess looking for her husband (who she admits is 'troubled'), but instead, starts a rather hot and heavy relationship with the archeologist even though she believes the man has killed her husband in oftentimes sordid scenarios that are the black melodramatic equivalent of a Fassbinder flick.

Discrediting Occidental man's thought in a rather poetic way, George types up the following decidedly unhinged rant before committing suicide, "To the black male children, philosophy is a prison; it disregards the uncustomary things about you. The result of individual thought is applicable only to itself. There is a dreadful need in man to teach. It destroys the pure instinct to learn. The navigator learns from the stars. The stars teach nothing. The sun opens the mind and sheds light on the flowers. The eyes shame the pages of any book. Gesture destroys concept. Involvement mortifies vanity. You are despised of the earth that is as if you were water in the desert. To be adored on this planet is to be a symbol of success. And you must not succeed on any terms. Because life is endless. You are as nameless as a flower. You are the child of Venus and her natural affection is lust. She will touch your belly with her tongue but you must not suffer in it. For love is all there is. And you are canon fodder in its defense." Indeed, such words embody the reasonably positive spirit of Ganja & Hess, a rare pro-black film that focuses more on self-determination than self-hate and irrational hatred for the white man.

After being stabbed with the seemingly demonic vampiric dagger, Hess be-

comes totally consumed by ancient African civilization that survives in spirit and has taken over the doctor's spirit, thus acting as an allegorical connection between the past and present for people of black blood, but he also develops a thirst for literal human blood and he is slightly less racially conscious when it comes to that, even draining an urban white whore of her precious hemoglobin. Although I cannot positively articulate what sort of spirit and 'mysticism' Ganja & Hess permeates as a man of purely Northern/Western European ancestry, the film undoubtedly has a positively penetrating spiritual essence that more so permeates the viewer's soul over the intellect, which was undoubtedly director Bill Gunn's intent because, while Hess is a brilliant man and a scholar of multiple fields, it is not until he receives something more visceral and metaphysical as a literal black bloodsucker that he becomes a more well rounded and complete individual, even if a couple black (and white) beauties end up dying in the process. As with any people, it is only blood, or 'lifeblood,' that lives on even when civilizations and cultures die and it is only when a particular hemoglobin is diluted or disappears that a people are totally finished and extinguished for eternity. Indubitably, it is through 'blood memory' and not archeological digs that Hess is able to fully understand what cannot be articulated through words nor understood by the mere and severely limited human intellect. Probably most interesting is that Ganja proves to be the most dominant and masterful character in Ganja & Hess thus hinting that the black female is the more dominant of the sexes (which is further supported by the fact that the Myrthian leader that Hess sees is a queen of the archetypical Venus physique and not an ultra masculine king), as she not only takes over the doctor's house, but she ultimately inevitably controls Hess (who is initially in control of the situation) and his subservient butler Archie (Leonard Jackson). Ganja and Hess 'marry' not once, but twice, first in a traditional ceremony and then by ritualistic knifing when the doctor turns the black diva into a bloodlusting queen of the night. Unfortunately, Ganja proceeds to fornicate with other men after her undead transformation and Hess finds relief in his chauffeur Williams' black church despite being a quasi-Satanic entity of sorts, thus spurring a new sort of spiritual awakening in him.

Clearly made with a post-Civil Rights/counter-culture black audience in mind, thus making it virtually impossible viewing for white-girl-addicted and rap-loving modern day blacks, Ganja & Hess offers a dichotomy of the two 'spiritual' extremes and options for the American Negro community: black racial nationalism of the quasi-pagan sort, which is largely based in an 'invented history,' or American-Fried Negro Christianity. Director Bill Gunn seems to leave it up to the viewer to decide what *Weltanschauung* is preferable, but the Myrthian religion of blood seems to be a more 'evil' yet equally seductive lifestyle as portrayed in Ganja & Hess, hence its dangerous and spiritually schizophrenic effects on the characters of the films. Of course, European and European-Americans can learn something from Ganja & Hess as well because, like the National So-

GANJA /& HESS

cialist thinkers of yesteryear, who argued about whether they should adopt a neo-Pagan Odiniſt religion or maintain their Germanized Chriſtianity (Nazi philoſopher Alfred Roſenberg totally rejected Catholicism), the characters of Gunn's film muſt decide whether their anceſtral roots are more important than transcending ſomething new for the future or maintaining the Chriſtian religion their anceſtors were forced to adopt as ſlaves. A rather idiosyncratic work of metaphysical horror that nonsensically features European art (where African art ſhould be) and black Americans ſpeaking French and Dutch, *Ganja & Hess* is a film about a conflicted race of people that, whether they like or not, have been 'culturally tainted' by the white man and muſt now decide, as a culturally and racially mongrelized people (director Gunn's character ſymbolically being the lighteſt ſkinned and moſt psychologically conflicted), where their dubious future leads. Even the title of the film, *Ganja & Hess*, brings up the question of the future of black American, with the hedoniſtic character of *Ganja* being a reference to marijuana (which is ſmoked throughout the film) and the character of *Hess* being a reference to a more Weſtern, Chriſtian, and intellectual future. Negro ſpirituality aſide, *Ganja & Hess* is a film any proſpective black (or even white) filmmaker ſhould ſee if they are ſerious about making truly revolutionary and philoſophical cinematic works with not only a penetrating message, but also a poetic ſtyle, as well as rare proof that truly original black auteur filmmakers can exiſt even if their works have been totally eclipsed by the popularity of artiſtically retarded rap 'music' and beſtial twerk videos.

-Ty E

FLESH EATER

Bill Hinzman (1988) Bill Hinzman may be the most terrifying and iconic zombie in film history. His performance in George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* never becomes old. Finding out that he had written, directed, produced, edited, and starred in his own film attracted me. I had no idea what to expect from this zombie god turned filmmaker.

Flesh Eater met way past any expectations I had for the film. Bill Hinzman was competent in every aspect of low budget film making. Amateurish yet solid, *Flesh Eater* fits in with any other zombie film. Its especially fun for those that are fans of *Night of the Living Dead*. Its reflexive nature bleeds nostalgia throughout. Its homage to an accidental famous killing in *NOTLD* produces great laughs. Bill Hinzman was also able to convince a young naked girl to let him fondle her for the sake of undead art. I'm sure *Flesh Eater* holds a special place in his heart. Hinzman even eats the body of his young daughter and in the process she drops her candy bar. What a great father. I don't know if Mr. Hinzman was having a midlife crisis when deciding to create *Flesh Eater*, but if so, it worked to his psychologically unstable advantage. Although paying many tributes to *NOTLD*, *Flesh Eater* is a little more plentiful in the gore category. Shotgun ignited exploding heads proved enough gore for the average desensitized gore fan. The acting and performances are similar to that of a *Friday the 13th* film, except parts of *Flesh Eater* are actually funny. Easily some of the funniest killings I've seen in a while. One notable killing involves the much needed flesh eating of a wise ass clown costume Dracula. You find yourself rooting for Bill Hinzman and his crew of infected undead slaves. *Flesh Eater* ends with a barn burning which was unnecessarily long in duration similar to the trailer burning in John Water's *Pink Flamingos*. In the aftermath of the fire lie charred bodies similar to those seen in pictures from the bodies in the Dresden bombings during World War 2. Interestingly enough, the prop master was able to make these bodies in one day. Bill Hinzman succeeded in creating a zombie flick acceptable to obsessive fans of the original *Night of the Living Dead*. *Flesh Eater* is packed with decent gore, humorous situations, and retrospective entertainment. *Flesh Eater* is mandatory viewing for anyone that is a fan of the number one zombie.

-Ty E

TOXIC CRUSADERS: THE MOVIE
TOXIC CRUSADERS: THE MOVIE

Bill Hutton (1997)

Toxic Crusaders is the undeniably horrific mess that is the effect of taking a franchise, known for its sex and voracious gore, and trimming it until suitable for kids. Note: This doesn't mean it isn't entertaining. The first three episodes of the show were put together to form this "movie." Toxic Crusaders isn't the only example of an extreme R-rated film being transferred to cartoon. Rambo was also done, and just like this, was heavily altered. The story finds the Toxic Crusader (Note: Avenger sounded too harmful, so they changed it to a more heartfelt term) and his struggles with fighting polluters. The storyline is almost a carbon copy of Captain Planet, and the show was easily identifiable as a cash-in to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. You can even tell by the theme song. Instead of Toxie hooking up with a blind bimbo and having sex with her, he gets a "girlfriend" who lost her glasses. Apparently, disabilities are too much of a sensitive topic to be aired on TV. They ripped out all the violence and replaced the latter with his magical mop that sweeps crime away. Toxic Crusaders is inevitably a mash-up of every popular 90's show. The influences of TMNT, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, Captain Planet, and even Creepy Crawlers shine through its tromatic skin. While being a rip-off of everything kids loved, you cannot help yourself but enjoy, and even laugh at the piece of toxic sludge that it is. Lloyd Kaufman has really expanded the Troma video library by creating a cartoon show. It makes me wonder what Troma wouldn't do. It seems for a while, Kaufman went on a merchandising binge, creating comics, toys, lunch boxes, video games, books, and even stickers. Due to these policies, it's hard to tell which is more well-known, The Avenger or the Crusader. The film has iconic villains and it's own strong charisma. Maybe that is why Troma is always so appealing. Sometimes, I wonder what the world would have been like, had the live-action Toxic Crusaders film been made. Perhaps in Citizen Toxie, we would have seen Toxie take on good Toxie, and destroy him. This is a cheesy blast through nostalgia and is more easily available than the rest of the shows we love.

-Maq

RUN AND KILL

Billy Tang (1993)

Run And Kill is one of the few CAT III films that I can honestly admit to love. What set this film apart from every other one is its complex plot that is equipped with an amazing cast. Kent Chang (Fatty) is an honest hard-working man who has a wife that he loves and a wonderful daughter. He is very punctual to work at all times and is a very friendly guy. One fateful afternoon, he happens to come home early to see his wife screwing the neighborhood shop owner. Emotionally battered, he tells them to take it in the bedroom so no one will see them. This reveals his first weakness - he has a repressed anger problem. In a fit of depression, he wanders around the seedy part of town till he locates a bar called 1997. Outside of this bar, he meets one of his old high school friends who buys him a drink and leaves with a woman immediately. Fatty then sits at the bar taking Tequila shot after shot until he is trashed. A woman then comes to the bar named Fanny after calling her a stupid whore, he begins to express his sorrow for his wife. Fanny then argues with him on why he didn't beat the shit out of her, she offers to help. She then introduces Fatty to a Vietnamese gangster who agrees to kill his wife for 100,000 dollars, he then passes out in the alleyway. Upon waking up, he begins to stumble his way home not realizing this is going to be a long couple of days. He walks into his wonderful apartment to see they are still together. The shopkeeper dresses up and begins to walk out the door until a flying dragon kick seals his fate in this apartment. Five men come in the apartment and start to try and kill his wife, but one of them decides he wants to rape her. Fatty does not remember what he did and is horrified all the same. She bites the would-be rapist and suffers an extremely brutal and creative death. They then begin to fillet the hell out of the shop keeper in the bathtub. From this point on, Fatty gets involved with yet another gang, results in the death of a sociopath's brother, loses his business, and his debt triples. This film is one of the grittier movies I have seen lately. It builds up quite nicely and fits snug in its 90 minute running time. Simon Yam makes a nice surprise as the sociopath and you can really see him shine with a blade slashing 30+ people's throats in a five minute scene. After normally being acquainted with Yam in detective roles, a sadist is welcomed warmly. While it is a CAT III film, it really takes a while for you to feel that. In the opening 20 minutes of the film, we get no blood, no breasts, and no swearing, then it just kind of explodes on screen. It is guaranteed that you will feel bad for Fatty's character. This film is the bastard lovechild of a Bukowski and Mamet script. Run And Kill is the story of an ordinary (albeit retarded) man caught in a ridiculous situation and should be highly regarded in the underground film circle. This film is often misogynistic and so uncompromising that if you watch the ending, you will be sure to be offended. This film takes no prisoners and is easily the best CAT III film I have seen. Highly

RUN AND KILL

Recommended.
-mAQ

THRILLER - A CRUEL PICTURE

Bo Arne Vibenius (1973)

Only such a cultured nation such as Sweden could produce an exploitation of such high caliber as *Thriller - A Cruel Picture*. A film that features eye gouging, hardcore sex, and heroin addiction has never been so splendid. The lovely Christina Lindberg was the perfect woman to cast as the one-eyed woman seeking revenge against a sadistic pimp, a lesbian, and a handful of other social degenerates. Lindberg plays a young woman that was molested as a child which has turned her into a mute. When she becomes a young adult, she is abducted by a suave sicko who turns her into a drug addicted sex slave for him to prostitute out money.

Excessively annoying and played out hack Quentin Tarantino stole a few elements of *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* for his over stylized trash *Kill Bill* films. Despite featuring pornography and extremely offensive material, *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* has more artistic integrity than all of Tarantino's films combined. Tarantino may not know how to make an original film, but every once in a while he knows the right film to steal from. Quentin Tarantino even had enough respect for *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* that he allowed director Bo Arne Vibenius to have a cameo in *Kill Bill* as a food vendor. Director Bo Arne Vibenius made the right choice when he decided to make his lead character a mute. Christina Lindberg has enough power in her beauty and glance to keep the viewer focused on the screen. This raped and abused woman has every right to torture and kill her victimizers. Instead of entering a state of comatose, this stunning one eye trains to kill and she kills well. I especially liked how scenes of violent revenge featured in *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* are in slow-motion. One has to savor One Eye's art of killing.

Apparently director Bo Arne Venius used a real cadaver for the scene in which Lindberg's character has her eye gouged out. This offensive scene only further confirms *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* as one of the best, if not the best, rape/revenge exploitation films. The reality is that most exploitation films are pure garbage with little to no redeeming quality. As a whole, *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* is a masterpiece of the unofficial genre. The film is one of the neglected (for obvious reasons) treasures of cinema history.

-Ty E

BREAKING POINT - PORNOGRAFISK THRILLER
BREAKING POINT - PORNOGRAFISK THRILLER

Bo Arne Vibenius (1975)

While American heteros had Cecil Howard (Neon Nights, Snake Eyes) and Jonas Middleton (Illusions of a Lady, Through the Looking Glass) and the American homos had Fred Halsted (LA Plays Itself, Sextool) and Jack Deveau (Left-Handed, Drive), the Swedes had Bo Arne Vibenius who, after working as an assistant director on Ingmar Bergman's experimental arthouse masterpiece *Persona* (1966) and making his directing debut with the family fantasy film (!) *Hur Marie träffade Fredrik* (1969) aka *How Marie Met Fredrik*, directed two strangely atmospheric hardcore artsploitation flicks—*Thriller: A Cruel Picture* (1973) aka *Thriller - en grym film* and *Breaking Point - Pornografisk thriller* (1975)—before giving up feature filmmaking altogether. While *Thriller: A Cruel Picture* has gained some popularity in recent years due to the fact that it was a major influence on Quentin Tarantino's two volume fanboy mix-tape *Kill Bill* (2003–2004), *Breaking Point*, which is easily one of the most sardonically politically incorrect porno films I have ever seen, is somewhat more obscure, even though arguably a superior work in pretty much every way. Featuring a cinematographer-turned-porn star who opted for taking the dubious pseudonym 'Anton Rothschild'—a name derived from the Rothschilds, the most evil Jewish banking family in all of human history that is responsible for funding both sides of virtually every single war over the past couple centuries—in the lead role as a seemingly schizophrenic office nerd and toy train fetishist with what also seems to be an acute case of asperger syndrome who sees it as his god-given right to rape and, in some cases, kill beautiful young women, *Breaking Point* was certainly not produced by one of the Semitic smut-peddlers who have a monopoly on such work in the United States. Aside from the pseudonym 'Rothschild' adopted by lead actor Andreas Bellis (who, despite having only starred in one other film in a non-pornographic role, helmed the camera for over 40 different films between 1968 and the 2000s, including *Thriller: A Cruel Picture*), the stuntman of the film adopted the name 'Turbo Man', the Special Effects guy took the glorious name 'Urban Hitler', the Producer (aka director Bo Arne Vibenius) stole the name Stan Kowalski (the name of the fictional American Polack rapist from Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947)), and the Unit Manager took the name 'Oscar Wilde', among various other charming pennames. While advertised as a 'pornographic thriller,' *Breaking Point* is also a scathing satire that maliciously mocks Swedish liberal democracy, the quackery of modern psychiatry (the antihero is inspired to serial rape after learning from a psychiatrist named 'Sigmund' that 89% of women have rape fantasies), urban decay, trendy left-wing terrorism of the 1970s, and government bureaucracy, as well as various other forms of contemporary post-WWII degeneracy. Of course, the film is certainly symptomatic of such degeneracy, but at least it is honest in that regard.

Shot from the rather unreliable perspective of the renegade rapist/social retard, *Breaking Point* is a sometimes oneiric and ominous odyssey of oddball orgasms and literal lunatic libertinism in a rare film—be it pornographic or otherwise—where a balding bourgeois dork becomes a sexually savage action antihero of the master fugitive kind.

Bob Bellings (Greek-born cinematographer Andreas Bellis aka ‘Anton Rothschild’) is a nerdy middle-age officer clerk with a rather unimpressive appearance who has a reasonably easy time leading a second life as a loner that no one would ever suspect was a sex killer. Indeed, during the beginning of *Breaking Point*, Bob stalks, brutally rapes, and kills a chic and sophisticated blonde stranger named Suzanne Andersson by smashing in her skull with a glass ashtray. While at work, Bob calls a sexually suggestive secretary at his work a “bitch” under his breath, as he loathes ladies, especially the highly attractive sort that would most likely reject his romantic advances. While watching the news at work, Bob hears a cop complain regarding Suzanne Andersson’s unsolved murder, with the man in blue remarking, “A rape and murder committed by an authorized citizen,” as if rape and murder is ok if authorized by the government. After the cop does his silly spiel, a quack psychiatrist with the rather fitting name Sigmund comes on the news and hilariously states, “One thing to keep in mind when dealing with deviants like this is never to offer any resistance. Now, a man like this wants you to resist, so our advice is to keep calm and let him do whatever he wants to. Even if worst comes to worst, you’ll only get raped. And current statistics indicate that 89% of the respondents—the women who answered the surveyed—have one time or another in their lives have actually wanted to be raped.” After hearing Sigmund’s advice, Bob comes to the realization that he no longer has to kill his victims, but that he simply just needs to demand that they drop their clothes and allow him to bugger them. After a lonely night playing with his beloved toy train set and reading a magazine about said toy train sets, Bob goes to work and while on a ‘trip to the bank,’ he tries out Sigmund’s theory. Indeed, Bob spots a young chick (Irena Billing) at the local subway and stalks all the way back to her home in the woods in what seems like a dreamlike fairy tale scenario. Like a seasoned pro, Bob simply follows the girl into her house, demands that she take her clothes off (which she does without hesitation), has her fellatio him, and then the two proceed to make passionate love. After ejaculating on the young girl’s face and receiving a loving handjob, Bob leaves the lecherous lady’s home, smirks at the viewer in a knowing fashion, and walks away with a fiendish swagger. While at work watching the news, Bob learns that the Swedish government is now giving out free guns via the ‘citizen’s insurance plan’ (with men receiving revolvers and women pistols). Naturally, Bob decides to take advantage of such generous government services.

After having an absurd dream about flicking a fly off his erect pecker with a rubber band, Bob forces another unwitting chick to strip and bend over, but she

BREAKING POINT - PORNOGRAFISK THRILLER

stabs him with scissors in rather painful moment of coitus interruptus. Needless to say, Bob chases her down in what ultimately evolves into a full-on car chase that results in the rape victim crashing into a house and dying after her car explodes. When Bob goes to pick up his government-ordained revolver, as well as some other more power weapons, a seemingly deranged gun salesman, who has a vocal affinity for vigilante justice, gives the rapist some special bullets, including 'fragmentation ammo' (which explodes upon entering a person's body) and nuclear bullets (!), which are only authorized for use by the army. For whatever reason, Bob picks up a spunky prepubescent girl, drives her around the country in his car, and gives her some candy. When the girl asks Bob to bring her home, he does, but when the little lady asks him, "shall we meet again?" he gives a firm "no," thus demonstrating his annoyance regarding the little insignificant bit of power the small child held over him. After picking up a hot hitchhiker, Bob gets rather lucky as his strange yet salacious passenger soon asks him, "wanna fuck me?" and proceeds to drop her clothes and spread her legs. Of course, Bob gets his buggery on but not before the hitchhiker asks, "Wanna see me fuck the gear stick?" which she does like a true champ. While on another ostensible 'trip to the bank' while at work, Bob is robbed by a hippie thug at knifepoint and is later kidnapped by a trio of swarthy far-left terrorists. After robbing him, one of the terrorists attempts to kill Bob execution, but he has no bullets in his gun, thus giving the rapist enough time to mercilessly gun down all three of the rock star terrorists with his atomic bullets. Not long after, a police helicopter shows up, which Bob blows up with an assault rifle and then swiftly carjacks a sports car from a young and dumb counter-culture type. That night, Bob has a pornographic nightmare in a surreal montage that recaps the rapist's sex and violence escapades thus far, including a scene where he shoves his trusty pistol up a young nymph's naughty bits. In a nice little twist at the very end of *Breaking Point*, Bob goes to an airport and is called to the information desk where he is reunited with his wife and young daughter. When his wife asks him what he has been up to, Bob ironically replies, "You know nothing ever happens in this shit town," thus hinting that all the rape and murder he was involved with was merely a product of his discernibly damaged mind.

In one especially telling scene in *Breaking Point*, antihero Bob listens to a radio host as he discusses the theories of a fellow named 'Burroughs' (undoubtedly, a nod to William S. Burroughs), stating, "The instance of schizophrenia seems to vary in different types of societies. Urban societies show the higher instances," thus underscoring the film's critique of modernism. More of a sardonic psychosexual/psychodramatic thriller of the genre-distorting sort than a simple 'pornographic thriller,' *Breaking Point* ultimately makes just as big of a mockery of the viewer as it does of the film/porn conventions it so playfully, if not perniciously, breaks. Due to its meager helping of sex scenes, not to mention its less than handsome lead, I think it is safe to say that this bizarre blue movie could not have

aroused too many people when it was originally released and it certainly makes for a sorry masturbation aid for contemporary viewers, but of course, most people on the hunt for such rare works of idiosyncratic filmic filth are probably not just looking for a quick and easy way to spill some seeds. Combining elements from the thriller, horror, fantasy, and action genres with a small dose of surrealism in a porn flick with a quasi-arthouse essence, *Breaking Point* is certainly a cream of the crop work when it comes to vintage blue movies, but then again, one should expect more from a pornographer who learned his craft from Ingmar Bergman (indeed, aside from working as an assistant director on *Persona*, auteur Bo Arne Vibenius also worked as a 'unit director' on *Hour of the Wolf* (1968)). Made in a super liberalized and emasculated country where a couple years back a man attempted to breast feed his baby, *Breaking Point* luckily does not shy away from displaying a rather distinct form of post-Freudian/post-feminist misogyny that satires the very essence of the decidedly socially degenerate liberal democracy that is Sweden. The perfect pornographic antidote to the anti-male/anti-wasp sentiments of *American Psycho* (2000), which was directed/co-written by feminist Mary Harron (who also directed the putrid piece of crypto-sapphic celluloid trash *I Shot Andy Warhol*) and co-penned by lily-licking lesbo Guinevere Turner, *Breaking Point* is a rare piece of socially redeeming porn that spits in the wayward eye of political correctness while managing to be funny and reasonably aesthetically pleasing at the same time (indeed, Ralph Lundsten's dreamy yet degrading soundtrack also immaculately compliments the tone and images of the film). If you have ever have a bad day and are fed-up with all the feminist filth being shoved down your throat by work and MTV, give *Breaking Point* a watch because, while the film might not give you a sexual release, it will certainly have a therapeutic affect of sorts.

-Ty E

THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN
THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN

Boaz Davidson (1982)

One of my most watched but least favorite genres growing up was that of the teen sex comedy, especially those made in the glorious, round, jiggling, natural 1980's. On the one hand, the values on display in these flicks tend to be completely out-of-step with my own. The typical set-up of an attractive guy, fat party animal, and middle of the road audience member stand-in doing everything in their power to see glorious, round, jiggling 18-going-on-32-year old titties while terrorizing nerds and being completely entitled upper middle class homophobic assholes to a new wave soundtrack is not something I can particularly relate to. I attended high school once, and I remember these guys (exchange the new wave soundtrack for some emotive hardcore or gangsta rap, granted)...the popular date rapists who threw massive parties and called guys like me "fags" when they would attack us half-naked in the locker room. On the other, these films provide all kinds of wishful-thinking scenarios, and more importantly, titties, be they sagging and unconvincingly high school aged- big week-old grapes that would look more appropriate in front of a suckling infant than accidentally torn off at a sock hop- or those rare cases of a young actress with a bad agent and the most perfect set of natural, perky knockers that make an entire Animal House reread worth the hour and a half of stale "bitches are dumb, nerds are fags" "humor" for that one divine reveal (which, depending on format, you either pause or put on A-B repeat and then reach for the Kleenex). Also some nice asses, occasional bush, but yeah, mostly mammaries. Anyways, *The Last American Virgin* has many of the hallmarks of the teen sex comedy genre. It has the trifecta of fat party animal, attractive guy, and slightly more generic audience member stand in. It has the same attitudes toward women, both deeply misogynistic but completely true to the mentality of a teenage boy on the cusp of puberty/college age date rapist. It even features much in the way of insanely cruel nerd abuse, which is always good for a laugh, homo. What sets *Last American Virgin* apart, however, is that the sex feels somewhat more grounded in something approaching reality, the acting is a few notches above what the genre would typically require, the soundtrack is the holy grail - THE eighties teen new wave soundtrack to end all eighties teen soundtracks - but mostly it's the ending; one of the most heartwrenching, sobering, and altogether RESPONSIBLE endings to any film about young love and sex period, let alone something greenlit because of the runaway success of fucking Porkey's.

The threadbare plot of *Last American Virgin*, as with most films of its ilk, concerns the plight of virginal Gary, a guy not quite as studly or funny and fat as his friends Rick and David, respectively, and his and his friends' efforts to get laid. Rick has little trouble in this department, looking like a less amiable Denis Quaid (also looking about 27, though to the film's credit, a number of the

films teenagers, including Lawrence Monoson, who plays Gary, actually look the part), and the guys land themselves in all kinds of wonderful set pieces, from the opening scene of substituting Sweet N Low for cocaine to convince a trio of girls to party at Gary's house to a visit to the local lonely Latin sexpot Gary encounters on his pizza route. This scene is particularly interesting as it has a certain sexual openness that I'm sure betrays the film's origins as a remake of director Boaz Davidson's previous Israeli hit *Eskimo Limon*. Gary first encounters the dime-store Charo when making a pizza delivery and upon realizing she would like nothing more than to jump his bones, rushes off, calls his friends, and invites them over (is he scared? Perhaps sharing is caring?). Rick, of course, takes the lead, and his friends strip to their boxers and watch through the peephole to her room (with no mention made of sloppy seconds...these guys are nothing like my own friends) (and I can't say I've ever excitedly watched a friend having sex) (or have gotten sloppy seconds for that matter- eww). David is up next, and the fully nude sex glimpsed through the peephole is a tad more realistic and fully naked than I, for one, am used to seeing in these films. Of course, Gary being the Last American Virgin of the title and all, is cruelly interrupted before having his chance by counterfeit Charo's lover, on return from the Navy. Much hilarity ensues. Also of note as far as set pieces go is the perplexing but refreshingly male-appendaged scene early on when Gary and the rest of his gym classmates walk in on the resident nerd spying through a peephole which somehow leads to a boner-measuring contest set to "Whip It" by Devo. You will never hear the song again without picturing a marching line of bulging, bouncing boners straining through tighty whities (between this film and *Love Exposure* I wish there were more boners in teen angst cinema - it is a natural fact of life every guy deals with that is oft-ignored in these movies, or at least only hinted at and not shown. An erection is way more common to a teenage boy than using a remote controlled airplane to rip off a blouse housing Double D's, I would think). And best of all, the nerd wins! Though they do dump a bucket of water on the dweeb, fag.

As these misadventures are underway, Gary notices virginal, angelic Karen (played by Diane Franklin, the foreign exchange babe from *Better Off Dead*, maybe my other favorite eighties teen flick), whom he first meets by stalking to her home, popping the tire of her bike, and then offering a ride to school. For Gary, it's love at first sight. For Karen, love at first sight comes in the form of Gary's best friend Rick, the hot douchebag to end all hot douchebags. Gary comes to this realization at a party early on in the film, and a scene of him drunkenly attempting to talk to Karen as well as watching them kiss during a slow dance are performed wonderfully by Lawrence Monoson, who earns the pathos of his character with the perfect combination of pretend confidence, teenage assholeishness, and affected puppy dog stares that eventually gives way to crushing defeat of the worst kind. As the film progresses, Gary becomes more and

THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN

more resentful of the situation, but helpless to do anything due to loyalty to Rick. This plotline serves to address some real truths about young love and lust and is what bumps Last American Virgin up to classic status.

SPOILERS ABOUND

For starters, there is the scene where Gary tries to distract Rick from taking Karen on the date in which he plans to take her virginity, inviting his friends in desperation to see a prostitute. It is here that Gary loses his Last American Virgin status, to a weathered, bitter whore who berates him the entire time within earshot of his friends, before leaving all three boys with genital lice. But where the film really takes off into unexplored territory within this genre comes after Rick deflowers Karen and dumps her promptly upon learning that she's pregnant. Gary promises to help Karen and he gets into it with Rick, severing their friendship. As Rick, making out with a new girl, David, and the rest of the class leave for a ski trip, Gary spends every last dime and then some to help Karen fund an abortion, and cleans out his grandma's house so she has a place to recuperate over the weekend. At the end of the weekend, he confesses his love to her and they share a kiss, but come time for her birthday party a few days later, Gary will learn that it is rarely the nice guy that gets the girl, and the film ends on a note that is incredibly surprising for something that up to a point just seems like a typical teenage-titty show. The montage in which Gary is raising the funds for the abortion and Karen is getting it performed, I must say, is one of the strangest I've ever seen in a film of this class. It is your typical "taking care of business", scrounging together every last dime in a sometimes comedic fashion eighties movie montage, only intercut with a sobbing Diane Franklin being readied for her procedure (to the tune of U2's "I Will Follow" no less?!). The film also begs some major questions, like sure, it sucks that the hot douchebag gets the girl in the end, but isn't using an abortion as an excuse to get close to a girl and popping her tire as a "meet cute" kinda creepy and all sorts of wrongheaded? Maybe the only lesson that Gary need take away at the end is not that nice guys finish last but that he acted like a creep, so fuck him. Either way, it's a sobering and responsible end to a teen sex movie to show that love and romance can also lead to itchy genitals and broken hearts.

/SPOILERS

One last thing of note- the soundtrack. Holy fuck, it's the holy grail of eighties teendom! The aforementioned Devo, The Cars (with particularly great use of "Since You're Gone") (best break-up song ever, by the way), Human League, The Waitresses, Journey, U2, REO Speedwagon's "Keep on Loving You" and much, much more. It's kinda like Grand Theft Auto: Vice City only instead of watching the murder of pedestrians and prostitutes you witness the murder of one young man's soul! And some great titties. Even if one pair of those titties are during a certain hard-to-stomach doctor's office scene, but, yeah...b-o-o-o-

i-i-i-n-g.
-Jon-Christian

FRESH
FRESH

Boaz Yakin (1994)

It's been high time that I've put thoughts of *Fresh* to rest being this was the film that first set my horizons to dabbling in constructing a solid base of opinions in written form, see also: review. Far from the decadent projects of faux pauper hood dramas, *Fresh* presents the first of its kind that I've seen, an intellectual pass at exhibiting impoverished communities without making me want to fumigate the entirety of the seedy alleys littered with degenerates and addicts. Essentially a coming-of-age urban fable with a 12 year old drug runner, name of Fresh, the film decides to center itself a fancy twist when he begins to use the game of chess and his estranged father's tactics to get himself and his sister out of the "game" before it's too late. Setting up a chessboard in his room, Fresh manipulates each piece in a manner catering to his opponents needs. As whimsical father-figure Samuel L. Jackson puts it, "I play my opponent. If he likes to attack, I force him to defend himself. If he's a cautious man, I draw him into dangerous waters." These words from this golden *deus ex machina* provides us with an exhilarating set-up for what might be one of the greatest films ever told through a black child's eyes, with the exception of *George Washington*.

Establishing the pawns rather quickly and efficiently without wasting time from the fireworks, *Fresh* introduces us to the morning habits of a school boy drug pusher as he stiffly tells this smacked Mexican *Consuela* that 20 means 20. After she bullshits her culture and daughter to the young black man in what might possibly be a scheme for more of the "product", *Fresh* leaves the apartment to deliver to local drug kingpin *Esteban's* cronies. The intensity of life is established very quickly in the projects as this kid *Fresh* could be any other kid growing up with such a poverty-stricken way of life. Scratch that, no kid from the projects could house such an intellectual fervor as effortlessly as *Fresh*. I think Mexican clown *Chuckie* would be a better comparison to the average low-income child, destined to die because of his arrogant, irritating, and perversely mongoloid nature. Because of the deteriorating element of his family, *Fresh* takes it upon himself to free himself from the slimy hands of *Corky* and *Esteban* in a concise yet superficial rigging of his creation. Using tactics employed in chess, *Fresh* ultimately boils down to a metaphorical game of chess using real pawns and sacrificing much to make ends meet.

Fresh proves to be one of the more tame films I set out to review. Not being much of quality, filming wise, *Fresh* doesn't really house any hidden aesthetics or inspired technique. It's simply a film that exists within the raw boundaries of the story it portrays so the quality is dismissible as the product is something I can revisit over and over again. Courting my predilection for spicy urban dramas, *Fresh* was developed for a specific audience in mind. I couldn't imagine current black youth watching this film without heckling poor *Michael* for par-

ticipating in lame activities such as "chess" or "family." These concepts mean nothing to most of, if not all, of our streetwise rodents. Surrounded by such filth must be distracting on the developing adolescence of Fresh. From the lackadaisical temperament of his "nAuGhtIIe N' nAStY" sister converted whore to the greasy self-idolizing tentacles of Ešteban, Fresh concerns himself with some putrid excess for sure.

As an added bonus, Samuel L. Jackson turns perhaps his best performance as his alcoholic speed-chess father whom Fresh can drop the moniker and manifest the semblance of a human being. Not just for whimsical anecdotes or father/son malleability, Fresh comes to this park to step his game up to better suit his needs. In what eventually begins to unravel, Fresh takes charge as a studious film featuring rather unsavory characters and takes the time to escape the bind of class-B "yungbloodz" and their banal disillusionment of cinema. Fresh isn't a perfect film but rather a perfect character. A child of rotting roots that I feel great sympathy for. You may be able to disregard the film but you most certainly cannot shun the character. As Michael sheds mortal coil by releasing Roscoe of his tainted innocence, Fresh becomes somewhat with purpose to better his life and stray back on course. To cap off a perfectly-competent debut picture from Boaz Yakin, Fresh ends on such a note of breakdown that it's near impossible for me to not get caught up in the flood of emotion emanating from Sean Nelson in his only credible role. This is the stuff that Urban films should be made of. There is no glorification of hood dreams to be found in Fresh, only a wake up call to black youth stating that it's time to grow up.

-mAQ

TATTOO
TATTOO

Bob Brooks (1981)

Undoubtedly, political correctness and feminism, like most 'humanist' ideologies/religions, is a corrosive force that uproots culture, nature, and even sexuality, hence the plague-like proliferation of trannies, queens, bull-dykes, cuckolds, miscegenaters, and other aberrosexuals in America and the Occident. Undoubtedly, one film to suffer the wrath of less than wet women (aka feminists) that features some emotionally disturbed and erotically-challenged individuals is the erotic artsploitation thriller *Tattoo* (1981) which, on top of being attacked upon its release by fecund-free feminist groups due to its salacious yet rather iconic poster, also acts as a sort of unconventional scathing critique of the post-'women's lib' world. Directed by American photographer and famous advertising director Bob Brooks—a man whose 1974 advert 'Smash Martians' was given the award for 'TV ad of the Century' in 1999 by Campaign magazine—*Tattoo* is a healthy combination of celluloid art and exploitation trash that some more sensitive (translation: ball-less) contemporary viewers might describe as 'misogynist.' Co-penned by Joyce Buñuel—the one-time Jewish wife of Spanish-French horror auteur Juan Luis Buñuel (*Au rendez-vous de la mort joyeuse* aka *Expulsion of the Devil*, *Leonor*) and daughter-in-law of Spanish surrealist maestro Luis Buñuel (*Un Chien Andalou*, *That Obscure Object of Desire*), *Tattoo* is a sort of wayward and more nihilistic remake of William Wyler's *The Collector* (1965) starring Terence Stamp, albeit set in a post-love zeitgeist of urban debauchery and decay where underage girls attempt to bribe tattoo artists to get tattoos on their tits and asses, women put their careers before children, rape is an unofficial city sport, women are such whores that they do not even know the father of their baby is (in one especially humorous scene, it is mentioned a woman gave birth to twins, with one baby being black and the other white), and visiting peepshows is a more realistic prospect for a man than an actual date. A sometimes chilling, if not equally hilarious, psychological erotic thriller with elements of horror and melodrama about a semi-autistic Japanophile of a tattoo artist who falls in love with a wanton career-driven model and decides to take her hostage and tattoo her entire body after she rebuffs his deranged 'romantic' advances, *Tattoo* is a work that deserves comparisons to John Avildsen's *Joe* (1970), Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), and Paul Schrader's *Hardcore* (1979) in terms of its therapeutically unflattering depiction of urban post-counter-culture America. On top of everything else, *Tattoo* also makes for one of the greatest anti-date movies ever made, as a somewhat sexually gratuitous work that contains what is undoubtedly every girl's worst nightmare.

After traveling to Japan while in the military and taking part in some sort of secret Jap tattoo ritual, Karl Kinsky (Bruce Dern)—a man who not by coincidence shares a Polish surname that is phonetically the same as deranged German

actor Klaus Kinski—decided to cover his entire body in tats (or what he calls “body markings”) and become a tattoo artist at a time when such a profession almost carried the same reputation as that of a pimp. An innately (and even disturbingly) introverted man with a foreboding demeanor who tends to flip-out during the most random of moments, Karl spent his childhood being emotionally abused by his Polack father, whose memory the body art artist scorns. One day, a neurotic Jewish magazine editor named Sandra (Frederikke Borge, the daughter of popular Danish Jewish comedian Victor Borge aka “The Unmelancholy Dane”) randomly shows up at Karl’s tattoo parlor and offers him the job of designing fake tattoos for a big photo shoot that is being done by a rampantly homosexual (although somehow married) photographer named Halsey (gay actor Leonard Frey, who starred in off-Broadway and William Friedkin’s 1970 film version of *The Boys in the Band*). While initially dismissive of the idea of compromising his art for aesthetically tasteless purposes, Karl eventually gives in to working with Halsey after seeing portraits of the models whose naked bodies he will have the opportunity to paint. While painting the nude body of a model named Maddy (Swedish actress Maud Adams, who is best known for playing Bond girls in *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974) and *Octopussy* (1983)), Karl seems to fall in love with the statuesque blonde at first sight, even if he yells at her for talking too much and allowing her skin to get too tense (which is apparently a big ‘no, no’ for body artists). Since Maddy is a rather loose lady who tends to screw a number of men in any given time in between her various photo shoots, she somehow agrees to go on a date with weirdo introvert Karl. Unfortunately, while on the date, one of Maddy’s ex-boyfriends shows up and tells Karl that he “does not take orders from Polacks,” so that tattoo artist threatens to kill him. While being threatening to her ex-beau does not scare Maddy away from Karl, his seeming sexual impotence and old fashioned puritanical mentality does. After verbally berating Maddy for using the word “fuck” and acting like an all-around socially retarded mad man with a bad temper, Karl finds that his beloved no longer wants anything to do with him, so he has the wise idea to kidnap the model, take her to his family home in Ocean City, New Jersey, tattoo her entire body with kaleidoscopic Jap tats, and somehow force her to fall in love with him. After knocking Maddy out with chloroform (a movie cliché that apparently does not work too well in real-life) and shooting her up with drugs, Karl takes the model to his family beach house and proceeds to tattoo her while she is unconscious. Naturally, when Maddy comes to and realizes her body is covered with permanent Jap body art, she loses her cool. Of course, Maddy also does not take kindly to the fact Karl makes her do bizarre stuff like masturbate while he voyeuristically spies on her via a keyhole and masturbates himself. Over time, Maddy learns to ‘play the game’ and pretend to be Karl’s wife, but she ultimately has ulterior motives. After Karl eventually finishes the rest of Maddy’s full-body tattoo, he finally gets aroused enough for the first time in his life to

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'make it' (aka have sex) with the model, but mid-coitus, she literally stabs him in the back with his own fancy tattoo machine needle in what is a rather symbolic scene.

Indubitably, one of the things I found most unsettling about *Tattoo* is that despite being a deranged kidnapper with a fiercely flat affect, Karl is ultimately more likeable and more authentic of an individual than virtually every other single character in the film, thus demonstrating the inversion of values of modern society in general and the tendency of said society to push people over the edge who would have felt at home in America only a couple decades before. Indeed, Karl Kinsky is a patently pathetic individual who tries in vain to consummate a traditional marriage, even symbolically taking his would-be-wife/kidnap victim to his family home (which is undoubtedly the source of his dysfunctional and antisocial behavior) and forcing her act like a wife via physical force, thus demonstrating the antihero's total alienation from society and ultimately insane introversion. Of course, Kinsky's Japanophilia and adoption of ancient oriental customs, not unlike the wiggers and philo-Semites that populate American today, demonstrates that he is a fellow suffering from a identity crisis and longing for tradition, hence his adoption of an alien culture. As Karl explains himself as to why people get 'the mark' (his name for tattoos), he believes people 'need them to exist.' Of course, with the proliferation of body pseudo-art in America since the release of *Tattoo* over three decades ago (who doesn't have a tattoo nowadays?!), it is quite apparent that America—a culturally retarded pseudonation that becomes all the more 'multicultural' (aka racially divided) and anti-tradition/anti-family/anti-heterosexual with each passing day—is suffering from a rather serious identity crisis that no amount of rainbow-colored ink will cover up.

Not surprisingly, writer-director Bob Brooks stated regarding the romantic element of the film, "We created 'Tattoo' as a drama of what one human being can do to another, love, possession, vengeance. We lay tattoos on each other in any kind of a relationship. Call it a mark, call it a scar, the effects are permanent." And, indeed, like it or not, like all worthwhile films, the effects of *Tattoo* are permanent. Upon first seeing the film, I merely wrote it off as a well made exploitation flick featuring mainstream Hollywood stars like *Lipstick* (1976) starring Margaux Hemingway, but after a year or so, I could not get *Tattoo* out of my head and recently decided to give it re-watching. Yeah, Ebert was partly right when he described the last 30 minutes of the film as "just dumb horror-film stuff," but not all artful cinematic erotica can be as refined as Walerian Borowczyk's, especially considering *Tattoo* director Bob Brooks only had previously directed a British made-for-TV movie, *The Knowledge* (1979), and rather unfortunately, would never get the opportunity to direct another film again. Also to Brooks' credit, he apparently had a secret influence on British cinema, or as advertising director Dave Trott revealed, "Bob switched from being

a photographer to a director. This meant he understood stylish, sophisticated lighting. No one else directing in London did. Before Bob, all UK commercials looked cheap and tatty. Alan Parker said, when he saw Bob's ads he realised for the first time that commercials could look as good as anything from Hollywood. Bob Brooks opened the door for that rush of classy, stylish British film talent that is now some of the best in the world." Aside from being notable for being trashed by feminists, *Tattoo* is also well known for being a work where the lead actor claimed he actually had real sex with his costar, though Maud Adams, being a classy lady and all, denies Mr. Dern's claims in regard to the supposed highly intimate meta-method-acting that went on during the shooting of the film. Featuring a humorous tribute to the shower scene in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) that involves a tattoo gun instead of a butcher knife, as well as a couple scenes that director Brooks was not above self-deprecation (the flamboyant character 'Halsey' is clearly a parody of the director's prior career as a photographer), *Tattoo* ultimately makes for one of the mostly strangely 'merry' yet macabre pieces of artful yet unpretentious movie misogyny ever made and for that reason alone makes it mandatory viewing for anyone who has ever laughed about feminist activists who think flashing their asymmetrical, grossly over-sized cow udders or itty bitty mosquito bites in public is a legitimate form of political protest.

-Ty E

BLACK CHRISTMAS
BLACK CHRISTMAS

Bob Clark (1974)

Aside from cinephiles and horror fans, it seems that few people seem to realize that belated mainstream American auteur Bob Clark (*Porky's*, *My Summer Story* aka *It Runs in the Family*), the director of the beloved Xmas time classic *A Christmas Story* (1983)—a work that managed to do the seemingly impossible by making a Fellini-esque style movie palatable to the American masses, as a film that might be described as an *American Amarcord* (1973), albeit minus the gigantic talking Mussolini heads and teenage circle jerks—was also responsible for directing one of the most ugly, brutal, and dejecting Christmastide celluloid affairs ever made. Indeed, Clark's underrated proto-slasher flick *Black Christmas* (1974) aka *Silent Night, Evil Night* aka *Stranger in the House* aka *Stop Me* was probably the first Xmas themed film that one would probably be better off watching at any other time of the year aside from the holiday season, as a work featuring crypto-alcoholic sorority house mothers who sneak wigs of Whiskey that they have hidden in toilets during Xmas parties, frigid and calculatingly cold girlfriends who surprise the boyfriend's with the nasty news that they're unhappily pregnant and plan to get an abortion, assholes with Jew-fros who dress as Santa Clause and call their girlfriend a "bitch" in front of underprivileged children, college girls receiving phone calls from pathetic perverts that say vulgar things in distinctly vulgar ways like, "Let me lick your pretty piggy cunt," and last but certainly not least, a decidedly deranged psychosexual serial killer who casually kills unwitting college chicks while lurking around the attic and upstairs of their sorority house. Made during the post-counterculture era, Clark's work is set in a remote college town populated by vulgar and vice-ridden college kids and ignorant townies where the Christmas spirit had already been long shattered before a sexually sadistic killer ever began making his rounds and dispatching sullen sorority sisters. Released well before John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) and Sean S. Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* (1980), thus not only making it one of the first Christmas slasher flicks, but also slasher flicks in general (though, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* was made in 1972, it was not released until the same years as Clark's film in 1974), *Black Christmas* is one of the oh-so rare horror classics that can actually been described as underrated as opposed to obscenely overrated. More importantly, Clark's casually creepy piece of Xmas time celluloid cruelty is a genuinely decent and well constructed work featuring a foreboding sense of suspense and nicely nuanced pacing of the playfully pernicious sort, reasonably memorable acting performances and characters (including that of a faceless killer), and highly imaginative murder scenes with intricate and even sometimes poetic tableaux that range from the strangely surreal to the borderline avant-garde. Of course, as a work directed by the man that previously directed the low-camp tranny exploitation flick *She-Man: A Story of Fixation*

(1967), the classic canuxploitation horror-drama-war hybrid *Deathdream* (1972) aka *Dead of Night*, and the cult zombie-comedy *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things* (1973), as well as produced (and some believe also co-directed) the classic Ed Gein flick *Deranged: Confessions of a Necrophile* (1974), Clark was bound to eventually assemble a masterful horror work and he did not need to use gratuitous sex and violence to do it, yet the innately inferior *Halloween*—the film credited as jumpstarting the mostly wretched slasher craze of the late-1970s and 1980s—was the work that ultimately received all the glory. Admittedly, I was somewhat disappointed by *Black Christmas* when I first saw it well over a decade ago, but after learning to appreciate cinema as an art form, I cannot deny that it absolutely murders the competition, as a slasher equivalent to Carl Th. Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) in terms of its uniquely underrated status in the context of its (sub)genre, as well as a work that makes *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984) seem like a retarded romp, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* feel like an arthouse abortion, and *Christmas Evil* (1980) aka *You Better Watch Out* seem like a spastic yuletide autism fit.

Opening with a rather conventional yet nonetheless beautiful nighttime outdoor shot of an old house covered in typical Christmas lights and decorations, *Black Christmas* initially has the essence of a classic Christmas drama from the 1950s, but things take a dramatic change when the viewer enters the house and is bombarded with the mostly bitchy and/or snarky sorority sisters whose repellent personalities act in stark contrast to the merry holiday they are ostensibly celebrating, as well as the classic building they call home. Unbeknownst to the girls, a nameless/faceless man that the viewer will later know as 'Billy' has snuck into the attic of the sorority house while the girls were busy getting good and drunk at their annual Christmas party. The girls soon get an obscene harassing phone call from the killer, who has called before and who the college chicks have aptly nicknamed the 'moaner' since he sounds like he is masturbating on the other line. While protagonist Jess Bradford (Olivia Hussey of gay Guido auteur Franco Zeffirelli's Academy Award-winning 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* adaptation) picks up the phone after it rings, it is her cuntwise-cracking comrade Barb Coard (Margot Kidder of Brian De Palma's Hitchcock homage *Sisters* (1973) and Richard Donner's *Superman* (1978)) that says to the curious creep caller, "why don't you go find a wall socket and stick your tongue in it, that will give you a charge" after he says such savagely salacious things as, "Let me lick your pretty piggy cunt" and "suck my juicy big cock. I'll come over and you can suck it." Needless to say, the caller is pissed by the college gal's gall and makes Barb a promise that he will ultimately fulfill when he hatefully remarks, "I'm going to kill you." Indeed, not long after the particularly perverted 'prank' call, Claire Harrison (Lynne Griffin), who is not really a big fan of Barb due to her vulgar personality, is asphyxiated by the caller/killer with a plastic bag after he surprises the young lady by jumping out of her closet and manhandling her in a most malevolent manner. Possibly

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feeling in the Xmas spirit, the killer carries Claire's body to the attic of the house and poses it in a rocking chair with a vintage baby doll in its arms with the bag that her suffocated her with still over her head, thereupon making the corpse look like a sort of warped Mrs. Claus decoration.

Luckily for the sassy sorority sisters, they have an ex-cabaret dancer/crypto-dipsomaniac named Mrs. Mac (Marian Waldman) as a 'House Mother,' as she is too busy sneaking swigs of Whiskey that she has hidden inside books and toilets to give a shit about what sort of degeneracy the girls are involved with. Unfortunately for Mrs. Mac, when dead dame Claire fails to meet with her obnoxiously uptight conservative daddy Mr. Harrison (James Edmond), she has to deal with the worried father's super snide scorn. Indeed, on top of being annoyed by the fact that his baby girl is missing, Mr. Harrison seems particularly offended by posters of nude hippie chicks hanging on the walls of the sorority house and complains like the anally retentive bitch that he is, "I'm very disappointed with this atmosphere and I intend to do something about it" to the less than amused house mother. Mr. Harrison's attitude annoys Mrs. Mac so much that she rightfully complains to herself, "These broads would hump the Leaning Tower of Pisa if they could get up there," in regard to her well warranted belief that the sorority girls are intemperate lady libertines who could not be controlled no matter what sort of rules she tried to enforce onto them. When Mrs. Mac goes looking for her kitty cat Claude in the attic of the sorority house after noticing that the attic door is open, she gets a fatal blow to the head via a crane hook, which she is subsequently hung from like a cow carcass, thus reflecting the fact that the crazed killer is not an 'agist' when it comes to hunting hoes.

Meanwhile, mostly unlikeable protagonist Jess—a girl that seems to have been indoctrinated by a lot of second wave feminist twaddle and has adopted an exceedingly gynocentric worldview—informs her melancholy musician boy toy Peter Smythe (Keir Dullea of Otto Preminger's *Bunny Lake is Missing* (1965) and Stanley Kubrick's 1968 sci-fi masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* in a role that was originally offered to fellow Kubrick graduate Malcolm McDowell) that she is pregnant and when he excitedly responds "that's fantastic," she coldly replies that she does not want the child and plans to abort it. Needless to say, Peter botches a piano exam he has later that day and subsequently decides to take his anger out on the piano by smashing it to bits. Seeing as Jess was well aware of the fact that Peter had the piano exam yet she decided to tell him about the abortion right before it just goes to show that she is a self-centered bitch, if not a scheming sadist, who clearly harbors resentment towards men, not least of all her boyfriend (notably, earlier in the film, Peter tells Jess on the phone that he loves her and she coldly responds by merely stating, "I know," as if disgusted by the thought that the man she regularly bangs has deep emotional feelings for her). Meanwhile, sorority sisters Barb and Phyllis "Phyl" Carlson (Andrea Martin) accompany Mr. Harrison to the local police station to report Claire's

strange disappearance and the dopey cop working there, Sergeant Nash (Doug McGrath), blows them off and insinuates that their missing friend is probably off blowing her boyfriend in a cabin somewhere. To play a prank on the socially retarded cop, Barb tells Nash that the sorority phone number is 'fellatio' and since he has no clue that she is screwing with him, the moronic cop actually writes it down. While hanging around the police station, the girls also learn that a high school girl named Janice has recently disappeared and it does not take long for her corpse to show up in a local park, so a police officer with some actual sense, Lieutenant Fuller (John Saxon of *Enter the Dragon* (1973) starring Bruce Lee and Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984)), begins taking the sorority girls seriously and has their phones tapped so that if the killer calls again, they can figure out his exact location. Unfortunately for Lt. Fuller, the crazed killer seems to have a lot more sense than the group of college girls whose lives he hopes to protect.

When Peter tells Jess that he wants to drop out of school and give up his dream of becoming a concert pianist so that he can marry her and so that they can start a family together, she turns him down cold and also reveals that she is going to abort their baby asap, so he breaks a Christmas ornament and states, "you selfish bitch, you're talking about killing our baby as though you're having a wart removed" and storms out of the sorority house. Naturally, due to his melodramatic drama queen behavior, Lt. Fuller suspects that Peter might be the killer. When the 'moaner' aka 'Billy' later calls Jess and repeats exactly what Peter said earlier in regard to her treating an abortion like it is "having a wart removed," she becomes convinced that her pissed off beau is the killer. Meanwhile, it is discovered via the phone tap that the killer is actually in the house and using Mrs. Mac's second line, so Sergeant Nash calls Jess and tells her to get out of the house immediately, but since two of her friends, Barb and Phyl, who she does not realize have already been killed (notably, Barb is stabbed to death with a crystal unicorn statue in a rather aesthetically pleasing scene of almost transcendental slasher savagery), are still upstairs, she moronically goes against the cop's order and goes to the second floor to look for her friends, who she ultimately finds dead lying together in a bed in rather strange poses. After that, Jess spots the killer looking at her via a crack in the door, so she kicks said door, thus injuring the creep and runs down to the basement of the house and hides. When Peter breaks a basement window so he can get inside the house since no one will answer the phone or door, Jess, who is petrified out of her mind and believes her boyfriend is the killer, decides to beat him to death with a crowbar. When Lt. Fuller and his men later arrive on the scene, they discover a fellow officer dead with his throat slit inside a patrol car outside the sorority house and assume the worst when they eventually find Jess lying on the ground with Peter's corpse in her lap. As demonstrated by Jess' killing of Peter and her all-around cognitive dissonance, the killer/Billy almost seems like her Jungian 'animus' (the

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unconscious of a female as expressed in a male inner personality), especially when one considers the rather brutal and visceral nature in which she murdered her boyfriend. Convinced that Peter was the killer, Lt. Fuller and the rest of the police leave the house while Jess, who has been given sleeping pills so that she can get some rest, sleeps like a baby. Not long after the cops leave, it is revealed that the killer is still in the attic with the perversely posed corpses of Claire and Mrs. Mac. The film ultimately ends ambiguously with the killer once again calling the house, thereupon hinting that Jess probably won't survive the night.

Maybe it is my impenetrable sense of nihilism or perennially multiplying cynicism, especially during the holiday season, but I think *Black Christmas* has certainly replaced Clark's later work *A Christmas Story* in terms of personal Xmas favorites. I also must admit that I felt like a little bit of a *schadenfreude* seeing a crazed killer that is assumedly screwed up as a result of a childhood sexual encounter with his sister (he makes constant references to a girl named Agnes, especially while in the company of his victims) going around and killing a bunch of feminist brainwashed college chicks who only think about screwing losers and who do not have to think twice about an abortion when pregnancy strikes. Indeed, *Black Christmas* makes for an interesting double feature and comparison piece to Clark's later classic Christmas flick, as it depicts the post-counterculture/post-sexual-liberation generation and their seeming dissatisfaction with Xmas and life in general in comparison to the characters of *A Christmas Story*, who find fun, happiness, and fond memories in the most simple and everyday of activities. One of the things that makes Clark's holiday season horror-slasher so positively potent, especially as a Christmas time chiller, is that, although it features a couple scenes of relatively effective comical relief of the somewhat crude sort, it does not wallow in the sort of moronic irony and compulsive self-consciousness typical of similar films and instead features simultaneously brutal yet beautiful murder scenes with an almost 'erotic' thrust and aesthetic sensitivity that few, if any, other slasher films can boast aside from giallos like Mario Bava's equally influential works *Blood and Black Lace* (1964) aka *Sei donne per l'assassino* and *A Bay of Blood* (1971) aka *Reazione a catena* aka *Twitch of the Death Nerve*. Of course, the most obvious reason Clark's film stands out amongst most insipid slasher swill is that it concludes in ambiguity and never reveals the identity of the killer, which is certainly something that would induce cognitive dissonance in contemporary viewers, who need their slasher shit spoon fed to them lest they feel that their rather vulnerable intellect has been challenged. Indeed, it almost seems like *Black Christmas* is not as popular in comparison to the competition because fanboys don't have a Michael Myers, Jason Voorhees, or some other sort of masked retard to swoon over and jerk-off to. Also, one could argue that the film is one of the few, if not sole, subtextual slasher flicks due to its arguable depiction of the nameless/faceless killer as protagonist Jess' animus. Indeed, *Black Christmas* is the ultimate yuletide

slaughter show, as a celluloid gift that keeps on giving as a work that, relatively speaking, leaves the viewer thinking every single time. Rather unfortunately, Clark later decided to put coal in the figurative stockings of the fans of his film by acting as an executive producer on the wholly and shockingly retarded loose-as-a-NYC-crackhead-hooker Canadian-American remake *Black X-Mas* (2006) aka *Black Christmas* directed by Glen Morgan (who somewhat surprisingly directed the halfway decent 2003 *Willard* remake starring Crispin Glover) and starring exceedingly annoying spoiled Jewess Michelle Trachtenberg. Of course, Clark was also responsible for directing *Baby Geniuses* (1999) and its sequel *Superbabies: Baby Geniuses 2* (2004) before a drunken illegal alien from Mexico tragically killed him and his son in a car accident in 2007, but as the man responsible for not only *Black Christmas*, but also *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things* (1973), *Deathdream* (1974), and *Murder by Decree* (1979), he had more than earned his fair share of respect from genre fans. I certainly cannot think of another filmmaker whose films have more invaded the hearts and minds of Americans during the Christmas season in such an eclectic fashion than those of Bob Clark, whose masterpieces *Black Christmas* and *A Christmas Story* offer the ultimate morbid yet merry schizophrenic celluloid double feature.

-Ty E

A CHRISTMAS STORY
A CHRISTMAS STORY

Bob Clark (1983) I have probably seen A Christmas Story (1983) more times than any other film in my entire life. Since birth, I have watched it multiple during every Christmas season. A Christmas Story has the ability to bring out the nostalgia out of the most Grinchiest of individuals. A Christmas Story is also one of the Christmas few films that hasn't left a sour eggnog taste in my mouth after noticing it been has televised for 24 hours straight on Christmas.

It's quite interesting to go back to A Christmas Story after all the years and evaluate it with a cinephile mindset. I don't think it would be ridiculous to say there is an obvious Fellini Amarcord influence to the film. That was the first thing I thought when I first watched Amarcord. Fellini loved to tell the heartwarming details of his childhood (whether he imagined them or not).

Illegal immigrant Hector Velazquez-Nava took the life of A Christmas Story director Bob Clark and his son earlier this year. Velazquez-Nava had a blood alcohol level of three times the legal limit and was driving without a license when he crashed into Bob Clark's automobile. Velazquez-Nava has the luxury of attending jail for the next six year and will most likely face deportation to Mexico afterwards. What a waste.

A Christmas Story wasn't Bob Clark's first Christmas film. In 1974 he had directed phantom slasher Black Christmas. I would have to say that A Christmas Story is a much better film. Everyone knows most slasher films are complete trash. Black Christmas at least had some intrigue to it. Bob Clark was no doubt a competent director.

I always get disappointed when Ralphie finally "shoots his eye out." As a child, I also took a liking to BB guns (better ones than a red ryder of course). I even got my best BB gun for Christmas when I was 9 years old. Ralphie was a true hero to me.

Merry Christmas from Soiled Sinema!
-Ty E

Bob Fosse (1983)

Despite the recent so-called Me Too movement where a bunch of bigwig Hollywood types, mostly of the Hebraic sort, were rather predictably exposed as sleazy sexual predators, the perennial semitic stereotype of the shiksa-defiling chosenite has yet to reach the mainstream public consciousness due to the mainstream media carefully portraying these pathetic perverts as ostensible “white men.” Indeed, while absurdly presented as “white,” disgraced Miramax cofounder and top Democrat supporter Harvey Weinstein—a physical monster of a man that was the subject of an article entitled ‘The Specifically Jewy Perviness of Harvey Weinstein’ at the Judaic publication *Tablet* magazine—is the virtual living and breathing physical embodiment of a nasty Nazi caricature straight out of Julius Streicher’s tabloid trash *Der Stürmer*. Of course, anyone even remotely familiar with the hermetic history of Hollywood knows that Weinstein was simply part of a grand Hollywood tradition of goy-gal-exploiting that, rather conveniently, has rarely been depicted in Tinseltown movies despite the fact that Hollywood loves making masturbatory movies about itself (hence the abject commercial and critical failure of a film like *The Day of the Locust* (1975) where the sins of Sunset Boulevard are laid bare). Of course, there are exceptions and it took a good degenerate goy boy like Bob Fosse—a rather handsome mensch born to a Norwegian-American father—to depict such a scenario, albeit in a somewhat atypical fashion that really underscores the innately sexually unsavory and sickening nature of Hollywood as opposed to focusing on the racial character of such corruption. Indeed, Fosse’s cinematic swansong *Star 80* (1983)—a film depicting the meteoric rise and brutal demise of Dutch-Canadian Playboy model Dorothy Stratten who was infamously murdered by her Hebraic (ex)pimp husband Paul Snider—is a notable film in that, on top of being inordinately aesthetically alluring for the time, it depicts how a wholesome blonde beauty can be transformed into an international sex object and ultimately destroyed in Hollywood in such a short time in a deceptively captivating cinematic work that hypnotically highlights the heinous debauching character of Hollywood and the sort of conmen, parasites, whores, hucksters, and sociopaths that lurk there. In terms of being based on the real-life tragic death of an attractive young girl from a decent (albeit fatherless) family that got murdered after getting sucked into a lurid lifestyle in the (post)counterculture age, *Star 80* is like the *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977)—a film that also features an older Jew lover grooming a young shiksa and leading her on a road to ruin—of the 1980s, albeit all the more infuriatingly tragic. Undoubtedly, what makes Fosse’s film somewhat more provocative than Richard Brooks’ criminally-underrated cult classic is that it mainly focuses on the killer to the point of empathizing with his personal and professional failures as the discarded husband of a hot Aryan ‘it girl.’

While Fosse fanatics—if they exist—would surely disagree, I have no qualms about confessing that, as a proud hater of musicals and everything they stand for, *Star 80* is unequivocally my favorite flick directed by the dancer turned auteur. Indeed, while I can appreciate *Lenny* (1974) as an unconventional biopic despite my disgust for its titular subject and *All That Jazz* (1979) as the American answer to Federico Fellini's surreally autobiographical masterpiece *8 ½* (1963), I find *Cabaret* (1972) to simply be an aesthetically and sexually sickening film that, in my mind, can only inspire fantasies of defenestration. While some people might find the flick to be redundant as the Stratten-Snider story had already been depicted two years earlier via the totally mundane made-for-television movie *Death of a Centerfold: The Dorothy Stratten Story* (1981) starring the all-too-absurdly-improbable-and-masculine Jamie Lee Curtis as the eponymous lead, it is also an indubitable auteur piece where male fox Fosse finds great conflicted personal sympathy with a coldblooded killer and necrophile. Indeed, as Sam Wasson noted in his book *Fosse* (2013) in regard to the auteur and the overly wanton world that created him, "Bob Fosse was the best thing ever to come out of burlesque, and he would pay for it forever." In short, Fosse spent his younger years as an underage dancer being sexually exploited by old debauched strippers and it would have an imperative influence on how he looked at sex in the entertainment world. For example, as Wasson retells in his book, "Strippers—twice Bobby's size in two directions, and twice as sharp—preyed on him before the show as he stood in the wings about to go on [...] When the girls found out he wasn't the eighteen-year old he said he was, they started messing with him. Feathered gorgons appeared [...] They pulled Fosse from his Latin conjugations onto their laps, crushing his face in fingers and tongues, twirling his perfect hair and the cock in his tuxedo pants. Scared and alone, he did as he was told. Even if that meant doing what no good boy should do, he did it, because if he cried out, they'd blow his cover and he'd be out of the show for good, and what would he tell his mother? [...] Something must have been seriously, shamefully wrong with him, because, despite everything he should have run from—the fondling, the sinning, the heckling, and the shirking—to him, having the strippers' attention felt a little like being a star [...] He was drawn to the girls, then hurt by them. 'It was schizophrenic,' Fosse said. He couldn't get away from it and he didn't want to."

Not surprisingly considering Fosse's cumming-of-age story, sexual (and social) grooming is one of the main themes of *Star 80*, which is a film that rather fittingly takes its name from the real-life vanity plate on the signature black Corvette of psychopathic groomer-cum-killer Snider. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, early on in the film, the virtual antihero Paul Snider played Eric Roberts—a character that was largely influenced by both Fosse's own personal experiences and Montgomery Clift's tragic character George Eastman in George Stevens' *A Place in the Sun* (1951)—remarks upon seeing Dorothy Stratten for the very first time working at a Dairy Queen, "Get 'em while they're young,"

which he proceeds to do. During his rather lecherous life, Fosse learned to go from prey to predator and, in that sense, he identified with sicko Snider in the worst sort of way, or as drama critic Martin Gottfried explained in his book *All His Jazz: The Life & Death of Bob Fosse* (1990) in regard to the auteur, "There can be little doubt that he identified with Paul Snider [...] As Dan Melnick said, 'Bob was projecting the worst part of himself on Snider.' [...] The differences between Snider and Fosse, of course, were greater than the similarities [...] Like Paul, who depended on women to support him, Fosse had married strong, older women. Like Snider he turned to young girls, who posed no challenge and could be ignored. Like Snider, he had hoped to be a movie star, and like Snider he failed. Like Snider he was regularly criticized for being tasteless. Unlike Snider, he was not tasteless to his soul. Paul Snider created a star in Dorothy Stratten, only to be denied credit for it, just as Bob felt he had been denied credit for his part in Gwen Verdon's success. 'I was always interested,' he said during an interview about *STAR 80*, 'in the man behind the woman, especially the show woman.'" In short, the film is like the Aryan goyization of a most monstrous coldblooded murder where Fosse somehow brings preternatural humanity to the innately inhumane in a manner that is, in many ways, hopelessly goyish yet ultimately more provocative than the real-life story. In fact, the film does not even mention the obvious fact that Snider was a member of the tribe despite the fact that the killer regularly wore a Star of David necklace and people knew him by the name "The Jewish Pimp." Of course, Fosse's glaring de Judaization of the subject matter is probably explained by the fact that Hebraic screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky was his friend and mentor. In fact, Fosse was hoping that Chayefsky would do a rewrite of his *Star 80* script, but the screenwriter had already become completely disillusioned with Hollywood due to his nightmarish experiences on Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980), not to mention severe health issues that resulted in his death in 1981 (and, like a surreal scene straight out of *All That Jazz*, Fosse even performed a tape dance routine at his funeral!).

Although Jewish, Paul Snider was an uncultivated philistine who, in terms of verbal IQ, only managed to master the lowly art of remembering everyone's name and redundantly (mis)quoting his degenerate virtual pimp heroes like Hugh Hefner. In terms of predatory street smarts as a parasitic bottom-feeder, Snider made quite the impression on the hopelessly naïve Dorothy Stratten who, on top of having very little experience with men (for example, she only had one previous boyfriend), she seemed to be looking for a father figure as her padre abandoned the family when she was young (born Dorothy Ruth Hoogstraten, Stratten was actually a first-generation Canadian as the progeny of Dutch immigrants). As depicted in *Star 80*, Snider saw the perfect unconsciously beautiful victim to exploit in Stratten and the fact she was underage and nine years younger made this extremely easy for him, at least until she achieved fame and fortune on her own and finally came to the bitter realization that her beau was a no-good-

bastard. Indeed, Snider took it for granted that Stratten would always be her meal ticket, so naturally he became completely unhinged when she began to get famous and dumped him for a powerful Hollywood filmmaker that was previously in a much publicized relationship with famous beauty Cybill Shepherd. The real-life Dorothy Stratten, who was blessed with rather large lips and shapely tits, was infinitely more beautiful than boyish Mariel Hemingway who portrays her in the film. Achieving virtual dyke status for her oftentimes unclad performance in prized Hebraic screenwriter Robert Towne's overrated directorial debut *Personal Best* (1982), Hemingway was naturally not Fosse's ideal choice for the role but she did have a certain innocent "unused quality" like Stratten and getting breast implants more or less sealed the deal for her in terms of the singular role. Needless to say, beloved male bimbo Eric Robert—an actor that is impossible to hate, even when playing degenerate junky criminals like in convicted pervert Victor Salva's *The Nature of the Beast* (1995)—is certainly more charming and handsomer than the real Paul Snider, but *Star 80* is less a historical document (despite being largely factually sound) than an aesthetically pleasing exposé on the perils of sexual exploitation and fame-seeking in Hollywood in the age of (post)sexual liberation. Indeed, not unlike the hapless heroine of *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, Dorothy Stratten is ultimately a victim of so-called sexual liberation and feminism as her rise and demise would be unthinkable otherwise, or as 20/20 senior producer Muriel Pearson recently remarked to the *Montreal Gazette* in regard to the new documentary *The Death of a Playmate: The Dorothy Stratten Story*, "The advent of the pill liberated women to make new choices about their sexuality. But it was, at times, a double-edged sword. We highlighted the duality of past and present by depicting a kind of double standard that was part of the PLAYBOY philosophy."

While Playboy Führer Hugh Hefner—a supposed goy with certain semitic physical and political sensibilities—was very supportive of the production of *Star 80* to the point where he allowed Fosse to use the Playboy logo and even granted him access to his mansion for research (in return, Fosse cast Cliff Robertson instead of Harry Dean Stanton to portray Hefner at the glorified pornographer's recommendation), the film does not portray the 'publisher' in an altogether positive light. In fact, Hefner comes across seeming like a more pretentious and self-satisfied yet no-less-full-of-shit version of pathetic-wannabe Snider; or, in short, a scheming glorified pimp acting like a father figure to stupid lost girls. In fact, as depicted in the film, horn-dog Hef even attempts to pass off his porno company to Stratten as a family (and, in turn, the family she never had), even stating with a certain glaring lack of sincerity, "PLAYBOY is a very special magazine, Dorothy. There's no other magazine like it. All the writers, editors, photographers, the girls, etc. We all have a very special relationship. It's not like any other magazine. We're all like a, well, we're just like a family." A pseudo-sophisticated creep that smugly roams around his own lavish parties in insufferably flamboy-

ant pajamas while routinely having his soft ass kissed by a carefully selected collection of adoring ass-kissers and brain-dead whores, Hefner represents the superlatively shallow and soulless dream that Ashkenazi simpleton Snider is so senselessly chasing (in fact, Snider, who founded the Chippendales Dancers, modeled the look of these male strippers after 'Playboy Bunny' costumes). Of course, both men act as the father that Stratten never had but, unfortunately for Snider, Hefner does a better job of it. While Dorothy Stratten comes off looking hopelessly naïve like a lamb unwittingly be led to the slaughter, virtually everyone else in her life (sans her poor mother) is totally shallow and/or painfully narcissistic, including her covertly kosher plastic surgeon housemate Dr. Martin 'Geb' Geber (David Clennon) who brags that he owns a Rolls-Royce simply as "an investment" and not as a "status symbol," as if that is some sort of important distinction. Needless to say, being a super shallow guy that is hopelessly high on his own supply and clearly only cares about himself, Geb is completely oblivious to the fact that his housemate Snider is a ticking time-bomb and is a great danger to Stratten, even after his girlfriend points out the obvious. In fact, when Snider acts with a certain lovelorn lunacy after Stratten leaves her, Geb responds by smugly complaining, "I can take a bragging Snider, I can take a coniving Snider. I just can't stomach a sentimental Snider," as if heartsickness and sentimentality are the same exact thing. Of course, Geb is no different than anyone else in Stratten's life in that he ultimately fails her in the end, hence the value of Fosse including pseudo-interview scenes with these largely superficial and/or unsavory characters who talk a lot but never say anything that truly matters. In that sense, *Star 80* oftentimes feels like a sort of anti-murder-mystery where the murder is already solved and the characters seem incapable of offering any real clues.

While Stratten reluctantly agrees to marry Snider despite Hefner hypocritically objecting due to the kosher Canadian having "the personality of a pimp," she is killed by her hubby only after 16 months of miserable marriage after leaving him for a sensitive filmmaker. Indeed, while Stratten marries Snider because she believes "I owe it to him" since he was responsible for jumpstarting her career, she cannot help but swiftly dispose of him upon meeting 'cinematic auteur' Aram Nicholas (Roger Rees)—a fictionalized character based on filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich who unwisely cast her in his box-office bomb *They All Laughed* (1981) and made her the subject of his dubious memoir *The Killing of the Unicorn - Dorothy Stratten 1960-1980* (1984)—as he is the complete opposite of her Hebraic husband as a kind, thoughtful, and empathetic 'artiste' that, quite unlike most men in her life, seems to see her more than just a tasty piece of fresh meat. As a one-guy kind of gal, Stratten, quite unlike her hubby, is fond on monogamy and refuses to maintain the charade of her sham marriage after falling for Aram. Of course, after a series of disastrous business ventures that are all funded by the success of his wife, Snider—a hyper hypocritical huckster

that regularly cheats on his lover throughout their rather one-sided relationship, including with less than lovely negress prostitutes that seem like insipid street slime compared to his positively pulchritudinous spouse—sees it as the ultimate blow to his already fragile ego when Stratten cheats on him with a big name Hollywood director. While Stratten tries to buy him off with a relatively generous offer of \$7,000, perennial loser Snider feels entitled to much more because, after all, he ‘discovered’ her. Needless to say, if Snider cannot have Stratten, no one can, so the Jewish pimp buys a shotgun and blows her brains out, but not before virtually ritualistically raping and brutalizing her. As if to confirm his position in the afterlife in some otherworldly Gehenna where he will be able to play pool with Oskar Dirlwanger and Carl Panzram, Snider then straps Stratten’s bloody naked corpse onto a ‘sodomy rack’ and then proceeds to commit necrophilia with his dead wife off-screen while the camera focuses on various nudes of the tragic heroine as if to starkly contrast her nightmarish reality to the pseudo-sophisticated erotic illusions that Playboy contrived. Before blowing his own brains out, Snider triumphantly declares, “You won’t forget Paul Snider” and the rest is history. Luckily for Snider, *Death of a Centerfold: The Dorothy Stratten Story*—a largely forgettable TV movie turd of the subpar soap-era-esque sort that features the less than handsome Bruce Weitz portraying Snider—was not the only film made in tribute to his infamy, as *Star 80* is a near-masterpiece in terms of style that somehow manages to be respectful to both the real-life murderer and his victim (whereas the TV movie only inspires feelings of apathy and banality as manly mischling Jamie Lee Curtis, who already looks rather ‘used up,’ seems completely incapable of expressing even an inkling of innocence or naivety, among other important nubile qualities that the real-life Stratten so effortlessly radiated).

Despite featuring many morally dubious subjects, *Star 80* is a strangely moral film, or, more specifically, the sort of covertly moralistic movie you might expect from a deeply troubled man that personally experienced the sins and debasement that it almost gleefully depicts as if to entice the viewer while mocking them at the same time by giving them unrivaled beauty and then ruthlessly ripping it to shreds with a certain understated elegance. On top of Fosse utilizing the film as a sort of covert self-criticism via the Paul Snider character, *Star 80* acts as a sort of stylish cinematic condemnation of the people, places, and professions that the auteur was so personally accustomed to. Indeed, featuring an aesthetic that falls somewhere between a post-Cries and Whispers Ingmar Bergman film (notably, Sven Nykvist acted as the cinematographer) and, well, vintage Playboy smut, the film ironically utilizes glamour to goad the viewer into asking questions about morality in an era that basked in shallow spectacle and disposable escapism, hence the commercial failure of great dark 1980s films like Ivan Passer’s *Cutter’s Way* (1981) and James Bridge’s *Mike’s Murder* (1984), among countless others. While the film portrays the fictionalized Bogdanovich char-

after in a mostly favorable light, Teresa Carpenter's Pulitzer Prize-winning Village Voice source article 'Death of a Playmate' is considerably less flattering to the point where it accuses both the filmmaker and Hefner of causing Stratten's death. To make things somewhat creepier, in 1988, 49-year-old Bogdanovich married Dorothy's 20-year-old little sister Louise Stratten in a dubious childless marriage that ended in divorce in 2001 (notably, as depicted in the film, Snider was already 'grooming' Louise when she was just a little girl). While Fosse was a philandering man, he certainly never reached the degeneracy of overrated auteur Bogdanovich who not coincidentally did a great job portraying a sleazy Hebraic psychiatrist on *The Sopranos*. If anyone can learn anything from the Stratten sisters, it is that girls abandoned by their fathers make easy prey for predators, especially if they are young, dumb, and beautiful.

As his films surely demonstrate, Bob Fosse was a considerably haunted and self-loathing man and while looking around a club on Sunset Boulevard during the production of *Star 80* he even went so far as to confess, "I'm going to die in one of these places. Here's where I was born." While Fosse did not croak in a pile of his own vomit in some sleazy strip club surrounded by topless hags with saggy tits, he did, not unlike his semi-autobiographical character in *All That Jazz* (1979), succumb to a heart attack and, rather fittingly, it was in the arms of his own virtual Dorothy Stratten, Gwen Verdon, whose career he made and (at least in his own mind) he never got enough credit for. Indeed, Verdon was Fosse's wife-cum-muse and the auteur acted as the director-choreographer for both the stage and film musicals she was best known for, including *Damn Yankees!* (1958) directed by Stanley Donen and George Abbott. As to what Fosse actually thought about the uxoricidal necrophile of his film, he would state, "Paul Snider was a guy who seemed a product of the sort of shallowness that comes from buying hook, line, and sinker the slick-magazine philosophy of what the American male should have. That is, if you have the right kind of car or the right kind of clothes, learn people's names, learn how to say hello charmingly, and all that, then the world will be your oyster." While I agree with Fosse to a degree, I believe he is bit too generous in his assessment of the semitic souteneur. After all, Snider came from a fucked family that, fulfilling the worst sort of racial stereotypes and surely using Talmudic reasoning, successfully petitioned a court to grant them all the assets of both Snider and Stratten after the murder-suicide because the Playmate died first and thus her homicidal hubby technically 'inherited' her wealth. Speaking of strange familial connections, Bogdanovich virtually unwittingly predicted the casting of *Star 80* when he opted to include a rather dark passage from female lead Mariel Hemingway's grandfather Ernest Hemingway's popular antiwar novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) as the epitaph on Stratten's grave marker.

While *All That Jazz* is a painfully personal film that makes Fosse seem like a self-destructive blackhole that sucks up everyone and everything around him,

Star 80 is arguably even more uniquely unflattering, albeit in a considerably more cryptic fashion. Indeed, as Martin Gottfried argued in his biography, “In STAR 80,’ John Kander said, ‘Bob was saying the same thing he was saying in CHICAGO. That everything sexual is disgusting, [but] I never knew him well enough to understand what demons he was exorcising.’ Perhaps the demon was sexual guilt. Perhaps STAR 80 was an exorcism of that demon, or perhaps it was an expression of his anger with Hollywood and its failure to make him a movie star. Perhaps finally, in some way, he was linking both of these major themes of his life as reflections of the qualities that he feared might be discovered within himself: shallowness, fraudulence, a self who, like Paul Snider, he secretly believed was cheap, unmanly, incompetent, and unlovable. Riff.” Indeed, it is certainly hard to believe a heterosexual man would be such a great dancer, musical-theatre choreographer, and theatre director and it surely is not particularly traditionally masculine that he would utilize such feminine skills to woo women. Of course, one cannot also forget that Fosse was forced to experience being molested by much older predatory woman to establish such a career, which is certainly something that probably haunted him for the rest of his life. Indeed, as Gottfried also argued, “...what emerges in sharp focus in STAR 80 is Fosse’s inclination to blame public sex—as if something had to be blamed—for private lust [...] But there is so much shabby sex in STAR 80 that even with the PLAYBOY sensibility as a theme, it seems excessive. Yet the brilliance of the movie, its power, probably could never have been achieved without the crass sex. It is as if the exorcism of Bob Riff required an overdose on sleaze.” Of course, ‘Bob Riff’ is the stage-name used as a teenager when he was being molested by slutty strippers. As a victim of a group of virtual female Paul Sniders, Fosse ultimately learned to become a Paul Snider himself, at least in his own troubled mind.

Not surprisingly, lead Eric Robert go into Brando-esque method-acting-mode during the filming of Star 80 to the point where he became a sort of demonic composite of both Snider and Fosse, which is apparent during the film, or as Gottfried explained, “As Dorothy’s assurance grows, Paul’s cracks. He changes his style and goes Hollywood in a clothing-store scene, putting together snakeskin boots, gold chains, and an unmistakable Fosse costume of black—black shirts, black pants. He would wear Fosse black for the rest of the film as STAR 80 begins its ascent to climax, and with full rhythmic music Fosse makes this wordless costuming scene into a virtual dance number.” Naturally, Fosse went further than making Roberts dress like him, or as the actor explained in Gottfried’s book, “He educated me on the life of the strip clubs. He wanted me to know it wasn’t about fucking, that every stripper who was a ‘lifer’—that’s what he called them—has the same issues as children who were molested. Bob believed that. He wanted me to know that this guy [Snider] had expertise, that this guy, if he weren’t a psychopath, would have been hugely

successful.” And Fosse was successful because he was not a psychopath, but an inordinately sensitive man that could empathize with the damaged dames that both preyed on him and were assumedly preyed on themselves. As someone that has dated (ex)strippers and victims of molestation, I can safely say that *Star 80* left a sick feeling in my stomach and reminded me of why it would be a blessing if both Hollywood and the entire so-called adult entertainment industry became the object of a complete scorched-earth policy. While Paul Snider only killed Stratten and (thankfully) himself, one can only imagine how many souls he destroyed during his short pathetic life via sexual exploitation as a pimp.

Notably, *Star 80* begins with a potent opening credits sequence featuring glossy pin-up shot of Hemingway-as-Stratten juxtaposed with the tragic heroine stating to a journalist, “PLAYBOY’s motto is the girl next door. They look for girls that are wholesome and fresh and young and naïve. They look for all of that. So most of those girls do have that type of background.” During this same sequence, a journalist can be heard asking Stratten’s teenage sister, “Would you like to be just like your sister when you grow up?” and she replies, “Yeah. Because I’m proud of her.” Undoubtedly, in this opening credit sequence before the film has really even started, Fosse has established a clear anti-Hollywood/anti-porn message where both Hollywood and Playboy are blamed for the seduction and, in turn, sleazy sexual debasement of youth who come to believe that flashing their boobs and beaver will lead to fame and fortune. Of course, Fosse, who dreamed of being the next Fred Astaire as a child, knew this all too well and he paid the ultimate price, but luckily it at least eventually resulted in great films like *All That Jazz* and *Star 80* where the shady side of show business begins to resemble a sort of metaphysical hell that not even the gloss and glitter, which the auteur’s films have plenty of, can disguise the pangs of debasement and spiritual destitution. In some ways, one could even argue that Stratten’s death was an unintentional mercy killing as the beauty at least never had the opportunity to degenerate into a forsaken creature like self-slaughtering porn diva Shauna Grant or harpy-like ‘Me Too’ messiah Rose McGowan. Indeed, whereas McGowan now seems seriously possessed by some sort of fiercely demonic feminist force and (at least, to me) is quite hard to even look at due to her crazy-dead-eyes despite once being quite beautiful in her early films like Gregg Araki’s *The Doom Generation* (1995), Stratten followed in the tradition of James Dean and will remain forever young and beautiful.

As for Fosse, *Star 80*—a film that the auteur expected would win him an Oscar—was so severely savaged by both film critics and former allies alike that the filmmaker decided to give up on filmmaking altogether and never directed another film. Indeed, bitch boy Andrew Sarris went so far as describing it as “one of the most glumly misogynous movies ever produced on this continent” with “The gruesome ending, particularly, is the biggest treat for women-haters this side of the underground snuff circuit.” A notorious beta, Sarris, who was

not a bad film critic, seems to be projecting his own fantasies and/or conflicted feelings onto the film, as *Star 80* derives its singular pro-female/anti-Hollywood majesty by devastatingly depicting the destruction of what Bogdanovich once somewhat rightly described as a 'unicorn' as Dorothy Stratten was a woman that was so strikingly statuesque and pure in her pulchritude that here mere presence in *Galaxina* (1980) is the sole thing that makes such stupendously stupid sci-fi-cat watchable. Undoubtedly, what Sarris and other critics of the film cannot deal with is being forced to confront the fact that such a breathless beauty was so savagely murdered and defiled in the dream realm of *Hollyweird* in an aesthetically flavorsome film that utilizes a slick *Playboy* perfect style to underscore such frivolous post-sexual liberation fantasies of fame and fortune. Indeed, to fully embrace a film like *Star 80* one must reject the lies of feminism, sexual liberation, and Hollywood and accept a certain cultural cynicism where the exploitation and commodification of feminine beauty is seen as something virtually satanic and ultimately anti-human. After all, the greatest celebration of Dorothy Stratten's beauty would have been if she had children with a similarly attractive man (as opposed to unattractive kosher comen like Snider and Bogdanovich) and not as the heavily edited subject of a semen-soiled porno mag that some pussy-starved loser used as a quick masturbation aid. In that sense, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that Fosse's film is the greatest thing to come from Stratten's life as a nearly cinematically immaculate warning on the perils of the road to stardom in a *Der Stürmer*-esque Sodom where girls must be virtual gorgons if they hope to survive, let alone thrive.

-Ty E

RAPE SQUAD

Bob Kelljan (1974)

Supporting a collective of multicultural femme fatales and heavy misogynist themes throughout, *Rape Squad* is an exploitation piece of unnerving potential but never fills through. The depictions of rape aren't well executed in the slightest but the scenario of being forced to sing "Jingle Bells" while getting sodomized by a man in a hockey mask is enough to leave women scrambling for a registration sheet for self-defense classes. *Rape Squad* was filmed 9 years before the title *Friday the 13th* even became synonymous with hockey masks and slashings so a bit of horror legend is originated within the confines of this pre-*Charlie's Angels* feminist classic. Director Bob Kelljan even went as far as to direct numerous episodes of *Charlie's Angels*. Maybe to wash away the shame of directing a film called *Rape Squad*. Taking a film called *Rape Squad* and marketing it as such is a rather risky move. A title like this is sure to offend everyone from rape victims to mothers to even rapists themselves as the film highlights a rape-busting group of women in shades with Dolemite-worthy martial arts moves. The "men are scum" philosophy doesn't entirely work in this film allowing for a gap in themes. It's almost as if Kelljan directed the first half, went on a brief hiatus, then came back after experiencing a life-altering situation. Rape is a fickle act and offers much beauty behind the curtains of cinema if filmed correctly. In place of portraying the lustful act of love as something glamorized and fluorescent, Kelljan films the act of rape to be fueled by cowardice, lack of machismo, complex-driven, and sleazy beyond comprehension. With all fairness to victims, this is how it should be displayed. Or should it? After a man in a hockey mask and orange jumpsuit rapes an innocent and beautiful girl, she goes to the cops with a profile looking that of an ex-member of Slipknot. Rather than providing any help because cops are evil in film and never "really try," Linda meets with the other victims and decides to put together a rag-tag anti-rape squad that erupts with the film's only true moments of color: Scenes in which the group humiliate sexual deviants by way of embarrassingly choreographed martial arts. I take that back; to even call this a form of "arts" is a rash decision by itself. The fight sequences go as far as to appear improvised. The resulting experiment is a film that flip flops between gender politics faster than "Madonna's reinventions". In one scene, women will be domineering their lovers and practicing misandry boldly but then will pull a 180° and begin to glorify the act of sexual assault and apply more texture to these men as being an innocent gender fueled mostly on humor. In the end, it feels like the women come out below the rapist. This blame can be laid on a scene where two men joke about rape in front of a victim. Harmless joke, right? Who knew that the female would "flip a shit" in what would soon become the most ridiculous scene ever to try and squander sympathy votes. For Tarantino's "ode" to the grindhouse cinema, the troupe of stuntwomen featured in *Death Proof*

RAPE SQUAD

can be traced back to the malnourished presentation of Rape Squad. For an exploitation film, my standards weren't particularly high for Rape Squad but this demonstration of "How far can I go?" proved to be an amusing experience, one that I can recommend to fans of anything that would have the gusto of featuring "rape" in the title. I don't regret watching Rape Squad but the idea of watching this film again doesn't exactly appeal to my senses. Rape is filmed as an act in acts. This is only a taste of the irony delivered in Rape Squad. Some women get over it faster than others and with good reason. The struggle for growth subsides and the female psyche seems to shut down. Over-exaggeration might be the case but Rape Squad is the last film you'd want to use as an analytical piece to research rape. Overall, this experiment in bad taste speaks of many subjects but doesn't really shine on any one. Expect a cluttered mess of enjoyable sleaze and over dramatic acting. Thank god for the nudity.

-mAQ

NEO-NAZI SATANISM

Bob Larson (???)

Neo-Nazi Satanism is without doubt the most important crisis that helpless Americans must face in the future. Forget about AIPAC lobby, Obama-nation, or international terrorism, Neo-Nazi Satanism is the one spreading cancer that must be exorcised out of our beautiful multicultural nation. Although a self-confessed atheist, white revolutionary James Mason is a supporter of Charles Manson and has ties with the Church of Satan. Thankfully, cautious Christian gentleman and Televangelist Bob Larson has made a career out of exposing (and exploiting) evil heretics like James Mason. In the short documentary Neo-Nazi Satanism, Bob Larson assaults James Mason with rounds of Jesus love and promises of eternal damnation via the boiling pits of hell, where according to the Talmud (as mentioned by Mason), Jesus Christ is boiling in excrement.

It becomes apparent during Neo-Nazi Satanism that Bob Larson seems to have at least a little bit of respect for James Mason. Larson informs Mason that he looks like he could be a low-level lawyer, Baptist preacher, or even gym teacher (I don't agree with that one). It also becomes apparent in Neo-Nazi Satanism that James Mason is at least a couple notches more intelligent than the rabid barking poodle Bob Larson. It is obvious that both men have their own particular ethos, which makes them of better moral character than the majority of the American citizens. Both James Mason and Bob Larson throw arguments at each other that become more and more predictable as the documentary goes on, but Mason is much cooler in his delivery whereas Larson's head seems like it might explode at any moment like that dude in David Cronenberg's *Scanners*. Larson also likes repeating racial slurs in such a loud and obnoxious manner that one might start questioning his true vaudevillian agenda.

Neo-Nazi Satanism also features a variety of hilarious calls from listeners. One girl tells Butthole-Bob Larson that he is racist against skinheads and Neo-Satanism, therefore he is racist in his own way. A Jew with a very non-Jewish redneck accent calls and claims he will single-handedly prevent an American Holocaust of his Judaic tribe. I especially enjoyed the remarks of a caller who claims that James Mason and Adolf Hitler must have deformed brains because even retards know the difference between right and wrong. Bob Larson seems a little confused on how to respond to this verbally barbaric caller. I seriously doubt Jesus was watching over Bob Larson or any of his callers.

Bob Larson also shows his knack for hitting all the low-blows. He asks James Mason when he last cried and Mason gives Bob some very sound advice about how if he cried for every bad thing in the world, he would never stop crying. It seems hard for Bob Larson to grasp the idea of getting a pair of balls and dealing with life in a more respectable manner, even if it is being a white power terrorist. All in all, I feel that James Mason was a much better and rational teacher than

NEO-NAZI SATANISM

Bob Larson. That is ok for Bob Larson though, because Bob knows he has already won the hearts and cash of his faithful idiotic listeners.

-Ty E

COME AND SEE

Bob Sarles (2004)

Despite the incessant demonizing and parodying of the Nazis in Hollywood films, very few of these films are even remotely responsible in regards to presenting objective facts. I cannot count the number of times I have seen well dressed blonde beasts in SS uniforms in Hollywood films tormenting ghettoized Jews for the mere delight. Of course, such crimes and atrocities occurred but not nearly as much as the Hollywood Zionist hate-machine would have you believe. Hollywood never really lets the viewer know the virtual hell on earth that the typical Eastern European Slav had to face during World War II. Thankfully, a couple Soviet filmmakers took it upon themselves to recreate the atrocities committed during the Nazi occupation of Eastern Europe. In the 1985 Soviet masterpiece *Come and See* directed by Elem Klimov, one gets a very realistic view regarding the Waffen-SS occupation of Byelorussia SSR, which upon conclusion will no doubt haunt the viewer for many years to come.

Oskar Dirlewanger

One aspect of World War II that very few people know about is the fact the Germany's most deadly military forces, The Waffen-SS divisions, were made up of mostly (around 60%) non-Germans. Aside from allowing fellow Nordic Aryans (Dutch, Norwegians, etc.) to fight for Germany, The Waffen-SS would later include (out of desperation) various nonwhite divisions composed of Indians, Arabs, Slavs (who were mostly considered European/Asiatic hybrids) and Tatars. Out of all of these non-Aryan *untermensch* divisions, the most degenerate and despicable was probably SS-Sturmbrigade "Dirlewanger" which was commanded by convicted sex criminal and soldier genius Dr. Oskar Dirlewanger. Despite holding a doctorate in political science and holding down a decent teaching job, Herr Dirlewanger could not keep his hands off little girls which resulted in his imprisonment in a plush concentration camp. Fortunately for dirty Dirlewanger, he was butt buddies with a comrade who also happened to be friends with Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. Asiatic-looking SS leader Heinrich Himmler granted Dirlewanger a swift release from his temporary home at a concentration camp and eventually Dirlewanger had command of his own Waffen-SS division. SS-Sturmbrigade "Dirlewanger", like Oskar Dirlewanger himself, was composed of criminals from concentration camps as well as homosexuals, Gypsies, mental institution patients, Slavs, and various other undesirable rabble fighters for Uncle Adolf's Reich.

The film *Come and See* is loosely based on the killing sprees committed by Oskar Dirlewanger's degenerate criminal commandos in Byelorussia. The film follows a young boy named Florya who joins up with Soviet partisans in defending virtually medieval-like peasant villages. Florya reminds me of a friend of mine whose father escaped from Eastern Europe after the Second World War.

COME AND SEE

Like my friend, despite his fair hair and pasty white skin, Florya (like a lot of Slavs) has a slightly Asiatic appearance, surely the result of the numerous Mongol invasions that occurred in Eastern Europe throughout history. The great American writer Ambrose Bierce once satirically defined Russians as "A person with a Caucasian body and a Mongolian soul" in his book *The Devil's Dictionary* but I think he was being too generous in his description of Slavic phenotypes. Although a lot of Slavic men tend to be aesthetically displeasing, the women seem to be some of the most beautiful in the world. After being left by himself at a partisan training camp, wandering the woods, Florya meets the Slavic beauty Glasha. In the scorched earth world of *Come and See*, Glasha seems to be the only white light that has reached Florya's petrified eyes. In one particularly beautiful and surreal scene, Glasha dances exquisitely on a small box in the rain, providing Florya with a small sense of joy and allowing him to forget (for a small moment) that Dirlewanger's army of vicious mentally defective criminals are just around the corner.

I must admit that *Come and See* is easily one of the best (if not the best) paced films that I have had the honor of viewing. Throughout the film, Florya comes upon various scenes of Dirlewanger-esque atrocities. As *Come and See* progresses, the fear and disillusionment in Florya's eyes becomes more apparent until at the end of the film his horrified face resembles that of a man being burnt alive, carrying a similar expression to those burnt corpse photographs taken after the Anglo-American firebombing campaign in Dresden Germany. *Come and See* essentially chronicles the spiritual death of a young boy who is forced by circumstance to grow to be a soldier in just a couple days. The infamous Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger said it best when he wrote, "Innocence is ignorance. To know and remain innocent would be the highest" as by the end of *Come and See*, Florya has certainly lost his innocence and has taken up the rifle as his new mission from God.

What finally changes Florya from an inquisitive young boy into a driven soldier is when he becomes a human plaything of Dirlewanger's SS men. Despite seeing various carnage and the suffering victims of Nazi atrocities, it is not until he becomes a victim of Dirlewanger barbarism that he becomes a true believer and fighter for the Soviet Partisan cause. During the pillaging and burning of a small village, Florya becomes completely aware of the depravity and remorselessness that can consume his fellow human beings. Those that do not know that *Come and See* was inspired by the atrocities committed by the Dirlewanger crew might find the acting exaggerated as the soldiers commit atrocities with a spirit of sadistic glee. Florya even finds himself as a possible subject featured in a Waffen-SS photo album when a German soldier places his Luger across the temple of the horrified boy's head in a peculiar yet viciously powerful pose for a photograph. Despite most of the villagers being burned alive in their community church, Florya manages to escape the ordeal (at least physically) unscathed.

By the end of *Come and See*, Florya is drunk with bloodlust for revenge. After seeing that Soviet Partisans have captured a group of the Waffen-SS men that were responsible for destroying the village and its inhabitants, Florya hands his Soviet comrades gasoline so that the enemy soldiers can be engulfed in a miniature Holocaust. Most of the Waffen-SS men and their Byelorussian collaborators plead for their lives, including an elderly German who talks about how he is a decent man and a loving Grandfather. Disgusted with the older officer's cowardice, a young and handsome soldier puts an end to these laughable peace relations. This young Nazi officer is no doubt a true believer as described by Eric Hoffer and lets the Slavs know that he feels they are an inferior race that needs to be exterminated (starting with the children) as they spread the plague of international untermensch bolshevism. Naturally, the enraged Slavs act accordingly but unfortunately for Florya, he does not get to utilize his gasoline as he had hoped.

Come and See would be the last film directed by Russian auteur Elem Klimov. A couple years before directing the film, Klimov lost his wife Larisa Shepitko, also a filmmaker, in a tragic car accident. Shepitko directed her own World War II film *The Ascent* (1976), which also happened to be her last completed film as a director. Unlike *Come and See*, *The Ascent* has a fairly bleak and nihilistic message, showing the hopeless weakness of individuals during war times. Despite all the misery and atrocities featured in *Come and See*, the film still carries a message of fighting till the bitter end. Elem Klimov had most of *Come and See* shot on a Steadicam, giving the film an authenticity that makes the film feel all the more chilling. Klimov was also looking for an extreme realism with the wardrobe as most of the SS uniforms were originals from World War II, as was the weaponry and real live ammunition fired throughout the film. Next to the dismay and arduous realism of Klimov's *Come and See*, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* feels like a glossy dystopian action film, full of pointless sentimentalism and contrived emotions. If there ever was a war film that could truly capture the horrors of war, *Come and See* is that film.

-Ty E

NOT A LOVE STORY: A FILM ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY
NOT A LOVE STORY: A FILM ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

Bonnie Sherr Klein (1981)

Admittedly, I have less respect for the opinions and experiences of feminist Jewesses than that of elderly ex-felon negro janitors or Vietnamese nail salon beauticians who moonlight as a giver of a “special massages,” so the last thing I would want to see is a documentary directed by frigid sexless Semitic misandrists of the oftentimes Sapphic sort, yet I could not help but watch the literally and figuratively cunt Canadian agitprop piece *Not a Love Story: A Film About Pornography* (1981) aka *Not a Love Story: A Motion Picture About Pornography* directed by Judaic femi-bolshevik documentarian and cripple rights advocate Bonnie Sherr Klein. My interest in seeing the decidedly deluded doc came after discovering that it was ironically once banned in the province of Ontario due to its pornographic content despite its overt anti-porn message. Directed by the mother of the much more famous but no less radically repugnant Jewish socialist feminist writer Naomi Klein (who is notable for her anti-Zionist stance, even once stating regarding the Israeli’s treatment of Palestinians, “[Some Jews] even think we get one get-away-with-genocide-free-card”), *Not a Love Story* is a sometimes unintentionally humorous schadenfreude-packed example of a hysterical Hebraic feminist complaining about a world she and her Adorno-adoring people helped sire via their promotion of so-called sexual revolution, women’s liberation, and Marcusian cultural Marxism. Featuring real porn starlets, strippers, and fuck show performers doing what they do best and discussing their unconventional forms of employment, as well as a variety of largely Hebraic and uniquely sexually unappealing feminists and neurosis-driven far-left-wing nuts that are intentionally misleadingly introduced with generic labels like “writer/poet” as if the doc was not mostly a yuppie affair and did not have more hysterical heebbs than a Jewish wedding, giving their opinion on the proliferation of porn in the post-counterculture age, *Not a Love Story* is patently preposterous pornographic anti-porn that ironically proves to be a nostalgic experience for fans of ‘porn chic’ aka the Golden Age of Porn. A Canadian government-funded work that was produced by Studio D—a now-defunct feminist/lesbian branch of the National Film Board of Canada founded in 1974 that was the first government-funded film studio dedicated to ‘women’ (aka kosher carpet-munchers) filmmakers and is probably best known for the dyke doc *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (1992) co-directed by Sapphic Semites Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman—Klein’s 69-minute doc (I wonder if the running time was intentional?!) is like a pornographic pseudo-arthouse exploitation montage as molested by the pathologically pedantic pseudo-intellectual musings of various largely downright ugly, swarthy, and hairy self-stylized feminist true believers who seem more than a little bit irked by the fact that men can gawk at hot women they themselves would like

to defile but would never ever get the opportunity given that they are physically and mentally revolting hags on a self-righteous ego-trip. Indeed, the great thing about *Not a Love Story* is that unless you're a man-hating feminist dyke, spiritually castrated male feminist, or brainwashed college student who thinks they are progressive because some limp-wristed college professor defecated on their brain, the doc will either reinforce your revulsion of everything feminist or will inspire you to hate feminists if you don't already do.

Opening with a conspicuously contrived scene where so-called 'eco-feminist' Susan Griffin self-righteously proclaims that the Valentine's Day edition of *Hustler* magazine is an example of "pornography revealing itself" because it features "the heart imprisoned, the heart on its knees" via its playful pictorials of women in bondage, *Not a Love Story* immediately establishes itself as not an objective film but as a polemical and misandristic hate-fueled movie manifesto where high-strung Hebraic hags invade pornographic realms, visiting Toronto, Los Angeles, 42nd Street in NYC, etc. From there, Klein enters the red light district of Ontario and narrates, "A woman's contortions...a woman that could be me. On the streets around me, women's bodies are offered for fantasy. Everywhere, illusions are for sale. I need to understand what is going on behind these doors and how it affects my own life." Of course, the woman would NEVER be Klein as no man, no matter how desperate, would want to see her unclad 'contortions' (or lack thereof), let alone partake in some sort of sexual act with her unless they had some bizarre fetish for frigid femicunts. The central subject of the doc, if there is one aside from the hairy-armed director, is a confident, charming, cute, and quirky stripper named Linda Lee Tracey aka "Fonda Peters" who Klein states of, "When I met Linda, I admired her comfort with her sexuality, but I discovered she was also asking questions about pornography." Tracey loves making her living doing a parody-based comedic strip routine where she playfully mocks her sleazy male patrons and she describes how she once attended a feminist anti-porn rally where the feminists treated her in a blatantly condescending fashion by saying things to her like "oh, poor you" thus leading her to come to the conclusion that these ostensible women's rights advocates had the same opinion of her as the most misogynistic of men, or as she states herself, "It's the same line men are using. Women are stupid." Of course, as *Not a Love Story* ultimately demonstrates, Tracey is one of the few smart, semi-sensible, and likeable women in the entire film, as she is not fueled by hatred or resentment, but a genuine intellectual desire to investigate the workings and motivations behind the sex industry. Indeed, the major difference between the feminists and so-called 'sex workers' (to use a convenient yet retarded politically correct phrase) aside from the glaring contrast in terms of attractiveness is that while the former group is discernibly sexually neurotic and quite bitter about it, not to mention pathetically pretentious, the latter group is quite confident and unpretentious.

In one of the more incriminating segments of the documentary, blonde British

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female porn photographer and director Suze Randall is interviewed and states regarding her erotic works, "I certainly don't look for a deep meaning in this." Later in the doc, Randall personally lubes up Linda Lee Tracey's pussy with a Q-tip for a photo shoot, which is shown in graphic detail, as if to demonstrate that the photographer is a devilish defiler and manipulator who exploits girl's pussies for profit. When Canadian porn magazine publisher David S. Wells is interviewed, he does not hold back blaming sexual liberation as resulting in the rise of pornography as he feels that the movement resulted in the emasculation of males. In Wells' mind, porn is a tool, albeit a rather pathetic one, that men use to reaffirm their masculinity. Needless to say, Klein seems more than a little bit annoyed when Wells states, "the greatest turn-on for a man is having a woman kneeling at his feet performing fellatio" and "men don't want to be equal to women...simple as that." In one of the more pathetic sections of the doc, a bisexual Jewish ex-porn star named Marc Stevens (real name Martin Feldman), who starred in porn chic classics like Gerard Damiano's *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973) and Radley Metzger's *The Private Afternoons of Pamela Mann* (1974) and appeared in both straight and sodomite fuck flicks (he was even once photographed by gay S&M/BDSM photographer Robert Mapplethorpe), makes the dubious claim that he got out of porn because he felt that it was "degrading to women" and then he cries about how he had various sex partners that had too high of expectations for him in terms of virility because they had seen him in porn flicks. Notably, Stevens would get back into porn after the release of *Not a Love Story* and, according to his porn star ex-girlfriend Sandi Foxx, committed suicide via hanging in 1989 after contracting AIDS. Stevens sees things quite differently from a trashy chick named Patrice Lucas who is the daughter of a hooker and who stars in live sex shows with her black husband Rick Lucas, who claims that white businessmen would get turned on seeing a negro defile a small white girl, even encouraging him during his show by shouting things like, "fuck her...hurt her...get it." Somewhat strangely (or maybe not so considering all the homos in hetero hardcore flicks), Lucas, like Stevens, seems fairly faggy.

In one of the most hilarious scenes of *Not a Love Story*, pudgy ogre-like Jewish radical feminist and prominent 'yippie' (Yiddish + hippie) Robin Morgan is interviewed while in the company of her preteen son, future musician Blake Morgan, and self-described "gay husband" Kenneth Pitchford, who is a founding member of the patently pathetic male feminist 'Effeminiist Movement.' While spiritual eunuch Pitchford the bitch boy listens intently while sporting an exceedingly gay scarf, Morgan unleashes the following rant that reveals her decided disillusionment with the outcome of the sexual liberation that she endorsed: "When people speak of the quote 'Sexual Revolution' in the 60s or the 70s, I think what they mean is what Marcuse prophesied as 'repressive tolerance' and, that is, more and more proliferation of superficial sex, kinky sex, and appurtenances and toys and things to first benumb the sensuality...the normal

human sensuality and then, once it is comatose, you need greater and greater stimuli to supposedly wake it into life, none of which has to do with the subtleties of eroticism, of love, of affection, of amiable communication.” Of course, one has to wonder how a woman married to a gay man experiences “normal human sensuality” and the “subtleties of eroticism, of love, of affection, of amiable communication,” but then again, Morgan is so manly that maybe she and her proudly effete husband sexually compliment one another. In what is easily the most absurd statement and flagrant flat-out lie made in the entire doc, Morgan claims that the first thing that the Nazis did upon invading Poland was flooding the country with pornography, thus underscoring her classic irrational Jewish victim mentality, as well as the innate role her Jewishness plays in her subversive politics. Later on in the documentary, Morgan declares that men should be actively shamed for indulging in porn and absurdly claims that she believes this because she “loves men so much.” Like the true born cuckold that he is, Pitchford comforts his wife Morgan while she literally cries about her hatred for porn.

Seemingly increasingly brainwashed by Klein’s anti-porn crusade, Linda Lee Tracey does an improvised anti-porn street sermon in front of a porn theater where she speaks of “nameless holes” and gets in an argument with a poor negro who claims she is “hurting other women” by “downing them” due to their careers in the sex industry. In what is probably the most glaring and shameless example of sensational and just plain stupid propaganda in the doc, Klein zooms in on the poorly drawn homemade swastika and SS tattoos on the hand of a porn patron in what is ultimately not the first but the second pathetic attempt in the film to somehow absurdly link pornography with National Socialism, as if the sex industry was not largely a Yiddish affair. In a rather incriminating scene where she unwittingly reveals that radical feminism is her own warped brand of religion, lesbo eco-feminist Susan Griffin declares that porn is the “opposite of religious worship” because it involves “desecration of the woman’s body.” Personally, as a man, I have to disagree, as I have met far too many fellows who have worshiped a woman they did not even know with more devotion than the average Sunday school patron or typical family man who goes to church on the weekend in a half-hearted attempt to atone for his porn addiction. In another one of the seemingly endless interviews with Hebraic intellectuals featured towards the end of *Not a Love Story*, Klein interviews a psychologist named Edward Donnerstein who argues about the desensitizing effects of porn and how it apparently portrays male-on-female rape as good yet male-on-male rape is portrayed as bad in films like John Boorman’s *Deliverance* (1972) in a scene featuring quite admittedly erotic footage of a woman performing fellatio on a handgun in the background. Of course, the thing that Donnerstein leaves out is that while most women seem to have rape fantasies and enjoy rough and violent sex from time to time (I say this not as a result of something I have read, but from personal

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experience), no man aside from the occasional queer masochist fantasizes about being anally pillaged. Towards the end of the doc, director Klein complains, "The research of the film exposed me to the worst of human existence and the kind of sadness that came from seeing the kind of pornography that I was seeing for the first time." Personally, I found more of the "worst of human existence" in the Hebraic talking heads than the hardcore starlets.

Despite *Not a Love Story* concluding on a somewhat positive note where it seems like central subject Linda Lee Tracey has seen the error of her ways as a stripper and has fully embraced feminism, the stripper was actually so annoyed with the distorted and one-sided way director Bonnie Sherr Klein depicted her in the documentary that she decided to become not only a documentarian, but also reporter, writer, and producer herself, as she felt the need to portray the objective truth instead of titillating agitprop twaddle. Indeed, one also has to wonder what Klein was thinking when she decided to include a long close-up shot of Tracey's pussy near the end of the film under the ostensible purpose of 'documenting exploitation,' as if the film is really just crypto-carpet-muncher porn disguised as an artsy farsty feminist political documentary as a work where estrogen-deprived feminists ultimately get to have their cunt and eat it too due to its combination of pornographic imagery and anti-male-mania. Admittedly, I agree with some of the points that were made in the doc, mainly that pornography desensitizes certain people, warps their view of sexuality, and incapacitates their ability to have normal sexual relationships. Indeed, I can think of a number of people I have known who got addicted to pornography before they ever even lost their virginity and I cannot even fathom the sort of fucked fetishes the younger generations that grew up with the internet have developed before they could even jerk off, but of course the deleterious effects of hardcore fuck flicks on human sexuality and relationships certainly pales in comparison to that of feminism and the sexual revolution, hence the proliferation of the porn industry in the first place as is discussed by one of the porn publishers in Klein's doc.

Brainwashed by post-Freudian kosher commie garbage like Wilhelm Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) and Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1955) that argued using the same old Judeo-bolshevik scam of pitting the poor goyim against the rich goyim that the prole libido needed to be liberated by 'repressive' western civilization, Klein and her friends in the doc are the very same sort of people that fought to pave the way for the wanton world depicted in *Not a Love Story*, thus their criticisms seem conspicuously absurd and highly hypocritical. Notably, the film was made during the so-called "Porn Wars" aka "Feminist Sex Wars" of the late-1970s through early-1980s that hilariously destroyed the second-wave feminist movement when 'anti-porn feminists' like Klein and her comrades waged war against 'sex-positive feminists' after morbidly obese Judaic dyke Andrea 'sex is rape' Dworkin organized a protest in NYC in 1976 against the absolutely worthless exploitation flick *Snuff* (1976) co-directed by Michael

and Roberta Findlay. While Klein mentions in *Not a Love Story* that the porn industry was partly mafia-run, she predictably does not dare to make reference to the fact that the porn industry is and always was a largely Judaic industry influenced just as much by monetary motivations as the desire to undermine the country's largely white Christian majority's morality, yet Hebraic radical feminist Robin Morgan actually has the chutzpah to make the patently preposterous projection that the Nazis spread pornography as a weapon in some pernicious Aryan master plan. Had Klein wanted to make something resembling a semi-objective documentary tackling the harmful aspects of porn, she should have interviewed intelligent members of her tribe involved in the porn industry like porn pioneer Al Goldstein and longtime veteran performers like Jamie Gillis and Annie Sprinkle, but instead she intentionally opted to interview poor and uneducated shiksa chicks that she could easily manipulate as well as depict in a degrading fashion that makes it seem like most women in the industry have no clue what they are doing and are being manipulated by misogynistic males who have malicious motives other than wanting to make tons of money, like using porn as a way to use "violence against women" or whatever. Either way, I can sleep comfortably knowing that *Not a Love Story* probably influenced more people to have sex and masturbate than adopt warped feminist views.

-Ty E

THE DEADLY CAMP
THE DEADLY CAMP

Bowie Lau (1999)

The Deadly Camp is more of a percentage of Anthony Wong's acting roles rather than its own film with a soul. He brings life to otherwise dead films. See also: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor. The Deadly Camp is a rehashing of The Texas Chainsaw Massacre mixed with hillbilly/inbred camp to create a film that would love to cover psycho-sexual territory with its implied father-son virility. Just because this film isn't great doesn't mean it lacks branches of favorable material. The Deadly Camp follows a group of picture-perfect couples taking a vacation on a lonely island. With about 9 people, personalities are a generally mixed bag sans the stereotypical "goofy" Asian displayed with enough screen time to span 4 characters. The females acting is rather abysmal seeing as they are just a tool to provide flesh to the Dependant relationship. That leaves us to Anthony Wong which, as you know, is an amazing character actor and plays the pervert pimp named Boar. This is another classic example of how Asia mimics much of American horror. And to think people actually believe Asia is the only source for original horror now-a-days? I scoff at the mere thought of that. The Deadly Camp is celluloid proof of this disputed claim. The film is so cluttered with nonsense and derivative character development that it almost offends me. The character is furthest from fitting his name "Soldier". I would have liked him to be a character like Spoon from Dog Soldiers, but he dies in a pathetic attempt at heroism. In what was destined to be CAT III, this effort barely passes as Category IIB. The film doesn't demonstrate aptness in any category. Annoying characters that are a collective just to create a miniature body count and a plot that doesn't really make sense are the ingredients to make this pabulum effort. The only reason I'd ever watch this film again is for the leper maniac exercising extreme misogyny via chainsaw.

The Deadly Camp on DVD exclusively at wtfdvds.com
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BLACK SUN

Boyd Rice (1999)

Experimental sound artist Boyd Rice seems like a cool and interesting guy. Although I cannot consider myself a huge fan of the would be “superman,” I respect what he does (whatever that actually is). I recently read the book *Standing in Two Circles: The Collected Works of Boyd Rice* and it seems like Mr. Rice has had an eventful life. Rice has done everything from being a Magister of the council of the nine in the Church of Satan to creating his own colorful Tiki Bar. One could say that Boyd Rice is an eclectic man with very distinct tastes. Rice has also dabbled in the “art” of experimental film making.

Black Sun is an experimental short by Boyd Rice featuring flickering and swirling swastikas for over 8 minutes. Unsurprisingly, Rice also provided the soundtrack for this EVIL NAZZZZZZZZIIIIII short. After a couple minutes of the endless erratic swastikas I found myself mesmerized. The National Socialists that took over Germany in 1933 used the swastika as a powerful image and fuhrer Adolf Hitler said of the flag, “As National Socialists, we see our program in our flag. In red, we see the social idea of the movement; in white, the nationalistic idea; in the swastika, the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work.” Of course, Boyd Rice’s swastikas in *Black Sun* lack any powerful nationalist colors. The swastikas in the short look like ruins and are all by their lonesome lacking any type of flag. One could say the swastikas featured in *Black Sun* are appropriately contemporary as they mark the death of the Third Reich. Boyd Rice: Occult Neo-Futurist and fascist or Deranged artistic Carny? *Black Sun* has been compared to the conceptual art of con-artist Andy Warhol. Boyd Rice also happens to be a co-founder of the Unpop art movement which is known for its application of pop aesthetics, stylings, or techniques to unpopular, unpleasant, repressed or otherwise censored ideas. I don’t think it would be a stretch to say that the swastika is nowadays an unpleasant symbol. I find it interesting, however, how contemporary anti-Nazi books, films, and other propaganda sensationalize the swastika better than Boyd Rice ever could. One could say that the swastika is a bigger and more power symbol now than it was in Germany from 1933-1945. As stated before, *Black Sun* is a mesmerizing short film but it is also far from being a masterpiece. Initially, the film felt like the cinematic result if somehow experimental filmmaker Stan Brakage was stranded at a Nazi rally and he lost control of his bowels out of fear for his life. *Black Sun* has more to do with cinematic diarrhea than it does with cinematic masturbation. Albeit, this defecation doesn’t feel too bad coming out once you get used to it.

-Ty E

THE MANY MOODS OF BOYD RICE
THE MANY MOODS OF BOYD RICE

Boyd Rice (2002)

If any document presents cunning canny aesthetic terrorist Boyd Rice in a rare moment of relief from metaphysical hemorrhoids, it is his own personal VHS mix-tape *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* (2002); a home-video compilation originally only released amongst the proudly untrained artist's friends, but eventually saw an official release by *Predatory Instinct Productions*; a precursor to Reverend Kevin I. Slaughter's *Underworld Amusements*. Indeed, *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* might as well be called *Boyd Gone Wild* as the grainy vhs tape features the NON-man at the height of drunken Dionysian ecstasy; whether he is acting the dipsomaniac with Douglas P. (*Death in June*) and Albin Julius (*Der Blutharsch*) in Europa or obsessively spinning obscure thrift shop records for semi-interested bar patrons. With his epic low-budget documentary *Iconoclast* (2010), documentarian auteur Larry Wessel attempted to unravel the many hats and masks of Mr. Boyd, yet the deranged dilettante noise musician does an especially swell job exposing his most humble self in *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice*. To say that some of the scenes featured in the compilation are redundant (like a sizable fraction of Rice's musick) would be more than a little fair (like the nude succubi fans featured cowering amongst the seemingly menacing man during a photo shoot), but like all of his albums, *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* has its various special moments of charismatic brilliance. Thankfully, Mr. Rice also chose to include some of his favorite scenes from Richard Wolstencroft's *Pearls Before Swine* (1999); a quasi-fascistic low-budget libertine action flick starring wolfsangel-obsessed artist in his most contrived and unconvincing role. In fact, Rice felt a scene of himself being flogged in the ass by a bloated and bald middle-age man in a cheap suit would make for a most captivating introduction to *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice*. Naturally, the compilation also features Boyd in full Satanic priest regalia on the exceptionally trashy talk show *Christina* discussing the merits and myths of the Church of Satan. If anything stays consistent throughout the virtual video timeline that is *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice*, it is Rice's chameleon-like knack for juggling many subversive and seemingly unrelated roles; an instinctive lifelong talent he explains most proudly and candidly in the RE/Search Publications video *Pranks TV!* (1988). If Mr. Rice has another talent that even begins to rival his ability to fit in a variety of eclectic masks, it is his scorched earth policy of burning bridges with former friends, artistic co-collaborators and girlfriends that would put Uncle Adolf to shame, hence the many missing central players from his personal story in *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* and Wessel's *Iconoclast*.

As someone who grew creating and watching many consumer grade skate videos and horror flicks, it would not be a stretch for me to say that I felt a strange sense of Déjà vu and nostalgia while watching the totally amateurish *The*

Many Moods of Boyd Rice. Additionally, it is quite apparent that Mr. Occult Fascist has a glaring amount of sentimentalism for the footage he compiled in *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice*, which is indubitably a nice change of pace for a man who ex-friend and fellow Gnostic Charles Manson described as a, "black pimp." If one was unaware of the background behind this personal peep show, one would most likely assume it was an unauthorized collection constructed over many years by a completest noise fan with an unhealthy Boyd Rice addiction, as it presents the Gnostic man-in-black in a manner that somewhat undermines his mostly deathly serious posturing. Out of all of the many moods of Boyd Rice, being piss-faced drunk is obviously the most pleasurable as exhibited in a scene in the VHS compilation where he performs an unrelenting full-frontal striptease with an unidentified female at a bar. If anyone wanted to discredit Rice's dubious reputation as a unflinching evil neo-nazi of the most despicable kind, they would just need to present *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice*; a personal video diary that also acts as an unintentional Achilles' heel for his various limp-wristed, left-wing witch-hunter detractors. After his fallout with Mr. Rice after devoting 6 years of his life to directing the documentary *Iconoclast* – a consciously hip 240 minute epic advertisement for the subversive artist and his long, uneven career – Satanic auteur Larry Wessel described his former pal in a interview as, "A lonely, cold-hearted, pretentious, hypocritical sociopath." What Wessel said may be true, but *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* offers a voyeuristic and barely edited perspective that somewhat contradicts the sentiments of the UNPOP documentarian. Personal drama aside, *The Many Moods of Boyd Rice* is an often entertaining, but sometimes longwinded fart from Rice's rusted iron heart.

-Ty E

THE MACHINIST
THE MACHINIST

Brad Anderson (2004)

The Machinist is a Spanish "psychological thriller" starring a sickly Christian Bale. Bale looks so unhealthy that he could have easily been an extra in your typical holocaust film classic. Maybe Steven Spielberg could cast Christian Bale in a prequel to Schindler's List. But seriously, in The Machinist Christian Bale looks like a cross between Nosferatu and a concentration camp survivor. Christian Bale lost over 60 pounds for The Machinist which shows the kind of acting dedication worthy of Max Schreck's approval. After watching The Machinist, I found out the film was a Spanish production. No surprise here as the film has a different type of atmosphere that didn't feel like your typical American "psychological thriller." The Machinist director Brian Anderson certainly got the film's nightmarish feeling down. I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Anderson studied at the film school of David Lynch. Director Brian Anderson put a lot of emphasis on mood which few directors are capable of nowadays. Christian Bale's character having the name Trevor Reznik is no surprise. The Machinist looks like it could have been a feature length Nine Inch Nails video minus pseudo-dark industrial music. Trevor Reznik, despite probably only weighing about 100 pounds, is obviously much tougher than NIN man Trent Reznor. Trevor Reznik is easily Christian Bale's most mentally deranged acting role to date. Nobody has ever denied Bale's superb performances at playing a psycho. It makes me wonder when Bale will do something crazier in his public life than just assaulting his mother and sister. The Machinist does have it's faults and a fairly weak ending. I really hope they weren't trying to make another Fight Club with this film, but my suspicious lead me to believe so. The Machinist had the potential to be a great film but is just a good film. Christian Bale gives it his all acting and director Brian Anderson, unlike most American directors, cares about actually directing. I can only assume that Fantasy Factory, the producers of the film, got in a way of the films production. Producers have a way of destroying films because they tend to hate art and love mediocrity.

-Ty E

GIANT

Brad Bird (1999)

I have been putting off my first viewing of the film *Giant* for sometime now. The main reason is that the film features James Dean's final performance, before he died in a car wreck a week or so after *Giant* finished filming. I knew before watching the film that despite it being an epic "as big as Texas", James Dean only got to play a smaller role, certainly not the lead caliber he got to play in *East of Eden* and *Rebel Without A Cause*. After all, seeing as Dean only got to play a secondary character in *Giant*, his performance in the film probably wouldn't even be interesting enough to deserve comparison to the two former lead roles that would immortalize him in celluloid forever. After watching the film, my prediction of James Dean's performance in *Giant* as being his worst and least notable of his cinematic career was certainly true. *Giant* also happens to be one of the most ridiculously melodramatic films that I have even seen in my life, certainly falling in line with the films *Anti-Texan* sentiment, a cinematic assault on the Southwestern stoicism of the Lone Star State. *Giant* was directed by American military propagandist George Stevens, director of the Nazi Concentration Camp footage (even helping with the footage used for the "eye for an eye" Nuremberg trials) taken after World War II and the feature *The Diary of Anne Frank*. To call Stevens a propagandist would be letting him off too lightly, for his films are partly responsible for the passive psychosis that has consumed the Faustian soul since the end of the World War II. George Stevens is one of the principle creators of the Holocaust Mythos which would set the standard for Steven Spielberg and others looking to milk Europe for some good ol' cash for Israel and of course the millions of Holocaust survivors. *Giant* has nothing to do with the Holocaust, but it is another film that attacks the Faustian man, the conquer of the world. *Giant* was one of the first (if not the first) Hollywood film to comment on the "racism" of Aryan Texans against poor conquered Mexicans and Indians, a message that is fairly common with Hollywood today. Pseudo-Injun hack Robert Rodriguez's upcoming pile of cinematic excrement *Machete* features a group of poor victim illegal alien invaders wielding Machetes against evil racist law-abiding American citizens. It should be quite the epic and such an artistically-sound picture could not exist without the legacy of George Stevens epic anti-Gringo (anti-Gringo in the organic Gringo sense, not in the deracinated self-loathing "progressive" liberal Gringo sense) piece *Giant*. For such a giant Texas epic as *Giant*, one would expect the most stoic and heroic of cowboys as the lead protagonist. Of course, with a director like George "The Indian (his real-life nickname)" Stevens, the lead protagonist is an "Independent woman" from Maryland named Leslie (played by Elizabeth Taylor). Leslie is certainly the proto-Feminist type that would act as a model for all those "liberated" women to come. Marylander socialite Leslie ropes herself Bick Benedict

GIANT

of the famous Texas Benedict family and heads down southwest to start her new life in Texas. Immediately, Leslie is appalled by the fact the poor whites and especially poor Injuns, are considered lesser citizens. Being the independently minded woman she is, Leslie believes that Texas was stolen from poor Mexicans. I guess being an Independent-minded woman, Leslie doesn't realize that being dominated means being naturally at the lower end of the totem pole. After all, people should really embrace Marxist metaphysics and feel very bad about being conquerors and winners. One should always look at victims, losers, and the defeated as the most virtuous of God's many children. After some time of complaining and whining, Leslie eventually convinces Bick to break most of his family traditions in the name of human progress. Giant is certainly one GIANT HEART WARMER! James Dean plays a degenerate cowboy by the name of Jett Rink. Jett is hated by most of the Texans that know him except for Bick's sexually ambiguous sister Luz. After trying to prove her manhood by riding a wild black stallion, Luz takes a wicked western crash that results in death. Luz wanted her boy toy Jett to have a little piece of Benedict land, a piece of land that proves mighty wealthy for its size due to the oil hidden underneath it. After finding oil, Jett Rink goes from being the gayest Cowboy in Texas to the richest man in Texas. Unfortunately, James Dean did not have the chance to do much as the character of Jeff Rink. He goes from being a pathetic cowturd to a rich arrogant asshole in what seems like a couple minutes. Who cares about character development when you got a film as big as Texas. The one positive aspect of James Dean's performance is that despite dying young in real-life, he at least got to grow old cinematically in Giant. Too bad that James Dean looks like an elderly toddler in his aging makeup. Dean's real-life friend Dennis Hopper also makes an appearance in Giant as the weak doctor son of Bick Benedict. The young Hopper's performance is at the very least entertaining, but it doesn't save this film's epic failure in character development. Old Man Dean At the end of Giant, big Bick Benedict is a broken man with a shattered legacy. He states of his mongrel mestizo Grandson, "My own Grandson doesn't even look like one of us. He really looks like a little wetback." The last shot of the film then shows an blue-eyed blond-haired child then it cuts to Bick's swarthy mongrel Grandson. This ending of Giant also symbolizes the new youth of America to come with the Open Immigration Act of 1965 (which opened up America to Third World Immigration and Suicidal Globalization) being in acted not long after the release of Giant. Without the help of sentimental melodramas like Giant, White Americans could not have been as so accepting and stupid to give their country away to people that show the incapacity to buildup (let alone maintain) their own countries. What a nice big national turn for the worst. Giant is a testament to the fact that Independent women and the emasculated American white male have really turned America into a prosperous place of progress and equality, a place where the future is destined to be a great one.

-Ty E

THE DEAD PIT
THE DEAD PIT

Brett Leonard (1989) Having perused through some much needed cult horror recommendations several months ago, I recently rediscovered this twanging, pulsing need to subject myself to *The Dead Pit* since being reminded about its release on Code Red DVD. After seeking out a copy and collaborating with the desire for supernatural zombie mysticism inside of me, I can genuinely say I came out of this experience almost surprised by the creeping quality of this low-budget guttural triumph. Brett Leonard's similar affection for fog machines can be found within some of the smoky racial VR combat sequences featured in *Virtuosity* and I see a similar character schematic being shared with *Feed's* Michael Metszencalmpf and *Dead Pit's* Dr. Colin Ramzi. Not only is the set up reminiscent to the brilliant *Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors* but the brutal crescendo garners an visually-aromatic likeness to the most infamous of scenes within *Return of the Living Dead*. This plus Cheryl Lawson parading around screaming whilst exposing her midriff equals horror goodness. Before I get off on a tangent with the ascertainable atmosphere within *The Dead Pit*, allow me to mention that the film is inclined to have a tremulous build up for some. It took me several viewings to make it past the 30 minute mark and I'm sure glad I finally buckled down for this treat. After its bizarre Ghoulies-esque opening scene of a young(er) Jeremy Slate lurking down a spiral staircase bathed in a ghoulish green smoke only to find a mad scientist who has been using the hospital's patients getting bizarre lobotomies and brain manipulation techniques. Telling the crazed Ramzi that this must come to an end, he puts a bullet between his eyes, rolls him in his "dead pit" and seals the cellar to the abandoned ward. Cut to the present, Dr. Gerald Swan (Slate) has become a shut-in psychiatrist with a misappropriated addiction to alcohol and counseling his patients. With the admittance of a new patient, one with a strange case of amnesia(?), a mysterious earthquake ravages the grounds and breaks the seal to the dead pit. While the film desperately struggles to breathe life into all its characters, this proves unnecessary as the dead rise from their Nickelodeon-flavored point of entry to devour the brains of all who have entered upon this unholy ground. Cheryl Lawson as Jane Doe is pitch perfect as an entrancing bubblehead but not much more than that. Actress she is not, dissenting guinea pig of psychological and physical torture by way of a malicious manifestation she is. Her connection with the sinister undead ringleader goes as far as one with any luck in predictability would assume. Jane Doe's adventures at night as she daintily sneaks past guard prove to be superfluous at most as most of her contact with the specter prove to be through her dreams until the finale. Even as dated and aged as the film appears to be, *The Dead Pit* does feature an exquisite set of decadence as told through abandoned hospital wing. To strengthen this aspect, Brett Leonard utilizes several camera techniques way before their time to great effect e.g. the chase scenes through

the halls as our poor lead actress flees in fear of falling victim to her boogeyman. At first glance, these scenes might appear to be ordinary but pay close attention as these tactics have just begun being employed again in such a similar "sweeping" pattern. See also: *Live Free or Die Hard* for a recent example. Perhaps the most universal ground of praise in *The Dead Pit* would be the climax of the film where Dr. Ramzi commands all his minions to shuffle ominously through the swinging double doors. Again, the implementing of the fog machine works to a brilliant key stroke. The calamitous nature of these bumbling fiends plays to great regards the tension needed for the shuffling beasts and their lack of humanity. Now while these slaves are limited by command, they break down my expectations to kill two police officers just off the property which sets the mood nicely for an all-over possibility of this supernatural epidemic breaking past the grounds and possibly into a world-killing event. Just a thought. *The Dead Pit*, while being an 80s horror film, is a sugar rush of evil incarnate. This comes as no surprise from the highly efficient skills of Brett Leonard. It's rather saddening to see him resort to directing *Highlander* films nowadays as he was such an unregarded icon in both cyber-thrillers and debut zombie features. *The Dead Pit* comes greatly recommended if you can digest the constant dribble of loons until you reach the midway notch. This is a film that matures as the mysticism of evil progresses; a very nice touch for a first-timer.

-mAQ

VIRTUOSITY
VIRTUOSITY

Brett Leonard (1995)

Virtuosity is a science-fiction thriller made in the fabulous year of 1995. This year marked some of the greater underrated cyberpunk films to be released in Hollywood. A fine example is the violent Johnny Mnemonic. What made Virtuosity so special might be the fact of it's racial conflicts in the film. In the beginning of the film, we see Denzel Washington in a bizarre Judge Dredd styled uniform. He is in virtual reality searching for a killer with many one-liners. When his partner asks "What do we look for?" Denzel replies "His Eyes - They look like mine." This line is one of the more hidden ways to mainstream blacks into society. More so the fact that when his virtual reality session is over, he goes from being slick and well-groomed into an exotic prison primate of sorts; donning the dreadlocks and scars. When Denzel discusses his case and the reason he is in prison, he touches the prude white criminal psycho-analyst's hands. This action causes her to shiver with unrequited delight. This statement speaking aloud that all white women harness deep, dark sexual fantasies with black men. It goes from that ridiculous remark to Denzel having a forced prison brawl with a hairy neo-Nazi covered with "White Power!" tattoos. The dark meat he speaks of sure sounds foul. That scene is also a gesture supporting the rumor that blacks are more prone to police brutality. This may, or may not be true, but Denzel won't stand for it. The certain killer he is tracking down is SID 6.7. This suave intelligent killer is played by none other than Russel Crowe. Denzel and Crowe won't be seen in a film together until American Gangster. Notice in Virtuosity, Denzel is a Negro Neanderthal and Crowe is a suave aficionado of suits, but in American Gangster, they switch roles completely. SID 6.7 is a clever code-name due to it being rounded up from 6.66 (The Mark of the Beast) His personality is derived from the methods of 200 serial killers, all rolled into one. One of the killers is the murderer of Denzel's family prior to the present events. This gives an interesting twist as Denzel has the amazing chance to get revenge twice; something not explored at all in revenge films, and of course Adolf Hitler is the first name to come up. Of course, there is no "antisemitism" in the film. They pardon Denzel with the mission of "Black man cleaning up the white mans mess." This film also has a virtual poke-fun of at the "geek" of America. One sad pathetic loser drools at a virtual reality tease, so much as preventing a real relationship or even social activities. He is soon disposed of like the scum that he is. Several aesthetic sequences of Virtuosity shine out. One being it's throbbing techno soundtrack that adds to the virtual eroticity that lingers off of the scenes, and the other were the state-of-the-art special effects. They range from Cronenberg and Giger-esque incubation pods to virtual screen melting. The film has a sadistic sexual side to it. SID 6.7 loves hearing beautiful women crawl at his feet screaming. Even more so when his favorite track of Lords of Acid plays at the same

time. This song fits perfectly into the film, but is edited due to its pedophilia lyrics. The song is entitled "Young Boys" and basically describes the singer's affinity for young boys in bed. The sexual tones of Lords of Acid fits the club scene this film follows perfectly. Virtuosity is a marvel of a cyberpunk film. Several of the scenes highlight the film and the others are forgivable. It has an extremely interesting stand point of sensationalism in film that goes hand in hand with on screen violence. The year 1995 produced great cinematic propaganda. Too bad they rarely make film like they used to.

-Maq

ADVENTURES IN DINOSAUR CITY
ADVENTURES IN DINOSAUR CITY

Brett Thompson (1991)

It takes a special moment to realize my appreciation for this long-lost gem. As I sit and eat a bowl of cereal, I can only imagine it's the sugar that rekindles the inner-child in me. I remembered key scenes from this film 16 years ago. That's a long time to try and force the title back in my head but sadly, I had completely forgotten it. Only about a year ago, I finally found the title with the aid of an internet random and I had slaved to track it down. I must know if the film retained any of its charm through the vicious cycle of time.

Adventures in Dinosaur City is an extreme exercise in minimal lighting. Brett Thompson went for a bleak tone to spin the story of the ill fated Saur City. The plot aims right for the heart strings of children. A scientist's son and two friends get sucked into a Dinosaur cartoon where it is up to them to recruit hero's Rex and Tops to stop the dreaded Mr. Big and restore sanctity to the Dinotopia. The subject matter of kids getting transported inside electronics isn't anything new but in this film, It's given a new life as the action and humor is actually something adults can dig into. As for an innovative standpoint, Adventures in Dinosaur City takes the same formula that Street Sharks used and created incredibly catchy one liners with awesome action. After re-watching Adventures in Dinosaur City, I can successfully say that I want to yell "Gimme Claw!" at a random passerby. No doubt I'd probably get the shit kick out of me, but the nostalgia this film has fed me is greater than any adrenal surge conceived yet. The action in this film can be divided perfectly down the middle. We got the average 3 Ninja's Kick Back combat style which normally involves a brat fighting with no rhythm and making comical gestures. Then we got the surprisingly good martial arts performed mainly by sidekick Tops. It's always persuasive enough to watch a rubber man in a foam suit do cartwheels and drop kick cavemen. Adventures in Dinosaur City is a fun romp through the prehistoric era but don't let that fool you. This is a double-edged abrasive family film that will resort to pre-adolescent double entendre's and extremely crude humor that will promote childhood rebellion. Partially disturbing in tone and relentless in fun, This is a must see and a children's cult classic. I can't remember seeing hot topics such as sacrificing oneself, hot bimbo cave women, ejaculation jokes, and smart ass dinosaurs all in one PG package. I need to digest this a bit.

-mAQ

BLOW OUT

Brian De Palma (1981)

Although I do not agree with a lot of his opinions on cinema and consider him to largely personify the worst sort of stereotypical British upper-class smugness and pomposity, I cannot help but occasionally refer to the writings of film critic and historian David Thomson, especially his film reference guide *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (2004), which features a number of unconventional critiques on various important and almost always unanimously praised filmmakers ranging from Federico Fellini to Stanley Kubrick. Indeed, aside from concluding his entry on the 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) director with "...Kubrick was always a 'master' who knew too much about film and too little about life—and it shows," he wrote regarding every film school hack's favorite filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock, "His great films are only partly his; they also belong to the minds that interpret them. There is an artistic timidity in Hitchcock that, having put the audience through it, must allow them to come to terms with the experience. But his own personality is withdrawn, cold, insecure, and uncharitable. The method, despite its brilliance, is equally private and restrictive. To plan so much that the shooting becomes a chore is an abuse not just of actors and crew, but of cinema's predilection for the momentary. It is, in fact, the style of an immense, premeditative artist—a Bach, a Proust, or a Rembrandt. And beside those masters, Hitchcock seems an impoverished inventor of thumbscrews who shows us the human capacity for inflicting pain, but no more." While Hitchcock has directed a dozen or so films that I particularly appreciate, I must concur with Thomson, especially when I compare the exceedingly eulogized "Master of Suspense" to the true pioneering masters of cinema like F.W. Murnau, Carl Th. Dreyer, Robert Bresson, and Ingmar Bergman, among various other examples. Needless to say, Thomson is no less harsh with Hitchcock's greatest impersonator Brian De Palma (*Carrie*, *Scarface*), who I have always considered a sort of obnoxiously self-satisfied and pedantic hack of the obscenely over-glorified sort who makes highly technically competent yet largely superficial and one-dimensional grade A big budget exploitation movies that film students, fanboys, and sexually impotent beta-male misogynists assumedly enjoy beating off to. Naturally, one also cannot take a director too seriously whose superficially stylish and machismo-marinated spick gangster films like *Scarface* (1983) and *Carlito's Way* (1993) are literally worshiped as the virtual Gospel by rappers, wiggers, ghetto negroes, and various other forms of gutter grade untermenschen rabble who typically have about as much respect for the artistic medium of film as they do for laws and literacy. Of course, De Palma's films are even more contrived and manufactured looking than Hitchcock's, as they are mostly fairly soulless and spiritually vacant cinematic works that are virtually all artifice and seem like they were more the product of an engineer's mind than that of a serious artist or poet, but then again

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he probably would have never obtained mainstream acceptance were he actually a artist or poet. Naturally, I am probably a little biased, but the cinematic works of largely forgotten auteur filmmakers like frog avant-gardist Yvan Lagrange (Tristan et Iseult, Dérive 'Le naufrage de Vénus') or Aussie hippie mad scientist Albie Thoms (Marinetti, Rita and Dundi) are infinitely more important and intriguing to me than some ex-arthouse poser like De Palma, whose arguable greatest talent is utilizing techniques from the experimental underground like split-screen as a novel gimmick that slightly differentiates him from the legions of soulless for-hire whores and artistically autistic artisans that prostitute themselves to the lawyers, businessmen, Cadillac commies and Israeli spies that rule Tinseltown. Of course, it is no coincidence that De Palma has a strong affinity for creating conspicuously cinephiliac cinematic works where the mechanics of the filmmaking process are actually incorporated into the film, as it highlights his sort of super literal and sterile view of cinema. Not surprisingly, De Palma is also arguably at his best when directing such covert cineaste pieces as his pre-Scarface output clearly demonstrates. Thankfully, quite unlike his bastard half-wop disciple Tarantino, De Palma also displays a degree of elegance and nuance when paying tribute to his cinematic masters, but cinephilia will only get you so far when it comes to being a truly formidable filmmaker.

As someone with a largely worthless BS degree in film, I would undoubtedly argue that studying philosophy, psychology, or even history would be of greater value to any aspiring filmmaker than actually studying film, as you will never be an intriguing auteur if you have no understanding of people, psychology, history, or spiritually (which, not surprisingly, seems to be the subject that most contemporary filmmakers seem to least understand). Surely, it is no coincidence that Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman was the prodigal son of a highly respected Lutheran minister, just as it is no accident that Paul Schrader was bought up under the anti-cinema doctrine of the super strict Calvinist Christian Reformed Church and Jean Cocteau was, first and foremost, a poet whose amateur painter mother committed suicide when he was only nine years old. Likewise, it would probably shock no one to know that Spielberg was a nerdy suburban kid who had nil interest in art films, spirituality, or even sex (though, like many Jews of his generation, he developed a deep and visceral hatred of Germans at an early age), as his films reflect his sterile, contrived, sheltered, naive, materialistic, and socially retarded upbringing. Indeed, Spielberg probably has more power and creative freedom than any other filmmaker in the world yet he chooses to create childish blockbuster swill that has not even really surpassed the pioneering films of Anglo-Saxon master D.W. Griffith in terms of artistic and narrative innovation. A rare Italian-American from a Protestant background, De Palma had a banal bourgeois upbringing that was only unconventional in the sense that he began playing peeping tom on his own father when he discovered that the patriarch was cheating on his mother with another woman, hence his obsession

with paying homage to the shameless voyeurism of *Rear Window*. Not surprising considering his dubious cinematic portrayals of women and troubled real-life personal relationships with women, De Palma also had a cold and callous mother that oftentimes reminded him of the fact that he was an accident and treated him as inferior to his eldest brother. Notably, De Palma's philandering father was a respected orthopedic surgeon and as Thomson somewhat hilariously noted regarding one of his most famous films, "...CARRIE is the work of a glittering, callous surgeon who left his knife in the body." Aside from developing an odd obsession with watching his physician father getting physical with random women when he was a boy, De Palma was also a tech dork that was obsessed with conspiracy theories, most notably the JFK assassination. Naturally, De Palma's contempt for his white bourgeois family and mistrust of the government as a result of JFK getting his brains blown out under quite dubious circumstances would ultimately lead to him adopting an ethno-masochistic Weltanschauung that would prove to be beneficial to his filmmaking career.

While De Palma's films, not unlike Hitchcock's, reveal very little about the man behind the camera aside from being the creations of a smug smirking cynic and lame mainstream liberal type that is more interested in seeing beautiful women penetrated with a knife than a cock, at least one of his commercial films, *Blow Out* (1981)—a flick that Thomson conveniently completely forgets to mention in his rather dismissive entry on the filmmaker in *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*—is vaguely autobiographical and arguably his closest equivalent to a true auteur piece. Like fellow dago New Hollywood filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola's respectable commercial failure *The Conversation* (1974), the film is more or less a reworking of Italian maestro Michelangelo Antonioni's revolutionary English-language arthouse counterculture thriller *Blowup* (1966), albeit focusing on film sound recording as opposed to photography. Featuring a whiny beta-male protagonist that reminds me of what Shia LaBeouf might be like if he had a couple testosterone injections and a somewhat less swarthy appearance, the film stars fellow weirdo wop wuss John Travolta as a sort of more handsome and charismatic stand-in for De Palma in a role that would earn the Hollywood hunk some minor legitimacy as an actor. In the film, Travolta portrays an exploitation movie soundman who unwittingly gets immersed in a deadly political conspiracy after serendipitously recording audio evidence in regard to the assassination of a popular governor and presidential candidate. Somewhat curiously but not surprisingly, the film also stars the director's then-wife Nancy Allen as a sort of dimwitted quasi-prostitute that is ultimately brutally murdered in the end, thus somewhat symbolically highlighting the De Palma's troubled history with women (notably, Allen was the first of three different women that the director was briefly married to). Additionally, the film is set in De Palma's hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and shot at various locations that the filmmaker was very familiar with, thus further adding to the film's innate auteur essence.

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Originally aspiring to be a sort of 'American Godard' that was more interested in testing the bounds of cinematic experimentation in terms of both narrative and technique than attempting to appeal to the bread and circus tendencies of mainstream audiences (somewhat strangely, Godard later became a fan of his rather lame and tame mainstream supernatural-thriller *The Fury* (1978) and even included a clip from it in his ambitious 8-part video project *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998)), De Palma's first feature-length film was an overly ambitious semi-experimental black-and-white metacinema horror piece entitled *Murder à la Mod* (1968), which feels like the result of some film school dork with Asperger syndrome paying intertextual homage to both Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) and Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), albeit with a little bit of Kurosawa's *Rashômon* (1950) and sub-Sarno-esque 42nd Street exploitation sleaze thrown in for good measure. Undoubtedly, as a fairly erratically assembled cinematic work that incorporates the filmmaking process as an imperative ingredient of both the film's structure and storyline, De Palma's debut feature certainly feels like a crude and dilettantish art school prototype for *Blow Out*, which is thankfully devoid of any of the sort of asinine Godardian and Brechtian influences that were prevalent in his early films. Indeed, if the film is admirable for anything aside from clearly demonstrating that the general public does not care about the truth and rather not know about sinister conspiracy theories that involve the brutal assassination of their beloved politicians, it is that it manages to reveal some of the mechanics of the filmmaking process in a fairly enthralling manner that will not put people to sleep while at the same time demonstrating that cinema truly has the power to change the world. While De Palma's films have hardly contributed anything to the evolution of humanity (in fact, his anti-American digital turd *Redacted* (2011) actually inspired a deranged Albanian Muslim to shoot and kill two U.S. Airmen at Frankfurt Airport in Frankfurt, Germany), *Blow Out* is a fairly provocative reminder that sometimes cinema can be a deadly game.

In a sort of trick film-within-a-film opening that seems like a parody of Bob Clark's classic slasher flick *Black Christmas* (1974), an autistic-looking four-eyed dork is depicted prowling around a female college dorm and spying on quite cunt-y and savagely salacious college sluts that are engaging in fucking, masturbating, and bitching, among other less than ladylike things that make the building seem more like a bordello than a student housing complex. When the killer eventually makes his way into a dorm bathroom without a single girl noticing him, he raises his knife in a Norman Bates-esque fashion and prepares to stab a showering babe who, upon finally noticing the psycho killer, unleashes a most impotent and unintentionally humorous scream that immediately reveals to the viewer that they are watching a rough cut of an imaginary movie. The slasher flick is a work-in-progress entitled "Coed Frenzy" and protagonist Jack Terry (John Travolta)—a former tech whiz kid turned underachieving exploita-

tion film studio whose sound recordist—is ordered by his swarthy lard ass boss to do what he does best and record some new sound effects for the flick, including “new wind” sound and a more believable scream for the shower scene. After leaving the exploitation film studio, Jack heads to a wooded area near a small bridge to do some sound recordings and is somewhat delighted when a young couple mistakes him for a peeping tom. Aside from the couple, Jack also encounters a frog and an owl, among various other small creatures that he carefully records. Needless to say, when a speeding car appears out of nowhere, careens off a bridge and then plunges into the water, Jack is left totally startled, but that does not stop him from taking the initiative to become a hero by diving into the water and risking his life to save the passenger(s) of the sinking car. While the driver of the car is already visibly dead (how Jack can see under water during nighttime is anyone’s guess), Jack finds a live girl in the back seat and he manages to save her in a courageous act that will ultimately eventually lead to the protagonist living a forlorn life of paranoia, dread, melancholy, and extreme guilt, among various other negative qualities that one does not typically associate with exploitation filmmakers.

After saving the girl, Jack is not congratulated as a hero but is instead treated like a virtual guilty criminal when he is questioned by the cops, who strangely doubt his story that there was a woman inside the car. As it turns out, the dead man that was driving the car was a populist democrat governor and presidential candidate named George McRyan, who was expected to be the country’s next president. Before Jack knows it, McRyan’s best friend and right-hand man, a dorky Nordic dude named Lawrence Henry (John McMartin), approaches him and attempts to coerce him into not telling anyone, especially the press, about the fact that the good governor was riding in a car with a somewhat slutty looking young lady that was not his wife. When Jack brings up the “truth” and how he prefer not to lie, Henry eventually manages to get the protagonist to change his mind after getting angry and arguing, “Who gives a damn that you were there? You want to tell his wife that he died with his hand up some girl’s dress? Or maybe you’d rather she read it in the papers!” Sally (played by Nancy Allen, who modeled her performance after Giulietta Masina’s character in Federico Fellini’s *La Strada* (1954)) is the mysterious girlish beauty that Jack saved and she immediately blushes and covers her face like a bashful child when the protagonist visits her hospital room and states, “I didn’t realize you were this pretty with all that mud all over your face.” While Jack’s somewhat flirtatious remark to Sally hints that he might develop some sort of romantic relationship with her, he ultimately becomes more infatuated with a pernicious political conspiracy that the little lady has somewhat unwittingly got herself involved in. Indeed, after leaving the hospital and checking into a cheap motel so that they can avoid any potential media attention, Sally falls asleep and Jack begins studying the sound recording that he captured during the accident, thus leading him to immediately suspect that it

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was not an accident at all and that the entire situation is part of a big coverup that both the police and politicians are involved in. As a result of what he hears on the sound recording, Jack believes that an assassin intentionally shot out the tire of McRyan's car to make it seem like the governor's death was a mere accident and he is seriously determined to uncover who did it and why. Indeed, Jack immediately becomes so obsessed with the political conspiracy that he cannot even bother to find the time to initiate a lurid love affair with Sally, who seems more than a little bit privy to any sensual advances that he might make.

Unbeknownst to gentleman Jack, Sally is a sort of softcore whore that was a semi-unwitting co-conspirator in a plot with her Judaic boss—a sleazy photographer and businessman named Manny Karp (Dennis Franz) that has no problem using his professional talents for rather unsavory yet highly profitable purposes—to setup Governor McRyan and destroy his political career. The original plan was that Karp, who was at the scene of the crime with his trusty 16mm camera, would film McRyan with Sally and thus ruin the presidential hopeful's plan to take residence in the White House due to the bad press that he would receive, but that all changed when an assassin decided to shoot out the politician's tire and ultimately cause his somewhat horrific death. Needless to say, delectable blonde dingbat Sally did not expect to get involved in a deadly situation where she found herself potentially drowning inside a car with a powerful dead man that she just met, but such are the unfathomable consequences of dealing with shadowy individuals that want to destroy political careers. Of course, neither Karp or Sally realized that a mysterious assassin named Burke (John Lithgow)—a tall and even somewhat goofy WASP weirdo with an equally bizarre fashion sense that probably no one would suspect of being an extra cunning coldblooded killer—decided it would be best if McRyan was simply liquidated. As an act of desperation, Burke was hired by the President's campaign manager Jack Manners, but he did not think that he would go so far as kill the governor. With McRyan dead, Burke still needs to clean up some "loose ends" and decides he must kill Sally, destroy Jack's sound recording, and deal with slimy sleazebag Karp. Unfortunately for him, Burke initially mistakes a random blonde for Sally and ends up killing the wrong girl, so he decides to mutilate said girl's genitals with cuts in the form of the Liberty Bell to make it seem as if she was the victim of a sexually sadistic serial killer. By creating a modus operandi for a phony mentally disturbed serial killer with a fetish for Liberty Bells and young broads with curly blonde locks, Burke hopes to make Sally's death seem like the result of a random sex crime as opposed to part of a big political coverup.

When Sally's kosher cohort Manny sells 16mm footage of McRyan's assassination to a mainstream publishing company for a large undisclosed amount and they are subsequently published in a magazine, Jack actually goes to the effort of cutting out black-and-white still photographs of the car crash and meticulously constructing a primitive film out of them that he then synchronizes with

his audio recording, thus further strengthening his belief that the governor was the victim of a political conspiracy. Eagerly determined to prove to the public that the governor was assassinated, Jack brings a copy of the sound recording to a local cynical cop named Detective Mackey (John Aquino), who loathes the protagonist because he “put a lot of good cops away” during his previous occupation with the Keen Commission where he was responsible for putting wires on people and busting corrupt policemen that were shaking down members of the mob. While Detective Mackey mocks and berates Jack and treats him like a half-crazed conspiracy nut as a result of the serious and seemingly absurd allegations that he makes, he reluctantly agrees to take a look at the sound recording, stating “Just because I don’t like you, does not mean I’m not gonna do my job.” Notably, as Mackey states to Jack in regard to the general public’s apathy when it comes to political corruption and conspiracies, “Nobody wants to know. Nobody cares. No sordid details. No political assassination. Accident. This guy’s dead, for Christ’s sake. None of this shit’s gonna do him any good now.” When Jack complains, “Don’t you understand that if they can get away with this and kill McRyan, who’s next?,” Detective Mackey cynically replies, “Who’s ‘they’? First I want you to tell me who ‘they’ is. What is that, a communist conspiracy of some kind? Or maybe – maybe it’s a couple of ayatollahs running out here in the street with blowguns.” Needless to say, when Mackey has his men take a look at the recording and they discover that it is completely blank, he calls up Jack and accuses him of being a nut job. As it turns out, Burke not only erased the sound recording, but also sneaked into Jack’s editing room at the film studio and erased all of the copies that he made. Luckily, Jack had enough foresight to hide a copy in the ceiling of his apartment.

When Jack is approached by a big star newscaster named Frank Donahue (Curt May) from a TV network named CITY NEWS, he finds the media man’s intentions somewhat dubious, but has second thoughts when he is offered the opportunity to play his recording on live television. Indeed, when Jack asks, “Why would you be interested in an assassination nut like me?,” Donahue confidently replies, “Go along with me on this. I guarantee you, by 8:30 tomorrow night...every one of those eight million sons of bitches are gonna believe Jack Terry’s story.” Before Jack can go on television, he must get Sally to steal her scumbag boss Karp’s original footage of the crash. Of course, Sally is reluctant to help him at first, but Jack manages to change her mind when he brings up the fact that he knows that she was part of the conspiracy and that her life is in danger, stating to her in an impassioned smart ass fashion, “I got a look at some of your earlier work. Some motel candid camera shots. You got nice tits. Who was paying you to flash ‘em for McRyan? [...] If I hadn’t been there to pull you out of the river, you’d be dead right now. Don’t you get it?” While Sally defends her quite dubious actions by stating, “It was just a job like all the others. I get ‘em into bed, and Manny’d get it all on film,” she cannot deny the fact that she

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was almost killed and that she is probably still in serious danger, thus leading her to comply with Jack's simple request. Luckily, Karp attempts to rape Sally when she goes by his apartment, thus giving the happy-go-lucky harlot the opportunity to smash a bottle over his head and then steal the 16mm film reel while her would-be-rapist is unconscious. Somewhat humorously, before attempting to sexually ravage Sally, Manny defends their role in the assassination of McRyan by stating to her while simultaneously taking a leak, "Besides, nobody is exactly crying over the way things turned out, if you know what I mean. What would have happened if the guy had have lived, huh? His career was finished, thanks to us. This way, uh, the guy comes out ahead, huh? He's a saint. A martyr. Christ, they passed one of his bills this morning." While Jack now has all the evidence he needs to prove that someone shot out Governor McRyan's tire, he does not realize that Burke has tapped his phone and knows about his plans to go on Donahue's show. Fully aware of the fact that she has no clue who Donahue is and thus would not recognize his voice, Burke calls Sally while pretending to be the newscaster and manages to coerce her into meeting him at 30th Street Station at 5:00pm with both Jack's audio recording and Karp's footage. Luckily, just before Sally leaves, Jack stops her and convinces her to wear a wire since he finds the meetup with Donahue to be somewhat fishy, stating, "I'm gonna cover all the bases. Nobody's gonna fuck me this time. This way if he disappears with the film...he can't pretend he didn't take it, 'cause I got him on tape." While Jack makes a copy of his recording, he unfortunately does not have time to make another print of Karp's film.

Upon arriving at 30th Street Station, Jack gives Sally a sort of brotherly kiss while parked in his Jeep in what is undoubtedly the closest thing to a romance scene in the entire film. Of course, Jack also lets Sally know that he can hear whatever she says since she is wearing a wire and that if she has any trouble to let him know. Not long after exiting Jack's Jeep and entering the station, Sally communicates to the protagonist via the wire how she would like to take a trip with him to New York City to see "Like SUGAR BABIES and stuff." Somewhat tragically, Jack will never get to travel to NYC to see Sugar Babies with Sally or start a hot and heavy romance with her, as Burke has quite different plans for the two. Indeed, almost immediately after Sally proposes the trip to NYC, Burke abruptly swoops in on her, introduces himself as Donahue, declares, "I think we have a little problem. I think we're being followed," and then practically drags the heroine through the station. Of course, Sally has no idea that Burke just strangled to death a female prostitute in a bathroom only a couple moments before meeting up with her. After listening in on their conversation for a little while, it does not take Jack long to realize that Sally is with someone else other than Donahue, but the two take a train heading towards Franklin Bridge Express before the protagonist can warn her. Naturally, at this point, Jack jumps into his Jeep and begins speeding to the train station.

Undoubtedly, Jack picked a less than auspicious time to speed through Philadelphia in a goofy looking baby blue Jeep, as he finds himself nearly running over hundreds of people during the Liberty Day parade. Indeed, as a result of driving like a belligerent maniac, Jack eventually symbolically crashes his Jeep through the window of a storefront with a display in tribute to American Revolutionary war hero Nathan Hale and is knocked out cold. Meanwhile, after arriving at the busiest and most hectic section of the parade, Burke gets Sally to hand him both the sound recording and film, which he abruptly tosses into a nearby bay. When silly Sally responds by playfully stating, "Jack's going to kill you," Burke puts on a pair of white strangling gloves and the heroine finally becomes aware of her precarious situation. Not long after Jack finally regains consciousness and finds himself inside an ambulance on a stretcher, he hears Sally's screams via the wire and proceeds running to look for her. Quite conveniently considering there are thousands of people around, Jack eventually manages to spot Sally standing on a large stage in front of a big America flag while screaming for his help. Somewhat tragically, although Jack manages to stab Burke to death with his own genital-mutilating weapon after sneaking up on him from behind, Sally has already been strangled to death. In what is indubitably Jack's most intimate and emotional moment with the heroine, the protagonist holds Sally's assumedly still warm corpse while Liberty Day fireworks explode in the background in what is a strangely darkly romantic yet simultaneously cheap and cynical scene that more or less epitomizes the essence of the entire film. In a sort of sickly ironic fashion, as a result of himself dying and his unidentified corpse being assumed to be that of the supposed Liberty Day killer, Burke ultimately manages to tie up every single important loose end of his criminal conspiracy. As for Jack, he seems to more or less succumb to psychosis and begins regularly listening to his audio recording Sally's screams before she was murdered. In the end, in what ultimately proves to be a classically savagely cynical De Palma conclusion, Jack somewhat masochistically decides to dub the scream for the film *Coed Frenzy* with Sally's piercing death scream. Indeed, in what ultimately seems to be an act of self-imposed punishment for accidentally getting his would-be-love-interest killed, Jack uses her final scream in a film that he was not even serious about working on.

Naturally, considering the steady rise in popularity of conspiracy theories as a result of the September 11 attacks and various other dubious events that have occurred in the United States and Western Europe over the past couple of decades, *Blow Out* has certainly stayed more relevant than it probably should have, especially when one considers the horrendous wardrobes and oftentimes obscenely outmoded music that plagues the film. Undoubtedly, it should be noted that De Palma—a virtual bourgeois moral barbarian that, in many ways, epitomizes the worst qualities of the dreaded Baby Boomers, even if he is slightly too old to be one—belonged to the first generation of young Americans that became

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seriously disillusioned with their country as a result of the assassination of John F. Kennedy and, not unlike many people of his era, the filmmaker developed a sort of fairly anti-WASP leftist worldview as a result. Indeed, the absolutely disgraceful degree of De Palma's flagrant ethno-masochistic degeneracy is clearly revealed in his early extremely convoluted Godardian satire *Hi, Mom!* (1970) where a dorky yet surprisingly sleazy pre-fame Robert De Niro plays a sort of stand-in for the director (who curiously has the Judaic name 'Jon Rubin') and jovial psychopath who starts a phony relationship with a ditzy dame (who is notably played by blacklisted commie screenwriter Waldo Salt's daughter Jennifer Salt) in the hope of filming a porno of her without her consent. In the same film, there is a rather sick and spiteful pseudo-cinéma-vérité segment entitled *Be Black, Baby* where a black nationalist negro strips and brutally rapes a beautiful blonde in a highly realistic fashion that was more or less shot in real time. In other words, *Hi, Mom!* reveals that De Palma is not only a morally bankrupt self-loathing white wuss that would probably enjoy directing an interracial snuff film, but that he is also a conspicuous cuckold, but of course all of those things usually go hand-in-hand. Notably, when describing the film during its pre-production stage in an interview with Joseph Gelmis featured in the book *The Film Director As Superstar* (1971), De Palma stated, "This film is much more radical than *GREETINGS*. It deals with the obscenity of the white middle class. And we are white middle class, Chuck [Hirsch] and I and everybody we know. So we're making a movie about the white middle class. And we're using the blacks to reflect the white culture. Because the blacks stand outside the system and they see what we are [...] It's a film that says that the only way to deal with the white middle class is to blow it up." Of course, considering that *Hi, Mom!* concludes with the Jewish protagonist Rubin blowing up a large apartment building full of successful and attractive white Anglo-Saxons, there can be no doubt that De Palma is an emotionally and psychologically damaged dago cuck traitor.

As a number of his films and early important relationship with Judaic producer Charles Hirsch (who co-wrote and produced the director's most explicitly anti-white flicks, including *Greetings* (1968) and its quasi-sequel *Hi, Mom!*) clearly reveal, De Palma has unquestionably demonstrated that he is a committed philo-Semite and shabbos goy stooge, which is somewhat ironic when one considers that he has claimed to have read virtually every single book that has ever been written on the subject of the JFK assassination yet has not come to the natural conclusion that much of the evidence points to it being a largely kosher conspiracy that was ordered by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, or, more specifically, as Michael Collins Piper wrote in his tome *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Controversy*, it "was a joint enterprise conducted on the highest levels of the American CIA, in collaboration with organized crime—and most specifically, with direct and profound involvement by the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad." Indeed, Israeli former nuclear

technician and peace activist Mordechai Vanunu—a man that spent 18 years in prison, including more than 11 in solitary confinement, merely for revealing details of Israel's nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986—made the claim in 2004 that the assassination was Israel's response to “pressure [Kennedy] exerted on...Ben-Gurion, to shed light on Dimona's nuclear reactor in Israel.” Apparently, the Israelis were not too keen on the fact that JFK did not want them to have nuclear weapons. Of course, if the Mossad went to the trouble of luring Vanunu to Italy and then drugging and smuggling him back to the Hebraic nation to imprison him for nearly two decades simply because he exposed the fact that Zion has nukes, naturally they would not tolerate an inordinately handsome McCatholic goy president that had the chutzpah to tell them they could not have an apocalyptic weapon that their kinsmen originally designed in the hope of dropping it on Nazi Germany (after all, it was no coincidence that stern Zionist and warmonger Albert Einstein, who wrote a letter to FDR in 1939 that ultimately led to the Manhattan Project where he lied about Germany's potential for nuclear technology, was offered the presidency of Israel in 1952). Admittedly, I have to give De Palma credit in one regard in that he portrayed the man that was responsible for filming the fictional assassination as a sleazy Hebraic character with a fittingly repugnant name like Manny Karp. After all, Abraham Zapruder, who made a lot of money off of his home movie of the president getting his brains blow out, was a Russian Jewish businessman and the JFK assassination has many obvious and not so obvious Jewish connections, not least of all Lee Harvey Oswald's mob-connected strip club owner assassin Jack Ruby (whose real name was Jacob Leonard Rubenstein). It should also be noted that De Palma's screenwriter for Scarface, half-Jew Oliver Stone, would renew interest in the assassination with his obscenely overrated epic JFK (1991), which was curiously executive produced by Israeli arms dealer and Mossad operative Arnon Milchan. As revealed in the rather sympathetic pro-Zionist book Confidential: The Life of Secret Agent Turned Hollywood Tycoon - Arnon Milchan (2011) co-written by Hebraic tribesmen Meir Doron and Joseph Gelman, Milchan's spy work involved gathering important nuclear documents by dubious means and “buying components to build and maintain Israel's nuclear arsenal,” thus it should be no surprise that he would produce a piece of glossy misinformation like Stone's film, which is nothing more than the covert Judaisierung of the JFK assassination. Rather revealingly, while JFK is about former New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison and his investigation into the cover-up of the assassination, it conveniently never mentions the fact that he eventually came to the conclusion that Mossad was the driving force behind the conspiracy. Of course, as Blow Out reveals, De Palma, like his semi-Semitic pal Stone, believes the JFK assassination was some sort of vast right-wing conspiracy. As ex-Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky revealed in his book, By Way of Deception: The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer

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(1990), which Israel tried to stop the release of via a preliminary injunction, the former motto of the Mossad was, “By Way Of Deception Thou Shalt Do War,” but of course that is the sort of thing that De Palma would actively ignore, as it contradicts his anti-WASP narrative. Notably, De Palma would symbolically demonstrate his solidarity with god’s chosen tribe in his horrendous black comedy *Wiseguys* (1986) where the protagonists, a low-level guido gangster and his Jewish pal, realize their mutual multicultural dream of opening the world’s first Jewish-Italian delicatessen.

Of course, with its both overt and somewhat covert references to an eclectic range of films, including Orson Welles’ *Touch of Evil* (1958), Vincente Minnelli’s *Some Came Running* (1958), Antonioni’s *Blowup* (1966), Michael Snow’s *La région centrale* (1971), Narciso Ibáñez Serrador’s *Who Can Kill a Child?* (1976), Jeff Lieberman’s *Squirm* (1976), Greydon Clark’s *Without Warning* (1980), and Ulli Lommel’s *The Boogey Man* (1980), among countless others, *Blow Out* is a proud piece of shameless pathological cinephilia, hence why alpha-fanboy Quentin Tarantino has described it as one of his top favorite three films of all time. Naturally, what somewhat differentiates De Palma’s film from Tarantino’s is that his characters are slightly less cartoonish and a tad bit more human, even if it is sometimes hard to think of Travolta as a tragic conspiracy theorist. Of course, despite being slightly more talented at melodrama than Tarantino, when it comes to depicting melancholy and authentic human emotions in general, De Palma is certainly no Bergman or Cassavetes, as his attempts at portraying pathos oftentimes seeming more like unintentional bathos, especially in *Blow Out* where Travolta sometimes comes off looking like a poor man’s Tom Cruise. In a clear demonstration of the fact that Tarantino watches way too many stupid kung fu flicks, he confessed to De Palma that he felt that the ending of *Blow Out* was, “one of the most heartbreaking shots in the history of cinema.” As far as I am concerned, De Palma is, at best, a very capable slasher/giallo film director and hyper Hitchcock fetishist who is very adept at taking a sophisticated and elegant approach to largely mindless entertainment, thus putting him above most Hollywood directors. With the possible exceptions of his underrated horror musical *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974) and pleasantly politically incorrect killer tranny classic *Dressed to Kill* (1980), I would have to argue that *Blow Out* is De Palma’s finest achievement as a filmmaker. Indeed, had De Palma only died in a car wreck after making the film, I might have more appreciation for him as a filmmaker, but it is hard to like a self-loathing bourgeois leftist who, aside from directing films for the NAACP, had the audacious arrogance to direct a phony self-important film like *Casualties of War* where he displays his hypocritical class biases by portraying young white working-class soldiers as evil racist rapists and psychopaths (it should also be noted that, like all of his cinematic works, the film is derivative and is actually based on an event that was already depicted nearly two decades before in kraut commie Michael

Verhoeven's scandalous anti-American film *O.K.* (1970), which hilariously stars one-time Fassbinder superstar Eva Mattes as a teenage Vietnamese rape victim). After all, De Palma has made a career out of making sleazy films depicting women being brutally murdered by perverts, yet he had the gall to make an ostensibly serious anti-rape/anti-war. One also cannot forget that De Palma is a proud draft-dodger, thus making his condemnation of white prole GIs seem like a craven act of projection where he condemns the very same unprivileged members of the European-American working-class that fought and died in the Vietnam War while he was making anti-American agitprop featuring negroes raping white women and Jewish psychopaths committing terrorist attacks like in his experimental agitprop piece *Hi, Mom!*, but of course it takes a special sort of hypocritical degenerate to truly thrive in Hollywood.

Right from the beginning of his filmmaking career with his surprisingly intriguing experimental horror short *Woton's Wake* (1962)—a low-budget black-and-white micro-epic with Expressionistic overtones that pays homage to films ranging from the original *King Kong* (1933) to Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *The Seventh Seal* (1957)—De Palma made it quite clear that he had a special affinity for recycling his favorite films, as if he knew nothing about life outside of cinema. Of course, what makes *Blow Out* somewhat different from most of his films is that it is a borderline auteur piece where he actually dares to reveal something truly personal about himself, including his sense of disillusionment with love, life, politics, society, and even the filmmaking process. While David Thomson once wrote of De Palma, "He has contempt for his characters and his audience alike, and I suspect that he despises even his own immaculate skill," *Blow Out* features a protagonist that he seems to completely identify with, thus making it all the more interesting that said protagonist is extremely bored with his job in the film industry and is left a complete and utter emotional wreck in the end. Indeed, De Palma's "self-conscious cunning" (as Thomson described it) just seems to be a sort of sturdy protective shield for his own vulnerability and glaring negativity towards everything about life and humanity, which is more or less exposed at the conclusion of the film when Travolta's character opts to dub a schlocky slasher flick with the heroine's death scream. In other words, De Palma's signature polished prettification of murder, mayhem, and social decay seems to be a therapeutic means for him to cope with being a dead and impotent soul who, as a sterile self-loathing middleclass white boy that has probably never even ever gotten into a fist-fight, has nowhere to channel his seemingly well hidden inner rage and hatred. Needless to say, it is no surprise that De Palma and Nancy Allen divorced a couple years after the release of *Blow Out*, as it cannot be a good sign for the future of a marriage when a husband depicts his wife as a dumb broad that lives off her tits and ass who is ultimately brutally murdered in the end (not to mention the fact that the filmmaker had Allen portray a hooker in his previous film *Dressed to Kill* where the actress shows off her

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unclad carnal goods and talks dirty to Michael Caine in regard to his cock). In fact, despite the fact that Allen is terribly claustrophobic and was completely petrified about shooting the segment, De Palma forced her to do her own stunts during the scene in *Blow Out* where she is trapped inside a car that is submerged in water. In that one regard, De Palma has indeed transcended his cinematic hero Hitch, as a man with self-confessed mommy issues who advanced the art of semi-covert sadistic 'high kitsch' filmic misogyny, which arguably reaches its unintentionally zany twentieth in *Body Double* (1984). With his most recent feature *Passion* (2012), De Palma proved he is not very good at remaking European pseudo-arthouse films or dealing with the subject of Sapphic psychopaths. Personally, I think De Palma should just get it over with and finally realize his dream of remaking a Hitchcock film. Considering De Palma's flare for deliciously stylized psychosexual degeneracy and the fact that Hitchcock's version is a little bit too tame and somewhat resembles filmed theater, I think it is about time that he remakes the Leopold and Loeb inspired Nietzschean classic *Rope* (1948). After all, considering De Palma's philo-Semitism and fetish for crafty killers, it seems like the perfect subject matter for him to tackle.

-Ty E

BONE SICKNESS

Brian Paulin (2004)

I am a supporter of DIY filmmakers and their passion for film making. They generally have decided to pursue film making due to their love of film (and fulfilling their dreams). Unfortunately (but unsurprisingly), most of these amateur filmmakers lack any type of talent or natural cinematic inclinations. I would have to say that about Brian Paulin and his film Bone Sickness. Bone Sickness is a zombie film that looks like it was created by an average Joe 30 something year old filmmaker. It features many scenes that are obviously fantasies of the typical and trivia filled Zombie fan. Someone that grew up thinking "I could do that" and "wouldn't that be awesome if..." Bone Sickness is also probably the only zombie film featuring a flesh eater rising from the depths of an above ground pool. Digital video has given a voice to the everyday man. Bone Sickness fully utilizes the pro-consumer technology as a mean of capturing Brian Paulin's dream. It is obvious that Paulin's main focus was special effects and gore. Bone Sickness has a home video feel that is impossible to ignore. The film is entertaining in a way that is unintentional. I guess that's better than not being entertaining at all. I respect that Brian Paulin has created his own film. I am not going to pretend Bone Sickness is a good film. It might be inspiring to those interested in making their own amateur film though. If you want to see bad special effects, unflattering nudity of some random dude's overweight girlfriend, and Halloween mask zombies, Bone Sickness is the film for you. I find it much more enjoyable to watch a low budget German splatter film.

-Ty E

DEADHOUSE
DEADHOUSE

Brian Rivera (2005)

Growing up horror wise, I've always been advised to stray away from the label Brain Damage Films, with good reason too. After skimming their catalog for a couple of minutes, the only sight that fills my retinas is pure unadulterated trash. There is Troma trash, then there is Brain Damage. I had only previously seen a single clip of *Traces of Death 2* and decided there was too much shitty generic metal in it to even deserve the title of "Shock." I've been told time and time again that it is a difficult task indeed to review a Brain Damage Film, but I must try. I will relay the scenes I viewed, and why I cry thinking about the package with 10+ odd Brain Damage Films that I have dedicated to watch and spread the word about this horrible scamming company whose main goal is to release bargain bin shit films and profit off of the dull masses. The film opens up with a fat kid with a pony tail. Note this character design, for it will reappear throughout the film. This 40-something looking "kid" is supposed to pass off as a rural teenager taking a walk through the woods. He then thinks he sees something in the woods. Upon further inspection, a tiny branch falls on him. This branch throws the fatty to the ground, leaving him angst ridden muttering "stupid fucking tree" He then gets slaughtered by a man whose killer design is a copycat version of any masked pro-wrestler. (My collection of fatties with pony tails) Next up in this horribly edited is a scene of a girl packing up her belongings being exceptionally morose. Her sister/friend (I don't give a shit about anything of their names or relations) comes in the room smacking her lips, rolling her eyes, and chewing gum incessantly like a cow. She looked like a cow too. After bickering, they meet up with some douche named Brandon who drives them down roads. When I say drive, it's more like sitting in a car talking while spinning the wheel and having people on the outside push it to mimic movement. They get lost and stop by a butcher shop that is ran by a fat guy with a pony tail. (!) After he hits on the cow, they leave and drive some more. While driving, they almost get in an accident cause of a fat guy with a pony tail in the road. (!) Then they meet the bad guy with long hair and the other guy with old 80's metal hair. At this time, I sort of shifted positions and closed my eyes and began to drown out the noise with my thoughts of despair. Looking forward to watching the rest of these films is almost as great of an idea as creating my own B.M.E. video. (Body Modification Extreme) A couple things I did notice; they blurred license plates, posters in a town, and the brand of SUV they were driving. This my friends, is the work of a true amateur. It gets increasingly easy to identify that the cast is a close-knit group of "gothic" friends who decided on making a horror movie. Hell, if Sam Raimi did it, so could they! Wrong. *Deadhouse* might be the worst film I've ever seen, but on second thought, I still need to watch the other 2133 movies from Brain Damage.

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LEPRECHAUN 3
LEPRECHAUN 3

Brian Trenchard-Smith (1995)

Warwick Davis returns to wreak more havoc in the first direct-to-video sequel of the Leprechaun anthology. This time, he adopts a Dolemite (R.I.P.) form of Irish lingo as he makes a rhyme out of nearly every sentence - most concerning murder and Irish quirks. Leprechaun 3 was the most popular rental film of 1995 and with a decent enough reason to be. It's slightly disappointing that this film wasn't shot in 3D as originally intended though. I would have loved seeing a dwarf in horrific makeup jump out of the screen. A far cry from the original formula, this film is among the first transcendence into kooky territory. Things get completely spacey and racy when the Leprechaun heads into space then into the hood... twice. So far out of memory, this is the most enjoyable sequel I've seen. I need to re-watch a couple of the other films, but this one captures a Teen Wolf motif as Scott slowly turns into a potato eating Leprechaun. Warning: Exposure to Leprechaun bites may lead to nonsensical Irish rhymes, sideburns, a potato fetish, and many other Irish stereotypes to be exploited. Proceed with caution. Once you've seen one comical direct-to-video slasher discharge, you've more or less seen them all. One thing going towards Leprechaun 3 on terms of originality is the pseudo-seductive television woman who transforms into a Giger creation with a hint of Funny Man to fry his circuits. All of the kills are incredibly loony. Eyes pulled out of a sleazy Italian magician's face, death by chainsaw, and strangling a pawn shop broker with a phone cord after a impressionable 15 minute scene toying with his imminent execution. Leprechaun 3 is a pretty light-hearted horror film with some of those post-80s classic gore effects - mainly the toe biting scene. That was insistently graphic for its time. A film that exploits the sin-haven's that are casino's would be Wishmaster 2: Evil Never Dies. The floors for gambling become a flesh farm as the evil Djinn harvests hundreds of souls. Too bad the Leprechaun didn't take advantage of the real Sin City. Instead of imagining a potential body count, he'd rather impersonate Elvis. All in all, Leprechaun 3 is a quirky direct-to-video sequel that is for a fun viewing. It really shows off the DTV capabilities of the 90s compared to the now. It's like modern horror directors aren't trying. If you expect horrible puns and aimless killing as people exploit the power of the Leprechaun's magical coin, you're in for a treat. If you are, however, looking for an intelligent slasher film based around an old Irish legend, you're in for a huge let-down.

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THE SUPER

Brian Weaver (2010)

Some things are best left undiscovered. This I have learned after viewing many, many independent horror films with big aspirations. The normal course taken by these forgettable reminders that all can purchase a camera mostly falls on the shoulders of a near-sighted "director" with a grandiose vision including the phrases "homage", "throwback", or even "grindhouse". I am happy to report that *The Super* is none of these things for it has enough sense to deviate from its originally plotted plan, be it accident or chance. The directing duo, Brian Weaver and Evan Makrogiannis, stray far enough from the fashion of disease-stricken horror and assemble upon an utterly weird state of mind found in the lead character, George Rossi. What occurs isn't so much as what fell upon Polanski's character in *The Tenant* but from a similar vein. Such an afflicted soul can only take so much frustration before exploding and the shocking and morbid outcome of *The Super* is where the talent of storytelling was hiding all along.

George Rossi serves as "the Super", short for superintendent. Taking the presumed family business over, this precarious Vietnam veteran has settled down with his beautiful handicapped wife and daughter in the apartment complex run by his truly. Greeting two new tenants, a strange interracial couple consisting of an appropriate African and an alternative, edgy Jewess played by Ruby Larocca, George Rossi makes it very clear of his seemingly honest intentions and fairness. What lies beyond, however, is the crushing pressure from his ever-moody wife to stand up to his tenants and to relocate upstate. Eventually, all this hostility paired with George's bouts of sadistic voyeurism, consume his being and leads him to striking a dynamic and odd relationship with Olga (portrayed by actress Manoush--a woman of German-American and Sinti tribe gypsy ancestry whose brilliant acting enables her to pass for an authentic Russian) which can only culminate in one thing - murder. *The Super* takes this off-commitment with exaggerating the very psychosis torturing the venerable patriot and proves its mutability. How? By dipping the very process of neo-exploitation into the irresolute subgenre of pseudo-snuff only to yank it back up and flaunt its withstanding of surefire horror poison.

Another thing plaguing these digital films, horror being the number one offender, is the lack of an aesthetic. *The Super* replaces the need for its biggest shortcoming by introducing lucid, vibrant hues and lighting upon the decadent set of the basement. The benefits of having such a dirty and degenerate lead psychopath are the endless results that can be achieved with a raunchy disregard for life. George Rossi stamps his feet around the apartment complex, cursing "Jew bastards", "Wops", and the ilk. The secondary offender and catalyst to this situation is Olga, the pay-for-service dominatrix on the top floor who has ignored the rent for two months. After helping George out of quite a jam, a crude one

THE SUPER

at that, the two descend, knife-in-hand, into a bizarre string of aggro-murders (are there any other kind?) with profit and isolation being the only thing on ones mind. What propels Manoush' character into a realm neglected by the majority of low budget horror films is the methodology behind her murders. This is gleefully authenticated with a flashback segment directed by Soiled Sinema favorite Andrey Iskanov. Starring himself as Olga's father, Iskanov downs what is probably the cheapest vodka and presumes to graphically rape his daughter, all in signature form. I'd be lying if I didn't rank this the greatest scene within The Super. If not for Iskanov returning to horror once more than for a segment that does Olga's sickness justice. I am honestly tiring of these stalwart psychopaths without indication of psychopathy - a visual diorama of inciting trauma goes a long way.

Although The Super is built off the foundation of a veteran angst chronicle, it makes sure not to tip over into the realm of previous contenders Combat Shock or Taxi Driver. Rather, Weaver and Makrogiannis put light to the passive evil and dichotomy between persuasion and temptation. Oh, but of course there must be something to fault The Super with and the scene transitions are pulled to the plate. The Super is generally consistent about its format, but when scenes suddenly transition, you'll catch hints of artificial film grain and scratches, the likes of which would be caused by repeated showings for decades. The acting can vary as well. I found the death rapper Necro's performance to be fluctuating in quality. On one hand, his sadism shines on screen, undoubtedly in a scene involving a forced blowjob, but during his sideshow detective act, seems frigid. Perhaps the lifestyle of which he lives prevents him from passing off normality as his behavior of choice. Regardless of these minor setbacks, The Super stands as one of the few horror films that I've seen in some time that left me satiated. It may not ooze class or represent a high-brow art form, but regardlessly, it is an oft-peculiar look at the cleverly hidden absent-mindedness of a man with so many heads to account for.

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SOCIETY

Brian Yuzna (1989)

In the underrated body horror film *Society* (1989), protagonist Bill Whitney is asked by a thoroughly agitated and sarcastic cop after reporting the mysterious brutal death of his poindexterish friend Petrie, "is it really that hard being rich." Indeed, not only is being rich an oddly burdensome lifestyle for emotionally lonesome Billy Boy, but he is also the black sheep of an incestuous family that shamelessly indulges in hedonistic self-worship and a deleterious form of decadence. During the beginning of *Society*, Bill mentions to his therapist that he has an irrational fear of his family and community, thus suspecting that he was adopted. Right from the onset of the film, it is quite apparent that Bill is totally out of sync with his community's ostensibly sinister collective unconscious. As *Society* progresses, Billy becomes increasingly dismayed and extremely paranoid as he hazardously uncovers the wicked and depraved infrastructure of a hidden network of debauched families that make up the upper-class society that he reluctantly belongs to. *Society* was created in the late 1980s, a culturally bankrupt time when preppies males felt that mullets were the height of culturally refined hairstyles and preppy women wore their hair in such a disheveled manner that they looked like they just finished an all-night orgy. *Society* was directed by Brian Yuzna, a Filipino-American horror hack best known by fans of the genre as the producer of Stuart Gordon's H.P. Lovecraft adaptations *Re-Animator* (1985) and *From Beyond* (1986), as well as for directing/producing the final two films in the *Re-Animator* trilogy. Both Brian Yuzna and his pal Stuart Gordon have a special talent for turning legendary American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft's stories into shallow pseudo-erotic schlock pieces that even the most zombified of horror fans can digest without too much mental confusion. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy the *Re-Animator* films (or at least the first two) as much as the next horror fan, but they are a total insult to Lovecraft's sagely Spenglerian horror tales. That being said, I must admit that I was extremely surprised by the quality of Yuzna's directorial debut *Society*, an audacious and ambitious work that one does not usually expect from the excessively repetitive and often times exceedingly stagnant horror genre. In fact, I can say without the slightest hesitation that I found *Society* to be better than all three films in the overrated *Re-Animator* series combined.

Society protagonist Bill Whitney is a handsome (despite his mullet) and athletic high school student who has it all, even while lacking the absolute robotic snobbery often times associated with someone of his distinguished pedigree. When Bill's sister's ex-boyfriend David Blanchard reveals to him an audio tape featuring the voices of his entire family as they participate in an incestuous orgy and murder for pleasure, the high school student finally has enough evidence to support his paranoid suspicions regarding the ambiguously peculiar nature of his

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family. After all, Bill walks in on his completely nude sister showering and for whatever reason, her boobs somehow managed to reposition themselves on her backside. The first hour or so of *Society* is like a mix between an artificial (but entertaining) Hitchcockian/De Palma-style murder mystery and an episode of *The Twilight Zone* directed by a crackhead horror fiend. The final half-hour of *Society* morphs into a blackest-of-black horror comedy. In fact, the concluding half-hour of *Society* reminded me of a pleasant unruly mix between David Cronenberg's adaptation of William S. Burrough's *Naked Lunch*, John Carpenter's *They Live*, and Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. Of course, *Society* predates both *Naked Lunch* and *Eyes Wide Shut* and was made only a year after *They Live*, thus Yuzna's film seems to be a totally original and groundbreaking work. For those individuals interested in unholy conspiracy theories about reptilian bloodlines and mutant New Order elites, *Society* will be a deranged, yet delectable cinematic treat. A member of the debased millionaires featured in the film states the following to a certain underclassman (that will go unnamed) in the film, "You're a different race from us. A different species. A different class. You're not one of us!" Due to their inclusive inbred bloodlines, the upperclassman of *Society* can perform royally absurd feats, such as relocating their faces on their asses, as we as communally (with flesh to flesh) devouring the low-grade blood and meat of terrified proletarians. To say the least, you will be hard pressed to find another "horror" film like *Society* that features an undeniably charismatic, yet chilling royal occult army of quasi-cannibals and über-sadistic upper-class degenerates.

If the totally hypocritical anti-bourgeois bourgeois economist/philosopher Karl Marx were alive today, *Society* - an astute work that unconventionally, yet successfully combines class satire with wacky bodily dismemberment - would most likely be his favorite horror film. Unlike George A. Romero's *Living Dead* films, *Society* does not superficially wallow in an infantile leftist socio-political subtext that immediately wears thin. Also, unlike Romero's *Living Dead* films, the gut-eating antagonists of *Society* are cunning, yet ultimately entertaining villains whose disguised motives keep the viewer guessing until the film's gore-gurgling end. To be quite honest, I expected *Society* to be another overrated and ultimately retarded horror flick, but nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, I found *Society* to be a wildly invigorating and criminally underrated horror film that makes most heralded masterworks of the genre seem intellectually and creatively bankrupt by comparison. The rich families featured in *Society* reminded me of the hyper-inbred Rothschild banking dynasty and their associate families (like the Rockefellers and the Schiffs), as no other family in human history has been responsible for so many deaths and wars around the world. As Billy is told by his therapist Dr. Cleveland, "Didn't you know Billy boy? The rich have always sucked off low-class shit like you." Indeed, *Society* is a delightful and diverting carnivalesque cinematic portrait composed of ultra-

pretentious upperclassmen who sportfully engage in hunting and shunting members of the untermensch working-class non-society just for the mere aristocratic pleasure. Stephen Biro (owner of Uearthed Films) apparently wrote a script for a Society sequel entitled Society 2: Body Modification, but it is now (apparently) an aborted project. Upon first hearing about the sequel project, it seemed like a cinematically appetizing possibility, but now I am glad the project is dead, as such a work would most likely be a crude insult to the original film. Hopefully, the audaciously idiosyncratic film Society will one day earn the prestige that it justly deserves from the Sinema world.

-Ty E

ROTTWEILER
ROTTWEILER

Brian Yuzna (2004)

Brain Yuzna has created multiple entertaining horror films that are worth their weight in gold and true treasures when it comes to rental chains. I was excited to see that he had created a Spanish killer canine film but failed to realize that the Spanish film was the one that I used to mock when I saw it on the shelves. This only dawned on me after the atrocious experiment in a human tolerance theory was over and I lay on the floor re-evaluating my choices. Two men escape prison in an extremely tired fashion. Of course, things don't go as planned and the partner in cuffs is killed leaving a dismembered arm on a chain. From this scene, our leading lady Dante delivers many bland chase scene from a horrible prosthetic robot dog that hardly strikes fear into the hearts of men. In fact, it kind of resembles a four legged Furby. Things don't pick up too much until when you realize that the character has amnesia. He is a rich American douche who picked up a Latino chick and played some real life role playing game about infiltration. Needless to say, the little snots get what they deserve. The rape and murder scene left me entirely apathetic as these characters lacked any common sense and or rational human traits. Brian Yuzna has had too much of a good thing. He gets by left and right with shitty classics and still manages to make a profit off of less-than-average work. Rottweiler is a horrible film on all levels. The only thing I really enjoyed was the CGI Terminator dog. The ending is rushed as with this review (I'm not going to waste my time on something that preemptively wasted mine) and caps off an end to a story that never really should have started. He should have stuck with the Re-animator series.

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MY NAME IS BRUCE

Bruce Campbell (2007)

Bruce Campbell is loved by everyone except few. I am proud to be one of the few horror fans to despise his cameos and recycled cocky attitude, and yes, I accept hate mail. He's transversed many fields including acting in motion pictures, acting in syndicated television programs, to becoming an author making flashy quips about being in love with Richard Gere while throwing out cute jokes about being a "B actor". As much as Brucie would like to be a "B actor", his filmography and income is far too steep for such a trashy title. Much like Kevin Smith films, *My Name is Bruce* opens with two counter-cultured teenagers discussing pop culture and cinema jests. Such horrible lines as "I loved Bubba Ho-Tep!" are scattered around the scripts. While the omniscient ideology of Bruce Campbell's career is fully appreciated, if I ever hear the phrase "Cave Aliens" again, I will crash my car into an elementary school. *Bubba Ho-Tep* was perhaps one of the worst projects in Campbell's career. Not for the acting or production values, but for how mind-numbingly boring the film was. It took me months to finish it. Incredibly similar to *Bubba Ho-Tep* before it, a monster is unleashed in a shockingly similar style to that of *Bubba Ho-Tep*, except this Chinese god of war is explained in a country drab complete with guitars and southern yodeling. As the film progressed further, I found myself enjoying the film for what it was. Back when this film was but a mere rumor, I thought that Bruce Campbell would have found himself at arms with a deadite. I prefer the idea of the esteemed Mr. Campbell fighting the one thing that brought upon this fame. Lets face it. The only good things Bruce Campbell starred in are far from outweighing the horrible. Bruce Campbell proves himself to be competent enough to capitalize off of his own image by making a parody of himself. Why not? As far as the reality would allow, this film is all complete bullshit. I had expected an accurate portrayal of Campbell's life shattered by the idea of a real evil, not some pseudo-biopic displaying Bruce lapping up vodka from a dog dish and courting transsexual singing prostitutes. The good news? I enjoyed *My Name is Bruce* thoroughly and it proved to be an enjoyable horror/comedy experience. The bad news? I still dislike Bruce Campbell's artificial persona.

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HAMMER
HAMMER

Bruce D. Clark (1972)

Shortly after Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song and Shaft fly-away eminence, Hammer was released starring Fred "The Hammer" Williamson. His first starring vehicle and true to his nickname earned in major league football, Hammer remains one of the strangest and archaic forms of blaxploitation cinema around. Ideally, the term is attached to loose-lipped action packed films in which soul seeps from every possible orifice. Someone must have missed the memo with Hammer and what we are given is a tight-knit drama with brief shimmers of jive and an excellent William Smith as the villainesque character. B.J. Hammer is this cats name and brawling is his game, which is why local crime boss Big Sid recruits him to be a prizefighter for the mob. Things get sticky once they tell Hammer to throw a fight and once he refuses and they kidnap his woman, Hammer ponders on how to defuse the situation at any cost. Unlike most blaxploitation titles, you won't find any African aesthetic as per the standard of the later fare. Hammer is certainly no Slaughter or Truck Turner and this just goes to show how premature the idea of his half-cooked film really was. It must have been conceived by a mind that couldn't discern the value of these black action pictures and instead created a thematically white film with a very thin layer of Negro attitude - because that is the form that Hammer takes on.

That's not to say Hammer isn't worth watching, especially for blaxploitation completists. On the contrary, Hammer is filmed exceptionally well and is a very classy picture but without grand excitement or crude attitude which is what the genre is known for. Once the film picks up, mainly to say after the dock fight in which Hammer ditches a meat hook in order to plant his fist in the gut of a disgruntled worker, the film conjures up some of what makes these films so great. A scene I'm referring to is when the white mistress of Big Sid slips into Hammer's room as he rests and proceeds to try to seduce the bull. Once Hammer gets a phone call giving him a second chance with an Afro'd mama, he kicks Rhoda to the curb and leaves her to get beaten by the jealous and enraged Brenner, portrayed excellently by William Smith. Throughout the film, Brenner expresses his displeasure with the many Africans he works alongside. During scenes of torture, he wears a mask of intense satisfaction that makes his character "pop" off screen while the others simply settle into the dust. Hammer is sugar, spice, and all things nice. It doesn't contain any of Fred Williamson's later charm but does unite "The Hammer" with co-star D'Urville Martin - the two later went on to star in Boss Nigger, which, by definition, is black sensationalism incarnate. The inclusion of D'Urville Martin's character, Sonny, in Hammer is a steaming deus ex machina for further commenting on brothers selling out. The character only exists for B.J. to attempt to assimilate back into his low-income community after hitting the limelight, leaving them to slap his hand, disappear,

then reappear by films end to give you the promised "Black Explosion".

"Looks like somebody gave you a good nigger whipping."

Hammer isn't the ideal introductory film for those uneducated in Fred Williamson, who later proves his worth with the sordid Black Cobra series and many other black oddities worth noting. Hammer definitely abides by Williamson's own credo of always getting the woman and never losing a fight - such Afro-narcissism goes a long way for spoiled entertainment. But in the end, Hammer delivers not a thing that we require of its company - not an explosion, nor a memorable soul soundtrack exempt from borrowing from Hayes. Hammer candidly gets by with its time-capsule aspect of a very young Fred Williamson doing very stale cinema. If you had any previous appetite for this film, your best bet would be to skip on further down his filmography in favor of fine dining. Hammer is a fossil in every way. Scenes of note are Fred Williamson playing father figure to his little fans in the street. It always tickles me to see hardened action heroes, known for murdering over such fickle things, kneel down and play role model to the "future business leaders" of America. Fred Williamson might be one groovy turkey but Hammer fails to hit the nail on the head, oh, please pardon that pun.

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NO SKIN OFF MY ASS
NO SKIN OFF MY ASS

Bruce LaBruce° (1991)

Supposedly Kurt Cobain's favorite film according to mainstream abberosexual auteur Gus Van Sant (*My Own Private Idaho*, *Elephant*) – who directed a film loosely based on the reluctant famous rock star's suicide for his mundane minimalist pseudo-arthouse flick *Last Days* (2005) – *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993) directed by homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce (*Hustler White*, *Otto*; or *Up With Dead People*) is undoubtedly one of the most positively perverse 'punk' flicks ever directed, not least of all due to its sadomasochistic, skinhead-sucking protagonist played by the director himself. Inspired by and vaguely a decidedly debauched remark of Robert Altman's overlooked minor masterpiece *That Cold Day in the Park* (1969) – a certainly chilling and creepy cinematic work about a wealthy yet lonely spinster who invites a young and handsome proletarian boy that is pretending to be mute into her apartment and inevitably imprisoning him but at the same time attending to his every need, including buying him prostitutes – *No Skin Off My Ass* centers around a poofer punker hairdresser who ironically falls in love with a shaven and stoic yet simpleminded skinhead, takes him home, gives him a bath, and locks him in one of his bedrooms. Patently politically incorrect in terms of its imagery and some of its sentiments and not the least bit pretentious for an audacious arthouse work, *No Skin Off My Ass*, despite its lack of production values and all around technical incompetency as a cinematic work, proved to be a potent first feature-length for Bruce LaBruce as it signified the arrival of an aberrant-garde auteur who was only out to construct his own carelessly crude, carnally campy, and even creepy fetishes and fantasies in grainy celluloid form. A born masochist, LaBruce once admitted in an interview in regard to a real-life neo-nazi hustler boyfriend of his that, "He needed a place to stay, and I didn't know how into Nazism he was, so I took him in. I kept ridiculing him for his views and beliefs and trying to talk him out of it. Then he got fed up with me one night and beat the crap out of me. So I kicked him out. But there was definitely a sexual dimension to it. On some level, I got turned on." And, indeed, *No Skin Off My Ass* is a softcore pornographic work of minimalist movie masochism that – with its zit-popping perversity and boot-to-butt buggery – is anti-erotic in its essence, at least if you're anyone aside from Bruce LaPoof. In the tradition of Kenneth Anger (*Scorpio Rising*, *Lucifer Rising*), early John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*) and Fred Halsted (*The Sex Garage*, *LA Plays Itself*), *No Skin Off My Ass* is a hyper-homo arthouse trash flick where one does not have to be a flaming fairy, fierce fist-fucker, nor homophile hipster to enjoy it.

A fan of the classic horror punk band *The Misfits*, as well as hair sissy salon-styling and masculine hetero hunks, "The Hairdresser" (played by Bruce LaBruce himself) is a severely sad fellow who gets all sappy and sentimental over solitary

skinhead boys with big boots and bald heads. One day whilst strolling around a local public park, he spots a depressed bootboy (played by assumedly Aryan aristocrat Klaus von Brucker) sitting all by his lonesome on a park bench and his maternal man-meat craving instincts kick in, so the Hairdresser decides to talk the sad and speechless skin into coming back to his punk pad. A master of ridiculous manipulation, the horny hairstylist surprisingly is able to also talk the melancholy macho man into stripping his skinhead uniform under the preposterous pretense of giving him a bath. The skinhead may not be the brightest bootboy in town, but he has a loony lesbian filmmaker sister named "Jonesy" (played by real-life Riot grrrl lezzy filmmaker/musician G.B. Jones) who is working on a pussy-licking agitprop piece entitled "Girls of the SLA" – in tribute to the far-left terrorist group comprised of cuckold crackers, mudshark murderers, and a Negro rapist Führer best known for their sexual torture and brainwashing of American heiress Patty Hearst – that acts as a sort of brain for her bald brainless bro. A fierce feminist punk pussy-licker that loathes shaved heads but loves shaven cunts, Jonesy tells her brother that "If you're a skinhead, you're stupid, and if you're queer, you're smart" and "The second best thing to being a dyke is being a fag" as if potentially getting AIDS from a creepy punk hairdresser is a wild and wonderful virtue straight from the perverse playbook of Rosa von Praunheim. Of course, as a lecherous lesbo of the lunatic libertine kind, Jonesy has no problem filming her brother's cock in compromised sexual positions, but such is the wacky wiener world of Bruce LaBruce where sociopolitical messages are an intrinsic part of the entire cinematic package, but portrayed to the point of preposterous parody whether a penis is involved (it usually is) or not. Featuring music from groups ranging from the ska punk band Operation Ivy's cover of the Nancy Sinatra hit "These Boots Are Made For Walking" and Deutsch diva Nico's cover of the German national anthem "Das Lied der Deutschen," *No Skin Off My Ass* surely makes for one those most anarchistic postmodern softcore gay porn flicks ever made.

Still a 'work-in-progress' as a filmmaker at the time of completely his first feature, LaBruce has pointed out certain flaws – both aesthetic and philosophical – in *No Skin Off My Ass*, but the most insightful is the following from an interview excerpt he did for the book *The View From Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers* (2007) by Matthew Hays regarding the quote from the film "If you're a skinhead, you're stupid...if you're queer, you're smart": "I felt very influenced by that ideological conformity for a while, like in *No Skin Off My Ass* (1991)...It was an upbeat message that it's cool to be a fag, but it's also naïve and simplistic: we were trying to be provocative in other ways which undercut that straightforward message....After that, some friends made me aware that I was still kind of brainwashed by my Marxist-feminist education at University. They slapped me out of it...I got freed from that...I try not to think about [my work] in terms of having a gay agenda." Of course, *No Skin Off My*

NO SKIN OFF MY ASS

Ass – a work that freakishly fetishizes the ‘neo-fascist’ body in a way that no limp-wristed leftist would dare – still proved that LaBruce was a filmmaker that was more interesting in pleasing himself than his mentally defective Che Guevara shirt-wearing cock-sucking compatriots. The Teutophile auteur would also go on to direct *Skin Flick* (1999) aka *Skin Gang*; a work featuring a seemingly braindead bootboy busting his load on an original edition of Uncle Adolf’s *Mein Kampf*, as well as a depiction of a gay bourgeois mixed race couple that is less flattering than that of the skinhead sodomites that rape them. In the tradition of Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *The Third Generation* (1979), LaBruce also parodied the megalomania of kraut RFA-style far-left terrorist with his seedy and satirical cinematic work *The Raspberry Reich* (2004) aka *The Revolution Is My Boyfriend*, thus it should be no surprise for anyone who has seen *No Skin Off My Ass* that the poof-punk auteur went in this daring, mainstream-gay-scaring direction in his filmmaking career. Regarding his fixation with the bare-skinned and buggering neo-brownshirt bootboy, the director remarked in an interview: “I have a bit of German blood in me...I find it intriguing that the Germans went from being this Aryan Überpower to being a kind of downtrodden nation. All the great shame they’ve suffered; perpetrating the holocaust has created a certain humility in many of the them. Yet they still have that German pride about them, an ego. It’s an interesting psychology, this restrained ego.” That being said, if a homocore Canad-Aryan filmmaker has to pass on the Teutonic torch because authentic Aryans are too busy getting shit and pissed on when not pandering to politically correct perversity than so be it, as I certainly don’t see Teutonic aristocrat of ass-eating and flagrant fag Führer Rosa von Praunheim doing it anytime soon, although he certainly seems to be a fan of Bruce LaBruce’s films as testified by his inclusion of a scene from *Skin Gang* in his documentary *Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis* (2005). Now LaBruce just needs to do a pornographic remark of Veit Harlan’s *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß* as the world would be a better place because of it, at least for the the Nancy Boy-hating neo-nazis of the effete filmmaker’s flesh-based fantasy world.

-Ty E

SUPER 8½

Bruce LaBruce° (1994)

Named in terrible tongue-in-twink tribute to Italian maestro Federico Fellini's autobiographical film-within-a-film *8 ½* (1963), the dead home movie film format that it was (at least in part) shot on, and the director's much embellished yet nonetheless relished dick size, *Super 8 ½: A Cautionary Bio-Pic* (1994) directed by controversial Canadian homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce (*The Raspberry Reich*, *Otto*; or, *Up with Dead People*) is quite an odd choice for the filmic fairies' second feature-length effort, especially so considering it is about an over-the-hill artsy fartsy pornographer (played by LaBruce himself), but then again it is a mockumentary, if not one grounded in wild and wanton truths. Although a semi-pornographic work starring LaBruce himself in the lead role as a fictional porn-star-turned-pretentious-arthouse-trash-auteur who is being interviewed for a documentary directed by a sleazy and less than seductive lesbo filmmaker, *Super 8 ½* seems a tad bit tame, conspicuously cliché (even if that was the director's intention, which it most certainly was), and lacking aesthetic and thematic potency when compared to the filmmaker's terribly technically incompetent yet undoubtedly uncompromising first feature-length film *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993) in its iconoclastic fagdom. Parodying and referencing cinematic works ranging from Douglas Sirk's classic Hollywood melodrama *Written on the Wind* (1956) to Andy Warhol's *Blue Movie* (1969) aka *Fuck* to LaBruce's own work *No Skin Off My Ass*, *Super 8 ½* is essentially a caustic combo of movie trivia and man-meat masturbation as what amounts to a sort of anti-climatic and feeble fag-film-fanboy's wet dream, but, unfortunately, if it were not for the filmmaker's horrible (albeit, to some extent intentional) acting, it would be hard for someone to distinguish between the innate character of the real homocore auteur and the fiercely foul fellatio-based fantasies of his self-deprecating filmic alter-ego. Needless to say, *Super 8 ½* is certainly no *8 ½*, nor does LaBruce's member seem even remotely the size the film's title boasts, but one only needs to watch the superlatively shallow cinematic cesspool of cinematic sodomy to see that the eccentrically effete auteur is not kidding anyone, not even himself.

Until relatively recently with the aberrant advent of 'gay rights' identity politics and what have you, cocksuckers and carpet-munchers were generally arch-nemesis's of sorts and I assume on a personal level this is still the case today. Indeed, such is the case in *Super 8 ½*; a sod-saluting and Sapphic-smearing cinematic work where the women have a little too much testosterone and the males do not have enough. In *Super 8 ½*, Bruce LaBruce as "Bruce" goes 'full fairy' in his filmic farce where a prissy pansy of an ex-porn-star-turned-filmmaker candidly recollects his road to ruin as an audacious artistic ass-et to the transgressive arthouse underground realm for a bean-flicking femme-nazi documentary filmmaker who has nil qualms about exploiting the washed-up fagola pornogra-

pher. Needless to say, Bruce's pretensions towards being taken seriously as an auteur 'artiste' are laughable at best, but no one is laughing. Aside from featuring LaBruce as more or less himself, but to a more prolific, perilously pansified, and artistically distinguished degree, thereupon foreshadowing his career as prominent pole-smoking, porn-possessed queercore auteur, Super 8 ½ also includes a cameo from alt porn auteur Richard Kern (Submit to me Now, Detachable Penis) as himself playing a role in a fictional film where he sports a wretched wiry wig and strap-on dildo (apparently, due to too much heroin, he was unable to 'rise to the occasion'). Kern's appearance is especially worthwhile and significant as many of LaBruce's faux-films in Super 8 ½ seem like piss poor imitations of the NYC-based filmmaker's preposterously poor, prosaic pornography. Also, like most of Kern's films, Super 8 ½ is neither hardcore enough to be considered a boner-fide work of pornography, nor subversive enough to be considered truly 'transgressive' cinema, especially when compared with the films of its infinitely more cinematically-inclined erotic arthouse American and Euro-sleaze predecessors like Alberto Cavallone, Walerian Borowczyk, Tinto Brass, Radley Metzger, and Stephen Sayadian, among countless others. Of course, the main difference between the films of Cavallone and Brass in comparison with the likes of lavender cowboys LaBruce and Kern is that a sort punk/DIY aesthetic and philosophy permeates throughout the latter two filmmaker's cinematic oeuvres. One learns while watching Super 8 ½ that ever since unexpectedly losing his interest in directing the tentatively titled work *The Reluctant Pornographer* aka Super 8 ½, Brucey's life has lacked direction, film directing, and erections. Aside from getting in feeble fights with his skinhead/hu\$tlér ex-boyfriend and putting his clownish make-up on in an exceedingly dainty manner so as to make a spectacle of himself when in front of the camera, spruce Bruce's life has been languishing in a lewd la la land of lecherous losers and lesbians; undoubtedly the same sordid sort that were also prominent in the subversive arthouse porn world he used to be a part of. A bitter and butch lesbo only makes his life all the more of a hellish homo hu\$tlér horror show, but he has nothing better to do anyhow as he has no plans to get a real job, let alone a blowjob.

How do you become a porn star? You blow; or so says the all but totally intolerable, twink-trotting terminal man-toddler protagonist of Bruce LaBruce's second feature film. Easily LaBruce's most lackluster and ultimately forgettable (and thankfully so) work to date, Super 8 ½ is certainly in no way worthy of being named in the same sentence as the Fellini masterpiece that, at best, only superficially inspired it at the most rudimentary level, but I guess that is what one would expect from a pomo homo flick directed by an auteur who knew more about fag film history than actual filmmaking when he conceived this completely convoluted and curiously uncurious cock-sucking celluloid abortion. Although similarly poorly directed and amateurishly gritty like his previous effort *No Skin Off My Ass*, LaBruce's Super 8 ½ lacks the rather risqué and thematically risky

romantic spirit that permeated quite perversely yet playfully throughout his first feature. Even the fag-flaunting writers of *Images in the Dark: An Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1996) had to admit that *Super 8 ½* is a “mild disappointment” and a “structural mess,” thereupon underscoring the lezzy documentarian featured in the futile film’s words, “I don’t give a damn about continuity...any way.” I also have to assume that LaBruce agrees as he seems to make little, if any, references to *Super 8 ½* in interviews, but then again, the flop of a film also features the drug-addled auteur unclad in all his unglory, smoking poles and gracelessly baring his (then) scrawny ass for the weary world to see. After all, even Rosa von Praunheim has his limits and thankfully refraining from featuring himself in nothing but boots on an open highway is one of them. As the loveless lesbian filmmaker in *Super 8 ½* states in regard to the dubious size of Bruce’s member as specified in the film’s title, “It didn’t quite measure up to reality” and neither does LaBruce’s clearly ambitious yet erratically defecated, sorry scatological second feature. If any of LaBruce’s films merit a fanatical fag-bashing in retaliation for the filmmaker’s less than fresh fruity filmmaking, it is unequivocally *Super 8 ½*; a sad cinematic work that proves that watching too many porn flicks can lead to a brutal case of brain damage and a serious identity crisis.

-Ty E

HUSTLER WHITE
HUSTLER WHITE

Bruce LaBruce° (1996)

A proud parodical poofer's postmodern guide to hustler flicks and classic Hollywood cinema, *Hustler White* (1996) co-directed by homocore film hero Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass*, *Otto*; or *Up With Dead People*) and S&M/bondage photographer/filmmaker Rick Castro (*45 Minutes of Bondage*, *Plushies and Furies*) – an aptly titled cinematic work if there ever was one – is a film that follows the day-in-the-life of a criminally-inclined hustler who gets into peddling flesh in a desperate attempt to support a baby boy that may or not be his as he is stalked by a patently pretentious and prudish yet prestigious European writer without an accent who is writing a book on the laurels of gay prostitution and pornography in Hollywood. Beginning with a shot of the anally-inclined hustler anti-hero floating dead face down in a jacuzzi as he narrates the events that would lead to his premature death-by-hot-tub, *Hustler White* is a loose remake/tribute/parody of Billy Wilder's film noir masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) with nods to Paul Morrissey's parody of the same film *Heat* (1972), as well as the Factory auteur filmmaker's first official feature *Flesh* (1968) in its divinely deranged depiction of a young gigolo playing with a baby while au naturel, among countless other film references including *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Death in Venice* (1971), and *Cocksucker Blues* (1972), to name a few. Beginning with British post-industrial group Coil's cover of "Tainted Love" – a mournful and macabre AIDS-themed rendition of the song – *Hustler White* opens with an orgasmic bang that echoes Gus Van Sant's rendition of streetwalker Shakespeare *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), yet LaBruce's film is nowhere near as serious and tragic as the *Good Will Hunting* (1997) director's odyssey into poetic poof prostitution. A sardonic black comedy to the conspicuously corrupted core, *Hustler White* features abhorrent Afrocentric ass-reamers with a proclivity towards penetrating lily white meat, sharply dressed morticians with an unhealthy fetish for duct tape and leather corsets, skinhead streetwalkers who dine on dickheads and loath kissing, crippled cocksuckers who fist men with their sickening stubs, and a variety of other overwhelming oddities of hyper-homo-depravity that would be totally indigestible if it were not for LaBruce's cheap yet clever campy comedic charm. Bruce LaBruce at his best or in other words, most grotesque yet most cinematically gregarious, *Hustler White* manages to find hysterical humor in some of the most horrid, humiliating, and horrifying sex scenarios ever captured in a carefully constructed narrative film. If you have ever had any doubts as to whether or not Los Angeles is the modern day Sodom and Gomorrah of bought and sold high-dollar sin and sodomy, you have yet to see LaBruce's anti-erotic excursion in revolting and ruinous celluloid perversion *Hustler White*; a film that reminds one why sodomites are the greatest spreader of AIDS and superficial sass.

A brainless yet becoming born loser with a lecherous libido and con-artist wit, Montgomery Ward (played by Madonna's ex-boyfriend Tony Ward who later appeared in LaBruce's 2010 scatological zombie porn flick *L.A. Zombie* as a hobo junky) may not be the most sophisticated hustler on the beat-up boulevards he struts his stuff on like a bragging bohunk who watched too many Rocky Balboa movie marathons, but he is a master of conning and cumming on people with his cock and cheating everyone with his crass and contemptible charm. Needless to say, Mr. Ward finds himself an unlikely admirer in the form of a prissy writer from Europa named Jürgen Anger (played by Bruce LaBruce himself in a super sardonic role) who, as he has to remind people quite often, is not related to Kenneth Anger, but he is just as extremely effeminate, innately introverted, and superlatively secretive as the Thelemite auteur and in *Hustler White* he will stop at nothing to meekly worship his lecherous "Lucifer." Also in town are a gang of gay Negro gangbangers led by a sexually ambiguous and quite corpulent and homosexual version of Marcus Garvey (played by so-called "Genderqueer" Vaginal Davis) who disseminates black power by inseminating cracka' cornholes via racially-charged gang rape, a sadomasochistic mortician (played by real-life, HIV-positive extreme S&M performance artist Ron Athey) who believes skin-heads make especially sufficient sex slaves, especially while being suffocated with duct-tape by a male maniac in drag, and an assortment of various other fierce fairies, fervent fudgepackers, and high-strung hunk hustlers from the busted bowels of Southern California hell. In between various scenes of heinous yet exceedingly humorous hustler-John relations of *Hustler White*, Jürgen Anger – a dapper douchebag who gets off to fondling and sniffing the bloody, body odor off the ripped t-shirt of a very potentially STD-ridden hustler – hunts for the he-hooker of his dream, Montgomery Ward; a proud and potent philistine whose only thoughts in life revolve around where and when he should sling his misused manhood so as to obtain money, money, and more money.

Throughout *Hustler White*, various candid interviews are featured off-screen with Montgomery Ward regarding his underground and uniquely unsung occupation of bought and sold sodomy. Mr. Ward, who himself is racially off-white at best, states without the slightest indication of irony that hustlers like to wear white because it signifies "purity." As for his dubious sexual persuasion, when asked whether he is gay or straight, Ward states, "I'm a hustler," thereupon echoing Joe Dallesandro's – who was a real-life switch-hitting streetwalker – questionable and unclassifiable sexual persuasion in the "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) as a miscreant man who sees his own flesh and body as nothing more than a marvelous moneymaking commodity that is an end in itself with no personal pleasure principle. Like virtually all of Bruce LaBruce's films, *Hustler White* is a work that, while it fetishizes and glorifies the exceedingly seedy and salacious, also unsentimentally parodies it to such a preposterous level that the director seems to have transcended the works of his filmic heroes Paul

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Morrissey (and, to a lesser extent, Andy Warhol) and John Waters. In its very essence, *Hustler White* is a hypnotically hysterical homage to hustler films and the very best of its kind, which I guess does not say much, but it surely does go as far as giving new life to crude camp classics like Warhol's *My Hustler* (1965) and Richard Stockton *The Meatrack* (1965). As for the true 'auteur' behind the film, the humor and story seem to be a putrid product of LaBruce's debauched brain and the fetishistic/pornographic material seems to mostly be Rick Castro's bent brainchild, especially if one considers that many of the 'actors' featured in *Hustler White* also did photo shoots for the bondage pornographer. As Bruce LaBruce explained in an interview, "The French freak out over *Hustler White*, in a good way. It was well reviewed by all of the major publications there. They tried to give it an X rating, but it was appealed in the press. A former minister of culture even publicly defended the film. Based on its popularity, my two previous films were also released in France," which says a lot when an unrepentant Germanophile of the rather ridiculously risqué has managed to impress a nation of proud perverts who have literally fucked the world, both literally and figuratively, via colonization and plainly pretentious and pessimistic pornographic 'arthouse' films. Naturally, I have a hard time believing that some froggy feminist filmmaker like Catherine Breillat would derive any enjoyment from watching *No Skin Off My Ass* or *Skin Gang*, but then again, maybe the French just love Bruce LaBruce's name. Despite the beginning of the film leading the viewer to think the contrary, *Hustler White* concludes on a happy note, which is virtually unheard of in the *Hustler* subgenre, thus leading the viewer to conclude that beneath all his punk rock perversity, Bruce LaBruce is just a sappy sentimental queen with the dream of being uniting with his hustler hunk king. Either way, *Hustler White* is guaranteed to give the viewer nightmares of streetwalkers with severed feet and being duct-taped-to-death. Of course, if modern gay-loving America needs an antidote to homo-homogenizing, it is by way of the horror-movie-like hustler's of LaBruce's sicko pomo homo S&M-fest *Hustler White*.

-Ty E

THE RASPBERRY REICH

Bruce LaBruce° (2004)

If I was forced to name Bruce LaBruce's most obscenely overwrought and aesthetically asinine cinematic works, the honor would go to the culturally-mongrelized German-Canadian pornographic production *The Raspberry Reich* (2004) aka *The Revolution Is My Boyfriend* (the uncut version edited by kraut gay porn company Cazzo) – a work marking the abberosexual auteur filmmaker's second 'adult film' following the satirically sexually sadistic skinhead-exploitation pic *Skin Flick* (1999) aka *Skin Gang* – as I cannot think of another film that bombarded me with such a grandly grating combination of positively putrid politics, perversion, and pictorialization of the tongue-in-twink patent pansy persuasion. Of course, no LaBruce film is without sardonic satire of the oftentimes severely self-deprecating sort as the Canadian filmmaker has framed his film-making career around hyper-intellectual yet seemingly idiotic filmic mockery, and *The Raspberry Reich* is most certainly far from an exception to this scatological auteur signature, as the anti-arthouse pornographer tackles two very personal yet universal themes: sex and politics. As a homo-kultur-hating-homo and a lapsed leftist of the formerly philo-Semitic Freudian-Marxist pedigree, it was only natural that Bruce LaPoof – an undeniably masochistic fellow who spent his college years keeping his mind firmly in the gutter by reading works by Judeo-Marxist "Father of the New Left" Herbert Marcuse and carnal commie sexologist Wilhelm Reich – would direct a film parodying the terroristic political germs of Germany, the Red Army Faction (RAF), and as one can expect from the homo-core auteur, *The Raspberry Reich* contains a crude collection of crazed cocksuckers for communism. Indeed, with his previous work *Skin Gang*, LaBruce tackled the forbidden realms of fierce fags for fascism where bodacious buggering bootboys with shaved heads pound mixed race bourgeois couples with their dicks, even portraying the limp-wristed men of miscegenation as more ill-natured and humorless than a brutal brigade of backdoor bombarding, boner-worshipping neo-brownshirts, so it was only natural that the filmmaker creamed out a curious cynical commie celluloid cumshot of sorts via *The Raspberry Reich*. Although the punk fairy filmmaker ultimately ditched the pussy politics of his youth, the production of the film would, in a sense, be the closest LaBruce ever got to be an urban guerilla, describing the creation of *The Raspberry Reich* as follows in an interview: "When we were making *The Raspberry Reich*, I got the sense of what it might be like to be in the Baader-Meinhof gang. It was "Guerilla filmmaking." We had to make everything on the cheap, on the fly, without permits, running around the city with guns, trying to be secret, getting found out, and then getting kicked out of places. In one location where we shot, a bunch of kids found out that it was a porn set, so they climbed the trees to peer in the windows. It felt like we were under surveillance. Even on that level, the whole

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thing felt like a terrorist act. Just to manage to make a porn film about terrorism and get it shown at major film festivals feels like a coup." Indeed, LaBruce certainly speaks the truth when he uses the word "terrorist" because if anything is a work of "aesthetic terrorism," it is *The Raspberry Reich*; a magnificent celluloid mockery of Marxist intellectual masturbation and male emasculation. Of course, in the politically, socially, and sexually retarded realm of *The Raspberry Reich*, "masturbation is counter-revolution" and "Heterosexuality is the opiate of the masses."

Arguably, the most fundamental distinction between Marxism and Fascism, especially of the post-WWII blend, is that while the latter is a mostly a male-led and masculine movement that espouses honor, taking pride in one's work, and a master mentality, the former is an innately effeminate political persuasion that sees work as the height of human degradation, worships the weak majority over the superior minority, is rooted in jealousy and a need for vengeance against the successful (the Marxist messiah himself, Karl Marx, was a failed bourgeois who never worked a day in his life and lived off the generosity of others, including Engels), promotes equality (i.e. collective mediocrity) and a decided disdain for the patriarch, so it should be no surprise that women were prominent in the Red Army Faction, among countless other far-left groups before and after them, and the case is no different for *The Raspberry Reich*; a film about a commie cuntress who leads her biologically 'male' cuckold compatriots into sucking cock against capitalism. Led by a less than ladylike egomaniacal gyno-supremacist Gudrun (Susanne Sachße) – a rather warped and wacky bitch suffering from sort of acute nympho-nihilism who justifies her all-consuming moral corruption and childishly contrived criminality by spouting absurd pan-sexual-neo-marxist slogans like "Out of the bedrooms into the streets!" (while engaging in sex in front of elderly people in a public elevator) and "Heterosexuality is the opiate of the masses" (when trying to force her heterosexual male comrades, including her suffering boyfriend, into cum-guzzling) – the so-called "Sixth Generation of the Baader-Meinhof Gang" aka "*The Raspberry Reich*" haphazardly plots to kidnap the son of a rich wealthy industrial named Patrick (Andreas Rupprecht); a recently out-of-the-closet sodomite who supremely sucks at skateboarding and likes to suck cock. After forcing her boyfriend Holger (Daniel Bätcher) to fuck his friend Che (Daniel Fettig) – a chronic masturbator who gets off to skimasks, handguns, and images of Che Guevara – Gudrun has her seemingly braindead band of terrorist underlings capture poor Patrick and, to the delight of the dick-loving hostage, perform homosexual acts on him so as to join the "The Homosexual Intifada". Little does everyone know that Clyde (Anton Z. Risan) – the weakest twin in the sexually subversive Sixth Generation – has already started a butt-pirate bond with Patrick. When it is revealed to the female Führer of flaming firebrand fag-scism that Patrick is a poofster partisan who agrees with the terrorist group's perverted political ideology, Gudrun declares him the Rasp-

berry Reich's "Patty Hearst" and a "prisoner of love," which he happily accepts as a faggy fan of force-entry fornicating. Although originally intending to send Patty boy's fag-bashing father a video of his sperm burper son being sodomized by the turd-burglar terrorist so as to obtain ransom money, the revolutionary plans go awfully awry when love, betrayal, and megalomania get in the way of things. Ultimately, the intemperate terrorists become victims of their own political dogma due to their full-force fanaticism for flesh and dicks becoming bigger than petty politics.

Citing Serbian auteur Dušan Makavejev's *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) – a work the Canadian director once claimed he "literally stole entire scenes from" – as the primary cinematic influence for *The Raspberry Reich*, Bruce LaBruce proved he was able to turn an esoteric Reichian/anti-Stalinist Slavic work into a MTV-esque porn flick of the aesthetically crappy kraut sort, which is certainly not a small 'accomplishment,' if you can call it that. Whereas in German New Wave auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Third Generation* (1979) – an absurdist work the director described as satirizing the third generation (following the '68ers and the Badder-Meinhof Group) of commie terrorism in West Germany, "which simply acts without thinking, which has neither a policy nor an ideology and which, certainly without realizing it, lets itself be manipulated by others, like a bunch of puppets" – LaBruce's *The Raspberry Reich* depicts a degenerate establishment of so-called anti-establishment terrorists that has been spoon-fed since birth played-out leftist political swill taught to them in public schools and universities, thereupon being the very thing they claim to hate; mindless automatons who ultimately champion crude theoretical caricatures of relatively mainstream ideas, hence why Gudrun ends up a bourgeois mother after all, even if she continues to rape the minds of passive individuals by regurgitating sterile political statistics via her infant child. After all, what is more trendy today among college students than being effete feminist, cultural Marxist cocksuckers whose idea of liberation is fucking as many people as possible, especially members of the same sex and/or of a different race (the darker the better), getting abortions on demand, dressing like sexually confounded prostitutes, quoting Jewish and other non-white leftist authors, and donating corporate-earned cash to dubious non-profit organizations like the SPLC and ACLU? Indeed, the would-be-radical-revolutionaries in *The Raspberry Reich* cannot even make enough money to feed themselves, let alone spark a global revolution, hence why they hypocritically rationalize stealing from private proletarian-owned grocery stores, despite having plenty of time to swipe STD-contaminated fluids and adorn their walls with communist corporate icons like Angela Davis, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, Andreas Baader, and Che Guevara. Ironically, Jürgen Brüning – the self-described Marcuse-inspired producer of *The Raspberry Reich* – lost a court case against the daughter of Alberto Korda, photographer of the famous Ché Guevara portrait, thereupon causing a ban of screening the

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film by a Paris court, on top of the producer having to pay a fine of 17500 Euros because of “copyright and trademark issues.” Needless to say Marxism has been dying a slow and deserved death for some time now and The Raspberry Reich – a work that is just as much of a product of the anti-Occidental far-left Weltanschauung it superlatively satirizes – makes for an audacious allegorical digital-video epitaph of the debauched dick-devouring sort that is guaranteed to aesthetically nauseate individuals from all ends of the political spectrum.

-Ty E

OTTO; OR, UP WITH DEAD PEOPLE

Bruce LaBruce° (2008)

Both an anti-zombie and anti-arthouse flick, as well as pretentious avant-garde postmodern black-and-white far-left propaganda film within a pornographic Milligan-esque melodrama, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* (2008) – a Canadian-German co-production featuring a virtually all-German cast – is undoubtedly homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce's most ambitious and experimental work to date. Featuring a pseudo-existentialist zombie twink with amnesia as the flesh-eating anti-human who, in his own monotone melancholy words, "might have been a vegetarian; or worse, a vegan" during his previous life, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* is not the sort of living dead flick that would appeal to most fans of the popular AMC TV series *The Walking Dead* (2010–present), or George A. Zombie, Lucio Fuci and/or zombie-comedies like *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) and *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), but it does feature random integral ingredients from all of these undead cannibal cinematic works. For starters, the zombie hero of LaBruce's Teutonic flesh-eating realm is more into fucking human flesh than devouring it, but he still manages to do both out of necessity as long as it is not of the fairer sex. Indeed, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* is far from a "straight" zombie work in any sense of the word, but a film that seems to be rivaled by just as many prissy poofs that wallow in shallow and cliché narcissism-fueled fairy fag flick like *Latter Days* (2003) and *Were the World Mine* (2008) as mindless gore-groupies of Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), which is no surprise considering LaBruce's sanctified ambivalence to the formulaic conventions and themes from both of these categories. As a sort of gay Godard minus cinematic smugness meets *Zombieland* (2009) without the feel-good feverishness meets old school John Waters, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* is a cleverly contrived carnivorously carnal camp piece of postmortem cannibalism and cum where humans dare not be afraid of zombies as they are as languid and lifeless as contemporary French arthouse flicks. Centering around an emo-fag of a flesh fiend named Otto (played by novice Belgian actor Jey Crisfar) who often asks himself, "how do you kill yourself if you are already dead?!", *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* is more at odds with the banality of his aimless life than the mundane bipedal meat he eats known as mankind, so much so that he is willing to star in a pretentious avant-garde agitprop piece directed by a megalomaniacal epigone lesbian auteuress entitled *Up with Dead People* that the academically-fanatical female filmmaker describes as, "my magnum opus...my dissertation of the death."

A so-called "one man revolution against reality" and "prince of zombie" according to a hot hack filmmaker named Medea Yarn (Katharina Klewinghaus) – a director that seems to believe she is the supreme spiritual spawn of F.W. Murnau and Ulrike Ottinger – zonked-out zombie Otto's only real priority seems to

OTTO; OR, UP WITH DEAD PEOPLE

be recollecting his life as a human, a haunted homo human. After hitching a ride to Berlin, Germany with good bourgeois folks who seem less than stunned by his emo-goth zombie look, Otto meets up with Medea Yarn and her meekish crew of cinematic collaborators, which includes her brother Adolf (Guido Sommer), flapper Louise Brooks-look-alike girlfriend Hella Bent (Susanne Sachße); a fashion victim of "Father of the New Left" Herbert Marcuse, and various other artsy fartsy, cultural marxist, abberosexual cinema snobs. Unbeknownst to Otto – who really is a seemingly schizophrenic sodomite who probably fried his brain on ecstasy and meth after one too many trips to the local gay bar – the band of bodacious filmmakers do not believe the brain-damaged boy is really a zombie, but an unconscious revolutionary and sexual liberator whose raunchy and radical flesh-fucking rejection of technocratic corporate 'reality' via mental derangement has made him one long step closer to freedom from globalist tyranny. Upon meeting his new compatriots in cinema, Otto is forced into watching Yarn's yawn-inspiring silent films, which he describes as, "The ones that put her on the underground map, if the underground has a map," including such grandiloquently titled works as "Duet for Somnambulists" and "Lascivious Ballet of Meditation on the Ordeal of the Death Ritual in the Mirror of Transfigured Night." Quoting pontifical puffery for her film "Up with Dead People," Medea Yarn states that it is believed by many people that zombies are, "a punishment on mankind by. A theological explanation such as this gained even more popularity when it became apparent that the latest cycle of zombies was homosexual. A gay plague had descended on humanity." Indeed, the homo-flesh-eaters are known as "The Purple Peril" in Yarn's loony leftist take on the living but lecherously undead where a "zombie Che Guevara" leads the worldwide rectal revolution of ravaged, reamed, and eventually reanimated flesh.

More likely suffering from "disorders of the soul" (i.e. schizophrenia, anorexia, and melancholia) as mentioned by his Turk twink boyfriend than any sort of post-mortem zombification, Otto ultimately seems to be a figuratively "dead soul" (Ukrainian-born Russian novelist 1842 allegorical novel *Dead Souls* being one of his favorite books) who continues to believe, "I am dead. I mean, I don't think I'm dead. I'm dead," after being hounded by filmmaker Medea Yarn with questions regarding whether or not he still believes he is a true blue zombie not long after she no longer needs to use him for shooting with the completion of principle photography for *Up with Dead People*. Realizing that "the living have no respect for the dead," Otto eventually decides to leave Berlin so as to forget a painfully penetrating past life best left forgotten, especially learning intolerable insights after a temporary reunion with his brown ex-boyfriend, being beaten by a gang of teenage Turkish termites, and facing much condescending humanist swill from ultra-vainglorious auteur Medea Yarn and her conceited cinematic cohorts. If anything, Otto is finally able to resolve that he is a "zombie with an identity crisis." Upon a superficial glance of the synopsis and the

American Strand Releasing DVD cover art, and tastelessly cheap, porno homo tagline "Bringing Sexy Back...From the Dead," *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* seems the ultimate excursion in zombie emo-fag hipsterdom, but the film is undoubtedly one of LaBruce's, if not his most, aesthetically and thematically ambitious and experimental works yet and surely the sort of sharply schlocky and sardonic that will leave less studied cinephiles quite dumfounded in its deconstruction and ravenous reconstruction of zombie movie conventions. Bruce LaBruce would follow-up *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* with the quite seriously sickening "hardcore" living dead orgy *L.A. Zombie* (2010) – a work that although reviving the filmmaker's fixation with a pseudo-zombie with an identity crisis – is a much more traditional flesh-eater flick, albeit with hordes of blood-drenched homo-sex as the homocore director's equivalent to Romero's special-effects-driven work *Day of the Dead* (1985). A potently putrid parody of lethal pseudo-intellectual left-wing fanaticism and the beaten-to-death zombie hysteria that has plagued movie theaters and mainstream society over the past decade or so, *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* is a film for those fed up with fervent fanaticism for flesh-eaters, fashionable neo-Marxist psychobabble and monotonous mainstream faggotry. A self-proclaimed lapsed leftist who admitted he was once "brainwashed by my Marxist-feminist education at university" and grew to "resent being raised at a time when you felt you had to conform to the ways of being gay that are presented to you," Bruce LaBruce is one of the last living iconoclasts of politically-incorrect fagdom who is not afraid to portray cocksuckers as mindless yet militant hordes of death-worshipping and death-dealing spreaders of deleterious disease and feral debauchery as depicted in *Otto; or, Up with Dead People*; a zombie flick that acts as a triple-assault bullet to the brain of braindead gorehound, gaudy anachronistic avant-garde 'auteur' filmmakers, and fanatical fag-sciists.

-Ty E

L.A. ZOMBIE
L.A. ZOMBIE

Bruce LaBruce° (2010)

Undoubtedly, zombie and hardcore porn flicks have a lot in common aesthetically, as both rely on careless cardboard cinema conventions and wallow in depicting the human body in a most unflattering manner that reminds one that humans are essentially just pieces of meat and no different from the sort one devours from a fast food restaurant, so it should be no surprise that some filmmakers have decided to combine the two typically artistically meritless film styles, with iconoclastic queercore auteur Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass*, *The Raspberry Reich*) being probably the most famous director to do it. Beginning with his melancholy pomo homo zombie arthouse-splatter flick *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People* (2008)—easily one of the director's most ambitious and aesthetically and thematically unhinged works to date—LaBruce followed his frolicsome flesheater fuck flick with *L.A. Zombie* (2010), a grandly grotesque work of zany zombie hardcore that was advertised with a poster playfully parodying the iconic poster used from George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). Of course, in its deleteriously disgusting depiction of a primitive looking brute with a monster prick who literally fucks people back to life in an act of ostensible altruism, *L.A. Zombie* is anything but a Romero flick, even if it features superficially symbolic social commentary of the far-left sort as a work that pays sympathy towards homeless people and homos. Starring Slovak-French gay porn star François Sagat (*Saw VI*, *SAGAT: The Documentary*)—a Cro-Magnon-like cocksucking creep whose innately idiotic black scalp tattoos can be seen glaringly under his corpse makeup—in the lead role as a flesh fucking street fiend who may be a zombie, but is more likely a schizophrenic bum (a technique that LaBruce also utilized in *Otto*) with a sinister sex drive, *L.A. Zombie* is easily the most aesthetically abhorrent, nihilistically nonsensical, and patently pretentious and preposterous zombie flick I have ever seen that makes one wonder whether or not LaBruce made the film as a perverse prank on zombiphiles and gay porn connoisseurs as a work that will surely leave both demographics (and everyone in between) feeling like the director defiled their soul in a feckless attempt to get back at all the people in high school who kicked his ass for being a limp-wristed fag. Released in two different versions—a 63-minute softcore version that was played at various film festivals and a 103-minute hardcore version that is not much more than a polished porn flick on steroids (and, indeed, many of the actors look they have taken their fair share of roids), *L.A. Zombie* is not only what is easily LaBruce's most uncreative and decidedly degenerate work to date, but a homo homogenization of everything that is sick and soulless in America, especially Los Angeles, as a film featuring racially mongrelized men who look like monsters without their makeup, psychopathic white collar criminals and gutter-dwelling mestizo gangbangers, and miscegenation-based muscle man on muscle

man orgies, among various other decidedly deplorable things, which is no surprise considering it is set in modern Sodom, Los Angeles. In part inspired by auteur LaBruce's slave-morality-driven belief that zombies are treated too badly in films since they are killed by rabid rednecks for sport and whanot, as well as a response to the hysteria regarding rabid gays and AIDS and other STDS, *L.A. Zombie* basically revolves around the gimmick that "instead of gay sex bringing death, it restores life," thus making it what is easily the most recklessly and nonsensically ineffective gay propaganda flick ever made.

Slavic pseudo-frog fag wigger François Sagat plays a lecherous yet 'loving zombie' who magically appears out of the Pacific ocean at the beginning of *L.A. Zombie* and makes his way around Los Angeles as a cadaverous cocksucker of sorts who will penetrate anything that is male and dead. Of course, as a crusty creature who nonsensically transforms from being blue and rotting yet muscle bound to a fairly 'normal looking' (normal in the flashy dressed Eastern European wigger sense) fellow with no discernible physical imperfections, it is dubious whether 'The Zombie' (he has no name) is actually an authentic reanimated corpse or not, though his foul fetish for muscular male flesh is unquestionable as a fiendish fleshwound addict who will fuck any mangled manful hole he can find. After being picked up by a swarthy twink (Rocco Giovanni) while hitchhiking, the Zombie is in a car accident that kills the driver of the car, so to pay back the young man back for his generosity, the post-post-mortem being buggers a wound in the boy's chest with his grotesque elephant-trunk-like penis, thus reanimating his heart and giving him the gift of life as a new member of the wanton walking dead. After literally penetrating the heart of the car accident victim with his putrid prick, the Zombie also commits sodomy on the young man, ultimately ejaculating blood. After reaching downtown L.A., the Zombie digs through trash and hangs out at the Los Angeles River where he witnesses a white collar degenerate shooting and killing another white collar degenerate (Wolf Hudson), so he drags his corpse to a semen-soaked outdoor mattress and reanimates the young businessman by placing his member in the man's fresh bullet wounds. In between creaming in the man-cunts on undead criminal corpses and taking messy coffee breaks at a café while all by his lonesome (no one seems to notice him, thus hinting that he is just a homo hobo and not a true blue zombie), the Zombie has equally banal and uneventful flashbacks about his life before becoming a member of the walking dead. After stealing some clothes, the Zombie finds the less than exquisite corpse of a gangster, so he fucks it via a bullet hole in the homeboy's head, thus demonstrating his salacious talent for skullfucking. Not long after, the Zombie also finds the corpse of a bum who overdosed on dope inside a makeshift cardboard box house, so he makes the hobo a flesh-fondling homo. Of course, the Zombie hits the jackpot when he enters a sodomite dungeon and witnesses a pack of neo-leather-fag types being killed in a multicultural coke deal gone bad, so he brings them back to life in

L.A. ZOMBIE

a beyond bloody orgy and carnage-fueled circle jerk that echoes the carnage of Romero's *Day of the Dead* (1985). In the end, the sentimental *Zombie* cries blood like a bitch while hanging out in a graveyard and reminiscing over his ex-boyfriends, even literally digging his own grave, but one suspects he inevitably keeps walking for some more masculine meat to manhandle.

A sort of pseudo-eccentric and excess-ridden yet radically aesthetically retarded piece of uniquely unpleasant celluloid 'womb envy' where undead sodomites create life via gay sex as opposed to spreading death and disease as one might assume, *L.A. Zombie* is undoubtedly impossible to swallow and even more impossible to enjoy as a work that brings new meaning to associating zombies with being braindead. Essentially *Hustler White* (1996) with zombies (including an unflattering cameo from Mr. Tony Ward as a bum), albeit minus the crude yet cultivated comedy and cinema/cultural references, *L.A. Zombie* is easily Bruce LaBruce's most tediously tasteless and thoroughly thoughtless work, as if it was made as a gay recruiting video for zombie fans, except I doubt anyone—no matter how patently perverse and morbidly masochistic—would find it arousing, including the debauched director himself. Shrugging off the messy and plotless structure of *L.A. Zombie* on his blog by stating, "Continuity is bourgeois," LaBruce, not unlike the typical modern horror/zombie director, got lazy and thought by covering his film with blood, guts, and exaggerated genitals it would be adequate for not injecting it with the same sort of subversive and sardonic thought as his previous works like *Hustler White* (1996) and *The Raspberry Reich* (2004). A sick yet superlatively superficial fantasy where a schizophrenic bum converts the corpses of stereotypical LA criminal types like white collar crooks and Mexican gangsters with his clearly diseased and decaying poz-cock, *L.A. Zombie* seems like a sort of brazen yet boring 'bug-chasing' propaganda piece where a pseudo-zombie 'giftgiver' spreads the undead plague by fucking heterosexual male flesh. Not even writing a script but instead utilizing a mere 3-page outline, LaBruce directed mind numbingly banal digital zombie diarrhea that is as slow and seemingly retarded and uninteresting as the film's flesheater anti-hero, hence why the character was played by a porn star. For screening LaBruce's pseudo-celluloid atrocity at the Melbourne Underground Film Festival (MUFF), Australian filmmaker/ film festival director Richard Wolstencroft (*Pearls Before Swine*, *The Beautiful and Damned*), who in the past has caught flack for screening a documentary on historical revisionist David Irving, had the luxury of having his house raided by police, which I can respect, even if I cannot really respect *L.A. Zombie*; a "hardcore gay art porno" that actually manages to be boring in its intrinsic ugliness. *L.A. Zombie* is a grotesque yet greatly generic 'gorno' flick that, at best, should have been utilized as an extra feature for a DVD release of infinitely superior fag flesheater flick *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People*, and should be ultimately avoided like AIDS as a horrendous pseudo-zombie flick with a 'positive' poof message.

-Ty E

GERONTOPHILIA
GERONTOPHILIA

Bruce LaBruce° (2013)

Naturally, it is only a matter of time before every homo enfant terrible auteur filmmaker grows up a little bit and puts away the gratuitous shots of bulging cocks, senseless low-camp gross-out debauchery, and various other forms of hetero-terrorizing aberrosexual agitprop to assemble a more serious and sentimental piece of sod celluloid that is designed to be appreciated, or at least tolerated, by a heterosexual audience. While queer Jap-American auteur Gregg Araki (Nowhere, Mysterious Skin) pussied out long ago with his softcore screwball comedy Splendor (1999) starring Kathleen Robertson (who inspired the filmmaker to dabble in heterosexuality for a short-time), homocore queen Bruce LaBruce (No Skin Off My Ass, Hustler White) just recently decided he wanted to try and debase the mainstream with his most recent feature Gerontophilia (2013), which has been advertised as a sort of gay Harold and Maude (1971). And, indeed, like Hal Ashby's obscenely overrated film, LaBruce's latest work was specially tailored for ultra-hip hipsters and faint of heart leftist types as the superlatively sappy and subtly sick story of an 18-year-old Canadian frog twink that seems to suffer from a mild cause of autism who falls head-over-heels for an 81-year-old high yellow negro that climaxes with a dick-shrinking pseudo-existentialist road trip involving PG-rated gay inter-generational miscegenation and a young queen getting upset over the fact a bunch of other young queens are attempting to steal his old jigaboo queen. By far LaBruce's biggest production to date as a work with a \$2 million budget, Gerontophilia was apparently inspired by teenage old-fart-fucker Marcus Ewert, who made himself the cocksucking concubine of sexually introverted alpha-Beats Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs during the late-1980s when the men were already senior citizens. Ultimately, LaBruce's distinctly debasing rectal-reamer romantic comedy absurdly attempts to make the superlatively sleazy and uniquely unnatural into something 'cute' and 'lighthearted,' which is enough to make any sane person, to misquote the original pimp Hermann Göring, reach for their revolver. Easily LaBruce's most lazy, contrived, and benign yet simultaneously repugnant work to date, this 'gentle' geezer-pleaser dramedy is the sort of film that will probably only appeal to those oh-so rare unlucky individuals that got molested by their grandfather and enjoyed it, as well as geriatric gay men who long to 'break-in' virginal teenage boys and turn them into grandfather-fucking freaks. Indeed, if LaBruce was attempting to tap into a larger audience with Gerontophilia, he probably failed, though there are probably enough unhinged middle-aged women and pre-twinks out there to get wet for lead Pier-Gabriel Lajoie, who radiates boyish innocence and naivety and thus makes for the perfect sex object for debauchees.

Like many gay men, 18-year-old French-Canadian twink 'Lake' (played by

heterosexual Pier-Gabriel Lajoie) spends a lot of time with wayward women, included his crypto-dyke girlfriend Desiree (Canadian child actress Katie Boland) and a whore mother named Marie (Marie-Hélène Thibault) who works at a strip club and forces her son to call her by her name instead of mom. Since all the women in his life make for worthless nurturers, Lake has been forced to become a sort of nurturer and caretaker himself, hence why he probably develops an erotic infatuation for elderly men, which he initially attempts to satisfy by doodling grotesque nude sketches of old farts with saggy skin. One day while working as a lifeguard at an indoor pool, Lake is forced to perform CPR on an old man he finds floating unconscious in the water, but he finds himself in an exceedingly awkward situation when he pops a boner in front of two younger girls after sucking face with the old timer, which ultimately causes him so much embarrassment that he decides to quit his job despite the fact that he needs money for college. Luckily, Lake's mommy Marie gets beat up at the strip club she works at and starts a new job at an old folk's home where she also manages to find her son employment. Of course, working in a retirement home is like being in a whorehouse for Lake, who finds himself stealing the patients' pills and molesting horny old heterosexual geezers while high on said stolen patients' pills. Eventually, Lake develops a pathological obsession with spoiled dark meat after giving a sensual sponge bath to a seemingly comatose 81-year-old high yellow elderly negro with faded blue eyes named Melvyn Peobody (played by gay Black Nova Scotian stage actor Walter Borden), whose jet black homo-hating son paid the tab for the old folk's home but will not even let his poof padre see his grandkids.

The retirement home that Lake works at is run by conspicuously corrupt pill-peddling scumbags who intentionally keep the patients over-drugged to the point of perpetual unconsciousness so they do not have to deal with them. On top of that, one of Lake's co-workers seOf course, Lake catches onto this early and begins trading Mr. Peobody's pills for alcohol, as the two 'lover's get drunk and play cards together. Meanwhile, Lake's closeted dyke girlfriend Desiree, who fetishes deranged cunts like Lizzie Borden and Aileen Wuornos, finds his scrapbook of old dirty men drawings and begins to realize her boyfriend bones old farts, thus eventually resulting in the dissolution of their phony relationship. After they break-up, Desiree gets drunk at a bar and makes out with a Sapphic metalhead while Lake swallows a bunch of pills with rum as a chaser and suffers a hallucinatory *A Nightmare On Elm Street*-esque dream featuring a nod to David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) in which he enters a ruined hospital on his skateboard and begins ritualistically licking giant grotesque wounds on Mr. Peobody's back.

When Lake's mother gets raging drunk and accuses her son of sodomizing an 81-year-old negro, a struggle ensues between the two that results in the old whore breaking her leg. With his mother incapacitated, Lake decides to realize

GERONTOPHILIA

Mr. Peobody's death wish of seeing the Pacific Ocean before he dies, so he gets his ex-girlfriend Desiree to help him kidnap the kindly old queer negro from the retirement home. While the two have tons of sleazy grandfather-grandson-like sex on the trip with Mr. Peobody absurdly posing as the boy's granddad, Lake becomes quite jealous when various other considerably perverted poof's begin hitting on his antiquated chocolate man. Indeed, Lake even gets into a heated girl fight with some Judaic-looking twink at a gay bar where neither girly man manages to land a single punch. Unfortunately, when Lake eventually gets the gall to proclaim his love to Mr. Peobody after they have sex in a motel room, the old high yellow homo is already dead. Only five people (including the organist!) attend Mr. Peobody's funeral, which depresses Lake, but he at least becomes happy when he notices his belated senile sod lover's homo-hating son making out with his mother. Indeed, Lake figures that if his mother marries his dead lover's son, then Mr. Peobody would become his grandfather, thus adding a tinge of incest to their already tastelessly taboo romance.

Aside from Harold and Maude and Beat bitch boy Marcus Ewert, auteur Bruce LaBruce seems to have also had more personal reasons for directing *Gerontophilia*. Indeed, seemingly no longer intrigued by the martial phallus prowess of gay-bashing neo-Nazi skinheads and selling out to the oppressive heterosexual bourgeois institution of marriage, LaBruce married an older Cuban negro a couple years back, though one not nearly as hold as the one in the film. Aside from negrophilia, LaBruce revealed in an interview with www.vocativ.com regarding his personal interest in gerontophilia: "I am now middle-aged, and I hope I will run into gerontophiles in the near or distant future who will appreciate me as a sexy, stimulating and fascinating sexual object. It's also a good metaphor for any sort of taboo or transgressive sexual peccadillo, a celebration of anyone who goes against the grain of society or nature. Young is fun, but old is bold." As for his self-admitted (extra)gay agenda with the film, LaBruce stated in the same interview: "With my movie, I chose to represent an inter-generational love and sex relationship that is as extreme as possible and still within legal boundaries. But it still disturbs people in its extremity, if in a deceptively gentle and subtle way." Of course, aside from men that partake in such behavior, I think it is most peoples' gut reaction to be decidedly disgusted at the uniquely unnatural sight of an elderly negroid and a youthful Franco-Canadian fag fucking. To LaBruce's credit, he makes no claim that he is a proponent of nature as demonstrated by *Gerontophilia* character Desiree's words of support to her ex-boyfriend Lake regarding his particularly perverse proclivity towards wrinkly old melanin-strong flesh, "I think that what you're doing and what you are is really brave. And the fact that you're acting on it, you know, like it's revolutionary [...] You're fighting against nature." If fucking old negroes is revolutionary, then I am proud to be a racist and homophobic counter-revolutionary. Easily one of the most, if not the most, understatedly unhinged films to date, *Gerontophilia* is a quirky queer

celluloid nightmare from the bowels of an old folk's home in homo Hades that demonstrates that the revolution is already over, as no so-called 'heteronormative' world could produce such a playfully pernicious poof piece. Indeed, LaBruce's cinematic STD is arguably the most corrupt thing to come out of cocksucking Canada since Gaëtan Dugas.

-Ty E

PIERROT LUNAIRE: BUTCH DANDY!
PIERROT LUNAIRE: BUTCH DANDY!

Bruce LaBruce° (2014)

Somewhat ironically, around the same time he was putting together his most mainstream and accessible work to date, *Gerontophilia* (2013), Canadian-born alpha-homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce (*Hustler White*, *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People*) began assembling what would ultimately be the most experimental, artsy fartsy, obnoxiously avant-garde, and innately inaccessible film of his career to date. Indeed, LaBruce decided to direct an experimental film based on Arnold Schönberg's atonal melodramatic 'anti-opera' *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), which he had previously directed a couple of live performances of in March 2011 at the prestigious Hebbel am Ufer (HAU) theatre in Berlin, Germany. While LaBruce had two different performances of the play filmed for posterity, he later decided that he wanted to pay tribute to German Expressionism and silent cinema and got his usual producer, Teutonic pornographer Jürgen Brüning (who has produced virtually all of LaBruce's films, including *The Raspberry Reich* (2004) aka *The Revolution Is My Boyfriend* and *L.A. Zombie* (2010)), to back the immortalization of his sexually unhinged Schönberg reworking in cinematic form, thus siring a curious celluloid photoplay that seems like it was directed by the bastard broad of F.W. Murnau and Ulrike Ottinger. Of course, aside from featuring the 21 selected poems from Otto Erich Hartleben's German translation of Albert Giraud's cycle of French poems of the same name that were featured in Schönberg's original version of *Pierrot Lunaire*, LaBruce's version features a more prominent parallel story written by the director that was based on a supposed true story/gay urban legend about a Toronto 'proto-transman' (female-to-male transvestite) who in 1978 cut off the cock of a taxi driver and attached it to 'himself' after his opulent girlfriend's wealthy father forbid his daughter from seeing him upon learning that he was really a she. For better or worse, LaBruce ultimately assembled what is the most genitally confused (anti)love story since Rainer Werner Fassbinder's singularly tragic masterpiece *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* (1978) aka *In a Year of 13 Moons*, though the film also seems to pay tribute to the arthouse splatter films of Berlin-based blond beast Jörg Buttgerit (who LaBruce once went on a date with for an episode of the ZDF/ARTE show *Durch die Nacht mit...* aka *Into the night with...*). A nightmarishly grotesque (as well as grotesquely nightmarish) tale of transman penis envy where LaBruce pays questionable tribute to Schönberg's supposed love of the *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol* with scenes of castration (or "Dick-capitation!" as it is described in one of the film's various inter-titles) and buckets of blood that are splattered across the screen in a somewhat fetishistic fashion, *Pierrot Lunaire: Butch Dandy!* (2014) is postmodern celluloid at its most literally and figuratively perverse where literal pornography, gutter grade splatter cinema, and Hebraic anti-Romantic musical atonality are combined in such an aberrantly obnoxious

and gleefully obscene way that not even Oswald Spengler or Volker Spengler could have foreseen such flagrant and fanatical cultural decay.

As someone that has unfortunately seen more films directed by kraut carpet-muncher Monika Treut (*Seduction: The Cruel Woman*, *Gendernauts: A Journey Through Shifting Identities*) than I care to admit, I must admit that I find female-to-male transsexuals to be rather repellent in both appearance and character, as if they are gigantic little boys with perennially dry vaginas. Of course, LaBruce decided to go one step further in terms of the eponymous transsexual protagonist of *Pierrot Lunaire* by also making the character a lowlife wigger from the projects who sports goofy baggy pants and the sort of flashy basketball shoes that could get you shot in certain culturally diverse American cities. Although a sort of medium-length film at 51-minutes, the work features a very scant and superficial storyline that could have easily been told with a 5-minute short, but LaBruce decided to put more emphasis on atmosphere and aesthetics in what basically amounts to a sexually schizophrenic transman psychodrama and operatic orgy of blood where castration, swarthy male strippers, baldheaded capitalist pigs, and Teutonic diva Nico become objects of sick obsession. Indeed, aside from the fact that the lead resembles the butch cyber-dykes of her fiercely fucked films, LaBruce's Schönberg adaptation has much in common with the the works of Austrian transman A. Hans Scheirl (*Flaming Ears*, *Dandy Duß*) in terms of its queer Blitzkrieg of nonstop aesthetic aberrance sans the primitive stop-motion animation and kaleidoscopic colors (though LaBruce decided to add color to certain bodily fluids). Notably, for the scenes emphasizing the protagonist's considerably unhinged mind, LaBruce opted to insert segments from the two different stage performances of *Pierrot Lunaire* that he had filmed, thus the film has two layers (on top of Albert Giraud's lyrics) that really drive home the tragic mental derangement of the titular lead. Indubitably, LaBruce's film is probably the closest thing that transmen have to a sort of *Tristan and Isolde* or *Orpheus and Eurydice* in terms of tragic romance unless you count mainstream melodramatic twaddle like Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry* (1999).

While the lyrics from Schönberg's original version are sung/spoken in German (lead Susanne Sachsse apparently spent 4-6 months receiving voice lessons to prepare for the role), the parallel story written by LaBruce is told via English language inter-titles, thereupon adding another layer to the already eclectically schizophrenic character and culturally mongrelized essence of *Pierrot Lunaire*, which would probably be nothing short of aesthetic terrorism for most viewers, including those super serious sort of cinephiles that diddle themselves to the latest Criterion Collection cover art. As told via an inter-title at the beginning of the film, "As our story begins, our hero, *Pierrot Lunaire*, and his girlfriend, *Columbine*, are out on a date..." Considering *Pierrot Lunaire* (played by Susanne Sachsse, who previously engaged in unsimulated heterosexual sex while portraying the lead in LaBruce's *The Raspberry Reich*) is a white woman who

PIERROT LUNAIRE: BUTCH DANDY!

pretends s/he is a black man, her idea of a date is watching his lecherous hooker-like girlfriend Columbine (Maria Ivanenko) do a striptease in front of headlights while sipping on vodka inside of her car and yelling crude things at her hoe. Ultimately, Columbine proves to be a sort of cocktease and fails to completely strip for her boyfriend (I guess LaBruce was against having a naked woman in his film), which somewhat disappoints her cock-less and ball-less beau. After their less than eventful date is over, pseudo-pimp Pierrot heads back to his home in the projects and on the way decides to take a leak, thus revealing, "A sandbag for a cock!" Indeed, the pecker-less protagonist complains, "Oh mortal travesty and foul indignity that I must squat to pee!" while urinating in the snow just like any biological girl would (notably, while the film is mostly in black-and-white, LaBruce opted to colorize the urine-covered snow). Poor prick-less protagonist Pierrot also complains, "A curse upon these two onerous appendages!" and "What have I done to deserve such a grievous fate?" upon grabbing her pesky mammary glands while making a strange face that is a cross between abject disgust and melancholy. In a scene featuring the inter-title "Zombie Pierrot!," Pierrot's decidedly daunting body dysmorphia is reflected in shots where her face takes on warped shapes worthy of Francis Bacon. Of course, when Columbine's wealthy father discovers that his little girl is dating a chick that wished she had a dick instead of a real mensch and ultimately forbids her from seeing the protagonist, Pierrot's lunacy inevitably reaches murderous proportions.

When Columbine's "fat capitalist pig father" (Boris Lisowski) comes to see Pierrot perform at a sleazy neo-Weimar cabaret, he soon asks "What kind of bugery is this?," grabs the protagonist's hidden bandage-wrapped tits, and declares, "I'm going to get to the bottom of this if it's the last bottom I get to." After Pierrot's pants are pulled down, a curious inter-title reading "Wikileaked!" appears and Columbine's father triumphantly declares, "Just as I suspected! Your mister is a sister!" upon exposing the pseudo-dude that is defiling his daughter. Naturally, Columbine's father forbids his daughter from ever seeing Pierrot again, telling her, "As far as you're concerned, Pierrot no longer exists!" and "You will only see him again over my dead body!" While there is no evidence that they have even attempted to have sex with one another, Pierrot is hopelessly in love with his superlatively slutty-looking girlfriend and s/he is willing to do anything to get her back. While watching a super swarthy baldheaded butch bro strip at a queer cabaret, Pierrot has an epiphany and declares, "I know what I must do to win back my love." In a long and torturous scene emphasizing the protagonist's rather insane plan, Pierrot is featured lurking around while sporting a strap-on dildo and carrying a butcher knife in a Norman Bates-esque fashion. After declaring, "The hunting ground: a house of burlesque!," Pierrot watches a male stripper masturbate to the point of ejaculation and declares while watching the unwitting would-be-victim's cock, "And what a prize package it is!" in a scene that is juxtaposed with a shitty electronic dance song that features trashy

lyrics like, "...in the name of pussy fixation." Pierrot's obsession with cutting off the stripper's cock is depicted in a variety of grotesque ways, including, "A Glory Hole Guillotine" that castrates the thug-like male whore's massive member in one swift chop. In another scene emphasizing LaBruce's signature fag fetish for guys and guts, blood is splattered on a triple-screen scene of the male stripper dancing from various angles. Of course, the actual castration is much less romantic than Pierrot thinks it will be.

Despite being a pseudo-masculine lowlife wigger of sorts, Pierrot seems to feel a certain degree of kinship with German singer-songwriter and one-time Warhol superstar Nico (aka Christa Päffgen), as s/he visits her grave and acts as if s/he is praying at it for good luck. After pseudo-heroically declaring, "Sweet Columbine! Soon I will prove to your fat capitalist pig father that I'm a real man!" Pierrot gets involved with "roid rage" and begins shooting steroids in her ass like it is heroin, as if it will give her enough strength to physically overpower a man so that he can chop his member off. When it comes time for Pierrot to finally dismember the male stripper's member, Pierrot pretends to engage in bum-buggery with the prick-peddler, but things go terribly wrong when the protagonist whips out a straight razor instead of her imaginary cock. Indeed, not only does the male stripper get away totally unscathed with his meaty member left perfectly intact, but he also mocks Pierrot for not having a purple-headed monster of his own, thus leaving the tragic transman exceedingly embarrassed and heartbroken. Ultimately, Pierrot decides to go for a much easier target and cuts off the hoe-handle of a Hindu taxi driver (Krishna Kumar Krishnan). Indeed, while the Indian cabby has a different skin color and his schlong is predictably considerably smaller than that of the male stripper, the colored castrated cock somehow seems like a fitting fit for Pierrot, who stares at the dismembered member with considerable intrigue immediately after hacking it off the hapless Hindu and then thinks to himself, "A cock of one's own." After somehow attaching the brown bald-headed bandit to his body, Pierrot heads to his beloved Columbine's house while sporting a hoodie and looking like Trayvon Martin's albino doppelganger. When Columbine and her father answer the door after Pierrot knocks, the protagonist proudly displays her new bloody tanned schwantz but the two react by just staring with expressions of abject disgust and shock. As reflected in a dream-sequence that reveals how warped the protagonist's psyche really is, it becomes clear that Pierrot truly believes that his new stolen flim-flam has turned her into a real man. Of course, one can only speculate where Pierrot and Columbine's relationship is headed, but it is quite dubious as to whether the protagonist will be able to rise to the occasion when he takes his beloved into the bedroom.

While academics claim that the Nazis labeled Arnold Schönberg's work as "Entartete Musik" (aka "degenerate music") simply because the composer was a Zionist and member of the Judaic tribe, it had more to do with the fact that

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his atonal music was considered a pathetic mockery of the medium and nothing short of “cultural Bolshevism” (notably, Schönberg’s Aryan student Anton Webern was a pan-German who more or less supported Nazism, yet his music was criticized for the same reasons as his Hebraic teacher). Indeed, in terms of his subversion and destruction of the Aryan model of music, Schönberg is like what Freud was to psychology, Franz Boas was to anthropology, and Einstein was to physics, hence why he was beloved by the neo-Marxists of the Frankfurt School like Theodor W. Adorno and far-left filmmakers like Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, who cinematically adapted his unfinished opera *Moses und Aron* aka *Moses and Aaron* in 1973 and would direct another two films based on the composer’s work. Interestingly, it was not Bruce LaBruce but a Belgradian conductor named Premil Petrovic who is friends with star Susanne Sachsse that ultimately came up with the idea to rework Schönberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, yet I think no other film director was better suited for the job as the Canadian homocore auteur indubitably follows in the same counter-tradition of aesthetically obnoxious and anti-pulchritudinous degenerate art. After all, it is quite fitting that a Canadian cocksucker of German descent would defile the work of a heterosexual Hebrew who debased German music and culture. Despite not even really being familiar with the composer’s life or work before taking on the project, LaBruce managed to echo the Expressionistic horrors of the composer’s paintings with *Pierrot Lunaire* in a fashion that might lead one to believe that the filmmaker is actually a longtime Schönberg fan-boy and not someone that grew up listening to second-rate punk bands. In terms of its theatrical style and emphasis on classical music, the film is indubitably the closest that LaBruce will ever come to obtaining Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s Wagernian ideal of the cinematic ‘Gesamtkunstwerk.’ Arguably most importantly, LaBruce’s *Pierrot Lunaire* is quite possibly the most potent example as to how far German kultur has degenerated aesthetically, morally, and spiritually since the capitulation of the 6th Army in the Battle of Stalingrad. Indeed, more wanton than the worst of Weimar and more grotesque than the childish caricatures of kraut comie troll George Grosz, LaBruce’s film is truly aberrant apocalyptic art that more than epitomizes the slogan at the 1937 Nazi *Entartete Kunst* exhibit: “Madness becomes method.”

-Ty E

THE TRACEY FRAGMENTS

Bruce McDonald (2007)

As mentioned in the earlier *The Dead Girl* review, recent indie (I'm tired of quoting it. By now you should know my stance) films have a habit of residing next to genre pieces and stealing many of the viewers with an updated feel and stars. This risky move squanders most artistry and poetic themes that were so bold in the original. This is definitely the case with *The Tracey Fragments*. I can't put my finger to it but during the rotation of the film's events, I found a feeling that felt ripped right from *Julien Donkey-Boy*. The only time Ellen Page has ever been attractive. Following a speculative form of art appreciated in some corner of the glob (at least), *The Tracey Fragments* incorporates a non-linear plot device of mixing up scenes using planned esotericism to make us think. God forbid, even if a film makes us "think" about a canine in reverse chronology, it's considered "Art". The comic book panorama styling is used in a fashion to try and give deeper meaning to the little things such as the type of shoes a person is wearing or body gestures. This thoughtful gesture to fans of detail gives us nothing other than a space hog for our glorified screen width. You will find yourself focusing on one panel and ignoring the others which brings the question - Why bother? Stealing the motif of the turtle child in *Julien Donkey-Boy*, Ellen Page hypnotizes (Ooooh. So independent using hypnosis) her little brother into think she's a dog. He turns up missing before a severe blizzard wipes out the town (ala *Nóir*). His disappearance you later find out is fault of her own. I merely bring this up as this is one of the many film I've seen recently labeling the disastrous results that follow as blamed on a naive female. Taking her emotional problems and false securities, she travels in a quest to find her brother. With her imagination perusing through memories of her "boyfriend" Billy Zero - a Robert Smith look-a-like douche bag, this film has everything that could possibly make you hate the counterculture surrounding liberal hipsters and the like. *The Tracey Fragments* is a film directed by a director whose main specialty is directing television episodes. For a film about a self-loathing female who for the most part is insane, *The Tracey Fragments* is a stand alone film. It features prominent ideas and theories towards film making. Although the film is lavish with emotions and ground breaking techniques, I felt this film was more of a bastardized spawn of *Julien Donkey-Boy*. I can't exactly point out which aesthetic the film borrows but a similar imminent doom atmosphere is presented whilst parading around Ellen Page in a shower curtain. Honestly, it's not that expressive. At first I thought that I was so cynical towards this film thanks to my aversion of the demographic. Then I remembered that this film is a remake of a remake of another theme, but to be fair, this film has its merits with unspeakable emotions. As you can tell, my feelings are extremely mixed. In one hand we have an intelligent drama with many unspeakable things and on

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the other hand we have a childish film endeavor with little girls saying "friggin"
and "gabillioncatrillion".*shudders*

-mAQ

WILD PALMS

Bruce Wagner (1993)

With the somewhat surprising, albeit rather brief, success of David Lynch's cult serial drama *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), a number of good, bad, and just plain ugly TV shows popped up during the early 1990s attempting to emulate the quiriness, wild idiosyncrasies, and rampantly heterosexual campiness of the labyrinthine murder mystery, including the long-running Hebraic humored CBS series *Northern Exposure* (1990-1995), as well as the satirical horror-themed children's show *Eerie, Indiana* (1991-1992). Unquestionably, one of the more inventive, esoteric, pleasantly peculiar, and somewhat shockingly underrated and unknown of these pseudo-Lynchian series is the five-hour dystopian mini-series *Wild Palms* (1993) which, somewhat undeservedly, has been referred to as 'Twin Palms' by certain reviewers ever since its rather anti-climatic release over two decades ago. Until rather recently, I had no idea the show ever existed and had it not been for my girlfriend's obsession with a certain Danish musician named Loke Rahbek, who is probably best known for his work with the 'synthpop' group *Lust For Youth* and who recently released an album entitled *The Wild Palms* in tribute to the show for his solo project *Croatian Amor*, I would probably never have discovered it, let alone dedicated my time to it, as a miniseries starring James Belushi and Kim Cattrall and executive produced by Hollywood com-symp conspiracy theorist Oliver Stone is not something that I would typically find appetizing. Instead of paying cold hard cash for his latest album, Rahbek requires that his fans send a totally nude 'selfie' of themselves, with the seemingly debauched Dane's patently preposterous reasoning being, "When you share your work with someone, it can be like showing your own skin – you are stripping naked," but I digress, and should mention that Belushi had no idea what *Wild Palms* was about during the shooting of the work despite being the star and Stone had very little, if any, role in the creative aspects of the show (though, he does appear in a small cameo role as himself). In fact, the miniseries was deemed so confusing by the executives at ABC that they opted to release a companion book entitled *The Wild Palms Reader* featuring background information and various tidbits/trivia about the characters, including a timeline, with decidedly deranged British tranny musician Genesis P-Orridge (*Throbbing Gristle*, *Psychic TV*) of all people even contributing writings to the book.

Admittedly, *Wild Palms* is a conspicuously convoluted major mess of ideas and recycled pastiche aesthetics that attempts to do too much in too little time, yet it is a strangely charming and compulsively curious convoluted mess that is rather critical of the same spiritually putrid place and people that it is about. A sort of 'sunny cyber-neo-noir' set in the now-no-longer-future year of 2007, *Wild Palms* is based on the comic strip of the same name by novelist/screenwriter Bruce Wagner (who penned the highly underrated 1989 satirical black comedy

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Scenes from the *Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* directed by Paul Bartel), who once somewhat aptly described his insanely idiosyncratic brainchild as, “a sort of surreal diary [...] a tone poem,” that deals with the still highly relevant themes like cyberspace (in fact, William Gibson, the sci-fi novelist who coined the word “cyberspace” in his 1982 novelette *Burning Chrome*, has a brief yet humorous cameo in the series), globalization, virtual reality, media manipulation, political and spiritual conspiracies, technocratic authoritarianism, trendy and powerful crackpot pseudo-religions/cults (i.e. scientology), and somewhat cryptically and unbelievably, the Jewish domination of not just Hollywood, but the media and politics in general. Indeed, as a work where the main L. Ron Hubbard-esque villain brags about his Jewish background and with virtually every other character featured in the series being ambiguously (they have traditionally Judaic surnames) or unambiguously Jewish (among other things, the character named Chickie Levitt played by ½ Jew Brad Dourif prays for the Jewish Kaddish), *Wild Palms* dares to expose the truth regarding the American postmodern plutocracy, albeit in an exceedingly esoteric way. Featuring a score by Japanese New Age composer Ryuichi Sakamoto (*Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*, John Maybury’s *Love Is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon*) and countless references to film (i.e. *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Alphaville*, *Seconds*, *Marathon Man*, etc.) and literature (i.e. W. B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Sun Tzu, Walt Whitman, Shakespeare, Nathanael West, Ray Bradbury), *Wild Palms* is a work that is just too hermetically cultivated, fast paced, spastically edited, and morally ambiguous to have ever appealed to even a marginal fraction of the general populous. The mystery-and-intrigue-ridden tale of an ostensibly happily married patent lawyer and family man who finds himself entangled in a series of mazes-inside-mazes and dreams-within-dreams after coming back into contact with an old lover and being hired by an evil TV corporation owned by a raving mad megalomaniac sci-fi writer turned religious leader turned presidential candidate of Jewish/Japanese extraction, *Wild Palms* is a work that only begins to make sense the more it progresses as a ludicrously labyrinthine piece of celluloid eccentricity that certainly pays off for those that dare to completely engulf themselves in neo-noirish madness. Depicting a semi-surreal ‘occult war’ between a group of so-called ‘good guys’ called ‘The Friends’ (I would describe them as being ‘agathokakological’) and their supposedly ‘evil’ enemies ‘The Fathers,’ the mini-series demonstrates that the battle for world domination is no longer secluded to the physical realm, but virtual reality as well.

Divided into five episodes (with the pilot being about 90 minutes and the rest of the episodes being about 45 minutes), *Wild Palms* begins with the seemingly clueless protagonist Harry Wyckoff (as played by an admittedly clueless James Belushi) having a midnight nightmare about seeing a random rhinoceros—a symbolic reference to Greek-Romanian playwright Eugène Ionesco’s 1959 play *Rhinoceros*, which is an allegorical play about the transformation of the inhabi-

tants of a small French town into rhinos that criticizes the rise of conformist/collectivist movements like communism, fascism, and National Socialism—in his empty backyard swimming pool. After staring at the rhino, Harry says to himself, “So this is how it begins” and wakes up to what is ultimately the beginning of a real-life nightmare set in 2007 Los Angeles. Harry is more or less happy with his intolerably whiny yet reasonably supportive wife named Grace (Dana Delany) who owns a chic clothing boutique and two young children named Coty (Ben Savage) and Deirdre (Monica Mikala), but after being approached by his sullen yet statuesque femme fatale ex-girlfriend Paige Katz (played by a black-haired and almost beautiful Kim Cattrall) about helping her to locate her long lost son, who was purportedly kidnapped many years ago, he will ultimately lose some of his loved ones and discovers that others are not really who he thought they were. Paige puts Harry into contact with media mogul/religious leader/aspiring president Tony Kreutzer (played by Robert Loggia who, quite notably, later appeared as a similarly crazed character in David Lynch’s 1997 film *Lost Highway*) who, aside from being the owner of the lawyer’s rival company Wild Palms Group and the warped bastard son of a murdered Jewish tailor and a woman of Japanese extraction who perished in an American concentration camp (Kreutzer makes reference to the FDR-approved Executive Order 9066, which cleared the way for Japs being rounded up and sent to so-called ‘relocation camps’), is a powerful senator, the leader of ‘The Fathers’, and the exceedingly egomaniacal figurehead/godhead/high priest of the so-called Church of Synthiotics (which is modeled after Scientology and practices the technique of “Synthiotics” as opposed to the “Dianetics” technique of second-rate sci-fi writer L. Ron Hubbard’s pseudo-church). Unbeknownst to Harry, his mega-bitch stepmother Josie Ito (Angie Dickinson) is Tony’s sister, as well as one of the ‘Old Generals’ of the Fathers, whose ex-husband is Friends leader Eli Levitt (David Warner) and whose arch nemesis is an semi-ambiguously gay artist named Tully Woiwode (Nick Mancuso) who, on top of being described as the “Schnabel of the West Coast” and “The Merchant of Venice,” is also another top leader of the Friends.

While Harry’s daughter Deirdre is a mute, his son Coty is an evil little asshole with a sinister face that only a psychopathic Israeli settler could love and when the lethally loony lad becomes the star of a the ‘first holographic TV show’, Church Windows, he begins to plot for world domination, as the ‘Synthiotic heir’ of his real biological padre Tony Kreutzer’s empire. Indeed, as *Wild Palms* reveals as it progresses, Coty is not really Harry’s son, but they are both closely related via Mr. Kreutzer, though it is not revealed until the end of the series how. Indeed, many decades ago, the Fathers started a pernicious program where they kidnap the progeny of their enemies and put them in Father foster homes so as to destroy their villains families and make them their spiritual slaves, with Harry’s femme fatale lover Paige being the product of such of an experiment as the daughter of a Friends journalist that was maliciously murdered by the killer Kreutzer crew.

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Unbeknownst to Harry, his black best friend Tommy Lazlo (Ernie Hudson) is a member of the Friends, the butt buddy of artist Tully Woiwode (indeed, art fag Tully has a thing for dark meat), and assumed kidnapper of Paige's lost son, among countless other deceptions that have gone completely over the head of the rather naive patents lawyer. After Tommy is arrested for the kidnapping of Paige's son, he is forced by the prison guards to take a highly addictive neo-psychedelic man-made drug called 'mimezine', which is used to enhance the experience of watching holographic television. While Harry begins to become rich and famous after agreeing to work for Tony Kreutzer, his wife Grace, who suspects Coty is not her real son and knows her hubby is carrying on an affair with his old lover Paige, begins to lose her mind and even attempts to commit suicide. On top of that, Harry learns that Coty is not really his son, but the progeny of Mr. Kreutzer and Paige. Ultimately, Coty moves in with his real father Kreutzer and, despite being a prepubescent child, becomes the most ruthless leader of the Church of Synthiotics and develops a fetish for goofy white yuppie ship captain uniforms. It is also revealed that Harry's mother-in-law Josie is really Mr. Kreutzer's sister. While a majorly murderous and radically ridiculous bitch, Josie has a weakness for Friends leader Eli Levitt, who is the father of Harry's wife Grace and genius cripple Chickie Levitt (Brad Dourif). Chickie was crippled and left for dead by the Fathers twenty years ago, but he went on to become the "Einstein of Virtual Reality" and the hardwire architect of the GO chip, which Kreutzer wants to get a hold of because it will enable him to become a "living hologram" and ultimately obtain seemingly infinite power.

When Harry slowly but surely begins to realize his boss Tony Kreutzer, who eventually marries Paige, is an exceedingly evil prick who plans to be the uncontested Führer of both reality and virtual reality, he begins to commit himself to working with the Friends—the so-called "shock troops of reality"—so the fiendish Fathers decide to kidnap his wife Grace and daughter Deirdre. Ultimately, Josie murders her own daughter (and Harry's wife) Grace and Harry is framed for the crime via digitally manipulated footage of his wife's death via strangulation. Meanwhile, Harry learns that a seemingly homeless twink-in-training named Peter (Aaron Michael Metchik), who has tattoos all over his chest and is a junior member of the Friends, is his real son (he and Coty were switched at birth). After 'officially' joining the Friends, Harry breaks into Kreutzer's TV station and broadcasts footage of Josie strangling Grace to death. Meanwhile, neo-hippie revolutionaries begin waging guerilla warfare against the Fathers and their corporate entities. Most of the Friends, as well as various other social rejects, live in an urban trash-filled underground realm called 'Wilderzone' that Tully Woiwode reigns over. While Friends leader Eli Levitt is executed after he is betrayed by 'blind artist' Woiwode (Josie blinds him by gouging his eyes and he eventually returns the favor) and the Fathers release more doctored videos of the Friends committing imaginary crimes, the revolution against Mr. Kreutzer

and his empire of cyber-evil is already well underway. Indeed, although virtually every major member of the Friends is murdered and Mr. Kreutzer eventually manages to obtain the “Go chip,” the ‘good guys’ more or less triumph in the end. Before Mr. Kreutzer dissolves into nothingness after having the Go chip, which had been altered by members of the Friends, implanted in his body, he reveals that he is the Darth Vader of L.A. by telling Harry that he is his biological father, thus making Josie his aunt, Coty his ½ brother, deceased wife Grace his cousin(!), and Paige his mother-in-law. With his once seemingly indomitable father and most of his followers dead, micro-megalomaniac Coty finds his pseudo-spiritual technocratic empire in literal and figurative flames. Indeed, even the wild palm trees get scorched. Assumedly, Harry, Paige, Peter, and Deirdre live happily ever after.

A sort of purposefully aesthetically and dramatically plastic cyber-noir epic steeped in ancient Japanese mysticism, pathological postmodern aesthetic pastiche, Hollywood history, and western literary allusions contained within an intentionally superficial-looking dystopian L.A. of the near-future where reality is blurred in a fashion that falls in somewhere between the “rabbit holes” of Lewis Carroll, the radical reality-distorting quasi-erotic virtual realm of David Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* (1983), the post-industrial/post-cultural/post-national sci-fi of *Blade Runner* (1982) and the novels of Philip K. Dick (especially his work *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), which also features a world where virtual reality TV is enhanced by a sort of cyber-psychedelic drug), *Wild Palms* certainly makes for a fairly consistently wild, whimsical, and wayward cinematic world to get lost in for five hours or so, even if it sometimes seems like it was edited in a nonsensical fashion not all that different from William S. Burroughs “cut-up” technique. Undoubtedly, one of the most provocative and shocking aspects of the miniseries is that the villains, The Fathers, and their rivals, The Friends, are portrayed as almost exclusively Judaic, thus making it a rare mainstream Hollywood production that deals with reality as opposed to an insulting fantasy realm featuring imaginary blue-eyed WASP devils preying on poor morally immaculate minorities (though, negro *Ghostbuster* Ernie Hudson is portrayed as a Christ-like martyr of sorts who gets hooked on a sort of blue cyber-crack that he is forced to take against his will). Also, I don’t know about everyone else, but it was quite a therapeutic experience to see the Hebraic pube-headed dork of *Boy Meets World* (1993-2000) and *Little Monsters* (1989), Ben Savage, being portrayed as, well, a little monster that is ultimately more unsettling in his sinisterness than Ralph Fiennes’ absurdly over-the-top portrayal of Amon Goeth in *Schindler’s List* (1993).

With reasonably decent directing by the likes of Kathryn Bigelow (*Near Dark*, *Zero Dark Thirty*), Keith Gordon (*The Chocolate War*, *Mother Night*), Peter Hewitt (*Bill & Ted’s Bogus Journey*, *Whatever Happened to Harold Smith?*) and Phil Joanou (*State of Grace*, *Heaven’s Prisoners*) and featuring an almost

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impenetrable tangled web of metaphysical, cyber, and political conspiracies that have at least some basis in reality/virtual reality, *Wild Palms* is certainly the most intricate and original project that Oliver Stone has ever gotten involved with, but of course, he had next to nil creative involvement with the mini-series. A work of meta-TV where a character remarks, "Nobody watches movies anymore...only TV," while watching *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) in a completely empty movie theater, the mini-series was made at a time when television was in a sort of Golden Age of creativity, but of course, nowadays the entertainment world more resembles the anti-reality realm of soulless pseudo-sentimentality as broadcasted by *Wild Palms* villain Tony Kreutzer's aesthetically and spiritually malevolent media empire. An absurdly neglected show that is most certainly past ripe for a cult following, the mini-series arguably comes closer than any other American film or TV series in terms of depicting the eclectic evil and racial/spiritual character of Los Angeles. Also, as my girlfriend has noted, the show has some of the coolest character names in the history of television. After all, who does not love repeatedly hearing a name like "Tully Woiwode" repeated over and over again by kosher conspirators and their equally kosher enemies?! As a show where the main villain compares eternity to a cyst, *Wild Palms* is a rare piece of mainstream celluloid cancer that, whether intentional or not, eats away at the main malignant tumor that is Hollywood. Featuring a suicidal Japanese-American *Star Trek* fan who hilariously claims that his "grandpa liberated Dachau" and a Nordic-like stand-up comedian shouting, "Sieg Heil! Sieg Hologram! Sieg Mimecom!" in rebellion against an ultra-evil Jewish media mogul/messiah, *Wild Palms* also makes for a pleasantly preposterous mockery of the postmodern pandemonium that is American society, especially the totally fictional yet largely believed America that has been dreamed up by the culture-distorters of Tinseltown. In terms of predicting the future just as all decent science fiction works do to some degree, the mini-series concludes with the mad messianic antagonist Tony Kreutzer, who is also mixed race (even if his archetypal Guido gangster appearance says otherwise), running for president in 2008, which is, incidentally, the same year that mulatto cultural marxist messiah Barack Obama campaigned for the presidency. With that being said, one could argue that *Wild Palms* makes the future seem a little bit less dystopian than it actually turned out to be. After all, despite being set in the late-2000s, the mini-series does not feature a single crotch-grabbing mestizo, meth-addled wigger, exceedingly effete Indian computer programmer, or blonde-wig-adorned 6-foot-tall tranny.

-Ty E

TWENTYNINE PALMS

Bruno Dumont (2003)

Many contemporary French filmmakers are undoubtedly masters of pedantically directing long, static, and soulless 'realist' scenes and gratuitous real-sex and controversial frog auteur Bruno Dumont (*The Life of Jesus, Outside Satan*) is no exception, yet unlike many of his patently pretentious and prosaic celluloid compatriots, I actually find much of his work interesting, especially his self-described "horror film" *Twentynine Palms* (2003), a French-German-American coproduction set in the "Beautiful Desert Oasis" of Twentynine Palms/Joshua Tree desert in southeastern California. And, indeed, with a very thin and almost nonexistent plot, *Twentynine Palms* relies heavily on the organic yet somewhat ominous atmosphere of its setting, or as director Dumont stated himself, "Here, it's not so much the subject that matters as the air itself, the atmosphere, its hue. In this way, *Twentynine Palms* is a horror film – an extreme horror; built up innocently, dependent on a delicate plot – the natural account of a couple of tourists engaged in wild sex – that, all of sudden, is reverse, attaining the ultimate. Death." Featuring a curiously mismatched yet sexually active romantic couple, including an arrogant American photographer and his beautiful yet mostly melancholy Russian-French subject, *Twentynine Palms* portrays what happens when two people, who are clearly not meant for one another, find temporary solace in loveless sex and basking nude in the arid desert sun, but, by mere chance, face the worst kind of grotesque brutality and dehumanization at the hands of two all-American redneck types who do not take kindly to bombastic bourgeois Hollywood types poking around in their dang nasty neck of the desert. Sort of like *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) meets *Zabriskie Point* (1970) as co-directed by Robert Bresson, Gaspar Noé, and Godfrey Reggio in pseudo-Dogme 95 style, *Twentynine Palms* is an experimental arthouse horror-shocker that does for the deserts of Southern California what John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972) did for the wilderness of Georgia, but unlike the classic Hollywood thriller, Frenchman Dumont's work of unrelenting 'realist horror' does not offer the viewer any sort of closure nor comfort in the end, but merely disgust, repulsion, and, well, real human horror and not the contrived 'mask and CGI' superficially scary sort. A rare 'thinking man's horror flick' aimed at those that probably typically abhor the genre (myself not included, though I find it harder and harder to defend the genre), as well as the kind of idiosyncratic horror-arthouse hybrid that will scare the typically dedicated gorehound away due to its long and sometimes monotonous scenes of sunny and scenic artiness, *Twentynine Palms*, not unlike Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* (2009) and to a lesser extent Harmony Korine's *Trash Humpers* (2009), is proof that auteur filmmakers of the arthouse persuasion have more to contribute to the much ma-

TWENTYNINE PALMS

ligned (and deservedly so) genre than so-called ‘masters of horror’ like George A. Romero, Wes Craven, John Carpenter, Stuart Gordon, and Tobe Hooper over the past decade or so.

Poorly matched odd couple David (David Wissak)—an arrogant ‘cool guy’ LA photographer type—and Katia (as Katia Golubeva aka Yekaterina Golubeva)—a Russian-French model suffering from seemingly debilitating depression, not to mention random crying attacks—make their way to Twentynine Palms from Los Angeles for a mini-vacation/photograph sessions in the ungentlemanly gentleman’s conspicuously obnoxious maroon Hummer, a senseless gas-guzzler that seems to be utilized by its owner to make up for his glaring lack of masculinity and testicular fortitude. While Katia clearly has her fair share of mental problems and personal hang-ups, she does seem to genuinely love her patronizing ‘sexual partner’ (as he is ultimately nothing more) David, who only seems interested in his trophy girlfriend when horny. Anytime Katia makes an attempt to express her feelings to boyfriend by saying “I love you” and hoping to hear the same thing back, David responds with “I want you” and proceeds to vaginally penetrate her in a crude and unemotional manner with little or not foreplay involved, as if she is the typical Russian call-girl. When David checks out a homely Asian girl while the two dine out at a Chinese restaurant, Katia becomes saddened and her boyfriend essentially insinuates that she is delusional. In fact, anytime Katia attempts to ask David about his emotions or expresses her only feelings, he flips out like a bitchy queen. Katia’s introverted sensitivity becomes especially apparent in a scene where the two find a black three-legged mutt dog on the road and she comforts the canine by telling it, “you’re a real dog.” Somewhat nonsensically, Katia encourages the tripod canine to chase her in the Hummer and the dog is ultimately hit by David, who was not paying attention while driving the SUV. Unimpressed with the fact that the already crippled canine is suffering due to his negligence, David faces vehement scorn from the oversensitive Katia, who states to him, “You don’t give a damn... You have no heart,” and, indeed, she is probably right.

Not long after the incident with the mysterious black dog, the two have a verbal fight in their motel room and David tells Katia he would never brought her on trip if he knew she would “act like a fucking princess,” so the little lady leaves and hides around various buildings outside. After some time, David finally gets off his lazy ass and goes looking for Katia and when he actually finds her, he accuses of her of “not being well,” which inspires her to run away again, but her bastard boyfriend tackles her, smacks her around, tells her “I hate you, I hate you” and proceeds to play fight with her as if nothing he did was wrong, thus demonstrating his seemingly sociopathic mentality. The next day, the unloving couple go for a drive in the desert and spot two men in a stereotypical silver redneck diesel driving recklessly, which inspires David to state “They’re crazy” in what will prove to be his famous last words. Not long later,

the men in the silver truck start ramming the back of the Hummer and drive it off of the road. David and Katia are nonsensically pulled out of their SUV by two rather wimpy looking rednecks, who rip the Slavic French girl's clothes and brutally beat her boyfriend, who does little to protect his girlfriend except say "don't touch her," as if such a feeble attempt at self-defense would stop these two clearly deranged and equally determined desert hillbillies. Clearly a less than ballsy bitch, David is forced to kneel down, bend over, drop his pants and is ultimately anally raped by a shaved head hick about half his size. Completely and utterly emasculated due to being beaten and forcibly sodomized without putting up even the slightest sign of a fight, David seems to enter a quasi-catatonic state when he goes back to the motel room with Katia, who tries to comfort her totally broken man. After temporarily leaving for a couple moments, Katia comes back to the hotel room and notices that David has locked himself in the bathroom and he refuses to reply to her requests. Out of nowhere, David, who has shaved his head and looks like the deformed Jason Vorhees as a boy from the dream sequences near the conclusion of *Friday the 13th* (1980), maniacally lunges at Katia and stabs her a number of times with a butcher knife in a Michael Myers-esque manner while on top of her in the same position in which they had sex only a couple days before, albeit with the roles symbolically reversed.

Indeed, when director Bruno Dumont described *Twenty-nine Palms* as a "story of regression" and a "savage love story," he was not joking as the film has to be one of the most dreary and brutal depictions of an ostensibly 'romantic' relationship ever captured on celluloid in its portrayal of a dubious dude whose sexual desire for his lover seems to be largely born out of hate and not love, hence the climax of the film when he finally kills her in a seemingly psychosexual manner, but using a butcher knife instead of his penis to enter her body in what will be their last moment with one another. Interestingly, both David and the redneck rapist cry in the same unsettling manner upon reaching sexual orgasms, thus associating the victim's innate similarities with his victimizer; the difference being that the pretentious LA photographer is less honest and repressed with his emotions, while the horny hick is a bit more matter-of-fact and 'in tune' with his emotions. The scenic desert setting of the film is an intrinsic and arguably the most important ingredient of the film as it sets the foreboding naturalistic pace for what will be two audience-traumatizing scenes of unadulterated human savagery unleashed on two cosmopolitan types who are used to the abstract hustle and bustle of the big city and have been unexposed to the naturally visceral and violent side of both man and nature. Even director Bruno Dumont stated that *Twenty-nine Palms* is a film from the gut, writing, "Envisage this film only in relation to the means employed; and so only work from instinct." Interestingly yet tragically enough, actress Yekaterina Golubeva would commit suicide in 2011 after a long but unsuccessful battle with depression. I also would not be surprised if actor David Wissak was rather embarrassed by his guy-that-gets-raped role

TWENTYNINE PALMS

as he has only acted a couple times more since the release of Twentynine Palms and director Dumont was undoubtedly not doing either of the two lead actors any favors by forcing them to use their real names in the film, but what seems like totally unsimulated sex between the two makes for a raw and ruthless realist work that takes no prisoners, which is more than I can say about most contemporary horror flicks. Many individuals seem to respond to Twentynine Palms with a special outrage and disgust and I think that was Bruno Dumont's intent as he makes the viewer 'work' for their sex and violence by portraying them in an uniquely unflattering and barbarous light and not the spoon-fed and superlatively superficial and stylized manner that boobs, deaths, and dead bodies are depicted in the typical Hollywood film.

-Ty E

THE STRANGERS

Bryan Bertino (2008)

Oooohh, another feminist film. These stupid men better stop ruining beautiful women's plans. In midst of another feminist film revolution similar to France's, America has turned into Lifetime Central. The Strangers busted through the film industry with what might be the scariest trailer of them all. A trailer that grips your tendons and nerves and provides you with no ample escape. They succeeded, partly. A couple, coming home from a marriage reception is faced with an early crisis, a refusal of marriage. A classic line from "Thriller" "I want you to be my girl" is stated, and the audience laughs. Go figure, right? From then on, the film gets crazy. People begin to show up, motivated towards some mysterious cause, to torture this stranded couple. Friends are murdered and salvation is far of from being reachable. The man returns to find his woman in hysterics. He takes the mans job by loading his fathers gun. Much use it will do him. This scene in particular angers me. In a scene where a bad guy should die, this bad-die presumes to master The Matrix and dodges a round of pellets fired from a shotgun. Unsteady and unrealistic, damn the horror world sucks. In a messy genre from a messy generation, I must admit that The Strangers is a candle in the dark. I must admit though, I tire of the "woman is crippled and must crawl away fomr this horrible event" sort of ending. Women are always portrayed as clumsy fools that ruin any chance of the truth being known. Perhaps they should all wear tracking beacons in case of a dire emergency. I'm sorry to come off as so misogynistic, but i cannot help but to realize that women are the downfall for men in modern horror films. Most horror films couldn't even touch on the terror that it presents. From my own personal standpoint; Did it scare me? No. Did it scare my friends? Yes. I seem to be impervious to horror now-a-days. The Strangers is a wonderful job from a first timer. A young and fertile attempt at modern horror. The use of old-timey music is applauded and upheld better than the works of Rob Zombie. The masks alone did a wonderful job at stealing jolts and jumps from its frantic audience. The others (General Audience) seem to be frightened by it. Is it great, no. Is it bad, no. This might seem inspired by French horror film Them/Illes, but it is a completely different film with completely different scares. A great job from a first time director.

-mAQ

VALKYRIE
VALKYRIE

Bryan Singer** (2008)

Valkyrie is the latest big production from Hollywood hack Bryan Singer. Singer tried to scare us about the evils of Nazis with his laughably propagandistic film *Apt Pupil*. With *Valkyrie*, Singer takes us for a history lesson with a roman catholic Nazi colonel Claus von Stauffenberg and his plot to kill Hitler. Going into the film, you already know what is going to happen. *Valkyrie* is a mildly entertaining and sometimes thrilling film that somewhat attempts to martyr the conspirators that tried to take out uncle Herr Wolf at his private quarters via suitcase bomb.

The fact that Tom Cruise plays the lead role of Clause Von Stauffenberg is what attracted me to this film the most. Aside from being in a Nazi uniform, Cruise also sports an eye patch and a missing arm to boot! After hearing about Tom Cruise's life devotion to Scientology and his recent public religious outbursts, I expected to see a man who meant serious Hitler killing business. Unsurprisingly, Tom Cruise's megalomania of sorts makes his performance worth seeing. All jokes aside, Tom Cruise is still a guy that takes his acting performances seriously despite what people have to say on the contrary. Apparently, many German film critics were offended by Cruise's performance in *Valkyrie*. German film critic Hanns-Georg Rodek of the German newspaper *Die Welt* stated of Cruise's performance, "He comes over best as an American hero, someone who battles for respect with aggression and energy. But Stauffenberg was a German hero, with aristocratic bearing, and Cruise cannot carry that off." Rodek's statement is fair as America is hardly a country of "aristocrats" but more like third and fourth generation well off peasants. But then again, what American actor could play a German aristocrat well? Being your typical arrogant and ignorant Hollywood production, *Valkyrie* lacks a certain authenticity that you come to expect from most World War II films. The most annoying thing being the variety of different "English" accents for these German Nazis. In all honesty, I didn't expect to hear much German in the film as Americans hate (and for the most part maybe can't?) read subtitles. *Valkyrie* features a variety of actors from around the world and even a handful from Germany. Some of the actors playing historical figures look ridiculous in comparison to the real-life individuals. I especially liked the vaudevillian looking man who played the sinister character of Joseph Goebbels. *Valkyrie* is not a beat down of postwar propaganda nor is it an amazing world war II epic. It is simply a film you watch to see your favorite actors dressed up in fancy Nazi uniforms. For anyone that liked the German Hitler bunker film *Downfall*, *Valkyrie* continues the tradition of new, big budget Nazi flicks. Also, Cruise's "Heil Hitler" salute with a nub for a arm is mandatory viewing. Hell, *Valkyrie* is also one of Hollywood's closest attempts at morally redeeming any German citizens that lived during the Nazi era. Now that's progress.

-Ty E

ALICE IN WONDERLAND: AN X-RATED MUSICAL FANTASY
ALICE IN WONDERLAND: AN X-RATED MUSICAL FANTASY

Bud Townsend (1976)

For whatever reason, pseudonymous English writer Lewis Carroll's novels have proven to be fruitful material for celluloid erotica. Indeed, arguably the most notable example of this is Jonas Middleton's hardcore arthouse horror effort *Through the Looking Glass* (1976), which is based on Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *What Alice Found There* (1871), which is the less popular sequel to the author's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Additionally, both French auteur Louis Malle's sometimes sensual surrealist work *Black Moon* (1975) featuring Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro (who was no stranger to nudity and even pornography, although he does not go unclad in the film), as well as Cecil Howard's shockingly artsy and kaleidoscopic porn fantasy *Neon Nights* (1981) demonstrate blatant Carroll-esque elements, not least of all because they both star a naïve blonde girl who becomes immersed in a striking fantasy realm of mystery and intrigue. Of course, the most blatant example of Carrollian celluloid carnality is the pornographic musical *Alice in Wonderland: An X-Rated Musical Comedy* (1976) aka *Alice in Wonderland* directed by horror hack turned pornographer Bud Townsend (*Nightmare in Wax*, *Terror House*) and starring fashion model and Playboy cover girl turned porn star turned semi-mainstream actress Kristine DeBell (*Meatballs*, *The Big Brawl*). Produced by porn mogul Bill Osco, who is notable for producing the first mainstream adult film, *Mona the Virgin Nymph* (1970), as well as the erotic Flash Gordon spoof *Flesh Gordon* (1974), *Alice in Wonderland* bears the seemingly strange distinction of being a fuck flick that was picked up and distributed by 20th Century Fox, though they cut three minutes of the work so they could receive an R-rating. Luckily, in 2007, the now unfortunately defunct label Subversive Cinema released the film on DVD in both its hardcore and softcore versions, with the former being the version I had the marginal delight of recently viewing. Undoubtedly, out all the Carroll-themed fuck flicks, Townsend's *Alice in Wonderland* is the most innately juvenile as a work that genuinely seems like it was created to appeal to children, thus making it quite at odds with Middleton's genuinely dark and depraved blue movie masterpiece *Through the Looking Glass*. Of course, considering porn films and musicals share similar structures (e.g.: little bit of storyline, 'action,' little bit of storyline, 'action,' etc.), it should be no surprise that someone would make a sing-a-long porn movie, but I would be lying if I did not admit that I forwarded through most of the songs in *Alice in Wonderland*, which reek of 1970s retrograde raunch. Indeed, while Townsend's smutty musical is worth a see, it is far too 'cute' and pathologically 'positive' to compare with the great works of the porn genre, as it is more or less a piece of cheesy post-counter-culture propaganda with Afrocentric undertones that reminds one how much hippies suck.

Alice (Kristine DeBell) is a somewhat bitchy, severely sheltered, and innately immature librarian who rebuffs the advances of her prospective boy toy William (Ron Nelson) insulting his shirt because it has another man's name on it (To Alice's credit, it is rather pathetic and emasculating when a man wears the jersey of their favorite sports player, especially when it is a white man wearing the jersey of a negro football or basketball player). As William accurately states of Alice, "The body is all grown up...but the mind is still a little girl." After William splits from the library after their (non)lovers spat, Alice finds a vintage copy of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and says to herself: "That's funny...I never read this when I was a little girl." Indeed, had Alice read the novel as a little girl, she might not be an adult virgin. After singing an absolutely horrid song in the library, a discernibly Hebraic "White Rabbit" (played by cult/TV actor Larry Gelman, who is best known for his roles on *The Bob Newhart Show* and *the Odd Couple*) appears out of nowhere and says to her, "You can grow up...there's nothing to it. Everybody grows up. I grew up." Since the White Rabbit is in a hurry to be at the Queen's party as it might result in her having his head if he is late since "the Queen's a bitch," he jumps and disappears through a magical mirror in the library. Intrigued by the rather overweight four-eyed White Rabbit, Alice also jumps through the magical mirror and lands in a room with one normal size door and a miniature door. Since she cannot find a key for the big door, Alice goes through the little door, but not before drinking a special lotion that shrinks her body, thus making her the proper petite size for the wild and wanton world of Wonderland. Indeed, Alice may be a virgin, but her erotic encounters with the people and beings of Wonderland will certainly change that.

After Alice, who cannot swim, falls into a lake and is saved by a furry creature, she is dried off by said furry creature's equally furry comrades in a chapter of the film that is abbreviated with the tie in: "Alice makes new friends...AND GETS A LICKIN'." Alice puritanically believes that, "If it feels good, there's a good chance it's bad," but the furry creatures touch her otherwise with their wandering tongues to prove her wrong. A talking rock also teaches Alice that there is nothing wrong with diddling one's naughty bits. After being introduced to the merry world of masturbation, the White Rabbit pops up and startles the prudish virgin. The White Rabbit brings Alice to a tea party hosted by the Mad Hatter (Alan Novak), who has a label on his large goofy top hat reading "9 7/8," which indicates how many inches long his member is (clearly, he embellished the number!). After whipping out his willy, the Mad Hatter convinces Alice to touch, lick, and eventually suck it, which she does in a rather childlike fashion, but it is ok since the hat man is a quick shooter. From there, Alice goes with her friends to help Humpty Dumpty (Bucky Searles), who fell off a wall and sprang a ball and now he cannot get his ding-a-ling up. Even viewing a live lurid show of a twosome of naughty Sapphic nurses performing 69 on one

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another cannot help Humpty get a hard-on, but luckily Alice comes to the rescue and uses her newly acquired oral sex skills to rescue his damaged dick from perennial flaccidness. After Alice gives Humpty an erection, all the characters sing, “His ding-a-ling up. His ding-a-ling up. We got his ding-a-ling up,” and the egg man falls off the wall again, thus revealing that his dick is nothing more than a cheap dildo. After hanging with Humpty, Alice meets silly sibilings/lovers Tweedledum (Bree Anthony) and Tweedledee (Tony Richards) who, aside from having jolly old good incestuous sex with one another, sport goofy yarmulkes. When the incest session gets old, Alice and her comrades leave and happen upon a whore (Gila Havana) attempting to revive a black Jewish knight (Bruce Finklestein), who is actually a queer with a white knight boy toy (Jason Williams). Indeed, with all the eclectic perverts in the area, it is no wonder why the place is called Wonderland!

When Alice encounters the King of Hearts (John Lawrence)—a bongo-banging Afrocentric pimp daddy who, like many black power types, seems to prefer blonde-haired cracker chicks over his own kind—she comes close to losing her virginity as the black monarch uses stereotypical negro pimp speak to con her into bed, but their sexual encounter is cut short when the white trash bitch Queen of Hearts (played by Juliet Graham, who appeared in various classic porn exploitation flicks, including Gerard Damiano’s 1975 S&M hit *The Story of Joanna* and Joel M. Reed’s 1976 trash-fest *Bloodsucking Freaks*) catches them in the act and calls for the virgin’s head much to Alice’s horror. Of course, as the Queen tells Alice, “You misunderstood me, doll. I don’t want to cut off your head...I want you to give me some head.” Against the Queen’s demand for instant sexual gratification, Alice’s new friends refer to a vintage copy of Alice’s *Adventures in Wonderland* to prove that she deserves a fair trial. If Alice is found guilty, she must give head to the Queen, but if she is found innocent she must face the even more perturbing punishment of giving the fat old Judge (J.P. Paradine) head. Of course, during what amounts to a surrealist show trial featuring a song and dance, including the negro King banging on bongo drums, Alice is found guilty. While giving the Queen of Hearts head, Alice manages to pleasure the mad monarch so much that she faints in delight, thus enabling her to make her escape with the help of the White Rabbit and Mad Hatter. After falling into a lake, Alice ends up in the real world and makes up with her boyfriend to whom she subsequently loses her virginity. In a rather silly hippie scene, Alice and her boy toy go skinny dipping in a rocky river and the film concludes with the following storybook epilogue: “And so Alice settled down...got married...raised a family in a house with a white picket fence...filled with kids and a little...Arf! Arf!...puppy...and they all lived happily ever after...Be sure to pick up a copy of Alice’s New Book “Fear of Shrinking.”

Aside from a couple weak cumshots and passive penetration scenes, Alice in Wonderland seems more or less like a cheapo spoof of the classic fairytale made

for sexually curious teens, though, somewhat dubiously, the film would surely appeal to younger children as well as it is certainly less sophisticated than an episode of *The Ren & Stimpy Show*. Personally, I was completely put off by the film's innately lighthearted tone, conspicuously cliché post-hippie "peace and love" and "live and let live" messages, mind-numbingly mindless celebration of hedonism, and truly vomit-worthy sing-a-long songs, though the work certainly has its rather memorable "magical" moments, especially when Humpty Dumpty falls off the wall sporting a dildo instead of his real wang. Indeed, if you're looking for a more 'evil' and 'esoteric' take on Carroll's novel, the part pseudo-documentary/part psychedelic celluloid trip *Alice in Acidland* (1969) directed by John Donne is certainly more effective in that regard, even if it is true retrograde trash. A work where virtually all the male characters are gay or ambiguously gay, the King is an Afrocentric pimp who plays bongo drums and fucks cracker cunts doggie style while they eat fried chicken, the Queen is a less than aristocratic mudshark who looks like a haggard white trash whore that was found at a Texas truck stop, Alice acts like a half-retarded bitch who will commit any sexual act so long as someone gives her a semi-logical reason to do so, and the White Rabbit seems like a pedophile Rebbe who uses goofy make-up to lure in little kids, *Alice in Wonderland* is certainly a work that the viewer will never forget, whether they want to or not. Considering the rumors that Lewis Carroll was a pedophile who may have wanted to marry an 11-year-old girl, Townsend's version seems to take a more 'subtextual' approach to the classic fairytale, especially considering the truly adolescent-like and pedomorphic lead really seems like a petulant pre-teen princess who's giving blowjobs and cunnilingus for the first time. Somewhat surprisingly, in 2007, an Off-Broadway musical entitled *Alice in Wonderland: An Adult Musical Comedy* based on the film was staged at the Kirk Theatre in New York City, thus demonstrating that the fetishistic filmic fairytale has developed a certain amount of respectability and artistic merit over the past couple of decades. Additionally, an amateurish animated porn flick entitled *Alice in Wonderland: A XXX Parody* (2011) directed by W. Crawford that is vaguely in the satirical spirit of Townsend's film was released a couple years ago. Somewhat interestingly, the 2007 Subversive Cinema DVD release of the film features a somewhat recent featurette entitled *Alice In Wonderland 30 Years Later: Back Down The Rabbit Hole* where a couple of the flick's cast members, including elderly Hebrew Larry Gelman (aka "The White Rabbit") and Lena Romane (who claims to have starred in a whopping 800 to 1,000 different fuck flicks during her rather long career!), reflect on the work some 30+ years later. Notably, all of the subjects of the doc rightly agree that pornography has degenerated drastically in terms of both artistry and morality since the release of *Alice in Wonderland*, including Hebraic hack porn star/director William Margold, which says a lot considering the man is so depraved that he once confessed in an interview with Rona Barrett that he would be willing to perform in a sex scene with his own

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daughter. Indeed, it certainly says a lot about our contemporary zeitgeist when a Lewis Carroll adaptation featuring Alice giving a half-ass blowjob to the Mad Hatter seems totally 'old hat' nowadays.

-Ty E

COMBAT SHOCK

Buddy Giovinazzo (1986)

"Bloody" Buddy Giovinazzo is one of the few directors to have created something so wildly foreign to Troma's usual assortment of tits and bugs. Rearing its ugly head at impoverished communities and the First Blood motif: "...fighting the war at home", *Combat Shock*, alternately *American Nightmares*, is a mean sonuvabitch that embraces pockets of nihilism all about its post-Vietnam squalor. Blatantly inspired by both *Taxi Driver* and *Eraserhead*, Buddy G. sought to mix thriller and nightmares in this piece of hatred. One can't tell whether Buddy G. was one of the few seething Italian directors with allegory's to spit or if it was the drug-addled production that turned the film into the raging A-bomb that it is still to this day. What's for certain is that *Combat Shock* appears timeless as unemployment and homelessness continues to steadily rise as our economy comes crashing down all around us.

Obviously the most pertinent discussion would involve me bringing to light the ode to *Eraserhead* with the deformed infant. A victim of Agent Orange, the baby sports what appears to be two separate eyelid membranes and instead of a cow fetus, Buddy G. resorted to the neater alternative of a puppet - gently coated in what I could assume is baby oil. After the frustrations and nagging of his wife finally take their toll, along with the babies auto-tuned whines, Frankie grabs his jacket and does the same thing he presumably does every day: take a stroll. But on this curious day, the events that transpire eventually become worse and worse, leaving Frankie in a state of despair with no foreseeable escape. Coming straight from the library of Troma left me hesitant to view this film. While Troma stands for independent horror, they also are responsible for putting cameras in peoples hands that needn't be producing motion pictures. There's only so many flatulent lesbian scenes I can sit through before I start to wonder what the fuck happened. Safe to say, *Combat Shock* is the best piece of work Troma ever put out. *Cannibal: The Musical* can kindly dismiss itself as meandering dross.

One point worth noting is the vibrant and "wacky" soundtrack. For some odd reason, Buddy G. acquired the world's most peculiar score to accompany his dismal diatribe. Funky percussion and Casio jams echo through the streets as Frankie strolls past chaos during a "junk-sick dawn." Running into loan-sharks who conduct a child prostitution ring leads us to believe *Combat Shock* will go down the easy route of fulfilling some vendetta towards society as popularized in *Taxi Driver*, but alas, nothing of societal worth is to be found. A key unveiling also happens to be the very fragile spirit of Frankie. In a strange turn of events, we witness with voice-overs and images projected onto his disturbed face the real truths of what occurred in Saigon and what became of the victims of the village massacre. *Combat Shock* is precisely what it's known for: gritty nihilism and

COMBAT SHOCK

a bleak climax. Apart from the negativity, *Combat Shock* also manages to be a comedy of sorts. The free-falling Frankie is host to some of the most unfortunate events. Add in scenes of brief mingling with rabid Junkies and you got yourself a strange portrait of the seedy underground. What Buddy G. created was certainly an unhappy number but if this didn't boost Troma's credibility, I don't know what could.

-mAQ

BAD RONALD

Buzz Kulik (1974) At the heart of sympathy lies only a few fictional characters. A more recognizable one being Donnie Darko, star of his own motion picture which hints towards the fact that God hates Jake Gyllenhaal. After watching the curious TV film *Bad Ronald* (1974), I have to admit a sick feeling in my gut from the cruelty and malice that has wormed its way into an innocent boy. Ronald is that nerdy kid we all knew in high school. Not necessarily nerdy, but more so a loser without any friends. He pines over a love he will never have and is well on his way to becoming a doctor to make his dear, sweet mother happy. That is until a freak accident leaves a little girl dead and Ronald to blame. In a panic, he buries her and tells his mother. She puts him in the old bathroom and seals the wall over to hide him from the police. Matters worsen when Ronald, deep in his fantasy land, finds out his mother died and a new family has moved into his house.

Ronald is the character that allocates outcasts everywhere. When I see a soul like this, being driven wildly beyond the point, I realize how unfair things can be. Scott Jacoby out does himself in his role of Ronald, A scrawny, bespectacled boy hiding in the walls of his house, immersing himself into his fantasy illustrations so much that he begins to throw away his old identity for his reborn royalty of his magical land of Enchanta. *Bad Ronald* is one of the few film adaptations that create their own world, apart from the original novel. This film (or novel) also inspired the title of an amateur MTV promoted rap-rock group called, well, *Bad Ronald*. In an effort to relate to the source, I watched one of their music videos and my ears are now bleeding because of it.

Bad Ronald is an excellent and uncomfortable viewing, maybe not more than the atrocious spawn that they call music that was inspired by it. It challenges your existent fear of being watched and punches you in the face with a stark situation involving lovely voyeurism and someone who is doomed to be alone for the rest of his life. Perhaps the best TV film ever made. No doubt this led to the creation of *Bad Boy Bubby*.

-mAQ

MESSAGE THE HISTORY
MESSAGE THE HISTORY

Cameron Jamie (2009)

Nowadays, with access to affordable (or easily stolen) non-linear video-editing programs and fathomless access to download-able video footage on the internet, pretty much everyone has the resources needed to make art films. Of course, most people are not artists and lack the unique sensitivity/sensibility that is imperative when producing notable works of art. I have seen my fair share of disposable art films (the majority fit in this category), so when I saw the short video collage *Message the History* directed by Cameron Jamie, I was more than a little bit pleasantly surprised. Tennessee Israelite auteur Harmony Korine has given high artistic praise to the film, eloquently stating, "This shit is fucking mind-blowing." Like Harmony Korine's recent effort *Trash Humpers*, *Message the History* features a group of dubious individuals from the deep South molesting inanimate objects. Both films also manage to capture the peculiar zeitgeist of our deranged and backwards times; *Trash Humpers* presenting a cult of elderly white trash humanoids and *Message the History* featuring a group of bourgeois blacks busting out mad, ambiguously homoerotic (often grinding into each other) tribal dance attacks.

The lone song featured in *Message the History*, which is of the same name as the film, was written by Sonic Youth. In 1998, Harmony Korine directed a Sonic Youth video for the song "Sunday," starring Macaulay Culkin and his then wife, Rachel Minor. Although Korine's Sonic Youth video is undoubtedly one of my favorite music videos, the audio/visual combination featured in *Message the History*, in my opinion, is even more cinematically refined and inspiring. In fact, despite only being around 10 minutes in length, I felt that *Message the History* was a much more profound work than Korine's most recent feature-length film *Trash Humpers*. Harmony Korine has described Cameron Jamie as a truly American artist and an "artist's artist," two compliments that I have always paid to Korine. Another reason I have always admired Harmony Korine is due to his rare ability to find beauty in the most unappealing and repellent of American cultural sewers. Cameron Jamie also indubitably has the rare ability to create aesthetic ecstasy through his own perceptive and personal trash-Americana-admiring artistic lens. Before watching *Message the History*, I would have never expected to find elegance in the form of possessed bourgeois Negroes gently humping Ikea furniture.

Director Cameron Jamie originally got the idea for *Message the History* after randomly stumbling upon dancing videos featuring the dancing confederate Negroes that would star in the film. In fact, *Message the History* features various unrelated clips that the director found on YouTube. I can only assume that the bodacious black boyz of *Message the History* dance in celebration as the white world is engulfed in perpetual flames (in the form of a scorching Christ-

mas tree and flaming skateboarder). The film also features an elder Negress absurdly walking her pet cat on a leash. Whilst the glue sniffing white boys of Harmony Korine's Gummo kill cats for fun and profit (to support their glue habit), the black woman featured in *Massage the History* allows her aristocrat to eat at the dinner table like a human. Without the message and revision of history by the New Left in the late 1960s, in favor of the American Negro as the noble savage victim, it is highly doubtful that the chair raping Southern brotha featured in *Massage the History* would be living such lavish lives (a result of affirmative action and America's commitment to "diversity"). A sagely redneck once told me, "If blacks can't eat it or fuck it, they break it." The bourgeois blacks featured in *Massage the History* would certainly have a hard time eating their furniture, so I guess they opted for preserving it by fucking it. Thankfully, pioneering American filmmaker D.W. Griffith is not alive to see the film, as the prophetic racist message that he warned of regarding black-white integration in his groundbreaking 1915 epic *The Birth of a Nation* has become nightmarishly true. *The Birth of a Nation* may have featured savage Negro legislators lounging with their bare-feet on the table whilst eating fried chicken in governmental chambers, but that pales (no black-face intended) in comparison to the jiving jigaboo juveniles featured in *Massage the History*. Harmony Korine once remarked that American cinema had not advanced far past (as far as storytelling goes) the work of D.W. Griffith. *Massage the History* certainly is a new form of abstract, non-linear storytelling, that induces a trance on the audience comparable to the spell guiding the jazzy chair humpers featured in the film. If you're an inspiring filmmaker and/or serious patron of cinematic art, *Massage the History* will have you enamored from the start. Never in my life have I sniggered so hard after watching a film featuring furniture fornicators. Praise Cameron Jamie, for *Massage the History* is a religious experience concocted by an auteur priest.

-Ty E

RABID DOGS
RABID DOGS

Cao Fei (2002)

For reasons that I will examine later, *Rabid Dogs* is largely a film that eschews modern techniques in modern thrillers and demonstrates a remarkable aptitude for creating an illusion of both fear and security. These facets of this killer car ride go hand in hand thanks to the incredible acting effort of Riccardo whose suave demeanor and relaxed, although sweaty, countenance allows for a breath of fresh air every shot or so. That is until the intensity of the score picks up again. The score is what begins building the suspense at the base of the film. It's always there waiting, watching for the opportune time to slowly build up into a foreboding tune of real time tragedy. All these mentioned pieces come together to create a perfect introductory masterpiece to Mario Bava, who has not only inspired Dario Argento, but also inspires me. As aforementioned, *Rabid Dogs* is the first film of Mario Bava's that I've seen. I've only heard legends of the director and tall tales of his filmic legacy but never examined the proof that more or less has been in plain sight most of my cinematic ascension. While hunting down various Nature attacks! films, the title *Rabid Dogs* caught my eye. Personally, my favorite novel is William Essex's *The Pack*; a novel so ferociously enjoyable that it will take a bite out of you. When eying the title, my cerebral machinations clicked and the two revealed themselves as being apposite with one another and I had to see more. Seeing that it was Bava, I thought to myself "Might as well" and thus was how I became introduced to a passionate, yet angry director. Much of *Rabid Dogs* deserves to be dissected and analyzed so bare with me. *Rabid Dogs* opens ideally with a far-out introduction video highlighting many scenes in a retro-groove fashion of psychedelic rotoscoping. The technical score performed by Stelvio Cipriani is one of the great Italian themes of any era. I'd even go as far as to say this recurring theme tops anything the uber-popular *Goblin* ever created save for the theme to *Buio Omega*. After the groovy opening credits subside, the film begins rather abruptly with a robbery and murder of a treasurer. The robbers make their getaway but not without suffering the loss of a partner in crime. After kidnapping a young woman and holding her hostage, the film quickly adheres to a strict rape/revenge storyboard but *Rabid Dogs* derails quickly and unveils a much more visceral torture for you rather than cheap shock tricks dictating perversions of the flesh. Stopping to switch cars, the crew of criminals and hostage take refuge in a car helmed by suave Riccardo who is taking his sick and sedated child to the hospital. His bucolic visage towards being hijacked is rather unnerving and leaves an odor of mischief but you're never quite sure of what's on your mind during *Rabid Dogs*. You want Riccardo to show compassion and empathy but you never quite get that. Just to create an idea of how he's doing "the proper thing," the incessant female captive begins screaming and struggling which only pisses off her executioners.

Using Riccardo as a pawn was a great and formal idea to show desperation as a comparative piece. His overall attitude is that of what you should show in case you ever wind up in a similar situation. In a fit of bonding, the Doctor even gives Riccardo favors and treats him as a human, not a body shield. Rabid Dogs would serve as an informative PSA summing up with the words "Don't be a hero, kid." The Italian myth and stereotype normally incorporates the words "greasy." I've never paid enough mind to how these origins came about and the only example that springs to thought is Stallone's wop-classics - the Rambo series. Rabid Dogs takes the close-up of a sweaty face popularized by spaghetti westerns and adds a dash of madness and sexual frenzy to this formula. Our Stallone impersonator Aldo Caponi plays the maniac of the bunch. He's killed before but it seems to be an act he regrets. Later, to prove his virility, he shows signs of desensitization and offers to kill again just to prove that he is a man. He kills later out of compassion for us, the audience, but soon after vomits. I would too if I just forever silenced the most annoying female to ever be immortalized on film that isn't Fran Drescher. Cohort Thirtytwo is an enormous fella whose preoccupation rests in sexual deviance and staring at nice sets of tits. In many scenes, his stature and figure are artistically dramatized as to show that a struggle would be useless. For most, a feeling of helplessness spreads throughout as we see Riccardo and Thirtytwo stand by each other. The criminal selection for this film is utterly amazing and only initiates the crude atmosphere that ricochets and expands. From each of the three villains, the culmination of the climax could never be expected and can never be forgot. What springs to mind after reading the basic plot summary is a minimalistic version of From Dusk Till Dawn. In case you haven't connected the dots, Tarantino is known for stealing things he likes almost like a child. Seeing as how he is the scribe behind From Dusk Till Dawn, it seems the no film is safe from his legal plagiarism. Rabid Dogs is a film that I could spend days writing about. Each ferocious angle and note in this film is an absolute hit to me. Rabid Dogs was "lost" for years due to the deaths of producers and lack of funding. After Mario's son, Lamberto Bava, decided to alter the film and title it Kidnapped, the film lost much of the intensity. I can make this factual assumption this because the score was altered and this is a fatal mistake. I've never taken Lamberto Bava as a serious director and his only real contribution towards film was Demons but his reputation still stands as being the offspring of a legend of Italian terror. The twist ending is unbeatable in terms of holding a mirror to the nature of humanity. Nothing screams crime classic like this quintessential car caper. Rabid Dogs is the perfect introductory piece of raw film making from a director whose eye's scream violence and express a fervor for constructing neo-realism.

-mAQ

MONDO WEIRDO: A TRIP TO PARANOIA PARADISE
MONDO WEIRDO: A TRIP TO PARANOIA PARADISE

Carl Andersen (1990)

Although I find both filmmakers absurdly overrated in their own respective ways, I could not help but be intrigued by a film that opens with the seemingly nonsensical and equally pretentious inter-title, “dedicated to Jess Franco & Jean-Luc Godard.” The film in question is *Mondo Weirdo: A Trip To Paranoia Paradise* (1990) aka *Jungfrau am Abgrund* aka *Virgin on the Edge* aka *Virgin at the Abyss* directed by Carl Andersen (*Vampyros Sexos*). Despite the (thankfully) misleading title, *Mondo Weirdo* is not another mundane mondo movie, but it does feature a wealth of demoralizing sleaze and exploitative nudity, at least certainly more so than one would typically expect from a standard work of the mostly asinine pseudo-documentary subgenre. Instead, *Mondo Weirdo* is an almost feature-length (at approx. 54 minutes) arthouse splatter-porn flick from Uncle Adolf’s homeland of Austria that is in welcome schitzzy-kitschy company with Demetri Estdelacropolis’s *Freud’s Flesh & Mother’s Meat* (1984) and Fred Halsted’s *The Sex Garage* (1972) with psychosexual elements of Roman Polanski’s *Repulsion* (1965) and George A. Romero’s *Martin* (1978) thrown in for good measure. Quite befittingly, the film opens with narration from a ambiguously Jewish psychoanalyst named Dr. Rosenberg (assumedly, of no relation to Alfred) who discusses the case study of an atypical 15 year old girl with latent lesbian tendencies who suffered from a series of erotically impassioned nightmares as a result of her overwhelming sexual repression. This psychosis-ridden girl named Odile (played by Jessica Franco Manera who is apparently Spanish slime-auteur Jess Franco’s real-life daughter) – a pixyish punk girl with a short semi-butche hairdo who sports booty shorts and Doc Martens boots – first enters the phantasmagoric dream realm of hot hallucinatory debauchery after having her first menstrual cycle while showering. Equally dismayed and intrigued by the heavy flow of hemoglobin seeping out of her pussy and dripping down her leg, Odile tastes her vital bodily fluids in a most prurient way. Odile must have some sort of unholy ancestral blood taint as it sends her on an often arousing yet harrowing nachtmahr by way of the dark underbelly of her subconscious, thus putting the little flapperesque lady in sexual contact with apparitions of luscious lesbian vampires, beauteous “Blood Countess” Elizabeth Báthory, and a stark-naked army of man-eating lesbos. Although Odile has a special appetite for kraut-cunts, she also encounters a variety of male perverts and unrepentant wienerschnitzel-fondling public-mastubators whom she has no qualms about sexually servicing, even if she does get involved with a little bit of castration and aggressive carpet-munching towards the conclusion of *Mondo Weirdo*. Despite the intrinsically hypnagogic nature of the film, all of the sex acts featured in *Mondo Weirdo* are graphic and real, including scenes of standard sexual intercourse, fellatio, female-on-female cunnilingus, borderline fisting, and homo

sodomy.

Unlike like most pornography, *Mondo Weirdo* is keenly accentuated via an erogenous pulsating soundtrack by the Viennese EBM/industrial group Modell D'oo – who also composed the music for Carl Andersen's previous facetiously titled work *I Was A Teenage Zabbadoing And The Incredible Lusty Dust-Whip From Outer Space Conquers The Earth Versus The 3 Psychedelic Stooges Of Dr. Fun Helsing And Fighting Against Surf-Vampires And Sex-Nazis And Have Troubles With This Endless Titillation Title* (1989) – henceforth making the film seem like an extended music video from sort of depraved bloodlusting S&M musical project. Undoubtedly, if *Mondo Weirdo* was a strictly silent film without a soundtrack it would lose 1/2 of its erotic potency and aesthetic essence as I cannot think of another better example of a musical score that fits the description of electronic body music as the film takes the human body to bodacious and sometimes brutal extremes in a manner that is in unerring unison with its unruly yet startlingly hypnotic sounds. In fact, the soundtrack is so gratifying and mischievously merry that I, too, felt like I was getting in on the action with little lass Odile and her many phantom lovers. Ultimately, the low-budget aura of *Mondo Weirdo* works to its advantage as a work with a very conscious punk rock aesthetic. Indeed, *Mondo Weirdo* is like an early Bruce La Bruce flick, except more appealing to breeders and lesbians than homos, although male-on-male copulation makes a brief yet savage appearance in the film. Although created a couple years after the artistic peak of the so-called Cinema of Transgression movement, *Mondo Weirdo* has more balls and succulent sadomasochistic sex appeal than anything ever directed by the likes of softcore pornographers Richard Kern and Nick Zedd and with the added bonus of not featuring the always detestable and ever so unattractive gutter-queen Lydia Lynch. Jessica Franco Manera may not be the most bewitching babe in the world, but she has a certain tragic cutesy-little-girl-who-has-fallen-from-grace quality that is altogether beguiling, as if she was the Louise Brooks of no-budget punk rock filmmaking. Even while inquisitively inspecting the freshly amputated cock of a maliciously mutilated man, Odile has a saccharine naivety that is wholly endearing.

After Odile accepts and acts upon her undying love of ladies, her erratic erotically-charged nightmares cease to appear and *Mondo Weirdo* concludes with the fitting end-title, "The End or a New Beginning." Personally, I would have liked to see Odile hook up with some sort of Nazi chic Brando-type, but I guess *Mondo Weirdo* – a castration-anxiety-driven work of artsy fartsy punk pornography and pop psychology – is ultimately a male's worst nightmare, even if an acutely orgasmic one. Like virtually all other works of its unclassifiable cinematic breed, *Mondo Weirdo* is as glaringly flawed work that looks like it was shot over the course of a single day, but that is also one of its greatest appeals. In short, *Mondo Weirdo* is the celluloid equivalent of a one-night stand with a mentally-imbalanced mixed-blood heiress-turned-hooker.

MONDO WEIRDO: A TRIP TO PARANOIA PARADISE

-Ty E

MORMOR, HITLER OCH JAG

Carl Johan De Geer (2001)

If there was ever a physically impotent and spiritually deficient man who could perfectly exemplify the absolute subversion of what was once the masterful and awe-inspiring art, staunch and steadfast moral principles, and the overall supremacy and love of beauty that once healthily reigned over the flourishing Occident, it would have to be blueblood-born-turned leftist Swedish artist Carl Johan de Geer who, like fellow hack artists and co-conspirators such as Andres Serrano (of "Piss Christ" infamy) and Dadaist Marcel Duchamps (whose aesthetic love of filthy toilets is unrivaled, except perhaps by frequent visitors to the tearoom), successfully made a name for himself in the degenerate, contemporary art world, most notably with his rather childish renderings of brightly colored flags—one of the Swedish flag with the word "cock" shabbily scrawled across the middle, along with an accompanying message imploring the reader to "dishonor the flag" and yet another of an American flag with its stars replaced with swastikas and the words "USA-killers" brightly written across the bottom (indeed, these are perhaps his most famous works, among countless others in which he utilizes traditional kindergarten level techniques such as finger painting and amateur sketches via magic marker to ineffectively deliver the same tired and effete anti-nationalistic and superlatively self-loathing anti-European messages that have been drilled into our brains for the last 40+ years).

In spite of being born into a well-to-do Swedish family of Walloon noble extraction, de Geer quite proudly and rebelliously rejected his aristocratic underpinnings during his more formative years to become a full-fledged degenerate leftist, quite the trendy persuasion at the time (as it remains to this today, only to a much more redundant and intrinsically recycled degree), and prime propagator of some of the most puerile and unsophisticated modern art this festering cesspool of a world has ever seen. Indeed, if we are now in the midst of the end times—the Kali Yuga, as many assumedly autistic, bed-wetting 'white nationalist' facebook users and stormfront messageboard lurkers with ridiculous sounding, hybridized pseudo-Nordic-Gaelic monikers like to think of it—a turbulent period marked by the unabashed worship and reverence for regression and ugliness, then Mr. de Geer himself must be one of the four horsemen, the premiere dough-faced poster-boy of "the death of the west," whose crudely colorful and supremely soulless trash, surely one of the many proverbial death knells of the Faustian man's untimely demise (along with Lil' Wayne rap videos and off-the-chart BMI's) would send even the seediest of aspiring modern artists of the Semitic persuasion to suffer pangs of intense jealousy that such rotten fruit so besmirched with Frankfurt school foulness could germinate and spring forth from the mind of a good goy such as de Geer (the grandson of Nazi sympathizers, no less).

MORMOR, HITLER OCH JAG

For as much of a loud fuss as he makes about desecrating his national flag by way of juvenile art renderings, smashing the old aristocracy, and promoting international Jewish supremacy and scatological aesthetic savagery as the only means by which we can arrive at a worldwide Utopian existence, de Geer is a rather homely and small, yet rotund fellow whose cloying and annoying effeminate, Winnie-the-Pooh-like voice and seemingly gentle manner belie his immense inner antipathy for the world. In his self-directed documentary short, *Mormor, Hitler och jag* (2001) aka *Grandmother, Hitler and I*—which lasts a mere 17 minutes but feels as if it drones on for 17 hours, not least of all because its main theme (especially in the last half of the film) is to harp on about the evils of fascism, one of the many components of the New Left academic agenda that has been brutally beaten into the brain of any Europid born after the late 1960s—de Geer first presents himself to the audience adoringly preparing his beloved grandmother's Swedish pork filet recipe (which bears an uncanny likeness to country stew recipe dog food), describing how he uses the smells and flavors of the recipe to evoke memories of his childhood years spent in her home, a woman who was born into great wealth and prestige but who, as he described her, was the matriarchal glue which held his family together. After speaking at some length with flowery adulation of his grandmother's virtuous nature, to his own remembered horror (clearly calculated for the documentary)—and with the anticipation that it will also horrify the viewers—de Geer casually confesses, with just a brief pause for suspense, that his grandmother was also, in his view, quite irreconcilably an avid fan of Adolf Hitler, that she had at one time dined with il Duce himself, Benito Mussolini, on the roof of the Fiat factory, a “memory she embraced only with warmth,” and that she was a keen collector of Nazi art mags, including *Vecko-Journalen* and *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*, the latter of which “had Albert Speer as its permanent artistic adviser and was adorned with a giant golden swastika on each cover.” To make matters worse, de Geer goes on to describe how his grandmother was basically a Hitler fan girl whose bedroom walls were lovingly plastered with Nazi stock posters of the virile fuhrer, and that even though she rarely ever discussed politics with family, she did believe that Jews were responsible for starting World War II, and that they also caused her husband, de Geer's grandfather, to take his own life (by way of throwing himself overboard on a boat) regarding what seemed to be dubious monetary matters. All of this information is delivered in the most manufactured melodramatic way possible, not in the sense that de Geer himself is being overly dramatic (he instead speaks with a rather flat cadence) but because he gives the appearance of a serious and tearless yet clearly grieving father delivering a very stern 1980s-style pussy PSA admonishing about the dangers of drugs following his good-boy-turned-bad teenage son's heroin overdose, with the overall message here instead being thus: it doesn't matter if it's your beloved grandmother or not, a Nazi is a Nazi, and Nazis must be crushed.

From this point on, de Geer segues into a carefully, yet casually delivered denunciation of his mellow and mild-mannered mormor and her rather demure yet steadfast love for all things fascist (being careful to imply here that his perception of his grandmother as good and wholesome was a thoroughly immature one, a perception that was irretrievably altered upon entering adulthood, like his adolescent fascination with Nazi soldier magazines). In perhaps the most surreal segment of the documentary, a rather unwholesome scene that looks like a NAMBLA advertisement if there ever was one, de Geer lays on a bed in little boy's pajamas outdoors and reminisces about the fanciful paracosm of his childhood, wherein he was an adventurer who found himself in remote jungles and who could easily escape danger if need be (the clear intent being to juxtapose his privileged and safe childhood against the always harsh reality faced by the poor and impoverished children who grew up with burnt offerings as their only sustenance). De Geer describes how he rejected the aristocratic background bestowed upon him by his grandparents, how his grandmother's love for fascism and all things Hitler planted the "seeds of disgust for all things brown" (with the exception of melanin-derived brown, of course—and rather funny considering that Hitler actually hated the color brown, despite his reliance on certain men wearing "brownshirts" in his early rise to power, at least according to the personal press adjutant of Goebbels, Wilfred von Oven), and how the 1960s were a rebirth of sorts for him, a time in which he could "breach bourgeois conventions, and forever break bonds with all ancestors" in the form of producing juvenile, thoroughly gauche and uncultivated art characterized by crudely contrived colors that only the most ghetto and peacockish of hoodrats would love, and crass, unsophisticated messages of hatred and rebellion against the system. De Geer, like his left-leaning brethren, who ironically "hate hate" and are "intolerant of intolerance," proudly declares at the conclusion of this 17-minute long, painful reproach of his sweet Nordic granny, that where she warned him against involvement with Jews, that he gleefully disobeyed her, in fact choosing to marry a sweet, Semitic soul sister of the 60s (a decision that is quite pompously proclaimed, though with decidedly less ebonic intonation, in a fashion not unlike the white girl down the street who watched one too many episodes of Maury, watched a little too much MTV, and whose alcoholic father told her never to mess with black dudes, but who decided to get knocked up with a cute little half-caste bastard by one of those would-be-rap-superstars-and/or-professional-football-players anyway). Finally, de Geer pays the ultimate tribute in the form of a giant "fuck you" to his grandmother by cutting out a black-and-white photo of her smiling, sweet visage, and pasting it into a newspaper cut-out alongside dozens of other contemporary Swedish neo-nazi's, most of whom are 20-something year old men imprisoned for posting "anti-semitic" messages on Internet forums in today's supposedly democratic Sweden where anonymously broadcasting one's opinions is a criminal offense.

MORMOR, HITLER OCH JAG

As evidenced even by de Geer's own depiction of her, it is quite doubtful that his grandmother, a Nazi sympathizer of unique Uradel descent, would have leveled even an ounce of the same hatred at her grandson that he has so disturbingly wrought against her, in fact, going so far as to forever tarnish her memory in cheap celluloid form for the sake of his own self-aggrandizement; indeed, *Mormor, Hitler och jag* is truly one of the trashiest, lowest pieces of pompous puffery ever committed to film, but spectacular evidence of the great lengths to which low-brow lefties will go, even defaming their own faithful family members, to petulantly prove a point about their own twisted sense of moral superiority.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

STRIKE BACK

Carl Schenkel (1981)

Although I used to be a huge connoisseur of old school punk/hardcore music from the late-1970s/early-1980s and still am to a very minor degree, I have always had a complete and utter disgust for the common defeatist and pathological passive attitudes of punks, who seem to think having a ridiculously retarded haircut and making themselves as aesthetically repugnant as possible in appearance is some sort of grand political statement, as if anyone cares if they die in a gutter with their pants down and a needle in their dick. After all, it is no coincidence that guys like "Donny the Punk," who put up no resistance when getting routinely raped by other man in jail, are also called "punks." Luckily, I recently discovered a kraut punk flick with the sensible message of "might is right" entitled *Strike Back* (1981) aka *Kalt wie Eis* aka *Punk Angels* aka *Cold as Ice* directed by Swiss cult auteur Carl Schenkel (*Dracula Blows His Cool*, *Knight Moves*) with an innately active nihilistic (as opposed to the passive nihilism of typical punk junk) philosophy that is heavy on visceral violence and passionate carnality about a criminally-inclined punk rocker named Dave who never tolerates being 'punked' by anyone and makes a hasty escape from prison after slitting his wrists, so he can see his girl (who has stopped visiting him) and seek revenge on the glorified gangster businessman that caused him to land in the slammer. A rare quasi-artsy exploitation action-thriller set in Berlin, West Germany that would anticipate the anti-arthouse shockers of Eckhart Schmidt (*Der Fan* aka *Trance*, *Loft*, *Alpha City*), *Strike Back* owes some of its aesthetic influences to "New Munich Group" auteur filmmakers like Rudolf Thome (*Supergirl – Das Mädchen von den Sternen*, *Rote Sonne* aka *Red Sun*) and the gritty urban realist flicks of lone wolf filmmakers Roland Klick (*Bübchen*, *Supermarkt*), but especially the degenerate sounds and styles of the Teutonic punk and *Neue Deutsche Welle* subcultures that were popular in the Fatherland at that time. Featuring appearances and performances from groups like *Neonbabies*, *Malaria!*, *Blixa Bargeld* of *Einstürzende Neubauten*, *Rainy Day Women*, *Thorax Wach*, *The Birthday Party*, *Tempo*, and many more, *Strike Back* is more of an exquisitely exploitative, post-Baader-Meinhof Group work against West German plutocracy and equipped with a punk rock fashion sense as opposed to an Americanized p.c.p.r. (politically correct punk rock) pussy flick made-for-punk-by-punks, thus, not unlike Paul Morrissey's sardonic anti-punk satire *Madame Wang's* (1981), *Strike Back* does not suffer the sort of dogmatic gospel according to Jello Biafra that makes similarly themed works from the same zeitgeist seem rather poorly aged and anachronistic today. Like a putrid puss-filled zit on the ass of Deutschland, *Strike Back* features a patently pessimistic man who has been wronged and cheated by everyone he knows and he is quite literally about to explode, but not without taking a couple of people with him as a sort of figurative punk rock Grim

STRIKE BACK

Reaper who has no problem reaping what he sows and vice versa.

Pessimistic punk rock pretty boy Dave Balko (played by Dave Balko), a dude with bleach blond hair as opposed to a xenophilic neo-Injun mohawk, has a hard time dealing with the incessant isolation of prison so he dumps his trash-can out on his prison cell floor so he can find his trusty old razorblade and slits his wrists so that he can at least be guaranteed that he will not have to spend another second in penal purgatory. Indeed, as a man who has "NO FUTURE" scribbled on his cell wall, Dave has no delusions about the fact that his life is irreparably ruined and things do not get any better for him when he inadvertently kills a cop while escaping from prison while en route to the hospital after his botched attempt at seppuku. Indeed, a man who has survived a serious attempt at self-slaughter and has managed to escape from one of Berlin's heavily secure penitentiaries, Dave undoubtedly has some minor luck on his side, but it is probably owed more to his heightened sense of self-preservation, even if he is an anarchic punk who makes a daily task of putting his life in danger, than kiss from punk rock kismet. Dave's main reason for breaking out of prison is to reunite with his beloved Corinna (Brigitte Wöllner, Playboy Miss August 1980), who neglected to write to and visit him when he was incarcerated, but he also has a score to settle with a prick Polack gangster named Kowalski (respected German actor Otto Sander of Margarethe von Trotta's *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986) and Wim Wender's *Wings of Desire* (1987)), who the pissed punk used to work for and was ultimately responsible for his imprisonment. Dave goes to a punk club owned by one of his friends so he can find the whereabouts of both Corinna and Kowalski and goes on his merry way, but not before brutally beating two biker-like philistines who belong to special K's gang of barbaric buffoons. Dave eventually meets up with and spends a salacious night with Corinna and finds out she is pregnant with his baby and that she now works as a paid whore for a corrupt corporate gangster named Dr. Hoffmann (Rolf Eden of Eddy Saller's *Shameless* (1968) aka *Schamlos* and Rosa von Praunheim's *Rote Liebe - Wasilissa* (1982)). The next day, Dave has a brutal fight with Kowalski that seems damn near as long as the one between the two protagonists of John Carpenter's *They Live* (1988) and he finally gets his well earned cash after hanging his ex-boss from a hook and nearly beating him to death. Unfortunately, Dave makes the mistake of stopping by Corinna's work and he is nearly beaten an inch away from his life by Herr Hoffmann's paid goons, even having his leg ran over and broken in the process. Dave's friends nurse him back to health while he spends his days and nights sitting in front of the boobtube learning more about the police's search for him as a fugitive and his adversaries Kowalski and Hoffmann; both of whom are in trouble with the law as well. When Corinna is gang-raped and maliciously mutilated by Kowalski's street soldiers, a group of new wave leather-fags of sorts on phantom motorcycles, she calls her big bad boss Hoffmann for help, thus going over to the side of the enemy. Feeling hopelessly

betrayed and without anything to lose except a life not worth living, Dave buys a stylish new motorcycle and attaches a tank of gasoline to his body so he can go out in a blaze of glory and take his enemies to hell with him.

No junky punk loser like punk rock icons Sid Vicious, Johnny Thunders, or G.G. Allin nor a man that is unable to survive being run over by a car like decidedly dead-boy Stiv Bators of the Dead Boys, angst-ridden anti-hero Dave Balke at least realizes that if he is going to waste his life that he is at least going to take Berlin's biggest ghetto robber baron with him as a true 'punk rock anti-hero' that battles the violent anarcho-tyranny of the state with violence, thus fighting like with like and fire with fire. For all the idle talk they do about the pros of anarchy and the cons of government, punks seem to neglect to comprehend that 'anarchy' is oftentimes sired by governments and there are no greater anarchists in Strike Back than 'anarcho-capitalists' Kowalski and Hoffmann. Thankfully, unlike Penelope Spheeris's celluloid punk rock cult classic *Suburbia* (1984), *Strike Back* – a work that carries its simple yet effective philosophy in its English title – is not a work that wallows in a pathetic punk rock pity party where punks are portrayed as defenseless victims of rabid Reagnite rednecks. Featuring footage of Blixa Bargeld performing some particularly pretentious and distinctly degenerate Teuton chant on a broken children's keyboard in a posh art gallery and members of Malaria recording rather ridiculously performed vocals for their song "Kämpfen und Siegen" at a seedy recording studio, *Strike Back* also makes for a curious celluloid cultural artifact of kraut punk rock and Neue Deutsche Welle that reminds viewers that, for better or worse, the authoritarian krauts were typically more anarchic in their art than their American counterparts. Indeed, although in terms of cinematic art, *Strike Back* is not even worth of being compared to Fassbinder's filmic feces, I would be lying if I did not admit that this piece of primitive punk rock celluloid art brought me back to my teenage days of unrefined hate for society and the state and my love for primitive kultur.

-Ty E

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Carl Theodor Dreyer (1932)

Rather unfortunately, reading books on the occult is typically nowhere near as interesting as it is when it's sensationally depicted in films, or so has been my experience, especially when compared to the gravely ghoulish, fantastically phantasmagoric, and darkly yet delightfully romantic German-French semi-sound cinematic horror masterpiece *Vampyr* (1932) aka *Vampyr – Der Traum des Allan Grey* aka *Vampire: the Dream of Allan Grey* aka *The Vampire* aka *Castle of Doom* aka *Not Against the Flesh* directed by Danish master auteur Carl Th. Dreyer (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*, *Ordet* aka *The Word*). Probably the only other vampire flick ever made (aside from Herzog's remake, of course!) that deserves to be compared with F.W. Murnau's German expressionist masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) aka *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*, *Vampyr*, which was Dreyer's first sound flick (though, despite being shot in three different languages, it is mostly silent and only features marginal dialogue), was both a critical and commercial failure upon its release, even receiving boos from audience members on its Berlin premiere on May 6, 1932, and also causing a riot in Vienna after audience members demanded to receive their money back. In fact, when *Vampyr* finally premiered in Dreyer's home city of Copenhagen, Denmark in March 1933, the director did not even bother to show up, ultimately having a nervous breakdown and checking himself into a French mental institution not long after, as a seemingly sinister cinematic work that seemed to 'haunt' its director more than anyone else. Indeed, not until relatively recently has *Vampyr* gotten the due it deserves from film critics as it was once regarded as one of Dreyer's weakest cinematic efforts, which was underscored by the fact that the director did not complete another film until a decade later when he made *Day of Wrath* (1943) aka *Vredens Dag* during the German occupation of Denmark. Rather loosely basing the script, which was co-written by Dreyer and his Danish friend Christen Jul, on Irish horror writer Sheridan Le Fanu's five short story collection *In a Glass Darkly* (1872), most specifically the lesbian vampire tale *Carmilla* that also acted as a major influence for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and feature art direction by one of the great art directors of German expressionism, Hermann Warm (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Fritz Lang's Destiny*), *Vampyr* is horror cinema at its most hopelessly hallucinatory and deliriously dream logic oriented, as if the aesthetic blueprint from every experimental artful horror film ever since, including Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977). Co-Produced and starring Count Nicolas de Gunzburg—a gay Jewish aristocrat and decadent dandy that was the son of a Russian father and Polish-Portuguese-Brazilian mother who agreed to fund Dreyer's film so long as he could play the lead role in the hope of becoming an overnight movie star and who would later work as a editor for pop-

ular magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, evening acting as a mentor to a young Calvin Klein—*Vampyr* is a film that's production is almost as strange and fragmented as its story, thereupon adding to its further mystification and legacy as one of the greatest, most idiosyncratically iconic, celestially creepy, and unnervingly foreboding and atmospheric vampire/horror flicks ever made.

Allan Gray (Nicolas de Gunzburg under the screen name of 'Julian West' who took the pseudonym to appease the wishes of his 'royal' family) is a rather dapper dandy in the spirit of Hanns Heinz Ewers (except nowhere near as handsome!) and Count Eric Stenbock (except nowhere near as mentally deranged!) who dabbles in Satanism and other forms of the occult, but he is about to reconsider his dark interests upon arriving and renting a room at an inn near the north-central French village of Courtempierre (where most of *Vampyr* was actually filmed). After being suddenly awakened by a somewhat elderly yet suavely dressed gent (Maurice Schutz) who warns him about preventing the death of a young girl and leaves him an ominous package with "To be opened upon my death" written on it, Mr. Gray is entrenched in a journey no less eerie than that of *Dorian Gray*, albeit more rewarding and less nihilistic in the end, because instead of becoming a 'psychic vampire' himself like the wanton Wilde Character, the quasi-pretty boy protagonist of Dreyer's supernatural vampire flick—the third major film and second "talkie" to deal with the now popular undead horror subgenre—becomes a sort of accidental hero against heresy. After receiving the dubious package from the mysterious older man, Allan Gray takes it outside and is entranced by shadows, which lead him to a classic old castle where he encounters a creepy carnivalesque supernatural 'shadow play' of sorts featuring perniciously playful figures dancing on their own, but also an elderly blind woman and less than erotic vampire named Marguerite Chopin (Henriette Gérard), as well as the Village Doctor (Jan Hieronimko), a *Renfield*-esque servant who is the most obedient and important human slave of the aristocratic bloodsucker. Naturally, Allan Gray eventually wanders out of the creepy castle and happens upon a manor and peeps through a window where he spots the old man who previously gave him the package being wounded with a shotgun, which is wielded by what seems to be a shadowy spirit. For whatever reason, servants at the manor let Gray inside and attempt to resuscitate the old man but it is too late. Gray ends up staying the night at the home and inevitably runs into a lovely lady named Gisèle (Rena Mandel), the daughter of the dead Lord of the Manor, who leads the young occultnik to the family library where she describes how her sister Léone (popular Nazi actress Sybille Schmitz) is extremely ill. Not long after, Gray and Gisèle spot Léone wandering around outside like a somnambulist, so they rush to her rescue, ultimately finding her unconscious with vampire bite marks on her neck. Finally, Gray remembers to open the package given to him by the Lord of the Manor since the old man is dead and all and finds a book entitled *The Strange History of Vampires* aka *Die Seltsame Geschichte Der Vampyre* by Paul Bonnat

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that gives him the imperative insights he needs to battle the demonic creatures and Léone from spiritual and physical slavery.

After reading from *The Strange History of Vampires*, with excerpts of which are featured in inter-titles throughout *Vampyr*, Allan Gray comes to the natural realization that Léone is the victim of a vampire. When the Village Doctor arrives at the Manor to take a look at lady Léone, Gray recognizes he was the same man he saw at the castle. Despite his uneasy feelings regarding the doctor, Gray agrees to a blood transfusion at the request of the dubious doc in the hope of saving Léone, whose sinister smile hints at the fact she is taking on a demonic persuasion, so he becomes rather debilitated by the loss of his vital fluids. Although weakened and semi-conscious, Gray awakes and is overcome by a fierce foreboding feeling and senses that Léone is in danger, so he rushes to the little lady and notices the doctor dropping a poison vial (he also hallucinates a skeleton handling said poison vial). Not surprisingly, the dastardly doctor flees the manor like a scared rat and Gray subsequently notices that Gisèle is gone. Of course, Gray decides to chase down the heretical Herr Döktor, which leads him back to Marguerite Chopin's castle and before he knows it, the young dandy hero has the uniquely unsettling vision of witnessing himself being buried alive in what is arguably the single most potent and iconic scene of *Vampyr*. After getting over the most morbid and personally petrifying of nightmares, Gray heroically saves Gisèle, but the Village Doctor manages to make his great escape once again. Meanwhile, an Old Servant (Albert Bras) of the manor discovers the copy of *The Strange History of Vampires* that the old Lord gave Gray and comes to the realization that to kill a vampire, one must push an iron bar through their cold black heart. Eventually, Allan Gray and the Old Servant unite at the crypt of Marguerite Chopin, where they find the blind old hag sleeps and drive the iron bar through her, thereupon killing the seemingly senile succubus, which turns her body into a flesh-less skeleton, and thus lifting the curse of the vampire and allowing Léone to swiftly recover. For the revenge for the death of his master, the Old Servant of the manor kills the Village Doctor after discovering him hiding in an old mill by activating mill's machinery, which drowns the deranged doc with flour, thus suffocating him to death in the process. In the end, Allan Gray and his new gorgeous lady friend Gisèle board a small rowboat, cross a hazy river, and find themselves landing on a figuratively and literally brighter clearing, though the final scene of *Vampyr* is that of machinery at the mill, thus hinting all is not well after all in our post-industrial world.

Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting aspects of Dreyer's *Vampyr* is that the filmgoer never knows for sure whether or not what protagonist Allan Gray sees and goes through are literal visions as they happen or merely the projections of fantasies from a funny fanboy with a dark sense of romanticism who has read one too many occult books. Indeed, while a 'genre' flick, *Vampyr* is nothing short of an innately cinematically experimental work that weaves in out of

conscious and subconscious sequences without warning, as well as cuts between scenes that are seemingly unrelated, hence why the film probably irked audience members upon its original release as a film that goes to great pains to reject the sort of classic mythology typical of Murnau's masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922) for something more hermetic and less tangible but not less aesthetically visually tantalizing. Not unlike Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) aka *Le Sang d'un Poète* and Luis Buñuel's *L'Age d'or* (1930) aka *The Golden Age*, *Vampyr* was a result of classical 'artistic partonage' that enabled the filmmaker a sort of artistic freedom and experimentation that is unheard of today, at least where somewhat mainstream cinema is concerned. As the one-time-film-star Count Nicolas de Gunzburg later confessed in an interview featured in the spring 1964 issue of *Film Culture*, "Like everyone else, I was dying to get into the movie," and his royal vanity certainly paid off, at least after about half a century, as he ultimately became the unforgettable, if not cipher-like, star of *Vampyr*; one of the greatest and most mystifying pieces of celluloid horror art ever concocted. Interestingly, cult auteur Curtis Harrington (*Night Tide*, *Games*) mentioned a by-chance run-in with Gunzburg in the summer in 1949 in his autobiography *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), writing, "The leading player in *Vampyr* is billed as "Julian West." So you can imagine my shock a few days later when I was in a projection room to see a preview showing of a new film, and Julian West himself walked in and sat down in the seat directly in front of me. It seemed uncanny; I could hardly believe my eyes! I gathered my courage and leaned forward in my seat; "Excuse me, sir, but did you appear in a film called *Vampyr*?" He turned and smiled. In a very deep voice, he replied, "That was a very long time ago." It was only much later that I discovered his true identity," thus making it seem like the Count was somewhat embarrassed by his all-too-brief career as an actor/producer. As for the 'curse of *Vampyr*,' aside from temporarily destroying Dreyer's career and mind, and guaranteeing that Count de Gunzburg would not be the next Rudolf Valentino, Sybille Schmitz—one of the only real actors in the film, and who would go on to become a popular Nazi actress (she could not have had more fitting initials!) playing femme fatales and other non-Aryan harlots, but was later blacklisted in the post-WWII era due to her unflattering status as a notably naughty National Socialist actress, despite her decidedly dark features—would, not unlike her character in *Vampyr*, become the victim of a doctor who fed her morphine addiction at an inflated price, even assisting in the fallen diva's suicide in 1955 via an overdose on sleeping pills, which was more than morbidly melodramatically depicted in the UFA-inspired neo-noirish flick *Veronika Voss* (1982) aka *Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss* directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Featuring next to nil blood and Christian iconography (which are replaced by sinister scythes and infant skeletons!), a less than alluring hag vampiress and zero eroticism, a somewhat wayward moral compass, an unreliable 'visual narrator' as the

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protagonist, an oneiric aesthetic that blurs the line between ominous and aesthetically orgasmic, a dead serious yet surreal story with nil camp value, *Vampyr* was certainly a success where artistry and psychological horror are concerned as demonstrated by auteur Carl Th. Dreyer's remark regarding his intention with the film, "I wanted to create the daydream on film...to show that horror is not a part of the things around us, but of our own subconscious mind," as I personally can think of few other celluloid chimeras that are so equally charismatic yet creepy and alluring yet foreboding, as if the director had found a healthy middle ground between heaven and hell.

-Ty E

SALOMÈ

Carmelo Bene (1972)

After having the rare and distinct pleasure of recently getting to see the Italian flick *Veruschka - poesia di una donna* (1971) aka *Veruschka: Poetry of a Woman* starring the eponymous German supermodel, I felt the need to see more of the tragic and melancholy but always stylish 1970s *Veruschka von Lehn-dorff* and her bizarre self-created body art, so I decided to watch the bodacious, bawdy, and blasphemous piece of keenly kaleidoscopic celluloid *Salomè* (1972) aka *Neon Vampires* directed by wacked-out Guido Renaissance man Carmelo Bene (*Our Lady of the Turks, Capricci*), a filmmaker that had next to nil interest in films/filmmakers of his time, once confessing regarding his thoughts on cinema history, “[Cinema] it’s the celebration of the Lumière Brothers. That is: since the Lumière period, what has come out of it? If you exclude that minimum of “self-fright” sought at all costs, or that hint of bewilderment in certain African tribes, at the sight of that train. The Lumières... I think their commemoration goes on since the 19th century. The same one which has been perpetuated,” as if he had the megalomaniacal mind to attempt to resume where the Lumière brothers left off. Described by kosher cineaste Amos Vogel in his work *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974) as, “an unknown genius of contemporary cinema” whose films are “visual, lyrical and auditory cataclysms, whose lava-like outpourings are of unequalled hallucinatory perversity... Their visual density and creative exuberance defy description,” Bene was a filmmaker whose cinematic works, in their flamboyance and pageantry, surpass even the most surreal and sensational works of Federico Fellini, including *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965) and *Satyricon* (1969), and like virtually all of his major works, with *Salomè*—a work loosely based on but uncredited to Oscar Wilde’s 1891 play of the same name, which, in turn, was based on the Biblical story of Salome—the shamelessly flamboyant yet surprisingly heterosexual absurd-garde auteur puts himself at the center of the sensually Satanic action by playing the role of King Tetrarch Herod Antipas (a man accused in the pseudepigraphical Gospel of Peter of ordering the crucifixion of Jesus Christ), the hyper horny and incestuous maniac monarch who served John the Baptist’s head on a platter to his Semitic slut stepdaughter Salomé in dubious payment for her infamous proto-femme fatale ‘Dance of the Seven Veils’ in what is true dirty dancing of the delectable decadent dego variety.

Featuring lanky yet lecherous Nordic goddess *Veruschka* as a bead-adorned yet ultimately unclad (beads are nowhere to be found when it comes to her naughty bits!) beauty with an aversion to clothing who arrives on the scene via the sea, a very vain and vampiric Jesus Christ who cries like a bitch as he rather unsuccessfully attempts to nail himself to the cross, a physically grotesque Salome with a dyke-inspired shaved head who could only appeal to the most degenerate of shabbos goy kings, a shit-talking and soccer-saluting John the

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Baptist who has no problem taking a couple blows to the head via a big book so long as he can call Salome a slut and whore, a debauched ancient aristocrat who dines out of women's derrieres, and the sort of in-your-face watermelon and buttocks fetishism you might expect from an American Deep South rap video, Bene's *Salomè* is sharply schizophrenic and sacrilegious celluloid at its most suavely sardonic, strangely and semi-sinisterly salacious and sordid, and spasmodically surreal. Directed by a man who once stated of his no less iconoclastic TV movies, "When editing is being made during the shot, one can achieve a music-movie. Then recording becomes an event," *Salomè* is a seemingly impenetrable work that will most likely thoroughly enrage and irritate both cinephiles and epileptics alike as an ADHD-inspired, art-added work where no single shot lasts longer than a second or two and that makes the intellectually masturbatory montages of Sergei Eisenstein seem like that of Béla Tarr, but also an innately aesthetically idiosyncratic work of nihilistic neon naughtiness that borrows from Baroque art, the *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*, and cubism, as well as the greats of Italian Futurism and German expressionist cinema, but also popular goombah auteur filmmakers, especially Federico Fellini, even if Bene would never admit so. A sort of grotesque 'Guido Lucifer Rising,' *Salomè*—a nearly narrative-less celluloid nightmare of the peculiarly 'high-camp' sort that takes Italian histrionic acting to more hysterical heights and is more absurd and aberrant than Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*—is quite arguably auteur Carmelo Bene's celluloid magnum opera, especially compared to the director's previous film *Don Giovanni* (1970), which is a sort of aesthetic and thematic prototype for what was accomplished with the filmmaker's Oscar Wilde adaptation.

Opening with a scene of beaded yet naked baldheaded Veruschka as "Myrrhina"—an Alexandrian noblewoman of the femme fatale sort featured in Oscar Wilde's unfinished play *La Sainte Courtisane* (1894) who attempts to tempt a Christian hermit named Honorius away from goodness—Bene's *Salomè* immediately establishes itself as a wild and whimsical take on Wilde that endlessly wallows in wanton whores of the sinister skinheaded sort corrupting the lives of men, especially of the god-bothering sort. Flash forward a couple seconds to a surreal scene of the Last Supper where a vampiric Jesus Christ declares to his Apostles that, "One of you will betray me" and a split second later a Jew drops a bunch of Shekels and said Apostles unanimously declare, "me, me, me" in their greedy desire to play Judas against their undead master. With goofy Disneyesque animated camels jumping through golden hoops, swarthy lard asses slicing watermelons in half with Arab swords, and a bloodsucking Christ carrying the disrobed bodies of voluptuous young women, the radically ridiculous realm of Bene's *Salomè* is serenaded in superlatively silly sacrilege that takes the Biblical story of Salome and death of John the Baptist about as serious as a soda-induced hiccup. Before the glorious appearance of unholy Judaic harlot Salome, young Roman twinks in borderline drag queen makeup whisper about the Jews, with

one young man asking who are the “wild beasts howling?” and the other responding that, “The Jews, they are always like that... They are in dispute over their religion.” Flash forward and Salome (Donyale Luna, who not surprisingly appeared in Fellini *Satyricon*), against the better judgment of her Jewish princess mother Herodias (bizarrely played by two actors simultaneously of different sexes, Lydia Mancinelli and Alfiero Vincenti) and stepfather Tetrarch (Carmelo Bene), decides to speak to the prophet John the Baptist, a seemingly senile and exceedingly eccentric old fart absurdly dressed in an anachronistic soccer uniform who insults the Hebrew harlot, calling her a “daughter of Sodom” and “daughter of a whore” among various other disparaging yet fitting things. For his hysterical insults to Salome, John the Baptist is beat over the head with a big book, but that only fuels his seething holy hatred. Of course, Salome herself does not take kindly to big John’s incendiary personal insults and his spurning her affections, so she pays him back by putting on a debauched dance, the ‘Dance of the Seven Veils,’ for her degenerate stepfather Tetrarch (as meta-historically played by auteur Carmelo Bene), who rewards her with the head of the foulmouthed Baptist. In the end, Salome picks the dead silky skin off of Tetrarch’s face and neck as he babbles incessantly, and a nihilistically narcissistic Jesus of Nazareth attempts to nail himself to the cross, but only manages to drive a couple nails through his feet and hands, ultimately failing in his respectable yet exceedingly egomaniacal attempt at self-martyrdom.

As director Carmelo Bene once confessed, “I am not interested in any filmmaker. I am not even interested in my own films, except for a couple of moments: the failed self-crucifixion in *Salomè* (1972), and the burnt, torn film in *Our Lady of the Turks* (1968) as a parody of recollection,” and, indeed, *Salomè*, like virtually all of the filmmaker’s work, seems like it was directed by a man who had next to nil interest in filmmaking trends of his time and even less interest in entertaining the masses, as if he made the film to test how far he could personally take cinema as an artistic medium. A challenging celluloid work that portrays a young Hebraic whore of the exceedingly exotic yet less than erotic sort as the ultimate cryptic manipulator and destroyer of prophets and kings, *Salomè* is a feverishly and freakishly frolicsome femme fatale-driven work that reminds the viewer of the long historical role of Jewesses in subverting alien cultures, peoples, and religions with their women’s naughty bits, while portraying Christians as crazed kooks suffering from self-induced cuckoldry. Undoubtedly, Bene’s *Salomè* even makes *Salome* (1923) starring real-life subversive Jewess Alla Nazimova and Ken Russell’s play-within-a-film *Salome’s Last Dance* (1988) seem totally tame due to its fiercely fetishistic and brazenly blasphemous take on Oscar Wilde’s *Salomè*. A personal friend of degenerate frog philosophers like sadomasochistic sodomite Michel Foucault and poststructuralist Gilles Deleuze—both of whom were incidentally fans of German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter—Bene was a sort of Guido Werner Schroeter with a seemingly equal keenness for kitsch

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and camp, albeit of the rampantly heterosexual sort. While less than 80 minutes in length, Bene's *Salomè* seems as epic as Schroeter's *Eika Katappa* (1969), albeit with the claustrophobia of *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*. A phantasmagoric oftentimes nasty neon nightmare from the soiled soul of a 'true believer unbeliever,' *Salomè* is merry metaphysical misanthropy in its most audience-agitating form and thus a work one will never forget as the antidote to not only a lifetime of Hollywood brainwashing, but also static and soulless far-left European arthouse films of the 1960s/1970s, especially those by the likes of banal blowhard Godard and Jean-Marie Straub.

-Ty E

AFRIKA

Caroline Link (2001)

Forget the revolutionary films of Senegalese auteur Ousmane Sembène (Mandabi, Xala) and mainstream Hollywood philistine liberal swill like The Constant Gardener (2005) and The Last King of Scotland (2006), criminally neglected Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone's Afrika (1973) is the ultimate dark romance flick set on the dark continent. Influenced by reading Algerian revolutionary Frantz Fanon's unintentionally hilarious and preposterously overrated pseudo-Freudian/Marxist political diatribe The Wretched of the Earth (1961) and having previously directed the relatively successful work Le salamandre (1969) – a politically and racially-charged post-colonial work disguised as an erotic tale about an interracial lesbian love affair – artistically courageous Cavallone was more than prepared to direct one of the most downright peculiar and hopelessly repellent works set in the horn of Africa. As the director stated himself, the world of Cavallone's Afrika is a contemporary Little Big Horn where white men act as General Custer's soldiers. Of course, one would barely notice this if it were not for the film's brutal opening scene featuring sexual mutilation and coldblooded murder against two suspect rebel women, as Afrika is essentially an often exploitative tale about a pitiable homosexual Italian boy named Frank (Andrea Traglia) who travels to Ethiopia to reunite with his fleeing gray-haired true love; a self-loathing (and married) homo professor named Philip Stone (Ivano Staccioli) who has failed as both a painter and as a lover. To prove his undying devotion to Philip, Frank has undergone a drastic sex-change and has changed his/her name to Eva so as to be a 'proper woman' and thus (in his mind) legitimize their relationship in the eyes of sneering homo-haters, but the elder man is not impressed, henceforth culminating into the heartbroken lady-lad's violent bedside suicide. Afrika was edited in a nonlinear fashion that is as spasmodic and unorthodox as the film's story and features a series of flashbacks from various character's (Frank, Philip, and Frank's sister Jeanne) perspectives that tell the histrionic story that led up to Frank's impending suicide. Although the socio-political themes featured in the film might seem strikingly modern upon reading a superficial synopsis of Afrika, the film is certainly on par with Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi's mondo classic Africa Addio (1966) aka Africa Blood and Guts or Farewell Africa in terms of being 'culturally sensitive' or lack thereof.

During Afrika, it is revealed that Frank and Philip first bumped into each other as both were searching for a copy of French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud's work Illuminations (1874); an uncompleted collection of prose poems. Like Rimbaud himself and many other decadent European degenerates, Philip would also travel to the third world in a futile attempt to escape the existential crisis that consumes his soul. Not unlike decolonized Africa, Frank and Philip are going through big changes in their lives and the final outcome is quite ques-

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tionable to say the least. Somewhat oddly, Tom Ford's *A Single Man* (2009) often feels like an extremely loose, polished remake of Cavallone's *Afrika*. Like Cavallone's earlier work, *A Single Man* follows a gay professor as he recollects over the past couple years about his deceased lover. Also, like *A Single Man*, *Afrika* depicts the professor's failed past relationship with a female lover, but unlike the former film, Cavallone's work does not hold back in showing the fairer sex's absolute and utter detestation for male-on-male buggery. Even Frank's seemingly sympathetic sister Jeanne is revealed to be completely revolted with her brother's unconquerable vice as revealed in *Afrika*'s forthright 'surprise' ending. To cure his brother-in-law of his ingrained apathy towards woman, Jeanne's husband contracts a group of teenagers to rape Frank (by a male and a female) in a scene that predates but is notably less effective than a similar scenario featured in Dutch auteur Paul Verhoeven's *Spetters* (1980). In the end, Frank – a self-eunuchized freak – has more testicular fortitude than his miserable, middle-aged and emotionally-broken boy toy. Like most of Cavallone's films, *Afrika* is an unflinchingly nihilistic, pessimistic, and misanthropic work that leaves no group spared and that includes many of the nameless Africans in the film who merely act as militant Uncle Tom's that are willing to kill their own kinfolk just so they can have a larger bowl of rice to eat at night.

If you're like me and find yourself tantalized by the prospect of " Fassbinder meets exploitation" (or in this case, Afroexploitation), *Afrika* – as well as most of Alberto Cavallone's filmography – makes for an uniquely enthralling cinematic affair. Admittedly, you won't learn much about the continent of Africa by watching the film nor discover the solution to hostile race relations, but you will find yourself laughing ecstatically at some of the most absurdly melodramatic scenarios ever shot on celluloid. Of course, *Afrika* – like virtually of Cavallone's work – is an acquired taste that, as a rule, generally leaves most viewers divided. If the spectator learns anything by watching *Afrika* it is that the white man should stay out of Africa and should have never entered the dark continent in the first place just as married professors should refrain from invading the murky nether-regions of flaky young men.

-Ty E

THE RUINS

Carter Smith° (2008)

Almost all of the new horror films of '08 are horrendous. It's nice to see one that is "so bad it's alright." The Ruins is exactly that. After a bunch of stupid kids with perfectly sculpted abs get trapped on a ruin of a pyramid, they realize they are quarantined by the locals due to a menacing force. This force being a surprising sentient being, capable of modern actions and commands. The entire story feels like a sequel to the Goosebump's classic Stay Out of the Basement. These stupid kids fit into a perfect vegetarian trap of death. These third-world country people are portrayed as completely stupid; only being able to handle basic thoughts and speaking a dead language. The theme of isolation is similar to [Rec]. The movie has those characters that you love to hate. The stupid jocks that love sex and alcohol. The same ones that make stupid choices that lead to stupid affects, but later in the film, they become withstand-able. As soon as these naive children become victim to something more sinister, their survival instincts begin to kick in. These characters started out stale but i guess to a certain effect. You were supposed to hate them. If you've ever watched a Friday the 13th film and got pissed off when they always trip or commit random gratuitous acts of stupidity, then this is not your film. These characters will jump 3 feet and break their knees. The goofs are many in this film. The ropes getting mysteriously longer is just an example. This film is a "How to not survive!" reference masterpiece. The ending of the film differs from the one in the original novel. This change is due to a "Hollywood" bastard ending. Same with The Descent, American film makers downplay our intelligence by dumbing down all our endings with the same ending that shows a never-ending loop of violence. While not sticking with jump-out moments, It would rather attempt to gross you out with flesh-carving madness synced with the the loss of the minds of college graduates. You might hear that this is scary. No, It isn't, but damn if it doesn't have some effective scenes. They come once in a while, with some hilarious scenes. This could be called a "so bad it's okay" film. The characters are flat and are created from the leftover mold's of Dawson's Creek. I don't regret seeing this film. Many people walked out on this film. It's not perfect, but don't expect an amazing, or even faithful book adaptation. This, just like Hostel, is just shitty "Feel unsafe in any country other than America" propaganda. The main villain in the film, which i will leave unknown for a surprise, has many amazing effects, which leads to an almost shocking experience. These quirks to the "things" leave many moments almost scary. While being a Hollywood film, It isn't horribly bad. If you have a couple beers in you, you might even like it. The Ruins is an moderately exceptional Hollywood fare featuring the stupid foreigners dying first. What a change.

-Maq

WE ARE NOT TO BLAME
WE ARE NOT TO BLAME

Cassandra Stark (1989)

As a movement largely headed by dope-addled degenerate males of the fairly effeminate and, in some cases, heteroflexible sort, the Cinema of Transgression movement naturally attracted various deranged or otherwise damaged dames, including loudmouthed gutter slut Lydia Lunch and pint-sized whacked-out waif Lung Leg, but, out of all of these of these wayward women, probably none is more enigmatic, whimsical, and just plain strange than auteur Cassandra Stark Mele (*Death of an Arabian Woman*, *The Anarchists*), who later completely dissociated herself from the underground film scene she belonged to and has gone on to do various interviews where she has not held back when it came to trashing her ex-collaborators like Nick Zedd and Richard Kern. A proud Italian-American who was not afraid to film her unclad pussy and her other carnal goods for her own largely oneiric films, Stark was initially the subject of panegyric praise by her one-time-boyfriend Zedd who once described her first film *Dead On My Arm* (1985)—a film based partly off the director's childhood experience in a mental institution that was influenced by the theories of C.G. 'Aryan Christ' Jung—as a “masterpiece,” but, for whatever reason, things eventually grew quite sour between she and her decidedly degenerate male compatriots. Indeed, when Stark opted to conclude her semi-dreamlike short *Wrecked on Cannibal Island* (1986) with a provocative scene featuring a shot where “Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here” is written over her bushy guidette beaver that ultimately ends with a guy named Jack Natz performing cunnilingus on her, Zedd somewhat dubiously complained in his film zine *The Underground Film Bulletin* that the ending featured a, “gratuitous shock tactic which stupidly violates the film's internal logic.” While Stark would later complain in an interview featured in *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant that Zedd, Kern, and Lydia Lunch were responsible for destroying the aesthetic and philosophical integrity of the Cinema of Transgression movement and noted, “Both Zedd's and Kern's films got much worse after they met each other and staring jerking each other off. A lot of the others who hung around the so-called scene got tainted by all this and a lot of the films started to suck. The creativity is sacrificed for opportunity. The violent and sexual imagery became overstated as quickly meaningless,” she did collaborate with the two male filmmakers on what is arguably her most ambitious film. Indeed, the 30-minute short *We Are Not to Blame* (1989) quite fittingly features both Kern and Zedd as sexually abusive lowlifes who invade Stark's mind and/or body to the point where she completely loses her sanity in the end and begins to resemble one of the ghostly pancake-faced chicks from Werner's Schroeter's (in)famous Oskar Panizza adaptation *Liebeskonzil* (1982) aka *Council of Love*. A sort of unintentionally humorous and campy piece of quasi-phantasmagoric Super-8 Gynocen-

trism where female sexual masochism and male sadism is explored in an almost metaphysical fashion, Stark's film demonstrates a certain uncompromising vulnerability, honesty, and tragically despoiled innocence that makes the cinematic works of her ex-compatriots seem like overly self-conscious hokey hipster posturing by comparison.

After a truly DIY lo-fi title sequence featuring the film's title painted on a glaringly dilapidated apartment wall and a shot of "A Casandra Stark Movie" painted alongside a jack-o'-lantern, as well as various forms of stereotypical Catholic imagery, including the The Immaculate Heart of Mary, *We Are Not to Blame* introduces the clearly mentally perturbed protagonist Paula (Casandra Stark Mele) who screams into her phone like a bloodthirsty banshee after being blown off upon calling about a potential 'copy-machine operator' job (as Stark reveals in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, she was struggling to make ends meet in the 1980s and was even once left homeless after cops raided her apartment). Meanwhile, while Paula proceeds to look through unpromising employment ads in a local newspaper, her estranged sister Denise (Laura Mae Jesson) is walking around NYC and is going to pay her an unexpected visit because she wants to get away from her abusive husband Jack (Richard Kern) and is desperate for somewhere to hide. When Denise finally arrives, she says to her sister, "I had to come. I really left Jack this time. I felt my head hit the floor one last time and something in me snapped" and begs her to let her stay, to which Paula replies in a fairly smug and self-satisfied way, "Well, of course you can, you silly fool. So it took a full whack from your dear hubby Jack to put you on the right track." While the two sisters are talking, the viewer also learns that the last time Paula saw Denise was when she intentionally burned her parents' house down, thus revealing that she has fairly maliciously destructive tendencies. After boring Denise by giving her a tour of her apartment just so that she can show off all paintings that she has created (notably, the paintings were actually created by Stark, who clearly also used the film as a less than inconspicuous mean to flaunt her painterly prowess), Paula makes her sister a spaghetti dinner where she eventually reveals the true extent of her mental derangement by stating after her sibling complains of being afraid of her husband, "I'm more scared of myself, I'm not scared of my man. I'm scared that maybe...these olives are really bugs and I'm not really even here...And maybe that I only think I'm eating olives and I'm really eating bugs." Naturally, Paula's mind begins to completely disintegrate as the film progresses.

When Denise complains, "I'm the one with the problems, you know," as if she is competing in a victimhood contest and then expresses her undying fear that her husband might show up at the apartment while the two eat dinner together, Paula seems to have a schizophrenic premonition of sorts where she inexplicably smears spaghetti sauce on her face, climbs on the kitchen table while in a seemingly possessed state, and suffers a seizure of sorts. Of course, it does not

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take long for deadbeat husband Jack to show up and when he does he demands that Paula tell him where his wife is while sadistically smacking her in the face with a red rose. When Denise wakes up from a nap and finds Jack in the apartment, the seemingly dope-addled thug of a hubby starts beating her and Paula in a fashion that one would expect from some boorish wife-beater-wearing wop thug like Jake La Motta in Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980). Ultimately, Paula knocks Jack unconscious by hitting him over the head with a frying pan while he is busy beating Denise while she is lying in a bathtub, so the two sister subsequently decide to tie him to pole on the roof of their apartment building. In a mocking gesture, Paula places the same red rose that he repeatedly smacked her in the face with into Jack's mouth, thereupon making him resemble some sort of hapless dime-store Don Juan. In between Denise attempting in vain to spoon-feed him canned crap while he tries to viciously attack her and calls her a "bitch," Paula whips anti-gentleman Jack into shape by slapping him in the face while repeating like a playfully sadistic automaton, "You better learn how to behave yourself." Aside from berating her sister's scumbag spouse, Paula also enjoys lying naked in her bathtub while in awkward positions and singing like an autistic toddler while in a seemingly possessed state that reflects the progressive degeneration of her uniquely unhinged mind.

Somewhat curiously, Paula has a sex dream about Jack and even decides to tell her sister about it, stating, "I was dreaming about Jack all night long last night. I went up on the roof and while he was tied up we had sex together. And even though we hated each other, it seemed really necessary, like...Maybe in the future, lovers will be a thing of the past and people that hate each other will get together to have sex. Instead of my beloved, it will be my dearly behated," thus hinting that she is probably a clueless masochist who wants to blame her fucked up sexual desires on some sort of malignant meta-sexual plague. After describing her lurid sex dream to a less than impressed Denise, Paula goes to check on Jack and discovers that he has somehow managed to escape from his bondage and is nowhere in sight. Seemingly obsessed with the idea of sharing carnal knowledge with her sister's violent deadbeat hubby, Paula later decides to diddle her puss while staring at her paintings, which are mostly comprised of cadaverous little girls that seem to point to some sort of ungodly childhood trauma that still plagues the protagonist. With Denise receiving her dream of her husband completely disappearing from her life, she and Paula decide to have a sort of mock funeral for Jack where they bury his personal belongings. After throwing Jack's stuff into a hole they have dug in the middle of a secluded public park, Paula proceeds to bless the items by ceremoniously pissing on them. Unfortunately, the unintentionally farcical pseudo-funeral takes a turn for the worst when a longhaired wuss (Nick Zedd), who has been secretly stalking the sisters, appears out of nowhere, pushes Denise into the hole, and proceeds to rape Paula, who begins to wallow in having her pussy pillaged by some wayward weirdo as

reflected in a large smile that eventually appears on her face while she is having her vag ravaged. After the somewhat brief rape, Paula grabs her sister Denise and they leave while Zedd curiously proceeds to fill in the hole that the two gal's dug. As an assumed result of the severe trauma that she has suffered at the hands of a sexually rabid proto-hipster ponce, Paula develops a special affinity for baby dolls and falls into a completely infantile state. Indeed, Denise screams hysterically when she wakes up Paula and discovers that her sister looks like a sort of punk rock Bride of Frankenstein. In the end, Denise also falls into a comatose state and sits by Paula's side while she rocks back in forth in a rocking chair while holding a baby doll and smiling at the camera in a deranged exaggerated fashion in a scenario that echoes the collective female psychosis of the eponymous chicks in Robert Altman's *3 Women* (1977). After the film's end credits roll, Zedd is featured sitting at a kitchen table naked while attempting to spoon-feed one of Paula's baby dolls in a rather ridiculous yet nonetheless grotesque scene that is genuinely more disturbing and aesthetically loathsome than anything the *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992) director has ever directed.

As the assumed result of her later renunciation of the Cinema of Transgression movement and largely interview-based personal war against Kern and Zedd, Stark decided to later reedit *We Are Not To Blame* and cut out all of the scenes featuring male characters, thereupon completely changed both the tone and narrative of the entire film and transforming it into a sort of innately incoherent dreamlike experience of surreally sisterly sort. When asked in an interview with Jack Sargeant why she decided to reedit the film, Stark replied, "I guess I was interested in seeing what it looked like if I eliminated all the antagonists, namely the men. They are suggested but not given any embodiment. I mean really, the whole purity of that film was the relation of the two sisters. So I was just amazed that when I took everything out that involved other people I just saw this purity there that I liked. In a way it's like when you work at home sometimes...I don't know, it's something about simplifying things, taking out what isn't necessary. It was kind of an experiment, I have both versions of it, I'm just interested in this version right now." Of course, Stark also took out "what isn't necessary" in her personal life by ridding herself of Kern, Zedd, and the Cinema of Transgression and of course knowing that fact before watching *We Are Not to Blame* makes the film an all the more entrancing experience as a result, as if the filmmaker could foretell the bitter disdain that she would later develop for her ex-collaborators. Notably, Stark, who is proudly Italian by blood (hence why she later began using her real Italian surname 'Mele' again), managed to gain a following in Italy, which is the only place that seems to distribute her films (the Turin-based publishing company Nautilus autoproduzioni released a VHS of her films under the title *The Lost Films of Casandra Stark*). Not unlike fellow NYC-based Guido auteur Abel Ferrara, Stark also had the opportunity to work in the old country where she shot part of her film *The Anarchists* (1994) in

WE ARE NOT TO BLAME

Napoli and was even featured on Italian TV while doing a film tour there (as the careers of Stark, Ferrara, Joe Dallesandro, and various other Italian-American film figures seem to demonstrate, Italians seem to love the novelty of having Americans of Guido extraction working in their homeland). Undoubtedly what separates Stark from the rest of the filmmakers of the Cinema of Transgression movement, especially its most well known figures Zedd and Kern, is that she has a strong sense of spirituality (in her first film *Dead On My Arm* (1985), she gave a credit to C.G. Jung, not to mention the fact she is obsessed with Catholic imagery and themes), as well as cultural and ancestral heritage, hence why she is also probably the most intriguing and authentic figure that was ever associated with the movement, even if her films oftentimes feel like they were directed by the schizophrenic bastard preteen daughter of Werner Schroeter and Asia Argento. As the film's title and content surely hints, *We Are Not to Blame* seems to be a film about coming to terms with sexual abuse and personal trauma. Indeed, like many victims of childhood sexual abuse, Stark's character in the film has an irrational attraction to male abusers. It should also be noted that Stark has accused both Zedd and Kern of being abusive and exploitative filmmakers, or as she stated in an interview with Sargeant regarding what she believes destroyed the Cinema of Transgression movement, "...it all became so mean and very abusive to the human spirit. It was an art movement moving against itself, against healing. It became a destructive force really, it became evil." Whether or not *We Are Not to Blame* helped Stark to heal is something that only she really knows, but it certainly gave me the somewhat dejecting impression that it was sired from the restless soul of an abused little girl who has been forsaken with having to live a lifetime of internal suffering as a result of some pervert(s) who wanted to experience a couple moments of sick forbidden pleasure.

-Ty E

36 FILLETTE

Catherine Breillat (1988)

Catherine Breillat's 36 Fillette has been called the "French Lolita." Aside from the fact that the female lead is only 14 years old, the films aren't too similar. 36 Fillette follows the young teenaged and big breasted Lili. She is obviously sexually frustrated and ready to "bust out" so to speak. She desires yet cock teases a middle aged man.

Lili can't articulate her feelings. She pretends she doesn't want sex when her body screams for it. She even causes the middle age suitor to put a couple bruises on her. Still, she goes back to this man. His dominance attracts her. Lili can only lie to herself for so long.

Female sexuality is central to the works of director Catherine Breillat. Her film Fat Girl (which is probably her best) makes 36 Fillette look weak by comparison. Nonetheless, developing teenage (and even preteen) sexuality also is a main focus of Breillat's work. One must wonder whether or not she is reflecting over her own adolescence. Her obsession speaks for itself.

Jean-Pierre Léaud (I think of him as Antoine Doinel) consoles young Lili in 36 Fillette. A wise man indeed, he fuels Lili's ambition for sex. Unfortunately for Lili, the man she desires is far from being as charismatic as Jean-Pierre's character. The young "man" she later settles for is just desperate (and Lili could care less).

Breillat invites controversy with her films. Her style is something new which is respectable. My only complaint is her films always seem to be lacking something. I probably lack the female intuition.

-Ty E

ROMANCE
ROMANCE

Catherine Breillat (1999) Having seen *Fat Girl* (A classic in it's own right), i was set on seeing all of Breillat's films. The one sticking out to me the most, was *Romance* or *Romance X*. From the alternative title alone, i could tell she was trying to capitalize off of the controversy. The thing that really sold it to me was the provocative cover featuring a semi-nude lovely female. It also gained a lot of much wanted publicity due to the unsimulated sex scenes in the film, which gave birth to more one-dimensional films victim to the same mistake. As soon as i watched this film, i soon realized that she wasn't really that attractive, nor was the film good at all. Marie is a teacher and has a very deep problem (No Pun Intended). She loves her boyfriend, but they don't have sex. In order to fulfill her darkest sexual desires, she decides to whore her self out in a vain attempt at post-modern feminism. Breillat assumes a full stance on making men seem like chauvinistic pigs. I'm not saying we're not, but i'll be damned if some ostentatious neo-dyke Frenchie will pull a lifetime original movie out of her ass in a vain attempt to cause housewife rebellions. Trying to look behind the background of her empowered monologues describing femdom as a must-is, i still couldn't find any enjoyable facet to this film. Considering having made some incredible films, i won't dismiss her just yet as an accidental film-maker. She still has a couple films i need to see in order for me to make my mind. I do appreciate the meaning behind the anti-love movement. I really do. I also agree with her descent into a darker form of sexuality but *Romance* is still a bland, raunchy film which is lead astray by it's own ego. Do not want.

-Maq

THE LAST MISTRESS

Catherine Breillat (2007)

I am not that big of a fan of degenerate and repulsive French feminists. I am also not that into period pieces. The thought of both of these things together is almost unsettling. I recently saw Catherine Breillat's *The Last Mistress* and now admit that I like a feminist's dirty and bloody French period piece. I guess any film featuring a very aggressive and sexually deranged Asia Argento can't be too bad. In *The Last Mistress*, Argento practically enslaves a young wussy frog despite her mental instability.

Asia Argento is the darkest and wickedest thing to hit the fairy like French aristocracy. She is the bastard daughter of Spanish and Italian aristocrats. An impure child of lust, Vellini (Asia Argento) is a mutt from two of the most mongrelized countries of Europe. The young and very feminine Ryno is at first offended by hearing of Vellini's ethnic background. But within a few days, he is ready to die for Vellini. Ryno takes a bullet for her in a dual with an overweight senior citizen. Vellini almost rapes Ryno's body as he is assumed to be dying. *The Last Mistress* is about true love.

Ryno finally finds himself a good Aryan girl after having too much of Vellini's insanity. Naturally, Vellini is around every corner ready to molest Ryno. Will little Ryno give into this dark goddess? Can the Aryan girl even compete with the hypnotic spells Vellini effortlessly puts on Ryno? Director Catherine Breillat felt that suspenseful romance would be more interesting than showing the ugliest vagina's ever with *The Last Mistress*. This is a film that both sexes can relate to and possibly be "titillated" by.

Asia Argento may give her greatest performance yet in *The Last Mistress*. She doesn't refrain from showing us her at her worst moments (not that she didn't do that in *Scarlet Diva*). In *The Last Mistress*, Asia Argento embodies the very appealing yet dangerous vamp at a new and much complex level. Unlike most vamps, in *The Last Mistress* we can't help but feel sorry for the manipulative and loose lady. After all, the male she seduces is a pathetic womanish creature anyways.

The Last Mistress is easily the best film I have seen from Catherine Breillat. Going into the film I expected a piece of pretentious dykeness and a wasted performance by Asia Argento. Instead, with *The Last Mistress* I got a somewhat complex character study of a pretentious aristocratic bachelor and his weakness for a woman of lust. I guess Catherine Breillat does have something interesting to say about males.

-Ty E

LORDS OF DOGTOWN
LORDS OF DOGTOWN

Catherine Hardwicke (2005)

Before making it big with the silly Twilight movie, Catherine Hardwicke had attempted to direct gritty yet somewhat superficially stylized realist films like Thirteen and Lords of Dogtown. Thirteen was an almost unbearable experience, with the climax for me being the surely unerotic and obscenely exposed brillo pad of middle aged actress Holly Hunter. Catherine Hardwicke, being the middle aged woman she is, surely has a different perspective on how to direct women (and men) than your typical male director. With Twilight, Hardwicke made this even more obvious with her scopophilia for actor Robert Pattinson and her unremarkable female lead. I believe Lords of Dogtown to be Catherine Hardwicke's greatest cinematic achievement and the director's most successful direction job, as far as the film's subjects go. The Lords of Dogtown is probably as close as Hollywood has ever gotten to capturing both vintage skateboard action and the lifestyle of the skater. I spent a good part of my life engulfed in everything skateboarding. When not skateboarding, I took it upon myself to find out about skateboarding history and it did not take me long to find old VHS tapes of old Hollywood Sk8 movies. Out of all the horrible skateboard-related movies to come out of Hollywood, I found Gleaming the Cube and Thrashin' to be easily the best. Gleaming the Cube has one of the silliest crime subplots ever, but for a young skater it makes for a fun albeit ridiculous film. Thrashin' is a much cooler flick showing the various skate subcultures of the 1980's with a radical Romeo and Juliet-style subplot. After all, nothing would be cooler to a bunch of young skaters than the idea of rival skate gangs that have skateboarding duels and rival sk8 gang chases. An especially notable scene in Thrashin' is when the lead character of the film is chased after at night on skateboard by an enemy punk/hardcore skate gang while the classic The Circle Jerks song "Wild in the Streets" is playing. Thrashin' is surely The Rebel Without a Cause of skateboarding. It wasn't until Lords of Dogtown, however, that Hollywood seemed to take the history of skateboarding seriously. Lords of Dogtown is based on the documentary Dogtown and Z-Boys, a documentary that essentially chronicles the early history of skateboarding. It was directed by one of the most famous Z-Boys Stacey Peralta, so as far as authenticity and historical credibility go, Dogtown and Z-Boys is a documentary in its own league. Catherine Hardwicke paid proper tribute to Peralta's documentary with her film Lords of Dogtown, especially for a woman that has zero ties to skateboarding. Skateboarders have always been weary of outsiders (as Lords of Dogtown even makes known) showing interest and attempting to cash in on the popularity of skateboarding. Within the past decade, it seems that skateboarding has reached its highest point in popularity, with skate parks and stores located everywhere and a good percentage of non-skater teenagers/young adults wearing skate garb.

With the 2005 release of *Lords of Dogtown*, it was about time that skateboarding was recognized as a legitimate and notable part of American cultural (and “sport”) history. Catherine Hardwicke was successful in making a film palatable for the general American audience but especially digestible by teenagers. Like *Dogtown* and *Z-Boys* before it, *Lords of Dogtown* features an audibly agreeable soundtrack with classic rock, psychedelic rock, punk/hardcore and other appropriate tracks that surely compliment the visuals of the film. Anyone that has ever skated knows that skate videos from skateboarding companies must have agreeable soundtracks to add to the vitality and persona of a particular skater’s video part. Skate videos have also influenced many notable contemporary directors such as Larry Clark (*Kids*, *Ken Park*) and Harmony Korine (*Gummo*, *Mr. Lonely*). Personally, skateboard videos were a gateway and initiation into the world of underground/independent cinema. Skateboard videos made me realize that there were much more unique, independent, and artistic filmmakers out there aside from the high priced garbage that Hollywood is constantly pumping out. *Lords of Dogtown* manages to express the rebellious and independent nature of skateboarding, even if it is mild in comparison to what actually comes out of the skateboarding world. Most of the young actors did an excellent job playing their vintage rebel roles. The albino teen from Gus van Sant’s *Elephant* played by John Robinson does an excellent job playing the anal retentive young Stacey Peralta. Surprisingly, Emile Hirsch is not bad as the most anti-social skater Jay Adams, a skater that would play a huge role in influencing the subculture despite leading a life of petty crime. Healthy Ledger even does a superb job playing a very annoying drunk and stoned surf shop owner, kind of like the Jim Morrison of a surf ghetto. Jewish-Ingun-Wop Nikki Reed also does a good job playing a zesty teenage cocktease. I wasn’t too fond of Victor Rasu as his hair constantly reminded me of a palm tree and his cholo chauvinism is not very tolerable. Like them or not, the characters of *Lords of Dogtown* are surely “characters.” I have watched *Lords of Dogtown* a number of times and it manages to keep its staying power. More importantly, the film makes you want to go out and skate. *Lords of Dogtown* may not have the hypnotic sensational Occult audio/video power of a Kenneth Anger film but it certainly accomplished what it set out to do in regards to immortalizing skateboard history in all its grittiness. As one of probably few skaters that also played on a football team, I can say that *Lords of Dogtown* did for skateboarding what *Friday Night Lights* did for football, offering the casual viewer a general yet entertaining inside view to each particular athletic culture. I just hope one day Hollywood decides to direct a Hollywood film about professional skateboard, artist, and Toy Machine skateboard company owner Ed Templeton., but I doubt Hollywood has that much of an interest in skateboarding.

-Ty E

THE SKIN
THE SKIN

Cecelia Condit (1981)

Aside from her fundamentally flawed SS sadomasochistic danse-macabre *Il portiere di notte* (1974) aka *The Night Porter* and to a lesser extent her dystopian sci-fi flick *I cannibali* (1970) aka *The Year of the Cannibals* and Nietzsche horn-dog hagiography *Al di là del bene e del male* (1977) aka *Beyond Good and Evil*, Italian auteuress Liliana Cavani—a filmmaker that is always more interesting when she is more intemperate artsploitation than plodding arthouse—has never been a filmmaker I seriously respected yet she certainly won me over with a recent viewing of her exceedingly eccentrically epic Curzio Malaparte adaptation *La pelle* (1981) aka *The Skin*. Curiously feeling oftentimes more Fellini-esque than Fellini in terms of combining the post-neorealist humanism of something like *I Vitelloni* (1953) with the surrealist situational travelogue-like approach of *Roma* (1972) and a sort of primordial dago decadence à la Fellini *Satyricon* (1969), not to mention a weird inexplicable monster fish scene that recalls *La Dolce Vita* (1960), the film is, in my obscenely obnoxious opinion, Cavani's greatest contribution to the art of cinema in terms of apocalyptic intrigue and downright sheer sleazy entertainment. Indeed, quite unlike the filmmaker's other films which, not unlike those of cosmopolitan commie Bertolucci, are completely deracinated and rarely guido-esque in a flagrantly gombbah fashion like the films of Pietro Germi and Ettore Scola, this wayward WWII epic—a delightfully degrading tribute to human debasement and desperation—is shamelessly and insanely Italian in its essence to the point of bordering on full-blown whacked-out wopsloitation à la Scola's *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* (1976) aka *Brutti, sporchi e cattivi*. In fact, the film is the ultimate 'antifascist' flick in terms of completely contradicting the Mussolinian ideal and portraying the Italian people, or at least the Neapolitan people, as a superlatively shameless people without pride or scruples. Indeed, in the film, mothers literally sell their little boy's buttocks to pedo-prone Moroccan Muslim invaders and fucked fathers hold group shows where American soldiers get to take turns fingering a rare teenage vaginal vagina. Likewise, Sicilian slags—a less than gorgeous group that invades Naples and causes the drastic depreciation of dago pussy for everyone—are so desperate for the dollars of darkie GIs, who are quite stereotypically only interested in fucking blonde white women, that they wear blonde wigs on their overly punished sub-prole pussies. Of course, desperate times call for desperate measures, but somehow I seriously doubt that the all-the-more-demolished krauts had reached such ungodly extremes of virtually transcendental whoredom, even if the kraut capitulation resulted in the unwanted births of various Günther Kaufmann bastard types. In short, *The Skin*—a sometimes vertiginously vulgar film full of venal vulgarians that manages to find a certain assuredly aberrant joy in the collective degeneration of a sub-piss-poor peoples—exemplifies the sort of

scathing cynicism, shameless honesty (paradoxically combined with grandiose dishonesty), and 'unflattering humanism' that guidos do best. Forget Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948), Cavani's odious odyssey of obscenity dares to plunge the viewer into the true dark disgusting depths of despair and destitution that plagued the defeated peoples of the Axis Powers in a manner that no Teutonic filmmaker has ever dared to touch despite the New German Cinema obsession with WWII and its virtually post-apocalyptic aftermath. Still, Cavani's underrated flick makes for a great double feature with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's classic *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979).

While *The Skin* is uniquely unflattering in its depiction of Italians, it is strangely 'pro-American' in a sort of cynical backhanded Italian sense where the dumb uncultivated yank is ridiculed for his naiveté. Indeed, as Cavani stated in the featurette *At the Frontier of the Apocalypse* in regard to the source writer's view of dumb yanks, "Malaparte sees the Americans in *THE SKINS* as a young and naïve people, which is somewhat true, and he's very attached to them. He has a love for them. There's a love for this quality, as if they were still clean, somehow untouched by sin, by the sin of war, the sin of butchery, by these things. He sees them in a positive way, as a person who has a positive view of the world would. And this comes out. He sees them as naïve because a city like Naples is the complete opposite of the American mentality. It can't get any more different." As to the right sort of symbol of strong puritanical American naiveté, Cavani felt that Burt Lancaster—a cultivated American that already contributed greatly to guido cinema via masterful Luchino Visconti flicks like *The Leopard* (1963) and *Conversation Piece* (1974)—was the right mensch for the job, or as she explained, "...I needed an American that didn't seem malicious at all. That really represented the idea of the American liberator. In that sense, ariose, with traits of goodness. Rough, but rough like a father." Of course, as the same singularly stoical actor that portrayed the strangely paternal and harshly heroic GI lead Major Abraham Falconer of Sydney Pollack's underrated WWII flick *Castle Keep* (1969)—another apocalyptic Europa-in-ruins epic of eccentricity that combines tragicomic realism and surrealism—Lancaster was the perfect man for the job, but great Latin lover Marcello Mastroianni shines no less as the lead. Speaking of Pollack's flick, Mike Nichols' similarly overlooked dark war dramedy *Catch-22* (1970) seems like an obvious influence on *The Skin*, especially in terms of its playfully preternatural depiction of American GIs and unhinged depictions of guidette whores, among other things.

As *The Skin* fleetingly makes reference to as if to absolve the writer of guilt, Curzio Malaparte—a half-German by birth that was born Curt Erich Suckert but a 100% Italian in terms of effortless charm and unscrupulous spirit—was originally a card-carrying fascist to the point where he was a vocal intellectual supporter of the rise of the National Fascist Party and Benito Mussolini, but he was too uncompromisingly individualist to properly play the game and oppor-

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tunism eventually led him to switching sides to communism and Catholicism after WWII (though one would not realize that by watching the film). In Cavani's fucked flick, Malaparte comes off seemingly like a sort of spiritually decadent aristocrat of spirit that is easily able to adapt to the most ungodly and atrocious of circumstances, including being elegantly passive-aggressively hospitable to an uncultivated conquering army made up of largely blond-haired and blue-eyed soldiers that are quite generous when it comes to terms like "wop" and "greaseball." For example, although ostensibly working from a pro-fascist perspective while a war correspondent on the Eastern Front during the Second World War, Malaparte's oftentimes uncensored articles acted as the genesis for his unclassifiable magnum opus *Kaputt* (1944) that is more of a razor sharp amoral literary masterpiece of despair and destruction than a tribute to any sort of fascist ferocity or Mussolinian martial prowess. While *Kaputt* managed to achieve official Catholic Index librorum prohibitorum ('List of Prohibited Books') status and the author was once a hardcore atheist that later supported the atheistic commies, he was even trying to scam god at the end of his life by getting close to the Catholic Church. As to his contributions to cinema aside from being the debauched brain behind *The Skin*, Malaparte made one attempt at directing with the largely forgotten *Il Cristo proibito* (1951) aka *The Forbidden Christ*. Additionally, the writer's legendary house 'Casa Malaparte,' which he once proudly showed-off to legendary German general Erwin Rommel, appears in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt*. In *The Skin*, one certainly gets the sense that Malaparte—a man with a pseudonymous surname that means "evil/wrong side" (and is also a play on Napoleon's family name 'Bonaparte' which in Italian means 'good side')—is the ultimate cultivated conman as a effortless charmer that knows how to tell a person to eat shit without even causing the slightest bit of offense yet you cannot help but love him, so naturally Mastroianni is the perfect man for the role. After all, not unlike Malaparte, Mastroianni was a sort of unofficial ambassador for the Italian people and Italian culture, which is exactly the thankless job that Mastroianni-as-Malaparte performs in *The Skin*—a film that probably deserves the distinguished honor of being the mostly uniquely unflattering tribute to Italy in all of cinema history. Indeed, if you thought Spike Lee did a spectacular job of goombah-bashing in films like *Do the Right Thing* (1989) and *Summer of Sam* (1999), you have not been bombarded with rotten garlic that Cavani's film reeks of. Speaking of Lee, his hopelessly Hollywood-esque WWII flick *Miracle at St. Anna* (2008) penned by Judaic mulatto James McBride turns the Italian campaign into a negro fantasy with cardboard characters that includes a preposterous love triangle between an Italian partisan chick and two black GIs instead offering a honest look at the horrors and whores of war like Cavani's flick.

In Teutonic dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's brutally beautiful *The Reign of Naples* (1978) aka *Nel regno di Napoli*—a sort of Pasolinian neo-neorealist

epic where communism and Catholicism battle for the soul of Italy while the people wallow in impoverished misery—a woman sells her daughter’s virginity to a negro sailor for a bag of sugar in what ultimately seems like a completely unbelievable scenario. Admittedly, I found this scene, which is apparently historically accurate, to be fairly disturbing despite Schroeter’s laconic approach to the material, yet it is nothing compared to the sheer and utter human depravity and abject desperation of the fittingly titled *The Skin* where human flesh of the most intimate sort is much cheaper than beef and pork. Indeed, as Malaparte (Maſtroianni) somberly ſtates, “We loſt the war. Women and children loſt if more than anyone else.” The year is 1944 and, aside from 112 German POWs that are being ‘fed’ by a scheming Camorra mobſter named Eduardo Marzullo (Carlo Giuffrè), there are no more faſciſts or Nazis in Naples, or so do members of the United States Fifth Army learn as they arrive in town with the expectation of doing some serious fighting and inſtead find a virtual city-sized whorehouse. Led by the largely benevolent yet no-bullſhit General Mark Cork (Burt Lancaſter)—a man that hates his own elites and finds it easy to like a deceptively affable chap like Malaparte—the army and various other foreign ſoldiers certainly treat the city as one big giant bordello as the locals aggressively attempt to ſell gaſh for caſh leſt they ſtarve. Aſide from being hired by General Cork to broker a deal for the 112 German POWs who are being intentionally overfed by mob boſs Marzullo with the intent of ſcamming more money out of the Americans, Malaparte is alſo assigned to aſt as the chaperon and ſort of cultural tour guide of a bitchy blueblood female aviator named Deborah Wyatt (Alexandra King) who alſo happens to be the wife of a U.S. ſenator and is thus abſurdly made an honorary Airforce officer. A ſuppoſed ‘Queen of the Sky’ that flies into Naples as part of a nonſenſical publicity ſtunt that, much to General Cork’s chagrin, is backed by both Eisenhower and FDR, Mrs. Wyatt—a ſuperficially cultured dame whose beauty is only transcended by her hubris—is an uptight cunt that immediately demonſtrates a ſenſe of racial ſuperiority over the lowly ſwarthy guido people that ſhe has oſtenſibly come to pay tribute to. Of course, being a man of ſubtle almoſt-Svengali-like ſeduction talents that oftentimes relies on projecting a deceptive image of adoring obſequiousness, Malaparte effortlessly gets his revenge on Mrs. Wyatt when ſhe leaſt ſuſpects it by forcing her to virtually bathe in her own ſanctimonious hypocrisy. Indeed, Malaparte brings Wyatt to a virtual white ſlave market where Italian mothers pimp their prepubescent ſons to Moroccan ſoldiers and the upperclass lady naturally completely loſes it when ſhe witnesses an Islamic pervert examining the anuſes of theſe poor forſaken boys, thus reſulting in her loſing a not-all-that-small ſegment of her hair after the ſwarthy ſexual ſavage takes a ſwing at her with a dagger (notably, ſaid ſand ſavage then proceeds to ſhowoff his ‘white woman hair trophy’ to his equally thrilled ſavage comrades). Needless to ſay, the voyage to Italy does not end well for Mrs. Wyatt as ſhe crashes her plane

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after Mount Vesuvius erupts and is subsequently the victim of a gang-rape scenario by her own American GIs in an unsettling scenario where the flying diva is brought down to the same level of abject degradation as the Neapolitan people that she previously looked down on in a scenario that would probably provide catharsis to certain guido viewers.

Aside from General Cork, Malaparte also befriends a young naïve but well-meaning GI named Jimmy Wren (Ken Marshall) who does not think twice about partaking in as much as guidette pussy as he can possibly penetrate, or so one would assume from all his bragging. In fact, when a Judaic comrade named Goldberg complains, "Are you crazy? Every nigger this side of the Atlantic has been in them wop broads. You forget them movies about what happens to your pecker if you get the clap?," Jimmy boy simply mocks his fellow GI for sticking to pathetically masturbating to porno magazines despite having unlimited vaginal opportunities in Naples. Despite partaking in prostitutes and even obtaining an Italian girlfriend (Rosaria Della Femmina), Jimmy eventually unexpectedly falls in love with a young Italian peasant girl named Maria Concetta (Liliana Tari) after encountering her selflessly comforting a dying GI whose guts and intestines are literally hanging outside his stomach. Needless to say, Jimmy suffers a mental breakdown of sorts upon discovering that his beloved Maria Concetta is part of a sick sideshow attraction as the supposed 'only remaining virgin in Naples' where he father charges GIs to finger her hymen-intact honeypot. In fact, Jimmy is so disturbed by this quasi-incestuous scenario that he angrily uses his fingers to break Maria's hymen and then proceeds to wipe the fresh blood on her father-cum-pimp's face in disgrace. Luckily, Jimmy finally gets over it and decides to bring Maria Concetta home as a war bride, or so he tells a less than enthused Malaparte who is probably not proud about being the member of a defeated nation where all the hot young girls are desperate to leave. Of course, despite the degradation that she suffers at the hands (or, in this case, fingers) of horny GIs, Maria Concetta is one of the lucky ones because, as Malaparte explains to Jimmy in regard to the prostitution situation in Naples, "Well, you know, the price of human flesh is below that for beef or pork. A week ago, you could get a 20 year old girl for 10 dollars. Now she'd be worth no more than four ... bones and all. The Sicilian girls flooded the market. They're older, so they cost less." Needless to say, the Sicilian streetwalkers are depicted as the most grotesque and ill-shapen of pussy-peddlers.

As an ex-fascist turned reluctant pro-American that seems to simply opportunistically support whoever is winning, Malaparte may not seem like a serious man of principle but as he proudly proclaims to Miss Wyatt and some dinner guests, "The real Italian flag does not show three colors but the male organ. Morality, Honor, Family, the cult of religion are all there, between the legs." In short, Malaparte is a covert pagan of sorts that has experienced what happens when civilization is stripped away and untamed libido reigns. Indeed, more than

anywhere else, defeated nations reveal that sex sells and that everyone is willing to sell it if they are desperate enough, especially when conquering armies can simply pillage pussy for free as some of the GIs attempt to do in the film. Somewhat subversively, the film also dares to depict the racial character of sex and how certain groups are more hopelessly depraved than others. Indeed, whereas various Muslims are depicted as boy-buggering barbarians and “sodomite who likes sunflowers,” negroes are depicted as sort of anti-alchemists that love defiling golden hair. In fact, civil rights saint Emmett Till’s father Louis Till was executed by the U.S. Army on July 2, 1945 after taking part in the murder of an Italian woman and the rape of two others while surviving in the Italian Campaign as an American soldier (notably, great modernist poet and fascist propagandist Ezra Pound, who was imprisoned alongside the colored lust killer, mentions Till in lines 171-173 of Canto 74 of his *Pisan Cantos*). Of course, in general, the American GIs, especially of the Anglo-Saxon sort, come out looking as the least sexually debauched. Needless to say, aside from the love affair between Jimmy Wren and Maria Concetta, all the sexual behavior depicted in *The Skin* is simply grotesque and that this completely loveless lust exposes human-beings as being nothing more than bestial animals, albeit worse as at least (some) humans have a conscience and thus should know better. In that sense, war and its aftermath is where man is at his most unflatteringly atavistic, or so one discovers while watching *The Skin*.

Naturally, *The Skin* would not be the artsploitation war film par excellence if it did not conclude in a highly sensational apocalyptic fashion where a Boston Brahmin-like bitch crashes her plane and faces a world of pain in the form of rape-happy GIs and is forced to learn a little humility for once in her luxurious life. Undoubtedly, Mrs. Wyatt’s nightmarish night in Naples almost seems like the auteuress’ revenge as the American aristocrat is previously depicted going on a hateful anti-Italian rant and spitting the following acidic vile at protagonist Malaparte, “I hate your attitude, you Latin snob! Know-it-all! All of you! Backwards! Scummy! Oily! Hairy, dark, greasy gigolos! Wop! Wop! And you’re laughing at me? You can stick your flag right between your legs, up your ass!” Rather regrettably, Malaparte does largely prove to be a know-it-all as far as his patently pessimistic perspective is concerned and the film even concludes with the hapless hero becoming hopelessly dejected after witnessing a happy Italian peasant man celebrating the American occupation being completely crushed by an American tank in an allegorical scene that more or less sums up the cultural effect of the American occupation on Italy. Needless to say, it is no coincidence that the film concludes with the arrival of the U.S. Fifth Army in Rome through the rather paradisiacal Appian Way. As Malaparte somberly states to his young American ‘friend’ after witnessing the crushing of a fellow goombah by an American tank, “You can go, Jimmy. You are the winners.”

In terms of its absolutely scathing and sardonic sentiments that are in stark

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contrast to the heavyhearted humanism of classic Italian films like Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and *Umberto D.* (1952) and Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945), *The Skin* is like the anti-neorealist film par excellence and a tastefully tasteless tribute to maestro Malaparte's almost otherworldly cynicism in relation to the American so-called liberation of Italy. Indeed, as Peter Bondanella noted in his classic text *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (1983), "Cavani investigates a moment of Italian history already familiar from many well-known neorealist films; however, she captures it from an entirely different perspective. In place of the nobler values of sacrifice and courage neorealist films celebrate, Cavani forces us to reconsider the dramatic story of occupied Naples as the relationship between the victor and vanquished. The director implicitly protests the cultural hegemony of America over Italy that began during the last year of the war. Malaparte's grotesque realism survives from the novel [...] The romanticism associated with the war by those who fought on the winning side, or who participated in the Resistance, is removed from Cavani's story, and what remains is a tale of survival, of saving one's skin in the midst of hardship, starvation, depravity, and uncertainty [...] Cavani reminds us, human history is made at the expense of human sacrifice, literally from our hides." As American half-wop Abel Ferrara's rather depressing documentary *Napoli, Napoli, Napoli* (2009) reveals, it seems that Naples has yet to completely recover from the Second World War, but then again this is a historically degenerate place that, as depicted in *The Skin*, there is, among other things, an old 'womb envy' tradition of 'gay birth' where a gay guido pretends to go into labor and give birth to a sort of mock baby boy with a large cock after nine months of 'gay marriage.' Of course, this absurd 'gay birth' celebration is organically Neapolitan and should stay that way as it would be a shame if it replaced by American trash like *Queer Eye* and *Drag Queen Story Hour* in terms of representing gay goombah identity.

Despite being assuredly antifascist, *The Skin* does follow in a certain distinctly Italian tradition as exemplified by the proto-fascist aesthetic perversity of Malaparte and his contemporary Gabriele D'Annunzio who, on top of writing decadent Nietzschean literary, was the first 'Duce' and a great national war hero that Benito Mussolini stole most of his best ideas from. Of course, Cavani's most (in)famous film *The Night Porter* is even more of a reflection of this sort of perverse fascist aestheticism, but I digress. In my opinion, what *The Skin* ultimately demonstrates is that Cavani is, at best, a sort of inordinately cultivated exploitation auteur that, due to her gender and propensity towards controversial subject matter, scammed her way into the arthouse, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Indeed, even in a film like *Francesco* (1989)—the second film of the director's career-spanning *St. Francis of Assisi* trilogy—where Cavani attempts what Paul Schrader has described as 'transcendental style,' the almost absurdly amoral female filmmaker cannot help but include a scene where a completely unclad Mickey Rourke, who curiously portrays the titular lead, literally fucks

snow. As for anyone that knows anything about Nietzsche or his philosophical *weltanschauung*, *Beyond Good and Evil* manages to make John Huston's obscure cinematic disaster *Freud: The Secret Passion* (1962) seem like a respectable biopic by comparison. As for her Jun'ichirō Tanizaki adaptation *The Berlin Affair* (1985)—a film depicting a bizarre love triangle between a Nazi diplomat, his wife, and the daughter of a Japanese ambassador—it is about as erotic and aesthetically potent as a mid-1990s Showtime softcore flick, but I digress.

Undoubtedly, there is no sharper contrast to the films of Cavani and novels of Malaparte than the writings of Italian 'super fascist' Julius Evola who denounced the stereotypical dirty debauched dago types that *The Skin* so unforgettably depicts. Indeed, in a chapter entitled 'Latin Character—Roman World—Mediterranean Soul' featured in his book *Gli uomini e le rovine* (1953) aka *Men Among the Ruins: Post-War Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist*, Evola makes a dichotomous comparison between two very different Italian types. Indeed, whereas the 'Roman' type is stoic, noble, disciplined, loyal, hierarchal, and orderly, the 'Mediterranean' type is histrionic, amoral, undisciplined, disloyal, resentful, disorderly, and proudly sexually ill-restrained. Needless to say, Evola believes that the Mediterranean type has come to define the Italian people, or as the magical baron once wrote, "The qualities of the 'Roman' type represent the positive limit of dispositions hidden in the best parts of our people, just as the qualities characterized as 'Mediterranean' correspond to the negative limit and the less noble part of it; these limits are also found as components in other peoples, especially in the 'Latin' group. However, we must realize that too many times behaviors resembling the 'Mediterranean' type have been identified, especially abroad, as typically Italian, and that the 'Mediterranean' component appears to have prevailed overall in Italian life following World War II." Of course, *The Skin* and most of Cavani's other films confirm Evola's unflattering thesis.

When reading Evola's remarks on Nietzsche, it almost seems absurdly ironic that Cavani—a woman that, not unlike fellow Italian filmmaker Luchino Visconti, certainly had a German obsession of sorts—would even dare to direct a biopic about the Teutonic philosopher yet, at the same time, some of his ideas also strangely support the Cavanian style of filmmaking and a sort of 'Italian' romanticism in general. Indeed, as Evola wrote, "Nietzsche himself warned against every morality that tends to dry up every impetuous current of the human soul instead of channeling it. The capability of control, equilibrium, continuity in feeling and in willing must not lead to a withering and mechanization of one's being, as seems to be the case with some negative traits of the central-European and Anglo-Saxon. What matters is not to suppress passion and to give to the soul a beautiful, regulated, and homogenous, though flat form; but rather to organize one's being in an integral way around the capability of recognizing, discriminating, and adequately utilizing the impulses and the lights that emerge from one's deep recesses. It cannot be denied that passion is predomi-

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nant in many Mediterranean Italian types, but this disposition does not amount to a defect, but rather to an enrichment, provided it finds its correlative in a firmly organized life." Of course, it can be argued that, in terms of the artistic life she has lived, Cavani somewhat ironically achieved this lofty Evolian ideal. Additionally, *The Skin* undoubtedly proves that Evola, Malaparte, and Cavani share similar sentiments in regard to the racial differences between Italians and Anglo-Saxons. It is certainly hard for me to imagine some uptight WASP stating in regard to his daughter's virginal vagina "It doesn't bite" while exposing during some superlatively sleazy sexual sideshow attraction, but such is Cavani's singularly sick cinematic realm of depraved dago sexual abandon and sodomic desperation.

-Ty E

NEON NIGHTS

Cecil Howard (1981)

Undoubtedly, with the possible exception of neo-expressionist Stephen Sayadian aka 'Rinse Dream' (Café Flesh, Dr. Caligari), Cecil Howard aka Howard Winters aka Ward Summers aka Umberto Corleone was the greatest and most inventive director of hardcore pornography during the 1980s and, quite ironically, it was only when he attempted to direct a non-pornographic work, the marvelously moronically titled quasi-exploitation flick *Dead Boyz Can't Fly* (1992), after he and his family were nearly murdered in a robbery, that his libertine-oriented filmmaking career would come to an end. While I cannot say I have seen all 29 of the films that Howard directed between 1975 and 1992 (he began his filmmaking career as a producer with *The Hot House* (1970) directed by fellow subversive auteur-pornographer Armand Weston), those that I have seen have never failed to enthrall me in some way or another, with the keenly kaleidoscopic yet equally phantasmagoric cinematic adult fairytale *Neon Nights* (1981) aka Cecil Howard's *Neon Nights* being arguably his suavely and stylishly salacious magnum opus. As one can expect from virtually any shockingly artful, well acted, and memorable blue movie from the Golden Age of Porn, *Neon Nights* stars charismatic yet seemingly half-crazed kosher star Jamie Gillis (*Through the Looking Glass*, *New Wave Hookers*), but what really makes this fuck flick captivating in terms of acting is the Lolita-like lead Lysa Thatcher (*Trashi*, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue*), who on top of vaguely resembling my girlfriend (who is actually much more beautiful than the porn star), has a certain misleading 'innocence' about her that virtually all porn stars lack. A sort of non-anthropomorphic take on Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *What Alice Found There* (1871) meets a transsexualized tribute to *Psycho* (1960) with a preposterous 'poetic' tribute to the famous shower scene in Hitchcock's film (not to mention a Hitchcockian appearance by director Cecil Howard himself), *Neon Nights* is a wickedly wanton work of the quasi-psychoanalytic sort about a melancholy blonde teenage nymphet with a rather serious, albeit mostly subconscious, *Electra* complex. The first cinematic collaboration between Howard and his seemingly equally talented screenwriter/associate producer Anne Wolff aka Anne Randall (who would go on to pen some of Howard's greatest works, including *Foxtrot* (1982), *Spitfire* (1982), *Snake Eyes* (1982), *The Last X-Rated Movie* (1990), etc.), *Neon Nights* is a naughty nymphomaniac nightmare that proves that, indeed, telekinesis can be titillating and that at least one pornographer was able to utilize mirrors and doppelgangers/shadows in a manner not that unlike Herr Fassbinder.

A swarthy middle-aged Semite named Robert (Jamie Gillis) is giving his single mother girlfriend (Linda Vale) a 'shocker' (i.e. 'two in the pink and one in the stink') and the lecherous old lady cannot help but moan with overwhelm-

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ing pleasure, which catches the sensual attention of the woman's petite yet busty blonde teen dream daughter named Sandy (Lysa Thatcher). While mother eventually has an entire hand shoved up her naughty bits by Robert, Sandy begins to pleasure herself by putting red lipstick on her nipples and eventually shoving a small comb in her virginal meat curtain. When Sandy goes to the bathroom to take a bath the next morning, kiddy defiler Robert barges in naked and begins seducing the young lady, stating "spread them for me, hurry!" and "show me how you wash your pussy." When Robert and Sandy begin to make sweet statutory rape, mother walks in on them, thus putting the teen in a precarious predicament. Apparently, Robert previously carried on an affair with Sandy's identical twin sister Denise, but her whore mother clearly cares more about cock than being a mother. When Sandy attempts to call her friend Bonnie (Kandi Barbour) for advice, she is met with apathy, as her friend is too busy boning her much older brother-in-law/tennis instructor Lyle (Ashley Moore). Bonnie is a rich bitch with an extremely low IQ who was told by her psychoanalyst that her innate clumsiness is a result of having "too much unresolved sexual energy," so she gets Lyle—a preppy dork who is supposed to drive his grandmother somewhere but decides otherwise after being seduced by his brother's wife (he literally states, "Fuck my grandmother...I'd rather fuck you.")—to service her with coitus so as to rid the little lady of her feeble motor skills. Following the lead of her estranged twin sister, Sandy decides to head to New York City. After missing the bus after a perverted magician named Harlan (Jake Teague) begins sweet talking her by the roadside, Sandy reluctantly decides to hitch a ride with said perverted magician. Staying in a sleazy motel room with Harlan and his equally sensual female assistant Sweet Marie (Jody Maxwell), Sandy is magically seduced by her new carny friends via clothes-undressing telekinesis and lecherous levitation from the wanton wizard.

In a tasteful tribute to *Psycho*, the viewer is introduced to the characters of witch-like bitch Rhonda (Veronica Heart) and jock-like philistine dick Snow (Eric Edwards). While Rhonda is a scheming wench with a voracious sexual appetite, Snow is a 'kept man' and man-whore (Rhonda calls him her own "private fucking machine") who is not good at much aside from blowing babes and bucks. Rhonda is Sandy's sister Denise's boss and when the teen finally arrives in NYC, the former takes the latter under her wing. Unbeknownst to Sandy, Rhonda and her bad beau Snow are involved in shady business practices that include white sexual slavery and drug-peddling, not to mention the fact they work for a mysterious fellow known simply as 'Mr. Prince' who lives in a quaint cabin-mansion in the woods with his artist girlfriend/muse Lilah (Arcadia Lake), an amorous lady who gets off to painting crude portraits of gigantic neon cocks. In what is easily the most enthralling segment of *Neon Nights* that visually falls in somewhere between the hermetic surrealism of Kenneth Anger and Federico Fellini, Sandy is initiated in an ominous orgy ceremony where she learns some

unsettling things about her supposed sister, estranged father (Roy Stuart), and herself in what is probably the greatest plot twist(s) in blue movie history.

A deliciously dark orgasmic celluloid odyssey of the Carroll-esque sort that is equally charming and corrupting but always succulently stylized, *Neon Nights* is ultimately arguably the greatest film of the late 'porn chic' era and sad evidence that pornography probably would have taken a more aesthetically and thematically ambitious path had it not been for the advent of videotapes. Shot on luscious 35mm film with a use of mirrors and simplistic yet exceedingly effective special effects quite comparable to the works of Jean Cocteau, *Neon Nights* could be mistaken for an Alain Robbe-Grillet film upon a superficial glance were it not for all the hardcore pornography. Somewhat oddly, auteur Cecil Howard made no lie of the fact he was mostly into making porn flicks for the money, once stating, "If you went on a percentage deal, you'd strive hard to have a good film because the better the film, the more money you'd make," but then again, he also once confessed, "I've always felt that there is a double audience. People that go to see an intelligent movie will sometimes laugh at what they think they'll see in an adult movie. I liked to surprise them..." with *Neon Nights* certainly being a work that was specially tailored for more sophisticated audiences. And, indeed, *Neon Nights* is quite the suavely sleazy celluloid surprise that manages to seduce the viewer in a mischievous manner not unlike how the various curious characters of the film that seduce protagonist Sandy. Indeed, a rare example of XXX-rated cine-magic that deserves being described as a 'classic' and not simply within the garbage-filled ghetto that is pornography, *Neon Nights* most certainly needs to be reexamined by the sort of cinephile that does not mind having their mind in the gutter every once and a while. As a work of pornography, *Neon Nights* reminds the viewer that there was actually a time not all that long ago when female porn stars did not look like unhinged plastic drag queens and thus the film will probably be of no interest to contemporary fanboy porn addicts who wallow in silicone pseudo-tits. Indeed, real artsy fartsy porn flicks with chicks with real tits are hard to come by and you will find few better than *Neon Nights*, a work that makes for the perfect double feature with Jonas Middleton's arthouse horror blue movie *Through the Looking Glass* (1976).

-Ty E

DEATH BELL
DEATH BELL

Chang (2008)

Death Bell is a newer Korean horror film depicting schoolhouse violence in a similar vein to the Eko Eko Azarak trilogy. The scenes are composed of incredible acting, stylish effects, and a sleek and very clean production value. In other words, your standard Korean film. Of any country's ability to hone their cinema into a specified technical category, the one that never bends the rules is Korea. Sometimes this is a good thing, other times, not so much. Death Bell starts off just as any other Asian film made in 2008; really confusing with a scrambled plot. These Asian films love to start off in media res just to accentuate how cool and flashy their cinema is. I couldn't be more annoyed. As Death Bell boils into a solid film, we are treated to several small contingencies. These also double as irritating tortures. For one, a really out-of-place disco club scene in which all the Asians dance together waving their fingers around in some post-Saturday Night Fever masquerade. What really drives this scene over the edge is that fact that all the Asians look alike. As soon as Death Bell (Go-sa) becomes conscious of how convoluted the plot is and how nothing is clicking in the viewer's brain, it throws the obstacle into the film. While students find themselves in what is first believed to be a terrorist attack from a student, they find their student body is threatened when random (or are they?) students are put in death traps and the only resolve is to answer a test problem. This special test will decide the fate of who lives and who dies. All is fine in cinema land until the film turns into a murder mystery. A throbbing orchestral score preluded with a beautiful opera piece is what drives the powerful requiems of understanding. The death scenes have the same quirks that populate the Saw series. This is also why the Saw series is so looked up to and this is the same reason why most people will really like Death Bell. When I was 3/4th's into the film, I found myself bored of the chases and the time limits. I don't like to be rushed during a film but eventually it all smoothed out into a fine outing of recent suspense/horror. Death Bell is a rare occurrence; a film that starts off good, goes sour, and then allows its buoyancy to lift it back up to the surface. If not for the creative deaths and well-acted characters, you should at least watch it for the powerful and moving ending that dictates a strict philosophy on revenge. You may get even, but when does the suffering really end? Death Bell gets my recommendation for averaging into a watchable and entertaining film.

-mAQ

UP FROM THE DEPTHS

Charles B. Griffith (1979)

Up from the Depths is an eccentric effort of z-grade, low-brow killer shark entertainment. Fresh off the hot block of Jaws copycats comes a film generally loathed by all but I did it! I struggled to look past the budgeted flaws and the amateur everything to find something charming and glorious; a sense of humor and moral direction. Armed with a lethal cast of Television actors and ridiculous set pieces, characters, and re-dubbed lines of dialogue, Up from the Depths guarantees a regretful, but flourishing cinematic experience with shaky-cam death sequences underwater. The worst idea ever when hunting sharks with spears. In the very opening scene of the film, a scene of a scientist and his beautiful assistant are conversing with lines so stilted that you cover your face with your palm. From there, a dramatic zoom-out lands framed on two hula dancers' derrières. The synchronized shaking rhythm of said behind casually frames the cast credits starting with the name Sam Bottoms. How dreadfully appropriate. In a blink of an eye, we are introduced to a tourist island getaways inhabitants and increasingly idiosyncratic personalities, not limited to a delirious Japanese man with fits of samurai flashbacks, an alcoholic con-pirate, a heavily side-burned heart throb, and the bumbling goofy owner of said hotel that gives us such memorable lines as "There's no sharks in the Hawaiian archipelago!" Of all the wacky situations, of all the violence, my favorite aspect of the film is the sardonic vantage of the chaotic riot sequences that frequent almost all of the killer-shark-terrorizes-beach genre, as small of a genre as it may be. Up from the Depths has been called a shameless Jaws ripoff many times but the pride behind making this film goes a lot farther than most spirited film makers have shown. A couple I've admired over the due course of the film explode, along with the others, in a fit of panic as the ancient "shark" has devoured more than enough of the temporary residents. As the constantly shunned wife screams, the husband replies "Fish can't walk!". She snaps back "Everybody is running!". He smiles while shaking her silly and gleefully responds "Fish can't run either!" They both throw back a hearty laugh and embrace each other as panic spreads like wild fire. This really throws an outlook on films starting with Jaws that frequent the formulaic scene of a killer confined in the water while people scream at the top of their lungs running in circles. An animal behind bars is no more a threat than a beastie in the ocean. Common sense is definitely prescribed in Up from the Depths. One scene in particular is worth a special mention. A group of kids repeats an activity of diving off a rocky mountain. Seen it before, threat level alleviated for now. Upon diving under the blue sparkling water (the grainy film stock detracts from this), a screeching violin begins reverberating, grating your ear canals. In the murky water, in the back ground, you can see a faint enormous creatures snout and let me tell you, this scene is practically horrifying in a sense. It sticks with me while pondering

UP FROM THE DEPTHS

the many highlight scenes in this film. I can't stress the importance of this film enough, mainly concerning the idea that copycat films can beat a heart of their own.

Up from the Depths is a film about returning ancestral sea life coming back to haunt us, us who've dominated their waters with oil rigs, nets, trash, and other man made befuddlement. The line "They were here first" rings shallowly in my cerebrum. Griffith is right. Creatures were here first and in no way are we to decide what lives and what dies. Before too much sympathy can come to that of the sea monster, it's promptly blown up in the name of science. In such a barbaric nod to science, the scientist screams before his last breath not to be thrown back in the water with "it". The heartless pirate decides to blow the shark up with an explosive charge. In regards to science, Up from the Depths is an important film that debuts a concept of films having heart over the blind predecessor. It's also nice to like something that appears to be hazardous to everyone's health. Like smoking before smoking was cool.

-mAQ

PARASITE

Charles Band* (1982)

In the future, nuclear war will have devastated everything. A mad scientist will have created a parasite only to be infected by it, and he will escape into rural neo-America in order to escape from a black-suited lightsaber-penned Lamborghini Countach chauffeur belonging to a group called the Merchants. All this might sound like a Christopher Lambert movie but we're not that lucky. Parasite is regarded as the first futuristic monster movie in 3D!. And also Demi Moore's first big screen appearance as the insipid country gal who lacks intelligence. Charles Band of Full Moon fame wrote and directed this "monster" film that doesn't really concern monsters. The parasites in question are mainly implied the length of the running time until some punks unleash it. A side symptom of the parasite involves shooting millions of spores out infecting everyone, but this is never shown and used merely as an anxiety tactic. I would have loved to catch this film in its glorious 3D version. There's torrents available of the actual 3D VHS rip, but I lack LCD shutter glasses in order to perfect the 3D quality lest I want to watch a film that looks the picture below. Paul Gludini looks like a sweaty and disgusting doppelganger of Jeff Goldblum by the end of the film. Parasite is just a dud of a monster film. This "futuristic" aspect is alluded to and Charles Band hadn't delved into fleshing out a dystopian landscape until three years later when he created the Trancers series featuring Jack Deth. The only enjoyable faceted design is the creative carnage. A parasite explodes out of an elderly woman's face and leaves a Street Trash mess with the remnants of a jaw chewed through by a protruding parasite. Parasite is an awful, awful film. With Halloween approaching, watching Parasite only reminded me how many horrible creature feature films populate the shelves of stores. This film isn't worth Demi Moore's overhyped appearance and it isn't even worth it to see the creature violence. The only unequaled up shot was a very Cronenberg inspired scene of a disgusting parasite lying next to a woman's leg that looked like a sticky reverse cow tongue. Also, Parasites don't kill their host. That would be a Parasitoid, but that's Charles Band for you.

-mAQ

DOLLMAN vs. DEMONIC TOYS
DOLLMAN vs. DEMONIC TOYS

Charles Band* (1993)

After glimpsing but a taste of the Sci-Fi Channel's Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys, I must say that I have so much more respect for older Full Moon Pictures. Seeing as how I took their slowly deteriorating style for granted, I never realized how bad it could actually be. I just wanted my old favorites back and this is a much wanted breath of air, although entire stale and recycled.

Like most mash-ups, this is made almost entirely of stock footage. The plot has been watered down a bit and Brick Bardo's as corny as ever. Take Bad Channels, Demonic Toys, and Dollman. Mix them together in a blender and what you are given is Dollman vs. Demonic Toys. The product is messy, unhealthy, and full of MSG. The only new elements are several misplaced scenes of battling and several new demonic toys - one being a memorable Soldier figure that predates Small Soldiers by 5 years. Chip Hazard's early incarnation was a bit more violent, eh? The heroine from the previous film returns to enlist the help of Dollman after the rest of her staff at Police HQ thinks she is insane. She's almost positive that the evil demonic toys are going to return and with the help of a hairy dwarf, she's right. The rest of the film really just revolves around lame subplots and embarrassing set pieces to make the average appliance look mammoth next to Tim Thomerson. To call this a B-grade film would be a bit of a compliment, but at least it doesn't stoop as low as to butcher the entire lore of the Toulon-related universe. Dollman vs. Demonic Toys is a horrific film by standards and the standards are deep. If you take a step back and reapply all judgments to the film, your cynicism might fade just a bit. Much like Puppet Master: The Legacy, all the "good" footage was edited in so what you get is a Full Moon greatest hits compilation. You at least have to be thankful for the lack of a slide show commentary. It's nice to see the Demonic Toys back for another round, even more so that a proper Demonic Toys sequel was announced not too long ago. Lets hope the future is bright!

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DAINGEROUS WORRY DOLLS

Charles Band* (2008)

I should have known from the title that this film wouldn't make any sense. Self-proclaimed tiny terrors have maybe a single minute collected screen time. Dangerous Worry Dolls is every bit a tribute and addition to horror as Incredibly Risky Situation 2: This Time It's Personal! Seeing as how this title randomly stemmed from the root of my mind and should be taken as a jest, the same should be said for Dangerous Worry Dolls. Calling this film out-of-touch would be a gracious compliment towards Charles Band's directing approach. Dangerous Worry Dolls begins with a quick edited collage of mulatto women scrapping a drug dispute. From then, the film just progressively gets worst. The prison aspect slightly inflates into a sweltering side story of a transsexual sex tape rape ring bewildered by a soon-to-be counter-raped by possessed angry woman with a strap-on. So the basic cover of this film is the obnoxious PG feminist W.I.P. (Women in Prison) flick of a despicable nature, only differing due to a pitied love interest. Full Moon used to be a brand you can trust. Over the years, this once respectable low budget horror company has slowly begun to deteriorate. The emblazoned logo was a solid guarantee for moderate acting, moderate production, but at the same time, a generically enjoyable horror film. Charles Band is a simple man of blind faith. A fossil without a fresh vision or idea. The only out-source for creativity is creating new sculptures and art prints for successful films he created decades ago. Although Troma uses Toxie as a mascot, to this day Troma still produces quality films. In my personal opinion, I vote that Charles Band steps down as acting director and steps aside for Silvia St. Croix, who directed the hilarious sequel to The Gingerdead Man. The legacy of Full Moon is nearly all but diminished thanks to films like Dead Man's Hand and Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys. For a better Full Moon title, check out the aptly titled Prison starring a young Viggo Mortensen. Dangerous Worry Dolls is absolutely B-grade filth. There's no meaning to the occurrences and Band could care less. Don't bother.

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SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT
SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT

Charles E. Sellier Jr. (1984)

Just in time for the holidays. I decided to re-watch the controversial Christmas carnage that was delivered in *Silent Night, Deadly Night*. In the year 1984, this film was released around Christmas time and dismissed as a holiday film. Upon further inspection, this was a slasher film received as psychological warfare against their children. The PTA and a mob of angry mothers took to the streets to have this film removed from theaters. Of course, these PMS-ing hypocrites had the film pulled only a short time later. The same controversy occurred when illiterate people took their children to Child's Play without researching the film. A stab at the enraged mothers was plastered on an old Child's Play comic with a stamp that said something along the lines of "Mothers Against Killer Dolls". The plot takes an inventive turn and creates a sympathetic killer. A child is told by his crazy grandfather that Santa is a punishing bastard and ruins the child's malleable mind by poisoning his happiness with venom. Later that night, his parents stop to help a stranded Santa only to be murdered/sexually assaulted. Having witnessed this and becoming an orphan, young Billy grows up under the stern nose of a sadistic nun. Upon reaching adulthood, he reaches within and snaps, causing his primordial aggression gene to swell up revealing the darkness within, thus executing many horny teenagers while growling "Naughty!". *Silent Night, Deadly Night* is a certain type of slasher that got too much credit for its controversy. Having an abundant amount of breast shots, the average male will feel at home with this film, but the horribly predictable script allows this film to reek of an unknown waste. I called the "two ball, corner pocket" line long before the sex scene was over. *Silent Night, Deadly Night* was a project that didn't take too much from the thought process to create. Hell, I'm sure there are many better Yuletide terror films. For example, Bill Goldberg's *Santa's Slay* which was a low-budget horror film with a plot of fantasy and a single scene in which Fran Drescher's hair bursts aflame. The high point of *Silent Night, Deadly Night* is the versatile kills. One woman, in an ode to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, is hung on a pair of antlers, leaving her hanging in a grotesque fashion over a mantle piece. Adult Billy shows incredible strength and prowess as he hangs potential rapists with Christmas lights. His pent up rage allows for his power to surge through his arms, allowing him to systematically murder without remorse and creating an intimidating atmosphere as he lifts a full grown man with a single arm. Billy is a serial killer one would prefer not to challenge. While *Silent Night, Deadly Night* had the balls to tackle a controversial subject of a child icon turning into a murderer; the same could be said for the fictional Mr. Stay Puft man in *Ghostbusters*. *Silent Night, Deadly Night* isn't the best slasher film but deserves a fraction of the devoted cult following it has garnered, but the franchise speaks for the film itself. The idea is tired, played out, and wore to the

bone. For the holidays, I cannot find a better horror film to recommend, but then again, I haven't dabbled much in the holiday horror genre. Silent Night, Deadly Night is an above-average horror outing, perfect for fans of cheese and gratuitous tit shots.

-mAQ

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER
THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

Charles Laughton (1955)

The Night of the Hunter (1955) is often categorized as a film noir, but that is simply unfair. The film misses and breaks too many conventions to be just lumped into the unofficial film movement of “film noir.” Instead of a femme fatale, The Night of the Hunter features a woman murdering and hate mongering a false prophet preacher who cons a recent widow into marrying him to get to the money her former husband stole (and was hung for). The preacher makes it clear he hates women and sex when he lashes out at his new wife on their honeymoon, due to her suggestive pose. This preacher is the sort of evil that even passes the heretic and effeminate hog evangelical John Hagee.

The “hero” of The Night of the Hunter is a young boy named John who manages to trick the blasphemous preacher into not getting the money he so greatly desires. The boy takes his younger sister Pearl on a beautiful ride down an enchanted river full of nature's various children. These almost spiritual scenes act as a relaxing escape from the overall dark nature of the film. While going across the river, John and his sister encounter fellow children starving due to their depression era misfortunes.

John and his sister are eventually taken in by Rachel Cooper, who runs a home for orphaned children. Cooper is played by no other than an elderly Lillian Gish, one of the greatest and most expressive of American silent screen actresses. I never thought I would see the day that Gish would point a shotgun at a preacher, and for that alone The Night of the Hunter is worth viewing. Ms. Cooper has a special place in her heart for children as they “abide.” Ms. Cooper also perfectly contrasts the preacher in an audacious manner.

The preacher has “LOVE” tattooed on his right hand and “HATE” on his left hand. These two emotional extremes act as the perfect theme for the overall film. The Night of the Hunter is a film truly about good vs. evil. The children in the film represent a pure clean soul and the preacher having a completely tainted (and ruined) soul. The preacher is the worst kind of evil as he is a false prophet as his “fruits” make clear. He has no problem acknowledging that sometimes “the Devil wins.”

The Night of the Hunter features one of the most powerful and ironically beautiful scenes committed to celluloid. The young mother of the children is found at the bottom of the river with her neck slit sitting upright in her car. The shot is illuminating and glowing as the beautiful dead young woman's hair waves through the water. Apparently, The Night of the Hunter director Charles Laughton was inspired by the films of the German expressionists. Laughton is able to combine the expression of the German masters with the mystical elements of nature. The director didn't just simply “borrow” techniques from films of the past.

Like *Carnival of Souls*, *The Night of the Hunter* is a film which was the start and the end of a director with much promise in the world of cinema. *The Night of the Hunter* is as perfect as a film of its kind can be. The film has a combination of children's songs, violent murder, superb performances, and a power that demands many viewings. I'm not much a religious person, but *The Night of the Hunter* has its own unique kind of sermon that stayed with me long after the film's conclusion.

-Ty E

WALKER
WALKER

Charles Martin Smith (2003)

If I had to make a list of movie genres I hated most, the Western genre would certainly make the top of the list. Second to the Kennedy family, the Irish second class white men of America have never plagued the country with a worse legacy than that of the Hollywood Western. Never has a genre convinced wannabe tough guys that they were tougher than the Western. John Wayne may have been a cowardly draft dodger, but he certainly did his part in making American males think going to war was the most courageous thing a Yank could do. Of course, there are some cool new Western subgenres out there like the Surrealist Western (*El Topo*) and the Acid Western (*Dead Man*), but there are also some new pathetic Cultural Marxist Western subgenres like the Hollywood-approved anti-European-American Revisionist Genre (*Dances With Wolves*, *Little Big Man*), degenerate cinema where the viewer is supposed to feel sorry for the poor noble savage. Brit Indie director Alex Cox certainly made the right kind of Western with his satiric Acid Western *Walker*, a film that shits on the "heroic" legacy of the American John Ford Western.

Walker is loosely based on the real-life American filibuster William Walker, an educated Renaissance man from Tennessee who had the luxury of being the president of the Republic of Nicaragua (1956-1957). Unfortunately for William Walker, his fellow white men from the British Empire felt him to be a menace and handed him over to some Injuns from Honduras who executed him. Alex Cox's *Walker* follows the political rise and fall of Walker, a man who has no problem getting tons of men killed for his idealism, an idealism that is never completely apparent. Knowing auteur Alex Cox was the man that brought us the American Masterpiece *Repo Man*, one can expect *Walker* to be one of the funniest (in bad taste, of course) character-driven Westerns ever made.

Walker is played by a young(er) Ed Harris, who was the perfect actor to play the lead. Ed Harris is generally known for playing very serious and stoic characters, but I have always felt Harris was a little overacting in his seriousness. Of course, in a Western satire Harris's sometimes silly stoicism works out to the film's comedic advantage. Whether leading his men to the slaughter via Sam Peckinpah-esque style battle brutality or attempting to sexually satisfy the hot Tamale of a spicy Señorita, Ed Harris delivers with silly stoic absurdity, a tough acting accomplishment indeed. I have not enjoyed Ed Harris in a role this much since his role as a mangle-eyed Mafia man in David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence*. It just goes to show, if you have the right director, an actor can be led into the path of his full potential.

The Clash lead front man Joe Strummer not only makes an appearance in *Walker*, but he also provided the wonderful atmospheric soundtrack to the film. If there is one thing that made Spaghetti Westerns better than their earlier

Hollywood counterparts, it was their intense reverb-fueled melodic soundtracks. Walker follows in the tradition of a Neo-Western with a more than suitable soundtrack. Walker is also further evidence that Alex Cox is probably the greatest "Punk Rock filmmaker" to ever live. Of course, Penelope Spheeris made a couple Punk Rock SINematic masterpieces (The Decline of Western Civilization, Suburbia) before spewing out Hollywood garbage, but Alex Cox's has never compromised his position as an Anarchist auteur.

By the end of Walker, it is more than apparent that Alex Cox has unloaded the message that the Good ol' United States of Gringos will never stay out of South America. Contemporary stock documentary footage of real-life dead South American bodies are displayed as evidence of William Walker's continuous killing legacy. Of course, a lot has changed since Walker was first released in 1987. America is now flooded with tons of illegal (and a handful of legal) "Hispanics" from South of the Border. Not only have they brought their bastardized form of the Spanish "no habla ingles" language, but they have also brought murdering gangs with them to boot. Maybe Alex Cox should think about doing a new acid Western set in present day America with a race war between shaved headed/tattooed covered Hispanics versus shaved headed/tattooed covered American Neo-Nazi skinheads. John Wayne could magically make an appearance (like he does in contemporary TV commercials) in the film in a dress.

-Ty E

KICK OR DIE
KICK OR DIE

Charles Norton (1987)

(This review will have spoilers in the 5th paragraph) Another A.I.P. (Action International Pictures) classic, Kick Or Die is whole-heartily an extreme Lifetime Action Original. Kevin Bernhardt plays Don Potter, a mountain man ex-"kickfighter" who after a horrifying accident involving the death and rape of his wife, escapes into nature in order to become one with his spiritual side. As soon as the same serial rapist begins striking again and more frequently, his longtime boxing pal recruits him to train the local girls to become self-defense masters. Part Dolemite and Part The Fighter, Kick Or Die is amazingly corny with a lot of heart for what it is. There's no doubt that it is bad production value, but it so over-the-top enjoyable. The female that tears between the two men who will do nothing to stop the rapes moonlights as an aspiring singer. Her "singing" is the most atrocious audio pitch I have ever heard. Kevin Bernhardt might be the most lame and un-stylistic fighter I have ever seen. When the pseudo-Goblin music begins to thump, I almost expect a decent fight scene but am instead treated with a painfully dull montage of misplaced kicks that are blocked and his "rebel" attitude. His social interactions with society are quite often interrupted by depictions of our "rape culture." If only Don Potter had viewed Irreversible, suicide might then be an option. The final showdown is recreated with a classic video game vibe to it. He transverses from obstacle to obstacle in a "Next Level" format which leads to security guards, then motorcycle goons. Fighting in a moving jeep going at a max speed of 10 miles per hour is hardly rousing, and the constant training montages of women embracing power over men is tedious and an eye-roller. Tim Wallace plays the blond hair, blue eyed Aryan sidekick who turns out to be the rapist. His M.O. is to style up in Blackface with a scraggly beard - more reminiscent to a vagabond Negro. In the showdown at the end of the film, one of his Negro "employees" walks in. The Aryan grabs his gun and after the Black man has time to stutter "Howdy Boss," he's lying dead in the dining room. Kick Or Die is hokey but I found this classic entry in the once-feeble made-for-TV martial arts genre very enjoyable. I'd recommend viewing it but heed the UK VHS edition. It cut out around a minute of "violent sexual situations" This mainly being women with their shirts ripped off and in the process of being victimized. We all know if you cut out T & A, you might as well have never made the movie.

-mAQ

RED SPIRIT LAKE

Charles Pinion (1993)

As a semi-fan of so-called neofolk music, I was naturally quite intrigued to learn that Annabel Lee—the violinist of her husband's group Blood Axis who has translated works by Italian philosopher and self-described "super fascist" Julius Evola, as well as Teutonic anthropologist and psychedelic drug advocate Christian Rättsch—was originally an aspiring actress of sorts who starred in a couple of cinematic works directed by filmmakers associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement. Indeed, in Richard Kern's short *The Bitches* (1992), Lee not only shows off her ass, titties, and pussy, but allows a girl to perform cunnilingus on her and even fucks some longhaired loser degenerate in the ass with a strap-on dildo in a rather frenzied fashion while she has an expression of sadistic glee on her face. Somewhat ironically, especially considering the later accusations of Nazism made against her and especially her husband/collaborator Michael Moynihan and their band by Zionist oriented 'anti-hate' hate groups like the ludicrously named Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Lee also played the eponymous role in Kern's short *Nazi* (1991) where she sports a Nazi officer's hat and performs a 'Sieg Heil' salute whilst topless and standing in front of an American flag. Additionally, Lee (who was apparently born Annabel McMullin, but has also gone by the name Annabel Davies) also dropped her clothes for Tessa Hughes-Freeland's no-budget Super-8 Georges Bataille adaptation *Dirty* (1993). Incidentally, both Kern and Hughes-Freeland (as well as fellow Cinema of Transgression filmmakers Tommy Turner and Kembra Pfahler) would appear alongside Lee in acting roles in the strangely atmospheric shot-on-VHS 'Pulp Video' art-trash-horror piece *Red Spirit Lake* (1993) directed by Charles Pinion (*We Await, American Mummy* aka *Aztec Blood*), who incidentally played the exceedingly emasculated fellow that got simultaneously mouth and ass-fucked by the titular chicks with strap-on dildos in Kern's *The Bitches*. In fact, as a feature film that not only stars her in the lead role (as well as another smaller role) but also co-penned, co-produced, and co-edited under the pseudonym 'Ellen Smithy,' the film is Lee's closest thing to an 'auteur piece,' though the aesthetic integrity is largely the result of director Pinion, who seems to have no qualms about artistically collaborating with a woman that violently reamed him in the rectum like a prison bitch. Indeed, Pinion even credits Lee for the film's supposedly misogynistic content, or as he stated in an interview featured in the book *Cinema Contra Cinema* (1998) by Jack Sargeant, "We wrote the screenplay tag-team style. I'd write for a while, then I'd say, 'I'm getting to this sex scene...' and would let Ellen [aka Annabel Lee] have a go at it. I have to say that many of the really depraved elements of RED SPIRIT LAKE were initially generated by her. For what that's worth. It's my shield against being labeled misogynistic." Notably, as Pinion once stated to Jack Sargeant in

RED SPIRIT LAKE

an interview, deranged British tranny musician Genesis P-Orridge once wrote him a letter reading, "I loved RED SPIRIT LAKE, I gave it to a friend who is into this kind of pulp video." Somewhat unfortunately, Cinema of Transgression anti-messiah Nick Zedd is less impressed with Pinion's oeuvre, as the *They Eat Scum* director apparently started regarded his first feature, "I really hated TWISTED ISSUES." Personally, I think that Zedd might be a tad bit jealous that Pinion is arguably beating him at his own psychotronic cinema game, as *Red Spirit Lake* is probably more tastelessly charming and unwaveringly enthralling than about 95% of the films associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement, not to mention the fact it is more sexually absurd and morally bankrupt than something like *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992).

Like fellow director Richard Baylor (*You've Made Your Bed... Now Die In It!*, *Cirsium Delectus*), Pinion is a sort of post-Cinema of Transgression auteur who carried on the cinematically transgressive tradition of Kern and Zedd, but opted to utilize video as opposed to Super-8 film for largely economic reasons, thereupon giving his 'films' an extra schlocky feel that seems obscenely outmoded nowadays, though that is certainly one of the charms of his somewhat singular oeuvre. As far as I am concerned, *Red Spirit Lake* is the only shot-on-video horror feature that I can think of that has even the vaguest artistic merit, as a work that seems like the result of the post-punk heterosexual progeny of Jack Smith and John Waters attempting to do for video what H.P. Lovecraft did for horror literature. I originally saw the film about half a decade ago, but after recently coming to the revelation that it starred Neofolk figure Annabel Lee, who is no stranger to all sorts of filmmaking as she apparently appeared in Jonas Mekas' experimental doc *He Stands in a Desert Counting the Seconds of His Life* (1969-1986) when she was only 3-years-old (it should be noted that Lee's mother is video artist Molly Davies) and even once worked as a production assistant on Bob Rafelson's Sir Richard Francis Burton epic *Mountains of the Moon* (1990), I could not help reassessing the flick, which is an insanely idiosyncratic piece of quasi-metaphysical high-kitsch where the Blood Axis violinist bares all like a proto-Suicide Girl, albeit she seems slightly less plastic and certainly more debauched in her essence. Somewhat foreshadowing Lee's interest in esoterica, the occult, so-called 'Radical Traditionalism', and völkisch matters via its playfully paganistic tone and themes of dark genetic inheritance and hedonistic pre-Christian spirituality, the film tells the quite spasmodic, surreal, supernatural, and even sometimes sci-fi genre-raping story of a young chick that is descended from a long line of wanton witches who inherits a rural New England estate after her spinster aunt is maliciously murdered by a queen-ish Mestizo industrialist and his motley crew of tit-twisting rapist thugs and must defend herself against the gang who wants to take away her rightfully inherited ancestral home. Of course, *Red Spirit Lake* is far from a modernist 'Blut und Boden' fantasy flick in the spirit of the National Socialist classic *Ewiger Wald*

(1936) co-directed by Hanns Springer and Rolf von Sonjevski-Jamrowski, as it is a conspicuously cynical flick of the nauseatingly nihilistic sort that follows in the spirit of Kern's *Fingered* (1986), albeit with the somewhat strange added bonus of mystical elements that celebrates New England's 'witchy' past (most of the film was shot at Lee's mother Molly Davies' Vermont home).

Apparently shot over the course of two long weekends on a completely guessed budget of \$2000 (as the director stated in an interview, "...I'm really pulling that figure out of a hat. It doesn't really cost anything to shoot on video. You need to feed your cast and crew. That's essential.") while Pinion was attempting to make his ultimately aborted 35mm feature *Killbillies*, *Red Spirit Lake* is like the ultimate party flick for born again nihilists, trash cinephiles, and sleazy eccentric pornographers. Directed by an auteur that much prefers the cinematic works of Chantal Akerman, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Roman Polanski to the lowbrow horror trash that he actually produces, Pinion's almost perniciously playful piece of 'Pulp Video' (which is the P-Orridge inspired name Pinion gave his now-extinct primitive style of video-based filmmaking) phantasmagoria is like SOV (aka shot-on-video) equivalent to Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), albeit where the madness, paranoia, sadism, and nostalgia for an ultra-violent American past is fully and unwaveringly embraced in a fashion that makes *The August Underground* creators seem like a group of pedantic and autistic fanboys who need to lay off the soulless torture porn swill and who are in desperate need of some nice, warm, wet pussy. Featuring wickedly wanton witches, tin man-esque space aliens, psychopathic nipple-twisting sex criminals, pretentious mystical-minded fags with bad bleach blond dye jobs, Christian peeping tom caretakers, self-loathing Hispanic crime bosses, and ass-raping fag hag ghosts with vulgar southern accents, among various other highly memorable curious characters that only exist in the wonderfully retrograde realm of *Red Spirit Lake*, Pinion's little film is a big reminder about how fun true trash cinema can be when directed with pure and unadulterated passion.

At the beginning of *Red Spirit Lake*, a semi-sexy spinster named Abigail Atavey has her titties violently twisted by Richard Kern at the command of Hispanic Hugh Hefner wannabe Diego Sardonia (German actor J.J. Straub), who is a sleazy and somewhat effete wealthy industrialist that demands that the woman sign over her titular family estate. Although the house is apparently "heavily mortgaged" and Sardonia will probably have her killed if she does not give it to him, Abigail self-righteously declares, "I'm not signing it and you're not getting *Red Spirit Lake*." Sardonia wants the old homestead because he wants to obtain the arcane magic powers it apparently contains. When Abigail begins unleashing a goofy magical spell and attempts to escape by grabbing the testicles of one of Sardonia's goons, she is immediately killed in a somewhat anti-climatic manner with a single stab to the abdomen by nipple-annihilator Kern. After Abigail's death, her young blonde niece Marilyn (Annabel Lee under the pseudonym

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'Amanda Collins') inherits Red Spirit Lake and soon finds herself being routinely stalked and hounded by Sardonia and his band of glaringly shady misfit sadists. Luckily, Marilyn's great-great-grandmother (also portrayed by Lee, who sports a cheap black wig that looks like it was purchased at a Halloween store), who was brutally murdered by a couple racist rednecks with some of her witch friends (Tabby Rasmussen, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, Jennifer Bailey, Kembra Pfahler), will come back from the dead as a ghost and protect her with magical powers. As Marilyn tells her racially ambiguous fuckbuddy Frank (Payton Farley) via telephone upon arriving at her newly inherited home, "I haven't been here since I was a kid. I'm the last living heir, so I got everything. Red Spirit Lake has a crazy history. My great-great-grandmother was born here [and] she died here. The town called her Mad Mistress Atavey. They thought she was a witch. She planted the big old maple tree in the back yard." Of course, the maple tree is sacred and is sort of like the Red Spirit lake equivalent to Donar's Oak, albeit seems to mainly attract the lily-licking spirits of lesbo witches.

Aside from her ancient ancestor 'Mad Mistress Atavey,' Marilyn receives ostensible protection from a crazed Christian 'caretaker' named Mathias (director Charles Pinion) and his slowwitted deaf-mute brother Thomas, who has a Manson-esque "X" carved into his forehead. When Marilyn first sees Thomas, she is so shocked that she immediately collapses and suffers a nightmare where a longhaired degenerate with black eyeliner (Cinema of Transgression auteur Tommy Turner, who directed *Simonland* (1984) and co-directed *Where Evil Dwells* (1985)) attempts to rape her with his monstrous tusk-like cock. When Sardonia sends his fairly creepy baldheaded underling Wesley (Rick Hall of schlocky sci-fi trash like Richard W. Haines' *Head Games* (1996) and Stephen J. Hadden's *Bio-Dead* (2009)) to attempt to coerce Marilyn into selling the house, caretaker Mathias abruptly shows up with a shotgun and rather rudely forces him off the property. After telling Marilyn that her aunt Abigail was murdered, Mathias explains, "We gotta talk about the angels. Angels is what brought me and Thomas to Red Spirit Lake. Angels lock the demons away and left us with the key." The Angels Mathias speaks of are actually humanoid extraterrestrials with glittery silver-toned skin that abducted and experimented on him and his brother. As Mathias also explains to Marilyn, "There's a war in heaven, Miss Marilyn. Me and Thomas are soldiers of Jehovah waiting for the Second Coming." Unfortunately for Marilyn, Mathias will later develop the delusion that she is some sort of servant of Satan.

When Marilyn plays a vintage violin that used to belong to her great-great-grandmother that creates an ominous discordant sound and subsequently performs a magical ritual of sorts, the protagonist hallucinates and recalls the memory of how her ancient ancestor and her dyke tarot-reading witch friends were brutally raped and murdered by a couple of puritanical rednecks. Needless to say, it does not take long for unclad pagan witch phantoms to begin roaming

around the estate to protect Marilyn and the magical maple tree against Sardonia and other undesirable elements. Meanwhile, Mathias plays peeping tom and masturbates outside while watching Marilyn exercising in her underwear while absurdly proclaiming, "Demons are here. Demons possess me." After Mathias' brother Tommy is killed in a battle with one of Kern's comrades, Sardonia decides to pay a personal visit to Marilyn where he gives her a broken pentacle medallion that he stole from her dead aunt Abigail and complains regarding his lowly Hispanic background, "My mother was a domestic down the street." The pentacle is a family heirloom that was originally owned by Marilyn's great-great-grandmother and Sardonia seems to make a mistake by giving it back to the protagonist. When Marilyn complains that the pentacle is broken, Sardonia remarks, "Yes, my apologies. I had to tear it off Abigail's throat. She was dying," violently mandhandles her, and proceeds to say goofy things like, "Marilyn, Marilyn...How magnificent it must feel to be the last living Atavey." After Marilyn accuses him of killing her aunt, Sardonia replies, "Not at first. I wanted her to teach me. I wanted her to teach me the secrets...the Atavey secrets...the soft feminine secrets," drugs her by stabbing her with a needle containing some dubious fluid, carries her up to her room while she is unconscious, declares, "I still speak a language that you will understand," and then proceeds to rape her from behind on her own bed. Luckily, the spirit of Mad Mistress Atavey soon appears and forces Sardonia to cut off his own cock and balls, but not before biting his tongue off. While the ghost of her ancient ancestor uses magic to get Sardonia to self-castrate himself, Marilyn gently masturbates by rubbing her clit and tits, thus reflecting the protagonist's newfound spiritually sadomasochistic sexual tendencies.

Somewhat to her chagrin, Marilyn's friends Shirley Tejas (Holly Adams of Hughes-Freeland's *Nymphomania* (1994)) and Bob (Bob Log) and fuckbuddy Frank eventually show up at the house and eventually find themselves to be the prey of both Sardonia's surviving goons and Mad Mistress Atavey's ghostly gal pals. While Marilyn has fun fucking swarthy wimp Frank, she is somewhat less amused with fag hag Shirley's whorish behavior and incessant bitching, which is all the more grating as a result of her southern twang. Of course, since he is a homo, Bob is not too happy when a sensual succubus (Julie Marlowe) begins giving him a supernatural blowjob while he is minding his own business by relaxing in a sauna, thus inspiring him to complain, "What do you think you're doing? You're disturbing my subtle energy fields!" When the succubus forces him to perform cunnilingus on her by aggressively sitting on his face and wrapping her legs around his head, Bob shouts, "Be gone, Jezebel!" in a particularly prissy fashion. Meanwhile, Richard Kern corners Shirley and teases her nipples and fucks her from behind, which she rather enjoys, at least until he puts a cigarette out on one of her tits. Naturally, when Shirley rudely states to Kern, "Well, I've been fucked better by a shower massager...and by better looking dicks," he

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decides to kill her by slaughtering her like a pig with his knife. When Kern catches up with Marilyn, he gives her a brutal double titty-twister and asks her regarding her exceedingly effeminate beau Frank, “You really let that geek bone you?” In fact, not only does Kern insult Frank, but he also kills him by putting a bullet in his brain. Meanwhile, two scantily dressed ghost nymphs coerce bald-headed wuss Wesley into following them into the snowy countryside where he ultimately freezes to death after stripping off all his clothes upon suffering the delusion that he is about to get in a threesome with two busty witch bitches. As for Kern, he gets fist-fucked in the rectum by the reanimated corpse of annoyingly extroverted Southern belle Shirley, who says to him before snuffing him out, “You weren’t such a bad fuck back there...Just a little rude. The truth is I think you’re one sexy piece of man meat. You’re so big and strong.” Needless to say, Kern does not survive the supernatural assault on his anus. As for the ending of the film, Marilyn suffers a miserable fate at the hands of Christian chronic masturbator Mathias, who sinisterly proclaims in the very last shot of the film, “Angels coming soon.”

Aside from providing ample evidence that Richard Kern is possibly a better character actor than he is a filmmaker, *Red Spirit Lake* indubitably proves that a special sort of pseudo-cinematic auteurist film can be achieved on the true trash medium of consumer grade analog video. Of course, had the film been shot a decade later when digital video became the new preferred medium of no-budget filmmakers, Pinion’s densely packed art-trash horror show might have lost a tad bit of its peculiar aesthetic character. Admittedly, I was originally first drawn to Pinion’s work after randomly seeing his first feature *Twisted Issues* (1988)—a SOV gross-out skate-punk horror flick—which, due to its anarchistic lo-fi style and fresh youthful spirit, gave me nostalgia for the amateur skateboard videos that I made as a punk-rock-loving kid, but *Red Spirit Lake* proved to be an entirely different video affair, as a work that features a preternatural otherworldliness that, aside from the films of the Cinema of Transgression movement and oeuvre of Richard Baylor, is probably best comparable to the more bizarre guido horror flicks of the 1970s, including the aberrant artsploitation works of Alberto Cavallone like *Blue Movie* (1978) and *Blow Job* (1980). Featuring a borderline sadistically darkly comedic winter wonderland realm that makes the Coen Brothers’ *Fargo* (1996) seem like bourgeois pussy pedantry and a trashy yet sometimes aesthetically pleasing use of pagan ‘magical’ imagery that seems like a hopelessly heterosexual take on some of the high-camp imagery used by Teutonic dandy Werner Schroeter in his early epic masterpiece *Eika Katappa* (1969), *Red Spirit Lake* ultimately seems like the curious result of a genuinely talented filmmaker and cultivated cinephile attempting to make the most absurdly trashy yet enthralling horror exploitation film ever made using the worst consumer grade video equipment imaginable. Aside from the Dutch arthouse flick *Winterstilte* (2008) aka *Winter Silence* directed by Sonja Wyss, I certainly

cannot think of a somewhat recent film featuring an intriguing utilization of pagan imagery and themes, even if it is done in a somewhat intentionally silly tongue-in-cheek fashion. Indeed, knowing that star and co-writer Annabel Lee would later embrace the ancient art of Occidental paganism, 'occult fascism,' and Radical Traditionalism makes Pinion's film all the more interesting. Additionally, in its inclusion of filmmakers Richard Kern, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, Kembra Pfahler, and Tommy Turner in outlandish acting roles, Red Spirit Lake confirms my long held belief that the Cinema of Transgression was an avant-garde exploitation movement.

-Ty E

DAISIES
DAISIES

Charles Walters (1960)

While I was originally introduced to the work of revolutionary avant-garde auteur Věra Chytilová—easily the most ill-restrained female filmmaker of the Czech New Wave and arguably the Slavic world in general—via *Fruit of Paradise* (1970) aka *Ovoce stromů rajských jíme* about a decade ago, I soon forgot about the feisty femme of a filmmaker and would not be reintroduced to her work until my girlfriend recently recommended *Daisies* (1966) aka *Sedmikrásky*, easily the director's most (in)famous and critically revered film to date. Although made within the state-sponsored film studio, *Daisies* was ultimately condemned as “depicting the wanton” and banned by the Czech communist regime upon its initial release, in part due to the wastage of food (a big no no in Marxist countries where many people are half-starving to death), but mainly due to the film's unwaveringly and innately ‘orgasmic’ and gorgeously grotesque essence. Directed by a philosophy and architecture student who was the only member of the fairer sex when she enrolled at FAMU in 1957, *Daisies* is a decidedly decadent, yet critically so, Dada-esque work that has been incessantly described as a feminist flick since its release, yet director Chytilová has denied she had any pretensions towards ‘female power,’ describing the film as “a philosophical documentary in the form of a farce” and that the film's plot-less structure was designed to “restrict [the spectator's] feeling of involvement and lead him to an understanding of the underlying idea or philosophy.” Centering around two marginally pretty, pixie-like ‘princesses’ that both have the name, Marie, who declare a sort of retarded and ultimately fruitless (although much fruit is involved!) war against patriarchy and con a couple ugly older men into supporting their unhinged addiction to hedonism, namely voraciously eating, playing childish pranks, and histrionically demanding attention, but, inevitably, due to their own self-absorption and unquenchable thirst for pleasure, bringing upon their own annihilation, *Daisies* is a film about pure evil in a uniquely unlikely form: that of two cutesy girls of dubious intelligence who decide that the world is for their taking. Ultimately seeming more anti-feminist and anti-counter-culture in its scathing sentiments due to its depiction of two moronic ‘progressive’ ladies with very little gray matter who see their naïve youthfulness and mindless self-indulgence as their greatest assets, *Daisies* is aesthetic and thematic decadence to such comical extremes of excess and ungodliness that it makes the hippie movement that hit the Occident like the innately intemperate behavior of spoiled children who think their farts smell like, well, daisies. Celluloid sitophilia at its most exquisitely and keenly yet ultimately deceptively kaleidoscopic, *Daisies* is a cinematic philosophical criticism of humanity at its most potently pretty and least prudish, especially for an avant-garde flick.

Beginning with industrial and battle footage, including the Pacific Theatre

during World War II, *Daisies* takes a dramatic change of pace when it introduces its two cutesy 'protagonists' Marie I (Jitka Cerhová) and Marie II (Ivana Karbanová), both of whom are in bathing suits and, despite their corny charisma, were played by non-actors. Marie II—a redhead with an unflattering bowl cut who is somewhat the 'leader' of the two gals—narcissistically describes herself as looking like a 'virgin,' but that will soon change when the two soon-to-be-lecherous lasses tell the world to go fuck itself. Before the viewer knows it, both Marie I and Marie II are dancing in front of a tree that is reminiscent of the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil' from the biblical story of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2-3 and naturally one of the girls decides to sink her teeth into a piece of forbidden fruit, which causes both little ladies to fall and nonsensically land in their apartment and make their dramatic transformation from virtual 'clean slates' with next to nil personalities into sinister yet silly succubi who emotionally and economically use men to support their beyond gluttonous appetites for food, attention, and girlish destruction. After Marie I cons an unsuspecting sugar daddy to take her on a date at a fancy restaurant, Marie II, using a false identity, randomly appears at the dinner table and proceeds to eat everything in sight, proudly declaring, "I love food. It's delicious" while criticizing her dinner companions for eating like civilized folk. Of course, Marie II's food fetishism influences Marie I to eat just as decadently as well and after dinner she belittles her 'mature' date due to his advanced age, as if he, being an old and unattractive fellow, can be blamed for being interested in dating a young and attractive girl. Later on, Marie I and Marie II head to an anachronistic nightclub with a 'Roaring Twenties'-style Charlie Chaplin-like dancer and a frisky flapper, who look like they could have stepped off the set of HBO's *Boardwalk Empire* and whose decided decadence reflects that the 'liberation' of the 1960s is nothing new, but merely something that has been drastically repackaged.

Not surprisingly, the two girls get good and wasted and cause childish social chaos at the nightclub and afterward Marie II—the most aggressive and 'progressive' of the two girls—goes to the apartment of a butterfly collector and provocatively places framed butterfly displays in front of her naughty bits. Of course, dead Papilionoidea only manage to captivate Marie II for so long as she naturally gets hungry again and she reunites with Marie I to quench her imaginary starvation. On their way to indulge eating like foul food sluts, the two girls take a small rowboat for their trip and the girls discuss their decided dissatisfaction with an old gardener ignoring them, one Marie complaining, "I wonder why that gardener didn't notice us?... Why didn't he at least tell us off?... He wasn't even sorry for us!..." and the other equally narcissistically stating, "What an old fogey! We're still young... We're young and we've got our whole lives ahead of us!" but little do the two little ladies realize that their senseless and wasteful gluttony will ultimately lead to their self-prophesized premature deaths. Eventually, Marie I and Marie II end up at a rundown Soviet-like factory where they have

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the good fortune of discovering an extravagant, kingly feast prepared assumedly for psychopathic communist leaders. In a retardedly ritualistic manner, Marie I and Marie II gorge the food and make a huge mess like little piggies and destroy the inside of the factory, even swinging from a giant chandelier, but before they know it they are treated like common witches and dunked in water like common witches (they are more like philistine pixie bitches) with the text, “is there any way to mend what’s been destroyed?” appearing in the background. Having a change of heart in regard to the hyper-hedonism and cock-teasing trickster like ways, the girls decide to repent by cleaning up the huge mess they made in the commie factory, but in the end, their efforts are in vain and too little, too late as both Marie I and Marie II are crushed and killed by the same chandelier that they were having fun swinging from only moments before in what is probably the best death-by-chandelier in cinema history.

Ironically concluding with the dedication to people who “get upset only over a stomped-upon bed of lettuce” (the film was, in part, banned due to the flagrant waste of film during the production), *Daisies* is indeed, first and foremost (at least, thematically speaking), a celluloid morality tale, or as director Věra Chytilová told “Comrade President” Gustáv Husák—the long-term Communist dictator of Czechoslovakia and of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1969–1987)—in a 1975 letter regarding her film: “DAISIES was a morality play showing how evil does not necessarily manifest itself in an orgy of destruction caused by the war, that its roots may lie concealed in the malicious pranks of everyday life. I chose as my heroines two young girls because it is at this age that one most wants to fulfill oneself and, if left to one’s own devices, his or her need to create can easily turn into its very opposite.” Indeed, whether Chytilová’s intention or not, *Daisies* certainly depicts the mindless “flower power” of the hippies as a sort of self-destructive figurative road to hell paved with daisies and butterflies, thereupon making a sort of peculiar avant-garde equivalent to Italian auteur Fernando Di Leo’s less than politically correct anti-hippie flick *Avere vent’anni* (1978) aka *To Be Twenty* where two self-absorbed and brainwashed feminist hippie chicks ultimately pay with their lives for their male-hating arrogance and angelic heads being shoved way to far up their rosy little asses. Of course, aesthetically and thematically speaking, *Daisies* is in league with the works of Serbian auteur Dušan Makavejev, Soviet Armenian auteur Sergei Parajanov, and revolutionary Japanese Renaissance man Shūji Terayama, but also singular female auteur filmmakers like suicidal Welsh feminist Jane Arden, Austrian humble housewife turned quasi-Actionist Valie Export, and German-Jewish dyke auteur Ulrike Ottinger. Quite possibly the most ‘pretty’ and girlishly aesthetically pleasing piece of celluloid aesthetic terrorism ever made, *Daisies* is a rare Dadaesque psychedelic picture with enough philosophical meat and wacky humor to entertain even the most committed of anti-hippies, myself included.

-Ty E

THE DEADLY ART OF SURVIVAL

Charlie Ahearn (1979)

While it is certainly no surprise that Andy Warhol never directed a martial arts flick, he and his head Factory filmmaker Paul Morrissey's overly gritty (anti)aesthetic heavily influenced at least one such flick in a fairly idiosyncratic way that demonstrates the sort of racial and cultural schizophrenia that American style multiculturalism produces. Indeed, like a good percentage of the films associated with the NYC No Wave Cinema movement, *The Deadly Art of Survival* (1979) directed by Charlie Ahearn (*Wild Style*, *Fear of Fiction*) reeks of outstandingly amateurish pseudo-cinéma-vérité Warholian ineptness and unequivocally makes the late-1970s rotten Big Apple seem like a post-apocalyptic human zoo plagued by widespread destitution, mental derangement, and good old sub-lumpenprole debauchery. Admittedly, if there is any one film (sub)genre that I find more hopelessly banal than westerns and musicals, it has to be martial arts and karate flicks, but after watching excerpts of Ahearn's film in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by French documentarian Celine Danhier, I got the sudden urge to rape my eyes and ears with pure and unadulterated urban negro style kung fu. A real piece of D.I.Y. celluloid and no bullshit guerilla filmmaking, the Super-8 feature only became a serious idea for its auteur after fairly effeminate white boy Ahearn was coerced into making it after being approached by a group of young black kids who saw him playing around with his film camera around their ghetto and urged him to make a movie about the karate school that they attended. Sort of *The Karate Kid* (1984) of the New York Underground minus the elderly Chinese dude, evil blond Aryan villain, and intolerable sentimentalism, *The Deadly Art of Survival* is an authentic example of art imitating life that stars real-life Lower East Side karate instructor and community leader Shidoshi Nathan Ingram in the lead role as a sort of negro folk hero in the making who wages a sort of quasi-racial war against a rival Latino instructor who gets his prepubescent students to run coke out of his proto-hip-hop dojo. Of course, if you have ever wondered why certain rap groups like the Wu-Tang Clan (which derives its name from the film *Shaolin and Wu Tang* (1983) directed by Hong Kong martial artist Gordon Liu) have become so seemingly culturally schizophrenic that they have developed a deep fetish for esoteric Chinese martial arts aesthetics and philosophies, Ahearn's film will give you a good idea and thankfully it is completely devoid of gangster rap garbage and ill-literate neo-minstrel morons whose pants are falling off their marijuana-marinated asses.

A piece of shockingly amateurish negro-realism of the pleasantly politically incorrect sort where the melanin-privileged 'actors' freely throw around words like "nigger" and "spick" whilst fighting one another, *The Deadly Art of Survival* features an aborted script with countless plot-holes and completely dead-end

THE DEADLY ART OF SURVIVAL

subplots, wretchedly bad acting and equally botched dialogue, sound quality so horrible that it is nothing short of hypnotic, and horrendous handheld camera work that reminds me of one of those ghetto brawl videos that usually comes courtesy of the geniuses at WORLDSTARHIPHOP and that were probably shot by some random government-subsidized jigaboo on a stolen iPhone, yet the film certainly has a sort of raw and visceral charisma about it that reminds me why I rather re-watch it than any Bruce Lee flick. Certainly a ‘brother’ film to Melvin Van Peebles’ proto-blaxploitation flick *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (1971) and Perry Henzell’s *The Harder They Come* (1972) starring Jimmy Cliff, albeit sans the nihilistic message and misguided glorification of savage gutter-level criminality, Ahearn’s film is also notable for being a rare film with a positive black hero as portrayed by a real-life positive black hero who does not speak Ebonics or sling crack or crusty crack-addled colored cunt. Despite its almost quaint positive prole message, the film also manages to drip with the slime and sleaze of Paul Morrissey’s *Forty Deuce* (1982) starring a very young Kevin Bacon as a young hustler who pimps out the corpse of prepubescent boy to an unwitting middle-aged New England preppie. Somewhat inexplicably shot by S&M-obsessed hipster nihilist Beth B—the ‘better half’ of an ill-fated marriage with Scott B that produced such post-punk art-fetish films as *G Man* (1978), *Black Box* (1979), and *Vortex* (1982)—*The Deadly Art of Survival* is a rare example of marginally working true multiculturalism in celluloid form, as a collaboration that brought together weak white hipsters and poor black kung fu champs. Indeed, the film may have been shot and directed by weak ass hipster crackers, but the negroes ultimately have all the glory, thus making the production a sort of unwitting allegory for how mainstream corporate sport leagues like the NBA operate.

I once had a friend from Annapolis, Maryland who told me about a local urban legend that he believed was true about how a Japanese tourist that completely vanished without a trace after he made the catastrophic mistake of wandering into the wrong side of town where black government housing is the norm. It seems that *The Deadly Art of Survival* director Charlie Ahearn had a rather different experience than the Jap tourist, or as the seemingly naively negrophilic auteur stated in the doc *Blank City* regarding the genesis of his ludicrously ‘lo-fi’ directorial debut, “It was part of that whole thing of getting the hell out of the art world and finding a kind of cinema much closer to reality. When I decided to take my camera out to far Lower East Side...I didn’t have any film crew at all...so I could basically just disappear. I met this whole kung fu school and they said ‘Will you make a film with us?’” Out of all the films I have ever seen associated with the movement, Ahearn’s first feature certainly most personifies filmmaker/painter James Nares’ remark regarding the philosophy regarding No Wave Cinema that, “We purposely alienated ourselves from the avant-garde cinema. We wanted to make narrative films instead of art films...because it

seemed like you could reach more people.” Certainly, *The Deadly Art of Survival*, like Ahearn’s other films, could not be any less pretentious, but I cannot say the same about No Wave filmmakers like Amos Poe and Eric Mitchell who seriously thought that they were America’s answer to *La Nouvelle Vague*. A sort of cultural cuckold with a Super-8 camera, Ahearn ultimately sired what is more or less a glorified homemovie that also works as an eccentric ethnology and unintentionally absurdist example of cultural appropriation where the Far East meets the Far Lower East Side. If any film can bring new meaning to the timeless word ‘Négritude,’ it is most certainly Ahearn’s singularly shitty yet nonetheless strangely captivating debut.

The film begins fittingly enough with protagonist Nathan Ingram shirtless in a bargain bin chiaroscuro scene flexing his muscles and doing kung fu moves until eventually verbally announcing the film’s credits orally, stating, “My name Nathan Ingram. The name of this film is **THE DEADLY ART OF SURVIVAL**. Scripted and directed by Mr. Charlie Ahearn,” thereupon underscoring the flick’s realist, almost documentary-like tone. As if almost mocking the innate ineptness and amateurishness of *The Deadly Art of Survival*, Ingram is subsequently featured walking around a graffiti-plagued ghetto basketball court and excitedly stating to a comrade regarding a Bruce Lee film that he just saw, “The style and everything...it was just beautiful. The choreography of the whole film was good.” Of course, everything about Ahearn’s film is absolutely appallingly bad, but as American negroes oftentimes say, it is a work about “Keepin’ it real” and that is one of its greatest charms. Ultimately, Ingram’s trouble arise when an Afro-Latino pal named Miguel Villanueva approaches him while initially acting chummy, but then completely changes, says to him out of nowhere, “Listen, Larry, what happened the last time I saw you? I told your ass to not come around here, didn’t I?,” sucker punches him in the face like the typical ghetto coward, and then has a pack of wild feral spades attack him. As a result of his beating, Ingram is not only left hospitalized, but his bodaciously bitchy baby-momma also rebukes him in the cruelest of ways, yelling at him, “I wish that god had killed you. That way I wouldn’t have to worry about you no more.” Needless to say, Ingram—a kung fu instructor (whose dojo is curiously never shown once in the entire film)—decides to dish out revenge against treacherous fair-weather friend Miguel and his slavish ‘play thug’ accomplices. Like in real-life when it comes to ghetto negroes, these two-faced “shines” are not so tough when it comes to fighting one-on-one and Ingram even manages to beat up a couple of them up after catching them bragging regarding his hospitalization and stating things like, “Dat nigga is crippled” and “He got fucked up so bad.”

As Ingram soon discovers after handing out various beat downs, a small-time wop Mafioso with the stereotypical name ‘Frankie’ ordered Miguel to kill him because the Guido assumed he impregnated his Chinese girlfriend. Indeed, after buying a revolver wrapped in a dirty newspaper from a young boy while com-

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posing music on an organic at his local church, Ingram decides to confront his (ex)friend and pulls the weapon on Miguel after catching him admiring himself in a mirror like a sort of welfare Narcissus. Rather absurdly, Miguel attempts to declare his innocence, pleading to Ingram while he has a revolver pointed in his face, “I had no choice” and “They put me up to it [...] it wasn’t me. You know I wouldn’t do something like that.” After declaring, “I outta blow your brains out,” Ingram hits Miguel in the gut and lets him off fairly easy by giving him a quick little beating that demonstrates that he is a man of honor and self-restraint. After talking to a low-level thug sporting an Adidas t-shirt at a super sleazy pool-hall that confirms that he and Miguel were hired by Guido goon Frankie to murder him for supposedly impregnating the chink chick, Ingram heads to a fried chicken joint where the East Asian whore works and bitches her out, threateningly stating to her, “Let me tell you something, Bitch. You know I was nowhere near your stinking pussy. You know that, right, You know that. We were supposed to be friends, we were supposed to be friends.” After stating to her that “I gave you a lot of respect” because she was only female he knew that was serious about martial arts, Ingram threatens the Chinawoman by telling her that if she does not smooth things over with Frankie, “I’m going to take my fist and bust you into a million pieces – pregnant or not.” Needless to say, the petrified race-mixing Chinese girl obliges Ingram.

Somewhat ironically, as it turns out, it was not Ingram but Miguel who put his spade seed inside of the Chinese chick. Needless to say, when his Chinese concubine reveals to Frankie that he is actually the father of the monstrously miscegenated fetus inside her tiny East Asian womb, treacherous Afro-Latino turd Miguel naturally opts to get out of town and even expects his oriental baby-momma to foot the bill for his self-imposed exile, thus leaving the half-breed baby a bastard before it is even born and causing Ingram to have one less problem to deal with. Unfortunately, just as Miguel leaves, another nemesis arrives in town named ‘Handsome Harry’ and he begins dealing dope out of a transparently dubious business that he opens called ‘Disco Dojo’ that uses the less than hip motto, “Martial Arts – With Style.” Of course, the dojo is merely used as a front for dope-peddling, as ‘Sensei’ Handsome Harry has his prepubescent students run drugs for him while he sits on his ass and counts his candy money. On top of overcharging his students (he demands \$20 for every single service he provides to them) and forcing them to make him money for him by running cocaine and heroin, Harry gives rather lackluster kung fu instructions that mainly involve him doing dopey poses while smoking a cigarette. Not surprisingly considering his line of trade, Harry receives his drug supply from an exceedingly arrogant Hebrew in a white suit. When Harry fires an empty weapon at him as a sort of sick joke and then obnoxiously remarks, “You dumb white boy. I could have killed you if I wanted to,” the Judaic gangster humorously replies, “Listen. You’re a ten year old moron anyway. When you grow up and get out of nursery

school, I'll give you a real one of those." Aside from hating whites (or, in the case of his dealer, Jews), Handsome Harry—a supposedly Hispanic chap with discernible Negroid admixture—is also no fan of blacks, even if they make up his largest clientele. Indeed, when Ingram confronts him at a phone booth, Harry less than jokingly says to him, "What's up, Nigger?" and the protagonist replies, "What's happening, spick? How you doing," though the two decide to postpone their showdown for a more appropriate date. Since Ingram is in the company of a fine ass white female whose panties he wants to get into, he ultimately opts to take down Harry at a later date as he has much bigger priorities. After all, if there is anything that will totally incapacitate a black man, it is white trash pussy.

While watching an adolescent kung fu tournament and talking to a journalist, Handsome Harry brags, "These kids are real cute. Very cute. Shit....My class kicks better than that and their stoned the whole time. I mean, the whole time...I can't believe this." Harry now runs a fairly successful dope-dealing operation and of course the only person that can seriously stop him is Ingram, so he opts to take decisive action against the protagonist by hiring two ninjas from a mysterious Chinaman named Lang Wang Chow to take him out. While Ingram is banging his baby-momma in his Cadillac while parked under the Brooklyn Bridge, the two ninjas manage takeoff all four of his car tires and then throw them in the river. Naturally, when the black-clad ninjas kidnap his bastard baby and then give him an ominous message that includes a decapitated naked baby doll and a note reading "Get your baby on your roof tonight 8-PM," Ingram decides to wage war against the comically dressed ghetto mercenaries. Against his students' advice (one of them wisely says to him, "Sensei, you may be a martial artist but you're not Superman"), Ingram opts to follow the ninjas' directions by meeting them on a dilapidated apartment roof by himself where he manages to not only kick the specially trained Chinamens' asses, but also gets his wee black babe back. At this point in the film, Ingram realizes that being a hero is tough and decides to throw in the towel, at least temporarily.

While riding in a taxi with two of his students, Sly ('Sly' Arthur Abrams) and Freddy (Freddy Rivera), Ingram complains, "When you don't got a job...and you got a kid...man, it is rough," which leads to all three men discussing the pros and cons of dope-dealing. After Sly alludes to the fact that he slings coke, Ingram and Freddy complain about how it is a less than respectful trade that destroys the community. After parting ways with his two comrades, Ingram seems to admit defeat and reveals that he might have busted his moral compass as indicated when he thinks to himself, "I wonder what kind of business Sly is really into. If Freddy would have kept his mouth quiet, shit, he probably would have told us. Man, if I was born rich, I could teach anything. To hell with this whole karate business. Harry's got it and Harry can have it. Money is the real deadly art of survival." Indeed, while Ingram decides to give up on fighting the epidemic

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drug problem in his neighborhood and resolves to let Handsome Harry keep running his evil enterprise, a chance sighting by his baby-momma ultimately leads to the protagonist having a real one-on-one showdown with his nemesis. After his baby-momma spots Handsome Harry assaulting a girl named Paula from their apartment window, Ingram decides to leap into action (somewhat humorously, his lover says to him “get your shirt” before he runs out of their apartment) and begins chasing down the more silly than sinister dope-dealing Sensei. In what is ultimately one of the most absurdly anticlimactic showdowns in martial arts movie history, Ingram beats up Handsome Harry and then kicks him off a concrete pier into the East River in a scene juxtaposed with ambient noise that seems more typical of a Scott B and Beth B flick.

Notably, two years after *The Deadly Art of Survival* was released, star Nathan Ingram was honored with a medal by kosher crypto-cocksucker NYC mayor Ed Koch—a man that was hated by many members of the No Wave scene due to his soft stance on battling AIDS despite his own assumed aberrosexual proclivities—for using his martial arts mastery to thwart a robbery in his ghetto. Before earning the medal, creating the apparently very effective D.A.S. fighting system, becoming the most famous negro martial artist in NYC, training over 10,000 students (over 50 of which would become masters) and becoming a truly positive black community leader, Grand Master Ingram was himself apparently a criminal thug that worked for Chinatown gang boss Yin Poy Nicky Louie and ran with the infamous Chinese-American the Ghost Shadows, thus making his stranger-than-fiction legacy as a true black role model all the more remarkable and inspirational. Indeed, if anything, *The Deadly Art of Survival* downplays both Ingram’s karate skills and heroics to the point where the film makes him seem like nothing more than a semi-nerdy and terribly culturally confused negro with a inexplicable Bruce Lee fetish who went berserk after suffering one-too-many beatings and just happened to take out a couple bad guys in the process during his quest for revenge. It should also be noted that a Ingram biography with the same name as Ahearn’s film was released in 2012. Of course, in terms of films depicting the conspicuously culturally mongrelized merging of martial arts and black ghetto culture, *The Deadly Art of Survival* is more or less the *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) of the bizarre subgenre. Indeed, without Ahearn’s debut feature, there would probably be no *The Last Dragon* (1985) directed by Michael Schultz or *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999) directed by Jim Jarmusch. Notably, with his subsequent feature *Wild Style* (1983) starring legendary New York graffiti artist Lee Quinones and rap pioneer Fab 5 Freddy, Ahearn would ultimately sire what is probably the *Citizen Kane* (1941) of hip-hop cinema, which is no small accomplishment for a wussy white dude who would probably be instantly beaten and robbed if he dared to currently walk around the same black ghetto neighborhoods that his films inspired.

Admittedly, I literally have nil interest in martial arts films and I doubt I

have ever even seen a single movie featuring Bruce Lee in its entirety, so I am not exaggerating when I say that *The Deadly Art of Survival* is one of the most unintentionally enthralling kung fu flicks that I have ever seen. Indeed, aside from *Deadbeat at Dawn* (1988), which features actor/auteur Jim Van Bebber doing all of his own stunts, including kicking ass with nunchaku and jumping off of buildings, I cannot think of a more captivatingly confused, idiotically idiosyncratic, and strikingly gritty contribution to the genre. Forget blaxploitation buffoonery like *Dolemite* (1975) and other intentionally schlocky celluloid coon crap, *The Deadly Art of Survival* might be a chronically psychotronic flick that is completely lacking in both wit and wisdom but it is also indubitably the real darkie deal as a true 'black power' motion picture that is to martial arts what Bill Gunn's *Ganja & Hess* (1973) was to the vampire subgenre and what *The Harder They Come* (1972) was to real Jamaican reggae. Of course, unlike the degenerate jazz worship in films by the likes of No Wave filmmakers like Amos Poe and Jim Jarmusch, Charlie Ahearn's first feature thankfully does not feel like a patronizing attempt to appropriate and/or mindlessly glorify American negro kultur, even if it features negroes that have strangely appropriated Chinese culture, hence why the film is probably less popular nowadays than certain shamelessly xenophilic and nihilistic No Wave classics that glorify crime and old dead black men. After all, as MTV and Hollywood has showed us with countless neo-minstrel style rappers and films like Ridley Scott's *American Gangster* (2007) and shows like HBO's *The Wire* (2002–2008), there is nothing cool about a law-abiding negro who dares to fight against parasitic drug dealers that have completely ravaged his community, or so says the unscrupulous Hebrew and his hopelessly cuckolded minion the white liberal. Indeed, as a film that completely lacks any phony altruistic white character and where a black man single-handedly saves his neighborhood from a racially dubious Hispanic dope-dealer who has turned all the local children into coke-peddlers, *The Deadly Art of Survival* promotes negro self-determination and rather refreshingly betrays the mainstream liberal narrative that negroes need to be coddled and that they cannot do anything on their own without the help of the white liberal slave-master, thus making the film a true black power picture that undermines uniquely absurd hocus pocus pseudo-theories like so-called post-traumatic slavery syndrome and proves that black men can be bad asses without having to sell drugs or kill other black men.

-Ty E

HITCH-HIKE
HITCH-HIKE

Charlie Simonds (1990)

As far as I am concerned, David Hess (no relation to Rudolf) is my favorite Jewish-American actor. This is for many reasons, but most specifically due to his totally genuine expertise at playing perverted homicidal psychopaths of the most sleazy and degrading sort. If any actor was born to play an Irgun terrorist, it is Hess, but alas, Hollywood would never produce such a film, thus his career was secluded mostly to the marginal realm of marvelous exploitation cinema. Although Hess is best known for his infamous performance as the exceedingly deranged felon-gang leader Krug in Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972), his greatest and most eclectically maniacal performance is as a bank-robbing hitchhiker who escapes from a mental institution for the criminally insane in the Italian production *Hitch-Hike* (1977) aka *AutoStop rosso sangue* directed by Pasquale Festa Campanile; a work that makes Robert Harmon's subsequent film *The Hitcher* (1986) seem like a softcore flirting match between a mature androphile and young, shy hustler. In *Hitch-Hike*, an American fellow who calls himself Adam Konitz (David Hess) hitches a ride with a vacationing Italian husband and wife that are on their way to Los Angeles, California. The husband, Walter Mancini (played by the great Franco Nero), is a thoroughly debased alcoholic Italian journalist whose wife Eve (played by Corinne Clery) wears the pants firmly and indisputably in the relationship. After picking up hyperactive Herr Hess, the married couple soon realizes that their passenger enjoys more than playful mind-games (albeit of the perverted philistine sort) and that he is brandishing a weapon more deadly than his equally pesky penis. Being a jolly immoral psychopath, the hitchhiker utterly enjoys taunting his less than hysterical bourgeois hostages and, in no time, has them fighting each other. Walter, being nothing more than a glorified gossip columnist, is not match for his vivacious wife who is a wealthy heiress and all-around independent woman. It is quite obvious for the beginning of *Hitch-Hike* that Walter has a dark underbelly in his masked soul that is rapidly reaching a boiling point. It is only his unexpected fateful meeting with a hairbrained and pussy-obsessed nut-job that finally empowers Walter with the tenacity he needs to meet his truly sinister destiny.

Upon first glance, *Hitch-Hike* seems like your typical psycho hitchhiker flick, but it breaks all the conventions of theme and morality in this small, but mostly spectacular, subgenre. What makes the film especially interesting is that virtually all the characters in the film go beyond the prissy Hollywood realm of carbon-copy good and evil. In *Hitch-Hike*, the knight does not come to save his princess from the dragon, nor does he fancy bedding her down and getting his dick wet. When it comes to virile male potency, the swarthy cop-killing hitchhiker is the only man who has what it takes to unload bullets and unsanc-

tioned semen. While the frivolous hitchhiker spouts narcissistic and delusional fantasies about having his unremarkable life stories documented for the totally apathetic world to see, passive Walter dreams of a 'progressive' male-only world of communal buggery. It is most apparent that lady Eve is sexually repressed and almost welcoming of the hitchhiker's assertive forced entry. Seeing as her own man is not man enough to properly provide for her, let alone protect her, Eve ultimately takes it upon herself to slay the evil dragon and the venomous lizard in his pants. For her noble and uber-miss strength, Eve is 'rewarded' in a way that has no rivals in the history of cinema in terms of gross betrayal and defiance of morality. In short, Hitch-Hike is not the sort of film one would want to show a prospective female mate, let alone a dictatorial girlfriend, but it is the sort of work that would be big with militant homo-supremacists, misogynistic serial killers, and maybe a couple oddball feminists. Needless to say, although I thought Hitch-Hike would be your typical Italian pseudo-Hollywood clone, it turned out to be one of the most shocking and strangely rewarding films I have seen in sometime.

Throughout Hitch-Hike, Franco Nero proves his versatility as an actor by auspiciously playing a proto-metosexual character who has his testicles carried around in his wife's thousand dollar purse. Like a lot of great films, Hitch-Hike is even more relevant today than when it was first released, which is virtually unheard of for films of this sort. After all, in our increasingly office-based abstract paper-shuffling western world, women are asserting themselves in ever sector of society and homogenized political homos are demanding that society put male-on-male sodomy on a sparkling lavender pedestal. Naturally, nowadays masculine maniacs and audacious alphas are rarely needed to lead raping and pillaging conquering armies and are but a mere pestilence that has no place in society aside from prison and the imaginary and insignificant world of professional wrestling. When it comes to a modern look at the sexes, Hitch-Hike takes a vicious yet honest nihilistic approach; offering no answers but foretelling a more conflicting and unhealthy future. Near the conclusion of the film, Walter and Eve are threatened and affronted by an unruly group of irrational and criminally-inclined youths who give evidence as to what to expect from future generations: hyper-materialism and mindless perniciousness.

Undoubtedly, the most glaring flaw of Hitch-Hike is that the film was dubbed, but I guess that is what one comes to expect from any and all Italian films. Still, it is nothing short of a tragedy that one does not get to hear the authentic dueling voices of heinous Hess and beta Nero. For those that enjoyed Hitch-Hike, the short 17-minute documentary *The Devil Thumbs a Ride* (2002) directed by David Gregory (*Texas Chain Saw Massacre: The Shocking Truth, The Theatre Bizarre*) for Blue Underground, is also a nice, if hopelessly superficial and overly sentimental, treat. While lacking in any real intellectual depth as far as socio-political issues are concerned, the brief documentary does feature some

HITCH-HIKE

worthwhile personal commentary from Franco Nero and his accomplice David Hess. Unsurprisingly, Hess declares his performance in Hitch-Hike to be his finest. Nero also discusses the little problem of breaking his arm after punching a naughty horse during the shooting of the spaghetti western Keoma (1976) right before the production of Hitch-Hike. Seeing as his character is an emotional cripple, breaking his arm was indubitably a blessing in disguise as the visibly broke arm is symbolic of the character's emasculated impotence. While shooting a fight scene in Hitch-Hike, Nero also accidentally broke Hess's Hebrew honker. I think most people will agree after seeing Hitch-Hike that it was a noble sacrifice.

David Alexander Hess (September 19, 1936 – October 8, 2011)

-Ty E

BLACK DEVIL DOLL FROM HELL

Chester Novell Turner (1984)

What can be said about *Black Devil Doll from Hell* that hasn't been exercised in the form of spittle from drooling cult film fanatics? Chester N. Turner's shot-on-video cult classic even went as far to inspire Jonathan Lewis, to a modest extent, to create *Black Devil Doll*, now arguably Rotten Cotton's mascot of sorts. *Black Devil Doll from Hell* yields a remarkable hold over most others populating its very specific niche of actual trash, and not just replicating trash. A very special aspect of the legend of *Black Devil Doll from Hell* is the mystery behind the "auteur" director, Chester Novell Turner. Vanishing after two feature films, the above mentioned and *Tales from the Quadead Zone*, Turner evaporated as quickly as he came, picking up notoriety with VHS cassette tapes that inflated in value. It has been revealed after many fans sacrificed lonely nights, slamming away at keyboards on various forums, that Mr. Turner allegedly passed away in a car accident in 1996, as was told by close friend and star of *Black Devil ... Hell*, Shirley Jones, during a horror convention. I can imagine this being a shock to most who simply guessed that he existed, far from the fringes of cinema, trying to cope with having made such bizarre and dubious films. After all, Chester Turner's *Black Devil Doll from Hell* remains one of the very limited examples of an African-American directing African-American cinema. As you may know, blaxploitation was a genre that was littered with the byproducts of whites and Jewish folk after the release of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song. Needless to say, Turner's aggravated Black expressionism tainted *Black Devil Doll from Hell* with a rebel authenticity and disregard for cinematic procedures, thus creating this fetid wreck of a film.

The version of which I am reviewing is a re-edited version assembled by David Ichikawa. Trimming the unnecessary long shots and editing a rock-oriented tune into the credits, this version of *Black Devil Doll from Hell* is unanimously referred to as the smoother cut. Painfully religious from the very start, *Black Devil Doll from Hell*'s lead heroine - if you can stoop that low as to label her such - is a god-fearing woman named Helen Black. After telling her fellow church-going honeys that she is not interested in sex until marriage, Helen is accosted on the street by a dusty hustler taking her to his trunk, offering quality coats and color televisions (typical). This goes on with him lauding her as "mama" until she gets frustrated with his sins and denies his stifled advances. Following this scene is the introduction to Chester N. Turner's exquisite lo-fi casio-funk/sleaze score that resembles what would befall a song composed by a 4 year old if given periods of brief silence before each note, as if Chester Turner paused to remember which key to hit next. After a scene in which Chester Turner trails off on a tangent with his camera, detailing various artifacts to remind us of Helen's unwavering love for god, as if we forgot; she then leaves her house and enters a thrift

BLACK DEVIL DOLL FROM HELL

store run by a Nigerian dwarf whose enthusiasm for Kwanzaa bleeds through the visually starved film. Scanning the shelves, Helen is drawn to a ventriloquist dummy with painted Negro skin and braids that have forever left a shadow of Rick James burned onto its reputation. While being warned by the grotesque shop owner, Chester N. Turner holds down a single note that subsequently wails over the voice track, drowning her warning.

The puppet is first given life on screen during a repulsive shower sequence in which Shirley Jones suds her naturally sagging breasts for what must be minutes. Giving into the strange demonic aura that must permeate through the shower curtains from the doll's gaze, Helen gives into her tribal desires and mimics a prototype of an Herbal Essences commercial before hamming it up with a "Oh God, what am I doing to myself?". From here on out is where Chester N. Turner's masterpiece dips into the deep end - puppet rape. What must be along the same fetishistic line that *Nekromantik* crossed with a makeshift phallic piece, *Black Devil Doll from Hell* also crosses with what begins as a rape scene with a black puppet; to her eventual succumbing to her primitive carnality and casting out the ruminations of a higher power. After the puppet disappears as the troll from Ghana foretold, Helen transcends into that ever-popular whore archetype and begins bedding down random Johns in a desperate attempt to rekindle that flame she once experienced (against her will but not actually). It just so happens that science has confirmed a staggering amount of women secretly are aroused by the idea of forceful, non-consensual intercourse. "Results indicated that 62% of women have had a rape fantasy...the median frequency of these fantasies was about 4 times per year, with 14% of participants reporting that they had rape fantasies at least once a week." I welcome such common truths in cinema and their unwillingness to shy away from "harsh" depictions of behaviors that are more common than good taste would let on. Besides from this certain point of *Black Devil Doll from Hell*; the film is utter garbage. Entertaining garbage - yes - but ultimately and undeniably detestable in every other regard.

Chester N. Turner's premature passing is a small stain on the hearts of few. Granted, had he continued living, his legacy would have most likely dwindled into obscurity. There would have been no reason for him to return to filmmaking - as his youthful fiery spirit towards creating cinematic abominations had already been long extinguished. Surely, family would be the only dominant current in his life (if he even had one), had he settled down. Not much is known about Chester N. Turner other than he was, in fact, a custodian of shit. I'm rather relieved he didn't live to see the state of horror and cult icons, traveling from convention to the next, offering no insight into films other than cheap DV dreams and a hefty price-tag on ink and laminate. *Black Devil Doll from Hell* is a film that I find myself torn between loving/hating. On one hand, I loathe the film's very creation - a gnarled root stemming from the VHS format; nothing of quality this considerably low should be worth so much. On the other hand, I laughed

aloud on many unintentionally hilarious occasions and thoroughly enjoyed the experience and look forward to re-watching the flick with a group of friends. Instantly comparable to my personal favorite Don't Play With Me Part 2, the lot of shot-on-and-edited-on-cassette films are strangely fascinating to me. By no means a classic, but by everyone means digestible. Even if you despise its creation, even if it spoils an otherwise good mood; Black Devil Doll from Hell is, and will always be, fun to mock and bitch about.

-mAQ

CAN YOU CALL ME SWEETHEART?
CAN YOU CALL ME SWEETHEART?

Chico Wang (2006)

Can You Call Me Sweetheart? (NSFW though I'm sure nothing on Soiled Sinema is) is enough an oddity to be reviewed on Soiled Sinema. Essentially not a film in any aspect but a clip deranged enough to make the cut for reviewing purposes. For the first time, I've decided to review something that doesn't stray into the opposite polarities of pornography and have decided to instead discuss the introduction video to the pornographic video No Swallowing Allowed #9. Much like the variable essences of writing, editing can do many things. I could choose to write in an amiably fashionable writing structure or ditch that futile effort for an elastic case of sarcasm. Editing, much like sentence structuring, is a battle of visual metaphors. Chico Wang ultimately decided to go with a "horror theme" to suit this video of Amber Rayne's psychosis. Apparently after a "backdoor problem", Amber Rayne auctioned the idea of feverishly screaming for bukkake in her eyes. While you might be thinking "mAQ, this sounds completely normal on a plane coexisting with Japanese porn". Fear not, this provides a bit of intentional dementia that could only be clinically consoled as a fit of Tourette's syndrome. The synopsis (or what?) goes as such. Amber Rayne lies on the ground in an unmoving stance. The carpet beckons your attention but this cannot be divulged as she's prying her eyes open in an A Clockwork Orange fashion. She starts foaming at the mouth screaming and taunting begging for a load in her eye. Suit follows and she wants more. She starts throwing humility at the cameraman screaming for more. She declares "I'm seeing fuzz but I can still see straight! MORE CUM". If this doesn't intimidate the average male, I wouldn't know what would. The attempts of fingering her are deemed useless as she seems unphased by these physical attempts of pleasuring her but she's beyond any form of connectivity of human life. The uber-bizarre takes a turn as soon as she begins communicating with the cameraman. Tempting her, he begins singing a soft lullaby "Cannnn youuu call meee sweetheartttt?". Allured by his soft voice, she follows with a bravado number bringing to mind the musical number seen in Buffalo '66. Both battle for the weirdest context of a musical number but this introduction video takes the ad-libbed cake. Thanks entirely to the sombre piano theme, Can You Call Me Sweetheart? maintains an almost Lynchian vibe of musical surrealism. I'd hate to use "Lynchian" as a term but after the awkward nuclear family scenario pictured in Eraserhead and the Silencio scene in Mulholland Drive, this seems nothing but an offspring. Both works are an instance of the macabre and the mundane being spliced effortlessly, even accidentally, together. Many thanks roll out to Cheal for introducing me to this video. His promises of something I'd never witnessed before ring true. This clever musing of existential angst beyond the glamour of pornography is a masterstroke by someone who would never appear to be likely to produce art. To

quote Pete; "A true auteur work in the crowded field of musical bukkake porn. Can You Call Me Sweetheart? is unheard of, subtle, powerful, menacing, and an experiment in unleashing something abstract amongst unsuspecting viewers. It is absolutely horrifying, disturbing, rewatchable, alienating, and groundbreaking in terms of abstruse film making. Clarity's not allowed here.

-mAQ

13 BELOVED

13 BELOVED

Chookiat Sakveerakul (2006)

Released domestically as *13: Game of Death*, this little number is one film that managed to successfully sneak its country of origin past me. Surveying the box art and synopsis, I would have never guessed that the film was from Thailand. My tastes strongly disagree with Thai new wave and the various other mediums that come from the "developing" third world country. Judging by the air-brushed still of "star" Krissada Terrence, I had assumed this Dimension Extreme release would highlight thriller Americana. After I quit my internal whining and went about the business of sitting through the film, I had noticed that while the film wasn't shot any better than the rest of the litter, the development of the story was ages ahead of its own film industry. Don't get me wrong, *13 Beloved* isn't a great film but it certainly holds the torch of quality suspense films in Thailand. Seeing as the cultural aesthetic of poverty and grime is a mainstay in Bangkok, where film stock must be cheap as are the films, I was just relieved that Chookiat Sakveerakul avoided this at most costs and focused on the financial contagion of lead salesman, Chit. Besides from Tony Jaa and Prachya Pinkaew, the country doesn't have anything to show for successes of artistry or financial gain other than "ladyboy" porn. Not even the Pang brothers or the critically acclaimed Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives can surface the consistently sinking market for Thai films (ones that don't involve various forms of Muay Thai.)

The outline of *13 Beloved* follows a recently laid off salesman named Puchit. Lady Luck has turned her back on his fortune for the last time. Broke, unemployed, without a car and severely in debt, it seems that the likely option would be to autodefenestrate oneself. While pouting in a staircase, his phone rings with an offer to win a large cash prize. In our Western world of cellular solicitation, this would surely be a call that I would either ignore or cut short. Divulging knowledge of his exact position, predicament, and a bothersome fly, the voice offers the first challenge to be killing the fly with a newspaper that mysteriously appears at the end of the stairs. This event serves as the catalyst to the increasingly erratic and immoral challenges that Chit subjects himself and others to. The child's play begins quite literally with playing with children. His task is to cause at least three toddlers to cry. Chit, being a commoner and that of strong morals, does not know how to pull this off. A shove later, Chit not only fails to evoke tears but spreads a smile on a young face. Once he tastes the temporary defeat, he accidentally steps on a toy and milks this to further his quest for 100 million baht. Such challenges are implemented but the length of extremity is stretched each go.

13 Beloved might seem similar to your palate. Imagine, if you will, what would happen if *Falling Down* was crossed with *Eagle Eye*. Director DJ Caruso credits

Steven Spielberg for the original idea for Eagle Eye but it's obvious that 13 Beloved or at least, mention of the plot, influenced his ideas. This way, claiming authenticity saves him from buying up the rights and wasting more of his gold. The one wound, the critical blow to 13 Beloved's credibility as a thriller, is the awful, awful score. Some clown, name of Kitti Kuremanee, developed music that isn't only distinguishable for being a steaming platter of wasted and unfiltered flaccid notes, but painful and distracting as well. Often times, the action and intrigue of this twisted game will catch full force only to suffer at the hands of the irregular tempo and utterly amateur production. I'll admit to being constantly partial to the events but I'll also acknowledge that this story was driven enough to keep my interest; vivid in its portrayal but tart.

A major element of 13 Beloved that really scored points for me was the realistic dramatization of hacking. Using most hackers favorite tool, Nmap, Chit's potential love interest delves into cyberspace, not the digi--Candyland as portrayed in Hackers, but raw data and line prompts in order to get to the bottom of his erratic and nonsensical actions. But this saving grace of plausible network invasion doesn't last long. As soon as the domain of the finale, the 13th challenge, is breached and a techno-luxurious hologram appears, as wide as a miniature IMAX screen, 13 Beloved switches gears to silly. The fact that no foundation or screen acts as backbone to the image, which quickly dissipates to reveal nothing out of the ordinary, really draws from the element of "Big Brother" 13 Beloved had going for it - that crawling notion of 24/7 observation which leads to a fermenting paranoia. What really sells 13 Beloved though from the territory of middling to competent is the "shocking" twist which proves to be the greatest act of humor involved in the script. Marketed as a horror/comedy, the regard to jokes was never sold to me until the conclusion, the shocking cap which lead on a visage of its own. While the faux-omniscience is enjoyable, it's merely a distraction from the effortless direction. Sure, the film looked good considering what part of the world it hailed from. I would never recommend 13 Beloved to a cinephile in hopes for an enlightening experience but if said film were at your disposal, it certainly wouldn't hurt to give it a chance. Hell, you might even appreciate the "white terrorist" approach more than I did.

-mAQ

WESLEY WILLIS'S JOYRIDES
WESLEY WILLIS'S JOYRIDES

Chris Bagley (2008)

I generally do not see gigantic black men who suffer from both obesity and paranoid schizophrenia as kindhearted teddy bears, but the recently deceased iconic rock star Wesley Willis is certainly an exception to my mostly exceptionless rule. Unlike most members of his community, Willis despised McDonald's fast food restaurants and loved rock music. Although Wesley Willis got out of the hood and became a somewhat successful musician in spite of his debilitating mind and body, mainstream media outlets have mostly ignored his stranger-than-fiction life story. After all, the so called liberal elite has always loved propagandizing real-life stories about minorities and handicapped individuals who – despite the blatant odds against their success – became cultural icons, yet the incredible (albeit short) life of Wesley Willis is only known by his mostly marginal fans. In the documentary *Wesley Willis's Joyrides*, one is introduced to the joyful joyrides and devilish personal hellrides of the extraordinary punk rock icon Wesley Willis. Next to the legendary Bad Brains – an all-black hardcore/reggae outfit – Wesley Willis is the most well known and revered black man in the mostly white punk rock genre, yet the gigantic schizoid negro frontman was more interested in pure rock 'n' roll; a genre largely pioneered by his ancestors, but later abandoned by later generations of black Americans. Wesley Willis may have lacked the guitar virtuoso skills of Jimi Hendrix, but he certainly put his entire haunted soul into his unconventional and totally genuine music. On top of creating a variety of original songs, Willis also covered songs ranging from popular British New Wave group Duran Duran's "Girl on Film" to American country-rock band Pure Prairie League's "Amie." *Joyrides* is a documentary that presents Wesley Willis at his ecstatic highs and tormented lows, thus it is a fairly objective flick that captures its subject beautifully; presenting the rocker's incomparable essence like never before.

The nineteenth century German scientist Karl Vogt once pointed out in his book *Man and his Place in Nature* that, "The skull of a Negro is as strong as ivory. In a fight, the Negro attempts to strike the chest of his opponent with his head, and both Negroes resemble lunging rams in the process." Wesley Willis is certainly an exception to Vogt's theory as he used his gigantic cranium to head butt friends and fans as a gentlemanly gesture of affection. In fact, due to Willis's lifelong friendly skull-tapping, the rambunctious rocker acquired a permanent mark of discoloration on his forehead. Contained within the punk rock star's indestructible skull was a brain that demanded his body to endlessly draw pictures of freeways and cars, solve complex (but pointless) math equations, and write songs about his lifelong obsessions; including (but not limited to): Ronald Reagan, McDonald's Big Macs, police, demons, and corrupt governments. Despite

his completely genuine interest in creating art, Wesley Willis made no lie of his affinity for cash-money. Like a fat kid in a candy store, Willis was known to go into music stores and buy the finest keyboards and accessories. In *Joyrides*, some of Willis's buying frenzies are intimately documented. Willis's in-store demonic freak-outs are candidly presented in the documentary as well. Wesley Willis had an extremely tragic and violent childhood which seems to be the root of the demons that would haunt him for the rest of his burdensome life. During *Joyrides*, it is revealed that Willis started hearing devilish voices after his deranged convicted felon stepfather beat him. Unsurprisingly, when Willis was a child, he and his brother were taken away from their negligent parents. As a result of his unforgettable misfortunes, Wesley Willis left his childhood ghetto in Chicago and hoped to never look back. In one particularly disturbing scene, Wesley Willis emotionally tells about how he was sliced in the face by a fellow brotha' during a violent robbery. Luckily, Wesley Willis started many friendships with bourgeois artists who were sympathetic towards his plight, henceforth allowing the rocker to crash in their homes. Of course, Wesley Willis was certainly no freeloader as he eventually earned his own cash when his band *The Wesley Willis Fiasco* became somewhat successful in the early 1990s. Naturally, many of Willis's lifelong friends recollect their happy – as well as agitating – experiences with the possessed rock star in *Joyrides*.

As discussed by his various friends in *Joyrides*, white liberal media darlings felt that Wesley Willis was being exploited by his loyal white punk rocker fans. During the documentary, former *Dead Kennedys* singer Jello Biafra – who owns the punk record label *Alternative Tentacles* (which released some of Willis's albums) – states that “misguided bleeding heart liberals” are totally ignorant in their assertion that Willis was exploited by whites with ulterior motives. It goes without saying that white liberals were offended by Wesley Willis's “white” style of music. After all, white liberals – being cannibalistic self-loathing sadomasochists – love to promote exotic Negro music as its alien character and Negro spirit give them the satisfaction that they are destroying their own peoples culture, therefore Willis's music fell out of line with their culture-distorting agenda. It is indubitably quite hypocritical how white liberals never see proud savage rappers like 50 Cent and DMX as pseudo-artists that blatantly exhibit and promote the worst stereotypes associated with black American culture. Wesley Willis was certainly not a criminal, crackhead, rapist, nor a posturing baboon, but a man whose greatest interest was making people happy with his heartwarming persona and original outsider art. Due to Willis's traumatic experiences as a child, he was deathly afraid of his hometown. In *Joyrides*, some of the artist's friends state that he had a greater exaggerated fear of his black community than that of rich white liberals who live in gated communities. Wesley Willis's absurdist lyricism and songs have been dubbed by some as “savant-garde”, no doubt a musical style that is exclusive to one individual. I see Wesley Willis as the white Daniel

WESLEY WILLIS'S JOYRIDES

Johnston; only less neurotic and more charismatic. Willis and Johnston seem to have also shared similar obsessions. Whereas Johnston wrote a song entitled Casper The Friendly Ghost; Willis wrote a song called "Casper the Homosexual Friendly Ghost." Willis's life would make for an excellent bio-pic flick as his personal story of struggle is certainly more captivating and unconventional than the one told in the Hollywood film *The Soloist* (2009), but it is doubtful such a work would ever be made, thus, for now, Wesley Willis's *Joyrides* must be considered the definitive cinematic work chronicling the neglected punk rock icon's fairly eventful life. Even during his remaining days on this earth (while dying in a hospital from chronic myelogenous leukemia), Wesley Willis remained jovial and continued to create music on his electronic keyboard. Whether you fancy Wesley Willis or not, Wesley Willis's *Joyrides* is an uplifting documentary that will make even the most bitter of pessimists see the world in a brighter light.

-Ty E

THE X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE

Chris Carter (2008)

How could anyone not be excited? Made possible with the horrible marketing idea to release this after *The Dark Knight* hits theaters, this is one of those films that we were slightly excited for, but managed to slip past us and become one of those "That's out?" films. A sleeper film, if you will. I forgot this was even coming out until today, when I built up the film with the passion of a raging god. Lo and behold, It sucks. No wonder they kept a wrap on the specifics and dainty details of this film. So, a paedophile Catholic priest has visions of a kidnapped Jewish FBI agent and her whereabouts. It's up to the sinful Catholic to save the soul of a Jew in this extremely un-tense thriller. Scully and Mulder are once again called in to head forth into "the darkness" in this incredibly bland TV drama. Like a bad episode, they stick with boring phenomenon. How the X-Files clicked so well with me was it's raffish use of cryptzoology, abductions, and other wicked beasties that appear on screen. It's fairly uncommon to see these creatures with a serious entertainment personality. The Mothman, Jersey Devil, Bigfoot, and the Loch Ness were all amazing to view in this tense television series that also chronicled the ridiculous sexual tension between two of the greatest TV characters. Scully has a difficult time trusting the boy-bound blissful priest. The two lovers are torn between faith, belief in other-worldly conditions, and what's right. There has to be some conflict, right? I'd hate to bring in spoilers for a film that isn't out, but due to it being a few of the only scenes I liked, I see no harm in doing so. Near the end, in one of the "revelation" scenes, we witness a Re-Animator inspired scene that actually got a shock from me. A distant death bed for a trans-gendered fantastical operation. Those crazy Russians. Who'd have thought the latest film to jump on the "Horrorifying world of Eastern Europe" would be an X-Files film? The plot is bland, the script is bland, and art direction is generically ripped from Fargo. If the new X-Files movie were a cereal, it would be the Wheaties of the bunch. No sugar and spice here; just classic drivel. I really wanted to love this. I did enjoy parts of it. I wanted to believe that this would be worth my ever-lasting time, but sadly it wasn't. This film disregards most of the X-Files timeline and creates a modern day world for the two ex-FBI agents. A watered down psychic story with a bullshit "twist." Gillian Anderson never ceases to get more and more beautiful with age though. Much like a fine wine. Much better than the first film. At least they did one thing right.

-mAQ

THE IMAGE
THE IMAGE

Chris Pettit (1975)

Maybe it is because he studied filmmaking with German Dadaist auteur Hans Richter (*Dreams That Money Can Buy*, *Dadascope*), privately studied acting under visionary American theatre director Harold Clurman, and/or had the opportunity to watch and edit some of the best films in the world, especially those directed by Ingmar Bergman, as a film trailer editor for Janus Films (the parent company of the Criterion Collection), but American Jewish auteur Radley Metzger aka 'Henry Paris' (*The Lickerish Quartet*, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*) somehow developed into one of the most shockingly artful and literate pornographers of cinema history. In fact, before looking into his background, I assumed Metzger was some sort of European arthouse director comparable to Liliana Cavani whose career stagnated and who was forced to make sexploitation and porn flicks to pay the bills. The first Metzger film I ever saw was *The Image* (1975) aka *The Mistress and the Slave* aka *The Punishment of Anne* aka *L'image* aka *Lesclave du plaisir*—a work based on an S&M-themed erotic novella by *L'Image* (1956) by Jean de Berg (the penname of Catherine Robbe-Grillet, the wife of novelist/filmmaker Alain Robbe-Grillet)—and I must admit that I was somewhat offended by the film's cultivated literary qualities, as if the director was so pathologically pompous that he wanted to pretend he was more than just a pornographer. Since then, I have somewhat warmed up to Metzger's oeuvre, especially after seeing his porn chic magnum opus *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (1975), and after reading an article from the British yellow journalism site the Daily Mail about the source writer Catherine Robbe-Grillet's contractual sex slavery to her demented director hubby Alain, I felt it was about time to re-watch *The Image* as it deals with similar themes regarding the master and slave dynamics of sexuality. The suavely sordid and salacious tale of a writer who begins a sadomasochistic ménage à trios with an old female friend and her young female sex slave lover (played by Mary Mendum aka Rebecca Brooke, who was Metzger's real-life girlfriend at the time), *The Image* is essentially a Europeanized bourgeois blue movie that was clearly specially tailored for cultivated Anglo-Americans and Europeans, but was ironically directed by an American Hebrew with a special predilection for blonde Aryan pussies and classic Occidental art and literature. Told in a sleek and easy-to-follow literary style that is divided into ten chapters (with pretentious titles like "The Roses in Bagatelle Gardens" and "Too Much Water and Its Consequences"), *The Image* is the sort of film Georges Bataille might have directed had he been a boobeiose Euro-preppy instead of a nasty Nietzschean anarchist.

Jean (Carl Parker)—a young and dashing fellow who looks sort of like a Jewish Arnold Schwarzenegger—is a hot jetsetter writer with airs of superiority who knows all the other people in Paris, but as he complains at the beginning of *The*

Image, "I detest literary cocktail parties as anyone who attends them regularly should if he has any self-respect at all." Luckily for him, Jean attends a hip and happening cocktail party at the beginning of the film that will change his life forever (or at least for the foreseeable future). Not long after arriving at the party, Jean spots a young blonde Aryan babe named Anne (Mary Mendum aka Rebecca Brooke) and soon discovers she's the 'kept woman' and voluntary sex slave girlfriend of his old friend Claire (Marilyn Roberts). Jean has not seen Claire for about 2 or 3 years, but he never suspected she was a lecherous lady-licker with a sexually sadistic side. Not surprisingly, Jean has next to nil sexual interest in old slag Claire, who resembles a frigid dyke high school administrator on the cusp of menopause, but he becomes instantly infatuated with young and luscious Anne and, since he has an entire month to write a mere article for his joke of a job, he spends all his free time driving around Paris in an attempt to chase down and get to know the young nympho, even going so far as borderline-stalking the submissive little lady. For their first big date together (they previously ate dinner with one another), Jean, Anne, and Claire go to Château de Bagatelle gardens and the writer ultimately gets to see the young concubine's rosy flesh flower for the first time. After Claire pricks Anne's genital region with the thorn of a red rose, Jean watches with fetishistic delight. Of course, Jean becomes even more aroused after Claire forces Anne to urinate in front of him on the same rose that was used to prick her skin. Needless to say, Jean becomes hooked on little Annie and uses any opportunity he can find to be with her. Luckily, Claire is not a greedy gal and invites Jean for a BDSM session that eventually evolves into a full-blown, if not bizarre and one-sided, ménage à trios. Indeed, fist-fucking in fancy restaurants and threesomes in clothing store dressing rooms with the salesgirl are just a couple of things Jean and Anna do together. Of course, in the end everything eventually comes toppling down during the ninth chapter of *The Image*, 'The Gothic Chamber,' when Claire's jealous side is finally unleashed when she notices that Jean rather enjoys screwing Anne and vice versa. After Jean gets down performing passionate coitus on Anne, Claire brutally attacks him with a bondage whip as if he is one of her slaves and throws the writer out of her house, but not before the concubine gangs up on him too and smashes a wine bottle over his handsome little head. Of course, Claire also beats Anne with the whip and the degraded concubine ultimately decides to leave her mistress forever. In a rather absurd twist (Jean mentions at the beginning of the film he had nil sexual interest in Claire), Jean and Claire get together and the latter ultimately goes from being a demanding dominator to being the one dominated.

A sort of more merry than morbid mix between *Conversation Piece* (1974) aka *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* directed by Luchino Visconti, *The Story of O* (1975) aka *Histoire d'O* directed by Just Jaeckin, and *Fruits of Passion* (1981) aka *Les fruits de la passion* directed by Shûji Terayama, albeit more pornographic and lacking any sort of serious socio-political subtext, *The Image* is undoubtedly

THE IMAGE

a cinematic work that, although gorgeously photographed and nearly immaculately directed, I can only recommend to fateful fans of porn chic and those interested in a film that authentically portrays S&M sex. Of course, compared to a brutal sadomasochistic sodomite fuck flick like Jacques Scandelari's *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales*, *The Image* seems exceedingly tame and conspicuously contrived, although both films conclude with a similar message regarding the power dynamics of sex regarding how the so-called 'masochist' is the one who is really in control, sort of like *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) minus the melodramatic acting, intellectual meat, and sophisticated subtext. Personally, I have never understood the appeal of S&M and BDSM, so I got no thrill out of seeing two jaded jetsetters routinely sexually ravaging a dumb young girl with mommy issues (Anne and Claire looked so much alike that the former could have been the latter's daughter). Interestingly, Catherine Robbe-Grillet—the woman who wrote the novel that *The Image* is based on—was her husband's virtual sex slave for over ½ a century, but she must have learned from the best because after her husband died she would become the master of a South African woman that is 31 years her junior. Admittedly, I would not mind if Radley Metzger got back behind the camera and directed a sequel to *The Image* based on the marriage between the Robbe-Grilletts. After all, something tells me that the man responsible for penning and directing *Eden and After* (1970) aka *L'Éden et après* and *Glissements progressifs du plaisir* (1974) aka *Successive Slidings of Pleasure* would be a more interesting character for a film than the pretty philistine protagonist of *The Image*. As for auteur Radley Metzger, one must assume he is a sadist as he managed to convince his then girlfriend to be filmed urinating, physically brutalized, and engaged in lesbo sex for the silver-screen, thus lending *The Image* a certain undeniable authenticity that similar works lack.

-Ty E

LONG PIGS

Chris Power (2010)

Collecting buzz during certain festivals and garnering a heap of awards, *Long Pigs* is a "mockumentary" fit to the design of *Man Bites Dog*, directed by two amateur filmmakers, Chris Power and Nathan Hynes. Following a cannibal during many of his exploits, not much is known about the characters within the film other than what is supplied over the course of dialog. The two hopeful documentarians created this "found footage" we have before us. Supplementing not just casual shadow to the serial killer but also interviews with members of the police force, families of Anthony McAlister's victims, and the ramblings of a radio jockey, *Long Pigs* is an independent Canadian horror film that stretches what low-budget found footage has to offer. Throughout the runtime, *Long Pigs* makes it very apparent that the brain-trust isn't within the gore but the interactions with the characters and the ending that we all foresee coming. In fact, the scenes of violence we're gifted with are anything but exploitative, rather, short and shocking. One scene that comes to mind is Anthony's slinging of a victim and demonstrating the "Gein configuration" that was also graphically utilized in *Marian Dora's Cannibal*. A time lapsed dissection of a hanging corpse is set to *The Nutcracker Suite*, a poor choice of music that only hampers the effect of butchery and is one of the few drawbacks of *Long Pigs* that can't be attested to budgetary restraints.

As a recurring theme in films favoring cannibalism as an arch, *Long Pigs'* Anthony McAlister too realizes the accessible whore being the easiest form of cuisine, especially with time being not of luxury. This was also given a degree of insight in the recent Mexican cannibal film - *We Are What We Are*. As with that same film, *Long Pigs* digresses the art of selection with victims that aren't exactly a high point of society, sans the little girl who was abducted prior. After picking up a hefty heifer off the street corner, the talk radio host chimes in with his two cents concerning the rash of vanishing prostitutes. Going in *Long Pigs*, you can toss your *Pretty Woman* dreams out the window as there is no classy whores to be found within. Although not the topic nor main prey of the film, there are enough connotations behind Anthony's cleaning of the streets to guarantee a reaction from whiny articulate women. Again pleasuring the genre of documentary, we're given plenty of face time from Anthony McAlister while he discusses the politics of cannibalism, bringing up many insightful arguments. What is consistent with culinary arts and the psychological reaction to self-prepared dishes is that they always taste better created with your own hands. Would this not remain constant with the product of cooking human flesh? The hunger they feel isn't too inhuman, is it?

Long Pigs may be the biggest independent surprise I've experienced in quite some time. The acting is exemplary and the filmmaking style, although cheap

LONG PIGS

and cost-effective, benefits the overall tone of this dark and lurid comedy. The cannibalistic musings of our lead topic outperform most other films that attend to this "found footage" trend that has begun popping up recently in various corners of horror. Inspired by select segments from *Faces of Death* and *Man Bites Dog*, *Long Pigs* is a healthy dose of slaughter and drama, stripped of artistry but with the inclusion of a wonderful character actor. Intelligent and barbaric to boot, this is pseudo-snuff done correctly - an inspired sketch for other filmmakers to take pointers from. If anything deserves to be critical upon, it would be the admittance of various other forms of storytelling, namely the random personalities being interviewed. While necessary, it causes the pacing of *Long Pigs* to collect and temporarily halt the process of progress. As is, this macabre tale of a cannibal in hiding, seething above the city streets, a sociable chameleon, is a wonderful work of low budget horror filmmaking and is worthy of most praise it may receive. What makes this film even better is the addition of beef jerky with a limited pressing of the DVD. A modern example of creativity boosting a product.

-mAQ

BLACK RAGE

Chris Robinson (1972)

I welcome cinematic oddities with open arms. Anything outside of conventions, I will take in under my loving wing. Sometimes, you got to learn how to just say no to films. Today, I'm spitting in the face of a film called Black Rage. As cunning and nonsensical the plot is, there should have been more to it or at least some of this promised Negro fury. I wanted to see a slave thug out into his societal standpoint of the present. All I got was the white director playing an "albino nigger". Chris Robinson served as the director, co-writer, and star of this film also known as Charcoal Black. The storyline was in print. 2 black men uncover an entirely illegible treasure map consisting of tiny bones which serve no purpose. When their Bronson-looking "massa" takes the map from them, the white black guy charges him, steals the map, and takes his black brother on a quest through a swamp to uncover hypothetical treasure. If you haven't figured it out by now, this screenplay wholly resembles the Coen Brother's film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* which was based on a poem entitled *The Odyssey*. I can agree personally with the Coen's adaptation but I frown infinitely upon Robinson's attempt. While scavenging for information regarding this film, I stumbled upon an iMDB review stating that his friend got ill from watching this film. Funny, I fell asleep in the credits and woke up with a migraine. In the end, I was in a hallucinogenic haze. I didn't know where I was or who I was. More importantly, the only thing that I could remember was the ending of this film, or lack thereof. They do not find the treasure, his white "nigger brother" was killed in an extremely pussified shootout that went as far as to calculating reload times and slave and master form some form of cinematic bond which would be more controversial than *Song of the South*. All in all, this film struck me as a wannabe blaxploitation film that tried too hard to integrate races and cease conflicts. For a self-proclaimed adventure film, not much goes on. This has almost zero entertainment value. You visually peruse through the characters attempting to find some golden detail you missed but it all falls flat. None of these characters are appealing, none of the action is entertaining, and the racial boundary it attempts to flutter over never existed. Whiteface it isn't. Just some crusty old white guy. How disappointing.

-mAQ

STEPHEN KING'S TRUCKS
STEPHEN KING'S TRUCKS

Chris Thomson (2000)

I will admit in the introduction to this review that i did not even begin to finish this disgusting piece of cinematic atrocities. If there indeed was a celluloid holocaust, Trucks would be it. A fine piece of cinematic cheesiness would be Maximum Overdrive starring the wonderful Emilio "EMILLIIIOOOOO" Estevez as that can-do American who helps hold down a fortress from haywire machines bent on human carnage. The short story Trucks by everyone's favorite horror maestro King was adapted into film twice. First up to bat was King's own directorial effort retitled to Maximum Overdrive, which has a title that displays its exploitation themes. The second was a decades later made-for-TV adaptation called Trucks. The title itself is a step down for such a classic horror story. Apparently, this TV adaptation was closer to the novel. Most literary pricks would feel the need to prefer the closer film to the novel, but i argue for the defendant. Trucks had a very rustic look to it. There was too much dust on the set and gave it a sandy, grimy feeling. I needed to take a shower afterwards. The violence was severely toned down, and was missing classic scenes as a small lot of Little Leaguers getting killed by cans of cola. On the other hand, Trucks did have a family friendly rating and was a good stepping stone into horror for children. Objection! If Maximum Overdrive had one thing going for it; I could pick only one thing, It would be the iconic Goblin truck; The truck that resembled Marvel's Green Goblin. Trucks just had boring dump trucks and semi's. Your Honor, the bland characters on Trucks are overshadowed by their own vagrant dysfunctions. Divorce and military brat's don't make amazing dialogue, but goofy tourists and secret weapons stockpiler's do. Stephen King might have hated himself for Maximum Overdrive, but i hate him more for allowing Trucks to be made. Even the tag line for Trucks attempted to cash in off of the comedy-horror element of Maximum Overdrive. The jury hereby finds the defendant.....not guilty! We sentence the plaintiff, Chris Thomson, to a horrendous career directing shitty television programs. Case dismissed.

-mAQ

ANTIBODIES

Christian Alvart (2005)

Christian Alvart's *Antibodies* is another serial killer film. People are obviously going to compare it with *Silence of the Lambs* and *Se7en*. Although at a much lower budget, *Antibodies* is a more interesting and a complex film. Director Alvart substitutes action sequences and fast paced entertainment with philosophical biblical questions and masturbation. *Antibodies* is mainly set in rural Germany giving the film a new type of feel. I wouldn't be surprised if Alvart was inspired by *Clean*, *Shaven* and its dark look into rural America. At points, both films have a similar feeling. Not to mention both films feature naked and mutilated bodies of little girls. *Antibodies* distances the viewer from the serial killer (unlike most Hollywood serial killer films). The majority of Hollywood serial killer films glamorize the killer. Not too many people are fans of pedophilic child killers. The problem with serial killer films is that not many of them are innovative. *Antibodies* features many of the conventions associated with the serial killer film. The difference is that the protagonist and hero is the most important character. I could care less about Jodie Foster in *Silence of the Lambs* and Morgan Freeman in *Se7en*. The protagonist in *Antibodies* is a family man with an internal battle over good vs. evil. I found myself forgetting about the killer in *Antibodies*. Keep in mind the actor playing the killer did an excellent job with the part. *Antibodies* isn't the most original and intelligent film ever made. It is however very thrilling, entertaining, well written, and even has a good message. *Antibodies* is evidence that mainstream directors could make better films if they put a tiny bit of extra effort into them. Director Christian Alvart's upcoming film *Case 39* stars Renée Zellweger. It will be interesting to see how that film turns out.

-Ty E

THOMAS HARLAN - WANDERSPLITTER
THOMAS HARLAN - WANDERSPLITTER

Christoph Hübner (2007)

Undoubtedly, few post-WWII German filmmakers/playwrights/novelists so flagrantly epitomized ethno-masochism and cultural cuckoldry than the late and less than great Thomas Harlan (Torre Bela, Wundkanal), the seemingly half-deranged prodigal son of the great National Socialist auteur Veit Harlan (Opfergang, Kolberg). A man that had the positively priceless honor of dining with Uncle Adolf in 1937 at the mere age of 8 and whose father was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, filmmakers of the Third Reich, Thomas Harlan, not unlike many Germans of his generation who inherited a less than ideal legacy of shame and defeat, grew up to be a 'Teutonic Uncle Tom' of sorts by deleteriously dedicating his life to treasonously besmirching both his father and Fatherland and who wasted a good portion of his life exposing so-called 'war crimes' and directing relatively forgotten films like *Wundkanal* (1984), where he interrogated and even physically assaulted an elderly ex-SS officer in a mock trial interrogation carried out by fictional RAF-esque left-wing terrorists (the sort of people Harlan admired/mimicked). In the glaringly minimalistic and even amateurish YouTube-esque documentary *Thomas Harlan - Wandersplitter* (2007) aka *Thomas Harlan - Moving Shrapnel* directed by Christoph Hübner, Harlan gives a candid bastardized verbal autobiography of sorts regarding his fetishism for the 'beloved Soviet Union' (Harlan's words, not mine), his lifelong campaign of spiritual and aesthetic patricide, and his feeling of self-flagellating indebtedness as the less than proud progeny of a naughty nazi filmmaker who dedicated his life to exposing the ostensible horrors of the nazi era (despite the fact he personally witnessed Soviet Asiatic hordes rape and murder elderly German women). Although seeming like it was shot in a couple hours in a carelessly leisurely manner, *Wandersplitter* was filmed between 2003 and 2006 in the author/filmmaker's ugly and thoroughly institutional room in a Southern German sanatorium (ironically, the clinic had a view of Obersalzberg, which is best known for being the location Uncle Adolf's scenic residence, the Berghof) near Berchtesgarden. Resembling a sad and defeated old pug dog who is so disillusioned with life that he no longer even derives pleasure from eating food, *Wandersplitter* is a positively perturbing and pathetic digital video portrait of Deutschland's most degenerated member of 'film royalty.' Indeed, when you have a left-wing Dutch-British-Jew like Ian Buruma stating (as he did of Thomas Harlan) that you were, "an obsessive seeker of justice, a Nazi hunter in Poland, a Communist revolutionary in Portugal and Chile, and a lifelong critic of his father. He was the son, who took on the burden of guilt from an unrepentant father," you must have some serious problems.

Quasi-morbidly obese, lacking even the most miniscule inkling of testosterone, and sporting a shabby head of white hair, Thomas Harlan resembles a

burnt out retired lesbian who used to work as an American public school administrator and suffered some sort of mental break and was thus subsequently institutionalized. Indeed, a lonely man who is spending his remaining days living in a sterile room in a sanatorium (apparently, he was being treated for emphysema) with an outside view of Southern Krautland that he absurdly likens to China, Harlan's life has reached its end (he would die in 2010 at the age of 81), though one gets the impression while watching *Wandersplitter* that the spiritual death of the author/filmmaker/playwright happened long ago in 1945 when Germany was defeated in the Second World War and his surname forever became tainted with the legacy of his father's infamous melodrama *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß*. Born in 1929 to German filmmaker Veit Harlan and Viennese actress Hilde Körber, Harlan had a relatively prestigious childhood as a privileged little boy that got to dine with Uncle Adolf (who he refers to as a 'fakir'), hanging out with Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, and routinely receiving rare Reich stamps (rather unfortunately, the stamps were later stolen by some frog while Harlan was living in Paris during the 1950s) from official National Socialist photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. By 1945, Thomas Harlan witnessed the mangled corpses of 80-year-old women who had been gang-raped by Soviet Mongol hordes, but instead of growing up to be a stern anti-communist, he became of a commie of sorts himself, taking pilgrimages to the Soviet Union, Israel, and Poland during the 1950s. Moving to Poland in 1960, Harlan researched nazi concentration camps and eventually began getting sued by a number of ex-nazi politicians who he started making libelous claims against, which eventually resulted in the loss of his German passport and ability to legally enter his own homeland. Harlan tells a number of these tales in a shockingly jubilant manner, but when it gets to the segment of *Wandersplitter* fittingly entitled 'Patricide,' he begins to shed a couple of tears, expressing his lifelong determination to no let his love of his father deter his treasonous anti-nazi commie activism. Most interestingly, Harlan confesses in what amounts to a sort of premature deathbed confession that he flirted with arson, setting fire to two Berlin movie theaters that played his father's movies, which included *The Trip to Tilsit* (1939) aka *Die Reise nach Tilsit*—an inferior anti-poetic remake of F.W. Murnau's American masterpiece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927)—and *The Immortal Heart* (1939) aka *Das unsterbliche Herz*. As Harlan makes quite clear during the doc, he was most mad at his father for continuing to make films after the National Socialist era and for being acquitted of 'crimes against humanity' for his role as the auteur of *Jud Süß*, a film that was made mandatory-viewing for the SS men that sassed and gassed god's chosen race. According to Harlan, the man who acquitted his father also previously sentenced Ukrainian children to death for stealing a mere scarf and who also married a nazi euthanasia doctor (someone else he had also previously acquitted in court). Since his father did not pay for his 'crimes,' Thomas Harlan thought it was his responsibility to do so, just as any white American bourgeois

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liberal wimp would.

As a number of his family members candidly confessed in the documentary *Harlan: In the Shadow of Jew Süss* (2008) directed by Felix Moeller, they felt Thomas Harlan had wasted his life due to his undying hatred of his father. Judging by his rather weak cinematic and literary output, Uncle Tom Teuton's attempt to 'follow' in his father's footsteps in a sort of antagonistic manner was also a failure. On top of only managing to direct three films (one of which, *Torre Bela*, is a communist agitprop 'doc') during his seemingly sporadic yet life-long filmmaking career, Harlan lacked an eye for beauty and the sort of angelic high-camp aestheticism that dominated his father's work. Indeed, Veit Harlan may have directed *Jud Süß*, which inspired a bit of hatred against hapless Hebrews, but Thomas Harlan's *Wundkanal* is nothing but seething celluloid hatred in its most pathetic form as American Jew Robert Kramer clearly revealed in his companion documentary *Notre nazi* (1985) aka *Our Nazi*, which features the patricidal commie kraut verbally and even physically berating an elderly gentleman (essentially a stand-in for his own father, who was by then already long dead) that he hired for his film under false pretenses. Aesthetically institutional and cold, Wandersplitter certainly makes for an apt bio of Thomas Harlan, a lunatic left-winger of the extra-extreme sort who lived in the past and who will ironically be forgotten before the father he loved-hated so dearly and undyingly. To his credit, Thomas Harlan was slightly less ethno-masochistic than his sister Susanne Körber, who not only married a holocaust survivor and converted to Judaism, but also committed suicide in 1989. Namedropping people like Isaak "the greatest prose writer of Russian Jewry" Babel and stating such absurd things as "Of course, as a child I was a member of the gang" (Harlan's summing up his role as a German child during the Third Reich), Thomas Harlan proved with *Wandersplitter* that, despite Hebraic Hollywood and the mainstream media's claims to contrary, post-WWII Europids, especially those of the Germanic/Nordic persuasion, are not only amongst the most self-flagellating and ethno-masochistic people in the world, but also the most empathetic and individualistic. After all, when has anyone ever heard a Jew cry about the anti-white genocides of Judeo-Bolshevik hangmen Kaganovich or Yagoda, or an American negro acknowledge the fact that his/her people are, collectively speaking, the most violent and murderous people in the present day United States. Indeed, white genocide will not be the result of Tyrone, Avi, Muhammad, and Carlos, but spiritually and mentally sick individuals like Thomas Harlan, a man that unwittingly singlehandedly proved the nazi generation had more dignity, integrity and pride than all the degenerate generations that followed it.

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Christoph Schlingensief (1984)

As far as truly iconoclastic auteur filmmakers are concerned, you probably cannot do better than belated Teutonic Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief (Mutter's Maske aka Mother's Mask, Kettensägenmassaker aka The German Chainsaw-Massacre) whose intricately incendiary cinematic works oftentimes straddled a refreshingly unhealthy line between tasteless scatological schlock and audacious avant-garde celluloid art. Indeed, one of the most refreshing things about Schlingensief is that he was not afraid to savagely mock his greatest cinematic heroes into oblivion whilst using some of the most grotesque and infantile yet undeniably clever means imaginable. For example, in honor of one of his greatest cinematic heroes, the auteur had a real-life retarded mensch dress like Fassbinder—leather jacket, goofy hat, and all—in his cinematic (anti)love letter to New German Cinema *Die 120 Tage von Bottrop* (1997) aka *120 Days of Bottrop* starring Fass regulars Udo Kier, Margit Carstensen, Irm Hermann and Volker Spengler. Of course, one could certainly easily argue that Schlingensief's entire cinematic oeuvre is both a ruthless critique of and tribute to cinema and cinema history, but probably none of his films are more obscenely obsessive with cinema history and its discontents than his first feature-length flick *Tunguska - Die Kisten sind da* (1984) aka *Tunguska: The Crates Are Delivered*. The final entry in a somewhat confounding triptych entitled 'Trilogy of Film Criticism - Film as Neurosis' that also includes the two shorts *Phantasmus muss anders werden* (1983) aka *Phantasmus Go Home* and *Die Ungenierten kommen - Was happened to Magdalena Jung?* (1983), Schlingensief's film is, if nothing else, that greatest and most hysterically hilarious assault on avant-garde cinema and experimental filmmakers that has ever been committed to celluloid. Featuring various surprisingly aesthetically pleasing avant-garde techniques throughout that demonstrate that Schlingensief was no novice when it came to masturbatory filmmaking skills, as well as seemingly random excerpts from early Teutonic experimental animator Oskar Fischinger's *Komposition in Blau* (1935) aka *Composition in Blue* and Kenneth Anger's *Eaux d'artifice* (1953), the film oftentimes feels like the extremely confused creation of the severely autistic bastard brood of Lotte Reiniger and Andy Milligan as a lavishly constructed low-camp abomination where the hopelessly horrendous acting and nonexistent storyline is only transcended by its startlingly striking beauty and corrosive comedic genius. Advertised by the film's distributor *filmgalerie451* as "Schlingensief's way of getting even with German avant-garde film," the feverishly fucked little flick tells the quasi-tragicomic tale of a young and attractive married German couple on vacation that has the misfortune of getting stuck in an old dilapidated and figuratively haunted house with three decidedly deranged avant-garde film researchers after their car breaks down in the cold yet exotic hell that is Siberia. Needless to

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say, *Tunguska* is a must-see work for any semi-serious Schlingensiefel fan, though I am not sure I can recommend to Stan Brakhage fanboys, film students, or anyone else really aside.

A film that refreshingly mocks the megalomaniacal delusions of grandeur and overall social retardation that plagues many enterprising avant-garde filmmakers, *Tunguska* seems to be especially an intricate and semi-loving yet nonetheless brutal attack against Schlingensiefel's former mentor Werner Nekes, but it also has older and more cryptically autobiographical roots that date back to 1968 when the director was only 7 years old. Indeed, when he was just a wee lad that was best known as the son of a respected pharmacist, Schlingensiefel had the distinguished honor of attending the scandalous fourteenth annual 'International Short Film Festival,' which was held in his hometown of Oberhausen. Of course, 1968 was an important year for the budding young auteur as it was also when he shot his first 8mm film and resolved to begin an artistic career that he would eventually become (in)famous for as a cinematic iconoclast that ultimately proved to have more testicular fortitude than any of the cinematic upstarts that signed the legendary Oberhausen Manifesto (incidentally, Schlingensiefel would eventually befriend the manifesto's most famous signer Alexander Kluge). Deriving its title from both an enigmatic fictional film that debuted in 1967 but was scrapped shortly afterward due to disinterest and the somewhat mysterious *Tunguska* event of June 1908 when a cataclysmic explosion over the sparsely populated Eastern Siberian Taiga flattened 2,000 km² (770 sq mi) of forest in what was ultimately the largest known impact event on Earth in recorded history, Schlingensiefel's debut feature is also arguably the most insanely idiosyncratic take on the 'old dark house' mystery ever made (indeed, despite lacking grotesque bisexual porn featuring ugly people doing ugly sexual things, the film even puts Curt McDowell's *Thundercrack!* (1975) to shame in terms of sheer abject absurdity). In terms of its preternatural poetical essence, crude cannibalization of various genre conventions, strange sardonic approach to Gothic themes, innately anarchic spirit, and dubious morality, *Tunguska* is like a kraut cinematic equivalent to Comte de Lautréamont's novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror*.

Considering that Schlingensiefel's previous film in his 'Trilogy of Film Criticism - Film as Neurosis,' *What happened to Magdalena Jung?*, was an extremely loose reworking of German Conservative Revolutionary movement writer Ernst Jünger's book *Das abenteuerliche Herz. Figuren und Capriccios* (1938) aka *The Adventurous Heart: Figures and Capriccios*, it is only fitting that *Tunguska*—a uniquely unpretentious cinematic work that, quite ironically, makes relatively practical use of somewhat pretentious avant-garde film techniques—makes a mockery out of a far-leftist counterculture kraut like Werner Nekes. Notably, Nekes would later bitch to Schlingensiefel that his next feature *Menu Total* (1986) was "a fascist film," so it almost seems like the auteur somehow had a promo-

dition that his mentor would eventually trash his films and thus trashed him in advance in a most silly yet nonetheless quite artistically fruitful fashion. Notably, the reason Schlingensiefel opted to direct a film about a tyrannical trio of avant-garde scientists on road to North Pole to show Eskimos experimental films was because, as the auteur states in the doc *Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme* (2005) aka *Christoph Schlingensiefel and His Films* directed by Frieder Schlaich, “That’s where I thought experimental film was headed.” In short, unlike hyper hermetic avant-gardist like Nekes, Schlingensiefel always wanted to make films that were seen by all sorts of people and not just fellow autistic filmmakers that are involved in a sort of perennial circle jerk like Jonas Mekas and his pals. As Schlingensiefel also explained in Schlaich’s doc, “After these two films [PHANTASUS and MAGDALENA JUNG] I naturally developed a latent rage against Nekes. I thought, why should I become Nekes? What’s with all this crap? [...] I wanted to separate myself.” Needless to say, despite the fact that some of his films like the preposterously titled *T-Wo-Men* (1972) and *Der Tag Des Malers* (1997) aka *The Day of the Painter* feature hot Sapphic pornographic action between hot twat kraut counterculture carpet-munchers, *Tunguska* is easily more enthralling than anything that Herr Nekes has ever directed (though I must admit that I have a softspot for Nekes’ *Uliisses* (1982) simply due to the fact that it features punk dyke diva Tabea Blumenschein in a rather striking performance).

In *Tunguska*, the viewer watches in abject anticipation as a collectively crazed trio of over-the-hill and fairly physically grotesque experimental filmmakers-cum-researchers use various form of vintage experimental cinema as a means to debase, subjugate, and brainwash individuals until they become psychosis-ridden followers of the “new filmic language” (aka avant-garde religion). The Führer of the filmic dictatorship is a lecherous lard ass named Roy Glas (legendary New German Cinema character actor Alfred Edel of Alexander Kluge’s post-Auschwitz exercise in ethno-masochism *Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos* (1968) aka *The Artist in the Circus Dome: Clueless*), who runs a largely imaginary empire of cinematic derangement. Seemingly inspired by the artistic theories of Carl Jung, Glas somewhat dubiously believes that the only way a true avant-garde cinema can emerge is if it is rid of neurosis (personally, I think a great deal of avant-garde art is the direct result of neurosis and psychosis, but I digress). Not unlike Nekes and his one-time wife Dore Oberloskamp (aka Dore O.), Glas’ foremost collaborator is his similarly insane scientist spouse Ireen Fitzler (Anna Fechter). In a possible mocking reference to Nekes and his then-wife Dore’s first breakthrough film, *Jüm-Jüm* (1967), *Tunguska* begins with a prologue from the avant-garde antagonist describing the premiere of his eponymous film, which was an abject failure and thus, not unlike the majority of experimental films, regulated to the celluloid dustbin of history where it probably belongs. As an assumed result of the failure of his film (Glas never actually says whether or not he was the one that actually directed *Tunguska*), Glas and his

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compatriots sought to “find and explore news aspects of zeitgeist and expression of film” and they felt the best way to do so would be to take part in an absurdly nonsensical expedition to Antarctica to demonstrate to primitive Eskimos the ostensible power of experimental film. Unfortunately for Glas and his small team, which includes his wife Ireen and a four-eyed lunatic named Lossowitsch aka ‘Losso’ (Vladimir Konetzny), never made it to their location due to a plane crash and thus have been stranded in Siberia ever since in a thankfully relatively uninhabited area where few people will have the grand aesthetic misfortune of enduring their distinct brand of meta-authoritarian cinematic oppression. Unluckily for the film’s young married protagonists, Rolf (Mathias Colli, who went on to co-write, assistant direct, and star in Schlingensiefel’s *Veit Harlan* reworking *Mutters Maske* (1988) aka *Mother’s Mask*) and Tina (Irene Fischer, who went on to become a writer/actress on Hans W. Geissendörfer’s long running TV series *Lindenstraße*), their tiny red car breaks down in Siberia and they soon find themselves being emotionally, psychologically, and aesthetically terrorized by Glas and his oppressive goofball Gestapo.

If you are looking for any sense of sanity or traditional logical in *Tunguska*, you surely will not find it, but one should not expect anything less from a Schlingensiefel flick where spaštic acting, compulsive spontaneity, and cryptic and not-so-cryptic dark yet surprisingly mirthful humor runs rampant. Indeed, like virtually all of the director’s cinematic works, the film completely blurs the line between nightmarish farce and melancholy fever dream, as well as aesthetic nihilism and super sophisticated schlock. In short, Schlingensiefel seems to make no lie of the fact that he intends to torture and aesthetically assault you just like the film’s gluttonous villain Glas, yet he does it with a knowing smirk like a demonic schoolboy who has just lit a bag of shit on fire on his good Catholic next-door neighbor’s front porch. Featuring Schlingensiefel himself under the assumed pseudonym ‘Christoph Krieg’ as a raving mad man who speaks of hope for humanity and other frivolous deluded fantasies before being violently murdered by an infantile retard, the film is a genre-molesting absurdist allegory that is packed with perverse poetry, sassy sadism, and surprisingly practical experimental techniques. A foreboding fairytale full of loudmouthed psychosis-ridden monsters and mumbling brain-damaged degenerates, *Tunguska* plays a pernicious game with classic genre conventions that Gothic horror, romance, mystery, sci-fi, and thriller genres and is glued together with avant-garde effects in what might be described as the filmic equivalent of a Teutonic tranny Frankenstein monster on bad acid. Not unlike many of the films of Jean-Luc Godard, it is immediately apparent while watching Schlingensiefel’s debut that it was directed by a man that lives and breathes film and wholly believes “cinema is everything” and “everything is cinema.” In other words, it seems that Schlingensiefel himself also suffers from a sort of cinematic psychosis, but unlike Nekes and the avant-garde researchers depicted in *Tunguska*, he at least realizes it and is brave and auda-

scious enough to mock and ridicule those who believe Peter Kubelka is the second coming of Christ and that Hollis Frampton is an immaculate cinema god among men.

If the lovable retard Arnie played by a very young Leonardo DiCaprio in Lasse Hallström's *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993) had an all the more mentally challenged Teutonic brother with ambiguous magical powers, it would probably be Herr Norbert (Norbert Schlieve, who once notably worked as an animator for Nekes). Norbert is an exceedingly erratic, unpredictably violent, and somewhat mysterious man-child of the fairly unhinged sort who has been trapped in the wilds of Siberia ever since he was involved in a plane crash that apparently killed his entire family, including his much beloved sister. Upon looking at a magical mushroom in the woods, Norbert sees an image of married couple Rolf and Tina and thus knows they are stranded somewhere in the area, though he is initially too shy to approach them. When Rolf and Tina eventually find Norbert lurking inside a somewhat sinister dilapidated house that they have yet to discover is the home to the avant-garde researchers, they are somewhat startled by him. While Rolf initially comforts Norbert by acting as a sort of loving paternal figure to him, the unpredictable retard somewhat freaks out Tina when he mistakes her for his dead sister. For whatever reason, Herr Norbert also has an affinity for pulling Tina's hair while repeatedly proclaiming that she is his sister. While Tina is certainly more mentally balanced than Norbert, they will both ultimately fall under the spell of the preposterous cinematic brainwashing of Glas and his gang, thus leaving poor Rolf to fend for himself when it comes to maintaining his sanity in a subtly morbid world of cinematic mind-games and cineaste oriented groupthink.

The next day after spending their first night at the half-ruined house that might be best described as cine-maniac manor, the married couple gets somewhat of a surprise when another dubious weirdo, a less than sane and creepily hospitable semiotician named Major Pater Hilf aka 'Major Father Help' (Schlingensiefel), knocks on the door of the house, aggressively introduces himself, and then randomly picks up Tina and clumsily drops her on the floor. For whatever reason, Major Help takes Rolf and Tina mountain climbing and then starts a fire that he more or less proclaims is a symbol of hopeful redemption for all of humanity. When Major Help demonstrates his latent sadistic side by daring to attempt to burn Herr Norbert's hand in the fire, the unpredictable retard immediately gets his revenge by using Rolf's car to run over and ultimately kill the zany semiotician. Before unwittingly proving that his fiery symbol of hope is totally worthless by dying not far from it, Major Help uses his last couple minutes of life to sing a melancholic pop song to Rolf and Tina on an electronic keyboard that magically appears out of nowhere. At this point in the film, it seems like hope is nothing more than an absurdist joke that will never be encountered by the married protagonists, who soon come to realize that there is no more hellish

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fate than to fall prey to the nonsensical esoteric ramblings and uniquely unsavory schemes of the outstandingly arrogant avant-garde filmmakers that haunt the area. Indeed, as Rolf and Tina soon discover, they would be much better off if the house that they are staying out was haunted by ghosts instead of a trio of compulsively conniving charlatan filmmakers.

When Rolf and Tina finally encounter avant-garde researcher Roy Glas and his two equally demented minions, they are immediately trapped in a pernicious autistic psychodrama involving warped mind games and reckless displays of unhinged hedonism. In a scene where Glas and his crew watch experimental footage of Tina frolicking through a forest in an exceedingly elegant fashion, it is hinted that the mad avant-garde scientists have been spying on the protagonist ever since they reached Siberia. Naturally, Glas takes an instant liking to the fairy sexy Tina and even dares to put his hand on her thigh right on front of her hubby Rolf while verbally mocking him. When Glas' wife Ireen declares there is an emergency and claims there is some sort of an accident, it is later revealed that she just wanted to use Rolf's car to pick up some booze. Undoubtedly, Glas' supreme arrogance and vanity is only transcended by his grotesque displays of gluttony, thus Rolf and Tina spend much of their time watching the megalomaniac savagely chewing on seemingly half-cooked animal flesh while talking bullshit. Rolf oftentimes has his two comrades collectively shout in vain the Nazi-esque "Strength and power," especially when they are viewing one of their avant-garde atrocities (one of which is the above mentioned footage of Tina looking like quite the elegantly dressed Fräulein while frolicking through a forest). Of course, it does not take long before Glas has Rolf and Tina go through torturous sessions of avant-garde brainwashing. Indeed, during one of such sinister sessions, Glas' stone cold Himmler-esque minion Lossowitsch jumps around with a white sheet over his body like a spastic ghost as Kenneth Anger's *Eaux d'artifice* is projected over his chest while the avant-garde researchers loudly chant incoherent avant-garde nonsense. Needless to say, when Glas cryptically asks Rolf "Fischlinger or Eggeling?" in reference to early experimental Aryan animators Oskar Fischinger and Viking Eggeling, the protagonist has no clue what he is talking about. Unfortunately, Tina is brainwashed with Glas' 'filmic language' as demonstrated by her bizarre behavior during the screening and later that night when she tells Rolf a seemingly nonsensical bedtime story with a strange happy ending involving a "bad dance instructor in Tunguska" and a mob of animated blue building blocks that kill their creators but not said bad dance instructor. The blue blocks are eventually revealed to be in reference to Fischinger's animated short *Komposition in Blau*, which Tina dreams about after she falls asleep.

While Rolf and Tina eventually manage to escape the avant-garde researchers home even though the latter seems to have developed Stockholm syndrome as demonstrated by her strange and innately irrational cult-like affection for Glas and his gleefully sadistic comrades, the only gas attendant (Schlingensiefel regular

Sergej Gleitmann) in the area refuses to give them gas, thereupon leaving them stuck in Siberia. In a belligerent fit of self-destructive desperation, Tina opts to steal Rolf's car and then drive it off a cliff, thus resulting in her death via skull fracture. With his beloved Tina dead and nowhere to go, Rolf desperately runs back to the avant-gardist's lair and informs them of his wifey's untimely demise. Needless to say, Mr. Norbert, who believes Tina is sister, seems just as emotionally shattered as Rolf by the female protagonist's tragic demise. As for Glas and his crew, they seem rather unaffected by Tina's death and set it fit to burn her body on some rocks near a lake in what seems like a sacrificial burning pyre to the gods of avant-garde cinema. While Rolf mentally deteriorates so badly that he tries to join the avant-garde cult, Glas and his crew opt to steal his car and leave him stranded in Siberia. Indeed, it seems Rolf is just not good enough to join the cult as indicated by Glas' elitist remark, "No, Rolf, we're too different. Tina is dead!" In what is indubitably a sad reflection of his progressive psychological degeneration, Rolf also somehow forgets that Tina is dead and goes looking for her around the researcher's lair in a Norbert-esque fashion, as if he is in denial that his ladylove is gone forever. Not surprisingly, it seems that Glas was only interested in titillating Tina, hence his almost seemingly pathological tendency to mock her marriage to Rolf. Additionally, before the mad scientist trio steals Rolf's car and leaves the protagonist stranded in the bowels of Siberia, Losowitsch sternly states, "We make solitudinarians!," as if to rub in the recently widowed young man's face that a rather grim and lonely fate awaits him. In the end, the film concludes with an epilogue from Glas where he declares his research is a success and "Film as a form of neurosis. Our research continues." Of course, as demonstrated by his decidedly deleterious effect on the protagonists, it seems that Glas' research is a total failure as he spreads neurosis wherever he goes and seems to have absolutely no clue as to sire the psychosis-free avant-garde that he and his loyal compatriots dreams of.

While I have always had an appreciation for avant-garde and experimental cinema and am always interested in examining the cinematic oeuvres of the most idiosyncratic of auteur filmmakers, I must admit that I have found most of these film directors to be obnoxiously obsessive one-track onanists whose cinematic works reflect the worse sort of impotent celluloid wankery. In that sense, it does not surprise me that Schlingensiefel's mentor Nekes incorporated pornographic imagery in his films, as it would not surprise me if the most arousing thing in the world to him was his own films. In that respect, I somewhat appreciate the sometimes literally masturbatory films of Paul Sharits (*Ray Gun Virus*, *T,O,U,C,H,I,N,G*), who seems to have ironically acknowledged in a tongue-in-cheek fashion the masturbatory nature of experimental cinema in general as opposed to succumbing to the banally calculating and unnervingly emotionally barren mathematical approach typical of the algorithmically-driven films created by other filmmakers associated with the Structural film movement. Inciden-

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tally, when Nekes attempted to direct a somewhat conventional comedy film, *Johnny Flash* (1986), it came off as a poor prude's take on a Schlingensief flick, thus revealing the extra esoteric auteur's seeming incapacity to create emotionally engaging cinematic works that appeal to people aside from fellow avant-garde filmmakers and half-crazed cineastes (incidentally, Schlingensief acted as a cinematographer on the film). As *Tunguska* reveals, a life revolving around arcane avant-garde filmmaking can only lead to pernicious and highly deleterious side-effects like psychosis, fits of rage and irritability, the loss of a wife or girlfriend, and/or an incapacity to appreciate emotionally engulfing films featuring lines of dialogue and sexy chicks with nice tits and shapely derrieres, among other things. Of course, the true genius of *Tunguska* is that it manages to alienated both autistic avant-garde cinema fanboys and culturally retarded philistines alike, but I guess one should not expect anything less from the debut feature of the singular auteur who was arguably the last great iconoclast of cinema.

By directing a film with blatant B movie and exploitation conventions featuring a cast of mostly quasi-retarded weirdos that most people would be petrified to touch with a ten-foot pool that relatively seamlessly utilizes a number of striking experimental tricks and techniques, Schlingensief managed to make a marvelous mockery of an ostensibly sacred realm of cinema history that has been safety guarded by avant-garde gatekeepers like Jonas Mekas and P. Adams Sitney for half a century. While I am admittedly probably more obsessed with experimental cinema than the average cinephile as reflected in my appreciation for filmmakers ranging from Frans Zwartjes (*Living*, *Pentimento*) to Ed Emshwiller (*Lifelines*, *Thanatopsis*) to Gregory J. Markopoulos (*Twice a Man*, *The Illiac Passion*) to Lloyd Michael Williams (*Opus 5*, *Ursula*) to Albie Thoms (*Rita and Dundi*, *Marinetti*) to Dietmar Brehm (*Blicklust*, *Blah Blah Blah*), I will be the first to admit that virtually all segments of the experimental realm—whether it be the late career esoteric cocksucker counterculture cinema of James Broughton, aberrant Aryan pornography of Viennese Aktionists like pedo cult leader Otto Mühl, or frivolous found-footage tweaking of banal Brit Malcolm Le Grice—deserve to be ruthlessly mocked, ridiculed, and/or lampooned and Schlingensief was most certainly the best person to do it. Indeed, whether it be remaking classic high-camp Nazi melodramas, creating a reunification themed kraut mutation of Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) featuring Udo Kier with a swastika mustache, or bringing the Aryan high kultur of Bayreuth to the most culturally barren and impoverished corners of the dreaded Dark Continent in an absurd stunt that surely rivals that of the mad avant-garde researchers of *Tunguska* that attempt to expose Eskimos to experimental cinema, Schlingensief was indubitably the best dude to parody the pretenses of cinema history's most autisticly arrogant sons. Of course, Schlingensief may be the only great artist in history that could never be properly parodied or receive the lame Hebraic Saturday Night Live treatment as a man whose real-life per-

sonality and preternatural charisma was more entrancingly hyperreal and downright hilarious than any neo-vaudevillian comedy sketch ever could be. Indeed, after watching Tunguska one can only come to the natural conclusion that it was directed by a cracked kraut genius with an untameable spirit that makes George Grosz seem like Norman Rockwell by comparison in terms of sheer artistic Weltanschauung. In other words, Heil Schlingensief!!!

-Ty E

MENU TOTAL
MENU TOTAL

Christoph Schlingensief (1986)

After viewing Christoph Schlingensief's brutally bleak yet conspicuously campy black-and-white feature *Menu Total* (1986) aka *Meat, Your Parents* at its ill-fated premiere at the 1986 Berlinale Film Festival, charming character actor Udo Kier remarked to the director that, "I killed myself laughing." Although the actor's random interaction would later spark many great collaborations with Schlingensief, including kraut arthouse trash works like *Egomania - Insel ohne Hoffnung* (1986), *100 Years Adolf Hitler - The Last Hour in the Führerbunker* (1989), and *The 120 Days of Bottrop* (1997), Kier was in the minority when it came to apotheosizing *Menu Total*. Described to him by his mentor Werner Nekes (Uliisses, Johnny Flash) as "fascistic" and by his ashamed father as being "terrible," Schlingensief was perturbed (yet at the same time, strangely pleased) by the negative response to *Menu Total*, not least of all because he thought he assembled an elaborately farcical esoteric comedy of sorts, even later proclaiming it be, "my best film!" Ultimately, *Menu Total* – a Nazi-themed arthouse piece of the most grandiose grotesquery – would prove to be one of Schlingensief's first public brushes with controversy. Within the first ten minutes of its premiere at the Berlinale, wimp Wim Wenders – a major target for ridicule in many of Schlingensief's films – walked out of the screening in sheer disgust and by the end of the showing of *Menu Total*, only half of the 800 member audience remained. Of those remaining 400 filmgoers, about half of them were decisively disgruntled with *Menu Total*, eventually causing a full-blown fight to breakout that left respected pharmacist Schlingensief's father in total tears. Indeed, after viewing *Menu Total* a number of times, I can honestly say that it is one of his most divinely deranged works, which says a lot considering it was directed by a filmmaker who has consistently equipped his films with images of absurdist rape scenarios, rampant race-hate, daffy death sequences, and every sexual perversion known (and not known) to man. Featuring a hysterical hodge-podge of campy concentration camp experimentation, crude and cynical child molestation, sadistic scatological scenarios, existential exploitation, and – more morbidly and mischievously than anything – a decidedly distasteful treatment of Germany's National Socialist past, *Menu Total* is the sort of film every good politically-correct German fears and rightfully so, but Schlingensief was not interested in ignoring or sanitizing his Fatherland's taboo past like so many of his generation, including ethno-masochistic Holocaust-hugger Wim Wenders (*Wings of Desire*).

In the documentary *Christoph Schlingensief und seine Filme* (2005) aka *Christoph Schlingensief and His Films* the audacious auteur displays no apprehension in stating that he is distantly related to Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels via his mother and feels that he, "would make an excellent overseer in a concen-

tration camp,” further stating that Germans “haven’t digested Hitler since 1945,” thereupon adding to the mystique and appeal of National Socialism for newer generations of Hitler’s spiritual children. In short, Schlingensiefel believes that artists should not, “always claim to be on the side of god,” and that he, “should be able to say “I am Evil”...I want to portray evil,” which Menu Total undeniably does, albeit in an audaciously avant-garde neo-Dadaist-Actionist sort of way, minus the pompous pretensions. Centering around a mentally unstable boy that while searching in vain for his beloved mommy, ends up exterminating an entire family, Menu Total is a recklessly wild cinematic work with a startlingly shattered moral compass. Starring German funnyman, musician, and filmmaker Helge Schneider (00 Schneider – Jagd auf Nihil Baxter, Stangenfieber) – who also assembled the irritatingly ironic cool jazz score for the film – Menu Total is an aesthetically malicious masterpiece of curiously cracked and crudely carnal kraut comedy. Taking place largely in a murky bunker where multiple maniacs meander and mess around with mutilated mortals, Menu Total is largely a mock-up, albeit more multifarious and mystifying, for Schlingensiefel’s later effort 100 Years Adolf Hitler - The Last Hour in the Führerbunker (1989); a 60-minute farce of the Führerbunker where the cast and crew was locked in a cement dugout for no less 16 hours in complete and utter darkness aside from the devotedly dippy director’s trusty flashlight, henceforth arguably making it the artistically faithful filmmaker’s most literal attempt at ‘Direct Cinema.’ Like 100 Years Adolf Hitler, Menu Total is a nauseatingly nonlinear experiment with apocryphal themes relating to the history of the Third Reich. By exaggerating these vaguely historical but mostly fabricated stories, Schlingensiefel attempted to arrive at allegorical truths about the legacy of Hitler (who in the Führerbunker flick is more of a ‘SHITler’ as he passionately paints and plays with his freshly defecated feces). In the documentary Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme, Schlingensiefel – sounding like a vehement völkisch idealist of the Jungian denomination states quite matter-of-factly that, “I believe we carry genetic baggage around within ourselves...events that happened long before we were born.” That being said, as an aberrant Aryan artist and thus an exceedingly endemic and eccentric expressionist of the German collective unconscious, Schlingensiefel painted a sordid, sardonic, even sadistic portrait of the Teuton volkgeist via Menu Total; undoubtedly one of the purest and unadulterated consciously and unconsciously ‘German’ films of the post-WWII era.

Undoubtedly, the palpably precarious 1986 premiere of Menu Total was assuredly a vicarious vantage point for Schlingensiefel because despite feeling hostile animosity from friends, family, and foes, the director also confirmed his artistic dexterity as an inexorable experimental filmmaker with a particularly potent propensity for invoking buried emotions in his countryman, even once admitting, “there must be some deep, dark black box inside of me. A place which is hungry to tackle material like this.” Although merely seeming like a schizophrenic scat

MENU TOTAL

film of the uniquely incoherent sort to the uninitiated viewer – which taken literally, it most certainly is – Menu Total, like the poetry of Gottfried Benn and Stefan George, aphorisms of Nietzsche and Spengler, paintings of Franz von Stuck, Fidus and Herbert Smagon, and the films of Fassbinder and Buttgereit, is an out-and-out exegesis of the German soul, albeit taken to the sort of extraordinarily erratic excesses that only Schlingensiefel was capable of. Filmed in rich and thematically complimentary black-and-white film stock, Menu Total works best as symbolic cinematic expression of the soul of a self-flagellating and spiritually devitalized people, portraying a fantastic dystopian Germanic netherworld where the "shadow aspect" – the unconscious aspect of one's personality that the conscious ego is unwilling to recognize – is laid bare as the de facto persuasion of the uncivilized citizenry. As ironically stated by a particularly debauched man in a Nazi-era Wehrmacht (army) officer uniform – who engages in ritualistic murder, molestation and mayhem – in Menu Total: "You mustn't hurt the children. Their future is our future and our work is their future." Keeping that in mind, Schlingensiefel took the opposite approach with his films, most especially with Menu Total, by intentionally and unrelentingly stirring unpleasant emotions in the viewers. While it might not be for the better if viewers find themselves fantasizing about becoming Adolf Hitler and spouting demented gibberish like the particularly perverse protagonist of the film, it might inspire them to renounce politically correct pretensions and artistic mediocrity, thereupon restoring testicular fortitude to the Teutons of Deutschland; a sound sentiment that the late, great Christoph Schlingensiefel certainly shared.

-Ty E

EGOMANIA – ISLAND WITHOUT HOPE

Christoph Schlingensief (1987)

Long before his film *United Trash* (1996) aka *The Slit* caused a brief suspension of diplomatic relations between Germany and Zimbabwe, he was arrested for calling for the death of German chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1997, created and hosted a radical racially-charged reality TV show (*Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container* aka *Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefs Container*) in the middle of Vienna in 2002 where illegal alien contestants that lost were deported to their respective nations, directed a superlatively subversive and scatological adaptation of Richard Wagner's masterpiece *Parsifal* (1882) at the prestigious Bayreuth Festival featuring a menstruating Grail and Arthurian knights in Jolson-esque blackface in the summer of 2004, and before he began building a Wagnerian 'opera village' in 2010 at a small village in the tiny landlocked western African nation of Burkina Faso, Teutonic auteur and all-around raunchy Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief (*Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* aka *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*, *Terror* 2000) did the seemingly unthinkable by attempting to make the most shamelessly beautiful and poetic film that he could in what one might describe as atavistic awakening of the classic kraut romantic spirit as sprung from the uniquely untamable soul of a mad mensch who had the misfortune of growing up in a nation where a certain Marxist mental midget famously declared the following dickheaded dictum, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." The film, *Egomania – Insel ohne Hoffnung* (1986) aka *Egomania – Island without Hope*, probably owes a great deal of its uncharacteristic pulchritude to the fact that Herr Schlingensief was then dating the leading lady, Tilda Swinton, who clearly had reached her peak in beauty at the time. Filmed on the North German island of Langeneß just off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein and set in a darkly romantic glacial realm that seems to reconcile the otherworldly landscape paintings of Caspar David Friedrich with the anarchic individualism of somewhat forgotten German philosopher Max Stirner and the ethereal and phantasmagoric expressionism of German auteur F.W. Murnau, Schlingensief's stunningly kaleidoscopic celluloid nightmare certainly seems like it would be the product of a endearingly egomaniacal fellow who has no time or interest in bothering to respect or identify with the political and aesthetic fashions of his day and age. In fact, the genesis of the film was more or less the almost unanimous hostility towards the director's previous film, the hysterically hilarious and nihilistically nasty feces-and-barf-covered Nazi family farce *Menu total* (1986), which Wim(p) Wenders walked out of after 10 minutes during its premiere and which Schlingensief's ex-teacher Werner Nekes apparently described as "fascistic." Indeed, apparently kraut queer actor Udo Kier, who the filmmaker did not know at the time, was the only one to congratulate Schlingensief on his film after its debut and the two subsequently decided to collaborate with one another right then

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and there, or as the auteur stated in the documentary *Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme* (2005) aka Christoph Schlingensiefel and His Films regarding their auspicious meeting and the birth of *Egomania*: “Suddenly, someone grabs my hand and says, ‘I’m Udo Kier.’ And I didn’t know who he was at first, I must confess. All I knew was I recognized his face from somewhere. I probably knew him from Andy Warhol’s “*Dracula*” but when I heard the name I really didn’t know who on earth he was. “I saw your film [Menu Total]. I killed myself laughing.” And I was so pleased that I had finally met someone who said that he killed himself laughing over my film. “The faces were so distorted and I thought the stuff they were saying was hilarious. Would you like to join me?” And so Tilda and I sat down next to him and on that evening we decided that we would make a film together and we drew up a contract on a napkin: “We will make a film.” We planned to start shooting three weeks later.” Of course, Kier would go on to star in virtually every one of Schlingensiefel’s subsequent films and the rest is history.

Segmented by excerpts from the work *Der Illusionismus und die Rettung der Persönlichkeit* (1895) written by kraut iconoclast Oskar Panizza—a now little known Bavarian-born avant-garde wordsmith and psychiatrist of Italian and French aristocratic Huguenot extraction who spent a year in prison after being charged with 93 counts of blasphemy for his tragicomedy *Das Liebeskonzil* (1894) aka *The Love Council*, which Schlingensiefel’s cinematic hero Werner Schroeter adapted in 1982 (notably, the film was banned in Austria in 1985 due to its perceived anti-Catholic sentiments)—*Egomania* is also a work where the aberrant-garde auteur pays tribute to his similarly subversive Aryan forbearers. As for cinematic influences, *Egomania* seems to be a love letter to the more impenetrable avant-garde works of decadent European arthouse dandies like Werner Schroeter and Derek Jarman, but also the anarchistic (anti)Heimat films of Herbert Achternbusch, ethereal celluloid pilgrimages of Werner Herzog, naked melodramas of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the pioneering celluloid poems of cinematic master F.W. Murnau (Udo Kier plays a Nosferatu/Dracula-like figure), and even the mystical mountain films of Dr. Arnold Fanck and Leni Riefenstahl. Of course, when it comes down to it, the film is pure and unadulterated Schlingensiefel, albeit at his most brazenly cinematic and eccentrically esoteric. An anti-Vergangenheitsbewältigung work where the director mocks the post-WWII German obsession with Auschwitz and whatnot, *Egomania* is set on a snow and ice-ridden island that seems like some Teutonic pandemonium in between heaven and hell whose inhabitants’ minds have been frozen in the past as if cursed by the Semitic scorn of Adorno and thus suffer perennial melancholia and loneliness. The exceedingly eccentric yet equally aesthetically exquisite story of two lovers who find their relationship tested when an evil demonic cross-dressing aristocrat becomes jealous of their love and happiness and tirelessly attempts to tear them apart and make the woman his, Schlingensiefel’s

film ultimately tells a classic story in a rather wayward fashion that reminds one why the director was arguably Germany's very last serious auteur filmmaker and true romantic.

A feverishly foreboding yet sometimes farcical metaphysical horror melodrama with a completely captivating dream logic and loony labyrinthine (non)storyline that makes full use of cinema's distinct power as a moving visual art like the great silent works of the German expressionist period, as well as the cine-magic works of Kenneth Anger, *Egomania* opens with a beautiful blue shot of a Gothic castle and with the film's narrator stating: "Once upon a time on an isolated island in the ocean there lived a handful of people. Their thoughts were formed in different languages and they tried to find the common words. In the beginning they were peaceful and helped each other. But soon harmony was overcome by antagonism. The father loves his son – but the son not his mother. Death loves life – but life not birth. The front is in the back and the back suddenly is in the front." Udo Kier plays an eloquent yet eccentric aristocrat of the evil and blood-thirsty yet eternally suffering sort named Baron Tante Teufel (which translates to "Aunt Devil" or "Devil's Aunt") and he is a Dr. Faustus-esque figure who takes on various material and spiritual forms, including the Devil, Nosferatu/Dracula (indeed, in some ways, Kier's character is a parody of his role in Paul Morrissey's 1974 cult classic *Blood for Dracula*), a demonic drag queen, the Flying Dutchman and the sort of iconic and handsome Satanic Teutonic dandy that was probably best personified by horror novelist Hanns Heinz Ewers, whose legacy was forsaken by his Faustian pact with the Third Reich. Baron Teufel constantly suffers hallucinations as caused by both good and bad memories, including the brutal stoning to death of one of his assumed lovers, as well as his seemingly happy marriage to his sweetheart as a prepubescent boy. The Baron is the father of a seemingly nice and would-be-heroic fellow named William (Uwe Fellensiek)—a fellow that bears a striking resemblance to Schlingensief and can be seen as his alter-ego—who, when not suffering nightmares relating to his pernicious pappy and his murderous behavior, longs for his redheaded beloved Sally (Tilda Swinton), who is a poor Brünhilde-like proletarian girl who oftentimes sports a medieval cloak and carries away the corpse of a sort of Aryan Christ at the beginning of the film with the help of old women wearing the same cloaks. She and William's love will be tested by the Baron, who wants nothing more than to destroy the young lady and everything she has and then make her his wife.

Aided by his slavishly loyal 'Aryan Christ' servant 'Anatol' (Schlingensief/Helge Schneider regular Sergej Gleitmann), Baron Tante Teufel trudges through the snow and mud while attempting to exorcise the haunting memories that have caused him pangs of guilt and that incessantly haunt his conscious and subconscious. One late night, like an incubus, the Baron appears in Sally's bed and when the young lady declares, "I'm so ill," he replies in a deep demonic voice,

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“You’re the devil, not me.” Indeed, the Baron is not the devil, but ‘The Devil Aunt,’ at least when he dresses in drag and plots to destroy the young woman and her love for her lover and unborn son. After being visited by a boorish and bawdy bitch named Ria (Schlingensief regular Anna Fechter) who attempts to coerce him to kill “the whore” Sally, the Baron comes up with the master plan to kill her child (she is pregnant with William’s child) and to destroy everything she has so that she will become his loving wife. After using Anatol to stone to death the local captain so that he can steal his ship, The Baron, who is in his “Devil’s Aunt” persona, drinks some red wine in a crazed fashion as if he is a fiendish vampire drinking blood and, with the help of Ria and some other old haggard wench, steals Sally away from William and sails away in the icy waters. From there, William wanders through the forests and back to his family castle home where he comes under the wing of his pernicious father, who demands that he forget Sally. Meanwhile, Sally gives birth to her and William’s son, who does not get to know his father who is literally and figuratively blinded by the Baron. Indeed, when Sally and their son randomly bump into William and the Baron on the beach, the former cannot see his beloved or progeny. While Sally attempts to get the attention of William, the Baron mocks her and pushes her around like some sort of old queen bully. Eventually, the Baron also kidnaps William and Sally’s child and does some bizarre satanic rituals with it. Broken and desperate as a result of losing both her lover and child, Sally comes to the Baron in a groveling fashion and tells him that she will do anything for him to waive the curse he has put on her, so the demonic blueblood bastard kisses her and makes her his. In the end, William shows up at the Baron’s castle on horseback like a knight in shining armor and battles his demonic daddy, who has become drunk with evil and eats William and Sally’s baby, kills his servant Anatol, and loses whatever semblance of sanity he had left. Luckily, William and Sally manage to escape together into the sunlight.

As David Ashley Hughes noted in his text *Reinventing the Left: Radical Responses to German Reunification*, Schlingensief’s *Egomania*, “thematizes evil for the first time in German cinema since the Weimar Republic,” which is certainly no small accomplishment and nothing short of a cinematically revolutionary act. As Hughes also noted in his work, “Reality in *EGOMANIA* is cold and desolate and infused with an apocalyptic sense of futility and hopelessness – not unlike much West German culture of the mid-1980s.” Indeed, the prodigal progeny of German New Cinema, Schlingensief radically rejected the realistic static works of the Oberhausen Manifesto signers from the 1960s and declares in his own way with the film that “Papas Kino ist tot,” as a *Gegenwartsbewältigung* work that beautifully butchers that phantoms of the present and mischievously makes a mockery of those forgotten souls that live in the past. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Schlingensief, who derived much of his potency and authenticity as a filmmaker from the fact that he did not suffer from the sort of history-based

artistic cuckoldry that plagued his contemporaries, was inspired by the more rebellious and individualistic filmmakers of German New Cinema like Werner Schroeter, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Daniel Schmid who were criticized and even sometimes absurdly described as 'fascist' filmmakers for their ambitious and cultivated aestheticism and for not making banal realist works about proles working in factories, as he was rebelling against the soulless and static nature of the spiritually castrated and Vergangenheitsbewältigung-obsessed zeitgeist he was born into. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Schlingensiefel oftentimes made fun of Wim Wenders, who arguably represented some of the worst aspects of German New Cinema and whose mindless idealism was relentlessly mocked in *100 Years Adolf Hitler - The Last Hour in the Führerbunker* (1989) in a scene where he is even compared to Uncle Adolf. In that sense, *Egomania* is an unhinged expression of the post-WWII volksgeist/collective unconscious that leaves no stone unturned in terms of expressing the metaphysical maladies and collective pathologies plaguing the Fatherland at the time, so it should be no surprise that the director pays blatant tribute to German radical individualists, Oskar Panizza and Max Stirner, with the film, not to mention the fact that he was also heavily inspired by the aristocratic individualism of Conservative Revolutionary novelist Ernst Jünger. When it comes down to it, the film is a sort of celluloid 'Heimat Nightmare' that is more devilishly humorous than the macabre stories of H.H. Ewers, more darkly romantic and mysticism-oriented than Leni Riefenstahl's *The Blue Light* (1932) aka *Das blaue Licht*, more absurdly Heimat-obsessed than the absurdist filmic farces of Achternbusch, and more aesthetically decadent than the early works of Schroeter. The fact that Schlingensiefel directed the film when he was only 24 just goes to show his majesty as a moviemaker who was probably born half a century too late. With its apocalyptic aesthetics, ominous oneiric tone, and strangely uplifting ending for what is a largely darkly poetic film, *Egomania* is a sort of Teutonic older brother to Derek Jarman's masterpiece *The Last of England* (1988). Brilliant as both an insanely idiosyncratic work of keenly kaleidoscopic cinematic art and as a critique of the modern glacial kraut soul, the film ultimately gives the viewer a good idea of where Schlingensiefel's filmmaking career might have headed had he not lived in a culturally and socially vapid zeitgeist plagued by ugliness, defeat, emotional barrenness, and despair.

-Ty E

100 YEARS OF ADOLF HITLER - THE LAST HOUR IN THE FÜHRERBUNKER
100 YEARS OF ADOLF HITLER - THE LAST HOUR IN THE
FÜHRERBUNKER

Christoph Schlingensief (1989)

In terms of filmic Uncle Adolfs, you probably cannot do better than kraut queer character actor Udo Kier in 100 Jahre Adolf Hitler - Die letzte Stunde im Führerbunker (1989) aka 100 Years of Adolf Hitler - The Last Hour in the Führerbunker directed by the late great Christoph Schlingensief (United Trash aka The Slit, Die 120 Tage von Bottrop aka The 120 Days of Bottrop), which may not feature the most serious screen depiction of Hitler but it certainly features the most memorable and feces-filled. The first film in the director's 'Germany Trilogy' aka 'Deutschlandtrilogie'—a sort of remarkably grotesque and oftentimes scatological post-Aktionist equivalent to Prussian conservative auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's own Teutonic celluloid triptych—Schlingensief's work is a totally tasteless piece of strangely tantalizing Teuton trash running less than 60 minutes that was shot over a 16-hour-long period from the morning of November 28 to the early AM hours of November 29 in a rotting World War II era bunker in the German town of Mühlheim an der Donau in the district Tuttlingen in Baden-Württemberg, Germany where the director used nothing but a mere flashlight that he himself wielded for lighting, thus giving the film a sort of kitschy yet apocalyptic chiaroscuro-like look sort of like the director's previous doomful scatological celluloid National Socialist nightmare Menu total (1986) aka Hymen 2 - Die Schlacht der Vernunft. A work titled in anti-tribute to the 100 years since Hitler's birth on April 20, 1889, 100 Years of Adolf Hitler lets the viewer know in a rather rude, crude, and aberrantly aesthetically terroristic yet jovial sort of way that Uncle Adolf might have blow his brains out on April 30, 1945 but the Führer is not dead, at least not in spirit, as Deutschland refuses to come to terms with him and bury him once and for all, or so Herr Schlingensief—a mensch whose lifelong obsession with National Socialism seems to have rivaled that of Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels and whose celluloid caricatures seem to fall somewhere in between that of Der Stürmer founder Julius Streicher and degenerate kraut commie Dadaist George Grosz—wants you to think. An absurdist work of audaciously antagonistic anti-history featuring intentional historical inaccuracies and obscene anachronisms that are ironically no less ridiculous than the myths about Hitler and the Third Reich that many people today accept as fact (i.e. Hitler had one testicle), thus underscoring the innately irrational and almost religious view people have of Austria's most famous amateur painter, Schlingensief's celluloid (S)hitlerite psychodrama acts as a sort of reverse exorcism for those individuals who like to pretend German history began with the Wirtschaftswunder. In 100 Years of Adolf Hitler, the Führer is not the tragic Wagnerian god who unleashed the world's greatest Götterdämmerung on Greater Germany and the rest of Europa,

but a morbidly melancholy and decidedly dejected bedridden wuss of the drug addicted and Parkinson's-plagued sort who is so rattled with a wacky sort of weltenschmerz that he uses excrement as a means of expressing himself before committing suicide in the most pathetic of ways in a cold, dark, and damp technocratic hellhole that was constructed by his regime. A work of overtly self-reflexive metacinema where many of the scenes begin with someone clapping a clapperboard in front of the camera as if Schlingensiefel did not even bother to have the film properly edited together after shooting it, *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* is truly 'transcendental' cinema in its purest, rawest, and most unadulterated form as a work that shatters every single cinematic, socio-political, aesthetic, and historical convention imaginable with the ecstasy and anarchistic glee of a brigade of acid dropping berserkers at an enflamed French whorehouse full of whores in Hitlerite drag.

Opening with Uncle Adolf as portrayed by Udo Kier declaring "Schnapps, Wim, Trotta, Nico, etc.," *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* immediately lets the viewer know that Herr Schlingensiefel has a bone to pick with some of the more popular and, in turn, more banal and conformist filmmakers of New German Cinema, namely Wim Wenders and, to a lesser extent, feminist hag Margarethe von Trotta. It should be noted that the film seems to be, at least partly, a sardonic celluloid revenge against Wenders, who walked out of the 1986 Berlinale screening of Schlingensiefel's film *Menu total* after being highly offended by the work, which was labelled as 'fascistic' by the German press and even the director's former mentor Werner Nekes. After Hitler mumbles a couple of words, one bears witness to Wenders making the following bullshit and conspicuously cliched (sub)humanistic speech at the 40th Cannes Film Festival on a grainy TV screen, "We can improve the pictures of this world and with that this world can be improved." As the rest of the film will demonstrate with a sort of insanely incendiary iconoclasm, Schlingensiefel thinks Wenders is a cowardly cardboard humanist fraud who makes soulless celluloid swill to appease shallow left-wing film critics and to demonstrate he is not a big mean Nazi monster like his parents and grandparents' generation, as if Germany's National Socialist past spiritually castrated him. From there, a little boy that looks like a blond Ashkenazi Israelite sings a butchered children's song that concludes with the goofy-looking child making reference to Wenders and the most artistically restrained yet internationally successful 'auteur' of New German Cinema, Volker Schlöndorff. As *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* reveals, Schlingensiefel is not surprisingly a Rainer Werner kind of guy as he is a fellow 'enfant terrible,' as the film features Fassbinder superstars Volker Spengler (*Satan's Brew*, *In a Year with 13 Moons*), Margit Carstensen (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Martha*, *Fear of Fear*), and Mr. Kier (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Lili Marleen*) in rather raunchy roles that seem to pay tribute to the most anarchistic of Fass-bande productions, like *Satansbraten* (1976) aka *Satan's Brew* and *Die Dritte Generation* (1979) aka *The Third Gen-*

eration. It is 30 April 1945 at 5pm and the last day of Hitler's god forsaken life and he is planning to go out with a bang in the Führerbunker, but not before he gets in touch with his inner fecal side. Hitler's mistress-turned-wife Eva Braun (Schlingensief superstar Brigitte Kausch) is dyking out with Magda Goebbels in a bunker bathroom. Braun's traitor brother-in-law SS-Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein (Volker Spengler) is running around the bunker like a bumbling buffoon while grabbing his nipples like an Guido tranny stripper. Meanwhile, Hermann Göring (Alfred Edel), Martin Bormann (Andreas Kunze), and Dr. Joseph Goebbels (film critic/Schlingensief superstar Dietrich Kuhlbrodt) babble on about pointless bullshit. Indeed, it seems that everyone in the Führerbunker is either suffering from cabin fever and/or autism, among other things.

Although it is the end of April, everyone in the bunker is celebrating Christmas by eating a large festive feast, but Big H is nowhere in sight, so Bormann complains regarding the missing Führer, "he's never on time...since Stalingrad...he just stays in bed, drunk, and ignores meals," to which Eva replies in defense of her MIA lover, "That's his way to celebrate, that's right." Hermann Göring is also unnerved by Hitler's glaring absence and rhetorically asks Eva, "What do you mean he's celebrating? Millions are running into the knives of the Bolsheviks...and he is celebrating says?," to which Dr. Goebbels eloquently replies, "Brother Göring, you're so stupid you should have been Reich Chancellor." Unfortunately, Herr Göring takes Goebbels' sarcastic remark quite seriously and he decides that he does indeed want to be the Reich Chancellor. Out of nowhere, Uncle Adolf finally appears like a creepy rotting great-grandfather lurking in the shadows in a craven attempt to get a quick peek of his unclad great-granddaughter and Braun is so aroused by his presence that she seems to have a spontaneous orgasm, but her best beau barely pays her any mind as he grabs a bottle of wine from the cellar. Indeed, Adolf is only interested in his somewhat sexy Mediterranean-like Nurse Morell (Asia Verdi)—a transsexualized version of the real Hitler's personal physician Theodor Morell, who got him hooked on a cocktail of drugs and who many Nazis seemed to believe was Jewish (notably, Morell claimed to have studied under Russian Jewish bacteriologist Élie Metchnikoff)—because she provides him with the only solace in his miserable forlorn life, morphine injections. While receiving an injection in a rather erotic fashion from Miss Morell, Hitler declares, "I'm still the greatest...Not just the leader and hero...I am myself! Straight, strong and simple!," as if to only convince himself that he is not the most monolithic failure in all of human history, as a man who went from being the most powerful man in Europe and the most (in)famous man in the world to a lonely enfeebled cripple hiding in a bunker who has had his life routinely threatened by many of his former followers. While watching Dr. Goebbels take a dump, Bormann is slapped in the face by Fegelein, who immediately runs away like a delinquent toddler who is proud of being such a little asshole. After Bormann calls Fegelein a "German swine" as the fat belligerent

bastard runs away, Göring comes up to him and Goebbels and lets them know that the rather rotund SS-Gruppenführer is a traitor because he has been screwing a prostitute. Needless to say, Göring, Bormann, and Goebbels gang up on Fegelein in a restroom, beat him up, and seemingly molest him, but he doesn't seem to mind as he is a raving maniac who wallows in sadomasochistic cruelty of the sexually savage sort. Meanwhile, Eva Braun performs fellatio on Magda and Dr. Goebbels' underage son Kurt while the young lad draws a picture for his "Uncle Adolf." Indeed, the Führerbunker is home to one fucked family affair.

While all the Nazis are singing "Silent Night" aka "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht" while walking slowly in line like a bunch of highly devout monks in a somnambulist-like state, lovelorn lady lunatic Eva Braun gets jealous over Sister Morell due to her secret lurid love affair with Adolf, so she attacks her like a wounded rabid crazed cunt ex-girlfriend who won't let go of her thoroughly disinterested boy toy. Meanwhile, sinisterly sleazy sex fiend Fegelein fingers a baby doll while repeatedly saying the word "fucking" as if he is possessed by the ghost of a depraved AIDS-ridden gay porn star. In an assumed tongue-in-cheek reference by Schlingensief to himself and his own film, Bormann declares while sitting on the toilet, "I'm reading from the works of degenerate artists" and Göring responds by once again stating, "I want to be Reich Chancellor" while playfully manhandling his comrade. Meanwhile, Fegelein molests his sister-in-law Eva Braun while Nurse Morell does the same to Mrs. Goebbels. Fed up with Uncle Adolf's declining leadership abilities, Dr. Goebbels self-righteously declares, "We no longer need a Führer, just the German people." For his last great artistic masterpiece before kicking the bucket, Hitler sits in a pile of liquid scheid and then makes a print of his feces-covered fanny by pressing it against a piece of paper hanging on the bunker wall while Dr. Goebbels declares, "the people won't be longing for a Führer, only the artist who has to learn not to resign, but to use the limits around him...Because, and I'm sure you will agree with me, Hitler, too was an artist!" in a most defiant fashion. Knowing that Hitler's hours are numbered Göring conspires with Fegelein and Bormann, letting the former know he will be in charge of foreign politics and the latter will be in charge of domestic politics while he will act as both Reich Chancellor and Minister of Propaganda after purging Goebbels in what he hopes to be a 3,000 year Reich.

When Uncle Adolf finally puts a bullet in his brain, his estranged lover Eva Braun decides to become him by dressing in drag, even giving herself a Charlie Chaplin mustache with charcoal. As her first act as the new and hardly improved Führer, Eva Braun makes a phone call on a broken phone to some unknown person demanding that field marshal Erwin 'the Desert Fox' Rommel, who committed suicide in 1944 at Hitler's request since he was connected to an assassination plot against the Führer, somehow be brought back to life. At her hubby's command, Magda hands out poisonous chocolate to all of her children (notably, one

is named after Margarethe von Trotta and another after Wim Wenders) who soon fall over and croak. Although she has killed all of her dozen or so progeny, Magda manages to give birth to another child—a primitive doll made out of yarn—during her lesbo wedding with Braun-turned-Hitler, though she dies during childbirth. Determined not to leave the baby a bastard, Braun hooks up with Fegelein and the two proceed to set Hitler's dog Blondi on fire in what one might describe as a 'hound holocaust.' After escaping from the Führerbunker, Fegelein and Eva Braun put their Nazi bastard baby that they have symbolically named "Little Moses" inside a rusty old tub and send it down a river to an ostensible promised land in a scene juxtaposed with audio commentary of kraut conservative politician Franz Josef Strauss—a long-time minister-president of the state of Bavaria—stating, "Actually the Germans are romantic people, but then they start pondering. Others are logical, but in the practical sphere, they're more realistic. Germans must finally learn...not everything in life ends in a mathematical parable, like $2 \times 2 = 4$. They should be less romantic, less enchanted, and most of all less ideological!" in a biting scenario that seems to reflect Schlingensief's belief that post-WWII Germany was sown in sin and perversion and is in denial about its National Socialist roots.

Notably, in the documentary *Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme* (2005) aka *Christoph Schlingensiefel and His Films*, auteur Schlingensiefel states that he once told a friend that he felt he would make an, "excellent guard in a concentration camp," adding regarding his interaction with his confused comrade, "He was like "Now what's that supposed to mean?" but no, I'm telling you [...] I have this fear, I probably have those molecules [...] I'm a few steps removed from Goebbels, my grandmother's maiden name is Goebbels, it was the cousin of a cousin or something like that, maybe there are molecules in me, [...] hopefully, they won't come into effect, so I've got to use it up from the outset, before it maybe puffs itself up later." Personally, I think Schlingensiefel would have probably been interned in a concentration camp or even secretly euthanatized like certain 'Entartete Kunst' artists like Elfriede Lohse Wächtle had he lived during the Third Reich, as he was such an innately intemperate, iconoclastic, and incendiary artist and pernicious prankster that there is no way he would have ever been able to follow orders from humorless Hitlerites, let alone guard thousands of prisoners, but I respect his message with *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* in regard to contemporary Germans being afraid of their roots and denying the past by pretending to be bleeding heart pansy humanist eunuchs, philo-Semitic shabbos goy artistic serfs, Father(land)-hating feminists, and other untermenschen rabble. Indeed, while von Trotta symbolically renounced her ancestral heritage by directing absurdly banal feminist biopics about anti-kraut commie Jewesses like Rosa Luxemburg, Wenders attempted to become an American filmmaker and went out of his way to work with Jewish American filmmakers like Sam Fuller, as if these glaringly and repulsively compensatory ethno-masochistic actions would

somehow rid them of the ostensibly nasty Nazi taint. As a man who staged an adaptation of Hamlet starring real neo-Nazis and created a Big Brother-esque TV show set in Vienna called *Foreigners out!* Schlingensiefel's Container where swarthy turd-skinned foreigners living inside a concentration camp-like container were voted off the show to be deported, Schlingensiefel demonstrated an obsession with Germany's taboo past that seemed to transcend Uncle Adolf's own obsession with heebies and bolsheviks, thus reflecting his truly Teutonic spirit. In its depiction of Hitler creating a painting with poop, *100 Years of Adolf Hitler* also reveals the biting irony of how Uncle Adolf unwittingly gave birth to the alpha-degenerate Viennese Aktionism movement, whose members were heavily influenced by their nation's Nazi past, especially Otto Mühl, who served in the German Wehrmacht and was even a war hero of sorts. Apparently, Schlingensiefel was so obsessed with his genetic inheritance and the supposed atavistic 'taint' in Aryan blood and kultur that he believed he contracted the cancer that ultimately killed him as a result of his involvement in adapting Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* in the summer of 2004 at the prestigious Bayreuth Festival because, as his friend Alexander Kluge noted in the foreword to the book *Christoph Schlingensiefel - Art Without Borders* (2010), "Wagner, he claims, disseminates a deadly poison via his suggestive music." Indeed, considering Wagner's crucial influence on Hitler and the National Socialist weltanschauung, Schlingensiefel might have been on to something.

-Ty E

THE GERMAN CHAINSAW-MASSACRE
THE GERMAN CHAINSAW-MASSACRE

Christoph Schlingensief (1990)

Everyone knows how brutal a Texas chainsaw massacre is, but few can fathom the sheer depravity of a German chainsaw massacre. In 1990, German art-house-trash auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief released the boldly extravagant Brecht-esque satiric reunification splatter flick *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* (aka *Blackest Heart*); the second entry in the director's "German trilogy," and a film that boldly goes where no film has gone before. Indeed, you will never see another cinematic work (except in another Schlingensief flick) that even begins to rival the anarchic nature of *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*; a film featuring a dream-sequence scene where Udo Kier sports an absurd Hitler-Chaplin-swaastika-mustache, as well as a cast of swarthy untermensch German actors that put the real-life cast of Fritz Hippler's *The Eternal Jew* (1940) to shame. Christoph Maria Schlingensief – who better resembled a Talmudic scholar during his remaining days than an Aryan Übermensch – passed away prematurely late last year due to an unsuccessful battle with lung cancer, thus I feel it is my duty to honor his legacy as a maniac maverick auteur by viewing all of his films within the next month (which is something I should have done long ago). Although it has been a while since I saw a film by the enfant terrible auteur, I decided that viewing *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* would be the best way to start my month long unofficial Schlingensief movie marathon. After watching the film, I must admit that I was anything but let down, as viewing *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* was the cinematic equivalent of a bleak phantasmagorical National Socialist nightmare. In fact, I would give my body to the Third Reich if I could somehow hear long dead Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels' (who is infamously known for banning films in the Fatherland) thoughts on the film. As one would expect from a work entitled *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*; the film is a tad more sophisticated and less serious than Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974). German immigrants played a large role in the cultural development of Texas (17% of modern Texans claim to be of German descent) – but like most Americans of European descent – they are indubitably less culturally refined than their blood brothers from the old country. In Schlingensief's *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*, one notices that cultural degeneration in Germany has taken a slightly different route than in the Texas portrayed in TCM.

The German Chainsaw-Massacre opens with real-life documentary stock footage from the 1990 German reunification ceremony. Then, the film takes a sinister turn for the worst, warning viewers that east Germans – who look and act like westerners – are secretly living among them. During the Third Reich, Aryan blood was considered nothing short of holy, but in GCM it is merely a less than meaty lucrative means for maniacally making money. Additionally, while the

Teutons of Nazi Germany wanted to consolidate with their racial brothers from around the world, most of the eastern and western Germans featured in GCM much rather prefer murdering one another. It goes without saying that GCM and TCM also have their differences. Whilst the slightly deranged cannibalistic Sawyer family featured in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* prefers only the finest grade human meat, the west German human-butcher clan of *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* stereotypically prefers Teutonic bratwurst cut from the cheap meat of east German swine. Of course, that is not the only difference between the two families, as while the quasi-inbred Texan Sawyer family prefers to butcher and sell the meat of counter-culture hippie types, the family featured in GCM – who are set in their barbaric ways – are happy to kill friendly progressive east Germans, as they make for tasty would-be cosmopolitan treats. Thus, it is apparent that Herr Schlingensief executed a role-reversal tactic with his distinct brand of chainsaw massacring - portraying the seemingly more advanced west Germans as debauched capitalists who are too set in their greedy ways to reunite with their culturally and economically bankrupt kinsmen. Even to this day – like most ex-Soviet eastern bloc nations – the eastern region of Germany still hasn't recovered from decades of communism. Of course, in Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, the director played on the prejudicial fears many Americans have for "backwards", "inbred" and "violent" confederates. As you find out during the beginning of GCM, east German anti-heroine Clara is far from being a sweet sassy lass as her thirst for blood is almost equal to that of the west German cannibal clan she falls prey to, for she is an undeniably proficient killer with an improvised talent for murdering and castrating enemies. While portraying those east Germans who refuse to leave their post-communist region as backwards automatons who are incapable of deracinating themselves from their former authoritarian brainwashing (as personified in GCM by a group of emotionally robotic ex-Stasi border patrol guards), the progressive west Germans - who are also set in their (materialistic) ways - slaughter their countrymen for blood soaked meat and Deutsche Marks. Frau Clara is indubitably a progressive feminist that yearns for total freedom as her sole interest is to emigrate to the west at any cost, even if she has to murder her androgynous troll-like husband in the process. On top of featuring a totally different socio-political subtext from the more traditional and linear horror history told in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* – a salacious work of unconventional slapstick murder – features gore-galore and endless scenes of exquisite entrails and bodily dismemberment. Like most of Christoph Schlingensief's work, *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* is first and foremost a clever (albeit intentionally trashy) neo-surrealist romp satire that should be taken solely in jest. Every serious horror fanatic knows that Hooper's cannibal clan flick is a canonical masterpiece of the macabre (as advertised in the film) due to its extremely naturalistic and somewhat cinéma vérité inspired aesthetic, thus, I suspect that the most fans of

THE GERMAN CHAINSAW-MASSACRE

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre will fail to appreciate (nor begin to understand) the wickedly designed jubilant chaos that is The German Chainsaw-Massacre.

Christoph Maria Schlingensief

I have a feeling that Christoph Schlingensief was less than enthusiastic about splatter films, but he certainly proved his profound understanding of the horror subgenre through the satiric tongue-and-cheek nature of *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*. Although the film features enough gore to stun the most desensitized of gorehounds, it will be apparent to those individuals that the director lacks respect for such exploitive exploits. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if Schlingensief was mocking Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* (1987) – which was released a couple years before *The German Chain Saw Massacre* – as both films feature mangled human torsos (both being the result of an automobile) that look quite similar. GCM is like a perfect marriage between the Viennese Actionist films and the surrealist works of Luis Buñuel confined to production values that mirror John Waters' early Art-House-Trash flicks (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*, etc.). Also, despite the sexually surreal nature of *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* – which includes incest and female-on-female missionary style rape – it is quite apparent that Schlingensief is mocking the post-WW2 libertine nature of European cinema. To put it simply, *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* is one of the ugliest and most revolting films that I have ever seen in my cinema-obsessed life. What saves GCM from being a loathsome pile of Germanic excrement is how hilarious and audaciously ridiculous the film is. Thankfully, Christoph Schlingensief was a politically astute individual who knew how to make his atypical symbolic social commentary digestible. After all, most politically-charged filmmakers are quite obnoxious (Spike Lee, Michael Moore, etc) in their execution of socio-political commentary. It is very doubtful that there exists another film in the world such as GCM; where a cannibal family keeps their dead Wehrmacht soldier grandfather (symbolic of Germany's inability to move forward) as a mobile shrine (another nod to TCM). To call the films of Christoph Schlingensief difficult would be an obscene understatement, but for those that have the gall to visually devour works that blur the imaginary line between pure trash and pure art, his films offer cinematic experiences like no other. Although *A Hundred Years of Adolf Hitler* (1989) is the first film in the director's "German Trilogy", I recommend that Schlingensief-virgins watch *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* first as it is a much more accessible work. Due to Hollywood and the mainstream (and the not so mainstream) media's skillful knack for inducing Teuton-phobia in the minds of American citizens, I think that is safe to say that if the average yank were to watch one of Schlingensief's films, it would (mistakenly) confirm their suspicions regarding the purported dubious nature of the fallen master race. Luckily, Schlingensief's films are only known and beloved by a small cinephile elite that cherishes the unfortunately de-

ceased auteur filmmaker's incomparable works of post-post-modern Germanic anti-kultur. Maybe someday a brave American horror auteur will do for Amero-cinema what Christoph Schlingensief did for German national films, but such an unlikely scenario is merely wishful obsessive-cinephile thinking. Instead, next time I watch *The German Chainsaw-Massacre*, I plan to accompany it with *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, as such an eclectically perverse double-feature could only make for an oh-so rare majestically macabre experience. German prophet philosopher Oswald Spengler once stated something along the lines that out of all the artists (he was most specifically referring to the German expressionist painters) who created art during the interbellum period (between the first and second World War), not one of them was an artistic genius that had the ability to construct aesthetically pleasing works. That being said, Spengler was lucky that he didn't live to see the subversive works of post-WW2 German filmmakers. Spengler – whose canny physiognomic tact enabled him to foresee many of the horrors that would occur in the western world nearly a century after his death – couldn't even have foretold the spiritually sick chaos contained within a hyper-cynical film like *German Chainsaw-Massacre*. Since we (the living) are all confined to culturally degenerate times – where art is more often unprepossessing than not – one might as well buckle-up and enjoy the deluging ride. Whether you were born in Germany or not, one (most imperatively those of occidental heritage) should accept that a film like *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* is mostly importantly a reflexive sign of our wretched times.

-Ty E

TERROR 2000
TERROR 2000

Christoph Schlingensief (1992)

As I expected it would be, *Terror 2000: Germany out of Control* – the final chapter in recently deceased Ger-maniac auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief's delightfully deranged "German trilogy" – is easily the most depraved and wickedly perverse work in the series. Like the first two films in Schlingensief's trilogy, *Terror 2000* is another example of the director's sadomasochistic obsession with being a self-loathing German who is haunted by his fatherland's National Socialist past. Also, like the previous films in the trilogy, *Terror 2000* is an absurdist political satire that pretends to be a mindless gross-out flick, thus, the film is indubitably a work that will offend both the one dimensional minds of gorehounds and the anally retentive tastes of arthouse princesses. As far as production values, *Terror 2000* beats its predecessors. I have a feeling that Schlingensief slowly learned how to direct films via his German trilogy, as all three features suffer from amateurish direction and incoherent plots yet these "weaknesses" only add to the mighty character and crude charisma of these marvelously maniacal movies. *Terror 2000* is a film about race chaos and Neo-Nazi vigilantes in post-reunification Germany. As one would expect from a film directed by Christoph Maria Schlingensief, a Neo-Nazi group terrorizes colored refugees (Ausländer) who have relocated to the fatherland. During the beginning of *Terror 2000*, a turd of a social worker (who seems more Amerikkkan than German) and a Polish family are kidnapped by the usual racist suspects. From there, *Terror 2000* turns into an anarchistic work of scorched-earth spoof cinema where every convention and norm of film is wonderfully exterminated. Had German auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief lived during the Third Reich, there is no doubt in my mind that he would have been lined-up for a firing squad. If it was discovered that Schlingensief was the illegitimate Grandson of degenerate German communist Dada artist George Grosz, I wouldn't be the least bit surprised as both Aryan artists had a special talent for portraying Germans as racial untermensch and a strange affinity for creating the anti-pornographic (sexually unappealing sex scenarios).

What makes *Terror 2000* extra-special is that director Christoph Maria Schlingensief plays the role of Michael Kühnen; the real-life gay German Neo-Nazi and ex-Maoist who died of HIV-related complications in 1991. In fact, the film goes as far as poking fun at the fact that Kühnen contracted gay cancer. I must admit that Schlingensief did a swell job exaggeratedly copying Kühnen's homopantomimes and overall daintiness. Everyone's favorite gay German character actor, Udo Kier, also plays the role of a Neo-Nazi priest in *Terror 2000*. If you have ever questioned Kier's ability to play a macho man, you have yet to see *Terror 2000*; a film where the humble-homo-actor shoots bullets faster than he guzzles down semen. Of course, Kier also still lets the audience watching the

film known that he is still on the brown-team by sharing homoerotic lingo with his brownshirt comrade. In short, *Terror 2000* is the kind of film that provides nationalists with enough ammo in regards to the dubious morality and nature of leftist artists. Although Christoph Maria Schlingensief uses sick gross-out humor and sadistic satirical content as a martially mean artistic means to mock Neo-Nazis, it is quite apparent that he is supremely fond of scatology. After all, I can't think of any other film that features an ugly Aryaness masturbating in public as a group of men fight behind her, revolting close-ups of real Scheiße covered with flies, and jokes about AIDS, thus, although *Terror 2000* is a leftist absurdist satire, it is surely a film that will offend most people from both ends of the political spectrum. To be fair, Schlingensief's sordid portrayal of colored foreigners is not exactly respectful, as he characterizes them in a manner comparable to a Tom Metzger-esque Neo-Nazi concocted caricature. In fact, a Negro repeatedly states "Fuck-fuck white shit" (translation: I want to rape German women). The foreigners in the film are quite ungrateful quests who have no problem stating that the free food that they receive at their refugee camps is "shitty" while also demanding that Germans give them more welfare. Of course, the refugee camp in *Terror 2000* is presented as a neo-Auschwitz of sorts.

Despite being easily the most lavishly produced film in Christoph Maria Schlingensief's German trilogy, I found it be the weakest of the three films. Naturally, many of the themes featured in the director's previous two films – *A Hundred Years of Adolf Hitler* (1989) and *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* (1991) – were once again covered in *Terror 2000*. That being said, I still found *Terror 2000* to be a notable and totally worthy exercise in iconoclastic cinema. I also rarely find films to be funny (especially when the director is attempting to be comedic) but I found the intellectual toilet humor in *Terror 2000* to be first-class display of satirical sass. It has been a long time since swastikas burned in Germany but in the Teutonic nachmahr *Terror 2000*; the ancient Aryan symbol burns on (albeit, in a mocking manner that parodies that of American KKK cross-burning). In the film, you will also find such charming dialog as "Long Live Hatred!" and "Adolf Hitler was a Nazi. My mother was a Nazi. My father was a Nazi. I'm a Nazi!" After watching the film, I wondered whether or not Christoph Maria Schlingensief had any full-fledged Nazi grandparents. Seeing as Schlingensief seems to hate Nazis more than Steven Spielberg does, I can only assume that he regretfully had an SS man or Gestapo agent swinging from his family tree. Schlingensief is well known in Germany (and even on an international level) for his tactic of incriminating politicians and their empty lies of "hope" by "playing something through to its end" with his various libelous claims against them. Of course, I sincerely doubt that the films in his Germany trilogy made for a successful outlet for expressing his political views, but I respect the anti-Aryan-Aryan's unconventional approach. Christoph Maria Schlingensief must have learned all he needed to know about satiric filmmaking by locking himself in his room and religiously

TERROR 2000

watching Stanley Kubrick's apocalyptic cold war satire *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) for months on end. Like *Dr. Strangelove*, *Terror 2000* is a quasi-nihilistic satire that is blacker-than-a-firebombed-Dresden-resident-from-1945 comedy that leaves no group/political ideology unscathed. With *Terror 2000*, Christoph Maria Schlingensiefel also pays tribute to Jewish filmmaker Mel Brook's iconic Nazi-parodying in *The Producers* when an obese investigator in the film (who is a glutton that sports a XXX-Large Nazi SA brownshirt uniform) sings a verse from Springtime for Hitler, thus he is the kind of German filmmaker that the original National Socialists would have labeled a "white Jew" (as they did to German theoretical physicists like Werner Heisenberg). Despite his admiration for God's chosen tribe, Schlingensiefel had no problem including a controversial scene (especially for modern Germans) in *Terror 2000* where a Hasidic Jew hangs lifelessly from a tree.

One scene I found especially humorous in *Terror 2000* is when a passionate Neo-Nazi states, "We can't stand the Jews because they left Germany in 1933 to go to Hollywood." Although I share the Neo-Nazi's sentiment in regards to half-Jew Fritz Lang, I see the immigration of Aryan auteur F.W. Murnau to America as German cinema's greatest loss. Despite Schlingensiefel's criticism of so called xenophobia among German Nationalists, the film still expresses the universal fact that race chaos and Neo-Nazi movements are truly symbiotic of multi-culturalism. Almost two decades after *Terror 2000* was released, German politicians – including social democrat banker/economist Thilo Sarrazin and Angela Merkel; current chancellor of Germany – have publicly admitted the total failure that is multiculturalism in post-war Germany. One of the strangest aspects of *Terror 2000* is that Schlingensiefel chose to use a Polish family as the central target of discrimination in the film. Although the original National Socialists showed a somewhat hostile hatred towards Poles (especially those of a darker and more swarthy phenotype), most modern Neo-Nazis accept the fact that Slavs and Eurasians are imperative fighters for the Occident who have yet to be totally tainted by liberal democracy like western Europeans and Americans. Whatever his exact political persuasion was, Schlingensiefel certainly foresaw the chaos that would erupt in Germany as a result of racial diversity. As a character states during *Terror 2000*, "Germany is not America, We're not an immigration country." After all, no one is telling Mexico nor South Africa that they need more white immigrants yet in European nations reverse-colonialism is demanded by conspiring Third World leaders and liberal Europeans alike.

-Ty E

UNITED TRASH

Christoph Schlingensief (1996)

Unquestionably, I am prepared to appreciate any film that manages to cause the ceasing of diplomatic relations between a western nation and a sub-Saharan African country, even if it is not necessarily a good one. Luckily, *United Trash - Die Spalte* (1996) aka *The Slit*—a work that was so disconcerting to some proud African negroes that it caused a brief suspension of diplomatic relations between Germany and Zimbabwe—is also a masterpiece of the insanely and iconoclastically cinematically grotesque and ruthlessly socio-politically repugnant. Directed by the late great aberrant-garde Teutonic Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief (Menu total, *Das deutsche Kettensägen Massaker* aka *The German Chainsaw Massacre*), the film is a sort of anti-American/anti-globalist/anti-UN anti-exploitation film that uses the conspicuously crappy cinematic conventions of carny celluloid hucksters like Russ Meyer, Herschell Gordon Lewis, and ZAZ (*Zucker, Abrahams and Zucker*) against itself to mount a mirthfully venomous celluloid blitzkrieg against the double-headed dragon of Americanization and globalization and their propaganda wing in Hollywood. Apparently partly a response to the United Nations' failure to stop genocide in Rwanda and the Balkans during the early 1990s, the fittingly titled *United Trash* tells the timeless tale of the black bastard spawn of a gay German UN officer and American hooker—a negro midget with a oozing pseudo-vagina on his forehead (hence the film's alternate title *The Slit*)—who is proclaimed the new messiah by a toothless excommunicated Catholic bishop and goes on a holy mission at the behest of a self-proclaimed dictator of the Afrocentric Islamic sort to assassinate the president of the United States and destroy the White House after being strapped to a Nazi era German V2 missile. A sort of modern day *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol* of the Teutonized culturally mongrelized African negro sort, Schlingensief's film is a metapolitically-incorrect post-colonial minstrel show where all of the Occident is the butt of the joke, but all the naive nig-nogs pay most of the price. A film where the mother Mary is a bishop-banging ex-con/ex-hooker as portrayed by over-the-hill Mexican Russ Meyer star Kitten Natividad, Joseph is a gay German UN officer and scat fiend as portrayed by real-life gay German character actor Udo Kier, and the Messiah is a seemingly retarded negro dwarf with a cunt on his cranium that he ejaculates greenish spunk out of as portrayed by some random unknown Zimbabwean negro dwarf named Thomas Chibwe, *United Trash* is a work that sardonically molests beaten-to-death biblical allusions to obscenely and obnoxiously articulate to the thoroughly debased viewer that the world is now one giant overflowing homogenized human sewer swimming with negro savages and run by degenerate deracinated Europeans under the ostensibly humanistic auspices of world peace, as if such a cliched fantasy is actually really desirable among (sub)humanity, let alone obtainable. Of course,

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as Schlingensief's scathingly satirical celluloid scat piece demonstrates, the monstrous multi-headed mongrel bastard known as global unity results in anything but peace on earth and goodwill to mankind.

After opening with the following tongue-in-cheek warning, "Attention!!! The following film contains subliminal effects! If you're pregnant or epileptic leave after 30 minutes at the most. Thank you for your understanding" that made me assume that auteur Schlingensief probably would have been proud if his film had induced a miscarriage in a young woman and/or caused an old geezer to croak as a result of a massive myocardial infarction as a true 'meta-artist' who saw no bounds and limits to art and its influence, United Trash then provides a complete general summary of the entire film because otherwise the viewer might not know what the hell is going on due to the movie's schizophrenic tone and general essence, as well as seemingly malefically spastic storyline and ultra-gross-out imagery. Indeed, the summary reads as follows: "This following film tells the true story of little Peter Panne, son of a German UN general and an American hooker. People simply called him JESU. While his father fails at the UN, a horde of Africans tries to destroy the president of the USA with a German V2 missile. JESU PETER's mother rams a needle into the boy's head so JESU ends up in the hospital. Despite his disability and a 33-lb crack on his head MOHAMMED PETER manages to save the world and destroy the American president forever and ever." Of course, the introduction summary leaves out all the gallons upon gallons of cum, blood, excrement, bile, and vomit that pollute the film, as United Trash, not unlike many of Schlingensief's works, is arguably a film where the sum of its parts is greater than the whole. Cipher-like protagonist Peter Panne aka Jesu-Peter aka Jesus-Peter aka Mohammed-Peter must have been conceived via immaculate conception (or a traditional negro gang rape) because while his father, United Nations general General Werner Brenner (the great kraut cocksucking character actor Udo Kier), is a kraut, and his mother Martha Brenner (Kitten Natividad of Russ Meyer's *Beneath the Valley of the Ultra-Vixens* (1979)) is a majority white American mestizo with mammoth mammary glands yet seemingly devoid of a derriere (unquestionably, a common and unfortunate body type for Mexican women), he is as dark as coal and has the most primitive of negro facial features, thus suggesting that he, unlike the average so-called 'African-American,' does not have a single drop of Europid blood. One also must not forget that Peter's dookie-diving daddy Werner is a rampant homosexual of the eccentrically effete yet militaristic Prussian-like sort who has never had sex with his wife and whose best beau is a "dyed-in-the-wool pervert" bodybuilder and creepy kiddy-fucker named Lund (Jonny Pfeifer, who later played alpha-queen fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld in Schlingensief's 1997 film *The 120 Days of Bortrop*). Shortly after being born, little Peter-Jesu is declared the new messiah by a tyrannical toothless Austrian bishop named Pierre (veteran actor Joachim Tomaschewsky of Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's 1999 cel-

luloid swansong Beresina) who was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for a good reason, but as the film's intentionally nauseating narrator describes, "...here in Africa people were still plain and simple. And he was welcomed with gratitude."

Peter's UN general father Werner has brought many great things to Africa including a water well so desert negroes don't die of dehydration and a crematorium so that disease-ridden colored corpses can be properly dealt with so as to stop the spread of the various diseases that afflict the Dark Continent, but it is a V2 missile leftover from Uncle Adolf's 12-year-old millennial Reich that he provides them with that will truly launch negroland out of the Stone Age and into the modern age. Indeed, on the eve of little Peter's blessed birth, Werner gives the rocket to the negroes and a "self-appointed dictator" named Hassan El Hatschi (Jones Muguse of Michael Raeburn's *Jit* (1992))—a bloated and boorish black slob who seems like a poor man's Idi Amin and who, like most third world extremist leaders, was educated in the West (Munich, to be exact)—decides he wants to crash it into the White House, as his ultimate goal is to kill the president of the United States, but the liftoff falls and the Islamofascist pan-Africanist only achieves burn marks and a ruined wardrobe (as can be expected from such a flamboyant fellow, he sports a giant ostentatious Kwanza-colored man-muumuu). With the help of decidedly demented Bishop Pierre, who wants to destroy the world but especially the Catholic Church that he so delusionally believes betrayed him, Hassan will groom the new messiah Peter to be a prophetic angel of death who will kill the U.S. president. Indeed, baby Peter replaces a straw puppet voodoo doll as the religious icon of Pierre's cult and he is placed in the V2 rocket, which, in terms of religious icons, is the group's equivalent to the cross. On the day of Peter's circumcision, merchants from Serengeti bring him myrrh and ivory and Bishop Pierre performs an (anti)erotic exorcism on his mother Martha, who is an ex-hooker with a long rap sheet who once spent twenty years in jail for exhibitionism, to ostensibly cure her of her deep-seated carnal vices. A perennial whore who was forced to become a sexually repressed housewife after marrying Prussian-esque poof Werner, Martha is practically reborn when Pierre gives her an exorcism involving chicken blood that is, "like a gigantic orgasm, the wave of African folklore penetrated her in a growing helix of hatred and violence." Indeed, Martha, like all the young negresses in the area that have been brainwashed by the sexually barbaric Bishop, becomes the blabbering unhinged charlatan Pierre's own personal whore, who he fucks with the hatred of thousands of Red Army Mongol rapists on the eve of the Fall of Berlin. When her husband Werner finds out that she has been fucking the unholy holy man and confronts her about it, Martha wisely brings up the fact that she found a pillow covered in feces that her hubby had soiled after being buggered by his shitstabbing boy toy Lund. Martha also whips out no less than ninety used condoms which she has collected over a 3 month period from her husband's sodomite sex-

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capades with Lund. When Werner asks her how she knows for sure that it is his semen inside of the well worn rubbers, Martha reminds him of the fact that the only sexual activity that she has ever engaged in with him is fellatio and she is quite accustomed to the “color and taste” as well as “quantity and consistency” of his Germanic gentlemen’s relish. Of course, pathetic Werner cannot deny that it is his spilled sod seed that has contaminated the condoms.

Quite magically, after Peter’s birth and his mother’s exorcism, the local famine ends and the blacks in the area begin becoming literate and even start using sexual contraceptives. Meanwhile, Bishop Pierre comes up with a pernicious prophecy involving Peter and, as the film’s narrator remarks, Martha “internalized the prophecy the hard way” by regularly allowing herself to be vaginally pillaged by the whore of a holy man. Of course, it seems like everything is looking up for Martha and her godly son, at least until she catches her husband’s boyfriend Lund molesting her blessed black baby boy, who is covered in feces when she finds him in the pansy hands of the poof pedophile. Using the “marble test” to confirm whether or not her son was defiled by Lund by seeing if the boy can tolerate a round piece of glass in his rectum, Martha unwittingly puts Peter’s life in jeopardy when the black baby boy places the object up his large negro nostril and begins suffocating as a result. While Werner has a histrionic lover’s spat with Lund, Martha unwittingly terribly disfigures her son’s forehead while attempting to get the marble out of his nose. Unbeknownst to Martha and everyone else, this all part of Bishop Pierre’s self-fulfilling, as he caused the tragic marble incident by sticking pins in a voodoo doll. Meanwhile, black Muslim dictator Hassan has his pan-African rebels blitzkrieg the local UN camp where they lynch and otherwise exterminate all the white people except Werner and Lund and predictably rename the place “Un-Camp Allah.” Forced to adapt to the changing political climate of primitive jigaboo-fascist authoritarianism—a distinctly Afrocentric style of government as described by the likes of great Nordic scholars like Lothrop Stoddard and Hesketh Hesketh-Prichard involving a lot of senseless killing, mindless hedonism, and a lot of sitting around and doing nothing—Werner and Lund dance in a minstrel show for the enjoyment of Dictator Hassan and his rowdy rebels, with the former sporting full-body blackface and a banana skirt and the latter wearing an aesthetically revolting Elvis outfit. When asked how she is doing by a kindly young negro who clearly wants to molest her mammoth cow-udder-like mammary glands, Martha responds, “my child has a marble up his nose and my husband has never fucked me.” After suffering the embarrassment of watching her husband dance in blackface for jolly cracker-lynching negro rebel soldiers, Martha forces Werner to drive her to the local hospital to see if Peter has recovered from a serious surgery involving the marble lodged in his nose. While a sadistic Mengele-esque doctor that moonlights as a rocket scientist named Vanderberg (Miklos Königer)—a “pathetic coward” and “moron in a lab coat” that is “a thorn in the flesh of Werner

von Braun” who came to Africa after the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster and started experimenting with “human engines” (aka disposable starving negroes)—manages to get the marble out of poor Peter’s nose, he also destroys his entire face in the process and tells Martha that it will be five years before he can be fully repaired. Needless to say, Martha is rather distraught by the news and after Werner makes the mistake of allowing her to drive him home from the hospital even though she has PMS and is pissed about the fact that she will not see her terribly disfigured spade messiah son for at least another five years, she crashes their car, thus permanently paralyzing her husband from the waist down in the process.

Flash forward five years later, Martha is a disgruntled alcoholic with a softspot for martinis and Werner is a disgraced cripple who wheels around in a shoddily-made UN cart while being made fun of by naughty negro gals because he no longer has the use of his legs, not to mention the fact that he no longer has any political authority as a white ex-ruler in a now black-run land. Luckily, since five years have passed, Werner is able to pick up his son, who is being held in the torture dungeon of demented Dr. Vanderberg. Upon arriving at the dungeon, Vanderberg brags that Peter has a “21.5-inch cock...in his crack.” When Werner finally sees Peter, he discovers a disgruntled retarded dwarf with a gigantic vagina-like gash (labia and all!) on his forehead that randomly ejaculates a grotesque greenish semen-like substance. Although no genius, Werner soon realizes that his son is an evil monster that will be used by Bishop Pierre and Dictator Hassan for super heinous purposes. Among other things, Peter enjoys getting drunk by pouring whiskey in the coochie on his cranium and when one of the Bishop’s young female followers/sex slaves says to him, “Oh yes, little boy...can I touch your little pussy” and pulls a globule of creamy greenish semen out of his forehead, he causes an earthquake that completely destroys the house he is inside. After Martha has sex with her son and subsequently celebrates the big event by dancing around naked outside with her progeny-lover, a miscegenation-based German-negro midget couple, and Hassan, Werner comes to the conclusion that he must assassinate both Peter and the would-be-great black dictator, but he fails miserably and ultimately gives up after multiple fruitless attempts. While he proves to be an impotent killer, Werner finally asserts the tiny drop of rampant heterosexuality lurking inside of his being by finally managing to have sex with his wife Martha for the first time, which ultimately enables them to “find peace in orgasms.” Of course, Bishop Pierre and Hassan finally decide to carry out their bombing of the White House and, in turn, assassination of the president. With Hassan at the wheel, Martha packed in a locked chest, and Peter as the engine (whiskey is poured in the slit in his head for fuel), the rocket is crashed into the White House while the American president is shooting a super 8 porn flick where he is the star. Ultimately, only Martha, Peter, and the president’s porn cameraman, who gets his camera lodged in his

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head, survive the ordeal. In celebration of their survival, Martha and her son Peter get married, travel to Rome for their honeymoon, and before they know it, they're expecting a baby. Unfortunately, Martha gives birth to a grotesque misbegotten inbred mixed-race creation that resembles a gory ejaculating vagina with eyes, so Peter, who is now the dictator-general of his homeland, does not think twice about tossing it out of a helicopter where it lands on the ground and ejaculates on Bishop Pierre and Werner, who have just married, as they walk out of the church as man and wife, with Udo Kier seeming especially comfortable in a wedding dress. The film closes with the following inter-title: "Dedicated to the victims of slowness and the UN."

For better or worse, I have exposed myself to all forms of exploitation degeneracy, from Troma retardation to the perturbing celluloid pathos of artsploitation auteurs like Marian Dora and Andrey Iskanov to the misogynistic costume melodramas of Andy Milligan to the sadomasochistic sod celluloid of frog fag extremists like Jacques Scandelari, and I have to say that United Trash is easily the most eclectically and eccentrically whacked-out and wayward 'exploitation' flick that I have ever seen, which is probably owed to the fact that auteur Christoph Schlingensief was about as much of an exploitation hack as Snoop Dog is a poet or Eli Wiesel is a historian. Indeed, the marvelous movie miscreation of a man that, in his gleefully deranged demolition of societal mores and sadistically sassy slaughtering of culturally cuckolded liberal (sub)humanist sacred cows, made the great Luis Buñuel seem like an icon of the booboisie and Dadaists seem like a bunch of granny panty wearing old spinsters that talked a lot but had nothing important or insightful to say, Schlingensief's film simultaneously diagnoses, embodies, flaunts, and ultimately mocks every necrotizing pathology that has plagued the Occident at least since the end of the Second World War and disseminates it in a semi-obfuscated multilayered fashion that can be enjoyed by the most hopelessly spastic of hyperactive SpongeBob SquarePants-loving toddlers and Phencyclidine-injecting ghetto jigaboos. Undoubtedly, one of my first thoughts after watching the film is that the world does not have enough nuclear V2 rockets and ancient genocidal blood feuds to clean up the pre-apocalyptic mess that is the acutely accursed West and its chaos-ridden former colonies. As a fiercely fucked Schlingensief farce overflowing with feces, every single foul sexual fetishism known to mankind, and a sort of singular flamboyant forlornness that leads me to believe that the director's dream would have probably been to direct and film a nuclear holocaust while tripping on LSD (after all, Schlingensief was a longtime admirer of Conservative Revolutionary hallucinogenic drug advocate Ernst Jünger). More or less a work that sardonically insinuates that Prussian militarism is a crypto-faggot boys club, third world dictators and revolutionaries are bred and schooled in Europa, American presidents are nothing more than borderline impotent glorified beta-male porn stars who can only get aroused by their own strategically contrived image, Africans are the perennial

unwanted bastard children of Europe, the United Nations and United States are just two sides of the same cheap fool's gold coin and the most deleterious threat to world peace since the rise of Bolshevism, and that the world is just one big micromanaged insane asylum that has been taken over by the inmates, United Trash is ultimately the ultimate anti-Hollywood film and the cinematic equivalent of a berserk Frankenstein monster on the rampage, as a work that cinematically deconstructs and reassembles every single celluloid lie that has by crapped out on the world by the likes of Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, Michael Bay, Robert Redford, and every other Hollywood anti-auteur and reveals them for the obscene absurdities that they are. Recently, I read about a pint-sized Ghanian tribal King based in Germany who rules his people from the safety and luxury of Aryanland via Skype, e-mail, and a phone and all I could think of was how fucked the modern world is and how Schlingensief's United Trash is a piece of curiously and perversely prophetic misunderstood genius that is nothing short of the V2 of art-trash cinema.

-Ty E

THE 120 DAYS OF BOTTRUP
THE 120 DAYS OF BOTTRUP

Christoph Schlingensief (1997)

As far as Kraut comedies are concerned, none can compare to the dementedly iconoclastic semi-surrealist works of Christoph Schlingensief and his work *Die 120 Tage von Bottrop – Der letzte neue deutsche Film* (1997) aka *The 120 Days of Bottrop – The Last New German Film* – a ferociously farcical parody of German New Wave cinema (most specifically the works of R.W. Fassbinder) – is arguably the ardent Aryan auteur filmmaker's most keenly reflexive and gut-busting effort. Featuring campy cameos and puckish performances from some of the biggest names in German New Wave (and Kraut cinema in general) – including Udo Kier, Helmut Berger, Volker Spengler, Leni Riefenstahl, Roland Emmerich, among others – *The 120 Days of Bottrop* is an overwrought unlove letter to German motion pictures that is more harsh than the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche's in terms of its bloodthirsty besmirchment of the Fatherland. *The 120 Days of Bottrop* features a number of the real-life surviving members of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's lecherous, carnivalesque inner-circle in a notably degenerated state (including Volker Spengler as an eccentric flaccid-cock-smoking producer) as they attempt to remake Pier Paolo Pasolini's final masterpiece *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) at the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin – Europe's largest building site and the setting for Fassbinder's 15 ½ -hour TV movie *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) – in a mere 5 days under increasingly topsy-turvy conditions. Intended as the final work of *Neue Deutsche*, the filmmakers in *The 120 Days of Bottrop* run into trouble as they begin to lose money and actors for their ostensibly ambitious final project. Part-homage but mainly a savagely sardonic satire of German cinema and post-nationalist Teutonic kultur in general, *The 120 Days of Bottrop* is very possibly the final word on German New Wave cinema from a director who couldn't have been better suited for the job. Being a child of the German New Wave and casting many Fassbinder regulars (Margit Carstensen, Udo Kier, Irm Hermann, etc) in his own uncompromising and antagonistic absurdist works, Schlingensief offers a candid and carnal perspective with *The 120 Days of Bottrop* that is more sportively sadistic than stalely sentimental in its portrayal of the once-revolutionary film movement its pays exorbitantly erudite yet erratic anti-tribute to.

As an unhinged left-winger who had gained international infamy for the many combative 'artistic pranks' (as best exemplified in Paul Poet's documentary *Foreigners Out! Schlingensief's Container*) he elaborately assembled over the past couple decades, it came as somewhat of a revelation to me that with *The 120 Days of Bottrop*, Schlingensief was quite critical of the ethno-masochistic and defeatist nature of most German New Wave films/filmmakers, especially regarding those works created during the last waning decade of the movement when passive nihilism came into vogue. Of course, with *100 Years of Adolph*

Hitler (1989), Schlingensief took a couple sharp snipes at Wim Wenders for his shallow and pathetically passive liberal idealism, but *The 120 Days of Bottrop* is an full-fledged offensive attack on the overly clichéd and often grueling weltanschmerz that plagues most of late era post-WW2 German New Wave cinema. While also a radical leftist like his cinematic forefathers who had criticized and lampooned Germany's National Socialist past in most of his works, Schlingensief never stooped to the irredeemable level of using his art as a platform for a one-man pity party of the putrid self-denigrating persuasion, nor did he ever embrace the highly contagious and toxic self-censoring artistic-hindrance of political correctness. After all, it is doubtful that Schlingensief was trying to appease culturally sensitive types when he decided to cast a real-life retarded untermensch as Fassbinder's delightfully (if aesthetically disgusting) dimwitted doppelganger in *The 120 Days of Bottrop*. That being said, it would not be a stretch to describe *The 120 Days of Bottrop* as the sort of postmodern satire that Trey Parker and Matt Stone of *South Park* fame would have directed had they had an encyclopedic understanding of German cinema instead of a proclivity towards fanboy wet dreaming about pop culture trash. Of course, one wouldn't expect anything less from Schlingensief; an anarchic auteur who had the audacity to direct *Mutters Maske* (1988); a terribly tragicomic remake of Jud Süß (1940) director Veit Harlan's National Socialist arthouse masterpiece *Opfergang* (1944). Needless to say, I doubt Joseph Goebbels would have found as much solace in Schlingensief's remake as he did with Harlan's celluloid magnum opus.

For whatever reason (but indubitably to mock the pretentious German-Dutch auteur in some sense), *The 120 Days of Bottrop* opens with the intertitle, "Wenders would have called this film a melancholy parody. Fassbinder never would have made it." Indeed, the film is a spoof, but it is more maniacally and malevolently merry than mirthless as Schlingensief certainly does not shed a tear for Fassbinder and his friends. Indeed, despite his cinematic experiments in black comedy with later films like *The Third Generation* (1979) and *Lola* (1981), Fassbinder would have never made a film so patently preposterous and seemingly unpretentious as *The 120 Days of Bottrop*; a work that has more in common with the early arthouse-sleaze films of John Waters like *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Desperate Living* (1977) than following in the rich cultural footsteps of the German New Wave filmmakers. I don't think it would be an exaggeration to state that not since Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977) has a German film been so gravely and feverishly preoccupied with its nation's cultural history as *The 120 Days of Bottrop*, yet it is also a work that – not unlike popular American animated sitcoms like *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* – can be also enjoyed by hopeless philistines who fail to appreciate its profoundly pastiche persuasion. Helmut Berger concludes *The 120 Days of Bottrop* with the snide statement, "I've had enough. If I had to act in one more German movie, it would be suicide." Knowing that Fassbinder concluded his prestigious acting

THE 120 DAYS OF BOTTRUP

career looking quite disheveled and oafish in the intrinsically mediocre and pathetically prosaic yet nonetheless sometimes strangely enthralling West German cyberpunk flick *Kamikaze 1989* (1982), one can only wonder whether or not the Bavarian auteur filmmaker's fatal overdose that same year was the result of an unconscious death wish, but judging by Schlingensief's social commentary in *The 120 Days of Bottrop*, one does not have to think too hard to come up with an informed hypothesis. After all, the German New Wave celebrity died with a copy of a script he was working on that paid homage to the life of a Marxist Jewess who sought the violent overthrow of his nation, which is undoubtedly a great metaphor for the life and work of Fassbinder and *Neuer Deutscher Film* as a collective, as so astutely observed and facetiously expressed by Christoph Schlingensief in *The 120 Days of Bottrop*.

-Ty E

FREAKSTARS 3000

Christoph Schlingensief (2003)

While in kindergarten at a multicultural public school, I first become aware of retarded people and their particularly outlandish and oftentimes uncontrollable behavior. Herded around the school like a bunch of spastic cattle by obese Negresses wearing unflattering sweatpants, these many times slobbering and even sometimes indecently exposed individuals certainly made their presence well known, whether they were conscious of it or not. Growing up as a wildly imaginative and television/movie obsessed child, I concocted a lot of fantasy ideas for TV series, including a 'concentration camp comedy' starring Woody Allen, but never did I dream of a musical talent show with an all star mentally retarded cast, but I was not the least bit surprised when I discovered that absurdist avant-garde auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief – who once started the political party Chance 2000 that encouraged the mentally feeble to run for office – did. Predating yet in a similar spirit to the popular reality show Pop Idol/American Idol, except less retarded, Schlingensief's *Freakstars 3000* (2004) is a delightful documentary work featuring highlights and unseen footage of the German filmmaker's 6-episode-TV show of the same name. As a work that attempts to, "highlight the problems of non-handicapped people," *Freakstars 3000* is certainly not the sort of work that one would expect to be the most successful TV program ever featured on the German Music Television Station VIVA due to perceived exploitation of less than musically inclined mental invalids. But then again, it is a sign of the times when institutionalized disabled folks make for more entertaining and original performers than those plastic philistines that occupy prime-time television. As a truly terrific testament to the melodic tenacity of Mother Nature's most special disabled darlings, *Freakstars 3000* lets the viewer know that Germany's got talent, especially when it comes to the unique untermensch sort.

In between yelling amongst one another and engaging in erratic and oftentimes unpredictable convulsion fits, the couple dozen or so gloriously grotesque outsider artists of *Freakstars 3000* compete for the positively prestigious personal prize of being one of the seven finalists who will ultimately comprise the band "Mutter Sucht Schrauben" aka "Mother Seeks Screws"; a discordant art rock group that plays their instruments out-of-sync with one another in a most charmingly carnivalesque manner. Shot on location at the Thiele Winkler Home for people with physical and mental disabilities in Lichtenrade, Berlin, *Freakstars 3000* is a welcome exception conventional reality TV mundanity as the show – with its curious yet oddly charming mental and physical cripples of immense courage – has more genuine human passion and expression than what seems like the entire history of so-called 'reality TV' combined, as the contestants of Schlingensief's broadcasted realism, unlike the narcissistic nincompoops of pop-

FREAKSTARS 3000

ular American shows like *Big Brother* and *Survivor*, are for the most part completely unconscious of the fact that the camera is constantly rolling. The super freaks of the documentary range from a shy, sensitive youthful girl with Down's syndrome to a morbidly obese middle-aged man with the IQ of a 7-year-old to a spastic 60ish-year-old with an unhealthy hatred for "the swine" Adolf Hitler. Unfortunately, as I discussed with a college friend so many years ago, like the special Special Olympics and other events that celebrate disenfranchised groups, it is typically the least retarded person on *Freakstars 3000* who ends up being one of the final contestants thus defeating the purpose of it in the first place, although a couple extremely socially/mentally-challenged performers do get to be part of the illustrious music super group "Mother Seeks Screws." Assuredly one of the most talked-about talents of the show is Achim von Paczensky – an ignoble member of the nobility who has had indubitably fallen from grace due to his hereditary taint – that unlike virtually other contestant on the show, seems relatively normal (at least no less mentally disadvantaged than the average American) and is even in a serious relationship with a special lady whose personal aesthetic and singing style is in the tradition of Germany's tragic singer/model Nico (Christa Päffgen); or at least Sir Schlingensiefel believes so. Of course, Schlingensiefel regular Mario Garzaner – a small, swarthy retarded man who played the role of Rainer Werner Fassbinder in *The 120 Days of Bottrop* (1997) and was also part of the political party *Chance 2000* and *Big Brother*-inspired television show *Foreigners out!* Schlingensiefel's *Container* – steals the show in *Freakstars 3000*, which is no surprise for anyone that is familiar with his real-life, non-performances.

As can be expected, *Freakstars 3000* sparked a storm of controversy in Germany, not least of all because only two generations ago, disabled members of the *volk* were oftentimes sterilized and even euthanized, thereupon inspiring moral ambiguity and shame in viewers who don't know how to respond to a rather retarded man having a connoisseur's shit on live television. As for the characteristically cliché liberal/democratic claim that *Freakstars 3000* was a work of tasteless exploitation and not entertainment, I believe such a sentiment is more telling of the guilty conscious of the meekish complainer (as probably intended by the director) and not the show itself because neither Schlingensiefel nor the contestants at anytime seem to be participating in a work of malicious manipulation and degradation. For example, when a self-conscious contestant complains that he got only a C in music classic, Schlingensiefel – a clever and creative man of high-intelligence – states that he got an F in the same class, yet he still sings, thus giving the petrified performer the much-needed courage he needed to go on with the solo singing. Also, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to state that being a part of *Freakstars 3000* was probably for many of the performers, the greatest highlight of their lives and probably the point where they felt the most confident and even 'normal'; which is no small achievement on Schlingen-

sief's part as he took an active role throughout the filming of the show, including wrestling and bathing members of the home for the merry mongoloids. After all, when is the last time a bleeding heart liberal set themselves up for nationally broadcasted television show as Schlingensief does when he experiences defeat at the the hands of a rather rotund retard during an impromptu wrestling match?!

-Ty E

THE AFRICAN TWINTOWERS
THE AFRICAN TWINTOWERS

Christoph Schlingensief (2008)

About a decade after completing his last feature-length film *Die 120 Tage von Bottrop* (1997) aka *The 120 Days of Bottrop* – an ambitious work the director regarded as ‘The Last New German Film’ – German absurdist auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief flew to Lüderitz, Namibia, the German South-West African colony with an entire cast, including actors Irm Hermann, Patti Smith, Robert Stadlober, Björn Thors, Klaus Beyer, Stefan Kolosko, etc. and a full film crew to direct his last cinematic work, *The African Twintowers*. Of course, at the time of filming, Schlingensief had no idea that it would be his last attempt at directing a film as fate beckoned and he became ill with lung cancer in 2008, tragically dying – not many years after his father – at the premature age of 49 on August 21, 2010 in Berlin, Germany. Unfortunately, Schlingensief – who spent the last decade or so running a political party (*Chance 2000*), hosting and directing TV shows (*FreakStars 3000*, *Foreigners out!* Schlingensiefs Container), working as a theatre (*Hamlet: This is your Family*, *Nazi-line*, *Elfriede Jelinek's Bambiland*) and opera (*Richard Wagner's Parsifal*) stage director, and pretty much everything else related to audio-visual media aside from film – ultimately failed in his attempt to bring *The African Twintowers* to completion as scripted, but the filmmaker eventually released a documentary for German TV of the same name featuring footage from the aborted film and the many but sometimes merry misadventures it entailed. As explained early on in *The African Twintowers* (2008), Schlingensief's bag (containing his annotated script for his Wagnerian 9/11 epic) was stolen by two local Herero homeboys, so on the second day of filming he decided to scrap the script as the ill-fated filmmaker falsely believed the random act of thievery was a positive premonition of sorts. Originally about Richard Wagner, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hagen of Norse Mythology and Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and the Namibia Herero people, among many other seemingly unrelated things, Schlingensief refused to follow what he had left of the script as he felt such organized filmmaking made him feel “like a civil servant.” Essentially, *The African Twintowers* follows often-times flustered and even sometimes furious Schlingensief as he spends 27 days in exotic Afrika as he hopelessly tries to make sense of a film that was never meant to be, but would ultimately sow a different film of sorts which I am reviewing now. Featuring narration by the director recorded 3 years after the artistic nightmare in Namibia and not long after contracting life-threatening lung cancer, *The African Twintowers* is undoubtedly Schlingensief's most dispiriting work as a document of a prematurely deceased polymath's faux pas, frustration, and eventual failure with the medium he loved most. Needless to say, when so-called “Godmother of Punk” Patti Smith has come to comfort your tears on an African beach, it cannot be the most blessed of days.

Mockingly and pseudo-pretentiously dressed as ethno-masochistic German filmmakers Michael Verhoeven (*Nasty Girl*, *Mutters Courage*) and Wim Wenders (*Wings of Desire*, *Until the End of the World*) with an exceedingly effete scarf and gay cowboy hat, Christoph Schlingensief enters Namibia passionately, if absurdly thinking, "Can you imagine? The Golden Palm at Cannes?" in regard to his latest attempt at an eccentric epic set in the dauntingly dark continent, *The African Twintowers*. Over a decade before, Schlingensief directed the cinematically charming *United Trash* (1996) aka *The Slit* – a United Nations gross-out spoof set in Africa that is probably the only film to feature the curious aesthetic cross between the works of John Waters and Herschell Gordon Lewis with that of Leni Riefenstahl – but his naughty negrophiliac dreams of Namibia for *The African Twintowers* would not be in his favor and the film would be plagued by an overwhelming number of personal and artistic problems, including the death of the director's father via heart attack and steady dissolution of all of his artistic intentions and resources. Originally envisioned as a feature about the American catastrophe of the September 11 terrorist attacks happening in an abject African slum where dead New Yorkers would be satirically set side by side with the sort of starved, disease-ridden bodies that appear in Africa quite regularly, *The African Twintowers* was set to be a sardonic attack on both Western technocratic globalization and the hyperbolic glorification of 9/11 victims in American mainstream media, but instead Schlingensief was inevitably left with 180 hours of footage that was judged by various film editors as being unworkable and inaccessible. Inspired by the Edda of Norse mythology, his former mentor Werner Nekes, and Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), Schlingensief did manage to create a piece for his ambitious long-term project *The Animatograph* after moving (with the help of happy Herero friends) a wooden ship entitled the 'arch' through the desert for several kilometers that was eventually placed on a revolving stage that was bombarded by jubilant locals, which was also supposed to act as the first set-piece for *The African Twintowers*, but things were not to be in the humid hotbed of "Unity, Liberty, Justice." Naturally, knowing Schlingensief's resourcefulness and creativity, not all of the footage to *The African Twintowers* went to total waste as some of it was screened at various art exhibitions throughout Europe and the boat was eventually taken to the Burgtheater in Vienna, Austria in 2006, becoming the center-piece in his Actionist-inspired improvised theatre play *Area 7 - St. Matthews Expedition* (2006); the final culmination of his animatograph project.

Ultimately, the documentary *The African Twintowers* acts as a torrid testimonial to the fact that Christoph Schlingensief had totally extinguished his vitality as a filmmaker, at least in any tradition sense, as by that point in his life he had already become heavily involved with 'active art' projects (political parties, TV shows, avant-garde stage-directing, etc.) without boundaries and with less rules when compared to the intrinsically contrived nature of filmmaking. Al-

THE AFRICAN TWINTOWERS

though he was never interested in directing films with linear storylines, by the time he started working on *The African Twintowers* that had a beginning and an end, once writing: "Whether in the theatre or in the cinema: it starts on the left, finishes on the right; there is the beginning, there is the end. A fundamental mistake." Always feeling constrained by the limits of filmmaking, it was only inevitable that Schlingensiefel would transcend his roots as a film director like no filmmaker before or after him. Regarding his failed but sometimes fun experience with *The African Twintowers*, Schlingensiefel states at the end of the documentary: "It was a great experience which generated amazing images, strange situations...which...brought up a lot of issues, especially regarding 9/11 and the significance of images of icons which are created and remain with entire communities over decades perhaps centuries and which will just seem like alien visions from outer space one day. Archeologists will then excavate this place with bits of food and a boat and they say, ok, there's been a river where boats could navigate, so this project can be used to distort history and produce a greater truth than the mind can process. That's why it defies beauty. Because you can't find closure." In a sense, the documentary *The African Twintowers* also acts as a sort of final testament for Schlingensiefel's life, ending the work with the somewhat worrisome and unsurprisingly nihilistic words: "I've always enjoyed life a lot, even more so now but what's really the point of it all? I mean, what...?" Judging by the footage featured in *The African Twintowers* for the aborted project of the same name, the unfinished film resembled a cross between Schlingensiefel's previous African flick *United Trash* and a work by American 'enfant terrible' Harmony Korine (*Gummo*, *Umshini Wam*), but one can only speculate what could have been, but as the director once stated, "I often produce images no actor would put in his casting tape." Assuredly, one of the best sequences in *The African Twintowers* is when Schlingensiefel teases and attacks a group of hyper and hysterical Herero schoolchildren while dressed up in an absurd penguin costume. As he explains quite seriously in the documentary, Schlingensiefel had no interest in saying sorry to the people of Namibia for ancient colonial crimes of long-dead imperial Germans, but instead brings euphoria and splendid recollections to the Herero people of today. After all, what child wouldn't have fond and vivid memories of a wacked-out German guy with a fucked-up haircut bringing a rotating boat to their barren and scarcely populated desert?!

-Ty E

MA MÈRE

Christophe Honoré (2004)

It's easy to see that French feminist Catherine Breillat composes most of her daring sexuality based on the text works of French shock-eroticist author and auteur Georges Bataille who is perhaps known best for his alluring novella *Story of the Eye*. From his posthumous work comes the polished after-result that is *Ma mère*. In what was a highly controversial creation comes a film that might be as controversial as the novel was intended. From stark perversions and dark helpings of incest and other forms of sodomy is where *Ma mère* reigns over most. Isabelle Huppert (*The Piano Teacher*) plays a daring role as Hélène, the mother of a sheltered religious boy who has yet to jump the transcendence from boy to man. He represents a spiritual force of one who should be sympathized with as he crosses a point as loveless virgin to sadist. try as they might but I could not favor this character in any way, in fact, I can't bring up another character to mind that I loathe more than this one. He's ruined life, love, and linguistics in order to satisfy his selfless ways. It's this powerful emotion evoked in me that morphs *Ma mère* from simpleton French film to a thematic motion picture worthy of a viewing. Postmodern French femininity. The only scene celebratory of his character is in which he is on the beach in company of the incredibly lovely Emma de Caunes. He looks slightly behind him and notices a crying child. In effort to comfort him, he questions the child's native language, first asking if Spanish then Italian. The mother grabs the child and walks the crying child out of camera view. In this bright scene, a light is shown in a dark corridor and a sense of humanity has been revealed. Before you can get too comfortable with a character that is enjoyable, it's all ripped out of underneath when Pierre forces Hansi (de Caunes) to enact a sadistic game of torture upon the adorable and eccentric Loulou. Right: Emme de Caunes Hélène has picked her son up from his cozy environment and has been placed in an abode of sex, degradation, prostitution, and with incestuous scene set-ups spotlighting Hélène as the partisan of the group that enforces a fast lifestyle of sex, drugs, and rock n' roll. *Ma mère* also happens to be one of a very small number to be rated NC-17. This rating is mainly for the "aberrant" sexuality displayed mercilessly in *Ma mère*. Pierre divulges in an early public demonstration of the meaning of getting his "salad tossed" while his mother stares coldly in his direction. Pierre early on in the film was a victim of a social-sexual phobia resulting in his lack of cleanliness and ability to act mature in crowded situations. Not even past the credits will Pierre become a man like his father was. *Ma mère* is indeed a daring exercise, both in displaying vulgar perversions and lurid nudity but also in adapting a Bataille novel to the screen. The chemistry between Louis Garrel and Isabelle Huppert is electrifying and forbidden. As their lips become mere inches apart from each others, you either deny an attraction behind incest or welcome the

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cinematic sexual advances of such a provocative film. Either or, you will notice the emotions and you might even urge towards the screen for the star-crossed lovers to finally accept the common embrace. In the final scene, you will become exasperated with feelings of regret or glad that you witnessed this perplexing experience. When questioned about *Ma mère* being incestuous in regards as to "why I watch the films I do", I answer the simple truth. *Ma mère* is concerning the dissolution of organized religion and the advances of sin and perversion, all the while containing light scenes of incest. One thing's for certain, in the final frame, you will either laugh out loud or remain boldly silent as you witness a man who has lost it all on the verge of a frantic sexual breakdown. *Ma mère's* verdict is judged better than half of Breillat's shitty works about femininity and the discovery of adolescence.

-mAQ

3 DEAD GIRLS!

Christopher Alan Broadstone (2007) Christopher Alan Broadstone's trilogy of award-winning horror shorts is now available on a single disc. Each film has an intense philosophical tone to them with throbbing soundtracks and little perks on the end of the initial stories. No story has been told the same way. Broadstone makes sure of that. The first short is entitled "SCREAM FOR ME". The plot ripped from the summary reads as followed. "One killer becomes a victim of another more brutal and insane than himself" You ever watch a film about a serial killer and just want the worst possible outcome to happen? To challenge the irony itself is a big no-no on the cinema screen. What starts off as a tale of "love" (Note "River's Edge for the inside meaning of this) and this boy's murder of someone he "loves". This is when we meet the Madman (Tony Simmons). This "Madman" is of one of the classic redneck stereotype. Tony Simmons does a horrifying job as playing this maniac. I'd greatly like to see Madman be in a feature length feature. He has enough madness and rage to be one of the great lunatics on screen. Casted perfectly, complimented with amazing camera work, and spiced up with some of the most horrendous sexual torture ever filmed, on screen or not, *Scream for Me* is a grail to be seen. Next short film is *MY SKIN!* Which in my own humble opinion is the most perplexing and rewarding. The plot as described "Death flies in to collect the soul of a murdered young woman, but first takes revenge on her killer". Leave it to Broadstone to churn out great ideas and the re-imagining of the classic figure Death. No longer a cloaked figure with a scythe, he dons the more horrifying bird mask, over-wrinkled face, and black suit. Reminds me of the original *Men In Black* witnessed during the horrific events that occurred in *Point Pleasant* (See also; *Mothman*). What starts as a regular pickup, he decides to open his great big book of death and make an edit. This then turns into a very perplexing re-visioning of a crime scene. With a game of cat-and-mouse that is similar to the pedophile scene in *Running Scared*, the Death figure growls his scratchy voice and lets the deed be done and the dead be dead. Last we have *HUMAN NO MORE*, the last and my least favorite. Now just because it is my least favorite of the three doesn't mean it is remotely bad. "A private detective consumed by an irreconcilable murder case descends into his caustic underworld one last time". *HNM* is wonderfully shot from two perspectives, the camera he has set up and an unidentified slithering and hissing entity. With a monologue that is as burdening as it is the truth, it does not leave you emotionally unphased. The points he brings up are true. R. Budd Dwyer himself would have been proud. This of course ends with a bizarre twist from a master storyteller. Thus ending his sick trilogy of films that rivals Douglas Buck's *Family Portraits*. Tony Simmons assumes all title roles. He plays a muscled psycho, the whimsically creepy Death, and the tortured detective. What a range of emotions. The situations that these films delve into is a sensitive yet very dark

3 DEAD GIRLS!

place. The flipside of tragedy. This is the place where fear and vengeance hides. 3 Dead Girls! Is the best compilation i have ever bare witness to. Filmmakers wish they could be as ingenious as Broadstone. As you may have noticed, I have included no screen shots. The reason for this is that i want this experiance to be as visually surprising as it was for me. Enjoy!

-mAQ

VOICE OVER

Christopher Monger (1983)

If the word 'American' actually still meant something and reflected the silent majority population of the United States, I would probably describe myself as a self-loathing American, but it is simply impossible for me to 'feel' American. Despite my lack of attachment to my arbitrary nation of birth, I oftentimes think about how it must feel to be a citizen in one of the modern multicultural and technocratic Americanized European nations. I know that my Dutch grandfather, who was born in 1919 and left the Netherlands in the early 1950s after his country went kaput as a result of the Second World War, was in for quite the shock when he visited his native nation after living in the United States for a couple decades and discovered how morally and culturally degenerate the country had become. It's just mere speculation on my part, but out of all the western European peoples, it must suck the most to be English, which is certainly reflected in British music (after all, punk was spawned from this little island), film, culture, and the once glorious but now decidedly defunct nation's increasingly 'colorful' multicultural population. While I'm not all that big of a fan of skinhead bands, I think Skrewdriver said it best when they sang, "once we had an Empire, and now we've got a slum." Indeed, you know your country is royally screwed when rather primitive people that you had previously colonized like the Pakistanis are turning your preteen daughters into sex slaves and a city like Birmingham contracts a misandristic feminist artist to create a public sculpture depicting a 'normal family' as two single non-white sisters with mongrel bastard children and no husbands. Created over three decades before Britain became the totally foredoomed pre-third world multicultural hellhole it is today (not that it was not already a multicultural hellhole at the time it was made), *Voice Over* (1983) written and directed by Welsh auteur Christopher Monger (Repeater, *Girl from Rio*), the man who is best known for the 'tranny yuppie' satire *Just Like a Woman* (1992) and especially the PG-rated 'feel good' Hugh Grant comedy *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain* (1995).

Certainly, considering the director's rather unfortunate subsequent works, *Voice Over* is not a film that I would have watched had I not read a review comparing it to the haunting and dispiriting spirit of the revolutionary post-punk band Joy Division, who probably better expressed more than any other group of their time the sense of alienation, abject hopelessness, nihilism, and somberness of England during the late-1970s/early-1980s. Before directing his absurdly underrated no-budget 16mm cult flick *Voice Over* and eventually becoming a mainstream filmmaker (of which, the director would later reflect, "I never saw myself as becoming part of commercial cinema – if you'd told me then that I would end up in Hollywood I would probably have been appalled")

VOICE OVER

Monger was a meager art student from Cardiff, Wales who attempted to take a theoretical formalist and deconstructivist approach to cinema as influenced by the French New Wave, especially Godard, as demonstrated by his early feature *Repeater* (1979). It was only with *Voice Over* that Monger managed to speak to his zeitgeist and demonstrate that he was one of the few British filmmakers to understand the foreboding spirit of his time to the point where even Americans were able to relate to it, or as the director stated regarding how the work managed to singlehandedly jumpstart his filmmaking career, "In 1982 I had shown *VOICE OVER* at a festival in Los Angeles. At the end of the screening I had an agent, a manager and a lawyer. It would take me almost a decade to make a film here, but I suddenly found myself in a culture that embraced me." The dark yet oftentimes humorous story of an educated yet seemingly Asperger-plagued 'DJ' of the terribly lonely sort who lives in a fantasy world whose Jane Austen-esque early 19th century romantic radio serial becomes successful, albeit for all the wrong reasons, thus plummeting the character into a pathetic world of ridicule from the fairer sex that eventually erupts into the most sickening of crimes and obsessions, *Voice Over* has been labeled by certain fecund-deprived feminists as 'misogynistic' but I guess that reality then would also have to be misogynistic.

Voice Over begins with dreamlike scenes of a beautiful early 19th century blonde debutante named Elizabeth (Bish Nethercote) dancing at a ball with her much desired aristocratic male soldier suitor during a wonderful romantic evening that, as described by the narrator, had "risen to her splendid expectations." Elizabeth's story is part of a 19th century romance radio serial called "Thus Engaged" that is written and narrated by lonely middle-aged fat man Fats Bannerman (played by British actor Ian McNeice, who went on to star in big Hollywood films like *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (1995) and Roman Polanski's 2005 adaptation of *Oliver Twist*) who lives in a fantasy world of his own making where he 'rewrites' Jane Austen novels from the perspective of a woman, Elizabeth, inspired by incidents from his own life while listening to early 19th century music and looking at a stack of paintings from the same era for artistic inspiration. A dejected divorcee of the monetarily cuckolded sort who has to pay a huge amount of alimony to his wife who took the kids to live in Italy, Fats lives a non-existence in a dilapidated warehouse located in a white ghetto on the docks. A perennial loner who has been thrown into isolation out of circumstance, Fats' only friend is special effects man F.X. Jones (John Cassady, who had small roles in big films like Richard Donner's *Superman* (1978) and *Highlander* (1986)), who he credits for his show's artistic integrity. Fats is a traditionalist who hates the modern world as demonstrated by the fact that he looks in disgust at a young man who resembles a negro albino who dares to play his vulgar music in the subway. When Fats moves away from the belligerent young man and the bombastic noise being excreted from his boom box, the youthful degenerate follows him. Later that day, Fats adapts his subway experience for

his radio serial via his alter-ego Elizabeth, which he translates as follows: "So Elizabeth had not enjoyed the coach journey. Her close proximity to an uncouth lout, intent on the singing of bawdy songs had been most upsetting." Needless to say, Fats' loser life takes a dramatic change when his radio show becomes unexpectedly very popular and he even wins a prestigious award, though he is not prepared for the unpredictable consequences of said success.

While Fats is quite happy and humbled by his recent good fortune, it only takes an exceedingly bitchy journalist and 'modern woman' that clearly has a master's degree in feminist lobotomizing to forever taint his attitude and overall outlook on life and obstruct his sanity. After turning down an interview with TIME magazine because it is a hateful rag that even "Marlon Brando won't touch," Fats makes the major mistake of agreeing to do an interview with a corrosive young enterprising journalist named Cecilia Crane (Sarah Martin) who digs up as much dirt as she can on the radio playwright and then throws it in his face when he least suspects it. After mocking the fact this his exceedingly sentimental radio show has somehow become a big hit, Ms. Crane accuses Fats of attempting to hide from the "mucky 20th century" and when he concurs, she states, "So you want to forget about today and all its complexities and return to some idyllic, aristocratic, simple world." After that, Ms. Crane patronizingly asks Fats why he would bother to write "romantic tripe" when his own personal life is full of failures, including a nasty divorce. When Crane asks Fats who he thinks makes up his main fan base, he defensively replies, "Okay, tell me. White, middle class, middle aged, university educated, is that it? Because if it is, I don't mind that. I'm not ashamed of it. It's not a crime. At least I have an audience, a big one," thus indicating that he thinks the journalist is a cliché liberal academic type who gets a self-righteous kick out of cowardly trashing her own racial and cultural background. Of course, Fats is somewhat surprised when he learns that his main audience is "teenagers" and "mostly poor kids" who listen to his show because they find it outmoded and unintentionally comical. Fats also is dismayed to discover that he has a cult following of older people who listen to the show for its "kitsch nature." Naturally, it is the last straw when Ms. Crane accuses him of writing "rip offs" of "paragraphs of Jane Austen, with a few words altered" and reveals that she knows he specialized in Jane Austen's work in college.

After his corrosive date with Ms. Crane, Fats walks out on the interview, gets good and drunk at a local bar to the point of staggering in the streets and collapsing in a grimy gutter, and eventually somehow staggers into a punk bar where he speaks about Elizabeth's "wet fart," stating out loud to himself while in the company of young punk folk, "That really would amaze the whole room. Elizabeth farted loudly. Her skirt rose noticeably. Mr. Bennet commented on its agreeable scent." When two young female Fats' 'fans' take him back to their apartment, they humiliate him by accusing him and his male radio serial characters of being "queer," cocktease him, and then take turns physically assaulting

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him while accusing him of being an “asshole” and “dirty old man,” among other things. Combined with his hateful write-up by journalist Cecilia Crane and his emotional and physical abuse at the hands of two beautiful yet sadistic blonde babes, Fats is from then on a changed man and his radio serial *Thus Engaged* begins reflecting that fact. Indeed, the show turns into a sort of dark and salacious horror show involving phantoms, murderers, and female vampires posing as prostitutes to lure in unsuspecting aristocratic gentlemen. Fats’ best friend and collaborator F.X. confesses he does not like the new route of the show and blames it on Ms. Crane’s article. Despite the disturbing character of the new show, it becomes all the more popular and the radio station begins receiving tons of new sponsors.

Meanwhile, Fats ‘finds’ a seemingly comatose girl (played by Bish Nethercote who, in an interesting case of casting, also plays ‘Elizabeth’ and one of the two girls that assaulted Fats) on the street who has been brutally raped and beaten and brings her back home with him where he nurses her back to health with the help of a discernibly reluctant doctor friend who attempts to coerce his comrade into bringing the physically and emotionally battered young lady to an institution, “She’s in shock, deep, deep, shock.” The Doctor even suspects Fats of being the brute who brutally battered and sexually pillaged the young girl, but he confidently, if not somewhat dubiously replies, stating, “I met her once a long while back, I recognized her. She was in the alley,” thus hinting that she is indeed one of the two girls that had previously tormented him and that he may indeed be the one who ravaged her (in fact, Fats even goes so far as confessing that he would have done something like that when he was younger). Despite making her more or less his slave, Fats attempts no sexual contact with her and even covers her body with a blanket while changing her clothes since she cannot do it herself due to her comatose state. Eventually, Elizabeth begins walking but hardly talking, with “bitch” being the only word she utters, as if it was the very last word that was said to her by her rapist during that fateful night when she had her womanhood irreparably despoiled. Since it is the first and last word she utters, “Bitch” becomes the emotionally destroyed dame’s name.

When Fats’ show becomes so successful that it gets picked up by a major radio station, he buys a new apartment for himself and ‘Bitch’ to stay in as he hopes to make his would-be-beloved an honest bourgeois woman but she seems completely unaffected by the change and the glorified radio DJ mumbles to himself while brooding in his tighty whities “how much longer can the silence endure?” in regard to the sad and static state of his non-relationship. Indeed, more and more Fats’ radio show begins reflecting his lonely non-life, with Elizabeth representing the ‘Bitch.’ On a particularly heated show, Fats recites, “It had all changed for him and was changing still. It had all gone. He had traveled so far. A dead landscape. All dead! Elizabeth dead, her remains unburiable. Out of reach, out of all sight, moving away from him so fast.” After one particularly

botched show, Fats, who suffered a speech impediment as a young lad, begins stuttering live during the broadcast. After the show, Fats has salt rubbed in his wounds when he bumps into reporter Cecilia Crane who mockingly states regarding his stutter-ridden broadcast, "Yeah, you're really using yourself now, aren't you, Mr Bannerman? Your new approach, very modern. And you're not losing your audience, either." Eventually, Fats completely loses his cool and airs a show featuring numerous multiple loops of him talking to the grating sounds of static noise, thus reflecting the cognitive dissonance that has completely clouded his frail forlorn mind. Somewhat inexplicably, 'Bitch' is so deeply affected by the landscape of the seemingly demonic and deranging horrendous noise that she leaves her house for the first time and shows up at the broadcast studio to meet Fats as if instinctively responding to a mating call. After the anarchic show ends, 'Bitch' and Fats walk hand-in-hand into the night and eventually end up at the warehouse where they used to live. While ballroom dancing for the first time in a scene in stark contrast to the opulent and deeply romantic balls of the DJ's radio serial, Fats drives a pair of scissors into Bitch's heart and then proceeds to violently stab her deathly stunning blood-soiled corpse.

Despite being rather humorous and somewhat quirky in parts, *Voice Over* is easily the darkest, most disconcerting, and nightmarishly nihilistic British film from the 1980s that I have ever seen, with the no-budget and strangely sympathetic Dennis Nilsen 'biopic' *Cold Light of Day* (1989) directed by one-time female auteur Fhiona-Louise, who purportedly committed suicide, being probably the only Brit flick of its time to even remotely compare to director Christopher Monger's work in terms of outstanding abject hopelessness. Indeed, if Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) influenced Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis to hang himself on that fateful day when he committed suicide, I don't even want to know how he would have responded to Monger's mesmerizingly melancholy cult masterpiece. In her January 23, 1983 review of the film, Janet Maslin demonstrated her complete and utter incapacity to understand the work by remarking, "Whatever Mr. Monger's purpose may be in showing Fats's progress from Jane Austen to this juncture, it is of less interest than his method. His *VOICE OVER* [...] which ought to be shocking, has a weary and repetitive flavor," as if she, like the other liberal pseudo-elite critics, who in her own minor way as a mainstream film critic helped foster and support the sort of post-industrial multicultural hellhole that exists in America, Britain, and the rest of the Occident today, is in total denial of the dystopian world that currently exists. Of course, it is easy to see why a film that is so poetically truthful and ultimately unnerving would soon disappear after its brief release, as it not only forces them to think, but also confront their precarious situation during a troubled time in history of almost seemingly apocalyptic proportions. Indeed, Monger's film is the rare sort of unrelentingly brutal and absolutely artistically uncompromising film that makes the work of Ingmar Bergman seem optimistic by comparison and probably even has the to

VOICE OVER

power to push a potential lone nut shooter type over the edge, though they might not be able to articulate why they found it so unsettling and inciting, as *Voice Over* is a work that captures the emotional spirit of a zeitgeist without so much as making a single reference to political trends or even popular culture of that era. Indeed, one of the film's major strengths is in what it chooses not to show and not because of what it does show, especially in regard to cultural trends, as it makes the protagonist's alienation seem all the more obscenely tragic. In fact, auteur Monger cannot even explain why his film is so potent as demonstrated by his remark: "What I do know, now having written literally dozens of screenplays, is that stories have a strange organic life of their own. It is often only later that you find out what you were truly writing about. More problematic, what the filmmakers 'make' and what the audience sees can be very, very different. To attempt to say what I think *VOICE OVER* is about at this distance would be at best a lie, and at worst, an apology. What I can say is that what it really represents for me is me becoming a filmmaker." Rather unfortunately, Monger would never become a better filmmaker as none of his subsequent works would feature the originality or artistic integrity that he achieved with *Voice Over*, but he would go on to receive much greater commercial success and is still somewhat successful, as he co-penned the screenplay for the critically revered HBO film *Temple Grandin* (2010) starring Claire Danes as the eponymous real-life autistic livestock behavior expert and pioneering autism activist.

With the rebooting of seemingly ancient children's cartoons like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, the ostensibly 'ironic' dress style of effete bourgeois-born fashion victims known as 'hipsters,' and the obsession of Hollywood and mainstream television with postmodernism and pointless pop culture trivia, it seems that the West, especially America and the countries that have been worst hit by the post-WWII culture-distorting trend of Hollywoodization, is obsessed with re-obtaining some lost golden age that never existed in the first place, with the protagonist Fats of *Voice Over* being a more 'idiosyncratic' and ultimately tragic example of this trend, as he has totally isolated himself from mainstream society and sought refuge in a bygone puritanical time when things were much simpler to the point where people find his work entertaining for the exact opposite reason he originally intended. Indeed, Fats is a sort of radio serial equivalent to European arthouse auteur filmmakers like Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran*) and his pal Daniel Schmid (*Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma*) who, instead of taking part in creating the sort of trendy and aesthetically static polemical works that were popular during their unfortunate post-68er-Bewegung zeitgeist, sought solace and escapism in decadent aestheticism of the pastiche high-camp kitschy yet cultivated sort. Ironically, the film almost perfectly predicted some trends as demonstrated by Hebraic hack novelist Seth Grahame-Smith's porno flesheater abortion *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), which is a mashup work that absurdly combines elements from Jane

Austen's classic 1813 novel *Pride and Prejudice* with new zombie scenes and full-color images that is predictably being adapted into a film by Burr Steers (*Igby Goes Down, 17 Again*) that is set for a 2015 release. Although I am not exactly an Austenphile, I almost vomited zombie guts when I saw *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* on display at Borders a couple years back, as it reflects the worst of our vapid and mindlessly nihilistic culture and is certainly something more ominous and disturbing than the early 19th century radio serials of *Voice Over* protagonist *Fats*. A true modernist 'horror' show that is, at the very least, a minor masterpiece and one of the best kept secrets of 1980s British cinema, *Monger's* celluloid psycho-drama manages to do the seemingly impossible by enabling the viewer to sympathize with and feel pity for a fat stuttering Brit slob who commits the most heinous and deplorable yet equally pathetic of crimes against a borderline catatonic beautiful blonde rape victim, hence the film's dubious misogynistic reputation among feminist dykes, so-called social justice warriors, and other slave-morality-ridden rabble who cannot possibly fathom that a man can commit horrendous acts against women yet still have a startling 'humanity' about himself.

-Ty E

THE DARK KNIGHT
THE DARK KNIGHT

Christopher Nolan (2008)

It's really impossible to review this film without discussing mild spoilers, so I will tone them down a bit. Batman Begins was indeed the beginning, albeit, a sloppy & slow beginning. But it left room for something amazing - a flawless sequel. Now with the hype building and building over this film, (See also: Snakes on a Plane) It is a miracle that the bubble hasn't burst yet. What we get is not only the greatest "superhero" film ever made, but possibly one of the greatest crime drama's ever made. As predicted months ago with the untimely passing of heart throb Heath Ledger, the Joker steals the show with great intentions. By the ending of this preposterously paced 2 hour and 47 minute film, you will be haunted by his amazing performance; a tour de force like no other. His performance is entrancing, it lulls you into a state of cinema hypnosis. Not only could I ever imagine a Batman film being this dark, but I could never imagine teeny-bopping Heath to play such a tortured character which inevitably led to his downfall. The one thing to realize, is that that the story isn't focused on the Batman, the Joker, or even Harvey Dent, but rather the impressionable city of Gotham. The greed, corruption, and villainry runs so rampant, you can see the horizon burning in flames of corruption. Chaos is the greatest notion to the Joker and he will stop at nothing to reach his ultimate goal of utter annihilation. Rather than falling to the same fate as that of Sam Raimi and his horrid piece of shit, also known as Spiderman 3, Nolan rises above the occasion and delivers two villains, each with their own cause and goal. Rather than have just the villains go "Hur dur dur, Let's kill Batman", they each have a separate enemy and a similar cause; death and mayhem. The transformation of Harvey Dent to Two-Face isn't something to be taken lightly, rather than being a humorous old washed-up actor who didn't have a past, Aaron Eckhart (Harvey Dent) is the one man who can save Gotham but befalls the deepest corruption. The title has more to do with the film then given credit for. Rather then clunking up the film, these two villains feel perfect, allowing this long-as-hell film to progress smoothly. As Ain't It Cool News put it so perfectly, "This isn't a comic book film, This is a graphic novel film!" The Joker's lines are not only amazing, but immensely quotable. I haven't had lines stuck in my head so deep since I last saw Anchorman. Not only does he have the "iconic" lines, but he has monologues depicting a horrid and dismal view of nihilism. What we get is a slide show of an insane forever-memorable caliber. As previously mentioned, The Joker is the scene stealer and the heart stopper. I often found myself on the edge of my seat, anticipating greatly his next line or movement. From his lip-smacking habits to his wonderful heterosexuality. It's amazing to see him as a heterosexual. Since his compliment on Gyllenhaal's attraction (Note: He fucked her brother.) I often found it mesmerizing to imagine the Joker figure with a woman. Someone of

such a deep resonating evil, being superficially happy. I got so into the film, that several "jump scenes" managed to fucking freak the hell out of me. Namely the "dead Batman" and the "life-changing explosion" scene. Scarier than any horror film released in several years, This film only needs actual insanity to lead the way on a purple/green carpet. I also appreciated the Joker killing the weakest form of mob first, no, not even a mob. The Negroes. I've never seen a pen disappear into a Negroes face before. The script was entirely poetry. I don't understand how people can think the ultimate hack Tarantino can pen an amazing script. I'm fucking sorry, but running gags about French cheeseburgers isn't fucking funny. Speaking of the word fuck, He uses it too much, and so do I. You're in for a surprise with a vivid idealist expressing dark and hard-to-swallow views on chaos and corruption. You don't need shitty plot twists to make an unformulated suspense film. The Dark Knight has enough twists to perfectly unravel this eggshell super-hype machine that has been manufactured by not only a great director, but also a viral marketing team responsible for such classics as leaving Joker cards littering comic stores. It is as every bit as intelligent as expected, but also furthers Bruce Wayne's douche bag ego to propel his "real identity" farther away than Batman's. The Joker's profiling record is nil. No name, no other aliases, same habits, which are also executed flawlessly. To bring up the viral marketing again, the tactics incorporated were mailing lists, getting their hands dirty, voice messages, and secret new production stills. I have an ongoing theory that this film will impregnate every female in the audience with awesomeness, so ladies, take your birth control. I'd also laugh if Ledger faked his death and when assaulted by critics, his reply would be "Why so serious?" Christopher Nolan's envisioning of the villains was flawless and traces of extreme black humor are scattered throughout. Imagine this film being The Departed meets costumed superheroes. The most poetic scene is the Joker, freshly escaped, hanging out of the police car, embracing his ultimate freedom, in stark silence. The only thing I underestimated is the amount of explosions in this film. The only complaint I have with this film is Batman's ongoing growl. Meanwhile, I imagine him ordering food from the dollar menu at McDonald's using the same voice. It's impossible to take him seriously. Batman's choreographed fighting has altered differently, for the better as well. Instead of relying on pussy martial arts, he just fucks shit up. Preferably with his form of bare rubber boxing. Technology is revolutionary, so is this film. Ledger's changed things forever. See to you, He's just a freak, like me! The Dark Knight is revolutionary in the cesspool of contemporary Hollywood film fare. Not only a brutal crime film, but also a story of love and all of the above. Everyone has an opinion, just keep in mind, It's also possible that their opinion is wrong.

-mAQ

TRIANGLE
TRIANGLE

Christopher Smith (2009)

I had no intention of reviewing *Triangle* as its qualities speak for themselves and don't require further recollection. This changed when a follower of *Soiled Sinema* requested me to review a film of Christopher Smith's. As I haven't seen his recently released period plague film, *Black Death*, I decided to scribble down the often wondrous effects that *Triangle* had me experience. Released in 2009, *Triangle* has often caught crossfire of being too much like *Timecrimes* or downright thieving the idea, when in fact, *Triangle* was slowly realized in 2004. Starring the gorgeous Australian bird Melissa George, *Triangle* takes her character of an overworked single mother far into the reaches of the supposed Bermuda Triangle. Christopher Smith had at one point clear references to the strange Atlantic phenomenon but abandoned them for subtlety. Smith then christened the yacht "Triangle" as to allude to something different all together. Contrary to his actions, though, everyone is still on board for a film that can't have too much competition for best film adapted to the Bermuda Triangle occurrences.

Despite boasting many of the film's secrets in the trailer, *Triangle* is still a tightly wrapped film that contains many more surprises, even surprises of which couldn't be spoiled with text. When I had begun watching *Triangle*, within the first half an hour, a looming sense of dread had crawled its way up my back. I was enticed and excited, giving way to the pleasing subgenre of nautical terror. The first thing you must understand is the nature of *Triangle*. Very much like *Timecrimes*, *Triangle* takes the same fear of reliving trauma and striving to alter the future and propels it past science and into the paranormal. In *Timecrimes*, a time machine plays villain in Héctor's quest to right the death of a woman whereas in *Triangle*, a somber woman goes to extreme lengths to rejoin her autistic son. Since I've only grazed over the general idea of *Triangle*, allow me to lay the story straight. The film opens with a working-class single mother cleaning up a mess left by her autistic son. Today is the day, she recalls from a post-it note left on the refrigerator door. She packs a large bag, hoists it into the trunk, and meets a potential love interest at the docks before setting sail. Call it mother's catharsis, if you will. The soft crashing waves don't last, however. Soon an enormous electrical storm looms over them and disrupts the breezy getaway by capsizing the yacht, thrusting a woman into the abyss and shaking up the survivors. Their grief is interrupted suddenly as a large ship passes by, giving way to board.

I was a fan of Christopher Smith's *Creep*. His vision of subway horror became a film I could frequent within a year. Despite obvious pacing issues and the general malaise accompanying the horror genre, *Creep* managed to excel in suspense and a sliver of claustrophobia. Having recently watched a similar film entitled *Stag Night*, I realized just how golden *Creep* was, for what it was. Here

in lies the problem with most contemporary horror. "Genre fans" are searching for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, so to speak. While I love and often crave horror, it is an appetite that is rarely appeased. Every once in a while a film will come along and change my perception of horror for but several days. This interim gives me time to catch up on low-budget driftwood and realize why my hope is so far gone. Triangle is excluded from this category though so the tirade seems pointless. I wouldn't consider Triangle a horror film any more than I would a science fiction film. The events are indeed fictitious and the bloodletting ample, but Triangle poses something so far from the very basics of science and questions the human motive. This is much more than a slasher film for within the shells of Jess' incarnations, a humanity is sensed, albeit of a brutal and merciless variety.

Don't confuse my delving into the deeper nature of Triangle as an assertion of perfection. The film may showcase its brighter moments with zeal (such as the grotesque impromptu Sally graveyard) but it suffers mainly from the premise itself. Given the film is wrapped unto a cycle, many scenes are repeated over and over again to the point of mental exhaustion. I felt the same during Timecrimes but that Spanish time travel film featured an exquisite pair of breasts. You really have no idea how far nudity can further the excitement of an idea based on repetition into a territory that is pleasurable. Triangle's shortcomings are the fact that it is limited but this isn't the fault of Christopher Smith, rather, the strange subject matter he managed to tackle head on. Other than the reprehensible repeating playlist, Triangle is rare with fault. It's a gloomy take on a terrifying "Groundhog Day". Having a friend who hit a drunk Negro crossing the street and witnessing first hand the guilt consume his social life, I know, off-hand, the effects of taking a life. Now imagine that void multiplied and you got a strong opposer to the definition of desensitization. Triangle sure isn't perfect but it dies trying. Just peruse the many theories surrounding the fate of Jess, Jess, or even Jess and you'll see exactly what I mean.

-mAQ

MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD
MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD

Christopher Speeth (1973)

As someone who has lived in a beach resort area for about half a decade and spent most of my life before then visiting the same place on a monthly basis, I have a special nostalgic affection for carnivals and amusement parks, even if I have a very low tolerance for these places nowadays due to the multicultural mutants and miscreants that typically inhabit them, so naturally I am a sucker for strange films about strange carnivals. Naturally, as a fairly obsessive cinephile that was bred on horror cinema but long ago gave up on virtually anything that slithers out of Hollywood, I also have an unhealthy obsession with offbeat, avant-garde, experimental, arthouse, overlooked and/or otherwise strange and singular genre flicks. Of course, my dual love of antiquated carnivals and idiosyncratic arthouse horror is probably best personified in relatively low-budget early 1960s cult flicks like Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* (1961) and Herk Harvey's *Cocteauian Carnival of Souls* (1962), though the acid-addled late-60s and early 70s surely produced its fair share of truly 'carnavalesque' chiller cinema, with the once-lost and largely forgotten but thankfully now found psychedelic art-horror celluloid fever dream *Malatesta's Carnival of Blood* (1973) directed by one-time-auteur Christopher Speeth being arguably the most superlatively strange, shockingly rewarding, and conspicuously 'cinephiliac' of these works. Assumed lost for about three decades until it was released on DVD in 2003 after being remastered at Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope Studios, Speeth's rather impressive debut was shot in Philadelphia in 1972 and is probably the most preternatural and phantasmagorical work of 'horror' cinema to emerge from the post-industrial bowels of the surely shitty east coast city aside from David Lynch's masterful debut *Eraserhead* (1977) as a work that seems like a uniquely unholy marriage between Federico Fellini, Jack Smith, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Andy Milligan (notably, Daniel Dietrich of Milligan's *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973)) plays the eponymous villain), and George A. Romero (Dietrich also appeared in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) as 'Givens'). As a work that is drenched in psychedelic surrealism, darkly eccentric humor, and even a bit of cross-dressing, Speeth's film is probably the closest thing to a horror equivalent to the films of Salvador Dalí protégé Steven F. Arnold, which include all-too-queer high-camp surrealist works like *The Liberation of the Mannique Mechanique* (1967) and especially *Luminous Procuress* (1971). A largely nonlinear and obsessively oneiric work that puts Tobe Hooper's *The Funhouse* (1981) to great shame when it comes to making the viewer feel like they are actually trapped inside an obscenely outmoded yet ominous amusement park, *Malatesta's Carnival of Blood* tells the considerably convoluted yet nonetheless incessantly entrancing tale of a beautiful young brunette who joins a dubious carnival with her parents in the hope of finding her missing brother, only to discover said brother is probably long dead and fell

prey to a virtual army of subterranean zombie-cannibals that are led by the titular villain and his sun-shy vampire and hook-handed comrades.

Featuring a literally and figuratively 'underground' collective of grey-faced and longhaired hippie-like cannibals that look and act like zombies and spend most of their time watching silent era Universal Horror and German Expressionist horror films when they are not drinking the vital fluids and eating the guts of normal folk, Malatešta's *Carnival of Blood* probably features some sort of message about the counterculture movement (judging by the film and its absurd non-storyline, bizarre humor, and insane imagery, I think it is safe to say that Speeth, the set-designers, and various actors and crew members were regularly consuming whatever drugs that they could get their hands on while they were making the film), but it ultimately works best as a shameless piece of horror cinephilia that was written (the story is credited to a playwright named 'Werner Liepolt') and directed by people that thankfully understand that horror was actually once, long ago, one of the most technically innovative and artistically merited film genres. Indeed, like the Teutonic Expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), of which an excerpt actually appears in the film, Speeth's flick owes most of its singular atmosphere and overall potency to its preternatural *mise-en-scène* and stunning tableaux as a work that ultimately feels like an unlikely marriage between darkly campy exploitation horror and the nihilistic avant-garde films of goofy Guido Carmelo Bene (*Nostra Signora dei Turchi* aka *Our Lady of the Turks*, *Un Amleto di meno* aka *One Hamlet Less*). Indeed, just as Andy Milligan used the genre as a means to make his marvelously misanthropic and misogynistic crypto-melodramas more palatable to less discerning audiences and thus more monetarily profitable, Speeth seems to have utilized horror as a means of showcasing various 'trippy' and entrancing abstract sets that will probably dumbfound the average half-braindead gorehound, slasher fanboy, or Romero retard. Interestingly, the sets were designed by a seemingly LSD-inspired troupe out of Philly called 'Alley Friends,' who would go on to become somewhat successful architects that were responsible for designing everything from passive solar buildings to eco-friendly high-rise condominium buildings around Pennsylvania. With Malatešta's *Carnival of Blood*, the three managed to assemble what is nothing short of an aesthetically nihilistic avant-garde netherworld that seems like a sort of allegorical representation of mutated post-counterculture America and features a hysterically hungry horde of hippie cannibals that make the Manson Family seem like a tiny collective of failed drug dealers and pseudo-pimps. Of course, like David E. Durston's classic rabid hippie horror flick *I Drink Your Blood* (1970), Speeth's film does make some superficial allusions to Charlie's family.

In a scene that certainly establishes the somewhat campy yet uneasy and foreboding tone of Malatešta's *Carnival of Blood*, a cross-dressing gypsy-like fortuneteller named 'Sonja' (AIDS victim Lenny Baker, who played the lead in Paul

MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD

Mazursky's *Next Stop, Greenwich Village* (1976) uses tarot cards to give a reading to young brunette protagonist Vena Norris (Janine Carazo in her first and last film role) while bitchily yelling at her "Don't touch my cards" and even physically assaulting her, as if he is one of those unconventionally misogynistic tranny fags who hate women because they are jealous that they have actual biological tits and vaginas. After the tarot reading, Vena asks Sonja how much he owes him and he curiously replies, "Owe me? Hahaha. The service is free...free to all new employees. This was no true reading, Vena, you must come back again when the cards have calmed themselves," thus hinting that something horrible is brewing at the overtly ominous theme park. Mr. and Mrs. Norris (Paul Hostetler and Betsy Henn) and their debutante daughter Vena have become reluctant carny employees because their missing son disappeared somewhere around the carnival, though it soon becomes clear that their little boy has probably met a grisly end. As seeming suburbanites of the fairly conventional sort, the Norris family sticks out like sore thumbs among most of the other carnival employees, which include a campy and exceedingly effete 'queen' named Mr. Blood (Jerome Dempsey of Sidney Lumet's *Network* (1976)) that acts as a manager and a sort of 'master of ceremonies,' as well as an antisocial chap with a hook for a hand and a deathly pale complexion named Mr. Bean (Tom Markus) that likes reading ancient Satanic material and discussing the merits of cannibalism. While Mr. Blood and Mr. Bean are sort of 'generals' of the carnival, the eponymous Malatesta, who may or may not have been named after the similarly swarthy Italian anarchist of the same surname and who likes to mostly get things done behind the scenes like the titular character of *The Phantom of the Opera*, is most certainly the true Führer, even if he seems too young for such a prestigious position.

Aside the Norris family, a fairly normal wisecracking young chap named Kit (Chris Thomas) has also just started working at the carnival and he soon develops a crush on buxom brunette Vena, who is unfortunately actually waiting for her boyfriend Johnny (Paul Townsend) to meet her at the carnival. As Kit somewhat cynically states to Vena upon first meeting her, "I run the Tunnel-of-Love. I flunked out of school and, providing that I work like hell, Mr. Blood has given me the dubious distinction of running that questionable wreck they call the Tunnel-of-Love." When a hilariously violent and vulgar little Hebraic girl named Toby Davis (Karen Salmansohn) ends up riding the Tunnel-of-Love with her two parents, Kit, who is initially not paying attention to working because he is too busy reading a copy of the classic counterculture tome *The Last Whole Earth Catalog: Access To Tools*, is startled to see that the family is missing from their boat when it reaches the end of the ride. Indeed, the only thing Kit finds left of the Davis family is a pair of smashed glasses and some blood, thus leading the reluctant carny to assume that something sinister is going on at the carnival, so he informs Vena of the precarious situation. Meanwhile, Mrs. Norris pleads to her husband, "This place is evil...I can feel it" after the two dis-

cuss how their missing son is probably dead. Assuming the worst, Mr. Norris pulls out a handgun and declares he plans to carry out revenge against whoever harmed his sole male progeny. As a Svengali-like individual who seems like he is lurking around every corner and whose shadow haunts the side of buildings in a fashion not unlike Count Orlok in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, Mr. Blood soon realizes that the Norris family and Kit are on to him and his ghoulish compatriots and thus prepares to take appropriate action. Unbeknownst to Kit and the Norris family, Mr. Blood is a bloodthirsty vampire with a large gut and a voracious appetite and Mr. Bean is the head a large family of cannibalistic Satan-saluting quasi-zombie-cannibals that live under the carnival and have never seen a single ray of sunlight, though they regularly indulge in the greatest films that silent horror cinema has to offer while wobbling around like autistic automatons in front of a subterranean large movie screen.

While he is an evil little fellow that does his fair share of killing and terrorizing, a swarthy midget named 'Bobo' (Hervé Villechaize of Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1980) and Robert Downey Sr.'s *Greaser's Palace* (1972)) provides lead Vena with some poetic hints of the horrors that await her via menacing melodies he sings to her and a couple other characters. Indeed, after singing, "Beware of evil who's caught in the shadow of the dream. Beware of the mystery of the carnival who shall remain nameless," Bobo points a shotgun at Vena in a threatening fashion and then scampers away like a rabid Chihuahua that is looking for something to sink its teeth into. Meanwhile, Mr. Blood informs Kit while absurdly riding a bumper car that Vena has a lover named Johnny and that she is waiting for him to arrive at the carnival, thus crushing the young man's romantic interest in her. Of course, Mr. Blood's queenish gossiping does not stop Kit from attempting to act as Vena's knight in shining armor. In a pleasantly protracted scene that blurs the line between dream and reality and involves a malefic masked phantom in a forest, an eccentrically stylized car-turned-bed that hangs upside down from a ceiling, seemingly haunted archaic swinging angel and negro statues, zombie-cannibals watching *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) while tossing popcorn at the female lead as she stands in front of the movie screen, and a sort of giant condom trap, Vena is thrown into a sort of real-life nightmare that ends with her suffering a mental breakdown after finding the corpse of Kit with a knife in his heart riding on a decrepit old ferris wheel. When Mr. Blood finds Vena crying while crouching down in the rain in her pajamas, he arrogantly pokes her with his cane and less than sensitively states, "My dear, you're so upset. My dear, it's too bad about poor, poor Kit. Don't be so upset though." Meanwhile, Vena's parents' mobile-home is attacked by a motley crew of flesh-eating cannibal hippie deadbeats. While Vena manages to violently murder a sort of blind and elderly longhaired 'zombie janitor,' she is soon attacked and captured by Dr. Blood while he is channeling Bela Lugosi. Ultimately, Mr. Blood brings Vena to Malatesta, who fittingly stands over the girl while a scene from *The Cab-*

MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD

inet of Dr. Caligari is projected in the background where somnambulist Cesare sneaks into the character Jane's room while she is sleeping and snatches her from her bed. While Mr. and Mrs. Norris manage to escape from their trailer, Vena is taken prisoner by Malatesta. Naturally, it is all up to Vena's boyfriend Johnny to finally show up at the carnival and save his dime-store damsel in distress from the ravenous wrath of the hippie cannibals.

With would-be-loverboy Kit already dead, Vena's boyfriend Johnny predictably finally shows up and inevitably becomes the new male protagonist, though he is slightly less charming than his pretty boy predecessor. Naturally, upon arriving at the carnival, Johnny finds Mr. Blood's claims to be more than a little bit dubious when the discernibly deceptive vampire informs him that Vena and her parents "died in their sleep of a freak accident" and that he should not "take it so bad" since he has a "long life" and "there are a lot of fish in the sea." When Johnny begins looking around the carnival and walks into a dimly lit building where he finds an occult text with medieval satanic illustrations and arcane writing, he becomes fairly uneasy, especially when hook-handed cannibal Mr. Bean soon shows up and begins going on a preposterous pro-cannibal rant. Indeed, when Mr. Bean states, "Say listen, lad. They say meat builds blood and flesh and gives you new life. Do you believe that?" and Johnny reluctantly replies, "Yes, I guess so," the cannibal makes the protagonist run out of the room as if he is scared for his life by adding, "So, wouldn't it follow that a man could live longer and longer if he ate more of the same?" and then waving his hook in his face. When Johnny runs into menacing Asiatic midget Bobo, he is somewhat startled when the tiny terror sings to him, "Very, very not yet dead... Stupid Johnny, use your head. Put your feet where evil stands... The knife cuts quick, the blood pours red. Stupid Johnny, use your head... Very, very not yet dead." Compared to his enemies, Johnny is indeed quite moronic and he certainly has no chance of outwitting, let alone defeating, a bunch of highly predatory vampires and zombie-cannibals who have been hunting and killing humans for god knows how long, but at least he tries.

In a somewhat unlikely twist, Mr. Blood shows up to the room where Vena is imprisoned while the cannibals are mindlessly watching Wallace Worsley's classic *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) adaptation starring Lon Chaney and tells her that he wants to save her, stating, "I want to help you out of the frying pan," but she finds his motives dubious yet still decides to follow him because she clearly has no other options. While leading her to ostensible safety, Mr. Blood explains to Vena regarding the amusement park and its secret cannibalistic inhabitants, "This carnival is constructed over a series of natural limestone caverns. That is how Bean has kept his family undetected for so many years... And they're cannibals, every one. Most of them have never seen the light of day. That's why they look so ghastly... Live like animals. No one has ever told them it is wrong, so how are they to know?!" In a scene that hints that he might be not only a

bloodsucker but a cocksucker as well, Mr. Blood describes how he was forced to join the carnival after being run out of town and that he only realized later when it was too late that he “could not leave.” Of course, Mr. Blood ultimately reneges on his promise to Vena and delivers her to mysterious mad man Malateŝta, but he makes the mistake of drinking the young girl’s “precious blood” beforehand without receiving the proper permission and is punished with a less than glamorous death by his fairly cold and brutal master. Upon approaching Vena as she is tied to what looks like a sort of Satanic operating table, Malateŝta charmingly ŝtates to her, “I am a man of one thousand faces, Vena. Mr. Blood has seen my face, but to you I show a kinder face,” as if he plans to make her his lover instead of cannibal/vampire meat. Meanwhile, after poking his head through a gigantic wooden Confederate flag while pretending to be juŝt another ŝtumbling cannibal-zombie, Johnny finally manages to find Vena, but their untimely reunion does not laŝt long. As F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922) is screened, Mr. and Mrs. Norris also attempt to rescue their daughter in the cannibal abyss, but the latter is soon hacked up by midget Bobo and subsequently eaten alive in a Romero-esque fashion. Of course, Mr. Norris is also soon killed after Malateŝta drives a ŝtake into his eye and then lets his flesh-eating underlings finish off the diŝtraught father. After getting separated from Johnny, Vena is approached by tranny fortuneteller Sonja who, not unlike Mr. Blood, offers to show her a way out of the carnival catacombs, but ultimately makes her a prisoner of Malateŝta again. The next day, after a cop shows up at the carnival and unwitting drowns Johnny upon playing a amusement park game that is rigged by Bobo, Malateŝta celebrates his victory over mere mortals by riding some of his own rides while Vena begins to perish while in captivity.

Make no miŝtake about it, although blatantly flawed in many reŝpects, Malateŝta’s *Carnival of Blood* is certainly a loŝt cult classic of ŝorts with ŝeemingly infinitely replay value. Indeed, I do not feel like I am succumbing to puffery when I ŝay that watching Speeth’s film for the firŝt time offered me more or leŝs the ŝame enjoyment as when I firŝt ŝaw ŝome of my favorite horror flicks like *Carnival of Souls* (1962) or *Lemora: A Child’s Tale of the Supernatural* (1973). Notably, I diŝcovered the film after reading about it while flipping through *NIGHTMARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* (2007) and could not help but immediately hunt it down upon reading it be deŝcribed by author Stephen Thrower as being, “Like the Euro oddity *FREAK ORLANDO* (1981), it’s really a ŝhowcase for the director and his art deŝigners to go berserk with acid-tinged visuals.” Indeed, like *Freak Orlando* and many of Ulrike Ottinger’s other films (including, of course, her doc *Prater* (2007), which is about the hiŝtory of the famous Viennese amusement park of the ŝame name), Speeth’s film is a truly ‘carnavalesque’ experience that is the next beŝt thing to being at an old ŝchool amusement park that is inhabited by actual living and breathing freaks. Unlike the films of ŝub-underground avant-gardiŝt Fredric Hobbs like

MALATESTA'S CARNIVAL OF BLOOD

Troika (1969), Roseland (1971), and Alabama's Ghost (1973), Malatesta's Carnival of Blood is a rare forgotten American 'artsploitation' flick that can not only be enjoyed by annoyingly discernibly cinephiles like myself, but also braindead Romero fanboys that get a hard-on from seeing a reanimated corpse ripping out and gorging on the intestines some hapless cop or soldier while they are still alive. While obviously the rediscovering of Speeth's film is not as important as if, say, Tod Browning's legendary lost film London After Midnight (1927) aka The Hypnotist starring Lon Chaney were actually found one day, Malatesta's Carnival of Blood is indubitably an invaluable and singular work in that it is a true testament to the artistic potential of low-budget horror cinema, which is certainly needed in a era when so-called 'independent' filmmakers find themselves mimicking the style, morals, and formulaic storytelling of Hollywood horror when they should be using their relative artistic freedom to test the bounds of the all too contrived and mostly mediocre genre. Surely, an open-minded novice filmmaker would find more artistic inspiration in Speeth's film than in all the films directed by the likes of Craven, Carpenter, Hooper, and Romero over the past two decades combined.

As a work that manages to shuffle darkly campy comedy, convention-bending horror, entrancing avant-garde tableaux, counterculture buffoonery, and a psychedelic approach to cinephilia, Malatesta's Carnival of Blood ultimately makes marginally comparable films like Ray Dennis Steckler's bottom-of-the-barrel schlock anti-masterpiece The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies!!? (1964), Yabo Yablonsky's The Manipulator (1971) starring Mickey Rooney, and Alan Gadney's Moonchild (1974) seem like the closest thing to a horror equivalent to Federico Fellini's *Giulietta degli spiriti* (1965) aka *Juliet of the Spirits*. Also, judging by Oliver Stone's rarely-seen horror debut *Seizure* (1974) aka *Queen of Evil*, which incidentally also stars Hervé Villechaize, it seems that Speeth should have probably been the one that had a successful filmmaking career and had the opportunity to direct a Jim Morrison biopic and truly psychedelic serial killer flick instead of the softcore Hollywood conspiracy theorist. For a film that was so poorly budgeted that the actors that played the ghouls were paid a mere \$5.00/day plus doughnuts and where the 'director's cut' was intentionally destroyed to make trailers because the producers did not have enough money to make an extra print, Malatesta's Carnival of Blood, not unlike the oeuvre of Berlin-based blond beast Jörg Buttgeriet, demonstrates why horror makes for a great genre to work within if you have little money to work with yet you want to create inspired celluloid art that has the potential to gain a loyal following. Not unlike Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz's *Messiah of Evil* (1973) aka *Dead People*, Curtis Harrington's *Ruby* (1977), Lamberto Bava's *Demons* (1985) and Bigas Luna's *Anguish* (1987), it also probably makes for the ultimate movie theater experience. Indeed, while I could easily list various glaring flaws that the film suffers from, my only real complaint regarding

Malatesta's Carnival of Blood is that I have not been afforded the grand opportunity of seeing it play on the big screen. After all, it is not often that one gets the opportunity to watch a movie about cannibals watching German Expressionist movies.

-Ty E

THE BLOB
THE BLOB

Chuck Russell (1988)

The 80s were the definitive period for monster films, or even creature films for that matter. Calling something a monster must follow suit to certain descriptive qualities. I wouldn't call "The blob" a monster, more of an experiment gone awry. Think of Slimer from Ghostbusters though a bit more sadistic and prone to murdering children. This brings me to another point of the 80s - there were no rules. Kill anyone, the audience won't care. The lack of selfish sensibilities really adds a "real feel" to this film. I don't appreciate selective mindless killers. The formula doesn't equate at all correctly. This remake plainly decided to upgrade the 1958 classic with rebellious youth, timid sex, and a silver platter of potent special effects. In terms of metaphors, the film is a pan filled with surgical tools. Now which tool to use in order to play a precise and specific death is its choice. In some ways, the special effects in *The Blob* are completely beyond words. The slime effects and acidic touch to the melting skin "wows" me repeatedly. I don't think I'll ever get over how ahead of the time this film was. Well, it was until fault lay blame on Kevin Dillon's mullet. I feel ethically responsible enough on behalf as reviewer to tell you that the effects in this film is an unholy conjoining of *Street Trash* and John Carpenter's *The Thing*. This alone should tell you all you need to know. Starring a young Shawnee Smith, who still had a dependable agent, the youth cast in this film is introduced without a moments hesitation only to serve as mindless cattle as soon as the "blob" hits the fan. I found myself shocked by the sheer quantity of deaths in this film. In material covering killer slime, a departure was much needed to save from the tedious hassle of an unnoticeable body count and the lack of laced humor. If *The Blob* had attempted to strictly follow the suit of a horror or even a horror drama, the result would have been questionable and laughable. *The Blob* is laughable, but in a relative way. Watching a citizen dive for safety only to be smashed and absorbed by a tendril is deserving of its own popcorn bowl. For any fans of killer slime, check out William Essex's novel simply titled *Slime*. With a last minute convergence of horror and drama (comedy's still there, folks), *The Blob* takes an intelligent turn towards political commentary with the discovery that this creature was a man made experiment to gain the upper-hand on those damn Russkies. But that's always the case, isn't it? In the 80s, a "who-dun-it?" governmental conspiracy plot twist was racy, fresh, and believable. In today's cinema, this happens as a common occurrence. I don't even think twice. Sometimes, I really do wonder about transpiring events like this. What if the Mothman was an experiment in organic satellites? It's questions like these make me embrace the unknown tightly with a feverish glint in my eyes. *The Blob* is a superior monster attack! flick. With many laugh-a-minute segments and that preserved nostalgic kick, *The Blob* makes me want to turn up the volume, scoot closer, and descend into

the world of the past with cinema that wasn't observant over motifs that were considered politically incorrect. To be blunt, watching an 8 year old being devoured grotesquely by an acidic killing machine, in graphic detail mind you, to be a masterful moment in any form of cinema. Its balls like these that make me appreciate horror. I wouldn't expect anything else from the man who brought us The Mask and Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors. In memory of Charles Edward Parrish.

-mAQ

VOICES OF DESIRE
VOICES OF DESIRE

Chuck Vincent (1972)

Being an exploitation film fan rarely pays off, hence why I more or less took a break from watching these films for a couple years until somewhat recently after once again taking the irrational plunge in cinema history's most inhospitable ghetto of debauchery, libertinism, and complete and utter aesthetic worthlessness. As I discovered over time, like with the arthouse world, exploitation cinema has its own great and distinguished 'auteur' filmmakers, so I try to watch films by directors whose work I can generally trust, including those working in the pornographic realm like Chuck Vincent (*Jack n' Jill*, *Roommates*). Although Vincent, who began his career in regional theater as a director and stage manager, mostly directed heterosexual pornography and sexploitation comedies, he was as straight as a circle and succumbed to AIDS in 1991 at the premature age of 51. Like his fellow gay pornographers who directed hetero hardcore flicks like the Amero Brothers and Michael Zen, Vincent seems to have put a special emphasis on artistry and detail in his work, as if he could only tolerate filming close-up shots of straight people fucking if he had some more creative things to do during the filmmaking process, with his first feature *Voices of Desire* (1972) being a perfect example of this. A shockingly artsy and atmospheric softcore sexploitation flick of the quasi-psychedelic Gothic horror sort, Vincent's first feature is, not unlike John and Lem Amero's phantasmagorical fuck flick *Bacchanale* (1970), one of the most strangely atmospheric and unforgettable works of overtly erotic horror ever shot on cheap 16mm film stock and had it not been directed by a pornographer and were it more readily available, it might be considered a classic of sorts today. A sort of sick and sleazy yet suave and stylish spectrophilic celluloid symphony as conducted by a slightly chubby alpha-ghoul as portrayed by porn star turned politician Mark Suben (who is now a District Attorney for Cortland County, in upstate New York) and featuring Sandra Peabody aka 'Sandra Cassell' of *The Last House on the Left* (1972) as a hysterical gal who is haunted and gang-banged by a superficially gregarious gang of dapperly dressed libertine ghosts, *Voices of Desires* probably sounds like one of the stupidest ideas for a film ever conceived yet the marvelously moronic degeneracy contained within the film is executed in such an eloquent and idiosyncratic fashion that it makes one realize that director Vincent was a true artist who sold himself short and whored himself out to the lowest bidder. Advertised with the fittingly pseudo-erotic tagline, "A Hypnotic Voyage to the Spirits of Lust," Vincent's film has crude acting, senseless scenes of pseudo-sensuality and unintentionally farcical fetishism, cheap special effects, piss poor lighting, and a variety of other glaring flaws, yet the film offers a totally singular experience that you're not going to find anywhere else, whether you like it or not. Indeed, *Voices of Desire* is like a bad sex dream that you just cannot help but look back on fondly. A way-

ward celluloid wet dream about a young and seemingly rather dumb hysterical female cinephile (auteur Vincent reveals his cinematic influences by featuring film posters from works by Fritz Lang, Josef von Sternberg, Orson Welles, etc. on the protagonist's apartment wall) who becomes haunted by a group of horny ghosts after attempting to make a simple phone call on a Manhattan payphone, Vincent's work ultimately proves that even innately idiotic film premises can be exquisitely executed if handled by the right mensch, even when working within one of the most aesthetically vapid genres known to man.

Voices of Desire begins banally enough with a fat, short, swarthy and stocky Alpine-like cop named Detective Holland (David Kirk of Robert Downey Sr.'s Putney Swope (1969) and John G. Avildsen's early Troma effort Cry Uncle (1971)) interviewing a young pale-skinned and dark-haired debutante named Anna Reed (Sandra Peabody of The Last House on the Left and Teenage Hitchhikers (1975)) about hearing "voices." As Anna explains, it all started when her boss gave her a package to ship. After shipping the package, Anna decided to do some shopping in downtown Manhattan and in the process, she lost track of time, so she decided to call her friend to tell her she would be late for a dinner date, but instead of getting her friend on the other line, she heard the heavy breathing of pernicious spirits and it scared her so much that she ran away from the payphone. While walking down a sidewalk after the eerie phone call, Anna hears a ghostly being whispering, "Anna, wait for us... Don't run away from us, please," so she hightails it back to her apartment thinking she will be safe there, but of course she is wrong. While biting into an apple and reading a magazine in her room, the same being from before declares, "Anna...we love you. Anna...love us." The mysterious ghoul must have put a spell on Anna with his pseudo-romantic whispers, as she subsequently begins disrobing, rubbing her supple breasts with pieces of fruit, and sucking on a banana like it is a cock. Scenes of Anna masturbating with fruit are juxtaposed with images of a dude (porn star Roger Caine of Jonas Middleton's hardcore horror masterpiece Through the Looking Glass (1976) and George A. Romero's postmodern vampire flick Martin (1976)), who happens to be one of the ghosts that has been haunting her, penetrating a semi-chubby chick with curves and jumbo jugs in a completely pitch black room. Indeed, it seems Anna was spiritually raped by a phantasm.

The next day, Anna's (or more like director Vincent's) taste in cinema is revealed in a scene of the protagonist's apartment featuring vintage posters of Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930), Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), Michael Curtiz's *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) on her decrepit apartment wall. Somehow, Anna thinks packing up her things and heading out of town to see her friend will save her from the wrath of the wanton spirits, but as soon as she hears said wanton spirits declaring, "Anna...you won't need your suitcase where you're going," the petrified protagonist loses her will

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power, drops her luggage, and starts heading to a lavish apartment where the ghosts reside. Indeed, like a somnambulist possessed by a demonic spirit, Anna manages to arrive at a luxury baroque style apartment with fancy furniture and antiques without any sort of directions. Although the apartment seems unoccupied, Anna soon hears sinister laughter and eventually finds two young longhaired men (Roger Caine and some other dude) in fancy suits and a young pale darkhaired woman (polack-guidette porn star Marlene Willoughby) in an enticing blood red dress sitting at a table in the kitchen who declare, "Anna...we've been waiting for you" without so much as moving their lips or saying a single word. Not long after, an older suited man known as the 'Conductor' (porn star turned politician Mark Suben under the pseudonym 'Gus Thomas') enters the room and the fearsome foursome of ghouls coerce Anna to drink red wine with them. It seems the sensual spirits are into date rape, as the wine is spiked and knocks out poor Anna instantly. After Anna passes out, the Ghouls carry her limp body to another room and take turns defiling her after she wakes up and screams "help me." Of course, as demonstrated by her big warm salacious smiles, Anna is having a fabulous time being frisked and fucked by the charming phantasms. Indeed, first the two young suited ghouls gangbang her while the Conductor conducts the carnality and the female ghoul in red, who seems rather aroused by the entire scenario, hold a candle in a rather provocative fashion. Next, the young ghoul gal played by Marlene Willoughby, who has traded in her elegant red dress for a lethally lecherous black leather dominatrix outfit, chases Anna around and acts if she is going to brutalize her like some sort of sadistic bull-dyke, but when the Conductor plays a beautiful melody on a piano, the sadomasochistic spirit gets soft and gently defiles the protagonist, who seems to rather enjoy dyking out with a fellow pale babe with dark hair.

While the Ghouls initially seem more friendly than fiendish, even if they more or less date-raped the protagonist, their general tone changes after Anna makes the mistake of eating dinner by herself. Indeed, when Anna spots a grotesque bluish-green gelatin platter at a dinner table, she cannot help but dig in, but before she knows it, the female and two young male ghouls approach her from behind with butcher knives in both of their hands and point them at her in a most threatening fashion. Of course, Anna attempts to escape by running like her little life depended on it, but in every room she single runs into she finds a sinisterly smiling phantom waving a butcher knives in her direction in a most sinisterly playful fashion. When Anna decides to run to the main living room of the house, she finds herself encircled by the three younger ghosts, so she curls up in a fetal position and waits for her assumed brutal death via knife-wielding phantasms. Luckily, Anna is saved when the charming Conductor comes out and gestures his fellow ghosts to leave immediately, which they do with a certain discernible sadness in their eyes, like depraved young children who have been denied the opportunity to slaughter a cute kitty cat. From there, the Con-

ductor embraces Anna in a most romantic and sensitive fashion and the two are transported to a glittery oneiric realm where they make passionate otherworldly orgasmic love on a glowing red bed. After her truly ethereal erotic escapades with the Conductor, Anna awakes inside the living room of the apartment and notices everyone is gone. On further research, Anna finds a man stabbed to death in a bathtub, the female and one of the young male ghouls dead in a closet, and the Conductor hanging from a noose in the living room. Flash forward to the present and Detective Holland reveals to Anna after she gets done telling her seemingly senseless story that the dead people she encountered died over 15 years ago as a result of a murder-suicide scenario, with the oh-so sensitive Conductor slaughtering every single person in his house and then subsequently committing self-slaughter via hanging. After the cop tells her that she will “get over this” and that he can find her a “good psychiatrist,” Anna runs off and heads to a bridge where she plans to commit suicide by jumping off, but just before she does, her fiendish ghost friends call out to her, “Anna, come back to us,” which she does. Indeed, it seems that Anna just cannot help but love bedding the undead.

For all its scenes of superlative stupidity, *Voices of Desire* offers one very important insight and that is that the only way you can calm a hysterical woman and make her shut the fuck up is by fucking her senseless, but of course, when the fucking ends, the insufferable hysteria inevitably begins again, or so the film demonstrates in its depiction of a deranged dame who can only find solace in sexual satisfaction of the spectrophilic sort. Indeed, director Chuck Vincent might have been a homo, but he knew that if there is something that can at least temporarily sedate a hysterical woman, it is a good old fashioned fucking. In that regard, *Voices of Desire* is probably the only film where poltergeists have a positive effect on the protagonist, who ultimately decides she would rather be the personal plaything of a group of ghosts than commit suicide. In its depiction of a rather intimate relationship between the protagonist and ghosts, as well as foreboding atmosphere and imagery (especially in the scene where the violent deaths of the ghosts are depicted), Vincent’s film has much more in common with Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980) than most cinephiles would probably give it credit for. Certainly, the spirit-on-human carnal action in Vincent’s film is infinitely more sensually unsettling than *The Entity* (1981) directed by Sidney J. Furie. While Vincent focused specifically on porn and sexploitation trash after *Voices of Desire*, he did return to the horror genre in 1987 with the surely underrated work *Deranged* (not to be confused with the 1974 Ed Gein inspired Canadian-American necrophiliac classic of the same name co-directed by Alan Ormsby and Jeff Gillen), which is a sort of all the more deranged reworking of Roman Polanski’s *Repulsion* (1965) with a chamber-piece-like structure starring genuinely talented porn thespians like Veronica Hart, Jamie Gillis, and Jerry Butler. Unquestionably, both *Voices of Desire* and *Deranged* demonstrate

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that Vincent could have probably had quite a fruitful and singular career as a prolific horror auteur had he wanted to, but as his surrealist experimental fuck flick *Visions* (1977) surely demonstrates, he was an eclectic artist who seemed to wallow in creating celluloid art in the gutter, which is certainly admirable in its own warped sort of way.

-Ty E

DERANGED

Chuck Vincent (1987)

Fuck bedroom blitzkrieging bogeymen, brain-gorging zombies, entrancing vampires with mad glamouring skills, sinisterly sensual succubae, gender-challenged psychotic retards sporting hand-sewn sporting skinmasks and wielding chain-saws, badly burned pedophiles with killer clawed gloves, heinously bitchy grotesque witches with deadly spells, and pernicious shadow-lurking phantasms, hysterical women are infinitely more horrifying and dreadful to me, both in real-life and the cinematic realm. Indeed, while the deadly torment of a masked retard and stumbling flesheater is relatively quick and painless, the hysterical woman and her pernicious psychodramatic games can haunt you forever if you're unlucky enough to survive her wrath. One of the scariest things about the hysterical woman is that she is no more in control of her actions than you are and cannot be completely culpable for her actions, thus making her actions all the more tragic, hence why Lorena Bobbitt was found not guilty due to insanity for cutting her husband's cock off and filicidal fiend Andrea Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity during a retrial for drowning her five young children, including an infant, in a bathtub in the bloodthirsty state of Texas where one murder is enough to convince the state to execute you (after all, what other state would execute a nice Jewish boy like Douglas Feldman?!). In the uniquely unhinged and underrated 1987 psycho-horror flick *Deranged* (not to be confused with the 1974 Ed Gein inspired flick of the same name co-directed by Jeff Gillen and Alan Ormsby), the viewer is forced to endure the static and claustrophobic schizophrenic hell of a hysterical heiress who completely loses what little was left of her mind after she murders a masked robber who also causes her to suffer a miscarriage after committing forced blunt trauma to her pregnant stomach. Directed by gay pornographic auteur Chuck Vincent (*Jack n' Jill*, *Roommates*), who is best known for his hardcore heterosexual carnal comedies but who made his feature debut with the artsy psychedelic Gothic horror exploitation piece *Voices of Desire* (1972), the film is more or less an all the more morbid yet sometimes strangely mirthful reworking of Roman Polanski's classic British psychological horror flick *Repulsion* (1965) starring French blonde diva Catherine Deneuve about a pathologically misandric young debutante who begins murdering men after falling into schizophrenia and reliving various childhood traumas. While Vincent managed to do the seemingly impossible by garnering mainstream respect for high-class X-rated fuck flicks like *Jack n' Jill* (1979), *Roommates* (1981) and *In Love* (1983), the critics were less sympathetic towards *Deranged*, with *The New York Times* reviewer Caryn James spitefully writing in her 1987 review of the film that it, "is not pornography, of high or low quality; it is just a sleazy, muddled movie that should have been kept in the can." One can only assume that since Vincent's film depicts womanhood as such a fragile and precar-

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ious thing, not to mention the fact that it portrays NYC natives as soulless psychopaths who worship money and religiously engage in extramarital excursions, the film hit a nerve with a native feminist New Yorker like Ms. James, who probably felt less than empowered by the whole cruel, dark, unsettling, and decidedly dejecting cinematic experience. Starring top pornographic thespians in the lead roles, including Vincent's favorite leading lady Veronica Hart (who later had small roles in Paul Thomas Anderson flicks like *Boogie Nights* (1997) and *Magnolia* (1999)) as the schizophrenic murderess, macho man and self-proclaimed sex addict Jerry Butler (who, despite his rampant masculinity and goombah-like good looks, is a half-Hebrew whose paternal grandfather was the half-brother of kosher commie mass murderer 'Leon Trotsky' aka Lev Davidovich Bronshtein) as said murderess' social-climbing philanderer hubby, and crazed yet charismatic kosher leading man Jamie Gillis as the decidedly dead daddy of the murderess, Vincent's film is not merely a desperate attempt at a mainstream crossover work, but a paradoxically distastefully tasteful tribute to the true acting integrity of its pornographic performers. Indeed, compared to most 1980s horror films, *Deranged* features acting performances of a Bergman-esque caliber in terms of its uncompromisingly deathly dark and fiercely foreboding melodrama.

Even though she is a rich housewife who inherited millions of dollars when her father slit his own throat with a straight razor, Joyce Peters (Veronica Hart of Cecil Howard's *Neon Nights* (1981) and Shaun Costello's *Pandora's Mirror* (1981)) has a lot of major and seemingly irrevocable problems, namely that she is a highly hysterical woman in a dubious marriage with a boorish bohunk tennis player named Frank (Jerry Butler of Frank Henenlotter's *Basketcase* (1982) and Cecil Howard's *Snake Eyes* (1985)) who superficially resembles John Wayne Bobbitt in both appearance and character, not to mention the fact that she suffers from nightmarish hallucinations during the most random of moments, even while in the company of other people. Maybe it is because she is pregnant and expecting a baby boy soon or just because she is an introverted weirdo, but Joyce decides to stay behind in NYC when her husband travels to London for a month-long business trip, thus leaving her more susceptible to falling prey to the internal purgatory of her own messed up mind. The voices in her head rightly tell Joyce that her husband Frank is carrying on a lurid love affair with her exceedingly extroverted bitch half-sister Mary Ann (Jennifer Delora of Vincent's *Bedroom Eyes II* (1989) and Henenlotter's *Frankenhooker* (1990)). If Mary Ann is a prissy princess, Joyce's mother Sheila (small-time porn star Jill Cumer of Henri Pachard's *Jailhouse Girls* (1984) and Vincent's R-rated sex comedy *Sex Appeal* (1986)) is a royally wretched queen bitch who resents her daughter for marrying a low-class "gigolo bum." Upon visiting her mother's lavish apartment with her sister Mary Ann, Joyce is rudely surprised with a baby shower where she is bombarded by the rather revolting presence of her stereotypically nasally-sounding Jewish mother-in-law and various other nefariously narcissistic vulgarians who

judge the quality of a party by how much money was senselessly wasted on it. When Joyce opens a present that contains a baby blue baby blanket, she fondly remembers a moment from her childhood when her father tenderly said to her, "Blue is the color of the sky and ocean...serenity. Pink isn't for my Joycie...you're special...Daddy's delight." After that, Joyce goes into a bathroom and hallucinates seeing a maniacal Minister (Daniel Chapman of *Mississippi Burning* (1988) and *Philadelphia* (1993)) smashing open the bathroom mirror, with an imaginary alternate dimension featuring a sardonic reenactment of her beloved father's funeral taking place on the other side of the mirror. As the menacing Minister sarcastically states regarding Joyce's father's death, "Let's thank all those who made this possible...Shelia and Darren, her secret lover, and then there's everyone's candy sweetie, Mary Ann, Darren and Sheila's illegitimate bastard child. And damn, if I didn't almost forget, there's daddy's favorite little delight, Joyce." Indeed, Joyce's father Eugene (Jamie Gillis of *Jonas Middleton's Through the Looking Glass* (1976) and Shaun Costello's *Water Power* (1977)) apparently slit his throat in the bathtub after catching his wife Sheila cheating on him with a dirtbag named Darren (John Brett), who would later become the anti-heroine's slimy stepfather.

While Joyce suffers from nightmarish hallucinations at least a couple times a day, they completely pale in comparison to the unending series of quasi-Fellini-esque surrealist horror she will suffer after coming home to her apartment after a long hard day of dealing with repugnant family members and being attacked by a sadistic thug in a ski-mask. Indeed, when the assumed robber attacks Joyce and she pleads with him "please, don't do it to my baby" while holding her bloated pregnant stomach, the scumbag proceeds to bludgeon her in the gut with the utmost brutality. While Joyce manages to kill the ski-masked thug with a pair of scissors before he can kill her, she subsequently suffers a miscarriage due to the brutal blows she took to her belly and wakes up the next day on her bed unclad sucking her thumb while in a fetal position like a newborn baby, as if to signify her rebirth as a completely helpless schizophrenic woman-child. Strangely, Joyce is in quite the peppy mood when she fully awakes and even tells her sister on the phone that she has never felt better in her life, as if she has already completely buried her traumatic experiences from the night before in the deep dark recesses of her mind. From there, Joyce's life becomes comprised of endless back-to-black hallucinations-within-hallucinations and traumatic flashbacks-within-flashbacks involving dead loving yet incestuous fathers and disturbingly distorted recollections. While the corpse of the ski-masked robber is still on her living room floor, Joyce hallucinates a past therapy session from her dreaded college years with a certain Hebraic psychiatrist named Dr. Freemont (Harvey Siegel) where she reveals she began hallucinating after her father killed himself. It only becomes apparent to the viewer that Joyce is hallucinating when she walks a couple feet away from Dr. Freemont and picks up a baby. Indeed, in Joyce's

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mind, she did not suffer a miscarriage but instead had the baby, who she named Frankie in tribute to her alpha-asshole husband. Still semi-sane every once in a while, Joyce sports a pillow under her stomach when people come by her apartment to keep up the appearance that she still is pregnant. During one of her flashbacks, Joyce re-experiences the moment she learned she was pregnant and how her pathologically pigheaded husband was so mad that it would destroy his professional tennis career that he calmly mentioned to his wife after berating her for getting knocked up, "it's not too late to get an abortion." Although her sister Mary Ann comes by at one point for a couple minutes just to bitch and complain about nothing important, Joyce really only interacts with one other person while hiding in her apartment and he is not exactly the best of company for an unhinged broad, as he is a greaseball horndog guido delivery boy named Nick (Gary Goldman, who appeared in Vincent's lame sex comedy *Young Nurses in Love* (1989)), who uses every opportunity to try to get in her granny panties by using superlatively sleazy sexual innuendos. In terms of imagined meetings, Joyce is oftentimes visited by her father Eugene, who makes his first appearance naked and covered in blood in her bathtub, thus reflecting the nature of his grizzly suicide. Of course, Joyce is not exactly in the best of company for someone who has suffered a super bloody miscarriage during a late stage pregnancy.

Needless to say, as the days pass by and the ski-masked robber's corpse begins to rot, Joyce gets complaints about her apartment smelling, so after imagining her husband Frank encouraging her to hide the body in a more covert and contained area, she puts the cadaver in her closet, but before long, the perturbed protagonist imagines the dead crook randomly popping out of the closet to attack and torment her. While at her apartment, Joyce also hallucinates the day when she first met her husband Frank at a country club and how her stepfather Darren warned her to stay away from such a "low class" fellow who was only interested in her money. Joyce also remembers the day when her mother told her regarding Frank, "you don't want to marry him. Play with him, have a good time with him, but look for a real husband." Indeed, Joyce's mother Sheila is a shameless first-class whore who knows how to separate business and pleasure, as she strategically married the wealthy Eugene but carried on a lurid love affair with Darren and she wanted her daughter to create a similarly duplicitous existence for herself, but her pathetic progeny did not learn the lesson, hence her current precarious situation as the hopelessly cuckolded wife of a grade A asshole. Indeed, as it turns out, the dead fellow with the ski-mask is Frank and he planned to kill Joyce and their unborn baby so he could inherit her millions of dollars and get with his true love Mary Anna, who he has been carrying on an affair with all along. When Joyce mistakes delivery boy Nick for her husband Frank, she ends up having to kill him after he gets a little bit too sexually aggressive after she cock-blocks him upon realizing who he really is. Realizing that her half-sister was also in on the murder plot with her husband Frank, Joyce

also violently murders Mary Ann. Naturally, Joyce also has mixed feeling on recollecting her incestuous relationship with her father, who strips his clothes off and joins her in bed in one rather demented scene. One night, Joyce suffers a nightmarish hallucination where all the corpses of her victimizers turned victims come alive and attempt to coerce her into committing suicide, with her undead husband pleading, "Joyce, you don't want to live. Don't you want to join us?," in a rather darkly humorous scene. In fact, Joyce's father demonstrates how easy suicide is by slitting his throat with a straight razor in the same fashion that he did when he originally committed suicide. When Joyce manages to temporarily get over her hallucinated demons when her apartment begins burning down, she talks to her mother on the phone and declares regarding her family and class background, "I don't think I'm one of you" and "I just don't fit in." Barely managing to escape from her inflamed apartment, Joyce walks on the seedy streets of NYC while stumbling around in a conspicuously dazed and confused fashion just like the average bum in a strangely 'hopeful' and somewhat symbolic scene of the character finally managing to break free from her greedy evil little bourgeois family. Unfortunately, Joyce waited too long to get away from her kinfolk, as she may have otherwise preserved some of her sanity had she acted earlier. Strangely and somewhat irritatingly, the very final shot of *Deranged* is quite a perplexing one that puts into question everything that happened previously in the film.

Although it seems somewhat inexplicable since the protagonist goes completely insane in the end and kills the most important people in her life, there was apparently a sequel planned for *Deranged* but, for whatever reason, it failed to ever materialize. Notably, auteur Chuck Vincent would later direct the similarly underrated and genre-bending horror-thriller *Bad Blood* (1989) aka *A Woman Obsessed* starring porn veteran Georgina Spelvin (*The Devil in Miss Jones*, *Babylon Pink*) and child star turned exploitation diva Linda Blair (*The Exorcist*, *Savage Streets*) before he died of gay cancer two years later in 1991. In his talent for depicting murderously hysterical women in sometimes absurd and borderline campy fashions, Vincent is certainly a kindred spirit of cult auteur Curtis Harrington, whose work *Games* (1967) starring a very young James Caan as a man who plots to kill his opulent wife, as well as his later classic *Grande Dame Guignol* flicks, must have influenced the porn auteur. Additionally, Vincent's rather clever and sometimes semi-cryptic implementation of class and social critiques in *Deranged* deserves comparisons with classic darkly humorous Paul Bartel satires like *Eating Raoul* (1982) and *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* (1989). Of course, *Deranged* is a much darker and more depraved work than anything Harrington or Bartel ever directed, be it horror or otherwise. Essentially an exceedingly claustrophobic chamber piece that is isolated to one set for about 90-95% of the time that mixes the Artaudian theatrics of Rainer Werner Fassbinder with the misanthropic melodramatics and

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malevolent murder scenarios of gay gutter auteur Andy Milligan, Vincent's film is certainly 1980s psychological kitsch at its most cultivated. In a sense, it was most apt that the lead role of *Deranged* was played by a porn star because, aside from the fact that 'adult performers' tend to be 'damaged goods' in real-life, few 'legit' actresses would have the stamina, stoicism, and nasty knack for degradation that was needed to play a bat-shit crazy broad who covers an entire bathtub with blood after suffering a brutal miscarriage and has sex with her undead daddy as portrayed by an unclad hairy Jamie Gillis. Indeed, Veronica Hart may have taken countless cocks on screen, but she also proved she could outdo Catherine Deneuve in terms of abject celluloid besmirchment. Unquestionably, the greatest compliment I can pay Vincent's film is that it is one of only a handful of cinematic works where I found myself empathizing with the sort of hyper hysterically and irrevocably wayward woman who I otherwise would say would be a great candidate for euthanasia or at least some sort of feminist commune run by savagely sadistic bull-dykes who know how to pound a terribly perturbed pussy into place. Since the miscarriage rate for women that know they are pregnant is around 15-20%, I would not recommend any young pregnant chick to watch *Deranged*. In fact, expectant fathers probably should not watch the film either, including those sickos that want their partner to lose the baby, as it might make them feel a smidgen of guilt.

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KILL ZONE

Cirio H. Santiago (1993)

Donnie Yen is still a name I am not yet accustomed to fully. His cosmetically altered appearance (in an attempt to seal his position as an Asiatic icon) is becoming more and more synonymous with the term martial arts as I write this. From his performance in *Blade II* to his role in *Once Upon a Time in China II*, Donnie Yen has been the background actioner that you notice for his fluid-like movements but has never received a chance, until now. I enjoy many varieties of class, style, and variations in my martial arts films. So I turned to *Kill Zone* for a prominent detective thriller and was greeted with that plus the most beautifully choreographed action scenes of all time. *Kill Zone* is a pure of heart gift, plus it wasn't given to us thanks to the pockets of Quentin Tarantino. Sure, he has a decent taste in film yet, but he hasn't given us much other than vapid monologues about foreign cheeseburgers that cause my ear drums to wither. To drastically switch tones & face, *Kill Zone* is a swift kick in the good cop/bad cop routine's nuts. Unbiased and totally unforgiving, *Kill Zone* is so utterly merciless with its delivery that your sheets will be soaked with drool and tears. With an all star Hong Kong legends cast not limited to Simon Yam, Sammo Hung, and the aforementioned Donnie Yen, *Kill Zone* is an award winning bonanza of tender emotions, wonderful cinematography, and the single greatest action sequences only to be topped by Tony Jaa's *The Protector*. We'll just have to wait for *Ong Bak 2*. Simon Yam (Drama steered), Sammo Hung (Drama/action prone), and Donnie Yen (*Jesus Christ Action*) all star together in a unique environment of over-the-top situations of traumatic stress and vengeance of the opposite polarities; all this in a jaw-dropping lush city habitat. It's in films like these that make metropolises seem like ant observatories. Ballroom dancing is a strict art of slack-rigidity and precise movement. Every move must be swift and elegant. What better way to celebrate femininity? Where the art of dancing eventually ends, choreographed martial arts takes up the place to further inject masculinity and fierce primal instincts of combat into the mix, creating an art that is unspoken for and is ultimately better that way; a prose of physical contact. The contours of the body are suited for both offensive and defensive and combined, create rapid-fire visual poetry. Perhaps I'm looking beyond the dust and into the behind-the-camera scenes, but either way martial arts is a bodily art to be reckoned with. It's not only invigorating for the senses but lavishly exclusive for the masculinity in us all. Perhaps the most graceful albeit sadistic showcased in *Kill Zone* is the newcomer Wu Jing. The extension of villain plus arm & dagger comes as a surprise. You honestly can't help but be enthralled as this assassin does his deed towards characters we feel for. His pristine white uniform becomes stained with blood splatters as he murders crooked cops who have their own crooked lives. Are his actions justified? These detectives are however,

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as crooked as the syndicate they seek to dismantle. If you have yet to view *Kill Zone*, quit reading this paragraph for graphic imagery of a massive spoiler. In the final instance of the inevitable showdown when Donnie Yen uses a MMA flip to slam Sammo Hung into a pyramid of glass, a weary Donnie Yen celebrates with a glass of wine(?). Out of the blue, a charging Sammo Hung sprints out of incapacitation to throw Donnie Yen out of a umpteenth story window to fall to his death and coincidentally landing on the car holding Sammo Hung's wife and newborn child. This coincidence borders karma on a shocking extreme. Rather than duping you into an all-too familiar ending, *Kill Zone* goes above and beyond, satisfying cravings that even you never knew about. This is a film that will leave you mourning a marvelous character, all the more so due to his fantastical fate. *Kill Zone* is the definitive cop film for me. I can't view such films as *Dirty Harry* & co. anymore without regretting choosing said Clint Eastwood film over this Donnie Yen masterpiece. No move is anti-climactic and no action is too weak for this film. Cause and effect, my friends. Every action has a reaction. My action was watching this film as a blind buy; reaction? Total and utter satisfaction. *Kill Zone* is thrilling and beautiful to look at. As my mind's being invaded by thoughts of a beautiful woman, the thought of Zipperheads kicking each other is enough to take my mind off of the theory of love. Damn the finesse of new-age Hong Kong action.

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I CAN'T SLEEP

Claire Denis (1994)

Contrary to popular belief, there have been a number of prolific black serial killers, including the Grim Sleeper, Jake Bird, Anthony Sowell, Andrew Crawford, Lorenzo Gilyard, Wayne Williams, and Carl Eugene Watts (who killed upwards of 100 people), among countless others, and those are just examples of a couple Afro-Americans and do not include negroes from outside the United States. Also, contrary to popular belief, not all serial killers are intelligent as the rather prolific killing career of half-retarded gay drifter Ottis Toole (who was the influence for the character of the same first name in *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986)) demonstrates. Undoubtedly the French-German-Swiss co-production *J'ai pas sommeil* (1994) aka *I Can't Sleep* aka *I'm Not Sleepy* directed by French female auteur Claire Denis (*Trouble Every Day*, *White Material*) is notable for having the rare distinction of depicting a gay black serial killer who gets his kicks robbing and killing extremely old white and weak women so that he can fund his lavish hedonistic lifestyle. Indeed, loosely based on the true story of Martinique-born mulatto serial killer Thierry Paulin—a curious fellow who ultimately died in prison from AIDS before being convicted of killing upwards of 21 elderly French and Jewish women between 1984 and 1987 with the help of his Afro-Guianan lover Jean-Thierry Mathurin (who was released in early 2009 after serving 18 years)—Denis' film is ultimately a work that seemingly unwittingly depicts the cultural absurdity of post-colonial Parisian style multiculturalism. Vaguely Altman-esque in its sparsely plotted structure and inclusion a number of intersecting characters that dwell in the same area, *I Can't Sleep* is also notable for being, among other things, one of the most plodding and anticlimactic serial killer flickers ever made, which is no surprise considering it was directed by the same director that created the 'anti-horror' arthouse effort *Trouble Every Day* (2001), which pissed off tons of bloodthirsty horror fan-boys, who tend to have limited attention spans and very little tolerance for films that mix nuisance and atmosphere with blood and gore. Indeed, despite the fact that he is a queer negro that does drag shows and kills elderly white women so that he can rob them to fund decidedly decadent cocaine-fueled homo parties, the serial killer of Denis' film could not be more banal and patently pathetic. Co-penned by Denis' usual screenwriter Jean-Pol Fargeau (*Chocolat*, *Pola X*), *I Can't Sleep* is a truly 'multicultural' movie in the sense that virtually every single character is foreign and lives in their own little ethnic realm inside of Paris, with the main characters being Slavs and negroes (and the latter being from ex-colonies). In fact, 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity' in general are depicted as factors that lead to the killer's murder campaign, as he is a gay negro who is rejected by both his black family and the mainstream white world, thus he is easily able to emotionally detach himself from his aberrant actions. Ironically, some of the people

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that the killer is most friendly with are old white women, yet his sense of social alienation is so strong and innate, and his resentment and boredom with life is so overwhelming, that he is able to carry out the killing with the ease that most people would put towards using the bathroom or checking their mailbox. A film that, although about 110 minutes long, does not reveal the identity of the killer(s) or a depiction of them carrying out their crimes until an entire hour has passed, *I Can't Sleep* is quite possibly the least thrilling and most anti-climatic serial killer flick that has ever been made yet, in a sort of cryptic arthouse way, it ultimately gives more insights into what might lead someone to committing such ungodly crimes than both David Fincher's *SE7EN* (1995) and *Zodiac* (2007) combined. Of course, then again, the film has about as much to do with serial killers as Altman's *Nashville* (1975) has to do with country music.

I Can't Sleep begins quite inexplicably with a scene that director Denis has described as having no particular narrative function where two police officers flying in a helicopter over Paris laugh hysterically for a reason that is never made apparent to the viewer. Admittedly, I like to think the cops are laughing about the fact that Paris has become a pathetic multicultural joke, as gay cross-dressing negroes now roam the streets and slaughter old grannies. From there, the viewer is introduced to the strikingly beautiful young quasi-protagonist Daiga (Yekaterina Golubeva of Leos Carax's *Pola X* (1999) and Bruno Dumont's *Twentynine Palms* (2003)), who has driven from her homeland Lithuania in an ancient Soviet car to Paris where she plans to start a new life, though she does not have any specific plans aside from meeting up with her long lost great-aunt. Almost immediately upon arriving in Paris, Daiga is hassled by two cops for parking in an illegal spot, so she reacts by absurdly saying to one of the officers in Lithuanian, "Clam up, seal dick," thus indicating that she is a tough little bitch who does not take shit from anyone, especially men, who she seems to have a special feeling of contempt for as her subsequent behavior also surely demonstrates. As Daiga heard on her car radio upon first driving into Paris, a serial killer dubbed by the media as the "Granny Killer" has been strangling to death and robbing elderly women in their apartments. As depicted various times throughout the film, Daiga constantly hears about the killer via newspaper and radio but she seems like she could not care less, at least until she figures out who the grandma strangler is later by accident and decides to use her secret knowledge to her benefit. Ironically, the serial killer, Camille Moisson (unknown actor Richard Courcet in his first role)—a young gay negro that bears a strikingly resemblance to Jean-Michel Basquiat who is from the Caribbean island of Martinique—lives in a hotel that is flooded with elderly women who he gets along with, thus no one ever suspects he is the killer.

Largely owing to the fact that it focuses on no less than three different groups of people that somewhat overlap, *I Can't Sleep* has a somewhat sloppy and incoherent storyline, at least at first. A good portion of the film takes place at a

third rate hotel owned by a fairly masculine old woman with white hair named Ninon (Line Renaud), who mainly has Slavic tenants and who teaches other elderly woman karate in her free time so that they can protect themselves from the “Granny Killer” while totally oblivious to the fact that he is actually living in her building. Daïga arrives at Ninon’s hotel to reunite with her great-aunt Mina (Irina Grjebina), but when she gets there the old woman does not even recognize her. Of course, as a woman that proudly states, “We stand together. We help one another. We’re Slavs,” Mina instantly embraces Daïga when she informs her that she is her great-niece. In another subplot, the viewer encounters Camille’s rampantly heterosexual brother named Theo (Alex Descas of Raoul Peck’s *Lumumba* (2000) and Jim Jarmusch’s *The Limits of Control* (2009)), who seems to resent his homo brother and has a toddler mulatto son named ‘Little Harry’ (Ira Mandella-Paul) with an attractive, if not all that sane, white woman named Mona (Béatrice Dalle of Jean-Jacques Beineix’s *Betty Blue* (1986) and Michael Haneke’s *Time of the Wolf* (2003)). As man that makes a living building bookshelves and other pieces of furniture for ungrateful middle-class folks that try to scam him out of money, Theo seems to hate white frogs, especially of the bourgeois sort, and wants to move back to Martinique with his girlfriend and their son, but Mona does not want to go, as she could not stomach living in a third world hellhole as she is a spoiled French girl and could not fathom living such a primitive lifestyle. Camille irregularly visits Theo mainly to see his nephew Harry, but it is quite apparent that the two brothers are more or less strangers who have nothing in common aside from the same bloodline. Indeed, Theo hardly suspects that his little bro is the infamous “Granny Killer,” as he wants nothing to do with his brother’s personal life, which involves decadent drag performances at gay bars and S&M and bondage photo shoots, among other things that would shame most heterosexual men.

As a chick that goes to all-male porn theaters just to have a laugh while in a room full of many horny and assumedly masturbating men, Daïga is a somewhat strange little lady who seems to think rather lowly of members of the opposite sex. While her great-aunt manages to land her a job with Ninon cleaning rooms at the hotel, Daïga was hoping to find much more dignified employment with a middle-aged theater director named Abel (played by French hack director Patrick Grandperret in a rare acting role), who invites her on a date and assumedly fucks her, but never gives her a job as he promised he would, which naturally infuriates the character. When Daïga later spots Abel driving around in a fancy convertible, she decides to chase him down and violently crash into him even though she has two passengers in her car, including a Frenchman that she does not know who wants to buy her automobile and a fat and exceedingly effete Slavic queen named Vassili (Tolsty of John Frankenheimer’s *Ronin* (1998)). While Vassili and the Frenchman tell the police that Daïga intentionally crashed into his car, Abel denies it and tells them it is an accident because he knows that

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he literally and figuratively screwed over the young Slavic babe by not giving her a job like he promised he would. While waiting at the police station after the crash, Daïga notices a police sketch of Camille and his white boyfriend Raphaël (Vincent Dupont of Jaco Van Dormael's *Mr. Nobody* (2009)) and realizes that they are the so-called "Granny Killer." Of course, as someone that has no allegiance to Paris or elderly French women, Daïga decides to keep her rather valuable information to herself, as she has big plans that will help her get back to her Slavic homeland.

Indeed, Camille and his bald white beau Raphaël like to gang up on old defenseless women and kill them, with the latter using his charms to trick the victims into letting them into their homes and the former eventually strangling them to death with his bare hands. Due to being a fairly lackluster killer who puts less passion into his murders than he does into taking a leak or putting on a pair of fishnet stockings (which he regularly wears!), Camille forgets to confirm that one of his victims is dead upon strangling her and she ultimately survives and provides his and Raphaël's physical description to the police. Rather absurdly, aside from a vague sexual dynamic that is only hinted at (the two gay boys attempt to murder one old woman after getting into a fight and making up), the only reason Camille and his boy toy rob and kill old women is so that they can pretend to be rich and opulent and show off to their wealthy fag friends by buying them expensive dinners. Indeed, one of their friends is a very Aryan-looking blond fag (Laurent Grévill) that works as a physician and when Camille buys him an expensive dinner, the good doctor pays him back by bugging his brown bunghole. While the doctor does have enough sense to wash off his prick after penetrating Camille's man-cunt, he has no clue that the young negro has recently contracted AIDS (ironically, Camille sees the doctor at the hospital and waves to him the same day he finds out that he has contracted gay cancer). Indeed, not unlike French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, Camille seems to have a sadistic desire to infect as many men with AIDS as possible, as he tells none of his sexual partners about his rather deadly disease before being bugged by them. Meanwhile, Theo buys his family plane tickets for Martinique, so his girlfriend Mona conspires to steal their son little Harry and run away, as she refuses to leave Paris and certainly will not allow her son to be taken to another country without her. Rather curiously, after realizing that Camille is the killer, Daïga decides to stalk him and eventually hangs out with him at a diner. In a sick sort of way, Daïga and Camille seem to be sort of kindred spirits who are united in their mutual social alienation from both their foreign subculture and the Paris populous in general. Ultimately, Camille is caught by the police while walking home one night after watching his brother play violin with a band at a club. While Camille is being arrested, Daïga breaks into his room and steals that money that he has stolen from his victims. Somewhat curiously, Camille has stuffed all the cash in a trash bag as if it is totally meaningless and

worthless to him, thus highlighting the senselessness of his savage crimes. After Camille is arrested, one of the cops mocks him by stating, "Camille...That's a girl's name." When the police interview Theo about his brother, he has no problem admitting to the white cop, "My brother's a stranger to me, just like you." As for Camille's mother, she completely loses it and says to her son while he is being hauled away in handcuffs, "I should have killed you when you left my belly. I'm the one who's dead! Why did I give birth to you, Satan? Why did you do this to me? You were such a good little boy. . .So kind." In the end, the film comes full circle, with Daïga driving out of Paris just as she once drove in at the beginning of the film.

Ultimately, *I Can't Sleep* is a sort of anti-film noir that breaks virtually all of the aesthetic and especially thematic conventions of the American quasi-genre. Indeed, aside from the fact that the police are mostly faceless misanthropic pricks who are hardly portrayed as heroes (notably, one of the cops says to Daïga, "Human beings are animals"), Denis' film dares to force the viewer to empathize with the killer, who is not revealed to be killer until about an hour into the film for that very reason, as if to trick the unwitting filmgoer into sympathizing with his pathetic plight as a cross-dressing colored boy who enjoys getting manhandled by dapper white dudes. Of course, the film also lacks a femme fatale, at least in the conventional sense, as while Daïga gets to know Camille in a dubious sort of way and then robs him of his money, she never conspired to use her carnal goods to turn a good guy bad like your typical scheming film noir whore. In fact, the most sinister force in *I Can't Sleep* is indubitably the city of Paris itself, which is depicted as inspiring the sort of social alienation that leads to some sorry sod like Camille becoming a serial killer and Daïga becoming a thief. While various newspapers are featured throughout the film mentioning the killings, none of the characters really seem to be in any way affected by the granny slayings, hence why it was so easy for Camille and his cocksucking comrade to get away with their dastardly deeds for so long. In that sense, the film depicts a much darker world than Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), which features a society that is plagued by an economic depression and rampant criminality where even career criminals, gangsters, and streetwalkers go to the effort of collectively hunting down and capturing the serial killer. While I am not exactly sure of Denis' intent and seriously doubt that she has any real nationalistic proclivities, *I Can't Sleep* certainly depicts multiculturalism as a sort of corrosive and malignant force of the contra nature and socially autistic sort that inspires apathy, social alienation, and criminality, especially when various different groups are living in their own hermetic worlds and thus feel no loyalty to their neighbors, let alone their city or country. Of course, being an exceedingly effete negro homo, Camille makes for the ultimate socially alienated individual, hence his lack of apathy when it comes to dispatching other human beings, whose lives and emotions mean nothing to him. When Camille's mother says to him "You

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were such a good little boy. . .So kind” after being caught, his sense of alienation is only all the more highlighted. Of course, as a homesick negro who incessantly dreams of going to Martinique, Camille’s brother Theo also symbolizes one of the many problems with multiculturalism and his mulatto son Harry is symbolic of one of the more extreme results of such an abstract and artificial ‘postmodern’ society, as he is a bastard boy that belongs to no race, culture, or country. I do not think it is a coincidence that Camille develops a special affection for his nephew Harry, as he seems to remind him of himself at a younger age due to his precarious place in the world (notably, unlike the fictional character Camille, the real-life serial killer he was based on, Thierry Paulin, was a mulatto). Of course, like Denis’ greatest works, ranging from her first film *Chocolat* (1988) to later great works like *White Material* (2009), *I Can’t Sleep* demonstrates in a fairly socially intricate and refreshingly idiosyncratic way that the French are now paying dearly for their colonial days. In that regard, I think it is quite fitting that there is a shot in the film of a newspaper reading, “France is afraid,” as the country will inevitably be consumed by its so-called multicultural population in a couple decades as events like the Charlie Hebdo shooting hint at. Indeed, the ‘culturally enriched’ Paris depicted in *I Can’t Sleep* ultimately seems like a far less depressing time, as one homo mulatto granny-slayer is nothing compared to a large Occidental city with a large medieval-minded Muslim population, or as director Denis once stated herself in reference to her film, “...a society and a city work best when [its] links are tight. For me, life is a story of connections – without them society will destruct.” Of course, a society that simultaneously endorses both the growth of a Muslim population and virtually every form of sexual debauchery, especially homosexuality, is nothing short of schizophrenic and ultimately suicidal.

-Ty E

BEAU TRAVAIL

Claire Denis (1999)

Since I have been on a strange and completely unexpected Claire Denis (*Chocolat*, *Les salauds* aka *Bastards*) kick lately that has led me to the natural conclusion the fairly unconventional auteur is easily the greatest living female filmmaker, I decided that I would stoically bite the bullet and finally watch the film that has been described as her magnum opus, which is, thematically speaking, not exactly the sort of film that one would expect to be directed by a woman yet, at the same time, it could have only been directed by a member of the fairer sex who has an unabashed love of hard yet sculpted male bodies as many of the director's other works demonstrates. Indeed, *Beau Travail* (1999) aka *Good Work* is undoubtedly a somewhat curious masterpiece for a heterosexual female as it tells the somewhat subtle and even esoteric story of a French Foreign Legion master sergeant of the latent homosexual sort who is fanatically obsessed with his fellow latent homosexual commander and decides to wage a personal war against a new young soldier who catches the attention of his forbidden love object. Of course, as her work *J'ai pas sommeil* (1994) aka *I Can't Sleep* especially demonstrates in a refreshingly uncompromising way, Denis seems to almost have a fetish for pretty poofs and never shies away from male nudity and glorifying the male body, so I was not all that surprised that she would direct a largely choreographed work where muscles and testosterone take center stage to the point where most of the young legionnaires do not even have credited names. While Denis' work certainly tells a story and a somewhat arcane one at that, the film is largely populated by what one might describe as living statues in the form of young Adonis-like soldiers who incessantly expose their bodies for both the protagonist and the viewer. Unquestionably *Beau Travail* is the greatest film on macho militarized homosexuality since Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1982 swansong *Querelle* (incidentally, Fassbinder included a quasi-S&M-oriented Legionnaire scene in his early masterpiece *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971)), as it manages to express testosterone-driven homoerotic passion in an innately subtle and nuanced fashion without depicting a single scene of gratuitous buggery or even homo kissing. To some extent, the film feels like a deconstructed western where all the savages have been killed or otherwise pacified and where the John Wayne character has created an imaginary enemy in his mind because said enemy has caught the attention of the old cowboy he loves most. Of course, Denis' film is also like a French arthouse take on the underrated closest queen commando classic *The Sergeant* (1968) starring Rod Steiger and to a lesser extent John Huston's all the more underappreciated and reasonably bizarre Carson McCullers adaptation *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967) starring Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor. Aside from its strong crypto-cocksucker theme, *Beau Travail* is also loosely based on Herman Melville's posthumously released unfinished 1888 novella *Billy Budd*

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and makes reference to Jean-Luc Godard's once banned work *Le Petit Soldat* (1963) aka *The Little Soldier*, with Michel Subor playing a character with the same exact name as that of the character he portrayed in the pro-commie anti-Algerian War flick. Of course, as one can expect from a Claire Denis flick, *Beau Travail* features certain racial and political themes about the legacy of colonialism, like the patent absurdity of attempting to mold negroes into 'Frenchmen' so that they will persecute their own black brothers in the pursuit of promoting the three-headed dragon of "Liberté, égalité, fraternité." Denis' film is also notable for featuring what I would certainly describe as one of the greatest and strangely uplifting endings in cinema history. Indeed, after watching Denis' film, you will never look at a suicidal sod or middle-aged military officer the same way again.

It would be a lie to not immediately reveal in a review of *Beau Travail* that the film is largely comprised of long scenes featuring healthy young soldiers with toned bodies doing redundant military drills and exercises in almost ethereally scenic locations. The 'gay gaze' that the filmgoer is subjected to is that of introverted protagonist Galoup (Denis Lavant of *Leos Carax* of *The Lovers on the Bridge* (1991) and *Holy Motors* (2012)), who is a master sergeant in the French Foreign Legion that secretly lusts after his elderly yet surely elegant commander Bruno Forestier (Michel Subor). As Galoup lovingly states regarding Forestier in a way that hints at his love interest's repressed homosexuality, "Bruno. Bruno Forestier. I feel so alone when I think of my superior. I respected him a lot. I liked him. My Commandant. A rumor dogged him after the Algerian war. He never confided in me. He said he was a man without ideals, a soldier without ambition. I admired him without knowing why. He knew I was a perfect Legionnaire, and he didn't give a damn. Bruno. Bruno Forestier." Indeed, like Forestier, Galoup uses his military authority as a reason to sit on his ass and somewhat creepily stare at young and buff men all day long. In fact, Galoup and Forestier's scopophilia is so obscenely obsessive that they actually delight in watching their men do emasculating things like ironing their uniforms. As Forestier proudly says while shamelessly gawking at his soldiers, "We're taught elegance in and under our uniforms. Perfect creases are part of this elegance." A non-linear work that is partially set in Marseille after the protagonist has been forced to leave the French Foreign Legion, *Beau Travail* centers around Galoup narrating the story about his long and undying unrequited love for Forestier led him to murderous jealousy when a young recruit named Gilles Sentain (Grégoire Colin of *Milcho Manchevski's Before the Rain* (1994) and Denis' *Nenette and Boni* (1996)) joined the Legion and soon caught the Commander's attention and affection. Galoup even has a sense of foreboding upon first seeing 22-year-old twink Sentain for the first time, or as he reflects via narration in a fashion that makes him seem somewhat like a pathetic paranoiac, "One day, a plane from France dropped off some new guys. I noticed one of them that stuck out. He was thin, distant. He had no reason to be with us in the Legion. That's what

I thought. I felt something vague and menacing take hold of me.” Of course, little did poor Galoup realize that Sentain would ultimately become the most beloved and soldiery member of his little frog brigade.

The French Foreign Legion is in Djiboutis and while there are plenty of young colored gals that are more than willing to fuck for a candy bar, the soldiers spend most of their free time with each other, with Sentain at the lead as a natural alpha who has great empathy and loyalty for his compatriots. While talking to a negro driver named Ali during a night in Ramadan, Forestier remarks regarding his soldiers, “My bastards are good kids” and then proceeds to describe himself as a sort of surrogate father to the soldiers. When Ali rhetorically remarks, “Guess how much a colored girl costs here,” Forestier jokingly yet somewhat awkwardly replies, “You’re a pain, Ali,” adding, “If it weren’t for fornication and blood, we wouldn’t be here. That’s all.” Meanwhile, Galoup becomes increasingly agitated about the new recruit, complaining to himself like a little bitch, “Sentain seduced everyone. He attracted stares. People were drawn to his calmness, his openness. Deep down, I felt a sort of rancor, a rage brimming. I was jealous.” Of course, Galoup is as loyal to Forestier as ever as demonstrated by remarks like, “Here I am, Commandant, like a watchdog, looking after your flock,” but that ultimately changes when the protagonist dares to mess with the Commandant’s favorite ‘son.’ When a freak helicopter accident happens that kills a fellow named “Pierre, the Corsican,” both Forestier and the troops develop a seemingly impenetrable respect for Sentain, who manages to save another Legionnaire (played by blond beast Nicolas Duvauchelle of *A l’intérieur* (2007) aka *Inside* and Denis’ *White Material* (2009)) from drowning, with Galoup somberly complaining, “It was then that Sentain’s heroism came to the fore.” When Galoup attempts convince Forestier that Sentain is a traitor and that “he has something up his sleeve,” Forestier, who has developed a deep passion for the young mensch, becomes agitated and gives the protagonist a firm warning not to fuck with his best boy by stating, “Careful what you’re saying. Backstabbing isn’t in the Legion’s honor code.” Naturally, it is really Galoup who has something up his sleeve and he will do anything to take down Sentain, including potentially causing him to suffer a slow and painful death. Despite Galoup’s jealousy of him, Sentain is actually an orphan from a humble background whose appearance abandoned him as an infant. Notably, when Sentain informs Forestier that he was “found in a stairwell,” the old queen Commandant expresses his fondness for him by replying, “Found? Fuck! At least it was a nice find.” Of course, Forestier never expresses such affection for Galoup, who might as well be a ghost as his presence his negligible at best.

Ultimately, Galoup decides to attack Sentain by persecuting his comrades in the hope that he will go over the edge and attack the protagonist, who plans to dish out the ultimate punishment to the poor unwitting orphan boy. Indeed, Galoup harshly punishes a negro soldier for “abandoning his post” after he goes

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to pray with some fellow black Muslims. When Sentain dares to attempt to give the punished negro a cup of water while he is tediously digging ditches as punishment to the point where his hands are bleeding profusely, Galoup knocks the cup out of his hand and stares at him in a threatening fashion. When he complains, "That's unfair, sir" and Galoup slaps him, Sentain instinctively punches him in the face, which is exactly what the protagonist wanted him to do as it gives him the opportunity to use punishment against him as a means to liquidate him. As punishment, Galoup drives Sentain many miles away to the middle of a desert where the young Legionnaire is left with nothing but a backpack and a compass and is forced to find his way back to the base. While Sentain acts passive-aggressively towards Galoup upon being dropped off by remarking, "I'll see you soon, sir. Says hello to Commandant for me," he does not realize that the protagonist has something up his sleeve. Of course, before dropping Sentain off, Galoup broke his compass so that he cannot find his way back, with the protagonist even bragging to himself like a militaristic mad scientist regarding his sinister scheme before hatching it, "You'll be sorry, Sentain, believe me. I see what you're up to. We don't need guys like you here. You're in my power. I will destroy you. I'll set my trap. The compass." Naturally, Sentain soon gets lost and begins rotting in the desert while his unit assumes that he has fled to Ethiopia, but Galoup is soon found out when the Legionnaires go to a tribal trading post and a negro soldier named Tierno notices that a young black boy is selling the MIA soldier's broken compass, which was found on a salty white beach. When Forestier summons Sentain to punish him upon learning of his treacherous behavior, the protagonist says to him, "Admit you hate me for it," but he responds simply by stating in a stoic fashion, "You know the rules. You knew what you were in for. You have no choice now. Repatriation for disciplinary reasons. Court-martial. You'll be convicted. Your Legion days are over. All over," thus leaving the disgraced master sergeant to feel all the more rejected by the man he loves most.

While Sentain is found half-death and unconscious by some tribesmen, his fate is questionable and it is never revealed whether or not he reunites with his Legionnaire comrades. Before going back to France, Galoup hangs out with a young negress that he seems to think is his girlfriend as demonstrated by the fact he buys her gifts and is featured lying shirtless in her bed, though he is never actually depicted even so much as kissing her, let alone pounding her brown puss. With nothing left to live for and becoming a pathetic and craven disgrace in the eyes of his one true love, who he will probably never see again, Galoup decides to end it all and kill himself upon moving back to Marseilles. Indeed, upon obsessively making his bed like a true anally retentive queen as if it matters what his bed looks like after blowing out his brains all over the sheets, Galoup lies down (notably, with a tattoo on his arm reading "Serve the good cause and die" being shown prominently shown) and prepares to blow his brains out. In a si-

multaneously hilarious yet strangely humorous twist ending, Galoup is depicted smoking a fag like a suave fag in a dark club and then dancing by himself to the revoltingly kitschy song "The Rhythm of the Night" by Corona in a scene that the seems to reflect the character's triumph of loneliness and, as Denis one described in an interview, his figurative, "dance between life and death."

In his essay on the film entitled *Unsatisfied Men: Beau travail*, Jonathan Rosenbaum—probably the only living American film critic whose opinion I respect to some degree—notably wrote, "I know it sounds fancy to say this, but the difference between Claire Denis's early work and *BEAU TRAVAIL* is quite simply the difference between making movies and making cinema." While I do not totally argue with Rosenbaum's remark as I think he underrates and/or is confused by a lot of her other work (notably, he complained in the same essay that Denis' film *I Can't Sleep* discomforted him because he felt it, "seemed to wallow in a kind of professional morbidity"), I have to admit that *Beau Travail* is indubitably Denis' most innately immaculate, effortlessly poetic, and emotionally penetrating work to date. Surely, one will not find another film that combines the 'body worship' based homoeroticism of Leni Riefenstahl, the tragic and self-loathing yet macho and militaristic faggotry of Yukio Mishima, the pathological moodiness and landscape lyricism of Michelangelo Antonioni, darkly erotic avant-garde choreography in the spirit of *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* (1989), and the intricate sexual and racial critiques of Fassbinder. Admittedly, I would usually question that intent of any heterosexual woman that dares to direct either a war film or virtually any sort of cinematic work about male homosexuality yet, like with virtually all of her films, *Beau Travail* demonstrates that Denis is simply intrigued by and can relate to idiosyncratic people, especially of the hopelessly lonely sort, and can find something to like and loathe about all sorts of people, even latent cocksuckers of the lovelorn sort who act murderously malicious as a result of becoming jealous like petty teenage girls. While the film undoubtedly features antiwar themes and mocks militarism in general, Denis' work is not like your average Hollywood war movie and thankfully does not feature sappy and emotionally manipulative sentimentalism like a big tough guy crying like a little girl after seeing his friend's head blow off. Instead, Denis seems to argue that the military is best run by a bunch of thoroughly sexually repressed closet queens who will accept nothing less than an all-male environment full of super spiffy and well ironed uniforms and bulging biceps, among other things.

Unquestionably Denis is a master of eloquent doom and gloom and in nowhere is this more apparent than in *Beau Travail*, which notably ultimately ends on a startlingly bittersweet and even joyous moment where a perennially lonely self-loathing fag's self-slaughter is curiously celebrated as the last big act of a man that lived inwards and had a complete and utter incapacity to express himself outwards. In that sense, the film acts as a sort of antidote to the pseudo-

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arthouse posturing of fashion designer turned would-be-auteur Tom Ford's obscenely overrated debut *A Single Man* (2009). Judging by her work, I can only assume that Denis is a lover of lonely losers and her obsession with this quasi-archetype is one of the reasons why *Beau Travail* is so particularly potent as she was able to make viewers of various stripes be able to identify with one of the most curious of men. When it comes down to it, *Beau Travail* is the ultimate tragic *Männerbünde* romance and a work that could be used as a recruitment film for a sort of neo-brownshirt *Sturmabteilung*, as it demonstrates that staying in the closet can lead to the most major of male sins, including treachery and dishonor, among other less than soldierly qualities that are more oftentimes associated with the feminine realm. Notably, Fassbinder once stated that one of the reasons that Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) was so important to him was because it inspired him to totally embrace his homosexuality lest he turn into an evil mensch as a result of repression like the antagonist Reinhold Hoffmann of the book, or as the auteur wrote himself, "...this reading helped me to admit to my tormenting fears, which were almost paralyzing me, my fear of my homosexual longings, to give in to my suppressed needs; this reading helped me avoid becoming completely and utterly sick, dishonest, desperate; it helped me avoid going under." Of course, the protagonist of Denis' film pays the ultimate price as a result of being dishonest with both himself and his comrades. Maybe if the protagonist of Denis' film had seen Fassbinder's 15½ hour *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) adaptation, he might have avoided the French Foreign Legion altogether and simply started frequenting a local cruising spot. Personally, after watching *Beau Travail* and seeing all the various African women sporting exceedingly flamboyant tribal sheets and lurking at kitschy clubs where absolutely abhorrent Afro-pop is incessantly vomited out of the speakers, I can see why homosexuality might become prevalent among the Legionnaires. Of course, as *Beau Travail* makes quite clear, Frenchmen probably should not be in Africa in the first place but of course, as the post-poetry life of Arthur Rimbaud and countless other famous frog poets and artists demonstrates, the Dark Continent and third world in general has always been a homo haven of sorts where white abersexuals who were not able to escape from their minds and sexual desires were at least able to physically escape to a place where bourgeois mores were nonexistent. Indeed, while I do not think Denis' film blames crypto-homos for colonialism, it does make it quite clear that it was restless loners, rejects, and orphans were more likely to leave their homeland behind and travel to strange lands where the native women might lead an otherwise heterosexual man to homosexuality. After all, there are not many black women that can say that they are as pretty as *Beau Travail* star Nicolas Duvauchelle, which is something Denis seems to agree with as her casting of him in various sexual and unclad roles fairly clearly demonstrates.

-Ty E

TROUBLE EVERY DAY

Claire Denis (2001)

As probably one of only a handful of people in the world that simultaneously likes Vincent Gallo, Claire Denis, arthouse cinema, splatter trash, and dark erotica, I felt it was about time that I watch the somewhat curious French-German-Japanese co-production *Trouble Every Day* (2001). A sort of arthouse 'anti-horror' flick where sex, especially of the feminine sort, is depicted as something monstrous and even cannibalistic, Denis' flick might as well have been co-directed by Mr. Gallo as his perturbingly peculiar presence permeates throughout the film. Indeed, if the weirdo self-loathing wop realms created by Gallo in *Buffalo '66* (1998) and *The Brown Bunny* (2003) somehow managed to haunt the most white collar sections of Paris, it might begin to describe an unnervingly eccentric and strangely erotic film like *Trouble Every Day* where both blood and cum practically drip down the screen. Notably, Gallo previously starred in Denis' rarely seen made-for-TV movie *US Go Home* (1994) and *Nénette et Boni* (1996) aka *Nenette and Boni* (1996) and like in the previous two films, the actor/director has the last name 'Brown,' which seems to be both his favorite surname and color as his fairly eclectic career demonstrates. Like Gallo's own films, *Trouble Every Day* is also consumed with the themes of male sexual neuroticism and female carnal carnivorousness, albeit depicted in an aberrantly allegorical way that uses and abuses conventions of horror cinema to the point where it makes one wonder whether or not Denis has any real serious respect for the genre at all. Undoubtedly, Denis' film feels like a horror flick created by someone with nil interest or knowledge of the genre aside from possibly French fantastique filmmakers like Jean Rollin and Jean-Pierre Bouyxou and autistic surrealists like Alain Robbe-Grillet. The story of a somewhat young American doctor of the proudly materialistic and sexually frustrated sort who takes his new pixie ditz wife to Paris for their honeymoon with the dubious ulterior motive of attempting to hunt down his ex-partner as well as one true love, who is a highly visceral quasi-vampire of sorts that suffers from a mysterious illness that compels her to seduce and cannibalize horny men of all types, *Trouble Every Day* is ultimately a tale about the insatiable sexual appetite of the fairer sex and the great and oftentimes pathetic lengths men will go to try in vain to satisfy said insatiable sexual appetite. A work where Gallo savagely kills a cutesy frog girl by literally eating out her pussy to the point where his signature mustache and goatee are soaked in more blood than gash gravy, Denis' film notably links the sexual to the violent and bestial in such a seamless way that it is hard to discern when a character is merely sharing their carnal knowledge with their sexual partner or viciously feasting on their flesh. Indeed, Denis does the seemingly impossible by taking the themes popularized by Jess Franco in films like *La comtesse noire* (1975) aka *Female Vampire* and giving them a nice pristine polish of artistic le-

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gitimacy that still manages to bite. Of course, what better casting for such a film than Gallo as a symbol of male sexual insecurity and feral-like femme fatale Béatrice Dalle as symbol of raw and visceral female sexual savagery. Undoubtedly, if nothing else, *Trouble Every Day* is a film that brings new mean to the age-old French phrase for an orgasm, “La petite mort” (aka “the little death”).

After some truly picturesque shot of Paris during the blue hour, *Trouble Every Day* introduces vampiric femme fatale Coré (Béatrice Dalle of Jean-Jacques Beineix’s *Betty Blue* (1986) and Jim Jarmusch’s *Night on Earth* (1991)) as she lures a slightly overweight trucker into her particularly pernicious path of deadly debauchery. When we see Coré again, she is kneeling in a field with blood on her face in close proximity to the seemingly smiling corpse of the trucker, who the deleterious dame fed upon after seducing him. No longer in control of her own actions as a results of contracting some sort of unexplained virus or disease that makes her act like a rabid erotomanical vampire, Coré is watched over by her unconventionally cuckolded negro husband Dr. Léo Semenau (Denis regular Alex Descas of Raoul Peck’s *Lumumba* (2000) and Jim Jarmusch’s *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003)), who takes it upon himself to bury the corpses of his wife’s exclusively white victims and clean the blood off her body after she has finished feeding. Once one of France’s most respected and successful neuroscientists, Léo had to quit the powerful pharmacology company that he worked for and now works as a lowly general practitioner so that he can take care of his wife and dedicate much of his time to attempting to find a cure to her curious affliction. When away at work, Léo keeps Coré boarded up in a room so that she cannot get outside and use her ravishing beauty to ravage unsuspecting men. Unbeknownst to Léo, two young men have been stalking his house and plan to vaginally plunder his wife, which she is literally begging for as demonstrated by the fact she tries break off screens that cover her windows when she sees the guys coming near him home. To make matters worse, Léo has to refrain from sexual acts with his bloodthirsty wife lest he become one of her victims.

Newlyweds Dr. Shane (Vincent Gallo) and June Brown (Tricia Vessey of Jarmusch’s *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999)) are in a plane headed to Paris to ostensibly celebrate their honeymoon, or so the less than good doctor wants his young and dumb spouse to think. Indeed, while he might be taking his wife on a fancy dream vacation to a part of Paris that is not festering with third world rabble, Shane’s real motivation to go to the City of Light is to reconnect with his ex-partner Léo and especially his assumed ex-lover Coré. While in the plane bathroom, Shane has grotesque vision of his wife June completely covered in blood, thus hinting that he might suffer the same malefic malady as Coré and is afraid that he might do something like munch on his new wife’s mammary glands, hence why he will refrain from carrying out coitus with her for the remainder of the film. Indeed, instead of royally fucking his young and fertile wife upon checking into their room at their luxury Parisian hotel, Shane

pathetically lies on his stomach on a bed and masturbates in a lackluster fashion while having a melancholic expression on his face. When Shane finds his wife bathing in their hotel room bathtub, he stares at her pussy in an impotent fashion and strangely asks her “Are you frightened?” as if he has reason to believe that she thinks he might rape her or something. Meanwhile, Shane begins regularly going by a super sterile corporate lab that Léo used to work at before disappearing where people dissect brains, but everyone there refuses to talk to him. When Shane finally gets the opportunity to talk to one of the scientists, he is told regarding Léo, “He just left without a word or trace. He just up and left. We haven’t heard from him since.” In a random flashback scene, Shane talks to a bitchy French scientist who accuses him of loving Coré, to which he replies, “It’s not the right word for it. I was attracted to her. She was so stubborn,” thus indicating the two might share a more ‘unconventional bond.’ When the female scientist attempts to agitate Shane by asking him his thoughts on loyalty and betrayal and he defensively responds, “You were not there. You don’t know what happened. You don’t know me. You’re wrong,” she proceeds to accuse him of stealing both Léo’s research and lover, as well as experimenting on humans, and then throws him out of the lab.

In a key scene in the film that seems somewhat insignificant, Shane goes on the internet and looks at a scientific website that states regarding Léo’s research, “These samples and analyses should in the near future help us to focus our pharmacological research into nervous diseases, pain, mental diseases, and problems of the libido.” Although never made totally clear, it can be probably assumed that Coré’s lethally lecherous behavior is the result of taking sort of experimental drug that did a little more than just increase her lust for cock, hence her hubby’s fanatical obsession with finding her a cure. Meanwhile, Coré states to her husband while he is giving her an intimate post-murder sponge bath, “I don’t want to wait anymore. I want to die.” Notably, in various lighthearted scenes where director Denis seems to almost mock the horror genre, Shane does parodies of both the Frankenstein monster and Dracula while going on a happy stroll with his wife around Paris, though he is later revealed to be a monster that is much more heinous than those classic horror figures. After at least one previous failed attempt, two young men, Erwan (Nicolas Duvauchois of Denis’ *White Material* (2009)) and Ludo (Raphaël Neal), manage to break into Léo’s house to get to Coré, who practically begged them to let her out before by banging on a window screen like a wild animal. After destroying some of the beakers and nonsensically swallowing some of the pills that they find in Léo’s home lab, Ludo roams around the house while Erwan searches for Coré, who he finds behind a boarded up doorway and who he instantly becomes entranced with, passionately kissing and touching her through the cracks between the boards. Like a wild beast full of rabid lust, Erwan wastes no time ripping off the boards off the door and proceeds to violently kiss and caress Coré, but the fun does not last long as

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the ferocious feral lady soon begins biting off pieces of flesh from his pretty boy face. When pansy Ludo hears his friend's strange groans of agonizing pain, he decides the best thing to do is run away like a petrified coward. Like a pussycat, Coré sadistically plays with Erwan before killing him by fiddling with his dangling flesh and softly rubbing her blood-soaked face against his in perniciously playful fashion. Ultimately, Coré murders Erwan and uses his blood to finger paint a wall in her home in a way that might lead some to suspect that she is some sort of degenerate modern artist.

When Shane gets a call from a girl name Malécot (Hélène Lapiower) from the science lab where she tells him in an almost conspiratorial fashion, "There is something I want to tell you but I cannot tell you here," he wastes no time in setting up a meeting with her. Upon meeting up with Malécot, Shane is given Léo's address and told, "I'm helping you because Léo needs a friend." When Malécot mentions that Coré is severely sick, Shane acts like a drama queen and immediately runs away without saying a word. In a rare instance of comic relief, Malécot says to herself upon witnessing Shane's strange behavior, "Shit. I hope I didn't do something stupid." Of course, Shane immediately makes his way to Léo's house and soon discovers that cracked cannibal cunt Coré has been playing with matches and has set the place on fire. While Shane wastes no time in embracing Coré as if attempting to recapture the good old days, he decides to strangle the bitch to death when she gets a little bit too rough for his taste and her corpse is subsequently engulfed in flames in a glaringly fake CGI scene that probably should have been cut from the film. While Shane goes back to the hotel to sexually service his wife, he cannot bring himself to consummate his marriage and instead goes in the bathroom and jerks off while June cries and bangs on the bathroom door while calling his name. In a rare instance of onscreen ejaculation, Shane blows his milky load on the bathroom floor. After busting a nut, Shane runs out of the hotel and June chases after him in vain, but of course she never finds him.

After going through her husband's cellphone history, June decides to get in contact with Shane's ex-partner Jeanne Ghislain (Aurore Clément of Louis Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974) and Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984)). When Jeanne shows June an old photograph of Shane and asks her "Has he changed much?," she revealingly replies, "I wouldn't know," thus underscoring the fact that she has married a man that she knows nothing about. Meanwhile, Shane buys June a puppy at a pet shop and lurks around subways where he seems to manage to seduce women merely by looking at and touching them, thus hinting that he, not unlike Coré, has some sort of entrancing power as a result of his affliction that helps him seduce his prey. Ultimately, Shane proves he does have such a metaphysical mating power when he goes back to his hotel, follows a maid named Christelle (Florence Loiret Caille of Denis' *Les salauds* (2013) aka *Bastards*) back her locker room, sexually seduces with next to nil effort, violently

manhandles her, and then kills her before performing cannibalistic cunnilingus on her sweet frog cunt. In the end, June goes back to the hotel and finds Shane showering and asks him, "How you feeling, Doc?" and he affirmatively replies, "I feel good." While embracing Shane after they mutually agree to go back to America, June gets somewhat of a chill upon noticing a drop of blood dripping down the shower curtain. It might just be my intuition, but I doubt that Shane will be as loving and delicate with June as accursed negro cuckold Léo was with his vampiric whore wife Coré.

For whatever reason (I suspect it is at least partly because many women are with men that they are in no way sexually attracted towards), many people have the outstandingly moronic belief that women have smaller sexual appetites than men, but the opposite is actually true. Aside from the fact that it is not uncommon for women to have a dozen or so orgasms in a single sexual session where a man only has one (not to mention the fact that female orgasms are apparently more intense than male orgasms), as well as the fact various porn stars have had their gashes plundered by literally hundreds upon hundreds of men in a single gang bang, certain philosophers have argued that the fairer sex is sexuality personified and nothing more, or as Otto Weininger once wrote, "Woman is only sexual, man is partly sexual, and this difference reveals itself in various ways. The parts of the male body by stimulation of which sexuality is excited are limited in area, and are strongly localised, whilst in the case of the woman, they are diffused over her whole body, so that stimulation may take place almost from any part." Undoubtedly, the character of Coré in *Trouble Every Day* is a solely sexual creature of the innately sensually intemperate sort who literally lives to fuck men to death to the point where she even attempts to consume her hubby. Although the character Shane has the same affliction as Coré, he is at least able to control himself to a certain extent and find other outlets for his homicidal horniness. Surely, no one can finish Denis' film and not come to conclusion that women are the most sexually insatiable gender. Of course, women have to pretend to not like sex so much because it is the only real commodity that they have to offer to men and they know it.

While some of her films do feature certain strange feminist elements, Denis is far from a Dworkin dyke or Agnès Varda fan-girl as demonstrated in an interview she did with *Interview Magazine* where she soundly stated, "I've never seen a world where only men were responsible for the violence and the women were innocent. They go together. Men and women are a violent mixture." Of course, as *Trouble Every Day* demonstrates, Denis' quote can also be applied to sexual violence. It should be noted that in the film it always seems as if the victims search out their predators, but of course you cannot have sadists without masochists and vice versa. As personified by the Coré character, women typically use more passive-aggressive and 'esoteric' (translation: underhanded) tactics when it comes to using violence, hence why men get all the blame. What

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ultimately makes Denis' flick an unconventionally darkly erotic work is not its various beaver close-up shots, but its portrayal of sex as something innately visceral, bestial, and, in turn, truly transcendental. Indeed, although it might seem somewhat deranged, one could argue that the ultimate sexual climax would be dropping dead after busting a load, or so one might assume after watching *Trouble Every Day*. While apparently many people were shocked when it was released and could not fathom that it was actually directed by a woman, I would argue that it could have only been directed by a woman and a rare honest one at that, which is unequivocally one of Denis' greatest strengths as a filmmaker. Indeed, not unlike Valie Export, Ulrike Ottinger, Helma Sanders-Brahms, or any other honest and worthwhile woman filmmaker that does not waste their time with sterile and outmoded feminist polemics, Denis is not constrained by the sort of frivolous moral dilemmas that plague men, especially when it comes to sexuality, hence her assumed appreciation for a man like Vincent Gallo who has no problem directing himself receiving an unsimulated blowjob for a film. Out of all the sort of genre-cannibalizing 'postmodern' vampire flicks that have been made over the past couple decades, including Michael Almercyda's *Nadja* (1994), Abel Ferrara's *The Addiction* (1995), Larry Fessenden's *Habit* (1995), Guy Maddin's *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary* (2002), and Denis' ex-employer Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013), *Trouble Every Day* is certainly the greatest, freshest, most original, and least contrived, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a film where none other than Vinnie Gallo voraciously feasts on a fresh young frog foregut.

-Ty E

WHITE MATERIAL

Claire Denis (2009)

As the country that produced audaciously arrogant Marxist documentarian Jean Rouch (*Moi, un noir* aka *Me a Black, Babatu*) and far-leftist extremist propagandist René Vautier (whose short agitprop doc *Afrique 50* (1950) was arguably the first European anti-colonial film ever made), not to mention exceedingly ethno-masochistic 'intellectuals' like spiteful little lazy-eyed toad Jean-Paul Sartre (a white man who gleefully backed the slaughtering of Europeans in his preface to Frantz Fanon's classic text *The Wretched of the Earth* yet characteristically was a hypocrite that lacked the testicular fortitude to follow through on his own beliefs and kill himself), France has a long history of anti-colonial agitators that seemed to suffer a sort of totally unbelievable race-based Stockholm syndrome. Of course, as Vilfredo Pareto demonstrated in his classic text *The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*, when a culture becomes irrevocably decadent its debauched elites begin to root for and actively support the very same people that seek to destroy them, as if they hoped to be spared from the very same revolutions that emphasize the extermination of all their friends and family members. To my knowledge, the only contemporary film that I can think of that depicts such warped thinking is ironically a French work directed by a woman who spent most of her childhood living in various French colonial West African nations and has dedicated most of her filmmaking career towards directing racially-charged works that were directed from a somewhat preternatural post-colonial white French female perspective. Indeed, *White Material* (2009) directed by Claire Denis (*J'ai pas sommeil* aka *I Can't Sleep, Trouble Every Day*) depicts a racially schizophrenic white French woman played by half-Hebraic frog diva Isabelle Huppert who has a visceral hatred for her own people and is determined to keep her unprofitable coffee plantation going during a quasi-genocidal anti-white civil war in an unnamed Africa nation even though both the corrupt government and especially negro rebels want to see all whites killed, only for her and her family to experience a sort of self-prophesying tragedy of the quasi-apocalyptic sort. Depicting a sort of Haitian Revolution 2.0 that emphasizes the innate stupidity and self-deceptiveness of idealistic xenophilic whites, the film should have probably borrowed its name from Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst's masterpiece 1984 swansong and be called *White Madness* as it depicts how a delusional white dame more or less causes the death of her entire family due to her insistence that they stay in negroland during a savage civil war featuring roaming armies of rape-inclined child soldiers, thug mercenaries that charge people an insane rate just to drive down dirt roads without being executed, and other forms of murderously violent rabble who seem to be geared towards murdering their 'enemies' (aka virtually anyone they come in contact with) in the most malevolently sadis-

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tic ways imaginable. Surely *White Material* is an important contemporary film in the sense that it is probably the only somewhat recent work of its kind that dares to depict what can happen to xenophile and negrophile Europids when they refuse to face reality in terms of race dynamics, especially in regard to the fact that just because someone is an ethno-masochistic cracker who hates their own people does not mean that pan-African rebels and other groups of honky-hating sambos will not slaughter you and your entire family in a most malevolent fashion. Arguably more intriguingly, Denis' film spreads a message that makes it seem as if there is no hope for redemption for both France and its ex-colonies in Africa, as irrevocable damage has been done to both sides to the point where the best thing whitey can do is to leave the Dark Continent alone for good. Indeed, thankfully *White Material* is neither your typical masturbatory tribute to the dubious legacy of charlatan frauds like Mandela nor a putrid piece of poverty porn that is meant to coerce the slave-morality-ridden white viewer into crying for the perennially impoverished noble savage.

White Material begins somewhat abruptly with a group of negro soldiers curiously finding the corpse of a negro rebel named 'The Boxer' (Isaach De Bankolé of Lars von Trier's *Manderlay* (2005) and Jim Jarmusch's *The Limits of Control* (2009)) lying on a bed in a white bourgeois home (as indicated by pictures of white people in the room) and declaring in an emotionless fashion, "It's the Boxer. He's dead alright." The same group of negro soldiers are also depicted locking a young Aryan man with a shaved head into a room and setting it on fire. Edited in a somewhat confused nonlinear fashion, the film will eventually reveal at the end how the anti-white negro rebel leader the Boxer ended up dying in a white person's comfortable bourgeois bed, as well as how the young Aryan boy ended up being locked in a room where he would ultimately be burned alive in a micro-holocaust of sorts. The foredoomed white boy's name is Manuel (Nicolas Duvauchelle of Denis' *Beau Travail* (1999) and Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury's *À l'intérieur* (2007) aka *Inside*) and, not unlike his protagonist mother Maria Vial (Isabelle Huppert of Haneke's *The Piano Teacher* (2001) and François Ozon's *8 Women* (2002)), he is somewhat unhinged, which seems to be both the natural result of tainted genetics and being part of a marginal white population that lives in a sub-Saharan African nation that is mostly hostile to Europeans. Aside from being a female cuckold of sorts that still lives at the same coffee plantation home with her ex-husband André (Christopher Lambert of *Highlander* (1986) and *Mortal Kombat* (1995)) who produced an illegitimate mulatto bastard son with the family's fairly young live-in maid Lucie (Adèle Ado), Maria refuses to leave her unnamed African nation even though her business no longer turns a profit and a civil war has just started where all the whites are being killed as being broadcasted by a rebel DJ that has taken over the local radio station. Indeed, when a white neighbor attempts to convince Maria to leave the country by yelling to her from a helicopter, "Madame

Vial. The French army is pulling out! We're leaving! You'll be completely cut off! Think it over, Madam Vial! Think it over! We're pulling out! You must leave immediately," she responds by getting a bitchy self-righteous attitude, gesturing a "fuck you" to the guy that tried to save her life, and saying to herself in a spiteful and rather confused fashion, "These whites, these dirty whites. They look down on us, and we risk our lives for them. They're a bunch of nouveaux riches, pretentious, arrogant, ignorant. They don't deserve this beautiful land. They can't even appreciate it!" as if she is in total denial about the fact that she belongs to the very same group of whites that she has so much seething hatred for. Of course, in the end, Maria's decidedly deluded attitude will result in the death of her entire family.

While Maria is making her way back home to her coffee plantation, a negro preacher lies dead in his church, which has a banner outside of it that ironically reads, "God doesn't give up," thus reflecting the apocalyptic situation brewing in the African nation. Of course, the preacher was killed by cracker-hating commie rebels that are mostly made up of mere children who clearly lack both the intellectual and emotional capacity to fully understand the deranged behavior they are engaging in, as well as the dubious dead-end cause they are mindlessly fighting for. A group of these rebels eventually run into their almost supernaturally stoic hero the Boxer who, although severely wounded, brings no attention to the fact that his time is numbered. When the Boxer is handed a fancy golden lighter by one of his comrades and asks where it came from, one of the rebels replies, "It's just white material," thus indicating it is war booty that was taken by the child soldiers from a white family that they have recently slaughtered. Meanwhile, Maria gets back to her plantation and is quite enraged when a couple of her black employees tell her they are quitting and leaving due to the civil war, soundly stating to her, "Coffee's coffee...Not worth dying for," so she maturely responds to them by telling them to fuck off and to never come back. Indeed, despite her ostensible love for Africa and black Africans, Maria treats virtually all negroes like slaves who can be bought and ordered around for mere pennies and when they do not oblige her demands, she becomes rather ruthless like your typical privileged white bourgeois bitch who is used to getting what she wants. Without employees to help her harvest the coffee, Maria is forced to travel to a nearby village to contract employees among the most desperate and impoverished of negro sub-lumpenproles, but before she does, she finds the Boxer hiding in a shed on her plantation, but she does not kick him out because he is the nephew of her favorite and most loyal employee Jean-Marie even though he is an anti-European pan-African revolutionary who wants her kind flushed out of the decidedly dark, Dark Continent. Naturally, harboring a rebel leader in her home is not exactly a sound move on Maria's part and it will ultimately foredoom her family to a most ungodly fate that is nothing short of catastrophic, if not all that different from what white Frenchmen suffered dur-

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ing the Haitian Revolution when the negro population exterminated the entire white population, including the women and children (though a handful of white female traitors managed to survive by agreeing to marry negroes).

Upon leaving in a large truck to look for employees to help her with harvesting coffee, Maria is stopped on the road by a couple of young machinegun-wielding negroes who demand that she pays \$100 as a 'toll' or be killed. Interestingly, the leader of the group is Maria's son's gym teacher and the protagonist also personally knows every single one of the militant negro crooks, but that does not stop them from sticking guns in her face and threatening her life, thus she is forced to pay the rather ridiculous toll just so she will not be gunned down for driving on an archaic dirt road. Before heading to the village, Maria stops at a pharmacy to pick up drugs for her ex-father-in-law and her black pharmacist friends attempt to coerce her to leave the country as they assume she will be killed since she is white. Notably, while at the pharmacy, a rebel DJ announces via radio: "As for the white material, the party's over. No more cocktails on shaded verandas while we sweat water and blood. They're getting out...and they're right to run scared. Our rulers are already trembling, their suitcases stuffed with booty they amassed while you starved." Unbeknownst to Maria, while she is picking up about a dozen or so negroes to work at her plantation, her ex-husband André is selling the entire business and property to the local mayor Chérif, who is not beneath ripping off his old white friends during times of desperation even though he is already extremely rich to the point of having his own private militia. As André retorts to Chérif when he comments that Maria will be mad when she finds out that he went behind her back and secretly sold the plantation, "I'm protecting her from herself. We no longer turn a profit. No use getting massacred over some coffee. The plantation isn't worth a thing." Clearly a self-absorbed scumbag of sorts, Chérif brags to André, "I keep you alive. Without me, you'd be rotting on the Garonne" upon making a dubious deal to buy the plantation for literally nothing (in fact, the plantation is given to Chérif to settle supposed debts, with the colored predatory capitalist claiming that André will still owe him money after handing over the property).

Before heading home with her new employees, Maria goes by an elementary school to pick up her ex-husband's 12-year-old bastard mulatto son Jose, but André arrives around the same time, so he brings his half-breed progeny back home with him on his motorbike. When Maria gets home, she tries in vain to wake up her twentysomething-year-old adult son Manuel—a clearly half-crazed fellow who takes after his mother sans her work ethic—since he is still dead asleep even though it is well into the afternoon. When Manuel finally awakes from his slumber, he decides to take a dip in the dirty family pool and is quite intrigued when he hears a couple young children moving inside his house. Ultimately, Manuel's curiosity gets the best of him and he decides to do what proves to be a major mistake when he attempts to chase down the kids while wearing no shoes.

Unbeknownst to Manuel, the children are armed and they eventually corner him while wielding machetes, spears, and guns and then proceed to call him a “yellow dog,” cut off a lock of his hair, and shove a gun down his pants near his genitals in a perverted fashion that signifies that they have a sickly salacious sod thirst for defiling white meat. Although not actually depicted, it is insinuated that one of the child rebels rapes Manuel as he is featured in a subsequent scene completely naked with his knees and feet bloody, as if somehow had just violently manhandled him while he was bent over on the ground. While André eventually finds his son naked in the field and provides him with clothes and Maria subsequently begins driving him home, Manuel eventually escapes and heads back home where he grabs a rifle, completely shaves his head into a skinhead style in a seemingly symbolic act that demonstrates his recent psychological castration via negro rape, and then shoves his hair into the mouth of his half-breed brother Jose’s mother Lucie in a rather violent fashion, as if to let her know that he no longer takes orders from his parents’ virtual slaves and that he is disgusted with the fact that his father left his mother and reproduced with a young negress concubine. Although Manuel’s grandfather Henri Vial (Michel Subor of François Truffaut’s *Jules and Jim* (1962) and Jean-Luc Godard’s *Le Petit Soldat* (1963))—the true owner of the plantation and patriarch of the home—comes to Lucie’s rescue and kicks his grandson out of the house, the black girl is enraged and hatefully declares, “The patriots will kill you all! All of you!,” thus indicating that she has no love for her white baby-daddy or his crazy cracker family.

In a flashback scene that hints that Maria may have been carrying on a romance with the negro mayor, the protagonist shares a joint with Chérif as he gleefully explains to her how she has failed as a mother in terms of raising a mentally unstable slacker of a son. After describing Manuel as a boy whose “mind is all over the place” that is turning into a “dog,” Chérif remarks to Maria regarding her influence on her son, “You botched it with him. You didn’t finish the job” and she responds by laughing like a typical stoned stupid moron. Of course, Maria’s workers fear for their lives and decide to quit when they hear the following announced by a government soldier on the local radio: “A reliable source has informed us that the rebel soldier, the Boxer, is hiding out amidst foreigners who rip us off and use our land to grow mediocre coffee that we’d never drink. Their accomplices will be eliminated.” Indeed, the black workers pull guns on Maria and demand money, but someone has stolen all the money from the family safe, so the desperate negro proles settle for a ride back to their village. Unfortunately, on the way back to the village, a group of rebel child soldiers that are clearly wearing the protagonist’s jewelry and clothing steal Maria’s van and kill a couple workers who dare to proclaim their innocence as poor workers. Indeed, by killing the poor peasants, the revolutionaries demonstrate they could care less about the bastardized Marxist ideology that they are ostensibly fighting for. When Maria goes to check on her friends at the pharmacy, she discovers

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that the store has been wrecked and robbed and that all of her buddies have been brutally slaughtered. Of course, the pharmacists were killed by the child rebels, who are more interested in getting high on factory grade drugs than bringing down their supposed capitalist oppressors.

Rather bizarrely, when he sees the child soldiers driving his mother's truck, Manuel, who is clearly not sound of mind and has developed a particularly advanced form of racial Stockholm syndrome where he has become sympathetic to the struggle of his black rapists, yells to them while riding a motorbike that he knows where their 'spiritual leader' the Boxer is and he will take them to him. Indeed, Manuel takes the murderous 'youths' back to his plantation and helps them steal a wheelbarrow full of food and then he and the killer kids get high on stolen drugs from the pharmacy and gorge on a buffet of western junk food. Meanwhile, a group of government soldiers begin invading the plantation while elderly patriarch Henri looks on silently and does not bother to warn his family members that a group of army thugs have come to slaughter them. When the soldiers find most of the child rebels sleeping in rooms inside the plantation house, including a preteen boy lying in a bathtub next to toys and empty jars of jelly, they kill them softly by driving knives into their still bodies in what is unquestionably one of the most calm and even soothing mass murder scenes in cinema history. When the soldiers find Manuel walking around the plantation with a rifle in his hand, they lock him in a room, set it on fire, and burn him alive. Meanwhile, Maria eventually manages to get a lift back home from her friend Chérif and during the ride the protagonist complains that her son Manuel is "defenseless" without her and the mayor soundly responds, "Extreme blondness brings bad luck. It cries out to be pillaged. Blue eyes are troublesome. This is his country. He was born here. But it doesn't like him." When Maria gets home, she finds both her ex-husband André lying dead in a pool of blood next to passports and Manuel's scorched corpse. After noting that her (ex)father-in-law is still alive and discernibly unscathed, Maria brutally murders Henri by hacking him up with a machete in a scene that, whether intentional on the director's part or not, seems to symbolize the deleterious effect that living in post-colonial Africa can have on a European. At the end of the film, a wounded rebel runs off into the woods, thus assumedly signifying the perennial state of catastrophic revolution in post-colonial Africa. The film concludes with the pseudo-dedication, "For the fearless young rascals...for Maria," as if to insinuate that both the child rebels and the protagonist suffer from a similar sort of childish arrogance, pathological pigheadedness, and self-destructive naivety.

Undoubtedly, I would be lying if I did not admit that I found Isabelle Huppert's character in *White Material* to be strikingly less sympathetic than her role as the eponymous masochistic pervert in Haneke's *The Piano Teacher*, which certainly says a lot, at least as far as I am concerned as I consider the anti-heroine in the latter film to be one of the most grotesque and uniquely unlikeable fe-

male characters in cinema history. Indeed, aside from being an exceedingly ethno-masochistic cuckold who smokes dope with corrupt black politicians and romanticizes African negroes so much that she considers them to be infinitely preferable to her own people even though they hate her and everything she represents while at the same time treating said African negroes like virtual slaves, Huppert's character risks the lives of everyone in her family so that she can maintain her silly dead-end existence of running a coffee plantation in a forsaken third world hellhole where murderous commie revolutions and anti-European race hate are everyday occurrences, thereupon resulting in a number of inexplicable tragedies that could have been easily avoided had she taken heed of the much warranted advice of virtually everyone she knows, including her black employers that understand their country much better than she does, thus making her no different than the moron politicians in Europe who thinking flooding their countries with more Islamic barbarian untermenschen will somehow make their countries more stable. I also do not think it is a coincidence that the protagonist's son is a moronic lunatic, as the character acts as a sort of allegorical representation of the negative effects of being white and born into a post-colonial nightmare nation where everyone hates you simply because of the color of your skin and you have nothing or no one to relate to, hence why the character goes completely berserk and leads the anti-white black rebels back to his family plantation so that they can destroy the place. It should also be noted that during the film the protagonist's ex-husband's mulatto son senselessly commits sabotage at the plantation while the characters are harvesting coffee by going on the roof of a building and cutting an electricity wire. Undoubtedly, this half-breed prodigal son is a sort of historically accurate archetype of colonial history as reflected in the fact that various leaders of the Haitian Revolution were the bastard Mulatto sons of French aristocrats and plantation owners. Of course, as the old Greek adage goes, the bastard will always be the enemy of the true-born. If *White Material* has any discernible message, it is there is no hope for whiteness in the Dark Continent, or as virtual pimp politician Chérif states, "Extreme blondness brings bad luck. It cries out to be pillaged. Blue eyes are troublesome." Of course, nothing is more troublesome than racially schizophrenic blue-eyed devils that somehow think they can survive and even thrive in a country full of poor and resentful half-starved negroes who cannot stand a foreigner that is more successful in their own homeland than they are.

In its depiction of the hopelessly 'unequal' master-slave relationship that occurs when black works for white, *White Material* is surely superficially comparable to Senegalese auteur Ousmane Sembène's debut feature *La noire de...* (1966) aka *Black Girl*, albeit more intricate and strikingly nihilistic. As much of Denis' work, including *J'ai pas sommeil* (1994) aka *I Can't Sleep*—a genre-confused film based on the true story of gay mulatto serial killer Thierry Paulin, who had a fetish for killing elderly white women and died of AIDS in prison

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before ever being convicted of any of the heinous crimes that he committed—demonstrates in an intricately idiosyncratic sort of fashion, the ghost of Frantz Fanon lives on as black Africa is taking its revenge against France for colonialism in a variety of strange and oftentimes predictable ways while racially schizophrenic white Frenchmen seem completely oblivious to the point of welcoming their misfortune. Thematically speaking, I must admit that I think Denis' film is extremely grotesque and quite symbolic of the sort of all-consuming sickness that is plaguing the post-colonial French collective unconscious, hence *White Material's* importance as a rare frog flick that offers some sort of contemporary truth, especially in regard to the impossibility of real peace between black and white. Indeed, something is indubitably innately sick and dysfunctional about a society when an elderly French woman directs a film where a young and handsome Adonis-like white Frenchman that is old enough to be the filmmaker's grandson is raped by a murderous negro child, as it demonstrates a certain irrevocable defilement of the soul that would have seemed totally inexplicable only a generation ago, even in a traditionally degenerate nation like France. Indeed, forget Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Georges Bataille, *White Material* is Franco-debauchment at its most horrifyingly sick and depraved. Of course, for those individuals that have a certain disdain for bleeding heart white liberals, Denis' film indubitably offers a bit of schadenfreude, even if the director has a somewhat curious view of race relations. Like the work of any great female filmmaker, including the films of Ulrike Ottinger and Helma Sanders-Brahms, *White Material* ultimately reflects the sort of bizarre and seemingly convoluted moral stances that honest members of the fairer sex seem particularly susceptible to, thus making for a particularly provocative cinematic work that dares to stir and ultimately debase the soul of the viewer to the point where they might question the popular view that it is the duty of Europids everywhere to champion mindless altruism towards poor negroes. If nothing else, Denis' film demonstrates that sub-Saharan Africans and blacks in general generally hate whites and no amount of altruism, pathetic groveling, or moronic negrophilia will change that fact. After all, it is no coincidence that after over 210 years, black Haitians still celebrate the complete extermination of the entire white population during the Haitian Revolution as the greatest event in their entire history. Of course, it is also no coincidence that Haiti went from being one of the most advanced and fruitful colonies in the world to degenerating into one of the most backwards and destitute slums on earth as a result of the revolution.

-Ty E

PUSSY TALK

Claude Mulot (1975)

While Gerard Damiano's mafia financed and distributed crossover work *Deep Throat* (1972) brought mainstream legitimacy to pornography in the United States, the French were treated to something much more bizarre in terms of pioneering crossover porn flicks. Indeed, Claude Mulot's *Pussy Talk* (1975) aka *Le sexe qui parle* aka *Talk* aka *The Sex Who Talks*—the first frog fuck flick to achieve international success and eventually earn cult status—is as wantonly whacked out as its rather literal American English title would suggest, as a patently preposterous porno piece featuring a chattering bushy pussy that likes to use the word “cunt.” Rather loosely based on the French 18th-century erotic novel *The Indiscreet Jewels* (1748) aka *Les bijoux indiscrets* by Enlightenment era writer Denis Diderot, Mulot's flick is what some viewers might describe as a sub-arthouse unintentional laugh-out-loud comedy as a dead serious work with majorly moronic dialogue and scenarios that would baffle even an autistic toddler in terms of its absurdist erotic anti-realism. Sort of like a Radley Metzger film (in fact, *Pussy Talk* can be seen being advertised on a movie theater marquee in Metzger's hardcore masterpiece *Opening of Misty Beethoven*) meets a preposterous premise from some old vintage Nickelodeon cartoon, Mulot's masterfully moronic yet lavishly lecherous blue movie may be a lot of things that one might describe as unflattering, but no one can say the film is in any way, shape, or form banal. Featuring 'actresses' that are far too attractive to be porn stars and mostly physically and psychologically male characters that are more often than not intimidated by beautiful women that probably would not normally recognize their rather mundane existences, the film's American distributor certainly used false advertising with the following rather ridiculous tagline: “Because you're a Woman, you should see...*Pussy Talk*.” A sort of raunchy 'gynocentric' reworking of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* that may or may not have influenced the rather wretched feminist vomit *The Vagina Monologues*, *Pussy Talk* is a salacious sick joke at the expense of both men and women that reminds the viewer that pussies have many secrets and complaints to tell.

Joëlle (Pénélope Lamour) is a statuesque redhead who is married to a less than sexually virile fellow named Eric (Jean-Loup Philippe), so she must find other ways to satisfy her sexual cravings aside from being soullessly humped by her hubby. When a hot blonde compliments her act of defiance regarding tearing up a traffic ticket that has been left on her car, Joëlle follows the sensual stranger into a record shop, fondles her vulnerable vulva, and attempts to shove a 100 French franc banknote in the woman's pussy, but the two are ultimately interrupted, thus prematurely aborting the game of 'cash-in-gash.' The next day while she is at work, Joëlle, who is an executive at an advertising agency, uses her seductive power as a busty boss to pull out a startled young mensch's cock

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and begin deepthroating it. When Joëlle comes home that night, she has to keep company with her husband Eric's banal friends, so to spice things up, she begins masturbating in front of them. While Eric is somewhat angered by his wife's vulgar display, it also turns him on, so the two have sex, though Joëlle is ultimately left unsatisfied. Needless to say, Joëlle decides to satisfy herself by masturbating in a bathtub while fantasizing about a group of male frogs in a circle jerk busting their loads on the windshield and windows of a car she is inside. After diddling her naughty bits, Joëlle notices her husband and also notices that her cunt has began talk in a crude fashion.

When Joëlle walks in on her snoozing husband, her mouthy meat-curtain rudely awakens him by stating: "Well, as I live and breathe...isn't it sleeping beauty? Wakeup you lazy son-of-a-bitch! You hear me? I said wakeup! I wanna fuck...you understand? FUCK! Only, this time I wanna get something out of it. I want you to sock it to me kid [...] You better get used to it! You both better get used to it because when I get going, I'm Pandora's Box without a lid." Indeed, Joëlle's pussy is now in charge and it has a voracious yet eclectic appetite, so before the ad executive knows it, she is walking to a porn theater in nothing but a trench coat. Upon entering the sleazy porn theatre and watching a fucked fuck film featuring a deranged dude cutting off a poor girl's bodice and subsequently raping her, Joëlle begins giving two swarthy frogs with flaccid chodes handjob at the same time, but her efforts do little to get the men's dongs up, so the threesome heads to the theater bathroom and gets involved in a claustrophobic ménage à trios. Needless to say, Eric is not happy later that night when Joëlle goes home and her blabbering beaver tells him what his wife has done at the local porn theater. The next day, Eric has his friend Martine (Ellen Earl)—a psychiatrist posing as a veterinarian "with an interest in pussies"—come over to meet Joëlle, whose talking pussy the quack naturally wants to meet. Of course, the chattering cunt, which semi-sinisterly states to the psychiatrist, "You wanna know, cunt?! [...] the four of us are going to have a blast," is too smart for Martine and coerces her to have sex with not only Eric, but Joëlle as well. Of course, minor trouble strikes Joëlle and Eric when Martine decides to go to the press with the story of the "vagina loquens."

Hoping to get the full scoop on Joëlle and get her surreally sordid story, Richard (Vicky Messica) approaches the ad executive's absurdly amorous artist aunt Barbara (played by French 'activist' Sylvia Bourdon)—a playfully perverted lady who regularly enjoys threesomes with both her male and female subjects—who is more than willing to setup up her niece for the right price. Meanwhile, after Joëlle falls asleep, her compulsively chit chatty cunt tells her husband about her sexual awakening as a teenager. Indeed, on top of revealing that Joëlle's mother shot her stepfather dead when she was 16 after catching her husband molesting her daughter, Eric also learns that his wanton wife lost her virginity to the nose of a Pinocchio marionette after her high school sweetheart pussied

out when it came to deflowering her. Eric also learns that Joëlle was quite the little sadist seducer when she was a teen, as she and her friend managed to molest their high school teacher, not to mention the fact that she fucked a priest after confessing to him. Rather shocked by all these stories, Eric is only all the more emasculated when the cunt cunt viciously states: “You don’t understand anything. She was so vibrant, so full of life...you’ve turned her into a frigid old woman. There’s a cunt issue...You act like a cunt, you work like a cunt, and you fuck like a cunt. Why she married you, I’ll never know.” After the cunt gets down spewing vile, yellow journalist Richard and his comrade break into Joëlle and Eric’s room while they are naked in bed. While Joëlle manages to escape while Eric beats up the jack-off journalists while he is in the bare, the chick with the chattering cunt makes the mistake of heading to her deceitful aunt’s house. After aunt Barbara drugs Joëlle, Robert comes by and starts masturbating the meaty talking pussy with a microphone, thus getting the sordid story he needs. While Eric later manages to silence his wife’s vagina by finally managing to sexually pleasure her with his cock, the hubby’s member becomes infected with the speaking genital STD in what is a rather predictable, if not pleasantly perverse, twist ending.

Apparently, the “talking cunt” (or, as the frogs call it, the “vagina loquens”) is nothing new in France, as it is an ancient folklore motif dating back to at least the 13th century, as demonstrated by the ‘fabliau’ (comical tales written by frog bards) ‘Le Chevalier qui faisoit parler les cons et les culs.’ Indeed, in the allegorical 1748 novel that Talking Pussy is based on, *The Indiscreet Jewels* aka *Les bijoux indiscrets*, French King Louis XV is depicted as sultan Mangogul of the Congo and has the power to make women’s “jewels” talk with a magic ring. Somewhat notably, Talking Pussy was such a hit that it spawned a sequel, *Triples Introductions* (1978), as well as an intentional comedic and thus innately inferior non-pornographic English remake entitled *Chatterbox* (1977) aka *Virginia the Talking Vagina* directed by gay pornography to exploitation auteur Tom DeSimone (*Hell Night*, *Reform School Girls*). As Talking Pussy demonstrates, the French were no less chic when it came to porn chic, but France’s socialist taxes destroyed the frog fuck film industry before it really began. Indeed, the immaculately titled work is certainly more honest and no less artful than contemporary frog pseudo-arthouse works like Christophe Honoré’s banal *Bataille* adaptation *Ma mère* (2004) and slave-driving pseudo-Frenchman Abdellatif Kechiche’s pseudo-Sapphic epic of counterfeit crypto-pornographic carpet-munching *Blue Is the Warmest Color* (2013) aka *La vie d’Adèle*.

-Ty E

CLASSE TOUS RISQUES
CLASSE TOUS RISQUES

Claude Sautet (1960)

Admittedly, the older I get, the more François Truffaut's classic film *Jules and Jim* (1962) seems like phony bullshit as dreamed up by an effete poser that has never had a genuine masculine friendship and I recently discovered that I was not the only one with this canon-contradicting opinion after reading a tribute to Gallic auteur Claude Sautet (*Max and the Junkmen*, *Mado*) by fellow French auteur Jean-Pierre Melville. Indeed, in the short yet superlative tribute entitled 'The Quiet Courage of a Great Filmmaker' featured in the March/April 192 issue of *Présence du Cinéma*, Melville soundly argued when comparing the masculine friendships of Sautet's masterful second-feature *Classe Tous Risques* (1960) aka *The Big Risk* aka *Consider All Risks* to Truffaut's film, "People often speak of films where the relationships between men, their friendships, have an enormous importance. I believed in the friendship of Abel Davos and Stark absolutely. It is interior, and does not appear by means of dialogue. The two men's behavior makes explicit their feelings, without either of them having to speak of their friendship. On the other hand, I was not able to believe in the friendship of Jules and Jim, even though they speak of it often." While Melville opens his tribute by confessing, "I offer my friendship rarely," Sautet's film had such a huge impact on the filmmaker that he not only gave his friendship to the fellow frog auteur but also somewhat copied his singular gangster film style, which is somewhat ironic when one considers the source material of the film. Indeed, despite being a French Jew that famously fought with the French Resistance during WWII as he would so painstakingly pay tribute to in his film *Army of Shadows* (1969) aka *L'armée des ombres*, Melville would (somewhat unwittingly) take imperative influence from a film based on a 1958 crime novel about real-life French Gestapo agent Abel Danos (alias 'le Mammouth' due to this robust/muscular build)—a bodacious bad ass that refused to wear a blindfold upon being confronted with the firing squad that would execute him—as penned by Corsican-blooded card-carrying-fascist collaborator José Giovanni (real name Joseph Damiani) who was involved in the torture, blackmail, and murder of various French Jews and resistance fighters. In fact, gentleman Giovanni was, not unlike Danos (who he befriended in prison), even sentenced to death himself for three premeditated murders but luckily (and unlike Danos) he escaped the guillotine when his sentence was commuted by President Vincent Auriol and instead he served eleven and a half years of an initial twenty years of hard labor. Fierce fascist source aside, I suspect that Melville, himself part of a criminal underground, could sense a certain intrinsic authenticity to the less than glamorous crime and grime of Sautet's film.

While Melville arguably had an imperative influence on the filmmaking of French master auteur Robert Bresson with his debut feature *Le Silence de la mer*

(1949) aka *The Silence of the Sea*—a more or less avant-garde chamber piece featuring a reluctant Nazi officer apparently partly inspired by German Conservative Revolutionary movement intellectual and supposed Nazi-fellow-traveler Ernst Jünger—there is no question that *Classe Tous Risques* was a crucial influence on the filmmaker's legendary gangster flicks, including *Le Doulos* (1963), *Le deuxième souffle* (1966), and *Le Cercle Rouge* (1970). In fact, I would argue that Sautet's film is more immaculate and enthralling than all of Melville's flicks aside from possibly *Le Samouraï* (1967) and apparently I am not the only one that thinks so as source writer José Giovanni himself would once say, "CLASSE TOUS RISQUES is the best film adaptation of any of my books. It doesn't have any nightclub scenes. It doesn't treat the subject as folklore. And it has more heart than *LE DEUXIÈME SOUFFLE*." Indeed, Melville's *Le deuxième souffle* is also a Giovanni adaptation that stars Lino Ventura, but it spends about an extra 40 minutes to do what Sautet's film accomplishes more effortlessly in terms of sheer underworld pathos, paranoia, and pessimism. As someone that experienced much of Melville's oeuvre long before ever even hearing of Sautet, I can safely say that watching *Classe Tous Risques* felt like the result of the mastering of the Melvillian universe as if all of the 'excess fat' and static plodding that sometimes plagues the Judaic auteur's films was carefully cut with the carefully calculated precision of a seasoned Fleishmeister. Indeed, whereas most of Melville's films are something I might be inclined to revisit every couple of years, Sautet's second feature is a seemingly flawless flick of the good and hearty sort that demands to be re-watched regularly and can be re-watched when you're in any sort of mood despite its rather bleak and pessimistic subject matter. Of course, being the kind of person that prefers *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984) to all of Sergio Leone's other films combined, *The Fire Within* (1963) aka *Le feu follet* to any of Malle's other films, *Taxi Driver* (1976) to Scorsese's later *Goodfellas* (1990), *La Bête Humaine* (1938) to Renoir's purported magnum opuses *La Grande Illusion* (1937) and *The Rules of the Game* (1939), and even Luca Guadagnino's ostensible *Suspiria* (2018) remake to Dario Argento's 1977 original, *Classe Tous Risques* is like the cinematic equivalent of 'cold comfort food' as a rare gangster flick of almost Spenglerian pessimistic proportions that dares to question humanity as a whole in its delightfully despairing depiction of a foredoomed gangster on the run that quickly loses everything that makes life worth living. Indeed, if any film acts as an apt eulogy for the gangster genre, it is Sautet's underrated black-and-white masterpiece.

Notably, *Jules and Jim* is not the only obnoxiously overrated *La Nouvelle Vague* film that would eclipse *Classe Tous Risques*—a film that still has not completely gotten its due despite now being regarded as a masterpiece among certain cinephiles and film historians—in terms of sheer popularity. Indeed, as French filmmaker Bertrand Tavernier (*Death Watch*, *Coup de Torchon*)—a loyal protégé of both Sautet and Melville—explained in a tribute to the film en-

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titled 'Beautiful Friendships' in regard to its unfortunate history, "Sautet's film was also eclipsed by *BREATHLESS*, released just a few weeks before; all the credit for bringing out the talent of Jean-Paul Belmondo went to Godard, despite the fact that in *CLASSE TOUS RISQUES*, Belmondo shows us a completely different side of his great gift as an actor, his remarkable versatility, by making credible an authoritarian character with radiant charm, by stunningly fusing virility and childlike innocence, in a performance that is in a totally different register from the one he gives in *BREATHLESS*." Admittedly, due to my general loathing of Godard's debut feature and especially the lead character, I initially disliked Belmondo and would not really realize his brilliance and effortless charisma until seeing him in relatively mainstream films like Georges Lautner's *The Professional* (1981) aka *Le Professionnel* and against-type arthouse roles like in Melville's *Léon Morin, Priest* (1961). In short, Godard neutered Belmondo in films like *Breathless* and *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) as if to make the actor more autobiographically autistic. In *Classe Tous Risques*, Belmondo does what Belmondo does best by being both the ultimate man's man and lady's man as a suave young cocksman that knows exactly how to fight and fuck (despite the film technically not depicting much of either).

Not surprisingly, both Melville and Sautet were completely unaware of the covert fascist flavor of *Classe Tous Risques*, which is probably a good thing as the film probably would not exist otherwise. Indeed, as Sautet stated in an interview featured in the book *Conversations avec Claude Sautet* (1994) by Michel Boujut when asked if he knew that the film's lead was based on an infamous fascist, "If I had known, I might not have made the film. I was not aware that Abel Danos—Davos in the film—had belonged to the Bony-Lafont [collaborationist] gang during the occupation. It was only after the film was released that one day, in a bistro, some underworld types tipped me off: 'It's great that you made a film about Abel!'" In fact, apparently Sautet did not even realize that his screenwriter, José Giovanni, who he described having "got along perfectly" with, was also an (ex)fascist as the novelist (and, later, filmmaker) was not revealed to be a collaborationist until October 1993 after being exposed by two trashy Swiss dailies. Undoubtedly, Giovanni's experiences as a once-condemned man certainly informs the decidedly desperate and even sometimes downright nihilist tone of *Classe Tous Risques*, which ultimately concludes with the lead antihero passively accepting his date with death despite technically getting away with his crimes as the character has been condemned by fate after losing virtually everything that meant something to him, not least of all his pride and dignity.

Although his crimes are never made clear, French gangster Abel Davos (Lino Ventura) has been tried in absentia and sentenced to death, so he is now hiding in Italy with his wife and their two little boys after being forced to flee Switzerland. After committing a successful holdup on a busy Milan street with the help of his rather agile accomplice Raymond Naldi (Stan Krol)—a completely

fearless fucker that demonstrates complete loyalty to his comrade—that concludes with an insane getaway that involves motorcycles and carjackings, the group decides to, somewhat curiously, head back to France. Rather tragically and quite unexpectedly both Raymond and Abel's wife are gunned down by custom agents just as they arrive at a deserted beach cove in the middle of the night in an almost surreally nightmarish scenario that marks the beginning of the end for the seemingly forsaken antihero. Virtually trapped in Nice, France with his two extremely young sons, who are clearly scarred for life as they witnessed the coldblooded murder of their mother and family friend Naldi, Abel is seriously screwed in more ways than one, but luckily some people owe him a "debt," or so he naively assumes as a man of honor that seemingly never heard the timeless sentiment that there is, "No honor among thieves." Indeed, Abel might be a violent crook, but he has a strict moral code that gets put to the test when his old comrades break said moral code. Abel expects to have good help from his old underworld buddies as Henri 'Riton' Vintran (Michel Ardan) owes him a big favor for funding his successful bistro and Raoul Fargier (Claude Cerval) practically owes him his life for somehow getting him out of prison, but unfortunately it never occurred to the antihero that his old pals are nowhere near as honorable, grateful, or respectful as he is. While a third friend, Jean 'Kid Jeannot' Martin (Philippe March), wanted to promptly arrive in France with a machinegun and ambulance to smuggle him back to Paris, he is talked out of it by Riton and Fargier as he is on parole and cannot risk such a precarious move. Since Fargier is a self-centered coward and Riton has been emasculated by his nagging barmaid wife, the 'old friends' decided to do what amounts to the bare minimum and reluctantly agree to hire a young stranger, Éric Stark (Jean-Paul Belmondo), to pick up Abel and his sons. Needless to say, Abel is highly offended to the point of feeling deeply betrayed when a total stranger as opposed to his old friends arrives in Nice, but, unbeknownst to Fargier, who hired him, Stark is actually an old comrade of Raymond Naldi or as he confides to the protagonist while trying to alleviate his worries, "I had a friend named Raymond Naldi. They don't know in Paris. I didn't want to tell you either, but with what you're thinking, it's better if I did." While technically a mere hired mercenary, Éric ultimately proves to be the only real friend that Abel can count on in a relationship where the young up-and-comer learns to respect and protect an old pro in decline.

It is immediately apparent that, despite their age difference, Abel and Éric have great chemistry and become immediate friends despite not saying much to each other as if the two have an instinctive understanding of one another. While Éric acts as a phony ambulance driver as Abel pretends to be an injured patient, he happens upon a beautiful beauty named Liliane (Sandra Milo of Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963) and *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965)) being beaten on the side of the road. Naturally, Éric promptly knocks out the pathetic woman-abuser and then boasts to Liliane, "The nice thing about me is my left." After Éric tells

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her a phony story in regard to their ambulance masquerade, Liliane agrees to join the group as a phony nurse and even maintains the charade after noticing a hidden machinegun inside the vehicle. Needless to say, Éric has not only found a new friend but also a new lover, as Liliane immediately starts a hot and heavy romance with the young gangster despite her quite different background as a theater actress. As for Abel, he may have acquired a new young friend, but he has lost two old ones as he ruthlessly berates both Riton and Fargier upon being reunited with them. Indeed, as Abel states to his old comrades with a certain visceral intensity, "But who sent a total stranger to Nice for me? It was you. And you. You two are pretty sly. You figure I didn't have much of a chance. So it starts off with a driver you hope not to find, and it ends with a cousin in Brittany." While Fargier remarks "He hasn't changed a bit" after Abel throws a violent fit that concludes with him smashing a large mirror and then storming out of his ex-pal's bistro, both he and Riton have become bourgeois bitches of the superlatively soft and pathetically self-centered sort. When Éric tries to comfort Abel by remarking, "You know...Riton and Fargier...you should forget them," the antihero calmly replies, "I already have. They don't exist any more." Since there is no way that he can provide a safe or healthy life for his poor now-motherless children, Abel decides to give them to his friend Chapuis' sister and then he proceeds to live a lonely life where he spends most of his time silently brooding in a tiny maid's room located inside the same apartment building where Éric lives. Needless to say, it is only a matter of time before Abel cracks or, more specifically, completely gives up on life altogether.

Since he needs escape money and future funds for the care of his children, Abel decides to do one more job that involves robbing a sleazy fence named Arthur Gibelin (Judaic Renoir regular Marcel Dalio), but unfortunately the miserable miser makes the ultimately fatal mistake of getting Fargier and, in turn, the police involved in a desperate attempt to get his stolen money back. Indeed, a certain police officer named Inspector Blot (Jacques Dacqmine) begins making threats against Riton and Fargier and they know they are next after Abel kills Gibelin. Leading a revenge campaign he begins with the murder of Gibelin after discovering that he hired a private investigator to follow Éric (whose identity he got from Fargier), Abel then kills Fargier by shooting him outside of his house in what proves to be a fittingly anticlimactic shootout between a virtual rabid bull and a bitch. Unfortunately, Fargier's wife Sophie (Michèle Méritz)—a beloved figure among the gangsters—dies in shock of a heart attack upon finding her husband's corpse, thus inspiring Abel to stop his revenge campaign just before he kills Riton. Aside from Sophie's shocking demise, Abel is also demoralized after Éric is shot in both his legs by Inspector Blot and arrested while in the process of warning the protagonist about the cops. Completely consumed with guilt and seemingly wishing for death, Abel tells his old friend Kid Jeannot

that he is done for good because, as he states with a certain manic intensity, "... I'm calling it quits. This is goodbye, Jeannot. Thérèse. Naldi. Sophie. And now Stark. I can't do anything for him. Understand? [...] Abel's gone. There's nothing left. Get the hell out, Jeannot. Do me a favor. Get out of here." In fact, Abel's proclamation of defeatism is so decidedly unbecoming and uncharacteristic that it even deeply disturbs a hardened criminal like Kid Jeannot who scampers out of his friend's hideout like a shocked child. Indeed, in the end, Abel disappears into a crowd of people on the street just as he once appeared at the beginning of the film. As the narrator notes in regard to Abel's patently pathetic and ultimately uncharacteristically passive acceptance of total defeat, "A few days later, Abel Davos was arrested. He was brought to trial, sentenced and executed." As for Éric, one can only hope that his love affair with Liliane works out and that he quits organized crime as the last honorable gangster, Abel, is dead.

While regarded as both a classic and masterpiece among many Francophile film fans today, *Classe Tous Risques* was such an abject failure upon its initial release that its auteur decided to give up filmmaking altogether, or as Sautet scholar N.T. Binh once explained, "That CLASSE TOUS RISQUES turned out to be a commercial failure was such a bitter disappointment to Sautet that he announced the abandonment of his career as a film director. But only two years later, when the film was discovered by a group of young cinephiles (including future director Bertrand Tavernier) and was rereleased on the art-house circuit, it had a spectacular reception and quickly became a cult favorite. Meanwhile, Sautet had returned to another career—as a clandestine adviser and script doctor on other directors' projects (including films by Jean-Paul Rappeneau, Louis Malle, Alain Cavalier, and Robert Enrico)." Speaking of Malle, although quite different aesthetically as a pastoral war drama, his film *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974) certainly makes for a great double-feature with *Classe Tous Risques* as a rare piece of cinema that dares to ask the hard questions and brings unexpected nuance and inordinate empathy in terms of depicting the desperate decline of an underworld collaborator who eventually finds death in the end (notably, neither film depicts the execution of its antihero, as if it would be in 'bad taste' to depict the state-sanctioned murder of a strangely likeable fascist thug). Despite its age, *Classe Tous Risques* also deals with timeless themes that still inform the philosophical essence of film and television today, not least of all *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) where one soon discovers that, typically, the only way out of a life of organized crime is either prison or death. Indeed, as Abel attempts to warn Éric, "Let me tell you something else, if you ever decide to do something else, something where you're sure to sleep in your bed every night, I'll be glad to hear it, wherever I am. I'm telling you because we always think we're clever. But if you stop standing your ground, you're nothing. You slip a little more every day...until...until you're nothing. Like today." Of course, the lead

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antihero of the hit HBO show spoke similar words and that is why it would not be a stretch to describe Abel Davos as the (proto)Tony Soprano of French (ex)Gestapo agents, albeit slightly less sociopathic (of course, it does not hurt that Guido lead Lino Ventura has a bull-like build comparable to Amero-wop James Gandolfini). Undoubtedly, my only complaint in regard to *Classe Tous Risques* is that it does not conclude on a similar note of disconcerting ambiguity as *The Sopranos*, even if it is not hard to predict what Abel's fiercely foredoomed future might be like.

In a somewhat recent review of Danish auteur Lars von Trier's *Befrielsesbilleder* (1982) aka *Images of a Relief*, I expressed my interest in films depicting the misery and desperation that typically haunted fascist types after World War II and I would certainly argue that *Classe Tous Risques* is one of the greatest of these films despite the director apparently having no clue it was based on a real-life French Gestapo hood. Additionally, I would argue that the novels of José Giovanni—a man that remained vocally 'right-wing' his entire life and clearly paid tribute his fascist comrades via his books—are a sort of wonderfully low-brow post-fascist continuation of the grand frog tradition of so-called 'literary fascism' as associated with Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Lucien Rebatet, and Thierry Maulnier. After recently re-watching *Classe Tous Risques*, I was certainly reminded of an unforgettable quote from P.P. Pasolini's swansong *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) when the fascist 'Duke' played by Paolo Bonacelli declares, "We fascists are the only true anarchists." And, of course, such an innately anarchic spirit explains how José Giovanni could have a successful artistic career after prison without anyone initially realizing his less than kosher background, hence why a Jewish (ex)Resistance fighter like Jean-Pierre Melville—a self-described "right-wing anarchist"—could so thoroughly identify with and deeply respect a work dreamed up from the mind of a man from the opposing fascist side. As for commies, they apparently were not interested in Sautet's deceptively meaty masterpiece or any of the great frog gangster flicks of the era as they preferred soulless social realist twaddle, or as Tavernier once explained, "Yet *CLASSE TOUS RISQUES*'s strength and originality were underestimated upon its initial release. It is true that gangster films had never been particularly popular with a whole segment of the French critical establishment. Journalists loyal to the Communist cause followed Georges Sadoul's lead in routinely panning them, even those like *NIGHT AND THE CITY* and *TOUCHEZ PAS AU GRISBI*, directed by filmmakers close to the party, insisting it was better to take an interest in workers and tradesmen than in criminals."

Of course, as a film that puts a premium on true masculine friendship, honor, respect, loyalty and masculine virtues in general, the film would certainly be considered 'fascistic' by today's exceedingly effete and self-destructively feminist film critics who despise any male character that is not a virtual eunuch. In that sense, *Classe Tous Risques* is not only a sort of crypto-fascist film noir, but

also—in the Peckinpahian sense—a visceral Gallic celluloid ‘death poem’ on the twilight of French masculinity, so it is only nature that Sautet would go on to direct lavish arthouse dramas like *A Heart in Winter* (1992) aka *Un cœur en hiver* and *Nelly and Mr. Arnaud* (1995) aka *Nelly et Monsieur Arnaud* featuring exceedingly emasculated and broken (yet ostensibly ‘misogynistic’) proto-male protagonists that have less testosterone in both their entire bodies than the technically-defeated Abel Davos has in his dehydrated piss. Of course, it is also no coincidence it is effeminate guys like Fargier and Gibelin that betray Abel as they are symbolic of a new spiritually neutered post-Vichy frogland where hos and dough come before true bros. Luckily, Sautet at least had an eclectic collection of friends including Giovanni, Tavernier, and Melville that supported his film and ultimately got him out of early retirement as a cinematic auteur. Although Sautet would go on to more ‘highbrow’ material like *A Heart in Winter* about the perils of being a romantically-retarded autistic introvert and receive much warranted critical acclaim for such films, Tavernier was probably right when he once wrote during his pre-auteur days as a film critic, “People say *CLASSE TOUS RISQUES* is a B Movie. Better B like Boetticher than A like Allégret.” Likewise, better a männerbund than a mangina, hence the difference in quality and testicular fortitude of the gangster films of Sautet and Melville to those of an overly-intellectualized autistic like Godard who even managed to make Über-bro Belmondo seem like a buffoonish bungling bitch that probably dreams of blowing Bogart. Of course, Abel Davos would have thought old ‘Bogie’ was a dick-downing queer.

-Ty E

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PAUL

Claude Sautet (1974)

While Rainer Werner Fassbinder—the ‘heart’ of German New Cinema—was not exactly a rampantly heterosexual geezer, he was a fan of many rampantly heterosexual films and filmmakers, both from his native Germany and Hollywood, as his early pre-Sirkian film noir/gangster flicks testify. Indeed, when interviewed by Hella Schlumberger in April 1978 for the German version of *Playboy* regarding, “people making films that you would have liked to make yourself,” Fassbinder named Klaus Lemke and his film *48 Stunden bis Acapulco* (1967) aka *48 Hours to Acapulco*—a rampantly heterosexual piece of celluloid if there ever was one—as one among only a handful of then-contemporary kraut films for which he displayed serious respect. A sort of Martin Scorsese of Deutschland, albeit more gritty, nihilistic, and taking a more raw realist approach, Lemke is best known for his reluctant love letter to the Hamburg underworld, *Rocker* (1972), but he has also directed a number of realist crime flicks starring mostly non-actors that anticipate the *Dogme 95*, with his work *Paul* (1974) aka *Ein Tag ist manchmal das ganze Leben* aka *Paul - Geschichte eines Ausgestoßenen* undoubtedly being one of his more notable cinematic works. Mostly revolving around a tastelessly charming kraut ex-con/small-time gangster who has just got out of prison and who spends most of his time aimlessly walking around drunk, insulting people in an exceedingly boisterously boorish manner, and hitting on used-up strippers/hookers who sport trashy wigs, one might describe Lemke’s little film as a realistic kraut comedy of the nihilistic post-WWII sort. Like his celluloid compatriots Eckhart Schmidt, Rudolf Thome, Roger Fritz, and Max Zihlmann of the ‘*Neue Münchner Gruppe*’ aka *New Munich Group*—an all but totally forgotten film movement that, somewhat unlike German New Cinema, sought to entertain and was daringly anti-intellectual in its essence—Lemke was more interested in cool criminals than feminist and neo-Marxist agitprop, even if the eponymous antihero of *Paul* is about as sensible as a gay autistic negro on crack. Like a Teutonic *Mean Streets* (1973) drunk off Paul Morrissey’s *Flesh* (1968), Lemke’s film is a rare crime flick that is as absurdly funny as it is just plain absurd. Filmed mostly around St. Pauli—a sleazy spot infamous for being Nordic Hamburg’s red-light district—and featuring authentic pimps and prostitutes as extras, *Paul* undoubtedly radiates a certain authentic grit and grime that most crime flicks lack. Indeed, a sort of anti-noir work where the male antihero is a ‘*homme fatale*’ who actually poses a discernible threat to female characters and not the other way around, Lemke’s 75-minute pernicious celluloid party seems like the hastily assembled and scatter-brained product of a raging dipsomaniac who has never seen a crime or film noir flick, as a truly anarchic work that breaks all the rules and conventions of its genre and them some.

After staying in the slammer for seven long years, auburn-haired Paul (played

by ex-sailor Paul Lyss) is finally released and greeted outside the prison by his uncouth criminal crony Jimmy (played by Lemke regular Jimmy Braker) and a couple seemingly dim and marginally attractive whores. After telling Jimmy that he looks like he is getting fat, Paul and his friends head back to an apartment and celebrate the jailbird's release by getting wasted and discussing various whores of all sorts. Indeed, after Paul explains how one of his ex-cellmates had a blowup sex doll that he did not bother to blow up even though he would blow it, he also describes his decided distaste for Bangkok hookers, as he believes they are no taller than chickens. While the two old friends seem to be getting along rather splendidly at first, Paul can sense there is something not quite right about Jimmy, so he smacks around the two prostitutes to see if they know anything and learns that his friend wants to murder him because he owes him \$250,000 marks (which is assumedly from whatever crime/robbery Paul committed to get sentenced to prison in the first place), but he has already blown all the money. When Jimmy sneaks in Paul's room with a handgun, the eponymous antihero bashes his friend over the head with a chair and runs away. With nowhere to really run or hide, Paul gets drunk and randomly shows up at the lavish home of a pretentious and seemingly impotent art dealer named Friedhelm aka 'Frank' Murnau (Friedhelm Lehmann), who is having an art show at his place featuring a live Jamaican band. On top of confusing Frank with Jimmy even though the two men look nothing alike, Paul, who seems more or less demonically possessed, causes a major scene at the degenerate art show by screaming at the all-black band to stop playing, insulting every single guest, and comparing all the paintings at the gallery to drawings he created when he was seven years old. Indeed, on top of obnoxiously asking Frank, "What kind of guy is that, is that a homo?," Paul leaves the party while yelling, "Mob...Riff Raff...Idiots...Abnormal," at all the startled partygoers. Of course, being a belligerent drunk, Paul soon goes right back to the party and attacks Frank, who is a posh pansy and barely fights back, even though the gangster felon is destroying his home and hitting on his beautiful wife.

Unfortunately for Frank, his classically stunning and exceedingly dainty wife Jane (played by Munich model Sylvie Winters) practically falls in love with Paul at first sight. At cuckold Frank's request, Jane naively drives Paul to the jailhouse where the dashing criminal, who absurdly wants to be put back in prison, was recently imprisoned. While Paul demands, "I want back in..I want back in my cell," to a guard at the jail, he is told that they do not run a homeless shelter, thus he must stay on the streets and face the wrath of his treacherous comrade Jimmy. After the gangster's failed attempt at having himself voluntarily imprisoned, Jane drives Paul to his favorite place in the world, the bar. While Jane is almost raped by one of Paul's friends, the antihero goes to a super seedy strip club where he is given a lap-dance by a meta-loose lady with an atrocious gray wig who seems to have a rather fine time grinding her poontang against her prized patron's wang.

PAUL

Eventually, Herr Murnau and his wife find Paul again hanging out with his underworld comrades, so everyone, including Jimmy, heads back to the art dealer's to get even more drunk in what is an ostensible utopian classless party between the rich and poor. While everyone is getting drunk at a dinner table, cuckold Frank, who is unquestionably jealous that his wife has such a strong infatuation with a common and rather uncultivated criminal like Paul, begins attacking his wife Jane. Naturally, Paul and his cronies don't take too kindly to Frank's violent behavior against his seemingly fragile statuesque wife, so everyone begins physically and verbally attacking him in his own house in a hyper hilarious scene of innately anarchic Teutonic slapstick absurdity. Indeed, even a prostitute verbally berates Frank by accusing him of being of an impotent show-off by remarking, "He wants to blow on his trumpet...play the exhibitionist with the big money, whoop it up...you know, he can't get it up and now he...He's not satisfied, he wants to play the king in front of his old lady. Sure, now she gets it, and then she has to fuck him. Dumb prick. He's a pig, a pig!" When the party is over, Paul and Jimmy leave together, with the latter remarking regarding the experience, "That was great. Almost like in the old days." Of course, Paul does not believe that Jimmy has gotten over his desire to liquidate him, so he coerces Jane to buy him an unregistered submachine Uzi from one of his con friends and begins looking for his treacherous friend around all the local bars. Jane attempts to stop Paul from ruining his life by murdering a mensch in cold blood, but he has already made up his mind. In the end, Paul not only kills Jimmy, but Jane as well as she unwittingly walks into the bar at the same time the angst-ridden antihero unloads his Israeli Uzi. Rather ironically, perennially cuckolded Frank begged for Paul to kill him only seconds before his wife is murdered. While Frank carries his wife away from the bar in a rather melancholy state as if he alone is responsible for her death, Paul walks out of the bar with a blank stare as if nothing has happened.

Judging by the almost exclusively unflattering pictures that I have seen of the filmmaker, auteur Klaus Lemke seems to be just as regularly inebriated by chemicals as the characters of his films and I am willing to bet that he was sometimes drunk and/or high when he directed his cinéma vérité-like gutter masterpiece of dipsomaniac delinquency, *Paul*. Apparently heavily influenced by the French New Wave, Lemke, not unlike Fassbinder, certainly seemed interested in playing with the conventions of old school Hollywood crime/film noir flicks just like *Godard*, but unlike *Breathless* (1960) aka *À bout de souffle*, Paul thankfully does not feature a single phony frog pretending to pull off his best Humphrey Bogart impression. Indeed, when it comes down to it, Lemke's film feels more influenced by the real-life lowlifes of St. Pauli than by other films, especially French New Wave works, which rarely seem gritty. Like Roland Klick's *Bübchen* (1968), Lemke's flick features a desperate and dispirited Deutschland where perennial drunkenness is a given and senseless nihilism and destruction reign in a cor-

rupted nation that seems to have yet to get over the quasi-apocalyptic effects of the Second World War. Needless to say, Paul is not the sort of crime-fetishizing film like *Scarface* (1983) or *Goodfellas* (1990) that would inspire teenage negroes to rob and rape elderly white women, as the work seems like it could have been directed by the aberrant Aryan grandfather of Harmony Korine as a perniciously playful and curiously darkly comedic kraut crime equivalent to *Gummo* (1997) in terms of its uncompromising realism and real-life-like randomness. Interestingly, despite the fact that the eponymous antihero is portrayed as such a mindnumbingly moronic and innately irrational individual that he gets plastered, kills his friend, and accidentally kills his love interested, he is still portrayed in a more likeable light than art dealer Frank Murnau, whose surname I cannot decide is a tribute or anti-tribute to the great *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) aka *Nosferatu*, a *Symphony of Horror* director F.W. Murnau (interestingly, Fassbinder previously included a character named Murnau in his (anti)crime flick *The American Soldier* (1970) aka *Der amerikanische Soldat*). Indeed, despite the lack of sophisticated socio-political subtext of *Paul*, it is more than clear while watching the film than the typical Alexander Kluge flick that there is seemingly nil future for anyone in the Fatherland, despite whatever class a person might belong to, be the person an impoverished prole or a cultured art fag with a raving trophy wife and trust fund.

-Ty E

THE HUMAN TORNADO
THE HUMAN TORNADO

Cliff Roquemore (1976)

Dolemite; an original accidental classic. With a track comic record that Rudy Ray Moore carried, his fame celebrated two different approach methods. A) Fans of the original comedian and his Dolemite character or B) Fans of blaxploitation classics and pimp hustling cheap film making. Rudy Ray Moore took his cult celebrity status and churned out many a film for him including 1 sequel to the original Dolemite and multiple offshoots. The Human Tornado is that sequel that I'm referring to. When one attempts to make a sequel to a trashy, vain, and racist film, one must keep the idea of the originals philosophy intact. Dolemite II is goofier, more action packed, and features the word "nigger" every other sentence. This especially fits well with the recent pact that Rudy Ray Moore has set forth claiming he will never say that word again. This makes me fear the success of The Dolemite Explosion. The Human Tornado features a different Dolemite character. It might be an alternate universe as seen in Jet Li's shitfest The One, but this isn't the Dolemite we grew up to love on. He is not as vulgar, his rhymes aren't as fresh, he doesn't kill honkies for fun, and there's no Hamburger Pimp. The action has improved and features self-parodying scenes of Dolemite performing an instant replay nude(!?) jump escaping from a white sheriff whose wife he just fucked. This is the catalyst for the story. The stupid hick killed his wife after seeing the Human Tornado tearing it up in bed (Through out this film, We see Dolemite woo several white women and partake in a sexual surrealist scene). Dolemite then goes on the run with his boys to California nearly escaping a man named Cavaletti who kidnapped his women to be tortured and executed unless his club is disbanded and his dancers work at his own club. What worked over its predecessor in this piece is the white hatred displayed by Dolemite and blaxploitation rookie Ernie Hudson (Ghostbusters). Dolemite needs a lift so he steals a car. Just happens to be the automobile owned by a flaming homosexual who Dolemite shrugs off and ignores. This Mark Hamill looking queer should have been shot and killed by the Black Panthers in my own opinion. The Human Tornado is as corny yet tragic as we love the series for, but I felt as a direct sequel to Dolemite, it was very lackluster. The action scenes were sped up and involved more classic kung-fu sound effects, but it didn't have that pimp flavor that I craved. I'd recommend this to only fans of the series, Never to a first-timer.

-mAQ

PETEY WHEATSTRAW

Cliff Roquemore (1977)

Petey Wheatstraw is blessed with an acute personality and surreal aesthetics that set it apart from the other self-funded 70s films that defined a genre. The set direction can only be borrowed from hallucinogenic masterpieces such as Julian Roffman's *The Mask* or José Mojica Marins' *Coffin Joe* anthology. The single greatest compliment to 70s blaxploitation is the creation of *The Devil's Son-in-law*. While many blaxploitation titles were far-fetched, few would cross boundaries such as Dolemite's own *Petey Wheatstraw*. In a similar "s-ploitation + Underworld" vein of *The Dragon Lives Again*, our favorite comedian finds himself in hell after his execution from rival comedians. Since his birth during a hurricane, Petey Wheatstraw was born a 12 year old with an affinity for ass kicking. It's these special skills that allow him to reign supreme in all of his characters. *Petey Wheatstraw* might be an accurate biopic on the life of Rudy Ray Moore. After promising Lucifer to wed his hideous daughter and create a spawn, Petey decides to steal his magic cane and hastily work towards outwitting the devil (by leaving town). The main thing here is that Petey becomes no one's bitch but his own. *Petey Wheatstraw* is one of Rudy Ray Moore's greatest achievements. His addition to cinema can be steadily overlooked as just another accidental spoof film but the layers are feathered deeper than presumed. With its incredible art direction of a 70s surrealist creation and nutzoid script ridden with laughable plot holes and awkward editing, *Petey Wheatstraw* even organizes time in a way to cleverly insert racial caricatures of the iconic "hood niggas" parodied in such timeless cartoons of ye olde' Disney. Such scenes as two Afrocentric Negroes on a porch sharing some delicious watermelon. Their only response is "Dis sho' am good!" and this is prior to the boy getting shot. Racism intact; Dolemite has inspired roughly two generations of rap music with his jive talk and constant rhyme scheme. His other outings swap circumstance with chance and inspire visual artists. There isn't a doubt in my mind that films like *Petey Wheatstraw* and *Disco Godfather* (Both experimental Rudy Ray Moore films) inspired the post-blaxploitation classics like *Pootie Tang* and infused the African philosophy of art that Spike Lee attempts to use in many of his brash and crass films of an anti-white nature. I'm sorry Mr. Lee but Eastwood won the race battle on this one with his personal piece, *Gran Torino*. Months before Rudy Ray Moore's tragic death, he had posted a Myspace blog explaining his recent decision to never say the word "Nigger" again. After creating an entire culture based on the versatility and counter-versatility of this word, his resignation of his own cultural movement proved to be of a shock. While many supported him, his protege's would not listen to reason. Snoop Dogg, who would be nothing without Dolemite, continues to use the word freely and even rather loosely. Whereas Dolemite films would express the term to a selected class of African-American,

PETEY WHEATSTRAW

modern rappers use this term to describe an average Joe. In Petey Wheatstraw, many continuity errors and problematic space/time conundrums occur. In one example, a thug wearing a sleek fedora gets rocked in the face causing his hat to fly off. The next edit leaves the guy getting punched again with his hat on. The reaction time for the thug to grab his hat and fit it back to his head is impossible which creates a quirky environment. One in which Petey grabs a 6 foot ladder to scale a multiple story building, but I guess art is art. Had Lucifer prevented the slaughter that occurred from ever happening, how did Leroy & Skillet acknowledge that Petey should be six feet deep? Ravenous hearts run rampant in Rudy Ray Moore's films. In most cases, you can expect a downbeat ending that serves as a PSA to urban youth. When the credits finally roll, you'll see that death takes its toll. In the case of this futureless setting, it seems ole' Petey will continue with the wedding. Petey Wheatstraw doesn't go far from raising the blaxploitation bar. Devil ho's and magic canes aside, you'll enjoy the hell out of this motherfucking ride. The rhymes grow thin, the room starts to spin, How could Petey ever hope to win? You barter with the Devil and you've sunken to his level. Rest in peace: The true pimp Dolemite. Even if your films are a bit anti-white.

-mAQ

SUDDEN IMPACT

Clint Eastwood (1983)

My forehead feels of plastic and Sudden Impact is yet another movie to add to the list of "Should have seen ages ago but only recently viewed." Dirty Harry, as you all know is surely a must-see and the very definition of renegade action cinema of both the eighties and nineties. Harry Callahan is a "psychopath with a badge" and a vigilante to end all vigilantes. While he encompasses that emotionless murderer that we all know and love, he also possesses a keen sense of his surroundings and is able to perform the most badass of detective skills while never losing his highlight of impeccable masculinity and taut stoicism within his frail old frame. Sudden Impact features Dirty Harry in another one of those "right man in the wrong time" devices that became so popular with the appearance of Die Hard - who cares which came first. Dirty Harry, for his own sake, is the silver screen tough guy to end most tough guys. Not even The Punisher who shares a similar interest in eliminating the baddies with little or no respect for life can touch the cold street smarts of Dirty Harry. What separates Dirty Harry's character formula is many things but the most infamous of all these is his expansive arsenal of one-liners and the ability to transform these one-liners, to completely convert the term into more of a verbal epitaph to do anything but honour the passing scumbag. It's these vanished assets that are missing from the modern action film. With John Cena films being released (along with the mystery of why on earth are these funded,) It seems that violent charisma, probable anti-heroes, and enough machismo to drown a hippopotamus are just a few of the things not to be found in today's hollow cinema. There's not really many other ways to put how Sudden Impact prevails as a classic in unbridled action and attitude. Take this clip in for example. Dirty Harry's character clearly predated Eastwood's role in Gran Torino. A shame that this time, in his prime, he didn't graphically call out these "spooks" for their thieving ways. I'm surprised these jolly-jive Negroes were holding up a diner instead of stealing TVs and bicycles and I'm pretty sure Dirty Harry was too, sucka!

R.I.P. Action This dearly departed niche of "too cool for school" rowdiness will be succinctly missed. Sudden Impact is commonly referred to as "the dirtiest of Dirty Harry" and these claims along with dignified visual evidence lead me to back these assumptions and opinions up with my own signature agreeing so. Never mind the fact that Sudden Impact is the only Dirty Harry film I can remember watching the whole way through. From the synopsis alone, mentions of a rape victim executing those responsible for her brutal attack clearly reminded me of a certain exploitation title many of you know as I Spit on Your Grave - Including generalizations, most of the rape/revenge sub genre will be grouped in as well. As the San Francisco police department cleverly call this armed feminine attacker Cockshot, the same moniker can be slapped on most of these estrogen

SUDDEN IMPACT

dripping "classics" as well. While I'll allow for this "Day of the Woman," It's painfully obviously that women get the short end of the stick during most, if not all, of modern horror films. Back in the 60s and 70s, however, that simply was a shocking sight to behold as most of these beautiful retro -chic broads were damsels in distress. What sets Sudden Impact apart from most of these exploitation titles is the implied rehabilitation with a dose of Harry Callahan as she watches the legend "exact justice the necessary way," and a sympathetic "anti-heroine." I find it incredibly uncommon to witness a vengeful female with whom I can express pity for. In most of these films such as Fiona, Baise Moi, and Last House on the Left, I wish to express my compassion towards these brutalized women but I can find nary an evidence of humanity. Sure, these gorgeous shells are people but in a way, their very life was a lifeless one at that. Sudden Impact not only features heart-stopping action with an implied gut-wrenching clinical reaction with its rape scene, but it also will stop no less than entertaining the hell out of you until its ending.

To return with a new paragraph, sleazy femme fatales always have a way of absorbing screen time but the result is merely a bag of shock and awe, no more, nor less. Substance is void and materialization of flesh is the only thing about this film. I always knew sex and violence sold but the further proof materialized with that of my discovery of the rape/vengeance genre. Sick sonuvabitches worldwide rent these films to gawk, uncomfortably aroused as these innocent delights are forced into lurid sex acts, witness slowly their decomposition as their soul evaporates. Once your morbid curiosity is fulfilled as soon as the group of males reach their climax, you claim to never have been interested in the opening act as it is "misogynistic" and can't wait for the revenge. For me, I always found the beginning of rape/vengeance films the most important act and to see such good carnal choreography go to utter waste with "refeminization" is a disgust to the psychosexual madness that lurks within. This sexual justice is only known for it being over the top schlock and even the most defensive feminist could not argue these facts. Sudden Impact is a film with brass, a cunning lead who mastered to art of a ice cold stare, and enough gun play to please even the most cynical fan of John Woo.

-mAQ

GRAN TORINO

Clint Eastwood (2008)

Gran Torino was film set to chase Changeling in the theatrical run. Directed by and starring Clint Eastwood, this film takes a diagonal and counter angle look at such franchises as Death Wish and other assorted revenge films, and spins an emotional web displaying life, the pursuit of happiness, and tolerance. Clint performs as Walt; a grizzled, jaded Korean war veteran that hates any and all walks of life. That is, until he meets to gook family next door that provides a savory view at racism throughout the times and how sometimes, people don't need to change their entire views on a culture. Accepting an entire culture might be a bit too much for an "old school" 70 year old. Clint Eastwood is one of the definitive American icons of all genres - Spaghetti Western, Drama, Action, Western, and many more. He has defied many physics by acting in films that can be called "brainless shoot em' ups" and then directing multi-Oscar winning pictures. The wrinkled man can attest for the majority of quality drama's seen in Hollywood today. Million Dollar Baby not only revived Hilary Swank's dead career (as dead as her role in that feminist-fuck Karate Kid film) but created a boxing film that interested people who weren't fans of boxing. In a way, Million Dollar Baby paved the way for many of the films you see today. When Gran Torino reach it's limited theatrical premiere, I'd read several reviews expressing a new distaste in Gran Torino. Seeing as how I refuse to watch Changeling, I expected it to be the same stale material that appears to have crafted that film. Gran Torino was a storm to brave through, I'll admit that. At first, I expected to loathe Eastwood's disheveled growl as much as the next guy who can't stand Bale's Batman voice. I was shocked to find it assimilate into the scenes perfectly and it didn't bother me no more. Even with the man being 78 years old, I still found myself intimidated by his hovering presence. Walt eventually reaches a point in which his racism is articulated and hilarious. When Walt reached out to help Ching-Chang Chong from a group of "spooks", I felt as if Walt had become my own personal hero. Gran Torino to me, is a piece reflecting a bit of Clint Eastwood's life. While I'm sure he is a happy man, the affinity for a vehicular relic and olden time hostilities lay presence. Who knows? Maybe all those years killing people on screen disturbed Clint Eastwood in ways unknown by the average actor. In the inevitable ending, Gran Torino was a success. My stomach aches now and I will cease to drone on about Gran Torino. Know that it shocked me and made me laugh. It's a rare treat to see such a weathered actor rise above expectations to create damn fine cinematic tragedies. Gran Torino is all what I wanted to derive from the experience. Clint's new film circles around the idea of Walt owning America cause he fought and killed for it, and damn if this film isn't American. A majestic look at the life of a rotten bigot; Gran Torino is a film that will stand aging. I will admit, I sure would have liked to

GRAN TORINO

seen Spike Lee's face when Clint called those uppity Negroes "spooks".

-mAQ

NIGHTBREED

Clive Barker (1990)

Despite Clive Barker's weaknesses as a director and lack of story cohesion, he always manages to direct a film that is at the very least interesting. *Nightbreed* (adapted from Barker's novel *Cabal*) is one of those films. The film is a jumbled mess of beautiful cinematography, unconventionally engrossing acting, and dark views into the discriminating mind of human nature. *Nightbreed* is a film that is like no other (just like all of Barker's other works regardless of what medium he is working in).

The masked family killer found in *Nightbreed* is played by no other than intellectual horror auteur David Cronenberg. Like Cronenberg's own films, his performance in *Nightbreed* is calmly calculated, progressively unexpected, disturbing, and sexually conflicting. Cronenberg's performance wasn't wasted as it was on the Friday the 13th franchise sci-fi slasher shitfest *Jason X*. A film so horrible that it makes me wonder if David Cronenberg was having monetary problems forcing him to join that wasted cause. *Nightbreed* features a virtual circus of monsters that have yet to appear in such vast number before it. This array of diverse monsters alone keep the film interesting enough for viewing. Mental case Boone decides it's time to live amongst the monsters in Midian (located under a graveyard with striking architecture). Many scenes featured in the monster realm of Midian look to derive influence from Federico Fellini's masterpiece *Satyricon*. Both films feature a variety of sequences briefly introducing interesting yet sometimes horrific individuals. These scenes are both surreal and in your face (as surrealism often is and should be). The weak elements found in *Nightbreed* are the result of poor editing and film construction. Clive Barker fell victim to the lack of faith 20th Century Fox had in the film. Barker was disappointed in final cut of *Nightbreed* and has recently promised a new cut with 25 more minutes of extra footage. I just hope the extra footage adds to the film unlike the director's cut of David Lynch's *Dune*. Despite its shortcomings, *Nightbreed* is a very enjoyable film that is very unique. One can only wonder the cinematic accomplishments the film could have made if it had a larger budget and greater support from 20th century fox. Studio systems have a vast and evil history of limiting film directors creative potential in the production of films. I just don't get what makes some lardo, cigar smoking degenerate think that he knows more about what the audience wants to see than the artist. The masses don't just enjoy films that cater to the lowest common denominator. They will support and follow great art if actually exposed to it.

-Ty E

A DAY WITH THE BOYS
A DAY WITH THE BOYS

Clu Gulager (1969)

Admittedly, Clu Gulager has never been one of my favorite actors, but he sure can play an agitating asshole quite convincingly as depicted in classic 1980s horror flicks like *A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985) directed by Jack Sholder and *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) directed by Dan O'Bannon, but I never would have suspected that the American folk actor had directed a 'horror' film of his own, let alone one of the artistically singular and morally dubious persuasion. Nominated for the illustrious Palme d'Or for best short film at the 1969 Cannes Film Festival, Clu Gulager's experimental avant-garde featurette *A Day with the Boys* (1969) is a curious first effort from a filmic-cowboy-turned-arthouse-auteur. Recently revived from absolute obscurity due to its inclusion as a special feature on the Criterion Collection DVD release of *George Washington* (2000) due to its thematic and aesthetic influence on director David Gordon Green's (*Undertow*, *Pineapple Express*) decidedly stark and unsentimental, realist coming-of-age flick, *A Day with the Boys* is a quasi-psychedelic celluloid daydream that seamlessly mutates into a nefarious nightmare about a modern day männerbünde of prepubescent boys who take things a little farther than playing a simple gamin game of cowboys and Indians while frolicking around town. Like a whimsical and kaleidoscopic marriage between the Hitler Youth-themed propaganda flick *Der Marsch zum Führer* (1940) aka *The March to the Führer*, Conrad Rooks' *Chappaqua* (1966), *Lord of the Flies* (1963), Věra Chytilová's *Fruit of Paradise* (1970) aka *Ovoce stromů rajských jíme*, and *Stand by Me* (1986), *A Day with the Boys* is surely a bittersweet treat for the eyes featuring a hectic hodgepodge of slow-motion sequences, acid-washed cinematography, celluloid solarization, Klimt-esque paintings, freeze-frame experimentation, but also an afflicting test for the soul that compels one to question to the duty of art. Like the curious borderline-kiddie-porn/coming-of-age flick *Maladolescenza* (1977) starring prepubescent-playboy model-turned filmmaker Eva Ionesco (*My Little Princess*), *A Day with the Boys* is a playful yet sometimes perturbing, psychotomimetic cinematic work that blurs the typically fine-line between original, cultivated art and highly-stylized, softcore child erotica.

Featuring immaculate and at-times otherworldly cinematography by Hungarian master cinematographer László Kovács (*Easy Rider*, *Five Easy Pieces*), *A Day with the Boys* oftentimes feels like a painting by German völkisch Symbolist artist Fidus come to life – except set in late-1960s America – due to its quasi-pagan Wandervogel-esque imagery. In a mere 18-minutes, this semi-surreal short does what feature-length films like *Julie Darling* (1983) and *The Good Son* (1993) could have only hoped to accomplish; depicting the human child as a cunning and conspiring killer. Part tribute to the 'innocence' of youth, as well as

the loss of such childhood purity, and part portrayal of manic mass-mindedness, *A Day with the Boys* examines the collective unconscious at its most rudimentary and consequently savage level. The film begins innocently enough with a nameless pack of whippersnappers cavorting around just as all young bucks should – playing with cap-guns, flying high on playground swings, and rummaging around in nature’s soil and forests in an inquisitive manner – but things take a turn for the worse when the micro-commandos encounter the eternal enemy: a middle-aged businessman attired in a spiffy suit – a sad symbol of perpetually lost youth. As a mature adult, the seemingly jolly gentleman sees the boys menacing demeanor as nothing more than harmless adolescent posturing and he even allows them to lead him to the woods as if he was an enemy combatant being dragged to execution. Unfortunately for the unsuspecting businessman, the renegade runts have reverted towards instinctive, atavistic homicidal tendencies, thereupon inevitably resulting in the bewildered adult’s earthly demise via being buried alive; undoubtedly a hefty price to pay for a utter taste of momentarily reclaimed youthfulness.

Unquestionably, the most unnerving and ethically dubious scene in *A Day with the Boys* is not the penultimate sequence when it is revealed the boys are merry mass murderers, but during the concluding visual epilogue where it depicts the keen killer kids splashing around bare-skinned in the water for an extended period of time in slow-motion. Indeed, *A Day with the Boys* sometimes feels like a softcore pedo-piece disguised as exceedingly elegant coming-of-age cinematic art, so as to occlude any suspicions from more thoughtful and perceptive viewers. That being said, the exposed wild boys scene is just the pederastic icing on the cake of what is very arguably America’s most artsy fartsy work of chicken-hawk cinema. I do not think I am being delusional nor harsh in my judgement of the film as my girlfriend and a couple friends arrived at a similar assessment of *A Day with the Boys* that was totally uninfluenced and independent from my estimation of it. That being said, one could argue that the victimized businessman could be perceived as a prospective pedophile because just like all pathological sexual perverts, he sincerely believes the boys want him and is quite exhilarated by their attention; so much so that he allows himself to be smothered to death by dirt, even when the young pups’ actions become increasingly negligent and positively precarious as their brief rendezvous progresses. Of course, only Clu Gulager knows the true motivation behind the film, but there is certainly a reason behind why *A Day with the Boys* – a work distributed by Universal Studios – is virtually unknown, even among seasoned cinephiles. Like American auteur Michael Cuesta’s controversial coming-of-age films *L.I.E.* (2001) and *12 and Holding* (2006), *A Day with the Boys* is a work foreordained to marginality due to its audacious artiness and beyond the pale subject matter that will only be appreciated by those fierce filmgoers mature enough to obstinately embrace it, as well as those more cultivated members of NAMBLA with cinephile proclivities.

A DAY WITH THE BOYS

-Ty E

LONG WEEKEND

Colin Eggleston (1979)

I once set out to see the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* directed by Peter Weir because I heard it was very atmospheric in nature. I have found very few films that have the ability to prove an engaging atmosphere from the film's opening to close. After watching *Picnic at Hanging Rock* I felt cheated. Despite the film's sometimes beautiful wilderness settings, the film ultimately failed in what it set out to do. It was not until I saw the "horror" film *Long Weekend* did I feel that I got my fill of mysterious Australian nature. In *Long Weekend*, a married couple in a deteriorating relationship set out for an Australian beach in hopes of fixing things. The couple is fairly cosmopolitan and seems to lack any type of roots with nature. By littering and hurting animals, they show their arrogance towards the outdoors. The man in the relationship attempts to feel and display power by shooting off a fancy rifle for no logical reason. It is not until things start getting on the Australian coastline does the couple realize the power of nature over man. *Long Weekend* has one of the most beautiful settings I have ever seen in a film. The Australian beach featured in the film looks like it has yet to be tampered by the corrosive hands of man. The water is of a pure dazzling blue that looks quite inviting to anyone that enjoys swimming. If someone were to flip through television channels and catch *Long Weekend* for a second, they might think that they are watching a nature documentary. The cinematographer of the film was not goofing around trying to shoot another "B" grade "nature attacks" film while shooting *Long Weekend*. The aesthetically pleasing nature of the film works in splendid contrast to the anti-nature attitude of the married couple. The woman is found out in the film to have an abortion. Not only has the couple denied the law of nature, but the reality of their own nature. The couple are the quintessential products of abstractive intellectualism and rootless cosmopolitanism. They are products of the death of western culture and the decline of civilization. It is no surprise that the birthrates of Europeans and people of European descent are dropping with each generation of the world. When one no longer feels their roots, their purpose of existence ceases to be. The married couple in *Long Weekend* are incapable of creating a family (let alone staying together), shun respecting natural law, and cannot sustain themselves without material objects. In a sense, nature puts them out of their misery. I was reminded of *Long Weekend* recently after watching the exciting and intense British horror film *Eden Lake*. The couple featured in the latter not only lack a connection with nature but also the sometimes viciousness of the man of nature who has yet to be deracinated from his "backwoods" roots. Both *Long Weekend* and *Eden Lake* feature a couple's demise due to their killing of an animal(s). Although man has dominated animal, it seems that man forgets that he is also an animal. It only takes a long weekend (or a few minutes) for a man to fare

LONG WEEKEND

against nature and its various exotic creatures.

-Ty E

CHAPPAQUA

Conrad Rooks (1966)

Out of all the experimental psychedelic avant-garde films to come out during the 1960s, affluent yet debauched druggo Conrad Rooks' curious semi-autobiographical work *Chappaqua* (1966) – a cinematic work featuring a schizophrenic array of color, black-and-white, and sepia tone imagery – is king. An heir to the Avon Products cosmetic gold mine, richie Rooks must have had a lot of free time on his hands to indulge in the finer controlled substances in life because by the time he was 18-years-old, he had already become an eclectic dope fiend; partaking in alcohol, cocaine, heroin, and virtually any other highly addictive narcotic pleasures on a day-to-day basis. Luckily for Rooks, he was a wealthy proto-flower-child of the 1960s and was able to travel to Europa to tryout an experimental "sleeping cure" at a clinic in Zurich, Switzerland, which was quite successful and, somewhat outstandingly, cured him of his merry malady for life. In his eccentric and exotic cinematic work *Chappaqua* – a nonlinear quasi-travelogue full of frightful phantasmagoric flashbacks, hallucinatory moments in a clinic, and various encounters with strangers both strange and spectacular – Rooks recounts his life shortly before and at the point of the cure. Featuring such high-profile hippies, junkies, and musicians as William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ravi Shankar, Ornette Coleman, Swami Satchidananda, Moondog, Ed Sanders, and Rita Renoir, among other celebrated degenerates and glorified charlatans of the 1960s, *Chappaqua* is a virtual "Who's Who" of trendy counter-culture gurus and outsider artists. With tons of cash to blow and a childhood where he was practically brought up in movie theaters, stating, "my mother used to leave me in one of the three local cinemas for the afternoon. Sometimes I went to all three in a day....And that sort of forced film culture stayed with me, so that from then on I always thought in terms of a story being told by the association of images," thus it was only the natural progression that Rook would day become a filmmaker. As the descent of American pioneers who settled in Virginia in 1622 and spent much time with American Indians, Rooks felt a special kinship with the red-man, hence the original of the title of his film *Chappaqua*, which derives from the Wappinger (a nation of the Algonquian Indians) word for "Laurel Swamp"; a sacred place of running water where one goes to bury the dead. The word 'Chappaqua' also had a special double-meaning for Rook as it was also the title of a poem he wrote, as well the name of the area of upstate New York where the auteur spent most of his life. Indeed, on top of featuring Rooks' rich white boy talk on Injun mysticism, *Chappaqua* also features Indian Hindi and American junky metaphysics of the convoluted and seemingly confused Burroughs-esque persuasion, thereupon making the film a heretical and often hysterical heteroclit counter-cultural cocktail of the most marvelously mongrelized persuasion. Inately labyrinthine in both structure and theme, *Chappaqua*, like Jean Cocteau's

CHAPPAQUA

candid drug diary *Opium: The Diary of a Cure* (1958), is a work that – whether intentional or not – makes a convincing case for both the pros and cons of illicit drug use, albeit in an exceedingly ethereal, histrionic, and abstract manner that is meant to speak to the soul as opposed to the intellect.

Starting his career in film as the co-owner of a short-lived production called Exploit Films that released softcore sexploitation films with risqué titles as *White Slavers* and *Girls Incorporated*, Rooks was eventually swindled by his dubious partner, who vanished without a trace with both, “the money and the girls.” According to legend, Rooks even taught Andy Warhol how to load a film camera, but judging by the pop-artist’s early films, his efforts must have been in vain. As testified by his celluloid magnum opus *Chappaqua*, it was not the soulless joy he experienced while engaging in hedonistic sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll that would inspire Rooks’ artistic creativity, but the tormenting tribulations and psychological phantasms that such unchecked abuse would sow in his personal life. Determined not to relapse back into drug abuse again, Rooks soon realized that by creating *Chappaqua*, he would be able to keep his demons in check. Using his inheritance and money borrowed from friends and family members, Rooks was able to produce the film for less than half a million dollars, which is not bad considering the professionalism behind this feature-length avant-garde film overflowing with so many iconic figures that it is a virtual visual holy scripture of counter-culture prophets, priests, and other unholy holy men. Almost made up of entirely improvised footage which was shot by utilizing three different cinematographers in places all around the world (Ceylon, England, France, India, Mexico, and 48 American states), Rooks did not assemble the stream-of-conscious narrative ‘structure’ to *Chappaqua* until deeply studying and interpreting all of the footage after it was already captured. For the press-book for *Chappaqua*, William S. Burroughs wrote the following description of the film: “There is a hiatus between blocks of association, rents as it were in the fabric of reality through which we glimpse the old myths that were here before the white man came, and will be after he is gone, a brief inglorious actor washed off the stage in the waters of silence. Rooks has brought to the screen the immediate experience of silent beauty conveyed in the Peyote vision – older Gods waiting impassively at the end of the line.” Indeed, *Chappaqua* is about as esoteric and poetic as Burroughs’ press puffery, and like the novels of the belated Beat writer, the film transcends the generally fine-line between horror and hallucination, dream and reality, conscious and unconscious, and – ultimately – heaven and hell.

Featuring hypnotizing hippie bloodsuckers, exotic human goddesses, cadaver-like junky spirits (Burroughs as ‘Opium Jones’), and gurus and melody makers under the influence in an awe-inspiring universe assembled by Conrad Rooks through more of spiritual intuition than the intellect, *Chappaqua* is a metaphysical horror film for those individuals that are more afraid of their own mind

under the influence than some retarded mute with a machete and a Halloween mask. Indeed, Chappaqua is one of the few examples where I would take heed of nutty professor Timothy Leary's popular counter-culture phrase, "Turn on, tune in, drop out" as the film offers some of the more positive attributes of psychedelics without the debilitating brain damage. As advertised in the press-book for the film, Chappaqua is ultimately a film about the "transformation of the main character thru ritual magic and exorcism of the evil spirit," with protagonist Russel Harwick (Conrad Rooks) as the possessed and clinic doctor Dr. Benoit (Jean-Louis Barrault) as the postmodern exorcist, thereupon making the work, despite its sometimes surrealist imagery, a singularly and somewhat embarrassingly personal work about a man in different stages of despair, angst, and eventual transcendental rebirth. Autobiographical elements aside, Chappaqua is a spine-tingling cinematic work featuring a bodacious buffet of kaleidoscopic imagery like no other film created before nor after it. Conrad Rooks would only direct one more film after Chappaqua, Siddhartha (1972) – a loose adaptation of German writer Hermann Hesse's novel of the same name – which is no surprise considering both works feature a young protagonist as they find themselves with an existential journey of sorts. It should be noted that – being a fan of W.S. Burrough's writings – Rooks bought the film rights for the novel Naked Lunch (1959) in 1962 and originally intended to adapt it for the silver-screen, but the seemingly impossible task would later go to David Cronenberg. In my opinion, Rooks did a much better job depicting the often miserable and sometimes maniacal life of a discombobulated junky than Cronenberg did with Naked Lunch (1991), but, then again, Canadian auteur was never hip to Cocteau's kick. Like Burroughs, Rooks was a trust fund enfant terrible who probably never did a real day of work in his entire life, thus making Chappaqua a testament to the fact that even opulent opium fiends can make positive contributions to society.

-Ty E

DEAD LEAVES
DEAD LEAVES

Constantin Werner (1998)

Dead Leaves is an anime film which is noted for its breathtaking visual flair and nihilistic attitude. These word-of-mouth nominations give clear praise towards the disgustingly short film (43 minutes) and it deserves every one of them. With a visual style comparable to FLCL, Dead Leaves does nothing but provide dick & fart jokes and blend it with a dystopian landscape which surface crawls with extreme carnage.

Retro & Pandya (aptly named) are two bizarre creatures who awaken on Earth with no prior memories to what caused them to crash land on Earth in the nude. After a 3 minute ultimate destruction spree to get weapons, food, and transportation, they are locked up and sent to a prison which is structured on what's left of the Moon. Together, they will have to put their heads...and their genitals together to escape and find out what really happened. The plot is over-the-top and the action is ludicrous. The style of animation is a unique way of preserving the background while exclaiming the action and broadening the onomatopoeia's to give a "Retro" appearance and create it's own specific mood. The pacing is what really shines. At times, I couldn't tell if I was frustrated at this film or if I was just having too much fun. At the fragile run time of 43 minutes, It's hard to really get absorbed into something so fast, but it all pans out fine in the end. The creatures which populate the world of Dead Leaves provides a Guillermo Del Toro-esque population which breathes life into the busy crowds the same way Stan Winston creates his fantastical caricatures of Aliens, Dinosaurs, and other beasties. 666 and 777 are the "sub-bosses" of Dead Leaves. Their designs seem to relate and/or borrow from various video game characters sprawling many platforms. 777 seems like a blue version of Potemkin from Guilty Gear and 666 is like Kiros from Final Fantasy VIII. All in all, an excellent animation surprise forms a frantic, high octane action epic sprawling a ruler's length in time. Too short, but too sweet. I'd like there to be a 6 episode series as much as the next fan would, but I doubt will see more of these two's adventures. If you like your nudity bizarre, sexual situations deranged, and gore and violence extreme and comical, Dead Leaves is right up your alley.

-mAQ

DEAD LEAVES

Constantin Werner (1998)

Dead Leaves (1998) is one of the few films from the east coast that actually captures the drowsy and depressing atmosphere so prevalent from eastern city to city. The film follows a lonely young man as he takes his dead girlfriend on a tour of various eastern coast locations as he makes his way from New York City to West Virginia. The young man doesn't say much and his dead girlfriend only talks when the man has haunting (yet loving) memories of her. It is important to be respectable when in the presence of a dead loved one. German born director Constantin Werner ultimately tells a somber tale of love and death. Dead Leaves is a film appropriately narrated by the tragically dark poems of Baltimore poet Edgar Allen Poe. The poetry of Poe was also able to capture the dispiriting nature of the east coast. Whether it be a cold and wet winter or the deadness of the fall, the east coast is the appropriate place to tell a melancholy tale. When I think of the falls I spent growing up on the east coast I think of Dead Leaves. Dead Leaves begins with the emotionally desolate and follows progressively towards heavy-hearted spiritual enlightenment. The film is an art house film for those individuals that have accepted the inevitable end. A time where a love lost and a life lost parallel one another. The protagonist in Dead Leaves knows his time is steadily approaching its conclusion. Dead Leaves is one of few films that captures this growing feeling of despair. Music by Rozz Williams (of Christian Death) and Gitane Demone compliment the overall hopeless mood of Dead Leaves. It is important for a film like Dead Leaves to have a similar auditory feeling to the overall visuals of the film. Dead Leaves is a film that works in its mood and progressively builds upon that mood. The American east coast is truly a fairly ugly and somberly atmospheric place. Dead Leaves is the ultimate tour guide on a road trip of the place that I call home.

-Ty E

BABA YAGA
BABA YAGA

Corrado Farina (1973)

For the most part, I loathe comic book film adaptations and the sort of collective autistic escapism and delusional of grandeur that they sire, including basic bitch Hollywood liberal actor Chris Evans—a spiritual eunuch with a Jewess fetish that is probably best known for portraying the extremely gay ass Marvel Comics character Captain America—thinking that he is somehow a righteous superhero in real-life and passive-aggressively threatening to beat up Identity Evropa founder Nathan Damigo (who righteously punched some violent female commie antifa-thug-cum-porn-star that has been fittingly nicknamed ‘Moldylocks’). Indeed, there are few things I find more repugnant than seeing some obscenely overweight middle-aged neckbeard in public sporting some superhero shirt that would normally be worn by a 7-year-old kid. Needless to say, it should be no surprise that some of my favorite cinematic comic adaptations are films that I did not realize were comic adaptations the first time I watched them. For example, Italian horror maestro Michele Soavi’s darkly comedic and even merrily misanthropic zombie flick *Dellamorte Dellamore* (1994) aka *Cemetery Man*—a film based on a novel by the author Tiziano Sclavi’s own *Dylan Dog* horror comic (which inspired the horrendous celluloid turd *Dylan Dog: Dead of Night* (2011))—is a personal favorite and a film that is just too cool, sexy, and non-autistic to seem like it was made appeal to virginal fanboys that fap to Harley Quinn fan art. Decades before Soavi, another Italian auteur named Corrado Farina, who had next to nil success during his short-lived career as a feature filmmaker, created what is indubitably one of the most erotically oneiric and visually arresting comic adaptations ever made. Based on Italian architect turned comic artist Guido Crepax’s comic *Valentina*—a very ‘cinematic’ comic strip series of the erotically-charged counterculture orientated sort that features an eponymous heroine inspired by iconic silent film actress Louise Brooks—Farina’s second and final feature *Baba Yaga* (1973) aka *The Devil Witch* aka *Baba Yaga*, *Devil Witch* aka *Black Magic* aka *Kiss Me Kill Me* is undoubtedly one of the great forgotten Italian horror films of the 1970s as a fairly idiosyncratic flick that totally transcends its mostly formulaic genre. The Guido answer to Belgian auteur Harry Kümel’s carpet-muncher cult classic *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) in terms of atmospheric lesbo horror between a powerful yet evil older woman and a younger and sexually vulnerable chick, Farina’s flick is loaded with a number of unforgettable visual orgasms. Indeed, a work of rather refined aesthetic decadence, *Baba Yaga*—a film that is indubitably too artsy fartsy and non-linear for gorehounds and too trashy and politically correct for anally retentive arthouse fags—is a virtual Gothic counterculture fashion show in cinematic form that is equal doses heaven and hell in terms of sheer imagery and atmosphere. While based on the comics of a so-called ‘revolutionary’ artist that was heavily influenced by the

leftist zeitgeist of the late-1960s, the film is also flagrantly 'fascist chic' and features hot chicks in SS and Prussian uniforms. Indeed, forget the pseudo-blonde she-bitches with retarded fake kraut accents in *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* (1975) and related nauseatingly insipid Nazisploitation trash, the Sapphic SS sluts in Farina's flick have a certain demonic diva elegance that transcends hokey historical clichés.

Long before he directed his underrated first feature *Hanno cambiato faccia* (1971) aka *They Have Changed Their Face* (1971)—an allegorical vampire flick featuring corporate bloodsuckers that pays tribute to the great cinematic masterworks of German Expressionism (e.g. the lead vampire's name is 'Giovanni Nosferatu')—Farina refined his filmmaking craft by directing tons of commercials and documentary shorts. In fact, he once directed an insightful short doc entitled *Freud a fumetti* (1970) about comic artist and *Baba Yaga* source writer Guido Crepax. Undoubtedly, Farina's short but sweet 10-minute doc makes a great primer for his feature as it reveals Crepax's strong cinematic influences and how his comic work is highly suitable for filmic adaptation. In fact, erotica maestro Tinto Brass was so impressed with Crepax's work that he hired him to create storyboards for his early candy-colored giallo *Col cuore in gola* (1967) aka *Deadly Sweet* aka *I Am What I Am*. Notably, Crepax was so obsessed with cinema and cinema history that he not only included iconic cinematic figures ranging from Erich von Stroheim to Louise Brookes to Ingmar Bergman to Boris Karloff in his work, but he also adapted a scene from Sergei Eisenstein's classic anti-Teuton war epic *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) in comic form in a intricate manner that closely mimics the musical rhythm of the film in terms of how he laid out of the images. Needless to say, like Crepax's comics, *Baba Yaga* features a sort of refined cinephilia that pays tribute to the darker side of classic cinema. Indeed, the film references everything from German master auteur F.W. Murnau's lost flick *Der Januskopf* (1920)—an unofficial adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—to Jean-Luc Godard's classic feature *Pierrot le Fou* (1965). Thankfully, the film does not feature the sort of masturbatory and carelessly contrived postmodern cinephilia that is typical of someone like Tarantino. For example, the heroine and her beau go to a screening of German Expressionist classic *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* (1920) aka *The Golem: How He Came into the World* directed by Carl Boese and Paul Wegener, only for said characters to later encounter a sort of non-Judaic neo-Golem in the form of a porcelain baby doll in bondage that comes to life as a result of a powerful witch that uses the object to kill and torture her enemies. Thankfully, the killer doll in Farina's film is more sensually sinister than the evil ventriloquist dummy featured in the old school British horror flick *Devil Doll* (1964) directed by Lindsay Shonteff.

As a general rule, I find it nearly impossible to take comic books nerds, especially adult ones, seriously, yet auteur Farina seems to have fairly good reasoning

BABA YAGA

for obsessing over the cultivated doodling of comic maestro Crepax. Indeed, to Farina, Crepax created an entire elaborate metapolitical *Weltanschauung* that not only transcended the comic medium, but also aesthetics and politics, or as the filmmaker articulated in the Blue Underground featurette *Farina & Valentina*, “It was revolutionary in terms of content, because it dealt with mysteries or magic or esoteric themes. The stories were ever more esoteric, bizarre and difficult to decode. But more than anything, it was linguistically revolutionary. By this, I mean that Crepax brought to the language of the comic strip an amazing breath of innovation comparable to what Jean-Luc Godard had done a few years previously for the cinema.” For better or worse, *Baba Yaga* is certainly a metapolitically revolutionary work that is very much of its rather debauched time, but thankfully it is also a fetishistically phantasmagoric fever dream featuring Sapphic SS sluts and statuesque beauties with shapely jumbo jugs that features the nice little novelty of incessantly blurring the line between risqué reality and fucked fantasy. In that sense, the film deserves to be favorably compared to frog filmmaker Roger Vadim’s underrated quasi-Cocteau-esque lesbo Gothic horror flick *Et mourir de plaisir* (1960) aka *Blood and Roses*.

About a decade ago or so, I used to think archetypal flapper Louise Brookes was fairly hot despite her proto-clithopper haircut and fairly average and not-so-curvy body, but then I realized she was a less than dainty dyke and her overall dykeness became too painfully obvious to me to the point where I found her more annoying than arousing. Undoubtedly, Farina puts Brookes’ lily-licker legacy to great use in *Baba Yaga*, which features a Brookes-esque heroine named Valentina Rosselli (French actress Isabelle De Funès in her most famous acting role)—a fashion photographer that likes taking photos of half-naked woman and black-on-white miscegenation—that comes under the spell of a sinisterly Sapphic eponymous blonde witch with savagely sadistic tendencies. Valentina is a somewhat uptight bitch that not only regularly denies pussy to her hack filmmaker boyfriend Arno Treves (George Eastman of the nasty celluloid turd *Antropophagus* (1980) directed by Joe D’Amato), but also says a lot of pretentious bullshit to him, including trashing his hero Godard as indicated by her snidely expressed remark, “Your guru hasn’t done anything of merit since PIERROT LE FOU. I’d much rather see Laurel and Hardy. You can expect a laugh.” Indeed, it is only when the heroine comes into contact with a literal witch that kills her hot female friends that she realizes the importance of a good man and seems to get over her rather dubious donut-bumper phase. Featuring Carroll Baker of *Baby Doll* (1956) in an underrated role as a mischievous MILF that attempts to use both her well preserved body (notably, Baker actually convinced auteur Farina to do a full-frontal nude scene for the film, though it was cut when it was originally released due to censors) and evil magic powers to enslave a girl that seems to have forgotten that she has more of an innate thirst for cock than cunt, *Baba Yaga* is—whether intentional or not—a cautionary tale about the per-

ils of dykedom and how a woman always make for a sad and sorry replacement when it comes to a man's job.

In what ultimately proves to be her first big mistake, Valentina—a proud arm-chair 'revolutionary' that is not beneath calling her best friends 'fascists' if they dare to not tow the pinko party line—expresses her shallow feminist independence by denying her beau Arno poontang and then insisting that she walk home by herself after a party. Indeed, after bitchily saying to Arno, "Listen to me. I don't feel like making love with you. Not tonight. Ciao," and parting ways with a man that seems to genuinely love and adore her, Valentina happens upon a lone German Shepherd in the street with a strange occult symbol inscribed on its fur. After expressing more affection to the dog than her boyfriend, Valentina gets somewhat of a shock when a fancy black car appears out of nowhere and nearly plows down both her and the mysterious canine. Before the heroine knows it, a beautiful yet seemingly Svengali-like middle-aged blonde emerges from the car and demands that she get inside the vehicle so that she can drive her home. Speaking in a fairly cryptic yet overtly carnal manner, the blonde immediately acts in a sexually predatory manner and states to Valentina, "It wasn't the dog. I was driving too fast. I knew something was about to happen. Our meeting was preordained." While in the car, the blonde also demonstrates her sharp Sapphic aggressiveness by feeling up Valentina's leg and then snatching a belt from her garter belt, which she promises to bring back to her the next day, even stating to the somewhat bewildered heroine with a certain sassy arrogance, "I need a personal object of yours. Be assured that I'll return it to you tomorrow." Rather inexplicably, the blonde knows exactly where Valentina lives and when the heroine gets out of the car, she declares to the female protagonist with the utmost self-importance, "Don't forget my name. My name is Baba Yaga." Not all that surprisingly, later that night Valentina has a troubling nightmare where two demonic divas in SS officers and the same German Shepherd she encountered that night escort her to a large dark pit that she is forced to strip naked in front of while an extremely cold and arrogant-looking SS man (auteur Farina) holding an evil looking kitty cat looks on. The same man will proceed to haunt Valentina in various forms, including as a policeman and Prussian officer, but she will always remain in a passive, if not slavish, position during these sadomasochistic nightmares that are clearly dictated over by Sapphic sorceress Baba Yaga.

Just as she previously promised on the fateful night when they first met, bodacious blonde witch Baba Yaga swings by Valentina's swinging pad and returns her "delightful little object" (aka garter belt button), though it is ultimately just a pretense to curse the heroine's beloved camera. Indeed, to Valentina's great distress, her favorite camera is turned into a magical weapon that hurts anyone she takes a photo of, including her voluptuous model friend Toni (Angela Covello) and some random hippie dressed up like Jesus that she spots in public holding a poorly made "GOD IS DEAD" sign. Toni is a beautiful brunette with virtu-

BABA YAGA

ally immaculate tits and an extremely extroverted personality, but one snap from Valentina's cursed camera immediately causes her to collapse and develop some inexplicable and completely debilitating illness that leaves her bedridden. Probably due to all the dope and commie literature that she has consumed, Valentina does not immediately realize the pernicious power of her accursed camera until it is too late. Meanwhile, Baba Yaga passively bides her time and allows the camera to do her work for her in the hope that Valentina will soon be her own personal slave and sexual plaything.

Despite cursing her camera and bringing chaos to her life, Valentina unwisely decides to pay Baba Yaga at her home, which is the sort of less than humble abode that you would expect from a carpet-munching witch with refined tastes. Indeed, Ms. Yaga lives in a large and somewhat dilapidated chateau of sorts that has, among other things, a seemingly bottomless pit in the living room and a wealth of ancient and mostly sinister seeming exotic trinkets. Under the pretense of taking photographs, Valentina snoops around the upstairs of the house where she finds a creepy vintage baby doll with a rather revealing bondage outfit. Somewhat unexpectedly, Valentina becomes so aroused upon finding one of Yaga's black leather gloves that she opts to masturbate with it while lying on a seemingly rather uncomfortable steel bed without a mattress. While masturbating, Valentina reveals her sickly masochistic side by fantasizing about a scorpion attacking her nipple and a crow pecking at her bushy pussy. Rather predictably, Yaga walks in on Valentina while she is diddling herself, though the heroine tries to play it off by complaining that she is suffering from a "dizzy spell." Clearly convinced that she has the heroine under her spell in both the literal and figurative sense, Yaga demands that Valentina take home the S&M baby doll, which is named 'Annette,' though the dopey heroine becomes somewhat concerned when the witch declares, "She will protect you from any harm." Unbeknownst to Valentina, the doll is demonic and deadly and can take human form (notably, the rather delectable Slavic-blooded Italian actress Ely Galleani portrays the doll in human form).

While an 'anti-bourgeois bourgeois' bitch that makes nonsensical statements about "revolution" despite living in a fancy and elegantly decorated apartment that she clearly could not afford on a meager prole's budget, Valentina is not beneath making racially-charged jokes to goofy negroes. Indeed, when her friend Romina (Daniela Balzaretti) and an unintentionally humorously effete negro come to her flat to take part in a degenerate interracial photo shoot, Valentina reveals she might be slightly counterrevolutionary when she states to the ambiguously gay colored gentleman, "Let me see some nice primitive drive, ok? Like your ancestors. You know, the ones in the jungle that ate up the missionaries." A sort of walking and talking cliché, the black boy is what one might describe as a 'magical negro' as he can somehow sense that the porcelain doll Annette is evil and thus he wisely refuses to touch it. Unfortunately, Romina is not so

wise and soon finds herself mysteriously pricked by the doll's antique hair pin, which leads to her becoming immediately sick and eventually dying as a result of a mysterious illness. As a result of suffering a nightmare where she is dressed as a Prussian soldier and executes a completely unclad Romina on a beach while Yaga (as well as auteur Farina sporting Prussian officer regalia, including a monocle and iron cross) looks on, Val feels extremely guilty about her beautiful model friend's rather dubious death. Needless to say, Yaga is willing to use her magical powers to kill anyone so long as it gets her what she wants, namely Val as a sexual slave and protégé.

Unlike the heroine, Valentina's boyfriend Arno is a fairly unpretentious and no bullshit kind of guy that has no problem admitting that he is a "whore" that directs worthless TV commercials instead of creating highly personal auteur pieces (although just speculation, I think that Arno is a sort of stand-in for director Farina, who spent a good portion of his life directing TV adverts). Indeed, when Valentina goes to visit Arno on a film set, he is directing a pleasantly politically incorrect TV commercial where a guido gangster turns a negro crook into a small human-shaped mound of black debris after throwing white laundry detergent on him. In that sense, Arno is just as much of an illusionist as Baba Yaga, albeit not as erotically magnetic when it comes to turning Valentina on. Naturally, it is Arno that must save Valentina from both her abersexual compulsions and Baba Yaga's sinisterly Sapphic metaphysical grip. While Arno does not initially believe his loony lover's claims in regard to Yaga being an evil dyke witch with magical powers that can kill, he does eventually realize something erotically evil is a work when he sees photographs of Annette the doll in human form attacking belated model Romina. Rather conveniently, Valentina and Arno's sexual relationship improves just as Yaga begins to catch the heroine in her malefic metaphysical grip.

When dyke dominatrix doll Annette takes on human form, seductively kisses the heroine on the lips in a teasing fashion, and then walks out of her flat with her favorite camera, Valentina naturally senselessly decides to follow her back to Baba Yaga's ominous chateau like a sex-starved Sapphic somnambulist that is looking to engage in some hardcore lesbo scissoring. Of course, Annette has merely lured Val to the old hot hag's house so that Yaga can imprison her there forever, or so she tries. Indeed, while Yaga initially treats Val in a wickedly sweet and charming fashion to somewhat camouflage her true malevolent motivations, the witch now feels fully confident to take complete ownership over the airheaded heroine. Indeed, although Yaga initially attempts to seduce her by completely disrobing and sensually declaring while proudly exhibiting her completely stark-naked body, "You belong to me, Valentina, so don't you forget it. I have already demonstrated I can do with you as I like," Val coldly rejects the seduction and bitches like a frigid virginal feminist on the rag, "NO! I couldn't care less about powers and riches and your cosmic secrets. And don't try to tell me

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who to make love with! Because no man has ever done that, let alone a woman.” Naturally, since Val refuses to submit willingly, Yaga opts for somewhat harsher methods and, with the help of slavish sex doll Annette, the wanton witch strips, ties up, and brutally whips Valentina. Needless to say, passive-aggressive bitch Val—a girl that is more bark than bite—is no match for the seasoned sorceress and her deadly delectable doll, so naturally it ultimately takes a man to get the job done right. Indeed, somehow Arno realizes that Val is at Yaga’s house and that she is in serious danger, so he immediately takes action and comes to her rescue. With very little effort, Arno smashes Annette the doll into pieces, though it is ultimately Val that literally takes down Yaga by somewhat unintentionally causing her to fall down the bottomless pit in her darkly lit living room. In a somewhat uneven twist ending, cops show up at the house immediately after Yaga is dispatched and reveal that the building has been abandoned for some time. In fact, even the bottomless pit is no longer bottomless. Either way, it seems Valentina has been literally scared straight in regard to Sapphic sexuality and thus will devote herself to dedicated dick Arno.

While surely one of the more neglected Italian horror films of the 1970s, I doubt anyone would dare to describe *Baba Yaga* as an immaculate masterpiece, including the film’s auteur Corrado Farina. In fact, in an interview featurette entitled *Farina & Valentina*, Farina laments on his failure to fully realize his artistic vision and pay greater tribute to Crepax’s source comic, stating with obvious regret, “My idea, which unfortunately was only realized in small part, was to make a comic-inspired film using Crepax’s strip as a starting point, which in turn used film as a starting point. I wanted to somehow come full circle. My idea was only partially realized in a few sequences. Namely those in which I used overexposed photographs in an attempt to approximate the graphics in Crepax’s comic strips. I also used a layout similar to the way Crepax laid his panels out on the page. Those sequences do try to capture the language used in the comics, but only two or three sequences remain in the film. In the rest of the film, I was unable to achieve that rhythm and composition, that comic flavor that I was hoping for.” Notably, during the same interview, Farina does a fairly admirable job summing up the film’s legacy and its importance in the context of Italian cinema history, remarking, “Currently, I have made only two feature films: *THEY HAVE CHANGED THEIR FACE* and *BABA YAGA*. But it’s interesting that after 30 years . . . these two films are enjoying a moment of popularity that exceeds by far the fame they enjoyed when they came out. In any case, I think that their so-called ‘second youth’ is due to the very fact that they are genre films of a very . . . if you’ll excuse the pun . . . a very particular genre. They go beyond pure and simple horror. They’ve become a testament . . . more so *THEY HAVE CHANGED THEIR FACE*, but also *BABA YAGA* in some ways . . . to a specific historical and cultural time, which is the ‘70s in Italy.” Indeed, Farina may have only directed two films, but they are fairly

singular auteurist works that place the filmmaker alongside Giulio Questi (*La morte ha fatto l'uovo* aka *Death Laid an Egg*, *Arcana*) and Alberto Cavallone (*Spell – Dolce mattatoio* aka *Man, Woman & Beast*, *Blue Movie*) in terms of being an unsung maestro of genre-bending Guido quasi-avant-garde horror.

As someone that has probably had more experience with lipstick bisexuals and lesbians than most men, I am oftentimes annoyed by the shallow and superficial, if not downright phony, portrayal of Sapphic psychos, deranged dykes, and menacing carpet-munching witch bitches in horror cinema. While I can certainly appreciate the cold and callous portrayal of crypto-dyke cunt Mrs. Danvers in Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 adaptation of English bisexual novelist Daphne du Maurier's classic Gothic romance *Rebecca*, Jesús Franco certainly did not demonstrate any profound understanding of the psychology of unhinged lily-lickers in his many (pseudo)lesbianic sexploitation flicks. Although directed by a seemingly rampantly heterosexual man and starring similarly sexually sane women, *Baba Yaga* somehow has a surprisingly authentic Sapphic essence. Additionally, the film manages to underscore the sadomasochistic dynamic of dyke behavior without seeming too stupid or exploitative. Indeed, although somewhat aesthetically different cinematic works, Farina's film somewhat reminded me of the quasi-expressionistic avant-garde S&M erotic flick *Mano destra* (1986) directed by and starring Swiss dyke dominatrix Cleo Übelmann. Additionally, I also would not be surprised if British auteur Peter Strickland watched Farina's film in preparation for his latest dark dyke romance *The Duke of Burgundy* (2014). On the other hand, *Baba Yaga* certainly never quite reaches the esoteric Sappho sadomasochism of a Ulrike Ottinger film like *Freak Orlando* (1981). While the film might be arousing to some lesbos of both the sadistic and masochistic sort, it is, quite thankfully, not exactly LGBT-friendly as a provocative cinematic work where a somewhat emotionally erratic and surely politically retarded girl must be saved from literally evil lesbians by her tall, dark, and handsome boyfriend. Undoubtedly, *Baba Yaga* is a film where, not unlike various works of German Expressionism and Fernando Di Leo's bizarrely foreboding giallo *La bestia uccide a sangue freddo* (1971) aka *Slaughter Hotel*, the form dictates the content and the story unravels like a stream-of-conscious nightmare. In short, Farina's flick is a wild and wanton ride where the viewer has the distinguished opportunity to get lost in a delectable deluge of amorous aesthetic decadence where nothing is as it seems. I must confess that *Baba Yaga* is one of the few films I can think of where I found myself totally willing to overlook its more glaring flaws due to my shameless obsession with its entrancingly dreamy imagery and overall sexy style. Indeed, the film is like a Alain Robbe-Grillet flick that been been directed by a mere mortal as opposed to a sadistic scatter-brained postmodern-intelligent-demigod. Needless to say, *Baba Yaga* is also one of the oh-so few cinematic comic book adaptations that you can show to a prospective lover without seeming like an autistic man-child and/or virginal omega male. In

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fact, I sense the film would be more appealing to gals than guys due to its rather refined depiction of exquisite female flesh, fashionable wardrobes, and overall extremely feminine essence, though both genders were surely find something to be aroused by. After all, there exists no other film with such a eerily erotic baby doll in bondage gear and a fascist chic aesthetic, not to mention the fact that Baba Yaga features the titular blonde bombshell star of Baby Doll in one of the most strangely sexy MILF roles in cinema history.

-Ty E

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Coſta-Gavras (1988)

Admittedly, it is not that often that a subpar Zionist Hollywood movie inspires me to read a 400-page book co-written by two less than literally gifted small town journalists, but such is certainly the case with the largely forgotten shit flick *Betrayed* (1988) directed by Greek-French auteur Coſta-Gavras (Z, Hanna K.) and penned by exceedingly ethno-masochistic and seemingly spiritually caſtrated Hungarian-American screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (*Basic Instinct*, *Showgirls*). Indeed, a fairly typical example of Hollywood raping facts and molding them to fit their own poſt-Trotskyite Zio-ganda agenda, the film—a virtual *Gone with the Wind* of Zionist produced neo-Nazi flicks—is loosely based on the thrilling real-life ſtory of white nationalist martyr Robert Jay Mathews and his underground European-American revolutionary group *Brüder Schweigen* (aka *Silent Brotherhood* aka *The Order*) and their rather insanely ambitious attempt to rage war againſt the U.S. government and reclaim the United States for Europids. After initially watching Coſta-Gavras’ debut Hollywood feature, I was appalled by the film’s absurd diſtortions and decided to read *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America’s Raciſt Underground* (1989) by veteran Denver reporters Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt so that I could at leaſt learn the basic facts in regard to the rise and fall of Mathews and the *Brüder Schweigen*. While I expected Mathews and his motley *Männerbünde* to be moronic Hitler fetishiſts and demented dope-addled criminals, *The Silent Brotherhood* revealed a truly tragic ſtory about somewhat misguided yet hardly ignorant men with patriotic ſpirits comparable to America’s founding fathers. Although involved in rather ambitious bank robberies, counterfeiting operations, and political assassinations over a period of about a year between 1983 and 1984, moſt of the men in the *Brüder Schweigen* lacked any ſort of criminal record and its member included mailmen, war veterans, former high school basketball ſtars, farmers, deep sea divers, college ſcholars, etc. In ſhort, the admittedly quite bad ass bros of *Brüder Schweigen* were not brain-dead skinheads with shitty homemade tattoos that liſtened to third rate punk music, but largely likeable and reſpectable men that truly believed in what they were doing and, in ſome caſe, ultimately accepted death over defeat and perennial incarceration to cowardly ſnitching. As Flynn and Gerhardt’s book reveals, the actions of the *Brüder Schweigen* make the neo-cowboy bank-robbing depicted in David Mackenzie’s *Hell or High Water* (2016) ſeem terribly trite by comparison. A ſort of real-life (and leſs autiſtic) white nationalist equivalent to the character Dignan from Wes Anderson’s debut feature *Bottle Rocket* (1996), Mr. Mathews was, deſpite his flaws, a relatively pure of heart man that was virtually unanimously beloved by his followers and who practiced what he preached to the point where he literally ſacrificed himſelf for them and became a martyr to the cauſe. Indeed, after a very long and intense ſtandoff with

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75 armed federal law enforcement, Mathews was burned alive as a result of an FBI agent firing three M-79 Starburst flares inside the house that he barricaded himself inside. Needless to say, Coșta-Gavras' highly fictionalized depiction of Mathews and the Brüder Schweigen is a grotesque injustice in terms of sheer historical fact, yet the film is not without its intriguing elements, namely its depiction of the FBI as more or less a morally bankrupt outfit led by power-hungry nihilists that lack principles and are just as criminally-inclined as the lawless terrorists that they so ruthlessly seek to destroy. In short, Coșta-Gavras might hate fascists, but he seems to hate the FBI and United States government just as much. After all, as the *Betrayed* reveals, while the FBI agents have sold their souls to a corrupt government, the white revolutionaries at least have ideals and are fighting for a cause that they truly believe in.

Admittedly, I am no Coșta-Gavras connoisseur and have come to the conclusion that the auteur spent at least the first decade or two of his filmmaking career attempting to remake Judaic Guido Gillo Pontecorvo's commie classic *La battaglia di Algeri* (1966) aka *The Battle of Algiers* (in fact, Coșta-Gavras would collaborate with the film's screenwriter Franco Solinas on his anti-American agitprop piece *État de siege* (1972) aka *State Of Siege*), but I have also come to the conclusion that, socio-politically speaking, *Betrayed* is not your typical Hollywood political-drama-thriller and certainly benefits from being helmed by an (ex)arthouse auteur. Additionally, Coșta-Gavras' revolutionary heritage (his father was a card-carrying commie that, among other things, fought in the Pro-Soviet branch of the Greek Resistance) is certainly to the film's advantage. Indeed, instead of simply depicting them as solely braindead knuckle-dragging neo-nutzis like most Hollywood movies, the white nationalists in the film are at least depicted as genuine revolutionaries that are fighting against an innately corrupt government, albeit for their race and community instead of the superficial intellectual abstraction of the proletariat. While the white nationalists are portrayed as hardworking proles that love their country, the FBI members are presented as pathetically deracinated opportunistic yuppies, snobs, and psychopaths that crave power for power's sake and are more than willing to do the government's dirty work to obtain said petty power. Of course, *Betrayed* is also plagued with some disgusting absurdities, including a sickening scenario where a group of white nationalist hillbillies hunt down and kill a negro in the woods with a certain sadistic glee, as if they are hunting for deer for sport. While the Brüder Schweigen assassinated an enemy and killed a traitor, they certainly were not prone to targeting random negroes or other nonwhites, as they considered such senseless savagery to be counterproductive to their cause. It should be noted that the film's screenwriter Joe Eszterhas is a pathetic ethno-masochist of sorts who refused to visit his own father, Hungarian aristocrat Count István Eötvös, on his deathbed because the old man was once a member of the nationalistic Arrow Cross Party. Indeed, not unlike Eszterhas' subsequent cinematic collaboration

with Coŝta-Gavras, *Music Box* (1989), *Betrayed* features a rather dubious message that it is morally righteous to betray a loved one and/or family member to a corrupt government if that person shares certain less than politically correct political views. On top of that, both films feature a laughably insipid feminist message that becomes all the more patently absurd when one realizes that Eszterhas penned such compulsively sleazy films as *Basic Instinct* (1992) and *Showgirls* (1995). In short, Eszterhas is probably the most to blame for the films' rather retarded post-shoah pseudo-moralizing.

Undoubtedly, you know a film about an infamous white nationalist revolutionary group is going to have certain insufferable Zionist and cultural Marxist agitprop properties when the very first inter-title reads, "An Irwin Winkler Production." As his discernibly Hebraic name clearly indicates, Winkler is a pride member of the Judaic tribe and he has even produced a number of films glorifying Jewish criminals, including *The Gambler* (1974) penned by James Toback and directed by fellow tribesman Karel Reisz and alpha-shabbos goy Martin Scorsese's sick Zio-fantasy *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). At the beginning of *Betrayed*, an odiously obnoxious Jewish radio show host based on Alan Berg—a loathsome figure whose assassination was also depicted in Oliver Stone's largely forgotten celluloid turd *Talk Radio* (1988)—is gunned down in a parking garage shortly after he gets done finishing a show where he baits anti-Semites by stating things like, "Jew-boys. Anti-Semitism, racism, hate. I know there's a lotta kike-haters among you nice Gentiles." Needless to say, like the real Herr Berg—a seemingly quasi-sociopath with a fetish for black women who was supposedly gunned down by Brüder Schweigen member Bruce Pierce with a MAC-10 in his own driveway—the Jewish radio host, who makes Howard Stern seem like a cultivated gentlemen and scholar by comparison, is a hardly sympathetic character, but since he is a high-profile individual the FBI begins investigating his mysterious murder and ultimately hires a less than dainty dame named agent Catherine Weaver (played by real-life Jewess Debra Winger) to infiltrate a small Midwestern farming community to see if some of its populous are part of an underground white nationalist network that is suspected of the incendiary Israelite's murder. Since the assassins spray-painted "ZOG" on both the Jewish radio host's corpse and car, the FBI is convinced that white nationalist carried out the murder, but they have no evidence to support their suspicions. A cold and oftentimes highly irritable childless single woman that seems to be emotionally impenetrable, Catherine has nil family members because she lost both of her parents in a car crash when she was just a wee babe, thus she makes the perfect undercover FBI agent due to her lack of familial responsibilities and seemingly deep-seated longing for a family of her own. Unfortunately for Catherine, she does not expect to be effortlessly seduced by the Midwest's foremost white nationalist revolutionary.

While working undercover as a combine driver—a hopelessly blue collar job

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that demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that the heroine is a less than dainty dame with an incurable case of penis envy—under the phony name Katie Phillips, Catherine soon finds herself falling in love with the local white revolutionary leader and acquiring a sort of adopted nuclear family where she feels complete for the first time in her exceedingly lonely life. Indeed, widowed Vietnam War veteran Gary Simmons (Tom Berenger)—the leader of the revolutionary group and a character that is very loosely based on real-life white national martyr Robert Jay Mathews—has not touched a woman in years since his wife died under dubious circumstances, but he immediately becomes entranced with Catherine upon first meeting her and it is practically love-at-first-sight, even though Catherine is a somewhat frigid bitch who seems disgusted at even the thought of a man daring to hit on her. Unfortunately for Catherine, Gary is a passionate, confidant, devilishly handsome, and charismatic charmer that knows how to get what he wants. Naturally, Catherine refuses to believe wholesome and sensitive family man Gary is a hateful killer, especially after he makes love to her and makes her feel like a real woman for the first time in her entire life. Of course, no unlike Mathews, Gary is a dichotomous individual with a dark murderous side that is well hidden beneath his rather welcoming and charming Adonis-like exterior. Additionally, like Mathews, Gary believes everything he says and is completely convinced that he is doing the Lord's work by leading a white nationalist militia that is responsible for assassinating the world's most obnoxious Jewish radio host. Needless to say, like Mathews, Gary seems to have been inspired by the white revolution depicted in the racially apocalyptic dystopian novel *The Turner Diaries* (1978) written by pseudonymous writer Andrew Macdonald (aka physicist turned National Alliance founder William Luther Pierce).

Catherine works for an exceedingly arrogant twat named Michael 'Mike' Carnes (John Heard) who, despite being an (ex)lover of the heroine, has no problem whoring her out to a 'lowly' blue collar mensch that he despises and wants to destroy. Indeed, Catherine is Mike's hot twat honeypot, though he gets extremely angered when he discovers that she has begun a real romantic sexual relationship with handsome alpha-male Gary, who has a natural sort of raw masculinity energy that the somewhat bourgeois self-absorbed FBI stooge lacks. A deracinated WASP that is more or less the opposite of Gary when it comes to the cultural, racial, and spiritual, Mike naturally has no problem having a quasi-sociopathic negro named Al Sanders (Albert Hall)—an inordinately cold and stoic spade that seems like he could be the big brother of the psychopathic serial killer 'Pluto' played by Michael Beach in Carl Franklin's *One False Move* (1992)—as his right-hand man. As Al's action ultimately demonstrate, he is a remorseless killer that is able to get away with coldblooded murder simply because he works for the FBI. As big black Al tells Catherine when she expresses great discomfort as a result of being whored out by the FBI and being

put in a very potentially deadly situation, “Everybody uses everybody, girl. It’s just a matter of what you’re being used for. What it is . . . is the only important thing.” Undoubtedly, Al would certainly be labelled an ‘Uncle Tom’ by the average urban negro, even if he kills white nationalists, as he has sold his soul to the FBI. While both Mike and Al are cold and calculating cynics that have no problem putting the lives of innocent citizens in danger if it benefits their careers, they seem to thrive on crushing Gary and his crew because they are a serious threat to the bureaucratic anti-working-class machine that they serve. Indeed, they are operatives of what Gary describes as “ZOG” (aka ‘Zionist Occupied Government’). Undoubtedly, if it was somehow proven to Al and Mike that the United States was unequivocally under the control of Zionist Jews that put Israel before the U.S., they would not mind as they are unscrupulous opportunities that live solely for personal gain. Indeed, while she never clearly articulates it in a specific way, Catherine has serious doubts about the intentions and methods of her bosses and coworkers.

The patriotic son of a vocal tax resistor and Sons of Liberty member that committed suicide after the IRS put a lien on his farm and depriving him of his livelihood, Gary has good reason to loathe the government and the people that serve it. As a Vietnam War veteran that received an award for being wounded and almost received the Medal of Honor for bravely killing a bunch of gooks on a suicidal mission, Gary practices what he preaches and is not some sort of hypocritical armchair warrior. Unbeknownst to Catherine, Gary has taught his young children Rachel and Joey to hate Jews, black, other assorted mud people, queers and race traitors. Due to the fact his wife left him because of his political views, Gary decides to completely indoctrinate Catherine into the cause shortly after they become a couple, thus soon tainting the heroine’s love for him. Indeed, under the pretext of going on a ‘hunting’ trip, Gary horrifies Catherine by more or less tricking her into get involved in brutally murdering a young negro man with other members of his revolutionary group. When Catherine emotionally breaks down after witnessing the coldblooded murder of the colored gentleman and expresses her horror and disgust in regard to the incident, Gary makes a feeble attempt to comfort her by stating, “Aw, come on, Katie. Come on, now. It was just a nigger. Don’t make too much out of it. There’s plenty more where he came from. I didn’t want there to be anything between us. I love you that much that I wanted you to come. If you love me, I got nothin’ to worry about. But if you don’t, I don’t care about goin’ to jail. But one thing’s for sure; we’re gonna kick the hell outta ZOG [...] Zionist Occupation Government. It means the goddamn Jews are runnin’ our country with their nigger police.” At this point, Catherine resolves to immediately run away from Gary and seeks comfort in her less than comforting fellow FBI employers, but Mike tells her that she must go back so that they can build up their case and destroy the white nationalist cell. To make matters worse, Gary’s pal Wes (Ted ‘Buffalo Bill’ Levine in a fairly under-

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rated role)—a convicted felon that is known for raping men and attempting to wage war against native negroes in South Africa—rightly suspects that Catherine is an informant or undercover agent of some sort (or what Gary describes as a “grasshopper”), especially after she nearly runs him over with her large pick-up truck while fleeing from Gary. Luckily for Catherine, Gary loves her too much to take Wes’ claims seriously.

Like Robert Jay Mathews and the Brüder Schweigen (which managed to snag nearly \$4 million in less than a year during their robberies), Gary comes up with an elaborate plan to begin robbing banks so that his group can build up a war chest and have the monetary means to cause serious destruction to the United States government. Indeed, Gary hopes to start a racial civil war of sorts that will result in America becoming a completely racially and culturally homogeneous judenfrei Aryan utopia. Somewhat absurdly, Gary wants Catherine to take part in the robberies, as he wants her to be a part of every aspect of his life. During their first bank robbery, the FBI monitors the area yet opts not to intervene so Catherine is forced to shoot a fat elderly security guard as a result. To make matters worse, FBI house negro Sanders shoots Wes, who ultimately dies an extremely painful and agonizing death in Catherine’s arms. Despite their previous animosity, Catherine and Wes started to bond a little bit before the bank robbery, so the heroine is naturally horrified by the murder and especially by the fact that the rather quirky revolutionary died in her arms. In fact, negro Al even proudly brags about killing Wes and describes the experience to Catherine as “terrific” and being “Like cleaning something off my shoe.” Naturally, with murderously arrogant government employed negroes like Al, it is easy to see why there are cutthroat revolutionary groups like Gary’s. Indeed, not unlike Gary and his group in regard to nonwhites and race traitors, the FBI has dehumanized Gary’s gang to such an extreme degree that they derive sadistic glee from killing its members in cold blood. Naturally, as a decidedly duplicitous dame that lives a virtual schizophrenic existence where she finds it impossible to become totally loyal to either the FBI or Gary’s group, Wes’ murder only further compounds Catherine’s growing resentment and disillusionment towards her emotionally parasitic and obscenely opportunistic employers to the point where her mental stability begins to become compromised and she questions everything that she is doing. On top of loving Gary, Catherine has developed strong emotional bonds with certain members of the group, including a benign grandfather-like figure named ‘Shorty’ (John Mahoney) who, despite loathing violence and murder, decided to join the revolutionary group after a bank stole his farm and the Vietnam War claimed his sole son. Like many of the members of the Brüder Schweigen, the members of Gary’s group have legitimate personal grievances against the government, which is using the IRS to systematically destroy Midwestern farmers and dispossess them of their farms and livelihoods. In short, the government and its anti-citizen/anti-farmer/anti-white policies are directly

responsible for the growth of white nationalist movements, or so the film clearly insinuates. Indeed, while the film is obviously anti-Nazi, it also dares to reveal that the white revolutionaries are the natural consequence of a corrupt globalist government that cares nothing for its most loyal and patriotic citizenry.

Not unlike Coşta-Gavras' subsequent collaboration with Joe Eszterhas, *Music Box* (1989), *Betrayed* concludes with an unintentionally absurd twist of cold feminist betrayal. Indeed, when Gary reveals to Catherine that he has discovered that she is an FBI agent just before he aims his rifle at a corrupt politician with dubious hidden ties to white nationalism that he plans to assassinate, Catherine responds by whipping out her service revolver and killing him with a single bullet in a somewhat unconventional demonstration as to why female careerism is totally toxic when it comes to male-female relationships. Notably, right before Catherine kills him, Gary cries, "Oh, God! I loved you, Katie" and finds it impossible to shoot her first even though he knows she is a traitor that has been secretly keeping tabs on him and his group. Of course, it also does not help that Catherine agreed to Gary's proposal of marriage only a couple days before. In the end, Catherine is so emotionally tormented by the entire experience that she immediately quits the FBI because she rightly believes they exploited her female wiles and then hits the road to wander aimlessly like some degenerate Beat poet. Not surprisingly, Catherine, who genuinely loved the man she killed, is so haunted by Gary that she thinks she sees him at a random bar, as if she will be forever tormented by his figurative ghost. In the very last scene of what is indubitably completely senseless sappy and sentimental feminist swill, Catherine actually gets the gall to pay a visit to Gary's daughter Rachel despite the fact that she murdered the little girl's father, thus leaving her and her older brother with no parents. Indeed, somewhat ironically, although she suffered the loss of both of her parents at an early childhood, Catherine did not think twice about consigning a helpless little girl to the same sorry fate, thus contributing to the vicious cycle of bastardization. Of course, the message of *Betrayed* is that it is much preferable to have dead parents than neo-Nazis ones, but I guess that is what one should expect from a film that was penned by a man that disowned his own father and even refused to pay him a final visit on his deathbed due to his political views.

Undoubtedly, I think it is a fairly auspicious time for me to review a film entitled *Betrayed* about the parasitic menace of ZOG. Indeed, with President of the United States Donald J. Trump's recent betrayal of all of his follows and campaign promises, removal of White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon from the National Security Council and disposal of Bannonism, and siding with warmongering neoco(he)ns and his insufferably smug candy ass Jewish son-in-law Jared Kushner—the Zionist extremist son of a convicted felon with ties to ultra-evil international chosenite George Soros—American certainly seems plagued with a Zionist Occupied Government that puts the interests of a foreign wel-

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fare state, Israel, over its own citizenry. Undoubtedly, Trump's grave betrayal is exactly the sort of thing that provides credibility to Robert Jay Mathews and Brüder Schweigen, as it demonstrates that peaceful political change is a fantasy, democracy is a laughable charade, and that all politicians are shabbos goy puppets that work for Israel first and America second, hence the groveling support of the Hebraic apartheid state among both democrats and republicans. Needless to say, Costa-Gavras' film is, in a somewhat conventional way, a piece of big budget Zionist propaganda that depicts Midwestern farmers as potential terrorist and blames sociopathic WASPs for the corruption of the extremely pro-Zionist FBI. Surely the film's depiction of white revolutionaries hunting and killing a negro for sport is nothing short of a grotesque leftist fantasy that bears no relation to any of the actions taken by the Brüder Schweigen, which actually forbid its members from senselessly attacking nonwhites. In fact, the scene is so senselessly stupid that lifelong leftist and negrophile Robert Ebert was even offended by it, or as he wrote in his 1988 review, "Another element that bothered me much more was a particularly disgusting and violent scene in which Berenger and his right-wing buddies capture a black man and then stage a 'hunt' in which they chase him through the forest at night and finally kill him. It is reprehensible to put a sequence like that in a film intended as entertainment, no matter what the motives of the characters or the alleged importance to the plot. This sequence is as disturbing and cynical as anything I've seen in a long time – a breach of standards so disturbing that it brings the film to a halt from which it barely recovers. I imagine that Costa-Gavras, whose left-wing credentials are impeccable, saw this scene as necessary to his indictment of the racist underworld he was exposing. But BETRAYED is not a small, brave political statement like Z, it is a Hollywood entertainment with big stars, and vile racist manhunts have no place in it." Indeed, the only purpose of the scene is to instill an irrational of the white revolutionaries in the viewer, which of course is quite typical of post-Eisensteinian Hollywood Zionist propaganda.

It should be noted that, out of all the great films he starred in, Tom Berenger regards *Betrayed* as his personal favorite and even off shrugged the film's detractors by stating, "It was exactly what it was meant to be." As a rare Hollywood actor with genuine masculine attributes, it is easy to see why Berenger would like the film, though one can only speculate as to whether or not he sympathized with his character. By all accounts, the real-life Mathews was a charismatic man's man that was respected by everyone that knew him to the point where many of them risked their lives and freedom for him, hence why Brüder Schweigen immediately fell apart after he was murdered. Needless to say, quite unlike the protagonist of the film, Mathews never had his estranged wife killed or engaged in big-black-game hunting, among other libelous absurdities. Additionally, Mathews and his men only targeted degenerate parasitic entities with his robberies, including porn shops, dope dealers, and banks. A sort of white

nationalist Robin Hood, Mathews was also quite generous and was always willing to help out a friend in financial trouble, even before he began robbing banks. In fact, Mathews, not unlike Berenger's character, was kind and honest to a fault to the point where he refused to believe that one of his followers, low-class Philadelphia bum Tom Martinez, had become a FBI informant to save his own sorry ass from imprisonment after being hit with counterfeiting charges (notably, William Baldwin portrayed Martinez in the weak made-for-TV movie *Brotherhood of Murder* (1999) featuring Peter Gallagher portraying Mathews). After reading *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground* by Flynn and Gerhardt, I can only come to the conclusion that Mathews was a tragic individual that could have lived a long and fruitful life were it not for his overwhelming longing to engage in a David and Goliath scale war against a corrupt government that he somewhat rightly believed was waging a war against his people and slowly but surely transforming his nation into a multicultural third world dystopia. Undoubtedly, over the three decades since Mathews' untimely death, America has degenerated into untermensch cesspool of sorts, thus completely confirming his greatest fears.

Ultimately, Mathews was burned alive on December 8, 1984 in a house near Freeland, Washington on Whidbey Island by the FBI after a standoff that lasted about two days that involved 500 FBI agents and cops. While surrounded by FBI agents in the house he would soon die in, Mathews managed to pen a suicide letters of sorts that more or less expresses Berenger's character's sentiments and the nature of the white FBI agents in the film. Indeed, Mathews' final words read as follows: "We all knew it would be like this, that it would be our own brothers who would first try to destroy our efforts to save our race and our terminally ill nation. Why are so many white men so eager to destroy their own kind for the benefit of Jews and the Mongrels? I see three FBI agents hiding behind some tress to the north of the house. I could have easily killed them, I had their faces in my sights. They look like good racial stock yet all their talents are given to a government which is openly trying to mongrelize the very race these agents are part of. Why can't they see? White men killing white men, Saxon killing Dane; When will it end? The Aryans' bane? I knew last night that today would be my last day in this life. When I went to bed I saw all my loved ones so clearly, as if they were there with me. All my memories flashed through my mind. I knew then that my tour of duty was up. I have been a good soldier, a fearless warrior. I will die with honor and join my brothers in Valhalla. For blood, soil, and honor. For faith and for race. For the future of my children. For the green graves of my sires. Robert Jay Mathews."

Undoubtedly, the story of Robert Jay Mathews and the *Brüder Schweigen* could make for a truly great epic political-thriller, but *Betrayed* is unfortunately not that film. Somewhat ironically considering his Hebraic background, William Friedkin—a rare Hollywood filmmaker that has never been afraid of politically

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incorrect or morally dubious subject matter as his sod S&M slasher flick *Cruising* (1980) clearly demonstrates—would certainly make for a fit director for such material, but of course a reasonably objective movie about a group named Brüder Schweigen will never be made in the Bizarro World nightmare factory known as Hollywood. After all, as the great anti-communist Russian novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once wrote, “For a Jew, nothing is more insulting than the truth.” In terms of the basic facts and interviews with actual members of the Brüder Schweigen, the rarely-screened ABC News doc *Inside the Hate Conspiracy: America’s Terrorists* (1995) is certainly watchable, at least as far as Zionist produced propaganda is concerned. In a semi-covertly Zionist nation with the largest Judaic population in the world, a mostly exclusively Israelite-owned mass media, and a seemingly all-powerful lobby group known as American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) that has cuckolded the United States Congress and both major political parties, the Brüder Schweigen will always be depicted as boogeymen while members of the partly Jewish leadership of the commie terrorist group the Weather Underground Organization (WUO) currently teach at American universities and brainwash white kids into hating their race, culture, and history. In terms of his sheer character and selflessness, Mathews also makes for a much better revolutionary hero than cowardly mass murder and rapist Che Guevara (who, incidentally, had a rather low opinion of negroes). Indeed, only when teenagers begin wearing Robert Jay Mathews and Francis Parker Yockey t-shirts will American youth have finally discovered a legitimate form of rebellion and not the sort of phony and self-destruction pseudo-rebelliousness that is fed to the by the sub-literate neo-minstrel performers, debased wiggers, limp-wristed white liberal ethno-masochists, and Hebraic hipsters of Hollywood and the entertainment industry. Franco-Grecian commie Costa-Gavra’ sort of carelessly convoluted hick Hollywood answer to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Notorious* (1946) starring homely Hebrewess Debra Winger as the Ingrid Bergman character, *Betrayed* is reasonably entertaining, features semi-sexy characters, and even includes the nice little novelty of self-described “hill-billy Jew” Ted Levine portraying a murderously paranoid neo-Nazi with a gay rapist past, yet it is also a work of audaciously asinine agitprop that unwittingly gives credence to the theory that America is under the control of a Zionist Occupied Government that is systematically destroying and dispossessing American’s white working-class backbone, hence the birth of the Brüder Schweigen in the first place. Indeed, the last thing white proles need after a long hard day of work is to be confronted with the condescending and hypocritical anti-white celluloid garbage that is being incessantly vomited and defecated out by the liberals and Jews of Hollywood, or so Alan Berg learned the hard way after spewing out years of anti-goy vile to his thoroughly debased listeners.

-Ty E

THE REBELLION OF RED MARIA

Coştas Zapas (2011)

Just in time for the upcoming convergence of catastrophes and eventual capitulation of Europa – especially the severely stagnating and decaying Mediterranean, otherwise known as old Europe – decidedly decadent and deliriously debauched Greek auteur Coştas Zapas (Uncut Family, The Last Porn Movie) – one of the last truly uncompromising auteur filmmakers in the world – released his politically-charged and quasi-pornographic work *I antarsia tis kokkinis Marias* (2010) aka *The Rebellion of Red Maria* in apocalyptic anti-tribute to the death of revolutionary leftism in the Occident. Putridly ‘punk rock’ and passively pornographic in persuasion, *The Rebellion of Red Maria* was released only two years following the economic crisis in Greece and clearly wallows in such an uncertain world on the verge of absolute chaos as the height of ‘freedom’ and personal liberty, where one can rape and murder without consequence. Centering around a strikingly degenerate fellow who calls himself “Red Maria” – a middle-aged ex-commie terrorist turned tranny prostitute – who takes on a young protégé he finds beaten to a pulp in the street and revives by molesting his genitals and subsequently trains to become a nihilistic serial killer, *The Rebellion of Red Maria* is the disillusioned expression of a filmmaker who has lost faith in leftwing politics and the revolution itself and has thus developed a more extreme and erratic *Weltanschauung* where personal gratification, at any cost, is the foremost ideology. Indeed, a withered and uniquely ugly ‘queen’ of the seedy semen-drenched streets, Red Maria looks like he became the cracker plaything of a gang of Negroes in prison as a result of his terrorist activities, thus he has accepted his newfound ‘femininity’ after losing the revolution and his anal virginity, and he is a literal whore of capitalism who peddles his man-cunt for mere shekels. It is only when he finds a young man, the victim of so-called ‘neo-fascist’ brutality, that he finds his calling for a carnal campaign of cock-sucking and coldblooded killing and decides to get back in tune with his loony leftist roots, albeit with a more patently pessimistic and pernicious game plan. Featuring random references to Greek diva opera singer Maria Callas – a ‘spiritual mother’ of sorts for Red Maria – and with a discordant death metal soundtrack, *The Rebellion of Red Maria*, aside from being a work of abberosexual ‘anti-pornography,’ is also an ‘anti-musical’ of sorts that incriminatingly celebrates moral, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, and political degeneracy in a manner like never before, as if seemingly deranged director Coştas Zapas had been released from an LGBT neo-Trotskyite mental institution before directing the film, thus also making it one of the most truly genuine leftwing revolutionary, and consequently philosophically and artistically despicable, works ever made.

“The Revolution died...It always died,” or so says Marxist terrorist turned (foul)flesh-peddling tranny Red Maria – a merry maniac of a mensch who long

THE REBELLION OF RED MARIA

ago lost faith in everything, especially 'revolutionary change,' aside from sucking cock and boning twinks. One fine cloudy day, Red Maria finds an unconscious young man who is wearing nothing but baggy shorts, which allow his pecker to hangout freely. Being a good Samaritan, Red Maria revives the gentleman by molesting him via humble handjob, which ultimately awakes the jaded gentleboy from his slumber, thus ushering in the ill-begotten romantic relationship in what is very possibly the most completely and utterly repulsive gay odd couple to ungracefully grace the silverscreen. As Red Maria learns and will never forget, his new butt ugly boy toy was beaten to a bloody pulp by a street gang of nefarious neo-fascists who do not take kindly to wiggers whose wieners pop out of their shorts randomly. A virtual modern primitive of a post-industrial wasteland, Maria's homo homeboy grunts like a hip hop toddler with Down syndrome, thus it is up to the sardonic shemale to 'make a man' out of his perturbed protégé. The first thing Maria asks if he can suck the lad's cock, which inspires the young man to finger his buttocks and masturbate. Not one to do things halfway, or to literally or figuratively masturbate with his life, Red Maria teaches his sodomite student how to get bugged in the brown eye, the gospel of apocalyptic post-Marxist revolutionary politics 101, and how to slowly and brutally butcher and murder neo-fascists in the comfort of one's own bathroom. Ironically, Red Maria is a rare Greek man whose ancestors may have not been raped by Turks as s/he has blond hair and blue eyes yet the neo-fascist street warriors are superlatively swarthy as if they just landed on Greece on a raft from Iran. With no chance of a real Marxist revolution happening and with leftwingers now having 'rightwing souls,' Red Maria redefines 'permanent revolution' via hedonistic homicide and haphazard homo sex. Red Maria also manages to transform his poof protégé from being a mere savage sod who compulsively strokes his meat on the commode into a political radical in red pleather who rather enjoys being reamed in the rectum by an old Bolshevik of buggery. If there ever was a celluloid romance that was radically rancid and repellant to both the eyes and ears, as well as the soul, *The Rebellion of Red Maria* makes for an inordinately odious and rotten romance gone retarded with a hysterical heart and soul that only a half Negro/half Hebrew hermaphrodite from Athens could appreciate.

Indubitably, if I learned anything by watching *The Rebellion of Red Maria*, it is that not all love is beautiful and that leftwing politics are quite effective in emasculating men. Undoubtedly, if German New Cinema dandy auteur Werner Schroeter was a punk rock pornographer who trashed the voice of Maria Callas for mundane metal and intricate tableaux for minimalistic 'realism' of the radically raunchy sort, it might resemble *The Rebellion of Red Maria* – a trying tragicomedy that is about as aesthetically appealing as a brown baby in a blender. With the incessant repeating of the same offscreen poetry lines, quite like *Argila* (1969) and *Eika Katappa* (1969), as well as its anti-authoritarian sociopolitical subtext, *The Rebellion of Red Maria* is indubitably a work inspired by the films

of Werner Schroeter, so it is quite interesting to note that Mediterranean auteur Coştas Zapas ripped off a kraut auteur who ripped off Mediterranean filmmakers, sort of like George Lucas borrowed the cinematic conventions for his Star War films from a Jap named Akira Kurosawa who borrowed his samurai film from John “Western” Ford. Of course, where Schroeter only saw death and dystopia in his sad cinematic swansong *This Night* (2008) aka *Nuit de chien*, zany Zapas only sees lurid love and carnal celebration in *The Rebellion of Red Maria* – a fiercely farcical depiction of a forsaken future without a historical future where man, be he a tormented tranny or sadistic skinhead, sees his fellow man as meat to be fucked and killed and where biological women have no place. Undoubtedly, in director Coştas Zapas’ mind, the world is a prison planet ruled by a pernicious plutocracy, thus *The Rebellion of Red Maria* makes for a wanton whimper in the face of globalization, technocratic terror, international bankers, and homogenization by way of Americanization and Hollywoodization, albeit a vaguely witty one. While I can respect some of Zapas’ aesthetic antagonism and blatant anti-Hollywoodism, I found *The Rebellion of Red Maria* about as philosophically and aesthetically inspiring as the latest Robert Rodriguez film, but at least the Greek auteur realizes the revolution, as well as the cheap Che Guevara ‘romance’ that oftentimes inspires would-be-revolutionaries to waste their lives for the good of the cause, is about as realistic as a black ruled planet, which is certainly something one cannot say of any other leftist filmmaker.

-Ty E

A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE
A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE

Craig Bodeker (2009)

A Conversation About Race is a splendid documentary trying to find out whether or not “racism” still exists in America. The documentary’s director, Craig Bodeker, asks random people on the street and behind closed doors questions about race and racism. The people in A Conversation About Race are your typical victims of cultural Marxism that believe the #1 issue facing America is racism. The people include an elderly black man who believes he’s a victim of racism because a white guy said he was good at dancing, a young female grad student type that typically lacks common sense, a transgendered freak who got a sex change, a feminist woman who talks like she has testicles, and a few other special people. All in all, most of these peoples responses made me want to vomit and prove why mob rule (democracy) is a joke.

Aryan documentary filmmaker Craig Bodeker with Asians

First, one has to look at the history of the word “racism” and its political origins. The first people to rally against “racism” were Marxists. When the Marxists got tired of blaming the bourgeois for the problems of the world, they decided to blame European and European-Americans. In fact, in the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin made “Antisemitism” a capital crime. For example, if someone were to point out that Soviet mass murderer Genrikh Yagoda, who murdered tens of millions of innocent white Russians, was Jewish, they could be murdered. Since words like “racism” and “Antisemitism” defy a true definition, as A Conversation About Race proves, anyone can be accused of it. Of course whites (people of European descent, sorry, Jews are not white but partial Asiatics), are the only ones that can be charged with racism in America. The cultural Marxist belief is that so-called minorities cannot be racists because they are in a “power struggle” against evil Caucasians.

Yes, modern liberalism, “anti-racism”, and other pseudo-progressive movements are the products of Marxist theory. The same type of Marxist theory that has resulted in the largest number of deaths in human history over the past century. Were the NKVD butchers that were responsible for these deaths “white?” Not really, the majority of these individuals, such as Lazar Kaganovich and Genrikh Yagoda were your typical Asiatic Eastern European Jews. The murderers that weren’t Jewish were some other type of minority and usually had a Jewish wife as a “safety” to prove they were not “anti-Semitic.” Many of these Soviet Union Jews would later move to the United States and have children known as “red diaper” babies. These kosher tots would grow up to lead the “Civil Rights” movement, promote drugs, break down European-American institutions, and promote such institutionally racist programs as affirmative action. Although these liberal liberators claim to be battling hate and oppression, they are historically (as the documentary proves) the biggest haters and mass murderers in all

of history. Sadly, they lead the fight against modern day “racism.”

Asiatic Mongrel (notably of Jewish and Mongolian descent) and Mass Murderer

of ten million white people Vladimir Lenin speaks on the cancer that is Anti-semitism

But what is racism? In *A Conversation About Race*, Craig Bodeker attempts to ask your typical American genius citizen what racism really is. Naturally, Bodeker cannot find an individual that gives a straight definition or example of it. Although the promoters of “anti-racism” will tell you that “race” is an “artificial construct (talk about irrationality),” they believe race (something that apparently doesn’t exist) problems are the major issue poisoning the world today. In *A Conversation About Race* we find out that the only “artificial construct” is the word “racism.” Like the most irrational and pathetic of religious dogma, believing in the evils of racism is a faith based system. Neurotic school teachers use fear to indoctrinate children at an early age the “evils” of racism so that it sticks in their mind forever. The very thought of “racism” has now become an emotional response that defies rationality and intellectual activity.

Thanks to the weak and spoiled baby boomers of the 1960s, liberalism and multiculturalism have created a country that is committing suicide. Forgot about learning to read or studying real history, students only need to know that racism is really bad stuff. Forget about white heritage and history, it was all evil and fascist. Whites don’t deserve a culture, the poor exploited races that don’t actually exist do! Funny, I thought that Europeans were the group of people historically that have individualist as opposed to collectivist societies thus being less ethnocentric. And isn’t it the international Jewish race that is clannish and the most ethnocentric of all? Aren’t blacks, Latinos, Asiatics, and other minority group collectivist societies that love to bring their Diasporas to America and deny assimilation? Isn’t it whites that aren’t allowed to have a culture? Wait, my bad, we have NASCAR and the young whore Miley Cyrus. Stupid whites, due to their individualism, bought into “anti-racism” because they are individualists who want to prove they can make it on their own and help the poor minority in the process. It has only cost them control of America and even Europe. I guess all that Holocaust business went to their heads. Maybe they should care about the 50 million or so of their own people that died in World War II instead of a small (but powerful) minority of people that are hostile to them.

A Conversation About Race is probably a controversial documentary for those emotionally impulsive liberal types. The documentary uses rationality and common sense to get its point across instead of typical liberal sentimentalism so typical of Hollywood race pictures. Maybe documentaries like *A Conversation About Race* are a slow start to a white awakening that minorities don’t care about

A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE

whites and believe they are owed something. For racial population changes in America, whites are going to be forced into a collectivist type of culture if they hope to survive. But with wiggers, philo-Semitic intellectuals, and increasing mongrelization, it is going to be a rough road ahead.

-Ty E

A FEW SCREWS LOOSE

Craig J McIntyre (2008) The only thing I expected from this film upon my dramatic and timely arrival was beautiful women, and damn did it impress on that plane. I went into this film with absolutely zero expectations and still came out completely empty-handed except for a few, and I mean few, memorable scenes. The film has no cohesive storyline. It would rather shove explicit violence in your face, traced lightly with gorgeous nudity of the female form and the once-seen prosthetic penis, moments before it is laughably castrated. The film opens with what may be the most amazing scene in low-budget horror ever. A huge, hulking Negro wielding a machete busts in on a porn shoot and begins to hack and slash his way through to his daughter who is about to be a star of a porno. The greatest thing about the film ironically also adopts the greatest death effect. After he is exterminated by a pathetic actor in a senior citizen mask, this "killer" becomes a serial murderer to film snuff films (which we don't find out about until the end.) This film has many flaws. I will begin to illustrate them in your mind with my vicious metaphors. The film's running time is the biggest overkill. Was this an editing mistake or what? (Screen capped by accident) This film happens to be longer than a Nick Swardson stand up, but without the entertainment. Much of this film is a vague attempt at an experimental filming style, edited with horrible color bars and remixing much of the clips. Most of the run time is entirely unnecessary and would rather make a better short film. In fact, what better to do with a horrendously long length than fill it with amateurish gore. Yes, this is fake. When I say amateur, I don't mean cheapie intestine pulling, I mean paper-mache heads getting crushed in and obvious dummies getting ravaged with weapons. But with every flaw, a single beautiful nude woman appears, and for this, I cannot thank Craig McIntyre enough for replacing this trite film making with nude hotties. Please love me... Honestly, the women that compliment this film assisted in helping me finish this film. It's not entirely as bad as I exclaim it to be. Remember, I'm a jaded cynic. In fact, a lot of our readers might even enjoy it, but I need something more than a ridiculous storyline and gore to please me. Here is an abridged version of the script for our readers.

INT. RANCID APARTMENT CAMERA GUY: Hey, I'm filming an amateur porn film. Excuse me while I belittle this "African-American LOL" by constantly calling her a slut and whore while the audience gets entirely solid misogynist vibes. ACTOR: FUCK! A giant colored gentleman just broke down the door and is hacking up my co-star while I sit here and cower like the lesser race that I am. It sucks being white. ACTOR's paper arm is then amputated pathetically with a machete. CAMERA GUY dons a mask and magically morphs into a serial killer and kills EVERYONE except the armless guy. They then form a TEAM in killing and exploiting women. EXT. SOME FUCKING CITY RANDOM MALE: RAHHH, My unapparent porn-star girlfriend was murdered

A FEW SCREWS LOOSE

unbeknownst to my knowledge, but I will train in a horrible montage to exact revenge upon a woman I have no idea is dead and the killers whose identity is unknown. Uneventful events then happen. Fin

The film owes a great debt to various porn-gone-wrong films such as the recent Amateur Porn Star Killer, A Hole in my Heart, and the obscure Psycho: The Snuff Reels (Niku Daruma.) The gore effects range from horrible to effective. Basically, you're settling for a grab bag of random violence coated lightly with T n' A, which can be a reasonable sacrifice. Does this excite you? Good, you'll see lots of these in alternating colors. The film making style heavily reminds me of the style Bam Margera used for his moderately successful film Haggard. While I respect Haggard a bit more, it boils down to the same annoying formula as Jackass with a story would have been. The same mistake that most low-budget horror films make has been exploited to full effect in A Few Screws Loose. Rule 1 of Low Budget Horror: Never, and I mean NEVER... put Grindcore or any type of metal on your soundtrack. Not only will it completely destroy any sort of tension and emotion that your film may have carried, but it will also make you seem inept at picking up a keyboard and generating your own effective soundtrack & score. A Few Screws Loose is a film I can't recommend at all. I love the women in the film. In fact, they generate a Russ Meyer-ish mood to enjoy while pretending the rest of the film didn't happen. I can see Craig engineering a new film that doesn't have so many flaws. In fact, I recommend that he take the enjoyable aspects from this film and create new life. He should take the Negro killer and make a blaxploitation horror film out of him. That would be perfect.

-mAQ

PERKINS' 14

Craig Singer (2009)

Perkins' 14 happens to be an enriched film experience by comparison and probably one of the few "good" After Dark Horrorfest films in existence. The plot revolves around a balding and intimidating police officer whose son was kidnapped 10 years before and the present day marks the decade anniversary. If you know anything about generic horror or horror in general (See what I did there?), you'd know that anniversaries never go peacefully and there's always something shady around the corner. His quiet and discomfoting day goes by rather dreary until he makes a connection between the abduction of his son with a mysterious man who was arrested for speeding earlier in the day. The film causally jumps from suspense thriller to pseudo-science zombie/beast horror and I've never really encountered such an awkward and engaging hybrid as this before. It almost reminds me of Fear X, a film that damn near ravaged my emotions. Since I've seen Martyrs very recently, I couldn't help but make comparisons to confined slavery and the inevitable deconstruction of humanity to the glorious effects of sensory deprivation. For the sake of a rather straightforward horror film, the underlying erotic themes have been removed and replaced with a higher body count. Perkins' 14 includes a master plan that plays out like one of the future installments of the Saw franchise. Think about it this way, Saw really has nowhere else to go but revisiting characters but even then the fan base will dwindle. So why not include drug-fueled zombie manchildren? To aid the effect of Perkins' 14, a rather delicious "punk" daughter is introduced to the mix and as noted in the recent review of 2008's The Children, these trendy girls only deliver eye candy while the tension builds up rather well. To put it blatantly, I enjoy staring at beautiful girls while I witness police officers getting disemboweled. These two fine points of the American dream just go hand in hand, I guess. I digress this very same reality that allows low budget horror to take place. I favor a certain charming low budget horror but not the over-produced trite that plays into our DVD shelves with promises of splatter and nudity. While these both are shining portraits of contemporary horror, I find a film with an emotional response to be a better way to "waste time" rather than watching subhuman looking females taking off their shirts revealing subnormal breasts only to get decapitated rather shoddily resulting in some half-painted prop head bouncing on the ground. Perkins' 14 did promise splatter to a degree but also made due with its riveting plot that was constantly shifting faces never allowing you to get bored. Expect an amendable level of violence, intrigue, and social discussion after viewing this film. It's not anywhere close to being an excellent film but it does uphold a contract to please, entertain, and amuse you with a level of seriousness that couldn't be that serious after revealing the plot in depth. Perkins' 14 is probably the most enjoyable film out of the third After Dark Horrorfest roster and the most visually engaging,

PERKINS' 14

especially after admiring the modern exploitation cover art that's handsomely illustrated. PCP fuels a personalized army of unstoppable psycho's to kill for Mr. Perkins after he snaps thanks to a neurotic paranoia. This effort is sustained through promotional tag lines as being lamented as the first film to be produced over the internet. This isn't as exciting as it sounds and certainly doesn't usher in a new era of film making. That, and this film's climax boils down to a disappointing rip-off of Assault on Precinct 13.

-mAQ

WHAT IS IT?

Crispin Glover (2005)

With every great film comes controversy; Citizen Kane, The Golden Compass, and The Da Vinci Code are all examples of films in recent memory that have been plagued with bad press. Crispin Hellion Glover's new film "What is it?" might be the most taboo breaking film to be seen yet. The plot is a bit wayward but makes up for it with its striking imagery and atmosphere.

The plot seems to be about a young boy who has an everlasting interest in finding snails while being tricked by a malicious god. The entire leading cast is formed by people who have down syndrome which plays a lot regarding the controversy. Blackface, down syndrome nudity, Shirley Temple pornography, and Charlie Manson leading the soundtrack are all examples of this film's roots and where they lie.

The surrealism that leads this film is entirely creative and striking. Crispin Glover has a supporting role of playing a Demi-God Auteur, which might be one of the weirdest characters portrayed, he demands all the creatures to be resilient to him. He seems to be the God in the plane of existence. You basically are watching a power struggle in the young boy's mind between dueling Gods. Glover's ideas have finally been brought to life with an amazing background to the story. His use of generalized evil in such ways that can only be deemed audacious is appropriate. Of course, the viewing of this film is partial without Glover's Q & A, book showings, and his enigmatic charisma.

This film is the first in a trilogy that is currently being planned. The second is titled "It is fine, everything is fine!" and the third "It is mine." These films according to Glover will never see a video release so he can preserve the road show feel. The set designs in this film are epic to say the least. His campaigning for this film has been controversial, due to a young Shirley Temple being portrayed as an SS officer committing heinous acts with a bull whip.

Many scenes stick out incredibly. For example, a crimson mounted room with a low fog that lies home to Monkey women, A glistening clam lies home to a Cerebral Palsy victim, and macabre puppet shows filled with some philosophies of either a madman or a genius decorate the runtime. Once you watch this film, you will never forget it. That is, If you are lucky enough to catch this film on tour. What Is It? is a cerebral force that invades your mind with its whistles and screams. A haunting shadow on the surrealist acclaim and a formidable viewing experience that is unrivaled and incomparable.

-Maq

LUNCH
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Curt McDowell (1972)

While it is something that would probably offend and/or disturb most honest heterosexual men to hear, it has been my experience as a debauched cinephile that 'will try any film' that homos tended to be some of the greatest and most artistically blessed directors of straight porn flicks, at least during the 'porn chic' era when pornographers still sometimes pretended that there was some sort of genuine artistic merit to filming people sucking and fucking. Indeed, the Amero brothers (Bacchanale, Every Inch a Lady), Chuck Vincent (Visions, Roommates), Zebedy Colt (The Devil Inside Her, Virgin Dreams), Zachary Strong (Confessions of a Teenage Peanut Butter Freak, Visions of Clair), Michael Zen (Reflections, The Filthy Rich: A 24 K-Dirty Movie), and even a chick-with-a-dick like Kim Christy (Dream Lovers, Squalor Motel) are just some of the pussy-intolerant queer pornographers that created distinct auteurist works that have, in one way or another, stood the test of time, but none of these filmmakers made films as quite as bizarre as eccentric erotomaniac Curt McDowell (Boggy Depot, Taboo: The Single and the LP). Best remembered today for his truly epic pornographic horror-comedy-melodrama hybrid Thundercrack! (1975) that was penned by his somewhat more famous teacher/lover/friend George Kuchar, McDowell was an Indiana-born Midwestern boy from a fairly traditional hardworking white working-class family that "ate a lot," yet he developed an obsession with all-things-sex at an early age that involved jerking off with his male cousins as a 13-year-old and both sucking the cocks of men and eating the pussies of women of all ages by the time he was 16, or so he describes in his quite literately titled short Confessions (1972). Of course, when McDowell relocated to the gay capital of the world to study painting at the San Francisco Art Institute, he became a full-fledged and unrepentant unhinged shit-stabbing libertine of sorts and in the process discovered that his calling in life was to become an experimental pornographer of sorts, with his butt buddy Kuchar luckily teaching him a couple important things in the process. Not surprisingly considering the super sleazy sod material of most of his most (in)famous cinematic works like Loads (1985), McDowell's most monetarily successful film was actually a heterosexual fuck flick. Fairly restrained compared to a lot of his work in that it thankfully does not feature ugly and swarthy tattooed deadbeat dipsomaniac scumbags jerking off in dilapidated apartments, McDowell's 71-minute heterosexual hardcore flick Lunch (1972) features a sort of intriguing disharmonious aesthetic marriage between porn chic and the NYC avant-garde underground. Seemingly just as much influenced by the Structural films of Stephen Dwoskin (Dyn Amo, Central Bazaar) and insufferably static pre-Morrissey works of Andy Warhol (Sleep, Vinyl) as the hit hardcore flicks of that time like Gerard Damiano's Deep Throat (1972), McDowell's film's title is inspired by its prominence of oral sex and was

advertised with the tagline, “Treat yourself to LUNCH if you’re hungry for a man’s kind of movie that’s raw, rough and uncompromising—made to satisfy a man’s voracious appetite! Go to LUNCH.” Indeed, while the film might be the odd one out in McDowell’s oeuvre in terms of its success and strong emphasis on heterosexuality, it certainly wallows in the sort of humor-tinged fiercely fetishistic and allegorically raunchy degeneracy that the auteur is best known for.

As a man that both played the virile lead role and assembled the fairly notable proto-industrial soundtrack, Mark Ellinger was responsible for a good portion of the film’s ‘potency’ and was even given an ‘assistant’ credit due to his crucial cum-heavy contribution to *Lunch*. Despite being rampantly heterosexual, Ellinger was a good friend of McDowell and apparently had no problems with not only being directed during his most intimate moments by a homo, but also sucking a cock as briefly featured in the film. Indeed, judging by the film’s emphasis on close-ups of Ellinger’s purple-headed custard chucker and somewhat shockingly explosive ejaculations, one almost gets the sense that McDowell directed the film solely so that he could spend countless hours staring at his pal’s pork sword and fairly explosive ejaculations (notably, according to George Kuchar, McDowell eventually got bored with directing his semi-autobiographical feature *Sparkle’s Tavern* (1985) because the film did not feature any pornographic scenes). In *Lunch*, Ellinger plays the seemingly realistic role of a San Francisco bohemian deadbeat named Dave Power who does not have a job and instead merely spends all of his time sitting around his apartment and fantasizing about less than gorgeous gals he knows, not least of all his curiously blowjob-obsessed lesbian landlord Gloria (played by pseudonymous ‘actress’ Velvet Busch). Plagued with a sub-homely and equally annoying live-in girlfriend that looks somewhat like a partially decayed corpse and who the protagonist would rather tease and insult then fuck, Dave is a man of few words who lives totally ‘inward’ and is a debauched dreamer of the day who probably resents the nights when he has to sexually service his sickly-looking sugar-momma. Indeed, while *Lunch* might be a heterosexual hardcore film, its subtly scathing critique of straight relationships are from the mind of a gay man who seems to have intentionally cast mostly unattractive women. Surely something is not quite right about a fuck flick when the most attractive woman is almost a midget with a raspy voice.

At the very beginning of *Lunch* after a fairly aesthetically pleasing pop-art credit sequence juxtaposed with experimental electronic music composed by Ellinger, the viewer watches protagonist Dave as he obsessively stares at a piece of she-meat across the street from the relative comfort of his S.F. apartment window. In the next scene, we see Dave outside approaching the young gal he was just drooling at and it does not take long before he is playing with the little lady’s meat curtain. In an extreme close-up shot, Dave is depicted slowly but passionately dining on the dame’s naughty bits in a fashion that makes it seem as if her bushy beaver is an extension of his leather-fag-esque beard (indeed, virtually all

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of the male character's have scruffy facial hair). After warming her up with a little oral action, Dave inserts his loaded gun inside the girl and demands that she make "no noise" while he sexually services her. After beginning pounding her puss from behind, Dave eventually groans to the girl "Where do you want it?" and she replies, "Don't cum in me, you bastard," so the protagonist merely out his prick, thereupon causing a fairly climatic explosion that begins as soon as his cock exits her vagina that ultimately leaves a remarkable amount of baby batter on the young lady's back. Not long after Dave ejaculates, the scene is revealed to be a daydream when the protagonist's uniquely unattractive girlfriend abruptly arrives at the apartment and asks him if he gave the landlord Gloria the rent money. After his girlfriend seems to gross him out by asking him, "How's your weenie?" as if she is beginning him to fuck her, Dave opts to pay the rent in the best and most pleasurable way he knows how.

When Gloria shows up Dave's apartment and bitchily asks him in regard to the rent money, "you haven't got it, right?" the protagonist does not reply and instead proceeds to get some coffee. Things get awkward for Gloria for a moment when she looks around Dave's apartment and notices strange vintage family portraits and paintings hanging on the walls that are surely a nod to the filmmaker's Midwestern background. Eventually, Dave asks Gloria, "Should I...pay in the usual way?" and then the film cuts to a shot of the protagonist unzipping his landlord's glittery dark blue pants while she lies on his kitchen table. As the viewer has surely predicted at this point, Dave is paying for the rent with his prick, though he warms up his landlord up by fondling her tits and fingering her clit while digging inside her snatch in an extreme close-up shot sequence that resembles a sort of DIY hippie gynecological exam. Of course, this entire scenario is just another one of Dave's extravagant fantasies, as the film soon cuts back to the protagonist teasing his girlfriend by attempting to grab her fairly flat derriere. At this point, Dave's gossipy girlfriend declares, "Guess who I saw at the Safeway?" and then states, "I saw that Neanderthal human Jody Baker. He was with that black chick you used to date." Not unlike Dave, Jody likes to do a lot of daydreaming, but unlike the protagonist he prefers to be on the receiving end of oral sex.

Jody Baker (Rick Mackota) is a perverted housepainter with a seemingly low IQ that looks sort of like a more gawky and neurotic version of Dave and he gets off to writing fairly brief perverted letters to people and leaving them under their door. Indeed, Jody seems to think that if he gives people raunchy accusatory letters containing his name and phone number, he will receive a blowjob from them. While taking a shit on the toilet and reading a comic while he still has dried paint and dirt all over his arms and hands, Jody receives a phonecall from a negress named Carol who Dave apparently used to bang. Without wiping his ass or pulling up his pants, Dave answers the phone by asking "Gloria?" in the hope that it is his lecherous landlord, but he is somewhat startled when the black

broad replies, "Gloria?! This is Carol." After finally remembering who Carol is, Jody begins playing with his rather limp love truncheon while continuing to talk on the phone like a little toddler about banal bullshit. From there, the film cuts to a scene of a totally naked Jody meekly crawling to an equally unclad Carol as she lies in bed. It does not take long before Carol is giving Jody head, with the painter's grotesque zit-covered ass taking up most of the frame. While the colored chick dines on his dick, Jody makes sure to warn her, "Don't bite it" as if he thinks she is wild beastess. After the less than sexy oral pleasure dissipates, Jody screws the extra hungry ebony spade and at the end he ejaculates on her steelwool-like bush. Of course, like with protagonist Dave, Jody's sexual encounter with Carol is eventually revealed to be nothing more than a mere fantasy. Indeed, at the end of the scene, Carol reveals her sexual disinterest in Jody by abruptly telling him that she has "got to go" and then hanging up the phone.

Since his girlfriend seems good at nothing but bitching and complaining, it comes as no surprise to the viewer when she states to the protagonist, "Dave, one of us has to get a job," to which he apathetically replies, "I know." Meanwhile, landlord Gloria discovers a letter under her door that reads "Gloria, I hear you like to suck dick" that was signed by Jody and includes his phone number, which certainly arouses the landlord as she proceeds to fondle and lick her titties while thinking about the lowly painter repeating to her what he had written in the letter. Indeed, Gloria eventually imagines Jody appearing to her in real-life and firmly stating, "Gloria, I hear you like to suck dick." Naturally, it does not take long before Jody's Johnson is in Gloria's oral orifice. In fact, Gloria is so obsessed with sucking cock that she does not even bother disrobe aside from leaving her tits outside her shirt so that Jody can rub his member and eventually cum on them. After Jody disappears, a somewhat repugnant looking middle-aged creep arrives at Gloria's apartment, begins sucking on the landlord's nipples, and then demands that she, "Suck it! Suck it!," which she wastes no time doing. While hearing various male voices in her head shouting, "I hear you like to suck dick," Gloria then imagines herself sucking the cocks of various less than handsome men. In a bizarre twist, Gloria's cocksucking fantasies are temporarily interrupted when her lesbian lover (?!) randomly shows up, asks her, "Hi, baby. What's you been up to?," and then proceeds to lick her nipples. Indeed, as her sapphic sister begins a little foreplay with her, Gloria imagines a biker-like guy showing up at her apartment while she is lying in bed while sporting nothing but underwear and sunglasses and demanding that she, "Suck it! Suck it," which she immediately does with the utmost unfettered passion. Somewhat curiously, when Gloria's girlfriend forces her to perform cunnilingus on her by sitting on her face, the landlord fantasies about sucking the biker's cock. Undoubtedly it seems that, not unlike a lot of lipstick lesbians, Gloria is a seriously sexually confused chick.

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In a hilarious shot that is not atypical of auteur McDowell's perversely preternatural sense of humor, the viewer witnesses that Jody has dozens upon dozens of notes hanging on a door his apartment to remind him to "write" various women. Meanwhile, an abnormally petite girl that could not be taller than 4-foot-6 asks Dave with a surprisingly raspy smoker voice, "Do you want to eat my pussy? I said, do you want to eat me pussy? Well, do you or don't you?," so the protagonist effortlessly picks her up while she simultaneously lifts her skirt for him and then puts her on a table so that it will be easier for a tall man like him to screw such a tiny broad. After Dave chows on her snatch for a little bit, the girl begins sucking the protagonist's whore-pipe in a scene that is fairly funny in that the truly little lady is so blatantly short that she does not need to bend down or get on her knees to give him a blowjob because her face is parallel to his prick when the two are standing face to face. When the girl end up on the table again and demands like a petulant child, "Fuck me! Come on, I said fuck me!," Dave naturally proceeds to stab her in her spasm chasm with his erect ramrod. While the little girl almost seems to be in pain during the plow session, she demands that Dave, "Push it deep," so he does. Right before he is about to climax, Dave whips out his pink steel and manages to ejaculate so far that his semen flies across the room and hits the girl in a face in a startling explosive 'money shot' scene that even puts notable professional ejaculators like Peter North to shame.

While the final cumshot scene is fairly startling, it does not compare to the shock of the penultimate scene of the film where the protagonist receives a letter from Jody reading, "Dave, Hear you like to suck dick. Call me," which is followed by a brief homoerotic clip shot of the protagonist sucking the perverted painter's cock. Indeed, it seems that auteur McDowell was somehow able to coerce his pal Ellinger to become gay-for-pay (though I seriously doubt that the actor was actually paid for being in the film). Naturally, Dave is repulsed and crumbles up Jody's letter. Meanwhile, landlady Gloria does the same with her letter from Jody after her lesbo lover asks "What's the note" and she replies, "Oh, some piece of bullshit," so as not to let her girlfriend get the suspicion that she is obsessed with smoking poles. Somewhat humorously, when Dave's girlfriend asks him, "Do you love me?," he less than passionately replies "Yeah, cutie" and then causes her to shriek and jump backwards by pulling on her nipple. In the end, the protagonist's girlfriend asks him if he would like to eat breakfast or lunch and he replies "lunch" and then smiles in a knowing fashion that is not unlike the conclusion of Wakefield Poole's experimental homo hardcore classic *Bijou* (1972).

After working on *Lunch*, star Mark Ellinger went on to star in and compose music for a number of his poof pal McDowell's subsequent films. In fact, Ellinger not only starred in and scored McDowell's magnum opus *Thundercrack!*, but he was also credited with coming up with the film's original storyline. Aside from working with McDowell, Ellinger also worked as a recording engi-

neer, sound designer, electronics technician, and composer on works by George Kuchar, Larry Jordan, the Mitchell Brothers, and a couple other filmmakers, including providing sound editing to the classic porn chic era costume piece *The Autobiography Of A Flea* (1976) directed by Sharon McNight. Additionally, he composed the score for Jordan's animated avant-garde cinematic opium dream *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1977), which is notable for featuring Orson Welles reading the words of English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge to images by Gustave Doré. Outside of film, Ellinger accomplished many things in the musical world, including writing a musical setting for *Fragments from the World of Henri LeCroix* by Pulitzer nominee Cyrus Cassells, who he performed with in the Bay Area in 1984. Not surprisingly, like many people that were involved with the San Francisco counterculture zeitgeist, the musician eventually entered a very dark period in his life that involved heroin addiction, homelessness, and a near-death experience when his blood became poisoned by a deep-tissue bacterial infection of *Necrotizing Fasciitis* on Thanksgiving Day 2000. Nowadays, Ellinger is apparently clean and operates a fairly popular blog entitled *Up From The Deep* where he documents the history of San Francisco buildings and architecture via writings and photographs.

In terms of sheer atmosphere, *Lunch* is a shockingly powerful art-porn piece that manages to make San Francisco seem even more sleazy and grimy than exploitation auteur Nick Millard's classic piece of celluloid trash *Criminally Insane* (1975). While the film might be the least 'McDowellian' of the works associated with the filmmaker's oeuvre, it led the way for his most distinguished work. Indeed, the royalties that were made from *Lunch* were apparently what inspired McDowell to make *Thundercrack!*, or as George Kuchar revealed in an interview featured in the book *Desperate Visions: The Films of John Waters & the Kuchar Brothers* (1996) by Jack Stevenson, "I guess Curt asked me to write a screenplay of **THUNDERCRACK!**. I labeled it **THUNDERCRACK!**. He wanted me to do a sex picture – all kinds of mixed sex in it. And, I wrote it, and he wanted to make it because he made a lot of money on another film called **LUNCH**, that he starred his friend in, Mark Ellinger, who later did the soundtrack for **THUNDERCRACK!**. I remember I just saw one shot of **LUNCH**, and it was Ellinger ejaculating, and he squirted clear across the room...almost practically missing the head of the girl who was lying down who name was Wendy [...] Those students used to make sex pictures, because in those days it was fashionable to show your chakra. So, those were the '70s." Of course, not unlike S&M sod auteur Fred Halsted's sexually eclectic pan-sexual experiment *Sextool* (1975), *Thundercrack!* was somewhat of a commercial failure because it was just too damn strange, artsy fartsy, and unsexy to appeal to the fairly simple sensual sensibilities of the raincoat crowd.

Ultimately, *Lunch* features a sort of semi-cryptic anti-monogamy message hidden beneath its mostly sexually static surface. Indeed, in its depiction of var-

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ious characters fantasizing about fucking other people while in the company of their significant lover, including a carpet-muncher daydreaming about sucking cock while licking her lover's lily, the film depicts monogamy as a sad absurdity and metaphysical prison the leads to people sitting around their apartments all day while looking all moody and broody and dreaming of a more sexually satisfying life that they will never have. Of course, director McDowell suffered from a serious case of satyriasis, which ultimately led to his premature death in 1987 at the age of 42 after contracting AIDS, so he might not be the most objective person when it came to critiquing the sexual and romance habits of heterosexuals, or as his pal Kuchar once famously stated about him, "Curt was curt, cute, controversial, and not celibate. He was a barrel of laughs and a roller coaster ride to hell and back. Life for him was a fast track to fast times that included devilish detours into forbidden erogenous zones." For totally personal reasons known to myself and one other person, I especially liked the fact the film featured a chick that had a pathological obsession with blowjobs, though I certainly could have probably done without the brief clip of hetero Ellinger giving a guy head, but I guess that is what one should expect from a film directed by a sexually nihilistic carnal clown like McDowell, whose personal calling in life seemed to be jovially raping and destroying all sexual taboos while wearing a smile on his face.

-Ty E

LOADS

Curt McDowell^o (1985)

A couple months ago, I went to a closing sale for Baltimore's greatest video rental chain in the hope that I would be able to purchase some rare gems at a discounted price. The owner of this now defunct video chain is a rather goofy and borderline obese Hebrew with a perfectly circular bald-spot on the back of his head who I once overheard discussing to one of his equally bloated kosher comrades about how the Jewish diamond industry is just as sketchy as the film industry, which I certainly do not doubt. Anyway, during the closing sale, I managed to find a VHS compilation tape entitled *Loads of McDowell* featuring the eponymous short *Loads* (1980) and a couple other short films directed by American underground queer auteur Curtis McDowell, who is undoubtedly best known for his campy and semi-pornographic epic "old dark house" horror parody *Thundercrack!* (1975). Assuming the video would be only a couple dollars or so, I eagerly approached the Judaic proprietor of the business and asked him how much it cost, only to discover that the shameless penny-pincher wanted \$70 for the single VHS tape (!), with his absurd reasoning being that it is out-of-print and he could not find a single copy of the film online for sale, so it must be worth a lot of money. Needless to say, I rejected the old miser's offer and told him that I would go download the film somewhere online that same day, which I did. Indeed, if not solely for novelty reasons, I had to see a film with the proudly sleazy title 'Loads' and, to my surprise, the wantonly titled work was even more decidedly depraved and debasing than I suspected it would be. While I was expecting loads and loads of tasteless campiness as is typical of auteur McDowell's oeuvre, the short turned out to be about 19 minutes of camp-free unhinged faggotry of the scum-and-cum-lathered sort where the colon-choking director sucks off a couple swarthy and ugly short men of the ostensibly heterosexual sort and describes in disgustingly degenerate detail about his sick love for straight men. Shot on scratched 16mm black-and-white film stock in a mostly dilapidated apartment that looks condemned and starring a couple longhaired and tastelessly tattooed losers who look like they just were released from the drunk tank of an urban Irish-American ghetto, *Loads* is certainly full-blown pornography, but due to its overwhelming aesthetic odiousness and amateurish home-movie-style, McDowell somehow managed to sell it as cinematic art to art fags and gay rights activists. Apparently inspired by former Miss Oklahoma and Florida Citrus Commission spokesman Anita Bryant's moral crusade against cum-guzzling (which she depicted as something akin to vampiric cannibalism), *Loads* is more or less a micro-movie manifesto-cum-diary that makes it quite clear why director-narrator-star-agitator McDowell died of AIDS in 1987.

As Indiana-bred bum bandit McDowell describes via narration at the beginning of *Loads*, he met his first heterosexual victim—a bodybuilder with a

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small stature—at a bath house and since “there weren’t very many women to go around,” the straight muscleman eventually settled for “second best” and went home with the hyper horny homo director of the film. Of course, McDowell did not mind being the man’s second choice as he gets really “turned on by straight men” and eagerly paid the less than buff Bodybuilder to spill his straight seeds onto some vintage porno magazines featuring bodacious babes with big boobs and even bigger bushes. To the delight of the terribly debauched director, the Bodybuilder started a “chain reaction” in regard to eager gay-for-pay rednecks, as various heterosexual hicks of the swarthy and seemingly racially mongrelized sort became enticed by the prospect of being paid to do hand-to-gland combat for an exceedingly effete Midwestern mud-packer. Needless to say, some of the prole pole-strokers were somewhat baffled by McDowell’s fetishistic requests, or as the director explains, one of the men “didn’t understand why I wanted to film him peeing...especially laying underneath his legs.” Probably the dumbest of all the pseudo-hetero hillbillies is a guy who hooked up with McDowell solely because he wanted the countless trashy tattoos covering his stocky and hairy body immortalized on film. When McDowell got “bored or daring” he sucked off a guy that he describes as being like “a crude little monster of a boy” at a semen-soaked porno theater. As one can expect from a film directed by an exceedingly eager inspector of manholes, Loads concludes with a climatic collage of climaxing cocks, with McDowell having loads upon loads unloaded on his face, including his conspicuously gay leather-fag-like mustache. Indeed, if you ever wondered why homos have a thing for mustaches, McDowell’s spermurper-themed short has the rather appalling answer.

Featuring director McDowell performing what some pretentious gay studies professor might describe as “avant-garde anilingus” on a man whose gooseberry grinder is more furry than the armpit of a middle-aged Mexican barmaid, Loads is certainly less artistically inclined than the works of auteur pornographers like Fred Halsted and Jack Deveau and thus does not seem particularly groundbreaking, especially where artsy fartsy queer blue movies are concerned. Indeed, whereas Halsted was a bone-braking and ass-fisting alpha, McDowell was, as his lo-fi homo home-videos demonstrate, a passive ‘power bottom’ who literally had to pay to play when it came to finding performers. Undoubtedly, compared to the director’s campy cocksucker horror-comedy epic Thundercrack!, Loads seems more like a plodding premature ejaculation, even if it is probably McDowell’s most personal, incriminating, and visceral work (indeed, how many other filmmakers have filmed themselves slurping up the less than sanitary spratz of countless dirtbag dudes who look like they could be bastard son of Charles Manson?!). Considering she felt one of the longhaired gay-for-pay heteros bared a striking resemblance to her own father, my girlfriend (indeed, she and I are probably the only couple in the entire world that watches vintage gay/lesbian porn together) found Loads to be a rather revolting experience, though that

did not stop her from laughing at McDowell's obsessive, if not poorly articulated, anecdotes regarding his commitment to turning bad boys into joy boys. Of course, McDowell's short does feature some scenes of accidental comic relief, as demonstrated by narrated remarks from the director like, "Then there was the one who was really uncommunicative. I directed him to say "suck it." He said "suck it" so realistically that I sucked it with gusto" and "It's such a beautiful, thick ass. I would have loved to have stuck my dick in there." Concluding with McDowell saying, "fuck his ass" in a rather animalistic fashion and a man moaning as a result of an orgasm after assumedly being savagely skull-bugged by McDowell, *Loads* is ultimately poor celluloid poetry in its most unsophisticated form as a sort of American proletarian equivalent to Jean Genet's avant-garde short *A Song of Love* (1950) aka *Un chant d'amour*, thereupon most likely only being of interest to old school porn addicts, underground film fanatics, and those majorly masochistic individuals who wallow in asinine aberrosexual aesthetic torture. With its pornographic depiction of a group of mostly short, swarthy, and ugly men who would probably repulse 99.9% of heterosexual women and gay men, *Loads* ultimately proves that, if nothing else, McDowell was certainly right about one thing when once remarked, "No one is a sex object, but anyone can be a sex subject."

-Ty E

THE SUMMER HOUSE
THE SUMMER HOUSE

Curtis Burz (2014)

Ever since at least the period when Rainer Werner Fassbinder and various other auteur filmmakers of New German Cinema started dominating the international arthouse realm during the late-1960s and early-1970s, the Teutons have been the foremost producers of the darkest, most morbid, and even grotesque (melo)dramas in the world, which is certainly no surprise considering the nation's singularly horrendous recent history, which included the country being literally completely reduced to rubble as depicted in Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948) and losing about seven million people as a result of the Second World War, not to mention the incessant guilt-tripping its citizenry has been brainwashed with by the Allied Powers since then, which Hollywood has shown no sign of stopping as indicated by somewhat recent redundantly Teutonophobic films ranging from Paolo Sorrentino's sad pseudo-arthouse joke *This Must Be the Place* (2011) to David Ayer's mythmaking piece of preposterous patriotard celluloid idiocy *Fury* (2014). Indeed, even with the death of Fassbinder in 1982 and, in turn, New German Cinema and German cinema in general, the krauts still have managed to produce some of the most perturbing and dejecting dramas around the world as demonstrated by not only arthouse works like Fred Kelemen's *Frost* (1997), Oskar Roehler's *Die Unberührbare* (2000) aka *No Place to Go*, Kai S. Pieck's *Ein Leben lang kurze Hosen tragen* (2002) aka *The Child I Never Was*, Matthias Glasner's radical 'rape epic' *Der Freie Wille* (2006) aka *The Free Will*, Hans W. Geissendörfer's *Schneeland* (2005) aka *Snowland*, Michael Haneke's German-Austrian-French-Italian (anti)Heimat flick *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte* (2009) aka *The White Ribbon*, and Katrin Gebbe's *Tore tanzt* (2013) aka *Nothing Bad Can Happen* but also big mainstream productions like Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der Anderen* (2006) aka *The Lives of Others*, Max Färberböck's *Anonyma - Eine Frau in Berlin* (2008) aka *A Woman in Berlin*, and David Wnendt's scatological coming-of-age tragicomedy *Feuchtgebiete* (2013) aka *Wetlands*, among countless other examples that demonstrate that the flames of the Dresden and Hamburg firebombings still burn deep in the German collective unconscious. Indeed, it seems that even despite the overall sorry state of contemporary Teutonic cinema—be it arthouse or otherwise—there is always some aberrant Aryan that feels the undying need to bleed their forlorn soul onto the silver screen, even if they have little to no resources to work with. While Romanian by blood and birth, Berlin-based auteur Curtis Burz (*Gib mir noch ein Jahr* aka *Give Me Another Year*, *Nora*) has certainly followed in the Teutonic tradition of distinctly disturbing dramas that send the viewer into a taboo realm where they probably do not want to go, especially in regarding to his latest feature *Das Sommerhaus* (2014) aka *The Summer House*, which depicts interfamilial sexuality in

a way that even puts Fassbinder to shame in terms of figuratively setting the bourgeois home on fire. The film is a sort of minimalistic arthouse melodrama with elements of the suspense-thriller sub-genre and tells the rather revolting yet nonetheless engulfing story of a fairly wealthy family man of the crypto-homo sort who begins falling in love with his friend's preteen son, only for said preteen son to decide to blackmail the latent pederast to save his father from bankruptcy. Naturally, the family man has a sexually repressed wife which, in turn, has a negative effect on their preteen daughter. Overall, *The Summer House* is one fiercely fucked yet strangely dignified filmic family affair that demonstrates that you can create a groundbreaking arthouse work for the price of a cheap weekend vacation.

One particularly intriguing aspect of *The Summer House* is that it was directed by a professional psychologist who merely makes films in his free time (though he did study acting and directing at the Bremen Theatre Institute). Naturally, Burz's experiences with patients informed his mental 'script.' Indeed, another interesting aspect of the auteur is that he managed to shoot the 100-minute feature on a almost nonexistent budget of 700 Euro without even completing a full script (the actors were only given a general synopsis and a general storyline to work with), yet *The Summer House* hardly resembles some sort of pretentious third rate Dogme 95 junk, even if it was shot on digital video. Ultimately, Burz's utilized his own intuition in regard to the chemistry of the actors and their performances while constructing a cohesive body and storyline for the film. In fact, Burz did not even come up with an ending for the film until the very end of shooting, or as the director stated in an interview included with the Artsploitation Films DVD/Blu-ray release of the film, "And the finale simply presented itself during the process. So we didn't know from the beginning or in the middle where the film would lead us, what the finale would be... We simply trusted our instincts. Whether it works for everyone who sees it, time will only tell." Indeed, a slow-burning psychosexual family melodrama with virtually nil discernible moral compass that absolutely demands that the viewer do their own thinking, *The Summer House* is like Michael Haneke with a soul meets a reluctantly suburban German Hitchcock on a shockingly minuscule budget that puts most third world fuck flicks to shame.

If Burz has anything in common with Fassbinder aside from his relentless yet hardly moralistic critique of the bourgeoisie, tendency to utilize the same actors, and theatric background, it is that, at least in his film *The Summer House*, he refuses to portray any single one character as being completely innocent, including children, though some of them are certainly more innocent than others. In that regard, Burz's latest feature makes for a great double feature with *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971). While ostensibly the story of a middle-aged man living in suburban pandemonium with the soul of an Ancient Greek sod and the conniving Teutonic Justin Bieber lookalike that wants to take advan-

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tage of his highly deleterious weakness for virginal preteen flesh, *The Summer House* is really a passive 'apolitical' (translation: non-Marxist) critique of the upper-middleclass way of life and how such a hopelessly contrived, spiritually vacant, unnatural and largely materialist lifestyle causes the repression of certain instincts and impulses that eventually rise to the surface and break through with a completely catastrophic vengeance. Indeed, the film ultimately confirms many things I have observed from personal experience in regard to the unhappiness that the bourgeois dream sires, especially when it comes to people marrying unfit partners for monetary reasons who they inevitably grow to deeply resent due to a sheer and utter lack of common ground and sexual chemistry. Likewise, as the film also validates, these corrosive mismarriages also produce whacked out children who will go on to have toxic and oftentimes parasitic relationships when they grow up. In Burz's film, a motherless 12-year-old boy takes it upon himself to convince a middle-aged man that he loves him while said middle-aged man's 12-year-old daughter considers being a lesbian as an assumed result of all the misery she has encountered as a child via her parent's miserable sham marriage. On top of everything else, the latent pederast protagonist does not mind if his best friend bangs his wife right in front of him, so long as he can get away with secretly blowing and being blown by young twinks. In other words, *The Summer House* is one majorly morbid and morose yet surprisingly beautiful family melodrama that is rather unfortunately totally relevant in our increasingly decimated cosmopolitan times of pathologically prosaic 'plastic' bourgeois living, but it is directed in such a lavish and even sanitized way that one might mistake it for a TV commercial for a new upscale suburban neighborhood or PSA on the merits on upper-middleclass living if they were only to give it a superficial glance, thus making it quite Sirkin in many regards, albeit with the sometimes off-putting proto-liberal moralistic tone.

At the beginning of the film, successful architect Markus Larsen (Burz regular Sten Jacobs) takes various banal generic photos at the site of his latest construction project on his cellphone. After finishing snapping pictures, Markus flips through the pics on his phone, thus revealing an erotic pose of a young blond twink named Oliver (Tobias Friebe) and thereupon letting the viewer know that the protagonist is a homo with a perverse predilection for much younger men. As the viewer will soon discover, Markus is a full-blown 'closest queen' who is not only married to a woman that he deeply resents, but also has an emotionally confused preteen daughter who cannot stand the fact that her parents have a nightmarish relationship where love and affection are nowhere to be found. At the beginning of the film, Markus receives a phone-call from his handsome friend/business partner Christopher Degenhardt (Swiss-born actor Stephan Bürki) urging him to come by his house, so the protagonist obliges and discovers that his comrade has "a fucking problem" that involves having to pay back taxes that he neglected to pay previously in a timely fashion or else he and

his company will go completely bankrupt. While Markus agrees to loan him an unspecified fraction of the money, Christopher is still in serious trouble and he has no idea what to do. After Markus leaves, Christopher tells his 12-year-old son Johannes (Jaspar Fuld) that "I've really messed up" and that he needs to "make friends" with the protagonist's daughter Elisabeth (Nina Spletstößer), who also happens to be the boy's classmate. Realizing his daddy is in deep shit, Johannes naturally agrees to help, though he has no idea at this point what particularly perverse lengths he will go to spare his father the mighty shame and burden of total financial disgrace and ruin. Meanwhile, Markus drives to a random house and tells his daughter he "could be a few minutes" while she waits in the car because he has to get something from a "coworker." Of course, the coworker is the twink Oliver whose erotic picture he was previously looking at on his cellphone and Markus has come by the blond blowboy's house to simply cum in his mouth. While Elisabeth seems to sense that her father is acting somewhat dubiously, she has no clue to the true degree of his erratic extramarital depravity.

When little Johannes comes by the protagonist's house to "make friends" with Elisabeth, he curiously immediately interrogates the girl about her father's daily habits. As for Elisabeth, she seems to have a small crush on Johannes and decides to put on some makeup to impress him. While his daughter is getting all dolled up in the bathroom for her preteen gentleman caller, Markus takes the opportunity to invite Johannes to go "grilling" with him and his family at their summer house, which the young man somewhat reluctantly agrees to. Before the cookout, Markus has Chris and his Guidette-like girlfriend Anne Lass (casting assistant Natascha Zimmermann) come by for a seemingly stereotypical suburban get-together that ultimately evolves into a quick bourgeois orgy of sorts. Indeed, out of nowhere Chris and Anne begin making out and then the two eventually encourage Markus' wife Christine (Burz regular Anna Altmann) to get up and join them while the protagonist remains at the dinner table with a discernible look of abject contempt on his face. Within literally less than a minute of the fully clothed threesome, Chris manages to make Markus' wife orgasm via cunnilingus, thus exposing the fact that Christine was in desperate need of having her main vein manhandled by a real man who, unlike her homo hubby, actually craves cunt. While Markus agrees to penetrate Christine doggy style afterwards, he has a look of decided disgust on his face and pushes his wife away and tells her to "cut it off" when she attempts to embrace him after he hatefully blows his load. Naturally, Christine is deeply hurt by the hate-fucking and subsequently tells her daughter to do her the favor of leaving Markus alone for a while because she believes that he is "angry...about us." When Elisabeth asks her mother, "What if I become a lesbian?" she laughs and replies "you won't" because she is "absolutely sure" there is no way she will grow up to be a ladylicker, even though her emotionally negligent upbringing is already causing her to have

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a low opinion of both men and heterosexual relationships.

When Markus eventually takes Johannes grilling, the boy seems fairly concerned after the protagonist comes up with some obviously phony accuse as to why the rest of his family will conveniently not be joining them. Among other things, Markus' cookout session with Johannes inspires him to ask his secret fuckbody Oliver if he can bring "someone young" the next day they hangout. As is quite apparent at this point in the film, not only is Markus a crypto-cocksucker, but now he is beginning to develop a sort of hellish spiritual Priapism for preteen boys that no quick knob-job from a gawky 20-year-old twink can cure. As an assumed result of his growing sexual repression, Markus begins to act all the more cruel with his daughter and wife and even goes so far as to ban them from conversing in English together. Indeed, as a sort of symbolic act in regard to their bond together as a mother and daughter who are the only ones that understand the oppressive environment they live in as the virtual slaves of an internally distant and exceedingly evasive patriarch, Christine and Elisabeth only communicate to one another in English, thus making it all the more brutal that Markus would attempt to deny them of their solacing 'secret language.' Meanwhile, Markus takes Johannes out to another grilling excursion and asks the boy to do him the "favor" of taking his shirt off. Somewhat curiously, when Markus asks him to drop his top, Johannes asks him "What do I get for it?," thus hinting that the little lad is fully aware that he is using his NAMBLA sex appeal to manipulate the middle-aged man. While Markus does not touch the boy, he does masturbate while fantasizing about him on the day of his wedding anniversary while he thinks his wife is asleep. Needless to say, Markus and Christine do not have anniversary sex, even though their daughter attempts to get them in the spirit by throwing them a small celebration of sorts. After all, as an aberrosexual mensch that only has a small boy in his mind, Markus cannot be bothered with frivolous things like fucking his wife on the day of their anniversary.

When Markus dares to kiss Johannes on the top of his head during one of their secret grilling excursions, the boy asks in a somewhat startled fashion, "What're you doing?," yet he does not dare runaway or tell anyone about the particularly perverse gesture as he has big plans that involve serious blackmail. Naturally, Elisabeth eventually asks her father if he plans to divorce her mother because, "She's weird sometimes," but the protagonist denies it and even attempts to calm his daughter's fears by replying, "You don't need to be afraid of your Mother. She loves you more than anything. She'll never do anything to you" and then adds, "You're going to be a really pretty, beautiful woman." As a result of her assumed misguided belief that it is her mother's fault that her parents have a miserable loveless marriage, Elisabeth uses lipstick to write "whore" in English on Christine's mirror. Of course, Christine is feeling increasingly emotionally isolated and is not too happy with both her husband and daughter's behavior, so she perversely decides to fasten a noose to hang herself with from

the second floor of the family house while Elisabeth is in her company. When Elisabeth asks about the noose, her mother disturbingly replies, "Just playing a game, honey" and then waits for Markus to get home. When Markus finally gets home and sees his wife with a rope around her neck, he simply walks back out the house, as he is merely annoyed by his wifey and does not want to deal with her insufferable cry for help. At this point, the viewer thinks that Christine might really kill herself, but she does not, as she probably feels it would be a huge waste to off herself for the benefit of an absurdly apathetic man that does not even care if she lives or dies. Meanwhile, Markus confides to Johannes, "You can always come to me...even if it's money." Of course, Johannes wants way more money than Markus would be freely willing to offer him, so he does not act on the protagonist's ostensibly generous offer. In fact, preteen cocktease Johannes soon begins hinting to Markus' family members that he is carrying on an indecent relationship with the family man. When Johannes randomly goes by Markus' house and asks Elisabeth where he is and she replies "What is it to you?," the conniving little brat has the gall to reply, "A whole lot." At this point, it is obvious that Elisabeth no longer has a girlish crush on Johannes and that her classmate has some sort of repellent relationship with her father. As for Markus, he no longer has any interest in his fuckboy Oliver and even stops giving head to him during mid-blowjob. Needless to say, Markus is not happy with Oliver when he brings by an overweight 22-year-old after asking him to bring someone "young," as he specifically wanted someone about ten years younger like his preteen love interest Johannes.

When Chris' girlfriend Anne comes by the Larsen home to complain that her beau has not fucked her in over a week, perennially pussy-blocked Christine, who has literally no one to confide in, is hardly sympathetic. After complaining about Chris' recent underwhelming sexual performance, Anne then begins to brag how great of a lover he is in general, stating, "I tell you, sex with him is fantastic. He is a real man, you know? Sometimes he took me really rough, wild...And sometimes, he was suddenly really tender, almost shy. And boy did he go down on me. He sometimes didn't stop until I came." At this point, Christine, who sees her friend's problems as being particularly petty compared to her own, becomes almost murderously jealous and screams at Anne like a truly cracked cunt, "And when are you going to ask how I am? You come in here and tell me a bunch of shit! I had no vacation and I also didn't get fucked. Welcome to my world. It's been years, years since he looked at me. It's been years since he went down on me. What do you think? Do you think you know the world? And you complain about one week? You slut. You could have a thousand men. Look for someone else. But don't come to me crying your eyes out. I can do that all by myself. I don't need you here for that. I'm doing shitty! Welcome to my world. Fuck off!" After all, hell hath no fury like a middle-aged woman who has been screwed out of a sex life because her hubby is more interested in a little

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boy that looks like the long last brother of Hanson.

When Christine discovers she is pregnant as a result of the one rare occasion where her hubby fucked her doggy style, she decides that the best course of action is to give herself a primitive abortion by shoving a coat-hanger up her vagina. Naturally, Markus never learns that she was ever even pregnant, which was Christine's intention, hence why she performed an abortion from the comfort of her home. Meanwhile, Markus becomes exceedingly enraged when Johannes shows up an hour later to one of their secret grillings and screams at the boy, "Are you jerking me around? If so, then don't come here anymore." Hoping to regain Markus' faith in him, Johannes agrees to spend the night with Markus at the summerhouse, though the viewer can only speculate what the two actually do that evening. At this point, Christine begins to suspect that her husband and Johannes have a sick secret relationship and even hints at her knowledge by remarking to Markus, "He's a nice-looking boy, that Johannes." After hinting to her hubby that she knows what he and Johannes are doing, Christine maturely decides to squat and piss on Markus' sandals. When Johannes declares to Markus, "I think I love you. I like your smell" and then adds, "I'll take my shorts off for you," it becomes too tempting for the protagonist and he opts to take the boy home. With Markus beginning to ignore him, Johannes decides to randomly show up at his house while his entire family is there and says to the protagonist when he asks what he wants in a somewhat hostile tone, "You said if I need anything, no matter what, I can always come to you." From there, Johannes demands 150,000 Euros and attempts to blackmail Markus by stating in front of his wife and daughter in a somewhat smug fashion, "I can tell your family how you kissed miss. Or should I say how you get naked in front of me? Or how you grabbed me...Or...how I bled." Needless to say, when Johannes says he has one hour to get the money or he will tell everyone about their very special relationship, Markus becomes frantic and goes to get the cash. Somewhat shockingly, Christine becomes more enraged with Johannes than her husband as she is jealous of him and hatefully yells at the boy, "You're ruining our lives. You shitty little rat. You liar." When Christine asks Johannes if he can prove his claims, the smartass kid smugly states, "The condoms in the coffee can. Markus' body is completely covered with hair." While Johannes is talking, Elisabeth decides to grab a Norman Bates-esque butcher knife. As to what happens in the end, you will have to watch the film for and find out for yourself.

Notably, being mailing me a DVD screener of *The Summer Home*, Artsploitation Films sent me a press e-mail about the film with the curious title "Warning: THIS IS NOT THE TYPICAL ARTSPLOITATION HORROR FILM!" with the message reading, "The storyline definitely makes for uncomfortable viewing" and "An intriguing film for adventurous film-goers not put off by its indelicate theme," as if they are even afraid of promoting their own film. Sort of like Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971) meets Adrian

Lyne's *Lolita* (1997) in secluded kraut suburbia as directed by the more restrained progeny of Gregg Araki and Dominik Graf, Burz's pleasantly polished yet nonetheless unnerving cinematic work is easily one of the most innately 'bourgeois' subversive films I have ever seen, as a work that seems like it was directed by a reformed gay pederast who wants to warn other potential pedo family men what might happen if they dare to attempt to act on their long repressed urge to seduce a preteen skater boy. Of course, the film is not just about pederasty but the hermetic hell that goes with upper-middleclass living and the spiritual retardation, emotional morbidity, sexual debauchment, moral hypocrisy, and overall interfamilial dysfunction that oftentimes accompanies it. Indeed, had the male lead of the film lived during his grandfather's generation, he could have been a proud Brownshirt in the Sturmabteilung and a comrade of Herr Röhm and Herr Heines instead of living a pathetic lie that causes the destruction of various other lives in the process, but of course modern Germany is no longer the same place that once produced the greatest thinkers, philosophers, and poets in the world, which is probably the natural retarding result of about 70 years of American occupation. Of course, few things are more dejecting to see than a hysterical sexually repressed woman, which is probably the inevitable consequence of a closest queen opting to begin a loveless marriage to a woman who never thought she would marry a man that prefers virginal kid cocks over old cunts. On top of that, as Burz's film reveals, any progeny begot from such a shame marriage can only grow up to have screwed up perspectives on both love and the opposite sex. While *The Summer House* reveals all these things, it offers no answers, which is all the more intriguing when one considers the director's professional background as a psychologist.

When asked why he made *The Summer House*, auteur Curtis Burz replied, "I didn't want to make a moralistic film. I didn't want to make a personal film, and I didn't work with any autobiographical material in *THE SUMMER HOUSE*. I wanted to try out a new genre with my colleagues. After the last two films we decided to approach this theme, to plumb its depths, to dedicate ourselves to it, as one simply does in artistic work...and not anything more. It's a movie, fiction, not a documentary, not an analysis. It's simply an artistic work." While Burz describes his film as "simply an artistic work," one cannot ignore the fact that it depicts a sort of social and spiritual plague of nihilistic hedonism and spiritual retardation that is not just prevalent in Germany, but Western European and the United States in general. Indeed, after watching *The Summer House*, it is easy to see why modern Germans are more or less committing collective suicide by refusing to have children, as the bourgeoisie is rotten to the core, but one should not expect anything less from a nation where cultural pride and community, which were once intrinsic ingredients of their country, are now seen as taboo and where Hollywood is constantly telling them that their pronatalistic ancestors are evil genocidal monsters. With mainstream German cin-

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ema increasingly resembling a bad parody of Hollywood, directors like Burz, who manages to maintain artistic freedom due to working with such small budgets and inordinately dedicated actors, are becoming all the more important as the only authentic no bullshit cinematic voices in krautland. Not unlike Jörg Buttgerit in the past and pseudonymous auteur Marian Dora today, Burz has proven that passion and artistic integrity trumps big budgets and stars when it comes to making truly provocative cinema that betrays the mainstream message that contemporary Germany is a happy democratic multicultural country where the path to paradise is achieved via Americanization. Unlike Oskar Roehler's modern classic *Agnes und seine Brüder* (2004) aka *Agnes and His Brothers* and the pedo-heavy oeuvre of Todd Solondz, *The Summer House* is a work that dares to confront interfamilial sexual dysfunction and the overall rotten fruits of upper-middleclass dystopia in a completely unrelenting fashion that never succumbs to comic relief. Indeed, I certainly found the film more distressing than Haneke collaborator Markus Schleizer's admirable debut feature *Michael* (2011). In its thankful lack of sapless sentimentalism in contrast to the dark Hollywood drama *The Woodsman* (2004) starring Kevin Bacon as an 'empathetic childfucker,' Burz's film even manages to chill the viewer more than the decidedly disturbing NAMBLA doc *Chicken Hawk: Men Who Love Boys* directed by Adi Sideman. Arguably most importantly, *The Summer House*, quite unlike similarly themed pseudo-arthouse Hollywood twaddle like Sam Mendes' *American Beauty* (1999) and Todd Field's *Little Children* (2006), actually demands that the viewer make their own moral judgements, which is probably too much to ask for those viewers that are used to having their morality and opinions spoon-fed to them by the turds of Tinseltown who curiously seem to have no problems with the long unpunished sex crimes of their favorite Hebraic auteurs Roman Polanski and Woody Allen. Of course, *The Summer House* depicts a world where the forcibly imported American dream has become a metaphysically malefic nightmare for one decidedly dysfunctional Teutonic family where the patriarch just happens to be a predatory poof, which is not something you will ever see in Hollywood or in the so-called American independent film world, thus making it essential viewing for anyone that likes their cinema to be challenging and, in turn, rewarding.

-Ty E

NIGHT TIDE

Curtis Harrington (1963)

Many decades before fully developing the exquisite mental illness that would later contribute to the uncanny and iconic performances he gave as Frank Booth in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and Feck in *The River's Edge* (1986), Dennis Hopper played in a variety of Hollywood and Indy cult films. Some of these films are somewhat forgotten (and rightfully so) while others – like Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* (1961) – are thankfully not. *Night Tide* is a fantastic little cult item about a young navy sailor named Johnny Drake (played by a relatively mentally stable Dennis Hopper) who finds himself magnetized to the mysterious pheromones of a cutesy fishy lady named Mora who may or may not be a genuine mermaid. During the film, the audience learns that Mora was found as a child on a Greek Island and adopted by a British sea captain named Samuel Murdock (played by Gavin Muir); a somewhat shifty Svengali man-of-the-world who makes Johnny seem like a boyish philistine. Marjorie Elizabeth Cameron – the Occultist wife of fellow Thelemite and rock scientist Jack Whiteside Parsons and star of Kenneth Anger's color short *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) – also plays a small but imperative typecast role in *Night Tide* as a mystery sea-witch who seems to hold psychic powers over Mora. Apparently, Parsons' thought his wife Marjorie was an incarnation of the goddess Babalon (who she played in *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*), thus her ghastly yet angelic appearance in *Night Tide* only makes the film seem all the more eerie. *Night Tide* director Curtis Harrington also directed the documentary *The Wormwood Star*; a work about Marjorie Cameron and her Magickal art. In a sense, the audience is in the same rocking boat as Hopper's character Johnny as both he and the viewers are bewildered by the dubious motives of Mora and the mystery woman follows her throughout the entirety of *Night Tide*. Essentially, *Night Tide* is a Gothic haunted house flick without a ghost-ridden house but, instead, set in a strangely atmospheric beachside vacation spot that can be justly compared to Herk Harvey's Cocteau-inspired cult masterpiece *Carnival of Souls* (1962). Curtis Harrington – being a lifelong Edgar Allan Poe fanatic (his first film was a short 8mm adaptation of *The Fall of the House of Usher*) – named *Night Tide* after a line from Poe's popular poem *Annabel Lee*. At the conclusion of the film, it will be all the more apparent to the viewer as to why the title of *Night Tide* and its source are all the more fitting.

I must admit that I have some domestic prejudices in regards to my reverence of *Night Tide* as I live in a seaside habitat similar to the one featured in the film. In fact, I only have to walk about 30 seconds from my condo to reach the beach and the Atlantic Ocean. Like the small beach town featured in *Night Tide*, my local area is known for its various amusement parks and Oceanside boardwalk. Of course, the only thing scary about my area is the number of extremely

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unpredictable alcohol-addicted locals and the unneeded number of aggressive police that arrest them. My town also has a relatively popular vintage boardwalk haunted house ride that features the same sort of Gothic horror cheese atmosphere that *Night Tide* potently permeates. On top of featuring a number of scenes of Johnny strolling down the beach and boardwalk amongst midnight shadows in the hopes of tracking down his ghostly gal, *Night Tide* also includes a couple phantasmagorical dream-sequences composed of Ed Wood-esque searhins which are quite similar to the ones that can be seen at my local haunted house ride. Simply put, *Night Tide* is one of those rare Gothic horror B-movies that one could describe as an example of, “they don’t make them like they used to.” The same can be said of counter-culture acting legend Dennis Hopper; one of the few actors in American film history who deserves to be described as a true veteran actor due to his notoriously volatile personal life and uneven and unpredictable acting career. Although Hopper seems seemingly sane in *Night Tide*; his infamous nervous stoner laugh is still quite noticeable in the film. *Night Tide* also features some elements that foretell the awakening of the popular hippie movement in American, including a lucid New Age-ish bongo dance performed by the thoroughly entranced Mora, an irrational tribe of drug-possessed youths, and a bombardment of degenerate Jazz. Hopper’s character Johnny is also the sort of emasculated male that is incapable of taming his dominant beastess; a revolting trait oh-so in post-hippie American.

Despite its somewhat crude special effects and superlatively wacky storyline, *Night Tide*, like *Carnival of Souls* and the surprisingly neglected work *Incubus* (1966) starring William Shatner, is a work that still holds up today. Bordering the line between American cinematic art and B-grade schlock, and being of interest to Occultniks, *Night Tide* is surely a work that deserves to have a larger cult following than it actually has. The film is also an excellent (albeit corny) attempt to adapt Edgar Allen Poe’s ideas for contemporary (at the time it was made) times. *Night Tide* director Curtis Harrington would end his film career like he started it with a short adaptation of Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher* simply entitled *Usher* (2002); a work featuring Zeena Schreck (aka LaVey); the daughter of Church of Satan founder and High Priest Anton LaVey. Incidentally, to help finance *Usher*, Zeena acted as a broker for Harrington’s sale of his rare signed copy of Aleister Crowley’s *Book of Thoth*. Another connection to Crowley in *Night Tide* is a somewhat unnoticeable street sign with the address 777 Saabek Lane; the number of the address being a favorite of the English Alpha-Occultist. Unfortunately, like most of Harrington’s work, *Usher* is apparently (I have been unable to track down a copy of the short to view it myself) a mediocre and thoroughly banal work. That being said, I do not think it would a stretch to say that *Night Tide* is nothing short of being Harrington’s “cinematic magna opera.”

-Ty E

QUEEN OF BLOOD

Curtis Harrington (1966)

Queen of Blood is a result of Roger Corman, at his resourceful best, purchasing special effects footage from some big-budget Ruskie space opera and then hiring Night Tide director and Kenneth Anger chum Curtis Harrington to shoot a film around it (in about a week, no less). What could very well have been as slipshod and haphazard as something like *The Terror*, however, is instead a transcendent piece of pulp entertainment; the cinematic analogue of an EC comic like *Weird Science* with the dreamlike atmosphere of *Night Tide* and the color scheme of Bava's *Planet of the Vampires*.

The year is 1990. At the International Institute of Space Technology, while keeping an eye out for space signals, Laura James receives a transmission that the project's head, Dr. Farraday, recognizes as an attempt by an extraterrestrial race's attempt at communication. After Farraday announces the exciting news, Laura receives a video from the aliens, showing that they've crash landed on Mars. With this, Farraday sends Laura and two other astronauts aboard the spaceship *Oceano* to Mars to investigate, where they discover one humanoid corpse and evidence that its companion took an escape ship to one of the moons of Mars. Laura's love interest, Allan, and his pal Tony convince Farraday to allow them to make the trips to one of Mars moons, where they can launch a satellite in order to locate the stranded alien ship, which they soon find. On board? An unconscious, green-skinned woman. The astronauts board the *Oceano* (save Tony, who stays behind to wait for the arrival of the *Oceano II*) with their inhuman cargo, who regains consciousness and wields an off-putting, strange countenance and refuses to touch the food they offer. Before you can say "space vampire", crew members begin dropping off like flies, seemingly by their own hands, and all but Laura seem susceptible to the space woman's otherworldly "charms."

Why this flick works where myriad of its ilk fail is Harrington's sure-handed direction, the expert utilization of the Russian footage, and a winning cast. Harrington, responsible for both the direction and the script, manages to infuse the film with both the "gee whiz!" matinee attitude of sci-fi of the time and the haunting lyricism of his debut feature, beginning with a credits sequence of three minutes or so of unsettling, Lovecraftian avant-garde paintings by John Cline (if anyone has any info on the guy, feel free to share- some really stellar work I've been able to dig up next to nothing on) set to dependably foreboding music. When "The Queen" shows her true colors, stalking and killing members of the expedition, the cinematography shows ITS colors, which are vivid and assuredly dream-like, at times suggesting what Ken Anger himself might have done if he'd taken a very different route of independent film. The drawn-out special effects sequences from Mechte Navstrehu and Nebo Zovyot, respectively, actually add

QUEEN OF BLOOD

to the trippy vibe by being singularly odd (it's difficult to tell what precisely the aliens are doing in these sequences, but adds to their alien nature considerably) and dubbed over with the eerie music that makes sci-fi-horror of this time period such a joy to listen to (some I recognized as the Barron's score from *Forbidden Planet*). The costumes and set-direction take Bava's *Planet of the Vampires* to an even kitschier level of retro-futurist fashions and garish color filters, making this eye-candy of the first order.

And speaking of *Planet of the Vampires*, a double-feature of *Queen* and that masterpiece would account for a big chunk of the plot of Dan O' Bannon's *Alien* script (what with the space eggs and distress beacons, but save the whole stalk-and-slash by phallic Giger-grotesque element), and I for one definitely see just as much *Queen of Blood* in Tobe Hooper's genius *Lifeforce*, also scripted by O'Bannon, as I do Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires*, on which *Lifeforce* is ostensibly based (especially in the scenes within *THAT* film in which a hot alien chick systematically makes her way through all the men aboard a spaceship). What pushes this one out of the ranks of "fun time waſter" into near-classic is the solid cast. John Saxon takes the lead as Allan, delivering dialogue in that slightly-off, wooden fashion that Saxon somehow manages to make inherently affable. Dennis Hopper, a Harrington pal and holdover from *Night Tide*, isn't yet the raving loon we'd come to love from a distance, but does manage some eye-bugging as *The Queen* grabs him by the nuts every bit that that mermaid chick did in his other Harrington outing, while Basil Rathbone collects his check as the head-up-his-ass Dr. Farraday (he reportedly filmed his scenes for this one concurrently- and on the same sets- with his scenes in *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet*). Of particular note are the two female stars: Judi Meredith's protagonist Laura is all kinds of a mid-sixties Sci-fi babe, managing to keep her bouncy blonde bob whether rocking a stylish space helmet or cowering in terror from the *Queen*. As for the *Queen* herself, Florence Marly, with the aide of make-up artist William Condos, creates a uniquely inhuman humanoid, communicating through confused and confusing facial expressions, a ceaseless malevolent smile, strangely lit eyes (that glow once the stalk-and-killing gets underway), and rocking a beehive wig and eventual green skin that effectively invokes the praying mantis she ultimately is. While I'm not familiar with much of Curtis Harrington's work beyond *Night Tide* and this fun flick, on the strength of *Queen*, I definitely look forward to delving into his oeuvre.

-Jon-Christian

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?

Curtis Harrington (1971)

In his posthumously released memoir *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), avant-garde auteur turned camp horror master Curtis Harrington (*Queen of Blood*, *Games*) wrote regarding his eloquently exploitative "Grande Dame Guignol" flick *What's the Matter With Helen?* (1971), "Of all my films, *Helen* is the one I personally like the best. It comes closest to realizing in all its details what I intended. It deals with the underlying themes of Eros and Thanatos—the will toward life and the will toward death." Indeed, while his debut feature-length work *Night Tide* (1961), a singularly atmospheric arthouse horror film, is my personal favorite Harrington flick, it is hard to argue that *What's the Matter With Helen?* is not the director's most artistically accomplished and aesthetically eclectic work as a period piece and macabre melodrama of the cruelly campy and culturally cynical sort that uses the cinematic conventions of Golden Age Hollywood against itself, or as the *L.A. Herald Examiner* once pegged it, "A musical-horror-melodrama-satire-love story." Penned by Henry Farrell, who previously worked with Harrington on the TV movie *How Awful About Allan* (1970) starring Anthony Perkins and who initially came to fame writing the script for *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962), the very first "hagsploitation" aka "Psychobiddy" aka "Grande Dame Guignol" flick, *What's the Matter With Helen?*, like most of the director's films which all seemed to be cursed, was unfortunately poorly advertised upon its release and relatively ignored, yet it would go on to rightfully develop a loyal cult following. In fact, *What's the Matter With Helen?* was so haphazardly and ineptly advertised that the official original movie poster of the film featured an image from the shock ending in a scene that Harrington hoped would be "as harrowing and brutal as the shower scene in *Psycho*," thus ruining the experience for anyone who went to see it. Of course, I, like virtually everyone else interested in the film, had *What's the Matter With Helen?* spoiled for me after glancing at the poster, yet Harrington's mischievous and even misanthropic celluloid exercise in homicidal hag hysteria is luckily a film of highly engrossing entertainment value and exquisite direction with the grand novel distinction of starring two clearly mentally imbalanced washed-up Hollywood Golden Age divas, thus, like good wine, it has only gotten better with age and has seemingly unlimited replay value. Starring an unflatteringly overweight Michelin Man-esque Shelly Winters (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Poor Pretty Eddie*), who plays a neurotic character going through a nervous breakdown while the actress herself was going through a real-life nervous breakdown, as well as Debbie Reynolds (*Singin' in the Rain*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*), who was apparently just as condescending to her co-star in real-life as her character is in the film, *What's the Matter With Helen?* is a film that is just as every bit hys-

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?

terically hilarious as it is melodramatically macabre about the kind of mentally deranged mothers it takes to produce coldblooded killers of the anti-Oedipal sort.

As depicted in a fake 1930s Hearst Metrotone newsreel at the Americana-mocking beginning of *What's the Matter With Helen?*, deranged young men Leonard Hill and Wesley Bruckner killed an unlucky young woman named Ellie Banner in a "Leopold and Loeb"-style fashion in Iowa and have both rightfully received life sentences for their dirty deeds. The two boys' mothers, Helen Hill (Shelley Winters) and Adelle Bruckner (Debbie Reynolds), decided it will be best to move away and get away from the bad press and abject social ostracization, especially after the former is cut on the palm with a knife by a vengeful anonymous assailant and receives a death threat from the same said perpetrator via telephone with the unsettling words "I'm the one who cut you.... I wanted to see you bleed." Changing their names and hoping to live new press/stress free lives, Helen and Adelle head from Iowa to sunny California and open a posh pedophile's dream, an unsettlingly debauched dance academy for little girls whose dubious parents want to make their daughters into the next Shirley Temple. Fat, morbidly depressed, and particularly passive, Helen merely goes along with her over domineering friend Adelle's madame-like get-rich-quick scheme, but, rather unfortunately, her mental health begins to decline over time. First, Helen, a woman who is deathly afraid of men, is rather angry when Adelle, a woman who does whatever she wants whenever she wants, hires a dandy queen of an elocution teacher named Hamilton Starr (Micheál MacLiammóir) to teach the little girls to have the proper voices for the new innovation of sound films. A shameless schemer and decadent dreamer of the mature MILF persuasion, Adelle also starts a hot and steamy love affair with the father of one of her students, Lincoln Palmer (Dennis Weaver), a rich Southern gentlemen of the seemingly closeted homosexual sort who knows how to treat a lady and behave like an ostensibly real man. With no other friends aside from Adelle, who constantly ignores and patronizes her, Helen gets a couple cute white pet rabbits, but that does not stop her from suffering flashbacks and ultimately hallucinations of her husband's grizzly death in which he was mangled into a bloody pulp by a farm plow.

Apparently, Helen's murderous son witnessed the death of his father via machinery at the mere age of 4, thereupon possibly leading to his mental derangement. Naturally, petty and less than pretty Helen is jealous of Adelle's new boy toy Lincoln and tries to break them apart, while also brainwashing herself with a steady diet of backwards Christian evangelist radio sermons so as to ease her perennial loneliness and sexual tension (it is hinted that she wants Adelle all for herself). After a mysterious man stops by at her and Adelle's home, Helen pushes him down the stairs and kills him as she suspects he is the same man from Iowa who threatened to butcher her. A nauseating narcissist of the self-obsessed

and opportunistic sort who seems to suffer from histrionic personality disorder, Adelle helps Helen dump the mystery man's body as she does not want the incident to ruin her career. Unfortunately, Adelle does not realize that she could be homicidal Helen's new victim. After learning of her true identity and that her son is a sadistic killer, Adelle's boyfriend Lincoln offers to hire the best lawyer in town to appeal for her son's case, but hateful Helen is less than impressed by Mr. Right's rather generous offer. Finally building up enough gall to confront Adelle about her motives, Helen states to her best bud, "I am not like you, Adelle. I'm not trying to buy back my son's love by charming some rich man..." Helen also lets Adelle know that their sons hate them and that their murderous behavior is a result of this hatred. Helen, who has more guilt than a Catholic cocksucker, visits a church and begs to a certain Sister Alma to forgive her, but she makes a complete and utter fool of herself and has to be dragged out of the church by Adelle. Helen ultimately goes ballistic and slaughters her beloved pet rabbits with a knife and confesses to Adelle that she is responsible for her husband's death as she apparently pushed him in front of a plow. Adelle offers to get Helen help and calls Sister Alma, but the bitch of a bunny butcher stabs her friend in the back both in a figurative and literal manner. In the end, Helen, who has finally taken the 'dominant' role in her relationship with Adelle sings "Goody Goody" on the piano in a one-woman/one-cadaver show that Lincoln accidentally walks in on in horror.

While the murderous Helen is, quite strangely, a more sympathetic character when compared to old whore Adelle, director Curtis Harrington summed up her character and the 'moral' of *What's the Matter With Helen?* as follows: "It is my portrait of the destructive narrow-mindedness of Christian fundamentalism, as exemplified by the character of Helen, whose hypocritical inability to face the truth of her sexuality brings only tragedy to those around her and madness to herself." Indeed, *What's the Matter With Helen?* does not feature a single scene of overt lesbianism as Harrington surely concocted a celluloid work of subtle nuances, semi-inconspicuous camp, and cryptic naughtiness in the old school Hollywood style and in the tradition of the director's friend James Whale (*Frankenstein*, *The Old Dark House*) that will surely be overlooked by most modern viewers. Poking fun at Hollywood 'Christian' flicks like Cecil B. DeMille's *The Sign of the Cross* (1932), the perturbing quasi-pedo phenomenon of Shirley Temple, ungracefully aged Tinseltown divas, and the aesthetic vulgarity of superlatively soulless old school Hollywood musicals, *What's the Matter With Helen?* is indubitably director Curtis Harrington's respectful anti-tribute to *Sunset Boulevard*'s hyper hypocritical films of yesteryear. A film directed by the only filmmaker to start out directing European arthouse inspired films and starring in Kenneth Anger films to making films produced by Roger Corman and multiple major studios to directing episodes of popular TV shows like *Charlie's Angels* and *Dynasty* and working with actors ranging from Gloria Swanson to Helmut

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?

Berger, *What's the Matter With Helen?* is certainly the biting sardonic creation of a man with a love-relationship for Hollywood who was far too subversive and artistic for the Hollywood studio system, hence his relatively small oeuvre despite making films for about 60 years. Although I am only someone with a slight interest in the short-lived subgenre, which tends to be especially cherished by momma boy queens, I unquestionably consider *What's the Matter with Helen?* to be the greatest and least aged of the hagsploitation flicks. After all, any time I need some therapeutic relief after dealing with a bitchy and needlessly narcissistic old bird of the less than physically fresh sort in real-life, I can just pop in *What's the Matter With Helen?* and dream of the possibilities.

-Ty E

THE KILLING KIND

Curtis Harrington (1974)

If there is anything that serial killers all seem to have in common aside from hunting their fellow humans, it is major mommy troubles, or at least one would assume so much after learning that white trash mass murderer Henry Lee Lucas' prostitute mom forced him to wear a dress and watch her have sex with her patrons as a wee lad, and I doubt necrophile Ed Gein dug up women that resembled his mother and made a "female suit" out their skin and body parts in what has been described as an "insane transvestite ritual" for nothing. And, of course, perennial momma's boy Norm Bates—a creepy camp character inspired by sick post-mortem sex-capades of Herr Gein—of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) probably would have been better off if his mother was not his best friend and the same can certainly be said of the sexually deranged anti-hero of cult auteur Curtis Harrington's study in mother-son psychopathia sexualis *The Killing Kind* (1973)—a torrid tale of a seemingly brain-damaged bastard man-boy who never had a father nor even knows who he is, so he always had his old whore mother all to himself, so instead of figuratively having to kill his father like 'normal' men, he took to killing women in homicidal honor to his mommy. Rarely seen upon its initial release because, as direct Curtis Harrington stated regarding the seedy cinematic work's producers, "They knew about as much about distribution as my grandmother," *The Killing Kind* is all but forgotten today just like its rather underrated director, yet it happens to be one of the few serial killer flicks of its time to get at the maternal root of homo-cidal tendencies and the central role certain malevolent mothers play in such psychosexually dysfunctional behavior as the sort of cinematic work that would horrify fickle feminists and bring ecstasy to serial killer groupies and fans of hagsploitation. A film about a boy whose idea of a sexual climax is strangling a woman to death after failing to 'rise to the occasion,' *The Killing Kind* is a film that is thankfully big on revealing the matriarchal motivations behind the killer, as opposed to banal buckets of blood and guts, directed by a filmmaker who probably would have made a much more profitable career as a psychoanalyst as opposed to doing the unthinkable by concocting charming yet eccentric 'thinking man's horror flicks.'

During a sunny summer day gang rape with some fiendish friends on the beach, troubled teen Terry Lambert (John Savage of Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Hair* (1979) directed by Miloš Forman) is coerced by his beach-tanned buds to sexually ravage a girl named Tina (Sue Bernard of Russ Meyer's *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965)), which he does, at best, quite impotently, thus inevitably resulting in his incarceration for two years. With nowhere to go when he gets out of the ostensible slammer of sodomy, Terry moves in with his tyrannical mother Thelma (Hollywood diva Ann Sothorn, whose acting career spanned six decades)—a sadistically sassy suburban slumlord who rents out

THE KILLING KIND

rooms to mostly old hags, but also, quite reluctantly, a young girl named Lori Davis (Cindy Williams of George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973)). When Lori moves in the boarding house, brazen bitch Thelma states to herself, "Give her a week, she will end up with some phony dude by then," thus expressing her unwavering hatred of both men and women, but especially women, as well as her wealth of experience as a lecherous lady who has been romantically involved with a number of "phony dudes" during her rather loose lifetime. An old and overweight whore that "used to turn some heads" in her day, Thelma does not even know who the sperm donor of her bastard boy Terry is. In regard to the unlucky woman her son haphazardly raped, Thelma states most vehemently, "Tina, I hate that name. I wish she was dead" and being a malevolent maniac of a momma's boy, Terry ultimately fulfills her command, but not before stalking the girl a little bit. Like cats, Terry rather enjoys torturing his prey before putting it out of its misery, so it is rather symbolic that the boy wonder's first confirmed kill is a kitten that he strangles to death after it makes too much noise during an intense session of peeping Tom.

As an elderly wheelchair-bound neighbor tells his daughter Louise (Luana Anders of *That Cold Day in the Park* (1969) directed by Robert Altman)—a sexually repressed alcoholic librarian in her mid-thirties—regarding Terry and Thelma's rather risqué relationship, "Its unnatural. Mother and son behaving like that." Of course, being an old maid who very likely has never felt a man inside her, Louise is turned on by the fact that Terry is a rapist, but he blows her off because the only time he touches girls is when strangling them. When Terry, who is straddling an acoustic guitar, insults Louise and her would-be-whorish behavior, the librarian states spitefully, "That thing that you hold so close to you like a woman, you can't even play it," thus resulting in the smashing of the guitar by the rapist rocker during an exceedingly erratic and volatile mental fit. A woman who figuratively carries around her son's testicles in her purse, Thelma finally receives a verbal assault from her Terry, who in a pathetic manner like a wounded animal begging to be put out of its misery, states, "Hey, you know what you're like! You're like this big, heavy pillow over my face and you're suffocating me... You're nothing but a fat whore!" Although a callous cunt who jokes about the fact that one of her tenants randomly died of a coronary in a market place and fell on a display of frozen fish ("A frozen stiff" as her son quips), Thelma begins to understand that her son Terry is a psychopathic killer whose bloodlust only grows with each passing day, especially after he kills his lawyer Rhea Benson (Ruth Roman of Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951)), who he still blames for his rather short prison sentence. During a failed lovemaking session with Lori, Terry kills the young girl after he once again becomes quite conscious of his sexual impotence and failure as a male and mommy dearest comes to the rescue to help him dispose of the damned debutante's body, yet her son starts to begin to become an ingrate, not to mention the fact he has a screw or two loose.

For the first time in her life, Thelma—a woman whose sole son always called her by her first name as if she were his lover—must act like a mother, albeit of the ‘tough love’ killing kind.

A mirthful yet macabre melodrama of the intrinsically incestuous sort, *The Killing Kind* is a potent yet perniciously playful tale about why slut single mothers should be cut off from the welfare state and why prison is probably not the best place for suburban momma boy rapists, at least if they are released in anything else aside from a body bag. A sardonic serial killer flick of the classically campy variety, *The Killing Kind* is one of those rare psycho manhunter flicks that features an ‘empathetic’ portrayal of the killer in question in a manner comparable to euthanizing a retarded Rottweiler puppy with rabies. Like virtually all of Curtis Harrington’s films, *The Killing Kind*, quite thankfully, has no happy ending and offers no inkling of solace to the viewer, and in the last interview ever conducted with the director before his death, he even proudly admitted “It’s amazing that I was allowed to get away with this” in regard to the tragic nature of his ominous picture in murderous oedipal obsession. Make no mistake about it, *The Killing Kind* is not an over-stylized ‘serial killer porn’ flick like *Seven* (1995) directed by David Fincher where an unhinged Übermensch psychopath plots a bunch of sophisticated ritualistic deaths to prove some mumbo jumbo psychobabble to impress Christian evangelist, atheist asshole, and Judaic Christ-killer audiences, but a very real, if compulsively campy, depiction of a deranged man of about average intelligence who has the grand misfortune of being born to a woman with a public cum-bucket between her legs. Still, despite the sheer and utter repugnance of both mother and son, it is interesting to note that despite their total lack of ability to socialize with anyone aside from one another, Terry and Thelma have an idiosyncratic bond that cannot be broken, at least until death do they part, thus making *The Killing Kind* a truly filmic family affair that everyone should see with their mommy this upcoming Mother’s Day!

-Ty E

RUBY
RUBY

Curtis Harrington (1977)

While the majority of experimental avant-garde auteur turned occult-inclined cult director Curtis Harrington's films were either senselessly butchered by studios and/or some sort of pompous prick of a producer, virtually every one of these tragically tainted films, including *Ruby* (1977)—a more than worthy rip-off of *The Exorcist* (1973) that features a seamlessly assembled hodgepodge of conventions from horror, thriller, film noir, Golden Age Hollywood melodrama, and gangster films, as well as a comforting dose of camp—make for singularly pleasurable experiences, sort of like *Twilight Zone* episodes on steroids, except all the more sinisterly sardonic. In fact, despite being one of the highest grossing independent films of its time before the release of John Carpenter's iconic slasher flick *Halloween* (1978), Harrington ultimately abandoned his authorship of *Ruby* by going to the Directors Guild and having the director's name credited as "Alan Smithee" because not only did writer/executive producer Steve Krantz (producer of *Fritz the Cat*, *Cooley High*) change the ending against the director's will (which Harrington and star Piper Laurie refused to re-shoot, so C-grade horror hack Stephanie Rothman did the dirty job), but also released a bastardized version of the film for television missing the best violence scenes, which were replaced with an apparently pointless subplot involving two characters that were nothing more than extras in the original theatrical release of the film. Luckily, about a decade ago, VCI Video released a DVD of *Ruby* that would amount to the closest thing to a director's cut (it is actually the original theatrical version that unfortunately features Krantz's conspicuously crappy 'horror' ending as Harrington's original poetic ending was permanently lost), at least as far as Harrington's original vision was concerned. As someone who never understand the seemingly hysterical hype surrounding *The Exorcist* (what is so strange about a Hollywood Hebrew directing an ostensibly 'Catholic' themed film about demonic possession?!), I was not particularly irked to find out that conman screenwriter Krantz penned *Ruby* with the rather blatant intention of cashing in on Friedkin's rather overrated yet undeniably financially successful flick, as auteur Harrington managed to turn it into his own idiosyncratic, if not blurred, vision, considering the artistically restraining circumstances. A reflexive movie set in a drive-in made for drive-ins, *Ruby* can no longer be experienced the way it was meant to be considering the almost complete extermination of outdoor movie theaters, but like *Demons* (1985) directed by Lamberto Bava, Harrington's creepy camp horror-noir hybrid makes for the next best thing as a potent, albeit discernibly flawed, piece of nightmare nostalgia, featuring burnout gangsters being strangled by film reels and hanged from giant drive-in movie screens, among other silly yet strangely charming Harrington-esque scenarios.

As phantasmagorically depicted during the opening scene of *Ruby* set in rural

Florida during 1935, sleazy yet suave gangster Nicky Rocco (Sal Vecchio) was gunned down by his gang members while in the middle of a romantic night of swamp-side wine drinking with his pretty and pregnant gun-moll Ruby Claire (Piper Laurie of *Carrie* (1976) and David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991)). Apparently, the head mafia boss Jake Miller (Fred Kohler Jr.) did not take kindly to the fact that Nicky was an ambitious young who also loved Ruby, the Dietrich-esque Jazz singer. While gasping his last breath, Nicky, like any self-respecting Guido career thug, vows bloodthirsty revenge and he will ultimately use his unborn daughter to carry out his special Sicilian blend of supernatural vengeance. Flash forward 16 years later to the year 1951 and Ruby is a has-been diva who now makes her living owning/running a drive-in movie theater that anachronistically plays B movies like *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (1958). Despite the fact they all played a part in killing her great love Nicky, Ruby has employed all the members of the mafia gang, who have just gotten out of jail after serving lengthy prison sentences, to run the drive-in theater for the delight of a bunch of local yokel hicks in a rather socially absurd manner totally at odds with cinematic genre conventions. Ruby also has a steady relationship with sensitive yet stoic mafia man Vince Kemper (Stuart Whitman), who helped raise her and Nicky's 16-year-old daughter Leslie (Janet Baldwin), a mute bug-eyed girl of the seemingly autistic sort. Leslie's lack of character and inability to speak is more than made up by the fact that she is a medium who can have spirits enter her body, but, rather unfortunately, her deceased dago daddy is a deranged fellow who is about to bring death to his ex-compatriots via his sensitive spawn.

After a couple gang members are brutally murdered in a ritualistic fashion, it does not take long for Ruby and Vince, who dump their friends' corpses into a river to avoid pesky policemen, to realize that Nicky is making good on his promise of spiteful spectral necro-slaughter. In the hope of stopping all the spooky slayings occurring around the theater, Vince has his parapsychologist friend Dr. Paul Keller (Roger Davis of Harrington's TV-movie *Killer Bees* (1974), as well as *Dark Shadows*) see 'what's the matter with Leslie' and determine if it really is the Guido ghost of Nicky who is responsible for the mysterious killings that have plagued the quaint Florida drive-in. Not long after Nicky enters his daughter Leslie's body and beats up Ruby after accusing her of setting him up at the time of his barbaric death, but, in reality, the little lady never committed treachery against her lover, but instead, inevitably got sadistic revenge against Jake, the jilted lover and the mastermind of the mobster-on-mobster mob hit. After Nicky's archenemy Jake, who is now blind and wheelchair-bound and no longer a powerful Mafioso Don, rolls into the room dead with a knife symbolically pierced through his heart, Ruby reveals to Doc Keller that she avenged her perished lover's death by gouging out the eyes of the man who ordered the hit of her man. After using his daughter's body to levitate and perform telekinetic murders, Nicky ultimately convinces Ruby, who is more than willing, to meet

RUBY

him at the scenic swamp where he was killed. In one of the cheapest, most tasteless, and absurdly anti-climatic tacked-on endings in horror history, Nicky's skeleton, which resembles the cheap sort of plastic Halloween decoration you find at Wal-Mart, pulls Ruby under water, thus reuniting them for eternity.

Like virtually any Curtis Harrington film, *Ruby* is big on atmospheric and morbid yet merry dark humor and, as the director described in his memoirs, "the film has found an admiring audience in Europe, and every once in a while, I meet someone who considers it one of my best films." Indeed, as someone who has become quite disillusioned with the horror genre, I find that *Ruby*—with its quasi-campy imagery and persuasion, cause-and-effect period piece setting, sweetly sadistic diva anti-hero, and nonchalant mutilation of genre conventions—makes for a much better way to waste 90 minutes or so than watching any of the films from the *Friday the 13th* series or even *The Exorcist*. Although Curtis Harrington would go so far as admitting that directing *Ruby* would prove to be "the most nightmarish experience" of his career and that he gets "very angry" anytime he re-watches it, the filmmaker's auteur signature bleeds beautifully a number of times throughout the work to distinguish it among the totally trashy exploitation trash that it is associated with. In terms of comparable works, *Ruby* is to Harrington's oeuvre what *Touch of Evil* (1958) is to Orson Welles, *Caligula* (1979) is to Tinto Brass, and *Wild Side* (1995) is to Donald Cammell, as a cinematic work ravaged by corrupt and uncultivated producers who sacrifice cinematic greatness for the quite dubious gamble of a hefty monetary return. Describing the producer who raped the soul of his film "both evil and stubborn," Curtis Harrington was just one of many tragic victims of an industry that strives to create philistine products for the peasant masses as opposed to cinema culture for the cultivated and would-be-cultivated. That being said, *Ruby*, ironically the director's most commercially successful film, will undoubtedly be most appreciated by those that already appreciate Curtis Harrington films, but will probably seem like a sort of 'The Exorcists for Grandparents' due to its nods to film noir, old school gangster flicks, classic Hollywood melodramas, and other films of yesteryear.

-Ty E

DEVIL DOG: THE HOUND OF HELL

Curtis Harrington (1978)

Poor Curtis Harrington. He was one of the first true American cinematic artists and a pioneer of both camp and cult cinema, yet by the 1970s, with the commercial failure of his Oedipus complex oriented serial killer flick *The Killing Kind* (1973), he had already entered the career-crushing abyss known as the television world. Of course, any great artist is better at polishing a turd than the average for-hire hack, so naturally Harrington made a number of notable made-for-TV cult horror flicks, including *How Awful About Allan* (1970), *The Cat Creature* (1973), *Killer Bees* (1974), and *The Dead Don't Die* (1975). While Harrington would continue to direct episodes of popular TV shows like *Dynasty* and *The Twilight Zone* until the late-1980s when his entire directing career totally expired, his last TV movie would be the so-bad-it's-good work *Devil Dog: The Hound of Hell* (1978) aka *Devil Dog: Hound of Hell*—a sub-dimestore work advertised by CBS as “A Halloween Howler” and starring Disney’s *Witch Mountain* series child stars Ike Eisenmann and Kim Richards. One of the things I like about Harrington, aside from his films, is that in any interview I have ever read or saw featuring him, the auteur never shied away from expressing his sheer and utter contempt for something, including his own films, with *Devil Dog* being a film he has shown nil reluctance trashing without mercy. In fact, in his posthumously released autobiography *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), Harrington described *Devil Dog* as simply a “monstrosity” and added, “This whole film built up to a horrendous climax, where the Devil Dog is revealed, but since the producer would not spend any money on effects, the scene fell flat. It was laughable rather than scary. Thank god I had nothing to do with the post-production work. I was off the picture by the time they created that ridiculous scene.” Indeed, the ending of *Devil Dog* is about as climatic as seeing flies hover over freshly excreted doggy droppings, yet one would be lying if they did not admit that the film still manages to entertain, if not for all the wrong reasons. Belonging to one of the most innately idiotic and totally worthless subgenres of the rarely artistically merited horror genre, *Devil Dog* is, at best, the misbegotten mutt occult horror equivalent to Sam Fuller’s racially-charged and radically retarded negrophobic killer canine flick *White Dog* (1982). The ludicrous tale of a murderous German Shepherd in league with Satan that puts to shame the canines that ostensibly ate kosher babies at Auschwitz concentration camp, *Devil Dog* is a film that makes *Cujo* (1983) and *Pet Sematary Two* (1992) seem like cultivated celluloid cuisine by comparison, yet somehow I managed to enjoy it more than the latest Spielberg flick.

Rather ridiculously, *Devil Dog* opens with a couple wealthy Satanists blowing a couple grand on a German Shepherd bitch and using the poor doggy in a Sa-

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tanic ritual that ultimately produces pernicious puppies in a scenario that steals liberally, if not ludicrously, from both *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *The Omen* (1976). Meanwhile, the Barry family's beloved bowwow is killed in a dubious hit-and-run accident involving a mysterious big black station wagon. By some miracle of fate, a seemingly nice fruit peddler, who is really a sinister Satanist incognito, shows up outside the Barry house and offers a precious little Alsatian Wolf Dog to the Barry children. After holding the puppy, preteen Bonnie Barry (Kim Richards) instantly falls in love with the doggy and her older brother Charlie (Ike Eisenmann) has a similar reaction. The family names the dog 'Lucky' and everything seems ideally perfect for the Barry family, but their superstitious Mexican Catholic maid feels there is something quite ominous about the dog. After the maid attempts in vain to warn patriarch Mike Barry (Richard Crenna) that the pup is pure evil, she dies in a freak fire. On top of that, one day while cutting the grass, Mike nearly severs his own hand in the lawn motor blade when the demonic doggy exerts control over his mind. Before long, every single member of the Barry family except father Mike becomes demonically possessed by the deadly devil dog. Needless to say, all hell breaks loose in sheltered suburbia when son Charlie frames a rival student by stealing a watch and planting it in said rival student's locker, thus enabling him to win a student election in a rather underhanded manner worthy of a psychotic Wall Street investment banker. Of course, papa Mike is rather perturbed when he discovers a Satanic altar in his attic and the fact his kids draw pictures of three-eyed Baphomet-like creatures is no less unsettling. With family friends dropping like flies and the nice next-door neighbor's dog being savagely shredded to pieces, Mike finally decides enough is enough and decides to rid his home of the killer canine. After making a couple attempts to shoot it with a gun and setting it loose in a faraway area outside of town, Mike gets desperate and decides to travel all the way to Ecuador after consulting an occult expert. On his pseudo-spiritual pilgrimage, Mike consults an elderly Indian witchdoctor/shaman, who reveals that the demon dog cannot be destroyed, but that it can at least be imprisoned in hell for another 1,000 years just as it had been previously. In the end, Mike gets involved in an absurdly anticlimactic showdown with the devil dog at a power plant of all places. After merely waving an arcane symbol scrawled on his hand by the witch doctor he met in Ecuador, Mike manages to defeat the dastardly devil dog. Unfortunately, as Mike's son Charlie reveals to his father at the conclusion of the film, there were apparently nine more pups in the bedeviled brood from which Lucky came, thus hinting at nine potential sequels to *Devil Dog* that were thankfully never made.

Comparable to Wes Craven's suburban horror abortion *Invitation to Hell* (1984) in its unintentionally satirical pseudo-scares, hokey horror clichés, and shockingly banal *The Brady Bunch* 'wholesomeness,' *Devil Dog* is undoubtedly auteur Curtis Harrington's worst film and quite symbolic of what America thinks of its few great cinematic artists. Of course, Harrington did the film merely for

the paycheck and so that he would not starve to death. In his autobiography, Harrington summed up the entire experience of making Devil Dog as follows: "The script was lousy and the producer, Jerome M. Zeitman, was determined to make the film within the budget he was given by the network. His only concern was to make the film for the cost of the licensing fee. You see, in the heyday of TV movies there was something called "deficit financing." A big company might pay a little more to make a movie with the idea that they would get it back in reruns and syndication. Zeitman was an independent producer and had given me an exceptionally tiny budget, even for television." Rather hilariously, in a featurette entitled "To The Devil a Dog" included on the 2-disc dvd set of Devil Dog released by Shriek Show, there are some somewhat recent interviews with producer Zeitman, who treats the film as a timeless masterpiece that is destined to spawn countless sequels and a remake. Undoubtedly, Zeitman (who describes Harrington as "giving a terrific job") seems like a carny-like swindler of the most pathetic and puffery-vomiting sort. In terms of the few positive aspects of working on Devil Dog, Harrington stated the following in his memoir: "I enjoyed directing Yvette Mimieux, who was one of the most beautiful actress I had ever worked with, and Richard Crenna, who was a total pro. But the film was an embarrassing disaster. And the slippery slope [of Harrington's declining career] only steepened." Personally, as a loyal friend of man's best friend, the whole evil dog gimmick has always felt like one of the most impotent and laughable sub genres of the horror genre and you probably will not find a better example of this than Devil Dog. A film that I can only really recommend to trash cinephiles, lard ass Anton LaVey groupies, and Curtis Harrington fans, Devil Dog is ultimately a piece of hellishly hackneyed hound horror dung that reminds the viewer that you cannot teach an older auteur new tricks, especially when working under the petty and artless art-loathing world of television.

-Ty E

MATA HARI
MATA HARI

Curtis Harrington (1985)

Without question, executed Dutch spy Mata Hari was a social-climbing slut and real-life femme fatale whose talent for flesh-peddling and leading on men for her own personal gain not only led to her own premature demise, but also the inadvertent deaths of tens of thousands of soldiers due to her espionage work. Although essentially a big budget softcore flick disguised as a spy thriller and World War I period piece, *Mata Hari* (1985) does a passable job in portraying the life and death of a female spy whose hypnotic sensuality was more deleterious to Europe's military officers than any flying bullets. Directed by the late great Curtis Harrington (*What's the Matter with Helen?*, *The Killing Kind*) and produced by Cannon Films, as well as starring the delectable yet tragic Dutch whore Sylvia Kristel of *Emmanuelle* (in)famy in the role of a historical Dutch whore, Mata Hari is relatively sympathetic to its protagonist, if not portraying her than a less than ingenious exotic dancer whose rampant moral looseness and weakness for aristocratic gentlemen put her in a wayward and wanton web of deceit, degeneracy, and—eventually—death. A woman who grew up in a broken home and who married a Dutch Colonial Army Captain twenty years her senior living in the then Dutch East Indies (what is today Indonesia) at the mere age of 18 after reading the man's 'wife-wanted' ad in a newspaper, which enabled her to socially climb to the Dutch Upper-class and live in relative financial privilege, Mata Hari (born Margaretha Geertruida Zelle) ultimately faced physical and emotional abuse from her husband (who kept a concubine), so she escaped to the wonderful world of xenophilia by studying Indonesian culture and customs, joined a local dance company, and de-Christianized herself "Mata Hari" (Indonesian for "sun" or literally "eye of the day"). After the death of her son under dubious circumstances relating to complications with syphilis (some believe that both of her children contracted the disease from their parents; others believe they were perniciously poisoned by a vengeful servant) and divorcing her husband, Mata Hari moved to Paris, France and dedicated her life to decadence and degeneracy as a so-called 'artistic' dancer, absurdly proclaiming to be an authentic Javanese princess and ultimately becoming the mistress of various wealthy industrialists, bluebloods, prominent military officers, and politicians. Essentially ignoring her entire back story before she became a celebrated dancer turned spy, Harrington's *Mata Hari* is mainly held together via a fictitious bizarre romantic triangle between Mata Hari and two friends/military officers, French Georges Ladoux (ironically played by Swiss-German Oliver Tobias) and the German Karl von Bayerling (further ironically played by Occitan French Christopher Cazenove). Sort of like Jean Renoir's anti-war masterpiece *La Grande Illusion* (1937) aka *Grand Illusion* meets *Emmanuelle* (1974), *Mata Hari* is softcore cinema with a couple campy shades of class that owes any 'artistic' merit it has to auteur Curtis

Harrington's exquisite, if not absurdly eroticized, direction.

Mata Hari (Sylvia Kristel) is a bisexual babe who will screw any and every handsome (and sometimes less than handsome) man in a military uniform and when she runs into brothers from different mothers, Georges Ladoux (Oliver Tobias), a dark-haired Frenchman and Karl von Bayerling (Christopher Cazenove), a blond-haired German, admiring Indonesian art at a Paris Museum in 1914, they inevitably form a threesome on opposing sides of the war effort after the Great War breaks out. Hari enjoys mystifying her own background, proudly proclaiming to her gentlemen callers, "They told me I was a predestined soul, dedicated to Shiva, god of the mysteries of love." After boarding a train and spontaneously engaging with carnal knowledge with a 'handsome traveler' (Derek de Lint) who is absurdly killed during mid-coitus, horny Hari finds herself a murder suspect of sort, but is ultimately freed by her charming kraut boy toy von Bayerling, a classic gentleman and rare German Francophile who flirts with the exotic dancer with conspicuously cheesy lines like, "You remind me of Paris. Of everything that's intriguing, innovative, different." Unfortunately, von Bayerling's frog friend seems to be a lesser gentleman, as he frames Mata Hari as an informant and declares she join the Allied spy effort after running into her in Paris again where she is performing a six-armed Goddess Kali act. Mata Hari also has the misfortune of being blackmailed by two crazy kraut villains, a certain 'Fräulein Doktor' (Gaye Brown)—a demented doctor of psychology and mastermind of German intelligence who is quite butch, to say the least—and her Svengali-like assistant Wolff (played by Fassbinder superstar/perennial villain Gottfried John). Of course, being a dainty ditz with big tits, Hari's main motivation is attempting to go behind enemy lines disguised as a nurse and rescuing her Aryan charmer Captain von Bayerling after she learns he may have been hurt. In the process of her espionage escapades and sex-scapades, Mata Hari gets a number of fine young European men killed, but she almost makes up for it by thwarting an explosive Teutonic assassination plot masterminded by the nefarious Fräulein Doktor and her wolfish associate Wolff. Rather unfortunately, Mr. Ladoux catches Hari in a rather compromised situation where she is arrested for spying, given a show trial, and executed while her guilty French lover watches on. Possibly owing to Curtis Harrington's homosexuality, friends-turned-enemies Karl von Bayerling and Georges Ladoux find reconciliation over the mutual melancholy as a result of Mata Hari's very public execution, proving the truism 'bros before hoes' can be classy when in the context of old school European military officers.

In his posthumously released memoir *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), director Curtis Harrington wrote regarding Mata Hari, which was incidentally his last feature-length film, "I think it turned out well. One French reviewer even said something to the effect of, "Kristel shows acting talent in this film that we had not suspected

MATA HARI

she had.” As was the pattern with many of my feature films, *Mata Hari* was better received in Europe than in the United States.” And, indeed, with its anti-war message and fratricidal and anti-romantic characterization of World War I, relatively respectful portrayal of the European aristocracy, depiction of an orgy and a lesbian *Ménage à trios*, poetically stylized battle sequences and sex scenes (including a female masturbation scene that producers forced Harrington to add to the film), and adulation of a high-class hooker, it is easy to see why the average John Wayne-wannabe American filmgoer might not have taken too kindly to *Mata Hari*. As proven by the unsealing of formerly confidential German documents in the 1970s, the real-life *Mata Hari* was indeed a German spy and not simply a scapegoat whose ‘glamorous’ execution, to quote one of the French military characters in Harrington’s film, would simply “do wonders for the Army’s morale.” Like the real-life *Mata Hari*, star Sylvia Kristel, who came from a broken home and was even molested as a child, was sexually exploited and thus would inevitably learn how to exploit her own body for personal gain. While Ms. Kristel was far from the greatest actress in the world, she was certainly a great choice for *Mata Hari*, even if her performance is totally eclipsed by Greta Garbo’s legend-creating performance in the pre-code Hollywood flick *Mata Hari* (1931) directed by George Fitzmaurice. As Harrington wrote in his memoir, “Sylvia was a huge star in France, and her fans came out in droves. These days *Mata Hari* enjoys a certain cult status among them, and maybe even a few fans of my own. I do believe I was able to add my touch to the proceedings.” And, indeed, without Harrington’s cultivated, if not compromised, direction, it is hard for me to imagine that I would enjoy *Mata Hari* as much as I do as a sort of lavish art-sploitation flick with a modest budget directed by an underrated auteur from a different era who was not a huge fan of Josef von Sternberg and friend of James Whale for nothing. As *Mata Hari* demonstrates, if anyone could bring class to celluloid exploitation trash and glamor to a glorified porn star, it was Curtis Harrington.

-Ty E

SWEET ANGEL MINE

Curtis Radclyffe (1996)

It is not often that one watches a film that carries an aura that feels like Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) meets the TV-series *Northern Exposure* (minus an ample dose of the quirky humor) meets *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) with Lynchian undertones; as such an ideally idiosyncratic work – for better or for worse – certainly sticks out in one's mind. Last week, I had the random luxury of sharply gazing at such a work – *Sweet Angel Mine* (1996) directed by Curtis Radclyffe and co-scripted by Sue Maheu and Tim Willocks (*Swept from the Sea, Sin*) – and I was certainly not left with a feeling of chagrin, even if the film was not exactly up to par with seemingly equipollent works like David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and Philip Ridley's *The Reflecting Skin* (1990). In terms of quality, aesthetic, execution, and essence, *Sweet Angel Mine* is in agreeable company with Garth Maxwell's equally underrated and unseen film *Jack Be Nimble* (1993). Like *Jack Be Nimble*, *Sweet Angel Mine* is a work that although sometimes extremely violent and vulgar in regard to imagery and sentiment, features a certain metaphysical dream logic that further accentuates its quasi-mystical rural setting and the menacing mystique of its mentally-imbalanced characters. *Sweet Angel Mine* follows a bodacious and sometimes bratty twenty-something Brit named Paul (Oliver Milburn) who has traveled to Nova Scotia, Canada in the hope of finding his long vanished father. While keenly cruising around on his crotch-rocket (a 1973 T140V Triumph Bonneville), Paul eventually encounters a visibly hesitant, awkward, and somewhat feral-like yet pulchritudinous country girl named Rauchine (Margaret Langrick). Although Paul takes an instant liking to the sub-literate little lady and her young, voluptuous body, he has yet to realize that her mother Megan is a homicidal maniac who has intimate conversations with ethereal beings. In an attempt to get closer to Rauchine and what lies beneath her virginal white skirt, Paul convinces the always confrontational Meg to hire him as a laborer on her farm; a place where hogs engage in comical carnal knowledge and where many formidable family secrets lay in plain sight. Not long after taking residence on the farm, Paul begins to have less than wet erotic dreams about the atypical mother and daughter that eventually evolve into a real-life nightmare that inevitably leads him to solving the mystery of his father's unexpected disappearance and the bounty in Rauchine's panties.

As someone who has personally encountered the detrimental effects that mentally ill matriarchal mothers have over their physically and mentally abused daughters, I found *Sweet Angel Mine* to be an especially eerie yet radiantly-stylized cinematic work. In Hitchcock's *Psycho*, one learns that exceedingly bitchy and overbearing mothers can spawn sexually depraved homicidal lunatic sons, but the calamitous side-effects of a unhinged wench on a daughter is a subject that has been rarely explored in cinema, thus *Sweet Angel Mine* comes as a notable and

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mostly worthwhile exception, even if it does not feature the same psychological depth and wholly convincing acting one would expect from an Ingmar Bergman film. Upon first appearing in *Sweet Angel Mine*, it is quite apparent that Rauchine has virtually nil self-esteem and barely even a distinguishable personality of her own. After Megan initially appears it is obvious as to why Rauchine seems to have a glaring hole in her emotionally-ravaged soul, as the girl's callous and cunning mother dictates every thought and action of her grown daughter's life. It is only when she meets and swoons over Paul that Rauchine begins to form an identity of her own, thus resulting in a quasi-schizophrenic break in her psyche between her new organic self and the old one formulated by Meg's nefarious nurturing. Being a chivalrous and charming British chap, Paul is wholly willing to deal with Meg's backwoods megalomania and Canadian-peckerwood pomposity during his precarious mission to win Rauchine's heart. Of course, Paul also encounters hostility from local would-be-vikings yokels that are far from welcoming when compared to how the North American Nordics from *Northern Exposure* dealt with the ill-disposed and whiny Judaic fellow from NYC. In short, Paul is a strange young man in a strange sullen land, but he stays committed to the philosophy of 'love conquers all', in spite of it threatening his very existence. Although Paul is the lead protagonist of *Sweet Angel Mine*, Megan is ultimately the most complex and multifaceted character and a lot of this is owed to actress Alberta Watson's (*La Femme Nikita*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) erotically and psychotically-charged performance. To say that Meg makes Paul seem like a bitch-that-eats-fish-n-chips would be a reckless underestimate. As Paul lets her know, Megan is certainly a cold cunt incapable of true love and human companionship, but she certainly knows how to (literally and figuratively) crucify a virile young man and handle a loaded firearm due to what seems like 2+ decades worth of steadily seething sexual repression.

After appearing briefly on VHS, *Sweet Angel Mine* all but disappeared (only to be recently unearthed via Netflix instant-viewing) from the world and has henceforth remained a rarely seen work with a virtually nonexistent cult following, but I have a feeling that will change as the years pass as the film will certainly appeal to fans of Philip Ridley (*Sweet Angel Mine* is a virtual "sister film" to *The Passion of Darkly Noon*) and the less pretentious admirers of David Lynch's work. Unfortunately, director Curtis Radclyffe would go on to direct the rather mundane and fundamentally formulaic British horror flick *The Sick House* (2008), thus one can only wonder if *Sweet Angel Mine* is a fluke of sub-masterpiece psychosexual filmmaking; or a sound and succulent synchronistic marriage between director, screenplay, and actors (I would assume the latter). Either way, *Sweet Angel Mine* is undoubtedly one of the most audaciously ambitious and perversely gratifying works about a disintegrating derelict matriarchal family gone awry. If any film has the potential to inspire an individual to second-guess a relationship they have with a girl (or guy) who has a bats in the belfry

mother, it is indubitably Sweet Angel Mine.
-Ty E

VERGEEF ME
VERGEEF ME

Cyrus Frisch (2001)

Like its more degenerate neighbor Belgium, the Netherlands has managed to produce a relatively remarkable amount of subversive and wildly idiosyncratic avant-garde and even mainstream auteur filmmakers, including Frans Zwartjes, Bas Jan Ader, Adriaan Ditvoorst, Jos Stelling, Alex van Warmerdam, Theo van Gogh, Nico B, Aryan Kaganof aka Ian Kerkhof, and Edwin Brienen, among various others. Most recently, a tall blond four-eyed chap named Cyrus Frisch aka 'Cyrus the Great' (Blackwater Fever, Oogverblindend aka Dazzle)—a man that could not more archetypically and banally Dutch in physical appearance—has been hailed by the Dutch press as the most subversive and iconoclastic 'enfant terrible' filmmaker in the Netherlands. A sort of 'dishonest documentarian' who cannot help but mix digital video fact with fiction, Frisch has been credited for directing the first theatrical feature-length fictional film shot on a cell-phone with his work *Why Didn't Anybody Tell Me It Would Become This Bad in Afghanistan* (2007), even though Aryan Kaganof was actually the first person to accomplish this with his feature *SMS Sugar Man* (while Kaganof's film was not released until 2008 due to problems with the distributor, the film was actually completely in December 2005). Frisch has utilized a number of audaciously absurd and admittedly oftentimes entertaining, if not morally retarded, gimmicks during his filmmaking career, including filming the death (!) and cremation of his mentor, Dutch film scholar Hans Saaltink, for his work *k zal je leven eren...* (1996) aka *I Shall Honor Your Life* after his comrade unexpectedly suffered a heart attack on his doorstep. Additionally, when the Netherlands' most influence film critic wrote regarding him and his work: "If I think of Cyrus Frisch and his films, the first word that comes to mind is: pathetic. A rebel without a cause. It's decadence without style, as if someone is stewing in his own dirt. Not inspired by cinephilia or any other examples...it's inventing film all over again for his own sake as a form of self-pity," the filmmaker fought back by directing a 70-minute piece with the rather fittingly title *Zelfbeklag* (1995) aka *Self-Pity* where the auteur tries in vain to drown himself in a fish tank while the negative review of his film is recited. Unquestionably, Frisch's greatest accomplishment thus far is the overly ambitious multi-media abortion *Vergeef me* (2001) aka *Forgive Me*, which is a sort of preposterously postmodern and obnoxiously self-reflexive play-within-a-film disguised as a documentary starring the director himself as himself, albeit with the ostensibly contrived persona of an immoral auteur who has made a Faustian pact to deliver the most devilishly degenerate, depraved, demoralizing, and dejecting film ever made. Indeed, starring a real-life cast of junkies, dipsomaniacs, ugly cripples, dirty whores and murderous mentally defective lard asses, Frisch's fucked flick is sort of meta-media digital video diarrhea that attempts to transcend Jerry Springer, Maury Povich, and Bumfights in terms of

excessive exploitation of human misery and suffering as a work that, contrary to National Socialist propaganda films, proves that the Aryan mind can be just as defective as that of the most degenerate of the Juden.

Directed by a mensch who once stated, "It's only when we behave immorally that we can raise a discussion on ethics," *Forgive Me* is like the Dutch equivalent to kosher confederate avant-gardist Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997), albeit taking a decidedly Dutch pseudo-deconstructionist approach as opposed to a neo-Vaudevillian montage-like approach. A longtime work-in-progress, Frisch originally showed early footage of the film at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) where, to the filmmaker's chagrin, the piece was warmly received, so the auteur decided to up the ante in terms of aesthetic aberrance and invalid exploitation. "THE TWILIGHT ZONE of reality" as reflected in Amsterdam's most physically and spiritually damned degenerates, *Forgive Me* is a dishonest piece of anti-cinematic (pseudo)honesty that attempts to be 'ironic' and 'insightful' in its meta-exploitation of invalids but it ultimately does very same that it seeks to criticize. At the beginning of the film, auteur Frisch self-righteously complains: "Can I say something? What I'm truly afraid of is that...What I think is really terrible is [...] if you spend your entire life watching television and every evening at 8 o'clock you watch the news and see what there is to see every day, at 80 you end up in a home and you're...There's no way you can cope with that. You take in all this information and you end up totally traumatized in a home for the elderly." When Frisch's comrade interrupts him by stating, "But Cyrus? What do you have to add with your films? Aren't your films just more pollution? Why do you make films?", the filmmaker retorts, "No. You don't have to watch my movies! I'm only saying that it's life-threatening. People need to understand! They need to see the influence of filming other people's suffering. What it means...And the impact it has on audiences." Messianic auteur Frisch believes, "some things should not be seen" and he decides he is going to fight back by absurdly showing things that certainly should "not be seen," arguing that with *Forgive Me*, "...I'm going to make sure it doesn't happen anymore. With this movie I'm going to go over the top! I'm going to cross the line! I'm going to cross the line of what's acceptable!"

In a keenly kitschy postmodern molestation of the cinematic legacy of Teutonic master auteur F.W. Murnau, *Forgive Me* juxtaposes scenes from *Faust* (1926) with phony inter-titles of the Devil stating, "I'll wrest the soul of Cyrus from God!" and thus the filmmaker subsequently makes his Faustian pact by introducing the motley crew of forsaken dipsomaniacs, junkies, and cripples. The first superstar introduced is hardcore middle-aged bisexual drunkard 'Nico,' who Frisch apparently met two years before in Amsterdam sitting in a broken down car in front of bar and liked him so much that he offered him a role in his film. Completely physically and mentally destroyed by his addiction to booze, Nico is hooked up to an IV and cannot even stand up, but that does not stop him from

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begging Frisch, "Please. Give me a drink... Or I can't take the pain." Somewhat unbelievably, during his early adult years, Nico went to college and during the very same time he was attempting to receive his graduate degree, he developed a fetish for hookers and hanging out in the Red Light District. Nico also likes men and attempts to coerce Frisch into giving him a big sloppy kiss, but the director is simply not dedicated enough to his art to reduce himself to the level of making out with a whacked-out wino that probably has at least half a dozen STDS. Nico and his slightly less trashy but no less broken girlfriend Chiquita once appeared on a terribly trashy Dutch TV show called 'Joy and Sorrow' where they discussed their various erotic excursions in the Red Light District. Chiquita is a chain-smoker who once burned her house down after falling asleep with a cig in her hand and Frisch helps fuel her vice by giving her a bag full of cigarette packs upon introducing her in the film. Despite being an exhibitionist of sorts who likes appearing on trashy TV shows and flashes her tits to Frisch without him having to ask her to do so, Chiquita apparently suffers from agoraphobia. Chiquita used to date an abusive cripple named Peter Franciscus Johannes Smits, but she had to dump him after he ripped her earlobe off. Peter is proud of having the "one in ten million" disease of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS), as he says it makes him feel "special," as he surely has nothing else to feel special about. Peter has a nearly 11-year-old daughter that he hasn't seen in 1 ½ years and Frisch attempts to coerce her into calling her, but he gets his ex Chiquita to do it instead, though she fails to get in contact with the little girl.

Arguably, the most degenerate of the lot aside from Nico is a heroin-addicted Arab cripple named Achmed, who does not seem to like his white compatriots too much and complains that Dutch drug laws are not liberal enough, self-righteously remarking from his electric scooter: "The Netherlands is a smart country, know what I mean? You can't use drugs...but alcohol is available on every corner. That's what I don't understand about this society...Drugs aren't allowed, alcohol is...Why? Cars are run over with cars. You drink like a fish, you get behind the wheel and you're dead. And not just you. You take another with you. With drugs you only kill yourself. Maybe you lose a friend or two, but it's your own fault." Also unlike his friends, Achmed actually seems to care about Frisch's film, complaining when Nico goes on a belligerent drunken rant, "I want it to be a beautiful film, and not this bickering. When you go somewhere, you don't show up drunk." Ultimately, all the 'characters' perform Frisch's play *Jesus/Liefhebber* aka *Jesus/Lover* for a respectable bourgeois audience that would not touch the performers with a ten foot pole if their life depended on it yet have somehow been coerced in watching the novelty of seeing them in a stage-play. Needless to say, the play is a sad and pathetic joke where audience members laugh while Chiquita nods out while mucus leaks out of her mouth and nose, a completely unclad Nico masturbates on stage and waves his member at the audience while displaying his skeletal shoah-survivor-esque body, Peter

does virtually nothing while sporting a beanie and a pair of shades, and Achmed takes long and effortless drags from a cigarette in between smoking heroin backstage. Of course, the proudly demoralized bourgeois audience gives the proud performers a standing ovation because they probably feel 'enlightened' that they had the opportunity to watch such an 'edgy' play.

A couple years after the performance of *Jesus/Lover*, director Frisch decided to interview the film's one and only true diva, Chiquita, about the aftermath of the performance and how it has affected her life. Probably to drive home the fact that the gutter diva is not all that different from certain international Dutch superstars in terms of the wanton and wayward fashion she chooses to live her life, Sylvia 'Emmanuelle' Kristel, herself a chain-smoker who began smoking unfiltered cigarettes at the age of 11 and died in late-2012 at the fairly young age of 60 from esophageal and lung cancer, briefly appears on stage as Chiquita's melancholy celebrity doppelganger. As Frisch explains, while the play was a hit that described by the media as "a new kind of theatre: reality theatre" and "a whole new form of engaged theatre," not one damn journalist, newscaster, or TV personality dared to check on the welfare of the performers, who had all sunken to an all-time low in terms of degeneracy as a result of their new celebrity. Chiquita describes how the experience made her feel that she had been "reduced to an actress" in her own life. Notably, Frisch arrogantly complains to Chiquita, "Since then that story has become reality and I can't stop it. I asked you to be yourselves...But you played roles. Now no one knows what's real and what isn't anymore. And that is the Twilight Zone of reality."

Indubitably, Chiquita's ex-beau Peter was most deeply affected by his newfound fame and when his mother berated him due to his dubious mainstream media reputation as a drug-addled mentally defective loser, he decided to get really drunk one night and ride his electric scooter off a loading ramp, thus causing him to break his back in two places. While Peter initially felt his role in *Jesus/Lover* was important because he believed "Insanity has elevated to norm. And that is a good thing too. Because the world is crazy," he could not handle his new infamy, so he killed himself on January 20, 1999. As Chiquita describes regarding her ex-lover, "he was so full of life" but "all this ruined him" and "...Now he's dead... and I always said: 'suicide in painless'." *Forgive Me* ultimately ends with a meticulously stylized yet aesthetically vulgar and intentionally kitschy pseudo-sentimental dream-sequence featuring a Zooey Deschanel look-alike (Ellen Ten Damme) with a handgun strapped to her leg frolicking around a scenic beach in a would-be-angelic fashion. Needless to say, the pixie girl's fun day at the beach is ruined when she happens upon destroyed American army tanks and a critically wounded Vietnam War era U.S. GI (absurdly played by Dutch-speaking junky Arab Achmed) who begs the little lady to kill him, and then goes out of character and tells Frisch to turn the camera off. After an inter-title appears reading, "Forgive...forgive me my trespasses!," the girl shoots the GI/Achmed and the

VERGEEF ME

film ends.

After watching various annoying interviews with auteur Cyrus Frisch, I must admit that he seems like an autistic dilettante and perpetual bullshitter who wastes way too much time trying to justify his art in a groveling and less than sincere pseudo-humanist fashion in what can only be seen as a patently pathetic attempt to appeal mainstream left-wing film critics. In fact, a couple years ago Frisch started something called the “World Problems Project” where he hoped to assemble a group of international filmmakers that altruistic make films about major world problems so as to, “give a real impetus to constructive solutions,” thus reflecting the Dutch filmmaker’s exceedingly exaggerated and seemingly megalomaniacal sense of importance as a serious ‘artiste.’ Personally, I would have a lot more respect for Frisch if he just confessed he was a misanthropic and nihilistic psychopath and took a more stoic stance towards exploiting drunks, cripples, junkies, and human tragedy. After all, the last thing the world needs is another artist that thinks that they can save the world. In 2011, Frisch did a speech called “The Story of a Filmmaker Who Got Frustrated Because He Never Saved a Life” in Hong Kong for something called MaD (aka ‘Make a Difference’) where he almost breaks down crying while complaining about how he wishes his films could save peoples’ lives and then shows a scene from his work *Blackwater Fever* (2008) where the seemingly ethno-masochistic protagonist of the film cries hysterically because he feels impotent in the face of saving the lives of AIDS-ridden African negroes. Of course, as Frisch’s own work *Forgive Me* clearly demonstrates, the Netherlands has enough of its own serious social and cultural problems for a Dutch filmmaker to feel the need to worry about the problems of the third world. Of course, as a fellow that morbidly made a film featuring the death, funeral, and cremation of his mentor and whose debut feature *Forgive Me* more or less resulted in the suicide of one of its subjects, Frisch’s oeuvre is probably as sincere in its supposed humanism as Kurt Geron’s *Theresienstadt. Ein Dokumentarfilm aus dem jüdischen Siedlungsgebiet* (1944) aka *The Führer Gives the Jews a City* (1944), Sergei Eisenstein’s suppressed 1937 work *Bezhin Meadow* (which was partially made to cover-up the 1932-1933 Soviet genocidal famine *Holodomor*), and Harmony Korine’s *Gummo* (1997). Indeed, I am sure Frisch was laughing to himself when he came up with the title for *Forgive Me*, as he is a sort of Geraldo Rivera of the Dutch avant-garde film world, albeit minus the superficial charm and charisma. Unquestionably, culturally deracinated western liberal democracies are great at producing autistic and psychopathic individuals and Frisch is just as much a product of contemporary Holland as the anti-superstars of *Forgive Me*. Had Frisch lived in the Netherlands during an earlier era before the emergence of a morally bankrupt welfare state that pays for transsexuals to get sex changes (!), he might have grown up to be a Calvinist minister as reflected in his mostly flat affect. Indeed, while I enjoyed *Forgive Me* to some extent, I certainly find Frisch more disturbing than any of

his works.
-Ty E

BLACKWATER FEVER
BLACKWATER FEVER

Cyrus Frisch (2008)

Judging solely from his previous works, it seemed rather unlikely that somewhat unhinged Dutch avant-garde auteur Cyrus Frisch (Selfpity aka Zelfbeklag, Dazzle aka Oogverblindend) would grow out of his meta-cinematic postmodern posturing, pre-packaged nihilistic gimmicks, uniquely inconsistent anti-aesthetics, and undying infatuation for media attention, but with his experimental quasi-existentialist road trip flick *Blackwater Fever* (2008), it seemed that he had finally got out of his self-designated artistic ghetto and began carefully assembling his own sort of distinguished cinematic language, or at least something certainly resembling one. For his first feature *Vergeef me* (2001) *Forgive Me*, Frisch absurdly attempted (emphasis on: 'attempted') to criticize the moral bankruptcy of Reality-TV and talk shows by directing the ultimate filmic freak show featuring exceedingly emaciated gutter-dwelling drunks, wheelchair-bound Arab junkies, and violent wife-beating cripples doing what they did best for an adoring audience of bourgeois dorks. Despite the fact that one of the anti-superstars of the film committed suicide as a direct result of the negative attention he received from the media after getting involved with Frisch's dubious antics, the filmmaker soldiered on without any regrets, confessing regarding the (non)actor's untimely death in an interview with *Filmmaker Magazine*: "Of course, I'm not really to blame for the death of Peter." Needless to say, Frisch had to at least attempt to try to top *Forgive Me* in terms of ostensible iconoclasm and carny-like showmanship if he wanted to stay relevant with the media and film critics, so he pulled off the stunt of filming his next feature *Why Didn't Anybody Tell Me It Would Become This Bad in Afghanistan* (2007) entirely on a cell-phone and even included a scene of himself in the film running down a public street naked, as if trying in vain to outdo the camcorder-based self-debasement of Hollywood teenage heartthrob turned junky trailer park auteur Giuseppe Andrews, who has never shied away from exposing his heart, soul, and his seemingly dirty dong for his homebrewed digital video creations. With *Blackwater Fever*, Frisch for once and all proved that he could make a carefully crafted experimental work that does not rely on mere shock value and is actually 'cinematic' enough to play in an actual movie theater. Following in the once-great tradition of existential road movies from the late-1960 to early-1980s like Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1970), Monte Hellman's *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971), and the works of Wim Wenders (*Kings of the Road*, *Paris, Texas*), Frisch's flick, not unlike French auteur Bruno Dumont's modernist realist horror show *Twenty-nine Palms* (2003), is just as much a metaphysical journey as a physical one as a work that features a look at the great American open road from the unique and unconventional perspective of a highly critical and sometimes cockeyed European lens. Indeed, when Frisch sees arid American deserts he does not think

about cowboys and Indians or *Breaking Bad*, but towel-headed Islamic terrorists and starving members of the negroid race, thus reflecting the great disconnect between deracinated Western Europeans and intellectually unevolved and culturally-retarded white Americans.

The almost dialogue-less (non)story of a dull young Dutch dude and his equally mentally vacant dame as they aimlessly drive a convertible from Los Angeles to Las Vegas (or what Frisch lovingly described as, “the western consumer paradise”) and somehow end up driving through the war-torn Middle East and Africa on the way after the male protagonist develops the very serious eponymous complication of malaria that causes red blood cells to explode in the bloodstream, the releasing of hemoglobin directly into the blood vessels and into the urine, and oftentimes kidney failure, *Blackwater Fever* is a sort of transcendental fever dream on overdrive that demonstrates in a shockingly aesthetically resplendent way what it must feel like to be an impotent ethno-masochistic white liberal who has been brainwashed into wanting to save all brown people of the world, but is far too decadent, spoiled, weak, and naïve to do anything at all. Indeed, despite featuring a protagonist who feels he is a “murderer” because he cannot save the lives of poor starving and disease-ridden black Africans, Frisch’s flick is ironically probably the first film production in film history where the lead actor and various crew members decided to quit the project before it actually wrapped shooting because they felt that the director had exploited impoverished negroes, thus reflecting the unhinged and hilariously hyper hypocritical nature of the filmmaker who, somewhat admirably, seems to be willing to go to any extreme to get his desired effect in terms of artistic expression. Of course, as a member of the same people that tamed and civilized what would later be called South Africa, Frisch was merely unwittingly following in a great Dutch tradition when he made the film. After all, I am sure that the starving Africans that appear in the film were able to get a nice meal or two in payment for their admittedly grotesque and even horrifying Jodorowsky-esque performances.

Notably, in keeping in tradition with his singular dedication to meta-exploitative hyper-hyperrealism, Frisch had originally intended to shoot at an actual real-life food distribution camp in the Horn of Africa, but some pesky NGOs thwarted the filmmaker’s ambitious plans to capture real negro suffering—certainly something that whites, especially those of the privileged and educated sort, cannot seem to get enough of nowadays—so he had to step it down a notch and created his own makeshift Sudanese Dinka ‘village’ in Namibia where he cast fairly sick, hungry, and deformed locals to play the parts for a scene at the end of the film that some viewers might describe as ‘poverty porn.’ As Frisch once stated regarding the nameless and childish self-absorbed yet largely apathetic McWorld-minded protagonist played by Roeland Fernhout (Robert Jan Westdijk’s *Siberia*, Martin Koolhoven’s *Suzy Q*) and his ignorance towards human suffering, “This character has the feeling that he’s not really there. He’s driving

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through a civil war in Africa, but he might as well be watching MTV. I think it's very important to zoom in on the reality we live in nowadays." Luckily for self-flagellating whites, bleeding heart leftist wimps, and pedantic Adorno fanboys, by the end of *Blackwater Fever*, Fernhout's rampantly metrosexual and comfortably-numb Hawaiian-shirt-adorned character will be crying like a little ball-less bitch while holding a black baby in what one might describe as an allegory for the absurdity, impotency, and hopelessness of contemporary European xenophobic altruism. Indeed, Frisch might have intended to make a film that panders to the racially and culturally suicidal lemmings and automatons in academia and the media, as well as the so-called non-profit organizations that probably give the filmmaker funding, but what he ultimately unwittingly sired is a visceral and unintentionally honest depiction of the all-consuming nihilism of spiritually and culturally retarded modern European man who, with nothing left to conquer and thus nothing left to live for, has ultimately decided to interpret Rudyard Kipling's famous poem "The White Man's Burden" as a call to self-exterminating altruism via the ostensibly completely selfless devotion to ending the perennial struggle of billions of starving illiterate 'people of color' in the world.

Although the protagonist only says a couple words during the entire film, *Blackwater Fever* begins with Roeland Fernhout narrating the following words: "And now...images flow through my head that I can't get rid of anymore. When I look at myself, in the mirror...I see a man who watches others perish. I have the guts to look but not to do anything. I don't pick up the phone to call the police. I don't open the window to scream. When I look in the mirror...I see a murderer." Fernhout sees a murderer in the mirror as he suffers from a totally transcendental form of patently pathetic post-colonial 'white guilt' which he obtains after contracting blackwater fever while driving from Los Angeles to Las Vegas and somehow ending up in the arid wastelands of the Middle East and Africa. It is so hot outside that you can see the heat rise off the asphalt, but that does not seem to affect the protagonist, who is not much more than a posturing cipher with a fancy convertible, chic shades, and a hot token girlfriend who likes getting fucked on top of her seemingly half-braindead beau's car. Throughout most of the film, Fernhout does nothing but drive and drive as if to reflect the perennial nothingness of his consistently stagnant life of western luxury, but after contracting a bad case of blackwater fever he begins to see what he initially thinks are mirages that eventually become too potent for him to ignore, thus ultimately giving him a new perception of life and humanity in general. Although initially a mindless consumer and materialist, Fernhout eventually develops the distinctly European vice of deeply devout humanism of the social justice warrior sort.

In between ejaculating on the stomach of his equally cipher-like girlfriend (played by Ellen Ten Damme, who previously starred in Frisch's *Forgive Me*),

Fernhout begins seeing towel-headed Muslim terrorists executing prisoners while he is driving through the desert, though he initially ignores these unsettling visions. When Fernhout decides to leave the highway and drive off-road through the desert, he runs into a dead corpse covered with a cloak, but after looking at it for a second or two, he doesn't seem too impressed and keeps on driving. After suffering from a completely crippling bout of fever-induced shivering that involves him rolling around in a fetal position on the desert ground, Fernhout swings his girlfriend in the air while a rotten corpse sits in the foreground, as if to highlight his apathy towards human suffering or something. When a group of negro terrorists rape his girlfriend, Fernhout does not even seem to notice, even after his lover manages to escape from her savages rapists, runs up to him in vain for protection, and ultimately has her brains blown out right in front of his decidedly disinterested boyfriend. It is only when Fernhout stumbles upon a corpse-like tribe of totally naked starving, deformed, and/or diseased dying African negroes that Fernhout seems to pull his head out of his ass for the first time in his life and takes note of his surroundings. Indeed, Fernhout is somehow more concerned with the fates of random black tribesmen than that of his own girlfriend. While Fernhout simply cries hysterically while looking a hunchback negro and dehydrated corpse, among other barely human misbegotten creatures, he eventually has an epiphany of sorts upon finding and cradling a black baby, which he steals(!) from the refugee camp and then runs away with, as if he wants to be like Madonna and start a collection of third world Hominid accessories that he can show off to the paparazzi.

As Olaf Möller wrote in his article entitled 'Things Fall Apart: The Unflinching Cinema of Dutch Provocateur Cyrus Frisch' featured in the March/April 2010 issue of *Film Comment* regarding the manipulative tactics that the *Blackwater Fever* director utilized for shooting the final scene of the film: "When Frisch was barred from shooting this scene in an actual refugee camp, he built a set, filled it with emaciated extras, and then sent in his star unforeshadowed. The look of horror on Fernhout's face is real – the actor broke down, weeping uncontrollably. He fled the set and subsequently professed his hatred toward Frisch for subjecting him to the ordeal." While I think very little of the intellects of most actors and appreciate it when filmmakers go the extra mile to make a truly audacious cinematic work, I think Frisch is more of a socially autistic sadistic exploiter than the selfless and altruistic humanist crusader that he has attempted to portray himself as. Ultimately, Frisch seems no more sincere about his would-be holy mission to save starving and dying untermenschen than when superlatively spoiled Hollywood superstars that live in virtual fantasy worlds like Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt walk down the red carpet and show off their latest living dark-skinned acquisitions from sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, *Blackwater Fever* is not an allegory for the spiritual transformation of a spoiled self-absorbed westerner into a humanist freedom-fighter

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as Frisch intended, but an accidental allegory for how seventy years of Americanization, Hollywoodization, and philo-Semitic xenophile-based reeducation has deracinated Europeans and whites in general and transformed them into soulless automaton-like slaves who have been carefully programmed like a rabid Pavlovian dog to care more about a rotting negro corpse in some faraway African desert wasteland than seeing their girlfriend gang-raped and executed by a militia of bloodlusting and rape-hungry Mandingo Islamists right before his very eyes. Call me crazy, but if I was forced to choose between sparing the life of my girlfriend or the lives of millions of third worlders, I would not think twice about picking the former and I certainly cannot under the mentality of people that would choose otherwise. While I would normally be annoyed by a film featuring such a shamelessly and pathetically ethno-masochistic conclusion, Frisch—an auteur that seems to suffer from sort of mental illness on the autism spectrum as reflected by his almost childlike intrigue in regard to real-life human misery and suffering—managed to assemble a film that, in spite of its intended message, ultimately succeeds in doing something that is infinitely more interesting by potently expressing the sheer and utter deadness of the Nordic soul, as well as the pathetic level that Faustian man has reduced himself to, as the world's foremost conqueror turned world's foremost cuckold and self-appointed adoptive parent of the entire untermenschen. Surely, I would have had more respect for the protagonist of *Blackwater Fever* if he had either killed himself at the end of the film instead of deciding to devote his life to a starving spade babe. Unquestionably the most ambitious, original, atmospheric, and strangely pleasantly paced road movie since American Guido hero Vincent Gallo's predictably condemned *The Brown Bunny* (2003), Frisch's experimental cinematic trip is a rare contemporary European flick that, for better or worse, actually manages to capture the particularly troubling spirit of its foredoomed zeitgeist. If space aliens ever came to earth and wondered why the white man helped to pave the way for his own extinction, they can just watch *Blackwater Fever* and examine the warped psyche of the film's less than heroic slave-morality-ridden hero, who epitomizes everything that is sick, pathetic, and absurd about the post-WWII European mind.

-Ty E

DISTURBIA

D. J. Caruso (2007)

Disturbia is yet another piece of horror trash from the bowels of Hollywood hell. The film made a lot of money for its putrid scum investors. Disturbia is Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window that takes place in some pathetic zio-clown teenager's neighborhood. I really hope the film's protagonist is sodomized by a group of black bikers, if there is a sequel (which there will be). The monetary success of Disturbia (grossing over \$100 million) only confirms the inept minds of the movie going audience. I can imagine American's running to theaters to see a film of Steve-o from Jackass shitting in a hotdog bun and feeding it to a drunken horny Mexican. The film would be revered as poetic genius and receive "two thumbs up" by Richard Roeper (just as Disturbia received). Roeper must have really had his eye on Disturbia star Aaron Yoo. Two hermaphrodites fall in love in the name of equality. Disturbia's star protagonist Shia LaBeouf for some reason has pubic hair on his head. He also has a special hatred for Mexican invaders with jobs of authority. I think they both have more in common than they would like to admit (like America's decline?). The love interest in Disturbia has the body of a 14 year old gangly boy. I guess LaBeouf had to settle for the next best thing. The countdown clock for Armageddon is set. King Tom Will Smith is ready to light the fuse. The high antichrist priest Steven Spielberg will be leading the way into hell. The apocalypse will be produced by Michael Bay and will be starring Tom Hanks. Disturbia star Shia LaBeouf only gets to be an associate demon.

-Ty E

EAGLE EYE
EAGLE EYE

D. J. Caruso (2008)

-Spoilers-

I recall the trailers for Eagle Eye. Shrouded in mystery, all I knew or thought was that its roots were based in cyber-terrorism as demonstrated ever so generically in Live Free or Die Hard. When it finally came time to view the film, I only really wanted to spoiler information. I had no interest in seeing a Shia Labeouf led action film. I had been tricked into watching him swing like Tarzan once. Never again. When it came time for me to view this film, I found the experience inevitable. I was slowly sucked into the world of Jerry Shaw. This wasn't a new path for me. I had recently found myself taking part of a viral "game" for Eagle Eye. I hit gold as the mysterious female voice called me at 3 am to get me to stop a frizzy haired interracial musician from escaping, thus saving his life. His airbags deployed and I watched his car crash. It was an effective experience. It was too tempting to put my random friends digits into the database so they too could be tortured. The musician reminded me of Eagle-Eye Cherry. Coincidence? I think not. Eagle Eye isn't the political espionage film you were probably expecting. 3/4ths of the way in, It halts and malforms into a vague science-fiction thriller. Eagle Eye is more exciting than Terminator 3 ever aspired to be. It also fails beautifully at being an apocalyptic tale, but I still have some respect for it. It might be the most visually entertaining movie in theaters at this point and that is something to acknowledge. Much of the excitement of Eagle Eye lies within the given scenarios, chase missions, and the implied violence. PG-13 for Intense Scenes of Action and Violence. Violence is the right word. So many police officers died horrible deaths in this film due to a negligent computer system. Many hypocrisies can be found in the tattered philosophy of this film, but then again, Eagle Eye only exists to cater to Shia teenyboppers and fans of grisly car accidents. Eagle Eye features hundreds of deaths involving innocent civilians and government workers. Some of these deaths defy all pivotal points of the cognitive imagination. This "cyber-terrorist" houses some extreme dissent for all humanity. Eagle Eye could have easily worked NWA's Fuck the Police on the soundtrack but the R rating is something DJ "Disturbia" Caruso fears. Not all directors can be stuck-up budget bastards. All in all, I got a mixed bag. I got wonderful action settings and great acting; Phenomenal acting even. The story had enough potholes in it to bring a stop to an extremely large truck, but I found myself content for 2 hours. Many aspects could have been worked on, but I'd rather look at this film as the bastard child of Terminator and 2001: A Space Odyssey than the original film it planned on being.

-mAQ

THE WHITE ROSE

D.W. Griffith (1923)

Immediately following a public screening at a local university for the German flick *The Nasty Girl* (1990) aka *Das schreckliche Mädchen*—a kosher kraut comedy if there ever was one about a busybody bitch of a young broad who takes it upon herself to prove and expose the fact that many people from her own hometown were nefarious Jew-slaying National Socialists—I was intrigued to see a Jewish man get up and question the seemingly unending self-loathing of modern day Teutons and their pathetic and perverse pathological proclivity toward apologizing for the supposed crimes of their fathers and grandfathers. The Brechtian piece of celluloid barf, *The Nasty Girl*, was directed by an ethno-masochistic far-leftist feminist Bavarian by the name of Michael Verhoeven, who is the prodigal pussy son of National Socialist propagandist filmmaker Paul Verhoeven (of no relation to the Dutch Robocop director of the same name). Undoubtedly, if Verhoeven inherited anything from his father, it was his propensity for making celluloid propaganda, albeit of a lunatic left-wing fashion as if the auteur was trying to make up for every ostensible cinematic wrong his padre made, while at the same reaping scorn on said padre in a manner not unlike how Thomas Harlan (*Torre Bela*, *Wundkanal*) would dedicate his entire commie celluloid career to trashing his father Veit Harlan's legacy as the Third Reich's greatest high-camp auteur. Seeing that Michael Verhoeven is a sort of celluloid cuckold who oftentimes portrays fiery yet pedomorphic females as absolutely revolting revolutionary heroes, it was only natural that he would direct *Die Weiße Rose* (1982) aka *The White Rose*, a film about the so-called 'resistance group' of the same name whose most famous member, Sophie Scholl, and her brother and four other members were arrested by the Gestapo and inevitably beheaded via guillotine in 1943. Naturally, since they stood up to Uncle Adolf and his regime by passively protesting through the pansy power of leaflets/articles (none of which were actually written by Sophie Scholl), the murdered members of the White Rose are now considered martyrs and their little legacies have since been lamentably eulogized to great acclaim by films like Verhoeven's *The White Rose*, a agitprop and sociopolitical puffery piece directed by a would-be-auteur whose hatred of his own ancestry and heimat are all the more potent than his rather vapid and vain artistry. If you like the sentimental stupidity of holocaust hogwash like *Jakob the Liar* (1999) and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (2008) and philistine feminist flicks like *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1975) and *North Country* (2005), *The White Rose* might be the perfect film for you.

Opening with the quote, "If a wave of protest rolls across the country, if "it's in the air," when many people join, then, in one last powerful effort, we can get rid of this system," which was apparently taken from the first leaflet from "The White Rose," it is quite obvious from the get go of *The White Rose* that

THE WHITE ROSE

director Verhoeven actually believes the Scholl siblings posed a bigger threat than they did. The year is 1942 and the place is Munich, Germany. The 21-year-old college student Sophie Scholl (played by Lena Stolze, who also played Scholl in Percy Adlon's *Fünf letzte Tage* (1982) aka *Five Last Days* the same year) is an annoying, cutesy girl who thinks she can get away with everything because of said conspicuous cuteness, so when she discovers that her brother Hans (Wulf Kessler) and his 'Christian socialist' comrades, all students at Munich University as well as a subversive philosophy professor Kurt Huber (Martin Benrath), have started a softcore anti-violent resistance group called the "White Rose," she makes it her business to join, despite her bro's objections. By anonymously distributing pamphlets about how the Nazis are the "master racists" and painting anti-Hitler graffiti on public walls, the White Rose begins developing a sort of unofficial following, which naturally irks local National Socialists, who inevitably bring in the Gestapo to rid Munich of the pacifist virus. Meanwhile, Sophie is in a relationship with a tall, dark, and handsome Luftwaffe pilot named Fritz (Ulf-Jürgen Wagner) who has been sent away to fight on the Eastern Front, likes to make childish jokes, and looks strangely like his girlfriend's brother. Naturally, *The White Rose* features superlatively sensationalized Spielberg-esque scenes (aka 'holocaust porn') of tall, blond, and handsome Aryan soldiers stripping poor innocent Jews of their clothes and executing them with the same robotic and detached precision as cyborg Herr Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* (1984). After a nauseatingly nasty Nazi Gauleiter makes an unpopular 'anti-feminist' speech at Munich University about why young women should spend their time breeding strong Aryan boys instead of becoming second-rate intellectuals and whatnot, the White Rose gains more support, but it cannot save its members from a deadly date with the ungodly guillotine. Although not contributing to any of the White Rose writings, Sophie demonstrates her dedication to the cause by rather conspicuously purchasing 50 postage stamps, as well as posing as a secretary, so she can steal tons of paper. After siblings Sophie and Hans Scholl, as well as their comrade Christoph Probst (Werner Stocker) are caught distributing naughty anti-Nazi articles at the university, they are arrested by the ghastly Gestapo, firmly questioned, and swiftly executed. Of course, only the most patently pernicious and excessively evil regime in human history could make the head roll of a pretty pedomorphic humanist Christian girl.

Rather absurdly, in a 2003 poll for the show *Unsere Besten* ("Our Best") broadcasted by the German public television channel ZDF, Sophie and Hans Scholl were voted the fourth "most important Germans of all time" by the German public, even beating Bach, Bismarck, Goethe, and Gutenberg, thus demonstrating the overwhelming sense of guilt the modern Teutons have as a result of the Third Reich. Additionally, what seems all the more absurd is the fact that Claus von Stauffenberg—an infinitely braver man who actually went into the 'belly of the beast' and attempted to assassinate Hitler and 'take back' Germany

from nefarious Nazi hands—was not considered greater than the Scholl siblings whose patently passive actions were ultimately futile and whose legacy is mostly superficial as rare gentle Germans who ‘resisted Nazism’ in the now-cliche bourgeois leftist university protester sort of way. Of course, as Hollywood’s holocaust campaign grows more hostile as the decades pass, Sophie Scholl has only become all the more popular as demonstrated by the mainstream kraut flick Sophie Scholl – The Final Days (2005), which is quite similar but ultimately inferior to Verhoeven’s similarly aesthetically and melodramatically mundane The White Rose, although it would win two Silver Bear awards, including for Best Director and Best Actress (Julia Jentsch) at the 2005 Berlinale Film Festival, on top of being nominated in September 2005 for an Oscar in the category of Best Foreign Language Film. Indeed, rather unfortunately, it seems the White Rose myth will continue to live on cinematically, with Michael Verhoeven’s The White Rose being the odious archetype for an almost imaginary anti-Nazi resistance that achieved virtually nothing except posthumous fame created by largely self-loathing and left-leaning Germans looking for any example and/or proof that not all krauts were demonic kike-haters. Of course, if Germany won the Second World War, who would still know the names Sophie and Hans Scholl today?!

-Ty E

NÓI ALBÍNÓI
NÓI ALBÍNÓI

Dagur Kári (2003)

More barren than the Sahara, Dagur Kári's film is the Icelandic answer to Donnie Darko. 100% more mesmerizing and a greater tragedy, Nói albínói is a film that defines a certain country's cinema. On the same level as such great films as Bad Boy Bubby, this story too deals with dysfunction, although not as extreme or vulgar. Nói is a prodigy; a boy capable of completing a Rubik's Cube in seconds flat but is stricken with the overbearingness of his father and his mother's borderline insanity. In this arctic wasteland, there isn't much to do. While getting his bottle of Malt, he meets a beautiful woman named Iris. This one fateful encounter kick starts a cycle of events leading to a horrific tragedy, one of likes which haven't been experienced before. Vincent Gallo's The Brown Bunny was such a disaster due to some philosophy he carries believing that nothingness can be considered art. This, as you know, failed horribly, leaving the film with stains of the humiliation encountered at Cannes. Nói achieves what seemed to be impossible; make a contemporary classic staying along the guidelines for being minimalistic. In fact, this film might as well have been Dogme 95. The uber-genius happens to also be an albino. Before you begin to mix facts with the film Powder, Nói didn't have any special powers except for an uncanny brain. The film is mixed with symbolism, snow glare, breath-taking cinematography, and characters you might actually care about. Alcoholism, underage obscenity, blood splattered dinner; Nói albínói is entirely one of a kind. This film will remind you of the special feeling within discovery. A dazzling portrait of snowbound calamity.

-mAQ

GEN-012

Daikichi Amano (???)

Some, some time ago I reviewed an abomination to cinema and porn, even cinematic porn. That [GEN-018] vile creation was my introduction to the radical redesigning of fetishism courtesy of the Genki studio. This studio, head by Daikichi Amano, specializes in a niche unpopulated by faces and names, rather victims and masochists. Featuring the new standard in degradation, many volumes chronicles women being sodomized with various insects, vertebrae, and invertebrate alike. GEN-012 features similarities to what 018 had so fondly dissected onto the quivering flesh of a nubile Asian woman in a manner that begs the question "How much are they getting paid?" Unlike the previously reviewed 018 entry involving fish, volume 12 concerns loaches and eels. To rip the roughly translated title to further give depth to the plot - "The loach's punishment and lesbian's desire in eel's crime". Further apart from its later predecessor, GEN-012 also bares a semblance of plot as our three leading ladies are witnessed gagged and blindfolded perched on the rim of a large metal drum, feet immersed in the cool water within. Upon further inspection, the water is revealed to contain swimming eels, assuredly amidst their own unknown thoughts and instincts. To think of the creatures reaction if they were to discover just what forms of sodomy await. This alone derives new meaning of the term "sadism". Hell, de Sade himself would be cowering at the voracity of Amano and his crew, voyeuristically speaking.

Beyond the extensive foreplay featured in GEN-012 is a voiced offender offering up unknown yet assertive orders to the women we can claim have no idea just what the purpose of this experiment is. Soon the fellow appears, mask and all, and kneads the womens breasts and mouths with the bodies of several eels. This doesn't necessarily shock though. If you're any advocator of Japanese culture, tentacle erotica should not be considered faux pas but as an accepted trait of the Japanese since its appearance in some time during the 1800s. Continuing on with the events, soon many wriggling eels coax screams from the written damsels. When the villain finally unmasks his dubious intentions, the series' consistent trademark of pantyhose is introduced over the women's faces, bulging to the breaking point with loaches and eels alike. Uttering nonsense, at least to an American audience, these women are seen hesitantly biting at each others stuffed "masks" and unleashing a torrent of slimy creatures over their laps and in their mouths. It's funny to anticipate this torture due to a purported threat over the loudspeaker.

In several ways, GEN-012 is the ultimate "grrl power" trip / feminine camaraderie adventure. This "film" just goes to show the lengths of extremities women are prepared to endure on account of an imminent threat on ones life. Being a woman surely is a hazardous occupation, one that requires little work however.

GEN-012

As fictionally evidenced, still a viable form of proof though, enemies the world over utilize women for one thing only - sex. Before you can admire the subversive yet slimy rendition of the bare minerals Spice World had to offer, these women find themselves trouser-less being spanked with the tails of eels. Of course people reading this are going to jump to outrageous conclusions, hopefully as outrageously esoteric as this film's material is. GEN-012 is the standard for a soapy mosaic of eel penetration. However, if you're searching for films completely revolting, you might want to strafe to either of the adjacent films in the GEN series. GEN-012's introductory sentence of mundane teasing runs as long as 40+ minutes. That equates to over half an hour of women silently sobbing getting their breasts lathered with marine slime. If you entered this film expecting what I had been expecting, you would be disappointed. Amano doesn't skim though, GEN-012 is full of interspecies sadism. Disgusted women can shriek to both sides of nature, the anthropic kind or towards the plight of said species: cockroach, dog, earthworm, loach, eel, fish, scorpion - Genki does it all.

Something as primarily universal as Japanese tentacle fetish is singled out as revolting and adverse. These terms of speculation are utterly appalling though. The same in which you might judge a friend or foe for whatever fetish he might conceal. Point is, fetishism is something everyone masks. You might look at a co-worker or peer in a way situational to conventionalism but know this, he/she, too, hides a dark secret of arousal, the same as you or I. Soon after the traumatically timed foreplay reaches an end, dunking occurs, the sexual torture escalates, and 012 finally matures into the tarnished slice of degradation that the namesake alone promises. Long time coming but it rounds out nicely with a coupling of swings supporting splayed legs. As per Genki standard, stuffed panty hose to illustrate Eastern voluptuousness, the hundreds of struggling creatures arouse the genitals of any-a-poor-mistress. Objects of desire don't come clearer than this, GEN-012 is not safe for anybody - but withstands a trial of adultery and bestiality combined.

-mAQ

GEN-018

Daikichi Amano (???) WARNING: IF YOU ARE EASILY OFFENDED AND PRONE TO SICKNESS, DO NOT PROCEED(The Fish That Has Is Crunched And The Wound Is Received)Chances are, if you have read Soiled Sinema before, you have come across a review to a particularly nasty piece of film called MASD-004. That being of the scatography collection, It might be the most uncivil cinematic trial anyone has ever been faced with. Well, turns out there are more in this bizarre series of the J-AV's. Expanding from MASD to GEN. MASD seems to be body fluids and GEN seems to extend into...slimy...amphibians and fish.Yes, that is right. Fish-rape-porn. What makes this more disgusting than MASD-004 is the entire feel. Sure, feces covering a crying womans face is disgusting, but getting sodomized by slimy fishermen with even slimier fish just hits it home with me. I could actually smell the disgusting sea smell when i watched this and it refused to leave me. So, the film opens up with a pretty Japanese woman getting molested by two oil-covered fishermen. Like any porn, it starts out with foreplay, then they pull out two fish and begin to stuff her mouth with them.At this time, she has about 4-5 medium sized fish in her mouth. The fishermen cut one open, spilling its blood, oils, and intestines all over her breasts and procede to use a large trout to perform fellatio on himself. Then he brings the girl into it. While she is getting mouthraped? (Roleplay mind you) the other fisherman taunts her with fish, cutting off littles pieces and shoving them in her mouth. The end result of the first scene is her covered in sperm, vomit, fish, and oil. The next scene thankfully happens to be the last, but in that regard, tens times more violent and putrid than the last.The woman is lying on the floor naked playing with little fish, biting their heads off and squishing them beneath her toes. She grabs a handful of fish and begins to fill her mouth with them yet again, only this time savagely devouring and spewing these raw fish back onto herself. The fishermen come back and in the last 20 minutes, manage to throughly ruin my life by injecting a large quantity of milky residue and fish eggs into her anus, and performing bird-like acts feeding chewed up fish to her while fucking her propped on a swing. GEN-018 is without a doubt, the sickest film i have ever seen. To call it porn, it must have some attraction. GEN-018 does not.A beautiful piece of irony. I google GEN-018, i get fish porn. I google GEN-017, i get the bible.Official Website: WARNING GENKI

-Maq

RED ROOM
RED ROOM

Daisuke Yamanouchi (1999) Red Room is a not-so-typical Japanese underground splatter film, which finally got a decent release. Director Daisuke Yamanouchi seemed to have CUBE in mind while directing this sleaze fest. This film has been circulating the Internet via various torrent sites without subtitles, making ridiculous claims as in “You don’t need the subtitles to understand the plot”. Well you do need subtitles, or else there is no character at all, Just scene after scene of pointless perversion and mild-mannered implied violence.

The plot concerns The Forbidden King Game. 4 players, and 4 cards. Whoever draws the king card gets to tell 2 of the members what to do to each other in a cage or else they get disqualified. Winner takes home 10 million yen, which is 89,730 US Dollars. We have a almost divorced couple, whose marriage and lives rest on getting this money, and we have a pair of sisters. They each have their story behind wanting the money. You know that the couple is in debt off the get-go, but you don’t realize the others purposes until later.

Not much is known about this red room. Strange men record it from somewhere else and speak in a voice changer. I guess the actions of the characters overshadow the curiosity that we should feel while watching these acts of anger.

Many things in this film hit me with a bad note, the violence being my number one problem. This film is made to sound wholly graphic and over the top, but it is just the bastard son’s of media hype. This film is loaded with implied scenes and lots of disgusting sound effects. The film opens up with two girls making out and the accompanied sound effect sounds like someone is fucking a jar of mayonnaise. Then you get the infamous “Light Bulb” scene, which is a complete disappointment, but in no way do these trivial errors and goofs make for any less of an entertaining trip.

The ideas for the torture and degradation are very interesting to watch on screen. They seem to have borrowed the concept of the spinning chair from The Devil’s Experiment. This film is very focused of revealing a monster inside everyone and does that quite well. One thing i really did appreciate the film for is it’s excellent soundtrack. It greatly reminded me of Nubohiko Morino’s work on Versus. Such a goofy film with a thumping dance soundtrack.

Films like these can be compared to “Niku Daruma” or even “Mu Zan E”. These are more examples of films circulating in the genre of extreme Japanese underground horror. The way the characters are developed is very bizarre and works out in advantage of the director. You hate every single character in this film. They all are disgusting wastes of human life, and to top it off, annoying as shit. I didn’t feel bad in the entire movie, no emotions, just violence.

A decent “extreme” film but leaves much to answer. Expect Red Room 2 to be released soon by Unearthed Films.

-Maq

TRILOGY OF TERROR II

Dan Curtis (1996)

If you follow cult cinema or even the classics, chances are that you have heard of *Trilogy of Terror*, and if not, then you have seen the infamous *Zuni Fetish Doll*. *Trilogy of Terror* is a three-part horror thriller made-for-TV movie that surprisingly horrified audiences with its story *Amelia*. This story, is about a killer African doll. Due to the original's success, they decided to make a sequel, also featuring its own beloved mascot. **THE GRAVEYARD RAT** The first story of the three is the second best, mainly due to the cheese and the slight rip-off it did from King's *Graveyard Shift*. It is called *The Graveyard Rats*. The plot is a very contrived one, as we have seen it many, many times before. A woman and her incestuous liaison plot to kill her over-bearing husband to get the will money. Little does she know, that the plot of land that they bury him on is home to dog sized rats. It's a fun little story, that is filled with hokey acting, ode's to noir, and manages to create sock puppet rats that are quite hilarious. Overall, an amateur attempt at creating cinema, but a grand attempt at making a comedy. **BOBBY** This story is the worst of the three, and features one of those twists that actually forces you to watch the entire runtime for its anti-climatic payoff. A woman summons the power from some false god to bring her son Bobby back to life. This happens, but this life around, he seems a lot more pissed off. Thus, a horrifying game of hide & seek ensues. Yeah, this story tried to capture the feel of child malevolence that *The Good Son* had, and fails pretty bad. Bobby is a whiny, blond-haired, bitch-boy whose voice constantly cracks while trying to sound sinister. Watch the end for a laughable mock-up of *Goosebump's "The Haunted Mask."* **HE WHO KILLS** This is the one you've all been waiting for. The alarming Zuni doll has its triumphant return in this shortly-after sequel. The crime scene at the end of the first movie has been discovered and the charred doll has been sent to a laboratory to be examined. All hell breaks loose when people and their close-mindedness decide to fuck with black magic. Hilarity ensues. The doll manages to rip its way through Italians, and Jewish people (Rothstein) until its conclusion. *He Who Kills* is easily the best in the set, and might be worth the price just for a cap to close the story on. Overall, this collection is pretty pathetic, and doesn't even touch on the same ground as the original did, but is still wholly humorous and might be worth your time. I wonder if Mike Patton voiced the doll. If not, he should have.

-Maq

THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD
THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

Dan O'Bannon (1985) Over the years, my "love" for the horror genre has waned. I find my stomach turning when I hear that an old classic is being remade or another sequel is in the works. One of my all time favorite horror films of the 1980s is the classic Return of the Living Dead. The film, of course, has an abundance of horrible and banal sequels that always trick horror fans into watching them. I guess it is just hard to deal with the fact that none of the many sequels can come even close to "living" up to the original. I listen to the song Party Time by 45 Grave anytime that I want to reflect on the film without actually watching it. Death-rock and the horror film is a splendid match made in hell. Return of the Living Dead has one of the best soundtracks to ever compliment a horror film. The Cramps, The Damned, The Flesh Eaters, and T.S.O.L. (unfortunately not the original line-up) add a certain fun eerie sound to an already competent horror flick. The punk rockers featured in Return of the Living Dead, for once, actually have music that compliments their aesthetic.

She also experiences her fantasy of being ripped apart by a bunch of old (and dead) men. When Trash comes back as a zombie, she is easily the most erotic zombie to ever grace the scratched silver screen. A homeless man learns the hard way when he becomes hypnotized by the newly rotting beauty. Why can't the recent flood of mediocre and worthless zombie films feature such salacious zombies? I never thought that featuring slapstick humor in a zombie film would actually be successful. There is nothing I hate more than the horror comedy, but Return of the Living Dead does it solidly. Over the years, the one liners of zombies have stuck in my mind and I can't complain. After all demanding "MORE BRAINS!!" is something you expect to hear from a zombie and the tarman zombie says it well. The torso of a rotten and topless blonde lets the audience know her fancy is, "not people, BRAINS!" This zombie has always had a close place in my heart.

Night of the Living Dead author John Russo was able to keep the "living dead" dead for his future cinema ventures, while director George S. Romero has to come up with different names for his sequels. Although Return of the Living Dead isn't an official sequel to Night of the Living Dead, it is a nice comedic and reflexive companion piece to the first film. I would even go as far as saying that I find Return of the Living Dead to be more entertaining than Romero's sequel Dawn of the Dead. Return of the Living Dead has aged elegantly whereas Dawn of the Dead has just aged.

-Ty E

HARRY BROWN

Daniel Barber (2009)

Harry Brown has been criticized by left wing film reviewers for being a mindlessly violent, morally bankrupt, bigoted and unrepresentative piece of fascist propaganda. Harry Brown exceeds all those expectations! This is a film that accurately depicts modern Britain and can only be properly described as fucking awesome. It is made of the purest form of win. This home grown British film starring Michael Caine is about an elderly retired marine living in a sinkhole estate full of chav scum. Simple plot; his friend is murdered he cleanses his local community. Superficially it's a rehashed Dirty Harry justice narrative, but it is just so much more than that, it is a film that really matters.

Let me explain; This film has been widely compared to the American 'equivalent' Gran Torino but it couldn't be more different. Gran Torino has a similar opening premise; bitter angry war vet (Clint Eastwood, who is also director) surrounded by immigrants, social decay, family breakdown, gangs, crime, etc., and you think that's just great, but no, it's a trap! Suddenly it becomes a feel good family comedy where our hero learns to embrace and nurture his new multicultural society learning the value of community relations, and that's how he wins. Sounds pretty gay right?

Harry Brown is totally different, thank god the Americans didn't get their hands all over it and ruin the thing! The Hollywood orthodoxy approaches representation in film by showing both sides of an argument, example - Terrorism; we would see a terrorist kill people and commit atrocities, but we would also see equal if not more screen time given to his family life, poor country, American foreign policy, and other forms of self criticism, you would also see moderate Muslims argue with the terrorist explaining how he is not the real Islam, blah blah world peace American imperialism blah. We have all seen these films.

Because these films are 'subversive' they always ride against popular fears/perceptions/and opinions, and therefore not only produce a film that is totally out of proportion with reality (by virtue of the fact you are portraying a liberally balanced debate rather than amalgamated perceptions of the audience), but actively attacks the social norms of the viewer and makes them progressive and self critical. It is on the basis of this orthodoxy that Harry Brown is so derided by liberal critics and sociology fags because of its supposedly unrepresentative in its demonic portrayal of the social underclass. That is the point.

Harry Brown offers a refreshing form of social criticism as in that it appeals directly towards your hate. In that sense I think it says something interesting about what public perceptions really are, as opposed to what they are widely understood to be - Hope perhaps? In my opinion people are sick of this unhealthy obsession in our culture which automatically defends the criminal over the victim. That is where all of the sociological analysis goes into; "it would appear the

HARRY BROWN

perpetrator carried out his actions because society did not embrace him, it was the capitalist system and sexual identity oppression, etc". One thing this film managed to do was connect to the sense of hopelessness and abandonment felt by ordinary people. It is no coincidence the hero is an ex-army veteran yet frail pensioner, in many ways he is representative of that old Britain we identify with.

This film is for anyone who has ever lived in a pikey town, or a council estate, or an inner city, (or at a stab, even having attended one of our public schools) because they are likely to have the fear. The Charvers in this film are so realistic they are genuinely frightening. The fact that they are over the top (or as liberals would say ... Racist?) captures this emotion. In this context they effectively lose their 'human rights' for the duration of the film while justice is visited upon them. Generally speaking everyone hates chavs, everyone hates the underclass, that is why this film was made. Underneath all the tolerance, and hug-a-rainbow bullshit people still don't buy into it, not even liberals which is why they lock themselves away in their safe little suburbs.

There is a sort of irony in that Harry Brown is more 'Dirty Harry' than Dirty Harry ever was, this is far more subversive because it is genuinely anti-system. The point of this type of vigilante narrative is that the vigilante exists because the existing forms of authority have failed and something needs to fill the void (which is politically speaking the central premise of fascism). In the previous films this message was always a mistake; Michael Winner – who directed *Death Wish* – went on to advocate the banning of the *Lord Horror Novel* and become an all around general prick, while Clint Eastwood who is associated most with the genre made *Gran Torino* (I don't hold this against him, he had to make his peace, but that makes him part of the system).

There is a great irony in that the very message of *Gran Torino* that is parodied in the impotent law enforcement via the satirical monologues from a police chief who is simply a career politician managing the decent of society as opposed to any force for law and order. The language it uses is very new labour, though it also has echoes of David Cameron's 'hug a hoodie' campaign (I bet you forgot that, I didn't). At a press conference at the end of the film he speaks of 'victory in the long term strategy of community relations, silent majority, harmony, breaking the wall of silence' ect. All this when the bulk of the police force went down to a huge defeat in the estate when hordes of feral youths descended upon them with projectiles chasing them out of the estate. But isn't it also true that our police do not control our towns and cities? That they can't enter certain areas? That the role of the police is reduced to firemen; to be political, not intervene, and be there to clear up afterwards.

"This isn't Northern Ireland Harry"

"No it's not. Those people were fighting for something; for a cause. To them out there, this is just entertainment."

Anyway, not to ruin the film but while this monologue plays the film ends

with our hero looking up at a clear blue sky and symbolically walking into the underpass with a sense of security, not so subtly letting you make up your own mind about which is the more effective method of crime control. It would be wishful thinking to hope that films like this might inspire some old codgers to dust off their service revolvers and start dropping social scum, that's not the point though. This film does not so much glorify vigilantism, but presents a desperate viewpoint on the social situation; that there are many people in this society who are irredeemably evil (for lack of a better word) and are always going to be social parasites. It is a propaganda film in this sense. While there remains unanswered questions as to how we specifically deal with the problems we face, the realistic solution that will enter people's minds is going to be something along the lines of organized armed authority: the Police, the Army, Paramilitary forces to just clear through these areas. It must be done, and the people will support it.

-Benjamin Noyles

THE DUNWICH HORROR
THE DUNWICH HORROR

Daniel Haller (1970)

If master American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft were alive today, he would be absolutely and irrevocably disgusted by the fact that his literary work has been constantly cinematically bastardized, debased, liberalized, and eroticized by countless hack horror directors who used the writer's name as a way to cash on his posthumous cult celebrity. An Anglophile racist of the Spenglerian anti-egalitarian sort who was rather repulsed by miscegenation and who brilliantly foretold the abject racial and cultural degeneration of America via his horror stories, Lovecraft would probably vomit at the idea that his short story *Herbert West—Re-Animator* (1922) gave misbegotten birth to a Hebraically humored film like *Re-Animator* (1985), which is rather unfortunately easily one of the greatest Lovecraft-themed flicks, where a dismembered head gives head to a gorgeous young blonde lady, but the *Weird Tales* magazine writer might have been even more disturbed by the film's lowbrow dark comedic tone. Of course, unless there is some sort of conservative revolution in the cinema world, it is rather doubtful that Lovecraft's work will ever be properly adapted for the silver screen. Undoubtedly, out of all the semi-good, the very bad, and the terribly ugly Lovecraft adaptations, I am going to have to assume that *The Dunwich Horror* (1970)—a work directed by hired hack Daniel Haller (*Monster of Terror*, *Devil's Angels*) and produced by monetary-motivated B-movie mogul Roger Corman—is the most blasphemous Lovecraftian movie ever made. Indeed, H.P. goes psychedelic hippie Crowleyite, *The Dunwich Horror* is only vaguely based on Lovecraft's classic 1928 story of the same. Based on a short story that Lovecraft's Indian-American biographer S. T. Joshi (Lovecraft would have unequivocally suffered another nervous breakdown if he knew that a leftist miscegenating untermensch was the foremost biographer/literary critic of his work) described as being "simply an aesthetic mistake on Lovecraft's part" with a "stock good-versus-evil scenario," Corman's *The Dunwich Horror* has a fairly superficial storyline that lacks the Nordau-esque degeneration themes of the original story and is more in the spirit of the "Turn on, tune in, drop out" mentality typical of the thankfully bygone era when it was made. As far as I am concerned, *The Dunwich Horror* is mostly of interest today (if of any interest at all!) due to its sometimes bizarre and transcendental aesthetic qualities. Featuring surreal dream-sequences that seem to be taken straight out of Jack Smith's unfinished high-camp masterpiece *Norma Love* (1963), *The Dunwich Horror* is a curious combo of inept celluloid storytelling and idiosyncratic set pieces, wardrobes, and special effects that ultimately fail to make up for the film's overall unnerving unevenness. Starring dirty Dean Stockwell (*The Boy with Green Hair*, *Blue Velvet*) as a half-caste human-monster and ancestor-worshipping megalomaniac who wishes he was the next Aleister Crowley in a role originally offered to Peter

Fonda, as well as Sandra Dee (Gidget, *Imitation of Life*) as a very vapid woman who just does not know how to tell a man “no”, *The Dunwich Horror* is the sort of celluloid abortion that occurs when a cinematic carny conman like Corman tries to make a ‘hip and happening’ horror flick for the badly braindead Easy Rider generation.

Advertised by MGM as follows, “Single white warlock seeks beautiful blond babe to join him at the altar...the sacrificial altar!” *The Dunwich Horror* at first seems to be the story of a resentful beatnik and would-be-guru suffering from Asperger syndrome. After an occult scene of a woman ostensibly giving birth to something that the viewer assumes to be a misbegotten creature of sorts, the film cuts to the rather sparsely populated setting of Miskatonic University in Arkham, Massachusetts where a pedantic professor named Dr. Henry Armitage (Ed Begley) has just given a lecture on the priceless and one-of-a-kind occult tome *Necronomicon*, which he idiotically entrusts a blonde bimbo student named Nancy Wagner (Sandra Dee) to bring back to the library. On her way to the library, Nancy is stalked by a weirdo with a Jew-fro named Wilbur Whateley (Dean Stockwell) who, with his sinister Svengali-like hipster gaze, cons the seemingly half-retarded lady into handing over the *Necronomicon*, but luckily Dr. Armitage soon puts a stop to this and knows that young man comes from a degenerate family of blasphemous black magicians. Although Armitage warns Nancy about the wackjob Whateleys, the little lady comes under Wilbur’s spell and gives him a ride back to his house in Dunwich after he pretends to miss his ride. Upon arriving in Dunwich, Nancy discovers that the lynch-mob-prone locals hate the Whateleys and that Wilbur’s great-grandfather, who believed “In another race of beings from a different dimension...An earlier race, superior to man. And he believed they could be brought back,” was hanged by the locals under dubious circumstances. Eventually, Nancy also meets Wilbur’s equally peculiar yet more passive grandfather Old Whateley (Sam Jaffe). After her car breaks down and radical redneck guru Wilbur drugs her with a curious Crowley-esque cocktail of sex, drugs, and hypnosis, Nancy becomes trapped in Dunwich by her deranged yet charming new boy toy. Of course, Dr. Armitage and a frigid female student friend arrive in Dunwich and attempt to convince Nancy to leave, but she is too wild and wanton for Wilbur. Upon doing some research, Armitage and his female student learn that Wilbur’s assumed deceased mother, Lavinia (Joanna Moore Jordan), is still alive and resides in a mental institution. Apparently, Lavinia went crazy after giving birth to Wilbur and his purportedly stillborn brother, but the truth proves to be much more darker. When Nancy’s female companion goes to the Whateley house to find her friend, she is killed by a monstrous creature that is apparently Wilbur’s twin brother, who was not born stillborn after all but is the malevolent mongrel progeny of human Lavinia and one of ‘The Old Ones’ from a superior ancient race. Meanwhile, Wilbur gets in a scuffle with Old Whateley that results in the eccentric grandfather’s

THE DUNWICH HORROR

death and when his grandson boldly attempts to give him a pagan ceremony at his funeral at the local cemetery, the terrified townspeople put a swift end to his beatnik blasphemy. In the end, Wilbur's retarded beast of a 1/2 breed brother gets loose and wastes a bunch of Dunwich townsfolk and Wilbur attempts to sacrifice Nancy on a pagan altar in tribute to 'The Old Ones', but is absurdly struck down and killed by lightning, with his scorched body falling into the sea. Rather unfortunately for her, it is revealed that Nancy is pregnant with wacked out wizard Wilbur's quadroom monster child.

Somewhat interestingly, *The Dunwich Horror* was co-penned by writer/director/producer Curtis Hanson, who is probably best known for directing the sentimental wigger epic *8 Mile* (2002) starring racially schizophrenic Aryan untermensch Eminem. Undoubtedly, while *The Dunwich Horror* and *8 Mile* have very little in common, they both reflect that sort of racial and cultural degeneracy that inspired the terror injected in H.P. Lovecraft's stories, albeit to a much horrendous and hopeless extent than the nerdy horror writer could have ever imagined during his nightmarish multicultural strolls in Red Hook, NYC. To further cinematically defecate on Lovecraft's singular literary legacy of the genetically grotesque, a couple years back SyFy broadcasted the little turd of a TV-movie *The Dunwich Horror* (2009) aka H.P. Lovecraft's *The Darkest Evil*, which also stars Dean Stockwell, albeit this time somewhat ironically playing the role of Dr. Henry Armitage. Just as I have no intention of re-watching the Corman-produced *The Dunwich Horror*, I have no plans to indulge in seeing Stockwell further embarrass himself in something put out by the proud fanboy philistines at Syfy. Personally, I found Lucio Fulci's incoherent gore-fest *City of the Living Dead* (1980), which features a town named Dunwich, infinitely more eerie and atmospheric in its depiction of New England when compared to the low-camp Corman corniness of *The Dunwich Horror*. Masterful Gothic horror degenerated into pseudo-creepy counter-culture crud of the pseudo-salacious and generically psychedelic sort, *The Dunwich Horror* is 'folk horror' at its most conspicuously contrived and horrifically halfhearted, especially considering its talented cast of actors. Indeed, *The Dunwich Horror* just goes to show the late-1960s/early-1970s were a culturally and aesthetically abhorrent era, as the film leaves a foul retrograde taste in one's mouth equivalent to the most skunky of Mexican-imported weed, albeit nowhere as hypnotic. For those looking for a more aesthetically-pleasing marriage between Lovecraft and Corman, checkout *The Haunted Palace* (1963) aka Edgar Allan Poe's *The Haunted Palace* starring Vincent Price which, although advertised as a Poe adaptation (Corman made a Poe-Cycle of eight Poe-themed films between 1960 and 1965), is actually a loose adaptation of Lovecraft's short novel *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (1927). Of course, it is rather dubious whether the world will ever see a true and faithful celluloid Lovecraft adaptation with a Spenglerian worldview and all, but hopefully one day a young and budding auteur weaned on a steady diet of Viet Harlan, F.W. Murnau, Julius Evola,

and Lothrop Stoddard will get the chance. At the very least, one can only hope that leftist lardo Guillermo del Toro and epic hack James Cameron do not get the chance to aesthetically mutilate and molest Lovecraft's sole novella *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936), as it will surely make the Corman-produced *The Dunwich Horror* seem like a unsung high-camp masterpiece by comparison.

-Ty E

THE MONOPOLY MEN
THE MONOPOLY MEN

Daniel Hopsicker (1998) *The Monopoly Men* is an important documentary as it exposes the far from “federal” American Federal Reserve. The reality of this private bank is that it is a central bank that prints money out of nothing. The international bankers that setup the “Federal Reserve” then lend out this money to governments and charge interest on it. *The Monopoly Men* reveals that the Rothschild family, who also set up central banks in all the great European empires, among other countries, are the real controllers of the Federal Reserve. Mayer Amschel Bauer Rothschild summed it all up when he stated, “Give me control of a nation’s money and I care not who makes its laws.”

The Monopoly Men is an episode in the 1998 TV series *Phenomenon: The Lost Archives*. What a shame that the important information revealed in this documentary was just part of some random, yet interesting TV series. Thankfully, the episode *The Monopoly Men* is now easily available for all to watch all over the internet. *The Monopoly Men* is hosted by the effeminate and somewhat creepy Dean Stockwell. Although lacking the charm and suaveness he displayed in David Lynch’s *Blue Velvet*, Stockwell makes a wonderful host for a documentary about conspiring international bankers who enjoy making tons of money in wars that kill millions of innocent people.

The Monopoly Men features various interviews with so called “conspiracy theorists” that have helped to reveal the crimes of The Federal Reserve and international bankers in general. Eustace Mullins is one of the men featured in the documentary and he is probably most responsible for revealing the crimes of the criminal central bank with his book *The Secrets of the Federal Reserve*. Mullins did all his research for the book at the library of congress and *The Secrets of the Federal Reserve* is perfectly source cited. Eustace Mullins was a protégé of poet Ezra Pound who influenced Mullins to investigate the Federal Reserve. *The Secrets of the Federal Reserve* would be the first book burned in Europe since 1945. Anyone interested in wanting to know how the world really works should read the important works of Eustace Mullins.

The Monopoly Men also features interviews with “conspiracy theorist” Michael Collins Piper. Piper has done a good deal exposing Zionist criminals, international bankers, and other related crud. In Michael Collins Piper’s brilliant book *The Judas Goats* he reveals the infiltration and subversion of American nationalist movements by criminal internationalists. The book also discusses how the fowl Anti-Defamation League has infiltrated various organizations, spied on individuals they deem “enemies,” and collected various information about people illegally. The information Piper reveals in *The Monopoly Men* is very general compared to most of Piper’s work but is important nonetheless. The only argument against statements from heroic people like Eustace Mullins and Michael Collins Piper, which are weak to say the least, is from a pudgy fellow

who is associated with J.P. Morgan.

American history class never teaches students such important facts like how Wall Street bankers Jacob Schiff gave \$20 million dollars to “revolutionary” Leon Trotsky (real name Lev Davidovich Bronstein) to run the “Russian Revolution.” The Czar, being the richest man in the world at the time, was certainly bad for business and had to be crushed. Of course, American school students are taught that the Russian revolution was an attempt at a “progressive” revolution where workers were overthrowing their dictator so they could start an international workers utopia. Instead, it just ended in tens of millions of people being killed by their own “government.” Facts like these are revealed in the important The Monopoly Men documentary.

Watch The Monopoly Men

The Monopoly Men is a good place to start for those searching to find the true leaders and history manipulators of the world. The Federal Reserve was responsible for two world wars, the depression, and the social problems that have become so “normal” today. Ever wonder why Jose and his intermediate family of 40 people came to America from Mexico to work illegally? Ever wonder why American jobs are being taken away from Americans and shipped over to third world countries. One has to question why in America our industries have been progressively dismantled over the years despite the atrocious debt our country has accumulated. Dean Stockwell sure wants to know.

-Ty E

BUSTER AND BILLIE
BUSTER AND BILLIE

Daniel Petrie (1974)

Although it would probably not surprise anyone that knows me, I have to admit that I absolutely loathe virtually all romance flicks, be they retarded rom-coms featuring some radically repulsive Hebrew turd like Ben Stiller lusting over some lecherous blonde Aryan Shiksa; phony James Cameron's blockbuster celluloid barf *Titanic* (1997), would-be-quirky frog mucus like Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Amélie* (2001), hipster hemorrhoids like Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013), or classic screwball swill like *It Happened One Night* (1934). In short, I tend to stay completely clear of any romance-themed film unless I receive a special recommendation from a friend whose taste in cinema I respect and/or if I do enough research about a film beforehand that leads me to believe that I would appreciate such a work. As far as I am concerned, German Expressionist auteur F.W. Murnau's Hollywood era debut *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) is unequivocally the most poetically romantic film ever made. While not exactly a film in league with Murnau's masterwork, the truly unsung cult item *Buster and Billie* (1974) aka *Buster & Billie*—a sort of post-Rebel Without a Cause teen rebel flick with hixploitation elements set in late-1940s Georgia about a teenage alpha-male high school senior who falls in love with the local town whore and who takes violent revenge against his comrades after they defile his beloved—is another one of those oh-so rare romance themed flicks that somehow got my blood moving. Co-directed by quasi-hack Daniel Petrie (*A Raisin in the Sun*, *Sybil*) and screenwriter/sometimes director Sidney Sheldon (*The Buster Keaton Story*, *Dream Wife*), this darkly romantic revenge flick is notable for being, among other things, one of the first mainstream movies to feature full-nudity (e.g. cocks and bushes) as well as Robert 'Freddy Krueger' Englund in a pre-*A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) role and a pre-*Airwolf* Jan-Michael Vincent as the lethally lovelorn 'lone ranger' lead. Unquestionably the sort of film one should watch with knowing as little as possible beforehand, *Buster and Billie* is a hardcore country fried heartbreaker that reminds one not to take their beloved for granted. Like the *Deliverance* of tearjerkers, albeit featuring hetero hick rape as opposed to hillbilly homo forced bum-buggery, the film truly brings new meaning to the age old phrase 'love conquers all.' A borderline southern Gothic work somewhat in the spirit of *Ode to Billy Joe* (1976), albeit slightly more disturbing, *Buster and Billie* does the seemingly impossible by being a work that is certainly exploitative in parts, yet somehow manages to be genuinely emotionally penetrating in a classic love story fashion. Never released on DVD and fetching a fair amount of money in its out-of-print VHS form, *Buster and Billie* is unfortunately a work that is destined to remain in obscurity.

The year is 1948 and despite being the most popular senior at his rural Georgian High School, Buster (Jan-Michael Vincent) is a born individualist and

confident rebel-rouser who does not care about what anyone thinks, including his friends and family. Buster is engaged to marry his high school sweetheart Margie Hooks (Pamela Sue Martin), though he hates her friends (he hilariously calls one of them a, “hoot-owl-looking bitch”) and resents the fact that she does not put out (as he pleads to her after she denies him carnal pleasure, “If a man doesn’t reach climax every time that he gets excited, he’s liable to get kidney trouble and die young”). Buster’s best friend is a goofy dullard boy named Whitey, who seems to worship his much more confident and handsome friend. Like the rest of Buster’s friends, Whitey regularly sexually takes advantage of a beautiful yet somewhat intellectually challenged young lady named Billie Jo Truluck (Joan Goodfellow), who has moronic untermensch hillbilly parents and thinks the only way she can get people to like her is by letting them do whatever they want with her voluptuous young body. Although Whitey and the rest of his friends offer Buster the opportunity to tag along with them during one of their gang-bangs of Billie, Buster opts out, but later decides to ask her out on a date after becoming quite sexually frustrated due to his girlfriend’s incessant cock-blocking. When Billie sees Buster beat-up a big fat belligerent school bus driver, she virtually falls in love with him at first sight, so she does not think twice about taking up his offer to take her on a date. Needless to say, the two soon fall in love and are both happy for the first time in their short lives, but their happiness is short-lived as jealous friends, annoying busybodies, and morally righteous morons get in their way.

After one particularly heated date with Billie that makes him realize that he truly loves her, Buster decides to drive to his girlfriend Margie’s house at 1 a.m. while drunk and tell her that their relationship is over, which she does not take well and even goes so far as lying to her friends and telling them she broke up with him. Of course, when Buster reveals his love for Billie by taking her to church with him, he turns a number of the congregants against him, including his pigheaded friends, who are mad they can no longer take advantage of the girl and cannot stomach the fact that their cool friend would rather hangout with a poor whore than them. Naturally, a number of people berate Buster due to his new relationship, including his parents, who feel disgraced that their son broke it off with ‘good girl’ Margie for a poor slut, as well as the local bartender Jake (Clifton James of Cool Hand Luke), who the high school senior threatens to beat up for bad mouthing his girlfriend. As a self-proclaimed “lone ranger” who “rides alone,” Buster truly couldn’t care less about what other people say and only falls all the more in love with Billie, engaging in skinny dippy, sentimental gift-giving, and whatnot. When Billie gives Buster a poorly made necklace, he loves it simply because it was given to him by his beloved, who is so unwaveringly in love with her boyfriend that she loves to write his name in the dirt with a stick like a little girl with a crush. When Buster gets sick, Billie reads a Captain Marvel comic to him in bed. At a local hoedown of sorts, the two almost cement

BUSTER AND BILLIE

their unadulterated pure love for one another in front of everyone in the town, which leaves a lot of people jealous. One day, Buster's friends go for some alcohol-fueled joyriding and when they spot Billie, they decide to have a little fun with her, but she runs away and when they catch her, she refuses to submit to their sensual savagery, so they knock her out and proceed to take turns raping her. When Billie regains consciousness while being raped by a boyish bitch boy named 'Mole' (Mark Pendergraft), she claws at the teenage rapist's face, which infuriates him so much that he starts beating her head in, thus resulting in her accidental death. Hoping to blame the murder on a mythical killer with a hook-hand, Buster's friend leave Billie's half-naked body in the woods with a couple branches barely covering it. Meanwhile, Buster goes looking for Billie and when he does not find her, he goes to the local bar where his friends hangout and is surprised to not find them there. Despite it being a rainy night, Buster eventually finds Billie's brutalized body in the woods and cries hysterically. When Buster goes back to the bar, he finds all his friends playing pool and can immediately see the guilt on their faces despite the fact that they try their darnedest to act cool and normal. After calmly agreeing to play pool with his friends, Buster randomly explodes and brutally beats all his friends, killing two of them with more or less with his bare hands (though he does use a pool stick and a billiard ball) and even slamming his best pal into a pool table. While Buster is temporarily jailed, he is let out of prison the day after Billie's funeral, which is not even attended by her parents, and he honors his belated beloved by stealing every single flower in town and putting it on her grave.

Despite being more or less a hixploitation on steroids, *Buster and Billie* is reasonably believable in its shockingly nuanced depiction of true love, with such seemingly benign things as simple glances between the two leads saying much more than words ever could about the genuineness of their pure passion for one another. The film is also one of those rare works that enables the viewer to empathize with the killer. Indeed, for any man to watch *Buster and Billie* and not feel totally satisfied with the male protagonist's actions at the end is not a man. In other words, if there is no context where you could see yourself killing for your beloved, you either don't love her or you're a ball-less pussy with no integrity. While women have a habit of destroying relationships between friends, I have noticed that jealous beta-males also tend to get quite irked when their alpha-male friend falls in love with a woman and in no other film is this depicted more potently and even perniciously than *Buster and Billie*, which is a work that is rather romantic in a sort primitive redneck fashion. Unquestionably, the film just had too much testicular fortitude and not enough senseless sentimentalism and contrived lovey dovey appeal to become popular with the American bourgeois, but it is certainly the romantic masterpiece that not enough working-class and rural-based Americans—the true audience of the film—have seen, because otherwise it would be considered an indisputable classic of 1970s

American cinema. Obviously, it should be no surprise that a weasel-like weakling like Leonard Maltin would trash the film, as he lacks the lifeblood and background to adequately appreciate it. The work is like a *A Walk to Remember* (2002) that is somehow good as directed by a talented exploitation auteur, as well as a *Southern Gothic* directed by a sort of lowbrow rampantly heterosexual Tennessee Williams. One must certainly have a heart of stone to deny the rough and rugged romantic majesty of Buster and Billie.

-Ty E

TONIGHT OR NEVER
TONIGHT OR NEVER

Daniel Schmid (1973)

Undoubtedly, auteur Daniel Schmid (Violanta, Hécate) is one of the most underrated directors of his generation and quite possibly the greatest Swiss filmmaker who has ever lived, yet most of his early films are nearly impossible to find and/or have yet to be released in any home media format at all, including his high-camp feature-length debut *Tonight or Never* (1972) aka *Heute nacht oder nie* – an ambient and hallucinatory assault against the German leftist 1968 student movement disguised as a decadent modern Gothic tale set in the 19th century featuring mostly 1930s opera and pop music. Inspired by the tradition of an aristocratic Austrian family who, on the night of St. Nepomuk (May 16th), would exchange roles with their servants for the night, *Tonight or Never* features Schmid's own dark romantic twist on the tale by adding a third, more prominently featured group as the morbid yet merry masters of a grand performance comprised of a semi-sadistic and sardonic camp-and-kitsch-ridden pack of comedic showmen (and women) who do takes on scenes from *Gone with the Wind* (1939), a work by Tennessee Williams, a satirical take on the suicide of the title character from Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), and the tragic conclusion of Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* (1876) in what has been described as a "cultural scrap heap." Vehemently hated upon its release by leftist filmmakers, film critics, and 'revolutionaries' alike due to its audacious aesthetic excess and quasi-counter-revolutionary political persuasion, *Tonight or Never*, unlike a good portion of the European films from its time, especially associated with German New Cinema (the director was friends with both Fassbinder and Werner Schroeter), has stood the test of time and Schmid himself later remarked regarding his debut work in an interview, "The film was severely attacked by the prevailing left "Zeitgeist". It's very strange. I recently talked to an American critic who's now 25. For him the sixties have only survived as a theatrical act – and that's exactly how the comedian in the movie is treated." The comedian Schmid speaks of in the film is a funny fellow who proclaims to the jovial delight of his blueblood-playing-plebians it is a "time of revolt," so it should be no surprise that German and Swiss leftists did not take kindly to the filmmaker's mockery of their failed revolution, nor the fact that *Tonight or Never* featured a cultivated and carefully crafted neo-Victorian 19th century aesthetic and an appreciation for the fin de siècle, which ultimately inspired his ethno-masochistic detractors to accuse him of "celebrating bourgeois cultural fascism." Of course, unlike naïve youthful idealism, *Tonight or Never* – a work set in a hotel (substituting for the interior of an ancient Gothic castle featured at the beginning of the film), which as the son of hotel owners/runners who came of age in a hotel in the Swiss Alps, Schmid was quite familiar with – is a film from the soul by a rare filmmaker of his age who, rather unlike many of his degenerated generation,

was not ashamed of his background but instead, fully embraced it, even if the taint of his cadaverous age permeates throughout the film.

Although Rainer Werner Fassbinder would marry her and cast her in supporting roles, Daniel Schmid was the one who made Ingrid Caven his star and diva as a sort of Marlene Dietrich figure and she would play the lead in the filmmaker's first three feature-length films (and masterpieces): *Tonight or Never* (1972), *La Paloma* (1974), and *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel*. In fact, it was Caven who convinced Schmid to direct *Tonight or Never* without even writing a script on virtual nil budget, which was completed over a two week period in 1971 and shot at the director's grandparents' hotel in Switzerland during the off-season. Schmid originally expected his friend Fassbinder to produce his first feature, but as the director explained in an interview with Juliane Lorenz, "At one point I expected that my own movie, *Heute Nacht oder nie* [*Tonight or Never*], would be produced next. But Rainer had other ideas. He literally told me, "No way. On Monday I start shooting my next movie." I got mad, said goodbye, and stormed out of the apartment. Ingrid followed me four days later and acted in my production. In due course several other dissidents joined us, among them Harry Baer. I still remember Rainer telling me, "You'll never pull that off. You're much too spoiled." Of course Schmid, who once stated regarding his curious relationship with Fassbinder, "Our mutual attraction derived from my inner resistance to some, though not all, of his movies," would pull it off almost immaculately and aristocratically and the rest is history.

Featuring a number of rebelling Fassbinder Superstars, including Ingrid Caven, Peter Kern, Peter Chatel, and Harry Baer, *Tonight or Never* is still fundamentally an auteur piece that is merely accentuated by its unconventionally charismatic star power. Like his friend and one-time lover Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg*) – the most dandy of the Europe dandy filmmakers – Schmid shared a love of opera and German expressionist cinema and these influences certainly bleed beautifully throughout the singularly hypnotic phantasmagorical entirety that is *Tonight or Never* – a pure aesthetic and political attack on the prevailing trend of anti-aesthetism and working-class-fetishizing of that time. As Schmid stated in an interview about having the supposedly 'bourgeois idea' of a grand hotel in *Tonight or Never*, "It was a world I knew, and I think you can only really say anything about worlds you know. With all the rules of their specific games, all their strengths and weaknesses. At the time many of my colleagues – writers, filmmakers – were identifying themselves with a working-class environment they'd never lived or functioned in." Indeed, featuring not a single prosaic lesson in poverty porn or the dubious pseudo-Freudian sexualization of savage street serfs, *Tonight or Never* is a glamorous if equally and intentionally grotesque tribute to a dead epoch directed by an uncompromising man who was disgusted with his own suicidal zeitgeist. Featuring a corpse-like cast of characters with the auras of aristocratic zombies and vampiric man-

TONIGHT OR NEVER

nequins who seem to 'float' around, if they move at all, *Tonight or Never* is a one night stand with the dead somnambulist souls of the Occident who exist only in memory and, quite symbolically, have been totally drained of their vitality.

To the complete and utter disgust of the Marxist Swiss-krauts that attending a press conference following a screening of *Tonight or Never* at the 1972 Solothurn Film Festival (SFT), Daniel Schmid stated regarding the work, "I did have political intentions in making the film. It may sound strange but the backdrop of political interpretation in front of which I localize the film is, in the best case, only present so as to disconcert the viewer. I live in a decadent era. That is my private belief. I believe that I live in a late chapter of Western history. I have no conception of how things might continue," as if he had just read a number of German Conservative Revolutionary tomes before directing the quasi-apocalyptic work. Of course, as a European of the post-WWII who, like Fassbinder, essentially grew up fatherless, Schmid was far too cynical to be any sort of radical traditionalist purist, even remarking in an interview regarding *Tonight or Never*, "I mystify only to demystify. It can't be pure nostalgia if it's not intact. I don't invoke a Gattopardo world, I disavow it, treat it ironically. I like to play with forms in a world where there are hardly any structures and forms left. Think of Griffiths' first close-up of Lillian Gish. It was a sensation, it was meant to be something specific. Today the whole world of television is one close-up concerto. That means the degeneration of structures, the degeneration of forms." A rare work of postmodern cinema with elegance, class, mystique, and—most importantly—a (dark) heart and soul, *Tonight or Never*, despite being the debut feature-length work of the director and an intrinsically experimental work shot without a script, is nothing short of a masterpiece and a major aesthetic achievement of post-WWII European cinema that can only be compared to Schmid's subsequent work *La Paloma* (1974) – a nearly flawless and strikingly magical high-camp effort also starring Ingrid Caven and Peter Kern.

At the predictable but rather anti-climatic conclusion of *Tonight or Never*—a work bearing no relation to the 1931 Gloria Swanson comedy of the same name—the masters go back to being masters and the servants go back to being servants, thus highlighting the absurdist illusion that was the self-loathing bourgeois leftists of the 1968 student movement in their idealistic, and ultimately futile pursuit of establishing a classless utopia. As Daniel Schmid recognized in an interview regarding the hypocritical yet unsurprising metamorphosis of his peers from hippies to yuppies in later decades, "Some of them, by the way, were the same people that supported the "holy" war against Saddam Hussein twenty years later, a war everyone helped make possible. But I'm no politician." Indeed, while the suave satirist Schmid was no politician, he proved with *Tonight or Never* that his understanding of people and politics, as well as art, was much more profound and insightful than that of his celluloid compatriots, foretelling how the so called "new left" would devolve into the new plutocracy as the degen-

erate descendants of the parents they loved to hate. Describing his old friend, Schmid once stated of Fassbinder that he “believed himself to be a monster and so he behaved like a monster.” If Fassbinder was a monster, Schmid was a proud and cultivated magician (or cine-magician) of the heretical sort who destroyed his own illusions, with *Tonight or Never* being his first great performance as an unholy marriage between the Habsburgs and Grand Guignol as the sort of asocial and aberrant party Alfred Kubin might have hosted at his 12th century castle.

-Ty E

LA PALOMA
LA PALOMA

Daniel Schmid (1974)

Before gaining about 100 pounds or so and directing kitschy exploitation films, Austrian actor Peter Kern (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*, *Flaming Hearts*) played the lead role in the cultivated high-camp work *La Paloma* (1974) directed by Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid (*Shadows of Angels*, *Imitation of Life*) in a nearly immaculate performance that would prove to be one of the greatest of his rather long yet uneven career. Loosely based on the novel *Camille* (1852) aka *The Lady of the Camellias* written by high yellow French fellow Alexandre Dumas, film and with crucial influence from Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930) aka *Der blaue Engel* and mostly likely Alfred Hitchcock's last British film *Rebecca* (1940), as well as the brazen naked melodrama of director Schmid's pal Rainer Werner Fassbinder and celluloid operetta of Werner Schroeter, *La Paloma* is a beautiful beast of meta-cinema decadence that reminds one why they watch films in the first place; to indulge in the wildly idiosyncratic and to simmer in seduction and sin without any of the less glorious consequences like acquiring an STD or a debilitating drug habit. Starring Fassbinder's ex-wife Ingrid Caven (*Fear of Fear*, *In a Year with 13 Moons*) in a certainly fitting role as a morbidly depressed cabaret singer who finds pseudo-self-worth in the form of a portly pedomorphic aristocrat, *La Paloma* is a cinematic work about the torment and tragedy of unreciprocated love and the perennial misery that such a hopeless situation sows for both parties involved. With its immaculate accentuation of imagery via both malefic and melodic music, *La Paloma* is a rare cinematic treat of the most majestically malicious kind that tenaciously and meticulously tinkers with one's marrow with its curious combination of scenic sorrowfulness or sordid grotesquery.

On a more personal level, the plump protagonist Isidore (Peter Kern) of *La Paloma* reminds me of a personal friend's seemingly autistic, fanboy brother. Technically a grown man in his early twenties, this rather reclusive and sedentary fellow is undoubtedly a virgin, but what else can one expect from an adult male who collects 'everything R2-D2' and considers Steven Spielberg the greatest filmmaker who ever lived. Naturally, I could never see my friend's bro in a relationship with a live woman, especially a beautiful one, so the prospect of such a seemingly absurd – and to be quite frank – unsettling scenario is a captivating one, to say the least. Of course, unlike my compatriot's brother, *La Paloma* 'protagonist' Isidore has two things going for him: he is extremely wealthy and he is deeply and unwaveringly in love with a terminally ill lady that is in dire need of an ego boost. *La Paloma* begins in a campy and carnal cabaret that seems like Weimar Berlin of the early 1930s, except updated in some sort of futuristic hell where men commit self-slaughter stoically after losing their meager earnings gambling, nearly nude preteen girls are paraded around like AKC-certified

canines at a some sort of sleazy dog show, and emotionally abused and feeble females flaunt their flesh to strangers just to survive another day. Isidore is an odd exception to the typical patrons of the cabaret, as he is an aristocratic gentleman, albeit an avoirdupois one who brings Miss La Paloma flowers after one of her moving melancholy performances, thereupon igniting the barely burning flame of their ill-fated, one-sided relationship. A fragile soul with a sometimes ferocious and callous exterior, La Paloma attempts to embrace Isidore's passionate and ceaseless love of which she has never experienced before and seems to work for a brief period of time, until the aristocrat's pal Raoul – a masculine, stoic, and sexually virile gentleman – shows up and inspires true love in the seemingly loveless ex-cabaret singer. That being said, La Paloma features a sort of marvelous and feverently foreboding melodrama that one feels like they are witnessing a slow but steady murder that could have been avoided had a series of bad decisions been averted. Indeed, La Paloma's death-by-heartbreak is revealed about halfway through the film, but the greatest tragedy in La Paloma is the slow brutalization and malicious mutilation of two lonely, tender hearts because "when she (La Paloma) began to love, it was not him she loved; she loved his love for her."

Mixing psychological horror, camp fantasy, literary satire, ominous operetta numbers, and rather ridiculous yet wholly intentional melodramatic romanticism, La Paloma is, at its worse, a minor masterpiece of 1970s theatric European arthouse cinema that has no contemporaries. Like a playful yet pernicious parody of Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) which, incidentally also stars Ingrid Caven, except actually accessible to a wider audience, La Paloma is a successful experiment in cross-medium camp where one does not need a background in bourgeois theatre and opera to actually enjoy it as it is an audacious and acrimonious work that will seem quite disconcerting to pompous patrician types. The film also concludes in a somewhat ambiguous manner that reveals that the joke is on the viewer, especially in regard to the precise manipulation of the spectator's soul. In a film where a man's single and only penetration of his beloved wife is with a knife into her cold cadaver, La Paloma is a saucy and sometime sadistic cinematic work that doesn't play nice but it plays for keeps.

-Ty E

SHADOW OF ANGELS
SHADOW OF ANGELS

Daniel Schmid (1976)

Like *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* purportedly directed by Ulli Lommel (Adolf and Marlene, D.C. Sniper), *Shadow of Angels* (1975) aka *Schatten der Engel* directed by Daniel Schmid (La Paloma, Jenatsch) is a melodramatically immaculate work that looks and feels like it was ghost-directed by German New Wave alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who also suspiciously starred in, produced, and used his production company for the film. Based on Fassbinder's controversial play *The Garbage, the City, and Death* (1975) aka *Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod*; a work that irked German historian and Hitler biographer Joachim Fest so much that he would label the auteur filmmaker a, "left-wing fascist" due to the perceived 'anti-Semitic' subtext in the work. Not only would copies of *The Garbage, the City, and Death* be withdrawn from distribution by the German publishing house Suhrkamp Verlag, but Schmid's adaptation was also withdrawn from theaters in new 'democratic and philo-Semitic' post-war Germany, thereupon sparking outrage and protest in lucidly liberal Paris, France of all places. Outraged, French post-structuralist/post-modernist philosopher Gilles Deleuze remarked, "Banning or blocking a film by Schmid is no victory in the fight against anti-semitism. On the contrary, it is a victory for a neo-fascism (...). For some people will remember the poignancy of this film, its political significance and how it was forced out of the public eye." Indeed, for anyone who has seen *Shadow of Angels*, it seems like an asinine absurdity that such a philosophically multifaceted and aesthetically scrupulous cinematic work would not at least seem somewhat sympathetic to the Semite plight, especially if one considers the nefarious nature of many of the gentiles in the film and writer Fassbinder's less than fascist political proclivities, but I guess most viewers need their movie morals spoon fed to them with a clear distinction of "black" and "white." Centering around a lonely quasi-existentialist prostitute who receives abject apathy and even contempt from her homosexual husband, prissy fellow hookers, and unsympathetic parents, the physically used and abused and emotionally broken Dietrich-like lady finally finds short-term solace in the unlikely form of a rich Jew.

During the beginning of *Shadow of Angels*, sonorously sad streetwalker Lily Breß (Ingrid Caven) commits a seemingly sadistic act when she breaks the neck of a kitten, but by the end of the film one realizes that it is not an act of mindless savagery she has engaged in, but selfless mercy and sympathy. As a fellow pussycat of the night dwelling in the ghettos of Frankfurt in the hopes of merely getting by, Lily knows what it feels like to no longer want to live. Married to a homosexual man-child named Raoul (R.W. Fassbinder) who lives by the decidedly deranged personal dictum "beating means love" and blows all of her hard-earned money via prostitution on gambling when he is not busy playing

with toys, Lily has no one in her life to reach out to. Incidentally, Ingrid Caven (who plays Lily) was briefly married to her onscreen husband Rainer Werner Fassbinder in real-life, thus making both of their performances in *Shadow of Angels* seem all the more audaciously authentic, hysterically heated, and characteristically chemistry-driven, especially when Raoul seems more concerned with the size of Lily's gentleman suitor's genitals than the fact they are copulating with his wife. Things eventually change for Lily when a bright light appears in the red district in the form of a rich Jew broker (played by Klaus Löwitsch) who, on top of buying her body for a pretty penny, confides in the intelligent call-girl, which eventually evolves into a passionate, albeit diacritic and dangerous, love affair that is ultimately doomed due to the lovers' conflicting backgrounds, forthwith giving *Shadow of Angels* a vaguely Shakespearean feel of sorts. The son of two Jews who perished in the holocaust at the hands of the people in the town he now acts as the unofficial dictator of, the rich Jew is not exactly a fan of Lily's ex-nazi drag queen father, who the kosher fat cat personally blames for his belated parents' deaths. The rich Jew believes he is, "not a Jew like the others," but fits into character with many of the stereotypes of the Israelite Semitic type, being a cunning capitalist who allows people to starve to death if it will earn him one more shekel, yet the other cryptic 'movers' and 'shakers' of the decrepit Frankfurt town are ultimately more repugnant and vicious. For example, the Chief of Police (Boy Gobert) who states of Jews, "they hate you and yet they need you for their perverted pleasures," thus insinuating the perennial stereotype that Jews are parasites and exploiters, is completely in bed with the rich Jew, even helping him with the cover-up of a murder and the committing of murder despite his personal disdain for the kosher broker. The only one who stays true to his old school National Socialist ethos is Lily's degenerate father Mr. Müller (Adrian Hoven), a vitriolic cabaret singer in drag who resembles an older, lower-class version of Helmut Berger à la Visconti's *The Damned* (1969). Mr. Müller has no qualms about admitting that he has killed Jews and that he wished he had killed the rich Jew's parents. Müller believes that the rich Jew "raises her (Lily)...to degrade him," which is indubitably true, but the uncommonly handsome Hebrew madly and hypocritically falls in love with the progeny of one of his greatest adversaries, thus his generosity is not in vain.

As stated by Ulli Lommel's typical tall, dark, and handsome character "little Prince" – one of the rich Jew's most right-hand men – "cocks can achieve miracles," especially in *Shadow of Angels*, but wonders of love sometimes come at a hefty price, which the wealthy Judaic is surprisingly willing to pay, even if it means the annihilation of what he loves most. Of course, in the end, the rich Jew and his gentile minions are still on top and the prostitutes and lower-class anti-Semites are still at the bottom, hence certain 'liberal' European's misguided belief that *Shadow of Angels* is a work of postmodern left-wing fascism. If anything, it only goes to show that German auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Parsifal*,

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Hitler: A Film from Germany) was right when he stated that "Whoever joined the Jews and the leftists was successful, and it did not necessarily have anything to do with love, or understanding, or even inclination. How could Jews tolerate that, being that these others only wanted power," in his aptly titled article *On the Misfortune and Fortune of Art in Germany after the Last War* (1990), as his controversial remark is certainly pertinent in regard to the hostile response to *Shadow of Angels* and the overall message of the film itself. Despite both Schmid's film adaption *Shadow of Angels* being regarded as a minor masterpiece of melodrama, as well as the play that it is based on, *The Garbage, the City, and Death*, being regarded as one of Fassbinder, if not his most, greatest play, that did not stop authoritarian holier-than-thou leftist gatekeepers from trying to assign these aesthetically and historically important works to the cultural garbage heap of history. Although screened in competition for the prestigious *Palme d'Or* at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival, *Shadow of Angels* has never been released on international DVD and continues to be attacked (although to a lesser degree than the Fassbinder play) by self-righteous academics of the ostensibly self-righteous, cultural marxist sort. That being said, I guess the *Neuer Deutscher Film* auteur died in vain when he was found dead with a script he was working on for a film about Jewish Marxist agitator Rosa Luxemburg in his hand because who needs neo-nazis when you have leftist fair-weather friends like those of Fassbinder, who was arguably the most culturally and artistically German filmmaker of the post-WWII era. Needless to say, his Swiss friend Daniel Schmid did a great service when he directed *Shadows of Angels*; one of the greatest films associated with the Fass-bande.

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Daniel Schmid (1978)

As someone that regards his previous features *Heute nacht oder nie* (1972) aka *Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma* (1974), and *Schatten der Engel* (1976) aka *Shadow of Angels* as some of my all-time favorite films, it is only natural that I have eagerly anticipated seeing Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's fourth feature *Violanta* (1978) about as much as a 40-year-old virgin craves to get his first proper whiff of a fresh warm twat. Although I have always feared that I might not ever get the chance to see the film since, not unlike most of Schmid's early films, it has never been released in any home media format aside from a hard-to-find foreign VHS sans subtitles, luckily I managed to find an admittedly rather poor quality print that some German guy generously created English subs for. After recently having the luxury of watching the film, I can safely say that, like Schmid's previous three features, it is unequivocally an unsung masterpiece that is in desperate need of being rediscovered by cinephiles lest it suffer the cinematically tragic fate of being regulated to the celluloid ash heap of cinema history. A somewhat morbid and melancholic yet beautiful and poetic melodrama that includes an eclectic all-star European arthouse cast including Lucia Bosé, Maria Schneider, Lou Castel, Gérard Depardieu, and Ingrid Caven, *Violanta* is certainly a singular work that can really only be described as Schmid-esque as it is just too idiosyncratic and unmistakably a work of the director to be described as anything else. In fact, in terms of themes and its period setting, I can only really superficially compare it to John Huston's swansong *The Dead* (1987), although Schmid's film is indubitably a more intricate, quixotic, nuanced, aesthetically enterprising, and all-around superior work and I say that as someone that appreciates both films and filmmakers. Personally, I would go so far as to describe Schmid's film as a marvelously moribund *The Dead* for the lethally lovelorn and spiritually necrotic, as a pathos-driven cinematic work that gives nil hope for the hopeless and basks in brutalizing the emotionally brutalized so as to remind the viewer to forget about love lest they risk living perennially like a dead soul among ghosts and phantoms of their past.

Adapted from the German-language novel *Die Richterin* (1885) aka *The Judge* by Swiss wordsmith Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, Schmid's film is set in an enigmatic rural realm that might be described as darkly romantic were it not for the seemingly eternal plague of cross-generational lovelorn misery and crippling regret that consumes the locals as a deceptively melodramatically merciless cinematic work where the viewer is offered nil catharsis and is instead forced to embrace a complete capitulation of the heart and soul. Set during the eighteenth-century in a small Swiss village that borders Italy where Schmid himself spent a major part of his youth, the film is preternaturally supernatural in the sense that ghosts and phantoms freely intermingle with humans that seem even more

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haunted than their undead compatriots. Notably, virtually all of these ghosts are connected to the terminally unhappy eponymous heroine, who is still haunted by those important individuals from her past that she either loved or loathed and thus can never completely forget. An effortlessly and charming and elegant yet hopelessly morose matriarch that runs a sort of soft dictatorship in her village as a so-called 'judge,' the titular protagonist has many skeletons in her closet that she is ultimately reminded of in a phantasmagorical fashion when her estranged son-in-law returns to the village after a virtual lifetime of exile to take part in the wedding of a beautiful young half-sister that he has never even met in a scenario that eventually evolves into incest. Indeed, although featuring beautiful mountain landscapes, truly festive folk clothing and celebrations, and stunningly exotic women of various ages, *Violanta* is about as merry as a third world autopsy and as heartwarming as a cold rusted dagger to the chest.

Not unlike the venomously vengeful lovesick bourgeois bitch played by Maria Casarès in Robert Bresson's early classic *Les dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) aka *The Ladies of the Bois de Boulogne*, the eponymous middle-aged beauty of Schmid's flick wears a mask of great respectability and moral superiority but that there is a sort of subtle fiery foreboding in her eyes that betrays her prestigious place in society as the beloved queen bitch of her village. Like virtually all of Schmid's great female leads, *Violanta* is an irreparably damaged diva and she longs for death, so it is only natural that the dead dominate her story and bring back painful memories of murder and heartbreak. Despite her own serious mistakes in life, *Violanta* believes it is up to her and her only to tell other people what to do with their lives, so naturally she gets somewhat petrified when her estranged stepson arrives at the village and begins lusty over her engaged daughter. Featuring Maria Schneider at her most shockingly innocent and virginal, Gérard Depardieu as the sleaziest of psychopathic brutes, Lou Castel as a pathetically impotent dropout, and Lucia Bosé as the most self-assured yet deeply internally tortured of manipulative matriarchs, *Violanta* is not really a political film but it can certainly be seen as a sort of hyper hermetic allegory for the decline of Europa as a film set in a decidedly dejecting gynocentric realm where bitter women reign, young men are completely emasculated and/or borderline asexual, and old men are virtually nonexistent as most of the men were curiously killed off long ago. In that sense, it is intriguing that the film is set at a sort of crossroads of Europe where the Mediterranean world meets the Germanic world, or as Schmid once explained to Rudolph Jula, "One of the reasons I did the movie was because it meant coming back to the place where I grew up. And it was an opportunity to define some of my so-called cultural identity – which is an in-between position. The place is in the Alps, at a point where rivers run south and north, and it's on the border between the Latinate and the Germanic world. It's always been well-travelled country: our roads go back to the Romans, the Etruscans. All the traffic between northern and southern Europe

used to cross these mountains. There are also three languages spoken within a very small area: Italian, German and Romansh, a language that goes back to the vulgar Latin spoken in the time of the Roman Empire.”

Violanta begins with the ultimately life-changing reading of a letter by a young man living in exile in Venice named ‘Silver’ (Lou Castel) to his dreaded stepmother Donna Violanta (Lucia Bosé), who is the so-called ‘judge’ and benevolent dictator of the small Swiss village that he was seemingly forced to flee from after the quite dubious death of his padre. Somewhat curiously, Violanta—a woman that seems to fear the mere presence of her stepson, as if he reminds her of some deep dark secret and/or crime that she committed—wants Silver to come out of exile to attend the wedding of his half-sister Laura (Maria Schneider), who he has never met but deeply longs for, hence his bizarre disinterest in voluptuous Venetian beauties. Laura is Violanta’s sole child, as well as Silver’s sole sibling, albeit they naturally have different mothers. Silver deeply resents Violanta because he blames her for his own biological mother going crazy as a result of his father divorcing her for the titular heroine. Indeed, the woman that Silver deeply loathes is now in complete control of the beloved hometown that his mother was originally supposed to take control of. On top of everything else, Silver’s half-sis is the one that is set to eventually takeover the village that his long dead father once ruled over. As the film eventually reveals near the end, Silver would have even more good reason to deeply detest Violanta if he knew what his conspiring stepmother did to his beloved father. What is for sure is that Silver rightly hates Violanta and has no problem admitting as such, though he seems to lack the drive and self-esteem to do anything about it. Not surprisingly, Silver certainly does entertain the idea of destroying Laura’s wedding by falling in love with her. In the end, it is only Violanta that is destroyed, though it is clearly something she longs for as if she has been dreaming of it her entire life.

Throughout the film, Violanta is curiously followed by a morose and painfully vulnerable yet absolutely ravishing, pale moon-faced and redheaded beauty named ‘Alma’ (Ingrid Caven), who has such an innately forsaken demeanor that it seems as if the Devil himself gave her a weekend pass out of hell just to attend the wedding as some form of inordinately cruel punishment. Completely consumed with guilt as a result of supposedly killing her husband and still hopelessly heartbroken that the man she actually loved was killed, Alma is incessantly rebuked by her friend for living in the past. As revealed in a brief scene shortly after she is first introduced to the viewer, locals believe that Alma acts strange because she was the victim of a harvest moon, but Violanta certainly knows better. As Alma emotionally confesses to Violanta, she believes “now the moment has arrived” and “The payment is due” in regard to the fact she poisoned her husband after their wedding, or as she further explains while clearly burdened with an almost grotesque sense of guilt, “...but no one except me knows about that. I never said

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anything because of my son. His life would have been a living hell if he had known . . . that his mother is a murderer.” As she later explains to Silver in a haunted cave, Alma is Violanta’s ‘shadow’ (in fact, it can be argued she is the heroine’s sort of Jungian ‘shadow aspect’), as she candidly expresses all the pain, guilt, and lovesickness that has also plagued the titular heroine for so many years. Indeed, when she notices that Alma has committed suicide by hanging herself during Laura’s wedding party, Violanta decides it is time to end her own life and does so by drinking poisoned wine. Notably, Violanta’s one-true-love ‘Adrian’ (Raúl Gimenez) was very knowledgeable about poisons and taught her enough about the subject to poison both her husband ‘Simon’ (François Simon) and eventually herself. While Violanta stoically states to Alma, “Memories are of no use. As are confessions,” it is ultimately the eponymous heroine’s miserable memories and confession to her daughter that give her the strength she needs to finally commit self-slaughter.

As depicted in rather ghostly flashback scenes, Violanta was forced to marry her belated hubby Simon after her sleazy brother ‘Fortunat’ (Gérard Depardieu)—a boorish psychopath that seemed to love lurking around seedy bars—literally gambled her away during a drunken game of cards. On top forcing her to marry a greedy old fart against her will, Fortunat also murdered Violanta’s lover Adrian while they were lovingly embraced in a strikingly sick act of tragic poetic violence that seems to have turned the heroine into the cold conspiring bitch that she is today. When Adrian’s ghost randomly appears the night before her daughter’s wedding, Violanta does not declare her love to him but instead immediately attacks him, stating, “I assumed that you had found peace. How meaningless! A dead man dreaming about life at night. That’s not possible, Adrian,” but he replies, “One needs a lot of time in order to die. Look out the window! You can see nothing but tormented shadows.” In fact, Violanta—a woman that prides herself on her own personal independence and capacity to rule—is such a cold and irrational cunt that she blames Adrian, as opposed to her demented brother Fortunat, for being murdered and causing the horrific premature end of their lurid love affair, stating, “But you were a coward, just like the other men. My brother intimidated you like he did with them. My God, how much I loved you! I wanted to runaway with you. No matter where. Far away from the valley. But you were afraid of me.” Of course, Violanta’s callous words reveal that she is nothing short of an emotionally erratic misandrist, so it should be no surprise that she established her own mountain matriarchy where most men merely act as meek servants. In fact, Violanta also strategically setup her daughter Laura’s marriage to a groveling beta-bitch named David (Luciano Simioni) specifically because he is “sensitive” and quite unlike her dead husband and deadly dipso-maniac brother. Indeed, denied true love herself, Violanta has no problem denying her daughter the same thing. Of course, unlike her arrogant old fart husband Simon, David is at least a young pansy pushover that little Laura can

boss around. A seasoned ice queen that has not gotten over the death of her true love, Violanta now looks at men as a means to an end and nothing more.

While it does not seem like they are particularly bothered by the taboo of incest as demonstrated by the fact that they make out (and possibly make love) in the countryside not long after meeting for the very first time, Silver and Laura are not actually half-siblings, or so the latter eventually learns upon eavesdropping on her mother. Indeed, as revealed towards the end of the film, Laura is not the daughter of Violanta's dead husband Simon, but her murdered true love Adrian. Indeed, when Violanta encounters the ghost of her dead husband, she hatefully boasts, "You weren't as lucky as you thought when you gambled for me. You didn't win me. You won my hate" and then reveals that she poisoned him and that Laura is actually "Adrian's child" and not his. Unfortunately, Laura witnesses this conversation, though she cannot see the ghost that her mother is ostensibly speaking to. Notably, Laura does not seem particularly disturbed by the revelation that Silver is not her biological half-sibling and that Simon is not her real father, as if she is fully aware of her mother's deep treachery and lies. Of course, by cuckolding Simon and murdering him before she could find out her dirty little secret, Violanta was able to secure a great future for her daughter. Despite her great airs of calm sophistication and happiness, Violanta has been more or less metaphysically dead ever since the death of her great love Adrian and she has simply dedicated her life since then to providing a secure future for her daughter, so it only seems natural that she commits suicide right after Laura gets married as her motherly mission has been accomplished and thus she has no other reason to live. Naturally, it is only fittingly that she kills herself the same exact way that she murdered her husband by consuming poison after her daughter's wedding in what ultimately seems to be a somewhat morbid form of penance. On the other hand, Violanta does not all seem to regret committing mariticide and her suicide seems to be more influenced by a virtual lifetime of heartsickness than homicidal guilt. As for Laura and her 'brother' Silver, one can only guess, but it seems that their (pseudo)incestuous affair concluded before it even really began, which is arguably the real tragedy of the film. In the end, Laura seems to have no problem with settling for matrimonial mediocrity over the ostensible half-brother that she clearly loves, though one suspects that she will eventually grow to be just as cold and bitter as her emotionally barren progenitor.

Notably, as opposed to being a sort of stereotypical quasi-Freudian celluloid turd where sex and romance is depicted in a pathological or psychoanalytic fashion (incidentally, Freud was somewhat obsessed with Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's source novella and referenced it in his early writings and lectures as an example of a 'pathological,' as opposed to psychological, work), Violanta depicts the world of love as a sort of forsaken realm plagued by tragic romantic destiny, or as auteur Daniel Schmid once explained himself in an interview, "Yes, there's a certain fa-

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talism about the story. And I love legends, they're what remain at the very end, and no one cares about the real truth. Everyone's fate is predetermined from the beginning, as if they were under a spell. There are no genuine couples, only impossible ones. And the main characters live with people from the past, the dead are sometimes more present than the living." In fact, not unlike many of Schmid's greatest cinematic works, the film has an undeniably timeless quality and might be best described as an aberrant anti-fairytale as directed by a sort of strangely cynical 'romantic pessimistic' that is just as dubious of love and its nuances and intricacies as he is obscenely obsessed with it. Of course, being a gay man, Schmid (who curiously cast his "first great love" Raúl Gimenez as the titular's heroine's dead lover) had a somewhat warped and arguably resentment-driven view of heterosexual love, as if it was something he deeply longed for but knew he could never really have. One also cannot forget that Schmid strongly identified with women and lived vicariously through them via his filmic heroines, so it should be no surprise that he personally exhibited some of the less flattering character traits associated with women, namely a talent for covert emotional and psychological manipulation. Indeed, as Schmid's longtime cinematographer Renato Berta explained in the documentary *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* (2010) co-directed by Pascal Hofmann and Benny Jaberg in regard to the filmmaker's somewhat Fassbinder-esque tendencies, "There'd be conflicts where I'd ask myself: 'What will happen now? This will be dramatic!' He had a fierce, awful, on-set argument with Ingrid Caven. It was very severe. He kicked the make-up table so that it fell over. 'You're a whore!' And that was really how he was: A sort of subconscious manipulator. He was always playing games and if you couldn't distance yourself at times you'd find yourself . . . in situations that seemed totally complicated, and you'd think, there's no way out. Then he himself would show you the way out. At least, at times. In this regard, then, he had an elegance that few possess." Indeed, the way Berta describes Schmid makes it seem as if the eponymous heroine of *Violanta* is a vaguely autobiographical character of sorts, at least in the psychological sense.

Also in the doc *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense*, Teutonic avant-garde maestro Werner Schroeter explained in regard to his longtime friend and fellow 'queen' Schmid, "Daniel saw a diva in everyone. He even tried to sell his aunt as an odd diva. Daniel was a diva ddiçt. They were hidden everywhere, and you only had to bring this out in order to draw forth this artificiality and create a diva's pseudo-immortality." Undoubtedly, out of all of Schmid's films, *Violanta* features the director's most fully realized and unforgettable diva in the form of Italian Neorealist legend Lucia Bosé who rules over an exceedingly feminine realm of not only the night, moon, nature, and the maternal, but also masks, sophistry, underhandedness, formlessness, and the daemonic. In short, the film is deliciously demonically Delphic in its innate femininity to the point of expressing the gynocentric as something that is gorgeously grotesque in a sick

and tragic sort of way. Depicting a sort of quasi-mystical and matriarchal pastoral *mono no aware* microcosm where the acceptance of lovelorn misery by the heroine highlights both the innate emotional strength and callousness associated with the so-called fairer sex, the film ultimately reveals Schmid's strange respect for the perennial enigma that is femininity. Surely, Schmid's film revealed that Italian sage Julius Evola was right when he wrote in *Eros and the Mysteries of Love: The Metaphysics of Sex* (1958) in regard to the devilishly dichotomous traits of the female sex, "A Persian legend indicates the ingredients of which a woman is composed as 'the hardness of a diamond, the sweetness of honey, the cruelty of a tiger, the warm brightness of a fire, and the coolness of snow.' These ambivalences, the same as those met with in the archetype of the Divine Woman, lie at the basis of another set of traits in feminine psychology: the co-existence of a disposition toward pity and a disposition toward a special cruelty. Lombroso and Ferrero observed some time ago how woman is simultaneously more pitying and yet more cruel than man, for her capacity for a loving protection and compassion is often accompanied by a lack of feeling, ruthlessness, and destructive violence that, once let loose, take a far greater hold on her than they do a man; history bears witness to this in collective forms when rebellions and lynching have taken place." Indeed, when Violanta hatefully rebukes the ghost of her great love that died in her arms, one cannot help but be reminded of Evola's words, "Women, wrote Martin, are ruthless about the evil they do to men they love." After all, even in death, the heroine cannot forgive her beloved for being brutally murdered at the hands of her own brother simply because he loved her too much. No doubt, I would be lying if I did not admit that Violanta made me seriously ponder the dark enigma of covert female psychological violence and the countless wars, wrecked nations, ruined lives, and destroyed love affairs that have occurred throughout history as a result of some conspiring bitch getting an itch to tell some monstrous lie. Indeed, as demonstrated by everything from Shakespeare to popular TV shows like *Game Of Thrones*, such craven feminine behavior is a timeless theme of Western culture, yet few individual men want to admit to themselves that women are capable of such things, hence why women like the titular heroine of Schmid's film are able to so easily getaway with them. Of course, as Otto Weininger once wrote, "No men who really think deeply about women retain a high opinion of them; men either despise women or they have never thought seriously about them." After all, even Schmid, who loved women and their idiosyncrasies, could not help but portray their most loathsome traits. Undoubtedly, the difference between Schmid and the average heterosexual man is that the belated filmmaker admired women for many of the same reasons that straight men simply cannot stomach them aside from only a strictly sexual basis.

Despite his unequivocal worship of dark feminine traits, Schmid was by no means some sort of degenerate feminist leftist cuck, at least not in any typical

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sense. Indeed, as Schmid stated during a contentious press release for his first feature *Tonight or Never*—a film that subtly satires the mindless stupidity of the German 68er-Bewegung student movement of the late-1960s—in regard to his disgust with Occidental decadence and the decline of Europa in general, “I live in a decadent era. That is my private belief. I believe that I live in a late chapter of Western history. I have no conception of how things might continue.” In fact, Schmid’s early films were oftentimes, rather absurdly, labelled “fascist” by certain left-wing film critics, or as the auteur explained himself when asked by Rudolph Jula if he was reproached for being a supposed bourgeois artist, “Yes, to the point of being accused of celebrating bourgeois cultural fascism. That was a term being hurled at everyone at the time. Everyone was a fascist, apart from oneself of course. But all these words have lost their meaning today, like communism.” Of course, to these commie critics’ very minor credit, Schmid was clearly a serious artist with a deep respect for European high kultur who was not afraid to direct films based on novels written by fascist authors like *Hécate* (1982) or to make ostensibly racially insensitive films like *Shadow of Angels* featuring a character simply named “The Rich Jew.” As far as fascist melodrama is concerned, Schmid’s films make a classic Veit Harlan flick like *Opfergang* (1944) seem like a quirky romantic-comedy by comparison in terms of sheer tragic sorrow and abject despair. Undoubtedly, *Violanta* is arguably the most immaculate cinematic example of what Douglas Sirk—an auteur that Schmid considered such a great hero and artistic influence that he paid tribute to with the fairly worthwhile documentary *Mirage de la vie* (1983) aka *Imitation of Life*—when he described the “impossible situation” of melodrama. Completely denying the viewer any sense of catharsis while ensnaring them in his own deep dark abyss of rather cryptically expressed sexual and emotional desires, Schmid managed to assemble a film that is among the darkest and most foreboding of cinema history when it comes to the metaphysics of sex and the perils of true love. Indeed, to watch *Violanta* is to be temporarily forsaken by Schmid’s hopelessly haunted Hades-like homo soul. Personally, I cannot think of another film where a somnambulist-like red-headed *Fräulein* inspires romantic fantasies of suicide and where an incestuous brother-sister romance seems like the most natural relationship in the world, but then again I am a sucker for Schmid and the sort of ominously yet soothingly oneiric cinematic majesty that his films offer.

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HÉCATE

Daniel Schmid (1982)

While my girlfriend and I love the early films of Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid (*Schatten der Engel* aka *Shadow of Angels*, *Violanta*), especially his masterful second feature-length effort *La Paloma* (1974) starring Fassbinder's ex-wife Ingrid Caven, we were both absolutely repelled by his brazenly bitter and precariously pessimistic colonial romance *Hécate, maîtresse de la nuit* (1982) aka *Hécate* starring American fashion model turned actress Lauren Hutton (*The Gambler*, *Once Bitten*) and the always pompous and unpleasant Frenchman Bernard Giraudeau (*Passione d'amore*, François Ozon's odious Fassbinder adaption *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*). In fact, to simply say the word "Hécate" is enough to consume my typically calm and mild-mannered girlfriend with sheer and utter disgust, which is certainly a sentiment I can relate to, even if I found myself more intrigued by Schmid's Franco-Swiss film on my second viewing of it due to its historical and philosophical themes regarding the capitulation of Europa as a result of the Second World and rise of a new form of barbaric collectivism as inspired by far-left anti-European sentiment. Having the grand distinction of being Schmid's most 'explicitly erotic' work (even if it does not show much in the way of bare flesh) and set in an unmentioned French-British North African colony, *Hécate* totally lacks the signature high-camp melodrama and decided aesthetic decadence that made the director's first three films, *Tonight or Never* (1972), *La Paloma*, and *Shadow of Angels*, idiosyncratic masterpieces. A sort of exotic European film noir featuring an apathetic femme fatale who wants nothing in return for her succubus ways aside from destroying the soul of any man that has the misfortune of coming under her spell, and set in a pre-apocalyptic Arabian colonial ghetto as opposed to an American urban ghetto, *Hécate* is ultimately an unpleasantly poetic celluloid allegory for the decline of Occidental power and influence disguised as one of the most disastrous romances ever depicted on the silver screen. Based on the novel *Hécate et ses chiens* written by French Nazi collaborator/Vichy government supporter Paul Morand—a novelist inspired by the Faustian philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Oswald Spengler, as well as the racial theories of frog aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau (whose ideas also inspired Richard Wagner and the Bayreuth circle)—*Hécate*, unlike similarly themed Hollywood works, makes no attempt to glorify the death of the west nor the so-called 'noble savage,' but instead portrays it as a sort of soft-core doomsday scenario leading up to a sort of neo-barbarism of global proportions. As a man who suavely satired the far-left 1968 student movement in his debut feature *Tonight or Never* and always displayed a deep admiration for traditional kultur, Schmid certainly expressed a sense of quasi-Spenglerian cultural pessimism with *Hécate* that is no less emotionally grating than his discernible disdain for heterosexual relationships.

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It is the 1930s and French diplomat Julien Rochelle (Bernard Giraudeau)—a successful and attractive but otherwise mediocre man—spots a mysterious beautiful blonde woman while lounging at the French embassy in Morocco. After Julien asks a consul at the embassy “what kind of woman is that?,” he learns she is “just a woman looking out into the night.” Of course, little does Julien realize that he will soon be spending a number of sleepless nights in a North African colony searching for the mysterious woman. As Julien narrates at the beginning of *Hécate*, “The story of Clothilde happened a very long time ago. When I say time...I don’t mean the number of years...I mean that since that time the world has changed. France and England no longer live at the slow pace of horses. France and her Treasury no longer represent the greatest bank in the world. America is arming Russia. Germany will devour everything, even her own downfall. In those days...When was it, already?” Upon arriving at the North African colony, Julien almost immediately starts a steamy love affair with a certain married woman named Clothilde de Watteville (Lauren Hutton), whose husband is a ‘strange French officer’ working as a mercenary in Siberia. Of course, little does gentleman Julien realize that he will be in store for the same sort of internal pain and heartbreak as Clothilde’s husband, a totally broken man who cannot live with or without his wife, but has chosen self-imposed exile and opium to distance himself from his seemingly magical and always wanton witch of a wife. While Julien and Clothilde’s relationship is seemingly immaculate due to its exclusively erotic nature, the French diplomat begins to overstep his bounds when he begins to declare his passionate love for the married *femme fatale*, which naturally pushes her away. Of course, Julien’s romantic relationship with Clothilde is not the only thing crumbling in the North African colony as the colony itself is falling due to rebel attacks inspired by a hatred for European imperialism. As French consul Vaudable (Jean Bouise), tells Julien regarding the state of the world and the foreboding future of the Occident, “One sees horrors everywhere. Everywhere where order reigns, everywhere where disorder reigns. Occasionally, in the center of Europe, in the center of certain Democracies, it is possible to find a fragrance of tolerance. A conquest against nature. Barbarism is a permanent threat. We can forget the ideas of the French Eighteenth Century. Liberty and individuality are two luxuries that are dying out.” Despite being a French diplomat, Julien cares more about permanently possessing Clothilde than whether or not Europe’s empires fall. Every time Clothilde disappears from his presence, Julien wanders on foot both day and night and when he finally catches her during one of these exotic Arabian nights, he forces himself upon her, thus demonstrating the dissolution of his mind as a diplomat-turned-degenerate. When jaded Julien later discovers an androgynous Arab boy hanging outside of Clothilde’s door, he displays his dominance in a rather degraded manner by capturing the brown boy, locking him in his lover’s room, and sadistically sodomizing the uniquely unlucky and unwilling victim. While

Julien is not arrested, he is forced to leave his post and his title and pension are revoked as a result of the sodomy scandal. Forced to take the first black boat to France by the French Foreign Office, Julien is forced away from his sweet succubus Clothilde, but he ultimately becomes a successful ambassador anyway despite being a lovelorn lunatic who perniciously pillaged a young untermensch boy.

Still consumed with undying love for the ever so cold and callous ice queen Clothilde as a pathetic perennial cuckold of sorts, Julien uses his power as an ambassador to visit his lost lover's husband in Siberia despite the fact a violent war is waging there. Upon a superficial glance, it is quite apparent Le colonel de Watteville (Gérard Desarthe) is a badly broken man who is addicted to 'Cocteau's kick' and when Julien arrives to speak with him, it comes as somewhat of a shock to the viewer that he is not angered by the fact that the melancholy married man is standing face-to-face with the man fellow that sexually defiled his wife. The Colonel lets Julien know that, "You know...we're both in the same boat, hoping every day that she's coming and praying always for her not to come. Here, I'm paying my debt. I am not cured. I'm still waiting." Not long after his visit with the Colonel, Julien ends up running into Clothilde by happenstance at a party in Switzerland and tells her he went to visit her husband, remarking, "I am like him. I was never cured." After declaring his love for Clothilde for the last time, he is met with the disappointing response, "Words always come too late...or too soon."

In an interview with Swiss filmmaker Rudolph Jula, director Daniel Schmid provided the following insights regarding *Hécate*, "A lot of things come together at the end of the world. The novel *Hécate* was written by Paul Morand, the character was based on his wife Helene, whom I met when she was a very old woman. She was supposed to be eighty-five when she died, and then they found out she was ninety-seven. She'd altered her passport so often that even her husband didn't know. *Hécate* is a film about projection, possession, jealousy and logical destruction." And, indeed, an irrational obsession with projection, possession, and jealously lead *Hécate* protagonist Julien, an otherwise dull and uninteresting man, to degenerate into a one-man train wreck who will do anything, including raping a teenage Arab boy, to demonstrate his debauched and ultimately demented love for a woman who is only interested in emotionless sex and flaunting her almost witchlike power over and destruction of said men.

A patently pessimistic example of 'love conquers all' (except for seemingly sociopathic femme fatales, of course!), *Hécate* is undoubtedly the closest thing to a French colonialist take on *Gone with the Wind* (1939), because, like the Hollywood epic, Schmid's film also depicts not only the failure of a great love affair but also the decline of a civilization, which has ultimately led to the mass-minded and Americanized world we have today where such things as class and culture have been turned into a mockery of the way things once were in the past.

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The fact that *Hécate* is based on a novel written by an unrepentant fascist elitist and aristocrat of the soul makes it all the more interesting of a film because, unlike the communist (and Hollywood) writers, who actively sought to destroy traditional Europe and European values via savage class warfare and portray all things classically Occidental as innately evil, most so-called 'far-rightists' hope to preserve ancient culture and traditions and rid their nations of vice and decadence, which the protagonist of Schmid's film ironically ultimately succumbs to. Undoubtedly, to describe *Hécate*—a film named of the Greek goddess of magic and protection who later came to represent the goddess of darkness, night, and the underworld and a sort of femme fatale—as a great 'downer' of a film would be an understatement as few other films have the power to depress, anger, and agitate like Schmid's dark colonial romance. Of course, with their celebrated cuckold epic *The Constant Gardener* (2005)—a film about a British cuckold of a diplomat in Kenya who makes the major mistake of falling in love with a hysterical 'humanitarian' activist, thus leading to both of their demises—Hollywood has popularized what Schmid did long ago with *Hécate*. The major difference between both films is that while *Hécate* portrays the dissolution of European power as a bad thing that will inevitably lead to a sort of rise of Bolshevik-esque neo-barbarism on a global level, *The Constant Gardener* absurdly portrays sacrificing one's life to disease-ridden 'noble savages' as the most morally noble and virtuous thing a person can do, which would have totally repulsed *Hécate* novelist Paul Morand. Of course, *The Constant Gardener* is a not only a glaring symptom of Occidental decline and the horrendous and culturally homogenizing Hollywoodization of the world, but also the reign of the untermensch and the total transvaluation of all values, which was not only dreaded by Morand, Nietzsche, and Spengler, but also *Hécate* director Daniel Schmid, who portrays the darkness and chaos engulfing Europe during the first half of the Twentieth century as a salacious and statuesque mistress of the night.

-Ty E

PINPRICK

Daniel Young (2009)

What originally piqued my interest in *Pinprick* was how cleverly matched the plot seemed to be with *L'immoralita*, a film I had recently discussed. The closest interpretation on Daniel Young's *Pinprick* could lend hints of Breillat's *À ma sœur!* but only after digging well underneath the feminine tissue. One thing that really struck a chord with me was our young star Laura Greenwood's performance. In *Pinprick*, Greenwood plays a radically rebellious teenager, aged 15, who festers an unbearable relationship with her mother. In a fit of retaliation, unknown to us or the camera, she decides to foster a criminal in her closet, feeding him scraps and entertaining his presence by wearing revealing clothing. In many scenes, Daniel Young incorporates visible signs of reality, not just script-writing, but an experience all together in realism. *Pinprick* is not a window into fictitious psychopathy but a careful portrait of, quite literally, the dangers of innocence.

Greenwood's character, Charlotte, is quickly introduced in her bedroom talking to a shadow in her closet. Not bumbling about with origins or needless explanation and sifting through scenes, *Pinprick* begins before we even realize it. Ervin Nagy plays Reyer, our enigmatic prisoner of this sterile domicile. Reyer is a character who possesses immense presence with his Hungarian features. He's certainly an intimidating character and the games he has in store for this unwitting family only add to his curious and repressed behavior. Daniel Young doesn't waste any time establishing the strange, almost teasingly pedophilic, relationship between the brutish Reyer and the budding flower Charlotte. I'd call *Pinprick* jailbait terrorism as scenes are juxtaposed to both titillate and warn you. In a certainly complex nature, Charlotte's character bounces around in panties, expressing her flourishing curves in a manner that is all too beguiling and impossible to resist. *Pinprick* then gives you a slap on the hand for eying the lovely dame as such a meat. What lies within this relapsing of lust is a strong point of *Pinprick*. The name of the game is passive fetishism and Laura Greenwood makes damn sure that every viewer is paying attention.

The battle soon switches targets as Reyer begins scoping out Charlotte's homely mother, Miriam, portrayed by Rachael Blake. I suppose the tedious girl-games wore thin for Reyer as he sets into motion a plan to assimilate himself within the household, allowing complete and total freedom, including the sexual kind. Charlotte, noticing Reyer has been intimate with her mother, begins to grow a sizable fear and jealousy. There's much more to the plot of *Pinprick*, which is delicately delivered at the very end of the film. A "twist" so mellow and radical that I should have seen it coming, but never did. Reyer, the Hungarian opportunist, is shed upon as a brooding character with a strange fascination for the toys of the bourgeois. *Pinprick* is the first "independent" feature I've seen in quite some

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time that I can solemnly swear to seep substance. Not only does the film play all fronts of battle but impales the typical daughter as well. Pinprick attests to the terror of angsty girlhood. While Charlotte suffers from susceptible and impressionistic behavior, one might argue she's not as rotten as her friends; one being a young Latino whore who receives a tattoo at an all-too young age. Charlotte expresses her distaste at the decision, all while realizing she too is irrational.

To return once more to the inextricable relation to *L'immoralita*, both Pinprick and the aforementioned Italian psychodrama share common similarities. Both films involve little girls hiding criminals away from their parents and share interest in mature mothers seducing or being seduced by said criminal. This leads to the familial meltdown in both pictures. Also shared is a scene of listening in on consummation which leads to the young ladies either sobbing or being noticeably distressed. Laura Greenwood's defining curves tackle the topic of ageless sex head on. Just as Simona proved in *L'immoralita*, these young fledging doves with dreams of big love know the sinister game they're playing and in some way, mesh seamlessly with the future of the false rape epidemic. With Pinprick, Daniel Young surprised me, intrigued me, and patronized me. Not just with the shameless sexuality of young Charlotte but with his effective storytelling. Pinprick is easily one of the better and engaging dramas floating around these days and it's a damn shame that it's not more accessible to wandering hands. To better solidify your own opinion, I suggest purchasing it here.

-mAQ

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

Danny Boyle (2008)

Hype and appraisal can indeed be a serrated-edged coin. On one surface, you face the logic of opinion and the other side represents the quality of said material. For perfect example, Had The Dark Knight not been a great film, consensus would still agree on cementing the films present status of "Best film of 2008!" due to the untimely passing of Heath Ledger. For me, two films fit this niche in 2008; Let the Right One In and Slumdog Millionaire. To stray from my point, Let the Right One In has been hailed as the single greatest vampire tale of all time. In my many attempts to watch it, I haven't surpassed 20 minutes running time all thanks to the sluggish pace at which it crawls effortlessly. However, I won't make my decision until I've finally digested it in its whole. Danny Boyle is a name I can rely on within Hollywood. While I didn't flock to his weepy tale of Millions, I found his previous efforts in 1995's Shallow Grave and 2002's 28 Days Later (the first half). His career has been aesthetically luxurious and earnest. With his recent dabbling in multiculturalism, Slumdog Millionaire takes City of God inspired narrations of a troubled childhood and adds Bollywood flavor in what takes place at a Hindi version of Who Wants to be a Millionaire? For what it's worth, Bollywood is famous in our American culture for their unabashed rip-offs, remakes, forgeries, and other doppelganging oddities. Voiced by a throbbing Hindi electro soundtrack led by bumping tracks from M.I.A., It's nice to finally see a film that uses smash hit Paper Planes to such an effective degree. Better yet, the culture of this film fits rather close to the characters featured in Slumdog Millionaire. The acting is stellar but I cannot find much porous material in Jamal to latch upon. Sure, the film is a filling outing in cinema, but it's stuck on the appetizer. Slumdog Millionaire definitely feels like it's missing something. The array of questions throughout Slumdog Millionaire coincide with events that transpired in his past creating this buoyant Déjà vu that fills you with glee. Slumdog Millionaire is a solemn film of many virtues. It's a thing of beauty. It isn't perfect and it never strived to be. When Danny Boyle created this film, I'm sure he had no expectations of his latest film to be called the single greatest film of 2008. What a way to cap off the end of such a prosperous year. Redefining inspirational cinema, Slumdog Millionaire will tug at your heartstrings. For once, I'm not discouraged of liking something so one-sidedly well-received. Had I not liked this film, the surprise dance number at the end might have made me vomit in my mouth a little.

-mAQ

THE TENANTS
THE TENANTS

Danny Green (2006)

The Tenants is a film about a Jewish writer named Harry Lesser who befriends a black militant writer named Willie Spearmint (Snoop Dogg) that is squatting in the same apartment building he lives in. Despite being sub-literate, Willie believes that his writing is revolutionary with its messages of killing white people. I guess he knows the audience he is targeting. The stoic (does one exist?) Jew Harry Lesser does everything he can to kiss Willie's ass for no apparent reason. Willie has a "white" Jewish bitch for a girlfriend that Harry starts falling in love. One can only expect violence with a disgustingly bizarre love triangle between writers as diverse as these.

Apparently, The Tenants has offended the racially sensitive citizens of the United States and only played at one theater in the entire country. I am not surprised as The Tenants lacks any type of happy and sentimental civil rights message that you can expect from films of this "progressive" generation. The "struggle" in the film is only between egos and "racially diverse" characters. As can be expected, the Jewish Harry Lesser is a "victim" of irrational black gentile anti-Semitism. Willie is a criminal who has served time and lives off the fruits of his Jewish "bitch" girlfriend. Despite hating whites and promoting black power idealism, he believe its okay to have a relationship with a white girl. In fact, if it wasn't for the white girl, this black power revolutionary would be begging for pennies on a curb in some shithole ghetto.

The Tenants lets the viewer know in a symbolic manner that if it wasn't for the Jewish community, the black civil rights movement would have never gone anywhere. It doesn't take much historical background research to find out that the NAACP was far from a black organization. For example, Jacob Schiff, the Wall street banker who also funded the Bolshevik revolution, funded the NAACP. Schiff also worked with his buddies Jacob Billikopf and the infamous Zionist Rabbi Stephen Wise to get the NAACP moving. To put it simply, the NAACP was never really an organization interested in true black interests. After stealing Willie Spearmint's girl in The Tenants, it is clear that the arrogant Harry Lesser wasn't really looking to help Spearmint's black power writing to get off the ground. Despite having an extremely low IQ, Willie Spearmint can see through the weak front that is Harry Lesser.

Throughout The Tenants Harry Lesser seems to get off on a masochistic ride of being verbally abused and threatened by Willie Spearmint. These scenes of a black man dominating a "white" man are so typical of Hollywood nowadays that it's a surprise that some "redneck" hasn't assassinated any Hollywood producers like the Silent Brotherhood assassinated the belligerent Jewish radio talk show host Alan Berg (who Oliver Stone later made a movie about Talk Radio). Despite being a criminal and wearing a jungle gear wardrobe, Willie is more

respectable than little bitch Lesser. When Willie eventually destroys Lesser's probably less than interesting book, I couldn't help but giggle.

The Tenants is a very flawed and somewhat small budget film that is at the very least watchable. Upon first viewing the film, I expected another race friendly Jew-lifts-black-man-off-ground-and-gives-him-power film that so typical of Hollywood. In the end, The Tenants has a nihilistic message that obviously must be upsetting to many white liberals. The dreams of a multicultural utopian society takes an ax to the stomach in The Tenants. Steven Spielberg directed The Color Purple and Amistad to give "power" to the black people but he is just another Harry Lesser.

-Ty E

TIME EXPIRED
TIME EXPIRED

Danny Leiner (1992)

One must certainly wonder how decidedly derelict director Danny Leiner, being of the traditionally Hebraic Hollywood persuasion with such formulaic, vacuous comedic hits as *Dude Where's my Car?* (2000) and *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* (2004) came to begin his career with *Time Expired* (1992), a semi-serious, and not particularly slapstick funny, but rather bizarre 30-minute short about a hyper masculine married wop whose latent homosexuality is unleashed after serving a two-year stint in the city jail while housed with a presumably Puerto-Rican, fiery latina transvestite cellmate. Indeed, *Time Expired* is a rather bizarre, yet enjoyable short film about the not so uncommon, but often unspoken of scenario of seemingly macho men finding their true lascivious homosexual selves in prison, and the often raucous ramifications that result from their lustful prison proclivities. Upon his exit from jail, Bobby (played by Bob Gosse) seems rather ambivalent about being reunited with his family who await him outside the prison gates. On the way out, however, his already mixed emotions about his release are further complicated when his former cellmate and lover, saucy latina tranny Ruby, decadently dressed to the nines in a sexy, short blue dress complete with a long, flowing black wig and sunglasses (played by the highly versatile John Leguizamo—whose many diverse roles range from portraying a sex-obsessed, possibly gay Guido in *Summer of Sam* (1999) to a nearly-brain dead half-Hispanic/half-Jewish hustler retard in *King of the Jungle* (2000)) walks by and asks him if he'd like to meet up later. Bobby, unsure of how to deal with the situation, immediately dismisses Ruby's presence and eagerly walks over to his awaiting family—his chubby, short and unassuming mother, his semi-autistic comic books obsessed brother Burt, and his young, faithful wife, Ginny (played by Edie Falco of *Sopranos* fame in one of her earliest roles). Bobby feigns excitement at seeing his forgiving family after being in jail for a presumably cum-in-the-butt filled two years with his Latin lover Ruby (after apparently having been charged with "ripping off over 1,000 parking meters," which is somewhat suggestive of kleptomaniac tendencies, which seem to be strikingly common among homosexuals, including my beloved flaming fag uncle), and returns home only to fall into a drunken, unemployed slump in which his pretty and forgiving and decidedly tame for an Italian wife Ginny can't help but feel sorry for her ex-con husband who, unbeknownst to her, is incessantly ruminating about and lusting after the sweet and spicy Latina ass of his tranny lover, Ruby.

Barely able to concentrate even on shitty afternoon cartoons while staying at home one day, Bobby finally gives Ruby a call and asks if she'd like to meet him at the local park, as covertly as possible of course, for fear of his family discovering that he is a lustful horndog of a homo with a predilection for a cross-dressing

maricon. Ruby happily obliges and attires herself accordingly in her favorite black wig and sexy red dress, only to find that Bobby is twenty minutes late for their presumed encounter of afternoon delight in the park. Ruby, predictably tiffed by his lateness yet very excited to see Bobby, remarks, “You’re twenty minutes late—that’s how late you are!” and “You’re way too flaco—you need a latina to make you some pollo!” is beyond dismayed when Bobby coldly tells her he only met up with her to say that he needs two months time to get his life in order, and that between now and then, the two of them can’t carry on any kind of relationship. Ruby, in characteristically hot-blooded Hispanic response, is beyond dismayed by Bobby’s plans and leaves immediately, but not before slapping him when he leans in for a kiss, and then giving him the finger and flamboyantly flashing her ass in anger. Later in the evening, Ruby goes to the local gay bar, dressed from head-to-toe like Marilyn Monroe, and washes away her sorrows in a dipsomaniac fit after being told by the bartender, “You know, he’s just a breeder” and responding, “I know. That’s what I like about him,” demonstrating that the little latin lover is still clearly quite obsessed with her Italian boy-toy and truly distraught over his looming, self-imposed two-month hiatus from their admittedly awkward, yet intense love-making sessions.

In spite of what he said, Bobby cannot make good on his promise to abstain from his debauched disposition, and just a day or so later he is already hanging out at the salon where Ruby works as a manicurist and hairstylist. The two go on an intimate afternoon date, in which he purchases for her a Jesus figurine at a local Hispanic market; the day ultimately ends with the two dancing intimately and lustily to some Billy Holiday or other such Negro spiritual inspired, faux-romantic, pretentious music in Ruby’s candle-lit bedroom, which inevitably concludes with the dubious pair exchanging bodily fluids and falling asleep, only for Bobby to later wake up and leave, only to return to his as yet unknowingly jilted wife who implores him to make love to her. Upon waking alone in bed the next day, Ruby, in typical latina fashion, is beyond pissed and can’t wait to take out revenge on and humiliate Bobby in front of his clueless wife. And indeed, the following morning is a true disaster for Bobby who, already packing his suitcase and preparing to leave his wife, is greeted at the front door by a truly pissed and volatile Ruby who barges through the front door and makes her presence known to Bobby’s wife Ginny who angrily responds, “Who the hell is this thing?!” with a lust-filled, passionate screaming match erupting between the two jilted ladies. Bobby finally admits to Ginny that he was a closet fag, and that he “consummated” his relationship with Ruby while in prison, and in rather atypical wop-fashion, Ginny is surprisingly accepting of his new-found life as a flaming homo, and quite graciously allows him to pack up his things and leave their humble abode. Ruby, on the other hand, is not so forgiving and while Bobby implores her to run away to Florida with him so that they can begin their licentious lives anew, she vehemently refuses and rather sacrilegiously throws at

TIME EXPIRED

him the Jesus statue he had purchased for her just days ago; Bobby falls to the ground like the limp-dicked loser he is, as the statue symbolically lay broken on the ground.

Ultimately, *Time Expired* rings true to its meaning with a somewhat open-ended conclusion in which Bobby peers in at the window to Ruby's salon, seemingly begging for forgiveness and for her to take him back, only for Ruby to shake her head at him in disbelief at his desperation. While *Time Expired* is by no means a masterpiece of any sort, cinematically or thematically, it certainly does make for a brief yet highly enjoyable viewing, particularly for those entranced by John Leguizamo's always enthralling and diverse personas, ranging from stereotypical mafia gangsters to hot-blooded homos to raunchy retards. And the film is also an insightful exercise in what it must be like for previously masculine men, having found their true salacious selves in prison, to make the real-life, outside of prison transition from being former lily-lickers to presently equally semen-spewing and semen-loving homos with a predilection for lustful man-ladies. And, finally, *Time Expired* proves that, while the old saying may go that "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," even those who are not biologically ladies are no exception to the rule, especially those of the hot-headed and fiery Latina tranny variety.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

BANGKOK DANGEROUS

Danny Pang (1999)

Not too long ago I sat down and reviewed the newest Nicholas Cage vessel Bangkok Dangerous. That film is a remake of a Thai action drama filmed at the end of the 90's helmed by twin brother duo The Pang Brothers. When I had low expectations for the remake which we met with equally, I didn't expect the remake to be the exact opposite of the original. Nicholas Cage is a caricature of our hero Kong, proven by the events. It even slightly explains the mop on his head. So, in the remake we have an assassin who becomes a sensei to a youthful man named Kong. This guy, Kong, is the only survivor of the hitman team in the Cage film. Kong, in the original, is an assassin who is taught by a man named Jo. Add a couple different scenes involving rape, and you've got nearly the same film, although backwards. The original Bangkok Dangerous is 100 times more exciting, more dramatic, more tragic, and features an incredible love side-story, unlike that cantankerous love stint the Nicholas Cage had with the deaf-mute pharmacist. If you had to give Nic Cage lines, so be it, but I did admire how the Pang's turned the robbery scene into a entirely different scene as the woman couldn't hear the chamber emptying into thugs. Kong is a deaf-mute which makes life a bit hard, especially his love life. If you enjoy awkward romance, fuck Juno and jump on the Bangkok bandwagon. He is unsociable and a cold remorseless killer. The only hesitation he even considers is just another obstacle he surpasses. The editing in this film was amazing at parts. It can be a fluent language of violence, as shown by the Pang's, but then it transforms back into painful drivel. Blood is a striking substance that the duo uses to an effect. They find a mesmerizing beauty behind blood slowly shaping around tiles then reforming. I can see how this is an ample technique used in a thriller. One point I found to be a bit weird was the action scenes. Critics have hailed the original as "frantic and hectic gunfights" which it completely isn't. The gun play in this film is realistic and hardly stylish. Bullets go everywhere and there is no beauty to the point. Thailand isn't normally a country I appreciate cinema from besides Tony Jaa films, but Bangkok Dangerous had that sly Korean feel which means there is life in that country. I'm glad to have seen this film, although a bit too late. The ending featured an incredibly tragic fate that could have been avoided but for the sake of sorrow, we wanted it to happen. Bangkok Dangerous (1999) puts the original to shame but still doesn't cross the line into marvelous territory.

-mAQ

SAVAGE STREETS
SAVAGE STREETS

Danny Steinmann (1984)

Considered by few to be a masterpiece in exploitation, *Savage Streets* is first and foremost a vehicle for Linda Blair to "professionally" bare her breasts. Even though this scene only stretches about a minute long with a slow and calculated pan across a bathtub, it is painfully obvious that her impunity paired with attitude was the second mark to meet. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if production of *Savage Streets* was funded simply from the premise of Linda Blair in leather wielding a crossbow, cleavage absolute. Caught on the rebound by director Danny Steinmann, who would later direct the runt of the Friday the 13th series (*A New Beginning*), *Savage Streets* pumps up the vigilante formula with effervescent colors, leg-warmers, and a typical 'tude to tease and flaunt a harsh and particular sexuality on the winners ground. Opening with a contrast of the Satins and the Scars, even adhering to a Venn diagram of sorts in comparing and contrasting the extremities of pack formations, in this case suburban violence - Vince is first introduced duping his parents into believing he's pursuing honest intentions, only then trading his would-be letterman jacket for a leather jacket. These actions justify a means, the obligatory summation of "do you know where your children go at night?". This (presently) pointless question is soon answered as we witness Vince jump into the back of a Bel-Air convertible, rendezvousing with his gang, The Scars. These boisterous boys are heeded only by their ignorance for at first they seem as if they could fit the archetype of being generally rowdy, even playful. But the light soon parts and their darker intentions are shown in a series of shakedowns which include ripping off the shirt of a buxom blonde in front of her boyfriend. It was a shame Steinmann didn't seize the opportunity or the advantage while he had it. God knows how much good would have come out of a single tear streaming down her cheeks as her breasts are groped by strange men. More-so, a simple look of dismay did not emphasize what could have been an above excellent (as well as arousing) scene. Note of interest - why not rape the beautiful aforementioned blonde rather than the timid, handicapped sister? Then again, power is the play and the Scars have more than enough sexual curiosities to work out.

With the Satins at the core of the story, we are indebted to enjoy the company of Brenda, Francine, and Heather, Brenda's deaf sister. The several hilarious and tragic (maintaining hilarity) confrontations between the sexes can have ample blame rerouted back to the Satins. It is them who strike first by stealing the convertible of the Scars while busy attempting to collect a nigh mentioned sum of money from the local jocks on account of "blow". Never mind the scene in which The Scars almost hit Heather with a car. Why the imperfect vessel of chastity is trotting around decrepit city streets at night with a gang of collected loose inhibitions is beyond me. It would appear that the Scars terrorize while the

Satins tease, giving both sides a gender-specific lethality - men control and abuse while women seduce and destroy. That's not to bring the role of Heather into this mix though. That's not to say I don't believe in inklings of innocence. The fact of the matter is, Heather is cattle. Created by a Norman Yonemoto, Heather's character is a senseless shell serving a strict purpose for rape. She exists solely to be violated, thrusting our cast of women into a level of aggression and panic. As comes the revenge, so must the inciting incident. Soon enough will the Scars repay a small slight against their street credibility by raping a deaf/mute girl and as per aged rape-revenge talents, will force the runt of the group to savage their forcefully seized property.

An interesting aspect of *The Scars* is their general homoerotic behavior, frequently at play. You'll see the leader of the Scars, Jake, grab the crotches of his kinsfolk as well as tugging the pants down off Vince in a heated fury. Gearing Vince's libido towards a potential victim, sure, but the spark in Jake's eyes as well as his lecherous stare either suggest that the character in which Robert Dryer portrayed fostered homosexual condolences or Robert Dryer himself found himself an on-set muse. Do I even need to mention the locking of lips as a form of taunting, of which was allegedly improvised, so stated Danny Steinmann in an interview? I like to consider Dryer's part of improvisation to concede towards a form of theatrical subconscious submission. The frothing hyper-sexuality of the Satins intermittently clash with the flamboyantly feral Scars, as well. To bring about, again, the questioning of the Scars motivations - I find it interesting to note the choice of victim on Jake's part. The Scars definitely succeeded in hand-selecting the mousiest and most timid girl of all, somewhat resembling a creature from *The Secret of Nimh*. If *Savage Streets* were to be acknowledged for anything other than a brief spurt of crossbow vigilantism or Linda Blair's dirty pillows it would be for a neon-bathed battle of the sexes in which the body count outweighs the potential requirement for a viewing. I found the city of *Savage Streets* to boast clever flickers and splotches of light, fruitful characters whose moral scale has been past compromised, and enough hearty violence to spread evenly across 93 minutes. However, I cannot place a crown on a film unworthy of exploitation royalty, especially one whose smoldering legacy refuses to burn out after left to the elements. Babes, bolts, and badgering - *Savage Streets* is a silly relic of simpler times. I won't cut the ribbon of approval yet but I wholeheartedly agree its investments into revenge have more benevolence than that of the wavering vigilante pool that is modern cinema.

-mAQ

FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET
FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET

Dario Argento (1971)

Without question, if I were to name the most neglected and underrated film of Guido Giallo master Dario Argento (*Suspiria*, *The Mother of Tears*), it would unequivocally have to be his experimental and strikingly idiosyncratic giallo *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1971) aka *4 mosche di velluto grigio*. The third and final chapter in Argento's 'Animal Trilogy' (following *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) and *The Cat o' Nine Tails* (1971)), *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* was originally conceived as the filmmaker's swansong to the giallo genre, but that changed when his historical dramedy *The Five Days* (1973) aka *Le cinque giornate* aka *The Five Days of Milan* proved to be a mighty monetary failure at the box office, thus guaranteeing that Argento would be forever pigeonholed as a master of the cinematically macabre and not much else (although he cannot direct a decent horror film for the life of him nowadays). Centering around a drummer in a popular cock rock group who accidentally kills a man who has been incessantly stalking him, only to be stalked and tormented by a sadistic blackmailer in a bizarre mask who took photos of said accidental killing, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is also a singular work in Argento's cinematic oeuvre in that it features homosexual themes, most specifically those of the pleasantly political incorrect sort, even bordering on the campy at times. Acting as a sort of celluloid prototype for William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) and Lamberto Bava's late era giallo *Body Puzzle* (1992), *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* depicts the preternatural insanity that occurs when a sexually confused killer with a demented daddy complex decides to emotionally ravage and torture a rock star who hires a queenish gay private detective to help him catch his gender-challenged stalker. Apparently, originally intending to have the protagonist portrayed as a hysterical homo (instead, he is a 'closeted killer' who stares in the mirror far too often), the fag factor of *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is largely of a subtextual manner that demonstrates that Argento probably was not up for ruining his career by directing a conspicuously gay giallo with a queer hero. Featuring high-speed camera work (at upwards of 1000 frames a second) that features a bullet moving in slow-motion (apparently, the first time ever featured in a film), a masterful and highly complementary musical score by Ennio Morricone (who thankfully replaced Deep Purple), a hypnotic 'image caught in the retina' gimmick, and one of the most startling ending twists and aesthetically pleasing car crash sequences in film history, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is a giallo for those that find the genre far too formulaic.

Roberto Tobias (American actor Michael Brandon) is the stuntman-like drummer of a Rome-based pseudo-psychedelic prog rock band and like many drummers, he is a rather strange and introverted fellow who does not say much. After noticing a weird, middle-aged goombah with a mustache following him around

town for several days, Roberto finally loses his cool and confronts the seemingly perverted stalker in an abandoned opera theater. The man denies following Roberto and pulls out a switchblade and the two get in a scuffle, ultimately ending in the stalker's accidental death after being stabbed and falling into an orchestra pit. For whatever reason, a person with a creepy cartoon-like little blond boy mask witnessed the murder from the balcony and has taken photographs of the tragic incident, including a photo of Roberto holding the bloody switchblade. Although Roberto manages to get out of the theater unscathed, he is in for quite the shocker when he wakes up the next day to discover that the ID of the man he killed, Carlo Marosi (Caliŝto Caliŝti), has been mailed to him and the weirdo photographer with the mask is waging a game of blackmail and psychological warfare against him. After a bit of good, old fashioned stalking, including playfully wrapping a chord around the drummer's throat, the mysterious stalker begins to kill off people close to Roberto, the first of whom is his maid Amelia (Maria Fabbri), who by chance discovers the identity of the stalker and attempts to blackmail them, but ultimately pays with her life via a straight razor to the throat. Meanwhile, after hearing a story from one of his band members about public beheadings in Saudi Arabia, Roberto has nightmares about being beheaded himself. After telling his wife Nina (Mimsy Farmer) about his accidental killing of Carlo Marosi and the subsequent stalking, she agrees that they should not go to the police. Eventually, it is revealed that Carlo Marosi was never actually killed and that he was on in the conspiracy with the stalker to dupe Roberto into thinking he was a murderer. When Marosi learns of the murders, he tries to back out of the conspiracy, but the mysterious stalker opts to slaughter him instead. Meanwhile, Roberto's wife Nina's cousin Dalia (Francine Racette) comes to town, which rather bothers the rocker. Dalia eventually admits her undying love for Roberto and the two have sex, but their romance does not last long as the little lady is also murdered.

Against his better judgment, Roberto hires a flamingly gay private detective named Arrosio (Jean-Pierre Marielle), who readily admits he has never solved a case, but absurdly believes the fact that he hasn't means that the odds of unmasking the stalker are in his favor. Rather surprisingly, Arrosio does indeed discover the identity of the killer after examining some of Roberto's family photos and subsequently visiting a mental institution, but he is attacked in a public restroom and injected with a fatal blue poison, so naturally he is incapable of informing his client who has been stalking him. Arrosio ultimately discovered that the killer is a female ex-mental patient suffering from 'homicidal mania' who was institutionalized as a teenager for three years and whose 'father' attempted make her a boy as he had no desire to have another daughter. Inspired by an old wives' tale that the retina of a corpse's eye registers in the brain the last image a person sees before they die, the police remove the eyes of Dalia's corpse and shoot a laser at it, thus revealing "four flies on gray velvet" she saw before she

FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET

croaked, hence the title of the film. Despite his friend's advice that he should leave Rome to save his life, Roberto decides to stay home and hides in the dark with a gun waiting for his stalker. Eventually, Roberto's wife Nina shows up and the startled drummer almost shoots her, unwittingly failing to realize she is actually the killer. In an attempt to spare her life, Roberto tries to push Nina out the door and in the process notices she is wearing a necklace with "four flies on gray velvet." After Roberto roughs his wife up a bit and accuses her of the killings, Nina's attitude turns gleefully sadistic and she manages to grab her boy toy's gun, ultimately shooting him in the shoulder with it. Nina reveals to Roberto that she only married him because he resembles her father, who was the man responsible for having her institutionalized. Apparently, Nina's father did not want a son and turned her into a spiritual 'drag king' as a result and thus she developed a uniquely unhealthy anti-Electra complex of sorts in the process. Since Roberto is apparently the spitting image of her deceased father and thus reawakened her once dormant insanity (which apparently died out after her father died), she felt the need to get even with her father by proxy by torturing her husband in every crazily creative way imaginable. Nina continues to shoot her husband as it gives her a sort of wicked sadistic satisfaction that seems to have a sexual component, but eventually, the drummer's beatnik friend Godfrey (Bud Spencer) shows up and puts a stop to the madness. After he knocks the gun out of his maniac mariticide-inclined wife's hands, Nina runs out of the house and drives away, ultimately crashing head-on into the back of a truck and, in a twist of fate, has her head decapitated in a manner similar to Roberto's dreams, with her car exploding shortly after.

Featuring absurd old wives' tales depicted as fact, comic relief in the form of half-retarded mailmen and goofy gay private detectives, pop psychology in the form of tales told by rockers that they want to screw about sexually repressed monsters, prog-rock that does not suck, a 'spiritual transvestite' as a killer, and one of the greatest and most gruesome yet simultaneously aesthetically pleasing conclusions to a giallo flick ever made, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is undoubtedly one of the most ambitious and labyrinthine giallo flicks ever made and thus it is naturally flawed as result, yet still remains one of the best and most inventive of its curious kind. Indeed, next to Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) aka *Non si sevizia un paperino*, Giulio Questi's *Death Laid an Egg* (1968) aka *La morte ha fatto l'uovo* and Silvio Narizzano's *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* aka *The Sky Is Falling*, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is indubitably one of the most insanely idiosyncratic giallos ever made as a work that molests and deconstructs the genre and a film that has even been known to make jaded giallophiles feel a bit uneasy in its uniquely unhinged avant-garde essence. Indeed, despite its various (and sometimes glaring) flaws, the only complaint I can make about *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is that director Dario Argento did not take what he accomplished with the film further with subsequent works, even if

he did eventually direct *Deep Red* (1975) aka *Profondo rosso* aka *The Hatchet Murders*, which many regard as the director's greatest work, as well as the greatest film of the genre. Personally, I would rather re-watch *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* over *Deep Red* any day. Not available in any format in the United States until 2009, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is surely a work that has yet to get its due and with all the tasteless celluloid garbage Argento has directed over the past two decades or so, no time is better than now for the work to be resurrected among not only giallo and horror fans, but also arthouse-inclined cinephiles as well. Predating hokey Hong Kong action flicks and *The Matrix* (1999) in its depiction of slow-motion bullets and doing it in a shockingly artful way, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* certainly deserves to be unearthed, though it is dubious whether modern day audiences are deserving of such a film. The closest thing to an *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978) of the giallo genre, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* is nothing short of murderous psychopathic sexual confusion in its most keenly kaleidoscopic form.

-Ty E

INFERNO
INFERNO

Dario Argento (1980)

With several hallucinatory films under my belt, I head on to tackle Dario Argento's *Inferno* - a sequel of-sorts to *Suspria*. My own ideas and beliefs lead to my opinion of *Inferno* being the best of Argento's Three Mothers trilogy, starting with the incredibly over-hyped and flawed *Suspria* and ending with the bloody equivalent to Harry Potter film *Mother of Tears*. The dreamlike visuals cannot be patented by any such artist considering that *Hausu* and *Suspria* were both released in the same year. Long lost ethnic brothers? Maybe. *Inferno* tracks the Argento touch of a woman in a fluidized dress and her distress. Rather from sticking to the feminist damsel aspect, the film kills off said female and moves to the next. You wonder to yourself which female will save the day but when all the women are dead and only a man, name of Mark, stands in the debris. You find yourself in an entirely new tale of terror from one of Italy's finest directors who have actually refined their style into an adaptable needle - puncturing all conventions of murder cinema. It's a dear shame this one wasn't as critically received as its predecessor. This is arguably the better rendition of *Suspria*. I found the imagery in *Inferno* to be a perfected art. The furious reds and the cool blue hues meshed into a filter that glazed nearly every scene. I cannot take "supernatural horror" the same after I've seen this film. Whenever I see a tale of witchcraft or occultism and it lacks the neon colors that tinge the screen, I feel disappointed that no other similar film will carry the same tremor. *Inferno* will have left a huge impact on you - whether you love it or not. Many of the effects are pure genius, such as the plexiglass bridge over a lake in central park that allows a mad murderous man to exact the whim of a faraway witch. Food for the rats, I suppose. What Coffin Joe did with tarantula's in *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*, Argento did with sewer rats in *Inferno*. If scurrying rodents manage to unnerve you in the slightest bit, then this might be a film to look out for. Argento made sure to use each set to full advantage. Each delirious curve of the stair rail provides a raw setting and instrument used by the actor. *Total Film* magazine called *Inferno* one of the 50 greatest horror films of all time and it's easy to see why. If it's not the mysterious killer stalking beautiful women or the hallucinogenic film experience that ensnares you in its grasp, then it's the mellow instrumental score by Keith Emerson. While not being a substitute for *Goblin*, it provides a softer experience that allows the ambiance of death to settle swiftly. An operatic masterpiece of supernatural horror and one of Argento's best.

-mAQ

DEMONS

Dario Argento (1985)

"They will make cemeteries their cathedrals and the cities your tombs!" Demons (Demoni) is the greatest horror film ever made. I start out this essay with serious intentions. This isn't the work of a sarcastic cynic, but rather from an enthusiast of all cinema. I have no proof to warrant this accusation, but I can tell you that Demons is 100% one of a kind. Perhaps Lamberto Bava's only great film, Demons involves a metal terminator-looking man who issues a ticket to a beautiful young girl. The ticket is to a horror film playing at a Berlin theater. During the film within a film, some of the patrons fold under possession and soon the theater is swarming with demonic Italians. Colorful characters give a voice to this film. Some of which include a Ving Rhames fused with "The Hammer" Williamson character. This man is one of the most bad ass pimps I have seen recently. You can forget about Terrence Howard. Some very fucked up scenarios even unravel. One being a feeble blind man's daughter leaving his side to fuck some random guy in between the curtains. Needless to say, this scene comes out of left-field and left me almost shocked. Later in the film, a group of rowdy punks snorting cocaine off of tits appear. This provides for some ample entertainment. Demons is a film that operates completely on its atmosphere and cheese. Scenes decorate it sporadically involving ridiculous situations. Such as a stud on a dirt bike wielding a katana, and the infamous "Random helicopter breaking through the roof." This is enough to grant the title of "B" movie or even cult classic, but Demons is much more. The entire setting of it involving a movie theater could be related to the current experience we would have, had we seen this in theaters. Suffice to say, some people have been lucky to see this gem on the big screen. Due to its plot, I could even imagine this film freaking me out if I were to witness it in a theater. It even goes as far as to be highly fucking entertaining. The DVD of Demons is in the "Dario Argento Collection." This marketing ploy managed to piss me off royally. I doubt Dario Argento knows how to make a film of this caliber. So instead of Mario Bava's son getting the credit, it is passed off to the giallo director turned Hollywood hack. Demons features an unusual soundtrack. Claudio Simonetti composed a beautifully funky score while the soundtrack consists of Motley Crue and Scorpions. It's such a bizarre mix. Perhaps a reason for this film's greatness lies in the hands of Michele Soavi. This is the man who is behind Stage Fright and Dellamorte Dellamore. He plays the metal masked figure and was the assistant director. Through his films, he managed to prove his worth by mixing art with comedy and even gore. While the film isn't too well known, it has its share of respect. In the video game of Silent Hill, there even exists a theater called "Metropol" and has several Demons posters on display. Demons is another to suffer the plague of unrelated name advertisement. On record, there are seven films that are either a direct

DEMONS

sequel or just given the title to provide a sense of trust. Demons is a landmark in horror. It can be scary or it can be hilarious. For many reasons, I doubt i will ever witness a film like Demons ever again. The only reason cancer hasn't been cured yet, is because instead of spending the research budget on copies of Demons, they purchase science equipment. Pssssh, when will they learn?

-Maq

TRAUMA

Dario Argento (1993)

The films of Dario Argento are for the most part “hit” or “miss.” The “Italian Hitchcock” has been really missing over the past two decades with a series of flops and straight up shit (I.E. Do you Like Hitchcock?). Trauma (1993) is a film of Argento’s that doesn’t try to fit into any of the quality extremes of his films. This may be due to the fact that Trauma was the first film of Dario Argento’s to be produced in the United States. The “unevenness” of Trauma still does not categorize the film as another “passable” from the cinematically bipolar Dario Argento. Trauma features a variety of head decapitations courtesy of special effects work by Tom Savini. These scenes of ultra violent (yet efficient) death echo back to the days of gruesome deaths found in Dario Argento’s Deep Red (1975) and Suspiria (1977). I couldn’t help but think that the decapitations scenes in Trauma felt a little contrived and were an attempt by Argento to travel back to the time when he was in his cinematic prime. Nevertheless, the scenes of death are both surprising and “in your face.” Certainly enough graphic violence to keep the typical obsessed horror fiend happy. One of the major themes and subplots of Trauma is young women dealing with eating disorders. Asia Argento’s character has a problem with bulimia. This is obvious from the get go of the film when she makes her way into a restaurant bathroom to expel her undigested food. Although eating disorders are serious problems facing young women, this whole commentary on bulimia in Trauma is quite out of place. It is if Dario Argento wants to tackle serious material but knows that he can only get a film made if it features some of his signature horror traits. Asia Argento’s half-sister Anna was supposedly the influence behind the bulimia commentary found in the film. At the end of Trauma, you can find her dancing to a black reggae group performing on a house porch. This scene is out of place unless you know the story behind it. Anna died in a scooter accident not long after the release of Trauma. Is Trauma just one sick family home video? Dario Argento no doubt exploited his daughter during the making of Trauma. I just don’t find it normal for a father to want to direct a topless scene of his young daughter. Asia Argento also looks very mentally out of it throughout Trauma. This is obviously pre-Scarlet Diva Asia and it is no surprise now why she has the problems that she does. I would not be surprised if Dario Argento also caused his daughter to turn anorexic during the making of Trauma. Her performance and physical appearance give off this impression. In conclusion, if you’re a horror fan (and Dario and/or Asia Argento) Trauma is necessary viewing. Dario Argento may not be one of the most mentally sane guys, but he has no doubt made some masterpieces. Trauma is a bizarre film made during a time when Dario Argento didn’t seem like he had much to offer in the way of being a filmmaker. Dario only knows what’s going on in his mind and Trauma gives evidence that it’s not too

TRAUMA

stable.
-Ty E

DO YOU LIKE HITCHCOCK?

Dario Argento (2005) Yes, I like Hitchcock. I like him enough to know that Dario Argento's *Do You Like Hitchcock?* is an atrocious dishonor to the master of suspense. This is no surprise when considering the amount of failure films that Dario Argento has created over the past couple of years. *Do You Like Hitchcock?* is the ultimate offense against the director that Argento claims to so dearly respect. It can be rest assured that Alfred Hitchcock's cremated ashes are getting ready to poison Dario Argento's last meal.

Immediately going into *Do You Like Hitchcock?*, I noticed the film looks like it was produced for public access TV. It can be assumed that Argento knew be the film's production that he would have very little monetary sources to work with. For a director that has influenced Argento so much (some calling Argento "the Italian Hitchcock"), he could have at least waited to secure funds that would enable him to make a film that looks like it cost at least one million dollars to make. I really wanted to enjoy *Do You Like Hitchcock?* The film follows an obsessed film student who has a special affinity for German expressionist cinema of yesteryear. This young man's life and surroundings eventually start becoming a real life Hitchcock film (of the pathetic no budget persuasion). A murder occurs at the apartment complex across the street. The film student is a voyeur practicing the same obsession as James Stewart did in Hitchcock's suspenseful masterpiece *Rear Window*. *Do You Like Hitchcock?* is a cheap and offensive homage to one of the most celebrated director's of the last century. It caters to the fantasies of an early twenties film fanatic and fails in all regards. I still can't fathom why Dario Argento has turned into such a mediocre director over the past couple of decades. The only semi-interesting recent project Argento has been involved with is the *Master of Horror* episode *Jenifer*, in which the strength of the hour long film can be attributed to the writing and not directing. Asia Argento is dominating her father in regards to film direction. I guess she has a lot to say when her father films her getting raped for his films.

-Ty E

MOTHER OF TEARS
MOTHER OF TEARS

Dario Argento (2007)

Having finally seen Dario Argento's long waited conclusion to his "Three Mothers" trilogy, I can honestly say that the Italian horror based director has lost his touch, just as his daughter has siphoned most of her ability to act. The film has been hyped up since it's mention all the way to it's theatrical release overseas. The story follows a coffin that has been unearthed, along with an urn decorated with menacing occult symbols. An all-knowing priest decides to open it, and mail it to someone in Rome. He might as well have just mailed the man a bomb. A couple of stupid women get giddy and decide to open it, leaving one mutilated by demons and the other on the run from a mystic force which she doesn't want to believe in. Those fucking realists always getting in way over their head. The "Mother" characters that have been used in Argento's works are actually based on characters from a Thomas de Quincey novel called *Suspiria de Profundis*. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? Two of the "mothers" were entitled *Mater Suspiriorum* and *Mater Tenebrarum*. These names sound familiar to other titles of Argento's work, namely *Tenebre* and *Suspiria*. I wanted to love this film, I really did. Argento has always been a weak spot for me from *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* to *The Stendhal Syndrome*, but I refuse to accept this CGI-induced mock up into my dear Italian horror collection. Like most film maker's mistakes, Argento attempts to cover up the lack of a coherent storyline with topless witches and some amazing violence. I have been avoiding recent Argento as of late, this includes *Pelts* and *Do you like Hitchcock?* I cannot imagine him ever capturing the eerie luminescence that resonates off his classics *Suspiria* or even *Opera*. The film boils down to inaccuracies that hit hard and shock value. I swear, when I first saw the mother throw her baby off the bridge, I wanted the entire film to be like that; shocking, incomprehensible, and misanthropic. The viewer got one of those. Do you really need me to tell you which one? One thing that could have saved this film, would have been a soundtrack by the original *Goblin*. It seems *Daemonia* is the weaker byproduct of *Goblin*. The soundtrack focuses on a "Gothic" feel with rippling guitar chords. I still find it hard to believe that Simonetti collaborated with Dani Filth for the soundtrack. I can honestly tell that the script was honed by four writers. That explains some of the characters personality changes and theme splits. Several shining spots of the film all had the same motive; Show a little bit, but not enough. These scenes include, Udo Kier, Dario filming his daughter nude, a great final death scene, and a monkey whose involvement in the story is unknown, but hilarious. The instant I saw Sarah Mandy's mother's ghost, a feeling of despair hit my gut as if the human species dawned on me as being pathetic. The story was shit, Asia's ghost mother looked like shit, the acting was shit, the ending was shit, and the special effects were amazing thanks to Sergio Stivaletti. I could not tell you to

avoid this film anymore than these last several paragraphs did. I'm starting to think that Dario himself is in need of a Hollywood exorcism. Mother of Tears is the rated R equivalent of a Harry Potter film.

-mAQ

GIALLO
GIALLO

Dario Argento (2010)

Wave after wave, these old horror maestros rekindle their slightly squirming fan base to watch the buzz kick shit around the Internet and film circuits. That must be the reason, some sick sadistic fetish for crushed expectations. I mean, why else would Dario Argento be releasing the fetid premature efforts that he is to this day? After *Do You Like Hitchcock?*, *The Card Player*, and *Mother of Tears*, the only consistent aesthetic Dario retained from his glory days of lit-brite wop thrillers was his unbridled narcissism and plucky sense of violence. While these two facets do build a product, the result is not something I'd appreciate from the man responsible for some of the greatest Italian horror films, directing or producing. Without Argento, would *Demons* have found a budget to play with? The fickle pseudo-science of premonition will not be wasted here in this text space but rather, I'd like to review his latest foray in homicidal angst and othernatural slaughter in his sardonically-titled *Giallo*. Get it? Let the chortling begin.

Giallo marks the third Adrien Brody film I've reviewed in a 2 month span. I wish it were a coincidence but truthfully, I've found myself drawn to his irreplaceable charm and versatility. After viewing *Predators* and discovering that even wimps can play macho, I've selected several films of his recent career to view and haven't been disappointed by his roles yet. Even in *The Experiment* did he traject the desperation of having to play guinea pig to a sadistic and blatantly homosexual Forest Whitaker. Adrien's ability is not to be underestimated and I find myself very warm to the idea of him playing a smarmy detective shadowed by seclusion and late night pizza. That begins *Giallo* in a way, however Adrien Brody's character, name of Enzo, isn't introduced until after the damsels in distress are desecrated by the killer known esoterically as "Yellow." After the sister of an American stewardess is kidnapped, the desperate dame from *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* seeks the help of Inspector Enzo Avolfi to recover her before it's ultimately too late.

If I had to protect a single shred of evidence to prove the film's reputation as anything but fallible, I'd select Brody's performance as an asshole investigator whose modus operandi is letting himself get too attached to cases. After watching his mother get slaughtered as a child, Enzo discovers the killer working at a butcher shop and decides to appropriate his own vengeance. Growing up, it must have become obvious that his only possible career path would be to convert to a gumshoe and track down serial murderers. This set-up is enough to install the arrogant, egocentric personality that is good for few laughs as his nasty demeanor paints the screen. Not only does he deflect the sex appeal and passes from Emmanuelle Seigner but leaves the film with such form that will undoubtedly echo in the minds of critics and cynics alike. Only after the film reaches

its conclusion can you form a solid hypothesis on whether the film had the makings of something of acceptable quality. Even at the point of this review I'm very torn between hating this film and appreciating its brave casting and slimy misogynistic violence.

No Italian thriller is complete without a formidable opponent, a killer for continuity's sake. In this film, the killer is grotesquely crafted as a cab driver with appalling intentions for young bodies. Yellow, named for the color of his skin and the taunts of school children, operates solely on the destructive inner guide that leads him to slaughter beauty in order to progress his own vanity. To complete his psychosis, Argento made sure to dope him up on "happy pills," thus endangering the victims even more because once his euphoria peaks, all hell breaks loose upon the supple and soft bodies of some of Italy's more beautiful specimens of lechery. Giallo is by all means a serious film, which hurts its credit, but the thing I couldn't get over most was how Yellow (played by Brody as well), in all his facial prosthesis, didn't look any less monstrous as he does without practical makeup application. Intentional or not, the idea of Argento cementing the killers pugnacious appearance as less of an embellishment towards the actors real face tickles my ribs. Subversive resentment for not acquiring the intended Ray Liotta? Possibly.

Dario Argento set himself up for failure, what, with creating all those classic departures from your typical Italian slasher by implementing luscious colors with the purpose of enchanting the set and creating something of a brand of mysticism around death. His reputation has preceded him since his cinematic venture into an extended midlife crisis. To be fair and blunt, Giallo isn't the phoenix rising from the ashes of which you so wished. I can find much to hate and much to appreciate, Giallo is simply a film that will not make everyone happy. The faults lie heavy in the diagrams of the killer, Yellow, as his jaundiced skin has led him to the instrumental slash-repeat ritual that leaps to his close capture. Beautiful escapist entertainment, for us and him, is what Giallo rests on. The idea of being engaged, whether it be from an awfully scripted slasher film to Adrien Brody who tries his damndest to be a dapper douche, is the drive of Giallo. Perhaps the biggest flaw of Argento's latest is that this film wears its heart on its sleeve and will catch flak for doing so. Let my unmentioned recommendation float on the promise that it's not as bad as Mother of Tears.

-mAQ

PREY
PREY

Darrell Roodt (2007)

Part of the influx of the mass-produced "Maneater" series comes Prey, a film that is attempting to steal the fame and following of the definitive lion film *The Ghost and the Darkness*. This Weinstein funded film has been deemed a Blockbuster exclusive and only available in said rental chains even though it's rarely enforced. With the cover showing a deformed bloody roaring lion and branding the name Peter Weller, the idea of Robocop shooting lions sounds promising enough. What we're given is a formulaic half-assed splicing of *Cujo* and *Jaws*. The result is forgetful, embarrassing, and undeniably generic.

Given the nature of the female and two children being trapped in a Safari jeep pursued and stalked by a family of predators, one would think of *Jurassic Park's* paternal themes. Although Steven Spielberg's film *Jurassic Park* was a groundbreaking film, the children were constantly cluttering the blockbuster's ability to amaze. Well in *Prey*, the children featured are ever worse than the last. Taking the "rebel bitchy teen" stereotype from the like of *War of the Worlds* (2005) and implementing it and altering it to fit the *Hannah Montana* age, the result is a female 16 year old we can all agree upon wanting her to die. Sadly, she lives to see another day. The only likable character is the African poacher who dies as soon as you warm up to him.

A dysfunctional nuclear family goes on a working vacation in Africa so Peter Weller may roam around doing business tycoon things. To strengthen the mother/daughter bond, the new step-mom takes the children on a safari to watch beautiful specimens gallop around in circles. The idea of lions attacking seems far from ordinary so the tour guide gets the film started by getting devoured. Of course he takes the keys with him. How else do you expect to waste film? From here, the plot only gets more and more manufactured. Mother gets keys, drives car in a frenzy only to crash it thus furthering the run time yet again (Dumb woman should have stayed in the kitchen). The Lion is an elegant species of feline. I respect the primal instincts of the lion as well as the territorial issue. The Lion is one of the more gorgeous endangered species. For man to trek on their natural habitat with their zebra-striped vehicle, how can they not expect nature to strike back. If a lion were to explore a nice suburban neighborhood, panic would ensue. This all comes down to the aggravating topic of animal rights in which no one should have a say. Point being, I find the lions to be justified in their brutal murders of sad humanity. It spices things up a bit, don't you know.(B.) The film *Prey*. (A.) Your attention span.Nods to an influence are a gracious thing. Down right scamming your inspirations is another thing. Peter Weller, upon noticing the disappearance of his family goes and finds a "Quint" to help track his family. I was waiting for the grizzly male to state "We're going to need a bigger jeep" throughout the film. Sometimes, being a greedy sleaze bag

has its payoffs to society. To which we owe the Weinstein brothers for making Prey an exclusive film. Had the rights been universal, more people would have been inflicted with the brash stupidity that this film offers. Want to see how to make a horror film completely wrong? Watch Prey. Value your time and money? Ignore Prey and watch The Ghost and the Darkness again.

-mAQ

THE WRESTLER
THE WRESTLER

Darren Aronofsky* (2008)

Darren Aronofsky is quite a “hack” of a director. He started his career by directing the experimental film *Pi* because he probably thought he could be the next David Lynch. The film was a banal and pretentious “wannabe” *Eraserhead* following a lonely Jewish mathematician with brilliant mental abilities. It seems that Aronofsky never realized that David Lynch directs his film by emotion and intuition. Aronofsky, on the other hand, used his incredibly boring intellect to contrive the “experimental” film *Pi*. Aronofsky followed *Pi* with the “look at me, I’m controversial!” shitfest known as *Requiem for a Dream*. Just like *Pi*, the film lacks any true emotion and fails in all attempts to impress. Darren Aronofsky’s third film, *The Fountain*, by far his worst film to date, is a film about love and mortality. *The Fountain* did not convince me that Aronofsky has ever loved anyone in his life.

The Wrestler is Aronofsky’s latest film and quite a departure from his earlier work. The film follows a washed up wrestler who is twenty years past his prime. The material of the film is far from pretentious as Aronofsky’s earlier work. *The Wrestler* has an intimate documentary style feel that echoes back to the realist masterpieces of John Cassavetes. A down and out looking Mickey Rourke stars as the wrestler. It is as if this role was made for Rourke. How the pretty boy rebel of *Rumble Fish* could look the way Rourke does in *The Wrestler* borderlines on the tragic. “Professional wrestling” is something of a joke to most Americans. The abrasive matches feature redneck and lowbrow theatrics that have gained a certain unflattering notoriety. Wrestlers are like modern day barbarians that have taken up the carney trade. Like the wrestler in *The Wrestler*, wrestling is the only job these individuals forgotten in time can actually do. Instead of raping and pillaging villages, they have to make a living destroying their bodies through other means. In our politically correct and estrogen driven modern day world, the alpha male warrior just seems to have a hard time getting a job doing abstract office work. *The Wrestler* makes it clear why. Mickey Rourke plays Randy “The Ram” Robinson, a wrestler who has come to the conclusion of his career and even his life. His lesbian daughter hates him, his stripper love interest won’t date him, and a heart attack has made it impossible to wrestle. Randy is a man that is stuck in his past wrestling “glory” days. He still sports shitty bleach blond Viking hair and listens to atrocious “hair metal.” In fact, the soundtrack of *The Wrestler* features music from Ratt and Guns N Roses. These tunes noticeably transplant wrestler Randy to the great days of his wrestling prime. These scenes are easily more depressing to watch than any other “dramatic” scene Darren Aronofsky has directed before *The Wrestler*. *Wrestler* Randy shares a similar lonely and degrading life to his stripper love interest. Both individuals sell and exploit their bodies for the amusement of rednecks and other lowlives that enjoy the cheapest of en-

tainment. Despite their lack of a real relationship, Randy and the stripper seem to share a close understanding of one another. The personality that they project while working is quite different from their true selves. Hollywood films very rarely have such complex yet uneventful romantic subplots. Darren Aronofsky has slightly redeemed himself from the boring junkie relationship between Jared Leto and Jennifer Connelly in *Requiem for a Dream*. *The Wrestler* makes me wonder if Darren Aronofsky stumbled upon a fluke in his filmmaking career. Never would I have thought that the director was capable of a truly powerful or quality film. Also, I wonder why Aronofsky chose to tackle the subject matter of the wrestler. Director Darren just doesn't strike me as someone that has an interest in good ol' sweaty wrestlin'. Mickey Rourke, however, is really what carries the film. Rourke, like *The Wrestler*, seems to very broken and miserable far past his glory days. With this acting performance, Rourke gave it his all in the most pitiful of roles and he must be commended.

-Ty E

BLACK SWAN
BLACK SWAN

Darren Aronofsky* (2010)

Darren Aronofsky needs no introduction: he released the stylized anti-drug PSA, *Requiem for a Dream*, and the somewhat docudrama, *The Wrestler*. To complete his lunar cycle of self-destruction is the release of *Black Swan*, a film of which I am having a hard time understanding how, and why, a film of this artistic ingenuity has been funded - but thank god has it. Two viewings later and this film, a documentation of a spiritual meltdown, still stuns me with the sinuous performance of Natalie Portman as Nina/White Swan and the elusive Black Swan, that we can assume resides within all of us. As Thomas (Vincent Cassel) explains to Nina, the White Swan is hers naturally, but in order to channel the Black Swan, cowardice must be examined in order to completely let oneself go and this is the premise of the film. It's really all about the mental manufacturing of stress and the debilitating effects of rivalry, save for being placed in a position of instability. Aronofsky made sure to film *Black Swan* almost behavioristically, with cameras placed over shoulders to highlight the bustling life of a professional dancer from the ever-watchful eyes of the looming architecture.

Inciting the events is the forced resignation of aging ballerina Beth (Winona Ryder), leaving a position for a new star to headline the Company's "visceral" re-imagining of Tchaikovsky's opus, *Swan Lake*. Being the ambitious, sheltered, girl she is, Nina Sayers leaps for the chance to be the new Swan Queen. Thomas accepts after being introduced, violently, to Nina's dark side. An act of blind faith if I'd ever seen one. From this moment on, characters are introduced and boundaries are pushed. Not only for Aronofsky's budgeted ballet horror film, but for the characters as well. Nina begins to see past her mother's crippling mental condition when the recently-turned debutante meets with friend/fantasy/rival, Lily (Mila Kunis). From here on, what is documented is a massive crisis of both beauty and identity. In lavish scenes of vanity, we witness horrifying acts of body horror that would make one Mr. Cronenberg cringe with absolute horror. For me, violence is almost second nature in film. I watch a film labeled horror/thriller and I expect ample scenes of brutality. But nothing could prepare me for the holy grail of squeamish activity - cuticle and nail savagery. I consider *Black Swan* to shelter my only instance of a breaking point. These are things that are to be forbidden in horror. Not to lower *Black Swan* to something as simple and to-the-point as horror, but to crown the new princess of terror - *Black Swan* is the ladies Jacob's Ladder.

Black Swan is a film that has been garnering immense praise recently and it is very obvious as to why. Not only is the tome of film-within-a-film altered to become play within performance, but both instances of double mediums are equally entrancing. The performance of *Swan Lake* is captivating and profound, in part to the incredible sound featured in *Black Swan*. For instance, the flut-

tering feathers and the scratching and clawing of the swan vying to escape. Not only the debut of *Swan Lake*, but Nina's psychological breakdown is marvelous as well. Her fractured female mindset becomes almost nerve-shredding because unlike most female characters, I sympathized. First hand do we witness the eventual evolution into a whore, the name branded after meeting and fucking (implied) a stranger at a bar. This transformation from late-bloomer princess to a die-hard diabolical slut is all in part to Lily's intervention. It's when this catalyst enters the equation do we see that it most always appear to be women who convert their familiar into debauched "deadgirls".

Juggling many traits of erotic thriller, horror, and even a Lifetime channel presentation, *Black Swan* will undoubtedly garner many comparisons. From *Repulsion*, *Jacob's Ladder*, and *Mulholland Dr.*, *Black Swan* rises from the expectations and emerges its own beautiful beast. After long wait, *Black Swan* marks the birth of an abnormal terror, the likes of which I haven't seen. But with this terror comes unabashed beauty and artistry. I'm having a damn hard time finding something I don't love about the film. From casting Vincent Cassel as debonair womanizer to Natalie Portman's authentic acrobatics, this is Aronofsky's best work to date. The final act alone would leave Matthew Barney blushing as *Black Swan* takes real performance art and splices it with daft surrealism and self-possession. Another critical aspect is *Black Swan* leaves few points left to the imagination, while ambiguity is something to be heralded, the blunt display of psychological pressure turned trauma is met with satisfying computer animation. Fuck *Inland Empire*, *Black Swan* is the definitive tale of a woman in trouble. The film also thankfully skips the angst stage and swan-dives straight into the heart of madness which is great considering Portman's track record for Teen Choice Awards.

Appealing to women, *Black Swan* successfully takes an art that I haven't been formally introduced to, and breathes excitement and majesty into. Another selling point is the blatant femininity, the never-ending quest for perfection. Having dealt with unstable women (which of them aren't?), I find the portrayal of women's vanity as a selfish and fatal consequence relieving. This masterful generalization of the deceitful female psyche debunks the age-old rumor that women are made with sugar & spice, everything nice. Nothing sweet about this fantastical delusion, Nina Sayers is at odds with the world and we can't figure out why. Once Nina casts off the maternal blanket that has been smothering and oppressing her for her whole life, the berserk bad-girl breaks free to finally let go in the heat of art, for art. Again, having viewed *Black Swan* twice, I find my willingness to revisit the world of bulimia and backstabbing alarming. I can only give so many kind words to *Black Swan* before the endearing comments become redundant as I fear has already occurred. If you're anything like me and you take dashes of surrealism and complexity with your cinematic fables, *Black Swan* is soon to be your favorite film of the year. Add the brevity of a mental

BLACK SWAN

breakdown and elements of melancholy and you have Aronofsky's masterpiece.
I was enchanted, were you?

-mAQ

REPO! THE GENETIC OPERA

Darren Lynn Bousman (2008)

Nothing can be more nauseating and traumatizing than watching a horrible musical. I recall in my grade school years that I was made sick to my stomach because I had to watch all of *The Sound of Music*. The sadistic and obese teacher had to have known the world of pain she was unleashing on her student's souls. After watching *The Sound of Music* I vowed that I would never watch a musical again. A few years later I would accidentally turn to a TV channel that was playing *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Although I was also slightly traumatized by this film, it at least had some subversive elements I could respect. Recently I viewed *Repo! The Genetic Opera*, a film obviously following in the footsteps of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* minus the homoerotic elements. *Repo! The Genetic Opera* is probably the goriest and bloodiest musical that I have ever seen. This is no surprise as the film follows a Repo man that rips the organs out of people that are incapable of repaying their debts to him. *Repo! The Genetic Opera* is set in a dystopian nightmare of a world where one organ selling corporation GeneCo, owned by the terminally ill Rotti Largo runs the whole city. A suave GraveRobber has also made a career of draining a pain killer called Zydrate from dead bodies to sell on the black market. Despite being a world of future degeneracy, *Repo! The Genetic Opera* shows a place that doesn't seem far off in the future minus the silly urban aesthetics. Rotti Largo is the disgruntled and bitter owner of GeneCo. Largo lost his ladylove to a man named Nathan who would later become the mass murdering Repo man. Rotti Largo has three delinquent and spoiled children who live a life of hedonism and spotlight. Chop Top Bill Moseley plays an angry little man named Luigi Largo who kills people anytime he is slightly irritated. Rich bitch and whore Paris Hilton plays Amber Sweet, a girl addicted to surgery and Zydrate. Singer of industrial group Skinny Puppy Nivek Ogre plays the fruity skin wearing brother Pavi Largo. Rotti Largo hates his children and he makes sure they know it. As far as musicals go, *Repo! The Genetic Opera* is better than most but that doesn't necessarily mean much. I can see this film, like *Donnie Darko* before it, being the hit film for ugly fat chicks that live at Hot Topic and wear shirts that have such genius quotes on them as "You laugh at me because I am different, but I laugh at you because you are all the same." I thought the film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* was a much better rock musical than *Repo! The Genetic Opera* as it has much more depth. *Repo! The Genetic Opera* really just tries to do too much in such a small time. The GraveRobber is easily the most interesting character in the film and he only makes a few appearances. *Repo! The Genetic Opera* is a film worth seeing but hopefully won't (but probably) have a huge cult following.

-Ty E

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB
THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB

Dave Borthwick (1993)

Most special effects in movies bore me. It is amazing how someone like Steven Spielberg or George Lucas, despite their virtually unlimited funds, cannot manage deriving any real quality purpose with their special effects. Honestly, I doubt that either of those two “directors,” both sporting very unflattering facial hair and facial features, are capable of expressing any real emotion through their movies. The special effects based films I have grown to appreciate are the innovative works of Jean Cocteau and other early surrealist filmmakers. I also have a soft spot for stop-motion animation. Whether it be The Evil Dead trilogy or the works of Czech surreal Jan Švankmajer, stop-motion animation special effects always bring me to another unnatural world. The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb was the last stop-motion animation I had the pleasure of viewing and now I must say that it is one of my favorites. The film also features pixilation (not CGI) which makes the wonderful world of Tom Thumb seem even more like a fantastic dream. The BBC made that right decision when they agreed to fund The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb. Tom Thumb is such a cute little guy in The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb. He is a claymation figure that looks like legendary actor Peter Lorre in fetus form. Almost immediately after being born, poor Tom Thumb is stolen from his already impoverished parents. Tom is brought to a room full of miniature mutants that are being tested by some guys that look like they could be members of the Gestapo. The newly born Tom Thumb is quite frightened by the experience, but manages to escape unscathed. Once out of the experimental hell, he meets fellow little people who are a bit barbaric. The sounds, sights, creatures, and atmosphere of The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb is one of wonder where anything can happen at any moment. One second a mobile snail gets stomped in powerful motion and the next a man's head is bashed against concrete until his death. The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb has comedy, drama, adventure, horror and every other genre ingredient. The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb defies both genre restraints and the art of filmmaking itself. This is a film that you can truly tell that the director tweaked every second of every scene to perfection. The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb is mandatory viewing for all those cinema fans looking to see a brilliant and successful experiment. The film is full of unlimited replay value and certainly guaranteed never to bore. Thumb is the “little guy” that you actually find yourself rooting for in a weird sort of way. Not many films feature a newborn child wearing a halo of flies.

-Ty E

HARSH TIMES

David Ayer (2005)

I think Christian Bale is a swell guy. No other mainstream contemporary actor has the ability to play such charismatic sociopaths and psychopathic roles. Recently Bale was arrested for “verbally abusing” both his mother and sister. We live in a pretty pussy world when a man can get arrested for his words. Christian Bale’s character Jim Davis in Harsh Times certainly wouldn’t tolerate such weak authoritarian filth. Jim Davis has a few problems. A war veteran from Afghanistan, Jim has seen people butchered and has done a little killing himself. He now lives in Los Angeles and hopes to get his Mexican girlfriend to the U.S. so they can get married. Jim is a gringo that is only friends with Hispanics. He isn’t afraid of them either as demonstrated when he puts a few bullets in a group of them. What else is a disgruntled war vet with extreme post traumatic stress syndrome supposed to do when he can’t get a job? Are Jimmy and Mikey more than just friends? Jim’s best friend is a little Latino guy by the name of Mike Alonzo (played by Freddy Rodriguez). Mike’s pair of family jewels aren’t nearly as big as Jim’s. After seeing an old Mexican in a bar get stabbed in the throat with a broken bottle, little Mikey becomes very traumatized and disturbed. Jim, on the other hand, becomes very excited about this event as if he had just won a bowling tournament. During the end of Harsh Times, the men’s friendship is challenged with a series of disturbing and violent events courtesy of Jim’s minor mental problems. After all, Jim is a soldier of the apocalypse and Freddy is just a little Latino that lives off of his sugar mama. Harsh Times is a surprisingly brutal, violent, and even nihilistic film. Christian Bale’s performance in the film is one of his best. It is a shame that both this film and Bale’s performance have been buried under a pile of other Hollywood garbage. Seeing as films featuring Hispanic Gangsta’s and other degenerates are so popular, Harsh Times should be notorious for fans of such material. I guess having a white guy as the toughest character in the film and actually having a well thought out film doesn’t go too well with Cholos, Wiggers, and other homeboys.

-Ty E

STREET KINGS
STREET KINGS

David Ayer (2008)

Police Brutality has been given a new face thanks to the abundant amount of drop-out rappers, penning down their displeasement with the "five-oh" for busting them for heroin charges cause of their color. It proves hard to actually write a review on this film due to the stereotypical Negro and of course, the reaction of the film or even my writing to be considered "Racist", but when we face facts and statistics, Negroes are still the majority source of the crimes. That's why they sent Keanu Reeves to clean up crime by any means in this fantastical crime film. With an all-star cast built up with Keanu Reeves, Forest Whitaker, and Hugh Laurie, this film was just given the title of being a high-octane action film with a killer soundtrack. Little did the primary audience (Blacks and urban wannabes) know that they were just going to witness a film with the deaths of only minorities. Keanu Reeves plays the character of Tom Ludlow; a LAPD officer who is constantly killing people and having his boss (Whitaker) writing it off as an accident, or hiding the truth. Whether the reason is valid or not, Reeves takes no precaution in "capping niggas" While every crime film comes and goes, It's hilarious to see every rapper jump at the chance to play the stereotypical crime boss or goon. In this film, we see the underestimated Common (Great in Smokin' Aces) and The Game (As the ordinary "fool" that houses an AK-47.) (And of course, due to his 3 minute long scene in Street Kings, he releases an album dedicated to his performance in which he didn't have to act) The plot is one of which is dynamic in action films. Throw a single character that houses a great tragedy, in between his own people and create twists and turns, while constantly trying to breathe life into a single character. A plethora of people claim Reeves is the worst actor to ever grace the screen. I simply ask "Have you seen My Own Private Idaho?" They all reply "No." The argument is instantly won. As will be demonstrated in Lakeview Terrace, Police might have too much authority and are mostly deemed as crooked. When Ludlow takes a job at the complaint desk, all we see is bitching black women screaming about "pre-nup" or some "foo" that snitched on "dem". Ludlow is the merciless Captain America of our streets. Street Kings is a great time and presents a firm reason to continue to root for the underdogs in the endless stream of typical blockbuster garbage. It doesn't top the visceral force that is Training Day, but it is a film made for audiences, not critics. Hugh Laurie shines in his short role, and Forest Whitaker is marvelous. The cast alone warrants a "view now" title, but if you go in expecting anything more than explicit violence, sadistic one-liners, and the degradation of "African-Americans", then you're sorely mistaken.

-mAQ

ANGEL MINE

David Blyth (1980)

In a small island country where the most best known and critically acclaimed filmmaker, Peter Jackson (*Dead Alive*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy), is a director of the mainstream, epic, and fantastic, one would hardly expect New Zealand to have any notable surrealist arthouse works and, indeed, they have few, but the obscure featurette *Angel Mine* (1980) directed by David Blyth (*Red Blooded American Girl*, *Wound*). Probably best known among bloodlusting cinephiles as the director of the rather redundant and equally forgettable sci-fi/horror hybrid *Death Warmed Over* (1984); and probably most monetarily successful for directing episodes and a straight-to-video release of the undeservedly popular queer kiddy superhero show *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, it might come as a cruel shock to some that Blyth initially dabbled in the mostly irredeemable realm of experimental arthouse cinema; first with the patently pretentious, psychosexual 14-minute short *Circadian Rhythms* (1976) and later with *Angel Mine* (1980), a strikingly sardonic surrealist short mediating on the failure of suburbia and the ensuing banality such contrived Utopian ideals sow. Centering around a mismatched married couple – a swarthy and goofy midget monkey man with a small frame yet long arms and a homely Nordic blonde miss with big bosoms and a forgettable face – *Angel Mine* presents suburbanites in a soundly cynical manner that is more ‘punk’ in its social commentary and avant-garde direction than Penelope Spheeris’ classic punk rock movie *Suburbia* (1984) and Rene Daalder’s anarchistic musical *Population: 1* (1986). Comprised of a variety of elaborately assembled petites vignettes, generally featuring ironic, cynical, and contradictory audio over ostensibly outrageous, campy, and offensive imagery, *Angel Mine* – although a glaringly low-budgeted work – is indubitably a work of singular cinema. Somewhat falsely advertised as “New Zealand’s own erotic fantasy that’s far too close to home,” *Angel Mine* is a work that Americans and European can also surely appreciate, but I wouldn’t call it a soundly sensual and salacious, unless you find flaccid poppycocks and flopping, hairy ballsacks and bloody botched abortions to be stimulating as I found the film to be of the fundamentally and intentionally anti-erotic persuasion, which should be no surprise when considering it is a surrealist piece about the stern sterility of the suburbs.

For those that have seen *Angel Mine*, it should be no surprise that director David Blyth was more inspired by experimental European films, especially Spanish director Luis Buñuel and artist Salvador Dalí’s revolutionary silent surrealist short *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), than hokey Hollywood productions when he made his early films. Featuring subversive sociopolitical elements and unconventional filmmaking techniques explored by Occidental auteur filmmakers like Alberto Cavallone (*Le salamandre*, *Man, Woman and Beast*), Roland Lethem (*La Fée Sanguinaire*, *Le Vampire de la Cinémathèque*), and Dušan Makavejev

ANGEL MINE

(W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism, Sweet Movie*), *Angel Mine* is a bright light in European New Zealand cinema history that director Blyth describes as having, “came out of nowhere and caught a lot of people by surprise.” Although eventually receiving his formal education at a university, Blyth began his film career in the gutter, describing his formative filmmaking years as follows: “We all came from the garage band. I was a garage film-maker. I used an old red Bolex and like the musicians didn’t have any formal education. They just got instruments and started making noises and I got a camera and started pointing it around the room. I thought ‘why wait to get experience?’ Emphatically punk in sentiment and direction, Blyth took an uncompromising DIY approach to assembling the film, describing the process of funding the production as follows, “The very first punk concert at Auckland University was raising money for *Angel Mine*. The thing about the film is that it was shot for \$13,000 or \$14,000, which meant I didn’t have to go to any of the authorities and have my script fettered.” The punk band that headlined the benefit concert, *Suburban Reptiles*, would also contribute to the soundtrack of *Angel Mine*. As explained in *Cinema Papers* magazine edited by Australian auteur Philippe Mora (*Mad Dog Morgan, Snide and Prejudice*), despite the director’s deviceful approach to maintaining creative control of *Angel Mine*, a cut was made from the film without Blyth’s consent of a blue movie scene by the film’s distributor so that the film would obtain a R-rating, but it is doubtful that the deletion of this seemingly irrelevant scene had any effect on this innately incendiary celluloid work. Mixing elements of horror, surrealism, TV commercial clichés, and punk rock and New Romanticist fashion, *Angel Mine* is an angst-ridden cinematic work about an odious odd couple whose marriage progressively deteriorates as they unwittingly wait for a leather-clad ‘New Romanatic’ space-duo – sort of aggressive alter-egos/Jungian Shadow selves – to annihilate them into oblivion. Needless to say, *Angel Mine* is scantily a feel-good work, but it is assuredly a liberating one, thereupon making it an incontestable, if nihilistic, fantasy film as advertised.

Described by director David Blyth as, “an attack on the great suburban dream of New Zealand, the whole focus on ‘get a job, get a house and a mortgage’, a whole philosophy which I guess punk was about questioning,” *Angel Mine* is a work that equally examines the narrative structure of cinema as an artistic medium, thus it is a shame that the New Zealander auteur essentially went from being an exquisitely erratic *L’enfant terrible* of celluloid to be a secondhand pussy pink power(less) ranger. Of course, like a lot of former punkrockers, Blyth must have got a job, house and mortgage, which is reasonable since living in the gutter is no way to live at all, but his political persuasion should have no bearing on his integrity as an artist as it undoubtedly did. Anarchism – whether it be of the radical left or right – may be a retarded and redundant form of government, but it can make for a fully fascinating approach to filmmaking as demonstrated in the foolhardy filmic fantasy *Angel Mine*. Although assembled by David

Blyth when he was barely an adult, *Angel Mine* is unmistakably his most mature and multifaceted cinematic work to date, which, I guess, doesn't say much for someone who went on to direct some of the worst children's programming of the 1990s, but it is surely better than it sounds as a work that shows death (with a nod to Bergman's masterpiece *The Seventh Seal*) literally mowing his lawn in an exceedingly prosaic yet cleverly allegorical manner.

-Ty E

DEATH WARMED OVER
DEATH WARMED OVER

David Blyth (1985)

Before a then relatively unknown Peter Jackson made his satirically grotesque splatter flicks like *Bad Taste* (1987) and *Dead Alive* (1992) aka *Braindead*, kiwi auteur David Blyth (*Red Blooded American Girl*, *Wound*) more or less single-handedly ushered in New Zealand horror cinema with his conspicuously convoluted yet undeniably addictive berserk celluloid monster *Death Warmed Over* (1984) aka *Death Warmed Up* aka *Robot Maniac* aka *Neuro Killers* aka *Re-Animator I* starring British actor Michael ‘Hercules’ Hurst, which is notable for being awarded the Grand Prix at the Fantasy Film Festival (aka ‘Festival International de Paris du film fantastique et de science-fiction’) by no lesser a filmmaker than Chilean-born auteur Alejandro Jodorowsky. While surely a genre flick influenced by everything from *The Island of Doctor Moreau* to George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and everything in-between, the flick was not directed by a typical horror hack but by an iconoclastic auteur that was once considered New Zealand’s equivalent to Luis Buñuel. Indeed, before directing *Death Warmed Up*, Blyth was responsible for directing the queer avant-garde psycho-sexual short *Circadian Rhythms* (1976) and the rather underrated surrealist Buñuel-esque anti-bourgeois fantasy *Angel Mine* (1978), so it seemed somewhat unlikely that he would direct a splatter flick geared towards a more general audience. Of course, as reflected in its fairly overt homoerotic subtext and rather raunchy one-liners like, “I love the smell of blonde pussy in the morning,” Blyth’s hysterically paced horror flick is not exactly your typical completely mindless spatter show. Co-penned by Michael Heath who was previously responsible for writing the Kubrick-esque Ozploitation classic *Next of Kin* (1982) and the underrated kiwi cross-genre Ronald Hugh Morrieson adaptation *Summer* (1982) aka *The Scarecrow*, *Death Warmed Up* is like a car accident that you cannot help but stare at in disbelief as a work that seems like it was created by a collective of nihilistic methheads where the storyline is just as frenetic and erratic as the in-your-face steadicam-based cinematography. More or less completely overlooked in Blyth’s native New Zealand where it was described in the press as a “depraved waste of taxpayers money,” the film would ultimately develop its most loyal following in Europe. Probably the most notable fan of the work is Jodorowsky who indubitably paid the film its greatest compliment when he stated in an interview: “...the film appealed to me because of its irrational side. David Blyth creates an unexplained atmosphere from which we have to draw conclusions, and, in passing, he settles scores with his paternal archetype and with his sexual vision of the world. So what sets off a negative apocalypse is a sexual act between two adolescents; from the moment these two youngsters make love in an open, healthy manner, the world explodes as if in retribution. From all these points of view, this can be said to be a personal film, made with very little

money, but one which multiplies its resources. I also divide directors into those who need several million dollars, and those who love the cinema so much that they make miracles on small budgets and multiply the loaves by putting all their efforts into the image." Featuring an involuntarily parricidal hero, ambiguously gay mad scientist with a fetish for both bloody brains and blonde boys, pernicious mutant punk rockers, an old fat white chap in an unconventional form of blackface, and reasonably decent gross-out gore effects, *Death Warmed Up* is certainly what cult films are all about as a piece of wayward celluloid idiosyncrasy that plays by its own rules while also playing with outmoded horror clichés.

Like *Death Warmed Up* itself, the life of protagonist Michael Tucker (Michael Hurst) very much resembles a nightmare, or at least it does after he kills both of his parents. At first, Michael is just your typical New Zealand Anglo-Saxon schoolboy, but things change when he goes by his father's work one day and witnesses his neurosurgeon daddy Professor Tucker (David Weatherley) getting in a heated argument over dubious research with his unhinged megalomaniac partner Dr. Archer Howell (Gary Day) who believes his brain surgery experiments can extend human life despite the fact that his experiments on rats concluded with the rats dying with major brain lesions. To Michael's horror, Dr. Howell spots him during the argument and then later chases the boy down and awkwardly recommends that he take a shower, homoerotically stating, "You're all sweaty. Let's get you cleaned up." While Michael showers, Dr. Howell admires the young boy's unclad body and then out of nowhere shoves a huge needle filled with some strange serum into the boy's bum, thus making him homicidally crazy. Ultimately, Dr. Howell gives Michael a shotgun and drops him off at his home where he rudely interrupts his parents' carnal pleasures and proceeds to shoot them dead, even symbolically blasting a hole where his mother's vagina used to be in what one might describe as brazenly anti-Oedipal behavior. For his unconscious crimes, Michael is locked up in a mental institution, even though he was not in control of his actions. Needless to say, when all is said and done, the protagonist wants his revenge and he will have it, but it will ultimately come at the price of everything, especially his sanity, but also love and a long well lived life.

Flash forward seven years later, Michael has been released from the loony bin and has a sort of 'Nazi chic' makeover as reflected in his charming bleach blond Hitler Youth haircut and matching eyebrows. Meanwhile, Dr. Howell, who previously received a grant from a heinous sounding group called the Rothschilds Foundation, has fully realized his dream as a sort of evil corporate mad scientist and now owns a gigantic hospital-cum-prison called 'Trans Cranial Applications' (TCA) on a luxurious island. Needless to say, Michael decides to pay Dr. Howell a visit on the island, but he also absurdly decides to bring his girlfriend Sandy (Margaret Umbers), as well his best bud Lucas (William Upjohn) and his girlfriend Jeannie (Norelle Scott). To get to the island, Michael

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and his friends take a ferry on which they run into some mutants, including a rather sickly fire-croched hunchback with a somewhat lycanthrope-like appearance named Tex Murno (Bruno Lawrence), who was apparently the first victim of Dr. Howell's surgery. When Lucas decides to piss on a random car, he and Michael soon find themselves fighting two mutants named Spider (David Letch) and Jannings (Geoff Snell), who ultimately get their asses kicked by the Aryan studs. Spider and Jannings are both 'patients'/'employees' of Dr. Howell and they will ultimately be spending most of their time attempting to hunt down Michael and his friends. After finally arriving on the island and getting in a road battle with Spider that ends with the baldheaded punk mutant getting run off the road, Michael drives his friend into a bizarre local town where he spots his nemesis going to a place called 'Ranji Gandhi & Sons Fruiterery' owned by a goofy Indian (played by Jonathan Hardy in 'brownface') whose eyes practically pop out of his head when he talks. While Michael and his friends have a fun little time at the beach where the two male leads sport super gay speedos (Michael Hurst seems like he has an erection), things ultimately begin going down hill for the group, who will soon be battling giant mutants at a mad scientist's somewhat kitschy compound, which seems like it was designed by Steve Strange of the New Romanticiſt group Visage.

At Michael's recommendation, the friends decide to hang out in some underground tunnels where they soon find themselves being chased by Spider and Jannings on motorcycles. When one of the mutant goons runs into Lucas' girlfriend's Jeannie, she hits her head on concrete and is severely wounded. Luckily, loverboy Lucas takes his revenge and ultimately causes Jannings to impale himself on a pole. When Spider brings half-dead Jannings by Dr. Howell's compound and the good doctor refuses to help, the sinisterly goofy mutant decides to seek his revenge. Indeed, Spider frees dozens of large mutant 'patients' at Dr. Howell's compound that immediately begin brutally murdering everyone in sight, including cute chicks in futuristic new wave uniforms. Eventually, a group of the unruly monsters led by Spider begin attacking Michael and his friends at a bar, but eventually Dr. Howell's Chinaman sidekick and a group of militaristic medics show up and force the friends to go back with them to the hospital where the homicidal havoc is raging on. To make a long story short, Jeannie gets burned alive after throwing radioactive material at a mutant, Lucas is killed after taking an axe to the gut from Spider, and Michael finally gets his much desired revenge by repeatedly stabbing Dr. Howell in the stomach with a scalpel in a discernibly fetishistic way. Before he is killed, Dr. Howell states to Michael in a homoerotic fashion, "I had a vision...You were a part of that vision." After killing Dr. Howell, Michael and his much suffering girlfriend Sandy leave the madhouse, yet the protagonist seems all the more deranged despite killing his nemesis and he even gets violent with his lover when she attempts to comfort him. When Sandy tells Michael, "It's over," he responds by curiously remarking,

“It hasn’t even begun” and by driving to the site of a group of cars and trucks in flames where he is ultimately killed via electrocution after a power line falls on him. Undoubtedly, to say Michael is a tragic protagonist would be an understatement.

Unfortunately, not only was the original 16mm print of *Death Warmed Up* apparently accidentally burnt by a careless intern at the film vault where it was kept, but a second 35mm blowup was also lost, hence why all the DVD releases of the film look like they were transferred from VHS. Interestingly, *Death Warmed Up* would not have ever been made were it not for a tarot reading given by none other than Alejandro Jodorowsky. Indeed, apparently director David Blyth was so obsessed with Jodorowsky after seeing *El Topo* (1970) at the NZ Film Festival that he traveled to London looking for the filmmaker-cum-guru and found out through some friends that he was living in Paris. Upon arriving in Paris, Blyth found Jodorowsky at a shop called Arcane 22 and was told after receiving a tarot reading that he should immediately go back to New Zealand and begin working on another film which would ultimately be *Death Warmed Up*. In a strange yet rather fitting instance of happenstance, Jodorowsky ended up being the President of the Jury when the film competed at the Paris Fantasy Film Festival where it won the Grand Prix. Notably, Jodorowsky would later state regarding Blyth and his film, “I could understand someone disapproving of David Blyth’s film, saying that it was a curious film, not Cartesian enough, with blood in it, idiotic, but nevertheless I don’t think I’m wrong in saying that this director is going to have an interesting career in film. In fact I told him, when I read the Tarot for him, that he was going to become very famous, and very rich, and that he would go and shoot in the United States, where people would do their utmost to deprive him of his vision.” While Blyth never really became that rich or famous, he did go on to work in Hollywood where he was most certainly deprived of his vision, hence why he would be forced to direct episodes of the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and various other completely commercial works that one would never expect to be directed by the kiwi Buñuel. Luckily, Blyth eventually decided to leave Hollywood and move back to his homeland where he began directing experimental documentaries and brutal arthouse splatter flicks like *Wound* (2010), which is arguably the director’s most subversive and grotesque work to date. Admittedly, the first time I watched *Death Warmed Up*, I had a rather hard time getting into it and had to turn it off after 30 minutes or so, but after becoming fairly familiar with Blyth’s oeuvre I wisely decided to give it another try and now can confess that I am a converted fan. As a truly bizarre and idiosyncratic sci-fi-horror that is like *The Island of Doctor Moreau* as savagely raped by *Liquid Sky* (1982) and *Class of Nuke ’Em High* (1986), albeit with creepy cocksucker undertones, Blyth’s movie is pure and unadulterated celluloid trash that could have only been sired in the 1980s and I mean that in the best possible way. After all, any film featuring a curious combina-

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tion of seemingly unrelated ingredients, including naughty nurses in fetishistic New Romanticist-esque uniforms, hilariously vulgar Indian racial caricatures, ambiguously gay mad scientists of the twink-obsessed sorts, murderous mutant punk rockers, and a sunny paradisaical island, among other things, is worthy of any truly enterprising cinephile's time.

-Ty E

TRANSFIGURED NIGHTS

David Blyth (2007)

Undoubtedly, in many ways, the Internet is a fucked tool of virtual socialization that has empowered collectives of crypto-perverts from all around the world to unite from the comfort of their living rooms in strengthening the social fabric of their sexual insanity. One of the creepiest yet equally pathetic subcultures I stumbled upon on the internet somewhat recently is so-called 'masking', which is a sort of cyber meta-cross-dressing that involves grown men, both gay and straight (and every in between), who take on human doll personas where they wear female masks, drag, and even fake tits and exhibit their foul fetishism for all the world to see via webcams. Although Channel 4's documentary *Secrets of the Living Dolls* caused a stir all over the internet and Twitter in early 2014 after 2.4 million viewers tuned in to watch the hermetic world of 'female masking,' New Zealand auteur David Blyth (*Red Blooded American Girl*, *Ghost Bride*) created an experimental documentary half a decade earlier, *Transfigured Nights* (2009), that offered a more subversive and dark, if not semi-campy, look at the disturbing cyber culture. Beginning his filmmaker career as the closest thing to a 'Kiwi Buñuel' with his avant-garde surrealist short *Circadian Rhythms* (1976) and his absurdist feature-length satire of suburbia *Angel Mine* (1976), Blyth would also be responsible for New Zealand's first horror film, *Death Warmed Up* (1984) aka *Death Warmed Over*. After *Death Warmed Up* got some international attention (Alejandro Jodorowsky is a notable fan of the film!), Blyth made his way to Hollywood and directed a couple horror films before falling into the undignified world of television where he even directed episodes of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*. Not surprisingly, it was not until Blyth moved back to New Zealand that he would go back to his roots and once again direct provocative auteur pieces, including the patently perverse arthouse-splatter flick *Wound* (2010). Aside from *Wound*, Blyth also began directing a series of documentaries, including *Our Oldest Soldier* (2002), which is about the director's WWII war hero grandfather, as well as a couple docs on sexual fetishism, which include the S&M/BDSM-themed work *Bound for Pleasure* (2002) and *Transfigured Nights*. An insightful and decidedly debasing document of mixed-up men ranging from Vietnam War veterans to white British Muslims who derive maximum ecstasy from emasculating and degrading themselves by wearing anime masks and fruity costumes for voyeurs across the globe via webcams, *Transfigured Nights* is a totally trying yet strangely rewarding document of Occidental decay that is scarier than any David Lynch film and ultimately reminds the viewer why Muslims are so eager to keep the Western influences out of their nations that they are willing to blow themselves up to accomplish such a goal.

With masker names like 'Hog-Tied,' 'More Rubber Sir,' and 'Miss Piggy,' it is easy to see that the subjects of *Transfigured Nights* take their creepily contrived

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online personas rather seriously. The human train wrecks of Blyth's film want to give you a private show, as it fuels their seemingly unquenchable thirst for exhibitionistic self-debasement and pseudo-self-glorification. 'Mr. Jeffus' is a virtual human pig who got into rubber and cross-dressing via his early interest in female gloves. With the emasculating encouragement of his equally rotund wife, Jeffus does female housework in high heels and a full-body leather suit. 'Kuniko' is a kinky creep who does not enjoy talking but wallows in wearing Japanese schoolgirl anime masks and tying plastic bag after plastic bag around his head, as if one bag is not enough. 'More Rubber Sir', who randomly discovered his fetish for rubber one day after trying on various wetsuits, is a crypto-queer who is too afraid of the commitment that goes with actually meeting real people in real-life person, so instead he gets on a webcam and shows off his coveted Israeli gasmask. 'Michiko' is from Hong Kong and believes it is "no fun to play male characters" because "girls get all the attention." Although his family is ashamed of his peculiar proclivity towards wearing Japanese anime character masks, he sees what he does "as an art" and wears his costume as much as he can. 'Hog-Tied' is an ostensibly heterosexual American truck driver who has blown no less than \$2,500-\$3,000 on his rubber gear. At any given time, Hog-Tied wears upwards of seven layers of rubber and enjoys putting a vibrating egg in his panties while he wallows in his own personal hell of unhinged hedonism. The 'Lady of the Mask' does not like to talk, but s/he sure can wear a mask and wig and do it in a rather grotesque fashion that might even give a child a heart attack. Indeed, Lady of the Masks sports multiple masks at once, peeling each face off with the fury of a maniac chick that cannot decide on what 'personality' to wear that day.

Undoubtedly, 'Deeba' is one of the most disturbed figures of Transfigured Nights and he has no qualms about exposing his metal derangement. A 38-year-old British IT worker of partial gypsy extraction who as he states himself, "came to the Muslim faith, believe it or not, on 9/11," Deeba states he has never derived pleasure from his penis and speculates that doctors may have ruined his genitals, as he remembers them fiddling with his member when he was a kid. A brazen burka fetishist, Deeba somehow believes that other Muslims will accept him despite the fact he is a tranny that gets a sick kick from posing in various elaborate female Islamic garments. To Deeba's credit, s/he is not politically correct and matter-of-factly states, "I've often wondered if dyslexia and gender dysphoria are linked. Every single TS I know is dyslexic." 'Miss Piggy' may be many things, but s/he is certainly not shy as a proud self-described "lifelong tranny" who loves to expose his/her shriveled up man-cunt for the world to see. An unmarried 65-year-old Vietnam War vet with no children, Miss Piggy confesses, "I was in the U.S. Army and went to Vietnam...I was a door gunner and paratrooper but not by choice." Undoubtedly, it seems being in the army did little to toughen up Miss Piggy as s/he, "loves big hair and high, high heels." Describing himself as, "part performance artist and part pure exhibitionist," Miss

Piggy believes masking, which he has done for over 30 years, is about, “recreating yourself as art...your own intimate canvas...and using that to escape from conformity.” Rather unfortunately, Miss Piggy concludes ‘her’ web cam performance by flashing her nasty bits.

Featuring an audio clip of Bela Lugosi yelling “pull the strings” from Ed Wood’s banally bizarre pro-transsexual docudrama-exploitation flick *Glen or Glenda* (1953), *Transfigured Nights* certainly has a sometimes humorous tone that manages to make the experience somewhat more palatable, though the entire experience as a whole is still nothing short of a sort of metaphysical molestation. Indeed, as someone who has read Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s timeless tome *Psychopathia Sexualis: eine Klinisch-Forensische Studie* (1886) in its entirety, I still cannot wrap my head around how anyone could become sexually aroused by wearing an Asian cartoon character mask, but then again, we live in a decidedly depraved era where children’s films feature sexual innuendos and eroticize animated characters. Advertised with the tagline “Mondo Webcam,” *Transfigured Nights* is ultimately an aesthetically and thematically wayward work that blurs the line between exploitation and art cinema and that also manages to pay tribute to Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi but has more in common with a Werner Herzog doc when it comes to depicting the cold, hard truth about humanity’s idiosyncrasies. An (anti)cinematic achievement of sorts in that auteur David Blyth managed to direct an entire film without having to even leave his computer, *Transfigured Nights* is *cinéma vérité* 2.0 as a strikingly singular low-budget work made in an age when any moron can make a movie and have it seen by simply uploading it to YouTube. Featuring an electronic score by Blyth’s regular composer Jed Town that is certainly more fitting than the Schoenberg composition that the film may or may not have derived its name from, *Transfigured Nights* is an audio-visual nightmare in expressionistic webcam form that must be preserved at all costs in a time-capsule as evidence of the sort of social afflictions that popped up as the West was taking its last gasp.

-Ty E

WOUND
WOUND

David Blyth (2010)

Although starting his filmmaking career as New Zealand's only arthouse punk auteur with Buñuel-esque films like the phantasmagoric short *Circadian Rhythms* (1976), the supremely sardonic and anarchistic anti-suburbia fantasy flick *Angel Mine* (1980), and the first NZ splatter flick *Death Warmed Up* (1984), "Kiwi Gothic cinema" pioneer David Blyth (*Red Blooded American Girl*, *My Grandpa Is a Vampire*) eventually made his way to Hollywood and made the drastic change of becoming a director of the pathetically p.c. kids TV-series *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and even a pansy ranger Christmas movie, but thankfully he has gone back to the colony and is back to his subversive, surrealist roots. On top of directing deranged documentary works like *Bound for Pleasure* (2004), a close-up and personal look at dominatrix dames, and *Transfigured Nights* (2009), an unsettlingly voyeuristic view of "wildly perverse, fetishistic pleasures of web cam mask performance" (including an ex-Vietnam Vet who has a fetish for dressing like a female pig in leather and who bring an all time low to transvestic fetishism), bad boy Blyth has returned to the realm of experimental narrative film after a two decade break with the kiwi arthouse horror shocker *Wound* (2010) – an innately deranged depiction of one insane incest victim's sadomasochistic struggle with psychological pandemonium and her attempt to reunite with her equally fucked up and fetishistic estranged daughter in a film that falls somewhere in between the nefarious nightmare realm of David Lynch and gorgeous and atmospheric arthouse gore of Jörg Buttgerit, except even less linear in structure and which the director summed up follows in an interview as follows: "'Wound' is a woman's pictorial descent into madness, seen as a series of events or visual mental shards from Susan's tragic life as she fights a losing battle for her sanity in an indifferent and uncaring world." Described by none other than Brit of celluloid blasphemy Ken Russell (*The Devils*, *Altered States*) in the following manner, "A two-headed doll! Iron-phallused Pig-man stealth! Birthing your own twin! The nightclub of dream-wandering! If your family of origin doesn't kill you, you may just make it...Gorgeous images and repulsive dream-surgery into the recesses of female consciousness. Enter at your own peril! A masterpiece!," *Wound* is certainly a daunting and deranging work to experience, sort of like watching a Russian execution video while in a mescaline-induced state as a deathrock mix-tape plays in the background, thus it will only appeal to the few, the proud, the aberrant arthouse connoisseur as an uncompromising work that manages to create an unholy marriage between surrealism and splatter, as well as foul fetishism with family matters. Needless to say, if you have ever suffered erotic debasement via a degenerate daddy, *Wound* – a work of audacious aesthetic terrorism that pours artsy acid in the grotesque gash that is post-cultural Occidental society – is not the sort of film to watch on Father's

Day, or any day for that matter.

As a sadomasochistic bitch who cuts off her daddy's dick within the first five minutes of *Wound*, schizo Susan (Kate O'Rourke) is not exactly a woman whose sense of judgment the viewer can trust, thus the film becomes a hallucinatory horror show where concrete reality and mental derangement become dismembered in a blender of S&M surrealism, anti-erotic excess, Gothic gratuity, and longing for something darkly romantic but totally intangible. With a pedophile fiend for a father who probably could be described as the 'New Zealand Josef Fritzl,' Susan makes it clear why "incest" and "patricide" go together like aristocrats and gulags, but she has a more pressing matter on her mind. At the ripe age of 19-years-old, Susan gave birth to a beautiful still-born baby girl, yet, quite inexplicably, a Gothic school gal named Tanya (Te Kaea Beri) who was born an orphan, and may be the daughter Susan thought was born dead, is on the prowl for her mommy dearest. When not trying tirelessly to make sales for her telemarketing job and basking in sexual abuse from her S&M Master John (Campbell Cooley), Susan is daydreaming day and night about an ostensible daughter that was spawn from the most unholy sin. With the rotten, worm-eaten apple not falling far from the devitalized tree, night owl temptress Tanya is also engaged in an all the more sickening branch of S&M that includes being senselessly buggered by a swine-mask sporting degenerate whose only other piece of 'clothing' is an iron-cock with a deathhead on the end and whose bloated body covered in heretical tattoos makes him seem like some sort of satanic Maori tribesman who took the Gothic blues lyrics of Glenn Danzig a little too seriously. A strikingly haunting and oftentimes hysterical collection of phantasmic tableaux that never relents in its metaphysical prodding and pillaging of the viewer's soul, *Wound* is a work that only offers solace to the deceased, but only aesthetically pleasing torment to the living, or so protagonist Susan finds out during her deluge of the mind. With visions of romantic suicide pacts on train tracks, a two-headed monster being born through a ghastly gigantic vagina, visitations from a matricidal daughter who wears death on her sleeve, elderly S&M madams, and non-rides to nowhere on an antiquated Victorian train full of lost souls with a punk rock fashion sense, *Wound* pours buckets of blood of the anti-Electral love sort.

In an interview for the website Schurr Sound, *Wound* director David Blyth stated the following regarding the contemporary Hollywoodized Occident, "In the Victorian times, children were present when dead bodies were being dressed and that was part of them understanding the process of death. Now in our western white society the coffin is closed. It's only actually the Maori culture that has an open coffin and a healthier attitude to death." Of course, *Wound* is a work that not only wallows in death, but also in unchecked perversions in a fundamentally anti-life society where pathological fetishism is rampant, even of the incestuous sort. In fact, the father-daughter castration scenes in the film were inspired by a real scenario course case Blyth read about in a U.S. newspaper. As

WOUND

Blyth has mentioned repeatedly in interviews, *Wound* is a work that fundamentally explores the “unconscious mind,” most specifically of the badly diseased sort, thus the film can be looked at as a renegade reaction to a sick and intrinsically repressed society and a depiction of a deepening laceration in the Western collective unconscious, as well as an incendiary indictment of the decadent wasp patriarch whose role in society is no more prestigious than that of a glorified sperm donor who spends his free time masturbating to images on the internet of young girls around the same age as his daughter. As a man who has gone to Hollywood hell and back, and has created sentimental kiddie horror films starring Al Lewis aka Grandpa Munster, David Blyth has proven not only that his subversive spirit has not withered with age, but also that his view of humanity, especially in regard to those from the post-colonial Occident, is no less pessimistic as a weeping wound of the auteur’s mind’s eye that continues to bleed in every shot of film and digital video he shoots.

-Ty E

HAZE

David Burton Morris (1983)

Apologies to mind, Tsukamoto is a man of feverish homoerotic film making tendencies. He has crafted visual art pieces tracing the darkness of homosexuality with such fervor as classic Kenneth Anger and Marian Dora's *Cannibal*. Be as it may, Tsukamoto will always create an admirable film, no matter how left-field it is from his previous works. From *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* to *A Snake of June*, *A Snake of June* to *Nightmare Detective*, Tsukamoto has proved his worth while creating *cinéma vérité* mixed with subversive images that unsettles most everyone. Somewhere between Tsukamoto's affinity for Western films, *Haze* is born rather crudely. Seeming more like *Cube* than anything else, we discover our focus being on a wounded man trapped in a concrete crawlspace. With only a short time to live before he bleeds out, he begins to slowly navigating this claustrophobic labyrinth and discovers a woman. For those who remember the infamous scenes of material & teeth in *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, be aware that you will see our hero's teeth grind against pavement for a good couple of minutes which leads to nerves twitching. If you recall Lynch's transfer to digital video (*Inland Empire*) and how pretentious it was, Tsukamoto's digital endeavor encompasses the very raw fear that should be filmed with digital. For those who revel in large, open spaces best avoid *Haze*. I'm not very terrified of small spaces but *Haze* had me short of breath and unsure if I wanted to continue. What *The Descent* did with claustrophobic terror, *Haze* magnifies the similar fear into uncharted levels of contingency. The near problem with *Haze* is its conclusion. Being of the surrealist taste, the ending settles with a coup d'état on the senses, leaving various theories that always erupt into polemic ramblings. I like to think of these skirmishes in experimental art as a Rorschach of moving images. *Haze* dumbfounds me still. The afterthoughts infect like a plague. Tsukamoto has created yet another classic with only 50 minutes of your time and manages to force you on the edge of your seat the entire time. The result is dizzyingly masochistic, uncomfortable beyond any stretch of the imagination, emasculating, and as hyper-horrifying as the homosexual hell depicted within the labyrinth.

-mAQ

FROM THE DRAIN
FROM THE DRAIN

David Cronenberg* (1967)

Cronenberg's early foray into the destruction of eccentricism is one of these early praised pretentious films sorts one cannot help but slightly appreciate. Two of his other obscure classics have a much deeper meaning and value - Crimes of the Future and Stereo. Two nutty men are sitting in a bath tub in an institution. Like Scorsese's The Big Shave, It seems to have some war conflict issues going on in the background of the character. Man #1 is a man with a contrived French-American accent who firmly believes in postmodernism. He dutifully inherits all habitual characteristics of the French and even sports the similar head pieces. He denounces the claim of there being tendrils coming out of the drain and heeds Man #2's (A nutty hair-lipped retard) warning of foreshadowing peril. Not stark black & white but rather of a grainy gray scale, the transfer and production value is beyond horrible. A time stamp is visible on the only print. Running at 14 minutes long, It's almost 13 minutes too long. The characters are some failed attempt at creating bizarre and surreal characters. David Lynch's Cowboy & The Frenchman was a much more successful attempt at using nationality as a key to surreal art. A subtle "avant-garde" soundtrack is lightly playing in the background while the stop motion tendril begins to choke Man #2 as Man #1 whimsically laughs in the background. Man #1 seems to be a past life of comedian Michael Ian Black, seeing as how they share a similar smile, humor, and face. It's a shame that Stella has more artistic integrity than this. From the Drain is a testament to the hilarity of the title of "art."

-mAQ

THE BROOD

David Cronenberg* (1979)

The Brood (1979) is an early masterpiece from Canadian psychological horror auteur David Cronenberg. A film that actually utilizes the “creepy child” technique in a successful way. The Brood is a film about mentally ill individuals and their experiments with “Psychoplasmics,” a sort of fucked up experimental therapy similar to psychoanalysis. Psychoplasmics becomes deadly when rage fuels asexual monster children to unload brutal attacks on adults. These children lack self control as much as they lack facial features. David Cronenberg might possibly be the most intelligent man to ever be involved with the horror genre. A director that incriminates himself as being obsessed with sexual perversion and disturbing situation violence (and death). In The Brood, the mother’s womb becomes obsolete as she bears children through unflattering tumors attached to her body. These tumors develop into physical extensions of the woman’s body and act accordingly (killing those that have enraged her). These “children” lack sexual organs and only exist to merely serve their mentally deranged mother. Like many of David Cronenberg’s films, The Brood starts out fairly tame (with any early scene of excitement of course) and builds up to a demented climax. A climax that goes past any contemporary scientifically logical explanation given by man that somehow works on the subconscious of the viewer. In The Brood, a mother’s attachment to her children becomes the ultimate “child cult” of femininity. The mother merely has to “feel” to send off her virtual army of deformed children to carry out her impulsive and recklessly killer desires. David Cronenberg could be commenting on the dangers of emotionally uncontrollable women. The male protagonist of The Brood is only looking out for the best interests of his daughter. David Cronenberg separates the parents into two categories. The mother being a monster of emotion that only gets worse as time goes on. The father, on the other hand, looks at everything in a logical way. He does everything he can to protect his daughter and investigate the mysterious deaths of his in-laws. It is the job of the father to stop the mother before she ends up killing everyone (including her own daughter). If The Brood had been released in modern terms, mainstream cultural Marxist film critics would pan it as misogynistic. I hope the film isn’t remade where the father controls his monster children with his penis. You can expect that sort of scenario in contemporary times. When you have Antichrists like the Weinstein’s releasing propaganda trash at excessively rapid rates, you have only two options. You can either make films of your own or take a trip back in the history of film. I recommend both.

-Ty E

THE DEAD ZONE
THE DEAD ZONE

David Cronenberg* (1983)

In what probably is Woody Allen's most popular film *Annie Hall*, Christopher Walken makes an appearance as a young suicidal art fag. Walken's character mentions to Woody Allen in the film that he sometimes gets the urge while driving to cross the other lane and enter oncoming traffic. Woody Allen then questions Walken's character's sanity with more than a little streak of arrogance. One would think that a neurotic such as Woody Allen would be more empathetic towards those with mental defects. Anyways, Christopher Walken would later play a character that slams his car into an 18-wheeler in David Cronenberg's adaption of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*.

David Cronenberg is nothing short of a versatile film director. Cronenberg films such as *Shivers*, *Videodrome*, and *Naked Lunch* have proven that the somewhat strange director enjoys experimenting with the deranged psychological horror with the medium of cinema. With films like *The Fly*, *A History of Violence*, and *Eastern Promises* on the other hand, shows that Cronenberg also can direct films that are fairly straightforward and conventional (yet still graphic and subversive). Cronenberg's 1983 film *The Dead Zone* fits into the director's more mass audience accessible type of film.

The Dead Zone is not a film that is impressively directed. The film also does not feature a variety of extreme and bizarre special effects that you might expect from a director like David Cronenberg. *The Dead Zone* is just a film with an exciting story and precisely executed direction. The film leaves no time for twiddling your thumbs or blinking. *The Dead Zone* is an example of a film that has such a good story that it would have been hard for a director to screw it up. Naturally, David Cronenberg delivered in the film directing department.

Christopher Walken does an excellent job playing a psychologically tormented man who has lost it all and has been "chosen" to lead a life of saving lives. Walken has always struck me as an individual with some type of 'less than holy' secondary manifesting behavior hidden behind a shell of charm. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if he was involved with the death of Natalie Wood as he is somewhat accused of. Walken has the natural ability to send chills down my spine. His performance in *The Dead Zone* is my favorite of his long list of roles. *The Dead Zone* also features Martin Sheen as a would-be messianic Adolf Hitler type. I have never found Sheen interesting, but for some reason his role in *The Dead Zone* is fitting. But just about everything is fitting and Sci-Fi/Thriller/Horror/Drama hybrids don't get much better than this film. It is also rare that a Hollywood film would show a man end his life with something honorable. *The Dead Zone* is a film full of virtue, love, and compassion.

-Ty E

VIDEODROME

David Cronenberg* (1983)

Videodrome can be simply defined as one of those "must-see" films of that generation. A History of Violence aside, Videodrome also happens to be Cronenberg's defining production of his unnatural delineation that's seated well within fans as a subclassification of cult/sci-fi. Videodrome has the clever strategy of incorporating stark and gruesome images into its set that have found its way around the Internet as an ever popular image; James Woods holding a mutated handgun to his head - "Long live the new flesh," he echoes monotonously in choice scenes nearing the climax. The addition of polished dialogue is assertively the resonating point of emotional entry. With my long overdue first viewing of Videodrome, a film hasn't revealed its marvelous true form in such a bloody and lucid style as of this tale of Max Renn and his prescription of Videodrome.

David Cronenberg had already established himself as a competent auteur by Videodrome's release. For the sake of variety, Cronenberg has crafted the contemporary horror, science fiction, drama, and thriller, all into marvelous and definitive pieces of the genre at hand. The accessibility of all his films whether it be Scanners or Videodrome itself, these staples of pseudo-science horror presentation will feature recurring themes of "body horror" that are oh so prevalent in most of his works. If you've seen any Cronenberg film (Sit down, Fast Company), you've no doubt witnessed these fleshy pods bubble and pus while flesh and machine (organic or not) become infused with madness. What Cronenberg is so acclaimed for is his effective and practical surreal violence and effects that spread on an even keel across his wide modicum of hits: e.g. the head explosion scene in Scanners, the pistol mutation in Videodrome (aforementioned), and Seth Brundle's painful transformation into an insect. Dictated by my own pleasure via overstimulation, Videodrome happened to be one of few contemporary, abstract masterpieces that you never, in my case, get around to watching until well past the deadline. Max Renn is an early and perfect example of the pathetic not quite-alpha male and the swift manipulation by feminist mind frame as Max, a low quality of lifer and a disgusting male of nature, finds himself fulfilling the perverted fetishism with a radio personality played by Deborah Harry. The inscribed sex scene appears to be of no pleasure to himself as he bows to her every whim eventually hallucinating himself on Videodrome. The fleshy pink walls reflect just how out of the BDSM loop he really is. Nicki Brand is no longer with him. No one wonders why. The opening scene of the omnipresent television set alerting Max to wake up to his painfully boring life is the kind of established scenario most films with self-deprecating leads should adhere to using. This is the kind of loser that walks, eyes ahead, on a busy sidewalk. Judging by the lengthy coat, you would never guess he's a prime example of that lame soul; the one that passes out watching late night television and starts the next

VIDEODROME

day with a stomach churning combination of coffee and old pizza crusts. From this average day, his first visit into the static-clouded Videodrome emerges as the first conflict for Max Renn other than his pugnacious style of life. After revealing Nicki Brand to Videodrome in an effort to peak her sexual climate, she becomes strangely aroused by the tape and seduces an unsure James Woods into emitting pain and pleasure, although the two become confused by scenes end. When the time comes for Videodrome to sink into psyches and initiate abnormal growth while subliminally annihilating lucid eroticism, the perspective of Max Renn is severely damaged and left in non-working order. From these all-seeing eyes, he's been converted to an assassin for Videodrome while Nicki Brand, who was also infected, became a seductive symbiote of Videodrome. Her eventual transcendence to digitized flesh is left to the viewers mind to possibly piece together a plot to tell of Max's implied techno-enlightenment. Only then will some answers be solved and many more will be asked. To be perfectly blunt and obtrusive, the philosophy of life prioritized on television is soul sapping and Videodrome's showcasing of technology depleting humanity came before the reality show boom of the 90s and 00s. As charted with the last sentence, the reasoning of Videodrome is more or less prophetic past the further use of an idea called "reality." Depending on the mindset of the viewer at hand, Videodrome may shock/offend you, intimidate you, excite you, and trample you down with the eclectic bevy of forbidden titillation. There's a reason that Videodrome is never explained to those who haven't experienced such a far out film as itself. The experience itself is something of a pinnacle in retrofuturism and the clandestine approach to disputing manipulation in both sexes. It often reverberates ideas of a gender war, all stemming from sexual confusion and assertive hypnosis. "At the end, he was convinced that public life on television...was more than private life in the flesh. He wasn't afraid to let his body die." With these words, It becomes ever apparent that Max Renn is an abasement of flesh and he must be purged. Videodrome is the future of video technology in its own reality and in ours. It might be David Cronenberg's single masterwork and his most frightening experiment.

-mAQ

THE FLY

David Cronenberg* (1986)

David Cronenberg's *The Fly* is the director's biggest box office success. It is also Cronenberg's most accessible film for mainstream moviegoers. Cronenberg succeeded in creating an original sci-fi masterpiece. Keep in mind that *The Fly* is a remake of the 1958 Vincent price classic. David Cronenberg was the right man for the remake job. I generally hate remakes. Especially remakes from the horror and sci-fi genre. Remakes in these genres (especially horror) are for the most part guaranteed moneymakers. The sad thing is that newer generations of horror fans know more about remakes (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Dawn of the Dead*) than they do the original films. The majority of these films completely destroy the significance and strengths of the originals. Cronenberg lends his psychosexual auteur touch to *The Fly* resulting in a worthy remake. Like Stanley Kubrick, Cronenberg transforms a film's source material into his own unique vision. Cinema offers the grand opportunity of unique vision. Directors like David Cronenberg use it to their advantage. Most directors are just worried about the paycheck. Jeff Goldblum stars as scientist Seth Brundle in *The Fly*. Goldblum was the appropriate choice for playing the eccentric and fast talking scientist. Brundle is obsessed with international notoriety and fame. A man that wants to change how people use transportation in the world. He also is also sometimes half asses in his ambitions. This eventually results in Brundle getting drunk and becoming a hybrid of man and fly. Like most of Cronenberg's film, *The Fly* features monstrous sexual flesh. Brundle's love interest (played by Geena Davis) dreams that she gives birth to a gigantic maggot. Cronenberg has always had an obsession with gynecology (see *Dead Ringers*). He could even be called the Sigmund Freud of horror. Only David Cronenberg could find sexual elements in typewriters (*Naked Lunch*), infections (*Shivers*), car wreck injuries (*Crash*), and VHS tapes (*Videodrome*). The world of David Cronenberg is much darker than his nerdy exterior displays.

The Fly is one of the best sci-fi films of the 1980s. David Cronenberg was able to successfully make the transition from underground subversive horror director to mainstream director. He has shown no sign of halting of lengthy career. *A History of Violence* and *Eastern Promises* (which I think is one of his greatest films) is a testament to that.

-Ty E

DEAD RINGERS
DEAD RINGERS

David Cronenberg* (1988)

There really is something metaphysically empowering about the role of a male gynecologist. It comes off as a sexist protective role played out for dire love of the other sex, but it can also be seen as a voyeuristic sense of comatose induced empowerment. David Cronenberg has covered many things in his films, but none of them have been as sexually charged as this film. *Dead Ringers* is a film concerning twin gynecologists, the womanizing Elliot and the peepish Beverly. The past is not explained about these characters due to their own psychic link they share. This is a common theory that is brought up on the subject of twins. It hasn't been proven, but it hasn't been disproven. When an illustrious actress enters their life with a mysterious vaginal mutation, their identities swirl into a concoction of sexual deviance, surgical nightmares, and family bonds. *Dead Ringers* is a vastly important film due to many things. One of them is its own set pieces. Cronenberg had constructed designs for the most horrifying, and ghoulish vaginal instruments; even worthy for a H.R. Giger drawing. The principal duo was based off of Stewart and Cyril Marcus. Jeremy Irons plays the role of a century as two brothers, each with their own personality, but linked together as a similar soul. No one else could have pulled this role off, but I wouldn't mind seeing a version starring Alan Rickman. A film that features gynecologists are as rare as they come. This film is unforgettable. While being a personal masterpiece of Cronenberg's, it does suffer mixed pacing; pacing that is only forgiven with its mammoth ending. Personal identity is the issue at hand in this film. The similar concept of twin souls was brought up more in depth in Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales*. The genre here is a confused one. *Dead Ringers* can be regarded as a realist science fiction, or even a black drama, teeming with Cronenberg's trademarked body horror themes. *Dead Ringers* is hands down Cronenberg's best film. It features a sadistic score that compliments the fruits of labor passed on by Irons. He notes every emotion by including key colors in the film that rub off on you, leaving you emotionally marked. Women with teeth in their vagina is not scary, but women with a mutant vagina IS scary. See this instead of any post-feminist shit. This is a film about sorrow, not shock.

-mAQ

M. BUTTERFLY

David Cronenberg* (1993)

David Cronenberg's film *M. Butterfly* is a very different direction for this Canadian director. I might be daft enough to consider this a period-piece. In this drama, it follows the downfall of two lovers who can question their own destiny and the worst betrayal to commit. The plot builds around two characters leaving the supporting actors hanging dry. Jeremy Irons plays René Gallimard, a diplomat stationed in Beijing, where he works his job to the best of his ability, while cruising to parties with his bland wife. Things begin to pick up when he meets Song, an opera performer. It is then that he is launched into a colorful world of cultural clashes, treason, sexual longing, and deceit. Through all of this plot comes the perfect end to an almost perfect story. I must keep the plot summarization short as to not give away any of this film's secret. Cronenberg made this film based loosely off the classical play *Madame Butterfly*. The original writer wrote the screenplay off of his own play for the screen. The film features as usual, Jeremy Irons best performance and when i say this, i mean every performance is his best. Ranging from a love story (*M. BUTTERFLY*), an action film (*DIE HARD: WITH A VENGEANCE*), to a surrealist nightmare (*DEAD RINGERS*). No one can argue with his strict tone of voice but some how manages to play a bottom feeder with ease. Alternating his stance upon the issues through out the movie, he plays a sincere man whose life is of no importance, to a love stricken man, who then hits rock bottom. It is an achievement to watch this film and not feel any emotion. Such a film directed with the utmost care would be the very creation of *M. Butterfly*. No aspect goes to waste in this romantic drama, but as all films have their problems, this one does to. The main problem is that it is too forced and cut into a regular major motion picture run time. This film would have been just at home with a double VHS set as a four hour epic. Not only does this not pose too much of a threat, but it makes it more available to be seen from a larger audience. *M. Butterfly* is an epic love story that shows no boundaries and doesn't wallow in it's excess. Grappled into your mind, it doesn't leave your attention long after the sorrowful ending. Highly recommended for those with a soft spot or just a taste for masterful directing.

-Maq

eXISTENZ
eXISTENZ

David Cronenberg* (1999)

The majority of eXistenZ can be attributed to the aesthetic and visual motifs seen throughout Cronenberg's career spanning such volumes of bio-synthetic lasciviousness as *Naked Lunch*, *Videodrome*, and *Crash*. Much of eXistenZ's imagery can be spotted in many of Cronenberg's earlier works from the mutated corporate espionage of *Naked Lunch* to the anti-technology sentiments of *Videodrome*. It's where these influences of projects past really adhere eXistenZ into such an exquisite category. You see, eXistenZ was released around a month after *The Matrix* premiered. *The Matrix* was one of those films whose vibrations through word-of-mouth increased at an alarming rate, sent screaming off into every magazine, catalog, and film connoisseurs mouth. Lucky for us then, now we have eXistenZ all to ourselves. It really is a shame though, especially since *Inception* seems to have borrowed many pockets of ambiguity and reality-twisting turns from Cronenberg's more coherent film and has only reached a fraction of the acclaim.

What's interesting to me is Jude Law's performance of Ted Pikul in eXistenZ. Having the much maligned *Repo Men* fresh in my thoughts, both characters are set on a similar stream of avoidance and violence, although one is less passive and merciless than the other. In *Repo Men*, the comparison can be drawn at the plot fixture of bio-organics. The pricing is irrelevant and not to be found in eXistenZ but the means to achieve technological and psychotropic escapism through synthetic flesh is where the lines meet. For the perfect antithesis of video games and the need to immerse oneself into a fantastical world of digital manipulation, avoid films like *Stay Alive* and stick with Cronenberg's definitive demonizing of console gaming. For those uneducated to eXistenZ, the film opens up quickly in the midst of a trial seminar to world famous game designer, Allegra Geller, showcasing her newest game, eXistenZ. By utilizing neural-sensors in a squid-like host, Allegra Gellar connects each "game pod" with umbilical cords wired in through Bio-Ports, located in the base of the "victims" spine. From here is where the film spins wildly, leaving you clawing at conceptions of what is real and what isn't. Soon after the game is launched, an assassin reveals a weapon constructed out of tattered flesh and bone to execute the "demoness, Allegra Geller."

Soon aspiring PR Ted Pikul is on the run with a wounded game designer with a contract on her head. This is where eXistenZ slips in and out of dream states as many questions are raised inquiring as to which reality is the game and which is the real world. Cronenberg makes excellent theoretical terror out of a virtual hallucination that will no doubt be emulated in the far future. Just think, what if Nintendo's *Virtual Boy* did what it intended to do? I'm not referring to headaches either. Later on in the film, minuscule evolved pseudo-Mugwumps appear to Jude Law's immediate surprise. eXistenZ is a strange delight in this

manner which crossbreeds Cronenberg's best into a universal piece of science-fiction. What developed as Interzone in *Naked Lunch* is later created by the hivemind program, eXistenZ, in the realization of the Trout Farm. Various extraterrestrial beasts are dissected in a crude and seedy manner. A manner in which will spark a craving to shower. The dingy plastic sheeting only adds to the slimy sensation that rolls right off the screen. Given these examples, eXistenZ could be considered Cronenberg's filmic concept of a Greatest Hits album - a scrapbook, if you will.

What eXistenZ provides is a galvanizing science-fiction odyssey that indeed tips the scales in the favor of gamers. Had you never experimented with gaming, most of the thematic way-points of eXistenZ will fall upon deaf ears. Cronenberg continues to promote hard fact as to his status of auteur. Viewing a single scene in any film of his will immediately draw a conclusion to being "Cronenbergian." It's a shame that *The Matrix* shadowed the release of eXistenZ as it is the superior virtual plane of existence. What eXistenZ accomplished dutifully in a single film took *The Matrix* three films to match, but to the point of a wilting franchise. Cronenberg's world of meta-flesh continues to amaze and feed that which hungers morbidly inside us. Faults may be found in the constantly evolving world of eXistenZ but like any great game, isn't perfect. It's scenes like Jude Law's constructing of "the special" into a skeletal weapon that make Cronenberg's cinema into the force of grotesque vitality that they remain to this day.

-mAQ

AT THE SUICIDE OF THE LAST JEW IN THE WORLD IN THE LAST CINEMA IN THE WORLD
AT THE SUICIDE OF THE LAST JEW IN THE WORLD IN THE LAST
CINEMA IN THE WORLD

David Cronenberg* (2007)

During the Nazi occupation of Europe, many prominent Jewish intellectuals - who refused to be enslaved by a movement that openly declared its goal of making the white world 100% Jew-free - simply committed suicide. German-Jewish intellectual Walter Benjamin, a quasi-Marxist of the Frankfurt school variety, intentionally overdosed on morphine pills at the Spanish-French border after realizing his plan to escape to the United States had fallen to pieces. Austrian philosopher Egon Friedell, who unlike Walter Benjamin, had a deep admiration for European culture (as exemplified in his three volume series *Cultural History of the Modern Age*), jumped out of his window after two SA brownshirts attempted to arrest him. In the short film (approximately 4 minutes in length) *At the Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World* - for the first time - Canadian auteur David Cronenberg cinematically acknowledges his Jewish identity; unsurprisingly, in an apocalyptic scenario where the last Jew (David Cronenberg) dies in the last cinema in the world. Cronenberg created the short for *To Each His Own Cinema*, a film anthology commissioned for the 60th annual Cannes Film Festival. For *To Each His Own Cinema*, 36 acclaimed film directors from around the world were invited to express "their state of mind of the moment as inspired by the motion picture theatre." Upon directing the short, Cronenberg's mind was not exactly in the most pleasant of places, as he had just heard Hezbollah's mission statement entailing the annihilation of every living and breathing Jew. For his segment in *To Each His Own Cinema* - David Cronenberg plays himself - as the last living Jew in the world who is about to commit suicide in a lonely bathroom located in the last cinema in the world. Being arguably the greatest living Jewish filmmaker, it is no surprise that the exterminators would leave Cronenberg to die last. Naturally, Steven Spielberg and Michael Bay were probably the first to go.

As blacklisted Jewish-American scholar Norman Finkelstein mentioned in the documentary *Defamation*, there is no reason to expect another Holocaust anytime in the near future. Of course, in *At the Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World*, the viewer experiences a fictional dystopian portrait of the future - where Zion has fallen from grace and Uncle Adolf's New Order plan for the Twentieth Century has been revamped and finally realized. David Cronenberg, a reform Jew who grew up in an assimilated middle-class Jewish Canadian family, acknowledges in his segment for *To Each His Own Cinema*, that whether he likes it or not, he is a Jew. As Cronenberg stated upon directing *At the Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World*, "I've never thought of myself as a Philip Roth whose subject was his Jewishness, but I've never denied it." Surely, Cronenberg has

found more influence in the collected works of William S. Burroughs than in the texts of the Talmud, yet the Canadian auteur has accepted that his self-professed enemies (Hezbollah) will always regard him as a Jew. Cronenberg also stated regarding Hezbollah, "It's pretty interesting to hear someone say our goal is to kill every Jew in the world wherever they are. That means me and my children. It does evoke a reaction.", hence his reasoning as to why he decided to direct such a stark and dreary short. In *At the Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World*, Cronenberg's last miserable minutes of life are captured by the fictional future MBT channel AutoBioCam. The commentators in the short treat Cronenberg's suicide as if they are commenting on a college baseball game, throwing out ignorant and ultimately erroneous speculation (describing him as a Hungarian filmmaker) on the director's filmmaking career. No doubt, with this short, Cronenberg is poking fun at the mechanical and automaton-like manner in which contemporary news broadcasters present death and catastrophe in *World News*. After all, David Cronenberg is the man that brought us the psychosexual Sci-Fi masterpiece *Videodrome*, a film that artistically illuminates the danger in regards to television blurring the lines between virtual reality and live flesh. Unsurprisingly, Cronenberg directed *At The Suicide of the Last Jew in the World in the Last Cinema in the World* in a manner that, just like a rundown of the day's sports stats, emotionally disassociates the viewer from the fact the last Jew in the world - who is blatantly in a state of great psychological pain - is about to die. It was certainly Cronenberg's intention that the short - despite showing a man on the verge of offing himself - provokes about the same emotional response in the viewer that a Hot Pockets commercial would.

Despite dealing with mostly horror, science fiction, and supernatural works throughout his filmmaking career, David Cronenberg has unwaveringly revealed his peculiar personality under the translucent veil of his blatantly psychosexual films. One film professor (William Beard) even went as far as to write an unflattering book (*The Artist as Monster: The Cinema of David Cronenberg*) that proclaims Cronenberg is the true monster of his films. Monster or not, in *At the Suicide of the last Jewish in the World in the Last Cinema in the World*, Cronenberg becomes both the victim and perpetrator of his own premature demise. In a way, the short is Cronenberg's most revealing work (uncovering his greatest fears), showing the director showing a phallic-like gun in and out of his mouth in a most humiliating manner - as if he is being forced to perform fellatio on it against his will just seconds before the bullet blows through the barrel - ending his life in a most unwanted deadly climax - indubitably drenching the room in excessive amounts of bodily fluids. Anyways, if somehow an anti-Semitic movement consolidated total power in the world, one would hope that they would at least have the decency to spare master auteur David Cronenberg's irreplaceable life.

-Ty E

A DANGEROUS METHOD
A DANGEROUS METHOD

David Cronenberg* (2011)

If any film has ever played out onscreen almost exactly as I imagined it would before viewing it, it is David Cronenberg's *A Dangerous Method*; a cinematic portrayal of the bizarre psychoanalytic love triangle between Aryan Christ Carl Gustav Jung (played by Michael Fassbender), the Rebbe of psychoanalysis; Sigmund Freud (played by Viggo Mortensen), and the young and thoroughly neurotic Jewess Sabina Spielrein (played by Keira Knightly). As someone who has read numerous books by Jung and his break with pseudo-father-figure Freud, I was quite surprised by the realistic (and often politically incorrect) portrayal of the inevitably doomed relationship between the two alpha-psychoanalysts. Like *A Dangerous Method* director David Cronenberg himself, Freud was a Jewish atheist who had a keen knack for sexualizing the most trivial of everyday situations and circumstances. Also like Cronenberg (and unlike their fellow perverted but more sexually ambitious Judaic kinsman Wilhelm Reich), Freud also tended to link man's greatest fears with the sexual. As fairly accurately portrayed in *A Dangerous Method*, C.G. Jung was annoyed by Freud's stern interest in incest and dogmatic anal fixations, thus the two eventually parted ways in a most irreparable way. Freud's jealousy over Jung's affair with his Jewish patient Sabina Spielrein would also prove to be detrimental to their already disintegrating relationship.

From the very beginning of *A Dangerous Method*, it is most apparent that Sigmund Freud is quite conscious of his Jewish identity and the alien Aryan society he lives in. One of the real-life Freud's heroes was Hannibal because like Carthaginian military commander, he saw himself as Semite who sought to destroy Occidental Civilization. Of course, Freud, being nothing more than a glamorized, penis-obsessed pencil pusher, attempted to battle Western Civilization by corrupting its morals through his less than kosher theories, especially in regard to sexuality. In *A Dangerous Method*, Freud's sheer resentment towards the Teuton man is more than obvious and even Jung is not excluded from his hatred. Due to the fact that the psychoanalytic movement was disproportionately Hebraic, Freud championed Jung as the chairman of the International Psychoanalytic Association so as to give the organization a more "Aryan Face." Cronenberg makes light of this fact (albeit, somewhat subtlety) in *A Dangerous Method*; no doubt a bold and totally anti-Hollywood gesture on his part. Of course, Freud's racial chauvinism becomes most glaring when he realizes that his goy boy protégé starts an affair with the kind of stunning Jewess that he could have only dreamed of as a young mensch in the ghetto. Freud sees fit to (in a dishonest fatherly manner) tell Spielrein that she should "never trust an Aryan" and that her affair with Jung is nothing more than the delusional pseudo-love of a Jewess fawning over a mystical Aryan "Siegfried."

It is undoubtedly an understatement for me to say that I was a bit weary of

the thought of seeing stoic Dane Viggo Mortensen portraying a totally emasculated and hopelessly neurotic early 20th century Jewish intellectual yet he managed to pull it off the seemingly impossible in *A Dangerous Method*. Indeed, Mortensen looks like Freud on 'Roids yet he is versatile enough as an actor to mimic the stewing bitterness and growing quasi-schizoid paranoia of the Viennese psychoanalyst in an exceptionally believable way. It also does not hurt that Mortensen sports Freud's stereotypical beard. Naturally, just like all of his performances, Michael Fassbender does a notable job portraying young C.G. Jung; a man who has yet to grow as a great thinker in his own right. Only after his break with Freud and his deep immersion in Gnosticism did Jung develop into the highly revered thinker he is today. Fassbender portrays young Jung as a man torn between his allegiance to a somewhat hostile father figure and asserting his own budding original theories. Although his role as proto-hippie psychoanalyst Otto Grass is small, Vincent Cassell performance is also quite notable. Even as a Frenchman, Cassell brings the charming swarthy libertine routine to a new extreme in *A Dangerous Method*. To my surprise, Keira Knightly had me believing that she was as a neurotic Russian Jewess whose behavior ranges from the severely repellant and dangerously childish to sexually fetishistic and highly professional. That being said, not only is *A Dangerous Method* a cinematic introductory course in psychoanalytic history but also a work of romantic neo-Victorian decadence.

I have noticed that a lot of diehard David Cronenberg fans are somewhat disappointed by the Canadian filmmaker's more recent non-body-horror works. On the contrary, I found *A Dangerous Method* to be more subversive and ambitious than much of Cronenberg's earlier works as the film is merely more intricately packaged with a sleeker and subtler design. Sure, a small scene of sado-masochistic sex between Fassbender and Knightly may be the most visually offensive aspect of *A Dangerous Method* but the film tells an imperative story – the battle of two cultures and two peoples – a dichotomy about the history of psychoanalysis that even the most dedicated of psyche nerds have yet to understand. Over two decades after her fling with Freud and Jung, Sabina Spielrein was exterminated by SS Death Squad, Einsatzgruppe D in 1942. Although Freud laughed at Jung's insistence on the importance of myths, his young student would predict – through “dubious ancient Aryan myths” – the outcome of the National Socialist revolutionary via his infamous essay *Wotan*; a work that describes the Teutonic archetype and what role it would play in the awakening of the German “collective unconscious” (a term coined by Jung) and the war and destruction it would bring to Europe (and its enemies) as a result. Of course, Freud managed to escape from the Gestapo and his anti-Aryan theories live on today in the hearts of Cultural Marxist college professors and Hollywood screenwriters. Seeing as it is virtually impossible nowadays to watch a children's show without hearing some sort of Freudian sexual quip, it is quite obvious who of the

A DANGEROUS METHOD

two adversarial psychoanalytic heavyweights had the most dangerous method.

-Ty E

MAPS TO THE STARS

David Cronenberg* (2014)

Despite the fact that he directed his first feature, *Stereo* (1969), 45 years ago and has been making mainstream films with Hollywood stars since the late-1970s, Canadian auteur David Cronenberg (*Videodrome*, *Eastern Promises*) had never shot a single frame in the United States, let alone Hollywood, until recently with his latest and long-in-coming work *Maps to the Stars* (2014) aka *Bailey's Quest* aka *Hollywood Nightmare*, though he only spent 5 days in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills directing it, with the rest of the film being shot in the filmmaker's native city Toronto. Of course, considering the film is one of the most pathologically venomous and shockingly scathing assaults on Hollywood in decades, Cronenberg could not have picked a more tactical and befitting time to finally shoot in Tinseltown. Based on a script turned novel by novelist, actor, screenwriter, producer, and director Bruce Wagner—a man that has demonstrated that he is one of the keenest and remorseless critics of his home city as demonstrated by his writing credits ranging from Paul Bartel's savage satire *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* (1989) to the underrated five-hour dystopian mini-series *Wild Palms* (1993)—*Maps to the Stars* languished in pre-production for six years before Cronenberg could get the funds to make it because no Hollywood producer wanted to touch such a biting work that scathingly portrays Hollywood as a modern day Sodom festering with incest, schizophrenia, teenage drug addiction, sadomasochism, and general psychopathic behavior. Unquestionably Cronenberg's most humorous work to date, albeit in a brutal fashion that will probably make most viewers feel guilty for laughing, the film makes Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992) seem like a silly Disney romp and Paul Schrader's *The Canyons* (2013) seem like a Hughes-esque teen drama by comparison. Indeed, next to *Maps to the Stars*, John Schlesinger's *The Day of the Locust* (1975) and Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) seem like nostalgic sentimentalist depictions of Hollywood during the good old days. As a rabid hater of Hollywood and everything it stands for, Cronenberg's film proved to be a rather therapeutic experience for me. The multilayered tale of an ambiguously Jewish Hollywood dynasty and related intertwined Sunset Boulevard scum who are probably better fit for work in a Gulag than getting paid millions of dollars to star in films that contribute to the moral degradation and infantilization of virtually the entire global population, *Maps to the Stars* ultimately seems like Cronenberg's unconscious argument as to why he never decided to work in Hollywood, even though he probably could have flourished there as a fellow member of the Hebraic tribe. Indeed, I like to think the film is a prophetic work about holy-wood's capitulation.

The Weiss family has some serious problems, which probably has largely to do with the fact the mother and father are brother and sisters and their children are

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inbred demon seeds. To the Weiss' credit, they did not know they were brother and sister until after they fell in love, but that did not stop them from spawning schizophrenic children. The patriarch of the family is Dr. Stafford Weiss (John Cusack), a celebrity psychotherapist and seemingly psychopathic alpha-conman who has managed to successfully con the masses into buying his bogus 'hocus pocus' books because he has so many high-profile clients. Dr. Weiss' sister/wife is Cristina Weiss (Olivia Williams) is the archetypical 'controlling mother' in many ways in that she has masterminded the rather lucrative career of her internationally famous child star son Benjie (Evan Bird), who is an obscenely arrogant yet somewhat intelligent 13-year-old recovering drug addict, sort of like a composite of Macaulay Culkin and especially Justin Bieber. Benjie has an estranged schizophrenic sister named Agatha (Mia Wasikowska), who he has not seen since he was a small child when she tried to kill him and the entire family by burning their house down, but not before giving him an overdose of drugs before setting the family homestead ablaze. Badly scarred by the fire she set seven years previously, Agatha has to always wear leather arm-length gloves and is completely scarred on the left side of her face, which she tries to hide with her goofy pseudo-flapper haircut. Unbeknownst to the Weiss', deranged daughter Agatha travels from her Florida-based mental institution in an exceedingly hopeless attempt to reunite with her family. Naturally, it will ultimately have tragic consequences.

Ultimately, lapsed pyromaniac Agatha takes a job as a personal assistant from her father's client Havana Segrand (Julianne Moore) after being introduced to the batshit crazy burn victim via an exceedingly overweight Carrie Fisher (playing herself). Among other things, Havana is a once-famous, has-been Hollywood actress of the psychopathically self-absorbed sort who literally jumps for joy when her rival's toddler son drowns to death, thus enabling her to get a role in a remake of a 1960s classic entitled *Stolen Water* that her belated mother Clarice Taggart (Sarah Gadon) starred in and received various prestigious film awards for. Clarice died young in a fire and Havana, who resents her mother's fame and dubiously blames her being supposedly molested as a child, regularly sees her appear as a ghost who constantly taunts her about her glaring insecurities and lack of talent. One of the reasons that Havana hires Agatha is because she was a 'victim' of a fire just like her mother, thus making her think she will somehow be able to get over her progenitor's ghost if she employs the externally and internally damaged dame. Upon arriving in L.A., the first thing Agatha does is visit the home that she burned down seven years before. Agatha also starts a 'romantic' relationship with a struggling actor named Jerome Fontana (played by Robert Pattinson in a role based on screenwriter Bruce Wagner's own experiences before he became famous in Hollywood) who she met after hiring him as a limo driver. Of course, soft-spoken gentleman Jerome, who is the closest thing to a 'likeable' and 'sane' character in the entire film, is just using Agatha

for “research” purposes, as he wants to further develop his acting chops.

Meanwhile, Bieber-esque bitch boy Benjie is on his way to being just as insane as his sister Agatha. Indeed, not longer after visiting a terminally ill girl named Cammy (Kiara Glasco) in the hospital and asking her how she got AIDS even though she has non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) in what is an elaborately planned publicity stunt to bolster his career for paid press he has gotten as a result of being a 13-year-old that had to enter rehab, Benjie finds himself haunted by the ghost of the terminally ill fan whose deadly disease he could not bother to look up. Benjie is famous for starring in a Home Alone-like film franchise ‘Bad Babysitter’ and his mother Cristina has managed to secure him the lead role of the latest sequel, but he soon finds himself resenting the project after being shown up by an enterprising up-and-coming 4-year-old redhead runt named Roy (Sean Robertson). Of course, Benjie gets back on drugs again in no time. After finding out that she came to visit Benjie, Dr. Weiss decides to confront Agatha and more or less threatens her to stay away from the family. Of course, as the film ultimately reveals, Dr. Weiss seems to resent his daughter more due to the fact that she knows his dark secret about being married to his sister/her mother than the fact that she tried to kill the entire family by burning the house down. Indeed, Dr. Weiss’ entire charismatically vomited “self-help” spiel seems to be a sort of instinctive self-defense mechanism to cope with the deep dark secret that he married and had children with his own sister. Ironically, Dr. Weiss’ most famous book, which he arrogantly describes as “a classic,” is called “Secrets Kill” and as the conclusion of the film will reveal, indeed they do. Indeed, while *Maps to the Stars* might not be in the spirit of Cronenberg’s old school “body horror” flicks, that does not mean that the film does not have a similarly large body count. Indeed, not unlike the half-braindead teenagers featured in countless c-grade slasher flicks from the 1980s, you just cannot wait until these innately insufferable, inane, and grotesquely vain characters are put of their misery and snuffed out for good.

In terms of technique and ‘artiness,’ I have never really found David Cronenberg to be a particularly gifted filmmaker. What makes his films interesting are the unnerving subjects he chooses, be it William S. Burroughs’ magnum opus or the sex life of ‘Aryan Christ’ Carl Jung. Indubitably, despite being the director’s first film shot in Hollywood and a rare attempt by the filmmaker to take a stab at satire, *Maps to the Stars* is archetypically Cronenbergian to the core as a work that takes an unwaveringly unflattering look at the darkness of humanity and the sensitivity of human flesh, be it coming in contact with fire or the used-up genitals of a would-be-MILF over-the-hill fire-crotchted actress. Personally, I found nothing particularly striking about Cronenberg’s direction and would even argue that Schrader’s similarly themed failure *The Canyons* proved to be a more aesthetically pleasing and gripping experience, yet *Maps to the Stars* is still a far more superior film. Indeed, while a work of celluloid fiction, the film still man-

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ages to iconoclastically demystify the mythmakers of Hollywood. Like a more coherent and less esoteric twist on David Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) meets a *Barton Fink* (1991) set in contemporary times, Cronenberg's film should be playing at every single movie theater in America as a sort of mischievously frolicsome deprogramming tool that lets the masses know that their filmic heroes are sexually depraved junkies with a weakness for incest.

Interestingly, Cronenberg also hints at the self-loathing that has been an innate part of Hebraic Hollywood since the beginning as documented in the rather insightful book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (1989) by Neal Gabler. While never mentioning it overtly, it can be inferred that the central family featured in *Maps to the Stars* is of the Judaic persuasion as hinted by their stereotypically Jewish surname 'Weiss.' In one rather hilarious scene early on in the film, egomaniacal brat Benjie—a little scrawny turd who, like many Hollywood Judaic types, bleaches his hair to make himself look more 'Aryan'—verbally assaults his stereotypically fat, swarthy, and unkempt middle-aged Jewish assistant, Arnold (Joe Pingue), hatefully stating in a sarcastic fashion: "Great Rabbi...death and dying. Man of wisdom...Zen fucking Arthur. I've got a new nickname for you: "Museum of Tolerance." When Arnold tells the little turd to watch his mouth, Benjie replies, "Why don't you show me your cunt, huh? I know you have one. Jew faggot." Of course, considering his less than flattering depiction of Jewish atheist messiah Sigmund Freud in *A Dangerous Method* (2011), Cronenberg has never been particularly fond of mindlessly supporting his people's great "culture-distorters" like most of the Hebrews in Hollywood. Additionally, in *Eastern Promises* (2007), Cronenberg cast the so-called "Russian mafia," which is a Jewish entity, in the most brutal of lights. Of course, it is doubtful that Cronenberg is a 'self-loathing Jew' but just a sensible mensch that is critical of the more unsavory elements among his people. In fact, Cronenberg has even gone so far as to distance himself from the cliché money-grubbing Hollywood Hebrew type, stating in a 2007 interview with *nypress.com*, "A sell-out is a personal thing. Ivan [Reitman] was always destined for Hollywood. That's what he wanted. I never wanted that." In the same interview, the director also remarked, "I'm always aware of [being Jewish]. It's always on my mind, but not obsessively. When you're threatened because of one aspect of your nature, whether it's your sexuality or your gender or your ethnic background, you become acutely sensitive to it for that moment. But it doesn't necessarily mean that's what defines you as a person." Indeed, it seems that Cronenberg is "acutely sensitive" to the fact that his people are not only brainwashing the masses with their neo-Trotskyite propaganda and promoting every form of moral degeneracy and metaphysical affliction imaginable, but that they are also degrading and exploiting the artistic medium for those purposes. With that being said, I like to think that *Maps to the Stars* is the director's sort of unofficial indictment of insipid Zio-ganda and aesthetic worthlessness of Hol-

lywood, as well as his argument as to why he has avoided working in Hollywood his entire life despite the fact that he could have easily ascended to royal status among the upper echelons of the Hebraic hegemony over Hollywood.

Featuring an aging actress of the borderline psycho-biddy sort being beaten to death with her own film award trophy, a burnout and drug-addicted 13-year-old child star attempting to strangle to death his 4-year-old rival, a fading actress suffering severe flatulence and constipation as a result of taking too many painkillers, an aspiring actor screwing a severely scarred burn victim in an attempt to advance his career and fine tune his acting talents, and a hyper hysterical actress trying in vain to outdo her long deceased mother in terms of popularity, *Maps to the Stars* is ultimately the closest thing to a film in the spirit of Kenneth Anger's hilarious hidden history book *Hollywood Babylon* (1959). Indeed, as the screenwriter's other works like *Wild Palms* and *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* also readily demonstrate, Bruce Wagner is surely one of the greatest, if not the greatest, critic of Hollywood working today and thus he should share credit with Cronenberg in terms of being the auteur behind *Maps to the Stars*. The fact that Wagner—a mystical-minded man who was a member of the inner-circle of Carlos Castaneda and studied under Indian Hindu guru Ramesh Balsekar—has described the aspiring actor character played by Robert Pattinson that literally and figuratively whores himself out as being of a semi-autobiographical nature just goes to show that even a man who has more or less built a career on mocking Tinseltown cannot even escape the debasing powers of Hollywood. Notably, Cronenberg once stated regarding his film, "Hollywood is a world that is seductive and repellent at the same time, and it is the combination of the two that makes it so potent." Personally, I find nothing particularly seductive about contemporary Hollywood, nor the fictional one depicted in Cronenberg's film, but the Hollywood of *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) is a different story. Indeed, the Hollywood of today is far too vapid, plastic, and uncultivated to produce deranged yet dignified divas like Norma Desmond. Instead, we have fat ass Hebraic slobs like Jonah Hill, neo-Cro-Magnon morons like Channing Tatum, unattractive and untalented pseudo-diva bitches like Julia Roberts, phony Uncle Toms like Will Smith, scheming neo-vaudevillian sub-smut-peddlers like Friedberg and Seltzer, ethno-masochistic baby-negro-collectors like Angelina Jolie and her beau Brad Pitt, racially ambiguous mystery meat like Wentworth Miller and Vin Diesel, and Asperger-addled blockbuster philistines like Steven Spielberg and Michael Bay. Needless to say, if Hollywood were to burn to the ground as depicted in one of the posters for *Maps to the Stars*, it would be no great loss.

-Ty E

CURSE OF THE PUPPET MASTER
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David DeCoteau (1998)

Without a doubt, one of the most disappointing, distressing, wacky, and maligned films ever created was *Curse of the Puppet Master*. Hated by everyone and spited by everything, this film is regarded as one of the worst films ever created. In light of recognizing the aesthetics behind *Full Moon*, I have come to terms with *Curse* and urge you to reconsider relieving the tension on your incendiary opinion towards what might be the most original take of the *Puppet Master* lore. *Curse of the Puppet Master* takes a classic tale like *John Steinbeck* and alters it into a sub-par horror film with hints of a magic philosophy and low-grade romance no doubt written by a lonely man with fantasies of hooking up with well-off, successful women. The turn witnessed at hand is a full 180°. The long lost visual effects of David Allen will be missed sorely. It's as if the puppets have carpal tunnel syndrome keyed in by their non-stop fidgeting in a sour attempt to give them the look of life, but this same plague can be said for the last 3-4 films. My friend once did a mock impersonation of an incredibly popular sound byte of a man screaming in a "Hyeaaa Hyeaaaaahhh Hyeaaaaahhhh" fashion. Having sounded familiar, I wasn't sure if I had just watched too much *Ahh! Real Monsters* as a child. What do you know, 2 minutes into *Curse of the Puppet Master*, this very same clip was played to an excruciating effect as you watch a mysterious puppet get doused in gasoline, only to be replayed some odd 20 minutes later. A vapid sex-crazed daughter of a doctor then dabbles in an art of seducing the "stable boy". She tells the idiot "The brain is the most over-rated organ." Perhaps the scribe of said script was furious at all the other quality fluff getting published while his unfinished *Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys* script ended up in Charles Band's trash receptacle. As for the femininity plane in *Curse of the Puppet Master*, the end result is nil. They strive for a miserable damsel in constant distress, but the screen is too busy glorifying jock rapists. What works is some rather interesting budding philosophies towards labor and spirituality. Dr. Magrew tells Tank that if you work hard enough with blood & sweat, you can give anything life. This is the motto that Tank follows to his inevitable, albeit goofy, grave. *Curse of the Puppet Master* is no worse than *Puppet Master 4* or *5*. While I once had some respect for the film on a level of how bad it was, I realized that the director of *Leatherface* was actually the one and the same. Not related. DeCoteau will later move onto directing *Retro Puppet Master* which is without a doubt one of the atrocious films I have ever seen. For an excuse to cover his directing *Curse of the Puppet Master*, he adopted the "Alan Smithee" way out and renamed himself Victoria Sloan. If I had directed two of the most disappointing sequels in the history of low-budget horror, I'd want people to account it on me being a woman director as well. *Curse of the Puppet Master* is indeed a horrible film, but it takes an ancient franchise and gives it a fancy new

makeover, even if it was better off untouched.
-mAQ

CHAOS
CHAOS

David DeFalco (2005)

Chaos is a foul and repugnant film. The stench of death and vermin will no doubt be excreted from your television set. I use the words "brutal" and "nihilistic" when needed be, but after a while, the films start to lose their impact. Sure, the subject matter might be way over average viewer's heads but I always retain the fact that it was once disturbing to me. One word I've never had to use in a review - Savage. Chaos is absolutely the most savage experiment ever planned out and filmed. This is also the reason that Chaos fell into an early grave. Chaos is another rehash of Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. Even though *Last House on the Left* was an uncredited remake, I don't enjoy the idea of picking on David DeFalco's film just because it made somebody shit their pants due to the embodiment of evil acted out by Kevin Gage. David DeFalco is an absolute lunatic, if you couldn't tell by his film making. To promote Chaos, he galloped around LA Coroner's Crypt babbling about evil while shirtless. At least it's more thought out than David Lynch making a public appearance with cattle. Chaos isn't nearly a shot-by-shot remake as you might have read from the many flammers this film has pissed off. I like to think of it as a thought-by-thought remake. DeFalco takes a scene, imagines to himself "Hey, we need to change the bumbling cop duo and add some race relations to ante up the tension!" and it works like gold. There's so many things I can't stand about Craven's heralded "masterpiece". It might have been terrifying years ago but we have Chaos now. Kevin Gage acts alongside Sage Stallone (Who is also co-owner of the fabulous Grindhouse Releasing) and both deliver incredible acting performances. Whereas Kevin Gage builds up the terror with his impressionable evil gestures and facial contortions, Sage Stallone mellows the screen out as the one participant who isn't sure if he is alright with what's going on. By the end of the film, you will suddenly be aware of the evil that exists all around. You will realize that you are breathing manually and that anyone can take that away from you on a mere whim. Chaos is easily one of the worst reviewed films of all time. The score averages at around 7%. Do the math and understand how many people felt persuaded by their virtues, morals, and other reviewers into spitting venomous remarks at this film. As a kid I did the same with *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. I eventually cleared my head, re-watched it and fell in love. I urge you to get your own opinion on this film. The film might have been tasteless and a unbridled nightmare, but that doesn't mean it's a bad effort. This film harmed me more ways than *Last House on the Left* ever hoped to. Chaos is full of violence and rape, but most of it is implied and shown off screen. The voyeuristic techniques of the camera are denied and proves that there are still some things where we shouldn't tread. Chaos has a delirious low-key ending that blows the original material's out of the water. You will be left stranded without a sick sense of glory. Only a few choice films have

this incredible power to sicken. Enjoy it while it lasts.
-mAQ

I DRINK YOUR BLOOD
I DRINK YOUR BLOOD

David E. Durston (1970)

I Drink Your Blood(1970) is a rabid killer hippie classic inspired by “The Manson Family” killings. The messianic leader of the cult is a buff Native American looking Shaman that seems to be three times as large as the real Charles Manson. He addresses to his cult that, “let it be known that Satan was an acid head. Drink from his cup.” Surprisingly, it is not acid that makes these scumbag hippies go on a killing frenzy, but the deadly juices of rabid dog put into meat pies that the degenerates eat. The rabid poison was put in the meat pies by a virtuous young man who wanted to avenge the disrespect that the hippies committed against the boy’s grandpa.SATAN!The shaman leader of the cult probably has the silliest dignified accent I have yet to see in a film such as I Drink Your Blood. His second in command is a rambunctious Negro who has had enough of the lynching bestowed upon his unfortunate forefathers. The white men in the cult are pathetic and impotent. The girls are for the most part blond whores looking for “Sex, Drugs, and Rock N Roll.” They also have a middle aged eastern Asian woman in the group for whatever reason. I guess she makes a great accessory.The real “hero” of I Drink Your Blood is the young blond haired boy that poisons moral breaking hippies. This young man has dreams of being a veterinarian and he’s not going to let some hippie scum get in his way. The child hero makes me wonder if I Drink Your Blood was also supposed to be a family film as it does have a good moral message. Nudity, decapitations, and guts aside, I Drink Your Blood gives Hollywood a run for their money as far as “good messages” go.I Drink Your Blood is one of the best films of it’s kind. It’s full of gore, comedy, rednecks, and violent deaths that any true American horror fan would demand. I can imagine American drive-in theaters of the early 1970s were full of happy filmgoers when I Drink Your Blood was first screened. What a wonderful world it would be if someone started a new horror subgenre featuring white liberals and hipsters killing minorities while infected with rabies. I Drink Your Blood is the film to look at for that type of inspiration.

-Ty E

BLACK SANTA'S REVENGE

David F. Walker (2007)

Black Santa's Revenge is a 20-minute blaxploitation short directed by David Walker that features the lovable and huggable Ken Foree as the enigmatic Black Santa. The film opens up with our favorite Black Santa losing at a game of dice where he lost most of his money. He shoos his friends home before he begins to have flashbacks about poverty stricken and disappointed children. The film starts off nice and easy that leads up to a ridiculous robbery that seemed too unplanned and led our vigilante in a detective's office.

The opposing sides of racial tension are shown in an often anti-white way as we bare witness to the detective try and put Black Santa in the crime. This is just ignored as the camera gets a good luck at the hilarious mural of the white man with his small dog behind his desk. After stressing about the disappointment of the children he decides to go drinking at a strip bar. After some glamorous strippers do their thing, we see our very own Black Santa hammering down shots and then requesting the bottle. Turning around, he sees one of the men involved with the robbery. Intoxication in hand, he decides to follow him to their hangout. After grabbing a shotgun, it all ends with bloodshed and incredible yuletide one-liners. Black Santa's Revenge has it's own errors and would have fit a longer running time a lot more snugly. Despite all this, the film is very watchable and proves that Ken Foree has what it takes to be a new blaxploitation star and bring the almost dead genre back to life. Pick this DVD up [HERE](#) for a very small price of \$13.00. The amazing nostalgic cover art alone is worth it.

-Maq

IN THEIR SLEEP
IN THEIR SLEEP

David Gaz (2004)

Having heard only a mutter as to the existence of *In Their Sleep*, when on the contrary, similar films such as *Martyrs* and *À l'intérieur* scream across horror outlets, I found myself wandering into an experience that I'd be woefully revisiting, even after an extended period of rest. Co-starring the ferocious Jean-Hugues Anglade, *In Their Sleep* primarily banks off the equally intense performances throughout. Having a perpetual fault in predictability, *In Their Sleep* assures you that being in the know isn't very much different than being blinded. The emotional core is continuously throbbing, allowing scenes to metamorphosize into truly nefarious examples of the French and their increasing lack of apathy towards family life, and that might very well be the shocking secret to their success. *In Their Sleep* opens with Sarah (Anne Parillaud, *La Femme Nikita*) dealing with a minor instance of turmoil as her son is upset with their relocation into the country. After pouting for a short amount of time, Sarah brings a tray of desert up to his room, finding only an open window. Assuming he might have snuck out, as I would, you see Sarah shed a slight emotion of panic and briskly walks to the window peering down. What awaits her is her son impaled on several reinforcing bars, gasping and choking on his own blood.

Flash-forward a year later and Sarah is still visibly shaken to the point of societal detachment. Scolded by the head nurse for amping a dosage and near-injuring a patient, Sarah is sent home on leave for several days as to collect her emotional baggage and come to terms with her loss. Things unfortunately spiral into disarray soon after, as we find Sarah hitting a young man with her automobile. Carrying him to her car, it becomes apparent that this boy, roughly the same age as her sons, is fleeing from a maniac. News of this collides with the mention of a burglar on the loose but by this point it's too late. Sarah is ultimately ensnared into a psychotic confrontation between two strangers and their words and pasts violently clashing, testing Sarah's committal of preservation entirely. Not to issue too much of the film's plot away and to preserve the integrity sustained by the cast, especially Arthur Dupont's dark gravitas. *In Their Sleep* suffers from the very typical mistakes of first time directors. The co-directors, also siblings, Caroline du Potet and Éric du Potet, made sure to craft their film around the basis of minimalistic, yet jarring, violence. This in turn propels *In Their Sleep* into a film encompassing upsetting scenes of shedding mortality and chastising the all-too vulnerable viewers into a submission.

Since much of *In Their Sleep* rides the train of suspense/thriller, red herrings are utilized in scenes challenging already cemented perspectives. This will have either two effects on you. You will be genuinely surprised, maybe shocked or you will just get pissed you off. Perhaps I'm being too kind of this film, a film that has done nothing for me but bring to light a feeling of utter melancholy, which

soured my mood. But as it stands, *In Their Sleep* is a very rare breed of film that strafes past the violence and into the consequences of these acts of brutality. You may think to yourself that these acts signify what modern convention has smeared as a "terrible ending" but you'd be shocked at how poetic the finale of *In Their Sleep* is. A warm feeling spreads through your body with a tune of divine opera fluttering throughout the credits. If not for the violence or the substantial hype most new age French horror collects, see *In Their Sleep* for that evidence of emotion weaved through each character. The directors have created a film that bleeds as its characters do and mourns as well. In terms of pure psychopathy and the remove of a killer burned onto celluloid, even one as frenzied or empathetic as the culprits, *In Their Sleep* is a marvel of sick intentions with some of the more disturbing hospitality towards a sleeping family I've seen yet.

-mAQ

REQUIEM FOR A VILLAGE
REQUIEM FOR A VILLAGE

David Gladwell (1975)

While the Germans have paid great tribute to their rural traditions and cultures with the once-popular but now largely ridiculed Heimatfilm genre, their Germanic brothers, the English, who have always had a larger disparity between the classes, have done very little to cinematically honor their ancestors and seem more interested in making intolerable hagiographies about banal monarchs and whatnot. Recently, I had the good fortune of happening upon an avant-garde Anglo-Saxon Heimat film that is surely a hidden gem among the seemingly bottomless pit of banality that is the British film industry. Directed by relatively unknown auteur David Gladwell—a man better known for editing Lindsay Anderson classics like *If...* (1968) and *O Lucky Man!* (1973) than his own films—*Requiem for a Village* (1975) is a lucid, lyrical, operatic, and totally unclassifiable celluloid poem about a church and cemetery caretaker from an east Anglian village who feels dejected by modernity and urbanization and who prefers to reminisce over his dead friends, neighbors, and family members while cleaning their tombstones. Of course, as one can expect from an experimental work, Gladwell's film is not merely mindlessly nostalgic sentimentalist twaddle like most Teutonic Heimat flicks, though it is by no means a pretentious masturbatory dilettante piece that was made by the director with the intent of proving how 'avant-garde' he is. Part living postcard, part ethnographic meta-documentary (Gladwell cast real people from the Suffolk villages where he filmed for the acting roles), part metaphysical zombie flick, part love letter to an ancient village and a dying way of life, part T.S. Eliot-esque cine-poem, and part critique of technology and the rise of the suburbs, *Requiem for a Village*—a split-narrative work that seamlessly connects the past and present as depicted from the perspective of an old man who literally and figuratively lives in the past and is ready to take his last gasp so as to be reunited with his deceased wife—is one of those rare films that seems almost completely original in its essence, as a film that establishes its own distinct cinematic language. Indeed, Lindsay Anderson probably said it best when he stated of the work: "David Gladwell's film is an authentic, lyrical pastoral work of absolute and obstinate originality - the work of a unique artist... *Requiem for a Village* is one of that handful of works which prove that the English poetic genius is fully capable - given the right, rare circumstances - of expressing itself in cinema, as it always has in literature and painting." Not unlike Fred Halsted's avant-garde homo hardcore flick *LA Plays Itself* (1972)—another film that contrasts the organic beauty and serenity of the country with noise, human nastiness, and abstract man made concrete jungles of the city—Gladwell's film depicts the bulldozer as a ruthless symbol for the destruction of pastoral perfection and history, as well as man as a pernicious god-given plague with a propensity for committing forced entry in regard to both nature and the

nether-regions of other human beings (luckily, Gladwell's film does not feature any brutal fisting scenes, though it does feature a savage yet strangely beautiful rape montage that is arguably the most poetic depiction of sexual ravaging ever committed to celluloid). Somewhat of a 'folk horror' work in part that is more authentic in its essence than Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973) in organically depicting the ancient culture it centers around, *Requiem for a Village* features the unrelenting cultural pessimism of Oswald Spengler, the lyrical love of landscapes (but also people) of Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance* (1982), the nuanced appreciation of the Volk and Volksgeist of Edgar Reitz's magnum opus *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984), the playful acknowledgement of England's pagan roots in David Rudkin's *Penda's Fen* (1974) directed by Alan Clarke, and the sensitive yet highly sensual approach to sexuality of the best works of Polish auteur Walerian Borowczyk, as a folkish filmic fever dream that demonstrates that the purest and most magical forms of pulchritude arise from the blood and soil of the peasantry, which has been more or less murdered by man himself.

Requiem for a Village centers around an elderly church caretaker who belongs to a zeitgeist long gone and who longs for death, whether he knows it or not. While now living in the suburbs like most of the surviving members of his quaint East Anglian village, the Old Man still spends most of his days working at the village, mainly in and around the old church in which he was married. Completely out of touch with the living, the Old Man only talks to himself, with most of his conversations revolving around attempting to remember the death dates of his former neighbors while looking at their ruined tombstones at the church graveyard. In fact, the Old Man spends so much time obsessing over his dead neighbors and loved ones that these individuals somehow manage to come back to life and rise from the grave, though they are not rotten. Indeed, Gladwell's film probably features the most benign and warmly welcomed 'zombies' in all of cinema history. After watching in astonishment as the dead rise from the grave in a most jubilant fashion and barely acknowledge him, the Old Man enters the church and magically transform into his younger self on his wedding day. From there, the film unearths fragments from the most memorable and sometimes even goofy (in one scene, a man brags how he tied a rope around a horse's testicles so it would not kick him) moments of the Old Man's life. As was not uncommon at the time, the Old Man lacked experience on his wedding night and awkwardly got to "know" his beloved in a most naive fashion, which is in stark contrast to the sexual degeneracy of today where virgin teenage boys get addicted to pornography at an early age and ruin much of the magic associated with discovering the opposite sex. The birth of the Old Man's daughter, who is now a somewhat grouchy middle-age spinster with a dyke-like haircut, is depicted in rather graphic detail, thus underscoring the traumatic and dangerous yet visceral beauty of human reproduction. The birthing scene cer-

REQUIEM FOR A VILLAGE

tainly reminded me that it was not uncommon not too long ago for a mother to sacrifice her life to create more life whereas women today are pampered all the way through pregnancy and hardly have to worry about dying before bringing their children into this world.

In *Requiem for a Village*, a gang of young leather-clad bikers become a symbol of the rapid proliferation of technology and urbanization, as well as a symbolic representation of how the present unsympathetically kills and buries the past, especially in regard to culture, customs, art, and religion. Ultimately, the Old Man who lives in the past is killed after one of the crotch-rocket-riding whippersnappers runs him over, which proves to be a truly divine experience for the dejected geezer, who is reunited with his deceased spouse and the rest of the villagers who succumbed to fate long ago. The Old Man's death is important as with his demise comes the burying of all the customs, traditions, and memories of the village, which is scheduled to be bulldozed to make way for a new chic suburb development. Before dying, the Old Man demonstrates his disgust for the modern world in a variety of ways, which is most apparent in a montage where the old disgruntled fart flings soil at a monstrous mechanized gold dirt digger, which cuts to a flashback scene of a ploughman tending to his horse, thus reflecting the increasingly cold and abstract relationship man has to nature. In arguably the most potent segment of the film towards the end, the Old Man recalls being a young boy watching his father quasi-rape his mother in a delightfully disturbed montage which is inter-spliced with a flashback sequence of two scythe-wielding young men gang-raping a young girl, as well as a present-day sequence of the bikers raping a girl, in a darkly erotic segment highlighting the historically violent nature of regeneration and the cycle of life. Indeed, it is hinted that the Old Man was spawned from an act of such sexual savagery, thus reflecting the ironic nature of nature, as a paradoxical system that creates life out of destruction, harmony out of chaos, and beauty out of abject ugliness. After all, if Alejandro Jodorowsky's father did not rape his mother in Chile some 80+ years ago (as the auteur has claimed in various interviews), the world would be deprived of such cinematic surrealist masterpieces as *El Topo* (1970) and *Santa Sangre* (1989). Of course, if one thing is for sure, it is that the Old Man, like every human being, left this world the same way he entered it—as nothing, or as one of the characters wisely states during one of the many flashback scenes: “We all come from dust and we go back to dust.”

A fleeting glimpse of an extinct kultur from rustic rural England before the age of culturally schizophrenic phenomena like chavs and wiggers, the deluge of third worlders from the ex-colonies, the great national shame of Islamic South Asian white slavery rings, American cultural colonization, and the rise of the suburbs, among various other modern social plagues that make the once-great British empire seem like an inexplicable memory, if not absurdist fantasy, *Requiem for a Village* is not only a lost arthouse masterpiece of sorts, but an in-

valuable historical document that gives you a better feeling and understanding of a now extinct culture and way of life than any graduate degree ever could. In terms of major themes in the film, Oswald Spengler, himself a die hard critic of the British and their influence on the world, probably said it best when he wrote: "Long ago the country bore the country-town and nourished it with her best blood. Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country." Indeed, aside from the old church and cemetery, which are both in discernibly bad shape, the country is depicted as raped and plundered in Gladwell's film. Going back to Spengler, he once stated: "When the Englishman speaks of national wealth he means the number of millionaires in the country." Of course, England's real wealth is depicted in *Requiem for a Village*, but the English do not seem to know that, hence why the film is truly one of a kind, as a rare rendering of the real English people and not effete monarchs with bad teeth, swarthy untermenschen from the third world, and chav scum. Featuring an immaculately complementary haunting choral musical score by David Fanshawe (*Seven Years in Tibet*, *Gangs of New York*), an exceedingly ethereal depiction of the Suffolk countryside, and a rare authentic expression of the Anglian Volkgeist, Gladwell's is a film that unequivocally proves that not all English people are either sniveling, pretentious, tea-drinking twats or brain dead, tattooed, and illiterate white trash scum.

-Ty E

PLAGUE TOWN
PLAGUE TOWN

David Gregory (2008)

Deceivably so, for the benefit of the slasher genre, *Plague Town* was created by the director of *Texas Chain Saw Massacre: The Shocking Truth* and just about any other exploitation making-of documentary you could point a finger at. With all this experience delving into the making of classics, does his secondhand skill rank up enough for him to create his own bold masterpiece? It is my deepest sorrow to announce "Nay," his film does not withhold the visual promises of a terror soaked foreigners - go - camping - wrong - place - wrong - time scenario that has been imprinted upon the very tome of slasher film 101. Can anyone create this genre anew without fear of retaliation from incompetent viewers and fellow filmmakers alike? *Plague Town's* biggest mistake was the entrance of the stepmother/father relationship. Necessary to the story arch, of course, but with the later events that unravel in the film the evolving aura that had blessed the cinematography of *Plague Town* diminishes to a larvae state and everything that has been worked upon so hard, died off suddenly in a state of emergency that was declared with a blind sense of urgency. It appears that *Plague Town* decided the build up wasn't worth delaying the actual screen terror so they catapulted our characters into uber-violent and unnerving situations that weren't entirely necessary and upon the slaughtering of the stepmother, you soon realize that everything beautiful about *Plague Town* died with that dear, sweet lady. Other than the stepmother being used as a pawn to prove a point about the utter stupidity of the female sex in moments of distress, *Plague Town* employs many subliminal tactics in making you despise anything with a uterus. It seems the men are the only one with any sense at all and in this subversive element of misogyny comes a great deal of entertainment to give *Plague Town* any credibility at all. I expected more from the first Dark Sky Films production. To the outstretched arms of anyone that remains excited for campfire horrors in rural communities, *Plague Town* is the same rehash we've seen over a thousand times. Make no mistake, this film doesn't claim to present new themes or material but If you've seen one reimagining you've seen them all. The presentation allows itself the ability to defy most expectations with a stark image permeating a sense of helplessness and with the help of a spectacular one sheet, *Plague Town* really appears to be better than it should. But we soon find out with no speculation as to how banal *Plague Town* really is. Most films have a choice, to speculate on the characters at the heart of the tale or to prime up the antagonists, as many as there are. With nowhere to go other than the route of senseless violence that equates with an ending that evokes strong themes of desperation and female degradation, *Plague Town* doesn't add up to anything other than a film with an Irish family being hunted by... things? My point exactly. "Independent horror has always challenged the norm and furthered the genre," says director/co-screenwriter Gregory. "And *Plague Town*

goes into far more perverse and disturbing territory than the average horror film. The entire cast and crew of Plague Town are not only prepared to push the envelope, but pummel and mutilate it as well."For a first time production from the company that has brought us *Ils (Them)* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, Dark Sky Films has brought us a depressing chapter of "independent" horror. For a project that claims to be perverse, personally, I need more literal evidence to justify these claims. Laying out a plan of forced childbirth and cutting to credits isn't what I'd call "perverse." At least, not in a *Dying Breed* sort of vein, which indulged itself on the visceral images of violent gang rape which, needless to say, is exciting on par with my fetishistic values. To jump from casual reviewing standards to snarky self-deceit, *Plague Town* can measure up to some form of otherworldly entertainment - about as much entertainment as you can extract from watching screaming girls run around in a caked-like darkness and claiming high caliber cinematography. *Plague Town* doesn't succeed on any ends other than a character study in the mind of a naive bitch. To watch characters ripped from *Child's Play 2*, *Girl, Interrupted*, and *Legally Blonde* engage in scenarios composed from pathless obtrusions with locals and to boast some integrity, leaves me as clueless as a certain film starring Alicia Silverstone. And what's worse is the fact that the only character you root for, the father, disappears while looking for help 20 minutes or so in to never be heard from again. No hint to his demise. He was written out completely. Humility has a discerning title and it is *Plague Town*.

-mAQ

EVILENKO
EVILENKO

David Grieco (2004)

Poor old Malcolm McDowell, he has yet to even come close to having an acting role as prestigious as when he played Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*. Apparently, Mr. McDowell rubbed Stanley Kubrick the wrong way after *A Clockwork Orange* and it probably cost him a very successful acting career. Instead, McDowell has spent his career playing in such films as the recent Italian film *Evilenko*. After watching the film, I had no clue that it was actually Italian. I would have assumed *Evilenko* was some anti-Russian British propaganda film.

Evilenko is a film loosely based on the Ukrainian serial killer Andrei Chikatilo. Chikatilo was a sicko that was convicted of killing 52 women and children mostly in Russia. He had a problem with impotence and his murders stemmed from that unfortunate problem. For some reason, it was not hard for me to believe Malcolm McDowell was a child murderer and sex pervert. I found it awfully awkward seeing McDowell attempting to molest a young school girl while in a state of derangement. That being said, the only thing that carries *Evilenko* from beginning to end is Malcolm McDowell's performance.

Italian composer Angelo Badalamenti lent his musical talent to *Evilenko* by producing the film's scores. Badalamenti is best known for his scores in David Lynch's brilliant *Twin Peaks* series and his films such as *Blue Velvet*. Unfortunately, Badalamenti's score doesn't really stick out in *Evilenko*. The lack of a notable score also goes hand in hand with the film's lack of overall aesthetic. *Evilenko* had the feeling of a very cheap TV production produced in one of the less than prosperous countries of Eastern Europe. Essentially, the film lacked the overall artistic power that one comes to expect from an Italian director.

Andrei Chikatilo was a card carrying communist. It is not secret (or maybe it kind of is) that communists are the biggest mass murderers in human history. The impotent killer of *Evilenko* however, has no real position of power except over little children. The way Malcolm McDowell looks at a child is a somewhat disturbing thing to see. What is even worse is seeing the elderly nude body of Malcolm McDowell. *Evilenko* is a film for those that are fans of McDowell or films about nature's worst predators. Just don't expect a work of artistic genius.

-Ty E

YOUNG DR. FREUD

David Grubin (2002)

Aside from *A Dangerous Method* (2011) directed by kosher Canadian auteur David Cronenberg, until rather recently, I did not think there was a film pertaining to the imperative role that his background as an ethnic Eastern European Jew and his hatred of Germanic peoples played on Sigismund Schlomo Freud (otherwise known as Sigmund Freud)—the founding father of the dubious ‘science’ of psychoanalysis—but luckily I recently discovered the docudrama-like made-for-TV ‘biopic’ *Der Junge Freud* (1976) aka *Young Dr. Freud* directed by philo-Semitic Austrian auteur Axel Corti (*God Does Not Believe in Us Anymore, The King’s Whore*) and penned by the director’s longtime collaborator Georg Stefan Troller. The son of a man of partial Italian extraction who was a member of the anti-Nazi resistance that died in 1945, Axel Corti (whose birth name was Axel Fuhrmanns, but assumedly changed his surname to ‘Corti’ to show his solidarity with his Guido blood as opposed to his out-of-fashion Teutonic genes) was anything but a National Socialist sympathizer and Austrian nationalist as demonstrated by his *Wohin und zurück* (1982-1986) aka *Where To and Back Trilogy*, which follows a Viennese Jew of the far-left persuasion whose father who murdered my Nazis and who ultimately stereotypically flees to New York City and inevitably returns back to Europa as a translator/prison interrogator to deal with them nasty Nazis, so naturally his work *Young Dr. Freud* takes a somewhat sympathetic view of Sigmund’s Semitism and how it shaped his anti-kraut/anti-bourgeois pseudo-science, even if the film dares to psychoanalyze the ‘soul doctor’ in the process, thereupon demystifying his legacy as a man that practically created a modern form of secular Judaism via psychoanalysis. Beginning in 1938 with Freud boarding a train from Vienna to London so as to escape from Uncle Adolf’s wrath, *Young Dr. Freud*—as signified by its quite literal title—depicts the degenerate doc’s meager life before he was a Freudian and got addicted to cocaine and cocks, but also and, arguably most importantly, demonstrates how the psychoanalyst’s parents background as Galician Jews made him feel like an outsider of Vienna and born enemy of the Aryan Viennese. Although clearly directed by a man with left-wing sympathies and a respect for Freud, *Young Dr. Freud* is the sort of biopic that could have never been made in Hollywood because, aside from neglecting to portray the psychoanalyst as a humanitarian hero of sorts and mystifying his life by making a patron saint of the holocaust and humanity, the film also somewhat unintentionally demonstrates that his ‘science’ was not much of a science at all, but an intellectual weapon used by a man who saw himself as a modern day Hannibal as a subversive Semite battling against Western Civilization.

Opening with a scene set in 1938 of an old Sigmund Freud boarding a train from Vienna to London, *Young Dr. Freud* accompanies these images with off-

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screen narration from an unnamed narrator who acts as a sort of cinematic psychoanalyst throughout the film and states regarding the psychoanalyst, "Of all the wise men of his day, Freud is at this moment the least loved, probably by himself, too," but, of course, after the Second World War and defeat of the Third Reich, he became a messiah among leftwing and largely Jewish academics and intellectuals who wanted revenge against the Germans and who naturally spread his iconoclastic ideas like the 'plague' (notably, Freud once remarked to his then-associate C.G. Jung during a 1909 trip to America that "they don't know it but I'm bringing them the plague" in regard to introducing his ideas to unsuspecting goy yanks) and have forever tainted Western society, sexualizing everything, including infants. As depicted in the first couple minutes of *Young Dr. Freud*, Freud (played by veteran Austrian TV actor Karlheinz Hackl) is psychoanalyzed via interviews with an unseen narrator, starting with his childhood as a persecuted Eastern Jew who eventually landed in Vienna as a young child so his father (who came from an unreformed Hasidic Jewish background) could pursue business as a wool merchant, stating of this experience, "Vienna always held terrors for me all my life...About as cosy as an arena...You always felt surrounded by strangers...No, not just strangers, unknown beings...To survive, you had to recognize them." In a very telling scene, Freud displays his undying disgust and shame for his father after being attacked by peasant anti-Semites and not defending himself, stating, "I never let that happen to me without defending myself," thus demonstrating he was a born fighter and not a passive victim. When Freud grew up to be a young doctor, he told Dr. Josef Breuer—the Austrian Jewish physician who laid down the foundations for psychoanalysis—that he was disgusted with his teacher's planned trip to Russia, stating, "In Russia they're murdering Jews and you go there to your noble patients...But you're Breuer, not just a Jew...But it's my people they're murdering in their pogroms." When Breuer remarks to Freud that he is "no Eastern Jew," his combative protégé retorts, "My father is," thus proudly displaying his deep sense of attachment to his cultural and racial roots. When courting his soon-to-be-wife Martha Bernays (Sylvia Haider), he confesses to her his ultimate goal with his profession is to be, "Some sort of conqueror, I think...An intellectual adventurer...Someone quite ruthless," which he most certainly will become as a man who will greatly contribute to the destruction of the moral fabric of European civilization.

Beginning with attempting to understand how eels manage to copulate despite the fact that male eels might lack testicles, Freud goes on to take on the case of "Anna O." (pseudonym of Austrian Jewess feminist Bertha Pappenheim) with his teacher Breuer and the two release the cast study *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), which introduced the technique of psychoanalysis as a form of cure, though the book was initially poorly received. Although highly ambitious, which is largely inspired by his abject hatred of Aryans, anti-Semitic or otherwise, and prophetic paranoia regarding potential pogroms, Freud is crippled by self-doubt

and his self-contradictory nature, but luckily his aggressive arrogance compels him to tread on with a vengeance. At the recommendation of an Aryan scientist who does not hate Hebrews, Freud heads to Paris in 1885 for a fellowship with French clinician Jean-Martin Charcot—the so called “Napoleon of the neuroses”—which is a turning point in his career that moved him towards the practice of medical psychopathology which he will be (in)famous for. Freud also starts a long and intellectually deleterious relationship with a crackpot kosher otolaryngologist named Wilhelm Fliess whose theory of ‘nasal reflex neurosis’ postulated that there was a connection between the nose and genitals (and ultimately relating this theory to a number of neurological and psychological symptoms) and whose idea of ‘innate bisexuality’, among countless other dubious perverse theories, will have an imperative influence on the founding father of psychoanalysis. While dealing with a professor named Dr. Meynert (Norbert Kappen), who criticizes the young Jewish doctor, stating, “You believe in hypnosis? That quackery beneath the dignity of thinking men?,” Freud becomes all the more determined to rebel against what he sees as archaic Aryan science, which rejects that men (as opposed to just women) can be hysterical. Meanwhile, Freud gets hooked on cocaine, stating of its benefits, “it boosts work capacity and relieves depression” and that “It’s a substitute for morphine and doesn’t cause addiction,” thus proving that his theories regarding human sexuality were not the only things he was wrong about. While essentially helping to lead the way for the ‘sexual emancipation’ of women and so called ‘sexual freedom’ for everyone else, Freud did not really practice what he preached as he was scared of pussy, which may have led him to be biased in forming his theory that all humans are bisexual.

Ironically concluding with an excerpt from a letter written by Freud to his wife Martha that reads, “Let our biographers sweat. We don’t want to make things easy for them. Let them all be right in their concept of “the hero’s development.” I’m looking forward to the mistakes they make,” Young Dr. Freud is probably the most objective and thoughtful biopic ever made about the psychoanalyst as the film neither portrays him as a Hebraic hero nor Semitic saint, but an absurdly arrogant and exceedingly eccentric character whose Eastern Jewish roots could have never been deracinated, but, instead, fueled his career as a proud Semitic subversive whose instincts and interests compelled him to destroy, with extreme prejudice, German mores. Notably, in a passage from his work *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud, in an attempt to make sense of why he had a metaphysical aversion to stepping foot in Rome, argued he was sort of retracing the footsteps of Hannibal—the Semitic leader of Carthage—as a member of an “alien race” in an Aryan land, writing, “Hannibal... Had been the favorite hero of my later school days... And when in the higher classes I began to understand for the first time what it meant to belong to an alien race... the figure of the semitic general rose still higher in my esteem. To my youthful mind Hannibal and Rome

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symbolized the conflict between the tenacity of Jewry and the organization of the Catholic Church,” and the film *Young Dr. Freud* certainly expresses this strong side of the psychoanalyst, albeit in the abstracted manner of a European attempting to understand a racial outsider. As a man who described himself as “a fanatical Jew” in a 1931 letter and on another occasion writing he had a “strange secret longings” related to his Jewish blood, Freud basically concocted a kosher intellectual weapon through psychoanalysis. As evolutionary psychology Kevin MacDonald wrote in his groundbreaking work *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (2002) regarding Freud and his (un)holy mission against Aryan civilization via psychoanalysis, “His identity as a Jew was thus associated with a self-concept in which he selflessly does battle with the enemies of the group, dying in an act of heroic altruism defending group interests—a mirror-image Jewish version of the grand finale of Wagner’s *Nibelungenlied* that was an ingredient in Nazi ideology.”

A Teutonized Hebrew schooled in Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche who hated the alien world in which he came of age but also hated himself as depicted in scenes from *Young Dr. Freud* where he remarks “I hate Vienna any time of the year...At present everything makes me vomit, including myself,” Freud was an all around corrosive force who did more harm to the world than good. For example, Freud’s nephew Edward, “the father of public relations,” Bernays would utilize his uncle’s theories on the human mind to brainwash the American populous with subconscious propaganda utilizing psychoanalytic techniques, which is depicted in Adam Curtis’s great award-winning 2002 documentary for the BBC, *The Century of the Self* (2002), a epic work that makes it quite clear that Freudian psychoanalysis was a weapon meant to subvert and defile people and not to help them. After all, where has psychoanalysis gotten daughter-lover Woody Allen, himself a lifelong advocate of psychoanalysis?! In terms of the few Freud flicks that exist, *Young Dr. Freud* is the best in terms of introducing the lifelong neurosis of the man behind psychoanalysis, ultimately making the Hollywood movie *Freud: The Secret Passion* (1962) directed by John Huston and starring Montgomery Clift seem like a pseudo-provocative piece of sensationalism and softcore surrealism that gives a redundant reductionist view of the man’s ideas and does not even attempt to touch his Jewishness, arguably the most important influence behind his work. Shot in black-and-white in a vaguely dream-like manner, *Young Dr. Freud* is not exactly a pleasurable picture to watch, but, of course, Freud is not exactly the most heartwarming historical figure to study, thus making the film seem like a suffocating trip through Hebrew intellectual Hades, but an interesting and important one nonetheless that reminds the unconscious gentile viewer that the psychoanalyst did not have their best interests in mind. As the great so called self-loathing Jew Karl Kraus—one of the earliest critics of psychoanalysis and a sort of intellectual adversary of Freud—once

wrote, "The Jews control the press, they control the stockmarket, and now they also control the unconscious."

-Ty E

SAW V
SAW V

David Hackl (2008)

"Here we go again!" - Brendan Fraser in The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor.

This above line was looping through my mind at an incredible velocity as I slowly trudged through the remnants of the once average Saw franchise. All shit hit the fan after Saw II was released only to be slightly redeemed by the second sequel - which was pushing it as it was. In the 5th (Eagh!) installment, director David Hackl creates a morbid sequel weighed down by so much "elusive" material that the film strays from the suspense torture into another one of those incredibly average and dare I say, boring, detective stories. Righteous Kill comes to mind when dissecting the fifth installment. As you can expect, Saw V has an ending that wants you to scream "Oh Shit!" but this one is painstakingly predictable. Saw V is nothing but vapid material only created to set forth a string of extra occurrences which happens in two universes - the Hollywood industry and the in-film multiverse. Saw is a series that refuses to die no matter how many sad souls it tricks into buying tickets. Taking in mind that I enjoyed the first and third for being needless torture for people who didn't pay school dues and other silly trife, Saw V is a sequel that is among the worst of the series and I implore you to not see this film. Saw V cheat sheet so you don't have to see it. If you want to experience an incredibly boring film to the maximum, do not read this following paragraph. Tattooed man crushes his hands and gets his torso slowly sliced by pendulum only to be split in half. A Detective's head is placed in an airtight cube filled with water. He presumes to stab a hole in his neck so he can breathe - survives. V shaped razors attached to a cable pulls a girls head into them decapitating her instantly. Explosion rocks the bald man's world splattering him across the room. Girl is stabbed in neck then electrocuted into a crisp. Man is squished completely and twin buzz saws cut through finger webbing's upwards into the wrist. This completes most of the gore and the entire point of the films. Saw V is a pretty bad film that is indecisively hard to sit through. At times, I found myself fidgeting hoping it would end sooner. Had the film been imagined by the original director's brainstorming, the twist might have been good or surprising. Nothing to see here except violence that can easily be found in classic video nasties which are much more filling in time for All Hallows Day. Easily forgettable and a preliminary excursion into the doomed series that is Saw. If purgatory is sweltering than Saw VI is scalding.

-mAQ

DEAD DREAMS OF MONOCHROME MEN

David Hinton (1989)

Although I have never been particularly fond of serial killers nor the American populous' peculiar obsession with them, I spent a good portion of my time last weekend watching a number of films about them. Out of all of these mostly wretched works, only two left any sort of notable impression on me: *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* (1993) and *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* (1989). While *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* impressed me due to its unabashedly exploitative and downright uproarious portrayal of deranged Dahmer, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* had the total opposite effect on me. Based on a stageplay about Dennis "British Jeffrey Dahmer" Nilsen that was conceived by Lloyd Newson and performed by the DV8 Physical Theatre located in London, England, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* directed by David Hinton (*Strange Fish*) is a militantly expressionistic cinematic performance art piece that can barely be described as a serial killer flick, at least in any conventional sense. DV8 Physical Theatre, which has been described as 'the theatre of blood and bruises', is somewhat notorious for its 'unconventional' approach to dance, using everything from virtual violence to less-than-mobile cripples in their pleasantly peculiar frolic pieces. *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* – a film that begins with four men feeding off of a catchy synthpop track and each other at an aggressive gay club and ends with three of these men laying dead in artful poses – is quite possibly their most infamous yet critically revered work. Featuring not a single line of dialogue nor acknowledging a single character's name, the film expresses a variety of entangled emotions that surely cannot be properly articulated through the use of mere stagnant words. Shot with black-and-white film on minimalistic yet aesthetically domineering sets engulfed amongst unsettling shadows, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* is a work that permeates gritty doom and gloom in a strikingly stylized and queerly indefatigable fashion. Had Jean Cocteau taken steroids instead of opium and collaborated with Jean Genet, Jörg Buttgerit and Derek Jarman on a film directed within the seemingly limited confines of a lone soundstage, it would most likely resemble *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*; a work of truly carnal cinematic poetry in motion.

If the real Dennis Nilsen were to watch *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men*, I am sure he would be more than flattered by the highly fictionalized portrayal of his homo-cidal antics. On top of featuring four men that one would never mistake for being banal government bureaucrats, none of the actors give off the vibe of a feeble and pathetic introvert that footage and photographs of Dennis Nilsen radiate in a most shuddersome manner. Preying exclusively on the weak, including junkies, prostitutes, vagrants and the like, Nilsen was not exactly a stud of a serial killer and neither were his queer quarry. Sporting bold combat boots and shaved heads (or at least two of them are), the muscular martial men

DEAD DREAMS OF MONOCHROME MEN

of *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* look as if they could be training for the remaining days of an apocalyptic world war. Of course, these agile brothers-in-arms are not getting ready to attack an enemy army, but each other. Featuring ambiguous dichotomies that blur the line between sex and violence, and love and hate, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* is a work that examines psychosis and the transcendence of the individual from the organic to inorganic. Due to the exceptionally choreographed and brutishly calculated 'dance' sequences featured in the film, every movement in *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* seems quite naturalistic, despite the blatantly theatrical persuasion of the film. It is not until three of the four men are dead that the viewer realizes the line between the normal and abnormal has been irrevocably crossed. As someone who has always found most forms of dance to be dreadfully insipid and uninspiring, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* proved to be an exorbitantly dynamic work that can be relished even by those individuals who are not very keen on grown men dancing around like coke-fueled fairies.

Using the curious case of cunning coldhearted killer Dennis Nilsen as a mere motif for examining ideas and interpreting emotions about the frailty of human condition in a refreshingly unpedantic manner, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* is a film that will be more of interest to fans of Leni Riefenstahl and Ingmar Bergman's work than the typical serial killer fetishist. For those interested in seeing a strictly realistic portrayal of Dennis Nilsen and his crimes, the gritty British horror-docudrama *Cold Light of Day* (1989) directed by Fiona-Louise (who committed suicide shortly after finishing the film at the premature age of 21) makes for an atmospheric and endearing yet objective depiction of the mass murderer's odious 'sexual' conquests. In many ways, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* is the ultimate anti-serial killer flick. Instead of portraying the killer in a typically romantic manner as a charming social Darwinist with a refined taste for blood (*The Silence of the Lambs*, *American Psycho*), or as a monstrous killing machine with nil emotions (*Halloween*, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*), *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* depicts the deadly man-hunter in a state of unmitigated 'nakedness', characterizing him during his most vulnerable and, ultimately, his most human moments, thus bring humanity to the inhuman; undoubtedly, an audacious and perverse premise that is bound to offend an ample number of viewers. Indeed, the film is as visceral as serial killers flicks come, yet *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* does the seemingly impossible by not featuring a single drop of blood. Needless to say, I never expected for an avant-garde dance film to be one of very few works that, in my opinion, successfully playacts the metaphysics of murder, at least of the thoroughly repressed homosexual sort. Not only would I argue that *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* is quite possibly the most importunate 'dance' film of its time, but I would also wager that it is one of the most celestially idiosyncratic offerings of mostly malodorous and depreciated celluloid ghetto that is the serial killer film.

-Ty E

SLAUGHTER DISC
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David Quitmire (2005)

Horror porn is a somewhat new trend that has been picking up momentum over the last couple of years. This is no surprise when considering that both horror films and porn follow a similar formula (little bit story, action, story, action, etc.). Both types of films also appeal to some of the most powerful and archaic of human emotions. The only reason people watch porn and horror is to satisfy cheap excitement. David Quitmeyer's Slaughter Disc didn't even satisfy my boredom. Slaughter Disc couldn't have cost more than a couple hundred dollars (and it is feature length at 90 minutes) to make. It has a pathetic local cable access channel quality with shitty digital video and crudely synchronized sound. These detractors still don't necessarily destroy a film of this type. Anyone going into a film like this shouldn't expect spectacular production values (or any values). Antiporn is supposed to be what Slaughter Disc is about. I guess that is quite right as I found nothing in the film remotely arousing. A typical looking porn star in dollar bin Halloween make-up and "spooky" white contacts isn't going to appeal to anyone (except maybe fans of Jerry Only's new The Misfits). This false vixen satisfies her lust for blood in a lame "gothic" way. She kills her victims after performing typical sex acts on them. Sorry, but this is no Nekromantik. Slaughter Disc features one of the most ugly and pathetic protagonists to grace the cheap screen of digital video. I hope this "film" isn't an auteur piece as David Quitmeyer has completely incriminated himself as the world's most desperate filmmaker. Slaughter Disc is full of loser masturbation, banal porn, and homemade horror. I can imagine that Quitmeyer (who calls Slaughter Disc "postmodern horror") came up with the idea for the film after drinking a couple cans of Coors Light. The horror world is already polluted with a dung heap of horrendous trash. Slaughter Disc is just another bag of garbage for the already putrid pile. Fans of both porn and horror will find that the film has nothing interesting or stimulating to offer. I hate to give negative reviews to low-budget filmmakers, but with Slaughter Disc it is absolutely necessary. The actual "slaughter disc" is one of those plastic discs that come in CD-R and DVD-R packs. The "slaughter disc" pretty much sums up the whole video (pointless, cheap, and disposable).

-Ty E

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

David Lean (1962)

Lawrence of Arabia is one of the legendary “epic” films that always makes top 100 lists. The film is almost 4 hours of aesthetically pleasing desert cinematography. Lawrence of Arabia follows the life of T.E. Lawrence and his exploits during the first World War. He manages to unite blood thirsty (this is no joke) Arabs so they can kill a bunch of Turks. T.E. Lawrence is a sassy Anglo chap that doesn’t even fit in with his own charming British counterparts. He much prefers wearing Arab sheet gear and shooting Turks with his big revolver. Lawrence also has a thing for Arab men. The real Lawrence used to hire Arabs to whip him for pleasure. In the film, Lawrence is beaten as punishment and becomes quite upset. Was director David Lean trying to cover up the truth? Lawrence of Arabia, like most other epics, suffers from being way too long. Epics are only long because they lack intellectual content. Lawrence of Arabia could have easily been cut an hour. A film starts to blur together when most of it takes place in a desert. Director David Lean wanted to show how “big” a film could be. He inspired Steven Spielberg and George Lucas to kill American cells in the process. Alec Guinness (Obi-Wan Kenobi) is also featured in Lawrence of Arabia. I don’t think that I would agree with the assertion that Lawrence of Arabia is one of the greatest films ever made. It looks like one of the most labor extensive and expensive films ever made. I guess it’s one of the best films ever made when looking at Lawrence of Arabia with a capitalist mindset. I just thought it had beautiful cinematography and not much depth.

-Ty E

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI
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David Lee Fisher (2005)

The majority of film remakes are cinema blasphemy only created because they are a guaranteed moneymaker. Unsurprisingly, a good percentage of remakes are for the horror genre as I doubt the studios really have any respect for their audiences intelligence. When I found out that the 1920 German expressionist horror film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was remade, I became skeptical. On the other hand, I knew the film was not made as a way to cash in on a formally successful franchise. Aside from universities and film societies, I seriously doubt *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* receives many new viewers considering the film is almost 90 years old.

The 2005 “re-imagining” of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* happens to have the sound and set from the original film. The original backgrounds of the 1919 film were scanned and the remake was filmed on a blue screen. This gives the film an odd feeling that you have seen the place before but things are not quite right. I would compare it to a reoccurring nightmare that slightly changes each time. The scanned backgrounds of the original film are fairly seamless in combination with the new acting footage.

The story featured in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is fairly faithful to the original and still retains much of its power. It is just a bit odd to watch a film I have seen countless times now featuring sound dialogue. Naturally, this causes one to focus less on the image than if watching the original. As can be expected, the actors featured in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* lack the power of the original performers. But quite honestly, who could champion the acting skills of Conrad Veidt? The actors featured in the remake deserve to be commended just for taking up such a challenge.

For fans of the original film and Guy Maddin, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is a film worth seeing. At worst it is a novelty film for those that cherish German expressionist cinema. In these so called “postmodern” days, the re-imagining of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is unsurprising. With the lack of original contemporary masterpieces and original auteur, filmmakers spend more time looking at older films to get inspired. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*(2005) director David Lee Fisher deserves a handshake.

-Ty E

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI

David Lee Fisher (2005)

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is one of the notable masterpieces of German Expressionist cinema. German expressionist painters lent their talents to the design of the film resulting in one of most elaborate and unsettling set designs in cinema history. Designer Hermann Warm also created rigid and distorted set pieces that capture the viewer into a world of dissonant emotion that many individuals might find uncomfortable. Contemporary director Tim Burton owes The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (with other films of the German expressionist era) credit for being a major influence on the "gothic" directors work. I also couldn't help but notice the striking resemblance between Edward Scissorhands and somnambulist Cesare. Of course, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is a film worthy of "borrowing" from.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari has been noted for displaying the negative emotions of postwar German society. Basically, film theorists (especially Siegfried Kracauer) believed the film showed the "nightmare" that was Germany after the first world war. Although I believe this is true to some extent, the validity of that arguments doesn't change the fact that the film is a masterpiece (as some contemporary film historians are claiming it is not). The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari was made at a time when the horror film was still taken serious as a genre. The film is one so strong in the aesthetic department that the viewer can't help but keep their eyes on the distorted image. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is also one of few films that comes close to resembling a nightmare. Historical context does not always make a film notable. The artistry of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari speaks for itself.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari has a "twist ending" that does not get old in future viewings. The reason is that The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is a film the sets a mood where the film's story is secondary. Don't get me wrong, the story itself is engulfing and fantastic. You just don't see many films that have as powerful images as those featured in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. Film sets nowadays are designed by over glamorized construction workers. The artists of the German expressionist period captured a nations (or at least their own) disturbed psyche via canvas.

The somnambulist featured in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, despite his effeminate nature, makes the ultimate midnight fiend. For Dr. Caligari to unleash this being for a late night killing is more than appropriate. Jason Voorhees is a deformed retard and Leatherface is just a retard. I love me some slasher films, but when I think of a "scary" killer, Cesare comes to mind. Thankfully, although the film is in a state of minor deterioration (sometimes a good thing), The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari still haunts us today.

-Ty E

ERASERHEAD
ERASERHEAD

David Lynch (1977)

In 2004, David Lynch's film *Eraserhead* (1977) was justly deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" by the United States Library of Congress and chosen for preservation in the National Film Registry. Personally, I feel *Eraserhead* is worthy of all three categories used by the United States Library of Congress, as I indubitably consider the film one of the grandest artistic achievements in American history. When I look back at my entire life, only a handful of hallmark films would leave such a deep impression on me that they would act as markers for which every subsequent cinematic work would be judged; *Eraserhead* being one of those films. *Eraserhead* is the kind of rare cinematic work that seems to have grown organically from the soul of the artist, boldly expressing the most deepest, darkest, and repressed feelings of traditional white America crying out in a nebulous globalized industrial world. I was certainly not surprised to learn that David Lynch has described *Eraserhead* as his "most spiritual movie." Lynch grew up in wholesome "middle America", so it is no revelation to realize that his whole outlook on life was changed when he moved to the industrial wasteland of Philadelphia; the city that would inspire the postindustrial barrenness of *Eraserhead*. Describing his ideal upbringing, Lynch stated, "Because I grew up in a perfect world, other things were a contrast." After viewing *Eraserhead* for the first time, it will be glaringly apparent to the viewer that something was burning a hole in the sensitive filmmaker's pure soul.

After David Lynch married his first wife Peggy (which produced a daughter), the Lynch family moved to Fairmount, Philadelphia, an area plagued with such brutal crimes that it would harbor a dire sense of fear in the young filmmaker. Not only was David Lynch thrown into a state of perpetual fear by the city; he was also a reluctant father in a troubled marriage. After sending a copy of his short film *The Alphabet* (1968) and a script of the short *The Grandmother* to the newly founded American Film Institute, David Lynch received financing for his upcoming work, eventually leaving Philadelphia for the AFI conservatory in Los Angeles, California. Not long after moving to the most populated city in California, Lynch began working on *Eraserhead*. AFI initially granted the director \$10,000.00 to work on his first feature-length (although the film was originally intended to be only 42 minutes) film. Although David Lynch started filming *Eraserhead* in 1972, he would not complete the film until 1977. Not long after he started shooting the first scenes of the film, Lynch's marriage dissolved, as did the grant money for the production. Unable to obtain subsequent money from AFI, David Lynch took out a loan from his generous father and started a newspaper route. Divorced from his wife, Lynch started living on the movie set of *Eraserhead*, filming much of the movie during his sleepless nights. Despite suffering terrible times in Philadelphia, an atomized nuclear family, and

an overall turbulent position in his life, Lynch was able to channel all of these negative emotions into the unsettling nightmarish aura that is *Eraserhead*; A film that Lynch has described as "my Philadelphia story."

Eraserhead begins when a diseased "man in the planet"(who I see as God) manipulates a couple metal mechanical levers, propelling a sperm-like organism to fall out of Henry' Spencer's (the film's protagonist) mouth into an abyss of percolating liquid. Although David Lynch has continuously left the meaning of *Eraserhead* in the realm of ambiguity, I see this scene as the conception of the alien child that will haunt Henry throughout the film. Near the beginning of *Eraserhead*, Henry is invited to eat dinner at the dilapidated house of his hyper-neurotic girlfriend Mary X. Henry, always anxiety-ridden and confused, is especially startled by his Girlfriend's bizarre family. Whilst eating dinner with Mary X's tribe, Henry becomes perturbed by a miniature man-made bleeding chicken that he is quite reluctant to carve. The father of the house makes a point to recognize that the mini-chickens are "just like real chickens," - a statement that reminded of the failure that is the industrially manufactured food industry, as well as the absurdity of inorganic food. I also could relate to the contrived conversation Mary's father tries to strike up with Henry. Every time I have dated a girl, I have been bothered by the banality and passive aggressive nature of the Girl's father, thinking to myself that behind this man's facade of friendliness lies an atavistic urge to kill the man that has buggered his sweet little girl. Mary X's Mother also carries an exaggerated caricature that resembles Mothers of girls I have dated - a combo of aggressive neuroticism and sexual gesturing. Like Henry, I always questioned whether or not I would leave the home of my girlfriend's family unscathed. Unfortunately for Henry, he will be indefinitely enslaved to his girlfriend's family via the birth of a repulsive newborn mutant child.

Eraserhead is a film that would have never worked, had the director opted out of shooting it in black-and-white film stock. Both in atmosphere and aesthetic, the film is a stark colorless journey into a very real nightmare, following a lonely life that hopelessly struggles to find physical/psychological relief. Thank the Anti-Christ that *Eraserhead* reached cult status in the underground cinema circuit, as the film's success probably saved Lynch from a dreadful life. Every time I watch *Eraserhead* and see Henry Spencer lose sanity as his mutant infant cries endlessly, I can only guess the unmentionable things that haunted David Lynch's mind as a destitute parent living in the cold bowels of a Philadelphia ghetto. The only escape Henry has in *Eraserhead* is in the company of a beautiful temptress that lives across the hall and a mutant-cheek cutie that lives in his radiator. Henry's girlfriend is homely at best, with a personality comparable to that of a neurotic toddler that suffers from acute autism. I think that most viewers of *Eraserhead* will agree that Henry's extracurricular sexual liaisons are quite understandable when you consider the intolerable nature of his girlfriend; a highly disagreeable gal that spends most of her time falling victim to seizures. If

ERASERHEAD

you believe that you have suffered immensely from a highly destructive romantic relationship at some point in your life, after watching *Eraserhead* you will indubitably change your mind and feel nothing short of the deepest empathy for poor Henry Spencer; God's most lonely man. By directing *Eraserhead*, David Lynch audaciously filmed his black and battered heart on celluloid for all the world to see.

Although I have seen more than my fair share of films with dreamlike qualities, *Eraserhead* is the only one that permeated the organic feeling of an authentic dream. Like Henry Spencer, in my dreams I have had the tragic feeling of losing a beloved lady in the darkness of hallways. During dreams, I have also had the pleasure of meeting an autoerotic succubus, as well as a virginal blond beauty; the two archetypal extremes of female sexuality. I decided to re-watch *Eraserhead* a couple days ago after hearing a worthy cover of the song "In Heaven" by the darkwave group The Danse Society. Although *Eraserhead* is a cinematic journey into heaven, the film also takes the viewer deep into the bottomless pits of psychological hell. The lady in the radiator may have an unsettling smile, but she certainly makes "everything thing feel fine." Despite the morbid nature and grueling intensity throughout most of the film, *Eraserhead* concludes on an uplifting note, as if David Lynch was able to foretell the fruitful career he would have in filmmaking (not to mention the fact he has dated beautiful women like Isabella Rossellini). *Eraserhead* ends with a climax more electrifying than a brothel of flapper whores screaming out in ecstasy as they reach the peak of an ethereal collective orgasm. If you consider cinema holy, *Eraserhead* is your Book of Revelation.

-Ty E

DUNE

David Lynch (1984)

Dune is David Lynch's only sci-fi film. Lynch considers Dune to be his only artistic failure. After viewing the film for the first time, I thought Dune was Lynch's "biggest" mess. I assumed it was merely jumbled pieces of the Frank Herbert novel (which I have not read). I have changed my mind on the abstract sci-fi film. Dune has more cohesion than Lynch's recent digital effort *Inland Empire*. Although the film lacks a lot in the way of detail, Dune makes up for it in aesthetics. The set design in Dune makes *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* look weak in comparison. The shots of the sand dunes, deserts, and other landscapes are easily comparable to the beauty found in David Lean's (who at one point was supposed to direct Dune) *Lawrence of Arabia*. In contrast to the beauty of the film, Dune also includes futuristic dark knights of the apocalypse. The Baron and his henchman offer a sort of evil that is highly enjoyable. The Baron has a striking resemblance to second in command of Third Reich Hermann Göring (who was descended from Bavarian Barons). Like Göring, the Baron enjoyed himself some young men. The Baron only gives a slight signal to his feelings when admiring Feyd (played by Sting). The Baron and Göring also share a charismatic bloated flamboyance that they somehow pull off. Hermann Göring was a hedonistic drug addict who was forced to wear a straight jacket when committed at a mental hospital. The Baron also carries a similar profile in his power hungry sociopath ways. The Baron

Hermann Göring

I never thought I would see Kyle MacLachlan play a Christ like figure. His performance in his role as Paul (who later emerges later in the film as Muad'Dib) is surprisingly bold. Paul has invested his life in obtaining the "spice" to confirm his messianic powers. Gigantic sandworms, neon blue eyed creep children, fire crotch Nazis, and Sting offer elements not often seen in David Lynch films. I still think that *Eraserhead* is Lynch's greatest achievement. Dune lies somewhere in the middle of Lynch's best films (I used to think Dune was his worst film). Someone needs to convince Lynch to go back to film. His artistic freedom needs to be somewhat limited.

-Ty E

BLUE VELVET
BLUE VELVET

David Lynch (1986)

I go back and forth on what is my favorite David Lynch film. It wasn't hard for me to realize, however, that *Eraserhead* and *Blue Velvet* are the most important to me. Although *Eraserhead* left a much larger impression on me, *Blue Velvet* is a film that I go back to most often. *Blue Velvet* is also one of the few films that has made me feel patriotic as an American. Like the setting of Lumberton in *Blue Velvet*, I grew up in a small town. Also like the world featured in the film, I felt slightly disturbed by the strange wholesomeness of the community and also sought to find the more subversive elements in my small town.

Jeffrey Beaumont is a fairly "normal" college student who returns to his hometown after his father suffers from a severe stroke. The stroke scene in *Blue Velvet* is hilarious like many of the tragic events featured in the film. I especially liked when a Jack Russell terrier starts attacking the water coming out of the hose in slow motion. Although supposedly "man's best friend," this doggy seems completely apathetic to his owners horrible fall. This scene, and like many other in *Blue Velvet*, is a brilliant assault on the values that the post-World War II suburbanites held so deeply.

Jeffrey Beaumont finds himself in a strange situation when he finds a human ear randomly in a vacant grass field. Once giving the ear to a local police detective, he begins to realize that things are not quite right in Lumberton. Then on after, Jeffrey begins to realize that the small town he grew up in is not so normal after all. With *Blue Velvet*, David Lynch was able to create a film of mystery that borders on the surreal. David Lynch has admitted that he is not an intellectual and that his ideas come from subconsciously within. I believe this is why *Blue Velvet* is a unique film and the story that could not have been contrived by the most clever of screenwriters/filmmakers.

Isabella Rossellini is an undeniably beautiful and stunning woman yet I find it hard to see her as sexually attractive. This is probably due to her ability to play a completely deranged Dorothy Vallens in *Blue Velvet* in a very authentic manner. Whether it be a knife wielding Dorothy demanding Jeffrey to strip or her being completely naked and battered near the end as she speaks of Jeffrey putting his "disease" in her, she is genuinely creepy. Dorothy also acts as the perfect opposite and arch enemy of Jeffrey's teenage love interest, Sandy. Whereas Dorothy is somewhat voluptuous and dark haired, Sandy is very homely (or more like ugly) and blond. David Lynch's dichotomy of the beautiful ruined whore and the plain Jane wholesome blond girl next door is something that probably crossed his mind many times in his younger years. With the conclusion of *Blue Velvet*, it seems that beautiful deranged women are only good for screwing and wholesome girls are good for marrying. What a profound revelation.

Dennis Hopper's performance as Frank Booth in *Blue Velvet* is without doubt

one of his greatest. The only other performance by Hopper that rivals it is his performance in Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* as the crippled psycho biker Feck. From the initial appearance of Frank Booth in *Blue Velvet*, the tone of the film changes. Frank Booth is a criminal with some serious mother issues. Like many of the most inhumane killers and politicians of history, Booth seems to have some sexual issues as shown after he rapes Dorothy Vallens in an almost ritualistic manner. A friend of Frank Booth named Ben also seems to have sexual issues. Frank calls Ben "suave" various times during his visit at his old ugly whore infested residence. Ben's "suaveness" is that he is an effeminate homosexual pimp (assumed) that has an ability to pull off pancake makeup. Due to their odd sexualities and pathologies, both Frank and Ben have fallen into a life of "unnatural" crime.

Suave Ben

Despite being a somewhat strange film, *Blue Velvet* is a great film to watch with friends. Quoting such Frank Booth lines in *Blue Velvet* like "baby wants to fuck!" and "Heineken? Fuck that shit! Pabst Blue Ribbon!" have become a sort of cult (or not so cult) phenomenon. One also cannot forget the memorable soundtrack in *Blue Velvet*. Dorothy Vallens's less than musical performance of *Blue Velvet* is notable as well as queer Ben's lip-sync performance of Roy Orbison's "In Dreams." To bring up *River's Edge* once again, this film and *Blue Velvet* make the perfect two billing midnight living room screening.

Blue Velvet is the ultimate piece of cinematic Americana. That being said, I believe David Lynch to be the greatest truly "American" contemporary director. Only America could produce such a unique individual as the ever so charming Frank Booth. Only America could produce such an ideal "normal" young man as Jeffrey Beaumont. Finally, only America could produce such a unique film as *Blue Velvet*. What a shame that Hollywood is full of such banal and mediocre "directors." One can only guess how many David Lynchs are hiding out in American small towns.

-Ty E

WILD AT HEART
WILD AT HEART

David Lynch (1990)

Exceedingly eccentric white trash Elvis Presley worship, unclad morbidly obese hookers, a Southern Negro being beaten to death by Nicholas Cage to the soothing sounds of speed metal music, wayward The Wizard of Oz fetishism of the looney Lynchian sort, Jack 'Eraserhead' Nance barking like a dog, a rather sleazy Willem Dafoe accidentally blowing his own head off with a sawed-off shotgun, the whoring out of ostensible all-American girl Laura Dern in the role of a Marilyn Monroe-esque character, Hebraic proto-hipster John Laurie sporting a confederate flag trucker hat, a hyper hysterical Sherilyn Fenn dying in a brutal car wreck after complaining about such trivialities as misplacing her purse, and the absurdist reinvention of the Southern Gothic are just a couple of the reasons why *Wild at Heart* (1990) has become one of my favorite David Lynch films, with *Eraserhead* (1977) and *Blue Velvet* (1986) being the only films directed by the avant-garde neo-surrealist auteur that transcend it in terms of celluloid majesty. Indeed, while I initially wrote-off *Wild at Heart* as an interesting, if not second rate, work directed by an auteur who had already reached his full artistic potential with *Blue Velvet* when I first saw it over a decade ago or so, it is now one of my favorite films of the 1990s and probably the only Nicholas Cage film I do not feel embarrassed about recommending to my friends. Arguably Lynch's most overtly erotic yet darkly humorous work to date, *Wild at Heart* is based on the neo-noir pulp novel *Wild at Heart: The Story of Sailor and Lula* (1990) by 'neo-Beat' poet/novelist Barry Gifford (who would later go on to co-pen *Loft Highway* (1997) with Lynch) and features one of the greatest collections of character actors in film history, including Harry Dean Stanton, Willem Dafoe, Crispin Glover, Isabella Rossellini, Jack Nance, John Lurie, Sherilyn Fenn, Grace Zabriskie, and Diane Ladd, amongst various other wild and wayward walking and talking human caricatures. Based on a novel Lynch described as being "a really modern romance in a violent world – a picture about finding love in hell," *Wild at Heart* is like a Southern fried *Blue Velvet* minus any inkling of wholesome Americana as a sort of heterosexual love letter to Tennessee Williams (interestingly, stars Diane Ladd and Laura Dern are related to Williams). Featuring Hollywood goofball Nicholas Cage (who wears his own snakeskin jacket in the film, which he did in tribute to Marlon Brando's performance in *The Fugitive Kind* (1960), which was based on the Williams play *Orpheus Descending* (1957)) in the lead role in what unquestionably the greatest and most fitting performance of his career as an exceedingly eccentric Elvis fan, *Wild at Heart* is a rare cinematic work that manages to be as unwaveringly entertaining and provocative as it is aesthetically audacious, which is undoubtedly one of Lynch's greatest talents as a filmmaker who has managed to do the seemingly impossible by bringing the avant-garde to Hollyweird. A neo-noir/southern gothic/road movie hybrid that

totally distinguishes itself from the old school film genres it is inspired by, *Wild at Heart* is ultimately the closest an American film from the 1990s has come to resembling genuine American celluloid art, as a sort of playfully pernicious cinematic postcard from the monstrously mongrelized hell-on-earth that is the post-Confederate South. In other words, *Wild at Heart* is about as 'culturally sensitive' as a Nathan Bedford Forrest sex tape.

Beginning with strangely loveable 'antihero' Sailor Ripley—a character aptly described by actor Nicholas Cage as “a kind of romantic Southern outlaw”—brutally beating to death a sleazy Negro criminal named Bobby Ray Lemon (played by stuntman Gregg Dandridge) to rather ridiculous speed metal music in what I believe is one of the most absurdly humorous scenes of cinema history, *Wild at Heart* immediately lets the viewer know that they are watching a film that neither Spike Lee nor Steven Spielberg could stomach. The black thug that Sailor murdered was hired by his 20-year-old 'virgin-whore' girlfriend Lula Pace Fortune's (Laura Dern) maniac mother Marietta Fortune (Diane Ladd) to kill him, so naturally the snakeskin-jacket-sporting gentleman killed the sinister watermelon man in defense, even if he seemed to have a little too much fun while doing it. Unfortunately for him, Marietta—a whack-job wench and somewhat over-the-hill femme fatale who sometimes takes on the form of a broomstick-riding Wicked Witch of the West—believes Sailor was a witness to the murder of Lula's father in an act of arson/murder disguised as an accidental fire and thus wants to dispose of him before he can tell everyone the truth (though, in fact, he never actually witnessed the crime). As a result of committing the murder of the black hoodlum at a very public Cape Fear ballroom located somewhere in between North Carolina and South Carolina, Sailor is sent to prison for a short time, but when he gets out his beloved Lula is waiting for him outside the jail and the two rekindle their literal and figurative flame by heading to a motel room and making passionate mattress-drenching love. The same night, the two lecherous love birds go to a concert for the speed metal band Powermad and when Lula is harassed by a dimwitted Guido metalhead, Sailor respectfully beats said Guido metalhead's ass and proceeds to sing a quasi-campy cover of Elvis Presley's "Love Me." A hopeless romantic who is not exactly the wisest when it comes to nuances of law and order, Sailor decides to break parole and head on a Bonnie and Clyde-esque road trip with Lula to sunny California. Meanwhile, Lula's deranged mother Marietta hires a private detective Johnnie Farragut (Harry Dean Stanton), who also happens to be her on-and-off again boyfriend, to track down Sailor and Lula and bring them back. A scheming bitch of a witch if there ever was one, Marietta also hires another on-and-off again boyfriend, gangster Marcellus Santos (J. E. Freeman) to track down and kill Sailor, but the career criminals opts for killing Johnnie Farragut first. Though already a psychopathic witch of a woman, Marietta loses what little is left of her sanity upon discovering Farragut is dead and proceeds to draw over her face and entire body with

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red lipstick. Meanwhile, Sailor and Lula, who have no idea of the demented depth of Marietta's sadistic she-bitch schemes, wallow in their wild and wanton romantic road trip as if they are the only two people in the world, but the two receive a bad omen when while driving on a road called the 'Yellow Brick Road' they discover the horrific aftermath of a two-car accident, even witnessing a babbling and bloodied broad (Sherilyn Fenn) taking her last gasp right before their startled eyes.

With less than \$100 to their names, Sailor and Luna end up in a Texas hell-hole of a town named 'Big Tuna' where most of the Fellini-esque inhabitants seem like they would probably reek of rancid fish guts. Not long after reluctantly landing in Big Tuna, Sailor bumps into an old Latina gal pal named Perdita Durango (Isabella Rossellini), who pretends to give him vital information as to whether or not there is a price on his head but is really in cahoots with hitman Santos and a mysterious mob boss named Mr. Reindeer (W. Morgan Sheppard), who has a peculiar proclivity towards flashing a shiny half dollar before executing his victims. After learning that Lula is pregnant, Sailor becomes so desperate that he agrees to commit a bank robbery with a sinister sex pervert of an ex-marine turned psychopathic career criminal named Bobby Peru (Willem Dafoe). Little does Sailor realize that Mr. Peru sexually assaulted Lula and works with Ms. Durango/Mr. Reindeer and thus plans to kill the 'E' fan during the bank robbery. Of course, the bank robbery is botched when a cop randomly shows up and Sailor manages to survive the ordeal after Peru gets his head blown off (with his own gun!) during a shootout with the police officer. The snakeskin-sporting protagonist is sentenced to almost 6 years (5 years, 10 months, 21 days to be exact) in prison for his part in the crime and is separated from his wife for about 6 years, not to mention the fact that he misses bonding with his son during his most critical years. Just as she did about 6 years before, Lula waits for Sailor outside the prison when he is released from jail, albeit this time with their young son Pace Fortune (Glenn Walker Harris Jr.), but their happiness upon reuniting is short-lived as the ex-con believes it will be best for everyone involved if he goes elsewhere and disappear from their lives entirely. Luckily, not long after his heartbreaking and seemingly senseless breakup with Lula, Sailor is beaten up by a gang of multicultural thugs after calling them "faggots," as he passes out from the beating and has a vision of the Glinda the Good Witch (as portrayed by Sheryl 'Laura Palmer' Lee) from *The Wizard of Oz*, who pleads to him, "Don't turn away from love, Sailor." After becoming conscious again, Sailor apologizes to the yellow and brown gangs members for questioning their sexuality and thanks them for beating him up and knocking some much needed sense into him. In the end, Sailor reunites with Lula and sings a cover of E's "Love Me Tender", which is a song he said he would only sing to his wife.

Despite receiving mostly mixed and negative reviews upon its initial release (most notably by exceedingly effete and equally flabby film critic Roger Ebert,

who led an army of trendy boozers at Cannes after Jury President Bernardo Bertolucci announced the film won the most prestigious prize), *Wild at Heart* managed to rightfully win the coveted 'Palme d'Or' at the Cannes Film Festival in 1990, thus demonstrating that despite their airs of pretense, the frogs surely have the right to be stinking snobs, especially while in the company of philistine American film critics. In eclectically bizarre company with *The Wiz* (1978) directed by Sidney Lumet, *Weit Weit Weg* (1995) aka *Far Far Away* directed by Norwegian-kraut queer video artist Bjørn Melhus, and *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* (2011) in Ron Atkins in its postmodern celluloid defiling of *The Wizard of Oz*, *Wild at Heart* ultimately says "There's no place like home" in a fashion worthy of 100 dead dipsomaniac Confederate war generals, as an American fairytale for those individuals that are far too cynical and disillusioned with the land of the culturally-free and socially-depraved to give a crap about classical children's stories. It should be noted that, aside from the *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991) prequel/epilogue *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), *Wild at Heart* is technically the only film directed by David Lynch that has a sequel (though it is more a sequel to Gifford's *Sailor and Lula* novel series than a directed sequel to Lynch's film), with *Perdita Durango* (1997) aka *Dance with the Devil*—a work also based on a Barry Gifford novel centering around the character Perdita Durango (albeit this time played by the less aesthetically pleasing Rosie Perez, as opposed to Isabella Rossellini)—being directed by Spanish auteur Álex de la Iglesia instead of Mr. Eraserhead. While being more faithful to Latino lunacy than Lynchian and lacking the characters of *Sailor and Lula*, *Perdita Durango* will certainly be of interest to most *Wild at Heart* fans, as a work that ultimately wallows more in black Meztizo humor than black white Southern hearts. While I must admit it is hard for me to relate to Elvisphile protagonist *Sailor* on most levels, I found myself rooting for his purity of heart and dangerous dedication to romance. Indeed, while seeming a bit autistic when he declares that his snakeskin "represents a symbol of my individuality" and "belief in personal freedom," *Sailor* simultaneously represents the best and worst thing about America as an idealist whose dreams are also the source of his worst nightmares, yet he keeps treading on anyway like any great die hard dumb ass yank would.

If Pasolini gave a good idea of the spirit of post-WWII Italy during the so-called 'Years of Lead' with his films and written works and Fassbinder did the same with his plays and films regarding the post-Wirtschaftswunder years and far-left terrorist in West Germany during 1970s, David Lynch has certainly achieved something similar, with *Wild at Heart* reflecting the director's fear of America falling into criminal barbarism, or as he stated upon reading Gifford's book and deciding to tackle the project, "It was just exactly the right thing at the right time. The book and the violence in America merged in my mind and many different things happened." Of course, since *Wild at Heart*, Lynch's works have only become all the more labyrinthine and impenetrable, with his most recent

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feature *Inland Empire* (2006) indicating that America is on the brink of some sort of cultural apocalypse. That being said, I now get a nostalgic feel while watching *Wild at Heart*, as it depicts a time when filmmakers had no qualms about featuring evil negro characters and before the Southwest faced the wraith of the Mestizo Reconquista, not to mention the fact that it features Nicholas Cage before he became one of the worst leading men of cinema history.

-Ty E

TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME

David Lynch (1992) *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* may be David Lynch's most disappointing film. Long time lovers of Lynch and *Twin Peaks* even hated it. *Fire Walk With Me* explores the life of Laura Palmer leading up to her death. Most *Twin Peaks* fans would agree this was not necessary. Probably around half the characters from the TV show never make an appearance in *Fire Walk With Me*. The film also takes a more serious tone than the quirky TV show. For a feature length film, the quality isn't much different than TV. *Fire Walk With Me* features naughty things like boobies and cracked open skulls. Laura Palmer's Father is not exactly the best role model.

Fire Walk With Me is still "Lynchian." The film has the feel of your typical Lynch film. I assume since *Twin Peaks* was canceled Lynch decided the only way to get out all his perverse TP fantasies would be to do a film. Big names like Kiefer Sutherland and David Bowie appear. Neither of which should have entered Lynch's Midwestern world.

Still, I do enjoy *Fire Walk With Me*. It is entertaining enough to get me through the entire film. It is also no doubt better than Lynch's complete self proclaimed failure *Dune*. The film has grown a little bit on me since my first viewing (which I barely made it through). Laura Palmer scares me. What a crazy bitch.

-Ty E

LOST HIGHWAY
LOST HIGHWAY

David Lynch (1997)

David Lynch's *Lost Highway* is one of my favorite efforts from the director of "weird." The film was one of Lynch's first (although he had bewildered people in the past) to really irritate the mainstream audience in its extreme ambiguity and lack of rational linear structure. *Lost Highway* follows a successful avant-garde Jazz musician and the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of his wife. While being charged and imprisoned for the murder of his wife, the Jazz musician morphs into a young man for no apparent reason and then is released from jail. Of course, no reason is given for this bodily change. David Lynch makes no lie about his affinity for mystery and things that intrigue. I respect Lynch's obsession with the unconscious and his contempt for intellectualism. *Lost Highway* is a solidly constructed film to me. *Mulholland Dr.* and *Inland Empire* are both films that left me feeling like I just wasted a couple of hours. I have gone back to these various times and have yet to completely respect them (especially *Inland Empire*). The masterpiece (in its own right) that is *Lost Highway* did not give Lynch a license to delve beyond the subconscious. In all honesty, I believe the "weirdness" of *Inland Empire* was a bit contrived at times. Someone needs to take away Lynch's digital camera. *Lost Highway* was the last film to feature Eraserhead Jack Nance. Shortly after *Lost Highway* was completed, Nance was beaten up by two Mexicans at a donut shop because he made a joke about their baggy pants (and told them to get a job and haircut). Nance was later found dead in his apartment with a large amount of alcohol in his system. Nance's minor role as a mechanic in *Lost Highway* was a good way to end an inconsistent career (for the most part only playing minor roles). The character of Mr. Eddy is one of the most hilarious (and that's saying a lot) characters to ever be featured in a Lynch film. Mr. Eddy makes a true contribution to society when he bitch slaps a white collar scumbag for riding his ass. That "cocksucker" got what he deserved. People should take notice to the virtuous philosophies of Mr. Eddy. Wife killer Robert Blake shines as the "mystery man" who has a resemblance to Bela Lugosi's Dracula. Tiny old Italian men are enough to scare any rational individual. The fear that he invokes in Bill Pullman's character gave me much more respect for the killer. Bill Pullman is one of the lamest actors in film history. David Lynch recently mentioned his realization that *Lost Highway* was inspired by the O.J. Simpson trial. I have my own interpretation of the film, but I have no intention of mentioning it. I find it ugly and obnoxious when I hear fan's of David Lynch express their "solid" interpretations of the Hollywood Auteur's films. I would rather watch the latest Michael Bay flick.

-Ty E

THE STRAIGHT STORY

David Lynch (1999)

After recently watching Alexander Payne's obscenely overrated, white-prole-patronizing Midwestern celluloid mess *Nebraska* (2013), I felt it was about time that I re-watch the David Lynch film that it ripped off, *The Straight Story* (1999). Easily the 'strangest' and most unconventionally conventional film in Lynch's oeuvre, *The Straight Story* has the distinction of not only being the director's sole G-rated Disney movie, but also the only film he was not actually involved with penning (although the film was co-written by Lynch's ex-wife/baby mamma/collaborator Mary Sweeney). Indeed, a film that could not be more fittingly titled, *The Straight Story* is a 'straight story' based on a true story about a straight old man named Alvin Straight who, at the age of 73, rode his John Deere riding lawnmower straight across Iowa and Wisconsin over a six week period in 1994 to make peace with his 80-year-old brother who had just suffered a stroke. While Lynch's films have always been as distinctly American as apple pie, *The Straight Story* is certainly more sweet than bittersweet and always warm inside, as if cooked to perfection by your long dead grandmother. Undoubtedly, Lynch's most sentimental film since *The Elephant Man* (1980), albeit in a more genuine and personal way, *The Straight Story* is a rare mainstream movie that depicts the strong, stoic, steadfast and primitively 'sentimental' America that has rarely been authentically depicted onscreen and is all but dead. Starring Richard Farnsworth (*The Grey Fox*, *Misery*) as the lead in a classic role that John Hurt and Gregory Peck probably regret turning down that would earn the star an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor (making Farnsworth the oldest person ever nominated for the award at that time), *The Straight Story*, not unlike a John Deere tractor, is a slow but strong and steady work that reminds one that not all road movies have to be about hippie stoners going to pick up drugs, morbidly depressed existentialists going nowhere fast in life, or a bunch of naïve teenagers attempting to 'find themselves' (or whatever). The one David Lynch film you can show your grandfather without him thinking you're some sort of crazed degenerate and/or pansy pervert, *The Straight Story* is just another reminder why the man who directed *Eraserhead* is the only true auteur working in Hollywood (or at least somewhere around it) who has given a voice to the silent majority.

Alvin Straight (Richard Farnsworth) is a 73-year-old World War II veteran and widow who probably only has a couple years to live and, due to his poor eyesight, he no longer even has a driver's license, which has diminished his sense of independence. The father of seven children (seven more died at birth) whose wife died in 1981 and whose middle-age daughter Rose (Sissy Spacek), who is borderline retarded (but has an amazing memory when it comes to simple dates and facts), now takes care of him, Alvin is essentially just waiting to die in peace,

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but that all changes when he learns that his estranged big brother Lyle (Harry Dean Stanton) has just had a debilitating stroke. Due to some bad blood between the two, Alvin has not seen his brother in a decade and wants to make peace with him before he dies. On top of ignoring his daughter Rose's advice that he use a walker and give up his vice of alcohol and tobacco, Alvin eventually decides he will test his strength by riding his rather ancient riding lawnmower across a couple to states to a place called 'Mount Zion' where his big bro lives. Needless to say, Rose and Alvin's equally elderly friends think it is a bad idea, but the headstrong old timer does not let negative naysayers get him down. On his first attempt, Alvin fails after his less than trusty mower breaks down, so he hilariously blasts away the piece of archaic yard equipment with his surely trusty shotgun by shooting the gas tank. After buying a reliable green John Deere tractor from a salesman (Everett McGill) who finds the whole trip to Mount Zion on a lawnmower quite dubious, Alvin, who has plenty of gas and Braunschweiger to eat, makes his second attempt, which will ultimately be successful, but not without some detours on the way. One night while cooking wieners, Alvin meets a young hitchhiker female who the old timer deduces is pregnant and has run away from home. Alvin then tells a story about his daughter Rose lost all four of her children after one of them was burnt when a babysitter was watching them, as the state felt such a mentally handicapped woman could not possibly be fit to raise children, even if she had nothing to do with the fact her child was injured. Using a bundle of sticks as a metaphor for the unbreakable force of family (the whole 'United we stand...divided we fall' deal), Alvin, who may not be an intellectual but is certainly wise for his years, seems to leave a deep impression on the naïve hitchhiker.

After being passed by a group of RAGBRAI cyclists, Alvin later finds himself hanging out at a cyclist camp with some young folks where he discusses old age and states that one of the worse part of one's golden years is, "remembering when you was young." After running into a hysterical woman who has just run over and killed a deer with her car and proceeds to cry about her curse-like propensity for hitting the cute animals, Alvin finds himself with dinner and cooks and eats the still slightly warmly road kill. After going down a steep hill on his tractor, Alvin runs into transmission trouble, but luckily he gets help from some rather helpful locals. In the down time, Alvin hooks up with a fellow beer-loving vet and confesses how as a sniper during the Second World War he killed many Germans and even accidentally killed a comrade of Polish extraction named Kotz via friendly fire and how he has had to carry that burden his entire life. Eventually, Alvin has his tractor fixed by two bickering brothers named the 'Olson Twins' (Kevin and John P. Farley, who are the brothers of Chris Farley), who try to overcharge the old man for their work but they drop the price after some intense bartering. Alvin also gives the Olson Twins a lesson on brotherly love, remarking regarding his trip to see his brother, "this trip is a hard swallow... of my pride."

Indeed, as Alvin tells a Priest (John Lordan) he meets that night in a cemetery regarding the bad blood between him and his brother, "Story as old as the Bible. Cain and Abel. Anger, vanity. You mix that together with liquor, and...you've got two brothers who haven't spoken in ten years." When the Priest asks about his 'peculiar' form of transportation, Alvin matter-of-factly states, "Well, you're not the first person to notice that. Padre. My eyes are bad. I can't drive. I don't like someone else drivin' the bus, and I need to get to my brother's." Regarding Alvin's decision to make peace with his brother, the Padre kindly states, "I say, 'Amen' to that, brother." With only a small drive to his brother Lyle's, Alvin ends up breaking down, but luckily it is just because he is out of gas and a farmer on a very large tractor gives him some fuel to finish the trip. Upon arriving at his brother's discernibly dilapidated home in the woods, Alvin calls Lyle's name and his brother eventually walks out very slowly with his hand firmly clasping a cane. Upon sitting next to one another on the porch of the house, Lyle asks, "Did you ride that thing all the way out here to see me?" and Alvin replies, "I did, Lyle," with both men tearing up intensely upon their long awaited reunion as men whose lives have dried up. Undoubtedly, it surely would have meant less to Lyle if his brother merely took a bus, as Alvin's John Deere odyssey was surely an act of atonement for both his brother and his life in general.

Undoubtedly a heartwarming celluloid tale that manages to be sentimental without being too superficial or phony, *The Straight Story* seems somewhat depressing when one considers the fact that star Richard Farnsworth, who was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer in 1999 and was in much pain during the filming of Lynch's film, committed suicide the same year by shooting himself at his own ranch home. Golden years suicides aside, Farnsworth certainly proved he shared a sort of kindred spirit with the real Alvin Straight as he did not let illness stop him from achieving in what age few people achieve in an entire lifetime. Like a Wim Wenders' flick minus the sometimes plodding pretense and existentialist Europeanness, *The Straight Story* is the true heart of (old) America in the form of a John Deere and a sort of celluloid eulogy for the so-called 'Greatest Generation' that ever lived. Indeed, while I have no doubt that Alvin Straight's generation makes every subsequent generation seem like a bunch of pampered pansies who do more consuming than producing, it's quite ironic that same generation won a war that would ultimately destroy their way of life forever. Indeed, with the Americanization of the world and the flooding of America itself with innately alien and mostly inassimilable diasporas from the third world who have nothing but contempt for the relatively wholesome sort of people depicted in *The Straight Story*, it would seem Alvin's killing of krauts and his Polish friend during the Second World War was for nothing but to guarantee that his grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have rather dubious futures where old expressions like, "Oh, for cry eye!" (a favorite saying of one of Mr. Straight's friends) will be deader than road kill and where biracial children will have noth-

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ing but scorn for their fair-haired cracker ancestors. A true American 'Heimat' flick with a shockingly refreshing sense of purity and dignity that is nearly impossible to find anywhere nowadays—be it in cinema or otherwise—is as straight as celluloid storytelling comes, as a picture perfect postcard of the most weirdly unweird Lynchian sort.

-Ty E

INLAND EMPIRE

David Lynch (2006) Any fan of the bizarre or down right obscure cinema, knows the name David Lynch. Over decades, he has sealed his place as the master of American mainstream arthouse with his debut film *Eraserhead*; which is among his best film and if not, one of the most disturbing pieces of independent cinema to grace US soil. Throughout the years, he has expanded in many different genre pieces and themes for film including alcoholism, surrealism, sexual dysfunction, and identity crisis. With his newest film *Inland Empire* finally released, many fans are left confused due to the sprawling 3 hours of nonsense that seems like every deleted scene from a Lynch film mashed together and given reject characters.

The film pays its homage to his own creation, *Mulholland Drive*, at the very beginning and continues throughout the runtime. Lynch's muse Laura Dern stars in the film which quite simply, is about a woman in trouble. The reason he never explained this is because i don't even think he knows what this film is about.

Many theories have been unearthed and clues pieced together to form some plot about a woman with an acting curse. Many of the scenes are just completely random and fit in nowhere. The only satisfaction presented in this film is the score, the rabbit scenes, and the tense screen on the poster pictured above. Many of the scenes are disjointed and connected with an amazing soundtrack. The soundtrack is one of the key elements in the deliverence of the story. If it wasn't for the soundtrack, i might have completely despised this film. Over the years, Lynch has accumulated an unnecessarily huge fanbase. With this in mind, the decision to permanently switch to Digital Video isn't that strange at all. With the rise of David Lynch, the "auteur", it seems he realized that he could make an extreme amount of capital off the situation, thus releasing his own brand of coffee beans tagged with the line "It's all in the beans ... and I'm just full of beans." This tagline is either self-mocking or just an attempt to make people fashionable if you gobble up Lynch's beans. Some might get hotheaded and lash out on me by saying "You just didn't get it lol". My friends, i didn't want to get it. The hallucination within another hallucination just got old after 30 minutes. With the beans in tow, it looks now that the reason for the digital video choice is the cost. Lynch can make a film for half the price now, and even more people will buy it. It's an amazing profit, which must account for his fashionable coffee table. Lynch's DVD company ABSURDA seems to have blown his ego huge. For his privately released films, he has a special edition which includes a huge cardboard box for an extra 10 - 20 dollars. If the world allows something such as *Dumbland* to be sold for the same amount of any other classic film, i don't want to be apart of it. *Inland Empire* is just a rehash of *Loſt Highway*, *Mulholland Drive*, and a plethora of concepts from Lynch's assorted projects, self-boasting

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his throne of experimentation. It seems the days for Lynch to make a good film are long over. If you look at his films in a broader perspective, his characters are no more contrived than in any Wes Anderson film; the same absurdity, the juvenile pauses to build atmosphere; and the same Twin Peaks characters in a never-ending rerun. Final Words: Inland Empire is the result of the corpse of Dali shitting on film, and no, that is not flattery.

-Maq

TWIN PEAKS: THE RETURN

David Lynch (2017)

Somewhat recently, I realized a girl that I was considering dating was a dumb bitch and immediately stopped talking to her because she, in her preposterously pretentious 'artiste' glory, had the unmitigated gall to proclaim that David Lynch of all filmmakers was a "hack." While I have my own strong criticisms regarding Lynch and have heard various attacks railed against him ranging from racism to perverted conservative misogyny (indeed, a dumb sapless soy boy named Jeff Johnson even dedicated an entire moronic book to this subject entitled *Pervert in the Pulpit: Morality in the Works of David Lynch* (2004)), it is nothing but patently absurd to claim that one of the most innately idiosyncratic auteur filmmakers to have ever suffered the grand artistic handicap of working in Hollywood makes something akin to dull and/or derivative celluloid bromide, especially in an aesthetically inverted era when anti-auteurs like Quentin Tarantino and Steven Spielberg—ostensible men with the emotional maturity and aesthetic refinement of bombastic little boys—are regarded by many professionals as some of the greatest filmmakers of all-time. Indeed, Lynch is one of the few cinematic artists and auteur filmmakers in all of cinema history that has managed to do the seemingly impossible by creating films that are both artistically original and genuinely entertaining, which he has indubitably demonstrated once again with his most recent and quite long-awaited 18-episode opus *Twin Peaks: The Return* (2017). Undoubtedly the perfect swansong to a rather singular and eclectic career, the 'event series' takes place 25 years after the original *Twin Peaks* was destroyed by the director's social justice warrior writing partner Mark Frost, who essentially completely took over the show after the first season and, with the help of various relatively unknown hack writers, turned it into a pseudo-quirky unintentional self-parody while Lynch was working on his darkly romantic road movie *Wild at Heart* (1990). Admittedly, I was somewhat dubious of the reboot when I initially heard it was in the works because I found Lynch's last feature *Inland Empire* (2006) to be quite literally unwatchable and assumed that the auteur was more interested in acting as an international propagandist for the pseudo-esoteric joke *Transcendental Meditation* (TM®) and pushing dubious projects like signature coffee beans and obscenely overpriced box-sets (e.g. *The Lime Green Set*) than testing the bounds of his artistic creativity and artistic prowess. In short, I was convinced that Lynch was high on his own supply and I still believe this to a certain extent, yet the latest and arguably greatest *Twin Peaks* season unquestionably demonstrates that elderly auteur still has artistic integrity and that he has not totally fried his brain on spiritually counterfeit TM® twaddle.

While various film academics have speculated that Lynch's film influences include cinematic works ranging from Luis Buñuel's classic surrealist short *Un*

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Chien Andalou (1929) to Robert Aldrich's (anti)Spillane sci-fi-noir *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) to Blake Edwards' sexy sociopath thriller *Experiment in Terror* (1962), I can only assume after watching the new *Twin Peaks* that he has an intimate infatuation with both Peter Sellers' strangely indelible performance in Hal Ashby's sardonic dramedy *Being There* (1979) and Jeff Bridge's quite literally out-of-this-world role in John Carpenter's *Starman* (1984). Indeed, much to the chagrin of an Austrian friend of mine, the series' lead character FBI Special Agent Dale Bartholomew Cooper spends the majority of the film in a meta-autistic Chance-cum-*Starman*-esque state, but such spastic and unhinged behavior is surely fitting when one considers the undeniable steady cultural and social degeneration of the United States since the original series was released. Portrayed by Lynch's virtual cinematic doppelganger Kyle MacLachlan—an actor that is surely the living embodiment of the archetypal Lynchian hero—Agent Cooper was condemned to the absurdist pandemonium of the 'Black Lodge' at the end of the original series and spent the new couple decades there while an evil double associated with an equally evil swarthy spirited named 'BOB' assumed his identity in the real world and brought malefic misery to his friends and co-workers, including his beloved 'Diane' (who, although an unseen character on the original series, is fittingly depicted by longtime Lynch regular Laura Dern in the reboot). While one would dare that they could read the filmmaker's mind, I think that it is obvious while watching *Twin Peaks: The Return* that Lynch believes that the world, especially the United States, has only gotten darker, uglier, stupider, and sicker since the brutal quasi-incestuous murder of buxom blonde teen Laura Palmer, hence the crucial need for a reboot. Indeed, forget the feel-good quirk of the lighter aspects of the original series, the new series has more in common with the prequel *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) and Lynch's debut feature *Eraserhead* (1977). Of course, that does not mean that the new series does not have a number of hyper hilarious scenes that would probably cause the ghost of Buñuel to pop a massive boner. After all, only Lynch could bring hilarity to meth-addled single mothers, teenage drug overdoses, arm wrestling, insufferably dumb obese women, sinisterly stoic yet nonetheless insufferably nerdy gangster accountants, white trash assassins, fast food, highly homicidal bearded bums, braindead mechanics, deadly hit-and-runs involving children, mouthy pussy-peddling negresses, slot machines, gangsters, beef jerky, unclad and overweight headless middle-aged corpses, and cowardly yet extremely treacherous insurance salesmen, among other things.

Aside from Agent Cooper being imprisoned in the Black Lodge for a couple decades and then being violently thrown back into the real world in an annoying incapacitated meta-autistic form, various other iconic *Twin Peak* characters reveal that they are unwitting victims of an exceedingly evil yet largely inexplicable zeitgeist where youth seems to be largely a curse and older people, who are largely worn out and disillusioned with life, are no more wiser. For example, one-time-

baby-diva Audrey Horne, who only briefly appears on the show, is now a fiercely frigid and somewhat overweight hag that is now married to a grotesque quasi-dwarf turd and may or may not be completely unhinged and living out nightmarish fantasies in a loony bin, not to mention the fact she spawned a literal demon seed from an involuntary carnal union with Agent Cooper's devilish double. Additionally, Sheriff Harry S. Truman is so sick that he does not even appear on the show, heartthrob rebel James Hurley is now a pathetic creep that hangs out with lowclass Brits instead of hot ass chicks, Sarah Palmer is an unhinged recluse with deadly paranormal powers, the long-dead military mensch Major Garland Briggs makes a curious reappearance as a recently deceased unclad decapitated corpse, Margaret 'Log Lady' Lanterman is terminally ill, bad boy Bobby Briggs is now a divorced police detective, Shelly Johnson (and her ex-hubby Bobby) are plagued with a self-destructive dope-addled daughter, Jerry Horne has had one-too-many bad acid trips, Johnny Horne is even more retarded, and Mike Nelson is now a banal corporate bully instead of a cool teenage bully, among various other delightfully dejecting examples. Needless to say, the new characters on the show are no less forsaken and/or dysfunctional, though it seems that every urban area depicted outside of Twin Peaks is even more fucked up. Indeed, unlike the original two series, the titular town is only one of a number of regions depicted in what is ultimately a more all-around epic and ambitious TV series that is just too damn good and artistic audacious to be described as a TV series.

Undoubtedly, Lynch has always had very good instincts when it comes to casting characters as *Twin Peaks: The Return*, which features many intriguing cameo roles from people ranging from perennially gawky goombah hipster favorite Michael Cera to drop-dead-gorgeous guidette Monica Bellucci, surely demonstrates. For example, Lynch does a masterful job at using otherwise loathsome and insufferable actors in fitting roles, most notably semitic social justice warrior comedian Brett Gelman portraying a superlatively slimy Las Vegas casino manager that hilariously gets his seemingly nonexistent balls stomped in by a rather stern but nonetheless fair wop gangster. A uniquely unfunny kosher con-median that clearly demonstrated his hatred of freedom of speech and artistic expression by leading a sickeningly self-righteous hate campaign to get the show *Million Dollar Extreme Presents: World Peace* (2016)—a pleasantly politically incorrect experimental sketch comedy TV series that was successfully taken off the air due to complaints from various bitchy Hebraic individuals—removed from Adult Swim, gordo Gelman more or less represents everything that is particularly putridly loathsome and insufferable about Hollywood and is thus an immaculate symbol for the sort of enemy of creativity that Lynch has spent his entire career fighting against. In short, only Lynch would have such deep intuition to cast the uniquely unfunny Hebraic hack in a strangely darkly humorous role that he was clearly born to play.

Incidentally, *Twin Peaks* co-creator Mark Frost—a curious fellow that does

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not seem to have accomplished anything of notability outside his work with Lynch, who he has attached his name to like a starving maggot on a rancid pig corpse—is of a similarly intolerant neo-pinko pansy stripe as Gelman, as he can be regularly caught ranting and raving on Twitter about half-baked anti-Trump conspiracy theories and imaginary Nazis. For example, when Frost discovered via an ostensibly controversial New York Times article entitled *A Voice of Hate in America's Heartland* that a mild-mannered Ohioan white nationalist named Tony Hovater had a Twin Peaks tattoo, he demonstrated his emotionally necrotic boomer-esque reactionary bent by declaring on Twitter, “Having now read [sic] the article, f*ck your bemused neutrality, NYT. As for the story's ‘protagonist’: while you're on your way to hell, lose the TWIN PEAKS tattoo, Nazi scum.” Rather humorously, Hovater responded rather stoically by asking “would you be willing to pay for my removals?,” but Frost did not have the testicular fortitude to reply to a big mean nasty nazi. While I do not know much about Hovater aside from the fact that he strangely seems to enjoy *Seinfeld*—arguably the most hopelessly Hebraic TV show ever created—I have read the article about him and I think it is safe to say that, in terms of sheer eccentricity of character and personality, he is a more apt fit for the Twin Peaks realm than Frost is, as he at least has an overall idiosyncratic essence while the TV writer seemingly seems like the stereotypical spiritually castrated white Hollywood leftist cuck shithead. Needless to say, I can only assume that Frost was responsible for writing a line in the new series where Lynch's character FBI Deputy Director Gordon Cole says in support of David Duchovny's tranny FBI Chief of Staff Denise Bryson in regard to the anti-tranny sentiments of certain fellow agents, “I told all of your colleagues, those clown comics, to fix their hearts or die.” Since Lynch has spent his entire career making apolitical and oftentimes politically incorrect films that various mainstream leftist film reviewers and academics are keen on complaining about, this glaring and completely out-of-place instance of insufferably silly virtue-signaling is undoubtedly an indelible stain on the series. Rather humorously, an article at the implicitly Jewish website *The Forward* stops just short of accusing the show of containing cryptic anti-Semitic tropes as indicated by the following excerpt, “Ben Horne, played by song-and-dance man Richard Beymer — who in fact played Peter in the film of *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*” — is the richest man in Twin Peaks, a nefarious, greedy character whose various business interests and relationships make him an on-again, off-again suspect in the murder of Laura Palmer. Ben's flamboyant brother and business partner, played by David Patrick Kelly, is named Jerry, an obvious allusion to the real-life Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the founders of Ben and Jerry's ice cream.” Of course, characters like the Horne brothers and various others hint that Lynch is, at the very least, subconsciously counter-kosher, which is a somewhat humorous prospect to consider since the auteur once collaborated with Mel Brooks—a mensch that really deserves credit for being one of the most hopelessly and in-

trinsically Hebraic filmmakers of all-time—on *The Elephant Man* (1980).

One of the most intriguing aspects of *Twin Peaks: The Return* is that virtual every single young character is a total fuck-up, doped up, sociopathic, and/or completely irredeemable. For example, during a conversation between local cops in *Twin Peaks*, the viewer discovers that high school kids with cutesy names like “Little Denny Craig” are dropping like flies during classes via drug overdoses. In short, virtually every young woman needs to spend some time sporting a rusty scold’s bridle and every young man deserves to get the shit kicked out of him at least half-a-dozen times, as there is no way these degenerate youths will live normal balanced lives. Indeed, Bobby Briggs and his ex-ladylove Shelly McCauley Briggs (aka ‘Shelly Johnson’) have a beauteous yet coke-addled and dangerously self-destructive blonde daughter named Becky Burnett (née Briggs) that lives in a shitty dilapidated trailer with her similarly dope-ridden husband Steven Burnett. A physically and emotionally unhinged tweaker and deadbeat philander that deals dope because he is too retarded to even be able to manage a successful job interview for an entry level office position, Steven ultimately seems to leave Becky a widow by the end of the series after seemingly blowing his brains out off-screen in a somewhat ambiguous scene that really underscores the character’s decidedly dark drug-addled delirium. Needless to say, as the virtual literal demon seed of a sinister quasi-supernatural rape, Audrey Horne’s young career criminal son Richard Horne—a virtual modern-day Frank Booth that is depicted randomly grabbing a girl by the throat at a bar and stating to her in a demented fashion, “I’m gonna laugh when I fuck you, bitch”—is the ultimate unhinged piece of (sub)human millennial excrement par excellence. Aside from threatening to rape random girls at bars and beating and robbing his elderly grandmother while his retarded helpless uncle looks on in abject horror, little Richard also manages to kill a little kid in a hit-and-run accident and then proceeds to blame said kid for the incident. In short, like many kids of his mostly worthless generation, Richard—a sassy sicko that was sown in hatred—should have never been born. In fact, the only seemingly half-decent young character in the series is doofus Deputy Andy Brennan and his wife Lucy Brennan’s sole progeny ‘Wally Brando,’ who notably styles himself after Marlon Brando’s insanely iconic character in outlaw biker classic *The Wild One* (1953) which, incidentally, Lynch’s buddy Monty ‘The Cowboy’ Montgomery co-directed a quasi-remake of entitled *The Loveless* (1982). Clearly rejecting the degenerate trends of his own zeitgeist but unfortunately lacking the charm, charisma, and beauteous handsomeness of his messiah Marlon, Wally, who is portrayed by goofy hipster guido Michael Cera of all people, is somewhat of a weirdo that spouts prosaic pseudo-metaphysical platitudes but he seems to ultimately have a good heart as indicated by his remark to Sheriff Frank Truman, “As you know, your brother Harry S. Truman is my godfather. I heard he is ill. I came to pay my respects to my godfather and extend my best wishes for his recovery, which I hope will be swift and

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painless. It's an honor to see you again. You know, my heart is always here with you, and these fine people, my parents, who I love so dearly, and I was in the area and I wanted to pay my respects [...] My family, my friend, I have criss-crossed this great land of ours countless times. I hold the map of it here, in my heart, next to the joyful memories of the carefree days I spent as a young boy, here in your beautiful town of Twin Peaks. From Alexandria, Virginia, to Stockton, California, I think about Lewis, and his friend Clark, the first Caucasians to see this part of the world. Their footsteps have been the highways and byways of my days on the road. My shadow is always with me, sometimes ahead, sometimes behind, sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, except on cloudy days, or at night [...] My dharma is the road." Of course, judging simply by the character Wally, it seems that Lynch believes that Transcendental Meditation is the only thing that can save contemporary youth from the all-destructive metaphysical hell of (post)modernity. On the other hand, while Wally might be a good guy, he seems to be completely devoid of any sort of originality, which is typical of his generation.

While *Twin Peaks: The Return* is unequivocally a visceral expression of Lynch's thoughts and especially feelings about the modern world, the series, which is really more like one massive Miltonian art movie, it is also a virtual 'David Lynch's Greatest Hits' in terms of its seemingly unending references to virtually all of the films and themes of the auteur's career, including his pre-Hollywood avant-garde days. Indeed, with its various scenes of grotesque vomiting, the series recalls Lynch's very first film *Six Men Getting Sick* (1966). In terms of aesthetically pleasing scenes of dark and seemingly endless phantom highways molested by intrusive headlights, it certainly tops *Loft Highway* (1997). As far as awkward and/or violent concert scenes in seedy bars that are inhabited by idiosyncratically dressed dipsomaniacs and degenerates, the series makes *Wild at Heart* (1990) seem a tad bit dated. For those that enjoy seeing arcane tools and preternatural evidence being used to solve devilishly Delphic mysteries, the new season of *Twin Peaks* makes *Blue Velvet* (1986) seem about as intriguingly enigmatic as *Scooby-Doo: The Movie* (2002), which is somewhat fitting since it features big goofy bastard Matthew Lillard in a performance that is a virtual antidote to the abject shame that he brought upon himself and stoners everywhere by portraying Shaggy Rogers. In fact, on top of delectably dark black-and-white scenes that bleed a certain Victorian decay like *The Elephant Man* (1980) and deathly dark Daguerreotype-like images comparable to the filmmaker's piece *Premonition Following An Evil Deed* for the anthology film *Lumière and Company* (1995), the series even has a little bit of a *Dune* (1980) aesthetic in terms of otherworldly sci-fi aesthetics. As far as I am concerned, *Twin Peaks* is Lynch's answer to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) as an inordinately epic auteurist miniseries and arguable magnum opus that manages to virtually immaculately sum up the filmmaker's

entire singular career and ultimately reveals that he has mastered his craft. In short, the series is the closest thing to a contemporary cinematic equivalent to Hieronymus Bosch's classic triptych painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and Marcel Proust's seven-volume literary masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time* (1913–1927) aka *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Indeed, while *Twin Peaks* might technically be pop entertainment that is meant for mass consumption, it is unequivocally the refined work of a mature yet nonetheless artistically fresh artist that has gone to great lengths to dive into the darkest abysses of his own soul and expose them for the entire world to see. As for Mr. Frost, he was clearly just riding on Lynch's coattails, as if the sole reason he was hired by the studio was to make sure that the auteur did not create a cinematic work that was too bizarre or inexplicable. Indeed, Frost is probably, at best, a glorified babysitter for America's favorite weirdo wunderkind.

Somewhat ironically, fag boy Frost apparently borrowed the idea for the iconic 'Black Lodge' from British occultist Dion Fortune's book *Psychic Self-Defense* (1930), which was heavily influenced by the work of Helena Blavatsky. Of course, anyone familiar with Ms. Blavatsky and her goofy esoteric (pseudo)religion Theosophy knows that she not only played a major influence on infamous proto-Nazi occultists like Guido von List and Rudolf von Sebottendorf, but was also a proud 'racist' and 'antisemite' that believed that most nonwhites were accursed 'monads' of the half-beastly *untermensch* sort. Naturally, it is no surprise that a seasoned ethno-masochistic like Frost would attempt to pass off quasi-Theosophical ideas as a form of ancient American Injun black magic despite the fact that the Black Lodge seems to contain nil Injuns (though, to be fair, the actor that played 'Killer BOB,' Frank Silva, was indeed part-Indian). Needless to say, despite featuring a great noble savage hero like Deputy Chief Hawk, *Twin Peaks: The Return* was attacked from various white liberal and non-white social justice eunuchs for lacking so-called 'diversity.' Naturally, such pathetic complaints seem patently preposterous when one considers that Lynch is one of the most innately and idiosyncratic white American filmmakers that has ever lived as a man whose very essence screams 'eccentric wasp weirdo' and whose art could have never been created by any so-called person of color. Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *Twin Peaks* so great and relatively artistically organic is, not unlike Denis Villeneuve's similarly nostalgia-inciting *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), its relative racial homogeneity and lack of phony token 'minority' characters. After all, affirmative action casting has never helped any film or TV show.

Undoubtedly, out of all the various millennial-defecated articles accusing the show of racism, the most pointless and idiotic yet vaguely unintentionally insightful is a piece written by an outstandingly insipid brown beastess named Sezin Koehler with the ludicrously long and equally insipid title 'TWIN PEAKS Is Overwhelmingly White, So Why do Fans of Color Keep Watching It?' where a Chinese-American chick soundly states, "It makes sense to me. I'm from a

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small town that's kind of old fashioned (no cellular towers, no chain stores...) so I found it to be very realistic. I don't think it would have resonated as deeply with me if it were more diverse. I love to see diversity, especially racial, in the media but I feel like the lack of diversity was intentional in TWIN PEAKS and was necessary to portray a certain environment/atmosphere." After all, no one would ever even dare to want to imagine a Twin Peaks with a negro Agent Cooper with cornrows or a swarthy black-haired and slant-eyed Laura Palmer, just as no one would ever entertain the prospect of a tiny yellow Chinaman portraying Melvin Van Peebles' eponymous bad ass black buck character in Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971) or neurotic kosher comedian Larry David portraying sadistic Aryan SS-Hauptsturmführer Amon Göth in Schindler's List (1993). Additionally, despite its dark underbelly, the titular town in the series seems like an almost fairytale-like utopia compared to most modern-day American towns and cities. Like the quite cozy North Carolina town in Blue Velvet, Lynch clearly loves Twin Peaks and sees it as the gravest of tragedies that such an addictively quaint place has been plagued with a sinister undercurrent. Naturally, the show would be something entirely different were it set in a chocolate-colored Brooklyn ghetto or the fecal-flavored and AIDS-ridden bowels of San Francisco as people from these forsakenly diverse shitholes would not be able to elicit the same degree of empathy. Although just speculation, I have always had the feeling that certain self-loathing white liberals and hipsters enjoy Twin Peaks simply because it provides them with the rare (subconscious) guilty pleasure of racial solidarity as the show's pathological quiriness and Lynch's art fag cred provides them with the perfect cover for such a preternatural indulgence. Of course, the very fact that cultural Marxist film critics would even consider that Twin Peaks has a large non-white audience and that said non-white audience is upset about the show's lack of melanin just goes to show how out-of-touch they are with race and culture. In short, the average non-white fan of the show is clearly deracinated and an outlier and probably the sort of individual that does not much like living among their own racial kinsmen. Undoubtedly, one of the many things that makes Northern Exposure (1990–1995)—a show that clearly reveals its main influence during the fifth episode 'The Russian Flu' of the first season with an overt waterfall dream-sequence homage—glaringly inferior to Twin Peaks is its absurdly arrogant NYC Judaic protagonist and the contemptible way he treats the local yokels. After all, one of the things that makes Agent Cooper so lovable is that, despite their flaws, he still loves the locals and would love nothing more than to become a permanent member of their community.

Although just speculation, I like to think that Lynch was on a somewhat respectable mission to troll his fans when he dreamed up Twin Peaks: The Return, namely due to the fact that Agent Cooper barely appears on the show, at least in his normal perennially jovial "damn fine coffee" form that everyone

loves. Indeed, although lead actor Kyle MacLachlan, who undoubtedly gives the greatest performance of his career, appears onscreen more than every other actor, he portrays no less than three (but really four) different 'characters': Agent Cooper, Cooper's evil doppelganger, and a degenerate tulpa created by the doppelganger named Douglas 'Dougie' Jones. While Agent Cooper manages to escape from the Black Lodge at the beginning of the series, he returns to earth in a meta-autistic form (hence, the 'fourth' character) and is only really a preposterously pathetic shell of a man that he once was, though he is certainly more agreeable than the pudgy sheboon-banging tulpa whose life he unintentionally takes over. Cooper-as-Dougie is like a living embodiment of what Aryan pessimistic Arthur Schopenhauer meant when he spoke of 'The Will' (or 'Lower Soul'), which he described in his classic text *The World as Will and Representation* (1818/19) as, "The will, considered purely in itself, is devoid of knowledge, and is only blind, irresistible urge, as we see it appear in inorganic and vegetable nature and in their laws, and also in the vegetative part of our own life. Through the addition of the world as representation, developed for its service, the will obtains knowledge of its own willing and what it wills, namely that this is nothing but this world, life, precisely as it exists. We have therefore called the phenomenal world the mirror, the objectively, of the will." A chubby and ridiculously cheaply dressed degenerate with a gambling addiction and a fetish for busty yet absurdly brainless pitch black negress prostitutes, Dougie is a sort of sad 'missing link' between Agent Cooper and his evil doppelganger. While Coop is a good man that always tries to do the right thing and the doppelganger is a devilish dickhead of a dude that seems to lack all the positive aspects that make people human and thus completely embraces evil in all its forms, Dougie is a virtual empty void and simply a morally weak and hopelessly self-indulgent fool. For most of the show, Agent Cooper lives as Dougie as if he is a prisoner in his own body in an acting performance from MacLachlan that arguably puts Peter Sellers' character in *Being There* to abject shame in terms of sheer absurdist retardisms. Undoubtedly, MacLachlan's performance(s) are more adequately comparable to Sellers' legendary multi-role performance in Stanley Kubrick's classic Cold War era satire *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). Unlike with Sellers' characters in Kubrick's film, the various Coopers depicted in *Twin Peaks* seem like extreme archetypal representations of Lynch himself. Of course, Cooper's doppelganger can be seen as a representation of both Agent Cooper and Lynch's Jungian 'shadow aspect,' just as Frank Booth was arguably Jeffrey Beaumont's (and Lynch's) in *Blue Velvet*. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Booth stares into Beaumont's eyes and matter-of-factly declares, "You're like me" during an extremely emotionally pivotal scene in the film. Naturally, it is no surprise that *Twin Peaks* concludes with Agent Cooper acting like a sort of strange amalgam of himself, his doppelganger, and his tulpa. In the end, Coop seems to have, to his grand abject horror, achieved Jungian 'Individuation' (incidentally, Mexican-American artist

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Manuel DeLanda, who also experimented with neo-noir as demonstrated by his arguable cinematic magnum opus *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980), also works with the concept of *principium individuationis*).

While somewhat cryptic, I think the final message of the series can be summed up to some degree with the following aphorism from Oswald Spengler, “The question of whether world peace will ever be possible can only be answered by someone familiar with world history. To be familiar with world history means, however, to know human beings as they have been and always will be. There is a vast difference, which most people will never comprehend, between viewing future history as it will be and viewing it as one might like it to be. Peace is a desire, war is a fact; and history has never paid heed to human desires and ideals.” After all, at the end of *Twin Peaks*, positively positive do-gooder idealist Agent Cooper, who does not seem to even consider the possible ramifications of his somewhat curious actions, manages to more or less unwittingly destroy himself, history, and everyone he knows just by traveling back in time to the night when Laura Palmer died to prevent her ill-fated demise via incestuous filicide. Also, Agent Cooper’s quest can arguably be simply summarized with Spengler’s words, “Free will is a feeling, not a fact.” Judging by these themes, it is hard to fathom how Lynch could fall for something as painfully deluded and idiotically idealistic as Transcendental Meditation, but I guess the auteur has to have something to believe in and can always dream of being a masterful Yogic Flyer that rivals Baron Vladimir Harkonnen in terms of bouncing around like a bloated beach ball, as one simply cannot stay completely grounded with so much hubris. Still, it is hard to reconcile the conclusion of *Twin Peaks* with the following ridiculous remark Lynch made during a preposterously shallow interview at beliefnet.com, “As Maharishi teaches, mankind was not made to suffer. Bliss is our nature. Life should be blissful, and blissful doesn’t mean just a small happiness. It’s huge. It is profound. It’s like totality. This atma becomes brahma, totality. It’s there, it’s our potential, it’s our birthright to enjoy enlightenment. You just need to unfold it.” After all, in *Twin Peaks*, human suffering seems to be one of the greatest, if nothing the greatest, driving force of humanity and something that simply cannot be avoided. Undoubtedly, it is a great irony that Lynch could create psychobabble-babbling charlatan like the character Dr. Lawrence Jacoby while at the same time peddling the most preposterous of would-be-exotic pseudo-religions. While TM® might have provided Lynch with a sort of (pseudo)spiritual safe space as a kind of outlet for his own personal demons, *Twin Peaks* and most of his other cinematic works reveal that Lynch has more spiritually in common with Calvinism than a post-Hindu corporation-cum-cult (incidentally, Lynch was raised Presbyterian).

Rather hilariously, in the fairly worthwhile documentary *David Lynch: The Art Life* (2016) co-directed by a curious trio of multicultural bros, Lynch recounts an anecdote about he got stoned on ganja and then pissed off his Jewish ex-

roommate, hack musician Peter Wolf (real name Peter Blankfield), by abruptly walking out of a Bob Dylan concert. Indeed, apparently Wolf approached him and bitched like a stereotypical dumb hippie, “nobody walks out on Dylan,” to which Lynch replied, “I walked out on Dylan. Get the fuck out of here!,” thus ending their truly absurd interracial friendship. During the same segment of doc, Lynch also mocks Dylan’s diminutive size, which is surely not the way you are supposed to refer to a kosher commie (pseudo)folk musician turned rock star that has unequivocally achieved god status among the sort of philistines and philo-semites that take mainstream American pop culture history seriously. For this and various other reasons, I can only assume that Lynch is, at the very least, a sort of subconscious antisemite. Of course, Justin Theroux’s rather loathsome character—a literal cuckold that gets righteously told off due to his preposterous (and quite quintessentially Judaic) passive-aggressive attitude by a stoic Nordic cowboy—in *Mulholland Drive* (2001) absolutely screams stereotypical Hebraic Hollywood hack filmmaker. Likewise, *Twin Peaks* character Albert Rosenfield is a virtual archetype of the stereotypical hypocritical Jewish leftist type as an arrogant jerk-off that treats nice rural white folks like garbage while proudly proclaiming to be a proud humanist and neo-peacenik of sorts. Naturally, Lynch is covertly conservative in other ways, as he seems to have a less than favorable view of fags as indicated by the sinister sod pimp ‘Ben’ portrayed by Dean Stockwell in *Blue Velvet*, not to mention the unhinged dykes in *Mulholland Drive*. Additionally, Lynch clearly was not attempting to appeal to the NAACP when he had Nicholas Cage brutally beat to death a superlatively sleazy negro criminal named Bobby Ray Lemon at the very beginning of *Wild at Heart* (1990). In fact, just as certain leftist film critics have complained, Lynch is not too big on negro characters in general as demonstrated by the sheer lack of them in his films, but one should not expect anything less from an auteur with a quite preternaturally white aesthetic that will simply just alienate most blacks. After all, filmmakers that cast pointless token negroid characters in films are the lowest and most pathetically phony of cultural cucks and should be treated as such, as real art is never about compromise.

Rather unfortunately, instead of embracing his more politically correct impulses, Lynch—a rather intuitive artist that has never succumbed to the autistic artistic con of abstract intellectualism—has embraced the grotesque absurdist escapism of worshiping a dirty old brown Indian untermensch that had an affinity for debasing his young white female followers, or so one learns while watching the somewhat disturbing documentary *David Wants to Fly* (2010) directed by nerdy Teutonic documentarian David Sieveking. In the doc, Sieveking—a fanatical Lynch fan that tries in vain to model his life after the maestro—attempts to embrace Transcendental Meditation, only to discover that TM® is an evil all-consuming corporation and that the filmmaker is, rather unfortunately, one of its most active yet mindless propagandists. As his cinematic output, including

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Twin Peaks: The Return, certainly demonstrates, Lynch is a conservative at heart and TM® simply seems to be his superlatively misguided attempt to embrace tradition and spirituality in a world where his own race, culture, and religion is being systematically dismantled by kosher culture-distorters, treacherous slave-morality-ridden white ethno-masochists, aberrosexuals, and the various other forms of (sub)human rabble. If any one doubts Lynch's wounded Faustian soul, one just needs to think deeply about the spirit of his art and then be directed towards British philosopher Roger Scruton's remark in the essay *Conservatism and the Conservatory*: "The real reason people are conservatives is that they are attached to the things that they love, and want to preserve them from abuse and decay. They are attached to their family, their friends, their religion, and their immediate environment. They have made a lifelong distinction between the things that nourish and the things that threaten their security and peace of mind." Additionally, the spirit of Twin Peaks unquestionably has more to do with Teutonic pessimism than the proto-hippie-dippy bullshit of shit-brown charlatan Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as indicated by the following quote from Nietzsche, "And do you know what "the world" is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by "nothingness" as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be "empty" here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms striving toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my "beyond good and evil," without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself—do you want a name for this world? A solution for all of its riddles? A light for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?—This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!" Indeed, Nietzsche's quote might seem like a megalomaniac tirade, but somehow I think that, aside from the 'will

to power' bit, it makes for a great esoteric synopsis of the series. Needless to say, Lynch could have learned a great deal more from Savitri Devi's ultra-hip brand on Hinduism than the shallow Dharma that Maharishi gleefully defecated out for his dumb (yet oftentimes rich) white followers.

Indeed, for better or worse, *Twin Peaks: The Return*—an intricate and multilayered episodic epic set in a titular town that has only further degenerated over the decades to the point where virtually no character seem redeemable—is, despite its many moments of humor, a work of immense hopeless sadness and longing for a time and place that died when Lynch was still a child, if not before. In fact, after watching the series twice, I cannot reconcile the fact that the same man that was the mastermind of the show was also responsible for writing in his rather disappointing book *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* (2006), “Negativity is like darkness. So what is darkness? You look at darkness, and you see that it's really nothing: It's the absence of something. You turn on the light, and darkness goes. But sunlight, for instance, doesn't get rid of negativity. It gets rid of darkness, but not negativity. So what light can you turn on that removes negativity the way sunlight removes darkness? It's the light of pure consciousness, the Self—the light of unity. Don't fight the darkness. Don't even worry about the darkness. Turn on the light and the darkness goes. Turn up that light of pure consciousness: Negativity goes. Now you say, 'That sounds so sweet.' It sounds too sweet. But it's a real thing.” Personally, I think it sounds like total bullshit, especially coming from someone like Lynch who manages to make scenarios involving violent rapes and murder quite humorous and a mensch who followed up the birth of his first born child by directing a film where a father brutally murders his mutant baby. As his work unequivocally demonstrates, Lynch is a man that basks and even thrives in both the literal and figurative darkness and no amount of spouting pseudo-metaphysical mumbo jumbo from some insufferably effete brown charlatan is going to change that.

Notably, Arthur Schopenhauer once wrote, “Every parting is a foretaste of death, and every reunion a foretaste of resurrection. That is why even people who were indifferent to one another rejoice so much when they meet again after twenty or thirty years.” Of course, the same can be said of people being reunited with an old show like *Twin Peaks*, yet I feel that it is only appropriate that the series and Lynch's career have reached their natural conclusion. Indeed, the final moments of the final episode of *Twin Peaks: The Return* undoubtedly have the bittersweet foretaste of death, but I would not have it any other way. In fact, the event series might even be seen as a sort of esoteric epitaph for America, or at least the true white America that Lynch spent his entire life mourning via his gorgeously grotesque portraits of absurdist Americana. When H.P. Lovecraft complained in a personal letter that New York City had been “completely Semiticized” and thereupon tragically lost to the “na-

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tional fabric,” he could have been speaking of the contemporary United States, at least in the cultural and spiritual sense. In that regard, D.H. Lawrence was certainly right when he wrote, “My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true.” After all, Lynch’s book *Catching the Big Fish* is terribly written and a testament to his largely irrational and anti-intellectual disposition, but his singular oeuvre reveals a certain *Weltschmerz* and *Sehnsucht* in relation to the WASP world that the auteur’s generation—the so-called ‘baby boomer’ bunch that turned their unearned and undeserved gift of unrivaled prosperity and comfort into a racially, culturally, and sexually apocalyptic nightmare—gleefully destroyed. Needless to say, Transcendental Meditation is a symptom of the very sort of degeneracy that Lynch’s films lament in fashion that is iconically American as Norman Rockwell but as jovially venomous as Luis Buñuel. Considering that the United States, or the true Euro-American U.S., is nothing more than a glorified European megacolony, it is only fitting that one of the last, if not the last, great filmmaker is an American. In his somewhat out-of-date but surely worthwhile book *David Lynch* (Twayne’s Filmmakers Series) (1992), Kenneth C. Kaleta—an obvious Lynch fan that thankfully does not subscribe to any Frankfurt School oriented theories—argues, “Lynch has put his brand on TV. He has stretched again, this time from film to television. He continues that expansion regardless of critical bouquets garnered or awards lost, regardless of cancellation or glorification of the series. Unlike Andy Warhol, who also moved from plastic art into the world of film, Lynch must not falter into creating art not from but simply of his world. Warhol electrified pop art with his Day Glo paintings. Yet Warhol is more celebrated for his lifestyle [...] David Lynch’s artistic creations include Lynch himself. He continues beyond precedent to display, to satirize, and to expand his contemporary aesthetic. Somewhere, of course, a line may be crossed and his balance knocked off center. Here, over the border, the artist wakes up to be merely an icon. This is the quagmire of twentieth-century celebrity. The significance of TWIN PEAKS may be obvious today, but the series’s place in the context of Lynch’s work—and its meaning for art tomorrow—remains open to speculation.” While Lynch has indeed transformed into a sort of somewhat cardboard celebrity art fag and icon, *Twin Peaks: The Return* reveals that he is an artist of the same caliber as Edgar Allan Poe, who Kaleta rightly compares him to, or as he wrote, “Like Poe’s verse, TWIN PEAKS is poetic—inherently rhythmic. It has a first-person speaker: the straightest, fairest, most literal hero, Dale Cooper. In the televised serial, Agent Cooper even reads impressions into a tape recorder, thus not only making the audience party to his telling, but involving it through his language, his rhythm, and the sound of his voice. As in Poe’s world, no matter the peculiarities of the incidents, the audience is assured by the speaker’s voice. Ironically, neither offers a universal world; rather comfort

is found in idiosyncrasies: Cooper is as distinctive a first-person speaker as any found in Poe's poetry." Indeed, containing a truly American lyrical folk poetry worthy of Poe and an entire preternatural mythos comparable to Lovecraft in terms of depth of imagination, Lynch managed to perform something that is nothing short of alchemy by turning a shit medium into boob tube gold. Of course, only Lynch could turn a blue-blond corpse wrapped in plastic into something deeply romantic, so it is only fitting that said corpse literally disappears into thin air at the conclusion of *Twin Peaks: The Return*, as no other artist—be they cinematic auteur or otherwise—will ever be able to fill his big goofy shoes when he is gone.

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David Mamet (1991)

Notably, in early 1944, screenwriter and journalist Ben Hecht—a relatively assimilated American Jew that initially had little interest in his Hebrew roots but later became a rabid Zionist propagandist of sorts as a result of the Third Reich—wrote in his book *A Guide for the Bedevilled* (1944), “Hollywood, is a town, an industry, an empire of toy-making, invented by Jews, dominated by Jews, and made to flourish like unto the land of Solomon—by Jews, and a few embattled Irishmen. Such is its truth, and if you wish to look for its deep meanings, it is into this truth you must look.” Indeed, unless you are a complete fucking moron or have never seen any movies, you know that Jews dominate and have always dominated Tinseltown, yet, somewhat curiously, Hollywood rarely releases truly Hebraic movies. Sure, there are plenty of crappy kosher comedies where some effeminate asshole Ashkenazi slob like Seth Rogen tries to be funny by mentioning his “Jewfro” in between creepily lusting over some dumb blonde shiksa, but rarely do Hollywood films actually take an intricate approach to the Jewish question or Jewish themes. After all, aside from his Hebraic brand of humor, Woody Allen only represents Judaism so much as he is a walking and talking racial stereotype as the virtual archetype of the classically weak, neurotic, and whiny four-eyed kosher cripple. Somewhat ironically but not surprisingly, the handful of the films that really take an intelligent approach to Judaism focus heavily on the theme of Jewish self-hatred, which seems to be almost as old as Judaism itself as indicated by historical figures ranging from Spanish Grand Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada to tragic Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger to suicidal American neo-Nazi Daniel Burros. In fact, both Arthur Hiller’s Robert Shaw adaptation *The Man in the Glass Booth* (1975) and Henry Bean’s *The Believer* (2001), which was inspired by Burros, feature Jews masquerading as Nazis and delivering rather intricate and articulate speeches regarding the timeless problem of the Jewish peril. While it does not exactly feature Hebrew Hitlerites sporting jackboots, David Mamet’s third feature *Homicide* (1991) also deals with the theme of the self-loathing Jew in the form of a police hostage negotiator who unwittingly gets involved in a Zionist terrorist conspiracy and ultimately commits an act of Zio-terrorism himself against a neo-Nazi business owner in a desperate attempt to overcome his self-hatred and create a strong Jewish identity, only to be betrayed by his new Jew buddies and virtually destroy his entire life in the process. As a staunch Zionist conservative that more or less regards Jews who consider their favorite Jew to be Anne Frank as treacherous self-loathing scum, Mamet is thankfully no stereotypical xenophiliac Hollywood Jewish liberal faggot and he has no problem portraying blacks as extremely uncouth racists and rapist beasts (e.g. Edmond). In *Homicide*, Mamet reveals that no one likes kikes, including some kikes like the film’s protagonist.

In his imperative text *The Wicked Son: Anti-Semitism, Jewish self-hatred, and the Jews* (2006), Mamet makes it quite clear that he believes that the goyim will never fully accept the Jews and that any Jew that seeks to assimilate is dangerously deluded, stating, “Just as (in the view of the Christians) Christianity superseded Judaism; so the contemporary Jew may long to cast off that which he (consciously or unconsciously) understands as an outdated system of allegiance. This confused Jew may aspire to join in that which he understands as a more modern, non-Jewish confraternity, entry into which will more fully integrate him into society at large, thus bringing happiness. He is, here, twice deluded. First, the state of perfect, relaxed integration that he ascribes to the non-Jews, their absence of anomie and anxiety, is a fiction [...] Second, this integration the Jew supposes his Christian brothers enjoy—just beyond the borders of his own unfortunate (spiritual or racial) segregation—should it exist, the Jew would, in fact, be debarred from it because of his race.” Somewhat curiously, in *Homicide*—a work that Mamet created when he was somewhat less racially radicalized—it is ultimately the fanatical Zionist Jews that most betray the Jew protagonist who is somewhat strangely played by glaring Sicilian-American Joe Mantegna. In fact, it is only when the protagonist comes into contact with other more fanatical treacherous Jews that he becomes treacherous himself and unintentionally kills his Aryan goy best friend/partner in the process. In unintentionally hilarious stereotypical oversensitive Jewish fashion, the protagonist completely loses it after his friend calls him a “kike” during a heated argument and decides to become a Zionist terrorist virtually overnight, thus breaking his oath as a police officer in the process. Quite contrary to Mamet’s unapologetically Zionist political writings, *Homicide* is a fairly nuanced film that more or less argues that Jews are damned if they do and damned if they don’t when it comes to embracing their race and culture. In fact, while Mamet would probably argue otherwise, the film might be best described as a quasi-nihilistic Jewish film noir where the protagonist is confronted with the nature of evil and discovers that members of his race are just as violent, hateful, and criminally inclined as the neo-Nazis and ghetto negroes that despise them. In short, it is strange to think that the same man that directed *Homicide* also wrote, “The quiddity of the self-loathing Jew, the opted-out Jew, is his grotesquerie. Both to his people and to the enemies of his people, he is out of step, out of tune, and pathetic—his efforts at assimilation foiling the possibility of contentment with a group to which he actually belongs.”

While the hapless working-class Hebrew protagonist of *Homicide* is unlikely for many reasons, not least of all because of his nonchalant self-hatred and rather glaring attempts at overcompensating for said self-hatred, he is far from the most unlikable yid in the entire film. In terms of its eclectic collection of repugnant, ugly, arrogant, smug, and/or just downright exceedingly unlikable collection of kosher characters, the film is somewhat ironically more effective in

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terms of spreading negative Jewish stereotypes than National Socialist classics like octoroon Jew Fritz Hippler's agitprop doc *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew* and Veit Harlan's lavish melodrama *Jud Süß* (1940). Certainly you know a character is repugnant when you cannot help but hate him even though his mother was just brutally murdered as in the case in regard to a certain audaciously arrogant and pushy Jewish doctor in the film named *Dr. Klein* who, in stereotypical Jewish fashion, uses his clout to force the protagonist to take his criminal case, but of course that is exactly the sort of thing that makes a Mamet flick interesting. Undoubtedly, if *Homicide* was not the product of a Judaic mind, it would be regarded as a quasi-esoteric antisemitism that demonstrates with fairly good reason as to why everyone hates Jews, including many Jews. Featuring a protagonist that is so ignorant of his race and culture that he confuses Yiddish with Hebrew and is not beneath joking about certain negative stereotypes regarding his race, *Homicide* is also notable in that the 'hero' is a Jewish philistine who is surely more likeable and sympathetic than the rest of the members of his seemingly forsaken race that he encounters in his strange personal odyssey. In short, the film does not exactly make the best case for Judaism or Zionism, but then again it features an even less unflattering portrayal of urban negroes and their striking tendency to commit the most brutal and violent of criminal acts for the most trivial acts (notably, it is ultimately one of these brutal black crimes that leads the protagonist to virtually destroying his entire life after mistaking a coldblooded ghetto murder for an antisemitic conspiracy). Indeed, the only possible conclusion that one can come to after watching the film is that most Jews are too obsessed with their own race and Israel to ever be trusted by American—whether they be black or white—hence the reason as to why the majority of Jews endorse the flooding of the United States with third world rabble, thus weakening their much despised European-American enemy.

In *The Wicked Son*, Mamet interestingly argued, "Why do some Jews reject their religion and their race? For two reasons: because it is 'too Jewish' and because it is not Jewish enough." As far as the film's protagonist Bobby Gold (Joe Mantegna) is concerned, he seems to be more honest than Mamet on the subject as he rejects Judaism because he associates it with weakness, cowardliness, and effeminacy, which are surely serious sins among cops. As a Jew, Bobby was blessed with the gift of gab and thus he was more or less forced to be the 'The Talking Man' aka 'hostage negotiator' of his police district (although the city is never mentioned, the film was actually filmed in the aesthetically grotesque post-Europid wasteland known as Baltimore). To the slight chagrin of his partner and best friend Tim Sullivan (William H. Macy), Bobby always has to be the first cop to bust in the door when nabbing bad guys because he is desperate to prove himself and demonstrate that he is no stereotypical pussy candy ass Jew coward. Of course, as a self-hating Hebrew that has no problem hearing co-workers regularly throw around racial slurs like 'yid,' Bobby is more masochis-

tic than he is courageous. At the beginning of the film, a bitchy negro named Mr. Patterson (Louis Murray) that works for the city mayor severely internally wounds Bobby by calling him a “little kike,” thus initiating the first step in the protagonist’s rather tragic path of personal transformation of the racially oriented sort that ultimately ends in abject failure. Since the FBI botched busting a negro dope dealer and killer named Robert Randolph (Ving Rhames) in a night raid that resulted in the deaths of two FBI agents, Bobby and his partner Tim have been assigned to locate him since they are already fairly familiar with him. Unfortunately while on the way to grab Randolph’s cousin, Bobby happens upon a murder scene in a black ghetto where an elderly Jewess was mysteriously killed during an armed robbery. According to some ebonics literate negroid children, the old Jewess was murdered because of supposed secret treasure in the basement of her store. When a black officer arrives on the scene, he practically blames the Jewess for getting liquidated since she had no business operating a store in an all-negro ghetto neighborhood. Needless to say, Bobby is more than a little bit irked when the dead Hebrewess’ outstandingly arrogant doctor son Dr. Klein (J.S. Block)—a virtual posterboy for Nazi propaganda as far as grotesque Jewish caricature are concerned who immediately complains of an antisemitic conspiracy in regard to his mother’s death—uses his kosher clout to make him work on his dead mother’s murder case. Indeed, instead of having the honor of busting ghetto arch-criminal Randolph and swaggering around like a big bad hero, Bobby has to suffer the whiny and hysterical paranoia of a family of opulent Jews that he just cannot stomach as they clearly remind him of the negative qualities that he hates in himself, not to mention the fact that they have way more money than he does.

While Bobby manages to coerce Randolph’s proud negress mother into helping the police to catch her son by telling her that they will put him in prison instead of six feet under, his superior—a loudmouthed guido named Lieutenant Senna (Vincent Guastafarro)—makes him take on the lowly job of dealing with the Jews because, as he tells him, “they’re your people.” Needless to say, Bobby is extremely offended when his boss describes the Jews as his people, so he goes on a rant and yells, “I’m his people?! I thought I was your people, Lieu,” but he is ultimately a pushover and begrudgingly takes the dreaded Judaic case. When Bobby is forced to go by the luxurious Klein castle after the Jews get scared as a result of ostensibly hearing a gunshot on their roof, Dr. Klein thoroughly pisses off the protagonist by threatening him by stating in an audaciously arrogant fashion, “Have you got the pride to do that job you were given? Do your job, or else.” Despite himself being connected to a Jewish terrorist conspiracy, dickhead Klein believes there is an antisemitic conspiracy and berates Bobby for supposedly thinking that he is dealing with, “hysterical Jews [...] that are always making it up.” Rather ironically, the conclusion of the film ultimately proves that, for the most part, Dr. Klein is a delusional Hebrew hysteric that could

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probably find a antisemitism at a Bar Mitzvah. After getting extremely annoyed with the Jews, Bobby goes to a room and vents out his frustration to his partner Tim over the phone, stating in an almost wildly excited fashion, "I'm stuck here with my – my Jews. You should see this fuckin' room [...] Fuckin' bullshit. Bunch of high-strung fuckin' bullshit. They pay so much taxes – Fuck 'em [...] Don't send the old lady work down there and tell me how you're so surprised. Fuck 'em and the taxes they pay. You tell me. Ten more bucks a week they're making', lettin' her [dead Jewess] work down there? Ha! Hey, not my people, baby. Fuck 'em. There's so much antisemitism the last 4,000 years. . . we must be doin' somethin' [to] bring it about." Unbeknownst to Tim, Dr. Klein's daughter Miss Klein (Mamet's wife Rebecca Pidgeon) was in the room and heard the entire conversation. While Bobby immediately attempts to apologize, Miss Klein immediately verbally reams him by passionately declaring, "My grandmother was kill today. She stayed down there because she wanted to stay there. She was a fighter. She wanted to die there. She died there. You're a Jew, and you talk that way in the house of the dead. Do you have any shame? [...] Do you hate yourself that much? Do you belong nowhere?" After swearing to Miss Klein that he will "find her killer" in regard to her dead grandfather, Bobby hears a gunshot and immediately investigates the roof of the building where he finds a torn piece of paper that reads "Grofaz." That same night, Bobby also discovers that the elderly dead Jewess used to be a Zionist terrorist that was involved in gunrunning, among other things. At this point, Bobby begins to speculate that there is indeed some sort of antisemitic conspiracy and soon finds himself engulfed in a sort of quasi-Kafka nightmare of obscene obsession and paranoia that inspires in him an ultimately rather untimely Jewish awakening of sorts.

As a result of being forcibly entrenched in a world of Jews and anti-Jew hatred (aside from the death of the old Jewess, the protagonist discovers anti-Jew flyers around the city that compares Jews to rats), Bobby becomes extremely enamored with the Klein case and begins following every lead he has, including the word "Grofaz," which he soon discovers is an archaic nickname for Adolf Hitler and an acronym for 'Größter Feldherr aller Zeiten' aka 'Greatest War Leader of All Time,' thus leading him to suspect that there is indeed some sort of sinister neo-Nazi plot against the Klein family. Meanwhile, Bobby's relationship with his partner Tim begins to fall apart as a result of his obsession with the Jewish case and his glaring disinterest with the big Randolph case that they were working on together. While Tim gives Bobby wonderful words of advice about the importance of not being too emotionally attached to the case by stating, "Bob, I'm gonna tell you what the old whore said, and this is the truest thing I know. 'When you start cumin' with the customers, it's time to quit,'" he also gets quite emotional about his partner's strange unbecoming behavior and calls him a "dumb kike." When Bobby goes to a Jewish library and an absurdly arrogant Orthodox Jew says to him, "you're say you're a Jew, and you can't read

Hebrew. What are you then?," it naturally only compounds his guilty feelings of racial confusion and deracination. While at the library, Bobby asks for information on 'GröFaZ' and 'anti-Semitic acts,' but the two-faced yarmulke-adorned librarian (Mamet stock Jew Steve Goldstein), who is actually a Mossad agent, lies to him and says that they have no such information because he knows that it has been loaned out to a local Zionist terrorist organization that is plotting to attack a local neo-Nazi.

Upon eavesdropping on the lying kippah-sporting librarian, Bobby learns that the information has been loaned out to a group called '212' and soon discovers their address, which he visits. When Bobby dares to ask a couple young joggers about the seemingly empty building at the address, they reveal they are Israeli terrorists by randomly pulling guns on him and threatening to kill him. Luckily, a small group of Jews, who were previously at the Klein home, recognize Bobby and invite him into the building, which is revealed to be the headquarters a secret Zionist paramilitary operation that seems to be inspired by the real-life Jewish Defense League (JDL) founded by assassinated ultra-nationalist rebbe Meir Kahane. Somewhat humorously, the old Zionist terrorists have stereotypically ugly old Jewish guy names like 'Barry,' 'Lev,' and 'Merv.' Impressed by the militancy and supposed masculinity of these militant Zionist Jews, Bobby immediately offers to help, but when the elderly Israeli leader of the group demands that he give the group an ancient document in regard to gunrunning with various local Jewish names and addresses, he refuses since it is police evidence. Bobby found the document in the basement of the store owned by the dead Jewess and it seems to prove that a good percentage of the city's Jewish population is involved in a vast Zionist conspiracy that has lasted for about half a century. When Bobby insists that he cannot do it because he does not want to break his oath as a police officer, the geriatric Zionist leader mocks him by asking him "Where are you loyalties?" and then has him thrown out, but not before melodramatically stating to his compatriots in regard to the protagonist, "He disgusts me." Like a stereotypical overbearing and shrill-sounding Jewish mother, the Israeli terrorist attempts to guilt Bobby into stealing the document by questioning his Jewishness, but the cop just cannot bring himself to break his oath, even though he is willing to now commit terrorist acts. Indeed, it seems that the Zionist geezer's whiny words worked wonders on old Bobby boy, as he has transformed from a self-loathing Jew into a Zionist terrorist in virtually a single day.

While Bobby's meeting with the Zionist terrorists certainly did not go well, he still attempts to help them by hooking up with one of their female members. Indeed, Bobby originally met Chava (Natalija Nogulich)—a vaguely attractive Jewess with a fairly flat affect—at the Klein's house and it does not take long for him to lose his phony tough guy person and pour his entire heart out to her, stating like the stereotypical whiny Jew that he used to hate, "They said I was a pussy all my life. They said I was a pussy because I was a Jew. And the cops

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– They'd say, 'Send a Jew? Might as well send a broad on a job. Send a broad through the door.' That's what they said. All my goddamn life. And I listened to them. I was the donkey. I was the clown [...] They made me the hostage negotiator 'cause I knew how the bad guys felt." Ultimately, Bobby makes the major mistake of carrying out one of Chava's Zionist terrorist missions out for her by blowing up the model train store of a neo-Nazi named Anderson. Needless to say, when Bobby examines Anderson's shop and sees a swastika flag, a picture of a Nazi soldier shooting a Jewess holding a baby, and books like Martin Luther's anti-Jew classic *The Jews and Their Lies*, he is more than a little bit angered, but he does not get the gall to blow up the building until he reads a propaganda pamphlet that reads, "It is only common sense to cull the weak. The admixture of Jewish blood into the clean White Race is a crime against humanity against which the greatest plagues of history must pale. The effeminate ideals and weak physical appearance of the Jew proclaim to all his inferiority. To tolerate the presence of the vile sickness in our midst is not justice, IT IS MADNESS." While Bobby has no understanding of Hebrew or the tenets of the Jewish religion, he can certainly identify with the racial element of Judaism, hence his rather melodramatic reaction to the racially-charged propaganda pamphlet. Unfortunately for Bobby, members of the Zionist terrorist group took photos of the protagonist blowing up the store and use said photos to blackmail him into giving them the document they want. On top of everything else, Bobby realizes just after he is blackmailed and beaten by a rather rotund Zio-terrorist goon named Aaron (Jewish magician and sometimes actor Ricky Jay) that he is late for his date with his partner Tim to nab alpha-criminal Robert Randolph.

If his day could not get any worse, Bobby discovers upon arriving at Randolph's rather quaint ghetto hideout that the entire operation has turned into a horrific disaster and that his partner Tim has been shot. Of course, had Bobby been on time to negotiate with Randolph instead of committing terrorist acts for the benefit of treacherous Israeli terrorists, his best friend probably would have not been shot. Totally unafraid of dying at this point in his increasingly lonely and pathetic life, Bobby bravely busts through the building while Randolph is shooting at cops to get to his partner Tim, who randomly states to him, "Do you remember that girl that onetime, Bob?" and then tragically dies in his arms. With his best friend dead, Bobby screams to Randolph, "You shot my partner, you fucking nigger. I'm gonna kill you" and then climbs down to a sort of almost mystical subterranean realm to confront the negro in a crucial climatic scene that auteur Mamet notably described in the Criterion Collection DVD audio commentary as, "The sort of apotheosis. The meeting with the keeper of the secrets [...] He's going deep into the cave to find the Minotaur. To finally find the secrets. And he's finally about to descent into the underworld." In what proves to be a symbolic common occurrence for the protagonist that demonstrates that he is a shitty cop that lacks the marital prowess to fight bad guys, Bobby manages

to lose his gun while making his descent and is thus naturally immediately shot when he finally reaches Randolph, who acts rather smug and mocks him for losing his gun. When Randolph asks the protagonist if he wants to beg for his life, Bobby pathetically replies, "It's not worth anything." When Bobby makes the quasi-suicidal mistake of claiming to Randolph that his mother sold him out to the cops, the negro copkiller shoots him again and calls him a "piece of shit," to which the injured protagonist replies while in glaring pain, "I am a piece of shit. I killed my partner, and your mama turned you in." When Bobby proves to Randolph that his mother sold him out by showing him a bogus passport that the police procured for the specific purpose of busting him, the trigger-happy negro outlaw is so stunned that he does not even notice when a couple cops show up and blow him away with a couple bullets. After being shot, Randolph's body lands on Bobby and he states while lying on the wounded Jew, "God. God help me. What did you do to me?" In what ultimately proves to be quite bitter biting irony for the protagonist, Bobby learns in the end that there was never any sort of antisemitic conspiracy and that elderly Jewess Klein was actually killed by the very same young preteen negro boys who proclaimed at the crime scene that she was killed for mythical treasure in her basement. Additionally, the 'grofaz' paper that Bobby found on the Klein's roof was not in reference to Uncle Adolf but a pigeon feed company called 'Grofazt.' On top of everything else, Bobby is kicked off of homicide and is immediately regulated to a stereotypical Jewish position of abstract paper-shuffling. Notably, at the beginning of the film, a deranged dude named Walter B. Wells (Colin Stinton) that committed familicide with his trusty hunting rifle made a somewhat strange offer to Bobby by stating, "Perhaps someday I could tell you the nature of evil. Would you like to know how to - to solve the problem of evil?," but the protagonist declines, stating, "No, man, 'cause if I did, then I'd be out of the job." Of course, by the end of the film, Bobby has encountered various forms of evil, including among his own race, but he is hardly capable of destroying it, especially since he himself pathetically succumbed to it.

While auteur David Mamet decided for whatever reason not to mention to the name of the superlatively shitty quasi-third world east coast city where it was shot, *Homicide*—a title that perfectly describes said city's most booming trade aside from dope-dealing—does a great job demonstrating that Baltimore is an absolutely forsaken and criminally malignant hellhole where corrupt self-serving spades run the government, perennially unemployed killer colored folks roam the streets at all hours, and corrupt white collar chosenites use their money to manipulate politicians to benefit of their true nation of Israel. Of course, the entire film almost takes a sadistic glee in depicting virtually every great American racial stereotype, including that bourgeois Jews are paranoid supporters of Zionist terror, urban negroes are barbaric brutes that are not beneath committing senseless violent murders during early childhood, and Jews make for crappy

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cops because they do not have the testicular fortitude or martial prowess to get the job done nor deal with the ruthless teasing of his fellow cops. It should also be noted that the least violent and racially hateful people in the entire film are the 'white' (translation: non-Jewish people of European descent), yet the black and Jewish characters are so belligerent in their racial sensitivity that one would almost assume that Mamet is attempting to say that there is a direct link between racial neuroticism and criminality. Indeed, the only whites that dare to say racially insensitive things are neo-Nazis and they do it via flyers while the negroes characters, who seem to see their anti-whitey hatred as a sort of badge of honor, quite regularly exchange charming racial slurs to complete strangers. In fact, even when the protagonist's friend calls him a "kike," it hardly seems to be for racial reasons. As for the negroes, Mamet makes it more than clear in *Homicide* that he believes that American negroes—a group that has been exploited as a sort of socio-cultural political weapon by Hollywood, Jewish groups, and politicians for at least a century—has a deep-seated collective hatred for all-things-kosher. In short, Mamet's confirms in a variety of subtle ways that he believes that all the conspiracy theories about Jews are true.

Undoubtedly, after watching *Homicide*, the only conclusion that the viewer can come to is that it sucks being Jewish, especially when it comes to having to deal with other Jews. Indeed, had the protagonist not had the grand misfortune of interacting with pushy rich extremist Jews, he probably would not have virtually lost his mind, committed a terrorist act, and got his best friend killed. Considering Mamet's own rather extreme Zionist tendencies, it is quite curious that he would write and directed such a strangely Zio-unfriendly film, but as Stuart Klawans noted in his essay *Homicide: What Are You, Then?*, "That even the hint of a Jewish conspiracy should be conjured in *HOMICIDE* may disturb some viewers, including, today, perhaps the author himself, who in recent years has issued a number of bluntly worded commentaries accusing virtually all critics of the State of Israel of anti-Semitism (or of self-hatred, if they're Jews), and of having feeble brains haunted by *THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION*. Rather than address the merits of this position, I will merely suggest that it's a mistake to identify Mamet the artist with Mamet the polemicist." Although just speculation, I can only assume that Mamet, as a famous and politically active Jew, is perfectly aware of the criminal and conspiratorial nature of rich and powerful Jews and that has instilled him with a certain deep and unwavering sense of paranoia that makes him feel the need to be militant about Zionism lest there be some neo-pogroms or even another shoah. After all, people that are not wracked with guilt do not feel the need to go on the defensive, yet Hollywood incessantly defecates out anti-intellectual holocaust agitprop films that are supposed to make the stupid goyim think that the Jews are history's foremost innocent victim despite all the contemporary (and historical) evidence to the contrary. This might also explain why Jews constantly complain about the holocaust and antisemitism

in Hollywood films and TV shows yet virtually never actually create truly Judaic themed works, as if they are afraid of gentiles, especially white Christians, truly understanding the intrinsically racially chauvinistic nature of Judaism and what it truly means to be a Jew in a world full of ostensibly stupid gentiles. Hollywood's curious fear of revealing its innate Jewishness certainly disturbed Ben Hecht, who once complained regarding the complete and utter disappearance of Jews from films of the 1930s and 1940s, "The greatest single Jewish phenomenon in our country in the last twenty years has been the almost complete disappearance of the Jew from American fiction, stage, radio, and movies. . . . And for this false oblivion and for this dangerous exile, the movies are the most to blame." Aside from emotionally manipulative holocaust propaganda films featuring good goy protagonist's like Schindler's List (1993), the occasional overt Zionist propaganda film like Otto Preminger's Exodus (1960) and Spielberg's Munich (2005), and the disgusting deluge of semi-cryptically kosher comedies featuring revolting Hebraic hogs like Seth Rogen, Hebrew-owned Hollywood is strangely silent when it comes to addressing its own heritage. As far as films that manage to combine genre conventions with Jewish themes, the only thing I can really compare Homicide to is the fairly mediocre fourth season The X-Files episode "Kaddish," which takes the legend of the Golem from the Kabbalah and transports it to contemporary times in an imaginary antisemitic Brooklyn where a trio of thuggish neo-Nazi proles kill an orthodox Jew for fun after reading one-too-many antisemitic flyers. Needless to say, The X-Files episode is putridly politically correct (in fact, the original antagonists were a Louis Farrakhan-like figure and his negro underlings, but the Fox network were afraid that dindus would get made, so Jewish writer Howard Gordon rewrote the episode to make it more characteristically p.c.). Of course, I doubt any Jew would have the artistic or intellectual integrity to make a film like Homicide nowadays, as it would be politically and financially risky to make a fairly ambiguous intellectual neo-noir that dares to feature a group of shadowy scheming Jewish terrorists whose members are also part of the city's cultural elite. Indeed not unlike the pre-Code Hollywood flick The House of Rothschild (1934), Mamet's film ultimately does more harm to the Judaic cause than good. Homicide hints at many reasons as to why people hate the Jews, but it never really gets to the heart of the issue, which Friedrich Nietzsche probably summed up best when he wrote in his classic text On the Genealogy of Morality (1887) in regard to the decidedly deleterious effect of Jews on the Occident, "Whatever else has been done to damage the powerful and great of this earth seems trivial compared with what the Jews have done, that priestly people who succeeded in avenging themselves on their enemies and oppressors by radically inverting all their values, that is, by an act of the most spiritual vengeance. This was a strategy entirely appropriate to a priestly people in whom vindictiveness had gone most deeply underground. It was the Jew who, with frightening consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value equa-

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tions good/noble/powerful/beautiful/happy/favored-of-the-gods and maintain, with the furious hatred of the underprivileged and impotent, that "only the poor, the powerless, are good; only the suffering, sick, and ugly, truly blessed. But you noble and mighty ones of the earth will be, to all eternity, the evil, the cruel, the avaricious, the godless, and thus the cursed and damned!" . . . We know who has fallen heir to this Jewish inversion of values. . . . In reference to the grand and unspeakably disastrous initiative which the Jews have launched by this most radical of all declarations of war, I wish to repeat a statement I made in a different context (BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL), to wit, that it was the Jews who started the slave revolt in morals; a revolt with two millennia of history behind it, which we have lost sight of today simply because it has triumphed so completely." Indeed, only in a slave-morality-ridden bizarro world dreamed up by Jews could homos, cripples, lard asses, dykes, mongrels, untermenschen, and retards be propped up as the height of moral righteousness while white men—the single greatest contributors to culture, civilization, science, and technology—are the most monstrous. Undoubtedly, what makes *Homicide* and Mamet's greatest works most interesting is that they dare to depict harsh realities as opposed to Hollywood bullshit, but I would expect nothing less from a man that once hilariously wrote, "In my lifetime we Jews, mythologically, have served the cause of soft pornography. The world weeps at our being killed. What fun. I wrote, years ago, that Holocaust films are 'MANDINGO for Jews,' and that the thrill, for the audience, came and comes from a protected indulgence of anti-Semitism: they get to see us killed and to explain to themselves that they feel bad about." Of course, *Homicide* is ultimately a reminder as to why I am not being paranoid when I sense that someone is attempting to emotionally swindle me anytime I see a Holocaust movie.

-Ty E

BRUTAL RELAX

David Muñoz (2010)

It seems as if it has been so long since I have last enjoyed a short film; one from this decade that is. *Brutal Relax* was recently selected to play at Sitges Film Festival, courtesy of Eskoria Films. No matter what might be a translation error as it perfectly chimes the tone of the film. The title is such after the discharge of a patient whom appears to have an aggressive condition. Our mute leading man with a frozen grin is being released from what I can only guess is a sanitarium. The doctor gives strict preference as to where Mr. Olivares should vacate to: somewhere relaxing as to avoid any sort of sparking conflict. The warnings towards avoiding stress weigh heavy enough but for us the trip is hardly over. As soon as Mr. Olivares settles on a beach in a pool of mud, scaly lizard zombies (or demons) crawl from the abyss to slaughter and maim the fun-loving citizens of the resort.

I believe that the most accessible facet to *Brutal Relax* is the facial comparison of Mr. Olivares to French provocateur Gaspar Noe. The second leading trait is the relentless bloodshed that is always excessive but never tiring. Mr. Olivares always gets his man and even goes as far as wielding a child's mutilated corpse as a club to bludgeon the creatures who have imposed upon the malfunction of his cassette player. Apart from the well-done gore effects and violent slapstick, *Brutal Relax* also is one of the few films in question that alters the undead into something that doesn't involve pharmacy brand face paint and shredded clothing. These lizard-men emit a pustular discharge from their mouth while chowing down on a passer-by's neck. The cast of victims include beautiful women, children, and the occasional bro. The level of depravity hit is almost shocking. What's more is how enjoyable and utterly intoxicating it all is, especially if you're able to reach the off switch for 15 minutes.

Mr. Olivares is the greatest aspect of the film which is an admirable portion of a serving based entirely on bloodshed. His ambiguity opens the door to possible precursors to what could be a tasty franchise of unpredictable vacation massacres. I, for one, would pay to witness Mr. Olivares in a parka defending a small ice-fishing village from mutant demon penguins. Also appealing is the sexless agenda fueling the bulky monster of a man, denying damsels no longer in distress from victory kisses. *Brutal Relax* is a bona-fide gruesome short that expresses its point clearly with no genre confusion. Finally, gorehounds did it right.

-mAQ

TALES FROM THE CARNAL MORGUE
TALES FROM THE CARNAL MORGUE

David Quitmeyer (2007)

David Quitmeyer has impressed me before with his "goreporn" Slaughter Disc which also manages to be anti-porn at the same time. A remarkable feat for an independent director. So moving on to the collection of his shorts, I had high hopes for a possible trio of disturbing erotica, but what I found was a retarded version of Are You Afraid of the Dark? There are three tales you must go through in order to complete this cinematic torture fest. The first one is perhaps the most ambitious, but due to its own broken promise of being a disturbing erotic horror film, it is very amateur film. MAIL ORDER BRIDE The plot is of a businessman who is broken up and lonely. He uncovers a robotic sex doll that will do anything to please you, the PC-2000 (Personal Concubine.) You show the doll your favorite pornographic videos and it will mimic your favorite fetishes, no matter how taboo or degrading they are. While set up for an interesting premise, the film is dragged into its own grave by horrendous acting, horrendous effects, and an overall horrendous execution. I like my horror films to be at least well constructed. This has no real value of any sorts. Avoid this title. MR. BUTTONS

If there is one genre that never gets old, it is the animated doll/inanimate objects. In this tale, they take that amazing genre, and add a dash of those kids horror novels "Goosebumps" into it. A woman who has some ex-lover storyline and wants revenge. She cuts off a rubber finger and stitches it in the nose. With an incredible twist (sarcasm), it turns out that anything she wishes for, happens in some weird twisted way. This is the best short, but it is far from great. SUSTENANCE This film is reminiscent of most females, perfectly preserved, just with a dash of horror/sci-fi in the mix. A model thinks she is fat, who is played by the lovely Caroline Pierce. She attempts to lose weight by undergoing an experimental procedure which involves them removing some fleshy organ from her naval, and locking her in a room for a while. This boils down to premature acting from Pierce, who should stick to being sinister, rather than her screaming and eating dog food. She doesn't have what it takes to be a scream queen. All in all, this collection of shorts is ultimately passable. His film Slaughter Disc is a vast improvement, so I won't hold this volume of embarrassing shorts against him. Let's face it, the only plausible reason you'd be viewing this, is either for the blood, or the nudity. This film has little of both. Pass this unless you are a die hard fan of Pierce. She almost makes it worth it.

-Maq

THE SECRET LIFE: JEFFREY DAHMER

David R. Bowen (1993)

When a film begins with a scene of Jeffrey Dahmer driving around in a convertible as if he is some sort of suave gay playboy on the prowl like the fellows in Gregg Araki's *The Living End* (1992), you know it is going to be a great one. As I soon found out while watching *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* (1993) directed by David R. Bowen and starring Carl Crew (*Blood Diner*, *Ironhorse*), not only did the flick prove to be an extremely entertaining effort, but also a notably (but unintentionally) gut-busting one as well, as it puts most genuine horror-comedies to shame with its mundane melodrama and bodacious interracial murder and mayhem. Featuring scenes of devilishly dandy Dahmer calling people "Pigs" (as if he is some sort of horror-film-addicted burnout metalhead), crying like a little girl, teasing a deaf Negro, prank calling his mom, turning Asian boys into zombies, sneering at a prankster priest, and many other wonderful things, *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* is a delectable work of accidental political incorrectness that is not to be missed. Essentially, *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* portrays Dahmer as some sort of ridiculous rebel-with-a-reprehensible-cause that lives in a state of indefinite adolescence and whose belligerent behavior is merely the result of having an estranged mommy and an overbearing daddy. Like angst-driven anti-hero Jim Stark (James Dean) from Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), the Jeffrey Dahmer of *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* is an uncommonly likeable anti-social rebel who loathes his family just as much as he disrespects the institution of law and order. Also, like Jim Stark, Dahmer has a special talent for attracting weaker social degenerates. Of course, unlike Stark, Dahmer is totally disingenuous in his charm as he is a master of deceit who will tell any lie and put on any front just to achieve his remarkably aberrant aims. In *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*, daring Dahmer is as compelling as the most seasoned of carny hucksters yet he has the special natural born advantage of having all-American boyish good looks and a superficially laidback disposition, thus being able to easily deceive and manipulate his prospective victims in a rather unsophisticated manner. Throughout *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*, Jeff lures a variety of gay and not-so-gay men to his domestic torture chamber (aka a scarcely furnished efficiency apartment) under the false pretense that he will pay them between \$150.00-200.00 in exchange for agreeing to pose nude for a series of Polaroid photographs. Of course, snapping perverted photos is only mere foreplay for dirty Dahmer as he is a more "hands on" kind of guy. Despite physical appearances to the contrary, Dahmer ain't no uptight wasp, but an active endorser of multiculturalism and diversity as he lives in a ghetto and loves ridin' dirty wit his many brothas of different colors.

If any part of *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* does the best job of capturing the film's essence as a whole, it is a scene towards the end of the film featur-

THE SECRET LIFE: JEFFREY DAHMER

ing our brave homicidal homo hero wearing a She-Devils on Wheels (1968) t-shirt as he murders and snaps photographs of his latest victim. Like the exceedingly gratuitous and pointless films of Herschell Gordon Lewis, *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* is a work that features a wealth of tasteless humor and carnal campiness, except to a deeper, mostly unintentional, and ultimately more preposterous degree. It should also be noted that actor Carl Crew (who also wrote the film's screenplay) previously starred as one of the cannibalistic Tutman brothers in the low-budget horror-comedy *Blood Diner* (1987); a pseudo-sequel to Herschell Gordon Lewis' 'pioneering' gore flick *Blood Feast* (1963). Indeed, *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* features a 'blood feast' worthy of a bloodlust-ing Egyptian goddess, but contained within a seedy slum worthy of two thousand crack-addicted maniacs. Dahmer may live in an apartment full of strong and uppity welfare queens that 'get up in his grill' quite regularly, but his lonely apartment is a distinct lunatic microcosm of his own making, adorned with the scant furnishings of a generic mad man, including abstract skeleton paintings on the walls and a lone kitschy skull on a tabletop. To accommodate the imperative needs of his rapidly decomposing company, Dahmer has a large black barrel containing acid that acts as a substitute room if sorts. Anytime Dahmer wants to grab a quick bite to eat, he merely has to open his freezer, which contains a couple decapitated heads of color and other assorted body parts. When having guests over for dinner, Dahmer never forgets to offer them a mixed drink that he creates with the utmost care, as a lack of hospitality would be most unbecoming for a gentleman of Jeffrey Dahmer's outstanding caliber. As the viewer soon learns while watching *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*, one would be at a loss to find a host as attentive and concerned with the welfare of his guests than Jeffrey Dahmer. When not entertaining the company of prospective lovers, Dahmer is sitting in a chair all by his lonesome making pseudo-deranged faces while staring into eternity as if he was Bela Lugosi's pothead grandson. To add to the sensory overload that is *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*, Carl Crew narrates the film with cheesy and mirthfully cliched lines of reflection that are quite typical of ineptly assembled film noir flicks and made-for-television Lifetime channel movies. With sounds and images such as these, it should be easy see why virtually every second of *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* manages to be nothing short of captivating.

When considering the film within the context of the time when it was created, it should come as no surprise that *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* was made under the dubious confines of total secrecy. Initially intended as a theatrical release, the film would be cursed into obscurity as a straight-to-video release. Somewhat fittingly, while in prison, Dahmer was violently bludgeoned to death with a broom handle by a racist black man suffering from a messianic complex only a year or so after the release of *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*. Indubitably, in a audacious display of profoundly bad taste, the film concludes with a memorial list

of Dahmer's various victims. It is quite apparent while watching *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* that it was assembled in a hurried manner so as to monopolize on Dahmer's newfound infamy using cinematic conventions that have more in common with satirical horror-comedies like *The Undertaker and His Pals* (1966) and the works of Herschell Gordon Lewis than what one would expect from a typical true crime docudrama. Thankfully (but unsurprisingly), *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* was not the last film to offend the families of Dahmer's victims. In 2002, the American Jeffrey Dahmer biopic *Dahmer* starring Jeremy Renner was released. Unlike *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer*, *Dahmer* is overly empathetic towards its necrophiliac/cannibalistic subject and portrays Dahmer as a victim of his authoritarian father's homophobic tyranny. Lady auteur Kathryn Bigelow was so impressed with Renner's performance as Dahmer in *Dahmer* that she decided to cast him as the lead of her Academy Award nominated and six-time Oscar award winning film *The Hurt Locker* (2008). Needless to say, Carl Crew's performance as a 'dashing' Jeffrey Dahmer in *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* is less than Oscar worthy, but he does bring a certain exceptional anti-social charisma to the role that may have led some audiences from 1993 to believe that one day, like Charles Manson, the self-loathing homo-cidal serial killer would become a cult hero of sorts for disaffected gay youth. Considering that abnormal Aryan auteur Jörg Buttgerreit always opens his films with serious quotes from popular American serial killers, I think he might want to consider making Jeffrey Dahmer the central subject of a potential third *Nekromantik* film. Although Jeffrey Dahmer is still mostly regarded as the archetype for all things both evil and degenerate, *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* has, rightfully, gone on to obtain a marginal, but vocal cult following. As someone who had the novel honor of being told as a child that I had a strikingly resemblance to a young Jeffrey Dahmer, a film like *The Secret Life: Jeffrey Dahmer* holds a special place in my heart.

-Ty E

IT FOLLOWS
IT FOLLOWS

David Robert Mitchell (2014)

At least in a general sense, I have totally given up on my very early childhood love of horror cinema to the point where I do not in any way pay attention to trends within the genre, though that does not mean that I refuse to check out the latest highly praised and critically acclaimed cinematic effort that the genre has to offer, especially if it is noted for being in anyway idiosyncratic and/or artistically merited as it is not often that such films come along in a place like the United States where cinematic art is considered a monetary serious liability. Indeed, naturally I eventually took the opportunity to watch Tomas Alfredson's *Låt den rätte komma in* (2008) aka *Let the Right One In* and Matt Reeves' somewhat pointless yet not all that bad English-language remake *Let Me In* (2010), Adam Wingard's *You're Next* (2012) and covertly slasher-conscious genre-bender *The Guest* (2014), and Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013), among various other less notable works, when I heard these films were worthy and somewhat original contributions to the seemingly accursed genre, but none of these films quite impressed me as much as the quasi-arthouse-ish supernatural horror flick *It Follows* (2014) directed by virtual novice filmmaker David Robert Mitchell. Directed by a young auteur whose first and only other feature *The Myth of the American Sleepover* (2010) was somewhat strangely a coming-of-age post-mumblecore dramedy about the Fremdscham-inducing awkwardness of youthful love and romance, Mitchell's second feature has a number of obvious classic horror influences ranging from John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) to the various *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* flicks to Sidney J. Furie's *The Entity* (1982) to Tobe Hooper's Colin Wilson adaptation *Life-force* (1985), yet it undoubtedly owns its borderline shocking pulchritude and economical filmmaking to influences that, not surprisingly, totally transcend the horror genre, with the (hyper)realist photography of Gregory Crewdson being arguably the most notable and influential. As rare piece of regional Midwestern horror cinema that oftentimes seems like what might happened if the young bastard brood of David Lynch and Debra Hill attempted to make a horror film for lapsed John Hughes fans, it should be no surprise that Mitchell had lead actress Maika Monroe, who notably just got done working on Wingard's *The Guest* just before the film began production, watch *Blue Velvet* (1986) in preparation for her role as the lead heroine. A somewhat ambiguously allegorical cinematic tone poem of the sometimes ominous yet always otherworldly sort that offers viewers the quite rare and delightful opportunity to come up with their own various interpretations as to its true meaning, Mitchell's fine little flick tells the spectrophiliac tale of a beautiful young blonde college girl who finds herself contracting a sexually transmitted curse of sorts that involves her being incessantly followed by a slow but persistent and psychologically craven deadly shape-shifting evil spirit

that can take the form of both strangers and loved ones and ultimately desires to kill its carnally accursed human prey by fucking them to death. Rather unfortunately, while an individual can rid themselves of the carnal curse by fucking someone else and passing it onto them, the sinister sensual spirit will come back to preying on them if the person that they passed it onto is killed by it.

Set in a somewhat serene and intentionally anachronistic Michigan suburb just outside of Detroit that seems to be 'outside of time' in the sense that, aside from a couple exceptions, no one uses cellphones, virtually all the movies referenced were made in between the 1950s and 1960s, and the characters wearing clothing that looks like it is mostly from the 1970s and 1980s, *It Follows* is oftentimes interpreted by viewers as a parable about HIV/AIDS and STDs in general, a critique of the effects of the so-called sexual revolution, and a symbolic depiction of a young woman's less than ideal sexual rite of passage, yet auteur Mitchell has been somewhat dismissive of these various interpretations and has mentioned that the film was actually inspired by a real reoccurring nightmare that he had, or as the filmmaker stated in an interview with *Digital Spy*, "I had it when I was very young, the nightmare. I had it several times and I still remember images from it. I didn't use those images for the film, but the basic idea and the feeling I used. From what I understand, it's an anxiety dream. Whatever I was going through at that time, my parents divorced when I was around that age, so I imagine it was something to do with that." Of course, by Mitchell's own admittance, it seems that the film was at least partly inspired by the quite prominent post-counterculture social plague of divorce, which at least owes some of its popularity to family-negative influences like feminism, the welfare state, and the introduction of the pill and so-called sexual liberation. For those that have been fully red-pillled and do not believe in the lies of Hebraic Hollywood and the innately anti-intellectual emotion-based joke that is mainstream cultural Marxist academia where extremely coddled and/or otherwise mentally defective so-called 'minorities' and white liberal bourgeois weaklings are taught how to be triggered by mere words and ideas, the film can easily be interpreted as an allegory for the death of the European-American middleclass as a result of the various corrosive leftist/cultural Marxist forces, including the counterculture movement, feminism/women's lib, and civil rights/multiculturalism, among various other intersecting post-Marcusian socially engineered metapolitical plagues that have had a decidedly necrotizing effect on the overall social, cultural, spiritual, and moral core of the nation's once great white majority. A film that depicts Detroit as a completely depopulated hellhole and virtually haunted metropolis that is full of eerily dilapidated houses that look like they would be inhabited by the most menacing of both (sub)human and supernatural monsters, the film hints that, like most highly deleterious things that destroy suburban and rural areas like drugs and sexual degeneracy, the titular evil sexual spirit slithered out of the city. It should also be noted that the film goes out of its way to highlight the fact

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that the characters' parents sheltered them from the city, thereupon underscoring the almost mystically ominous essence of the quite literally dystopian urban wasteland while, at the same time, making light of the fact that suburbanites have a keen naivety when it comes to the real-life horrors of the world and thus make for the perfect victims for a deadly demonic STD from both the literally and figuratively dark side of town.

Featuring a rather naive and less than dainty yet compulsively cute suburban debutante heroine that is trapped at a somewhat purgatorial crossroad between childhood and adulthood that becomes all the more apparent after she lets some handsome hunk penetrate her fairly fresh main vein and subsequently becomes the perennial prey of a sexually deadly specter, the film surely demonstrates that coitus is considered a sort of initiatory act of adulthood that many teenagers and young adults are just too emotionally immature to deal with, especially if you're a dumb tom girl that, like the female protagonist, every boy and man wants to fuck. Featuring a subtly deteriorating suburban realm where all the male characters are either weak and/or manipulative and where the only paternal figures come in the form of the evil specter taking on the appearance of the heroine's father and grandfather, *It Follows* depicts an exceedingly emasculated society where the archetypical masculine male of American history has become nothing more than both a literal and figurative phantom that strikes great fear into the seemingly sexually conflicted female lead, who does not go by the quite unflattering male nickname 'Jay' for no reason. Indeed, if any contemporary horror film manages to simultaneously critique the decidedly deleterious effects that the sexual revolution, so-called women's lib and feminism, and civil rights/multiculturalism have had on the white American middleclass and how white flight to the suburbs has only turned America's pioneering majority into perturbingly passive sheep that could easily be led to the slaughter, it is indubitably *It Follows*, even if that was not exactly director Mitchell's conscious intention. Featuring a female protagonist that initially has a sort of deluded, idealistic desire to find true love and romance, the film not coincidentally depicts a mindlessly wanton microcosm where the evil entity ultimately takes advantage of the fact that all sex is loveless and passionless and is usually based on some sort of craven lie or deception. Indeed, as the film makes quite clear, it is rather unlikely that two lovers that have a mutual love and affection for one another could acquire the supernatural sickness.

Of course, while all these oftentimes ambiguous and esoteric themes are quite intriguing and totally atypical of horror cinema in general, what really makes the film work is its overall absolutely outstanding aesthetic package, which features a hyperrealistic arthouse meticulousness comparable to Dutch auteur Alex van Warmerdam's socially scathing arthouse films like *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners* and especially *Borgman* (2013), but also a sort of vague neo-retro vibe in the spirit of the more recent cinematic works of Nicolas Wind-

ing Refn, Adam Wingard, and Jim Mickle that is underscored by its original synthesizer-driven musical score by Disasterpeace (aka Richard Vreeland). Intentionally shot with wide-angle lenses that give the film an extra expansive Kubrickian feel that makes the viewer feel as if they are completely engulfed in an ever-growing suburban abyss and that ultimately greatly accentuates the film's overall ominously yet beautifully oneiric essence (somewhat fittingly, lead Monroe has described Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) as her personal favorite film), *It Follows* is probably the best and most idiosyncratic suburban horror flick since the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), though it is obvious that the auteur is an actual child of the suburbs who has an innate and highly intimate understanding of the social dynamic of the environment as opposed to a leftist philosophy professor turned pornographer turned filmmaker like Wes Craven who has a dubious fetish for inordinately strong teenage female protagonists. In fact, instead of depicting teens and young adults as worthy rivals to the main monster, Mitchell's film completely breaks with outmoded genre conventions and depicts the would-be-heroes as the hopelessly stupid, naive, and foolish perennial children that they are. In short, there is no question after viewing *It Follows* that director Mitchell has a somewhat sentimental yet wholly critical view of the film's suburb setting (after all, he is a product of a Michigan suburb) and that he has not only a love of classic American horror movies but also a deep and obsessive respect for cinema as an art form to the point where he has sought to attempt to bring something fresh to both the genre and artistic medium. In other words, unlike the average horror director, Mitchell is not some hackish studio whore that vomits out celluloid products for the monetary benefit of some psychopathic Svengali-like studio head (though, to be fair, due to its unexpected popularity, the film was eventually purchased by The Weinstein Company's subsidiary, RADiUS-TWC, for North American distribution), but a real auteur with a distinct vision that all serious cinephiles should keep their eyes on in the future.

Right from the get-go in the wonderfully erratic and preternaturally stylized opening scene, *It Follows* announces that it is not your typical haplessly hokey horror turd, but a carefully constructed piece of cinematic art that actually demands that the viewer have a sense of taste and use their brain. Indeed, the film opens with a very long single shot of a petrified young dame wearing nothing but a slip and high-heels named Annie (Bailey Spry) running out of her house as if being chased by something or someone, pretending everything is all nice and dandy when both a negress neighbor and her father ask her if she needs help, running back into her house to get her purse and car keys, and then jumping into her car and abruptly driving away in a frenzied fashion. Ultimately, Annie drives to a secluded beach during twilight where she crouches down on the sand at the edge of the sea and calls her father on her cellphone while in a discernibly petrified state and confesses to him in a manner that makes it seem like she is say-

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ing goodbye forever, “I love you [...] I just wanted you and Mom to know how much I love you. Dad, I’m sorry I can be such a shit to you sometimes. I don’t know why I do that. Just know that I love you, OK? I just really love you both.” Considering her words to her father sound like those of a regretful individual that knows they are about to kick the bucket in some horrific way, it is no surprise that Annie is depicted as a lifeless corpse in the next scene. Undoubtedly, what is shocking about this scene is that something or someone has so brutally murdered and mangled Annie that one of her high-heel-adorned legs has been severely broken to the point where it is pointing in the opposite direction in what is ultimately a stunningly macabre early morning beach scene that almost manages to be morbidly erotic. Indeed, Annie’s corpse looks like a virtual surrealist statue, as if auteur Mitchell endured an Alain Robbe-Grillet movie marathon in preparation for this scene. Thankfully, unlike many Robbe-Grillet films, the imagery in *It Follows* never overwhelms the film’s narrative, as the two seem to perfectly compliment one another.

After poor little Annie is liquidated by some unknown pernicious force that seems to enjoy killing people during the late night in secluded places, the viewer is introduced to cutesy blonde protagonist ‘Jay’ Height (Maika Monroe)—a seemingly overgrown tomboy who refuses to be called by her real female name Jamie despite the fact that she is on the verge of both adulthood and her sexual maturity, or so it initially seems—as she briefly cleans and then relaxes in her family’s cheap above-ground swimming pool. Considering comments made by her busybody adult female neighbors, it seems that Jay comes from a somewhat broken home as her father does not seem to be in the picture and her mother is rarely around (when the viewer is eventually introduced to the mother, we never get to clearly see her face), though the female protagonist has a fairly close relationships with her somewhat less attractive younger sister Kelly (Lili Sepe) and childhood neighbor friends. Since Jay’s neighborhood seems to be a place where absentee adults are the norm, it is only natural that she and her friends have such close bonds that they make up a virtual surrogate family that provides each other with emotional support. Indeed, Jay is friends with an almost insufferably nerdy neighbor boy named Paul (Keir Gilchrist of James Wan’s quite horrendous supernatural horror abortion *Dead Silence* (2007)) and a dorky eccentric four-eyed girl named Yara (Olivia Luccardi) that plays a childish joke on her friends by farting quite loudly while reading Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s classic *The Idiot* (1869) on a seemingly futuristic clam-shaped compact e-reader. After her brief dip in the pool that involves gently drowning an ant that she finds crawling on her arm and playfully confronting some little boys that are playing peeping tom, Kelly briefly talks to her sister and friends and then prepares for a movie date with a young handsome fellow named Hugh (Jake Weary) that she seems to be quite infatuated with, even though she does not really seem to know much about him or his true character. While waiting in line to watch *Charade* (1963) starring

Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn at a quite quaint antiquated movie theater (the scene was actually shot on location at a historic Japanese style theater in Detroit named Redford Theatre, which is notable for featuring a fully functioning Wurlitzer organ and being the place where Sam Raimi's classic *The Evil Dead* (1981) premiered), Jay proposes to Hugh that they play a rather juvenile game called "The Trade Game" where he must choose a person in the crowd that he would like to trade places with and then she gets the opportunity to guess who he picked. Despite being a handsome young man that is about to penetrate fresh premium pussy of the barely legal sort, Hugh somewhat strangely reveals that he would like to trade places with a little toddler boy, arguing, "I mean how cool would that be to have your whole life ahead of you." Judging Hugh's somewhat emasculating confession, one assumes that he has either screwed up his life majorly and/or lacks the emotional maturity and self-discipline to fully embrace the fact that he is a grown-up man and should not be fantasizing about being at an age where he is a completely dependent urchin that can getaway with pissing himself and not feel embarrassed. Naturally, things get somewhat bizarre between the young couple when Hugh insists that they leave the theater before the movie even starts after he spots a mysterious girl in a yellow shirt that Jay cannot see. While Jay has the typical jealous female response and demands to know if Hugh saw an ex-girlfriend, the heroine has no idea that she will soon discover that her beau has some seriously sinister sexual baggage that would even scare a pussy-peddling and STD-ridden Detroit crack whore away.

While Jay is noticeably baffled and concerned after being practically dragged out of the theater for seemingly no sensible reason at all by her seemingly bipolar boyfriend, that does not stop her from letting Hugh lacklusterly hump her in the backseat of his car the next night. While Hugh proves to be a pump-and-dump prick who just wanted Jay for her precious young poke-hole, the torment and abuse only just begins after the great sexual deception is revealed. Indeed, after the seemingly sapless sex concludes, Hugh gets out of his car and fiddles with junk in his truck while Jay lies in the back seat and gracefully plays with some weeds while softly confessing to her seemingly apathetic boyfriend, "It's funny. I used to daydream about being old enough to go on dates...Driving around with friends in their cars. I had this image of myself, holding hands with a really cute guy, listening to the radio, driving along some pretty road...Up north maybe...And the trees start to change colors. It was never about going anywhere really...Just having some sort of freedom, I guess. Never old enough, where the hell do we go." After Jay concludes her rather revealing little pseudo-poetic post-coital rant, she is in for quite the shock when Hugh abruptly grabs her from behind and knocks her out cold with a face full of chloroform. When Jay eventually wakes up, she finds herself inside a truly nightmarish ruined parking garage and tied to a wheelchair while wearing nothing but her quite childish little pink panties and matching bra. When Hugh notices that Jay has finally awakened, he

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absurdly attempts to explain to her that he has intentionally infected her with an evil sexually transmitted curse that involves an evil deadly entity following her until she gives the curse to someone else. Indeed, as Hugh states to his petrified hapless victim while seemingly like he is on the verge of suffering a mental breakdown, "I'm sorry. I'm not going to hurt you. Don't worry. You're not going to believe me, but I need you to remember what I'm saying. This Thing. It's going to follow you. Somebody gave it to me and I passed it to you...Back in the car. It can look like someone you know...Or it could be a stranger in a crowd. Whatever helps it to get close to you. It can look like anyone...But there is only one of it. And sometimes...Sometimes I think it looks like people you love just to hurt you." After explaining to her how he has infected her with the most perniciously deadly of STDs, Hugh then pushes Jay to the edge of the building in the wheelchair where he reveals to her that a completely unclad middle-aged woman of the rather menacing looking sort is walking toward their general direction. Needless to say, the wheelchair-bound heroine can only respond with abject hysteria while watching a completely speechless nude woman in a seemingly trance-like state walking towards her. As Hugh explains, he intentionally bound her to the wheelchair to prove to her that the evil entity is real so that she understands that she is in serious danger and that she should never go into a building with one exist lest she fall prey to death-by-supernatural-rape. Of course, considering the specter will once again go after him if it kills her, Hugh has a vested interest in Jay's survival.

Naturally, Kelly, Paul, and Yara are horrified when they witness Hugh dropping off Jay in the middle of the main street of their neighborhood in nothing but her underwear and then driving away, as it seems like the dubious hunk just brutally date raped and then tossed her out of his car like she was rancid garbage. Notably, before Jay is dropped off, Yara is depicted playing the Victorian card game Old Maid, which involves the players ridding themselves of the cards based on strange characters (the 1940s Whitman Publishing Co. set includes various racial caricatures, including a prostitute-like negress named 'Agonizing Sue' and a pimp-like negro named 'Jazzbo Jackson') and where the loser of the game is the one that retains the titular card. Of course, the Old Maid game somewhat parallels Jay's new supernatural struggle, as the true 'loser' of the very real game that she has been plagued with is the one that is currently accursed with the evil entity and thus she must seek to spread it to someone else if she wants to abscond from the supramundane clutches of the lethally lecherous apparition. Unfortunately, even if Jay gives someone else the curse by deceptively coercing some guy into plunging his pork-sword into her warm and wet black hole, she will still be able to see the entity and she will probably be in danger for the rest of her life. After all, if the entity kills the person that she gave the curse to, it will go after her again in what ultimately seems like a perpetual vicious circle of lethally lecherous vice. Since the only insights that Jay has in regard to the

specter are the handful of things Hugh told her during his little post-sex pep talk, the heroine has no idea if it has any serious weaknesses or if it can even be killed. While the police are called and Jay is hospitalized after her truly nightmarish date, Hugh totally disappears and it is subsequently discovered that he was using a fake name and identity when he was dating the protagonist. Indeed, it turns out that Hugh fabricated an elaborate bogus identity just so that he could start a phony relationship with some unwitting young dame and then infect her with the supernatural STD.

As clearly indicated by a scene where she stands in front of a large bathroom mirror while wearing nothing but her underwear and then proceeds to open her panties and stare intensely at her pussy as if something is terribly wrong with it, Jay seems to feel quite dirty, corrupted, and sexually confessed as a result of her recent experiences as the victim of a desperately manipulative bug-spreader that she had genuine feelings for. Needless to say, things only get worse when Jay sees the entity in the form of an elderly woman while sitting in a college class and then proceeds to embarrass herself by running out of the room while an uppity negress professor yells at her (notably, the black teacher is depicted reading American-born British poet T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," which naturally shares some themes and commonalities with the film). That night, Jay and Kelly reluctantly allow Paul to sleep over after the haunted heroine describes her horrific encounter with the senile specter. As someone that has a borderline unhealthy infatuation with Jay to the point where he is fully willing to be her doormat, Paul dubiously uses the heroine's hysteria as a means to get close to her. While Jay and Paul discuss how they were both each other's first kiss while watching a cheesy black-and-white sci-fi movie on a TV that looks like it is at least 25 years old, the entity breaks a kitchen window in the house, thus immediately alarming the already quite startled protagonist. After Paul leaves the room to investigate, Jay slowly walks around downstairs and eventually discovers the entity in the form of a semi-topless girl with screwed up teeth that is wearing no shoes and only one sock. On top of the fact that the entity looks the ghost of a sexual assault victim from the 1970s, the specter further petrifies Jay by peeing all over her floor. While only speculation, it seems as if the specter has taken the form of a prostitute that was brutally raped and then left for dead. At this point, Jay runs upstairs and locks herself in her room where she initially refuses to unlock the door when both Kelly and Paul knock and demand to be allowed inside. After she allows Paul and her sister inside, Jay tries to stop them from opening the door when subsequently Yara knocks. Somewhat predictably, when they open the door, both Yara and the entity enter the room, with the former naturally being completely unaware of the presence of the latter. Considering that the specter has taken the form of an extremely tall and lanky young man that somewhat resembles a giant that died of starvation, Jay practically loses her mind as a result of what she sees. With nowhere to run

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or hide, Jay takes desperate measures and climbs out of her upstairs bedroom window, climbs down her house, gets on a bike, and then makes her way to a local playground, as if it makes her feel safe to revert back to childhood by riding on a swing. Unbeknownst to Jay, her neighbor friend Greg Hannigan (Daniel Zovatto)—a longhaired stoner type that seems like the sort of dude that likes to fuck chicks while high and listen to Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven"—witnesses her bizarre behavior while he is smoking a joint with a hot chick in his car and becomes considerably concerned, so he decides to ditch his date and go ask the protagonist if she needs help.

After teaming up with rather gregarious stoner Greg, Jay and her friends decide to visit the abandoned dilapidated Detroit house that the fellow-formerly-known-as-Hugh lived at to see if they can find anything there that might lead them to finding the manipulative STD-spreader. Upon entering the falling apart house, which looks like it used to be a rather fine piece of middleclass architecture (in fact, the house is an American Foursquare, which were quite popular in the U.S. from the mid-1890s to late-1930s), Jay and her friends find crushed up beer cans hanging from strings (which was obviously used to alert ersatz-Hugh of the entity's presence), vintage pornographic magazines covered with semen-soaked tissues, and prescription bottles full of various dubious pills, among other things that give the impression that it's former occupant was a dip-somaniacal pill-popping horn-dog slob that epitomizes the average American frat-boy douche. Upon flipping through one of the porno mags like an inquisitive little boy that has just found his dad's secret stash, Paul discovers a photo inside featuring pseudo-Hugh wearing a high school varsity jacket. When Jay sees the pic, she realizes that her defiler is wearing a jacket from a local school named Lawson High, so the gang decides to head to the public educational institution where they ultimately learn that Hugh's real name is Jeff Redmond after looking through an old yearbook. After learning his name, Jay and her friends soon find Jeff's address and then proceed to pay him a surprise visit at his family home where the heroine and her friend's are warmly greeted by his hopelessly bourgeois mommy. While acting like a paranoid meth addict suffering from major drug withdrawal symptoms, Jeff reveals he is a man-whore of sorts by stating in regard to how he originally acquired the carnal curse, "I met a girl at a bar. It was a one night stand. I don't even remember her name. I think that's where it came from." After attempting to coerce Jay to spread the curse to someone else by arguing to her and her friends, "She can do the same thing I did. I mean, it should be easy for her, she's a girl. Any guy would be with you...Just sleep with someone else and tell him to do the same thing. Maybe it'll never come back," the rather startled ex-jock throws them out of his house. While Greg gets slightly aggressive and basically tells him that he and his entity stories are pure bullshit before they leave, there is no question that Jeff is desperately afraid of something, hence why he would go so far as to do something as heinous as

infecting a cute blonde with a spectral sexually transmitted curse of the decidedly deadly sort. Of course, what makes Jeff a somewhat intriguing character in that the you cannot bring yourself to completely hate him despite knowing the daftly things he has committed, as his all-consuming fear is very real and he at least attempted to somewhat prepare Jay for the curse, even if it was somewhat to his personal benefit to do so. Also, somewhat interestingly, neither Jay nor any of her friends dare take revenge against Jeff for what he has done, thus underscoring the innate impotency and pathetic passiveness of the modern middleclass. After all, as the film reveals, both Paul and Greg have varying degrees of romantic feelings for Jay, yet neither of them have the testicular fortitude to avenge their precious golden-haired shield-maiden.

Luckily, semi-suave and somewhat heroic lady's man Greg, who is clearly attracted to the protagonist, offers Jay and her friends temporary sanctuary in his remote family lakehouse where he teaches the little lady to shoot a revolver by giving her target practice lessons. Despite being far from home, it is not long before the entity appears in the form of Yara and grabs Jay by the hair while she is sitting on the beach with her friends. When Paul is violently thrown a number of feet by the entity after attacking it with a beachchair upon seeing the inexplicable sight of an unseen evil spirit pulling Jay's hair, he becomes a true believer in predatory curse and realizes that his friend is not just delusional or mentally ill. After very narrowly escaping the entity's grasp, Jay runs away and locks herself inside a boatshed with all of her friends except Greg, who does not witness the strange beach encounter and thus remains skeptical about the curse. While Jay manages to shoot the entity in the head, the seemingly all-powerful specter is only momentarily stunned, thus hinting that it might be immortal and/or completely indestructible. After briefly morphing into the lanky giant that previously invaded the heroine's bedroom and then smashing a window, the entity transforms into a pale rat-like little boy that resembles a rabid terminal cancer patient and then proceeds to enter the shed through the artificial entrance that it has created, so Jay flees the small building, steals Greg's car, and then proceeds to crash said car in a cornfield while driving it in a hyper hysterical state, thus underscoring the heroine's innate incapacity to think or act rationally when attempting to battle her phantom foe. As a result of the crash, Jay breaks her arm and is left temporarily hospitalized, though thankfully the entity leaves her alone during her short hospital stay. Quite fortunately, Greg, who, unlike her other friends, does not seem to really believe in the entity, agrees to risk contracting the curse by fucking Jay in her hospital bed. While Jay likes Greg as a friend, she has a borderline melancholic expression on her face when he humps her in the hospital bed in what proves to be a less than sexy (un)lovemaking scene. Somewhat curiously, Greg reveals to Jay three days after their rather underwhelming roll in the hay that he has yet to see the entity. Of course, as hinted in a brief scene where he is depicted shamelessly flirting with

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another girl at a table in a cafeteria, it is assumed that Greg has foolishly passed on the curse to some unwitting victim(s). Naturally, as a firm non-believer in the entity, Greg does not think anything of it when his ostensible mother bangs on his door while he is asleep and then appears to him topless with her silicone breast implants hanging out of her robe, thus resulting in the inordinately stoic stoner being killed without even putting up a fight. Indeed, when Greg answers too door and sees the entity in the form of his topless mother, her responds by telling, "What the fuck, Mom?" and thus is completely unprepared when the salacious specter more or less dives pussy-first onto his dick. Somewhat provocatively, the celestial curse adds insult to injury by fucking Greg to death while in the form of his silicone-injected progenitor. While Jay witnesses the entity in the form of Greg breaking into Greg's house and attempts to warn him by unsuccessfully trying to call him and then subsequently running to his house, the heroine find herself completely helpless while witnessing the deadly supernatural rape. After witnessing deadly pseudo-incestuous spectrophilia in the form of the entity riding on Greg's cock, Jay is left completely horrified and emotionally exhausted, so she decides to drive to the lake where she ends up sleeping outside. When she wakes up the next day, she sees a couple young bros that she does not know in a boat in the water, so she curiously decides to swim to them. As demonstrated by her almost deathly facial expression, it does not seem like Jay is simply looking to have some fun in the sun with the boat boys. Whether Jay has decided to spread the curse by the way of an aquatic threesome or foursome is questionable, but she is depicted crying while driving back home, thus hinting that she might be consumed with guilt as a result of having infecting the unwittingly fellows. If Jay did indeed spread the curse to boat boys, they must have put up a poor fight against the entity, as it is not long before the specter begins hunting the heroine again.

As is quite apparent throughout the film as reflected by the character's compulsively cuck-ish behavior and pathetic pouty facial expressions when the heroine shows other males attention, pussy Paul has a precious little crush on Jay, so naturally he eventually offers to fuck her under the dubious pretext of being passed the curse. Indeed, Paul has such an overwhelming thirst for his childhood friend's glorious stinkpot and is such a little pathetic groveling white knight 'good guy' pansy that he is willing to risk a very horrific spectrophiliac death just to bang Jay one single time. Of course, Jay initially turns down Paul's offers, thus causing him to whine with a virtual murmur, "I like you too, you know. Why did you pick Greg?," to which she sadly replies in regard to her dead stoner pal, "I thought he'd be okay. He wasn't scared." Paul even meekly attempts to kiss Jay, but she simply turns her head away as if she offended that such a weak and nerdy bargain bin beta-boy would dare to try to take advantage of her glaring vulnerability with such a feeble and passionless attempt at a kiss. Ultimately, Jay and Paul concoct the childish plan to lure the entity to a large Detroit indoor

swimming pool where they plan to electrocute the supernatural spirit by tossing a couple dozen electronic items into the water. While driving away from her house, Jay notices the entity in the form of her naked grandfather standing on the roof of her humble abode, though she neglects to tell her friends what she has just witnessed. Upon arriving in the city and walking down the somewhat foreboding street of Detroit, Yara remarks to Jay and her friends in a scene that underscores the film's somewhat cryptic theme of the tragedy of white flight, "When I was a little girl, my parents wouldn't let me go south of 8 Mile. And I didn't even know what that meant until I got a little older and I started realizing that, that's where the city started and the suburb ended. And I used to think about how shitty and weird that was. I mean, I had to ask permission to go to the state fair with my best friend and her parents, only because it was a few blocks past the border." Jay replies to Yara by simply stating, "My mom said the same thing," thus highlighting the ominous reputation of the city, especially among the white middleclass, which has seemed to have developed an almost mystical view of the great evil that engulf the hopelessly forsaken shitty post-Europid city. As soon as the protagonists climb a fence that is around the pool building, the film morphs into a sort of revisionist 'old dark house' flick. Indeed, aside from the fact that the building resembles a sort of visually oppressive decaying gothic mansion-cum-castle that one might expect to find in a secluded rural region of England, it turns into night and begins raining and storming outside not long after the protagonists enter the increasingly sinister structure.

After plugging vintage lamps, typewriters, TVs, alarm clocks, and various other aesthetically displeasing electronic devices into the outlets in the main room of the indoor pool, Jay gets inside the water and waits for the specter while her similarly petrified friends wait for her signal to plunge the objects into Chlorine-laced aqua. Although Jay never says it explicitly, the entity eventually appears in the form of her father. In fact, Jay is so horrified by this fact that she refuses to tell her sister Kelly that evil spirit has taken the form of their mutual progenitor. After lurking in the entrance hallway of the pool for a couple moments, the entity eventually emerges and begins picking up and throwing the electronic devices at Jay, thus scaring her and her friends that she might be electrocuted. Notably, the uncanny supernatural creature, which is sporting a white wife-beater like some stereotypically abusive guido father, acts in a somewhat atypical fashion in its seemingly consciously emotionally manipulative expressions of violence, as if the entity knows that Jay's father is a violent alcoholic deadbeat and is trying its best to terrorize her by pantomiming her padre's abusive behavior. While Jay attempts to point out where the entity is, Paul tries in vain to shoot the completely invisible target and accidentally hits Yara in the process in what ultimately proves to be ample evidence that the young friends did not put too much thought or preparation into their half-baked plan. When Kelly manages to expose exactly where the specter is standing by tossing a blan-

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ket over its head, Paul is finally able to see where it is and then proceeds to put a bullet in its brain, thus causing it to collapse and fall into the pool. Seemingly immune to bullets, it is not long before the entity grabs Jay's leg and begins drowning her while lurking at the bottom of the pool. Luckily, Paul's shooting prowess gets somewhat better and he somehow manages to put a bullet in the brain of the invisible entity while it is underwater, thus enabling Jay to escape from specter's grip. After she finally emerges from the pool, Jay is startled to find a strange blister-like wound around her leg/ankle area where the entity had grabbed her. When Paul asks her to look in the water to see if the entity is dead, Jay slowly crawls to the edge of the pool and, to her great horror, discovers that the water is being consumed by a growing cloud of murky blood. Of course, considering the striking ambiguity of this uniquely unsettling scenario, the viewer is left guessing as to whether or not the creature perished in the pool.

As a sort of award for his borderline heroic efforts (indeed, the viewer senses that she feels obligated to let him have a little taste of her accursed spasm chasm), Jay fucks Paul when they get home that night in what ultimately proves rather lackluster sex between two individuals that have seemingly nil sexual compatibility. Indeed, after their particularly prosaic carnal session, Paul meekly asks Jay, "Do you feel any different?" and she nods no. Seemingly greatly disappointed after finally achieving the seemingly inconceivable by fucking the girl of his dreams, Paul also admits he does not feel any different. The next day, Paul drives by two fat and radically repulsive ghetto skank prostitutes that give off the impression that they are mutant survivors of a nuclear apocalypse. While one of the streetwalkers smirks at Paul when he looks at her, it is never revealed as to whether or not he decided to use her and/or the other girl's sensual services. Of course, patronizing a prostitute would be a great way to get rid of the curse as it could possibly be spread among countless victims in a very short time. Notably, in the penultimate scene of the film, Paul and Jay visit Yara in the hospital where she reads aloud the following line from Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*: "But here I should imagine the most terrible part of the whole punishment is, not the bodily pain at all—but the certain knowledge that in an hour—then in ten minutes, then in half a minute, then now—this very instant—your soul must quit your body and that you will no longer be a man—and that this is certain, certain! That's the point—the certainty of it." Considering their recent experiences, one would hope that Jay and her friends now have some understanding of the meaning of Dostoyevsky's words and have accepted that they will one day disappear from this world. In the very last scene, Paul and Jay are depicted holding hands while walking down a sidewalk in their neighborhood in an exceedingly awkward fashion, as if they are trying in vain to resemble a romantic couple. Unbeknownst to the terribly mismatched (un)love birds, they are being followed by someone that may or may not be the entity in a young male form. Additionally, this final scene features many allusions to death, as it is set during the Halloween season

as demonstrated by the fact that various pumpkins and fake cobwebs can be seen around the neighborhood, not to mention the fact that a 'Dead End' sign can be seen both in front of and to the right of Jay and Paul (in fact, the former's arm cast is even inscribed with the words, "Here lie the bones of Jay"). As hinted by the fact that they both have sullen expressions of their faces and neither of them look at or talk to one another during the entire scene, it seems like their relationship will not last long, but such is the common fate when a girl stupidly begins a relationship under quite questionable circumstances with a eternally groveling 'good guy' type who would probably gladly devour her turds if he asked her to. Arguably not coincidentally, like all of the curse-spreading coitus sessions in the film, Jay and Paul's extra awkward game of sexual intercourse was not that natural consequence of mutual love and affection but instead the result of a somewhat emotionally abusive deception that will probably eventually lead to an unpleasant outcome for both involved. Indeed, at its most rudimentary level, *It Follows* certainly reveals that cheap loveless sex always has negative consequences, especially when you are young and dumb and thus unprepared for the full impact of said consequences.

One of the reasons I absolutely hate horror movies that are set in the suburbs so much is that they tend to have a glaring innate artificiality about them that many people seem to mistake as some sort of sophisticated social critique, yet *It Follows* manages to do the opposite by taking an almost shockingly naturalistic approach to subtlety, eloquently, and sometimes symbolically hinting at many of the very real problems that consume white suburbia, including the dissolution of the nuclear family, the rise of soulless recreational sex and its consequences (i.e. pregnancy/abortion, mental illness, STDs, etc), suicide, self-mutilation, drug addiction, the inversion of genders, and sexual schizophrenia, among various other things that Hollywood would never dare to tackle in any sort of serious and honest fashion, but one should not expect anything else from an anti-Europid industry that is largely dominated by wealthy culture-distorting Hebrews who spent many decades actively promoting the socially corrosive vices that led to these things. Indeed, the film oftentimes feels like it could be directed by one of the actual members of the community it depicts, albeit one with a keenly critical yet empathetic eye. Indeed, instead of containing a quasi-feminist (meta)political agenda and absurdly portraying the lead as some sort of all-competent-ingénue like Nancy Thompson in Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and Sidney Prescott in *Scream* (1996), the lead in Mitchell's film is a typical moronic young woman and she and her friends ultimately hatch the most naively childish Scooby-Doo-esque plan imaginable when they attempt to exterminate the entity at the pool despite having no idea if it has weakness or if it can even be destroyed. Additionally, it is no shock that alpha-wuss Paul accidentally shoots one of his friends when attempting to shoot the specter, as such a scenario is very likely when a pansy nerd with poor motor skills and next to nil gun training

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attempts to shoot at an invisible target in a closed off room. While the film concludes in refreshing ambiguity, I think it is safe to assume that the silly young heroes failed to liquidate the entity and that their days are numbered. Notably, although he apparently liked the film, Quentin Tarantino singled out *It Follows* for criticism, stating, "It's one of those movies that's so good you get mad at it for not being great," to which Mitchell later fittingly retorted on twitter, "Hey QT, why don't we get together over a beer and talk about these notes. I have a few of my own for you." Apparently, Tarantino—an autist that seems to be immune to organic cinematic art and lives for playing with obscenely outmoded genre conventions, sort of like a little deranged kid that gets a sick kick out of burning ants—found the film's mythology to be too inconsistent, but clearly he missed the point, as the flick goes out of its way to never construct a clearly defined mythology, hence why the heroes came up with the seemingly random and elaborately impotent and nonsensical plan to kill the entity by electrocuting it in the pool as they, quite unlike the protagonists of similar genre films, have no ancient occult book, all-wise guru, or sagely nun to learn from in regard to how to destroy the monster. Indeed, not unlike Tarantino, it seems these kids' unintentionally borderline Dada-esque plans were the natural result of watching too many stupid horror and sci-fi films.

While sex is nowadays considered more or less as sacred as taking a shit or popping a zit, modern-day generations forget that carnal pleasures used to be a matter of literal life or death for many people as a result of complications during birth and incurable STDs, among other things, not to mention the fact that many individuals believed that they risked eternal hellfire when daring to engage in sinful fornication. Undoubtedly, one of the many reasons that *It Follows* is so intriguing is that it brings back a certain amount of thrilling danger to sex and is a sort of atavistic remainder of both the spiritual and biological risks of carnal pleasures. Set in a world where the only fathers are weak (e.g. Nicole's bourgeois pussy dad) or violently murderous phantoms (e.g. Jay's father) and the only other adults are zombie-like busybody philistines (Jay and Greg's mothers) or phony affirmative action-based negro authority figures that no one respects (e.g. Jay's professor and the police detective), and all the young heroes are hopelessly naïve man-children and woman-children that surely lack the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and philosophical discipline and rigor to one day lead their communities, *It Follows* ultimately paints a perturbing portrait of the horribly coddled white middleclass that makes it seem like it is facing a very immediate extinction. Of course, another rather effective ingredient of the film is its intentional use of anachronistic clothing and technology, as it can be seen as symbolizing the increasing monetary and cultural impoverishment of the modern-day middleclass, which no longer enjoys the great prosperity that previous generations did, especially the baby-boomers who, as an arguable result of being the most spoiled and thus weak and deracinated generation in all of human history, are ul-

timately responsible for the decidedly deleterious social changes that have led to the progressive deterioration of their very own people and culture. Indeed, the characters in the film not only use their parents' beat-up old cars and archaic furniture, but have also been handed down the emotional, economic, cultural, and spiritual impoverishment that their parents created. After all, the popularity of partly mummified kosher commie presidential candidate like Bernie Sanders is largely the result of the surplus of college graduates in their 20s and 30s who still live with their parents and who will probably be spending the rest of their lives attempting to pay off student loans while working unskilled service jobs at left-wing oriented companies like Starbucks and Panera Bread. With their parents and grandparents abandoning Detroit—a city that their ancestors built—so that tribes of niggers could destroy it in more than two generations, only to weaken their race in the process by living in the totally safe and artificial world of the suburbs, these young adults lack even the maturity to safely and responsibly engage in the most basic and primitive adult biological act of sexual intercourse, so it is only wholly fitting that the titular monster of *It Follows* is a sexually transmitted and requires that the transmitter to commit sexual abuse and non-consensual sex to rid themselves of it. Contemporary Westerners now seem to believe that the sole function of sex is pleasure to the point where it has totally lost any sacred or spiritual essence it once had, hence the rapid decline of white birth rates and the glorification of abortion as a patently pathetic symbol of petty you-go-girl female (pseudo)empowerment, as if paying some Judaic doctor a bunch of shekels to have the child that is growing in your body vacuumed out of your vagina is a glorious and honorable thing that should be commended as an act of great strength and personal sovereignty (in fact, a bunch of dumb feminist bitches recently started a social media campaign entitled 'Shout Your Abortion' where tens of thousands of dumb cunts gloated over the internet about committing softcore legal maternal filicide). Undoubtedly, when you have a generation of people that unconsciously worships at the altar of Puer aeternus, kill its own children out of laziness and/or narcissism/self-absorption, passively allows its cities and neighborhoods to be colonized by barbarian minorities that are absurdly subsidized with mostly white middleclass tax money, and have never thought about the future existence of their people or culture, you have a nightmarish situation where sexuality is arguably the most fundamentally and symbolically dysfunctional element of the equation. Indeed, the real 'IT' that follows the protagonists of Mitchell's film is about have a century of self-inflicted dysfunction and decadence that was either sired or passively accepted by the characters' parents and grandparents.

While I have mostly given up on horror cinema in general, *It Follows* and the rare European quasi-arthouse film like kraut homo auteur Till Kleinert's *Der Samurai* (2014) have given me some slight hope that there are still inventive horror auteurs out there that understand nuance, allegory, and archetypes

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and want to make timeless yet modern cinematic works that tackle the truly horrific aspects of contemporary society as opposed to simply portraying redundant one-dimensional monsters in cheap costumes that have no deeper meaning and instead simply epitomize the redundancy and lack of originality that plagues the genre. In that sense, Mitchell's film has more in common with the great cinematic works of German Expression than contemporary supernatural horror films, as an arcanelly allegorical flick that bleeds the fears and weaknesses of the collective unconscious of white America. Somewhat curiously considering he does not see himself as any sort of horror filmmaker, Mitchell is already talking about possibly doing a sequel, which I somewhat hope is never happens so that the original film remains just as enigmatic and does not suffer the sorry fate of being franchised to death like *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *Halloween*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Scanners*, among various other examples. Indeed, the less we know about the eponymous ST(S)pecker of the film the better, as *It Follows* is an innately oneiric film with a foreboding dream logic that would be shattered if there was attempt to uncover the intricacies of the film's refreshingly vague and ambiguous mythology. Indeed, Mitchell's sometimes reminded me of Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975) in terms of its richly ethereal and narcotizing atmosphere, absolutely unforgettable dream-like visuals, and sometimes seemingly stream-of-consciousness approach to both the imagery and dialogue. Of course, Mitchell does not attempt to be as philosophically or metaphysically deep as Tarkovsky, but instead uses his own organic Michigan suburban sensibility to tell a highly personalized socio-cultural story in a sort of covertly artful and refreshingly unpretentious fashion that demonstrates that he wants to appeal to a large audience while staying true to his evolution as an artist. In terms of its disturbing depiction of a painful youthful sexual awakening and hauntingly symbolic use of an indoor swimming pool that seems to represent adulthood (indeed, heroine Jay finds solace in her small personal above-ground pool, which can be seen as representing her childhood, but finds herself in horrifying experience in the large Detroit indoor pool, which could be seen as symbolizing adulthood), Mitchell's film also deserves seemingly unlikely comparisons with Jerzy Skolimowski's rather underrated feature *Deep End* (1970). Despite being a horror film that is certainly highly conscious of certain conventions of the genre, *It Follows* is indubitably a more artistically and emotionally mature cinematic work than Mitchell's previous feature *The Myth of the American Sleepover*. As his hopelessly gaudy and spasmodic genre-philiac films obnoxiously reveal in their unabashed negrophiliac outbursts, gratuitous displays of soulless violence (yet curiously lack of sexual intimacy aside from the occasional foot fetish scene), and complete and utter lack of morality and spirituality, Cuckantino—a completely racially and culturally deracinated pothead who grew up with a single mother who, not surprisingly, exposed her young son to negro boyfriends—is just too materialistic and emotionally immature to be able to

fully embrace a film like Mitchell's where everything is not wrapped up in a neat little package that can be fully digested by his autistic fanboy brain. Also, one cannot forget that, despite its mostly semi-cryptic references to classic horror films, *It Follows* never basks in the sort of too-cool-for-school pomo posturing that typically wets the panties of autistic fan-boys who seem to see cinema as sort of form of cheap neo-vaudevillian entertainment as opposed to a genuine artistic medium.

As director Mitchell stated himself, "I'm not personally that interested in where 'it' comes from. To me, it's dream logic in the sense that they're in a nightmare, and when you're in a nightmare there's no solving the nightmare. Even if you try to solve it." Personally, I believe Mitchell is being honest in what he says and, despite his dubious support of a big fat mainstream white liberal slob like Michael Moore, I sense that he has a visceral feeling that he cannot fully articulate that there is something not quite right in America and that his instant-classic horror film is unconscious expression of a young and thoughtful white man who, due to a lifetime's worth of brainwashing via the cunning kosher culture-distorters of Hollywood, cannot figure out why the nuclear family has been nuked and his previously quite beautiful hometown has degenerated into a third world dump that looks like it was firebombed. Of course, Mitchell understands that rows upon rows of condemned Detroit houses are infinitely more disturbing and horrifying on the emotional level than some elaborately constructed haunted house on a Hollywood studio set. In terms of sheer atmosphere and commitment to depicting the nuances of modern suburbia and its discontents, Mitchell's sole cinematic excursion in horror seems like a Michelangelo Antonioni flick when compared to so-called classics like *The Amityville Horror* (1979) and Peter Medak's *The Changeling* (1980). Indeed, probably the only film that seems to manage to reconcile the cinematic works of Antonioni, Lynch, and John Hughes, *It Follows* feels like the semi-unconscious reaction of a cerebral cineaste that senses that his beloved community and, in turn, country is on the brink of a racial and cultural apocalypse. Additionally, I could not help but think after watching Mitchell's film that old school horror classics ranging from the Universal Monsters movies of the 1920s through 1950s to classic slasher flicks like Carpenter's *Halloween* seem like frivolous bullshit when compared to the stranger-than-fiction horrors of real-life. Of course, Mitchell's film also unwittingly demonstrates that the borderline infantile romances and tedious teen angst depicted in Hughes' films were just early signs of a degenerated generation of sexually, emotionally, and psychologically immature individuals who were artificially manufactured by the suburbs. As the great prophetic Teutonic philosopher Oswald Spengler once stated in regard to the tragedy of urbanization, "Long, long ago the country bore the country-town and nourished it with her best blood. Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies

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in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country.” Of course, there has been a major paradigm shift in the Occident that not even Spengler could foresee. Indeed, with the cities in ruins and colonized by barbarians and its former white inhabitants succumbing to decadence and emasculation as a result of fleeing the places they built and relocating to the sterile and somewhat unnatural realm of suburbia where the best blood is sapped of its vitality and left virtually devoid of the capacity to create great art and culture. Indeed, as the characters of *It Follows* clearly demonstrate via their hysterical behavior and patently preposterous (non)solutions to serious problems, most suburban folks have no chance of surviving a societal collapse, especially those unfortunate individuals that live just outside the double dark shitty city of Detroit where the real STD-carrying monsters and mutants dwell. After all, as Spengler wrote in the opening passage of his swansong *The Hour of Decision* (1934), “Is there today a man among the White races who has eyes to see what is going on around him on the face of the globe? To see the immensity of the danger which looms over this mass of peoples?” While Mitchell seems to instinctively sense this threat as hinted in his film’s unflattering depiction of young suburbanites and occasional scene of a naughty negro lurking outside a dilapidated Detroit house, he, like so many white Americans, still lacks the courage and psychological prowess to look at what is right in front of his face, hence the authentically foreboding tone of *It Follows* where the presence of fear and paranoia is unquestionable but its exact source never fully explained. While Mitchell will unfortunately probably not make a film in the spirit of Rudyard Kipling’s classic poem “The Wrath of the Awakened Saxon” anytime soon, his use of T.S. Eliot is a good start and his first horror feature makes it perfectly clear that he is a young auteur to look out for.

-Ty E

THE UNBORN

David S. Goyer* (2009)

With the releases of *Defiance*, *Miracle at St. Anna*, and *Valkyrie*, it seemed that Hollywood relieved some of that Nazi sensationalism with a cinematic premature ejaculation. Who would have thought that *The Unborn* would snowball into a relentless Jewish assault on the senses? Certainly not I. From the early trailers, I had hope visible for this feature. After *The Haunting of Molly Hartley* and before *The Uninvited*, I was sure that *The Unborn* would at least be a tolerable horror film, even if it did include all the "scary" scenes in the trailer like most horror films. I first got a hint that this would be a good film when AMC Theaters demanded that the trailer be removed from all copies of *Twilight*. Being a projectionist, I enjoyed watching the screaming girls from above. I was pained to remove the trailer because of someone that couldn't handle terror while agreeing to view a vampire film. As the film builds up, you can piece together the entirety of the shock scenes by simply plugging the scenes in the trailer with the fitting circumstance and background. The public apparently wasn't ready for *The Unborn* and I'm glad that this was the demographic decision. "I'm not looking for a Christian exorcism! I'm looking for a Jewish one!" How can one incapacitate an amazing character actor with brutish screen charisma? By making him into a fairy Rabbi of course. Gary Oldman plays the under-used character of Rabbi Something. He is a "non-believer" but upon experiencing his own second-hand demonic hallucination of a comically CGI-canine with an Upside-down (Really?) head, he converts his decision to help the half naked Odette Yustman. That's what kills any cheap thrill this film carries - the special effects. In the beginning - the dream sequence, when the fetus opens its eye to carry a Seed of Chucky-esque eyeball, the crowd laughs. Or wait, the crowd screams, I laugh. That brings me to my second point. Upon closing tonight, the "opening day" for theatrically released films, *The Unborn* was a hellacious one to monitor and clean. In my personal duty, I act as both Booth Operator and Usher. Well, I usher to help the weak-willed with their petty problems and "broken hands". Tired of the "quotes" yet? I'm not. As I stood outside of the auditorium housing *The Unborn*, I witnessed beautiful girl after beautiful girl whispering to their boyfriend how "amazing" the film was. Let me tell you, it is none of these - these being of positive praise. Coincidentally, Irony... For my dear SS readers, I have a bit of a confession to perform. I'm rather inebriated. Upon viewing *The Unborn* and heading home, my writing process involved frustration, self-destruction, and self-loathing. The experience was a troublesome one and I found the film to be increasingly harder to write about. What better way than to consume some alcohol to allow uninhibited thoughts to flow free? There is none, especially if I suffer from a very specific case of writer's block towards this film. This review before you is the chronicling of three days writer's block and a penchant for in-

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describable amounts of alcohol.”Jumby” wins my nomination for worst fictional name. ever.All religions conform to and become slaves of the ”master religion”. In the end, all artifacts of each religion die horrible, violent deaths save for Gary Oldman. This would be fine had he not symbolized the entire religion of Judaism. I dare any one reader to watch The Unborn and not get tired of the egg-barrage of the Jewish connection with the film. Had it been worked in easily would it have worked? Maybe, but no, we had to be ”raped” with visual images of holocaust clippings, Star of David charms, Evil Nazi experimentation’s, and the Kabbalah mixed with occultism.Many choose to serve as blind cattle for the Shepard; the Shepard being the motion picture for indulgence. Had a film with incredibly Christian themes (See: House (2008) been released under the guise of a pedigree horror film, the fans would revolt with derogatory statements and weak-willed insults. Now if this film’s religious pretenses were set to Judaism, the audience would sit there quietly. After South Park featured an episode featuring Steven Spielberg and George Lucas raping their creation Indiana Jones, the ADL (Anti-defamation league) stepped forward accusing the episode of being ”anti-Semitic” even though a mention of belief is nowhere to be found of heard in that specific episode.What do you see for yourself after death? Depending on ”ethical” choices, it might be heaven, hell, or whatever is in between. For those special horrible people who murdered children and raped women, it’s a free ticket to The Unborn. Congratulations, you’ve just been a human guinea pig in the idea of a point. The Unborn is bad, any way you look about it. Story? Which story? The one about -it- being inter-universal or the one of it being demonic? David S. Goyer is perhaps the worst writer I’ve ever had the immediate displeasure to analyze. Before The Dark Knight fags come rushing in, know that Ledger improvised most and more of his lines allowing for the scintillating hysteria behind his ”final” role.With so many thoughts & emotions drained past the line of exhaustion, The Unborn remains soiled. Had I not expected an earnest film with originality, the blowback might not have severed so many ideas towards horror. The Unborn is the worst film of 2009. Does the biting satire scathe your sensitive skin? No more than what viewing this atrocity would do. Perhaps the worst date movie of all time and the most likely to attract noisy urban monkeys, The Unborn is overall the most avoidable film of all time.

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TOURIST TRAP

David Schmoeller (1979)

The last thing I need to see this Halloween season is another superlatively shitty and soulless slasher flick directed by some untalented for-hire horror hack, so naturally I was quite hesitant about watching the cult item *Tourist Trap* (1979) co-written and directed by David Schmoeller (Puppet Master, Catacombs), whose work *Crawlspace* (1986) starring Klaus Kinski I just recently watched and was so impressed with how oh so bad it was. After seeing that it was lauded in Stephen King's nonfiction work *Danse Macabre* (1981) and praised by various reputable horror scholars, I figured I would take the plunge and give Schmoeller's directorial debut a chance, not least of all because I am a fan of creepy and grotesque mannequins, which I first encountered as a young child while visiting a resort town museum that featured a demented looking 1920s laughing female dummy that looked like a rabid crack-addled amazonian drag queen on display. Indeed, from the human-nequins of Steven Arnold's psychedelic surrealist short *The Liberation of Mannique Mechanique* (1967) to the phantom-like pseudo-human beauties of Umberto Lenzi's brazenly bizarre giallo *Spasmo* (1974) to the oftentimes cheesy wig adorned dummies of William Lustig's *Maniac* (1980) starring Joe Spinell to the rotten and corpse-like mannequins of French auteur Patrick Bokanowski's experimental black-and-white avant-garde short *The Woman Who Powders Herself* (1972) aka *La femme qui se poudre*, I cannot get enough of morbid manikins. The genesis of *Tourist Trap* was director Schmoeller's vaguely experimental University of Texas thesis film *The Spider Will Kill You* (1976), which was funded by a grant from the Directors Guild of America and was an Academy Award Student Film finalist for the student Oscar that ultimately lost to future Hollywood heavyweight Robert Zemeckis' satirical short *A Field of Honor* (1973). The morbid story of an old blind man that lives in an old theater and falls in love with a murderous mechanical mannequin, *The Spider Will Kill You* is, at best, a primitive but somewhat worthwhile misbegotten example of what the director's first feature would eventually become. Featuring a score by Italian composer Pino Donaggio (Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now*, *Carrie*), sound effects culled from *The Time Machine* (1960) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and art direction by horror master Robert A. Burns (*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *Re-Animator*), as well as notable acting performances from super Nordic Übermensch, MLB/NBA sports star turned actor Chuck Connors (*Branded*, *Soylent Green*), and McJewess Tanya Roberts (*Charlie's Angels*, *The Beastmaster*, *That '70s Show*) and cinematography by Josef von Sternberg's son Nicholas, *Tourist Trap* is one of those horror flicks that is done a great disservice by being labeled a slasher movie, as it manages to transcend the totally tasteless tedium of the ghetto subgenre, which probably has largely to do with the fact that executive

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producer Charles Band gave the director relative creative license over the film. Basically, the film is a vaguely oneiric Chuck Connors dark comedy show featuring the ex-athlete in a somewhat campy leatherface-esque role and including some cool murderous mannequins and some ok looking future starlets that do not bare their unclad bodies nearly enough (as director Schmoeller confessed in an audio commentary track from the DVD release of the film, he was too much of a pansy to get the girls to disrobe, even though it was part of the script). A PG slasher fever dream that actually manages to not suck, *Tourist Trap* is like the *Luminous Procuress* (1972) of its schlocky subgenre as a strangely atmospheric slasher flick that attempts to be serious horror art and fails wonderfully. If you ever thought the premise of the fantasy rom-com *Mannequin* (1987) would work better as a horror flick, *Tourist Trap* is certainly the film for you.

Somewhat bitchy broad Eileen (Robin Sherwood) and her boyfriend Woody (Keith McDermott) are driving in the desert when their car gets a flat tire, thus causing an annoying detour for them and their three friends, who are driving in a separate car. A true gentleman that does not waste time getting the job done, Woody immediately goes looking for a gas station, but when he finds one, it is completely abandoned. When Woody investigates the back of the vacant gas station/diner, he enters a backroom where a bunch of grotesque mannequins pop out and attack him in a vicious fashion. Needless to say, Woody is killed, albeit in a rather anticlimactic manner after he is impaled in the back with a metal pipe by some mysterious person or entity. Meanwhile, the couple's friends, Becky (Tanya Roberts), Jerry (Jon Van Ness) and Molly (Jocelyn Jones), who drove in a separate car, spot Eileen waiting in the broken down car, so they pick her up and go looking for Woody. When they spot Woody's flat tire lying near a sign for a dubious place called "Slausen's Lost Oasis," they begin heading in that direction with their jeep, not spotting the "Closed to the Public" sign on the way. Of course, as can be predicted, Jerry's jeep soon breaks down, so the three girls go skinny-dipping in a lovely nearby lake with a breathtaking little waterfall that resembles some sort of otherworldly paradise, though the viewer unfortunately does not get to see any of their naughty bits. While frolicking around like philistine fairies in the water, the girls are approached by a large old blond Nordic man carrying a double-barreled shotgun and sporting a cowboy hat named Mr. Slausen (Chuck Connors), who explains how his "Lost Oasis" is truly lost as a result of the government building a huge highway that made his tourist trap obsolete. After explaining how he used to charge \$.75 cents a head for people to swim in the lake, Slausen warns the girls to get out of the water by sundown or else they might fall prey to water moccasins.

Since Jerry boy is "not much of a mechanic," rugged man's man Slausen agrees to drive him and the girls back to his home to see if they can fix the jeep. As it turns out, Slausen's home is also a wax museum where he has mechanical mannequins of General Custer and a Confederate Officer that fires blanks from a

shotgun to “scare the shit out of kids and Yankee tourists” (apparently, mimes were hired to play the animated mannequins). As Slausen explains, the various dummies were created by his mysterious brother, who apparently lives in the city and works for some prestigious wax museum. Nearby the wax museum is an old plantation-like home that Slausen describes as being the home of his brother Davey who apparently did not get along with the General Custer mannequin. Before Slausen goes to help Jerry with the jeep, he warns the girls not to leave the house due to “trouble with coyotes.” After complaining “something’s funny about that man” and “something’s funny about that house, too,” Eileen opts to not take heed of Slausen’s advice and ventures outside to look for a phone at Davey’s humble abode where she discovers a family of life-like mannequins. Eventually, a faggy looking weirdo in a mannequin mask confronts Eileen, who is soon strangled to death when a scarf that she stole from one of the dummies magically tightens around her throat. As it turns out, the deranged dude in the mannequin mask has telekinetic powers. Meanwhile, pouty blonde Molly and Becky take notice of a rather life-like female mannequin in the wax museum and subsequently discover after flipping through some old photo albums that it is modeled after Slausen’s belated wife. Slausen walks in on the girls while they are talking about this and remarks that he made the mannequin in tribute to his wife because, “I loved her very much. I wanted to keep her memory alive forever. This was the best way I knew how.” Of course, little do the two dimwitted girls realize that Slausen has a much more sinister and sickening relationship with his belated spouse.

With Woody and Eileen missing and Jerry apparently somewhere in town attempting to get his jeep fixed, Molly and Becky decide to venture outside the wax museum when Slausen leaves. Of course, Becky is soon attacked by the deranged drag-queen-like dude in the mannequin mask when she enters Davey’s home. The man in the mask brings Becky to a basement dungeon where Jerry and another girl named Tina (Dawn Jeffory), who is strapped to a table, are imprisoned. As the two explain, the man in the mask is Slausen’s crazy mannequin-making brother and he soon kills Tina via suffocation while covering her face with plaster while attempting to turn her into a mannequin. After killing Tina, Slausen’s bat-shit crazy brother goes on about how his big bro makes him wear masks because he is jealous about handsome he is. When Jerry manages to get free from his bondage, Slausen soon stops him via his telekinetic powers. Meanwhile, Molly continues to walk around outside looking for her friends and is soon attacked by the mad mensch in the mask, but luckily Slausen soon picks her up in his redneck-style pickup truck. As Slausen explains to Molly, the costumed killer is his brother and he wears doll masks because, rather absurdly, “he always wanted to look like me” (why someone would wear a girl’s doll mask to resemble a large old Nordic man is anyone’s guess). When Slausen stops inside the wax museum, he gives Molly a shotgun and tells her to guard outside. Of

TOURIST TRAP

course, Slausen's unhinged brother eventually arrives and Molly does not waste any time trying to blow him away with the shotgun, but the weapon only fires blanks. After Slausen's brother mocks Molly, she becomes considerably enraged and hits him over the head with the shotgun, thus cracking his mask and revealing that the man is really Slausen and not his brother. Molly runs off and attempts to hide in a pond, but Slausen soon emerges from the water and knocks her unconscious by forcing her head under the water.

Eventually, Jerry and Becky escape from the basement, but soon get separated. Slausen eventually finds Becky and takes her to the museum where she is killed after the telekinesis-inclined cowboy killer animates his mannequins and an Indian chief dummy chucks a dagger into the back of her seemingly empty skull. Afterwards, Slausen brings Molly to his brother's room at the Davey house, forces her to wear a mask grafted from his belated wife's face, and says, "tell me you love me." Indeed, despite looking nothing like his belated brunette wife as a young blonde, Slausen thinks that Miss Molly will make an apt replacement for his dead wifey. After Molly declares her ostensible love for Slausen, the crazed cowboy breaks down and explains that he killed both his wife and brother, stating, "they were whoring behind my back...whoring in my own house...he and she had to die...I had a legal right to that." Slausen then goes on to explain how he created a mannequin in the likeness of his wife because he still loved her and missed her so much. After Slausen's melodramatic breakdown, pansy boy Jerry shows up to save the day and Molly begs him to kill the mad mannequinophile. Unfortunately, on top of being a patent pansy who does not have the testicular fortitude to kill, Jerry does not realize that he has been 'mannequinized' by Slausen, who merely walks up to him and dismembers his body parts. After that, Slausen decides to animate all of his mannequins and does a sort of morbid yet merry 'dance of death' with his mannequin wife, who also comes alive. When Slausen is basking in the glory of his undead dummy wife and morbid mannequin family, Molly picks up an axe and drives it into the cowboy's head, thus killing him almost instantly. In the end, final girl Molly goes completely insane and drives away from "Slausen's Lost Oasis" with all of her mannequinized friends in the passenger seats.

As director David Schmoeller explained in a DVD audio commentary track for *Tourist Trap*, star Chuck Connors acted a lot like his character in the film in real-life by acting somewhat 'aggressively friendly', or as the filmmaker stated himself, "Chuck Connors tried to give me a hard time. Everybody knew it was my first film and so everybody just wanted to know if I could pull it off and he was always testing me. Not in a mean way, more of just having fun with me. He was 6'6"...he was very tall and he would come up behind me and look straight down and tap me on the shoulder and I'd look up and he'd say, 'you wanna fight?' and I would say 'no.' And he would laugh and go off." Of course, as anyone can tell that has ever heard Schmoeller speak, the director is a rather

'queenish' fellow with a goofy lisp, so big tough guy Connors probably could not resist playing around with him and intimidating him just a little bit. As Schmoeller also explains in the audio commentary, Connors apparently wanted to be a sort of "Boris Karloff of the 70s and 80s." For someone that had literally nil acting experience and just decided to become an actor after his sports career had stagnated, Connors is shockingly charismatic and comically-inclined and certainly gives the most memorable performance in *Tourist Trap*. Indeed, one must certainly respect an alpha-male who had the gall to wear quasi-drag and run around like a merry maniac. Ultimately, Connor's character is like a non-retarded cowboy leatherface meets a rampantly heterosexual Norman Bates on steroids. In its portrayal of a mad man as depicted by a veteran actor in an against-type role who kidnaps women and brings them to a weirdly whimsical world full of mannequins and props, *Tourist Trap* is probably best comparable to the rather bizarre little known quasi-avant-garde horror flick *The Manipulator* (1971) starring Mickey Rooney, who must have been rather desperate at the time to play such an unbecoming and unflattering role.

Aside from being probably the best PG-rated 'slasher' flick ever made, Schmoeller's film is also a curious piece of cinema history. Indeed, aside from the fact that the work was shot by Josef von Sternberg's son Nicholas, filmmaker Ron Underwood (*Tremors*, *City Slickers*) acted as the first assistant director, Ben-Hur (1959) director William Wyler's son David acted as the second assistant director (how many assistant directors does a low-budget slasher flick need?!), and horror auteur Ted Nicolaou (*TerrorVision*, *Subspecies* franchise) acted as the film editor. Certainly one of the most quirky, idiosyncratic, and underrated films of the dreaded schlock-ridden slasher subgenre, *Tourist Trap* is also unquestionably the greatest film of Schmoeller's career as a work where his softcore pansy approach to horror filmmaking came in handy and enabled the more unconventional elements of the film (e.g. animated mannequins, retired MLB players) to shine. If you ever wondered what Spanish genre hack Jaume Collet-Serra's 2005 remake of the classic Vincent Price vehicle *House of Wax* might be like if it did not feature cultural-tinge-inducing high dollar whore Paris Hilton and was not meant to appeal to the most fiercely philistine of tacky teenybopper turds, Schmoeller's film is probably your best bet. While *Tourist Rap* might not be up there with *Messiah of Evil* (1973) and *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973) in terms of criminally underrated American cult horror flicks, it is certainly superior to any of the other films routinely pumped out by softcore Semitic smut-peddler Charles Band/*Full Moon* features and, as far as slasher films are concerned, better than any of the *Friday the 13th* films, which probably does not say much, but it at least guarantees a more than tolerable way to waste 90 minutes during the upcoming Samhain season.

-Ty E

TOURIST TRAP
TOURIST TRAP

David Schmoeller (1979)

Whenever kill doll/puppet classics begin their annual name-dropping by rabid horror fans, three always come to surface and I do mean always: Child's Play, Puppet Master, and Tourist Trap. The first of the two films have everything in common, an timely merchandising period and many successful sequels. The lone wolf Tourist Trap has none of these things so what exactly makes it appeal to the general fan of tiny and plastic terrors? I honestly couldn't tell you. After much delay and finally viewing Tourist Trap, I could say that I was briefly excited after watching the trailer. A friend who I've chatted with many a-times sort of introduced me to the wonders of Chuck Connors and I dare say he didn't disappoint me in his role. Tourist Trap as a film, however, did. The trailer promised two things and it failed to deliver one and toyed around with the other; terror and killer marionettes. Saying that Tourist Trap was a horrifying experience at the age of 7 - 13 is like saying that sharks bite hard. There isn't a doubt in my mind that something with the subject matter of Tourist Trap could frighten and potentially warp the malleable minds of our youth but as a piece intended and judged by adults, Tourist Trap consists of could-be atmosphere and tension yet fails to cement any promise of both. In the beginning, one of the stranded gang wanders into a gas station and is promptly assaulted by a psychic malevolent force after being taunted by cackling half-completed mannequins. This is indeed a strong opening for a film whose reputation borders on "loved as a child!!1" to "so bad it's goodd." Much of Tourist Trap's notoriety for cult fame has been linked to it being a descendant of the long-dead Full Moon Pictures - long dead meaning quality-wise. From producer Charles Band comes a film with nothing special just like most of his later works. Full Moon Pictures has become almost a laughing stock of "indie" filmmakers. Had any of the hope for the new Puppet Master film or Demonic Toys sequel vanished, so would most of the fan base that aren't derelict Troma worshipers. That, and the hilarity of the surprising effort Gingerdead Man 2: Passion of the Cruel, save the reputation of Full Moon just enough for my faith to still lie within them to create SOMETHING amusing. Low budget horror bashing aside, Tourist Trap's only creepy aesthetic is the harmonizing female grunts and moans that escape from the past-tortured mannequins. Such a feminine ground and pounding could have been used to much more effect than in this amateur-hour straight-to-cable horror film with a reputation larger than the work put into the film's earnest keepings. This late 70s smörgåsbord of terrible backwoods deliverance from evil film doesn't make the cut. However, Tourist Trap does highlight a killer within a mask that, had given the proper treatment, could have went on to be a legendary icon of horror. With that ghastly ventriloquist mask that was made out of what could only be human flesh, "Davey" was everything that I hated about dummies, mannequins,

and anything of the like. If you are looking for something to blame, my bet would be on Goosebumps' staple series "Night of the Living Dummy." Slappy may not have ever harmed anyone but he never needed to. Simply smashing a guitar to cause blame was terrifying enough for me when I was a child. Tourist Trap simply cannot capture any solid form of matter to be considered a "good" horror film. It has the pieces, just none of them fit. It's best to consider this an incomplete portrait of decent to moderately acceptable footage with a brief hint of true terror. It's a shame that this never really took off after its exhilarating introduction. I don't know about you but with this film being as so-so as it shouldn't be, a remake only could go more places than the original.

-mAQ

CRAWLSPACE
CRAWLSPACE

David Schmoeller (1986)

As a mensch whose father was of Polish extraction (the original family surname was 'Nakszynski') who dubiously claimed in his autobiography that he made the conscious decision to desert the Wehrmacht during the Second World War and who was one of the first Germans to visit Israel (with National Socialist era auteur Veit Harlan's ethno-masochistic son Thomas), Klaus Kinski is probably the least likely German actor to hold any sort of National Socialist sympathies, yet that has not stopped various exploitative hack filmmakers from hiring him to play Nazi mad men. Of course, with his 'blond beast' appearance, piercing blue eyes, and discernibly deranged persona, Kinski is a Hollywood hack's kosher wet dream in terms of being the ultimate archetypal screen Nazi. Perhaps the most patently pathetic example of kraut Kinski's craziness being exploited in a cheap, tasteless, and decidedly dishonest attempt to depict the innate evilness of the Nazis is the actor's unintentionally humorous performance in the absolutely horrendous horror-thriller *Crawlspace* (1986) directed by horror hack David Schmoeller (*Catacombs*, *Netherworld*). Probably best known today as the 'auteur' behind the cult horror classic *Tourist Trap* (1979) and *Puppet Master* (1989) where he would demonstrate the best of his meta-mediocre directing talents, Schmoeller—an archetypal left-wing for-hire horror hack who, unlike wine but certainly like many of his genre contemporaries, has only gotten worse with age—originally intended *Crawlspace* to be an anti-Vietnam War flick but schlockmeister producer Charles Band, who is Jewish (he even named one of his sons 'Zalman'), demanded that he change the film to feature a homicidal Heeb-hating Nazi antihero. Apparently a huge Kinski fan, Schmoeller agreed to change the film if Band could get the German actor to be in the film, which he did, and the rest was history. Of course, as Schmoeller would recollect in his would-be-humorous documentary short *Please Kill Mr. Kinski* (1999)—a sort of poor man's equivalent to Werner Herzog's (anti)love letter to the actor, *Mein liebster Feind - Klaus Kinski* (1999) aka *My Best Fiend*, which was somewhat suspiciously released the same year—Kinski caused so much havoc, pain, and chaos on the set of *Crawlspace* that one of the Italian producers proposed killing the actor and cashing in on the insurance money. When Kinski died, Schmoeller's negative remarks about him were featured in the actor's obituary, thus acting as a sort of posthumous revenge against the raving screen renegade. A rather rancid celluloid horror turd of the shockingly horrific sort, *Crawlspace* is a hokey and almost wholly derivative hodgepodge of horror flicks ranging from Michael Powell's masterpiece of voyeuristic horror *Peeping Tom* (1960) to *Willard* (1971) and its sequel *Ben* (1972) to William Lustig's classic slasher flick *Maniac* (1980) that is only worth viewing to see Kinski get kinky with lipstick, hordes of rats, Russian roulette, and nihilistic post-Auschwitz ramblings about

life and death. Indeed, in spite of Mr. Jesus Christ Savior's disruptive behavior on the film's set, Kinski is the only thing about *Crawlspace* that saves it from being the cinematic equivalent of prostate cancer.

Karl Gunther (Klaus Kinski) is a crazed nihilistic kraut who has a portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche hanging in his office in a spot where a picture of Jesus Christ would normally be and whose Nazi surgeon father used to exterminate Heebs, thus it should be apparent to the Hollywood-lobotomized viewer that he epitomizes all that is truly evil and rotten in this god forsaken world (or something). Indeed, apparently after learning he liked killing people while working as part of the Nazi euthanasia program, Gunther Senior developed a fetish for waſting yids. Like all the evil genius Hitlerite wackjobs featured in Hebraic Hollywood movies that put the propaganda of the real National Socialist propaganda films to shame, Karl is independently wealthy and owns an apartment building which he has rigged with secret passageways (hence, the title 'Crawlspace'), booby traps, and nonsensical torture devices that he likes to play with when not deriving an almost erotic satisfaction from reading his naughty Nazi father's masturbatory journal entries regarding euthanasia and the killing of the chosen amongst god's chosen. At the beginning of the film, one of Gunther's beautiful blonde Aryan babe tenants accidentally walks into a room containing the good doctor's personal pet, a dyke-like chick named Martha White (Sally Brown) who's had a forced glossectomy and is confined to a cage, all courtesy of Herr Doktor, who wanted a permanent companion that would not talk back. Of course, Karl is saddened he has to kill beautiful babe, not to mention the fact that he has to go to the effort to rent out her room to somebody else. Ultimately, Gunther rents the room to a somewhat lesbo-like chick named Lori Bancroft (Talia Balsam) after lying to a rather bitchy prospective male tenant (played by the director in an uncredited cameo role) and telling him that the room is no longer available. Like virtually everyone else in the film aside from Kinski's character, Lori seems to have no personality, thus she does not elicit even the vaguest sympathy from the viewer.

Luckily for Gunther, most of his tenants are dumb sluts with either sexually impotent boy toys or old sugar daddies who are too big of candy asses to properly please their ladies. Of course, while hanging out in the various elaborate crawlspace tunnels he has strategically placed around the building, Gunther becomes accustomed to eavesdropping on his titillating tenants' less than impressive sex lives. Meanwhile, a nauseatingly nerdy and ambiguously Jewish "Nazi Hunter" type named Josef Steiner (Kenneth Robert Shippy) shows up at Gunther's building and accuses him of killing his brother. Steiner also goes on about how he is a "very tenacious" man who spent three entire years of his assumedly rather banal life looking for him and during his research he discovered that the doctor's father was a SS man that was executed for "crimes against humanity" after the Second World War. Apparently, while working as the chief resident at

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a hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Karl killed 67 people, including Steiner's brother. Luckily, Gunther eventually kills Steiner and, like most of his victims, leaves a poorly drawn swastika on his face. An unhinged Übermensch, Gunther likes to make pseudo-Nietzschean ramblings like, "I'm fascinated by the delicate balance between life and death...good and evil" and "I'm my own god...my own jury...and my own executioner." Of course, as one can expect from such a patently predictably hack horror work, Gunther's executioner is ultimately 'empowered woman' Lori.

Featuring scenes of Klaus Kinski getting off to watching old newsreels of Uncle Adolf like it is pornography, every holocaust and Nazi 'war criminal' cliché imaginable, corpses covered with swastikas, braindead blonde Shiksa sluts, and even a Hebrew lament that is played throughout the film, especially when the Nazi murderer is contemplating the crimes of his SS war criminal father, *Crawlspace* would be a kosher wet dream, especially for philistine Zionist types like torture-porn hack Eli Roth, but the film is just too god damn awful to appeal to the Semitic sensibilities of Teutonophobes. Indeed, as much as I hate to even reference the site, Rotten Tomatoes has the film at an impressive 0% 'rotten' rating, thus making it probably the only holocaust-themed work with such a pathetically low rating (it should go without saying that, whether good or bad, in the shoah business world, virtually all holocaust films get at least some sort of puffery-ridden praise). Of course, that has not stopped director David Schmoeller from pretending it is a serious film, even going so far as to state of Italian composer Pino Donaggio's Hebrew lament that it was designed to, "remind the viewer of the terrible tragedy of the Holocaust." Judging from Schmoeller's surname, I assumed he was a member of the tribe, but after watching him complain about Kinski in *Please Kill Mr. Kinski*, I'm convinced he is just some ethno-masochistic queen of a shabbos goy who whored himself out to Semitic smut-peddler Charles Band and who gets off to trashing his racial kinsmen because he got his ass regularly kicked as kid for being an exceedingly effete pansy. Unquestionably, any entertainment value that *Crawlspace* features is to the credit of Herr Kinski and I do not blame him for being an intolerable egomaniac on the set as a man who has starred in some of the greatest films of the post-WWII era and thus shouldn't have to tolerate American hacks telling him what to do. If you're a big enough Kinski fan (and/or masochist) to endure *Crawlspace*, make sure to watch Schmoeller's micro doc *Please Kill Mr. Kinski* right after. As Schmoeller rightly describes in the documentary, Kinski hated directors. Ironically, the last film Kinski starred in, *Kinski Paganini* (1989), was also his directorial debut. While *Kinski Paganini* is not a masterpiece, it certainly demonstrates that Kinski was a much more talented filmmaker than Schmoeller ever was. Indeed, as much as I typically hate actors and see them as vain and vapid cattle that should be exploited by good directors, Kinski's talents transcended that of the onscreen whore, even if he was a deranged psycho whose own daugh-

ter accused him of molesting her as a child.

-Ty E

PUPPET MASTER
PUPPET MASTER

David Schmoeller (1989)

Puppet Master is a very important film for me. For one, it has captured my heart since childhood, always being readily available at our local video store, and for two, it terrified the shit out of me as a child. At an extremely young age, I recall walking into a pitch-black room only to witness Tunneler drilling through a woman's head. Full Moon's project that launched their entire company concerns a group of psychics staying at the Bodega Bay Inn due to recent activity. They then stumble up 5 devilish dolls that are guarding the secret of life. This plot works for many reasons. It takes the normal killer doll technique and throws away the huge back story of possession and focuses more on the fact that "oh shit these dolls are about to kill me" rather than "I wonder where these things come from", but just in case, both are included. Each puppet has its own very iconic traits. We have the skull-faced Blade, who with his fedora, blade and hook, and his bullet eyes, creates a very stylish terror in its own right. Pinhead, whose tiny head and huge arms recall back to Tod Browning's Freaks. Mrs. Leech who vomits leeches onto any rival. Might not seem too freaky, but be warned if you don't like creepy crawlies. Jester, the "leader" of the pack, who is merciless and cruel. Let's not forget Tunneler, the vicious vindicator who drills all competition. Using little squeaks in a first person puppet scene heightens the sense of the Napoleon syndromed dolls. The film would not be complete without Richard Band's masterful soundtrack. The main theme alone carries throughout the entire series, complementing even the horrible films. The fact that all these dolls were once Nazi's adds a certain charm to the mix. Puppet Master is the only low-budget classic horror film that has actually given me something. I return, it has spawned numerous action figure lines, comics, shirts, and many, many sequels. This with a couple others are the only few contenders in the "good" killer inanimate object genre. David Allen does the special effects for this film. Stop motion is fluid and features many amazing scenes. I guess they couldn't afford him anymore due to the lack of effort in the sequels. Andre Toulon has a family of tiny terrors. Personally, I care for each puppet, as they have a soul on screen. You want rape? How about suicide? What about ex-Nazi killer puppets? This film has everything and should be examined as not a schlock-fest, but as an important stepping-stone in horror cinema. Full Moon paved the way for independent companies EDIT: to be successful. Too Full Moon hasn't made a good film in decades.

-Maq

DAVID WANTS TO FLY

David Sieveking (2010)

Despite the fact that he is the director of a couple of my favorite films, I have been disillusioned with David Lynch for quite some time now, but nothing could prepare me for the sheer and utter disappointment and even repugnance that I felt for him after watching the German documentary *David Wants to Fly* (2010) directed by young novice filmmaker David Sieveking (Sénégallemann, *Vergiss mein nicht* aka *Forget Me Not*). Indeed, although I know that *Eraserhead* (1977)—a film where the seemingly half-autistic protagonist ultimately brutally murders his mutant infant, among other things—was inspired by Lynch's unhealthy feelings about becoming a father and that he apparently laughed hysterically while directing the bizarre rape scene featuring Isabella Rossellini in *Blue Velvet* (1986), none of these things quite disturbed me, yet Sieveking's doc made me feel more uneasy about the filmmaker than any of the various interviews I have watched featuring serial killers, war criminals, genocidal maniacs, and guys who get their cocks chopped off (aka trannies). Ultimately, the film depicts how a decidedly dorky kraut film student, the eponymous director, becomes interested in the neo-Hindu Transcendental Meditation™ (TM) movement and its recently deceased 'guru' Maharishi Mahesh Yogi due to his flagrant fan-boy love for David Lynch, only to discover that his filmmaker hero is arguably the foremost propagandist and (anti)intellectual gatekeeper of a powerful cult that was led by a highly hypocritical charlatan who used it as a means to defile rich and famous white woman and to live a life of leisure and luxury by deceptively conning wealthy members out of their wealth by promising them silly pipe dreams like 'world peace' and supernatural powers like the ability to fly. In a somewhat parallel subplot, the doc also depicts the director's doomed love affair with a similarly dorky dame that is related to the exceedingly bitchy Hebraic second wife of Brecht. While Sieveking managed to befriend Lynch and members of the TM community during the early phase of making the film, by the time the film was complete five years later his filmmaker hero, who once blessed him and his future, was threatening to sue him and ruin his career if he released the doc, which is certainly not what one would expect from a mensch that brought the world fairly subversive films like *Eraserhead* and *Blue Velvet*. It should be noted that Maharishi first gained fame as the personal guru of popular musicians from obscenely overrated rock bands like the Beatles and the Beach Boys, but even a degenerate wife-beater like John Lennon was eventually able to realize he was a fraud and paid tribute to the brown-skinned master by writing the song "Sexy Sadie" (which was originally titled "Maharishi" until George Harrison got scared and complained) while in India about becoming disillusioned with the leader after he began making sexual advances to Mia Farrow (who seems to be a magnet for sleazy scumbags). Undoubtedly, after watching *David Wants to Fly*,

DAVID WANTS TO FLY

you will unfortunately think that Lynch is a member of what might be described as a poor man's Church of Scientology, as the auteur acts like Tom Cruise's all-too-happy-go-lucky uncle, albeit somewhat creepier and minus the phony suave charm.

As narrated by director David Sieveking at the beginning of *David Wants to Fly*, the Berlin-based filmmaker has just graduated from film school but he still counts on his parents for rent money and feels pretty lost in life, somberly stating, "I wanted to make dark films like my idol, David Lynch. But I was lacking the darkness. He was my age when he completed his first masterpiece." Indeed, a fan-boy can never become as great as his master, but the young documentarian will ultimately learn that his master is a brainwashed maniac of sorts who now seems more interested in peddling masturbatory second-rate meditation techniques than directing films that challenge his talent as an artist and take him into new aesthetic realms. Sieveking is in a relationship with an aspiring novelist named Marie Pohl and she constantly bitches at her hopelessly passive beau about petty things, even complaining to him "You treat me like a hamster" simply because he lovingly asks her if she is still asleep upon waking up next to her in the morning. Although not referenced in the doc, Ms. Pohl is the daughter of actor Klaus Pohl (Otomo, Hannah Arendt) and Sanda Weigl, who appeared in a couple somewhat recent Rosa von Praunheim docs and whose father is the cousin of kraut commie playwright Bertolt Brecht's Jewish second wife Helene Weigel. Upon looking online about his filmmaker hero, Sieveking discovers that Lynch is going to be giving a talk about Transcendental Meditation and how it has inspired his creativity as an artist, so he and his girlfriend get on a plane and head to Maharishi University of Management (MUM) in Fairfield, Iowa. Notably, at the beginning of the doc, the viewer has no clue that the filmmaker is about to go on a long and strange journey where both his fan-boy worship and unwaveringly love for his girlfriend are going to be tested in a way that shatter his almost childlike faith in both the integrity of an artist and the power of love.

To Sieveking's delight, he gets to conduct a one-on-one interview with Lynch, who immediately begins spewing pseudo-esoteric TM gibberish to him like, "Were all in this suffocating rubber clown suit of negativity. And it's stinky rubber...And why do we still want to be clowns?" Clearly out of touch with the rampant ethno-masochism that many young Germans suffer from nowadays, Lynch even attempts to appeal to Sieveking's seemingly nonexistent 'German-ness' by remarking regarding practicing TM, "It's not like you dive in once and say I'm enlightened. You dive in every, regular as clockwork...regular as clockwork...it's a real German thing...and you just do it and watch things get better." Lynch also manipulatively attempts to use Sieveking's dream of becoming a famous filmmaker to sell TM to him, remarking, "For a filmmaker, you want to get the best teacher you can get...and for studying life and making life better, you want to get the best teacher you can get." Before they part ways, Lynch says

to the young filmmaker, “You be a strong proponent and enjoy life and enjoy your filmmaking and you’re going to zoom forward, you’ll see. Wherever you are now, you may be fine, but you’ll just go quickly zooom.” Of course, by ‘proponent,’ Lynch probably means mindless promoter of the TM brand name. “Animated by David’s words,” Sieveking checks out the “Golden Dome” of Maharishi institute where people are hopping around to “increase creativity and intuition,” but they never quite fly, which is the ultimate goal of a so-called ‘yogic flyer.’ After watching a bunch of dorky white boys hopping with their legs crossed in a yogic position and trying but failing to do the same, Sieveking has a TM brain scan done and learns that he is “light years away from being a yogic flyer,” thus he must sink a bunch of cash into learning the basics of the TM technique.

Since he wants to be initiated into TM, Sieveking heads to Hannover, Germany and pays a kraut conman with the nonrefundable gift of “six fresh flowers, sweet fruits, a white handkerchief, and 2,380 Euros in cash” to be initiated into the movement and receive his personal mantra, which is an Indian word in Sanskrit that he can never tell anyone about which he must repeat silently for the rest of his life twice a day for twenty minutes while meditating. Apparently, the entire TM technique can be taught to anyone in about 20 minutes, yet Sieveking was forced to pay some pansy low-level guru-cum-salesman a hefty sum for such a simple lesson in dot-head style pseudo-esotericism. While finding the meditation techniques relaxing, the documentarian soon begins to have his doubts regarding the movement as a whole, narrating, “What have I gotten myself into? Is TM strictly scientific and non-religious as they claim? Yet, while meditating, these questions fade away.” Ultimately, the young filmmaker must admit to himself regarding his new pseudo-spiritual hobby, “When I meditate I feel wonderfully in tune with the worlds, but afterwards I’m still alone in my apartment.” Meanwhile, although she is in NYC, Marie begins sending Sieveking text messages reading, “stop meditating” as if she is jealous of her boyfriend’s new metaphysical hobby. Unfortunately, TM Führer Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who has been living as somewhat of a recluse for the past couple years, drops dead before Sieveking can have the distinguished honor of meeting him, so the filmmaker decides to head to India to catch his funeral where tens of thousands of people ultimately come to pay tribute to the deceased guru. While at the funeral, Sieveking bumps into Lynch sporting a goofy white Indian robe and discovers that Maharishi left behind several billions of dollars which he has entrusted to his three nephews. When he gets back to Berlin, Sieveking happily declares his “dark days are over” and that it is “time for enlightenment” because he has finally obtained funding for his film and his girlfriend Marie is coming back from NYC, so he “want to surprise her by creating a home she will fall in love with.” While Marie acts like she is happy with the home Sieveking has lovingly crafted for her and tells him he is “sweet,” she ultimately rewards him by leaving him ten days later and heading back to NYC. From there, the young

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filmmaker must confront his disillusionment with both TM and his romantic relationship as they prove to be things that he cannot count on.

When Sieveking heads to Vlodrop, The Netherlands to the TM world headquarters for first annual meeting since guru's death, he begins to realize that the cult tolerates nil criticism of any sort and many of its leaders are power-hungry vipers who have used the death of Maharishi as a means to destroy comrades and take control by any means necessary. Indeed, when one of the TM leaders expresses dissent regarding the fact that Lebanese neuro-scientist Tony Nader has been named the new Maharishi, his microphone is immediately cut-off and Sieveking is forced by cult members to stop filming the event. While Sieveking is told by representatives of TM that he cannot use any of the footage he shot from the annual meeting in the Netherlands, he decides to rebel and predictably falls out of favor with the image-obsessed cult. Upon doing some research, Sieveking learns that to become a 'Raja'—a high-ranking TM global leader that acts as a representative of their respective nation—the person must make a simple 'donation' of at least one million dollars just to begin training for the distinguished position. Upon talking to Swiss leader Raja Felix, Sieveking comes to realize that TM is just selling imaginary power for an imaginary world government. Despite being one of the highest ranking leaders in the world, Raja Felix confesses that he has never personally seen any of the TM members 'fly,' which is apparently done by certain so-called 'Yogic Flyers' who have reached true 'enlightenment.' When asked if he ever saw Maharishi fly, Raja Felix proclaims that the guru was far too "humble" to act in such an ostentatious way as to demonstrate his actual powers. At this point, Sieveking must admit that TM is probably a "clever business plan" and that "some say that enlightenment is for sale."

When David Lynch comes to Germany to crown a fat kraut capitalist pig named Raja Emanuel as the TM global leader of Krautland, the cult ultimately suffers a major public relations disaster. Indeed, when Raja Emanuel declares during his acceptance speech, "I am a good German. I'm a German who wants to make Germany invincible" and someone in the audience retorts, "That's what Adolf Hitler wanted," he makes a major ass of himself by arrogantly replying, "...but unfortunately he couldn't do it because he didn't have the right technique." Of course, little does Raja Emanuel realize that a certain eccentric Greek-French woman of Greek-Italo-Anglo stock named Savitri Devi had already attempted to synthesize elements of Hinduism and National Socialism. Ultimately, Raja Emanuel is called a "charlatan" and "pathetic pig" by the audience and practically booed off the stage, so Lynch pathetically runs out and tries in vain to save the day, thus making him seem more absurd than one of the characters in his films. TM wants to build a "university on invincibility" at a post-industrial wasteland called Teufelsberg aka 'Devil's Mountain'—an artificial hill near Grunewald Forest that was built with the rubble of post-WWII Berlin, cov-

ers a never completed Nazi military-technical college (Wehrtechnische Fakultät) designed by Albert Speer, and was later used by the US National Security Agency (NSA) for spying—but Raja Emanuel and Lynch's pathetic PR stunt made sure that would never happen. As a site with a supposedly dark history involving Nazi bogeymen and American occupiers, Sieveking seems to find the idea of building a TM university at Devil's Mountain to be ridiculous and in poor taste, but personally I think it is quite fitting.

When Sieveking heads to NYC with the dual objective of seeing his girlfriend and watching Lynch give a speech in promotion of TM for young school children, he ultimately finds himself in a rather uncomfortable position that crushes what little hope he has left in regard to his future. On top of the fact that his girlfriend is seeing another guy and is thinking about breaking up with him, Sieveking also discovers that Lynch wants nothing to do with him. After pretending to be part of a Swiss film crew and sneaking into the filmmaker's fancy hotel, Sieveking is told by Lynch's fast-talking representative that he does not want to talk to him, but somehow he eventually lands an interview with Mr. Eraserhead. When Sieveking dares to ask Lynch why TM sells so many expensive 'herbal remedies' and other bogus health products, the filmmaker nonsensically replies "so beautiful" in a creepy and seemingly possessed fashion, stutters for a second as if attempting to think of a bullshit argument, and then proceeds to go on a brainwashed rant about how great it is that such a "business" exists and can offer TM supporters these dubiously priced pieces of hocus pocus. After the nightmarish interview that ultimately proves to be the last he will conduct with his hero, Sieveking's girlfriend gets exceedingly bitchy on a subway ride back and complains, "I think it's a little strange. You are harassing a celebrity for a movie you want to make because you've decided to be obsessed with David Lynch." As revealed later in the doc, Marie's bitchy rant seems to have more to do with the fact that she wants to breakup with her boyfriend than her concern with his fan-boy obsession with Lynch. After narrating, "Her love for me seems to be on holiday," Sieveking and his girlfriend embrace and mutually sob on a beach while a group of fat Americans swim in the water in what ultimately proves to be a unintentionally humorously absurd scene. At this point, the filmmaker must admit defeat and less than proudly proclaims, "After more than a year of meditation, my life is a complete disaster. My girlfriend dumped me, David wants to lynch me, and TM is threatening to sue." Of course, at least now Sieveking can completely devote himself to proving that TM is BS.

With his life in ruins, Sieveking is finally able to dive deep into the stranger-than-fiction con-artistry of TM and its almost sinister hermetic influence on certain sectors of the Western world. After visiting a school where young children are regularly brainwashed with TM and forced to religiously recite the words of the less than great Maharishi, Sieveking visits a so-called 'Maharishi Vedic City' in rural Iowa where about 260 brown Indian TM 'pundits' are housed and

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quasi-imprisoned behind a large fence, but he is denied entry into the community. Seeming like some sort of scam business where illegal aliens are smuggled into the United States under false circumstances, the seemingly shitty Maharishi Vedic City has a reputation for being under heavy surveillance to the point where various pundits have jumped the fence in an attempt to escape but were immediately apprehended. Upon talking to the Maharishi's ex-'skinboy'—a flagrantly faggy fellow who almost talks exactly like Kenneth Anger and ultimately wasted \$100,000 of his own money on the movement—Sieveking is told regarding the guru that, "He was awful and wonderful at the same time" and "He used people and then brushed them off like flies." As demonstrated by the fact that he is depicted fetishistically touching the guru's rotten old sandals, it seems that the ex-skinboy had a sort of homosexual infatuation with Maharishi, who was certainly no homo as reflected by his reputation for using his power and influence to regularly defile beautiful white women. Indeed, Sieveking talks to a former TM manager turned Shamanic teacher named Judith Bourque who confesses that the guru seduced her and told her "don't tell anyone." When Maharishi found new white women to defile, he got tired of Bourque and she ultimately opted to leave the group. According to Bourque, Maharishi told her that if she ever was impregnated by him, she would need to marry another man immediately, thus there are probably tons of half-caste Maharishi bastards roaming around the world that have no clue that their biological father was one of the world's most monetarily successful spiritual pimps. Probably no one else is more self-admittedly pathetic in the documentary than successful Jewish publisher Earl Kaplan, who actually donated the unbelievable sum of \$150 million (!) to TM after being told the money would be used to set up a colony of 10,000 Indians who would collectively bring about world peace. Of course, the world peace never came and the village the Maharishi setup was comprised of shoddy shacks with missing roofs, thus it can be assumed that he pocketed most of the money.

After Lynch threatens to sue him if he doesn't allow him to see the final cut of the film, Sieveking decides to head to the Kaplan-funded Brahmaṣṭhan of India aka 'Capital of World Peace' and instead of finding 10,000 Yogic flyers, he discovers a destitute ghost town that is inhabited by eight or so followers. While his pilgrimage to Brahmaṣṭhan is a pathetic disappointment, Sieveking ultimately finds true enlightenment upon meeting a seemingly genuine guru named Swami Swaroopanand who, like the Maharishi, studied under a teacher named Guru Devi. Of course, the business style structure of TM begins to make sense when Swami reveals that Maharishi served as Guru Dev's bookkeeper and personal secretary and that he was never given the right to assign mantras and teach meditation. As Swami states to Sieveking, "A true guru has no expectation from his disciple. He never wants anything from him. It is the disciple who offers his service to the Guru. Gurus don't sell their knowledge. They share it. Guru Dev had a sign at his place: "Donations are not allowed; you can only sacrifice your

sins her.” What you have learned from Maharishi, will not bring you spiritual progress. Now you should go to Gangotri in the Himalayas to the source of the river Ganges. Try to find the meditative art of living. That’s it.” Of course, Sieveking, who did not have to pay a single penny for the insightful lesson, follows Swami’s order and takes a pilgrimage to the source of the river Ganges and on the way he befriends a mountain-dwelling monk, meditates, and bathes in icy water as if to cleanse himself of TM’s corrupting influence. In the end, Sieveking heads back to Berlin and sings a song with his (ex)girlfriend Marie, ultimately stating of their relationship, “We get along better than ever since we broke up.”

After watching *David Wants to Fly*, I can certainly see why Lynch demanded more money from Showtime to do the upcoming *Twins Peaks* reboot, as he probably needs a steady cash flow to retain his place of prominence in TM. Of course, this would also probably explain why Lynch has also released designer coffee beans and pointless TM non-books like *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* (2006) that seem to be written for autistic children that cannot be bothered to read pages that are full of actual text as opposed to tiny paragraphs and contrived quotes from the Upanishads. Despite the fact that he directed all of his greatest films well over three decades ago and has not done anything worthwhile in well over a decade, Lynch knows that he has a ludicrously loyal cult following that, not unlike members of TM, will purchase anything he peddles, not matter how pointless and vapid, as he is now more of a brand name and one-man corporation than a serious artist who lives to create. With that being said, I must say that I respect David Sieveking for having the intellectual integrity and thoughtfulness to take upon the uncomfortable tasking of demystifying and somewhat effortlessly exposing a man that was his greatest hero and influence while, at the same time, still being able to acknowledge that, in the end, he, “is still a guru for me as a filmmaker.” Not surprisingly, it seems that the public relations people at TM hired a cuck filmmaker to counter *David Wants to Fly*, though the film in question, *Beyond the Noise: My Transcendental Meditation Journey* (2012) directed Dana Farley, seems somewhat hard to find.

While I felt a sense of extreme *Fremdscham* while watching the scenes in *David Wants to Fly* where Sieveking more or less admits he is a cowardly cuckold and cries like a little baby while embracing his treacherous girlfriend who has just confessed to fucking another guy, I have to respect the filmmaker for his unflattering honesty and rather refreshing lack of pretentiousness, which is quite rare nowadays. As revealed in his most recent doc *Vergiss mein nicht* (2012) aka *Forget Me Not*, Sieveking’s parents, like so many Germans of their era, were far-leftists that were involved with the 68er-Bewegung student movement who were in a ‘open relationship,’ so that might explain the filmmaker’s acceptance of cuckoldry and initial interest in buffoonery like TM, which was quite popular during the counterculture era. If Werner Herzog were a Berliner instead of a Bavar-

DAVID WANTS TO FLY

ian who grew up under the rabid materialism of the post-Wirtschaftswunder era instead of the despair and destitution of the Second World War, he would have probably directed a film like *David Wants to Fly*. Certainly, if you watch Sieveking's doc as a double feature with Herzog's *Grizzly Man* (2005), it becomes quite clear that Lynch is no less delusional than Timothy 'I got eaten by my best bear friend' Treadwell. Of course, although he may be an insufferable whack-job now, no one can take away from Lynch his singular reputation as the man behind such true cinematic masterpieces as *Eraserhead*, *The Elephant Man*, *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart*, and *The Straight Story*, among various other admirable works that demonstrate that there was at least one great American auteur that can be compared to the great European arthouse filmmakers. One can only hope that Lynch will achieve true enlightenment, ditch TM, and get back to being a serious filmmaker who lives to create, but that is probably about as likely as the cult offering broke ass documentarian Sieveking an honorary 'Raja' title. If you're a Lynchite who cannot bear to see the sort of shameless propagandist that your favorite filmmaker has become but still want to see a film that demonstrates how silly it is when Europids sport superlatively silly ancient Indian robes and figuratively (and sometimes literally) suck the cocks of crusty old brown men with goofy Apu accents, checkout the iconoclastic Dutch comedy *Jezus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus Is a Palestinian* directed by Lodewijk Crjns and bask in the hilarity of post-WWII Occidental xenophilia and cultural cuckoldry. Additionally, Teutonic experimental weirdo Werner Nekes' film *Uli-isses* (1982) features a brief scene where a Maharishi-esque Hindu guru that looks like he has feces on his face is denounced a "psychic fascist" (notably, in an interview, Sieveking describes Maharishi's hypnotic influence over people being similar to that of Uncle Adolf). Ultimately, *David Wants to Fly* is a sometimes metaphysically painful and strangely disturbing yet oftentimes ironical and reasonably aesthetically pleasing reminder why it is important to have good taste in both women and charlatans lest you be completely abandoned and left all by your lonesome to perpetually meditate.

-Ty E

THE ARRIVAL

David Twohy (1996) On top of everyone's favorite Sci-Fi films are the repeated contenders - 2001: A Space Odyssey, Alien, Blade Runner, The Terminator, and The War of the Worlds. The Arrival is an ironic title, considering the lack of talk back towards this film. Word of mouth is the big media-throttler in terms of most sleeper hits. Charlie Sheen stars as a paranoid conspiracy theorist who has uncovered the best-kept secret about our environment. Before the term "green" was slapped on films discussing the benefits or controversial theories on nature, The Arrival was waiting steady with a horrifying premise that explores Outer Limits subject favorite of terraforming. Largely making sense, The Arrival settles the fear that the film could en masse by having all the Aliens disguising themselves as (Illegal) Aliens. This species design is remarkable. Reverse knee-caps and rippling brain flaps that shine with promise of Mars Attacks! Martians. The "thesis" of this film is questionable as a remake of Carpenter's media horror classic They Live. Charlie Sheen as Zane Zaminski plays a really effect character set forth in the mix with an extreme situation. Tony T. Johnson plays KiKi, The Arrival's "Short Round." This annoying black youth talks about nothing but how back in his last school, "erryone wuz strapped." The special effects were very nifty for their time. Several revealing alien scenes built tension perfectly as well as the Scorpion scene which lead to the demise of Sheen's almost-noir dame. Quite a fitting ending to such a character. I wished the same fate to the "scientific heroine" of Tremors, but it seems the sacrificed the greater character. David Twohy is a certified Science fiction film director. He brought us The Arrival, and then toned it down a notch with popcorn sizzler Pitch Black and the sequel elongating the myth of Riddick. He knows how to create a moody looming apocalyptic scenario and still entertain with A+ acting and a marvelous script. The Arrival is the best science fiction film you've never heard of, shadowed by the release of Independence Day.

-mAQ

CIAO! MANHATTAN
CIAO! MANHATTAN

David Weisman (1973)

During German auteuress Ulrike Ottinger's Sapphic dystopian sci-fi epic *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* – a wonderful otherworldly cinematic work where an intensely intrusive international media empire creates, shapes, manipulates, and destroys a star celebrity – the lead protagonist learns via newspaper that “he” (a pomo Dorian Gray played by German model-turned-actress Veruschka von Lehndorff) has died despite that the decidedly dandy fellow is still living. Although a work of absurdist and surrealist science fiction, Ottinger's film proves that sometimes fantastic fiction is grounded in scandalous truths, especially when one considers a foreboding flick like *Ciao! Manhattan* (1972) directed by John Palmer (husband of Warhol superstar Ivy Nicholson) and David Weisman (*Edie: Girl on Fire*) and starring youthquaker princess Edie Sedgwick in a pseudo-documentary work that inevitably acts as a virtual cinematic epigraph for the tragic socialite's short, somber life in the fast-lane. Comprised of authentic audio recordings of Sedgwick's memories of the Warhol Factory and NYC and contrived clips from the original aborted script that was started in 1967, *Ciao! Manhattan* is essentially an interblended, bastardized cinematic work assembled from various ingredients that ultimately is more potent and penetrating than what was originally intended for the film; a discombobulated piece of drug-addled debauchery that is seemingly in stark contrast to what the perturbing project eventually evolved into. Beginning with the posthumous tribute, “Three months after the completion of filming, Edie Sedgwick, who portrays herself in the role of Susan, suddenly died at the age of 28. We dedicate this motion picture to her memory,” it is apparent right from the inception of *Ciao! Manhattan* that the film is not about a fictional character named “Susan” but a real-life sad little rich girl whose starvation for attention caused her to develop a marvelous persona that would eventually overwhelm and eclipse her true self, thereupon resulting in the most direful of consequences. Incessantly flaunting her unflattering breast implants (which in the movie she ascribes to “eating better” and doing her “exercises”), slurring every single sentence, and looking and ‘acting’ rather sickly for a bodacious blue-blooded 28-year-old, so much so that Edie barely resembles the charming cutesy girl in the Warhol Factory footage that is scattered throughout *Ciao! Manhattan*. Like a deranged and decisively doomful Russ Meyer film, minus big bona fide boobies, and with aesthetic and structural nods to Conrad Rooks' *Chappaqua* (1966) and the French New Wave films of Jean-Luc Godard, *Ciao! Manhattan* is undeniably – for better or worse – a work that is rather reflective of its zeitgeist and the ill-starred superstar it portrays.

Strung-out on speed, stardom, and self-glorification, Susan (Edie Sedgwick) is one sufficiently sad ex-superstar, not least of all due to the fact she needs to use

her itty bitty teats as a means to hitch a ride back to her flaky mother's mansion. Although she barely remembers it, Susan is picked up by a Texan hippie-poser-without-pretensions named Butch (played by Wesley Hayes in his first and only film role) – a friendly yet feeble-minded fellow who delights in “drives around looking at things,” has big plans of riding shotgun in a flying-saucer, and is quite suspicious of colorful Californians due to their seemingly shifty and snide ways – while flashing her bogus bosoms late one night while hitchhiking in a most pathetic way to get back to her eccentric yet concerned mother's mansion where she literally ‘camps’ out in a carefully contrived and conspicuously childish world of dual self-worship and self-negating neuroticism. Of course, as a spoiled yet routinely abused little rich girl whose father and brothers couldn't keep their hands off her, aside from the one homosexual brother she absolutely adored who committed suicide in her room as she mentions in *Ciao! Manhattan*, Susan/Edie is not exactly the most stable of pretty people as proven by her routine stays in mental institutions, addiction to speed and barbiturates, and electroshock therapy sessions. In fact, despite the fact that she is topless and free as a bird or whatever, friendly philistine Butch has a hard time figuring out why he – a rampantly heterosexual and horny hippie of the virile Southwestern stripe – has no desire to bugger the former “it girl”; the gal that every American lass wanted to be and every young American male wanted to be with during the mid-1960s. Of course, Susan/Edie is the not same babe she was during her *Factory* days as she is clearly out of her mind and positively physically disheveled, sort of like a pretty flower that was run over by a lawnmower, which boy genius Butch even recognizes as proven by his insulting question to her, “Did you really use to look like this?” in regard to pictures from her photo-shoots with weirdo Warhol. As Susan/Edie explains quite matter-of-factly during *Ciao! Manhattan*, the media made a big deal when she dyed her hair blonde and got a short chic haircut, as if she was trying to be Warhol's doppelganger, which she adamantly denied. As for men in her life, Susan/Edie explains that “It's taken me a longtime to realize it but Paul is the only person I truly ever loved,” even if their mutually destructive relationship revolved around riding around Joe DiMaggio Highway on ample amounts of amphetamine. Paul being Paul America – the star of the early *Factory* feature-length film *My Hustler* (1965) – who like Edie, was used, abused, and ultimately disposed of after queen Warhol and his cronies got bored with them. Also like Edie, Paul was considered a fine-looking fool by Warhol, but being the petty and shallow opportunist that he was, used the handsome hunk for his body yet laughed at his brains behind his back in a most catty way. Braindead Butch – a childish fellow who has dreams of flying in a flying-saucer – may not be a trained psychologist, but he has enough empathy to say to himself, “poor chic, she's really wasted,” and indeed Edie is, as anyone watching *Ciao! Manhattan* can tell that her end is near.

Featuring an unintentionally comical collage of Edie/Susan enduring shock-

CIAO! MANHATTAN

treatment juxtaposed with footage of her ill-fated wedding near the conclusion of the film, one would be generous to describe *Ciao! Manhattan* as an 'art-exploitation' flick of the most low-down and degrading kind, thereupon making Warhol's *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1965) and *Outer and Inner Space* (1966) seem like fun flattery pieces by way of comparison. Of course, *Ciao! Manhattan* is not a total trash piece as it does reveal some of Sedgwick's post-Factory insights, especially in regard to counter-culture movements, of which she states regarding a group of peaceful hippies and the 'revolution of the youth,' that, "They serve like a mockery in way of reality because they think everything is smiles and sweetness and flowers, when there is something bitter to taste. And to pretend there isn't is foolish.." Too bad Edie did not realize this until it was too late. During one of the final scenes of *Ciao! Manhattan*, the character Butch notices a newspaper with the headline, "Andy's Star of '65, Is Dead at 28," and merely says to himself, "how about that," in a vapid yet reasonably unsurprised manner. Needless to say, *Ciao! Manhattan* would have been better titled *Ciao! Edie* as that is what the film is essentially about, but – of course – the directors/producers obviously did not want to make the uniquely underhanded film a total bummer so as to crush a potential at an ample monetary return. Admittedly, you would probably learn more about the laconic life and tumultuous times of Edie Sedgwick by seeing *Ciao! Manhattan* than by watching George Hickenlooper's somewhat recent biopic *Factory Girl* (2006) starring Sienna Miller, but you will probably need to take a long shower after watching Palmer and Weisman's da'stardly and distinctively disturbing work of self-prophesied-death-by-way-of-celluloid.

-Ty E

THE LAST HORROR FILM

David Winters (1982)

Personally, I have always felt that the iconic slasher flick *Maniac* (1980) directed by William Lustig and starring Guido cinematic hero Joe Spinell was more darkly humorous than anything. After all, what is more funny than a wayward wop with malignant mommy issues talking to drag queen-like mannequins?! Naturally, when I discovered horror comedy *The Last Horror Film* (1982) aka *Fanatic*—a sort of pseudo-satire of Lustig's slasher flick (the film was purportedly released under the title *Maniac 2: Love to Kill* on VHS in West Germany) starring *Maniac* leads Joe Spinell and Caroline Munro—I knew it was a film I had to see and would probably rather enjoy, if only in a novelty 'junk cinema' sort of way. A pseudo-horror-film-within-a-horror-film in the spirit of Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) and Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) meets John Waters' *Serial Mom* (1994) and Lucio Fulci's *Nightmare Concert (A Cat in the Brain)* (1990), *The Last Horror Film* is a campy quasi-horror-of-personality work about a maniac Guido taxi-driver from NYC who absurdly believes he has what it takes to be the next great auteur of horror cinema and travels all the way to the Cannes Film Festival in France to proposition a popular Screen Queen to star in his would-be-movie, but instead ends up killing a bunch of film producers and other degenerate Hollywood types and makes a *cinéma vérité*-like snuff flick instead (or so the viewer thinks). Rather bizarrely directed by Anglo-Jew David Winters—a dancer/dance choreographer turned film director/producer who is probably best known for directing the Alice Cooper music concert documentary *Welcome to My Nightmare* (1975) and the Romeo and Juliet-themed skateboard flick *Thrashin'* (1986) starring Josh Brolin—*The Last Horror Film* is certainly a charmingly trashy 1980s celluloid cheese that seems to mock the horror genre and the media hysteria surrounding it rather than paying actual tribute to the much maligned genre. Actually shot guerrilla style without permits at the 1981 Cannes Film Festival where Joe Spinell apparently blew a good portion of the film's budget on booze and other hedonistic pursuits, *The Last Horror Film* is essentially a cinephile's sloppy wet dream as a work that features shots of billboards from such great films as Andrzej Żuławski's *Possession* (1981), Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), István Szabó's *Mephisto* (1981), and John Waters' *Polyester* (1981), among various others. Featuring star Joe Spinell bickering with his real-life mother Filomena Spagnuolo in his real-life apartment, *The Last Horror Film* is not only a lovingly loony tribute to the underappreciated Italian-American actor, but the closest thing to a real sequel to *Maniac*.

As depicted in the opening scene of *The Last Horror Film*, Vinny Durand (Joe Spinell) is a perversely pathetic loser who masturbates in public movie theaters to tasteless slasher flicks featuring fake blonds with fake tits being butchered

THE LAST HORROR FILM

by maniacs. While his friends berate him for drooling over horror movie magazines as if they are porno mags and his overbearing mother (Filomena Spagnuolo aka Mary Spinell) believes he should be happy with his undignified job as a taxi driver, Vinny is a proletarian megalomaniac with deranged dreams who rather absurdly believes he will be the next Alfred Hitchcock and he even seems willing to kidnap and kill to achieve his grandiose goals. Having gone so far as writing a screenplay, dumbass Durand firmly believes that international cult film superstar and so-called "Queen of Horror Films" Jana Bates (Caroline Munro) will be the star of his upcoming movie. Unfortunately, being a sub-literate buffoon with no real world experience (let alone experience working in Hollywood), Vinny decides simply flying to the Cannes Film Festival and stalking Ms. Bates will be his best bet. Certainly crazy but not lazy, Vinny takes his tip money from taxi driving, buys a plane ticket, and heads to the Cannes Film Festival where he discovers a virtual heaven on earth of both carnal and cinematic treasures, though the hapless would-be-filmmaker seems incapable of obtaining both. Naturally, Vinny attempts to hookup with Jana Bates, who is at the festival to promote her latest horror excursion *Scream*, but he is denied access to her every single time. When Vinny attempts to call Bates' manager/ex-husband Bret Bates (Glenn Jacobson) about his script, he is rudely hung up on. When Jana Bates heads to a press conference with her producer Alan Cunningham (Judd Hamilton), she receives anonymous flowers with a strange note reading, "You've made your last horror film." Not long after, Bates goes to see her manager/ex-husband Bret in his hotel room, but instead she is greeted by his bloody corpse, which later vanishes into thin air when the police arrive to investigate.

A stereotypical Hollywood Hebrew named Marty Bernstein (Devon Goldenberg) bumps into Vinny, who begs him to promote his movie, and becomes rather suspicious of the strange fellow after finding out that film director Stanley Kline (director David Winters) and his personal assistant Susan Archer (Susanne Benson) have also received strange threatening notes similar to the one Jana Bates received. Marty goes to the police about Bret Bates' dubious death, but the cops think it is merely a publicity stunt. After receiving a note purportedly from Bret Bates, Marty finds himself axed to death by an ominous figure wearing a black cloak. Of course, Stanley Kline and Susan Archer are subsequently brutally murdered as well and the mysterious killer has filmed all these deaths in a somewhat voyeuristic Peeping Tom-esque fashion. Meanwhile, Vinny begins filming his own horror movie when not acting like a maniac while dressed in drag and schizophrenically talking to his suave imaginary doppelganger. Eventually, Vinny gets the gall to sneak in Jana's hotel room with a bottle of champagne in hand, but startles the little lady while she's in the shower. Vinny asks her to play the lead role in his movie, but Jana belittles him, so the would-be-auteur smashes the champagne bottle and menacingly threatens the *Scream Queen*. Jana ultimately manages to escape from Vinny's wrath and seeks sanctuary in

her producer Alan. Later, Vinny disguises himself as a police officer, heads to the Cannes award ceremony and manages to kidnap Jana by knocking her out with chloroform. With Jana is unconscious in the passenger seat of a rental car, Vinny heads to a castle in the French countryside to film a scene for his horror movie where he plays Dracula and the Scream Queen plays his involuntary victim. In an absurd twist, Bret Bates shows up to the castle with a gun and movie camera and reveals that he is the real killer and has merely used Vinny as the perfect dimwitted fall guy. Jealous over his ex-wife's new life as a very desirable free woman and international super star, Bret had decided to seek revenge. Luckily, Vinny manages to kill Bret in a leatherface-style fashion by beheading him with a chainsaw. In another climatic twist, it is revealed at the conclusion of *The Last Horror Film* that everything that happened at the Cannes Film Festival was not as it seemed and things conclude on a rather happy note with Vinny having completed and released the trashy horror film he always dreamed of. In the end, Vinny screens his directorial debut for his mother and she asks him afterward if he has, "Got a joint?," and the mother and son proceed to share a nice sized blunt.

As Maniac director William Lustig revealed in the Troma dvd release of *The Last Horror Film* regarding the production of the film: "He (Luke Walter) and Joe would go shoot scenes for the movie by themselves...It was not a conventionally made horror film... It was a film that was kind of an improv." Indeed, apparently *The Last Horror Film* was a real-life fantasy flick of sorts for Joe Spinell where he could vacation in Cannes, party with his friends, and make a movie and one certainly gets that feeling while watching the film. *The Last Horror Film* is by no means a great movie, let alone a masterpiece or 'thee last horror film,' but it is a fun little flick starring an actor who deserved more lead roles in films. Undoubtedly, with its murder scenes shot from the perspective of the viewer, *The Last Horror Film* clearly influenced the 2012 remake of *Maniac* directed by Franck Khalifoun and produced by Alexandre Aja. Superlatively stupid satirical schlock featuring Sicilian savage Spinell dressing in drag, talking to his more dapper doppelganger, and acting like a general boorish jackass, *The Last Horror Film* is certainly a work made for the fans and the fans only. Of course, in its depiction of a time when the Cannes Film Festival actually played masterpieces like Żuławski's *Possession*, *The Last Horror Film* unwittingly depicts the end of a zeitgeist when European arthouse cinema began to die and banal Hollywood blockbusters began to rape the minds of the entire world. At least with a film like *The Last Horror Film*, one knows the film is honest in its innate tastelessness and artlessness.

-Ty E

THRASHIN'
THRASHIN'

David Winters (1986)

Out of all the various obsessions I have consumed myself with throughout my life (and there are many), skateboarding was easily the activity that I had the greatest passion for. That being said, I made the effort to hunt down any movie that featured skateboarding in any form. Out of all the skateboard films I spent a lot of time and money locating (which were usually out-of-print VHS tapes before the days of easily downloading rare movies online), *Thrashin'* was one of the few skateboarding films worth re-watching. Not only does the 1986 film feature vintage skateboarding but it also includes hardcore punk music which used to be one of my favorite genres of music. What better adrenalin rush than trying to escape from a rival skate gang while The Circle Jerks song "Wild in the Streets" is playing as featured in *Thrashin'*. The other day I decided to revisit the film and I must admit after reviewing it after so many years, I felt a bit of nostalgia, quite the achievement for a bitter young man like myself. Like Penelope Spheeris's *Suburbia*, *Thrashin'* is like trashy junk food, something I like to get myself into whenever I want to kickback and not take life so serious, just like your typical American.

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Thrashin' is essentially a "Romeo and Juliet" love story mixed with elements of *The Warriors*, set in the 1980s Los Angeles skateboarding world. Cory Webster is the "leader" (which means he is just the best at skateboarding in his group) of the "good guy" skate gang "The Ramp LOCALS!" Essentially, the Ramp Locals look like a bunch hippies that wear neon daisy dukes and probably listen to shitty 1980s cock-rock music. The much cooler gang is the "bad guy" gang "The Daggers," a group of hardcore punk rocker skaters. The leader of the Daggers is Hook, a guy that also happens to be the brother of Chrissy, the love interest of rival gang leader Cory Webster. Hook makes no lie that his biggest priority is his persona and style. When his sister responds critically to a punk style picture of himself that he sent to his mom, Hook states quite ridiculously (and hilariously), "That wild Indian picture happens to be styling. I don't know what you're talking about." It may only be shallow fashion but most skater cliques in real-life dislike other skaters that dress differently as expressed in *Thrashin'*. Of course, in the 1980s skaters were less divided socially when you consider the various subcultures contained within skateboarding culture nowadays. After all, I doubt many paper-gangsta Wigger skaters existed in the 1980s but there is quite the abundance of them nowadays.

Not only does *Thrashin'* feature hardcore punk music but also a variety of other classic tunes from the 1980s. I must admit that I quite enjoy the girly romance song "Don't Think Twice" by Canadian singer France Joli that is played when Cory and Chrissy have their first romantic night together. Such songs bring

me back to a time when I was more optimistic about love and when misogyny was not a glaring character trait of mine. I was also happy to notice whilst re-watching 'Thrashin' that a song by the underrated and revolutionary music outfit Devo is included in the film during a virginal half-pipe scene as the Ramp Locals skate their newly built ramp. For fans of the Red Hot Chili Peppers fans (I can't say I am one), 'Thrashin' also includes a musical performance by the original lineup of the group, before Israeli guitarist Hillel Slovak overdosed on heroin. Despite the cheese factor of many of the songs featured in the film, 'Thrashin' would not be half the film it is (undeniably losing a lot of the silly charm it resonates) had the creators of the film decided to merely create a generic score.

One of the greatest scenes in 'Thrashin' is a nighttime sk8 joust between rival gang leaders Corey and Hook. Jousting is surely an activity that should make a comeback in the skateboarding world. After all, with most professional (and even amateur) skaters doing tricks down 20+ stairs nowadays, jousting does not seem like such a dangerous activity. To the credit (and one of the very few credits I will give the show) of the MTV series Jackass, the jackasses on the show paid homage to 'Thrashin' with an episode featuring sk8 jousting. It has been 7+ years since I quit skateboarding but 'Thrashin' is the kind of film that makes me want to once again take another trip to the local skate park. The skating in 'Thrashin' is no doubt dated (freestyle skateboarding is even featured in the film, a style of skateboarding that is long extinct) but the film expresses the spirit of fun and camaraderie involved with skating. Of course, by the end of 'Thrashin', the fantastic and unrealistic message of "love conquers all" is emphasized but that is what one expects from a schlocky sk8 flick made in the 1980s. The closest thing to a gang that I ever was in was my old skate crew and fun was always to be had whether in the form of skateboarding or petty crime (vandalism was always entertaining). If there is a 1980s Hollywood skateboard film that captures of zeitgeist of 80s skate culture it is without fail 'Thrashin'.

-Ty E

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David Wnendt (2013)

Among the countless negative and largely Hollywood-propagated stereotypes about Germans ranging from them being born genocidal mass murderers to boorish yet humorless hotheads who don't know how to take a joke, scat fetishism seems to be one of the more unflattering perceptions that the *ausländer* has regarding the Teutons and the somewhat recent punk-powered German 'coming-of-age' flick *Feuchtgebiete* (2013) aka *Wetlands* directed by David Wnendt (*Kleine Lichter*, *Combat Girls*) certainly does nothing to contradict this rather unfortunate stereotype. Luckily for Germans, the film is based on a 2008 novel written by a stupid China-doll-like British TV presenter/actress named Charlotte Roche, but unfortunately for the Germans, they are the ones the lapped up the book, which was originally written in German, and made it a spectacular unexpected best-seller in the Fatherland, hence its adaptation into a feature film. The superlatively and pathologically scatological story of a less than hygienic 18 year-old bourgeois-bred punk rock tomboy with a bad case of hemorrhoids who derives fetishistic pleasure from wiping her unkempt unclad cunt on dirty public toilet seats and who is left hospitalized after slicing open her rectum while shaving in a preposterously careless fashion, *Wetlands*—a work that predictably takes its title from the self-lubricating feminine nether-region—is unquestionably the most overtly grotesque, intentionally and idiotically shocking, and compulsively classless film ever made about a troubled teenage girl that is attempting to find her place in this cold, dark, and unforgiving world. As demonstrated by his previous feature *Kriegerin* (2011) aka *Combat Girls*—a film from the American History X (1998) school of filmmaking in regard to its obscenely one-dimensional approach to looking at neo-Nazi skinhead subcultures—director Wnendt seems to have a dubious fondness for crude unladylike teenage chicks with ludicrously outmoded haircuts and horrible taste in men and music and in *Wetlands*, the filmmaker takes this fetish to ungodly extremes by putting a statuesque Nordic beauty that was given an unbecoming makeover that makes her look like she was run over by a short bus driven by a group of meth-addled Riot grrrls in the most compromised, unflattering, and oftentimes literally crap-covered of situations. Seemingly inspired by Church of Satan founder Anton Szandor LaVey's book *The Satanic Witch* (1971) aka *The Compleat Witch*, or *What to Do When Virtue Fails*, the angst-ridden aberrosexual anti-heroine of Wnendt's proudly wanton film keeps her eponymous genitals dirty and unwashed so that she can subconsciously seduce male (and sometimes female) prey whose cum (or what she lovingly describes as "my sex-souvenir candy") she lets dry on her hand after erotic excursions so that she can lick it off later as a sort of post-sex dessert. A curious combination of gross-out humor and dark (melo)drama that does not quite work and practically begs to be taken seriously as if such a degeneracy-driven

work can be taken seriously, *Wetland* is ultimately like a more juvenile and autistic take on the tragicomic films of Teutonic auteur Oskar Roehler (*Agnes and His Brothers*, *Atomised* aka *The Elementary Particles*), albeit minus the semi-serious social commentary regarding Germany and German history. Indeed, the only thing that Wnendt lets the viewer know about contemporary Germany with his film is that the country is more of a culture toilet now than it was during the Weimar era despite the fact there is no economic depression like during the post-WWI years and that there is no way in hell the decadent bourgeoisie would ever embrace something like National Socialism again. Like an autistic kraut *Amélie* (2001) sodomized by a cum-crusted *The 400 Blows* (1959) and directed by the artistically ungifted and culturally retarded bastard progeny of Jörg Buttgereit and Lena Dunham, *Wetlands* is an admittedly sometimes entertaining sick joke at the expense of all of German cinema history.

Due to the fact that her hyper-neurotic mother is an OCD-ridden 'neat freak' who thinks that human pussies are the most putrid and unsavory things in the world, *Wetlands* protagonist Helen Memel (Swiss-German actress Carla Juri of Frauke Finsterwalder's *Finsterworld* (2013)) has developed an acute hatred of personal hygiene to the point where she derives complete ecstasy from rubbing her festering young cuntlet back and forth across dirty public toilet seats, with the protagonist even proudly remarking her preferred potties, "the dirtier the toilet, the better," as if she hopes to catch some hip and trendy STD, or at least vaginitis. In the self-satisfying hope of attracting prospective mates who do not mind mating with a somewhat deranged debutante with extra naughty bits, Helen tries to keep her venerable monosyllable reasonably unclean and unwashed to the point where it smells like "cottage cheese." To make sure her young yet hardly underused snatch smells rotten enough throughout the day, Helen regularly drives her fingers in her gash and then takes a lick as if she is a culinary artist testing out her latest recipe. Aside from her own prick-purse, Helen is also intrigued by other girls' prick-purses and oftentimes uses her sub-homely overweight friend Corinna (Marlen Kruse) as a sordid source of Sapphic sensual splendor. Indeed, aside from sampling Corinna's seemingly pungent cunt secretions, Helen also trades her used tampons with her friend so that the two can become so-called "blood sisters," even when the feminine hygiene product looks so soaked in sanguine fluids that they look teabags used by vampires and surely something that would give someone toxic shock syndrome (in fact, at one point in the film, Corinna gets Helen's tampon stuck in her vag and her friend has to use forceps to pull it out). Although she used to date a death metal drummer who derived sexual pleasure from her defecating on his chest, Corinna has moved up in the romance world and is now dating a dopey half-braindead drug dealer named Michael (Bernardo Arias Porras) who seems like he has been to one too many Phish concerts. As for Helen, she is more of a random erotic encounter kind of girl and prefers not knowing the name of the random guy who's dried

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up ejaculate she has just licked off her crusty fingers. Luckily for Helen, she will soon meet a somewhat older pansy boy that she can make her own personal bitch.

There are a number of reasons why Helen—an upper-middleclass girl that has never known poverty yet dresses like a homeless gutter punk—is so irreparably screwed up, but the most obvious source of her fetish for bodily fluids (which, aside from cum and pussy juice, also include pus, smegma, blood, menstrual blood, etc.) and virtually anything else that is foul is her emotionally invalid bat-shitty crazy mother (Meret Becker of Margarethe von Trotta's *Das Versprechen* (1995) aka *The Promise*), who arrested her daughter's emotional development when she was just a wee little girl and has made her hate her somewhat privileged class background. When Helen was just a little girl, her mother let her fall to the ground and hurt herself instead of catching her as a lesson to, "Trust no one. Not even your parents." Helen certainly took that lesson to heart as she decided to have herself sterilized as soon as she turned 18 so that there would be no way to continue her fucked family female line. As Helen makes quite clear, everyone single woman in her family going back to at least her grand-grandmother was not quite right in the head, so degenerate genetic inheritance is more or less guaranteed in her family with each subsequent generation. Notably, for her seventh birthday, Helen's mother gave her a DVD copy of Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), thus reflecting her warped sense of motherhood. Indeed, Helen's unsanitary and surely self-destructive sexuality is unquestionable symbolic of her decision not to reproduce.

Not long after her little brother Toni (Ludger Bökelmann) was born when she was only 8-years-old, Helen's parents got divorced and ever since then she has attempted to find creative ways to get her parents together even though they hate one another. When Helen suffers a serious anal fissure after shaving her rectum in a rather careless fashion (indeed, while it might seem unlikely that someone like the protagonist would shave in the first place, Helen apparently developed a fetish for shaving after allowing a swarthy towel-head named 'Kanell' to ritualistically shave her snatch), she is hospitalized as an impatient in a proctological ward so she can have her bunghole repaired, so she attempts to use the opportunity as a way to get her parents together, but as the protagonist soon learns, her progenitors have much more important things to do than visit her because she has a mere self-butchered butt-hole. While in the hospital, Helen develops a crush for a blond beta-male nurse with the fitting girly name Robin (Christoph Letkowski) who does not seem to be too grossed out upon seeing the protagonist's protruding swollen asshole as demonstrated by the fact that he takes a picture of it on his cellphone. In fact, Helen finds Robin to be so cute that she masturbates under her sheet while he is rolling her back to her room on a stretcher after surgery. Since Robin is a passive beta bitch who seems close to retarded when it comes to talking to and seducing girls, Helen naturally has

to initiate sexual acts with him, which she does by telling salacious stories about having lesbo sex with fat hookers, among other things. After having surgery to have her anal fissure fixed, Helen is told by the doctor that she has to go home as soon as she has her first successful bowel movement, so she pretends to not have defecated for a couple days even though she wakes up one day completely covered in her own liquid feces from head to toe. When the doctor eventually tells Helen that she has to leave, she absurdly decides to drive her newly repaired rectum into a metal post on her bed, thus causing her to sustain a serious injury that requires emergency surgery.

As *Wetlands* makes quite clear in a series of flashbacks, both of Helen's parents are emotionally negligent self-absorbed buffoons who lack even the most rudimentary parenting skills. While her mother is a whackjob with the nurturing skills of a speed-addicted psychopath who incessantly changes religions like someone changes their wardrobe, Helen's father (Axel Milberg of Tom Tykwer's *The International* (2009) and von Trotta's *Hannah Arendt* (2012)) is an annoyingly extroverted engineer who is more interested in his latest much younger whore girlfriend than his own daughter. Helen describes her father's proclivity towards acting like a boorish jackass as being the result of a large ego that he obtained from having both a sizable dong and bank account. As the film eventually reveals, Helen's parents got a divorce after her crazed mother tried to kill herself and little baby brother Toni by sleeping with their heads inside a gas oven, which the protagonist walked in on when she was just 8-years-old. Indeed, Helen might be one cracked cunt but her lack of sanity in sanitary matters pales in comparison to her mother's all-encompassing mental derangement. On top of trying to kill herself and her baby son, Helen's mother also does unhinged things like beat her daughter's pet rat to death by swinging against a wall in a garbage bag, as well as flash her old beaver off in front of a dozen or so dinner guests after getting mad at her husband at a dinner party. Of course, in the end, Helen's parents don't get back together again (any man that would get back with a woman who attempted to kill their child would have to be insane himself) and there is not sort of redemption for the anti-heroine, but she does get herself a new cute cuckold male nurse boyfriend.

Not surprisingly, the source novel written by Charlotte Roche that *Wetlands* is based on has been described as "cleverly marketed pornography" by its detractors and as "erotic literature" by its fans. While I cannot say that I have read the book and certainly never plan to, I can say that it's authoress seems like a terribly ditzzy dame who, judging by her remarks in interviews, seems to derive great pleasure from writing about what can only be described as highly personalized and fetishized toilet humor. In various old videos of Roche interviewing rock stars, she comes off as hopeless moronic and in one interview with Marilyn Manson it seems as if she would love nothing more than to dine on the would-be-antichrist-superstar's limp dick. Of course, *Wetlands* seems much like its source writer as

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an unsophisticated and mundanely morally bankrupt collection of fetishes and pathologies that would gross-out most rampantly heterosexual man and turn-on disgusting dykes and male cucks that get off to being degraded by domineering dames. Indeed, judging by her normal real-life appearance, star Carla Juri really got the ultimate anti-makeover for the film, as if director Wnendt was attempting to make her as unappealingly tomboyish as possible to appeal to a personal fetish of his own (Juri's character certainly does not resemble Roche in any way). Aside from possibly inspiring a couple stupid and impressionable teenage girls to contract an STD or two, *Wetlands* is ultimately a largely harmless and strangely 'cutesy' film that is not much more than the cinematic equivalent of a book on fart jokes or an early John Waters film, albeit minus the signature queer irony and with better production values. Admittedly, when I finished watching the film, I could not help but think about how banal scat humor can get after being reamed in your face for 105 minutes or so. Indeed, after the first ten minutes or so, *Wetlands* becomes a sort of tedious game of anti-wit where the film seems to try to incessantly one-up itself in terms of celluloid grotesquery but never quite succeeds, sort of like a junky attempting in vain to regain the majesty of their first high. Undoubtedly one of my favorite scenes in the film was a sort of (anti)homage/spoof of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) centering around a couple ugly middle-aged pizza delivery guys involved in a circle jerk where they collectively cum on a pizza in a scenario that will certainly cause Kubrick purists to piss their panties. Undoubtedly, seeing Kubrick's reaction to such a scene would probably be more entertaining than the film itself. A sort of aberrant after school special from anti-hygienic punk princess hell, *Wetlands* not only proves that the German bourgeoisie is more rotten and repugnant than Fassbinder ever thought it was, but is also probably one of only a handful of films that can be used by overprotective mothers to deter their teenage sons from attempting to get into the piss-stained panties of young punk girls. If you ever wondered what kind of film Georges Bataille might have directed had he had a festering lather-maker and the mind of a perversely promiscuous teenage philistine girl who worships her own pussy juice, Wnendt's wantonly retarded wonder work might be for you.

-Ty E

A FIRE IN MY BELLY

David Wojnarowicz (1990)

Lately, I find myself revisiting short films more often than feature-length works. I can say without hesitation that the phantasmagorical occult sinema of Kenneth Anger has swayed most of my more recent cinematic attention. Whether it be a film or an album of music, I find myself most attracted to artistic works that lack filler material. I find that short films generally lack filler material as the filmmaker is often more careful and disciplined when it comes to directing and assembling a film that is less than 10 minutes in length. Over the past couple of years, my taste in cinema has become more refined, resulting in a stricter personal criteria for films that I find to be worthy of artistic praise. *Fire in My Belly* directed by David Wojnarowicz, despite being around 4 minutes in length (a 20 minute version of the film also exists), is certainly not the kind of ideal short film that I find perfectly palatable, as it lacks fluidity and hypnotic majesty; two rare cinematic attributes that I find imperative when conclusively deciding whether or not a certain flick is an authentic work of art. After reading up on director David Wojnarowicz and watching *Fire in My Belly* (the filmmaker's most notorious work), it is apparent to me that the postmodern polymath artist (working within many artistic mediums) never fully developed a cohesive and original cinematic/artistic voice.

In 1985, Wojnarowicz successfully sued United Methodist minister Donald Wildmon and The American Family Associate (a conservative Christian organization) for copying and distorting (protected under the New York Artists' Authorship Rights Act) his art. Although dying from AIDS-related complications in the early 1990s, Christians would later have their revenge against Wojnarowicz in 2010 by having his short *Fire in My Belly* removed from the National Portrait Gallery. The Catholic League and intelligent design advocate John Boehner merely complained to the National Portrait Gallery and the short was ousted. Christians demanded that *Fire in My Belly* should be removed from the gallery because of a vacuous scene in the short featuring ants walking over a cross. Surprisingly, Mr. Boehner was not as offended to see the gratuitous boner featured in the film. My main problem with *Fire in My Belly* is that it lacks originality and artistic cohesiveness; undoubtedly a pastiche mess that personifies the cultural bankruptcy of most 'postmodern' art. After watching the short, it was obvious to me that the director was especially influenced by *Scorpio Rising*, almost making *Fire in My Belly* in certain parts feel like a gross parody of Anger's sadomasochistic masterpiece. I guess David Wojnarowicz felt that by showing an erect cock for a couple seconds (the male members featured in *Scorpio Rising* are quickly inter-cut randomly in the film, making them seem like subliminal homo-occult messages), he was making a huge leap in artistic progress.

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At best, *Fire in My Belly* is an alright way to waste 4 minutes (do not even bother watching the 20 minute version). At worst, the short is a testament to the lack of evolution in the way of cinematic artistry. You are better off watching the 1929 surrealist masterpiece *Un Chien Andalou* created by Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali. After all, David Wojnarowicz seems to have lifted his interest in creepy insects and blasphemous imagery from *Un Chien Andalou*. It is a sad day when anti-Christian sentiment has become so trendy and hip that it manages to bore the viewer. *Fire in My Belly* is comparable to the 'scandalous' 1987 *Piss Christ* photograph (which was partially funded by the United States Government via the National Endowment for Art). To be an artist in the modern world, you do not need talent and skill, only banal iconoclasm and borderline pornography. French decadent poet Arthur Rimbaud (a major influence on David Wojnarowicz) may have been a libertine but he was also a purveyor of beauty, something that Wojnarowicz was never able to accomplish. I am not surprised that Wojnarowicz contracted a fire in his belly, as it was probably the result of consuming too many hot pieces of past art (he could never compete with) over the years. By creating *A Fire in My Belly*, Wojnarowicz was able to release his confused incendiary influences, creating a postmodern work of visual farts.

-Ty E

POOR PRETTY EDDIE

David Worth (1975)

In terms of superlatively stupid, uniquely ugly, and all around aesthetically and thematically repugnant films, I cannot not think of another cinematic work I saw in recent time that left me with such a feeling of awe-inspiring disgust and intrigue than *Poor Pretty Eddie* (1973)—the sordid and gritty cinematic story of a supposedly sophisticated light-skinned black woman who ends up in the wrong redneck town—due to its lunatic leftist message, accidentally absurdist plot and pseudo-Southern Gothic surrealism, and needlessly nauseating nonsensicalness. Also known as *Black Vengeance*, *The Girl in The Web*, *The Victim*, *Redneck County*, *Redneck County Rape*, and *Heartbreak Motel* (a cut ‘softcore’ version with a ridiculous ‘happy ending’), *Poor Pretty Eddie* is one of those sleazy films that lets the viewer know there is no limit in American cinema when it comes to combining cheap titillation with childlike cultural marxist indoctrination. A work vaguely based on the Jean Genet play *The Balcony* (1957) and starring hagsploitation diva Shelley Winters (who also starred in the 1963 cinematic adaptation of *The Balcony*), singer-turned-actress Leslie Uggams (*Hallelujah, Baby!*, *Roots* TV Miniseries), Slim Pickens (*Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, *Blazing Saddles*), and Ted Cassidy (*Lurch* of the 1960s television series *The Addams Family*), *Poor Pretty Eddie* is a piss poorly made quasi-Blaxploitation/Redneckploitation flick in the risqué ripoff spirit of race-hustling Hollywood melodramas of the late-1960s/early-1970s like *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) and *Mandingo* (1975) that portray white southerners as supremely stupid sadomasochists of the Negro-fetishizing sort and blacks as all-knowing born saints and sophisticates that are inherently superior to their murderous, melanin-deprived counterparts in every way, especially when it comes to morality and sexuality. Of course, being a film that was directed by an undistinguished pornographer named Richard Robinson (*Adultery for Fun & Profit*, *Is There Sex After Marriage*) and funded by distinctly debauched Michael “The King of Pornography” Thevis—a smut-peddler, sex shop chain owner, and peep show manufacturer who was later imprisoned and made the FBI’s most-wanted list following a successful prison escape in 1978—*Poor Pretty Eddie* is not exactly the sort of work that was aspiring for cultivated celluloid artistry, even if the filmmakers behind it made it in an ultimately failed attempt to “go legit.” A piece of particularly peculiar and unpleasantly perverse celluloid trash of the exceedingly exploitative sort, *Poor Pretty Eddie* still attempts to be artsy fartsy and socio-politically chic in the “new left” fashion, yet fails miserably on both accounts due to its excessive lecherousness effortlessly canceling both of these things out, thus making for an unintentionally hilarious work of low-camp crudeness and Southern fried pseudo-surrealist kitsch that retardedly renders it an idiosyncratically odious celluloid work that

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manages to be half-way entertaining, even if one gets the urge to stomp in the skulls of the creators of the film while watching it.

New York born popular negress singer Liz Wetherly (real-life actor/singer Leslie Uggams) is a rather intelligent and dignified woman and her prestige and popularity has certainly gone to her horse-hair-adorned head, so out of sheer arrogance, which she will later regret, she makes the mistake of traveling through the South all by her lonesome so as to have a relaxing break from always being in the spotlight. While opening *Poor Pretty Eddie* with a 'soulful' rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" (which was filmed at an actual football game at Atlanta Stadium on November 4, 1973 in a game between the Atlanta Falcons and the Los Angeles Rams), Liz seems totally ignorant to the fact that in certain secluded areas of the dirty Deep South—an area that in many places has yet to recover from the American Civil War—does not take too kindly to colored folks, cultivated or otherwise, but some of them, especially man-whore Elvis Presley-wannabes, do have a perverse proclivity for indulging in chocolate from time to time. After her fancy expensive car breaks down when the radiator overheats in the seemingly haunted forests of some unnamed confederate land (the movie was actually filmed in Athens, Georgia), Liz walks to the nearest lodge and encounters a tastelessly charismatic aspiring musician named Eddie Collins (Michael Christian) who assures her, "Don't worry ma'am, we'll fix you right on up," and has a gentle redneck giant named Keno (Ted Cassidy)—a half-retarded handyman and quasi-slave of sorts whose bites inevitably prove to be bigger than his barks (the fellow rarely ever talks, even when seeing a woman sexually ravaged) that spends all of his free time with his canine companion—tow her car and sets her up in a hotel room. Despite his seductive confederate charm, hillbilly handsomeness and hick hospitality, pretty boy Eddie is given the cold shoulder by Liz, who seems like a lesbian, which depresses him all the more since she is a famous singer, an aspiration the rock n roll redneck also has. The 'cultural king' of his hometown who happens to have his own half-insane sugar mama named Bertha (Shelley Winters)—the matriarch of the area who also owns the local lodge—Eddie does not take kindly to Liz's arrogant airs of cultured coonish superiority, especially after falling in love with the black broad, thus the country hustler inevitably forces himself on the spade singer to the maniacal cheers of the local townspeople who fully support his unofficial miscegenation redneck rape revolution. As his obsessed mature lover Bertha states, "Eddie knows a lot about poontang, don't know nothin' about women." When Liz attempts to tell the local Sheriff Orville (Slim Pickens) about Eddie's repeated acts of racial miscegenation based rape, the officer tells her he cannot blame the boy for committing forced buggery, perversely asking her "Did Eddie bite you on the titties?" and even lays the blame on her for not leaving the town. Meanwhile, gentle giant Keno—a man whose only friends are dogs—begins to become quite agitated by Eddie's sexual pillaging of Liz and things ultimately take a turn for

the worst when the rapist would-be-rock-star butchers one of the Keno's dogs and cooks it in some sort of spicy Southern stew, dog collar and all. A follower of proto-wigger Elvis Presley, Eddie will stop at nothing to commit involuntary miscegenation and even marriage with his famous African queen, but morally keen Keno has different plans. Indubitably, one of the most bizarre love triangles ever committed to celluloid, the torrid romantic tale of Ed the sped, lippy lesbo Liz, and hysterical hag Bertha reminds how really repulsive some love stories can be.

Featuring particularly prophetic quotes like, "one of these days the only thing were gonna have around here is high yellow," Poor Pretty Eddie is a pretty perturbing look at race-mixing before it become quite vogue among the lower classes as it is today. Of course, America has always had a dedication and been a foremost player in the upcoming racial apocalypse, especially considering the proliferation of Melungeon people (tri-racial individuals of European, Amerindian, and black extraction) in the South since the mid-1600s before even the inception of slavery. Interestingly, the title name protagonist of Poor Pretty Eddie has the surname "Collins," which is one of the main melungeon families in Tennessee, thus Eddie's proclivity for dark meat and forced entry might not be so strange after all. Either way, Poor Pretty Eddie portrays virtually all Southern men as dimwitted barbarians with a pathological obsession with penetrating pretty pickaninnies and portraying the sole Southern woman as a horny honkey hog who can only get sex by paying for it. With gratuitous dream sequences of cracker Eddie cracking a whip and strikingly stupid scenes of Liz's face morphing into Eddie's in a moronic moment of celluloid mongrelization, Poor Pretty Eddie is the sort of innately idiotic philistine propaganda piece nonsensically equipped with exploitation elements that makes a documentary like *The Eternal Jew* (1940) directed by Fritz Hippler seem like rather reasonable and objective as few other films feature such crude anti-cracker cardboard stereotypes and nonsensical Negrophilia as the sort of film that Quentin Tarantino probably uses as a regular masturbation aid. A curious Southern Gothic fairytale that is, at best, entertaining for all the wrong reasons, Poor Pretty Eddie is essentially the cinematic equivalent of eating spicy fried chicken and cornbread at a crackhead-infested, inner city Popeye's restaurant, minus the resulting unpleasant bowel movements and possibility of being raped and/or robbed. Of course, as history has proven, it was not white men who would go after black women in the future, but knuckle-dragging Negro men going after white trash women (and the occasional debauched debutante), the lowly blue collar and redneck whose ancestors the creators of Poor Pretty Eddie maliciously attack. Incidentally, Shelley Winters almost died when he private plane almost crashed upon landing when she arrived to shoot Poor Pretty Eddie, which thankfully did not happen as she gives one of the most unflattering depictions of an old slag cougar who even allows her boy toy to rape negroids just so he will stay with her and, if that is not romantic,

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then I don't know what is.

-Ty E

THE VOYEUR

Deborah Shames (1997)

Voyeurism can be a dangerous hobby. Those that seriously take part in this activity can find more excitement in watching than actually doing. I think that it would be safe to say that many cinemaphiles have this unfortunate problem. Italian erotica auteur Tinto Brass's *The Voyeur* takes one of the most bold and direct looks at voyeurism. Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* told us that voyeurism could get us caught in the middle of a murder mystery. Tinto Brass's *The Voyeur* tells us that watching other people have fun can lead to a life of loneliness.

As you would expect from a Tinto Brass film, the women featured in *The Voyeur* are of the unique beautiful Italian variety. Whether it be the film's protagonist Dodo's wife or a scantily clad short haired nurse, these are women you can't take your eyes off of. Natural beauty is a rarity in today's "body modification" times. I have personally never found women that are "suped up" like cars to be appealing. Don't expect to see fake tits and pierced clits in *The Voyeur*. These ladies have large natural breasts and grown out muffs to boot. Protagonist Dodo is a French professor that has allowed his intellect to control his life. He is constantly found in "one in a lifetime" type situations and can't seem to "get in on the action." His bedridden father is more able to obtain beautiful women that catch his fancy. Later on in *The Voyeur*, you will find that Dodo's father is keeping a dark secret. A secret that somehow inspires Dodo to fix his *Voyeur* obsession so he can get back to being involved in the real thing. *The Voyeur* features a scene with a woman and a cigar that predates everyone's favorite internationalist president Bill Clinton's slob affair. It is clear that Bill Clinton doesn't have very good taste in women or international bankers. The exotic nurse featured in the cigar scene is one of the most powerful "voyeur" scenes that I have seen to date. Dirty old men shouldn't have the luxury of being involved in such rare encounters. Dodo's wife is a beautiful Aryan Northern Italian blond that the young professor can't seem to satisfy. Her love for Dodo is clear as it is powerfully illustrated throughout *The Voyeur*. Dodo even finds himself on the receiving end of a midnight film screening fellatio. As you can expect from Tinto Brass, *The Voyeur* is a film that finds its driving eroticism in the situation of the scene. Of course, beautiful nude women don't hurt.

-Ty E

WRONG TURN 3: LEFT FOR DEAD
WRONG TURN 3: LEFT FOR DEAD

Declan O'Brien (2009)

Supposing that the director himself has decided to cash in on the upcoming release of *Left 4 Dead 2*, *Wrong Turn 3: Left for Dead* will hit DVD shelves worldwide on 10/24 and leave many appreciators of the 2nd *Wrong Turn*, directed by Joe Lynch, wondering if this inexcusable sequel could muster any of the magic that Henry Rollins' ode to ass kicking did just some years back. To be fair, I'm mainly supporting devil's advocacy on blacklisting this infernal straight-to-video hellspawn. I didn't really give it much chance nor did it deserve such. I could have embraced *Wrong Turn 3* the same way most people have and wrote a piece of writing involving one or more of these words- "fun," "entertaining," "slasher," "gory," and/or "enjoyable." Since I'm not a fool nor some fool that appreciates something with a mindless body count or a single scene of (very nice, fake) breasts, I have pulled not a single punch in loathing this film next to the unsavory *The Hills Have Eyes 2* or the unforeseeable *The Cell 2* and thus, my abusing begins. *Wrong Turn 3* lacks a single unimaginative bone in its terrible packaging. I immediately became somewhat excited for this film after seeing the esthetically stunning teaser poster plastered above and journeyed in a vain quest to comfort myself with the idea of Joe Lynch to reprise his director's chair for a final outing. Alas, I was verily disheveled to learn of the director not being Joe Lynch but someone who directed such admonished titles as *Cyclops*, *Rock Monster*, and *Monster Ark*. I'm not one to judge on a skill that seems to require so much anguish and sacrifice, that being a director. But neither of these "films" look to be anything more than a cheap ticket into a hopeful contract with Dimension. Or maybe to be more predictable and down to earth; Syfy. Now, with no Henry Rollins and no Joe Lynch, the *Wrong Turn* series has nowhere to go but down, right? Yes. Needed more of the above. This desecration to "torture porn," slasher fare starts off with a group of college co-ed med students of some sort vacationing, camping, relaxing out in the woods. Pardon my deteriorating memory. I promise these lapses are for my own good as well as your own. Awkward dialogue is bantered back and forth until two people that couldn't possibly be "together" start to straddle each other and make conversation so amusing that it seems implausible the only high moment in the film is in the first 4 minutes. After a dorky looking guy gets straddled by one of those supermodel types, she inquires "Alex thinks I'm a slut. Do you think I'm a slut?" To which he wisely responds "Yes. But that is what I love about you!" He then begins off on a short-lived tirade on her exquisite breasts which lands an arrow through her bosom and his adulterous hand. Scene. The creative oasis of director Declan O'Brien has just ran dry and so has your capacity for real film making. Unless of course you respond "Dude....awesome."

As long as you're having fun...

Once this scene is soiled, Wrong Turn 3 pulls no stops in setting up what could be deliverable sequences only to tarnish this withering bud of a flower with CGI that one could sincerely call the work of a child. Not only are the special effects unimagined, but the whole backwoods family motif is recycled for what could be some new terrible disease upon horror films with credits going to Cube and bastardized by James Wan and his unmistakably buoyant Saw franchise. No longer are horny teens slaughtered for little or no reason with primitive weapons handled by genetically primitive creatures capable of only murder and mating, but now they cannot even safely venture the woods without fear of getting sliced into three pieces with a makeshift twin vertical guillotine trap. Hypercube seems a much more fitting environment for my precious time as of now. Once I met the two prison inmates that bicker the entirety of the film, the razors were aimed directly at my throat, skipping 3 of the 4 steps of cinematic suicide. The typical skinhead and dirty Mexican accompany most, if not all, of the screen time. While the title role is credited towards Tom Frederic. His role is cut short during the subplot of the escaped prisoners finding bags upon bags of money from a crashed armored truck. To go off subject, How do these "cannibals" have electricity? Once all is said and done, I really began to wonder what the point was to include these characters other than to buff up a script that could have managed to be three pages or less and still have been the same quality as the one presented to a mass audience. *Gulp* My final (worth noting) gripe with this film is the severe lack of intimidating villains. While the first and second film had at least a minor roster of titular villains, the third entry, and hopefully last, decides to keep a childish "Three fingers," as he is called, and an unidentified Elephant woman who is killed like a little bitch. The film takes an unexpected turn at this point as this group of hardened criminals find it hard to cope with surviving the onslaught of a 5'9, 151 pound inbred monster. I've read reviews calling the characters reaction during this time believable and this assumption is entirely laughable. In the perverse canon of Wrong Turn, Wrong Turn 3 detaches itself completely for what was painstakingly created by a horror fan with an expensive camera. I'm not glorifying Wrong Turn as a pivotal horror film but at least it got the backwoods retard thesis correct. Wrong Turn 3: Left for Dead is one of the worst offenders of Direct-to-DVD lore. Wrong Turn 2: Dead End will go down in history as being "fun," "gory," and "enjoyable," all at the same time, but it's sad to say that Wrong Turn 3 will only be known for wasting a pair of really nice tits in order for an awful movie to continue. Talk about sacrifice in the movie making industry.

-mAQ

MOTHER'S MEAT /& FREUD'S FLESH
MOTHER'S MEAT /& FREUD'S FLESH

Demetri Estdelacropolis (1985)

When I first heard about the film *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* (1984), I instantly asked myself whether or not such a film could live up to its brilliant and brassy title. Clearly, a film entitled *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* must be a work of pretentious trash, and, of course, to my pleasurable discovery, it is; minus overly conceited and painfully pedantic mental masturbation. As someone who enjoys both trash cinema and artistically refined arthouse flicks, I always feel a bit blessed when I discover a rare cinematic breed like *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh*; a work of aristocratic artistic degeneracy that follows in the grand out-of-step footsteps of alpha-art-fag Andy Warhol, William S. Burroughs, Paul Morrissey, and John Waters, but stands alone perfectly fine on its own two delightfully dotty celluloid feet. Written, directed, and starring Greek-Canadian junkie Demetri Estdelacropolis at age of 22 years old as a mere student film, *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* gained minor infamy when it was the only Canadian film screened at the 1984 Berlin Film Festival, henceforth presenting the most northern North American nation in an atypically perverse light. More psychosexually disturbing, hilarious, and downright strange than any of fellow Canadian auteur David Cronenberg's films and more personally incriminating than anything ever directed by Winnipeg-Nord Guy Maddin (*Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, *Brand Upon the Brain!*) and Arabian-Canadian Karim Hussain (*Subconscious Cruelty*, *The Beautiful Beast*), *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* is a work ridiculously riddled with opaque elements of Estdelacropolis's perturbed opium-seduced psyche and peculiar personal fixations. Estdelacropolis plays the cursedly fucked up 'anti-hero' Dimira aka Lucie, a gay porn star who, with every act of male sodomy he engages in, becomes further preoccupied with his equally warped mother Esther; a stocky wretched wench that is like a cross between Edith Massey (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*) and Shelly Winters à la Curtis Harrington's *What's the Matter with Helen?* (1971) and *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?* (1971). It is apparent in the film that Esther is largely responsible for creating Dimira's self-destructive Jungian "shadow"; the unconscious part of the mind responsible for repressed and destructive instincts. Dimira's Anima, the unconscious feminine psychological qualities of his mind, are also partly uncovered in the film. *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* is essentially an unconventional experiment in psychoanalytic individuation as it is a work that attempts to bring light to (in the noble spirit of Lucifer) the more painful elements of the unconscious and decipher the filmmaker's 'true self'. In fact, director Demetri Estdelacropolis ends the film with the quaint, but fitting tribute "Dedicated to all of our mothers."

Demetri Estdelacropolis' *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* could also be called *Oedipus Wrecked and Retarded*. As a charming chap tells the ever reluctant

protagonist Dimira, "shut up, just accept the fact you're a fag and hate women." As one finds out while watching *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh*, this chap is Dimira's psychiatrist and he is soon trading roles and paying his porn star patient for anal physical therapy. Like Dr. Freud, the psychiatrist's theories seems to have more to do with the perversity of his own psyche than that of his patient's. Of course, Dimira has no time for women (aside from the occasional petrifying sexual encounter with a dildo-wielding porn starlet friend), as his obscenely pesky and putrid domineering mother does a spectacular job nagging him into oblivion. Any prospective viewer of *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* needs to be prepared for the fact that mother Esther brings a certain repellent (yet distinctly humorous) quality to the film that might inspire certain spectators to erupt violently during one of the many times when the horrid hag incessantly whines, "Dimira, Dimira, Dimira...." as she unabashedly dreams of bedding her homosexual son. Also, those individuals suffering from an acute case of castration anxiety might want steer totally clear of *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* as the film takes genital mutilation to generous extremes. Naturally, Dimira's man-loving sexual aberrance is explained in quasi-Freudian terms, but in a manner that is more campy than clinical. Dimira, being the son of an exceedingly egging and mind-numbingly neurotic lady lunatic who lusts after her own male progeny, is repelled by all women as he associates them all with mommy dearest. Mother Esther may not be mentally perceptive enough to believe her own son is a flaming queen who buggers boys and plays with phallic sex toys, but she does claim to know how to spot an authentic transsexual by the size of their Adam's apple. Structurally, *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* is a magnificent nonlinear mess that is comprised of eccentric slapdash scenes that mostly revolve around sexual deviancy, humorous 'soul-searching' existential isolationism, and pathetic personal crises. Despite its lack of plot, the film moves along quite fluidly and never wavers in the realm of vulgar artistic pretense, nor pseudo-intellectual banality, but it does feature a wealth of scatological imagery and themes, as well as a sordid buffet of bittersweet food-for-thought. *Mother's Meat & Freud's* is further accentuated by an exquisite soundtrack by the German New Wave group Trio. In both sight and sound, the film is ultimately a foremost work of avant-garde cinematic debauchery that features a number of quotable lines and ever-present replay value. Unfortunately, for whatever reason, it is nearly impossible to find a copy of *Mother's Meat & Freud's* on the internet, let alone in dvd form.

After completing *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh*, it would take Demetri Estdelacropolis over fifteen more years to complete his second and only other feature *Shirley Pimple* in the *John Wayne Temple of Doom* (2000). As somewhat crudely explained in the Canadian documentary *In the Belly of the Beast* (2001), a work covering the Montreal-based *Fantasia Film Festival* over two

MOTHER'S MEAT /& FREUD'S FLESH

years in 1997, Estdelacropolis never could 'kick the Chinaman all the way out', hence his lack of regenerative artistic productivity over the years. At the conclusion of *In the Belly of the Beast*, Estdelacropolis appears randomly on the deserted nighttime streets of Montreal looking like a white Rastafarian vagrant in a clear state of opium-induced stupefaction and rambles on somewhat pathetically about his films and fans. Needless to say, in the documentary, Estdelacropolis, both mind and body, barely resembles the fag chic porn star he played in his precariously honest autobiographical flick *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh*. Maybe if Estdelacropolis had a lifelong trust fund like fellow homo heroin addict artist William S. Burroughs, he would have had a much more fruitful career, but alas, *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* and *Shirley Pimple in the John Wayne Temple of Doom* are the audacious auteur filmmaker's only cinematic offerings, yet they suffice. After all, a discordantly intimate and unceremonious film like *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* is infinitely more important to me than the entire filmography of an artistically-compromising 'for hire' Hollywood hack like Christopher Nolan. *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* is probably what Norman Bate's life would have resembled had he been a young adult in the early 1980s, given into his sexual perversity, and been deterred by a grueling drug addiction. What amazes me the most about the film is that it was made nearly thirty years ago, yet it is now artistically vivid and kooky as ever. As a child, I greatly enjoyed quirky 1980s Brat Pack/John Hughes comedies like *Weird Science* (1985) and *Pretty in Pink* (1986), but such outdated films do nothing for me nowadays as an older and much more discerning viewer. *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* most certainly fills the void of my youth as it is a stand alone achievement of truly demented, ribald, and idiosyncratic 1980s cinema. One can only hope that Estdelacropolis will get help and go on a methadone maintenance program as the now middle-aged junkie auteur probably has so many new (and much starker and discombobulated) stories to tell.

-Ty E

SHIRLEY PIMPLE IN THE JOHN WAYNE TEMPLE OF DOOM

Demetri Estdelacropolis (2000)

After 18 years in the making, Greek-Canadian auteur Demetri Estdelacropolis finally completed his conspiracy theory-ridden anti-John Wayne/anti-action camp-masterpiece *Shirley Pimple in the John Wayne Temple of Doom* (2000); an innately absurdist cinematic meta-essay that was certainly worth the belated wait, even if very few people, including dedicated cinephiles of the cinematically strange, were there to take notice. It came as sort of a revelation to me that Armenian-Canadian auteur Atom Egoyan (*Exotica*, *Chloe*) acted as an associate producer for this well-nigh unknown film, but like most cinematic works by the critically acclaimed director of *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997), *Shirley Pimple* is an uncompromising piece of celluloid daredevilry that examines the more seedier side of sexuality and human motivation, but from a vehemently tragicomic camp angle that can even be appreciated by the most prudish purveyors of philistinism. *Shirley Pimple* resembles what Andy Milligan probably would have assembled had he spent a couple semesters in film school, relished in a week-long John Wayne movie marathon while high on marijuana, and attempted to direct a thematically/aesthetically transposed remake of John Milius' unintentionally farcical anti-Soviet action-thriller *Red Dawn* (1984). Set in the year nineteen hundred and thirty (give or take 30 years), *Shirley Pimple* is a film about an effervescent little girl on the verge of complete biological womanhood who describes herself as a, "11 year old, surreal serial killer, heroin addict, and B-movie star" with "a selective hearing process; otherwise known as deafness" that physically resembles Shirley Temple, but considers her true doppelganger to be John Wayne; the Hollywood screen legend that has been a contested symbol of indomitable masculinity amongst the American male public for over ½ a century. At 7 years old, *Shirley Pimple* became the lead attraction of the propaganda film factory *The John Wayne Institute for the Preservation of American Ideals* – a quasi-Warholian neo-fascist and ameri-centric spreader of the hokey Republican metapolitical doctrine of "John Waynism" that initially exploited and eventually enslaved the little sass by getting her addicted to Cocteau's kick – but as she grew older, the increasingly sadistic sweetheart adopted a counter-revolutionary weltanschauung and established soldierly solidarity with *The Psychotic Weaklings*; a group of pants-wetting, child molesters and little girls who use real live babies (described by Pimple as, "eating, shitting, sucking machines") as exploding terrorist devices. Needless to say, *Shirley Pimple* is probably the most conspicuously 'campy' action film ever made and the sort of ostensibly outlandish work that Troma co-dictator Lloyd Kaufman wishes he had made, but lacked the preternatural intellectual aptitude, drug-inspired discipline, and bona fide wacked-out creative obsessiveness to do so. Apparently, penned by 'Marion Morrison' (which, being John Wayne's ironically effeminate real name, is

SHIRLEY PIMPLE IN THE JOHN WAYNE TEMPLE OF DOOM

obviously a tongue-in-cheek pseudonym) and featuring many of the 'superstars' (Esther Vargas, Rick Trembles, Estdelacropolis himself, etc.) from his debut feature-length film *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* (1984), Shirley Temple is another (and his only other) auteur-piece from the delightfully deranged director Demetri Estdelacropolis; a procrastinating semi-perfectionist who clearly consumed a wealth of heroin and film history books during the nearly twenty year production of this highly cinema-reflexive and Hollywood-repellant action-packed trash epic that features everything from interminate infanticide to pornographic Uncle Sam-inspired graphic art propaganda.

Right from the beginning of *Shirley Pimple*, one is blitzkrieged with a charming yet schizophrenic crash course in the history of Hollywood movies. As the viewer learns early on in the film by Ms. Pimple's monotone narration, the real Shirley Temple was dethroned by puberty and John Wayne (most specifically, his performance in John Ford's 1939 film *Stagecoach*). Although unofficial adversaries as legendary American cultural icons, Shirley Pimple makes the reasonable (if patently offensive) argument that both stars shared the same audience composed of R&R and R&R (Republican, Retarded and Right-Wing, Reactionary). Although John Wayne was seemingly sexless in his preposterous posturing stoicism, bipolar English writer Graham Greene (during his more obscure days as a film reviewer) argued in his 1938 review of John Ford's *Wee Willie Winkie* (1937) starring Shirley Temple that little lead actress was a sex icon among perverted old men; a claim that would get the author sued for libel by 20th Century Fox and cause him to flee to Mexico so as to escape a prison sentence. Being a butch brat with homicidal tendencies and suffering from heroin withdraw, Shirley Pimple is hardly a sex symbol, but that does not stop her from joining up with *The Psychotic Weaklings*; a militant anti-Wayne revolutionary group that finds John Wayne's legacy and manhood to be quite dubious, as expressed most humbly by one its leaders' most potent political rants: "despite the fact as a war hero, a soldier's soldier, a cowboy's cowboys, John Wayne was the most repressed closet queen and panty-waisting beta-pussy of them all." Although an active Republican (though a self-described "socialist" during his college years) who influenced many young American males to fight in wars ranging from World War II (starring in 13 films during the war) to Vietnam (even starring in the 1968 film *The Green Berets*; the only film made in support of the war), Wayne was a draft-dodger (obtaining 3-A status, "deferred for [family] dependency reasons") who never fought in an authentic battle in his entire life with the only real-life live bullet ever shot at him being from his second wife Esperanza Baur; a mentally unstable Mexican actress (undoubtedly another unsavory biographical detail for patriotic Wayne fanatics). With the exception of the highly quotable scene from Alex Cox's cult classic *Repo Man* (1984) where the character Miller announces that, "John Wayne was a Fag" who "come to the door in a dress", Shirley Pimple is very possibly the only film to characterize the true reality behind Wayne's

magnified and mythical legacy. In fact, aside from being the most anti-Wayne flick ever made, Shirley Pimple in the John Wayne Temple of Doom, as given clear evidence in its decisively screwy postmodern title, is a work that wages total war, maliciously mutilates, and ultimately deconstructs the moviemaking magic of Hollywood. Estdelacropolis' incorrigible anti-Hollywood ethos ultimately reaches its climax in Shirley Pimple when John Wayne in zombie-like form is liquidated via 'commie piss' in a western-style showdown scene with Shirley Pimple that perversely echoes the especially eccentric chaffed essence of the satirical suicide of ultra-nationalist true believer General Jack D. Ripper (due to his insistence that his "precious bodily fluids" were tampered with by Reds) in Stanley Kubrick's classic cold war era spoof Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964).

As mentioned early on in Shirley Pimple, the real John Wayne eventually died in an undignified manner after losing a battle with cancer; the same fate his character feared in his final screen role in The Shootist (1976) directed by Don Siegel (Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Dirty Harry). Many believe that Wayne contracted cancer while ill-advisedly playing Mongol leader Genghis Khan in the critical and commercial failure The Conqueror (1956); a work filmed near a Nevada nuclear testing ground that resulted in 91 individuals of a 220 person film crew contracting various forms of the malignant neoplasm disease by 1981, thus one could argue that the Hollywood legend was ultimately a (unconscious) victim of the cold war he so gallantly promoted with his lackluster acting. Shirley Pimple may featuring tons of explosions and senseless brutality but it is as far as one can get from a John Wayne flick; portraying little girls and child molesters as the most menacing and malevolent of coldblooded of killers, henceforth boldly underscoring the strabismic romanticized view of war in classic Hollywood propaganda films, most specifically those starring "The Duke" himself. Shirley Pimple concludes in a manner comparable to Sidney Pollack's satirical "pro- and anti-war" flick Castle Keep (1969) with an extravagant 20+ minute battle between the pugnacious pedos of the Psychotic Weaklings and the wimpy Waynites at the John Wayne Temple of Doom; a militaristic building with a "Joseph Mengele Search and Destroy" wing. Undoubtedly, a much less intimate and personal work than Estdelacropolis' previous effort Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh, Shirley Pimple in the John Wayne Temple of Doom is an equally unhinged and unconventional expression of the auteur filmmaker's particularly warped yet wonderful psyche, thereupon it is a work that demands a cult following that it currently has yet to obtain. After all, the world still has a legion of individuals watching the films of Shirley Temple and John Wayne in a notably onanistic fashion.

-Ty E

NAKED MASSACRE
NAKED MASSACRE

Denis Héroux (1976)

The older I get, the less tolerant I am of exploitation cinema, so it takes a film with a rather bizarre and/or ugly reputation for me to even considering viewing something from that celluloid ghetto. The innately culturally and morally confused West German-Italian-French-Canadian co-production *Born For Hell* (1976) aka *Naked Massacre* aka *Die Hinrichtung* directed by French-Canadian quasi-pornographer/producer Denis Héroux (*Virgin Lovers*, *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well* and *Living in Paris*) was one of those rare innately idiosyncratic exploitation flicks that managed to catch my attention. An international exploitation film set in terrorism-ridden Belfast, Ireland and starring European and Canadian arthouse superstars like Mathieu Carrière (*Young Törless*, *Egon Schiele – Exzess und Bestrafung*), Eva Mattes (*Stroszek*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*), Carole Laure (*Sweet Movie*, *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs*), Myriam Boyer (*Shadow of a Chance*, *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*), Leonora Fani (*Percy Is Killed*, *Nenè*) and Christine Boisson (*Identification of a Woman*, *Jenatsch*), *Naked Massacre* is a totally tasteless horror-thriller based on the crimes of sexually confused American serial killer Richard Speck about a misogynist Vietnam vet of the decidedly deranged sort who suffers from impotence and decides to take his erotic frustration out on a house full of nubile young nurses. A curious product of a time when Canada had very liberal tax shelter laws (apparently, investors could write-off as much as 200%) for international co-productions with Europe and Israel, *Naked Massacre* is probably the finest and most aesthetically contemptible example of what happens when serious and singularly talented arthouse actors are degraded for the sake of a dubious investment. Part of the requirement for Canadian-European co-productions was that stars from the respective nations that funded the film would have to appear in the film, so *Naked Massacre* features great kraut actors like Mathieu Carrière and Eva Mattes giving unintentionally inept and sometimes hilarious performances due to poor dubbing. Of course, seeing a talent like Carrière portraying a wack-job American woman-killer also makes for a rather absurd experience. Still, with its against-type cast, gratuitous psychosexual ultra-violence, superlatively silly yet nonetheless striking setting, and innately insincere 'anti-terrorist' message, *Naked Massacre* makes for a welcome exception to the sort of contrived exploitation films typical of the 1970s. Mostly shot in Hamburg and Studio Bundeſtorf (Lower Saxony) in West Germany, *Naked Massacre* also has a beautifully bizarre atmosphere due to its various scenes shot in apocalyptic Belfast in the age of terrorism and globalization. Simultaneously anti-American yet pro-Israel (the film closes with a news report on a terrorist bombing in the unholy Holy land), *Naked Massacre* is essentially liberal capitalist trash meant to capitalize on human tragedy and for that reason alone makes the film have a cer-

tain crude essence that is much more palatable than the latest 'socially conscious' celluloid con from the likes of mainstream liberal horror icons like George A. Romero, Wes Craven, and Tobe Hooper.

Beginning with the conspicuously contrived introductory warning, "Harbor town in Northern Ireland, where after centuries the religious dispute flamed up again and where – like everywhere nowadays – undeclared wars, bloody terror and blind rage are the cause for pointless deaths of countless innocents. The personal fates are fictitious, merely the analysis of the offender and the acts are based on authentic events," *Naked Massacre* depicts a war-torn Belfast where buildings, churches, and people are being blown up around the clock in terrorist bombings and brainwashed Irish Catholic grade school children practice executing English soldiers. Morally retarded war vet Cain Adamson (Mathieu Carrière) does not know why he decided to travel to Belfast or why he decided to fight in the Vietnam War (he figures it was either to kill people and/or kill himself), but he is certainly in his element and sure of the fact that, "I only knew one hooker that was a human being...but she killed herself at 18. Nobody knows why." The dead hooker killer Cain is speaking of his sister who, among other things, he apparently had sexual relations with. A bum-like drifter without a cent to his name, Cain sleeps in homeless shelters and begs bartenders for free beer. Upon meeting a young Vietnamese refugee, Cain shows the young man a medal he won and proudly states, "See this...it means I'm a hero...I had to grease a lot of gooks to get this." After questioning Cain's sanity (the war vet proudly proclaims, "The army doctor declared me perfectly normal"), the young gook, who is no more savory than his new American friend, makes the ex-GI the following proposition regarding opening up a whorehouse, "I know a place in London... English people have very special tastes. With your accent and looks we could pick a fortune over there." Of course, Cain is more interested in blood than bucks and declines the yellow man's offer and instead decides to humiliate an over-the-hill prostitute who brags about the fact she turned her son queer after having incestuous relations with him one-too-many times. When the fat old cow of a hooker also accuses Cain of being a pansy cocksucker, he ultimately decides to take his bitter revenge against the fairer sex.

Eventually, Cain finally finds what he has been subconsciously looking for in the form of a house full of international European nurses, including a couple German gals, as well as a pregnant chick and a lipstick lesbian or two (indeed, the film features a couple cheap sub-softcore lesbo scenes). With "Born For Hell" (hence the film's alternate titles) tattooed on his arm that he brags to the nurses he paid a mere \$10 bucks for at the age of 14, Cain proceeds to emotionally, physically, and sexually terrorize all the girls in various ways, starting with a chick named Amy (Carole Laure) who resembles his beloved dead sister. When Amy won't put out, Cain gets sexually frustrated and strangles her to death. An ostensible proponent of lesbianism, the mad misogynist forces one nurse to per-

NAKED MASSACRE

form cunnilingus on her friend for the mere cultivated pleasure. In what is probably the most equally 'penetrating' and peculiar scene of *Naked Massacre*, Cain begins to act sweet to one of the surviving nurses, Catherine (Eva Mattes), but she has lost her mind and decides to commit seppuku via driving a large knife into her stomach. In the end, Cain gets away but one of the girls manages to survive that fateful night by hiding under a bed. Supposedly guilt-ridden by his crimes and fearing he might get caught, Cain decides to commit suicide (apparently, he also tried to kill himself while in the army) in a public bathroom stall, but fails and while being stitched up, the doctor notices he has the same "Born For Hell" tattoo that has been reported on the news in regard to an identifiable trait of the mystery man who committed the Belfast nurse massacre.

A mind-numbingly mean-spirited and even misanthropic work, *Naked Massacre* is certainly worthy of being just as revered as similar exploitation classics like *The Last House on the Left* (1972), *Hitch-Hike* (1977), *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), and *The House on the Edge of the Park* (1980), but the film's sometimes pseudo-arthouse essence is probably too off-putting to the average philistine gorehound. It is also doubtful that auteur Denis Héroux cares about the legacy of *Naked Massacre* as he would go on to be given the prestigious title of 'Officer of the Order of Canada' in 1983, so a proto-torture-porn flick about the nihilistic nurse killing of a sexually warped serial killer like Richard Speck would probably not be the best thing for the filmmaker to list on his resume. Additionally, as a serious actor/director who has worked with Volker Schlöndorff, Harry Kümel, and Paul Morrissey, and who has also dedicated his life to fighting for fathers' rights, it is doubtful that lead Mathieu Carrière looks back on the film fondly. Although it probably does not say much, *Naked Massacre* is easily the best film ever made about Speck and a somewhat inventive take on the gynophobic killer's crimes. A film that seems like it was directed by a jaded ex-hippie anti-war protestor turned hateful capitalist smut-peddler, *Naked Massacre* can in no way be taken seriously as an anti-war/anti-terrorism work but instead more resembles a petty agitprop piece assembled by unsophisticated mainstream left-wingers who knows the right ass to kiss (i.e. Zionists, feminists, etc.). That being said, *Naked Massacre* ultimately makes for a quasi-interesting sub-cult item for proudly Eurocentric cinephiles that demonstrates how a hack director can degrade Fassbinder superstars and French divas to the point where they are virtually indiscernible from the no-name actors featured in worthless slasher franchises like the *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* series.

-Ty E

PROBLEM CHILD

Dennis Dugan (1990)

Films of the past had the blissful opportunity to be taught a lesson in extremely unappropriated humor. I mean sure, we have Apatow making stoner comedies with Seth Rogen mentioning his Jewish ancestry every 20 minutes but a level of crass comedy seen in *Problem Child* is somewhat of a relic. A jaded doctor tells a bourgeoisie woman that she will never have children by explaining the architectural faults of her fallopian tubes by fumbling with props equating in a visual aid that one would cry over. With *Problem Child*, John Ritter adopts a child who poses as an angel but he is constantly described as the devil. This child is a thief, arsonist, potential murderer, and a lying little shit. Junior is a hellion at best, one that needs to be described in explicable tortures. I'm not one of a child-abusing nature but this little bastard is one of the most irritating screen characters ever produced from the bowels of comedy. On the other hand, the terrible things that he does that's transformed into comedy? That takes the masterful hand of someone who can make a film right. That brings me to the conclusion that *Problem Child* is a fluke in Dennis Dugan's career, having seen that he directed *You Don't Mess With the Zohan!* Then: Paternal terror is a genre that has been mainly dominated by demonic children and possessive ghosts. For instance, my mother cannot watch *Poltergeist* anymore cause of the violence and horror directed towards children. It's a trend that many adults find themselves conforming to against their own will. Once you have kids, horror's dead to you, save for a few troopers out there who allocate horror, children, and children who love horror in their entertainment diet. Consider this paragraph a shout-out to these folks. Apart from films like *The Good Son*, *Problem Child* is one that really fleshes out the ideas of children ruining the parents lives. The imperial authority that John Ritter attempts fallibly over little Junior is eventually scrapped for faulty discipline theories on love and acceptance. This leads to a boost in tantrums thrown out by Junior. Well, not exactly tantrums but a head full of revenge and very eager to dish it out amongst smarmy 7 year old girls who have their heads stuck in bullying, isolating boys with "cooties", and other childish segregation's. The perfect idea of a nuclear family is begrudgingly cast out when Ritter's wife Flo cheats on him with a serial killer in his kitchen and then ventures to elope with him. Unbeknownst to the whore figure, she's being taken for ransom. Yet another woman that cast of security and love for a bit of danger. Rest easy, she gets what she deserves in the end. Now: *Problem Child* is an excellent 90s comedy that has a similar approach as *Beethoven* but with a progressing love path near the climax in which two male figures cast out the woman in their lives for a more comforting homely environment. From excellent performances from Gilbert Gottfried and Michael Richards, *Problem Child* is a principle film of an era when having children say "dick" and "damn" and other words was still

PROBLEM CHILD

considered kosher. This is a comedy that doesn't appear to have gotten stale over the years and even employs a slight misogynistic ending.

-mAQ

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

Dennis Dugan (2008) Dennis Dugan and Adam Sandler's new stab at comedy *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* is not really a movie so much about the Israel/Palestine conflict as it is about the dwindling possibilities of success for both Israeli and Palestinian immigrants in America. It has a mild Zionist agenda, but make no mistake: it has a far more Jewish agenda. In many ways, it can be compared to the similarly ethnic-themed comedy *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* (and perhaps the sequel; I haven't seen it) in that it makes the point of celebrating non-European immigration and promoting anti-WASP sentiments. In some ways, *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* is remarkable in that it takes this theme so far as to insinuate that corporate gentile businessmen and ignorant gentile rednecks are the ones who are prolonging the hatred in the Middle-East. Whereas pro-immigration Hollywood films typically make a few references here and there to the evilness of whites, the last twenty minutes of this film leave absolutely no question as to its agenda.

Do not think, however, that there are no Zionist undertones to the film. This film is more about promoting the strength of Jewish-Americans rather than Israelis, which is understandable, but Zionism is a definite component to *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*. Throughout the film, references to terrorism, the Hezbollah, and the Hamas are dropped. All of the inter-ethnic aggression is the responsibility of the Palestinians. Many of the Palestinians are actually played by Jews as well. Even in the final reconciliation scene where the Israeli and Palestinian immigrants put their differences behind them, the Palestinians complain that everyone hates them. An Israeli turns to a Palestinian and says, "Everyone hates us, too." "Why?" the Palestinian asks. "Because they think we're you" the Israeli responds, and the whole crowd has a good laugh. And my stomach turns.

Israeli understanding of the Arab political and cultural climate has a history of being absolutely poor. A former CIA official has described being "appalled by the lack of quality of the [Israeli] political intelligence on the Arab world ... Their tactical military intelligence was first-rate. But they didn't know their enemy. I saw this political intelligence and it was lousy, laughably bad ... It was gossip stuff mostly" (this quote was retrieved from Mearsheimer and Walt's *The Israel Lobby*). This theme of ignorance is quite prevalent in *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*. Their ability to poke fun at Israel and its quirks is top-notch. According to Sandler himself, much research went into the character of Zohan, and neoconservative critic John Podhoretz (the son of one of the founding fathers of the neoconservative movement) praises the film's accuracy in its portrayal of the *pushtak*, the Israeli equivalent of the American *guido*. However, the understanding of the Palestinians is quite noticeably lacking. I would say that it is rather obvious as to why this is.

Perhaps a little even-handedness would go a long way. After all, since the

YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN

second intifada, the ratio of Israeli to Palestinian killings has been 4:1 in favor of Palestinian deaths. Terrorism is consistently practiced by the IDF according to almost all human rights organizations and the legal definitions of international law. There is a joke about the 1967 six-day war in this film, but little is mentioned of the fact that Israel ruthlessly stole a huge chunk of land in that war's outcome that is now legally defined as occupied territory according to a 14-1 World Court decision (the only dissenting vote coming from the United States). This film does nothing to shed any light on the situation: it merely regurgitates the same media-brainwashed terrorist stereotypes about Arabs that America is exposed to on a daily basis, and worse, it relies on a purely media-concocted myth that Arab-Israeli animosity is deep-rooted and based on millennia of historical conflict as opposed to Israeli aggression in the last century. And yet it is a movie by progressive Jewish liberals. Well, the progression is not in its handling of the conflict and its pedantic and embarrassing call for peace. The "progressive" elements can be found in its reactionary finger-pointing at white conservatives.

In the last twenty minutes of the film, we learn that evil ignorant rednecks and evil shrewd businessmen have conspired together to gentrify the New York area to really screw over immigrants. Thus, the white man once again becomes the common enemy. In this way, Zohan is similar to Borat in that it implies that the war on terror is the responsibility of ignorant rednecks and that Jews are merely at a loss for why this insanity is occurring (true, most Jews have opposed the war in Iraq, but it is also true that the war was largely due to extensive lobbying from the AIPAC, the JINSA, and the PNAC – all of which are maintained by Zionist Jews). But again, the message of the movie has more to do with immigration than it does terrorism. Leftist Jews have always championed non-European immigration and were largely responsible for the reworking of immigration laws in the 1960s, and the reason is because it is very helpful to Jewish survival.

Since the Jews have always been a diaspora people by choice, the influx of many other non-White ethnic groups in America (including Arabs) results in many more diasporas, allowing Jews to look far less conspicuous by comparison. Anti-semitism has always been much consistently lower in culturally pluralistic societies. The average Jew may not know this, but the top-tier Jewish intellectuals who lobby legislation in this country have this knowledge down pat. For American WASPs, this naïve acceptance of free-flowing immigration, the active ingredient for racial strife, is what is causing America to dwindle downward and degenerate into a third-world cesspool, and more importantly, it changes the sociological climate in such a way that allows for meaningless, asinine wars such as the war on Iraq to occur without serious opposition in the first place. In the minds of those who created Don't Mess with the Zohan, American rural folk are anti-semitic, anti-Arab nut-jobs who are trying to nuke everything in sight.

Meanwhile, back in reality, most rural Americans know nothing of Judaism. To the average American, the Jew is some weird shrimpy guy with a funny voice

who likes money – a legendary schoolyard fairy tale about as legitimate as the boogeyman. No rural redneck is ever going to even be able to get the Israeli inside jokes in this movie, nor will he be able to “mess with the Zohan” because he doesn’t even know what the hell “the Zohan” even is.

Adam Sandler was much funnier when he was imitating gentile philistines in slapstick-humor comedy classics like Billy Madison and Happy Gilmore. I could barely finish this film, let alone laugh.

-Blind Lame OKB

EASY RIDER
EASY RIDER

Dennis Hopper (1969) Easy Rider is one of few American "classics." The film was part of the so-called "Hollywood Renaissance" where stupid Americans proved they could be artistic like the French(New Wave). I will give credit where credit is due. Easy Rider is as artistic as any Hollywood film could get. This is no surprise considering a young drugged Dennis Hopper directed it. The film was shot on 16mm(looks gritty even on DVD) and at points bordering a Cinéma vérité style. A good amount of Easy Rider features the two hippie drug dealers(Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper) just riding their motorcycles across rural America. Stoner rock of this period(late 60's) is heard throughout.

Music producer/murderer Phil Spector makes an appearance as the drug "connection." Jack Nicholson also comes along for the ride as an alcoholic ACLU lawyer. He's fighting for American freedom of speech and all he gets in return is a broken skull. The majority of other actors featured in Easy Rider are easily forgettable. But there is one comical exception. "Close-minded" redneck Southerners make the ultimate bad guys. They verbally bait and the hippies do nothing. For once a Hollywood film is realistic.

Over the decades, it is no doubt that tons of dope has been smoked while viewing Easy Rider. Pointless awkward stoner talk is heard throughout the film. These scenes almost make Easy Rider effective as an anti-drug film. These flower children never even make it out of the South. Who knows what Dennis Hopper's message was with Easy Rider. His brain was probably fried from all the acid he took during the shooting.The most "experimental" part of Easy Rider is when the hippie duo and two girls drop acid in a graveyard. I didn't know whether to laugh or be disturbed by this scene. Maybe Hollywood shouldn't experiment with trying to be artsy. The acid was obviously bad. Almost as bad as the religious symbolism during the scene. Everyone knows that the best cinematic graveyard scenes are in Jim Van Bebber's Deadbeat at Dawn and My Sweet Satan. All bowl hits should be in tribute to Satan!

Unfortunately Easy Rider hasn't aged very well. Set during the time period when America started to collapse(others call it "progression"), the film is almost stomach turning. Its good to know that Easy Rider at least acknowledged the failure of hippies and their ambition for freedom. Sorry but you will more of a slave to sex, drugs, and rock n roll than any fascist government. Dennis Hopper knows this better than anyone else.The ending of Easy Rider is by far the best part of the film. Excellently executed and impacting, its what makes me decide to go back to Easy Rider every year. Dennis Hopper was uninterested in peace and love. He was more interested in taking tons of drugs and passing out next to a curb.

-Ty E

THE LAST MOVIE

Dennis Hopper (1971)

As biographer Peter L. Winkler wrote in his book *Dennis Hopper: The Wild Ride of a Hollywood Rebel* (2011): “Universal Studios gives Dennis Hopper creative control over his dream project, *The Last Movie*. High in the Peruvian Andes, Hopper shoots forty-eight hours of film, spends sixteen drug-fueled months editing it, and creates a career-ending bomb.” Indeed, Hopper’s second European-arthouse-inspired film following the success of his unpredictably successful directorial debut *Easy Rider* (1969), *The Last Movie* (1971), is probably the most fittingly, if not unfortunately, titled film of cinema history as a work that essentially caused him to be unofficially blacklisted from Hollywood, thus resulting in his coke-and-Cuba-libre-fueled exile that lasted for about a decade. Originally intended to be Hopper’s first feature as a sort of pet project he co-penned with screenwriter Stewart Stern (who also penned *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), which Hopper had a small acting role in), *The Last Movie* is ultimately a singular case when an unhinged Hollywood actor had the opportunity to direct with total artistic freedom in a primitive foreign land without running water and ultimately become a sort of ‘Messianic auteur,’ with the actor-turned-director once stating regarding the importance of his cinematic crusade: “Man, the movies are coming out of a dark age. I mean, for forty years the uncreative people told the creative people what to do. But now we’re telling them, like forget those big budgets. The only thing you can make with a big budget is a big, impersonal, dishonest movie. The studio is a thing of the past, and they are very smart if they just concentrate on becoming distribution companies for independent producers. We want to make little, personal, honest movies. So we’re all taking small salaries and gambling on a cut of the gross. And we’re going to make groovy movies, man. We’re taking on more freedom and more risk. I think we’re heroes. I want to make movies about us.” And, indeed, Hopper made good on his cinematic mission because after shooting *The Last Movie* in a small village in Peru with \$1 million dollars given to him in good faith from Universal Studios, he stole the master print of the film and headed to Taos, Texas where he worked tirelessly to edit the film while engaging in drug-addled orgies and dangerous behavior like drunken shotgun shooting, thus ultimately creating a celluloid work that was once lovingly described by effortlessly effete film critic Roger Ebert as a, “wasteland of cinematic wreckage.” Featuring disorientating Godardian jump-cuts, a deconstructed non-narrative structure, artsy close-up shots of bumblebees landing on flowers, an outstanding 25-minute wait before the title screen pops up, D. H. Lawrence-esque nods to pre-Christian American Indian paganism and creepy pagan animal masks that would anticipate *The Wicker Man* (1973), a less than flattering depiction of Peruvians as less-than-noble savages who haul around corpses on the back of their cars and cannot tell the difference between

THE LAST MOVIE

reality and filmic fakery and thus develop a murderous cinematic cult, pretentious 'Missing Scene' inter-titles spliced throughout the film, and an art-added approach to the classic western genre, *The Last Movie* may be convoluted celluloid mess, but it is an interesting and provocative mess that demonstrates that Dennis Hopper probably could have been developed into one of the greatest American auteur filmmakers of his zeitgeist had he worked in Europe instead of Hollywood.

Kansas (Dennis Hopper) is a Midwest-bred self-stylized 'counter-culture cowboy' who is in the Peruvian Andes working as a 'hired hand'/stuntman on a western film on *Billy the Kid* that is being directed by none other than Samuel Fuller (*Shock Corridor*, *White Dog*). Brainwashed by both counter-culture bullshit and the American dream, Kansas begins to rather enjoy living outside of civilization and becomes obsessed with the native peoples' primitive culture and customs, not to mention the fact that he is in a romantic relationship with an indigenous prostitute named Maria (Stella Garcia). Of course, despite his superficial xenophilia, Kansas dreams of getting rich by building hotels around the Andes. After hanging out at a Catholic church, Kansas befriends a Priest (Cuban-American Tomás Milián, who appeared in Visconti's segment of *Boccaccio '70* (1962) and played the lead in Giulio Questi's Gothic spaghetti western *Django Kill!... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967)), who is rather concerned about the moral effect the movie set might have on the locals. When a dude named Dean (a possible tribute to Hopper's friend Jimmy Dean?) accidentally dies while shooting the last scene of the *Billy the Kid* film after falling off from a building and smashing through a roof, Kansas decides to quit the movie business and stays in Peru, as he has a superficial idealized view of the country and its 'noble savage' inhabitants. While driving around with Marie, Kansas spots some Peruvian Indians driving around with a bloody and beaten corpse tied to the back of their car and the American cowboy seems somewhat bothered by the fact that his girlfriend couldn't care less at the grizzly sight. One night while hanging with his girlfriend, Kansas is approached by the Priest, who seems rather worried about something. When Kansas asks him, "What the hell is going on down there?" in regard to a number of villagers dancing around flames, the Priest responds in broken English, "Hell...and that's violence and people are killing themselves in the streets. And movies have brought violence here and I don't like it." When Kansas goes to investigate, he finds the natives mimicking the behavior of a film crew, albeit using real violence instead of movie magic, as well as fake bamboo cameras and lights. When Kansas attempts to explain to the 'auteur' (who the Priest calls, 'The Evil One') of the Peruvian pseudo-film that the violence and deaths featured in Hollywood films are fake and simulated, he complains, "but that's not real" and demands states, "Gringo...go back to your horses." Indeed, it seems the Peruvian peasants thought the Hollywood filmmakers were performing 'miracles' by shooting men who seemed totally uninjured by their wounds,

thus they have created a sort of psychotic celluloid cult, with their bamboo cameras acting as religious icons and whatnot.

As *The Last Movie* progresses, Kansas temporarily ignores the violent native film crew and has fun doing stuff like having sex under a waterfall with his Mestizo girlfriend in plan view, which is seen by the Priest and his altar boys. Kansas also hooks up with his eccentric schemer friend Neville Robey (Don Gordon), who is looking to find \$5,000 so he can fund a gold-mining operation. While hanging out a restaurant, Kansas and Neville hook up with two rich American chicks, Mrs. Anderson (Julie Adams) and her daughter Miss Anderson (Donna Baccala), who only looks a couple years younger than her high-class tramp mother. Immediately after, Kansas and Neville attend a party hosted by Mrs. Anderson's hubby Harry Anderson (Roy Engel) with about a dozen other people. After Neville fails to scam \$5000 out of no bullshit businessman Harry, the party host agrees to pay for an all-expenses paid trip to a whorehouse, but Kansas' girlfriend Marie does not want to go there as she worked there and does not want all her new rich white friends to know she is a sub-proletarian pussy-peddler. Ultimately, Harry pays two Peruvian whores to get it on lesbo style, but the exotic primitive lily-licking fun is cut short when Kansas gets in a fight with Marie's ex-pimp with a shotgun. Rather irked by the ordeal, Kansas beats up his beloved Peruvian Indian princess. The next day, Marie does not complain about the fact that she has a black eye as a result of her beau's brutality, but instead nags Kansas about her deep-seated desire to own Mrs. Anderson's fancy fur-coat, because, as she tells her bohemian boy toy, "Just because we don't have electricity and running water, it don't mean we don't like to have nice things, Gringo." Ultimately, Kansas gets Marie the fur coat, but he is forced to become Mrs. Anderson's whore as payment and performs cunnilingus on the old broad's lady-fur. Due to prostituting himself to Mrs. Anderson, Kansas also manages to get the \$5000 to fund Neville's treasure hunt, but the expedition, which is not actually depicted in *The Last Movie*, is totally unsuccessful because, although they find gold, it is not enough to make a mining operation profitable for prospective investors. Not long after, Kansas is attacked and captured by the Peruvian 'filmmakers', who imprison him in an old school western jail cell, which previously served as a set-piece for the Hollywood western that was shot there. As the 'witch doctor/director' of the non-film tells to his fellow Peruvians while parading the American cowboy around the village, Kansas is, "The best part of the last movie. The dead man!" Indeed, from there, the rest of *The Last Movie* largely comprises of Kansas attempting to dodge bullets and being brutalized from the crazed coca-chewers. Of course, Kansas' girlfriend Marie also ditches him and joins the murderous festivities with her savage racial kinsmen. In a pothead flashback scene that recalls *Easy Rider*, Kansas and his pal Neville discuss the gold-mining operation by a bonfire and the latter mentions how he learned everything he needed to know about gold mining by watching *The Trea-*

THE LAST MOVIE

sure of the *Sierra Madre* (1948). Needless to say, in a film where a drugged-out counter-culture cowboy degenerate becomes the prime prey of hundreds of innately irrational brown men and women, *The Last Movie* does not conclude very happily, but as Hopper once stated in an interview, “it doesn’t matter if Kansas dies or not, it’s the film that dies.”

An aesthetically wayward and thematically nihilistic work that was produced and released by a clueless studio run by kosher capitalists who knew nothing about the art of cinema for an undeserving American audience, *The Last Movie* is a work that anticipates everything from Werner Herzog’s *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) to Ruggero Deodato’s *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) and totally obliterates the silly humanist myth of the ‘noble savage,’ thus making it mandatory viewing for any viewer who thought Dennis Hopper was in spiritual solidarity with the hippies when he made *Easy Rider*, even if he was a half-crazed counter-culture icon himself. Apparently, it was on the advice of Jewish-Chilean-French auteur Alejandro Jodorowsky that Hopper decided to scrap a more ‘conventional’ edit of *The Last Movie* than the one that exists today. In fact, as Jodorowsky revealed in a 2008 interview with *Bright Lights Film Journal* regarding his involvement with the film: “...Dennis Hopper was at one of these private shows, and he liked *EL TOPO* a lot. And so he invited me to come to Taos. And in Taos, he had four or six editing machines and twelve editors working. At that time, he didn’t know what to do with *THE LAST MOVIE*. And I saw the material, I thought it was a fantastic story. And I said, “I can help.” I was there for two days, and in two days I edited the picture. I think I made it very good. I liked it. But when he went to show it to Hollywood, they didn’t want it, because by then he was in conflict with them. Later, I think that Dennis Hopper decided that he couldn’t use my edit, because he needed to do it himself. And so he destroyed what I did, and I don’t know what he did with it later [...] I took out everything that was too much like a love story or too much Marxist politics. For me it was one of the greatest pictures I have ever seen. It was so beautiful, so different.” Despite Hopper’s cut of the film scaring the hell out of Universal Pictures, especially president Lew Wasserman, *The Last Movie* premiered at the Venice Film Festival where it managed to win the grand prize for best film, but that is probably because Europeans are typically more cinema literate than Americans.

A rare piece of experimental Hollywood meta-cinema where a western-within-an-arthouse-film that delightfully degenerates into a celluloid-ritual-within-a-film, *The Last Movie* simultaneously manages to demystify the western genre and American dream while also demonstrating the hopelessness of the peoples of the decadent and deracinated materialist west living peacefully with the innately spiritual and rooted global south (be it Peru or otherwise). Indeed, although a work that is a little bit rough around the edges and is far from immaculate, *The Last Movie* is something of a lost flawed masterpiece that has more aes-

thetic and thematic intricacy in its last 30 minutes or so than *Easy Rider* has in its entirety. Admittedly, I almost wanted to vomit while hearing Kris Kristofferson (in what was his debut film role) singing the lyrics, "Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose" from his hit song 'Me and Bobby McGee' and the inclusion of John Buck Wilkin's song 'Only When It Rains' at the end of the film, which proved to be no less than an aesthetically repugnant experience, but that is the price one must pay for coked out Hopper celluloid majesty. Hopper would later play a similar, albeit more degenerate role in the Spanish quasi-giallo *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* aka *The Sky Is Falling* directed by Italian-Canadian auteur Silvio Narizzano. Made at the height of the actor/auteur's cocaine-addled derangement while in exile, *Bloodbath* stars Hooper as a junky burnout hippie of the Burroughs-parroting over-the-hill sort named 'Gringo' (not coincidentally, the name that all the natives, including his girlfriend, in *The Last Movie* call him). Indeed, both *The Last Movie* and *Bloodbath* act as sort of celluloid exorcisms of the counter-culture zeitgeist and that is certainly something I can appreciate.

-Ty E

OUT OF THE BLUE
OUT OF THE BLUE

Dennis Hopper (1980)

Out of the Blue (1980) is an unofficial sequel of sorts to the hippie road flick Easy Rider (1969). Like Easy Rider, Out of the Blue was directed by and stars Dennis Hopper. Contemporary auteur Harmony Korine (Gummo, Julien Donkey-Boy) has stated that Out of the Blue is one of his top ten favorite films of all time. Out of the Blue Star Linda Manz would go on to play a role in Korine's directorial debut Gummo (1998). I am not lying when I say that Out of the Blue is one of the most depressing American films that I have ever seen. A film that captures the results of drug fueled idiocy and its detrimental effects on the American nuclear family. The subversive invention of "Rock N Roll" threw the teenagers of the United States into a rage of rebellion. Elvis Presley (who is described as the first "Punk" in Out of The Blue) was the first subject utilized by the evil producers in the record industry. Of course, Elvis wasn't the only subversive element utilized by the entertainment industry. Films like The Wild One starring Marlon Brando inspired American teenagers to rebel and practice criminal behavior. In Out of the Blue, an old picture of Dennis Hopper's character can be seen sporting a hat similar to the one Brando wore in The Wild One. Out of the Blue is a film that essentially blames the collapse of the American nuclear family on subversive elements that were being churned out of the entertainment industries deepest and darkest lair. The young girl (played by Linda Manz) is a dedicated punk rocker. She bangs hard on her drum set and takes no shit from anyone. Her mother is a heroin addict who has screwed every man in town. The girl's father was put in jail for crashing a giant freight truck into a school bus full of elementary school children while he was drunk. The young girl knows she's on her own and even goes on her own trip. A trip that results in drug use, seeing her favorite local punk band, and driving around a bunch of groupies that are flashing their tits. Throughout Out of the Blue, Neil Young's haunting song My My, Hey Hey (Out of the Blue) is heard. The song is also a tribute to Elvis and Punk Rock. The song perfectly compliments the overall dramatic and tragic tone of the film. The young girl lets everyone know she is a fan of the pathetic yet charismatic Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols. During the "explosive" conclusion of Out of the Blue, the young girl's obsession with Mr. Vicious becomes apparent. Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain also decided "it's better to burnout than fade away" as noted on his suicide note. Out of the Blue shows the decades later result of many of the hippie types that were featured in Easy Rider. No one is going to be a success (or even functioning) when they live the life of a drug addict. Dennis Hopper's character in Out of the Blue is a drug addict child killer who decides he wants to offer his daughters virginity to his drinking buddy. An individual so pathetic that death is the only option for ending his miserable existence. Unsurprisingly, Dennis Hopper seems very

suiting for the role as his track record has proven over the years. The entertainment industry's subversive attacks on America is not something new and unknown. One thing that the media neglects to mention is the horrible effects "rock and roll" has had on rural America. City fags weren't the only ones to be introduced to the pathetic world of drug addiction. People in rural areas watched the same TV shows and heard the same songs on the radio. I wouldn't be surprised if the producers of the entertainment industry are related to the people pushing drugs in rural America. Dennis Hopper taking a chug from the bottle in *Out of the Blue* is an unrecognized masterpiece and one of the most important American films ever. Linda Manz and Dennis Hopper give extraordinary performances as realistic (sadly) people. Individuals that you might expect to know if you live in a rural area. The entertainment industry and media is mockingly hateful of people from rural areas for a reason. They condemn that which they destroy.

-Ty E

EQUINOX
EQUINOX

Dennis Muren (1970)

Long before I became a pretentious twat and discovered the wonders of European arthouse cinema and the internet made extremely rare films fairly accessible, I could never really predict a great cinematic experience as most of the films I watched were random works that I would catch on cable TV by happenstance during some late ungodly hour when most kids my age were asleep dreaming about touching their teacher's boobs. Admittedly, due to the rather intimate and revelatory nature of some of these late night viewings, I could almost liken them to religious experiences as they completely changed the way I looked at cinema, especially of the horror oriented sort, which was a genre that no one aside from myself seemed to be so obsessed, thereupon giving me all the more delusional impression that I was in my own little hermetic world that only I, and no one else, had access to. Undoubtedly, one of the things that made these experiences even more mystifying was that I would often miss the beginning of these films and never learn the title of these movies, so it would oftentimes be many years before I actually discovered the name of these works so that I could watch them again and recommend them to people. One of the films that certainly had a deep impact on me was Don Coscarelli's *Phantasm* (1979), which I credit as for priming me at a young age to later appreciate surrealist cinema ranging from classic European arthouse works like Fellini *Satyricon* (1969) to the aberrant exploitation of Russian auteur Andrey Iskanov (*Visions of Suffering, Philosophy of a Knife*). Out of all these films, the one took me the longest to discover the title of was the cult horror flick *Equinox* (1970), which I saw when I was about 10 or 11 but did not learn the name of the film until I was in my 20s when it was somewhat shockingly released as a lavish 2-disc DVD set by the Criterion Collection in 2006.

Arguably the greatest and most epic home-movie ever made, the film was created by a small group of complete amateurs, including future famous Hollywood special effects man Dennis Muren (*Star Wars*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*), for a mere \$6,500 in 1967 and released under the title *The Equinox...A Journey Into The Supernatural*, only to be picked up by B-movie producer Jack H. Harris (*The Blob*, *Dark Star*) in 1970 and go under a sort of 'Hollywoodization' process involving the shooting of new scenes by writer-director Jack Woods, adding of a new villain, and extensive reediting, among other things that somewhat changed the emotional impact of the film. Admittedly, when I re-watched the film for the first time in over a decade in 2006 and then again a couple years after that, it did not nearly have as big of an effect on me as it did when I first saw it as a highly impressionable kid with an unhealthy addiction to all-things-horror, which caused me to speculate that I might have actually seen the 1967 cut before, thus leading to recent my decision to watch that version. While I ultimately discovered the

1970 version was indeed the same film I saw as a kid, I also discovered that I, like a number of fans of the film, actually preferred the original amateur cut as opposed to Harris' curious edit, so my efforts were luckily not in vain. A work with flagrant Lovecraftian overtones, including an evil Necronomicon-like book and a notable performance by 'Cthulhu Mythos' writer Fritz Leiber as a scientist/teacher who dooms himself and some of his students to hell upon doing dubious research in the black arts, *Equinox* also makes for mandatory viewing for any vaguely serious horror fan in that it is the virtual blueprint for Sam Raimi's classic flick *The Evil Dead* (1981) as a stop-motion-animation-driven celluloid nightmare about a couple young students who unwittingly find themselves being chased and murdered by pernicious demonic beings upon get their hands on an ancient manuscript that belonged to a dead civilization that found the portal between earth and hell.

It should be noted that my review is mainly going to cover the original 1967 version *The Equinox...A Journey Into The Supernatural*, which I also found to be at least somewhat more eerie and foreboding due to its unwavering rawness, as if it is an authentic document of four teenagers' rather eventful summer vacation in hell. Aside from being about 15 minutes longer and featuring a somewhat revamped opening title sequence, the 1970 version is notable for the inclusion of a demonic park ranger named 'Asmodeus' that was played by the film's main director Jack Woods (special effects man/producer Dennis Muren and co-writer Mark Thomas McGee are also considered uncredited co-directors). While I found Asmodeus—a character's whose name was apparently taken from a sort of devil/demon-king in some deuterocanonical literature, including the Book of Tobit of the Catholic and Orthodox biblical canon—somewhat intriguing when I originally saw the 1970 cut, I realize now that he was just added to the film to give it a sort of sleazy exploitation vibe, which is especially apparent in a scene where he hypnotizes and more or less rapes one of the female characters. Obviously heavily influenced by French-born auteur Jacques Tourneur's UK cult classic *Curse of the Demon* (1957) aka *Night of the Demon* and the singular stop-motion animation special effects of Ray Harryhausen (who, along with George Lucas, would later go on to praise the film), *The Equinox...A Journey Into The Supernatural* is unbelievably hypnotic and otherworldly cinematic horror in its purest and most unadulterated form as a piece of preternaturally primitive celluloid art created in the pre-*Night of the Living Dead* (1968) era before the genre-debasing rise of gratuitous nudity and violence and retards in masks. Personally, I consider the film in the spirit of early German Expressionist works like Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and Hans Werckmeister's *Algol: Tragedy of Power* (1920) in that sense that the film's visuals demonstrate are certain inordinate romantic obsessiveness.

The Equinox...A Journey Into The Supernatural begins completely abruptly with protagonist David Fielding (Edward Connell) running away from some

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gigantic cloaked entity (notably, this scene was cut out of the 1970 version) in the woods, running to a highway, and being picked up by a young couple in a convertible, but not before being run over by a car that mysteriously lacks a driver. Flash forward exactly one year and one day later, a sleazy yellow press journalist named Sloan (James Phillips) visits David at a mental hospital where he is heavily sedated and confined to a padded cell. While described by the head doctor as a melancholic, Davey boy clearly has much worse problems. In an attempt to get David to talk to him, the journalist asks him "What's the cross for? To protect from you curse?" and then unwittingly incites him to attack him upon showing him a photo of an old man. The old man is question is a teacher named Dr. Arthur Waterman (Fritz Leiber) and he was ultimately the one responsible for unleashing the evil forces that attacked David and his three less fortunate friends on that fateful day one year and day ago. After his failed attempt to converse with David, Sloan listens to a tape recording of the protagonist's testimony in regard to what happened to him and his friends the day that the latter mysteriously disappeared from the world.

It all started when David's friend Jim Hudson (Frank Bonner) called their mutual friend Eddie to find a date for him for a party. Eddie's such a good friend that he brings by a hot Nordic blonde named Susan Turner (Barbara Hewitt) for David, which Jim seems slightly jealous of since his girlfriend Vicki (Robin Christopher) is not as hot. In a cheesy scene of foreshadowing, David says to his friends after snapping of photo of them, "...in a moment my dear friends, you will gaze upon the faces of the dead," which inspires Susan to sarcastically whine, "That's a nice way to start off the day, calling us the dead." When David makes the ultimately fatal mistake of convincing his friends to stop boy their teacher Dr. Waterman's cabin before heading to Eddie's party, he unwittingly seals the fate of everyone involved. While the characters are on their way to Waterman's quaint home, a giant Cthulhu-like creature with large tentacles crushes the cabin, so when they eventually arrive they are somewhat baffled by the curious sight. Of course, things get even more curious when Vicki wanders on her on and spots a beautiful Gothic castle. Naturally, the foursome reluctantly decides to go checkout the castle in the hope of finding Waterman there and on the way they pass an ominous cave where they heard some sort of unnerving presence inside that sounds hardly human. Although somewhat petrified by the sounds emanating from inside the cave, the friends go inside and are quite startled to happen upon a skeleton and eventually an elderly old fart (fittingly played by Muren's grandfather, who provided most of the funding for the film) of the sinisterly goofy sort who has a proclivity towards laughing in a maniacal fashion. After asking the teens if they are "afraid of the demons and his friends," the unsettlingly goofy geezer accuses them of attempting to steal his book and then absurdly gives them said book, which he has hidden under a bunch of rocks. Of course, little do David and his friends realize that the ancient book will be

the source of sinister forces that will soon begin to stalk and kill them.

After having a quaint little chicken-wing picnic, the girls go on a walk and noticed that the castle has inexplicably vanished into thin air. Meanwhile, while David is attempting to read from the book, Dr. Waterman appears out nowhere and snatches it from his hands. When David and Jim chase after Dr. Waterman, he eventually trips while running through a small creek and somehow magically dies in the process. After walking away from the body for a minute or two, David and Jim are more than a little surprised to discover that Waterman's corpse, like the castle, has also completely disappeared without of trace, though a sulfur-like smell pollutes the area. Not long after that, David and Jim discover an 'invisible barrier' to what seems like another dimension, though they opt to not tell their lady friends about it. Needless to say, when a giant apish King Kong-esque chases down the eccentric old man down and murders him by repeatedly slamming his frail old body into the ground as if he were a ragdoll, David and Jim go in hero mode to save their damsels in distress from the extra bestial being. While the monster manages to grab the book, Jim soon murders it by piercing its heart with a large stick. While the friends question if the gorilla-like beast has something to do with Waterman and/or his destroyed cabin, they never consider that it might have something to do with the mysterious occult text they are carrying around, at least not until later. Indeed, after doing some walking on his own so he can find his camera and only finding some ruined film and a recently deserted camp site, Jim goes back to his friends and says, "I think the book has something to do with the forces of darkness." At this point, the foursome finally begins to realize the magnitude of the malevolent menacing that has been stalking them.

Upon looking through the ancient occult grimoire, the friends are baffled as they cannot understand the archaic language and symbols inside, which included Hebrew letters and Star of David symbols (somewhat curiously, in the 1970 version of the film, it is mentioned that the so-called 'Star of David' can be used to battle the monsters). Luckily, the friends eventually find a note left in the book by Dr. Waterman where he calls the book as an "accursed tabloid" and describes how he wants to, "warn the world that the forces of darkness are far from dead." As the note describes, seven months ago Waterman's archeologist colleague found the book while conducting an excavation of an "unknown civilization near the Persian Gulf" and against his friend's advice, the teacher became "blinded by curiosity" and began studying the text in the hope of learning of the secrets of immortality. Ultimately, with the book, Dr. Waterman was able to open a portal near his cabin where he was able to witness the dead journey to hell, which he describes as, "A horrifying sight which only increased my desire for the secrets of the Equinox." Naturally, demons eventually caught wind of what was Dr. Waterman was doing and decided that they not only wanted the book, but also his soul. Ultimately, Mr. Waterman's note warns the reader to

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not attempt to fight the demons and to destroy the book. Not long after reading Waterman's note, a gigantic green caveman-like creature appears from the invisible barrier, which Jim soon gets trapped in while battling the creature. With his arm outside the barrier, Jim is able to hand the book to David, who gives it to the girls and tells them to run to the car and drive away. In a desperate attempt to rescue his friend, David enters the invisible barrier and discovers a place that resembles the normal world, albeit somewhat distorted with a more hellish tint and the castle they saw before. It does not take David long to find Jim, though it is not really Jim but a demonic doppelganger.

Indeed, David unwittingly leaves his dying friend behind and crosses back to earth via the invisible barrier with the insidious imposter. After he attempts to pull a cross necklace out of his pocket and pseudo-Jim stops him, the protagonist soon questions the doppelganger about his true identity and he arrogantly replies, "Don't you know David, or are you afraid to draw the obvious conclusion?" After crediting Waterman for opening the invisible barrier and explaining how he "found all the answers" but "did not know what to do with them," the demon explains that they were responsible for reanimating the teacher's corpse and sending him back to earth in the hope of getting their book back. Eventually, David gets tired of listening to the demon ramble on, so he starts a fistfight with him and the evil entity eventually takes on his real physical form as a harpy-like red devil with wings. After knocking David out, the demon flies away and chases the girls, ultimately killing Vicki and knocking out Susan. When David regains consciousness, he manages to stun the demon long enough with his crucifix to grab Susan and begin running back to the car. Although somehow losing the cross while running from the hellish harpy, David and Susan manage to cause the demon to burst in flames upon ducking in front of a cross-shaped tombstone that they spot while passing through a graveyard. Unfortunately, not long after that, a 'demonic explosion' occurs that kills Susan and the film comes back to the exact same scene from the very beginning of the film where David is saved by a couple in a convertible after being run over by a driver-less car. At the end of David's recorded testimony, the protagonist reveals that he is supposed to be killed by the demons exactly one year and one day after the events occurred. After listening to the recording, Journalist Sloan complains he can't use David's testimony for a story because "It's a year old" and then tells an attendant at the mental institution to let him know if the protagonist ends up killing himself since it will give him what he needs for a newspaper headline. Upon leaving the nut ward, Sloan unwittingly passes Susan, who is not really Susan but a demonic doppelganger who has come to kill David, who no longer has cross to protect himself with because the reporter accidentally got a hold of it during their scuffle.

Undoubtedly, if I were to somehow open a school of horror filmmaking, I would make *The Equinox...A Journey Into The Supernatural* (and not the 1970

version) mandatory viewing for all students, as it is unequivocally a film dripping with inspirational energy as a work that could have only be sired by hardcore horror fans with a pure and untainted love for the genre and all its idiosyncrasies. Indeed, as an unrepentant cinephile with reasonably eclectic taste in film, I would have to say that what most of my favorite films have in common—be it Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978), Adriaan Ditvoorst's *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*, Demetri Estdelacropolis' *Mother's Meat & Freud's Flesh* (1984), or Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* (1987)—is that they are, quite unlike virtually all Hollywood productions, blatant labors of love created by men that were completely infatuated with the art of cinema. Of course, *Equinox* is also such a film, but what distinguishes it from most films in general is that it was created with a sort of charming youthful naivety that was inspired by communal readings of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* (in fact, the editor of the magazine, Forrest J Ackerman, provided his voice for the hospital tape recorder scene), which was to the makers of the micro monster movie what *Cahiers du cinéma* was to the filmmakers of the French New Wave. Notably, aside from obvious influences of Lovecraft, Harryhausen, and Tourneur, one of the film's most important special effects men, David Allen (*Flesh Gordon*, *Q: The Winged Serpent*), was a classically trained pianist and student of Teutonic Romantic literature who attempted to incorporate Richard Wagner's theory of 'gesamtkunstwerk' (aka 'total work of art') into the film. Undoubtedly, with its Gothic castle and cemetery scenes, the film certainly gives off the impression of being a poor man's attempt to recreate a Caspar David Friedrich or Arnold Böcklin painting in 16mm celluloid form. While *Equinox* certainly deserves its reputation as being 'so-bad-its-good' (in fact, it is only one of a handful of films that I think genuinely deserves this obscenely overused designation), it also screams sincerity and purity of spirit in such a way that makes me simply incapable of thinking of it the same way I do a Troma flick. Indeed, the film may be tasteless teenage trash with embarrassingly bad acting, but it's tasty teenage trash that reminds the viewer why the word 'nostalgia' was coined. While I will probably never watch a single *Friday the 13th* film ever again, *Equinox* is somewhat timeless and a work I will never be embarrassed to show any kids that I might have. In fact, I would argue that it is the perfect film to show to a young child that has never seen a horror film.

-Ty E

THE BEASTS
THE BEASTS

Dennis Yu (1980)

When I began watching Dennis Yu's *The Beasts*, notorious and accomplished CATIII rape/revenge film, I was intrigued by the dual personality of the film. Switching shots between the teen-centric exploits of a brother-sister pair with friends to criminals on the lam known as the Disco Boys, *The Beasts* carved lo-fi fashion out of film and degraded a cry out of audiences worldwide. Not only featuring horrifying and surreal imagery, *The Beasts*' graphic rape scene depicts the height of authenticity in rape. Such depravity cannot depend on choreography to insinuate total violation, rather, *The Beasts* is rough and tough, martyring fondness of the "fairer" sex. Once *The Beasts* erupts into a full-blast revenge spectacle, the film becomes predominately masculine and turns into a wild game of stalk and kill without a hint of its coy and bashful groovy build-up. Plot in a nutshell; 5 friends decides to take a camping trip just outside a rural village when they catch the attention of a group of malicious delinquents who proceed to torment the group with frightening psychological warfare. The games don't stick to the mental aspect but trip well into full-fledged violence and disregard for mortal coil. These so-called Disco Boys are surely among the most evil and psychopathic characters in cinema, hidden away in a rusted trove of truths.

One of the various highlights of *The Beasts* is the inclusion of the radically mutated character, Snake. True to his name, Snake is a vile creature whose natural appearance rivals Michael Berryman's visage in grotesque fascination. Apart from the character, snakes are heavily employed throughout *The Beasts* which aim to jitter and revolt the senses. I couldn't sell this aspect to either parties due to its usage of snakes and also the violent maiming of them. I'm not quite sure of Dennis Yu's intent on this one other than to shock and offend but my hat goes off to him because it works. During one of the final showdowns between Wah and Ling's father and Snake, we find Snake, enraged, surrounded with the slithering serpents and shrieking, grabbing handfuls and whipping and beating them against walls and furnishings. To argue good taste would prove to be an entirely fallible argument but this is what I want when I pick up an 80s CATIII film. There are even several scenes involving the decapitation of wriggling snakes that prove to be too nasty to be staged. One prospect that deserves to be mention is an earlier performance of Kent Chang, resident "Fatso" and Flash Point's Inspector Wong. As *The Beasts* cites its influences with American exploitation, Kent Chang's character is directly comparable to the introverted and retarded character of Andy in *I Spit on Your Grave*. Both foster childlike mentalities and in some shred of favor, are innocent. *I Spit on Your Grave* isn't the only inspiration that can be cited, instead, you can also reference *Deliverance* and *Last House on the Left*. During some segments, *Last Hut on the Left* would be a preferable caption but when the dizzying violence and brief misogyny winds

down, The Beasts will remain to stay. After all, The Beasts wrangled together some of the most disgusting and gnarled creatures of instinct I have seen in a CATIII film yet.

There is much fun to be had in The Beasts, either as an excursion in film or a slideshow of general ugliness. The end of The Beasts changes its uniform into a hunt sequence with close-quarters combat from the delirious father and the Disco Boys. Also up for grabs are exaggerated and creative death traps including a scene with a box-like formation that is lined with spikes that falls atop a poor saps head. When I had finished The Beasts for the first time, I was indeed humored and sickened in a way but I didn't feel as if it had struck significance within me. I decided to chat with a friend about the many high points of the film and upon his gushing, I decided to take the reigns once more which lead to an intoxicating experience in molestation and degradation. There is much magic to be found in The Beasts whether you look at the depiction of rape which leaves poor Ling star-fished out atop a rock beneath a waterfall - breathtaking scenery - or you glance at the grim carnage and respect the anger that must have animated Dennis Yu's incendiary vision. For what it is worth, I've been so spoiled off of films generally conceived as "high class" that now that I have tasted the dark side once more, I'm not so sure I want to turn back. The Beasts is prime nihilistic entertainment and a hell of a way to exorcise hormonal frustration -- a work of "soiled sinema" by proxy.

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THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES
THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES

Derek Cianfrance (2012)

In *Drive* (2011) directed by Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn (*Pusher*, *Valhalla Rising*), handsome Hollywood leading man and heartthrob Ryan Gosling—one of a few mainstream actors halfway worthy of his fame and fortune—played a young hero, a postmodern knight of sorts with immaculate manners and a talent for suavely driving and beating, who savagely slays a gang of psychopathic Jewish gangsters in the seemingly selfless hope of saving the life of his love interest and her mongrel mestizo son, even if he never really gets to spend his life with her or is even properly ‘rewarded’ by the lovely lady by way of her fair-skinned flesh. In the film *The Place Beyond the Pines* (2012) directed by Derek Cianfrance (*Blue Valentine*)—a film with a less trusty moral compass—Gosling also plays a fellow who puts his life at risk to save his love interest and a young lad (this time his actual son, but also a racial mongrel of the mestizo sort) via monetary support, but the dilemma is she is a bitchy broad who got knocked up by him and did not even have the courtesy tell him about the boy and now she has a nice Negro boyfriend who she uses for financial support as he is a proud house owner, thus he must edge out the prestigious competition and the only way he can think do it is by becoming an outlaw bank robber of the morally dubious sort. A motorcycle stuntman in a traveling carnival by trade who quits his carny career to be near the woman that will have nothing to do with him and their infant son, Gosling ultimately decides to rob banks with his motorcycling talent to support the family he so desperately wants to keep, but ultimately runs into trouble in an uniquely unreliable trade where death, destruction, and disaster come with the territory. Directed by Derek Cianfrance, who studied under experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage of all people but seemed to learn nothing and who directed *Blue Valentine* (2010)—a work also starring Ryan Gosling that I found absolutely intolerable as a sort of brazenly banal emo beta-male melodrama from hipster hell—*The Place Beyond the Pines* is the ostensibly ‘epic’ story of sinful fathers and the metaphysical inheritance they give to their prodigal sons in a narratively ambitious yet unforgivably uneven cinematic work told in three varying acts. Following in the sub-subversive legacy of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960) in killing off what viewers assume is the lead protagonist/anti-hero about 1/3 into the movie, *The Place Beyond the Pines* is certainly a film that takes ‘risks,’ at least in the context of the convention-plagued and monetary-driven industrial Hollywood studio system, but suffers from a fundamental narrative jaggedness that is quite blatant due to the fact that it is separated into three parts in what seems to be a cable television series on steroids that aspires for greatness but seems totally counterfeit and contrived when compared to the great films of the so-called American New Wave, including those by Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, but especially those post-WWII European film movements like

Italian Neorealism and Neuer Deutscher Film.

Luke Glanton (Ryan Gosling)—a somewhat dirty yet semi-virtuous fellow with a somewhat muscular body covered with vulgar homemade tattoos who sports faded Metallica t-shirts with holes in them—is a motorcycle stuntman in a traveling circus and during a trip to Altamont, NY he stops by an ex-lover's house, a Hispanic girl named Romina (Gosling's real-life girlfriend Eva Mendes), only to learn that he is the 'baby daddy' of an infant boy named Jason, who magically looks 100% Western European despite the fact his mother looks rather swarthy as some sort of unmentioned Hispanic (her mother is an illegal alien, but it is never mentioned from where). Unfortunately, Romina is now in a serious monogamous relationship with a somewhat upstanding Negro named Kofi (Mahershala Ali), whose house she lives in and who does not like degenerate white boys coming around his house and trying to cause trouble, especially when it comes to his rather absurd and distinctly American tri-racial family. Luke decides to quit his job and move to NY to provide for his wife and son, but it is kind of hard when he can only seem to make minimum wage. While riding around on his motorbike in the woods like a deer galloping along poetically in the forest, Luke runs into a strange and goofy quasi-redneck dude named Robin Van Der Zee (Australian Jew Ben Mendelsohn) who owns a small repair shop and provides the young father a job as a mechanic, but it does not pay the bills. During a conversation about money troubles and his need to support his broken family, Robin, who claims to have successfully robbed four banks in the past, proposes robbing banks to get rich quick, which they both inevitably do as Luke is a man with a very unique special skills set as a stunt motorcyclist without a shred of fear. After a couple successful robberies, Luke gets in a fight with Kofi after dropping a crib off for his son, which results in his arrest after senselessly smashing the black brother in the face with a large wrench. After getting out of jail on bond, Luke proposes to Robin that they commit two robberies at once, but his friend tells him he is it "out" for good, stating quite prophetically, "You know something Luke, if you ride like lightning, your gonna crash like thunder," which he inevitably does. Robin, who seems to have quasi-gay feelings for his friend, pointlessly destroys Luke's bike in a feeble attempt to stop his friend from committing more robberies and being very potentially imprisoned or killed, but he buys another one after putting a gun in his friend's mouth and demanding money for his destroyed bike. Unfortunately, the new motorbike he buys is not as faithful and a tire blows out during a robbery getaway. Attempting to escape on foot and eventually locking himself in the second floor of some random house he invades, Luke is ultimately killed by a rookie cop named Avery Cross (Bradley Cooper), who shoots the outlaw stuntman, who falls to his death from a two-story window. Unfortunately, The Place Beyond the Pines fails to be any more intense than a scene about 1/3 through the movie where Ryan Gosling lies dead in a pool of blood with a perverse smile on his face.

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Now focusing on small-time police officer Avery Cross, who was shot during his skirmish with Luke and is now regarded as a (false) hero of sorts for getting injured in the line of duty and killing a renegade bank robber, *The Place Beyond the Pines* precedes to follow the guilty conscious of a somewhat cowardly cop—a relatively small fellow with a law degree who is better at verbally bullshitting than kicking ass—and the corruption of the particular police force he works at. As a man who has a son that is about the same age as Luke's son, Avery has a hard time looking at his kid. Cross' wife and ex-judge father want him to quit the police force and aspire for bigger, less dangerous things, but the rookie cop seems to think he has a future among more crooked, alpha-male cops. While recuperating from his injuries, Avery is brought on a ride-a-long with three fellow cops, including the corrupt crew's nefarious leader Deluca (Ray Liotta in a typically dirty cop role), who search and illegally seize from Romina the bank robbery money Luke gave her for their son Jason's uncertain future. After feeling rather guilty for taking the money from the baby boy whose father he killed and realizing he will never go anywhere as a pussy police officer with a law degree who does not have what it takes to rule the streets, Avery—partly to further his career and ease his guilty conscious—decides to rat out his fellow cops, which enables him to secure a position as an assistant district attorney under rather dubious and even treacherous circumstances, thus proving that when it comes to his actions, whether they be seemingly morally pristine or dirtier than an urban crack whore on a Friday night, he is always looking out for #1. Flash forward fifteen years later in what is the third and final act of *The Place Beyond the Pines*, Avery Cross is now running for New York State Attorney General, but he is now divorced and his delinquent teenage son AJ (Emory Cohen)—a subliterate high school senior and barbaric bourgeois wigger whose command of the English language is laughable compared to his politician father—is moving in, which ultimately stirs trouble for his father's political campaign and personal life. By rather magical happenstance, AJ, who is now attending a new school in his father's area, runs into and befriends Luke's son Jason (Dane DeHaan) during his first day at high school. While AJ is a self-absorbed wigger druggy delinquent who wishes he was a ballsy black gangsta but comes from a typically Judaic NY background of self-absorbed narcissism and arrogance where he can act like a dumb ass without having to suffer any serious consequences, Jason is a jaded working-class introvert of the white individualistic type, or as his new friend describes him, a "loner stoner." After buying XTC together, Jason and AJ are busted by the cops and while picking him up from the police station, Avery realizes that his son's new friend is the son of the man he killed long ago, thus he threatens his boy never to talk to his new comrade again, which pushes the would-be-negro to hysterical tears. Meanwhile, Jason begins to do research on his father after getting his name from his stepdad Kofi and learns about his father and his grizzly outlaw death. When Jason, who is high on Oxycontin (which

he stole from a pharmacy) and alcohol, eventually realizes that AJ is the son of the man who killed the father he never knew, he starts a fight that inevitably results in his hospitalization. After getting out of the hospital, Jason buys a gun from a thuggish ghetto drug dealer and pays a special visit to Cross & Son, but things somehow inexplicably work out in the end in a cop out of a cinematic conclusion clearly meant to appease to the fairytale sentiments of the average philistine American filmgoer.

Beginning as a sort of a vaguely more nihilistic, East Coast rip-off of *Drive* (2011) directed by Nicolas Winding Refn minus the striking synthesizer-driven soundtrack and concluding in an anti-climatic manner that is no more thrilling or chilling than a number of other segments in a flimsy film that tediously relies on endless tension yet has no great pay-offs, *The Place Beyond the Pines* is a recklessly assembled work that tries to be everything as a sort of would-be-epic Hollywood pseudo-arthouse flick with a narrative that aspires to be a postmodern Greek tragedy of sorts contained in a world where the American Dream has devolved into a decidedly depressing dystopian nightmare, yet only manages to be a halfway entertaining way to waste 140 minutes and is ultimately nowhere near the monumental masterpiece that director Derek Cianfrance was hoping for. Indeed, one can respect Cianfrance for attempting to pull-off a film where a superstar like Ryan Gosling is killed off only about 1/3 into the movie, but it is quite apparent that *The Place Beyond the Pines* loses steam after this point and turns into a somewhat mundane lesson in morals and sins of the father as if the director was the first filmmaker in film history to consider that some cops might be more corrupt than cons and that there might, in fact, be no such thing as real 'heroes.' Of course, European films have been covering such themes since the dawn of cinema and post-WWII European cinema is dominated by such patent pessimism and negativity, albeit to a more ambiguous and authentic degree, thus *The Place Beyond the Pines* will probably only seem like something new and groundbreaking to the sort of uncultivated Hollywood cinephile that claims to love cinema, but has an incapacity for watching films with subtitles and understanding anything aside from the cheap and contrived pseudo-subversive melodramas that the swindlers and carny hucksters of Sunset boulevard have been spinning out since the late-1960s.

Surely the expression of a film school trained director who watched way too many Martin Scorsese, Robert Altman, Francis Ford Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson films during his lifetime, *The Place Beyond the Pines* is the conspicuously contrived creation of a man that knows a lot about post-classical Hollywood (or the so-called "American New Wave"), but not much else, especially life, as if he just came to the realization that America is run by liars from areas like NY who have spoiled children who for some reason wish they were black and "keeping it real" (non-European-run Hollywood itself is largely to blame for the cultural vacancy that is America and the absurd myth of the culture-

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producing Negro). I doubt many people, including brain-dead Americans high on Tarantino's celluloid turds, will see it as any revelation that the double bastard (both racially and socially) son of a criminal could grow up to be a more honorable individual than the son of a pussy cop with a law degree who cons and connives his way up to being the New York State Attorney General because, as Brad Pitt's character states at the conclusion of *Killing Them Softly* (2012)—another film that strives for greatness but is just another piece of plastic pomo pretentiousness—"In America you're on your own. America is business," and in business there is no place for morals or culture, especially in an extra-European cultural and racial bastard like the United States of America. Like the completely compromised character Avery Cross that he portrays in *The Place Beyond the Pines*, director Derek Cianfrance is someone who knows the right thing to do when it comes to his job (i.e. create celluloid art), but is too caught up in the corporate and cosmopolitan system of America (or in this case, Hollywood) to do the right thing, thus his film comes off as a halfhearted attempt at cinematic artistry that reflects no deep sense of real-life learning or aesthetic integrity on the filmmaker's part, but instead comes off as a terribly tedious and intemperate Tinseltown tidal wave of cinematic clichés, half-ass celluloid convention breaking, and a work that ultimately expresses a mundane moral message in 140 minutes that could easily be disseminated in a ten minute short by a more uncompromising auteur. Indeed, it does not say much about a filmmaker whose greatest contributions to cinema are being known for featuring a scene where Hollywood hunk Ryan Gosling submissively performs cunnilingus on Heath Ledger's ex-girlfriend and another where the star lies dead in a pool of his own blood with a seemingly sardonic smirk on his face. I could not help but think Gosling was smiling at the viewer for being tricked into enduring such an elaborately assembled piece of celluloid con-artistry.

-Ty E

SEBASTIANE

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1976)

Even with his first feature-length film *Sebastiane* (1976), British queer auteur Derek Jarman (*Jubilee*, *The Angelic Conversation*), with some minor help from one-time director Paul Humfress, proved to be an aesthetically and thematically revolutionary filmmaker, as not only was the suavely sleazy cinematic work arguably the first British film to feature a positive portrayal of flagrant homosexuality and homoeroticism, but it was also the first film to be shot entirely in Latin (even if some of the dialogue is in ‘vulgar Latin’, which Jarman intentionally utilized, even going to a classics scholar for translation so words like “faggot” couple be properly translated) and the first British film to be released in England with English subtitles. Originally a production designer who worked for Ken Russell, even designing the iconically iconoclastic alpha Nunsploitation flick *The Devils* (1970), Jarman clearly learned from the best when it came to artful celluloid blasphemy and high-camp, taking the cryptic biblical homoeroticism of Cecil B. DeMille and stripping it bare and making it bloody via *Sebastiane*, a virtual softcore flick for fans of ‘religious’ Renaissance paintings. Only vaguely based on the life and times of the early Christian saint and martyr Saint Sebastian—a Roman Christian who is said to have been killed by Roman emperor Diocletian that has inspired countless gay artists, ranging from Japanese far-right novelist Yukio Mishima to German high-camp auteur Werner Schroeter—*Sebastiane* almost seems carelessly cliché in its gayness today in its depiction of what is undoubtedly one of the oldest and most artistically portrayed ‘gay icons.’ A sort of ‘depiction of a depiction’ in its focus on aesthetically readapting Renaissance paintings (subtextual homoerotic portrayals of Sebastian first appeared then) of Saint Sebastian as opposed to staying faithful to the story of the much sensualized and sensationalized saint, *Sebastiane* is a fiercely fetishistic celluloid fever dream of the superlatively sadomasochistic sort that portrays Christianity as an anti-gay/anti-life vice that prevents a closest queer from getting his fuck on and surviving the torture of a group of very horny soldiers. Beginning with Sebastian’s forced exile after protesting the execution of a Christian by Diocletian, Jarman’s *Sebastiane* almost completely abandons the traditional tale of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian and focus on the protagonist’s mentally and physically painful experiences with sexual repression after being sent to a military outpost where he is forced to fight and fuck, but refuses to do both as a frigid Christian who has promised himself to Jesus Christ and subconsciously desires death, hence his eventual martyrdom. A decidedly decadent yet classically inspired sexually morbid depiction of a ‘masochist for the Messiah’ and “Christian faggot” (as one of the Saint’s tormentors describes him), *Sebastiane* is a strikingly singular yet paradoxically derivative pomo homo ‘tribute’ to the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian that echoes the pastoral Mediterranean nude photos of Baron Wilhelm

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von Gloeden, the strangely nostalgic biblical atheism of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Matthew* (1964), and the epic ancient Roman raunchiness of Fellini *Satyricon* (1969), the latter of which Jarman makes a thinly disguised tribute to.

As revealed in the introduction of *Sebastiane*, "IN THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 303 THE EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN'S PALACE WAS RAVAGED BY A SERIES OF INEXPLICABLE FIRES. THE AGING EMPEROR BLAMED THE CHRISTIANS AND AS A RESULT UNLEASHED THE LAST GREAT PERSECUTION AGAINST THEM. DURING THE NEXT MONTHS THERE WERE MANY VICTIMS INCLUDING SEVERAL OF THE EMPEROR'S CLOSET FRIENDS." Opening with a phallogocentric pagan jubilee scene (which Jarman hoped would be a "cruel cocktail party where the glitterati met oriental Rome") at elderly pervert Diocletian's humble abode on 'Christmas Day' in celebration of both the birth of the sun and the emperor's 20 years on the throne featuring grotesque 'beings' sporting what appear to be penis piñatas, *Sebastiane* immediately establishes itself as a high-camp celluloid affair of the unwaveringly debauched sort. After Diocletian's (Robert Medley) 'court clown' (or whatever he is) receives a couple gigantic cumshots to the face after a phallic circle jerk in tribute to the sun, the emperor has a rabid negro kill a blond beast of a Christian and his beloved 'favorite' *Sebastiane* (Leonardo Treviglio)—the Captain of the Palace Guard—cries out in hostile protest as a proud Christian crusader, thus resulting in his banishment to a desert military outpost populated by Christ-hating cocksuckers of the sexually 'cannibalistic' sort. Almost immediately upon arriving at the meager military camp, *Sebastiane* is singled out by the Severus (Barney James)—the blond and handsome Captain of the Guard—who does not aim to torture the newcomer simply because he is a Christian, but because he finds him absolutely arousing and will use any torturous method, no matter how deleterious and deadly, to get what he wants. Refusing to both fight and fuck as an involuntary member of the pagan Männerbünde, *Sebastiane* is beaten mercilessly and incessantly, especially by old school S&M fanatic Severus, whose fanatical obsession with the cowardly Christian falls somewhere in between lurid love and freaky fetishism. While *Sebastiane* confides in someone that he longs for his super severe tormentor Severus, stating, "I love him. He is beautiful. More beautiful than Adonis," the passive Christian warrior cannot get off his self-cuckolding crutch for Christ, thereupon ultimately leading to his long and drawn out downfall. When Severus finally begs to be embraced by the rather repressed Christian, passionately spouting "*Sebastiane*, Love me," *Sebastiane* makes the literally fatal mistake of laughing and replying with "you impotent fool" to his forbidden lover. As punishment for his anti-social behavior among proud sexual deviants with a preposterously proud sort of super masculine sexual prowess, Severus has *Sebastiane* tied to a stake where every soldier, including the Christian's only friend, Justin (Richard

Warwick), is forced to unload arrows into the Christian coward, thus resulting in his death and eventual martyrdom, which he seemed to long for all along as a masochist for the messiah.

Despite being a revolutionary work in terms of 'mainstreaming' explicit gayness in cinema, *Sebastiane* was accepted, but with marked hostility, by some more anally retentive homo film critics, including Canadian commie cocksucker Thomas Waugh, who wrote regarding the work upon its release, "The film comes across as a second-rate skin flick all dressed in a costume that doesn't fit...In fact, the only thing that distinguishes *Sebastiane* from the realm of soft core is the honesty of the latter. The film is so clumsy and unpersuasive in its pretensions to seriousness that it would probably work as camp were it not so tedious." Of course, as he would later admit himself, Waugh could have not been more wrong, as *Sebastiane* is not only conspicuously campy in a cultivated sort of way that would make Jarman famous as an aberrosexual auteur to be reckoned with, but also makes playful references to its influences, including a reference to Cecil B. DeMille ("the chariot races of the famous Cecilli Mille") and Federico Fellini ("a new man from the east...called Philistiini...scoured all the brothels of Rome...and as far as freezing Britain...looking for pretty boys...for his production of *Satyricon*"). Of course, *Sebastiane* did not just have an influence on the cultured gay world, as the British goth/post-punk band Sex Gang Children released an EP entitled *Sebastiane* (1983) featuring cover art of the martyrdom scene from Jarman's film. While I did not mind Brian Eno's anachronistic score for *Sebastiane*, I personally would not have minded seeing Sex Gang Children's song of the same name featured in the film.

Interestingly, Jarman spoke briefly about making a sequel of sorts to *Sebastiane* utilizing a more traditional approach to the martyrdom of Saint *Sebastiane*, but it is doubtful whether such a film would have worked and would have been anything aside from redundant considering what he accomplished with the original film. As Tony Peake revealed in the Jarman bio *Derek Jarman: A Biography* (2000), Jarman was the involuntary victim of 'sexual torture' while attending the Canford School in Dorset as a young boy, with the traumatic experience the filmmaker faced being described as follows in the book: "The incident in question involved him being cornered by a group of his contemporaries, held down, stripped, then brought to public orgasm by the stroking of a feather duster up and down the length of his legendary 'snake.'" Undoubtedly, the childhood event Jarman 'suffered' that was described by Peake seems to be reenacted at feature-length for *Sebastiane*; a film that is a virtual collection of case studies in regard to the (sado)masochistic nature of homosexuality, but in a lavish ancient Roman period piece form. It should also be noted that as a child, Jarman, whose mother was ½ Jewish was described as a "wog" by his classmates, so he felt like a 'double minority' of sorts, which can be certainly said of the eponymous outcast protagonist of *Sebastiane*, who is a gay closeted Christian among pernicious pagan wolves of

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the sexually virile sort. That being said, one could argue that *Sebastiane* is one of, if not the most, autobiographical films Jarman ever directed, at least in regard to his formative years. Undoubtedly, aside from possibly the impossible-to-find TV-movie *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (1984) aka *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien*—a West German production directed by Czech auteur Petr Weigl (*Lady Macbeth von Mzensk*, *A Village Romeo and Juliet*) based on a play by proto-fascist poet-warrior and true Renaissance man Gabriele D'Annunzio that stars Pasolini protegee Franco Citti (*Accattone*, *The Godfather*)—Jarman's *Sebastiane* is and will always be the ultimate and definitive sodomite St. *Sebastiane* flick.

-Ty E

JUBILEE

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1978)

Undoubtedly, the greatest anti-punk, punk dystopian fantasy film ever made, *Jubilee* (1978) directed by British arthouse maestro Derek Jarman (*The Angelic Conversation*, *The Last of England*) is a decidedly pessimistic portrayal of Great Britain of the present that also simultaneously acts as a darkly romantic love letter to English high kultur and the monarchy of the past, while using the subculture it less than flatteringly depicts as the antithesis of everything that was once great and noble in the England of long ago. An unrelenting work of magical realism that is notably less homophobic than most of Jarman's film fare, *Jubilee* follows Queen Elizabeth I (Jenny Runacre) as she is transported to present day England by her royal occultist John Dee (Richard O'Brien) via an ebony-eyed spirit guide in black tights named Ariel (a character from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a work Jarman would subsequently adapt in 1979), only to learn that Queen Elizabeth II was slaughtered in a random senseless mugging, Buckingham Palace has been turned into a degenerate recording studio that is run by an evil Svengali character of the repulsively racially bastardized and megalomaniacal persuasion, the British patriot song "Rule, Britannia!" has been turned upside down as a decadent anarchistic punk song featuring a bombastic burlesque dance and audio samples of Adolf Hitler speeches, violent women-children with orange dyke haircuts murder police in the middle of the street and castrate their cocks, and that the all unholy anti-Christ has captured the heart and soul of once-merry olde England. A rampantly ridiculous realm where nihilism, hedonism, and senseless self-gratification of all sorts have totally replaced art and fantasy and where gender roles have been radically flipped (men lay around with other men in bed while women form violent gangs in the streets), the unhinged UK featured in *Jubilee* is a place where Moors murderer Myra Hindley is regarded as an artist and a feminist hero, where angelic ballerinas dance gracefully in bombed out streets around a urban bonfire where neo-barbarians burn books, and where law and order have literally been abolished, thus making it a lunatic libertine anarchist's wet dream, yet director Derek Jarman does not portray such deplorable delinquency and debauchery as something to be esteemed, but the inevitable result of a tired and devalitized civilization in decline that has reverted back to a patently preposterous form of postmodern primalism. Featuring a number of popular punk/new wave icons in leading roles, including Adam Ant, Jordan (a protégé of Malcolm "The Sex Pistols" McLaren), Toyah Willcox, Nell Campbell (of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* fame), putrid punk rock tranny Wayne/Jayne County, and Hermine Demoriane (a French tightrope walker), as well as cameo performances by The Slits and Siouxsie and the Banshees and a musical score by Brian Eno, *Jubilee* makes for an incendiary cinematic work that ironically unleashes an intrepid iconoclastic attack on the iconoclast punks themselves, thus

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making for an exquisitely idiosyncratic work that manages to synthesize the high camp blasphemy of Ken Russell (whose masterpiece *The Devils* (1970) director Derek Jarman worked as the production designer for) with the poetic elegance of Shakespeare and Michael Powell and farcical counter-counter-cultureness of Paul Morrissey, while also acting as one of the few truly refined 'punk' films.

According to a rather butch and bitchy punkess of the mentally deranged sort who goes by the fitting name "Mad" (Toyah Willcox), "*The History of England*" goes as follows: "It all began with William the Conqueror who screwed the Anglo-Saxons into the ground...carving the land into theirs and ours. They lived in mansions and ate beef at fat tables...whilst the poor lived in houses, minding the cows on a bowl of porridge—whilst they pushed them around with their arrogant foreign accents. There were two languages in the land, and the seeds of war were sown. At first the two sides coexisted meeting only on the racetrack and the battlefield whilst they fought the rest of the world—who they despised more than each other. Now one day, when there was no one left to fight...it dawned on them that the real enemy was at home...and that they should fight themselves. Having grown greedy on the booty they had looted from the rest of the world...they decided to fight with money. But by now this was made with paper, so it was pretty worthless. So, when they discovered this they took to fighting with guns. The rest of the world sighed a sigh of relief to be rid of them...and got on with their own business...and England slowly sank into the sea." Indeed, while the pre-apocalyptic England featured in *Jubilee* has yet to literally sink into the sea (as it rightfully should), it is most certainly a seedy and sadistic cesspool of born-again nihilists and amphetamine-addled anarchist prophets whose angst-ridden anger and arrogance is only transcended by their rather wacky need to destroy anything that has yet to be tainted by modernity, both in terms of cities and culture and no one, not even her greatness Queen Elizabeth I and her loyal alchemist John Dee can stop the madness of a nation on the brink of the Armageddon. To her dismay, the sixteenth century "Virgin Queen" comes to witness a recklessly wanton and naively nihilistic punk collective of fierce females (and a couple irrelevant cucks) featuring a number of curious characters, including revisionist historian "Amyl Nitrite" (Jordan), boyish "Bod" (Runacre, who also plays Elizabeth I, in an allegorical dual role), manly mute "Chaos" (Hermine Demorlane), kind-of-cute "Crabs" (Nell Campbell), and fecund-free fuhrer "Mad" (Toyah Willcox), after she is transported to the post-industrial wasteland that is the modern day UK. In a subplot, a passive pretty boy named "Kid" (Adam Ant) wants to make a career as a rock star and Crabs, whose name is probably in tribute to some STD she carries, has the hots for him, so she introduces him to a degenerate dictator of a music producer/media mogul named Borgia Ginz (Jack Birkett), who is also a nihilist philosopher of sorts that wallows in his egomaniacal subversion of the world via malignant mass media. According to Ginz, "This is the generation who grew up

and forgot to lead their lives. They were so busy watching my endless movie.” Indubitably a pompous prick of the pseudo-princely sort, Ginz has no delusions that the punk music he actively promotes is of a rather poor aesthetic quality and has an equally sterile, if not sickly subversive, social value, summing up the music movement he leads as having the following purpose, “As long as the music’s loud enough, we won’t hear the world falling part.”

Utilizing actual real rubble from buildings that were never repaired after the London Blitz, as well as a number of real-life London ghettos, Jubilee features a Great Britain that may have officially won the Second World War, but never politically nor economically recovered, thus leading to subsequent generations of disillusioned Brits who have nil respect for nor understanding of their nation’s history and culture, and this youthful nihilism and aimlessness certainly reaches its apex in the artistically vapid form of the punk rock subculture. In Jubilee, hatred merely exists for hatred’s sake and rampant boredom can only be appeased via sadomasochistic group sex and lust murder, hippie-like group homosexuality and violent lesbianism, stealing cars, playing half-naked games of Monopoly, killing trannies (out of shallow jealousy of ‘her’ popularity) and cops, carving ‘bloody’ words into friends’ backs, watching mindless music videos on the telly, polishing lawn gnomes, partaking in duels in apartments, and setting the world aflame via all-out (and all girl) guerrilla terrorism. When the males of the punk collective are murdered coldheartedly by a fascistic policeman who relieves himself by pissing in the street during broad daylight, the less than lady-like punkettes of the group drown their sorrows in alcohol and take to the streets and castrate the cock of a cop that committed the cowardly crime, but they don’t stop there as they maliciously murder another man in blue via Molotov cocktail, shouting the punk rock cliché “NO FUTURE” as they commit the act of ultimately worthless terrorism. In the end, Mr. Big Borgia Ginz is still at the top, and he moves to Dorset, England, which is now a communist dictatorship and apparently “the only safe place to live now,” where he moves into a mansion (he “requisitioned”) that used to be owned by aristocrats, thus symbolizing the death of the aristocracy and high culture, and the reign of mass-man, who the evil record producer chronicles via his artistically vapid music.

In a question Nietzsche answered, Queen Elizabeth rhetorically asks herself: Is God Dead? Indeed, judging by Jubilee, one can certainly assume Derek Jarman thought so, with the new dispiriting spiritual guides of the modern world being metaphysically malevolent media moguls like Borgia Ginz, who has the audacity to admit like a true egomaniacal false messiah of the technocratic age that under his insidious influence masses of automatons, “The media became their only reality and I own their world of flickering shadows. BBC. TUC. ITV. ABC. ATV. MGM. KGB. C of E. You name it. I bought them all...and rearranged the alphabet. Without me...they don’t exist.” Indeed, while satirizing the punk movement as a natural, if not nasty, symptom of a sick society that pro-

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motes such a shallow pseudo-culture that was spawned by the very same group of people its members claim to be fighting against, Jubilee, not unlike Paul Morrissey's equally anti-punk/anti-capitalist/anti-communist romp *Madame Wang's* (1981), out punks the punks, thus proving their way of life and non-philosophy is nothing but banal bunk, so it should be no surprise that director Derek Jarman sired hatred in Britain's bourgeois anarchists, including fashion designer and business woman Vivienne Westwood, who rose to riches and popularity after her clothes began being sold at a boutique owned by Malcolm McLaren (the man who invented and named the punk rock boy band The Sex Pistols in a manner not unlike New Kids on the Block and The Backstreet Boys). Sharing aesthetic attributes with the films of Ken Russell, Paul Morrissey, Ulrike Ottinger, and Slava Tsukerman, but synthesizing it with aesthetic salutes to Shakespeare, English high kultur, and the monarchy, Jubilee brings a certain poetry and prestige to the punk world that it never saw before and would never see again. Indeed, if the punks were right about anything, it is the classic defeatist punk motto (as referenced sardonically in Jubilee, but also many times before and after the film's release): "My generation's the blank generation."

-Ty E

THE TEMPEST

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1979)

Admittedly, I am not much of a Shakespeare connoisseur, largely because I never bothered to read much of his work in high school or elsewhere, so I certainly have no problem with the fact that British auteur Derek Jarman butchered the all-too-famous English playwright's work with his punk high-camp flick *The Tempest* (1979). Indeed, while Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991) featuring John Gielgud (who was ironically originally set to star in Jarman's flick) might be the most idiosyncratic and experimental take on Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (1610–11), Jarman's screen adaptation is surely the most aesthetically pleasing, decidedly decadent, and fittingly updated take on the bard's final play. Incidentally, Jarman's *The Tempest* also happens to be the first feature-length screen adaptation of the Shakespeare play, though Broadway theatre director George Schaefer directed a TV version of the work in 1960 for the television anthology series *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. Although receiving a number of positive reviews from Shakespearean scholars upon its release, Jarman's *The Tempest* was despised by a number of prissy Shakespeare purists and was even described in *The New York Times* by star critic Vincent Canby as being, "funny if it weren't very nearly unbearable. It's a fingernail scratched along a blackboard, sand in spinach, a 33-r.p.m. recording of "Don Giovanni" played at 78 r.p.m. Watching it is like driving a car whose windshield has shattered but not broken. You can barely see through the production to Shakespeare, so you must rely on memory," thus ultimately ruining its chance of receiving popularity in the United States, or so described by Jarman biographer Tony Peake. And, indeed, featuring virginal 14-year-old Miranda being portrayed as a slutty and less than youthful punkette with kinky negro-esque hair by degenerate punk diva Toyah Willcox, a rather youthful yet radically resentful and even sinister Prospero portrayed by Heathcote Williams who gets off to exploiting his servants, real Jungian/Cabbala-inspired magic, a grown Caliban as portrayed by blind gypsy mime Jack Birkett (aka "The Incredible Orlando") suckling on his discernibly grotesque and obese man-like mother Sycorax's breast, super gay dancing *Querelle*-esque sailors, and high yellow American diva Elisabeth Welch giving a conspicuously campy cabaret-inspired performance singing Cole Porter's "Stormy Weather" in what would ultimately be the singer/actress's final film role, Jarman's *The Tempest* is Shakespeare as delightfully dreamed up by post-WWII England's foremost arthouse auteur and postmodern Renaissance man. A decidedly debased depiction of Shakespeare's play as adapted by a celluloid alchemist whose cinematic oeuvre is riddled themes regarding the drastic decline of English culture and The British Empire, Jarman's *The Tempest* is a fiercely phantasmagorical and even Gothic work that delicately deconstructs and reconstructs the original play in a mystifying manner that still manages to pay

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respectful homage to its source writer.

Living in exile in a shadowy mansion (the film was shot on location at the Stoneleigh Abbey) on a desolate island with his sexually repressed daughter Miranda (Toyah Willcox) after being banished there by his treacherous brother Antonio (Richard Warwick) and the King of Naples Alonso (Peter Bull), the Right Duke of Milan Prospero (Heathcote Williams) conjures a tempest with his slave spirit Ariel (Karl Johnson) that will reunite all of these people in the same home. Creating a storm that wrecks an Italian ship carrying Antonio, Alonso and his son Ferdinand (David Meyer), as well as the King's drunken mariner Stephano (Christopher Biggins) and his friend Trinculo (Peter Turner), on to his island, Prospero is waging a conspiracy against enemies that ultimately sires a number of conspiracies against him. When King Alonso's son Ferdinand reaches the island, he instantly becomes a firewood-chopping slave of Prospero, but the malicious magician's daughter Miranda soon falls in love with the enemy's spawn and vice versa in a quasi-Romero and Juliet-esque fashion. Meanwhile, Prospero's debauched and fish-like slave Caliban (Jake Birkett), whose attempted rape of Miranda is not depicted in Jarman's *The Tempest* (though one sees Caliban harass the little lady while she is washing her bare bosoms), runs into drunkards Stephano and Trinculo on the beach and enthusiastically joins up in a conspiracy to murder the magician. Although a magician of sorts by trade, Prospero wants reasons to conquer all in the end, but his daughter Miranda simply wants a boy toy in the end. Not unlike savage slave Caliban, sassy supernatural spirit Ariel also wants his freedom, hence his involvement in conjuring the storm that wrecked the Italian ship carrying King Alonso and his eccentric entourage. While Prospero is the great magician, it is ultimately his seemingly dunce-like debutante daughter Miranda who casts the most powerful spell in her love-at-first-sight romance with Ferdinand. In a scenario inspired by a real-life incident involving Jean Cocteau bringing 21 sailors to his friend's 21 birthday, Jarman's *The Tempest* concludes with a literal golden wedding between Miranda and Ferdinand involving dancing sailors and Elisabeth Welch as a 'golden goddess' (or more liked colored camp diva) symbolically singing "Stormy Weather" in a bittersweet conclusion director Derek Jarman described as follows to the *International Herald Tribune*, "I don't want to bless the union as Shakespeare did...because the world doesn't see the heterosexual union any more as a solution. Miranda and Ferdinand may go into stormy weather." Indeed, Jarman's *The Tempest* is not exactly the most 'straight' Shakespeare adaptation.

As Tony Peake explained in his book *Derek Jarman: A Biography* (2000), "Although Jarman maintained that what had always interested him about *The Tempest* was that 'no one can pinpoint the meaning', his own reading of the play was fairly unequivocal and deeply pessimistic. Jarman's Prospero is, in the words of Michael O'Pray, 'sinister, intense, secretive and cruel.'" Indeed, Jarman's *The Tempest* is a film about a lonely and exiled man who will stop at nothing to de-

stroy the lives of his enemies, ultimately leaving the 'anti-hero' more lonely and emotionally defeated in the end, with his daughter becoming a member of his arch nemesis' family. Set in a metaphysically haunted "house of dreams" and "island of the mind" with cabbalistic symbols chalked on the walls and melancholy spirits riding Victorian toy horses, the Prospero of Jarman's *The Tempest* is not the alter-ego of Shakespeare as typically presumed, but what seems to be a composite of Jarman himself and his hero John Dee, the Renaissance magician who, not unlike the director himself, fell prey to the hostility of lesser minds, especially those with an aversion to artsy fartsyness. While surely not Jarman's greatest, most ambitious, nor most personal work, *The Tempest* is undoubtedly one of his, if not his most, accessible work as a curiously 'queer' take on Shakespeare that somewhat successfully does the seemingly impossible by bringing new lifeblood and true magic to the somewhat played out play. With his subsequent cinematic effort *The Angelic Conversation* (1985)—a highly experimental and mystically homoerotic work the director regarded as his best film—Jarman juxtaposed dreamlike slow-motion images of dandy twinks with off-screen narration of 14 Shakespeare sonnets read by Shakespearean actress Judi Dench. A sort of celluloid moving painting drenched in alchemy and esoteric ecstasy, *The Angelic Conversation* is certainly Jarman at his most cine-magical, but also rather indicative of why the filmmaker chose to depict Shakespeare the way he did in *The Tempest* as a man who believed in magic, at least in the aesthetic and cinematic sense as demonstrated by his remark, "film is the wedding of light and matter – an alchemical conjunction." Dedicated to the memory of Jarman's mother Elizabeth Evelyn Jarman, *The Tempest* is a tastefully trying tribute to old school English kultur directed by a man who mourned the past but was surely himself a product of his decadent zeitgeist, hence why the film still seems rather fresh and innovative today, yet also so unequivocally British. Indeed, in its depiction of Prospero as a fallen hero from a fallen family who is blinded by hate and who has lost sight of what is important, Miranda as a loose floozy who screws the first young man she bumps into, and Caliban as a swarthy untermensch who pays back his teacher/caregiver by attempting to defile Prospero's daughter, Jarman's *The Tempest* features a maniac microcosm depicting the cultural and spiritual malignancy that consumes the Occident, especially post-colonial England, today. Just as Derek Jarman himself would do while slumped over his desk at his cottage in *The Garden* (1990), *The Tempest* concludes with Prospero laying lifeless with defeat. Just as his hero Pier Paolo Pasolini died with his *Trilogy of life*, Derek Jarman brought high-camp and crude comedy to the classics, which is both an aesthetically noble and nefarious act for which he should be respected.

-Ty E

THE ANGELIC CONVERSATION
THE ANGELIC CONVERSATION

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1985)

Undoubtedly one of the more interesting (aborted) projects of his filmmaking career, British auteur Derek Jarman described his unrealized film *The Angelic Conversation of John Dee*, as a “dialogue between Queen Elizabeth I and Dr. John Dee in which Dr. Dee unfolds the mechanics of the universe with the aid of his scrying mirror and the intervention of the Angel Ariel.” While Jarman began working on pre-production for the project in the late 1975/early 1976 while still in the process of editing his first feature-length effort *Sebastiane* (1976) – the first cinematic work recorded entirely and meticulously in Latin and arguably the first ‘pro-gay’ British film – he failed to get funding for *The Angelic Conversation of John Dee* and instead began obsessing over an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s eponymous play *The Tempest*, of which he described as the famous playwright’s, “most personal and internalized comment on his condition” that was used to, “liberate himself from the known limits of man and to attempt a reconciliation.” Although inevitably abandoning *The Angelic Conversation of John Dee* and later directing *The Tempest* (1979), Jarman would eventually assemble a similarly titled work *The Angelic Conversation* (1985) that drew crucial inspirational from both of the previous projects, but composed of a new ‘conversation’ entirely. Originally entitled *Psychic Billy’s Angelic Conversation* during its embryonic stages, Jarman described the film in his reflective cinematic poem *The Last of England* (1988) as, “a series of slow-moving sequences through a landscape seen from the windows of an Elizabethan house. Two young men find and lose each other. The Film ends in a garden.” Featuring 14 Shakespeare sonnets narrated by Shakespearean actress Judi Dench (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *A Room with a View*) and an original score by English experimental industrial group Coil set to languidly-moving footage of often obfuscated landscapes and handsome young men in sometimes homoerotic, but mostly companion-less, situations, *The Angelic Conversation* is a scrupulously nuanced non-narrative work that demands active yet reposed contemplation and meditation from the viewer. In an early outline of the film, Jarman himself described his intent with *The Angelic Conversation* as, “The cinema of noise, a film which does not dictate to the audience, allows the mind to wander and draws its own conclusions,” thus it is a decidedly avant-garde work that is probably only accessible to dedicated cinephiles, post-industrial/neofolk fans, and individuals who enjoy getting lost in European museums.

Aesthetically, *The Angelic Conversation* resembles what alpha-neofolk group *Death In June* would have probably envisioned had they had someone direct a feature-length film for their classic album *Nada!* (1985) as testified by the settings, poses, and outfits used by the band for promo photographs. Of course, Derek Jarman did not find his most vital influence for *The Angelic Conversation*

from the neofolk scene, but in the seemingly unlikely subculture of psychobilly music. After hopelessly swooning over a suave 26-year-old PhD student named Paul Reynolds (Beastmaster, Press Gang) – a man who the director felt epitomized everything that was seductive and amorous about psychobilly – Jarman found one of his most personal influences for *The Angelic Conversation*. During the filming of *The Angelic Conversation*, Jarman was also able to capture the subtle romantic gestures of Reynolds and his short-lived lover Philip Williamson as their relationship blossomed and eventually withered away quite organically through the production of the work, hence the title the 'The Angelic Conversation' and the film's opening quote: "Love is too young to know what conscience is. Yet who knows not conscience is born of love." Although a cinematic work about two individuals discoursing through gesture, *The Angelic Conversation*, like much of Jarman's work, is a film that romanticizes over a forgotten and more cultivated past; juxtaposing images of contemporary post-industrial world via images of burning cars and cold concrete buildings with footage of elegant, aristocratic-like young men adorned with flowers and Elizabethan jewelry. Often described as Jarman's most intimate effort and a work embodying his distinct homophile weltanschauung, *The Angelic Conversation* is an undeniable auteur-piece about penetrating passions and paralyzing personal obsession, thereupon making the film's 'conversation,' like Jarman's final work *Blue* (1993), a mostly self-reflective one. Although an innately 'gay' arthouse work, *The Angelic Conversation* must not be pigeonholed into the marginal realm of queer cinema as it features nil of its more typical (and someone would say terrible) trappings, most specifically nihilistic self-loathing and debauched sexual grotesquery, that are prevalent in works by fellow homo-auteur filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Gregg Araki, and Bruce LaBruce. Akin to the cinematic works of German New Wave auteur Werner Schroeter (*Der Tod der Maria Malibran*, *Der Rosenkönig*), who was also known for his 'auteur excess', *The Angelic Conversation* is a virtual painting-in-motion that takes more aesthetic influence from a classic artistic medium (not unlike the pioneering films of F.W. Murnau) than one it was created within, but then again, Derek Jarman – who got his start in cinema as stage-designer (most notably working on Ken Russell's *The Devils*) – always considered himself more of a painter than a filmmaker's filmmaker.

Although technically a feature-length film, *The Angelic Conversation* is essentially a short film that was stretched out to 78-minutes. Out of curiosity, I personally reedited the film at about ten times the speed just to see the result and I must say that sped up, *The Angelic Conversation* loses a lot of its artistic resonance and soothing properties as Jarman assembled the film so as to give the sensibility of a perpetual dream of ecstasy with a looming tinge of postmodern doom, as validated in his description of the film: "a dream world, a world of magic and ritual, yet there are images there of the burning cars and radar systems, which remind you there is a price to be paid in order to gain this dream in

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the face of a world of violence.” Indeed, *The Angelic Conversation* is a welcome piece of poetic escapism for those dissatisfied with modernity and the mechanical, uncouth Hollywood movies that are symbiotic of it. Although not Jarman’s greatest cinematic work (I would go with *War Requiem*), *The Angelic Conversation* is quite possibly his purest and most uncompromisingly effort as an auteur filmmaker and as an artist.

-Ty E

CARAVAGGIO

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1986)

Before becoming a filmmaker in his own right, British auteur Derek Jarman (*The Last of England*, *In the Shadow of the Sun*) worked as a production designer for English director Ken Russell (*Lisztomania*, *Savage Messiah*)—a master of fiercely flamboyant and conspicuously campy biopics of artists—so it should be no surprise that he would also tackle bawdy biographical films with an unwavering lack of respect for historical reality, with *Caravaggio* (1986) being his greatest tribute to a famous artist. And, indeed, like Russell's exceedingly eccentric biopics, *Caravaggio* (1986) is a largely fiction-based work that emphasizes celluloid poetry and romanticism, as well as parallels between the past and present, over the documented historical record as a pomo homo work that features intentionally anachronistic scenes, including the appearance of typewriters and calculators despite being set in the 16th and 17th century. A somewhat troubled production that took a number of years to get off the ground (Jarman abandoned more film projects than he would realize) and went through countless screenplay rewrites (apparently, the screenplay was revised no less than 17 times), with Italian screenwriter Suso Cecchi d'Amico—a wonder woman who penned screenplays for such great Guido filmmakers as Franco Zeffirelli, Luchino Visconti, Vittorio de Sica, and Michelangelo Antonioni—eventually coming on and collaborating with auteur Jarman on the screenplay, *Caravaggio* ultimately turned out to be one of the director's most, if not, 'conventional' and accessible works and in stark contrast to the minimalistic Cocteau/Genet-inspired avant-garde flick the filmmaker originally intended it to be, which is a shame, but is also in the spirit of the film itself. Indeed, despite being arguably Jarman's most linear and least impenetrable works, *Caravaggio* is naturally drenched in high-camp homoeroticism of the Pasolini-esque sort that is more concerned with *Mise-en-scène*, tableaux, theatrically melodramatic acting performances, and aesthetic/thematic subversion than providing a docudrama-like depiction of the life and times of the eponymous protagonist. An almost recklessly fictionalized retelling about the somewhat mysterious and undeniably controversial life of Italian Baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Jarman's *Caravaggio* portrays the artist as more of an anti-hero than hero, depicting him as a belligerent bisexual outlaw of sorts who killed his great love and found his greatest source of inspiration in the criminal and sexual perverted despite being his imperative connection to the Vatican. Starring Jarman's muse Tilda Swinton (*The Last of England*, *Orlando*) in her very first screen role, as well as manly man Sean Bean (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, HBO's *Game of Thrones*) portraying a bastard of a bisexual street fighter, *Caravaggio* is a perversely potent, if not uneven, reminder that Britain produced much more provocative and timeless works during the 1980s than overrated big budget feel-good filmic filth like

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pathetically philo-Semitic Chariots of Fire (1981) and the epically banal post-colonial cultural cuckold flick Gandhi (1982).

Opening with old Caravaggio (Nigel Terry) on his deathbed suffering from poisoning while in exile as his deaf-dumb slave-houseboy Jerusaleme (Spencer Leigh)—a chap who was given to the artist when he was just a wee boy by his own family—Caravaggio then cuts to the protagonist when he was a teenage hustler (portrayed by Dexter Fletcher) with an unhealthy obsession with vice and gutter-level criminality. Making a humble living hustling old perverts out of their money and pulling his dagger out on said perverts when need be, Caravaggio was eventually discovered by cocksucking Cardinal Del Monte (Michael Gough) while bedridden at a Catholic hospital. Offended by the fact that teenage Caravaggio's dagger blade has "No Hope, No Fear" engraved on it, Del Monte still decides to act as a mentor of sorts for the young con as he believes the bad boy has artistic talent, not to mention the fact the holy man is an unholy pederast who finds the little lad rather appealing. After his teenage twink years and coming of age under the sexual and artistic nurturing of Del Monte, Caravaggio grows up to be an artist who, despite still living under the roof of the creepy Cardinal, has a naughty knack for painting religious portraits using quasi-drag-adorned gay prostitutes, winos, and other stunning street rabble as models. A brazenly bisexual brawler, gambler, drunkard, and rebel rouser who sleeps with everyone from his retarded houseboy Jerusaleme and a female contortionist named Pipo (Dawn Archibald)—both of whom have acted as models for his paintings—Caravaggio is a rather unlikely person to be a semi-official artist for the Vatican, so naturally his days are more or less numbered. One rather fateful day, a handsome street fighter named Ranuccio (Sean Bean) catches Caravaggio as the artist wants the young man for both a lover and model, but the problem is that the brawling blond beast has a girlfriend named Lena (Tilda Swinton), who also catches the artist's fancy. Naturally, a bizarre baroque love triangle brews with ultimately brutal results. Both Ranuccio and Lena end up bedding Caravaggio and both become rather jealous of each other as a result. After Lena becomes pregnant by an unnamed fellow, she proudly confesses she plans to become the mistress to the wealthy Scipione Borghese (Robbie Coltrane), but not long after, she is murdered via drowning by a dubious party. Wasting no time to paint an exotic subject, Caravaggio paints Lena's exquisite corpse whilst weeping. Not surprisingly, Ranuccio is arrested for the murder, but Caravaggio uses his connection with the Vatican to talk to the Pope (portrayed by Jarman regular, blind Gypsy mime Jack Birkett) and he gets the young street fighter freed not long after. Unfortunately for him, Ranuccio makes the idiotic mistake of confessing to Caravaggio upon his release from prison that he did indeed kill Lena and that he did it so they could be together. More than a tad bit infuriated by the situation, Caravaggio slits Ranuccio's throat after the dullard makes his murder confession. In the end, Caravaggio comes full circle with the eponymous character lying on

his deathbed dying as he respectfully refuses the last rites offered by Catholic priests.

Described by John Russell Taylor of *Sight & Sound*, “By the standards normal in British cinema, *Caravaggio* is an enterprise of extraordinary daring and resonance, carried out with a single mindedness – and sheer efficiency – which cannot be faulted. By the standard of Bresson or Pasolini, unfortunately, it remains all too suggestive of love amongst the waxworks. The breathe of life is somehow missing,” *Caravaggio* is indeed far from auteur Derek Jarman’s masterpiece as a work that seems shockingly softcore and even self-censored when compared to the director’s greatest works like *Jubilee* (1977), *The Angelic Conversation* (1985), and *The Last of England* (1988), yet it is still a captivating film nonetheless that, using the lurid life of *Caravaggio* as a parallel, demonstrates the filmmaker’s own dilemmas as a cinematic artist working in a country where serious celluloid iconoclasm is next to nonexistent. Indeed, it seems that Jarman himself was even disappointed by *Caravaggio* in retrospect as the director’s biographer Tony Peake wrote in *Derek Jarman: A Biography* (2000) that, “Watching the film a year later in Rome, he found it ‘too assured’ and could hardly believe it was his,” which is not exactly the way any artist wants to remember his work, especially considering it was the film the auteur spent the most time creating as a cinematic piece that was in pre-production for years. Still, Jarman’s *Caravaggio* managed to receive the Silver Bear for an ‘outstanding single achievement’ at the 36th Berlin International Film Festival, which is no surprise since the director’s films were typically better received in krautland and the auteur even made a number of threats that he planned to work in Germany as opposed to suffering the sterile censorship of merry olde England. Personally, I found *Caravaggio* to be Jarman’s least enthralling and provocative work, as the sort of quasi-lackluster flick that I have no intention of ever re-watching, at least any time soon, yet with that being said, the work is—for better or worse—one of the best biopics I have ever seen on a painter. Undoubtedly, in its depiction of maestro Michelangelo Merisi da *Caravaggio* as a sort of innately incendiary and iconoclastic proto-punk figure who managed to aesthetically assault the Vatican with his decidedly decadent paintings yet still managed to get funded by the Catholic Church, Jarman’s *Caravaggio* manages to contradict the Pope character’s statement, “Never heard of a revolution made with paint brushes.” Most importantly, Jarman’s *Caravaggio* successfully manages to make the ancient plight of *Caravaggio* palatable for today’s viewers, demonstrating that there were always Pasolinis and Jarmans who somehow managed to make a system that was totally against their lifestyles work in their favor, at least to some extent. Indeed, in the end, Jarman’s *Caravaggio* is more about the perennial spirit of the subversive artist than a factually fateful *Caravaggio* biopic, which is certainly something I can respect. Like a Werner Schroeter flick made accessible for the masses, it is no surprise that *Caravaggio* would go on to be Jarman’s most popular work, which is a shame, but

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at least unlike other avant-garde filmmakers, the director's oeuvre has not been condemned to the celluloid dustbin of history.

-Ty E

THE LAST OF ENGLAND

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1989)

Partially inspired and named after a painting by English Pre-Raphaelite painter Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England* (1987) directed by British auteur Derek Jarman (*The Garden*, *Wittgenstein*) is an epic non-narrative cinematic poem shot on Super 8 that acts as an aesthetically-enrapturing obituary for traditional English culture and customs. Although his father was born in New Zealand and his mother was ½ Jewish by ancestry, Jarman – with the possible exception of Peter Greenaway – is arguably the most eclectically “English” director from the last couple decades of the twentieth century as testified by the distinctly Anglo-Saxon nature of his films that often tended to delight in Elizabethan, Shakespearean, and Victorian themes and aesthetics while also capturing the troubling and apocalyptic zeitgeist of his foreordained age. That being said, *The Last of England* – a work featuring themes of English decline that were examined in his early (anti)punk flick *Jubilee* (1977) and an aesthetic and narrative structure similar to his film *The Angelic Conversation* (1985) – is undoubtedly the grand culmination of Derek Jarman’s life as an artist and a filmmaker. Originally under the working title *The Dead Sea*, *The Last of England* was once described by Jarman as a poetic allegorical work about, “the sinking of the Titanic, the Titanic being Great Britain.” Dissatisfied with the original, more esoteric title *The Dead Sea*, the lead actress of the work, Tilda Swinton, confessed to Jarman that, “You can’t call it that. It’s the most vibrant film I’ve ever seen.” Indeed, lady Swinton was positively correct in her assertion as *The Last of England* is one of those rare and ideally idiosyncratic films that – not unlike F.W. Murnau’s *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), Carl Th. Dreyer’s *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), Federico Fellini’s *8½* (1963), and David Lynch’s *Eraserhead* (1977) – seems to do the seemingly impossible by totally transcending the typical constraints of the film medium, at least in a metaphysical sense. Akin to a hallucinatory drug and out-of-body experience, *The Last of England* was constructed by Jarman in a similar semi-unforeseeable, journey-like fashion. Shot in a random experimental manner with specific scenarios and themes outlined but with nothing resembling a ‘proper’ film script, the artistically-bantam British auteur was not able to fully realize the film until after spending endless time viewing and analyzing the footage he shot, thereafter dividing the work into 15 distinct sections. In fact, the film’s poet, Derek Jarman, guides *The Last of England* through the comfort of his somber, skull-adorned writing desk. Featuring torrid and sometimes terrifying scenes of junkies getting their kick, terrorists and tyrants turning the streets into urban battlefields, cold executions, marriages formed and irrevocably broken by state persecution, and the tiny Island State in flames, *The Last of England* is a penetrating and unforgettable work that was meticulously assembled by one of the Queen’s last great artists.

THE LAST OF ENGLAND

Taking its name from Ford Madox Brown painting of a Victorian husband and wife aboard a tightly crowded ship which is headed for a new life abroad, *The Last of England* is undoubtedly a more pessimistic and misanthropic work than the Pre-Raphaelite artwork that inspired it. While the couple featured in Brown's painting may be physically cramped and wearing frowns of discontent on their faces, they – unlike the eternally damned citizens of Jarman's *The Last of England* – have a potential future, even if not an ideal one. Featuring unknown non-actor Mark 'Spring' Adley – the debauched son of a British MP and Jarman's onetime-lover – in the starring role, *The Last of England* is a film that, although decidedly avant-garde in style and sentiment, does offer a certain uncompromising gritty realism of England (and most specifically London) under "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher's rule. Although Mr. Spring would have the nonpareil opportunity of starring in what is arguably one of the most masterly and unmitigated English films ever made, he felt that Jarman's brand of filmmaking was completely and utterly "pointless" and instead preferred trashy popular American soap operas like *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. Of course, with the exception of narration by Nigel Terry (written by Jarman) and sound-clips from radio news and historical bigwigs like Uncle Adolf Hitler, *The Last of England* does not feature a single line of dialogue and certainly none of the sort of dastardly *Dallas*-esque melodramatic verbal quibbling Spring (whose role in the film is entirely voiceless) was keen of. As a real-life unrepentant drug-addict and perennial "wild boy," Spring essentially plays himself in *The Last of England*. In fact, many of the scenarios featured in the film having a strikingly resemblance to those featured in alpha-Beat writer William S. Burroughs' dystopian/utopian (depending on who is reading it) novel *The Wild Boys* (1971), which is no revelation when considering the influence the book would have on various British artists/musicians (David Bowie, Duran Duran, Joy Division, etc), including Jarman who included the junky icon in his short film *Pirate Tape* (1983). In fact, Jarman once remarked that as far as those individuals who inspired his brand of filmmaking, "Anger, Burroughs, Ginsberg, and Rauschenberg were the influences – Andy (Warhol), the court jester." In a film where the lead protagonist shoots dope, masturbates over Baroque artist Caravaggio's painting *Profane Love*, and feverishly plays the pipes of pan in London's burning post-industrial badlands, it is easy to see that with *The Last of England*, Derek Jarman both reveled in and transcended his artistic influences, henceforth leading the way for the despair-laden and seemingly ethnosuicidal Super 8 arthouse works of anomalous Aryan auteur Jörg Buttgeret (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*) and – to a lesser extent – the experimental homoerotic arthouse-trash works of Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass*, *The Raspberry Reich*).

It was not until Derek Jarman finished directing and editing *The Last of England* that he was able to offer the following semi-ambiguous description of the film: "The poet wakes in a visionary landscape where he encounters personifi-

cations of psychic states.” And, indeed, *The Last of England* is a sui generis cinematic work that, unlike virtually every other film made in the history of cinema, is endowed with a trance-inducing essence that has the aesthetic dynamism to transfer viewers to various seemingly unconscious cerebral states. Needless to say, *The Last of England* makes for a psychoanalyst’s most sodden yet sensual wet-dream as it is a work that metaphysically expresses what mere literature is incapable of articulating; the raw and self-scathingly scrupulous vivid visual depiction of one artist’s torn, tragic, and tormented soul. Luckily, Jarman also wrote a book of the same name (later retitled *Kicking the Pricks*) to accompany *The Last of England*. Unlike the film, *The Last of England* book is a fairly literal and illuminating work where – in the tradition of Roland Barthes’ *Camera Lucida* – Jarman discusses everything from his troubled relationship with his father (a Lancaster bomber pilot who suffered from depression due to his involvement with so much death during the Second World War) to the increasing disintegration of traditional English society, kultur, and art. As explained by his friends in the documentary *Derek Jarman: Life as Art* (2004), Jarman had a disaccording dichotomous perspective on England’s dramatic cultural shifts during the second of the twentieth century. Although a politically-active gay man with AIDS who welcomed the increasingly liberal views in regard to unconventional sexual persuasions, Jarman also felt that these social changes came at the price of the once-glorious traditional English society that he held so sacredly, henceforth making his films, most specifically *The Last of England*, all the more pertinent and potent today than when they were released decades ago as these cinematic works act as a cultural ‘missing link’ between the traditional ‘land of the Angles’ and the increasingly less English, technocratic multicultural England of today. While although an extremely personal work featuring the virtual dissolution of his childhood and the traditions that came with it (as portrayed in inter-spliced vintage home movie clips), *The Last of England* also depicts an entire nation of people who are plagued by terrorism, racial discord, substance abuse, nihilistic hedonism, and a deluge of ever escalating moral and culture decay, thus making for a wonderful post-Spenglerian nightmare sprinkled with nostalgia for a people and culture lost long ago.

-Ty E

WAR REQUIEM
WAR REQUIEM

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1989)

British Queer auteur Derek Jarman probably never shot a real gun during his relatively short life yet his cinematic masterpiece is assuredly the combat-heavy war epic *War Requiem* (1989); a BBC-financed film adaptation of English composer Benjamin's Britten's 1963 music piece of the same name. Although centered around a musical requiem (Decca Records required that Jarman not include any audible sound in the film aside from Britten's composition), *War Requiem* is indubitably first and foremost a visual tour-de-force in a category all of its own. In fact, I would argue that the musical score is the weakest attribute of the film. Unlike most of Jarman's work, *War Requiem* neglects to feature hordes of nude gay men galloping along gayly but it does include a most intimate and physically and emotionally visceral look at the tragedy of martial masculinity and the bloody brotherhood of war. Unlike most popular anti-war films (i.e. *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon*), *War Requiem* does the seemingly impossible by completely shying away from romanticizing and glorifying combat. Sure, the film may feature heavenly firebombings and sensual (but not sexual) soldierly camaraderie but the underlying message of, "war is destructive" permeates throughout the entirety of the bewitching brutality that is *War Requiem*. I am sure that Jarman – as a sensitive homosexual – saw war as the greatest evil as it kills the most beautiful and valiant of men for – at best – the most trivial and cryptic of reasons. Throughout *War Requiem*, a beauteous blending of real (stock footage) and fictional theatric deaths of young soldiers are successfully dramatized in a most horrifying manner. Ultimately, *War Requiem* is not only a tribute to the many British soldiers who needlessly bled blood on the earth's soil, but, also, a virtual cinematic epitaph for the countless Europeans who died in battle since the dawn of Christianity.

Aside from being a grand achievement in the realm of both art and filmmaking, *War Requiem* is a strangely spiritual work about the selfless and Christ-like sacrifice so many forgotten soldiers gave for their fatherland. Unlike many anti-war artists, Jarman peculiarly but pleasantly refrained from portraying the deaths of various soldiers as not being in vain, but, instead, as the inevitable "rite of passage" of every generation. In the end, the real victims of *War Requiem* are those unfortunate individuals who managed to survive the war. In the beginning of the film, the viewer is introduced to a thoroughly melancholic, wheelchair-bound war veteran (played by British veteran actor Laurence Olivier in his last acting role) whose wartime memories still haunt him at his advanced and exceedingly feeble age. While his loyal comrades died in their prime and are remembered for their gallant acts of soldierly nobility, the old war veteran cannot even relieve his bowels without the assistance of a nurse. Had the old man lived during pagan times, his pathetic status as a crippled and elderly survivor would have most likely brought shame upon him as only the most courageous of

fighters had the luxury of entering Valhalla upon the end of their mortal earthly existence. The only female character featured in *War Requiem* is an angelic nurse (played by Tilda Swinton) who finds herself caring for dying men that she acts as a pseudo-mother of sorts for. Although never setting foot on a battlefield, the nurse still encounters the most tragic and soul-shattering results of war. She is undoubtedly a Virgin Mary figure; the soldiers being the many Sons of the European Apocalypse. Like the war veteran, the nurse holds the burden of having to remember the short and painful deaths of those men that are forever lost to fate.

One of the most interesting and symbolic scenes of *War Requiem* is when a jolly snowball fight between a Brit and a Kraut (played by a youthful Sean Bean) turns into a deadly game all due to a sheer and petty misunderstanding. During the scene, a German soldier appears from the shadowy entrance of a building and jovially throws a snowball at a British gentleman that is playing a piano outside in a most absurd manner. Of course, a fellow Brit (Wilfred Owen – the film's lead protagonist – played by Nathaniel Parker) sees his comrade frolicking in the snow with the German but mistakes it for real battle. In the end, the previously friendly German and Englishman lay eternally dead for no reason; no doubt symbolic of war in general. Out of good and keen conscience, Derek Jarman also included a scene in *War Requiem* featuring a couple greedy and revoltingly effeminate, cigar-smoking Winston Churchill-like capitalists in pancake-make-up. While armies of European patriots slaughtered their fellow blood brothers in the belief that they were protecting their respective nations, the hotshot moneymen of these countries effortlessly relax in a state of constant hedonism as they count their endless downpour of shekels that they undeservedly earned from the noble blood of heroic men that they see as nothing more than ignorant peasants. As I mentioned earlier in the review, *War Requiem* does not feature a word of dialogue yet the entire story of war and its literal and figurative casualties are told in a most lucid and aesthetically-pleasurable manner. Featuring innocent childhood flashbacks, delightful dirges, and real-life and extremely expressive theatrical deaths, *War Requiem* is nothing short of being one of the most (if not the most) important filmic war poems ever created.

-Ty E

THE GARDEN
THE GARDEN

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1990)

British arthouse auteur Derek Jarman must have spent a lot of time reflecting on his life and the world he lived in his prized, meticulously cared for personal garden as many gay men seem to do, or at least one would most assume so after watching his celluloid odyssey *The Garden* (1990) – a highly personal HIV-infected celluloid work that was filmed in the filmmaker’s gloomy yet strangely gorgeous coastal home of Dungeness in Kent, and around his personal garden and the nuclear power plant that surrounded it. Like his previous cinematic experiment in extra-extravagant non-linear filmmaking *The Last of England* (1988), *The Garden* would be described by Jarman as “home-movie making really gone sort of slightly grand” and had been a serious project in the filmmaker’s mind since 1987, even if he never bothered with writing a script or any other such bollocks for what would be a particularly personal, if not exceedingly esoteric and metaphysical film. Somewhere between a delightful daydream of the best of what England has to offer in terms of organic scenery and traditional culture, and a nefarious and nauseating nightmare sequence featuring a lynched leather-fag’s attempt at advertising credit cards and the voyeuristic whoring out of Mother Mary via the paparazzi, *The Garden* is indubitably one of the last magical and majestic works of British cinema of the positively poesy sort, not to mention a politically incorrect portrayal of poofers in jolly olde England, even if the film itself is an attack on the powers that persecute bourgeois gays who refrain from dining in the tearooms and maintain monogamous relationships. The last major film Jarman worked on before AIDS became too debilitating of a disease in its destruction of the filmmaker’s body, *The Garden* was followed by more minimalistic works including *Edward II* (1991); a pomo homo take on the supposedly bisexual and murdered monarch, *Wittgenstein* (1993); an aesthetically and thematically Brechtian take on the Austrian Jewish philosopher of temper tantrums and tautology, and rather sad cinematic swansong *Blue* (1993); a work featuring a mere blue screen where the director discusses his life and *Weltanschauung*. While making *Blue*, Jarman was losing his vision and dying from complications of AIDS, thus it acts in stark aesthetic contrast to the ever so keenly kaleidoscopic and virtually wordless piece of hermetic homophile Christ-worship, *The Garden*, an exceedingly subversive slice of strangely spiritual sanctified sodomy assembled by an auteur when he was at the height of his powers as a cinematic artist, but also in touch with death. Featuring the artist himself, Derek Jarman, as the heavy sleeper in his own little Anglophile oasis and the filmmaker’s muse Tilda Swinton with a messianic child, as well as a soothing score by post-industrial group COIL, Goth/Darkwave group Miranda Sex Garden, and musician/composer Simon Fisher Turner (who, on top of providing scores for Jarman’s *Caravaggio* (1986) and *The Last of England* (1988), also cre-

ated music for the David Lynch produced film *Nadja* (1984)), *The Garden* is the closest thing to a 'poofter Passion of the Christ.'

In Derek Jarman's *The Garden*, the general atmosphere seems to be somewhere in between paradise and on the eve of the abberosexual apocalypse. Whilst sleeping in a brass bed in a shallow pool of water, he is encircled by topless men and women in white pants who are carrying torches. When not gathering mushrooms in the garden, Mother Madonna (Tilda Swinton at the height of her pulchritude) and her infant son are bombarded by brazen and terrorist-like members of the paparazzi sporting ski masks in balaclavas. Indeed, the thugs of photo journalism even see it fit to physically assault the mother of Christ until she is separated from her forsaken son. Meanwhile, two handsome homo lovers, one with the physical appearance of an Anglo-Saxon Nordic and the other an Atlantic Mediterranean, bask in the beauty of the local beaches and seductive scenery, but things are not so serene as they seem. Among other things, a leather-fag Judas hanging from the rope he committed self-slaughter with and a creepy corporate conman go about promoting credits cards and usury in a sin-saluting fashion. Even more aesthetically abhorrent, a swarthy and Semitic-like broad who seems to have crawled out of a crack in early twentieth century vaudeville hell advertises that one should 'think pink' (a song apparently taken from the Audrey Hepburn vehicle *Funny Face* (1957)) and sports preposterous all-pink clothing, which the two gay men do too, but will ultimately help lead to their downfall at the hands of less handsome members of the Christian church who arrest, tar and feather, torture, and ultimately kill the seemingly happy-go-lucky and kindhearted dudes into Dorian love. In the more rock-ridden areas of the garden, naked men crawl around like enslaved animals as if they are some sort of fallen fags in homo Hades, not to mention the fact a group of hysterical females in colorful dresses brutalize a cross-dressing shemale while pernicious paparazzi terrorists document the whole event. While laying in bed together in the privacy of their own home, the two male lovers are assaulted by a trio of evil men dressed as Santa Claus who document their gayness as evidence. Soon after, the two sacrificial sodomites are in a sauna from a sort of Greco-Roman pandemonium in a scene that includes an appearance from Jarman regular and all-around creepy cocksucker Jack Birkett. With all the torture and death, *The Garden* still ends on a rather happy note.

According to Derek Jarman biographer Tony Peake, regarding *The Garden*, "as the film's maker, Jarman himself would dream his film into being. The garden would be the gardens of both Eden and Gethsemane, while the landscape of Dungeness, with its boats and fishermen, would be a Sea of Galilee. There would be an actual Christ, whose appearance and passion would be mirrored and intercut by that of two gay lovers who, at moments, would share his torments. This enabled Jarman to focus more powerfully and bitterly than in previous versions on the attitudes of the Church to gay men and its role in the AIDS crisis.

THE GARDEN

He hoped to show that, thanks to St. Paul's proscriptions against homosexuality, the Church had lost sight of Christ's original message of love." Personally, I have nil interest in the Church's relationship to gaydom, but Jarman certainly assembled a transcendent cinematic work with *The Garden* that does not bow down to political correctness; be it of the LGBT police or Christianity variety. In fact, Jarman regarded *The Garden* as a thoroughly Christian film and apparently likened it to Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Matthew* (1964) and, indeed, the film expresses more church learning than the average Pentecostal could take in in two lifetimes. Religious and sociopolitical messages aside, in terms of aesthetics, *The Garden* stands up with Jarman's most breathtaking works, including *The Angelic Conversation* (1985), *The Last of England* (1988), and *War Requiem* (1989) as a film that follows in a rich tradition of intricate tableaux, high camp, and subversive kitsch, not unlike the works of Sergei Parajanov, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Werner Schroeter. Undoubtedly, while the average art antagonistic would probably see Jarman as a cinematic anti-Christ of sorts, Jarman was a Christ of celluloid who waged a virtual one-man revolution against the Hebrew hacks of Hollywood and proved he had a 'passion for Christ' as he could do more with a consumer grade Super-8 camera than they could with all the money and technology in the world, with *The Garden* being the cinematic Book of Revelation of his oeuvre.

-Ty E

WITTGENSTEIN

Derek Jarman^{o*} (1993)

Out of all the Derek Jarman films I have viewed, none of them have been particularly memorable aside from his first feature *Sebastiane*, a film so full of blatant heroic homo-eroticism and gay martyrdom, that it is hard to forget, whether one likes it or not. It was not until I saw Derek Jarman's *Wittgenstein*, one of his last features, did I feel that the director deserves to be remembered as one of England's few notable auteurs. *Wittgenstein* is a film that gives a short but sweet life summary of Viennese philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, a man that was born with a kosher silver spoon in his mouth, one he would often times try to regurgitate out, even once comically attempting to become a Soviet proletarian worker.

Wittgenstein does not have a typical film structure nor was the film directed in a typically cinematic way. Director Derek Jarman decided to direct *Wittgenstein* on a theater stage, in a theatrical manner. What compelled Jarman to direct the film this way, especially a bio-pic, seems rather dubious yet it is surprisingly executed in a successful manner, surely more successful than Jarman's adaption of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Unfortunately, *Wittgenstein* is mainly narrated by a child actor that is supposed to be a young Ludwig Wittgenstein, a child that even makes Harry Potter less turdsh by comparison. Of course, Ludwig Wittgenstein was a child prodigy so using a child Ludwig Wittgenstein does make sense, after all Wittgenstein's life seemed to go more downhill (for him, at least) the older he got.

Ludwig Wittgenstein happened to attend the same grade school as Adolf Hitler and the rumor is that a certain repellent Jewish child Hitler mentions in his autobiography *Mein Kampf* was actually Wittgenstein. Of course, the validity of this claim is questionable to say the least, but if one thing is true, it is that Ludwig Wittgenstein was one of the most famous self-loathing Jews in all of history. Wittgenstein was highly influenced by the brilliant Jewish psychologist/philosopher Otto Weininger, who killed himself shortly after writing his masterwork "Sex and Character" in 1903 at the ripe age of 23, a man that claimed Jewish traits and female traits were one in the same. Weininger also proclaimed that the feminizing of Western civilization was largely responsible for the degeneracy of society as well as the decline of the West. Mommy lover and cokehead Sigmund Freud was not too fond of fellow Viennese Jew Weininger, although he recognized his genius. Wittgenstein however was a fan of both Weininger and Freud, but his interest in Freud largely came from his interesting writings, not his scientific methods, which Wittgenstein felt were scientifically laughable and quackish. In *Wittgenstein*, proclaims of Freud, "It's dangerous stuff, it takes a Viennese to know another." Ludwig Wittgenstein was surely hard on his fellow Jewish intellectuals, even stating in his brilliant book *Culture*

WITTGENSTEIN

and Value: "Amongst Jews "genius" is found only in the holy man. Even the greatest of Jewish thinkers in no more than talented. (Myself for instance.) I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively."

Not only did Ludwig Wittgenstein attack his own race (or at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of his blood, being only a full-Jew by National Socialist standards), but he also had a lot of negative things to say about his profession as a philosopher. In Derek Jarman's *Wittgenstein*, Wittgenstein proclaims "Philosophy is a sickness of the mind." In Ludwig Wittgenstein's most well known work (and probably most important) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein states, "Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language." In a sense, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* can be looked at as the most honest work on philosophy ever written (of course, not that I have read all works of philosophy). Whereas Friedrich Nietzsche is often praised for his skill and talent in regards to aesthetics (although having many times contradicted himself philosophically), Ludwig Wittgenstein's form of philosophy seems to have been strictly utilitarian. In Jarman's *Wittgenstein*, the character of Ludwig Wittgenstein goes into exaggerated self-parody-like rants against both philosophy and language, making the film most interesting as an introduction to the work and life of Wittgenstein.

After seeing the historical-fiction film *When Nietzsche Wept* on Friedrich Nietzsche not too long ago, an embarrassing flick-able flick indeed, I can easily say that Jarman's *Wittgenstein* may possibly be the best film ever made about a philosopher, not that that says much. Certainly, Derek Jarman has an immense care for his subject in *Wittgenstein*, even if he did not attempt to portray the man any where near to his full complexity. As for how the film was constructed, *Wittgenstein* is surely its own cinematic league, just like the philosopher himself. Just don't expect an in depth analysis of the Wittgenstein's work and theories, but instead an artistic tribute to a man that surely deserves it.

-Ty E

A SORE FOR SIGHTED EYES

Derrick Beckles (2006)

Imagine if you will, a collection of dirty 80's and 90's vignettes, fused into each other flawlessly. Synced to match the theme and beat of various musical performances. TV Carnage has created another goldmine out of stale clips that make us realize how superficial humanity can be at times; A video mixtape for the non-believers. Race relations and political dismay are featured in glowing Technicolor. If i have to applaud one thing, be it accidental or not, It would be for making Negroes look cancerous to our society. The lavish scenes showing rap music's effect on cultures, politics, and even religion can be of a shock. Barbie dolls turned urban called Flava's are just asking us to raise our children to be sluts and have an "attitude" This particular scene switches into a horrendous rap project by the Chicago Bear's very own Mike Ditka."Hail Satan!" Colin Powell presents himself in a crown and dancing amongst a stage, rapping about some odd things. Richard Simmons is the commentator for obesity and the gateway for heaven. Just as Little Nicky demonstrated with a Chicago record; You can pull an amazingly creepy effect from anything. The editing is amazing and grounds many tactics to heighten the comedy in the scenes. In instance, John Ritter cries while watching a retarded Rosie O'Donnell on a bus. Whether you laugh at Garth Brooks cheering on a tumbling retard at a track race or have an affinity for alcoholic robots, This collection can either be treated as a hilarious tour throughout bizzare culture or a dangerous tool aiding a racial Armageddon. And Romero thinks his film has commentary? Don't make me laugh.

-mAQ

FLODDER
FLODDER

Dick Maas (1986)

Out of all the peoples of Europe, the Dutch seem to be the least interested in attracting international audiences with their films despite the fact that most people from the Netherlands speak better English than most Americans and would have no trouble creating films that both yanks and Brits can understand. Of course, Paul Verhoeven successfully made the transition from being a Dutch art-house auteur to a master of reasonably clever Hollywood blockbusters, but he is an exception. If there is a Dutch filmmaker that has tried his damndest to make reasonably Hollywood-esque genre flicks with big stupid car explosions, crude humor, and elaborate chase scenes that are specially tailored to appeal to a mainstream international audience, it is writer, director, producer, and composer Dick Maas (Amsterdammed, Sint aka Saint Nick), whose works have managed to gain respectable cult-followings, including his 'killer elevator' flick *De lift* (1983) aka *The Lift* (which the director later remade in English as *The Shaft* (2001) aka *Down* starring Naomi Watts) and especially his proudly lowbrow comedy *Flodder* (1986) aka *Welfare Party* aka *Les Lavigueur déménagent*, which managed to spawn two sequels, as well as a fairly long-running spin-off TV series. To be fairly blatant, *Flodder* is the Dutch equivalent of trash Hollywood kosher comedies featuring Hebraic hogs like Seth Rogen and Jonah Hill, albeit minus the incessant Jew jokes and borderline homoerotic scatological humor. Also, as a work with genuinely politically incorrect humor that savagely satires the lunacy of the Dutch welfare state, Maas' film is a tad bit more sophisticated than the typical neo-vaudevillian swill that is incessantly defecated out of Tinseltown. Indeed, like *The Beverly Hillbillies* meets *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978) with a shade or two of *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), this sometimes delightfully despicable piece of socially scathing celluloid trash depicts the hysterical hilarity that ensues when a typically weak and scrawny idealistic liberal social worker coerces the city council of Amsterdam to move a vulgar and antisocial white trash criminal family into the most affluent neighborhood in the city after it emerges that the eponymous lumpenprole family's state-owned house is located next to a toxic waste dump. Although admittedly sometimes annoyingly formulaic and just plain retarded, *Flodder* offers the viewer the singular celluloid fantasy of seeing both the death of the liberal humanist dream in the form of the ultimate 'tokkie' untermenschen trash dynasty.

Short, swarthy, bald, and weasel-like social worker Jacques "Sjakie" van Kooten (Lou Landré) seems to believe, like commie true believers and other 'useful idiot' types whose idealism tends to be exploited by various sorts of schemers (ranging from authoritarian regimes to welfare queens), that humans are completely malleable and he is on an insanely idealistic mission to prove it by proposing the 'zany' social experiment of moving a poor criminal family into Amster-

dam's most prestigious upper-class neighborhood, Zonnedaal, which is inhabited by a number of doctors and high-ranking military officers. Against the better judgement of the Amsterdam city council, Sjakie manages to let the delinquent Flodder family move into the upscale neighborhood after their dilapidated government-owned humble abode is deemed condemned after a toxic waste dump is found nearby. Like virtually all white trash families, the Flodders have no patriarch and are led by a morbidly obese matriarch named Ma Flodder (Nelly Frijda) who has five bastard kids of varying ages that all have different fathers, including Johnny (Maas regular Huub Stapel), brother Kees (René van 't Hof), sister Kees (played by Croatian-Dutch model, singer, and Playboy Playmate Tatjana Šimić aka 'Tatjana'), Toet (Nani Lehnhausen), and Henkie (Horace Cohen). 27-year-old Johnny is the oldest of the tribe and like many backwards proles, he has a fashion sense that is a couple decades behind as demonstrated by his red jacket and blue jeans à la James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Kees is a shameless slut with a bad blonde dye job who is buggered at night by her seemingly half-retarded brother with the same name. The youngest preteen brother Henkie also sometimes likes to pimp his sister Kees out to anyone that is willing to pay, so long as they have cold hard cash. Aside from Ma and the kids, a wheelchair-bound mute fellow named 'Grandpa Flodder' (Jan Willem Hees) who is not actually related to the family, suffers from dementia, and has a childlike toy train obsession, as well as a murderously violent black Bouvier des Flandres dog named 'Whisky,' also belongs to the family. The Flodders may not have much in terms of brains, common sense, personal hygiene, material wealth, or fashion sense, but they are hopelessly loyal to one another and can survive anything, including the passive-aggressive wrath of the superlatively 'stiff' Dutch bourgeoisie.

Like many low class individuals, Ma Flodder, like her children, is completely oblivious to her glaring trashiness and self-righteously asks her social worker Sjakie upon seeing her new luxury home, "Is this a good neighborhood? I don't want to lower myself." Luckily, Ma's kids are slightly more perceptive regarding their surroundings and immediately begin hitting on hot twat blonde teen bourgeois babes that live in the neighborhood, thus starting a sort of unofficial civil war between the Flodder brother and local preppie boys that wear really lame baby blue sweaters. In fact, after brother Kees spends a little too long staring at two blondes playing tennis while fantasizing that they are unclad, he suffers a beating from a gang of malicious preppie pansies, so Johnny decides to chase down the posh pricks in his pink convertible in a wild and wacky chase scene that ultimately results in the rich kids crashing their luxury automobile in a swimming pool. When the feisty yet sexually repressed wife of a seemingly impotent authoritarian military officer named Colonel Wim Kruisman (Herbert Flack) causes a minor fender bender with Johnny's car, the untermensch gentleman refuses to take money from the little lady and instead takes her card instead so he

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can defile her later. Indeed, Johnny and Yolanda Kruisman (played by Dutch supermodel Apollonia van Ravenstein) start a lurid love affair. Meanwhile, sister Kees seduces her car dealer neighbor Ed Neuteboom (Bert André) while her brother takes polaroids. Naturally, Johnny and his brothers use the pictures to blackmail their neighbor Ed into giving them a free sports car. Meanwhile, Colonel Kruisman gives Yolanda a nice punch in the face after he catches his wifey cheating on him, so she packs her bags and moves in with the Flodders. With the 'tokkie' menace rising in the neighborhood, Colonel Kruisman sets up a plan called 'Operation Stanley' to ethnically cleanse the poor degenerates from their high-class hood. Of course, the Flodders will not go down without a fight, or something resembling one.

When Grandpa Flodder is accidentally killed after getting a little too close to one of his beloved railroads, the Flodder family finds themselves rich after finding tons of money hidden in the old man's toy trains, so they end up buying the fancy house they live in. Meanwhile, all the people in the neighborhood have a secret town meeting where they plot to rid themselves of the Flodder scum from their squeaky clean neighborhood, but when Johnny and Yolanda come by and reveal that they are engaged to be married, the bourgeois schemers find themselves in a precarious situation as 'one of their own' has decided to side with the enemy. Not one to make enemies or to hold a grudge, Johnny also invites all the neighbors to attend his engagement party and they all reluctantly decide to attend. Needless to say, the the Flodder family proves to be a bad influence on the mostly puritanical neighbors, who find themselves delighting in a sleazy cocktail of prole-approved sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. For instance, a group of men including underage teens and effete 60+-year-old men, line up at a door to take turns screwing sister Kees, whose little brother Henkie acts as her pimp and takes money from the horny men at the door. The Flodder hound Whisky also has fun at the party by eating one of the neighbor's cutesy ankle-biters. In the end, virtually every single neighbor gets high, drunk, and/or fucked. As for Colonel Kruisman, he is not too happy about his wife leaving him for a gutter-bred low-life, so he gets good and drunk and decides to destroy the Flodder house with a tank that he has stolen from his military base. While the Colonel blows up the Flodder home and thus ends their hyper hedonistic hick party in the process, the family takes the tragedy in good humor as proud poor people who have learned to live in chaos and destruction.

Unquestionably, I would like to see a remake of Flodder featuring a Moroccan Islamist family moving into an upperclass neighborhood full of idealistic and politically incorrect white liberals who, instead of rejecting their new neighbors like in the original film, attempt to embrace them and ultimately receive a rude awakening that tests their phony humanistic faith. Unfortunately, both the sequels Flodder in Amerika! (1992) aka Flodder Does Manhattan! and Flodder Forever (1995) aka Flodder 3, as well as the long-running Flodder series(1993-

1998), are not much more than retarded cliché-ridden recyclings of the raunchy ideas, tropes, jokes, and chase scenes of the original film, thus reflecting 'auteur' Dick Maas' deep-seated desire to sell out as a sort of Dutch John Carpenter, albeit more degenerate and boob-obsessed. Rather curiously, Maas' hit cult comedy was one of the sixteen films added to the prestigious Canon of Dutch Cinema (aka 'Canon van de Nederlandse Film'). Indeed, *Flodder* was selected as one of the sixteen most monumental Dutch films of all time in a list that includes classic, experimental, avant-garde, and arthouse works, including the ancient silent slapstick short *The Misadventure of a French Gentleman Without Pants at the Zandvoort Beach* (1905) co-directed by Willy Mullens and Alberts Frères, the celluloid 'city symphony' *Regen* (1929) aka *Rain* co-directed by Mannus Franken and commie propagandist Joris Ivens, the Willem Frederik Hermans adaptation *Als twee druppels water* (1963) aka *Like Two Drops of Water* directed by Fons Rademakers, *Blind Kind* (1964) directed by master documentarian Johan van der Keuken, the gorgeously grotesque short *Living* (1971) directed by Frans Zwartjes, *Turks fruit* (1973) aka *Turkish Delight* directed by Paul Verhoeven, and *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners* directed by Alex van Warmerdam. Artistically speaking, *The Northerners* (which, incidentally, was produced by Maas) is the alpha and *Flodder* is the omega in terms of Dutch celluloid comedies, though I can almost see why the latter was included in the Canon of Dutch Cinema as it represents post-WWII Holland at its most obscenely deracinated and Americanized, which is important when attempting to understand the deleterious effects of yank hegemony, as well as the preposterous Dutch welfare state.

-Ty E

JEW-BOY LEVI
JEW-BOY LEVI

Didi Danquart (1999)

During the late-1960s/early-1970s anti-Heimat films—student movement-approved left-wing works that mocked and ridiculed the distinctly Germanic and highly popular Heimatfilm (which spanned roughly from the late-1940s to the early-1970s) of yesteryear—were rather popular with top filmmakers of German New Cinema, with directors including (but certainly not limited to) Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*The Niklashausen Journey*, *Pioneers of Ingolstadt*), Werner Herzog (*Herz aus Glas* aka *Heart of Glass*), Wim Wenders (*The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*), Volker Schlöndorff (*Michael Kohlhaas - Der Rebell*, *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*), Herbert Achternbusch (*Bierkampf*, *Heilt Hitler!* aka *Heal Hitler!*), Walter Bockmayer (*Flammende Herzen* aka *Flaming Hearts*, *Geierwally*), and Peter Fleischmann (*Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*, *The Hamburg Syndrome*) contributing works to the homeland-hating Teutonic anti-genre. Of course, like any genre/subgenre, the anti-Heimatfilm may have died long ago, but every once in a while some nostalgic (or, in some cases, anti-nostalgic) auteur will unearth the conventions of the genre, including a revival of sorts during the late-1980s/early-1990s, with Stefan Ruzowitzky's *The Inheritors* (1998) aka *Die Siebtelbauern* and Peter Kern's *Haider lebt – 1. April 2021* (2002) being rather contrasting examples of this Germanic cinema phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the Hollywood-esque German-Swiss-Austrian co-production *Viehjud Levi* (1999) aka *Jew-Boy Levi*, directed by documentarian turned TV hack Didi Danquart (*The Pannwitz Stare*, *Offset*) and adapted from the 1980 Thomas Strittmatter play of the same name, is the most superlatively soulless, aesthetically and thematically superficial, and exceedingly ethnomasochistic contribution to the anti-Heimat film style that I have had the greatly grating mis-experience of suffering. In fact, *Jew-Boy Levi* is not only a hatred-stirring anti-Heimat film, but also a sort anti-Heimat: *A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) celluloid polemic that callously contradicts the so-called 'apologetic' tone of Edgar Reitz's film. Indeed, like Reitz's magnum opus *Heimat*, which was criticized by a number of film critics because it did not wallow on the holocaust, *Jew-Boy Levi* features an anti-social character named Paul who is the only one in his village that is tired of rural life and has the desire to travel outside the country, but the similarities stop there as Danquart's libelous and mundanely minimalistic lynch mob flick features liberal-sired stereotyped 'archetypes' as opposed to likeable idiosyncratic country characters like its celluloid nemesis. Featuring a wandering Jew with a heart of gold, a psychopathic National Socialist bureaucrat, a lecherous Nazi whore who is willing to betray her man for random man-meat, boorish beer-addled bullies who attack with the proclivities of rabid German Shepherds, and various kraut moral cowards who jump on the Hitlerite bandwagon to appease the greater folk, *Jew-Boy Levi* is the sort of deluded and ulti-

mately botched philistine wet dream that has been made especially to appeal to the most idiotic of the goyim as a innately insulting work that makes Hollywood agitprop pieces like Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (2008) seem super thematically sophisticated by comparison.

Taking the first word of its German title, 'Viehjud', from a derogatory word for a Hebrew in the cattle trade, *Jew-Boy Levi* features a conspicuously contrived world ostensibly set in the Black Forest region of Germany in 1935 before most Jews were forced to concentrate in concentration camps. Traveling Jew boy Benjamin Levi (Swiss actor Bruno Cathomas) has just come back from a long stay in the Rhineland and has set his semi-Asiatic eyes on a farmer named Andreas Horger's (Georg Olschewski) underage waitress daughter Lisbeth (Caroline Ebner), but so has an antisocial, unemployed bum named Paul Braxmeier (Bernd Michael Lade), who does not make a suitable suitor for the little lass, at least according to the girl's parents. Aside from a couple of joking remarks, none of the sternly Catholic inhabitants of the Black Forest village care about the fact that Levi is a member of god's chosen tribe, but that all changes when a Nazi engineer named Fabian Kohler (Ulrich Noethen), who moonlights as a hack magician, and his crew of Reichsarbeitsdienst brownshirted thugs come to the area to build roads and whatnot for the great Reich. The first sign that things are getting heavy in the hinterland is when Levi's farmer friend Andreas Horger opts for slaughtering a calf instead of selling it to him in what is an allegorical scene alluding to the holocaust (or something). Meanwhile, prick Paul seduces but then rejects engineer Kohler's whore girlfriend/secretary Neuner (Martina Gedeck, who is probably best known for portraying Ulrike Meinhof in *The Baader Meinhof Complex* (2008)), which puts him on the shit list with the nazi nymphomaniac. On top of that, Paul replaces a rabbit with brown scheiss in Kohler's magic hat (thus embarrassing the humorless Nazi in front of a live peasant audience), which results in him getting a beatdown from some nefarious nazi hoods. When Levi has something stolen from him, he makes the moronic mistake of going to anti-kosher Kohler for help and is told that he is "nothing" and thus his problems mean nothing. A simpleminded man who loves singing Yiddish songs to his beloved pet rabbit, Levi is in for a horrendous shock when he discovers that someone has beheaded his hare and left it in a bloody sack for him to discover. Needless to say, virtually all of the inhabitants of the village turn on Levi, including farmer Horger and his wife Kresenz (lapsed Fassbinder superstar Eva Mattes in a rather unflattering role), who initially encouraged their daughter Lisbeth's romance with the Judaic gentleman due to his wealth. In the end, all the local yokels gang up on Levi and aggressively attempt to get him to sing a Nazi song instead of a Yiddish one, but luckily Lisbeth pulls out a shotgun, thus enabling the Hebrew to make his great escape on his beloved motorcycle. Indeed, while not depicted in the film, one can only assume Levi made his way to America to make his fortune and eventually sue the Germans for reparations after the

JEW-BOY LEVI

Second World War for the major marxist crime of micro-aggression.

Featuring swinish kraut hicks getting old retarded men drunk by force-feeding them alcohol, a kindly Hebrew treating his braindead gentile neighbors to lavish gifts, a half-retarded farmer nonsensically remarking to his Jewish friend "Christian Jews are worse than real Jews. If you weren't a Jew, you'd be the worst Christian Jew," 'outsiders' like midgets and kosher country boys portraying the only likeable characters, and nazi villains with less depth than the eponymous dumb blonde villain of *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1975), *Jew-Boy Levi* is ultimately nothing short of an innately insult work, no matter what your intelligence level and/or political persuasion is. In its damning depiction of the German collective as a mindless mass of meek followers who can be easily coerced into hating Jews in a second's time as if so-called anti-Semitism is an intrinsic element of the German character that can be atavistically reawakened at any time, *Jew-Boy Levi* is the spirit of anti-kraut/anti-Catholic jude-boi Daniel Goldhagen's ahistorical Teutophobic polemic *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996). Aesthetically speaking, *Jew-Boy Levi* seems like it was directed by an autistic eunuch who would rather direct children's fantasy films than serious German arthouse films. In short, *Jew-Boy Levi* is probably the worst German film I have ever seen and this is coming from someone who has viewed *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) and one or two of Alois Brummer's low-camp Bavarian blue movies. In its strategically dumbed down depiction of a rural German microcosm, the message of *Jew-Boy Levi* is 'stupid barbaric krauts betrayed and scapegoated exceedingly generous and morally pristine Jews that they had the distinguished honor of being in the company of.' Undoubtedly, *Jew-Boy Levi* is symptomatic of why real Heimat films no longer exist in the Fatherland, as it is the repugnant expression of a mentally colonized and culturally-distorted people who have been spiritually cuckolded by ethno-masochistic excrement like Danquart's dauntingly deluded and debasing film. Indeed, maybe director Danquart can learn a thing or two from Veit Harlan about how to execute more subtle cinematic propaganda.

-Ty E

FLAMING EARS

Dietmar Schipek (1992)

Indeed, there might not be a lot of cyber-dyke films floating around in semen-sanitized cinematic cesspools in the world, but one thing you can count on with these curiously and even creepily carnal celluloid works, aside from featuring some of the most aesthetically displeasing leafless and lecherous lesbian ladies, is some of the most wonderfully weird and decisively deranged cinematic scenarios ever captured on celluloid and the Austrian film *Flaming Ears* (1992) aka *Rote Ohren fetzen durch Asche* is certainly no exception to this rule. Co-directed by A. Hans Scheirl of *Dandy Duß* (1998) infamy, as well as fellow cunt-licking compatriots Ursula Puerrer and Dietmar Schipek, all of whom appear in this delightfully depraved dystopian dyke celluloid *nachtmahr* as some sort of s/he-miss-creation 'character' of sorts, *Flaming Ears* is a fiercely frenzied and freakish feast for the eyes and ears from the morally adverse and positively perverse perspective of three Sapphic sickos. Shot on surprisingly strikingly Super 8 film stock and blown up to 16mm, it is a film that has an exceedingly erratic and eccentric essence all its own, although *Flaming Ears* does owe much to German lesbian auteuress Ulrike Ottinger (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, *Freak Orlando*) who undoubtedly acted as a spiritual mother of sorts for the film with her uncompromising works of lovingly lewd lezzy libertinism of the actively avant-garde yet equally terribly trashy kind. Described in an interview by co-director Scheirl as being about "female lone warriors, and they try to live their lives as intensely as possible and thus collide with each other somehow. It's a matter of life and death. And love" and her cunning linguist queer compeer Puerrer as "Sheroes, fighters! Surrealistic figures, sex, violence - perpetrators in general. Always women, and they concentrate on themselves and on their greed," *Flaming Ears* is certainly a crass yet curiously charming celluloid oddity – a sort of lesbian equivalent to William S. Burroughs' seemingly unfilmable novel *The Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead* (1971) – about lubricous and sometimes lethal lezzy fantasies run amok and a mentally-ravaging romance film for the raging and rampaging rug munchers from hell.

For as long as I can remember, when it came to criminally-inclined, crude, cretinous and otherwise combative women, they tended to be bodacious bulldykes of the ostensibly born-brazen persuasion. If one were to look into the deep unconscious and most wild dreams of these balls-to-the-wall butch ballbusters of the lady-licking variety, it might resemble the Sapphic sadomasochistic surrealism of *Flaming Ears*, albeit of the austere Austrian aberrosexual Aryaness variety. In fact, co-auteur A. Hans Scheirl described the film as being, "contrary to the psychological cinema, where actors tell stories, we depict inner states with cinematic means." Set in the unforeseeable future in the year 2700 – the "year of the toads" – in the fantastic dystopian dyke city of "Asche"; a realm darker

FLAMING EARS

both visually and thematically than either of Joel Schumacher's unabashedly pan-sified, homoerotic Batman flicks, *Flaming Ears* is the type of intensely intemperate and preposterously wacked-out work of abnormal yet audacious celluloid artistry that could have only been assembled by individuals so depraved, so uninhibited, and so penetratingly perverse that to call the film 'contrived' and or 'weird for weird's sake' would be a display of gross ignorance that would be akin to labeling Tarantino a cinematic artist and Herbert Achternbusch a sentimentalist. Almost as impenetrable as the most esoteric high-camp works of Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Day of the Idiots*) and queer junky alpha-Beat writer William S. Burroughs' final trilogy of novels "The Red Night Trilogy," *Flaming Ears* is a work of exceedingly sordid cinematic artistry that takes no prisoners, sort of in the same spirit as a lustful serial killer amidst a national murdering spree. Essentially, centering around three mentally unstable lesbians with the kind of commanding will power that only people with serious pathologies display, including Valley (Ursula Puerrer); a "fighting diva" of the particularly perverse pyromaniac persuasion who sports a pseudo-cock-and-balls that dangle from her crotch, Spy (Susana Helmayr); a comic book artist and the most 'ladylike' (I use this term extremely loosely) of three, and Nun (A. Hans Scheirl); an Aryan alien with an unhealthy fetish for reptiles, *Flaming Ears* is not held together by a deeply discernible plot or subplots, aside from lunatic lesbian rivalries that initially sparked with the burning of a comicbook-printing factory, but its original and sometimes aesthetically odious hodgepodge of archaic yet visually arresting stop-motion animation, amateur Nekes-esque special effects, and sickening, senseless, and sardonic scenarios of sexual skankery. Needless to say, if you find the early films of John Waters, Andy Warhol, and Paul Morrissey to be too degrading, stay quite clear of those frisky, feral, and fecund-free *Flaming Ears*.

With ridiculous lines of dapper diesel dyke romanticism like "the revolution of love is bloody" (surely, a period pun!), "my honey is a scumbag sheer lunacy," and "I just love to fondle the jewels of your fantasies," *Flaming Ears* is surely a work that is out of this world – both literally and figuratively – but with lines like, "good to have a girlfriend with humor," it is a cinematic work of psychosexual sadism that is not a totally alien affair. Despite every logical signal to the contrary, co-director Ursula Puerrer stated of her character in the film, "I am Volley. As simple as that. And Volley loves precision, ease, aggression, devotion and wit. I live in a special world, and I walk through the so-called world heavily armed." Indeed, I have no doubt that *Flaming Ears* is a cinematic depiction of Puerrer and the other two lady-lad directors' most flagrant and fiendish female-flesh-fondling fantasies, hence the film's profoundly poles apart persuasion. Like an unholy marriage between Jack Smith's *Normal Love* (1963), Steven F. Arnold's *Luminous Procuress* (1971), Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982) and Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1982), except on an even lower budget as directed by

Ulrike Ottinger and Monika Treut while intoxicated on a merry mix of mescaline and methamphetamines, *Flaming Ears* is ultimately only really comparable to co-director A. Hans Scheirl's subsequent and sole solo feature-length cinematic effort *Dandy Duſt* (1998); an overwhelmingly wacky, morally wretched, and aesthetically insane work that arguably makes her previous work seem tame by comparison. Featuring surreal rollerskating, debauched god's pissing from the sky, raunchy reptile-based gluttony, sexual fetishism for furniture, dashing dyke dancing, prideful displays of penis envy, carpet-munching martyrdom, and vicious displays of lesbo-on-lesbo hate crimes, *Flaming Ears* makes for a jolly old good time in a dystopian cyber-dyke wasteland. As co-director Dietmar Schipek stated at the end of an interview: "Film is risk and danger. I like to expose myself to danger. The viewer, by the way, as well. Because only under exceptional conditions can you produce unconditional films. Only when utter dedication can be felt, will the film have transformed into reality, and leaving the cinema will become a lasting discovery: 'What is actually happening to oneself?'" I do not know about other people who have watched *Flaming Ears*, but it brought me to the epiphany that I would never want to live under a futuristic fascist lesbian dictatorship under any circumstances.

-Ty E

PERTH
PERTH

Djinn (2004)

"Singapore's answer to *Taxi Driver*" boasts the snarling cover of a DVD copy of *Perth* that I picked up at Blockbuster for a mere \$3.99. Surely this film should be worth the price of an overpriced 40 oz. of your favorite malt liquor? Such as point-of-subject Harry Lee's life designed of squalor, Blockbuster is too feeling the effects of a dissolving structure of which nothing can be done about it. To try as I might to not juxtapose with relative ease of both the video rental market and Harry Lee's pointless aspirations to be a "simple man," *Perth* isn't so much an "answer to *Taxi Driver*" as it is a film undoubtedly inspired but during the climax of the film's somber moments, it's nothing more than a kind nod with meticulous moments of glory mixed in conservatively with instances of poor directing. Besides, isn't it a bit too late to have an "answer" to *Taxi Driver*? Martin Scorsese's break out hit is almost 30 years *Perth*'s senior. In *Perth*, a chart of disgruntled humanity is slowly chalked out as the camera unabashedly follows a little over a week in the life of ex-security guard Harry Lee. What unfolds next is an arbitrary tour into why he bludgeons his wife silly, why she deserves this cruel treatment, and why this film has been hailed as "Singapore's most violent film." The answers to these questions are both complicated in narrative and fairly mundane. I like to view *Perth* as a response to whores across the world. It doesn't require culture shock to plainly realize that race doesn't necessarily hamper in any way womenfolk's shortcomings as they are designed to be lyrical tormentors. Lim Kay Tong does an impeccable job at portraying the sneering "misogynist" Harry Lee, a man driven over the edge in part to combat flashbacks and a cheating, gambling wife who I believe deserves every fist planted into her frail, oriental body.

Harry Lee dreams of being a simple man who wishes to immigrate to Perth, Australia. Having recently been laid off, he'll have to escort call girls around for that extra cash. While the build up and eventual connection he makes with forced prostitute Mai recalls heavily of *Taxi Driver*, the film couldn't have a more separate taste in theme. Mai and Harry Lee aren't so different - after Mai's family got in debt deep, they apparently sent her off to hook off her body to earn their family's keep. It's this recurring theme of gambling and unfaithfulness that sets the tone early for this slowburn of rage cinema. Unlike most films bordering on the same topic of bottled contempt and forays into copious amounts of alcohol, *Perth* is frightfully slow. So creeping in fact, that you become anxious waiting for the violence to kick in. We're teased at first with spousal abuse but then that teasing becomes petting with a broken bottle jab. If *Perth* does one thing right, it's keeping your attention without expunging any of the glory so early. When this scene of violence finally explodes into a machete fight, my initial reaction was a resounding "fuck yes." Given the scenes regarding Harry Lee's past combat

experience as a commando, I was sure to see some incredible display of career prowess that had might returned to this man with nothing to lose. However, what I received is a scene only comparable to watching a blind man attempt to bust open a pinata. Harry Lee can not wield a machete for the life of him, literally. This scene did feature a couple of satisfying kills but nothing too abrasive for me. Asia Extreme Underground noted that Perth is "Singapore's most violent film" and on that note, I would have to believe this is the only Singaporean film with violence. Perth is a very engaging display of the ole' "descent-into-madness" character drama that every director attempts to make but capturing anarchic behavior that seems fluid and perverse isn't as easy as these directors wish. I happened to enjoy Perth for many reasons and none of these included the feeble finish. As much as I hate to admit it, I think Perth only deserves a single viewing, if you even have the attention-span to watch an Asiatic Harvey Keitel travel around with aviators and bitch about "loyalty."

-mAQ

DOLPH LUNDGREN IS THE KILLING MACHINE
DOLPH LUNDGREN IS THE KILLING MACHINE

Dolph Lundgren (2010)

Parallel to the release of the super-sized fast food sandwich we know as *The Expendables*, Dolph Lundgren retitled his courteous family-man/contract killer crime epic from *Icarus* to *Dolph Lundgren is The Killing Machine*. While this may look well on paper, this scraps the only semblance of a serious notion towards duplicating *A Bittersweet Life* in parts and *Taken* in others, in favor for an expose worshipping this real-life bad-ass. What we get is what we hoped for (we being classic 80s Dolph fans), not much akin to *Dark Angel* or *Universal Soldier*, *Icarus* is the very similar stoic combat-grizzled Soviet who has it out for whoever is wronging him. Owing almost the entire screen time to other films who have done this before and to a better advantage, *Icarus* never ceases being an anti-intellectual statement and a violent popcorn piece that gives you a merit badge in villainous ways to dispatch your foes. I may never look at a bench press again. Thanks for that, Dolph.

The bizarre thing is that while I do not condone the title switch it does seem to benefit from it, quality wise. Watching this film under the guise of *Icarus* pro-lapses the tale into comical austerity from which it never recovers being a DTV film for its own sake. However, as *Dolph Lundgren is The Killing Machine*, some nostalgic protective aura enshrouds the film giving it that root-for-utter-destruction edge that it needs to survive the continuous landslide that is direct to video sales. Under the moniker of both titles, the film still presents the superfluous tale of a father who has never been there for his family . . . because he assassinates "marks." Struggling to juggle his family and work life proves to be too great for *Icarus* (Dolph) and he finds himself the target of an old comrade for which penance and comradeship is not enough. Mix in random spices of post-KGB Russian conflict and you got yourself a translucent, yet enjoyable film capable of combing the cheese romance from *Commando* and creating a hybrid with some gruesome key scenes of cheek-ripping and face-crushing Dolph at his elderly physical peak. As the film progresses, the producers, I assume, decide to barrage us with thinly conceived narration from Dolph explaining in pseudo-enlightened prose that he has to redeem himself amongst other contrived soliloquies. Upon hearing that he originally intended for his character to be a villain akin to his excellent role as Gunnar Jensen in *The Expendables* and that his producers denied his request due to sales, It occurred to me that Dolph is a mere puppet to his financial backings which must be a reason in declined quality. Dolph Lundgren was permitted 18 days to complete principal photography and didn't approve of the producers cut, which is what we are viewing. Had Mr. Lundgren has his way, I'm sure we'd all be enjoying a fastidious ode to what Dolph Lundgren really wants to convey with his villainy; a meditating crime tycoon who indulges in the very savagery that made him so prominent as an 80s action star who achieved

critical success with his video rentals.

Icarus has several things on its belt, I'll admit. With the exceptional acting chops of the Stefanie von Pfetten (who is also a smelting pot on the eyes) and Lindsay Maxwell whose supple nipples must be the size of a "baby's fingernail", the film boasts strong female and male performances rounding out with a surprise role of Bo Svenson as the past come back to haunt Dolph. Icarus isn't a great film but its entertainment value is worth its weight in gold. I could find myself re-watching some of the exceptional shoot out scenes and replay some of the iconic deaths of the unfaltering waves of henchmen to my hearts delight. Icarus isn't a film that had to be made but now that it is here I graciously accept this gift for what it is; a film by Dolph Lundgren about Dolph Lundgren. I'm sure many of you can complain about the handcam quality but for what it is worth, Dolph sure is menacing toting a Remington 870 and I hungrily look forward to this brutes reemergence in the video scene. I believe I'm going to coin the term "dolphsterpiece" from here on out.

-mAQ

SECONDS
SECONDS

Dominic Sena (2000)

As far as I am concerned, McJew auteur John Frankenheimer (Birdman of Alcatraz, The Island of Dr. Moreau) reached the height of his artistic prowess as a filmmaker with his psych-out semi-psychedelic flick Seconds (1966), the final chapter in the director's 'Paranoia Trilogy' (following The Manchurian Candidate (1962) and Seven Days in May (1964)). Based on the lesser known 1963 novel of the same name written by David Ely and featuring luscious black-and-white cinematography by Academy Award winning Chinese-American cinematographer James Wong Howe (Hangmen Also Die, Sweet Smell of Success), Seconds is a sort of de-teutonized, Hollywoodized counter-culture taken on Goethe's Faust with an anti-bourgeois leftist twist about a somewhat past middle-aged banker who gets hooked up with a dubious 'word-of-mouth' company that helps him fake his own death and gives him a new identity, including a new face via state-of-the-art plastic surgery. In keeping with the film's theme of 'rebirth,' Seconds quite notably features a number of communist blacklisted actors whose careers had been destroyed in the 1950s in primary roles, including Jeff Corey, Will Geer, and John Randolph, thus demonstrating director Frankenheimer's solidarity with the left and his cold war anti-anti-communist sentiments, which he previously made quite clear with his most popular flick The Manchurian Candidate, but especially with Seven Days in May. Of course, being an idiosyncratic and phantasmagoric dystopian flick of sorts that is equal doses psychological thriller, horror, and science fiction, Seconds may be a work of passive leftist counter-culture agitation, but it is also a patently pessimistic, unwaveringly nightmarish, and even somewhat nihilistic work that offers no answers to the questions it asks, ultimately ending on a rather negative note that is bound to haunt viewers, myself included. In fact, Seconds had such a deleterious effect on Brian Wilson, the manic-depressive schizo master songwriter of the Beach Boys, that he thought the film was talking directly to him (to his credit, the character is named 'Mr. Wilson') and it caused the songwriter to abort his concept album Smile, which went unfinished for almost four decades (though he released various forms of the album in 2004 and 2011). Indeed, as far as films go, Seconds is a high-strung schizophrenic's worst celluloid nightmare as a sort of eerie expressionist piece of pernicious cinematic paranoia that is bound to ruin even the most stoic of optimists' days, yet it is also an aesthetically pleasing and atmospheric work that demands ritualistic re-viewings. Starring masculine old school Hollywood homo heartthrob Rock Hudson in an unconventional lead role where the actor does not appear onscreen until around 40 minutes into the film, Seconds is a rare work from Tinseltown with a degree of artistic merit that is rightfully now regarded as a cult classic.

Miserable middle-aged bourgeois banker Arthur Hamilton (John Randolph)

may be a Harvard graduate who makes a decent living and has done financially well for himself, as well as his wife and grown daughter, but he is a walking corpse of sorts whose soul seems to have died a slow death long ago. Finding next to nil love nor solace in his faithful wife and rarely seeing his married adult daughter, Arthur just walks through life like a nameless and faceless ghost who is rarely noticed by anyone, so after receiving a phone call from a college friend, Charlie Evans (Murray Hamilton), that he thought died long ago regarding a underground corporation that offers the possibility of a 'rebirth' with a new identity, the banker considers his options. Through Charlie, Arthur is hooked up with the word-of-mouth company simply known as "The Company" that offers to provide customers a new life and identity for the measly sum of \$30,000, which includes the faking of one's death and plastic surgery. Eventually, Arthur is brought to the secret location of the Company, whose secretary drugs the banker's tea. When Arthur wakes up, a fried-chicken-licking executive of the company, Mr. Ruby (Jeff Corey), shows the banker footage of himself seemingly raping a young nubile girl, which is used as blackmail were the rather reluctant customer to pass on the identity-changing operation. After realizing he might go to jail for rape, as well as talking to the seemingly nice owner of the company, 'The Old Man' (Will Geer), Arthur reluctantly decides to go through with the procedure and wakes up as a very haggard looking yet much more youthful Rock Hudson. Rechristened 'Antiochus 'Tony' Wilson' (Rock Hudson), the lapsed banker, whose death has been staged by the Company in a hotel fire using a cadaver resembling his own body, has now taken on the identity of a successful degenerate artist with a lavish home in Malibu, California and a groveling personal manservant, so life seems to be looking up for the protagonist, or so he hopes. Eventually, 'Tony Wilson' starts a relationship with a somewhat ominous blonde babe named Nora Marcus (Salome Jens), who takes the reborn 'artist' to a neo-pagan bacchanalian grape-stomping/winemaking orgy where the ex-banker loses his 'beatnik virginity' and gets wild and naked, but all good things must come to an end, especially after being reborn as someone you're innately not (have you ever heard of an artistic banker or a true artist that is good with managing money?!).

Unfortunately, things soon get ugly for Arthur-turned-Tony when he hosts a happening party at his new swinging pad and gets so plastered on some fine firewater that he reveals to his guests about his former identity as bourgeois boob Arthur Hamilton. Unbeknownst to Tony, many of his guests/neighbors are also 'reborns' who utilized the secretive services of the Company and they don't take kindly to a newcomer going around revealing such sensitive esoteric information in such a reckless manner. Worst of all, Tony learns that his sensual sweetheart Nora is not a sweetheart at all, but a manipulative wench who has been employed by the company to be his full-time quasi-callgirl girlfriend. Unsurprisingly upset upon learning of these rather regrettable revelations, Tony decides to revisit his former wife (Frances Reid) from his previous life under his new persona

SECONDS

(pretending he is a friend of the ostensibly deceased Arthur Hamilton) and discovers from the widow that their marriage failed because he was a soulless and vapid workaholic who put social prestige and material possessions before love and family matters. Determined to start all over again and be reborn for a second time, Arthur-as-Tony asks the Company for a new identity/body, but to do so he must provide them with a new name of an individual he knows that might also want to be reborn. As Tony/Arthur learns, his friend Charlie Evans was required to 'sponsor' a friend to get a new identity, hence why he contacted the banker in the first place. Rather unfortunately for him, Tony/Arthur cannot think of a friend/acquaintance who might want to be 'reborn,' thus leading to his nefarious and nightmarish downfall via Mengele-esque surgery. After failing to provide the name of a potential person to be 'reborn,' Tony/Arthur is awakened by the kindly Old Man who owns the Company who tells him that he is being immediately taken for identity-changing surgery. Unbeknownst to him, Tony/Arthur is then taken to surgery to be euthanized where his corpse will be used to fake a new reborn client's deaths. In the end, Tony/Arthur, who is strapped to a surgery table, suffers a hysterical fit as he realizes he is about to die and is read his last rites by a charlatan priest/rabbi/minister. Luckily for him, before being euthanized, Tony/Arthur seems to fall into a catatonic state.

Although doing poorly on its initial release and hated by European critics when it was originally screened at the Cannes Film Festival (Frankenheimer was even afraid to attend the press conference and had Rock Hudson do it instead), *Seconds* has rightfully earned its place as a cinematic cult classic. Luckily, some realized the aesthetic majesty of *Seconds* upon its release, as cinematographer James Wong Howe, who should be credited as largely responsible for the film's foreboding atmospheric and fierce phantasmagorical essence, was nominated for an Academy Award for his work on the film. Indeed, as much as I loathe auteur Frankenheimer political persuasion and sympathy for kosher commies like John Randolph (real name Emanuel Hirsch Cohen), few films capture the particular zeitgeist so potently, perturbingly, and penetratingly than *Seconds*; a nearly immaculate work that shows the failure of the 'American Dream' to truly bring happiness to its citizens/consumers. A sort of post-industrial take on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus* (1818) meets a delicately deconstructed take on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1808) meets the Hebraic paranoia of Orson Welles' 1962 cinematic adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) aka *Der Prozess*, *Seconds* is essentially modernist Gothic horror in suburbia in the age of the atom bomb and cold war paranoia. Additionally, *Seconds* is a spiritually pessimistic work of metaphysical sci-fi horror that asks the difficult question: What good is being reborn when the soul is already dead? Directed by a man who may or not be the father of bastard Hollywood hack Michael Bay (Frankenheimer denied it, claiming he took a paternity to prove otherwise when said DNA tests did not then exist), *Seconds* is a work that makes one

question whether or not, quite unlike Europe, cinematographers are the true 'auteurs' in Hollywood as it is hard for me to believe the film would be nearly as effective without James Wong Howe's signature cinematography. The closest thing to a mainstream 1960s Eraserhead, Seconds is the perfect thing to watch all alone while suffering a bout of insomnia. Forget the now somewhat outmoded and less aesthetically prestigious The Manchurian Candidate, Seconds is forever Frankenheimer's most artistically ambitious, strangely beautiful, and most memorable film.

-Ty E

CRAZY LOVE
CRAZY LOVE

Dominique Deruddere (1987)

I'm in love with Crazy Love. It was directed by Flemish director and obvious auteur Dominique Deruddere. It is no doubt he has a personal love for Crazy Love. It was one of the few masterworks of its decade (1987 release). Crazy Love is the kind of film that would most likely turnoff the most pretentious of film lovers before they even consider watching it. It makes the teen angst of a John Hughes film look like a collection of middle school pity parties. Barfly Charles Bukowski's writings are the loose basis for Crazy Love's story.

Masturbation instruction, puss filled zits, and necrophilia inspire feelings of the most forbidden love. The climax is an extremely wet one. In the end, everything still feels lighthearted despite the Crazy Love's progression into a life nihilism and nothingness. What a shame that Crazy Love hasn't gotten the recognition it undeniably deserves.

Protagonist Harry Voss experiences temporary joy through something you generally wipe your ass with. This image and dance (as seen on the film's cover art) stick out boldly. After that, life goes downhill. Harry Voss falls in love with a bottle of liquor and his path in life goes down from there.

Harry Voss swims with the stars with his crazy love. He has finally found his sleeping beauty with her unconditional love. Harry Voss from the beginning was a romantic. Eventually, he became a deity of love.

-Ty E

PHANTASM

Don Coscarelli (1979)

Over the years I have seen many horror films, many forgettable and a few unforgettable. Don Coscarelli's *Phantasm* is easily one of the most memorable horror film experiences of my life. I originally saw the strange and abstract horror film by chance during my preteen years. It was a cinematic experience I have not forgotten. I still consider *Phantasm* to be one of the greatest and most original American horror films ever made. Very few films in the horror genre have so many memorable and horrifying ingredients. I wouldn't be surprised if *Phantasm* series creator Don Coscarelli was on an Alejandro Jodorowsky film binge during the developing of *Phantasm*. It would not be the most pleasant experience to find someone you thought was dead wearing a black cloak and shrunken to dwarf size. It also would not be that fun if that same zombie dwarf was trying to kill you. The master of these putrid dwarfs in *Phantasm* is an iconic "Tall Man" played by actor Angus Scrimm. The Tall Man also uses flying spheres to drill out the blood and brains of his human victims. The Tall Man is not of this world and desires to have humans shrunken and sent to hell in slavery. The Tall Man is easily one of the more unconventional villains of the horror genre. *Phantasm* follows a young teen named Mike who is the first to suspect the evils of the Tall Man. I do have to admit that Mike can be somewhat of a turd but he means well. His brother Jody believes Mike to be slightly deranged due to the death of their parents. Jody also happens to be friends with an odd ice cream man named Reggie who loves to jam out on guitar and fight zombie dwarfs. The young men also encounter a whorish woman that likes to fuck and kill in the graveyard. One of the greatest scenes in *Phantasm* is when Mike accidentally enters the gate to another dimension and sees lines of zombie dwarfs walking to their doom. The sky in this scene is of a hellish red that reminds me of a similar sky in Federico Fellini's *Satyricon*. This "other dimension" offers a whole new world to the already horrifying setting of *Phantasm*. The film is truly one that feels like anything can happen at any moment. The Tall Man is a new kind of monster and he couldn't care less about a human's reality. *Phantasm* has spawned three sequels and there is a fifth film in the works. Sadly, *Phantasm* creator Don Coscarelli hasn't come close to capturing the power of his first *Phantasm* and channeling it into his sequels. Nonetheless, the *Phantasm* sequels are interesting as novelty but for not much more. *Phantasm* is a horror film that has an eeriness about it that I could only find similarly in the horror works of the German expressionist directors. *Phantasm* is one of the finer and truly original points of phantasmagoria in horror cinema history.

-Ty E

INCIDENT ON AND OFF A MOUNTAIN ROAD
INCIDENT ON AND OFF A MOUNTAIN ROAD

Don Coscarelli (2005)

Don Coscarelli and Angus Scrimm once again collaborated for Masters of Horror episode Incident On and Off a Mountain Road. The hour long "film" follows a feisty true feminist (not some bitch that complains about the German language being misogynistic). She is a young woman that has learned how to defend herself due to the deranged courtesy of her white nationalist/militia man husband. Later, she decides it is her turn to become barbaric. Incident On and Off a Mountain Road is a film about reversing so-called "gender roles." Angus Scrimm plays the role of a quick talking hillbilly that enjoys the gift of song. The young woman decides that she is not a fan of the hillbillies backward poetic gibberish. It is unclear whether or not the young woman is supposed to be virtuous or not. I suspect she is as we now live in the age of "girl power." I hope girl power doesn't call for the extermination of white males. It can be rest assured that Emma Goldman has secured her flaming spot in hell. The monster of Incident On and Off a Mountain Road is some sort of Aryan super monster. He's dressed for war with boots suitable for stomping heads. He acts as the ultimate test of the young woman's strength. What great Bolshevik propaganda he would have made. Incident On and Off a Mountain Road features flashbacks that ultimately lead to a climatic ending of sorts. This is the only characteristic of the film that provides any evidence that Coscarelli directed it (aside from featuring Angus Scrimm). Incident On and Off a Mountain Road is no Phantasm but it offers fans of the series something new until the fifth film is completed. I still consider the original Phantasm to be one of the greatest and most original American horror films.

-Ty E

ILSA: SHE WOLF OF THE SS

Don Edmonds (1975)

It seems for every serious holocaust film, novel, or memoir there is at least one Stalag fiction novel (otherwise known as ‘holocaust pornography’) or Nazisploitation flick, with the most curious thing about this phenomenon being that Jews are the ones that are largely responsible for this seemingly sexually schizophrenic smut. For example, Auschwitz survivor, Yehiel De-Nur, Dinoor—a man who has written extensively in Hebrew about his time concentrating in concentration camps and who testified at the (in)famous Adolf Eichmann Trial on 7 June 1961, even melodramatically collapsing while on the stand after describing the camp as the “planet of the ashes” and failing to give anymore testimony—was responsible for penning the erotically charged novella *House of Dolls* (1955) under the penname ‘Ka-Tsetnik 135633’ which was ostensibly based on the author’s sister’s experience as a sex slave in a ‘Joy Division’ (indeed, this is where the British late-1970s/early-1980s post-punk group of the same name derived their name), which was a fictional group of Jewish women in concentration camps during WWII that were forced to sexually service young Aryan soldiers. As is also depicted in the highly worthwhile, if not considerably banally assembled, documentary *Stalags* (2008) directed by Israeli filmmaker Ari Libsker—a man notorious for agitating his fellow chosenites with docs like *Circumcision* (2004), which depicts the old kosher cock-cutting ritual as highly harmful—trash pulp novels called ‘Stalag Fiction’ with pseudo-titillating titles like *I Was Colonel Schultz’s Private Bitch* featuring Jews being sadistically sexually degraded and tortured by female SS guards that were all the rage among Israeli men during the 1950s and early 1960s, but the Eichmann Trial put a stop to all that. Hell, even Otto Preminger’s epic Hollywood zio-agitprop flick *Exodus* (1960) starring Paul Newman features a scene where an aspiring Irgun terrorist played by Sal Mineo confesses he was anally pillaged by an evil Aryan butcher while he was imprisoned at Auschwitz. Of course, the Nazisploitation exploitation subgenre, which arguably began during WWII and reached its zenith around the mid-1970s with the release of *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* (1976), is easily the most high-profile example of the cultural phenomenon of the fetishization and eroticization of the SS and concentration camps. Although classic Italian art house works like Luchino Visconti’s *The Damned* (1969), Liliana Cavani’s *The Night Porter* (1974), and Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1976) were the most influential films in terms of popularizing ‘Nazi chic’ imagery and cinematic SS sadomasochism, the American exploitation effort *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* is arguably the most popular and iconic of these films, thus making it all the more curious that it was produced by kosher confederate producer David F. Friedman—a man probably best known for his collaboration with fellow Hebraic smut-peddler Herschell Gordon Lewis, including the proto-splatter flick

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Blood Feast (1963)—under the somewhat psychopathic tongue-in-cheek Teutonic pseudonym ‘Herman Traeger.’ Considering Friedman co-produced and had a small cameo in Lee Frost’s early American Nazisploitation flick Love Camp 7 (1969) co-produced and co-penned by exploitation hack Bob Cresse, it is fairly obvious where the producer got the idea for the film. An all the more dubious reworking of the formulaic women-in-prison film (WiP) exploitation sub genre, albeit set in a concentration camp (somewhat humorously the film was shot on the Los Angeles set of the POW concentration camp TV sitcom series Hogan’s Heroes), Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS, directed by exploitation hack turned Hollywood producer Don Edmonds (Wild Honey, Terror on Tour) is basically a sick joke at the expense of the viewer’s intelligence and morality that goes further than even all the movies of Jerry Bruckheimer, Michael Bay, and Steven Spielberg combined in terms of demonstrating the inexplicable lows that certain Jews are willing to go to earn a couple shekels.

Opening with a sadiſtically patronizing warning from fictional producer Herman Traeger juxtaposed with an Uncle Adolf speech that reads, “The film you are about to see is based upon documented fact. The atrocities shown were conducted as “medical experiments in special concentration camps throughout Hitler’s Third Reich. Although these crimes against humanity are historically accurate, the characters depicted are composites of notorious Nazi personalities; and the events portrayed, have been condensed into one locality for dramatic purposes. Because of its shocking subject matter, this film is restricted to adult audiences only. We dedicate this film with the hope that these heinous crimes will never occur again,” Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS purports to be a docudrama of sorts, but it ultimately makes Spielberg’s Schindler’s List (1993) seem like an objectively directed piece of cinema-vérité. Very, very loosely based on the purported WWII era crimes of female concentration camp guard Ilse ‘The Bitch of Buchenwald’ Koch, who was accused of turning Jews into lampshades and soap and whatnot, and who committed suicide in prison in 1967 while serving a life sentence, Edmonds’ pseudo-erotic celluloid excrement is not interested in the facts, but only offending, shocking, titilating, and furthering post-WWII Allied agitprop in a work that attempts to create a torture-porn-based myth in the form of a fictional, big bosomed blonde female Joseph Mengele who gets a sado-masochistic kick out of devilishly defiling and eventually killing nubile young Jewesses and testing the sexual prowess and stamina of men until she gets tired of them and has them exterminated as well. Starring as the eponymous lead, middle-aged North American Nordic babe Dyanne Thorne (Joseph W. Sarno’s Sin in the Suburbs (1964), The Erotic Adventures of Pinocchio (1971)), who began her career as a nudie cutie in pin-up mags and would eventually earn a Ph.D. in comparative religion, the film owes virtually all of its charm and charisma to its lead actress, who apparently did her fair share of reading up on Ilse Koch to prepare for the role. More of a femi-nazi than a National Socialist true believer,

Ilse believes more in the superiority of Aryan womanhood than the Aryan race as demonstrated by her remarks such as, “a well-trained woman can withstand pain longer than a man.” Indeed, as her many cruel psycho-sexual conquests with her many male concubines demonstrate, Ilse’s pussy is more powerful than a panzer tank, but her Wotan-like womanhood is ultimately tested when she meets a prestigious, sexually potent German-American POW who manages to sexually service three fiercely feisty fascist fräuleins at once.

Beginning with double-D Nazi diva Ilsa riding on some swarthy untermensch man’s cock, the anti-heroine seems somewhat sensitive initially, but that all ends after she takes a shower, declares to her subhuman male concubine, “once an prisoner has slept with me, he will never sleep with another woman again,” and proceeds to take her sex slave to a operation room/torture chamber where she has his cock cut off. Needless to say, the castrated prisoner is not exactly satisfied with the fact that he has had “the honor of sleeping with a German woman.” The real fun begins for Ilse when a bunch of female prisoners are brought in for selection, with some being sent to a ‘Joy Division’ and the others being assigned to “help the cause of medical research and therefore save thousands of lives,” with the latter group having their pussies closely shaved by sinisterly Sapphic SS guards in preparation for (anti)erotic experimentation. The same day, a group of male prisoners are shipped in and Ilse becomes smitten with a blond German-born American student named ‘Wolfe’ (Gregory Knoph), who is dismissive of his Aryan origins, stating that it is “something beyond my control.” When Ilse has the men strip and inspects their bodies, she mocks their members, stating, “you call yourself men...I see no manhood between your legs” and calls Wolfe a “bastard German,” adding, “it is clear to see that their blood is tainted.” Upon talking to a Guido named Mario, Wolfe learns that, “once he has served her, that is the end of him as a man” in regard to Ilse’s perverse proclivity towards cutting off her male concubines’ cocks. Of course, Ilsa eventually calls for Wolfe to “satisfy” her and he proclaims to the cunty Kommandant that he will “satisfy you until you beg me to stop.” As he promises, Wolfe annihilates Ilse’s nether-regions and virtually turns her into his groveling sex slave. As Wolfe explains to Mario, he is a “freak of nature” and “sort of human machine” with seeming infinite sexual stamina who learned upon reaching puberty that he could “hold back [...] all night if necessary” as long as he wanted. Convinced that “no man” can perform as Wolfe did that night before, Ilsa has the prisoner engage in a threesome with two tyrannical big titted fräulein guards, which he does with gusto. After proving his meta-SS-worthy sexual stamina, Wolfe is able to make sexual demands of Ilsa.

Meanwhile, Mario meets up with female prisoners, including tough bitch Anna (played by mulatto actor/director Mario Van Peebles’ German mother Maria Marx) and Rosette (Jacqueline Giroux), and begins plotting a prison revolt. Indeed, being forced to endure gigantic electric vibrators, syphilis injections

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the slow removal of fingernails, and electric volts to the nipples, among various other forms of inhumane treatment, the female prisoners are just dying to escape from the clutches of the crazed kraut cunt commandant, whose lard ass scientist 'Binz' (played by George 'Buck' Flower of John Carpenter's *The Fog* (1980) and *They Live* (1988)), enjoys doing extensive research on untermensch genitals. When Ilsa's lard ass goon boss the 'General' (B-movie character actor Richard Kennedy of *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975) starring Robert Mitchum and *The Buddy Holly Story* (1978)) and his small blond beast aide Richter (Lance Marshall), who bears an almost disturbingly startling resemblance to Austrian-German actor Oskar Werner, show up at the debauched death camp, the carnally cruel Kommandant must rationalize her insanely inhumane experiments, stating of her choice not to provide anesthesia during surgery, "One does not give caviar to guinea pigs." Luckily, the General thinks of Ilsa of as "some blonde goddess" and looks the other way, although, in a scene echoing the fictional story of Uncle Adolf deriving sexual pleasure from his niece urinating on his face, the SS she-bitch is forced to give her pervert boss a nice warm golden shower. On the day of the planned prison revolt, Wolfe manages to coerce Ilsa into allowing him to tie her up before they commence coitus, but instead of banging the bitch, he shoves a handkerchief in her mouth and proceeds to release all the prisoners in the camp who exterminate all their former tormentors in similarly heinous ways as they were once tortured, even though the German-American hero advises them to face the courts of the Allies. After killing virtually all the Nazi guards, nurses, and scientists, the General's aid Richter shows up in a Panzer tank with an SS brigade and liquidates virtually all of the prisoners, including Mario. Ironically, in a cynical twist ending, it is not one of her many victims (Anna tries but dies from her wounds before she can carry it out), but Richter who kills Ilsa, which he was ordered to do by SS- Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who wants no evidence that the death camp or its experiments ever took place. As Richter radios to his boss after carrying his orders out, "General, your orders have been carried out. Camp 9 has ceased to exist. You may tell the Reichsführer that the Allies will find nothing. They will never know." In the end, only Wolfe and Rosette survive.

As one could expect from a relatively successful sadistically salacious flick featuring such an iconic SS blonde beastess as the lead, *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* spawned three innately inferior sequels, including *Ilsa, Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks* (1976) directed and produced by Don Emmonds, *Ilsa, the Wicked Warden* (1977) directed by Spanish exploitation auteur/pornographer Jess Franco, and *Ilsa, The Tigress of Siberia* (1977) directed by Jean LaFleur and produced by Roger Corman and Ivan Reitman, with Dyanne Thorne reprising her role as the eponymous lead for all three films. Aside from being directed by the same non-auteur as the original film, *Ilsa, Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks* also wallows in cheap Zionist agitprop as a work where Ilsa, like some real ex-Nazi

leaders (i.e. Johann von Leers, Otto Skorzeny), teams up with an 'Islamofascist' dictator. Although amateurishly directed and a total abject insult to both the real National Socialists and their victims, as well as the German language (indeed, most of the characters sound like second-rate extras from Hogan's Heroes), *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* is shockingly effective in that, unlike most Nazisploitation and women-in-prison flicks, the film plays out in a fairly serious and thus brutal fashion that lacks the goofy and low-camp elements that give the viewer temporary relief from all the lowbrow aesthetic savagery. In other words, *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* is an ugly and sadistic film for ugly and sadistic people that reminds the viewer of what true and unadulterated exploitation cinema is all about, as a seriously sick flick that has about as much aesthetic merit as a Mexican drug cartel snuff flick. Undoubtedly, the film even makes Tinto Brass' *Salon Kitty* (1976) seem like a remake as opposed to a semi-parody of Visconti's *The Damned* (1969). Somewhat fittingly, director Don Emmonds went on to co-produce *True Romance* (1993) penned by Quentin Tarantino, who would go on to mainstream Nazisploitation via *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), thus reflecting how much society has degenerated since the release of *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS*. Indeed, when it comes down to it, *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* and its similarly psychopathic celluloid bastard spawn *Inglourious Basterds* more or less reflect the average Hollywood and public school indoctrinated American filmgoer's historical perspective regarding the Second World War and the Third Reich, thus indicating that Dr. Goebbels could have learned a thing or two from his Hebraic enemies in Hollywood, whose incessant post-WWII depiction of Adolf Hitler as the virtual devil incarnate make the titular Joseph Süß Oppenheimer of Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) seem like an eccentric old uncle by comparison. Of course, then again, it is probably more appealing to have a big breasted blonde SS she-bitch like Ilsa as a representative of the more unsavory elements of one's race and people than a swarthy rat-like schemer like *Jud Süß*.

-Ty E

SCHOOLGIRLS IN CHAINS
SCHOOLGIRLS IN CHAINS

Don Jones (1973)

Schoolgirls in Chains, or commonly known as any of the following: Girls in Chains, Abducted, or Let's Play Dead, is a 70s washout hippie excursion in exploitation and raw film stock. Starring Gary Kent of modest cult fame, Schoolgirls in Chains was adorned with the misleading title for providing verbal titillation, what, with the visual implication of jailbait in bondage, whose ears aren't ringing? The fact of the matter is that Schoolgirls in Chains has reached this low pinnacle of fame due to its parasitic behavior towards already-contrived cinema mechanisms. Such as Hitchcock's Psycho, a strong plot key of mother-ventriloquism was lifted and grafted to this schlocky film all aboard with nudity and Straw Dogs-esque "rape" in which the recipient isn't as unwilling as she might claim. With this and the bungled brother, John, whose mental deficiency doesn't inhibit his potential to select exquisite feminine figures, Schoolgirls in Chains proves to be a quite intoxicating experience in drab film-making. Surely with such lovely ladies on board, the entire production of this burnout can't be neglected, even if the narrative skips around frequently.

Calling out the misleading title for a reason, Schoolgirls in Chains does feature one student, well, at least that's referenced as such, but the near absence of chains is glaring. What instead happens is the abduction of several women throughout the run time. Schoolgirls in Chains surprised me with such. I figured that the introductory bombshell would be the pivotal character in the film, the seductress to these men's perversions. Would you imagine my shock when our heroine's backside is loaded with buckshot in non-typical meta-horror fashion. Her gorgeous, lifeless body slung on a fence, just mere feet from a road with passing automobiles. Frank is the chieftain of the household. Both he and John are victimized by "Mother's" cruel intentions. In a flashback scene referenced in Adam Sandler's The Waterboy, Frank's mother goads his fiancée with tales of how he still wets the bed. She then proceeds to alert the lady that the reason why her and Frank haven't slept together is because of the incestuous affair going on between the two. Such a shame this wasn't highlighted with a steamy vignette of motherly love. That would have driven the effect of the finale out of the park instead of on dusty VHS shelves.

Once the female student is introduced, we get a full taste of the victims below in the shed/cellar and the games John enjoys playing with his real dolls, his sex toys, if you will. Rough cuts of leapfrog, hide and seek, and the knife-power-play of doctor are all at John's service. His character is perhaps the most humorous of all included. While Frank's fate was disguised well as vengeance was anticipated, the power of malice is really captured in John's brain-dead antics. It's these films of motherly discretion towards the evils of women that really

causes waves through the male psyche - as was the case with the recently viewed *Deranged*. Once the student's teacher notices his extra-credited scholar of after-school lust is missing, he follows up on a lead which winds him up at this house of degradation. Meanwhile, Frank is bedding down a piteous woman in his mother's sun room. This scene turns from violation to an obsessive love quickly. After being dumped back in her dungeon, the sickly victim adjacent to the lover expresses her distaste for promiscuity - "Did you enjoy that? . . . Looked like you did." While *Schoolgirls in Chains* isn't groundbreaking or fashionable in any regard, it's still an exemplary piece of midnight cinema with a generous amount of nudity. Asides from the dated atmosphere, I can sense the effects of drug usage on the director Donald M. Jones' taste buds. What self-respecting director in the era of free love didn't binge on psychedelics? Especially ones that mastermind such smut as this.

-mAQ

HEROSTRATUS
HEROSTRATUS

Don Levy (1967)

After a number of months of procrastinating, I finally got around to seeing an ostensible holy grail of epic arthouse cinema, *Herostratus* (1967) directed by Australian auteur Don Levy (Time Is, The Belt and Suspenders Man), but rather unfortunately, at least as far as I am concerned, the seemingly sacred cinematic affair did not live up to its rather rich reputation as a lost masterpiece of experimental filmmaking, though I cannot say I was left bored to tears by its certainly sordid and psychodramatic celluloid storytelling. On top of being nearly impossible to see for over four decades due to being hidden away in studio vaults after being only screened a sparse number of times upon its initial release, *Herostratus* has the delightful distinction of featuring Helen Mirren in her first screen role as a satirical goddess of flesh-flaunting advertising, but the oftentimes seedy and salacious yet audaciously artfully stylized cinematic work also has more sinister secrets in its bleak back story. Centering around a young and restless Londoner suffering from an ample amount of angst and existential crisis in post-WWII Britain who, in the supposedly divine, self-immolating spirit of the Vietnamese Thích Quảng Đức Buddhist monks, decides to commit suicide as an impotent form of political protest (or so he says), but not without giving himself immortality by broadcasting his self-slaughter for the whole world to see, *Herostratus* would prove to be a piece of life reflecting art and art reflecting life as both the star of the film, Michael Gothard (Curtis Harrington's *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?*, Ken Russell's *The Devils*, Tobe Hooper's *Lifeforce*) as well as director Don Levy would commit self-slaughter in subsequent decades after the subversive socio-politically conscious cinematic work's release, thus adding an acutely accursed character to this curious celluloid feast. More of a torrid meta-physical 'trip' than *Performance* (1970) co-directed by Donald Cammell (who would also commit suicide after a lingering, lifelong obsession with death) and Nicholas Roeg, *Herostratus* may very well be the starkest and most striking yet curiously cryptic cinematic depiction of Swinging London ever made directed by a seemingly unlikely individual who earned a PhD in Theoretical Chemical Physics before becoming one of the most artistically ambitious yet transitory film directors of his zeitgeist. Filmed over the course of a five-year period on an unbelievably low budget (\$25,000.00) with help from the BFI Experimental Film Fund for what was only supposed to be a mere avant-garde short, *Herostratus* ended up being an uniquely uncompromising, innately inauspicious, and feverishly foreboding 142-minute cinematic epic of the exceedingly eccentric that expresses the empty emotions of an era engulfed in end times flavored self-worship and superfluous stardom, malicious materialism, and needless narcissism.

Taking its name from the ancient arsonist who, seeking a sort of immortal notoriety via senseless destruction of beauty, burned down the Temple of Artemis

at Ephesus in ancient Greece, Herostratus follows a scrupulously spasmodic and determinedly destitute 23-year-old poet/virgin named Max (Michael Gothard) who decides making a sardonic media spectacle out of his own self-obliteration will be the way to obtain some sort of postmortem fame and possibly even spark a national revolution. As someone who adamantly believes that no matter how hard a person works in life, they still end up, “a decomposing lump of flesh in the ground,” it seems rather odd that mad Max is interested in posthumous fame of any sort, especially when he will not be around to enjoy it, but I guess giving up one’s life is a small price to pay for those that no longer have the energy to push on. In the timeless tradition of Goethe’s *Faust*, Max makes a deranged and dubious deal with an exceedingly effete and unflatteringly plump, fat cat media advertising devil named Farson (Peter Stephens) to become a ‘marketed martyr’ of the postmodern age, thereupon romanticizing suicide in a Cobain-esque fashion. Taken somewhat seriously for what seems to be the first time in his markedly miserable life, Max is treated like a seminal Superstar where he participates in prime time TV interviews and photo sessions, but more importantly, the would-be-famous fellow finally loses his virginity and falls in love for the first time. Farson’s young and gorgeous assistant Clio (Gabriella Licudi) is apparently ordered by her rather roly-poly bastard of a boss to give Max the time of life, so naturally the clever yet oversensitive blond boy, whose curious claim that he will stoically commit self-slaughter for adoring audiences seemed decisively doubtful from the start, second thinks suicide because, after all, he’s “scared of heights” and gets “dizzy.” Farson and his advertising goon Pointer (Antony Paul) – a psychopathic poindexter who treats the perturbed poet like the latest innovative product from a prominent clean supplies company – do not like Max’s reasons for wanting to kill himself because, “they’re far too personal...negative,” so they decide to give him, “something positive, something altruistic and idealistic that the public will look up to and they’ll respect,” to commit Anglo-Saxon seppuku to or so the loyal Television viewers of London are told. When the big day comes, Max is more than a tad bit reluctant to jump off the roof for televised audiences, even after Farson reveals that Clio does not really love him but was only ordered to fuck him, so things go absurdly askew when an initially antagonistic yet ultimately altruistic man attempts to save the suicidal star’s life, thus resulting in a struggle between the two and the wrong man falling to his death from the roof. With more reasons than ever before to commit suicide, miserable Max, now on the brink of total emotional breakdown, scampers back to the proletarian ghetto from whence he came, once again failing in the game of life, but this time at the expense of an innocent individual who dared to care in a technocratic dystopia of deluded dreams and industrial decay.

Although he never goes through with the deadly deed, it is quite apparent from the start of Herostratus that Max is on the verge of some sort of mental malfunction and potential self-destruction as a sad and sorry sod who lives in

HEROSTRATUS

squalor and cannot even convince a sexually ambiguous Asian girl (the heterodox character, who literally battle cries for warfare, being most likely an allegorical representation of the West's meddlesome involvement in the Vietnam war) to abide his dandy and devilish charms. Featuring a schizophrenic celluloid storm of inter-spliced black-and-white stock-footage of Nazi concentration camps, the apocalyptic atomic bombing of Hiroshima, bloody communist revolutions, and false promises from President Truman regarding the United Nations, Herostratus depicts a failed post-WWII Britain full of growing urban decay and perverse poverty where the guiding philosophy among the collective populous is personal gain at any cost, including self-abasement. As Max explains to Clio during their wild night of romance in regard to his grand objective in committing suicide, "In a day's time, I'll be on top of the building. In the heart of London. High, high building. People down below in the street, busy street. Scurrying crowds of people. Someone will notice me up on the roof. See me standing there ready to jump. Then they'll all begin to notice. Suddenly the street gets slower and slower, and they all stop and they're all look up. "Don't jump, don't jump!" That's what they're all thinking. They're forgetting themselves for a minute and they care about me. They care that I'd just throw my life away down into the street. Then I'll jump." Of course, things do not work out exactly as planned, although a man does attempt to stop him, but nothing changes for the better in dreary London, not for Max nor anyone else, thereupon leading the viewer, myself included, to rationalize that Herostratus is a cinematic work of patent pessimism and daunting despair. Naturally, it should no surprise that many film critics believe that Herostratus had an imperative influence on Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). As Farson told him before his disastrous day of suicide, Max is, "The monumental flop of all time" and a "futile nothing" whose sincerity, freedom, and hope has never gotten him anywhere, especially in a society that puts a particular premium on material gain and superficial social prestige over merit and creativity. After all, every society gets the art it deserves or at least Don Levy certainly seemed to think so, but, unfortunately, only a few individuals, including British auteur Richard Lester (*A Hard Day's Night*, *Superman II*), took notice of Herostratus; a heated, heretical, and hermetic celluloid indictment of a spiritless capitalist system fundamentally grounded on perverse plutocratic principles that inevitably sire social alienation and collective mental illness, hence the skyrocketing popularity of antidepressant drugs in the contemporary Occidental world.

Featuring experimental cinematic still shots of macabre melting bodies inspired by Irish-born British figurative painter Francis Bacon, footage of Beat poet Allen Ginsberg from Peter Whitehead's documentary *Wholly Communion* (1965), and an idiosyncratic and oftentimes entrancing editing style inspired by the Soviet montage theories of Jewish Bolshevik filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Lev Kuleshov, Herostratus is a hysterical yet hypnotic hodgepodge of high

degenerate art of its time. Needless to say, pedophilic poofers Ginsberg's megalomaniacal performance poetry has aged less gracefully than the beat, Beat poet's physical appearance would over the next couple of decades. Of course, many segments of *Herosstratus*, including various random appearances by director Don Levy's wife Ines as a phantasmagoric lady of death in black leather with a matching umbrella who haunts Max's mind, as well as a psychedelic burlesque show mixed with a bloody bovine being brutally slaughtered, are scenes that work just as well today as they probably did upon the film's initial release. Describing the film himself as, "an intricate network of emotional references," Don Levy surely assembled an epically erratic and unsettling celluloid experience (or 'trip') as opposed to a standard linear film, even if a discernible and rather simple story lies in between. A rare arthouse artifact from Britain, *Herosstratus* is certainly worth seeing, but falls somewhat short of being a neglected 'lost masterpiece.' Still, the fact that the film is relatively unknown and even less seen (despite being available for the first time ever in home entertainment format via BFI's beautiful restoration of the film on DVD/Blu-ray), on top of the fact that both the director and star would later commit suicide, is evidence enough that *Herosstratus*' major and most potent theme – that we live in a society that does violence against the individual, especially the 'sensitive' and once-sacred artist type – has only become more relevant as the decades pass.

-Ty E

THE BEGUILED
THE BEGUILED

Don Siegel (1971)

In *The Beguiled*, Clint Eastwood has not only his strangest film but his most gynophobic film as well, to speak arbitrarily. Filmed in 1971, the same year director Don Siegel would clasp Eastwood in for another role, one 'slightly' more iconic (*Dirty Harry*), *The Beguiled* is set in the South during the end of the Civil War and features Eastwood as a wounded Yankee discovered by an in subordinate little girl, disappearing off her "prim-and-proper" school grounds and into the forest. Lucky for him, the little girl played hooky to secure some mushrooms (what awful foreshadowing) because if it hadn't been for her, Eastwood's character McBee would have been left to die in that tree. Upon acting as crutch to his near-lifeless body back to the grounds, the girl brings him home to the strictly Southern bevy of bells. They are then sent into moral disarray as they weigh their options of either turning him over to Confederate hands or harboring a fugitive, albeit a handsome one, which leads into the sinister seduction and manipulation from the hands of Eastwood's. This also portends to future games of puppetry as Eastwood allegedly insisted that darling Sondra Locke get her tubes tied. A sad fate indeed as her daughters and daughter's daughters would have been done wonders for gene pools, with the right male instrumentation, of course.

From here on out, *The Beguiled* slowly turns its head to reveal its noxious intent. The increasing jealousy and rivalries between the ladies ruminates and stews until *The Beguiled* cannot possibly contain such scorned women and instead of a suggested and respected output, the women unleash their spite and malice onto a victimized soldier. Now, before I go any further, I'd like to discuss what appears to be a large and inconclusive difference between the film adaptation and the source material Ala Thomas Cullinan's novel - originally titled *A Painted Devil*. On one of many of the novel's illustrations of *The Beguiled* it reads "A helpless man-- Eight haunted women!" when, in fact, *The Beguiled*'s cinema companion sympathizes with the repressed maidens of the estate and demonizes McBee as being a manipulator, "el seductor", and a callous male guilty of wartime savagery. Don Siegel makes for an interesting case to distort the original path sent down by the bygone succubi. In his own words, the film was to show "the basic desire of women to castrate men" but in his error to properly emulate the intended and initial game of female psychological warfare, Siegel himself near castrated the film by villainizing the victim. Regardless of the fact, although McBee regresses into a beastly nature after pampering the ladies fears with lies, *The Beguiled* still has the subversive matter-of-fact as to the inclinations of the deceitful women, all clawing for a piece of Yankee charm and sexual hospitality.

Demonstrated clearly is the wavering willpower of Eastwood's character McBee. Like most self-respecting males, only so much temptation can be endured before male virtues break and buckle. Mirroring the events of *Misery*, *The Beguiled* is essentially a hostage scenario. These conditions McBee is subjected to are the precursor for his eventual and eventful outburst in temporary violence. McBee begins the seduction of one female - a courteous friendship. This becomes an obstacle in the path of other women's intentions and desires which soon after almost results in capture from the enemy forces. *The Beguiled* also marks a reflexive turn for Clint as the duration of the film is him chasing or fending off advances from females - quite a typical turn for one of the more charismatic and stoic actors of the twentieth century. Blending with McBee's pursuit of happiness are the pasts and traumas from several of the other girls. Mainly the sordid relationship between the headmistress, her absent brother, and the Negress slave-maid who recounts a particular night of botched sexual assault. It's not McBee's fault, the hen nest thrown into disarray - the pieces and mechanics of feminine deceit were there all along. The poor soldier only acted as a catalyst to a cat fight. *The Beguiled* then stumbles into a surrealism based in reality when something very dear is snatched from him, taken on what could be considered good judgment had the embers of betrayal hadn't been stirred.

The Beguiled is a special sort of sinema, really. It holsters crude sentiments towards women but pockets them quickly before anyone notices. Elaborate fantasies are at play with the young soldier playing pawn. Diabolical pre-teens potent with hormones lash out after preemptive feelings of rejection with a nonexistent promise guiding them. I doubt the original premise, rather, the prime objective of the novel, could have been duplicated if headed by one of the Western world's biggest stars while retaining the marquee value or the career in which Clint so dutifully balanced. So for this I appreciate *The Beguiled*, regardless of its off-the-beaten-path way of being rewritten. Clint Eastwood plays a certain kind of devil, one that is quick to be crucified by women for means of survival by seduction but these misguided firecrackers refuse to address the real issue here -- escape. *The Beguiled* doesn't bare a happy ending nor a real ending at all. In essence, it is just a continuation of strict regiment, a simple toss towards reform. *The Beguiled* isn't just important. It is really an eye-opener. The peculiar way in which it is filmed will leave you assuming McBee is just a monster, man at his most primitive. Perhaps even thirsty for vengeance but you couldn't be farther from the truth. He stood, he coped, he understood. Most importantly, he was grateful. And look where McBee wound up. *The Beguiled* stands adamant with a lesson to be learned. I just hope you weren't blind enough to miss it.

-mAQ

WHITE OF THE EYE
WHITE OF THE EYE

Donald Cammell (1987)

While most fans of his work would ultimately agree that his directorial debut *Performance* (1970) – a counter-culture cult classic he co-directed with British auteur Nicholas Roeg (*The Man Who Fell to Earth*, Track 29) – was the greatest film of the ill-fated Scottish filmmaker's career, painter-turned-filmmaker Donald Cammell (*Demon Seed*, *Wild Side*) would still manage to direct one of the most aesthetically artful and underrated serial killers flicks ever made, *White of the Eye* (1987), before he committed suicide by shooting himself in the head in 1996. Based on the the virtually unknown novel *Mrs. White* (1987) written by conservative mystery novelists Andrew and Laurence Klavan (but released under transsexualized pen name "Margaret Tracy") and co-penned by the director's young Asian wife China Kong (daughter of Chinese actress Anita Loo), who also appears in the film in a small role and who the filmmaker started a romantic relationship with when she was still jail bait (they got married when she was 18 and he was already 44!), *White of the Eye* follows a suave and strapping family man who also happens to moonlight as a psychopathic killer with an unquenchable thirst for murdering beautiful women in a rather ritualistic fashion in an aesthetically and thematically subversive cinematic work featuring magnificent murder scenes that could be described as a totally transcendental form of celluloid high art. As someone who began his career as a society portrait painter, Cammell lends a certain refinement to the kaleidoscopic kill scenes, thus making for a rare cinematic work where a curious combination of beautiful broads, buckets of blood, and barbaric brutality make for a singularly breathtaking cinematic experience of the luxurious libertine sort that will make more than a marginal portion of viewers ashamed at themselves for basking in the bloodlustful show. In fact, *White of the Eye* wantonly yet wondrously wallows in moral dubiousness, so much so that wife of the malevolent anti-hero refuses to turn in her man after learning that he is a murderously misogynistic, coldblooded killer, which upset certain female audience members at a 1988 UCLA screening due to what they saw as implausible and totally unthinkable, thus director Cammell responded with the following explanation, "I thought it would be more interesting to have her deeply in love and, when she realized he was a psychopath, forced to decide whether to abandon him, or hang on in there and confront him with it and continue to love him, even up to the point where it degenerates in bestiality." Indeed, aside from being an uncommonly sexual and succulently stylized serial killer flick, *White of the Eye* is a morbidly dark romance full of psychosexual passion and perversity that portrays the killer as an executioner of both love and life as an aberrant, ultra-masculine Don Juan figure who never ceases to charm, even up until the erotically-charged, explosive ending and a work described by director Donald Cammell as an, "artistic study of man's need to destroy."

Paul White (David Keith) may seem like a dumb hick upon a superficial glance, but he is really a cultivated country boy who loves the music of Mahler just as much as he loves murdering wild beasts and resplendent mistresses and whose murder scenes are described by an art connoisseur of a police detective as being like, "post-cubist Picasso." A respected sound expert who installs hi-fi stereo systems in the mansions of wealthy patrons in the Arizona desert, Paul has the perfect modus operandi for slaughtering opulent women in their own homes, but, rather unfortunately, he owns a rare pair of truck tires that ultimately link him to a crime scene where the same tread marks as his own are found by police in the dirt driveway of a mutilated woman's home. The genetic son (inherited "taints" are a secondary theme of the film) of a criminal embezzler, Paul began his life as a juvenile delinquent with a rap sheet a mile long, but over the years he became both more intellectual yet viciously visceral, henceforth making an art of killing. Unfortunately for him, Paul managed to fall in love with a New York City chick named Joan (Cathy Moriarty) who he did not have the desire to exterminate when looking into the white of her eyes, thus he eventually married her and they had a daughter. Paul met Joan when she and her then-boyfriend Mike DeSantos (Alan Rosenberg) were travelling through Arizona and both of the NYC natives become intrigued by the strikingly stoic, red-blooded redneck. Naturally, considering Mike is a cosmopolitan beta-male who postures himself as an urban bad boy, Joan falls head over heels in love with true blue bad ass Paul – a macho psychopath with a devilish charm who literally has gorgeous women begging to bone him. Although Paul has most of the townspeople from his Arizona hometown vouching for his personal integrity and professionalism, the suave serial killer has a black policeman named Detective Charles Mendoza (Art Evans) on his back who is a dilettante art critic who can detect his bloody artistic signature, not to mention trouble from his wife's ex-boyfriend Mike and a wealthy and wanton mistress who is looking for a booty call. Detective Mendoza brings both Paul and Joan in for questioning, but the killer has an alibi in the form of supposedly spending an erotic evening with his mistress, thus causing his wife to learn about his extramarital infidelity in the process.

Like any great method actor caught in a serious shitstorm, Mike begs for forgiveness from Joan, but she inevitably finds the souvenir body parts of his victims hidden under their bathtub. Not unsurprisingly, Paul loses his cool and reveals his nihilistic philosophy and anti-woman Weltanschauung after being revealed to be a lurid ladykiller, proclaiming to his petrified wife, "This is scientific fact. You see, the female of the species is the main reason that evolution is turned inside out." In a state of megalomaniacal messianic fever, Paul also proclaims to be the "chosen" one who has been sent to put the fairer sex "out of their misery." Blinded by love, Joan blames herself for Paul's insanity, stating, "I must have made you feel all alone" and she even makes the mistake of neglecting to report her pathologically homicidal husband's sinister crimes to the police. Not

WHITE OF THE EYE

long after, Paul becomes totally berserk and covers his face with red paint that makes him look like some sort of unhinged Apache samurai and decides he must kill his wife and daughter. The mother and daughter escape, but Paul eventually finds Joan in an abandoned quarry, but ex-boyfriend Mike rescues her and takes the serial killer hostage, thus resulting in a final showdown between the two diametrically opposed men: one being a deracinated and decadent city boy who would perish if he had to spend a month surviving on his instincts in the woods and the other being a primal warrior with a wolfish lust for blood who is trapped in the wrong millenium. In the end, Joan seems more perturbed by the fact she never truly understood Mike than the fact he was a bestial manhunter who killed countless women and attempted to kill her and their daughter.

Indeed, like serial killer anti-hero Mike, *White of the Eye* director Donald Cammell was a sexually promiscuous man who had a proclivity for charming and cheating on countless women and eventually going out in a blaze of glory by his own hand. In fact, despite the fact that his biographers said there is no evidence to support it, apparently Mr. Cammell, like one of Paul's victims, watched himself die after he requested his wife China put a mirror up to his face during his final moments of life after putting a bullet in his brain. And, of course, one cannot forget during the final moments of *White of the Eye*, Paul boasts to his weaker adversary that, "I did something with my life. I left my mark," and I am sure Cammell felt the same way after directing one of the most aesthetically subversive and morally ambiguous serial killer films ever made that is in the philosophical spirit of thinkers as diverse as Robert Ardrey, Georges Bataille, and Aleister Crowley (whose lap Cammell sat on as a little boy as he was a friend of his father), even if he only managed to direct a mere four feature-length cinematic works during his near four decades as a filmmaker. As someone who was apparently enamored with Apache Indian legends, Cammell offered the following meaning for the title of the film, which was taken from a Southern Athabaskan phrase, and, in turn, his intended effective he hoped the work would have on the filmgoers, "the phrase "white of the eye" described those who look too closely into the eye of violence and how being a witness leaves a mark upon the viewer." Unfortunately, Donald Cammell, an apparently arrogant 'artiste' who self-destructively destroyed more film projects than actually fulfilling them during his relatively short life, would never and will probably never get his due as a fierce and formidable auteur, but as Robert Cettl wrote in his book *Serial Killer Cinema* (2003) regarding *White of the Eye*, "Like *The Stepfather*, it was a genuinely disturbing thriller that was considered to have been unfairly overlooked in the wake of such 'safe' thrillers as *Fatal Attraction* and *Jagged Edge*." Of course, as a work that portrays a rural rebel as a cultivated and sophisticated killer as opposed to a half-retarded coward that resents city folk and makes them 'squeal like a pig' while getting bugged in the bum, as well as a film that portrays all women as more desiring of virile and violent European-American apha-males

as opposed to scrawny and sarcastic NYC Semite-like beta-males any day of the week, *White of the Eye* does not exactly feature the sort of propagandistic conventions that tend to be utilized by Hollywood, thus it was naturally shunned by lesser men. Undoubtedly, after watching *White of the Eye*, one gets the feeling that Hannibal Lecter was hardly a real man.

-Ty E

WILD SIDE
WILD SIDE

Donald Cammell (1995)

Admittedly, the first time I saw Scottish libertine auteur Donald Cammell's cinematic swansong *Wild Side* (1996), I could see why the film drove him to commit suicide, as I felt it was an ugly film about ugly people doing ugly things with the aesthetic, thematic, and erotic potency of the sort of second rate Abel Ferrara flick and certainly not a film worthy of being held in such high esteem as the director's previous films *Performance* (1970), *White of the Eye* (1987), or even *Demon Seed* (1977), but I recently decided to give the work a second look as I have come to appreciate the ill-fated filmmaker's work all the more as the years have past and a film depicting Christopher Walken as a sexually degenerate money launderer surely cannot be half bad, yet, I am sad to say my opinion has hardly changed. According to Cammell's young wife China Kong, who wrote the short story the film was based on, as well as co-writing the script, just as she did for his previous feature *White of the Eye*, the reason she and her damned director husband decided to tackle *Wild Side* (originally titled "The Grey Area") was because they, "wanted to understand financial people. One of Donald's best friends [Ben Jacober] was a banker for Rothschilds, so he was familiar with this mentality to an extent. It was a bit of a send up, to tell you the truth, of financial people, of our understanding of them." Indeed, if one thing is sure about the 'financial people' of *Wild Side*, aside from the fact they are parasitic perverts of the strikingly soulless sort whose sexual degeneracy is only transcended by their love of cash, it is they are totally incapable of sustaining any semblance of a normal romantic relationship, which, not unsurprisingly, can also be said of director Donald Cammell – a pathological philanderer of the first order who was apparently known to charm both women and even men into his bed. Probably more importantly, Cammell directed *Wild Side* as a 'gift' to his young wife China (who was 26 years younger than her husband), but, ultimately, the director felt he failed thus contributing to his somewhat predictable suicide. Of course, it was when Cammell was fired from *Wild Side* (after a cut of the film had already been sent to Cannes) and taken over by producers and edited into a piece of totally tasteless second rate celluloid erotica (which originally aired on HBO in 1995 with the director being credited as "Franklin Brauner") that he was thrown off the deep end and put a bullet in his brain on 24 April 1996. Apparently, the producers of *Wild Side* felt Cammell and his editor Frank Mazzola's original cut was too "arty" and Hebraic producer Elie Cohn, like a true smut-peddler, concluded the flash-cuts featured in the film were, "fucking up a perfectly fine lesbian scene." In tribute to Cammell and to fulfill his original cinematic wet dream, Mazzola and the director's widow China released a posthumous "director's cut" of *Wild Side* that was critically revered, but, personally, I think it is a bit a of puffery to describe the film as anything remotely worthy of being de-

scribed a masterpiece, unless the idea of Christopher Walken buggering a buff brown bohunk pleases you. Make no mistake about it, *Wild Side* is a work of would-be-high-class trash where one is supposed to believe that Sapphic miscegenation makes for the most of truest of loves and that sex and power are one in the same.

In *Wild Side*, sex, money, and power are indistinguishable from one another and those with money are doing the fucking and those without it are getting fucked. Towards the conclusion of the film, hotshot money launderer Bruno Buckingham (Christopher Walken) – a repugnant yet unintentionally humorous creep who incessantly sports silk pajamas as some sort of Guido-like Hugh Hefner, except with long black hair and a more honest sense of sleaziness – goes to sodomize his brutish underling and denies he is a homosexual stating, “This is not about sex, it’s about power,” as if he is some sort of pussy-deprived prison inmate who is desperate to stick his dick in a warm hole and needs an argument to rationalize his latent homo side. And, indeed, batshit crazy Bruno loves to demonstrate his power by buying high-dollar callgirls, thus leading him to a fateful meeting with Sapphic seductress Alex Lee (played by then-unknown, pre-dyke Anne Heche) – a loan officer in Foreign Accounts at a Long Beach bank who moonlights as a pricey prostitute under the pseudonym Johanna so she can pay her mortgage. Bruno takes an instant liking to Alex’s saucy attitude upon their first ‘date,’ but suspects she might be an “FBI slut” of some sort, so he orders his chauffeur Tony (Steven Bauer of *Scarface* (1983)), who is really a FBI agent looking to bust his ‘boss’ and bust a load in his boss’ whores, to drive her back to her hotel and try to screw her (apparently Feds only screw the ‘big dicks’ and not the ‘little dicks’), which she declines to do. Being a conspiring cop with seemingly unlimited resources, Tony finds Alex’s address and surprises her when she gets home and rampantly rapes her from behind in a most domineering fashion, but makes the seemingly idiotic mistake of mentioning, aside from being a devout Catholic with immense guilt who is looking to save his soul, his true profession as a federal agent in the process. Not long after, Alex starts a sexual relationship with Bruno’s ex-wife/girlfriend Virginia (Joan Chen of David Lynch’s *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991) and *Lust, Caution* (2007) directed by Ang Lee) – a bisexual Chinese woman (modeled after Cammell’s wife China, who made out with potential lead actress during screen tests for *Wild Side*) who was raised in a convent – thus ushering in a cryptic-Ménage à trios. Alex is ordered by Tony (who can bust her as a prostitute) to expect an Asian woman (Virginia) to open an account at her bank job because Bruno is using her as a way to recover \$169 million dollars (a special number that makes for an all time low in the filmmaker’s ‘symbolism’) he has in an inaccessible account and wants to use the new dummy account setup by his ex-wife to somehow transfer it to a foreign account. Indeed, Alex bumps into Virginia at the bank, but before they know it, they passionately embrace and the frigid loan officer realizes she is really

WILD SIDE

a lipstick lesbian and falls in love with the yellow woman, hence her disgust with dicks of both the literal and figurative sort. Bruno continues to bugger Alex and also uses her as his 'protégé' in getting back his \$169 million, but things go awry when she admits to Virginia that she is a prostitute who is also banging her ex-husband, thus resulting in the East Asian erotomaniac's failed attempt at suicide via drug overdose. Bruno later catches Tony trying to rape Alex, so he tries to rape the rapist, but Virginia shows up after awakening from her suicide-inspired slumber and aborts the homoerotic anal invasion. Alex and Virginia make up and plot an escape overseas with the money and live a luxurious life as lesbian lovers, but Bruno and Tony have different plans.

Frankly, it is hard for me to think of another film with such an unsympathetic cast of characters as *Wild Side* – one of only a handful of films where I was rooting for the grizzly and ungodly deaths of all the characters in the film via AIDS or drive-by shooting. Aesthetically and thematically speaking, *Wild Side* is indisputably Donald Cammell's most artistically vapid work and features next to nil of the references to art, culture, and philosophy that his previous films are famous for as a work that, in terms of artistic integrity and genuine eroticism, does not even compare to the masterpieces of the Golden Age of Porn, like *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) and *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (1976). Almost entirely set in shadowy and darkened rooms, *Wild Side* has a strikingly superficial set-up that resembles the sort of direct-to-DVD neo-noir flicks that no one has ever seen, so it should be no surprise few know of Cammell's cinematic swansong today. Admittedly, Christopher Walken gives a top-notch performance in *Wild Side* that seems to be a perverse parody of the sleazy and psychopathic gangster roles he is best known for, but it is hard to overlook his aesthetically-degrading dirty old man wardrobe and repulsive midlife crisis cool guy haircut. To her credit, Anna Heche is quite convincing as a conspiring cunt-licker of a cunt and Joan Chen is not half bad either as a chinky 'cunning linguist,' but that does not change the fact that I found *Wild Side* about as interesting as a filler episode of *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) or *Boardwalk Empire* (2010–present). Of course, I can respect Cammell for attempting to portray banksters as debauched as possible, but I sincerely doubt any member of the Rothschild family can 'assert' himself like Mr. Walken, even when he has a retarded 12-year-old boy grunge haircut, but I don't find it far-fetched that money launderer's kosher cocks gets hard for cash and buying high dollar goy gals.

Indeed, it is nothing short of a shame that Cammell killed himself for *Wild Side* – a film that would have never reached the level of cinematic greatness he had hoped for, no matter how many jaded jump-cuts and fetishistic flashback sequences editor Frank Mazzola added to the film as you cannot polish a turd, especially one aspiring to be extra-erotic. But then again, if my wife was a woman whose idea for a film was about a mixed-race lesbian couple who kick two alpha-males' asses and whatnot, I would probably have more problems than getting the

final cut for an over-stylized softcore flick with sub-witty dialogue and would-be-wild-and-wanton imagery. If one learns anything from *Wild Side*, it is that banking turns Jews and wasps into cosmopolitan cuckolds of Chinese femme fatales. Banker or not, it seems director Donald Cammell fell under the same spell for salacious and Sapphic soy sauce and it seems to have affected his judgment as a filmmaker because who can say with a straight face that the self-slaughtering Scotsman gave his greatest 'performance' with *Wild Side*!?

-Ty E

SAVAGE VENGEANCE
SAVAGE VENGEANCE

Donald Farmer (1993) Exploitation is the art of exploiting something. Common sense, right? Many classic exploitation films have paved the way for bigger and better things, slowly nulling away at the censors and the MPAA so the rating systems aren't as harsh. Back in the 70's, if a film like Hostel were to come out, hysteria would ensue. I thank films like I Spit on Your Grave, Ms. 45, and Cannibal Holocaust. Not Savage Vengeance. Savage Vengeance (AKA I Will Dance on Your Grave) is a loose sequel of sorts, to the Meir Zarchi film I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE, also starring Camille Keaton, only credited as Vickie Kehl. I guess even she knew what she had gotten herself into. These films are a marvel due to the explicit matter at stake and the exposure of extreme sexual deviance and violence. We have none of this throughout the film except for the non-climactic ending. A decent chainsaw-to-head scene is all we are treated to for bearing this horrid picture. Normally i tend to stay away from storyline events in hopes of you witnessing the film for yourself, but in order to spare you readers, i will discuss the beginning. We have the dashing Mrs. Keaton parking her car in an abandoned wooded glen. She goes near a waterfall, lays on a rock, reads a magazine, and falls asleep. We then see another car pull up. OH NO! The evil white men are here with their leather jackets and 80's hair. They know she is there for some odd reason, and sneak up on her in a scene reminiscent to children's board game "Don't Wake Daddy!". After the guys hold her down and rape her full clothed?!, they run away leaving her scarred for 4 years until she gets raped again. That's right. She gets raped with clothes fully intact. Even Torched did the revenge scenes amazingly better. The acting is among some of the most heinous acting ever committed to film. Low budget is not an excuse for low quality. This might be one of the worst films i have ever seen. Need i mention the directors incompetence to spell the title from during the opening credits?

-Maq

LET ME DIE A WOMAN

Doris Wishman (1977)

Admittedly, I have not dug particularly deep into the exceedingly seedy, sleazy, and shitty sexploitation works of jaded Jewess 'auteur' Doris Wishman (*Gentlemen Prefer Nature Girls*, *Bad Girls Go to Hell*), but *Let Me Die a Woman* (1977) aka *Strange/Her*—a quasi/pseudo-documentary about trannies, transsexuality, and sex-change operations—is the only film she directed that I was actually able to finish without giving up due to sheer and utter boredom. Advertised as “A Hygiene Film” with the less than titillating tagline “It’s about real people...,” *Let Me Die a Woman* is an X-rated exploitation film terribly disguised as a serious medical documentary narrated by a purported real doctor of medicine and featuring interviews with real transvestites, but also featuring sensationally contrived ‘docudrama’ pseudo-porn scenes of so-called chicks with tiny tits and flaccid pricks engaging in amazingly banal ‘erotic’ scenes with ostensibly heterosexual men. Directed by a wanton and artistically whimsical woman who was also responsible for marvelously mediocre hardcore porn flicks like *Satan Was a Lady* (1975) and *Come With Me, My Love* (1976) starring the supremely grotesque lesbo Jewess porn star Annie Sprinkle, *Let Me Die a Woman* goes so far as even featuring a cameo from Hebraic porn star Harry Reems of *Deep Throat* (1972) and *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973) infamy, thus making no bones about discrediting its own moral and scientific integrity as a film that was meant for selling tickets to perverted scopophiles and not as a sincere “how-to” guide on the phenomenon of transsexuality and those rather unfortunate and seemingly biologically schizophrenic souls who are so dearly convinced they have the mind and soul of a woman that they become willing eunuchs and guarantee that they will never have a chance to receive a sexual orgasm ever again in their lives. Narrated and guided by a supremely shady Judaic fellow named Dr. Leo Wollman, a man described in the documentary as a “MD, PhD...doctor, surgeon, psychologist, minister, medical writer...A man uniquely qualified to help us understand this phenomenon,” *Let Me Die a Woman* features not only the unclad bodies of chicks with boobs and balls that are perversely prodded by the heeb Herr Döktor in question, but actual bloody and relatively brutal footage of penises being butchered and inverted during ‘sexual reassignment’ surgery. While describing *Let Me Die a Woman* as a disturbing piece of lowbrow ‘aesthetic terrorism’ would be too generous of a description for this bottom-of-the-barrel piece of accidentally eccentric exploitation cinema, director Doris Wishman certainly deserves backhanded credit for having the macabre gall to exploit some of the most deleteriously disturbed and self-destructive individuals that make up humanity.

“Imagine if you can what it is like to be a woman imprisoned in the body of a man...or a man trapped in the body of a woman,” or so says the narrator of

LET ME DIE A WOMAN

Let Me Die a Woman regarding the transsexual, a person, to once again quote the film, that must have had something along the lines of a “monstrous, biological joke played on him or her.” Our guide for the documentary is Dr. Leo Wollman (apparently a real doctor whose practice was in an urban ghetto), a supposed Renaissance man in regard to the postmodern tranny condition, and he has a special sensitivity towards speaking in detail about and exaggeratedly prodding his poor patient’s genitals in a most dubious manner. Despite the rather repulsive quack doc being the main narrator of the degenerate doc, a Puerto Rican ‘chick’ named Leslie who had her dick cut off is the true star power of Let Me Die a Woman. Indeed, Leslie is a real male-to-female transvestite who has natural looking breasts and had he/r penis cut off and surgically reconstructed into a vagina of sorts. Undoubtedly, Leslie is an extremely flamboyant individual who looks like she could be an extra from Paul Morrissey’s *Mixed Blood* (1984) and has an eccentric and intemperate Latina diva tranny essence not unlike John Leguizamo’s character “Ruby” from Danny Leiner’s *Time Expired* (1992), thus providing a bit of comic relief in an inane piece of pseudo-science. Of course, what is most sensational about Let Me Die a Woman, aside from its real footage of cock-chopping sex-changes being performed, is the various exploitative sex and gore scenes based on ‘true’ stories, including cock-to-cock spooning between man and transwoman and an extremely absurd, Milligan-esque dramatization of a desperate military man turned carpenter stoically dismembering his own dick via chisel in desperation in a scene that looks like an outtake from the classic rape and revenge flick *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978). In making his argument for the importance of sex reassignment surgery, Wollman matter-of-factly states, “some transsexuals live their entire lives as men. They are ineffective sexually, socially, and are usually failures in all of their undertakings because they are so very insecure.” In terms of ‘hard science,’ one learns while watching Let Me Die a Woman that during a male-to-female sex change, the testicles are thrown away and the penis of the patient is simply inverted/turned inside out, thus acting as a pseudo-vaginal canal. Of course, as degenerate doc Wollman explains in regard to the man-made vagina, “one disappointing feature is the absence of lubricating fluid, because the glands that produce this fluid cannot be transplanted,” so naturally it is quite some time before a man-turned-woman can try their new genitals out after surgery. Wollman explains one rather disgusting story of a desperate dude who got a sex-change in Casablanca and was eager to use ‘her’ new beaver and did so too soon, thus she needed surgery to fix the damage done. When Leslie had sex for the first time as a new woman with a German fellow, she was lucky that her boy toy assumed he was the lucky one to pop her cherry due to the blood that came out of her designer vagina and never suspected that she was really born a he. In the end, the feisty faux-female Leslie, whose crudely charming character could not have been contrived by a filmmaker as innately talentless as Doris Wishman, seems like the only believable person in Let Me Die

a Woman.

In German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's highly personal (he made it after the suicide of his boyfriend Armin Meier) avant-garde masterpiece *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), one is exposed to a desperately perturbed protagonist named Erwin/Elvira Weishaupt who, although once a married man and father that was never even an active homosexual nor interested in becoming a woman, decided to get his penis cut off in Casablanca after randomly falling in love with a rich yet sadistic Jewish businessman/holocaust survivor. In the end, Elvira's sex-change does nothing to change her would-be-lover's mind and s/he ultimately commits suicide as a person who failed to find happiness both as a male and female, thus acting in stark contrast to the false hope that *Let Me Die a Woman* haphazardly attempts to offer in regard to sex-changes. According to one 2010 study, 41% of American transsexuals have attempted suicide, thus *In a Year of 13 Moons* does not seem all that extreme in its depiction of a butcher who had their genitals butchered in the hope of changing their lives and inevitably committed self-slaughter as a last resort after realizing what a drastic mistake s/he made regarding the sex-change. The reality is that no person born a man can ever truly be an authentic woman as males and females are innately genetically different in that men have one X and one Y chromosome and females merely have two X chromosomes and no Y chromosomes. While *Let Me Die a Woman* pretends, quite transparently, to be seemingly sympathetic to its mixed-up subjects, as gay far-leftist film critic Thomas Waugh wrote in a 1978 review of the film with regard the star Leslie, "a young Puerto Rican woman...tells an engaging story of growing up in biological "prison" within a large, poor family and a macho culture. But an offhand remark that if she had any children she wouldn't want them to be gay suddenly explodes a mass of contradictions that the film is trying to avoid." Indeed, if anything is learned while watching *Let Me Die a Woman*, it is that being a transsexual makes for a miserable existence, so much so that it pushes some to destroying their ability to experience sexual pleasure and sexually reproduce. That being said, if Doris Wishman should be remembered for anything, it is for being the sleaziest and most parasitical female filmmaker who has ever lived and with *Let Me Die a Woman* being her odious magnum opus.

-Ty E

HAUNTEDWEEN
HAUNTEDWEEN

Doug Robertson (1991)

If you have noticed the multiple attempts at restoring that 80s vibe to horror films recently, raise your hand. I for one, am getting tired of this chain reaction trend. The only film that captured the vibe in both retro and contemporary portions was Ryan Nicholson's Gutterballs. In the early 90s, DIY film makers in a college town of Kentucky decided to create a horror movie which double served as a nice throwback to rental titles and a satire of the classic slasher film. The result is the much abhorred Hauntedween, which is strictly a film you will love or loathe. A group of fraternity brothers find out their debt is due and their brotherhood is about to be foreclosed. Years ago, a very creepy child named Eddie beheaded a little girl and escaped with his mother into the woods. After they target Eddie's old house for a Halloween haunted house fundraiser, Eddie comes back with murder and mayhem planned for this very special night of ghouls & beasts. Things mix fluently into a hybrid of PCU, The Last House on Dead End Street, and Carpenter's Halloween. The result is horrifying micro budget with a cast of real southerners. If you can handle this type of film, the payoff is wealthy and generous. Older Eddie is mainly seen from the back until minutes before the credits roll. His bulky figure and Brock Samson mullet are setting fire to every no-no in the world of fashion and he couldn't care less. As a villain, stating that his character was under-developed would be a horrible play on words. You know nothing of his character, nor what sparked his murderous rage. The opening scene of the younger Eddie reminds me heavily of Bad Ronald, a film that no doubt lent some inspiration. But as far as satire's go, this film strikes the slasher genre where it hurts; inadvertently or not. Many locals of the college actually participated in the film. As bad as the acting is, what's grand is the fact that these are real students wearing real attire. The real treat is the hilarious character who is a mix of Crispin Glover and Tim Blake Nelson on Ritalin. It's a sad view of the educational system, fiction or not. I like to believe that Hauntedween is a big "fuck you" to the rural backdrop of Kentucky. That gives the film a lot more to go off of other than the obvious sensationalism of violence shown as Eddie murders kids in front of a cheering crowd as they believe what they're witnessing a performance. How many other film can you witness a 6'4 man hitting someones head clean off with a Louisville Slugger? Hauntedween will no doubt go down in history as "that one atrocious film by those rednecks", but I can pull more out of the film than just what people choose to see. That, and the fact that this film had a very effective "scare" scene that made my heart skip a beat (Cleverly waited for my defense's to go down to ambush). What you're getting is a horror gem in every sense of the word. A true horror film with every ounce of independent spirit. Welcome to the House of Horrors!

Hauntedween on DVD exclusively at wtfdvds.com

-mAQ

C.H.U.D.
C.H.U.D.

Douglas Cheek (1984)

You go into C.H.U.D. knowing it's a bad movie and you accept it. You brace for impact and let the experience soak into your pores. One problem - There's not enough to actually guarantee entry into your skin or pupils. C.H.U.D. (Cannibalistic. Humanoid. Underground. Dwellers.) is a disappointing film, really. It has the structure of being a true cult classic but doesn't meet you halfway and leaves you stranded with protruding budget factors.

C.H.U.D. has had the immense pleasure of being referred to on every pop culture force from The Simpsons to The Critic to Tom Green. The influence of the early eco-horror film is widespread and I really don't know why. It's not that it's a bad film, it just lacks anything that separates it from the bulk. The stars of the film are the mutants and we don't have enough of them. With a small budget, on screen groups of C.H.U.D. are hard to come by. Near the end we get a group of 3 or so in the same shot. It was a godsend but didn't save the film. This "B" movie features Home Alone alumni Daniel Stern as a greasy scam artist turned humanitarian and some photographer who was meant to be the main character but didn't present enough presence to differentiate him from other secondary characters. The C.H.U.D. are displayed with perfection. Slimy and wide eyed mutated creatures from beneath New York's streets makes for a great story to be told. It's quite enchanting that the C.H.U.D. look like Piccolo. Well, more so than the albino vampire that is Piccolo in the new Dragonball live action film. C.H.U.D. is a bad film but in it's defense I will admit to enjoying the film greatly for its monster mash charm and is a great film to compliment the Halloween festivities. The incredibly slow pacing and cyanide laden dialogue makes the film turn for the worst but it rebounded slightly by mayhem thanks to an early John Goodman cameo and a great political conspiracy sub-plot. A worthy 80s monster cheese that doesn't touch the luridness of Street Trash.

-mAQ

THE DEADLY SPAWN

Douglas McKeown (1983)

After reexamining the classic Lovecraftian stop-motion-animation-driven horror flick *Equinox* (1970), I got the impulse to watch some more low-budget homemade horror with primitive special effects, and after referencing Stephen Thrower's *NIGHTMARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* (2007), I figured that I would check out *The Deadly Spawn* (1983) directed by one-time auteur turned 'queer' writer Douglas McKeown. Ostensibly a rip-off or Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) as indicated by its marvelously moronic alternate titles like *Return of the Aliens: The Deadly Spawn*, *Return of the Alien's Deadly Spawn*, and *The Alien's Deadly Spawn*, McKeown's film, which apparently cost only about \$27,000 to make, is really a fan-boy fantasy come to life and I mean that in the best possible way, as it is more or less an all-amateur production where genuine love and nostalgia for the horror genre was really what got the film made. Indeed, much like the kid character Charles in the film, director McKeown spent his childhood years experimenting with horror make-up and attempting to scare his neighbors with his crude creations, which certainly will not surprise anyone that watches *The Deadly Spawn*, as the film is a virtual filmic love letter to the horror and sci-fi films of yesteryear, albeit dripping with the sort of blood and guts that were beginning to dominate genre films at the time it was released. Notably, the one thing that the film does have in common with *Alien* is that the eponymous extraterrestrials have a certain glaring phallic quality to them that is even more flagrant than Scott's work, which is curious considering that the director is a wide-receiver on the pink team and almost certainly had no fear of big giant cocks, but then again McKeown had trouble with the man behind the curious looking monsters, special effects man and associate producer John Dods, who managed to get him fired at the end of production after bitching to swindler producer Ted A. Bohus. Featuring a cast of strikingly sapless suburbanites that all seem to suffer from some sort of mental illness on the autism spectrum, *The Deadly Spawn* also makes for an interesting work in that it unwittingly exposes how supremely socially retarded what one might describe as the 'Star Wars generation' was. Indeed, I was more perturbed by the characters and their defective behavior than by the giant teathed cocks and sperms from outerspace. Featuring a revoltingly pedantic balding teenage science dork that seems like a castrated middle-aged community college professor as the would-be main protagonist and a prepubescent boy as the only character with any sense or testicular fortitude, *The Deadly Spawn* is, aside from the special effects, most potent as a piece of suburban impotence. Indeed, even for a horror film, McKeown's work is loaded with a number of socially and physically inept spastics who cannot seem to be able to wipe their own asses without suffering some sort of major trauma.

THE DEADLY SPAWN

It all happens when a meteor falls to earth in suburban New Jersey and two hapless teenage dorks camping out in the woods are killed when a mysterious life form emerges from the rock. From there, the aliens invade the basement of married couple Sam (James Brewster) and Barb (Elissa Neil), who have two sons, including a seemingly autistic horror and sci-fi obsessed preteen named Charles (Charles George Hildebrandt) and a preposterously pedantic high school science major named Pete (Tom DeFranco). Also temporarily residing at the house are homely lady Aunt Millie (Ethel Michelson) and her psychoanalyst husband Uncle Herb (John Schmerling), who seems to have an obsession with little Charles' all-consuming horror fetish. The morning after the meteor landing, Sam and Barb wake up early so they can get ready for vacation. Since it is raining outside, Sam decides to check the basement for flooding and is soon swallowed up by some unseen creature. Naturally, Barb eventually goes down in the basement to look for her hubby and is soon perturbed to see blood on the ceiling light. Of course, Barb is in for a big surprise when she feels her husband's hand on her back and turns around, only to discover her spouse's dismembered limb in the mouth of a large semi-phallic-like creature with long sharp pointy teeth that immediately rips her face off and kills her. While Aunt Millie hears the screams of Barb, she assumes it is from some horror film that little Charles is watching. With a note left behind by Barb about leaving for vacation, Aunt Millie does not expect there to be two thoroughly dismembered corpses and an alien monster in the basement.

As ironically announced by a DJ on a radio in the kitchen while most of the family is downstairs during the morning, "It looks like it is going to be a bad day." Before leaving to go wherever, Uncle Herb decides to interview Charles about his horror and sci-fi fetishism. While Herb seems to find Charles' obsession to be somewhat dubious, the boy's undying love of all-things-spooky will ultimately provide him with the courage to take on the aliens while his sterilely materialistic older brother Pete acts like a pathetically petrified pansy that almost gets him and his friends killed. After Aunt Millie heads to her mother Bunny's (Judith Mayes) house for a luncheon with her similarly uptight and anally retentive old friends, an electrician comes by the home to fix a malfunctioning circuit breaker in the basement, so Charles decides to put on a cheap Dracula cape and mask and go scare the poor prole worker, only to discover sperm/tadpole-like creatures swimming around the flooded floor. After following around the extraterrestrial sperms for a bit, Charles discovers that they are dining on the electrician's corpse. Eventually, Charles discovers the 'mother spawn,' which has three heads and has presumably given birth to the little sperms, which have invaded every corner and crevice of the basement. Undoubtedly thoroughly desensitized due to his religious viewings of monster movies, Charles stares in disbelief and soon realizes that the aliens respond to sound, thus he wisely remains calm and silent even though he witnesses the out-of-this-world beast gorge on his decapitated

mommy's head.

When aspiring scientist dork Pete's would-be-girlfriend Ellen (Jean Tafler) and best friend Frankie (Richard Lee Porter) come by his house with the dried up corpse of one of the sperm monsters, they decide to dissect it because it seems like no creature they have ever seen before. While Ellen and Frankie believe the shriveled tadpole-like corpse might be of extraterrestrial origin, Peter finds their theory to be absurdly preposterous and bitches, "I give up on you," adding, "Look...all I know is that a creepy feeling is not scientific. Monsters from outer-space is pure ignorance." Meanwhile, during Bunny's luncheon, one of the sperms manages to crawl into a food processor and gets grinded up in a vegetable that the old ladies unwittingly eat. Not long after eating the vegetable meal with a 'mystery sauce' that causes all the women make a face of abject disgust, all of the ladies are soon attacked by the sperm creatures in a seemingly unintentionally hilarious piece of quasi-splatter slapstick. When Pete and his pals attempt to get Uncle Herb's advice regarding the dissected sperm, they find his mutilated and partly dismembered corpse sitting in the living room, with two of the creatures even popping out the psychoanalyst's stomach in an Alien-esque fashion. Before they know it, the three-headed mother spawn charges the nerdy teens, so Charles heroically rises to the occasion by turning a radio on which the creature soon attempts to eat and ultimately suffers a serious burn from.

After their friend Kathy (Karen Tighe) abruptly arrives in a particularly bad case of bad timing after they attempt to warn her to leave from an upstairs window, the teens get slit up in different rooms after they are charged by the monster spawn. In a rare scenario of genre convention breaking, the mother spawn charges Ellen while she is hiding in Pete's room, bites her head off, and then knocks her decapitated corpse out of a window. When Pete witnesses the death of his quasi-girlfriend and discovers her headless corpse lying in his lawn, he breaks down and heads to the attic where Frankie and Karen are hanging out. Since he has clearly lost his rather fragile autistic scientific mind, Pete absurdly attempts to open the attic door while the more sensible Frankie tries to stop. Clearly the only sane, rational, and practical person in the house, Charles concocts the idea to fill a prop monster mask with explosive flash powder which he attaches to a metal pole and frayed electrical cord that he will use as a fuse to cause to explode after inciting the monster spawn to bite it.

After creating the explosive prop head, preteen hero Charles heads up to the attic to save his pussy big brother Pete and his two friends while they do nothing to help except cry like hysterical women. After yelling at the teens to stop crying like bitches so the monster stops focusing on them, Charles makes noise to get the mother spawn to get his attention and then gets it to bite the prop head. After having some trouble attempting to plug the electrical cord that is hooked to the prop head into an outlet and almost being eaten by the parasitic alien monster, Charles finally succeeds and causes the creature to explode into

THE DEADLY SPAWN

seemingly thousands of pieces. In a seeming homage to George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), various town residents are depicted collectively killing the monster sperms as the alien outbreak is now national news. When Aunt Millie gets home, she finds various cops and paramedics carrying corpses out of the house. Although he was left more or less physically unscathed by the aliens, Pete is hauled away in an ambulance while kid hero Charles stays behind. The film ultimately concludes with a twist ending where a policeman patrolling the area witnesses a virtually mountain-sized monster come alive after confidently telling a comrade via radio that he believes that all of the aliens have been wiped out.

A sort of poor man's take on *The Blob* as seemingly watched by a fiercely fanatical fan-boy who got off to all the blood and gore of William Lustig's classic slasher flick *Maniac* (1980) starring Joe Spinell, *The Deadly Spawn* certainly literally and figuratively bleeds passion for the oftentimes critically maligned genre it belongs to, thus making it mandatory viewing for any marginally serious horror fan. A pseudo-sequel of sorts was released about a decade later entitled *Metamorphosis: The Alien Factor* (1990) aka *The Deadly Spawn 2: The Metamorphosis*, but it should be avoided at all costs as it lacks the passion and fan-boy integrity of the original film. While director Douglas McKeown never directed another film, he did bizarrely direct and co-write two silent film style 'plantation' scenes for the independent negress bull-dyke flick *The Watermelon Woman* (1996), though Sapphic spade director Cheryl Dunye cheated him out of a directing credit (which is ironic since the eponymous 'Watermelon Woman' in the film has did not receive credit for her work). It should also be noted that McKeown's envisioned 'director's cut' of *The Deadly Spawn* was apparently much more intricate than the film that exists today, but after John Dods got him fired, the special effects man and producer Ted A. Bohus excised, among other things, a more developed romantic subplot between Pete and Ellen. Apparently, Dods was obsessed with showing off his special effects work and hated the way McKeown was directing the film, so he successfully conspired to have the director fired from the film. While the 'phallogocentric' special effects are certainly iconic in their own primitive sort of way, most of the potency of the film comes from McKeown's preternatural characterization of the characters, playful tongue-in-cheek humor, glaring horror/sci-fi fanboyism (the film features references to James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), *King Kong* (1933), *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), *The Mole People* (1956), *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958), and *Tales from the Crypt* (1972), among tons of other films). While not exactly as good or enthralling as *Equinox* (1970) or Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981), *The Deadly Spawn* is certainly a classic of its time that brings great shame to similar no-budget 'homemade horror' works like Robert Scott's *The Video Dead* (1987) and J.R. Bookwalter's *The Dead Next Door* (1989). Indeed, I certainly cannot think of another horror flick that makes such a mar-

velous mockery of suburbia and its autism-inducing effects on its populous and especially its youth.

-Ty E

ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS
ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS

Douglas Sirk (1955)

While it has become somewhat paradoxically trendy, especially in America and the rest of the declining West, for people to proclaim they do not care what other people think about them and to project an image of anti-conformity and uncompromising individualism, I can honestly say I could care less what most people think of me to the point of a reckless fault and hold no allegiance to anything or anyone and never well. I cannot help it, I was born that way, so it is quite incomprehensible to me that someone would throwaway a great love or passion merely because their family, clique, and/or social group does not approve of it and it almost makes me feel almost borderline murderously misanthropic to think of such a scenario. I have always found the mindless conformity of the so-called fairer sex to be especially annoying to the point where I have to somewhat agree with Otto Weininger when he wrote that women are completely devoid of true individuality, hence why they are willing to mutilate their bodies, starve themselves, or even abort their own unborn children just to fit in and dodge some petty social stigma that would not bother any man with an ounce of personal integrity. Indeed, it is no coincidence that many of the worst and most murderous authoritarian regimes were able to gain power as a result of the strong support they received from women. After all, how else would a double-bastard mulatto and glorified hustler pimp politician rise to the presidency in the United States if it were not for the masses of unthinking women who wet their panties and swooned over him. Unquestionably, one of the more tragic everyday examples of deleterious female conformity is when a woman denies herself the one man she truly loves so as not to rile up the equilibrium of her static social class, community, and/or jealous family, as if it is solely these group's decision as to who a woman can or cannot fuck while in her bedroom. Of course, such scenarios have been the central themes of countless films ranging from Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* adaptation to Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), but the master of such sickening everyday scenarios was New German Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder who dreamed up such daring tragic romances as that of a fellow known simply as 'The Rich Jew' starting a love affair with a German prostitute with a gay pimp for a husband whose drag queen cabaret singer daddy is an ex-SS man who may have gassed her lover's parents in a concentration camp via his controversial banned play *The Garbage, the City, and Death*. Of course, like any filmmaker, Fassbinder had his influences, with Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk (*Magnificent Obsession*, *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*) being one of his most important and overt teachers. In fact, Fassbinder's award-winning classic work *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974) aka *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* is more or less an all the more subversive updated West German reworking and homage to Sirk's lusciously kaleidoscopic Holly-

wood Technicolor melodramas *Imitation of Life* (1959) and especially *All That Heaven Allows* (1955). As an unrepentant Fassbinder fiend, I naturally had to get around to seeing *All That Heaven Allows*, which I watched for the second time just the other day. In our decidedly decadent post-Sex and the City zeitgeist of MILF mania where older women see it as some sort of status symbol to get with a younger man, Sirk's film about a suburban New England widow who faces scorn from her college-brainwashed adult children and country club friends after she becomes engaged to her much younger and less socially conscious gardener, but the May-September romance *All That Heaven Allows* is still strikingly penetrating in its merciless depiction of the pettiness of people, especially of the soulless and sterile suburban sort, in the face of a very special love they dare not officially acknowledge, let alone sanctify.

Cary Scott (Ronald Reagan's first wife, Jane Wyman) lives a banal and barren existence as a widowed mother of two idiotically idealistic college students, with the daughter being an aspiring social worker who is brainwashed by Hebraic twaddle imported from the intellectual ghettos of Europe like Freud and the son being a sort of majorly materialistic softcore psychopath and novice workaholic. Everyone in Cary's life, including her ostensibly 'modern' children, think they know how she should live her life and waste no time telling her what they think she should do with it, even though they clearly do not understand her at even the most fundamental level. For example, her social worker daughter Kay (Gloria Talbott), who is surely a 'liberal' of her time that stylizes herself as an 'enlightened progressive' type and 'independent woman' who believes she is some sort of beacon of rationality, thinks she should marry some intolerable old fart named Harvey (Conrad Nagel), who later proves he is a crypto-sleazebag after he manhandles Cary while giving her a big nasty unwelcomed kiss and then makes her the sleazy and less than subtle offer, "why don't we meet in New York? I know a place." As Kay states herself, "I like Harvey...He's pleasant, amusing, and he acts his age," as if she fears the idea of her mother having a passionate love affair or even sex. In short, Cary's would-be well meaning children and friends have no clue what is right for her or what makes her happy, as they are only concerned with how her personal relationships affect their own shallow lives and social standings. While Cary's husband was a successful businessman and pillar of the community who was beloved by all the automatons that lurk at the local country club, Cary is a more sensitive and introverted person who would rather disappear into a crowd than be noticed and she pretty much lives the underwhelming existence of a non-person, which she is fine with. Since she keeps a relatively low-profile, Cary is oftentimes the object of gossipy speculation, with one country club cunt remarking in regard to her, "I can never decide whether Howard's wife is a saint or just not very bright," thus reflecting her dubious position in the community. Indeed, Cary seems like she has been relegated to a sort of suburban purgatory of no return until she meets a tall, dark, and handsome

ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS

gardener named Ron Kirby (Rock Hudson), who has taken over his recently deceased father's gardening business. Cary immediately becomes smitten with Ron's charm, confidence, intelligence, and naturalistic yet poetic outlook on life. When Ron states regarding Koelreuteria trees that according to Chinese legend, "They say it can only thrive near a home where there's love," Cary replies that it is a "beautiful legend" and practically creams her panties. Undoubtedly, Ron has a sort of entrancing power over Cary and he will inspire her to do things she never thought imaginable. Unfortunately for Cary, her kids and friends have very different expectations for her.

When Ron invites Cary to his rural home under the pretense of seeing his much prized silver spruce trees, she at first says no because she instinctively knows it would be a 'subversive' act in the eyes of her friends, but she immediately has second thoughts and goes with him. Ron lives in a secluded country home that is largely a greenhouse and remarks to Cary upon showing it to her, "I can see that a woman might not like it, but it does very well for me," to which she symbolically replies, "If one likes to live in a glass house." Indeed, while Ron is not afraid to live in a 'glass house' as an innately individualistic man who can be himself in front of anyone at any time without feeling an inkling of shame or guilt, no matter who they are, Cary hides in the shadows of her suburban prison while hoping no one notices her. Of course, before she knows it, Ron is kissing her and from there, Cary is introduced to her new young lover's Thoreau-esque life of simple anti-materialistic living and tree-hugging. When Cary is brought to Ron's friends the Anderson's remote nursery, she is initially bewildered by the experience and even becomes so paranoid that she suspects her beau's pal Mick (Charles Drake) is laughing at her, but her fears are soon calmed by the accepting and hardly judgmental nature of these proud anti-conformist folks. Mick met Ron during the Korean War and because of him, he went from being a materialistic advertising agent who had a rocky relationship with his wife Alida (Virginia Grey) and who devoted his life to "keeping up with the Joneses," to becoming a rabid anti-materialistic proto-hippie who calls Thoreau's Walden his bible and lives by the personal philosophy, "To thine own self be true." When Cary asks Alida if Walden is also Ron's bible, she replies, "I don't think Ron ever read it, he lives it. You see, Ron's security comes from inside himself and nothing can ever take it away. Ron absolutely refuses to let unimportant things become important." Unfortunately, Cary is exactly the sort of person who allows unimportant things to become important to her, as she lives in a suburban fantasy world of cowardly conformist artificiality and because of this, her romance with Ron will be the subject of unwavering hatred, scorn, and ridicule.

When Ron proclaims his love to Cary and asks her to marry him, she initially thinks the idea is crazy and hysterically complains "can't you see it's impossible?", but she naturally soon gives in. As Ron tells her, "this is the only thing that matters" and "You're running away from something important because you're afraid,"

but of course Cary will soon forget his words when she faces a deluge of venomous antagonism from her spoiled and self-centered brat kids, fair-weather friends, nosy neighbors, and compulsively callous country club comrades. Indeed, when Cary lets her kids know that she is engaged, they are quite excited as they assume she plans to marry seemingly benign old fart Harvey and her son Ned (William Reynolds) even remarks "Don't worry, Mother. We're all for it," but when she reveals it is actually Ron who she plans to spend the rest of her largely misspent life with, they both turn into irrational animals of the incessantly bickering and bitchy sort. While they both reluctantly agree to meet Ron, things soon turn ugly quick when he arrives and refuses to bend the knees while being interrogated by his beloved's bratty spawn. Using what she describes as a "detached" approach to questioning her mother's less than auspicious engagement, Cary's daughter Kay attempts to talk Ron out of the marriage by stating, "You don't know Mother as we know her. She's really much more conventional... than you seem to think she is. She has the innate desire for group approval, which most women have." Ultimately, both children contrive totally bullshit excuses to get away from Ron only minutes after meeting him. When Cary brings her dashing beau to a party comprised of all her country club friends held at her best friend Sara's home, it is ultimately an abject disaster that results in some superlatively self-righteous busybody bitch having the gall to call Ron "positively murderous" after he grabs and threatens Harvey for groping his beloved fiancée. When Kay gets home that night after the nightmarish party, her nasty little Mad Men-esque son confronts her, accusing her of being a whore by hatefully stating, "I think all you see is a good-looking set of muscles," and even tells her that he will never ever visit her again if she gets married to Ron because he would be too "ashamed." Even daughter Kay, who sees herself as some sort of freethinking progressive type, hatefully attacks Cary by remarking, "you love him so much you're willing to ruin all of our lives?" while sobbing hysterically. Needless to say, the suburbanites of All That Heavens Allows provide more than enough reasons as to why the commies might be right when they call for the extermination of the bourgeoisie.

Of course, feeling depressed and isolated after all her friends and family gang up on her with the utmost malice, Cary goes to Ron and tells him that she wants to postpone the marriage so that everyone in her community can get "used to" their unconventional relationship and he replies by somewhat sarcastically remarking, "you mean we'll invited to all the cocktail parties?," thus reflecting his disapproval of her willingness to sacrifice their love just because a bunch of fake ass wine-sniffers disapprove of it. Unconsciously projecting her own feelings onto Ron, Cary accuses him of forcing her to choose between him and her kids. Of course, Cary chooses her kids and leaves her lover behind to drown in a poisonous cocktail of misery and loneliness. Despite breaking off her engagement with Ron, Cary's kids show her no gratitude and even fail to show up at her home

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over the weekend after promising to. Of course, Cary is still hopelessly in love with Ron and when she bumps into him while she is Christmas tree shopping, she finds it nearly impossible to obfuscate her undying love for him. As for Ron, he is so hopelessly distraught by the situation that he even loses his seemingly unconquerable confidence and becomes a grumpy and pathetic pessimist, with his friend Mick even telling him that, "you're no good to me, yourself, or anyone" and recommending that he get back in contact with Cary, arguing it is up to him to make things right because, "She doesn't want to make up her own mind. No girl does. She wants you to make it up for her." Meanwhile, on Christmas, Cary learns that both of her grown children are moving away, as her daughter is getting married and her son is planning to travel around the world for his job and hopes to sell the family home, thus causing her to come to the natural realization, "The whole thing's been so pointless" in regard to dumping Ron for the sake of her unreliable children and phoney friends. Undoubtedly, Cary's lonely life reaches its pathetic peak in terms of phoniness and artificiality when her children give her a television set for Xmas that will ostensibly allow her to have "life's parade" at her fingertips. When Cary goes to her physician Dr. Dan Hennessy (Hayden Rorke) because of terrible headaches that she has been routinely suffering, the doc tells her that she is suffering from no diagnosable illness and that her pain is psychosomatic and the direct result of her lovelorn longing for Ron. A truly 'good' doctor in the most fullest sense of the word, Dr. Hennessy tells Cary that her headaches are a good sign that their relationship is salvageable and encourages her to go back to Ron, which she immediately does, but upon arriving at her estranged beau's home, she cannot find him, though he spots her, so she leaves heartbroken. Tragically, while attempting in vain to gesture to Cary from the top of a snowy mountain near his home, Ron accidentally slips off a cliff and sustains a borderline life-threatening injury (notably, Sirk originally intended to conclude the film with Ron falling off the cliff, thus leaving it up to the viewer to decide whether he survived or not). Luckily, Ron's friend Mick's wife immediately notifies Cary about the accident and takes her to see her bedridden beloved. When Cary arrives at her great love's humble abode she lets him know that she's staying for good. Of course, due to Cary's hysterical, negligent, nonsensical, and even treacherous actions, her romantic bond with Ron will be forever tainted, not to mention the fact she has destroyed her lover's mind and body in the process, ultimately transforming him from a proud and strong yet calm and easygoing man who is more or less the living embodiment of the Thoreauvian *Weltanschauung* into an lovelorn mess with the confidence of a male East Asian porn star in the middle of an all-black gang bang.

In his 1971 essay *Imitation of life: On the Films of Douglas Sirk*, Sirk's Bavarian spiritual son Rainer Werner Fassbinder wrote regarding *All That Heaven Allows* and its ironic and seemingly tacked-on happy ending, "...later Jane goes back to Rock, because she keeps having headaches, which happens to all of us if

we don't fuck often enough. But when she's back, it isn't a happy ending, even though they're together, the two of them. A person who creates so many problems in love won't be able to be happy later on. That's what he makes films about, Douglas Sirk. Human beings can't be alone, but they can't be together either." Of course, Fassbinder would take what Sirk did in his work to greater and more provocative extremes in *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* by demonstrating that proles and ugly people are all the more petty and pernicious in their rejection of couples that contradict their unwritten rules of conformity. Notably, homo heeb auteur Todd Haynes would pay tribute to both Sirk and Fassbinder's films with his relatively mainstream effort *Far from Heaven* (2002) starring Julianne Moore, though it is unquestionably inferior in every way to the two works that it so liberally 'borrows' from. Unquestionably, one of Sirk's greatest achievements with *All That Heaven Allows* was managing to concoct an almost decadently aesthetically 'pretty' and 'glittery' work that somehow manages to inspire hatred, misanthropy, and even misogyny in anyone with blood pumping in their veins, especially in regard to those many individuals who have had to deal with petty and oftentimes jealous self-righteous outsiders meddling with their relationships, as if it is actually their business or something. Of course, one must also respect Sirk for directing a film that ruthlessly criticizes the very same demographic of people it was made for, as he was a sort of master of superlatively scathing passive-aggressive celluloid sadism. Indeed, despite being originally peddled as a cheap soapish sort of melodrama, *All That Heaven Allows* could have only been assembled by the sort of highly cultivated and dignified sort of fellow who can make the age-old expression "fuck you" seem like an exceedingly elegant term of endearment. Notably, Fassbinder also wrote in his essay on his mentor, "Sirk has said that film is blood, tears, violence, hate, death, and love. And Sirk has made films, films with blood, with tears, with violence, hate, films with death and films with life. Sirk has said you can't make films about something, you can only make films with something, with people, with light, with flowers, with mirrors, with blood, with all these crazy things that make it worthwhile. Sirk has also said that lighting and camera angles constitute the philosophy of the director. And Sirk has made the most tender ones I know, films by a man who loves human beings and doesn't despise them as we do." While I can agree with most of Fassbinder's sentiments, I think that, as *All That Heaven Allows* exquisitely demonstrates, Sirk indubitably had hatred in his heart for a specific breed of people, but certainly the right people. Indeed, the sort of people that see it fit to despoil someone's love and happiness because something about their relationship takes them out of their oh-so precious comfort zone. As a work that loves to hate those that hate those who love unconditionally, *All That Heaven Allows* unequivocally demonstrates that some hatred is healthy, for one justifiably hates that which threatens something they love.

-Ty E

A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO DIE
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Douglas Sirk (1958)

Ironically, despite being remembered as a master of melodrama, Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk's most personal cinematic work was probably a war film, which, as his asinine WWII era agitprop piece *Hitler's Madman* (1943)—a completely fictionalized account of the assassination of SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heyrich (incidentally, fellow recent anti-Nazi emigre Fritz Lang also directed a cheap agitprop piece based on the incident the same year entitled *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943))—demonstrates, it was not exactly a genre he had a special talent for. Indeed, while *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (1958)—a work based on the 1954 novel of the same name (the original German title is *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*) by first class frog-kraut pacifist pansy and distinguished traitor Erich Maria Remarque—might be a war film full of exploding buildings and brutalized Aryan corpses, it is also a malignantly melancholy melodrama full of despair, pessimism, hopelessness, and even a smidgen of nihilism that concludes on a decidedly dejecting note that not only speaks volumes about the filmmaker's thoughts on the Second World War and humanity in general, but also the tragic death of his sole progeny. The filmmaker's penultimate work before directing the racially-charged hit *Imitation of Life* (1959) starring Lana Turner, retiring from filmmaking altogether, and relocating to Switzerland, the film was a rather personal work for Sirk because, like the protagonist in the film, his estranged Nazi actor son Klaus Detlef Sierck (1925-1944) died a pointless lonely death towards the end of Second World War on the Eastern Front while serving in the German Wehrmacht. Although he directed a couple films in Germany during the Third Reich period, including the huge UFA box-office hit *La Habanera* (1937) starring exotic Swedish diva Zarah Leander, Sirk (whose real name was Hans Detlef Sierck before anglicizing it upon moving to the U.S.) was a well known hardcore leftist with a Jewish wife who directed works by philo-Semitic kraut commie playwright Bertolt Brecht for the stage. After marrying Jewess Hilde Jary, Sirk's first wife refused to allow him to see their son Klaus and when the auteur decided to flee from Uncle Adolf's Reich in 1937 and eventually move to the United States where he began directing anti-Nazi propaganda films during the early 1940s, it guaranteed that he would never be able to see or contact his son again. Ironically, son Klaus become a Nazi child actor who starred in over a dozen films before his tragic untimely death, including three works by Veit 'Jew Süß' Harlan who, as the unrivaled master of high-camp National Socialist melodramas, was a sort of unofficial artistic nemesis to the elder Sirk. Notably, Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels was indirectly responsible for the youngrt Sirk's death, as he took an irrational dislike to the boy, made the baseless accusation he was a homosexual (even sending him before the Gestapo to answer for imaginary aberrosexual crimes), cut many of his

scenes from Harlan's Frederick the Great war epic *Der große König* (1942) aka *The Great King*, forbade the boy from acting in anymore films, and sent him to the Eastern Front where he would ultimately die. After the Second World War, Sirk, who had no clue his son had perished in the Slavic lands like so many other German boys his age, came back to Germany to look for Klaus, only to learn what no father should have to discover. Later, in an interview with John Halliday, Sirk would reveal his hope that his son was at least able to find love before he died, with *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* being "one possible" scenario that might have happened to Klaus Detlef Sierck.

Made at a time when the last thing that the happy stupid American victors wanted to see was a film depicting the incomparable suffering that all Germans—both good and bad, as well as young and old—experienced during the Second World War, *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* is certainly not a work that exonerates Germany for National Socialism, hence why it has been somewhat rightfully dubbed *All Quiet on the Eastern Front*, but it does make the Normandy Invasion and other oftentimes cinematically depicted events that yanks cry about seem totally petty and insignificant by comparison as far as human tragedies are concerned. Set during a virtual Aryan apocalypse of scorched earth chaos when entire families were crushed and burned alive in a split second via Allied bombing raids and where fallen countesses pawned their pussies to any boorish beer-chugging bastard who had an extra crumb to spare, *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* is a father's first and final attempt at mourning a prodigal son who, like so many of his generation, was cheated out of a full and potentially artistically prolific life after unwittingly making a Faustian pact with a movement that promised a Teutonic utopia but ultimately delivered a hellstorm of the apocalyptic sort. The totally tragic tale of a young German soldier who has the priceless opportunity to escape the savagery of the Eastern Front for three weeks after being furloughed and experiencing all extremes of the emotional spectrum after going back to his bombed out hometown where he ultimately falls in love and gets married, only to be killed by a swarthy untermensch Soviet partisan after sparing the ingrateful man's life just moments after learning via letter from his loving wife that he will become a father, this uniquely dejecting war movie attempts to comprehend the completely incomprehensible while at the same time damning the German people for allowing the Nazis to takeover and for supporting a war effort that not only resulted in the deaths of 7-10 million German soldiers and civilians (yep, you probably didn't know that more krauts than kikes died in WWII), the total destruction of every major city/town and countless irreplaceable ancient landmarks/buildings/sculptures, and the complete eradication of some of the greatest ancient Teutonic bloodlines, but also secured the end of Germany's once prestigious reputation as one of the greatest producer culture-bearers in human history. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the heebies in Hollywood and the media use any chance they can get to bring up the holocaust

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or perpetuate some obscenely outmoded WWII era stereotype, as if they are still waging an agitprop war with Herr Doktor Goebbels.

As an inter-tile reads at the beginning of *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, it is the “Russian-German Front 1944” and a German soldier named Immerman (Jock Mahoney) remarks that it “looks like spring is coming” because frozen German corpses are starting to thaw out of the once-rock-hard snow. A rather effeminate novice soldier named Hirschland (Jim Hutton) who is having a hard time adjusting to the war remarks regarding the freshly thawed out corpse of a German officer that “he looks like he is crying,” but as a comrade tells him, “his eyeballs were frozen.” When Hirschland is forced to take part in the execution of a group of Soviet partisans, which include hysterical middle-aged Ruski women and elderly geezers, he cannot live with himself, so he blows his brains out and the head German officer has his less than honorable death officially recorded as a “Death by Accident.” Before Hirschland commits suicide, a comrade named Ernst Graeber (played by John Gavin of Stanley Kubrick’s *Spartacus* (1960) and Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), who, as a dark-haired McLatino of half-Mexican extraction, probably does not fit the Aryan ideal) berates him and his “big baby eyes” for acting like a whiny little wimp and not partaking in vodka-chugging with the rest of his comrades. Luckily for him, Herr Graeber, who has seen action everywhere from North Africa to Paris and has not had a single vacation from battle in over two years, has been furloughed and has the opportunity to spend three weeks hanging around his hometown where he plans to, “get deloused, take a hot bath, sleep in a clean bed, and forget for three weeks that there is a war.” Of course, Little does Graeber realize that during those three weeks he will fall in love, get married, and develop a progressive hatred for all things Nazi and all things war.

Upon arriving in the quaint town where he was born and raised, Ernst’s initial rather enthusiastic nostalgia is completely destroyed when he discovers that his entire neighborhood, including his family home, has been reduced to rubble as a result of Allied bombing raids, with his parents being nowhere in sight. It does not take long for Ernst to realize that the Nazi bureaucracy machine will be of no help in his seemingly hopeless search for his family. Ernst also learns that the local citizenry is not exactly supportive of his and his comrades service, as an eccentric old fart complains to him, “six raids, six raids since you damn front-line soldiers have been running away out there” and then more or less blames him for the death of his wife and kids via a bombing raid. During his search for his family, Ernst befriends a typically boorish kraut soldier named Hermann Boettcher (Don DeFore) who is rather sad about the fact that his 200-lb “solid muscle” blonde beastess of a wife is missing. Upon speaking with Boettcher, Ernst gets the idea to visit his mother’s physician Dr. Kruse, as he figures that he would probably know whether or not his parents are still alive, but when he arrives at the doctor’s house, the only person he discovers is the doc’s insufferably bitchy

young daughter Elizabeth Kruse (Swiss actress Liselotte Pulver of Billy Wilder's *One, Two, Three* (1961) and Kurt Hoffman's *The Haunted Castle* (1960) aka *Das Spukschloß im Spessart*), who is perennially pissed off over the fact that the Gestapo took her daddy away and that her family home has been turned into a virtual boardinghouse for exceedingly bitchy busybody housewives whose husbands are Nazi party members. Despite the fact that she is an impenetrable bitch with a gigantic chip on her delicate shoulder, Ernst becomes almost immediately enamored with Elizabeth's entire being and unlike many soldiers, he is interested in more than just a wartime fling. Although Elizabeth acts like an inhospitable cunt and tries to kick Ernst out of her home ASAP, a bombing raid temporarily forces her to seek safety with the gentlemanly soldat at a local bomb shelter. When Ernst later walks Elizabeth back to her home and attempts to give her a care package full of food that was given to him by the army when he was furloughed, she flips out and less than subtly accuses him of attempting to ply her into giving up her pussy. At this point, Ernst has had enough of Elizabeth's brazen bitchiness and incessant ingratitude, so he stoically states to her, "I'm sorry, fighting is not my idea of fun, not even with you" and leaves. On his way back while walking through the rubble-ridden streets, Ernst is approached by a super Aryan-looking lady of the night who he baffles by handing the care package to for free and walking off without getting a piece of feisty Fräulein pussy in return. Of course, little does Ernst realize that he turned on Elizabeth with his random display of hotheadedness, as she likes a real mensch who can rightfully put her in her place.

The next day while walking down the street, a Hermann Göring-esque Nazi leader in a fancy convertible yells to the protagonist, "Ernst...don't you recognize your friends anymore?" in a most unintentionally ironic fashion. The National Socialist fat cat is Oscar Binding (*Thayer David of Dark Shadows* (1966-1971) and *Rocky* (1976)) and his days as a pre-Third Reich era Hitler Youth member have certainly paid off, as he is the humble son of a milkman who went on to become the Nazi 'District Leader' of his town and he invites Ernst, who is a former classmate of his, to come by his lavish multistory home for some cognac so he can show off his hedonistic life of luxury that includes, among other things, expensive bath salts, looted art, countless taxidermy animal head mounts, and an unlimited supply of starving women who will do just about anything for a mere bread crumb. Indeed, Binding makes sure to brag to Ernst about the fact that the day before a "beautiful creature from the old aristocracy with long hair and a superb figure" came by his humble abode begging from him to free her hubby from a concentration camp. Of course, Binding is not greedy and even offers Ernst a literal orgy a women if that is what his heart desires, but the protagonist is not even interested in one woman, let alone a brothel full. While hanging out with his old comrade, Ernst is also somewhat perturbed to discover that one of his favorite teachers, Professor Pohlmann (source writer Erich Maria Remarque

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in a supporting role in what would be the first and last time he acted in a film), had a temporary internment at a local concentration camp as a result of Herr Binding's insistence at getting back at the educator for giving him a hard time in the past when he was a student for being a Hitlerite. More of an opportunist than a sadist, Binding eventually freed Pohlmann, who now lives in a bombed out church where Ernst intends to later pay him a visit, but it is not until later that he will have a good reason to. While Binding offers Ernst the opportunity to stay at his luxurious home for as long as he wants and partake in practically any form of hedonism, the grunt soldier turns him down, but he does take him up on his offer for a warm bath involving expensive bath salts, a bottle of wine, and a search mission for his parents. While the bath salts prove to be beneficial, the bottle of wine and search mission prove to be totally worthless.

After talking her into going on a romantic walk with him after she becomes noticeably aroused by the lilac bath salt scent on his freshly bathed body, Ernst finally manages to get Elizabeth to shed her seemingly indomitable frigidness and the two kiss passionately under a half-burned tree that prematurely bloomed as a result of the heat of a nearby fire making the perennial plant think it was already spring time. Of course, as a result of their nation being both literally and figuratively in flames, Ernst and Elizabeth's love affair will also prematurely bloom into something quite beautiful but ultimately doomed. From there, Ernst concocts a plan for an intricate romantic evening at a fancy underground restaurant called 'New Germania' involving fine wine and French food, but first he must borrow an officer's uniform from a wisecracking gentleman named Reuter (played by McJew Keenan Wynn of Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968)), who is such a refined and cultivated cosmopolitan 'man of the world' that he has been hospitalized as a result of the "rich man's disease" aka gout, thus he has had the distinguished luxury of sitting the Second World War out. While their romantic evening gets cut short after 'New Germania' gets caught up in a bombing raid that spoils their dinner and results in a woman getting burned alive after her fancy dress catches on fire, Ernst and Elizabeth have a hell of a time, as they love one another and thus can have fun doing anything, no matter how dangerous or tragic, so long as they are together. Of course, Ernst soon proposes to Elizabeth and while she initially hesitates and launches one of her signature bitch-fests, she ultimately says yes. Of course, not long after being married, problems arise. For one, Ernst intercepts a summons from his new bride from the Gestapo and suspects it might be bad news since Elizabeth's father was arrested for talking shit about the war effort. Luckily, Ernst also receives a letter from his parents telling him that they're still alive. Needless to say, Ernst is in for quite a scare when a bombing raid completely demolishes the factory where his wife works. On top of that, upon looking for his beloved at their home, Ernst finds the building burning down, though he manages to save a small plant and a portrait of Elizabeth's father before the

place completely burns down. Naturally, Ernst is rather relieved when Elizabeth eventually shows up outside of their burned down home, though he does not have the heart to tell her that she has received a summons from the Gestapo. Ultimately, the two decide to seek sanctuary in a bombed out museum next to Professor Pohlmann's ruined hideout and they have an almost magical storybook time living among ruined statues, with Elizabeth remarking that it has always been her dream ever since she was a little girl to live in such a romantic fashion.

Upon receiving advice from Professor Pohlmann and his Jewish fugitive friend Joseph (German actor Charles Régnier of Fred Haines' 1974 Hermann Hesse adaptation *Steppenwolf* and Ingmar Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg* (1977)), Ernst decides to go to the Gestapo on his wife's behalf in the hope of sparing her any potential punishment she might face as a result of her ostensible traitor father's actions. Before going to the Gestapo, Ernst decides to go by his friend Binding's place as a last resort to ask him for help, but he becomes so disturbed by his friend's company, which include a drunken *The Night Porter*-esque blonde Nazi whore sporting nothing but an SS officer's hat and a silk robe, as well as a concentration camp commander named 'Heini' (Austrian actor Kurt Meisel)—an overly pernicious-looking baldheaded piano virtuoso whose musical talents apparently once "made the fuhrer cry"—who brags about burning Jews, that he leaves without even bothering to ask for help. When Ernst finally gathers the courage to head to Nazi headquarters, he is ultimately in for a bittersweet relief when a Gestapo Lieutenant played by none other than Klaus Kinski (notably, virtually all the evil Nazis in the film have blond hair and blue eyes, while the 'good guys', like the protagonist, have semi-swarthy appearances) simply has him sign the release for a small wooden box containing his wife's father's cremated ashes. After discovering that Dr. Kruse's official recorded cause of death is a heart attack, which was written on the death certificate of virtually all people that were euthanized by Nazi doctors, Ernst comes to the unsettling realization that Elizabeth's father was murdered. While Elizabeth is saddened to hear bad news of her father's untimely demise, she seems more perturbed by the fact that Ernst has to go back to the Eastern Front. Although Ernst attempts to have his furlough extended for a single day, the Nazi in charge literally laughs in his face and thus the ultimately foredoomed protagonist is forced to take the next train out of town back to the Eastern Front where a fairly certain death waits him. Upon joining up with his largely decimated army battalion, Ernst becomes so enraged when one of his comrades goes to liquidate three dirty elderly Soviet partisans that he shoots him dead and then makes the ultimately fatal mistake of setting the triad of crusty old commie farts free. After reading a letter from Elizabeth revealing that she is pregnant and that he will become a father, Ernst is ironically shot dead by one of the partisans he set free, thus revealing that pacifism and hollow idealism kills during times of total war, especially when you're decidedly dehumanized semi-Asiatic enemy is drunk on revenge after suffering

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over half a decade of murder and misery.

Undoubtedly, director Douglas Sirk was probably not the only one who was feeling a tad bit guilty as a result of his (in)action after fleeing the Third Reich, as *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* star/source writer Erich Maria Remarque's sister Elfriede Scholz was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and beheaded via guillotine not long after the novelist fled to the United States, with infamous Nazi judge Roland Freisler—a show trial maestro who, upon becoming president of the People's Court, was responsible for approximately 90% of all proceedings concluding with sentences of death or life imprisonment—somewhat sinisterly stating to her during her trial, “Your brother is unfortunately beyond our reach—you, however, will not escape us.” To add insult to injury, Remarque's other sister Erna was forced to cover the cost of Scholz's prosecution, imprisonment and execution. While both Remarque's novel and Sirk's film were probably at least partially inspired by each creator's respective post-WWII guilt, German auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder noticed an important difference between the two creations, writing in his 1971 essay *Imitation of life: On the Films of Douglas Sirk* regarding *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, “You can't make a film about war. How wars come about—that would be important, and what effect they have on people or leave behind. This isn't a pacifist film, either, because you never for a minute say to yourself, without this gruesome war everything would be so beautiful or whatever. Remarque's novel, *A TIME TO LIVE AND A TIME TO DIE*, is pacifist. Remarque says that without war this would be an eternal love; Sirk says that without war there wouldn't be any love here.” Indeed, aside from the fact that Remarque was, like virtually all pacifists, a delusional idealist and true blue coward who did not want to accept the fact that people are naturally aggressive and tend to kill one another under the right set of circumstances, he seemed to conveniently overlook the fact that people seem not to fuck around during quite deadly serious times (i.e. during total war) where the next day or hour could very possibly be their last. Indeed, with all the superlatively stupid, petty, and pathetic problems that people concern themselves with nowadays, there would be almost something quite liberating about the virtual hell-on-earth depicted in Sirk's film and sometimes I even think that the best thing that could happen to America is if a war came along that inspired people to set their priorities straight and cleansed them of all the worthless bullshit in their lives. As an admirer of Remarque's literary nemesis Ernst Jünger and someone who thinks that the Hollywood agitprop piece *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) directed by kraut-hating Hebrew Lewis Milestone (born Leib Milstein) and produced by his kosher comrade Carl Laemmle, Jr. is one of the most obscenely overrated and maliciously manipulative so-called ‘anti-war’ films ever made, I was honestly surprised I mostly enjoyed *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, even if it glaringly tainted by obnoxiously phony pseudo-German accents, classically contrived Hollywood studio sets, mediocre melodrama, and second-

rate acting performances from the lead actors. Although an uneven work that suffers from many of the banalities and conspicuous crappy contrivances typical of Hollywood WWII films from its era, Sirk's film is important because it not only uncovers the intentionally deeply buried suffering of the Teutons during the Second World War as mercilessly inflicted by the Allies, but also because it features the filmmaker at his most conflicted, haunted, and forlorn in a rare cinematic work from the perspective of a German father who faced the most terrible and irrevocable of losses; the death of his long lost son. As to whether or not Sirk regretted giving up his sole son and heir for kosher cunt, one can only guess.

-Ty E

THE TAINT
THE TAINT

Drew Bolduc (2011)

Not since what seems to be eons ago has such a voice of trash echoed throughout underground cinema as Drew Bolduc and co-director Dan Nelson's *The Taint* has. Written, directed, and starring Drew Bolduc, this vile testament in multitasking is as shocking and repulsive as modern cinema, even archaic exploitation, comes. The plot revolves around a dystopian backdrop in which the water supply of a town, possibly the world, becomes tainted with a mutated penis enlargement formula. Phil O'Ginney awakes from a nightmare in the woods only to have a psycho with goggles sprinting towards him. Armed with an enormous scythe and a severed phallus, this maniac chases Phil until he runs into Misandra (Clever), a desensitized park ranger who alerts him that most, if not all, males are stricken with "the taint" which turns them into sex-raving beasts victim to their own instincts. These instincts of course include misogyny, the male's great past-time. Who else to pass judgment on women than their favorite prey? As displayed prominently in all marketing materials, killing women is the only thing on these males minds.

With an aggressive 80s pastiche about it, *The Taint* is one of the few films whose aesthetic (or anti-aesthetic) is digested even before the start of the film. The title font rings of an old-school skateboarding design, an image so fierce that I can practically taste the Powell boards underneath *The Taint's* wretched breath. Whatever you want to call this, new-age trash with punk glamor, this genre undiscovered is a formidable force. Finally I can enjoy shock for shock sake and *The Taint* stands as one of the few true comedies of the splatter market. Long have I scowled in the direction of Troma for producing unfunny situations of cocks, lesbians, and deplorable (and shoddy) effects work. *The Taint* not only effortlessly delivers what Troma promises but does it with such zeal you can forgive the somewhat sloppy and confusing narrative amidst flashbacks. What might be the biggest surprise of *The Taint* is how well done and audibly orgasmic the soundtrack is. Coursing through the chip-tune veins of *The Taint's* score is hints of punk and garage rock, junk to the ear. This marks the first soundtrack I can listen to without imagery to accompany since Mike Patton's take on Nevelandine & Taylor's chaotic *Crank 2*.

Following the fetishistic norm of hardcore dystopia, *The Taint* reintroduces an apocalyptic sensibility involving a rape-centered society. It's strange encountering this again so soon after viewing *The Afterman*. The epoch of subtlety has dawned. This is proven with the delightfully comic dialogue exchanged between Phil and a surviving camaraderie of frat-esque closet homosexuals whose leader is obsessed with the male figure. When one of the goons catches sight of Misandra, he bellows loudly of gang rape. With something as bold and artless as this, one cannot shake mention of reminiscing Zedd/Kern. Bringing Gen-X'rs into

a style past brings a delightful platter to the table, one that can be compared as the comic hipdom of Scott Pilgrim vs. the World blended violently with the anarchic libidinous nature of several of Richard Kern's Manhattan Love Suicides. Normally, I would be hesitant towards the ingredients that makes up the popularity of The Taint. From a non-Troma enthusiast, take it as this. Troma's exhibition of frequent nudity and grotesquely cheap special effects marked a new era in horror - a desexualized kind. Troma stands as the only film company that can successfully kill my sex drive and to their demographic, serves as a large redundancy and inhibitor of clash-trash quality. Not only does The Taint handle carefully the contents within, but surpasses near every film in the catalog of Troma.

The biggest selling point of The Taint is the endless seam of misogyny available. Many scenes encounter various infected men as they bolt down the street with large objects with the sole hunger to smash women's heads in. Misandra's previous love life is divulged with one of the most hilarious scenes to be found in The Taint. Her relationship with her boyfriend is explained in a cinematic exposition during a picnic. After lustfully swapping saliva, words of true infatuation are exchanged as quoted below.

Woman - "We're so in love."

Man - "Fuck anybody who's not in love like we are!"

Woman - "Must be fags!"

Man - "Total fucking queers."

This imitation of retro 50s chivalry is a charm in parallel to the cock-spewing anarchic graduating class of cum-loud that is The Taint. For a meal consisting of gratuitous gore and ejaculate, The Taint is as repulsive as sleaze comes and is the first crack at cockagenda documented. I've never seen a film as abrasive and immature as Drew Bolduc and Dan Nelson's The Taint and I hope for the best in their future endeavors - as long as the hatred for women withstands.

-mAQ

MOON
MOON

Duncan Jones (2009)

Following Sam Rockwell's over-the-top hilarious cameo in the holy grail of television, *Stella*, I became incredibly interested in his upcoming science fiction project known as *Moon*. Upon *Moon*'s release, this *Twilight* sensation really hit the fan and the shit. was. everywhere. When one would inquire about *Moon*, some scantily clad obese chick somewhere would ask "New Moon?" as if to insult my intelligence further. Hopefully this pandemic of glam vampires will end but I don't foresee that happening so I figured I'd rather write down my thoughts instead of fishing for a handful of opinions as I'm sure most of the local townsfolk would surely call this film "boring." Like many deep space films before this, *Moon* encompasses the idea of solitary madness as explored in that Resident Evil-in-space film titled *Pandorum*. *Pandorum* is a fictional breakdown of the mind in space. Not to call this entirely fictional, in fact, I'm sure if we (humans) did more long term experiments in space, we too could adopt the usage of *Pandorum*. So apart from the terrible film references, How does *Moon* hold up? *Moon* is a film that relates to its own symphony of infinite quiet. Clint Mansell, best known for his work on *Requiem for a Dream*, collaborated with his own experiences of a resonating orchestra within personal hollow white walls to create a repetitive theme to the dreary, melancholy status of isolation and loneliness unheard. Suffice to say, *Sacrifice* from the score to *Moon* is simply the best film theme to be produced in a long time. My own fears leeches and sapped so much from me than I could handle just while viewing the trailer, Some credit goes to Sam Rockwell as well for providing the perfect visage of Sam Bell. No one else could have near pulled off what he has accomplished. Paired with both this and *Bronson*, which has a review coming soon, this year in festivals and "independent" cinema seems to be the most promising I've experienced yet. The only complaint with *Moon* yet is simple and most simpletons seem to share this in common with each other; It's too "boring." With a film set in space circulating the plot around a single man working in a solitary lunar station for 3 years with very little outside contact to civilization, I wouldn't expect a science fiction masterpiece to be anything but. *Moon* is something of a stand still staple in filmmaking. For the budget being what it is and the welcome absence of computer-generated imagery, the practical model effects are simply outstanding. The lunar landscape looks anything but artificial and the open claustrophobia of a bleak surface is present with a resounding "Yes!" What really stands out as special in *Moon* is the composition and pacing of this accelerating mystery. While the film's internal makeup is frequently bouncing around, the set pieces and pivotal plot stay almost frozen, so to speak. As to say, *Moon* is a tidy film that takes place in a very short time with not much happening other than a dual mono-character portrait that is active within its own steadily paced

storytelling. Moon is a film that is as ambiguous as its purported ending, but an ending can only mean a beginning as well. With many positive aesthetics and the stark and heavenly-white set design of this specific lunar base, Moon fashions itself a polished film that suffocates you with many emotions and its phobia inducing fits of madness. Along with Rockwell's incredible performance that marks him as one of the most incredibly underused actors, Kevin Spacey wows as the robotic helper Gerty whose simple vocal demeanor goes a long way for him just be utilized as a voice actor with an expressible monotone pitch. His wide variety of on screen "emoticons" really sets the mood for each and every scene he appears in, although not meaning to give a robot gender. With my subsequent viewing of Moon, I feel as if all science fiction up to this (excluding several) have lacked the real mechanics of what composes a space classic. Moon has all those and more, with an intriguing beginning, mysterious middle, and tragic end. I could find some aspects of faulty presentation, I'm sure, but I'm too busy enjoying what I experienced during Moon, especially what I'm experiencing after. This is a film that will stick with you no matter if you loved it or loathed it. Personally, I find Moon to have what science fiction has been missing all along - misadventure and despair.

-mAQ

WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM
WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM

Dušan Makavejev (1971)

Out of all the messianic psychoanalysts with godlike complexes, Freudian-Marxist Wilhelm Reich – a funny fellow who genuinely believed “not a single neurotic individual possesses orgasmic potency,” that National Socialism was the result of sexual repression (as if Joseph Goebbels was not a big enough man whore), and that “orgone” (aka orgasm) energy was a ‘cosmic energy’ which uneducated laymen described as ‘God’ – takes the kosher cake for being the biggest crackpot of the pseudo-scientific psychoanalytic movement, so it is no surprise that, unlike Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung, the salacious soul-doctor is relatively unknown today and rarely acknowledged in academia, which is at least in part due to the embarrassingly dogmatic nature of his sex-obsessed ideas and his perverse and ultimately pathetic personal life. By the 1930s, Reich had become a bad joke of sorts among his fellow psychoanalysts, not least of all due to his ‘hands on’ approach with nude patients (a number of whom become submissive sex partners and would perform illegal abortions with at least one ending in the individual’s death, all at the good doctor’s command) so, on top of wanting to escape from the Hebrew-hostile National Socialists, the quaint quack moved to the United States in 1939 and was eventually convicted of mail fraud in 1956 for illegally shipping ‘orgone accumulators’ and related schizoid literature after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration obtained an injunction against the interstate shipment of such dubious pseudo-scientific materials, thus he was imprisoned and died shamefully of a heart attack not long after. In Serbian auteur filmmaker Dušan Makavejev’s (Man is Not a Bird, Montenegro) Reichian film *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) aka *W.R. - Misterije organizma* – a delightfully deranged dichotomous cinematic work that is half documentary and half sardonic/surrealist fantasy flick – a naively noble but ultimately laughable attempt is made to rehabilitate Wilhelm Reich and his work and satirize the ‘impure communism’ of corrupt comrade Joseph Stalin in an exceedingly eccentric and sexually excessive manner that makes for an undeniably enthralling aesthetic and thematic experience, even if you’re the sort of individual who concurs with the sentiment, “Better Dead Than Red.” Banned in Makavejev’s homeland of what was then Yugoslavia for its apparently blasphemous portrayal of bolshevism and sexuality, and inevitably resulting in the director’s exile from the country for nearly two decades, *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* is a startlingly subversive cinematic work more in the spirit of unhinged anti-Occidental anarchism than an intellectually competent cry for so-called ‘pure communism’ – the argument made by all Marxist fanboys when one mentions that some 100+ million people died during the twentieth century due to Marxist regimes – thus making it a movie that makes the unintentional argument that artists do not always make for great political minds or at least that is what one can only conclude after someone

makes the more than dubious argument that, "Only Revolution Ends War!"

Beginning with the quote, "This film is, in part, a personal response to the life and teachings of Dr. Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957)...Studying orgasmic reflex, as Sigmund Freud's first assistant, Reich discovered life energy, revealing the deep roots of fear of freedom, fear of truth, and fear of love in contemporary humans. All his life, Reich fought against pornography in sex and politics. He believed in work-democracy, in an organic society based on liberated work and love," W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism* sets up a sentimental idealist tone that is ultimately at odds with the satirically titillating and sometimes tragicomic absurdism that shines throughout the work, at least as far as the fictional fantasy component of the film is concerned. Featuring narration of what sounds like the words of a wanton witch doctor with the pseudo-scientific psychobabble of a quote, "Cancer is the hysteria of cells condemned to death. Cancer and fascism are closely related. Fascism is the frenzy of sexual cripples. The swastika owes its magnetism to being a symbol of two bodies locked in genital embrace. It all stems from a longing from love...", W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism* establishes early on that Reich – a man whose own daughter argued that his lifelong obsession with sex was the result of being molested as a child – stressed sex over science and sex over love. Reich oddly believed that communism and 'free love' were intrinsically compatible and Makavejev's W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism* makes the patently absurd argument that communism failed in Eastern Europe because the Soviets abandoned this perverse Trotskyite principle of psychological enslavement via sexual obsession (a strategy also used by Hollywood). Featuring cameos from counter-culture figures ranging from hideous Hebrew Tuli Kupferberg as a psychotic soldier who parades around his gun as a pseudo-phallic device while antagonistically annoying Wall Street businessmen in a scene that attempts to argue that 'sexual frustration and violence' are interconnected, as well as Warhol Superstar/tranny Jackie Curtis as an example of Reich's ideas on aberrant sexuality, W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism* makes it clear that atheistic left-wing Ashkenazis and cynical, sexually ambiguous drug addicts should be the real heroes of Bolshevism and not heroic war heroes who did their own fair of orgone energy transferring raping German girls at the conclusion (and for some time afterward) of the Second World War.

Undoubtedly, the fictional narrative-driven segment of W.R.: *Mysteries of the Organism* has aged the most gracefully, because otherwise this determinedly degenerate démodé celluloid work would be nothing more than an inanely idealistic left-wing equivalent to a *Mondo Cane* documentary without it, hence why the director's subsequent effort, *Sweet Movie* (1974) – a more narrative-based and comedic work – has aged more gracefully. The strikingly sardonic segment of W.R. *Mysteries of the Organism* focuses on a young and beautiful Yugoslavian madam of Marxism named Milena (Milena Dravić) who falls from Bolshevik grace after becoming enamored with a nefarious and narcissistic Stalinist ice

WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM

skater named Vladimir Ilyich (Ivica Vidović) whose personal fame has led him to feel superior to the people of the workers' revolution. Hopelessly tainted by Western capitalism as a corrupt Superstar and cult of personality in the spirit of Stalin (old Soviet propaganda films about the 'man of steel' are inter-spliced in the film) who is not a lover of the people, but merely a man possessed by sacrilegious self-love that reaches its zenith when he decapitates the star-crossed woman who loves him via the blade of his ice skate. Indeed, once Milena had to do more for 'love' than merely spread her legs and spout manic Marxist dribble, the commie dream went down the drain faster than comrade Trotsky did after having a ice-pick driven through the back of his head, or as her decapitated head states quit eloquently, "Cosmic rays streamed through our coupled bodies. We pulsed to the vibrations of the universe. But he couldn't bear it. He had to go one step further. Vladimir is a man of noble impetuosity...a man of great ambition...and immense energy. He's romantic, ascetic, a genuine Red Fascist. Comrades...even now I'm not ashamed of my communist past."

Indeed, what better way for a committed commie to discredit a piece of unflattering history than by describing it as 'Red Fascism,' or an individual like Uncle Joe as a 'Red Fascist' as such is the case in *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*; a quite kooky and obscenely outlandish anti-Stalinist communist propaganda flick of the peculiar 'Red Reichian' persuasion that, due to its rather absurd 'objective' and 'message,' one must respect auteur Dušan Makavejev for his sheer audacity because had he made this film only a couple decades before, he would surely have ended up in a Gulag for being one of those "rootless cosmopolitan" types. As one of the female narrators states early on in *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*, Reich's Maine-based research center 'Orgonon' did not exactly have the best reputation as apparently, "Rumor called it a secret Jewish organization that was masturbating patients in Orgone accumulators, experimenting on children kept in cages, and plotting to introduce work-democracy." Of course, as the historical record shows, all these rumors, including rampant sexual abuse at the so-called Orgonomic Infant Research Center (OIRC) that was even vouched for by Reich's unfortunate son Peter's autobiography *Book of Dreams* (1973), were more or less true and in many cases far worse than the rumors would lead one to believe. By the end of his life, Reich's mental health had declined so far that UFOs were waging war against the planet earth and mankind and he personally was engaged in a "full-scale interplanetary battle" with these evil extraterrestrials via his trusty 'Cloudbuster' (an 'invention' Reich said could cause rain by manipulating 'orgasmic energy' in the atmosphere). Of course, *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* – with its experiments in 'cock casting' (a mold is made of a porn director/producer named Jim 'Debbie Does Dallas' Buckley's erect penis to 'prove' the artist's sexual contact with a famous man), candid talks with tragic tranny Warhol Superstars like Jack Curtis (who died of a heroin overdose at the age of 38), underground magazine editors for *Screw* magazine 'working in the nude,'

a hack artist named Betty Dodson whose only aesthetic inspiration is masturbation and who sincerely believed, “When it comes to sex, all women are gay,” and uniquely ugly ‘performance artist’ Tuli Kupferberg of the foully farcical hippie degenerate band The Fugs running around in neo-Vaudevillian manner as if he knows what it means to be a soldier as a passive wilted flower child – does not exactly make for the most logical, nor politically or scientifically sound argument for a ‘free love’ boner-based Bolshevik revolution. After all, people who spend their times fucking all day don’t tend to get much work done and those sexually repressive communist dictatorships of the past sure had their fair share of genocidal famines, so I doubt a group of ‘dumpster-diving’ hippies would be much better.

-Ty E

SWEET MOVIE
SWEET MOVIE

Dušan Makavejev (1974)

Very possibly the most visually and thematically subversive and politically iconoclastic and esoteric “avant-garde black comedy” ever made, *Sweet Movie* (1974) directed by Serbian auteur Dušan Makavejev (Montenegro, *The Coca-Cola Kid*) is undoubtedly one of those rare aberrant arthouse films that appeals to both patently pretentious cinephiles of the extreme left who regard Marxist auteur Jean-Luc Godard as their cinematic savior, as well as depraved and socio-politically unconscious exploitation film burnouts who regard Ruggero Deodato’s *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) as their ‘*Citizen Kane*’ and Jap scat as their closest thing to spirituality, and are just looking to feel even the slightest bit of activity in their irrevocably intemperate and innately impure souls, thus making this self-described sugar-coated piece of sordid Serb-concocted cinema an ideally idiosyncratic celluloid feast, albeit one that might cause you to ‘do the technicolor yawn.’ The first film Makavejev directed after being exiled from his now-defunct multicultural nation of Yugoslavia for his similarly cinematically seditious work *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) – a film about the lurid and loony link between Marxism and subversive sexuality featuring pro-incest/anti-fascist Jewish Marxist/psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich as its central subject – *Sweet Movie* is a Canadian production that was partially funded by the National Film Board of Canada and is a part ‘anti-communist, communist’ cinematic manifesto and part rabid renegade attack against anti-revolutionary sexual repression of Western capitalism and its cuckold cousin, contemporary communism. *Sweet Movie* is indubitably a cinematic work with a metaphysical message most directly directed to the populous of Makavejev’s homeland and other Soviet satellite states, yet is so aesthetically audacious, sickly salacious, and cleverly crafted that one need not be a downtrodden Slav slave of the degenerate commie dystopia realm to enjoy it. A marvelously mad piece of classic yet morally corrupted celluloid montage centering on two stories about two different but inevitably equally warped women – a virginal model with a glowing golden pussy who is despoiled by a diverse collection of capitalist pigs around the materialistic globalized Occidental world and a female pedophile ship captain with a sick obsession with sex, candy, and communism – *Sweet Movie* is a delightful and deranged piece of dichotomous cinema that reminds the viewer how the two big business c’s (capitalism and communism) have literally and figuratively fucked the world to the point where the other two big biological c’s (cocks and cunts) have been so perverted, misused, and abused that everyone seems to have forgotten to use them in the traditional way by uniting them. In short, *Sweet Movie* is probably the only film ever made that can be simultaneously appreciated by fetishistic scat fiends, fascist libertines, cosmopolitan commies into coprophilia and racial cuckoldry, and stoic fans of cinema and/or twentieth century world history.

Miss Monde 1984/Miss Canada (Carole Laure) seems like a lucky gal, at least upon her initial appearance in *Sweet Movie* as a 'sweet' lady who has a radiant rosebud and a holy hymen that is still intact, thus allowing her to beat a wild Negress, Miss Congo (a woman who wears bananas as a skirt) and a barbarous and butch Miss Yugoslavia in a super satirical "most virgin" contest – a patently perverse pageant of pussy parading that is symbolic of the sexually impotent and fiercely fetishistic capitalist West's absurd obsession with the preposterous 'virginal whore' archetype – where each contestant's cunt is meticulously examined in a sterile, sexless Annie Sprinkle-sideshow-style 'Public Cervix Announcement' by Dr. Mittlefinger; a, "brilliant master of deep insights and even deeper insights." As a prize, Miss Monde, a virginal yet more than willing sacrifice to capitalism, is married to a mad megalomaniac and milk industry tycoon with a masochistic mommy complex named Mr. Kapital (John Vernon) – a man with a golden cock who does not know the difference between Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, but respects the man all the same for starting the Russian Revolution of 1917 – but on the night of the ritualistic deflowering, the undefiled beauty queen is repelled by her new husband's nasty affinity for wacky 'water sports,' thus leading to the premature severing of the relationship between the two ill-fated lovebirds that almost gets the beautiful bride killed via drowning by her bastard ex-beau's puritanical mother. Meanwhile, commie captain Anna Planeta (Anna Prucnal) sails her degenerate boat filled with candy and featuring a jigaboo-like Karl Marx figurehead around the dams of Amsterdam as she attempts to recruit young men and little boys for her sexually subversive sugarite/Trotskyite revolution. In a display of anachronistic absurdity, Planeta manages to attract a sugar-sex-obsessed sadomasochistic sailor (Pierre Clémenti) from the failed Battleship Potemkin of 1905 who proceeds to mount the captain into orgasmic oblivion, but Miss Monde is not as lucky. Taken away by her ex-husband's monstrously muscular Mandingo bodyguard (played by real-life bodybuilder Roy Callender) and carried up a gigantic milk bottle advertisement by the bodacious black buck in a sardonic scene in anti-tribute to *King Kong* (1933) that will probably prove to be totally traumatizing for contemporary white liberals, Miss Monde verbally assaults her kindly kidnapper by spouting nonsensical/contradictory slurs like, "Hitler, Dirty Jew" and "fascist pig" (he prefers being called a "Neanderthal"), so he sexually degrades her and ships her in a red suitcase that eventually lands in the Eiffel Tower, where she is his masterfully handled by a flamboyant Mexican singer/actor named 'El Macho' (Sami Frey; a boy toy of Brigitte Bardot during the 1960s) who has no problem asserting his manhood despite his questionably queer Cockette-esque persona. Unfortunately, a couple of prudish Italian catholic nuns see Miss Monde mounted via her meat-curtain by the mighty Mexican with mascara, thus sparking a stake of sensual shock that eventually leads her to ending up at Viennese Aktionist Otto Muehl's hysterical sex commune where the accursed beauty witnesses infantile

SWEET MOVIE

shit-eating and vile fetishistic projectile vomiting, but she manages to develop a particular fondness for one of the member's flaccid members. Planeta also falls in love; first with the hitchhiking sailor and then with a couple little boys, but ends up killing them all in the end, thus leading to another failed commie revolution, albeit this time of the pinko pussy sort, where mania for Marx merely leads to physical and intellectual masturbation and eventually mindless murder and mayhem. Like all idealistic political revolutions rooted in impossible dreams far away from real-life, Planeta lured them in with starry-eyed sweet talk (this time with literal candy and a cushy and charismatic comrade cunt), but as the great gay Sturmabteilung (SA) brownshirt leader Ernst Röhm – a wildly wanton man who literally wallowed in the scatological colors he once wore – once self-prophetically stated not long before he himself was sacrificed under the dubious pretense of being a treacherous sodomite during the 1934 Night of the Long Knives (Hitler's political purge), "All revolutions devour their own children." Miss Monde on the other hand, eventually turns into literal salacious sweetness as a model whose bare-skinned body is covered in liquid chocolate for a smutty and sensual yet sweet and sugary advertisement, thereupon marking the triumph of capitalism over the individual via sexual subjugation, displacement, and abstraction; the wretched root of the phenomenon of aberrant fetishism that seems to have become the norm in the Western world.

If one learns anything of value from Sweet Movie, it is that postmodern utopian boat bolshevism, as well as its less avant-garde blends, turns women into fetishistic and fratricidal killers of men and boys and that the sort of sanitized 'sexual freedom' offered by capitalism results in foul fetishism, including (but surely not limited to) urolagnia (a perverse pleasure for piss), emetophilia (sexual arousal via vomiting), paraphilic infantilism (grown men who get off to retrogressing to a baby state), scatophilia (a sexual fondness for feces), aquaphilia (wanton for water), exhibitionism, vampirism, wet and messy fetish (WAM) aka splashing, miscegenation, and pedophilia, which has only spread all the more in the increasingly globalized, technocratic world with the fall of the Soviet Union and the homogenizing of the third world via Americanization/Hollywoodization since the release of Makavejev's film almost four decades ago. Convicted pedophile Otto Muehl – who oddly received the Iron Cross for bravery in fighting in the National Socialist army during the Second World War before his decided degeneration and dedication to Aktionism, and who disliked Sweet Movie, stating, "It was all prescribed" – and his primitive commune of shit-eating, infantile man-babies and fetishistic regurgitators symbolize the height of human devolution via a mostly materialistic weltanschauung comprised of communism, anti-nationalism and ethno-masochism, and the soulless and superficial capitalistic promise of 'sexual liberation.' Interestingly, close-ups of Judeo-Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky's (real name Lev Davidovich Bronshtein) ugly rat-like mug is featured throughout Sweet Movie, especially during

boat scenes of Planeta and her patriots of pomo pinko perversity. On top of being a stern proponent of the worldwide 'permanent revolution,' Trotsky was also a Freudian who advocated the sexualization of children at a young age so as to make them early lifelong slaves of their own sensuality, hence why aristocratic English writer Aldous Huxley (who was certainly 'in the know' when it came to world affairs) included a sexually promiscuous girl named 'Polly Trotsky' in his popular dystopian sci-fi novel *Brave New World* (1931) as the novelist saw the future as a bleak one where humans had the sexual discipline of chimpanzees and could not think past their own impulsive needs for personal gratification at the cost of intelligence, knowledge, and kultur, among other things, thus making Anna Planeta the sugary Trotskyite of Makavejev's bodacious bent world of internationalized wantonness and askew erotic instincts propelled by innately anti-organic sociopolitical systems of cultural chaos. Indeed, at best, the cinematic beauty of *Sweet Movie* is unwaveringly bittersweet, but I guess one cannot ask for better in a world where groups of grown men find sexual solace in swimming in their own shit and retrogressing into an infantile state, a subculture of severely sick sodomites known as 'Bugchasers' actively pursue being buggered ('bareback' style) by 'Giftgivers' (aka HIV-positive poofs) so as to oftentimes become, like far-left French philosopher Michel Foucault, sadomasochistic spreaders of the diseases themselves as a potential 'poz-cock' killer, and post-menopausal women known as 'cougars' devote their lives to sexually preying on young men that could be their grandsons.

-Ty E

THE COCA-COLA KID
THE COCA-COLA KID

Dušan Makavejev (1985)

Undoubtedly, it is a sad irony of Australian cinema that, despite New Australian Cinema (Australian New Wave) movement—unquestionably the country-cum-continent's greatest era of cinema—being of a relatively 'nationalistic' persuasion (especially in comparison to the largely left-leaning movements in Europe during the 1960s-1980s), a number of the greatest Aussie films were directed by complete outsiders, including early masterpieces like Brit Nicolas Roeg's *Walkabout* (1971) and Bulgarian-Canadian Ted Kotcheff's *Wake in Fright* (1971) aka *Outback*. While not exactly as highly revered as Roeg and Kotcheff's films, *The Coca-Cola Kid* (1985) directed by Serbian renegade auteur Dušan Makavejev (*Man Is Not a Bird*, Montenegro) is another Australian film that was directed by a foreign auteur that I sincerely believe is one of the greatest and most re-watchable Aussie films ever made. Indeed, while it might be the director's most overtly commercial and accessible film, as well as a cinematic work that only demonstrates the most glaringly superficial understanding of Australia and Australian culture to the point of grotesque parody, Makavejev's marvelous little movie is indubitably a dirty gem of absurdist (romantic)comedy that deserves the somewhat ludicrously lofty reputation that *Crocodile Dundee* (1986) maintains, not least of all because super sassy and sensual Aussie-guidette Greta Scacchi gives what is arguably one of the most erotically eccentric performances in all of cinema history. Seemingly too patently preternatural for everyday lemming filmgoers and not artsy fartsy or overtly politically-charged enough for the typical insufferable art fag cinephile that suffers from moist panties while watching *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels* (1975), *The Coca-Cola Kid* is undoubtedly a film that demands serious critical reevaluation. Undoubtedly, if the film were not directed by the one-and-only Dušan Makavejev, it would probably be less harshly viewed, but such is the sorry fate of a mensch that makes a masterful avant-garde doc about a subject as unworthy as deranged kosher quack Wilhelm Reich.

Admittedly, as a fan of the filmmaker's previous more politically and carnally charged arthouse flicks, I was originally somewhat hesitant about watching a mainstream Hollywood Makavejev movie starring goofy male bimbo Eric Roberts, so naturally I was thoroughly delighted to find that the actor's male bimboness was put to perfect use in the form of an outstandingly arrogant and lovably narcissistic hotshot ex-marine Coca-Cola marketing executive who rather ridiculously sees utilizing predatory advertising for unhealthy soda products as some sort of noble metaphysical quest of the quasi-patriotic sort. Based on short stories in *The Americans, Baby: A Discontinuous Narrative of Stories and Fragments* (1972) and *The Electrical Experience: A Discontinuous Narrative* (1974) by bisexual Aussie writer Frank Moorhouse, who also wrote the film's screen-

play, *The Coca-Cola Kid* was once described by Janet Maslin as “a corporate satire,” but that would be selling it too short and making it seem like something that would mostly appeal to limp-wristed leftist twats, pedantic film and sociology professors, and self-loathing bourgeois hipsters. Indeed, unlike many real commie filmmakers, anti-communist communist Makavejev assembled a sassy, sensual, and humorously surreal slapstick satire that would also appeal to true blue lumpenproles instead of simply pseudo-intellectual reds that frequent Starbucks. Virulently mocking The Coca-Cola Company in a ironical fashion where one might assume it is Coke-porn piece were the film silent due to its many exceedingly aesthetically pleasing shots of Coke logos, signs, and even the beverage itself, one can only assume the bigwigs at the soda corporation had no clue what sort of film they were dealing with when they opted to not sue the distributor Cinecom Pictures into oblivion (notably, the film begins with a long disclaimer noting that the Coca-Cola Company had no involvement in the film, which almost seems improbable considering all the eclectic Coke swag that pleasantly pollutes the film). In a sometimes heavyhanded yet nonetheless effective way, Makavejev demonstrates the blood-colored parallels between Coca-Cola and communist movements in a playfully satirical fashion where the viewer feels thirsty for both Coke and nicely tanned goombah gal skin at the end. Of course, not unlike pinko propaganda, Coke advertisements practically promise an otherworldly utopia, but both communism and soda oftentimes lead to poor health and a premature death.

While legendary American auteur Robert Altman failed big time with *O.C. and Stiggs* (1987) in his somewhat valiant attempt to create a decent goofy teenage comedy aimed at the mindless masses, Makavejev demonstrated with *The Coca-Cola Kid*—a cinematic work that apparently languished in pre-production for about a decade—that he is completely capable of making a film that appeals to both hardened cinephiles and normal people that consider movies to be nothing more than the aesthetic equivalent of cheap sugary soda. Indeed, while I would not go so far as to say that the film is superior to his classics like *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) and *Sweet Movie* (1974), it is certainly more re-watchable and addicting. While indubitably one of the great Australian films of the 1980s, it somewhat makes a mockery of Australia in its seemingly superficial and stereotypical depiction of the Outback. In fact, as Neil Rattigan noted in his book *Images of Australia: 100 Films of the New Australian Cinema* (1991) regarding the film, “There seems little doubt that some of the conspicuous appearances of obvious Australian cultural symbols (kangaroos, didgeridoos, ‘Waltzing Matilda’) in *THE COCA-COLA KID* are a direct consequence of the director’s unfamiliarity with Australia or the effect of its novelty. *THE COCA-COLA KID* does not achieve quite the mirror of amazement that Roeg’s *WALKABOUT* reflects, but its narrative is structured around a two-way clash of cultures, one internal to Australian and one external.” Undoubtedly, when it comes down

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to it, Makavejev's film ultimately says more about the United States (and the viruses known as 'Americanism' and 'globalization') than the *Down Under*, but of course that is one of its many charming little novelties from a filmmaker that is the master of charming (and sometimes not-so-charming) little novelties.

The eponymous quasi-protagonist of *The Coca-Cola Kid* is a straightshooting troubleshooter American neo-cowboy with the Germanic surname Becker (Eric Roberts in one of his greatest and most underrated roles) who somewhat absurdly has a "MBA in Business and Theology from Harvard Business School" and believes "Money is god's muscle." Undoubtedly, as a young and handsome Anglo-Saxon go-getter with a mindless devotion to puritanism that suffers from serious sexual hangups, has nil interest in other cultures, and has a profound arrogance towards and intolerance of any beliefs or customs that are not his own, Becker is surely symbolic of Makavejev's view of America as a whole. As *The Coca-Cola Company's* foremost "First rate point-of-sale man," Becker is sent to the corporation headquarters in Australia to troubleshoot seemingly imaginary problems in the Outback. A man with a misguided mission that seems to have missed his true calling as a Southern Baptist preacher or wealthy televangelist, Becker immediately baffles the employees of the Australian Coke headquarters, including the head boss Frank Hunter (Max Gillies), who receives a somewhat curious fax from the company in regard to the protagonist reading, "Listen to him. Don't get angry. Don't get scared either . . . And do not be surprised." While most of the other Coke employees are either disturbed or annoyed by Becker's absurdly aggressive and quasi-metaphysical approach to advertising, dirty blonde secretary Terri (Greta Scacchi of Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992) in arguably the sexiest role of her career)—a divorced single mother who humorously pays her ex-husband alimony each month for their daughter—clearly wants to fuck his brains out as demonstrated by the fact that she is constantly ogling him while her delectable legs are conspicuously spread wide open in front of him. In fact, Terri soon becomes so frustrated by Becker's blatant disregard for her rather inviting sensual gestures that she nonchalantly accuses him of being a closet homo, stating, "Maybe you're just not interested in women." Of course, poor idiosyncratic alpha-male weirdo Becker—a proud ex-marine that seems to have nil interest in premium grade pussy—does not even seem to be aware that Terri is accusing him of being a poofster, as he has his head so far up on his own ass that he cannot be bothered to even acknowledge the fairly overtly aggressive flirting of such a supremely sexy slut single mother. As the viewer soon realizes, one of Becker's greatest charms is his sort of closest shyness when it comes to exceptionally gorgeous women that want to sit on his babyface and grid their clits into in his flesh.

Since Becker has been brought to Australia to troubleshoot and he is quite good at his job, it does not take long for him to realize that there is a rural Outback town named Anderson Valley where not a single person drinks Coca-Cola

because they are virtually enslaved by the owner of a local brew. Indeed, Anderson Valley is more or less a soft dictatorship run by a tastelessly charming old fart named T. George McDowell (Bill Kerr of Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981)), who started his own soda company in 1924 and refuses to sell out to anyone as he has too much pride to submit to the competition, even if said competition could effortlessly crush his absurdly outmoded operation into oblivion. Unbeknownst to Becker, T. George McDowell is Terri's estranged daughter. Indeed, in terms of employment, Terri is figuratively sleeping with the enemy (and, of course, later she literally sleeps with the enemy), which makes sense when one considers her seemingly schizophrenic pedigree and bizarre family history. While her father owns his own rival soda company, Terri's mother was a Coca-Cola model who opted to eventually kill herself because she could not bear her hotheaded hubby T. George's obsession with his work, namely his fetish for ice. Undoubtedly, Terri is, at the very least, partly attracted to Becker because he reminds her of her cutthroat capitalist father in terms of hardheadedness and alpha-male tenaciousness. While Becker does not realize it until towards the end of the film, it is ultimately up to him to break Terri's family's curse. Indeed, only if Becker stops being such an unhinged workaholic will he have what it takes to be Terri's lover lest her end up a perennially lonely, bitter, and disgruntled old man like T. George.

As if on some sort of important one-man military mission, Becker gets into Marine Corps mode and heads to Anderson Valley in a rented Jeep to spy on T. George McDowell's quite literally antiquated soda operation and see if he can buy the old man out. Rather humorously, Becker almost beats up a butch babe pilot named Juliana (Kris McQuade) when she dares to scare him by flying her plane too close to his Jeep. Luckily, Becker's heart melts when he finds a wounded kangaroo named 'Duncan' and Juliana's elderly aunt Mrs. Haversham (Colleen Clifford) sitting inside the plane and helps carry them to his Jeep. In fact, Juliana even soon forgets that Becker was about to attack her and compliments him while he is carrying her elderly aunt by stating, "You're pretty strong for someone so cute." Needless to say, as a man on a mission with seemingly nil interest in the opposite sex, Becker is hardly enticed by Juliana's flirting and thus continues his journey to Anderson Valley where he is met with rejection upon rejection after attempting to get in contact with the great enigmatic T. George McDowell. When Becker dares to spy on and take photos of the old man's lavish, if rather archaic, soda plantation-cum-factory, T. George slyly attempts to shoot him with a shotgun. Upon escaping the plantation and heading back to the local hotel where he is staying, Becker becomes exceedingly enraged when he discovers that T. George has got him kicked out of his room, so he is forced to sleep outside on the edge of a dangerous cliff where he is greeted the next day by a boorish police constable on a camel who politely serves him tea but then passive-aggressively states to him, "Far away from home? I can't understand people who

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can't stay home. Looking for trouble, taking risks they don't need." When the constable whips out a pistol, Becker opts to beat his ass, hogtie him, and then attach his bound body to the end of his Jeep, which he subsequently drives to T. George McDowell's plantation. Rather impressed that Becker has brutally beaten and tortured his best law man, T. George warmly invites the protagonist to see his vintage soda operation, stating, "I like a tenacious man. Come. I'll show you the plant." Despite being a rather primitive soda operation that uses ice instead of refrigerators to cool its products, Becker is quite impressed with T. George's factory and the two rivals get along rather swimmingly, which is really no great surprise as they are more or less kindred spirits. In fact, T. George even gets rather personal and tells Becker about his dead Coca-Cola model wife, though he eventually gets upset and angrily states regarding his belated beloved, "She never understood . . . ice. She bore me a child and soon afterwards kill herself . . . and I've never forgiven her."

While T. George ultimately refuses to submit and sell his company, Becker still cannot help but have great respect for the stubborn old man and states to his boss when he gets back to Coca-Cola headquarters, "You know, Frank, he's got a real class operation up there though. It's like stepping back into the goddamn 1920s." As for Frank, he is shocked that Becker was even able to get T. George "flushed out" and congratulates the protagonist on his singular accomplishment. After only talking for a couple minutes, T. George unexpectedly arrives at the office with an entourage of glaringly homely young female singers and proposes to Becker a merger with his company and Coca-Cola called 'McCoke.' A master of old school showmanship, T. George even has a skywriter write 'McCoke' in the sky to impress Becker and his comrades. Meanwhile, Terri completely infuriates Becker by hiding inside a soda cooler inside the protagonist's office because, as she meekly states, "I'm hiding from my past" and does not want to be seen by her estranged father T. George. When Becker finally pulls her out of the fridge, Terri tries in vain to explain herself, but he cuts her off, calls her a "half-wit," and demands that she quit her job voluntarily lest she be officially fired and left with a tarnished employment record. Despite firing her, Terri leaves Becker a specially wrapped present from her daughter 'DMZ' (Rebecca Smart) made for him that contains various special presents, including a homemade card, seashells, and a copy of *The Americans, Baby* by Frank Moorhouse featuring Scacchi naked on the cover and draped in an American flag. A couple days before, DMZ—a little girl who proudly describes the origin of her nickname being as follows, "That's what my parents call me. It means demilitarized zone. When they throw things at each other . . . I'm off-limits"—met Becker at the office and was impressed when he told her, "You can call me the Coca-Cola Kid." Despite the fact that Becker had to beat up her father Kim (Chris Hayward) for causing a huge scene and physically assaulting both him and Terri in the Coca-Cola office, DMZ seems to want the protagonist to be her new daddy.

Unlike with her mom and most other women, Becker also seems to rather like DMZ, thus underscoring the protagonist's rather childlike mentality.

Despite the fact he fired her hot little ass in a rather rude and heartless fashion, Terri does not stop in her bold quest to bone Becker, who categorically refuses to even have a simple drink with her, even after she takes the effort to chase him down and spy on him. Indeed, when Becker hires a band, including an elderly aboriginal man named 'Mr. Joe' (Steve Dodd of Fred Schepisi's *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978)), to create a Coca-Cola sing with a supposed authentic "Australian sound," Terri lurks around the recording studio and admires the protagonist as he dictates over the insufferably hokey hired hack musicians. Unbeknownst to Becker, Terri is friends with some of the band members and manages to convince them into having the protagonist attend a hip drug-fueled party at her apartment. To play a somewhat sick trick against her would-be-beau, Terri even coerces one of her gay male friends into dressing in drag and kissing Becker, who seems incapable of spotting a tranny, including one that clearly resembles a gawky man. Ultimately, Becker is so hopelessly embarrassed after being caught kissing a man that he sobs like a little girl and has to be consoled by Terri's daughter, who he complains to in a hilariously vulnerable fashion, "This is so embarrassing. I'm so embarrassed." In a rare moment where he reveals that he may indeed have some interest in Terri, Becker states to DMZ, "She's a dangerous woman, your mother" and she replies, "She's an unhappy woman." When Becker attempts to break up a fight between Terri and her ex-husband Kim, he soon is knocked out cold after the former breaks a bottle over his head. Somewhat strangely, Becker spends the rest of the night getting drunk on the street with Kim, who states of his ex Terri that, "She is an incurable star-fucker" and "The woman we're both in love with." Needless to say, Becker denies he is in love with Terri, but that does not stop Kim from attempting to persuade the romantically hapless protagonist to hookup with her. Indeed, Kim clearly still loves Terri, but he seems to realize that Becker is simply the better and more attractive man.

In a somewhat quirky attempt to buyout T. George since the Coca-Cola Company is clearly not interested in the old man's idea of a merger, Becker has about a dozen or so Coke trucks driven to his factory by drivers sporting extra tacky Santa Claus outfits. Unbeknownst to all parties involved, one of the Santas is Terri dressed in drag. Indeed, big titty Terri dons Santa drag in a desperate attempt to both seduce Becker and prevent him and T. George from killing each other. Needless to say, T. George takes the new Coca-Cola fleet as a major insult to his giant ego and demands that the trucks be immediately removed from his factory, thus sparking a short but sweet brawl between the employees of the rival companies that involves sweaty rednecks fighting dudes in Santa costumes. After subsequently having Becker as the quest of honor at a rather festive rotary dance, T. George decides to go out in a literal blaze out glory instead of simply

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fading away by submitting to Coke and losing his antiquated soda empire, so he conspires to blow up himself and the protagonist inside his factory during a late night meeting. Luckily, instead of meeting up with T. George that night and being unwittingly blown up in an old fart's factory, Becker is finally seduced by Terri, who proves in more ways than one that sometimes love does conquer all. Indeed, in what proves to be a truly festive unexpected present that he eventually personally unwraps, Becker comes back to his hotel room to find Terri lying on his bed in a Santa outfit. While Becker initially plays hard-to-get in his sort of passive-aggressive male bimbo way and attempts to throw her out, he finds himself being unable to argue with Terri when she states, "If we got sex out of the way, we could relax," so the two passionately fuck while pillow feathers cover their flesh in what is indubitably a truly iconic Makavejevic fuck scene. Rather curiously, it is only when Terri is dressed in drag in a Coca-Cola-colored Santa outfit that Becker finally becomes aroused enough to bone her, but luckily the protagonist is not scared away by her delectable dago curves. Needless to say, T. George gets the surprise of a lifetime when he arrives at Becker's hotel room to yell at the protagonist for not keeping his appointment from the night before and unexpectedly discovers his estranged daughter, who he has not seen in over seven years, completely naked in the room. While T. George naturally accuses Becker of hitting him "below the belt," Terri comes to his defense and states, "Leave him alone, Dad. I came of my own accord . . . to save you from him. Or him from you. I don't know which anymore."

When T. George succumbs to a pathetic pity-party and complains, "The child owes no natural affection to the parent," Terri retorts, "I've always loved you . . . in spite of everything," though she subsequently leaves Anderson Valley for good, thus giving her daddy all the reasoning he needs to go ahead with his big plans in regarding to blowing himself up. When T. George actually goes through with his big explosive plans and commits suicide by blowing himself up in his own factory, Becker becomes so disillusioned with his job and even his own entire Weltanschauung that he immediately quits his prestigious position at Coca-Cola and decides to dedicate his life to Terri and her daughter DMZ. Indeed, without looking back, Becker makes the biggest mistake of his life by hooking up with a mentally unstable single mother of the quasi-nymphomaniacal and sometimes quite physically violent sort. Luckily, a mentally deranged hotel bellboy believes Becker is some sort of secret agent and gives him \$50,000, so the protagonist has a nice gift to give to his new family. While *The Coca-Cola Kid* concludes on an absurdly happy note, auteur Makavejev demonstrates his wonderfully warped sense of humor by ending the film with a completely random apocalyptic intertitle that reads, "A week later . . . while cherries blossomed in Japan the next World War began." Indeed, as far as a jovial cultural pessimistic like Makavejev is concerned, even if you fix your life for the better and rid yourself of all your negative and/or otherwise repellent personality traits and devout yourself to self-

less love, you still might be killed in some sort of nuclear apocalypse. Needless to say, we can only assume that Makavejev is not a fan of Ronnie Reagan or Ronald McDonald.

Notably, in an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma*, frog literary theorist, philosopher, and alpha-semiotician Roland Barthes—a man that hardly be described as a cinephile, even though he sometimes wrote about the artistic medium—somewhat strangely argued, “What I ask myself now is if there aren’t arts which are more or less reactionary by their very natures and techniques. I believe that of literature; I don’t believe a literature of the left would be possible. A problematic literature, yes—that is, a literature of suspended meaning: an art which provokes responses but doesn’t supply them. I think literature is that in the best of cases. As for cinema, I have the impression that, in this respect, it’s very close to literature, and because of its structure and material, it’s a lot better prepared than theatre is for a certain responsibility for forms that I’ve called the technique of suspended meaning. I think cinema has trouble supplying clear meanings and that, in its present state, this shouldn’t be done. The best films (for me) are those that suspend meaning the most . . . an extremely difficult operation, requiring at once great technique and total intellectual honesty. For that means disentangling oneself from all the parasite meanings.” While Barthes generally makes me want to barf and represents pretty much everything I loathe about French intellectuals, his somewhat preternatural theory of cinema certainly applies to the films of Makavejev, including his most mainstream effort *The Coca-Cola Kid* which, although expressing certain strong political and metapolitical sentiments, is largely meaningless, but of course that is one of the things that makes it so great as a piece of oftentimes unpredictable absurdist rom-com of the rather anarchic and iconoclastic sort. Indeed, cinema history’s greatest (and only) anti-Coke absurdist romantic-comedy, Makavejev’s exercise in sardonic Aussie slapstick surrealism is pure frolicsome iconoclasm that manages to mock both Coca-Cola and Lenin, as well as nationalism and internationalism, with outstanding eccentric ease. Indeed, one must certainly salute a filmmaker with the talent to offend both Reaganites and Trotskyites alike while employing a hodgepodge of aesthetic waste from both old school commies and contemporary corporations.

Despite being innately anti-Coca-Cola in terms of sentiment, *The Coca-Cola Kid* manages to depict the soda itself in a strangely sexy fashion in multiple scenes, as if the sugary bubbly liquid was the magical vaginal fluids of an immaculately beautiful Greek goddess like Aphrodite or Eros. In that sense, the film is like Makavejev’s previous cinematic works in that it breaks down and deconstructs aesthetic meaning in an oftentimes tongue-in-cheek, if not just plain shamelessly anarchistic, fashion. Undoubtedly, the filmmaker’s singularly provocative philosophy towards manipulating politically-charged cinematic aesthetics is made quite clear in a December 2000 interview with Ray Privett where he stated, “I am very fond of TRIUMPH OF THE WILL. It is one of my

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favorite films of all time. In *THE FALL OF BERLIN* I was absolutely surprised to discover that Mikhail Chiaureli, the director, who was one of Stalin's favorite directors, was directly inspired by two sequences of *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*. This was one of Stalin's top films, about the victory over Germany, but still he gets inspiration from *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*, though it is never credited. And this inspiration is not ironic, it is used for heroic, pathetic portions of the film. It's unbelievable. One example is of Stalin coming down from the sky, which is right out of the beginning of *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*, when Hitler comes down out of the sky. And the other part is this fantastic meeting in Nuremberg where people say where they're from. But this type of public performance in *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL* was itself stolen by the Nazis from the Communist street theatre." When Privett then proposed that Makavejev stole from yet, at the same time, made fun of Stalin, Chiaureli, Hitler, Riefenstahl, and the early 'Russian' communists, the auteur retorted, "You can say that, but you can also say I was inspired by and paid homage to them. They were the best propagandists of their own (horrible) countries. Being in movies, we are all in the same country – the country of movies. You can say it was Russian or German, but in movies it is all the same country. It's a country of dreams. So I was treating them as uncles and aunts I was borrowing from. Perhaps they were uncles and aunts who I didn't particularly like. But they still let me borrow the car." Indeed, in a rather bizarre fashion, Makavejev undoubtedly pays winking homage to the Coca-Cola aesthetic in *The Coca-Cola Kid*, but that is one of the reasons he is a great filmmaker as an auteur that is, relatively speaking, aesthetically apolitical, even when attempting to make some sort of political statement.

Quite notably, in his celluloid swansong, the autobiographical documentary *Rupa u dusi* (1994) aka *Hole in the Soul*, auteur Makavejev demonstrates his happy-go-lucky contempt for Coca-Cola by hanging out with a large dapperly dressed pig in a movie theater and asking someone if the animal enjoys the rather popular tooth-decaying soft drink. Of course, as a (ex)Yugoslavian Serb that has lived all around the world, Makavejev is no stereotypical feeble-brained white liberal bourgeois philistine and his distaste for Coca-Cola is quite cultivated, as he did much in-depth research on the company in preparation for the film. In fact, Makavejev was not just trying to be quirky when he opted to make the film's protagonist a sort of Evangelical salesman as indicated when he stated to art critic Alan G. Artner, "I did incredible research on Coca-Cola and discovered a kind of religious background. Coca-Cola started in the South, after the Civil War, in a time of depression and nervousity. It was a soothing drink, calming people down. They really wanted mankind to be happy. They also had this great democratic idea that kings and presidents and proletarians all drank the same thing. Strangely enough, this gets in touch with some of the dreams of Lenin, you know, a society in which everybody is satisfied." Indeed, while *The Coca-*

Cola Kid can be simply viewed as a “light comedy” (which was Makavejev’s self-admitted intention), it is also a shockingly subtextual work where the deep bizarre truths it reveals are ironically hidden inside the most absurdly humorous and improbable of scenarios. Of course, one of the great truths that the film also reveals is that Greta Scacchi is unequivocally one of the most effortlessly sexy and sensual bitches of cinema history. Indeed, one single ass, beaver, or tit shot of Scacchi is undoubtedly more sexually potent than a thousand fuck flicks.

-Ty E

TEKKEN
TEKKEN

Dwight H. Little (2010)

Based on the hit Playstation series of the same name, Tekken is a wild attempt at bringing a video game classic to the medium of film with partial success. Taking the babbling insecurity of the Japanese and adapting it to a tale most appreciated by the West is an achievement in itself. Like Speed Racer before it, the idea is taken out of context and reshaped by its copyright holders into something best fit for a motion picture and similarly to that of Speed Racer, the climax is composed of vignettes including flashbacks and inordinate scenes of inspiring power surges through anger and rage, which condone the use of frustration to achieve anything you wish. Cinema separate from the source material, Tekken is a labor of love towards the characters and approaches the fickle topic of costume design quite seriously, staying true to the video game which is more than most can say about their tripe products of capitalist consummation. Gifted by the power of creative ideals and an adoration (must be) of Escape from New York and Blade Runner, Alan B. McElroy wrote the screenplay for Tekken and also brought us both the stories of retro-revival love-it-or-hate-it Wrong Turn and Halloween 4 which stands as one of the best horror sequels. Taking a departure from the atypical tournament tear film which was done with poor results in Mortal Kombat and DOA: Dead or Alive, Tekken charges head on into a dystopian landscape in which each continent is owned by a single mega-corporation and provides fighters in a worldwide tournament known as Iron Fist. Jin Kazama makes his small living acting as a runner for stolen goods; items to be used against the post-dictatorship of Tekken. Several propaganda style posters emblazoned with Heihachi's face litter the post-apocalyptic streets. Remarkably, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa still makes a living playing the same villainous character (Shang-Tsung and Heihachi) and doesn't seem to be slowing down. The storyline of Tekken is cleverly articulated and proves to be quite charming in the beginning as it goes as far as to provide growth upon children's fiction into a neo-realist nightmare of a populated purgatory provided by the government we put our trust in. Excluding the budget, the approach to Tekken is taken very sternly. As Jin returns to a trader with smuggled goods to be used in the uprising, he is given "real" currency which he uses to buy goods from a seedy Negro archetyped as a "drug dealer." Instead of offering crack cocaine or "purrp," he sells Jin a little baggy of ground coffee in a nice stab at the future of what we could consider luxuries. After this, he decides to also purchase a bar of chocolate and an orange; gifts for his mother and girlfriend. This scene is very important in establishing the very bleak atmosphere and is later used as a crutch for the film once the tournament begins. Nice fight scenes aside, the dialogue is as balderdash as they could possibly get and I found myself groaning aloud during scenes of Jin and Christie. While being endearingly retarded, this romantic entanglement of fighters is best left to

nerdy, sweaty fan-fiction. Taking liberties with the past involvement of Kazuya and Jin's mother, the filmmakers take one more step towards dominant independence while suggesting the Jin's mother was a victim of rape, which tickles my fancy and imagination. Tekken suffers gruelingly from many problems but considering the status of the game and the lack of intellectuals who might play the game, it just seems impossible to enjoy something for what it is. While Internet trolls goad on and on about the pristine quality and enjoyment of Super Mario Bros. or the passe-indulgent Double Dragon, these critical gnats cannot enjoy something that dares to differ from a video game based on sexless Japanese musclemen who grapple and kick into the depths of forever. Tekken is a capital surprise. Presumptions are made but these defenseless expectations have a chance to be smashed right through if you can switch your cynicism off and enjoy a film that boasts wonderful albeit short martial arts action and a nice hopeless atmosphere for the outside inhabitants of this multiverse. Tekken isn't an excellent film; it doesn't bring anything new to the table but reasonably associates particular interests of the demographic and embraces it. Based on a tournament fighting game whose roster of would-be champions includes bears, cyborg queers, baby dinosaurs, and Satan, I find the negative attitude based around this film to be compulsive and irrational. Given the fact that I might be able to find it within my ice cold interior to view this film again, it definitely deserves a view from anyone who has ever played the game. Tekken's ambition is also its downfall. The fight scenes are too short, too many subplots and character mentions are cemented into the film's lore but make no sense otherwise, Heihachi is crippled from sacrifices that had to be made based on his hair's eccentricity, and most importantly, it just isn't strong enough to exist alongside bonafide entertainment. That being said, I found Tekken to be a wholly enjoying experience and would recommend it to fans of the game. Also, Eddy Gordo is portrayed by "that Capoeira guy" from Tony Jaa's The Protector which acquires the film bonus points for stellar casting.

-mAQ

SUSPECT ZERO
SUSPECT ZERO

E. Elias Merhige (2004)

Suspect Zero is a film that follows a serial killer who kills serial killers (played by Sir. Ben Kingsley). The director, E. Elias Merhige, is most respected for his experimental film Begotten. Begotten looks like a German expressionist film from hell. Suspect Zero is at best an "average" serial killer film. Suspect Zero is a good example of what a director has to sacrifice when trying to make a living. The film has a very contrived and calculated structure. In the beginning of Suspect Zero, we start to question things (just as the film's cop protagonist). As the film progresses, the questions start getting answered. When Suspect Zero is over, all questions are answered and wrapped up neatly into a nice little package. Begotten is a film full of risks and unconstrained (or so it seems) experimentation. E. Elias Merhige claims that the film was inspired by a real life near death experience involving a car accident. The first fifteen minutes of Begotten are amazing (unfortunately). As the film progresses, things get a bit boring and blurred together. Begotten does, however, some other interesting scenes. The film just lacks a certain flowing cohesion (yes, even experimental films somehow have to come together). Begotten I once had a discussion with a "punk" feminist girl on Begotten and she described it as a film that looked like, "it was made by a bunch of loser goth kids to be spooky." I would go that far as I feel the film has merit (even with its flaws). The feminist girl's opinions aren't to be trusted as she makes her income taking cheap nude pictures (a sign of her belief in female "equality?"). Begotten is a film that should be seen by at least any half serious fan of underground and experimental cinema. Now E. Elias Merhige has hit the mainstream (or scratched the surface) with Shadow of the Vampire (Nicholas Cage produced this due to his love for Begotten) and Suspect Zero. Shadow of the Vampire was interesting in a novelty (especially for fans of Nosferatu and F.W. Murnau) sort of way but was nothing groundbreaking. Suspect Zero is a whole other story. I am kind of bored with serial killer films. The whole trend of the charismatic serial killer has been getting old. Suspect Zero features a serial killer (named O'Ryan) who becomes a killer due to the empathy he feels from the victims of other killers. O'Ryan was part of an FBI experiment (project Icarus) to create super telepathic abilities (originally a Soviet technique). He is able to see the deaths of serial killer victims and has lived a life of individualist pain. This "moral" serial killer is a somewhat refreshing look at the beat to death sub-genre. Director E. Elias Merhige attempts to make the formulaic Suspect Zero experimental in the way of image effects. Many scenes are shot in a distressed look (echoing back to Begotten), fire like oranges, and other emotion driven image tampering. These experimental techniques give Suspect Zero an almost music video like feel (but don't most conventional films?). It feels as if Merhige is trying as desperately and hard as possible to let a little of his artistry show.

Merhige is a victim of having to support himself. He is not going to make any money directing another Begotten. The bills start to add up. If you listen to the audio commentary for Suspect Zero you will notice the embarrassingly pathetic attempts of Merhige to legitimize Suspect Zero as a serious artistic film. It is a quite depressing experience (I could only bare a couple minutes of his “confessionals”). Merhige seems an unsuccessful and lower budget version of David Fincher. I don't think he will be making a “comeback.”

Suspect Zero held my interest enough to get through it (I have actually seen it a couple times). E. Elias Merhige is a another victim of American economic reality. The United States does not promote the progression of the arts and culture (a threat to economic interests). We have Rob Zombie to tell us what slasher films we need to know trivia for, and Wes Craven for producing terrible remakes of his best films. Cinematic innovation and experimentation are anti-American.

-Ty E

DIN OF CELESTIAL BIRDS
DIN OF CELESTIAL BIRDS

E. Elias Merhige (2006)

E. Elias Merhige's film *Begotten* (1991) is quite possibly the most important experimental horror work of its time. The spectacularly abrasive and ambitious celluloid *nachtmahr* was inspired by a near death experience Merhige had at the age of 19 years old, thus the director acutely invested his entire petrified soul into the bewitching, yet glaringly blasphemous film. *Begotten* was intended to be the first film in an unofficial trilogy by Merhige, but the director would not create a second chapter in the series until 2006 due to his marginally successful career in Hollywood. Popular goofball actor Nicholas Cage was a fan of *Begotten* and would go on to produce Merhige's first commercial film *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000); a historical fictional work chronicling the production of German master director F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) with an enticing twist: Max Schreck is a real bloodsucking vampire. Naturally, I enjoyed *Shadow of the Vampire* as Murnau is one of my favorite directors yet the film lacked the auteur flare of Merhige's previous film. In 2004, Merhige would go on to direct another commercial work – *Suspect Zero* – an embarrassingly subpar serial killer flick starring Aaron Eckart and Ben Kingsley that was partially produced by Hollywood crackpot actor Tom Cruise. On top of being an artistic failure, *Suspect Zero* neglected to earn back half of its original \$27 million dollar production costs at the box offices. Merhige would also go on to direct music videos for bands like Marilyn Manson, Danzig, and Interpol. In 2006, E. Elias Merhige finally released the second film in his trilogy – *Din of Celestial Birds* – a 14 minute short that was created in a similar aesthetic vein to that of *Begotten*.

Upon learning that E. Elias Merhige finally released *Din of Celestial Birds* (2006), I was fairly reluctant to see the film. After all, it took the filmmaker 15 years to finally direct another film for his experimental trilogy. After watching *Suspect Zero*, I pretty much lost hope in Merhige's seriousness and artist prowess as a director. Experimental auteur filmmakers like David Lynch and David Cronenberg had entered the mainstream, yet still managed to direct groundbreaking works, but I can't say the same thing about Mr. Merhige. According to Merhige, *Din of Celestial Birds* is an abstract work dealing with the concept of evolution and the birth of consciousness, yet the only thing I got out of the film was a couple interesting images, but I remained starved for the purported philosophical food for thought. Thus I am sad to the report that *Din of Celestial Birds* was more disappointing than I originally expected it to be. In fact, the short feels and looks like Merhige was merely attempting to rip-off his younger self in a feeble and ultimately failed attempt to recreate the otherworldly spiritual nature of *Begotten*. I personally think it is quite tragic that Merhige has consistently failed to top a film that he made during his early dilettante years. Unlike

the wonderfully gritty and grotesque work *Begotten*, *Din of Celestial Birds* is an overly polished film directed by a formerly ambitious auteur who matured for the worst. Although I suspect that some fans of *Begotten* might find *Din of Celestial Birds* to be an interesting work, they could never honestly admit that it captures an inkling of the metaphysical horror that permeates throughout the original film. Had I saw *Din of Celestial Birds* not knowing that it was directed by E. Elias Merhige, I would have thought the director was someone with pretensions geared towards being the next David Lynch, as the spiritless short has the inorganic feel of a self-indulgent and unoriginal student film. Whereas viewing *Begotten* has been a magical life changing experience for many, *Din of Celestial Birds* is the kind of film you would soon forget immediately after viewing. Mother earth may have committed suicide in *Begotten*, but she must have fallen asleep in *Din of Celestial Birds*. Despite being totally discouraged by *Din of Celestial Birds*, I will always hold some respect for *Begotten*; a wonderful pagan nightmare without rivals.

E. Elias Merhige once mentioned that cinema is the most meaningful artistic medium of modern times. Although I find Merhige's statement to be somewhat valid, nothing will supersede the irreplaceable and distinctly intimate nature of literature. It should be noted that Merhige has openly admitted that his films are somewhat inspired by occult literature he has read over the years. Knowing that Merhige considers cinema to be the most intrinsically valuable art form of the present era, one would think that he would be more focused on directing revolutionary cinematic works than creating overpriced disposable Hollywood products. Unfortunately, I doubt Merhige will ever break his reputation as a "one hit wonder" auteur who sold his once splendidly austere soul to the businessmen of Sunset Boulevard. During the production of *Din of Celestial Birds*, Merhige had help from Q6, a seemingly unthinking collective of philosophers and artists. The short opens with the titles "hello and welcome ... do not be afraid ... be comforted ... remember ... our origin..." and then precedes to show the birth of matter from nothingness. Despite the obscenely pretentious scenario portrayed in *Din of Celestial Birds*, the film adds up to nothing (as advertised!). By reading the film's plot, one knows that E. Elias Merhige – a former student of the occult – is now a proactive nihilist whose spirituality has worn to nil; no doubt the hefty price most people have to pay to work in Hollywood.. Although *Begotten* is a sadistically sacrilegious work, the film still features a dark spirituality that is quite alluring. I guess after working in Hollywood for so long, Merhige only believes in matter as a matter-of-fact and in *Din of Celestial Birds* it eminently shows. I just hope E. Elias Merhige decides to do something more original and compelling for the final film in his unofficial trilogy, but that seems like a rather dubious and forlorn dream.

-Ty E

DER FAN
DER FAN

Eckhart Schmidt (1982)

If any film deserves the distinguished title ‘arthouse horror,’ it is German auteur Eckhart Schmidt’s *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance*; a slow-burning yet titillating thriller set in a Neue Deutsche Welle tableau about a cute yet distinctly deranged teenager girl with an unhealthy crush for a relatively unimpressive new wave singer. Undoubtedly, Schmidt’s greatest and most immaculate cinematic achievement (his underrated 1985 flick *Loft* is not far behind), *Der Fan* is a film where the fine-line between obsession and psychosis is transcended, thus resulting in something much more terrifying than mere teenage tenderness with the most surprisingly of results. Starring Luxembourgian television presenter and actress Désirée Nosbusch (*Good Morning, Babylon, A Wopbaloobop a Lopbamboom*) aka Désirée Becker of the Eurovision Song Contest 1984 in an ironic yet charmingly fitting role as anti-heroess Simone; a girl who pesters the mailman everyday in the hope that she has received a response from her beloved rockstar “R”, *Der Fan* is a film about a lonely and equally loony girl whose day-to-day life revolves around the public media happenings of a man she has never actually met, but that doesn’t stop her from attempting to make him her eternally bonded beau. Notable for its long and extended scenes of Nosbusch’s naked and nubile body in exceedingly compromised positions, *Der Fan* portrays Simone, a girl whose looks are completely and utterly misleading, like a pug pup with an acute case of rabies. Nosbusch must not have realized the severity of the role because long after signing a contract agreeing to star in *Der Fan au naturel*, she attempted to stop the release of the film, thus resulting in an excessive trial and a scandal in the German press, which she inevitably lost. Admittedly, Nosbusch’s infamous garmentless scenes are what *Der Fan* is probably best known for, but it would be totally misleading to describe the film as a sexploitation or skin flick. Featuring a highly complementary, if somewhat dated, kraut New Wave soundtrack by the German synth-based group Rheingold – a group fronted by German musician Bobo Steiger (who also happens to play “R”), *Der Fan* – with the considerably different and notably popular porn flick *New Wave Hookers* (1985) is probably the most scandalous and salacious yet thoroughly entrancing film ever made centering around a post-punk/new wave backdrop.

Featuring mostly improvised and wordless acting, *Der Fan* works as a film because – through her monotone voice and body language – one can truly believe that Simone is a patently pathological and pathetic pervert with a foreboding inwardness that is on the brink of bursting out at the most slightest disappointment. Thus, I think it would be fair to describe *Der Fan* as the *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970) of punk rock cinema. Vaguely resembling a poor man’s Ian Curtis had the tragic and suicidal Joy Division vocalist lacked his distinct introverted and haunted charm, Simone’s fantasy boyfriend “R” is quite differ-

ent from the romantic, media conception she has of him. Tall, dark, and only slightly handsome, but also a famous teenage heartthrob with a wealth of lackluster carnal experience, “R” is surely out of Simone’s league, but that does not stop her from attempting to jump his rickety rockstar bones. After failing to receive a single response from one of her many letters, Simone – who is nervous, neurotic, and suicidal – decides to hitchhike to a TV show that “R” is being taped for at a nearby studio. Estranged from her parents and all but friendless, the character of Simone makes for a fresh and ideally idiosyncratic example of alienation in post-WWII and post-nationalistic Germany. Noxious obsession aside, “R,” like most musicians, is hardly the sort of individual that the masses should celebrate and emulate, let alone swoon over, thereupon making Simone’s perceptibly perverse puppy love seem all the more pitiful and downright perturbing. Naturally, when “R” does not live up to Simone’s inane and imaginary ideal of him, her entirely self-invented internal world is irrevocably shattered resulting in the most heinous of consequences. Like a Michael Haneke film cleverly disguised as a German John Hughes-esque Brat Pack clone, *Der Fan* is a work that manages to catch the excessive escapism and narcissism of the 1980s without seeming like an accidental self-parody like so many similar works (e.g. *St. Elmo’s Fire*, *Less Than Zero*) seem to be.

Unlike most of Eckhart Schmidt’s fictional feature films, *Der Fan* is a rather realistic work with a genuinely disquieting and ominous atmosphere, at least during the final 1/3 of the film. Initially seeming like a wholesome and light-hearted new wavish melodrama, *Der Fan* takes a turn for the wonderfully worse, as if the lead cutesy girl goes from being a mousey debutante to Jeffrey Dahmer’s kraut cousin; this film reminds the viewer how even a small punk rock flick can stir a bodacious blitzkrieg of emotions if fastidiously and adroitly executed. Like Allan Moyle’s *Times Square* (1980) meets Gerald Kargl’s *Angst* (1983), but with a ferocious feminine flare, *Der Fan* is a work that has a particular propensity for sparking fear in both arrogant, oversexed male musicians and virginal teenage beta-males alike as the film brings new meaning to the popular and innately preposterous feminist phrase: I am women, hear me roar! Featuring a random artwork from the 1936 Summer Olympics – the legendary National Socialist Olympiad – and footage of rock fans that resembles entranced crowds from the Nuremberg Rally captured in Leni Riefenstahl’s propaganda masterpiece *Triumph of the Will* (1936), *Der Fan* is a work that highlights the Dionysian, neopagan nature of the rock concert and the sort of collective hypnosis and implicit irrationalism that such sexualized sensationalism stirs, especially in the already mentally imbalanced, thus making the death-by-Arno-Brekeresque-statue-to-the-head scene featured in the film seem all the more strikingly symbolic. In his later work *Loft* (1985), Eckhart Schmidt would also accent the deadly serious nature of artists and art patrons, but to the point of a playful parody, henceforth making the film a lot less threatening than his previous

DER FAN

work *Der Fan*. In Germany, kultur has always been considered one of the more important attributes of a nation, thereupon making *Der Fan* all the more interesting of a film, as although many pseudo-cultural ingredients were imported to the Fatherland, Kraftwerk – the father's of the krautrock electronic music scene depicted in Schmidt's work – are of thoroughly and uniquely Teutonic origin. That being said, Simone could not be more diametrically opposed to *Das Model* of Kraftwerk's hit song, but then again, that is what makes her so startlingly alluring, if unmitigatedly disconcerting.

-Ty E

THE GOLD OF LOVE

Eckhart Schmidt (1983)

Maybe it is because I am one of the few cinephiles that loves those oh-so rare films that blend both lowbrow trash and highbrow celluloid sophistication for a rather curious cinematic blend, but the more films I see by Eckhart Schmidt (*Jet Generation - Wie Mädchen heute Männer lieben*, *Alpha City*), the more I feel that the director is one of the most underappreciated, misunderstood, and original Teutonic filmmakers of his *zeitgeist*. Instead of making dry and dreary far-left films criticizing so-called “ordinary fascism” and the kraut bourgeoisie like many of the filmmakers associated with German New Cinema, Schmidt directed poetic neo-romantic works featuring a healthy serving of sensational sex and violence, among other things, with *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance*—a decidedly dark, distinctly disturbing, and even demented work starring one-time Eurovision presenter Désirée Nosbusch as a crazed music fan who stalks and eventually maliciously murders her favorite musician, who fronts a Kraftwerk-esque electronic group—being his most successful work to date (somewhat unsurprisingly, Japanese ‘celebrity cannibal’ Issei Sagawa is a fan of the film). Featuring part of the same cast and crew as *Der Fan*, the director’s next feature, *Das Gold der Liebe* (1983) aka *The Gold of Love*, would also focus on a cutesy fangirl who develops an unhealthy obsession with her favorite musicians. Described by Schmidt in 1997 as follows, “The film was made only at night in about 10 days. A part of the team was the same as on *DER FAN* and they were taken to the limit, because the Viennese nights were loaded: From actors on drugs to shooting permits that could only be realised with pressure,” *The Gold of Love* is undoubtedly a more aesthetically ambitious, eccentric, and esoteric work than its much more popular cinematic predecessor, as a pathologically phantasmagoric and hyperphysical work driven by a quite spellbinding dream-logic where nothing is as it seems. Indeed, comparable to the more inaccessible and anti-linear works of German Expressionism like *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1926) aka *Secrets of a Soul* directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Schmidt’s film is unquestionably somewhat in the spirit of Arthur Schnitzler’s 1926 novella *Traumnovelle* aka *Dream Story*, albeit set in a deathly degenerate Vienna where a corrosive cocktail of *Neue Deutsche Welle*, heroin, sexual depravity, and all-around insanity rule the streets. Undoubtedly, one of the most strangely charming aspects of the film is that the somnambulist-like teenage lead (played by Alexandra Curtis, who is the daughter of Austrian diva Christine Kaufmann and Hollywood Hebrew Tony Curtis) is obsessed with the German electropunk/NDW group D.A.F. (*Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft*) and finds a guardian angel in the form of a member of the Austrian New Wave group *Blümchen Blau* (who, like D.A.F., also contributed music to the film’s rather notable soundtrack). Indeed, *The Gold of Love* is probably the world’s first and last surrealist *Neue Deutsche Welle* horror

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flick (Austrian auteur Niki Liš's 1982 cult flick *Malaria* is also NDW-driven but it does not feature horror elements) and it's a rather remarkable one at that. Apparently, when the film was released, Schmidt stated something along the lines that no film critic would be able to analyze it and indeed, *The Gold of Love* is loaded with all sorts of religious and cultural symbolism, as a modernist metaphysical horror flick with a darkly romantic spirit that is best approached as one would approach their own dreams—on the subconscious level.

After opening with footage of D.A.F. performing to the strangely soothing sounds of industrial noise, *The Gold of Love* then cuts to a scene of the film's 16-year-old protagonist Patricia (Alexandra Curtis, who previously starred in the excellent Austrian film *Die Ausgesperrten* (1982) aka *The Excluded* directed by Franz Novotny) being awakened from her slumber after hearing someone chanting her name. After looking at the moon, Patricia, who is a somnambulist-like state, becomes convinced that the members of D.A.F., Gabriel "Gabi" Delgado-López and Robert Görl, have supernaturally summoned her to come to Vienna to see them. Indeed, Patricia walks all the way to Vienna by her lonesome, but when she gets to the venue where the band is playing, she is denied entry because she has no money, so tears of blood (!) begin to run down her face as if she is the Virgin Mary of NDW. While Patricia talks to an unknown girl (Marie Colbin) via an outdoor speaker who agrees to sneak her into the concert, the teen ultimately stumbles on a gruesome yet strangely aesthetically pleasing ritualistic murder (the chick repeatedly stabs another chick in the stomach as if raping her abdomen) that is being executed by the same curious chick who agreed to help see D.A.F. perform. Indeed, the killer 'Princess of the Night' (indeed, this is the name of Colbin's character as listed in the credits) is the member of a nasty little nocturnal gang led by a tall and lanky leather-jacket-adorned psychopathic Aryan degenerate named 'Ernsti' (Hermann Strobel), who completely controls the Viennese underworld and lives by the curious little motto "corpse to corpse," as if his job is to exterminate the entire population of the city. Naturally, since Patricia witnessed the murder, Ernsti and his 'gal goons' (indeed, aside from the 'Queen of the Night,' the gang's second-in-command is another quasi-dyke-like chick with dark hair) want the teenager dead because she witnessed the grisly murder and they know where to look for her since she made a big deal about meeting Gabi and Robert of D.A.F., who apparently enjoy hanging around the more sleazy joints in Vienna when not jumping around on stage like spastic stormtroopers.

When Patricia arrives at a Neue Deutsche Welle club while searching for the mysterious 'gold of love,' she happens upon Gabi and Robert's black leather combat boots, as well as a number of eccentric and super sensual characters, including a couple having bestial sex in plain view, a completely nude blonde chick with a big bushy bush sitting cross-legged in a chair, and a couple pale white corpses with golden blond hair. When the seemingly hypnotized teenager

leaves the club, she spots a glowing white car (indeed, this is another insistence where the film takes a somewhat subtle supernatural approach) containing the two mysterious fellows behind D.A.F.. After failing to meet Gabi and Robert, Patricia enters a bar and spots an overweight mensch fiddling with two handguns who ultimately blows his brains out just as the teenager is running out of ominous taproom. When Patricia goes to a second bar, she meets a seemingly supernatural prophet/wiseman/Christ-like figured named 'Heller' (played by Viennese Jew André Heller, who previously read a long monologue in Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's 1977 magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany*), who tells the teen dream: "I know what you are looking for but maybe you'll find something else entirely." While talking to Heller, Patricia passes out and the 'Queen of the Night' soon shows up and throws a dagger at the Semitic Sage's back yet, quite miraculously, he survives and manages to save the protagonist from being fatally penetrated by the mad Queen's knife. Indeed, the Queen of the Nacht ultimately proves to be no match for Heller and Patricia's god-like will power.

As the film progresses in a fantastically foreboding fashion, Patricia encounters another prophet/sage (Andrea Wurstbauer) of sorts at a hair salon, who gives the young girl a somewhat sinister yet sensual head massage and states, "They won't look for you here. They know I'm crazy and that I'm looking for a different victim every night [...] Don't disappoint me...all I'm looking for is the gold of love." The mystic Hairdresser also repeats what Heller said by warning Patricia that, "Maybe you'll find something else." When Patricia goes to another bar (indeed, it seems like the only things that exist in Vienna are sleazy bars and equally sleazy music venues), homicidal heroin Führer Ernsti shows up and tells the teen dream that she will not live to see the next day while pressing a gun into her gut, but luckily a virtuous female bartender named Raphaela (played by star Curtis' sister Allegra Curtis), who is completely fed up with all the heroin and homicide that the gang has plagued the city with, helps the teen escape, at least temporarily. After being grabbed by a faceless corpse-like being while hiding amongst the shadows of the maleficent metropolis, Patricia is caught by the pernicious Princess of the Night, who injects potentially deadly street junk into the little lady's arm. After falling in and out of consciousness at a concert, Patricia once again spots Gabi and Robert's phosphorescent automobile, but she is in for quite the surprise when she looks inside the car and sees that her two favorite musicians are lifeless skeletons. On top of experiencing the disappointment of a lifetime upon learning that the two dudes behind D.A.F. are nothing but bones, Patricia is immediately shot in the gut by Ernsti, but somehow she does not die. After being shot, Patricia enters a nefarious nightmare of the surreal 'sex and death' oriented sort where she encounters, among other things, a woman stabbing herself in the vag, thus resulting in a bloody mess that puts the most moribund of miscarriages to shame. After the deranging dream-sequence, Patricia goes to see the Austrian New Wave group Blümchen Blau perform. Throughout

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the film, the singer of the band, Jakob Mundl, acted as a sort of goofy 'Guardian Angel' for Patricia. After finishing their set, the Guardian Angel kisses Patricia and she instantly faints (as she does quite often throughout the film), so he and the rest of his band carry her away so that she may sleep in safety. Ultimately, *The Gold of Love* ends as it began with Patricia awaking in her room after feeling the power of moonlight, albeit this time she does not waste her time wandering the streets of vice-ridden Vienna, as she seems to have realized that musicians are not gods. Indeed, it was all a dream and like Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Federico Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), the film concludes in a metacinematic fashion by revealing the film crew, including auteur Eckhart Schmidt coaching star Alexandra Curtis.

Undoubtedly, out of all the films I can think of, the expressionistic American film noir flick *Dementia* (1955) aka *Daughter of Horror* directed by John Parker is the only cinematic work that comes even close to *The Gold of Love* in terms of its literally and figuratively dark essence and singularly oneiric and ominous atmosphere. Of course, Schmidt's film is much more malevolent and disconcerting in its essence, but unlike *Dementia*, it ultimately seems to have a 'happy' ending and even a positive message, which is rather rare for a Schmidt flick. Undoubtedly, a major clue to the hermetic celluloid puzzle that is *The Gold of Love* is the remark, "you'll find something else," which is made by two of the Sages that the protagonist encounters during her otherworldly odyssey. Indeed, in the end, Patricia does not find the "gold of love" aka (D.A.F.), but she does learn that her musician heroes are nothing but 'empty skeletons' (or 'fool's gold') and not the great holy grail that she risked her life, limb, and soul to search for. Indeed, set in a murder, suicide, and heroin plagued Vienna where D.A.F. flyers cover virtually every single wall and building, the film ultimately (and possibly unwittingly) demonstrates that musicians are not the virtual gods that the media has promoted them as, but modern day 'Golden Calves' and false prophets who are the foremost spreaders of spiritual syphilis and all-around cultural degeneracy, hence why sex, death, and drugs are innate qualities of the NDW scene featured in the film. Of course, the protagonist of Schmidt's previous film *Der Fan* did not come to this revelation until it was too late, so she lost what little was left of her already unhinged mind as a result, thereupon resulting in coldblooded murder of the most macabre sort. Interestingly but not surprisingly, *The Gold of Love* was not the last film Schmidt made where he dealt with the unhealthy phenomenon of teens obsessing over dopey dope-addled musicians, as he followed the work up with the comedy *Wie treu ist Nik?* (1986), which is from the perspective of the musicians as opposed to the fans like the two previous films. Indeed, while Schmidt has spent much of his career writing on and directing films about post-counter-culture music trends (his first feature, *Jet Generation - Wie Mädchen heute Männer lieben*, is a sort of kraut equivalent to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966)), his works do not romanticize these trends,

with *The Gold of Love* demonstrating that Neue Deutsche Welle was no different than the modern cultural trends that preceded it, even if it did have better music (I must admit that I love D.A.F.'s hit song "Der Mussolini"). Featuring everything from a whacked out woman shoving a knife up her naughty bits to a young murderess kidnapping a teen girl and injecting street smack into her arm, *The Gold of Love* is assuredly Schmidt's darkest and most demented film yet, rather ironically, it also seems to be his least nihilistic, but then again, maybe the auteur had a thing for star Alexandra Curtis and did not want to see her meet an appalling end (indeed, while Curtis is not exactly the cutest girl in the world, she certainly beats her ugly American half-sister Jamie Lee Curtis). Undoubtedly, the film is also the director's most accomplished example of his greatest talent as a filmmaker; combining high kultur with ridiculously sleazy trash. The only other film that I know of that manages to seamlessly mesh quasi-punk performances with surreal and foreboding metaphysical horror is the Hungarian film *The Dog's Night Song* (1983) aka *Kutya éji dala* directed by Gábor Bódy. Indeed, *The Gold of Love* is like the *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) aka *Le Sang d'un Poète* of the Neue Deutsche Welle scene, albeit directed by a rampantly heterosexual kraut as opposed to a faggy frog. Of course, one also must not forget that Schmidt's work is probably the only film ever made that makes you want to, "tanz den Mussolini" during the middle of a dark and sinister night.

-Ty E

ALPHA CITY
ALPHA CITY

Eckhart Schmidt (1985)

Aside from possibly the killer and kitschy, kraftwerk-esque teen 'horror' flick *Der Fan* (1982) aka *The Fan* aka *Trance*, *Alpha City* (1985) aka *ALPHACITY - ABGERECHNET WIRD NACHTS* is undoubtedly anti-Neuer Deutscher Film/anti-intellectual German auteur Eckhart Schmidt's most popular and commercially successful work. Although set in seedy and synthesizer-driven Berlin of some ostensible near-future, Schmidt himself has described *Alpha City* as being not a "Berlin movie," as even Berliners had no idea where the film was set when it first premiered. In fact, very little about *Alpha City* is distinctly "German" aside from the musical score because despite being a 100% Teutonic production and its rather passionate romanticism, as the film was shot without sound and later dubbed in both English and German during post-production. A film about two men who fall in love with the same woman, one American and the other German, *Alpha City* also goes against expectations in that the American character (Al Corley, who being quite a popular New Wave musician in Europe at that time, also contributed to a good portion of the film's musical score) looks totally Nordic and German, while the Berlin woman (Isabelle Willer) and her crazy kraut male lover (Claude-Oliver Rudolph) look totally Mediterranean as if they were the stars of some c-grade giallo flick from the same era. A traditional and no bullshit kind of guy, Schmidt created a very literal title for "*Alpha City*" as it is about two very different types of Alpha males who agree that the kraut metropolis is not big enough for the both of them, so the two duel it out with one another until one (or possibly both) of them is dead. As Hans Schifferle, the editor of the popular German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, wrote in his article *Cinema of Passion: A Portrait of Eckhart Schmidt*, "Alexander Kluge once gave us a wonderful characterization of Schmidt's film themes: referring to his wild love films, Kluge said that desire might be called a refined cannibalism. But Schmidt does not only have one theme: above all, he has a specific way of looking at the world, entering into the finest details. His style, with its tendency toward the extreme and an attractive desire for speculation, is characterized by a preference for ritual, style and ceremony over crude, theatrical "psychologizing". He attempts to discover the secret from the surface, to recognize the truth in a moment." Indeed, while *Alpha City* might be a convention-driven neo-noirish postmodern "Western" minus the cowboys and Indians and set in a New Wave, semi-futuristic sort of dystopian Deutschland, Schmidt does not share a trait typical of his Hollywood influences of pandering to his audience by opting for including a contrived optimism with a neatly packaged happy ending. Indeed, *Alpha City* could be described as a neo-romantic work, but one where cold-blooded killers, prostitutes, and mentally defective piano players are hopelessly trying to consummate love in a wildly wanton world of innate destruction, moral

corruption, and all-around cultural chaos.

Opening with footage of ghetto anarchist and piano player Frank (Claude-Oliver Rudolph) – a tall, dark, and handsome man with grotesque scars all over his chest – performing cunnilingus on a relatively bitchy prostitute named Raphaela (Isabelle Willer), *Alpha City* immediately establishes a mood of lechery over love and the female overpowering the male. A woman that makes her living peddling her flesh to perverts of the mostly posh and powerful sort a number of times a night, Raphaela does not seem like the sort of woman who is looking for a permanent beau, but Frank is about to try and change that or at least die trying. Described as a ‘man-eater’ by those that know her, Raphaela does not even bother to consummate coitus with Frank after her lily is lovingly licked until she reaches orgasm via the man that loves her. Despite (and probably because of) her lack of carnal reciprocation, Frank decides to follow Raphaela’s every ass-shaking move around the city and when he sees her in another man’s car, the perturbed proletarian piano player smashes it to pieces. After demanding that Raphaela get out of the car, an American gang leader (Al Corley, who aside from being a New Wave musician, is probably best known as the first actor to play Steven Carrington on the 1980s soap opera *Dynasty*) and his goons show up to see what all the commotion is about, thus ushering in the beginning of a brutal and bizarre love triangle that will end in belligerent and brazen bloodshed and bereavement. A lover and a fighter, Frank the tank manages to beat up and strike fear in virtually every high dollar John that has a ‘date’ with ravishing Raphaela, but one man, the American; a stoic yet bloodthirsty blond beast who has no problem murdering a couple dozen people in a night for mere monetary gain, manages to impress and undress the flesh-peddling femme fatale and, naturally, penetrates both her body and soul. Frank, on the other hand, tells her himself, “I said I love you...I’d kill for you,” and indeed he would, but he also has no problem smacking Raphaela around when she runs her mouth too much, which she seems to rather enjoy, so it seems the American is dead wrong when he tells her she is, “not a masochist.” As someone who admits, “I haven’t seen daylight in over two years,” Raphaela might be a bit delirious in her belief that she loves two men; one being a dilettante piano player who plays debauched clubs and illegal gambling halls and knows how to hit a woman and another who is a suave, albeit psychopathic, fellow who makes who makes a killing literally killing. Although enemies, there is a certain amount of respect between Frank and the American, as both seem to acknowledge one another’s “alpha” status in a world of banal beta bitches, but as they both agree, “There’s not enough room for the two of us...there’s just no room,” thus a duel ensues at the fiery finale of *Alpha City* – one of only a handful of “New Romanticiſt” themed films with actual balls – where the two angst-addled anti-heroes and outlaws of love symbolically battle it out at the Berlin Olympiastadion; the site of the 1936 National Socialist Summer Olympics in a scene that Schmidt described as being shot from the

ALPHA CITY

"Führer perspective" (where Uncle Adolf sat and enjoyed the show).

As prostitute Raphaela states while standing on the roof of a Mercedes-Benz building, which was also featured prominently in an iconic scene from the West German cult classic *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) directed by Uli Edel, with her freaky boy toy Frank, "Sometimes, I have this feeling that everybody down there, that all of them are working for me," and, indeed, in a certain sense she is right. At the mere shake of her ass or accentuation of her 'naughty bits,' Raphaela can put any man under her spell, including two intrinsically individualistic Alpha types who answer to no one but themselves, at least until a certain saucy and sensual lady enters their lives and changes it forever. Indeed, *Alpha City* – a seductive yet savage cinematic work directed by a proudly untamed auteur who once famously admitted, "I would rather film a naked girl than a discussion of problems" – is the sort of film both estrogen-deprived feminists and testosterone-deprived "pick-up artists" love to hate as it exaggerates the true source of 'women's power' to the point of being quite preposterous yet positively penetrating, hence one of the film's greatest appeals: its unwavering celebration of outmoded archetypes. A modern day Western/film noir hybrid for those that cannot stomach mute cowboys seeming to suffer from constipation and maniac midget gangsters with Yiddish NYC accents, as well as those who prefer synthpop over cockrock, *Alpha City* is no movie masterpiece, but it tells a rather timeless tale in a stylish, new dark romanticist sort of way. While his other hit cult films *Der Fan* (1982) and *Loft* (1985) are rather original in their shocking pseudo-arthouse aberrancy, *Alpha City* borrows aesthetic ingredients from both of these films, but tries to tell a rather conventional, albeit completely corrupted, cinematic love story that concludes in a less than comforting manner that reminds one why Hollywood is run by odious and ostentatious optimism-peddlers as opposed to actual humanbeings. Of course, with unintentionally hilarious one-liners like, "I've always wanted to shoot the piano player" and "I didn't murder him. I just helped him to commit suicide," among countless other curious quotes, *Alpha City* proves that America was not the only place where rampant materialism sired absurdist melodramatics in movies, but unlike eternal juvenile John Hughes, Eckhart Schmidt had no problem admitting he had testicles and tireless Teutonic ones at that!

-Ty E

LOFT

Eckhart Schmidt (1985)

Aside from possibly his charmingly callous hero-worship-gone-homicidal cult flick *Der Fan* (1982) and his superficially-stylized Americanized action-romance-drama flick *Alpha City* (1985), German auteur Eckhart Schmidt is a relatively forgotten, if somewhat deservedly so, filmmaker who has many more cinematic misses than hits, but he has created a couple works that deserve critical reevaluation and even a serious cult following, most specifically his rather bizarre and thoroughly engrossing cross-genre pseudo-arthouse work *Loft* (1985). Like a merry mongrel mix between the visual and audio aesthetic of Slava Tsukerman's iconic new wave sci-fi flick *Liquid Sky* (1982) and the visceral and psychotically playful brutality of Wes Craven's popular exploitation flick *The Last House on the Left* (1972) and its Italian-clone *The House on the Edge of the Park* (1980) directed by Ruggero Deodato (*Cannibal Holocaust*), *Loft* is a curious cinematic work that is every bit as idiosyncratic, entertaining, and controversial (at least for its time) as it sounds, but it is also packed with ostentatious artistic pretensions and a glaring (non)socio-political message that has not aged gracefully, although these sometimes repelling cinematic flaws do add a secondary and wholly unintentional layer of character to the film that make it all the more noteworthy. Despite its blemishes, *Loft* is easily the most enthralling and unintentionally uproarious 'horror' film that I had the random pleasure of viewing this summer. Also, like Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky*, *Loft* features a primitive and unhealthily addictive electronic score created by the director that further accentuates agitating ambiance of the film. If the Baader-Meinhof Group were anarchic punks with more of a proclivity towards creating gigantic sinister cock paintings, gently raping bourgeois bitches, and reciting pretentious poetry than being suicidal media whores, they might resemble the villainous art collective featured in *Loft*; a sensational and sassy celluloid shock piece that has the prestigious distinction of provoking much controversy in supposedly "artistically free" Germany upon its original release.

Set sometime in the not-so-distant future, *Loft* begins with narration from an unnamed individual about a neurotic and nihilistic era where – much like our present post-postmodern world – the Occident is on the break of total civil war and hedonism makes for a totally chic *weltanschauung*. At first, we are introduced to a bourgeois couple as they visit an avant-garde art exhibition located in a loft in some post-industrial wasteland. Raoul (Andreas Sportelli), a rich, cocky, and awfully pompous PBF (pretty boy fag) in his early-20s, lets his muse Raphaela (Rebecca Winter), a Mediterranean-like bitch with an emotional twitch, know that he is only attending the seemingly amateur art show so he can finally unbury the fleshly, earthly pleasure that is between her legs. Lit-

LOFT

tle do the two banal bougies realize that Furio (Karl-Heinz von Liebezeit), the lead 'curator' and Führer of the art collective – a debauched and nasty Nordic sadist who looks like he just walked off the set of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) – is watching the couple's every move and he doesn't take kindly to their apathy towards his would-be-audacious art. With topless girls chained to poles and phallogocentric paintings adorning the walls, furious Furio has indeed set up quite the spectacle for his inhospitable guests and they repay him by frantically fornicating in a darkened room away from the art. After the art exhibition, Furio and his collective imprison the couple in the loft and treat them accordingly. In defense of his impassioned brutality, Furio vehemently states, "You attended our exhibition, but not one of you paid any attention to our pictures. We are our pictures, and they strike back when they're insulted." To be fair, before her boyfriend starting putting his hands up her dress, Raphaela seemed somewhat intrigued by the art, but she doesn't feel the full force of Furio's creative fury until he is forcibly plundering her panties while Raoul watches on defenselessly while imprisoned in a nearby bathroom. For the rest of *Loft*, the film resembles a cross between kitsch performance art à la Viennese Actionism-meets-New Romanticism and the puckish malice of the local yokels in Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974). Ending somewhat abruptly in a quasi-supernatural and inexplicably phantasmagoric fashion, *Loft* always thrills even after all of the kills.

Undoubtedly, *Loft* is my favorite effort from the anti-arthouse auteur Eckhart Schmidt who once had the audacity to state, "I would rather film a naked girl than a discussion of problems," in a country where kultur and artistic prudishness have always reigned. Indeed, *Loft* may not compare with a R.W. Fassbinder nor Werner Schroeter film in terms of artistic refinement, but it is indubitably one of the greatest and most innovative dystopian rape-revenge flicks ever made and thus worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as Mark L. Lester's *Class of 1984* (1982), *Liquid Sky* (1982), and even James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984). In short, *Loft* is pulp cinema at its best; terribly trashy, morally ambiguous, infinitely quotable, succulently stylized, and – above all us – wickedly and utterly entertaining, but with a peculiar tinge of artistic merit. That being said, it is interesting to note that Eckhart Schmidt seems to mock the artistic sternness and fanaticism of the villains of *Loft*, as if he made the film in part as a celluloid anti-love letter to Fassbinder and the rest of the overly genteel auteur filmmakers of the German New Wave. If *Loft* makes any sort of political message, it is an 'apolitical' one expressing Schmidt's staunch disdain for all things politics, be it socio-political, realpolitik, or otherwise. In the end, the upper-class is still at the top, and the anarchist artists and their art have literally faded into history, henceforth acting as Schmidt's final political statement on the futility of filmmakers and other artists in their vainglorious attempts to change the world. Needless to say, Schmidt went on to direct films about volup-

tuous, bare-breasted mermaids (Undine) and softcore skinflicks (Motel Girls), but Loft provides copious, if crude and cryptic, evidence that the German auteur has more than just beautiful brunettes with marvelous mammary glands on his mind.

-Ty E

E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S DER SANDMANN
E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S DER SANDMANN

Eckhart Schmidt (1993)

Ever since I first discovered his Neue Deutsche Welle themed arthouse-horror masterpiece *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance* about a decade ago or so, I have been deeply intrigued by the oeuvre of Teutonic auteur Eckhart Schmidt (*Jet Generation - Wie Mädchen heute Männer lieben*, *Alpha City*), who I have developed a strange sense of respect for due to his proudly subversive anti-intellectualism, unwaveringly rampant heterosexuality (sometimes, I think that he only directs films so that he can talk cute girls into taking off their clothes), and seeming loathing of arthouse cinema. Indeed, unlike many German filmmakers of his zeitgeist, Schmidt seemed most interested in entertaining and titillating, albeit in a distinctly artful fashion, than making films in solidarity with far-left terrorists and phallophobic feminists. Once described by German auteur Alexander Kluge as featuring a sort of "refined cannibalism," Schmidt's films reminded krauts that there are still some German men that are willing to do anything for women, including die, even in a spiritually castrated post-feminist age when most German filmmakers, especially those that belonged to German New Cinema, were more interested in promoting quasi-communist political causes. In fact, Schmidt once bravely confessed, "I would rather film a naked girl than a discussion of problems," with the countless tender tits and bare bushes in virtually all of his works proving this. For his feature *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Der Sandmann* (1993) aka *The Sandman*—a work loosely based on the highly influential 1816 E. T. A. Hoffmann Gothic short story of the same name—the auteur took his obsession with unclad woman to ungodly extremes in a work about a mentally haunted mensch with such an unhealthy obsession with a mysterious young lady that he tries in vain to overlook the fact that she is a manmade robot. Indeed, a sort of arthouse fantasy-horror-romance flick of the orgasmically oneiric, neo-romantic, and even quasi-Lynchian variety, *Der Sandmann* certainly is, at least in my opinion, a lost cult classic of German cinema. Directed by an unconventional kraut auteur who seems to be responsible for some of the least German, German flicks ever made starring oftentimes foreign and/or seemingly intentionally swarthy actors and actresses (indeed, in Schmidt's *Alpha City*, the Aryan protagonist looks like a wop metalhead and the American antagonist looks almost like archetypically Teutonic Übermensch), *Der Sandmann* is probably Schmidt's most innately Teutonic cinematic work to date as a modernist neo-romanticist work based on a classic romantic work written by one of the Fatherland's greatest Mythopoeic writers. Like Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971) meets James B. Harris' *Some Call It Loving* (1973) aka *Dream Castle* meets *Blade Runner* (1982), Schmidt's flick is an exceedingly ethereal, darkly romantic, deliriously dreamlike, and obscenely obsessive adult Gothic fairytale about a troubled young man suffering from a decidedly debilitating and even deranging case of post-traumatic

stress disorder as a result of seeing his father die as a child who revisits his childhood hometown in Italy with his girlfriend and finds himself falling dangerously in love with the daughter of a man who he blames for his father's dubious death some two decades before. A sort of *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) for Douglas Sirk fans (on top of directing two documentaries on Sirk, Schmidt made his film *Das Wunder* (1985) in the melodramatic spirit of his filmic father figure) and/or people who cannot stand the mental masturbation of Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Der Sandmann* is an undeniably flawed flick that reminds one that some films, no matter how convoluted and nonsensical they are, have an idiosyncratic narcotizing affect that makes all its weaknesses seem irrelevant and totally forgivable on retrospect.

Daniel (half Irish/half Italian actor Lorenzo Flaherty) is driving to the ancient Italian resort town that he grew up in with his beautiful girlfriend Clara (Sabrina Paravicini) and he should be rather happy, but he is plagued by a childhood flashback from twenty years ago when he witnessed his father's death in a fire during a unexplained industrial accident. Indeed, Daniel is so consumed by bad memories that he almost completely collapses upon checking into a hotel at a quaint Italian village with his girlfriend as a result of these literally hellish flashbacks. Of course, Daniel only gets all the more worse when he bumps into a wealthy old Guido scientist named Coppola (played by German veteran actor Erik Schumann, who started working during the Nazi era and went on to star in Fassbinder flicks like *Lili Marleen* (1981) and *Veronika Voss* (1982)), who the disturbed young man blames for the death of his father. Of course, a series of problems arise for Daniel one night when he not only bumps into Coppola, but also spots his nemesis' exceedingly strange and slender yet equally sensual daughter Olimpia (Stella Vordemann), who likes to show her oftentimes scantily clad statuesque body outside around her father's estate, as if she is a living statue of great aesthetic majesty that the scientist cannot help but flaunt to his neighbors. Needless to say, Clara becomes instantly jealous of Olimpia, but she is also worried about Daniel's fanatical hatred of old man Coppola and believes her boyfriend is more or less borderline schizophrenic. When Daniel takes Clara to visit his father's grave for the first time in his entire life, he tells his girlfriend that he believes Coppola killed his father and fled, but she does not believe him, as he has no evidence to back his claims aside from a faulty childhood memory. After Daniel breaks into Coppola's home a couple times and attempts to swoon the virtual walking-and-talking orgasm (indeed, due to her singular exotic and erotic essence, she is like sex incarnate), Olimpia, Clara is, somewhat inexplicably, invited to a party at the elderly Goombah's home. Upon being 'formally' introduced to Olimpia, Daniel confesses to the young lady that he has a feeling that a "new life" begins today, as if the young debutante has stolen his soul. After the party, Clara naturally berates Daniel for debasing her by slobbering over Olimpia in front of everyone else at the reception and obsessing over Coppola,

E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S DER SANDMANN

stating, "If he's a murderer then I'm the Virgin Mary." Indeed, while Clara might not be the Virgin Mary, Olimpia is certainly the next best thing, as a virginal beauty that seems like a living and breathing Arno Breker statue, albeit with a fire-crotch.

Needless to say, after taking all she can in terms of being ignored by her lovelorn lunatic boyfriend, Clara runs away, heads to Venice and leaves her unfaithful boy toy a letter saying he can join her if he wants, but of course, Daniel has too much unhealthy love for Olimpia and fanatical hatred for Coppola to leave just now. Degenerating more and more into a depraved megalomaniac of sorts who runs around from place-to-place rambling nonsense, Daniel begins taunting and making death threats to Coppola, but the scientist remains rather calm, at least considering the circumstances. Of course, this does not stop the exceedingly arrogant antihero from routinely bedding Coppola's delectable daughter. When Coppola's elderly associate Spalanzini (John Karlsen) offers Daniel a brand new red BMW to leave the Italian town and reunite with his girlfriend, the meta-lovestruck young man throws the keys to the car in a river and sarcastically asks the old man, "do you happen to have a spare key?" After a while, Daniel manages to get Olimpia out of her father's firm and seemingly incestuous grip, but he soon discovers that things are not as magic as he had hoped they would be. On top of the fact that Olimpia is rather evasive when it comes to questions regarding her childhood and background in general, Daniel soon learns that she bleeds white fluid and has wires and tubes in her rather petite body. Indeed, Olimpia is an anatomically-correct cyborg that was invented by Coppola, yet she somehow developed real human emotions over time, including love, yet Daniel finds this all to be rather dubious and begins questioning the integrity of his erotic robotic lover. While Daniel complains that Coppola is an evil Sandman who threatened "to scratch out my eye if I couldn't restrain my curiosity" when he was a child, Olimpia ensures her new boyfriend that he is a great and loving man who brought her life. Obsessed with the fact that she is a robot who cannot feel pain, Daniel begins to doubt Olimpia's love and becomes increasingly obsessed with playing with the various parts and wires inside her body, as if he has developed a foul fetish for masturbating machinery. Needless to say, one day, Daniel goes too far in terms of fiddling with his robo-babe's wanton wires and ultimately disembowels her, thereupon resulting in her malfunction and subsequent death. Desperate to revive his amorous automaton, Daniel goes to his perennial enemy Coppola for help and learns that his lady love is gone forever, as the Guido scientist attempted to make a second robot and failed. Indeed, Coppola also reveals to Daniel that he is actually his father and that the real Coppola was the one that died in the tragic fire that took place two decades ago. As Daniel's father explains, "I couldn't bear what I'd done to you and your mother. That's why I fled. Only your mother knew the truth...And that truth killed her. Forgive me. Daniel. Please. Forgive me. Forgive me everything."

In the end, pseudo-Coppola/Daniel's father drops dead and Daniel somehow regains his sanity and goes to Venice to reunite with his girlfriend Clara.

For those that found the love affair between Rick Deckard and 'replicant' Rachael in *Blade Runner* to be somehow strangely romantic, *Der Sandmann* takes the whole mensch-cyborg romance deal to much more unhinged extremes in a work that is more or less an allegory for the intangibility of an immaculate lover/love affair, as a film featuring a man that believes he has fallen in love with the perfect woman, only to learn that she is not even a real woman/human, but the dubious creation of his worst enemy, who ultimately turns out to be his father. Needless to say, despite the film's full title 'E.T.A. Hoffmanns Der Sandmann,' Schmidt's phantasmagorical piece of celluloid is only superficially reminiscent of Hoffmann's short story (which Freud once heavily analyzed in his 1919 essay *The Uncanny* aka *Das Unheimliche*) and, quite unlike the source material, the film features a semi-happy ending. While depicting a man that is clearly half-crazed (like with Hoffmann's story, the character of Coppola is a sort of metaphor for antihero Daniel's dark side), Schmidt's film is a sort of wild and whimsical wake-up call to all men regarding the fact that there is no such thing as a completely perfect woman and that if a woman seems too good to be true, it is probably because she is. While a somewhat kitschy work, *Der Sandmann* wallows in pure passion and unbridled romance, as a strikingly charming celluloid work that transcends both dream and reality, as well as the usually fine line between high and low art. As Hans Schifferle wrote in a brief article about the auteur, Schmidt is a filmmaker that "does not see movies and art, spectacle and poetry, classical music and rock 'n' roll as opposites, but as two sides of the same coin" and nowhere is this more clear than in *Der Sandmann*, which offers a sort of semi-Hollywoodized take on classic Teutonic kultur. Indeed, as a man who once described his early feature *Männer sind zum Lieben da* (1970) aka *Atlantis* as "Kleist's *Penthesilea* as a romantic comedy" and who in 1989 directed an adaptation of Richard Wagner's 1876 four cycle opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* aka *The Ring of the Nibelung* on video, Schmidt is not a filmmaker who is afraid to add a little bit of trash to class and vice versa, with *Der Sandmann* being quite arguably his most successful attempt at cinematically melding classical art with kitsch (indeed, the film's score, which features Vivaldi and Chopin, as well as industrial electronic music, perfectly demonstrates this). Arguably the greatest filmmaker ever associated with the 'New Munich Group' (which also included Klaus Lemke, Rudolf Thome, Max Zihlmann, and Peter Nestler and various other filmmakers that were not associated with German New Cinema), Schmidt ultimately demonstrated that the catastrophic Second World War did not totally destroy the romantic essence of the German collective as one might suspect, as while *Der Sandmann* may not be the cinematic equivalent of one of Wagner's operas, it certainly touches the soul in a beautifully bittersweet fashion that reminds one why life is worth living as a fetishistic fever dream that depicts

E.T.A. HOFFMANN'S DER SANDMANN

a wickedly warped mis-romance that is almost as patently pathetic as Friedrich Nietzsche's failed love affair with Lou Andreas-Salomé.

-Ty E

SUNSET MOTEL

Eckhart Schmidt (2003)

Undoubtedly, one of the most depressing things for a cinephile to witness is the decline in quality of one of their favorite director's work with age. Indeed, even the great master auteur filmmakers like Fritz Lang, Federico Fellini, Alfred Hitchcock, and Ingmar Bergman had a noticeable enfeeblement in terms of their artistic prowess as they got older. Of course, somewhat less artistically inclined directors seem even more susceptible to artistic decrepitude, with German cult auteur Eckhart Schmidt (*Der Fan* aka *Trance*, *Alpha City*) being a prime example of 'auteur senility.' While Schmidt was easily one of the greatest, if not most hated and critically reviled, kraut cult filmmakers of the 1980s, by the 1990s his work began to rapidly decline, with E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (1993) aka *The Sandman* being his last truly 'great,' artistically ambitious, and notable work. Indeed, while Schmidt's first documentary, Douglas Sirk: *Über Stars* (1980), was made at time when he was still in his prime, nowadays the only thing he really does is direct cheapo featurette documentaries about various Hollywood filmmakers and historical figures, including Otto Preminger, Jerry Lewis, Federico Fellini, Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis (whose daughter Alexandra Curtis starred in the German filmmaker's underrated macabre surrealist masterpiece *Das Gold der Liebe* (1983) aka *The Gold of Love*), and his buddy Uli Edel, among countless others. Indeed, like wonderful weirdo David Lynch (whose work seems to have influenced Schmidt), the indubitably underrated *Der Fan* director has completely embraced the radically repellant and glaringly artless medium of digital video, hence his peculiar proclivity towards directing about half a dozen micro docs each year since the late-1990s. In 2003, he directed his last 'official' feature, *Sunset Motel*, and announced that he no longer has any intention of directing feature films, so now he only directs documentaries and takes sub-erotic photos of marginally attractive American chicks, which is no surprise considering he is the same mensch who once stated in 1968 during the same year he announced his arrival in the cinema world with his salacious debut feature, *Jet Generation - Wie Mädchen heute Männer lieben* (1968), that, "I would rather film a naked girl than a discussion of problems." Admittedly, when I first saw screenshots from *Sunset Motel*, I was disappointed and even a tad bit shocked, as the digital video aesthetic surely resembles that of third rate pornography, yet Schmidt must be an alchemist of sorts as he somehow almost managed to turn digital diarrhea into moody and broody cinematic gold. Dubiously dedicated to suicidal Guido commie poet/novelist Cesare Pavese and featuring cameo appearances from popular American novelists Hubert Selby Jr. (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*, *Requiem for a Dream*) and Janet Fitch (*White Oleander*, *Paint It Black*), *Sunset Motel* is a dark and disconcerting romance set in iconic sunny Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood about a young and relatively inno-

SUNSET MOTEL

cent waitress who falls hopelessly in love with an impenetrable and nauseatingly narcissistic novelist who ultimately makes his lover want to end her short life due to his sadistic mind games. Indeed, like Schmidt's greatest works, this minimalistic little movie that wallows in love for classic Hollywood is a ruthless work that reminds the viewer of the close link between true love and death.

Raoul (played by producer Sean Costello, who produced the repugnant sentimentalist black power flick *Night Catches Us* (2010)) is a seemingly half-autistic novelist who keeps avoiding a cute blonde named Laura (Joanna Canton of the *Convent* (2000) and countless horrendous TV shows) who works at a café in Sunset Plaza and lives in the Saharan Motel on Sunset Boulevard. After Laura spots Raoul voyeuristically gazing at her while swimming in a pool, she finally gets the novelist to verbally communicate with her, though he soon attempts to get out of the situation by stuttering, "I think I made a...mistake," like the ball-less coward that he is. While Raoul is an innate introvert and seemingly half-autistic, he is also rather arrogant, and his future love interest Laura will ultimately be a tragic victim of a rather fragile ego. Despite being a supposed writer, Raoul does not have much to say, so Laura does all the talking by describing her love for Chinese food and how she would love to see a colorized version of her favorite romantic comedy, *Roman Holiday* (1953) starring Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn. As she explains, Laura loves the film because she fantasizes about being a, "princess for a day," as it would be a stark contrast to her current life as a barely-getting-by wage-slave. Laura also absurdly describes Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) as an "Italian movie." Of course, Laura and Raoul's mostly one-sided conversation inevitably leads to passionate sex, though even intimate coitus is not enough to save the novelist from his social retardation. Indeed, after making seemingly passionate love, Laura says, "I wanna see you again" and Raoul merely says "sure" and leaves abruptly, as if he is scared his new lover might have cooties or something. After bumping into a random chick who describes how happy she is because she is three months pregnant with her husband's child, Laura begins contemplating her dubious future with Raoul, who she soon spots walking around with some random Latina, thus demonstrating that he is probably not a very faithful mensch.

When the two quasi-lovers have sex for a second time, Raoul leaves immediately afterwards in a ridiculously rude fashion, thereupon causing Laura to cry hysterically. As a sort of patently paranoid passive-aggressive pansy lunatic, Raoul begins accusing Laura of being a loose slut after she confesses she was not a virgin before they met, thus causing the little lady to once again break down in tears. Indeed, while Laura has had sex in the past, it was only with her former fiancé. While a total prick, Raoul more or less eventually realizes that he is treating Laura unfairly, so he goes to his elderly ex-junky buddy Hubert Selby Jr. for advice. Ultimately, gutter sage Selby tells the novelist that "taking joy in somebody's else's success" brings happiness and that he must be accepting of change

if he ever wants to be truly content with what life has to offer. Although Selby's words initially have a positive effect on Raoul, the sickeningly self-centered man soon disappoints Laura in a variety of ways. After describing how her greatest fantasy is to live on a boat with Raoul and travel around the world whilst having tons of sex on said boat, Laura manages to talk her 'boyfriend' into visiting Zuma Beach with her, as one of her favorite movies, *From Here to Eternity* (1953) starring Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr, was shot there. Upon arriving at the beach, Raoul vehemently refuses to join Laura for some fun in the sun because he claims that he, "has to write." Internally wounded, Laura assumes her non-relationship with Raoul is over and goes on a date with another man. When Laura gets back from her date, she finds a very angry Raoul waiting for her on the same bed in which the two have spent their most magical moments together. Of course, paranoid wack job Raoul accuses Laura of cheating on him and even goes so far as to accuse her of using him as a "sex machine." When Laura attempts to tell Raoul that she loves him, the nasty novelist hatefully states like a true blue asshole, "I'm leaving and I'm never, ever, ever coming back here ever." Of course, Raoul later comes back, but Laura is nowhere to be found. When Raoul asks a young Mexican hotel clerk where the girl in Room 228 is, he states with a rather flat affect, "She doesn't live here anymore. She's dead. She committed suicide."

A minimalistic motel room melodrama of the rather understated sort, *Sunset Motel* is almost anti-Schmidtian in its essence as it emphasizes nuanced Sirkian drama over gratuitous sex and violence. Indeed, while the director's cult hit *Die Story* (1984) features a rather bloody and gratuitous suicide scene of a completely naked man and woman with slit wrists laying in a bathtub full of their own blood, *Sunset Motel* does not even depict the protagonist's self-slaughter at all, as if Schmidt had too much respect for the character to depict her in such an undignified position. Indeed, in terms of dramaturgy, the film is shockingly effective, as Laura seems like a wounded angel that is practically begging to be saved by her manipulative boyfriend Raoul, who will ultimately inspire violent thoughts in any heterosexual red-blooded American male. While I would have preferred for Schmidt to have ended his long and rather uneven filmmaking career by doing another Richard Wagner or E.T.A. Hoffmanns adaptation (indeed, aside from directing *Der Sandmann*, he shot a uniquely kitschy adaptation of Wagner's 1876 four cycle opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* aka *The Ring of the Nibelung* on video), *Sunset Motel* is a work that, for better or worse, has a special place in the filmmaker's oeuvre. Certainly, *Sunset Motel* features the sort of wicked "refined cannibalism" that German New Cinema father figure Alexander Kluge spoke of when describing the wild love themes that have become a signature of the director's work. While Schmidt claimed that *Sunset Motel* would be his last feature, he has directed a number of trashy 'erotic' flicks since then under the pseudonym "Raoul Sternberg" (derived from the names of two of his favorite

SUNSET MOTEL

directors, Raoul Walsh and Josef von Sternberg). I watched the trailer for one of these films, *Hollywood Fling - Diary of a Serial Killer* (2010), and I can certainly see why Schmidt chose to use a pseudonym for this work, as it seems like an aesthetically abhorrent abomination as a no-budget piece of horror-porn digital defecation featuring gangster rap music and bestial black chicks with decidedly disgusting fake tits. While *Sunset Motel* is not quite up to par with Schmidt's extremely addictive idiosyncratic cult hits from the 1980s like *Der Fan*, *The Gold of Love*, *Die Story*, *Loft*, and *Alpha City*, it is surely the director's most valiant attempt at a true modernist melodrama that painfully demonstrates why love kills. With that being said, it seems only natural that Schmidt would conclude his feature filmmaking career with a film where the leading lady kills herself.

-Ty E

SLAYER

Ed Puduk (2007)

Ever received a film that you held off watching cause it looked down-right bland? I did that for about a week and boy, did I make a mistake. Slayer is a low-budget unconventional Vampire action film. My first attempt at watching this film was dead at night. I remember waking up for a brief second only to catch an amazing special effect of a guy launching a knife into a vampire's head. Too bad I blacked out again. (Before) (After) (Compliments to my fabulous artwork) Ed Puduk (Director/Writer/Producer/Actor) has only made a few mistakes when making this film. The main problem is of the most crippling caliber - the generic name which has been handed to a Casper Van Dien film. This might explain why the iMDB rating is so low. People on those forums never seem to think anyways. First off, being filmed on his college campus, the cinematography was fucking beautiful. I mean, stark colors and even an animated flashback. This film surprised the hell out of me. Eric Carlson is a college student who witnesses a vampire slaying and hides. After a series of events, he is grappled into a web of vampire slayers hiding in a cabin and decides to stay and take the "red pill." You might be thinking what I was thinking - Wanted with vampires. This might be true. The slacker-chic turning a hardcore leaf seems to be the latest craze. Slayer is a dramatic effort with scenes of kick ass action scenes and memorable characters. Though, at times, I secretly believed this film was a marketing campaign for Nintendo products. The characters ranged from the "loser" to the "long haired goth vampire" but they managed to mix up them pretty well, creating the mute bad ass with a deep love and a homosexual Andy Samberg named Link. (How convenient, The Legend of Zelda was Rose's favorite game) Not only did these characters grace the screen well, but they also left in fashion. The death toll is high and chaotic. I was shocked at several deaths. An encore for keeping me on my toes. Sound effects were brilliant but some were mismatched. I wasn't too fond of the slicing effects. While I rag on films for using the "schink" effect, It's become a staple for sword fight effects to me. Remember that scene in Irreversible? The fire extinguisher one? Yeah, well the entire film features brutally animated bat-to-face and sledgehammer-to-face scenes. The violence is spectacular and a paralyzed art form. Violence now-a-days is over-sickening glamorized garbage. Puduk creates antagonists that cry and breathe. I felt bad for these sick creatures. Slayer is worth more of your time than you think. It's worth more of my time. I regret not watching this film immediately, but it all works out. A heterodox vampire film that not only changes the natural viewpoint of the vampyric myth, but also changes the way we view low-budget action films. If Puduk could make this on an independent basis, than it just shows how much modern DIY film makers are slacking. Calm down, Puduk. You're making the kids look bad.

SLAYER

-mAQ

SHAMELESS

Eddy Saller (1968)

Long before he became the decidedly dignified and dapper royal Teutonic queen of character acting, gay German actor Udo Kier (*Suspiria*, *Melancholia*) played a number of roles as rampantly heterosexual men in various European exploitation and horror flicks, including his daring debut performance in the feature-length Austrian/French/West German co-production *Shameless* (1968) aka *Schamlos*; a gritty yet sleekly stylized and aesthetically and thematically subversive black-and-white celluloid work about a young yet brutal career criminal who literally ran away from the circus as a teenager to become a star gang leader who will use any method of intimidation, no matter how savage and sadistic, for mere monetary gain. Directed by Eddy Saller (*Torment of the Flesh*, *Liebe durch die Autotür*) – a filmmaker who made a couple idiosyncratic exploitation films between the 1960s and early 1980s before working in a less prestigious filmmaking profession as a gaffer on big budget films like *The NeverEnding Story* (1984) directed by Wolfgang Petersen and *Stalingrad* (1993) directed by Joseph Vilsmaier – *Shameless* is a rare work of its zeitgeist that, unlike the popular völkisch and colorful Heimatfilme of that time, managed to depict the less delightful side of post-Nazi Austria. Similar to Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg's portrayal of late-period Swinging London in the cult classic *Performance* (1970), *Shameless* quite shamelessly presents the positively putrid potpourri of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll that permeated throughout metropolitan Austria (although featuring German license plates and whatnot, apparently it was actually filmed in Vienna) around the same time, including aesthetically abhorrent Viennese Aktionist action art, exotic strippers and prostitutes, speed-addicted homosexual gangsters, and a celebration of all things unhinged and anarchic in the urban Austrian bohemian underworld. Originally a male hustler by the dubious nickname "Dodo" who oftentimes dressed in drag and even was pimped out by his inseparable friend-in-sin Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Udo Kier certainly made for a curious choice for a callous yet charismatic violent crime-inclined gangster in *Shameless*, yet he still managed to deliver a dashing and distinguished performance in what is a rare exploitation flick of the late-1960s that actually goes beyond senseless and soulless celluloid excrement.

Alexander Pohlmann (Udo Kier) is a young man with a pretty pokerface who is always on the move and always making a move, at least ever since he retired from being a knife-thrower and trick-shot artist at his family's circus at the youthful age of 15-years-old and went to the big city to try his loony libertine lot at murdering men twice his size and swindling small businesses for protection money in a most swinish manner. Needless to say, life as a mod-like street Viking is not an easy one as Pohlmann learns as he tries to kill his enemies before they kill him. Of course, Pohlmann is a professional at what he

SHAMELESS

does and he never thinks twice about ruining a man's life, as long as it comes at the right price. His life is also full of sexy and 'saucy chicks,' but things change when Pohlmann gets romantically involved with a conspiring stripper and seductress named Annabella (Marina Paal); the flesh-flaunting femme fatale daughter of an extremely wealthy Sicilian tropical fruit dealer named Guido Romanelli (Vladimir Medar) who is "hot like an emptied MP" and "extra class" in bed, which the high-ranking hoodlum assumes is due to her exotic Mediterranean roots. An extremely popular girl among rich hotshots of the underworld, especially in the bedroom, Annabella apparently claims to be only in love with the youthful but powerful Pohlmann, which the gangster finds most suspicious but believes could be quite fruitful for him in the long run, but when the diva of degeneracy is found maliciously murdered under dubious circumstances, things take a turn for the worst in the wayward criminal world. Grieving and enraged by his daughter's premature death at the hands of a calculating and cold-hearted killer, Romanelli approaches Pohlmann about catching the murderer, forcing him to confess, and eventually murdering him and making it look like a suicide, which the gangster agrees to do, but for a hefty monetary sum. Romanelli believes his daughter was killed by a funny fellow named Michael Hohenberg (Louis Soldan) and Pohlmann and his gangster compatriots put the man under judicious examining via criminal-run underground court style à la Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), but being a drug-addicted homosexual with no love for the ladies, the extremely effete defendant seems hardly like the real culprit. A powerful criminal named Richard Kowalski (Rolf Eden) – a malevolent man so obsessed with Annabella that he had her watched 24/7 by his hired goons and even brutally beat her at one time during an argument – seems more like the real transgressor as a malefic man motivated by insane jealousy and uncontrollable rage. When it is finally revealed that Annabella started producing secret porn films of the many men she sold her voluptuous body to as an uniquely underhanded way to blackmail them, the true killer is finally revealed in an extra-climatic conclusion that is as superlatively surprising as it is salaciously shocking. Needless to say, a lot has changed in Germany/Austria since Uncle Adolf and his SA and SS boys rid the city of vice and human vermin only a couple decades before.

A merry yet macabre mix between a Germanic 'Whodunnit?' Giallo of sorts and a delectably debauched depiction of counter-culture and underground organized crime groups of that time, *Shameless* is a short but sweet and unabashedly exploitative (even if it does have a cautionary message tacked on at the beginning) yet expertly crafted exploitation work that owes just as much to German Expressionism and American b-grade film noir as it does to Italian Neorealism in terms of thematic and aesthetic influences. Indeed, I would be lying if I did not admit that this film had me on the edge of my seat throughout, which I certainly cannot say about lifeless arthouse gangster flicks like Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) aka *À bout de souffle* and *Band of Outsiders* (1964) aka *Bande*

à part; emotionally feeble and socio-politically passé works that would unfortunately have an imperative influence on filmmakers of German New Cinema. It seems that Shameless director Eddy Saller, especially in regard to his directorial debut *Die Geißel des Fleisches* (1965) aka *Torment of the Flesh*, was a forerunner for anti-intellectual German auteur filmmakers like Klaus Lemke (*48 Hours to Acapulco*, *Rocker*) and Eckhart Schmidt (*Der Fan*, *Alpha City*) who focused on directing gritty, exciting, lecherous, and action-packed cinema that rejected the anti-climatic theories of kraut commie Bertolt Brecht. In the wildly wanton world of *Shameless*, morality is dead and so is god and country in an apocalyptic era where aberrant Vienna Aktionism, imported American rock 'n' roll, and completely corrupt criminal politicians hold sway. For fans of Udo Kier, *Shameless* is also a rare treat, especially considering he is the only actor who has had a career so varied as appearing in Paul Morrissey's *Blood for Dracula* (1974), R.W. Fassbinder's *The Third Generation* (1979), Gábor Bódy's *Nárcisz és Psyché* (1980), Gus van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* (1994), Christoph Schlingensief's *United Trash* (1996) aka *The Slit*, *Barb Wire* (1996) starring Pamela Anderson, Michael Bay's *Armageddon* (1998), and Werner Herzog's *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done* (2009), among over 200+ films, yet never before has the actor seemed so barbarous, brazen, and butch in a star role, which is a major achievement for a man who started out as a flesh-peddling drag queen, but then again, never before has an actor (Aryan or otherwise) been so suave and shameless.

-Ty E

BLACK COBRA
BLACK COBRA

Edoardo Margheriti (1989)

From Director Stelvio Massi comes an Italian action film with a title hellbent on getting some of the fame directed towards Stallone's Cobra. It's nice to see an action film starring a black man who isn't thrown in for comedic value. It is also nice that the man is Fred Williamson. Throughout action film history, heroic blacks were mostly known to grace blaxploitation films, rarely a more accessible series. Black Cobra is of this sort, placing a tough womanizing cop who is in charge of protecting a photographer who witnessed a murder. The key is that she took a picture of the villain. Let me start off by saying that this antagonist role is gut-bustingly hilarious. He is the leader of a crazy gang of motorcyclists trying to mix the genres of Bikesploitation and Blaxploitation. Whenever he has a evil plan, the camera pans into his shaded face, cracking a crooked grin with a perfect view of his gold tooth. This alone makes it worth the sad price of \$1 at your local Wal-Mart. After witnessing the film, I immediately questioned whether or not I enjoyed Black Cobra. After thinking about the horrible one-liners, Williamson's passive sternness, and the armies of bumbling cops in this film, I realized how much fun I had with this film. If you look at Black Cobra from a cinephile perspective, you might be disgusted, but damn if this movie isn't funny as hell. Fred Williamson is one of the greatest actors out there, ranging from playing a good role as Boss Nigger to playing a comical cop with a cigar in Black Cobra. Black Cobra is one of those Italian-looking action films that exploded from the 70s. While a cynic might spite the film for it's non-serious view of cinematography, It can't be that bad due to the immense replay value that will have you hitting the play button over and over again. Due to the below cheap price for this collection, Black Cobra is a must for any action fans, and even blaxploitation. Black Cobra is a genre-twist for the most, plus we get to see The Hammer woo some white ladies in a different scenario.

-mAQ

FLESH: THE TRUTH ABOUT 9/11

Edouard Salier (2005)

Edouard Salier's short film entitled FLESH is a horrible, pompous short film with little to no direction at all. It seems he is one of those pretentious "indie" film directors who tries to associate hard orgy sex with art. This short has nothing but CG and special effects. A brash attempt to offend. His plan is to offend voraciously but to no avail. What we have here is a glistening CG skyline of New York City. Skyscrapers and the Chrysler Building are illuminated from the sun. We then see an ecstasy-driven lesbian sex scene silhouetted onto the buildings. All of them are covered with hard sex of all genders. As we are distracted by this absurdity, we have a plane crash into one of the towers. The middle explodes with red pixel spikes protruding out. The women continue to fuck even as they crash to the ground. We have a scene that is made to look like a first person view. Some hapless helper on the ground running with a camera screaming vulgarities, praying to god or something. The second tower falls. The film was only slightly garbage by this point. The director decides he wants a fleet of airplanes to explode into every building to make a point which is unapparent. During some of the explosions, he decides to show "shocking" footage in a quick edit scene. This is including Arnold elected for governor, Charlie Manson, and the Ku Klux Klan. This move buried the film. Several groans escaped from my chest. From all the rubble, one giant jagged tower emerges, it might symbolize how America "came together" after 9/11. After this erect foundation stands proud, we see a plane coming in the distance. This film works zero percent and has no point. I can imagine some crazy Spaniard/Frenchie running around NY screaming about how Arnold and sexy writhing women did 9/11. This is not high art. This film is in comparison to the bag of trash in your car. Dispose of immediately.

-Maq

JAIL BAIT
JAIL BAIT

Edward D. Wood Jr. (1954)

If master Neuer Deutscher Film auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder can be credited for directing anything remotely resembling a sexploitation flick in the rather ridiculous spirit of self-proclaimed boob-man Russ Meyer (*Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, *Mudhoney*), it is surely his rarely-seen and indefinitely banned TV-movie *Jail Bait* (1973) aka *Wildwechsel* aka *Wild Game* aka *Wild Game Crossing*; a strikingly sleazy yet simultaneously sophisticated cumming-of-age flick about statutory rape, the disintegration of traditional German lower middle-class morals, and the problems associated with parricide. Based on a work written by German Brechtian communist playwright and all-around Renaissance man Franz Xaver Kroetz – an author best known for his socially conscious melodramatic portrayals of rural Bavaria – Fassbinder’s *Jail Bait* ultimately proved to be too ‘pornographic’ and probably too morally and politically ambiguous for the man who penned the play it was based on. In fact, Kroetz was so outraged by Fassbinder’s *Jail Bait* that he took serious legal action, thereupon causing an injunction to be enforced, resulting in scene cuts and an extremely limited release of the film, hence its virtual total unavailability today. Fassbinder and Kroetz publicly argued over *Jail Bait* with the letters from each being published in the 1970s in various mainstream German newspapers. In his first open letter to cavalier kraut Kroetz, Fassbinder wrote: “it is a pity that you cannot be altogether honest. Why are you embarrassed to admit that you refused my offer to work with you on a script that would be acceptable to both of us?...Everything that is in the film is also in the play...Maybe this now embarrasses you. But it need not, because your play isn’t that bad, honestly.” In the same letter, Fassbinder would also go on to state that *Jail Bait* is, “the first time you have been understood,” meaning that as a loyal communist who writes in supposed tribute/admiration/defense of the “ordinary people” aka proletariat, the filmmaker has made the pretentious playwright’s work more palatable to less literate and politically astute audiences who rather enjoy their ‘bread and circuses’ to ‘socially redeeming’ swill. And indeed, featuring sex, death, and rock ‘n’ roll, *Jail Bait* is undoubtedly a work that can be digested and enjoyed by the proudest of philistine peasants, but that does not make the film even less intricate than his previous no even subsequent efforts. Starring Eva Mattes as a 14-year-old floozy schoolgirl and Harry Baer as a 19-year-old chicken factory worker who makes the moronic mistake of deflowering a feisty and finagling femme fatale of the uncommonly fulsome and underage sort, *Jail Bait* is a smutty yet seasoned cinematic tale about young love gone awry and then some.

Hanni Schneider (Eva Mattes) may be a high school girl who still sleeps with dolls and comes from a rather wholesome, if authoritarian, family, but when she is offered a ride on the motorcycle of a charming James Dean-wannabe named

Franz Bermeier (Harry Baer) – a young man that sports a terribly teased pompadour hairdo and sports tight studded jeans and equally small fitting t-shirt who has clearly bought into the shallow, nihilistic rebellion of Hollywood à la *The Wild One* (1953) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and pseudo-erotic negrophiliac renegade rockabilly of American icon Elvis Presley – she cannot help herself and before she knows it she is literally rolling around naked in the hay with her carboncopy rebel-with-a-single-cause: the ravaging of tempting teenage girls. Of course, before he even realizes it, Franz has fallen to prey to the teenage temptress' carnal charms and he soon believes the he is madly in love with the homely dame, henceforth eventually leading to his disregardfully decided damnation as a result of his fleshy metaphysical enslavement to the dastardly dame. Unbeknownst to Franz, horny Hanni has a fascist father named Erwin Schneider (Jörg von Liebenfels; presumably of no relation to the Austrian proto-nazi völkisch theorist of a similar name) with unhealthy and even quasi-incestuous feelings for his sole progeny, which results in the young man's arrest for supposed statutory rape. Being a possessive and pestering parent with a perverse proclivity towards prying into his daughter's sex life, Erwin declares that he wishes that Hanni's boy toy Franz was castrated, condemned to death, and hanged as he nostalgically reminisces on the glory days of the Third Reich. Essentially, Erwin is a living relic who dreams of an aggressive authoritarian regime where all forms of social subversion and moral decay are stomped out with a mighty iron fist, which he – as a virtually impotent lower middle-class man of limited education and political impotence – is unable to do. Being 'daddy's little (deranged) girl,' Hanni is quite inexorable and extreme when it comes to her egomaniacal wicked wants and nefarious needs, especially in romantic matters. After discovering that she is pregnant, Hanni conspires to have her father killed because, to quote the lethal lady, "he has to go because we need room," and she ingenuously recruits her ex-jailbird boyfriend Franz – who has already been to prison once because of erratic father Erwin – to do it. A rather gross gal that wishes she was a true blue Swiss miss (despite her chubby, swarthy, and semi-Mongolian appearance), who would be lucky to play a nude extra in an Andy Milligan flick; and whose understanding of the world around her is no more sophisticated than that of a 7-year-old, Hanni will not stop at anything, even if that means murdering her only father in the Fatherland.

Probably unwittingly, Fassbinder himself revealed why Franz Xaver Kroetz was probably offended by *Jail Bait* when he stated in an interview regarding his less than condemning portrayal of Hanni's father Erwin, "I think I'm one of the few directors in Germany who has a positive relation to his characters...in some cases, like the girl's father in *JAILBAIT* when he talks about the war, I'm indulgent almost to the point of irresponsibility." Indeed, it was probably not the gratuitous nudity and negligent behavior of the anti-hero "Bonnie and Clyde" couple of *Jail Bait* that proved to be most irksome for Kroetz, but the fact that

JAIL BAIT

the misogynistic and fascist father – a man that fawns over his daughter and has mostly merry memories of the Third Reich – is ultimately the only true voice of reason and responsibility in the film. Like many of the German director's previous but especially subsequent films (i.e. *Fox and His Friends*, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*, *I Only Want You to Love Me*, *In a Year of Thirteen Moons*, etc.), Fassbinder utilized *Jail Bait* as a way to analyze and depict why certain members of the inerudite working-class carry out the decisively extreme and desperate actions that they do. Unable to communicate their emotions to one another, both Hanni and her equally extemporaneous father Erwin merely act on emotion without taking a second thought as to the radical repercussions of their actions, thereupon leading to the literal (and in Hanni's figurative) end of their lives. As for Franz, his greatest crime, even as a murderer, was an act of perverse passion by a misguided and moronic young man brainwashed by Hollywood movies and American rock 'n' roll to think his belligerent behavior was that of a virtuous underdog just defending his love. Unfortunately for Franz, he has found a kindred spirit in Charles Starkweather. Although by no means Fassbinder's greatest work, *Jail Bait* is also far from being the accursed auteur filmmaker's worst film, thus making it mandatory-viewing for fans of the German New Wave master, as well as unhealthy junkies of teen rebel flick. Not only does Fassbinder deconstruct the juvenile subgenre with his postmodern teenage outlaw film, but he added a post-war German twist with which the apparently celebrated playwright Franz Xaver Kroetz could not contend.

-Ty E

KEN PARK

Edward Lachman (2002)

Larry Clark is a pervert and probably a pedophile. He makes no effort in trying to hide his obsession with preteen and teenage sex acts, and is notorious for taking many of his young actresses to bed. Larry Clark's film *Ken Park* is probably the photographer turned film director's most perverted and graphic film. The film follows a group of young degenerate skaters as they discover the pleasures of group sex and displeasures of incest. With *Ken Park*, decided sexual taboos were out of the question. Scenes featuring teenage skater boys performing cunnilingus on their girlfriend's middle aged mother gives an accurate look at why Larry Clark is a filmmaker.

One could call *Ken Park* pornography as I am sure the film would get many people excited. On the other hand, *Ken Park* features some of the most sexually disturbing scenes ever featured in a somewhat mainstream (although it has never had a wide release) film. A film featuring dope smoking, suicide, and fake tits is typical of American cinema. *Ken Park*, however, is much different than films of similar subject matter. *Ken Park* doesn't feature gratuitous scenes just as a quick way for the filmmaker and producers to make a quick buck. *Ken Park* features scenes like a scrawny Italian American teenager's auto erotic asphyxiation because Larry Clark wanted to fulfill a pervert fantasy of his through film making. Larry Clark's debut film *Kids* is still his best. Whereas *Kids* follows a group of broke ass teens from the inner city, *Ken Park* features middle class skaters from the suburbs. Larry Clark also recently directed another skater film *Wasup Rockers* which follows a group of young teenage Latino skaters as they face "discrimination" of sorts. One could say that Larry Clark is the only filmmaker to tackle the many different skateboarding subcultures in America. It is about time a filmmaker focused on skateboarders and their subversive culture(s). Not since the days of Eurotrash erotica and exploitation cinema, has a film blurred the line between pornography and "art." I wouldn't exactly call *Ken Park* art, but it is certainly worth recognition. The reality is Larry Clark has captured a world of sexual perversity as the norm. So called "sexual liberation" has resulted in a world of "everything goes" where everyone is looking for the next big kick. The last sex scene in *Ken Park* features a sensual threesome amongst three teenagers. To Larry Clark, teenage sex is the most aesthetically appealing situation to be caught on film.

-Ty E

STARSHIP TROOPERS 3: MARAUDER
STARSHIP TROOPERS 3: MARAUDER

Edward Neumeier (2008)

How exactly does one recover a film from the bowels of hell in the form of a second sequel to the classic cult film *Starship Troopers*. The original, being created from a book by a master of science fiction, was directed by Paul Verhoeven - a director who has had his share of arthouse and campy cult films. This time around, they attempted to re-create the feeling of the original with the satirical infomercials and bringing back the only good role Casper Van Dien had; Johnny Rico. Johnny Rico finds himself facing some terrorist charges after some plushie bugs attacked a secure base and he punched a general. While being court-martialed, he finds himself being pulled from his execution in order to take a mech team to a bug planet featuring a couple twists here and there while displaying horrific CGI and props. I mean, look at these fucking "weapons." They handle as if they were made from styrofoam. One thing movie studios don't realize. CGI isn't the only option here. Films like *T2: Judgment Day* wowed audiences with its view of a post-apocalyptic landscape. In this film, they took the low-carb route to creating bugs and planets. They could have used old-fashioned effects wizardry, but stuck with the hellacious more expensive routine and in the end, slaughters what was good about the film, and trust me, it needs everything it can get. Johnny Rico's character seems too forced and lost everything that was fun about him. It's understandable though. The fresh out of school rebel teen "sticking it to his parents" signs up for Mobile Infantry and gets in a ragtag squadron of flunkies who decide to squash bugs and have good times. This Johnny Rico is a combat-bred machine who sucks at doing that as well. Supporting cast is a group of females who are not ordained priests but that doesn't stop them from forcing religion down your throat. The females have several roles in the film, ranging from the sniveling rat to the virginal christian, and to the "bad ass heroine." Almost makes me sick; Thank god there was two seconds of female nudity or I would have been pissed. What starts off as moderately entertaining turns into mindless drivel as soon as it hits its peak. I loved the twist, and I loved the "final boss" of the film. The effects were definitely amazing there. That might have been the reason for the all-around shitty production. They blew their budget on a Lovecraftian bug monster that shines with influences of his Cthulhu mythos. When the shit really hits the fan is about an hour and half in, the film stops on a dime and starts pursuing some bastard mission to convert every viewing audience member into a follower of God. A group of descending mechs highlights a halo over the Virgin Mary-esque female on the evil bug planet. Led by Rico, the messianic robot suits fry all of the planets inhabitants. After all, they were only living on their home planet. *Starship Troopers 3: Marauder* is vastly superior to the middleman. With a bit o' blood and PG-13 tits, this might entertain the simple-minded fans of the original, or the commentary directed towards the Middle Eastern war might

suit the intellectual, but none the less, the religious propaganda will piss you off.
A moderate war-in-space film.

-mAQ

DEFIANCE
DEFIANCE

Edward Zwick* (2008)

It's Holocaust and Nazi season at the movies during these cold winter months. Of course it's great timing for films about the suffering of God's chosen as the Jewish state of Israel has just gotten done "pounding" the virtually helpless Palestinians that are stuck in Gaza. *Valkyrie* taught us (like *Schindler's List*) that sacrificing oneself to the aid of the Jewish people is the most noblest and virtuous of deeds (even if it ends in failure). Edward Zwick's film *Defiance* teaches us that a gang of neurotic Jews will not relent in beating to death a random blonde haired German soldier if he were to cross their most chosen of paths.

Defiance follows the Bielski brothers, a group of Jewish partisans that helped save the lives of Jews and kill Germans (and their pesky collaborators). The reality of what the Bielski brothers did was simply survive and avoid fighting at all costs. *Defiance* director Edward Zwick wanted to add a little Zionist spirit by portraying the Bielski brothers as Nazi hunting Jews. The Bielski's also aided the Soviet partisans and are said to have participated in the Naliboki massacre. This massacre involved mass killing of the people in the Polish town Nalibok. Of course, "survivors" of the Bielski group firmly deny this. *Defiance* portrays the Bielski brothers as heroes for stealing and looting from the Slavic people of Belarus. In the film, members of the Soviet army even call the Bielski brothers "Jewish bandits." Well, I guess these Jewish bandits are doing their thieving for a good kosher cause. Daniel Craig stars in *Defiance* as Tuvia Bielski, the leader of the group. Daniel Craig is a gentile in real-life and his character has a certain Aryan sensibility about him that may be misleading to film going audiences. When Tuvia kills a man in *Defiance*, he does it with meaning. Whether it be the collaborators that killed his father or a mutinying kinsman, Tuvia kills in a profound manner. This is certainly not like the cowardly murdering nonsense carried about well equipped and U.S. backed Israelis in Gaza. The real Bielski Partisans Typically, all the gentiles in *Defiance* are portrayed as evil Jew killers and traitors of the Jews. The only man to truly help the Jewish people is lynched and has a sign attached to him that says "Jew Lover." Even the Soviet partisan leader friend of Zus Bielski stabs him in the back by retreating. Essentially, the one time friend of Zus has left the Bielski partisans like sheep for slaughter by inhuman Aryan butchers. *Defiance* does not try to hide its portrayal of gentiles as those that lack proper "human" morals. The partisans speak of this gentile animal behavior throughout the film. However, to be fair, there is a lot of fighting and bickering between the Jewish Bielski partisans. One of the Bielski brothers, Aron, does not have much of a role in *Defiance*. His character is simply a scared child who has been shocked by the incomprehensible horrors of gentile savagery. Aron's lack of "character" and stability in *Defiance* might be for a reason. The real-life Aron Bielski, now in his eighties, and going by the name Aron Bell, was

recently arrested on grand theft of swindling a 93-year-old woman, a Catholic survivor of the Holocaust. One has to wonder how Aron went from a savior of the Jews to an elderly white collar criminal. Nonetheless, Aron Bielski is a Holocaust hero. Mugshot of Aron "Bell" Bielski. Defiance seemed to borrow a little material from the Soviet cinematic masterpiece Come and See (1985) directed by Elem Klimov. The film is set in Belraus and follows a young boy who joins a group of Soviet partisans and sees the horror of the Nazi SS and their allies. Come and See is one of those rare truly horrifying films that does not give in to petty sentimentalism as Defiance does. I won't go into similarities between the two films as it is tedious, but those that have seen both films will probably be disgusted by the "borrowing" Defiance director Edward Zwick has so freely taken advantage of. Come and See, although a Soviet propaganda film, is a film about human suffering and horrors. Defiance is a film about moral superiority and heroic fantasies. Defiance does not do much to separate it itself from films similar to it. It features a few exciting action sequences and people getting killed. Actors Daniel Craig and Lieke Martens (who play the two main Bielski brothers) are the only interesting acting performances. I also liked this little Jewish intellectual character who accidentally blows himself up during a heroic act. It was like a bad joke on Edward Zwick's Part.

-Ty E

TERRORAMA!
TERRORAMA!

Edwin Brienen (2001)

Undoubtedly, Dutch auteur filmmaker Edwin Brienen (*Viva Europa!*, *Revision - Apocalypse II*) has come a long way since the release of his first feature-length film *Terrorama!* (2001) – a sensory deranging digital diarrhea explosion of raunchy rape, unsentimental sacrilege, nasty nihilism, sick sex, and philosophical terrorism – because although the film won “Best film” at the Melbourne Underground Film Festival and earned actress Esther Eva Verkaaik “best leading actress” at the Toronto Independent Film Festival, the film also cemented the director’s reputation as an erratic enfant terrible; a title he still retains and seems to wallow in today. Unlike most filmmakers, Brienen – who studied philosophy and psychology (two forms of study that are probably infinitely more important for a serious filmmaker than actual film studies) before working as a radio host at the ripe of 22 years old, as well as an underground television actor/director, including collaborating on the shows *Buch*, *Burgers & Buitenlui* and *Hoe Hoort het Eigenlijk?* with Theo van Gogh (great-grandson son of art dealer Theo van Gogh, the brother of artist Vincent van Gogh) – went all the way with his first feature, showing that his childhood viewings of Andy Warhol and John Waters certainly paid-off in the long run in his development into a libertine artist. A rare filmmaker that is equally inspired by the work of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Claude Chabrol, alongside aberrant auteur filmmakers like Alberto Cavallone (*Man, Woman and Beast*, *Blue Movie*) and revolutionary pornographers like Gerard Damiano (*Deep Throat*, *Splendor in the Ass*), *Terrorama!* certainly reveals its director’s eclectic influences, but it is also transcends its subversive but oftentimes outmoded cinematic predecessors, thereupon painting an innately scathing and unprepossessing portrait of postmodern Netherlands, as well as Europe as a whole. Centering around a sextet of sick, sexually perverted and seemingly psychopathic nihilists from the Netherlands who have the bright and bold idea of kidnapping a well-known TV host RAF-style in the shallow hope of eradicating what little is left of the Occident’s traditional social norms and morals, *Terrorama!*, as an aberrant arthouse piece, is ironically a work of aesthetic terrorism itself, not only in its obscene and ominous objective to visually and audibly offend, but also to ‘philosophically enlighten’ the viewer. In other words, *Terrorama!* – for better or for worse – makes the films of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Herbert Achternbusch seem overly sentimental and subdued by comparison.

Although often described as ‘the Dutch Fassbinder’, not least of all due to the prolific amount of films he has directed in such a short period of time, but unlike his kraut filmic hero, Edwin Brienen’s films, especially *Terrorama!*, rarely feature sympathetic or even remotely redeemable characters. While Fassbinder’s films generally feature characters that are trying to achieve some tangible, honest,

or remotely respectable goal like maintaining their sanity or surviving a hapless love affair, Brienen's are carefully constructed characters who are horribly hopeless and determinedly desolate degenerates of the hate-mongering and sexually depraved kind whose activities inevitably and quite more honestly (in comparison to Fassbinder's) lead to some sort of self-annihilating transcendence, which is interesting when considering that Theo van Gogh – who was brutally assassinated by a Dutch-Moroccan Islamist due to his penetratingly provocative films and writings criticizing Islam – appears in *Terrorama!* reciting passages from the Koran while a curious couple bestially fucks in a car right behind him, hence why the scene was cut from the British release of film by the UK-based company Salvation Group after holding back the release for a number of years. Beginning with a performance of the sardonically titled song "Hitler Was A Speedfreak" by the swastika-draped band Johnny Cohen & The New Age Nazis – a sort of punk rock equivalent to Motörhead – *Terrorama!* establishes itself as a shamelessly and stoically subversive work right from the get go as the sort of sophisticated scat piece, not unlike the films of German auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel (*The German Chainsaw-Massacre*, *United Trash*), that would have more sensitive viewers walking out of the movie theater within mere minutes.

Just in time for the holiday season, I felt a daunting dose of the Christmas spirit when I discovered that *Terrorama!* features the Dutch equivalent of Santa Clause, Saint Nicholas (*Sinterklaas*), raping a bodacious babe doggy style as his Negro servant "Black Peter" (known as "Zwarte Piet" in the Netherlands) – played by a naked and pale honkey, aside from his blackface, nappy wig, and red lipstick – jovially jerks-off while in a state of absolute ecstasy in a significantly swinish scene of XXXmas joy. Needless to say, aside from being innately and unwaveringly politically incorrect, *Terrorama!* also features a variety of surreal pornographic imagery of the unsimulated sort. Personally, my favorite scene is where a slavish Jesus Christ, who drags a cross like a hobo carrying his raggedy bundle, is rejected by a handsome SS man that he hugs and embraces with pure love, thus inspiring him to subsequently masturbate and plant his spoiled seed into the grass. As for the film's loose, but discernible plot, which involves six activist-nihilist psychopaths kidnapping and torturing a popular TV personality Gerard van Dongen (Michel van Dousselaere), one must admit and accept that *Terrorama!* is a work where the sum of parts are less important than the individual segments themselves. As the character Edwin (naturally, played by Edwin Brienen himself) emphatically pontificates in a patently unpopular political manner during one of the film's various candid pseudo-documentarian interviews, the group's credo to political philosophy is that: "Idealism is to be thrown overboard, it only causes disappointment. Otherwise you could goddamn join the Maoists, the communists, the neo-marxists...the whole fucking lot...self-interest, that's what matters." Indeed, in their homo-sado-masochistic need to rape men in the throat, sexually and physically degrade melancholy women (Brienen's lead-

TERRORAMA!

ing lady Eva Dorrepaal has one hell of a time), gay-bash and throat-stomp euro-wigger misogynists, shoot-up heroin in between shooting spunk into their female compatriots' junk, and engaging in all-around deranged hedonistic debauchery, the tainted terrorists of Terrorama! must have taken the philosophies of Anton LaVey much too seriously.

Consumed with equal doses of nihilism and narcissism that are generated by a deep-seated resentment and a will-to-perverse-power, the curiously cruel Cyprian terrorists of Terrorama! are most confident in their objective to rule over others as especially underscored by character Edwin's remark that, "People who are stupid or inferior and use violence, are not dangerous...They are harmless because you can eliminate them quickly. But as soon as violence meets intellect, society is warned!" In a sense, the film feels like a maniac manifesto for Nietzschean active-nihilism as one certainly gets the feeling that director Edwin Brienen – a student of philosophy and psychology himself – spent a lot of time dwelling on the intrinsically irrational ideas he depicts in Terrorama!, thus this mind-wrecking work certainly oftentimes feels like a therapeutic artistic execution of the filmmaker's more dangerous and impractical fantasies. I don't know about other people that have seen the film, but I doubt the characters featured in Terrorama! would fair well while incarcerated with Moroccan and Somalian philistines whose inborn Weltanschauung is to break, fuck, and kill. Ultimately, one never learns the actual outcome of the rebel rejects' criminal actions and the film concludes with one of the bat-shit beserk beauties stating the obvious with the closing remark: "nihilism is my middle name." Indeed, much like Brienen's subsequent works, Terrorama! is a striking and maniacal mélange of high and low art and a diabolically thoughtful work that argues for visceral action and self-indulgence over soulless novelty intellectualism of the Utopian humanistic sort, thereupon bringing more meaning than just plain superficial sensationalism to the fact that the terrorists adorn their humble hideout with a National Socialist swastika and Schutzstaffel flags. Although by no means racial chauvinists nor even racially conscious, these characters do reject – much like the National Socialists that preceded them – slave morality-driven liberalism and naïve calls for peace and progress and instead delight in Dionysian derangements of the mind and body. That being said, maybe it is high time that the whole of the Occidental peoples heed these thoughtful words from Terrorama!: "Lick and smell the vaginal juices that smell of death."

-Ty E

BERLIN NIGHTS: THE GRAND DELUSIONS

Edwin Bienen (2003)

Originally entitled and better known in Europa as *Lebenspornografie* (2003) aka *Life Pornography*, Dutch enfant terrible auteur Edwin Bienen (*Last Performance*, *Revision - Apocalypse II*) recently retitled the work *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* for its first time American release, thereupon sparking my interest in re-watching the film after my initial viewing of the subversive cinematic effort about a year ago. Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting and prolific, if not oftentimes derivative, auteur filmmakers working today in both the Netherlands and the European continent as a whole, *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* makes for one of his most ambitious, audacious, and arresting early cinematic efforts. While the original title of the film is certainly more provocative and seductive, if not partially misleading, *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* makes for a more straightforward and quite literal description. The film follows a troupe of decidedly demoralized Amsterdam-based actors/artists as they move to Berlin, Germany to star in an erotic show and simultaneously attempt to reboot their fading careers and find love in a forsaken quest of a fool's paradise. The second feature-length work following *Terrorama!* (2001) directed by Edwin Bienen – dubbed “the Dutch Fassinder” due to his direction of 14 feature films in a mere decade, as well his intrinsic and imperative influence by the German New Wave König – *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions*, like the director's previous work, is almost nauseatingly nihilistic and unpleasantly pornographic; featuring patent aesthetic and thematic extremes that the audacious auteur cracks up to making sure he would not bore the audience. If the *Last Performance* (2006) was Bienen's cinematic equivalent to Fassbinder's *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* (1978), *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* is the Dutch auteur filmmaker's version of his film hero's semi-autobiographical flick *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) a work that similarly follows a bunch of perverted actors as they plummet into their particular personal purgatory while the degeneration of their art parallels this daunting deluge into oblivion. If it says anything, Edwin Bienen claims, like all of his films, he has yet to watch *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* since its initial release, which one can only speculate that his cinematic works are artistic rituals of sorts where the damned director exorcises his demons in uncommonly delightful yet demoniacal celluloid form.

Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions most specifically centers around emotionally ravaged Romy (named after German actress Romy Schneider; one of Bienen's favorite actresses) played by Eva Dorrepaal (Bienen's equivalent to Fassbinder's Dietrich-like diva “Ingrid Caven”), a down-and-out actress who would be happy to get a role in a Tampax commercial. Beginning with the confrontational and decidedly butch character Claire (played by Esther Eva Verkaaik)

BERLIN NIGHTS: THE GRAND DELUSIONS

opening the film, denigrating the audience for two minutes or so with her vehement and venomous verbal spew and with repellant images of sardonic scatology and putrid pornography, including an appearance from French "GG Allin" and noted noise musician Jean-Louis Coştes who also contributed to the soundtrack (with the majority of the striking synth-driven score being composed by Le Syndicat Eleçtronique) for *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* and is probably best known in the film world for his infamous head-crushing appearance in Gaspar Noé's *Irréversible* (2002), one knows what they are in store for before the title "Lebenspornografie" even appears. *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* also features a scrawny and sentimental leather-fag named Jim (played by Onno Meijer who has since died of a heart attack); a heartbroken homo who cannot get over the fact that he broke up with the love of his life because he was HIV positive. Undoubtedly, the most deplorable character is Berlin night club owner Thorwald (Peter Post) and his wanton wife; a hideous husband and wife duo whose dual propensity to annoy the audience is next to none. The Virgin Mary (played by celebrated "Dutch diva" Marjol Flore) also makes an appearance, but she is no match for the film's lost souls, who are so consumed with strife, self-loathing, and hedonistic self-destruction and who are always naughty and never nice. Needless to say, Edwin Brienen was not lying when he once stated that he was trying to positively provoke the audience with his first films, as *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* is essentially a work of anarchic aesthetic terrorism disguised as a loony libertine melodrama, not that hysterical and haunting histrionics doesn't help to guide this coarsely carnal cinematic work. During the beginning of the film, cunt Claire states, "Art is a statement. It's important that art provokes. And that's necessary," which is a sentiment with which I basically agree, but if a film's sole objective is to provoke, it is not much more provocative than a crackhead screaming at the top of his lungs while exposing his shriveled, crab-ridden genitals on a busy freeway. Luckily, *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* is not just notable for its distinct debasing essence, as Brienen is even able to making fisting and sexual violence an aesthetically pleasing experience.

Featuring a cameo that was originally intended for *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* star Volker Spengler from fellow Fassbinder alumnus Peter Kern as a cocaine-dealing humungous homo named Valencia who claims to have sliced his mother from her "neck to cunt" and has a dick-less tranny boyfriend named Schulz who had his cock cut-off because he kept getting sick from shoving his knob up other men's anuses, as well as a gay-bashing sodomite neo-nazi (Andreas Scharfenberg) who gets off to beating the shit out of fellow gays, *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* is surely a work that is not for the faint of heart nor the prissy and politically correct. In fact, I would not recommend the film to anyone who is not looking to have their night ruined, as *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* is, at best, less than a merry mix of misery and misanthropy, but a suavely stylish piece of melancholy and moroseness nonetheless. As Dutch

director Edwin Bienen explained in the audio commentary for the American release of *Berlin Nights: The Grand Delusions* – like the characters in the film (Bienen himself actually plays a cocaine-snorting fellow named Loete) – was facing a spat of bitter romance that also inspired him to move to Berlin in real-life, thus the grating debauchery depicted in the film, as I suspected, was grounded in sordid and smiting truths. Due to a scene where a character states, to paraphrase, “Jews create their own Adolf Hitler,” Bienen faced unfounded criticism from a certain Dutch Jewish watchdog group. Indeed, Hebraic hypersensitivity aside, Edwin Bienen is one of the few truly groundbreaking and authentically controversial filmmakers working in Europe today, which says a lot for a continent that has no problem depicted unsimulated sex in movies. Aside from uninhibited and unhinged imagery, Bienen brings up ideas and themes that are rarely examined in modern cinema as a whole; whether it be the terror of gay nazis or the sadomasochism of sick sodomites, Bienen knows no limits, thereupon putting him in good company with his ill-fated hero Fassbinder.

-Ty E

WHY ULLI WANTED TO KILL HIMSELF ON CHRISTMAS EVE
WHY ULLI WANTED TO KILL HIMSELF ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Edwin Bienen (2005)

From my personal experience as the proud grandson of a Flying Dutchman, the Dutch reign supreme when it comes to hyper negativity, cynicism, airs of superiority, and pathological Teutophobia. In other words, the Dutch people (aka 'lazy Germans') are proud assholes who derive a deluded sense of superiority from the fact that they are pathologically 'liberal' (i.e. decadent and lazy) and adamantly support degenerate and ethno-masochistic social causes. Indeed, Dutch auteur filmmaker Edwin Bienen (*Terrorama*, *Revision - Apocalypse II*) is certainly a dude who makes nihilistic and oftentimes nasty films, but what makes him different from the average Cheese-Eater is that he seems to have a rather nice relationship with the perennial enemy nation of Germany (aka the land of the boorish "Moffen")—the Germanic brother country that occupied the Netherlands during the Second World War and stole all its cheese while the natives starved and froze to death—and has made a number culturally pessimistic Nietzschean melodramas there. Indeed, being described as the "Dutch Fassbinder" might be akin to being described as the "Dutch Hitler" for some Dutch people, but Bienen seems to wear the distinguished Teutonic title with pride. Recently, I was quite happy to receive a Christmas present from Bienen and his Berlin-based production company Ultra Vista in the form of the Dutch filmmaker's (anti)Christmas cult movie *Warum Ulli sich am Weihnachtsabend umbringen wollte* (2005) aka *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve*, which was recently fittingly re-released for the Holiday season. Sort of the Xmas film that Fassbinder never made, albeit more brazenly naughty and nihilistic, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* is certainly the 'Satan's Brew of Christmas movies.' Made following the shooting of Bienen's *In a Year with 13 Moons*-esque film *Last Performance* (2006), *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* was not only inspired by Fassbinder's maniac melodramas but also by the Bavarian auteur filmmaker's singularly prolific work ethic. Spurred by a whimsical idea Bienen had to complete an entire film (including shooting, editing, post-production, etc.) in a mere three to four weeks, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* was shot in less than two weeks and was already in Germany theaters two months after pre-production began. The only real Christmas movie that I watched on this past Christmas day, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* certainly got me in the "Bah! Humbug!" spirit as a tastelessly and even terrifyingly tragicomic work about a pathetic loser who wants more than anything just for a single person to spend Christmas with him, but lacks the personality and social clique to attract even the most repugnant of Americanized Aryan degenerates, including his bitchy bull-dyke sister and obnoxiously extroverted transvestite father. Featuring clips from Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) dubbed in German

and elderly folks drinking themselves to death as they suffer yet another miserable and melancholy Yuletide, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* is probably the only Xmas film ever made that has the potential to both drive people towards and steer people away from the perennial gift of suicide.

Ulli (Marin Caktas) is an unremarkable fellow with a dead-end job as an exceedingly emasculated office slave who is rather determined to find someone special to spend Christmas with, but the problem is that he has about as much swag as an elderly old man's wrinkled scrotum, not to mention the fact that he still worships his long gone ex-girlfriend Nicki (Eva Dorrepaal). In fact, despite being well into his mid-30s, Ulli has only had one girlfriend in his entire sad life and his dubious relationship with Nicki only lasted a mere 6 months, thus he has about as much experience with women as the average high school boy. Rather autistically, Ulli makes his first pathetic attempt at wooing a woman to spend Christmas with him by approaching his cute next door neighbor, who he does not actually know, with a would-be-thoughtful Xmas gift. Naturally, the girl blows him off like he is a creepy salesman and rejects his retarded gift, which is a vintage copy of J. D. Salinger's absurdly overrated teen angst novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). After his failed attempt at seducing his neighbor, Ulli goes to hang out with his British best friend Elton (Tomas Spencer). Rather annoyed by his feeble friend's moody and broody bitch boy behavior, Elton verbally berates Ulli into oblivion, ultimately insulting him for his love of the rather repellant romantic-comedy *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) and eventually tells him to "fuck off outta here." Despite kicking him out of his apartment, Elton later makes up with Ulli and the two bros-without-hoes naively attempt to buy hard drugs from a degenerate swarthy drug dealer named Heino (René Ifrah), who has a rather bizarre fetish for so-called 'Latin music' and big booty bitches like Shakira. Of course, when Heino's slutty and slightly unhinged girlfriend physically dominates and attempts to molest Ulli, the two friends unfortunately leave drug-free.

Desperate for both love and affection, Ulli makes the moronic mistake of visiting his bull-dyke beastess sister Bettina (Nicole Ohliger) and her dude-like Dutch dyke girlfriend Karin (Esther Eva Verkaaik). Sister Bettina immediately attempts to throw Ulli out, but Karin makes him stay as she seems strangely turned-on by his company. After going on a painfully plodding and pretentious spiel about the purported homoeroticism of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, Karin begins to get horny and starts feeling up the sexless office worker, which rather irks Bettina and results in a brutal battle between the two bull-dykes that concludes in rough lesbo sex. After getting in the Christmas spirit by eating an archaic-looking aluminum-bound TV dinner, Ulli goes to visit his man-mommy Evelyn (Ades Zabel) and her decidedly despicable Euro-wigger boyfriend Olaf (Niels Bormann). After Olaf—a fellow who is in a relationship with a less than homely transman—accuses Ulli of being a cocksucker, Evelyn reveals to her son that she has a tumor and will die of cancer in the next couple

WHY ULLI WANTED TO KILL HIMSELF ON CHRISTMAS EVE

months, thus further compounding the offbeat office worker's undying depression and disillusionment with the holiday season. Feeling more desperate than ever, Ulli decides to take a strange stranger named Cat (Malah Helman) hostage with a toy prop gun, which initially proves to be successful but the hapless hopeless romantic ultimately gets more than he bargained for. Indeed, Cat is a cute but somewhat creepy gal who attempts to get Ulli to strangle her as the two awkwardly make misbegotten love in a bathtub, but the sensitive gentleman naturally refuses to do so, so the little lady leaves her kidnapper with the unflattering remark, "I really feel sorry for you" as if he is the most pathetic pussy in the world. After going to a church sermon and receiving no solace after asking the stoic reverend why not a single one of the seven billion or so people that inhabit the earth is willing to spend Christmas with him, Ulli contemplates suicide but naturally pussies out. In the end, Ulli spends Christmas in a retirement home inhabited by mostly senile and somber elderly folks and gets drunk with a resentful old fart that has no interest in speaking with him. Indeed, it is not a wonderful life after all, at least for postmodern *untermensch* Ulli.

Undoubtedly, in its malignant anti-merry melancholy, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* might have been better titled *Why Didn't Ulli Kill Himself on Christmas Eve?* as the patently pathetic protagonist's self-slaughter would have given him the gift-that-keeps-on-giving; eternal peace. In terms of pathetic male protagonists, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* ultimately puts the accursed cuckolds of Fassbinder's *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970), *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1972), and *The Stationmaster's Wife* (1977) to abject shame. Of course, protagonist Ulli was not the only deplorable character featured in the film, as *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* does not feature a single likeable nor redeemable character. Indeed, featuring loony lesbian erotomaniacs, bastard 'best friends,' swarthy Shakira-saluting dope dealers, pompous charlatan preachers, erratic elderly old farts, sadistic Sapphic sisters, masochistic kidnap victims, and Euro-Trash wiggers, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* is certainly an insanely iconoclastic anti-*It's a Wonderful Life* of sorts where everyone is naughty and no one plays nice. A sleazily sardonic piece of celluloid coal in your much cherished vintage Christmas stocking, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* is the perfect cinematic Xmas feast for both anti-Santa-ists and subversive cinemaphiles alike. Indeed, I doubt auteur Edwin Brien got any presents in his shoes from Sinterklaas this year after deciding to re-release *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve*; arguably the most antagonistic yet hilarious anti-Christ-Mass ever made. A Christmas flick for those individuals who prefer Krampus over Santa Claus, *Why Ulli Wanted to Kill Himself on Christmas Eve* reminds the viewer that for every person that loves the holiday season, there are two or three other people who have hit rock bottom and cannot wait for the new year to begin and for the Christmas tree to be

thrown in the dumpster.

-Ty E

EDWIN BRIENEN'S HYSTERIA
EDWIN BRIENEN'S HYSTERIA

Edwin Brien (2006)

Taking a drastically different approach to his 5th feature-length film Edwin Brien's *Hysteria* (2006) – the first film in the director's "Apocalypse Trilogy" (the second being *Revision - Apocalypse II* and the third remains to be seen, although some believe that his most recent work *Exploitation* is the final chapter) – a soundly singular and striking silent film directed by Dutch auteur Edwin Brien that does not feature a single shot of full-color footage, but a variety of one-colored tinted scenes, the most prominent of which being blue for a rather interesting reason. In part inspired by the infamous Italian flick *Blue Movie* (1978) directed by absurdist auteur Alberto Cavallone (*Maldoror*, *Blow Job*), *Hysteria* – like the artfully sleazy scatological wop shocker it pays tribute to – follows a lonely woman in a horrified and ambiguously delusional lady named Lara (Brien's always nude regular Eva Dorrepaal) – the sort of unstable woman that a depraved psychoanalyst would love to get their hands on – in a state of hysterics who has taken sanctuary in the worst possible residency imaginable after a forced encounter with an unwanted date with a ravenous and rampaging rapist. Quite conceivably the world's most unlucky girl in the world, not unlike the deranged anti-heroess of Abel Ferrara's *Ms. 45* (1981), Lara soon realizes the gorgeous Gothic castle that she decided to shelter in is full of coxcomb lunatics, quirky sadomasochists, aberrant aristocrats, and – the worst of all, at least for already severely sexually abused and misused Lara – rapists. More meticulously stylized and 'anti-erotically' extreme than even the uncut version of Cavallone's erratic exercise in naughty and mostly nonsensical nihilism, *Blue Movie* – a virtual arthouse flick for serial killers and coprophilia junkies – *Hysteria* is more than a tribute to an obscure sub-cult classic, as the film also pays equal tribute to the silent era, most specifically German expressionism, as if Satanic German National Socialist Renaissance man Hanns Heinz Ewers (writer of such horror classics filmed for the silverscreen as *The Student of Prague* and *Alraune*) and Deathrock pioneer Rozz Williams (co-writer/co-director of the S/M serial killer short *Pig* (1999)) came back from hell and collaborated on an unclassifiable low-budget horror utilizing both archaic and state-of-the-art filmmaking techniques. Indeed, Edwin Brien's *Hysteria* is probably the only film ever made that features violent leather-fag fisting (an oddly memorable scene for my girlfriend who later dreamed of shadow people fist-fucking each other in dark corridors of the most unholy and hole-y of dimensions) and a scene of German expressionist opera performed by a Gothic transvestite dyke in a Victorian suit all in one film.

Literally a "Blue Movie," especially in regard to the various phantasmagorical rape scenes performed by a positively perverse perpetrator that wears what seems to be a Ronald Regan mask, Brien's *Hysteria* manages to pay tribute

to Cavallone's improvised masterpiece of the atmospherically aberrant in a relatively subtle and discreet way, so much that despite being a huge fan of the Italian film, I did not initially recognize the influence in the defiant Dutchman's film. Also featuring classical music by Johann Sebastian Bach – a favorite of the scat-sanctifying anti-hero of *Blue Movie* – *Hysteria* utilizes the same music but under more fitting circumstances, mainly during scenes of the debauched blueblood degenerates partaking in morbidly amusing games of the rich and flagitious, including reanimating dead friends in coffins, encouraging one said dead friend to beat a naked girl with a mallet like the impotent cadaver-like grandfather from *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), and forcing the same untimely guest to eat shit out of a dog bowl while absurdly wearing a plastic bag over her head. *Hysteria* also features an eclectic but consistently haunting score composed by Hanno Hinkelbein (Null Records/Aeox) and IO that features everything from industrial noise compositions to ambient neo-classical tracks, so there is no mistake that the film is a modern flick that is not merely a pomo puff piece like the sort you would expect from tired old guys like Guy Maddin and Brothers Quay as Edwin Brienens realizes he lives in the present and not some glorified and intangible past. Wallowing in wantonness, but of the determinedly anti-erotic and scatological sadistic sort, *Hysteria* will be a grueling challenge for the majority of modern philistine horror whores because instead of offering cheap titillation and thoughtless terrorization, Brienens makes the viewer pay for experience by testing the strength of their psyche and capacity to endure somewhat impenetrable art unlike with the latest Eli Roth and Rob Zombie flick – fanboy masturbation pieces that fail to even achieve a potent burst of postmodern ejaculation – thus I think it is safe to say that it is one of the Dutch auteur filmmaker's most ambitious efforts.

Dedicated to Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh (1-900, Submission) – with whom Edwin Brienens collaborated on various TV series before becoming a filmmaker in his own right, and who was brutally assassinated by an Islamist terrorist (although one might draw a different conclusion after watching van Gogh's final conspiracy-themed work 06/05 aka May 6th) – *Hysteria* has, to some people's confusion, been described by the director himself as a "political horror" work that covers such topics as mind manipulation and false reality. Indeed, upon superficial glance, one would be at a loss to find anything remotely "political" about *Hysteria*, but Brienens executes these themes in a most unpreachy (and literally unspoken) manner that is disseminated through striking symbolism and avant-garde action in an expressionistic horror setting. Citing the Austrian tragicomic thriller *Die Totale Therapie* (1996) aka *Total Therapy* directed by Christian Frosch – a film that shows how a bunch of mentally and emotionally feeble individuals fair (i.e. they go insane and kill one another) after their brainwashing savior therapist is murdered – as one of his top ten favorite films, it seems Brienens employed a similar technique, albeit to a more cryptic degree,

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of utilizing the power of psychological terror and influence as a tool for control; be it by a political party, mainstream media, or the leader of an acropolis full of degenerates as is the case in *Hysteria*. The fact that the (various) phantom rapist(s) in the film wear a variety of masks, including (political) pig, Arab towelhead, and American president illustrate the sort of illusive boogeymen that one sees every day just by turning on their television. All realpolitik propaganda aside, the greatest strength of *Hysteria* is the magnificent collection of art-exploitation imagery contained within the film, especially for a work that was produced using the innately distasteful and aesthetically sterile format of digital video, as many scenes resemble moving paintings as if directed by German New Wave dandy Werner Schroeter had he had a special proclivity for German expressionism and old school slasher and gorno flicks instead of androgynous women and Mediterranean men. Indeed, the dapper lesbo operetta, especially reminded me of a scene from Schroeter's *Eika Katappa* (1969) and *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972), but seeing as Brien is "the Dutch Fassbinder" and both *Neuer Deutscher Film* auteur filmmakers (Schroeter and Fassbinder) were friends/collaborators, this is no surprise. That being said, the only thing that is a surprise is that both a film like *Hysteria* and a director like Edwin Brien exist contemporarily as I surely cannot think of another filmmaker that pushes both arthouse melodrama and pornographic S&M splatter films to such a degree that fecal-flinging fist-fucking begins to seem like an expression of high-camp charm.

-Ty E

LAST PERFORMANCE

Edwin Brien (2006)

Edwin Brien's *Last Performance* (2006) is quite possibly the first consciously LaVeyan melodrama ever to be made. Auteur Edwin Brien has been described as the 'Dutch Fassbinder', but such a label is merely generous for a filmmaker who – although produces seemingly 'original' films at an unseen speed – lacks the overall artistic talent and integrity of the much greater and more eclectic German filmmaker. Instead, I would describe Brien's work as a mix between that of his fellow countrymen Tom Six, Christoph Maria Schlingensief (minus the humor), and Fassbinder-kitsch. Although Brien does not deserve to lick Fassbinder's thoroughly decayed, gaping asshole, his films do provide the viewer with a window into the passive nihilism and cultural bankruptcy of hyper-hedonistic, postmodern Europa through a cheap and broken multicultural window. Brien's work *Last Performance* is somewhat different from most of his previous works in that it was filmed in the English language and that it takes place in the typically debauched New York, New York theater world. Borrowing somewhat ineptly from the philosophies of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, *Last Performance* is an excessively pessimistic yet superficial work that barely scratches the surfaces of the relatively deep barrel of ideas from which it borrows from. What makes *Last Performance* somewhat interesting is that these philosophies are contained within a megalomaniac microcosm inspired by the real narcissistic (and sometimes tragic) lives of famous NYC-based but mostly unrelated artists like Andy Warhol, Klaus Nomi, Yoko Ono, Lydia Lunch, and various others.

Last Performance opens with the haunting opera track "Dido und Aeneas: Dido's Lament" as performed by otherworldly countertenor Klaus Nomi. Considering that out-of-this-world-alien-Aryan Nomi died nearly a quarter of a century before the production of *Last Performance*, a pudgy imposter unfortunately takes his place and sports the iconic wardrobe and lip-syncs the somewhat prophetic song of the late New Wave German opera singer. Admittedly, the opening song and scene sets the tone for what will follow in the film: decadent and depressing scenarios mixed with recycled ideas and art. In the film, a self-loathing alpha-homo named Tom starts a clearly dubious sexual relationship with an aspiring European Starlet named Julia, thus throwing his overly effeminate butt-buddy Cooper into an erratic crying game of the most self-torturing kind. Due to its barely controversial themes and NYC setting, *Last Performance* is strangely reminiscent of William Friedkin's much tamer film *The Boys in the Band* (1970); a somewhat revolutionary work that boldly (for that era) yet fairly measures the pros and cons of cosmopolitan gay-dom in everyone's favorite metropolitan city. The cover of the *Last Performance* dvd should feature the tagline, "to bugger or not to bugger", as such words quite aptly summarizes

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the overall feel and postmodern spiel (s) contained within the film. In a sense, the film reminded me of some of the more banal existential eroticism writings written by the thoroughly bored and imprisoned Marquis de Sade had he been more passive and lived in contemporary times, as only an exceedingly privileged individual could find such complaints and needless and manufactured drama as the characters of *Last Performance*. The only character that counterbalances the white pseudo-aristocracy of boredom in the film is an anti-social Negro in exaggeratedly effeminate neo-pimp garb who enjoys the pioneering “unemotional” (as he describes it) Teutonic-electronics of Kraftwerk and the beautiful words of German genius Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Indeed, *Last Performance* is essentially a melodramatic sideshow of pointless decadence where pleasure can only be found in the realm of sexual humiliation and self-degradation. After all, how many other films feature a Queenish queer dressing up in drag in a vain and pathetic attempt to lure back his cheating dilettante-heterosexual boyfriend. That being said, the greatest achievement of *Last Performance* is most likely its proclivity towards embarrassing viewers with its exceedingly shameless and emotionally-ravaging characters.

When it comes to the overall *mise-en-scène*, set-design, shot composition, and music, *Last Performance* is surprisingly a distinct and mostly pleasurable experience for the eyes and ears. Had the acting performances, writing, and dialogue matched the integrity of the audio/visual aesthetics featured in the film, *Last Performance* could have been a minor masterpiece of sorts. Instead, *Last Performance* is a marginally exciting adventure through a mostly adventure-less and soulless world of miserable self-worship and contrived carnality. To its credit, *Last Performance* concludes with a quasi-Satanic ritualistic play of sorts, hence the title of the film, but that does not save the film from being an often sterile and mostly impotent journey through the limp-wristed left-hand path of the NYC theater dramarama netherworld. If *Last Performance* left any notable impression on me, it is that Edwin Brienen, being a young and highly productive filmmaker, is a ‘work-in-progress’ who quite possibly has the embryonic makings to be a great filmmaker in upcoming years. The greatest tragedy of *Last Performance* is not the one featured in its storyline, but that a film that had the potential to be somewhat great only ended up being somewhat engrossing and less than thought provoking. With the glaring lack of genuine auteur filmmakers in the 21st century, one can only hope that Edwin Brienen will develop into a director that is worthy of being mentioned in the same sentence as the truly great arthouse auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Of course, after seeing a pretentious and pseudo-provocative photograph of would-be bad boy Brienen receiving a (probably bogus) blowjob while wearing (like fellow hack Hollander Tom Six) a cowboy hat on the front-page of his personal website, I do have some serious and legitimate doubts about the barely flying Dutchman’s future artistic potential and integrity as a serious martial auteur to be reckoned with.

-Ty E

REVISION - APOCALYPSE II
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Edwin Brienen (2009)

The second chapter in his “Apocalypse Trilogy” (the first being Edwin Brienen’s *Hysteria* (2006)), delightfully dastardly Dutch auteur Edwin Brienen’s (*Terrorama*, *Viva Europa!*) nihilistic melodrama/horror flick *Revision - Apocalypse II* (2009) is a work that – given its seemingly Satanic philosophy (in the past, Brienen has displayed an interest in atheistic LaVeyean/Nietzschean thought) and perturbing prophetic albeit ambiguous ‘message’ – begins quite sardonically with a quote from Revelation 22:13 that reads: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” Inspired by a startling dream he had of a giant Jesus icon on a mountain top shooting lasers out of his eyes like in some Japanese monster movie that turned people into mindless lemmings, his obsession with post-911 conspiracy theories, fear-mongering in the mainstream media, and sleazy grind-core flicks, Brienen eventually came up with the idea for a quasi-futuristic, yet conspicuously modern film where a melancholy ex-model named Traci (played by Brienen superstar Eva Dorrepaal of *Lebenspornografie* and *Last Performance* infamy) – a disillusioned lapsed Christian who has reluctantly embraced nihilism – decides to surrender herself to the ‘ultimate act of evil’ at her deranged hubby’s advice so as to fill her tormented spiritual void. Never alone wherever she may be, the model is haunted by beefy, beer-belly-flaunting and (unintentionally) hilarious inner-demon named Vince DeStructo (played by German-born rapper Jacob Dove Basker) who breaks out into thrashy screamo/punk songs (taken from the Dutch group *The House of DeStructo*’s second album “Everything Must be Destroyed”) and who acts as a sort of Jungian ‘shadow’; the dark, unconscious, instinctive, and irrational hidden self. Relatively equal parts dystopian postmodern nightmare, menacing melodrama, nihilistic and atmospheric *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) inspired exploitation flick, and misanthropic musical, *Revision - Apocalypse II* is Edwin Brienen at his best as an aesthetically and thematically eclectic cinematic work that is nothing short of singular and unclassifiable.

Patently pessimistic Traci is one decidedly dispirited lady, but she is not so deluded as to delight in her despair like a masochist, thus she is willing to go to a number of extremes to shed or at least lessen her wicked woes. Miss misanthropic sees so little hope for the world, that she states while confiding in a friend, “Back then there was Hitler, nowadays it’s even worse. We have the New World Order...It’s all about control...I sometimes wonder what these monsters want now. They already control the earth. Now they want complete control of the collective mind. That what is called god.” Indeed, with terrorists everywhere as sort of pomo movie stars and forced chip implantation used on law abiding citizens, Traci knows better than anyone else that fear truly eats the soul, so to strike back at god and country, and to have a little taste of power for herself,

she decides that murdering and mutilating people will make for a great change of pace. Unfortunately for her, torture and terror do not seem to be Traci's cup of tea, at least when it comes to acting as a sort of personal therapy, thereupon leading her to lose the little bit of semblance of sanity and self-control that she had left. For Traci, friends and fuck-buddies come and go, but her inner-demon – the heavy and hysterical hirsute fellow that heatedly howls while not far from her side – is forever. Featuring an extended cameo/music performance from The Horrorist (aka Oliver Chesler; probably best known in the film world for being the idealistic young punk from the Depeche Mode documentary 101 (1989) co-directed D.A. Pennebaker), on top of the various raging, ridiculous, and oftentimes retarded lip-synched inner-demon Vince DeStructo, Revision - Apocalypse II is a strikingly schizophrenic salmagundi of sight and sound that – whether a conscious decision on director Brienens part or not – underscores, to the extent of sardonic parody, the soulless, multimedia pseudo-existence modern life in American and Western Europe has degenerated into with Traci – a beautiful yet childless woman who is well past her prime and has nothing of intrinsic value in her life – acting as an archetype for modern female discontent and dejection.

Coming from The Netherlands – one of the most degenerate liberal democracies in the world – Brienens films are superlatively symbiotic of Occidental decline. The main difference between him and other filmmakers is that he recognizes it and to some extent even embraces it, if not in a totally unsentimental and nihilistic sort of manner that is bound to repel more sensitive viewers. Of course, Revision - Apocalypse II is not without flaws, most specifically in regard to the rather superficial dealing with conspiracy theories and themes of technocratic authoritarianism, but then again one does not watch an Edwin Brienens for a lesson in New World Order Terrorism 101. Indeed, one watches a film by “the Dutch Fassbinder” so they can experience a bit of aesthetically cinematic terrorism of the infectiously titillating and delightfully degrading form. With that in mind, I think it is safe to say that, like South African auteur Aryan Kaganof, Brienens is one of the few truly uncompromising filmmaker working today during a time where the 'auteur filmmaker' – the last true dictators - are virtually nonexistent. Additionally, like his hero Fassbinder, Brienens is not just interested in pleasing pretentious arthouse crowds, but also making his work more 'accessible' to wider audiences; however, this is not done to the detriment of his artistic vision as there is not a single work directed by the iconoclastic Dutchman that leaves the viewer with the sense of 'closure' that the typical Hollywood and even so-called 'independent' films do. Although Revision - Apocalypse II is not the sort of film that would appeal to a Quentin Tarantino or Christopher Nolan fanboy, it is certainly the rare brand of idiosyncratic cinema that would appeal to the more discerning arthouse and horror fans alike, which one cannot say about most films. That being said, with 'art cinema' dying as a whole in the Occident,

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at least we have films like Revision - Apocalypse II where it will perish in flames rather than with an unnoticed whimper. In other words, Viva La Apocalypse!!!

-Ty E

NAVEL AND A-BOMB

Eikoh Hosoe (1960)

As someone who likes to indulge in the literary works of Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, I was somewhat disappointed by Paul Schrader's bio-pic *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985). Although the film is a piece of cinematic art in its own right, I feel that it fails to capture the true essence of Yukio Mishima. When it comes to the authentic Mishima in visual form, I believe that Japanese photographer Eikoh Hosoe did the best job portraying the tragic master of pen and sword with his relatively small set of photographs featured in his book *Ba-ra-kei: Ordeal by Roses* (1961–1962). Although many people believe that Mishima was a perverted megalomaniac, the candid carnal snapshots featured in the book *Ba-ra-kei: Ordeal by Rose* reveal that he was quite the multifaceted character who could be humorous and humble while still maintaining his militant and melodramatic persona. Before his legendary photo shoot with Mishima, Eikoh Hosoe directed the atomic 1960 Japanese arthouse short film *Navel and A-Bomb* (*Heso to genbaku*); a work that manages to meld eccentric homoeroticism and nuclear doom and gloom in a distinctly exquisite manner. Hosoe was given the first name "Toshihio" at birth but later changed it to "Eikoh" to symbolize the new post-samurai Japan that he was living in. Had I never had the blessed opportunity to devour Hosoe's delightfully deranged and thoroughly decadent artistic works, I would think his name change was purely the act of a pretentious Jap art fag on the rag. At the very least, *Navel and A-Bomb* is a stark yet erotic expression of an artist whose internal suffering is only matched by the atomic explosion featured in the film. Unlike Yukio Mishima, Hosoe was able to accept that Japan would no longer be the land of Samurais but, instead, an economic and technological powerhouse with a western capitalist taint that can never be undone. That being said, I think it is only fitting that Hosoe captured the most iconic photographs of Yukio Mishima; the last famous Japanese figure to commit *Seppuku*.

For many viewers, *Navel and A-Bomb* will be a brief yet undesirable exercise in cinematic torture (a metaphorical "ordeal by roses", if you will), but, for the already initiated, the film acts as a therapeutic mini-vacation through the ashy beaches of the Land of the Rising Sun. Indeed, *Navel and A-Bomb* features plenty of bare belly buttons of all ages and sizes and an exploding atomic bomb, but they are used in a symbolic nature that reflects the zeitgeist of post-World War II Japan. Upon turning an invisible knob over a dejected younger's x-marked navel, an atomic bomb explodes in a blazing blind fury that brings near darkness to the relatively tiny island country. While the grown men featured in *Navel and A-Bomb* move around absurdly with a combination of playful pantomimes and seemingly possessed hysterics, the young boys remain fairly immobile; barely even able to crawl and stand on the beach that their elders seem quite comfort-

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able with. Like European children of the same era, these post-WWII Japanese youths are lost in their homeland and remain detached from their own ancient culture. One only has to watch modern Japanese cinema to realize that there is a serious spiritual and psychological crisis that is weighing down on the westernized citizens of Japan and the country's economical prosperity is merely a poor and wholly materialistic substitute that can never fill the irreparable void of organic kultur. *Navel and A-Bomb* also features one of the most excruciating performances from a live (or barely alive) chicken that it makes the furious dancing fowl scene at the conclusion of Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) seem like a concert encore from *Rock-a-Doodle*. When it comes to Japanese cinema, I wouldn't exactly call myself a diehard fanatic, thus, for me, *Navel and A-Bomb* is nothing short of a hidden cinematic gem.

-Ty E

THE HOLY LAND

Eitan Gorlin (2001)

Despite the fact that Hollywood is almost exclusively owned and run by Hebrews, especially of the “Israel First” Zionist persuasion, one rarely sees any films depicting the true face of the Jewish Holy Land and the trouble the nation faces in a 24/7 war zone where one hates thy neighbor, so I was rather intrigued when I discovered an independent Israeli film about a young and virginal orthodox rabbinical student who breaks off his pathological study of the Torah and Talmud and parties with Russian prostitutes, Jewish-American bar owners, and terrorists of the Judaic and Palestinian sort. Directed by controversial (especially to kosher folks) Jewish American auteur Eitan Gorlin, an American Orthodox Jew who was educated at a Zionist Yeshiva school in Israel, *The Holy Land* (2001) is the sort of rare film – be it from Hollywood or otherwise – that takes some low blows at the circumcised cock of little Israel in its candid portrayal of wack-job Jewish American terrorists who blow up buses full of Palestinian women and children, Jew-on-Jew hatred between religious and atheistic Israelites, rampant Islam hating, the fascist terrorism of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the proliferation of Yankee Yid ‘settlers’ of the AK-47 stroking sort, Arab traitors who have sold their souls to genocidal enemies, and the literal sex slavery of Eastern European Slavic women by slave-trading Semites of the psychopathic pornographer persuasion. Despite its rather incriminating and incendiary depiction of Israel, *The Holy Land* is in the fairly palatable form of a semi-formulaic coming-of-age tale that features a synthesized mix of melodrama, comedy, sub-eroticism, a tinge of thriller, and sociopolitical commentary and that is not much harder to follow than a piece of Michael Bay’s gratuitous explosion excrement, thus making it an ideal film to watch for those many American individuals who have yet to realize that the Hebrew nation is not a towelhead land, but the true source of America’s woes in the Middle East. Inspired by director Gorlin’s experiences while living in Israel during the early to mid-’90s during the first intifada as someone who served in the Israeli army, *The Holy Land* is a postmodern parable of sorts that takes its central plotline from an abstruse segment from the “Bava Batra” (aka “The Last Gate”) of the Talmud that is often ignored or intentionally misinterpreted by Rabbis because it more or less recommends that Jews test their faith by “going under cover” in civilian goy clothes and fornicating with a prostitute (even better if she is a gentile), thereupon getting sin out of their system so they can attend to practicing archaic rituals like wailing spastically in front of a wall. Of course, as the protagonist of *The Holy Land* learns through terribly tempting trial and error, Slavic shiksa girls are typically hotter and have more fun than frigid Israeli girls, evil kraut Hermann Hesse novels make for much more entertaining reading than the Talmud, and taking bong hits of marijuana gets you just as high, even if it is not kosher.

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Opening with authentic stock footage of unholy hell in the Holy Land with footage of Third World style guerrilla warfare between Palestinians with off-screen narration from a Russian girl speaking in broken English regarding a warning her mother gave her about going to Israel as a virtual slave and how after her less than delightful experience in the desert dystopia that she concluded, "I hope the Jews and Arabs kill each other until nobody left," The Holy War immediately establishes a feeling of nihilistic hatred, but then cuts to a highly contrasting scene of the protagonist sucking from his mother's teat as a wee babe. Flash forward twenty years later to 2000 and we see the Hebraic hero Mendy (Oren Rehany) is now interested in women's bosoms for entirely different reasons as he masturbates to porn magazines in his Orthodox parents' bathroom and ejaculates quite crudely in the bathtub as the sort of eccentric and erotically disadvantaged character you would expect to see in a Todd Solondz (who, incidentally, had plans to be a Rabbi as a child but ended up being the even sicker spiritual son of Woody Allen) film. On top of spilling his Semitic seed in the place where his entire family bathes themselves, Mendy proves to be quite the heretical Hebrew because he prefers reading kraut writer Hermann Hesse's wholly unkosher novel Siddhartha (1922) and is reprimanded by his rabbi because he believes, "the Torah is the truth. This book isn't the truth." A rather strange Rebbe who fondles the shoulders and hands of his Talmud-scholars-in-training (in the audio commentary for the DVD, director Gorlin hints that he is a homosexual pederast), the teacher recommends, citing an obscure passage from the Talmud, that Mendy should leave Jerusalem and go to a Tel Aviv goy town incognito and make love to a gentile flesh-peddler so he can get his lustful desire out of his system as he believes that the boy's religious doubts will be settled and that he will be able to focus on the Torah and holiness.

Of course, things don't go quite as planned when Mendy falls in love at first sight with a goyish Russian prostitute named Sasha (played by Israeli actress Tchelet Semel with a somewhat unbelievable Russian accent) who gives him a handjob that lasts no more than a single second. Mendy also befriends a strangely buff and bodacious alpha male Jew from America named Mike (Saul Stein) who is a longtime friend and fuckbuddy of Sasha and used to have an adventurous job as a war photographer, but now owns a somewhat seedy bar that is patronized by strange characters, including self-loathing Arabs, anti-Arab Jewish professors, and killer kosher Kahaneite terrorists/settlers who are in a holy war with impoverished Palestinians who dare to occupy land that they hope to make part of greater Israel. Mendy essentially abandons Orthodox Judaism as a prodigal son of sorts and takes a job at Mike's bar. When not attempting to vie for the innately unlovable and sexually demoralized Sasha's affection, Mendy hangs out with an Arab Judas and charismatic conman named Razi (Albert Illooz), as well as an unsavory psychopath that calls himself "The Exterminator" (Arie Moskuna) who carries around an AK47 at all times and takes pride in

killing Palestinians. In trouble of losing his bar, Mike gets involved with a smuggling scheme and terrorism, thereupon including Mendy and Sasha by proxy. Not just a simple streetwalker, Sasha is a sex slave that is owned by a grotesque Israeli who forces her to star in fetishistic porn flicks and is quite desperate to get out of her direful situation, thus she offers to marry Mendy because he has an American passport and she wants her freedom in the ostensible land of the free. Looking for more of a romantic relationship as opposed to mere bought buggery, perennial virgin Mendy tries to turn Sasha straight, but seeing as his lecherous lady love can only get wet for bad boys (as she states herself) and with all of his friends involved in a pernicious terrorist plot, things might be too late for the lapsed Orthodox Jewish boy to make a real mensch out of himself.

During the last 30 minutes of *The Holy Land*, terrorist settler "Exterminator" yells to Mendy's Rabbi – who gives the boy an ultimatum that if he does not come back to Orthodox Judaism, he will tell his parents about his sinful way – that he, "can't stand that sniveling, stuck-in-the-ghetto diaspora Judaism either," in a scene that sums up one of the major themes of the film: religious Orthodox Judaism versus quasi-fascistic and atheistic secular Zionism. Considering America has the largest Jewish population in the world (despite making up only about 2.2% of the U.S. population as of 2008), the fair majority of which being secular Zionists, it should be no surprise that *The Holy Land* was rejected by no less than three Jewish film festivals, of which director Eitan Gorlin stated in an interview for www.salon.com regarding American Jewry's campaign to hide the unflattering truths regarding exploitation and militarism in Israel, "There's a real desire among a lot of people to control images and messages and the story of Israel. People are used to propaganda: 'You're either with us or against us.'" I like to think the film has ambiguity. Some Jewish film festivals are more a celebration of our culture. They just don't want to go there." With Jews that are more dedicated to eating bacon cheeseburgers and marrying goy gals as people who blasphemously founded a nation before their messiah came out of cultural and political reasons as opposed to religious ones, *The Holy Land* is quite oddly a religious work about a people who have abandoned their God. With ex-Israelis like Jazz musician Gilad Atzmon writing such scathing things about his people as, "We must begin to take the accusation that the Jewish people are trying to control the world very seriously" and "American Jewry makes any debate on whether the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' are an authentic document or rather a forged irrelevant. American Jews do control the world, by proxy. So far they are doing pretty well for themselves at least," and films like Gorlin's *The Holy Land*, one can only wonder if it will be the Jews themselves who will commence the pogroms against their own people once again. For a group who relatively recently founded their first nation in thousands of years as a direct result of Auschwitz and who oftentimes proclaim to be the world's foremost victims, it is rather strange that a Jew would call himself "Exterminator"

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(Gorlin based this character off of a real person) and make a sport of gunning down feral Palestinian children for pelting rocks. Personally, as an unrighteous gentile, I could not always tell the difference between an Israeli and Palestinian, at least in the context of The Holy Land, aside from the fact that one group uses the United States as a vassal of unconscious Shabbos Goys, while the other lives in a city-sized concentration camp provided by their Semitic brethren. That being said, I doubt anyone, aside from Americans Jews, would care if the Israelis and Palestinians wiped out each other out overnight as fantasized about by the resentful Russian girl at the beginning of The Holy Land. After all, when a simple Yeshiva student cannot even complain in peace without being scammed by Slavic sex slaves, driven to substance abuse by Jewish jock philistines, and coerced into terrorism by a physically foul fellow that looks like he could be Rick Moranis' pedophile uncle, there is truly trouble in the Holy Land.

-Ty E

LATIN BOYS GO TO HELL

Ela Troyano (1997)

Somewhat ironically, despite his bitching about racism in various interviews, Nick Zedd only seemed to be able to ‘recruit’ white filmmakers for his Cinema of Transgression movement, unless you count more obscure figures like deracinated Europid Mexican Manuel DeLanda (*Incontinence: A Diarrhetic Flow of Mismatches*, *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller*) and Hawaii-born Japanese-American Jon Moritsugu (*Terminal USA*, *Mod Fuck Explosion*). In fact, Zedd had such a bad falling out with Cuban carpet-muncher filmmaker Ela Troyano (*The Bubble People*, *Once Upon a Time in the Bronx*) after collaborating with her on the ‘lost’ shelved flick *Totem of the Depraved* (1983)—a supposed parody of/tribute to Andy Warhol’s anti-classic *My Hustler* (1965)—that he spread the false rumor that she had died and even wrote a bullshit obituary for her in his zine *The Underground Film Bulletin* as a bitchy way to prove that she was ‘dead’ to him and the entire Cinema of Transgression scene. In fact, in an interview featured in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, Zedd hatefully describes the Havana-born lesbo filmmaker as, “an incompetent Cuban filmmaker who had worked with me and Jack Smith.” Naturally, Troyano completely distanced herself from Zedd and the Cinema of Transgression movement and, as Sargeant states in *Deathtripping*, “She began working as a part of the ‘thriving radical dyke performances at WOW and began a decade long collaboration with [my] real-life sister Carmelita Tropicana.” Indeed, Troyano must come from a fairly sexually dysfunctional Cuban family as her sister Tropicana is also a lily-licking dyke and played the eponymous role in her farcically Sapphic 27-minute camp short *Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffin* (1994). Undoubtedly, the American-German-Japanese-Spanish feature *Latin Boys Go to Hell* (1997) is easily Troyano’s most popular, ambitious, and rewarding film and is notable for being a rare American Latino homo horror-crime-melodrama that was curiously directed by a Cuban clit-hopper with a special affinity for gallows humor. Based on a novel by gay Latino screenwriter André Salas (*Fucking Different New York*, *Eulogy for a Vampire*) and produced by homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce’s Teutonic porn producer Jürgen Brüning (*Hustler White*, *The Raspberry Reich*), Troyano’s film feels like what might happen if a Latinized nancy-boy Douglas Sirk attempted to direct a genre-confused (anti)romance with an ostensibly linear narrative that pays aesthetic tribute to Kenneth Anger, James Bidgood’s *Pink Narcissus* (1971), Jean Genet’s *Un chant d’amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*, the Kuchar Brothers, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, and Werner Schroeter, among various other kitschy and/or high-camp queer influences. Of course, *Latin Boys Go to Hell* was also clearly influenced by the early cinematic works unhinged histrionic Hispanic cinema of Spanish auteur Pedro Almodóvar. Needless to say, the Hispanic ho-

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mos of Troyano's flick are infinitely more hyper hysterical and morally depraved than the kraut cocksuckers of a gay-themed Fassbinder feature like *Fox and His Friends* (1975), thus hinting that the lesbo auteuress has mixed feelings about male sexual inverts, though it is quite apparent that she has nothing but the deepest respect for the masters of gay underground cinema.

If *Latin Boys Go to Hell* has anything resembling a protagonist, it is a seemingly autistic latent homosexual Hispanic teen named Justin (Irwin Ossa) who becomes particularly irked when his stereotypical single Latina mother informs him that his estranged cousin Angel (John Bryant of Abel Ferrara's *'R Xmas* (2001) and Alain Zaloum's *David & Fatima* (2008)) will be moving in with them in their cramped ghetto apartment. An inordinately introverted closest queen who could not be any less Hispanic in terms of his essence as a fairly quiet and mundane dork who largely lives inward, Justin spends most of his free time watching a mythical trashy Spanish-language soap opera entitled *Dos Vidas* aka *Two Lives* and helping a pretentious white photographer named Monica Westphal (Anne Iobst of Troyano's *Carmelita Tropicana* and Benjamin P. Speth's *Dresden* (1999)) take homoerotic photos of unclad Latino boys posing with fake plastic skulls over their cocks. While a lecherous beefcake model named Carlos (Montreal-born gay mainstream fashion photographer Mike Ruiz in a role that apparently bored him so much that it inspired him to quit acting before his acting career had even really began) has the cheap skull over his dick, Monica encourages him to skull-fuck it, stating, "Why don't you think of one of your favorite stars giving you a blowjob?" While hanging out at a sleazy Latino club that is frequented by homo-haters that like to dance, sexually depraved model Carlos attempts to bugger Justin in the ass by following him into a bathroom, slowly approaching him from behind while he is taking a leak at a urinal, and perversely stating in a quite bestial fashion, "I wanna fuck that little ass," but the protagonist is a hopeless romantic who, due to his almost idiotically idealistic view of love as a result of watching countless tasteless soap operas, is waiting for the right kind of man to sweep him off of his fairy feet. Of course, little does Justin realize that he will ultimately be forsaken with the seemingly inexplicable pain of falling in love with his own heterosexual cousin Angel when he moves in with him.

When his cousin Angel finally arrives, Justin's creepy infatuation with him is quite apparent, as he almost seems afraid to talk to him and incessantly stares at him in an unnerving fashion that makes the protagonist seem like he might become a sort of Hispanic Jeffrey Dahmer. In no time, Angel becomes Monica's favorite model and, in what appears to be a tribute to Werner Schroeter's *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King*, he poses naked sprawled on a bed of red roses even though he is not actually gay like the rest of the photographer's models. Of course, since his cousin Justin is a jealous little pansy who has always dreamed of being a gay model yet lacks the photogenic physique and charm, Angel has

to hide the fact he is a model from his cousin. When Justin takes his cousin to a Mexican themed dance night at a local club, he becomes quite dejected when Angel begins flirting with a pretty fag hag chick named Andrea (Jennifer Lee Simard) who is hopelessly in love with her gay best friend Braulio (Alexis Artilles). Indeed, while Angel is chatting up Andrea, Carlos—a psychopathic sexual predator who attempts to fuck any man that passes his gay gaze and who complains regarding condoms, “I hate using that shit. It makes it hard to cum”—approaches Justin and tries to coerce him into coming home with him, even though he started a fight with him only a couple days before and is already the boyfriend of Braulio, who has fallen hopelessly in love with the deleteriously sexually promiscuous model. Ultimately, Justin goes back home with Carlos and has his man-cunt deflowered in a campy montage where a piñata hilariously explodes at the same exact moment that the latter reaches sexual climax. After having his rectum reamed, Justin acts all dejected and forlorn, which agitates bestial bone-smuggler Carlos who, unlike the overly passive protagonist, does not like to sentimentalize sex and romance. When Carlos says to Justin, “Oh, come off it. You wanted to get fucked and you did. What’s the matter...you can’t deal with the fact you like dick?,” the protagonist reveals just the sort of old fashioned fruitcake romantic he is by naively replying, “I just thought sex was supposed to be between people who cared about each other.”

When loverboy Braulio discovers that his muscular beau Carlos has not been faithful with him and has fucked a dorky wimp like protagonist Justin, all hell breaks loose in the hermetic Hispanic homo underworld. Indeed, when Braulio dares to bitch out his bastard of a boyfriend about his lecherous behavior, Carlos gleefully brags about it and dumps the heartbroken Hispanic, who becomes exceedingly hotheaded and self-righteously declares to his (ex)lover, “You bastard...I wouldn’t touch your filthy dick even if you paid me.” Somewhat curiously, Carlos is not only shot and killed by a masked assailant sporting a goofy Halloween mask shortly after he breaks up with Braulio, but also has his dick dismembered and shoved in his mouth. Notably, Carlos’ obscenely over-the-top pseudo-tragic death is foreshadowed in a scene where he pricks his finger on a red rose while admiring himself in a mirror in a Narcissus-esque fashion. Needless to say, a fat middle-aged negress and her son (who is absurdly carrying a copy of exceedingly effete Truman Capote’s classic true crime nonfiction novel *In Cold Blood* (1966)) are more than a little shocked upon finding the bloody corpse of a Hispanic homo with a cock in his mouth in a scene that seems to channel dirty Dahmer. When Andrea remarks to Braulio that he does not seem particularly melancholy about the fact that his lover was murdered and castrated, he strangely responds, “You were right about him all along. He’s a fucking bastard. Forgive me if I’m not all broken up about his death. As far as I’m concerned, he got what was coming to him.” Indeed, at this point in the film, it is quite apparent that Braulio is Carlos’ killer and the next person on his murder list is Justin,

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who he naturally blames for the dissolution of his lurid love affair even though the protagonist did not want to be anally pillaged by the dead model in the first place. At a photo exhibition with the eponymous title 'Latin Boys Go To Hell' featuring a collection of Monica's gay Yatō-esque Latino photos that was apparently named in tribute to some assumed cocksucker named Carlos Antonio Perez (1973-1997) who probably died of AIDS, Justin and Angel have a showdown of sorts with unhinged homo Braulio where lesbo actress/writer/director Guinevere Turner appears out of nowhere as an Grim Reaper-like apparition of sorts. Before Braulio begins unloading bullets on the lead and his cousin, Justin informs Angel that he is in love with him. Of course, Angel is not an incestuous fag, but he shows great empathy for Justin and attempts to let him down easy by stating, "You're a great guy...a good looking guy and all [...] I just can't go in that direction. If I did, you'd be the first person I'd think of." In the end, Latin Boys Go to Hell concludes on a sardonically ironical note that makes a mockery out of kitschy pseudo-poetic love. As hinted at in various shots where Catholic iconography is juxtaposed with images of drag queens and dumb blondes like Pamela Anderson (including a shot of the infamously horrendous dystopian Casablanca reworking Barb Wire (1996)), the film seems to blame Catholicism for the gay Hispanic community's undying infatuation with love and falling in love, with protagonist Justin even attempting to sacrifice himself for love in the end.

With its superficially straightforward storyline, Latin Boys Go to Hell features what might be described as an abortive narrative, horrendously wooden acting, and particularly preposterous displays of pseudo-pathos, among various other glaring flaws that are quite comparable to the worst of Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959), yet that is ultimately one of the main reasons why the film is worth watching. Indeed, the film is nothing if not a virtual treasure trove of depraved campy humor and various semi-subtle queer cinephile references. In fact, many of the indoor scenes featured in the film feel like direct tributes to Kenneth Anger's Scorpio Rising (1964) where the eponymous character played by Bruce Byron sits on his bed while watching a TV and reading comics. If I did not know better, I would assume that Latin Boys Go to Hell was made for the sole purpose of paying homage to both Scorpio Rising and Pink Narcissus while mocking the Roman Catholic tinged romantic histrionics of lethally lecherous Hispanic homos. Of course, considering how Teutonic Sapphic auteurs Ulrike Ottinger would portray leather-fags as Gestapo-esque killers in a number of her films, including her allegorical dystopian epic Freak Orlando (1981), Troyano would not be the first to make an unflattering farce of fags and fag culture (in fact, until relatively recently with the AIDS crisis and growth of "LGBTQ" collective power groups, fags and dykes belonged to totally separate and oftentimes opposing subcultures, which makes sense since each group is only interested in members of their own sex). While sometimes having the particularly putrid Club Kids vibe of 1990s quasi-gaysploitation flick like Shampoo

Horns (1998) directed by Spanish auteur Manuel Toledano (1974–2007) and starring Hispanic-homo-killer Michael Alig (who is probably best known as the titular subject of Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato's Party Monster: The Shockumentary (1998) and the directors' follow-up 2003 feature film Party Monster starring Macaulay Culkin), Troyano's film thankfully owes more to the great queer camp directors of yesteryear. Personally, I could not tolerate more than a couple minutes of Troyano's fairly brief dyke-feßt Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen and I find it somewhat ironic that the rug-munching auteur's greatest film is about homicidal homos, but then again, lesbian-themed cinema has never been particularly interesting and I can not imagine a group of clam-smackers pulling off a camp routine. If one thing is for sure, it is that Latin Boys Go to Hell is more aesthetically pleasing than anything that Troyano's rival Zedd—a man that has fucked pre-op trannies and gave head to another man while in drag in Richard Kern's King of Sex (1986)—has ever directed.

-Ty E

MONDO LUX: THE VISUAL UNIVERSE OF WERNER SCHROETER

MONDO LUX: THE VISUAL UNIVERSE OF WERNER SCHROETER

Elfi Mikesch (2011)

I typically try to refrain from reviewing documentaries as I see it to be a redundant task for the most part, yet every once and a while I come across a certain doc that needs to be seen and that certainly applies to *Mondo Lux - Die Bildwelten des Werner Schroeter* (2011) aka *Mondo Lux: The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter*, a strikingly intimate and rather revealing document of the life, artistic works, and remaining days of the notoriously private German New Cinema auteur and dandy Renaissance man Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, Malina), arguably the last great 'artiste' of truly decadent (in the positive sense!) Teutonic kultur. Directed by Schroeter's longtime cinematographer/collaborator Elfi Mikesch (*Seduction: The Cruel Woman*, *Fieber*), who shot such Schroeter arthouse masterpieces as *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* and *Two* (2002) aka *Deux*, *Mondo Lux* is easily the greatest introduction to the superlatively secret life and kitschy high-camp films of the insanely idiosyncratic auteur, who died from cancer at the age of 65 on 12 April 2010 before the documentary was released, so it should be no surprise that the film has the slightly ominous feel of a living obituary. A theatrically melancholy man who wore all black his entire life and was most obsessed, at least cinematically speaking, with love and death and the link between the two, Schroeter discusses in *Mondo Lux* the many lovers and family members in his morbidly melodramatic life who succumbed to death at a premature age, typically under tragic conditions, including suicide and complications related to AIDS. Of course, like a Schroeter film, *Mondo Lux* is not all about melancholia and *weltschmerz*, but is also quite tragicomic and features a number of frolicsome anecdotes from his friends/collaborators, including actresses/divas Isabelle Huppert and Ingrid Caven, as well as Germanic filmmakers Wim Wenders, Rosa von Praunheim and Peter Kern, among various others. Easily the most preternatural and least tamable director of German New Cinema, Schroeter's was also one of the most, if not the most, esoterically influential, inspiring the aesthetics of filmmakers including (but certainly not limited to), Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Daniel Schmid, Walter Bockmayer, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Ulrike Ottinger, yet virtually all of his films are impossible to find in the United States and a number of his films have yet to be released in any home media format anywhere. An art-addled and effortlessly effete aesthetician whose films are virtual living museums of decadent European art history, Schroeter also moonlighted as a documentarian, opera director, and photographer and all of these subjects are covered in *Mondo Lux*, a virtual Schroeter-for-Dummies guide in celluloid form, but also a must-see for serious 'Schroeter survivors' who are more than familiar with his work. Despite Schroeter's reputation for the sadder side of life and that the document follows him as his body becomes weaker and discernibly emaciated from cancer, *Mondo Lux*—in its depiction of

the filmmaker working relentlessly on various projects in a frantic attempt to escape death—is ultimately an inspiring work that makes one want to live life to the fullest, or at least die trying, which the dandyist director of German New Cinema did with a sense of dignity that is actually quite shocking, especially for a man that seemed to worship death.

As demonstrated by his various references to great artists/musicians/poets/writers, including Franz Schubert, Heinrich Heine, Robert Schumann, William Shakespeare, and Arnold Schoenberg, among various others, Werner Schroeter is a man that lives and breathes for art, but his choice of medium was cinema, which gave him the opportunity to take an eclectic approach to art and creating delightfully decadent cinematic works like no other filmmaker before that, ultimately achieving the “Gesamtkunstwerk” in celluloid form, albeit in a conspicuously kitschy fashion that proved both “high” and “low” art can be seamlessly synthesized. Filmmaker Wim Wenders—a fellow with a more than flat affect that I would have never suspected had an affinity for a film like *Eika Katappa* (1969)—describes Schroeter as follows, “I’ve known him since 1967 in Munich. We were all sitting together, 20 students at the film academy, and Werner was one of those twenty. By far the greatest eccentric there. The only dandy in the group. He didn’t stick it out very long.” Indeed, while Schroeter became one of the most original and influential filmmakers of German New Cinema, he couldn’t care less, stating, “I have no intention whatsoever of playing a leading part [in the New German Cinema], and submit to the expectations of producing Kulturscheisse [literally, Cultureshit], even if it may be true that I carry around with me and into my films the past of this Kulturscheisse,” thus demonstrating the audacious auteur filmmaker’s innate individualism that would ultimately cause him monetary troubles (many of Schroeter’s films cost him more money than they made in theaters) as he never had an interest in appealing to mainstream audiences, be it German or otherwise. As semi-snidely Schroeter explains in a speech featured in *Mondo Lux* regarding the lack of respect he received in Germany for creating aesthetically audacious and largely apolitical works, “here I was seen as the crazy enfant terrible. The singing, jumping art cunt or whatever. People thought little of my intelligence. Whereas in France I was seen as an equal partner,” hence the filmmaker’s decision to make a good percentage of his films outside of his homeland, including two Pasolini inspired “Italian eros” works, including *Nel regno di Napoli* (1978) aka *The Kingdom of Naples* and *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* (1980), as well as two French co-productions with French actress Isabelle Huppert, including *Malina* (1991) and *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*, among a number of other cross-cultural European cinematic works. In regard to *Palermo Oder Wolfsburg*, Schroeter states in *Mondo Lux* that the work is, “An accidental encounter between Italy’s South and what I don’t like about Germany, such as Wolfsburg. And VW,” thus hinting at his hatred for not only industrialization and capitalism, but also the Third Reich, the latter of which he

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would lampoon in his underrated film *Der Bomberpilot* (1970), the closest thing the auteur ever made to a Nazisploitation flick.

Of course, more than anything, it was Schroeter's muse Magdalena Montezuma (*Willow Springs, Freak Orlando*), who died tragically at the mere age of 41 in 1984 from cancer of the womb, that his filmmaking changed forever and arguably for the worse, but luckily the two collaborated on one last work, *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King*, while the actress was literally dying, which, at least in my opinion, turned out to be the director's celluloid magnum opus. Discovering Greek-American soprano diva Maria Callas at age 13 shortly after his Polish grandmother committed suicide was an aesthetic 'revelation' of sorts for Schroeter and he paid tribute to her with not only his first 8mm film *Maria Callas Porträt* (1968), but also throughout his entire career via her songs and essence haunting a number of his films. On top of his Polish grandmother, baroness Elsa von Rotjov, committing suicide when he was only 13, Schroeter's first lover Siegfried committed suicide when he was 13 or 14 and the boy was 16, not to mention that two of his other boyfriends died under tragic circumstances, one of which died from AIDS. One of Schroeter's lovers that did survive is Berlin-based filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts, A Virus Knows no Morals*), who is featured throughout *Mondo Lux* reminiscing with his lunatic lover over the good old days, including how the Berlin buggerer used to emotionally brutalize his beau. Of course, von Praunheim was not the first person to attack Schroeter as the filmmaker discusses in *Mondo Lux* how he was regularly beaten up as a child, even having urine dumped on his head. More than anyone, Isabelle Huppert, who did a photo shoot with the dandy auteur before he died, drives home the fact that Schroeter approached all artistic mediums the same way, with a uniquely uncanny creative energy, which is quite apparent to anyone that has seen his films. As for Schroeter himself, he described the driving force behind his films as follows, "Of course humor, farce was a mode of expression I really enjoyed. I wanted to express myself with people I lived with. And that's what interested me. My films at the time are by-products of my love affairs," and, indeed, judging by virtually any of his tragicomedic films, it is easy to see that the keenly cosmopolitan kraut with a Mediterranean soul was perennially lovelorn.

Not long before he himself also died of cancer on 21 August 2010, German auteur Christoph Schlingensief (*Egomania – Island without Hope, The German Chainsaw-Massacre*) wrote in his blog that he hoped that Werner Schroeter's films would reach a larger audience and make their way into film school curriculum, which, although would be great, is rather unlikely as his cinematic works only seem all the more hermetic and impenetrable as the decades have passed and as the great Teutonic philosopher Oswald Spengler once stated, "One day the last portrait of Rembrandt and the last bar of Mozart will have ceased to be — though possibly a colored canvas and a sheet of notes will remain — because

the last eye and the last ear accessible to their message will have gone,” which is even more true when it comes to man who directed *Malina* (1991), a macabre, if not sometimes merry, mindfuck of a movie about a man named Malina. Prophesied in 1977 by his butt buddy R.W. Fassbinder as likely to “assume a place in film history similar to that of Novalis, Lautréamont, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline in literature,” Schroeter, as the title of *Mondo Lux: The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* makes quite clear, not only created his own cinematic language and universe, but proved that cinema could be aristocratic, even if it features drag kings and queens, as well urolagnia among lesbo mental patients as surreally scatologically depicted in *Day of the Idiots* (1981) aka *Tag der Idioten*. As *Mondo Lux* director Elfi Mikesch stated in an interview with filmmaker Frieder Schlaich (Paul Bowles – Halbmond, Otomo) regarding the death of Schroeter and the importance of his films, “I just have to get used to the fact that this will never happen again. That’s why his films have become so important. They are what remains. All these waste products survive. There’s a lot to learn and experience from them. Every time I watch one, and I watched many recently, I discover something new, and surprising new threads in his oeuvre. Whether it be body language, the relation between language and music and how that relates the spoken word, to physical action or the representation of vision. The way he presents speech and music. That is incomparable, it raises your consciousness.” While still alive, Schroeter was no less complimentary of Mikesch, writing of their seemingly immaculate creative partnership that began in 1986 with *Der Rosenkönig*, “From the beginning on, we had a specific communication code and very deep trust. While Elfi’s poetry is different from mine, it is equally multi faceted. Elfi gives the content of many images a structure, and she derives poetry from it. In my case, the poetry originates from the void, in Elfi’s from motion and condensation. This overlap enables us to collaborate,” thus it should be no surprise that he entrusted her to direct *Mondo Lux*, a documentary that, at least in my quasi-humble opinion, is easily the greatest tribute from one filmmaker to another as the last testament of a truly avant-garde auteur that never got his dues in terms of his importance and prestige as one of cinema’s few true artists and innovators.

-Ty E

EAST OF EDEN
EAST OF EDEN

Elia Kazan (1955)

James Dean is most famous for his role as Jim Stark in *Rebel Without a Cause*. Although a brilliant and legendary performance, Dean's role as Cal in *East of Eden* is his greatest. James Dean may only have three major film roles to his credit, but his brilliance as a natural method actor has confirmed his legacy as one of the greatest American actors to grace the silver screen. James Dean was a very conflicted and volatile individual in real-life, and his role as Cal in *East of Eden* best fits the character of the real young man. In *East of Eden*, Cal and Aron are as different as brothers could be. Cal is criminally minded and constantly in trouble whereas Aron is a deeply idealistic Christian. Aron takes after his good Christian father, who makes his living running his own ranch with his boys. The father cannot understand why Cal acts the way he does and why he constantly acts bad. The missing link is the two boys' mother who the father claimed has died. Cal finds out that his mother is alive and that she happens to run a whorehouse. It becomes apparent why Cal is "bad." Although "Bad," Cal is a much more interesting and complex individual than his pansy Christian brother. Like the real-life James Dean, Cal is damaged goods and a born survivor (or maybe not). Brother Aron shows his true weakness and false worldview when he finds out who his Mother really is. Being the good Christian he is, he smashes his face through a train window while making his way to get killed by Germans in the war. When Cal finds out his mother is still alive and who she is, things start to make more sense for him. *East of Eden* is set on the eve of America's entry into the first World War. Due to the lies of media moguls with alien interests, America got involved in the war to kill evil Huns (despite America's largest ethnic group being of German descent). You can be sure that the sons of the war agitators didn't lay a foot on European soil, and sat the war out. They did, however, illegally receive a piece of land in Palestine from the British Empire via The Balfour Declaration of 1917 for getting the U.S. involved in the war. This land theft and "behind the scenes" deal still affects the world today with American's dying in the middle east once again for alien interests. Surprisingly, in *East of Eden*, Hollywood acknowledged the vicious slander brought upon Germans for no rational reason at all. *East of Eden* takes a look at how opposites attract and produce conflicting children. The dichotomy of good and evil becomes an in-depth brotherly character study with the film. Like always, evil is much stronger and interesting than good as the charismatic Cal demonstrates. When the family is finally destroyed, Cal is the only one left standing. Due to his denial of Christianity and its anti-human rules, Cal is able to handle finding out his mother is a madam at a whorehouse. Cal is not a sheep in the herd, but a wolf on the prowl.

-Ty E

HUMAN ANIMALS

Eligio Herrero (1983)

After being rather disappointed by the French cult flick *Themroc* (1973)—a satirical work that is essentially silent (aside from grunts, gibberish, and typical urban noise) about a proletarian building painter/laborer who has a sort of atavistic awakening and decides to become an urban caveman of sorts that takes his sister as a sexual mate and engages in cannibalism—I decided it was time I re-watched a somewhat similarly themed, dialogue-less, yet all but totally unknown dystopian Spanish sub-cult flick entitled *Animales racionales* (1983) aka *Human Animals* aka *Die letzte Stunde* which would be the second of only two films directed by filmmaker/screenwriter Eligio Herrero. On top of being an all the more enthralling and aesthetically pleasing experience than *Themroc*, *Human Animals* is an all the more absurd work featuring, among other things, post-apocalyptic bestiality, ridiculously endless nudity and dirt-covered naughty bits, and an agreeable social message that does not reek of outmoded far-left cynicism. Shot on the breathtaking Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, *Human Animals* is a delightful dystopian quasi-sci-fi flick with a setting in organic paradise that follows the quirky and kinky adventures of two men, one woman, and a very horny Alsatian Wolf Dog who seem to be the sole survivors of a nuclear apocalypse of sorts. A satirically wanton low-camp yet marginally artful work with virtually nil pretensions and that wallows in unrelenting entertainment value, *Human Animals* portrays ‘survival of the fittest’ in semi-scatological slapstick and delightfully dialogue-less form what happens when humans are left without culture, technology, and morals and revert to a feral-like state where fighting, fucking, and food are the most important concerns and petty human inventions like civility, self-control (especially of the sexual sort), and language are dropped by the wayside for something much more pure, lively, and lecherous. Sort of like the Spanish equivalent to Flemish auteur Rob Van Eyck’s debauched dystopian sci-fi flick *The Afterman* (1985), albeit less nihilistic and culturally cynical, *Human Animals* is sort of like the Gilligan’s Island of post-apocalyptic films, except where the stranded islanders do things like people would do in real-life like have sex and fight to the death for the sole woman.

Human Animals begins with fire-tinted stock footage of various nuclear detonations, thus letting the viewer know that humanity has finally achieved its ultimate goal—wiping itself out and a good portion of the world with it. After the mushroom clouds fade away, the viewer is introduced to the three characters who are unconscious and laying on their backs in a desert in a rather random way, as if placed there by God himself to repopulate the earth after humanity obliterated itself via nuclear holocaust. The three nameless individuals include a blonde and beautiful Nordic woman (Carole Kirkham, who would go on to play “Eva” in a film called *I Love Hitler* (1984)), a handsome blond Nordic man

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(Geir Indvard), and a darkhaired and swarthy Mediterranean man (José Yepes, the only actor to star in more than just a handful of movies). Upon waking up, the blond Aryan man looks at a picture in his wallet of his assumed sister with the writing "To my dear brother" on it, but the image soon evaporates for whatever reason as if it is the final remnant of human technology, just as the characters in the *Human Animals* clothes and civility will disappear as the film progresses. Not long after killing a bunch of little killer crabs and eating their remains, the Mediterranean man starts tearing off the blonde woman's dress and wastes no time in sexually defiling her. In fact, the Mediterranean man featured in *Human Animals* matches the character traits of his sub-race as described by National Socialist eugenicist/racial theory Hans F. K. Günther, who wrote in his work *The Racial Elements of European History* (1927) that, "The Mediterranean man is very strongly swayed by the sexual life, at least he is not so continent as the Nordic (who need not therefore feel the sexual urge any less," as well as, "A disposition to cruelty and animal torture, a not unfrequent inclination to Sadism may perhaps stand in relation to the stronger sexuality." When the post-apocalyptic threesome happens upon an abandoned lighthouse-like building, the Mediterranean man decides it is a good idea to destroy all the plates and other manmade items he finds in the seemingly ominous building. From then on, the rest of *Human Animals* seems like it could have been depicting prehistory as the increasingly hostile homo sapiens get further in touch with their carnal and visceral sides.

Meanwhile, a German shepherd (played by "Larry" the dog) joins the humans, albeit from a distance. After killing, gutting, cooking and eating some furry animals by a fire, including jackrabbits, Mediterranean man gives the blonde babe some of the good old in-and-out, which upsets the blond Aryan man, who is a much more stoic yet sensitive individual while his swarthy nemesis is a sort of trickster and cheat. Discovering the Aryan man upset all by his lonesome in the woods, the Aryan woman gives him a sensual blowjob, thus stirring a bizarre beachside love triangle. Eventually, the promiscuous trio builds a primitive house where they all sleep together and begin to wear archaic loincloths and tribesman-like bandanas, which holds back their newly grown Conan-esque hairdos. Of course, problems arise when the Alsatian Wolf Dog decides he wants a piece of Aryaness ass. Before they know it, the debauched dog has raped and conquered the woman and the two men are forced to abandon their home and stay outside weeping with each other like two feeble fags. After visualizing zany zoophilia in his mind of his beloved blonde and the rapist canine, the Aryan man decides enough is enough and decides to burn the house down where the woman and dog are sleeping with each other, thus forcing the canine out for a final fight to the death. Rivals turn into temporary friends when Aryan man and Mediterranean man adopt the strategy of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' and team up in maliciously murdering man's best friend. Of course, all alliances come to a bitter, bloody, and brutal end after Nordic and Mediterranean naturally decide

to fight to the death for the grand prize of the golden haired beauty who, being the lone woman on a deserted island, is more than worth her weight in gold. In the end, Nordic displays a triumph of the will after he smashes Mediterranean man's brains in with a rock and secures the blond beauty for himself, thus securing the natural order of things, which is certainly never depicted in contemporary slave-morality-driven Hollywood flicks. Indeed, "Might is Right" is certainly the name of the game in *Human Animals*.

A pop-Darwinian tale of sub-biblical proportions that, despite featuring dog-on-woman actions and caveman-like violence, ultimately features a good message, *Human Animals* is a timeless celluloid tale that is nothing short of uniquely unforgettable and not just because it features a chick copulating with a canine. If John Waters had a heterosexual European brother bred on Nietzsche who had never read a book or watched a movie created after the 1950s, it might resemble *Human Animals*, which is essentially a postmodern silent film with a totally traditional, albeit sometimes trash, sensibility. Borrowing from many of the conventions utilized in Italian survivalist caveman exploitation films like Alberto Cavallone's *Conqueror of the World* (1983) aka *I padroni del mondo* and *Ironmaster* (1983) aka *La guerra del ferro: Ironmaster* directed by Umberto Lenzi about prehistoric blond Aryan savages that tried capitalize off of the success of *Quest for Fire* (1981) aka *Guerre du feu* directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, albeit set in a post-apocalyptic deserted island instead of prehistoric setting, *Human Animals* is a rare 'exploitation' work in that it brings crude charm and simple yet important morals to an eclectically merit-less B movie style. In fact, I found *Human Animals* so effective that it made me think that a nuclear apocalypse might not be so bad as it would possibly force what is left of humanity to sort itself out and adopt a more natural mode of living. Of course, with its lack of dialogue, vague arthouse essence, and somewhat working moral compass, *Human Animals* is not the sort of work that will appeal to the average jaded gorehound nor Jess Franco fanatic as its nonstop nudity and sexual debauchery is far too radically ridiculous to arouse the sort of one-track mind individual who mindlessly wallows in mere boobs and blood. Given "A totally disgusting three stars" out of four by no one less than pseudo-redneck film critic Joe Bob Briggs, *Human Animals* is indubitably one of the most patently peculiar post-apocalyptic flicks ever made, as if directed by an avant-garde auteur from some distant porno planet.

-Ty E

A QUIET PLACE IN THE COUNTRY
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Elio Petri (1968)

Although I have never thought of Nordic Italian Stallion Franco “Django” Nero as a seemingly schizophrenic and angst-ridden art fag who creates vulgar abstract paintings of the childlike finger-paint sort, he once played one in the unsurprisingly underrated, avant-garde proto-giallo Italian-French horror production *A Quiet Place in the Country* (1968) aka *Un tranquillo posto di campagna* aka *Un coin tranquille à la champagne* directed by Guido commie auteur Elio Petri (*The 10th Victim*, *Property Is No Longer a Theft*)—a filmmaker whose mind was apparently as plagued by anguish and existential crisis as the characters he cinematically portrayed. Winner of the Silver Bear award at the 19th Berlin International Film Festival, *A Quiet Place in the Country* is now all but allocated to the celluloid dustbin of history, which is generally a positive thing when it comes to far-left commie, psychoanalytic/psychedelic mumbo jumbo from the late-1960s, yet Petri’s film, not unlike similarly underrated works like *Death Laid an Egg* (1968) aka *La morte ha fatto l’uovo* directed by Giulio Questi, has enough aesthetic integrity and intriguing thematic complexity to warrant reconsideration today as an avant-garde psychosexual horror-thriller that poses enough questions about the crisis of the Western soul to be more than relevant for today’s viewers, even if the majority of spectators will have too much trouble digesting such a decidedly discombobulating and deranging cinematic work that poses many important questions but has no real answers, thus not falling prey to the phoney sort of hope that is oftentimes espoused by lying leftist idealists. A potent albeit peculiar piece of quasi-supernatural surrealism about a psychologically and psychosexually perturbed painter who finds nil solace in his artistic success nor lavish lifestyle, so he moves out of the soulless city into the nice and peaceful country in a desperate attempt to cure his all-consuming *weltschmerz*, *A Quiet Place in the Country* is indubitably a work that has much in common with such masterpieces as Michael Powell’s *Peeping Tom* (1960), Ingmar Bergman’s *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), and Paul Verhoeven’s *The Fourth Man* (1983) in its unsettling and perversely penetrating portrayal of a mentally unhinged artist on the brink of mental dissolution. Of course, the major difference between all these other films in terms of storyline is that the protagonist of *A Quiet Place in the Country* is obsessed with the beautiful ghost of a slutty 17-year-old countess who met a rather grizzly fate during the Second World War that may or may not exist. Told from the perspective of an exceedingly unreliable painter at war with his own mind and art, *A Quiet Place in the Country* is assuredly one of the greatest and most complicated cinematic stories of a haunted artist.

Leonardo Ferri (Franco Nero) has a lot of problems but virtually all of them are the product of his haunted and afflicted mind that cannot conform to the

ways of technocratic modernism, as he is a rather successful degenerate painter whose art resembles what might happen if a rainbow were to barf on a piece of canvas. During the first couple minutes of *A Quiet Place in the Country*, Leonardo, in a surrealist pop-art scenario that is later revealed to be a dream, sits somberly and half-naked in a chair that he is tied to in a striking scene of cinematic sadomasochism. His wife/manager Flavia (Nero's real-life, two-time wife Vanessa Redgrave) greets him when she gets home with all the worthless gadgets and knickknacks she picked up at the store, including a waterproof TV, a transistor fridge, an erotic electric magnet and other seemingly pointless and worthless gimmick items made to appeal to the Faustian need to conquer nature, which now has reached a ridiculous and patently pointless level where instead of dominating continents and peoples as was done in the past, Western man can only try in vain to dominate his own domestic laziness and unquenchable thirst for material possessions, which only further feeds his feeling of worthless. During the same dream, Leonardo also dreams that his now-naked wife is murdering in a bathtub via a number of Norman Bates-esque butcher knife stabs to the chest. While he finds his wife's incessant nagging about his need to be at art shows to display and promote his work to be rather annoying, Leonardo is all the more disturbed and plagued by popular symptoms of the modern world, including charity/altruism (a supposed representative from the "Artist for Orphans Associations" tries to swindle him), consumerism (all the items that make his already pointlessly complicated life all the more unbearable), pornography (he becomes more interested in porn magazines than his real flesh and blood wife), poverty porn (an obsession with looking at everything grotesque the Third World has to offer), and guerilla warfare (with seems to inspire the painter's need to rebel against his bourgeoisie background and the director's seeming leftist xenophilia). When it comes down to it, Leonardo—who is certainly no da Vinci—hates reality as explained in delusional quasi-commie statements like, "canvases and paints should be free for everybody. One hour a day," but, of course, Leonardo's dream of an intangible Marxist Utopia is the least of his problems as his innate disdain for reality begins to take a homicidal form inspired by his fanatical fetishism for a voluptuous femme fatale phantasm of the supernatural S&M variety.

One day while driving around in a rather scenic rural area, Leonardo is greeted by his doppelgänger at the gate of a classy country home, a seemingly ancient Venetian villa, which he immediately jumps out of his car to investigate, but not without bringing his trusty "Playgirl" and "Super Sex" magazines like any reasonable porn addict would. To Leonardo's credit, his wife ruins any moment of sexual passion for him as she always answers the phone anytime they are about to sexually embrace because, after all, it "might be important" and she would not want to jeopardize her financial security for a potential business deal. Of course, Leonardo eventually explores the giant yet somewhat dilapidated villa that caught his fancy and runs into its particularly peculiar caretaker, a swarthy

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and slightly overweight 50-something-year-old named Attilio Bressan (Georges Géret). When Leonardo says he is “looking for a quiet place in the country,” Attilio responds “only death is quieter than this,” which ultimately turns out to be quite the understatement. Unable to churn out a mere painting during a three month period, Leonardo is finally able to convince his wife Flavia, who probably believes it will be good in the long run for her bank account, to buy the Venetian villa where the painter immediately gets to work as hired workers, including a ravishing young housekeeper named Egle (Rita Calderoni), begin restoring his homestead. During Leonardo’s first night in the home, some unknown entity destroys all of the artist’s paintings and art supplies, of which he initially accuses Egle and her little brother who she seems to have an incestuous relationship with as they are shown embracing in bed, but something sensual and supernatural seems to be responsible for the disturbances. The next day, Leonardo learns about the mysterious “little countess” named Wanda (Gabiella Grimaldi), a royal nymphomaniac described as being “really a beautiful creature and a slut” by local townspeople who was randomly shot to death in 1944 by a British fighter pilot. Soon thereafter, Leonardo can no longer focus on his art and becomes involved in metaphysical necrophilia of sorts, spending all his time questioning local country folk about Wanda and her effect on the town and even visiting her elderly and senile mother, who tries to get in the painter’s pants. Leonardo eventually learns that every man in town shared carnal knowledge with Wanda, including Attilio, who killed a German corporal after walking in on her in the act with the unlucky Teuton. Attilio, who is a serious alcoholic that always carries a glass of the good stuff with him wherever he goes, blames himself for Wanda’s death because she helped him bury the dead kraut in a field, at which point in time she was shot down by the British fighter pilot in a scenario of absurdly tragic poetic justice. Apparently, wanton Wanda felt no sense of sympathy for the kraut that she inadvertently caused to be murdered due to her intemperate lecherousness. One dark and ominous night, Leonardo holds a séance with Attilio and his wife, but also every pompous person he knows in the art world, which results in Flavia’s seemingly supernatural strangulation and inspires the painter to finish what she started. In the end, Leonardo gets the peace and quiet he was always searching for, albeit against his own will in a mental institution where his pathological porn addiction takes on preposterous extremes, but considering the painter’s psychotic persuasion, one can never be sure if anything that goes on is a depiction of reality or his own macabre mental derangement.

Decades after completing *A Quiet Place in the Country*, director Elio Petri would state of the film, “The reason why I defend *A Quiet Place in the Country* is because it is the portrait of an artist, of a middle-class intellectual and of his division. He was a middle-class artist who, as far as his expressive means were concerned, tried to upset forms and formulas and who found himself prisoner

of a serial production system. Thence his escape towards the ghosts of romantic culture.” Indeed, although directed by a quasi-Marxist auteur who stuck it to the middle-class and the innately materialistic and mundane lives they lead, *A Quiet Place in the Country* transcends Frankfurt school psychobabble and is no piece of needless novelty intellectualism of the Trotskyite sort, but a serious, albeit aesthetically and thematically schizophrenic look at the crisis of the Western soul in a manner that works more effectively in the medium of abstract cinema form than in writing. Petrio even went so far as to admit regarding *A Quiet Place in the Country*, “The film was a criticism of the intellectual, indeed from the inside. In short, we were on the threshold of ’68 and this is my last film before *Investigation*; that is before making films I could feel were useful to some cause,” so it is rather unfortunate that he did not realize that the political persuasion he subscribed to as a quasi-communist was just as deluded and materialistic, and thus unsatisfying to the soul as the bourgeois modernism he negatively portrays in the film. As protagonist Leonardo states in the film, “I’m forced to follow the rules of the market. I have to abide by them. I can’t change them,” thereupon admitting to a passive feeling of unshakable impotency in the face of a shallow modernism and as C.G. Jung once wrote regarding human nature in his work *Psychology and Alchemy* (1952), “People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own souls. They will practice Indian yoga and all its exercises, observe a strict regimen of diet, learn the literature of the whole world - all because they cannot get on with themselves and have not the slightest faith that anything useful could ever come out of their own souls. Thus the soul has gradually been turned into a Nazareth from which nothing good can come,” and such is the fate that ultimately leads to Leonardo, who has a delusional obsession with an intangible entity—a banshee nympho bitch of the decadent aristocrat sort—from suffering a complete mental break in the tradition of Friedrich Nietzsche; a man that was never able to overcome the nihilism that inevitably took over his body and soul.

Featuring what is probably the most decidedly discordant and intentionally atrocious score Italian maestro composer Ennio Morricone ever created, *A Quiet Place in the Country* is a potent piece of conscious aesthetic decadence with a soul, if not a rather “haunted” one in the fullest sense of the word. A rare and uncompromisingly idiosyncratic piece of psychological and psychosexual horror that combines sardonic black humor, supernatural surrealism, a curious combination of pop-art, art deco, and Gothic imagery, and a darkly romantic grotesque aestheticism, *A Quiet Place in the Country* is certainly a work of its time that will probably just plain agitate most modern viewers due to its erratic editing and music, and ambiguous brand of storytelling, but for those that understand and appreciate the film, it surely makes for one of the most absurdly underrated horror films—be it Italian or otherwise—ever made. Like a psychedelic surrealist take on Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Martha* (1974), albeit with the protagonist

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and director as the masochist and woman as sadist as opposed to the opposite scenario as featured the German New Cinema auteur's Sirkian melodrama, *A Quiet Place in the Country* lets the viewer know there is no escape from modernity, even in a place where gangsters, pimps, prostitutes, and Marxists are scarce, but the film does confirm that rural areas make for more scenic and spiritual living, though it might drive one to spiritual necrophilia with a romantic past that is long deceased, which still beats parallel parking and living amongst the assorted 'mystery meat' that populate corrupt cosmopolitan cities.

-Ty E

DOG DAYS

Ellie Lee (2001)

The first film I ever saw directed by Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl (*Import/Export*, *Paradise* trilogy) was *Hundstage* (2001) aka *Dog Days* and as far as I am concerned, it is the filmmaker's greatest and most 'touching' work to date. Quite ironically, like Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997), I first saw *Dog Days* after renting it at Blockbuster of all places and was quite shocked that a subtitle-allergic family-oriented mainstream rental store would carry such a graphic anti-fantasy work. I also recall watching *Dog Days* for the first time and having my then-girlfriend's redneck/Melungeon family members randomly walk in and laugh at how the characters in the film were so "white trash." Indeed, it certainly says something when a group of uncultured, sub-literate American yokels goes so far as describing Austrians—their innate racial and cultural superiors—as 'white trash,' but of course that is one of the greatest appeals of a Ulrich Seidl film where the Aryan rabble rises to the top for all the world to see like strangely beautiful yet nonetheless sickening celluloid pond scum. Undoubtedly, in his obsession for unhinged realism, Seidl is certainly the Viennese equivalent to heeb hipster Harmony Korine, but unlike the Judaic jokester, who gets a real kick out of exploiting the most unprivileged of goys, the Austrian auteur approaches his subjects from a more 'empathetic' insider's perspective that attempts to understand the seemingly inexplicable. Like *Short Cuts* (1993) directed by Robert Altman, except with real Teutonic testicular fortitude and minus the somewhat contrived literary qualities, *Dog Days* depicts an eclectic collection of eccentric characters who sometimes randomly cross paths during the hottest days of the summer. Although the director's previous work *Models* (1999) was technically a 'fictional' film, *Dog Days* was Seidl's first serious attempt at creating a semi-mainstream feature, or as the auteur stated of the work in his official statement: "DOG DAYS marks an end as well as a beginning in my work. *Dog Days* is a so-called real feature film with a real script, real stories and real actors. And still, a lot is different. There was a script, but no written dialogue; there were actors, but many more non-actors; and my way of working was documentary." A strangely delightfully and shockingly humorous putrid portrait of Viennese domestic grotesquery in the Americanized post-Hitlerite age, *Dog Days* is a vehemently visceral work that engulfs you in the same dark suburban environment that sired incestuous rapist maniac Josef Fritzl. Taking its title from the most scorching time of summer (July 24–August 23, with the name 'Dog Days' deriving from *Canicula*/Orion's Dog, the constellation most present in the sky at this time), *Dog Days* also acts as a nice Schluchtenscheisser cultural counterpoint to Spike Lee's race-hustling summer scorcher *Do the Right Thing* (1989), albeit minus the outmoded jungle music and senseless 'slave rebellion' message.

An Austrian Aryan wigger with the ridiculous cringe-worthy name Mario

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(René Wanko) is hanging out at a hip rave club and is royally pissed like a drag queen on the rag when he jealously witnesses a couple of young fellow Aryan men eyeing up his blonde Barbie girlfriend Klaudia (Franziska Weiß) dancing on a stage, so he makes a scene and leaves abruptly, smacking some strangers and his bitch before leaving rather abruptly in a fit of rage. The next day, an old widowed man who seems to suffer from OCD named Mr. Walter (Erich Finsches), who lives with his large guard dog and truly slavish and equally rotund and elderly housekeeper (who gives him rather repulsive stripteases, one of which he commends her by hilariously stating, "Well done, just like in the orient.") meticulously trims his hedges and does other pointless yard work to ostensibly fill the bottomless void that is his post-marriage non-life. Meanwhile, on the other side of town, a discernibly homely 30-something-year-old hitchhiker named Anna (Maria Hofstätter) with Asperger syndrome (notably, the pediatrician who the mental disorder was named after, Hans Asperger, was Austrian) verbally bombards people in their cars and proceeds to read off 'top ten' lists (i.e. ten most common deaths, ten best plasma TV models, etc.) and unwittingly insult her victims about their weight and dubious sexual habits. Not faraway, a divorced wife (Claudia Martini) is engaged in a rather repulsive group orgy with other rather repulsive 40+-year-old individuals and after concluding her session of group carnal knowledge, she heads to the roadside memorial site of her dead child, where she runs into her ex-husband Theodorakis (Victor Rathbone), who does not even acknowledge her presence. In fact, Theodorakis and his ex-wife still live in the same house together where they pretend the other does not exist. Desperate for work, an alarm system man named Hruby (Alfred Mrva) tries in vain to help discover who is responsible for scratching the fancy cars of a group of bitchy bourgeois folks who threaten his employment if he does not solve who is responsible for the petty crimes. Meanwhile, a used-up post-menopausal teacher (Christine Jirku), who is a Egon Schiele fan as demonstrated by her framed reproduction paintings on the wall, takes off her panties and bends over to wait for her sorry slob of a lapsed hippie lover Wicherl (played by real-life pornographer/sex club owner Victor Hennemann), but when he arrives, he shows up with his young ironically named younger friend 'Lucky' (Georg Friedrich) and proceeds to force her to get drunk and smacks her around for her lack of enthusiasm. Wicherl demands his girlfriend to do the following, "Sing, you dumb idiot. Come on, let's have a little more feeling, asshole. Like the Negro bitches...with baskets on their heads...of bananas, oranges, pineapples...La Cucaracha..." but she fails to do it to his liking, so he smacks her around some more and his friend Lucky proceeds to pour a bottle of beer over her less than pretty little head. In the end, Mario tells his girlfriend Klaudia she is a slut and smacks her around a bit, alarm system man Hruby solves his car-vandalizer problem by taking advantage of aspy-Fräulein hitchhiker Anna and delivering her to his sadistic customers (who beat and rape her for ostensibly scratching their automobiles), Lucky pulls

a gun on Wicherl and humiliates him (forcing him to put a lit candle in his rectum and sing the Austrian national anthem at gunpoint) to avenge the teacher's honor (but she absurdly apologizes to Wicherl in the end and they make up), and someone poisons old, widowed Walter's dog. Quite fittingly, *Dog Days* closes with Mr. Walter—a man who threatens to call the cops on his neighbors for talking outside and whose typical highlight of the day is verbally reaming defensive grocery store clerks—stating, “People are so cruel.”

In one particularly heartwarming scene of *Dog Days* where Nordic white Negro ‘Lucky’ forces his friend Wicherl to sing the Austrian national anthem, the viewer pays witness to auteur Ulrich Seidl's wonderfully wicked apocalyptic sense of humor while seeing a Aryan untermensch with a bulging beer gut sing “Native home of many great sons...A people with a gift for beauty” at gunpoint in a scene that seems more at home in a Tennessee trailer park or Detroit crackhouse than in the capital of Austria. As far as beauty is concerned, *Dog Days* makes the physically warped yet wanton nude portraits of Egon Schiele seem like Arno Breker statues by comparison and the fact the film takes an inately realist approach only makes it seem all the more uniquely unhinged in its superlatively scathing (anti)humanism. While contemporary Austria is not exactly known for the most uplifting films, *Dog Days* takes things to a new level because, unlike the too-cool-for-school nihilism of Franz Novotny (*Die Ausgesperren* aka *The Excluded, Exit... nur keine Panik*) and pedantic arthouse shockers of Michael Haneke (*Funny Games*, *The White Ribbon*), Seidl is only interested in the hard and ugly truth and not mere masturbatory intellectual abstractions, hence the director's undying affinity for the documentary format and aesthetic. Indeed, not unlike a good many Germanic/European artists nowadays, one gets the sense that Seidl hates his people while watching *Dog Days* and the fact he contributed a segment to the far-left omnibus doc *State of the Nation: Austria in Six Chapters* (2002) only goes to show this, yet there is also a certain understanding and insight into his people in the work that, unlike Korine with *Gummo*, the filmmaker also accepts the fact he is a member of this race that he so gleefully aesthetically besmirches. Featuring weak women that are attracted to physically and emotionally brutal bullies, a middle-class that is so madly materialistic that they go so far as raping and beating mentally ill women as revenge for their precious property being tarnished, an upper-middleclass couple so unwaveringly cold that they live in the same house for assumed monetary reasons yet do not even recognize one another and think it is ok to have other sexual partners out in the open under the same roof, young men that are so insecure that they dress like they are black and beat up their girlfriends due to the totally unwarranted belief that they are cheating on them, educated post-menopausal women that are so lonely that they are willing to take endless abuse for lard asses, and an old man with a complete and utter lack of empathy for anything aside from his beastly guard dog, *Dog Days* ultimately portrays a patently perturbed

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people suffering from an emotional glacial period that no summer sun nor even nuclear apocalypse will melt.

Dog Days is the sort of film that Hollywood pseudo-arthouse works like *American Beauty* (1999) directed by Sam Mendes and *The Weather Man* (2005) directed by Gore Verbinski wish they were, but which lack the subtle naturalistic nuances, visceral aesthetic integrity, and unwaveringly unflattering honesty to transcend the phony dream factory that is the fanciful culture-distorting and emotion-contriving empty shell of Tinseltown. Rather ironically, while a distinctly Viennese regional work, *Dog Days* is almost just as much an indictment of America and its non-kultur as it is an assault on Uncle Adolf's Fatherland. Indeed, featuring a collection of mostly overweight, cheap, materialistic, and security-obsessed wack-jobs in a city with a McDonalds on every corner, *Dog Days* depicts a culturally degraded nation that has traded in their long and rich kultur for true 'creature comforts' that come with being a spiritually colonized people. Although Josef Fritzl tried to blame his insidious behavior on his 'nazi upbringing,' his actions more so demonstrate the sort of obscenely arrogant, soulless, self-absorbed do-whatever-the-hell-I-want attitude that has become synonymous with being American. And while *Dog Days* makes Austria seem like a country with a Prader-Willi syndrome and Asperger epidemic, in reality America is easily the fattest and most anti-depressant prescribed nation in the world, but of course you would not know that from watching Hollywood films. I know that Seidl would probably like to blame Austria's problems on the imaginary thing some call 'everyday fascism,' but whether the director wants to admit it or not, *Dog Days* ultimately portrays a spoiled and emotionally sour people who thrive on the perennial void that is materialism and have no sense of identity nor national culture and who might as well be German-speaking Americans. Featuring the apocalyptic cynicism of Cioran, the sweetly sardonic misanthropy of Paul Morrissey, the anti-bourgeois absurdity of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the avant-garde Austrian angst of Peter Handke, and the scathing Germanic 'social realism' of John Cook and Uwe Schrader, *Dog Days* demonstrates with its mostly minimalistic yet visually keen scenarios and static yet nonetheless strangely striking tableaux that Austrian society has gone to the dogs and the dogs have become rabid. That being said, I can only guess what Ulrich Seidl thinks should be done to rabid dogs.

-Ty E

THE BLACK ROOM

Elly Kenner (1982)

While I used to feel differently as a child, I would have to say that, overall, the 1980s were a fairly shitty decade for American horror flicks, especially in regard to the exploitation world. Indeed, although the decade produced such classics as Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981) and *The Evil Dead II* (1987), Dan O'Bannon's *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985), Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987), and Joel Schumacher's sole worthwhile effort *The Lost Boys* (1987), the 1980s lacked the grittiness, sleaziness, seriousness, and true horror of brutal 1970s works like Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972), Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), Jonas Middleton's hardcore art-horror-porn flick *Through the Looking Glass* (1976), Roger Watkins' *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), *Phantasm* (1979), the singularly sick oeuvre and misanthropic oeuvre of gutter auteur Andy Milligan, and countless other truly crude and vicious grind-house/exploitation works, which was partly the result of the rise of Reaganism and Hollywood co-opting conventions of the genre as a result of the monetary success of certain low-budget works turning them from rich and milky blood into stale water. Needless to say, I am fully willing to sample and embrace any 1980s horror flick that has teeth and bites and relies on schlocky vaudevillian one-liners, dimwitted dames with double silicone sacks, the first ever token negro and Asian characters, goofy 80s clothing like spandex and legwarmers, and shitty hair metal with masturbatory guitar solos. About two years ago I discovered such a work that does not have any of those cliché things (aside from an Asian, though she seems to be of the 'exotic' half-caste sort), but for whatever reason, I did not get around to seeing it until recently. Indeed, *The Black Room* (1983) aka *Invasion of Terror: The Black Room* written and co-directed by Norman Thaddeus Vane (*Frightmare*, *Club Life*) and Elly Kenner (who, despite his rather gay name, is not a woman) is a film you might call a 'lost gem' if you think Jörg Buttgerit's necrophile classic *NEKRomantik* (1987) is an art film and you have a nasty obsession with Guido artsploitation auteur Alberto Cavallone. In other words, *The Black Room* is a celluloid oddity that falls somewhere in between cinematic art and morally retarded sleaze, thus making for a work that will only be appreciated by a few.

A truly 'modernist' vampire flick with nil supernatural elements that was co-directed by an American Jew and an Israeli with no directing experience and shot at the Hollywood Hills home of the Mafia's 'literary representative' on a meager budget of \$40,000 (including post-production costs) in 1981 over the course of "roughly ten fifteen-hour days" (indeed, it took two years before the film was released), the film should be a totally worthless piece of contrived and formulaic horror dribble that was meant to capitalize off of the stupidity of Americans, yet

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it is a fairly striking, singular, and stylish piece of elegant exploitation cinema that is like a west coast 'goth chic' take on George A. Romero's *Martin* (1976). More or less sharing directing duties in a similar fashion to how Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg worked together on *Performance* (1970), with Vane, who is the real 'auteur' of the film, being in charge of the actors and Kenner, who was just trying to make a quick buck (according to Vane, Kenner's then wife stated of his collaborator, "As soon as Norman signs the contracts I'm going to fuck him"), directed the camera, *The Black Room*—a literally and figuratively titled work that borrows its name from a darkened room like a bathhouse where people, especially gay men, go for sex—also benefits from the fact that it was shot by Robert Harmon, who would go on to be the director of the classic road-horror-thriller hybrid *The Hitcher* (1986) starring Rutger Hauer. The slightly sleazy but almost always stylish, oftentimes erotic, sometimes darkly humorous, and vaguely allegorical story of a suburban family man who is cruelly cock-blocked by his prepubescent children, so he runs a lavish 'black room' in a mansion owned by a quasi-incestuous brother and sister who kill the young girls their tenant brings because the brother suffers from a rare blood disease and needs constant blood transplants, the film is so unconventionally entertaining that it makes you wonder how auteur Vane is the same man who worked as a second unit director for porn-horror spoof *Dracula Sucks* (1979) starring Jamie Gillis.

At the beginning of *The Black Room*, a couple is having sex in the 'black room'—a dark and vaguely baroque room illuminated by an unforgettable glowing luminescent table and gothic candles and adorned with antique pillows, rugs, furniture, and various knickknacks—when the owners of the house, Guido-like 'blood junky' Jason (Stephen Knight, who was featured in the horrendous horror flick *Necromancy* (1972) starring Orson Welles as the leader of a witches coven) and his S&M-obsessed Asian sister(?) Bridget (semi-Europid-like Filipino-American Cassandra Gava of John Milius' 1982 hit *Conan the Barbarian*), slowly walk in and pull a creepy and craven form of coitus interruptus where they knock their two victims out with a needle. Of course, the victims never wake up, as Jason takes them to his makeshift blood opium den where he uses a device similar to an embalming machine to rob his prey of their vital fluid so he can shoot the liquid up his arm, which he does in such a fierce fashion that the tube explodes and squirts blood everywhere. After sucking the corpses dry (one of which is played by the film's executive producer Doug Cronin, an ex-professional football player), Jason puts them outside. Meanwhile in suburbia, Hebraic preppie Larry (Jimmy Stathis of the c-grade 1982 slasher *Hospital Massacre*) is trying to bone his wife Robin (TV actress Clara Perryman in her sole film role), but one of his kids soon puts a stop to that after waking up from a nightmare and calling for mommy and daddy. Larry reacts to this rather extremely by deciding to rent out a room where he can bring young and impressionable coeds, as well as more upscale hookers. Indeed, when Larry sees an ad in a newspaper reading "Hol-

lywood Hills—Live Your Fantasy” for a room in a mansion in the Hollywood Hills for a mere \$200, he cannot turn it down, but of course the price proves to be too good to be true, as the landlords plan to use their tenant as the unwitting procurer of their victims.

With his new secret pleasure-dome in the Hollywood Hills and overflow of sex with anonymous women, Larry becomes much happier with life and his sex life with his wife reaches an all-time high as well. In fact, Larry even goes so far as telling his wife Robin about the ‘black room,’ though he claims it is nothing more than a fantasy. When Larry stops by his hideout to drop off the month’s rent and cannot find Jason, he ends up finally talking to Bridget, who develops an instant infatuation with the not-so-tall, dark, and less than handsome tenant. Needless to say, Larry is quite excited to learn that Bridget is Jason’s sister and not his wife as he had once suspected. Disappointed that his latest sexual conquest has not arrived (the siblings most likely killed her), Larry takes up Bridget’s offer to join her in picking flowers where she reveals that her brother has bad blood, stating, “It’s a very rare blood disease [...] the medical term is Thalassaemia. It affects mostly Mediterranean types. Your red blood cells are different, so he has to constantly replenish his blood every 60 days. Then once a month. Now, twice weekly.” After picking flowers like a bunch of blueblood pansies, Bridget—a sadomasochist and exhibitionist who has various nude and fetishistic pictures of herself, which were taken by her own brother (!) adorning the walls of her home—covers her unclad body in psychedelic paint and engages in some unintentionally humorous sexual roleplaying where one plays a bull and the matador while big bro Jason snaps photos. Upon taking a break from pretending to be an amorous bull, Bridget states, “This is our moment of truth, Larry. Only, this time, you’re the bull and I’m the matador. See, the most beautiful thing in the world is to be killed by someone that you love.” Needless to say, Larry does not understand that Bridget is serious. When not killing and stealing the blood of his tenant’s concubines, Jason takes tons of Robert Mapplethorpe-esque S&M photos because, as he fiendishly states, “for every person, photography is my way of holding on to a little bit of their soul.”

Of course, all hell breaks loose when Robin finds the old newspaper advertisement and keys for her husband Larry’s black room, though she opts not to confront her spouse initially and instead decides to do some investigating. After arriving at the Hollywood Hills mansion, Robin discovers that all the people from Larry’s ‘black room’ stories are real, as she talks to Jason who coerces her into doing the same exact thing her husband is doing. When Robin asks Jason why he wants to help, he sinisterly remarks that it is “because the irony of it all appeals to me. The idea of you bringing in an unlimited supply of new people...fresh blood.” When Larry arrives at the dark room with a college student named Lisa (Charlie Young of Cheech & Chong’s Nice Dreams) and her boyfriend Terry (mainstream Hollywood actor Christopher Young of Thelma

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& Louise (1991) and Happy Gilmore (1996) in a pre-fame role) who is there to watch his girlfriend being boned because he just wants to “watch” and “take notes” for his psychology class, Robin watches her husband screwing the young girl via a two-way mirror that Jason has installed. When Robin breaks down and cries after catching her unwitting hubby in the act, Jason pretentiously states, “After we know the truth, comes sadness. All truth is terrifying, especially about ourselves and the people we love. Jealousy is your sickness...mine is need.” Deciding to get her revenge and have fun doing it, Robin opts not only to sleep with someone in the black room, but also to sleep with college kid Terry, whose girlfriend Lisa Larry slept with.

Needless to say, Larry is in for quite a surprise when he sees his wife screwing tall dork Terry. When Larry later confronts Robin about her extramarital excursion, she states, “I had to feel what you had with all the others” and confesses that Terry was a better lay than him. Lisa also proudly proclaims, “I feel like a different woman” and “I realized I lost all my jealousy” and refuses to go to the black room after Larry makes her an ultimatum: “me or the room.” After getting in a heated argument with Larry, Robin storms out of their home and heads to the Hollywood Hills, not realizing that Jason and Bridget have killed Lisa and Terry and plan to kill her next. After leaving his kids with a teenage babysitter (scream queen Linnea Quigley of *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) and *Night of the Demons* (1988)), Larry heads to the black room to get his wife, but not soon after he gets there he finds himself being knocked out and bound and tied. Meanwhile, Bridget attempts to coerce Jason into not killing Larry, stating, “Look Jason, you’re not my lover, you’re my brother...you’re my partner, you’re not my father. Oh, God...I just want someone to be close to...to sleep with,” but her brother simply replies, “No one can come between us and live.” To make matters worse, Bridget calls babysitter Millie and asks her to bring the kids to the Hollywood Hills. Luckily, Larry manages to free himself and Robin after seemingly choking Jason to death with his handcuffs shortly after Millie and the kids arrive. Eventually, Robin manages to stab Bridget in the throat with a wire while the tragically deranged semi-Asiatic she-bitch prowls the house. Somewhat inexplicably, as Larry and his family manage to escape after suffering temporary car trouble, Jason and Bridget somehow manage to rise from the dead. While driving away, Robin asks Larry, “Do you think that people like that ever really die? Somehow, I have a feeling that they go on living forever.”

As revealed in Stephen Thrower’s mandatory exploitation cinema text *NIGHT-MARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* (2007), auteur Norman Thaddeus Vane had tons of trouble on the shoot, especially in regard to his novice Israeli co-director Elly Kenner (who he stated of, “We didn’t get along very well, obviously”), as well as the film’s producer Aaron C. Butler (who has no other film credits), who he unlovingly described as follows: “Aaron

Butler, the producer, was a big red-headed Irishman of Jewish descent. He wore a Star of David around his neck, drank like a fish, cursed everybody and was totally obnoxious.” Despite the trouble he had on the production with his fellow Israelites, Vane is somewhat proud of the film as demonstrated by his fitting remark, “It was the only vampire film ever made where the people were real and really did have a blood disorder and their need for blood was real and not based on some mythical vampire legend.” While Vane went on to direct one or two more entertaining films, including the sleazy yet cheesy night club flick *Club Life* (1986) starring Tony Curtis, Kenner not surprisingly disappeared from the exploitation world and began directing and producing wholly Hebraic Israeli works like the 6-part film series *Esoterica Jerusalem* (1992), *Visions of the Holy Land* (1996), and the kosher family-comedy *Mi Ha’ Abba?* (1997). Like *The Image* (1975) of quasi-slasher exploitation, albeit with more testicular fortitude than Radley Metzger’s work due to its artistic pretenses and pseudo-aristocratic setting, *The Black Room* is ultimately a masterful work of failed cinematic art. Like Metzger, Vane certainly had the Hebraic talent for parroting European art house cinema.

With its subversive approach to vampire film genre conventions, modernist neo-Gothic aestheticism and foreboding essence, darkly debauched blueblood decadence, erotically-charged semi-surrealism, relative abstractness, and emphasis on style, tone, and atmosphere over substance, Vane’s flick is the work that Tony Scott’s *The Hunger* (1983) wishes it was, which is rather unfortunate considering *The Black Room* has never ‘officially’ been released on DVD (a bootleg DVD of the original VHS exists) and is dying to be restored (the VHS print is ultra-dark, so you sometimes cannot even see what is going on in the dark room). Featuring a seemingly Asperger-plagued pseudo-philosopher dandy Guido that sports Saturday Night Fever-esque popped collar button-up shirts with a murderous addiction to blood, a sadomasochistic nymphomaniac who seems just as obsessed with sex as having her picture taken, and a married couple that nearly succumbs to something much worse than a divorce after becoming enthralled with regular extramarital excursions, *The Black Room* is also an audacious, if somewhat amateurish, allegory regarding the metaphysical affliction known as addiction. Indeed, I surely found the film more effective, erotic, and even elegant than Darren Aronofsky’s junky-exploitation film on steroids, *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). Although inaccurately writing that the film is “Unique in the male-dominated blood horror universe in that it was directed by a woman, Elly Kenner” (what is up with Jewish men with female-sounding names?!), Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford were certainly right when they wrote in their work *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002): “THE BLACK ROOM also reversed the rules of the Italian giallos, where people allow sexual psychopaths into their homes. Here, the ugly Americans go out naively and fall into destruction’s hands.” Indeed, the

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film certainly has a vague anti-American feel about it which is all the more highlighted by its almost European essence, as a work that would make for the perfect double-feature with Alberto Cavallone's all the more demented and bizarre effort *Blue Movie* (1978), especially considering both works have a relatively singular claustrophobic yet otherworldly feel to them. Indeed, it might be because I am a little bit biased, but *The Black Room* is easily the most artful and original Hebraic-directed horror/exploitation flick that I have ever seen, which makes it all the more fitting that the villain is a swarthy yet opulent bloodthirsty fellow with various aberrant sexual fetishes and pathologies.

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INGLORIOUS BASTARDS

Enzo G. Castellari (1978)

This title might sound familiar due to the recently announced Quentin Tarantino remake under the watchful eyes of the Weinsteins. How appropriate for them to produce a film about killing as many Nazi's as you can in the allotted time -a German Whack-a-Mole, if you will. The original (Which was based off of The Dirty Dozen) was just recently given the DVD release it has always deserved from Severin Films. A group of criminals are being escorted from an Allied prison camp when they wind up being replacements for a team hired to blend in and sabotage a train deep inside Nazi controlled France. Inglorious Bastards is one of those films that are amazingly shot. Enzo G. Castellari formed a busy picture. Instead of the action or focus sticking on one central character, you can trail off and appreciate a full-motion scenery or read someones personality while the camera is on a character you don't entirely favor. Inglorious Bastards is a spaghetti war film, but don't let the title fool you. These guys may be inglorious, but they get the job done, although things get done rather messy with a smoldering horizon behind their turned backs. This group of anti-heroes is one you can love. Robert Yeagar (Bo Svenson) is the leader of the roughnecks who bares any uncanny resemblance to Daniel Craig of Bond fame. Fred Canfield (Fred Williamson; A personal favorite) is the cigar-swindling black hammerhead shark who steals the show and warrants a re-edit for the blaxploitation loving crowd. Due to the insane success of Williamson's other blaxploitation pictures, the original film was chopped & screwed to make a film called G.I. Bro. The footage was edited to make it appear as if Williamson was the main character. If there was ever a film that was "most American" that came from another country, Inglorious Bastards would take the cake. Fred's sly grin cracked open with a cigar, calling the German language "Mumbo jumbo" and the tag line "If you're a Kraut, He'll take you out!" this film makes sure no essence of German pride is retained after this. With the news of Tarantino turning the characters into Jewish Americans, I find myself doubting this film even more than before. The only way I'll appreciate it is with a cameo or role going to Fred Williamson. Inglorious Bastards is a film that ironically captures all the glory of classic action films. There's no rules on their playground of destruction. It's kill or be killed and that's the way they like it. This film has it all - nude Fräulein's, a ridiculous body count, black humor, and great all-around chemistry from the characters. This is a violent EuroCult period piece not to be missed.

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GREAT WHITE
GREAT WHITE

Enzo G. Castellari (1981)

But I'd rather call this film *The Last Shark*. Be as it may, Cover art for the tentatively titled *The Last Shark* is a rare image to capture. I had once acquired its gracious presence but it is forever lost to the insatiable and slutty appetite of my external hard drive. You say rip-off, I say classic. With these words forms the most concrete and audacious form of plagiarism barely on the cusp of being a worldwide horror hit. *Great White* opens with the clever formula of a town on the ocean being terrorized by a record size Great White. This Great White also happens to be retarded as it strays from all natural instinct and chooses to attack some insignificant beach outlet. Deaths pile up and obnoxiously hairy people get aggravated. Such with my knowledge of Vic Morrow, I witness him mercilessly hunt the shark, but WAIT! He's actually a doppelganger and Vic Morrow is the character who I'd last expect him to play; the Scottish "Quint". These brilliant tidbits of fanboy fanaticism create a debacle of daring handiwork. To mock the occasionally roaring shark in *Jaws*, This shark roars brazenly whenever it makes its repeated "head-slightly-above-water" appearance. Little quirks like these make for an absolutely fucking hilarious film experience. Scenes of exaggerated violence flow freely and without a camera shy director, this film is propelled to an instant cult hit. Victims in this film enter a new realm of embarrassment as they complete absolutely ridiculous survival tactics as shifting weights and jumping in the water. The shark is a magnet and the actors or characters in a Shinya Tsukamoto film, or at least that's the way it's filmed. There is no mercy for any characters. Even the mayor is devoured within an hour in a Deep Blue Sea moment that is perfectly preserved on film. Enzo G. Castellari has created many hits among horror/cult fans but is sometimes left behind in his own dust cloud. With *The Last Shark*, he strikes underwater gold. Despite Spielberg using a portion of his Jew gold to ban the film on the spot despite letting Bruno Mattei's *Cruel Jaws* off the hook (No pun intended). It appears that Mr. Steven is jealous of the infamous Nazi sensationalist hit *Inglorious Bastards* and decided to retaliate on the film maker. God only knows that Spielberg is the only director allowed to create the false serenity concerning "the Holocaust". Despite the controversy blowing this film up to be some scam, *Great White* manages to provide its own buoyancy throughout film history. It's a copycat film taking the steam of a film that consists of a serious plot, then adds some comedic elements (Unprecedented or not) and creates a slapstick spin-off of horror that equates into a epidemic of fun. This film does drag a bit from the start but picks up natural speed from the waves of violence. You can watch the full film [here](#).

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Enzo Milioni (1978)

If there is an avant-garde film that comes anywhere close to depicting the unhinged psychosexual nightmare the was the abusive childhood of uniquely inarticulate white trash serial killer Henry Lee Lucas—the genetically challenged fiend that inspired the eponymous lead of John McNaughton's cult classic *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986)—it is indubitably the ominously oneiric experimental horror short *Ursula* (1961) directed by little known subversive avant-garde auteur Lloyd Michael Williams (*Line of Apogee*, *Two Images for a Computer Piece*). Indeed, not unlike many serial killers and criminals in general, Lucas was abused by a single mother during his childhood and, like the poor little boy depicted in Williams' film, he was forced to wear a dress (in fact, Lucas' mother was a sexually savage prostitute that made her little boy watch while she was being sensually serviced by various strange men). Also like Lucas, the cross-dressing little boy in the film ultimately brutally murders his mother with a knife in what one might describe as an aberrant act of patently perverse poetic justice of the anti-Oedipal sort. Of course, judging by his later rather subhuman adult appearance, Lucas was probably never a pretty blond boy that could easily pass for a girl like the poor little eponymous lad in Williams' film, but I digress. While Curtis Harrington (*Games*, *What's the Matter with Helen?*) began as an avant-garde filmmaker and became a master of the covertly queer hagsploitation subgenre, Mr. Williams, who is all but completely unknown today, should be credited for directing what is the first (and probably last) experimental *Grande Dame* Guignol film. Indeed, it is almost incomprehensible to think that anyone, especially an American, would direct an experimental horror film in the early 1960s featuring a little dude in drag that concludes with said little dude brutally butchering his bitch of a mother with the same exact knife that she just used to slaughter her sexually confused son's new pet frog. To be fair, *Ursula* is a fairly subtle and hardly graphic film, thus its particular brand of psychosexual perversity might be lost on many contemporary viewers who expect to see buckets of blood and guts. Of course, as a man that previously directed an experimental surrealist adaptation of Lewis Carroll's 1871 poem *Jabberwocky* entitled *Jabberwock* (1959), Williams—an auteur that is even pretty much completely unknown among cinephiles and avant-garde film fetishists—was no ordinary filmmaker, but I guess one should not expect anything less in a country where art cinema is hardly respected and horror cinema is mostly considered titillating teenage trash.

While I am hesitant to go as far describing *Ursula* as a lost masterpiece, I certainly see it as a sort of important missing link of American avant-garde horror cinema that has yet to get its due as work featuring certain sexually subversive themes that predates works ranging from Frank Perry's post-psycho-biddy clas-

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sic *Mommie Dearest* (1981) to classic sexually schizophrenic slasher trash like *Sleepaway Camp* (1983). Indeed, despite the fact that he was one of the co-founders of The Film-Makers' Cooperative aka The New American Cinema Group along with Jonas Mekas, collaborated with pioneering female animator and filmmaker Mary Ellen Bute on her film *The Boy Who Saw Through* (1956) starring a very young Christopher Walken, and has worked with important queer cinema figures ranging from Warhol superstar Taylor Mead to raging kraut queen Rosa von Praunheim, American avant-garde authority P. Adams Sitney did not even make a single reference to Williams or any of his films in his supposedly comprehensive text *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000*, but then again he also forgot about important proto-counterculture auteur Peter Emmanuel Goldman (*Echoes of Silence*, *Wheel of Ashes*), among various other negligent omissions. Aside from James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber's quasi-Expressionist Poe adaptation *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), Harrington's 1942 amateur teenage reworking of the same Poe story and *Fragment of Seeking* (1946), and a couple other examples, American experimental horror cinema is all but nonexistent, with Williams indubitably being it's most criminally unsung auteur. Aside from *Ursula*, Williams also demonstrated a knack for the forebodingly cinematically phantasmagoric with esoteric cinematic poems like *Opus#5* (1961) and *Two Images for a Computer Piece* (1969), with the latter featuring a notable original musical score by Vladimir 'father of electronic music' Ussachevsky. While I have not been able to track down his later longer cinematic works like *Line of Apogee* (1968) and *Rainbow's Children* (1975), *Ursula* seems to be his darkest and most daring yet, at the same time, most accessible and revolutionary film as a genuinely haunting homo oneiric celluloid nightmare made at a time when being a homo was more or less illegal and thus something to be petrified of, or so one would assume after watching the somewhat surprisingly unsettling short.

Based on the vaguely autobiographical short story *Miss Gentilbelle* by writer and sometimes screenwriter Charles Beaumont—a man probably best known for penning many episodes of the original *The Twilight Zone* TV series whose tragic death at the premature age of 38 as a result of “a mysterious brain disease” seems like something that he might have penned himself—*Ursula* is pure celluloid Americana in the greatest and most fullest sense as a piece of organic yank horror that can only be compared to a handful of other cinematic works like Richard Blackburn's criminally underrated Lovecraftian vampire lesbo flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973) and Don Coscarelli's classic surrealist horror piece *Phantasm* (1979) in terms of contributing to a truly authentic and artful American horror film mythology that is completely outside the alien influence of the culture-distorters of Hollywood. Notably, Armenian-American NYU film professor Haig Manoogian, who acted as a mentor to a young Martin Scorsese and even produced his first feature *Who's That Knock-*

ing at *My Door* (1967), is credited as an ‘advisor’ on Williams’ film. In fact, despite earning Williams the Bronze Medallion at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival (incidentally, he previously won the Silver Medallion for his short *Jabberwock* in 1959), *Ursula* is actually a student film, hence the completely unknown actors and composer. In my less than humble opinion, the film’s low budget and sometimes amateurish production values (including glaringly dubbed voices) ultimately work to its advantage, as *Ursula*, which feels like it is set in antiquated Anglophile realm that is equal parts Southern Gothic and Victorian Gothic, seems like the creation of a decidedly damaged young man that was less interested in trying to make a film to entertain people than to provide himself with therapeutic emotional release by documenting the decay of his own mind in a most visceral manner. Indeed, I do not know much about Williams but just by watching his fairly idiosyncratic horror short, which was notably made at a time when wholesome TV swill like *The Andy Griffith Show* was extremely popular, I would assume that that he had a sadistically bitchy mother who stunted his manhood and ultimately turned him into a woman-hating homo.

Undoubtedly, the central theme of *Ursula* is how damaged and broken things can never be fixed, especially when it comes to the mind. Indeed, at the very beginning of the film, tragic she-boy protagonist ‘Ursula’ (Calvin Waters, who has no other film credits aside from being the producer of an aborted reality TV show about an eponymous gay negro fashion designer entitled *Living Life with Dwight Eubanks* (2009))—a poor little lad who has been forced to live as a girl—accidentally tears a brand new dress he is wearing after falling from a tree upon being called to come inside by his supposed mother (Dorothea Griffin), henceforth leading to horrific consequence for the protagonist where he must learn a lesson about the impossibility mending. Naturally as a crazed cunt that wants to brainwash her son into becoming a girl, *Ursula*’s mother—a woman that is clearly too old to be his biological progenitor—is extra irked when he dares to do such a boyish thing as tearing his clothing whilst playing outside. After bitching to him like a sexually repressed witch on the rag, “Oh, you ungrateful child! Look at yourself – destroying your finery. Such a pity. It can never be replaced,” *Ursula*’s mother declares in a calmer yet all the more sadistic fashion, “Let’s play a little game about mending things, shall we?” and then demands that he go fetch his beloved pet parakeet. Although just a young and vulnerable child, *Ursula* realizes that his malevolent mommy has seriously unsavory intentions with his pet as he apologizes in advance to his bird by stating “I’m sorry little bird. I’m sorry” as if he already knows what will happen to it. Needless to say, *Ursula*’s mother slaughters the bird and even makes the boy protagonist hand her the knife that she uses to kill it with. In a scene that demonstrates *Ursula*’s seething hatred for his mother, *Ursula* thinks to himself “I hate you” while staring at her immediately after she kills parakeet. After killing the bird, *Ursula*’s sadistic mother hands the boy the bird’s dismembered body parts and states in a fashion

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that makes her sound like an old spinster school teacher who has devoted her life to gaining pleasure from covertly browbeating small and impressionable school children, "Take her in your hand. Do not forget her wings. Now then, shall we mend the tiny bird? Shall we put her together again? Glue her pretty little wing back?" to which he sadly replies, "No. Nothing can be mended." Of course, the emotional and psychological damage that Ursula's mother has done to him also cannot be mended as the fittingly creepy conclusion of the film ultimately demonstrates.

After suffering the trauma of witnessing the senseless slaughter of his most beloved pet by a wicked woman that is supposed to love and protect him, Ursula naturally suffers from severe nightmares that night involving swarms of screeching birds, sinister large gnomes, an ominously luminous moon, swinging gothic chandeliers, a desolate beach, and his mother calling his name and laughing in a maniacal fashion. In fact, Ursula's nightmare is so long, consuming, and intricately horrendous that he has to be physically awakened by his mother, who yells in his face while attempting to force him out of bed, "You have missed lunch. You were told to be downstairs prominently at 12:30 and instead I find you resting, like a lady of great leisure." After his rather rude maternal awakening, Ursula hangs out by a creek near his house where he discovers a frog that he makes his new but hardly improved pet. As demonstrated by his remark, "Ugly frog. Let's play a little game, shall we? Mommy will teach you how," Ursula fully realizes he will not have his new green buddy for long as he plans to sacrifice him to accomplish his own matricidal fantasies.

When Ursula shows off his new pet his mother, she predictably hatefully shouts in his face while grabbing him by the collar, "Really, you have surpassed yourself in wickedness" and then grabs a large dagger-like knife from a dilapidated cabinet with a broken glass window. When the gender-challenged boy protagonist reveals that he named the frog "Ursula," his mother remarks in a bitchy bourgeois fashion while brandishing the knife in a somewhat sensual manner, "Really?! ... But how very appropriate," thus underscoring her sick and seemingly insatiable sense of sadistic glee. While his mother is admiring the poor frog that she has just so senselessly slaughtered, Ursula quietly goes to the cabinet and grabs the knife that was just used to slaughter his green friend. Just as his mother drops the dead frog on the floor that she just killed while maintaining a facial expression of abject disgust, Ursula says "mother" and then kills her off-screen by brutally stabbing her to death (the only thing the viewer hears is her echoing scream which, as one reviewer already noted, anticipates the scene in George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) where Mrs. Cooper is stabbed in the cellar by her zombie daughter). In the end after the rather climatic scene of Schadenfreude inducing matricide, Ursula, who is now all alone and psychosis-ridden, rocks back and forth with his hands wrapped around legs while in a fetal position as he repeats to himself his dead mommy's words: "Wicked girl. Bad

girl punished. Must be punished. Bad girl...punished. Must be punished." As the disturbing final scene reveals, the titular boy transvestite's mind cannot be mended. In that sense, *Ursula* almost feels like a kaleidoscopic avant-garde prequel to Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) where one learns how Norman Bates developed his mommy issues, cross-dressing tendencies, and fetish for carving up crazy cunts with knives. Thankfully, unlike later films featuring sexually deranged cross-dressing killers like Russ Meyer's *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) and Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* (1972), Williams' film never succumbs to trashy campy humor or cheap sexual innuendos.

Undoubtedly *Ursula* is a film that cannot be fully appreciated unless one considers its particular historical context. Indeed, the film was made at a time when most America gays were still in the closest and thus queer filmmakers oftentimes sought more esoteric means to express themselves, hence why there is probably so few great fag experimental filmmakers nowadays. Additionally, considering the taboo nature of cocksucking at that time, it should be no surprise that many of the queer experimental filmmakers of the 1950s and early 1960s made films about internally tortured, troubled, and/or otherwise mentally unsound individuals as the early films of both Gregory J. Markopoulos and Kenneth Anger clearly reveal. Notably, in the handful of reviews that I found on Williams' film, about half of the reviewers did not even realize that the titular character was a boy, thus underscoring the film's quixotically queer essence. Certainly, it is dubious as to whether such a hermetically homosexual film where fagdom is a source of painful fear and loathing would be made nowadays, especially considering both the mainstream media and public schools are absurdly attempting to brainwash kids into thinking that trannys are normal and getting your dick chopped off is a normal medical procedure. Indeed, one could argue that *Ursula* is packed with the perturbed pathos of generations upon generations of raging closet queens. Incidentally, although the source story, *Miss Gentilbelle* is somewhat autobiographical in the sense that the author's mother used to punish him by making him wear a dress and even threatened to kill his pets, Beaumont was a rampantly heterosexual man and he even once wrote a short story entitled *The Crooked Man* that was published in *Playboy* in 1955 about a morally and sexually inverted dystopian world where heterosexuals are a minority that are actively persecuted by homos. Considering the rampant homo-approved language policing of the American public by the mainstream media and government institutions, bullying of bakeries and other private businesses and groups that do not comply with the softcore authoritarian aberrosexual agenda, and defiling of the American legal system via gay marriage and other patent absurdities that make a mockery of law and Western Civilization, it seems that Beaumont's story is not so far-fetched as the pink NKVD, like their Zionist compatriots, hold a preposterous amount of power in the United States, but I digress. Of course, if *Ursula* demonstrates anything about homos and their place in a supposedly homophobic Western society,

URSULA

it is that gay artists created more nuanced and enigmatic works before being gay become something to be ostensibly proud of.

As largely the result of being included as one of the films in the *Other Cinema* DVD compilation *Experiments in Terror* (2003) alongside vaguely similarly themed experimental horror shorts ranging from Peter Tscherkassky's *The Entity* (1982) revamping *Outer Space* (1999) to Damon Packard's ridiculously spasmodic avant-splatter piece *Dawn of an Evil Millennium* (1988), *Ursula* is undoubtedly Williams' easiest to find film. Notably, *Miss Gentilbelle* was later adapted by Alfred Hitchcock Presents director Robert Stevens under the titled 'Miss Belle' in 1968 for the Hammer Films TV show *Journey to the Unknown*. Additionally, a Hebrewess hack named Tara Miele, who recently created a stupidly sentimental and distinctly disingenuous anti-Trump agitprop PSA entitled *Meet a Muslim* (2016) for a rather dubious quasi-commie Jewish-Muslim propaganda outfit, directed a patently pointless version of the story entitled *Miss Gentilbelle* (2000). Needless to say, Williams' version is the greatest adaptation of Beaumont's story as the sort of film that makes the viewer fantasize about what the auteur could have done with the material of a horror literary maestro like H.P. Lovecraft had he had the budget and means to make an actual feature-length film with professional actors and a decent composer. Indeed, *Ursula* is the rare sort of cinematic work that makes me long for an organic American experimental horror cinema that unfortunately does not really exist, as it feels like a filmic tease from a movement that died in its infancy. While I have watched the film a number of times, it leaves me hungry for more ever single time in that sense that it is rather apparent that the Williams had the capacity to create so much more. I almost must confess that every time I watch *Ursula*, I am reminded about virtually every single serial killer that I have ever read about it. After all, it could be argued that the eponymous little boy is just as much the monster of the film as his loathsome mother, as he completely transcends her transgressions and graduates on to matricidal murder before he even reaches puberty. In that sense, the film is like a sort of anti-nostalgic coming-of-age film for serial killers as Henry Lee Lucas, Richard Chase, Gary Ridgway, Edmund Kemper, Bobbie Joe Long, and countless other real-life serial killers experienced childhoods involving maternal abuse similar to that of *Ursula*. Arguably more importantly, *Ursula* is, in terms of brutality and aesthetics, the closest thing to a fag filmic equivalent to a Brothers Grimm fairytale. Indeed, forget Larry Yust's Shirley Jackson adaptation *The Lottery* (1969)—a 20-minute horror short that is well known for scaring generations of American school children who were forced to watch it in their English classes—Williams' short should be mandatory viewing in public schools lest the United States be condemned with another generation of deluded fatherless youth who believe that cross-dressing is the height of cultivation.

-Ty E

VACANCY 2: THE FIRST CUT

Eric Bross (2008)

Let's go over the finalizing details of 2008 and the reincarnation of the DVD studio within early 2009. Let's take our first breath. The Lost Boys 2: The Tribe, Rest Stop 2, Vacancy 2: The First Cut, Pulse 2: Afterlife, Pulse 3: Invasion, Feast II: Sloppy Seconds, Joy Ride 2, Reeker 2, Without A Paddle: Nature Calling, Anaconda III, Alone in the Dark II, Boogeyman 2, Starship Troopers 3: Marauder, The Eye 3, and many others. This list is representative of Hollywood taking a steep clique change. Where as remaking J-horror was the only function they had acquired from experience, alas, they now know how to milk a family for all it's worth.

Allow me to tell you a secret. I've never seen Vacancy, nor do I plan on giving it a chance. On the topic of the Hollywood myth of snuff material, 8mm was raw, coarse, and a damn fine film for that matter. I don't need a Luke Wilson vessel for a shady-business type deal. Besides, what kind of snuff film is one with little-to-no sexual activity. If I wanted to watch people being murdered without intercourse or fetishist values, I could open up a new tab in the wonderful browser of Firefox. 3 words in a search engine could get me my fix of boring sensationalism. With only one character of the predated sequel (paradox?), Vacancy 2: The First Cut doesn't do much for the viewer who hasn't seen the original. The character of Smith is the only returning character which means that most of the villains are mere fodder. The idea of a snuff film is tossed around within the origin, but the whole scheme is so laughably conceived that it's incredibly hard to believe. "So wait. You're telling me people buy videos of people getting murdered? Well hot damn! Why didn't we think of this sooner?" Vacancy 2: The First Cut attempts to establish an "Argyle" character shortly within but falls short of steam. For being apart of the Straight to Video DVD sequels that are squelching & soulless, Vacancy 2: The First Cut is an alright horror film. Well, not even really a horror film. The idea is suspense in itself. Devoid of strengths and lacking weaknesses, this prequel to Vacancy simply exists. At times it's enjoyable and acknowledgeable but at other times, the film is tedious, stuffed with clichés, and lacks nudity and violence. And we all know if all else fails, these "stocking stuffers" do strengthen a film.

-mAQ

PINK ULYSSES
PINK ULYSSES

Eric De Kuyper (1990)

Apparently influenced by the similarly titled and homoerotically themed arthouse work *Pink Narcissus* (1971) directed by James Bidgood, *Pink Ulysses* (1990) is a potent yet unwaveringly pretentious piece of esoteric pomo homo celluloid that radically reworks Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey* in a campy, carnal, and even comical fashion that trades in cinematic action-adventure conventions for a sort of arcane celluloid aphrodisiac. Directed by Belgian auteur Eric De Kuyper (*Naughty Boys*, *A Strange Love Affair*) who described his contemporary cross-European heritage as follows on his official website, "I was born in Brussels. So I speak and write English with a French accent; Dutch with a French accent; and German with French and Dutch accents!," *Pink Ulysses*, although a Belgian-Dutch co-production, features dialogue in German, French, Italian, and English, yet one does not need a serious understanding of any of these languages to appreciate the work as it is virtually a modern silent film featuring a number of exquisite tableaux in the camp dandy spirit of Werner Schroeter, albeit more butch, with some aesthetic and thematic ingredients from Kenneth Anger, Carmelo Bene, and Luchino Visconti thrown in for good measure. In fact, even if one understands all of the scantily spoken languages in De Kuyper's postmodern tragicomedy, there is no guarantee that one will be able to follow the film as it is an audacious yet oftentimes cinematically archaic arthouse flick of the sometimes pornographic sort that mixes kaleidoscopic images of Odysseus' return home after twenty years of exile in Troy with seemingly pointless modern day black-and-white footage of a funny self-fondling fellow who seems to live the life of a lonely male 'housewife' doing such daring and heroic things like ironing shirts, masturbating in front of mirrors, treating homely naked women like cheap furniture from IKEA, and other activities that would have probably inspired our hero Odysseus to commit suicide out of sheer boredom. Director De Kuyper, who also wrote the 'original' screenplay, described the film as follows: "Homer tells us how Ulysses' wife Penelope used to weave Laertes' shroud. The work she did by day she unravelled by night. That process was not dissimilar to the creation and production of *Pink Ulysses*. Gradually images (collected here and there, also from film classics) and well and lesser known music created a texture of sight and sound, resulting in a variation on *Ulysses*." Featuring excerpts from classic silent films like *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), most specifically the most seemingly homoerotic scenes (apparently, Sergei M. Eisenstein was more on the pink team than the red one), *Pink Ulysses* is essentially an acutely arcane and fiercely fetishized homophile molestation of both Occidental history and cinema history, yet it will mainly appeal to arthouse fans of any stripe, including those with nil interest in terribly tanned 1950s beefcake pinups, hence why De Kuyper's film was well received at the 1990 Rotterdam Film Festival and virtually

everywhere else it was screened and is not known outside the world of European arthouse cinema.

If Jean Cocteau ingeniously used the ruins of post-WWII Paris as the perfect setting for updating the classic Greek myth of Orpheus with his masterpiece *Orpheus* (1950) aka *Orphée*, Eric De Kuyper somehow thought it would be wise to turn the Homer's Greek hero Odysseus into a 1950s-style crypto-homo muscle mag hunk that is lacking in both wit and heroism, at least in any realistic and genuinely masculine sort of way, with *Pink Ulysses*, a suavely stylized epic without much action, but tons of man meat and muscles. Of course, the Odysseus of *Pink Ulysses* is far more interesting than the flagrant fairy that makes up the contemporary black-and-white portion of the film. Opening the film ironing his shirt in a rather erratic and seemingly nonsensical fashion, the prissy 'modern man,' who never puts his shirt on again for the remainder of the film, enjoys masturbating and gazing in the mirror, which is indubitably an expression of his narcissism and loneliness, and when an unclad automaton of a woman shows up at his door, he clearly does not know what to do with her as a less than manly mensch who prefers to spill his seed instead of spreading it in the vaginal realm. If anything is for sure, Odysseus and his journey offer the contemporary character not only an elaborate romantic fantasy of the marvelously masturbatory sort, but also a striking dichotomy for the viewer of a majestic mythic past and the prosaic present, where domestic chores like ironing make for a stupendously banal way for one to spend one's day. Of course, Odysseus, who need not worry about wearing shirts and electricity, has so much free time that he can spend a scenic and sensual seven years with a beauteous babe named Circe, who looks good enough to be his wife but is all the more spellbindingly seductive. Despite his propensity for attracting striking statuesque women, the orgasmic (indeed, he always has a smile on his face as if someone is continuously smoking his pole) Odysseus of *Pink Ulysses* has a seemingly endless proclivity towards softcore exhibitionism, especially around other men, who have nothing on his brawn and biceps. If Odysseus of *Pink Ulysses* is cunning, it is only in the most philistine hustler-like sort of way, simply using his Breker-esque physique to lure in his pretty prey. Naturally, as everyone knows, many male suitors attempt to claim Odysseus' wife Penelope by trying their ultimately inferior skill at the great king's bow, but the great king and his son Telemachos inevitably kill them all in the end, thus immaculately handling family matters with gusto. Like Alberto Cavallone's *Le salamandre* (1969) and Federico Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), the director and his crew are revealed at the conclusion of *Pink Ulysses*, henceforth demystifying the movie myths and slapping the viewer across the face with the banality of reality.

In regard to his take on Odysseus' twenty years of epic limbo, director Eric De Kuyper offered the following hint regarding his rather idiosyncratic and inventive celluloid puzzle: "Perhaps Penelope began to love her son more than her

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diſtant, absent husband? And poſſibly Ulyſſes began to love the ‘ideal Penelope’ he recognized in magical Circe more than his wife, who would be waiting for him in Ithaca? Perhaps... and the imagination lingers on... How this materializes in a film, a fabric, is Pink Ulyſſes’ ſecret. An exploration, an adventurous wandering.” Indeed, Odysſeus’ odysſey materializes in a rather claſſically camp, anti-reality ſort of manner that, whether the intention of the director or not, demonſtrates how really absurd the Greek tragedy truly is. Why Odysſeus, who is on what amounts to a permanent vacation full of captivating ſcenery and otherworldly ſensuality, even bothers to go back to his wife and ſon in Pink Ulyſſes is anyone’s guess, but it is quite obvious that director Eric De Kuyper was looking to make a piece of aeſthetically antagoniſtic body worſhip that ſpends juſt as much as time fawning over the ultra-maſculine male phyſique as it does obſcuring its meſſage. An arthouse anti-epic that, in terms of action, only features vintage ſilent footage of men wreſtling men and other crypto-homo ſcenes from film hiſtory, Pink Ulyſſes is maſculinity painted pink by a man who is obviously not a fan of Spartacus (1960) and David Lean’s Lawrence of Arabia (1962), but has clearly ſcoured every curious crevice of cinema hiſtory to ſhow that homos have always ſat in the director’s chair. Featuring excerpts from The Fall of Troy (1911) directed by Giovanni Paſtrone, Strike (1925) and Battleship Potemkin (1925) directed by Sergei M. Eiſenſtein, and the Cocteau penned work Love Eternal (1943) aka L’éternel retour directed by Jean Delannoy, Pink Ulyſſes is eſſentially a celluloid love letter to queer film hiſtory that goes to great pains to make ſure that Steven Spielberg and even Sam Peckinpah fans find the whole experience to be completely and utterly impenetrable. While Pink Ulyſſes does feature an authentic pulſating cock buſting a load, the film does not feature any ſcenes of real gay romance, thus following in the cinematically orphic footſteps of the homo auteur filmmakers that came before. Of course, like Pink Narciſſus, Pink Ulyſſes is not a ‘fags only’ flick, but an exquisite, if not flawed, cinematic work that reminds all viewers that, in their need to conceal and obſcure their ſexuality, queer filmmakers found creative and allegorical ways to expreſs themſelves, which certainly beats the ſlavish cult of victimhood and lack of originality that plague moſt mainſtream (and ſo not ſo mainſtream) gay films today. Indeed, I doubt anyone would care about their films today if maſter sodomite auteur filmmakers like Pier Paolo Paſolini, Curtis Harrington, Rainer Werner Faſsbinder, Jean Cocteau, and Kenneth Anger made propaɡanda works promoting gay marriage and queers adopting children. Pure, claſſic, and cultivated camp, Pink Ulyſſes is evidence that Nordics can ſtill make worthwhile arthouse films if they try.

-Ty E

MALÉFICES PORNO

Eric De Winter (1978)

The French have a fine reputation for freaky fucking, xenophilia, miscegenation, and colonialism, so it is only natural that some fucked up frog would eventually direct a ridiculously racially-charged porn flick featuring a monstrous mandingo negro partaking in Eurupid flesh in a bestial fashion, but I never thought I would discover a work as wantonly whacked out as *Maléfices porno* (1978) aka *Maléfices pornographiques* aka *Cavern Bondage* directed by one-time-auteur Eric De Winter. Indeed, the film was deemed so degenerate in frogland upon its initial release that it was banned for two years, with the censor board writing regarding the work on 8 February 1977: "This film poses a problem of unusual severity. Outside images heavily and specifically sexual, developed in the most squalid conditions - the film climbs quickly to a level that exceeds the simple ranking on the list of pornography within the meaning of Articles 11 and 12 of the Law of the 30 December 1975. More problematic, in fact, are sequences of cruelty and sadism - tortures; scenes of blood; sexual abuse - racism - a long scene where a black man is obligingly reduced to a sexual object - terror finally - the vision of the bride diving naked and unconscious in a sulfuric acid bath. Despite the poor achievement of the direction that mutes the effect, the Control Commission has considered that this dishonorable film was not only injurious to the human person, but a danger to the mental and psychological integrity of an important part of the audience, even adult. It has accordingly concluded, unanimously, that the threshold of a total ban was reached." Indeed, I can certainly see how some spineless and spiritually castrated government bureaucrats in post-colonial France might be worried by a film featuring whites babes torturing the genitals of a King Kong-like negro who later rapes an impotent white degenerate. Originally mad with the intention of appealing to the American S&M crowd, *Maléfices porno*, which was apparently shot in a cave north of Paris, was then revamped by auteur De Winter to appeal to the distinct tastes of fur-lickers. As a result of the pansy politically correct censors, the film was severely butchered and only exists today as a 57-minute cut, which was recently rereleased on DVD as a limited run of 300 copies by Serious Publishing. A phantasmagorical and somewhat psychedelic porn flick about a sexually impotent and unhappily middle-aged frog fellow of the rather physically repulsive sort who fantasies about inflicting brute carnal force on virginal white chicks and a beefy buck negro, *Maléfices porno* could be seen as an unconscious allegory for the degraded place of Frenchmen in the post-colonial/post-feminist age. Probably the most conspicuously exploitative racially-charged 'horror' flick since *Ouanga* (1936) aka *The Love Wanga*, *Maléfices porno* is a seriously perverse reminder why (sado)masochism and miscegenation go hand-in-hand.

An impotent frog cuckold (Gilbert Servien) who skinny arms yet a big gut

MALÉFICES PORNO

attempts in vain to masturbate while his wanton wife (Laurence Jarry) gets involved in a less than titillating threesome with some dorky dude with a glaring bald spot and another woman. That night while lying in bed with his oversexed spouse, the supposedly horny yet ultimately sexually hapless Husband attempts to get his lover to screw him, but she complains, “You know that you can’t,” and confirms his lack of sexual virility by taking a peep at his perennially flaccid member. Before turning the lights off and going to bed, the Husband reads a trashy pulp novel on voodoo, which assumedly sends his mind into the gutter because when he falls asleep, he dreams of being a depraved sexual dictator with a limp dick who seems to have stolen his wardrobe from Coffin Joe. Taking place inside a poorly furnished cave covered in debris, Maléfices porno depicts in debasing detail what happens when an impotent frog fantasies about being a real man. At his command, the Husband has his Wife bring in two young women—a blonde and brunette—whose assholes he probes and pokes with his fingers in a rather raunchy fashion. When the less than well hung Husband gets bored with the girls, he has them cut-up with a blood-splattering buzzsaw. To liven things up a bit for him and his equally lethally lecherous lady love, the Husband brings out a gigantic buff negro named ‘L’Hercule’ aka Hercules (played by Manu Pluton, who previously appeared in Jacques Scandelari’s 1973 artsploitation masterpiece *Beyond Love and Evil* and later starred a “murdered Arab” in *The French Connection II*) and states of him while probably putting the bound black beast on display, “Look, look at this beautiful monster I’ve bought in Barbès.” A platinum blonde slave in a angelic white robe is also brought out so that the Wife can eat out her pussy. After chowing down on her Sapphic slave’s mighty meat curtain, the Wife begins torturing big black Hercules by waving her tits in his face while he is in bondage. Needless to say, the giant jigaboo is hungry for white pussy, but he will also develop a distinct taste for hatefully penetrating middle-aged French manholes.

After cutting off his exceedingly gay yellow thong with a dagger, the Wife begins stroking and sucking the gigantic jigaboo’s burnt black snake, but of course, she pulls her despoiled mouth away before the negro slave can spill his dark seeds. Of course, the Wife eventually rides the black buck, though she finishes him off by jerking him off, for she surely wanted to avoid being impregnated with untermensch seed. After humping Hercules, the Wife forces the platinum blond to pissing in her hubby’s mouth. Like a demented prison dyke, the Wife also forces the brutalized blonde to munch on her meaty main vein and her impotent slave-driving Husband gets so jealous that he drives a butcher knife into the poor girl’s stomach. After diddling his Donkey Kong dong with a whip, the Wife begins driving pins into Hercules’ ebony skinflute while sadistically stating, “What’s up, cute boy? I’m going to put your big dick inside you up to your belly. You’re going to like that.” Needless to say, when Hercules manages to escape from his bondage, he goes berserk and savagely sodomizes the Husband,

who takes it like a little bitch. When the Husband wakes up screaming from his debauched dreamed turned exceedingly emasculating nightmare, he decides his wanton wife must die, stating to himself, "What joy when this bitch is going to dissolve in a fat broth! It's her fault if I can't raise mast again. It's her fault only. It's her fault if I can only have sex in blood. In blood and death. Yes, it's her fault. That bitch! She's heavy but soon she'll weigh nothing." As he drops his unconscious wife into bathtub full of what looks like a curious cocktail of vomit and diarrhea but what really is sulfuric acid, the Husband says, "So long...bitch...So long," and proceeds to laugh manically.

Maybe it is because I am mostly into vanilla sex, but it is rather hard for me to imagine someone deriving sexual satisfaction from *Maléfices* porno, which is nothing short of aberrant aesthetic torture of the patently pathetic sort. Indeed, the only people that the film might arouse are white cuckold horror fans that fantasize about their girlfriends being buggered by belligerent black beasts, or ruined white sluts with a perverse predilection towards dark meat. Of course, unlike when the film was first released, cuckold porn is apparently rather big nowadays, thus demonstrating that the French are truly the 'progressive' perverts that they have always been stereotyped as. Indeed, the only thing I could think about while watching *Maléfices* porno is that the French seem to have never gotten over the unfortunate fact that they were defeated and exterminated by negro slaves during the so-called Haitian Revolution, which was partly metaphysically influenced by voodoo. Of course, voodoo does not make an appearance in (non)auteur Eric De Winter's fuck film for nothing. Aside from being uniquely ugly and absurdly amateurish vintage celluloid smut, De Winter's film features a seemingly accidental quasi-psychoanalytic depiction of the post-colonial French male mindset. Indeed, one could argue that the antihero's anal pillaging by a negro sex slave is an aberrant allegorical representation of the Haitian Revolution, though that would probably be giving De Winter too much credit. Of course, as they say, once you go black you never go back, especially after having your rectum ripped by the schlong of a crazed colored King Kong. It should be noted that during the Haitian slave revolt, it was not uncommon for black 'revolutionaries' to rape white women on top of the corpses of their husband and children, which certainly makes De Winter's film seem rather weak by comparison. While I cannot say I got much out of the film aside from a couple giggles, *Maléfices* porno did make me realize that Jean Rollin is more of an artist than I originally gave him credit for, as De Winter's would-be-wanton-but-mostly-rotten fuck flick certainly makes *The Rape of the Vampire* (1968) aka *Le viol du vampire* seem like a lavish Bressonian arthouse masterpiece.

-Ty E

LA FEMME 100 TETES
LA FEMME 100 TETES

Eric Duvivier (1968)

The importance and purpose of special effects have changed drastically since the early pioneering days of cinema. What was once the trade of film magicians has been contemporarily morphed and bastardized into a mongrelized gimmick used by the cunning businessmen and carny hucksters of Hollywood who use special effects as a tool to degrade and ultimately hypnotize the viewer through their meaningless collages of retarded and irrelevant shadowplays that have no meaning aside from the obvious (in other words; what you see is what you get and nothing more). Instead of Georges Méliès – a true special effects Cinemagician – the modern world has James Cameron – a soulless big-budget schlock manufacturer whose depth of vision is shallower than that of the amount of urine contained in the recently deceased filmmaker Leonard Castle's deathbed bedpan. Additionally, there is no modern filmmakers that comes even close to the groundbreaking cinema poetry of trans-medium artists like Jean Cocteau and Man Ray; men whose pioneering special effects techniques were invented not just to wow the viewer, but to provide their adventurous audiences with motion-picture poetry. The other night, I had the grand scopophilic pleasure of viewing the neglected and rarely seen 1968 short *La femme 100 têtes* directed by French auteur Eric Duvivier; a film based on a collage book of the same name published in 1929 by German Dadaist/Surrealist artist Max Ernst. Despite never having the opportunity to view the book *La femme 100 têtes*, it was quite unmistakable to me that the 1968 film was based on the German surrealist's work, as the short is full of the same grotesque yet acutely attractive eroticism and splendid derangement as Ernst's paintings. Essentially, *La femme 100 têtes* is a cinematic collage of moving pictures and paintings, as if artistic works by Max Ernst came alive in a similar vein to that of the fantastic horror comedy *Waxwork* (1988), except with refined artistry and timeless imagery.

Max Ernst's original 1929 book *La femme 100 têtes* is an abstract work about a woman living among ghosts and ants with an allegory for Immaculate Conception, but Duvivier's 1968 adaption seems to enter into darker yet more humorous realms of appended ambiguity. For some, *La femme 100 têtes* will be a most horrific nightmare, but for others (myself included), the short will be a splendid fantasy for dreamers of the day. Max Ernst was a master at turning seemingly aberrant and malformed subject matter into works of awe-inspiring beauty and intrigue. In the short *La femme 100 têtes*, director Eric Duvivier somehow achieved what seemed to be impossible; transferring the essence of Max Ernst's work onto the silver screen. Of course, *La femme 100 têtes* seems to be influenced by other artists aside Herr Ernst, as the short echoes back to Jean Cocteau's surrealist masterpiece *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) and the early collaborations between Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí (*An Andalusian Dog* and

The Gold Age). What is most striking about *La femme 100 têtes* is the film's apocalyptic portrayal of various voluptuous and mostly topless buxom beauties. Throughout the short, various men can be seen killing each other whilst a female Venus figure stands on and views from the distance in a most sinister manner. The tantalizing and hypnotizing breasts of these women are the equivalent of an anti-Golden Fleece, as they weaken and cripple a man's martial prowess and nobility to the loathsome level where he can no longer be concerned with anything else. The portrayal of women as wicked sinners in *La femme 100 têtes* is similar to how Polish symbolist writer Stanisław Przybyszewski characterized the sinful Christian churches and clergy in his excellent work *The Synagogue of Satan* (1897) view of the fairer sex. Przybyszewski – who was one of the earliest students of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's work – stated that historically, Christian churches and leaders in Europe – who hypocritically enjoyed sexually torturing and murdering so called heretics – turned all that was natural (most importantly; man's lust and eroticism) into the most unholy tool of the devil himself. Max Ernst – who was brought up in a Catholic middle-class family in Cologne, Germany – was certainly haunted by anti-sex religious tales that he learned as a child, no doubt falling prey to the perverse church teachings that glorified the anti-human, abstracted, and altogether inorganic. Whether you're religious or not; you will indubitably find *La femme 100 têtes* to be an utmost compelling spiritual experience, as the film is a virtual tribute to purgatory where one's lust and demons haunt the viewer well after the film concludes.

In my humble opinion, the Dada/Surrealist artists were the last great movement of artists in the Occident. Although they tended to capture the ugliness of man/woman and life like their degenerate hack successors, many of them also had well developed skill/technique, religious beliefs (mostly of an occult nature) and the ability to capture the height of idiosyncratic grace. Unfortunately, such dignified artists are far and few between nowadays. When I found out that untermensch "artist" Andreas Serrano's *Piss-Christ* photograph was finally destroyed (after being vandalized various times beforehand) on May 17, 2011, I couldn't help but to wickedly snicker. After all, Dada artists like Max Ernst had more talent and expression in their actual piss than a poor modern blasphemous artist like Serrano has in his entire body of work. When compared to a film like *La femme 100 têtes*, *Piss-Christ* seems like nothing more than the polluted and recycled urine that it was engulfed in, as Serrano's work is glaring evidence in regards to the total and (unfortunate) bankruptcy of modern art. Whereas *Piss-Christ* is quite stupid and disposable (thankfully, it was disposed) that was literally made from the rancid urine of a posturing pseudo-artist, *La femme 100 têtes* is a delightfully intriguing and inquisitive work that provokes thought in Christians, Satanists, and nonbelievers alike. If you're one of those oh-so rare discerning cinephiles that is looking for a totally distinct and equally liberating film, *La femme 100 têtes* offers such a delectable and monumental cinematic

affair.

It is apparent that the director of the film, Eric Duvivier, is one of those tenuous and anomalous filmmakers who rightfully approaches cinema as a serious artistic medium, for *La femme 100 têtes* is a work that features the godly level of experimentation explored by such master auteur filmmaker's as F.W. Murnau, Carl Th. Dreyer, and Kenneth Anger. Despite being shot in black-and-white, the short is more colorful than an unending rollercoaster of rainbows on fire. To call Duvivier a winsome cine-maniac auteur would be a terrible and misleading understatement, as every single shot contained within the film has more going on in both theme and visuals than the entirety of your typical Hollywood lackluster blockbuster, for the *La femme 100 têtes* is a pleasant cock-and-ball-buster where the *mise-en-scène* is comprised of otherworldly seasons of ferocious felicity, thus throwing the viewer into a Dadaist abyss of evil eros and Luciferian female dictatorship. During one scene in the film, a gluttonous slob obliviously carries on eating as the building he is housed in collapses before his food-obsessed eyes. Personally, I like to see that scene as a metaphor (although this was obviously not the director's intent) for brilliant films like *La femme 100 têtes*, as while art is collapsing and disappearing from the modern Occidental world, the general public stays magnetized to the soulless and equally irrelevant works of platitude and dribble that are tiresomely released by the malignant Tinseltown monster. Facts may tend to be stranger than fiction, but the phantasmagorical world of *La femme 100 têtes* is more magical than the wildest of real human dreams. If the world as we now it really is on the short road to Armageddon as many people seem to think, *La femme 100 têtes* is a rapturous filmic prophecy to that somewhat likely scenario. In the age of Kali Yuga, Max Ernst is certainly one of the greatest saints, thus, by creating *La femme 100 têtes*; Eric Duvivier proved he is one of the German Dadaist artist most studious and proficient monk disciples.

-Ty E

TWEEK CITY

Eric G. Johnson (2005)

Tweek City is the kind of film that i can get used to. A film which gives you very little expectations except for the lead actor. A film that takes a formula and adds it's own quips to it. An intelligent, yet haunting film documenting the personal decay of a sad soul. Giuseppe Andrews plays Bill, a man who refuses to sleep due to his reoccurring nightmares. For this reason, he takes speed nearly everyday, living from his speed tweek and walking the streets at night. Soon, accidents begin occurring, and his frightful past begins to catch up to him, in a hellish way. Tweek City is a film that lives within itself. It doesn't stray onto unfamiliar turf, but provides for an entirely new cinematic experience. It manages to provoke necessary thoughts and shock and horrify you, while still giving you that much needed laugh. I'd be lying if i said i thought this film would be good without Andrews, but therein lies the myth. Tweek City feels chock full of Andrew's own work, almost as if this part was wrote for him. The films own view of the modern Jew was also quite hilarious. I wonder if Andrews really thinks of them as low as he admits in his film. Tweek City features a droning, pulsing score that echo's his own sanity being shaken to the core. Paranoia and lust accompany this mans journey to find bliss. The film's very own ending even surpasses the brilliance of The Believer's own. Sexual confusion is at foot and plays a prominent role in his inability to connect with any person. Maybe this explains why Giuseppe is a recluse. The only thing that frustrated me, was the optical blurring. It was a bit unnecessary. It takes it's low budget indie theme and propels it to places where few have wandered; a wasteland of personal films bent on the destruction of your own emotions. Tweek City is highly recommended viewing material, especially for any fans of Giuseppe Andrews. Deus Ex Machina's have never been so insightful.

-Maq

Eric M. Nilsson (1968)

Bernardo Bertolucci's pro-Marxist epic 1900 is quite the disappointment. Despite being a fan of Bertolucci and his perverse commie films, 1900 could quite possibly be the biggest failure of the Italian director's long and for the most part successful career. The film stars two international (not Italian) heavyweights Robert De Niro and Gerard Depardieu. These two actors play childhood friends who later become enemies due to their obvious class differences.

Bertolucci seemed to only have two focuses when directing 1900 that ultimately destroyed this mess of an "Epic." First, Bertolucci focuses on the sexual differences between the "honorable" proletarian and the "cowardly" capitalist. The proletarian (poor worker) seems born to screw as shown by Bertolucci's emphasis on a young worker's sexuality (that borders on child pornography). The capitalist child is sexually inferior and shows great admiration for his proletarian friend's sexual potency. Like many communist fetishists, Bertolucci seems most interested in analyzing the sexual differences between both social classes. The second focus of 1900 ties in with the first focus. The proletarian is portrayed as honorable, strong, and stoic. As you can expect, the capitalist is portrayed as cowardly, weak, depressed, and self-loathing.

Many of the actors featured in 1900 lack chemistry with one another. I assume that Bernardo Bertolucci casted De Niro and Depardieu due to their international statuses. I just see it as sacrilegious of Bertolucci to not cast real Italians in the lead roles. The two leaders aren't really believable as "best friends" from different classes. The closest they seem to get is when De Niro touches Depardieu's genitals as they both attempt to share a lady.

I found Donald Sutherland's role as Atilla the sadistic Italian fascist to be the most powerful performance. This blue eyed and blond haired devil finds enjoyment in breaking a child's skull open against a wall. Atilla is portrayed in a way that would even make Steven Spielberg's caricatures of "Nazis" look tame. For some insane reason, Bernardo Bertolucci (like most Marxist and Marxist sympathizers) believes communists to be heroes. The facts have proven that the number of people Marxists have killed make fascists look tame in comparison. Bertolucci's Freudian projection (portraying fascists as killers and proletarians as peaceful) of sorts is obvious as his sexual perversity. I am sure Bertolucci has dreams of raping young fascists with his "revolutionary" hero Leon Trotsky.

In one of the proletarians most honorable moments, they cover Atilla in horse feces. These dirty poor proletarians have no problem rubbing a wild animal's rectum in hope of filling their hands with shit to be thrown to a mean ol' fascist. Bernardo Bertolucci has made it clear that fecal felons are the most honorable of antifascist heroes. As you can expect, Atilla takes revenge in the form of bullets and proletarian death.

The moral of 1900: do not make a five hour epic focusing on just two personal obsessions. Anyone that has seen a film by Bernardo Bertolucci knows that the director loves bizarre sexual situations and poor communists. Devoting an epic to those two things just isn't going to work. It took me a couple of weeks to finish 1900 and it felt like I watched a television mini-series that went on way longer than it should have.

-Ty E

KIDNAPPED
KIDNAPPED

Eric Mitchell (1978)

Out of all the film remakes I have ever seen, *Kidnapped* (1978) directed by French-born No Wave auteur Eric Mitchell (*The Way it Is* or *Eurydice in the Avenues, A Matter of Facts*) has to be the most patently pointless and uniquely unbelievable, as a work that is not much more than an equally static Super-8 color reworking of Andy Warhol's black-and-white S&M-oriented Anthony Burgess adaptation *Vinyl* (1965) starring pretentious drug-addled homo poets Gerard Malanga and Ondine and all-too-tragic heiress Edie Sedgwick in one of her very first underground film roles (although oftentimes credited as her first film role, the emotionally damaged Factory diva previously appeared in the Ronald Tavel penned Warhol feature *Horse* (1965)). While Warhol's adaptation is at least notable for predating Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film as an adaptation of Burgess' dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and somehow even managed to earn an entry in the popular film reference book *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* (2003) due to its somewhat revolutionary meta-barebones approach to filmmaking, Mitchell's debut feature is only really notable for demonstrating how much various No Wave filmmakers merely copied off the absurdly amateurish Factory brand of filmmaking. Indeed, as described in the classic text *Midnight Movies* (1983) co-written by rare fellow Hollywood-hating Hebrews J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Mitchell's first film, *KIDNAPPED*, consisted of fifteen unedited super-eight rolls spiced end to end in a poverty-row rehash of the Warhol Factory's assembly-line method. (The film was even blandly billed as "A 1960s underground movie happening today.") A few jittery extroverts stimulated by drugs, Mitchell's on-screen direction, the cue sheets bluntly taped to the wall, and the new-wave music blaring from a plastic phonograph on the floor jostle each other and the ever-panning camera within the cramped, harshly lit confines of the filmmaker's barren Lower East Side living room. When not trading insults, the cast vaguely pretends to have abducted a wealthy industrialist (Mudd Club owner Steve Mass) and are half-heartedly beginning to torture Mass as the camera runs out of film in midsentence." Like *Vinyl*, *Kidnapped* is the sad and pathetic yet nonetheless sometimes engaging result of a considerably lazy and technically inept artist merely placing his decidedly dopey dope fiend friends in front of a camera and getting them to reveal how superlatively stupid and passively nihilistic they are, among other things. In short, Mitchell's film is a shockingly grating and preposterously prosaic 62-minute celluloid endurance test that ultimately rewards the viewer with nothing aside from the opportunity to mock neo-bohemians and obnoxious art fags from the rotten Big Apple.

Like the pre-Morrissey Warhol films, Mitchell's proudly lackluster Super-8 abortion is mostly comprised of a couple high-as-a-kite hipster dullards pos-

turing for the camera like mind-numbingly obnoxious narcissistic toddlers and mumbling about absolutely nothing of value while trying in vain to seem glamorous, sophisticated, and covertly chic, thereupon making for an occasionally unintentionally marginally entertaining sad joke at the expense of the hopelessly inept filmmaker and especially the would-be-superstars, who are so hopelessly bored with life that they cannot even bother to fuck or be passively fucked, especially the male 'characters.' Somewhat interestingly, Kidnapped was shot by No Wave filmmaker turned painter James Nares (Rome 78', No Japs at My Funeral), who also came from the Warhol/Morrissey school of filmmaking and stated of his work as the sort of 'anti-cinematographer' in the documentary Blank City (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, "Eric asked me to shoot his film KIDNAPPED. It had a beautiful structure. It was just like rolls of Super-8 and we shot one roll, shot the next, and then shot the next and cut them together and that was the movie." Nares would also go on to shoot degenerate avant-garde jazz saxophonist John Lurie's No Wave anti-sci-fi flick Men in Orbit (1979), which features both the director and Mitchell tripping on acid while pretending to be astronauts in outerspace in a work that was actually shot in the former's dilapidated apartment. Indubitably, Mitchell's homemade anti-anti-terrorist feature is even more amateurish seeming than Nares describes it, as a sort of post-Warholian celluloid wart that is hidden somewhere on the ass of NYC underground filmmaking and thankfully will only be remembered by those individuals masochistic enough to wade neck-deep through a sea of celluloid shit. Of course, as a work where some East Asian hipster bitch who seems terribly sexually repressed accuses a bunch of No Wave figures, including of auteur Mitchell, of being closeted fags, Kidnapped is not a total waste of life, especially if you like it when sickeningly self-conscious posturing scenester fags attempt to create 'ironic' art and unwittingly create something that makes a total mockery of them and their rather remarkably rotten work.

The first film in a loose trilogy preceding Red Italy (1978) and Underground U.S.A. (1980), Kidnapped was described by Mitchell himself as being highly derivative, or as the auteur once stated himself, "My first approach was to make a comment on what was around me at the time. That's why I made KIDNAPPED. I began by trying to figure out a definite style. The style was a rip-off, but I was very interested in making the reference. I liked it a lot at the time; I was completely nuts about it." While fundamentally being more or less the same in terms of style, structure, and amateurishness, Mitchell's film is slightly different from Warhol's Vinyl in that it was shot on color Super-8 film as opposed to black-and-white 16mm, as well as inspired by the half-cracked kraut rock star revolutionaries of the Baader-Meinhof Gang as opposed to being adapted from a Burgess novel. A work that was shot in one day and was never edited, Mitchell described the film in Blank City as, "It was like punks-on-speed and terrorists-on-valium," yet it would probably better be described as poofs-with-hissy-fits

KIDNAPPED

and hopelessly horny fag hags on PMS. In other words, *Kidnapped* features a couple posturing hipsters incessantly babbling about things they know nothing about like sex and revolutionary politics, yet ultimately saying nothing, at least nothing of any intrinsic value, thus making the work a perfect example of a true landmark 'No Wave' flick, as a playfully plodding piece of pseudo-arthouse 'high schlock' with no production values, no real actors, no plot/script/storyline, and of course no discernible point.

Like an aesthetically autistic punk take on Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) in terms of giving the illusion of being much longer than it actually is due to seemingly being all shot in one take in a claustrophobic apartment inhabited by morally retarded young hipsters sporting mostly goofy clothes, *Kidnapped* begins with horrendous pan shots of the flat juxtaposed with a grating art-punk-jazz song that gives the viewer a good idea of the antisocial essence of the film. For a good portion of the film, especially during the beginning, the character's heads are cut out of the frame in a fairly annoying way that makes it seem like cinematographer James Nares fell asleep at the camera. At the beginning of the film, Chinese-American cunt Anya Phillips (who was the one-time girlfriend of No Wave saxophonist James Chance) says to No Wave diva Patti Astor (of Amos Poe's *The Foreigner* (1978) and Anders Grafstrom's *The Long Island Four* (1980)), "You know, you should come by my flat sometime. We can talk about politics or something." Since Astor does not seem too interested in dyking out with a cunt chink as demonstrated by her remark "I am a one-man woman," Phillips complains, "What do you think I'm going to do, jump on a big dildo?" and continues to bitch in an insufferable fashion. Eventually, Astor gets annoyed and complains to Phillips that she does not want to go to her "slimy apartment" or have her sticking her face in her "twat." Indeed, as she bitches, Astor does not feel like a "cheap dyke" and will certainly not allow a slant-eyed Chinese carpet-muncher to dine on her gristle-gripper. When auteur Eric Mitchell also attempts to hit on Astor by saying patently preposterous things to her like, "I think you're really gorgeous...I think you're really beautiful...I think you're really magnificent...I think you're magnificent [...] You're so fabulous," she is less than impressed. In a pathetic attempt to use his dubious reputation as a novice filmmaker, Mitchell also attempts to swoon Astor into bed by proclaiming, "Every inch of your body stinks of celluloid" and "It really reeks of celluloid," but she puts him in his pathetic place by retorting, "I don't give a shit about your image because I don't have an image."

When flagrant fag Gordon Stevenson (who directed the somewhat unconventional No Wave flick *Ecstatic Stigmatic* (1980) before dying of AIDS not long after) goes on a clichéd quasi-commie rant where he self-righteously declares that rich people are uncultivated pigs that cannot dress and like sporting vulgar blue jeans, Phillips becomes extremely agitated and hatefully states to him, "I think that's a bunch of reactionary crap. I mean, I have never seen anybody

so reactionary as you. You know, people like you should be shot dead...Run over and shot dead. Anyway, as far as I'm concerned." After Stevenson retorts, "Just frustrated, just really frustrated," Phillips accuses him of being a hypocrite and states, "If you don't like these rich pigs, just blow them off. Nobody is going to stop you...You're just too scared, too scared to do anything." After her prosaic pseudo-political rant, Phillips gets somewhat flirty with Stevenson and gives him a backhanded compliment of sorts when she declares, "In some ways, you're kind of cute...But you're probably just another fag and I'm sick of hanging around fags." Since Monsieur Mitchell does not like cunt chicks accusing his homeboys of being homos, he defends Stevenson by telling Phillips that she is an "asshole" and "phony," among other childish things that make him seem like a toddler suffering from an intolerable case of the terrible twos. At this point, Phillips completely loses her cool, states to both men, "You're all fags. Every one of you," and recommends that they both get out of the closet because, as she less than eloquently states, "It couldn't hurt...that much."

Totally oblivious to the fact that Phillips is just acting like a bitch because she is in dire need of some dick and maybe a little cunt, Mitchell goes on a girly man rant while smoking a fat joint where he verbally vomits on her, "You really think you're some kind of revolutionary, huh? I'll tell you, you're really a phony one, a phony revolutionary because I haven't seen you do anything yet. You haven't done shit. Alls you've done is talked about it...You haven't done anything yet [...] Have you put any bombs anywhere? Have you kidnapped anybody?" After Mitchell gets down verbally reaming Philips, Stevenson goes on a similarly aimless rant where he thankfully decries the "liberal humanist lie." Out of nowhere, everyone eventually begins dancing to the Rolling Stones cover of "Satisfaction" by Devo that is playing on a record player in the room and Mitchell eventually gets in a girly fight with a wuss in a leather-jacket in the process. After the dance, Stevenson begins hitting on Mitchell and apologizes to him in regard to an assumed botch sex session by stating, "I couldn't get it up for you [...] I couldn't get it up for anyone at the moment, sorry." Seeming to have the sexual habits of a psychopath, Mitchell replies to Stevenson, "I can do the same job myself. Anyway, I think it's a lot better afterwards...because you don't have any hassle. See, I don't like sex very much at all. I don't like anything that much." When Astor attempts to sleep with sod Stevenson and even offers him \$30, he rudely begins laughing and replies, "There's just something about you I don't like. Too fucking bourgeois or something." In a rather valiant attempt to prove Phillips wrong in regard to her claims that they are nothing but whiny armchair revolutionaries, the raging revolutionary queers kidnap a young businessman (played by real-life business man Steve Mass, who owned the Mudd Club) and spend the last ten minutes of the film 'torturing' him in a lackluster fashion while he is blindfolded and tied to a chair. Since the victim is "capitalist swine" and all, Mitchell forces him to oink like a pig. In the end, the victim softly states "kill

KIDNAPPED

me,” so Phillips fulfills his wish by shooting him in the head, though naturally the gun fails to make a ‘bang’ sound.

Without a doubt, *Kidnapped* is one of the most absurdly amateurish and incredibly pointless and meandering films that I have ever seen and I say that as someone who is somewhat familiar with both Troma and the so-called Mumblecore movement, yet I’d watch it any day over the latest Michael Bay or Steven Spielberg blockbuster because it at least has some character, charm, and a sense of humor, not to mention the fact that it mocks the dilettante guerilla politics of far-left terrorists, namely rock star commies like Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin. In that sense, Mitchell’s film anticipates the self-critical left-wing art-porn flicks of Canadian cocksucker Bruce LaBruce, especially *The Raspberry Reich* (2004) aka *The Revolution Is My Boyfriend*. Somewhat curiously, aside from Warhol’s *Vinyl*, *Kidnapped* seems to most resemble the classic homo hardcore porn flick *Boy ‘Napped* (1975) aka *Boy-napped!* starring Jamie Gillis and mustached dick-stabber/disco singer/AIDS victim Wade Nichols (aka Dennis Posa) and directed by German-American exploitation auteur turned gay pornographer David E. Durston (*The Love Statue*, *I Drink Your Blood*). Indeed, if Mitchell’s film featured a sex scene or two, it might be considered a classic porn chic era fuck flick as opposed to a forgotten No Wave classic. Despite the minimalistic art-trash aesthetic of *Kidnapped*, Mitchell has more cultivated cinematic influences than one might assume, or as he stated in the doc *Blank City*, “I really liked Warhol for the concept, Fassbinder for the ensemble of actors, Pasolini for his integrity, and Melville for his hat and sunglasses.” Speaking of Fassbinder, compared to films where the New German Cinema alpha-auteur satirizes the senseless behavior of self-stylized commie revolutionaries like *Die Niklashauser Fahrt* (1970) aka *The Niklashausen Journey*, *Mutter Küsters Fahrt zum Himmel* (1975) aka *Mother Küsters’ Trip to Heaven* and *Die dritte Generation* (1979) aka *The Third Generation*, *Kidnapped* seems like a botched attempt at a hipster philistine circle jerk. For better or worse, Mitchell’s film would have a somewhat notable influence on both No Wave cinema and the Cinema of Transgression movement, especially the oeuvre of husband-wife team Beth B and Scott B (*Black Box*, *Vortex*). Somewhat surprisingly, Mitchell eventually became a remarkably more cultivated filmmaker as demonstrated by his ‘magnum opus’ *Underground U.S.A.* (1980), which demonstrates eclectic influences ranging from Josef von Sternberg to Billy Wilder’s *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) to Paul Morrissey’s *Heat* (1972). Additionally, Mitchell’s feature *The Way it Is* or *Eurydice in the Avenues* (1985)—a work where a chick portraying Eurydice in an adaptation of Jean Cocteau’s *Orphée* (1950) aka *Orpheus* is found dead in Tompkins Square Park and where the East Village is portrayed as a sort of Cocteauian underworld—is notable for featuring both Steve Buscemi and Vincent Gallo in early pre-fame acting roles. While indubitably Mitchell’s most eclectically mediocre work, I personally somewhat appreciate *Kidnapped* to some marginal

degree because it demonstrates that NYC art fags are just as stupid, lazy, and dirty as ghetto crackheads.

-Ty E

UNDERGROUND U.S.A.
UNDERGROUND U.S.A.

Eric Mitchell (1980)

If American 'No Wave' actor-writer-director Eric Mitchell (*The Way It is*) is remembered for anything, it is probably his role as the lead pseudo-blond European secret agent Max Menace in Amos Poe's excruciating exercise in punk rock puffery *The Foreigner* (1978) – a film that has aged about as gracefully as Lady Gaga's latest pair of underwear, as a cinematic work that aspired to be on a level with the best of European arthouse but ultimately has as much artistic merit as a kosher kraut slapstick flick like *The Roaring Fifties* (1983) aka *Die wilden Fünfziger* directed by Peter Zadek. Admittedly, Mitchell's own films (or at least one of them) are slightly more interesting than anything Poe has ever done with his satire of the posh and prissy NYC art scene, *Underground U.S.A.* (1980), being what some believe is his 'unsung masterpiece,' even if the film owes its entire aesthetic package to Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey yet makes a feeble attempt to lampoon the Factory films it owes its rather lethargic proto-hipster lifeblood to. As Mitchell stated in an interview for the book *Destroy All Movies!!! The Complete Guide to Punks on Film* (2010), "I came into the scene through Amos Poe. I was acting in his movies, and also going to acting school at the Lee Strasberg Institute. After I was in *Unmade Beds* and *The Foreigner*, I felt like I could make my own movie." And, indeed, Mr. Mitchell made his first movie, *Kidnapped* (1978) – an equally unwatchable, innately incoherent, and blatantly unedited Super-8 remake of Andy Warhol's *Vinyl* (1965), an aggressively apathetic adaptation of Anthony Burgess' dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) that Stanley Kubrick would later adapt into a masterpiece, thus proving the incompetency of the rotten Big Apple's 'arthouse' auteur filmmakers. Like with *Vinyl*, I had the rare and less than delightful opportunity to view *Kidnapped* and, indeed, if anything is good about the film, it is its title as the relentlessly redundant work made me feel sadistically shanghaied for the 62 minutes or so that I subjected myself to such masochistic movie viewing. Luckily, with his second film, Mitchell ambitiously (relatively speaking, of course) decided to make a film with more than a handful of long and aimless indoor shots and thus it would be a slightly more enthralling film, although it took me no less than 3 or 4 times to get through *Underground U.S.A.* – a sleep-inducing spoof about the pretentious poof-infested NYC art scene of the late-1970s/early-1980s starring the seemingly damaged director himself as the bisexual hustler anti-hero Victor in a film that probably is the cinematic equivalent of what it felt like to die from AIDS while surrounded by a bunch of positively pompous fashion victims during the early epidemic that inspired kraut queer auteur Rosa von Praunheim to make a documentary in the city in the late-1980s. Undoubtedly, the essence of *Underground U.S.A.* can be summed up with a cold cock of a character's line from the film: "I hate emotion." If you ever felt like senselessly suffering the

shallow and soulless insincerity of New York's finest art fags, fag hags, and hysterical homos in drag in a would-be-wild-and-wanton world of aesthetic and emotional sterility, *Underground U.S.A.* is most certainly the film for you.

At least as far as *Underground U.S.A.* protagonist Victor – an ill-fated foreigner (indeed, it seems that Eric Mitchell loves playing Europeans) who rather reluctantly came to America long ago, only to sell his cock on the city block – is concerned, the life of a sexually-flexible NYC hustler is not life at all, but he is more than willing to 'upgrade' his sad situation, even if it means sleeping with rather repellent and, in some cases, borderline brain-dead people. After dancing like a restless retard in what seems to be a homo hoedown with some random shit-stabber in a gutter, Victor is confronted by a woman who screams, "If only I'd known you were a fag like the rest of them. God, what a waste." When Victor comes home, he suffers similar verbal abuse from his ex-drag-queen, flamer of a roommate (played by Warhol tranny Jackie Curtis, star of Paul Morrissey's *Flesh* (1968) and *Women in Revolt* (1971)), an intrinsically insufferable queen-like queer who styles himself like James Dean's Jim Stark from *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and even has a portrait of the too-young-to-die Hollywood rebel icon on his apartment wall. Needless to say, Vic's (no)dick of a roommate kicks him out after he tells the miserable man-woman that he was "more fun" when he was "a drag queen" and the hustler hits the streets and looks for someone else to hustle, eventually meeting a beautiful and flirtatious philistine broad with bleach blonde hair and a New Romanticist-like fashion sense named Vickie ('no wave' diva Patti Astor, star of various Amos Poe films and *The Long Island Four* (1980) starring Klaus Nomi), who used to be a popular movie star, but is now only left with a hungry sense of narcissism that is poorly fed, thus the down-and-out dick-peddler makes for a temporary fix. While Victor assumes Vickie is rich and his ticket to a free lunch and luxury, she is merely a fallen art princess who pops pills at the bequest of her creepy and conspiring cocksucker friends, including a new wave queer named Kenneth (portrayed by real-life art critic René Ricard, the man who helped Jean-Michel Basquiat gain fame), who finds the hustler's motives quite dubious, especially when he is forced to allow the dirty boy to borrow his expensive cock-sucker clothing. After suffering a number of grueling encounters with exceedingly abhorrent and obnoxious art fags who freely admit that "even bad art makes good money" and speak callous gossip amongst one another, especially about pathological pill-popper Vickie, Victor finally loses his cool and admits to himself regarding his current arrangement with the fallen actress, "And now I was stuck with her. I thought she was loaded, but then I find out she has no money. That woman is completely insane. To tell the truth, I'd like to get out of here as soon as possible. This scene is pretty boring and getting older all the time. I wonder what she is going to do next. I am really stuck between Kenneth, the chauffeur, and her. This whole setup is a mess." In the end, the leading lady takes one too many pills and Victor

UNDERGROUND U.S.A.

rather impotently admits to a barmaid (played by John Water Superstar Cookie Mueller) as to why he is no fun to be around, "I don't know...I never have any fun in the sun," in what is indubitably the truest line in the seemingly endless entirety that is *Underground U.S.A.* – a completely cynical yet hyper hypocritical and futile attempt at satirizing a scene that the film itself seems to be a virtual broken mirror of.

While, not unlike Paul Morrissey's *Heat* (1972), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss* (1982), and *Hustler White* (1996) directed by Bruce LaBruce and Rick Castro, *Underground U.S.A.* was an attempt to create a sardonic parody and radical update of the film noir classic *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) directed by Billy Wilder, albeit mixed with artless pretensions of mundane minimalism that put the Mumblecore movement to shame, with director Eric Mitchell proving yet again one more reason as to why New York City has yet to produce a single film movement that is worthy of being named in the same sentence with its European counterparts. While Mitchell admitted the following in an interview regarding *Underground U.S.A.* that, "it was like a ricochet, a bounced comment on the Warhol scene and the No Wave scene. We thought we were the coolest people in the world, and we took it upon ourselves to behave the way we thought Nico or whoever would," the filmmaker seems to have missed the quite blatant and incendiary irony of Paul Morrissey's anti-liberal comedies that more than aptly tore apart the gaping asshole of the asinine 'art scene' they were shat out of. What made Morrissey's films infinitely more humorous and culturally relevant in comparison to, say *Underground U.S.A.*, and the rest of the nauseating 'no wave' films is that the Factory auteur was a true 'counter-revolutionary' as a self-described "right-winger" who cinematically spit and pissed on the so-called sexual revolution and the culturally vacant counter-culture movements it sired, with Mitchell's subculture being the most superficial extreme of such 'no culture' insipidity. Indeed, when your only frame of reference is the very dead-end pseudo-subculture you hope to spoof as was Eric Mitchell's, it can only have self-incriminating and unintentionally self-mocking consequences as is the case with *Underground U.S.A.* – a film made with the intent of being legendary and a piece of 'cult' cinema as a sort of NYC equivalent to the early films of Jean-Luc Godard or Rainer Werner Fassbinder, but it was ultimately, quite rightfully, condemned to the celluloid garbage heap of history. Indeed, if you're looking for the film *Underground U.S.A.* strived to be, but is that and much more, Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982) has both the fashion sense and attitude, but also space aliens fiending for heroin and jaded Jewesses lusting after Aryan UFO hunters, which is more than any cinephile could ever ask for, especially considering the curious context. Indeed, *Underground U.S.A.* ain't associated with the 'Blank Generation' for nothing.

-Ty E

WILD MUSSELS

Erik de Bruyn (2000)

Out of all the white countries in the world, I would have to assume that the Netherlands has the smallest rowdy red-blooded redneck population and the fact that a small proletarian village in Bergen op Zoom could produce a filmmaker as idiosyncratic and cultivated as Adriaan Ditvoorst (Paranoia, De Witte Waan aka White Madness) seems to be proof of that. Indeed, I am willing to bet that the average Dutch lumpenprole is more cultured and well read than the average American college-educated bourgeois professional, though judging by the film *Wilde mossels* (2000) aka *Wild Mussels* directed by Erik de Bruyn (Nadine, J. Kessels), it seems that at least one area of the Netherlands, Zeeland (or 'Zealand' in English)—the westernmost province of the country which is comprised of a group of islands (hence its name, which translates to 'Sealand') that thrives on a largely tourist economy (apparently, the dreaded krauts love vacationing there)—seems to have a less than cultivated peasant population that would fit in well in the American rural Deep South. Undoubtedly, with its adrenalin-packed combination of lowbrow humor, danger-loving longhaired dudes on motorcycles, lecherous domineering women with ridiculous haircuts, incessant dope-smoking and dipsomania, crappy radio rock music, and even Confederate flags, De Bruyn's film is probably the only Dutch film ever made that would appeal to fans of the hit American redneck soap opera *Sons of Anarchy*, yet it is a relatively fun flick as a sort Dutch tragicomic mix between Federico Fellini's *I Vitelloni* (1953) and Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) about a young Zealand-bred motorbike-riding bastard who feels trapped in an ostensible paradise and dreams of moving to Dublin after meeting a smooth-talking burnt-out Irish dude with a glaringly goofy mullet.

A sort of Dutch (anti)Heimat flick featuring magic realist elements and a soundtrack viewers will either love or love to hate (I fall into the latter group) that includes songs by Nashville Pussy (who actually appear in the film), Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, Green Lizard, Deftones, and the director himself, *Wild Mussels* is indubitably one of the least pretentious and most accessible 'art-house' works that I have ever seen as a film that anyone who has grown up in a small and isolated rural area, especially of the seaside sort, can relate to, at least to some extent. As someone that both grew up in a small rural area and later moved to a seaside town, I found that De Bruyn's debut offered, in a somewhat unintentional way, a strange bit of slight *déjà vu* for me from a past life (indeed, during my early adult years, most of my pals were beer-chugging rockers-cum-motorcyclists that dreamed of getting out of town and making something out of their lives but ultimately never did), and although the film may be plagued by a tidal wave of moronic haircuts, a spastic symphony of retard rock, and a couple 'false notes,' its 'metalhead melancholia' ultimately rings true. Directed by a

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fellow who somewhat made his debut in the Dutch cinema world by appearing in Eric De Kuyper's porno homo experimental celluloid odyssey *Pink Ulysses* (1990), *Wild Mussels* is a perpetually blue-tinted lumpenprole celluloid poem that, although fairly accessible, concludes on a senselessly tragic note that is more in tune with the absurdity of real-life than the putridly positive fantasy realm of unhollywood. Starring reasonably talented leading man Fedja van Huêt of contemporary Dutch classics like Mike van Diem's *Karakter* (1997) aka *Character* and Martin Koolhoven's *AmnesiA* (2001) in an almost unrecognizable role as the deleteriously free-spirited yet perennially dejected lead character, de Bruyn's work is arguably the best 'post-teen rebel' flick ever made as a vulgarly beautiful fever dream about a male threesome that seem to have forgotten they graduated from angst-ridden adolescence about a decade ago and must confront the future or stay trapped in a static seaside nightmare of perennial proletarian monotony.

One gets a pretty good idea what kind of loser antihero Leen (Fedja van Huêt) is during the opening scene of the film where he shares a fat joint with his comrade Jacob (Frederik Brom) and attempts to be 'deep' by discussing an 'alien superbrain,' only for his friend to demystify his fantasies with reality. Leen fantasizes a lot because he has a humdrum job working as a boat mechanic that he is only able to find solace from via smoking, drinking, partying, reckless motorbiking, and other dangerous behavior that hints the antihero has some sort of deep dark death wish. Despite being a hard worker, Leen is living in a state of perpetual adolescence that seems partly the result of the fact that he is a bastard who never knew his professional motorbike father, who he oftentimes thinks about and talks about with his seemingly deceased daddy's Belgian friend Wannes (Josse De Pauw of Dominique Deruddere's *Crazy Love* (1987)), who he sees as a sort of pseudo-father figure. Leen also has a curious relationship with his lecherous mother Noortje (Will van Kralingen), who clearly has incestuous feelings for her son as he apparently resembles his father in both appearance and character. Due to the fact she once abandoned him when he was a child, Leen somewhat resents his whorish mommy, who has no problem flirting with her son the same way she flirts with other men to get what she wants. Noortje is married to an old bald fart that Leen works for named Rinus (Hans Veerman) that she clearly does not love and describes simply as a, "just a roof over my head." While Leen has a questionable relationship with his mommy, he has no problem attracting beautiful women as demonstrated by the fact that he manages to sweet talk a naughty nurse named Janine (Angelique de Bruijne) into taking off her panties in public and giving them to him so he can inhale her feminine secretions. Unfortunately, it seems that Leen has a hard time maintaining anything resembling a romantic relationship as demonstrated by the fact that he has random sex with fat chicks where he fantasizes about Janine and even his mommy. Of course, Leen spends most of his time with his two main pals Jacob and Daan (Frank Lammers), who also share his love of motorbiking but completely lack

his smooth style and daredevil talents. Like his father before him, Leen plans to attend the Bikers Ball in Ostend, but his plans eventually go sour when he bends the frame of his bike after jumping over an entire canal with it.

Ultimately, Leen has an epiphany of sorts after meeting an Irishman that calls himself 'Nowhere Man' (Martin Dunne) after beating two of his friends in an amateur motorcycle race. After causing his two competitors to bite his dust, Leen spots Nowhere Man standing on the side of the road with a broken down car. Using his mechanic talents, Leen fixes the strange mullet-adorned Irish man's car and is repaid with, "A great can of black piss from the Celtic angels." After drinking a beer with the Irishman, Leen finds himself magically transported to an exotic Dublin bar featuring beautiful ginger girls who freely flash their neon red beavers, as well as negro bartenders that sport t-shirts reading 'Zion.' Ultimately, Nowhere Man gives Leen a red cassette tape with his phone number and tells him to come to Ireland, stating, "go into any Celtic pub and you will find me." Needless to say, Leen instantly begins planning to move to Dublin and soon gets it into his head that his love interest Janine will go with him even though the two are not an actual couple, but when he asks her, she flips out and smacks him in a hysterical fashion. Leen also comes up with a moronic idea to rob a local bank, but the heist fails miserably after one of the protagonist's friends accidentally gets shot in the thigh. When Leen's stepfather accidentally drowns in a freak accident at work, Leen's dream of relocating to Dublin comes crashing down as he is forced to takeover the old man's job, thus making him feel all the more trapped in Zeeland, especially considering he now feels obligated to support his widowed mother, who more or less demands that the protagonist stay by blackmailing him with emotions. Meanwhile, Daan goes behind Leen's back and begins dating Janine, thus causing the two lads to get into a bloody fist fight where the friends ultimately make up in the end. When Leen comes by his mother's home one day and she describes how she is planning to move to the city with a pompous business man named Bert (Freak Smink), the protagonist, who has more or less dedicated his life to taking care of his wanton progenitor, loses it and decides to leave Zeeland for good.

After ritualistically burning down his makeshift houseboat home, Leen begins heading out of Zeeland on his motorbike, but at the last minute he decides to make the ultimately fatal mistake of seeing his friends Daan and Jacob play an underground show, especially considering it is the latter's birthday. Naturally, Leen gets good and wasted during the concert to the point where he pours beer on his head while in the moshpit. After the show, a rather inebriated Leen tells his comrades he is leaving while playing Russian Roulette with a gun he stole from Wannes, stating like a true braggart, "Celtic angels, great babes, girls with red pussies, barrels of whisky. You can fly there! All at once, heaven and hell. I'm gonna make it. A garage and bar in one. You can do anything, if you only dare. Just like the Irish, they're just like the wild ones. I'm gonna make it over

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there. A garage and bar. And I'll call it...the Celtic Car Company." Rather tragicomically, right after stating, "Dublin...Greatest city in the world, here I come," Leen accidentally kills himself after pulling the trigger during his rather haphazard game of Russian Roulette. At Leen's funeral, Jacob reads a poem that his friend gave him the night he unwittingly offered himself that ironically reads, "My oh my, tell me why all hard work, and then you die. A spade of sand and you're done...but I, I'm gone." In the end, Jacob, who is not a native Zealander like Leen and Daan, is the only one that manages to leave the island. As Daan mockingly stated to Jacob when he lacked the testicular fortitude to play Russian Roulette with him and fellow Zealander Leen, "outsiders stay outsiders," hence why said outsider was the only character in the film to realize his dream of getting away from the Dutch redneck island.

I have to admit that I found *Wild Mussels* to be a fairly bizarre work in the sense it straddles an inexplicable median between proudly lowbrow beer-chugging bromance buffoonery and transcendental magical realist celluloid art of the existentially intriguing sort. I think the rather preternatural aesthetic essence of the film can be best summed up in a scene where the antihero's quasi-incestuous whore of a mother stands in front of a mirror and German Symbolist/Jugendstil (aka Art Nouveau) painter Franz von Stuck's classic painting *The Sin* (1893) aka *Die Sünde*—a work depicting the embodiment of evil featuring a topless femme fatale with a large serpent wrapped around her body lurking amongst the shadows in a sinister yet seductive fashion—can be seen reflected behind her in a scene that ultimately reveals the character is a sort of figurative of 'Eve' whose behavior inevitably leads to her sole son's rather pathetic demise. Surely, *Wild Mussels* is the relatively contemporary equivalent to Paul Verhoeven's nihilistic cult classic *Spetters* (1980), which also depicts the seemingly accursed lives of a group of lumpenprole motorcyclists who lead senselessly self-destructive lives, though I would have to say that, for better or worse, Erik de Bruyn's work has a more singular and readily recognizable aesthetic that, at least visually speaking, cannot really be compared to any other films. Indeed, with its incessantly ocean blue tint and solacing magic realist scenes of the protagonist drinking beer underwater and hanging out at otherworldly Dublin bars with lecherous mick chicks who have no problem flashing their red beavers to random strangers, *Wild Mussels* is literally and figuratively dripping with an undeniably potent atmosphere that gives the impression that Zeeland has an ethereal essence, even if the film portrays the area as a sort of perennially draining metaphysical prison of sorts that no true local can escape from.

As someone that grew up in a small rural area where most of the people never seemed to manage to move away despite the fact that it seems like they spent most of their time complaining about how much they hated living there and fantasizing about moving away, I found that, despite its incessant fantasy scenes of magical realism, *Wild Mussels* ultimately rings true in terms of expressing

the general mood of feeling like you're both physically and spiritually trapped in the seemingly forsaken hometown of your youth. Notably, when I moved away to college and came back to visit every once in a while, it was quite apparent that my old friends were degenerating by the second by having sex with homely and oftentimes fat chicks, recklessly indulging in hard drugs and cheap booze, and listening to shitty radio rock which altogether collectively became their regular lifestyle while their intellectual curiosity all but evaporated. In fact, I even had a friend who managed to shoot himself in the head like the protagonist of de Bruyn's film but he managed to survive since it only grazed his skull. Of course, when everything is said and done, *Wild Mussels* will always hold a special place in my heart because it demonstrates that even the Dutch can be pothead rednecks with death wishes who listen to superlatively shitty music like the Deftones. In that sense, despite being a fairly idiosyncratic Dutch regional work, de Bruyn's film ultimately says more about the white rural American majority than any Hebraic Hollywood film ever could.

-Ty E

ISLAND OF LOST SOULS
ISLAND OF LOST SOULS

Erle C. Kenton (1932)

Admittedly, I have always been somewhat disappointed by old school Hollywood monster films. Whether it be Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) starring Bela Lugosi or *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) directed by Jack Arnold, I have been consistently letdown by the seemingly overblown reputation of early Hollywood horror flicks, especially when comparing them to the great phantasmagorical cinematic works of German expressionism. One thing that stands out glaringly regarding Hollywood monster movies is the atrociously recherché and inorganic nature of these mostly one-dimensional works, but I guess American audiences were fairly easy to convince during (and after) that era. The other day I took a somewhat hesitant chance on the early biopunk flick *Island of Lost Souls* (1933) directed by Erle C. Kenton, the first cinematic adaptation of H.G. Well's novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). I can veraciously admit that *Island of Lost Souls* is the only early American monster flick that not only exceeded my expectations, but also resonated in my mind a number of days thereafter. Although obviously shot mostly on the restricting confines of a studio set, *Island of Lost Souls* manages to conjure up the eerie atmosphere of a genuine isolated island microcosm that mentally-feeble man-made monsters call home. Dr. Moreau (played royally by a charmingly sinister Charles Laughton) is the undisputed and self-appointed dictator of this island as he satanically created its inhabitants by somehow hybridizing man and animal via vivisection. Of course, things change when a critical quasi-humanist named Edward Parker (played by Richard Arlen) finds himself stranded on Moreau's own morbid maniac version of Gilligan's Island. *Island of Lost Souls* is thematically reminiscent of German horror writer Hanns Heinz Ewers' short story *Mamoloi*, a colonial weird tale featuring an exotic Haitian lady who sacrifices herself for her foreign Aryan lover, as the film features a forbid love affair between the film's protagonist Edward Parker and an exotic panther-woman. Naturally, being a vintage Hollywood production, *Island of Lost Souls* is full of wooden acting and absurdly contrived melodrama, but like most horror films, one can look past these somewhat irritating, consequential flaws.

In our modern and increasingly globalized and homogenized world, one does not always know what to expect when traveling to various parts of the world. With somewhat hostile Turks inhabiting large pockets (many times virtual 'no go zones' for indigenous Teutons) of Berlin, Germany and the nearly complete third-worldization of American cities with hostile and mostly unassimilable immigrants from every underdeveloped nation in the world, one would think that a shadow-hand is consciously speeding up a worldwide civil war and virtual cultural apocalypse of sorts. In *Island of Doctor Moreau*, a science fiction scenario of master versus untermensch is suspensefully played out in a closed-off and

mostly uncharted cosmos of the dysgenically damned. One could even argue that the film is an (unintentional) metaphor for the bloody and genocidal history (slave revolution of 1804) of Haiti when it was still part of the French colony Saint-Domingue. During *Island of Lost Souls*, the exceedingly pompous and obscenely self-confident Dr. Moreau even has the gall to state, "Do you know what it means to feel like God?" (an infamous quote that UK censors found to be most contemptible) in regard to his self-righteous campaign to subvert nature and create subservient hideous beings that are neither men nor animals, but poor creatures who suffer the unideal fate of being somewhere schizophrenically in between. Inevitably, Dr. Moreau's Mephistophelian display of cruelty and pathological narcissism, as well as his incontestable sense of entitlement, leads to his most unpleasant downfall at the peculiar man-paws of his creations/ex-slaves as he arrogantly never considers that his total control over his army of mongrel mammals will one day wane when these half-thinking monstrosities finally realize that freedom and, even destruction of 'society' as it stands, can become a reality. *Island of Lost Souls* is essentially the fictional horror film equivalent of Harvard-educated eugenicist Lothrop Stoddard's prophetic work *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under-man* (1922). Stoddard predicted that, like the manimals in *Island of Lost Souls*, former Western colonies throughout the world would be overthrown and conquered in bloody revolts led by newly confident indigenous populations who were cognizant of the white man's curtailing power in the world. Personally, I found *Island of Lost Souls* symbolic of what one can expect for the future of the Occidental world, only the conclusion of the film is notably less frightening than the very potential dystopian destiny that might occur as a result of never-ending mass revolts spreading like rabid locusts in formerly civilized lands.

One aspect of *Island of Lost Souls* that I found especially captivating is the strikingly realistic appearances of the various manimals, as many of the actors that played these miserable creatures are authentically deformed, apish, and carrying the grand misfortune of owning exaggeratedly sloped foreheads that were quite typical of prehistoric man. I am sure that pioneering Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso would have approved of the casting for *Island of Lost Souls*. I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that today, one can visit any major American city and see certain human-beings that looks as artlessly atavistic, mongrelized, and grotesque as the tragic monster-men of *Island of Lost Souls*. In fact, American horror author H.P. Lovecraft experienced a similar real-life personal horror scenario during his brief migration to New York City during the early 20th century. Lovecraft described new immigrants to NYC as, "The organic things -Italo-Semitic-Mongoloid- inhabiting that awful cesspool could not by any stretch of the imagination be call'd human." In fact, such 'horrifying' privy encounters would influence the iconic sub-humanoid monsters Lovecraft would dream up for his *Weird Tales* and lead to his (somewhat arguable) rep-

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utation as America's greatest writer of horror literature. One could only imagine Lovecraft's reaction were he to visit the increasingly degenerate city today. Like all great science fiction works, *Island of Lost Souls* is a film that manages to combine a pessimistic premonition of the future with fantasy elements that somewhat cryptically manage to chill one's soul.

-Ty E

STEEL AND LACE

Ernest D. Farino (1991)

You'll notice something undeniably special about Mom and Pop video stores of the grand ole' VHS heydays. Following the popularity surge of the Digital Video Disc, most of these tiresome spoof titles offering up soft-core B-movie fun were sold at bargain prices leaving a certain collector foaming at the mouth. An opportunity to purchase various Lamberto Bava titles seems too good to be true. Like many of these titles before it, few or none of these have the hopes of seeing an official DVD release. Steel and Lace is one of the misjudged. While not being a great film by any means, it feels like a real movie should but with an inspired touch of science fiction and comedic properties. After being ferociously raped off screen by a gang of affluent males with their bright careers ahead of them, Clare Wren's denied justice on part of alibi's from the culprits. After taking her life on the very same day, her brother Bruce Davison, a NASA scientist whose specialties revolve around artificial intelligence, decides to recreate her body into a cybernetic android for the sole purpose of TV-YA titillation and murderous revenge. I know what you're thinking and yes, I said the same thing. "Am I in exploitation heaven?" and you won't be disappointed. While the effort does feel like a Lifetime rape/revenge movie aided by the influence of psychedelics, Steel and Lace does have quality kills, over acting zealously on a project as B influenced as this, and some young and coming TV talent as Bruce Davison and David Naughton. The dialogue is tripe and causal Law and Order drivel. Detective talk seems to bother me these days. You'd think that instead of physical training, they'd be forced into taking a personality test as seen in most restaurant businesses. Most, wait no, all of the memorable lines are blurted out by the forensic detective. He goes off on a verbal rampage describing the ingenuity behind the murders. His comments are most funny on arguing over the alleged "strangled while being decapitated" murder. Gaily Morton as Clare Wren delivers a promising role as the crying, infantile woman who'd been desecrated. She later switches roles to play a cold and curious killing machine. Later, you'll see her "CPU" when Bruce Davison inserts her visual memory into his hardware. The android effects could be easily realized as an important piece of science fiction fan lore. Steel and Lace is a very entertaining film that leads up as a B-movie unkempt with trashy moments and an incredibly small budget. Director Ernest D. Farino will later move on to directing Moonbeam's select Josh Kirby episodes. It's only justice to see someone of oblivious childish trash-exploitation that will grace the screens of networks like TNT one day. The absolute surprise this film is holding back on is the moving and powerful ending. An amateur director looks past his restrictions and delivers a stunning point-of-view from a free fall by sacrificing a camera. If you're scoping for VHS treasures that won't be magnificently realized on a higher format, look no further. I doubt we'll see Steel

STEEL AND LACE

and Lace on Bluray any time soon. Keep crossing your fingers for a chance to see this hidden gem.

-mAQ

SURVIVING THE GAME

Ernest R. Dickerson (1994)

I'd been meaning to see *Surviving the Game* for some time. I am a fan of the classic story and film *The Most Dangerous Game*. It sounded like a contemporary renewal of the timeless classic but what I got was more or less Ice T slinging Ebonics faster than the survival tactics he gratuitously attempts to display. After all, I was only expecting a decent film but shame on me. *Surviving the Game* may have been a bare victory but no one reaps the rewards. Ice T plays Mason; a belligerent ignorant waste of a human life. In reality, he is a rapper turned actor. One of the first if I do say so myself. In this time, these rappers had a broad range of acting jobs, not just a crime/gangster film to which they are limited to in this modern age. The downfall of quality for sure. The plot of this film has been disguised, along with *Hard Target's*, to show sympathy towards homeless people. The truth is far from. This is a film that undoubtedly ends up degrading black people and their "street smart cred". Ice T spends his time being an ignorant bastard who likes to pretend he has something smart to say. He isn't very good at the English language, not even with one-liners. He finds a hot ticket to get dough and takes it. This winds him up with a German tycoon (Rutger Hauer) with his black assistant, a Jew and his son, a sociopathic psychiatrist (Gary Busey) and an emotional random. They fine dine while commenting on the scruffy look and attitude of the ignorant guest. What Ice T doesn't know is that he is actually on the menu. Cue the "Get the fuck out of here. 10 minute head start" scene and that's where the film actually ends. The rest is just filler. Throughout the course of this film, these self proclaimed hunters are constantly making folly's and undermining the Negro star. Eventually he uses cigarettes, his Timberlands, and the other tools of his Urban survival guide to make his way to freedom. In this film you will witness Ice T saying "Fuck" every 2 minutes. The promise of action is what really lures us in and this film has none. The high point of the film is Gary Busey and he is dispatched quick. Rutger Hauer never was given the chance to make this into a real cinematic treat and we go home unfulfilled. By the end of the film, Ice T is muddy and grimy, soiled with nature's excrement similar to the scene in *Predator*. Only this time, it forms a natural Blackface with Ice T's bloody lips. Such elements like these just give this film a sour flavor. It's times like these that makes me appreciate absurdities in cinema. I just wish that I could respect this film more. Ernest Dickerson is a no-talent hack that only really excels in directing story lines that were already preconceived, ala Television drama's. *Surviving the Game* is a game you won't want to survive after Busey is written out of the script.

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TALES FROM THE CRYPT: DEMON KNIGHT
TALES FROM THE CRYPT: DEMON KNIGHT

Ernest R. Dickerson (1995)

Tales from the Crypt: Demon Knight is an early prelude to what could be called a Tales from the Crypt: Motion picture saga, including Bordello of Blood. Demon Knight carries the same deadpan delights and satire directed towards the industry with a monster mash theme. Constant puns are used such as Screampay and Hell-O to accentuate a fluid horror theme within the cinema dimension. All this thanks to the ever-so eccentric Crypt Keeper, one of America's most beloved horror icons. Demon Knight opens as a informal music advertisement. I counted 2 popular "rock" songs playing during the short opening credits. The silliness fades away soon after, allowing you to absorb the scenarios and ultimately, Billy Zane's amazing performance - as always. William "Die Hard 2" Sadler is on the run from a mysterious figure played by Billy Zane. Billy Zane plays a whimsical elder demon on a quest to retrieve a relic containing the blood of the late Christ. The very portrait of this film is painted by the maniacal Billy Zane. As what any horror fan should say, the presence of Billy Zane is enough to make even the most worthless film enjoyable. He had performances in The Mad, Titanic, Zoolander, and Invincible. Because of his acting, he made Titanic almost bearable, he turned The Mad into a sleeper classic, he performed comedic surgery on Zoolander and created a joke that wasn't entirely a eunuch, and he created a martial arts image that didn't revolve around bad ass Asiatics with Invincible. I'm a true fan of this mans work and his starring role in Demon Knight is no exception. Billy Zane would have been a sufficient Timothy Olyphant replacement in Live Free or Die Hard. I've seen some pretty pathetic attempts at horror/comedy. For instance, take New Zealand's Black Sheep. For being hailed as an uproarious horror classic, the film was quite tame. The only smirk was heavily in debt to a tidal wave of CGI sheep. Tales from the Crypt, devoid of the Hammer roots, is horror meets undead stand-up and it works so well. Jada Pinkett-Smith co-stars as a bad bimbo bitch who avidly supports women's rights and the emancipation proclamation. Another recognizable part in this film is Thomas Haden Church as the douche bag that ruins the overall plan and trusts the villain, only to meet a much-wanted fate. I didn't expect to enjoy Demon Knight as much as I did. In fact, I wasn't sure what to expect. I hadn't seen this film since I had rented it as a child. 1995 was a great year indeed, but I don't remember much of the neo-pulp cinema movement that occurred then. While many comic book and video game adaptations were taking place, each provided ample entertainment and never fully dissatisfied the audience, until the millennium snuck up and left every fan boy in a seated fury. Demon Knight is recommended viewing for any fan of 90s cinema. You will leave the experience having enjoyed a buffet of over-the-top gore and plenty of laughs.

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Ernst Wild (1978)

For obvious reasons relating to wartime guilt, the cultural colonization of their nation by the U.S.A. and its allies, and the virtual worldwide demonization of their history and culture, a good percentage of the West German filmmakers of the post-WWII era had a rather contentious relationship with their national identity and culture, as if it was something to be ashamed of or apologetic about. Indeed, from the malignantly melancholy melodramas and Hollywood genre obsessions of Rainer Werner Fassbinder to the celluloid existential crises of Wim Wenders to the oftentimes sterile and annoyingly contrived leftwing literary adaptations of Volker Schlöndorff to the populist Marxist cheerleading and hagiographic feminist bitch biopics of Margarethe von Trotta to the insufferably banal commie docs of half-Hindu Harun Farocki to the pathologically pedantic intellectual cinematic experiments of Alexander Kluge to the absurdly aesthetically decadent high-camp escapism of Werner Schroeter, the filmmakers of the New German Cinema movement that lasted from the late-1960s to early-1980s seemed more interested in negating and/or condemning their ancestral cultural than actually building upon it. In fact, even Hans-Jürgen Syberberg—a staunch Wagnerite and the most consciously Teutonic and conservative of Germans filmmakers from his era—succumbed to some of the cultural decadence of his *zeitgeist* as reflected in his utilization of the techniques of kraut commie Brecht and the aesthetic excesses of Queen Schroeter. Undoubtedly, the contempt, loathing, and/or fear that many of these filmmakers had for their nation and culture is probably most apparent in regard to the relative popularity of the ‘anti-Heimat’ films, which were socially scathing cinematic works that cynically mocked the once popular ‘Heimatfilm’ subgenre of the late-1940s through 1970s. Oftentimes viewed by leftists as a continuation of the films of the Third Reich and the proto-Nazi mountain/‘Bergfilme’ films of the 1920s through early 1930s, the Heimat films were shamelessly wholesome and sentimental movies set in rural settings that emphasized the value and importance of love, friendship, family, and country living, thus it should be no surprise that such cinematic works were considered to be loathsome by a degenerate generation of politically radicalized filmmakers who blamed their parents and grandparents for the legacy of Uncle Adolf. Needless to say, any filmmaker that dared to display any sort of affinity for the kraut countryside and a distinctly Germanic way of life was bound to be ostracized, or at least such was more or less the case for underrated Swiss German auteur Niklaus Schilling (*Der Westen leuchtet* aka *The Lite Trap*, *Die Vertreibung aus dem Paradies* aka *The Expulsion from Paradise*), who just passed away in early May 2016 at the age of 72 as a nearly completely forgotten filmmaker whose films are even somewhat hard to come by in Germany.

While Edgar Reitz undoubtedly brought new and much needed life to the

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genre with his singularly epic 'post-Heimatfilm' Heimat trilogy, Schilling dared to declare from the very beginning that he loved the land, soil, and people, or as he stated in his controversial 1977 essay, "Cinema, Melodrama, and the World of Emotion" in regard to what he believed constituted true Teutonic cinema, "One can say that the special qualities of German film are its countryside, its regions, the soil, and perhaps its people in general. And likewise its myths. A 'German world of feelings' if you will, which can be an almost ideal cinematic subject. In this sense, the German films of the thirties, forties, and fifties have more to do with cinema than the films of the sixties and seventies. And our surroundings have lost nothing of their mythologies at all; and these are of interest to me." Indeed, like fellow Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid—a staunch and vocal anti-leftist whose debut feature *Heute nacht oder nie* (1972) aka *Tonight or Never* satirized the German 68er-Bewegung student movement and whose Lauren Hutton vehicle *Hécate* (1982) is an adaptation of a novel by frog fascist Paul Morand—Schilling was a true rebel auteur that never debased himself to the level of virtue signaling, robotic left-wing political sermonizing, or adapting the mostly disposable novels of trendy quasi-commie writers like Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass. In fact, Schilling seemed to reject adapting popular novels altogether as demonstrated by his remark, "Once again we find among us a particularly fatal tendency not to trust the power of the filmic medium, but rather to construct films from the most classical literary sources possible in order to escape the danger of having to work with images and in that way to tell our own stories." In one of his greatest films, *Rheingold* (1978) aka *Rhinegold*, the underrated auteur would prove that you do not even need much of a storyline or plot, let alone a lame and ethno-masochistic Marxist-Freudian subtext, to sire a completely captivating, hypnotic, and haunting piece of true Teutonic celluloid poetry of the strangely tragically transcendental sort. As subtly and hauntingly melancholic as it is elegantly erotic, Schilling's film is ultimately a great and quintessentially Germanic example of the artistic medium of cinema being utilized in a fashion that no other medium can.

If there is anything that most of the filmmakers of the New German Cinema collectively had in common, it was their seemingly complete and utter ignorance and/or disdain for classic ancient German myths, legends, and fairytales, which are important because they are an insightful reflection of the Aryan 'Volksgeist' (aka "Spirit of the People") and oftentimes tell more about the character of a people than mere historical facts can. Unquestionably the genius of Schilling's *Rheingold* is that it manages to create a seemingly seamless unholy marriage between both myth and machine as well as ancestral Heimat and cosmopolitan industrialization in a rather unique cinematic work that hints at this in its very title, which naturally has multiple meanings. Deriving its name from both the Trans-Europe Express (TEE) train of the same name that operated between Hoek van Holland (near Rotterdam) and Geneva, Switzerland from 1928 to 1987 and the

Richard Wagner opera *Das Rheingold* (1869) that it was named after, Schilling's sort of decidedly dark Heimat-film-on-tracks depicts the final hours of a both physically and spiritually fatally wounded beautiful woman who has decided to let herself die after being stabbed by her jealous diplomat husband upon discovering that she is carrying on a lurid love affair with an old school mate. Indeed, largely devoid of a contrived plot and traditional character development, *Rheingold* depicts the fairly slow but fitting death of a near middle-aged blonde beauty that seems to have finally realized that she has wasted her life by marrying a man that she did not love simply because he was wealthy and successful. Seeming to take subtle inspiration from Wagner's *Wolfram von Eschenbach* adaptation *Parsifal* (1882) and the character King of the Grail Knights Amfortas' perennial wound, the heroine portrayed by Schilling regular Elke Haltaufderheide ultimately succumbs to an injury that seems to be merely an extension of an internal wound that has long troubled her seemingly forsaken soul, hence her decidedly deleterious extramarital excesses. A sort of cultivated dark romance for cynical crypto-traditionalists and anti-modernists that is big on atmosphere and low on filler and pointless chattering, Schilling's virtual Ragnarök-of-the-heart ultimately reminds the viewer that sometimes love conquers all in a most tragically inconvenient fashion, especially if you're a woman with archaic instincts that compel you to marry a man simply because he is a good provider and later discover that no amount of material wealth compares to the feeling of being with a man who can turn your pussy into a virtual raging waterfall with a mere provocative glance.

Undoubtedly, like many modern day Western woman, *Rheingold* heroine Elisabeth has denied herself love, affection, and sexual satisfaction for greed and material security, which ultimately led to an ever growing wound in her soul, or to quote Carl Jung in regard to his interpretation of the *Parsifal* myth and the tendency of people to ignore one aspect of their (sub)conscious for the benefit of another, "The breakdown of the harmonious cooperation of psychic forces in instinctive life is like an ever open and never healing wound, a veritable Amfortas' wound, because the differentiation of one function among several inevitably leads to the hypertrophy of the one and the neglect and atrophy of the others." As depicted in flashbacks, the film's exceedingly elegant heroine lived a stagnant married life of loveless sexual repression until one day when she randomly bumped into a grade school sweetheart named Wolfgang by happenstance while riding on a train that he works on. Of course, as a professionally emasculated man that makes a living as a lowly waiter on a train, the heroine's true love can hardly provide her with the lavish lifestyle and quality of life that she is used to and thus the female protagonist even ends up having to pay the hotel bill when they are on their extramarital weekend getaways, thereupon causing an internal conflict in her soul that she eventually resolves in the most senselessly of tragic fashions. Not unlike Germany as a whole, the forlorn female protagonist is torn

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by her natural instincts and the demands of an industrialized modern society that is—for better or worse—constantly evolving at a rate that surely eclipses both emotional and social evolution, or as German philosopher wrote in his fairly brief book *Man and Technology: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1931) regarding the precarious nature of technology and its relation to man, “The unique fact about human technics, on the contrary, is that it is independent of the life of the human genus. It is the one instance in all the history of life in which the individual frees himself from the compulsion of the genus. One has to mediate long upon this thought if one is to grasp its immense implications. Technics in man’s life is conscious, arbitrary, alterable, personal, inventive. It is learned and improved. Man has become the creator of his tactics of living—that is his grandeur and his doom. And the inner form of this creativeness we call culture—to be cultured, to cultivate, to suffer from culture. The man’s creations are the expression of this being in personal form.” It should be noted that the most eccentric and socially retarded character in the entire film is an inventor. Indeed, the cultural schizophrenia of modern technologically advanced Germany is probably best symbolically underscored in a scenario were a kindly old grandfather tells his granddaughter the German myth of Lorelei as they pass the River Rhine steep slate rock of the same name whilst riding in a state-of-the-art first-class-only Trans Europ Express train that was named after a Wagner play that, according to George Bernard Shaw in his book *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), is a critique of industrial society.

Not unlike with the locomotive and young loony Vietnam War vet portrayed by Dennis Hopper in Henry Jaglom’s *Tracks* (1977), the titular train in *Rheingold* oftentimes feels like a metaphor for the mental racing and overall disintegration of the heroine, who recalls via vivid flashbacks the good and bad of her fairly tragic life as a woman that married the wrong man and eventually fell in love with another. Seemingly following in the footsteps of his Swiss compatriot Daniel’s Schmid’s underrated masterpiece *La Paloma* (1974) where Ingrid Caven’s character slowly wastes away in aesthetically decadent von Sternbergesque style while married to a pathetic wealthy man she loathes and longing for the unreliable yet sexually potent man that she secretly loves, Schilling’s film features the ultimate female suicide in terms of the preposterously passive yet undeniably fitting way in which the heroine dies. In fact, although she never says it outright, it almost seems as if the heroine believes that the fatal stab wound that she received from her hapless husband is the single one thing of true value that he did for, thus highlighting the sort of hopelessly lovelorn pandemonium that plagues the character. A blonde barren beauty whose biological clock seems to be more or less busted, the female protagonist probably realizes that she has no real future and will be forced to live the rest of her days as a childless creature in perpetual physical decay who will never feel the sense of security of knowing that she will die a happy old woman with children and grandchildren sitting

beside her bed. After all, women tend to marry men that they do not love so that they will have a good provider for their children, yet the film's heroine has not even taken advantage of that important maternal benefit. A truly Teutonic piece of cinema that engulfs the viewer in the most darkly romantic corners of the German soul, the film even dares to make references to National Socialist era cinema. Indeed, the heroine's mother is portrayed by Alice Treff, who previously appeared in the Nazi era rail transport romcom *Ein Zug fährt ab* (1942) directed by Johannes Meyer and starring Ferdinand 'Jud Süß' Marian. Undoubtedly, by comparing *Rheingold* with its predecessor *Ein Zug fährt ab*, one gets a pretty good idea as to how forsaken the German soul has become since the Second World War. A sort of modernistic equivalent to Kristina Söderbaum's characters in her husband Veit Harlan's Nazi era films like *Opfergang* (1944), the heroine ultimately commits a sort of quasi-nihilistic form of sacrifice where nothing is gained and everyone loses.

Heroine Elisabeth Drossbach (Elke Haltaufderheide of Schilling's *Nachtschatten* (1972) aka *Nightshade* and Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980)) is like a wilted rose as woman that, although still quite beautiful and elegant, is long past her physical prime and who radiates a distinctly feminine brand of *Weltschmerz*. Married to a small and considerably unattractive workaholic German diplomat named Karl-Heinz Drossbach (Gunther Malzacher of Franz Seitz's *Abelard* (1977)) who she not only does not love but who also refuses to sexually satisfy her (as depicted in flashback scenes, the heroine was oftentimes forced to masturbate before starting an extramarital affair), Elisabeth did not think twice about initiating a hot and steamy love affair with an old friend from her childhood named Wolfgang Friedrichs (Rüdiger Kirschstein of Volker Schlöndorff's *Coup de grâce* (1976)) after randomly bumping into him on the *Rheingold* train. As Elisabeth confesses to Wolfgang upon initially bumping into him, she even thought of him earlier that morning even though they have not seen each other in what seems to be decades. Needless to say, Wolfgang is impressed with Elisabeth's quite glowing pulchritude and he even seems to sense that she is desperate to jump onto his cock. Rather unfortunately, Wolfgang is hardly a wealthy man as he works as a lowly waiter on the train, thus Elisabeth seems a little bit hesitant about leaving her banal yet powerful and successful hubby for a guy that hands little girls cans of soda for a living. In fact, as the viewer soon learns while watching the film, Elisabeth plans to move to New York City with her husband for his job and she is only riding the *Rheingold* one more last time just so that she can say a proper farewell to Wolfgang, who naturally wants her to divorce her husband. Quite unfortunately, cuckold Karl-Heinz decides to randomly show up on the train to confront Elisabeth and her lover, thus leading to totally tragic consequences for all involved.

Before boarding the *Rheingold*, Elisabeth says goodbye to her mother who gives her a present for her husband that will inevitably lead to her daughter's

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death. The present is a gold envelope opener with Karl-Heinz's initials engraved on it and it acts as a sort of Wagnerian symbol for their loveless marriage, so it is only natural that Elisabeth is ultimately fatally wounded with it. Indeed, after Karl-Heinz catches Elisabeth flirting with Wolfgang in one of the train cars, a certain foreboding unease hits the air as the kraut cuckold is confronted face-to-face with the shamelessly audacious lies and flagrant extramarital indiscretions of his wife and the striking arrogance of her lover. After Karl-Heinz accuses Wolfgang of sleeping with his wife, the lowly waiter mocks the diplomat by proposing they head to a round table in Geneva to negotiate a contract detailing sharing the use of Elisabeth's spunkpot based on different regions of the world. While Karl-Heinz is undoubtedly a terribly boring fellow who seems to care about his work more than his wife's cunt, Wolfgang is an arrogant asshole of sorts who seems to derive a certain sadistic pleasure from the fact that he is banging a much more successful man's wanton wife. After the unhappily married couple finally goes to their own private train car, Elisabeth gives Karl-Heinz the present from her mother and he less than sincerely remarks, "I'm pleased." Of course, Elisabeth tries in vain to get her husband to ignore the fact that he just caught hanging out with her lover by pretending to be happy to see him, but she does not realize that there is not much you can do to the calm murderous jealousy of a scorned husband, even if you are a highly manipulative woman that knows the power of feminine touch. When Elisabeth almost immediately begins ignoring him after giving him the present by daring to begin reading some trashy tabloid magazine, Wolfgang becomes visibly agitated and begins eyeing his nice and shiny new golden envelope opener, which seems to be practically begging him to pick it up and use it as it shimmers glowingly in the sunlight. When the train drives under a bridge and the train car briefly becomes dark, Wolfgang ceases the opportunity to grab the envelope opener and then brutally stabs his wife in the stomach in what seems to be a desperate attempt to avenge his cuckold status. After the single stabbing, Karl-Heinz exits the train car in a swift fashion and gets off the train at the next stop without anyone noticing his murderous behavior. From there, Elisabeth passively awaits death while recalling the most poignant moments of her life, especially in relation to her homicidal husband and lifelong love obsession Wolfgang. As becomes quite clear to the viewer as they watch the film, Elisabeth is a woman with strong and insatiable erotic desires and even when she is dying, she cannot help but fondly reminisce about being sexually serviced by Wolfgang in both exotic and less than exotic settings that range from scenic country fields to a post-industrial wasteland near an aesthetically monstrous Bayer factory.

One thing that really distinguishes *Rheingold* from many German films of its era is that virtually all the characters look strikingly Aryan in appearance, especially the women and children, thus confirming that Schilling was a true rebel of his era and not a slave to political correctness like so many contemporary German

filmmakers (indeed, although just speculation on my part, but I am pretty confident that contemporary mainstream German actors like Daniel Brühl, Franka Potente, and Moritz Bleibtreu probably owe at least part of their popularity due to their somewhat racially ambiguous phenotypes). Not long after she is stabbed, Elisabeth is joined by a young blonde girl and her grandfather, who somewhat resembles literary Übermensch Ernst Jünger and who seems to have a great understanding of German mythology and folklore, including the Rhine folk story of Lorelei, which obsessed a number of German artists throughout history ranging from tragic Romantic composer Robert Schumann to German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine to Surrealist painter Edgar Ende. While there are various versions of the Lorelei myth that attempt to explain its strange perennial murmuring, the most famous is probably the story of a lovelorn young maiden who drowns herself in the River Rhine and is condemned to the horrendous fate of becoming a siren that unwittingly lures nearby men with her singing and beauty and ultimately causes them to crash onto the rocks. Undoubtedly, Elisabeth is a Lorelei of sorts as an accursed stunning beauty who caught the attention of a rich and powerful man that would ultimately not return his love and compel him to attempt murder. Notably, Elisabeth opts to exit the train car before the grandfather finishes telling the Lorelei story, as if she cannot bear to acknowledge that ancient folklore relates to her own tragic story.

Not long after stabbing his wifey and exiting the train, Karl-Heinz's conscience catches up with him and he decides to chase the Rheingold via taxi in the hope of saving Elisabeth from a very probable death. Meanwhile, spends her last dying day switching from train car to train car. While in one of these cars, the bleeding heroine encounters an eccentric astrologist who offers her candy and declares after examining her astrological signs, "Your talent lies in handling your imagination. This is how you should cope with your dangers [...] You are, so to speak, courted in a way. You are able to be happy, but time and again you compromise your happiness by passionate emotions." While Elisabeth daydreams and responds to virtually nothing he says, the astrologist adds, "You have an extraordinary power of attraction and special artistic talent. Your relationships are mostly fateful. This also means that you're emotionally... well." Before exiting the car to return to her own, Elisabeth reveals that she was listening after all by stating to the astrologist, "What you say is true. You applied a lot of effort." When Elisabeth gets back to her car, the little blonde girl notices that she is hemorrhaging but says nothing, as if she has an intuitive understanding that the heroine wants to die. While Wolfgang gives Elisabeth painkillers and attempts to coerce her into visiting a hospital in Freiburg im Breisgau, she refuses to, henceforth more or less confirming that she wants to die. Although he clearly enjoys fucking her and rubbing it in her cuckold husband's face, Wolfgang does not seem to truly love Elisabeth in the same fashion that she loves him, hence why the heroine probably ultimately chooses death over a divorce. While Wolf-

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gang seems sincere when he states to her, "We've always been in love, even in school. You sat in front of me, with your long golden hair. And your kisses that I imagined," he does not seem to be as serious as Elisabeth, hence why he probably fails to save her in the end.

While looking deathly ill while lying in her train car, Elisabeth becomes acquainted with an eccentric inventor named Herbert Soskamp who claims to have "75 registered patents" and who proudly boasts he is leaving Germany for good for Switzerland because he believes that the Fatherland robbed him of both his wealth and dignity. In fact, the inventor is on the train illegally because he does not even have enough money to buy a ticket, so naturally he is quite grateful when Elisabeth ends up paying for him after a pesky ticket-taker catches him train-hopping. Despite her help, the inventor unwittingly manages to say things that would probably offend Elisabeth like how his sister randomly married a French man despite only having known him for a couple weeks because she was 34 and thus afraid she would be "left on the shelf." Indeed, as far as the viewer can surmise, it seems that Elisabeth—a considerably introverted woman that seems completely immune to confessing, let alone expressing, her emotions—married for similarly dubious reasons. When Karl-Heinz finally manages to catch up with the train and enter Elisabeth's car, he meekly remarks to the heroine, "I only want to see how you are. I am sorry," but she wants nothing to do with him and declares while refusing to even look him in the face, "I want you to leave this compartment. I don't know this man." When Karl-Heinz complains to his wife, "I don't understand you," inventor Herbert gets agitated and attempts to protect Elisabeth by stating, "You heard it! The lady doesn't want to be disturbed." Of course, Karl-Heinz predictably exits the train car like a defeated little bitch, but then he gets angry, hunts down Wolfgang and sarcastically remarks, "My wife needs coffee again," and then initiates a fairly pathetic beta-male brawl while his spouse spends her last moments in the company of an eccentric stranger. Meanwhile, while succumbing to her wound, Elisabeth remembers a magical moment when she and Wolfgang shared a dreamlike moment on a rowboat together. After nostalgically recalling her magical romantic rendezvous with Wolfgang in what the viewer assumes was the happiest moment of her entire life, Elisabeth finally croaks and then collapses onto the floor. Somewhat absurdly, the inventor is arrested for the murder while Karl-Heinz manages to get away via train, though he is clearly ridden with guilt and will probably live the rest of his pathetic life in abject misery. When Wolfgang sees Elisabeth's corpse being hauled away on a stretcher at the next train station, he is too afraid to even approach her body and merely looks on from a distance. Just as Elisabeth probably expected, both men ultimately failed her in the end, thereupon arguably justifying her decision to embrace death.

I used to know a young man and woman that were very much in love with one another in a way like no other couple, as they were two very 'idiosyncratic'

individuals that, despite being out of step with the rest of humanity, somehow managed to find each other. Unfortunately, these two lovers struggled with their relationship from almost the very beginning due to largely external reasons that were beyond their control, as if the entire world was rallying against them in a sort of quasi-Shakespearean fashion. Of course, these lovers also had their own respective inner demons that made for a rather corrosive combo, as if their love was only rivaled by their combined mutual internal chaos. When the two eventually broke up after a long relationship where the love and sexual attraction never seemed to wane but the dysfunction and lack of trust only grew, the man never seemed to recover and began walking the world if he was a forsaken soul that was so detached from his surroundings that he did not even realize he was condemned to a figurative hell. Although the dynamic of the bizarre love triangle depicted in the film is quite different, I think Rheingold manages to successfully communicate a sense of hopeless and perennial lovesickness that is somewhat similar to what the young man I knew felt as a result of being in a desperately hopeless situation with a woman he probably still feels is his one true soul mate. Notably, in the handful of English language reviews I could find on Schilling's film, the reviewers describe it as "pointless" and a "journey to nowhere," but clearly they are missing the point as it is a positively poetic flick that is more about penetrating the viewer with almost intolerably overwhelming pangs of hopeless heartbreak and romantic desperation than telling a linear story with an easy-to-follow plot, not to mention the fact that it is a fairly enigmatic piece of cinema that derives much of its power from what it does not reveal to the viewer. Indeed, a transcendental Gothic tone poem made in an age when both love and spirituality oftentimes seem like an abject impossibility, Rheingold is indubitably one of the most forebodingly darkly romantic films that I have ever seen and I say that as someone that is typically incapable of empathizing with lovelorn heroines.

Unlike leftist crypto-agitprop pieces like Peter Fleischmann's *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* and Volker Schlöndorff's *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* (1971) aka *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach*, Rheingold is a true anti-Heimat flick in the sense that, instead of merely mocking or satirizing the genre in a decidedly disrespectful manner, it inverts virtually all of the conventions of the genre to present a tragic Teutonic world where the *Volksgeist* has become schizophrenic, *Liebesverzicht* reigns, and the only thing that still exists of the old Germany is abandoned castles and ancient rocks that are more of interest to tourists than locals. Indeed, instead of taking place in a small village where virtually everyone has known each other their entire lives, the film is set in a cosmopolitan piece of locomotive transportation full of strangers who have very little in common aside from having the luxury of having enough money to ride first-class. It should also be noted that the people who have known each other the longest, heroine

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Elisabeth and her lover Wolfgang, find themselves in an irreconcilable situation that concludes with their eternal separation as opposed to their desired unity. Featuring brief and subtle moments of sentimental love in a seemingly spiritually accursed realm consumed by malignant melancholia, the film is the work of a true romantic who longs for love despite knowing it is virtual fantasy from a bygone era when men and women were still able to complement one another like a key in a lock. Certainly the most tragic aspect of the film's heroine is that, upon discovering real love after being married to a man she loathes, she cannot go on living as she probably cannot fathom being devoid of what she probably sees as being one of only a handful of things that makes life truly worth living. Another tragic element of the film is that, as hinted in flashback scenes from their childhood, the heroine and her beau would have probably gotten married at a young age had they lived in a different era, but pernicious social plagues like globalization, feminism, and urbanization, among things, probably got in the way at some point in their lives. Indeed, as depicted in the old school Heimat films, it was fairly normal in previous generations for people to marry individuals from the same village that they had known their entire lives, but of course absurd social phenomena like movie stars have resulted in people, especially women, in developing delusional standards for men. While the viewer never gets her complete story, one can only assume that heroine Elisabeth grew up with ridiculous standards for men after watching one too many Clark Gable and Gary Cooper flicks and thus prolonged marriage until it was too late while waiting in vain for an imaginary immaculate white knight to sweep her off her feet, thus causing her to settle for a man she did not love out of desperation at a time when her fertility was dubious at best. Of course, being a barren woman approaching middle-age that decided hypergamy was more important than love, respect, sexual attraction, and emotional compatibility, the heroine epitomizes the tragic creature that is the decidedly deracinated modern Occidental woman, who is too concerned with her personal comfort and social prestige to concern herself with the important ingredients that typically lead to happy and successful marriages. After all, it is no coincidence that marriages are at an all-time low in the Western world and that the majority of marriages end in divorce, as modern women, who have been brainwashed by feminism and stupid stories from childhood about how they deserve all deserve a white knight, expect too much from men yet give virtually nothing in return. Naturally, this also probably explains why that, despite having the highest standard of living in human history, unhappiness is at an all-time high among Western woman. Sadly, most women will probably never discover the true source of their general dissatisfaction with life, as it would require them to pull their heads out of their asses and confront the fact that everything they have been brainwashed with during their entire lives via Hollywood in is a sad little lie.

Featuring an elegant yet sometimes ominous and vaguely Wagnerian elec-

tronic score by Eberhard Schöner (*Traumstadt* aka *Dream City*, *Ansichten eines Clowns* aka *The Clown*), a mostly immaculate cast of authentically Aryan actors and actress, various references to true Teutonic folklore, and no ethno-masochistic allusions to the Nazi era or lame Adorno-approved leftist critiques, *Rheingold* was not surprisingly booed at its German premiere as it was probably considered too overtly Germanic and apolitical for the mostly New Left oriented kraut cinephiles of that time who probably did not want to be reminded that they have a cultural tradition that is worth preserving. Despite its pathetic debut, Fassbinder listed it as one of the 'Most Beautiful' films in all of New German Cinema in his 1981 'Hitlist of German Films.' Notably, Fassbinder's also placed Schilling at #8 in his list of 'The Ten Most Important Directors in the New German Cinema,' on top of listing the director's feature *Die Vertreibung aus dem Paradies* (1976) aka *The Expulsion from Paradise* as one of 'The Best' films of the entire era. Despite seeming to have little in common as filmmakers aside from their appreciation for melodrama and strong and oftentimes amorous divas, Schilling and Fassbinder apparently shared a somewhat similar view of German cinema in the context of German cinema history, or to quote Thomas Elsaesser in *New German Cinema: A History* (1989), "It is true that allusionism is part of a complex process whereby film-making assures itself of its own history, and the New German Cinema progressively did just that. This is evident when one considers the case of Fassbinder: the early gangster films, the 1950s Hollywood melodramas, his reworking of the UFA-Stil in *LILI MARLEEN* (1980) and *VERONIKA VOSS* (1982). It is also evident in his pastiches of so many other historic styles [...] The career of Niklaus Schilling could serve as an example of a film-maker trying to inscribe himself in a tradition, via allusionism, of the German cinema's own commercial history." Of course, history has less kind to Schilling, but then again he was not a savagely sadistic megalomaniacal queer that somehow managed to create forty feature length films, two television film series, four video productions, twenty-four stage plays and four radio plays, among various other artistic accomplishments, during a career spanning less than fifteen years before dying of a drug overdose before he even reached middle-age.

Despite the fact that he was revered by easily the most important German filmmaker of his generation, not one of Schilling's films is available in the United States and it was only last week not too long after the filmmaker's that I finally got to see one of his films. While I could certainly find flaws in the film if I wanted to, I have no reservations about saying that *Rheingold* is, at the very least, a relatively timeless minor masterpiece and 'lost classic' of sorts that eclipse even Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1951) in terms of my favorite rail transport flicks. I also must confess that Schilling's film makes the train scenes in Wim Wenders' *Falsche Bewegung* (1975) aka *Wrong Move* and *Der amerikanische Freund* (1977) aka *The American Friend* seem sterile and insufferably cosmopolitan by comparison. I hate to get sentimental, but the film really affected

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me in the sense that it is a rare cinematic work with a female heroine that I felt like I truly understood on a visceral level and I say that as someone that typically has no problem writing off the majority of lovesick leading ladies. A rare piece of New German Cinema era Germanic fatalism where a foredoomed beauty sacrifices herself for love after coming to terms with the abject hopeless of her lot in life, *Rheingold* is brutally beautiful and subtly erotic cinematic poetry that gives a hint of what German cinema might be like in general if the film industry was no full of deracinated dorks, ethno-masochists, nihilists, feminists, and other forms of materialistic rabble who have nothing to say.

Undoubtedly, English auteur Ken Russell might as well have been describing German cinema of the 1970s when he complained in *Altered States: The Autobiography of Ken Russell* (1991) regarding the degenerate and uniquely un-English state of English cinema, "We do live on a magic island, without doubt, but so far as British films are concerned there is precious little evidence of this. By and large, contemporary film-makers seem to revel in squalor, glorify ignorance and extol violence. There is another kind of life outside of this which many people in this country would like to celebrate, if only they were given the opportunity and not made to feel guilty about it. It is nothing to do with religion; it is to do with the spirit of the land in which we live, that elusive quality touched on by the music of VW [Ralph Vaughan Williams] and his contemporaries such as Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge and John Ireland: music expressing the majesty of nature, forgotten rituals, pagan goddesses and ancient heroes. All these scores are unashamedly romantic and shamefully neglected; and desperately outmoded according to the new barbarians whose mission is to tramp our heritage underfoot. Still, I agree that ours is not an age of heroes, though in his Seventh Symphony VW remembers some very gallant gentlemen who battled against tremendous odds to reach the South Pole and failed." Of course, post-WWII Deutschland is anything but heroic, yet a film like *Rheingold* reminds the viewer of the singular glory and deep dark roots of Teutonic mythology and kultur, thus making it mandatory viewing for anyone who wants to indulge in true Teutonic culture. As for the true power and importance of the melodramatic pathos of the film, Schilling probably said it best when he wrote, "Melodrama—what a strange concept: another cubbyhole in which one places scenes with crying men, childless, rich women, passionate love-hatreds, and setting suns. It also is used as disapproving and disdainful response to a precisely choreographed attack on the world of emotions, something a cinematic film can do if it takes itself seriously. It take it seriously and no doubt use these forms taken from the melodrama, because these forms likewise contain something that is specifically cinematic: an optical narrative structure which does not explain and edify—a way of dealing with emotions." Considering that the titular train ended operation on May 30, 1987 after over 59 years of service, *Rheingold* can and should be seen by contemporary German filmmakers who dare to attempt

to be the heirs of the greats like F.W. Murnau and even Schilling as a new fresh source of Teutonic mythology that can be utilized as inspiration for their own films.

-Ty E

A WALK INTO THE SEA: DANNY WILLIAMS AND THE WARHOL FACTORY
A WALK INTO THE SEA: DANNY WILLIAMS AND THE WARHOL
FACTORY

Eſther Robiſon* (2007)

Unfortunately, Andy Warhol may be the moſt popular American artiſt of the laſt century. As far as art goes, Warhol's greateſt talent as an artiſt was being a con-Artiſt. Every once in a while, Warhol would 'discover' an artiſt with legitimate talent and exploit their creativity by advertising it as his own. For the documentary *A Walk into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory*, filmmaker Eſther Robiſon ſought out to discover the mystery ſurrounding her uncle's mysterious assumed ſuicide into the ſea, hence the title of the film. What Robiſon discovered with her inquiries from various Warhol factory characters was a degenerate club of no talent nihilists that got off by ſcrewing each, both literally and figuratively. Danny Williams was both a lover of Warhol's as well as a filmmaker with a niche for creating extravagant lighting setups. In *A Walk into the Sea*, Ms. Robiſon discovers that many members of Warhol's entourage have a hard time remembering Williams, let alone giving him credit for ſhooting some of the moſt aethetically appealing footage (including what is assumed to be the firſt recorded images of *The Velvet Underground* playing live) ever ſhot at the factory. As deſcribed in *A Walk into the Sea*, Warhol was the laegeſt ſhareholder at the Warhol factory but also the ſmalleſt contributor, making millions of dollars off the work of other more artiſtically inclined individuals.

At the beginning of *A Walk into the Sea*, Danny Williams is deſcribed as very nice, ſociable guy, apparently too nice for his own good. Whereas Williams was ſolely motivated to create art, other more favored members of the Warhol factory were only intereſted in pleaſing Andy and not creating. John Cale (of *The Velvet Underground*) ſays of the Warhol factory, "Everybody was afraid of being left out ſo they created a part for themſelves." As with any artiſt with a true paſſion to create, Danny muſt have felt eſpecially trapped working with Warhol, a famous art fae whoſe already eſtablished celebrity would intimidate moſt novice artiſts. In fact, in *A Walk into the Sea* it is revealed that Williams greatly hated the glaring fact that the majority of the Warhol factory people were not doing anything but ſtanding in his way from doing ſomething he had a dire paſſion for. According to the various former Warhol factory members featured in *A Walk into the Sea*, the main reaſon Danny was favored by Warhol was due to their ſexual relationship, ſomething the pomo homo artiſte tried to keep hush, hush. Apparently, Andy Warhol was known for getting people to fall in love with him (Edie Sedgwick being one of them), never reciprocating it back to them, ſomething that would deſtate Danny Williams. One former friend of Danny's in *A Walk into the Sea* claims that Warhol psychologically tortured Williams, using him for his electrical ſkills at *Velvet Underground* ſhows and various other imperative Warhol productions that furthered helped eſtablish the

artistic infamy of the hack soup can painter.

Unsurprisingly, Danny Williams' greatest rival at the Warhol factory was fellow filmmaker Paul Morrissey. Although I am a fan of Morrissey's cinematic trash-art, it is quite apparent to me that he is an intolerable man of self-worship as he arrogantly flaunts in *A Walk into the Sea*. In the documentary, Paul Morrissey pathetically attempts to completely discredit all the work that Danny Williams contributed to the Warhol factory. According to John Cale, after completing a show for his band The Velvet Underground, he heard a bunch of noise and discovered that Danny Williams was brawling with Paul Morrissey, apparently a common occurrence between the two battling filmmakers. Supposedly, Morrissey purposely hid electrical material that Williams needed to use for his strobe-driven light shows (in which Morrissey claims never existed despite how famous they are). It is quite obvious after watching *A Walk into the Sea* that Danny Williams was a much better filmmaker than Morrissey, successfully experimenting with lights and time (the footage is featured throughout the documentary) before his rival ever unskillfully documented junky little Joe shooting up in his Trash trilogy. The rivalry between Morrissey and Williams is a great example of the desire for power being more important than artistic integrity when it comes to gaining cinematic notoriety. After all, look at the army of no talent hack propagandists that work in Hollywood.

One former acquaintance of Danny Williams describes him as a circuitry wizard due to his enchanting electrical talents. It is also acknowledged in *A Walk into the Sea* that Williams was one of the first people to experiment with strobe lighting effects in the flashy fashion he did, something that has become the norm at concerts and night clubs nowadays. Legendary documentary filmmaker Albert Maysles also credits Danny Williams for jumpstarting his (and his brother David's) career. Williams edited together a documentary film for the Maysles brothers that impressed some financiers so much that they were given the opportunity to document the first tour that The Beatles ever did in The United States. Of course, most of the Warhol factory members have no problem writing off Danny Williams as a nobody that never deserved to breathe the same air that was in the general region of their isolated ivory towers. Paul Morrissey feels that Danny's death was the result of a methamphetamine addiction that corroded his mind as he was apparently not a depressive/suicidal individual but I find that theory to be far too simplistic, especially when you consider Morrissey's role in ousting the promising filmmaker from Warhol's favor. When Danny originally went missing, his mother attempted to call individuals associated with the Warhol factory and they were all offended by her inquiries, showing complete apathy towards their former associate's assumed death. According to Paul Morrissey, Andy Warhol did not even show a sign of mourning when his former lover died. A lot of people that befriended Andy Warhol ended up dying tragically, so what better way for him to go out than during a routine gallbladder surgery.

A WALK INTO THE SEA: DANNY WILLIAMS AND THE WARHOL FACTORY

Danny Williams was certainly a man that showed a great deal of potential as an artistic auteur filmmaker. Albert Maysles said it best regarding Danny's suicide in *A Walk into the Sea* when he states, "It is a poetic, beautiful image walking out to sea but I rather have him come back swimming."

-Ty E

CAN GO THROUGH SKIN

Esther Rots (2009)

Certainly, you will not find a more screwed up and neurotic group of people nowadays than young white women, especially those from decadent Western European countries like the Netherlands, which prides itself on being the most progressively degenerate nation in the world as a place where the government is willing to pay for mentally ill men to chop their cocks off and pretend to be women and fund terrorists like Theo van Gogh's assassin Mohammed Bouyeri via welfare to sit around all day and plot the destruction of the Occident. Of course, you can watch various arthouse films from the Netherlands and tell there is something seriously wrong with the people there, but there are very few cinematic works that attempt to depict the sort of psychosis that many modern women seem to be plagued with there as demonstrated by their lack of interest in producing children and xenophilic fetish for Arabs, negroes, and everybody else except actual Dutchmen. In his debut Golden-Calf-winning feature *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* (1992)—a work that is like Straub on steroids and with a soul meets the less abstract son of Frans Zwartjes—South African auteur Aryan Kaganof demonstrated that young Dutchmen are sexual sadists and their female partners are reluctant masochists who long for emotion but also have an undying craving for being pounded mercilessly with a rock hard cock. Of course, as the assumed result of the further effeminization of Dutchmen over the past two decades or so, it seems that Dutch women are getting even more neurotic as the result of being pounded by less and less hard cocks. In the more recent arthouse work *Kan door huid heen* (2009) aka *Can Go Through Skin* directed by Esther Rots, one bears witness to one of the most damning depictions of contemporary Dutch womanhood in the form of an uniquely unsympathetic young lady that also happens to be a sexual assault victim who moves from urban Amsterdam apartment to a rotting shack without proper plumbing in redneck Zeeland as a way to get over the fact that a towelhead pizza delivery boy beat her up and sexually defiled her. As Rots' film specifically demonstrates, the great thing about female filmmakers is that, if they are not feminists pretending to project some sort of contrived pseudo-morality, they tend to unwittingly reveal the sheer and utter lack of morality that women have. Indeed, *Can Go Through Skin* is nothing short of a male's worst nightmare as a work featuring a young woman that epitomizes everything that is repellant, irritating, and contemptible about the members of the so-called fairer sex. Featuring horrible lesbo-like girly music, spastic editing, incessant annoying close-ups, masturbatory handheld camera movements, tons of improvised acting, and a distinctly unattractive lead actress whose attitude and personality seem to make her appear infinitely uglier than she actually is, *Can Go Through Skin* is certainly a film that I never want to watch again yet I am glad I did as it is a rare work that unequivocally demonstrates that

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something is not quite with modern western woman.

Intemperate redhead Marieke (Rifka Lodeizen) is suffering a mental meltdown because her handsome blond boyfriend just broke up with her and one can only assume that it was her fault as clearly indicated by her innately irrational behavior and hysteria, so she begins drink red wine and nonsensically decides to begin trolling for a rebound dick by calling every single ex-boyfriend she knows, but they all unsurprisingly turn her down as if they already know she is bad news. Meanwhile, Marieke decides to order a pizza and when the 'Pizzaman' (Chris Borowski)—a swarthy and scrawny rat-like fellow of the archetypically Arab sort—comes and delivers the pizza she does not even bother to shut her door and lock it after he leaves, thereupon resulting an easily preventable tragedy that will change the protagonist forever. Needless to say, while eating her pepperoni pizza and getting ready to take a bath, Pizzaman appears out of nowhere and begins choking her and ripping her clothes off. Luckily, Marieke's friend Siska (Elisabeth van Nimwegen) shows up and attacks the seemingly physically weak untermensch delivery boy, but the protagonist also suffers the embarrassment of having to run outside completely naked in the streets of Amsterdam. On a whim, Marieke ultimately makes the impulsive decision to buy a dilapidated cottage in rural island region of Zeeland that she and her ex-boyfriend had previously talked about buying despite the fact that she is a totally helpless cosmopolitan woman that knows nothing about plumbing, carpentry, or anything else that will be necessary to fix the virtually falling down house. Obviously, Marieke has bought the house for psychological reasons as it affords her a feeling of safety and escapism from the big bad multicultural sewer of a society that robbed her of her innocence and dignity (or whatever). Marieke also decides to attend the trial of her attacker Pizzaman, who is clearly a savage sadist of sorts that smirks at her in a sinister fashion in the courtroom and who ultimately gets off with a slap on the wrist since he is a poor non-white third world subhuman and all, which naturally infuriates the protagonist to the point where she begins chopping up stuff with an axe while yelling "fucking assholes" and "fucking lawyers."

Upon moving into her new pastoral shithole in Zeeland, Marieke begins living a hermetic paranoia-ridden existence full of internet chatrooms, fetishistic torture and murder fantasies, and uniquely unsanitary living. When a rather fat and unattractive middle-aged neighbor who looks like someone from a West Virginia trailerpark named John Maan (Wim Opbrouck) begins coming by Marieke's home and helping her fix up the place, the clearly mentally perturbed protagonist becomes increasingly angered and paranoid as she misguidedly sees the kindly and rather altruistic fellow as a menacing intruder with dubious motives. One day when she comes home and finds John working on her roof, Marieke becomes exceedingly enraged like a super cunt from hell and screams "what the fuck are you doing?!" and "bugger off." When John comes by during week-

end to fix her shower as he promised he would, Marieke decides to act like a scared child by hiding in bizarre cramped places to pretend that she is not home. Meanwhile, while rummaging around her house, Marieke finds such thing as a seemingly authentic original photograph of Aryan aristocrat and failed Hitler assassin Claus von Stauffenberg (?!), as well as a loaded rifle that she attempts to use as an empowering pseudo-phallic of sorts. Indeed, with the gun, mad Marieke does really bad Travis Bickle impersonations and fantasizes about shooting her attacker 'Pizzaman' while he begs for mercy. In fact, Marieke fantasies about keeping Pizzaman as her slave and letting him rot away in her attic. At one point, Marieke decides to collect all her used tampons, which she uses as teabags to make Pizzaman a nice warm large cup of menstrual tea that a vampire might enjoy (indubitably, with his superlatively swarthy appearance, Pizzaman looks ghoulish enough to be a bloodsucker of sorts). When Marieke bumps into a neighbor outside carrying a trash bag full of apparently ill kittens, she becomes rather defensive over the kitty cats and demands that the man give them to her in a somewhat rude fashion. The kitties seem to be covered in feces, thus the fit perfectly in Marieke's filth and garbage-ridden home. Of course, since she can barely take care of herself, Marieke is fairly negligent with the animals. When one of the cats randomly drops dead while, Marieke is not the least bit shaken and she apathetically puts the dead kitty in a plastic bag and takes a bath right next to the dead feline. As for the rest of the kitties, Marieke uses them for target practice while fantasizing about killing Pizzaman. Undoubtedly, in terms of rape victims, you won't find a more deplorable one than miss Marieke, who seems to use the trauma she has suffered as an excuse to carry out every single sick fantasy she has ever had and the more the days pass, the more depraved and despicable her behavior gets.

Ultimately, through the internet, Marieke begins living a second life after 'befriending' a middle-aged fellow that goes by the user name 'Herfst' (Roel Goudsmit) in a chatroom who feels rather guilty over the fact that his lover was raped by a cabdriver and he was unable to stop it, thus he has developed a sort of vigilante attitude against rapists that he slowly but surely converts the protagonist to. While providing Marieke with support for the trauma she he has suffered, he also guilt-trips her into getting involved in vigilante violence by telling her that if she does not kill Pizzaman man and he ends up attacking someone else that it will be her fault because she failed to stop more attacks. Upon meeting up with Herfst and some other unmentioned people, including a couple more young women, Marieke gets involved with setting and murdering rapists, which is never actually depicted in the film in great detail so as to emphasize that it is a highly secretive of the protagonist's life that even she does not want to think of. Meanwhile, Marieke comes by John's house with a bunch of egg foo young and allows him to fuck her after having one too many drinks, though she sneaks out in the middle of the night as if she is ashamed of her actions and scared of in-

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timacy. It should be mention that Marieke's ex-boyfriend is a rather handsome blond Nordic man with an Adonis-like figure, so the fact that the protagonist would allow herself to be defiled by a big pig like John just goes to show how much her self-esteem as plummeted since her traumatic encounter with pernicious prick Pizzaman. To her great dissatisfaction, Marieke's one-night stand with John results in her pregnancy and she initially plans to abort the baby, even rationalizing her decision by pretending to talk to the fetus, stating to it things like, "I think I'd come to hate you and hurt you" and that she'd be "bad mother." Indeed, there is no doubt that Marieke would be a cruel and horrendous mother as demonstrated by the fact that she murdered a litter of kittens and even refuses to let free a bird that she finds stuck in a net, thus guaranteeing the creatures slow and painful death. For some reason, Marieke decides to keep the baby and John naturally becomes the perfect supportive cuckold husband, sweetly stating to her pregnant stomach, "Dear little man or woman, I don't care, as long as it's one of the two. Hey, sweetheart. Come on, baby, give us a kick."

By day, Marieke is pampered and comforted as a soon-to-be-mother by her fat ass beau John, but at night she becomes an ostensibly powerful anti-rapist vigilante who goes around with her comrades. While Marieke initially seems empowered by her schizophrenic lifestyle, as she is able to feel simultaneously strong and tough yet protected and tender as a girl who is warmly protected by a caring man who has no clue about her secret double life as a vicious vigilante, she cannot keep up the act forever. Indeed, one day while shopping for groceries, Marieke sees a couple cops and her plaguing paranoia gets the best of her to the point where she runs home, deletes all the files her computer to hide evidence, starts smashing her laptop whilst cursing at it, and calls up Herfst and begs him to destroy all his evidence, thus indicating that the vigilante must have made the moronic mistake of filming their murders. Naturally, John tries to calm her down and comfort her, but Marieke just acts all the more hysterical and violent and begins hitting him like a rabid animal, so he forces her to take a cold shower while she complains "I'm drowning," thus making it seem as if she is suffering from schizophrenia. After her cold and luckily emotionally incapacitating shower, Marieke seems to enter an almost catatonic state and John carries her to bed where she lays lifelessly as if her soul has left her body. The film concludes with the inter-title, "for my little Siska February 3-7, 2008," thus reflecting that Marieke had a baby girl that she named after her best friend, but it died a couple days after birth. Assumedly, Marieke deranged behavior probably led to her baby's death.

Admittedly, when it comes to most female filmmakers, I usually think of someone trying in vain to do a man's job and failing terribly at it, but I must admit that *Can Go Through Skin* is a piece of pure and unadulterated feminine cinema that no male, no matter how queer or effeminate, could have ever directed as it depicts Dutch womankind in such a unflattering, repugnant, morally retarded,

and just plain decidedly disgusting fashion that no man could have been able to tolerate working with such material. One must also consider that the film was largely improvised and thus the product of hours upon hours of fairly organic deranged dame behavior. Apparently, during most of the shooting of the film, only a total of five people, including the entire cast and crew, were around in a small claustrophobic setting, so it must have been a nightmarish experience for any males involved. In a way, *Can Go Through Skin* is like the ultimate horror film for heterosexual males, as it forces the viewer to get beyond uncomfortably intimate with an uniquely unhinged chick who suffers from the worst sort of hormonal hysteria and lack of self-control. Indeed, Ms. Esther Rots' film is a rather rare kind of work in that it is the cinematic nightmares of both rabid feminazi dykes and rampantly heterosexual male chauvinists, which is certainly not small accomplishment. Arguably, the biggest taboo the film breaks is that it demonstrates female rape victims can be deranged cunts whose traumatic experiences make them all the more cunt. The only other film that I can think of that depicts a rape victim in a similarly unflattering light is the German arthouse 'rape epic' *Der freie Wille* (2006) aka *The Free Will* which, on top of depicting a sexual predator in an uncommonly sympathetic sort of way, features a middle-aged bourgeois blonde rape victim going berserk upon meeting her rapist's girlfriend and beating the girl up and violently shoving a toilet brush into her vagina as if it is her god given right as a sexual assault victim to commit such an act. Of course, in a 'feminized' (translation: lesbianized) world that encourages young women to live in big cities around 'diverse' people, be 'strong' and 'independent,' and forgo getting married and having children, *Can Go Through Skin* is far from a politically correct 'pussy power' flick as it demonstrates how weak and vulnerable young women really are, especially when living in close proximity to swarthy untermenschen who see nothing wrong with rape because it is part of their 'culture' and they think Dutch women are easy whores anyway (indeed, this is the common assumption among Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands). Interestingly, the female lead of Rots' film even admits she used to be naive about city life before she was sexually assaulted, confessing to her lard ass lover, "The city is so aggressive. You don't realize it at first. But once you notice it, you see it all the time." Ironically, after her traumatic experience, the protagonist (or more like 'anti-heroine') of the film eventually takes on a somewhat traditional female role by getting pregnant and having a protective male lover do all her work for her, but she ultimately fails at this as she is already far too tainted by modernity and a lifetime of feminist brainwashing to live the life of a simple humble housewife.

Interestingly, in her official 'director's statement,' Rots wrote: "Another question I was trying to come to grips with is: 'How do you deal with a legal system protecting the rights of offenders, instead of the victims? Along with the instinctive, all-consuming feelings of vengeance from which there is no relief?'" While seeming rather random initially, I think Rots included the scene where the pro-

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tagonist of *Can Go Through Skin* finds a photograph of failed German resistance movement figure Claus von Stauffenberg to demonstrate that there are certain circumstances in life where one must break the law and take actions into their own hands, like when a towelhead rapes you and the loony left-wing Dutch legal system does not make the rapist serve any jail time because it would be ostensibly 'racist' or something. Indubitably, it was uncommonly bold of Rots to portray the rapist of her film as an Arab, as one of the biggest taboos in the Netherlands and the rest of contemporary degenerate Western Europe is to recognize that virtually all rapes and violent crimes in these countries are committed by third world illegal aliens and so-called 'asylum seekers,' especially of the Islamic Arab and negro sort, and that the conspicuously corrupt legal systems in these countries are pathetically lenient with these people and even try to cover up their crimes, like the Paki-led underage white sex slavery rings in Oxford, England. Sadly, *Can Go Through Skin* ultimately demonstrates that, since the death of Theo van Gogh, it seems that at least one female Dutch filmmaker has more testicular fortitude than most of the Dutch male filmmakers combined, as it is a work that, whether intentional or not, completely demystifies the bullshit liberal multicultural feminist cosmopolitan dream that the Dutch seem so particularly proud and fond of. Notably, *Can Go Through Skin* was nominated seven times for the Golden Calf—the Dutch equivalent of an Oscar—and ultimately won three of the awards, including the coveted Special Jury Prize, with the jury's reason being: "In a time of deepening professionalism, air tight scripts and firm rules, the jury is pleased to see that it is possible to make a film outside of the trodden paths. Because of their courage and willingness to follow the experiment, both in ways of narrative as well as ways of working, with a special end result, the jury gives the Golden Calf for the Special Jury Award to the team of CAN GO THROUGH SKIN." Of course, the jury forgot to praise Rots and her crew for making a film that dares to contradict the feminist, multicultural, globalist narrative and ultimately exposes a hidden unfortunate truth about life in Amsterdam for young Dutch women.

-Ty E

UGLY, DIRTY AND BAD

Ettore Scola (1976)

Undoubtedly, the Italians are not only the greatest cinematic exploiters, but also the greatest self-exploiters and if any film demonstrates this, there is probably no better example of this than the delightfully degenerate, great tragicomic Guido-sploitation *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* (1976) aka *Brutti, sporchi e cattivi* aka *Down and Dirty* directed by Ettore Scola (*A Special Day, What Time Is It?*). Set in a sub-medieval maggot-infested micro-Third World shantytown in inner city Rome, *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is the superbly sordid and sleazy yet hysterically hilarious tale of a magnificently miserly slumlord of the pathologically criminally-inclined sort who has four generations of his own family living under his rickety rat-infested roof as if they are the prisoners of a death camp run by Goombah hobos. Co-written by Sergio Citti (*Ostia, Bawdy Tales*)—the sole filmmaker protégé of Pier Paolo Pasolini who himself came from the slums of Rome as proud members of the sub-proletariat (Citti taught Pasolini ‘rare’ Roman dialects) and featuring actors like Ettore Garofolo of Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma* (1962)—*Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is like a slapstick poverty porn of the absurdly anti-erotic sort, featuring incestuous heterosexual trannies, father-in-law rapists, poverty-ridden playboy models, and a family that may not agree on much aside from the fine points of familicide. Starring Nino Manfredi—one of the most prominent actors of the “*commedia all’italiana*” (Italian-style comedy) genre—in the lead role as a pathetically greedy, one-eyed patriarch who is willing to kill his entire family to keep his well ‘earned’ insurance money he obtained in a quicklime accident that cost him the hefty price of half his vision, *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is a radical remainder that the fall of the Roman Empire was not exactly the best thing for what would become the racially despoiled Italian non-race. Apparently, originally envisioned as a documentary, *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is nihilistic Italian neo-neorealism from a deranged dagowop netherworld where people are willing to do anything and everything to hold on to what little they have in regard to a life, like maggots on a corpse, except less dignified. Probably the best unintentional cinematic arguments for the merits of *Cosa Nostra*, *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is, indeed, ‘ugly, dirty and bad’ but it is also brilliantly cynical and masterfully misanthropic in an almost tragicomedically transcendental sort of way. If you ever thought about what it would be like to see a motley crew of ghetto Machiavellians without teeth fighting tooth and nail for mere self-preservation, you can do no better than *Ugly, Dirty and Bad*, a film that even trumps Werner Schroeter’s *Nel regno di Napoli* (1978) aka *Neapolitanische Geschichten* aka *The Kingdom of Naples*—a work apparently hated by many Italians upon its release due to its unflattering portrayal of poor garlic-deprived Guidos—in its all-encompassing cultural pessimism and aesthetic and thematic grotesquery, albeit done from a mercilessly mirthful angle. A celluloid contra-

UGLY, DIRTY AND BAD

dition of the age old Italian saying “Africa begins south of Rome,” Ugly, Dirty and Bad is a uniquely ugly remainder that even the greatest and most illustrious civilizations can degenerate to the level of slime-ridden savages not much different than those found in the Congo or Brazil.

Before the white trash Irish-American Gallagher family of Showtime’s *Shameless* (2011–presents), there was the miserable Mazzatella family of Ettore Scola’s masterpiece of merry meek misery *Ugly, Dirty and Bad*. The patently perverse patriarch and ‘Duce’ of the family, Giacinto Mazzatella (Nino Manfredi), is a man without any serious plans, aside from hiding his well earned insurance money from members of his family, not working, and getting so retardedly drunk that he forgets where he hides said money. Four generations living under one dilapidated roof in a shitty shack in a negro-inspired shantytown on the poverty-ridden borderlands of Rome, the world of Ugly, Dirty and Bad is a pleasantly perturbing place where ideas of prostitution start before puberty for young girls, debauched trannies screw their cuckold brother’s wives, fathers shoot their sons over baseless accusations revolving around money, and mothers take pride in the fact that their daughters are featured in porno magazines. With seemingly 20+ people living under one roof and every single one of them poorer than prole piss, Giacinto makes sure to sleep with a loaded shotgun, which he is more than willing to use as demonstrated by the fact that he nonsensically shoots one of his sons after misplacing his money and accusing his entire family of stealing it. As someone who literally stabs his wife Matilde (Linda Moretti) after an argument, rapes his daughter in law, and denigrates his transvestite son Nando (Franco Merli) with remarks like “homo, tranny, faggot...get fucked in the ass,” Giacinto makes for the ultimate archetypical anti-family man. After a short stay in prison for shooting his progeny, Giacinto’s life takes a dramatic change for the better when he meets and instantly falls in love with a young yet morbidly obese prostitute with monstrous bosoms named Iside (Maria Luisa Santella) and does not think twice about taking his new lecherous lady love home and having her sleep in the same bed with his wife Matilde. Naturally, considering Giacinto gives Iside ‘love’ and ‘respect’, treats her to lavish gifts and fine wine, and screws her in front of his entire family, his wife Matilde seeks revenge and enlists the help of a local voodoo master who drives pins in the heart of a voodoo doll representing Giacinto, but that pseudo-magical mumbo jumbo proves unfruitful in killing the sub-proletarian philanderer. Eventually, the entire family agrees to kill patriarch Giacinto by poisoning his macaroni, but like all ‘white’ trash, he survives the ordeal and pays his family back by setting fire to his home at night while everyone is sleeping inside, yet, rather unfortunately, they, also being human garbage, all survive. Determined to rid himself of his family and profit in the process, Giacinto sells the family shack to a Neapolitan immigrant family but the tenacious termite-like tribe fights back and the humble home collapses as a result. In the end, the family that hates each other stays together as Giacinto

builds his degenerate dynasty and new shack and lives haplessly-ever-after with his piggy prostitute girlfriend, wife Matilde, and four generations of degenerates.

Notably, the family shack featured in *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* has a peculiar statue of Charlie Chaplin, which is quite ironic considering, instead of pumping up and pleading for the proletariat like the silent commie film star did in his films, Ettore Scola portrays them as acutely accursed criminals and scumsuckers of the innately irredeemable sort. Rather paradoxically, the untermensch cretins of *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* ultimately somehow come out looking more likeable, at least in my opinion, to any of the cinematic tramps Chaplin ever created as Scola's film is celluloid scatology with a sensitively sordid soul, thereupon making it a cinematic work that could have only been sired in post-WWII Italy. Indeed, without question, no other nation of people is better at cinematically polishing a turd and making it pleasantly palatable than the Italians and I doubt there is a better example of this than *Ugly, Dirty and Bad*, a film that makes meatball misery, misanthropy, and meagerness seem merry and magical, which is something no Bolshevik agitprop flick has ever been able to accomplish. And I am not the only one to see it this way as director Ettore Scola earned himself the "Prix de la mise en scène" (Best Director Award) at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival for directing *Ugly, Dirty and Bad*, a work that makes for perfect company with the films of Pier Paolo Pasolini and his protégé Sergio Citti. As someone who has always had a softspot for Italians and Italian-Americans with a lack of self-control, erratic emotions, and a propensity for petty criminality, I find that *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is like the *Citizen Kane* of Guido-sploitation flicks and a work that makes classic American family comedies like *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983) and *A Christmas Story* (1983) seem like prissy bourgeois bullshit by comparison. A fiercely and foully farcical celluloid family affair for the entire family, *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* is guaranteed to make even the most perverted and poverty-stricken of pedigrees feel better about their troubled family matters as Scola's film personifies the wise phrase, "if you can't feed them, don't breed them" like no other.

-Ty E

NOSFERATU: A SYMPHONY OF HORROR
NOSFERATU: A SYMPHONY OF HORROR

F. W. Murnau° (1922)

Despite being less than two decades shy of a century old, F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* is still the greatest vampire film ever made. Count Orlock is also the most grotesque and eerie vampire to be captured on celluloid. Actor Max Schreck's performance as the vampire goes far behind method acting. I have no problem suspending reality and seeing the vampire as authentic. E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire* was even mildly entertaining in its fictional portrayal of Max Schreck as a real vampire. My first introduction to *Nosferatu* was in early elementary school. An episode of Nickelodeon's *Are You Afraid of The Dark?* featured Count Orlock coming to life and infiltrating a movie theater. I decided then that he was the greatest vampire ever. I have seen my fair share of vampire films and not one of them can compare to the radiating trance that Count Orlock omits in *Nosferatu*. Francis Ford Coppala's *Dracula* is quite a blasphemous adaptation. I thought that guy was supposed to be one the best directors ever (another Hollywood fantasy)? *Nosferatu* features a real Slovakian castle in ruins (in place of Romania). F.W. Murnau was one of the first directors (especially in regards to German expressionist cinema) to use real sets for shooting. This also furthers *Nosferatu*'s realistic feel. In contemporary cinema, we would expect the castle to be a CGI effect that destroys any type of human sense that such a gothic set should conjure up. The years have not been too kind to *Nosferatu*. Like all films of the silent era, *Nosferatu* features the decay of celluloid (Murnau's six original films have been lost forever). The deterioration and scratches *Nosferatu* has acquired over the years thankfully at least add to the films character. I can only imagine the truly dark scares *Nosferatu* caused when it was first released in 1922. Also take in consideration the live orchestra that would accompany the film. F.W. Murnau was one of the foremost innovators of cinema. *Nosferatu*, *The Last Laugh*, *Faust*, and *Sunrise* are testaments to Murnau's monumental contribution to the art of cinema. I would even say that he was even a superior director to fellow German expressionist director Fritz Lang. May F.W. Murnau's dark soul rest in piece.

-Ty E

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

F. W. Murnau° (1927) *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is German auteur F.W. Murnau's silent masterpiece. The film was Murnau's first American production and it shows. *Sunrise* has more in common with German expressionist films than it does with American films of that time period (the film was released in 1927). *Sunrise* was also the only film to receive the Unique and Artistic Production at the first ever Oscar ceremony in 1929. Americans were quite baffled by the film's artistry as American cinema had primarily been used as a business appealing to the working class. This has been true even before the start of the Hollywood studios (American films were first screened in traveling vaudeville acts in the early 1900s).

Sunrise has some of the most beautiful scenes ever committed to celluloid. When I first saw the early swamp scene I was pulled into a world that engulfed all of my emotions. Much like Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls*, *Sunrise* put me in a trance from beginning to end. These are the only two films to effect me in this very particular way. Both directors meticulously constructed lucid dreams on film. This is amazing considering *Sunrise*'s fairly straightforward plot. F.W. Murnau, being one of the early pioneers of film, was more influenced by paintings than his own medium. This is quite obvious and prevalent when viewing Murnau's lexicon of films (*Nosferatu*, *Faust*, *The Last Laugh*, etc).

The utilization of sound in *Sunrise* is also quite effective in adding to its dream-like feel. It was also one of the first films with a soundtrack of music and sound effects recorded in then-new Fox Movietone sound-on-film system. Quite an abstract way to derive emotion through sound and image collaboration. The horns in the score also become startling. Not something I expect from a film of any particular era.

Sunrise's story also is quite touching. I am not one for romance films, but Murnau knew how to get it done right. Writer Carl Mayer's dichotomy between country and city is something I truly appreciated. The mistress from the city represents everything immoral and corrupt of the manmade prison. The wife represents the essence of beauty and nature. The husband realizes the error of his way in being seduced into something that seems to offer progression and happiness, but in reality destroys the human soul. So quickly did the husband forget his fundamental reason for living, but so soon he remembered.

F.W. Murnau died in an automobile accident in Santa Barbara, California on March 11, 1931. According to pioneering filmmaker/gossip sleaze bag Kenneth Anger, the crash was a result of Murnau giving a blowjob to his fourteen-year old Filipino valet driver Garcia Stevenson while he was driving. Murnau had potential in future projects and his death was a serious blow to film innovation and history.

F. W. Murnau 28 December 1888 - 11 March 1931

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

-Ty E

CALVAIRE

Fabrice Du Welz (2005)

For whatever reason, Belgium—the country responsible for the infamous scat-covered apocalyptic arthouse flick *Vase de Noces* (1974) aka *Wedding Trough* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie* and underrated aberrant-garde filmmakers like Roland Lethem (*La Fée sanguinaire* aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, *The Red Cunt* aka *Le sexe enrage*) is king when it comes to the most warped European arthouse flicks, yet very few of these works get seen anywhere outside of Europe, with a work like the Flemish production *Ex Drummer* (2007) directed by Koen Mortier being a rather rare exception. Of course, decidedly demented Belgian horror flicks like Johan Vandewoestijne's *Lucker the Necrophagous* (1986) are not exactly cherished among American horror fans either. Luckily one Belgium horror flick that certainly deserves praise for its artful perversity, *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal* directed by Fabrice Du Welz (*Vinyan, Cold 45*), actually managed to rise out of the ghetto that is the European independent horror underground and become a cult hit of sorts that people either seem to love or love to hate. Technically a Belgian-French-Luxembourgian co-production, *Calvaire* is not only artsploitation cinema at its most atmospheric and ethereal, but—whether intentional or not on the director's part—an aberrant allegory for the racial and cultural senility of Belgium and the death of the west in general. Described by many of its detractors as a 'derivative' work (what film isn't?), director Du Welz has referenced films ranging from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) André Delvaux's *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... A Train*, thus demonstrating the filmmaker's curious combination of Hollywood horror and European arthouse influences. A sort of curious combination of Claude Chabrol, Harry Kümel, Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), pre-junky *Harmony Korine*, and a little bit of *The Pig Fucking Movie* thrown in for good measure, *Calvaire* is a uniquely unsettling and semi-surreal tale of a young traveling entertainer who makes the timeless mistake of heading down south and ultimately becoming the involuntary quasi-tranny sex object of a bitter and equally demented old innkeeper who seems to be pretty lenient when it comes to finding someone to replace his wife. The story of a seemingly arrogant hack singer who somehow manages to have everyone he comes into contact with—be they male or female and/or young or old—fall in love with him, *Calvaire* is ultimately one of the most bizarre tales about a Christ-like figure, especially since said character is sodomized by a pig-porking redneck.

Marc Stevens (Laurent Lucas) is a uniquely untalented traveling man-diva who lives in his vintage van and who makes a somewhat unrespectable living singing generic ballads in peculiar venues like old folk homes. After giving a Christmas performance at a nursing home, Marc is approached in his makeshift dressing room by one of the old folks, a certain Madame Langhoff (Gigi Cour-

CALVAIRE

signy), who puts the singer's hand on her crotch in a determinedly desperate attempt to seduce him, but he pushes her away in abject disgust. When Marc leaves the retirement home, he is approached and embraced by a younger woman that works there, Mademoiselle Vicky (played by French porn star Brigitte Lahaie), but he also turns her away in decided disgust. From there, Marc makes his way south to perform for some Christmas special, but his van craps out on the way and he finds himself stuck in the swampy hick-inhabited area of Hautes Fagnes in Liège. While stranded in the rain, Marcus is 'rescued' by a seemingly half-retarded and haunted chap named Boris (Jean-Luc Couchard), who is quite obsessed with locating his missing dog. Boris drops Marc off at a seemingly abandoned inn owned by an old chap named Bartel (Jackie Berroyer), who is still pissed off by the fact that his wife Gloria left him long ago. Bartel claims to be a retired standup comedian and to prove his generosity to a fellow performer, he not only offers to provide Marc with free room and board for two days, but also offers to tow and repair the singer's van. Despite Bartel's unwavering generosity, Marc acts like a queenish bitch and refuses to be open with the innkeeper and listen to his personal struggles, as if he cannot be bothered to acknowledge that other people exist and have feelings. The next day, Bartel begins becoming particularly possessive over Marc, especially after the singer decides to go for a walk, aggressively warning him to stay away from a local village because, "those people are not like you and me. They're not artists." On his stroll, Marc witnesses, among other things, a teenage boy penetrating a pig while his all-male family looks on in amorous awe, remarking how "so tender" the scenario is. Meanwhile, Bartel finds some amateur porn portraits (which were given to the singer by Mademoiselle Vicky in an envelope before he left the old folks home) in Marc's van and since he is a man who has not had a real living and breathing woman in some time, it really gets the innkeeper's bitter blood pumping. That night, Bartel works himself into a frenzy and raves to Marc about how his wife Gloria abandoned him many years ago. Little does Marc realize that he will inevitably have to act as a transsexual stand-in for Gloria.

The next day, Marc discovers that Bartel has discovered his porn photos and when he goes to confront the innkeeper, he finds that the pissed old man is destroying his van like a wild berserker. In no time, Bartel blows up the van and knocks Marc unconscious with the van's battery. When Marc finally awakes from his temporary slumber, he finds himself tied to a chair and wearing a rather aesthetically distasteful sundress typical of a woman in her late-40s/early-50s. From there on, Bartel, who has totally lost what little was left of his wife-warped mind, addresses Marc as his beloved Gloria and asks why 'she' has come back to him after all these years. To ostensibly "protect him from the villagers," Bartel brutally shaves half of Bartel's hair off in a rather painful fashion. The next day, Marc manages to escape while Bartel is looking for a Christmas tree, but he is soon caught in rabbit snare trap. Dullard boy Boris finds Marc but mistakes him

for his dog and sits down and pets the singer, but notifies Bartel. Bartel picks up Marc and throws him in the back of his truck, which is witnessed by some villagers, but they do not lift a finger to help him. As far as Marc's punishment for running away, Bartel verbally berates the singer and crucifies him as if he is Christ. Like any working-class fellow pissed off at his wife, Bartel goes to the local bar to drown his tears in alcohol, but he makes the mistake of telling the pussy-deprived villagers that his 'wife' has returned. To celebrate Christmas, Boris comes by with the raped pig (which he believes is his dog) and Marc gives a loving and teary-eyed speech about love and the holiday in between beating the cross-dressing singer to a bloody pulp, but the Christmas joy is cut short when someone shoots inside the inn. In no time, the villagers invade the inn, kill Boris and Bartel, and one even sodomizes Marc thinking that he is really Bartel's wife. Due to the rowdy jealousy-driven behavior among the horndog hick villagers, Marc manages to escape from the inn and into the woods, but the mob follows him. Marc runs all night and into the next day, spotting a crucified Christ on the way. One of the village elders manages to chase down Marc, but falls into some quicksand before killing the amateur singer. Instead of taking the man's gun and killing him like he should, Marc, taking on the role Bartel's wife, comforts the crazy fellow and tells him that he loves him as he sinks into the sand.

Rather curiously, Calvaire director Fabrice Du Welz has gone on the record confessing that there are only two characters in the film, Marc and Bartel, and that all the other people in the film are merely a variation of Bartel. Indeed, what makes Calvaire rise above the sewer level that is typical of most horror movies is that it is open-ended and begs for interpretation, which cannot be said of most contemporary films, be it horror or otherwise. On top of that, Calvaire, not unlike *Ex Drummer*, has a distinctly 'anti-Heimat' quality that is not simply anti-white 'lynch mob' propaganda like in Hollywood films like *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) or *Deliverance* (1972) and liberal horror trash like *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977), but shows a serious concern for the culture, and, in turn, racial degeneration of Belgium. Undoubtedly, 'protagonist' Marc is a sort of archetype for the modern narcissistic and exceedingly effete European male who only cares about himself and it is only when he is tortured, humiliated, and sodomized that he is able gain enough sensitivity and humility to open up to another person, which he finally manages to do at the end of Calvaire. Of course, Bartel and all the other, mostly older, characters represent an old and senile Europe that has lost touch with everything it once was, which is represented by Bartel's lost wife Gloria, who never makes an appearance in the film, as well as Boris' lost dog. In Marc's committed ambition to become a rock star, he is undoubtedly chasing one of the most idiotic and juvenile dreams that post-WWII Western society now deems holy and godlike. In his previous and even more grotesque yet darkly humorous short *Quand on est amoureux, c'est merveilleux*

CALVAIRE

(1999) aka *A Wonderful Love*, auteur Fabrice Du Welz tackles necrophilia and one could argue that *Calvaire* is about a sort of 'spiritual corpse-copulating' as a work about a lonely lunatic of an innkeeper that is so in love with the past that he no longer lives in the present and thus has lost complete touch with reality. Ultimately, *Calvaire* attempts to put both the viewer and the protagonist in the shoes of the metaphysical necrophile. While Marc finally comes to understand his torturers through his 'ordeal' and becomes Christ-like for his sacrifice, it is dubious whether the viewer does or not. Far from the *Psycho/Deliverance/The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* rip-off that certain undiscerning (and, typically, unsophisticated) viewers claim it to be, *Calvaire* takes the formulas, conventions, and themes of the American horror flicks it pays rather open homage to and raises them to level of serious celluloid art.

-Ty E

ALLÉLUIA

Fabrice Du Welz (2014)

I have been in a couple relationships with relatively 'normal' women, but whether it came to their aesthetic interests or sexuality, I found them to be hopelessly banal. Indeed, I can only imagine how boring in bed the average bourgeois-bred yet hopelessly negrified feminist-brainwashed MTV-loving twat is nowadays, but of course, as far as atypical ladies are concerned, 'idiosyncrasies' always come with their own set of 'preternatural' problems that can oftentimes drive one crazy, at least from my experience, but then again to be with such a woman, one must be at least partially crazy themselves. When two whackjobs get together, they oftentimes create what one might describe as 'mad love,' which is somewhat of a long celebrated tradition of cinema history as demonstrated by popular works like Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Leonard Kastle's *The Honeymoon Killers* (1969), Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973), David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990), Dominic Sena's *Kalifornia* (1993), Tony Scott's *True Romance* (1993), and Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994), among countless other films that give ostensibly normal people a little whiff of what it is like to be in a fiery romance. Of course, many of these films are inspired by true stories about killer couples, including *The Honeymoon Killers*, which is based on the so-called 'The Lonely Hearts Killers' who killed upwards of 20 different women between 1947 and 1949 and were subsequently executed via electric-chair on March 8, 1951, but not before publicly professing their love for one another one last time. Indeed, Hawaii-born Spaniard Raymond Fernandez and his borderline obese WASP lover Martha Beck were a true odd couple that pretended to be brother and sister despite the obvious racial and cultural differences and lured unsuspecting desperate women via lonely hearts ads and then killed them for their money. The killer couple's story not only inspired Kastle's film, but at least three other cinematic works, including *Profundo Carmesí* (1996) aka *Deep Crimson* directed by Mexican Israelite and Luis Buñuel protégé Arturo Ripstein, *Lonely Hearts* (2006) directed by some TV hack and starring John Travolta and Salma Hayek, and most recently *Alléluia* (2014) aka *Hallelujah* directed by Belgian Walloon auteur Fabrice Du Welz. While I just discovered and watched Du Welz's film, which seems to have come literally out of nowhere, I can say without the slightest hesitation that it is not only the most brutal and artful of the *Lonely Hearts Killers* flicks, but I have to admit that it is easily the greatest, which is no surprise considering the mad mensch that helmed it. While Du Welz has described Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) as his favorite film in various interviews, he also has been influenced by the great magical realist filmmakers of his homeland like André Delvaux (*The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, *Belle*), hence the originality of his ominously otherworldly yet darkly hilarious debut feature *Calvaire* (2004)

ALLÉLUIA

aka *The Ordeal*, which features an exquisite homage to *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... A Train*. After facing a nightmarish experience working on the mainstream multicultural French action-thriller *Colt 45* (2014) starring a bunch of swarthy towelheads in a production that the director has described as “the worst experience of my life,” and “A terrible nightmare...[I] almost killed myself,” Du Welz decided to go back to his arthouse horror roots and assemble *Alléluia*. Inspired by how Ripstein was able to transport the ‘The Lonely Hearts Killers’ story to Mexico for *Deep Crimson*, Du Welz hooked up with *Man Bites Dog* (1992) co-writer Vincent Tavie and quickly assembled *Alléluia* with *Calvaire* star Laurent Lucas and Pedro Almodóvar regular Lola Dueñas as the two charismatic leads, henceforth creating one of the most decidedly deranged and debasing yet curiously comical and brutally beautiful celluloid romances ever sired on gritty 16mm celluloid.

Although from Spain, single divorced mother Gloria (Lola Dueñas) looks more like a *Mestizo* from Mexico and she has a job worse than a sweatshop janitor. Indeed, Gloria ‘prepares’ corpses for a living and at the beginning of *Alléluia* she spends a little too much time washing the shriveled cock of an elderly corpse. Luckily, Gloria’s decided desensitization to the dead will come in handy in the near future after she meets the mysterious man that will sweep her off her feet and pleasure her like no other person has ever done before. After being more or less forced by her trashy friend Madeleine (Stéphane Bissot), Gloria reluctantly agrees to go on a date with a dude that describes himself as “almost six-foot-six” on a dating site. The dude in question is Michel (Laurent Lucas) and he is a self-stylized ‘Satanist’ of sorts (notably, real-life Lonely Hearts Killer Raymond Fernandez believed that voodoo and black magic techniques that he learned from a cellmate in prison made him irresistible to women) and he does a silly ritual involving burning Gloria’s photo and creepily stating, “Let Gloria succumb to my charms. Let it be.” When Michel meets Gloria at a restaurant for their big date, he thoroughly impresses her with his conspicuously contrived pick-up lines, pseudo-cultivation, and bogus alpha-male persona, so naturally the two end up fucking right after the date. In fact, Michel also ends up spending the night at Gloria’s apartment and acts if he is her hubby, even reluctantly eating breakfast in the morning with her bastard daughter Monique. When Gloria is abruptly called into work, Michel agrees to watch Monique, though he actually ends up spending most of his time snooping through his new lover’s stuff and finding incriminating things like photo albums where she scratched her ex-husband’s face out in every single picture. Michel also seems to derive sexual satisfaction from deeply inhaling the dubious odor permeating from Gloria’s used shoes (later in the film, Michel fiercely pleasures himself while Gloria’s foot is lodged in his mouth in a seemingly uncomfortable fashion). Michel claims to be in the shoe business and when Gloria gets back from work he tricks her into giving him money that he claims he needs to use to pay a merchandise dis-

tributor. Naturally, naive little woman-child Gloria is more than happy to give Michel the quick cash even though she is not exactly rich herself and has a child to feed, stating to her new beau regarding her somewhat creepily enthusiastic act of charity, "If you don't help the people you love, you don't really love them." Of course, after Michel gets the money, he leaves without so much as giving Gloria a kiss despite all she's done for him.

Before leaving her apartment, Michel gives Gloria his phone number, but when she calls he never picks, thus causing her to suffer lovelorn lunacy of sorts where she suffers bouts of hysterically crying and eventually begins going to every single club and bar in town looking for her MIA boy toy and asking random strangers if they have seen him. Of course, Gloria eventually spots Michel at a club not just dancing with one, but four different women, including a negress. Ultimately, Gloria decides to wait outside the club in her car and surprise Michel when he parts way with his slutty-looking company. Needless to say, when Gloria surprises Michel by appearing out of nowhere and confronting him, the only thing he can say is, "Let me explain..." and then proceeds to grasp his head as if faking an injury for sympathy while crying, "Oh my head" in an unintentionally humorous fashion. Of course, Gloria falls for his patently pathetic behavior and nurses Michel back to health at his apartment, which is covered with photographs of various lonely women he plans to seduce and milk for cash. Apparently, Michel genuinely has something wrong with his noggin as a result of being hit in the head with a beam at construction site when he was sixteen in a freak accident that has plagued him with permanent bouts of migraines that seem to be especially induced by stress, which Gloria will soon be the main source of. Although he has lied for most of the film, Michel realizes he has been caught and decides to reveal everything to Gloria about himself and his degenerate second rate Don Juan ways, stating, "My mom lived in a small apartment. When a man came, I had to sleep in the bedroom closet. When Mum didn't have a man, she took me into her bed. I had to take their place. Until one guy threw me out. Then I wandered around. Not long. Just long enough to realize I had a gift. The skill Mum taught me, giving pleasure. Except, as you see, now I take something in return." After that, Michel confesses he does not really own a shoe store and then tries to coerce Gloria into going back home, as if he genuinely cares about her feelings and does not want to let her down with his debauching ways. Instead of doing the sensible thing and leaving Michel for good, Gloria pleads to her man, "I wanna stay with you. You keep doing what you do...And I'll help you. Being with you...living for you...relieving your migraines. Be mine, Michel. Want to?" Naturally, Michel cannot turn down her offer and the two become partners in both crime and romance. Indeed, Gloria even abandons her daughter by giving her to her friend Madeleine to watch, stating, "I've never felt so good in my life" and telling her progeny, "I'm going to do something important." Indeed, like many single mothers, Gloria decides to put her own needs

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before her daughter.

In a scheme to get enough money to realize his dream of opening his own store, Michel marries a less than attractive and somewhat overweight post-menopausal woman named Marguerite (Édith Le Merdy) and moves in her large home with Gloria, who pretends to be his sister even though she is clearly Spanish. Of course, Gloria instantly becomes jealous of Marguerite and when she walks in on her lover receiving an aggressive blowjob from his new wife in a wine cellar, she goes berserk, jumps on the poor woman like a wild animal, and chokes her to death with relative ease within less than a minute. Indeed, despite initially seeming like Michel will be responsible for masterminding the murders, it soon becomes fairly clear that Gloria is actually the crazier of the two. Of course, Michel is mad but not because his new wife is dead but because Gloria killed her before she could get money from her so he could start his own legitimate business. As Michel tells Gloria, "I'm working. I have to fuck them" and then proceeds to fuck her on his belated wifey's dinner table. In a bizarre and totally unforgettable piece of musical neo-magical-realism, Gloria sings the following lyrics before proceeding to stoically dismember Marguerite's naked corpse with a saw, "Be careful, my love. They no longer have dreams. They're empty and alone. They live in darkness. I found you. You brought me back to life, so beware my life...Be careful, my love, be careful." Although Michel's feelings seem much more complicated as if he has an incapacity for love, Gloria truly believes that she and her crypto-gigolo boyfriend share a special and totally singular love that everyone is jealous of and that no one would understand.

In a true demonstration of 'the banality of evil,' Michel takes Gloria to a screening of John Huston's *The African Queen* (1951) and proceeds to describe his "absolute respect" for Humphrey Bogart because he had no pain in his eyes during the film despite the fact he was apparently suffering from cancer while shooting the work in glorious hot and mosquito-ridden nations like Uganda and the Congo. While watching the film, Michel impersonates a scene where Bogart childishly mocks a hippo, which brings Gloria great happiness as if she has reverted to an infantile state. Since Gloria oftentimes acts like a child and throws literally murderous temper tantrums, Michel decides to use his Bogart impression anytime he needs to calm his lunatic lover. In an assumed tribute to Satan endowing the former with supernatural seduction powers, Michel and Gloria dance naked around a fire while in a seemingly possessed state of mad erotic ecstasy. Agreeing to no longer fuck his victims so as not to upset Gloria and cause her to botch another job by killing a woman for giving her beau a mere blowjob, Michel next targets a devout and nearly elderly Catholic woman named Solange (Hélène Noguerra). Assumedly partly inspired by the setting of his favorite Bogart flick, Michel pretends to be a priest and tells a phony sob story about how Gloria started a Catholic mission in the Congo that was eventually attacked by rebels who killed all the men and raped all the women. Michel also

claims that he started a 'Catholic non-profit organization' called 'Aid Africa' to raise aid for an imaginary fellow named 'Father Samuel' who refused to leave the ravaged negro village. During the entire comical charade, Gloria pretends to sob hysterically but eventually bursts out laughing while listening to Michel's borderline pornographic descriptions of the Afro-atrocities. Solange is clearly aroused by the story and states, "All that misfortune is fascinating" and then proceeds to compliment Michel by remarking that he is "very down to earth for a man of god," thus hinting that she might have some sort of faint sexual attraction to him. In fact, Michel is so down to earth that he manages to eventually defile devout Catholic Solange, but Gloria walks in on the unholy act and beats the holy woman to death with a shoe. Before being beaten to death with footwear, Solange demonstrates how her religion has effected her sexuality by stating, "I forbid you to cum" while engaged in heated carnal knowledge with Michel.

After having a fake loving wedding ceremony by themselves in a barn, Michel hooks up with a relatively beautiful and wealthy single mother named Gabriella (Anne-Marie Loop) who has a young daughter named Eve that is about the same age as Gloria's daughter. Since Gabriella's husband died when Eve was only three months old, she is quite serious about finding a new surrogate father for her child, who seems to rather like Michel as he plays with her and helps her with her French lessons. Of course, Gloria is exceedingly jealous of not only Gabriella and her glaringly superior pulchritude, but the fact that Michel treats Eve as if she were his real daughter even though he treated her own daughter Monique like a pestilence. Indeed, Michel seems like a relatively normal family man with Gabriella and Eve and, to the intense chagrin of Gloria, he even seems to bask in this new masculine role. Meanwhile, Gloria acts increasingly childish, even drawing hateful grotesque caricatures of Gabriella with "bitch" written next to it, which Eve eventually accidentally finds after the careless murderess leaves it outside. When Gloria attempts to give Eve a poorly assembled toy animal she has made out of hay and the little girl's mother demands that she say thank you, she throws an elaborate temper tantrum, screams, "I don't want a present from her! I don't want her to exist!" and then asks her mother if she is blind in regard to the dubious nature of her female house-guest. Meanwhile, to make sure she does not go into one of her homicidal rages, Michel begins drugging Gloria while he has sex with Gabriella. Unfortunately, Gabriella lets the cat out of the bag when she informs Gloria, who she thinks is Michel's sister, that she is pregnant and wants to abort the baby. Of course, Gloria goes completely ballistic, begins strangling Eve and then locks her in a room, and then demands Michel kill Gabriella, absurdly stating, "You can fuck here, you can kill here." After some hesitation and a botched half-hearted attack where he merely cuts her arm, Michel murders Gabriella at Gloria's command by hacking her in the neck with an axe. Obviously slightly less crazed and more morally sound than his beloved she-bitch, Michel tackles Gloria when she attempts to kill Eve, thus

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the little girl luckily manages to escape relatively unscathed. In the end, Gloria realizes that Michel was drugging her and decides to have her revenge. In the final fever-dream-like scene of the film, Michel and Gloria go to the movies and it is insinuated that the police have come to arrest the former as a result of the latter calling them, thus proving that Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

Part artsploitation romance, part magical realist musical, part postmodern anti-Heimat film, part (anti)Catholic satire, and part nihilistic horror-comedy, *Alléluia*, not unlike the director Fabrice Du Welz's previous works *Calvaire* and *Vinyan*, is a work that rather refreshingly defies all genre categorization, which is all the more amazing when one considers that it is based on a true crime story that already inspired three other films. Apparently, Du Welz considers *Calvaire* and *Alléluia* to be the first two chapters of a proposed loose trilogy set in South Belgian area of Ardenne and starring Laurent Lucas that he hopes to complete sometime soon. Indubitably, he is probably the foremost auteur 'Heimat horror' in the world, which is something he seems to accept and embrace as demonstrated by remarks he has made in interviews about his homeland like, "Belgium is a dark, surreal, schizophrenic, absurd place to live. *CALVAIRE* is a very Belgian film." Luckily, it seems Du Welz seems to have learned his lesson in regard to the true horrors of commercial filmmaking, as he stated in an interview with www.film4.com regarding his totally shockingly horrendous tastelessly xenophiliac mainstream frog action-thriller *Colt 45* that, "...it was a disaster because it was a very bad production. They wanted me to deliver a strict commercial movie, and I'd like to do that, but I suppose I'm not the right guy for that job." Unfortunately, as the oeuvre of his filmic father figure André Delvaux demonstrates, Walloon filmmakers oftentimes have to rely on the French for getting their films produced, hence the country's lack of Dutch-language films despite the fact that the Flemish are the majority population of the culturally schizophrenic nation.

Undoubtedly in its own weird fucked up and fiercely fiendish way, *Alléluia* is a rather romantic film that proves that, no matter how unhinged you might, there is always someone out there for you, even if such a union can lead to migraines, misanthropy, murder or worse. While I seriously doubt it was Du Welz's intention, the film also features a serious indictment of womanhood that reflects the sort of warped thinking, hyper hysteria, and moral retardation that only women, as well as some fags and effeminate men, seem to have the capacity for. While Michel seem rampantly heterosexual due to his mastery of pleasuring bitches and whatnot, he actually looks at sex the way as women do as a sort of tool and means to an end, though he also gets a narcissistic kick out of seducing women as well as if sex to him is just another form of masturbation. Like many male heterosexual degenerates, antihero Michel's mental pathologies are the direct result of women and not any sort of male influence, as he is the forsaken bastard son of a wanton whore who made him both watch her fuck men in a closest

and forced him to pleasure her when no other man was around. As *Alléluia* also demonstrates, few things are more deleterious to a child than a desperate single mother who is willing to go to a variety of absurdly debasing extremes to keep a man around. Also, it is no coincidence that Michel becomes the most well adjusted and happy when he takes on the natural position of a substitute father and husband, which is arguably what most angered jealous bitch Gloria, who seems to thrive in a world of chaos, death, and destruction and could never in her wildest dreams live such a life of domestic normalcy. Of course, I probably should not be reading too much into any of this, as Du Welz has demonstrated in various interviews that he is an anti-intellectual of sorts who, unlike most contemporary European art fag arthouse auteur filmmakers, thankfully takes a more visceral approach to filmmaking that comes me from the gut than the oftentimes soulless intellect. Indeed, Du Welz might have a dark soul of sorts but at least, unlike many of his contemporaries, he actually has a soul.

-Ty E

TOBY DAMMIT
TOBY DAMMIT

Federico Fellini (1969)

Toby Dammit is a segment featured in the three tales of the macabre by Edgar Allan Poe film *Spirits of Dead*. I have singled out the segment Toby Dammit because it stands out as the best short film on the feature and is worthy of exclusive mention. The short was directed by master maestro and supposed former circus clown (probably one of his many lies) Italian director Federico Fellini. Toby Dammit is about an alcoholic former Shakespearian actor who is losing his career. For this short, Federico Fellini once again directs the film in a dream-like surrealism that slightly resembles a nightmare. Some people in the film are merely cutout and models, while most are living. These artificial individuals makes film a disconnected quality of what odd dreams are made of. Toby Dammit is essentially a nihilist with nothing left to live for. He agrees to do an Italian film in return for a Ferrari that is a signed death wish. Upon entering Italy, Mr. Dammit is bombarded by the paparazzi (the origin of this name is from a photographer in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*) and he becomes immediately annoyed. Toby throws a bag of luggage at one of the paparazzi and is instantly denounced by the photographing scumbags. At the airport, Toby also first comes in contact with a little girl with a ball. As Toby rides up an escalator, is as if he's finally trying to escape a hell that has been reserved for him. His trip in Italy will soon tell. The little girl Toby Dammit encounters is very pale, blond haired, and has fairer than fair skin. She smiles in a way that slightly hides her face as if she has something to hide. This girl and her ball look as if they should be on display as priceless porcelain that could be shattered at any minute. On an Italian talk show Toby Dammit is asked if he believes in god and he replies "no." When asked if he believes in Satan, Toby enthusiastically (for once) replies "yes." Toby claims that Satan to him is a little girl. What individual would proclaim a little girl to be Satan and why? Toby Dammit is a suffering individual whose inner demons go deeper than merely being an alcoholic. Toby Dammit attends an Italian award show that looks as if it is shot in a wet, cold cave in hell. Although beautiful women surround Toby and guests show their gratitude, Toby continues to drink himself into a pathetic state. A woman pronounces her love to Toby and he seems like he couldn't care less. Upon reading Shakespeare, Toby tells the audience he could have been a great actor and admits his contempt for all at the show. He immediately runs out of the award show and gets in his Ferrari. The life of luxury and hedonism is not appealing to Toby. It seems as if only the fast and dangerous can revive the bitter soul of this almost lost cause of a man. Toby Dammit takes his Ferrari and speeds down small roads of an Italian town. He immediately encounters odd wood cutouts of human beings and artificial sheep. Dammit looks as if none of these things bother him as he is eager to get where he is going. He finally encounters a real human being who looks

slightly retarded and deranged who does not respond to Toby's verbal inquiry. Toby drives faster and faster until he reaches a fallen bridge. This single mad-man car ride is easily more entertaining than any action film car chase I have had the displeasure of watching. Toby knows what he has to do as he sees the little girl with the ball on the other side. Toby Dammit is one of Federico Fellini's most overlooked films and as good as his greatest of films. Federico Fellini was a master of mise en scène and Toby Dammit demonstrates the director's ability to make every detail of a shot purposeful. Whether the actors in the film are human or merely cutouts, they are genuinely colorful and many times alluring. How many horror films can say that?

-Ty E

I CLOWNS
I CLOWNS

Federico Fellini (1970)

About 7 years ago, I managed to find a VHS copy of Federico Fellini's TV movie *I*

Clowns at a Mom and Pop video store. At the time, I had already viewed most of Fellini's greatest works and felt that watching *I Clowns* would grant me one step closer to finishing the Italian maestros entire filmography. Aside from remembering that it disturbed my girlfriend at the time, I pretty much forgot all about *I Clowns* and wrote it off as Fellini's most forgettable work. The other day, I was quite grateful to receive a digitally remastered DVD edition of the film from RAROVVIDEO. I figured that by watching the new release of *I Clowns* in a remastered form, I would finally be able to properly assess the cinematic merit of the film in context with Federico Fellini's large and extravagant collection of cinematic works. After opening the box to the handsomely packaged new release of *I Clowns*, I immediately inserted the disc into my DVD player, and to my surprise, became ecstatically engaged in the carnivalesque cinematic bliss of *I Clowns*. I must admit that it has been sometime since I watched a film by Federico Fellini, but after watching *I Clowns* for a couple minutes I soon remembered why I, as well as a good portion of film critics, consider the legendary Italian director to be one of the greatest filmmakers to have ever lived. Whether featuring a circus of extra peculiar looking clowns or a voluptuous blonde bombshell dancing in a water fountain - with his knack for dreaming up a combination of spectacular surrealism and a baroque aesthetic - Federico Fellini's films provide the viewer with a metaphysical experience that champions any live circus or local high-class strip club. In *I Clowns*, Federico Fellini personally takes the viewer on a pseudo-cinéma vérité journey into the lives, times, and fantastic activities of an eclectic group of circus clowns that gave the director some of his most notable childhood memories.

Although the legacy of Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini has faded into obscurity in Italy, the artistic legacy of Federico Fellini is here to stay. In Rimini, Italy, an airport named after Fellini reminds the world that the Italian filmmaker is one of few artists that gave his patrons the opportunity to cinematically fly. In *I Clowns*, Fellini pays tribute to performance artists that inspired his love of the fantastic; everyday circus clowns. The subjects range from a farcical fascist clown to legendary silent clown Charlie Chaplin's daughter Alice. Stylistically, *I Clowns* resembles Fellini's *Roma* (1972), as both films take the viewer on an abstract autobiographical journey, colorfully illuminating the events and people that truly touched the Italian maestro's majestic life. *I Clowns* also features Swedish beauty Anita Ekberg, the lovely lady whose iconic appearance in Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* is often considered one of the greatest moments of cinema history. Many film critics have criticized the Italian director for being

too "self-indulgent", yet with the wonderful life and fantastic dreamlike portraits Fellini gives for these highly personal events, I have never found the director's cinematic "narcissism" to be worthy of harsh criticism. After all, watching a film by Federico Fellini is probably the second best thing to actually taking a trip to Italy. Fellini's love for the people and places that consumed his charmed life are more than apparent in his films. One scene in *I Clowns* that I found to be especially reflective of Fellini's empathetic character occurs when the filmmaker watches stock footage of his favorite childhood clowns at a museum. Upon viewing the footage, Fellini is immediately taken aback by the fact that the film stock is deteriorating, thus seeing famous clowns from yesterday symbolically fading from memory before his weary eyes.

"The Clown was always the caricature of a well-established, ordered, peaceful society. But today all is temporary, disordered, grotesque. Who can still laugh at clowns? Hippies, politicians, the man in the street, all the world plays the clown, now." -Federico Fellini

Even though the stock footage of clowns featured in the Italian museum has deteriorated from history, Fellini has guaranteed the immortality of their legacy with *I Clowns*. Like many of Fellini's other films, *I Clowns* ends on an extremely high note with a spectacular clown pageant. Despite taking a behind-the-scenes look at clowns, *I Clowns* manages to retain the mysticism of its subjects. Federico Fellini once considered being a ringmaster during his early years of adulthood, yet in a way, the Italian auteur fulfilled this desire when he decided to direct performers (including clowns) in the form of filmmaking. *I Clowns* is Federico Fellini's most literal cinematic circus, an extravagant collection of clown vignettes which grant the viewer a household circus without the atrocious smell of elephant feces. From his greatest masterpieces (*I Vitellini*, *8 1/2*, *Amarcord*, etc) to his less notable works (*City of Women*, *Intervista*, etc), Fellini stands out as an auteur in the truest sense; a cinematic author who has graciously shared his most intimate autobiographical moments, ranging from teenage group masturbation (*Amarcord*) to the most revealing moments of self-doubt. Although *I Circus* is certainly one of Fellini's minor works, any true fan of the Italian filmmaker will find the film to be a memorable experience that involves the viewer from beginning to end. Federico Fellini is known for being a notorious liar, yet the fictional elements of his cinematic autobiography give a truthful account of his jestful soul just the same.

-Ty E

AND THE SHIP SAILS ON
AND THE SHIP SAILS ON

Federico Fellini (1983)

In my opinion, *And the Ship Sails On* was maestro Federico Fellini's last great masterpiece. Sadly, the legendary flamboyant auteur's later films are, for the most part, a disappointment. *And the Ship Sails On* captures the last bit of Fellini's magic before his death less than a decade later. The film stands alone in style to all of Fellini's other films. No surprise when considering Federico Fellini went from directing Italian Neo-Realist films to surrealist magic shows. *And the Ship Sails On* follows a narrating Italian journalist on a cruise during the eve of World War I. The ship is filled with pretentious aristocrats, bourgeois snobs, and a smelly depressed Rhinoceros. *And the Ship Sails On* acts as a satirical commentary of the old European aristocracy. Federico Fellini makes no lie of his distaste for their royal dehumanization. The bourgeois in *And the Ship Sails On* live a meaningless life of unimportant conflict and contrived melodrama. Maybe Fellini thought World War I and the destruction of the European aristocracy was a good thing. The set design of *And the Ship Sails On* is intentionally artificial looking, reflecting the personalities of the individuals featured in the film. During the film's conclusion, Fellini even goes as far as showing himself directing the film and revealing the lavish indoor studio set. The Rhino featured in *And the Ship Sails On* has an indescribable aesthetic appeal that made me more caring of his life than the majority of characters featured in the film. An amazing shot of the Italian journalist and the Rhino in a small boat further confirm Fellini's eye outrageous and heartwarming(yep) situations.

The Europeans are on a cruise to mourn the death of a famous Italian opera singer. Their sentiments are obviously for show as Fellini purposely points out. Serbian refugee eventually board the ship resulting in disgust from the pretentious bourgeois. I wonder if Fellini puts blame on the Austro-Hungry aristocracy for the Serbian assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Fellini was always a man capable of making the most bland of souls full of wonder. *And the Ship Sails On* is a film that has yet to acquire the praise that his earlier masterpieces received. The postwar (of both wars) European film industry, in my opinion, produced the greatest film directors the world has ever known. The world will never see another Federico Fellini, F.W. Murnau, or Ingmar Bergman. Thankfully their films still exist for viewing today.

-Ty E

RENT BOYS

Fenton Bailey (2000)

Veteran kraut queer filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim may have directed over 50 films (counting short and feature-length works) before he turned 50-years-old, but he seems to be a much better documentarian than an idiosyncratic auteur of flamboyant fictional films. With his first breakthrough work being the filmic fag-on-fag bashing docudrama/militant movie manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) aka *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt*, as well as his peculiar poofter propensity for candidly covering gay-related topics that even the most AIDS-ridden of homos would not touch with a latex-covered stick, like in *Men, Heroes and Gay Nazis* (2005) aka *Männer, Helden, schwule Nazis* – an innately incendiary and iconoclastic documentary work chronicling the history of homo Hitlerites and their contemporary cock-sucking equivalents – Praunheim has proven time and time again that he is a seedy soldat of cinéma vérité sodomite history and his rather recent work *Rent Boys* (2011) aka *Die Jungs vom Bahnhof Zoo* is no less brazen and authentically awe-inspiring. A documentary covering the history of male hustling in West Berlin's busiest transportation center, Bahnhof Zoo train station – the superlatively slimy and sickening setting of *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) directed by Uli Edel – *Rent Boys* is another explicit and equally inexplicable documentary work from von Praunheim that undoubtedly works more against the queer cause he has dedicated his life to than it does to further fagdom in the public's eye, but it is an important work all the same. Beginning with vintage news footage from 1965 at Bahnhof Zoo of a nerdy newscaster that looks like he could have been one of the real-life public sex offenders of *Tearoom* (1962/2007) presented by William E. Jones, *Rent Boys* soon reveals that the Berlin transport station has been a hotspot for homos and hustlers for nearly half a century. Flash forward to the present and the public prevalence of bought buggery at the Bahnhof Zoo has far from waned as even the German government has now stepped in to provide free sexual contraceptives and HIV tests to the hustlers, even to illegal aliens of the Turkish, Kurdish, gypsy, Romanian, etc. persuasion. Indeed, if anything has dramatically changed over the past couple decades regarding the dick-peddling boys of West Berlin, it is the complexion of their skin and the language they speak. Needless to say, if Uncle Adolf were alive, it would be hard to tell what he would be more infuriated by regarding Bahnhof Zoo; the number of Aryan boys pawning their asses or the number of unhinged untermensch taking over the trade and selling at a discount price.

The first central subject featured in *Rent Boys* is an indigenous German fellow named Daniel – a blockheaded 28-year-old man-boy that bears a striking to kraut queer filmmaker Michael Stock; the writer/director/actor of the nihilistic

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new queer cinema flick *Prinz in Hölleland* (1993) aka *Prince in Hell* – who got into gay-for-pay prostitution after realizing it was much easier to peddle his prick than it was to steal a car or rob a house. Like many of the hustlers featured in *Rent Boys*, Daniel is a self-professed heterosexual man who came from a broken home where his idiosyncratically insane mother forced him to literally eat the skidmarks out of his underwear as a young child as punishment, thus he naturally hit the streets and the rest is history. A man who lives a double life, Danny boy never let the mother of his child know that he lets old men blow him for a couple bucks on a routine basis. The next fellow featured in the documentary is a nauseatingly brain-damaged ex-hustler of pure gypsy blood with a permanently disgruntled face and narcotic-haze that goes by the name Nazif (“Miro”), who is best known for writing a book about the sometimes highs but mostly lows of the hustler life. Like many Romani children, Nazif was taught by his parents to steal and beg for money from foreigners, but by happenstance, he was approached in his youth by a prominent Berlin pedophile with the more than apt name “Kids Carsten” (apparently, a well known pedo in the Fatherland) who talked the boy into selling his body to him at the mere age of 12, thus ushering in his long career as a popular street queer. Now on methadone and barely mobile, Nazif has had an ostensibly hellish life that includes prison sentences, but while in jail he learned to write and wrote his hit autobiography on sold sodomy, thus he is doing relatively well when compared to his family members, who are more than a bit hostile to their son’s trade. When Nazif’s father learned of his prodigal son’s poofster profession, he forced his son to strip naked, poured lighter fluid on his body, and literally lit his ass on fire. Another gypsy from Romania named Romica came to Berlin and found he was able to support an entire family by going gay-for-pay, even if his wife did not like it at first (he is filmed in the documentary sitting next to his wife and baby son while he talks openly about his faux-fag flesh-peddling). Originally, Berlin just had German and some Turkish/Arab hustlers, but with the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the eastward gates opened and gypsy and Slav rent boys began to flood the streets with on sale semen, thus further validating the fact that poverty and prostitution go hand-in-hand as depicted throughout *Rent Boys*. Ionel is another gypsy who came to Berlin thinking he would be stealing, begging, and/or playing music to earn an income but he became a dollar-an-inch man instead, thereupon earning a ton of bread, which enabled him to support his family and buy hip clothes, but he also faced violence from violent Romanians (Romani and Romanians have a perennial hatred of one another), which almost resulted in death when one stabbed him in the face and chest. Like most of his callboy compatriots, none of Ionel’s friends and family know about his dick-peddling profession as nowhere else in the world is it more dedicatedly decadent and anti-family than the EU, thus foreign people from more ‘traditional’ backgrounds, no matter how poor and defeated, tend to shun such behavior. Undoubtedly, the most tragic and

plainly pathetic individual featured in *Rent Boys* is an exceedingly effete German fellow named Daniel René, who was routinely anally raped starting at age 8 or 9 by a janitor at a commie Eastern Berlin school. Over time, René became a virtual sex slave in a large pedophile ring (which was not busted until over a decade later) and was pimped out at Zoo Station (only getting a 30% cut of the money he earned and giving the rest to his sodomite slave master), but when he became an actual adult at age 18, the poor boy was thrown away by his daftly homo handlers as they found him to be far too old for their preteen/teen tastes. Out of everything, René was left most broken by the fact that he was eventually rejected by the pernicious pedos as virtually his whole life revolved around these infantile sexual inverts, thus he felt alone and abandoned. Indeed, there is not a single male hustler featured in *Rent Boys* that does not have warped idea of friends and family.

Needless to say, the life of a hustler is no life at all, and the same can certainly be said of the Johns that patronize them. Surely, one of the most interesting aspects of *Rent Boys* is interviews conducted with high-profile Johns, the most famous being Austrian actor/director Peter Kern, but a neo-leather-fag who wears a gimp mask is not far behind. The first artist/trick interviewed is a German photographer named "Master Patrick," a flagrant fag photographer who claims to have an archive of over 100,000 candid photos of nude men (many of whom are hustlers) and who always wear a trademark leather S&M mask, thus never revealing his true identity, at least in the physical sense. Master P lives in the same neighborhood as the gigolos he buys sex from and his daily life seems to be the dream of a smutty queer romance novel, thus acting in stark contrast to the perennially lonely Peter Kern. A man who has starred in around a hundred films, including works directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Daniel Schmid, Walter Bockmayer, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Werner Schroeter, and Ulrike Ottinger, a director of films starring none other than Helmut Berger, and a popular cult figure in his homeland of Austria, Kern is not a fellow that one would assume was eternally unloved and plagued by loneliness but as he states himself in *Rent Boys*, "Who wants to sleep with a monster like me? I was always... Whether I weighed 140 pounds or, like now, 350, I was always the fatso." As should not be a surprise to anyone who has seen his films, Kern rather bluntly confesses, "I made *Gossenkind* ["Gutter Child"], a film in which a father is married and has a son, but he has a penchant for boys. Good, the one he likes is 15, so he's really a youth. The tabloid press wrote: "Peter Kern, Child Molester." As soon as you touch the subject, you get pigeonholed. I can't say I'm into children, but I can say I'm into youths between 16 and 22 years of age." As an unmistakably morbidly obese man whose bulging belly extends a couple feet below his crotch level as if he were a gigantic human beanbag, Kern quite valiantly, yet vulnerably and pathetically, admits, "I'm so lonely, so alone. I long for a relationship. When someone just rests his head on my shoulder, I'm

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in seventh heaven. I want the moment to last forever. Just his head and quiet conversation... That's not offered to me; I have to buy it. I have to pay someone to rest his head there. For another hour, 50 or 100 euros more... For me, it's not about fucking anymore; I've had that." Judging by Peter Kern's rather recent film *Blutsfreundschaft* (2008) aka *Initiation*, it seems like Kern would like nothing more than to take in a derelict neo-nazi skinhead boy from a broken home and convert him to 'spiritual sodomy' and vapid LGBT politics.

Ultimately, *Rent Boys* is a work that proves that in any consumerist capitalist society where people put commerce over community and flesh over family, everything has a price, including one's personal dignity and sexuality. The fact that someone would be so decidedly desperate as to ritualistically pawn their body to a papa poof for a small monetary profit yet still claim to be heterosexual is the height of senseless self-degradation and desensitization in a city suffering from a malignant sickness of the soul akin to spiritual syphilis. Another interesting and insightful element of *Rent Boys* that I am surprised that Rosa von Praunheim decided to include is the sad and sordid personal story of pedo-ring victim Daniel René as it indisputably proves that, indeed, there are certain groups of homosexual pedophiles and pederasts who aggressively and criminally seek to 'recruit' and create members of the poisonous 'preteen-penetrating tribe,' thus proving that some segment of the gay male population may not have been born homosexuals but were reared into it via ravaging of the rectum at an early age by a pedophilic sex predator as depicted in Gregg Araki's *Mysterious Skin* (2004). Undoubtedly, if one learns anything from *Rent Boys*, it is that the life of a hustler is not nearly as 'romantic' as homophile auteur filmmakers like Gus van Sant (*Mala Noche*, *My Own Private Idaho*) and Bruce LaBruce (*Super 8 ½*, *Hustler White*) would lead one to believe. A mutually pathetic transaction between two equally pitiable people – one so desperate for money that, as a straight man, they will let a horny homo blow them for a couple bucks, and the other so sexually and/or romantically desperate that they have to buy it from shady street people that are oftentimes criminals (and have killed Johns and vice versa) – the realm of renting boys as depicted in Rosa von Praunheim's *Rent Boys* is not only that of a very real yet semi-secret Sodom, but also an age-old part of human history that no one wants to recognize, not even many of the participants themselves.

-Ty E

PARTY MONSTER

Fenton Bailey (2003)

With the recent release of the King of the Club Kids, Michael Alig, after serving 17 years in prison after being convicted of 1st degree manslaughter in 1997 for killing his Latin drug dealer Andre "Angel" Melendez, injecting his corpse with Drano, dismembering his body, and throwing it in the Hudson River, among others, I felt that there was no better time to re-watch the film that influenced the campy cocksucker's parole officers to deny him parole in 2006. Indeed, a film about the rise and fall of the NYC Club Kid scene, Party Monster (2003), which is based on Alig's best f(r)riend and fellow alpha-Club Kid James St. James' 1999 memoir Disco Bloodbath: A Fabulous but True Tale of Murder in Clubland (which was later changed to 'Party Monster' in 2003), depicts a group of talentless fag and fag hag narcissists led by the ultimate alpha-fag narcissist Alig that adopted Andy Warhol's Factory lifestyle (in fact, as St. James once stated, "I think Michael's big break was when Warhol died...") of imaginary self-centered superstars and hedonism to ungodly extremes of excess that would ultimately lead to murder. Co-directed by subversive queer producers-cum-auteurs Randy Barbato and Fenton Bailey (they would subsequently direct the documentary Hidden Fuhrer: Debating the Enigma of Hitler's Sexuality (2004) which takes a look at the evidence as to whether or not big H was gay), who previously directed the documentary Party Monster: The Shockumentary (1998), which the film is also largely based on, Party Monster, despite its seemingly exploitative and vulgarly campy essence, is a debauched docudrama that is quite faithful to the facts right down to little details regarding the curious case of Michael Alig and his Club Kid cohorts, as a work that never degenerates into hagiography (knowing Hollywood's homophilia nowadays, one can expect that if Gus Vant Sant had directed the film, it would have portrayed Alig as a misunderstood hero of sorts). Admittedly, when Party Monster was first released over a decade ago, it was sort of a dream come true for me because, like many kids my age growing up during the early-1990s, I would often joke about Macaulay Culkin being gay and having been molested by Michael Jackson, so for him to make a very unexpected comeback as a hysterical homicidal homo seemed like pure kismet. Directed by two men actually connected to the Club Kid scene and starring a number of the original Club Kids wearing the same the repulsively flamboyant costumes that they wore during their prime as coke, cock, and ecstasy addled drug children, Party Monster depicts the height of Reaganite degeneracy (indeed, in the Shocukumentary doc, Alig and his friends confess they were all part of that materialistic mentality) where trust fund degenerates delighted in their own degeneracy and demanded that the entire world worship them for it despite the fact they lacked any sort of talent or trade. An unflattering, if not reasonably objective, portrayal of the bastard son of an eccentric

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German immigrant woman from a small town in Indiana with an unhealthy obsession with horror movies who learned how to con and charm people as a child by peddling candy at inflated prices and who, naturally feeling misunderstood, inevitably came to NYC to become rich and famous, which he almost did but also developed multiple drug addictions and homicidal tendencies, *Party Monster* is ultimately a damning depiction of the American dream gone awry set in arguably the most spiritually sick city in the world.

When Michael Alig (Macaulay Culkin) was 10 years old, his Sunday teacher taught him how to French kiss, “among other things,” and around the same time he taught himself how to be a parasitic capitalist by buying candy in bulk and selling it to his co-students at a 200% markup rate, thus the so-called ‘King of the Party Kids’ learned everything he needed to know about being a psychopathic poof conman while he was still just a wee lad. When he became an adult, Alig left his remote hometown in Indiana and headed to New York City to seek fame and fortune and soon realized he was practically made for the shitty city. After enough pestering and flattering, Alig convinces an underground socialite/trust fund transient by the name of James St. James (Seth Green) to teach him the “rules of fabulousness” in terms of gaining a reputation in the underground. After begging a one-eyed nightclub owner named Peter Gatien (played by Dylan McDermott in easily his most interesting film role ever) to host his parties at his nightclub, Alig soon becomes the uncontested Führer of the Club Kids. While St. James is Alig’s arch nemesis as both queens are determined to one-up one another in terms of popularity and reputation, Peter acts as a sort of father figure to the bastard Club Kid. On top of setting up parties in tribute to Herschell Gordon Lewis’ pioneering splatter flick *Blood Feast* (1963), Alig also pioneers a number of illegal parties in places ranging from an 18-wheeler truck driven by a tripping tranny (played by Marilyn Manson in drag) to a trashy fried chicken fast food joint. On top of conning people into giving him money for parties, Alig is so slick that he even manages to convert an ostensibly heterosexual fellow named Keoki (Wilmer Valderrama) into a homo and even transforms him into a ‘Superstar DJ’ in the process. Unfortunately, Keoki soon develops a coke problem and Alig gets back at his boyfriend by using all his white powder, which he shares with their cat (or ‘lovechild’), thus ushering in the beginning of the King of the Club Kid’s life-destroying addiction to drugs. Indeed, on top of keeping his slavishly hedonistic Club Kids under control, including his German-born mother Elke (played by Diana Scarwid of *Mommie Dearest* (1981)), by feeding them drugs and alcohol, especially ecstasy, Alig also invents his own childish droog-like language (using invented words like ‘skrod’, ‘skrink’, ‘Skrinkle’, ‘Skroddle’, etc.), which he actually convinces his followers to use.

With the growing popularity of the Club Kids, Alig and his low-camp comrades are featured on talk shows (although John Stamos portrays the talk show host in the film, Alig and his friends went on the Geraldo Rivera show, as well

as the Jane Whitney Show where they found solidarity with GG Allin of all people!) and even do national tours to recruit members, as if the Club Kids are like some degenerate sodomite SS. During one of these performances, Alig, who is dressed like a campy Hitler with an Uncle Adolf mustache and a really gay lederhosen outfit, espouses his wanton psychopathic Weltanschauung to audience members, declaring, "Greetings, citizens. We are living in the age where the pursuit of all values other than money, success, fame and glamour, has either been discredited or destroyed. Money, success, fame, glamour." One of the people to see Alig and his human accessories on TV is a gay Latino named Andre "Angel" Melendez (Wilson Cruz of *My So-Called Life* fame), who comes to NYC and becomes a top drug dealer among the Club Kids. While Alig has no problem devouring Angel's drugs, he hates the Hispanic homo as he sees him as a dimwitted fraud and shameless copycat. Alig also starts a pseudo-romance with a hot fag hag named Gitsie (Chloë Sevigny) and spends a lot of time with a dapper hat maker turned drug dealer with a rather flat affect named Robert "Freez" Riggs (Justin Hagan). Eventually, Alig and Angel get in a fight over a longstanding drug debt and Freez ends up bashing the winged Latino in the head with a hammer. From there, Alig and Freez smother Angel with a pillow, pour Drano down his throat (although, according to the real-life Michael Alig, they also injected his veins with the cleaner), cut off his limbs, put his dismembered corpse in a cardboard box, and threw it into the Hudson River. Ever the braggart, Alig even goes so far as boasting of the murder and since the cops want to bust his boss Peter Gattien, he stays out of prison for a period of time, even going on a "Second Honeymoon" to drug rehab with Gitsie (indeed, Alig overdoses), but Angel's body eventually turns up. In the end, Alig's rival James St. James becomes quasi-famous for writing the "Great American Novel" aka *Disco Bloodbath* (the book the film is based on) while the King of the Club Kids is denied fame due to his imprisonment, though he brags, "You know, prison isn't all that different from a night club...everything's for free and I don't have to get out of bed in the morning. And I can get all the drugs and sex I want."

In *Party Monster: The Shockumentary*, the real-life Michael Alig is so flagrantly arrogant and confident that he will get away with his sick criminality that he gives the following superlatively shallow excuse as to why he killed Angel, "he was a...he was a copycat...he was one of those copycats we hate so much and so we killed [...] I killed Angel and... That's the kind of thing that gets me in trouble" (keep in mind that this interview was filmed 3 months before Alig was arrested). Indeed, as far as I can tell from seeing him speak in interviews and documentaries, the real Alig makes Macaulay Culkin's portrayal in *Party Monster* seem at least somewhat more empathetic and likeable by comparison. As far as I am concerned, the only good thing that ever came out of the whole Club Kid pseudo-kultur was the movie *Party Monster*, which is the modern day equivalent to a midnight movie and a true instant cult classic if there ever was one, as a

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highly quotable work with seemingly infinite replay value. Aside from appearing in *Party Monster: The Shockumentary*, Alig and his cracked out cocksucking Club Kid comrades also appeared in the obscure 'gaysploitation' flick *Shampoo Horns* (1998) directed by Spanish auteur Manuel Toledano. Additionally, Alig is also the main subject of the upcoming documentary *Glory Daze: The Life and Times of Michael Alig* (2015) directed by Spanish actor-turned-director Ramon Fernandez (indeed, it seems the Spanish have a special affinity for Alig for whatever reason). Incidentally, the trailer for *Glory Daze* mentions nothing about the fact that Alig is a killer. Upon being released from jail on May, 5 2014 after serving 17 years behind bars, Alig was also the subject of a 'public letter' written by gay wop journalist Michael Mušto which declared, "You not only killed Angel, you basically murdered nightlife." Additionally, Mušto had the gall to dictate to the King of the Club Kids that he should do the following, "Charity work—any charity work—would be a good way to take you out of yourself and to give back to the world in a way that might bring some gratification. Starring in reality shows or throwing parties (if anyone would let you) might sound appealing, but going down those hollow paths won't lead to anything substantive. Those kinds of résumé entries were for the old Michael Alig. The new one needs to catch up with technology, adapt to our city's more privileged populace and come up with something digital that will be creative, constructive and conciliatory. Use your imagination while quelling your baser instincts." Of course, as a man who used to date a neo-nazi skinhead, loved the word "spic" (not to mention the fact he killed one), routinely pissed in people's drinks (and would coerce other people into drinking piss and vomit), and wrote libelous articles claiming his friends were involved in the less than flattering trade of enslaving 12-year-old boys and forcing them into white sex slavery, Alig would certainly look like a pathetic phony were he to attempt to turn over a new leaf and become another Hollywood humanist hack, especially with an innately incriminating biopic like *Party Monster* in existence that has immortalized his moral insanity, drug addiction, and scatological sadism. Like a contemporary Paul Morrissey flick minus the moral compass, *Party Monster* is not just an endlessly fun and entertaining film that is as addictive as coke yet shot on the price of crack, but also an epitaph for an entire degenerate generation of excess who thought that they were pure gold, but were more akin to excrement, thus making Michael Alig an aberrant alchemist of sorts. As for Macaulay Culkin, he should have won an Oscar for his performance in a truly singular role where he singlehandedly destroyed his reputation as a loveable childhood actor forever.

-Ty E

VIVA LA MUERTE

Fernando Arrabal (1971)

Viva La Muerte is a prime example of degenerate art. Fernadol Arrabal may just be another commie art fag bent on subversion (blowing kisses to Bunuel). Poor boy Fando lost his communist father due to his mother's big mouth. She doesn't want her nut bag husband fighting for the reds in the Spanish civil war. In typical communist schizophrenic fashion, Arrabal portrays communists as fighters of freedom and peace. Proletarians who have fought against the evils of nationalism and religion. Communists always forget that they have much more blood on their hands than any fascist government ever did. Viva La Muerte plays out like a disturbed and schizophrenic children's film. The film features Fando's fathers head being defecated on, animal slaughtering, incest, and other typical surrealist bullshit. Degenerate communist artists like Fernado Arrabal both entertain me and make me want to murder them. They offer insight into their off balance minds via fucked up films and then expect people to take them seriously politically. Most surrealists shouldn't even be allowed to have a driver's license (let alone promote politics). Fernadol Arrabal's real father was a victim of fascist persecutions (or something). Father Arrabal escaped from prison and eventually disappeared. Viva La Muerte seems like Arrabal's attempt to articulate his feelings on the subject (with the fantasy that his Dad was revolutionary). My belief is that all commies get what they deserve. Honestly, Viva La Muerte is one of the better surrealist films that I have seen recently. It is solidly constructed and offers the viewer something to think about. I didn't feel like Arrabal was contriving too much like a lot of surrealists. I have many times questioned whether I like or hate Alejandro Jodorowsky. Fando Y Lis is too good to denounce that scumbag. Viva La Muerte is a beautiful film in it's own right. Degeneracy is an American virtue. Films like Viva La Muerte make me realize things could be worse. I feel for poor Fando (or maybe Arrabal?). The surrealist film is an excellent way for wackjobs to exorcise their demons.

-Ty E

I WILL WALK LIKE A CRAZY HORSE
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Fernando Arrabal (1973)

I Will Walk Like A Crazy Horse is a French surrealist black comedy with recurring themes of dysfunction and suspense. The plot is a bit wayward at first, but soon begins to mold into a formulaic storyline thanks to the help of flashbacks and dream like realities. The film itself is thrust into it's own perfections as you encounter truly original surrealism mixed with blessed blasphemy. The opening scene itself is of a child messiah in a manger wearing a crown of thorns. He is promptly silenced and victim to genital mutilation. We meet Aden Ray, who is a wanted man who disappeared into the desert. He then encounters a nameless hermit who lives in the desert. They promptly become friends and encounter many disturbing adventures. Along the way, the past begins to crush Ray's sanity slowly resulting in epic religious hallucinations. IWWLACH is a marvel in avant-garde cinema. It's stunning portrayal of insanity masked by a suit and tie is of a memorable sort. Misogynistic thoughts occur within Ray and many questions arise about this unknown man. The bond they share can almost be deemed homo erotic at the root. Why does Ray want for this man to be happy at his own expense? Will it par chance fill the void in his life? The film speaks its soft metaphors and is plentiful with sexually distressed imagery. One scene that sticks out to me is his penis being used as a candle. Many very taboo themes such as hermaphrodites, nude children, and bleeding messiahs are abundant. This is obviously an outlet for director Fernando Arrabal to unleash his sexual repression and personal demons. It speaks boldly with its anti-capitalist mindset. Watching "Marvel" cry when seeing the abuse of nature in our society is a sorrowful moment. IWWLACH is a deeply affecting film, which speaks of religious turbulence and the absurdity of real beauty. It is an audacious addition to any surrealist fan and should be highly regarded for its Island Of Death feel and similar Jodorowsky experience. Sexual confusion is the name of the game.

-Maq

TO BE TWENTY

Fernando Di Leo (1978)

As far as I am concerned, hippies would have been better off in concentration camps where they were forced to 'concentrate' and do hard labor or die as opposed to comfy communes comprised of needless and heedless hedonism, hence why many of them grew up to be quasi-psychopathic yuppie materialists and have helped degenerate the Occident into the collectivist commune of chaos it is today where Third World whores shit out brownish babies without care and the more irresponsible someone is (i.e. producer of bastard babies, unemployed, addicted to crack, etc.), the more they are rewarded by the government. Anyway, while I will probably never get to see my dream of seeing unhip hippie bastards being herded into cattle cars and being shipped off to life-changing concentration camps with motivational signs at the front gate that state "Arbeit macht frei" ("work makes [you] free"), I did manage to track down a rather idiosyncratic Italian flick directed by Dago gangster film Duce auteur Fernando Di Leo (Milano calibre 9 aka Caliber 9, Il poliziotto è marcio aka Shoot First, Die Later) entitled *Avere vent'anni* (1978) aka *To Be Twenty* about two gorgeous yet gullible and gall-ridden Guido gals who hitch a ride to Rome in the hope of finding the ultimate utopia full of peace, love, and penetrating penises at a hippie commune, but instead find themselves in store for a rather rude awakening full of impotent men, repressed lesbian feminist ideology, prostitution, bad drugs and bad sex, and ultimately a dystopian nightmare full of rape and coldblooded murder. A satire of the hippie/counter-culture movement, sexual liberation, feminist, and other repellant ingredients of the late-1960s worthy of cultural cringe disguised as a European "sex comedy" quite typical of its time, *To Be Twenty* is the rare sort of unclassifiable quasi-exploitation flick with a marvelously malicious moral compass that will leave those beta-man viewers expecting a giddy 'masturbation aid' feeling like they have been slapped in the face and kicked in their little blue balls. Released theatrically in the United States in a soulless and superficial soft-core edited "sex comedy" edition minus the stomach-churning ending, *To Be Twenty* must be seen in its uncompromising "director's cut" version to be truly effective and unforgettable, lest ye turn into a dirty, drug-addled tranny hippie homo. In the totally torrid yet trying tradition of *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977)—certainly one of the most underrated films of its era—*To Be Twenty* is a vicious yet vivacious reminder that leftist idealism and sexual liberation do not exactly cleanse the soul, but they might lead you to becoming a raped and mutilated corpse, like the girls in Fernando Di Leo's film, that not even an acid-addled abberosexual hippie bastard of the erotically-challenged sort could love.

Opening with the quote, "I was 20. No one can ever tell me it was the best time of our lives" from French communist philosopher Paul Nizan—a man whose life was cut short after some Aryan Übermensch killed his proto-hippie

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ass at the Battle of Dunkirk during the Second World War—*To Be Twenty* sets a ‘fun and sexy’ tone that seems to be out-of-sync with the frog thinker’s less than nostalgic remark, but as the film unfolds, the lives of the two female anti-heroes only seem to get worse or less wonderfully wild. During the beginning of the film, after someone turns on some music, a bunch of hippie deadbeats, wake up from their stoned slumber on the beach, including naked men and women, but also beautiful strangers Lia (Gloria Guida) and Tina (Lilli Carati), who lack boy toys. After both agree that they are “young, hot, and pissed off,” Aryan blonde Lia and classic dark-haired/skinned Mediterranean Tina, who probably read Hermann Hesse’s *Siddhartha* (1922) as she has an absurd red dot imprinted on her forehead, decide to hitchhike to Rome on a wanton whim, even though they don’t know anything about one another. While lady Lia, who has lesbian proclivities, grew up an unloved orphan raised by nuns and worked as a janitor at a Catholic boarding school and was forced to masturbate an old Sapphic Spinster at the mere age of 16, Tina is a bourgeois bitch who ran away from home because of her parents’ “attempt to make me be a good housekeeper. Next to virginity, it’s what my parents care about most.” Indeed, while Lia seems to be mostly a lesbian lily-licker, Tina makes no lie of her unquenchable hunger for cock, so she becomes naturally quite disappointed when she gets to the beatnik commune and not a single wimpy hippie hunk can get his willy up due to sexual impotency caused by incessant drug consumption. On their way to Rome, Lia and Tina are offended by a wealthy woman “preaching morality in a sports car” who tells the girls regarding their salacious hitchhiking, “That’s no excuse to act like whores, whores have more tact, funny no guy’s picked you up!” On their way to the commune, the girls steal from grocery stores and even offer a nerdy middle-aged shopkeeper a blowjob for a mere pack of Marlboro Red cigarettes, but he turns it down. When the girls get to the commune—“That place full of queers, whores and druggies” as a local woman calls it—Lia and Tina are disappointed to learn they only find expensive “rent” and sexual “impotency” and that “you can’t screw when you want.” The fat fuck commune leader Nazariota (Vittorio Caprioli) informs the girls that free-love-based communes are no longer free as they need to pay for electricity, water, gas, and solid waste removal, thus the girls end up prostituting themselves to dirty old men of the vehement vulgarian sort. On top of the lack of hot love and less than prestigious pussy-peddling, an exceedingly annoying communist filmmaker shows up at the commune and goes off on an innately idiotic rant about leftist psychobabble and promotes the radical lezzy feminist terrorist Valerie Solanas—the S.C.U.M. bitch with the unquenchable itch for killing men, including her failed attempt at assassinating alpha-art fag Andy Warhol—which rather annoys the half-braindead hippies, even if they have no clue what all the commie cunt commotion is all about. After the commune is raided by the cops, Lia and Tina are forced to leave and on the way back to their hometowns they make their way to a raunchy roadhouse

where they meet some real macho men who don't take kindly to cock-teasing, romantic rebuffs, nor kicks in the testicles thus the two hippie girls ultimately meet a grizzly and superlatively shocking end due to their crude counter-culture cuntiness when in the company of true gentlemen of the macho wop sort.

Indubitably one of the most, if not most, standout and unconventional films among Fernando Di Leo's cinematic oeuvre, *To Be Twenty* starts out as a sassy "sexy comedy" with socio-politically astute satirical undertones and concludes in a chillingly cynical manner as if Stanley Kubrick's more unhinged anti-liberal Italian cousin directed an aberrant after-school special. Indeed, like Di Leo's subsequent work *Madness* (1980) aka *Vacanze per un massacre*, *To Be Twenty* has no heroes and even victims are the hysterical harbingers of their own deleterious demises. While the two protagonists, especially Tina, of *To Be Twenty* throw themselves at virtually every man they see in the movie, especially limp dick hippies high on who knows what, when the enfant terrible twosome are finally offered sex by real macho men—the sort of completely corrupt criminals typical of a Fernando Di Leo flick—they totally cop out and attempt to escape, even complaining to the gentlemen of interest, "A woman can't even dance, what an awful world we live in," so when the guys decide not to take no for an answer in their quest for "free love" by women who claim they are sexually liberated, it has truly brutal consequences, thus discrediting the idea of "free love" in the first place. When it comes down to it, the two girls of *To Be Twenty*, especially tyrannical Tina—a woman who even admits of herself "I'm such a Bitch" while trying to quasi-rape a drugged out dude—is nothing but a spoiled brat who does not realize how good she really has it in her life and that her complaints against her parents are petty at best and preposterous at worse. While the two gals by no means deserve the dastardly defilement and deaths that come to them, the leader of the group that gang rapes and brutalizes them has a point when he states, "These sluts were leading us on back there. So now we have a right to enjoy them. You know what their moves meant? That they despise men! So now we'll show them..."

Had the girls of *To Be Twenty* been more interested in their studies or at least working instead of flashing their naughty bits in front of every man that passed their gaze, they would have surely avoided the sad and surly tragic end that awaited them. Of course, the children of a time when breaking down every tradition and moral of society was in vogue as promoted by idiotic popular musicians and neo-Marxist academics of the so-called "new left," it is doubtful that the girls of *To Be Twenty* would have bought into an intrinsically inane and inutile *Weltanschauung* of infantile wantonness and retarded 'revolutionary' change had they been born before the Second World War, but such was the fate of the superlatively spoiled post-WWII generation, especially the self-absorbed Baby Boomers who, not surprisingly and quite symbolically, were the first generation brought up on television. Of course, with mainstream Western media now trying

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to depict illiterate ghetto black rappers as virtual warrior-philosopher heroes and treating race-mixing and sexual perversion as “progressive” and “cool,” the sort of stark and tragic consequences that appear at the conclusion of *To Be Twenty* have probably only become all the more common and unavoidable since the release of the film. In a society that has elevated such humanoid garbage as Snoop Dogg—an ex-con/pimp/drug dealer who was once charged with murder—and Kim Kardashian—a mongrel mud-shark who gained her initial fame from a sex tape—one can only wonder what a modernized remake of *To Be Twenty* might be like, if it would even be made at all as Fernando Di Leo’s fine flick is not the least bit politically correct. That being said, if I could compile a collection of films for angst-ridden middle-class youths with a fetish for far-left politics and sexually-repressed feminists to watch as mandatory-viewing at some sort of rehabilitation camp for leftist loonies and MTV victims, *To Be Twenty* would be at the top of the list as I cannot think of another film that so relentlessly turns degenerate youthful dreams into an unsettling nightmare. After all, a stupid girl would be better off watching *To Be Twenty* and learning something about certain ‘principled men’ than making the mistake of going to the wrong side of town and running into a fellow like Tyree or Tyrone, who does not take no for answer.

-Ty E

COLD LIGHT OF DAY

Fhiona-Louise (1989)

If infamous serial killer and necrophile Dennis Nilsen is the “British Jeffrey Dahmer” as he has been dubbed by the mainstream media, *Cold Light of Day* (1989) is the Brit *Dahmer* (2002), at least as far as cinematically empathizing with a corpse-copulating serial killer is concerned. Indeed, like the uneven but not uninteresting *Dahmer* biopic starring a rather then-unknown Jeremy Renner, *Cold Light of Day* dares to wallow in the messed up mind and perennial loneliness of a gay lunatic lustkiller. The very first and ultimately last film directed by mysterious female auteur Fhiona-Louise—a woman whose only other credentials include starring in two short obscure films, *Metropolis Apocalypse* (1988) and *Sleepwalker* (1993), directed by British actor and entrepreneur Jon Jacobs (a man whose greatest claim to fame is mortgaging his house in 2005 to buy a virtual asteroid for \$100,000, the most expensive ‘virtual item’ ever sold at that time)—*Cold Light of Day* is the sort of malignantly melancholy and superlatively stark and grating celluloid work that could have only been directed by a dangerously introverted individual who has entered the darkness and cannot manage to find their way back. And, indeed, auteur Fhiona-Louise would never make another film after her debut as she apparently committed suicide not long after creating her debut feature at the tender age of 21, thus making it all the more morbidly eerie that *Cold Light of Day* concludes with the following tribute from the director: “For those too sensitive for this world.” Undoubtedly, one would expect the auteur was uncommonly sensitive and empathetic if she managed to possess any understanding for a necrophiliac sodomite serial killer like Dennis Nilsen who, between late-1978 and early-1983, killed no less than 15 men and boys whose bodies he molested and mutilated before he either burned or flushed pieces of their putrefied flesh down the toilet. The son of an alcoholic Norwegian father and a pious Scottish Catholic mother, Nilsen would lose his father to divorce when he was only four-years old and would go on to describe his early childhood as being a “female dominated world,” so when the killer’s beloved grandfather and sole father-figure died of a heart attack when he was just shy of being six-years old, it had totally traumatic consequences that forever changed the way he viewed the world, especially in regard to death. Forced by his pathologically Catholic mother to see the corpse of his grandfather, Nilsen had what he would later describe in his autobiography as “my first encounter with the fact and mystery of ‘Death,’” which would ultimately become the biggest obsession of his pathetic life as a man one might describe as God’s loneliest nancy boy necrophile.

Dennis Nilsen (played by Bob Flag, who has played in diverse roles ranging from Werner Nekes’ kraut avant-garde flick *Uliisses* (1982) to *Calendar Girls* (2003) starring Helen Mirren) leads a rather unremarkable life as a soldier (he

COLD LIGHT OF DAY

worked in the catering unit of the army, which is where he gained the expertise to butcher bodies) turned cop turned civil servant, but after making the major mistake of flushing the remains of his gay male victims down the toilet and causing the drain in his apartment building to block, he is arrested for multiple murders of the rather grizzly blood-guts-limbs-organs-bones-ridden sort. Told in a series of oftentimes ominous and macabre yet realistic melodramatic flashbacks that are mostly set in the pernicious poof protagonist's dilapidated apartment, Nilsen meekly describes to a prick police inspector named Simmons (Geoffrey Greenhill) how he became a flesh-fucking fag serial killer. Always willing to help a neighbor, Nilsen is such a nice fellow that he helps an elderly war veteran, who "had a little accident" (i.e. he pissed himself), with cleaning up his soiled "old soldier" body. When Nilsen begins a relationship with a young bum hustler named Joe (Martin Byrne-Quinn), his lonely loser life seems to be looking up, but as one can expect from such dubious romances, the good times do not last long. On top of giving blow jobs to other men in sleazy tearooms, bitch boy Joe starts heated arguments with the seemingly meek and cuckoldish Nilsen. When Nilsen accuses his swarthy boy toy of being an "ungrateful bitch," Joe retorts with, "God, you sound so fucking camp, you do." Needless to say, Nilsen kills Joe by strangling him until he is unconscious and then proceeds to drown him in a bathtub. Although gay, Nilsen tries to 'straighten' himself out and goes to a prostitute, but he ends up embarrassing himself terribly after ejaculating literally a second or two after the busty streetwalker touches his genitals. As a loyal civil servant at a jobcentre, Nilsen has access to various down-and-out young men and since his impulse to kill has become uncontrollable ever since wasting his lover Joe, he uses this position to recruit prospective victims, which include teenage runaways, hustlers, junkies, and bums. Indeed, like his kindred spirit Dahmer, Nilsen the murderous man-loving menace preys on people that society will not notice being missing, let alone miss. With the "beautiful" (how Nilsen describes them) bodies piling up, Nilsen must get creative with hiding the remains of his victims. On top of burning and cooking body parts, Nilsen hides limbs under his apartment floorboards and hides other parts in his furniture, but he develops a special affinity for flushing rotten flesh down the toilet. Of course, Nilsen's warped world comes tumbling down after his busybody neighbor calls a drain-cleaning company when the dismembered parts of young men end up clogging the apartment building's drains. When an employee from the drain-cleaning company smells something a little more fetid that does not simply reek of simple shit, he calls the cops and Nilsen does not even bother to put up a fight, wasting no time in confessing his dastardly deeds. At the conclusion of *Cold Light of Day*, Nilsen confesses to Inspector Simmons regarding why he committed the crimes: "I did it for me... Purely selfishly... I worshipped the act of death...over and over, it was like killing myself. It's as simple as that. I hated the decay and dissection...there's no pleasure in that...but I did enjoy the

açt. And to kill myself, I'd experience it just once...by killing others, it allowed me to feel it again and again.”

Apparently, the real-life Dennis Nilsen would go on to describe the day he got arrested as ‘The Day Hope Came.’ Personally, I doubt there ever was hope for a repugnant yet pitiful person like Nilsen and the suffocating starkness of *Cold Light of Day* makes that quite clear. Indeed, to call *Cold Light of Day* an ‘enjoyable’ film would be nothing short of absurd, but it is certainly an exceedingly effective work that is the virtual celluloid equivalent of being stuck in solitary confinement with Nilsen in a nutward. On top of the fact that lead Bob Flag bares a strikingly resemblance to Nilsen and radiates a certain perturbing patheticness that cannot be merely contrived, *Cold Light of Day* takes an almost quasi-cinéma-vérité approach that, aesthetically speaking, falls somewhere in between the stylized realism of films by John Cassavetes, Alan Clarke, and Vincent Gallo, albeit with the atmospheric brutality of Jörg Buttgerit. In terms of its patently pathetic and lethally lonely ‘anti-hero,’ *Cold Light of Day* recalls Kurt Raab’s role as the cannibalistic German serial killer Fritz Haarmann in *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves* produced by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and directed by Ulli Lommel. While *Cold Light of Day* is probably a work that will bore jaded gorehounds looking to get a cheap thrill from senseless buckets of blood and guts, as well as arthouse-inclined cinephiles who feel too cultivated and dignified to accept an obscure no-budget serial killer flick from the UK, *Cold Light of Day* is certainly a grimy unsung classic of sorts that dares to take a reasonably objective look at the miserable misspent life of a man who loved death so much that he literally made love with it. Ultimately, the only real recognition that the film received is winning the UCCA Venticittà Award at 47th Venice International Film Festival held in 1990. Somewhat surprisingly, *Cold Light of Day* is not the only artful and worthwhile film about Nilsen, as *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* (1989)—a synthesizer-driven black-and-white avant-garde flick created by members of the controversial DV8 Theater Group that uses aggressive ballet as a means to interpret the killer’s loneliness and depravity—is also worth checking out. A film directed by a suicidal artist who dared to look into the abyss and somehow found something human in the monster looking back at her, *Cold Light of Day* is celluloid desperation in its most decidedly deranged, dreary, and death-deifying form. Needless to say, the film is also infinitely superior to the 2012 Bruce Willis and Sigourney Weaver film of the same name.

-Ty E

IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES
IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES

Florence Dauman (2003)

Unlike many modern-day white men around my age, I have never really suffered from strange fetishistic plague of 'yellow fever' or even considered dating an Asian girl, let alone marrying and/or having children with one (after all, the last thing that world needs is more deranged hapa spawn). Indeed, aside from a Slavic-looking green-eyed ¼ Japanese girl when I was in middle school, I have never really found myself fantasizing about defiling the largely curveless bodies of oriental chicks, so naturally I have never wanted to actively seek out Asian pornography of any sort, hence my initial disinterest in seeing the Franco-Japanese flick *L'Empire des sens* (1976) aka *In the Realm of the Senses* directed by Nagisa Ōshima (*Night and Fog in Japan*, *Death by Hanging*). Of course, considering it is a fairly (in)famous film and I am a huge fan of the director's preternaturally homoerotic (anti)war flick *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983) starring David Bowie, it was only a matter of time before I watched erotically wayward flick. Needless to say, as someone with a huge fetish for dames with large shapely derrieres, hourglass figures, and (to a somewhat lesser extent) large tits, I initially did not expect to find anything even remotely erotic about Ōshima's film, yet upon watching it I somehow found myself enamored with female lead Eiko Matsuda's petite yet surprisingly curvy physique. In short, Matsuda is like a Japanese Venus, but arguably the most erotic thing about *In the Realm of the Senses*—a film best known for featuring tons of unsimulated sex and an unconventionally climatic castration scene—is the hot, heavy, and slightly homicidal 'mad love' romance that is unequivocally the main focus of the film. Notable for gaining Ōshima internal acclaim in the cinema world and more or less transforming him from a Japanese filmmaker to a relatively cosmopolitan one (though his work would ultimately suffer as a result), the film is loosely based on the real-life story of Japanese Geisha-cum-prostitute Sada Abe and the huge scandal that she caused in Japan during the 1930s when she erotically asphyxiated her lover, Kichizo Ishida, chopped off his penis and testicles, and then carried them around with her in her kimono as if they were sacred good charms. Like one big long, erratic, and deleteriously intoxicating coital session that concludes with a such an enrapturing transcendental orgasmic climax that the inordinately virile male protagonist loses both his life and genitals in a sickening scenario that somehow seems logical in the end in the context of the lovers' lurid and insanely intense romance, *In the Realm of the Senses* is a film that is, above all us, about a totally raw and visceral chemistry based sexual love affair that is so dangerously potent and explosive that it can only end in death due to the ever increasing intensity of the crazed couple's singular carnal majesty. Indeed, although a rather fittingly titled film since the debauched duo lives in a totally intoxicating and solely sensual-based hermetic demimonde, I still think

it might be better renamed 'La petite mort.'

Undoubtedly, one of the aspects of Ôshima's film that I found most intriguing and, to some extent, relatable is the fact that the two leads seem to lie together in bed for eternity, as if they would love nothing more than to completely cut themselves off from the rest of humanity and spend the rest of their days in a perpetual state of heightened carnality, hence the film's almost autistically literal title. Indeed, out of all the girls I have been with, only one did I never eventually get sexually bored of, even though some of my previous lovers were gifted with comparable pulchritude. In fact, as the years passed, our sexual chemistry and mutual attraction only seemed to grow while our relationship became more 'complicated' in other ways. Even to this day years later, an hour cannot pass with me being reminded of her touch, smell, and sensual warmth. Surely, what makes *In the Realm of the Senses* so delightfully darkly romantic is that the couple, which lives for perpetual mutual copulation, chooses death while they are at the height of their otherworldly erotic compatibility instead of allowing themselves to be broken up by society or something else (like the heroine's mental illness!), as if they can subconsciously sense that Japan will be eventually fire-bombed and nuked in dubious Allied air raids. While I sincerely expected the film to be pretentious artsy fartsy Jap pornography of the rather revolting sort disguised as a 'mature' arthouse flick, it proved to be, at least in my opinion, one of the few films ever made in cinema history where the sex scenes are an innate and imperative ingredient to the point where it would completely fall apart at the seams were it not so delicately explicit. Indeed, instead of watching two sex fiends fucking to simply fuck, Ôshima's shockingly mirthful celluloid orgasm treats the viewers to two strangely sympathetic weirdoes making love to one another simply because they are so hopelessly in love and see virtually everything else in life as completely pointless. In short, even the most inordinately artful of porn flicks like Lasse Braun's *Body Love* (1978), Cecil Howard's *Neon Nights* (1981), and Stephen Sayadian's *Café Flesh* (1982) seem like tasteless fucks flicks when compared to the exquisite eros of Ôshima's arguable cinematic magnum opus. Bataillean in an oftentimes surprisingly humorous egg-in-a-pussy sort of fashion and almost pathologically politically incorrect in an oftentimes sado-masochistic fashion, *In the Realm of the Senses* also somehow manages to be almost just as absurdly comical as it is erotically cultivated and decadently romantic. In fact, the film is almost savagely sadistic in its humor as a uniquely unforgettable flick that features small children teasing an elderly bum by pocking his exposed shriveled prick with a flag stick, an insanely unmotherly heroine that sexually abuses a wee toddler by aggressively squeezing his genitals to the point where the little lad screams in pain, and a male protagonist that has no qualms about randomly molesting, raping, or sympathy-fucking Geisha gals of all ages and sizes while in the company of his beloved, among other things. Somewhat ironically, while I have always found the sort of absurdly sordid sexual fetishism

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depicted in Japanese cinema to be nothing short of insufferably ridiculous, if not downright sexually autistic, *In the Realm of the Senses*—a film that is certainly beyond vanilla as far as sexuality is concerned—proved to be an almost shockingly accessible film for me. Indeed, the flick might have been directed by a leftist degenerate of sorts and produced by a dubious Hebraic frog, but it certainly has something archaically universal about it in the way in manages to succeed where most pornography fails in its depiction of organic sexual obsession. It is also a rare film that demonstrates what it means for a man to find a cunt that feels and smells as natural and imperative as his own cock and vice versa.

Unlike many more conventional cinephiles that seem incessant on looking solely to the Criterion Collection (incidentally, they were responsible for releasing *In the Realm of the Senses* on DVD/Blu-ray in the United States) for what they regard is notable cinema, I have rather mixed feelings about Japanese cinema in general and hardly have a hard-on for Akira Kurosawa, who is more or less the Jap John Ford and certainly the most Americanized of the great Japanese filmmakers. Naturally, I was immediately interested in Ôshima when I discovered that he largely hated Japanese cinema and even much of his own cinematic works, so it is only natural that his most well known film, *In the Realm of the Senses*, has never been released in its complete and uncensored form in his own native country. In fact, the film—a rare Franco-Jap production—only managed to bypass Japan's anti-pornography laws by having the undeveloped footage shipped to frogland where the film was processed and edited (not surprisingly, the film was produced by French-Polish-Hebrew Anatole Dauman, who also produced some of Polish erotic maestro Walerian Borowczyk's classic films). Notably, at the very end of his rather polemical and borderline anti-Jap BFI documentary *100 Years of Japanese Cinema* (1995), Ôshima concludes the film by more or less expressing his longing for dissolution of an organically Japanese national cinema and identity, even stating with not even the slightest hint of irony, "The first hundred years of Japanese cinema have been the period of its youth. It will certainly stay young for the next hundred years. And in these hundred years, the Japanese film will free itself from the spell of Japanese-ness, and will come abloom as pure cinema." Of course, the great irony is that *In the Realm of the Senses*—a quasi-pornographic period piece featuring bisexual Geisha orgies and archaic Jap folk music—is hopelessly Japanese in terms of its aesthetic essence and bizarre fetishism. After all, only in Japan does a woman become a famous celebrity after chopping off her beau's balls and bald-headed bandit. Certainly, when I think of Japanese cinema, my mind always comes to Ôshima and Shûji Terayama before the relatively tame samurai cinema of Kurosawa and Masaki Kobayashi. As a lifelong leftist extremist of sorts that was born to an ancient aristocratic family with notable samurai ancestors, Ôshima is certainly a degenerate of sorts, albeit a distinctly Japanese one that tested the bounds of cinematic

civility and artistic expression. Certainly, if there ever was a sort of Jap Pasolini, it was Ōshima.

For better or worse, *In the Realm of the Senses* features one of the most believably depraved and sexually insatiable yet somehow compulsively cute and eccentrically erotic divas of cinema history and I say that as someone that has never had a fondness for yellow flesh. Indeed, Sada Abe (Eiko Matsuda)—an unhappily married ex-prostitute turned domestic ‘servant girl’ that works at a hotel who was forced to peddle her pussy after her businessman hubby lost all of his money—is immediately revealed to be an unhinged bitch in the very first scene of the film where she stares into space with great unhinged fury, as if she is about to explode at any second for the most trivial of reasons. While she might be a pervert of sorts that could fuck all day if she had the right cock inside her, Sada is rampantly heterosexual as demonstrated by the fact that she rebuffs an aggressively Sapphic coworker that begins randomly fondling her tits. In fact, after the lesbo coworker realizes she is not into the ancient art of carpet-munching, she takes Sada to a peephole so that they can spy on their boss Kichizō Ishida (Tatsuya Fuji) while he fucks his wanton wife. It seems that Sada likes what she sees, as she soon starts a hot and heavy romance with hyper hedonistic sex-master Kichizō. Indeed, one day after Sada attempts to stab one of her coworkers for calling her a “whore,” Kichizō physically manhandles her, suggestively states, “Why hold that knife when you could be holding something else?,” and then forces his fingers inside her assumedly less than wet cunt. Shortly after warning her, “I like the sway of your hips. I bet you’ve broken many a man’s heart. I will pierce you through,” Kichizō more or less rapes Sada but she really likes it and soon transforms from a passive lover into a highly aggressive one as a result of her complete and utter obsession with her employer’s seemingly eternally erect member. As the two soon realize, it is virtually love-at-first-fuck as the two become almost permanently attached at the cock and cunt to the point where they completely forget about all the other people and concerns in their respective lives.

Undoubtedly, both Kichizō and Sada are eccentric social misfits of sorts and it does not take long before they get lost in their own hermetic demimonde of hyper horniness. Of course, the lovers are nothing if not happily imprisoned in their own two-person pandemonium of pleasure and it is ultimately only death that can separate the two. As a rather emotionally erratic woman that seems to suffer from Post-coital tristesse (PCT) and is prone to violent outbursts and emotion breakdowns when she is not having her meat curtain rammed with her beau’s seemingly permanently erect blue-veined custard chucker, Sada quite literally lives to fuck and only wants to fuck to the point where even her lover begins to get a little too physically tired from all the juice-draining orgasms. Luckily for Sada, Kichizō has the sexual prowess of a virtual samurai army and is always down for dipping his Don Cypriano into Sada’s seemingly perennially wet pas-

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sion pipe, even when he is literally falling asleep. While initially a seemingly happily married man that enjoys giving his wifey what she most desires, it does not take long for Kichizō to abandon his needy wife and completely devote himself to his mistress Sada. Indeed, Sada is an unrepentant bitch of the grotesquely jealous sort and even bitches to Kichizō during one of the first time they have sex, “you’re going to make love to your wife later, aren’t you? What a slut, having sex every morning [...] I won’t let you go until you’ve cum.” When Kichizō’s wife attempts to ‘mark her territory’ by intentionally fucking her hubby in front of the heroine, Sada becomes so enraged that she instantly fantasizes about violently murdering the broad. Luckily, Sada has more creative ways to demonstrate her love for Kichizō, including dipping her food in his sexual juices and vice versa. Unfortunately for Kichizō, Sada would prefer killing them than to allow him to be in the general proximity of another woman’s cleft of flesh.

Kichizō may be married to an oversexed sextop, but that does not stop him from marrying Sada in a sort of mock wedding attended by half-a-dozen seemingly sexually demented Geisha girls and some goofy old fart that resembles an anorexic mummy. In fact, the wedding ceremony is so special that the newlyweds fuck in front of the guests, which ultimately turns the Geisha girls on so much that they collectively strip a virginal member of the group named ‘Kosome’ and deflower her with a somewhat quaint bird-shaped dildo. Not surprisingly, the wedding eventually evolves into a full-blown orgy that concludes with a sea of lifeless naked bodies lying on the floor. Despite their incessantly professed love for one another in a decidedly fleshy form, Sada temporarily leaves Kichizō to visit her hometown for the sole purpose of peddling her puss to her former school principle. An extremely elderly and unattractive man that she apparently deeply respects due to his prestigious reputation, Sada demands that the principle slap her, twist her nipple and pull her hair, which ultimately arouses the heroine so much that she gets horny enough to ride his ancient cock. Before leaving Kichizō for her fancy date with the principle, Sada forces him to trade kimonos in what is indubitably a silly yet nonetheless potent symbolic display of their mutual undying love and affection for one another. Although she is not beneath selling her cash for gash to dirty old men, Sada soon becomes so irrationally jealous that she whips out a knife and threatens to cut off Kichizō’s cock in a somewhat foreshadowing scene that underscores the heroine’s deep-seated unhinged sadism and how it seems irreparably intertwined with her sexuality.

Indeed, Sada seems especially obsessed with the sadistic act of cutting off Kichizō’s cock while it is inside her cunt, at least until she realizes that she has a special fondness for the savage art of ‘breath control play,’ which ultimately leads her to getting the opportunity to castrate his creamstick and love-spuds. Indeed, the beginning of the end of the couple’s hot and heavy romance occurs when Sada comes more in touch with her growing sadistic side and realizes that she receives especially potent orgasms while strangling Kichizō while he is inside her.

After abandoning his wife and trapping himself in an increasingly deleterious yet completely intoxicating psychosexual affair that blurs the line between heaven and hell, Kichizō almost seems to welcome his demise as he has unquestionably reached the greatest heights in the realm of the senses, with death during sex being the next sensible route for the romance to take. When the pain involved with erotic asphyxiation proves to be too much for poor Kichizō, he tells Sada, “If you strangle me . . . don’t stop midway. It’s too painful afterward.” Somewhat curiously, Sada seems more interested in the potency of her orgasms than the survival of the man that gives her said orgasms. After Kichizō succumbs to asphyxiophilic excess, Sada quasi-ritualistically dismembers her lover’s cock and balls and then writes “SADA AND KICHI TOGETHER FOREVER” on his chest with his own blood. Notably, the film concludes with a shot of Sada lying next to Kichizō’s dismembered body juxtaposed with auteur Ōshima himself narrating in a somewhat monotone fashion, “For the next four days, Sada carried his severed organ from one Tokyo inn to another. She was still smiling radiantly when she was arrested. The story shocked all of Japan. The sympathy of the public made her strangely popular. These events took place in 1936.”

Undoubtedly, I think the best way one can argue for the legitimacy and absolute imperativeness of the unsimulated sex scenes featured in *In the Realm of the Senses* is to compare it to Ōshima’s subsequent film *Empire of Passion* (1978), which features a similar ‘mad love’ orientated romance sans the sexually explicit imagery. The second film in a fairly respectable diptych that was created when Ōshima was surely at the height of his artistic powers, *Empire of Passion* is a quasi-horror flick that also stars Tatsuya Fuji as a ‘sexual outlaw’ of sorts, yet it is not as nearly immaculate and ultimately lacks the fluid pacing of the director’s previous effort. Additionally, Ōshima’s penultimate feature *Max, Mon Amour* (1986)—a goofy comedy about a loony love affair between Charlotte Rampling and a chimp that was penned by Luis Buñuel’s later era screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière—seems like a retarded pseudo-Buñuelian joke compared to the eloquent erotic excesses that the auteur achieved in the past. Indeed, somewhat ironically, only in the relatively sexless film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1980)—a work that elegantly depicts the homoerotic tensions between an uptight Japanese POW camp commander and a Hakuin POW played by an extra gay David Bowie—does Ōshima come anywhere near to depicting a love story as potently idiosyncratic as he did with *In the Realm of the Senses*. Personally, I find most pornography to be completely phony and extremely alienating and anyone that has ever read about the behind-the-scenes degeneracy that goes into producing fuck flicks will realize that there is nothing even remotely sexy about it, yet I never got that sense while watching Ōshima’s film. In short, it took me nil effort to suspend my disbelief and accept that the two people on screen are consumed with completely organic *l’amour fou*.

I have noticed that a number of film critics have praised Ōshima for his sort

IN THE REALM OF THE SENSES

of far-leftist iconoclasm and active destruction of traditional Japanese mores and taboos, yet I certainly did not read *In the Realm of the Senses* as some sort of fierce feminist statement as some (e.g. Jonathan Rosebaum) have, namely because the heroine is a violent and sadistic hypersexual whore that does not think twice about strangling to death her beloved just so that she can achieve the ultimate orgasm. Additionally, the male protagonist—a fairly weak and lazy would-be-Don-Juan that lives off women and lets them constantly push him around—is not exactly a hero. After all, pleasure is a weakness, yet it seems to be the only thing that the male protagonist is capable of striving for, hence his idiotically tragic yet somehow strangely touching downfall. In a rather notable symbolic scene towards the end of the film, the horny hero is depicted walking in the opposite direction with his head down while a line of soldiers march stoically down the street as they are celebrated by young adoring Jap chicks in a scenario that really underscores the character's hopeless alienation from Japanese society and overall fantasy-like existence. While this scene seems to be Ôshima's attempt at mocking the supposedly dehumanizing Jap war-machine and how it ostensibly alienates hedonistic people like the protagonist, it is ultimately said protagonist that seem rather ridiculous in the end, but then again I must confess that I still found their raunchy romance to be singularly touching. Indeed, one of the greatest accomplishments of Ôshima's film is that it successfully manages to depict true love between two preternatural lunatics that have somehow managed to find each other in a world that rejects them. Of course, Ôshima, not unlike Pier Paolo Pasolini, was no mindless leftist ideologue, or as Donald Richie (*Dead Youth, Five Philosophical Fables*), himself a director of subversive Japanese avant-garde erotica, noted in his essay *In the Realm of the Senses: Some Notes on Oshima and Pornography* in regard to the filmmaker, "All of Ôshima's films are criticisms of society and the political assumptions that form it. He is interested in reform but rejects the social agendas that often accompany it. He sometimes castigates the left as well as the right, and always assumes that it is the individual and his or her needs that must be politically addressed."

In the dark and depraved eyes of literary degenerate Georges Bataille, who clearly influenced the film (e.g. egg in pussy), the male hero Kichizô of *In the Realm of the Senses* is the mostly erotically bravest of men as revealed in the frog novelist's words, "It takes an iron nerve to perceive the connection between the promise of life implicit in eroticism and the sensuous aspect of death." After all, the male protagonist not only sees this connection but fully embraces it to the point of self-obliteration, thus bringing new meaning to the French phrase 'La petite mort.' Of course, what makes the character's death truly disturbing, at least for Japanese people of the 1970s, is that the couple rejects the traditional Japanese 'Shinjû' and instead demonstrates a sort of deracinated romantic nihilism that Ôshima seems privy to. While probably not the director's intent, Kichizô is, in many ways, certainly symbolic of the death of true Japanese mas-

culinity, thus it is only fitting that the film is set right before Japan suffered the most emotionally, spiritually, and physically brutal defeat of their entire history. As contemporary Japanese society and culture certainly demonstrates, WWII more or less resulted in the spiritual castration of the country. While maybe an unrivaled *Übermensch* in the bedroom in terms of sheer sexuality virility, Kichizō symbolizes Nietzsche's 'last man' as a sort of anti-prophet that anticipates Japan's post-samurai crypto-dystopia where frigid women give orders, testicular fortitude has been replaced with technology, and people in general no longer seem interested in establishing a legacy by having children. Certainly, it is no coincidence that the heroine Sada eventually completely castrates Kichizō after threatening to do so at various points, as if the only value her lover had was his cock, hence why she kept it as a special souvenir. While Kichizō might be a *dai-sensei* of sensuality, he basically lacks virtually every other quality that any sane woman looks for in a prospective lover. Of course, as a disgraced pussy-peddler that is not beneath sexually abusing children, Sada is no exactly good wife material. As a completely cosmopolitan man descended from a respected samurai family that sympathized with Korean invaders, worshiped female power, actively sought to uproot organic Japanese culture and law, and directed what is arguably the least intrinsically Japanese film ever made (*Max, Mon Amour*) by a native Japanese filmmaker, Ōshima was the ultimate degenerate and a sort of contra Mishima as an artist that virtually made a career out of mocking and exploiting his own race and culture. After all, Yukio Mishima was certainly no puritan, yet he managed to find a way to seamlessly interweave the degeneracy of Occidental modernity with traditional Japanese aesthetics. Whereas Mishima infamously ended his life when he was at the height of both his artistic and physical powers, Ōshima degenerated into a sort of novelty 'Uncle Wong' that merely faded away after only managing to direct one more feature over an almost three decade period before his death in early 2013. Of course, the greatest irony of Ōshima's legacy is that he will be best remembered as a weirdo Jap filmmaker that made weirdo Jap films and not as some highly successful cosmopolitan artist that was able to transcend both his race and culture. Surely, the auteur led the way for distinctly degenerate Japanese artist and chef like Mao Sugiyama, who underwent elective genital-removal surgery, cooked his dismembered cock and balls, and then served them to about half-a-dozen people at \$250-a-plate during what can only be described as a carnally cannibalistic dinner party. As *In the Realm of the Senses*—a film that features a brief scene of non-cannibalistic culinary carnality—certainly demonstrates, only a Japanese filmmaker could make a rather rapturously erotic film where the characters spend the entire time fucking on a floor.

-Ty E

THE ASSAULT
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Fons Rademakers (1986)

Undoubtedly, every modern western nation has its overrated token Judaic literary figure as it would be considered nothing short of antisemitism for white Europeans and Americans to not put at least one Semitic scribbler, especially if they are a proud shoah survivor like Eli Wiesel, on a grand pedestal, even if they are not even remotely worthy of such a honor. In the Netherlands, Harry Mulisch—a fellow who, along with his Jewish mother, managed to remain rather unscathed during the Nazi occupation because his Austrian gentile banker father worked for a kraut bank that dealt with confiscated Jewish assets—is undoubtedly considered the most famous post-WWII Jewish writer and unlike that obscenely overrated weasel Wiesel, he is somewhat deserving of his great fame. Aside from his novels, Mulisch is also famous for his rather flagrant arrogance which bordered on megalomania as reflected in statements like, “I don’t just remember it; I am World War II.” Possibly as a result of his bizarre situation as a Dutch Jew who was not persecuted during the Second World War and because his Aryan father collaborated with the Nazis and was thus later imprisoned as a Nazi collaborator, Mulisch took a more intricate view of the Nazi occupation and its aftermath as personified in his best-selling novel *De Aanslag* (1982) aka *The Assault* which, unlike most Dutch novels, was translated into more than 30 languages and spawned a hit film adaptation that was just as successful as the book, even if it is not as famous as it probably should be in the United States where reading subtitles is certainly not the norm. Indeed, the film is notable for being the first Dutch film to win the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1986 and was directed by Fons Rademakers (*Mira*, *Because of the Cats* aka *The Rape*) who incidentally was also the very first Dutch filmmaker to be nominated for an Academy Award via his work *Dorp aan de rivier* (1958) aka *The Village by the River* in 1959.

Although distributed by the kosher kitsch kings at Cannon Films who mostly churned out senseless action-packed schlock and proudly anti-artistic celluloid swell featuring big tits and big guns, *The Assault* (1986) aka *De Aanslag* is a classic epic war-drama with a quasi-arthouse style and 140+ minute running time that is probably the only Nazi occupation work of its kind that is worthy of being compared to Paul Verhoeven’s *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange* which, incidentally, was also penned by prolific Dutch screenwriter Gerard Soeteman (*Turks fruit* aka *Turkish Delight*, *Spetters*). A film that spans over four paradigm-shifting decades, beginning at the end of World War II and concluding in the 1980s, *The Assault* is also probably the closest thing to a Dutch equivalent to Edgar Reitz’s magnum opus *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) in terms of its subtly melancholic depiction of the serious social changes of a Germanic nation over the course of a number of decades, with the Second

World War ultimately being the most obvious catalyst for these mostly deleterious transformations. A carefully crafted political-thriller in a slowburning yet sometimes action-packed Greek tragedy form, Rademakers' film tells the story of a barely likeable Dutch doctor who unravels the unpredictable fact and curious circumstances that led to the deaths of his entire family at the hands of the Gestapo after a Dutch Nazi collaborator is killed outside of his family home by members of the resistance. A work about the irony of fate where there are no clear-cut heroes and where supposed good guys' actions are just as deleterious and deadly as supposed bad guys', *The Assault* is a film that might sometimes feel like an unintentionally hokey Hollywood film in its occasionally contrived direction and crappy pseudo-classical music, but ultimately features relatively complex philosophical themes that expose Steven Spielberg for the reductionist Zionist agitpropagandist that he is, as *Schindler's List* (1993), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *Munich* (2005) seem like insults to the human experience and history when compared to Rademakers' film, which does something rather rare for its (sub)genre in that it depicts the consequences of war from all different perspectives. Indeed, *The Assault* is probably the only film you will ever see where an elderly resistance fighter is still consumed with hatred for his ex-enemies despite the war ending about four decades before and the son of a Nazi is depicted as the most mentally, emotionally, and economically forsaken of all the characters. Of course, unlike the United States, the Netherlands, like most of Europe, only faced pain and misery as a result of the Second World War.

As narrated at the beginning of *The Assault*, "It's January 1945. Almost all of Europe is liberated...celebrating, eating, drinking and making love. But here in Haarlem it's still war. And winter. The winter of starvation." Indeed, elderly men are dropping like flies via starvation as a result of the Hungerwinter ('Hunger Winter') famine, but 12-year-old protagonist Anton Steenwijk (played by Marc van Uchelen, who eventually became a filmmaker but later committed suicide in 2013 at the age of 42) seems totally unaffected by the misery of World War II and is even friendly with a much hated classmate named Fake Ploeg whose father is a Dutch Nazi collaborator and is purportedly responsible for the death and torture of various members of the shadowy Dutch resistance. When Nazi Fake Ploeg Sr. is killed in Anton's neighborhood and the neighbors, a semi-sexy nurse named Karin Korteweg (Ina van der Molen) and her widowed father, inexplicably move the corpse in front of the protagonist's family home, the Gestapo ultimately burns down the protagonist's house, kill his entire family and 19 other people as a reprisal for the assassination. Indeed, when the Gestapo showed up at the Steenwijk home and noticed that Anton's father had a copy of a book by Dutch Sephardic Jewish philosopher Spinoza sitting out, the Nazi in charge felt they had their culprits, especially considering the protagonist's 17-year-old brother Peter (Casper de Boer) was caught attempting to move Ploeg's corpse and run away with the dead Nazi's gun. After being sepa-

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rated from his parents and watching his house being burned down by Nazis with blowtorches, Anton is put in a prison cell with a young female Dutch resistance fighter (Monique van de Ven) who refuses to tell the boy her name but gives him the advice, "...one thing you should never forget for the rest of your life. Don't forget that the Krauts set your house on fire. Who did it, did it...And not someone else." When Anton reveals to the woman what happened to him and his family, she begins to cry and remarks, "You know, if the resistance hadn't done it...that Ploeg would have killed a lot of other people." Although their interaction is brief and the protagonist only manages to see the resistance fighter's large sensual lips, Anton will remember the encounter with the "communist whore" (as she is described by a Nazi officer) for the rest of his life.

Ultimately, Anton (Derek de Lint) is driven to Amsterdam the next day by some German soldiers and goes to live with his uncle after learning his parents and brother have been executed. Flash forward to 1952 and Anton is a medical student that, "doesn't meddle with politics, no more than he does with his past," but that changes when he goes back to his hometown in Haarlem for the first time since his parents were killed, "because a friend passed his Master's degree in dental surgery." While walking around his old neighborhood, Anton is spotted by his old neighbor Mrs. Beumer (Elly Weller) who reveals to him that his belated mother attacked SD men and that both his parents were "killed like animals." When Mrs. Beumer reveals that a monument has been erected to his parents and the rest of the people from Haarlem were killed by the Germans, Anton visits it by himself and seems quite melancholy, but he subsequently buries the past and does not revisit it again until 1956 when he has a chance encounter with his old childhood 'friend' Fake Ploeg Jr. at a violent communist riot in Amsterdam. Like his belated Nazi father, Fake is a staunch anticommunist and seems quite resentful that Anton is now a doctor. As Fake explains, his mother was put in a concentration camp for NSB members/Nazi collaborators simply because she was the widow of a Nazi, so he was forced to go to trade school instead of college and now works at an appliance shop doing "repairs and the like." Fake clearly suffers from a persecution complex and rants regarding his need to battle communist scum in Amsterdam, "My father is right. Everything they say about communists now, he was already saying in the war...And it's those damn communists who killed him." Needless to say, Anton is not impressed and when he suggests that Fake's father was responsible for the murder of his parents, the discernibly angst-ridden anticommunist goes berserk, throws a rock at the mirror, and runs out of the protagonist's apartment, though he briefly comes back to tell him that he will always remember that he was the only person in Haarlem to be nice to him when he was a kid and everyone in town hated him because he was the son of a Nazi collaborator. Undoubtedly, out of all the people in the entire film, Fake is clearly the one that was mostly deeply affected by the aftermath of the war, though virtually every single character wears the internal

scars of the singularly catastrophic event.

Although he spends a good portion of his early adult years having short month-long relationships as if he has intimacy problems and lacks the capacity to devote himself to a single woman as a result of his tragic experiences during childhood, Anton decides to get married after meeting a Dutch girl while on a trip in East London named Saskia de Graaff (also played by Monique van de Ven) that has the same exact lips as the mysterious resistance fighter he met when he was 12-years-old. While at a funeral for his father-in-law's resistance fighter friend, Anton overhears an old fat man named Cor Takes (John Kraaykamp) aka 'Gijs' discussing his role in assassinating Fake Ploeg. After introducing himself to Gijs, the elderly resistance fighter justifies killing Ploeg by stating, "He'd use a whip with a wire to flay the skin off your face. He'd push your bare bottom against the hot stove. He'd put a garden hose in your ass so that you would puke your own shit. He had to be taken care of." Surely, Anton becomes somewhat annoyed with Gijs because he realizes that if he had not killed Ploeg, his family would have never been executed by the Gestapo. While talking together, Anton is startled to learn that Gijs was the lover of the sensual-lipped female resistance fighter he met when he was a kid. Gijs also reveals to Anton that the female resistance fighter's name was Truus Coester and she was executed by the Gestapo at some sand dunes near Amsterdam.

After learning about the true identity of resistance fighter Truus Coester, Anton starts a strange and somewhat reluctant relationship with Gijs that ultimately makes him become obsessed with the death of his parents and the mysterious circumstances revolving around the death of Fake, like why his neighbor Karin and her father moved the Nazi's corpse in front of his family home. Although having a young daughter with her named Sandra, Anton divorces Saskia and eventually marries another woman named Elisabeth (Mies de Heer) with whom he has a son named Peter in tribute to his dead brother. While at an anti-nuclear protest that he is blackmailed into joining by his dentist friend Gerrit-Jan (Kees Coolen), Anton bumps into his ex-neighbor Karin and he does not waste any time asking her why she and her father moved Ploeg's body in front of his family's house, thereupon resulting in their deaths. After explaining that her father was so consumed with guilt as a result of being indirectly responsible for his family's death that he moved to New Zealand and eventually committed suicide, Karin explains that they decided to drop Ploeg's body in front of his house instead of their neighbors the Aarts because the latter family was hiding Jews in their home and they did not want the Nazis to find them. After discovering that his family's demise was the accidental circumstance of protecting a hidden Jewish family, Anton seems to come to terms with the past and can finally move on with the future.

Ironically, despite the resentment that many Dutch people still hold for the Germans as a result of the Second World War, the Netherlands is home to what

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is probably the only monument dedicated to a German Wehrmacht soldier in the entire world. The monument was made in tribute to a German soldier named Private Karl-Heinz Rösch who was blown up at the mere age of 18 just moments after saving the lives of two small Dutch children at a farm in the small southern Netherlands village of Goirle during an Allied attack on October 6, 1944. In a somewhat strange way, I think *The Assault* expresses the same message as the Rösch monument as it completely demystifies the official narrative regarding 'good' and 'evil' during the Second World War, as both works of art demonstrate the impact of individual acts during wartime. Indeed, while the protagonist of the film is told by various people to never forget that 'the krauts' were responsible for torching his family home and killing his parents, the character also encounters nice German soldiers and realizes that some members of the resistance were just as much of murderous thugs as the most merciless members of the Gestapo. While the protagonist's parents were indeed executed by the krauts, their deaths were the direct result of a series of misunderstandings and unfortunate circumstances that are especially common during times of war when one small slip can result in death. As source writer Harry Mulisch, who was a lifelong left-winger, stated of his own father's stranger-than-fiction circumstances as a man who ultimately paid a major price for protecting his Jewish son and wife, "It's a terrible paradox of the war. My father took great risks to save my mother and was later condemned as a collaborator." While I think the conclusion was somewhat preposterous and some of the scenes were hopelessly contrived, *The Assault* is an engulfing work that acts as a sort of antidote to the mundanely dichotomous black-and-white morality of virtually all Hollywood WWII films. While the protagonist seems to think otherwise when he learns of the true circumstances leading up to his family's death, his kinfolk ultimately died pointless deaths which, although quite typical of war, seems to be a concept that most Americans do not want to accept as reflected by the fact that they call virtually anyone that dies in a pointless Zionist war a 'hero.' Apparently, during his Oscar acceptance speech, director Fons Rademakers naively attempted to convince American audiences to get over their seemingly undying fear of reading subtitles and embrace films from other countries. For better or worse, *The Assault* is indubitably one of the most 'accessible' Dutch films ever made, even if it forces the viewer to slightly look beyond good and evil as far as morality is concerned, thus making it the perfect introductory work for novices of cinema from the Netherlands.

-Ty E

NIGHTDREAMS

Francis Delia (1981)

To be quite frank, I hate the Christmas season and cannot remember the last time I couldn't wait for god's ½ Jewish double-bastard son's pseudo-birthday to be over with. As is typical, last year's Christmas was an especially deplorable and less than merry day for me, but I did enjoy doing one thing on Christ's big day and that was watching the arthouse hardcore porn flick *Nightdreams* (1981) aka *Night Dreams* aka *Nightdreams #1* directed by music video/television director Francis Delia (*Freeway*, *Long Day Journey*) under the curious pseudonym 'F.X. Pope' and co-written by Jerry Stahl aka "Herbert W. Day" (who would go on to pen garbage like *Bad Boys II* (2003) directed by Michael Bay) and Austrian-American auteur-pornographer Stephen Sayadian aka 'Rinse Dream' (*Café Flesh*, *Party Doll A Go- Go!*), who some people, like myself, would argue is the real 'auteur' of the film. Indeed, today I thought I would get into the anti-Christmas spirit by re-watching a film that would give both Santa Claus and Satan a hard-on and/or a heart attack. Described by *Playboy Magazine* as, "The first avant-garde adult film...Fellini meets *Eraserhead*," and by *Velvet Magazine* as, "The *Citizen Kane* of adult films," *Nightdreams* is undoubtedly and unequivocally one of the greatest fuck flicks ever made and a rare aberrant quasi-artistic porn flick that goes beyond being a miserable masturbation aid. In fact, with its hardcore absurdist hodgepodge of pussy-licking monster dolls, saxophone-blowing toasted Wonder Bread, deviant droog-like bathroom rapists, cutesy cunnilingus-inclined cowgirls, plastic-like pussies, debauched dildo-wielding demons, frail fetuses popping out of penises, and salacious towelhead sheiks, you would have to be a sick and demented degenerate to get-off to a film like *Nightdreams* (in fact, co-writer Sayadian has noted in interviews that it was a failure as a porn flick but a big success as a *Midnight Movie*); a phantasmagoric piece of porno pandemonium of the sexually surreal sort that seems like the sort of nightmares a victim of child molestation might suffer, especially if said child molestation victim has a sick sense of humor. On top of being brazenly bawdy and beautifully bizarre, *Nightdreams* is both intentionally and unintentionally hilarious in its unhinged and exceedingly eccentric erotic charm, sort of like a bad 1950s sci-fi movie on expressionistic avant-garde steroids, yet all the more wildly wicked and warped. A rare porn flick shot on 35mm film stock featuring music by spaghetti-western-influenced New Wave group *Wall of Voodoo*, *Nightdreams* is probably the only porn flick that manages to reconcile the avant-garde hardcore sleaziness of Fred Halsted's *Sextool* (1975) with the fiercely fantastic New Romantic aesthetic absurdity of Slava Tsukerman's culturally cynical sci-fi cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982). Featuring porn diva Dorothy LeMay (*Trashi*, *Stalag 69*) playing the role of a hysterical housewife named Mrs. Van Houten (a name in tribute to one of the ladies of

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the Manson Family, no less!) who becomes the hyper horny guinea pig patient of salacious scientists and undergoes experimental shock treatment that induces erotic, albeit oftentimes nefarious and nightmarish, dreams of the decidedly debasing sort, *Nightdreams* is totally tasteless yet tasty trash-art-porn from sort of fiercely fetishistic forbidden dimension.

Accordingly to her less than sexually virile husband, Mrs. Van Houten (Dorothy LeMay) has never had a single orgasm in her entire sad and erotically-deprived booboisie life, but with the somewhat shocking shock treatment help of two psychiatrists, one male beta (Andy Nichols) and one female alpha (Jennifer West), she manages to have a number of naughty nightmarish dreams that deliver an ominous and otherworldly sort of orgasmic pleasure that ultimately arouses more than the just attention of the two initially frigid soul-doctors. While Mrs. Van Houten is asleep, the two decidedly decadent and oftentimes quarrelling docs send her a series of super sensational electric shocks that stimulate both her mind and body, thereupon turning the little lady into a nasty nymphomaniac of nightmares who will fuck anything anywhere, including a jerking jack-in-the-box with a human cock, two cute cunt-licking cowgirls with big udders, musical negro Cream of Wheat boxes, mask-adorned droog-like rapists, and other wanton and wild weirdos. Too blatant to be mere aesthetic theft, the bathroom rape scene with the deranged droog dude seems to be a rather reluctant homage to *Dressed to Kill* (1980) directed by Brian De Palma, a man who thrives on cinematic homages and who has made a major monetary killing off of meta-Hitchcockian celluloid killings. On top of titillating toys and cuming on cowgirls, Mrs. Van Houten also travels to horndog Hades where a lesbian-loving Lucifer has a demoness lick the mental patient's lily and later finishes her off with a daunting demonic strap-on dildo. Of course, Lucifer is no mere vainglorious voyeur but a virile victor of vice who also does his damndest to sexually violate Mrs. Van Houten during a literally hot and steamy pseudo-sinister Satanic threesome in hell. Of course, you cannot have hell without heaven, so Mrs. Van Houten makes her next nightmarish nympho stop in hedonistic heaven where French composer Erik Satie's minimalistic masterpiece "Gymnopédies" plays angelically as the mentally perturbed protagonist ostensibly gets on god's dick. In the end, *Nightdreams* concludes with a fitting twist that puts into question who is really the doctor and who is really the patient.

Not surprisingly considering its popularity, *Nightdreams* was followed by two sequels, *Nightdreams II* (1989) and *Nightdreams 3* (1991), but being shot-on-video, these two would-be-weird-and-wacky porno turds lack the aberrant artsy and phantasmagoric cine-magic that the original film is quite rightfully (in)famous for. Indeed, while *Nightdreams* co-writer Stephen Sayadian failed in his attempt to direct worthy sequels to the original film, he was responsible for directing the positively potent post-apocalyptic porn flick *Café Flesh* (1982), which has the grand distinction of being the first porn flick to com-

pletely crossover and become a Midnight Movie classic as a work that played in repertory theaters across the United States and Europe throughout most of the 1980s. Additionally, Sayadian is also responsible for the non-pornographic yet erotically-charged avant-garde flick *Dr. Caligari* (1989), which is a severely sardonic and fetish-fueled tribute/quasi-sequel to the German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) aka *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* directed by Robert Wiene. While I can state without hesitation that *Dr. Caligari* is easily the most aesthetically and thematically complex, as well as snidely sardonic, of Sayadian's films, *Nightdreams* is unequivocally the darkest and most memorable of the film projects he worked on. Interestingly, in a somewhat recent interview with twitchfilm.com, Sayadian stated he was compensated for his work on *Nightdreams* in the following peculiar manner: "I got \$60,000 to make *Nightdreams*, and the entire film was paid in change. There used to be these peep shows everywhere. People would put quarters or dollars and they could see a show behind a glass wall, and it would go on for as long as they kept the money in. The people that financed that paid the budget of the film in coins. They didn't want to convert it to bills. I made *Nightdreams* with \$60,000 in quarters." A rather humble arthouse pornographer if there ever was one, Sayadian also stated in the same interview regarding the root of his aesthetic prowess: "Everything I had ever done, in terms of filmmaking, my hands were always tied by the budget. The budget always came first. People always ask, how did you come up with this or that? And I always have the same terrible answer: I had no money; it was all I could do! I never shot a film on location. Not one location. And that was because you go where your strength is. I'm a good production designer, good art director, good enough for low budget, so you do that." Indeed, considering the history behind the making of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and a number of other German expressionist films, it seems Sayadian was influenced by more than just the aesthetic and 'twist' ending of Wiene's masterpiece, as the work was made under similarly 'unwasteful' circumstances (the sets for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* cost less than \$800 and the leading actors were paid \$30 a day).

A sort of heterosexual celluloid equivalent to Michael Zen's *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters* (1984), albeit more humorous and satirical in persuasion, not to mention more aesthetically eclectic, *Nightdreams* is essentially a rare piece of porn specially tailored for the more discerning cinephile. Originally conceived to be a modern filmic equivalent to an "old vaudeville review," *Nightdreams*—which was originally made under the work title "I Know You're Watching Me"—ultimately evolved into a perturbing yet perversely pleasurable purgatory of potent preternatural petite vignettes that Werner Schroeter might have directed had he been a heterosexual horror fan with a sickly sardonic sense of humor and a foul fetish for jagged and otherwise bizarrely shaped dildos. As Sayadian also noted during his interview with twitchfilm.com, "I came from hard porn, but was trying to inject an artistic film sensibility into it. But at the same time I was

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doing that, downtown in New York and in the L.A. scene, these people from the art world were putting porn into their images – people like Nick Zedd, Lydia Lunch, this transgression stuff – but if you look at that stuff today, I think we won out. I think our porn to art approach holds up much better.” And, indeed, I have to concur with Sayadian, as there seems to be more artsy in a single cum shot featured in *Nightdreams* than in all of Kern’s ‘poor man’s art-porn’ flicks combined, not to mention the fact that no one—and I mean no one—wants to see an ugly gutter-feminist bitch like Lydia Lunch naked. Indeed, while porn star Dorothy LeMay might not exactly be the most gorgeous gal in the world, her ‘penetrating performance’ in *Nightdreams* is as good as they cum in regard to pornography, especially considering the innately idiosyncratic and aesthetically/thematically iconoclastic nature of the film. Indeed, as I hoped it would, re-watching *Nightdreams* certainly got me into the nihilistically nostalgic, anti-Christmas spirit.

-Ty E

THE GODFATHER

Francis Ford Coppola (1972)

The Godfather is the Don of all Sicilian-American guinea (a word quite often used in the film) mafia films. Francis Ford Coppola did an excellent job as an artisan directing a film about undesirable yet respectable members of his Mediterranean race. The Godfather is after all a master craftsman piece if not a work of art. A film that retains its power with each viewing. The editors of the film also deserve to be noted as the baptizing montage during the end of the film is one of the greatest of American cinema. The Godfather is a true teamwork project and not an auteur piece.

A young Al Pacino shines in the film starring as Michael Corleone, a war hero and college student turned master exterminator. Marlon Brando proves that he could dominate a film that he is not featured in very much. He also proved that he could use his method acting schools to play a top crime leader of a group he shares no blood with. Brando came out of the film as the actor making the most cash with his role as Don Vito. Few actors can claim they have such a varied and successful career with films like *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *On The Waterfront*, *Last Tango in Paris*, and *The Godfather*. Francis Ford Coppola knew that Brando was worth the extra money for his irreplaceable acting abilities. Robert Duvall does an excellent job as Tom Hagen, the stoic adopted son of Don Vito. Being not of Sicilian blood (but "Kraut" and "Mick" blood), Hagen was the lawyer and consigliere. The Coen Brothers made the Italian mafia look like a bunch of moronic buffoons in *Miller's Crossing*. I guess Francis Ford Coppola figured they would need a Mc-Aryan to be the "brains" of the Sicilian mafia family. Sicily is not known for its scholars. Tom Hagen is the man that demonstrates "self-control" and rationality in *The Godfather*.

Federico Fellini's favorite composer Nina Rota lent his music making to *The Godfather*. A film such as *The Godfather* wouldn't be complete without the emotionally engulfing sounds of Nina Rota. Martin Scorsese decided pop songs would be the best choices for his mafia flicks. Maybe Coppola has a little more class (or maybe not)? Francis Ford Coppola certainly did his time at film school when he decided to hire both Marlon Brando and Nina Rota. Now most American's have heard a score from the composer that created musical works which brilliantly complimented the fantastic visual works of the legendary Federico Fellini. It is no lie that *The Godfather* is one of the top ten best American films ever made. American film has always been a business, and with business comes the desire to create marketable products. *The Godfather* combines violence, a memorable score, competent directing, Eisenstein inspired editing montages, and good storytelling for a film that Hollywood can be proud. Francis Ford Coppola also owes his Sicilian ancestors and relatives a little credit for their film influence. I have always been more a fan of Italian cinema than Italian-America

THE GODFATHER

cinema. The Godfather is something the Italian-American community can be proud of.

-Ty E

APOCALYPSE NOW

Francis Ford Coppola (1979)

Francis Ford Coppola is without doubt one of the most overrated directors of all time. More of an artisan than an artist, Coppola is one of the most studied directors in film schools because of his "technical" achievements in film. *Apocalypse Now* is the Italian American directors greatest film. At best the film is a dark odyssey of a man coming to terms with himself while searching for another man. At worst, Coppola spent way too much time, effort, and money on a film that is NOT the best war film ever made. The *Godfather* series has influenced many morons to idealize the world of organized crime. With *Apocalypse Now*, Coppola has also convinced us that "war is bad." A crazy surfer Lt. Colonel Bill Kilgore likes to kill gooks and have his soldiers surf rad waves at the same type. Coppola really shows us the absurdity of war in a fairly obvious manner. I personally thought Lt. Kilgore was a pretty cool dude. *Apocalypse Now* also shows how poor black kids from the intercity died in the jungles of Vietnam for whitey. I wonder if there is a film about the Vietnam war that doesn't bring this up. The liberal rule for war filmmaking is killing fascists = good and killing communists = bad. The Vietnam war was bad because America had Negroes and poor whites kill third world communists. World War II was good because Americans killed Europeans. Francis Ford Coppola even alludes to Nazism when Kilgore blasts Richard Wagner as he goes in for the kill on a village of backwards gooks. Francis Ford Coppola is a deeply philosophical man not to be questioned. I have never thought of Martin Sheen as a tough soldier. Hell, I never thought of Mr. Sheen as even a man. His role as Captain Willard in *Apocalypse Now* makes about as much sense as his son Emilio Estevez playing a punk in *Repo Man*. Hollywood really likes to have men of weak physique playing the roles of heroic men for obvious reasons. I would have even preferred an overweight and aged Brando as Captain Willard. At least Brando looks like he went outside as a child. Rumor has it that Francis Ford Coppola enjoyed himself with young teenage male prostitutes in Cambodia during the filming of *Apocalypse Now*. He had his convicted child molester friend Victor Salva (director of *Powder* and *Jeepers Creepers*) with him during the shooting of *Apocalypse Now* so it would be no surprise. For all the time spent on the making of *Apocalypse Now*, the result is less than "epic." The film slightly horrified me as a child but now I see it as mild entertainment. I give credit to Coppola for spicing up the film with some tunes by The Doors and a small role by Dennis Hopper as an eccentric American photographer. I take away credit from Coppola for re-releasing *Apocalypse Now* in it's "Redux" form. Coppola can't possibly think that the "redux" version is a superior cut. The original film cutout the "new footage" for a reason. Then again, Francis Ford Coppola isn't much different from his fellow "film school generation" of film directors such as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. Americans

APOCALYPSE NOW

should leave it to the Europeans and Russians for war films.

-Ty E

RUMBLE FISH

Francis Ford Coppola (1983)

Rumble Fish was Francis Ford Coppola's big attempt at being artsy fartsy. The film was shot in black-and-white and has a spacey feeling which Coppola intentionally employed. With Rumble Fish, Coppola even dabbles in surrealism, dream sequences, and "heavenly" camera angles. From beginning to end, Rumble Fish feels as if you're floating in and out of the film. Although flawed, Rumble Fish is one of Coppola's greatest artistic achievements.

Matt Dillon stars in Rumble Fish as a young gang leader named Rusty James who can't live up to his legendary brother's reputation. Rusty James is a male bimbo that just can't help but incriminate himself as an incompetent moron and impulsive fuck up. His brother, The Motorcycle Boy (played by a calm and collected Mickey Rourke) demands respect merely by making his presence known. Rusty James claims that he will one day be like Motorcycle Boy but fails to even come close to understanding his own brother in even the most general way. At best, Rusty James can only admire his brother and he knows this. Rumble Fish follows in the footsteps of East of Eden, another film that takes a look at two brothers that don't seem to share any of the same blood. But unlike East of Eden, both brothers featured in Rumble Fish are involved in crimes as for them it is the norm. This is not strange as years pass in the United States crime and gangs become more glamorous as result of America's leaders being subversive culture distorter's. The pairs of brothers in East of Eden and Rumble Fish also share something very importantly in common in that their mother has abandoned their family. Also in both films, each brother responded to this maternal disappearance in a completely different way thus resulting in opposing personalities. Rumble Fish is a fine update of "different brothers of the same mother (and broken father)." Rumble Fish suffers from an annoying soundtrack of goofy sound effects that get in the way of the film's important dialogue. The Police drummer Stewart Copeland had a new invention at that time called a "Musync" which never should have been invented. Thankfully, this little contraption hasn't been utilized in films often. The unfortunate problem with "experiments" is they often result in unexpected failure. Stewart Copeland failed. Rumble Fish features a variety of new (for that time) and old actors. One of my favorite performances, although limited in scenes, is by the legendary Dennis Hopper. Hopper plays the drunken and mentally unstable father of the brothers featured in Rumble Fish. Father Hopper realizes the great tragic quality that is Motorcycle Boy as he takes after his mother. Rusty James seems to take after no one and Daddy knows this. Rusty James is the black sheep of the family that only wants to fit in. His brother and father know it's a lost cause. Rumble Fish is one of the more complex Hollywood "family affairs" that deserves viewing.

-Ty E

NECROPOLIS
NECROPOLIS

Franco Brocani (1970)

After reading various warnings to avoid the film like the experimental LSD-ridden celluloid plague, I decided it was about time I get around to seeing the lost psychedelic-drug-inspired Gudio avant-garde epic *Necropolis* (1970) directed by obscure Italian auteur Franco Brocani (Clodia – Fragmenta, Schifanosaurus Rex). Starring Italian avant-garde auteur Carmelo Bene (Our Lady of the Turks, Capricci) as a very authentically drunk leather-jacket-adorned Kenneth Anger fan, Warhol Superstar Viva (Bike Boy, Lonesome Cowboys) as a repressed housewife who shoves coke cans up her pussy, and French junky arthouse superstar Pierre Clémenti as a rather gay and naked Attila the Hun, as well as gigantic penises, a dandy-like melancholy Frankenstein monster, a human-size King Kong, Satan himself, and a number of other famous cinema/literary/historical fantastic figures in less than fantastic yet highly stylized settings, *Necropolis*—a hippie fantasy-horror work with an international cast featuring dialogue in Italian, English, German, and French—is a sort of postmodern psychedelic psychobabble fest where the various actors, whose chemical-fueled inebriation is certainly not in question, deliver mostly mundane and madly meandering monologues about a bunch of unintentionally corny and even sometimes funny crackpot counter-culture subjects. A sometimes strangely charming celluloid endurance test that will only be of interest to diehard cinephiles, wannabe-hippies and people who think they are more intelligent while they are high, *Necropolis* in many way epitomizes everything that was wrong and degenerate about the late-1960s/early-1970s as a convoluted work of counter-culture craziness and drug-addled debauchery masquerading as cultivated celluloid art of the highly intellectual and transcendental sort. Yet for all of its nauseating nonsensicalness, pseudo-philosophical meanderings, and inane and uninventive iconoclasm, I somewhat enjoyed *Necropolis*, even laughing out loud a number of times at the film's vivacious vulgarity. Starring Viva as a brazenly bitchy and sexually repressed housewife who rather regrets her marriage to a pussy of a poet, *Necropolis* features many great and highly memorable quotes from the Warhol superstar like, "Bring me a Coca Cola so I can fuck myself," "I knew he'd always end up in bed with a boy," and "If it weren't for vibrators, I'd be in a sorry state," among countless others. Like an early Warhol production on steroids meets Kenneth Anger and Carmelo Bene as directed by someone who knows a thing or two about set-design, shot composition, and general filmmaking techniques, *Necropolis* apparently purports to be a distinctly deep 'statement about life' and, judging the film, it must be a life less than worthy of living. A collection of petite vignettes featuring distinctly stylized yet mostly minimalistic tableaux, *Necropolis* is a playful celluloid counter-culture pandemonium of pretentiousness, perversion, and bawdy blasphemy that reminds the viewer that not all things 'beatnik

retrograde' are totally worthless, if not always retarded.

Before viewing *Necropolis*, I decided to watch an experimental black-and-white dystopian sci-fi short entitled *Segnale da un pianeta in via di estinzione* (1972) aka *Signal from a Planet on the Way to Extinction* directed by auteur Franco Brocani. Indeed, if I learned anything about Brocani as a filmmaker whilst watching his rather lecherous and loony science fiction short, it is that he is a cultural pessimist of the far-left who, despite bemoaning the spiritual and moral degeneration of the left, is certainly a byproduct of said degeneration and *Necropolis* certainly confirms this, albeit in a rather confused, campy, and chaotic manner that makes one wonder whether or not the filmmaker fried his brain on too much mescaline, cocaine, and LSD. As mumbled by the effete Frankenstein monster in the film, Brocani seems to believe that in some form or another that "The universe is in my head" and *Necropolis* must be seen as a celluloid expression of the auteur's unhinged universe of eccentrically eroticized film references, hippie hysterics, anti-bourgeois baloney, and decidedly demented anti-capitalist/anti-fascist diatribes. Featuring no real beginning nor end, let alone a linear storyline, *Necropolis* is a discernibly discombobulated nightmare from a warped wop mind that wanted to concoct a work as intimate and idiosyncratic as a masterpiece like David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) would prove to be, but was too high on LSD and cinema history to discern between celluloid genius and total trash art, thus ultimately siring something somewhere in between. Opening with an off-screen narrator stating, "You look upwards, because you want to exalt yourselves. You want to exalt yourselves. I look downwards, because I am exalted," *Necropolis* immediately gives the viewer the feel that the film was directed by a proud narcissist who believes he and only he knows the truth. Of course, what the 'truth' is is rather dubious, but it seems director Brocani is a proud proponent of individualism as demonstrated by a character's remark, "Everyone must live according to his own PERSONAL law." Of course, all the characters of *Necropolis* have innately different life philosophies.

Indeed, *Necropolis* is certainly a celluloid work inhabited by diacritic, if not demented and damaged, individualistic characters of counter-culture who play by their own warped tune, which is a large part of the film's appeal today. For one, one once again gets to see famed frog fag Pierre Clémenti, in the role of Attila the Hun, riding a horse naked in a scene that anticipates his mostly unclad performance in Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar* (1972) aka *La cicatrice intérieure*. One also gets to see absurdist Italian auteur Carmelo Bene, who is as drunk as a Sicilian skunk, bickering with Viva about Satan and magic. When Viva asks him, "What about the devil?", Bene hilariously responds "Anger, Kenneth Anger," but the Warhol superstar rejects the art of cinema being a true reflection of life, stating, "It's not in films you find magic, it's in life...It's not in Kenneth Anger's films. It's in real life." Of course, Bene is not the main victim of Viva's lapsed bourgeois bitchiness, as she saves most of her hatred for

NECROPOLIS

her filmic husband Louis Waldon, who she previously had unsimulated sex with the year before in Warhol's *Blue Movie* (1969). Unfortunately, it seems their romance has fizzled since the Warhol flick as Viva spends the entire scene berating her onscreen husband, describing him as an impotent pansy of sorts, ultimately declaring of her ostensibly homosexual hubby, "I knew he'd always end up in bed with a boy." Other standout quotes from Viva to her sad cuckold of a spouse include, "If it weren't for vibrators, I'd be in a sorry state" and "If I wanted a purring pussy, I would have married a girl." Of course, as a superlatively spoiled yet miserable woman who less than proudly admits, "I always get everything but what I want," it seems nothing will satisfy Viva, impotent hubby or not. Undoubtedly, one of the most standout scenes in *Necropolis* is of Paul Jabara of *Hair* fame, who was a pioneering member of the disco 'culture' and who died of complications relating to AIDS in 1992, giving a monologue next to a gigantic six-foot-tall phallus, but not before his decapitated head is somehow magically reattached to his emasculated body. In what is easily the most technically innovative scene, Jabara delivers a monologue to 'himself' in the same scene as he is dressed in drag as 'Countess Viva Bathory' (indeed, the swarthy hippie-like homo somehow pulls off pretending to be a spoiled blonde NYC debutante). Not surprisingly, *Necropolis* concludes just as abruptly and nonsensically as it begins.

With a Wilde-esque Nordic dandy Frankenstein monster (as depicted by Spaghetti Western/giallo star Bruno Corazzari, who worked with Lucio Fulci, among various others) in a green velvet two-piece suit (with 'black power' sound clips being played in the background) suffering from major melancholy, a rather impotent and naked Attila the Hun as depicted by Clémenti riding a horse on a phantasmagoric pop-art set, Louis Waldon as an angst-ridden American tourist looking for the (apparently missing) *Mona Lisa*, Viva giving what is arguably one of her greatest and most vivacious (and tolerable) screen performances, mad Mesoamerica Aztec/Tenochtitlan ruler Moctezuma II as a mellow hippie-like blue-eyed lover of birds, and French-Jewish-Dominican-American hipster Tina Aumont (Modesty Blaise, Fellini's *Casanova*) as a mostly mute and childlike cradler of babydolls, *Necropolis* is certainly a majorly mixed-up cinematic work with some sometimes palatable counter-culture meat on it that surely becomes more interesting on subsequent viewings, at least for those cinephiles stoic enough to brave through the entire film. Of course, *Necropolis* will be totally inaccessible and intolerable for most filmgoers, especially those unfamiliar with the counter-culture characters featured in the film, thus it will undoubtedly stay in the celluloid dustbin of history where it has essentially been since its original release over four decades ago. Featuring a sort of half-coherent dialectic between the cine-magic of Kenneth Anger/Jean Cocteau versus the gritty realism of Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey, *Necropolis* is ultimately like a celluloid/LSD-addled counter-culture cinematic psychosis created at a time when experimen-

tal film was at its height, so the fact that Pierre Clémenti, Viva, and Carmelo Bene star in it make it an all the more worthwhile endeavor for adventurous cinephiles. A sort of Guido Chelsea Girls from cinema history hell, Necropolis is a zany and artistically overzealous product of its deluded zeitgeist that reminds the viewer that hipsters may have always sucked, but at least in the past they were somewhat more original and genuine in their degeneracy and longing for revolution.

-Ty E

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE BEACH
THE LAST HOUSE ON THE BEACH

Franco Prosperi (1978)

Sprouting from the ashes of Wes Craven's godforsaken hit *The Last House on the Left* was a slew of ripoffs and cash-ins in an attempt to snag some of the profit for themselves. Any man with a camera and a cast of a couple women willing to take their shirts off can make one of these films. It's that easy. *The Last House on the Beach* is directed by the man behind *Mondo Cane* and its direct sequel as well as the notorious *Africa Addio* and *Goodbye Uncle Tom*. The formulaic plot stays stand still; not fearing any backlash for fitting the cookie cutter mold of every one of these films and features a band of criminals taking refuge in a house under the supervision of a virgin's den. This time, they twist the turns wider and sharper when they make these women religious and includes a nun. Part nunsplotation - part rape/vengeance, all evil. The plot works within itself really well and produces a very calming atmosphere when it wants the illusion to be present. The killers allow the females to play on the beach and sleep in peace which creates this false sanctity. These perpetrators can play nice and flip flop your emotions as you question your doubts and doubt your questions. One scene in particular is when Walter finds a tube of lipstick. As he raises the compound out of the tube, this harmony escapes his eyes. It seems to be the soul of a sexually confused man. That is, until he dons a powdered face and lipstick in an incredibly eerie scene where he rapes a young teenager. I'm pretty desensitized to rape in film so this didn't really shock me at all or present anything new. That is, until a virgin was raped to death with a large stick. *The Last House on the Beach* is superior to the bland film that is *The Last House on the Left*. There might be a House on the edge of the park or on Dead End Street or any other diagonal direction, but it still proves a challenge to create a film that surpasses its own limitations on this battlefield of exploitation. I personally felt this film could have been a bit more graphic though. Shout-out to the fine folks at Severin Films for the rarest EuroTrash.

-mAQ

VERUSCHKA

Franco Rubartelli (1971)

Long before every homely ho and hussy in America was going to Mardi Gras festivals and having their terrible tits airbrushed, and Hollywood actresses like Rebecca Romijn-Stamos got pseudo-naked in the form of wearing nothing but makeup and minor prosthetics in films like *X-Men* (2000) and its sequels, Prussian countess and prototypical supermodel “Veruschka” (aka Vera Gräfin von Lehndorff-Steinort aka Veruschka von Lehndorff)—a rare statuesque model/actress of intelligence and artistic talent who actually did all her own creative work during her fashion shoots (she once quipped she wanted to be more than “just an attractive coat stand”), including her makeup and hair, as well as having involvement in the editorial process of said photo shoots—had completely revolutionized and monopolized nude body art/body paint of the seemingly quasi-pagan sort (she often camouflaged herself in natural settings, taking the form of rocks, trees, etc.) with iconic photos being featured everywhere from *Vogue* to *Playboy Magazine*. The first international superstar who since the 1960s onwards appeared on over 800 magazine covers, Veruschka did not always live the sweet life, even if she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth, as her father Heinrich Ahasverus Graf von Lehndorff-Steinort was a member of the July 20 plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler who was sentenced to death by the Volksgerichtshof (“People’s Court”) and executed via hanging on 4 September 1944 for his role in conspiracy, thus forcing the young countess and the rest of her family to live in labor camps for the rest of the war, and ultimately leaving the Prussian blueblood family homeless. In the patently personal psychedelic arthouse film *Veruschka* (1971) aka *Veruschka - poesia di una donna* aka *Veruschka: Poetry of a Woman*—a morbidly melancholy yet keenly kaleidoscopic cinematic work penned by the damaged diva herself—one is not only exposed to a rather physically vulnerable Veruschka who is incessantly unclad aside from body painting in a variety of atmospheric nature settings (a couple of the scenes were apparently shot in Kenya during a photo shoot with Peter Beard), but also to the tragic heart and soul of the naughty Nordic countess, who is visited by a prepubescent child doppelganger that acts as a sort of striking symbol of her tragic childhood, a childhood that she seemingly never recovered from. Despite being considering one of the most gorgeous women in the world, Veruschka was a victim of bullying as a teen due to the fact she was 6’1” at the mere age of 14 and would eventually sprout to a towering 6’4” (though some report she is actually 6’3”) and this internal woundedness and paradoxical need to be seen yet hidden is quite apparent in many of her portraits, but especially the film *Veruschka*, a quasi-esoteric allegorical biography of surreal sadness and stunning self-loathing. Featuring the telling Susan Sontag quote, “...the desire to hide, to be camouflaged, to escape human appearance, to be an animal, an object, not a person, the de-

VERUSCHKA

sire to punish the self, to dissolve the self into the world, to be striped naked, to petrify the body, to become only matter..." (Fragments of an Aesthetic of Melancholy) on her present official website (<http://www.veruschka.net/>), Veruschka could have practically used the quote from the lesbian Jewess as a sort of philosophical synopsis of the film *Veruschka*, a film directed by Italian photographer Franco Rubartelli, who was also the longtime lover of the damaged diva. Featuring an iconic score by Italian maestro Ennio Morricone that is now better remembered than the actual film despite sounding like the sort of music featured in a vintage Summer's Eve douche commercial, *Veruschka* is cinematic female exquisiteness in its most existentially lugubrious yet sensually surreal form.

Tall Aryaness Veruschka is on a road trip with her middle-aged Italian agent/boyfriend (Luigi Pistilli) across the rural Italian countryside and despite the stunning scenery and being with a man that ostensibly loves her and vice versa, she cannot seem to shake her all-consuming melancholy and existential misery. At the beginning of their road trip, Veruschka asks her boyfriend, "how do you think this journey of ours might end?," which is a question she will ultimately regret asking by the film's strangely tragic yet ethereal conclusion. Early on in the film, Veruschka has an eerie premonition of her future when, after seeing and waving to a young boy on his motorcycle with his father, she later passes the boy and his father laying dead on the highway after a tragic car wreck. On the way, the lovers pick up a Christ-like hitchhiker and Veruschka's boyfriend dubiously remarks, "maybe it's our chance to have a threesome" as if he is some sort of active cuckold who enjoys seeing swarthy hippie types hump his hot girlfriend. The hitchhiker admits to Veruschka that he does not like her boyfriend because "he's someone who knows too well what he wants" as he is a Guido beatnik of sorts who believes in "being one" with the "Sun God" and "Mother Earth," among other things. Not surprisingly, the two lovers soon part ways with the hitchhiker and Veruschka begins to regret going on the road trip with her boyfriend, inevitably coming to the conclusion that their lackluster relationship has fallen apart. Meanwhile, Veruschka, who is constantly dreaming and daydreaming (hence, the semi-surreal essence of the film), less than fondly reminisces about how her proud aristocratic German mother, who looks like a grumpy Guido diva with terminal cancer, warns her about leaving home, telling her, "You'll be like a tree taken away from the forest. Your roots will be crying....Poor girl. Your body will be dismembered and torn into pieces," but, quite naturally, she did the opposite, seeking her fortune and fame around the world.

As he tends to do throughout the entire film, Veruschka boyfriend's berates her because he does not "get her" and her wild and oftentimes whimsical idiosyncrasies. More than anyone else, Veruschka dreams of her prepubescent child self as if trying to get in touch with a part of her self she lost long ago. Veruschka also recalls the "fond banalities" of a once-great love affair she had with a young and handsome Aryan man named Michael, who makes the viewer

wonder why she would be now dating a super swarthy and equally arrogant high-italian twice her age, as if she only started to date him to further her career, thus throwing her into complete and utter misery in the process. Of course, it is later revealed that Veruschka ran away with her present boyfriend to get away from her mother and ex-boyfriend Michael. Veruschka displays her Aryan arrogance in a scene when she should proudly proclaim regarding her home, "In this house there are German things which a foreigner could never understand!" thus expressing the supermodel's own disillusionment with her Prussian aristocratic ancestry. Veruschka's boyfriend also sees things in an exceedingly delusional manner, proudly proclaiming he saved his trophy lady love from suicide and various vices. Indeed, as revealed in a psychedelic psychosexual flashback, Veruschka got involved with some acidhead hippies and hallucinated that she was making love to herself. Being a supermodel, Veruschka also discusses the minor misery of her trade, which includes painful reproductions of her face by doctors, later morbidly stating regarding three statue replicas of her head, "Its' me...guillotined three times" as if fantasizing about her own death, which she does quite often. After sadly discussing how she denied herself a baby, Veruschka explains how she 'killed' a bunch of baby dolls on the beach, only to feel remorse and recollect all the doll parts she had previously dismembered, eventually symbolically burying them, in the sand, realizing that she has 'buried herself' in the process as a supermodel whose career came at the spiritually hefty price of her individuality and personal dignity. In a paradoxically hopeful yet completely hopeless attempt to 'fix' herself and figuratively 'pick up' the pieces of her childhood, Veruschka goes on to repair and rebuild a number of grotesque baby dolls that resembled those drawn by degenerate German surrealist artist Hans Bellmer and those that would later be fetishized by German arthouse-splatter auteur Marian Dora (Cannibal, The Angels' Melancholy aka Melancholie der Engel). In the end, Veruschka inadvertently (or not) causes her and her boyfriend's death in a car accident after attempting to let a bird go free she has in a cage and the film concludes with Veruschka's child doppelganger prancing around happily and with the quote, "FREE...Letting her go forever into her imaginary world from which she would never return again. And I hope, I hope..." which will assuredly haunt most viewers (myself included!)

Indeed, in the end, Veruschka was finally "FREE" as her and her photographer boyfriend, director Franco Rubartelli, broke up in 1971 shortly after Veruschka was released, which is not a surprise since the boyfriend character in the film is a constant source of misery for the superstar protagonist who, among other things, complains of her mature Mediterranean man's impotency and bourgeois attitude toward life. Interestingly and rather fittingly considering the morose essence of Veruschka, the actor who played Veruschka's boyfriend, Luigi Pistilli (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, Twitch of the Death Nerve), committed suicide in 1996 via hanging after a show of Terence Rattigan's *Tosca* that he

VERUSCHKA

starred in had been critically panned, thus throwing the actor into a deleterious depression, which was further compounded by his bad public breakup with Italian singer/actress Milva. If nothing else aside from being one of the most aesthetically pleasing pieces of post-WWII female Prussian aristocratic angst ever made, Veruschka also deconstructs and ultimately exterminates any preconceptions one might have about a gorgeous international superstar as the film portrays Veruschka, who quite notably penned the script (making her, at least in my opinion, the true 'auteur' of the film), as a super suicidal chick in abject misery who longs for nothing more than the freedom of childhood, namely her own childhood before her father was executed by Uncle Adolf in a botched assassination attempt that could have totally changed the course of history.

Undoubtedly, it would be a bit of stretch to describe Veruschka as an endlessly engrossing film because it is far too dispiriting and artsy fartsy to appeal to the layman filmgoer, yet it is ultimately important due to its singular depiction of the sad soul of a superstar, even if it somewhat paradoxically mystifies her in the process. Aesthetically, Veruschka seems to have gone on to influence works ranging from the forgotten cult flick *Garden of Death* (1974) aka *The Gardener* starring Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro (who could easily be mistaken for Veruschka's shorter brother) as a man who turns into a tree and *The Guardian* (1990) directed by William Friedkin in its depiction of a human morphing into trees and whatnot. It should also be noted that *Veruschka* (1971) is not the only film called and starring Veruschka, as a German documentary entitled *Veruschka - Die Inszenierung (m)eines Körpers* (2005) aka *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera* co-directed by Paul Morrissey (*Blood For Dracula*, *Forty Deuce*) and Bernd Böhm was somewhat recently released about the now-elderly superstar's life. An unpretentious woman who had the gall to besmirch her own untouchable legacy of beauty by getting involved in unflattering drag king yet fiercely frolicsome antics, including dressing as commie chink Chairman Mao for a photo shoot based on a concept by Salvador Dalí and even portraying Oscar Wilde's iconic literary anti-hero Dorian Gray in mischling Ulrike Ottinger's dangerously dandy dystopian sci-fi epic *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, Veruschka is not only one of the most famous supermodels to live, but also one of the most strikingly strange, thus Veruschka is mandatory viewing for anyone interested in digging into her hermetic heart or who wants to see probably the most anti-erotic film ever made featuring an incessantly nude international supermodel.

-Ty E

SEE THE SEA

François Ozon° (1997)

Unless it is cine-magician Jean Cocteau, frog fag filmmakers are not exactly my thing and that especially includes François Ozon (*Criminal Lovers*, *8 Women*), as the man even managed to defile the work of the great Bavarian celluloid queen Rainer Werner Fassbinder with his aesthetically impotent four act chamber piece *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* (2000) aka *Gouttes d'eau sur pierres brûlantes*. Based on the play *Tropfen auf heiße Steine*, which Fassbinder wrote when he was only 19-years-old, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*—a work that depicts a troubled bizarre 'love' triangle between a naïve 20-year-old boy, a psychopathic 50-year-old businessman, and the 20-year-old boy's beautiful yet terribly dumb blonde girlfriend—is a Frenchized celluloid abortion that pays both aesthetic and melodramatic insult to its Teutonic source writer. Of course, as a man who likes to give credit where credit is due, I cannot totally write-off Ozon as a filmmaker, as he has directed one or two cinematic works that I have come to appreciate, with his 52-minute short *See the Sea* (1997) aka *Regarde la mer* being worthy of praise for being a particularly nasty, nihilistic, mean-spirited, perniciously perverse, and uniquely unsettling film that makes one question whether or not the fairy filmmaker has some sort of deep-seated hatred for the fairer sex; or at the very least, there seems to be something innately cruel about a film director that seems to identify with wicked women as many of his films, including his hit *Swimming Pool* (2003) starring Charlotte Rampling and Ludivine Sagnier, readily demonstrate. Indeed, by comparison, *See the Sea* makes *Swimming Pool* seem like frivolous celluloid child's play in its daunting depiction of a foreboding relationship between two very different yet strangely complimentary women. Starring auteur/writer/actress Marina de Van (*Don't Look Back*, *Dark Touch*), who disturbed viewers with her disconcerting depiction of a pathological self-mutilator (played by de Van) in her aberrantly allegorical first feature *In My Skin* (2002) aka *Dans ma peau*, as one of the creepiest cold bitches in French cinema history, Ozon's medium-length film is a decidedly dark and slow-burning thriller set in a sunny and scenic beachside setting that manages to reconcile the work of Alfred Hitchcock with Michelangelo Antonioni in a film that dares to find beauty in human ugliness and vice versa. Indeed, if there exists a film that can induce a miscarriage in expecting mothers, it is this aesthetically nefarious piece of celluloid gynophobia.

Sasha Noyer (played by Sasha Hails, who is probably best known as a writer on the long-running BBC TV series *Casualty*) is a young British mother with a 10-month-old baby named Sioffra (played by Hails' real-life daughter Samantha) and she is currently living all by herself (aside from the baby, of course) in a beachside house owned by her husband Paul (played by Paul Raoux, who also acted as the assistant director of the film) located on an island named Île

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d'Yeu off the western coast of France. Husband Paul is away on business in Paris and Sasha does not know when to expect him back, so she is rather lonely and has both sex and friendship on her whimsical little mind. When a discernibly antisocial and creepily cold drifter named Tatiana (Marina de Van) shows up at Sasha's doorstep and states, "I'm looking for a place to crash on the island," the mother initially says, "Sorry, this isn't a hotel," but she eventually gives in due to her undying loneliness and rather extroverted character, which demands constant attention, even if it is of the potentially dangerous sort. While Tatiana initially camps in the yard and promises to keep to herself, Sasha is just too social and extroverted to leave the dirty drifter in the lurch, so she offers her dinner and some fancy wine. While eating, Tatiana, who gorges on her food like a rabid pig in heat, reveals that she used to work as a nanny, but she has trouble staying in the same place for too long and prefers to travel alone. When Sasha asks Tatiana if she gets scared while traveling alone, the deranged drifter proudly replies that she is the one that does "the scaring." Of course, Sasha is too hopelessly naive to get the hint that the stranger might be of a somewhat unsavory and even unhinged character. That night, Sasha, who clearly has an untamable sex drive, masturbates by grinding her naughty bits on a chair, as if she is a little girl who has just discovered her sexuality. The next day, Tatiana takes a bath while smoking a cigarette and rubbing her genitals with a soap bar in a seemingly uncomfortable fashion. After her rather grotesque bath, Tatiana takes Sasha's toothbrush and rubs it in her feces (which she leaves in the toilet for the young mother to find). Indeed, at this point of *See the Sea*, it is quite apparent that the drifter is a sinister little psychopath with a scat fetish.

When Sasha, the baby, and Tatiana go to the beach, the latter notices a couple of homos having sex in the woods nearby, which seems to turn on the young mother. After Tatiana opts to leave after complaining of being bored by the sun and surf, negligent mother Sasha decides to leave baby Sioffra all by her lonesome on the beach so she can get in on some of the hot homo action going on in the woods. Indeed, Sasha somehow manages to get a young cocksucker to perform cunnilingus on her in a rather aggressive fashion. Meanwhile, Tatiana plays in an ancient and ruined graveyard where she admires the tombstone of a little boy and even reaches inside a broken crypt to see if she can touch a corpse, thereupon demonstrating her morbid character. That night, Tatiana asks Sasha about her birthing experience in what is easily the most awkward part of this unsettling little short. After Sasha describes how giving birth was "great" and how she opted against an epidural because, "It was my first. I wanted to really experience the pain...know how it felt," Tatiana then asks the young mother if her vagina ever tore and describes how, "Some [women] shit out the pussy after" giving birth. When Sasha kindly tells Tatiana to stop asking questions about birth as it might prevent her from ever wanting to have a baby of her own, the drifter states in a matter-of-fact fashion, "I already had one." When Sasha asks

where the baby is, Tatiana says, "It is dead." After Sasha apologizes for asking, her curious guest sickly replies, "That's okay. I had it aborted." Luckily for Sasha, a phone call from her husband Paul breaks the tension of the absurdly awkward conversation. Indeed, Paul is supposed to arrive at the house the next morning at 10am and Sasha invites Tatiana to stay, as she is convinced her husband will have no problem with her company, but the deranged drifter has much different plans in mind. That night, a tear trickles down Tatiana's face as she stares at Sasha and baby Sioffra while they are sleeping together in bed. Tatiana then proceeds to strip off all her clothes, and assumedly joins the mother and baby daughter in bed. The next day, Paul arrives, but he cannot find Sasha or the baby. Eventually, Paul notices a red tent in his yard, which he opens up, only to find his wife's Sasha's naked and somewhat bloody corpse. A rather gruesome scenario, the unclad dead body is tied up with bondage and has a plastic bag wrapped around its head. Meanwhile, Tatiana is on a ship heading to Ireland (the boat has an Irish flag). Of course, Tatiana is carrying baby Sioffra, who is naturally crying, in her arms.

While Tatiana is easily one of the most innately despicable and disgusting female characters in film history, protagonist Sasha is not exactly deserving of the 'mother of the year' award, as a routinely negligent first-time mommy who leaves her baby by itself on a beach so she can have sex with a strange sodomite who probably has a STD or two (she also leaves the baby unintended in a bathtub), not to mention the fact that she allows her baby to be watched by a blatantly deranged psycho bitch that looks like a feral hobo who barely survived a Muslim gang rape. Indeed, a genuinely shocking and stomach-turning work that makes an early Roman Polanski shocker like *Repulsion* (1965) seem like a soft-core bourgeois melodrama by comparison in terms of its nihilistic depiction of feminine ferociousness, *See the Sea* is an ominous celluloid assault against the viewer that may be predictable in its nuanced utilization of suspense, yet still manages to chill the viewer in the end. Undoubtedly, the two main characters of the film represent two archetypical, albeit unflattering, extremes of femininity, with Sasha being a well meaning, if not scatterbrained and negligent, mother who genuinely loves and adores her child (even if she is not fit to raise her), and Tatiana being a cold, calculating, and callous cunt of the deleteriously jealous sort who does not even have a drop of the nurturing qualities that one needs to be a mother, hence why she aborted her own child. Indeed, forget Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *See the Sea* has to be the most macabre maternal horror movie ever made, as a work that not only features a mother being murdered and her baby stolen, but also features spine-tingling Sapphic undertones, as if lesbians are the most sinister and sadistic of women, yet at the same time, it almost seems as if the director felt the mother deserved to die due to her ultimately fatal naivete. For a French film, *See the Sea* is also deceptively simple, as one can more or less tell where the film will conclude right from the get go,

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yet this does not detract from the work's pathologically perverse potency, as a nearly immaculately assembled sunny horror story that seems to have been directed by a morally dubious man with an acute hatred for women and maternity, for one can only speculate what would inspire someone to make such a majorly malevolent little movie. Undoubtedly, in its scenic Hitchcockian sexual sadism and unflattering depiction of depraved cocksuckers cruising a beach, *See the Sea* seems to have had a major thematic and aesthetic influence on the French thriller *Stranger by the Lake* (2013) aka *L'inconnu du lac*, thus demonstrating auteur François Ozon's imperative influence on contemporary French cinema. A wickedly whacked reworking of *Wuthering Heights* meets *Knife in the Water* (indeed, yet another Polanski reference!) with a formulaic, if not fiercely foreboding, structure that dares to mix serenity with scatology, Ozon's sicko short is like the celluloid equivalent of contracting a painful STD on vacation, as a film that will never leave your mind, no matter how much you wish it would. Indeed, if you're looking for a strong antidote to the hobo feminism of Agnès Varda's *Vagabond* (1985) aka *Sans toit ni loi*, *See the Sea* is certainly worth your time and anguish.

-Ty E

WATER DROPS ON BURNING ROCKS

François Ozon (2000)

While it is indisputable that German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder was influenced early on by French filmmakers, including pedantic commie Jean-Luc Godard and 'mainstreamer' Claude Chabrol, it is nothing short of pure cultural and cinematic blasphemy for a froggy filmmaker to cinematically adapt his aberrant Aryan work, yet frog fag filmmaker François Ozon (Sitcom, *Swimming Pool*) did just that with his theatric melodrama *Gouttes d'eau sur pierres brûlantes* (2000) aka *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*. Based on *Tropfen auf heiße Steine*—the first play ever written by Fassbinder when he was merely 19-years-old yet still featuring many of the signature qualities of the forsaken filmmaker's work—*Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is a theatrically stylized and pedantically paced work divided into four separate acts that follows the rise and fall of a 20-year-old bisexual German boy's romantic relationship with a 50-year-old professional of the seemingly psychopathic and sadomasochistic sort. Rather absurdly and aesthetically repugnant in a culturally arrogant manner that is not unbecoming for Hollywood filmmakers but less typical of froggy bastards, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, despite being a work featuring ostensibly kraut characters in Deutschland, was shot in the French language with an all fur-licker cast, thus making for a celluloid work that was artistically doomed for Fassbinder fanatics and Germanophiles alike before Queen Ozon shot a single frame of film. Still, with theatrical structure and thematic similarities with *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), the merrily macabre master-slave dynamics and camera angles of *Martha* (1974), colorful postcard-like opening credits similar to *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), the homo middle-class malevolence of *Fox and His Friends* (1975), bourgeois S&M imagery and characters typical of *Despair* (1978), and featuring a post-op tranny suffering from emotional trauma like *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), among various other countless references to the films of the master of Teutonic melodramatics, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is indubitably a postmodern celluloid tribute to Fassbinder directed by a man with a fiercely fanatical understanding of the filmmaker whose work he adapted, which is rather interesting considering the relatively well known visceral hatred between Germans and the French that goes back centuries. Based on a play by Fassbinder that the filmmaker refused to ever adapt in any form—be it theater or film—due to its autobiographical depiction of his painful real-life relationship with a nefarious gay geezer, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is essentially the tragicomic story of a super suave middle-aged sexual sadist who builds up and breaks down a son figure of the sexual sort in an uncompromisingly cynical, anti-romantic, and misanthropic melodrama celluloid work with an ultra-unhappy ending in almost certain tribute to *In a Year of 13 Moons*, as well as the Teutonic filmmaker's own tragic life and death.

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20-year-old red-haired twink fairy Franz (Malik Zidi) has a beautiful buxom blonde fiancée named Anna (Ludivine Sagnier) who he does not seem too interested in and certainly does not love, but that all changes forever one day when the seemingly confident yet easily corruptible German lad meets and decides to go to the quaint home of a charismatic kraut freckle-puncher named Léopold (Bernard Giraudeau), who looks like the suave Svengali anti-love child of Christopher Walken, Joseph Mengele, and Dirk Bogarde. While Léopold initially seems to be a mature and passionate lover with a profound understanding of people and romantic relationships, he is really an anally retentive psychopath who knows how to make people fall hopelessly in love with him and after becoming totally dependent on him, treats them like nauseating nuisances who he derives grand pleasure from by verbally and sexually abusing them. After spending a mere night with the elder man discussing failed romances and sexual fantasies, and eventually engaging in anti-agist sodomy, Franz moves in with Léopold and becomes his little bitch boy via emotional and monetary servitude. After six months of living with Léopold, Franz is now a virtually live-in housewife and archetypal fairy who prances around in lederhosen and tends to his menacing mature man's demanding requests of the banal yet eccentric bourgeois sort, including making sure to keep vinyl records in their sleeves and not playing music too loud. Lecherous lunatic Léopold also admits to Franz that he believes he drove an elderly pensioner/war veteran to suicide after screwing the poor man out of his inheritance, so the boy comforts him by trading roles with his lover doing S&M, thus becoming the 'top' for first time in their relationship.

After months of fighting in a uniquely unhealthy and one-sided relationship with Léopold that solely revolves around sick sex, Franz agrees to meet up with his ex-fiancée Anna, who admits she still loves him despite the fact he dumped her for a man old enough to be her father. While Franz admits that he is still madly and masochistically in love with a callous old cocksucker, he ends up playing the same "man in the overcoat" roleplaying game with Anna that he does with Léopold, but it is quite clear that a woman makes for a rather unworthy substitute in a game of sexual sadism. Anna eventually convinces Franz to move out of Léopold's apartment and it begins to seem like the two will get married and have two kids (ludicrously named Léopold and Franz). When Léopold shows up and Franz tells him he is leaving for good, he merely laughs at the young mensch and orders him to get coffee. Léopold's ex-girlfriend/boyfriend Véra (Anna Levine)—a male-to-female transvestite who had their dick cut off in Casablanca for the sadist—also shows up and things start getting rather deranged and debauched. Léopold orders both Anna and Véra, who no longer seem interested in leaving, into the bedroom for group sex and they both abide, which infuriates Franz, who fantasizes about murdering his psychopathic boy toy. Franz and Véra both agree they are "Léopold's creature" (aka slave in a sadomasochistic relationship). Seeing how Léopold inspired Véra to happily mutilate his/her

own genitals, only to be dumped in the end, Franz does commit suicide because, after all, as he states himself, “Maybe I’ll go to heaven, since I’m so young.” Undoubtedly, a lifetime with Léopold cannot be good for one’s soul, but as the psychopath tells his slaves, “you need me” and as masochists, they certainly do.

Master or slave, there is not a single likeable or respectable character featured in *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, especially in regard to the slaves, who welcome their positively perverse and pernicious persecution, but such is the Fassbinderian realm as demonstrated in countless cinematic works by the German auteur, including *Martha* (1974) and *Fox and His Friends* (1975), but also in François Ozon’s relatively faithful, if not flagrantly Francofied, adaptation of the great German auteur filmmaker’s innately incriminating first play. It seems that François Ozon took Fassbinder’s quote regarding a major theme in his film *Fox and His Friends*, “I am more convinced than ever the love is the best, most insidious, most effective instrument of social repression,” to such an extreme that it borders on the point of parody in *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, a virtual fan-boy fag flick of the both Fassbinder-esque and Sirkian fashion. Additionally, to the film’s aesthetic detriment, Ozon attempted to recreate yet slightly sterilely modernize the mostly outmoded, 1970s-like set designs and wardrobes featured in various classic Fassbinder flicks as if to be ironic to the point of aggressively agitating audiences members with *Water Drops on Burning Rocks*, an excessive exercise in pomo platitudes. Indeed, while *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is probably only second to the ‘drag king’ Fassbinder biopic *A Man Like Eva* (1984) aka *Ein Mann wie EVA* starring Eva Mattes in terms of depicting the German filmmaker’s misanthropic melodramatic essence and complete and utter contempt for the kraut bourgeois, it can hardly be described as a good film, let alone a great one as some people seem to think. Of course, only Fassbinder can do Fassbinder and anything else is going to be, at best, second rate and, at the very least, marginally superficial. Featuring a poof of a protagonist who commits suicide after intentionally overdosing on drugs in a manner not unlike how Fassbinder himself died, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is a curiously culturally mongrelized self-love letter from one poof filmmaker to another, but a kraut cocksucker is always more masculine than a heterosexual frog, hence why the German auteur filmmaker’s works are all the more powerful and visceral than hysterical homo Ozon, a half-mensch whose superficially saucy Franco-camp works I could never quite stomach. A gut-churning *Ménage à Quatre* plagued by aesthetic puffery and mundane melodrama of the would-be-wild-and-wanton sort with comedic undertones that could only make those who sniff antiquated wine laugh, *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* is the artistically disastrous poofed out product of a French flamer princess attempting to be a debauched Bavarian king.

-Ty E

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François Truffaut (1972)

If there is one theme that seems to tie together all the works of the great Belgian master auteur André Delvaux (*The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, *Rendez-vous à Bray*), it is that virtually all of the male protagonists of his films are weak intellectuals of the mentally feeble, sexually underwhelmed, pathologically passive and/or cuckolded sort. While I think Delvaux is indubitably one of the greatest and most underrated post-WWII auteur filmmakers as a man whose lesser works are even still at least minor masterpieces, I have to admit that I oftentimes get the urge to slap the shit out of the prosaic pansy ass protagonists of his films, especially the mustached Walloon wuss lead of the director's fourth feature *Belle* (1973) who epitomizes virtually everything that is insufferable about intellectuals and academics. Indeed, the film might feature the most radically repugnant of all Delvaux's male protagonists, as the character is a passively incestuous cuckolded coward and hopelessly banal beta-bitch whose much shorter coworker openly flirts with his wife in front of him and who has deep and undying erotic feelings for his debutante daughter. A pedantic romantic at heart of the failed poet sort that works as a literary professor and archivist who gives talks on outmoded 16th-century poets that only he seems to understand, the protagonist ultimately has an unexpected yet rather timely reawakening of the heart and soul upon randomly finding an eponymous feral-like foreign blonde babe roaming around the High Fens moors in East Belgian on the German border. Of course, as one can expect from a Delvaux flick, one never knows whether or not *Belle* is a fetishistic figment of the protagonist's imagination or a living and breathing real-life forest femme fatale. Clearly inspired by reading too much ancient frog poetry and perpetually worsening midlife crisis, the poindexter protagonist eventually becomes insanely jealous and obsessed with murdering his wood nymph mistress' longhaired injun-like (boy)friend. A work that Delvaux described as being heavily inspired by Gérard de Nerval—one of the most essentially Romantic, albeit suicidal, of French poets who was once described by frog decadent poet Charles Baudelaire as having “delivered his soul in the darkest street that he could find”—*Belle* is the seamlessly oneiric tale of a middle-aged intellectual fool's one last desperate attempt at chasing romance, passion, and life itself. Delvaux's only film not adapted from a contemporary novel but based on an original script, the film successfully achieved the director's self-described goal by creating a cinematic narrative that features an, “...alternation of reality and dream, one flowing into the other with no end.” Indeed, by the end of the film, it is impossible for the viewer to separate fact from but fantasy, but it is ultimately irrelevant as the protagonist's patently perturbed and pornographically romantic psyche is what *Belle* is really about, as a work that poetically depicts the pathetic and deleterious extremes that most men, even those of the highly

intelligent, seemingly level-headed, and relatively successful sort, will go for premium pussy of the ostensibly 'mysterious' sort. A work about a classicist who resents receiving the intellectually revolting gift of structuralist twaddle by the likes of Gérard Genette and Roland Barthes from his much hated future son-in-law, Delvaux's film also creates a dichotomy between classic and modernist Occidental culture as a work that features immaculately woven hodgepodge of aesthetic influences ranging from Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Caspar David Friedrich to Paul Delvaux and René Magritte. Undoubtedly, if Delvaux was a master at something that few, if any, other filmmakers were capable, it was homogenizing the aesthetically ancient with hopelessly contemporary as *Belle* quite exquisitely demonstrates, though I have to assume the filmmaker had more respect and appreciation for the former as a man with an old soul who could not help but feel the taint of modernity.

At the beginning of *Belle*, less than happily married middle-aged protagonist Mathieu Grégoire (Swiss actor Jean-Luc Bideau of Alain Tanner's *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000* (1976) and François Girard's *The Red Violin* (1998) aka *Le violon rouge*) receives a warm reception after giving a speech about Polish-French poet Guillaume Apollinaire where he describes how Dostoyevsky came to the Spa in Liège in Wallonia with the intention of gambling instead of writing. After the speech, some elderly old fart asks Mathieu when he plans to publish his work and the protagonist has to remind the seemingly mentally feeble fellow that it was not written by him but Apollinaire. While it is obvious that Mathieu would prefer being a real poet of distinction instead of reading and writing on the works of others, it is nearly impossible to make a living writing poetry in Belgium, or as a minor character insightfully states later in the film, "In Belgium, you can only publish poetry at your own expense or in magazines." Instead, Mathieu is a literary professor turned museum archivist who spends a good portion of his time working with an annoying and ambiguously gay turd of a borderline midget co-worker named Victor (Roger Coggio) who incessantly flirts with the protagonist's wife Jeanne (Danièle Delorme) right in front of his face. Of course, since Mathieu is more sexually attracted to his adult daughter Marie (Stéphane Excoffier of Jos Stelling's *De wisselwachter* (1986) aka *The Pointsman*) than his wife, he does not seem to mind too much. Probably due to his unsavory sexual attraction to her, Mathieu finds it nearly impossible to communicate with his daughter Marie in a civil fashion and instead mocks her for looking supposedly 'common' because she wears brown stockings instead of white ones. Although Mathieu is naturally unable to act on his sexual desire for his daughter, he will soon meet a strange foreign woman in the moors of High Fens located in the most uninhabited area of his province of Liège that will give him a much needed outlet for his incestuous urges.

At the beginning of the film after giving his Apollinaire reading, Mathieu goes outside the building where he gave the lecture and stares at his prized white

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Volvo while in a seemingly possessed state. Just because he feels like “driving around,” Mathieu heads to High Fens and almost crashes his car after an animal unexpectedly jumps out in front of his car. Upon investigating, Mathieu finds large drops of blood on the ground but cannot find the animal, so he decides to travel back to the very same location the next day where he hears an animal whimpering. Eventually, Mathieu spots a wounded German Shepherd that leads him to a ruined old cabin where he is quite startled to see a beautiful young foreign woman named Belle (Romanian actress Adriana Bogdan, who also appeared in Delvaux’s second feature *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... A Train*) who does not speak French. Mathieu attempts to chase Belle and inform her that her dog needs to be put down, but before he can do it the delectable little dame kills the canine with a shotgun, immediately tosses the weapon in a bush as if she is repulsed with herself, and then begins sobbing hysterically. Assumedly inspired by his encounter with Belle, Mathieu goes home and, although neglecting to tell them of his strange encounter with the lady in the forest, proudly informs his wife and coworker Victor that his next big reading will be on French poetess Louise Labé, passionately stating, “The Beautiful Rope Maker...lover of ice and fire...Sixteenth-century sonnets. ‘I live, I die, I burn and I drown.’” When Victor expresses his concern that Labé may be too obscure for most people, the protagonist stoically, if not somewhat nonsensically, replies, “Physical love is their bread and butter.” That night after accusing his wife of carrying on an affair with Victor, Mathieu has an ominously orgasmic dream where he takes his naked daughter to a train station and shamelessly makes out with her in front of some stranger onlookers. During the dream, Mathieu also tells his daughter how Belle “lost her dog,” thus establishing a link between the protagonist’s progeny and the wild woman in the woods. Indeed, Mathieu may have created Belle in his own mind as an outlet for his seemingly unquenchable incestuous libido.

Of course, Mathieu soon goes back to the moors and is disheartened to find Belle in a bedridden state in the attic of the terribly dilapidated cabin, but he wisely uses the opportunity to show the strange beauty his affection for her by nursing her back to health and she ultimately repays him with some passionate carnal action. Mathieu also loves Belle’s company because, as he states, “I can tell you everything because you understand nothing and say nothing.” As a lovely looking lady the more or less lets him do what he wants with her, never complains, and listens to whatever he has to say, Belle is a figurative (and potentially literal) dream-girl, but of course, like all women, she eventually expects something from the protagonist. While Mathieu’s sex life seems to have improved seemingly infinitely since starting his fairytale-like affair with Belle (at the beginning of the film, Mathieu’s wife looks bored to death while he performs cunnilingus on her), his home life takes a turn for the worst after the protagonist learns that his beloved daughter is engaged to be married to a yuppie-like four-

eyed dork of the physically frail and obscenely gawky sort. Of course, Mathieu is also beyond displeased when he returns to Belle and find a young American-Indian-like fellow covered in animals furs that is simply known as the 'stranger' (Valerio Popesco) in her company. It does not take long before Mathieu begins getting murderously jealous of the stranger and when the Indian-like wildman borrows his Volvo without asking and subsequently brings him back the a bottle of wine as a "present," the protagonist smashes said bottle of wine against the wall and calls the fellow a "base creature." As a result of the stranger 'borrowing' his car, Mathieu is late for his reading on Louise Labé and perplexes his friends and family when he does the speech while his shoes and pants are obviously covered in dry mud. To make matters worse, young college students begin heckling Mathieu while he is giving his reading, but that does not stop him from stating regarding Labé in an impassioned and almost pornographic fashion, "New without love' could have been her motto...But also 'never without pain.' Because in the 16th-century there are few more moving words: I live, I die, I burn and drown. I quake with cold and perish with heat. My life so hard and yet so sweet. At once I shrivel and I." Naturally, the reading concludes abruptly when Mathieu thinks he sees the stranger in the audience and becomes both angered and startled and thus loses his track of thought, so Victor interrupts and starts taking questions from audience members that results in a college student mocking the protagonist for "speaking on a subject that doesn't interest us." Of course after making a fool of himself, Mathieu decides to chase down the stranger and does not waste any time attacking him and knocking him down a set of stairs in front of a hundred or so people. Unfortunately for Mathieu, the man he attacks is not the stranger but a fellow from an area called Robertville with a similar fur coat and haircut who decides to press charges against the protagonist. Ultimately, Mathieu later opts to get involved in something a little more criminally oriented than a public brawl. Indeed, regularly banging a backwoods blonde bombshell has given Mathieu a serious sense of testicular fortitude that he has probably never felt before in his entire life.

After the nightmarish aborted reading from hell, Mathieu's future son-in-law gives him books by Genette and Barthes, but the protagonist hilariously scares him away by looking at him with sheer and utter contempt as if he is the world's most slimiest asshole. Undoubtedly, Mathieu seems resentful towards the young man not only because he plans to marry his beloved daughter and take her permanently away from him, but also due to his dubious literary tastes. To prove to Mathieu that he is not a queer, Victor takes the protagonist to his home to show him what he describes as his "collection." Somewhat strangely, the "collection" that Victor speaks of his a bunch of different brushes he has locked away, with the character creepily stating while fondling a black brush in a fetishistic fashion, "Coarse, dark hair. For the hollow in the hips and the curve of the buttocks." Ultimately, Mathieu, who is into real sex and not frivolous fetishis-

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tic bullshit of the sexually dysfunctional sort, becomes so exceedingly enraged by Victor's considerably curious behavior that he smashes every single mirror in his coworker's room, thus putting their already dubious friendship in jeopardy. When Mathieu finally gets the gall to kill the stranger and heads to the moors with a shotgun, Belle does the job just before he gets the chance just like she did with the German Shepherd before. After killing the stranger, Belle yells "VOLVO" and the two proceed to load the corpse into the car and drive it to a pond where they dispose of it. Later that night, Mathieu warmly embraces his wife, tells her that he loves her more than ever before, and then strangely states, "Life is passing me by. It has no purpose."

Needless to say, Mathieu is equally saddened and angered after seeing his daughter off at a train station after she is married, especially since she demands money from him and does not even say a proper goodbye. When Mathieu goes to see Belle later that day, she also demands money as well, thus establishing a clear link not only just between the protagonist's daughter and the potentially imaginary chick from the woods, but also the female species as a whole. When Mathieu's boss Marcel asks him to drive to Robertville to answer some question in regards to the young man he attacked after his botched Labé reading while two police detectives curiously follow them in a separate car, the protagonist fears the worst and meekly confesses to killing the stranger. When Mathieu shows the police detectives the pond where he sunk the stranger's corpse, he is delighted to discover that the only carcass they find is that of the German Shepherd. Of course, Mathieu goes looking for Belle again and in the process someone steals money out of his car glove compartment that he planned to use to start a new life with his mistress, thus leading the protagonist to conclude that he was setup by his ladylover and the stranger right from the beginning. After all, Belle strangely insisted on shooting the stranger and his corpse was not recovered from the pond, thus indicating that he might actually still be alive and only faked death. That night while lying in bed, Mathieu obsessively states to himself, "She couldn't do it. She didn't trick me. She killed him for me, together with me. We carried him together. Drowned him together. In one of the pools at Pont Noir. A pool at Pont Noir." To confirm whether or not Belle betrayed him, Mathieu goes looking for the stranger's corpse again on a snowy day and is quite delighted to see the fellow's hand and fur coat under the ice in the pond. As Mathieu states in a delusional fashion with a half-crazed smirk on his face while staring at the stranger's hand under the ice, "She really did it for me. It's all true. She didn't deceive me. As long as she comes back." Of course, it is not only rather dubious as to whether Belle will come back, but also if she ever even really existed in the first place.

Undoubtedly, after watching Belle, I could not help but obsess over how so superlatively stupid some men, especially those on the brink of a midlife crisis, act when it comes to the fairer sex. Of course, the fact that Delvaux's film

features surreal fantasy elements only highlights the absurdity of the fact that a stuffy middle-aged dork who is about as charming and handsome as a high school principal actually thinks that an exotic young blonde beauty would have ever genuinely fall in love with him and is not just using him for her own ends. Naturally, the film also underscores the seeming worthlessness of poetry and all the culture and education in the world when confronted with both visceral lust and pure love, as the protagonist is willing to throw away everything that he has ever worked for in his entire life for some hot chick that he just met in the woods who does not even speak the same language. Indeed, protagonist Mathieu is one of the most intelligent and respected men in his small province, yet his actions completely defy the most fundamental aspects of common sense, thus reflecting the Achilles heel of the male gender that so many members of the so-called fairer sex have counted on exploiting since the very beginning of time. Certainly there are few things more cold, calculating, and craven than beautiful (and oftentimes not-so-beautiful) women, as western woman owes her special status in the world not through being persecuted by a largely imaginary patriarchy, but by learning from virtual birth how to manipulate men to their life's advantage. While western society tells us that women are looking for love, it is really men who suffer from the weakness of being hopeless romantics who are oftentimes so blinded by the prospective of love that they will not even notice they are about to fall off a figurative cliff that is only a couple feet away from them. Although he may have been a tad bit biased since he was supposedly a 'sexual invert' (aka fag), Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger was certainly on to something when he recommended that men should have as little to do with women as possible, but then again, it is hard to refrain from one of the most imperative ingredients that make life worth living, not to mention the fact it has resulted in many creative works of art like Delvaux's *Belle*. To go back to Weininger, he once wrote, "The deepest, the intelligible, part of the nature of man is that part which does not take refuge in causality, but which chooses in freedom the good or the bad," which certainly can be said of the protagonist of Delvaux's film. Indeed, for better or worse, the lead character of *Belle* finally becomes a real man at middle-age, which certainly cannot be said of a good number of western males nowadays.

-Ty E

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Frank Capra (1946)

It's a Wonderful Life is a Hollywood classic that actually deserves to be watched by every American family during the Holiday season each year. As much as I feel that most Hollywood "classics" are usually overrated and contrived studio products, It's a Wonderful Life deserves the special recognition it has. As much as James Stewart has always annoyed me to an extent, his performance in It's a Wonderful Life is one of his greatest (if not his best). It's a Wonderful Life is also an essential film to watch this Christmas with the economic crisis that has been plaguing this country and has already resulted in suicides. Henry F. Potter is the kind of villain that most Americans can feel good about hating this time of the year. Recently, a real life Potter was exposed by the name of Bernard L. Madoff. Madoff, a Zionist "philanthropist," is easily as despicable as the banker fiend Potter. Just as Christmas never truly leaves us every year, neither do the coldhearted swindlers. One can also expect Madoff to get off fairly leniently just as Henry F. Potter. Sadly, the George Bailey's of the world seem to become less and less. It's a Wonderful Life debuted in theaters in 1946 and a lot has changed since then. America had just won its hand in the second World War and things looked good. However, the "small man" still had a hand with the banks and his community. Bankers like Henry F. Potter did not have the majority of people completely financially tied down as virtual serfs. The world of "Potterville" is one of degenerate Jazz, loose women, and disgruntled souls as George Bailey finds out. Drive around most American towns or cities nowadays and you will see that degeneracy has become the norm. It's a Wonderful Life director Frank Capra was not lying with his portrayal of how bankers like communities and people to be when under their miser wrath of usury. It's a Wonderful Life is a film that needs to be seen in its original black and white format. Aside from the color version horribly done, the black and white format better compliments the film's depiction of an American past. The majority of America has now been enslaved by having to say "Happy Holiday" instead of the classic "Merry Christmas." Christmas has become just another capitalist Holiday that people like Bernard L. Madoff exploit for financial gain. Thankfully, It's a Wonderful Life is still a celebrated film that gives the audiences a celebration of more "hopeful" times.

-Ty E

THE MIST

Frank Darabont (2007)

Who would have ever thought, one of the greater monster films of the generation would be based off of a Stephen King story? Many of his adaptations to the screen can be deemed as utter trash, save 1408, Maximum Overdrive, and Graveyard Shift. Frank Darabont (The director of The Shawshank Redemption and The Green Mile) makes another great King adaptation. Maybe he should be the permanent Stephen King adapter. The one aspect that can shine light on this film amongst the many monster films that have arrived is the realist concept for it. Horror fans, and religious nuts trapped in a supermarket, realize that the thick mist that has blanketed the town has a more menacing creature(s) living in it. One religious nut goes as far to denounce every god except the god of the Israelites. Many wicked beasts being called an Old Testament god might be a little too nutty for my taste. Thomas Jane was a bit disappointing in his role as The Punisher, so I never got a proper first impression from the man. Thomas Jane is now cinema's Henry Rollins. The film spouts all excellent performances. I don't think there is a single sore thumb amongst the cast. Despite the cast, the cinematography is amazing and there isn't much of a soundtrack to be found. Again, this only compliments the realist factor. The creatures seem Harryhausen inspired, and feature many era inspirations. Despite it being CGI, they manage to look faithful to the film and not seeming to be of a different layer. I haven't seen such a great monster design since the "epic three"; The Host, Cloverfield, and Deep Rising. I promise Lovecraft inspired creatures that bring tears to your eyes with their own majestic beauty. I haven't been so inspired since Jurassic Park. The story seems to be largely inspired by Dean Koontz's novel Phantom. I wouldn't ask for a better inspiration. The book manages to play on claustrophobia, the unknown, and the feeling of being completely alone better than any novel or film. The fear of lunacy and alienation echo for an eternity on screen. The characters keep in mind the basic survival techniques. When you think about it, the film/book seems to be inspired by another Koontz novel "The Servants of Twilight"; a novel about a religious group who believes a woman's child is the anti-Christ. It's hard to watch this film and not despise the core of humanity. When I watch these films, misanthropy flows through my veins and the nature of religion on society disgusts me. The Mist does its job at making religious nut jobs look more insane than they are given credit in the media "News Articles such as a woman who puts her baby in a microwave because God told her to". The film picks up strong and carries through, delivering the most ball busting ending ever filmed. The fact that the director had enough guts to make something that could get him black-listed later stands out to be a monumental achievement. Overall, The Mist is an incredible achievement in mainstream horror cinema. It manages to provide something original with a washed up genre.

THE MIST

-Maq

BASKET CASE

Frank Henenlotter (1982)

Basket Case is a low-budget film about questionable brotherly love. Duane and his brother Belial were born Siamese twins so they were extra close as brothers. The brother's father was quite an insensitive man and wanted Belial cut off then thrown away like a cancer infected wart. Belial was probably not loved by his father because he looks like a large tumor with two arms and a few hideous facial features. Duane, on the other hand, is anatomically correct but lacks in the mental health department.

After killing a doctor that helped separate them, Duane carries Belial to degenerate New York City in a basket. The basket in the film is probably the only thing that doesn't look filthy so Belial keeps a fairly clean home. For some irrational reason, a young blonde hits on Duane very assertively and he can't help but to give in. Belial, on the other hand loses his cool and wrecks their apartment. The sounds that come from Belial sound similar to that of a homeless freestyle rapper raping a freshly groomed kitten on the lower eastside. The folly artist from Basket Case sure does deserve acknowledgment. A middle aged mulatto woman that looks like a prostitute (and probably is) also takes an interest in Duane. The two drink a few beers together and talk about family matters. Later, Belial tries to molest the woman and she goes into hysterics. I can only assume that those types of shrieks and screams are commonplace in degenerate cities where the animals roam wild. A killer tumor like Belial certainly fits in.

Basket Case features enough ridiculous gore and killing to keep perverted horror fans happy. Belial even kills and rapes Duane's blonde girlfriend. Although supposed to be dead, you can see the blonde actress clearly breathing in the film. Basket Case director Frank Henenlotter deserves to be commended for his keen eye. But I doubt this director has flaming bloody eyes as Belial when he's looking to rape a real live girl. In the end, jealousy ruins the Siamese twin brothers extra close relationship. Thankfully, a couple of cheap prostitutes get to enjoy a cool sight, courtesy of the brothers last gripping moments on earth.

Most trash films are just trash. That also includes all the trash films that are often noted as "good" trash. Basket Case is one of the few pieces of "good" trash. Although I don't know the directors true intentions, Basket Case is a wacked out film that will touch a nerve at some point for everyone. Whether it be Belial engaging in Negro panty sniffing or nude footage of Duane running down the street, this film delivers.

-Ty E

BRAIN DAMAGE
BRAIN DAMAGE

Frank Henenlotter (1988)

I am fairly convinced that the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program and anti-drug PSAs are designed to get kids interested in using and abusing drugs, as they are so preposterously patronizing and agitating to the juvenile mind that they could only inspire any self-respecting kid with a natural aversion to authority to want to smoke a joint, pop a benzo, snort an oxy, and/or huff some glue in protest against such patently pathetic propaganda campaigns. On the other hand, ostensibly anti-drug flicks like Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996), Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), Jonas Åkerlund's *Spun* (2002) romanticize the addict lifestyle in a nauseatingly naïve way, as if such a non-existence is constantly exciting and full of magical wonder and intrigue, even when suffering from major withdraw as reflected in the unintentionally absurd dream-sequences in these rather retarded works, hence why so many diluted dope addicts love these dumb ass films, as it makes them suffer the delusional that they are part of some super secret arcane world that can only be adequately understood and appreciated by the truly initiated. Indeed, I certainly can only think of a handful of films that might dissuade someone from trying junk, like the decidedly dejecting and equally degenerate Finish doc *Reindeerspotting: Escape from Santaland* (2010) directed by Joonas Neuvonen (who, ironically, is currently surviving jail-time for drug trafficking), but probably the most bizarre and counter-intuitively effective anti-dope flick I know of is the nice and nasty little 'neo-exploitation' flick *Brain Damage* (1988) directed by self-described "exploitation" auteur Frank Henenlotter (*Basket Case Trilogy*, *Frankenhooker*). A sort of absurdist anti-drug allegory in a bawdy and ballsy 'body horror-comedy' package, Henenlotter's darkly comedic piece of highly conscious low-camp kitsch depicts the strangely hypnotic homicidal hilarity and excess-ridden eccentricity that ensues when a young and rather dumb dude begins a mutually dependent relationship with a parasitic phallic-like creature named 'Aylmer' that gives him a truly transcendental high via a direct injection of meta-narcotizing blue fluid into his brain in return for procuring the pathologically sassy micro-monster a steady supply of fresh human grey matter. Unquestionably the most wonderfully and wickedly warped take on the deleterious effects of dope on human brain chemistry since Slava Tsukerman's stylishly sleazy sci-fi cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982), *Brain Damage* is easily the most fun can have while dealing with anti-drug themes, which might say much considering the banality of the topic, but then again the film's greatest appeal is that it is a Henenlotter flick, thus guaranteeing the sort of feverishly fucked filmic facetiousness that will only be appreciated by the truly initiated and/or criminally insane.

Brain Damage begins unpredictably enough with the introduction of two

over-educated married old farts named Morris (Theo Barnes) and Martha Ackerman (Lucille Saint-Peter) that live a semi-hermit-like existence in a crummy NYC slum apartment that is strangely decorated with primitive tribal art and exotic warrior masks, thus hinting they might be cultural anthropologists and certainly xenophiles. For whatever reason, the old odd couple also have a dozen or so fresh brains sitting on their kitchen table as if they are being prepared to be fed to some sort of large bloodthirsty beast that eats ten times more than a large adult male. The brains are for something or someone named 'Aylmer' (voiced by old school horror host John Zacherle aka 'Zacherley') and when the mysterious creature disappears from the eccentric elderly couple's bathtub, Morris and Martha suffer a major histrionic freakout to the point where they rudely barge into the apartment of an uppity negress (Beverly Bonner, who played the scary black tenant in *Basket Case*) to check her bathtub for their missing little friend, which they fail to find. Ultimately, Aylmer makes his way to the apartment of handsome yet hapless protagonist Brian (soap opera actor Rick Hearst) while Morris and Martha are lying on their apartment floor and foaming at the mouth as if suffering from a seizure as a result of super hellish drug withdraw. Indeed, the Ackermans are elderly junkies and their choice of drug is the venomous blue juices of Aylmer, who is a repugnant yet strangely charming and eloquently spoken creature with goofy beady blue eyes that looks somewhere in between a dried up donkey turd and a burnt crisp STD-ridden black cock. Aylmer survives and thrives off of a steady diet of raw brains, but he is tired of animal grey matter, so he decided to escape from the Ackerman stronghold and he ultimately wisely chose dullard boy Brian—a proud yet seemingly unlikely fan of punk, thrash metal, and goth music as demonstrated by *The Cramps*, *Slayer*, and *Bauhaus* posters hanging on his wall—as his new host. After blowing off a date with his girlfriend Barbara (Jennifer Lowry) and brother Mike (Gordon MacDonald) due to feeling more than a little bit under the weather as a result of his body being invaded by a penis-like parasite, Brian goes back to sleep and later awakes to find a large blood stain on his pillow. After going back to asleep again, Brian awakes to a bright light in the form of an entrancing glowing eyeball on his ceiling, as well as a deluge of translucent blue fluid engulfing his entire room and eventually his body in what will ultimately give the protagonist a heavenly otherworldly high that he will never again be able to top, though he surely will try as he is now the servant of a hostile, albeit good-humored, entity that lives to kill.

After unwittingly getting high for the first time on the hardest and most natural 'psychedelic painkiller' in the world, Brian soon discovers grotesque foot-long creature Aylmer popping out of his body in a fashion that seems to mock Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979). Ultimately, Aylmer makes a Faustian pact with Brian, calmly assuring him in a most devilish fashion like some sort of charlatan cult leader that, "This is the start of your new life Brian...a life without worry, pain,

BRAIN DAMAGE

or loneliness... a life instead full with colors, music, and euphoria... a life of light and pleasure” and “I am you, Brian... I am all you’ll ever need.” Aylmer gets Brian high by directly injecting his brain with his blue juices via a needle-like tentacle he has located inside of his mouth. The blue juice gets Brian so high that Aylmer is able to suck the brains out of human victims while in his presence without him even remembering the brutal murders ever occurred. Indeed, Aylmer’s first victim is an authoritarian Nordic-like negro security guard at a junkyard and while Brian hallucinates seeing glowing kaleidoscopic totaled cars while high as a kite in outer space, Aylmer drains the brain of the spade victim. At first, Brian and Aylmer’s symbiotic relationship seems perfect, at least as far as they are concerned, but after the former discovers that he has a giant bloodstain on his underwear that is clearly not his own, he begins to realize something fishy is going on. Unbeknownst to Brian, he wandered into a punk club called “Hell” while he was high and met a big bosomed slut who tried to give him a blowjob after grabbing his cock and excitedly stating, “feels like you got a real monster in there,” but instead of receiving a meaty member in her mouth, the sensual slut fellated a ‘real monster’ that sucked her brains out. Eventually, old man Morris Ackerman catches up with Brian and tells him he is a total moron for feeding Aylmer human brains, as it has made the creature too strong and has enabled him to easily gain the upper hand over the protagonist. After Morris reveals during a hysterical rant that ‘Aylmer’ is an old English name for “the all inspiring famous one” and that he paid for the ancient creature with “money and blood,” Brian decides to confront his phallic-like pal and learns that he has indeed been the unwitting accomplice in a series of grisly murders. Eventually deciding like so many drug addicts that “I have to be in control,” Brian decides to take Aylmer to a seedy apartment where he will try in vain to control the cock monster and withdraw from dope, not realizing that his brain chemistry has changed drastically as a result of his recreational drug use. Needless to say, as Aylmer tells him he would, Brian begins begging the creature for his blue fluid after going through a truly haunting cold turkey withdrawal where he hallucinates seeing his ear fall off and buckets of blood pouring out of his head. Ultimately, Brian is forced to procure victims for Aylmer before the creature will agree to soothe his raging withdrawal symptoms. While Brian finds Aylmer a nice big buff naked guide (as perfectly personified by Joseph Gonzalez, who later played the meathead pimp in Henenlotter’s 1990 feature *Frankenhooker*) in a humorously awkward homoerotic scene where the viewer almost expects the protagonist to be brutally anally pillaged, the turd-like brain-eater opts to eat a defecating high yellow negro horror fan who was minding his own business while reading a horror magazine while on the crapper.

While Brian was busy getting high and acting as a slavish accomplice to various murders, his brother Mike was ‘comforting’ his girlfriend Barbara by catering to her insecurities and vulnerabilities while putting up the false front

of being a 'nice guy' who has selflessly come to the aid of a lovelorn lady in need. Indeed, after Brian decides to go back to his apartment, he overhears his brother boning Barbara, but he is far too high and disoriented to give a damn. After hallucinating that he has black rectum-like orifices on his stomach and he has eaten Barbara's brains during an imaginary borderline incestuous quasi-threesome with her and Mike, Brian catches his brother and girlfriend naked in bed together, but instead of getting mad he altruistically attempts to warn them to stay away from him so that he does not accidentally kill them during one of his deadly dope-addled stupors. Not listening to reason, Barbara, who does not seem the least bit guilty about the fact that she has just cheated on her boyfriend with his brother, follows Brian to a subway in the hope that she will be able to salvage their broken relationship. In a sadistically farcical scene of bittersweet anti-romance, Brian kills his girlfriend after she states, "I don't want to lose you" and gives him a kiss that naturally result in her brains and inwards being drained out. Although Brian does not seem to be too upset over the fact that he has just played an unconscious role in murdering his beloved girlfriend via literal brain drain, he is gracious enough to lie her corpse down on a couple subway seats in an exceedingly delicate fashion as if he is putting a sleeping baby in it's crib. When Brian gets back to his apartment building, old man Morris confronts him with a German luger while his wife Martha wife pulls Aylmer off of the protagonist's back. Of course, Aylmer soon drains the brains of the two elderly old farts, though, unbeknownst to the penis-like parasite, Morris does not die. While Aylmer is attaching to Brian's brain to reward him for all the delectable cerebral cuisines that he procured him that night, Morris randomly emerges and pulls the parasite off of the protagonist's brain just before it properly injects it's host's grey matter with the blue fluid. After Morris ends up strangling Aylmer to death in a fit of rage before succumbing from his brain injuries, Brian begins suffering a serious reaction as a result of his botched high that results in his head mutating in a warped fashion and blue juice squirting from his mouth and nostrils. Like many disillusioned drug addicts who have thrown in the towel on life and given up on their fight against addiction, Brian decides to commit suicide by blowing his brains out with Morris' luger, but instead of dying, a heavenly light begins beaming from the area of his head that he had blown off in a shockingly ambiguous transcendental ending that seems to be Henenlotter's own equivalent to the conclusion of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968).

In its grotesquely exaggerated depiction of both the physical and metaphysical hell that is full-blown drug addiction, *Brain Damage* ultimately manages to contain more truths than any of the obscenely overrated pseudo-artsy (anti)drug dramas like *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Basketball Diaries* ever could. Indeed, anyone that watches Henenlotter's film and still finds themselves fantasizing about using drugs might as well quite while they're still ahead and take

BRAIN DAMAGE

a lethal injection of junk, as there is surely no hope for them. I certainly cannot think of another film where the dope-addled protagonist is so far gone in his junk-addled somnambulist stupor that he mindlessly listens without even the most minute worry or hint of jealousy while his scheming brother passionately penetrates his girlfriend, among countless other similarly disturbing, albeit oftentimes humorous, examples. Of course, while *Brain Damage* features a preternaturally potent anti-drug subtext that it is certainly singular in terms of the mostly mindless (sub)genre(s) it belongs to, that does not mean the film is not pleasantly plagued with the sort of mirthfully unhinged moral retardation and superlative sleaziness that one expects for any genuinely worthwhile exploitation auteur. Unquestionably, it certainly takes a certain degree of uncompromising cultural cynicism mixed with rampant moral bankruptcy to sire a darkly comedic body horror parable about the particularly pernicious effects of narcotic addiction in a work that would surely be much appreciated by the more discerning pothead. For fans of Henenlotter's distinctly debasing oeuvre, *Brain Damage* is notable for feature a tongue-in-cheek cameo from Duane Bradley and his basket-bound mutant twin brother of *Basket Case* fame during a subway scene near the end of the film. Rather humorously, Duane gets creeped out by the discernibly deranged parasite-possessed protagonist and runs away with his basket. While I am not sure I would describe *Brain Damage* as director's crowning achievement as so many Henenlotter groupies seem to do, I do have to admit that it is unequivocally a masterful miscreation of a movie in relation to the particular dark, slimy, and scum-ridden cinematic ghetto that it belongs to. Indeed, what other movie features a lecherous lady of the night giving a sloppy deep-throat blowjob to a phallic-like brain-devouring parasite. If you ever get the urge to shoot junk or smoke rocks, just watch *Brain Damage* and remember the wisecracking cock-turd with teeth named Aylmer and you might be brought back to your senses, or at least cause you to crack a twisted smile that might make people think you're some sort of scheming pervert.

-Ty E

FRANKENHOOKER

Frank Henenlotter (1990)

Although his almost accidentally 'avant-garde' black comedy horror flick *Basket Case* (1982) will always be my favorite film by probably the only true cinematic heir of classic 42nd Street Grindhouse exploitation flicks from the 1960s and 1970s, Frank Henenlotter (*Brain Damage*, *Bad Biology*) probably was most successful with his malformed marriage between bodacious 'body horror' and putrid postmodern slapstick and lunatic low-camp with his consciously and exceedingly exploitative and semitically eccentric anti-tribute to both James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), *Frankenhooker* (1990). While Whale's films are cultivated works of high-camp Gothic eloquence, Henenlotter's *Frankenhooker* – a seedy and equally satirical work that manages to cinematically synthesize the cultural cynicism, misanthropic trashiness, and absurdist bodily dismemberment of Andy Milligan (*The Body Beneath*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*), the urban grittiness and social alienation of Abel Ferrara (*Ms. 45*, *Fear City*), and the Yiddish vaudevillian slapstick of the Marx Brothers (*Duck Soup*, *A Night at the Opera*) – is the sort of aberrant apocalyptic (albeit hardly serious) cinematic work of racial, moral, and cultural chaos that brings credence to American horror master H.P. Lovecraft's words regarding New York City: "The organic things -Italo-Semitico-Mongoloid- inhabiting that awful cesspool could not by any stretch of the imagination be call'd human. They were monstrous and nebulous adumbrations of the pithecanthropoid and amoebal; vaguely moulded from some stinking viscous slime of earth's corruption, and slithering and oozing in and on the filthy streets or in and out of windows and doorways in a fashion suggestive of nothing but infesting worms or deep-sea unnamabilities. They -or the degenerate gelatinous fermentation of which they were composed- seem'd to ooze, seep and trickle thro' the gaping cracks in the horrible houses... and I thought of some avenue of Cyclopean and unwholesome vats, crammed to the vomiting-point with gangrenous vileness, and about to burst and inundate the world in one leprous cataclysm of semi-fluid rottenness." Indeed, with its Hispanic bohunk pimps with multicultural army of female fleshpeddling crack whores, physically grotesque and morbidly obese Der Stürmer-esque caricatures of Jewish Johns and crackheads, race/gender-hustling 'special interest' groups entitled H.O.O.K.E.R. (Hold Onto Our Knowledge of Equal Rights), nefarious Negro pimps who tell people to 'Do the Right Thing' (undeniably an attack on Spike Lee's irrationality-inspiring 1989 film of the same name), near-elderly, crusty-cunt strippers, post-industrial urban decay and sickening 'street trash' (it is no coincidence that the star of Henenlotter's film made his debut in the 1987 horror/black comedy *Street Trash*), Unabomber paranoia and acute autism of the lead protagonist, and the most nasally nauseating accents in human history, the unwavering degeneracy and proletarian decadence of the NYC featured in

FRANKENHOOKER

Frankenhooker pales in terms of its all-around horrifying persuasion than the one Lovecraft wrote about during the early Twentieth Century. Needless to say, if there was any worse era for one to be resembled after being run over with a remote control tractor with the body parts of drug-addicted hookers and reanimated via crack by a quack doctor, it is the zany zeitgeist featured in Frankenhooker.

Having a beautiful, albeit big-boned, fiancée (former Penthouse Pet Patty Mullen in an absurd fat suit), neurotic novice mad scientist Jeffrey Frank (James Lorinz) has everything a nefarious nerd from New Jersey could ever dream of, so when his girlfriend is gutted and grinded up in a freak lawnmower accident, he gets right to work reassembling and reanimating her postmortem body in a maniacal manner that would put emotionally vacant psychopath Herbert West of *Re-Animator* (1985) to shame. A crackpot genius of refined taste, Jeffrey engages in trepanning via an electronic drill whenever he needs some intellectual inspiration to literally penetrate his brain. One night after a couple moments of insightful and orgasmic trepanning, jaded Jeff takes a trip to the more sleazy side of NYC's sidewalks to see if any of the voluptuous crack-addicted prostitutes will make for good limbs for his female Frankenstein bride project, but instead he discovers the wild wonders of crack rocks, which will prove to be the missing ingredient to put his finishing touches on his reanimating and electrifying elixir. Jeffrey makes the rather wise decision of buying the marvelous miracle drug in a slimy bathroom with Star of David graffiti drawn on doors of the bathroom stalls from a drug-dealing macho meathead of a pimp named Zorro (Joseph Gonzalez); a muscleman misogynist who makes all of his girls wear "Z" trademark emblem (which he also sports like a retarded rapper on a gold chain) on their arms, which were carved in. Jeffrey also makes a business arrangement of sorts with Zorro, in which he sets up a huge hotel 'party' for the next night with Zorro's entire crew of crack whores, so he has a large selection of body parts to pick from for his dead fiancée. Needless to say, being a nervous nerd, Jeffrey chickens out like a true cuckold during his big night with the girls, but one of the predatory prostitutes discovers the mini would-be-mad-scientist's stash of crack-laced reanimation potion, thus inspiring all the girls to smoke the rocks while ignoring their gentle John's warnings. By happenstance, Jeffrey manages to get all the bodies parts, albeit mismatched, but beautiful biological material nonetheless when the girls' bodies explode after smoking the demented doc's special blend. Jeffrey manages to bring his fiancée back to life, but little did he suspect that she would be a severely slutty and salacious 'Frankenhooker' (also played by Patty Mullen) whose sexual magnetism makes men explode in more ways than one. Apparently, Jeffrey did not take in consideration that all personalities of the dead hookers whose dismembered bodies he used for his Miss Modern Prometheus would be blended in with his lady loves, thus resulting in a severely schizo she-bitch held together with stitches who has sexual itches

she must scratch, but not without a monetary and ultimately murderous return. When Zorro discovers his trademark “Z” logo on the undead prostitute’s arm, he begins to investigate, thus ending in a final showdown between Jeffrey and his beloved Frankenhoker and the Latin pimp.

Concluding with a castrating surprise ending that would make any fan of ‘body horror’ feel like a born-again eunuch, Frankenhoker is a curiously crude yet clever low-camp classic of black comedy horror in an easily digestible, if not deleterious, form that – in its sardonic treatment of societal ills – is the squalid celluloid equivalent of dismembered Sour Patch kids candy laced with Adderall with a pinch of passé punk aesthetic asininity. If one could argue that aberrant-garde auteur Frank Henenlotter has a distinctive talent as a filmmaker, its is taking the 42nd Street celluloid exploitation trash of yesteryear in making it more palatable to more discerning audiences by adding a biting bit of debasing irony, as well as pumping up the volume on aesthetic and thematic vulgarity, yet at the same time refraining from totally mindlessly wallowing filth for an intolerable period of time like his fiendish filmic forefathers did. If you ever dreamed of seeing Elvira as the flesh-peddling bimbo bride of Frankenstein, but with same sort of sassy and ‘sexy’ attitude that Ms. Peterson is known and loved for (albeit to a less refined but more topless degree), Frankenhoker is indubitably your next best bet as a bodacious and even morally belligerent work of black comedy body horror that makes the unhinged world of crack-addicted hookers and whores of the typical Zionist American politician’s wet dream for anti-Anglo American into a semite-unsafe iconoclastic nightmare where hookers literally bust balls and dismember bodies, especially of obese hook-nosed fellows, everywhere between their gated New Jersey homes in suburbia and the cultural chaos they help stir up in cesspools of NYC that, “by any stretch of the imagination be call’d human.”

-Ty E

BAD BIOLOGY
BAD BIOLOGY

Frank Henenlotter (2008)

Finally, a twist on fated star-crossed lovers for the avant-punk film fan. As undoubtedly indebted to the likes of Tsukamoto and Cronenberg as other aspiring body-horror provisioner's, *Bad Biology* takes and bakes its own cake with genetic genital terrors that conform the word "mutant" is something normal by comparison to its own ill deeds. It's no wonder this film is directed by Frank Henenlotter (*Basket Case*, *Brain Damage*, and *Frankenhooker*.) Only a brief excursion into his cerebral workings could produce such a tasteless comedy birthed from slime and decadence. After witnessing dismal contenders for both horror/comedy and "vagina dentata" features, *Bad Biology* vacuum seals itself and all seven clits in a league of its own. Womanhood is tough business. Hormones arise early causing multiple orgasms at the dinner table. Totally lame and inconvenient, eh? Then there's that business with bearing mutant feti shortly after sex. Wait, what? Allow me to relay origins. Jennifer is a photographer vouching feminist ideals and was plagued with seven clitorises upon birth. The inner workings are fleshy piston-like tumors that seem crazy enough to be a wacky treat from Japan. Worst of all, they increase sexual metabolism to the point that she blabbers lines as "I need a dick like a junkie needs a fix." Then we meet Batz. He's in possession of a drug-addicted sentient monster cock. Knowing what you know now, Where else could this story take you other than a malformed version of pleasurable hell? *Bad Biology* is essentially a genetic conundrum of biological anomalies related to a grotesque tale that flows freely and insecurely, creating a strand of almost-pornographic images relative to the sick thoughts harvesting in everyones mind. Frank Henenlotter weaves an urban approach to body horror; a move never done before with such a pseudo-Cronenberg approach. By casting Jedi Mind Tricks and Wu-Tang affiliates, Henenlotter has sealed a fan with mAQ (shameless 3rd person approach.) Even the world of art isn't given immunity from the scornful and cynical eye of *Bad Biology*. Soon a caricature of feminist "expression" is created painstakingly only to be ritualistically lampooned on camera. In a photo shoot of rappers kissing women with vagina masks, all the sensible ones find the blurring of sexuality and art to be completely divided and the result to be crude pornography. The assertion is true and the teaser for the upcoming *The Ugly Truth* displays just as much "oppression" on the female kind as this graphic display of gender bending does but less contrived. Only Jennifer could see what she called art. When revealed to her representative, his reply more or less bordered the equal result of calling her retarded - "Vagina faces. Are you serious?" If there ever was a rainstorm in a day of feminist art, this would be the Hurricane Katrina. As it is, *Bad Biology* is an uncommonly crafted vision of sexuality transgressed normal comprehension - or whatever normal really is. For the benefit of us, the viewers, the effect is cleverly realized with concise plea-

sure traps and gadgets. An anti-communal picture, *Bad Biology* might scare away a crowd with rapid, audacious glimpses of a mutant species of humanity; one natural and the other unnatural. For females, I can see where it would be easy to be offended. With all the infant abandonment and ridicule braved by the slutty Jennifer, I'd be pretty down on spirits too. The reaction on the male spectrum had me rooting Batz to "whip it out" every few seconds and rape a certain whorish teenage girl talking about how much she craves cock. Sorry to say but watching a feminist trash a baby scene after scene identifies the very concern of politically incorrect anecdotes [loosely.] Then again, there is that art student who painted with abortions (or something.) This experiment is what the second half of *Hollow Man* aspired to be - sexually speaking of course. This one comes highly recommended. Could pass as a contemporary John Waters directed Science fiction epic.

-mAQ

SCOUNDRELS
SCOUNDRELS

Frank Oz (1988)

Undoubtedly, Ron Jeremy is an archetype for discernibly decadent and superlatively sleazy porn star swine, with virtually his entire reputation riding on the fact that he is a fat swarthy slob who gets to fuck quasi-hot chicks, which is something of a dream that the majority of American males dream as lard asses themselves. Of course, while always a repugnant pig with a less than handsome appearance, Jeremy was not always a chunky turd who resembled a sort of slimy and scuzzy Super Mario, with his against-type role as a bourgeois psychiatrist in the cult blue movie *Scoundrels* (1982) directed by 'great' auteur-pornographer Cecil Howard (*Snake Eyes*, *The Last X-rated Movie*) and written by the director's longtime collaborator Anne Wolff (*Foxtrot*, *Firestorm*). Carefully crafted by the man responsible for the phantasmagoric surrealist porn masterpiece *Neon Nights* (1981), *Scoundrels* is certainly a cream of the cum crop work in terms of both a porn work and a Cecil Howard flick as a dark yet sardonic botched celluloid wet dream marinated in internal misery, middle class misanthropy, and hatred, albeit executed in a rather humorous, if not unintentionally, fashion that laughs in the face of intricate extramarital affairs and ruined upper-middle class lives. A playfully perverse psychosexual psychodrama that seems like it was specially tailored for the most wayward of quack psychoanalysts, *Scoundrels* tells the semi-surreal tale of psychiatrist who finds himself dually cuckolded by both his wife, who is carrying on an affair with his best friend, and his degenerate daughter, who is screwing said best friend's nephew and has just started a curious career as a high-class call girl. The very first film to win both 'Best Film' and 'Best Director' at the very first AVN Awards in 1984, *Scoundrels* is best appreciated today as a whacked-out pseudo-artistic cult film with both intentional and unintentional frolicsome humor and a strikingly mean-spirited ending that is bound to ruin any porn addict's orgasm. Indeed, featuring Ron Jeremy being fingered in the kosher cornhole by a high-class call girl and Robert 'Cannibal Holocaust' Kerman defiling an underage gal that reminds him of his daughter, *Scoundrels* is an unhinged Freudian nightmare starring a cast of sicko Semites that seem like archetypical perverted Hebrews taken out of National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's naughty Nazi tabloid *Der Stürmer*.

Beginning with a surreal dream-sequence of psychotherapist Simon (Ron Jeremy) wearing white pancake makeup as a French mime who stares blankly next to his equally mannequin-like wife Linda (Lisa Be) and daughter Francie (Tigr), *Scoundrels* immediately establishes a feeling of foreboding unease in the viewer. Indeed, Simon is a successful doctor with a prosperous family that lives in relative comfort, but he is also on the verge of suffering a midlife crisis, which is only further compounded by the fact that he believes his old lady Linda is carrying on a lurid love affair with his best friend Harper (George

Payne), not to mention the fact that his little girl Francie has become a little whore who, while pretending to study for exams, is having bisexual orgies with her equally debauched friends Cheryl (Marilyn Gee aka Marissa Constantine) and Jack (Sean Elliot). On top of that, Jack is Harper's nephew and like his equally swarthy uncle, he is also carrying on an affair with Simon's wanton wife Linda. While rather disconcerted and depressed about the fact that his wife is probably cheating on him, Simon is carrying on an affair with his secretary Vivian (Copper Penny), but Harper also manages to get in her panties as well after the psychiatrist become increasingly impotent and withdrawn. Of course, the most degenerate sexual deviants of *Scoundrels* are Simon's patients, especially a sleazy photographer named Mr. Wallace (Robert Kerman aka 'R. Bolla') who managed to deflower an underage teen bimbo named Emerald (Tiffany Clark) during a less than fruitful photo shoot. While proclaiming how he feels guilty about popping the cherry of a teen that was "so innocent," Wallace reveals the true nature of his mind when he confesses to Simon, "Geez Doc, I feel awfully guilty," yet proceeds to laugh in a sinister fashion that puts to shame the eponymous race defiler of Veit Harlan's infamous National Socialist melodrama *Jew Süss* (1940). Undoubtedly, Simon's most depraved patient is a bisexual bitch named Mrs. Katz (Anna Turner), who attempts to seek revenge against her unloving businessman hubby (Ron Hudd) by seducing his secretary Mary Lou (Sharon Mitchell). To get his obsessive-compulsive mind over the fact that his best friend is screwing virtually every single important woman in his life, Simon routinely visits a convenience store to buy cigarettes from the hot store clerk 'Rainbow' (Ariel) and frequents a health club with a built-in whorehouse where he patrons a less than pretty prostitute named 'Kitten' (Tammy Lamb). Meanwhile, daughter Francie becomes a prostitute at the same bordello that her father frequents and sexually services a marine in the service named Frank (David Ambrose) who, after having his man-cherry popped, declares to his bought-lover, "I'd like my \$50 dollars back now. It's just not right! I'd like to marry you. I don't want anyone else touching you." Presumably the result of his progressive emasculation, Simon rather enjoys it when Kitten penetrates his rectum with her rubber-glove-adorned fingers. In the end, Simon seems to have the last laugh when he throws a pie in the face of a prying cop, but fate ultimately has the last laugh as the psychiatrist and his new teen lover Rainbow, who was hiding in the backseat of the car when the police officer pulled him over, get in a disastrous car wreck, with the viewer never knowing whether the doctor and/or teen dream were found DOA. Either way, *Scoundrels* is certainly a porn flick that concludes with an explosive climax.

Personally, I cannot fathom how or why a porn flick like *Scoundrels* ever got made because, aside from not featuring a single character that rises above the level of being average-looking (indeed, most of the 'performers' are downright homely, if not repulsive), *Scoundrels* features an innately nihilistic storyline with

SCOUNDRELS

an innately unhappy ending that must have let down a large amount of lumpenproles who were expecting a movie they could jerk off too while seeing it in theaters when it was first released in the early-1980s. Indeed, many of the performers featured in the film were no less degenerate in real-life, as lady-lickers Sharon Mitchell and Tigr's heroin-fueled lesbian relationship would later be depicted in all of its unlovely glory in the documentary *Kamikaze Hearts* (1986). As one reviewer noted regarding the film, *Scoundrels* has Bergman-esque pretensions in its downright strange attempt to mix sullen melodrama with what is ultimately anti-erotic pornography. Of course, *Scoundrels* stands out more nowadays due to its aesthetic and thematic idiosyncrasy as opposed to its ostensible arthouse cred. Not surprisingly, it seems that star Ron Jeremy had no clue about what sort of blue movie he starred in as he would compare *Scoundrel* director Cecil Howard to Hollywood hack James Cameron (*Titanic*, *Avatar*) in a somewhat recent interview with hotmovies.com, as if being compared to a soulless non-auteur who makes bombastic blockbusters is a good thing. Of course, Jeremy did know enough to realize that Howard was more than just your average talentless pornographer, stating of *Scoundrels*, "It's great. Abstract, esoteric, avant-garde. *Scoundrels* is really a very, very classy, well-made movie. Everything Cecil Howard ever did was classy." Indeed, I never thought I would ever torture myself by watching a film featuring Jeremy, but when I discovered *Scoundrels*, I would not allow my innate revulsion for the porn star to stop me from watching what is indubitably one of the greatest and most singular, if not unintentionally eccentric and exceedingly anti-erotic, porn flicks ever made. For anyone that ever wondered what Woody Allen's life might have been like had he been a quasi-heterosexual psychiatrist as opposed to a patently perverted Bergman-wannabe with a flare for Judaic comedy, check out *Scoundrels* and wallow in the wild and crazy bourgeois life of a cuckolded Hebraic head-shrink.

-Ty E

DAVID AND LISA

Frank Perry (1962)

David and Lisa is a touching film about two mentally ill individuals that connect in a mental institution. Although intellectually brilliant, David Clemens suffers from a very severe and debilitating version of obsessive compulsive disorder. He can't stand being touched and has an obsession with trying to control time as he believes time will kill him. David meets his love interest Lisa Brandt upon his entry into the "mental treatment center." Lisa is even worse off than David as she suffers from a split personality disorder and can only speak in rhymes. One could say that David and Lisa is one of the most unconventional love stories ever made. The main psychiatrist of the mental treatment center is Dr. Swinford, a very patient and understanding man who wants to break David's social fears. He listens to everything David says which fairly often annoys David. David is a very irrationally defensive yet highly intelligent individual. Although intelligent, David lacks the common sense to see the errors of his ways. Dr. Swinford, through various calm methods, starts to enlighten David about his troubles through various calm methods. For Lisa, fixing her mental illnesses seems next to impossible. David decides it's up to him to figure out her "case" as it interests him. David has a reoccurring dream in which he cuts off people's heads with the hand of a giant clock that he controls. It is up to David to destroy people in time so that they don't destroy him. To David, time is the uncontrollable destroyer and he's trying to figure out how to stop it. He despises all watches and is highly irritated by Dr. Swinford's broken wall clock. To David's surprise, time begins to solve the things that interfered with his life before. Lisa also happens to be a person that he gradually opens up to. David and Lisa is a film that was released in the United States in 1962. I found the film to be very unordinary and serious for it's time. The film certainly makes One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest seem a little silly. David and Lisa was released over a decade before One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, yet takes a look at mental illness in a much more serious and dare I say realistic manner. The relationship between David and Lisa is a nice change in the way of cinematic love stories. How many other films have dared to portray a realistic relationship between two less than mentally stable individuals?

-Ty E

LADYBUG LADYBUG
LADYBUG LADYBUG

Frank Perry (1963)

I honestly don't know where to begin on this film. I should have prepped some witty explanatory opening paragraph highlighting my experience getting a hold of this film, but to be honest, It was a blind grab from a public tracker. Yes, I downloaded it; Sue me. So, Upon reading the Wikipedia article, I glanced accidentally at a massive spoiler. Instantly, my stomach churned. That single sentence horrified me into a state of manic petrification. Regardless of the entire film being ruined by one Wikipedia editor's inability to spell or complete sentences, I dredged slowly through this long yet calculated film and found myself astonished. Frank Perry is an Academy Award winner whose films I haven't heard of. After watching this film, I must seek out his other films. In a time shattered by the Cold War, more specifically the Cuban Missile Crisis, a rural elementary school's normal day is interrupted by an ear-shattering alarm warning of a nuclear attack in approximately one hour. Not knowing if it's a drill or the real thing, the principal and the teachers begin to evacuate the students while someone continues to try to reach the outside world. Normally, these apocalyptic films bother me in a sense and never leave me feeling uneasy. Only two films have made me feel wary of the end of days and those are Cloverfield and Ladybug Ladybug. What A Nightmare on Elm Street did for children's songs was long accomplished before by this very film. Having a title of a popular nursery rhyme was an intelligent move for the film. Giving that the children are of such a young age, the only real comfort they feel is leeches from games and songs. Speaking of children, the acting really shone for me. My personality traits create much hatred for children, including children in film. Jennifer Lopez's Enough drove me bonkers during the scene in which the "bad man" tried to harm the girl power group. This experience caused the little girl to shrill for minutes at a time. I expected the same from this but was surprised to find children questioning God's inability to save them or the effects of war. Watching such small and fragile minds expanding with the grief that religion might be dead and the government doesn't care is a sight to behold. A war-torn melodrama that presents a cast populated with many New York based Broadway actors and a handful of children. I doubt there is any way that this film could be received as horrible, let alone not amazing. Ladybug Ladybug amazed me, thrilled me, shocked me, provided me with the most calculated angles and lighting effects in recent memory, and actually left me breathless.

-mAQ

TAXI ZUM KLO

Frank Ripploh (1981)

Post-WW2 Germany has produced a wealth of homosexual auteur filmmakers, but – for better or worse – none quite compare to Frank Ripploh aka Peggy von Schnottgenberg (Miko - aus der Gosse zu den Sternen, *Taxi nach Kairo*); the Berlin schoolteacher-turned-filmmaker who felt no shame in simultaneously grading papers in tearoom toilets while sucking cock through a less than glorious glory-hole. Ironically, recommended to me by my beautiful girlfriend, *Taxi zum Klo* (1981) aka *Taxi to the Toilet* (or “*Taxi to the John*”, etc.) directed by and starring Mr. Ripploh in an embarrassingly semi-autobiographical role in a work that is not exactly the sort of homophile arthouse film one would expect from a master kraut-queer auteur like R.W. Fassbinder (*Fox and His Friends*, *Querelle*) and Werner Schroeter (*Malina*, *This Night*), but it does offer a spiked comical cocktail of ridiculously raunchy candid carnality of the debauched public educator sort. Relatively conventional and somewhat amateurish in narrative structure in part due to the shoestring budget it was shot on, *Taxi zum Klo* is a wild work of ‘camp realism’ that derives most of its entertainment value from its goofy and often gross domestic gay zaniness. An eccentric elementary school teacher by day and a public pervert by night, Ripploh – who is hardly a prancing queen – does a swell job living a double life, at least in the beginning. Seemingly like some sort of laidback, hippie sociology professor in both appearance and character, Ripploh’s general lack of outward effete gayness makes him all the more interesting of a character, especially when sharing slobber and semen with other homely homo men and being tested (positive) for STDs in a most crude and compromised manner. After all, I doubt many filmmakers would direct themselves while will passively receiving a metal medical phallic probe in the fag end. Unflinchingly charming, comical, and capricious from beginning to end, *Taxi zum Klo* is a film that – despite its intensely intimate and often downright revolting subject matter – would probably appeal to most viewers, even those that feel a bit overwrought by the image of a swarthy man’s asshole being penetrated by a peculiar fellow in leather chaps.

Like many controversial films, especially the sort featuring real-life (homo) sex, *Taxi zum Klo* was banned in Britain upon its initial release, which should no surprise to those that have already watched this penis-prominent cinematic work. Opening with backboard collage containing some of Ripploh’s most penetrating personal obsessions, including artwork by Salvador Dalí and Tom of Finland, a photo of queer German New Wave auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*, *The Einstein of Sex*) and a family member in a Hitler Youth outfit, and homocentric pins with cutesy quips like “No More Heteros,” one immediately gets more than a clear idea as to the director’s personal proclivities and wacky Weltanschauung. Similar in theme to a lot of gay

TAXI ZUM KLO

films of the 1970s/1980s from Europe and America – like William Friedkin's *The Boys in the Band* (1970), Wolfgang Petersen's *Die Konsequenz* (1977) aka *The Consequence*, Ron Peck's *Nighthawks* (1978) and Bill Sherwood's *Parting Glances* (1986), *Taxi zum Klo* is a film that ultimately portrays the unfulfilling and self-destructive nature of homosexual subcultures during that era as vividly portrayed in Larry Kramer's gay-community-inflaming novel *Faggots* (1978) and von Praunheim's documentary *Positive* (1990), yet unlike many of the characters featured in similarly related works, Frank Ripploh does demand pity from the audience but only shits and giggles, thus managing to retain whatever is left of his personal dignity. Always maintaining a reasonably positive attitude, even when learning that genital warts are invading his putrid poop-chute, Ripploh merely expects the viewer to laugh at his and his butt-buddies rather grotesque bare-skinned bodies and abject personal failures in life. After meeting the man of his dreams – a movie theater attendant with a creepy mustache typical of the loony leather boys featured in Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) – Ripploh's life begins to pick up momentum, but due to his wandering wienerschnitzel and jokester wisecracking, he soon learns that it is much easier and far more sexually fulfilling to blow random twink and bears in public restrooms. Although initially contemplating a pseudo-marriage featuring an urbane lifestyle of leisure and male-on-male monogamy with the possible addition of an adopted 'mongoloid child' (his own words) after beginning a steamy relationship with his new boi toy, Ripploh inevitably realizes that such bourgeois lifestyle changes could impede on his secret life of lecherous latrine lovemaking; a nature high of the thoroughly bestial sort that, that like most addictions and compulsions – once initiated into – one can never divert from partaking in.

Described by *The Village Voice* as, "the first masterpiece about the mainstream of male gay life," *Taxi zum Klo* – like most cinematic works of its kind – features a far from a flattering portrayal of homosexual lifestyles, especially when compared to a movie as relatively tame as Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), yet it does ultimately humanize its protagonist because it reveals him to be a flawed individual with a thirst for vice, and dreams and hopes that, despite the repellant nature of his public sexual relations, most people can relate to. In spite of directing a sequel to the film entitled *Taxi Nach Kairo* (1987) – a work that is virtually impossible to obtain a copy of, even in Germany – Frank Ripploh would never direct another film as influential and critically revered as *Taxi zum Klo*, although he would be immortalized in the pages of queer cinema history by playing the role of a drunken legionnaire (with fellow German filmmakers Wolf Gremm and Robert van Ackeren also playing this symbolic role) in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Querelle* (1982); the arguable 'Citizen Kane of gay cinema' and the only fiercely homoerotic film to have received a large degree of success at that time upon its initial release (selling 100,000 tickets in the first three weeks). Although *Taxi zum Klo* seems comparatively insignificant when compared to a

film as artistically refined and iconic as *Querelle*, it does feature a certain artistic scrupulousness and integrity that most films – whether gay-themed or not – ultimately lack, hence why it has remained a favorite among fans after over three decades. Featuring excerpts from *Christian and His Stamp Collector Friend* (???) – an impossible-to-find anti-pedophile PSA with unfathomably distressingly pedophilic imagery – *Taxi zum Klo* is a film that will indubitably have you second guessing your child's seemingly normal elementary school teacher.

-Ty E

DEAD FURY
DEAD FURY

Frank Sudol (2008)

FSudol is a name that should be known for his amount of hard work. He broke animated horror boundaries down with his 2006 film *City of Rott*, which was released by Unearthed Films. Although the style and effects were a horror fans wet dream, the film suffered horrible pacing and should have rather been a short film. His new film *Dead Fury*, fixes his errors and presents an ultimate homage to 80's horror films. The annoying grandfather character in *City Of Rott* is back, this time with Jenn, Max, and Jake; a group of friends gone hunting. After a less than intelligent hiker finds a spell book and resurrects a body-jumping demonic zombie spirit, the group must fight for survival in the woods. The film gives it's jokes and credit to *The Evil Dead*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, and *Tod Browning's Freaks*. *Dead Fury* is a vast improvement over his last. In this outing, he provides a great story that is still fresh, provides scenery that is pure cartoonish eye candy, then paints the walls red with demon gore. FSudol is a man that i can appreciate. He does almost every job on this film, from the voices, to the production, editing, music, sound effects, and the writing. His work is all a one man job. If his credit stands familiar, you should know that he did animation work on the musical *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut*. If there is a weapon that you fancy, chances are, is that one of these characters use it to gut a demon. We have scythes, shovels, buzz saws, shotguns, and meat tenderizers. There is really nothing holding back this film except for the repetition of the same vulgarities over and over again; "Stupid Bastard." It is impossible to not watch this film, and have a bloody good time. *Dead Fury* is a gory romp; a cabaret of carnage to be exact. To outdo it's own visuals in *City of Rott* is an achievement worthy of boasting, and FSudol has done just that. If the sight of gloopy intestines mixed with arterial spray and constant vulgarity excites you, you found your new favorite film. This is the new *Braindead* in terms of no-holds-barred bloodshed.

FILM FESTIVAL PREMIERE Wednesday, April 9 « 9:45 PM Ritz East Theater 2 Tickets \$10

-Maq

MODELS

Frank Tashlin (1955)

When the kraut electronic group Kraftwerk wrote their hit single “Das Model” they probably did not have the radically repugnant pseudo-blonde bimbos of the Austrian film *Models* (1999) directed by Viennese auteur Ulrich Seidl (*Dog Days* aka *Hundstage*, *Import/Export*) in mind. Probably most notable for being Seidl’s only film that is not dominated by an Aryan freak show of ugly, obese, elderly, and/or severely mentally ill protagonists, *Models* depicts in a minimalistic yet meticulous manner the supreme superficiality and stupidity, soulless greed, childish narcissism, and mindless hedonism (especially where coke and cocks are concerned!) that seems to go hand-in-hand with being a model whose great talent is striking a conspicuously contrived pose for some perverted photographer. Indeed, despite the film’s sometimes almost home-movie-like aesthetic, Seidl himself has stated that *Models* is the most difficult film he has ever directed, writing in a ‘director’s statement’ featured on his official website regarding the production: “Directing has probably never been as difficult for me as with this film. First of all: because models aren’t used to others being interested in them as people. Secondly: because models are used to being treated badly. Thirdly: I was dealing with people who are used to money being their sole professional motivation. But money can’t be the basis of a productive collaboration for a film as I understand it.” After watching the film, I must tip my hat to Seidl for having to deal with these innately intolerable ladies for long enough to complete a feature film, as watching these airheaded Aryanesses for a mere two hours is surely something akin to metaphysical torture. I do not know if the myth that blondes are dumb was started when American Jewish businesswoman Ruth Handler invented the Barbie doll (which was ripped off a slightly less trashy German doll called the ‘Bild Lilli’ doll) or when Marilyn Monroe whored her way up Hollywood by becoming the most prized Shiksa in Tinseltown, but the gorgeous and, in some cases, would-be-gorgeous broads of *Models* totally transcend any sort of traditional negative blonde stereotypes and they are not even natural blondes. A piece of socially scathing “staged reality” set in a pathetic realm of demented post-MTV Austrian domestication full of vaginal douches, tarot cards, and lines of cocaine and populated by pretty yet plastic people whose personalities are just as phony as their lips and tits, *Models* is just another one of Seidl’s uniquely unflattering examples of how American hegemony has perverted Germanic kultur, namely ideal beauty.

Vivian (Viviane Bartsch) enjoys saying “I love you” to herself in the mirror, vomiting up her food in the toilet, routinely douching her overworked vag, laying completely unclad in a tanning bed while talking about men’s members (apparently, her first boyfriend’s penis felt like “cold pizza”), accusing her long-term boyfriend Werner (Werner Hotzy) of cheating on her, and pathologically

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ruining her hair with various ugly perms, dye jobs, and pseudo-chic haircuts. Hyper hedonist Lisa (Lisa Grossmann) has fake duck-lips that make her look like an albino tranny Negro and she likes American negroes, preposterous plastic surgery, cocaine, vodka, tasers, large and obnoxious wigger coats, dancing in sleazy night clubs while high/stoned/horny, and screwing in slimy public restrooms. Tanja (Tanja Petrovsky) is slightly less degenerate and spends her time dabbling with tarots cards and other mystically minded mumbo jumbo, while Elvyra (Elvyra Geyer) does not really stick out amongst her 'friends.' Of course, what all these girls have most in common is their deluded dreams to become the next top magazine-cover-adorning glamour girls and despite putting poisonous drugs in their bodies, these lecherous ladies spend a good portion of their time beautifying themselves with a variety of wacky methods that seem to have nil results. Admittedly, these girls do not fuck around when it comes to ostensibly improving their looks and getting modeling gigs, as if tragic Guido porn star Moana Pozzi defecated in their brains. Vivian tells her boyfriend the sex is no longer good because she believes he no longer loves her and assumes he is cheating on her since he is always late. Ever the self-centered and sex starved girl, Vivian sees her boyfriend's assumed sexual affairs as a great blessing, as it gives her the justification to go out and cheat herself, which she does with gusto, though her fuck buddies always mock and consider her a lame lay. In terms of men, the girls believe "Austrians are the worst" but also that "Spanish guys are animals...Proletarians to the max." Despite their ostensibly high standards in men, Lisa begs for sex from lil American negroes and Vivian has no problem shaking her naughty bits in the face of an old and sleazy photographer named Peter Baumann, who she later screws, in a patently pathetic and groveling attempt to further her career. Undoubtedly, the unintentionally comical downward spiral that is vice-ridden Vivian's life reaches an all time low in the last scene of *Models* when, after screwing a random dork of a dude with the rather fitting name Gernot Assinger, the rather dignified dude states, "Well...Doing it with you and all wasn't as great...as you promised it would be" and proceeds to laugh at the lanky lady nonstop for about 3 minutes as if he is stoned on the model's hair dye. Indeed, if one learns anything while watching Seidl's *Models*, it is that models are much dumber than they look and seem to be part of some sort of postmodern tribe from Monroe-ite hell.

Despite its long scenes, mostly still and static camera work, and intentionally repetitive scenes (many of the same exact shots/camera angles are repeated throughout the film), *Models* is arguably auteur Ulrich Seidl's most accessible and least nuanced work as a sort of putridly pretty piece of anti-reality-TV that allows the kind of girls you would expect to find on MTV hang themselves with their own obscenely morally retarded words and discernibly degenerate deeds. As someone who has seen my fair share of Germanic films, what I found most shocking about *Models* is that, despite the fact they speak Austrian German,

the 'anti-heroines' of the film are totally indistinguishable from the sort of insipid attention-addicted fake blondes you can find at any American sorority or sports bar. It would be easy and stereotypical to call the shallow chicks of *Models* 'Eurotrash' as some less creative reviewers have described them, but more than anything, these fallen Fräuleins are indubitably victims of a Hollywood lobotomy and American (non)culture hegemony. Certainly, if these women were brought up with the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) as opposed to Snoop Dogg, Baywatch, Hebraic feminism and Barbie, they might have been caring mothers as opposed to careless whores. After all, I doubt any girl grows up dreaming of singing a song with a title like "Shave that Pussy" while high on coke and hunting for jigaboo meat when they become grown women. What I found most ironic about *Models* is that, while the model's grandmothers probably associated blonde hair with purity and intelligence, the girls of Seidl's film, who are clearly not natural blondes to begin with, seem to believe their hair color is some sort of hot slut trump card and a license to act intentionally stupid and vapid 24/7, as if that is a turn-on or something (when, in reality, it is essentially an anti-Aryan Judaic myth that was invented by films like Billy Wilder's *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), which was not coincidentally but quite ironically directed by a Viennese Jew who once interviewed Arthur Schnitzler, Alfred Adler, and Sigmund Freud all on the same day during his pre-director days as a reporter). Of course, a lot has changed since *The Seven Year Itch* was released over half-a-century ago, as the German-speaking world now has progressive Jews like Daniel Cohn-Bendit who, in his book *The Great Bazaar* (1975) aka *Der grosse Basar*, brags about his various erotic excursions with Aryan five year-old children during his days as a kosher commie 'anti-fascist' kindergarten teacher. Naturally, one can only assume what happened to the girls of *Models* when they were children, but it is certainly without question that they were exposed to some sort of progressive learning, even if not of the Cohn-Bendit pedo sort. Neither straight narrative film nor authentic documentary, *Models* is a metaphysical affliction in celluloid form, with Seidl being the soul-doctor. Of course, Seidl merely diagnoses the problem as there is no cure for the models' affliction, at least in a world where Steven Spielberg is the international Minister of Propaganda, a weak and effeminate mulatto ex-drug addict is the supposed leader of the most powerful and culturally corrosive country in the world, and where all moral and values of the Occident have been totally inverted to appease the (non)ethics (what Nietzsche called the 'slave morality') of Europa's perennial enemy. Indeed, if you have ever wondered why something like the holocaust could happen, just consider the fact that the largely Hebrew-run democratic Weimar Republic Germany of post-WWI was only slightly less decadent than the globalized post-nationalist Occident of today, with Germany now being a country where the government has legalized prostitution and actively endorses borderline incestuous pedophilia between fathers and daughters (in 2007, Two 40-page booklets entitled "Love,

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Body and Playing Doctor” were released by the German Federal Health Education Center (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung - BZgA) purporting that Fathers “do not devote enough attention to the clitoris and vagina of their daughters”, not to mention the fact that the German far-left has promoted the sexualization/molestation of children since the late-1960s) and that sells clit stimulator sex toys in vending machines. That being said, I would not be surprised if the roads to Auschwitz 2.0 were paved by silicone tits, Spring Breakers dvds, Kanye West cds, rainbow flags, Cohn-Bendit sleaze polemics, and McDonald’s Happy Meals. As for my only complaint regarding Models, I really wish Seidl incorporated the Kraftwerk song “Das Model” into the film.

-Ty E

NECROPHOBIA

Frank van Geloven (1995)

Unless you count the grotesque avant-garde works of Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*), Paul Verhoeven's Catholic-tinged genre-hybrid arthouse work *The Fourth Man* (1983) aka *De vierde man*, and/or South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's experimental quasi-documentary *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994), there are not really that many notable Dutch horror flicks. Personally, I have never really found classic Dutch horror films like Dick Maas' *De Lift* (1983) and *Amsterdamned* (1988), and Rudolf van den Berg's *The Johnsons* (1993) to be particularly interesting, not to mention the fact that all of these films are cross-genre works and surely not examples of pure unadulterated horror cinema. While not exactly an unsung masterpiece and only vaguely artsy fartsy, the delightfully debasing 60-minute flick *Necrophobia* (1995) co-directed by Frank van Geloven and Edwin Visser is a rare notable example of where Dutch filmmakers who clearly love the horror genre managed to assemble something strikingly sick and memorably aesthetically aberrant. Indeed, the closest thing to a Dutch *Nekromantik*, albeit with shades of both classic and not-so-classic works like *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *The Toolbox Murders* (1978), *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Lucker the Necrophagous* (1985), and *Cemetery Man* (1994) aka *Dellamorte Dellamore*, van Geloven and Visser's so-called "psychological horror" film is delightfully depraved celluloid trash with marginal class that reminded me why I am and will always be a horror fan, even if I think about 99% of what the genre has to offer is worthless and innately inane garbage. Although somewhat amateurish and featuring mostly sterile student film style acting performances and not exactly the most attractive of Dutch actors, *Necrophobia* also features striking editing, genuine shocks, demented dream-sequences, sister-on-sister car chases and soricide, pale female corpses sporting strap-on dildos and—arguably most importantly—necrophilia. Of course, like many Dutch films, the work also features dark dry humor, nihilistic undertones, and a certain biting cynicism that one can usually expect from cinematic works from the small Germanic lowland country. Like Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik 2* (1991), *Necrophobia* is notable for featuring an unhinged female necrophile, albeit one who will fuck both male and female corpses so long as a strap-on dildo is mounted on said corpse before she mounts it. Also, like *Nekromantik 2*, the film features a weak, goofy, and gawky male protagonist who finds himself the unwitting prey of a nasty brunette Nordic babe with a fiercely foul fetish for newly rotting flesh. A micro horror flick made for horror fans by horror fans, especially those with a special taste for corpse-fucking art, *Necrophobia* is another great example as to why cadaver-humping and dark humor go together like peas and carrots, as well as piss and shit.

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Like many Dutchmen, Mark Embrechts (Martijn Oversteegen) is a rather blunt and leisurely fellow who begins *Necrophobia* by remarking via off-screen narration regarding his loathing of running and his love of his wife and dog: “They say running is good for your physical condition. That’s nonsense. The only effect it has on me is that I’m sweating like a pig. The ones having fun are Boris and Rebecca, he always does when I run around. Anyone who wants to keep such a beautiful girls has to stay fit.” Unfortunately for Mark, his life is going to be turned upside down when his wife Rebecca (Grietje Besteman) is tragically killed after she is run over by a less than prole-like pansy wimp driving a large truck that he clearly was not meant to drive. Mark is so traumatized by his wife’s death that he has his friend watch his dog Boris for him while he attempts in vain to grieve. As Mark contemplates to himself while at his wife’s funeral, “Sometimes life grabs you by the balls...and all you can do is swallow and continue. But I’m not ready to swallow yet.” At the funeral, Mark also notices two attractive young women, and one of them, a seemingly mentally perturbed chick named Colette (Gerry Verhoeven), will soon become the widower’s rebound lover, though it will ultimately have gruesome consequences. Meanwhile, a cloaked individual digs up Mark’s wife Rebecca’s freshly buried corpse, brings it back to a fog-filled torture chamber adorned with corpses in various states of decay hanging from meat-hooks, straps a strap-on dildo on the cold cadaver’s pussy, and begins riding the pseudo-phallus on the corpse. Of course, Mark will soon get very personal with the defiler of his beloved wife’s corpse.

Not taking the senseless unexpected death of his wifey very well, Mark contemplates suicide and even attempts to slit his wrist with a seemingly dull bread knife, but he pussies out the last second. Of course, Mark is somewhat cheered up when he bumps into cemetery girl Colette at the local graveyard where his wife was recently buried, as the young lady asks him out on a date, which he naturally obliges, though he naturally has mixed feelings about the situation as he still loves his belated spouse. That night, a seemingly hysterical young woman wearing a horrid wig named Martha Morbeck—the other young woman that the widower spotted at his spouse’s funeral—comes by Mark’s home to warn him to stay away from Colette by making the seemingly far-fetched claim that she will put him and his wife’s life in danger, even if the latter is already dead. After Mark rudely kicks her out of his humble abode, Martha hits the road and is soon involved in a car chase with Colette, who ultimately shoots her in the shoulder before running her off the road. Martha eventually wakes up in the necrophile’s torture chamber and is soon killed by a chainsaw-wielding Colette, who is also sporting a featureless white mask. Indeed, Colette is the necrophile, though it is not initially apparent why she prefers fucking female corpses with strap-ons as opposed to male corpses with real rotten cocks. When Mark finally goes to Colette’s house for a dinner date, he asks his new love interest about Martha. Colette reveals that Martha is, in fact, her sister and that she fell in

love with the same man as her, thus resulting in a bitter rivalry between the two siblings. Indeed, Colette was married to a man named David that died from a heart attack the previous year and Martha has apparently attempted to wage a “crusade” against her ever since. When Mark and Colette have sex, the latter has a traumatic flashback regarding how her husband died of a heart attack while they were having bondage-based sex and she was unable to escape from the rotting corpse of her dead beau because she was tied up. Indeed, Colette had a truly transcendent carnal session with her belated boy toy, which ultimately caused her to develop a softspot for rotting flesh.

Needless to say, Mark leaves shortly after the rather awkward sex session, but not long after he gets back to his home, Colette abruptly arrives, hits him over the head with a mallet, and brings him back to her corpse-fucking torture chamber, where the somewhat pathetic protagonist wakes up naked with a large strap-on dildo attached to his seemingly brittle body. While Colette soon attempts to kill Mark with a chainsaw, the widower manages to disable her weapon and she is soon shot dead by her curiously crazed psychiatrist Dr. Bernhardt (Rutger Weemhoff). As Dr. Bernhardt reveals to Mark, he is the one who got Colette hooked on corpse-fucking in the first place. Indeed, on top of suffering the distinct trauma of her husband dying on top of her during S&M-fueled sex, Colette was trapped under her postmortem hubby’s corpse for a week before anyone found her, thus leading to posttraumatic stress of the rather perturbing meta-perversion-inflicting sort. As it turns out, it was Dr. Bernhardt’s idea to get Colette to “re-live” the experience of necrophilia and he even helped her dig up the corpses. Naturally, Mark must die since he knows of Dr. Bernhardt’s dubious relationship with Colette regarding grave-robbing and corpse-based carnality. While Mark manages to kill Dr. Bernhardt by stabbing him in the throat with a meat-hook, the doctor manages to shoot him in the stomach and genitals with a sawed-off shotgun just before he drops dead. As he dies, Mark thinks to himself, “Sometimes life grabs you by the balls. Literally. Thank god it’s over.” In a twist ending, it is revealed that Colette has survived the gunshot wound and she wants to fuck Mark, who says to himself while dying, “over my dead body.”

Undoubtedly, what sets *Necrophobia* apart from similarly themed American films is that, aside from featuring corpse-fucking, it is undying in its relentless cynicism, pessimism, and misanthropy to the point where the protagonist is killed and even has his balls blown off. Indeed, even the death of the lead’s wife is depicted in a totally unnervingly nihilistic fashion, as the woman is depicted twitching spasmodically as she succumbs to her fatal injuries. Of course, gore-hounds will also probably be sad to know that, unlike Buttgerit’s *Nekromantik* films, the necrophilia scenes in the film are not depicted in graphic detail, but are more implied than anything. Indeed, while the American influence on the film is blatantly obvious to the point of almost seeming like parody, van Geloven and Visser’s work is decidedly Dutch in character, as it spares no one’s feelings,

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never wallows in sentimentality, and prides itself on being pathologically pessimistic and absurdly anti-romantic. Somewhat notably, the two directors of the flick would collaborate on one more film together—the somewhat popular Dutch-Belgian coproduction *Slaughter Night* (2006) aka *S18n8*—before Visser himself became a corpse after he died unexpectedly of a heart attack on August 26, 2012 while in Crete, Greece. While not exactly a masterpiece of arthouse cinema, *Necrophobia* is certainly an underrated and overlooked masterpiece of Dutch horror, which may not say much considering the sorry state of the genre in the Netherlands, but considering it is the same tiny nation that produced cinematician Frans Zwartjes—a master of the aesthetically grotesque and macabre—it also says a lot. Also, while not the greatest film that the totally taboo sub-genre has to offer, *Necrophobia* will certainly appeal to necro-cinephiles who enjoy similarly themed works like Joe D'Amato's *Beyond the Darkness* (1979) aka *Buio Omega*, Buttgereit's *Nekromantik* series, Nacho Cerdà's *Aftermath* (1994), and Philippe Barassat's *Le nécrophile* (2004). Of course, I would not recommend the film to the necrophobic.

-Ty E

DEATH MAY BE YOUR SANTA CLAUS

Frankie Dymon (1969)

It is not often that black power types make films, let alone highly experimental British avant-garde ones, so I was naturally quite surprised when I discovered the once 'lost' Afro-Anglo agitprop piece *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* (1969) directed by black Brit Frankie Dymon Jr., who has the distinction of being probably the only member of the British Black Panther Party. Among cinephiles, Dymon is probably best remembered, if remembered at all, for being one of the Black Panther militants that appeared in celluloid Marxist pseudo-messiah Jean-Luc Godard's Rolling-Stones-doc-cum-Marxist-agitprop-experiment *One Plus One* (1968) aka *Sympathy for the Devil*. Assumed lost for a number of decades, a print of Dymon's X-rated 36-minute micro-feature was rediscovered somewhat recently and since then has been routinely screened as part of the 'Black World' initiative by the British Film Institute (BFI). Additionally, the film was included as an extra feature on the BFI Flipside Blu-ray/DVD combo release of Michael Sarne's *Joanna* (1968), which also deals with themes of black-male-on-white-female miscegenation in late-1960s London. A curious piece of celluloid negro nihilism of the pseudo-existentialist sort in an idiosyncratic quasi-Godardian style that director Dymon himself once labeled "Afro-Saxon" (which is certainly an apt, if not seemingly oxymoronic description), *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* would probably be best described as an Afrocentric artsploitation flick featuring ultra-violence, including cock-chomping cannibalism, and quasi-pornography that deals with the somewhat hypocritical dilemma that some black power brothas have regarding their love and obsession with white women. After all, you usually do not see even the most boneheaded of Uncle Adolf fetishizing neo-Nazi skinheads running after black or mestizo broads, yet it always seems that non-white racial nationalists, especially of the negroid sort, cannot get enough of honky whores. Indeed, it is not uncommon for certain black power and/or far-leftist types associated with groups like the Black Hebrew Israelites, Black Panthers (early leader Eldridge Cleaver was a serial rapist who considered his routine raping of white women to be a "an insurrectionary act"), and Symbionese Liberation Army (the leader of which, Donald DeFreeze, apparently routinely raped heiress Patty Hearst after kidnapping her) to lust over the white cave wench, thus inadvertently revealing their inferiority complex and pathological resentment towards the white man and obsession with defiling and appropriating the white man's most sacred counterpart, the white woman. Conceived over a six month period and shot in a mere ten days, the project initially intimidated director Dymon, who later reflected that his execution of the film was quite easy, stating in Volume 1, Number 11 of the British sexploitation magazine *Cinema X* that it was, "easier than I thought. Films are, basically, just pictures. Nothing new to Africans. We tell all stories in pictures." Featuring

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a score by the British proto-progressive rock group Second Hand (whose song 'Death May Be Your Santa Claus' the film is named after, with the band even releasing a full-length album of the same name in 1971), who appear in the film, and packed with tons of wonderfully politically incorrect imagery of the racially, sexually, and politically-charged sort, *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* will ultimately probably be better appreciated by libertine cinephiles and eccentric exploitation fans than modern day black power advocates who, like most contemporary viewers, will probably find the material to be somewhat inexplicable.

Opening with an iconoclastic title screen featuring a black dagger with a savage-looking negro head featuring a nose ring as a handle that has split through the flag of Great Britain, *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* then introduces protagonist Raymond Parker (ex-photographer/ex-model Ken Gajadhar), who is a college student, black power advocate, and Marxist lecturer of the exceedingly egocentric sort who lectures to a bunch of white students that, to the chagrin of white men and black women, the black man and white women desire each other most, and then makes the following nonsensical, convoluted statement, "The power that stands on privilege - and goes with women, pot, champagne and bridge - broke. And democracy regained her reign, which also goes with women, pot, and screwing. Therefore, if you want things to stay as they are, things will have to change - won't they? You see, the French Revolution, begun in 1789, did not end in 1830, but gained true victory in May 1968..." Probably due to the fact that he does not bother with his studies and spends more time agitating, Raymond is kicked out of the school by an old authoritarian WASP, who states, "Look... You know I have to do this" and complains about "bloody academics" when the belligerent black neo-bolshevik buck leaves his office. As Raymond narrates, juxtaposed with a scene of him walking away from the university in a decidedly defiant fashion, "In a convention, there must be two things. I, for one, must be the soul. They tell me that all things that have been done in the world must first come after evil has been done. My name is Raymond and that is the slave mark I must forever lose to be true to my own cause." What he means is anyone's guess, but it probably involves his dilemma regarding his embarrassing and seemingly paradoxical addiction to cracker chicks and his need to stay true to his pure jigaboo blood and spirit. Of course, as a black man that speaks more eloquently and literately than the average white Brit, was born and raised in a nation that colonized his ancestors, and worships a racist anti-black white man like Che Guevara, Ray suffers from a number of internal conflicts and is plagued by contradiction, as a man that seems to suffer from racial schizophrenia and attempts to compensate for it by espousing a sort of faith-based black liberationist theology.

Aside from his academic career being more or less over, Raymond has problems in the area of love and friendship, or as he narrates after waking up and

reading a copy of the book *Castro: A Political Biography* (1969) by The New York Times comsymp writer Herbert L. Matthews regarding he and his white friend's recent addiction to miscegenation: "Can a man realize the very dimensions of his life? Do I know what precise amount of horror is involved mine? Oh yes...it was at this point that my whole world crumpled from under my feet. I fell in love with a white girl and my best friend married a black woman." From there a beauteous scene of Raymond's friend and his black wife walking in a sunny London park erupts into a completely random bloody and ultra-violent castration scene of two longhaired white dorks and a seemingly half-retarded King Kong-esque negro, who was pushed into a pond only seconds before by his two heinous honky comrades (!), assaulting another longhaired white dork and ripping apart and cannibalizing his cock in a moment of savage sadomasochistic ecstasy that can be interpreted as an allegorical representation of miscegenation and multicultural 'castrating' and thus destroying the white race. Meanwhile, Raymond dreams of defiling his tall blondhaired and blue-eyed white beauty (white South African model Donnah Dolce) in between scenes of prog-rock band Second Hand performing in their underwear in an abandoned house along with sardonic surrealist scenes of two walking and talking caricatures, a stereotypically dressed Maoist Chinaman and the Catholic Pope. In one particularly hilarious scene, a swarthy commie rebel sporting a Che Guevara costume steals a mulatto baby from its homeless mother, who also has a white baby, and hands it to the Pope, as if it is the Catholic Church's job to find the negroes whose nations had been plunged into starvation by Marxist rebels.

Unquestionably, one of the most potent scenes of *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* involves seemingly authentic footage of a black power revolutionary heckling a bunch of poor, dirty, and largely toothless white Brits by remarking that they are "not prepared to accept the fact that there are many stupid and ignorant whites all over the world." Unwittingly demonstrating that virtually all communist theory and propaganda has been invented by far-leftist Jews who hate Europe and everything it represents and have no real interest in 'liberating' the colored people of the world but are instead using them as pawns in their war against the Occident, the black heckler also reads the following absurdist agit-prop screed compiled from writings by Judaics that were kicked out of Germany to the angry white lumpenproles: "Bruno Springer tells of the African strain even in the Germans...Professor Einstein says all modern people are the conglomeration of so many ethnic mixtures that no pure race remains with exception of the negroid, who are rapidly declining...many of Europe's most famous men, past and present, are of mixed marriages. Racial fusion tends to come before the development of any high state of culture. One cannot find any records anywhere to find that a pure race, on its own initiative, has ever developed a high culture with the exception of the negroid stock." Meanwhile, the Chinaman continues to contemplate revolutionary theory while the Pope takes a priestly poop in the

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crapper.

In a twist ending, it is revealed that Raymond's beloved is not a blonde Nordic nymph but a black as coal soul sister named Georgina (Jamaican-born model Merdelle Jordine). Indeed, all the sex scenes between Raymond and the Aryan beauty were just fantasies of the protagonist, who fell in love with the (non)white girl after merely talking to her on the phone and assuming by her voice that she was white. In the end, both the protagonist and the black, who are both wearing red, walk in the same direction, while the white girl, who is wearing blue, heads in the other direction, thus assumedly signifying that Raymond is finally headed in the right direction in his life, as he has finally decided to chase members of his own race. What auteur Frankie Dymon Jr.'s intention was with *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* is hard to say, but I do not think it would be a stretch to say that it is ultimately an anti-miscegenation piece directed by a conflicted negro who is ashamed of the fact that he prefers white devil dames to African queens. Unquestionably, Dymon's film is the kind of no bullshit work that gets under the rather thin skin of white liberals because, aside from featuring some white dork getting his dong devoured by a rapid negro Donkey Kong, it offers no sentimental messages of hope or racial reconciliation, but instead goes a much more nihilistic route that makes racial harmony seem like the silly and ultimately intangible pipe dream of idiotically idealistic whites and blacks who love miscegenation and think they somehow have the right to tell everyone else how to live just because they have a malignant case of jungle fever. In fact, Dymon went so far as to compare white woman to sensual spy Mata Hair in a scene where footage of the protagonist having sex with his white love interest is juxtaposed with a photo of the (in)famous Frisian femme fatale. While certainly original and intriguing, if not obscenely outmoded like a rotten overdosed hippie inside a broken down Volkswagen bus, Dymon's film was nothing all that new as demonstrated by Sarne's Joanna. Additionally, compared to Italian erotica maestro Tinto Brass' pre-porn avant-garde feature *nEROSubianco* (1969) aka *Attraction*—a part collage/part agitprop piece about a white woman who swoons over a black buck after her cuckold Guido hubby drops her off at Hyde Park that premiered at the 1968 Cannes Film Festival (thus technically predating Dymon's work)—almost makes *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* seem somewhat tame by comparison. Still, compared to Melvin Van Peebles' undeniably entertaining yet exceedingly technically inept black power epic *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), Dymon's Afro-Saxon artsploitation short seems like a highly intricate and nuanced work of a seasoned master who had the potential to be the next Ousmane Sembène or a black and rampantly heterosexual Lindsay Anderson. Like Van Peebles' Black Panther-approved film and the underrated black arthouse vampire flick *Ganja & Hess* (1973) directed by Bill Gunn, *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* is not some silly Blaxploitation movie directed by some monetary-motivated Hebrew, but an authentic work of Afro-cinema that makes

a serious and wholehearted attempt to speak to and for blacks living in the white world. Why Dymon never directed another film is a mystery to me, especially considering the relative artistic bankruptcy of British cinema during the the late-1960s in comparison to other European nations like Germany and Italy. I don't know about other people, but I am fully supportive of Garveyites, schizophrenic Black Israelites, and black power bros of every stripe attempting to make avant-garde films full of pure unadulterated race-hate and blood mysticism.

-Ty E

LIVING
LIVING

Frans Zwartjes (1971)

If there is any filmmaker whose works seem to be hopelessly haunted spirit of Faustian man, it is Dutch Renaissance man Frans Zwartjes (*Behind Your Walls*, *Pentimento*) who, despite being easily the most original and idiosyncratic auteurs that has ever lived, is rarely discussed by avant-garde and experimental cinema historians, not to mention the fact that none of his films have ever been released on VHS or DVD outside of the Netherlands. Of course, as an inately visceral and intuitive auteur who does not feel the need to intellectualize his work or compare himself to other filmmakers, Zwartjes never subscribed to trendy film theories and never kissed the ass of Jonas Mekas or his associates, hence why he might allude or annoy certain film historians (notably, as the auteur once humorously stated himself, “My own motor system determined the film style”). While once rightly described by Sapphic Jewess Susan Sontag as “the most important experimental filmmaker of his time,” Zwartjes only seems to be known nowadays by deathrock/darkwave fans and the occasional eccentric cinephile. I must admit that I have a very personal attachment to Zwartjes’ films, as I find them to be totally singular pieces of carefully cultivated celluloid with inordinately abstract cinematic realms of the highly emotionally sort that immediately felt like déjà vu to me the first time I experienced them, at least on the metaphysical level, as they tapped into something wholly primal that I did not feel the need to intellectualize or dissect but instead simply embraced without question. In that sense, Zwartjes is one of those filmmakers that people will either truly love or love to hate, as those that don’t initially ‘get it’ never will. Indeed, if I died and my corpse was reanimated and condemned to a personal perennial purgatory of the nightmarishly claustrophobic sort that was inhabited by the rotting and mangled zombified corpses of a couple of insufferably lecherous ladies that I rather regretted fucking, it might begin to describe what a film like Zwartjes’ classic short *Visual Training* (1969) means to me on a spiritual level. Despite the fact that Zwartjes—a musician (and one-time violaiist in the Dutch National Opera), violin maker, draughtsman, painter, sculptor, and virtual lifelong professor who is somewhat ironically against the idea of teaching art, especially artistic technique—seems to outright reject all forms of artistic tradition, the splendidly unearthly outdoor scenes in his classic black-and-white short *Anamnesis* (1969) feel like the all the more eerie and haunting post-apocalyptic equivalent to a Pieter Bruegel the Elder painting. In short, as far as I am concerned, Zwartjes is to non-linear/non-narrative experimental filmmaking what tragic auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst (*De blinde Fotograaf* aka *The Blind Photographer*, *De Witte waan* aka *White Madness*) is to narrative arthouse filmmaking, as a true cultural heir to Dutch masters like Bruegel and Vincent van Gogh, as a man’s whose work seems to embody the darkest and most forlorn and macabre

corners of the seemingly now forsaken Netherlander Volksgeist. The eldest son of an intelligent and cultivated rebel nun who grew to abandon and hate the Catholic Church and a boorish and uneducated working-class pugilist that died when he was only 9 years old, Zwartjes had a less than ideal childhood that involved nearly starving to death during the Second World War, on top of the fact that he came into contact with much internal suffering during his early adult years as a male nurse in a mental hospital, hence his particularly preternatural mastery of apocalyptic cinematic misery and melancholia. Indeed, I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that Zwartjes' films manage to say more about the human condition with a single shot, camera angle, or edit than Tarantino or Spielberg films do in their entirety, but I digress. Likewise, quite unlike the preposterously pedantic and largely emotionally vacant intellectual experiments of pathologically masturbatory avant-garde filmmakers like George Landow (aka Owen Land), Paul Sharits, Hollis Frampton, and Tony Conrad, Zwartjes' films are dripping with grim understated soulfulness, angst, pathos, carnality, Sehnsucht, and Weltschmerz, among other things.

While his early black-and-white experiments like *Birds* (1968), *Anamnesis* (1969), and *Visual Training* (1969) will always be the Zwartjes films that I appreciate the most since I saw them first and find them to be the rawest and most relatable, I think I have to concur with the Dutch auteur himself that his greatest and most immaculate work is the 14-minute color short *Living* (1971). Indubitably one of the most idiosyncratically atmospheric and consistently foreboding cinematic works ever made, the film was the final entry in the filmmaker's 'Home Sweet Home' series where Zwartjes utilized his brand new and freshly painted home in the Hague to assemble refreshingly apolitical anti-bourgeois celluloid nightmares that were more subversive than any of the films that were being assembled by the countless counterculture, anarchist, and commie filmmakers that were fairly vogue in Europe at that time. A true 100% auteur piece in the most literal sense as a work where the auteur was responsible for every single aspect of the filmmaking process, including hand-processing his own film prints, *Living* was both filmed by and stars Zwartjes and his wife and muse Trix Zwartjes, who appeared in virtually every one of her hubby's films. Indeed, more or less unwittingly inventing the selfie many decades before it became a routine habit among self-absorbed teenage girls on Facebook, Zwartjes filmed almost the entire film while holding the camera in front of his and his wife's faces. While one would assume that Zwartjes' literally in-your-face virtuoso handheld camera work would lend a certain realist cinéma-vérité quality to the film, that could not be further from the truth, as *Living*—a somewhat wickedly ironically titled film—is essentially an experimental dystopian sci-fi flick where it seems like a drone security camera is flying around and recording the deathly dull domestic (non)habits of a scientifically reanimated zombie couple that seems to be too dead to fuck. Sporting white pancake make-up and their Sunday's best

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and expressing nil discernible emotions aside from anxiety and dread, Frans and Trix look like a recently deceased middle-aged couple whose corpses were buried at the eponymous supernatural burial ground of *Pet Semetary* (1989), only to be regrettably reanimated as spiritually comatose undead automatons that lack even the energy to kill. Of course, considering that it is a Zwartjes film, *Living* certainly has a darkly erotic undercurrent to the point where Trix's tits and pussy seem to have more life and character than the singularly hapless protagonists. In that regard, the film sometimes feel like what heaven might be like for a voyeuristic necrophiliac serial killer. Additionally, in terms of tone and atmosphere, one might describe *Living* as the closest thing to an abstract avant-garde equivalent to Don Coscarelli's classic cult horror flick *Phantasm* (1979).

As Zwartjes once confessed in an interview with homo auteur Mike Hoolboom (*Frank's Cock*, *Letters from Home*)—a Canadian who is, incidentally, the son of a Dutchman and Dutch-Indonesian mother—in regard to his seemingly erotomaniacal mindset at the time he made the film, “I was a bit overexposed sexually back then. I had an extreme interest in sex. It made me scream with irritation that what you always saw in films was a man and a woman together – commotion – one, two, up you got. That was not eroticism, that was gymnastics. At the point that they actually made it into bed, a blanket was pulled over the action. Everything went black and a while later you heard teeth being brushed. What I wanted was solely to film under the sheets, in a manner of speaking. Trix, my wife, had a really astonishingly beautiful body. She was a student at the academy. I am one of those teachers who married a student. Scandalous behaviour, I agree. I filmed her a lot.” While Miss Trix admittedly has a nice pair of jumbo jugs, to be aroused by the film is nothing short of borderline necrophilia, as the little lady resembles a well endowed corpse that is just about to break down and rot. Needless to say, a decomposing cuntkin cannot be too delicious smelling. If you find the mainstream leftist anti-capitalist symbolism of George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) to be a tad bit too heavy-handed, *Living* makes for a most refreshing alternative as Zwartjes offers no easy answers as to why he and his wife resemble undead funeral attendants, but I think it is safe to say the auteur is not a fan of the post-WWII Dutch bourgeois lifestyle and sees it as something that is innately sick, sterile, and unsettling; or so the film potently suggests in a highly expressive yet sometimes esoteric fashion. Of course, while Zwartjes criticizes the bourgeoisie, he also somewhat ironically acknowledges that he part of it (after all, the film was shot in actual home). Notably, in his imperative book *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933)—a collection of essays that largely focuses on the lost and deracinated spiritual void that is Faustian man—Carl Jung wrote, “A psycho-neurosis must be understood as the suffering of a human being who has not discovered what life means for him. But all creativeness in the realm of the spirit as well as every psychic advance of man arises from a state of mental suffering, and it is spiritual

stagnation, psychic sterility, which causes this state.” Keeping Jung’s quote in mind, I see *Living* as a sort of unconscious spiritual ritual from an intrinsically irreligious man who believes in nothing aside from artistic expression and the majesty of large mammary glands. While Jung noted, “The modern man has lost all the metaphysical certainties of his medieval brother, and set up in their place the ideal of material security, general welfare and humaneness,” Zwartjes is not only metaphysically moribund, but also sees material security as a sort of form of sterile decay, or so one assumes while watching *Living* where domestic life is the most perniciously plastic forms of existential purgatory.

After beginning with a rather aesthetically pleasing opening credits sequence that includes the title of the film in the flag of the Netherlands colors of blue-white-red, *Living* cuts to a somewhat ominous and unsettlingly cockeyed low-angle shot of Frans and Trix hovering over the camera while a ceiling window that seems like a sort of gateway to hell disguised an intangible entrance to heaven can be seen behind them. From there, the married couple slowly makes their way down a flight of stairs in an extremely careful, calculated, and almost conspiratorial manner while Frans licks his fingers in a preposterously dainty fashion like some pretentious French wine-sniffing faggot who is afraid of his own asshole. Frans also incessantly plays with a revoltingly flamboyantly colored silk handkerchief that matches his equally ridiculous tie. Needless to say, being an audaciously anally retentive member of the bourgeois undead, Frans does not dare open a door without the help of his trusty hanky. Needless to say, it does not take long for the viewer to realize that Zwartjes believes that a sanitized existence is also a spiritually sterile existence that defies all that is natural and organic.

In a seemingly allegorical scene that seems to insinuate that the bourgeois are more or less large children that love fiddling with toys and playing house, Frans and especially Trix fiddle with miniature furniture, which they have placed on top of a sort of homemade blueprint of their home that is fittingly titled “*Living*.” At one point, Trix strangely steps on the blueprint, as if she thinks that she can somehow enter the image, even though said image is merely a poorly drawn model of the house that she is already standing inside. As the film progresses, Trix rests her head on Frans’ shoulder, but he remains completely indifferent to her loving gestures, as if he is totally immune to love and sensuality, among other things. Indeed, the closest thing to actual emotion that Frans expresses is irrational anxiety as indicated by his seemingly obsessive-compulsive tendency to place his handkerchief on his lips and even in his mouth. Arguably, the climax of the film involves Trix doing a sort of grotesquely lackluster (non)striptease where she is more or less sterilely molested by the ever invasive camera, which seems like it is on the brink of entering her womb like what happens to hardcore diva Catharine Burgess in pseudonymous pornographic auteur Jonas Middleton’s classic art-horror porn flick *Through the Looking Glass* (1976). Aside

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from the camera entering inside her skirt to the point where it is practically presses against her pantyhose-covered pussy, the well endowed undead dame flashes her tits multiple times in a quite frantic fashion that is made all the more bizarre and even unnerving in that the rather spasmodic scene is in hyper fast-motion. Judging simply by this sort of 'titty terrorism' scene in comparison to the rest of the film, I would have to assume that, aside from creating art, the only thing that makes Zwartjes feel truly alive is big tits and creamy cunts with rather fleshy labias (notably, the auteur would get some extra close-up shots of Trix's timeless twat in *Pentimento*). In the end, *Living* fittingly comes full circle, with the protagonists proceeding to go back up the stairs where they stand in exactly the same position on the second floor of the house that they were standing at during beginning of the film.

Rather revealing, at the very end of the documentary *De Grote tovenaer* (2005) aka *The Great Magician* directed by Ruud Monster, Zwartjes softly states in regard to the supposed innate similarity between artists and mental patients, "There's a term by Wilhelm Reich, an American psychiatrist... He thought that artists and... lost, confused people, patients, if you will... He invented a term for these disorders: Emotional plague. That really struck a chord with me. My stay in the psychiatric hospital, too. It convinced me... that those people all have emotional plague. Something you have no perception of, and no power over. And no idea that you have it." While Zwartjes clearly misinterpreted what sexually abusive quack, card-carrying commie, and all-around degenerate wack-job Wilhelm Reich, who was actually an Austrian Jew, meant when he used the phrase "Emotional Plague" (which was really a defamatory slur disguised as a scientific label that the psychoanalyst invented as a weapon so that he could accuse people, especially German gentiles, of suffering from collective psychosis if they supported nationalism/tradition or rejected the sort of degeneracy he was peddling), I think the filmmaker's remark reveals a lot about both his rather pessimistic mindset and empathy for the mentally afflicted, but also, arguably more notably, it seems to reveal that he felt that he himself was spiritually sick. Had Zwartjes read Jung instead of the innately materialistic Judaic psychoanalysts like Freud, Reich, and Adler, he probably would have better understood the metaphysical affliction that was plaguing him and Occidental man in general. As Jung once wrote, "It seems to me, that, side by side with the decline of religious life, the neuroses grow noticeably more frequent [...] everywhere the mental state of European man shows an alarming lack of balance. We are living undeniably in a period of the greatest restlessness, nervous tension, confusion and disorientation of outlook." Of course, Zwartjes' *Living* is practically marinated in "restlessness, nervous tension, confusion and disorientation of outlook," among other more inexplicable ailments and afflictions that are arguably best communicated in cinematic form.

Of course, when Friedrich Nietzsche famously wrote in his book *Die fröh-*

liche Wissenschaft (1882) aka *The Gay Science*, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him,” he was not speaking literally or attempting to sound like some too-cool-for-school proto-hipster iconoclast, but foretelling that the loss in belief in Christianity and Christian morals among Europeans would lead to a sort of dangerously corrosive nihilist plague because they would be left with an intrinsically debilitating void, or to once again quote the Teutonic philosopher, “When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one’s feet. This morality is by no means self-evident... By breaking one main concept out of Christianity, the faith in God, one breaks the whole: nothing necessary remains in one’s hands.” As demonstrated by the fact that Western Europeans openly welcome hordes of millions of highly hostile Arab Muslim rabble into their nations, it is quite clear that they believe in nothing aside from their own petty, pathetic, and highly self-destructive post-Christian moral posturing. In fact, Jung, who was a sort of reluctant Nietzschean of sorts, noted that the progressive ethno-masochistic ‘tolerance’ of modern European man was a sign of collective mental illness and pathological defeatism, or as he wrote well over half a century before Europe begin transforming into Eurabia, “The revolution in our conscious outlook, brought about by the catastrophic results of the World War, shows itself in our inner life by the shattering of our faith in ourselves and our own worth. We used to regard foreigners—the other side—as political and moral reprobates; but the modern man is forced to recognize that he is politically and morally just like anyone else.” Naturally, as the son of an errant nun, it is no surprise that Zwartjes would succumb to this sort of nihilism, though he would take it to an all the more extreme degree in his firm rejection of artistic tradition and cultural inheritance. Indeed, as a professor, Zwartjes taught an anti-tradition art class that he invented entitled “Non-Applied Design” because he “thought the only thing they did there was re-designing.” South African auteur Aryan Kaganof also once told me a humorous anecdote about how he took a film course with Zwartjes and on the first day of class he stated to the students, “If you really wanted to know how to make films you would be out there with a camera making films, not listening to some old guy like me who thinks he knows it all.” Of course, the great irony with Zwartjes is that his rejection of cinematic tradition is one of his greatest strengths, as it has led him to becoming one of the most insanely inventive and idiosyncratic filmmakers that has ever lived. Indeed, cinephiles love to talk about how they can easily recognize a Hitchcock, Roeg, or Tarantino film just by watching a scene or two, but Zwartjes is surely one of the only filmmakers whose cinematic works can be identified by a single frame.

While Zwartjes is the sort of rare totally transcendental filmmaker whose films could never be adequately analyzed, especially not with intellectual bankrupt theories that are inspired by Frankfurt School style cultural Marxist bullshit, I firmly believe that his cinematic works, especially *Living*, reflect the deepest and

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darkest expression of the forsaken post-Christian Faustian man. Of course, as both an irreligious artist and proud sensualist that rejects tradition, Zwartjes is an extreme example of the eponymous 'modern man' that Jung spoke of *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. As Jung noted in the final chapter of his book, "I have found that modern man has an ineradicable aversion for traditional opinions and inherited truths. He is a Bolshevist for whom all the spiritual standards and forms of the past have lost their validity, and who therefore wants to experiment in the world of the spirit as the Bolshevist experiments with economics." Undoubtedly, what makes Zwartjes an interesting and truly notable case is that, unlike the Bolsheviks and their all the more degenerate disciples, he has 'succeeded' in his experiments and has sired his own cinematic language and universe that was not inspired by any sort of cinematic tradition. Indeed, the only thing cinematically that Zwartjes was ever influenced by was the subversive spirit of the experimental American filmmakers of the 1960s, or as the auteur stated to Hoolboom, "What made a huge impression on me was the New American Cinema. The municipal theatre in Eindhoven presented a new American film program in the early 1960s. For the first time I was able to see films by Bruce Connor, by Markopolous, by that fatso... Peter Kubelka and by Andy Warhol. I thought: Jesus Christ, what's going on! In *THE SHOPPER* by Warhol, the camera is first pointed at the ceiling and then sinks downwards, but you can feel that it was not done by hand. The bolt at the top of the tripod wasn't screwed tight. The camera sinks down by itself, splendidly. While the camera keeps on shooting, you can meanwhile hear someone talking. The protagonist just keeps on going. The crazy thing is that I started to be irritated by the film after a little while and I went out to get a drink. I must have gone back and forth ten times and each time that I opened the door to have another look, I thought, damn it all, it's awfully good! Those screenings had a big influence on me." Of course, judging by his films, it is nearly impossible to see how he was influenced by the non-directed cinematic abortions of weirdo Warhol. It should also be noted that, although he does not subscribe to Catholicism or Calvinism, Zwartjes has been influenced by *philosophia perennis*, including the Hindu Vedanta and the writings of Medieval Teutonic mystic Meister Eckhart, hence the strangely spiritual and otherworldly nature of his films. Indeed, forget Hitchcock, if any filmmaker has codified his own religion of celluloid voyeurism with its own special set of esoteric rites and rituals, it is Zwartjes.

As the literal "father of Dutch experimental film" and a longtime film professor, Zwartjes has naturally influenced many filmmakers, including such unexpected individuals as music documentarian Frank Scheffer (*John Cage: From Zero, Conducting Mahler*), yet none of his artistic heirs have even come close to expanding on or even adequately mimicking his singular cinematic techniques. Undoubtedly, the most 'successful' of his students is Paul de Nooijer, who co-directed *Moving Stills* (1972) with Zwartjes, yet his films ultimately seem hope-

lessly contrived, shallow, goofy, and just plain weak by comparison. Indeed, de Nooijer's short films like *Say Goodbye* (1975), *Review* (1976), and *At One View* (1989) have an unmistakable Zwartjes-esque vibe to them to the point where the characters in these cinematic works seem like they could be the neighbors or relatives of the protagonists of *Living*, but unfortunately these admittedly oftentimes quite eccentric flicks lack the teeth and visceral obsessiveness that pervades the director's master's films. In fact, when de Nooijer eventually cultivated his own signature aesthetic that did not seem like it was altogether influenced by Zwartjes, his films began resembling hyper hokey and kitschy 1980s MTV music videos as reflected in intolerably silly and zany cinematic works like *N.E.W.S.* (1984) and *Stop the Greenhouse Effect* (1992). While de Nooijer would do things to distance himself from Zwartjes' style like incorporate various forms of primitive animation, even his more recent works like *Loſt in America* (2005) co-directed by his son Menno de Nooijer radiate aspects of the Zwartjesian universe. Not surprisingly, *Living* is obviously the Zwartjes film that has most influenced de Nooijer.

While most cinephiles and cineastes would probably think I was absolutely insane for admitting this, I cannot deny that Zwartjes' mere 14-minute short *Living* is more important to me than the entire oeuvres of legendary directors like John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, and David Lean, but then again I have always had more of an affinity for poets than artisans. Like Danish master auteur Carl Th. Dreyer and fellow Dutchman *Ditvoorſt* with narrative filmmaker, Zwartjes is a rare exception in film history in that he reinvented cinema in terms of both technique and concept. In that sense, Zwartjes' films are not only brutal for novices in terms of imagery, but also in overall technique, as watching one of his films is like being introduced to cinema for the first time. A filmmaker that thankfully never fell into the Structuralist ghetto or ever subscribed to esoteric commie theories that epitomize the obscenely outmoded and virtually now wholly worthless and equally forgotten intellectual masturbation pieces of asininely arcane excremental avant-gardists like Laura Mulvey and her equally banal bitch-boy Peter Wollen, Zwartjes ultimately also managed to beat the Vienna Aktionist filmmakers like Kurt Kren and Otto Muehl at their own gorgeously grotesque game while at the same time managing to make avant-garde cinematic works that are as entertaining and timeless as those of Kenneth Anger. Of course, unlike his rather crude Lowland Countries contemporaries like Belgian artsploitation agitator Roland Lethem (*La fée sanguinaire*, *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, *Le sexe enrage* aka *The Red Cunt*) and underground necrophilia enthusiast turned mainstream casting director Patrick Hella (*Les sables*, *La tête froide*), Zwartjes refined his craft like an old master as opposed to merely throwing something sadistically silly and vaguely artsy fartsy together that mostly relies on sheer cheap shock value (though, admittedly, Lethem and Hella's proudly obnoxious shorts are refreshingly humorous and anarchistic). Notably, as clearly indicated by the im-

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passioned flirting he does while directing his wife Trix and artist Moniek Toebosch at his house in the Hague in the doc *Frans Zwartjes, Filmmaker* (1971) directed by René Coelho, Zwartjes also knew how to have a lot of fun on his film sets, even if his oftentimes unnervingly foreboding and claustrophobic cinematic works sometimes hint otherwise. Not surprisingly, Zwartjes' one-time student Aryan Kaganof—undoubtedly one of the most subversive filmmakers of the modern age—would pay tribute to *Living* and a number of the master's other films with his 20-minute flick *Mother's Day* (2014). While Zwartjes' influence on Kaganof was more in terms of spirit than aesthetics, the South African auteur's masterful *Bataille* adaptation *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994) certainly has some Zwartjesian moments that recall *Pentimento*.

A nearly no budget film that features nil special effects or plot and is set in an almost completely empty all-white house that seems like the all the more nightmarish (anti)bourgeois equivalent to the otherworldly neoclassical style pod room featured at the conclusion of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Living* unequivocally proves that creativity, inventiveness, and genuine artistic talent always trump big budgets and lavish. Undoubtedly, when I think about Zwartjes and his films, I cannot help but be reminded of the Edgar Allan Poe quote, "Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence—whether much that is glorious—whether all that is profound—does not spring from disease of thought—from moods of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect." Indeed, while watching *Living*, it feels like I have paid witness to some great metaphysical insight regarding modernity that simply cannot be communicated via writing or in any other art form. Notably, as Zwartjes confessed to *Hoolboom* in regard to the personal importance of cinema in comparison to the various other artistic mediums that he has worked within, "According to Trix, I've never been as clear about myself as I am in my films. But I didn't see that at all when I was making them. I didn't interpret those films. Others did, but what they said was often beside the point." Undoubtedly, when I watch *Living*, I see Zwartjes embodying Faustian man as an eerily elderly and decidedly decrepit sexless undead bourgeois corpse who is too apathetic to even bother to acknowledge that his voluptuous and aggressively lecherous yet nonetheless equally cadaverous wife is flashing her big bosoms and pussy at him. As far as I am concerned, Zwartjes' film represents the ugly and pathetic extreme of contemporary European man, who is too internally sick and passive to even defend his nation and women from his perennial enemies, or to once again go back to Jung's quote, "We used to regard foreigners—the other side—as political and moral reprobates; but the modern man is forced to recognize that he is politically and morally just like anyone else." Of course, only a Dutchman of the almost self-destructively individualistic sort could have directed a film like *Living* where the condemned corpses of Calvinism haplessly wander around a house they no longer recognize in a land

that they feel wholly spiritually dispossessed from. Surely, if I were given the opportunity to bury one single film in a time capsule as evidence of what led to some sort of catastrophic Occident apocalypse, it would be Zwartjes' magnum opus, which ultimately makes the truly hellish depiction of mid-sixteenth century Holland depicted in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's masterful panorama painting *The Triumph of Death* (1562) seem like an exceeding exciting time to live by comparison. Quite fittingly, *Living* is one of the sixteen films that was included in the 'canon of Dutch cinema' (aka *Canon van de Nederlandse film*), thus putting alongside other similarly important cinematic works like Johan van der Keuken's *Blind Kind* (1964), Adriaan Ditvoorst's *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra*, Paul Verhoeven's *Turks Fruit* (1964) aka *Turkish Delight*, and Alex van Warmerdam's *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners*. Somewhat unfortunately but not surprisingly, one of Joris Ivens' films was also included in the canon. Of course, as a result of Ivens and his dubious legacy, film academics and historians tend to associate Dutch cinema with internationally oriented communist agitprop instead of the true celluloid gold of Ditvoorst and Zwartjes. As far as I am concerned, until the average semi-serious cinephile has the image of *Trix Zwartjes'* tits burned into their brain, Dutch cinema will not have been given its just due.

-Ty E

IT'S ME
IT'S ME

Frans Zwartjes (1976)

Thanks to the thoughtful gratitude of a Dutch comrade and SS reader, I was finally able to wallow in the strangely entrancing pulchritude of the first feature-length film of one of my favorite filmmakers. Indeed, *It's Me* (1976) directed by the great Dutch renaissance man Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Behind Your Walls*) is, not unlike most of the auteur's films, an innately idiosyncratic piece of avant-garde cinema where the grotesque somehow becomes strikingly gorgeous. Unlike many of the director's better known films like *Anamnesis* (1969) and *Living* (1971) where the characters oftentimes resemble reanimated corpses and deathrock fans and the settings resemble some unspeakable sort of post-Christian pandemonium, the film is somewhat documentary-like in its essence and its clearly set in a contemporary setting, though the emotions and behavior expressed by the female lead are unequivocally grotesque and oftentimes unnerving. A non-narrative one-woman show starring Dutch diva Willeke van Ammelrooy—a woman with a long and eclectic career who has starred in everything from *Swinging Amsterdam* exploitation trash like Pim de la Parra's *Frank en Eva* (1973) to fantastique arthouse classics like Harry Kümel's *De komst van Joachim Stiller* (1976) aka *The Arrival of Joachim Stiller* to Oscar winning feminist insipidity like Marleen Gorris' singularly misandric carpet-muncher movie *Antonia's Line* (1995) to big budget Hollywood kitsch like the Sandra Bullock vehicle *The Lake House* (2006)—*It's Me* is a sort of haunting yet strangely darkly humorous psychodramatic portrait of an insufferably self-absorbed actress whose vulgar displays of vanity and self-absorption is only transcended by her waning sanity and pathetic loneliness. In short, the film depicts Western womankind at its worst.

While I have yet to have the honor of seeing everyone of Zwartjes' films, I can only assume that the 68-minute feature is the auteur's most overtly Warholian effort as a lo-fi document packed with impassioned improvisation where the actress and her onscreen persona are completely blurred (thankfully, van Ammelrooy is classier than Warhol superstar Viva). In fact, Warhol is one of the few filmmakers that Zwartjes has described as an influence, or as he once stated in an interview with experimental queer filmmaker Mike Hoolboom, "What made a huge impression on me was the New American Cinema. The municipal theatre in Eindhoven presented a new American film program in the early 1960s. For the first time I was able to see films by Bruce Connor, by Markopolous, by that fatso... Peter Kubelka and by Andy Warhol. I thought: Jesus Christ, what's going on! In *THE SHOPPER* by Warhol, the camera is first pointed at the ceiling and then sinks downwards, but you can feel that it was not done by hand. The bolt at the top of the tripod wasn't screwed tight. The camera sinks down by itself, splendidly. While the camera keeps on shooting, you can meanwhile

hear someone talking. The protagonist just keeps on going. The crazy thing is that I started to be irritated by the film after a little while and I went out to get a drink. I must have gone back and forth ten times and each time that I opened the door to have another look, I thought, damn it all, it's awfully good! Those screenings had a big influence on me." Of course, *It's Me* is not plagued by the sort of grating technical ineptness that is typical of a Warhol film. Indeed, with a number of seemingly immaculately framed soft-focus shots, Zwartjes's film certainly has an ethereal essence despite its relatively humdrum one-room setting.

Of course, what really makes Zwartjes' films quite different from Warhol and his collaborator Paul Morrissey's cinematic works is that it is a virtually immaculately directed and edited piece of unconsciously high class celluloid art that was created by a man that developed his own preternatural filmic language, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a filmmaker that once boldly stated, "My own motor system determined the film style. It never occurred to me to wonder: can this shot follow on after this one? If you start wondering about that you should be looking for another job straight away." If one thing is for sure about *It's Me*, it is that Zwartjes is absolutely obsessed with every inch of female lead van Ammelrooy's silky skinned body as the camera compliments the actress' every curve and crevice. Indeed, in no other films does a woman's body, movements, and facial expressions tell the entire story, or lack thereof. Likewise, in no other film does a woman's most pathetic and banal moments become so striking. A film that could be retitled 'The Dejecting Domestic Habits of A Chainsmoking Dutch Dime Store Diva,' *It's Me*—a film that focuses on the terribly dull daily habits of an actress that no one seems interested in hiring—takes a surprisingly aesthetically entrancing approach to demystifying the allure and intrigue of the sort of ravishing statuesque woman that most men would give one of their testicles to fuck.

Considering that it is the only one of his full-lengths films that has been officially released on DVD, I have always wrongly assumed that *Pentimento* (1979)—an avant-garde dystopian flick full of fine female flesh and East Asian scientist that perform curious experiments on said fine female flesh—was Zwartjes' first feature. Needless to say, it was a pleasant surprise for me to discover *It's Me*, which does for Willeke van Ammelrooy what Philippe Garrel's *Les hautes solitudes* (1974) did for tragic American actress Jean Seberg in terms of giving an oftentimes exploited and seemingly damaged diva the opportunity to flex her acting chops and express herself in a rather raw and vulnerable fashion that some people, especially those looking for a mere masturbation aid, would probably find to be a tad bit off-putting and even unsettling. Indeed, while the film might feature a brief beaver shot or two, the heroine, who oftentimes seems like she is only the brink of a total mental breakdown, is hardly depicted in an erotic fashion, at least in any conventional sense (notably, van Ammelrooy first gained

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fame for her debut role as the eponymous wanton woman in Fons Rademakers' classic Stijn Streuvels adaptation *Mira* (1971)). While Zwartjes was apparently disappointed with the results of his first feature, leading lady van Ammelrooy would regard it as one of the greatest artistic successes of her rather long and eclectic acting career despite the fact that she portrays a less than likeable lady of the considerably loony sort. Aside from Zwartjes himself, Mat van Hensbergen, who also shot Adriaan Ditvoorst's criminally underrated epic satire *De mantel der Liefde* (1978) aka *The Mantle of Love* and would later curiously act as a camera operator on Hollywood trash like *Cheech and Chong: Still Smokin'* (1983), acted as the film's cinematographer. A bizarrely captivating cinematic work where Zwartjes seems to have traded in the visually grotesque of his earlier films for the emotionally grotesque as personified by a pretty vapid beauty that seems to suffer from a strangely neurotic form of self-worship, *It's Me* might be about only one woman but it ultimately works as a subtle critique of modern Occidental women in general as van Ammelrooy's character suffers from an exaggerated form of the sort of insufferable psychosis that is all too prevalent among members of the so-called fairer sex in Hollywoodized post-WWII Europe where a sort of wholly corrosive and vulgar Coca-Cola pseudo-culture reigns. Indeed, incessantly unconsciously brainwashing herself with magazines featuring female nudes that she constantly compares herself with, the nameless the heroine—an actress that has turned her apartment into a virtual shrine and fantasy realm of her own making—is a fully willing victim of female tabloid trash and seems to live solely to triumph over and/or win the respect of other women, or so the viewer can only assume by her bizarre behavior.

As Jean-Luc Godard attempted to communicate in both overt and covert ways in his semi-autobiographical eight feature *Une femme mariée* (1964) aka *A Married Woman* in regard to the sort of metaphysical affliction that plagues many modern Western women (notably, the filmmaker was convinced that his then-wife Anna Karina was incapable of loving him due to being debased by pop culture), the contemporary European female is incapable of true love and monogamy because she has been brainwashed by magazines and cultural trends that have informed her that the ideal 'liberated' woman is a self-worshipping and self-glorifying hedonistic whore of the culturally retarded sort who is only interested in her own quest for pleasure and shallow reputation among other vainglorious women that live to model their largely worthless lives after the fantasy worlds created by the homo advertisers of Madison Avenue. Notably, in regard to a montage from his film featuring an assortment of advertisements juxtaposed with a song sung by Sylvie Vartan, Godard stated, "If I have shown . . . the place that magazine advertisements occupy in the life of this woman, it's because certain forms of advertising are going so far as to become people's own thoughts. The models that are proposed to people are becoming identical with the people themselves. Even their sex life is not their own, it's already displayed on the

walls. People's existence is no more than the reflection of what they see, their freedom is a prefabricated thought."Undoubtedly, the heroine in Zwartjes' film is the unintentionally humorous extreme in regard to the dark and depressing phenomenon that Godard describes, as her entire existence seems predicated on something she saw on television or in a movie, even when she is all by her lonesome (in fact, one assumes she does not have a social life because the fantasies contained within magazines and movies have acted as a sort of sick psychological substitute). Of course, quite thankfully, Zwartjes' film is a mostly visceral experience and does not succumb to the sort of calculated pedantic intellectual methods that are quite typical of Godard's films. Like a minimalistic avant-garde Dutch mutation of Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965) sans the schizophrenic horrors, murder, and sexual repression, *It's Me* is indubitably a somewhat ironically titled work in that the heroine seems to have no true organic identity or personality of her own, but instead seems to exist solely to attempt to live up to the counterfeit glamour and shallow sexual appeal of her favorite unclad print starlet while she wastes away in her apartment in a bizarre yet banal hermetic ritual of movie and media induced self-transformation. Whether or not her character is based on herself, her younger self, and/or other actresses she encountered during her career, it is quite clear that van Ammelrooy is all too familiar with the internally damaged dame she portrays to the point where one has trouble separating the actress from the character. Indeed, for better or worse, *It's Me* is Willeke van Ammelrooy completely raw and uncensored.

After a sort of 'Gothic chic' glamour shot of van Ammelrooy, the film abruptly cuts to a shot of her foam-covered hand in a bathtub in a scene where it becomes immediately apparent that she lives for pleasure, especially the smaller pleasures in life. As demonstrated by the fact that she slowly sprawls out her limbs in the bathtub like a sleeping dog stretching in the sunlight, the heroine is a master when it comes to basking in her bourgeois domestic luxury. Notably, the viewer does not even see van Ammelrooy's face for the first time until well into the 6 minute mark after her phone rings and she exits the tub in a rather relaxed fashion. Not surprisingly considering the context of the scene, the viewer has the distinguished pleasure to see van Ammelrooy's bosoms and beaver at virtually the same time we first see her face, but such brazen physical nakedness is nothing compared to the erratic emotions and strange psychological quirks that she will ultimately expose in Zwartjes' extra claustrophobic chamber piece. As for her phone call, the heroine says things like "Oh yes!!!" and "fine" like a phony porn star during what is clearly a patently pointless and painfully generic conversation. While most of the film is in English, it is oftentimes inaudible because Zwartjes opted to layer secondary audio tracks over the dialogue, thus giving the viewer the impression that the protagonist is scatterbrained bimbo that suffers from cognitive dissonance, among other things. After her fairly brief phone call, van Ammelrooy strips off her clothes and gets in the bathtub again so that she can

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drain the water, though she takes the opportunity to smoke a joint as she waits for the water to go down the drain. After she is all nice and clean, the heroine is ready to spend the rest of the film roaming around her small yet rather striking apartment like a histrionic harpy that is high on an inflated and wholly delusional sense self-esteem and a dubious cocktail of drugs.

As a result of a clearly fruitful collaboration between Zwartjes, his beautiful wife Trix Zwartjes, and a chick named Floor Peters that seems to have no other film credits to her name, the slightly flamboyant production design in *It's Me* is absolutely alluring and quite fitting as the heroine's apartment looks like that sort of flat Werner Schroeter might have put together had he worked as a production designer on a color sequel to David Lynch's *Eraserhead*. Naturally, as someone that seems to spend all day inside where she is free to smoke while lounging around naked, van Ammelrooy seems to love her little lair as it probably the only place in the entire world where she is able to truly be herself and sharpen her acting talents without seeming like a total fool. Indeed, acting and resembling a slightly more tolerable and feminine Katharine Hepburn, the heroine says to an imaginary audience in an extra exaggerated melodramatic fashion things like, "You don't want to understand" and "Oh, it's a wonderful feeling...those people around me." When she is not practicing acting, van Ammelrooy looks at magazines full of nude female models and then uses a portable mirror to compare her tits, pussy, and other body parts to those of said nude models. While it is dubious as to whether she is a dyke or even a passive part-time lily-licker, there is no question that van Ammelrooy lives in a personal estrogen-marinated pandemonium full of fiercely unflattering feminine psychological idiosyncrasies and bare and busty unclad female bodies where no masculine presence can be found. After all, one would expect that van Ammelrooy would receive at least one visit from a sensually potent male suitor of some sort, but the heroine seems more interested in closely examining her own boobs and smoking blunts than smoking a fuckpole or being vaginally pillaged by some young hunk. Indeed, in the hysterically feminine world of *It's Me*, men are not even part of the equation, which is unfortunate considering that the heroine seems like she could at least be temporarily relieved of her internal turmoil if some kind young man were to make her feel like a real woman by sexually ravage her.

While only mere speculation, I can only assume that the heroine's single greatest obsession is trying on new clothes and shoes, which she does countless times during the film. Indeed, when van Ammelrooy straps on a pair of fancy high-heels, she does it in such a sensual and sensitive fashion that one can only assume the sort of delicacy that she puts into diddling herself. In contrast, when the heroine brushes her hair, she does so in a sinister fashion to the point where it seems like she might explode into a seething rage of irrational violence. In another scene, the heroine demonstrates her physical elegance by performing a little ballet routine while smoking a joint and fiddling with a large feathered fan

in a fairly dark room that is lit by nothing but a small static TV screen. Of course, van Ammelrooy spends a little bit of time watching some Zwartjes-esque black-and-white footage of herself on a tiny TV screen during a fleeting metacinematic moment that seems to be a nod to the director's previous black-and-white shorts. After opting to play with her hair and making it quite curly, the heroine hatefully stares into the camera and then subsequently has a mental breakdown of sorts where she kicks things around her apartment and eventually sheds tears of anger and frustration. In fact, van Ammelrooy eventually mentally deteriorates to such a troubling degree that she begins pacing back and forth in her flat while mumbling incoherent mumbo jumbo. As to why the heroine acts the bizarre way that she does, she gives a hint when she states to her phantom audience, "ME. . . I'm not tired. I'm not lazy, too. I just do my profession. This is me. I'm only an actress" and then coughs and complains in a less than believable fashion, "I'm dying." Towards the end of the film, the heroine picks up her obviously much prized gold-colored phone and spouts what can only be described as a garbled mess, though it seems somewhat doubtful that there is someone on the other line. When van Ammelrooy eventually gets off the phone, she sheds a tear as if she cannot bear the fact that no one is calling or interested in her. In the end in what is undoubtedly a fittingly unnervingly beautiful conclusion to an unnervingly beautiful film, the heroine stares directly at the viewer with a smirk on her face that grows from a goofy smile to maniacal laughing.

If *It's Me* seems to be about anything, it about female narcissism, delusion, and self-deception, which of course seems to be especially prevalent in attractive actresses who have assuredly infected the rest of Occidental women with their perverse prima donna propensities. Undoubtedly van Ammelrooy's character seems like a sort of Dutch porn star Norma Desmond, albeit without the wealth and prestige that she would need to keep spectators and servants around to pay witness to her megalomaniacal displays of infantile vanity and nostalgic self-worship. Indeed, in many ways, one could argue that *It's Me* is one of the most misogynistic films ever made (incidentally, Zwartjes' later feature *Pentimento* was viciously attacked by feminists, who once raided a screening of the film and destroyed a print) as it paints an unsettling portrait of the so-called fairer sex, but I seriously doubt that it was the director's intention as Zwartjes has never been a filmmaker with any strong intellectual or socio-political pretenses, even if one could argue that his cinematic works say more about their particular zeitgeist than most Dutch films from the same era. More than anything, I could not help but be reminded of the ideas of anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vilar in her revolutionary text *The Manipulated Man* (1971) in regard to women and how they only seem to be concerned with what other members of their sex think. After all, throughout the film, van Ammelrooy is either comparing herself to other women or attempting to look like other women by trying on various outfits, thus providing credence to Vilar's words, "Yes, only women exist in a woman's world."

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The women she meets at church, at parent-teacher meetings, or in the supermarket; the women with whom she chats over the garden fence; the women at parties or window-shopping in the more fashionable streets; those she apparently never seems to notice – these women are the measure of her success or failure. Women's standards correspond to those in other women's heads, not to those in the heads of men; it is their judgment that really counts, not that of men [...] Men really have no idea in what kind of world women live in; their hymns of praise miss all the vital points." Indeed, the genius of *It's Me* is that, although it only features one single character who rarely speaks, it is quite apparent that her superlatively superficial mind is almost solely focused on the styles, mannerisms, make-up, and hairdos of other women as if she is totally devoid of both an independent mind and distinct personality. Of course, the heroine's truest self is ultimately revealed during her rather unflattering moments of neurotic rage.

It has been my personal experience that the more a woman changes her appearance in a dramatic fashion and 'reinvents' herself, the more mentally unstable she is. I have also noticed that when women are at a low point in their lives and 'feel' ugly, especially when they have dumped or have been dumped by a boyfriend, they tend to get a ridiculously unbecoming hairdo that matches their melancholy or general mental instability. Of course, it is quite revealing that the uniquely unhinged female of *It's Me* incessantly tries in vain to find a look that she will be content with, as her behavior demonstrates a perpetual state of internal chaos that no shitty dye or perm job could help alleviate. Notably, the heroine seems the most relaxed and mentally sound when she is naked, as if she feels completely free and not plagued by psychological and cosmetic baggage. On the other hand, as Vilar noted in regard to women and their natural naked state, "Woman regards her natural self merely as the raw material of a woman. Not the raw material but the end result has to be judged. Unmade-up, without curls and bracelets and necklaces, women are not yet really present. This explains why they do not mind running around in curlers or with cold cream on their faces. It is not 'they' at that stage – they are still occupied with the process of becoming 'them.' They succeed with this sort of make-believe all the more easily because they are not hampered by any kind of intelligence." Judging by Vilar's admittedly rough but nonetheless reasonable remark, one can only assume that the great self-loathing Hebrew Otto Weininger was not too far off when he described women as being innately soulless and lacking true individuality, for their main concern is superficial appearances and maintaining a perennial aesthetic masquerade lest men discover that they are nowhere as intriguing or enigmatic as they would have you believe.

I think it is quite fitting that a film entitled *It's Me* ultimately demystifies female beauty and presents it as an absurd charade, as the viewer ultimately sees what is arguably post-WWII Holland's most famous diva at her most literally and figuratively naked. Indeed, while a good number of men like to put pussy on

a pedestal, especially premium grade pussy, and see dames as Delphic creatures that can never be truly understood, most women are thoroughly less intriguing than the extravagant costumes and make-up they wear, or as Vilar noted in regard to the major con that is femininity, "This femininity, synthetic in origin, consists of two different components: emphasis on secondary sexual characteristics and distancing herself by means of masks [...] The first component serves to make her desirable to man, the second to make her mysterious to him. She herself thus creates the equivocal, unknown 'opposite sex,' making it easier for him to accept his enslavement. Thanks to the wide range of possible transformations each woman can offer a man – and a 'real' woman varies her looks just a little every day – she keeps him in a state of constant bewilderment. While he is still trying to find yesterday's woman in today's, she gains time to achieve her own ends. She will maneuver the man into an untenable position, all the time skillfully distracting his attention from the stench of a rotting mind beneath the pleasing mask." Of course, it could be argued that the deathly pale corpse-like women featured in Zwartjes' classic shorts like *Visual Training* are a symbolic depiction of womankind in its unmasked state and *It's Me* is simply the auteur's first realist work.

Aside from possibly effeminate dope-addled frog Philippe Garrel (*Le reveleateur*, *La cicatrice intérieure* aka *The Inner Scar*), no other heterosexual cinematic auteur has demonstrated a deeper obsession for womankind in their natural habitat than Zwartjes, which is arguably most apparent in *It's Me* where the viewer is forced to confront a less than mentally sound diva without both her literal and figurative make-up, thus making for a fairly singular cinematic experience that is just as grueling as it is rewarding. Undoubtedly the film will prove to be a strangely unsettling experience for any heterosexual man that has ever had to deal with the incessant indecisiveness, irrationality, and self-obsession of a beautiful broad who believes her physical appearance and, in turn, mental well-being and personal comfort are above all other concerns in the world. Of course, as Zwartjes' film hints during the scenes where the lead attempts to act like a Golden Age Hollywood diva, the art of cinema has only compounded these particular forms of female psychosis as virtually all women now find themselves comparing themselves to the greatest beauties of the silver screen.

Somewhat ironically, despite lacking the pancake make-up and eerie undead eroticism that is associated with the female figures in the director's earlier films, the all-too-female heroine portrayed by van Ammelrooy is easily the most inately grotesque, repugnant, and insufferable woman that I have ever encountered in a Zwartjes flick. Indeed, while the viewer is exposed to van Ammelrooy's naughty seductive stares and provocative physical gestures, *It's Me* is ultimately about as erotic as watching a raving afro-adorned negress receive electroshock therapy, even though Zwartjes still manages to showcase the heroine's pulchritude. Notably, despite depicting the largely ugly and painful emotions

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of a delectable dame in a tiny apartment, it is also indubitably one of Zwartjes' most beautiful films. Aside from the strikingly tableaux and agonizingly alluring lead, the film certainly benefits from its original electronic musical score by Zwartjes and Lodewijk de Boer (who created music for a number of Zwartjes' films and who later directed van Ammelrooy in his sole feature *The Family* (1973), which anticipates the ambient sounds of contemporary underground Danish musical projects associated with like record labels like Posh Isolation and Janushoved, including *Internazionale*, *Croatian Amor*, and *Rosen & Spydde*, among various others. While I must stop short of describing *It's Me* as a lost masterpiece, it is, like most of Zwartjes' oeuvre, certainly ripe for rediscovery among serious cinephiles that appreciate filmmakers that test the bounds of the entire artistic medium of cinema. Certainly, one also cannot ignore a film that more or less subtly affirms Weininger's wise timeless words: "A man's real nature is never altered by education: woman, on the other hand, by external influences, can be taught to suppress her most characteristic self, the real value she sets on sexuality. Woman can appear everything and deny everything, but in reality she is never anything. Women have neither this nor that characteristic; their peculiarity consists in having no characteristics at all; the complexity and terrible mystery about women come to this; it is this which makes them above and beyond man's understanding – man, who always wants to get to the heart of things. . ."

-Ty E

THE GREAT MAGICIAN

Frans Zwartjes (2006)

Dutch Renaissance man Frans Zwartjes has had a less than ideal life; his father died when he was 9 years old, his mother was an ex-nun turned mental health worker, and he (voluntarily) lived in a mental institution for a weighty and artistically influential period of time. Luckily for Zwartjes, he did not mind seeing mental invalids relieve themselves in public before his very weary, sparkling starstruck eyes, but, instead, found an atypical sort of solace in it. In fact, such seemingly flustering scenarios would inspire his exceedingly grotesque short films that, even to this day, have no contemporaries in regard to their genuinely odiousness and narcotizing proto-death-rock aesthetic. Unlike the modern trend of firmly embracing the cult of victimhood, Zwartjes became an eclectic, highly productive, and profoundly expressionistic artist with a keen talent for playing and building string instruments (especially the violin), painting human portraits whose warped human physiques make those created by Egon Schiele seem like that of the Adonis-like figures concocted by Arno Breker by comparison, and directing some of the most aberrant yet strangely pulchritudinous short films ever made. In the documentary *De grote Tovenaar* (2006) aka *The Great Magician* directed by Ruud Monster, Frans Zwartjes, the creator of some of the most audacious surrealist cinematic works ever created, is ironically revealed to be a modest man who tells the story of his life and audacious art at a vocal pitch that is not much louder than a humble and saintly whisper. Had someone not known anything about Zwartjes nor his art, one could easily mistake the subversive artist for a Calvinist pastor and not a man committed to total depravity. Of course, had Zwartjes' Dutch Calvinist ancestors seen his art, he would have surely been burnt at the stake. Modernly, Zwartjes is considered an anti-Christ among estrogen-deprived feminists, indubitably a notable honor of sorts, as they find his cinematic depictions of those members of the fairer sex involved in erotic 'water sports' to be most reprehensible.

I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that Frans Zwartjes is organically following in a grand and incomparable legacy of morbid and grueling Dutch art. Following in the tradition of demonological works painted by early Dutch Renaissance painters Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel (Brueghel) the Elder, the short films of Frans Zwartjes are stark religious works for the mostly materialistic post-WWII era. As he explains in *The Great Magician*, Zwartjes has devoured many highly inspirational esoteric religious texts, including the Sanskrit Rig Veda and Vedanta, related works of Indian mystical literature, and texts written by German Christian mystic Meister Eckhart. Combined with his very personal experience with seemingly possessed mental patients, Zwartjes films reflect the penetrating spirit of a deeply religious (if pessimistic) man whose post-Christian and post-traditional sentiments bleed

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deeply (both literally and figuratively) through his uncompromising art. Oddly enough, Zwartjes also credits traditional opera for giving him the emotional development and confidence he needed as an artist. As a man who is known for creating films that are exaggeratedly visceral and portrays the body in a state of endless, cadaver-like decay, it is somewhat queer that Frans Zwartjes has also cites something so common and ordinary as the nude and natural human body as one of his greatest influences. As he explains quite vividly and unabashedly in *The Great Magician*, Mr. Zwartjes would often frequent nude beaches and gaze at the stripped bodies of both men and women of all ages for artistic encouragement, henceforth, developing an especially keen partialness for mother nature's most rosy flesh flower; the female vagina. In fact, it is quite apparent in the documentary that Zwartjes is most jubilant when he discusses in fanatical detail his distinct love for the mystique behind the naturally fragrant female meat-curtain. Of course, like his cinematic portrayal of every other body part, Zwartjes' various onscreen scenes of the penis flytrap are comparable to a cold, wet axe-wound on a mobile cadaver lurking menacingly in a dark, uncharted subterranean netherworld. Needless to say, the 'Great Magician' of *The Great Magician* is a renegade regal neo-Gothic artist who sees the world through a unique personal lens that have accredited him with ability to be an unintentional and unofficial prophetic apocalyptic priest of sorts. Like all religious works, the films of Frans Zwartjes strike fear and bewilderment into the uninitiated, but bring consolation to the enlightened proselyte.

If any filmmaker can capture what modern man looks like on the inside, it is indubitably Frans Zwartjes. As expressed so sharply in his films, the soulless man of contemporary times is a grotesque, Zombie-like being who obsesses over every and any perversion, so long as it does not have any practical utilitarian purpose and actually result in the reproduction of progeny. In the eyes of Zwartjes, the modern man is also a preposterous pig who incessantly consumes without even the slightest inkling of self-control. In Zwartjes' short *Visual Training* (1969), a debauched and decaying man and a couple ghoulish gals find themselves preparing a woman's voluptuous (if disgusting) buttocks with ungodly seasonings and ingredients, as if she is the main course in a cannibalistic buffet. These seemingly pernicious and ill-disposed individuals in the film later stare into the camera in a most menacing way, thus throwing the voyeuristic viewer out of their comfort zone in a strangely alluring way. If all of the characters in Frans Zwartjes' films have anything have in common, it is their irrevocable loss of soul and ever ambient presence of tragedy, as if these individuals have accepted their everlasting interment in Hades and have met a similar fate to Dorian Gray. During the conclusion of *The Great Magician*, Frans Zwartjes mentions how orgone-obsessed psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich once described artists as suffering from an, "Emotional plague." Zwartjes goes on to humbly acknowledge that he noticed this same internal affliction in the mental patients he worked with during

his early adult years, thus expressing his quaint solidarity with the mentally and metaphysically challenged.

Despite the aura of aesthetic perfection that permeates quite consistently throughout all of his work, Zwartjes nonchalantly confesses in *The Great Magician* that many of his films were made with comfortable ease and through accidental artistic success. For example, Zwartjes claims that his first color film *Living* (1971) was shot with a mere two rolls of film and that not a second of the footage went unused. To edit *Living*, Zwartjes simply developed and attached both rolls of film and fidgeted with the speed of various scenes. Like all of his films, *Living* features Zwartjes' signature discordant editing style that is bound to bring emotional disharmony and transcendental discombobulation to the soul of even the most stoic and seasoned of cinephiles. As a film professor, Frans Zwartjes expects nothing short of authenticity and artistic ingenuity from his novice film students. Unlike most American film schools, Zwartjes feels that learning the technical 'trade school' aspects of filmmaking is not enough and that one must have something truly exceptional to communicate. As he explains in *The Great Magician*, Zwartjes' idiosyncratic brand of filmmaking is fundamentally intuitive, script-less, and uniquely uncontrived; a personal quasi-dilletante style of unteachable cinematic creation that he recommends aspiring filmmakers to stay clear of as it naturally repels prospective financiers. In short, Frans Zwartjes is a perfectly pigheaded auteur whose abominable will-to-create has empowered him to be one of the greatest filmmakers of his time and one of the most splendidly morose and malcontent movie mavericks to have ever lived. Indeed, Frans Zwartjes, like the original cinemagician Georges Méliès (who was himself of 1/2 Dutch ancestry), is a great black magician of celluloid whose mastery of craft will never be upstaged nor plenteously plagiarized. *The Great Magician* is a good as documentaries get in dissecting an individual auteur film director and his works, but one must acknowledge that Frans Zwartjes' honest, unpretentious attitude and lack of ambiguity (as is usually typical of artists of all stripes) are largely responsible for the clarity and comprehensiveness of this fine filmmaker portrait. On top of featuring candid interviews with Zwartjes, *The Great Magician* also features lengthy excerpts from all of the auteur filmmaker's films, which give further lucidity to his personal story. For staunch patrons of cultivated cinema and/or the films of Frans Zwartjes, *The Great Magician* is a must-see affair, as it is a documentary work that somewhat objectively attempts to deconstruct a filmmaker whose personal and artistic integrity and spirituality still manage to triumph over the confinement of mere academic analysis, thus, the cinemagician still remains elusive despite his story being more than sufficiently told.

-Ty E

DIE AUSGESPERRTEN
DIE AUSGESPERRTEN

Franz Novotny (1982)

As far as made-for-television films are concerned, you probably won't find a greater, more biting, and sickly sardonic one than the fairly obscure Austrian TV-movie *Die Ausgesperrten* (1982) aka *The Excluded* directed by Franz Novotny and based on the novel of the same written by the terribly pessimistic and nihilistic Nobel Prize winner Elfride Jelinek (*The Piano Teacher*, *Luft*). Also co-writing the screenplay and starring as one of the film's characters in her sole acting role to date, there is no doubt Jelinek certainly gave her 'seal of approval' to the makers of *Die Ausgesperrten*, but while the book mainly focuses on the characters' contemplative thoughts, the film merely captures their everyday words and deeds. As an Austrian of ½ Jewish ancestry and lifelong committed feminist and card-carrying communist, Jelinek is internationally notorious for her anti-Nazi and anti-bourgeois themes as they act as a crucial and innate quality of her work and the film *Die Ausgesperrten* is no exception. Following two seemingly well-mannered yet unsavory and sadistic siblings and their 'recruited' friends (two of whom are ironically named after pacifistic anti-Nazi resistance 'fighters' Sophia and Hans Scholl of the *Weißerose* fame) as they frantically and regretfully 'come-of-age' in late 1950s Vienna, *Die Ausgesperrten* is a cinematic work that unsentimentally dwells on Austria's National Socialist past and the irreparable affects it had on the post-WWII generation. Having a crippled and thoroughly sadomasochistic ex-SS officer as a father and a servile mother that ignores his blatantly abusive behavior against the entire family, the *Lenfant terrible* teens of *Die Ausgesperrten* take reactionary revenge against society by stealing, vandalizing, and even killing around the cosmopolitan city they call home. Curiously, Elfride Jelinek's real-life father was a Czech Jew who remained unscathed during the Nazi era due to his talents as a chemist, so one can only speculate whether or not he acted as an inspiration for the distinctly debauched father in *Die Ausgesperrten*. With a strikingly swarthy, Semite-like appearance on the level of aesthetic absurdity, it is quite perverse yet devilishly ribald to watch the father as he fondly reminisces over brutally raping countless Jewesses as a SS man as if he were the vaudevillian equivalent of Amon Goeth. In fact, throughout the entirety of *Die Ausgesperrten*, there is not a single character that would have made for the ideal Aryan poster boy, which was almost certainly a conscious decision made by the makers of the film. They may hate the Nazis and their parents, but the siblings of *Die Ausgesperrten* – being dedicated nihilists with violent anarchic proclivities – are certainly their father's kids as especially testified by the film's singularly brutal and marvelously macabre ending.

Being a doomed generation, at least in the metaphysical sense, the kinky kids of *Die Ausgesperrten* get their demagoguery kicks by engaging in loveless fucking in high school bathrooms, running over fellow teenagers with cars, brutally

beating bourgeois gentlemen, and dreaming of America in a less than romantic fashion. Austria may not have a glorious future but it has an infamous past that acts as a foreboding reminder of the characters unpleasant birthright as a defeated people with a bloodstained history. Beginning during the year 1942, the turning point of the Second World War, with a scene of unimpressed SS officers looking bored to death as they view an anti-Semitic play featuring the father "Otto" playing a Rabbi and wearing a XXXL prosthetic hook-nose, *Die Ausgesperrten* immediately sets the tone for what is one of the most snidely comical and mirthfully misanthropic films ever made. Jumping ahead to the year 1959 in Vienna, Otto is now missing a leg, most of his hair, and his dignity, but at least he still has his dark sense of humor, which he passes on to his two cultured yet curiously callous children Peter (Paulus Manker) and Anna (Ursula Knobloch). In part, the behavior of the two turbulent teens somewhat resembles that of 12-year-old protagonist Antoine Doinel from François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) had the boy gone on to mature into a machinating maniac with an antipathy for all things relating to love and family. Forget the amazingly aberrant Aryan children of *Village of the Damned* (1960), the conniving kids of *Die Ausgesperrten* are the real children of the damned. Somewhat attempting to wear a mask of sanity among the general public (in between assaulting/vulgarizing/burglarizing them), arrogant anti-hero Peter has no qualms about announcing to his compatriots that "crime is pure will," as if he is a Nietzschean of the anarchic-libertine Georges Bataille variety. In the public arena, Anna is a bit more forward than her brother, proclaiming to her priggish teacher (played by Jelinek herself in an ostensibly ironic and humorous role) that, "The human has to give himself to those extreme actions commonly considered crimes or choose death." Indeed, as the days pass and their father becomes all the more bestial in his sexual torture of the mother, the teens further embrace their pigheaded philosophy of active apostasy, of which the older Nazi generation has no understanding. In one particularly telling scene, a victim of the torrid teens calls them, "Goddamn surrealists!" as if he is on the brink of spewing a Nazi diatribe about the connection between Communism/Judaism and degenerate art. It is only at the end of the film that anti-hero Peter interrogates his mother about his father Otto's behavior that he finally transcends nihilism and takes serious and decisive action in regard to his family's certainly uncertain fate.

Predating and ultimately anticipating the thematically brutal and nihilistic and aesthetically grim films of Austrian auteur filmmaker's Michael Haneke (who later directed an adaptation of Jelinek's *The Piano Teacher*), Gerald Kargl (*Angst*), and Paulus Manker (who incidentally plays the lead "Peter"), *Die Ausgesperrten*, despite its ridiculously obscure and neglected status even in its own nation of origin, is assuredly one of the most important works of post-WWII Austrian (and German-speaking) cinema. Not unsurprisingly, Paulus Manker would prove to be just as competent as a director as an actor with Weiningers

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Nacht (1990) aka Weininger's Last Night, a film about one of Vienna's most important and tragic intellectual figures, and The Moor's Head (1995) aka Der Kopf des Mohren, a work quite comparable to Die Ausgesperrten that follows the slow but steady and shocking disintegration of an Austrian middle-class family. Although similar in theme to a lot of Michael Haneke's films, Die Ausgesperrten – with its furiously farcical tone – is ultimately more palatable yet demanding than most of the Austrian filmmaker's cinematic works. That being said, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to state that it is quite improbable that the films of Haneke and Manker would exist, at least in their present form, without the crucial influence of Die Ausgesperrten; a work that is quite arguably the greatest TV-movie ever made, at least in the German-speaking world. Undoubtedly, Die Ausgesperrten did for Austrian cinema what the cinematic works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders, and Volker Schlöndorff did for German cinema; giving a voice to 'The Third Generation'; the Hitlerite era's unwanted, discontented, and ill-fated progeny. Although considerably less well known and critically revered, Die Ausgesperrten is most assuredly Austria's 'Rebel Without a Cause', but unlike the spoiled American youth of James Dean's generation, Hitler's spiritual grandchildren have something to be truly embittered and unruly about.

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ABELARD THE CASTRATION

Franz Seitz (1977)

Abelard the Castration is an extremely rare '77 Germanic art piece about the discovery of the corpses of infamous early lovers Abelard and Héloïse and more importantly, castration. This piece in particular has been deemed as simple sleaze but there lies a greater destiny for this film. It is indeed a shame that this is a piece that may be outside the confines of arthouse cinema for eternity. Two art students and part-time lovers experience life at its finest. Interwoven with this timeline is footage of their court case leading to the horrible impending realization of what they were charged for. They share themselves, men, and artistic experiences. I can imagine this lifestyle to be simplistic and very relaxing while not having to worry about presentation or accommodation. These "Art dykes" discover the bodies of the infamous lovers and proceed with caution as the idea of love becomes increasingly familiar. During an extremely graphic (and real) scene of watching a horse get castrated, these "liberal left wing lesbians" become entranced with a veterinarian doctor whom they share exotic bedroom adventures. Sharing is caring in this film that predates Dead Ringers. Many aesthetics are shared and common ground is marked. If this weren't such a bitch to get a hold of, I'd imagine Cronenberg being partially inspired. The film takes a brutal and extremist turn when the duo finds him in bed with another woman. Passions over heat and these feeble women eye a set of surgical tools. In a fit of blind rage, they proceed to castrate the knocked out man while security rushes to save the poor bloke. Not exactly shown but implied, this is a very real scene of a manhood being destroyed. The women, covered in his blood, realize what they've done and run away shrieking. Abelard the Castration isn't a stunning film. The production assets set the film back a couple of notches. I blame the director for not finding a point of interest during his filming. The camera just seems to trail around until finally setting on one of the scorned leads. I'm very grateful for the basic knowledge of the German language that I'd acquired from my schoolings. Had I not known the basics, the lack of subtitles might have destroyed any chances of me enjoying this film. Abelard the Castration is what I'd expect it to be; cunning, ruthless, and Germany's answer for Audition, albeit a lot more brutal.

You can pick up a copy at WTFDVD'S here.

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DETEKTIVE
DETEKTIVE

Franziska Buch (2001)

Long before pedantic proto-hipster Jim Jarmusch (*Down by Law*, *Only Lovers Left Alive*), whose second feature film *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984) was partly funded by the West German TV channel ZDF, was copying auteur filmmakers of the French New Wave and creating 'offbeat' crime and neo-noir flicks featuring degenerate jazz soundtracks and goofy lackluster characters, Teutonic filmmakers like Klaus Lemke (*48 Stunden bis Acapulco* aka *48 Hours to Acapulco*, *Rocker*), Rudolf Thome (*Rote Sonne* aka *Red Sun*, *Der Philosoph* aka *The Philosopher*), Volker Schlöndorff (*A Degree of Murder* aka *Mord und Totschlag*) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* aka *Lover is Colder than Death*, *Gods of the Plague* aka *Götter der Pest*), among countless others, were making stripped down and statically directed counter-culture crime flicks that inspired naïve teenagers to listen to outmoded Negro music and idealize anarchic gangsters. Indeed, somehow some of these now mostly forgotten films managed to reconcile the films of Humphrey Bogart and Raoul Walsh with the primitive celluloid (anti)counter-culture experiments of Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey, thus making for curious cinematic works with mixed results that have aged less than gracefully over the decades but sometimes make for semi-interesting novelties nonetheless, with *Detektive* (1969) aka *Detectives* directed by Rudolf Thome being an excellent example of this sort of 'neo-detektivfilm.' Starring model and counter-culture sex icon Uschi Obermaier—the one-time sexual partner of Jimi Hendrix, Mick Jagger, and Kommune 1 founder/all-around hippie charlatan Rainer Langhans—*Detektive*, which was auteur Thome's first attempt at directing a feature film, is a quasi-absurdist and less than hard-boiled crime anti-thriller that reminds one why hippies should probably never mess with a masculine film genre. Also starring actor-turned-director Ulli Lommel (*Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* aka *The Tenderness of Wolves*, *Cocaine Cowboys*) and co-shot by cinematographer-turned-director Niklaus Schilling (*Nachtshatten* aka *Nightshade*, *Rhinegold* aka *Rheingold*), *Detektive* is essentially a primitive work from the early days of German New Cinema when most Teutonic filmmakers of that time unfortunately had an acute case of Francophilia coupled with cultural-masochism and it certainly shows in Thome's cinematic debut, even if I found it infinitely more interesting than Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless*. A German flick where virtually every character has a swarthy complexion and scrawny and/or pathetic physique, not to mention chicks that look like they were imported from the Slavic East and characters with American-like names, *Detektive* is, at least aesthetically speaking, as anti-Teutonic as films come. In other words, *Detektive* would have probably been less appealing to Leni Riefenstahl than Joey Goebbels and would have F.W. Murnau wishing he was on some Polynesian island somewhere.

Sebastian West (Ulli Lommel) and Andy Schubert (Marquard Bohm) are Munich-based private detectives that own a company with the nice generic name 'West and Schubert,' as if they are psychopathic lawyers who hide their immorality with an intentionally banal exterior. When Herr Schubert goes to spy on a chick named Annabella Quant (Iris Berben) after being hired by her supposed husband Busse (Peter Moland, who would later co-direct *Haytabo* (1971) with Ulli Lommel), he learns the job is pretty much a dead-end with no real payoff. On top of not really being Busse's wife, Annabella falls in love at first sight with Schubert and the two 'hook up.' Naturally, Busse goes to the West and Schubert flips out, attempting to shoot the detectives, but they beat him and make him their little bitch. Among other things, Busse is a broke middle-aged trust fund brat with a rather repellant bald-spot who is in trouble for embezzlement and has nil money to pay the detectives, so they keep him around as a sort of cuckolded slave, at least until they can no longer tolerate his moronic behavior and meek demeanor. West and Schubert 'share' a pretty personal assistant named Micky (Uschi Obermaier) who they, among other things, enjoy taking naps with when they should be working. Although a rather anarchistic detective agency already, the company eventually begins to fall apart when they can no longer pay their bills and have their furniture taken away, so West declares, "The time has come for everyone to think of themselves," but fate has other plans for the men. Eventually, the detectives are assigned to take on a case for a certain old rich dude named Krueger (Walter Rilla), who is concerned that his much younger ex-girlfriend named Christa (Elke Haltaufderheide, who would later become the filmic diva of Niklaus Schilling) who is in cahoots with a swarthy ghoul of a man named Reininger (Dieter Busch) who claims to be a pharmaceutical salesman by trade. Apparently, if Krueger drops dead, Christa plans to cash in 100,000DM via insurance policy and apparently Reininger wants a piece of the pie. Detective West goes by Christa's home and charms her, ultimately hiding a small recording device in one of her houseplants. And, indeed, the recording device reveals that Christa and her man Reininger are conspiring to get rid of Krueger via poisoning. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Krueger wants Christa's little blond boy Florian (Florian Obermaier) as a replacement for his own deceased son. While Krueger's plan seem dubious, Sebastian is confident he is on his side, remarking, "Krueger trusts me. He loves me. Yesterday he cooked for me. I reminded him of his son, clear case." In the end, a number of plot twists are revealed, including that both West and Schubert's assistant Annabella and Christa's co-conspirator Reininger had been hired by Krueger, who tried to setup his ex-babe so he could take custody of Florian. When Christa is confronted about her intentions to poison Krueger, she defends herself by absurdly stating, "I was hoping – maybe it was silly – that he would marry me once he saw that I could have poisoned him, and didn't." Despite thwarting his own poisoning, Krueger ironically gets poisoned in the end and thus Christa gets to

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both keep her son and cash in on the old man's life insurance policy. On top of that, Schubert asks Christa to marry him and everyone lives happily after, or not as demonstrated by one of the character's closing remark, "Life is one of the toughest."

While tinkering around with film noir conventions like a true dilettante, auteur Rudolf Thome ultimately assembled a nihilistic black comedy of the decidedly dry yet quasi-deranged sort disguised as a sterile gumshoe flick with *Detektive*, a work quite like Fassbinder's first feature *Lover is Colder than Death* in terms of its deconstruction and radical reconstruction of old school American genre conventions. In my opinion, Fassbinder could have never had assembled his scatological slapstick comedy *Satansbraten* (1976) aka *Satan's Brew*, which also stars Ulli Lommel as a detective, had it not been for *Detektive* paving the way for such suavely played sardonic celluloid absurdity. Thome would follow up *Detektive* with the similarly toned yet all the more delightfully demented cult classic *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun*—a dystopian anti-sci-fi flick that also starred Marquard Bohm and Uschi Obermaier about a commune of crazed hippie feminist chicks that collectively murder men simply because they have pricks—but the filmmaker never again achieved the success and cult status that he earned with his second feature, though unlike many of his cinematic compatriots (who are either dead or gave up on filmmaking altogether long ago), he still continues to direct films to this day. Apparently, the first cut of *Detektive* was much different than what was officially released as Thome revealed in a small autobiography he wrote featured at moanafilm.de: "When I finished shooting *Detektive* (*Detectives*), I promised Hellman [producer Carol Hellman] that I would complete the initial editing in two weeks. I hired two cutters, rented two editing rooms, and did two people's work. After two weeks the first cut was finished and the film was about 150 minutes long. Hellman saw it and thought that the film was a catastrophe. He demanded that I agree (I had a clause in the contract granting me the sole right to make artistic decisions) to postdubbing (it had been made with original sound), that it be shortened to ninety minutes, and that I add three sex scenes at points in the film where this was possible. For two months we didn't speak and finally when I realized that the film would not be released unless I gave in, I said I would accept point one and point two of his conditions." While I enjoyed *Detektive* more than I suspected I would, a 150-minute cut of the film seems like it would be a rather grueling experience, even with all of Ulli Lommel's charm and all. As Thome's very first feature, *Detektive* is unequivocally a formative work, but a rather audacious one nonetheless that demonstrates the filmmaker could have evolved into a much greater talent had not so many of his dream film projects fallen through. A counter-culture anti-noir with cheeky eroticism and humor that somehow manages not to totally suck, *Detektive* probably deserves to be a minor cult classic of sorts, but since German film companies do not seem interested in releasing their films outside

the Fatherland, let alone with English subtitles, it is pretty much a given that Thome's flick is headed for perennial obscurity, which is a shame since it is more provocative and intriguing than virtually any frog Nouvelle Vague film noir flick I have ever seen.

-Ty E

NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE SAND
NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE SAND

Fred Burnley (1972)

While horror cinema can sometimes be rather romantic in a somewhat sleazy sort of way (especially if vampires are involved), genuine horror-romance hybrids featuring an equal amount of attributes from both genres are exceedingly rare for obvious reasons, as Jane Austen fan-girls could care less about body counts and no die hard gorehound wants to consider the idea that zombies can be lovelorn. While classic Gothic flicks like Alfred Hitchcock's *Daphne du Maurier* adaptation *Rebecca* (1940) and Jacques Tourneur's Val Lewton-produced classic *Cat People* (1942) mixed horror and romance to a certain degree, they did it in a somewhat traditional quasi-Victorian fashion and not in a modern way that would appeal to most post-*Night of the Living Dead* horror fans. While probably not featuring enough blood and guts to give 'torture porn' fetishists a hard-on or wet their gashes, the largely unknown British flick *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* (1972) aka *The Exorcism of Hugh* directed by film editor turned one-time feature film director Fred Burnley is a rare horror-romance hybrid that manages to have more or less equal doses of both genres. Based on the somewhat more popular 1969 novel of the same name by English author, playwright, stage actor, and popular newscaster Gordon Honeycombe (who incidentally portrayed a newscaster in the classic British horror flick *The Medusa Touch* (1978) starring Richard Burton), Burnley's film is a work I discovered upon reading about it in the book *House of Psychotic Women: An Autobiographical Topography of Female Neurosis in Horror and Exploitation Films* (2012) by Canadian horror/cult film cineaste Kier-La Janisse. While I certainly do not agree with Janisse on everything in regard to horror and exploitation, I can usually trust her opinion on films about truly hysterical women who have become sad forsaken slaves to 'mad love' and she was certainly right in her praise of *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand*, which depicts the level of desperation a woman reaches after she falls in love for the first time after being unhappily married and must choose between a lovelorn life without her beau or the possibility of an eternity in hell with her one true love. Indeed, the film is about a doomed love affair between a woman who comes to the remote British Isle of Jersey during wintertime to think about whether or not she should divorce her husband and soon meets and falls in love with a sensitive islander, only for said sensitive islander to soon tragically drop dead during a vacation in Scotland yet for his corpse to reanimate and continue to 'haunt' his beloved, who is in complete denial of her beloved's death even though he cannot talk and his body is beginning to rot. Undoubtedly a somewhat slow and uneven work that could have easily been made better with a different musical score (horrendous Hebraic composer Nachum Heiman is probably best remembered, if at all, for his work on the Israeli cult flick *An American Hippie in Israel* (1972) aka *Ha-Trempišt*) and by editing out about 20

minutes or so, Burnley's film is still certainly a singularly haunting one-of-a-kind work that is like a somewhat superior quasi-supernatural horror equivalent to the somewhat botched Yukio Mishima adaptation *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea* (1976) starring Sarah Miles and Kris Kristofferson sans annoying children meets John Carpenter's *The Fog* (1980) except less violent and set at daytime. Of course, the film is also much more genuinely romantic than *My Boyfriend's Back* (1993) as far as zombie romances are concerned and features a sort of impending metaphysical doom and gloom that is in stark contrast to its solacing beach scenes. Indeed, probably the most offensive thing about *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* is that it really features some beautiful and breathtaking scenes that truly challenge the viewer's expectations in regard to the horror genre, which alone is reason enough to see it.

Anna Robinson (played by Susan Hampshire, who is probably best known for playing no less than five different characters in Harry Kümel's Jean Ray adaptation *Malpertuis* (1971) aka *The Legend of Doom House*) is stuck in a loveless marriage with a banal guy and she somewhat resents her husband because she hates being a housewife and feeling like a 'kept woman' and an 'object,' so she has come to the Isle of Jersey of the Bailiwick of Jersey to decide whether or not she should get a divorce. Luckily for her (or so it seems at first), Anna soon meets a tall, dark, and marginally handsome lighthouse-keeper named Hugh Dabernon (hack actor Michael Petrovitch of *Tales That Witness Madness* (1973) and Brian Trenchard-Smith's *Turkey Shoot* (1982) aka *Escape 2000*) while roaming the rocks near a lighthouse and she more or less instantly falls in love with him and his strangely charismatic ways, so she naturally does not have to think hard about whether or not she should divorce her dolt hubby. Upon first meeting Hugh outside the lighthouse he works at, Anna remarks to him, "It's very lonely here" and he matter-of-factly replies, "Like the edge of the world," which is probably the best way to describe how the two's love affair feels as they, like most couples that are genuinely in love, act like they are the only two people in the world. Hugh also sets the tone for what will happen later in the film by remarking regarding his rocky hometown, "Perhaps there's a road hidden under the water...lined with drowned souls," adding, "Before they built the lighthouse, this was a graveyard for ships." In the end, the area will also be the graveyard for the two foredoomed lovers.

As Hugh remarks to Anna regarding he and his older brother George Dabernon (Frank Finlay of Clive Donner's Dickens adaptation *A Christmas Carol* (1984) and Tobe Hooper's Colin Wilson adaptation *Lifeforce* (1985)), "We're all that's left of centuries of Dabernon lives." Indeed, Hugh comes from an ancient clan that has inhabited Jersey Island since the beginning of recorded history, thus lending a sort of vague mystical Lovecraftian feel to the film that certainly adds to its already foreboding atmosphere. Since George is obviously a closest queen and latent homo who clearly will never have kids of his home,

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it is ultimately up to Hugh as to whether the Dabernon family name will live on, but unfortunately fate has different plans for him and his genetic line will ultimately reach the same sad end as Lovecraft himself, as a man whose family name will die with him. Before he even kicks the bucket, Hugh acts somewhat eerie and morbid, as he has a sort of moody broody essence about him and says strange quasi-esoteric things to the protagonist like, "The past is another country...someone once said. We're a part of the past, Anna. Some part of us is always there," while the two are standing inside an ancient tomb. Of course, it is quite obvious that one of the reasons that Anna is so attracted to Hugh is because he, unlike her bourgeois husband, has a mystifying quality about him that she cannot quite pinpoint. As Anna complains regarding her husband, "What he really wanted was a wife, not a person. Just someone to be there...so old fashioned," yet she is certainly willing to be "old fashioned" with Hugh and live the life of a conventional housewife, even when her loverboy becomes a smelly rotten corpse. Hugh's parents died when he was young, so his camp-as-the-queen brother George raised him and is thus quite overprotective with him, as if he is a bitchy old mother who would love nothing more than to carry her son's testicles around in her purse. Indeed, when Hugh brings Anna back to the family house, his big bro acts quite bitchy as if he is on the rag and has run out of tampons. When George walks in on Anna and Hugh naked in the bed the next morning, he becomes exceedingly enraged and acts all the more bitchy and complains to his brother, "it's disgusting...in mother's bed" and "I don't want to find her here when I get back," as if he has incestuous feelings for his brother and wants to keep him for himself. As Hugh jokes to Anna regarding George while arguably hinting that his big bro is a homo, "He's never seen a naked woman in his entire life."

While they have only been together for a couple days, Anna soon tells Hugh, "I want to be with you always" and adds regarding her estranged husband, "He couldn't believe that in one week I could meet someone and everything would change." Upon meeting up at a loud and crowded restaurant, Hugh yells to Anna in a brief scene of comic relief, "I want to make love to you in Scotland," so the two soon take a honeymoon-like vacation to an idyllic coastal area of the country that does not look all that different from Jersey. When Hugh does boyish things like run in and out of a cave that ocean waves are constantly crashing into, Anna gets irrationally worried and bitches "I don't like it here" as if she can foresee that something terrible is about to happen to her lover. Naturally, when Anna runs down the coast in a giddy fashion while yelling childish things like "yay!" while her beau is chasing her from behind and eventually turns around to see Hugh lying on the beach as if he is dying, she completely panics and goes looking for help. Ultimately, Anna finds an old Scottish couple named Mr. and Mrs. MacKay (David Garth and Betty Duncan) who call a grouchy old physician named Dr. Irving (Jack Lambert of the Hammer horror flick *Dracula: Prince*

of *Darkness* (1966) starring Christopher Lee) to come to Hugh's aid, but their efforts ultimately prove to be in vain. When Dr. Irving takes a look at Hugh and informs Anna that he has died of a heart attack, she cries so hysterically while screaming things like "It can't happen... It can't happen... He can't die. He can't die... He can't die... You can't die" and "You can't die. You said you'd never leave me. HE SAID HE'D NEVER LEAVE ME!" that the somewhat insensitive doctor has to shake her while yelling in her face, "Stop it! Stop it, you hear!" to calm her down. Upon learning that Hugh has died, Mr. MacKay somewhat humorously remarks, "He was a fine big fellow. Strange, him dying like that" and his wife superstitiously replies, "It's the Lord's judgment, that's what it is." After having a nightmare while sleeping at the MacKay's home, Anna gets her big wish when Hugh comes back to her in the middle of the night, though he does not seem like his normal aphorism-spouting self. Indeed, the next day Anna brags to the MacKays that there was a mistake and that Hugh is alive, or so she thinks.

Although Hugh does not say a single word the entire time and maintains a creepy sort of flat affect as if he is lacking a soul, Anna does not consider that there is something not quite right about her beau until a day later when they return to the Isle of Jersey and she demands that he speak and say "I love you" but he does nothing. Instead, Hugh is somehow eventually able to non-verbally 'transmit' "I love you" to Anna, as if he is a sort of ghost that has lost control of his decaying body. When George gets back to the house, he can instantly tell that his brother Hugh is a walking corpse and proceeds to berate Anna for causing his little bro's undead state, stating to her, "If it weren't for you, this would have never happened. He's possessed, isn't it? Possessed by you! You're a witch... trafficking with the devil. You have conjured an evil spirit into his dead body." Of course, Anna is in serious denial and remarks to George regarding Hugh's dubious condition, "My love for him has given him life." To demonstrate that Hugh is nothing but a rotting corpse, he sets his brother's hand on fire, which does not even cause the lighthouse-keeper to flinch. Ultimately, George comes up with the curious idea to have his brother get an exorcism (obviously, the film's alternate title *The Exorcism of Hugh* was later created to cash in on William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), which was actually released a year after Burnley's film), but while driving to the exorcist undead Hugh grabs the steering wheel and causes his big bro to drive off of a cliff and die when his van explodes and bursts into flames upon hitting the ground. When police come by the house to tell Hugh that his brother has died in a horrible accident, Anna tells the cop that he is dead and hands him a death certificate that was given to her by Dr. Irving. While Anna pretends that things are normal at first by making her lover extravagant meals that he does not touch and by ignoring the fact that he is a creepy fratricidal zombie with cold dead eyes that moves around like a somnambulist, the protagonist can only deny reality for so long before she begins

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losing her mind. As the days pass, Hugh's body begins to rot and his eyes turn black and Anna finally begins to accept reality and eventually cries to her zombie lover, "Please stop loving me, just please let me go. I don't want to die," but he will not go away, at least at first. After a fight where Anna beats in Hugh's postmortem pretty boy face with a candleholder and rips open the rotting flesh on his cheek and forehead, the lovelorn zombie finally gets a clue and decides to leave for good. While Hugh's slow-witted yet well-meaning coworker Collie (Michael Craze) comes by and brings Anna flowers after sensing that something might be wrong with her, the suicidally lovesick protagonist cannot get over her lover or the possibility of living life without him and follows him the sea where they are assumedly united in eternity via death in what is indubitably a genuinely darkly romantic ending. Indeed, while Anna might be somewhat of a birdbrained twat of a character, her devotion and commitment to her lover is strangely admirable and heartwarming in the end.

Interestingly, not unlike the character Hugh in *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand*, director Fred Burnley would die suddenly in a somewhat absurd fashion a couple years after the film's release in 1975 at the premature age of 41 and would never direct another film again. Even worse than suffering a heart attack despite being young and healthy like the character Hugh in the film, Burnley died of lung complications from exposure to bat feces (!) of all things while filming the documentary *Alexander von Humboldt - 1799* for David Attenborough's 1975 series *The Explorers*. Starting out as an assistant director on the popular black comedy *The Ladykillers* (1955) starring Alec Guinness and Peter Sellers, Burnley basically mainly worked as an editor and BBC hack for most of his filmmaking career and never really got to try out his real talent on anything of significance aside from *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand*, which was both a commercial and critical failure, hence why he probably did not direct another feature during those three years before his untimely death in 1975. Considering the fact that it was only released once on VHS in the UK and nowhere else, the film was actually fairly hard to find until relatively recently after it received a DVD release in both the UK and the United States. Featuring an uniquely unsettling and almost otherworldly use of the sea comparable to Matt Cimber's *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* (1976) starring Millie 'Anne Frank' Perkins and unconventional approach to the undead somewhat comparable to Bob Clark's *Deathdream* (1974) aka *Dead of Night*, *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* ultimately manages to capture the best and worst of 1970s horror cinema as a sort of morbid yet romantic soap opera-ish melodrama where all the characters sport aesthetically vulgar post-hippie haircuts and wardrobes. Indeed, it is certainly the sort of horror film you might have expected from Douglas Sirk had he been apolitical and somewhat less talented. Ultimately, in its depiction of a woman living with the reanimated corpse of her dead lover, *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* is a sort of allegory for the irrevocable pain that one feels upon losing a lover for whatever

reason, thereupon making for a rare horror flick that will certainly bore the shit out of teenage zombie film fans yet at the same time can be appreciated by people that loathe horror so long as they have ever experienced heartbreak. Somewhat strangely, the film also resembles the François Ozon flick *Sous le sable* (2000) aka *Under the Sand* starring Charlotte Rampling so much that I have to assume that the screenwriters of the French flick had to have seen Burnley's work and felt it would be a good movie to quasi-plagiarize due to its relative obscurity. While not exactly up there with Leslie Megahey's Sheridan Le Fanu adaptation *Schalcken the Painter* (1979) in terms of artistic merit and emotional impact as a work of idiosyncratic British Gothic horror, *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* is certainly infinitely more intriguing, enthralling, and inventive than probably 95% of both zombie flicks and horror films in general that have been released over the past decade or so.

-Ty E

NIGHT OF THE CREEPS
NIGHT OF THE CREEPS

Fred Dekker (1986)

Night of the Creeps is a fan boy flick at the corniest of degrees. The film takes a postmodern approach to various cult films from a number of decades. Night of the Creeps makes reference of everything from Plan 9 From Outerspace to The Monster Squad (another film from Night of the Creeps writer/director Fred Dekker). The cold war era sci-fi film, slasher film, zombie film, and even 1950's Hollywood teenage rebellion are all parodied. All of these elements are combined with the teenage angst "underdog" film so widely popular in the 1980s. The film follows two neurotic (a love shy boy Chris and a cripple C.G.) butt buddies who just can't seem to land a girl (C.G. isn't even trying). A group of Aryan frat Nazis act as the evil and dumb villains. In an act of belligerent courage the crippled C.G. says to the frat Gestapo, "why don't you get off our case and practice goose stepping or something." This scene is to demonstrate to the viewer that anyone with physical strength and blonde hair is a potential Nazi. Later you see the frat leader wearing a wife beater with a German eagle to confirm his Aryan ethnocentrism.

Sieg Heil Mein Führer!

Determined Nazi Hunters from the school of Simon Wiesenthal Chris eventually gets to legitimize his desire for a holocaust of Aryans. All of the frat boys turn into zombies Bill Hinzman style and Chris decides it's time to unload some bullets. When he blows the heads off of the zombie frat leaders he adds the strategically placed one liner, "don't take it personally" with sadistic fan boy wit. The pathetic hatred fantasy involved in these scenes almost legitimizes Fritz Hippler's The Eternal Jew as a serious film. Night of the Creeps is what would happen if the history of American horror had sex with John Hughes and produced the ideal mongrel child. The film is one that offers much replay value and movie quoting potential. I have gotten fed up with these film "qualities." I guess that is what happens when you are introduced to the world of international horror (among other films). On the other hand, I would be lying if I didn't admit that Night of the Creeps is a masterpiece of it's silly kind. I still believe that Fred Dekker's greatest contribution to film is coming up with the story for House. A bizarre horror comedy involving the Vietnam war (and other serious issues) is a pretty bold and innovative idea. Night of the Creeps further confirms Fred Dekker's knack for creative and genre abstracting writing. I just hope that Night of the Creeps has not inspired anyone to write "Go, Monster Squad!" in a public bathroom.

-Ty E

STEPPEWOLF

Fred Haines (1974)

Out of all the literary adaptations of world famous novels, onetime auteur Fred Haines' *Steppenwolf* (1974)—an American-Swiss-UK-French-Italian co-production based on Teutonic novelist Hermann Hesse's classic 1928 novel of the same name—is certainly one of the most rarely seen and unbelievably underrated, which was apparently the result of piss poor marketing and the disastrous accidental production of a series of eighty discolored prints on the film's initial release. Going through a troubled pre-production history with Michelangelo Antonioni, John Frankenheimer, and even popular 'tough guy' actor James Coburn being looked at as potential directors, as well as Billy Wilder graduates turned Grumpy Old Men Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon and degenerate 'LSD guru' Timothy Leary (who was a fugitive on the run from prison at the time who ultimately lost his chance at the role by dropping two 'Sunshine tabs' on the film's rich industrialist financier Peter Sprague, who had a bad trip and later declared Leary to be a "perverter of mankind") being considered for audaciously anti-heroic eponymous lead, it is actually a miracle that the film ever even got made, not least of all since Herr Hesse curiously included a clause in his will prohibiting the sale of film rights to his work. Of course, considering the totally Teutonic idiosyncrasies of Hesse's work, I can kind of see why he didn't want it to be ever cinematically adapted, especially in the culture-distorting realm of Hollywood. While Haines penned the script and directed the film, co-producer Melvin Fishman—a Hebraic acidhead who never worked on another film—is said to be the real 'auteur' of *Steppenwolf* and it was apparently his persistence and befriending of the Hesse family that got the film made in the first place. Fittingly shot in Basle, Switzerland which is the hometown of LSD, as well as the actual place where Hesse wrote the novel, the film is a decidedly delectable aesthetic disaster that utilized multiple visual moving picture formats (film, Slavic animation, archaic video, etc.) and combines the degeneracy of the Weimar era with the decadence of the counterculture era (notably, Hesse himself was a member of the German Wandervogel, which inspired the California American hippies, thus the connection is rather sound), as well as combined Nietzschean existentialist despair with a dope-addled hippie take on Jungian psychology, thus making for one eclectically eccentric and ludicrously labyrinthine work that resonates in one's mind long after the 'madman'-based madness has ended. Indeed, in a certain sense, the titular protagonist's personal motto "For Madmen Only" is also true for the film.

Undoubtedly *Steppenwolf* is probably the only film that features degenerate jazz music, dream-sequence-based appearances from Mozart and Goethe, and a legendary Bergman actor snorting coke. Luckily, instead of getting less than humorous kraut-hating Hebrew Matthau to play a kraut (the Jewish actor famously

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made a big deal about having to shoot in Germany for Stanley Donen's *Charade* (1963) because he had a visceral hatred of Germans), Bergman protégé Max von Sydow (*The Seventh Seal*, *The Exorcist*)—an archetypal Hallstatt Nordic from an aristocratic Swedish background—ultimately got to play the brazenly bitter “wolf of the Steppes.” While I see von Sydow as a fairly straight fellow who would hardly have a weakness for opium and a straight-razor-based suicide fetish, no other actor was better suited for the role as a mensch that looks like a less gawky and more handsome and Nordic version of Hesse, not to mention the fact that he gives an absolutely amazing performance in the film. Based on a novel that was written by Hesse during a midlife crisis of sorts when the writer's second marriage to singer Ruth Wenger began to fall apart and he was suffering from regular bouts of suicide ideation and despair while living in complete isolation in Basle, *Steppenwolf* is a compulsively culturally pessimistic work that ultimately offers a glimmer of hope in the end in regard to a rather vicious, intolerably cynical, and socially alienated middle-aged ‘madman’ who is in a sort of self-imposed internal exile and who can only manage to get through the day by calming his nerves with at least a daily dose of opium and by remembering that he can always follow in the footsteps of nineteenth-century Austrian novelist Adalbert Stifter via “a fatal accident while shaving.” Despite its heavy and dejecting themes, the film ultimately ends on a positive inspirational note that reminds artists and intellectuals to not take life too seriously and that there is nothing wrong with a little involvement with recreational drug use, criminally-inclined philistine friends, and loose bisexual ladies. Starring compulsively cute French dirty blonde actress Dominique Sanda (*Novecento* aka *1900*, *Beyond Good and Evil*) as the protagonist's Jungian ‘anima’ (feminine inner personality in a male's unconscious) and frog bohemian dandy Pierre Clémenti as a mystifying saxophonist of the rather anti-intellectual and sexually adventurous drug-driven sort, *Steppenwolf* is most certainly one of the most hopelessly ambitious literary adaptations ever made, as well as a seemingly forsaken cult film without a cult.

Protagonist Harry ‘Steppenwolf’ Haller (Max von Sydow) begins the film describing how pathetic his day was, as the only thing he managed to accomplish was about an hour or two of writing and two hours of laying in a hot bath after taking opium. While the opium haze bath makes Haller reconsider his urge to commit the unpardonable sin of suicide because it soothes his pain, the “contentment” he receives as a result of taking the solacing drug fills him with a sense of loathing. When Harry takes a stroll that night in the hope of finding a “road to pleasure” (though he will settle for a “road to pain”), he is laughed at by a lecherous lady of the night after he is almost hit by a car, which he subsequently throws a rock at in a fit of rage. Somewhat mysteriously, Haller eventually finds a ‘Magic Theater’ with a sign reading “Entrance not for Everyone” and before his very eyes, the sign transforms to read “For Madmen Only”, which is the protagonist's own

personal motto. By the next morning, the entrance to the Magic Theater has inexplicably disappeared and all that remains is a brick wall. The next day, Harry finds a goofy vendor from the Magic Theater who sells him a booklet with the title "Tractate on the Steppenwolf" and then magically disappears into thin air. As Harry soon learns as depicted in an idiosyncratic quasi-psychedelic animated montage created by Czech artist Jaroslav Bradac (who later went on to appear as himself in Stephen Dwoskin's *Outside In* (1981)), the beige-colored booklet contains the protagonist's personal history and *Weltanschauung*. As depicted in the sometimes humorously quasi-pornographic animated montage, Harry has always had a bit of wolf inside of him (or, "a beast...with only a thin veneer of the human") and he only grew into all the more of a rough and tough figuratively bestial blond beast when he realized as a child that polite bourgeois society was trying to tame him. As the narrator described regarding Harry, "He was secretly and resistantly attracted to the bourgeois world," yet at the same time considers himself a sort of elite member of the bourgeoisie, or as narrated, "The vital force of the bourgeoisie resides in its outsiders, artists and intellectuals, like Harry, who develop far beyond the level possible to the bourgeois. Knowing the bliss of meditation, no less than the gloomy joys of hatred and self-loathing, he is nevertheless captive to the bourgeoisie and cannot escape it, unless suffering has made his spirit tough and elastic enough, he finds a way of reconciliation and an escape into humor." Luckily, despite its dark themes, *Steppenwolf* certainly has its fair share of absurdist humor.

Ultimately, Harry realizes how hopelessly alienated he is from society as a whole when he visits an intellectual friend's house and offends his comrade's wife by stating regarding her much prized Goethe bust, "I hope that Goethe didn't really look like this...this conceited air of nobility...the great man ogling the distinguished company. His venerable bombast is bad enough, but to portray him like this." Harry's friend's wife is so hurt by his remark that she cries hysterically, grasps the bust like it is a child, and runs away. Though Harry apologizes to his friend for insulting his wife, he also defends his rather rude behavior by proudly stating that he "always speaks his mind," adding, "Goethe did too, at least during his better moments." That night Harry has a phantasmagoric nightmare where he travels back in time and meets Goethe, who tells him he should have been a schoolmaster instead of a writer and accuses him of being more "stuffy" than the very bourgeois people that he hates. Goethe does not particularly like Harry's attitude because the pretentious protagonist criticizes the positive and optimistic nature of some of his work. Indeed, Harry seems to be more of a Heinrich von Kleist or Arthur Schopenhauer kind of guy. To contradict Harry's remarks regarding the lack of sincerity in regard to hopeful art, Goethe brings up Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) aka *The Magic Flute*. Unbeknownst to Harry, he will also soon meet Mozart, who will ultimately act as a source of inspiration for the perturbed protagonist.

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Feeling rather desperate and becoming increasingly obsessed by the idea of slitting his own throat with a straight razor to the point where he carries around the blade with him wherever he goes, Harry becomes desperate and decides to seek some relief from his metaphysical affliction by wandering aimlessly, so he eventually wanders into a dance hall where he meets an exceedingly beautiful blonde about half his age named Hermine (Dominique Sanda) who immediately mocks his melancholic demeanor and pathological tendency towards self-pity, even handing him a straight razor and stating, "You can do it here if you like." Needless to say, Harry immediately becomes enamored with the provocative young dame and her flirtatious tenacity to ruthlessly mock him and agrees to do anything she says. When Harry meets Hermine the next day, he offends her by giving her flowers, so she calls him an "idiot" and tells him to never give her a gift ever again. Somewhat strangely, Hermine morphs into Harry's childhood friend Hermann after he asks her what her name is and she responds by asking him what he thinks it is. Indeed, like in Hesse's novel, it is never clear if Hermine really exists as a real person, though she is most certainly the protagonist's anima. Ultimately, Hermine forces hopeless introvert Harry to engage in extroverted 'bourgeois' behavior like dancing and drinking. Hermine also introduces the protagonist to a charismatic bisexual hedonist saxophonist and supposed 'exotic demi-god of love' named Pablo (Pierre Clémenti in his first acting role after spending 17 months in jail due to a dubious drug charge), who supplies the protagonist the energy he needs to stay up and party all-night by giving him a line of cocaine to snort. At Hermine's insistence, brazenly bitter bloke Harry also manages to bang a hot Mediterranean babe named Maria (Carla Romanelli), who is also carrying on an affair with playboy Pablo and Hermine. In exchange for all her help, Hermine curiously makes Harry promise that he will kill her as soon as he falls in love with her. With nothing left to lose, Harry is happy to oblige all of her requests, no matter how contrary they are to his true character. As a proud anti-intellectual who plays degenerate jazz and does not think twice about stealing fancy expensive cars and driving them around right in front of cops, Pablo is the literal complete opposite of Harry yet they both get along famously, thus revealing that what the protagonist needed most was to get away from himself and to live life as an active participant as opposed to a passive critic.

As *Steppenwolf* progresses, Harry goes from being a malignantly moody and broody uptight suicidal cynic to transforming into a cocaine-addled and car-stealing middle-aged party animal who has no problem sharing the same girl with his new half-pooof comrade Pablo. Eventually, Harry attends a large *Traumnovelle*-esque fin-de-siècle-themed masquerade ball where Goethe hands him a coin-like object reading, "Magic Theater tonight...for madmen only...Hermine is in hell." When Harry eventually does find Hermine, he finds her dressed in drag just like him in the same suit, thus reaffirming that she is indeed his anima. After Hermine asks him, "are you ready to go to hell to find me?," Harry

follows her and Pablo into the metaphysical kaleidoscopic hell known as 'Magic Theater.' From the last thirty minutes or so of *Steppenwolf*, Harry goes on a nightmarish yet aesthetically alluring phantasmagorical psychedelic 'trip' where he fights in WWII as a member of the Wehrmacht with a childhood schoolmate named Gustav (Niels-Peter Rudolph), is 'tamed' by a caged *Steppenwolf* and subsequently bites into a cute little bunny rabbit like a rabid animal while blood gushes from his mouth, has a philosophical conversation with Mozart as personified by Pablo who introduces him to a perennially sleeping Richard Wagner, and eventually murders Hermine by stabbing her with a butcher knife in a somewhat psycho-sexual fashion. In the end, Harry is given a show trial and is supposed to be summarily executed for corrupting Magic Theater with "so-called reality." Luckily, Mozart informs Harry that all is not lost and that he has virtually infinite chances to start a new beginning in his life. As Pablo tells Harry upon first bringing him inside the Magic Theater, "To conquer time and reality, you must extinguish the superfluous reflections you call your personality. All it takes is a hearty laugh." Indeed, ultimately the key to happiness for Harry is hanging out with hyper-hedonistic philistines, doing hard drugs and delectable dames, listening to non-symphonic negro music, and not taking life too seriously.

Whether looked at as a metaphysical werewolf flick, surrealist satire of the oh-so-seriousness of early 20th-century German intellectuals, Jungian 'head' movie, existentialist celluloid trip, post-holocaust critique of pre-Nazi Germany, half-baked counterculture comedy, and/or actively nihilistic Nietzschean fable, *Steppenwolf* certainly makes for an intriguing, if not flagrantly flawed, overly ambitious, and sometimes aesthetically outmoded, piece of absurdly undervalued cinema history that proves that even some of the most bizarre novels can be more than adequately adapted for the silver screen. As someone who read Hesse's source novel about half a decade ago, I think it is as good as literary adaptations get (ironically, Michelangelo Antonioni apparently turned down directing the film despite being offered a large sum of money because he felt the novel was unfilmable). Of course, as the man that penned the Academy Award nominated script for the James Joyce adaptation *Ulysses* (1967) directed by Joseph Strick, it only seems fitting that Fred Haines cinematically adapted Hesse's supposed unfilmable novel. Personally, I think *Steppenwolf* star Max von Sydow's buddy Ingmar Bergman would have been the most appropriate person to adapt the novel. After all, Bergman's masterpiece *Vargtimmen* (1968) aka *Hour of the Wolf* starring von Sydow shares a lot in common with Hesse's novel in terms of themes and dark surrealist imagery and thus the two films make for an excellent double feature. Still, surely Haines' *Steppenwolf* is the greatest of the Hesse adaptations, as a work that puts Avon heir Conrad Rooks' *Siddhartha* (1972) to shame in terms of ambitiousness and faithfulness to its source material. In terms of works attempting to depict the post-WWI German mood and psy-

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che in a quasi-philosophical way, *Steppenwolf* is certainly more intriguing than Ingmar Bergman's *Das Schlangenei* (1977) aka *The Serpent's Egg*, though it is not quite up there with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's mammoth magnum opus and true cinematic 'Gesamtkunstwerk' *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), which will probably remain the final word on the subject, at least in cinematic terms. Notably, as revealed in the article *Jung Hearts Run Free* written by Jenny Fabian, who was there to witness the turbulent production of the film, *Steppenwolf* producer Melvin Fishman was apparently so burnt out after spending over seven years trying to get the work created that he suffered a fatal heart attack two years after it was released, hence his curious one-credit filmography. As also revealed in Fabian's article, self-described "drug fans" Fishman and Haines were given a large gift-wrapped supply of Ritalin by a Basle-based pharmaceutical company that were big "film fans," so the two were both on a steady diet of drugs during that entire production, so the former's premature death was not just induced by the film's commercial and critical failure. Despite being far from an immaculate masterpiece, *Steppenwolf* is unequivocally a contagious labor of love encompassing multiple important and somewhat overlapping twentieth-century cultural zeitgeists that, at the very least, deserves recognition as a lost and criminally neglected cult classic that proves that if there is a will there's a way when it comes to adapting esoteric highly personalized novels. As a patent pessimist myself, I also consider it to be a strangely inspirational work, though I don't exactly share the film's message regarding hard drugs, which only give a person a superficial sense of transcendence. Indeed, if Nietzsche, who was himself a longtime opium addict that spent a lot of his time writing and hiding in his room like Harry Haller, was a filmmaker during the 1970s and decided to direct an inspirational work after having an epiphany while tripping on acid, I'm sure it would somewhat resemble *Steppenwolf*.

-Ty E

LA PLAYS ITSELF

Fred Halsted (1972)

I know about as much about gay porn as I do about black scholars, but I can state without hesitation that Fred Halsted (*Sextool, A Night at Halsted's*)—an ultra-masculine leather-fag who once advocated a form of fierce fag fascism and once directed a homo hardcore flick with an all punk soundtrack—is easily the greatest queer pornographer who has ever lived, with his debut feature *LA Plays Itself* (1972) being his celluloid magnum opus. A virtual blue-collar Kenneth Anger with a muscular physique, working-class ethic (he once worked as a gardener for Vincent Price!), and a brutal and predatory sexuality, accidental arthouse auteur Fred Halsted would express all of these things and more in *LA Plays Itself*, a naughty and no-nonsense piece of gritty celluloid nature worship and severe sexual sadism that is known to repel even the most unrepentant of sodomites, especially of the sack-less sissy sort. Described by none other than literary outlaw himself, Mr. William S. Burroughs, as follows, “This film breaks all the stereotypes! I recommend it for all audiences!” *LA Plays Itself* is certainly like no other porn flick made before or after it and it is certainly not for the faint of heart or those that subscribe to the modern politically correct LGBT lunacy that pervades throughout mainstream American society. Beginning as a sort of celestial Californian völkisch flick of a lonely hiker spotting and blowing a naked hippie blond boy and concluding as a homoerotic horror nightmare where a naïve young pretty boy is bound and takes a large fist to the rectum, *LA Plays Itself* is ultimately an aberrant arthouse shocker, so it makes it all the more strange that auteur Fred Halsted described the film as an, “autobiographical homosexual story.” A man that was routinely anally raped by his own stepfather while a mere adolescent and who would apparently later be raped again as a muscle-bound macho man adult, Fred Halsted was the real deal in terms of the sort of sadomasochistic leather-fags depicted in William Friedkin’s sodomite slasher thriller *Cruising* (1980). Indeed, *LA Plays Itself* even left alpha-surrealist Salvador Dalí thunderstruck, apparently stating regarding the fiercely fetishistic flick that it was “new information for me,” but it also left politically active leftist fag poofs irrevocably disgusted, which is indubitably a good thing when it comes to art. As Fred Halsted described for the San Francisco publication *Kalendar* regarding an East Coast screening, “In New York City, I invited all the gay liberationists, writers and other artists. I thought, ‘Jesus, here I’ve made this great gay liberation film, *L.A. Plays Itself*. They can’t help but love it.’ I was there and I was happy and then the curtain went down and they started to boo and hiss and stomp their feet. I thought, ‘my god, is this a gay, liberated audience?’” Indeed, probably the only gay porn flick that will strike fear and disgust in both homos and heteros, as well as males and females, *LA Plays Itself* is the seemingly magical, if not blatantly somewhat amateurishly assem-

LA PLAYS ITSELF

bled, result of an audacious novice artist who has no pretensions about going all the way, fist in ass and all.

The Los Angeles featured in *LA Plays Itself* is quite different from the largely Mexican metropolis that exists today. Opening with a shot of a sign for the city limits of Los Angeles, boasting a population figure of a mere 2,535,700 (as opposed to 3,792,621 in 2010) lost souls, *LA Plays Itself* soon scans the seemingly exotic forests of the the Los Angeles area that seem in stark contrast to the polluted and festering concrete jungle one typically imagines. Off-screen narration of an East Coaster proclaiming that “Lost Angeles Stinks” appears, but homo hero Fred Halsted comes to the city’s rescue and bashes New Yorkers, which is no doubt a noble sentiment on his part. After a number of scenic and soothing Buttgerit-esque arthouse shots of butterflies, salamanders, spider webs, and pretty plants set to the sounds of Japanese koto music, a naked Aryan hippie man (Rick Coates) with blond hair bathing in the sound is approached by a hunk hiker (Jim Frost) and the men engage in oral and anal sex when not prancing along gayly in a stream. The sex scenes begin to take a quasi-psychedelic form when butt-darting is superimposed over pink flowers and caves and boulders over buggery, thus symbolizing the peaceful pansies the mainstream gays have always attempted to project to mainstream society. Of course, the ugly reality of urbanization unfolds when a bulky bulldozer rolls by some flowers and aesthetically displeasing power-lines are revealed over a car-infested freeway. While Fred Halsted found his greatest source of solace in nature and the wild, even once admitting the happiest period of his life was when he was a gardener for Vincent Price, the filmmaker developed his fame/infamy in the urban S&M netherworld and *LA Plays Itself* is no different as the second part of the film reveals how a boyish Texan becomes the bitch boi of a strikingly sadistic sodomite with an unhealthy fixation with rope and forceful fists in ass-holes. After driving by billboards for cinematic cult classic *Performance* (1970) co-directed by Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell—an assumed favorite of Halsted’s—a porn theater for three erotic flicks, including *101*, *Acts of Love*, and *Infrasexum*, one is introduced to the “New Kid in Town”(played by the director’s real-life boyfriend/torturer Joey Vale). Apparently, a debauched dramatization of his autobiographical affair with Vale, Fred Halsted offers to show the new kid “the ropes” of L.A. and soon he is quite literally tying him up with them and bounding him in unpleasant positions *au naturel*. Forcing the new kid to climb steps naked while being brutally whipped, Halsted rules the roost with an iron-fist to the point where he is quite literally fisting him full force. The tortured Texan also licks Halsted’s dirty black boots like a common dog obeying its egomaniacal master. In the end, a Texan is dead, which is a small price to pay in Halsted’s wicked and wanton world where one is bound for pleasure. Whether its peaceful twink engaging in sodomite splendor in the grass or lunatic leather-fags engaging in lethal lechery, *LA* plays for keeps.

In an interview with a bleeding heart homo fellow named Mikhail Itkin who saw it fit to constantly contradict the interviewee, Fred Halsted stated quite stoically, "What Nazism is saying, though, is: you're Aryan, you're white, you're better. Gay supremacy is very similar to that. So I think it's a new kind of fascism—which I wholeheartedly endorse...I really do think we're superior and that thesis is fascistic. I don't believe in equality, and I think it has been proven that at times when you have a great renaissance in culture and the arts, it's always gay people who are leading the whole thing. We are now starting such a renaissance again." Indeed, the second half of *LA Plays Itself* features such ultra-masculine martial prowess, butch body worship, and a master morality philosophy as an expression of a sort of quasi-fag fascism of the aesthetic sort and is a far cry from the mainstream fairy faggot shit that now comprises mainstream 'gay culture.' Indeed, while Halsted was 'gay married' (i.e. in a long-term yet sexually promiscuous relationship) to Joey Vale, it is highly doubtful he would have promoted the sort of bourgeois-buggers-adopting-babies bullshit and effeminate homosexualization of mainstream society by slave-morality-driven celebrities who collect Negro and Asian children from around the world. An unclassifiable piece of potent idiosyncratic filmmaking, *LA Plays Itself* offers daunting dichotomies between soft hippie homos versus sadistic sodomites, man versus machine, the organic jungle versus the urban jungle, and sexual tenderness versus erotic torture that let's the world know that not all pansies are pink! A hypnotic horror flick for homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, *LA Plays Itself* is probably not going to get anyone off unless they are quick shooters and/or masochists who love botched orgasms, but it does make for a mesmerizing masterpiece of the cinematically macabre sort. While a film like *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) projects the message that manly men who love men are just misunderstood romantics who are unable to reciprocate their love because of an unjust and so-called 'heteronormative' society, I think *LA Plays Itself* offers the hard truth when it comes to alpha-fag musclemen. After all, there is no peace, equality or understanding in taking a huge clenched fist in the pooper, no matter how much poof puffery is shoved in one's face by the mainstream media.

-Ty E

THE SEX GARAGE
THE SEX GARAGE

Fred Halsted (1972)

I recently discovered the gritty erotic art house works of Fred Halsted; a director whose fetish for motorcycles and automobiles seems to be greater than even that of crowleyite auteur Kenneth Anger. In fact, Halsted's 34-minute short *The Sex Garage* (1972) is fairly similar to Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964), as both films are experimental tributes to the hypnotic sexual magnetism of motorcycles. Although made nearly a decade after *Scorpio Rising*, *The Sex Garage* has a grittier aesthetic and a more vintage look. Also, unlike *Scorpio Rising*, *The Sex Garage* seems to lack any type of socio-political subtext. In fact, if *The Sex Garage* did not contain such a dreamy atmosphere of illuminant sexual surrealism, it would be nothing more than forgettable smut that would have probably disappeared from the radar of obsessive cinephiles decades ago. It may sound a bit odd, but *The Sex Garage* seems like the kind of porn film that Roger Watkins (who, did in fact, make porno films) would have made. Like Watkins' lost (but now found, although out-of-print again) low-budget masterpiece *Last House on Dead End Street*, *The Sex Garage* has a fairly distinct atmosphere that seems like it could have developed by mere chance as a wonderful artistic accident (not to insult either filmmaker). Also, like Watkins' horror film, *The Sex Garage* has the earmarks of a work that was directed by someone who had developed a somewhat morally-confused psychosis due to heavy drug use (Watkins once admitted he spent most of the budget for *Last House on Dead End Street* on speed), as both films are so distinctly perverted, yet consistency powerful in their entirety. It is rumored that director Fred Halsted was once Vincent Price's gardener (which wouldn't surprise me). Judging by Price's dubious sexuality, I am sure the iconic classic horror star would have enjoyed employing Halsted – a gay porn filmmaker and performer – as his gardener. With *The Sex Garage*, Halsted proved he was an eclectic pervert, as this film is a bisexual mix of straight sex, gay sex, and the unthinkable.....mechaphilia.

Despite seeming quite tame by today's pornographic standards, *The Sex Garage* was such a controversial work upon its initial release that a New York City showing of the film was raided by police. Apparently, the liberal cosmopolitan citizens of NYC were quite terrified to see a man fornicate with his beloved motorcycle. Undeterred by the public's snide reaction to the motorcycle-sex scene, Halsted kept it intact in subsequent versions of *The Sex Garage* released on video, but a controversial fisting scene was cut from later prints of the film. *The Sex Garage* was released as a supporting work for Halsted's film *LA Plays Itself* (1972, 51 minutes), thus many consider the 34 minute short to be a third act of the larger work. Despite not appearing in *The Sex Garage*, Fred Halsted stars in *LA Plays Itself* as a sexual performer, social commentator, and hypocritically brutal sexual torturer. *LA Plays Itself* also features Halsted's lifelong boyfriend Joey Vale

(who also directed a couple porn flicks). When Vale died in 1986 at the premature age of 36, Halsted – unable to cope with the loss of his life partner – committed suicide in 1989 via sleep pills, even leaving a confessional suicide note behind that stated, "I had a good life...I've had looks, a body, money, success and artistic triumphs. I've had the love of my life. I see no reason to go on." During the 1980s, the quality of Halsted's erotic works plummeted to an unwatchable level, so it seems that the Reagan years were not very kind to the libertine auteur. During his prime, Halsted dressed in a fetishistic leather-clad manner similar to that of the outlaw rebel bikers featured in the Marlon Brando vehicle *The Wild One* (1953), therefore his works seems to be primarily an erotic extension of the controversial Hollywood films that he saw as a young man. Hollywood would not fully recognize Halsted's brand of fetishism until the release of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980); a homoerotic S&M quasi-slasher flick that is probably the most underrated work ever created by the man who directed the totally overrated Hollywood horror blockbuster *The Exorcist*. Unfortunately for Halsted, he would never reach the homo-prestige of Robert Mapplethorpe; a renowned photographer (who also focused on fetishistic homoerotic themes) that died of aids during the same year as the art house pornographer committed suicide.

Cinematic sex mechanic Fred Halsted during his prime

For those individuals interested in films that blur the line between porn and art, *The Sex Garage* is certainly one of the greatest American films belonging to this highly sensational category. Unlike most of Fred Halsted's work, *The Sex Garage* is accessible to people of various sexual persuasions (except lesbians). Despite featuring some queer material, the short is also a true expression of male sexual masculinity, as *The Sex Garage* manages to lucidly express the parallels between the organic power of male potency and the contrived energy of man-made horsepower; a theme Kenneth Anger also explored in *Scorpio Rising* and *Kustom Kar Kommandos*, albeit in a less blatant and more metaphysical manner. Halsted received some recognition as an artist when the Museum of Modern Art in mid-Manhattan, NYC screened his works and even collected some of his film prints for their permanent collection. Over the past decade or so, posthumous screenings of Fred Halsted's films have been cropping up throughout the United States, thus one can assume that the deceased filmmaker will only acquire more recognition as the years pass. After all, we live in a time where sexual perversion is one of the most glaring attributes of the Occidental world, so it is no stretch of the imagination to say that the films of Fred Halsted are artistically symbiotic of our sexually unrestrained times. Like the surrealist auteur works of Jean Cocteau and Kenneth Anger, *The Sex Garage* is an incandescent cinematic poem. If you only see one film by Fred Halsted, make it *The Sex Garage*; a visually and musically (featuring pleasurable noise) ambient work that audaciously celebrates

THE SEX GARAGE

the unnatural unity of man and machine.

-Ty E

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Fred Halsted (1975)

While an innocent young man, avant-garde pornographer Fred Halsted (*Nighthawk in Leather, A Night at Halsted's*) was routinely raped and abused by his stepfather and these rather traumatic experiences would not only deeply affect his personal life as a staunch sadomasochistic sodomite who highhandedly popularized fisting and lunatic leather-faggotry, among other things, but also his surreally sleazy and aberrantly artful celluloid works, the most idiosyncratic, esoteric, and sexually subversive of which being *Sextool* (1975), the concluding film in the proudly debauched director's L.A. Trilogy. With his experimental 'arthouse' porn flick *LA Plays Itself* (1972) and its companion work *The Sex Garage* (1972)—the only two hardcore flicks belonging to the permanent Film Collection of the Museum of Modern Art—Halsted became a sort of underground darling of the art and cinema world, inspiring alpha-surrealist Salvador Dalí to describe his work as “new information for me” and prompting junky literary outlaw William S. Burroughs to state that the films, “break all the stereotypes.” With his growing popularity, Halsted hoped to follow up *LA Plays Itself* and *The Sex Garage* with a more ‘sexually eclectic’ and ‘professional’ work, thus siring *Sextool*, which, while featuring the signature fisting and carnal violence of his previous efforts, also included Asian trannies, campy cabaret shows, and perverts riding motorcycles into degenerate sex fiend parties, thus ironically making it ultimately the ill-fated filmmaker's most blatantly bizarre, hallucinatory, and artful work and surely not something that would have captivated the everyday pervert. Described in a review from the *Hollywood Reporter* as a, “cruel, terrorizing film...the kind of film one can imagine Nazi concentration camp commanders commission for their jaded amusement,” *Sextool* is a sinisterly carnal celluloid nightmare featuring sailors being raped with boners, boots, and bananas, Gestapo-like cops in leather sodomizing young hustlers with nightsticks, negroes in black Cadillacs getting their fuck on with a white hippie cuck, and an oriental tranny smoking herb through a gigantic penis pipe. Deciding to shoot on mainstream movie grade 35mm film as opposed to gritty 16mm like his previous works, *Sextool* proved to be a rather expensive project for Halsted and he was only able to shoot the most imperative ‘action’ scenes and hardly any transitional scenes nor character development, thus the film has a foreboding nonlinear oneiric ‘structure’ that essentially amounts to a number of potent climaxes with little to no masturbation in between. Due to its hardcore imagery, *Sextool* was never played in mainstream theaters and only a few porn theaters were equipped with 35mm projectors to screen the film, thus the work had marginal theatrical distribution at best. While Halsted released a limited quantity of Super-8 prints and videos upon its initial release, *Sextool* has been out-of-print ever since, with only the Museum of Modern Art owning an original 35mm print of the film.

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Indisputably a commercial failure upon its release, *Sextool* is also arguably Halsted's celluloid magnum opus, or at least that was what I was able to discern after getting a hold of a horrendous quality bootleg copy of the film that looks like it was unearthed from homo hell.

Opening with a scene of Fred Halsted, who resembles Richard Gere except less queer, 'welcoming' the viewer as he walks around in an industrial wasteland while carrying a bottle of beer, which he naturally smashes, and sporting his signature leather-jacket to the ominous sounds of synthesizer-driven ambient noise, *Sextool* immediately establishes the tone for a sensually sinister and tyrannical work where (anti)erotic violence reigns with excessive savage force. Next cutting to a scene of a wisecracking and somewhat creepy Asian transsexual named 'Gloria' (Charmaine Lee Anderson, a one-time Empress of Hawaii in the Court of Many Rivers of Louis XIV, an American drag ball association) whose would-be-alpha-male boyfriend Jeff (Gus Harvey) tells her, "I fuck you so hard and deep you shouldn't even be able to walk. You just think of a new position and...well...you're the mother of creation," one immediately gets the idea that the meta-raunchy world of *Sextool* is a place of lecherous lost souls with no values and busted moral compasses who live to fuck and get fucked. Meanwhile, driving down the street is a Cadillac limousine containing some sexually intemperate spade soul brothers forcing a white hippie slave to give them head and a debauched driver who enjoys jerking-off while wearing leather gloves. Gloria and Jeff go to a sex party where the yellow transman gives 'her' lover the following warning, "You must be very careful around here Jeff...You never know who you might meet or what they might make you do" and proceeds to laugh maniacally. Upon arriving at the sexual outlaw get-together, Gloria points out two ultramacho leather-fags and the scene then cuts to the two lecherous leather-men violently gang raping a young boyish blond sailor (Tim Rhodes) who they not only anally and orally deflower, but also shove their fists, boots, and bananas up his rectum as if their bodies are a single working 'machine' or sextool), which is further accentuated by the film's fiercely foreboding proto-industrial score. Next Gloria spots a corrupt cocksucking cop, who rides into the party on a motorcycle and the scene cuts to a startlingly sordid sequence of the poof-penetrating policeman in a martial leather uniform nefariously using his nightstick to torture and inevitably 'assert' his power in a young man's rectum, among other things. Next, Gloria spots a rather dapper dick-downing dandy, who moonlights as a cross-dressing cabaret dancer that seems to have come straight out of Steven Arnold's *Luminous Procuress* (1971) and, to quote the gossiping yellow tranny, "pays her audience to cum." The clown-like cabaret dancer goes by the stage name "La Belle Eccentrique" and wears a somewhat ghoulish camp costume that includes pansy pancake makeup, a top hat, a suit jacket, and fish nets, and who gives a dildo-flinging performance to a homely hustler wearing a shirt that says "Rent-A-Kid Make-An-Officer" who, before he knows it, is using poppers,

has attached clothes lines all around his body, and is busting his load and showing a cigar up his ass with Crisco, which the cabaret dancer soon smokes like a true champ.

Meanwhile, at the party, a couple of jealous and conniving trannies gossip and one remarks about Gloria's biological maleness and her ostensibly heterosexual boyfriend, "Do you think he knows," which a friend responds, "About her or himself? They're both ladies!" in what is the closest thing to campy comic relief in *Sextool*, a film where bodies are weapons of wanton destruction. After smoking some weed through a large phallic pipe, Gloria sits in front of a fire and talks nostalgically of her mother's promiscuous behavior during Pearl Harbor, "The bombs was going down, and she was still out cruising, picking up the sailors, bringing them home, conquering them. That's my mother. She was so beautiful" and how, "I used to pick up those lipsticks, eyebrow pencils, padded bras, put on her nightgown, and just prance and dance. She never knew. I love my mother so much," thus demonstrating the transman's source for inevitably becoming a chink-chick-with-a-dick. At the party, Gloria also spots Fred Halsted and his real-life lover Joey Vale, the former of whom she insults by stating, "He thinks he's a boxer, but his idea of a workout is a bottle of beer in one hand and wearing a pair of gloves" and the scene then cuts to the director practicing boxing with his boyish blond bitch boy toy. After punching a punching bag a number of times like a true proletarian pugilist, Halsted 'takes off his gloves' and forces Ms. Vale to not only lick the blood off his knuckles, but also drink his piss. Wasting no time, Halsted proceeds to strip and beat Vale, using a large leather belt (with a nice large chain attached to the end) to get the job done properly and whip his tiny twink bitch back into shape. In the end, Gloria leaves the party for San Diego and her boyfriend Jeff, apparently a married man, is recruited into fagdom by pervert host Randy because in Fred Halsted's homo heaven and hell, perversity reigns, especially of the master and slave sort. In the end, it is revealed that deranged tranny Gloria setup Jeff to be emasculated and used him like a true tool, or 'Sextool.'

Utilizing a variety of eccentrically ethereal sound effects in an apparent tribute to Robert Altman (*That Cold Day in the Park*, *Short Cuts*)—a filmmaker both director Fred Halsted and producer Taylor Brown credited as their favorite filmmaker—*Sextool* is essentially a hypnotic hardcore porno flick of the flagrantly foreboding fashion with next to nil plot but featuring nihilistic sexual nightmares galore. Directed by a man who promoted a sort of fierce fag-scism and militant homo-supremacy of the renegade quasi-Röhm-esque variety, once going so far as proudly stating in an interview, "What Nazism is saying, though, is: you're Aryan, you're white, you're better. Gay supremacy is very similar to that. So I think it's a new kind of fascism—which I wholeheartedly endorse...I really do think we're superior and that thesis is fascist. I don't believe in equality, and I think it has been proven that at times when you have a great renaissance

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in culture and the arts, it's always gay people who are leading the whole thing. We are now starting such a renaissance again," Sextool is ultimately Fred Halsted's most inventive, sexually and socially iconoclastic, and thematically and aesthetically terroristic film and a virtual manifesto for his whacked-out Weltanschauung of sexual crime and punishment. Anti-bourgeois to its rather hard core, Sextool is totally at odds with the kind of equality-mongering insanity of today's mainstream LGBT community as the work that not only rejects becoming part of straight society, but seeks to destroy it without mercy one sick fuck at a time. Certainly a work that will more appeal to arthouse and cult cinema inclined cinephiles and cineastes as opposed to uncultivated cocksuckers looking for a quick and easy masturbation aid, Sextool is like a hardcore hodgepodge of the degenerate dreaminess of Jean Genet's Cocteau-esque *Un Chant d'Amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*, the sadomasochistic sailor fetishism of Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Querelle* (1982), the anti-bourgeois horror-like horrific sexual perversity of Alberto Cavallone's *Blue Movie* (1978) and *Blow Job* (1980), and the gritty S&M arthouse exploitation of Jacques Scandolari's *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971) and *New York City Inferno* (1978) for what ultimately adds up to a strikingly singular work of celluloid sensual savagery that violently fist-fucks the soul without remorse.

Advertised with the rather literal tagline, "USE/ABUSE/EVERYONE/EVERYTHING," Sextool is a work so unwaveringly subversive and cinematically unhinged that it inspired *Divine of Pink Flamingos* (1972) feces-eating infamy to state, "I WOULD EAT THIS FILM!!," though I am surprised the fist-focused work was not too 'butch' for the tragic drag queen. In regard to his own thoughts regarding his influence as a filmmaker and more-than-vocal proponent of fist-fucking, Fred Halsted stated in a posthumously released interview entitled "A Rather Late Yet Interesting Interview with a Dead Porno Artist" in *Butt Magazine*, "I think I've been extremely influential in terms of breaking faggots out of the swish era. My films present faggots in the macho era, and maybe it's too overdone, but the whole style changed. I think that it had an enormous influence on the style and fashion of gay America, and I think that's good. At one time for several years I was the dominant thinker in America in terms of breaking this softness, and I think it's succeeded," yet Halsted is rather forgotten today, even among leather-fags and it seems only the most audacious of cinephiles have kept his legacy going. With characters stating such sexually cannibalistic things as, "Let's cruise the meatrack. I'll tell you how everybody's hung, slice, and degrade" and a rape victim "more... more... more sir... more..." while being fist-fucked into oblivion by his tormentor, Sextool, arguably more importantly than anything, is the visceral artistic expression of a sexually abused boy turned sexually sadistic man whose suicide at the mere age of 47 proved he was a fucked fellow seeking self-obliteration who instinctively saw sex as a form of destruction as opposed to reproduction, which one could easily argue is the true psyche of

the homosexual and sexual fetishist in general. Unfortunately, with Halsted's suicide came the orphaning of Sextool as he owned the rights to the film and it is rather doubtful the work will ever be released again in any form, thus making it one of the most sought after and impossible-to-find hardcore works of porn history. Even if you have to travel to semen-drenched Sodom to find a copy of Sextool, it will surely be worth the effort because even with all the subversive homoeroticism and boots literally in peoples' asses, one will soon forget they are watching a gay porn film and begin to start thinking they have entered a post-apocalyptic hell that only Halsted could have pleasantly plagued the world with.

-Ty E

A NIGHT AT HALSTED'S
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Fred Halsted (1982)

Long before homocore pioneer Bruce LaBruce made films about queer punk hairdressers swooning over skinheads in *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993) and young twink neo-nazis jerking off onto old school editions of *Mein Kampf* in *Skin Flick / Skin Gang* (1999), militant sadomasochistic sodomite auteur Fred Halsted (*The Sex Garage*, *Sextool*) was making hardcore arthouse blue movies featuring leather-punks being anally and orally punked with punk rock/new wave soundtracks. Described by some as Halsted's crowning achievement as an aesthetically and genetically endowed pornographer, *A Night at Halsted's* (1982) sticks out from virtually every other porn flick ever made in that it features a soundtrack including songs by Devo, The Sex Pistols, The Circle Jerks, The Dead Kennedys, David Bowie, X, and The Adolescents, among various others, set to footage of leather-fags pumping each other full of twinkie cream in a *Querelle*-esque cocksucker club. As Halsted's biographer William E. Jones wrote in *Halsted Plays Himself* (2011), "Fred Halsted continued to direct during the 1980s, but the terms of his involvement in the porn industry had changed, and most of his feature films and videos from that period have little to recommend beyond the obvious attractions. The best of the lot is *A Night at Halsted's* (1981), shot at the sex club Fred owned..." Starring hardcore homo Halsted—a self-described proponent of "gay supremacism" who once proudly stated in an interview that "Gay supremacy is fascistic! What's the difference between gay supremacy and Nazism?"—during his more 'mature' years as a pernicious pleasure-seeking predator on the prowl who is looking to penetrate passive young men and force them to literally lick his boot in the same manner as he depicted a decade earlier in his first feature-length film *LA Plays Itself* (1972), *A Night at Halsted's* is eroticized self-worship at its most superlatively sleazy, cum-covered, preposterously punk rock, and ludicrously leather-bound. Unfortunately, like most porn flicks (excluding Halsted's early films), *A Night at Halsted's* can be rather redundant for those not looking to get off to cocks get blown through gloryholes as man-on-man manhole action is clearly the main attraction, yet the film still manages to transcend the typical 1980s skin flick with its almost unintentionally surreal combination of cock-chomping visuals and penetrating powerchord sounds. Needless to say, seeing Fred Halsted in full leather-fag apparel stalking young men at his cum-covered club to Gary Numan's "I Die: You Die" makes for an innately idiosyncratic and iconic scenario as if the viewer is witness some sort of seedy spiritual rites of some secret society of synthesizer Sodom.

Opening with Fred Halsted entering his club like a highly decorated general making his way onto the battlefield, *A Night at Halsted's* lets the viewer know immediately that one is about to witness the warped and recklessly wanton real-

life fantasies of its star/director. Before stealing some tricks from some young twinks, Halsted talks to the cashier of the club, who is played by the director's real-life long-term boyfriend Joey Vale. About a half a decade after *A Night at Halsted's* was released, Vale died of AIDS and Halsted decided to follow his loverboy by committing suicide in 1989, writing in his suicide note, "I had a good life...I've had looks, a body, money, success and artistic triumphs. I've had the love of my life. I see no reason to go on." The reality of both Halsted and Vale's deaths make *A Night at Halsted's* an all the more interesting watch as a charismatically crude celluloid work depicting sexual, cultural, and aesthetic nihilism, where each gushing cumshot reflects a closer step to an early death. Made during the pre-condom days when gay cancer had yet to scare ultra-masculine homos from abandoning their lurid leather uniforms, *A Night at Halsted's* is a deranged dream before it blew up into a real-life nightmare. *A Night at Halsted's* concludes where it begins with Mr. Halsted discussing the finer points of S&M fetishism with his tragic lover Joey Vale, who also worked as the fluffer on the film, thus making the film a sort of fucked family affair. Advertised in newspapers as "A Private Men's Club" featuring LEVI-LEATHER-PUNK, such an advertisement certainly fails to express the sensual sadism of Halsted's, a pervert's palace where young bucks can have the distinguished honor of licking an old arthouse pornographer's legendary boots.

Filmed at what Fred Halsted himself dubbed as his own "stand up fuck club," *A Night at Halsted's* is a debauched documentary more than anything, albeit a highly subjective one clearly used as an outlet for the star/director to showcase his personal 'pride and joy' one more time. Featuring the trailer of an eighteen-wheeler that was designed as a reconstruction of the trucks of New York's Meatpacking district, a translucent Plexiglas wall with a rather large goryhole, metal bunk beds without mattresses meant to deliver maximum discomfort for the sadomasochistically inclined, and seemingly endless dark hallways meant for running into a potential victim/victimizer, Halsted's club only lasted a year after it opened because, as William E. Jones wrote, "Fred himself admitted that Los Angeles did not have enough perverts to support the sort of business he envisioned." On top of being a sickeningly visceral appearance akin to spiritual syphilis with a strangely complimentary punk soundtrack that makes the whole experience easier to swallow, *A Night at Halsted's* is a highly humorous piece of leather lunacy, not least of all because the film's 'other star' J.W. King looks like a pseudo-fascistic, fecal felon retard in his captain cocksucker police hat and his symbolic need to fiercely fuck clones as a nihilistic narcissist who probably feels that downing the dick of his doppelganger is the next best thing to screwing himself. Seeing Halsted take on a twink-in-training, Greg Dale, a fellow that dons a dog collar and ebony jockstrap, also makes for an unintentionally satirical piece of frolicsome fetishism, as if the director was trying to reinvent S&M leather-faggery, but ultimately just ended up intentionally parodying it. Of course, it is

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not until Mr. Halsted—a man who made a name for himself in *LA Plays Itself* by having his lover lick his leather skull-crushing boots—has Vale ‘cleanup’ his faithful boots that he can go on his merry way and say his salacious goodbyes, thus concluding *A Night at Halsted's*. While lacking the Scorpio Rising-esque aberrant arthouse essence of *The Sex Garage* (1972) and *LA Plays Itself* (1972) and the esoteric and eccentric 35mm eroticism of *Sextool* (1975), *A Night at Halsted's* was still a rather decent way for an unhappy unhinged pornographer to conclude his then-already-stagnating pornography career. For those that think that diseased cocks and gigantic gloryholes cannot be funny, *A Night at Halsted's* is a reminder why semen-covered pleather has more slapstick value than a dozen Friedberg and Seltzer flicks. Of course, what else can one expect from a film with the would-be-titillating tagline, “How Long Can You Stay Up?”

-Ty E

VERHÄNGNIS

Fred Kelemen (1994)

Although more active nowadays as a cinematographer who has shot various important contemporary European arthouse works, most notably the last two films of Hungarian auteur Béla Tarr and his wife Ágnes Hranitzky, including *The Man from London* (2007) aka *A londoni férfi* and *The Turin Horse* (2011) aka *A torinói ló*, Fred Kelemen—a Berlin-born fellow of half-hun/half-Hungarian descent who has an exceedingly effete essence about him—is also an ‘auteur’ filmmaker who, due to the relative unavailability of most of his work and the puffery-plagued praise that he has received from important far-left-wing intellectual gatekeepers like degenerate Jewess Susan ‘White People Are Cancer’ Sontag, has gone on to gain a sort of ‘mythical’ status among a certain group of cinephiles that like plodding arthouse works, especially of the Eastern European sort, were nothing really happens. Kelemen has been compared to everyone from Werner Herzog to Alexander Sokurov and is known for mainly making fairly long and monotonous quasi-realist films of the ultra-gritty and largely dialogue-less kind that lack anything resembling a plot, feature obnoxiously over-extended and static scenes in dark rooms and alleyways, and contain mostly poor, unattractive, and desperate Slavic foreigners living in Aryan urban gutters that oftentimes lurk around the seediest of bars. The film that made a name for Kelemen is the 80-minute feature *Verhängnis* (1994) aka *Fate*, which is actually a student film that the director made as his graduation project at the German Film & TV Academy in Berlin, yet it ultimately got great praise from Sontag (who gave the film an honorable mention in her largely pessimistic essay ‘The Decay of Cinema’) and various other important critics and even went on to have an American premiere in 1996 at the Anthology Film Archives in New York. In fact, a German friend of mine who attended the same Berlin school at the same time as the filmmaker told me that Kelemen was considered a superstar there and the poster for *Verhängnis* was even hung on the wall of the institution in tribute to his legacy. What interested me about the film aside from its fairly short length in comparison to the director’s other works (for example, Kelemen’s subsequent feature *Frost* (1997) is a whopping 270-minutes) is that it was shot on shitty Hi-8 video (the preferred format of skateboard videos during the 1990s) and transferred to 16mm film in a manner to make it look as shitty as possible, thereupon giving it a unique ultra ‘lo-fi’ aesthetic essence that underscores the decidedly degrading and destitute tone of the work.

When interviewed for WKCR-FM on March 4th, 1996 following his film’s screening at the Anthology Film Archives, Kelemen stated regarding his goal with *Verhängnis*, “I wanted to show that a human being is not pure, that people are not units. To create impure pictures relates more to the truth about human beings,” adding, “...I think it can be very interesting to move away from the

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idea of pureness and technical perfection. Pureness is a myth, and the ideology of pureness has created much pain in the world. I think there are no pure feelings and no pure people and no pure races.” Aside from the patently pretentious and clichéd pseudo-humanistic nature of his remarks, I find it rather pathetic and ethno-masochistic on Kelemen’s part to ‘apologize in advance’ for his Teutonic background by alluding to National Socialism, thus leading me to conclude that the director is, at best a pussy, and, at worst, a lying sack of shit who makes ‘poverty porn’ disguised as humanist poetry to appeal to the vain and patronizing lumpenprole fetishism of trendy left-wing bourgeois filmgoers, critics, and academics who somehow think it is enlightening to watch poor and uneducated dipsomaniacs act in a ridiculously self-destructive fashion so that they can get the masochistic thrill of feeling guilty for being ‘privileged.’ Still, while Kelemen does not really say anything particularly profound, new, or insightful with *Verhängnis*, the film does feature an undeniably potent foreboding atmosphere, pleasantly grating aesthetic, and ultimately unwittingly reveals the cultural and moral decay that accompanies contemporary social phenomena like multiculturalism and globalization (with deracinated half-Magyar director Kelemen himself being a direct living and breathing product of these things). Undoubtedly, the film proves why Kelemen has had a more fruitful career as a cinematographer than an auteur, as he is great at setting up and capturing bold images, especially in dark and somberly lit post-industrial hellholes, but does not have a strong enough personal vision to become a great auteur. Indeed, like the downloadable portraits of himself that Kelemen posted on his personal website, *Verhängnis* is certainly stylish but ultimately lacks character.

If Rainer Werner Fassbinder demonstrated in his classic Sirkian work *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) aka *Angst essen Seele auf* that Arabs prefer hanging around their own little ghetto microcosms while living abroad in Krautland, Kelemen more or less demonstrates that Russians and other Slavs do the same in *Verhängnis*, which is set in a Slavified Berlin ghetto where vodka and sex seem like the only things that make life worth living. Of course, as the film ultimately demonstrates, vodka and sex can surely make for a deleterious and sometimes even deadly combo, especially after a poor fellow has busted his ass all day after a hard day of drinking and attempting to scam money, only to come home to find his girlfriend fucking another dude. After a pretentious quote from the Dalai Lama and gritty slow-motion opening montage vaguely in the style of the concluding post-rape scene in Larry Clark’s *Kids* (1995) featuring various middle-aged to elderly hobo-like Slavs lurking around Berlin as if the city is one big giant third world loony bin, the film cuts to a nighttime shot of a somewhat young Russian illegal alien named Valery (Valerij Fedorenko) playing his accordion while sitting on some stairs outside of some undisclosed building. Eventually, a fat, stocky, and swarthy fellow walks up to Valery, compliments his accordion playing, and invites him to come back to his apartment to play

for him for money. Unfortunately for Valery, he unwitting ends up going to the apartment of a seasoned untermensch sadist who gets a craven kick out of taunting the monetarily disadvantaged, especially if they are Russian. Indeed, while the fellow pulls out a fresh bill for Valery as if he is going to give it to him in exchange for his musical services, he takes it away when the street musician goes to grab it. On top of that, the fellow gets extremely agitated while Valery is playing and makes him stop and play a different song. Ultimately, the man 'pays' Valery for his performance with an entire mug of cheap vodka that he more or less forces the musician to drink and then proceeds to throw him out of his apartment in a rather violent fashion, as if he is throwing away a piece of rancid garbage. Surely, the way Valery is abused makes it quite clear that Verhängnis is partly an homage to Herzog's *Stroszek*, which also centers around an oftentimes abused and belittled Berlin-based street musician of the alcohol-addled sort who plays his accordion in the streets. Unfortunately, also like the eponymous character of Herzog's film, Valery has a whorish girlfriend whose lecherous behavior gets him in trouble.

After being thoroughly degraded by a considerably ugly and mean-spirited little turd of a swarthy sadist, Valery becomes terribly upset and while in a seemingly possessed state decides to wander towards a brightly beaming light in a large water fountain in a marginally transcendental scene where it seems as if the character has just entered the gates of hell. While standing in the fountain with his feet and parts of his legs immersed in water, Valery cries like a wounded animal and thrashes at the water in a scene that transitions to a photo of a small pile of dead corpses, including a baby, as if to hint that the character suffers from PTSD as a result of experiencing the horrors of war when he still lived in his native communist homeland. After playing in the water fountain, Valery heads to a seedy local bar where he gets even drunker and eventually plays a game of pool for cash with some fellow immigrants. While Valery wins the game, he has to pull a knife out upon collecting his rightfully earned award from the pool table, as his competitors are sore losers and begin approaching as if planning to attack him in a vicious fashion. While Valery makes it out of the bar unscathed, he has to watch behind his shoulder while running down a sidewalk to make sure that he is not being chased by the losers of the pool game. Before heading back to his girlfriend's (and possibly his) apartment, Valery decides to take a brief rest by sitting on the sidewalk, not realizing that he will eventually walk into a nightmarish situation that every man dreads that he will ultimately never return from, at least emotionally.

When Valery arrives at the front door of his girlfriend's apartment, he decides to eavesdrop for a little bit and then eventually demands that he be allowed to come inside, but his little lady refuses to allow him inside as if she is hiding something from him, which she most certainly is. After a little bit of yelling back and forth between him and his ladylove Ljuba (played by German actress Sanja

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Spengler, who later had a small role in Oskar Roehler's *Die Unberührbare* (2000 aka *No Place to Go*), Valery becomes fed up and swiftly kicks open the door of the apartment, only to find his girlfriend completely naked with the exception of a robe and a naked man that she has clearly just engaged in carnal pleasure with. Needless to say, Valery is infuriated and begins grabbing Ljuba by her hair and smacking her around while her shocked secret lover begins slowly putting on his clothes so he can make his escape, but the gutter accordionist notices what he is doing and pulls a gun on him before the fellow can leave. Rather absurdly, Ljuba attempts to grab Valery's gun while he has it pointed at her fuckbuddy, thus causing it to go off and instantly kill the poor young stranger after a single bullet penetrates his gut. To figuratively rub her actions in her face, Valery pulls out the money he has earned for her, literally rubs the money in her face, and then abruptly leaves. Of course, the entire situation leaves Ljuba completely broken and she literally pisses herself while staring at the lifeless corpse of her lover. While still wearing nothing but a robe, Ljuba leaves her apartment and runs into the night where her bad luck ultimately gets much worse.

Clearly not a wise decision maker, Ljuba decides to go to a seedy bar so that she can drown her misery in cheap vodka. While things start off innocently enough when a seemingly nice young man sits beside her at a table and begins talking to her after she ends up choking on her first glass of vodka, Ljuba finds things getting a little bit heated when a swarthy Arab-like guy makes her dance with him and in the process notices she is completely naked under her robe. When Ljuba's dance partner gets a little excited after seeing her supple breasts and bushy beaver, she is angered and pushes him, so he pushes her back and knocks her flat on her face in front of everyone in the bar. Things seem to calm down after a slutty and slightly beautiful blonde barmaid helps Ljuba get up and the grateful character repays the woman by giving her a passionate erotically-charged kiss, but the violent dickhead of a dancer's equally swarthy friend soon decides to sit at the quasi-protagonist's table and it does not take long for him to get under the table and begin molesting her by rubbing his face on her bare pussy while groping her breasts. Needless to say, Ljuba's experience at the bar ends in brutal gang-rape. The next morning, Ljuba wakes up in a field with her robe open and proceeds to start the new day by smoking a post-rape cigarette in a blue-tinted scene that screams 'nuclear winter.' After staring into space while standing near a ruined old factory, Ljuba begins walking and is soon joined by her boyfriend Valery of all people in a scenario that is most certainly a curiously unlikely instance of seemingly fated happenstance. While Ljuba and her murderous boy toy begin walking together and eventually go out of frame, a bulldozer appears out of nowhere and begins following their direction as if to hint that all of humanity and the ugly vulgar post-industrial world it has created should be wiped out from the face of this earth (of course, I doubt this was Kelemen's intent).

When asked by a fellow named Ryan Deussing during a 1996 interview with WKCR-FM about the fact that the lead characters in *Verhängnis* are immigrants and if he was “thinking about Germany or about politics” when he developed the film, director Fred Kelemen responded with a transparent ‘bleeding heart’ by preposterously stating, “I think everyone should find a way to live that is not cynical, especially people who make something for an audience. You have to be very aware of what you’re doing, and I try not to make films that are ‘against’ what is happening around me. I try to show everything, but not out of cynicism—that’s important to me and to why I made this film. And sure they’re aliens, but in a sense we are all aliens—we find ourselves in a world we don’t understand. We are alienated from ourselves, as well, because we fight the world and we fight each other and we fight our own desires. We all want love, we just don’t understand how to get it.” Of course in its depiction of a man being taunted for being Russian and later taking out all of his pent up rage on a stranger, the preposterous message of the film is that you should not be racist to someone as it might lead to murder, which is certainly the moronic sort of excuse that leftist and cultural marxist types use to explain why the majority of crimes in Germany and the rest of Europe are committed by foreigners (though, of course, it is mainly Turks and other Arabs that commit these crimes and not Russians). Indeed, aside from the film featuring a quite cynical depiction of how Russian immigrants act and respond to situations, *Verhängnis* seems to almost romanticize a world of ghetto poverty where rape and murder are as commonplace as taking a shit or turning on a light switch. In its depiction of a woman seeing her lover murdered and being gang-raped in what seems to be the span of a couple hours or so, Kelemen’s film is a work that, despite its hyper-gritty realism, features an extremely rather unlikely sequence of events that are about as plausible as those featured in the average Hollywood blockbuster thriller.

Notably, Kelemen’s collaborator Béla Tarr once stated regarding what makes a true auteur filmmaker, “If you are a real filmmaker you have to have your own style, your own language. Which is depending on your cultural background, your history, and your budget of course, and a lot of things what you already have. Because as I see, what I think, filmmaking is a kind of reaction to the world—you’re just telling people how you see the world, from your point of view of course. But, you know, that’s the reason why I do not listen for the other circumstances, what the other people are doing—because it’s impossible to follow someone, impossible to say OK this is a trend, or what we would like to keep it or—it’s definitely fake, wrong way. You have to be yourself, you have to tell everything from your side and you do have to have your own language; and if you have your own language you don’t care about the world and anything really and that’s what I feel, what I learned during these 34 years.” While Kelemen has somewhat of his own style, his works hardly seem like the product of a man who has his “own language” and doesn’t “care about the world and anything really,” as his message

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regarding the troubles that foreigners face in Germany is just as reductionist-oriented and hysterical as the sort of verbal vomit regurgitated by liberal arts college sociology professors and leftist special interest groups. Indeed, aside from *Verhängnis* depicting Russians as barbaric ‘white niggers’ in a manner that will certainly appeal to mainstream left-wing film critics and academics, the film features nothing new as far as the history of post-WWII German cinema is concerned. Aside from being aesthetically similar to the gritty realist works of past German filmmakers like Uwe Frießner (*Das Ende des Regenbogens* aka *The End of the Rainbow*, *Der Drücker*) and Uwe Schrader (*Kanakerbraut* aka *White Trash*, *Sierra Leone*), Kelemen’s films are so much like the German era works of relatively forgotten Iranian auteur Sohrab Shahid Saless (*Reifezeit* aka *Time of Maturity*, *Utopia*) in terms of style, content, themes, and general essence that some would probably accuse him of aesthetic plagiarism. Indeed, Saless made long, plotless, and poorly lit 3+ hour-long films about foreigners living in squalor in Berlin before Kelemen’s balls even dropped.

As for works that were shot on archaic video and transferred to film, John Wintergate’s bizarre horror-comedy *Boardinghouse* (1982), which was shot on Betacam and blown up to 35mm, was released well over a decade before *Verhängnis*, though one must admit that Kelemen’s work has a rather raw and strangely solacing look to it that demonstrates the director’s talent as a cinematographer. Indeed, Kelemen’s work with Tarr proves that he contributes more to the cinema world as a cinematographer than as a director. After all, Dutch cinematographer Jan de Bont shot some of the greatest arthouse works of post-WWII Dutch cinema, including Adriaan Ditvoorst’s *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra* and *De blinde Fotograaf* aka *The Blind Photographer* (1973), as well as Paul Verhoeven’s *Turkish Delight* (1973) aka *Turks fruit* and *The 4th Man* (1983) aka *De vierde man*, yet the Hollywood blockbusters he directed upon becoming a filmmaker like *Twister* (1996) and *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* (2003) are pure and unadulterated celluloid shit that seem like they were assembled by the all the more Asperger-plagued brother of Michael Bay. While I certainly will not complain if Kelemen continues to direct films, I think he has a better chance at becoming the next Robby Müller than the next Tarkovsky or Fassbinder like some film critics seem to believe. To Kelemen’s credit, he admitted in a February 25, 2014 interview with YNET Israel, “There’s no difference for me whether I’m shooting a film as a director or only as a cinematographer,” which is certainly not something any serious auteur filmmaker would say. Undoubtedly, *Verhängnis* is certainly more interesting than most of the films that have been produced in Germany since the death of Fassbinder/New German Cinema, but of course that says more about the sorry state of contemporary kraut cinema than it does about Kelemen’s talent as a filmmaker.

-Ty E

AUGUST UNDERGROUND TRILOGY

Fred Vogel* (2001)

When you search for “The most disgusting movie”, chances are the name August Underground has come into play more than once. That is how I found out about this trilogy of depravity, sadism, and punishment. The series is so notorious because it takes a simple serial killer sketchboard and transforms it into something so realistic, and so extreme, that it is almost incomprehensible.

Imagine walking down a road, to the nearest 7-Eleven. You stumble upon a VHS tape that isn't labeled. Your curiosity gets the best of you and you decide to take it home. You are walking down the street with this tape. As you enter your apartment, you set the tape on your coffee table and take care of some odd jobs. When you finally get a chance, you sit down and pop it in. Static graces the screen with a strangely illuminated presence. You watch as an almost amateur home video pops up onto the screen. You sit amused while watching two normal guys just drink and chat. They then walk into the house and open the basement door. You don't realize that every step they take, is a step closer to the real hell. This is just the first step in the exploits of these unnamed killers. Every action seems to go unnoticed by the general public. This film angers, disgusts, horrifies, and condemns you to join the ranks of fellow SICKO's. All three of these films link up in an almost perfect way. August Underground is the considered to be the birth of these killers. We do not know if they have killed before, nor do we think about it as we watch through their eyes. In the first AU, we are subjected to two killers. Well, one actually. The cameraman never physically kills someone, but he nevertheless torments and imposes it upon him or her. This film is almost too real. From the camerawork to the static, this film will shock you when you watch it. These films have the best special effects thanks to Jerami Cruise, FX Artist for Toe Tag Pictures. The only scene I really had a problem with was the blowjob scene. When he started punching her, I was laughing at how bad it looked. You get the feeling of hopelessness head on. What Fred Vogel created is the most realistic and seedy film on serial killers ever filmed. He doesn't try to glamorize serial killers like most other movies. He shows what it is, gritty, horrifying, and unpleasant. At the end of the film, it doesn't have credits, it just cuts off. You sit on your couch and just think about what you just subjected yourself to. This film rips your metaphorical jugular out and shits on it. If you want the real deal screw CSI, get August Underground. The second of the films is entitled August Underground Mordum. This one takes what you thought to be the worst, most prolific serial killer movie, and vomits all over you. This one is more focused on sexual extremes as a whole. They take everything you thought was hardcore and blew your expectations away. The only real problem with Mordum is that it seems so uninvolved with everything. It's too over the top, one might say. They take Fred Vogel's character and introduce 2 new killers,

AUGUST UNDERGROUND TRILOGY

Crusty and Maggot. They are brothers and sisters and they fuck around. While this just not only confuses the hell out of everyone, it also makes the film seem less realistic in a sense but for every disadvantage there is an advantage. In this film, there is the most graphic castration scene that has ever been committed to celluloid. There are scenes that are so brutal and unmerciful that its amazing that this film isn't all over the news. This film thrives at its core on the sheer brutality that it portrays. There is a scene involving a little girl and a bathtub, which is beyond offensive and degrading. The whole argument over Mordum is which version is better. The co-star Maggot released this film cut and extended the way he wanted it to be looked upon. It is simply dubbed "The Maggot Cut". Copies can still be found on eBay occasionally. Near the horrifying climax of this film, our favorite killers meet up with Killjoy, Member of Necrophagia, and discover he has some "skeletons" in his closet also. After the release of Mordum, Toe Tag Pictures garnered some credibility as being the new face of horror. To quote Fred Vogel himself, "The future of horror is bright fucking red". That quote has stuck with me ever since my initial viewing because the man is right. Horror is going downhill fast. They make film like they see it, not so people of a younger age can watch it. These films can be personally described as a "No holds barred descent into hell on earth". When this film got released, it exploded all over forums. Fans and newcomers were amazed and confounded. No way in hell could he ever top the original but he did. August Underground Penance was the most amazing film I have ever seen. When the name was released, I immediately went to a dictionary and looked it up. It has to do with atonement for sins. The name and theme could not be anymore perfect. When it was released and I got my copy. I sat down and was just fucking amazed. The only thing that I hated about these films was that the characters seemed so invincible. They would kill, they would laugh, and they would fuck. It seemed like it would never stop or never feel for their actions but in Penance all that changed. The emotions from the killers just amazed me so much. I cried in this film. It is so brutally beautiful. There is so much to this film that isn't even noticed right away. This movie had been under speculation from fans and critics alike because there appeared to be no way they could top Mordum but they ultimately did. A great trilogy which is severely overrated at times, but still a classic in underground horror. These films should be viewed but take heed to the warnings you read on the internet.

-Maq

THE REDSIN TOWER

Fred Vogel* (2006)

"Butchery and carnage will reign upon the holy"

I do not remember their being anyone considered "Holy" in this film. The newest film from TOETAG Pictures, creators of such nasties as August Underground and August Underground Mordum, is the mother of all over hyped cinema. This film started screening about a year ago in horror conventions around the globe. Many reviews brought back amazing results, one even going as far as to say it "re-invents the slasher genre". You can imagine the average consumer being throttled for this film, but all hopes were shattered when the DVD release date was delayed in hopes of finding a company to release this film on DVD. Fans waited and waited and finally, they just released it themselves. I pre-ordered my copy without a second glance. The film has a simple and... familiar plot. Mitch loves Kim. Kim loves Mitch. Kim wants more. Kim breaks up with Mitch. Mitch is pissed. He wants revenge. Kim wants drugs and alcohol and cheap sex. Mitch wants vengeance. Kim wants to party at a sleazy tower with all her "gothic" friends. Madness ensues. Now the acting, is a very mixed bag. We got Mitch, played by Perry Tiberio, who in all aspects is and can be a great actor. He needs some work on his sniffing though. Then we have Kim, who i am going to be a nice guy and say that her acting is horrid. I cannot imagine anyone thinking the acting in this film is better than any of the other Vogel productions. The stoner guy was a good actor too. The cast seems very cliched and annoying. I dont view any of these characters as real people. We got the stud football jock, a Fat Joe look alike, Gothic sex fiend, and the stoner and company. I only sympathized for maybe 3 characters out of the entire running time. One cool thing about this film though, is how they managed to mix a slasher film with supernatural climaxes. You never really know who to trust or who will get out in the end. The gore, which TOETAG is so famous for, is hardly there. We got a face slashed, maggot afterbirth, intestines, and etc. It looks good, but it could have used higher quantity. Another thing that got me was how the film is titled "THE REDSIN TOWER" but there is only 1 floor. One floor that houses a flying lizard plant which reminded me of Full Moon pictures bad attempts at animatronics. The lighting in this film varies from too dark to see anything, but it is a tower, and really beautiful shots involving lots of cunning uses of shadows. "The future of horror is BRIGHT FUCKING RED" If they make any more films like this, it seems the future of horror is pretty fucking bland. Overall, this movie is just another notch in my mind of movies i have seen. Nothing too special, and it has all been seen before. All this coming from a TOETAG Pictures fan. On a brighter note, i did get a really cool patch with the DVD.

-Maq

THE REDSIN TOWER
THE REDSIN TOWER

Fred Vogel* (2006)

Toe Tag Pictures has obtained a loyal following over the past couple of years. This following was in response to their debut *August Underground* and later sequels. These “videos” provide the viewer with homemade style snuff fun. It is obvious that creator Fred Vogel figured an easy way to get around having a large budget and effort put into his film would be to go for cheap brutality and realistic looking torture. Mr. Vogel has been praised for his efforts and creating “original” terror. I don’t think I agree with that when taking into account the countless other films using the same mock reality technique. *Cannibal Holocaust* and *The Blair Witch Project* are two earlier films that provide the viewer with a more intimate look at fear. Aside from the three *August Underground* films, Toe Tag Pictures has also managed to produce the feature *The Redsin Tower*. Going into the film I didn’t know what to expect. The *August Underground* films give no insight into the artistic capabilities and creativity that Toe Tag Pictures might have (aside from special effects). I was entertained by their pseudo snuff films but that kind of stuff gets old fairly fast. With *The Redsin Tower* I could finally make up my mind on Toe Tag Pictures and their future in “underground” horror. The Toe Tag Pictures team makes an introduction before *The Redsin Tower* mentioning how they had many distributors offering the team a DVD release. I can assume that was probably only Brain Damage Films as *The Redsin Tower* is an even weaker effort than most the films they distribute. *The Redsin Tower* was a group effort by the Toe Tag Pictures team which has given me zero faith in any further project they produce. I still think that their best contribution to film was the special effects they did for *Murder-Set-Pieces*. Many Toe Tag fans have responded negatively to *Murder-Set-Pieces* as they have probably realized that Toe Tag Pictures should stick to special effects and give up on “filmmaking.” *The Redsin Tower* is not an easily digested film. This is not because the film is deep or contains various subtexts that require further viewings to appreciate. It’s because it’s a dragging, banal, horribly written, and amateurishly directed shit-fest. Fred Vogel’s character in the film is a metaphor for the whole film. He plays a fat, loser stoner rasta that looks like he should have been at a sublime concert in 1993. I doubt Mr. Vogel would ever overdose on heroin. After he takes a bong hit he’s too busy with his Taco Bell and Snowballs. *The Redsin Tower*’s cover art looks like it was directly lifted from Dario Argento’s *Suspiria*. This is no doubt theft on the part of Toe Tag Pictures. It is also no surprise. They also “borrow” heavily from Sam Raimi’s *Evil Dead* when one of the many forgettable actresses becomes possessed and becomes “ghoulish.” Raimi did it much better 25 years ago. Keep in mind that this entire scene near the end of *The Redsin Tower* is by far the most interesting part of the film.

Fred Vogel must be a huge Dario Argento fan

The Redsin Tower plot seemed like it came out of the lyrics of a My Chemical Romance song. Is the Toe Tag Pictures a group of hopeless dark natured romantics? I assume they just wish they were. Toe Tag Pictures offers their fans cheap nudity and gore just as their mainstream Hollywood counterparts do. The only difference is that Hollywood horror films offer a more polished look with more silicone. I am against Toe Tag pictures representing the "underground." They couldn't lick the blood off of directors like Jörg Buttgerreit, Jim Van Bebber, or Shinya Tsukamoto's legendary film reels.

-Ty E

SELLA TURCICA
SELLA TURCICA

Fred Vogel* (2010)

For the first 6 years, ToeTag Pictures, now respectively ToeTag Inc., had been slowly establishing themselves as a dominating force in a genre practically unclaimed and never-to-be-taken-seriously: faux-snuff. What ToeTag did for found footage still represents a turning point in the way I perceive and anticipate violence, regardless of the attitudes of the crew. With a steady drum-roll, *The Redsin Tower* was finally released with incredible praise. Following *August Underground Penance*, *The Redsin Tower* was ToeTag's breaking free from the shackles, as to say, making a real film. My dreadful experience with such was highlighted in a review some years back and I completely lost faith in the ToeTag crew to produce anything that can't be redeemed by a bucket of blood, no matter how realistic or gritty said bucket might be. With my unsightly hair standing on end, I received a copy of ToeTag's latest film, *Sella Turcica*, and began to slowly digest the images vacuumed onto my screen. It's surely sad to say that the only thing ToeTag ever did correctly was film themselves being assholes with corn syrup.

The magic that ToeTag achieved in *Murder-Set-Pieces* is surely not reflected behind the camera. *Sella Turcica*, which is a depression in the skull having to do with the pituitary gland, is Fred Vogel's image of a "drama," a film so wrapped up inside its ghastly narcissism that it refuses to wield its horror badge until the final ten minutes. The plot revolves around a family's homecoming preparation to a returning soldier and son, Sgt. something-or-another. Bound to a wheelchair, the demise of his ability to walk is a mystery to both the family and the somber fellow whose handicap is his own. Greeting him is his mother, Camille Keaton (Rape "victim"), and his brother, sister, and sister-in-law. Oh, and also the Negro DJ/rapper who is sleeping with the young sister. This wacky cast of can't-be actors play thespian comedy as they bumble about tripping over lines and passing expressions which are better suited for ventriloquist dummies. The worst offender is *I Spit on Your Grave*'s Camille Keaton, whose acting ability reveals itself to be limited exclusively to being chased, raped, repeat. Translating the synopsis while filtering out the bullshit is simply a favor I cannot bless the Pittsburgh based "filmmakers."

It's become glaringly obvious that the fans of ToeTag concentrate their behavior into a "cult" of sorts, almost like Juggalos but nowhere near the severity of brainwashing. As this hivemind would have it, no negative connotations may surround any film in the independent oeuvre of ToeTag, lest you be flamed with verbal threats of Fulci-worthy torture. Did I mention that the dog in the film is named Fulci? I wonder whose fandom has been plastered upon us. *Sella Turcica* is a film that has received incredible word-of-mouth and will sell at least several thousand copies, a dubious honor considering the film would better serve as a

practical effects demo reel. The commendations from such high-profile horror sites should have been my warning to tread away as these are the same fans who claimed *The Redsin Tower* to be the horror marvel of 2006. It's not an unknown fact that *Sella Turcica* is a remake of *Deathdream*, regardless of what anyone tells you. The same war-horror story is traced with alterations but retains the same heart, but not quite as I'm sure *Deathdream* is the far superior film.

If you favor derivative familial functions than *Sella Turcica* might be your cup of tea, but if you're expecting a tale of tempestuous horror worthy of the Hitchcock inspired poster artwork you'll be sorely disappointed. Only in the finale does something of an event unfold. Suddenly the Sgt. stands up, spitting up blood and tissue matter all over his shirt and begins to smash, claw, bite, and break his family members in a vegetated fashion, as saying the twitchy movements and snarls of the undead son are the only bright aspects of the entire production. When this somewhat rousing scene of retribution is unleashed upon the annoying kinfolk, it's as if the stars aligned and a bit of light had shed upon the land. Had Fred Vogel decided to make a dedicated zombie film, perhaps I'd have kinder hostilities to spout but alas, he's settled for documenting interracial relationships while shoving the alternative lifestyles of his actors down your throat. Yes, we get it. You like tattoos and piercings as well as your fans. I only wish he'd audition people other than fans for his productions. When the calling for *Toe Tag* is finally answered, what we get is rotten and expired. Not to say the film wasn't dead the first utterance that escaped Camille Keaton's mouth.

-mAQ

Otomo
Otomo

Frieder Schlaich (1999)

A number of German New Cinema auteur filmmakers made great, if not ludicrously left-wing, films about German-foreigner relations, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder with Katzelmacher (1969) aka *Cock Artist* and *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) aka *Angst essen Seele auf*, Werner Schroeter with Palermo oder Wolfsburg (1980), Helma Sanders-Brahms with *Shirin's Hochzeit* (1976) aka *Shirin's Wedding*, and Alexander Kluge with *Vermischte Nachrichten* (1986) aka *Miscellaneous News*, so—at least cinematically speaking—the Teutons are not exactly new to tackling contemporary social issues like multiculturalism and the (mostly imaginary) reality of race hate, yet if one were to judge by the rather recent kraut melodrama *Otomo* (1999), it would seem that the contemporary filmmakers of the Fatherland have begun to drastically degenerate in their thinking and artistic prowess or lack thereof, as if the vital lifeblood had been drained from their hearts, minds, and souls. After all, Fassbinder hated his countrymen, especially the bourgeois and was a pathological partaker in homo miscegenation yet he realized that, at least if we were to judge by his work *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, that racially mixed romantic relationships are doomed to failure and that a master-slave relationship is the natural order in any sort of so-called 'multicultural' society, no matter how much "tolerance" is thrown down one's throat. Additionally, Fassbinder's friend Werner Schroeter demonstrated in *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* that, typically, the foreigner would always be a perennial *untermensch* in Deutschland, bound to serfdom, subjugation, exploitation, and a sort of mentally crippling culture shock that leads to violent and irrational criminality and the same rabid race hate that leftists, rather idealistically, believe they can exterminate. In *Otomo* directed by German director/producer Frieder Schlaich—co-owner of Filmgalerie 451 and producer of films by kraut greats like Christoph Schlingensiefel and Werner Schroeter—one gets a more cultural Marxist friendly message on the need for Aryans everywhere to be more sensitive and sexually inviting when dealing with the *Ausländer* because, after all, a lack of cultural sensitivity can result in a multicultural pile of dead Aryans and dead Negroes if a simple misunderstanding occurs due to the sort of 'lost in translation' communication that occurs in culturally schizophrenic multicultural societies. Loosely based on a true story (virtually all the details and drama of the film were invented in a calculated and propagandistic manner) about a so-called "asylum-seeker" (aka illegal alien) named Frederic Otomo who was shot death after stabbing two cops and injuring three others during one terribly tragic day in Stuttgart in 1989, *Otomo* is one of those fundamentally formulaic, modern ethno-masochistic and slave-morality-driven cinematic works that attempts to inspire Stockholm syndrome in more weak-minded and emotionally-inclined white viewers, while further instilling a sense of guilt and moral superiority in

the sort of wily and wimpy white liberal scum that promote and create such fabricated celluloid feces. Borrowing gritty realistic aesthetic techniques from German lone wolf auteur Roland Klick (*Supermarkt, White Star*)—who director Frieder Schlaich once made a documentary about—Otomo is the cuckold kraut equivalent to *Crash* (2004) directed by Paul Haggis, minus the 'passion,' as the sort of patently pointless and socially pernicious cinematic work that accuses everyone, except the noble non-white viewer of course, of being a crypto-racist with the capacity for indirectly killing a good bible-reading and seashell-collecting Negro man.

Sensitive yet stoic illegal alien Otomo (played by Ivorian actor Isaac de Bankolé of Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth* (1991) and *The Limits Of Control* (2009)) lives a rather pathetic and destitute life in Stuttgart, Germany as a jobless wanderer who is on an aimless journey to find meager employment, but it seems not a single kind kraut soul exists to help him as all good, groveling white people should. When Otomo is denied employment at a dilapidated temporary employment agency because he has neither an ID nor a proper pair of working shoes (he wears a pair of vintage slippers with holes in them that one of the Germans mockingly calls "Jungle Stompers"), he makes the unwitting mistake of riding in a subway train and is eventually hassled by an ostensibly 'racist' prick of a ticket-collector for not having the right ticket. After the ticket-collector attempts to cite Otomo and stop him from leaving the train, the agitated black man makes the genius decision to headbutt the anally retentive kraut and runs away like a rebel slave on a confederate plantation. Naturally, the ticked off ticket-collector, who now has a broken nose for technically doing his job (even if he is an asshole about it), reports Otomo to the police, thus leading to a super Schwarze mensch-hunt against the angry African. A young and married Nordic cop named Heinz (Hanno Friedrich) and his goofy rapping beta-male partner Rolf (Barnaby Metschurat) hope to be the ones to catch Otomo as they hope to receive job promotions. Meanwhile, a corrupt truck driver offers to smuggle Otomo to the Netherlands if he can come up with the cash, so he hassles a young 46-year-old grandmother named Gisela (ex-Fassbinder SuperStar Eva Mattes in a terribly degrading role) and her toddler granddaughter for money in a quasi-threatening manner that makes little sense, but luckily she is a sexually desperate xenophile who is in a weekly African dance class and finds the angry African's aggressiveness to be rather arousing, so she makes the wise decision to take the fugitive back to her daughter's apartment. Unfortunately, Gisela's daughter Simone (Lara Kugler) shows up to find her blonde baby daughter dancing with a strange black man and the police eventually close in on Otomo. Although Gisela, like a true white sugar mama, gets Otomo the money, the truck driver has already left for the Netherlands, thus leaving the hapless African stuck in Stuttgart under the racially-charged radar a bunch of evil Teutonic devils whose Nazi grandparents supported Uncle Adolf. When Heinz, Rolf, and three other

Otomo

policemen finally reach Otomo and try reason with him, he merely stares blankly as a tear falls down his face, only to stab all of the cops when they, rather gently, attempt to take him into custody, thus leaving three men dead, three men injured, and at least one woman widowed; all because a scared foreigner who was illegally in the country in the first place did not want to go to jail. To top things off, while Otomo's funeral is only attended by Gisela and an obese hotel clerk with a grotesque case of heterochromia who looks like he could be Austrian actor Peter Kern's slightly more slim brother, the fallen policemen are given festive public funerals, thus clearly illustrating the innate 'racism' of Deutschland! (or something).

Otomo is surely the sort of film that could have only been made in contemporary Europe as a pathetic piece of minimalistic 'realist' propaganda ridden with poverty porn, groveling ethno-masochistic xenophilia, naive 'noble savage' worship, innate anti-nationalist sentiment, aesthetic dreariness and deadness, hokey hip hop beats, and a general artistic and philosophical impotence. If it were not for the film's patently politically correct, Negro-martyring message, Otomo would be regarded as just another banal, soulless, and forgotten contemporary German film, if acknowledged at all. Ironically, director Frieder Schlaich included a scene of 'unconscious racism' (at least as far as limp-wristed leftists are concerned) in Otomo in an unintentionally hilarious allusion to *Frankenstein* (1931) directed by James Whale where the black protagonist—standing in for the creature—plays with flowers with a little blonde girl next to a lake. Indeed, it seems Schlaich was guilty of the same pathetic and futile 'finger-pointing' that he condemns the everyday German of in his absolutely odious work Otomo—a virtual 'how-to' guide in being a cultural commie kraut without cock, balls, and a sense for artistry and logic. The essential message of Otomo is that in every 'asylum seeker' is a misunderstood man who can potentially discuss the bible for hours, lovingly dances with little Aryan girls, be a 'noble savage' and 'exotic primitive' for sexually desperate German grandmothers who are fed up with impotent Aryan men to enjoy, and a morally-endowed man who rightfully puts anally retentive, authoritarian civil workers in their place by headbutting them like an animal, even if he is a coldblooded murderer who kills out of the juvenile fear that he might have to spend the night in one of the many majority non-German jails. Indeed, after watching Otomo, I have come to the natural conclusion that director Frieder Schlaich does not even deserve to lick the post-mortem assholes of kraut cinematic greats like Schlingensiefel and Schroeter, so it baffles me that such a horrendous hack ever had the opportunity of working them. Featuring homely German New Cinema diva Eva Mattes in the decidedly degrading role of a mindless mudshark of a grandmother that is described by her own daughter as being a dreaded "old hippie," Otomo is a perfect example of the slow and steady decline that is German and European cinema in general by casting a woman who starred in works by greats like Rainer Werner

Fassbinder and Werner Herzog as a rather retarded and reprehensible woman who would risk the life of her granddaughter just so she can be manhandled by a muscular Mandingo. Winning such coveted and wonderfully titled prizes as the particularly prestigious “Diversity in Spirit Award,” Otomo is undoubtedly indisputable proof that contemporary German filmmakers no longer have Faustian souls, but some of them, like Frieder Schlaich, wish they had Negro ones, even if they have the artistic swag of an eunuch with autism.

-Ty E

M
M

Fritz Lang (1931)

M is Fritz Lang's best film. Lang has admitted this in multiple interviews and even in Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt* (which I think is Godard's best film). M was also Lang's second to last early German film (The Testament of Dr. Mabuse being the last) before fleeing Nazi minister of Propaganda's Josef Goebbels offer to direct films for the Reich (keep in mind Lang's *Mother was Jewish*). Most of Lang's later films (especially *American*) would have much smaller budgets (especially in comparison to films like *Metropolis*). Despite being released over 75 years ago, M is still the best film dealing with a child murderer/molester. Peter Lorre does an excellent job portraying the killer Hans Beckert. His pathetic and gentle nature fit the profile of a real life child killer. Lorre's froglike eyes give off the intensity of an uncontrollable murderer. I believe Killer Hans when he says he can't control his behavior. His mannerisms are uncontrollably suspicious to say the least. Nazi propagandist Fritz Hippler utilized Lorre's end speech for his failed propaganda film *The Eternal Jew*. The reason for this was that it confirmed Jewish "degenerate art" and mental illness. It was also used as evidence that Jews were prone to criminal behavior and showed no desire to take responsibility for their crimes. Peter Lorre is probably most famous for his role in *American* propaganda film *Casablanca*. Quite interesting that Lorre played a part in both sides of wartime propaganda (whether he agreed to or not). One of the most telling scenes of M is when the child murderer Hans takes refuge in the shadows of a clustered room. He is a scared and pathetic individual. You almost even feel sorry for the killer. However, his horrible acts are unforgivable. Director Fritz Lang ultimately seems to blame the parents of the children as expressed in the M's conclusion. I really hope Lang wasn't an apologist for criminals of the worst type. M has a feeling like no other. The film is set in a shadowy city that feels undeniably claustrophobic. As M progresses, you feel that the capture of Hans is inevitable. He has nowhere to hide. The networking used by the citizens (most being criminals themselves) hunting the murderer makes for an intense capture. When the murderer is finally caught excitement reaches its climax. Fritz Lang is my second favorite German expressionist director (F.W. Murnau being my favorite). His varying range of cinematic achievements confirm Lang as being one of the most interesting and innovative directors in film history. Peter Lorre's voice would later be the inspiration for Ren Höek of the now classic *The Ren and Stimpy Show*. Fritz Lang's M is without doubt one of the greatest films ever made. David Fincher and his film *Se7en* need to take notice!

-Ty E

SCARLET STREET

Fritz Lang (1945)

Scarlet Street is a gloomy film noir directed by Fritz Lang during a time when the director had a lot of anger. German Jewish film critic Lotte Eisner claimed that Lang's American films reflected his contempt for what was going on in Europe before and during the second world war. Fritz Lang, born in Vienna, Austria, was a ½ Jew and felt his homeland had betrayed him. That didn't stop Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels from offering (according to Lang himself) Lang to become the head of the German film studio UFA. Instead of taking the offer, Lang ran off to France and then eventually settled in America. Lang's wife Thea von Harbor (who co-wrote many of Lang's scripts such as Metropolis and M) decided to join the Nazi party. Scarlet Street follows a low ranking banker and amateur painter by the name of Christopher Cross. Cross, played by the legendary film noir star Edward G. Robinson, is a pathetic individual with limited self-confidence. His life changes when he meets a cunning prostitute with the fitting name 'Kitty' who is also called 'Lazy Legs.' Of course, Kitty cons Cross into thinking she likes the small and pathetic man. Kitty's boyfriend Johnny is the mastermind of this scheme. Soon Kitty has an apartment to stay in. The rent is free, courtesy of stolen bank money from Mr. Cross. Kitty also steals Cross's painting and signs her name on them to the recommendation of Johnny. Kitty loves Johnny and seems to love him even more when he smacks her. Johnny doesn't show much genuine emotion towards Kitty, only enough to convince her to commit dirty deeds for him. When Christopher Cross finally figures out he is being played, the repercussions are unexpected and violent to say the very least. Upon proposing marriage to Kitty, Cross receives a heartbreaking response. Kitty says to Cross, "I wanted to laugh in your face ever since the moment I met you. You're old, ugly, and I'm sick of you. Sick! Sick! Sick!" After hearing this Cross bursts into anger and finally "sticks it" to Kitty with an ice pick. I guess all that sequel repression had to be dealt with somehow. This scene is possibly one of the most brutal scenes for it's time period and echoes back to Fritz Lang's days in Germany when he was making films like M. Johnny is a quick talking blond beast that lacks the character that goes with his looks. Chris Cross, on the other hand, is a little Jew who we assume has a big heart. In the end, Cross is double crossed by the woman he loves (like Lang was by his wife Thea von Harbor) and her Aryan boy toy. With Scarlet Street, was Fritz Lang taking his revenge on Germany with cinema? Christopher Cross, like Fritz Lang, was an artist that lost his temper and the results were ugly. Although a masterpiece of film noir cinema, it is almost hard to believe that Lang was the same man that directed Metropolis and Woman in the Moon. Lang went from somewhat of an optimist to a moral nihilist.

-Ty E

KRACHT
KRACHT

Frouke Fokkema (1990)

During the late 1960s through early 1980s, various auteur filmmakers associated with New German Cinema created cinematic works oftentimes described as 'anti-Heimat' films that mocked and ridiculed the traditional Heimatfilm—a popular subgenre from the late 1940s through about the early 1970s that took a sentimental approach to simple rural living and traditionalist values—because they were brainwashed by the 68er-Bewegung German student and then-trendy 'New Left' ideologies and associated such films with the National Socialist proclivities of their parents and grandparents generation. The Lowland Countries like Belgium and the Netherlands had their own types of random anti-Heimat films as reflected in works like Fons Rademakers' *Mira* (1971) and Alex van Warmerdam flicks like *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners* and *Kleine Teun* (1998) aka *Little Tony*, but probably none of these works are as cold, ugly, and tragic as the little known work *Kracht* (1990) aka *Vigour* aka *Vigor* directed by flagrant feminist filmmaker Frouke Fokkema (*Wildgroei* aka *It Will Never Be Spring*, *De omweg* aka *The Detour*). While I have never seen any of her other works, I did see Martin Koolhoven's darkly comedic cult flick *Suzy Q* (1999), which Fokkema penned and which presents a pathetic yet perturbing portrait of a 1960s Dutch working-class family that involves incest, violent misogyny, suicide, and mindless Mick Jagger worship, among other things. Unlike *Suzy Q*, *Kracht* is rarely humorous and is even sometimes downright oppressive in its 'stoic' depiction of raw and unadulterated human ugliness. Indeed, one thing that is especially notable about Fokkema's film is that it features a sort of cold emotional detachment that women typically seem to excel at. As one can expect from a film directed by a feminist that depicts an unlikely love affair between a widowed farmer from rural bumfuck and sensitive female artist type from the big city, Fokkema's directorial debut portrays Dutch peasants as close-minded and lynch-mob-inclined barbarians of the genetically degenerate sort who loathe modern art and lack even the slightest inkling of literacy and cultivation, yet somehow it is still a rather potent cinematic work of the emotionally brutalizing sort that demonstrates that its director seems to have a lot of pent up hatred which she has used to obscure assumed heartbreak and whatnot. In its depiction of a beautiful young blonde painter who lives in the shadow of her lover's dead wife and tries in vain to get her widowed farmer beau to get over his deceased spouse, *Kracht* is like the Dutch anti-Heimat equivalent to Hitchcock's classic *Rebecca* (1940) sans the Victorian Gothic elegance meets John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972), albeit somewhat darker and drearier than the other two films. Set in a dysgenic rural hellhole in southeastern Holland where the locals speak a dialect of the somewhat obscure Franconian language of Limburgish, Fokkema's film makes no attempts to conceal its hatred for the simple folk that it portrays

as reflected in the fact that various characters are retarded and/or crippled, especially women and child, not to mention the fact that virtually all of them are unlikeable, if not downright creepy in a sinister redneck sort of way. Indeed, Kracht is indubitably a neo-liberal feminist's worst nightmare, but that does not mean it will not appeal to people that find rednecks to be less repellant than Gloria Steinem fangirls.

Kracht begins with a funeral march for the wife of recently widowed quasi-protagonist Bert (Theu Boermans), who is a farmer that looks and even acts like the slightly less attractive brother of Swiss actor Bruno Ganz. Bert's wife Marie-Louise's corpse is being driven around by two goofy brothers, Jeu (Khalidoun Elmecky) and Jo (Bert Geurkink), who resemble the ghostly gangsters from the Israeli cult flick *An American Hippie in Israel* (1972) aka *Ha-Trempiist* directed by Amos Sefer. In a clear demonstration of what auteuress Fokkema thinks of the local peasants, one of the two brothers remarks regarding Limburg, "The more the land becomes hilly, the more people sided with the Germans. My father used to say that." While Bert's wife died of brain cancer, most of the locals believe she worked herself to death and now that she is gone, the protagonist has no clue what to do with his life as he and his beloved have spent virtually the entire lives running their farm business and now he feels that he has lost his way. Before he watches her body being cremated, Bert takes the wedding band off his wife's corpse in a symbolic gesture reflecting the fact that he cannot let her go. Bert's seemingly half-retarded prepubescent son Thomas (Dave van Dinther) is in denial that his mother is dead as indicated in his bizarre remark, "My mother isn't dead. She always be my mother. And I'll survive you all. Then you'll be in jars. There'll be ten jars on the mantelpiece." Of course, the jars Thomas is in reference to the fact that his mother was cremated and her ashes were placed in a vase. When Bert begins mourning, less than empathetic neighbors scream rather cavalier things from outside his house things like, "Go to work. Your animals are starving. Self-pity. Cut it out." When Bert's butcher brother starts a fist fight with him, a neighbor woman remarks, "They're killing each other. They've been doing it for twenty years." Undoubtedly, if Bert is a cryptically melancholy man, his butcher brother is as hard and stoic as a rock. After two months of mopping around, the local Catholic priest visits Bert and, after some arguing, convinces him to go to an agriculture fair in a city 200 kilometers away. Unbeknownst to Bert, he will meet a beautiful young woman in the city that will fall deeply in love with him, but he will be to emotionally ill-equipped to accept her love and will ultimately destroy her.

While Bert roams around a large crowd at the agriculture convention in the city, a ravishing young blonde babe named Roos Rozemond (Anneke Blok) randomly begins taking photographs of him because she is attracted to his melancholic essence. Bert eventually notices Roos and decides to follow her to a table and asks her if he can sit next to her. Upon sitting at the table, Bert tells Roos

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that he feels like a stranger in the city since he is a country boy and she responds by half-jokingly stating, "I'm always a stranger in this city and I live here." Indeed, Roos is a rather lonely and somewhat sad young lady and she is attracted to Bert because she could sense a similar feeling of impenetrable loneliness in him. Ultimately, Roos insists on finding Bert a "good hotel" and agrees to meet him later that night for a dinner date. Roos is an artist who, somewhat ironically considering what happens to her later in the film, paints large canvasses of mutilated pigs in a sort of quasi-expressionist style that Bert will ultimately have a hard time appreciating. When Roos and Bert eat dinner with one another later that night, the latter becomes fairly annoyed when the former's ex-boyfriend Sjors (Rik Launspach) randomly shows up, so he forces his date to leave abruptly with him and they head back to his hotel. When Roos comes back to Bert's hotel room and gets rather sensual with him, the less than sexually experienced farmer awkwardly remark, "I'm a simple man. I have to get used to it." When Roos asks Bert if he thinks she's a prostitute while sitting on his lap in a provocative fashion, he replies, "Yes. You look a bit like those women you have to pay." When Roos jokes that he can tip her if she wants after they have sex, he somewhat absurdly replies in a hopelessly honest fashion, "Good, money speaks more clearly than love. But it's confusing with you. You may mean more than just money." Although they have just met, Roos even goes so far as proclaiming her love for Bert, who opens up enough to reveal that his wife is dead and that he has, "A 9-year-old son. A real asshole." Ultimately, Bert has too much anxiety about having sex with Roos, so when she falls asleep, he writes her a note with his phone number and abruptly leaves the hotel. Naturally, since she believes that she is in love, Roos wastes no time in calling Bert, not realizing her new beau comes from a backwards hellhole of a small-town where everyone is proudly ignorant, perennially stubborn, and not privy to sensitive artistic types like herself.

Upon arriving at Bert's isolated town via train, Roos is chauffeured by the brothers Jeu and Jo, who shock the young lady by remarking that her beau's wife only died recently and was purportedly "worked to death." Roos almost seems petrified upon entering Bert's seemingly foreboding town due the lack of people and complains, "Are you sure this is it? I don't see anyone," to which Jeu and Jo somewhat creepily reply, "They see you." Indeed, the villagers certainly see her and it does not take them long to treat her like the local 'bête noire' because she is a beautiful and free-spirited outsider who threatens their absurdly outmoded way of life. Needless to say, Roos is somewhat disheartened when Bert seems less happy to see her as she is to see him. When Roos has dinner with Bert's family, she is disturbed by the fact that her lover has an invalid sister that cannot talk and is more or less vegetable. Undoubtedly, the vegetable farmgirl seems to be symbolic of what the director thinks like life is life for a woman in such a small village. Bert's butcher brother also makes quite the impression on Roos

by discussing “artificial insemination” and how America has the “best semen” when it comes to farm animals. When one of Bert’s relatives remarks that Roos reminds him of the sort of models that are featured on local pornographic post-cards, the protagonist loses his cool and abruptly leaves the dinner with his lady friend. Instead of talking to her and asking her what she likes, Bert spends most of his time with Roos morbidly talking about his dead wife, thereupon making it quite clear that he is incapable of moving on and starting a life with a new woman. While Bert compliments Roos because she “can listen” and, unlike his relatives, actually cares how he feels, he is completely incapable of listening back and ultimately treats the hopelessly kind city girl in a rather emotionally and romantically negligent fashion that will ultimately break her. When the two love birds finally have sex for the first time, Bert gets a little too excited and ejaculates before he even manages to penetrate Roos. Of course, the two eventually begin to share a healthy sexual relationship that involves literally rolling around in the hay, but shared carnal knowledge is not enough to sustain their dubious romance.

Quite unlike the average western woman, Roos makes the most valiant and uncomfortable attempts to fit in with Bert’s family, including acting as a mother to his mentally feeble misfit son Thomas, who is such an unlikeable young man that he states regarding his own grandmother that she is a “Stupid woman” and brag, “Sometimes I hit her, because she’s so stupid.” Roos even paints a large almost life-size painting of her lover and his brothers and Bert later repays her priceless gesture of love and affection by unwittingly insulting her by attempting to buy her a cheap piece of folk art at a local fair while mocking the sort of modern art she does by describing it as “not really practical.” On top of everything else, Roos is quite unhappy with the fact that Bert’s deceased wife Marie-Louise’s ashes are sitting in plain view in a vase in the living room, as if the dead woman is haunting her beyond the grave. Indeed, at one point in the film, Roos stares in a forlorn fashion at the vase while Bert is banging her in a bestial fashion on the family couch. In what is arguably Roos’ most pathetic attempt at impressing Bert, she begins wearing his dead wife’s rather homely clothes, but it only angers and annoys the widowed farmer, who clearly does not see the young lady as a serious replacement for his deceased spouse. When Roos reveals she is pregnant, Bert becomes so infuriated that he slaps her hard enough to knock her on his ass and then accuses her of seducing him. Clearly deeply hurt by Bert’s belligerent behavior, Roos picks up the vase containing Marie-Louise’s ashes and hurls it at a wall. In a scene that seems like an unintentional parody of shitty Hollywood slasher films, Bert and his brothers slowly chase after Roos through a dirt field in a fashion not unlike Jason Voorhees and Michael Myers when they are stalking one of their victims. When Roos goes to the local priest for help, he dismisses her relationship with Bert and describes it as nothing more than a “one-night stand” and then tells her that it will be best for everyone involved if she goes

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back to the city. While Roos calls her ex-boyfriend Sjors to pick her up, she also attempts to make one last ditch effort to get back with Bert, but he refuses to listen to her and simply coldly tells her, "It's no good. It's over." Ultimately, Roos decides to kill herself in a rather melodramatic fashion by hanging herself in Bert's barn, but the rope eventually breaks and a pack of pigs begin gorging on her corpse after it hits the ground. When Bert finds Roos' bloody and mangled corpse, he cries, "Oh girl...This can't be...My god" and then yells to his butcher brother when he shows up, "slaughter the animals" and "get lost. She was the only one that listened to me." Of course, had Bert actually listened to Roos once or twice and treated her like she was actually important to him, she probably would not have killed herself and the two might have even had a happy life together if they moved somewhere else where disapproving relatives were not lurking around every corner.

Undoubtedly, Kracht certainly demonstrates that director Frouke Fokkema has the sort of spiteful hatred of peasants that both self-righteous bourgeois white liberals and hormonally imbalanced feminists seem capable of, thus leading me to conclude that she would probably suffer a nervous breakdown if she was somehow forced to take a tour of the American Deep South. At the same time, Fokkema seems to fetishize the backwards farmer in the film, as if she would love nothing more than to be savagely ploughed by the one-eyed stag of a misogynistic redneck in the back of a cow-turd-infested barn. Ultimately, Kracht makes for a great double feature with the Dutch flick *De Poolse bruid* (1998) aka *The Polish Bride* directed by Algerian auteur Karim Traïdia, as both films offer very different depictions of Dutch farmers and their love affairs with virtual opposites. While Traïdia's film is tender and portrays the Groningen countryside as having a sort of magical and mystifying beauty, Fokkema's film portrays the Limburg countryside as an almost pernicious and certainly oppressive place with an eerie and deathly atmosphere that is likely to kill anyone if they dare to stay there long enough. Indeed, while ostensibly a dark romance flick, Kracht is really a work of Gothic anti-Heimat horror where the hick-hating auteuress seemed to manage to channel all her fears and hatred into the film, thus making for an undeniably potent piece of perturbing celluloid that, despite its cliché depiction of poor and ignorant peasants, still manages to succeed in most of its aesthetic ambitions. Indeed, sort of like the Dutch feminist equivalent to Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) in its depiction of a monstrous hillbilly family that oppresses an outsider, albeit where said outsider falls in love with the monster and ultimately pays for it with her life, Kracht is the one film that has managed to convince me that there is such a thing as Dutch rednecks and they are indubitably more unnerving than the ones you find in hokey American Hebrew-produced horror films because they actually seem realistic and not like grotesque caricatures created by pencil-neck pansies who have never met a real redneck in their entire lives. Unlike many of the German anti-

Heimat films of the late-1960s and 1970s, which seem outmoded due to their transparent post-68er-Bewegung political messages, Fokkema's film has aged quite gracelessly as the passing time has only made the film's already moribund aesthetic tone only seem all the more decayed and rotten. Indeed, had Belgian Baron André Delvaux been a somewhat less cultivated lovelorn Dutch feminist with a cunt instead of a cock instead of an eclectically cultured Walloon magical realist, he might have directed something like Kracht.

-Ty E

NÁRCISZ ÉS PSYCHÉ
NÁRCISZ ÉS PSYCHÉ

Gábor Bódy (1980)

If someone were to take up the ambitious yet seemingly futile task of synthesizing the major ideas of Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Oswald Spengler's two-volume tome *The Decline of the West* (1918-1923) and attempt to direct a highly experimental cinematic epic about the fall of the European aristocracy in the form of a libertine love story vaguely in the spirit of *Gone with the Wind* (1939), it might resemble *Nárcisz és Psyché* (1980) aka *Narcissus and Psyche* directed by Hungarian auteur Gábor Bódy (*Amerikai Anzix* aka *American Postcard*, *Kutya éji dala* aka *The Dog's Night Song*) and starring German heartthrob Udo Kier (*Blood for Dracula*, *My Own Private Idaho*) in what is probably the single greatest performance of his career as an actor; a sentiment he apparently shares despite having appeared in over 200+ films. The single largest-scale Hungarian production of its era, *Narcissus and Psyche* was released in three versions; an original 210 minute two part cut, a 136 minute cut for international distribution and a 270 minute three part epic made for television, the last of which I was luckily able to view. Described by director Bódy as, "a story of present times, and even though the characters are wearing costumes from the past, the epoch they are a witness to exists outside the limits of history," *Narcissus and Psyche* is a forlorn fantasy film and quasi-psychedelic period piece of sorts that simultaneously chronicles the tragedy of an exceedingly passionate yet perversely plagued love affair that was 'never meant to be' between two lovers who never age and the dramatically changing sociopolitical climate of Europe, most specifically the Hapsburg Empire/Hungary over a 130 year period, thus concluding during the rise of National Socialism. Based on a collection of poetry entitled *Psyché* (1972) written by Hungarian poet Sándor Weöres but also centering on biographical anecdotes from the author's life, as well as an almost entirely fictional account of the 'romantic' relationship between German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and Russian-born psychoanalyst Lou Andreas-Salomé (male protagonist "Narcissus" being based on Nietzsche and female protagonist "Psyche" based on Andreas-Salomé), *Narcissus and Psyche* also makes for a dolorous tribute to great European cultural producers and wordsmiths of the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century or as auteur Gábor Bódy stated, "I tried to make this story a myth, a myth of antagonism born of our European culture, according to which men and women can only find their physical and intellectual liberty at the expense of others. And in spite of 35 years of socialism, my generation is still living in this antagonism." A most morose yet magical cinematic saga of sordid sensuality, spiritual and somatic sickness, social strife, syphilis, and striking surrealism about the perfectly contradictory odd couple – a downright debauched mixed blood countess and a (would be) morally noble, poetic genius of a peasant – *Narcissus and Psyche* is one of those rare aesthetically astonishing

works one cannot believe even exist upon seeing it and may very well be the most underrated and under seen film epic ever made, or at the very least, the one that every single one of the millions of female Udo Kier have always dreamed of, but will never see.

Born in the year 1795 to a mother who was a gypsy girl's bastard child turned countess (after having been adopted by a count) and a Hungarian nobleman, countess Psyche aka Erzsébet Mária Lónyay (played by Patricia Adriani), came from a family whose nobility was recognized by the Habsburg Monarchy, but not their rank. When Psyche was only three years old, her mother started a relationship with the famous gypsy violinist János Bihari and decided to run away to a Romani settlement, taking her daughter with her where she would spend the rest of her childhood, thus missing out on the advantages of being an aristocrat. After her mother died, Psyche was raised by the violinist's poor relatives and other kindhearted local yokels, which would lead her to meeting her one true love "Narcissus" aka László Tóth Ungvárnémeti (played by Udo Kier with bleached blond hair); the inordinately intelligent yet increasingly megalomaniacal poet son of a pastor. As it becomes quite apparent from the beginning of Narcissus and Psyche, Psyche – whose maternal ancestral origins were the product of bestial lust as opposed to love – is an accursed wanton wild child who does what she wants whenever she wants, including maliciously offending the manners of the patently pretentious and anally retentive aristocrats of her class, including randomly sitting on a lad's lap and forcing him to partake in coitus with her, but not before he states to her quite disparagingly, "I am a swordsman, horseman, I do not want a vampire to drain my strength," in a feeble attempt to deny her carnal charms. A patently perverse yet pure of spirit poetess of both wayward words and actions, Psyche is especially perturbed by the fact that perennial narcissist Narcissus – a classicist poet and walking anachronism who tries to uphold noble ideas from antiquity who believes, "only in the aesthetic and historic authority of the Greek-Latin gods," and wants to do something great and noteworthy with his life to compensate up for his humble beginnings – will not have intimate sex with the carnal countess because of his supposed love and respect for her, or so he says. One gets the feeling that Narcissus thinks to himself, "Tis Pity She's a Whore," but ironically, the physical and eventual psychological ruin from a literal whore; a fleshpeddler who reminded him of Psyche.

When Narcissus receives a bad case of the "French disease" (syphilis) from a prostitute (many believe that Nietzsche's descent into madness was the result of receiving the same STD from a hooker), Psyche's man's cock is semi-permanently blocked, at least until they can find a cure, which the perverted poetess (Narcissus is annoyed by the "sensual" and "soiled" nature of her poems) will gladly pay for. Of course, Psyche has physical problems of her own because she was raped by her own brother-in-law and impregnated, which the quasi-incestuous rapist was quite agitated by, so he punched the expecting mother of

NÁRCISZ ÉS PSYCHÉ

his pesky would-be-progeny in the stomach, thereupon inducing a miscarriage and internal bleeding that does not cease until Narcissus brings his true love to a seemingly sinister doctor who keeps creepy deformed fetuses in formaldehyde sitting out for all his patients to see. Always the opportunist looking to advance his place in society, Narcissus converts from Calvinism to Catholicism so he can receive a scholarship from the Archbishop of Eger to study in Budapest where he trades professions, going from a poet to a scientist, thus pushing his poetess further away. Out of desperation, Psyche hooks up with a wealthy and eccentric nobleman/freemason named Maximilian Freiherr von Zedlitz (György Cserhalmi) – a man modeled after German philosopher Immanuel Kant – who wants to marry her and reminds her of the father she has much contempt for, so naturally the lascivious lady goes back to being sexually promiscuous with some political revolutionaries and even becomes pregnant with one of their babies (the father being unknown), but the baby is eventually disposed of by her uncle so as not to ruin the family's already wavering reputation.

As Narcissus' syphilis worsens, so does his megalomania, which is only all the more compounded when he is forced to sell his poetic masterpiece "Narcissist" – a classical and highly reflective work – which, to his utter and devastating dismay is eventually adapted into a superlatively sleazy, sexually degenerate, and curiously campy Vaudevillian play (performed at a place where Teutonic Neuer Deutscher Film 'diva of death' Ingrid Caven does a performance similar to her solos in Daniel Schmid's 1974 high-camp masterpiece *La Paloma*). Unable to sire children due to the rotting of his reproductive system via syphilis, Narcissus accepts his life of loneliness and Psyche decides to marry and have children with the mundane yet reliable and respectable Maximilian Freiherr von Zedlitz. Destitute and dying from the STD that ultimately severed any hope of a marriage and kids with his beloved, Narcissus requests that Psyche make love to him before he perishes into eternity, which she obliges, thus ending an unfulfilled love affair that was doomed due to circumstance and human stupidity. Of her man, Psyche confesses, "My great love...was terribly egoistic. Just as egoistic as the hero of his poetic tragedy, Narcissus, who was ill of mortals...self-loving...No one else could have written it...but him." In a positively plodding and mostly miserable marriage with a fellow that is jealous of a dead man, Psyche dies in a questionable manner that is no less of a travesty than that of her dear Narcissus; the king of narcissists who like virtually all people suffering from his vehemently vainglorious mental affliction, had a deep-seated self-loathing that made him unable to get close to others, including the lady he loved for over a century, yet could never consummate with, hence, his deleterious need to tell her, "Your being a whore doesn't matter...because you were born a whore." Although they never aged a single day over the course of over a century, once the possibility of fulfilling their love for one another is extinguished, they finally succumb to metaphysical heartbreak and eventual death.

A keenly kaleidoscopic depiction of a generally colorless period(s) in history, at least cinematically speaking, *Narcissus and Psyche* is a film that manages to do the seemingly impossible by bringing idiosyncratic poetry and intrigue to a culturally and socially declining period in history as a sort of Slavic Victorian gothic epic that makes Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975) seem like a soullessly constructed work of epic banality, and I say that as a fan of both cinematic works. A film featuring literal flying pigs, *Narcissus and Psyche* is a work that makes it seem like anything is possible, at least when it comes to the now seemingly dying art of cinema and the civilization that created it. A work depicting the literal fall of empires (more specifically, The Habsburg Monarchy) and the decided death of a civilization, *Narcissus and Psyche* makes it quite clear by the end that money is now king. On top of temporarily moving to the United States to get away from the havoc and horrors of the Great War, Psyche comes to the realization that her aristocratic roots are worth nil when a rich America, which inherited much more money than any nobleman she knows, sees it as an absurd proposition for him to be a title of nobility as it no longer has any value, thus also accentuating the absurdity of Narcissus' needless and heedless campaign for superficial greatness. As modern America has proven, you can be a crack-addicted illiterate felon or an overweight and barbaric meathead idiot, but if you can bastardize the English language to a simple beat without melody or tackle people hard enough, you can be a famous millionaire. That being said, I think it is safe to say that class and kultur died on the battlefields of both World Wars with directors like Gábor Bódy being the last remnants of a once-great kultur before technocratic postmodernism and globalization reared their ugly universalizing and homogenizing heads. Oddly, after about five years of completing *Narcissus and Psyche*, director Gábor Bódy died under dubious circumstances in what the authorities of his homeland Hungary, then a Soviet satellite, said was a suicide, but, despite pleas from his wife that he was murdered, no official investigation was conducted, thus making him a victim of communist criminality. Although *Narcissus and Psyche* hints at the fact National Socialism – a political ideology motivated by the need to eradicate cultural decay, cosmopolitanism, and societal degeneration – put the final nail in the coffin of Occidental civilization, Uncle Adolf surely was not responsible for the grim cultural ethnic graveyard that is contemporary Eastern Europe; a place that both ironically sired yet slayed Gábor Bódy, one of its great cinematic artists.

-Ty E

THE LAST HOUSE IN THE WOODS
THE LAST HOUSE IN THE WOODS

Gabriele Albanesi (2006)

The Last House in the Woods is a contemporary Giallo film which unlike its predecessors, is graphically and artfully violent and bloody. The film captures the sadism that was manufactured by early Italians and manages to add some American elements, such as the incredibly over-played Plaid-wearing deformed rednecks. Due to the title, you can tell this film is trying to cash in to the 70's exploitation boom. It's only a matter of time till they run out of possible combinations. The story follows a sweet girl with her ex-boyfriend. He wants to get back with her so he decides to drive through the woods. While parked, sadistic would-be rapists attack her, but she is saved by a flashy Italian named Antonio (Go figure.) She and her lover are taken back to his house where she uncovers they might not be in the clear just yet. The Last House in the Woods captures the fabled anti-hero theme very well towards the end, and provides manageable twists, guaranteeing you the blood and the suspense. Amazing energy and charisma comes from the family, as they provide a comfortable atmosphere for the lead characters and you, only to rip it away a second later. The Madness is captured fluidly by director Albanesi on film. One might notice the special effects work of guru Sergio Stivaletti as he slaves away to create a hellbound atmosphere of limbs. For a feature debut, Gabriele Albanesi does a great job implementing himself in the Italian horror genre. The film itself takes nods from early Argento and just adds more violence. This as you know, can never be a bad thing. Relative to early Giallo, this film uses a rustic synth score that echoes the grand era. I never really fully appreciated Casio keyboards. The only thing really that doesn't belong in this film is the "reason" for the bloodshed. The Last House in the Woods is an uncompromising film that delivers its promise; to shock, offend, and spin a web with a nihilistic atmosphere. Thank god, Giallo is reborn.

-mAQ

SEVEN POUNDS

Gabriele Muccino (2008)

Seven Pounds has been released theatrically long enough so that I feel comfortable divulging certain aspects of the film, both appreciated and loathed, that could be deemed as "spoiling" to the experience that is Seven Pounds. A unanimous amount of movie goers have been terminally stricken with a case of the sub-viral marketing that Seven Pounds has launched. Perplexing trailers with very little plot line were revealed over the course of months. Advertising for this film was frustrating cause I didn't know what was going on and let's face it, This is no Cloverfield advert. Italian director Gabriele Muccino, widely known for his other Will Smith collective The Pursuit of Happyness, attempts to recreate the feeling of a Shakespearean tragedy with this enigma of a film. Reviews have generally been mixed towards this film which only made me want to experience this on my own. Critics are generally someone you cannot trust. Just ask Ben Lyons about that one time he called I Am Legend "Greatest movie ever made". As filmdom goes, the term "sleeper" is applied to films that are critically received negatively for false reasons, or just no received at all. In this case, Seven Pounds is a sleeper drama hit that will score well with adults. My curiosity has been piqued, so what next? During the time I spent absorbing Seven Pounds, I found many admirable assets and fewer facets worth nit-picking over. Regarding Will Smith's career? It's been a variety of over-the-top performances in many summer blockbusters. In fact, juxtaposing Will Smith and blockbuster would be a conundrum had he not starred in the most profitable of the bunch. Fresh Prince to Bad Boys, ID4 to Wild Wild West. Smith has been our charming star of most of the ridiculous action films with a racial twist. I can't think of a single genre that the Prince hasn't marked with his irrevocable humor. With such blatant unapologetic propaganda, it's hard not to be swayed by his onscreen swagger. Seven Pounds is one of his most surprising performances to date. Quick switch from a tragedy to outlandish moments of depression; It's hard to take this film seriously 100% of the time. I even forgot that what I was watching had the sole intent of making me cry. One of the few weaknesses that plagues this film is that Seven Pounds is doomed to be considered just and only good. The character of Ben Thomas is invasive to a degree such seen in Pay It Forward. Valiantly although recklessly charging in the midst of peoples problems for a Shakespearean version of redemption. The cost is flesh and there lies the theme. The key camera angles through fences, windows, and other outlets provide more of a "flesh" to the themes of invasion. Seven Pounds is a homely experience with many personal feeling strewn about. Seven Pounds is a story that quite literally unfolds. Literally as metaphorically as it can be. During Seven Pounds, you will undoubtedly attempt to unravel the plot and piece the premature puzzle together, Try as you might but you will not foresee the final scenario until it is too late. Seven Pounds

SEVEN POUNDS

brings to flesh the idea of the rules of a theatrical tragedy, but with shameful CGI jellyfish. I wouldn't call this "most depressing" but with a gifted script with flips, twists, and turns, Seven Pounds accelerates past its prime and into a sub genre of film that caters to those looking for an emotional ride. With sacrificial aesthetics and an adequate cast (I despise Rosario Dawson), Seven Pounds is indeed about birth. Cinematic or organic; you decide. What a joyous time to be a crippling depressive.

-mAQ

ELECTRIC DRAGON 80000V

Gakuryu Ishii (2001)

Electric Dragon 80000V is a fun Japanese cyberpunkish film that I have been enjoying more with each subsequent viewing. The film follows a reptile investigator named Dragon Eye Morrison who has an unhealthy obsession with both lizards and guitars. It seems that Electric Dragon 80000V director Sogo Ishii has an odd and “lost in translation” obsession with American rock group The Doors and Jim Morrison. Whatever Ishii’s interpretation of The Doors meant, he was able to make an entertaining and unique film filled of obsession with electricity, guitar solos, lizards, and respectable archenemies. Dragon Eye Morrison does some heavy shredding on guitar producing an unrelenting storm of electric guitar noise. Morrison plays live performances for himself in his apartment and on public bridges in the middle of the day in a city. He had a little accident with some power lines as a kid and now unleashes his electricity in the form of Japanese punk noise. Dragon Eye Morrison is also known to do some ass kicking as the reptilian part of his brain loves violence. Only a deranged former TV repairman named Thunderbolt Buddha is any match. The antagonist relationship between Dragon Eye Morrison and his mysterious enemy Thunderbolt Buddha borders on the homoerotic. Thunderbolt Buddha seems to have an envious respect for Morrison that results in confrontation. Thunderbolt Buddha cuts up Morrison’s precious sleek guitar and kills his homeless lizards. Angry as a Hiroshima atom bomb victim, Morrison speeds over to Buddha like a wave of chaotic electricity. Upon meeting Dragon Eye Morrison he says, “Why did you make me mad?!” Thunderbolt Buddha simply and ingeniously responds to Morrison with, “I wanted to see you angry.” Naturally, the two supernatural dudes battle it out. When the battle finally ends, only Morrison is left standing in front of Buddha’s mask which has “see you around” written on it. That is what I call gentleman’s fight. I was given a DVD copy of Electric Dragon 80000V by a very dear lady. She also happened to watch the film with me and was immediately offended by it. She could not believe that a Japanese man could act like he was so cool while he was strumming his guitar. To say the least, she had a complete and utter desire to beat up Dragon Eye Morrison. In all honesty, upon first watching Electric Dragon 80000V it can be too unintentionally funny. It doesn’t take long however to realize that the film is beautifully shot, sleekly edited, original, and full of life. That’s a lot more than I can say than about the majority of recent films I have seen.

-Ty E

THE RAID: REDEMPTION
THE RAID: REDEMPTION

Gareth Evans (2011)

Quite assuredly, red-band clips or trailers from most necessarily violent action films are always followed with a rush of excitement for said title. This method of delivery involves making an almost whispered promise of at least one especially outstanding scene, the one in which is in question as the video streams or graces the cinema screen. It would be quite the disappointment if that preemptive, in this case, single scene was the only of its kind in quality, whether it be in suspense, bloodshed, or gratuitous feral generosity. It would be of similar character to show the final fight of *Flash Point* or even *The Man from Nowhere*, to a pair of virgin eyes for the sake of absorbing salivation for your own esteem's gain, which, admittedly, I am guilty of. Thus was the curse I carried for months after watching a red-band clip from *The Raid: Redemption*. I feared an all-too real terror of this scene spoiling a key moment that I had built myself up for, so you can imagine the feeling of dread when, during my temporary stay at the cinema while viewing *The Raid: Redemption*, this scene in particular popped up. But alas, the scene continued without a hitch or hiccup! Gareth Evan's masterful global marketing team knew and approached the limitations of exposure with a certain bravado lost upon most action films and their combined run at arousing attention. It was as if a heavy burden was lifted off of my shoulders and I could open up to *The Raid: Redemption*. I could let it tell me, without hesitation, all of its little secrets and worry me with all of its woe. You see, for me and most everyone I know who has bore witness to its third world grandeur, *The Raid: Redemption* marks the graduation of this new blend of international action film. One in which encroaches upon the formula of simple and similarly structured action pieces such as *Ong-Bak* or *The Protector*, save for the sparsely seen Indonesian fighting style of Pencak Silat. The two aforementioned Tony Jaa vehicles were met with massive appraisal but were also maligned for their doe-eyed absence of thought, whereas *The Raid: Redemption* wrestles from this stranglehold with a candle of ease that holds steadfast without a flicker or chance of dimming.

It's become so that I find it difficult to sit and review, in-thought, a post-*Raid: Redemption*-esque film without finding myself victim of that classic compare/contrast to the next best thing, which is obviously being *The Raid*. For in its wake, left screaming an army of "boorish males", comes an expectation that might be nigh to match - an obsessive exercise in ceaseless savagery, each minute being more daring than the last and each fight sequence becoming more stylized, choreographed, and calculated. Since the shriek of this Indo-wizardry was heard worldwide, you can be certain that these highly-marketable future Eastern exercises of sweat-soaked exertion won't end with *The Raid: Redemption* and for that matter, any of its sequels. Many attempts will be made upon their title of champion and these challengers' motives will fall victim to cynical ratings as

cinophiles use the schematics of *The Raid: Redemption* as an impromptu grade-book, cursing while X-ing in heavy red permanent ink, not even bothering to wonder where, or why, it all went so wrong for them. These "substitutes" will only increase in numbers while the action film of our heritages fate relies on the likes of *A Good Day to Die Hard* and *The Expendables* and their promised sequels (or should I say squeals, drastic to stay afloat these are, with mild results). The problem falls on Hollywood and their hasty decisions to brand Western audiences as ignorant to the beauty and eccentricity found in foreign styles of fighting. Hollywood will continue to pump out action remakes of popular foreign films with a soulless nod to an alien and titular fighting style. Their repayment plan? To replace a key diversified system of offense with sub-advanced grappling maneuvers merged with hyper-edited body blows. You might as well refer to the Bourne handbook for how I imagine *The Raid* remake turning out, but I digress. Known in its homeland as *Serbuan Maut* and then internationally as *The Raid*, the evolution of title didn't quite stop there. Overseas in the American market, *The Raid* later had "Redemption" tacked on to its title to allow copyright to resume naturally as well as opening up options for a sequel, or in this case, two. Released at Sundance with an alternate score from Mike Shinoda of Linkin Park "fame" and the unfortunately named Joseph Trapanese, this exclusive composition for *The Raid* served as an occasionally unruly love letter to a film that needed no such grabs for attention, especially from a post-applied promise of being faithful to the images.

Unfortunately, the faithfulness to the original artistic vision wasn't all in check, as the Western theatrical run felt the need to doll itself up beyond the limitations of an American adrenal-pop soundtrack considering intelligence. Things proved all and good until the simplicity of the electronic score, that followed alongside with the hurried sense of survival, ran out and gave room to the scene-chewing appetite of a mid-chaos dubstep routine which, far dependent on your opinion of the (awful) genre, is most unfitting for a frenetic cinematic scenario, especially if it wants to be taken seriously. But in regards to the U.S. release of *The Raid: Redemption*, this was close to its only sin. *The Raid: Redemption*, if to be remembered by a single act, had one thing going for it and that is apart from the luxurious and fruitful sequences of violence, away from the viciousness of tenant to tenant, and far from the incredible death scenes that will leave your nails clawing at plush. No, what *The Raid: Redemption* has is an incredible sense of utter helplessness and defeat, a feeling that could not be anticipated from watching the trailer alone. Now, mind you, a trailer that boasted the tagline of "20 Elite Cops - 30 Floors of Hell" refused to give way to the actual gravity of the situation which is a merit to be thankful of. Imagine my surprise when this micro-army of skilled officers were scattered, slaughtered, and slain. *The Raid: Redemption*, no matter what you may read from genre-waving bannermen, applies well within me as the cinematic equivalent of an old classic arcade-style beat em' up - in par-

THE RAID: REDEMPTION

ticular, Streets of Rage (although a rendition that meets the concrete isolation of Die Hard). You have for potential evidence a small band of aggressive law-abiding citizens battling wave after wave of weapon-wielding rapists, junkies, murderers, and other related fallen ilk. Each character combats his own specific mini-boss, of sorts. The floors of the building can be taken, literally, as levels, and as an added bonus you are also given the architectural despondency of the Silent Hill multiverse. It is no coincidence that the core demographic suited for The Raid: Redemption are 18-32 year old fans (gender not applied as my fiancée was quoted as dubbing the film "a masterpiece") of ferocious competition. Much to their surprise too, is that it is gift-wrapped in a package anonymously sent to "Fanboy". No return address either, hmm.

If you have it within you to embrace such nonchalant acts of treachery, murder, and extreme violence then open your ears, eyes, arms, and tendons to this assault on the senses. The Raid: Redemption can easily be followed and the events can even transpire/unfold to the dull senses of a quasi-intellectual cinema-goer. The Raid is that certain sort of film that you can view once and rely on later as a perfectly competent sound and space filler as you multitask on whatever in-house errand(s) lie on your plate, and in which by some magical method of multimedia memory, The Raid: Redemption can be mentally visualized as well as synchronized alongside the groans and moans of both pools of victims - good and bad. For exceptional physical feats, look no further. You will notice the actions of those depicted on-screen, no matter the side you choose, attempt to disguise themselves as falling under their own category of exceptional heroism but that is never the case in The Raid. Even the rookie SWAT lead, Rama, has an agenda for entering the building and only when their original plan becomes so, for lack of a better word, fucked, does he step up to the plate to ensure the safety of himself and the scattered survivors. Welsh born director Gareth Evans would obviously follow up the enormous critical success of The Raid so in his future we can assuredly see two more sequels to the Indonesian debut and as I mentioned before, at least one American remake. When asked about his plans for The Raid: Redemption's sequel, now tagged with the subtitle "Retaliation", Evans could only comment about his hopeful inclusion of car chases - "I want to bring car chase elements to it as well. So we have like a cool fight scene where you go inside a car, fighting against four people as it's speeding along a one-way." Now, I'm all for diversity but the greatest appeal of The Raid was its horrific seclusion - a terrible event sealed off from outside communications or contact. If these men are even remotely allocated to another life-or-death situation, then what is keeping them from turning the wheel. I'm not sure how it could possibly work out without some method of escape but my brows stay curiously and cautiously raised. This beast was meant to be leashed. If you slaver for intense bodily nihilism then look no further. The Raid: Redemption reigns king of overkill - a rare film event in which officers of the law die like dogs while

the villains perish under much more honorable circumstances, and that is more
bravery than I ever could have expected from such a piece.

-mAQ

JACK BE NIMBLE
JACK BE NIMBLE

Garth Maxwell (1993)

Once upon a time and before becoming one of the most hideous pseudo-Aryan platinum blonde chicks-with-dicks working in Hollywood, Alexis Arquette (born Robert Arquette), the lesser known sibling of the famous Arquette acting family (including Rosanna, David, Patricia, and Richmond), played the role of the male adolescent anti-hero Jack in the gravely underrated New Zealand neo-fairy-tale horror flick *Jack Be Nimble* (1993) directed by Garth Maxwell. More demented and cunning than a schizophrenic tranny on uncut crack, Jack nimbly hypnotizes personal enemies with his artfully crafted motor-powered candlestick and has them unintentionally commit suicide through a variety of intricate, highly intimate, and ruthlessly befitting ways. Jack has very privy reasons for becoming a sly metaphysical mass murderer, but the true root of his irrevocable psychosis is the direct consequence of being separated from his little sister Dora when he was a wee lad. After his obese father became an unrepentant philanderer, and, thereafter, his mother turned into an emotionally unstable drunk with nil mothering skills, Jack and his sis were put up for adoption and given to two very different families. While Dora was raised somewhat ideally with a good, bourgeois upbringing, poor Jack was cursed to live in the less than luxurious rural land of wild cow-turds with a hostile pack of sadistic Kiwis hellbillies who don't take kindly to the lonely boy's proclivity towards impulsive hypersensitivity and playing with furry kitty cats. Although Jack grows up to be a talented murderer and dilettante inventor with an unorthodox intellect, his sister Dora becomes a creature of feminine empathy and intuition as she develops crucial extra-sensory abilities that allow her to know when her bothersome brother is in immediate danger. Despite their deracinated coming-of-age, Jack and Dora remain two peculiar peas in a pod during their vexatious separation. Upon reuniting after many years of emotionally severe severance, siblings Jack and Nora face fierce vulnerability from various outsiders, ranging from jealous boyfriends to split-personalities, but most specifically from a dyke-like brigade of ex-stepsisters. Due to a childhood's worth of cataclysmic abuse, Jack becomes his own worst enemy; burning every bridge and annihilating all beings that have the misfortune of carelessly crossing his capricious path.

Director Garth Maxwell has cited various influences, both personal and aesthetic, that went into the creation of *Jack Be Nimble*. On a more diacritic and arcane level, Maxwell and *Jack Be Nimble* co-writer Rex Pilgrim have stated their personal familial and social isolation as gay men played an imperative role in assembling the psychologically damaged and confounded character Jack and his affinity for ritualistic revenge. In fact, the screenwriting duo would once again collaborate on the gay dramarama *When Love Comes Along* (1998); a mostly mediocre and artistically sterile work that bares no resemblance to its older sib-

ling Jack Be Nimble. Despite the innate (albeit cryptic) gayness of some of the more personal themes that plague anti-hero Jack in Jack Be Nimble, the film itself lacks any sort of overt mention of homosexuality. While Dora enjoys engaging in verbal and physical intercourse with an older gentlemen, Jack's only source of sexual ecstasy seems to be through brute violence, which one could argue is a symbolic metaphor for sodomy. As far as cinematic inspirations go, Maxwell has (somewhat unsurprisingly) named David Cronenberg, Dario Argento, and David Lynch as filmmakers who had influenced the look and atmosphere of Jack Be Nimble. For the scenes of Jack growing up in rural Hades, Maxwell attempted to channel the ethereal aesthetic potency of the late nineteenth-century Symbolist art movement, most specifically, the work of Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin. Despite its many influences, Jack Be Nimble hardly seems like a hack-kitsch derivative work as the film, much like Federico Fellini's *La Strada* (1954), has a timeless quality that transcends both age and passing trend, thus guaranteeing its staying power as a truly ominous and caustic, yet bewitching piece of cinema. Upon first viewing Jack Be Nimble, my always discerning eyes failed to notice any blatant influences as I was immediately taken aback by the film's savage yet startlingly sentimental story and unmerciful yet aesthetically-titillating acid-washed imagery. Like any great modern fairy tale, Jack Be Nimble tells an archaic story in a wholly neoteric and sophisticated way. Being a work of apt cinema, Jack Be Nimble is most successful in depicting the story through its use of exceedingly expressive imagery, keen shot composition, seamless editing (in one clever match-cut, a bucket of pig's blood dissolves into a birthday cake), and overall dynamic mise-en-scène, as opposed to the often platitudinous realm of sheer words. In fact, the greatest weakness of Jack Be Nimble is its sometimes unconvincing and poorly synched dialogue, which sometimes resembles the poor overdubbing of a Lucio Fulci film. Of course, like most great films, the actions and images featured in Jack Be Nimble are more vehement than patently restrictive words.

Jack is quite quick when it comes to stomping on the throats of bloated waitresses who happen to be two times his size, but such erratic and unbecoming behavior ultimately leads to his demise, hence the tragedy of the story and his character. Ultimately, Jack's greatest talents are merely a clever and intricate survivalist response to his undying and overwhelming pain. After all, had it not been for the barbaric backwoods childrearing techniques of his abominable adopted parents, Jack would have never went to the trouble of fashioning a marvelous machine of hypnotic destruction. While the ending of Jack Be Nimble may be less than ideal to the typical Hollywoodized automaton, the film does provide an optimistic view of family matters and the primordial power of genetics. Although being a work that is indubitably too dark and risqué for toddlers, and too mystical for the seasoned cynic, Jack Be Nimble is a truly strange tale that tends to leave most viewers divided, but never blasé. Undoubtedly, the presence of pre-tranny

JACK BE NIMBLE

Alexis Arquette also adds a curious ingredient to Jack Be Nimble that few other films can boast. Surprisingly, what I found most odd about Arquette's appearance in the film was not the atypical 'leading male' role s/he plays, but the quality and plausibility of his/her performance. In fact, Arquette's exceptional performance in Jack Be Nimble may be one of the best abstract arguments against sexual reassignment surgery. After all, who can say anything positive (and with a straight face) about any of "her" subsequent performances? The creators of Jack Be Nimble described the film, somewhat sneeringly, as the, "queereſt little grenade." Indeed, the film is most certainly preternatural and esoterically homosexual, as well as overly emotionally explosive, but it is also devilishly delightful and crudely charming work of de facto cult/horror cinema.

-Ty E

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Gary Goddard (1987)

Accompanying most, if not all, of Cannon films is the entrance into the realm of cheesy epic entertainment and alike most of the occupying modicum is the adaptation of *Masters of the Universe* starring the promising and chiseled Dolph Lundgren. With such a spectacle to tell and such little time, *Masters of the Universe* starts off with the immediate alluded never ending battle between He-Man (Not entitled Prince Adam in the film) and the prosthetically-plump Skeletor. After briefly highlighting key characters that are for and against Eternia, the film jumps into obstacle mode and thrusts you into a race against time to rejuvenate the Sorceress who looks strikingly like Meryl Streep but aged 20+ years. When it comes down to the marrow, *Masters of the Universe* is yet another original tale that gets forced into a snug spot of city fetishism. City fetishism: The ineptitude to create pure and concentrated filmic energy with respect to marketed property. So, instead of pouting - they thrust unsure characters into a contemporary social structure and rake in the profits as we witness awkward turnabouts. This very legacy of impotent films spans from *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* to *Jason Takes Manhattan* to even pseudo-Tarzan territory with the sadistic George of the Jungle. This normal fable of eccentric character in an unfamiliar environment is obvious to the fact of fiction but when they pluck eccentricities out of their well-suited environments and place them in commonly used urban areas e.g. New York, things tend to get a little sloppy. Take *Jason Takes Manhattan* for a pathetic example. Sure the idea and tag line gave us a clever marketing scheme and imposable images that are branded forever with the icon of Voorhees but take the product in consideration. Half the film was spent on a boat and the lack of style was impudent upon my visceral fantasies of Jason slashing pesky degenerates. As autopsied, city fetishism is exactly what had happened to *Masters of the Universe* but the kicker is that the final product is a film that doesn't feature as many bourgeois individuals as you'd like to anticipate. The curing agent is rather quasi-faithful material that is big on explosions and Lundgren holding plasma rifles with one arm as parodied in *Tropic Thunder* with Ben Stiller's character as he compromises accuracy for theatrics. This decision wasn't the stake in a grave but rather a driving force to jettison familiarity to the tale of Eternia. *Masters of the Universe* is immensely entertaining due to the fact that it transforms into a Right Said Fred video by finale that is equally met with light tricks, sweaty muscled men, and primitive ass chaps. Easily one of the most homosexual action films since *Commando* or the early draft of *Starbeast*. So when you have lost faith in mankind, know that you can turn to He-Man to passively assure your survival aided with Dolph's suave brick voice that he uses to woo the metaphorical panties off of Kevin's piece of pie, Julie. Armed with "lazer" weapons and swords that look as if they are made of aluminum, He-Man finds his quest near-

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

ing completion when he decides to enter battle with a Skeletor-turned-Midas godlike manifestation of what Galactus should have looked like in the second Fantastic Four film. If you can forgive the "mortality" beset upon the film in dire attempt to connect with a mortal audience, it's rather easy to become immersed into the fantastical swords & magic realm of Masters of the Universe. If this isn't enough reassurance, the logo of Cannon films should be enough to coerce you into favoring this film and weeping for the regrettably one-note career of Dolph Lundgren, who really put a soul into every character portrayed, even when the script offers the original material up for sex trafficking. For a final note let's be honest with each other. Can you actually think of anything more hilariously contrived than Lundgren bellowing "I have the powwwer!?" I can't.

-mAQ

NO MORE SOULS: ONE LAST SLICE OF SENSATION

Gary J. Tunncliffe (2005)

Hellraiser is one of many horror film franchises that start off with a great start then just bog down into un-entertainable mush. This is a short film shot on high def for around a couple thousand dollars. Keep in mind it is only 5 minutes long. Seems a bit pricey for only 5 minutes eh? Well, the plotline follows the leader of the cenobites named "Pinhead". Quite an iconic figure he is. Well this time, he is old and is not Douglas Bradley. Trust me, I was moaning too. Mankind has gone extinct leaving no more souls to torture, no more pleasure, and the fear that his followers will turn on him. What's an immortal being to do? Well, he decides to open the puzzle box himself. We know what happens now. Only problem is, is the execution of the scene. Instead of getting the chain-gang, we merely have a Caesar-esque stabbing that is no worthy of the often-beautiful slayings in the Hellraiser series. The acting is little to none. Just a monotone monologue from Pinhead (Which is all we need) and the set designs were decent. The lighting tended to be annoying and the Chatterer looked disgraceful and didn't "chatter". All in all, it is worthy of being a contender for the true Hellraiser films. No More Souls should be treated as a sequel to Hellbound and you should ignore all the other entries. It is the only one worth the Clive Barker seal of approval. This is a fan film worthy of seeing and is available as an easter egg on the DVD of Deader. The Hellraiser mythos has only gone downhill lately. I'm waiting for those talented Frenchies to re-imagine it already.

-Maq

POLTERGEIST III
POLTERGEIST III

Gary Sherman (1988)

First off, let's admit one thing. The only reason any of us would pay attention to *Poltergeist III* is for A) Heather O'Rourke or B) Heather O'Rourke's following death due to complications of Crohn's disease. This completely unnecessary sequel could be deemed as a complication of her possible procedure which would have saved her life. For this, I blame the film industry for wasting time and dependency on something that will never be respected by anyone who doesn't have a fixation on Heather O'Rourke's premature starlet status. *Poltergeist III* is known for the tragic death of the series lead and the over-extensive use of "Carol Annnee!" Note her overly chubby cheeks as this is a symptom of Crohn's disease. How exciting! We get to watch a little girl die progressively as we pass slowly from boredom. Heather O'Rourke and Zelda Rubinstein return in the *Poltergeist* trilogy's finale. What should have been a film to consciously consider the losses and graciously back step with pride and dignity intact soon disintegrated as the film progressively got worse with no end in sight. The beginning opens up with an air of adequacy as we mentally piece together and try to come to grip the terror that Carol Anne has had to live with. I haven't pitied a child since *Child's Play*'s Andy Barclay erupted with the "woe is me" face. What started out bleak soon spiraled out of control as this kid should have accepted suicide way earlier than *Child's Play 3*. The very same rules apply to Carol Anne. It's apparent that no matter what, no matter how resistant the box office is, Carol Anne will never be freed of Kane's wrath. Not even stomach cancer can stop this onslaught of feudal franchise persistence. The final blow to a legacy that should have ended after the debut film was the passing of Heather O'Rourke and what a sacrifice it was. After Carol Anne settles in with her aunt and family in a tower that consists of over 100 floors, her peace is soon shattered by visions of the horrifying spectre that has been following her over the course of three films including this dreadful sequel. Soon this film sells into a Generation-Xer with a cast of rebellious youth who become involved in the malevolent workings of a spirit that reveals his greatest fetish to be cracking mirrors. Somehow I remember the *Poltergeist* being more exciting and destructive, even designed by a certain H.R. Giger. It would appear that Kane has turned a new leaf as a pacifist taking cues from Angus Scrimm all the while conforming to an Amish subculture. Perhaps Mennonite? *Poltergeist III* should have at least settled as a passable crack in a pillar of horror but instead stands as one of the most depressing and dismal attempts at resuscitating something that is past dead. From the half-assed performances from everyone involved save for the cherubic Heather O'Rourke, it's easy to blame the "Poltergeist Curse" for the lack of compassion put into a sequel of another sequel. It's only when you retitling a title that you begin to notice the chain of unoriginality. *Poltergeist III* stands testament to a prose of carelessness only aided

by a key acting performance of a dead child actress and a couple scenes that stand out with generic aesthetics but a theme nonetheless. I give credit for a cunning idea of obscuring the view with the "entrance" to the other side. You know, that really bright flood light. Poltergeist III remains in recent memory only due to Heather O'Rourke's untimely departing from our world into the very world she feared in three horror installments. The only reason one should view this film is to "appreciate" her screen presence or to stare into her face and realize that in between takes she was most likely projectile vomiting and slowly deteriorating into the very monster she was running from. R.I.P. Heather O'Rourke

-mAQ

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Gary Trousdale (1991)

Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* is a brilliant exercise in the balance of realism and fantasy. Cocteau once again employed his simple yet very effective special effects to invoke a world of dreamlike detachment. The beast lives in a world of magnificent enchantment. His dark home features a variety of live human (and human parts) statues that give complete servitude to him and his recent acquirement Belle. Belle lives a life of wonderful slavery with the beast. She cannot look in the Beast's eyes but is free to wander the halls of his luxurious castle and take advantage of its magical appliances. Jean Cocteau's lover Jean Marais plays the role of both the beast and Belle's human love interest Avenant. Cocteau added a subplot to the French fairy tale involving Belle's male suitor (Avenant) who decides with the conspiring help of Belle's sisters, to kill the beast and steal his riches. Cocteau's version of the fairy tale would heavily inspire the Disney animated version of the film. *Beauty and the Beast* is the most linear in structure of Jean Cocteau's films. This can be obviously attributed to the fact that Cocteau adapted the film from a French fairy tale. Of course, Cocteau creates a film that is just as spectacular as his other masterpieces. Cocteau's auteur signatures are immediately identifiable when the Beast's castle is first shown. Cocteau's surrealist dream worlds are ones of inviting atmosphere and perfection. It can be only assumed that his opium addiction influenced his knack for atmospheric sedation. *Beauty and the Beast* was filmed soon after the American liberation of France. This caused for various problems during the film's production as explained in Jean Cocteau's diary of the film. It is amazing that a director could create (with the help of others of course) such a beautiful film under such harsh conditions. The average Hollywood director would have a yeast infection if they received regular coffee when asking for decaf. The universal themes of fairy tales are losing their power with each generation as the human race heads for another dark age. Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* perfectly updates (still relevant today) the fairy tale for the times of conspiracy and deception. You won't find any truth in Hollywood unless you skin the beast that operates it alive. Contemporary directors need to spend more time studying directors like Jean Cocteau, Carl Th. Dreyer, F.W. Murnau, and Ingmar Bergman. The only thing you will learn from the likes of Quentin Tarantino, Brian De Palma, Robert Rodriguez, and George Lucas is trivial diarrhea hidden beneath the corroded skin of generic stylization.

-Ty E

I STAND ALONE

Gaspar Noé (1998)

Gaspar Noé's 1998 film *I Stand Alone* (*Seul Contre Tous*) is a visceral mind-fuck of a movie. This film doesn't use trippy visuals or any kind of fancy storyline to grab your attention. Truth be told, it doesn't want your attention. Noé even gives you 20 seconds to leave the film. Is this a brutal and depraved film? Yes. Is it disturbing and morally fucked? Does this make it a bad film? No, it doesn't, but that seems to be the majority of opinion. The plot is very one-minded, just as the attitude of its character is. Phillipe Nahon (Best known for *High Tension*) plays The Butcher, whose anger and aggression knows no bounds. In a very informative opening scene, we see stills of his family as he explains his father's death at the hands of "Evil Nazis" and how he was an orphan. We view his love for butchery (Which fits his personality best) and we see that he opens up his own shop. He meets his lover, a beautiful co-worker and has a steamy session in a hotel. 9 months later, Cynthia is born. This proves to be too much to handle, as the Butcher gets left with Cynthia. Fast forward a couple of years, Cynthia gets her first period and on the way to the shop, she almost gets raped. Poor Poor Butcher. When she comes in with bloody underwear, his head screams Rape. He grabs his butcher knife, finds the kid, and stabs him in the face. He lived, and the Butcher was sent to jail while Cynthia was institutionalized. Upon his release, he meets a bar owner, knocks her up as well, and decides to move and forget about his daughter. What happens from here on out it's best to watch on your own. Spoilers are a very sensitive topic on film, and I wouldn't want to weaken this film's power. This film is a bold and audacious character study which delves deeper into the mind of a madman than let's say "Henry: Portrait Of A Serial Killer". Director Gaspar Noé somehow brings art to the most violent situations. Expect many wonderful shots and amazing angles. That seems to be Noé's specialty. Example: Irreversible. There are many different kinds of love and this film proves it. The soundtrack features classical symphonies that give you a false sense of security and make you feel most uncomfortable. This man's morals are out of whack, from calling a bar-keeper's son a "Nigger Faggot" to threatening to kill his unborn fetus, the Butcher is not a man to be reckoned with. Phillipe Nahon delivers a ground-breaking performance. The Butcher is one of the more fucked up characters I have seen. He is a racist, trashy, and hostile being and his very life disgusts me but hey, to each his own. With wonderful narration and insanity-driven monologues, *I Stand Alone* is a force to be seen but the film does come with a gratuitous warning. This film is not for the faint of heart.

-Maq

SODOMITES
SODOMITES

Gaspar Noé (1998)

Sodomites is a seven minute long short film directed by Gaspar Noé to promote condom wearing during sexual acts. As the title implies, the short features a spectators show of sodomy. A group of S & M biker types watch as a muscular man in a wolf mask delivers a series of anal blows to an anticipating leather clad vamp. The two sodomites are cheered on by their excited audience and comrades. Some of these individuals are so excited that they begin pleasuring themselves. This even includes an old man with a disgusting chode. After the orgasmic conclusion of the forbidden sex act, the groups leader has a woman inspect the condom for semen. When the condom is found out to have worked, the group of vicious perverts cheers. During the sex act, a PCP fueled editing montage occurs showing a variety of sexual deviants satisfying their own needs. This sequence is typical of Gaspar Noé as he seems obsessed with trying to make his audience sick with his films (by way of both aesthetic and technique). The difference with Sodomites is that he seems to be doing it for comedic purposes. I couldn't help to think about Gaspar Noé laughing behind the camera. Apparently Sodomites was funded by the socialist French government. No wonder France is falling apart and resembling a third world country. Noé has always had a niche for exposing the underbelly of France. The French government funded Sodomites brings the degeneracy of France wide out in the open.

-Ty E

IRREVERSIBLE

Gaspar Noé (2002)

Irréversible is a film that might put off some audiences. I personally think it's brilliant and a contemporary masterpiece. The film utilizes a nonlinear narrative format allowing the viewer to discover what led up to the films disturbing and brutal opening scenes. Irreversible was written and directed by Argentina-born French director Gaspar Noé.

During one of the early scenes in the film, a mans face is crushed at a gay bar with what looks like a fire extinguisher. The scene is essentially one continuous and unrelenting shot that forces the viewer to be engulfed in the violence. I don't think that it would be an exaggeration to say that this scene is one of the most intense scenes ever committed to celluloid. Unlike most films featuring violence, Irreversible doesn't allow the viewer to feel safe or comfortable.

The film also features a rape scene that lasts almost 10 minutes. Nothing about this scene is entertaining or erotic. The rapist is a gay psycho pimp that is obviously under the influence of drugs. During the rape he lets the audience know his hatred for beautiful women and women in general. Although the pimp is really only in this scene, his actions and words are some of the most telling characters seen throughout the film. It would be interesting to know what director Gaspar Noé's motivation behind this character was.

Irreversible also utilizes an editing technique to give the feeling that each scene is one single shot. Alfred Hitchcock used a similar technique in his film Rope, loosely based on real life child murderers Leopold and Loeb. A 2001: A Space Odyssey poster is also seen in the room of the male protagonist in Irreversible. It can be assumed that director Gaspar Noé is most certainly inspired by film-makers of the past. Most films that deal with France tend to give it a romanticized feel. I find that to be ridiculous and a film like Irreversible shatters that stereotype. The film shows the dark side of France with subversive subcultures, extreme violence, brutal rape, and not so aesthetically pleasing sets. Irreversible introduces a new look at France just as François Truffaut's film did decades before. It is rare to find nowadays directors that are brave enough to bring up issues that are not often the most desirable to think about.

In a time when the majority of films released are just made to get a quick buck, Irreversible offers the viewer something new both in artistry and social commentary. It also looks at the inevitability of time and its consequences in which I believe are done in a more intelligent way than Christopher Nolan's Memento. Time can change everything as unfolded in Irreversible.

-Ty E

DESTRICED
DESTRICED

Gaspar Noé (2006)

DeStricTed is a compilation of seven short films by seven different directors expressing their views on sexuality and pornography. As can be expected, some are interesting and some are complete shit. Directors generally use short films as an opportunity to experiment with the film medium. Many of these directors are already virtual pornographers so the DeStricTed project is fitting to their backgrounds. Balkan Erotic Epic directed by Marina Abramovic This short features Slavs from the Balkans playing with their tits, fucking a grassy field (actually having sex with the ground), and flashing their muffs to mother nature. The short plays out as something you might expect to see on the history channel if they included graphic sex history. Apparently women from the Balkans used to cover their hands with their female secretions and put it on their children's face. What loving mothers. Sync directed by Marco Brambilla I am sure mind control Soviet propagandist Dziga Vertov would be proud of this porn scene montage. This short films is merely a collection of sex footage edited together in a coke-heads format. Nothing very interesting here. Brambilla probably came up with the idea for the film after watching the latest McDonald's commercial. Hoist directed by Matthew Barney Some weird fuck greases his dick while being suspended in some type of industrial machine. This short had me disgusted after I actually noticed what was going on. Hoist starts out ambiguous in a close-up shot of a dirty body and an erecting object (guess what it is?). An interesting short that acts as a horrible nightmare (despite it being intended to be so or not). Impaled directed by Larry Clark Larry Clark does what he likes best when interviewing young men about sex and pornography. The interviewed, for the most part, seem fairly brain dead. Clark also has porn stars give confessionals on sex and how they got into the sinful porn industry. Eventually an Emo looking fellow has the opportunity to pick out a porn star to screw and he goes for anal with a 40 year old. Larry Clark once again confirms that he is an old pervert that has yet to become conscious of his porn directing ambitions (yet happened landed there). We Fuck Alone directed by Gaspar Noé We Fuck Alone takes a look at two very different individuals in their own privacy masturbating to the same porno. The short is filmed with a strobe effect that you would expect from Noé. A cutesy teenage girl is the first to be featured masturbating. She makes sure that her teddy bear is close by her naked body. The second person to fuck alone is a weird fuck with a blow up doll and a devil lock haircut. A worthy effort from Noé. House Call directed by Richard Prince A doctor starts screwing his patient in this short. Featuring ambient noise and super shitty video quality, House Call is porn for art fags. Aside from auditory and visual dissonance, the short is fairly typical of a porn. A sometimes interesting effort, but nothing new. Death Valley directed by Sam Taylor-Wood They saved the worst for last

with this pointless jerk off fest. A lone man takes a walk into Death Valley and starts masturbating. He seems to be having some mental problems in the process. What a lonely fellow. Director Sam Taylor-Wood put no thought into this short that should have been aborted. DeStricted offers a few alluring shorts. It would have been interesting to have seen John Waters and Jörg Buttgerit contribute a film to the compilation. Half of the directors involved in DeStricted have no right calling themselves artists. Anyone can captivate an audience with sex (especially when it's unconventional).

-Ty E

ENTER THE VOID
ENTER THE VOID

Gaspar Noé (2009)

Without question, *Enter the Void* (2009) is Argentinean auteur Gaspar Noé's most technically and aesthetically accomplished work to date, but I would never call it anywhere near his greatest film. Indeed, compared to the froggy pre-apocalyptic Euro-decay of Noé's previous works, *Carne* (1991), *I Stand Alone* (1998), and *Irréversible* (2002), *Enter the Void* seems like the epic celluloid wet dream of a decadent and unthinking recreational psychedelic drug user (which Noé is!) who can no longer be bothered with the uncomfortable true troubles of the world because he is far too comfortable and has finally received enough success to do whatever the hell he wants. Undoubtedly, *Enter the Void* was a 'dream' for Noé and the filmmaker's equivalent to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)—a work that the director has credited as not only influencing him to be a film director at the mere age of 7, but would also make a somewhat strange 'appearance' in poster form in a hot and steamy sex scene between Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel in *Irréversible*. Additionally, Noé has cited the films of cine-magician Kenneth Anger, especially *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), as being a major aesthetic influence for *Enter the Void*, but arguably most interestingly, the filmmaker has credited the scientific drawings of German Romantic biologist/philosopher/physician/artist Ernst Haeckel as influencing the neo-psychedelic organic patterns featured throughout the film. In terms of less obvious aesthetic influences, Noé has named the experimental films of 'spiritual auteur' Jordan Belson (*Bop-Scotch*, *Phenomena*) and the found-footage flicks of Austrian auteur Peter Tscherkassky (*Instructions for a Light & Sound Machine*, *Happy-End*). Thematically speaking, *Enter the Void* is like a totally transgressive 'Idiot's Guide to the Tibetan Book of the Dead' as directed by a contemporary jet-set drug addict who decided to "Turn on, tune in, drop out" while on an overextended exodus in Tokyo, Japan. The hyper hallucinatory, hypnotic, and aesthetically hysterical celluloid scumbag saga of a superlatively scrawny American drug dealer/addict living in Tokyo who is nonsensically killed after his cowardly cuckold of a friend rats him out to the police, only to comeback as a floating spirit as prophesized in the Tibetan Book of the Dead and watch over his friends/family, *Enter the Void* is a strikingly spiritually degenerate fantasy flick that will probably prove to be a 'religious' experience for ravers and other nocturnal narcotic-fueled rabble, but will seem rather retarded, at least thematically speaking, to most other viewers. Still, despite its decidedly decadent themes and morally and spiritually dubious message, *Enter the Void* is nothing short of a visually spectacular experience from a filmmaker that seems to be 'finding himself' (or whatever).

Oscar (played by non-actor/aspiring filmmaker Nathaniel Brown)—a rather questionable fellow who gets off to sniffing his little sister's panties and is jealous

of said sister's pimp-like boyfriend—is a gawky and scrawny young American male of the modern emasculated sort who lives in Tokyo and supports himself by selling drugs in a notoriously dangerous and stupid place to sell drugs. Unfortunately, Oscar is a bad salesman and enjoys smoking his own product, which is DMT. Oscar's well meaning artist/neo-beatnik guru friend Alex (Cyril Roy) wants him to quit dealing dope and lets him borrow the Tibetan Book of the Dead as inspiration. At the beginning of *Enter the Void*, Alex tells Oscar how when a person dies their spirit wanders among the living and experiences nightmares until it can be reincarnated. After Oscar's cowardly British friend Victor (Olly Alexander) rats him out to the cops after discovering his friend had been fucking his MILF mom, the DMT dealer is shot to death by Jap cops in a bathroom stall after failingly attempting to flush his dope down the toilet (and idiotically telling the cops he has a gun!) at a happening bar called 'The Void,' thus beginning his post-life as a wandering spirit in kaleidoscopic cotton-candy-colored Tokyo. After dropping dead on a urine-drenched floor after taking a bullet to the chest, Oscar gazes at his corpse as he floats above in spirit form and his short yet somewhat tragic life proceeds to be viscerally yet surreally depicted in semi-chronological order. When they were just little children, Oscar and his sister Linda were in a rather violent and traumatizing car accident that claimed their seemingly loving parents, thus sending both siblings to different foster homes where they would grow up to become, more or less, self-destructive individuals with corrosive (and even incestuous) tendencies. After coming of age, Oscar relocated to Tokyo and eventually saved enough money via selling drugs so that his sister Linda (perennial celluloid whore Paz de la Huerta) could also move to Japland, but when she arrived she became a stripper and, in turn, the paid slut of a manipulative Jap with a wop name named Mario (Masato Tanno). To cope with the stress of his sister Linda, who he has a quasi-incestuous relationship with, being a paid slut, Oscar ultimately became a more destructive drug user and began to use DMT, which inevitably led to more self-destructive behavior, including screwing his British friend Victor's mom. Of course, when Victor, who is a closet queen, found out that his best friend defiled his beloved mother, he conspired to get Oscar arrested by the cops (he was arrested on a possession charge, so by setting up Oscar, Victor thought he would be able to knock out two birds with one stone) but, of course, never expected it would result in the death of his friend.

From there, the rest of *Enter the Void* essentially focuses on the somewhat immediate aftermath of Oscar's death and how his sister Linda and friends, Alex and Victor, deal with it. Naturally, lecherous Linda falls into a most melancholy state and indulges in large doses of drugs and sex, including miscegenation-based orgies and lesbianism. Linda also gets pregnant and aborts her ½ Jap baby, which Oscar witnesses in a rather gross way from above the operating table. When Linda and her 'boyfriend' Mario go to see Oscar's body, they are

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both disgusted and the corpse is eventually 'scorched' via cremation. Meanwhile, Victor bitches his mom out like a true bitch for sharing carnal knowledge with Oscar (assumedly, Victor wanted Oscar all for himself). When Victor attempts to apologize to Linda for his unwitting part in Oscar's death, she treats him like the bitch he is and tells him to kill himself, but instead he gives communal blowjobs to middle-aged Japanese businessmen like a true racial cuckold. Eventually, Linda drops her truly mean man Mario and, to Oscar's postmortem delight, gets with Alex, who has been living like a bum and eating out of garbage cans for the majority of *Enter the Void*. In the end, Oscar's spirit floats between rooms at a fancy kaleidoscopic hotel called "Love Hotel" where he witnesses his friend Alex passionately making love to his sister Linda, Victor blowing a Jap businessman while another Jap businessman waits for his turn, his pedophile drug dealer Bruno (non-actor and 'Save The Children' activist Ed Spear in his first and sole film role) smoking crack while watching a young boy having sex with a young girl, and various strangers engaging in various forms of fucking and sucking. In the final scene, Alex seems to be reborn via his sister Linda's vagina (thus making him the son of his sis/friend Alex), but auteur Gaspar Noé has denied this interpretation, claiming it is merely a flashback of the protagonist's original birth in the form of a false memory.

Featuring quotes from drug-addled artist-guru Alex like "Smoking. It reminds me of sucking on my mother's nipples. Best thing in my life," and "It's funny you know... DMT only lasts for six minutes but it really seems like eternity. It is the same chemical your brain receives when you die...It is a little bit like dying would be the ultimate trip," *Enter the Void* is certainly a celluloid drug epic made by a drug connoisseur for drug connoisseurs and that is exactly why I could not completely get into the film, even upon subsequent viewings and as a rather unrepentant Gaspar Noé fan. Indeed, while I firmly respect Gaspar Noé for his uniquely uncompromising libertine brand of filmmaking and all around aesthetic terrorism, it is impossible for me to truly respect a film that wallows in deluded DMT fetishism and pseudo-Orientalist hogwash of the would-be-metaphysical sort. Additionally, *Enter the Void* confirmed to me that Noé's career-spanning interest in incest is more than just an interest and has gotten rather old, and that he did not choose to include such sordid themes in *Carne* and *I Stand Alone* simply because he has an unflattering view of French proletarians. Indeed, 160 minutes of incestuous and perverted sexuality, psychedelic drug use, fucked up families, and warped Asiatic romanticism for death is not exactly my ideal sort of epic cinema and compared to *I Stand Alone* and *Irréversible*, *Enter the Void* seems like philistine escapism created for contemporary bourgeois would-be-beatniks who have the time and money to wash on such modernist post-counter-culture inanities. Still, *Enter the Void* is easily the greatest film set in Japan and directed by a white man since Paul Schrader's *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985) and an aesthetically noble, if not thematically negli-

gent, attempt by Noé to direct his very own 'celluloid trip' equivalent to 2001: A Space Odyssey. Featuring a totally unsympathetic protagonist who does not even deserve the sort of empathy typically afforded to iconic cinematic antiheroes like Travis Bickle and Alex DeLarge, Enter the Void is certainly a film that is exceedingly emblematic of our spiritually and morally repugnant, vain and valueless, emotionally-dead and death-worshipping, and spectacle-obsessed zeitgeist, thus one must admit it has a more than fitting title. Packed with otherworldly images of abortions and aborted fetuses, sadistic sodomite drug dealers doping underage Jap boys, violent car crashes involving prepubescent children, starving artists eating trash out of garbage cans, Yank-on-Jap miscegenation of both the hetero and homo sort, dreamlike DMT derangement, a fiery cremation of a young drug addict, a crazy bitch dumping her brother's ashes down the sink, countless babies sucking on tender teats, and a spirit ostensibly being reborn via his sister's overworked snatch, Enter the Void is human ugliness in its most pleasantly digestible form and for that reason alone makes it worth viewing, even if the film seems like grandiose grade school diletantism when compared to its infinitely more thematically complex father film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

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Gaspar Noé (2015)

From various sources, including personal friends and real-life stories I have ever read, I have always heard that if you want to destroy a loving relationship, just get involved in a threesome and things will eventually fall apart from there. Judging simply by his latest feature *Love* (2015), it seems that even a drug-addled hedonist like French-based Argentinean auteur Gaspar Noé (*I Stand Alone*, *Enter the Void*) believes this to be true, though admittedly the film deals with much more issues than that, as an explicitly erotic melodrama depicting the remarkably destructive failed romance of two young and dumb degenerates of the emotionally erratic sort who like to fight and fuck. The director's most sexually explicit yet least violent work to date as a 3-D flick jam-packed with tons of highly stylized unsimulated sex scenes, Noé's 135-minute epic erotic tragic romance has naturally been described by many people in the press as a "3-D porno," but that would certainly be selling it somewhat short, especially if you're a cinephile and/or have ever loved someone that you wish you could get back. Of course, as demonstrated by his quasi-campy government-funded safe sex PSA *Sodomites* (1998) and his onanistic segment "We Fuck Alone" from the erotic anthology film *DeStricted* (2006) reveal, Noé is no stranger to working with pornographic content, so it is pretty much seemed inevitable that he would eventually direct a full-on feature-length fuck-fest featuring ethereal ejaculations and phantasmagoric fellating. Indubitably Noé's least thematically and aesthetically ambitious yet most overtly erotic work to date, the auteur actually came up with the idea for the film about 17 years ago and originally planned to make it in the early 2000s with Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel in the lead roles but apparently the then-married couple were not too smitten with exposing their sex life to the public or doing decidedly debasing things like getting involved in a threesome with a tranny, so they went ahead and thankfully collaborated on the superior film *Irréversible* (2002) instead. Featuring a novice actor as the male lead and two non-actresses with nil acting experience as the female leads, *Love* is ultimately a valiant attempt by an auteur to make a realistic depiction of a failed romance from a distinctly sexual perspective (or what the would-be-filmmaker protagonist of the film describes as, "sentimental sexuality"). Even more shamelessly self-indulgent than Noé's previous feature *Enter the Void* (2009) as an obviously autobiographical work that makes incessant references to the director's personal life and favorite films in both overt and hermetic fashions, the fuck-filled flick was largely improvised, especially sexually speaking (apparently, Noé would simply setup a scene and let the actors go from there), and was shot from a mere seven-page script. Not unlike his previous works, especially the short *Carne* (1991) and its feature-length sequel *I Stand Alone* (1998), *Love* also reveals Noé's somewhat humorous contempt and loathing for his adopted

nation of France, especially the nation's capital Paris, which is depicted as a virtual gigantic bordello that is inhabited by intemperate sex-obsessed hedonists, jaded swingers, drug addicts, and pretentious pussy-obsessed art fags who are too weak and psychologically broken to maintain healthy romances that involve trust and commitment. Starring boyish up-and-coming American actor Karl Glusman—a Bronx-born bro with a Irish-Catholic mother and German-Jewish father who somewhat resembles a Melungeon (or a octoroon or mustefino)—in lead role as a character named after Noé's mom who feels imprisoned to a woman he does not love but unfortunately knocked up that spends most of the film recollecting his bittersweet relationship with his all-time great love after her despondent mother randomly leaves him a worrisome voicemail because she has gone missing, the carefully constructed piece of quasi-artsy-fartsy erotica might be dripping with buckets of steaming cum and cunt juice but it is hardly sexually stimulating as a malignantly melancholic melodrama that depicts the disintegration of a hot and heavy romance between two sad and pathetic virtual adult children who would certainly not be doing the world a favor by reproducing with one another.

After recently watching Hebraic hipster Henry Jaglom's helically structured debut feature *A Safe Place* (1971) featuring Orson Welles as a nonsensical Yiddish magician, I have to say I am somewhat less impressed with Noé's unconventional narrative structures, especially in regard to *Love*, which oftentimes seem like a less successful take on the editing of *Irréversible*. Still, the film's non-linear narrative is more seamlessly woven and sensible than the sort of conspicuously contrived masturbatory storytelling that one associates with a Tarantino flick. Essentially, Noé's latest feature unfolds in a somewhat predictable fashion where the viewer comes to realize how the protagonist ended up in his current pathetic plight as a result of the dissolution of his self-destructive romance with a woman that he is more or less addicted to and still cannot get over, even though she humiliated him in a variety of ways, including coercing him into taking part in a traumatizing threesome with a deep-voiced silicone-ridden tranny and cheating on him with an old fart with a cheap grey toupee (who is humorously portrayed by Noé himself in a cock-flashing performance). Produced by Vincent Maraval, who also produced the white-girl-exploiting towelhead hack Abdellatif Kechiche's epically overrated Sapphic pseudo-arthouse turd *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* (2013), *Love* comes very much from the same school of over-extended 'auteurist erotica,' but luckily it at least transcends mere titillation and communicates an important message about the absurdity of love and romance and how people that are oftentimes sexually perfect one another also makes for the most toxic of couples. Also, thankfully the film features real women with real bushy beavers as opposed to the completely bald baby gashes that are quite typical of both porn stars and western women nowadays. Indeed, were it not for the fact that the protagonist is an annoyingly whiny and scrawny stoner asshole of

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the radically repellent sort whose oftentimes enraging presence ultimately gets in the way of fine female flesh, the film might be somewhat arousing it parts. A film that predictably proposes that monogamy is unnatural, undesirable, and imprisoning (even though auteur Noé is married to French-Bosnian arthouse filmmaker Lucile Hadžihalilović), *Love* is also probably Noé's most innately immature and imbecilic work as a film that unintentionally demonstrates that when you're raised by far-left-wing parents, you will probably never fully grow up as you have been indoctrinated with a skewed pseudo-morality that teaches that mindless self-indulgence and promiscuity are virtues that are practiced by ostensibly enlightened and progressive individuals. In other words, the film certainly seems like it could have been directed by a LSD-addled fratboy who decided that his lecherous life would make for poignant cinematic art. On the other hand, Noé is hardly sympathetic towards the swingers, dopers, and whores that the film depicts, thus hinting that he is not as morally bankrupt as he seems (indeed, sometimes the film seems like it was directed by a sort of reformed libertine who seems to sense certain things are degenerate, yet is too hopelessly debauched to fully realize and articulate why).

Opening with a scene of what Noé once described as "A sweet double hand job" of protagonist Murphy (Karl Glusman) getting his rump-splitter stroked by his (ex)girlfriend Elektra (Swiss model Aomi Muyock, who Noé met at a party) while he thumbs her clit in an awkward position in a dark shadowy room to the less than erotic sounds of Erik Satie's "Gnossienne No. 3," *Love* immediately comes off as a pretentious fuck flick, but luckily when the lovelorn lead character begins to mumble moronic shit to himself about how much he hates his current life it becomes quite obvious that the film was not directed by someone who thinks of himself as the cinematic heir of Robert Bresson. Like director Noé, Murphy is a foreigner living in Paris whose all-time favorite film is Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and who has no problem mocking his adopted nation and its people (in fact, at one point the protagonist humorously describes the attendants of a Parisian art gallery party as, "Bourgeois French fucks...with their heads so far up their asses."). Murphy was once an aspiring filmmaker that came to Paris to study film, but after accidentally getting a proudly pro-life oriented underage blonde fuck-buddy named Omi (played by Danish painter's assistant Klara Kristin, who Noé randomly discovered dancing at a night club) pregnant after the condom broke during sex and becoming the father of a baby boy named Gaspar, his life has been total hell as he absolutely loathes his baby-momma, who he fears will turn his son gay, and seems to no longer have any aspirations of becoming some sort of great auteur. While Murphy's apartment used to be covered in an eclectic assortment of vintage film posters ranging from Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) to Armand Weston's Sadean porn chic era roughie *The Defiance of Good* (1975) to D.W. Griffith's classic silent era KKK masterpiece *The Birth*

of a Nation (1915), his flat was completely taken over and redecorated by odious twat Omi to the point where only one small corner of a room still contains items from his previous life. At the very beginning of the film, Murphy begins to endure an emotionally debilitating tidal wave of bittersweet nostalgia when he is rudely awakened by a voicemail message notice on his cellphone that was left by his ex-girlfriend Electra's mother Nora (Isabelle Nicouf), who he has not heard from in over two years. The last time Murphy talked to Nora, she yelled at him, "You should be ashamed" and "You destroyed my daughter, my only daughter," so he quite rightly realizes that it is "not a good sign" if she is trying to get in contact with him after two years. When Murphy listens to the voicemail, he hears Nora state in a clearly upset fashion, "I'm sorry to bother you on the first of January but I haven't had news from my daughter in the past two months...and I'm worried...and I know that she was in a suicidal mood. If you can call me, that would be nice. I am very, very worried. Thank you." As the viewer obviously suspects right from the get-go, Love does not have a happy ending.

It has been two years since Murphy foolishly irreparably destroyed his relationship with Electra by recklessly fucking Omi behind her back and getting the bitchy Lolita-like blonde. Murphy probably thought it was OK to cheat on Electra with Omi because the three previously engaged in an intense weed-fueled threesome, but he never suspected that one lousy and seemingly inconsequential fuck session would ultimately destroy both his entire life and relationship. Since she is firmly against abortion because she was herself the product of promiscuity and was thus always resented and looked at as a bad accident by her apparently unloving mother, Omi refused to get an abortion and Murphy suspects that she intentionally got pregnant, even at one point in the film thinking to himself regarding the current state of his miserable life, "I'm sick of this bitch. Go take care of the baby...and leave me alone, please. She tricked me...I know she did. Living with a woman is like sharing a bed with the CIA – nothing's secret. This used to be my apartment. I used to be happy here. It doesn't feel like my place anymore...Always looking over my shoulder now." After receiving the voicemail from Nora, Murphy cannot help but obsessively recollecting the pure passion and ecstasy of his hot and heavy romance with Electra who, quite unlike Omi, was a woman that he truly loved and adored, even if he treated her like shit from time to time and vice versa. In fact, as he incessantly states throughout the film, Murphy still loves Electra and literally prays to god that she will come back to him. As depicted in a flashback scene, Electra once handed him opium and told him, "If something bad happens in your life and I'm not there, it will protect you," so Murphy decides it is a good time to get high on the drug while recalling his sometimes good, equally bad, and at times downright ugly relationship with the one all-time true love of his life. As Murphy's story ultimately reveals, it is always better to suffer pain and heartbreak with someone you love than to endure a sterile and boring existence with someone you don't.

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As one can expect from a Noé flick, *Love* more or less depicts the story of Murphy's relationship with Electra in reverse order, beginning with the beyond bitter breakup as provoked when the lead confessed to his lover that he got another woman pregnant and concluding at the very beginning of their romance when everything seemed magical and immaculate. Like with many intense relationships, Murphy and Electra almost immediately fucked and declared their love for one another not long after meeting on happenstance in a scenic Paris park. While the two made a vow to one another to never let anyone get between them, both of them would eventually break that vow in a number of ways to the point where they eventually even encouraged one another's debauchery, thereupon inevitably destroying their relationship entirely. As depicted in flashbacks, aside from their brief ménage à trios with Omi (who was notably only 15-going-on-16 at the time of their initial threesome), Murphy and Electra also engaged in group sex at a swingers club and even engaged in a threesome with a creepy deep-voiced tranny in a sickening scenario that the protagonist naturally rather regretted to the point where he proclaims that he wishes he could erase it from his mind. Notably, Electra convinced Murphy to get in the three-way tryst with the tranny by absurdly arguing, "It would be a good compromise. Some boobs, some cocks." The sexual dysfunction in their doomed relationship began when Murphy foolishly decided to follow an overtly slutty girl into a bathroom under the pretense of snorting some lines of cocaine, only for the lecherous little lady to whip out a condom instead of coke and then sit on his cock in an all too effortless fashion, as if it was something she had done many times before. Unbeknownst to Murphy, Electra had already cheated on him with her opulent yet borderline physically grotesque gallery owner ex-boyfriend 'Noé' (Gaspar Noé). Indeed, since she is an aspiring painter, Electra thought it would be good for her career to ride the cock of her ex-beau, who originally dumped because, as she states, "He was old, but he wanted younger." Needless to say, when Murphy gets extremely drunk at one of Noé's gallery showings, he decides to confront his nemesis and ultimately breaks a bottle over his head, thereupon messing up the art dealer's preposterous wig in the process. Being a rich pussy who does not have the testicular fortitude to fight back and instead resolves his problems like a welfare queen who considers the government her sugar-daddy, vengeful Noé triumphantly declares to Murphy, "You piece of shit! I'm going to feed you to the cops" and has him arrested. Somewhat humorously, while being questioned about his supposed crimes by a smug four-eyed cop, Murphy justifies his actions by proudly stating, "I'm proud of what I did [...] Fucking France. 1918 was the last time you guys won a war. Since then what have you done? Nothing. Sitting on your asses eating. I'm an American. I'm an American. We fight for what we believe in." Somewhat inexplicably, despite his somewhat rude behavior, Murphy befriends the cop and while the two are sharing a beer at a bar, the policeman reveals that he is just as degenerate as the average stereotypical French

bourgeois pussy by stating, “You’re in France, forget about your American feeling of possession. Of ownership. Of war, of violence. Try to think differently. In the United States...in the ‘60s, you were different. People were loving each other. What’s wrong with going in a club and fucking all the women? Because you know you’ll fuck other women in your life. But you’ll fuck other women behind her back.” Ultimately, Murphy makes the moronic mistake of following the cop’s misguided advice and takes Electra to a swingers club where they engage in lame group sex that only further divides the two lovers. Indeed, for whatever reason, it seems that Murphy and Electra believe that the best way to repair their irreparably broken relationship is by engaging in as much group sex as possible, thus reflecting their badly busted moral compasses and innate incapacity for logical reasoning and personal reflection.

Aside from the fact that the two lovers cannot seem to keep their genitals in their underwear for more than a couple minutes, Murphy and Electra’s romance is further compounded by a vicious cycle of substance abuse that eventually begins to reach self-obliterating proportions. Indeed, after Murphy reveals to Electra that he got Omi pregnant, she reacts hysterically by hooking up with the protagonist’s revoltingly swarthy cocaine-peddling buddy Julio (Juan Saavedra), who takes full advantage of the female protagonist’s glaring vulnerabilities. In fact, Murphy even goes so far as to describe Electra as a “junky,” though he is totally willing to overlook that fact if she somehow comes back to him as clearly indicated at one point in the film where he thinks to himself, “It’s true she was a junky. I would forgive everything. I would always love her...if she would forgive me. Please Electra, come back to me. Come back. Come back. Come back. I want to be in your arms. I want you to hug me. To hold me. Please hug me. Please hold me.” Despite the fact he once stated to her during a fight, “You will never, ever be a good mother. Ever! You’ll never be able to mother a child because you are a venomous cunt,” Murphy’s biggest regret seems to be never having a child with Electra, or as he thinks to himself while on the brink of crying, “She said we could do anything together. But there’s one thing we never did. We never made a baby.” In fact, Murphy curiously named his son Gaspar after the child he originally planned to have with Electra, who wanted to have no less than seven child number because she absurdly felt it was a lucky number (notably, when asked in an interview with uproxx.com about what he felt was the most emotional scene in his film, Noé remarked regarding Murphy’s decision to name his son Gaspar, “...the fact that the guy is mad enough at the girl that they considered having a baby of a particular name and then just two months later he’s giving the same name to someone else, with another girl, I thought that was very cruel. I was shocked by the idea that someone can promise the moon to someone and then be setting the moon to someone else just a few months later. Because the guy pretends he’s sentimental but the guy is not as sentimental as he thinks he is.”). At the very end of the film while sobbing in a bathtub, Murphy

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reaches rock bottom in terms of heartbreak, succumbs to melancholic madness, and dreams of a pregnant Elektra appearing to him. Of course, given the fact that she has suicidal tendencies and once told Murphy that she is more afraid of pain than death and “rather commit suicide” than face it, Elektra is probably already dead and the protagonist knows it. Unlike her previous boyfriends, Murphy was the first man that Elektra truly loved and she even told the protagonist at one point in their relationship that if they ever broke up, she “would probably have to disappear,” which is a promise that she ultimately fulfilled. At the very end of the film while Murphy is all by his lonesome sobbing in a bathtub, his toddler son Gaspar wanders into the bathroom, which only makes the protagonist all the more upset. While embracing his son and crying even more hysterically, Murphy moans, “Gaspar, I’m so sorry. Life is not easy. Someday you’ll understand. Please forgive me. I am lost.” In the end, Elektra and Murphy are depicted embracing in the bathtub, with the former remarking, “Please. Don’t leave me” and the protagonist, “I promise...I will love you until the end.” Of course, the viewer does not doubt that, at least in his own way, Murphy will always love Elektra, even if her body is no more.

Undoubtedly, with its various overly conscious scenes where you can practically imagine auteur Gaspar Noé winking at you, Love becomes downright cringe-worthy and Fremdsham-inducing at various points, especially during a scene where the protagonist declares, “You know what my biggest dream in life is? My biggest dream is to make a movie that truly depicts sentimental sexuality.” In another scene of auterist meta-masturbation, Noé makes it even more apparent that the film is autobiographical when the protagonist declares while more or less pseudo-poetically describing the film’s synopsis, “I want to make movies out of blood, sperm and tears. This is like the essence of life. I think movies should contain that. They should be made of that.” Indeed, in that sense, Love is like Noé’s own strangely sappy semen-soaked equivalent to Woody Allen’s *Annie Hall* (1977) as a shamelessly self-reflexive cinematic work that takes a ‘pornographic’ approach to lovelorn nostalgia. Despite undoubtedly being the director’s most overtly sexually explicit work, the film is also somewhat ironically Noé’s most innately ‘softcore’ and least subversive effort to date, as if he made it as sort of masturbatory experiment in cinematic technique to get some practice in preparation for beginning a more ambitious and highly personalized auteur-driven phase in his career. Certainly one of the most annoying aspects of the film is that it attempts to depict so-called “sentimental sexuality,” yet the characters are far too soulless, immature, and just plain stupid for the viewer to feel even the slightest inkling of empathy for them, even if you’re able to superficially sympathize with certain aspects of their plight, henceforth hinting that Noé is too debauched and emotionally stunted to ever become a great auteur filmmaker. After all, impregnating random underage teenage sluts, getting involved in threesomes with shemales, and hanging out with wealthy ex-lovers are

not very intelligent gambles to make in a relationship if you believe that you have found your soul mate. It seems that even Noé's far-left-wing mother has a more practical view of his talents as a filmmaker as demonstrated in an interview with Dazed Digital where the director stated, "When she was still alive, my mother came with me to Cannes and she enjoyed it [IRREVERSIBLE]. And two years ago, I told her I was going to do a movie that was very sexual (with LOVE). She said, 'No, you're better at violence. You should do another violent movie.' I said, 'No, mum, I want to do a movie about love.' So that's what I did."

A work that is surely pathologically cinephiliac, albeit thankfully not in an obnoxious Tarantino-esque sort of fashion, *Love* pays tribute to various films and filmmakers in a number of ways that makes it quite clear that genuinely Noé loves cinema. Indeed, aside from the fact that the film's protagonist's apartment is covered with vintage posters for films ranging from Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) to Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) to Paul Morrissey's *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973), the flick also features excerpts from John Carpenter's musical score for *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976) and Bobby Beausoleil's score for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972), thus underscoring the fact that the director is not exactly a fan of romance flicks, let alone great master auteurs like Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni, who certainly understood a couple things about the precarious state of love in the post-WWII Occident. Of course, what most of the films Noé pays tribute to have in common is that they take a look at the darker side of sexuality, which is somewhat ironic considering *Love* is quite sexually banal, even if it features the novelty of a 3-D cumshot gloriously exploding on the screen. Notably, in his official Director's Note, which he signed 'Gaspar Julio Noé Murphy' (which is a combination of four of the characters names), the filmmaker stated, "Of all my films, this one is closest to what I have been able to know of existence, and also the most melancholic. And it gives me a lot of pleasure to be able to share this short tunnel of joys and ecstasies, accidents and mistakes." Additionally, in an interview with *Vulture.com*, the filmmaker described *Love* as "my first first-degree movie" and "the closest thing I know to life, and the most personal." Undoubtedly, there is no doubt in my mind that Noé was telling the truth when he described it as his most innately intimate and personal film, thus confirming my suspicion that, not unlike his hero Kubrick, his talents lie in the technical aspects of filmmaking and not in being a highly personal 'auteur.' Surely it is somewhat strange and ironic that Noé—a man whose parents fled from Argentina to France in the 1960s because, as the director stated in an interview with Dazed Digital, "they didn't want to end up in a torture camp"—is at his greatest when making 'fascistoid' films featuring Aryan butchers stabbing swarthy Arabs like in *Carne* (1991) and a man literally bashing in the brains of a sick sadistic faggot that tried to rape his friend like in *Irréversible* (hilariously, Hebraic film critic David Edelstein once wrote, "IRREVERSIBLE might be the most homophobic movie ever made"). Surely, no one would dare to

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describe Love as 'fascistic' or 'homophobic.' In my opinion, Noé's previous films, especially his first two features, are more patently potent than his latest effort because they are visceral and unadulterated expressions of the sort of the natural instincts that his commie parents probably attempted to suppress whereas Love just depicts various forms of soulless debauchery that he and/or his friends have engaged in. Of course, the last thing that Europa (and especially France) needs is more expressions of senseless celluloid sensuality featuring sexually intemperate emotional cripples.

Despite being somewhat like the cinematic equivalent of a sometimes redundant 135-minute fuck session that concludes with a badly botched orgasm where a weak wad of cum drizzles out of your urethra like liquid emerging from a half-clogged eyedropper, Love does feature some simple truths about love and relationships as reflected in its depiction of unflattering irrational behavior and simple remarks from the hapless protagonist like, "Sex when you're in love is the best thing." Indeed, while you can certainly enjoy sex with people who you could care less about, nothing beats the truly transcendental highs of being in a relationship with someone that you both love and are completely sexually compatible with, but of course when things get bad, the lows are equally intense, hence why the protagonist of the film thinks to himself at one point, "How can something so wonderful...bring such great pain? Maybe it's better to never love at all." While I would much rather re-watch Love over its sort of cuck-certified pseudo-intellectual American equivalent *Before Sunrise* (1995) directed by Richard Linklater, I cannot help but feel that Noé's film is a hastily cinematic work that had the potential to be great but is just too damn superficial and pointlessly long, as a film padded with plodding pornography and pointless dialogue, among other things. Undoubtedly, if I am feeling in the mood to watch an idiosyncratic art-porn epic, I would much rather re-watch Curt McDowell's 160-minute piece of mirthfully macabre Gothic melodramatic sexual dysfunction *Thundercrack!* (1975). As the cinematic works of auteur pornographers like Radley Metzger (*The Image*, *The Opening of Mišty Beethoven*) and Lasse Braun (*Body Love*, *French Blue*) surely demonstrate, sensitively stylized artful pornography is nothing new, but of course Noé is well aware of this as demonstrated by his quoting of porn chic era works like the Mitchell Brothers' *Behind the Green Door* (1972) and Weston's *The Defiance of Good* (on top of that, he is proud collector of literary erotica). Additionally, the nihilistic hardcore flicks of Roger Watkins like *Her Name Was Lisa* (1980), *Corruption* (1983), and *Midnight Heat* (1983) make Love like child's play in terms of sheer darkness and grittiness. As someone that believes that, in rare cases, certain forms of pornography can be culturally redeeming and artistically merited in a sort of viscerally transgressive fashion, I have to admit that Noé's film left me somewhat cold and less than impressed and I say that as someone that was genuinely excited about seeing it. Still, in our degenerate post-counterculture age of soul-

less sex and mindless promiscuity, *Love* is somewhat important as a cinematic work that essentially tells a timeless tale as a sort of modern equivalent to classic ancient myths like *Tristan and Isolde* and *Orpheus and Eurydice* where it is demonstrated that love and sexual compatibility are not always enough to sustain a healthy relationship. Indeed, Noé's film might be shallow in certain senses, but it holds more intrinsic truths than both Lars von Trier's *Nymph()*maniac (2013) and *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* combined. Also, unlike von Trier, Noé at least has the gall to show off his own erect cock in the film (when asked in an interview with *Vulture.com* about this, the auteur humorously replied, "When you make a movie, it's like playing a game. It's kind of funny to show your dick to everybody in the country."). While one could argue that flashing his blue-veined custard chucker is symbolic evidence of Noé's propensity towards long-winded artistic masturbation, it is certainly better to be a shameless onanist than a passive and clinical voyeur like von Trier and especially *Kechiche*. Although largely a one-note wonder of cinematic wantonness, *Love* unequivocally demonstrates that Noé completely empathizes with poor lovelorn losers who have an undying craving for a warm cunt that they were quite familiar with at one point in their life, which is a sentiment that any hot-blooded male can identify with. Indeed, I can undoubtedly think of at least one certain otherworldly hole that I would love to jump into right now.

-Ty E

CLIMAX
CLIMAX

Gaspar Noé (2018)

Although Gaspar Noé would probably never admit it, if there is anything that ties all of his films together thematically, it is how they, quite glaringly, depict the pre-apocalyptic decline of the Occident, especially the auteur's adopted homeland of France. In fact, I would argue that Noé is probably the most perfect choice to direct an adaptation of Jean Raspail's classic racial dystopian novel *The Camp of the Saints* (1973)—a surprisingly darkly humorous and even salacious and scatological yet decidedly dejectingly prophetic work that depicts the destruction of Western Civilization via hostile invading third world hordes that are encouraged by ethno-masochistic traitors, nihilists, and resentment-ridden miscegenation victims—but we don't live in a perfect world and thus just have to be satisfied with the auteur's undeniably debasing yet nonetheless delectable works like his latest frenetically fucked dance-hall-horror feature *Climax* (2018) starring an ostensibly eclectic cast of mostly melanin-privileged non-actors of various shades (mostly dark!). Indeed, the film virtually (if not possibly unintentionally) depicts a sort of raunchy racial apocalypse of sorts in a sort of degenerate dance microcosm where sex and drugs lead to irrational race-hate, brutal murder, death of a child, and even grisly suicide, among other uniquely unsavory things that one has come to expect from a Noé flick. By no means Noé's greatest feature (in fact, out of all the director's previous works, his last feature *Love* (2015) is probably the only one that is clearly inferior), the just-over-90-minutes-feature has somewhat ironically received the best reviews of the auteur's careers, as if the terminally 'woke' mainstream film critics missed the glaringly subversive racial subtext (or, even worse and not improbably, they enjoyed seeing a black-majority dance troupe commit quite literally savage hate crimes against mostly innocent whites, including a hot pregnant chick at the hands of a barbaric baldheaded black beastess). In short, as the film's title hints, *Climax* is an allegorical depiction of the French racial climate where all the vices of modern-day frogland—which range from gay pederastic miscegenation to Sapphic promiscuity to (sometimes involuntary) collective drug binges—act as a sort of convergence of social catastrophes that ultimately light the flame of genocidal race hate. Of course, considering this is a Noé flick, this ugly and dejecting material provides for endlessly enthralling and even sometime darkly hilarious material, as if the auteur was attempting to provide indelibly bittersweet therapeutic entertainment with plenty of raw and raunchy razzmatazz for Occidental Armageddon in the form of a quite literal (neo)Danse Macabre on bad psychedelic dope.

Not without good (and quite obvious) reason, 'dance horror' is an almost nonexistent sub-genre with only a handful of entries that include works ranging from Fulci's tastefully tacky *Murder-Rock: Dancing Death* (1984) aka *Slash-dance* to Peter Del Monte's undeservedly obscure *Etoile* (1989) aka *Ballet* (as

well as Aronofsky's obscenely overrated rip-off *Black Swan* (2010)) to Tobe Hooper's somehow watchable dystopian Masters of Horror entry *Dance of the Dead* (2005) to, of course, Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977) and Luca Guadagnino's 2018 remake. Of course, the above mentioned films range from insipid mindless trash to phantasmagorical gothic arthouse-horror, yet none of these cinematic works come even close to *Climax* in terms of seemingly perfectly interweaving dance with narrative and ultra-violence with pathos. A mere five-pages of script stretched out to 97-minutes of perversely pulsating orgasmic audio-visual potency, the film also manages to feel like a virtual filmic dance-of-drug-addled-death, as if the viewer is transported to the the realm of savage sensuality, senseless sadism and spiked sangria that positively pollutes the miserably multicultural blood-sweat-semen-and-urine-drenched dance floor. Additionally, while the film was shot in a mere 15-days, it takes the *Rope* (1948) route in terms of giving the impression that it was shot in a single night via one-take (apparently, the film was apparently actually inspired by the single-shot German film *Victoria* (2015) directed by Sebastian Schipper). As one can be expected from Noé's first feature to actually receive a mere R-rating, it is also his least explicit and arguably most accessible, though it is certainly not his worst and its rather curious racial politics are arguably more subversive than any of the more graphic scenarios from the auteur's arguable magnum opus *Irréversible* (2002) like the 10-minute long take rape of Monica Bellucci or the S&M sod getting his skull literally crushed with a fire extinguisher. In that sense, Noé makes fellow New French Extremity auteur Bruno Dumont—a pedantic (yet undeniably talented) intellectual that cannot help but constantly depict contrived 'white racism' in his films, as if that is some serious problem in the conspicuously cucked continent of Europa—seem like a timid little bitch boy that, despite his ambitious experimental approach to the cinematic form, strangely subscribes to an insufferably banal and ball-less basic bitch narrative when it comes to race, thereupon unfortunately irreparably tainting his entire oeuvre. Instead, the film has more in common with the first three features of Dumont's underrated cinéma du corps superior Philippe Grandrieux, especially the beautifully brutal dance-and-synth-heavy *La Vie nouvelle* (2002) aka *A New Life*.

Undoubtedly, one of the most refreshing things about Noé is that, despite being an arthouse auteur of sorts, he is an inordinately unpretentious filmmaker that has no qualms about exposing his greatest cinematic influences. In fact, as his various films demonstrate, the auteur loves boasting about his personal cinematic favorites and *Climax*—an experimental exercise in both cinematic form and excess that only Noé could have conjured—is certainly no different in that regard. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, there is a shot of a vintage TV that is flanked by various vintage VHS tapes, including copies of Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie*, Fassbinder's *Fox*

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and *His Friends* (1975) and *Querelle* (1982), David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), Pasolini's *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975), Jean Eustache's *The Mother and The Whore* (1973), Argento's *Suspiria* (1977), *Christiane F.* (1981), Jan Kounen's *Vibroboy* (1994), and Gerald Kargl's *Angst* (1983). Noé also apparently intended to include VHS tapes for crucial influences like John Guillermin's *The Towering Inferno* (1974)—a film he credits as having an imperative influence on *Climax*—and Cronenberg's *Shivers* (1975), but he unfortunately did not have copies of these cinematic artifacts. Additionally, the TV is also surrounded by various vintage paperback books, including works ranging from Oscar Wilde's prison 'letter' *De Profundis* (1905) to Georges Bataille's classic (anti)erotic novella *Story of the Eye* (1928) aka *L'histoire de l'œil* to Carlos Castaneda's pseudo-anthropological best-seller *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968) to Patty Hearst's memoir *Every Secret Thing* (1982). Naturally, the auteur's collection also includes some film books, including Lotte H. Eisner's classic text *Murnau* (1973) and Luis Buñuel's short but sweet cinematic memoir *My Last Sigh* (1982), among others. Undoubtedly an eclectic mensch, Noé also displays works by French Enlightenment philosopher Denis Diderot, gay (ex)Surrealist artist Pierre Molinier, French film critic and sometimes filmmaker/Jean Rollin associate Jean-Pierre Bouyxou, Swiss-German writer Fritz Zorn (of the decided downer of an autobiography *Mars* (1977)), Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin and, sadly, Freud. Personally, I was glad to see Noé's collection of works by Teutonic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his all-the-more-cynical virtual spiritual protégé E.M. Cioran. Aside from Nietzsche's classic *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and the study *Nietzsche* (1925) by Austrian Jew Stefan Zweig, Noé curiously displays a copy of the literary forgery *My Sister and I* (1951). Purported to be written in 1889 or early 1890 during Nietzsche's stay in a nut-house in the Thuringian city of Jena, the largely asinine apocryphal text, which reads like an unhinged parody's of the philosopher's writing, probably intrigues the auteur because it alludes to incest and other forms of degeneracy (apparently, David George Plotkin—the son of a rabbi—confessed to ghostwriting the book, which includes a number of obvious factual inaccuracies, including the Teutonic philosopher's unrequited love Lou Andreas-Salomé being described as a "Jewess"). Undoubtedly, in terms of its various imperative cinematic, literary, and philosophical references, *Climax* can be seen as Noé's most overtly fan-boyish work which, in this case, is not a bad thing as he at least has respectable taste that does not involve the fetishization of superheroes or cartoon characters.

It is especially fitting that Noé included a copy of Cioran's *The Trouble With Being Born* (1973) as the Romanian philosopher once described Paris as an "apocalyptic garage," which is a pretty good way to describe the setting of *Climax* (of course, "apocalyptic school turned dance hall" is even more fitting for modern-day France considering the intellectual and racial deterioration of the country).

The film is actually set in abandoned school that resembles some sort of snuff film factory in the largely culturally banal year of 1996 (and very loosely based on true events from that time). Opening with a clearly ironical title that reads “A Proudly French Film” juxtaposed with a French flag that covers the entire screen, the film is so innately and undeniably un-French that the so-called racial minorities are the majority and classic frog stereotypes like elegant romance and intellectual sophistication are completely nonexistent. Indeed, on top of only a couple of the character being actual white indigenous frogs, the majority are negroes who ultimately demonstrate many of the same grotesque negative racial stereotypes as their Afro-American counterparts (rather humorously, many of these black characters express the desire to travel to the United States as if compelled by some atavistic collective unconscious yearning). For example, every single interracial attack involves a negro irrationally brutally assaulting and/or stabbing a white, including an incestuous black brother that brutally beats a white dancer for virtually no reason and then, in a moment of insane (yet all-too-common) irony, accuses him of “racism” and brands his forehead with a poorly drawn swastika. In short, whether by (possibly subconscious) intent or accident, the film unequivocally reveals the true contemporary racial climate of the Occident where indigenous whites are victimized while so-called minorities absurdly play the victim. Indeed, as belated French right-wing theorist Guillaume Faye noted in his penetratingly incisively theoretical swansong *Ethnic Apocalypse* (2019), “Out of sheer resentment, frustrated self-victimization, a decidedly vengeful and vindictive mentality and racism too, many of their members abhor France and long to destroy it from within.” Undoubtedly, the abandoned school setting of *Climax* certainly acts as a microcosm of France, so I don’t think Noé could have missed the grating irony when he opted to open intro to said setting with a large fancy title reading, “A Proudly French Film,” but then again Noé is a drug-addled dude and he might just be depravedly clueless enough to believe such an outstandingly absurd statement. On the other hand, the film also includes a inter-title reading “living is a collective impossibility” after the racial chaos erupts and I doubt that is a coincidence. In short, the film demonstrates that diversity is a disease that metastasizes like a cancer until it breaks down the organic national body.

While I did not realize until after watching it for a second time, *Climax* manages to do the seemingly impossible by being a great film despite not having a single sympathetic or likeable character as if it is set in the real world where most people are not much more than uninteresting meat puppets looking to get fucked by other seemingly uninteresting meat puppets. Indeed, while I would typically like to root for the lone white dude David (Romain Guillermic)—a fairly stereotypical-looking swarthy frog that would be easy to forget in terms of appearance were it not for his curious skinhead-esque wardrobe, which includes a bomber jacket and Dr. Martens boots—I found him to be a fairly

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sleazy, low-class, and loathsome piece of rotten frog excrement and he almost deserves the nonsensical beating from the colored gentleman. Initially, kraut cunt 'Psyché' (Thea Carla Schøtt)—a slightly chubby blonde with a butch dyke hairdo and blank stare that hints at drug-induced psychosis/sociopathy—seems fairly reasonable as she explains how “I don't want to end up like Christiane F” and doesn't want to succumb the same incessant acid-dropping that has apparently consumed her Berlin buddies, but by the end of the film it becomes fairly clear that she is a completely crazed carpet-muncher that senselessly unleashed the LSD nightmare on the unwitting members of her violently 'vibrant' dance troupe. Indeed, as her compatriots are fighting, killing, being sexually reckless, and committing suicide and other forms of self-harm, Psyché manages to spend the entire night dancing her tiny dead cold heart out, though she does piss on the floor at one point in an arguably symbolic scenario that underscores her value and contributions to French society. On top of assumedly spiking the sangria with LSD, Psyché is a total cunt to her pseudo-blonde mystery meat girlfriend Ivana (Sharleen Temple), who rightly tells her “you're so fucking fake” as she is a character that is completely devoid of organic personality and her recklessly venomous spiking of the sangria is in complete contradiction to her interview confession that she left Berlin to escape drug debauchery. Meanwhile, David watches the Sapphic cat fight and rightly remarks to his negro pal 'Omar' (Adrien Sissoko), “Dyke stuff never works. They need cock. Both of them together, fuck it.” In the end, Psyché drops LSD into eye while her girlfriend Ivana cheats on her with arguable lead Selva (played by Sofia Boutella, who is the only real actor in the film). Needless to say, this film does not do much to help the cause of lesbianism, or so-called 'alternative lifestyles' in general, but that is what one has come to expect from a great post-sanity amoralist like Monsieur Noé.

While Hollywood and the grotesque globohomo elites love portraying n-egresses as glamorous 'queens' and other patent absurdities as arguably most insufferably exemplified in Theodore Melfi's tedious historical revisionist turd *Hidden Figures* (2016), *Climax* actually dares to depict a black woman as a brutal beastess of the most primitively evil form via a deathly dark dame named 'Dom' (Mounia Nassangar) who reveals certain sadistic self-control issues that involve attempting to kill unborn white babies. Indeed, in what is one of the more shocking scenes of the film, Dom—a baldheaded brute that might as well have a dick (and surely has a monstrously large clit)—brutally assaults a white chick named 'Lou' (Souheila Yacoub) in form of a couple kicks to her pregnant stomach. Unwillingly to believe that Lou didn't drink the spiked sangria because she is pregnant, Dom not only attempts to give her a virtual abortion via kick-to-stomach, but also gets her negro friends to encourage the scared white girl to kill herself in one of the film's more disturbing scenes that is likely to infuriate any sane racially conscious cracker. Unable able to handle the racial hostility from Dom and her pack of predatory LSD-addled darkie dancers, Lou turns a

knife on herself after initially attempting to fend off her attackers and eventually concludes the film in a bloody hysterical state crawling out of the building into the snow as if being brutally birthed from the fiery cunt of jungle juice hell into the relative safety of cold lonely white death. Of course, not all the interracial encounters are violent, as a fag negro DJ named 'Daddy' (Kiddy Smile)—a large yet goofy and (seemingly) harmless 'black bear' type—reveals a sort of depraved tenderness by deflowering a young gay boy of dubious racial ancestry name 'Riley' (Lakdhar Dridi) that was hoping to have his boy-pussy popped by straight white boy David. As for all the bizarre racial hostilities, they probably could have mostly been avoided were it not for the superlatively sleazy scheming of disgustingly degenerate white Aryan woman Psyché who would have been better suited for her parents' generation as a member of the Baader–Meinhof Gang. Either way, Climax is a film with a cast of apocalyptically cringey characters that inspire absolute aposematism and really underscore the sad (anti)humanist joke that is so-called multiculturalism. As the film (seemingly unintentionally) demonstrates, H.P. Lovecraft was certainly right when he wrote, "Race prejudice is a gift of nature, intended to preserve in purity the various divisions of mankind which the ages have evolved." After all, not a single character in the film would be in the shitty situation they find themselves in were it not for the existence of a Kalgarian Europa; or, anti-Imperium par excellence!

Apparently, I am not the only one that noticed the film's rather savage racial (sub)text, as a dumb twat that writes neo-commie claptrap for Yahoo Movies UK bitched in regard to the film, "Noe has said he wanted to show the regression of human nature, and CLIMAX does that, but in doing so he's made black people look like the most violent and primitive race, and that's the hardest thing about this movie to watch. It feels like an ugly step backwards when in recent years we've seen a cinematic movement to show the beauty of black culture which has served to ameliorate a faux image forced upon its people." Of course, as this racially dubious lobotomized little lady fails to realize, all crime stats (not to mention good old-fashioned common sense) demonstrates that the film is completely accurate in terms of depicting the color of crime and race hate on the street level, especially in France where Africans and Arabs mostly excel in extralegal excesses and good visceral ultra-violence, among other things that the French media and culture elite do their darnedest to cover up (in fact, in the French Republic, it is even illegal to perform census in regard to racial and religious background). Surely, it is hard to imagine that average white French woman brutalizing the pregnant belly of a bulbous black beauty, but I digress. Needless to say, the French have certainly forgotten the hard lessons of the so-called Haitian Revolution (aka 'colonial Caribbean frog genocide'). Had Noé gone the Hollywood-esque Bizarro World route and depicted an anti-reality dance floor of the damned where black scientists were preyed on by pretty-faced white boys in the same vein as kosher-certified crap like The Purge franchise, he would no

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longer be an artist and instead a spiritual eunuch-cum-whore that worships lies over truth like so many Tinseltown hacks. Needless to say, when Noé recently confessed that he hated the unintentionally absurd Afrocentric Marvel abortion Black Panther (2018)—a movie based on a comic book superhero that, not coincidentally, was sired from completely kosher, as opposed to colored, minds—and had to “escape the cinema after 20 Minutes” partly due to it being plagued with R&B music, all the usual suspects accused him of racism, thereupon confirming that Hollywood has finally indoctrinated enough mentally feeble automatons that aesthetic taste is now completely irrelevant and even denying liking big budget celluloid shit can cause you to be seen as a virtual thought criminal among the moronic mainstream.

Not long after first seeing *Climax* for the first time, I had the grand unexpected pleasure of wallowing in Marcel Carné’s coldly romantic masterpiece *Port of Shadows* (1938) aka *Le quai des brumes*. Despite featuring a number of dark elements, including art fag suicide, sexual exploitation, and a decidedly dejecting (yet nonetheless quite fitting) ending where a beautiful fresh young love affair is swiftly annihilated after the male lover is coldly gunned down like a rabid dog in the streets, Carné’s film contains a certain hope and romance that Noé’s nihilistic danse macabre is completely devoid of, thus underscoring the complete and utter spiritual degeneration of France as a whole. Indeed, had a fire broken out and every single character burned alive while screaming in great agony, it would still be impossible to care for the lost souls and miscreants of *Climax*—a film that is only orgasmic in the same way as a Viagra-driven moneyshot in a cheap contemporary fuck flick is. In short, Noé has his finger on the pulse of frogland, but there seems to be no heartbeat.

Notably, in his penetratingly incisively theoretical swansong *Ethnic Apocalypse*, Guillaume Faye argues, “Just like a baby viper that breaks its egg shell, the coming racial civil war is only in its humble beginnings [...] The responsibility for this ethno-racial civil war, which has already been kindled, will be borne by our political, intellectual and mediatic elites and a statal apparatus that have conjointly been tolerating and enabling this colonizing immigrational flooding for a period of forty years. But remember—he who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.” Far from deserving to reap some sort of whirlwind, Noé, quite unlike any other modern-day French-language filmmaker, has consistently created films that are viscerally symptomatic of an innately sick and increasingly racially anarchic society that act as cinematic canary in a coal mine of sorts for a dystopian future that arguably can be seen as a sort of Haitian Revolution 2.0, albeit Islamic and more morbidly multiculti. I just hope that the auteur, not unlike his family emigrating from their native Argentina to France in 1976, manages to flee frogland before it is too late lest he experience something à la *The Camp of the Saints* that make the scenarios in *Climax* seem like good-humored child’s play. Rather unfortunately, not unlike the characters in Noé’s film, it

seems there are very few places to run as globalization, reverse colonialism, and anarcho-tyranny has already engulfed most of the West.

In one of his most impossibly poetic aphoristic scribbles, Friedrich Nietzsche—a painfully introverted mad man that was probably too shy and timid to dance—declared in regard to the seemingly otherworldly quality of dance, “What a host of things can be accomplished by the state of intoxication which is called by the name of love, and which is something else besides love!—And yet everybody has his own experience of this matter. The muscular strength of a girl suddenly increases as soon as a man comes into her presence: there are instruments with which this can be measured. In the case of a still closer relationship of the sexes, as, for instance, in dancing and in other amusements which society gatherings entail, this power increases to such an extent as to make real feats of strength possible: at last one no longer trusts either one’s eyes, or one’s watch! Here at all events we must reckon with the fact that dancing itself, like every form of rapid movement, involves a kind of intoxication of the whole nervous, muscular, and visceral system. We must therefore reckon in this case with the collective effects of a double intoxication.—And how clever it is to be a little off your head at times! There are some realities which we cannot admit even to ourselves: especially when we are women and have all sorts of feminine ‘pudeurs.’ . . . Those young creatures dancing over there are obviously beyond all reality: they are dancing only with a host of tangible ideals: what is more, they even see ideals sitting around them, their mothers! . . . An opportunity for quoting FAUST. They look incomparably fairer, do these pretty creatures, when they have lost their head a little; and how well they know it too, they are even more delightful because they know it! Lastly, it is their finery which inspires them: their finery is their third little intoxication. They believe in their dressmaker as in their God: and who would destroy this faith in them? Blessed is this faith! And self-admiration is healthy! Self-admiration can protect one even from cold! Has a beautiful woman, who knew she was well-dressed, ever caught cold? Never yet on this earth! I even supposed a case in which she has scarcely a rag on her.”

Of course, in *Climax* a dancer crawls in the cold as she bleeds out and a darkie danseur even freezes to death, which is quite fitting as Noé’s nasty little celluloid dance number feels like the sardonically vengeful ghost of Cioran ruthlessly raping his one-time-hero Nietzsche’s inordinately elegant words, though these characters would be caught by what might be charitably described as a ‘triple intoxication’ and it is hardly of the relatively wholesome sort Nietzsche alludes to. Undoubtedly a film with a deceptively simple title that inspires many meanings, *Climax*—an oftentimes uncomfortably captivating cinematic work that is certainly not the Nietzschean ideal of Dionysian yet Dionysian nonetheless—depicts the last gasp of the Occident in a maniac microcosm where Mother Africa quite literally delivers a blow to a pregnant France (carrying, rather fittingly, a literal bastard) and where there is not white man to provide the white

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women the appropriate dance 'intoxication' (in that sense, the degenerate ghetto dance numbers are quite apt as they allegorically express the aesthetically and culturally debauched state of France as a whole). After all, as Noé once said himself, "all history is written in sperm and blood." In the end, it will not just be France and its indigenous white population that are swallowed up by the multiculti nightmare, but eventually everyone and everything just like virtually every single character in the film. Until then, one can only hope that Noé continues to devour drugs and and remember that, "one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star."

-Ty E

PRIDE AND GLORY

Gavin O'Connor (2008)

Pride and Glory had fallen into a miniature release date pothole. Its release was originally planned to be March but was later pushed back to October 2008. It might have been worth the wait depending on how critical you are towards cop drama's. It isn't a film that breaks barriers down or exceeds its own limitations but nestles snugly into what it calls a home within the universe of corrupt cops. If you want a cast perfectly executed within each others own acting abilities, go elsewhere. Jon Voight is still playing the same character he did in National Treasure. Edward Norton serves as that detective who accidentally killed someone or something and is pushing his pension as a desk jockey. This isn't elaborated a bit as to why he's so "tortured" but most of this film is just go-with-it material. He originally was planned as star power but I guess several of his fuses are blown. It's ironic that Norton can play the most bewildered archetypes on the screen but cannot play a cop - the easiest role to portray. Colin Farrell's performance is the best in the film and is only tampered with by his "family man" side which nulls out most of the previous depravity him and his precinct have spent building up. Sporting a blazing accent with the city gestures and true to life cop look, he is easily the most believable character. A scene to look out for - Colin Farrell threatening to torture a minority's baby with a scalding hot iron. True cinematic menace rarely seen in a Hollywood film, and this is yet another reason why this film excels in some departments. Scribe Joe Carnahan writes the dull script for Pride and Glory. You may know this man from the explosive Narc and Smokin' Aces. It's a damn shame that he didn't put forth more effort into the film which could have been the Training Day of 2008. The film cleverly separates the extreme brutality towards minorities with inane "family" dialogue that challenges any attention span. This is definitely a chore to sit through a runtime of two hours and thirteen minutes. Pride and Glory wishes to set itself up as the next crime drama to depict extreme violence with a staggering dramatic edge, forcing tears to be shed and relationships to be challenged. While the film debuts a horrifying and gripping end, it's not enough to save most of us from the incredibly challenging scenes. The end justifies the means as minorities "get back" at the horrible racists by way of baseball bats which is the epilogue of a race riot. Names are rarely introduced which leads to massive confusion and names such as Eddie, Sandy, Kimmy, Ray, and Pa are tossed around like a football, which brings round to the false patriotic contexts the title provokes within your imagination. Pride and Glory would love to entertain you, but first you must suffer through never-ending "developmental" scenes.

-mAQ

ANTICLIMAX
ANTICLIMAX

Gelsen Gas (1969)

Aside from Alejandro Jodorowsky (*Fando y Lis*, *El Topo*), Raphael Corkidi (*Angels and Cherubs*, *Pafnucio Santo*), and Juan López Moctezuma (*Alucarda*, *The Mansion of Madness*), Gelsen Gas (née Angel Sánchez Gas) was another subversive, if not lesser known, auteur with a special knack for surrealism who helped to revolutionize Mexican cinema, yet he ultimately only directed one film, *Anticlimax* (imdb gives the year 1973 but apparently it was made in 1969), during his entire filmmaking career thus making him sort of an enigma of cine Mexicano. Although Gas never directed another film, he did produce and star in the documentary short *Robarte el arte* (1972) directed by Juan José Gurrola, which documents a journey where he, the director, and Brazilian pianist Arnaldo Cohen went to Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany to steal a work of art. Undoubtedly, Gas' act of theft gives you a good idea of his mentality as a renegade filmmaker from south of the border, with his fittingly titled work *Anticlimax* reflecting the auteur's revolutionary and even criminal essence as an artist. Written by Luis Urias (who appeared in Jodorowsky's *Fando y Lis* and did art design for *The Holy Mountain*), shot by auteur/cinematographer Rafael Corkidi, and featuring a charming, if not all too brief, cameo from Jodorowsky, Gas' film is undoubtedly a dream collaboration created by the best Mexican filmmakers of the time and it is certainly as brazenly bizarre as it sounds. Directed by an iconoclastic poet Renaissance man of sorts who has worked in virtually every single artistic medium (he is best known for his paintings, including his tribute to Belgian surrealist artist René François Ghislain Magritte, 'Homenaje a Magritte' (1969), and his self-portrait 'Autogelsen' (1971)) and is even an inventor of some distinction (he invented the 'Hemifrontis', which is a radiator made out of volcanic rock, among various other things), *Anticlimax*—a black-and-white work that is virtually silent aside from some surrealist poetry spoken by an off-screen narrator—has more aesthetically in common with the early cinematic experiments of Luis Buñuel (whose influence on Mexican counter-culture is probably greater than anyone else) and Dada artists like Hans Richter, Man Ray, and Marcel Duchamp than the films associated with Jodorowsky and the Panic Movement yet the film is distinctly Mexican in character as a sort of esoteric absurdist response to modernity, including the rise of the Mexican middleclass and importation of American materialism. A multi-medium film by a multi-medium artist, *Anticlimax* features Gas' abstract sculptures, paintings, and poetry as encountered by a vassal-like protagonist who tries in vain to bring meaning to a life without meaning as a servile individual who is unwittingly imprisoned in an increasingly technocratic world of industrialization, urbanization, overpopulation, militarization, and crappy brainwashing TV shows. The closest thing to a 'Mexican Eraserhead' (of course, being set in a third world, things

are not quite post-industrial yet); the film utilizes cinematic haikus to express disillusionment with the political, cultural, and sexual repression of that time. Indeed, starting production about a year after the Tlatelolco massacre (aka 'The Night of Tlatelolco') when the military killed upwards of hundreds of students protesting the 1968 Olympics and released just a year before American and European rock music was outlawed in Mexico due to its purported degenerative powers, *Anticlimax* is also a 'left-wing' work that somehow manages not to be repugnant or preachy as it is far too wacky and idiosyncratic to back any sort of concrete political cause and is thus best looked at as containing a singularly wayward *Weltanschauung* that transcends traditional political philosophies which is semi-esoterically disseminated by the Gas Man via symbols, sounds, and editing rhythm.

Beginning with sinister laughter off-screen and an image of a muscular man in a speedo juxtaposed with the narrated words "Gelsen Gas...because I'm alive," *Anticlimax* immediately expresses a sense of third world dime-store psychedelia when the title floats across the screen as if it were inside a lava lamp, but that soon ends in the next scene where a man digs up old film canisters in the middle of a desert. Indeed, Señor Gas has unearthed a film for you from the bottom of his subconscious that is as nihilistic as it is strangely goofy. The protagonist of the film is a young middleclass man named Gonino who seems to be fairly vacant when it comes to a personality, but he has the drive to make it as an architect, inventor, and mass consumer. At the beginning of the film, Gonino leaves his apartment and asks a chubby cop (as aquatic bubble noise is played in the background, with strange sounds being quite prominent in the film, which is further accentuated by songs by French avant-garde composer Pierre Henry) for directions, but the officer points him in the wrong direction and he runs into a pack of pesky Mestizo schoolchildren exercising who somehow morph into a flock geese. After going back to the cop and getting the right directions this time, Gonino ends up in a building packed with automaton-like workers and grotesque sculptures where he is given a job. The protagonist is hired by a man sitting at a translucent floating desk and surrounded by jagged sculpture who tells the new employee that his benefit package is as follows: "4500 to start with. Two weeks off in August. 3 courses in the processing area. Information verification and speed reading. Meals in the cafeteria: carb controlled." After leaving his new job site, Gonino takes a public bus and stares at the voluptuous thighs of a naughty nurse while a bloated Mestizo boy salivates while looking inside the skirt of an obese woman who is trying in vain to cover up her nasty bits. Late-1960s Mexico must have turned into modern day America overnight, as Gonino ends up going to a food stand where he dishes out \$3 a hotdog, which he opts for cutting up into small pieces instead of eating. While playing with his wieners, the film's (non)hero also catches sight of three Mexican military officers speaking German (of course, this is a cliché allusion to fascism). After spotting

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a sign that reads "Check Your Weight," one of the officers gets up and weighs himself on a fancy scale and being a fat ass, he probably does not like what he sees. After getting done grinding his Frankfurter into what looks like vomit, Gonino is picked up by his friend (whose car has an anatomically correct bull decal on the back, with cock and balls and all) and heads to a hip party (shot at Mexican artist/artisan Feliciano Béjar's real house) where a little girl pops out of a fridge, various people ballroom dance, a woman attempts to perform fellatio on a painting (the place is covered with a number of modernist works of art), a poet writes poetry, a flamboyant fellow performs ballet, and a fur-coat-sporting Alejandro Jodorowsky sits with a hot chick on a couch.

After the party, all the fun ends and Gonino must accept his new life as another cog in a corporation machine. After having a salacious dream of a busty babe's ass being repeatedly flogged, Gonino wakes up and begins working on some architecture blueprints. After the protagonist goes to work at a hellish construction site, an off-screen narrator reads the following roughly translated words: "I have collected words, words. Useless sounds from dogs as our souls are kicked. Useless accusations against those who operate our happiness in mechanical calculators. In public they reveal our innermost secrets, in magnetophones, in filters where the secret noises of love is taped. We rip out each other's eyes, just because, because it's dark. In this world, petrified like fish eyes, we neither come nor go. We're only sustaining the disease of the universe." From there, an image of a black African baby suckling on his mother's nipple is shot with a shotgun, with a bullet going directly through the eye of the impoverished negro child. Back at his new job at the factory, Gonino begins designing white roses, which are magically mass produced with mechanical machinery. Gonino has been assigned to work with a guy named Gonzalo, who stresses the need for the flowers to be absolutely perfect, as if they can somehow do a better job than Mother Nature when creating roses. From there, we see a series of intentionally redundant scenes of Gonino doing the same things over and over again (i.e. walking to work, working, walking home, watching TV). Gonino's new salary has certainly turned him into a good little mass consumer as he throws hundreds upon hundreds of cans of food in a shopping cart while in a grocery store and purchases everyone of them. Indeed, the protagonist's overabundance of food seems to be making him a little bit crazy as he nihilistically opens hundreds of cans of food just to play with the contents, as if he is an inquisitive child. At the office, Gonino ends up developing a fetish for paper airplanes, especially during the most busy moments of the work day. For about the final 1/3 of the film, *Anticlimax* is comprised of a variety of spacey dream-sequences that begin with the introduction of a beautiful babe frolicking around ancient ruins that are covered with creepy baby dolls in weird poses. Gonino meets this little lady later that night and they carry a gigantic crucifix together to a curious church where Jesus Christ is on display in a jail cell. The next day, the two lovebirds travel to an

amusement park where they 'ride' inanimate rides and the girl matter-of-factly remarks that, "everything is mechanical." After briefly going to an art museum, Gonino goes by himself to a patent office where he gets a strange and seemingly worthless invention patented by a secretary wearing a classic wedding dress. Gonino and his girlfriend end up getting married at a fancy Catholic church and an archetypical Mexican 'Lucha libre' wrestler in the tradition of El Santo (who was also a popular film actor and folk icon) sporting a cape and mask wraps a noose around both of their necks in a rather symbolic scene. From there, the newlywed couple has sex and eats forbidden fruit in a seemingly magical forest where wayward mirrors cover the trees. Eventually, the lovers get lost in a room full of mirrors and without gravity where they crawl up the walls and ceiling. Towards the conclusion of the film, a number of people led by a man pushing a friend in a wheelchair attempt to walk on water but merely sink. The people in the water eventually salute Gonino and his wife as they embrace. In the end, it is revealed that Gonino's story was merely a film played in a movie theater, thus *Anticlimax* ends quite anticlimactically as advertised.

While black-and-white and featuring none of the fiercely flamboyant pageantry typical of Jodorowsky and Corkidi's films from the same era, *Anticlimax* is certainly just as important and innovative as auteur Gelsen Gas' cinematic compatriot's work. Indeed, while Corkidi's oeuvre focuses on Mexico's dark history, Gas' film is a work that wallows mostly in the contemporary, even if it does feature references to the pagan past and the stranglehold of Catholicism, as it includes important iconic scenes from three different city centers that reflect the modernization of the third world nation: Celanese Corporation tower on Avenida Revolución (in Tijuana, Baja California, México), Ruta de la Amistad (a monument featuring 22 large sculptures created just before the 1968 Summer Olympics to serve as permanent markers of the event in the landscape of Mexico City), and new Periferico highway (which is featured prominently in a scene where Gonino's friend picks him up). The film is also notable for being one of only a handful of totally independent Mexican films shot on 35mm film stock. Ultimately, *Anticlimax* seems like the relatively successful cinematic experiment of an (anti)modernist Mexican artist that was fed a steady diet of Buñuel flicks, Dadaist art, and silent comedies by Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton who considered making a psychedelic film but was far too cynical and sardonic to make a work about such banalities as drugs and free love, so he opted for making a wicked and whimsical work that not only slaughters every sacred cow of modernity, but also deconstructs cinema as an artistic medium as a highly reflexive piece of celluloid that begins with film reels being unearthed from a desert and concludes revealing that the entire film is a fabrication that has been projected in a movie theater. A trying celluloid trip that might prove to be a rather bad one for less enterprising filmgoers, *Anticlimax* is playfully pernicious cinematic poetry with bite that does not betray the viewer in terms of constantly bom-

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barding them with a variety of images and gestures that demonstrate a decided disdain for the modern world and all its abstract mechanical intricacies. Set in a technocratic 'fasco-capitalist' dystopia where dieting is dictated by employers and even fast food restaurants, Xerox copies are considered just as authentic as originals, flowers are manufactured as opposed to naturally grown, consumerism has become the new state religion, and—arguably, most interestingly—cinema is more captivating than real-life, *Anticlimax* is ultimately a ruthless revolution in cinematic form that spares no prisoners and proves that a relatively unknown Mexican filmmaker understood over four decades ago that the entire world, including the third world, would be devoured by American hegemony, spiritual degeneration, and inflated hotdog prices.

-Ty E

ROMPER STOMPER

Geoffrey Wright (1992)

Romper Stomper is a great film because it lacks the in your face moral preaching often found in films of this nature. The film is like an update of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* with a bizarre Neo-Nazi love triangle attached to it. I much rather prefer a film that shows skinheads committing acts of violence for fun than having some impotent mentor enlightening the world that having hate in your heart is bad. I have always loved *A Clockwork Orange* because it attacks both sides of the political spectrum. *Romper Stomper* doesn't even really attempt to go into politics (unless you count beating up Vietnamese as being political).

Russell Crowe (before he became a gladiator and schizo) stars as the vicious and sociopath Hando. His right hand man is Davey, a Neo-Nazi skinhead with a soft and loving side. The actor who played Hando, Daniel Pollock, committed suicide by throwing himself in front of a train before the theatrical release of *Romper Stomper*. He was also a heroin addict and romantically involved with co-star Jacqueline McKenzie. His break-up with McKenzie sparked his unfortunate death. *Romper Stomper* features pulsating Oi! style skinhead music with naughty racial slurs. Apparently you have to kick someone if he's yellow. Recently Australia publicly apologized for the wrongs done against the indigenous aborigines people. One might expect more racial tensions and *Romper Stomper* style skinheads on that glorified island. A Hitler's youth knife saves the day in *Romper Stomper* during the film's climatic conclusion. A young and budding skinhead takes a bullet in the same area of his head where Charles Manson has his immortal swastika. *Romper Stomper* has enough brutal violence to satisfy the most sadistic of film fans. The film surpasses the curb stomping action found in the heavily edited *American History X*. The original *American History X* intended to feature Giuseppe Andrews (as a surfer skinhead) harassing a homeless black woman. I much prefer to see that than Edward Norton taking unwelcome darts in a cold shower. *Romper Stomper* is a powerful and brutal film. A film that will stir you up with emotions that contact the most archaic of human instincts. *Romper Stomper* may not be most complex film (nor should it be), but it grabs you in its beginning and destroys you by its end. Few films have that kind of power. May Daniel Pollock rest in peace.

-Ty E

SUKKUBUS – DEN TEUFEL IM LEIB
SUKKUBUS – DEN TEUFEL IM LEIB

Georg Tressler (1989)

As someone who is quite fond of the Teutonic mysticism of the mostly forgotten and often stigmatized German Mountain (bergfilme) of the 1920s and 1930s, I am always interested in seeing contemporary takes on the mostly forgotten film genre. Obsessive Scandinavian-Canadian auteur Guy Maddin (*Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, *My Winnipeg*) was somewhat artistically prosperous in his noble attempt at paying tribute to the Mountain film – albeit in a most absurdly and sardonically satiric fashion – with his work *Careful* (1992); a film that managed to bring oedipal incest and a kaleidoscope of charismatic colors to the typically morally pristine and black-and-white genre. The modern German movie *North Face* (2008) directed by Philipp Stölzl (*Baby*, *Young Goethe in Love*) was also an interesting contemporary take on the Mountain film, notwithstanding the blatant and clichéd ethno-masochistic message tacked on at the conclusion. Undoubtedly, one of the most outlandish, original, and sensational post-WW2 takes on the Mountain film is *Sukkubus – den Teufel im Leib* (1989) aka *Sucubus – Devil in the Flesh* directed by Georg Tressler; a Vienna-born auteur who previously assembled works ranging from Nicholas Ray-inspired teenage drama flicks (*Teenage Wolfpack*) to episodes for Walt Disney's *Wonderful World of Color* (*The Magnificent Rebel*) to trashy yet tempting science-fiction sex comedies (*2069: A Sex Odyssey*). With his last major film (the director would end his filmmaking career in the undignified realm of TV-movies) *Sukkubus* – unlike with many of his previous Hollywood-inspired films – Tressler got more in tune with his Germanic roots by deriving it on the myth of the "Sennentuntschi"; a tale about a doll that morphs into an evil and vengeful female demon that was traditionally told throughout the German-speaking Alps (from Bavaria to Switzerland), but was most popular on the Swiss side of the mountain, which also happens to be the setting of the film. Set in the early 19th century on a remote slope high up on the Swiss Alps, *Sukkubus* opens with the following 'fairly tale' introduction, "A Swiss legend tells of three herdsmen who let themselves in for the powers of evil and were punished gruesomely for their outrage." Such generalized and less than detailed words offer a frank but (thankfully) understated hint as to the oddly eccentric and equally exploitative yet classically atmospheric (at least in the German Mountain sense) essence of *Sukkubus*; probably the world's only German Mountain-Horror hybrid and one of Germany's few decent post-WWII horror films.

Admittedly, my initial interest in *Sukkubus* came from the fact that German absurdist auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel (*Terror 2000*, *Mutters Maske*) acted as the assistant director for the film. Indeed, although the *Sukkubus* seems like it could have only been sporadically directed by Schlingensiefel, it does feature some sprinklings of exquisite exploitation, sneering sexual perversity, and a risqué roast

of German kultur. Sukkubus centers around three very divergent peasant herds-men: Senn (Peter Simonischek); the stoic and notably Aryan leader of the threesome who seems to be in his mid-30s, Hirt (Giovanni Früh); a slothful and sexually degenerate fellow who has a proclivity towards Schnapps and young boys despite being middle-aged, and Hüterbub (Hüterbub); a thirteen year old boy who – aside from deriving great satisfaction from the dubious act of having his favorite cow “Bruni” lick salt from his body – seems like a rather normal, if often petrified, lad. After a night of indulging in one of the Germanic people’s greatest vices (aka alcohol), the two elder men decide to build a primitive sex doll out of an odd face-shaped root found by the boy in a cave. To their ecstatic and intoxicated amazement, the rather dull woodpile morphs into a voluptuous lassie’s ass, thus beginning the ferocious fecund curse in seemingly female form that plagues the three sexually-repressed fellows for the rest of the film. Swarthy but also stunning and alluring in appearance, the female apparition more resembles the Salome of Christian folklore than the sort of statuesque Nordic beauty one would expect to be living on the mountaintop. While also protecting themselves from the unclad succubus (played by Pamela Prati of Umberto Lenzi’s *Ironmaster* and Andrea Bianchi’s *Io Gilda*), the three men also battle each other, as well as the hallucinations brought upon their own wandering minds due to living in abject isolation. Needless to say, Sukkubus is far from being as holy as Arnold Fanck’s *Holy Mountain* (1926) nor as aesthetically delectable as Leni Riefenstahl’s *The Blue Light* (1932), but it does keep up with the tradition of metaphysical Germanic mysticism typical of the Mountain film genre, albeit in a manner also palatable to culturally unrefined horror fans.

Considering that Switzerland is the nation that produced “Aryan Christ” (or so he was once dubbed by one of his most determined detractors) Carl Gustav Jung – the German-Swiss man who coined the phrase “collective unconscious” (a collective, impersonal unconscious of archetypes inherited by members of the same race) – it is most fitting that Sukkubus – *den Teufel im Leib*, a work of atavistic-exploitation cinema, would be set in the same country. It should also be noted that the dialect of German spoken in the film is an idiosyncratic mix of German and German-Swiss, thus lending a certain cultural authenticity to the film that further compliments its austere Alpine atmosphere. Indeed, like the vintage German Mountain films, the setting itself of Sukkubus gives off the feeling that something that is omniscient is foreboding within the mountains, but what makes Georg Tressler’s hodgepodge horror work different is that nature and bare-skin become nefarious as opposed to rapturous, and as a consequence, the film acts in direct opposition to the sanctified view of the natural outdoors held by prominent völkisch movements (Wandervogel and National Socialists), artists (Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach, Fidus, Ivo Saliger) and thinkers (Hermann Hesse, C.G. Jung) during the early twentieth century throughout the German-speaking world. Of course, being of a deliberately debauched and sex-

SUKKUBUS – DEN TEUFEL IM LEIB

ually suggestive nature (e.g. cow milk mimicking cum) throughout, Sukkubus is a work that is more likely to inspire erotomania than ideas of lebensreform among viewers.

-Ty E

SEASON OF THE WITCH

George A. Romero (1973)

George A. Romero has made more failures than successes. Aside from the first three dead movies and Creepshow, I can't say that I am big fan of Romero's films. Season of the Witch is one of Romero's early "experimental" films dealing with a woman that has decided to both cheat on her husband and become a witch. The middle aged house wife protagonist has succumb to the activities of the younger generations (her daughter's) "sexual liberation" era. Season of the Witch is a woman's liberation film disguised as a horror film. This film takes cues from Federico Fellini's Juliet of the Spirits and the realist films of John Cassavetes. George A. Romero experiments with various dream sequences that look like a parody of some hippie's late 1960s college student film. Season of the Witch is an ambitious film that fails embarrassingly. Romero made the right choice when he decided to stay engulfed in the horrid world of mainstream horror (he could be king!). The mainstream critics love to flaunt about the genius of George A. Romero because of the assumed liberal messages in his various films. Whether he is making a joke about a group of shotgun blasting rednecks or showing the courage of a brave woman, Romero is delivering messages (whether consciously or subconsciously) that they want you to hear. His films generally feature a courageous woman and a nonwhite male as heroes. The "crazies" and power hungry psycho's are always aggressive white males (Romero's biggest fear?). The zombies are never the biggest threat as most deaths occur due to the consequences of human conflict. The truth of the matter is (whether Romero wants to believe it or not) that rednecks would be the best mortal opponents of the zombie. Romero needs a reality check. Of course Season of the Witch incorporates elements of psychoanalysis in the form of a pretentious community college professor (telling the housewife of her hidden desires for him). This young "kid" is incapable of taming the feisty witch housewife. Free love has its emotional consequences. I really couldn't imagine a grown man interested in directing a film about a housewife gone heretic. It makes you wonder if Romero's soul is that of a sexually frustrated middle aged woman. Season of the Witch features maybe 10 minutes of what could be considered horror. The average horror fan might contemplate suicide before finishing this mess that should have stayed "lost." Over the years I have become less and less interested with the work of George A. Romero. Night of the Living Dead and Dawn of the Dead are films that changed the way I looked at the horror film. Now I wonder if those films just had all the right variables to add up for accidental zombie masterpieces.

-Ty E

MARTIN
MARTIN

George A. Romero (1976)

The older I get, the less tolerant I am regarding the films of ‘the people’s horror auteur’ George A. Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*), as nothing seems less cinematically unappetizing to me than ‘socially conscious’ left-wing horror films, which the iconic horror filmmaker is almost singlehandedly responsible for sinisterly spawning like an out-of-control monster as if it was one of his filmic zombies. Indeed, it has been nearly three decades since Romero even made a halfway decent film, with the troubled production *Day of the Dead* (1985) being the last film that he made that I could stomach without feeling like I was being bombarded with populist leftist celluloid flesheater feces of the superlatively superficially satirical sort. In fact, as far as I am concerned, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Martin* (1976), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Knightriders* (1981), *Creepshow* (1982), and *Day of the Dead* (1985) are the only Romero flicks that did not make me feel totally embarrassed by Romero’s calculating cinematic counter-culture redundancies. The director’s closest thing to an ‘arthouse’ flick aside from his totally unwatchable early celluloid abortions—*There’s Always Vanilla* (1971) and *Hungry Wives* (1972) aka *Season of the Witch*—*Martin* aka George A. Romero’s *Martin* aka *Wampyr* is also probably Romero’s most artistically and intellectually ambitious celluloid to date. In fact, Romero himself regards *Martin* as his personal favorite of his own films, which is a notable sentiment on his part considering he could easily cop-out and name one of his most popular and influential works like *Night of the Living Dead* or *Dawn of the Dead* as his fave. Although I would not describe it as his greatest film, *Martin* is certainly Romero’s most subversive and ‘interesting’ work as a vampire flick that delicately deconstructs and distorts, mischievously molests, and radically reinvents the horror subgenre it pays a sort of reluctant homage to. Indeed, as a vampire flick that is lacking in romanticism and is mostly aesthetically revolting, decidedly dreary, and ultimately quite cynical, *Martin* is a rare bloodsucker flick for both people that love and loathe the subgenre. Clearly influencing homocore poof Bruce LaBruce zombie flicks *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People* (2008) and *L.A. Zombie* (2010) in its teasing thematic ambiguity in regard as to whether the protagonist is actually a member of the undead or not, *Martin* is a strikingly singular vampire flick in that the bloodsucking lead is a patently pathetic and decidedly dorky zit-faced teenage turd who could not even glamour a blind midget with Down syndrome if he tried, thus opting for drugging them college frat boy style instead and feeding on them while they are unconscious, thus taking all of the fun out of being a vampire. Featuring a vampire who, instead of living in an ancient castle, squats at the humble home of his granduncle—a pissed and perturbed yet articulate old fart who suffers from a murderous case of Sanguivoriphobia—in the postindustrial wasteland that is Pittsburgh, PA, Mar-

tin is probably the only bloodsucker movie where the vampire is a delusional fellow who has no fangs and slits his victim's wrists with a razor so as to slurp up their vital fluids. A demystifying depiction of a degenerate pseudo-Dracula that simultaneously portrays Catholic 'true believers' as the most pernicious of perverted minds and a murderous teenager as misunderstood and angst-ridden young man who is a nasty and nihilistic product of his spiritually backwards background, *Martin*—arguably more than any other films of the horror subgenre—if nothing else cinematically significant, manages to suck all of the life out of the vampire mythos.

A would-be-Dracula wuss of a young man named Martin Mathias (John Amplas) is on a train heading from Indianapolis to Pittsburgh and since he is somewhat insane, he believes he is a vampire of sorts, so he injects some poor young lady with a debilitating dose of dope, slits her wrist, feeds on her blood, and leaves her to bleed out. Awkward as an ugly duckling on PCP, Martin is far from a suave bloodsucker and almost bungles his deranged date with the sexy stranger on the train. When Martin arrives in Pittsburgh, he is less than warmly greeted by an old man with a Lithuanian accent who looks like Colonel Sanders. Of course, the man, whose real name is Tateh Cuda (Lincoln Maazel), does not sell fried chicken (though he does own a butcher shop!) and despite his animosity towards the young man, he is Martin's granduncle. For whatever reason, crazed Cuda believes Martin is a true blue vampire and treats him as such, calling his nephew "Nosferatu" and covering his home with garlic and crucifixes. Since Martin's family dropped dead and Cuda is his closest living relative, the boy bloodsucker has no choice but to stay with the mystical-minded maniac of a man who believes he is a supernatural creature from hell. Paradoxically, while Martin does his damndest to prove to Uncle Cuda that he is not a vampire, fiddling with garlic and stating things like "There's no real magic... ever," Martin has seemingly schizophrenic visions, which are depicted in luscious monochrome black-and-white, of himself engaged in imaginary classic Gothic vampire horror scenarios that ultimately involve him killing and sucking the blood of beautiful young women. In one of these scenarios, Martin quasi-homosexually kills and drinks the blood of a man outside, yet hallucinates he is inside an old castle draining the blood of a young beauty in her bed. Believing that he is an 84-year-old bloodsucking creature of the night, Martin is playing a most dangerous game that could very potentially get him killed as his medieval-minded uncle has made the ultimatum to him that if he discovers he kills someone, he will personally drive a stake through his Nosferatu nephew's cold black heart. In between working at Cuda's butcher shop as a delivery boy and stalking unsuspecting young ladies, Martin calls into a radio DJ under the alias of "The Count" to set the truth straight regarding vampires (rationalizing there is no "magic stuff" as an excuse for his lack of fangs and hypnotic powers) and asking advice regarding 'female trouble.' Naturally, with his delivery job,

MARTIN

Martin comes in contact with a number of sexually repressed women, but being quasi-autistic, he is incapable of asserting himself, despite the fact that a lonely lady named Mrs. Abbie Santini (Elyane Nadeau) is practically begging him to jump her bones. When Martin finally gets the balls to seduce Santini, he begins a lurid love affair with her that dries up his thirst for blood. After losing control and attempting to drain two bums of their blood, Martin is almost caught by the cops and experiences a temporary sense of relief, but, rather unfortunately, Santini, an alcoholic who is depressed by the fact that she is infertile and will never have children, ironically commits suicide with a straight razor and uncle Cuda blames his nephew for her death. Irked that his granddaughter Christine (Romero's ex-wife Christine Forrest) has moved out of the family home and that no one shares his superstitious beliefs, Cuda keeps his word and drives a stake through Martin's heart, ironically killing the boy for the one murder he did not actually commit.

With the original cut, which is now presumed lost, being at an epic length of 2 hours 45 minutes, Martin as it exists today is certainly not the film it was originally meant to be, yet it still manages to be one Romero's most provocative and penetrating cinematic works, even if it is a rather amateurishly directed work riddled with accidental 'jump cuts,' outmoded wardrobes and mostly horrendous acting and forgettable actors. Set in an aesthetically revolting world of pollution-ridden factories as opposed to foggy ruined castles, nihilism as opposed to spirituality, and pansy proletarian blood-licking posers as opposed to aristocratic bloodsuckers, Martin is a modernist vampire flick where alienation, social and urban decay, mental illness, melancholy, the breakup of the nuclear family, and drug addiction is rampant and rightfully so as a truly and classically 'American' horror film that depicts the land of the free and home of the brave as it really is; a culturally and spiritually vacant multicultural nightmare plagued by vice and identity-crisis-stricken loner losers like antihero Martin. Undoubtedly, the antihero of Martin is a product of his zeitgeist and environment as an introverted psycho whose only source of solace is escaping into an imaginary world of suavely dressed bloodsuckers. Indeed, it is only when Martin starts a romantic relationship that his sanity begins to somewhat reach equilibrium, but ultimately he is a lost cause whose decidedly debilitating mental derangement wins in the end, so, in a sense, his death via a stake in the heart is a fitting way for the boy to go out. Aside from possibly *Jonathan* (1970) directed by German auteur Hans W. Geißendörfer and *The Addiction* (1995) directed by drug-addled American McGuido Abel Ferrara—both of which undoubtedly being better directed and more aesthetically pleasing works to Romero's revisionist vampire flick—Martin is indeed the greatest modern vampire flick. Not unlike David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), albeit in a less esoteric and artful way, Martin portrays post-civil rights urban Pennsylvania as a revolting postindustrial nightmare with a degenerating populous suffering from depression, alienation, and sexual dysfunction,

thereupon one of only a handful of American vampire flicks that rises above the level of tasteless trash. Featuring a quasi-autistic lead whose MILF girlfriend backhandedly compliments him by saying, "That's why you're so nice to be around...you don't have opinions" thus underscoring the lack of true personality many young American males suffer from, Martin is more relevant today than when it was first released, even if it is rather aesthetically outmoded affair, but then again, that is an innate trademark of George A. Romero's greatest films.

-Ty E

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George A. Romero (1985)

While this Christmas season has been even more miserable for me than usual, I really had no interest in celebrating it in a violent nihilistic by watching another sleazy Xmas slasher like Bob Clark's *Black Christmas* (1974) or Lewis Jackson's *Christmas Evil* (1980), even if I have come to the natural conclusion that blood and boobs (and especially the combination of the two) make for rather aesthetically pleasing additions to images of Santa Claus, mistletoe, and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Instead, I was looking for something more melancholically nostalgic and unpleasantly poignant, so I was lucky to remember at the last minute about Hollywood auteur John Huston's swansong *The Dead* (1987) starring his half-wop daughter Anjelica Huston and adapted by his one-time screenwriter son Tony Huston from the story of the same name (from the short works collection *Dubliners*) by famous Irish novelist and poet James Joyce. Directed by the auteur from the relative luxury of a wheelchair at age 80, the film was not just a labor of love because it was a filmic family affair, but also because it was based on a work from one of the director's favorite writers and set in the land of his Celtic ancestors where his children were brought up. While Huston might have already been an old disgruntled fart at the time he directed the film, his later classic works like his underrated Flannery O'Connor adaptation *Wise Blood* (1979) and delightful dipsomaniac odyssey *Under the Volcano* (1984) clearly demonstrate that he, unlike many filmmakers, only got more artistically ambitious and subversive with age, or as oftentimes wrong Jewess Pauline Kael certainly got quite right regarding his final flick, "Huston directed the movie, at eighty, from a wheelchair, jumping up to look through the camera, with oxygen tubes trailing from his nose to a portable generator; most of the time, he had to watch the actors on a video monitor outside the set and use a microphone to speak to the crew. Yet he went into dramatic areas that he'd never gone into before—funny, warm family scenes that might be thought completely out of his range. Huston never before blended his actors so intuitively, so musically." Indeed, *The Dead* is oftentimes quite sentimental and humanistic in the best sort of way (and I say that as someone that typically feels the urge to smash something if I hear someone describe something as being 'sentimental' or 'humanistic'), but it also climaxes in a bittersweetly somber yet strangely hopeful fashion with a beta-male husband coming to terms with the fact that neither he nor his wife truly love one another and that he is more or less a phony that has never truly lived life. As someone that has always seen the Irish, especially the McCatholics, as the red-haired and red-faced pug-nosed negroes of Northern Europe, I am also happy to report that Huston has managed to give the Irish cultivation and even dignity, even if the film does feature a terribly inebriated mick degenerate or two. In other words, *The Dead* is the perfect cultural antidote

to the typical sub-literate Irish-American that proudly describes themselves as 'Irish' despite not being able to locate Ireland on a map. Of course, it would be dishonest of me not to disclose the fact that there is a scene in the film where the character discuss the social and cultural superiority of Italians in comparison to their own Irish culture, but one should not expect anything less in a film directed by a man who got his half-Italian daughter to play the lead and half-Italian son to right the screenplay (which he received an Oscar nomination for).

Set in 1904 at an Epiphany party held by two elderly spinster sisters and their equally barren and unmarried niece, the film certainly features an eclectic collection of quasi-bourgeois characters, including a goofy middle-aged drunk with an overbearing mother, fierce proto-feminist bitch with an obsession with Irish independence, elderly protestant pervert, and various other 'idiosyncratic' individuals that 'normal' people try to avoid every other day of the year aside from the holiday season when they are forced to be in their company due to family tradition. A virtual chamber piece that Kael probably enjoyed due to its Altman-esque emphasis on a bunch of not-always-civil talking heads, the film is somewhat genius in the sense that the main characters are hardly the center of attention, at least not until the final 15 minutes or so, yet it somehow manages to work in the end. In fact, for a good portion of the time you forget that Mrs. Huston is even in the film yet she somehow manages to give the most overtly dramatic and unforgettable performance as a character that is forced to confront her lack of love for her hubby as inspired by her bittersweet remembrance of the tragic death of her one-true-love, who died when she was still just a girl under rather heartbreaking circumstances. Indeed, if there is any good reason that the suicide rate skyrockets during the holidays, it is because the pain of remembering a past love is multiplied to an excoriating degree, which is surely quit effectively depicted in an effortlessly elegant fashion in Huston's film where a middle-aged married woman with children still cannot get over the pangs of heartbreak and guilt associated with a long dead boy who made her feel a way that her short and stocky beta-dork husband never could. Featuring a well liked but ultimately rather pathetic and unremarkable male protagonist that must come to terms with the fact that he has been emotionally cuckolded by a young man that died at the merge age of 17 before he even met his wife, *The Dead*—a surely fittingly titled flick with more than one meaning—is arguably Huston's most vulnerable and tender film and a cinematic work that seems to carry some cryptic personal message from the auteur about his own lost love, or at least some would assume (it should be noted that the filmmaker's fourth and most beautiful wife Enrica Soma—the mother of actress Anjelica and screenwriter Tony—died tragically in 1969 at the premature age of 39 in a car accident). Needless to say, as someone that is currently single, the film has more special significance for me than I would like to admit, so it felt like bittersweet kismet to re-watch it while recalling the seemingly perennial pain of a certain romantic loss. Undoubtedly, *The Dead* is

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not the sort of film you want to watch if you are currently in a happy relationship that you cannot possibly fathom ending.

At the beginning of *The Dead*, it seems like a Dublin Epiphany party—a Santa-less Christian feast day on January 6 that celebrates the revelation of God in his Son as human in Jesus Christ—could turn into a disaster due to drunk degenerates like McDrunkard Theodore Alfred ‘Freddy’ Malins (Donal Donnelly) and mouthy perverted old protestant fart Mr. Browne (Dan O’Herlihy), but the year is 1904 and these characters are far too classy and organically European to engage in the sort of sordid mick degeneracy that the city is best known for nowadays. After all, poor Freddy is so hopelessly bourgeois that he cannot bear to piss in another man’s company, even when he is stumbling around drunk like a fool. The party is at the charming two-story humble abode of two elderly spinster sisters, Aunt Julia Morkan (Cathleen Delany) and Aunt Kate Morkan (Helena Carroll) and their much younger but similarly childless and husbandless pianist niece Mary Jane (Ingrid Craigie). Although never really alluded to, one might assume Mary Jane is a dyke as she has a number of hot young redheaded debutante students, including Miss Furlong (Kate O’Toole), Miss O’Callaghan (Maria Hayden), and Miss Higgins (Cormac O’Herlihy). Stocky dark-haired male protagonist Gabriel Conry (Donal McCann) and his wife Gretta (Anjelica Huston) are some of the last people to arrive at the party because, as the former complains regarding the latter, “[she] takes three mortal hours to dress herself.” Likewise, Gretta bitches about her husband making her wear “galoshes” because, “Gabriel says everyone wears them on the continent.” Happy to be away from their children but hardly touchy and feeling with each other, Gabriel and Gretta seem to be stuck in a stagnating loveless marriage of convenience, or at least so will the viewer will most certainly assume by the end of the film. While Gretta seems to be simply bored with her hubby, Gabriel—a rather uptight chap with a somewhat phony personality who spends a good portion of the night attempting to memorize a rather contrived speech—just seems to lack the emotional capacity to truly love anyone. In short, Gabriel is the kind of fellow that seems like he would be more interested in video-games and fedoras than women if he lived in contemporary times. Seemingly asexual, Gabriel even acts annoyed when a proto-IRA bitch named Molly Ivors (Maria McDermottroe). In a seeming attempt to flirt with him in an aggressively teasing fashion, Ms. Ivors later mocks Gabriel for his lack of love for Ireland by calling him a “West Britain.” A proudly deracinated cosmopolitan type whose petty boasts of continental open-mindedness ultimately reveal a sort of insufferable passive-aggressive arrogance that is oh-so typical of effeminate males, Gabriel even proudly declares to Ms. Ivors, “To tell you the truth, I’m sick of my country.” Needless to say, if Gabriel and Ms. Ivors were to actually fuck, it would naturally involve the latter violently penetrating the former with a large ribbed strap-on dildo.

Although a nice lass that does not seem to have a mean bone in her entire

body, Gretta seems somewhat disconnected from everyone else, especially her husband, who seems to be totally oblivious to her dubious emotional state, at least at first. Unfortunately, an old unhealed internal wound in Gretta is violently ripped open at the party when a somewhat fat fellow named Mr. Grace (Sean McClory) unexpectedly recites an eighth-century Middle Irish poem entitled "Donal Óg" translated from Gaelic by someone named Lady Augusta Gregory that concludes with the forlornly lovelorn lines, "My heart is as black as the blackness of the sloe, or as the black coal that is on the smith's forge; or as the sole of a shoe left in white halls; it was you put that darkness over my life. You have taken the east from me, you have taken the west from me; you have taken what is before me and what is behind me; you have taken the moon, you have taken the sun from me; and my fear is great that you have taken God from me!" While Mr. Grace's recitation does not push Gretta over the edge, it does make her vulnerable enough to completely break down later in the film upon hearing a traditional Irish song that her long-dead teenage lover used to sing to her. In fact, the viewer does not even see much of Gretta again after Mr. Grace's recitation until towards the end of the film after the party has already ended, though we see a lot more of her phony husband than we would like to due to a ridiculous contrived speech where he declares that his two elderly aunts and their niece are the "Three Graces" of Dublin and brags about the hospitality of Irish folks. While Gabriel is keen on demonstrating niceness and kindness, his actions do not always seem sincere. When Freddy Malins arrives at the party drunk and disheveled at the beginning of the film, Gabriel goes out of his way to clean him up, but one gets the sense that his kind acts are more motivated by a desire to avoid conflict at all costs than a sort of pure kindness. Indeed, Gabriel is certainly the sort of archetypal 'nice guy' type that is unfortunately now all too common in the Western world as his occasional bitchy passive-aggressive behavior reveals. Luckily, Gretta gets so ludicrously lovesick after being confronted with reminders from the past that no amount of nice guy nonsense can prevent her from pouring out her heart to her husband Gabriel about how she really feels.

After the party ends, Gabriel only goes looking for his wife after helping Freddy's disgruntled mother get into a carriage, so naturally he is somewhat shocked when he finds her crying at the top of a set of stairs of the Morkan house while secretly listening to a fat chap named Bartell D'Arcy (famous Irish tenor Frank Patterson) singing the traditional Irish song "The Lass of Aughrim." Unbeknownst to poor Gabriel, the song was regularly sung by Gretta's long dead teenage lover Michael Furey. During their somewhat awkward carriage ride back to their hotel, Gabriel makes various failed pathetic attempts to comfort Gretta, including telling a stupid family story about a horse and kissing her hand, but she just cannot seem to stop brooding over her memories. When they eventually get back to their hotel room, Gabriel finally gets the gall to ask

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Gretta what is wrong, so she admits she was thinking about the song “The Lass of Aughrim,” because, as she somberly confesses while on the verge of tears, “I’m thinking about a person long ago who used to sing that song.” From there, Gretta sobs while she tells the tragic prematurely ended love story about her and an inordinately romantic boy named Michael Furey from Galway that died when he was only 17 after assumedly risking his life to see her one last time. Indeed, as her remark, “I think he died for me” clearly reveals, Gretta blames herself for Furey’s untimely demise, though one also suspects that she is also mad at herself for marrying a man that she does not really love. A sickly boy that died a week after he risked his life to visit Gretta during a rainy winter night despite his failing health because he discovered that she was moving to Dublin, Furey certainly loved her in a manner that quasi-narcissist Gabriel never could, but as the clearly haunted female protagonist reveals to her husband regarding her youthful love, “I am implored him to go home at once. I told him he’d get his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live.” Needless to say, Gabriel is rather taken aback by the entire story and its dejecting implications, not least of all because he has no intrinsic understanding of how a man could love a woman so much, even though the woman in question is his own wife.

While Gretta practically passes out while sobbing after telling her deeply disconcerting story of tragic young love, Gabriel finds his mind racing, not least of all because he finally realizes that he does not truly understand his own wife, or as he thinks to himself while staring at her in bed, “How poor a part I’ve played in your life. It’s almost as though I’m not your husband and we’ve never lived together as man and wife.” Indeed, the viewer soon realizes that Gabriel is an emotionally underdeveloped individual that has never loved another person in his entire life as reflected in his clearly articulated racing thoughts, “To me your face is still beautiful, but it’s no longer the one for which Michael Furey braved death. Why am I feeling this riot of emotion? What stirred it up? [...] One by one, we’re all becoming shades. Better to pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dimly with age. How long you locked away in your heart the image of your lover’s eyes when he told you that he did not wish to live. I’ve never felt that way myself towards any woman, but I know that such a feeling must be love. Think of all those who ever were, back to the start of time. And me, transient as they, flickering out as well into their grey world. Like everything around me, this solid world itself which they reared and lived in, is dwindling and dissolving. Snow is falling. Falling in that lonely churchyard where Michael Furey lies buried. Falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living, and the dead.” Of course, during his rather short life, Michael Furey certainly truly lived more than sad beta-cuck Gabriel Conroy, whose wife’s soul belongs to a dead teenager. Notably, Gabriel also contemplates his old spinster Aunt Julia and how she will probably die soon, as if he realizes that he will also

die lonely just like his spinster aunt, even though he technically has a wife. Of course, as the film reveals with its shots of a snowy cemetery where Michael Furey was buried, death is an innately solitary affair that no one escapes, not even pretentious self-absorbed twats.

The not-exactly-morbidly titled *The Dead* was certainly an exquisite and even poetically fitting way for John Huston to conclude his fairly singular filmmaking career, but I would probably stop short of pulling a Roger Ebert, who included it in his book *The Great Movies III* (2010) despite giving the film only 3 out of 4 stars in his original 1987 review, and describing it as an immaculate masterpiece. In fact, I consider Huston's other later cinematic efforts *Wise Blood* and *Under the Volcano* to be superior to his swansong in just about every way, especially in terms of entertainment value, subversiveness and sheer replay value. Of course, then again, I cannot think of a more artistically sound yet vulnerable film for a filmmaker to end both his life and career with, so I do not want to underplay its value in the context of Huston's entire oeuvre, especially since so many other great filmmakers (e.g. Fellini, Bergman) concluded their careers in less than memorable fashions. Naturally, the film only seems all the more poignant and haunting now that virtually all of the actors featured in it are also dead, yet their memory now lives on via cinema not unlike how the memory of Michael Furey lives on in the mind of poor Gretta, but of course that was probably Huston's intention, hence the film's subtle multilayered brilliance as both a nuanced melodrama and virtual self-obituary in poetic cinematic form. While I cannot say that I am perennially internally wounded by the memory of a dead teenage boy, *The Dead* inspired a sort of vaguely unsettling bittersweet nostalgia-cum-misery in me, especially in regard to the unwavering feeling of preferring death over being without the bitch I love(d) most. Unlike many lovesick individuals, Gretta certainly has a certain convenience of memory, as her great love died young in what seemed to be the ideal youthful romance before hate and negativity came into play in her relationship. Indeed, there seems to be a certain romantic purity in regard to Gretta's memory of Michael Furey, hence the intolerable nature of her loveless marriage with Gabriel. Of course, the film's male protagonist Gabriel represents the height of beta-male sterility as a man that is so out of touch with his own wife that he has no clue that she finds him to be both emotionally and sexually banal and thus clings to ancient memories in regard to a dead boy that she probably did not even have the pleasure of feeling inside of her. A prosaic pansy whose phony panache is a pathetic substitute for an authentic personality and whose cosmopolitan tendencies reveal a laughably contrived sense of class and superiority, Gabriel is ultimately a truly singularly horrifying character of cinema history in that he represents the everyman par excellence; a walking and talking eunuch corpse that merely floats through life instead of actually living it. Of course, I think it is safe to say that Huston actually lived life as his long and eclectic filmmaking career, various wives and lovers, and children demonstrate,

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so it seems somewhat curious that he would focus on such a soulless character, but then again he was a man that truly loved classic mick literature and was probably just happy to adapt his homeboy Joyce. After roaming around a small oceanic city until 5am the next morning this past New Year's Eve and seeing countless drunk sluts with fake blonde hair stumble down the streets and tons of brain-dead bros attempting to pick fight with strangers and harass workers and business owners, I cannot help but think a lot has been lost in the Occident in terms of love, romance, and chivalry since the days of Joyce's Ireland as depicted in Huston's *The Dead*; a film with a title that best describes the both the spiritual and cultural status of modern Western man. Not just a dapperly dressed candy ass that lacks the capacity to love, Gabriel is a sad symbol of European decadence and an entire race's unconscious obsession with collective suicide, which is surely something that would have pained Mr. Joyce to see as demonstrated by his wise words, "Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age." As for Mr. Huston, he might have been somewhat spiritually and politically decadent, but he was unequivocally a true Faustian Man that expressed a certain degree authentic Aryan masculinity, even in a depressing melodrama like *The Dead*.

-Ty E

MONKEY SHINES

George A. Romero (1988)

Monkey Shines is a film that has garnered a status of "instant retro classic" in horror. This "alleged" story seems ripped from Stephen King's head. The tale of monkey-man love relationship along with the genetic alteration has no choice but to relate instantly along the likes of Dean Koontz's *Watchers* and Stephen King's *Cujo*. Romero has worked on such Stephen King works as *Creepshow* and the pre-planned *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*. All this over the ever-so-natural horror idolization. If there's any favoritism in the horror culture, it's between King and Romero, after all, neither seem to have their own signature blend of stylistic writing/filming.

Now there's absolutely no reason to wear glasses those enormous unless a secretive heirloom status.

Monkey Shines is a novel by a virtually unknown directed to the screen by the immortal "Romero". The reason this novel is unheard of is beyond me. The whole story figment of a killer primate is a rich blend of ironic evolutionary revenge that has not been seen in films such as *Congo* and *Outbreak*, regardless of which came first. The film plays out as planned, each move becoming more predictable than the last, ultimately leaving an anticlimactic battle of "who's higher on the food chain".

Monkey Shines will regrettably always be remembered. The film isn't by any means horrible or bad, but the lack of any visual direction disturbs me. Hell, if it weren't for the horrific poster artwork of the toy monkey with cymbals/razor, this film wouldn't bother my natural existence anymore than *The Kindred* (which parallels *Monkey Shines* with overly exceptional poster artwork. The same expectations were soiled with the recent release of *Max Payne*; a film that couldn't have been THAT bad, but ended up being the stuff of nightmares.

Monkey Shines is a certain kind of film that wishes to be both terrifying and stature sadistic as Cronenberg's *The Brood*. It takes a special kind of "dreamer" film to fail at any substance and only prevail as a generic tale of terror that isn't as scary as it looks. The obsessive villain of Ella is as intimidating as the average woman - which isn't intimidating at all. Lackluster opening linked directly to an inconsiderate ending. *Monkey Shines* would love to bridge a connection between man and beast, but fails in the birthing process. As for unadulterated terror goes, *Monkey Shines* has a negative amount of those. With embarrassing infrared monkey vision, you'd wish you had watched another film prime for replay. Whether the "tortured" quadriplegic main character wishes to be Corky from *Magic* or the entire lack-of-style wishes to "borrow" from *The Brood*, *Monkey Shines* doesn't shine in any aspect. Not necessarily a bad film, but nothing eye-opening about it other than the press material including the amazing poster. A species war could have been filmed so much better.

MONKEY SHINES

-mAQ

DIARY OF THE DEAD

George A. Romero (2008)

Didn't Romero say he wasn't going to make any more zombie films? Oh, and then he made *Land of the Dead*. Well, in effort to spread the apocalypse craze even further, Romero lends his output of first-person terror. Sorry guys, but *Cloverfield* and *[REC]* did it better. Well, on the subject of *Land of the Dead* being released, when the film first debuted, Romero spoke so highly of it; that it is his personal masterpiece. As soon as the negative reviews started pouring in, Romero then harnessed the power of the Internet and began writing blogs and recording webisodes of how studios and executives ruined *Land of the Dead*. So each of his "Dead" films attacks a subject or even "problem" in society. *Diary of the Dead* is a direct attack to the Internet/media fad of this generation. The film spouts YouTube, Myspace, and blogging site references. *Diary of the Dead* is not the proud DIY zombie film that you might think it is, rather, a cowardly attack towards anything that has ever wronged or spoke ill of Romero. Instead of trying to make fun of the critics and people who dislike his accidental cult film's, he should focus more on making a decent film. One thing that made *Cloverfield* and *[REC]* so horrifying, is the lack of music. Being as how it is a character holding the camera, it allows the film to almost break the "third wall." In the opening montage of *Diary of the Dead*, the female narrator explains how she took the footage of the apocalypse and added music to it; to add to the "effect." This alone starts the film off on a low note. The plot takes a group of college kids filming a horror movie in the woods. Again, Romero seems to be attacking the indie horror business, as these kids encounter zombies. To watch all these stupid film school kids get killed off must be his wet dream. "How many times have I told you? Dead things don't move fast." This is a direct quote and another attack, this one against the constant remakes of his films being made, the "new" zombie that always sprints, and again, his very own creation (*Land of the Dead*.) One thing I still don't understand is, why when *Cloverfield* was released, every one commented on this authenticity of the characters? Sure, they had their rough spots, but compared to the acting and demeanor of everyone in *Diary of the Dead*, they were Oscar worthy. *Diary of the Dead* is the ultimate "How to make a bad movie!" reference source. Is it me, or does the narrator purposely speak like Sarah Connor from *T2*? The film is entirely composed without any horror fan's wit or ingenuity. If I were to encounter a zombie, I'd sure as hell call it a zombie, not call them "dead" or even deny their existence. Black Militants who are on the run make their second coming in this film. First time since *Night of the Living Dead*, I believe. When the colored gentlemen are questioned about why they got together, they stated "Because we got the power. For the first time in our lives, we got the power." Romero is now at the point of trying too damn hard to bring social commentary in his films. *Diary of the Dead* is all about

DIARY OF THE DEAD

surveillance and censorship. The whole cast features intellectually challenged hicks and film school jerk-off's. This film is nothing new, and it is certainly not good. Zombie effect's don't make movies good, and neither does Romero.

-Maq

DEATH BED: THE BED THAT EATS

George Barry (1977)

Whether in the underground or the mainstream, I have viewed a plethora of horrible films during my life. I have dug far and wide, from nation-to-nation (cinematically not geographically, of course) hoping to find those few dark films worthy of recognition and notoriety. Despite all the mediocrity I have encountered on my cinematic journeys, the celluloid adventures have been worth it when I recall such horrific masterpieces as Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik*, Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond*, Roger Watkins' *Last House on Dead End Street*, Andrey Iskanov's *Visions of Suffering*, and a variety of others. Recently, I took my chances with an odd and peculiar horror film *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats*, a film with such an odd title that it would make even the most initiated and jaded of horror hunters out there wonder in amusement.

Death Bed: The Bed That Eats was directed by the unknown auteur George Barry, a man that seems to only understand art in his own lost vacuum world as his single horror accomplishment testifies to. The ambiguous ghostly voyeur of the *Death Bed* is the tragic decadent artist Aubrey Beardsley, who is trapped within his own painting. The last great Sage poet and American patriot Ezra Pound once stated, "Beardsley was a sick man who knew he had to make a name quickly if he wanted to make it, personal wish, not believing in what art is or ought to be.....He was a heroic invalid, up to the point of his force. He didn't lie to himself or his friends in private, He knew that beauty is so difficult. He said, beauty is difficult." Like Pound's statement about Beardsley, director George Barry also should hold the title of "heroic invalid," a filmmaker with a twisted vision whose idea of beauty can only be found in the most dark, damp, and deteriorating of mid-western basements. The world of *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* is a place that not many people would willingly go to, but those that desire to will be treated to a place of wonderful phantasmagorical bliss. For those that cherish their deepest and darkest of strange dreams, the film visualizes a supreme deadly daydream, offering the viewer a glimpse of a deteriorated celluloid netherworld that will not be soon forgotten. I can only imagine that director George Barry used a wide variety of mind altering drugs before, during, and after the production of *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats*. In fact, I would not be surprised if Mr. Barry got the idea for this lovely nightmare of a film whilst wasting away on his own bed. Some of the most aesthetically powerful scenes in *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* occur when the bed eats a much deserving docile victim. The beautiful bed does not really eat the person, but burns them alive in a beer-like yellowish liquid which vaporizes human flesh like acid. The bed also resonates a whitish foam that makes one wonder whether or not the bed is sexually aroused by the humans it consumes. Drug connoisseur or not, I am sure George Barry felt a bed that eats people would make for a distinctly interesting film in comparison

DEATH BED: THE BED THAT EATS

to a bed that people die on merely by overdosing on. Despite the many killings that have occurred before the sad quaint eyes of forever young Aubrey Beardsley, he seems to have gotten rather bored with bedside killings. If you're looking for a vintage and hypnotic piece of original Sinema, Death Bed: The Bed That Eats is the film to see. I am pretty sure Aubrey Beardsley would not have minded having his ghost make an appearance in this fantastic acid horror experiment, for this is a film merely following in his hopelessly decadent footsteps. Just as I wonder where artistically Beardsley would have ended up had he not succumbed to tuberculosis at an early age, I also wonder where George Barry would have went cinematically had he continued directing films after Death Bed: The Bed That Eats. Maybe Barry only had one film in him, but this single horror film and one-time director deserve exclusive recognition, for Death Bed: The Bed That Eats is one of those rare horror films that manages to go beyond the typical sensory power of the medium, radiating Sinema gold. Swim inside the Death Bed because surreal nightmares like these never get old.

-Ty E

HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER

George Huang (2001)

It's humorous to see on the assortment of various "grade" films the name of the fabled creature designer, Stan Winston. In light of his marvelous creations not limited to Pumpkinhead, Xenomorphs (With due given to Giger), and Predator, the good outweighs the bad. The first half of this film is made-for-TV gold. I loathe straight to video horror more than the next guy. Having to work at a rental chain introduced me to the macabre world of DIY film making and such horrors as vampire midget films (Ankle Biters). I'd pick any of Winston's Creature Feature series over any Sci-Fi Channel film. This is the early film that beat the Slacker-power film Stay Alive to the punch. Better than Stay Alive in almost every way, the sniveling, pathetic "in-game graphics" are both on par. Which says a lot, considering the massive budget differences and year made. The graphics in TRON are considered more revolutionary than anything presented in this film. Again, It all lies on the weight of Stan Winston creating a cool bad guy; which seems to rip off Virus in a big way. In the series, there is She Creature, Earth vs. The Spider, How to Make a Monster, and Teenage Caveman. Teenage Caveman is most known for being directed by pedophile auteur Larry Clark. Each of these films is a modern remake (retelling) of a classic AIP film (American International Pictures). Plot in a sentence: Computer programmers racing to complete a game accidentally unleash "killer" A.I. into a computer game thus possessing a telemetry suit. Nerdcore is becoming a prominent voice in pop culture this century. It started with Nintendo geeks, now it is blossoming into the musical category (mc chris) as well as fashion (J!nx). The characters have the charm of old school Full Moon characters (Which isn't too boasting). Is that a Pikachu? Self-proclaimed Scream Queen Julie Strain plays a role in this film. As expected, she wastes no time stripping nude and jumping up and down. The title Scream Queen should be buried with the legends and not be used to label Troma stars and low budget models. To me, It's as disrespectful as it sounds. I can't look Strain in the eyes without remembering her acidic role in Tales from the Crapper. That movie was a cinematic cock punch; Arguably the worst Troma film in existence. Stan Winston's decision to create low-budget films really made me look up to the man even more. His hard-working unbiased work environment should be noted by every director or film crew member. What Geung tried to create with the characters is the food chain, expect presented and highlighted by social status, gender, and race. Being a Chinaman, he places a zen black man in the role, and even makes him an intellectual named Sol. (The very same Karim Prince.) Sol: The name is Sol. As in Solomon. As in the King That Is Wise. As in the solution to all of your problems. Why should you hire me? [laughs] Sol: That's just dumb; that is a dumb question. Why do you call that a chair? Why is the sky blue? Why are you dressed like a thirty-two year old when it's obvious

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you're at least fifty- [gets interrupted] Then to typecast some more, they place an awkward wrestler in the film (Tyler Mane) whose name is Hardcore. Just don't ask him if it's his real name. This man swings around ancient weaponry as if he knows how to handle such antiques. Not only is the group a social rat race but each character fits a class or race in the standard video game. Hardcore obviously being the "Warrior", Sol being the "Mage", Laura being an "Elf", Bug being a "Cleric", and ironically, Steven being the "Thief". The film takes a hilariously awkward role when all blame for the approaching carnage falls on the Negro's shoulder. He designed, created, and gave life to the monster. He is also the first to die. The monster then takes his "tainted" pupils and exchanges them for something a bit more "white". The marketing for a "Scary" game in this film is all in vain. The scariest game is not one with a monster and awesome weapons. This film should be re-titled to "How to Not Make a Scary Game" This is arguably better than the film. Another flaw is the shameless product placement. P.O.D. can clearly be heard in one scene which warranted some groans from me and Evil Dead video game posters cover the wall. There is something about Video games and women mixing that leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Wait a minute, allow me to correct that. Something about Video games and Clea DuVall mixing makes me nauseous. She is up there with one of my least favorite faces in film. No. Speaking of video games and actors not fitting, I don't believe any of these "Stars" have ever played a video game in their life. In many scenes, each of these celebrities showed extreme acting vigil while mashing away at their controllers to do the simplest command such as jumping. Swinging a sword should not call for pressing every button as fast as you can and biting your lip. How to Make a Monster is seriously flawed, but there is something within the first hour which makes it almost worth my time. Tattoo's switch arms and people hear a fluttering rooms away through steel walls. This is a infected film which is dragged down by a horrible climax with a juvenile attempt at a symbolic layered ending. This film's ending is almost as fun as playing Virtual Boy and allowing your brain to bleed. I still think it's partially fun, especially being a homage to the 50's. *shrugs* "Battle not with monsters lest ye become a monster. When you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes into you." (Note: This quote is exercised in the film in a most pretentious context)

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HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED

George Kuchar (1966)

Just like with Andy Milligan about three years ago, I never thought my taste in cinema would grow so low to the point where I would actually come to appreciate the work of the “the Mozarts of 8mm Cinema,” the Kuchar twins, especially belated brother George (*The Devil's Cleavage*, *The Mongreloid*), whose singular quasi-autistic trash aesthetic finally began to appeal to me rather recently after I saw a screenshot from his extra experimental montage-based short *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967)—a work once described by the auteur as something that, “must be seen by the victims of perversity, regardless of sex or age. Painstakingly filmed and edited, it will be painful to watch, too”—and decided that I must watch it immediately. In the almost repugnantly perverse yet addictively playful short, Kuchar absurdly appears in a leather biker outfit that is quite similar to that of the eponymous gutter stud in Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and hangs out with a couple morbidly obese Jewesses that surely inspired John Waters to make ‘Divine’ his main diva. Needless to say, after wallowing in *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin*, I needed to see more Kuchar and ultimately naturally decided on his 17-minute experimental micro-melodrama *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966), which is regarded by many, including the various politically correct film scholars who pretend to like his films because they believe they are useful to their sterile LGBT agenda (even though the modern ‘homo friendly’ world would never ever produce a single Kuchar, Anger, or Markopoulos, as their films are expressions of suffering and longing and not banal issues like gay marriage), as his magnum opus and was incidentally made at the same time that his brother Mike was assembling his lo-fi sci-fi masterpiece *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), which he also starred in. An absurdist film-within-a-film that authenticates the director's remark that “I work best under terrible pressure” as work that had its genesis in an aborted film and was inspired by real-life in that big bosomed lead, Donna Kerness, decided to quit production, which forced the auteur to completely change the entire flick and ultimately sire something that is thankfully much more personal, Kuchar's bizarrely kaleidoscopic piece of histrionically melodramatic metacinema tells the story of a perennially lonely and sexually repressed filmmaker who begins to lose what is left of his mind and dignity after his busty yet seemingly half-brain-dead lead heroine abruptly decides to quit the production because she is tired of exposing her juicy jumbo jugs on camera. Notably, Kuchar once somewhat mockingly reflected regarding his own film that it was, “A dazzling ruby in Kuchar's jewelry box of cinema gems and gossamer garbage. Financed with unemployment checks...[it] goes beyond the erotic into the world of hyper-neurotic, a world which exists behind the filmmaker's shower curtain.” Indeed, not only does the film reveal Kuchar to be a hyper-neurotic self-flagellating homo that wishes he got more cock than his lead-

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ing lady, but also an obscenely guilt-ridden pansy momma's boy whose mother seems to carry around his testicles in her purse. A rare cinematic work that is just as intrinsically campy as it is melancholic and thus makes the viewer laugh when they should probably cry and vice versa, *Hold Me While I'm Naked* is pseudo-Sirkian in an almost psychotic way that makes it quite clear that Kuchar is unequivocally one of the most self-denigrating, enigmatically eccentric, and benignly unhinged filmmakers who has ever lived. Of course, Kuchar is not Rock Hudson as the male lead, but a character that makes the titular human turd in *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) seem like what ghetto-dwelling American negroes describe as a 'pimp.'

Hold Me While I'm Naked begins with Kuchar, who plays an overtly autobiographical character named Phillip, directing a farcically frantic chase scene where he shouts to his lead actress Donna Kerness while she is running away from some unseen entity that she should look "scared" because her "life is a stake." In a display of his true carny-esque gentlemanliness, Kuchar also shouts to Kerness while directing her, "This is your greatest portrayal. You're a star and this is going to be your biggest picture. Keep running." After finishing shooting the scene, human goober Kuchar smiles in a charmingly goofy fashion and waves in approval while still holding his film camera. In the next scene, Kuchar films Kerness and a man that is embracing her behind a stained glass window and while he describes her first take as "wonderful" and "almost just perfect," he then tells her that they have to reshoot the scene with her bra off, "because the mysticism of the stained glass window and the profanity of that brassier do not go well together." While Kerness immediately sheds her bra and has no problem shooting the scene, she decides it is the last straw in terms of having to shed her flesh for the particularly perverse looking fairy filmmaker, especially after he announces after shooting the scene, "Terrific! That's it for today. Tomorrow we do the massaging table scene and maybe after that, if we have time, we'll do the scene where you're found naked in a fallout shelter and there are those radioactive welts on your side."

After wrapping up shooting for the day, Kerness and her onscreen/offscreen lover continue to makeout behind the stained glass window while Kuchar proceeds to walk home by himself while looking like a pathetic impotent loser in a scene that seems to underscore the filmmaker's nonexistent sex life and overall emotional impoverishment. While walking home, Kuchar happens upon a little bird sitting on a tree branch and he is so entranced by its natural beauty that he somehow manages to magically pick up the little creature without it flying away and then proceeds to kiss it in a scene that misleadingly makes the viewer think that the filmmaker is headed towards a brighter and more beautiful future, but of course that's not how things work out when you are a goofy gay loser who lives with their mother. Meanwhile, Kuchar's leading lady Kerness melodramatically moans to her lover, "I'm sick and tired of being naked in almost every scene. I'm

not going to do this picture anymore, he's like some kind of erotic parent," to which he fittingly replies, "A neurotic parent is more like it." Ultimately, Kerness pleads to her discernibly horny white knight beau, "Just take me away from him" and then calls him the filmmaker and lets him know that she is quitting the film. Instead of getting mad at Kerness for quitting and, in turn, destroying the picture he has dedicated his life to making, Kuchar meekly asks her on the phone, "You're not going to finish the movie?" and then slowly puts his phone down on the receiver and then stares out of his window in a pathetically forlorn fashion as if he is staring into oblivion. It becomes quite apparent at this point that, without filmmaking, Kuchar's life is meaningless and he has nothing to live for. In between inexplicably applying red lipstick to the plastic lips of unclad vintage baby dolls that are lying next to him in bed, Kuchar makes various attempts to find new actors but, as a man with a hilariously flat affect, he is not a very good salesman, especially when people have better things to do like fuck. When Kuchar calls up one longhaired hippy dude and declares like a senile bible salesman, "Yes, there happens to be an opening in my new film for you and a girl of your choice. I have a great role for her," the silly looking beatnik bastard finds himself hanging upon on the filmmaker after his girlfriend gets his mind focusing on more important things by taking her bra off. Indeed, the two hippies have such passionate sex that they cause power-lines outside to seemingly shake.

In a montage that seems to highlight the fact that Kuchar is a man with an undying sense of loneliness and sexual repression who has hit rock bottom because the one thing that helps him to partially fill the void that is his life, filmmaking, has been taken away from him, shots of the filmmaker lying on the ground entangled in reels of film is intercut with scenes of hippies fucking. Naturally, as the film progresses, Kuchar's idiosyncratic montages only get all the more merrily melancholic. In what is the most (in)famous segment of the film, a montage of Kuchar taking a sad lonely shower is intercut with scenes of the filmmaker seemingly daydreaming about his ex-superstar Kerness ecstatically making love to her man in a shower. Notably, Kuchar is strangely wearing a similar translucent dress as Kerness while taking a shower, thus indicating the filmmaker is fantasizing about being her and making passionate love to rough macho men in the shower. While showering, Kuchar seems to lose it and begins banging his head against the shower wall like some sort of lethargic mental patient who refuses to take his meds. At about the same time, the corpse of the little bird that Kuchar kissed at the beginning of the film appears at his window and then the film cuts to a shot of the filmmaker kissing the cutesy winged being and it subsequently dying as a result of his literal kiss of death, thereupon arguably insinuating in an allegorical fashion that the auteur believes he is some sort of corrosive force who only has the capacity to debase and destroy, hence his fetish for pornography and getting girls naked. At the end of his shower of sad-

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ness, Kuchar's mother (played by his real-life Ukrainian peasant mother Stella Kuchar of *Anita Needs Me* (1963) and *Ascension of the Demonoids* (1985)) starts attempting to open the bathroom door and then yells to her son in an exceedingly bitchy fashion, "Phillip, it's me, Mom. Get out, for Christ's sake. You've been in there an hour. The food's gonna get cold. Get out already. I'm sick and tired of hanging around this house all day. I wanna get out too. Now remember, put the bathmat on the floor so you don't get any water all over the bathroom. Come on, hurry up! The food is getting cold." As demonstrated by the fact that he stares at the bathroom door in a somewhat disturbing fashion while you can hear his heart beat, Kuchar seems afraid of having to simply leave the room and confront his mother, who is undoubtedly largely responsible for his autistic behavior and remarkably low self-esteem, among other things. Somewhat curiously, when Kuchar does finally leave the bathroom, he is dressed like a middle-aged woman, thus hinting that he takes after mommy dearest and is more or less becoming her. After his mother serves him a pathetic looking pork chop dinner that she serves on a paper plate (I guess Kuchar's mother was too lazy to wash dishes), Kuchar abruptly breaks down the fourth wall by staring into the camera and declaring to the viewer, "I guess there's a lot of things in life worth living for...isn't there?"

In a rather insightful segment featured in the documentary *It Came from Kuchar* (2009) directed by Jennifer M. Kroot, *Hold Me While I'm Naked* heroine Donna Kernness states while fiddling with a lollipop like it is a cock, "I was in the beginning of *HOLD ME*, but I was feeling weak because I was on Prednisone, so I called George...and you know how he is, he says, 'ok Donna, ok Donna.' He was devastated...I know he was, but he'd never show that. He went on to finish the movie. I think what it turned into was his devastation, along with his other devastations about things in his life that maybe bothered him. We were laughing at and yet crying at the same time when he's lying on the floor with film all over his face...the cuttings of movies and calling people who are saying, 'Oh, no, no...I can't see you now'" and they're all having their own personal sex life. And what is he doing?! He's twirling in the shower with his mother calling him to eat his pork chops." Indeed, despite being less than 20 minutes long, Kuchar's film is one of the patently pathetic self-pity parties ever sired on celluloid, yet it also one the greatest, most idiosyncratic, and joyously bittersweet self-pity parties as the pure and unadulterated expression of a seeming autistic queer who fantasizes about being a dreamy diva that every macho man desires yet is ultimately too strange to even appeal to the average AIDS-ridden tearoom sod. Of course, most viewers of the film will probably be asking themselves how Kuchar got so screwed up and socially inept in the first place and thankfully the film at least partially answers that question, albeit in a campy hermetic homo way. Aside from the film's various references to Catholic guilt, Kuchar makes it quite clear by casting his own mother in an repugnantly bitchy

role that she is largely the reason he suffers from ludicrously low-esteem and is so intrinsically plagued with such a debilitating case of neuroticism that he makes Woody Allen seem like a strong and stoic Waffen-SS soldier by comparison. In fact, Kuchar has such a preternatural relationship with his mother that when she died, he filmed her wake and even got a shot of his then-98-year-old aunt crying at her casket for his singularly morbid short *Currents of Destiny* (2007). In that sense, I think Kuchar used his camera as a sort of shield-cum-safety-blanket that made it somewhat easier for him to deal with the more emotionally and psychologically difficult things in life. After all, he also documented his good friend and collaborator, filmmaker Curt McDowell (*Thundercrack!*, *Loads*), while he was on his deathbed dying of AIDS for his video piece *Video Album 5: The Thursday People* (1987) and you can tell while watching the footage that he surely did not do it for exploitative reasons. As a man who proclaimed in the doc *It Came from Kuchar*, "...But you know, adults are weird, you know. I think all kids understand that," it seems that Kuchar always saw himself as a child and this sort of childish innocence and naivety is certainly apparent in his films.

Indeed, judging by the uncompromisingly confessional, almost self-destructively and nihilistically autobiographical, and radically retrograde 'home-movie-esque' yet meticulously stylized essence of *Hold Me While I'm Naked*, it is hard to imagine that, aside from more obvious influences like John Waters and Nick Zedd, that the films of Guy Maddin, who notably appears in the doc *It Came from Kuchar* and cites *The Devil's Cleavage* (1975) as one of his favorite films, would exist today. Additionally, the overtly mechanical and intentionally contrived bird scenes in the film almost certainly influenced the conclusion of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986). Undoubtedly it takes a certain striking degree of social retardation and pathological cinemania to churn out a film like Kuchar's where life and cinema become one and the same, with the filmmaker's perturbably pathetic life ironically obtaining crude yet captivating poetic meaning in its celluloid form. In its recklessly daring expression of real ugly and less than flattering pathos, impotence, and despair, Kuchar's truly short but sweet melodrama managed to accomplish the seemingly impossible by giving camp artistic credibility. Somewhat shockingly, the film was even included in the popular but somewhat uneven film reference guide *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* (2003) edited by Steven Jay Schneider. Directed by a superlatively scatological fellow (notably, John Waters has acknowledged that the shocking 'shit-eating grin' conclusion of *Pink Flamingos* (1972) was probably inspired by the turd scene in *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970)) who seems to suffer from an inverted Oedipus complex and a love-hate relationship with some of his leads that was probably inspired by his desire to live vicariously through them, *Hold Me While I'm Naked* ultimately unwittingly reveals the cocksucker essence of 'camp' and how it is merely an exaggerated expression of the how the homo—an abstraction from the mainstream that is innately incapable of truly understanding the het-

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erosexual mind—perceives and interacts with the world, especially in regard to sex and cinema. Of course, what makes Kuchar a braver filmmaker than his contemporary Jack Smith and disciple John Waters is that his films, especially *Hold Me While I'm Naked*, are hopelessly personal and incriminating, hence their singular charm. I also must not forget to note that I have never noticed a gay filmmaker with such a shameless big titty fetish, but I guess that is what happens to you when your father introduces you and your twin brother to pornography at an early age. Surely, one almost gets the impression while watching *Hold Me While I'm Naked* that Kuchar thought that if he looked at enough massive mammary glands, it might turn him straight (notably, at the end of his career, Kuchar seemed to sexually mature and became obsessed with filming the shaved granny pussy of elderly diva Linda Martinez in works like *The Fury of Frau Frankenstein* (2005)), which is just one of the many interpretations that one can get while watching the film, as a work that tests the bounds of cinematic tastelessness in a way that is, unlike most campy trash, anything but soulless. Indeed, if there is a celluloid heaven, Kuchar is probably filming Pasolini right now getting run over by a car driven by Fassbinder while Curtis Harrington commands a UFO that is hovering in the background.

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ECLIPSE OF THE SUN VIRGIN

George Kuchar (1967)

While *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) and *A Reason to Live* (1976) are oftentimes considered two of the filmmaker's very best films, George Kuchar's *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967) certainly holds a special place in my heart simply because it was the very first film that I saw by the seemingly quasi-autistic auteur that made me realize that he was more than just an obscenely outmoded amateur film director who flooded the American underground with his shamelessly neurotic experiments in excess, eccentricity, and senseless scatology. Arguably Kuchar's most innately esoteric and experimental film as an anti-linear montage piece, the film is a sort of quasi-sequel to the filmmaker's most well known and revered cinematic work, or as he stated himself, "ECLIPSE OF THE SUN VIRGIN was the follow-up to *HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED*, in which I try to get into the character's mind. The character was me of course. I did it in a more dreamlike way. *NAKED* was about the experience of what's happening; *SUN VIRGIN* was more enigmatic. When it first came out, no one could make head nor tail of it, but now people understand it—which scares me. I didn't totally get it 'til years later. Someone saw it and said this is a gay picture, and I thought, he's right. I had no idea at the time, twenty years ago." Indeed, the film is a piece of semi-cryptic Catholic cocksucker guilt where the auteur fittingly plays the lead and displays his sense of disgust while in the company of fat grotesque girls while, at the same time, he longs to be with some greasy Guido guy of his dreams. Featuring an almost all-Hebraic cast of morbidly obese Divine-esque Jewesses, wops and Yid dorks, as well as Kuchar as himself in the lead role sporting all-black Scorpio Rising-esque leather motorcycle outfit, *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* reveals that the filmmaker's preferred communication with girls is by way of belching and farting and his interest in boys is almost religious in a sort of ritualistic Catholic homoerotic sense where the lead character worships young men in a fashion not unlike how sexually repressed nuns pray to the image of Jesus on the cross. Of course, when it comes to both genders, Kuchar does not have the testicular fortitude to pursue any sort of meaningful physical relationship and instead attempts to impress his would-be-sexual-conquests with screenings of vulgar medical footage. A film with a sort of distinct dream logic that seems to be set more in the director's terribly sexually repressed fantasy realm than any sort of tangible reality, Kuchar's all-too-brief 13-minute experiment in middle class repression is indubitably one of the most idiosyncratic, enigmatic, and truly quirky queer themed films that I have ever seen and I say that as a fan of the oeuvre of Teutonic dandy Werner Schroeter. Indeed, the film makes anything that John Waters has ever done seem hopelessly contrived and insincere by comparison. Additionally, the film makes anything Jack Smith has ever done seem like the obnoxiously abhorrent aesthetic ravings

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of a hyperactive poof philistine queen. Most importantly, *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* is more thoughtful and intriguing than anything directed by the majority of so-called Structural filmmakers like Paul Sharits and Hollis Frampton that were working during the same era, as a playfully perverse piece of highly personalized preternatural cinema with a deep and bizarrely darkly joyous soul.

George Kuchar plays a college graduate who is plagued by Catholic guilt, fat obnoxious sisters (all of whom are played by fat and swarthy Jewesses despite Kuchar's own Slavic Catholic origins), and a low tolerance for alcohol. At the beginning of the film, a drawing of Jesus Christ is juxtaposed with a frigid sounding woman narrating, "he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it" from Matthew 10:39. In the next shot, a framed college graduation photo of Kuchar is juxtaposed with the same woman narrating, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" from Matthew 19:21. In the next shot, Kuchar is featured attempting to drink liquor out of a coffee mug, though he has a hard time swallowing it and seems to almost barf it up. From there, we witness a bizarre scene where Kuchar's Hebraic homeboy Larry Leibowitz plays piano while his mother Frances Leibowitz plays on a different piano that is positioned in the opposite direction. Out of nowhere, Mrs. Leibowitz grabs an old framed portrait of her and her son when he was just a small lad and stares at it intently as if disappointed that her little boy is a now a little mensch with sexual urges. In what is the first overtly homoerotic scene, Kuchar stares like a goofy gay goofball at a somewhat gawky guido boy named Joe Zinzi as if he wants to devour his dago dong, but the filmmaker becomes afraid of the wrath of god when he notices that his little friend is sporting a large crucifix necklace. Indeed, guido Zinzi will homoerotically haunt Kuchar for the rest of the film, but so will Christ and his deep-seated Catholic background. Somewhat strangely at almost the three minute mark of the film, it is insinuated that Kuchar might actually be dead as the Jesus portrait from the beginning of the film closes to reveal a leather bound obituary reading "In Loving Memory" on the cover. Humorously, a storm knocks the obituary down and exposes that it was being propped up in a half-ass manner by a bottle of Right Guard deodorant. Whether Kuchar is dead or not is questionable, but it seems fairly undeniable that most of the characters in the film, including the protagonist, seem like sexually repressed phantoms that live in some sort of alternate dimension for forsaken perverts that lack the fleshy goods and charisma to obtain a mate.

As the film progresses, Kuchar continues to attempt to hold his liquor but he ultimately ends up spitting it back in his blue coffee cup. When Kuchar ends up going outside, the film ends up taking an all the more mystical tone that only gets all the more bizarrely esoteric as it progresses. After a segment where the matronly narrator states, "Only as your pride slowly crumbles will you get the glimpse of true humility," Kuchar uncovers a mirror that is covered with pieces

of fruit and closely stares into it in a scene that is certainly a hilarious allegory for homosexual narcissism. At this point in the film, Kuchar begins a temporary excursion in so-called heteronormality and tries in vain to attempt to court a somewhat chubby girl that sometimes has a parakeet resting on her shoulder who he watches playing Beethoven on a piano while seemingly like he is bored to death. When Kuchar attempts to pick a rose for the girl in a scenario one might interpret as his abject failure at attempting to live as a heterosexual man who courts women, he ultimately fails pathetically and merely pricks his finger instead to the point where blood is gushing out of it (not long after, the girl also receives a bloody finger). In another scene that illustrates Kuchar's decided disinterest in the fairer sex, the protagonist is featured sitting on a stuffed animal adorned bed while sporting leather-fag biker gear and keeping his distance from his would-be girlfriend, who is admiring herself in a compact mirror and seems to be waiting in vain for her hapless beau to peck her on the lips. In a preternaturally potent montage that sort of feels like an experiment in subliminal pop art, shots of the pseudo-girlfriend displaying where she pricked her finger on a rose are juxtaposed with Kuchar checking out his guido pal Zinzi, who gives him a flirtatious knowing smirk. Notably, during this montage, Kuchar is sporting the leather biker outfit and a pair of black sunglasses, which one might interpret as the sort of idealized macho homo that he wishes he was. In the same montage, Kuchar is also featured stealing a Beethoven bust and throwing it into a dirty above ground pool in a scenario that seems symbolic of the protagonist's sacrifice for sodomy (after all, Kuchar's female 'love interest' was featured in a previous scene playing Beethoven on the piano). After Kuchar tosses both the Beethoven bust and a partly deflated beach ball in the pool, the girlfriend is featured sobbing hysterically while staring at a goofy portrait of the protagonist. Naturally, Kuchar and his little fake girlfriend are not featured in another single scene together for the remainder of the film, thus confirming that the poof protagonist has rid himself of any heterosexual pretenses that he might have had before and has accepted the fact that he is about as straight as a circle.

After his failed girlfriend cries to the point where her face is literally soaked with tears as if someone hit her in the face with a water balloon, Kuchar is depicted calling a fat Jewess on the phone and belching into the receiver when she picks it up. Hilariously, the heavyset Hebrewess responds to Kuchar's fairly powerful burp by farting so loudly that she causes the bed that she is lying on to shake. From there, the viewer is forced to endure the unsightly sight of fat, Divine-esque Jewesses applying lipstick, smoking cigarettes, and playing with kitty cats, among other things that seem to make a mockery of femininity and the so-called fairer sex in general. For whatever reason, during this truly grotesque kosher chick montage, a random photo is spliced in of a young black bourgeois mother staring lovingly at her young daughter as she prays in a scene that—whether intentional or not—seems to hilariously highlight the absurdity of the

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American negro's devotion to the white man's brand of Christianity. In a scene that may or may not be of Kuchar as a child, a boy is depicted playing with a cardboard toy 'skeleton-plane' in a scenario that hints that the filmmaker is dead and that he is now merely floating back and forth through time (which would explain the overall dreamlike nature of the film). After the surreal skeleton-plane scene, Kuchar trips an obese Jewess and causes her to spill coffee on the cover of a comic called "Teen-Age Love" featuring an attractive young man and woman embracing on the cover. Of course, the spilled coffee scene seems to symbolize Kuchar's rejection of all-things-heterosexual. In the end, George screens footage of a man showing off his rather large and flexible Adam's apple, as well as surgery footage. While screening the footage, Kuchar spends more time watching his friend than the actual film, thereupon indicating that he has finally embraced his homosexuality, even if he has yet to physically act upon it. When the surgery footage ends, *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* also fittingly ends.

Notably, in a segment from a lecture in the documentary *George Kuchar: The Comedy of the Underground* (1983) directed by David Hallinger, Kuchar states regarding the genesis of his film and why he decided to make a sequel to *Hold Me While I'm Naked*, "I had myself in the picture and there were all these trilogies coming out... Antonioni's was coming out with trilogies... Satyajit Ray was coming out with these trilogy movies... So I wanted to make one so I put myself in another picture called *ECLIPSE OF THE SUN VIRGIN*. *ECLIPSE OF THE SUN VIRGIN* hit more closer to home. Some of you may realize that...those that know me...that it came close to home. So therefore I had to change it...I had to make it more ambiguous and have the plot line more like a dream...So that it doesn't tell that much." Of course, while absurdly esoteric for a Kuchar flick, there is no doubt while watching *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* that it is an extremely personal film about homosexuality and the seemingly innate neuroticism that accompanies it, especially if you had a strict religious upbringing like the filmmaker, who never quite let go of his Catholic roots as his films readily demonstrate (in fact, at various points in his career, Kuchar has credited Catholic iconography and ritual as influencing his distinct aesthetic sensibilities as a filmmaker, which is especially apparent in his highly confessional video diary *Temple of Torment* (2006)). Interestingly, Kuchar would once state in a somewhat self-deprecating tongue-in-cheek fashion regarding *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin*, "I dedicate this film poem to the behemoths of yesteryear that perished in Siberia along with the horned pachyderms of the pre-glacial epoch. This chilling montage of crimson repression must be seen by the victims of perversity, regardless of sex or age. Painstakingly filmed and edited, it will be painful to watch, too." Of course, considering his strong Catholic background and the era he grew up in, it is easy to see why Kuchar had some major hang-ups regarding his homosexuality, which his mother was apparently not too glad about, or as the filmmaker once confessed in regard to some of his seemingly traumatic per-

sonal experiences, "I made a transvestite movie on the roof and was beaten by my mother for having disgraced her and for soiling her nightgown. She didn't realize how hard it was for a 12-year-old director to get real girls for his movie." Although quite different aesthetically speaking, *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* is quite comparable to Gregory J. Markopoulos' masterpiece *Twice a Man* (1964) in terms of being a sort hyper hermetic homo 'coming out' film that depicts the depression and sense of despair that results from being a young gay man from a fairly normal middle class background.

While Kuchar once confessed, "I don't see myself as a gay filmmaker....I don't think other people see me as a gay filmmaker either because certain of my films don't deal with that—and because I don't grab my student audience and fondle them on the side. Curt [McDowell] felt the gay scene was a ghetto," *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* is unequivocally an innately gay film directed by a filmmaker of the extra queer persuasion and, interestingly but not surprisingly, it also happens to be what is probably the most difficult, offbeat, baffling, and just plain curious work that he ever made. Incidentally, the same also can arguably be said of gutter auteur Andy Milligan whose first flick *Vapors* (1965) is not only his only overtly gay and least exploitative film (even if it features a dangling cock at the end), but also easily the most artsy fartsy and idiosyncratic flick that the AIDS-ridden sadistic sod filmmaker ever sored. Undoubtedly, what films like *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin*, *Twice a Man*, and *Vapors* demonstrate is that repression and persecution of homosexuality at least had some positive consequences, as it resulted in truly groundbreaking art that reflects the height of human misery and melancholia from a sort of highly introverted gay perspective. Of course, what makes Kuchar's films different from works like *Twice a Man* and *Vapors* is that it manages to create a sort of delectably disharmonious marriage between camp and pathos, which seems totally oxymoronic upon hearing but makes total sense in the wonderfully wayward world of *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin*, which is probably the only film ever made that makes gay self-loathing seem like a quite merry experience.

-Ty E

PAGAN RHAPSODY
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George Kuchar (1970)

With my growing obsession with the films of the Kuchar twins, especially in regard to the more prolific brother George (*The Devil's Cleavage*, *Symphony for a Sinner*), I have discovered that a scene featuring a gigantic monster turd in a toilet does not exactly make for bad melodrama, or at least so is the case with *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970), which seems to be one of the more underrated cinematic works directed by the unfortunately belated *The Mongreloid* (1978) director. Apparently, as the director would oftentimes reveal himself during lectures, many film critics wrongly believed that George K. was "all washed up" after the release of his hilariously self-pitying masterpiece *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) because they felt that none of his other cinematic works could ever possibly live up to that work, yet I would argue that he has directed various superior works since then, especially around the same time period (for example, the film's somewhat lesser known sequel *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967) is, at the very least, just as good and certainly more intricate and ambitious). Indeed, while I am not totally sure that *Pagan Rhapsody* is unequivocally superior to *Hold Me While I'm Naked*, it is indubitably at the same level, even if it lacks the same fiercely and neurotically self-reflexive tone. An eclectically tragic micro melodrama of the hypnotically high-camp sort that demonstrates why Kuchar was a master at being able to pack more 'pathos' (or, more accurately, 'bathos') and hysterical emotions in about 20-minute than most filmmaker can pack into an entire feature, the unhinged featurette is notable for featuring an eclectically tragic(omic) and romantically cataclysmic conclusion where every single major character suffers a distinctly dejecting end that certainly inspired the early films of John Waters (who once stated of Kuchar and his brother that they, "...made me want to make films. THEY are the reason."). Ironically, despite being one of Kuchar's most pessimistically tragic and even misanthropic cinematic works, the auteur did not originally intend it to be as such, or as he once stated himself that, "[although] originally not scheduled as a tragedy, things swiftly changed as the months made me more and more sour as I plummet down that incinerator shaft I call my life." Featuring busty yet brainless big bosomed scheming whores, less than handsome lovelorn pseudo-aristocrats with bastardized noble blood, self-loathing closet queen playwrights who have dubiously dedicate their lives to writing heterosexual high dramas, and a couple other more minor but no less colorful characters that remind the viewer that Kuchar was just as good at finding the right superstars for his films as Fassbinder, *Pagan Rhapsody* is an elegantly obscene and largely anti-erotic cinematic ode to those that find romance films and romance in general to be rather repugnant. As one can expect from a Kuchar flick, there are no morally righteous and dignified fair ladies, but instead conniving and self-absorbed sluts whose use their twats as their sole means of

survival, whether it be robbing a rich fat brokenhearted loser out of his money or attempting to con empathy and protection from a lonely art fag. Of course, what makes Kuchar's film different from most films in general is that the abhorrent (anti)heroine/femme fatale gets what she deserves in the end by dying the most absurd and undignified of tragicomic deaths. On the other hand, men are depicted in a no less unflattering light, as the film demonstrates that even repressed homosexuals can be conned and cuckolded via the wiles of wicked wanton whores, thus exposing man's greatest and most perennial weakness. Ultimately, *Pagan Rhapsody* is a rare example where the typically preposterous phrase "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" has real meaning, as it is a film that reveals things about the so-called fairer sex and heterosexual relationships from a poof's perspective that most straight men are either too blind and/or too afraid to see.

There are probably few things that are more pathetic to a tearoom-lurking gay man than a lovelorn heterosexual who has yet to get over a woman that has long vanished from his life, or so one would assume while watching *Pagan Rhapsody* where a rather wealthy yet all the more miserable middle-aged fat fuck named Edgar (Kuchar regular Bill Cowan of *Color Me Shameless* (1967) and *Encyclopedia of the Blessed* (1968)) attempts to pay tribute to his long deceased beloved by contracting a young latent homo named Camillo (Lloyd Williams) to write a play about their lurid love affair, but ultimately ends up committing suicide when a scheming cunt of a femme fatale who he hires to portray his dead lover betrays him and ultimately destroys the entire project in the process. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, Edgar states to Camillo following a lavish credit sequence, "You understand, Camillo, that I'm not exactly an Adonis, but I do possess royal blood...at least on my mother's side of the family. My affair with the Countess Del Monaco was, therefore, not a national scandal but a beautiful affair. An affair I wish you to immortalize on the stage with your remarkable talents as a playwright. Although it's been fifteen years since her tragic death in a skiing accident in Zürich, her memory is more real to me than all the wealth and extravagant garbage I have accumulated since." Edgar's most magical night with the Countess Del Monaco apparently involved the two playing an otherworldly arpeggio-driven rhapsody, which also happens to be the film's exceedingly ethereal score, on a piano together during a romantic evening that eventually evolved into sex and mutual declarations of love, or as the mixed blood aristocrat states in a somberly nostalgic fashion, "I can remember us now. That night at the Steinway." As poor Edgar will soon learn during his hopelessly and ultimately tragically failed attempt to create a lavish stage play in tribute to his belated beloved, it is futile to attempt to recreate or even pay tribute to a glorious romantic past, especially when you live in a pathetically prosaic present and are surrounded by whores and homos who could certainly care less about such banal things.

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After hiring Camillo to write the play, Edgar immediately begins looking for a lead to play the role of his deceased lover Countess Del Monaco. It does not take Edgar long to find his female lead as he merely calls a somewhat questionable 'heroin chic' blonde named Olga (Janine Söderhjelm of Kuchar's *Unstrap Me* (1968)) and asks her to have her new roommate Eva (Jane Elford of Kuchar's *Tales of the Bronx* (1970) and *Portrait of Ramona* (1971)) come by his humble abode so that he can 'interview' her to see if she is right gal for the part. A not-quite-ravishing redhead with big bosoms who apparently bears a striking resemblance to the Countess (of course, Elford portrays the Countess during the flashback scenes), Eva is instantly hired by Edgar, who proudly describes her as the "perfect girl" and then sends her by Camillo's apartment so that he can tell her about her important part in the play. While Eva might resemble the Countess in terms of physical appearance, she could not be any less aristocratic, as she is more or less a proletarian whore who lives to con and seduce men but lacks the intellect to pull off any sensual scam that transcends simple one-dimensional romantic deceit. When Camillo opens his door after Eva knocks, he is absolutely stunned by her entrancing pulchritude, but being a crypto-cocksucker who has no real use for women, he is more intimidated than enticed by her. In fact, when Eva decides to get naked for no reason at all while lying on his couch, Camillo gets fairly afraid and immediately calls Edgar to tell him to immediately come by his place and pick her up. As demonstrated by a shot of her sinisterly smirking when Camillo meekly calls Edgar while there is an discernible expression of fear on his pudgy little pansy face, it is quite obvious that Eva gets a sick kick out of using her sex appeal as a means to strike fear in men, especially when it comes to pansy wimps like the playwright. As for Edgar, he calls Olga and tells her to drop Eva's luggage at his place as he is having her move in with him. Indeed, it seems that Edgar not only sees Eva as the star of his play but also as a sort of replacement from his long deceased lover.

A very voluptuous yet somewhat creepy broad with big tender tits and seemingly stoned glazed eyes, Eva has an almost ominous presence about her that is underscored by foreboding music that is played during crucial scenes featuring her. When Camillo remarks to Eva regarding the Countess Del Monaco, "She must have been a remarkable woman," she simply says nothing as if jealous of her blueblood predecessor's borderline mythical reputation as an otherworldly beauty that still holds the heart of a wealthy man despite being dead for about fifteen years. When Edgar foolishly gives Eva a dress that belonged to his beloved Countess, the redhead subsequently puts out a cigarette in a skull ashtray in a shot that will foretell the grisly fate that both characters will meet. While Eva becomes Edgar's live-in whore, it is quite obvious that she is rather repelled by her swarthy sugar daddy because at one point she walks in his bathroom and screams in abject horror upon discovering a gigantic unflushed turd in the toilet. Indeed, Edgar might be an elegantly spoken and dressed over-the-hill dandy of

partial noble blood, but he is also a fat slob who is clearly too lazy and careless to flush his inhuman horse-sized feces down the toilet when a beautiful woman is living with him. Needless to say, it does not take long before Eva goes behind Edgar's back and begins bringing dumb hunks to the house while he is away so that she can properly fulfill her seemingly voracious sexual appetite.

Not unlike many great leading men of film and theater history, the fellow that is cast for Edgar and Camillo's play, Desmond, is a homosexual, though he is so exceedingly effete and insufferably queer that he makes Montgomery Clift and Anthony Perkins seem about as butch as Herr Schwarzenegger. Naturally, being that Camillo is a sexually repressed sod with nil sexual experience, tragedy strikes when he goes by young booty-buffer Desmond's apartment by himself so that he can show the actor the play. While Desmond describes his play as "Pretty hot material," it is quite obvious that he is not interested in heterosexual romance as he as gay beefcake muscle magazines lying all over his apartment floor, which naturally makes Camillo somewhat uneasy. When Desmond decides to randomly take a shower, Camillo is compelled to follow him into the bathroom where he impulsively opens the shower curtain while his leading mensch is in the middle of bathing. Somewhat curiously, instead of defiling Desmond, Edgar instead subsequently encounters two completely unclad phantoms that appear out of nowhere and proceed to fuck in front of the clearly shocked and seemingly schizophrenic playwright. Of course, when one of the poof phantoms begins carnally manhandling Camillo, the closest queen becomes completely petrified and immediately runs out of Desmond's apartment as if his life depended on it. As can be expected from a repressed queer who is too afraid to even be defiled by other queer dudes, Camillo experiences a truly vomit-worthy absurdist tragedy of sorts when Eva eventually attempts to get him to screw her.

While redheaded hussy Eva might bear a striking resemblance to the late, great Countess Del Monaco, Edgar seems to begin to see her as nothing more than a low-grade counterfeit cunt and cheap carnal cipher whose value is purely visual. Indeed, while making love with Eva in a bed that is absurdly sitting next to a gigantic Campbell's Chicken Gumbo soup can that would probably cause Warhol to cream his panties, Edgar gets noticeably agitated, declares, "I have to get up, really," pushes his pseudo-lover aside, and abruptly leaves the house, but not before informing the raunchy redhead that he will not be taking her to a fancy restaurant that he originally promised to take her for dinner before. Far from offended or agitated by Edgar's flaky behavior, Eva seizes the opportunity to call her equally lecherous lady friend Vivian (Kuchar regular Donna Kerness of *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965) and *House of the White People* (1968), who was pregnant at the time of the shooting) and joyously declare, "Hello, Vivian. He's gone. Get the boys and come over." Although Vivian does not bring multiple boys to Edgar's apartment, she does at least bring by a single boy that wastes no time in sharing carnal knowledge with Eva, who is certainly flattered by the

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fellow's almost bestial behavior.

Needless to say, when Edgar abruptly shows up and discovers that his home has been transformed into a vulgar beatnik party pad and finds his 'kept woman' Eva being defiled by some scruffy biker type, he becomes homicidally enraged and begins choking the redheaded wench like a berserk Frankenstein monster on cocaine, though unfortunately the lecherous leading lady eventually manages to escape his grip and run out of the apartment after her male friend knocks out the melancholy pseudo-aristocrat. As an aggressively wanton woman that thinks she can get whatever she wants from any man so long as she shakes her ass or flashes her tits in the right fashion, Eva decides to seek both emotional and physical support in pathetic beta-boy Camillo and she does so by simply appealing to his innate male protective instincts by running to his door under the guise of being a poor damsel in distress and hysterically sobbing like a stereotypical battered housewife, "He's crazy. He's crazy. He tried to strangle me." At this point, the two embrace kissing and in the process Eva hilariously rips off Camillo's shirt after he makes a half-hearted attempt at grabbing her hearty derriere. While the two make love, closet homosexual Camillo is so grossed out by the entire anti-erotic experience that he begins violently projectile vomiting to the point of petrifying Eva, who is probably not used to men being repelled by her meat curtain. Horrified at the sickening sight of Camillo perversely puking white substances all over the place, Eva makes a valiant attempt to hightail it out of the apartment but in the process slips on some of the barf and hits her head upon falling backwards on the floor, thus killing her instantly. Meanwhile, Edgar decides to kill himself by swallowing an entire bottle of pills after Camillo fails to pick up his telephone. While playing the eponymous theme score on his beloved Steinway in the dark while it is violently thunders outside, Edgar's face becomes drenched in tears of sorrow. In the end, Edgar drops dead in the middle of playing, with his head fittingly hitting the piano keys and producing discordant noise when he finally succumbs to his self-administered intentional drug overdose.

Somewhat humorously, Pagan Rhapsody is partly best remembered today as influencing the infamous shit-eating scene at the conclusion of John Waters' classic art-trash masterpiece *Pink Flamingos* (1972), or as the Baltimore-bred 'Pope of Trash' stated in the documentary *It Came from Kuchar* (2009) directed by Jennifer M. Kroot in regard to the film, "There is a close-up of a turd in a toilet, which may have led the way to the end of *PINK FLAMINGOS*. I don't think I had ever actually seen a turd in a movie. That was... Even today, that was a fairly rare shot." Still, despite the film's fleetingly scatological tone, it is also arguably Kuchar's most eclectically beautiful, transcendental, solacing, and lavish cinematic work as a sort of shockingly hypnotic high-camp meta-melodrama that successfully manages a seemingly aesthetically schizophrenic marriage between the decadently gorgeous and hilariously grotesque. Out of all the cine-

matic works that I can think of, Kuchar's 20-minute masterpiece of melancholic celluloid majesty most reminded of a Jesús Franco flick of all films. Indeed, with its elegant aristocratic and neo-classical sets, heavy use of lit candles in dark rooms, ethereal piano score, unhinged psycho-dramatic essence, and hysterically exaggerated tragic tale of dark romantic deceit that eventually evolves into a deadly bizarre triangle, *Pagan Rhapsody* features a number of striking similarities with Franco's underrated Marquis de Sade adaptation *Sinfonía erótica* (1980) aka *Symphonie érotique* aka *Erotic Symphony*. Additionally, I would argue that Kuchar's film is the closest American aesthetic equivalent to the great high-camp German-language arthouse works like Daniel Schmid's *La Paloma* (1974) and Werner Schroeter's *Goldflocken* (1976). In fact, next to Kuchar's film, Jack Smith's magnum opus *Flaming Creature* (1963) seems like a retardedly redundant and aesthetically autistic piece of handicapped camp that really suffers due to its lack of bathos and storyline, among other things. In its depiction of a self-loathing fag's failed attempt at embracing heterosexuality, *Pagan Rhapsody* follows in the somewhat preternatural thematic tradition of the director's twin brother Mike Kuchar's classic short *The Secret of Wendel Samson* (1966), which brother George also stars in. Of course, unlike Mike's flick, George's film does not feature any sort of happy ending or positive resolution for the gay character (as Mike has revealed in interviews, his brother George was apparently more deeply influenced by their mutual traditional Catholic upbringing).

Notably, in the doc *It Came from Kuchar*, Mike Kuchar would state of his brother's film *Pagan Rhapsody* that it was, "about the underlying organic horror of existence." Personally, I feel that the film is more about the absurdity of life, love, and romance, but then again it is sometimes hard to read the exact intent of Kuchar's rather idiosyncratic work, hence its singular brilliance. Of course, there is no doubt that Kuchar's film informs the viewer that love, sex, and romance can drive most people to the point of insanity if the 'right' variables come into play, especially if you're a lovelorn heterosexual man who cannot simply go cruising in a public park or bathroom to get a blowjob like many homos oftentimes do. As Kuchar once stated himself in an interview featured in the book *Queer Looks* (1993) in regard to the power of sexuality and as to why he would maintain abstinence while working on a film, "People want different things, different shades and graduations. The world of sex is based on how you were brought up, other peculiarities. I've been to that world. There's an incredible driving power, it gives so much energy. It's also funny to see it masked in mainstream films—it will always surface, and you can read it, you can get the message. People are driven by sex. It'll drive you crazy. Everyone knows if you hump before making a picture, you lose that spark. You have to clean yourself up before you make it work. You have to go on to the steam room, get the poison out, the vices. Then you make a picture about the vices, but you have to be clean to do it. And then the process makes you pent up. I was never really able to merge the two. My pictures

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are mostly about the binges, the vices.” While *Pagan Rhapsody* certainly features a sort of gay gaze, its cynical conclusions regarding heterosexual romance are just as keen as the lavish Hollywood melodramas of Douglas Sirk, albeit with a sort of good honest no bullshit venom injected in them. While mainstream gay movies like Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and Tom Ford’s *A Single Man* (2009) attempt to persuade straight viewers that homos are just like heteros when it comes to romance, Kuchar’s film demonstrates that gays are more likely to be tormented by neurotic self-loathing and deleterious compulsions than the loss of a single lover. As for women, *Pagan Rhapsody* depicts them as parasitic and perpetually conniving creatures who see men as a means to an end and nothing more, especially if they are attractive dames that know how to take full advantage of their carnal currency. Sort of like the (anti)Rebecca (1940) of the late-1960s/early-1970s NYC underground, Kuchar’s film is a delectably deranged cinematic dance with dark romance that ultimately reminds the viewer why you should never allow a woman that you have just met to move into your home under any circumstances. Arguably more importantly, *Pagan Rhapsody* also reveals why you might look like a serious asshole if you attempt to create a piece of art in tribute to some great long lost love.

-Ty E

THE DEVIL'S CLEAVAGE

George Kuchar (1975)

Although I have somewhat mixed feelings, I have to concur with many of his fans that Slavic-American sod auteur George Kuchar (*Hold Me While I'm Naked*, *Symphony for a Sinner*)—arguably the most lovably degenerate filmmaker that has ever lived—created most of his greatest and most idiosyncratic cinematic works before he left his hometown the Bronx and relocated to San Francisco and became a perennial professor at San Francisco Art Institute where he would stay for the rest of his relatively singular life. Indeed, one might assume that relocating to the virtual homo capital of the world would have been artistically beneficial to a homosexual filmmaker, yet Kuchar's early keenly kaleidoscopic no-budget masterpieces like *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966), *Eclipse Of The Sun Virgin* (1967), and *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970), among various others, certainly demonstrate otherwise. Still, Kuchar did manage to direct a couple of unequivocal classics during his first decade or so again in SF, including the masterful *The Devil's Cleavage* (1973), *A Reason To Live* (1976), the rather underrated *Forever And Always* (1978), and *The Nocturnal Immaculation* (1980). In fact, it was not until his one-time-student turned great-love, hyper hedonistic queer filmmaker Curt McDowell (*Loads*, *Sparkle's Tavern*), died of AIDS in 1987 that Kuchar's artistic evolution seemed to end and that he got lazy and satisfied making relatively generic shot-on-video student films. While one could certainly argue that the digital dioramas featured in one of Kuchar's later works like *Secrets of the Shadow World* (1999) have a certain anachronistic schlock appeal, the film seems like a lethally kitschy piece of grating aesthetic autism compared to something as visually alluring and strikingly hermetic as *Eclipse Of The Sun Virgin*. In terms of sheer ambitiousness and intrinsic cinematic insanity, Kuchar's rare feature-length film *The Devil's Cleavage* is arguably the filmmaker's magnum opus and certainly one of the great unhinged masterpieces of the American underground. Indeed, it is hard to argue that *Hold Me While I'm Naked* is superior to the fecal-flavored tragedy and chiaroscuro-laden doom and gloom of Kuchar's bizarrely ballsy black-and-white feature. Modestly described by Kuchar himself as "an impressionistic series of romantic set pieces filmed in seedy interiors," the innately fucked feature reeks of perverse pulchritude and grotesque glamor, as if the aberrant auteur was attempted to direct something as ethereally beautiful as an avant-garde flick directed by French auteur Marcel Hanoun like *L'été* (1968) meets Josef von Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* (1932) for morally retarded John Waters fans and Troma turds. A sort of all-the-more-eccentric big sister film to the Kuchar penned and McDowell directed black-and-white pornographic cult horror classic *Thundercrack!* (1975), the film is equally grotesque as it is gorgeous as an unrelenting scatological farce that satirizes classic Hollywood melodramas by European-born filmmakers like

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Douglas Sirk and Josef von Sternberg and gritty film noir flicks by Nicholas Ray and Sam Fuller. Hopelessly convoluted in terms of plot and storyline as a cinematic work that feels like it is set in some alternate unhinged universe where time and place are dictated by the wayward whims of the mostly mentally unstable and sexually insatiable characters, *The Devil's Cleavage* is, in many ways, not much more than the psychosis-ridden fantasy of an obsessive cinephile that demonstrates more interest in golden age Hollywood than the sort of avant-garde and experimental cinema that Kuchar was loosely connected to. In other words, the film was not made with the intent of giving experimental cinema gatekeeper Jonas Mekas a hard-on.

Upon doing as much research I could on the film due to my suspicion that it would offend the outstandingly anally retentive and politically correct sensibilities of respectable bourgeois faggots and morally righteous white liberal wimps, I discovered that *The Devil's Cleavage* was not exactly beloved among many film critics, including bitchy gay ones, when it was original released. Indeed, in a 11/27/1975 review featured in *Soho Weekly News*, the nameless reviewer bitched regarding the film and his belief that Kuchar had totally degenerated as a filmmaker, "With *HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED* (1966), he made a kind of breakthrough into home-movie big time, and I can remember lines of Lower East Side patrons (mainly dirty old men) eager to suffer through the heights of a New American Cinema program just for 15 minutes of Technicolor Kuchar and of his star Donna Kerness wetting her magnificent breasts behind a shower curtain. We all thought someone had arrived capable of saving even independent cinema. But a lot of bathtub water has flowed down the drainhole, and I don't see that Kuchar has gone anywhere except he has moved from the Bronx to San Francisco and—as a friend pointed out—he has advanced from color to black-and-white." Additionally, in a slightly less scathing review featured in the *Chicago Daily News*, Christine Nieland complained, "Unfortunately, *THE DEVIL'S CLEAVAGE* looks a lot funnier on paper than it does on film. For one thing, Kuchar makes no concessions to technical competence. The dialog is scratchily recorded, while the black-and-white visuals are harsh and ugly. Secondly, once we get the idea, we realize that we're laughing at a one-joke movie. The level of parody remains consistent, which is to say the film never really tops itself. When you've seen one of Kuchar's grotesque housewives, you've seen them all." To his great credit, experimental filmmaker Warren Sonbert (*Short Fuse*, *Carriage Trade*)—a somewhat tragic auteur who is best known for cinematic works dealing with his own frail mortality and losing battle with AIDS—certainly seemed to have a better grasp of the film when he wrote in an article for the *Bay Area Reporter* entitled *An American Treasure*, "This uproarious romp through the fleshpot dumps of San Francisco is a relentless exploration of sin, greed, lust and various inviting body parts – like Douglas Sirk on *Ecstasy*." Of course, it is ultimately impossible to articulate the singular majesty of

the film in mere words, especially when describing an abstract (anti)melodrama directed by a man that was not very verbally articulate himself.

Undoubtedly, what virtually all of the reviews that I encountered in regard to *The Devil's Cleavage* have in common is that the reviewers seem incapable of accurately describing even the most rudimentary elements of the film's plot, which is certainly no surprise to anyone that has seen the flick. Indeed, the film is a hot and steamy mess of the nicely (and sometimes nefariously) nasty sort where logic and rationality are nowhere to be found. Indeed, Pacific Film Archive director Edith Kramer was not exaggerating when she stated, "I don't think anybody can copy or imitate George's style. His whole career has shown an independent spirit in the best sense—he's applied a very personal, unique style to an enormous body of work that's like a fountain, never running out of wit, energy, or inspiration," as the filmmaker's many and oftentimes quite blatant technical fuck-ups and plot inconsistencies are even part of his own charmingly preternatural auteur stamp. In short, it is quite obvious while watching *The Devil's Cleavage* that it was directed by a uniquely uncompromising lost soul that only creates films for himself and is imprisoned in his own scatological universe where common everyday human wants and needs, especially of the sexual and romantic sort, are the butt of one big perennial joke that seems to be at the expense at humanity as a whole, especially that portion of humanity that was born and bred on the delusional dreams of Hollywood. Directed by a homosexual man that mostly rejected the label of being a gay filmmaker that makes gay films as clearly indicated by remarks like, "I don't see myself as a gay filmmaker. . . . I don't think other people see me as a gay filmmaker either because certain of my films don't deal with that—and because I don't grab my student audience and fondle them on the side," the film is only queer in the sense that the auteur sees heterosexual romance as a patent absurdity that he has nil nature intrinsic understanding of, hence is depiction of it as the height of irrationality and insanity (but then again, he depicts gay romance as equally absurd). Indeed, in a Kuchar flick, love can only end in death, despair, sexual and social dysfunction, and/or abject delirium. Somewhat strangely (or maybe not so since Kuchar would subsequently pen *Thundercrack!*), the viewer can only conclude after watching *The Devil's Cleavage* a bisexual ménage à trois is the only reasonable antidote to heartbreak and lovesickness. When Josef von Sternberg said, "Shadow conceals—light reveals. To know what to reveal and what to conceal, and in what degrees to do this, is all there is to art," it seems that Kuchar took these words of cinematic wisdom more seriously than most. Indeed, there is probably not one single shot in *The Devil's Cleavage* where a character is not at least partly lurking the shadows, as Kuchar wants you to know these sad and mostly sexually depraved individuals are shameful slaves of their lustful longings. As many of his films rather hilariously reveals, Kuchar, quite unlike his sex-saluting cocksucker comrade Curt McDowell, was a sexual neurotic of sorts. In *The Devil's Cleavage*,

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the viewer is treated to what might be best described as low-budget neurotic erotic neo-Expressionism where carnal crimes are mostly boldly highlighted via the lack of lighting.

Divided into three equally debauched chapters that chronicle the romantic decline of the less the glamorous female protagonist, *The Devil's Cleavage* is a farcically forsaken film where madness is the method. Featuring a naughty nurse named Ginger (Ainslie Pryor) that lives in the seedy suburbs of San Francisco, the film could be described in literal terms as a cautionary tale about the perils of being a nymphomaniac that is married to a lazy and seemingly sexually impotent Hawaiian man that falls to deliver regular dick injections (as any honest lady will tell you, every healthy woman needs their hole to be filled every once and a while lest they go insane and become feminists or something). Indeed, Ginger's somewhat literally lethally lethargic hubby Edmund (Al Wong) is such a lazy loser that she is forced to search for new cock each day because he simply will not fuck her, let alone work or pretend to act like anything resembling a respectable husband. When Edmund briefly wakes up from his eternal slumber to beg "I want an egg," Ginger prepares a lavish breakfast and then feeds it to her beloved dog 'Bocko' instead of her yellow bedridden spouse. Aside from resenting her husband, Ginger hates the grotesque old fart patients that she takes care of so much that she regularly creates fake vomit and throws it at these poor helpless souls. A hopeless hawaiiophile that seems to be attracted to men that most women simply ignore, Ginger married Edmund because he is a Hawaiian aristocrat and she expected it to be an immaculate storybook marriage, but as she complains in terms of her grand disillusionment in regard to her somnambulist-like spouse, "He was the ancestor of some fat Hawaiian monarch [...] He promised me a pineapple plantation and a necklace from the teeth of a tiger shark. Well, as it turned out, he became the pineapple and the necklace became nothing more than the collar of the leash." Of course, since her hubby sleeps all day, Ginger has no problem cheating on Edmund and getting away with it, at least at first until a couple busybody bitches decide to ruin her marriage with an anonymous letter.

On top of everything else, Ginger is violently mocked and ridiculed by her slutty ghetto skank neighbors. Indeed, when one of the neighbors asks Ginger how her husband is and she nonchalantly retorts "not so good," a haggard bimbo (Kathleen Hohalek) hatefully remarks, "Maybe if you both slept in the same bed, he'd feel a lot better." At this point, Ginger gets in a brutal literal bitch-fight with the two neighbors that involves exposed panties and rabid bitching but seemingly nil landed punches. An unbelievably cruel and craven bitch, the haggard bimbo neighbor regularly tortures her own bedridden ghoulish mother, who bears a striking resemblance to Leatherface of Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (notably, the film was apparently completed in 1973, which was one year before the release of *TCM*), by dumping her own full turd-packed

bedpan on her. When a tall, not-so-dark, and slightly handsome handyman named Marvin (musician and Curt McDowell regular Mark Ellinger) swings by the haggard bimbo's humble abode to fix her dishwasher, she opts to drug the unwitting prole's coffee so that she can rape him. Unfortunately for her, instead of successfully molesting Marvin, the sexually predatory haggard bimbo gets disgusted, runs out of the room, and is subsequently suffocated to death with a plastic bag during a brutal display of much-needed Filicide in what is indubitably one of the most potently perverse Schadenfreude-inducing moments in all of cinema history. As for Marvin, he luckily manages to rob the haggard bimbo and then escape without even noticing that his would-be-rapist is being brutally murdered by her own progenitor.

When Edmund somehow wakes up long enough to receive and read an anonymous letter that reads, "Your wife is a tramp," it more or less spells the end of Ginger's horrible marriage. Indeed, while Edmund is reading the letter, Ginger is flirting with a sleazy Swedish beatnik doctor named Dave. A shameless slut that likes to pretend she has something resembling dignity despite the fact that she has downed about half-a-dozen dicks in the last seven days, Ginger cynically remarks to Dave, "Do you expect me to commit adultery for the sixth time this week? What sort of woman do you take me for?" and he reveals his sexual desperation by retorting, "I'll take you in sickness and in health until death do us part." Ginger also reveals her bizarre flirting techniques with Dave by telling him that she knew he was "Swedish" because, as she pretentiously states, "I could tell by the cold light burning in your eyes. Northern Lights . . . always shifting." Ultimately, poor Edmund dies under dubious circumstances and Ginger exposes how much of a self-obsessed bitch she is by complaining, "Oh, why is he always gone when I need him most." Not surprisingly considering her less than ideal circumstances, the death of her husband proves to be a blessing in disguise for Ginger as it affords her the opportunity of being able to relocate to wholesome Blessed Prairie, Oklahoma and begin a new life that is free of savage slut neighbors and worthless men that don't know how to treat a woman, or so she initially believes before she receives a rude awakening that involves a hunky yet less than faithful Midwestern mensch with a Cruising-esque mustache.

Upon relocating to Blessed Prairie, Ginger checks into a seedy motel where she meets a nice but morally feeble and sexually promiscuous motel manager named Frank (Curt McDowell), who hits on her by asking her, "Would you like some assistance to that Stairway to Heaven?" and then somberly telling her the abridged version of his hilariously tragic life story, stating that he is, "The only son of Mary and William. Mom died six years ago. She fell into a wheat-thrashing machine and became hamburger for the crows. My father's in a mental institution near Tulsa. He was driving the machine." As for Ginger, she explains that she is nervous about identifying her dead husband's corpse because she is afraid she will laugh and that the morgue attendant will realize that she is

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“just black inside” like “the gates of hell.” When Ginger complains of the degeneracy of Hollywood Hills, Frank retorts, “Debauchery here is limited to tilting pinball machines on the Sabbath” and recommends that they drink a local alcoholic mix known as the “Devil’s Latrine” in symbolic moment that seems to seal the fate of what ultimately proves to be a disastrously aborted romance. Completely shocked at his inordinate warmth and kindness and seemingly enticed by his boyish good-looks and pervert mustache, Ginger asks the motel manager, “Why are you so good to me, Frank?” and he autistically replies with not even the slightest hint of irony, “Once, about two years ago, in an Oklahoma City restaurant on Main Street, I read a saying by the owner of the place. It was written on the menu, right beneath the beverage section. It said, and I quote, ‘Be good and you’ll be happy.’ I’ve never forgot that, Ginger.” Unfortunately for the two new love birds, Ginger has to go identify her dead hubby’s corpse and the two must temporarily part company, so Frank makes her promise to come back to him during an extremely cheesy yet somehow foreboding moment of melodrama where the viewer immediately realizes that things will end terribly for both the nurse and her new gentleman suitor. Despite making Ginger promise to come back to him, Frank has not forgotten two of his ex-lovers and he makes the rather ridiculous mistake of attempting to reconnect with both of them after the naughty nurse leaves, thus ultimately eventually leading to tremendous soul-shattering heartbreak for all those involved.

After Ginger leaves, Frank totally loses his mind and literally treads snowy mountains and examines caves while yelling “Ginger, where are you?” in the hope of finding his new lover, as if he suffers from amnesia and has forgotten that she has promised to promptly come back to him. A self-destructively neurotic romantic hysteric with a feeble mind and all the more feeble heart, Frank cannot even bear being without Ginger for a couple days and soon finds himself getting into contact with two of his ex-flames, including a lecherous good-for-nothing slut named Loretta that he looks for in a sleazy bar. On top of hunting down Loretta, Frank calls his devoted ex-girlfriend Angie (Virginia Giritlian) and attempts to coerce her into leaving her abusive homosexual boyfriend Ronald to come back to him. Frank’s old flame Angie loves him so much that she confesses to him over the phone upon agreeing to leave Ronald and come back to him, “Why? . . . Why after so long do you stand in the way of the torrent I call my life? You’re the only dike I cannot crumble; the only wall of sandbags immune to my treacherous tides. You have only to say the words and I’ll head back north.” As a pretentious woman-beating prick that cares more about his “war buddies” (translation: fuck buddies) than her, Ronald is practically begging to be dumped by Angie, who ultimately uses a gun to make her way out of the door. As a man that proudly brags that her once picked her off the street and fed her “caviar and Ritz crackers,” Ronald refuses to let Angie go in peace and defiantly declares to her when she walks out the door, “I’ll follow you wherever

you go.” Of course, as a sexually confused mad man, Ronald naturally follows through with his pernicious promise. While on the journey to get back to her beau Frank, Angie passes a strange nighttime parade featuring unintentionally grotesque giant floats of Charlie Brown, Batman, and various other cartoon figures that seem like a bad omen. Needless to say, the perturbing parade is nothing compared to the hell that awaits her at Frank’s dilapidated motel.

While Angie is traveling across the country to desperately get back to him so that they can reignite their hot and steamy love affair, Frank hooks up with another ex-flame named Loretta at a trashy party, though he initially does not recognize her because she has become a militant Girl Scouts supremacist of sorts. Frank agrees to go with Loretta “into the darkness” and initially seems quite adamant about jumping her bones, but when she attempts to fuck him, he bitches like a retarded prude, “A Girl Scout doesn’t act like this, Loretta” and then curls up into a fetal position and pathetically whines, “I hurt all over.” Disturbed that Frank seems to have nil interest in her nice nubile body, Loretta asks him, “who has crippled you in mind and body?” and then bitches, “Strange . . . I brought you in here to help me become a woman and, instead, I find myself wanting you to accept your manhood.” Meanwhile, Ginger eventually gets back to the motel and happily declares while in the company of her large mutt Bocko, “I’ve come back, Darling, like I said I would, only I brought a friend with me this time,” but is perturbed to find Angie instead of Frank. When Ginger asks Angie who she is, she replies in a somberly poetic fashion, “A dead memory that someone dug up from the past” and then promptly points at gun at her somewhat less attractive rival. After complaining about Frank, “I must have been insane to believe that telephone call,” Angie attempts to shoot Ginger, but it is ultimately the former that dies in the struggle (or so the viewer assumes). When Frank finally gets back to the motel, he discovers a grisly crime scene and immediately emotionally breaks down during a much deserved moment of self-loathing (after all, he acted as an unwitting catalyst to the deadly estrogen-driven encounter). To his slight chagrin, Frank also discovers Angie’s ambiguously gay (ex)boyfriend Ronald, who states to him in a somewhat sinisterly sadistic fashion while curiously rubbing his rival’s back in an aggressively homoerotic fashion, “Why don’t you go out and lay in some meadow. The dew is already falling and it may rain later on. If it does rain, don’t run. There’s nothing like a little bit of god’s water to wash away the dirt to collect the Devil’s Cleavage.”

After losing Ginger, Angie, and Loretta, Frank somehow finds himself in an ultra sleazy bisexual ménage à trios with San Francisco handyman Marvin and Ginger’s slutty ex-neighbor Stella (Michelle Gross-Napolitano). As Frank mournfully declares to his new lovers, “six-dollar-a-night-key” is a “small price to pay for twelve hours for merciful amnesia,” especially when you manage to lose three different lovers in a single day despite all of the three lovers being hopelessly in love with you. Stella is an even more hopeless and sexually nihilistic case

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after breaking up with his abusive beau (overrated Judaic cartoonist Art Spiegelman in a rare acting role), as she longs for, “an eternity of forgetfulness,” which she attempts to achieve via cheap alcohol and dirty loveless sex. Apparently, Stella was enticed by Frank because she could tell he was “one of the lost” just like her and Marvin. Not surprisingly, lovesick loser Frank bitches of his love for the nurse from the “city by the bay” while in the ludicrously lusty company of Stella and Marvin, though that does not stop him from partaking in a threesome. Eventually, Frank seems to accept his new sorry lot in life and declares to his new lovers before embracing them, “Do you think there could be happiness for us? Not individually, but as a threesome? I mean, perhaps there is some truth in that theory of three being a sacred number.” Meanwhile, a seemingly severely wounded Ginger is coerced into following a slutty pseudo-blonde home where the female protagonist is more or less raped by the pseudo-blonde’s hyper horny sleazebag husband. While being sexually savaged by the sleazy scumbag husband, Ginger sees her beloved dog Bocko outside and cries out for him, but he does not even respond. Indeed, it seems that even Ginger’s beloved canine Bocko no longer wants anything to do with her. When Ginger complains, “I’m afraid. I’m so afraid” while symbolically bent over in a doggy style position, the sexually sadistic husband replies in a stern matter-of-fact fashion, “We’re all afraid” and then proceeds to penetrate her puss in a relatively savage manner. Upon being forcibly fucked, Ginger seems to finally accept her pathetically perverse plight in life as an unlovable slut that is not even loyal enough to be a dog owner. As one can expect from a Kuchar flick, love destroys all in the end and virtually all of the characters are left completely emotionally wounded. Undoubtedly, if there is any special insight that *The Devil’s Cleavage* reveals, it is that everyone is foredoomed to live in isolation and emotional solitude and that love can only end in devastating heartbreak and, in some special cases, a very ugly death.

As a somewhat quirky (although not quite queer) chap with a similarly perverse sense of cinephilia and bizarre affinity for classic melodrama and film noir movies from golden age Hollywood, Canadian auteur Guy Maddin (*Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, *My Winnipeg*)—a romantic cynic with a fierce fetish for anachronistic filmmaking techniques—is naturally a huge Kuchar fan and even regards *The Devil’s Cleavage* as one of his favorite films. In fact, Maddin would lovingly state regarding the film in the documentary *It Came from Kuchar* (2009), “The movie I really want to be able to quote but I have to be able to see it again and again and again to do it is George’s **THE DEVIL’S CLEAVAGE**. I just remember it having one line after another, each one eclipsing the previous one. And you could just tell it was just so much fun, and because they’re at the dawn of my adult film viewing experience, they might as well have been my earliest childhood memories. But when I’m on the filmmaking road, trying to reach my own version of perfection, I still see **THE DEVIL’S CLEAVAGE** floating

there.” Notably, as an extremely modest and humble man, Kuchar rarely boasted about his own films and their importance and once even summed his artistic contributions to cinema history by stating, “I just, um, made pictures,” yet he seems to have also regarded his black-and-white melodrama as one of his favorite films as indicated by his remark in *It Came from Kuchar*, “THE DEVIL’S CLEAVAGE played in England. I made it with the school’s camera, which was sync sound. I got letters...people really enjoyed it, so I felt so much better, you know. I was happy I made it. It’s a big, turbulent drama about a big city nurse and stuff.” Additionally, in an interview with Scott MacDonald featured in the book *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (1988), Kuchar remarked, “DEVIL’S CLEAVAGE has a revival now because of the punk thing. They like the heavy make-up and the costumes, and they like the subject matter. It’s real loud. When it first came out, some people liked it, some didn’t. Then it hit a period where everyone thought it was a grotesque horror. And now it looks good.” Indeed, for a film that is well over 40 years old, *The Devil’s Cleavage* is still shockingly subversive and, aesthetically speaking, nothing short of an otherworldly celluloid orgy of delectable obscenity and blissful odiousness, among other things. Certainly, in no other film will you find such a seemingly aesthetically schizophrenic mix of trashy toilet humor and chiaroscuro-heavy celluloid majesty. Indeed, Kuchar is probably the only filmmaker that has ever lived that has managed to so blatantly blur the line between excrement and ecstasy, dementedness and deliciousness, and pathology and poetry. In other words, *The Devil’s Cleavage* offers unwavering happiness in a steamy and fiercely fecal fly-ridden filmic form that is seductively shadowy as Carl Theodor Dreyer’s *Vampyr* (1932) yet as scatological and schlocky as the most shamelessly morally bankrupt of Troma turds. Undoubtedly, the fact that the film has never been released in any home media format is a crime against cinophilia and a sure sign that American cineaste oriented companies like the Criterion Collection and Kino Lorber Films are run by uptight prudes that rather peddle communist poverty porn and senseless feminist dribble than authentic American cinematic art.

Notably, in his book *Desperate Visions: The Films of John Waters & the Kuchar Brothers* (1996), trash film historian Jack Stevenson revealed in regard to the imperative relation between Kuchar and McDowell, “In return for Curt’s help on *THE DEVIL’S CLEAVAGE*, George assisted Curt on his 1975 feature, *THUNDERCRACK!* This would be their glorious gift to posterity – the world’s only underground porno horror movie. George titled and wrote the film, did lighting, made up and costumed lead actress, Marion Eaton, and acted in the role of ‘Bling’ – the psychosexually troubled gorilla keeper who attempts suicide by crashing his circus truck in a thunderstorm.” Indeed, in terms of aesthetics and the people behind it, *The Devil’s Cleavage* is certainly a big sister film to the more pornographic *Thundercrack!*, which also notably features McDowell’s jumbo juggled sister Melinda McDowell and a number of the other same

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superstars, including Michelle Gross, Virginia Giritlian, Mark Ellinger, and of course Mr. McDowell himself. Additionally, Kuchar's *A Reason To Live* starring McDowell is a sort of little sister film to the other two. While technically a melodrama of sorts, I would most certainly argue that *The Devil's Cleavage* is easily the most bizarre, horrifying, and decidedly disturbing of these three films, even if it is not technically a horror film and lacks the oftentimes downright unsexy pornographic imagery of *Thundercrack!* (though it does feature a couple limp dicks and large saggy tits). In short, I imagine the film would be nothing short of audio-visual torture to the majority of humanity, but for me *The Devil's Cleavage* is a healthy reminder why I love the art of cinema and why it sometimes takes the morbidly mirthful wisdom of a weird gay guy to realize the absurdity of getting all lovesick and melancholy over any one chick when there are so many other equally hysterical hymen-less harpies in the world. Indeed, as a guru of the cinematically grotesque, Kuchar might have been a literal cocksucker but he was no loathsome faggot and his films reveal more testicular fortitude than the majority of action and superhero films.

-Ty E

A REASON TO LIVE

George Kuchar (1976)

At the very end of his film *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966), tasteful trash auteur George Kuchar (*Pagan Rhapsody*, *The Devil's Cleavage*) looks directly into the camera and asks the rhetorical question, "I guess there's a lot of things in life worth living for...isn't there?," to which he seems to attempt to answer in his inordinately beautiful yet nonetheless sometimes scatological micro-masterpiece *A Reason to Live* (1976), which depicts the absurdist tragedy that ensues when a melancholy man whose wife is cheating on him decides to ditch both of his babes and move from San Francisco to Oklahoma to fulfill his dream of living in a sleazy motel in tornado territory instead of rotting away like some banal bourgeois bastard in a lame apartment in fag city. Starring his then-lover/student/longtime best friend, filmmaker-cum-pornographer Curt McDowell (*Thundercrack!*, *Loads*), in the lead role as a fairly pathetic mensch who gets a fair amount of pussy but seems completely apathetic to the couple of dames that want to down his dong, especially his wifey, Kuchar's film tells the joyously cynical story about how following one's dreams can lead one to lying naked and dead in some cheap Oklahoma motel, which becomes all the more curious when one considers that the lead character actually dies as a result of doing something that the auteur did on a yearly basis. In fact, not unlike the protagonist of the film, Kuchar would travel annually to Oklahoma where he would stay in the same cheap hotel so as to observe the weather and clouds as demonstrated by his shockingly entertaining video documents like *Weather Diary 1* (1986). Apparently co-directed by female lead Marion Eaton, *A Reason to Live* is an endlessly entrancing 25-minute melodramatic fever dream that oftentimes degenerates into a histrionic mock-ominous nightmare where a man's fate is both literally and figuratively in the clouds, at least until he finally decides to take action for what is probably the first time in his life and eventually must pay the ultimate price for a seemingly benign choice. Easily the most bizarre tornado flick ever made as a work that even makes Michael Almereyda's debut absurdist family dramedy *Twister* (1989) seem terribly tame by comparison, Kuchar's film is a sordid little cinematic work that mimics the tableaux and melodramatic hysterics of filmmakers like Josef von Sternberg and Douglas Sirk in the way that borderlines the line between respectful homage and preposterous parody. Of course, like his other masterpieces like *Hold Me While I'm Naked* and *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967), the film is genius in that it somehow manages to do the seemingly nonsensical by juggling camp and kitsch with *Weltschmerz* and melancholy in a way that makes it seem as if Kuchar is so hopelessly self-denigrating and neurotic that he cannot even take his own abject misery seriously, hence its singular brilliance as a an outstandingly aesthetically pleasing piece of phantasmagorical celluloid trash with a preternatural degree of class. A mix of nihilistic nerd neu-

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roticism, pathological cinephilia, crypto-cocksucker longing and despair, shadowy (anti)glamour and gloss, and morbid suicide fetishization, *A Reason to Live* is ultimately auteur cinema in the truest sense, even if Kuchar opted to give one of his stars a co-director credit when it is obvious that the film is 100% his own personal vision. Indeed, only George Kuchar could make a small apartment living room seem as mystifyingly foreboding as the famous swamp scene from F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927). A totally improvised work where Kuchar apparently created and personally dubbed all the dialogue after the film was shot, the campy genre-bending horror-thriller-melodrama hybrid with pseudo-mystical undertones is notable for being probably the only film ever made where taking out the garbage and a taking shit are depicted as climatic events that are worthy of extended screen time.

A Reason to Live begins with a shadowy woman (Marion Eaton of *Thundercrack!*) that looks like a drag queen attempting to impersonate Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) creeping up on her beau Vince (Curt McDowell) while he is less than gracefully sleeping on an ugly sofa and surprising him with a passionate kiss on the lips that he is less than passionate about. After kissing her boy toy, the woman stares out of a window and states to her assumed husband, "Wake up, darling. It's dawn" and then walks over to a plant and says while stroking one of its branches like it is a hard cock, "I'm going to give thanks to god for making dawn shed its light on my beloved." Vince reacts to his beloved's romantic words by pulling a blanket over his face, thus more than hinting that he is absolutely disgusted by the exaggerated love and affection his wife regularly showers him with. When his insufferable lady love goes to make breakfast for him, Vince secretly gets on the telephone and tries to call his busty blonde-haired sister Julia who, for whatever reason, has positioned a hose with water pouring out of it between her leg, as if she has a bad case of penis envy. Somewhat strangely, the sound of the ringing telephone proves to be a borderline tragic experience for Julia as it causes her to collapse on the ground. After his aborted attempt at calling his sis, Vince's wife asks him who he tried to call and he curiously ignores her question and instead replies, "I saw some cirrus clouds this morning and I had high hopes. I hoped that they turn into cirrocumulus then altostratus, then maybe a big nimbostratus would move in....But." Indeed, as the film reveals, Vince is more interested in clouds than cunts.

After Vince's wife declares to him, "I'll get you your pecan pie," the fairly gratifying 1950s melodic Sirk-inspired musical score of the film is abruptly replaced by a sort of erotic and energetic celestial synthesizer score and then the protagonist proceeds to call his slob mistress Chichi, who is moronically passed out on her couch with a lit cigarette in between her fingers and tons of trash all around her floor, including a pizza box with half-eaten pieces of crust, countless empty Pepsi and beer cans, and other items that indicate that the less than gorgeous harlot lacks even the slightest inkling of dignity and does not exactly care about

her health. When Chichi picks up the phone after stumbling around trash that is lying around her apartment, Vince asks her if she was sleeping and she lies and states, "No, darling...I was in the garden planting vegetables," which seems to arouse the hopelessly naive protagonist as indicated by his excited reply, "I like you...you're natural." From there, Vince proceeds to fondle and finger a small statue of a topless aborigine chick, which somehow magically turns on not only just Chichi, but also his wife too, who is secretly listening to the entire conversation on the other line in another room. At the end of their largely wordless orgasmic phone conversation, Vince declares to Chichi, "I'll meet you at moonrise." After his worried wife asks, "Going already?" and proceeds to cry, Vince begins walking through the street of San Francisco to meet Chichi, but tragedy strikes for his slobbish mistress when she is in such pain as a result of intestinal issues that she has to crawl to the bathroom and subsequently takes such a massive dump that she has to use a large stake to get the turd pile down the toilet when it fails to flush. Meanwhile, after scrawling on the ground near a skull, Vince's sister Julia goes outside and states to a fellow dirty blonde that may or may not be her girlfriend, "Nora, I tried to kill myself." Somewhat humorously, annoyingly happy-go-lucky Nora, who is tending her garden, responds to Julia's mundanely stated confession by passionately embracing her, calling her "foolish," and then giving her the following timeless advice, "Remember...there are three things in this world that you can do: you can do good, you can do bad...or you can do nothing." Obnoxious optimist Nora also states to Julia, "Lookout there, Julia. A fog is coming to us...it will give you strength," but not long after ominous music begins to play and fog proceeds to engulf the SF suburbs in a scene that eerily foreshadows the series of absurd tragedies that will soon destroy most of the characters in the film.

After finally managing to get her giant turd(s) flushed down the toilet, Chichi, who is late as a result of her major bowel problems, makes a frenetic attempt to meet Vince in time for the moonrise and in the process she absurdly attempts to wave down a taxi in an open field and then subsequently falls off of a cliff after carelessly not watching her step in her valiant struggle to get to her boy toy. Meanwhile, Vince's wayward wife almost suffers a complete mental breakdown while taking out the trash. As a result of the fact that Chichi did not meet him in time for the moonrise and thus probably assumes that she stood him out, Vince goes to see Julia, complains to her, "Sis, I feel sort of bad," and while sharing a coke with her during an extra touching brother-sister moment proudly declares, "I'm leaving this place, Sis." After confiding in Julia, "I saw some cirrus clouds this morning and I had high hopes. I hoped that they turn into cirrocumulus then altostratus, then maybe a big nimbostratus would move in, but I'm leaving this place, Sis," Vince goes back to his place and reads a book entitled Oklahoma Weather by meteorologist Gary England (who is apparently a pop culture icon in Oklahoma City and who had a cameo in Dutch master

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cinematographer turned Hollywood hack filmmaker Jan de Bont's blockbuster *Twister* (1996)). In the next scene, Vince is featured standing stoically in front of a large airplane during a sunny day while putting on a pair of sunglasses on like he is a man on the mission yet he ultimately ends up at a sleazy motel in Oklahoma where he plans to start his supposed dream life. Unfortunately, while downing a banana like it is a pulsating purple-headed monster, Vince sees a news report on TV about a tornado warning in his area, but of course he makes no attempt to seek safety elsewhere because he has come to Oklahoma to experience the splendor of mother nature's destruction. After Julia catches a news program about how a tornado ravaged Oklahoma, Vince's unclad corpse is featured on the floor of his ravaged motel room and next to one of his feet is a newspaper with the headline "Twisters, High Winds Rip Area" and "Tornado Hits Apartments." After seeing a young muscular negro father and his two young children appear on the news, Julia immediately turns off her TV, heads to her bathroom, fills up the bathtub, stands inside said bathtub, and then puts her fingers inside a light bulb socket, thereupon finally achieving her dream of committing suicide and possibly reuniting with her recently deceased brother, who arguably committed a sort of passive self-slaughter. While Nora is horrified upon hearing Julia's gruesome ear-piercing screams while she is outside fiddling with her garden, she soon gets happy upon seeing fog entering the area, as she sees it as another good omen, even though all the recent series of events have affirmatively proven otherwise. Of course, Nora's happiness does not last long when Julia's skeleton appears from an upstairs window and cynically states, "Look, look out there! The fog is coming. It will give you strength" while smoke oozes out of the eye-sockets of her completely fleshless skull, which resembles one of the various corpses of German citizens that were burned alive during the Allied bombing of Dresden during World War II due to the fact that it still covered with a head full of hair. Indeed, *A Reason to Live* may begin as a lurid melodrama but it concludes as a sort of pseudo-supernatural horror flick.

As far as I am concerned, when it comes to the seemingly oxymoronic category of truly cultivated psychotronic celluloid, *A Reason to Live* is like the *Black Narcissus* (1947) of the trash avant-garde, albeit featuring debauched dames with bad dye jobs instead of naughty nuns and clouds and tornadoes instead of mountains, among other things. Evoking films ranging from William Dieterle's *Fog Over Frisco* (1934) to von Sternberg's *Ana-ta-han* (1953) to Sirk's William Faulkner adaptation *The Tarnished Angels* (1957) and featuring lavish and vaguely oneiric phosphorescent black-and-white celluloid, the film is really like no other (aside for some of Kuchar's other flicks) yet it has only ever been released on VHS as part of a 'Best Of' video compilation entitled *Color Me Lurid* (1966-1978), which also features *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966), *Wild Night in El Reno* (1977), *I, an Actress* (1977), and *The Mongrel* (1978). Like his *Weather Diary* videos, Kuchar's *Wild Night in El Reno* is notable for

continuing the filmmaker's weather watching fetish. Notably, Kuchar would reveal that there are ancestral roots attached to his storm and weather fetish in Jennifer M. Kroot's doc *It Came from Kuchar* (2009) where he tells the seemingly apocryphal story, "Mom was born in the Ukraine. She was a farm girl. There was a lightning storm. One of the farm boys ran into a bale of hay to escape the rain and lightning hit and incinerated him...And that's why she's always been afraid of electrical storms. You couldn't calm her down. I've always liked lightning and thunder and I'd always be by the window and she's say, 'Get away from the window!,' and she'd be very agitated." Indeed, like much of his work, *A Reason to Live* seems to be at least partly rooted in Kuchar's somewhat morbid mommy issues, albeit in a more rebellious way since Mrs. Kuchar apparently was horrified by inclement weather yet the filmmaker loved it. As to whether or not Kuchar wanted to be killed by a tornado, that remains to be seen but I suspect that he felt it would be a romantic way to die, especially after watching his film.

As quoted in the book *Queer Looks* (1993), Kuchar remarked regarding certain minor problems he had with his ostensible 'co-director', "I had fun photographing *A REASON TO LIVE*—it was all done with a Bolex, and the sound was dubbed in later. Plus I loved designing Marion Eaton, although she was horrified at the result; because it was black and white, I wanted the lipstick to look just right, to stand out, and I had to redesign her eyebrows. I liked the way the sofa looked when you took the cushions off—you could see the shapes of the springs underneath. Marion couldn't understand why I'd want such a horrible-looking sofa in the film. I explained that this movie was about a relationship falling apart, about disillusionment, I guess." Apparently, Eaton, who is probably best known for her performance in the Kuchar penned and McDowell directed epic 'old dark house' porn flick *Thundercrack!* (1975), had somewhat mixed yet largely positive feelings about the film, or as she once stated herself regarding her experiences, "*A REASON TO LIVE* was the first time I did a film for George that was not scripted. It was pure improvisation and it wouldn't have sync sound, so I wouldn't be using his language, his feelings. And it was a learning experience for me, that I got to share with him [...] George wanted me to empty the garbage [laughing] wearing this dress. It was a little hard for me to get that together until it finally clicked through my mind that when I empty the garbage myself in my house in Mill Valley, I would go out and walk up the stairs in this beautiful day and that's when I'd usually think about the poetry that was going on my mind while doing this mundane task. So, I was really pleased with the shot, the way it came out, because this woman who is feeling a great deal of emotional dramatic tension has to perform this mundane act and so there's...I can't finish that; I don't know why; I got lost..."

With its crypto-cocksucker material that emphasizes camp over actual cock-sucking as personified by Kuchar's then-lover playing a sort of dime-store Don

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Juan who is adored by various lecherous ladies, *A Reason to Live* offers a great example as to why the filmmaker once stated regarding his loathing of being described as a fag filmmaker, "I don't see myself as a gay filmmaker....I don't think other people see me as a gay filmmaker either because certain of my films don't deal with that—and because I don't grab my student audience and fondle them on the side. Curt felt the gay scene was a ghetto. He loved mixed crowds because he liked straight guys. Another friend of mine, Dan Turner, was saying how he liked interchange situations. That's where I come from." Indeed, one of Kuchar's greatest talents as a filmmaker is that, not unlike Andy Milligan and to a lesser extent John Waters, he was oftentimes able to mask his homo sensibilities and give them an ostensibly hetero form and ultimately assembled with *A Reason to Live* a delectably disturbing subtextual melodrama that puts all the films of Sirk to shame in terms of its scathing critique and ironical cynicism in regard to seemingly banal subjects like love and romance, which is something that people of all sexual persuasions can relate to. Somewhat ironically considering its various depictions of brutal deaths, *A Reason to Live* really does offer some reasons to live, albeit some fanatically self-destructive ones like tornado hunting, sexual promiscuity, and suicide ideation. Of course, as Kuchar once stated in regard to a scene in *Weather Diary 3* (1988) where there is a shot of him taking a piss, "Everyone wants to be a stripper, but if you don't do it now, you'll go to your grave bitter. That's how I felt. What could be better in your past than a nude scene? It's a dream come true. We all want a scandalous past—it's what Hollywood pictures were always made about. I think it's the dream of our nation, to be a person like that."

-Ty E

STAR WARS EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE

George Lucas (1977) Stars War IV: A New Hope is a film school jerk off fest. George Lucas obviously took all he learned at film school and put it all together in a "futuristic" way. Essentially Star Wars is just another Samurai or Western. Just add the sci-fi setting.

John Ford was a huge influence on the film. The scene where Luke's Aunt and Uncle are found dead was taken from *The Searchers*. Kurosawa was another big influence as *Star Wars* is a loose remake of *Hidden Fortress*. Droid C-3PO was taken from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Leni Riefenstahl's third reich art masterpiece *Triumph of the Will* also influenced *Star Wars* (especially during the end heroic award scene). The "rebel alliance" seem to be modeled after Bolshevik revolutionaries (who were the most evil people in history). I am not surprise that an Antichrist like George Lucas would show props to mass murderers. The "Galactic Empire" is supposed to be modeled after EVIL NAZI BUTCHERS!!!! Lucas wasn't try to hide this when he decided to name the imperial soldiers "storm troopers." The soldiers (and Darth Vader) also share similar helmets to that worn by German in World War I and II. I like to interpret Darth Vader as Adolf Hitler. Adolf was a Jew that decided it was a time for a change just as Vader went from "good" to "evil." English hammer film actor Peter Cushing (who played a Nazi in *Zombie classic Shock Waves*) plays Grand Moff Tarkin who looks like he was modeled after Nazi Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels. Tarkin and Goebbels were both very charming characters.

Josef Goebbels Grand Moff Tarkin

George Lucas updated *Star Wars* with new and "improved" special effects. Like Steven Spielberg, Lucas seems to have the mind of a child. His obsession with candy polished special effects makes me sick. Lucas's net worth is estimated at \$3.6 Billion. Hopefully he will take the money (as it keeps growing) and build his own spaceship which might tragically crash in Uranus. Portrait of an Artist P.S: Mark Hamill is a little turd.

-Ty E

RAMBO: FIRST BLOOD PART II
RAMBO: FIRST BLOOD PART II

George P. Cosmatos (1985) I like to think of the legend of Rambo to be an evolutionary one. He first appears as a weathered and tortured anti-hero who happens to be the best of the best, hiding from people who have done him wrong. First Blood happens to be a powerful film conveying an important message against those discriminating against 'Nam veterans. Somewhere along the way, Rambo went from an artist painting a tapestry of death to a bonafide American action hero who sports his curly Wop hair pinned back with a greasy headband worthy of the Karate Kid. In the original Morrell book, Rambo dies. However, that is non-profitable and a pussy's way out, so George P. Cosmatos decides to resurrect him. While I don't particularly favor directors who taint an amazing film, it is true that Stallone held the reigns over this film. That would explain the jump from First Blood Part II to Tombstone. Rambo is back to help win the war. So while Rambo mines rocks in prison, Trautman comes to him with a mission. A mission so fierce, that Rambo couldn't say no. Rescuing P.O.W's has never been so difficult, especially when there is a traitor in their midst's. This is by my knowledge, one of the first action films to incorporate the usage of a cartoony sadistic Russian as the villain. As we all very well know, this political tactic is still being used to this day (I.E. Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skulls) It seems that people are starting to wise up to Spielberg's fetish for portraying National Socialists as an evil entity. So Rambo gets captured and in an intense scene, withstands the most extreme tortures. From here on out, Rambo is alive due to his extreme hatred towards his own country. This is the only real aspect that carries on through the first film. In First Blood, John Rambo is blown away at the reasoning of his rejection by the country he fought for. This time, he is left to die by his own country. The final words go along the lines of "I would die for my country and I want my country to love me as much as I love it" Strong words coming from a strong man. After his escape, Rambo takes on a chopper piloted by an evil Soviet. It's instances like these that make me aspire to create a syndicated television show facing Rambo off against various celebrities and Hollywood monsters, just to watch Stallone kick as much ass as he always does. First Blood Part II is by no means an excellent film, but it brings the character formerly known as Rambo back, and I love it for that. After all, Rambo is known for its political content mixed with Ass-whuppin. Bring on Rambo V.

-mAQ

RAWHEAD REX

George Pavlou (1986)

When I think of Clive Barker, macabre philosophy comes to mind. Along with sadomasochistic tendencies, Barker infuses a potential homosexual "flaw" to his bookwork that coincides with the horror creating new planes of metaphysical and abstract terror and depravity, in other words: "future of horror, and its name is Clive Barker." Clive always had a way of creating both exceptional stories along with films but we know his work towards film and video games are always both a bit sketchy. So what would happen, if someone without a true merit for filmmaking attempted to recreate a fabulous tale of inhuman godless terror? Well, the true answer to all these questions and more lie within the process of both making Rawhead Rex and viewing Rawhead Rex. The film is an absolute chore to finish without pausing. Granted, there are some true die hard fans of the film but that being said, their happiness towards the creative property was most likely birthed off the film first and then the comic/short story. Rawhead Rex started out as a godless "god." A creature undefinable by all modern science and judging by the contorted shape of its body, contemporary symmetry didn't exist either. Rawhead Rex looks as what would occur if Hey Arnold! fused with Pumpkinhead and it is nothing short of a lovely image, right? Wrong, Rawhead Rex was titled such as he was born of an undeniable 9 foot tall phallic image that looks of a wild, hairy, unnaturally shaped cock. Director George Pavlou decided to denounce Rawhead's fear of post-fertile women in order to change the scene into what seems to be yet another demonic possession film until we realize that one character, whom we expected to birth a hell spawn, is never approached by the lens again. Meanwhile, Rawhead Rex looks like an eight foot tall version of Donny from The Wild Thornberry's and we're supposed to take seventy more minutes of this seriously?. Something must have been lost in translation cause not even an incompetent coworker of mine could fuck up this badly this many times. It's purely shameful that this is the second film of Clive Barker's that he had disowned. My sadness is short-measured though because after this atrociously "almost entertaining" film, he directed Hellraiser. Rawhead Rex begins like any other "Nature gone amok!" film would - a poor schmuck who does his duty disrupts/pisses off a species of creature or a single entity into a widespread panic and/or chaos. In terms of horror, this very plot line is normally eligible on a Tom Clancy level, as in you can mix and match names, archetypes, and settings and normally come up with a similar thesis to a monster film without sacrificing the amusing value of the genre. An everyman photographer is on a business trip with his family in Ireland's country side when a huge monolith is unearthed and a goofy looking behemoth is born from the soil. So is the page that Rawhead Rex begins on and it's not a very good page. There really is no starting point for this monstrosity. Rawhead Rex begins on a long note

RAWHEAD REX

and features an emasculated, malnourished short note full of hypocrisies and text-to-visual error. Anything that the short story was known for is void on film - a toxic cinematic conundrum. It's very hard to wonder how such a simple plot could get so off track. "There was clearly a misapprehension over what [Underworld] was all about - they told me they wanted a horror movie and then took all the horror out! [I said], 'Look, if I get involved in Rawhead and you take the horror out again, there's nothing left as this is a monster-on-the-loose movie.' As they owned the rights anyway I thought I'd write a first draft and at least have some control over the project. Frankly, I needed the money at the time as well. I wrote a draft and a half and that was literally the last I ever heard from anyone. I was never invited on the set, never saw the promised plane ticket for Dublin, and all I kept hearing were pretty lousy things about the way the film was progressing." I'll never understand why I was ignored. It still remains a complete and utter mystery to me. Even to this day I've never received an explanation why I was never consulted over any of the major decisions to change the thrust or details in my original script. Either they thought I was useless and wouldn't have anything to contribute or else they worried I might have some valid opinions which would make too many waves." Rawhead Rex is simply another misconception from those assholes at the studios who simply do not value an artist's integrity. The tale of Rawhead Rex involved a monster who enjoyed feasting on children. In the film, Rawhead Rex, we get a movie about a Neanderthal creature with a receding hairline whom "grabs" a child and when the scene shifts angles in its cowardly way, we don't know if the kid is deceased or not. Or maybe that was just on my behalf. You see, after viewing The Host, I learned never to trust those "are they dead yet?" scenarios with children. A child is far too harmful to kill off camera or on and there within lies my doubt towards this experiment in faulty, belligerent filmmaking. As it seems, I remember now that Rawhead doesn't even kill in the manner of which it is supposed to. After a vicious mob attack, many suffer from missing faces and in this visual tale, it seems only chewing leads to slashed jugulars. Rawhead Rex may be entertaining in such a vain way as "Hey! I'm in the mood to turn on my television without having to waste a single brain cell thinking about any commercial values or sub-political messages. What's Rawhead Rex?" The title Rawhead Rex can only be mistaken for absolute trash but don't get it twisted. The short story was a wonderfully quick read, the film is a painfully dredging experience in films that go past their unwanted prime.

-mAQ

SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE

George Roy Hill (1972)

A nonlinear big budget Hollywood sci-fi arthouse flick addressing the Allied powers unofficial war crime of the totally terroristic firebombing of Dresden during the Second World War certainly seems like a sort of wishful alt-right fanboy fantasy yet, somewhat inexplicably, such an insanely idiosyncratic cinematic work actually does exist and naturally it is not exactly a famous film despite being based on a relatively famous novel. Luckily, it is also a great film that, despite being nearly half-a-century old, is rather fresh despite technically belonged to a genre that does not typically age gracefully. Indeed, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972)—a film based on American postmodern writer Kurt Vonnegut's 1969 novel of the same name—is, in my less than humble opinion, one of the greatest films of the so-called 'New Hollywood' era and certainly more deserving of notability than the various classic films associated with the movement as directed by the likes of Peter Bogdanovich, Hal Ashby, Miloš Forman, and Arthur Penn, among countless others. Likewise, I would also argue that it is a rare film that, not unlike Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), is superior to its source novel (in fact, Vonnegut was quite happy with the film and would even state, "I love George Roy Hill and Universal Pictures, who made a flawless translation of my novel"). Of course, the film's director George Roy Hill is best known for the New Hollywood classic *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969)—a sort of American Western answer to François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962)—which is a film that I have always found to be hopelessly soft, sentimental, and obscenely overrated. Not unlike his American New Wave contemporaries Michael Ritchie (*Prime Cut*, *The Bad News Bears*) and Alan J. Pakula (*Klute*, *Sophie's Choice*), Hill is a good argument against auteurism as a talented filmmaker that, relatively speaking, lacked a potent personalized approach and signature style, which was arguably a benefit to a preternatural picture like *Slaughterhouse-Five* that could have easily been an absolutely abominable artistic disaster were it helmed by a more monomaniacal and/or fetishistic filmmaker (speaking of, Guillermo del Toro, who has certainly demonstrated his commitment to the cultural marxist cause by introducing interspecies miscegenation in the fiercely fishy *The Shape of Water* (2017), announced in 2013 that he plans to remake the film in collaboration with silly semitic screenwriter Charlie Kaufman). That such a film was ever made in Hebraic Hollywood—a place that, more than any other, clearly has no sympathy for the complete destruction of an ancient German city and countless priceless pieces of architecture—is nothing short of a miracle and virtual fluke of cinema history that reveals Hill's inordinate artistic integrity as a rare Hollywood filmmaker that was clearly not willing to bend-over for Zion (notably, underrated kiwi mischling auteur Vincent Ward would later depict the firebombing of Dres-

SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE

den in a somewhat less effective yet nonetheless still potent fashion in his rarely-seen film *Map of the Human Heart* (1992)). Needless to say, had Hill prostituted himself by directing a holocaust film on a similar scale to *Slaughterhouse-Five*, he would probably be better remembered and more revered today.

Notably, the full title of Vonnegut's book is *Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* and the author is described on the title page as "A FOURTH-GENERATION GERMAN-AMERICAN NOW LIVING IN EASY CIRCUMSTANCES ON CAPE COD [AND SMOKING TOO MUCH], WHO, AS AN AMERICAN INFANTRY SCOUT HORS DE COMBAT, AS A PRISONER OF WAR, WITNESSED THE FIRE-BOMBING OF DRESDEN, GERMANY, 'THE FLORENCE OF THE ELBE,' A LONG TIME AGO, AND SURVIVED TO TELL THE TALE. THIS IS A NOVEL SOMEWHAT IN THE TELEGRAPHIC SCHIZOPHRENIC MANNER OF TALES OF THE PLANET TRALFAMADORE, WHERE THE FLYING SAUCERS COME FROM. PEACE." Indeed, as Vonnegut's author description (possibly unwittingly?) alludes to, one of the greatest absurdities of WWII, not unlike WWI, is that German-Americans made up the largest ethnic to fight for the United States against Germany and Vonnegut—a battalion scout with the 106 Infantry Division that was captured on December 22, 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge—even had the singular displeasure as "fourth-generation German-American" of witnessing an irreplaceable Teutonic city from his ancestral homeland being completely eradicated by his own countrymen while a POW in what was ultimately a literal 'holocaust' (aka 'sacrificial mass slaughter via fire'). Notably, Jean-Luc Godard of all people noticed the absurdity of this situation in his obscure feature *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (1991) aka *Allemagne 90 neuf zero* where it is narrated, "The US never understood the war, or took part in it. At best, their fight was not the state's fight, nor on the same battleground. The US can only imagine a civil war. It's always themselves and their own defects, personified by the enemy, that they combat in all wars. For them, war is a moral dilemma. When they were English, they fought the English. When they became Americans, they fought Americans. Once sufficiently influenced by the Germans, morally and culturally, they attacked the Germans. The first American to take a prisoner in 1917 was Meyer. The prisoner's name was also Meyer." Of course, life's great dark absurdities are what *Slaughterhouse-Five* is all about, hence its lack of popularity among the general public which prefers disposable neatly-packaged feel-good banalities to mercurial movies that challenge the mind and seep into the soul.

Alien abductions, the firebombing of Dresden, homicidal wop psychopaths with lifelong grudges, and a seemingly autistic affectless hero are just a couple of the seemingly discordant ingredients that make *Slaughterhouse-Five* so insanely yet ideally idiosyncratic, yet the film is no less exceptional in terms of its form as a nonlinear flick with a virtual 'jigsaw' approach to editing (courtesy of edi-

tor Dede Allen of such classics as *The Hustler* (1961) and *Night Moves* (1975)) that manages to mimic human memory in terms of switching back-and-forth between major events from the protagonist's fairly eclectically traumatic life. Indeed, it is an extraordinary film about an extraordinary life as lived by a largely less than extraordinary individual that just floats through existence yet somehow achieves a sort of strange truly out-of-this-world transcendence in the end. While technically a sci-fi film and undoubtedly one of the first to deal with the theme of alien abduction, Vonnegut clearly has no special love for the genre and merely uses it trappings for mostly philosophical reasons (of course, for Hebraic Hollywood to make a film about the horrors of the Dresden Bombings seems like science fiction in itself, but I digress). Just as in the novel, the film is a quasi-existentialist work where the magnificent meaningless of life is given a vaguely optimistic spin where the viewer is asked to focus on the good and forget the bad, even in a demented culture-destroying world where the Dresden tragedy occurred. Notably, in a special introduction featured in the 1976 Franklin Library edition of the novel, Vonnegut stated of the event, "The Dresden atrocity, tremendously expensive and meticulously planned, was so meaningless, finally, that only one person on the entire planet got any benefit from it. I am that person. I wrote this book, which earned a lot of money for me and made my reputation, such as it is. One way or another, I got two or three dollars for every person killed. Some business I'm in." Undoubtedly, Vonnegut's sentiments sum up the overall charmingly dispiriting spirit of the film, which is very much beautiful in a biting surreal fashion comparable to blood splattered across fresh white snow (which, quite fittingly, actually appears in the film).

Although a man that probably could be best described by the title of Austrian novelist Robert Musil's unfinished three-volume novel *The Man Without Qualities* (1930–1943), the film's protagonist Billy Pilgrim (Michael Sacks)—a tall blond American boy with an all-American Norman Rockwell-esque essence—has led a virtually magical life filled with great tragedy and heartbreak but also great wonder, intrigue, and splendor. A virtual cipher of a man that lead actor Sack portrays quite perfectly as far as effectively radiating a flat affect is concerned, Billy is clearly a model for the eponymous heroes of Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983) and *Forrest Gump* (1994), Chance the gardener in Hal Ashby's *Being There* (1979), Léon in Andrzej Żuławski's *L'Amour Braque* (1985), and Dougie Jones in *Twin Peaks: The Return* (2017), among various other examples. Luckily, Billy's character is perfect for such a story as it allows the viewer to more easily embrace a film that deals with both the very real horror of war and a sort of goofy science fiction that defies reason. Falling somewhere in between an 'Everyman' and Nietzsche's 'last man' with a good bit of autism thrown in for good measure, Billy is also in many ways quite typical of an American male of his era in that he goes off to war, gets married and has two kids, has a relatively successful career, and then retires, but only two events from his life give it true meaning:

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the Dresden firebombing and alien abduction. Of course, the latter is pure fantasy and a sort of expression of Vonnegut's own pseudo-metaphysical wishful thinking in regard to some intangible humanist heaven where even autists like Billy Pilgrim get to fuck premium grade pussy for eternity for an exceedingly erudite all-alien audience.

While the film begins during WWII with a seemingly lost Billy roaming around in a considerably chaotic snowy Europa, the film rather seamlessly weaves back-and-forth between his life, including before and after that war that seemingly left indelible scars on his curious psyche. The son of a fierce fat father that—to impress his equally big boorish friends—put him in a traumatizing 'sink-or-swim' scenario as a small child where he was thrown into the deep-end of a public pool while completely naked and a comparably ludicrously large-and-in-charge mouthy mother, Billy hardly has the makings of a martial soldier and he virtually sleepwalks through the entire war despite it also having a totally traumatizing effect on his life. For example, when the Germans give him a woman's coat to wear in an attempt to emasculate him, Billy is completely clueless that he is being mock until a British POW makes it crystal clear to him and even then he does not seem to care. Aside from surviving the horrors of the Dresden terrorist bombings and being forced to move countless charred kraut corpses with other GI POWs, Billy also witnesses the senseless execution of his sole friend Edgar Derby (Eugene Roche)—a kindhearted teacher and family man that acts as a sort of much-needed father figure for the hapless protagonist—who is punished for 'theft' by some overly enterprising SS men after randomly being spotted rather innocently grabbing a Hummel figurine from some ruins. Undoubtedly, Derby's absurdly senseless death, which is over a cute inanimate object that, rather innocently and sentimentally, reminds the poor character of his son and that one of the SS men subsequently throws away like trash after having the middle-aged GI swiftly executed, completely personifies the spirit of dark tragicomic absurdism that guides both the film and novel. Although Billy made a short-lived but completely unforgettable friend in Derby while a POW, he also becomes the #1 eternal enemy of a psychotic Sicilian-American named Paul Lazzaro (Ron Leibman)—a loudmouthed lunatic of the suitably swarthy sort that, arguably quite revealingly, has turned irrational homo-hating into a sort of unintentionally humorous poetic art—that vows to kill him one day because he quite wrongfully believes that he caused the death of his comrade Roland Weary (Kevin Conway), or as he initially threatens the protagonist, "A fag frolic in Wyoming. I'll be there, Pilgrim, waitin' for you." Needless to say, Lazzaro does kill Billy and, as someone hopelessly "unstuck in time" that experiences various events from his life at various times multiple times, the protagonist is well aware this death-by-dago awaits him.

While Billy survives the Dresden Bombing and, in turn, the Second World War, and then gets married, has two kids, and becomes a successful optometrist,

he seems completely detached from his 'life' and instead seeks sanctuary in his beloved doggo 'Spot.' After catching his son Robert (Perry King) masturbating to a centerfold of a sexploitation starlet named Montana Wildhack (Valerie Perrine of Bob Fosse's *Lenny* (1974)), Billy also finds a rare source of solace in the sensual lady and the silly sword-and-sandal (aka peplum) films that she stars in (and that his incessantly nagging lard ass wife, who he clearly does not love, highly disproves of). The Tralfamadorians—a group of highly intelligent and sophisticated extraterrestrials who exist in all times simultaneously—seem to realize this and transport both Billy and Montana to a virtual human zoo located on their planet of Tralfamadore, thereupon leading to an unlikely love affair between the protagonist (who is now middle-aged) and voluptuous diva that eventually leads to the birth of one son. As Billy tries in vain to explain to his pedantic son-in-law in regard to the important insights that he has acquired from these aliens, "On Tralfamadore you learn that the world is just a collection of moments, all strung together in beautiful, random order. And if we're going to survive, it's up to us to concentration on the good moments and ignore the bad." In the end, Billy even learns to accept his own rather absurd assassination at the hands of his deranged wop nemesis Lazzaro who kills him while he is giving a speech on the subject of Tralfamadore while in the Guido's shitty home city of Philadelphia. Despite Billy's insistence on remembering the good, the Dresden bombing, which acts both as the climax and 'centerpiece' of the film, sticks out the most in the end (as it should). After all, it is hard to forget the complete incineration of a singularly striking place full of happy children and old people (as Hill underscores during the pre-bombing scenes) that the protagonist initially describes upon first seeing it as, "the Land of Oz." Indeed, right before the climatic bombing scene, the viewer is teased with a quasi-travelogue of sorts featuring the most beautiful pieces of ancient Teutonic architecture juxtaposed with a composition by Johann Sebastian Bach in a virtually aesthetically angelic combo that arguably represents the height of apolitical German high kultur in an exceedingly ethereal scenario where it seems 'nothing bad can happen,' henceforth perfectly underscoring the true apocalyptic horrors of the firebombing of Dresden.

When I was in college, I once had this insufferably whiny slave-morality-ridden professor—a seriously shameless shabbos goy that once asked all the Jewish kids in my class to stand-up in a bizarre scenario of seemingly worshipful racial fetishization—that used to use his monotonous lectures to cry about being persecuted for being a "polack" (which, considering his relatively young age, seemed rather unlikely) or to philo-semitically proselytize for the chosen amongst god's chosen. During one fairly unforgettable lecture where he rather recklessly exposed the pathetic heights of his craven resentment-driven bloodlust, this exceedingly erratically effete professor did an impassioned speech on how good the Dresden firebombings were and even went on to describe in great

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detail the cultural importance of the city and how it was easily incinerated because it was largely made up of wood buildings due to being so ancient. After witnessing this bitchy biddy—a virtual middle-aged boy with the sad sick soul of a neurotic sex-starved old woman that probably still has not gotten over the ostensible trauma of a jock shoving him into a locker during high school—practically drool with a certain sadistic glee at the mere thought of the totally senseless brutal extermination of German woman and children and destruction of great German culture, I naturally came to the conclusion that those that ordered the senseless bombings were operating from a similar unhinged mindset. After all, rabid Jewish United States Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. infamously came up with the Morgenthau Plan with the odious objective of turning Germany into a depopulated wasteland, not to mention the fact that Albert Einstein lied to FDR about Germany's advancements in nuclear science so that he could get the Manhattan Project started in the hope that his ex-homeland would be nuked. Of course, what makes *Slaughterhouse-Five* such a successful antiwar film is that it is not plagued with the sort of hatred or resentment that inspired the pseudo-heroic Morgenthau and Einsteins of the world or the literary frauds like Elie Wiesel and Jerzy Kosiński. Indeed, it is only because Germany was destroyed and Zion prevailed that we even know of the zio-media-hype names of Einstein and Wiesel today while ignoring real geniuses like Nikola Tesla and a peaceful Aryan humanist like Vonnegut (who, if he was not a leftist of sorts, would have surely been completely ignored).

While *Slaughterhouse-Five* is unequivocally the greatest Vonnegut film adaptation of all-time as the novelist himself recognized, *Mother Night* (1996) directed by Christine (1983) lead Keith Gordon surely makes for a great double feature with George Roy Hill's film. Based on the 1961 Vonnegut novel of the same name, the film, which features an iconic cameo from the German-American writer, centers around the considerably conflicted antihero of Howard W. Campbell, Jr.—a character that seems to be inspired by both American modernist poet Ezra Pound and William 'Lord Haw-Haw' Joyce—who lives a sort of double life and overall schizophrenic existence as an American Nazi propagandist that quite deceptively uses his radio show to spread hidden messages that can only be decoded by Allied intelligence. Notably, the character also appears in Roy's *Slaughterhouse-Five* during the early part of the Dresden bombing scene in a red-white-and-blue swastika uniform that whacked-out wop Lazzaro describes as a "fag outfit." While neither film is even remotely 'pro-Nazi,' they both manage to question the official WWII narrative and, quite unlike virtually any Hollywood WWII films, make light of atrocities committed against the Germans (in fact, *Mother Night* director Gordon is a member of the tribe, but he doesn't let his ethno-racial loyalties get in the way of a good weird paranoid story, as the film even makes reference to the mass rape of German women by

Soviet hordes). As for other Vonnegut adaptations, the Jerry Lewis/Sam Fuller vehicle *Slapstick of Another Kind* (1982) is one of the worst films ever made and *Breakfast of Champions* (1999)—a film that should have worked since it was directed by offbeat auteur Alan Rudolph who, not unlike his friend-cum-mentor Robert Altman, is totally suited for such subject matter—is a total mess that the author apparently felt was “painful to watch.”

As far as I am concerned, George Roy Hill is one of the most underrated filmmakers associated with the so-called American New Wave and *Slaughterhouse-Five* is superior to anything that was ever directed by more respected filmmakers associated with the movement like Paul Mazursky, Norman Jewison, Sydney Pollack, Peter Bogdanovich, Mike Nichols, and countless others. A sort of spiritual cinema son of Hollywood maverick William A. Wellman (*Wings*, *The Ox-Bow Incident*) as both filmmakers were man’s men that served as fighter pilots and had a lifelong love of flying in general as demonstrated by their respective films, Hill brought a certainly inordinate masculinity to American cinema during an exceedingly emasculated (post)hippie era with underrated films like the mesmerizing männerbund aviation drama *The Great Waldo Pepper* (1975)—a film that pays tribute to the singular glory of Teutonic fighter pilots and the similarly daredevil-ish American pilots that, despite technically being enemies, respected them—and the vehemently anti-p.c. hockey dramedy *Slap Shot* (1977) starring Paul Newman in a rare lovably sleazy role. With *The World According to Garp* (1982)—a personal childhood favorite that, until relatively recently (last year), I could not recall the name of despite it being burned into my mind nearly thirty years ago—Hill directed a film that was clearly a (quite superior) model for *Forrest Gump*, albeit darker and more inordinately eccentric. While not one of his masterpieces, Hill brought some unexpected much-needed-nuance to the whole perennial Israeli–Palestinian conflict with his John le Carré adaptation *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984) starring Klaus Kinski of all people as a sort of Machiavelian Mossad agent in an uneven yet reasonably enthralling film where the Israelis ultimately come out looking like the most underhanded of international terrorist exploiters. In my less than humble opinion, it is a damn shame that Hill will always be best remembered for the softcore western *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, but Americans love their westerns and hate their war crimes.

While the curious combination of real-life war atrocities and alien abductions might seem a tad bit silly, especially to those that take the Dresden firebombing seriously, the two things somehow work together perfectly in Hill’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and their seemingly discordant combo make even more perfect sense if one has consulted the UFO writings of the great ‘Aryan Christ’ Carl Jung. While Jung did not completely rule out the possibility of space aliens and flying saucers, he did feel that the whole UFO phenomenon that more or less kicked off during World War II was part of a psychological and, in turn, spiritual crisis that was plaguing the Occidental mind. Indeed, as Jung argued

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in *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky* (1959), “One can hardly suppose that anything of such worldwide incidence as the Ufo legend is purely fortuitous and of no importance whatever [...] The basis for this kind of rumor is an emotional tension having its cause in a situation of collective distress or danger, or in a vital psychic need. This condition undoubtedly exists today, in so far as the whole world is suffering under the strain of Russian policies and their still unpredictable consequences [...] Precisely because the conscious mind does not know about them and is therefore confronted with a situation from which there seems to be no way out, these strange contents cannot be integrated directly but seek to express themselves indirectly, thus giving rise to unexpected and apparently inexplicable opinions, beliefs, illusions, visions, and so forth. Any unusual natural occurrences such as meteors, comets, ‘rains of blood,’ a calf with two heads, and suchlike abortions are interpreted as menacing omens, or else signs are seen in the heavens.” Undoubtedly, despite his general autistic demeanor, *Slaughterhouse-Five* protagonist Billy Pilgrim—an absurdly lucky survivor of the hell-on-earth Dresden nightmare—is a man plagued with a certain ‘emotional tension,’ which he is ultimately relieved of with the best next thing to heaven: a sort of extraterrestrial fuck factory where he gets to make love with the literal girl of his dreams in a baroque out-of-this world setting where his alien overlords, the Tralfamadorians, tell him everything he needs to know about life and existence, thereupon elevating him of every single fear and worry that he has. In that sense, both Vonnegut’s novel and Hill’s film adaptation act as sort of esoteric escapism where the ‘emotional tension’ that has resulted in the UFO phenomenon is cured by said UFO phenomenon; or at least Vonnegut’s fantastic fictional humanist version of it.

Notably, in attempting to describe the nightmarish state of painting in the post-WWII UFO age, Jung remarked, “Just as women’s fashions find every innovation, however absurd and repellent, ‘beautiful,’ so too does modern art of this kind. It is the ‘beauty’ of chaos. That is what this art heralds and eulogizes: the gorgeous rubbish heap of our civilization. It must be admitted that such an undertaking is productive of fear, especially when allied to the political possibilities of our catastrophic age. One can well imagine that in an epoch of the ‘great destroyers’ it is a particular satisfaction to be at least the broom that sweeps the rubbish into the corner.” While *Slaughterhouse-Five*—a film that literally depicts one of the greatest cities in human history as a sort of grotesquely gorgeous rubbish heap as partly caused by largely cultureless American philistines—does have a certain ‘soothing’ quality, it is also indubitably an expression of the ‘beauty of chaos’ that Jung describes in our pre-dystopian age of ‘great destroyers’ of the innately cosmopolitan alien culture-distorting sort. In that sense, the film is more potent than ever, not to mention radically red-pilled compared to the rancid raunch and cultural retardation that epitomizes most recent Hollywood sci-fi flicks (and movies in general). After all, you will not find another Hollywood

movie that makes positive reference to English historian and supposed 'holocaust denier' David Irving who, as the film alludes to, was the first to seriously study the Dresden atrocity with his revolutionary text *The Destruction of Dresden* (1963). As for Vonnegut's novel, it might even eventually prove to have predicted the forsaken future of the U.S. when it notes that, "The United States of America has been Balkanized, has been divided into twenty petty nations so that it will never again be a threat to world peace. Chicago has been hydrogen-bombed by angry Chinamen. So it goes. It is all brand new." Indeed, so it goes.

-Ty E

OUANGA
OUANGA

George Terwilliger (1935)

With the decidedly deplorable and downright disgusting deluge of miscegenation-championing propaganda in movies, commercials, and virtually every and any sort of advertising, it is quite relieving when one is reminded that there actually was a time when race-mixing was depicted as something universally unholy and akin to bestiality. Luckily, I recently happened upon the film *Ouanga* aka *The Love Wanga* aka *Drums in the Night* aka *Drums of the Jungle* which, aside from being the second zombie film ever made in cinema history (*White Zombie* (1932) starring Béla Lugosi and directed by Victor Halperin is the first), is a work about the evils of miscegenation featuring Jews like Hollywood writer/director/producer/actor Sheldon Leonard (*The Andy Griffith Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*) portraying negroes and starring green-eyed high-yellow beauty Fredi Washington, who was best known for playing “Peola” in the 1934 version of the film *Imitation of Life* directed by John M. Stahl and starring Claudette Colbert, as a black Haitian plantation owner that demonstrates that there is no wrath quite like a negress’ scorn by unleashing a voodoo curse to reanimate the dead as revenge against her WASP boy toy for getting engaged to a racially pure blonde Aryan babe. The first talkie as well as cinematic swansong of once prolific but now forgotten silent era auteur George Terwilliger (who directed, among other things, the 1922 William Randolph Hearst produced work *Bride’s Play*, which was intended as a starring vehicle for the producer’s then-mistress Marion Davies), this little proto-flesheater flick is an unequivocally b(ad) movie that has probably rightly been forgotten by cinema history, yet as a would-be-titillating tale of racial discontent, deleterious mayhem-inspiring mixed blood, and savage spiritual warfare that is completely at odds with the left-wing counter-culture zombie flicks of George A. Romero and the overall multicultural-friendly state of contemporary horror, *Ouanga* makes for an undeniably provocative footnote from zombie film history. Of course, anti-miscegenation themes are nothing new for the horror genre as demonstrated by the collected works of American Spenglerian horror novelist H.P. Lovecraft, as well as satanic Teutonic Renaissance man Hanns Heinz Ewers (whose work was influenced by his own personal travels to places like Haiti, as well as by the eugenics movement, especially in regard to early Zionist Max Nordau’s 1892 work *Degeneration* aka *Entartung*). Additionally, the early decades of cinema produced their fair share of classic anti-race-mixing works, as most obviously demonstrated by D.W. Griffith’s pioneering epic *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which features a scene where a character played by Mae Marsh leaps to her death to avoid being raped by a nefarious negro named Gus. Advertised with the then-salacious taglines, “Meet CLELIE. . .Naive. . .YOUNG and BEAUTIFUL. . . LITHE YIELDING and PRIMITIVE LOVE-HUNGRY CHILD OF THE

TROPICS!” and “STRANGE LOVES OF QUEER PEOPLE!,” Ouanga is certainly no Val Lewton masterwork, but it is certainly more enthralling than the majority of intolerably frivolous and formulaic flesheater filmic feces that comes out nowadays.

Set in Paradise Island in the West Indies, Ouanga opens with a shot of a voodoo statue and a nameless/faceless narrator remarking regarding the ex-slaves of the island, “The life of its inhabitants is marked by an unhurried peacefulness and a joyous contentment. Their simple occupations are colorful and primitive. And whether they live in mountain, valley, or town, eventually they find their way to the great city markets.” Of course, at night the negroes get naughty as demonstrated by scenes of sinister half-naked spades walking amongst the shadows in a zombie-like fashion and the narrator’s ominous remark, “Night falls...and with the rise of the great white tropical moon comes a sinister awakening...mysterious figures slip from shadow to shadow...nature becomes ghostly and unearthly...alive with evil movement, shuddering incantations and gruesome rites...and seemingly from everywhere comes throbbing, pulsating beats of the voodoo drums.... Drums... Drums...” One of these mysterious figures is double-black magician Klili aka Clelie Gordon (Freda Washington), who after receiving a sacred necklace from an elderly voodoo priest, declares, “Shall I lose this, may evil and death come upon me,” thus officially ushering in her second career as a venomous voodoo priestess. Indeed, Clelie is a high yellow Haitian plantation owner who has adopted the dually dark religion of her much darker servants and she plans to use her new black magic skills to obtain her great white love Adam Maynard (played by Philip Brandon, who spent most of his filmmaking career working as an assistant director, including on Ouanga), who has just inherited the quaint Haitian plantation of his deceased father.

Clelie is so hopelessly infatuated with wussy white boy Adam that she stalked him all the way from Haiti to New York City. While Adam confesses to Clelie that she was “wonderful during those two lonely years” (he assumedly used her as a concubine/exotic primitive curiosity) when he bumps into her on a ship sailing to Haiti, he also tells the very Eurypid-like black broad that there is no way in hell that he will be her lover again, as he soon plans to marry his virginal blonde Aryan fiancée Eve Langley (Marie Paxton). Clelie has talked herself into believing that she is as Aryan as a BDM (Bund Deutscher Mädel) girl to deny the fact that her ex-lover believes, “the barrier blood that separates us cannot be overcome.” In fact, she is so desperate, she even offers herself into slavery, melodramatically pleading to Adam, “I’d be your slave...anything.” As a novice voodoo priestess, Clelie decides to work her magic on Adam and recruits a pitch black maid named Susie (Babe Joyce) to help her to carry out her demonic deeds. Indeed, Susie has a thing for Adam’s servant Jackson (Sidney Easton) and Clelie offers to help the black maid obtain her ebony wonder via voodoo if she agrees to put a “voodoo death charm” (aka “ouanga”) in Eve’s purse, though the plan

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is ultimately botched. Of course, Clelie is not the only lunatic lover in Haiti, as Adam's overseer LeStrange (played by swarthy but non-negro like Hebrew Sheldon Leonard, who wore no make-up for the film) is in love with the self-loathing black voodoo priestess and tells her, "You must be mad to think you can win the love of that sort of white man." In fact, LeStrange is so obsessed with Clelie (who calls him "black scum") that he makes her the following threat: "You said that if you couldn't have my master, no other woman would. Well...that goes for me too. No one else is going to have you, is that clear? I'll kill you first." After Clelie manages to reanimate two coon corpses, she has the negro zombies kidnap Adam. While Clelie confesses to LeStrange regarding Adam, "I'm trash to him. Good-for-nothing, trash. Black trash," she still manages to suffer delusions of grandeur and resentfully states to her captive Eve, "A placid white-blooded thing like you make Adam happy? Adam needs a woman of fire...passion, like me." In the end, lethally lovelorn negro overseer LeStrange saves the day by killing cultivated yet crazed coon Clelie just like he said he would. Indeed, symbolically named Aryan lovers Adam and Eve are rightfully united and can go on to have racially pure (aka racially unconfused) babies that will not suffer from the racial schizophrenia that ultimately led to Clelie's truly tragic end.

While Fredi Washington would portray a character that attempts to 'pass' for white in both *Imitation of Life* and *Ouanga*, she apparently had a much different view on the subject in real-life as demonstrated by her 1945 remark: "You see I'm a mighty proud gal and I can't for the life of me find any valid reason why anyone should lie about their origin or anything else for that matter. Frankly, I do not ascribe to the stupid theory of white supremacy and to try to hide the fact that I am a Negro for economic or any other reasons; if I do I would be agreeing to be a Negro makes me inferior and that I have swallowed whole hog all of the propaganda dished out by our fascist-minded white citizens." Ironically, it was Washington's racially ambiguous appearance that prevented her from getting more black roles (apparently, she turned down the opportunity to play white characters), as she lacked the jet black appearance to play archetypal negro maid/mammy roles. Judging by the fact that she refused to 'pass' and play white characters and only dated/married black men (she was once married to Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who was the first black brother that was elected to Congress from New York state), it is fairly likely that the actress approved of the anti-miscegenation message of *Ouanga*, though she probably found some of the film's depictions of blacks to be somewhat dubious. Indeed, the film features a number of scenes that would probably cause most modern p.c.-lobotomized pansy viewers to piss their panties, including a scene where a cracker states regarding blacks, "They're as dumb as ghosts." Additionally, most of the Haitian buck negroes featured in the film are totally indistinguishable from the two choco-zombies. Of course, anyone who has visited any American

urban area will probably notice that most of the colored folks there walk and move in a fashion that is not all that unlike that of the walking undead. Indeed, were it not for the likes of Romero, zombies may have always been associated with blacks.

Somewhat reminiscent yet ultimately aesthetically inferior to *White Zombie*, *Ouanga* somehow managed to spawn an all-black remake entitled *The Devil's Daughter* (1939), yet it lacks the potent miscegenation theme and is thus totally worthless in every single regard. While director George Terwilliger originally planned to shoot *Ouanga* entirely in Haiti, he befriended a real-life Haitian voodoo priest that scared the hell out of him and inspired him to relocate the production to Jamaica, or as Gary D. Rhodes wrote in his book *White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film* (2006) regarding the seemingly cursed production: "...Terwilliger befriended the head of a cult and his voodoo followers. When asked to perform in front of the cameras, however, the group became angry. Terwilliger soon found an OUANGA in his car, as well as encountering a punctured tire and a tree deliberately placed in the road. Warnings came of more evil to follow, and Terwilliger quickly decided to move the cast and crew to Jamaica. The morning he was to sail, however, his dancers had disappeared and the drummers and some extras had been arrested. Undaunted, the director began shooting again after settling in Jamaica, only to have a rainstorm drown two Jamaicans working on the film; in addition, sickness killed a crew member, and a cyclone destroyed the sets. After two months, an exhausted Terwilliger returned to the U.S. with footage in hand. Though seen in England as early as 1934, OUANGA--for unknown reasons--did not play U.S. Theaters until 1936." As Richard Stanley revealed in his documentary *The White Darkness* (2002), scientists have done brain scans of black Haitians while they are in voodoo trances that prove their gray matter takes on a different form during these heightened spiritual states, thus demonstrating how serious these black, black magicians take their unholy religion. While I am hardly someone that believes in magic, especially third world ghetto magic, the curious production history of *Ouanga*, as well as the film's tribal-drum-driven score and sometimes oneiric visuals certainly allowed me to be able to enact suspension of disbelief and get into the whole voodoo negro zombie atmosphere, which is certainly something I cannot say for most zombie flicks. Of course, as someone who was first taught about the religion in elementary school by a borderline elderly negress who once confessed that her husband put a litter of kittens in a sack and shot them with a shotgun, voodoo (or Vodoun aka Vodun) has always been a marginal interest of mine and *Ouanga* certainly reignited that interest and of course, the anti-miscegenation theme was the icing on the cake. There's certainly something special about a hokey old horror film that seems like it was inspired by the writings of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard.

-Ty E

NOTORIOUS
NOTORIOUS

George Tillman, Jr. (2009)

The climax we all knew was coming but began expecting painfully early (such was the tragedy of B.I.G.'s life) arrived on time to coincide with Big Poppa's new release. Only when it arrived on the silver screen, something else was miraculously present, a cohort if you will; tear-jerking emotion. The final moments of Notorious finds itself in unfamiliar biopic territory as I find tears brimming in my eyes. Reliving the nightmare of hip-hop is no easy feat but yes, you will brave the death of an icon once more. Between the life-like performances of figures we've all heard of before and the redefining of re-enacted concert footage, Notorious thumps and pulses life into someone that is never forgotten. Between the coastal rap war of Biggie and Tupac that spread throughout every urban environment, I found myself braving the side of the East coast. I'm not necessarily a fan of Puffy but the Notorious B.I.G. made my allegiance of the utmost loyalty. With my condolences to Tupac, I never got into his style of music making or his "revolutionary" tactics. The legend of Tupac Shakur is rarely listened to or experienced first hand. His spirit and memory lives on thanks to crude airbrushed shirts at your local farmer's market and his Makaveli brand of clothing. Perhaps one day, a biopic in his name will give him justice but until then I'd rather be hypnotized by Biggie's presence. Few of you might have seen Robin Williams' film *The Final Cut*. The concept of this film follows "cutters" - cold film splicers who take a hard copy of memories and the vision of a persons entire life and trim them to make a fitting eulogy. This may seem like a departure from the topic of a deceased rapper but the tale is an unintentional philosophizing commentary on the subject of a biopic. Much like "biopics", the "producer" must pick and chose the struggles of a man and his saving grace, so to say that in the end, Christopher Wallace would appear a good and justified man. The truth might be farther than we know. While he represented the busted niggas, he was also a womanizing, drug-dealing piece of meat. But who's to say any of those are negative things? On the topic of the music behind the film, Danny Elfman conducts the powerful theme of Notorious. Backed with classic hits from Biggie and the occasional departure such as the tune from Slick Rick the Ruler's Children's Story, Notorious is in no way malnourished in the arts of music. Notorious works in such mysterious ways that it presents songs that we've heard time and time again, but revives them. I can now listen to "Hypnotize" and "Juciy" and think to myself how fresh these tracks are, regardless of the decade gap. The concert footage is absolutely breath-taking. Early on from the trailer, I noticed the surreal like shots from behind Biggie's outline. The camera does his larger than life figure, literally and metaphorically, justice and the hues of dark blues and bright fluorescents light up the dancing crowd. As Biggie once said, "Dumb Rappers need teachin". This statement weaves perfectly for our era of Soulja Boy's and Rico

Todriquez Wright's Notorious is a film that touched me. The fact that I let my guard down to this marvelous character who is faulted by none of his own is a progressive piece of instinct to me. Jamal Woolard is a highly qualified actor to star as Hip-Hop's departed titan of lyrical terror. Although the cast is mainly full of beautiful people to fill the roles of ugly people, mainly Lil' Kim, such is the ways of the Hollywood machine. I feel the greatest asset this film has is the young appearance of Biggie's son filling the shoes as the Notorious B.I.G. as a child. The pain conceived behind this film is entirely evident. Although this is only the perspective of the East coast on the war and the West coast is still not documented in a visually provoking way, I find solace in the fact that these facts are true. Who knows who killed B.I.G. and Pac? The world will never know.

-mAQ

WU: THE STORY OF THE WU-TANG CLAN
WU: THE STORY OF THE WU-TANG CLAN

Gerald K. Barclay (2008)

Any opening remark on the subject of a Wu-Tang Clan featured piece of writing should begin with the words "Wu Tang Clan Ain't Nuthing Ta Fuck Wit." Not only because this is a true self-assessment of the legendary Shaolin-based hip-hop group but because it has also become an anthem for a vulgar generation. Stemming from Staten Island which is referred to as Shaolin, this merry band of rappers defied all odds in creating a legendary hybrid of stunning lyricism and classic Kung-fu themes and equipped sound bytes. Finally their story will be told through the eyes of a childhood friend and unfortunately for us, this director/friend also happens to be illiterate as he misspells many a word leaving most of the educated folk stunned, mock-turning away and questioning if what they just saw was legit. This documentary opens up with the eventual collective piece of Wu-Tang Clan with narration by the director, Gerald Barclay, acclaimed creator of such classics as *Bloody Streetz*, and explains Prince Rakim's (RZA) grouping of an unheard of expansive rap group to create an early prototype of Wu-Tang Clan. This BET produced documentary chronicles their rise to global fame and success finally slowing down to a halt with the saddening death of Ol' Dirty Bastard, who is humorously alter-egoed as Dirt McGirt. Like it should, not much happens when Ol' Dirty passes. Solo albums are produced and the Wu recollect to release records that are great, but lack the comic intrigue and carny pitch that Big Baby Jesus gave them. All good things do come to an end and with Ol' Dirty's death, the biography becomes almost less than interesting and sees itself as an elongated tribute to the Ol' Dirty Bastard and loses all pride & integrity. My main gripe with this feature isn't without an inciting event. With the short runtime of barely clocking in at an hour, this film rushes through events that could, no, should be embroidered to fans or "hataz" alike. For instance, the Wu-Tang Clan is secondarily known as marketing geniuses. They have promoted everything from documentaries, books, video games, a clothing line, and DVD restorations but only the clothing line is fleshed and no justice is brought to the other mediums of product inflation. For instance, I would have loved to hear thoughts and interviews about the horrid cult video game *Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style* in which you can engage in 4 player 3D combat. For a self-proclaimed story of the greatest urban performers, this is surely bare bones and finds itself glorifying the Wu-Tang Clan with no instance of stability and focuses on the light more than the dark, which can be understandable in filmic context. *Wu: The Story of the Wu-Tang Clan* also paves the way to make Raekwon and only Raekwon look like a complete dickhead while promising a mutual downfall of fame. Meanwhile, the RZA is glorified to be messianic with a solid vision of hip-hop but this comes as no surprise. After seeing the RZA's acting performance in *Derailed*, it's easy to see he is a cool cat.

On a similar subject of depiction, Ol' Dirty advocates frequent use of his seed and spreads it throughout many Negro women. That nigga has 13 children and I bet they are all from different mothers. A true hero for children to look up to, ODB also managed to save a little girl, age 4, from a burning automobile. Irony within, ODB would allegedly later light himself ablaze in order to escape from Clinton. That scene remains one of very few that has any materialization of being considered "powerful."

If my thoughts appear jumbled on this documentary, it's no fault of my own. This is a documentary that "documents" hardly anything of importance and remains as a collected package of interviews with the men responsible for this cultural Asiatic phenomenon and several cohorts such as Popa Wu, the platonic father of the group and many other acquaintances. Halfway through the feature, the sight on the Clan is lost and trails off to snootily follow the tail of the dearly departed Dirty Bastard and his trails & tribulations. The RZA bellowed in recorded concert footage that "We're not going to mourn his death but to celebrate his life." And contrary to these moving words amplified to a sea of fans, Barclay mourns ODB's death with a shoddy documentary that is almost as incomplete as his spelling education. For a "Greatest Hits" moment of archived footage of interviews, concerts, and music videos, Wu: The Story of the Wu-Tang Clan isn't a bad reference piece but will ultimately disappoint the die hard Wu-Tang fanatic. Look at me, I'm disappointed.

-mAQ

ANGST
ANGST

Gerald Kargl (1983)

Gerald Kargl's *Angst* is a sadistic serial killer masterpiece. This intense and deranged film even rivals the masterpiece *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. *Angst* follows a newly released killer that never stopped seeing red despite his "rehabilitation." As soon as he is released from jail the man embarks on his killing spree. A killing spree that gives this killer perverse sexual satisfaction. *Angst* features amazing camera work that flows from one scene to another. The film has a very seamless and superbly constructed feel. I would even go as far as saying *Angst* is the most perfect serial killer film that I have ever seen. To further compliment the film's amazing camera work, the soundtrack adds a crucial cinematic energy that leaves nothing to be desired. The killer finds a secluded house to carry out his killings. A middle aged mentally retarded and wheel chair bound man is found in the quiet house. Quite an odd first victim for this killer. I was disturbed by the retarded man's random appearance. Later the handicapped man's mother and sister show up. The killings become an undesired family affair.

The young sister (mid twenties I suspect) suffers the worst attacks of brutality. The killer has an orgasm of blood and sadism with her. I can't help to think this is what real victims of serial killers face when they tragically succumb to their unrelenting path. The family dog watches the killings playfully. As a lover of dogs, I couldn't help to focus on the dogs reactions to the killings. The dog eventually hides under covers from the killer. This is probably the only "cute" moment of *Angst*. The killer narrates *Angst* with stories of his tormented childhood and confessions of his most darkest desires. He is the product of neglect and sadism. One can't truly feel sorry for the killer, but we get an idea where his perversities derive from. Out of all the serial killer films I have seen, *Angst* most successfully psychoanalyzes the mind of a serial killer. Hannibal Lecter would be proud.

-Ty E

THE SATISFIERS OF ALPHA BLUE

Gerard Damiano (1981)

After my recent discovery of the 'adult film actress' Lysa Thatcher (*Touch Me in the Morning*, *Pink Punk*)—probably the only blue movie star that has ever caught my attention—in Cecil Howard's phantasmagoric porn masterpiece *Neon Nights* (1981), I decided to dig up some more lecherous flicks starring the little Lolita-like lady and ultimately discovered the decidedly dirty yet strangely moralistic dystopian sci-fi flick *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* (1980) aka *The Satisfiers* aka *2001: I odysseia tou sex* directed by none other than Italian-American cult pornographer Gerard Damiano (*Deep Throat*, *The Devil in Miss Jones*, *Splendor in the Ass*). As someone who has never been a hardcore science fiction fan (nor a fan of hardcore science fiction), let alone seen a single episode of *Star Trek*, I was quite enthralled to see dirty dago Damiano debase the played-out genre that is oftentimes associated with impotent and/or virginal fanboys that collect toys. Starring superlatively swarthy and less than handsome Hebrews Robert 'Cannibal Holocaust' Kerman aka R. Bolla and porn star turned standup comedian Herschel Savage (a man who was given his pseudonym by his kosher comrade Jamie Gillis in an attempt to mold a 'nerdy Jewish identity' with that of an ostensible super stud), as well as the ever so radically repulsive vulgarian Jewess Annie Sprinkle (*My Father Is Coming*, *War Is Menstrual Envy*), *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* seems like the sort of soulless technocratic and politically correct future that might be sired if the most despicable of Hollywood liberals had their wayward way and turned the world into one big kosher cesspool of semen-drenched humanist sloganing and perverted loveless sex where family, kultur, art, and individuality are nowhere to be seen. An ideally idiosyncratic and totally kitschy cult item from the late part of the great Golden Age of Porn, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* tells the satirically sordid story of a sub-homely heeb homeboy who suffers from all-consuming melancholy and resentment due to the fact that there is merely great superficial sex in the 21st century and where real authentic love and commitment are no longer vogue, so he faces a bit of heartbreak after falling for a high-tech hooker and decides to make it his duty to deflower her cold heart. The pornographic answer to quasi-erotically-charged sci-fi cult classics ranging from Curtis Harrington's *Queen of Blood* (1966) and Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982), *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue*, despite being a hardcore flick featuring mostly nasty sex, most certainly has a lot of out-of-this-world ingredients that, like all decent films of the genre, reminds the filmgoer that the future will probably be a fucked place worthy of an atom bomb or two.

It is the 21st century and some post-apocalyptic scenario has inspired the surviving humans to revamp society in a sophisticated yet soulless manner somewhat comparable to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* where hedonism reigns with

THE SATISFIERS OF ALPHA BLUE

a laser-prick and where women are not allowed to birth to children in a real and organic fashion and are instead subjected to the sexual desires of men. Rather unfortunately for the women, it seems all the handsome men died in the nuclear apocalypse. Female 'Relaxers' merely give men massages, but 'Satisfiers' must sexually service men in any manner they so desire. Kosher comrades Algon (Robert Kerman) and Griffin (Herschel Savage) have just arrived at the vice-fueled vacation planet of 'Alpha Blue' via teleportation and while the latter is quite excited about being at the exotic pleasure-dome, the former is a brooding cultural pessimist looking for love and is tired of loving in an emotionally pacified universe where superficial slogans like "save the whales" make up a good portion of the (non)conversations people have. As Griffin states to Algon, "They gave it up in the 20th century and you're still smoking," but that is the least of the fellow's problem as an emotional wreck of a man in a world of robotic automatons. When Algon meets a busty blonde nymph Satisfier named '805' aka Diana (Lysa Thatcher), he falls in love at first sight and the two make passionate love after eating a full dinner (as opposed to the tablets that most people eat), but when the Semitic pseudo-stud brings up real love and how great the pre-apocalyptic world use to be, the feminist-brainwashed hooker states, "You mean like the old days? You're crazy, the old days are old...they no longer work. There's no pain, no frustration. I'm a satisfier. That's what I do best. I'm the best fuck in cubicle seven" and "Fuck you! Love my mouth, my cunt. Don't waste my time on love." Storming out of the room, Diana yells at Algon, "Talk to yourself, I'm going to eat cock, eat cock until I choke" and, indeed, she proceeds to down no less than four beefy dicks. Although Algon now thinks Diana is a "cunt," he cannot get her out his miserable mind, but as a wanton woman of the borderline lesbian sort who proudly proclaims to her fellow lady-licking Satisfiers, "I like having my cunt sucked, especially by a woman. Men can be too tough when it comes to eating pussy. Oh, it's not that they don't try to do it well...it just takes a woman to understand another woman," it will be hard for him to make her his monogamous lover. Meanwhile, all sort of sexual debauchery is happening around Alpha Blue, especially involving an unsavory Satisfier (Annie Sprinkle) with cow utters for tits who gives fellows golden showers and even buggers a statuesque Aryan man with a veiny strap-on dildo and then forces the assumedly fecal-covered object in his mouth and subsequently sticks it inside herself while it's still in the mouth of said statuesque Aryan man. An unhinged universe populated by philistine lemming perverts without even the least bit of individuality, Algon is even berated by his best friend for his complaints about love, with Griffin complaining, "That's what your problem is, good buddy. You care, no one else does. You are the one out of step. It's really simple...if you can't beat them, join them." Luckily, in the end, Algon demonstrates his sophisticated carnal knowledge to such an otherworldly degree that debauched dame Diana agrees to do 'anything' for him, including the unthinkable; loving him

like a real human being.

Despite being a super sleazy piece of aberrosexual pornography featuring some of the most degenerate, ludicrously unappealing porn stars of its era, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* ultimately has a 'moral' message as a work that champions making love over loveless sex and even satires the sort of trendy liberal ideals that inspire naive boys and girls to go to third world hellholes like the Congo for some non-profit organization. Set in a world where there is no real love, the nuclear family has been nuked, virtually all the men are ugly, physically pathetic Jews and where the women are brainwashed by a post-culture-culture/feminist view of sex, and senseless hedonism for hedonism's sake is the only thing that is strove for, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* is undoubtedly more thematically relevant today than when it was released over some three decades ago. Sleaze duce Gerard Damiano followed up the film with an innately worthless and unworthy shot-on-video sequel entitled *Return to Alpha Blue* (1984) that of course does not feature lady Lysa Thatcher and has less of a sci-fi essence than Godard's *Alphaville* (1965). Rather bizarrely, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* seems like it was made to mock the very same people that it was made by, as if Damiano was attempting the same sort of 'anti-erotic' erotica that Jonas Middleton (*Illusion of a Lady, Through the Looking Glass*) and Stephen Sayadian aka 'Rinse Dream' (*Café Flesh, Dr. Caligari*) pioneered, but decided to take a less mystifying and more literal approach, even opting to cast some of the most repugnant porn stars of all time (indeed, Lysa Thatcher certainly seems out of place in this putrid planet). Aside from featuring the uniquely unlikeable likes of Herschel Savage and Annie Sprinkle, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* also features the ever annoying untermensch trainweck that is white trash wonder Sharon Mitchell who, in the documentary *Kamikaze Hearts* (1986), demonstrated her erratic relationship with heroin and butch blonde chicks. If nothing else, *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* is an ugly film about mostly ugly people and mostly ugly sex acts in a cardboard cutout science fiction pandemonium of infantile scatological pleasure that ultimately offers more thrills and food-for-thought than Ridley Scott's big plastic celluloid dildo *Prometheus* (2012).

-Ty E

HERRMANN
HERRMANN

Gerd Reda (2013)

Somewhat understandably considering most white males don't even have the testicular fortitude to stop their countries from being colonized by the global south and turned into third world shitholes, let alone stop their sisters and daughters from being defiled by the untermenschen, cuckoldry and submissiveness has become quite vogue in the United States and especially Europe over the past decade or so, so it certainly does not surprise me that a German filmmaker would make a film featuring a dude being raped in the ass and mouth by members of a decidedly deranged feminist terrorist cult sporting strap-on dildos and fetishistic white vinyl suits. Indeed, such is the unsavory scenario that plays out in the 13-minute German 'torture-art-porn' short Herrmann (2013) directed by film critic turned filmmaker Gerd Reda, who writes for a film review site called Splatting Image and has worked on numerous films by Teutonic splatter anti-maestro Olaf Ittenbach (*Legion of the Dead*, *Garden of Love*) and other directors in various capacities, including as a lighting technician, key grip, and gaffer. A sort of spin-off film for the director's dream project, the short and its history were described by Reda in 2013 as follows: "In 2011, I wrote the screenplay for a feature film called *FRAU MUSTERMANN*. *Kommando Frau Mustermann* is a terrorist organization comprised of four women who kidnap, rape, and then free the men they have captured. The feature is set on the day of the kidnapping of the last victim. Cabin fever has grown amongst the women and thus conflicts ensue. The short *HERRMANN* is not a truncated version of the feature, but a spin-off. The story concerns the kidnapping of the third victim, Herrmann." While normally I would question the sanity and sexuality of a mensch who makes films featuring men being anally and orally pillaged by crazed cunts who probably fried their brains after one-too-many communal readings of Warhol's failed assassin Valerie Solanas' hilarious *SCUM Manifesto* (1968) and the hysterical scribbling of morbidly obese Hebraic dyke Andrea Dworkin, Herrmann is notable for the fact that the male rape victim is an over-the-hill far-leftist family man and arm-chair revolutionary who apparently sexually ravaged a couple of girls in between 'raging against the machine' (i.e. handing out pointless pamphlets to people that don't give a shit about them and holding impotent protests against an imagined fascist super-state). While auteur Reda devotes most of his film writings to marvelously misogynistic S&M-themed Japanese films, especially of the 'Pinku eiga' variety, his debut short is certainly of a more masochistically misandristic nature to the point of aesthetic terrorism as a work that would certainly traumatize more faint of heart viewers while at the same time being the ultimate delight to the male cuckold. Indeed, as much as I hate psychopathic Zionist hack Eli Roth and his innately anti-European post-Auschwitz Hostel swill, Herrmann is certainly not the answer to his work as far as so-called 'torture porn' is concerned,

though it is not a complete waste.

Opening with a seemingly nostalgic and sentimental credit sequence montage featuring stylized vintage still photographs of punk concerts and punks, including the eponymous protagonist (Andreas Berg) sporting a Black Flag t-shirt, juxtaposed with a melodically melancholy song by superlatively wimpy American experimental post-punk group Xiu Xiu, Herrmann initially seems like it is going to be some sort of intolerably generic punk drama made for pseudo-rebellious middle schoolers and stupid little girls that worship punk rock star cock, but of course the film eventually changes its tone fairly quickly and quite dramatically after a couple minutes of banal bourgeois drama. After the opening credit sequence, the viewer is transported to 'protagonist' Herrmann's home where he and his wife Tina (Martina Ysker) tuck their small son into bed. Herrmann and Tina seem to have a nice little bourgeois family, but for whatever reason, the husband cannot seem to get over his love of the punk scene and 'revolutionary' left-wing politics despite the fact that he is bordering on middle-age and has quite the conspicuous receding hairline and is nowhere near as cool as a Andreas Baader or even a Holger Meins. When Herrmann declares, "I have to go now. 'Revolution' is calling," to let his wifey know that he is leaving to hang out with his fellow far-left man-child comrades, Tina complains, "Can't your group save the world without you? Not even once?" in a half-serious fashion. When Herrmann asks her why he should not go, Tina reminds him that she is ovulating, as the two assumedly plan to have another child together. Of course, little does Tina realize that her husband is the only one that will be buggered that night. After promising to be back home that night at 11pm, Herrmann leaves his home to meet with his comrades, but after only walking a couple dozen feet or so, he is knocked unconscious with a stun gun and kidnapped by two masked young women with uniquely unsavory intentions.

When Herrmann awakes from his temporarily artificially-induced slumber, he finds himself unclad and strapped to a table in an awkward position in a small bright white room that seems like a prison cell in some kind of dystopian Teutonic nuthouse straight out of Fassbinder's *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire*. Herrmann's mouth has also been forced open via a metal dental device as if someone plans to shove something large inside of it. Before Herrmann knows it, two lanky long-legged women (Katinka Maché and Stephanie Reinhardt) sporting featureless white masks, black bob haircut style wigs, large black strap-on dildos, white vinyl dominatrix-like outfits, and black high heels walk into the room and one of the women proceeds to brutally swing a baseball bat at his rather bony bitch boy arm. From there, one of the sinister she-bitches shoves her strap-on in Herrmann's mouth and the other sticks hers in his seemingly virginal bung-hole and the two proceed to hatefully defile the protagonist's fleshy orifices while staring at each other in a knowing fashion of crazed cuntcentric camaraderie. While being mouth and ass fucked into oblivion, Herrmann thinks

HERRMANN

of his sleeping and son and past fragments from that night as they flash in his mind in an ADD-esque collage. When the two loony ladies finish hate-fucking the unlucky fellow, one of them knocks the protagonist out after injecting something into his back in a rather forceful fashion. When Herrmann finally wakes up, he finds one of his hands handcuffed to the same table he was just fucked on in front of a camcorder on a tripod. From there, the girls film him reading the following agitprop script: "Enough is enough. No forgiving! No forgetting! There is no statute of limitations for sexual violence. Men shall no longer feel safe: Neither at work, nor at home, and certainly not within their family environment. From now on they also have the right to lifelong fear and trauma. And I am not here by coincidence. I am an offender. I am well-known, but have never been punished." Indeed, as it turns out, despite being some sort of old school far-leftist 'social justice warrior,' Herrmann is some sort of pernicious pussy pillager and the girls have decided to take out their pernicious post-Solanas brand of penis envy on him. After taking a Polaroid of their prisoner, the girls drop off Herrmann in an abandoned park. In the end, one of the girls makes the following threat to the viewer: "You will hear from us. Those who don't will get to feel. Don't be afraid: You will survive. So did we." Somewhat humorously, the end credits of the film feature another song by Xiu Xiu.

Somewhat notably, the introduction page for the official website for Herrmann reads: "Drawing a thick red line from Art House to Exploitation." Indeed, in its curious combining of of highly stylized artsy fartsy aesthetics with violent hate-filled (anti)sexual imagery, the film certainly qualifies as artsploitation in the spirit of Nacho Cerdà's "Trilogy of Death" (Awakening, Aftermath, Genesis), Mitch Davis' *Divided Into Zero* (1999), Karim Hussain's *Subconscious Cruelty* (2000), Andrey Iskanov's *Philosophy of a Knife* (2008), and Marian's *Dora's Cannibal* (2006), but it certainly lacks the dark and distinctly Teutonic romanticism of aberrant-garde maestro Jörg Buttgerit (NEKRomantik, *Der Todesking*), which is somewhat odd considering a reproduction poster of the great 1890 painting "Lucifer" by German Symbolist painter Franz von Stuck is featured on the wall of the home of the titular protagonist (it might just me, but from my experience, I see it as rather unlikely that a nearly middle-aged far-leftist punk poser would be a fan of von Stuck's work). Needless to say, I was not surprised to discover that director Gerd Reda has written extensively on the work of Spanish artsploitation auteur Agustí Villaronga (*In a Glass Cage*, *El mar aka The Sea*) after watching Herrmann. In terms of socio-political messages, you would have to be somewhat unhinged to take the film seriously, as it is about as subtextually intricate and sophisticated as a Pussy Riot PR stunt or an American Hebraic businessman-backed pseudo-feminist Femen titty show. In short, Herrmann is about as subtle as Andrea Dworkin's farts after an all-nighter at a non-kosher Mexican buffet. Indeed, as much as I like seeing poser left-wing revolutionaries being gang-raped by unhinged feminist sexual terrorists who make old

Germanic feminist filmmaker hags like Margarethe von Trotta, Helke Sander, and Valie Export seem sane by comparison, I have my doubts about auteur Gerd Reda's proposed feature *Frau Mußermann*, as the last place I want to be is around a sect of psychotic misandrists who somehow think bugging beta-males with fake dicks will help them get over their deep-seated daddy issues. Undoubtedly, the last thing the film world needs is more Lisbeth Salanders. Indeed, maybe Reda should re-watch some of those Jap pink films he likes so much and reconsider the 'gender equality' of his films. Of course, like with most of the rest of Europe, rapes, like most other violent crimes, are overwhelmingly committed by foreigners, especially of the brown Muslim sort, but I will give Herrmann credit in that it exposes the fact that many beta-males join punk scenes (rather unfortunately, I know this from experience), as well as left-wing and feminist groups, as a pathetic means to procure pussy, with the eponymous protagonist of the short probably taking advantage of naive teenage girls after getting them good and drunk at shitty punk shows. Indeed, if one learns anything from watching Reda's film aside from the the director seeming to have female-on-male rape and strap-on dildo fetishes and that women make fairly pathetic rapists (indeed, the two latex ladies' thrusts make those of Michael Jackson seem like the height of rampantly heterosexual masculinity), it is that weak left-wing punk pansies are just as likely to rape chicks as drunken frat boys.

-Ty E

PANDEMONIUM
PANDEMONIUM

Gilberto Martínez Solares (1975)

It's truly saddening to see such masterpieces of cinema sunk to such obscure depths. Haydn Keenan's Australian black comedy, *Pandemonium* (1988), is officially now one of the most bizarre excursions in silliness that I have ever been pleased to witness. The plot(s) develop as such - A girl thrown to the dingoes is instead raised by them only to return after all those years to Sydney in search for her betrayers. In case you're not up to speed with Australian news considered legend, this happenstance is based on Azaria Chamberlain's disappearance which inspired the phrase done to death by pop culture - "The dingoes ate my baby!" Upon finding the mansion of her parents, many crazy events begin to unfold including but not limited to: a four foot tall Hitler and his 2 dyke-Reich assistants, a mad doctor inspired by Frankenstein and his zombie henchman, and an end-of-the-world scenario. All this in what I would refer to as an incestuous affair between Saban's short lived *Beetleborgs* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* without lyrics. Starring David Argue with an accent permanently reflecting a sense of achievement and Playboy model Amanda Dole, who is topless for more than half the film, *Pandemonium* is criminally panned the world over for not making a lick of sense. But you see, that's just where the magic comes in.

Hitler getting a handjob to spread the perfect seed *Pandemonium* earns its chips with its bizarro nature of religious and political satire, as sharp and esoteric as humor towards a non-Australian citizen can get. *Pandemonium* not only breaks every rule cinema ever set in stone but incites a riot in which to vandalize every standard with its crude and intelligent message. This atrocity can only be the work of some surreal, anarchic infection left behind by the assault of nonsensical hi-jinx. Once the gorgeous "Dingo girl" arrives at the place of residency, several characters bumble directly into her path, which ignites pagan sacrifices, forced surrogacy in order to create a new strain of Aryans, and a caveman with "animal magnetism". If I could compare the frenzied manner of *Pandemonium* to any sense of reality, it would be to compare the images projected on screen to having your brain inserted into a pinball machine. Maintaining its absurd composure is one thing *Pandemonium* does best. Only in the last 15 minutes of runtime does the film show any hints of slowing down. But for what it's worth, the endless barrage of the incredibly lovely Amanda Dole's breasts leaves a feeling of euphoria spread evenly over every hormone. You will never be able to take your eyes off them - the real stars of *Pandemonium*.

It's a damn shame that films as critically developed and ripe with insanity as *Pandemonium* remain impossible to find. Only through VSoM (Video Search of Miami) are you able to order a copy, that or rare video traders. DVD companies like Severin Films give me hope for Ozploitation to appear in American markets though. The prime exploitation label currently, Severin has given sight

to many genre classics such as *Stone*, another piece of Australian history. Director Haydn Keenan might be either a cinematic genius or an absolute loon. The effects of *Pandemonium* are exactly what the title implies. So many characters, juggling many horror legends, from vampires to mummies, are introduced throughout with little reason other than the further the adventures of the messianic Dingo girl and her obsessive would-be lover, Kales Leadingham. After consummating with God in the guise of a jazzy Negro, the Dingo girl is reborn in a true tale of Christian fiction, as believable as any other book of Christ. My current state renders me damn near a blubbering idiot. The psychotropic adventures of *Pandemonium* have overloaded my senses to the point of indistinguishable. I don't think I could ever tire of *Pandemonium* as a single scene features many deranged, madcap happenings all at once, leaving much lost during the initial viewing. You will observe the mania relapse to the point of coaxing you to rewatch the film, picking up on more maladjustments in a purely meta fashion. I have no idea what I had just watched but I assure you that like me, you will enjoy every panicked and blasphemous minute of it. If you're brave enough, you can purchase the film [here](#).

-mAQ

L' APPARTEMENT
L' APPARTEMENT

Gilles Mimouni (1996)

In the immensely frustrated state that I am currently delving in, one might tell me to relax or take a load off. Instead, I chose to go forward with writing about the most rewardingly frustrating film that I have ever seen called L' Appartement. Now we've all encountered a film called Wicker Park. Chances are that you've stumbled upon this hipster insta-classic at your local video rental chain or even caught it in theaters. If it's not ringing a bell, it's that one "artistic" film starring heart throb Josh Hartnett. Perhaps this film could be described as one of the early mainstream indie films. Now, for the uneducated, Wicker Park is an exercise in shot-by-shot remakes - One of the early ones too. The original film is a little ditty called L' Appartement. In case you've been in a sheltered American life, this obviously is translated into The Apartment. Which in case is our main setting and where most of the drama unfolds. The story concerns Max, a playboy who is engaged to someone who doesn't matter. He recalls an old flame named Lisa who he encounters after her strange disappearance. From this event, Max spirals into a deadly web of obsession. L' Appartement is a drama of the fiercest kind. When making a genre addition to the drama section, it's inevitable to include some form of love, whether post-humous or a love of an inanimate kind. Gilles Mimouni has infused a style that breathes life into the instinct to pick a perfect mate rather than one that you might lust over. He stares the myth of love dead in the face and challenges any preconceived notion you'd have on the subject. Vincent Cassel happens to be one of my only cinematic vices. If he releases a film, I immediately must view it multiple times and process every movement he makes on film. After seeing this film, I feel obliged to leave this film alone and never watch it again. Before this comes off as some bad review, I must say that this film had a very advanced cinema disease attached to it that I will call Motion Picture Frustration. For example, I am a hip-hop and rap fan, particularly old school N.W.A. and Sugar Hill Gang. When I had first seen (unbearably) Are We There Yet?, I almost ripped my teeth out watching one of the original gangsters being exploited by a couple of little annoying niglets. Watching L' Appartement for the first and only time could be the equivalent to having my teeth and brain ground down to a liquid powder and snorted by an obese geek. If you've seen Wicker Park and not the original like so many others have, You will be surprised by the almost nihilistic outcome of this film. I could list reasons as to why this film hugely differs other than the annoying Matt Lillard as a sidekick, but truth be told, I want you to be horrifically surprised like I was. L' Appartement is a godsend in romance films. It is a film that will make you challenge any tall-tale of happily ever after. I blame a friend, Derek, for making me watch this film. L' Appartement is the film to end all films. It will make you laugh with coyish delight as Cassel awkwardly stumbles across every visu-

ally striking set with enough on screen fervor to light a match. Together with future wife Monica Belluci, they single-handedly create the most mindfuck of a film ever invented next to Sion Sono's Strange Circus. Both of these films were viewed at horrible times, which only strengthens the mood. Fuck, I need a real vacation.

-mAQ

THE NIGHT OF THE DEVILS
THE NIGHT OF THE DEVILS

Giorgio Ferroni (1972)

Indubitably, no Halloween is complete without at least watching one Guido horror flick, preferably of the vintage Gothic sort, whether it be a cultivated Golden Age classic from Mario Bava like *Black Sunday* (1960) or one of Godfather of Gore Lucio Fulci's gorgeously grotesque pseudo-American films like *The House by the Cemetery* (1981). Indeed, like the krauts long before them during the German expressionist period, Italians certainly know how to bring art, atmosphere, angst, and foreboding anticipation to a typically disposable genre that prides itself on cheap thrills, senseless sensationalism, and soulless sex, among other things. While any self-respecting Italian horror fan knows the works of Mario and Lamberto Bava, Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento, Ruggero Deodato, and Michele Soavi, as well as the strikingly less talented exploitation filmmakers like exploitation-oriented pornographer Joe D'Amato and Umberto 'Cannibal Ferox' Lenzi, some rather talented wop filmmakers have been inexplicably forgotten, with Giorgio Ferroni (Calvin Jackson Padget aka Calvin J. Padget) being a perfect example, which might partially have to do with the fact that his formative years were spent working for a now less than fashionable authoritarian regime that fashionable Guido commie filmmakers of the late 1960s and early 1970s like Bernardo Bertolucci and Pier Paolo Pasolini would most certainly disapprove of. Notably, Ferroni got his start in filmmaking during the fascist period when he made Mussolini-sanctioned documentaries and pro-war propaganda films like *The Thrill of the Skies* (1940) aka *Lebbrezza del cielo*, which is about a group of young pilots who construct a glider, travel to Spain during the Spanish Civil War, kick ass for Franco, and come home to receive warm receptions by the populous of their home city of Asiago due to their heroic Bolshevik-bombing efforts. After World War II, Ferroni temporarily dabbled in neorealism before working in swords-and-sandals films and finding some commercial success in a series of spaghetti westerns he directed starring Giuliano Gemma, but he is best remembered today, if at all, for two rather aesthetically pleasing and absurdly atmospheric gothic horror flicks, *Mill of the Stone Women* (1960) aka *Il mulino delle donne di pietra* and his penultimate work *The Night of the Devils* (1972) aka *La notte dei diavoli*, with the latter being my personal favorite of the two.

Only available in bootleg form in the United States and most of the rest of the world until relatively recently when it was released by the Italian label RaroVideo on DVD and Blu-ray in 2013, *The Night of the Devils* is an almost-avant-garde vampire flick revolving around a man who becomes more or less insane after encountering a peasant that is haunted by a vampire-witch hybrid with the plot being partly based on the Gothic novella *The Family of the Vourdalak* (1884) aka *The Wurdulak* by Russian poet/novelist Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy (not to be confused with Leo Tolstoy, who was the novelist's second

cousin). Of course, Ferroni updated the story, adding gore and other grotesque imagery, bushy goombah beavers, horrendous 1970s wardrobes and haircuts, and even hallucinogen-inspired psychedelic imagery. Featuring a nonlinear narrative structure that would give Quentin Tarantino an even bigger hard-on than tall Nordic women's large feet and featuring an eerie and highly complementary original musical score by one-time Michelangelo Antonioni composer Giorgio Gaslini (*La Notte*, *Deep Red*), *The Night of the Devils* is an unequivocally unjustly forgotten masterpiece of Guido horror that reminds one why Italians were most certainly the true masters of European, and largely international, horror during the post-WWII era.

Opening with a psychedelic red and turquoise title screen comparable to that of Juan López Moctezuma's *The Mansion of Madness* (1973) and set to the strangely melodic yet haunting sounds of Gaslini, *The Night of the Devils* then cuts to the lead protagonist Nicola (Gianni Garko, who is best known as the eponymous protagonist of the countless Sartana spaghetti westerns and who also starred in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1960 proto-Holocaust classic *Kapò*), who is all bloody and broken, collapsing in the countryside, and from there a hallucinatory dream-sequence proceeds that includes a skull with maggots crawling in its eye socket, a faceless man feeling the mighty bush and ample bosoms of a faceless woman, a man having his face blown off with a shotgun, and two sinister dudes sporting cloaks and skull masks performing a seemingly Satanic ritual on an unclad babe inside a jail cell. From there, the viewer learns that Nicola is institutionalized and the doctors cannot figure out who he is or where he came from because he is either a mute, simply refuses to talk, or has lost the ability to speak due to fear, with the latter ultimately being the reason for the character's unnerving speechlessness. Meanwhile, a beautiful young redhead named Sdenka (Agoština Belli of Edward Dmytryk and Luciano Sacripanti's curious 1972 cult item *Bluebeard* and Dino Risi's *The Career of a Chambermaid* (1976)) arrives at the loony bin and reveals to the head doctor that Nicola is a lumber importer who she met a week ago and swooned over. When Nicola sees Sdenka and she warmly states "it's me...it's your Sdenka," he becomes so gripped by fear and panic that he manages to escape the grasp of two orderlies and runs away despite the fact he is wearing a straightjacket. Not long after Nicola is strapped to a hospital bed and given a sedative, Sdenka magically disappears from the hospital without a trace, though she leaves behind an empty purse (why she does this is never answered). From there, the film flashes back to the weekend before and depicts how Nicola went from being a suave, super bourgeois businessman to a semi-vegetable that lives in a permanent state of fear.

While heading to the Yugoslavian border in his luxury automobile, Nicola almost hits a stunning young dame, but manages to swerve his car out of the way at the last minute, thus causing him to crash. With his car out of commission, Nicola heads through the woods where he encounters gigantic black

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hogs but not a single person, not even the mysterious woman that he almost hit, though a seemingly unsavory hick named Jovan (Roberto Maldera) sees him. Jovan and his equally uneasy and seemingly haunted 'father' Gorca Ciuelak (Bill Vanders of Luchino Visconti's 1969 high-camp Third Reich melodrama *The Damned* and Lucio Fulci's 1969 erotic pre-giallo *Perversion Story* aka *Una sull'altra*) are burying the latter's forsaken brother whose body is wrapped in a blood-soaked white sheet. Gorca eventually tracks Nicola down, tells him about his dead brother, and warns him to stay out of the woods, especially after dark, and offers him room and board at his house. When Nicola enters the seemingly ancient Ciuelak home, he is taken aback by the fact that the family members immediately board up their windows and doors and seem to be hiding some imperative fact from him. While eating dinner with the family, Jovan comes down and explains to Nicola that he has training as a mechanic and will help him fix his car the next day. At dinner, Nicola also meets lovely Sdenka, the same girl who caused him to crash his car and will become a figure of demonic torment for him only a week later. As it turns out, Jovan has been carrying on a secret affair with his father's dead brother's wife Elena (Teresa Gimpera Víctor Erice's masterpiece *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973) aka *El espíritu de la colmena*). It is also revealed when Jovan and Gorca talk in secret that a centuries old curse plagues the family involving a woods witch (Maria Monti of Massimo Dallamano's masterful 1972 *What Have You Done to Solange?* and Bernardo Bertolucci's 1976 botched comsymp epic *1900* aka *Novecento*) who kills people and turns them into flesh-eating vampire-zombies that have a thirst primarily for their own loved ones.

The next day, patriarch Gorca decides to go end the family curse for once and all by driving a super large stake through the witch bitch's cold black heart, but his son Jovan warns him that he could destroy the entire family and that if he does not get back by 6 pm, he will personally drive a stake through his heart. While talking to one of Elena's prepubescent daughters, Nicola learns about the family curse and Gorca's plan to end it by killing the witch, who sleeps in a barn and resembles a black magic-inclined gypsy zombie. While Gorca comes back home early with proof of his success in the form of a dismembered human hand wrapped inside a gypsy-style scarf, things are much darker than they seem. When he sees someone lurking outside near the window of the children's room that night and alerts Jovan, he accuses the guest of drinking too much Euro-hick moonshine. That night, Nicola consummates his lurid love affair with Sdenka in what will ultimately be the first and last time they make love. The next day, Jovan fixes Nicola's car and everything seems to be looking up, at least until Elena's daughter reveals that Gorca has taken her sister Irina (Cinzia De Carolis of Argento's 1971 flick *The Cat o' Nine Tails* and Antonio Margheriti's 1980 flick *Cannibal Apocalypse*) into the woods. As it turns out, Gorca was indeed turned into one of the undead zombie-vampire beasts and only pretended to

have killed the witch while under the spell of said bitch witch. When Gorca gets back without Irina, he rips off the old man's shirt and reveals that his chest is rotted out, so the prodigal son drives a stake into his undead daddy's heart just as Nicola walks in. Nicola tries to stop Jovan, but he is too late and is soon all the more horrified when he sees Gorca's face cave in and completely rot within seconds, thus revealing that he is not quite human. That night Elena finds her daughter Irina but the little girl is now an undead ghoul and soon takes a bite out of her mom's neck, rips off her shirt, and claws at her tender tits as if she is on the brink of performing some atavistic breastfeeding routine.

Meanwhile, Nicola has already left the woods to pick up his lumber, but he decides to stop by a Catholic church where he talks to a disgraced military man named Brigadier Kovachich who reveals to him regarding the creatures that have cursed his beloved Sdenka's family that they are, "incorporeal material creatures. Something like the notes of [...] music. It's the terror of silence on which they feed, the terror of loneliness. They kill others primarily because they want company, especially those persons they happened to be in love with. And their victims search for their own company. A never-ending chain of death unless one can break a link." Needless to say, Nicola heads back to the woods to save his darling forest nymph Nicola, but when he sees her and notices blood on her neck, he assumes the worst. After Sdenka reveals that Elena has turned the rest of the family into flesh-eaters in what is ultimately one fucked up family affair, Nicola decides to make a run for it, but he once again wrecks his car. Of course, members of the extended zombie-vampire family take turns clawing at Nicola and he manages to kill them off one-by-one in rather grotesque ways. Flash forward a week later and Sdenka visits him one night in his room at the nut ward. Naturally, Nicola runs for his life and manages to dispose of his straightjacket in the process. When Sdenka finally finds him and corners him in a cremation room while declaring her undying love, Nicola arms himself with a large metal rod and proceeds to impale her with it. Ultimately, *The Night of the Devils* ends rather cynically and makes the viewer wonder whether Nicola took one-too-many hits of acid and suffered from sort of mental break.

If an intemperate Hightalian with a love of big bushes, psychedelic drugs, and Victorian gothic horror attempted to remake Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981) in the Italian countryside, albeit minus the neo-vaudevillian Semitic slapstick routines, it might begin to describe the marvelously macabre majesty of Ferroni's unfortunately unsung horror masterpiece *The Night of the Devils*. Indeed, while it might seem far-fetched considering the obscurity of the film in the United States, it is hard for me to believe that Raimi did not see Ferroni's film and use it as a sort of embryonic blueprint for *The Evil Dead*. Notably, horror maestro Mario Bava was the first to adapt Tolstoy's novella as the second segment of his classic Gothic omnibus film *Black Sabbath* (1963) aka *I tre volti della paura* starring Boris Karloff, Susy Andersen, and Mark Damon, but it is not

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nearly as penetrating, subversive, and idiosyncratic, though it is certainly a classic piece of creepy gothic guido celluloid in its own right. Indeed, it is a work created during the intermediate period of Italian horror after the influence of Bava and before the rise of Pier Paolo Pasolini's (in)famous arthouse shocker *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) and the unwaveringly brutal ultra-violent and nihilistic works of genre extremists like Fulci and Deodato. The only film that I think is even remotely comparable to Ferroni's fetishistic piece of foul filmic flesh is Elio Petri's counter-culture-tinged quasi-avant-garde (anti)ghost story *A Quiet Place in the Country* (1968) aka *Un tranquillo posto di campagna* starring Franco Nero and Vanessa Redgrave, as both films are semi-experimental and somewhat sensual works that are set in a haunting rural environment and center around a blonde Nordic-like Guido who loses his sanity after encountering feminine supernatural elements. *The Night of the Devils* is also notable for being a rare masterful piece of Italian (anti)folk horror. Despite being directed by a lapsed fascist filmmaker, Ferroni's film depicts a depopulated wasteland in which its handful of survivors are so hopelessly backwards that they do not know what television is, do not own phones or cars, engage in quasi-incest, and blame all their troubles on their seemingly perennial work unions and mega-bitchy wood-dwelling witches, with the inter-familial bloodsucking being of both the literal and figurative sort. Needless to say, *The Night of the Devils* is a cynical, pessimistic, and deranging work that manages to capture the spirit of its zeitgeist in a seamless and subtle esoteric sort of way that is anything but polemical and unsurprisingly directed by a man who lived through the fascist era to see Italy degenerate into a virtual overseas brothel of America and a socially chaotic nation on the brink of civil war as agitated by student revolutionaries and Marxist terrorists. Arguably more so than the arthouse works of enfant terrible arthouse auteurs like Pasolini, Bertolucci, and Bellocchio, 1970s goombah horror flicks act as a sort of exaggerated primal expression of the Guido volksgeist. After all, what better way to reach the so-called proletariat than the innately irrational horror genre?!

-Ty E

ANGEL

Giorgos Katakouzinis (1982)

Greece is not exactly known for its film industry, especially of the ostensibly homicidal homoerotic sort, so when *Angel* (1982) aka *Angelos* directed by Giorgos Katakouzinis (*Apousies*, *Zoe*) – a fierce fag flick featuring a Hellenic homo Norman Bates of sorts who has no qualms about sporting a dress in public – was released, it was quite a big deal and strangely one of the country's biggest commercial successes, being "seen by almost one Greek in twenty" (according to American DVD distributor Water Bearer Films), and was played at a number of Gay Film Festivals and even swept the awards at the Salonika Film Festival and was also well received at Cannes, but not everyone was happy, especially due to its less than flattering portrayal of proletarian Greek gaydom. Described by Raymond Murray in *Images in the Dark: An Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1994) as being, "From the 'Tis a pity he's a homosexual' school of filmmaking," as if William Friedkin had time in between directing mostly 2nd-rate thrillers to teach Greeks the proper way to portray perplexed poofs, *Angel* is the sort of somber and seedy sort of harrowingly hysterical melodrama that has the potential to drive certain viewers to suicide, especially those whose fathers rather be dead than have a debauched son who downs dicks and/or plays wide receiver on the pink team. Sometimes seen as the Greek equivalent of German New Cinema master of melodrama Rainer Werner Fassbinder's highly personal auteur piece *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* – a painfully penetrating film inspired by the director's lover's suicide – *Angel* is no more of a merry, but certainly an equally metaphysically malignant work, albeit an innately inferior one. Like *In a Year of 13 Moons*, *Angel* centers around a lonely, low-spirited lad from an irreparably broken background who finds himself cross-dressing (although the character of Katakouzinis' film does not go as far as mutilating his meat) so as to please his sadistic love interest, only to discover that love does not always conquer all, especially when the callous corruption of the soul is involved. For those that even wondered why the slasher sodomite of William Friedkin's homo-hated homicidal homo work *Cruising* (1980) was driven to drive more than just his phallus into fellow members of the flaming fag club, *Angel* might offer some memorable, if not mostly miserable and melancholy, answers.

Athenian aberrosexual *Angel* (Michalis Maniatis) leads a rather pathetic and increasingly perturbing life and his only source of solace – being buggered by ugly bum-like bozos in public parks in the dark – is a totally illegal one, so naturally the young Mediterranean man is best friends with misery and even misanthropy, even if his blank stare hides his most dark and daunting thoughts. Having a belligerent bindle boozier for a father (Vasilis Tsaglos), a hardworking masochist for a mother (Katerina Helmy) who guts chickens for a living, a retarded sister with

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cerebral palsy, and an ex-prostitute grandmother who nostalgically remembers the good old days when, “our daughters spread their legs for a cup of olive oil,” Angel has a lot more problems than just being a hapless homo who hopelessly longs to find a fatherly Mr. Right as poverty is especially unkind to the pathologically perverse poofter. Things only get all the more dreadful for exceedingly effeminate Angel when he is drafted into the Greek army; a place where patent pansies do not fare well. When Angel finally meets and starts a relationship with a macho, mustachioed sailor who could have easily been a character in fag frog novelist Jean Genet’s novel *Querelle of Brest* (1947) named Mikhalis (Dionysis Xanthos) who acts as a hunky husband to the bashful gay boy, things start looking up for the fairy fellow. Determined to make Angel his 24/7 bitch boy, martially manipulative Mikhalis makes his sensitive sweetheart dress in frisky female drag and sell his body as a flaming tranny flesh peddler. Needless to say, Angel has a bit of trouble juggling his damning and daunting dual career as a secret sodomite soldier and a chick with a dick who reluctantly turns tricks for the depraved dudes into dudes with dicks. When Angel is busted giving a blowjob while working his naughty night job, his contradictory life as a poorly paid cocksucker and military man is finally exposed, thereupon leading to his inevitable expulsion from the army, and hostility and heartbreak from his family at home. While Angel is less than happy when an unpleasant policeman tells him, “I spit on you...A soldier and a fag,” his depression and degradation reaches an all time low when his deadbeat drunk of a dad hysterically cries, “My son is a fag!...How can I face the neighbors?!” and “I’ll kill myself.” Indeed, while Angel’s dad is certainly an alcoholic asshole, he is also a man of his words because not only does he beat his own head into a bloody pulp, but he also commits self-slaughter by passionately penetrating his own large gut with a pair of scissors in front of his wife, disabled daughter, and sack-less sacrilegious son. Needless to say, life as he knows it becomes less and less fun for the fragile flamer Angel and he starts to get stranger and stranger to the point of total debasement and deadly derangement.

Near the conclusion of *Angel*, Angel – who was ruthlessly raped the night before by an eco-unfriendly garbageman who delights in anally traumatizing young twinkles – wakes to find himself with his mascara smeared and his wig gone, surrounded by mountains of trash in a junkyard. Like many of the characters featured in *Angel*, the poofter protagonist – due to his devastating upbringing and undignified lot in life – is ultimately no more valuable than the garbage dump he eventually ends up in or so the film insinuates, hence why it seems that the majority of (mostly gay) reviewers of the strikingly sullied cinematic work regard it as, ‘homophobic.’ More than a tragic, albeit trashy, film about the protagonist’s sexual persuasion, *Angel* is a film about a totally degenerated nation where public fudge-packing is the least of its more overwhelming problems, which are more likely the result of some less than humble but certainly horny Turk rap-

ing their great-great-great-great-great grandmother, especially considering that Greek kultur was at its height when it was all too common for elder men to bugger young boys in a manner that would give Oscar Wilde joy, albeit with one of the men (like Angel of the film) taking on the role of the passive partner. Of course, with the legalization of male prostitution in Greece in 2006, men like Angel no longer have to worry about being busted by the police for literally busting their asses. If Angel and the legalization of salaried streetwalking are any real indication of Greece's seemingly metaphysically greasy soul, it is no wonder that 'far-right' nationalist political parties like Golden Dawn, which currently has 18 seats in the Hellenic Parliament, are growing quite popular in the EU's most impoverished nation. Call me crazy, but I do not think a country is on the road to success when men are better at passively bending over while wearing a dress than they are at climbing walls in boot camp.

-Ty E

EVIL
EVIL

Giorgos Noutsias (2005)

Evil (To Kako) is a rare breed of horror - Greek horror. Greece hasn't seen a decent horror film since *Island of Death* (To my knowledge). Evil takes the very overdone (and ignorant) story of a group of survivors trapped in a zombie apocalypse (Cue the mc chris fans). What allows this film to shine aloud, more so than the fluff, is the violence, incredible characters, and effective DIY camera work including skilled editing. Think of that horrible, horrible film *Automaton Transfusion*, except entertaining and ambitious. The characters are obviously the blissful creation of a hivemind AKA Yorgos Noutsias. With character progression being "the geographic gradation of expression of specific characters over the range of distribution of a race or species", it's easy to notice the careful steps taken to slide in humor, tragedy, and restlessness within each scenario as seen by a specific survivor. Lovable and enticing characters each with a horrific demise, if fate should see it that way. I once saw this film in a fantastic media shop in Philadelphia christened Long in the Tooth. I was perusing through the volumes of obscure films and I found 3 titles of interest and they were *Strange Circus*, *The Coffin Joe* trilogy, and a zombie film called *Evil*. Two of these were from the divine *Danger After Dark* collection but I wasn't chancing a blind buy, after all, *Sion Sono* is a name I can trust. I don't regret not purchasing it then due to the extremities and polar shifts that *Coffin Joe* and *Strange Circus* performed on me, but I always adored the DVD illustration by a Mr. Michael Bukowski. Eye-popping, colorful, and savage. What Yorgos Noutsias has distilled upon the horror market isn't a vain attempt to "recreate" another mythos that doesn't need altering. The official job of zombie recreation lied in the hands of Lucio Fulci, who has been as much of a gentleman to lay down instant classics for our starving retinas. The "zombie infection" isn't at all anything zombie like. In the opening scene, An eerie outbreak occurs from a spirit (That heavily reminds me of *Ghosts of Mars*) that possesses those who unleashed it. *Evil* carries the foreign torch for the sub-par zombie branch of horror. This isn't the greatest accomplishment but it is an accomplishment and that is more than I could ask for. It has also been revealed that a sequel is in the works starring none other than - Wait for it - Billy Zane. After seeing Zane's underrated film *The Mad*, it would be a fatal understatement to not exclaim my gratitude. *Evil* is merciless with a shock ending that raises questions concerning the directors work on a low budget piece. I'm currently listening to *Work/Death* and I must say that this droning static fits the ideas of this film incredibly well. *Evil* comes highly recommended.

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RITUAL - A PSYCHOMAGIC STORY

Giulia Brazzale (2013)

Chilean-born Renaissance mensch Alejandro Jodorowsky may be Hebraic by blood but his films and persona certainly demonstrate that he has somewhat of a Latin spirit, so I was not all that surprised when I recently learned that he collaborated with some avant-garde guidos on a film. Indeed, the Italian 'metaphysical horror-thriller' *Ritual - Una storia psicomagica* (2013) aka *Ritual - A Psychomagic Story* co-directed by first-time feature filmmakers Giulia Brazzale and Luca Immesi was not only influenced by Jodorowsky's autobiographical novel turned film *The Dance of Reality* and his psychotherapy technique known as 'psychomagic,' but also features the *El Topo* (1970) director in a small role as the ghost husband of a widowed 'good witch' of sorts. A sort of sadomasochistic arthouse flick that puts special emphasis on savagely sensual tableaux and self-described 'atheist mystic' Jodorowsky's pseudoscientific psychomagic mumbo jumbo, *Ritual* is part exercise in style and part tribute to the cinematic and spiritual journeys of one of the world's greatest and most eccentric cult filmmakers. There is no question that Italy used to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, producers of films and auteur filmmakers as the land of Fellini, Pasolini, Rossellini, Antonioni, Visconti, and Bertolucci, among countless others. Likewise, Guidoland was also one of the greatest and most eclectic producers of horror masters ranging from the truly revolutionary pioneer Mario Bava to the artful and surrealist giallos of Dario Argento to the compulsively subversive 'artsploitation' avant-gardists like Giulio Questi and Alberto Cavallone to the gorgeously grotesque celluloid splatter of Lucio Fulci to the unhinged ultra-violence of major misanthrope Ruggero Deodato yet, like with most contemporary cinema in the boot-shaped Mediterranean nation, Italian horror is now a cinematic wasteland that, at best, can only try in vain to compete with old glories. Admittedly, I probably set my expectations absurdly high for Brazzale and Immesi's debut *Ritual*, as I hoped it would prove to be a sign of a new spark in Italio-horror and would represent a sort of rebirth for the genre in Italy, yet I ultimately was not totally disappointed as the film had enough perverse pulchritude and morbid memorable moments to keep me interested from beginning to end. Most importantly, *Ritual*—a work that depicts an abusive anti-romance that only gets all the more worse when the female protagonist is forced by her brutal man-child boy toy to get an abortion after unexpectedly getting pregnant—is a work that offers a rather incriminating window into a dying nation with a dwindling indigenous birthrate and an almost completely bankrupt culture. Indeed, aside from possibly Asia Argento with works like *Scarlet Diva* (2000) and more recently *Incompresa* (2014) aka *Misunderstood* and to a lesser extent Paolo Sorrentino with obscenely overrated works like *La grande bellezza* (2013) aka *The Great Beauty*, very few Italian filmmakers have

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dared to depict the dispiriting spirit that has led to Italy becoming something akin to a barely living museum and tourist attraction that relies on the reputation of its great past in the hope of somehow making it into the future. In *Ritual*, the protagonist and her malevolently misogynistic boyfriend have no future, neither as a couple nor as individuals as they are decidedly damaged individuals whose 'complimentary' flaws ultimately make for a deleterious and completely killer combo of the savagely schizophrenic and superlatively spiritually sick sort. Although it might not exactly explain why things are the way they are in Italy, the film captures a forlorn and forsaken zeitgeist of spiritual and sexual dysfunction where marriage and parenthood are an absurd anachronism, mindless hedonism and self-indulgence are the name of the game, and spirituality is the tool of the senseless or senile.

Ritual begins with something that one might describe as a degenerate 'dating ritual,' as it depicts somewhat young and reasonably beautiful protagonist Lia (played by Désirée Giorgetti, who also appeared in the Jörg Buttgerreit co-directed horror anthology *German Angst* (2015)) walking around a decadent yet sterile 'modern art' museum while being seemingly stalked by a discernibly unsavory guido in a fancy suit named Viktor (played by Ivan Franek, who appeared in Sorrentino's *The Great Beauty*), who eventually corners his voluptuous prey in a room projecting an experimental film. As the viewer soon learns, Viktor is actually Lia's bourgeois bad boy boyfriend and he is a staunch sadomasochist who seems to be only able to become sexually aroused when abusing his girlfriend in a variety of verbal and physical ways. Since Lia is a rather atypical Italian chick as a highly neurotic, introverted, and passive dame, Vik the dick has no problem making her his perennial vulnerable victim, thus the couple's sex life is rather active, if a bit one-sided. As a dress designer, Lia has a somewhat artistic sensibility that seems to go hand-in-hand with her discernibly delusional perspective of her relationship with Viktor, who only gives a shit about himself and will do every and anything to get his jollies and that especially includes using his girlfriend as a virtual blowup doll. Viktor oftentimes surprises Lia with random gifts, but that is because he is a scheming psychopath and the items are really for his own amusement as demonstrated by the fact that he mainly gets her BDSM contraptions and sexually revealing clothing. Viktor literally rules over everything Lia does, including what she eats, even force-feeding her sushi even though she cannot stand raw fish. Of course, the more Lia cries and begs for mercy, the more turned on Viktor gets, as he thrives on abuse as if his life depended on it. Not surprisingly, Lia regularly goes to a psychiatrist named Dr. Guerrieri (Cosimo Cinieri), but she adamantly denies that Viktor abuses her or is in any way a problem, even pseudo-proudly proclaiming to the head doc in a rather hysterical way regarding she and her superlatively sadistic beau, "He and I are meant to be together." The progeny of a decidedly deranged mother who she indubitably takes after, Lia was raised by her maternal aunt Agata (Anna

Bonasso) and when she was only 9-years-old she suffered a tragic event while at her home as a result of having her first period at such a young age, thus causing her to become convinced that she was literally cursed by the devil, even calling her first menstrual cycle “a curse,” hence her rather bizarre masochistic sexual habits.

Since Viktor is a psychopath, he is always stalking Lia and when he spots her talking with a gay fashion designer named Flavio at a coffee house, he later interrogates her, accuses her of cheating on him, calls her a “slut” repeatedly, bends her over a kitchen table, and more or less rapes her in a pathetic demonstration of his less than potent sexual prowess in an absurdly brief coitus session that lasts less than a mere minute. Assumedly as a result of the quasi-rape or one of their aberrant erotic escapades, Lia becomes pregnant and Viktor predictably responds to the seemingly good news by forcing her to get an abortion that results in the protagonist suffering an ominous nightmare involving her bastard beau performing an abortion on her where he pulls out a bloody log instead of a fetus. Soon after the abortion, Viktor decides to pick up a prostitute with a glaringly fake blonde wig that looks like a cracked out tranny but he ultimately decides to scream in the streetwalker’s face and kick her out of his car instead of paying her for pussy, so he goes back home and is startled to find Lia unresponsive in a bathtub full of blood as a result of a fairly serious suicide attempt. While Lia survives her senseless attempt at self-slaughter as a result of Viktor getting her help, she wisely decides to abruptly leave her boyfriend and move in with her beloved aunt Agata so that she can recover from the trauma caused by having an abortion.

During the first night that she sleeps at her aunt’s large 18th century luxury chateau in the Veneto countryside, Lia wakes up to the sound of a woman singing outside, so she goes outside on her balcony to investigate and spots a beautiful lady that seems to be about the same age as the protagonist. Not only does Lia begin believing that this mysterious woman is a wicked witch, but she also thinks that she has ‘stolen’ her aborted baby. Notably, Lia’s aunt Agata is as ‘psychomagician’ whose magic rituals include doing such things as having a seemingly gay boy set a picture of his father on fire so that the ashes can be mixed with wine to be drunk as a means to purportedly cure the gay boy of his overwhelming fear of his dead daddy. In another absurd magic ritual, Agata has a young negress wear ‘whiteface’ while her white friend wears ‘blackface’ so that the former can feel more integrated into quasi-white guido society. Not surprisingly, good witch Agata’s husband is Alejandro Jodorowsky aka ‘Fernando’ and although he is dead, he visits his ladylove at night in bed where he provides her with psychomagic advice and flirts with her in a bizarre manner by stating things like, “While I’m caressing you, I see you’re getting old. I love both you...and your death.” Of course, it is alluded to that Agata practices spectrophilia and what better person to engage in it with than Señor Jodorowsky. Meanwhile, loony

RITUAL - A PSYCHOMAGIC STORY

Lia befriends two imaginary children that call themselves 'Elves' named Nicola and Gaia who only speak in song and in nursery rhymes. Naturally, the 'Elves' freak the hell out of Lia when they randomly give her a 'new age' style tarot card reading and sing as a duo, "...there's a child who is her baby, it's her baby who's crying loudly, turn the card and here comes death."

Of course, Lia's spiritual recovery is completely compromised when loser loverboy Viktor randomly shows up at the family chateau and acts quite vindictive to the protagonist after initially putting on a 'good boy' act to get in her good graces so that she would not immediately kick him out when he initially showed up unannounced. Indeed, at one point, Viktor holds Lia's head under water in a bathtub—a place she typically seeks solace in as especially exemplified in a scene where she bathes with a bunch of goldfish—to scare her into thinking he is drowning her and then hatefully states, "You shouldn't have left me like that." Naturally Viktor absolutely hates Agata, complaining to Lia that he thinks "she's an old fool" and "This house gives me the creeps." Of course, one cannot completely blame Viktor as he suffers a nightmarish hallucination at the house where he slowly slices his face up with a shaving razor in a scene that seems to be a direct tribute to Guido-American Martin Scorsese's pre-fame short *The Big Shave* (1968). Viktor also becomes rather perturbed when he walks in on Lia caressing and singing to an antique baby doll as if it is a real live infant. As Viktor proudly states, "I don't want children. Children are only a burden," so naturally he is not going to tolerate his girlfriend fawning over a children's toy as if it is a living and breathing baby. Ultimately, Agata attempts to rid Lia of her post-abortion sorrow by staging a magic ritual that involves the protagonist pretending to give birth, but of course sadist Viktor, who gets increasingly drunk, intolerant, and violent as the film progresses, ruins it and ultimately pays a hefty price in the end that results in his death and the loss of what little bit of sanity his girlfriend had left.

If you're ever dreamed of an ambitious celluloid marriage between Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965), John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), Argento-esque retarded female hysteria, and a Jodorowsky-esque approach to genetic inheritance and spirituality, *Ritual* is probably the film for you, but it is also certainly one of those somewhat disappointing works that is not exactly as delectable as it sounds, as a film that demonstrates that the two filmmakers know their cinema history but are still at a formative stage in their careers and still need to find their own idiosyncratic voices (that is, if they each have one). While the film is seemingly infinitely superior to anything that fallen maestro Argento has directed over the past two decades or so, it is ultimately too conspicuously contrived, 'Jodorowsky chic,' and 'too-cool-for-school' for its own good as a work that feels like a celluloid fashion show with buckets of blood, S&M fetishism, and goombah meathead misogyny thrown in for good measure, but then again the film also says a lot about contemporary Italian culture and society

in general. Set in a sub-opulent realm populated by flashy dressing Hightalian beta-males posing as alph-males who can only get their cocks hard by beating a woman, as well as barren childless women who will use their pussy for pretty much anything aside from procreation and giving birth and who do not think twice about getting abortions even though they want to keep the baby but are too weak and passive to say no to their boyfriends, *Ritual* ultimately makes Italy seem like a giant disco club in Sodom where the wisest and most level-headed people are elderly witches with dyke hair-cuts and where anyone under the age of 60 is a perennial child with some sort of serious sex disorder, which acts as a sort of aberrant allegory for why they would never procreate. Personally, I find Jodorowsky's so-called 'psychomagic' to be just a more exotic and attractively packaged version of the old kosher carny Freudian con and certainly one of the most unappealing aspects about the filmmaker, so for someone else aside from him to incorporate this brand of dubious metaphysical psychotherapy into the film seems like a patently pathetic gimmick to me, but I cannot say that I was unhappy to see Mr. Topo actually appear in the film. For those expecting Brazzale and Immesì's film to be the sign of a new Renaissance in Italian horror cinema, they will surely be sadly disappointed, but I'm sure Jodorowsky fanboys and fans of unclad and unhinged guidettes will surely find something to like about it, as I surely did. Indeed, *Ritual* is certainly no masterpiece, but it at least demonstrates that Italians know how to bring style and sex appeal to just about anything, including rape, abortions, and suicide. There is also a sort of cryptic moral message in the film. Indeed, according to Jodorowsky himself, he was the product of his father raping his mother, but unlike the protagonist of *Ritual*, who aborts her rape-baby, the Chilean Israelite was actually born so one should always think twice about getting a baby vacuumed out of their cunt as it might cause you to go crazy with murderous schizophrenia and/or prevent the birth of a future filmmaking genius.

-Ty E

EYES BEHIND THE WALL
EYES BEHIND THE WALL

Giuliano Petrelli (1977)

Undoubtedly, when it comes to Guido giallo flicks, I always prefer the insanely idiosyncratic ones that either totally defy and/or destroy the conventions of the genre and/or bring something aesthetically new (or even avant-garde) to the style with Giulio Questi's *Death Laid an Egg* (1968), Elio Petri's *Un tranquillo posto di campagna* (1968) aka *A Quiet Place in the Country*, Dario Argento's *4 mosche di velluto grigio* (1971) aka *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*, Lucio Fulci's *Non si sevizia un paperino* (1972) aka *Don't Torture a Duckling*, and Silvio Narizzano's *Las flores del vicio* (1979) aka *Bloodbath* being a couple of my notable favorites. More recently, I discovered the whacked-out wop giallo-melodrama hybrid *Locchio dietro la parete* (1977) aka *Eyes Behind the Wall* aka *Voyeur pervers* aka *The Crystal Man* directed by actor turned one-time-director Giuliano Petrelli (*La villeggiatura* aka *Black Holiday*, *La mala ordina* aka *The Italian Connection*) and starring Buñuel regular Fernando Rey (*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *That Obscure Object of Desire*) in a rather fitting role (sorry, but it is hard for me to believe that old ugly fart Rey could get with the kind of chick(s) he does in *That Obscure Object of Desire*) as a decidedly degenerate and equally wealthy wheelchair-bound pervert of the pathologically voyeuristic sort who gets off to spying on his tenants, especially of the male persuasion, via a secret spy room in his house. A sickeningly sleazy yet seductively stylish work that mischievously molests Hitchcock by adding gratuitous sex/nudity, incest, and interracial sodomy Italian exploitation style, *Eyes Behind the Wall* ultimately makes for a cruel celluloid work that is just too damn pathologically perverted to be sexy despite the fact that the film was made to appeal to certain debauched individuals looking for a kinky masturbation aid. A bitter mix of macabre melodrama with incestuous giallo horror, *Eyes Behind the Wall*, with its depiction of a discernibly despicable (and less than sexually virile) intellectual, seems like it was specially tailored for Hebraic quack Sigmund Freud. About 70 minutes of psychosexual celluloid perversion with some mind-molesting twists and turns that make for fiercely fetishistic cinematic foreplay that ultimately erupts into a literally and figuratively explosive climax that was meant to provoke just as much as it is meant to penetrate the psyche of the viewer, *Eyes Behind the Wall* is delightful dago filmic decadence that, unlike most films of its now mostly outmoded celluloid breed, somehow demands subsequent re-viewings.

Beginning with the Italian exploitation answer to Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1950) in a scene featuring a young and handsome gent named Arturo (American actor John Phillip Law of Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* (1968) fame) staring at a young lass's legs on a train and proceeding to sexually ravage her against her will, *Eyes Behind the Wall* then cuts to the seemingly banal bourgeois world of crippled old rich dude Ivano (Fernando Rey) and his ostensible 'wife' Olga

(Bosnian-born actress Olga Bisera, who played the role of the 'Baker's Wife' in Sydney Pollack's *Castle Keep* (1969)), who is young and beautiful and who seems about only half the age of her wheelchair-bound hubby. Rapist Arturo is the latest tenant at Ivano's home and little does he realize that his landlord is a sinister voyeur who has 24/7 access to seeing everything that he does in his new apartment. Indeed, Ivano has a secret room hidden in the wall with state-of-the-art spying equipment, including a fancy periscope/telescope-like device with which he and his wife watch Arturo's every move. As Ivano tells Olga, he finds Arturo to be a provocative individual of the "hermetically shut" sort, stating of his particular interest in his new tenant, "What really makes me mad is that, while this apparatus perfectly frames him, I, on the other hand, can't seem to frame his psychological profile in any way." Of course, wifey Olga concurs, stating that Arturo is "certainly a strange animal," though her interest transcends a simple voyeuristic fascination with the fellow's collection of ethnology, sociology, and anthropology books and affinity for classical and modern avant-garde music.

At the Svengali-like encouragement of Ivano, Olga decides to follow Arturo around town, ultimately spotting the new tenant buying porno magazines and befriending a Negro at a local disco. For whatever reason, Arturo brings the Negro back to his apartment and in no time, the black buck is borderline raping the introverted white boy, which rather turns on borderline psychopathic cripple Ivano but rather distresses Olga, who seems to develop a crush for the quasi-gay boy. Not long after the scene of miscegenation-based sodomy, Ivano remarks regarding his tenant, "It would be interesting to find if his homosexuality is casual or firmly rooted. Or if he brought that torture and pain on himself as some absurd need for suffering" and decides that his wife should befriend and seduce Arturo to investigate, which she has no problem doing, even if her loony love interest was reamed in the rectum by a disco jigaboo. While Olga tells Arturo that he is "just plain weird. Too weird," she still has passionate sex with him while Ivano watches from the comfort of his hidden spy room. In the end, it is revealed that Olga is not really Ivano's wife but actually his daughter. Additionally, Olga previously carried on an incestuous affair with her now-deceased brother, who died in a car wreck that also resulted in Ivano's crippling, hence the why perverse patriarch is now in a wheelchair. Indeed, Olga found Arturo to be alluring because, like she, he is a 'lost soul' who never got over a traumatic experience from the past (with Arturo's 'traumatic' experience being raping the chick on the train) and the two decide to cement their bond forever by committing suicide in a car explosion.

A sort of mutated and molested pseudo-Italian remake of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) that makes *Disturbia* (2007) starring Shia LaBeouf come off like a pansy preteen wet dream for posh prepubescent girls, *Eyes Behind the Wall* ultimately does what all great giallo films should do by making the macabre movie master himself, Alfred Hitchcock, seem like a self-censoring sissy who did

EYES BEHIND THE WALL

not have the glorious gall to go all the way in his psychosexual/psychoanalytic celluloid depictions of human sexual perversity. Of course, *Eyes Behind the Wall* is nowhere near as immaculately assembled as a Hitchcock flick and even features a seemingly pointless subplot between a misogynistic pederast butler and a blonde teen, but it certainly stands as one the most original and under-appreciated giallo flicks ever assembled as a rather wicked work that manages to juggle morbid melodrama with pop psychology for a most mean-spirited and even misanthropic cocktail with a smashed moral compass that depicts a violent rapist and an incestuous chick as the most empathetic characters. To add to the film's slickly stylized sleaze credit, *Eyes Behind the Wall* also features a synth-driven musical score composed by Giuseppe Caruso, who also assembled the score for the kiddy arthouse-erotica flick *Maladolescenza* (1977) starring Eva Ionesco. 'Psychopathia Sexualis' with a distinctly 1970s Italian flare, *Eyes Behind the Wall* will certainly appeal to the unconventionally refined tastes of Alberto Cavallone and Giulio Questi fans, though I think it might offend the aesthetic sensibilities of those cinephiles that are obsessed enough with the *Master of Suspense* that took the time to read *Hitchcock/Truffaut* (1967) by François Truffaut because, as far as I am concerned, Giuliano Petrelli's film is nothing short of Hitchcock heresy and not of the superficial pseudo-softcore Brian De Palma variety.

-Ty E

KILLER NUN

Giulio Berruti (1979)

Upon breaking ties with weirdo Warhol and his mentor Paul Morrissey and moving to Italy to establish a 'legitimate' non-arthouse acting career, Italian-American counter-culture sex icon Joe Dallesandro (Flesh, Trash, Heat) starred in a series of superlatively sleazy and largely forgotten Guido exploitation flicks, with the nunsplotation flick *Killer Nun* (1979) aka *Suor Omicidi* aka *Deadly Habits* directed by relatively unknown director Giulio Berruti and starring busy Swedish model turned actress Anita Ekberg being one of the more well known of these films. A piece of overtly sacrilegious trash of the super softcore Sapphic sort, the film was banned in the UK and pulled from distribution shortly after its release despite being the no. 2 film at the box-office in Rome due to pressure from the Catholic Church, who rather objected to the film's absurd tagline: "From the secret files of the Vatican." A work that more than clearly demonstrates that Ekberg's waist increased and popularity decreased over the nearly two decades since she appeared in the iconic scene in Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960) where she played a bodacious Nordic "dream woman" who dances in Rome's Trevi fountain for the pleasure of Marcello Mastroianni, *Killer Nun* features the sensual Swedish actress as an unhinged middle-aged opium-addled bisexual nun who suffered brain damage as a result of neurosurgery and now has an unhealthy hunger for blood, boobs, and Joe Dallesandro. Notably, in the book *Joe Dallesandro: Warhol Superstar, Underground Film Icon, Actor* (2011) written by Michael Ferguson, Dallesandro would confess regarding his involvement in the nunsplotation flick and various other goombah exploitation flicks: "When I worked in Italy, they'd take all these old actresses who were overweight and they would put them in films with me and they'd ignite again. They'd have something going for them because I wouldn't make them look like an old person. I play to everybody as if they were the most important thing in the world." Indeed, both onscreen in the Warhol/Morrissey films and offscreen as an actor, Dallesandro played the role of a hustler who used his body in a way that few women are even capable of. The lapsed Warhol superstar previously worked with *Killer Nun* director Berruti (who only directed one other film, the forgotten 1976 exploitation flick *Noi siamo come le lucciole* starring *Cannibal Holocaust* director Ruggero Deodato's then-wife Silvia Dionisio) three years before on the fairly trashy and mean-spirited but ultimately worthless crime flick *Il tempo degli assassini* (1975) aka *Season for Assassins*, for which the Guido filmmaker acted as the editor (Berruti worked as an editor and screenwriter before getting the chance to direct). A ridiculously sleazy work that, for better or worse, owes most of its charisma to Ekberg's over-the-top, if not dead seriously played, performance, *Killer Nun* might qualify as a hagsplotation flick were it not for the lead actress's relatively well preserved beauty and rather serious and

KILLER NUN

less than campy performance. In short, this dago nunsploration celluloid abortion is the dubious, if not curious and even sometimes interesting, result of what happens when a lapsed sex icon who is best known for her meta-busty body attempts to be a serious actress in a fucked film that lacks seriousness where an elderly wheelchair-bound cripple receives a blowjob during a thunderstorm from a hot young maid, a lesbo nun demands that her much younger spiritual sister wear stockings during sex, Little Joe portrays a sensitive and sophisticated yet ultimately weak and sex-starved doctor, an elderly man is suffocated via cotton balls, and a nun offers to sacrifice herself into servitude to save her murderous lesbo lover from prison.

After receiving major brain surgery to remove a tumor from her seemingly under-used gray matter, big bosomed blonde nun Sister Gertrude (Anita Ekberg) becomes a crazed cunt of the lethal lesbo sort who gets off by reading sexually-charged S&M-like stories of saints being tortured to elderly patients at the psychiatric ward where she works. While Gertrude pleads to the head physician, Dr. Poirret (Massimo Serato, who played a bishop in Nicholas Roeg's 1973 arthouse-horror masterpiece *Don't Look Now*), as well as her Mother Superior (played by Austrian-Italian countess Alida Valli, who appeared in several masterpieces, including Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949) and Luchino Visconti's *Senso* (1954), though her career suffered as a result of a scandal involving the murder of a young fashion model during a sex-and-drug-orgy), that she needs therapy to fix her damaged brain, she is looked at with a sort of superstition-fueled indifference and does not get the serious help that she needs. After allowing one of her elderly patients to drop dead, Sister Gertrude steals and pawns the victim's jewelry so she can buy some dope (she is a morphine addict, after all), booze, and a sexy wardrobe, which she uses to lure a man who enters her holy hole after she decides to go incognito as a non-nun aka real woman one day. On top of being a passive murderer and major morphine addict, the sensual Sister is also a closest lipstick lesbo who makes up the dominant half of a lurid love affair with a younger Sapphic sister named Sister Mathieu (played by Paola Morra, who is probably best known for being the Italian Playboy Playmate of the Month for February 1978), who is much nicer than her lunatic lover. Ultimately, Sister Mathieu will help her loony lady lover cover-up her violently murderous crimes.

On top of having a broken brain, Gertrude hates men as a result of being molested as a child, even admitting to a priest during a confession that she would like to "snuff out all men" in revenge for having her happiness snuffed out as a child. Needless to say, the nasty nun begins murdering men, including an old fart who she catches receiving a blowjob and sex from the luxury of his wheelchair. Although she hates men, Gertrude is no gentler with women, who she tortures before killing. In fact, the nympho nun even tortures her girlfriend Sister Mathieu, who she forces to wear stockings and declare, "I'm the worst kind of prostitute" before they have lurid lesbo sex. Indeed, Sister Mathieu is somewhat of

a slut, but she is well meaning, as she kisses the crotch of a new young doctor named Dr. Patrick Roland (Joe Dallesandro) in a rather raunchy attempt to get him to overlook his suspicions regarding Sister Gertrude's murderous behavior. A crippled patient named Peter (played by Lou Castel of Marco Bellocchio's *Fists in the Pocket* (1965) and Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971)) also becomes suspicious of Gertrude's deranged behavior, so the sadistic sister maliciously murders him, but not before taunting the paraplegic victim with a healthy dose of terror and torture. When Dr. Roland finally discovers that Sister Gertrude is a morphine-addicted serial killer, Sister Mathieu threatens to kill herself if he tells anyone about her lover's deranged behavior. In the end, the nuns cover-up the murders and lock Gertrude in a cell where she falls into a quasi-catatonic state and Sister Mathieu becomes the virtual sex slave of Dr. Roland in return for him not going to the cops about the deaths. Ironically, as a result of being a Sapphic sister in sexual servitude, Mathieu develops homicidal tendencies and confesses to a priest her fantasies about killing men.

A spiteful little film without morals and redemption starring two of the biggest sex icons of their respective eras, *Killer Nun* is the aesthetically atrocious result of what happens when a novice director who is somewhat resentful about their old school Italian Catholic upbringing attempts to inexplicably juggle anti-Catholic sermonizing with aesthetic immorality. In the featurette from the *Secret Files of the Vatican*, director Giulio Berruti, who has a small Hitchcockian cameo in *Killer Nun* as a Priest, stated regarding his film and its relationship with the Catholic Church: "I love the Church, I admire them as educators, but maybe they push Church life too hard: Mass every day and Sundays...so when you come out of there, how can I say, you look for something different. So the idea of this nun caught my attention. I think she was killing because of her loneliness. So this is the theme, the plot of the movie. Not everything came out as intended but it was supposed to show that drug addiction could substitute for God." Indeed, the film would have probably made a little more sense if a scene featuring the anti-heroine raising a syringe like a chalice over a church altar and 'communicating with God' via morphine injection was not cut out (and, according to the director, destroyed). According to director Berruti, Italian distributors could do whatever they wanted to do to films and ultimately destroyed the film. Describing his own film as being, "like a daughter abandoned by her father," Berruti gave up on feature filmmaking after *Killer Nun* and decided to be a documentary filmmaker so he could get his creative freedom back. Despite being a blatant celluloid hatchet job, I, as someone who is not really a fan of the exploitation subgenre, found Berruti's work to be one of the more interesting nunsploitation flicks. Indeed, no film featuring Anita Ekberg, Joe Dallesandro, and Alida Valli can be completely bad, though it can remind you of a grand missed cinematic opportunity.

-Ty E

THE VISITOR
THE VISITOR

Giulio Paradisi (1979)

There is no other way to approach this title than with severe caution. Fans (seldom found) of *The Visitor* know full well of the haphazardous alternate cuts of the film, either volleying ten or more additional minutes to further elaborate on the insane plot mechanics at hand or the shortened American version clocking in at 96 minutes, which hurriedly speeds through the ramblings of a screenplay penned by an Egyptian writer (no doubt played a part in the heavy dosage of religious symbolism and surrealism). What follows is something that really no one understands. No amount of sifting through the various versions will leave an imprint of concise understanding. *The Visitor* is as foreign to us as both the extraterrestrial fixture and the history behind such a film - a film in which the budget surely went straight to the star-studded cast which includes, but not limited to, Sam Peckinpah as an abortionist masked with shadow - rumors abound that while on set, was fueled on cocaine and constantly drunk, a performer if I ever saw one. With so much confusion towards the film, one thing is certain; *The Visitor* is hands down, one of the strangest films I have ever been pleased to see.

Popular belief leaves children in light as the only innocence to be found in our society. *The Visitor* entirely suggests otherwise. Insisted upon as an Italian masquerade of *The Omen*, *The Visitor* is accredited to stealing motifs from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* as well, what, with its blending of surreal science, extraterrestrial life and religious forces of good & evil. Joanne Nail stars as the lovely Barbara Collins, mother to a sinister young girl named Katy, whose lone hobby is skulking downstairs playing Pong using her telepathy. Father to the child is Lance Henriksen whose turn as a Faustian father marks one of the brighter performances in his career (as well as the wonderful *Nature of the Beast*). Raymond Armstead (Henriksen) has sold his soul as well as his family's to a mega-conglomerate led by Mel Ferrer whose intentions are to get the two adults wed and to procreate another perfect being - most likely timed to coincide with astrological alignment. Among other things, John Huston has a rather important role as a mystic emissary who is detailed in flashbacks before time on a sun-scorched rock garbed in a thick cloak. *The Visitor* is essentially two astral entities, representing either sides of chaos and order, speeding towards an inevitable collision. I will go out on a limb in assuming that much of *The Visitor* was lost on me at first due to the alternate cut that I viewed. However, further examination led me to forums crowded with pleas for understanding. Director Giulio Paradisi learned the ropes of intrigue well playing assistant director to Fellini on *8½*. Allow me, firsthand, to debunk any rumors that *The Visitor* just blindly swings *The Omen* as a fail safe. *The Visitor* simply takes several cues and paints the remainder of the picture with bewildering symbolism and bad biology,

really.

Barbara Collins, at the end of the day, is simply a gorgeous lass that fell victim to circumstance as well as a grand pattern (that will continue to repeat itself). Withholding evil forces, imagine, if you will, the plight of mankind being so extravagant and recurring as in cinema, now making that an everyday occurrence. It's a strange topic to ponder about, especially when Franco Nero, portraying Christ, stares off with icy-blue eyes into the camera surrounded by hairless children, as per their metaphysical baptism. The Visitor is, quite frankly, one hell of a brain-rush. A film as esoteric and bizarre as this, having such funding and blowing it on an ensemble cast, destroys my thought process. Here I sit attempting to connect the shattered remains of what was once an idea on how to approach reviewing The Visitor. Words cannot simply highlight all there is to enjoy and despise about The Visitor. Am I scornful because it genuinely confused me with its alternate cuts and switchable narratives? Almost, other than that, The Visitor was quite a surprise with excellent performances from top grade acting talent and its pseudo-science blended with alien life and other pleasing abnormalities. Don't think, just give it a chance. Who knows, it might shred the last hint of decency you have towards no-expectation-cinema, rewriting the very way you view random cassette tapes. I know it did for me.

-mAQ

THE VISITOR
THE VISITOR

Giulio Paradisi (1979)

Italians sure know how to polish turds, especially when it comes to taking banal Hollywood blockbusters and making them more stylish, cynical and—most importantly—sincerely sleazy. Undoubtedly, out of all the great Guido rip-off films, none is probably more ambitious than *The Visitor* (1979) aka *Stridulum* directed by Giulio Paradisi (who used the pseudonym ‘Michael J. Paradise’ so he would seem more ‘American’), who previously worked as an assistant director and actor on Federico Fellini’s autobiographical masterpiece *8½* (1963) and was later mainly responsible for directing comedies. A work that shamelessly steals from Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963), *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Omen* (1976), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), Donald Cammell’s *Demon Seed* (1977), *Damien: Omen II* (1978), and *The Fury* (1978), among countless other films, yet throws in conspicuous arthouse and psychedelic elements that ultimately give the film its insanely idiosyncratic character, *The Visitor* is an extravagant celluloid monster gone berserk that defies both expectation and classification. Produced and co-penned by Egyptian-born Greek producer/director Ovidio Assonitis (Forever Emmanuelle aka *Laure*, *Piranha Part Two: The Spawning*), who previously co-directed/co-produced the notable Guido *The Exorcist* rip-off *Beyond the Door* (1974) aka *Chi sei?* and was later a stockholder and CEO of Cannon Pictures during the early 1990s, *The Visitor* was originally intended as just another cheap take on William Friedkin’s hit supernatural horror flick, but evolved into a phantasmagoric science fiction horror epic of the celestial metaphysical sort with an eclectic all-star international cast, including Hollywood auteur John Huston (*The Maltese Falcon*, *Wise Blood*), Mel Ferrer (*The Longest Day*, *War and Peace*), Lance Henriksen (*Aliens*, *The Terminator*), Shelley Winters (*The Night of the Hunter*, *Lolita*), director Sam Peckinpah (*Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, *Straw Dogs*), Franco Nero (*Django*, *Querelle*), and Glenn Ford (*Gilda*, *3:10 to Yuma*). Notable among cinephiles as being one of the most recklessly whimsical and inately incoherent films ever made (which is more than a slight exaggeration), the film was originally released in the United States in a badly butchered cut that made the work seem even more inexplicable than it actually was, or as producer Assonitis stated in an interview with Zack Carlson, “When *THE VISITOR* was released in the US, the cut was very different than the original version, and much shorter as well. They did that without asking our permission. It was a distributor from Atlanta. They really eliminated a tremendous amount of the story [...] They’d made the cuts, and they had no right to do it, but what could I do? There was a conflict, and we were going to take legal action, but the film had already played. It took decades for people to see the complete version.”

Luckily, Independent distributor Drafthouse Films re-released *The Visitor*

in its complete form in 2013 in both theaters and on DVD. While I had previously seen the original butchered cut of the film and admired various random scenes, it was not until I saw the complete version of this much maligned work that I was able to appreciate it fully as being one of the most ridiculously ambitious oddities of Italian copycat cinema. Mostly shot in Atlanta, Georgia of all places with the support of the state government (then-governor George Busbee actually enticed the Italian crew to shoot there as they wanted to develop a film industry in the state), city mayor (three-term high yellow black democrat Maynard Jackson), and even media mogul Ted Turner, *The Visitor* is certainly a big celluloid cultural mongrel that producer Assonitis bizarrely claims was more influenced by video-games (indeed, the archaic first-generation video-game pong is featured somewhat prominently in the film) than other films (!), but is really a schizophrenic hodgepodge of various blockbuster Hollywood films and genre conventions that manages to bring artfulness to mainstream American industrial style filmmaking. Featuring a long-haired Franco Nero as a Christ-like figure, John Huston as an extraterrestrial exorcist/warrior battling an evil little blonde girl and quasi-Satanic businessmen, Shelley Winters once again portraying a bitchy maid, and Sam Peckinpah (who was apparently a pain to work with and only worked on the film for a single day) playing a doctor who gives his ex-wife an abortion because she is pregnant with a demon seed of sorts, *The Visitor* is a rare (anti)genre film where thematic insanity reigns and audacious aestheticism trumps genre formulas. Like Dario Argento at his prime meets *Satyricon* (1969) era Fellini as penned by William Peter Blatty had he fried his brain on acid and developed a nasty bird fetish, *The Visitor* is arguably the most entertaining mess of a low-budget (around \$800,000) mega movie ever made.

An ostensible old Polack/intergalactic warrior named Jerzy Colsowicz (John Huston) has been summoned by a blond Aryan Christ figure (played by Franco Nero in a role he apparently offered to play for free just so he could work with his hero Huston), who surrounds himself with bald children acolytes in glittery white robes, to take care of an evil 8-year-old American girl from Atlanta named Katy Collins (Paige Conner). As the supremely stoic Aryan Christ explains, a certain Commander Yahweh managed to capture an evil mutant being known as 'Sateen' in a battle that claimed hundreds of lives. Unfortunately, Sateen eventually managed to escape in a tiny scout craft and landed on earth where he developed new psychic and occult powers and used them to dish out death and destruction. To rid planet earth of inevitable destruction by dark forces, Commander Yahweh sent a flock of specially trained birds to kill Sateen, but the evil being managed to procreate with earth women before he kicked the bucket, thus spreading his demon seed in a somewhat cryptic fashion. 8-year-old Atlanta girl Katy Collins—a confederate Heather O'Rourke lookalike of sorts who is a master of gymnastics and figure skating—is one of Sateen's descendents and it is 'extraterrestrial exorcist' Jerzy Colsowicz's job to rid the girl of her sinister genetic

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inheritance as well as preventing her mother Barbara Collins (Joanne Nail) from breeding again, or else evil may spread like the plague throughout the cosmos. Barbara's boyfriend Raymond Armstead (Lance Henriksen) is a professional basketball team owner who works for a group of satanic businessmen who sent him on a sinister assignment to procreate with his girlfriend to create another demon spawn. Luckily, Barbara can sense her daughter is evil and does not want another child, but of course, Raymond and Katy have teamed up to make sure she spawns a satanic spawn against her will.

Demonic brat Katy is so powerful that she merely stares down negro Muslim NBA player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to give him the power to do a literally explosive game-winning slam-dunk, but she has more pressing things on her mind as a little bad rich bitch who wants a bad little bro to help her establish an out-of-this-world aristocracy of satanic evil and destruction. In between playing pong with her stoned babysitter and using her evil pet bird 'Squeaky' to carry out devilish deeds, Katy plots to get her dimwitted mother pregnant. On her birthday, Katy magically receives a gun as a gift from her aunt (who really bought her niece a talking bird toy, but someone or something replaced the present) and 'accidentally' shoots her mother with it after throwing the weapon on a table in an excited fashion, thus resulting in her paralysis and her total dependence on her evil boyfriend and deranged daughter. Despite being a worthless cripple, Barbara refuses to get married or have a kid, telling Raymond, "I want my freedom." Barbara also hires a maid named Jane Phillips (Shelley Winters) who loves to sing negro spirituals (which hint at the fact that she has sort of 'supernatural negro powers' despite the fact she is white) and talking about astrology and she can tell instantly that there is something not quite right about Katy. Meanwhile, a detective named Jake Durham (Glenn Ford) begins investigating the circumstances revolving around Barbara's paralysis and when he asks little Katy about it, she says "Go fuck yourself," adding, "I don't like you. You're a child molester. I bet you do dirty things to children." Needless to say, it does not take long for the Detective to drop dead after snooping around the Collins home, as Katy has deadly demonical pigeons unleashed on him, which poke his eyes out while he is driving, thus causing him to crash and subsequently die after his unmarked cop car explodes. Meanwhile, Barbara ends up getting pregnant after her car breaks down, as evil scientists land Close Encounters of the Third Kind style, abduct her, and artificially inseminate her with the demon seed. Jerzy, who previously babysat for Katy and had a pong showdown of sorts with the little girl, tells Barbara that she has conceived out of the evil business men's hatred for this world, so she naturally opts for aborting it. Luckily, Barbara's ex-husband Dr. Sam Collins (Sam Peckinpah) knows how to perform abortions and reluctantly gives her one. When evil bird Squeaky attacks Barbara, maid Jane kills it, which irks Katy so much that she pushes her wheelchair-bound mother through a fancy gigantic fish tank (which contains no fish!). Barbara attempts to set

Katy straight by bringing her in for psychological testing and experimentation, but nothing helps. Ultimately, Katy becomes completely demonically possessed, strangles her mother, and then throws her down the stairs. With the help of Katy, boyfriend Raymond attempts to lynch Barbara for aborting her demonic fetus, but Jerzy sends in some magical birds (the same sort that killed Katy's evil ancestor Sateen), which kill the satanic basketball franchise owner when one drives its beak into his neck. Ultimately, the angelic birds also manage to 'peck out the evil' of Katy, who is delivered to Aryan Christ, albeit minus the evil and a head of hair. In the end, Jerzy states, "You can't kill children. Only the evil part. That's no more."

As Ovidio Assonitis revealed in a recent interview, apparently John Huston was not embarrassed by his role in *The Visitor*, or as the Producer stated himself, "Long after *THE VISITOR* was finished, I was invited out to visit John Huston. He was a week from dying. I got there, and he was very sick. He'd brought together all the women from his life. So he had a 22-year-old girl there beside an 80-year-old woman, all sitting around the same table. That was his farewell. I was the only other man there. And at that time, I saw that he'd purchased a video cassette of *THE VISITOR* so he could watch it at home." Personally, I only have all the more respect for Huston for being in the film, as a legendary Hollywood director who dared to get a little dirty in a dago celluloid beast that demonstrates that Italians do it better, at least when it comes to ripping of soulless Hollywood mainstream trash. As both revealed in the extra features included with the 2013 Drafthouse Films DVD release of the film, star Lance Henriksen (who had no clue what the film was about) and Italian-American screenwriter Luciano Comici (who was mainly hired because he spoke both English and Italian) do not exactly have fond memories of *The Visitor*, with both men recollecting their chaotic experiences working on the film and essentially describing producer Assonitis as an intolerable egomaniac. Of course, Assonitis admitted himself that the film was made under intense and largely improvised circumstances, with the producer stating in an interview regarding how the film was in a constant state of evolution, "The story was being built and rebuilt day-by-day, even as we were shooting. Sometimes you include things that come out from your subconscious without you knowing it." Cultivated and kaleidoscopic metaphysical sci-fi-horror kitsch crammed with sensational and otherworldly cine-magic, a pinch of psychosexual degeneracy, and a wonderfully warped sense of logic (or lack thereof) that even puts Brian De Palma to abject shame, *The Visitor* is ultimately pure style and spectacle over substance and that is certainly one of the reasons I enjoyed it so much. As someone who cannot be bothered to invest any sort of emotion in the majority of Hollywood horror/sci-fi/thriller films, I managed to appreciate *The Visitor* because it is such an aesthetically overwhelming and thematically convoluted experience that I never found myself bored and I certainly never found myself feeling lost while watching the work.

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Indeed, compared to the films of David Lynch and Alejandro Jodorowsky, *The Visitor* tells a fairly linear story that is easy enough to digest, especially on subsequent viewings. As for the importance of the film in the context of film history, I think Assonitis said it best when he once remarked, "All in all, I am sadly aware that my contributions to the horror genre are not of such historical relevance as, say, *THE EXORCIST* (1973) or *PSYCHO* (1960). We're not talking masterpieces here, but I have put all my love and enthusiasm into my films and I think it shows. What's most important, I have gained the respect of true horror fans, who are always loyal and extremely perceptive--they know a good film when they see one!" as *The Visitor* is certainly a work that deserves an even larger cult following than it already has as a sort of poor man's *The Holy Mountain*. The virtual father film to *Beyond the Black Rainbow* (2010), *The Visitor* is a "pre-Reagan-era fever dream" that demonstrates in a dreamscape-addled sort of way that CEOs (in one notable scene, a satanic businessman, who later dies with what looks like feces on his face, states, "Power corrupts [...] And absolute power corrupts absolutely. But we must have that power."), politicians, and related parasitic psychopaths have been transforming America into a Devil's playground for sometime. Of course, more importantly, the film demonstrates that a random Guido hack director has more creativity in his pinky than Spielberg has in his entire truly satanic being.

-Ty E

DEATH LAID AN EGG

Giulio Questi (1968)

I would not exactly call myself a “giallo man”, especially considering my favorite films from the great Guido genre tend to be works that defy convention or barely belong to the genre at all, including *Eyes Behind the Wall* (1977) aka *Locchio dietro la parete* directed by Giuliano Petrelli, *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* directed by Silvio Narizzano, *A Quiet Place in the Country* (1968) aka *Un tranquillo posto di campagna* directed by Elio Petri, *Order of Death* (1983) aka *Copkiller* directed by Roberto Faenza, *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1971) aka *mosche di velluto grigio* directed by Dario Argento, and last but certainly not least, *Death Laid an Egg* (1968) aka *La morte ha fatto l'uovo* directed by Giulio Questi. Directed by the man who assembled the quasi-surreal gothic western *Django Kill... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967) aka *Se sei vivo spara*—a film of no direct relation to *Django* (1966) that only took its rip-off name due to the financial success of the Franco Nero vehicle despite, in my opinion, being a superior and more multifaceted cinematic work—*Death Laid an Egg* would ultimately prove to be the greatest celluloid achievement of criminally underrated auteur Giulio Questi's rather brief filmmaking career as a completely unclassifiable pop-arthouse, proto-giallo sardonic sci-fi work of the misanthropic, anti-technocratic, and quasi-Marxist (indeed, the director Questi was a commie, albeit of the rather now-unconventional 'masculine' variety) sort. Featuring a deranged dystopian psychedelic essence and a delightfully discordant score, *Death Laid an Egg*—a film with indubitably one of the greatest titles in film history—is centered on an all around sexually perverse *Ménage à trios* comprised of one man and two women who, on top of sharing carnal knowledge, also co-operate a high-tech Faustian chicken farm where they hope to become God and sire a mutant race of futuristic fowl that will bring them massive profits as technocratic prophets, but, unfortunately, mutual deceit of the dark romantic variety gets in their way and the unhinged untermensch of the house seems to have an unhealthy obsession with brutally murdering pretty prostitutes by slitting their throats in a sleazy hotel room. With eccentric and erratic editing by Franco Arcalli (who also acted as the film's co-writer, as well as the co-writer of virtually every other Questi film and one of the co-writers of the Sergio Leone epic *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984)) that seems like a Soviet montage on acid and a jarring avant-garde soundtrack by Bruno Maderna (who provided some music to *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)), *Death Laid an Egg* is a trying and—some would say—aesthetically torturous trip that will only appeal to a certain sort of cinephile, but surely not every jaded giallo fan. An absolutely aesthetically and thematically loony labyrinth of the lurid celluloid libertine variety that keeps the viewer simultaneously discombobulated yet hypnotized from the intriguing beginning to its eremitic end, *Death Laid an Egg* is the thing delectably decadent

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and dead celluloid daydreams are made of and with a tagline like, “See them tear each other apart. Then see what they do with the pieces” it is all but impossible to resist such a film’s cynical charms.

Although being the sole male in a bizarre love triangle with two beautiful women might seem ideal to most men, it is certainly not that way for handsome yet weak beta-male Marco (Jean-Louis Trintignant)—a man so dissatisfied with his sex life that he feels the need to regularly buy cheap hookers and ritualistically slit their throats at the same hotel room, or so things seem from the very beginning of *Death Laid an Egg*—a biting attack on the sexual and social perversions and pathologies of the bloated bourgeois. Like the protagonist played by Franco Nero in *Hitch-Hike* (1977) aka *Autoštop rosso sangue* directed by Pasquale Festa Campanile, Marco must live with the fact that he is an intrinsically impotent man-whore who married a woman who, although unquestionably dropdead gorgeous, he no longer loves, thus he daydreams of breaking free from the sheer and utter banality of his contrived and unnatural bourgeois life. Indeed, as the sole owner of the high-tech chicken farm where Marco works, wife Anna (Gina Lollobrigida) certainly wears the pants in the relationship, even if she is always taking them off for the much younger babe Gabrielle (Swedish blonde bombshell Ewa Aulin)—the temptress of a third wheel of the terrible threesome that will end in abject tragedy. A somewhat older woman than Gabrielle and most certainly past her physical prime, Anna seems to have a sexually charged, yet jealous infatuation over the young blonde beauty and discusses dismembering her with husband Macro, albeit in an eroticized and figurative fashion. Sort of like the cute yet creepy young lily-licker from *Chloe* (2009) directed by Atom Egoyan, Anna sees Gabrielle (who even admits “my mother was my only happiness”) as an unspoken rival and perverse mother figure and has a sort of lesbian Oedipus Complex (although, in the end, it seems like she really had a lesbo Electra complex). An ultra-paranoid lady with a rather guilty conscience, Anna—a bourgeois babe and capitalistic enemy of the working-class—is paranoid that her ex-workers, who she fired and replaced with state-of-the-art machinery to save money, are out to kill her as they stare at her behind a fence near her chicken factory, but little does she know that she has more ‘personal’ romantic acquaintances that are out to kill her, albeit for different reasons. Marco is also the rather reluctant adviser/representative of an arcane organization called “The Association” that wants to push the visibility of chickens to the forefront of mankind as the bald chicken-ophile Führer of the group believes, “The difficulty we face is that nobody knows poultry.” The members of the Association don’t seem to know shit about chicken shit either as they feel the fowl should be promoted in an aberrant advertising campaign as the “principal actor in the drama of modern life,” by promoting degenerate quasi-Warholian pop-art of chicks as doctors and poultry playboys and proletarians. The Association also hooks Marco up with a suave Svengali character named Mondaini (Jean Soubieski), who begins

to conspire with Anna for dubious reasons. Marco, Anna, and Gabrielle have it easy at the chicken factory as they have a magic all-purpose poultry machine called “The Machine” that, on top of feeding and slaughtering chickens, plays acoustic avant-garde music. The Machine, which uses radioactive chemicals, is also being prepared to create mutant headless, wingless, and boneless chickens of the future that will cut expenses and dramatically increase profits.

A man stuck in a loveless relationship with a domineering wife who desperately desires love, Marco attempts to convince Gabrielle to run away with him as he hates his job, life, and wife, and with the young blonde he wants to, “find something permanent.” Unfortunately, Gabrielle is from a younger, more machine-like and psychopathic generation, thus she only has her eye on the money and the archetypical ‘modern man,’ Mondaini will help her, telling his co-conspirator that they are “much stronger” than miserably married couple Marco and Anna. Gabrielle and Mondaini plan to frame Marco for a murder that he has ironically been fantasizing about committing, but while the married man has deep-seated reasons for wanting to commit the crime and escape his hopelessly humdrum life, the two psychopathic schemers are merely motivated by money. When Marco’s cute little doggy “Blackie” is grinded up in the Machine, he begins to lose his mind all the more, realizing that his life is literally being grinded up by the monster appliance. When the Machine actually ends up successfully churning out living and apparently breathing headless chickens, Marco freaks out and smashes the grotesque miscreations to death, which infuriates the Association and Anna. Before killing them, Anna—in a heated attempt to save their dying marriage—pleads to Marco, “Can’t you see how very important it is?! It’s something I always wanted, something we could share between us, something that was ours, something that’s mysterious and now that it has finally come you reject it. You’re too weak to accept it. You’re a coward if you kill them... I WARN YOU!” Of course, Anna’s plea to her husband has the opposite of her desired results and Marco brutally bludgeons the mutant chickens to death, thus symbolically exterminating his marriage and riches in the process. Meanwhile, Anna goes incognito as a pseudo-prostitute so as to surprise Marco face-to-face when he goes to pick up his weekly whore to use and abuse, but Gabrielle and Mondaini have hatched a more malicious conspiracy that will inevitably usher in the end of a *Ménage à trios* and a marriage.

During one especially symbolic scene towards the conclusion of *Death Laid an Egg*, the leader of the Association verbally chews out Marco for killing the mutant chickens, ironically stating, “Your behavior seems to me outside the realm of any human standard,” as if playing God and creating ungodly freak fowl for monetary profit is a morally glorious thing. Totally breaking with every convention of the giallo aside from the ‘whodunnit?’ angle, *Death Laid an Egg* is an aberrant avant-garde assault on modernity, attacking consumerism, the sexual revolution, feminism, technocracy, and Faustian man’s eternal need

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to conquer, subjugate, and control nature in what is a neo-Grand Guignol hen Hades. As German philosopher Oswald Spengler wrote in his short work *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1931), one of the first books written on technology, "As once the microcosm Man against Nature, so now the microcosm Machine is revolting against Nordic Man. The lord of the world is becoming the slave of the Machine. Their strength is bound up with the existence of coal," and that can certainly be said of the world featured in *Death Laid an Egg*, but unsatisfying sexual degeneracy and moral retardation also reign in the film in an apocalyptic depiction of humanity that only sees pessimism for the future. Featuring the celluloid pop art aesthetic and phantasmagorical playboy perversity of works like *The Laughing Woman* (1969) aka *Femina ridens* directed by Piero Schivazappa and with the avant-garde wild and wanton weirdness of *A Quiet Place in the Country* (it should be noted that both film's had the same production designer, Sergio Canevari, hence the aesthetic similarities), *Death Laid an Egg* is a curious celluloid work of its time that, although poorly aged in parts, still holds up quite aesthetically and thematically as a work that is more politically pertinent today than it was upon its initial release, even if has been deep fried in psychedelic psychobabble. After all, no one who has ever eaten at McDonalds could deny there is something rather off about their disgusting chicken meat with dubious pink and black chunks in it and after watching *Death Laid an Egg*, I doubt I will ever be able to eat such fried filth again. Indeed, the film brings truth to Werner Herzog's words, "Look into the eyes of a chicken and you will see real stupidity. It is a kind of bottomless stupidity, a fiendish stupidity. They are the most horrifying, cannibalistic and nightmarish creatures in the world," but as *Death Laid an Egg* demonstrates, humanity, especially members of the bourgeois, are much worse in a world where men are cowardly chickens and chicks want to be men.

-Ty E

TOUCH ME IN THE MORNING

Giuseppe Andrews (1999)

Touch Me in the Morning was the first feature length film from trailer park auteur Giuseppe Andrews. It was shot on a camcorder in black and white because Andrews couldn't figure out how to shoot in color. Giuseppe Andrews also stars in the lead role as Coney Island. Mr. Island's unapologetic father (played by the legendary Bill Nowlin) tells his son that he is a "tar baby." Throughout Touch Me in the Morning, Coney Island's father takes tons of real drugs (like crack) and even drinks alcohol in the shower. One could say that Bill Nowlin is much more than just a "method" actor. Giuseppe Andrews's writing talents are like no other. Like his more recent films, Touch Me in the Morning features a flood of stream of consciousness poetry spoken through the mouths of those that have disconnected from the world. Whether it be senior psychosis or too many beers, the "characters" in Touch Me in the Morning have decided to checkout of the "real world." I believe that Giuseppe Andrews has done the same as his films exemplify. Only a true outsider could make films as distinct as Andrews. Not many filmmakers would be daring enough to sit next to Bill Nowlin as he recites poetry while defecating in the toilet. Giuseppe Andrews has often stated that German New Wave auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder is one of his favorite directors. Like Fassbinder, Andrews is able to take a small set and turn it into a world of captivating drama. Also like Fassbinder, you won't find a second of worthless footage in a Giuseppe Andrews film. In all of Giuseppe Andrews films, you will find more than one "happy accidents" as a result of his "one man" guerrilla style film making. Touch Me in the Morning opens with a drunken fist fight between one of his best "players" Walt Dongo and a long bearded (but bald headed) biker. This opening scene sets the pathetic (yet engulfing) feel of the overall film. The world of Touch Me in the Morning is one that is completely opposite of a Hollywood world. The film lacks any type of production value, features aesthetically displeasing individuals, and is a complete assault on Hollywood Bolshevik style "political correctness." Giuseppe Andrews is most notorious for his acting roles in Hollywood so he knows the type of soulless goons that he is waging a "holy" war against. The trailer park in Touch Me in the Morning has more to do with America than any propaganda piece (of shit) Hollywood vomits out its lying lenses. Touch Me in the Morning is a personal film from a reclusive man. A man that seems like he can only communicate abstractly through the medium of a camcorder. Touch Me in the Morning is excellent example on why it takes an interesting individual to make an interesting film. No matter how much money Hollywood pumps into their latest epic (or epidemic), their films for the most part lack any type of real humanity or human emotion. They are expressions of the materialistically diseased and valueless. Hollywood is a cancer and the individuals featured in Touch Me in the Morning are unfortunate victims of that

TOUCH ME IN THE MORNING
cancer.READ SS INTERVIEW WITH GIUSEPPE ANDREWS
-Ty E

TRAILER TOWN

Giuseppe Andrews (2003)

When I was younger and much more impulsive, I would blind-buy random Troma dvds and naturally I was typically quite disappointed with what I bought upon actually viewing it, but at least one of these poorly manufactured films, *Trailer Town* (2003) directed by Hollywood teen-heartthrob-turned-gutter-auteur Giuseppe Andrews (*Touch Me in the Morning*, *Period Piece*), proved to be a well welcomed exception. Like many 'Troma classics', *Trailer Town* is not actually a real Troma production, but merely a film distributed Troma Entertainment so that Lloyd Kaufman and a couple of his cronies can profit off the cinematic labor of some other poor filmmaker. Regardless, Giuseppe Andrews may be a Hollywood actor whose image countless teenage girls have secretly touched themselves to after seeing him in such sorry films as *Independence Day* (1996) and *Detroit Rock City* (1999), but he is also a true blue proletarian auteur and gutter enfant terrible of the quasi-junky sort who grew up in the very same trailer hood that his camcorder-recorded 'outsider films' depict. Indeed, instead of mocking his unhinged untermensch subjects like kosher carny auteur Harmony Korine (*Gummo*, *Spring Breakers*), Andrews is the real drug-and-alcohol-addicted quasi-white trash deal as a filmmaker's whose work Bavarian adventurer auteur Werner Herzog rightly described as reflecting the following, "This place, this trailer park, I have a feeling that this is the real America." In *Trailer Town*, there is not a single drop of the superlatively soulless and sentimentalist Hebrew-manufactured pseudo-humanism of Hollywood, but an audacious aberrant array of perversely poetic tragicomic trash treasures from the sort of forsaken human rabble that spend their entire miserable lives on disability or mindlessly working themselves to death stocking shelves at Wal-Mart. A sort of horrifically humbling yet hyper humorous Amerikkkan Heimat home-movie that demonstrates why the United States is the world's foremost genetic toilet, *Trailer Town* is not only true independent cinema, but an absolutely authentic piece of American avant-garde cinema and libertine comedy that features a uniquely unflattering depiction of the USA as the perennially proletarian land of the culture-free and discernibly depraved. A film that proves failed bourgeois, bourgeois bastard Marx did not know shit about the working-class, *Trailer Town* is a rare piece of American kosher-free comedy that simultaneously cinematically farts on Woody Allen while unwittingly deconstructing every single convention of the comedy genre. A sacrilegious and shit-stained stream-of-consciousness assault on virtually every single pansy ass p.c. American taboo, *Trailer Town* is the anti-titillating and delightfully debasing tale of a maniac mobile home park owned by a washed-up soap opera star that is inhabited by equally washed-up libertine comedians who cannot seem to crawl out of their whisky and Heineken bottles long enough to leave their post-industrial village of vulgarity. Featuring

TRAILER TOWN

highly quotable lines like “We drank piña colada by the pool while some raſta fairy piece of garbage fed us papaya” and “Your hole had herpes but I didn’t give a shit. I dove in” as spoken by poesy dipsomaniacs, Trailer Town is Bataille meets Burger King as seen through the cockeyed lens of America’s moſt warped ex-teenage heartthrob.

What is the ſmartheſt thing that ever came out of a woman’s mouth? According to bodacious trailer park bum Billy Cossacchi (played by Andrews ſuperſtar Bill Nowlin), “Eiſtein’s dick” is the ſmartheſt thing ever to come off a lady’s lips. In Trailer Town, there might not be many Eiſteins, but there is ſurely a curious collection of exceedingly eccentric entertainers who would probably be beſt deſcribed as dyſtopian alchemiſts as they ſurely know how to turn excrement into ſcathing comedic gold. Indeed, moſt of the characters in Trailer Town may be one or two drinks away from liver failure, but they know how to live and enjoy life, even in abject squalor. After awaking from a long night of drinking and bull-shitting, barroom hero Billy throws off his newspaper sheets and demands that his personal slave negro Stan Patrick aka ‘Stan the Nigger Man’, who fittingly sports and old school coon hat, make him a microwave burrito, which the brown brother does with guſto but not before wrapping it in skidmark-ſtained underwear. Indeed, Billy boy is certainly the maſter of his dilapidated mobile domain, but troubles arrives in Nor-Cal paradise when the pre-geriatric garbagecan man receives an eviſtion notice, thus ultimately culminating in an “aluminum holocaust” of ſorts. Of course, before tragedy ſtrikes, tons of bawdy booze-inspired poetry is vomited out by America’s laſt true rebel wordsmiths. After an exceedingly inebriated fellow named Walt Williamson (Walt Dongo) proclaims his love for getting behind the wheel and driving after drinking countless bottles of cold beer, his belligerent buddy Long Dong Ron (Vietnam Ron)—a bearded bum beaſt that makes Charles Manson ſeem like a young cultivated twink—recites a note written to himſelf, eloquently ſtating: “I fucked you on a lawn chair...paid for your liposuction...Your hole had herpes but I didn’t give a shit. I dove in. Because I float like a butterfly and ſting like a bee. The raſta fairy fucked animals...rolled us joints the ſize of toilet paper. I got you ſo ſtoned that you...allowed me to alienate your asshole with my afghan.”

Aside from poetry and ſpoken word performances, Trailer Town also features candid musical performances, including an up-close-and-personal appearance from a young white trash folk artiſt who ſings a ſcat-fueled ſong about his unſettling personal experience with “swamp water pussy,” which he follows up with a ſtory about the real-life experience that influenced the anti-salacious ſong. An elderly and rather deteriorated fellow named O-Henry (Bill Tyree) goes on a date with diarrhea (which looks like old taco beef) that ends with the old fellow getting lucky and unloading his expired ranch load on the juicy pile of rotten meat. Jolly negro Stan Patrick “tips his hat a little bit” to his would-be-white-maſter Billy and does a little Stepin Fetchit-eſque dance as he “firmly believes”

that “country dancing is the answer” to all of America’s problems. After Billy boy makes a heated drunk call to the ‘fuckin’ manager’ of the trailer park where he threatens to call the ACLU due to “some fuckin’ white bitch down here with her fuckin’ white daughter livin’ with a nigger,” among countless other things, total war is declared in Trailer Town. Before the war, Billy strolls into a record store sporting a gigantic strap-on dildo and sombrero and tells the queer store clerk, “Really, what I need is some nigger music. You dirty, nigger-lovin’ cocksucker, suck this, motherfucker. I wanna hang you by your balls and shit blood in your fuckin’ mouth.” After the gay store clerk calls the cops, Billy reveals to him that his “little buttercup turned out to be a nigger fucker” and that “She was a fucking slut that gave money to the bible channel...She put canola all over her hola. She didn’t fuckin’ need to do that.” Billy may be a raving racist who hates his raunchy mudshark of a daughter, but his friend negro Stan knows he is a true sweet heart at heart, ultimately thanking him for helping to take care of “the fuckin’ black, bloody booger that gave me life” (aka his mother). Meanwhile, wild man Walt Williamson loses his marbles and shoots the fat fanboy lover of his elderly ex-girlfriend. In the end, a pussy redneck security guard with a loaded weapon shows up and the trailer park’s inhabitants, including Billy boy, get on top of their mobile homes and begin to wage battle against a one-bastard army. In the end virtually everyone dies, but not without putting up a fight, which is ultimately the moral of the innately immoral camcorder tale that is Trailer Town.

In one of the final scenes of Trailer Town, the creepy character Long Dong Ron tells the strikingly allegorical tale: “There used to be this Mexican girl that lived around here. And she had unbelievable beauty. And she always looked nice. She had tight, black pants. And her hair flowed through the wind. But she lived in this shitty apartment. It wasn’t much bigger than a toilet bowl. And it looked so strange to see such a sweet, little lovely, coming out of such a scum pit. But I’d sit there and watch her come out of that place every day though. I dreamed about riding up on a white horse and taking her away. But I thought to myself, look at what the word does to beauty. Look at where the world puts beauty. They keep beauty in shitholes!” Indeed, if Trailer Town has any message at all, it is that pulchritude and poetry can be found in the most unlikely of unhinged places, namely a Northern Californian trailer park inhabited by truly gifted ghetto showmen and gutter gurus. According to aberrant-garde auteur Giuseppe Andrews, he followed up Trailer Town with two sequels, but he tragically destroyed both of them (with no copies remaining) before they were ever released. More genuine and empathetic than anything ever directed by Harmony Korine and more waywardly melodramatic than most Fassbinder flicks (Andrews has cited Fassbinder’s *I Only Want You to Love Me* (1976) as a personal favorite and major influence), Trailer Town is indisputable proof that a couple alcohol-addled white trash degenerates and jaded jigaboos are intrinsically more humorous and

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likeable than filthy rich Hebraic Hollywood comedians like Jonah Hill, Adam Sandler, and Jon Stewart. An absurdly amateurishly assembled camcorder comedy featuring pointless hardcoded English subtitles, Trailer Town has been a favorite comedy of mine since I originally first saw it about a decade ago or so. A rare unadulterated and authentic America film that really shows the world where white America is headed (and where a large portion of the poor cracker world is at), Trailer Town is, most importantly, an antidote to the thematically nefarious and xenophiliac neo-bolshevik flicks that the psychopathic swindlers of Sunset Boulevard routinely pump out. Forget Wes Anderson, Noah Baumbach, Lena Dunham and other soulless bourgeois hipster hacks, there is more truth in one of 'Stan the Nigger Man's' steaming turds than most 'highbrow comedy' director's entire odious oeuvres.

-Ty E

SCHOOF

Giuseppe Andrews (2008)

Before I review Schoof, I think I'll take some time and address the peculiar genius of its creator. For well over ten years, Giuseppe Andrews has engaged and enraged audiences fortunate enough to stumble upon his microbudget masterpieces. With casts consisting of the denizens of his trailer park home, a video camera, and a budget of no more than a thousand dollars a picture, Andrews has managed to carve out a niche for himself in the post-post-meta, cynical landscape of contemporary cinema. What his films lack in polish or "good taste" is easily trumped by the vitality of his writing and the defiance of his imagery. The sight of a nude elderly man in a hotel room rubbing pork rinds on his penis while simulating sex with an imaginary partner ("Period Piece") might sound like an exercise in shock value, but filmed from Andrews sympathetic perspective it is instead an inspiring "fuck you" to anyone that would rather deal with issues like aging, mental illness, elderly sexuality or the consumption of meat from a safe distance. His dialogue-lewd limericks haltingly delivered by his stable of (brilliant) non-actors akin to a stable of teenage boys in an acid-induced stream-of-consciousness free-for-all is among the funniest you will ever hear. Instantly quotable, rib-tickling gems litter his films. Better still, the lack of condescension that characterizes his work. Like John Waters, you get the sense that Andrews loves his stable of derelicts, junkies, and freaks, and his films are a testament to that love as opposed to a freak show like, say, Gummo which, while not without aesthetic merit, certainly seems to laugh at and not with its white trash subjects. With this in mind, it is particularly saddening that Andrews recently announced his retirement from the world of film. In an e-mail and website statement chock full of strange new age sentiment, Giuseppe revealed that he is foregoing cinema to concentrate on making music. And while his music is fun and has its moments (if you're familiar with his films, you've heard your share of it), what the fuck?! When again will we have a maverick who finds beauty in the deep-set facial lines of Vietnam Ron or who can wring never-ending hilarity from grown men eating each others farts in a way that doesn't make one feel like a complete idiot? Who can end a film called "Who Flung Poo?" on such a note of pathos that my ex-girlfriend's lip quivered in sympathy?

"gods/goddesses, i have never talked much about my movie making experience, and the times i have for the most part hide what they were really about. Film (like all other mediums) is an artistic tool for soul-lessons, this medium in particular allows the artist to record visually the outer-life...there in lies the difficulty with it since true answers are found inside. The artist is born yearning to express to others the inner-life even if he or she doesn't realize it when they begin to explore their gifts. I became very frustrated with trying to make film exude what music can do so easily that it would be a waste of time to keep pursuing it. This

SCHOOF

exiting of the film medium is not sad for me, it is joyous! I'm glad to not be stifled any longer from what i can share with you through music about our inner-life, the outer is obviously a huge part of cinema (even for the greats) and you run into all it's lies, nonsense and agony time and time again (along with it's massive beauty too of course but the other hoops get old.) My soul learned what it needed from this medium and i am grateful for the experience, i beat every addiction, confusion and ignorance through it, and most importantly learned music from it! My greatest joys making the films were when scenes i created gave one of the actors a heightened experience that took them away from their pain, loneliness, & fears for a moment.. for me that's why they're important. i love you, giuseppe"

Anyways, Schoof, while not the best of the auteur's work, marks a major breakthrough in terms of style and ambition. An extraterrestrial curse called "schoof" has descended upon the town. Characters are driven to obsessively jump over Christmas trees, hallucinate attacks from giant hamsters, and sexually molest dolls on live television. As this is going down, two "weekend" cowboys must dispose of the body of a woman who overdoses in their hotel room, whose spirit in turn appears to her ex-boyfriend at the grave of the baby she forced him to abort with the wire coat-hanger he carries on him at all times. Along the way, we are treated to musical sequences, "special effects" sequences, and one of the more charming dildo-naming/reconciliation scenes ever committed to celluloid. While an outright description of the plot might make Schoof sound like a surefire winner, it is hurt by slack editing and a dearth of memorable dialogue. Whereas a classic like *Period Piece* or *Who Flung Poo* barrages the viewer with line after line of scatological delirium and use multiple storylines to keep the momentum going at full speed, Schoof relies far too much on being 'weird' as opposed to 'funny' and the multiple storylines don't connect in a thematically satisfying way. *Period Piece*, for example, consisted of many different storylines, the result of the film in fact being many shorter works combined (hence the title—a piece consisting of different works from that period in his career), but somehow manages to gel together in such a way that it never really feels like the mix-and-match job it in fact is, as all of the tangents and fragments add up to a cohesive statement about love and sex. Schoof, on the other hand, feels a little too loose for its own good. Sometimes takes drag on a little bit past where they would in a superior film, draining much of the charm from the stilted delivery. The dialogue suffers as there is more effort expended on surreal, nonsensical statements fueled by the schoof curse than on the poetic potty-mouthed diatribes of past classics. Furthermore, I for one was excited from the description to see Andrews work within the confines of a genre film, but for the most part it feels not unlike his other work, only with the addition of some sci-fi asides to set up the surreal goings-on. What does work? Marybeth Sychalski, Andrews' main squeeze in real life, makes for an appealing narrator and is all kinds of a babe. The low-rent

special effects, be it the cut-and-paste "giant hamster", the radioactive shrimp tempura, or an alien battle that creatively uses sound to create an otherworldly vibe, are great fun. Best of all, the movie ends on a musical note that is no doubt indicative of the direction Andrews would soon take in eschewing film in favor of his musical ambitions, as the entire cast join hands to sing the extraterrestrials into submission. It is inspiring, uplifting, and a great end to a so-so flick. Even at his most uneven, Giuseppe Andrews is a talent to be reckoned with. One can only hope his sabbatical from film is short-lived, as filmmakers this intense, inspired, and completely free of obvious influences are increasingly hard to come by in this age of remakes, homages, and ironic distancing.

-Jon-Christian

MALÈNA
MALÈNA

Giuseppe Tornatore (2000)

Malena is a coming of age film about a young boy named Renato and his obsession with the most beautiful woman in Sicily. This striking woman is named Malena and all the women in town are jealous of her for obvious reasons. As soon as Renato sees Malena his life is forever changed. He starts spying on the beautiful Sicilian every chance he gets. He also starts masturbating while thinking of Malena and her exaggerated curves. Little Renato is truly a hopeless romantic. Malena follows in the steps of the legendary Italian filmmakers. Federico Fellini's films were the biggest influence on Malena as the prepubescent masturbation in the film demonstrates. I couldn't help but think *Amarcord*, *8 ½*, and *I vitelloni* had an influence on Malena. I had a young Sicilian American friend growing up and I would be lying if I didn't say Renato reminded me of him. Italian coming of age films, despite their perversity, are heartwarming to say the least. The beautiful Monica Bellucci is amazing as Malena. Despite her lack of dialogue in the film, Malena carries the film with her beauty. Monica Bellucci makes Marilyn Monroe look like a cheap dollar store blonde by comparison. Mrs. Bellucci has deadly and bare curves in the film that catches any living male's fancy. Little Renato is quite mature and wise for his age. Malena is set during World War II and despite the chaotic time period, the film is for the most part a happy experience. One scene had me angered when a group of aged Sicilian women are finally able to take out their inferiority regarding their aged looks out on the young Malena. Malena is tragically beat and has her hair cutoff by the overweight wop women. The only thing these spiteful women are good for is making calzones. A brief Nazi orgy scene in Malena reminded of the great Italian erotic and exploitation films of yesteryear. Malena is truly a trip down Italian cinema memory lane which is something I can always appreciate. This is a film for any male that has a beating heart and love for film. Although Renato never "hooks up" with Malena, he is happy helping her in the end. What a splendid film indeed.

-Ty E

WILLARD

Glen Morgan (2003) The way acting supports a film is like the way condiments make food better. Some brainless films don't need incredible acting; like Jumper. With Willard, another remake of a classic horror film, the above par notch for remakes is set even higher by the eccentric headliner Crispin Glover who completely reworks the film at its foundation. The plot is familiar. Willard Stiles is a man whose life has been destroyed due to his fathers death and his mothers ailness. Similar to Jackson's gorefest Dead Alive, both children have much maturing to do and leaves them with a distorted sense of reality. Willard works a deadend job with no friends. His boss happens to be R. Lee Ermey, and as this role applies, a lot of emotional damage occurs from this bastard. Eventually he finds solace in an incredibly intelligent white rat he named Socrates. Using his new friends, he decides to bite back at everything that has caused him pain over the years. So we have a "When Animals Attack!" film with a deep psychological burning inside of it. This by itself makes it a great movie. A beautiful though occurs within all of Glovers films. When you think about him acting in all these common popular films, it's nice to see his privately funded artistic visions being produced with his own brand of sacrifice. The acting is phenomenally deranged and poignant. Willard is truly a disturbed man. There is no real sense of accomplishment for him, only sorrow, which he uses to fuel his silent rage. Willard is a landmark in mainstream cinema, bringing harsh realities in touch with the common viewer. This film is perfectly complimented by Crispin Glover's music video "Ben". In the music video, you will see trademark Glover, as philosophers and Hitler make an appearance.

-Maq

I SELL THE DEAD
I SELL THE DEAD

Glenn McQuaid° (2008)

Straight from the horse's mouth comes the base element of *I Sell the Dead*. Only since it established off of a very similar presentation of reflective nurseries dictated from a dead man walking was it able to gain a fresh and authoritative vision of cinematic entertainment. Glenn McQuaid has shown us the potential for Irish period horror-com's and boy does the future look dead since we can all agree this clever film was a fluke. Must I recall painful and scathing memories of the late Bernie Mac's Irish performance in *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*? For this reason, I refuse to acknowledge that McG is directing a new Terminator film. Had he any doubt of seriousness, he would have changed his gay ass name into something a bit more professional and not something kids in the 3rd grade nicked him.

I Sell the Dead is a rather whimsical piece of horror/comedy that would eventually erupt, violently, in murder, supernatural mystique, and rival gang drama. Basically, this film is equipped with what it needs to entertain thoroughly and not bore a single fan. Dominic Monaghan is the apprentice underling of an infamous grave robber by the name of Willy. Only just recently, Willy met his fate at the guillotine for a frame job convicting him of murder. Well, the same fate has hit his partner, Arthur, as he awaits trial by execution and his only saving grace is pleading his life story to a passive-aggressive priest played by Ron Perlman. The following recited tale is a brilliant story of a pair of down-on-their-luck grave robbers and how they struggle to cope with thievery, deceit, zombies, vampires, wait what?

This cunning idea that's presented in *I Sell the Dead* is an unsuspecting creeper -- one that waits for you to enjoy what the film gives you and surprises you with fantastical tales that don't seem to fit the current scheme of things. After the slew of proportions panned out, I certainly wasn't expecting the roles of vampires and zombies to be entering my visions. I was expecting a cultural "fuck all" which gingerly describes most period pieces now-a-days but what I got was a film that starkly illustrated good times in the events of two bumbling would-be heroes. Budget based on reputation and directed towards slimy aesthetics is the formulaic stamp of period pieces. Recreating an era takes time and this doesn't even begin to cover the story at all. These "famous frauds" should be stripped of the worthy title of "Director" and be listed as an incompetent costume designer but wait, Irony prevails as that listed job already exists. *Homo sapien decor* has never been so frivolous. To add to the already stiff blessing you've received from the dear company of *I Sell the Dead*, this also marks a horror comedy that doesn't entirely insult your intelligence. Fact of the matter is that most of these hybrids flat out suck on terms of scares, humor, and overall direction. Severed head gags work to a stifled extent and armed with predictability, can drag a film to hell

with a non-styled free fall of "been there, seen that." I Sell the Dead is probably one of Ireland's only recent point of characters; the irony resides in the shooting location of New York, but alas, all's well. I Sell the Dead is still one of the only "great" horror comedies recently that see to the entertainment of the potential audience.

-mAQ

CAPTURED FOR SEX 2
CAPTURED FOR SEX 2

Gô Ijuuin (1986)

This rough ero-gro pinku film is a rough, sentimental film that focuses on the bizarre change between extreme pain and enormous pleasure. The beginning of this film shows a young couple driving down a trail in the forest when, you know it, their automobile breaks down. Before they get the chance to sulk, a strange passerby offers to fix the car the next day. They enjoy his shaded company with some sake and a weird shaped bath tub.

Later that day, Miki runs out screaming for some unknown reason and she notices their car is gone. Cue the creepy man with a knife leading them back into the house before tying them up tight and forcing her to perform fellatio on her significant other. This is only the beginning of this descent into the beautiful annals of BDSM and forced Ecstasy. Shiko Shima (Antagonist) forces him to perform cunnilingus on the poor girl and sodomize her with various objects before getting raped repeatedly. After many cruel scenes of torture and erotic situations, the captor begins to make it into more of a visual art performance. Carressing her flesh with lit candles while managing to find the deepest beauty in her squeals and whines. After becoming a voyeur in these tactics, the salaryman boyfriend notices this excites him in ways never trekked and sparks unknown desires. After escaping, he begs to become the mans apprentice. He is then a pawn in the cruel twisted games he entrenches his girlfriend in. After they use her body in disgusting ways such as filling her anus with a milk enema and corking it in for weeks only to let it spew out, they find new targets. Kidnapping young girls off the street and taking them back their hut of pleasure, they make these poor women slaves to their game. After all is said and done, *Captured For Sex 2* is an erotic masterpiece. Comparable to such great films like *Blind Beast*, this film is certainly not for everyone and may be deemed disgusting, perverse, or even untañteful, but if you have a keen eye for the elegance of depravity and sadomasochism, this film is yours. The one fact about this film that will enhance the viewing pleasure is that Shiko Shima is actually famous in Japan for being the king of S & M. He revealed his fetish to the public and opened up a VIP torture chamber in which he trained over 3,500 women the art of sadism. Some of the acts in this film are arousing and some of them are putrid. One scene involves filling an anus with marbles and flushing it with wine. Then letting it sit until she loses bowel control filling a funnel with a tasty cocktail. We have whippings, beatings, burning, wax tickling, bondage, forced discharge consumption and many more neatly wrapped into a tough product to swallow. The title of this film refers it to be the sequel to *Captured For Sex* but it is actually a loose sequel to *Ikenie*. The original *Captured For Sex* was actually a sequel to *Daydream*, another pinku XXX film involving strange set pieces. *Captured For Sex 2* is a bizarre ride through lust, pain, and the transgression of normal pain. It is not to

be missed and it will not be forgotten.

-mAQ

LATE BLOOMER
LATE BLOOMER

Gô Shibata (2004)

So many clustered feelings on this film, all of which are incredibly favorable. *Late Bloomer* is probably the most responsive film I've seen in quite some time. Taking cues from masterful pieces of disturbing fiction and presenting it in such a fashionable manner requires tedious work. Even better, *Late Bloomer* may have been a film exercise that came naturally. I don't believe we'll ever discover the genius within that wrapped this project up in a tight little package. Taking a controversial step in hiring an actor with cerebral palsy to play Sumida - a blood-fueled vengeful handicapped person, *Late Bloomer* takes a step towards visualizing a steam punk movement with the beeline track the camera gestures towards. A smoky venue for his friend Take's punk band gives dismal light to nightmarish fantasies of revenge and retribution, all homicidal in nature. Presented in unnerving gray-scale, *Late Bloomer* features a comfortable life for Sumida. Clinging to visions of partying, beer, and women, Sumida hires a young college girl to be his caregiver. After her affection is blessed to Take, Sumida slowly erupts in a fit of jealousy that will be one for the books. Though not barbaric in nature, his curiosity with life and death leans towards extremes on both ends. Unsatisfied with life, he decides to take and satisfied with taking, he himself seems without life. The result is a tableaux of nerve-shredding avant-garde cinema. *Late Bloomer* encompasses ideas that I, myself, are uncomfortable visualizing. When I see someone with down-syndrome, thoughts come flooding into play. "Do they understand vengeful nature?" That amongst others rush forward but I doubt I'll ever get an answer lest I fall victim to one myself.

World's End Girlfriend composes the soundtrack to *Late Bloomer* and might I say, I've never heard such a deeply affecting and perfectly juxtaposed soundtrack giving life to calamitous intent and whatever-form of innocence this depicts. Watching Sumida's disfigured body twist and contort with frightening detail, all while wielding a knife, comes off as repulsively shocking and grotesque. *Late Bloomer* has been called a hybrid of the serial killer genre and this assertion is highly accurate. At first, his motives come off as vengeful but soon his victims are randomized. He kills without decision, without empathy. Soon, his already-crippling handicap results in him appearing brain dead. By way of superior editing tricks, Go Shibata will immerse you in a world I fear you may never return from. *Late Bloomer* is the birth of a naturalist noise-horror, something more akin to everyday social activities but infused with passive soundscapes. *Late Bloomer* definitely fits the motives of noise music and goes well with brainstorming over the likes of *Kites* and *Caen*. This is one film that doesn't spout grandeur of a "Could-be serial killer living next door" and *Late Bloomer* certainly doesn't give color to the scenario. What we get is starkly real and one of the greatest foreign films I've seen in some time. Occasionally, I found a slight flaw in the process

of Late Bloomer but a mistake during birth can be applied to most things. Late Bloomer is a tour de force on terms of revolutionary Japanese psycho-cinema. From the scene in which Aya asks Sumida if he wishes he was born normal and his disturbing speak'n'spell device replying "I - will - kill - you," we accept our fate to be entwined in the absolute experience that is Late Bloomer. Seizure-driven and casually over-the-top, Late Bloomer will leave you marked as there is no way to escape both the wrath of Sumida or Late Bloomer. As an experience, Late Bloomer is raw and scathing; along the lines of something I'll never count on seeing again.

-mAQ

MARUTA 3 ... DESTROY ALL EVIDENCE
MARUTA 3 ... DESTROY ALL EVIDENCE

Godfrey Ho (1994)

Alternately titled *Men Behind the Sun 3: A Narrow Escape*, *Maruta 3* is a spiritual sequel to T.F. Mou's *Men Behind the Sun*. Having previously directed *Men Behind the Sun 2: Laboratory of the Devil*, Godfrey Ho returns to the reigns of schlock-shock with an entirely unnecessary sequel to a film that needn't a sequel. I had previously reviewed this film, unbeknownst to me as I set out to watch it. This must say something about the quality of the film for I only felt a twinge of *Déjà vu* once but kindly shrugged it off. What a coincidence it was to see that a comment had been left on my older review the day I happened to revisit the dreadful film. Regardless of this minor setback, I intend to update my previous thoughts of *Maruta 3* with knowledge of the atrocities in depth as documented in the late Iris Chang's document *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. You see, the pressure from such aggravated Japanese nationalists and the burden of the pain suffered by her people pushed Mrs. Chang into taking her own life. This itself is an event with such deadly agitation that no bargain exploitation title could ever encompass.

What Godfrey Ho succeeds at is a feat that should be, unquestionably, easy enough for a child to pull off; capturing the grueling patriotism of the Japanese. *Maruta 3* takes place as Unit 731 struggles to escape with the secret of the atrocities committed intact. The comical aspect of this is Godfrey Ho's notorious ability to make even the most dramatic of instances into running gags and *Maruta 3* is no stranger to this. The character Ito in *Maruta 3* bears a fatal infection in a manner linearly comparable to Godfrey Ho's filmmaking, from which stems a powerful irony. This is illustrated in keen example as a commanding officer issues the news that Japan has surrendered to the invading Russian forces. This, in turn, prompts a scene in which many-a-soldier commits seppuku and/or take their own lives with a complimentary vial of arsenic. A scene of this sort should idolize the selfless servant to state but under God Ho's command becomes that of sketch comedy. This play on death is as rigid and under-realized as a theater form - lapsing in and out of dramatic prose. The rat-trap that Ho got twisted up in past the error of his Chinese-shit aesthetic was his laziness combined with his willingness to disturb. This led him to recycle past footage of the original *Men Behind the Sun* within *Maruta 3*. While *Godzilla* could somewhat successfully use this to its advantage, in *Maruta 3*, this leads to many characters reminiscing the cruelties suffered by Chinese prisoners of war with contrived flashback sequences and the obligatory "Oh god, what have we done?" tantrum.

Regarding Godfrey's cost-effective decision to recycle scenes of grue, you'd think handling a scene in which a group of demoralized soldiers overlook a train station littered with assorted clothing and blood spilled everywhere would be moving, at least minimally. This sequel has nowhere near the same effect as

the original, neither in shock value or in exploitive tone. While Maruta 3 may include scenes of live autopsies and the obligatory severed-limb-in-jar, the film can not sustain any form of shock value nor can it withhold any emotional impact, let alone impact of any kind. Maruta 3 will dissolve as salt in water after your introductory viewing. Take my prior inspection for example. I forgot I had even seen this film, let alone reviewed it. I'd recommend avoiding this title at all costs as you, too, might end up viewing this waste of entitlement twice, as I have already done. If you haven't viewed the original Men Behind the Sun, do so immediately as it serves as a rite of passage for any aspiring "cult" or "gore" fan, catering to both with its illicit controversy.

Godfrey Ho attempts to take duty in either immortalizing the horrors of Unit 731 or slandering the ordeal. I cannot tell because either way this experiment was a failure. Maruta 3 just equates into an anti-Japanese sentiment aimed straight for the heart of Manchuria. The guilty party within the film feign a guilty conscience but to pull off an emotional effect as such, would require skilled actors, which I'm sure Godfrey Ho does not have at his disposal. Not even the angst or the cultural reconciliation make this film anything other than a visual distraction from superior daily duties such as washing dishes. The namesake of the film's English distribution alone should exist a shred of enjoyment to be had in this slice of Oriental schlock, but behold, a barren viewing experience. Maruta 3 features no sex, hardly any original performances of violence, and a whole helpings worth of dismal drama to be consumed. It is hardly a way to spend a Saturday night, that is for sure. Of course, we get it Godfrey, "casualties of war...". As far as his ethnicity goes, Godfrey Ho appealed to the title Men Behind the Sun as this doomed unit of "unspeakable evil" needed their cinematic comeuppance. Imagine a film presenting Unit 731 without the cruel, hyper-aesthetic of Russian auteur Andrey Iskanov or the amiable T.F. Mou. Maruta 3 stands as a drab war drama that closes on a note of superior cinematography; a scene of a live burial, the only iconic image in the film.

-mAQ

THEM
THEM

Gordon Douglas (1954) AKA Ils/Them is a film that debuted in Europe in 2006, "terrifying" the nation. It is based on actual events which, when known, are pretty horrifying. While it is a very effective film and has a great feel, the film does drag in many spots and leads to much frustration. The plot has a minimalistic feel. A loving couple in their inconveniently placed home one night, become under siege from a group of unidentified things. Them had a lot of hype for me. Seeing the clips and the trailers, it seemed that it might even scare me. With these expectations in mind, i set out to begin watching it. The action picks up rather quick within the first 15 minutes and doesn't let up until the end. It runs at about 77 minutes, which is not long for a feature length film, but keeps you entertained, which is a great thing. The directing style seemed bland, too many contrived shots on things of no purpose and the lack of lighting to add to the feel. The lack of lighting worked for The Descent but was not needed in this film. Even in areas of natural light, it was still too dark. It's hard to praise a stalk/slash film for having realistic actions. We all claim we would grab a knife, but who knows? Terror has an adverse effect on the brain and we won't know until we are placed in said situation. Many of the sets were manufactured to thrill and scare, which was annoying. Scenes like a plastic sheet corridor in her attic and manufactured sound effects to startle. The plastic scene looked ripped from Child's Play 2. It was like a French survival horror version of Shyamalan's Signs, except without aliens. The sound effects were extremely effective at times, rarely getting dull, but what this film did reminds me of what Open Water did, take an event that not much is known about, and give it some expressionist feel to it and try to create wacky situations and moods. Most of what happened could not even be possible for the attackers to do. By halfway through the film, i knew only the ending could save it. It had gotten repetitious and undeserving of this title. Most French directors even seem to come in Duo's now. This couple also being responsible for the beyond horrendous unnecessary remake of The Eye. It seems one persons vision of a film is not enough anymore. The single most powerful theme in the movie was the ending. Based on a true story, once it dawns on you, i promise your jaw will hit the floor. If you want the full effect of this film, it's best to not watch any of the trailers or clips. You know how American trailers love to throw every scare scene in a 2 minute mash-up, call it a trailer, and ruin every chiller moment.

-Maq

SHAOLIN /& WU TANG

Gordon Liu Chia-Hui (1983)

I'm a big fan of modern martial arts films. As tacky and contrived as they are, I still squeeze everything out of them and relax while taking in the amazing cinematography with the stunning choreography. In fact, nothing pleases me more than a Tony Jaa film. The man can fight, jump, fly, and kill. He is a mortal Thai Terminator. In my childhood, I dabbled a bit in the classics of old Chinese martial arts but never was enthralled by what I was witnessing. Years later, I picked up Shaolin & Wu Tang for two reasons. 1. Wu Tang Clan. This dynamic rap group has not only changed the face of time itself, but also the business of music and myself. It has opened me to broader horizons in the face of challenging musical interests and granted me immunity within the Negroes. 2. Xenon Pictures. This is the same company that has released the Dolemite collection, so ultimately I can dig it. I honestly didn't know what to expect besides aged fighting moves and horrible dubs presented on a presentation which feels like a once recorded over VHS. The film instantly starts out with a breathtaking introduction of a lone fighter training in a room full of monks amidst a vast sparring arena covered with beautiful hanzi scattering the room- both painted on the wall and suspended from the ceiling. The choreography of the past is unmatched even by our contemporary martial arts. Most of these "Actors" actually believed in the laws and rules of their chosen styles. Religion played a huge role in training and real fighters didn't have trailers and multi-million dollar budgets. The merits and honor of being a true fighter has all but evaporated. Shaolin & Wu Tang has risen the bar for martial arts films worldwide. To go along with the film, is Wu Tang Clan's debut album Enter the Wu Tang (36 Chambers). The RZA has taken his single passion - Kung Fu films - and formed an entire dynasty of music and memorabilia around a Chinese theme. After kicking the music industry's ass, he resided in making music for Tony Jaa's The Protector and Afro Samurai. I even hear rumors of an Eli Roth produced grisly splatter fest incorporating the RZA and Wu Tang. It is a vast epic, depicting two rivaling clans warring over which fighting style is better - Shaolin or Wu Tang. In the end, friendships will be challenged, traitors will be unearthed, people will die, and I will feel a whole lot better about witnessing the greatest Martial Arts spectacle to ever grace my home theater system.

-mAQ

WINDOWS
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Gordon Willis (1980)

Despite the fact that it is no secret that a remarkably large number of violent female criminals and prison inmates are estrogen-deprived bull-dykes, politically organized carpet-munchers feel the need to go out of their way to obscure this unspoken fact that all crime statistics confirm, as if it will compromise the fact that a good number of prominent feminist leaders and theorists are also emotionally glacial clit-hoppers. Indeed, heterosexual murderers typically use more inconspicuous and passive-aggressive means of murder as the countless female serial killers who utilized arsenic and other poisons on their unwitting victims demonstrates. Notably, even as far as back as 1980 way before the release of Paul Verhoeven's lesbo-inciting neo-noir *Basic Instinct* (1992), organized gusset-nuzzlers become quite pissy over the pseudo-artsy-fartsy thriller *Windows* (1980) directed by Gordon Willis because of its depiction of a stuttering socially retarded bourgeois broad becoming the love obsession of a lethally loony lesbo with a rather raspy voice who is murderously jealous of men and their members. Starring the somewhat strange guidette Talia Shire—the sister of filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola and 'cinematic wife' of Rocky Balboa of Rocky fame—as a sexual assault victim who also happens to be the object of insane infatuation of a deranged dyke who hired a sleazy taxi driver to molest her beloved 'friend' so she can use an audio recording of the molestation as an extra intimate masturbation aid, the film is also notable for being the first and last film directed by cinematographer turned one-time auteur Gordon Willis, who was responsible for the striking cinematography of such classics as Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy (1972-1990), as well as Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Manhattan* (1979), among various other notable works. Featuring a vaguely arthouse style that seems to attempt to blend Hitchcock with the *La Nouvelle Vague*, *Windows* was a five time nominee of the less than coveted Golden Raspberry Award (including Willis for 'Worst Director,' which Kubrick was also absurdly nominated for his as a consequence of his work on the now-classic film *The Shining* (1980)) and was later more or less disowned by the director, though not because he succumbed to Sapphic outrage as one would probably suspect, especially nowadays where everyone is afraid to offend the pink gestapo and gynocentric misandrists. While the closest thing to a dyke equivalent to William Friedkin's killer cocksucker cult classic *Cruising* (1980) in terms of its themes and the controversy surrounding its release, *Windows* ultimately feels like a shallow celluloid tourist guide of late-1970s/early-1980s NYC and its landmark that had the potential to be great but hardly goes anywhere and never rewards the viewer in any way. Indeed, the film is just another example of how great cinematographers oftentimes make ludicrously lousy film directors, hence why Willis never directed another single film but instead wisely

opted to spend the rest of his career shooting works for other directors. Like an aimlessly voyeuristic Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) meets the aesthetics of Woody Allen's *Interiors* (1978) meets a retarded smidgen of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and a weak impotent *Maniac* (1980), the film is basically a less than seamlessly synthesized hodgepodge of cinematic references with a mis-used score by maestro Ennio Morricone that ultimately adds up to nothing aside from an unfortunate wasted attempt to make a classic cult film about a crazed killer carpet-muncher.

Emily Hollander (Talia Shire) is a fiercely frigid and annoyingly soft-spoken introverted female who in the process of divorcing her pansy intellectual husband and unbeknownst to her, her raspy-voiced crypto-dyke friend and fellow assumed Jewess friend Andrea Glassen (Elizabeth Ashley) is completely infatuated with her to the point where she is willing to kill to send a sort of insanely eccentric esoteric message to her beloved in the form of sleazy sexual violence. In fact, Andrea is so decidedly deranged that she hires a ludicrously low-class white trash taxi driver to sexually assault Emily so she can have an audio masturbation aid source of sorts. Notably, Andrea has the unsavory molester use a tape recorder while he defiles Emily so that she can have an amorous audio gift that keeps on giving. Indeed, Andrea gets all hot and bothered listening to Emily moan in pain and distress, thereupon demonstrating she is a sadomasochistic Sappho. As a strange and introverted woman who stutters when she gets afraid and even owns an entire bookshelf worth of books on how to train yourself to stop stuttering, Emily certainly seems like a sort of mousy carpet-muncher and her seeming growing resentment for men only makes matters worse, so it is ultimately a sort of blessing in disguise in the end that she becomes the victim of a fierce fairy lady. In a most arrogant fashion, Andrea even attempts to coerce Emily into not telling a police officer about the circumstances of her attack and attacker by arguing, "You don't have to tell him anything, you know...He's never going to catch who did it." Andrea also has the taxi driver come by Emily's place again so that she can pretend to be the protagonist's savior by smashing the molester's arm into door when he attempts to break in while acting as if she is as brave and as strong as a man or something absurd like that. Naturally, after being maliciously molested, Emily unsurprisingly decides to move to a new apartment on the other side of town and also soon starts a romance with an uncommonly empathetic and handsome police detective named Bob Luffrono (Joe Cortese), thus causing Andrea to become all the more insane with bloodlust and murderous jealousy. Of course, Andrea decides to secretly rent a flat across a bridge from Emily's new apartment and uses a telescope to spy on her every move in a creepily voyeuristic *Rear Window*-esque fashion. While Andrea regularly goes to a psychiatrist to get much needed psychological help, her shrink Dr. Marin (Michael Lipton) seems to make her all the more deranged and resentful. Indeed, no amounting of talking and confessing can calm Andrea's rising

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rug-muncher rage.

In a rather convenient instance of happenstance, Emily ends up taking a taxi that is driven by her attacker whose name is Leonard Obecny (Rick Petrucci) and who only seems to subconsciously realize that he is driving around his victim, who makes the mistake of being not so nice to thus exposing the same exact gutter-grade tone of voice that he used when assaulting the protagonist. Ultimately, Emily begins to realize that the taxi driver is her attacker after he gets mad at her and violently screams at her for calling him 'Leonard,' rather rudely remarking to her, "Why do you keep calling me Larry? Lawrence is my name. Larry is bullshit." After coercing the taxi driver into pulling over she can use a payphone, Emily manages to get Leonard arrested and when he is in custody, he confesses that he has an accomplice but he absurdly tells the cops that he won't tell them who his partner is unless they promise to let him go free. Needless to say, Andrea eventually begins to completely lose it due to Emily's new relationship with cop Bob and begins murdering people, including her crush's elderly Jewish neighbor Sam Marx (Michael Gorin). Emily also gets quite the scare when she opens her freezer and finds her precious orange kitty cat frozen-to-death inside. When Andrea's psychiatrist wisely attempts to have her committed, she violently slaughters him and heads to her secret loft so that she can plot to make Emily her sexual plaything.

Of course, Andrea eventually has Emily come to her apartment and it does not take the protagonist long after finding the crypto-carpet-muncher's telescope to realize that she has spying on her and that she is the deranged stalker killer that killed her kitty cat and elderly friend. After Emily realizes that the telescope is pointed right at her apartment window, aberrosexual psycho-cunt Andrea appears out the darkness like a truly ghoulish gay gal and scares the shit out of the protagonist with her creepy lezzy lurker behavior. After scaring the hell out of Emily by smashing the telescope, Andrea becomes deleteriously delusional and cries "You can never love me...don't lie to me. I couldn't bear it if you lied to me," so the protagonist lies and says she can learn to be a fairy lady. Ultimately, Emily ends up staying up all night with Andrea and the next morning the loony lesbo even admits to having hired taxi driver Leonard to molest her, bragging, "I could have hurt you but I didn't. I kept it from happening." Eventually, Andrea begins demanding that Emily take her shirt off just like Leonard did when he molested her while stating pathetic things like, "lift up the sweater" and "show me what you showed him." When Emily continues to refuse to take off her sweater, Andrea suffers a violently pathetic and hysterical spastic attack as a result of feeling rejected, so the protagonist smacks her in the face and tells her to stop, thus causing the deranged dyke to cower and cry, "Don't hurt me. Please, don't hurt me," as if she is an innocent victim and not a deadly sapphic she-bitch. Of course, policeman Bob and his comrades eventually show up and arrest Andrea and assumedly send her to a prison where she will undoubtedly

be able to cure her latent lesbianism. In the end, Emily states to Bob regarding Andrea, "She would have never done anything to me." Indeed, although a mad murderer, Andrea is a prisoner of lady-lover love and would not dare to personally physically hurt the object of her desire as she lacked the gall, hence why she hired a dirty half-retarded cabbie to do it for her.

While the idea of a film where an ambiguously Jewish and superlatively sexually repressed lesbo lunatic begins slaughtering people because she is too cowardly to confess her delusional love to her friend surely sounds intriguing, *Windows* is an absurdly aimless celluloid abortion that is as anti-climatic as pussy-on-pussy penetration. Notably, director Gordon Willis would later state about the film, "One of the mistakes I did in my life was to make that movie," curiously adding, "The Germans and Swedes like it, though, for some reason," thus indicating that the Germanic world might have a surplus population of sadomasochistic bean-flickers. Apparently, Willis more regretted having to deal with the mental problems of high maintenance actors/actress than dealing with the theme of lunatic lesbos, or as he stated, "I've had a good relationship with actors...but I can do what I do and back off. I don't want that much romancing. I don't want them to call me up at two in the morning saying, 'I don't know who I am.'" Ultimately, to appease his LGBT attackers, Willis would deny that the film was even actually about dykes, arguing, "WINDOWS is not about homosexuality – it's about insanity," as if the two things are always mutually exclusive. Of course, the insanity depicted in the film is of the unequivocally deranged dyke sort, with the villainous fitting various carpet-muncher clichés in her perturbing mental pathologies, as she seems like some sort of frigid feminist leader who did not get her fair share of lecherous lady-loving. In the end, *Windows* seems like a botched cautionary tale that attempts to warn quasi-autistic and otherwise socially retarded women who have become disillusioned with men due to their own inadequacies about what might happen if they give up on heterosexuality and opt to convert to lily-licking. While *Windows* certainly demonstrates why Willis earned the nickname 'The Prince Of Darkness' due to the oftentimes dark and shadowy style of his cinematography, directing a film takes more effort than merely being able to immaculately frame a shot in appropriate lighting, which is something the cinematographer seemed to learn the hard way as the director of what is arguably the most banal lesbian thriller ever made. Indeed, Hungarian-German auteur Fred Kelemen is also a master of dimly lit cinematography yet the films he shot for Béla Tarr are far superior to anything he has ever directed himself. Additionally, Dutch cinematographer Jan de Bont managed to help contribute to what is arguably the most strange and fiercely foreboding cinematic atmosphere of Dutch cinema history when he shot the Willem Frederik Hermans adaptation *De blinde fotograaf* (1973) aka *The Blind Photographer* directed by Adriaan Ditvoorst, but he ultimately sired one of the biggest and most horrendous Hollywood horror turds of the 1990s when he directed the

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The Haunting (1999). Admittedly, Windows is effective in one way in that it fills the viewer with a sense of revulsion for lesbians, especially those of the ostensibly cultivated NYC-bred Jewess sort, thus I can almost understand why gay groups would protest the film. After all, at least William Friedkin's Cruising gives a certain dark romanticism to the S&M leather-fag realm, which certainly cannot be said of Willis' film, which makes dykes seem like the most bat-shit crazy yet paradoxically banal and lonely people around.

-Ty E

MRS. MEITLEMEIHR

Graham Rose (2002)

Probably no other contemporary actor has portrayed Adolf Hitler and various other Nazi leaders more times, at least in such a stoically campy fashion, than unambiguously gay German character actor Udo Kier (*Blood for Dracula*, *Nárcisz és Psyché*), with his role as a sort of scatological 'Asshole Shitler' in Christoph Schlingensief's spastic satire *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler - Die letzte Stunde im Führerbunker* (1989) aka *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler - Die letzte Stunde im Führerbunker* being one of the most devastatingly deranged depictions of the Führer in all of cinema history. While Schlingensief's Hitler flick is not exactly well known, it is certainly better known the 29-minute British dark comedy short *Mrs. Meitlemeihr* (2002) directed and co-written by successful advert man turned would-be-filmmaker Graham Rose, co-penned by English actor Jeff Rawle (*Billy Liar*, *Drop the Dead Donkey*) and starring Herr Kier as Big H in old hag drag. Indeed, a work of degenerate historical fantasy, Graham's film depicts a decidedly desperate Hitler disguised as a woman and hiding out in late-1940s rubble-ridden London amongst assorted human rabble. Needless to say, *Mrs. Meitlemeihr* is in the timeless British tradition of being resentful regarding the Second World War and thus features a one-dimensional depiction of Hitler as an intolerable and intolerant raving buffoon, albeit this time wearing a granny wig and dress. Undoubtedly, the big twist of the film is that a perverted old Jewish widow becomes obsessed with attempting to get inside Hitler's granny panties, not realizing that he is trying to fuck the great Führer himself. Keeping that dubious and easy-to-botch premise in mind, it is easy to see why *Mrs. Meitlemeihr*, which was originally intended as demo piece to entice prospective investors for a bigger and more elaborate production, was never made into a full-length feature film as was originally planned by Mr. Rose. If there is any group that hates Hitler and the Germans more than the Jews, it is indubitably the Brits, and with good reason. While the Jews at least got their first official nation in thousands of years out of the holocaust, the Second World War not only cost the Brits their empire and domination of the world, but also their pride and dignity. As revealed in the great German documentary *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* (1998) directed by Hermann Vaske and hosted by Dennis Hopper, like the Jews, the Brits adopted comedy as a way to relieve their pain and naturally Uncle Adolf became the incessant butt of the jokes for countless hack England comedians and has remained so for no less than over half a century. With the somewhat recent tabloid rumor that Hitler went into hiding after the Second World War, died in South America in 1984 at the age of 95, and even had a negress girlfriend, I felt a little bit eager about watching a film as seemingly as stupid and insipid regarding the National Socialist leader's imaginary post-WWII years and *Mrs. Meitlemeihr* certainly

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fit the bill as a work that also once again demonstrates that the English have an unhealthy obsession with men wearing dresses.

It is April 1945 and Adolf Hitler (Udo Kier) has decided to opt out on his part of his suicide pact with his long-term companion Eva Braun (Tara Ward), who he married only less than 40 hours before she put a bullet in her brain. Indeed, bloated bastard Martin Bormann (Hendrik Arnst) has a transport ready for Hitler to escape to Argentina, as they plan to start building a Fourth Reich from scratch once they get settled in their new adopted homeland. To fake big H's death, a SS man shoots a nerdy man that vaguely resembles the Führer in the head and uses his corpse as a body double for the Allies to find. Flash forward to November 1947 and somehow Uncle Adolf did not make it to scenic Argentina, as he is now stuck in an impoverished white ghetto in London, even complaining in a letter to his boy Bormann: "My struggle to exist here is becoming intolerable. Still no papers! Every day I wait, but nothing. Since our last communication, the money is all but gone. I'm starving. And have been reduced to filth and squalor. How much longer must I endure this humiliation? This room where I must remain prisoner is a living nightmare. I fear, above all, that my identity will be revealed. I dare not venture out, but I must! My health is deteriorating by the day. You're my only hope and salvation. In the name of the Fatherland, I beg of you, Bormann...Communicate!" The fallen Führer is so poor that he does not even have a stamp to send the letter, so he has to go to the post office to buy one with what little money he has left. To hide his identity, Hitler decides to dress in drag and use the alias Mrs. Meitlemeihr. Unfortunately for Adolf, there is an exceedingly annoying Jewish widow that lives in London that has a thing for somewhat masculine Fräuleins.

On the way to the post office, some rotten little sub-literate Brit boys playing with a rugged dummy with a Hitler mask make the mistake of begging Hitler for money, but the cross-dressing Wagnerian Übermensch is not amused by the lads' crude cardboard caricature of him, so he states in German, "What insolence. You ought to be locked up." When Hitler finally gets to the post-office, the elderly clerk, who is hard of hearing, has a very hard time understanding what the lapsed Nazi messiah is saying, so he states under his breath, "I hate zee handicapped." After leaving the post office, Hitler is followed by a Jewish widow named Lenny Veldermann (John Levitt) who, for whatever reason, is rather attracted to the world's most infamous anti-Semite. It turns out that Lenny—a stereotypically sleazy, pushy, and wisecracking Hebrew—lives in the same dilapidated apartment building as Uncle Adolf. Needless to say, Lenny invites himself over to Hitler's apartment for dinner without actually getting permission, as he hopes to get lucky with Herr Hitler. While Hitler complains, "I've been betrayed...forgotten. FORGOTTEN! Hated!" during the dinner, the Jew self-righteously states that the Germans must "accept their guilt" for the holocaust. Needless to say, Hitler becomes infuriated and hatefully shouts, "The

Germans will rise again” and then states in German, “The German spirit...will be the world’s salvation.” When the two men get drunk and Hitler passes out, Veldermann attempts to take advantage of the unconscious Führer, but when the Jew reaches up his dress to cop a feel, he screams “a cock” and a brawl breaks out between the two born adversaries. After strangling the Jew and stating “Jewish bastard pig,” Hitler has a bottle smashed over his head and some sort of broom shoved up his rectum. In an act of would-be-poetic-justice, the Jew attempts to gas Hitler by shoving his head in a gas oven, but the two men pass out before the final solution can be fully carried out. The next day, Veldermann realizes that Mrs. Meitlemeihr is actually Hitler after noticing a stain of dried blood covering Uncle Adolf’s upper lip that resembles the great dictator’s iconic Charlie Chaplin mustache. After the Jew goes back to his room, a postal worker attempts to deliver a letter to Hitler from Martin Bormann and presses extra hard on the door bell to get the mysterious tenant’s attention, thus causing the entire apartment to blow up in the process after a spark from the poorly wired door bell ignites the gas from the stove that filled up the apartment the previous during the sissy Aryan versus Hebrew slapstick brawl. Indeed, in the end, Adolf Hitler ironically dies in a literal holocaust.

Undoubtedly, in terms of subversive British Hitler humor, Mrs. Meitlemeihr is nothing new. On top of the never released black comedy *Son of Hitler* (1978) starring Bud Cort as the eponymous lead and Peter Cushing as a neo-nazi leader, the short-lived British sitcom *Heil Honey I’m Home!* (1990) portrayed Hitler and Eva Braun living next door to a Judaic couple named the Goldensteins. Of course, *Heil Honey I’m Home!* was cancelled after the first episode, so it should be no surprise that Mrs. Meitlemeihr never developed into the extravagant feature film that director Graham Rose intended it to be. While I was not exactly impressed with the short, I must give props to Mr. Rose for siring such a preposterous film that is, if nothing else, in rather poor taste and would probably offend the likes of overrated kosher comedian Mel Brooks, who practically made a living off of poking fun at Hitler and the Nazis. Interestingly, it is revealed in the British documentary *Hitler: The Comedy Years* (2007) directed by Jacques Peretti—a work that goes into rather deplorable detail about why Uncle Adolf has become a mainstay of British comedy for over the past half-century or so—that McEnglish comedian Spike Milligan was obsessed with Hitler in such an unhealthy and all-consuming fashion that he suffered a mental breakdown in Italy and had to be hospitalized for a while. Without question, Mrs. Meitlemeihr also demonstrates this sort of post-WWII Hitler-mania, as another one of the countless examples as to why the British seem to suffer from sort of mass reverse Hitlerite psychosis. Unquestionably, the film’s greatest strength is star Udo Kier’s typically over-the-top camp-addled performance, thus making the film a somewhat worthwhile endeavor for fans of the queer kraut character actor. Of course, as a man who used to dress in drag while working as a transvestite

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prostitute (with his bud R.W. Fassbinder being his pimp!) during his pre-acting career years, Kier probably did not have to put much effort into his role for Mrs. Meitlemeihr. It should also be noted that Kier's very first acting role was in the British short film *Road to Saint Tropez* (1966) directed by English actor/auteur Michael Sarne (Joanna, Myra Breckinridge). More recently, Kier played a small role as a futuristic Führer in the patently pathetically politically correct multiculturalist sci-fi-comedy *Iron Sky* (2012). Of course a film featuring a cross-dressing Hitler being quasi-date-raped by a rather repugnant Hebrew is easier to digest than a cowardly miscegenation-saluting agitprop piece of celluloid scheid like *Iron Sky* where a blonde Nordic Nazi babe ends up falling in love with an American negro astronaut. One must also give credit to Mrs. Meitlemeihr for not concluding with a sickeningly sentimental and conspicuously cliché quasi-commie speech about the need for tolerance like Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940). Apparently, Hitler, who was a cinephile of sorts, viewed Chaplin's film no less than two times, but no one actually knows what the Führer thought of the film. Personally, I would be interested to know what Hitler would think of thought of Mrs. Meitlemeihr. Of course, as a man who was once best buds with a beer-chugging and brown-shirted sodomite like Sturmabteilung commander Ernst Röhm, loved the work of German symbolist painter Franz von Stuck, and bought the rather sexually subversive painting "Leda and the Swan" by Paul Mathias Padua, which was exhibited at the Great German Art Show of 1937 in Munich, Hitler may have been many things, but he was no prude and I am sure he would have gotten a laugh or two out of Mrs. Meitlemeihr, even if he probably would have had director Graham Rose executed were he given the chance.

-Ty E

FREEZER BURN: THE INVASION OF LAXDALE

Grant Harvey (2008)

Any amount of "psychotherapy" will conclude with the discovery that I love every film that Crispin Glover has ever appeared in. I use the word "love" in a quite platonic context but the idea should be passed along that I enjoy most films featuring him, if not just for his role. When I had read the title card bearing two names which said "Tom Green and Crispin Glover", I couldn't believe it. First off, Tom Green seemed to have disappeared off the face of the earth save for his webisodes. Second off, two kings of depraved eccentricities have finally come together for a film that should loosely follow the type of construct that Evolution did. Let's face it, Evolution wasn't that bad(?) Freezer Burn is that one kind of film, a festival runner that seems to inevitably drop off the face of the planet. Any "Joe" could gather a small fortune and cast two actors that find themselves in the most uncomfortable of predicaments, and come out with a film. I feel sorry to say it but if the budgeting was divided in a pie chart for an easy visual aid, you'd see that Glover's and Green's monetary cut make up most of the film's production. That's not to say for the rare occurrence of CGI that has been applied in order to create the illusion that these are aliens that we are dealing with but 9 times out of 10, you will forget this movie faster than it forgot you. The small Canadian town of Laxdale is home to a hockey star (go figure) and it's up to him to convince the townspeople that a group of Dutch aliens are not in fact drilling for oil but rather going to microwave the earth so they can acquire our planet as a habitat to call their own (or something like that). Truth is, I wasn't really paying attention to this film. At times, I get hit by heavy doses of procrastination but none ever bore the hygienic tendencies of that fateful night. While watching Freezer Burn, I found myself walking away at times to do things that really didn't need to be done, for example - organizing my already organized DVD shelf. Crispin Glover's turn as an Aryan alien doesn't really turn heads. Normally, Glover's demeanor stands out with maniacal laughter or even just his cold presence but alas, the director instead decided to replace Glover's lines of dialogue with little clicks and whistles as to impersonate a "lost alien language". Cute. Not to mention the alien language sounds like it was made by a homosexual rave kid thanks to the freeware version of Frooty Loops. Even the deaths of the Martians were uninspired. Securing an homage to the Blob by making the aliens weakness be that of the cold, Tom Green gets together with an extremely ugly girl who appears to be stealing Brandy's (Joe Dirt) mojo and these two throw frozen confectionery treats at multicultural aliens, all the while enjoying the purified remnants of what is Canada. Freezer Burn contains zero to no humor and 30% more cholesterol than the leading competitors. There's almost no reason to go see this film. Hell, if Crispin Glover made any less body gestures (he moves his hand several inches), I'd refuse to even acknowledge this

FREEZER BURN: THE INVASION OF LAXDALE

film even existed. Tom Green's always good for a laugh but Freddy Got Fingered is beckoning you from across the room. Blast that film all you want but Freddy Got Fingered will always have more artistic ingenuity than this science-fiction "disasterpiece". I think I might hate Freezer Burn.

-mAQ

THE DOOM GENERATION

Gregg Araki° (1995) SPOILERS

Gregg Araki's *The Doom Generation* is a hilarious apocalyptic road film. It is also probably the only road film to feature a young man jerking off then swallowing his seed. The number 666 is seen throughout the film in tribute to the all mighty Lucifer (probably a wuss CEO in real life). I guess you could say that *The Doom Generation* is a ride through hell. I just hope that if hell on earth occurs it will include talking decapitated Asian convenience store clerks heads. Rose McGowan stars as a tough and brutal sex vixen. Her performance in the film is very personal to me as she reminds me of my ladylove. Its rare to find a girl that is both extremely beautiful yet aggressive. She is a woman that knows how to take control, even if she can't seem to control herself. Gregg Araki is no doubt one sick individual. He's obsessed with sexual perversion and death in way that plays like a sitcom (obviously his intent). *The Doom Generation* has been compared to hack liar Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*. I find it very offensive as Oliver Stone's film should only be compared to Nike commercials. My only complaint with *The Doom Generation* is the castration and death of the films pathetic romantic Jordan. His death was quite tragic as he had a quality to him of innocence (despite his many vices). Many know the actor that played Jordan (James Duval) as Frank from *Donnie Darko*. This fellow seems to die in a lot movies. Araki's style has evolved a great deal since his earlier films. I felt that *Mysterious Skin* was his best film. He is one of the few directors that is still able to disturb me. I will make it a goal of mine to view Araki's entire film lexicon. The American auteur is a rarity.

-Ty E

NOWHERE
NOWHERE

Gregg Araki° (1997)

Hailed as "90210 on acid", this initial assessment doesn't stray far from reality. Some form of reality that is. Nowhere consists of deranged teenage hallucinations, male sexuality crisis', lizard aliens, grotesque suicides, and an uncomfortable interracial child couple headlining with a young Mena Suvari. Nowhere isn't just the pinnacle of bisexual film making, it's also Araki's finest film effort coupled with the forced genius of Hunter S. Thompson, whose work seems contrived and drug-induced in retrospect. Sure, the finest genius can come up with something relevant to literature but a gossip journalist on mescaline can turn prose into desperation rather quick and surprisingly become heralded and looked up to cause of it. What a world, ladies and gentlemen. Gregg Araki conjoins facets from each of his other film to complete his tour de force of teen angst. The usual casting of James Duval lends much substance to Nowhere on the term of avant-garde cinema regulars. His role in the great American classic ID4 led to Donnie Darko, Nowhere, and the Doom Generation. The film opens up reasonably promising with Duval encompassing the very idea of a "Steamy shower sequence". He begins masturbating, collecting his thoughts in a process that involves awkward conversations, artfully composed sex scenes, and bi-curious affairs. All of this to a rousing shoegaze score nonetheless. Nowhere even seemed to set the stage for Araki's screen adaptation of Mysterious Skin which also dictates a code of sexuality livened by thoughts of space aliens. Through the eyes of Dark (Duval), we witness a stage being set as he decides that he isn't going to live much longer. It's the prophetic doom that gives Nowhere that vibe of terror as you never quite know what to expect and Nowhere will always surprise you, even after watching it again. Consisting of tons of cameos, many familiar faces will pop up here and there not limited to Heather Graham, Ryan Phillippe, Rose McGowan, Shannon Doherty, Rachel True, Debi Mazar, Christina Applegate, Jordan Ladd, and Guillermo Díaz. Nowhere is hard to track down at that. Its public domain lies within the market of Region 2 DVDs but is currently hosted up at YouTube (so that you may watch for free). Lord knows when Araki will decide to release his magnum opus [preferably in a box set].

If you've ever thought about The Doom Generation and found yourself disgusted at the pet project, you should give Nowhere a chance in order to redeem yourself. Not to say that you're in the wrong for hating on either of these two but the leading argument is from an offended party. This tires me to know end seeing as how Araki makes it very clear that his films are high-brow surrealist trash. Epic scenery and tinted lens coupled with neon lights flow steadily through the course of most of his films save for Mysterious Skin. A distinct scene that comes to mind is Bart's drug abode. His room's walls are plastered with lyrics in a hefty font. This might create a prestigious arthouse vibe but this, my friends, borders

genius. When all is said and done, *Nowhere* will shock you to a certain point of intensity. You'll question the film to some extent, perhaps even wonder aloud what you just experienced but the answer will always be obscured. I'm not sure what Araki had in mind while creating *Nowhere* but whatever it is, I want more of it. If you can't handle ideas construed in a film, don't watch movies. But for depictions of drug abuse, teenage angst, apocalyptic surrealism, and Araki's personal blend of immature humor, *Nowhere* is the undisputed champion of trash cinema. We're all just waiting for this to be released commercially in the United States.

-mAQ

THIS IS HOW THE WORLD ENDS
THIS IS HOW THE WORLD ENDS

Gregg Araki° (2000)

Not so much a film about the apocalypse as Araki's previous effort *Nowhere* was, *This Is How The World Ends* was a TV Pilot episode for a series that was to be presented on MTV. I guess that the fine folks at MTV underestimated the power of Araki's homosexual film style. That might explain the corporations idea to promise 1.5 million but only deliver 700,000 dollars. The various countercultures presented in this short (44 minutes) are all various familiar instances in his normal feature length films. If for one second you were worried about censorship, you can honestly breathe a deep sigh of relief. Using blurred bars and family-safe words works wonders when Araki uses them. Maybe he should teach a thing or two to the pansy producers of *Live Free or Die Hard* or the upcoming *Terminator Salvation: The Future Begins*. Casper is an unnamed character living the big life. His gas money consists of crisp hundreds and he has friends of all shapes and sizes. His love appears in his dreams similar to a pseudo-*Nowhere* James Duval masturbation fantasy. Justin Pierce plays Zombie, a dread locked narcoleptic who finds himself in ridiculous situations. 2 years after the pilot, Pierce hung himself in a Las Vegas hotel. You will know Pierce from his role as Casper in *Kids*. Funny how the name Casper is shared in this film. Araki labeled *TIHTWE* as "A *Twin Peaks* for MTV" I cannot agree with this statement anymore. Dancing midget Sugar-Ray fans turn into gun wielding robbers. Things that aren't, are. A youthful acid trip for the new generation. I would like to imagine this series getting green lighted, but somehow, I think that it just passes over MTV's head. Pure genius is always denied. A grandeur exercise in post-homosexual surrealism. You won't forget these characters anytime soon.

-mAQ

MYSTERIOUS SKIN

Gregg Araki° (2005)

Judging by his gloriously morally retarded black comedies like *The Doom Generation* (1995), *Nowhere* (1997), and more recently, *Kaboom* (2010), Jap-American New Queer Cinema auteur Gregg Araki seems like he would be one of the most ill-equipped filmmakers for making a serious and responsible film about childhood traumas and the long-term effects of being molested as a pre-adolescent boy, yet he somehow made one of the best, most daring, and shockingly honest films on the subject, as if he himself was a victim of such abuse. Of course, as Araki's film, *Mysterious Skin* (2004)—a vaguely autobiographical work based on gay New England-based novelist Scott Heim's 1996 novel of the same name—audaciously reveals, many homosexuals were molested by older men as children, thus indicating that there is indeed a certain unofficial 'recruiting' subculture of queendom and that NAMBLA might not be a lunatic fringe of the fag world after all. Somewhat paradoxically, despite being quite unnerving as a work that features child molestation and a violent rape scene, the film also manages to be an aesthetically pleasing experience, which largely has to do with its ambient score, including songs by Slowdive (the film opens with their cover of the Syd Barrett song "Golden Hair"), Cocteau Twins, Sigur Rós, as well as various ethereal dream-sequences and 'fantasy' scenes. Like a coming-of-age story in reverse, *Mysterious Skin* tells the tale of two very different young men—an introverted and seemingly autistic asexual nerd and an exceedingly extroverted homo hustler—who are eternally united due to the fact that they were both molested a decade previously at the age of 8 by their pee-wee league baseball coach, with one of the boys even actively taking part in the molesting of the other. While the nerdy boy developed dissociative amnesia as a means to cope with being molested and now believes he was abducted by aliens during those hours from the past that he cannot remember, the young prick-peddler remembers the events vividly and rather sickly sees them as a sort of sexual awakening as opposed to child abuse. Featuring a truly horrifying Halloween scene where a young boy molests another boy with the misguided belief that he will not tattle, as well as references to zombie flicks like George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and J.R. Bookwalter's *The Dead Next Door* (1989) and ultra-kitschy scenes of UFOs and alien abductions, I thought re-watching Araki's film would be a more unconventional way to get in the spirit of All Hallows' Eve. Indeed, if you're looking for a film that might give you nightmares and are tired of devouring brainless celluloid zombie shit, *Mysterious Skin* makes for a most preternaturally disturbing experience like no other, as a work that takes an un-sentimental look at the tragic long-term effects of losing one's innocence while still just a vulnerable wee lad.

During the summer of 1981 when they were both just 8 years old, Kansas

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country boys Neil McCormick (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and Brian Lackey (Brady Corbet) were molested by their little league baseball Coach (Bill Sage), who is a considerably masculine man that looks like he walked off the set of one of sado-masochistic sodomite Fred Halsted's films (somewhat notably, like the director of *LA Plays Itself*, the coach also has a rather repellant fist fetish, albeit of the boy-oriented sort). Both boys came from badly broken homes, with Neil being the bastard son of a whorish dipsomaniac single mother (Elisabeth Shue) and Brian being the progeny of two parents that were about to divorce, thus making them the perfect prey for a predatory pedophile. While Neil enjoyed the experience of being molested and saw it as a sexual awakening of sorts (after all, as he describes, his molester resembled the sort of macho men that intrigued him in his slut mother's *Playgirl* magazines), Brian was so traumatized by those events that he cannot remember them and believes he was abducted by aliens due to the fact that he cannot remember five hours from his childhood and routinely bled from his nose and wet his bed for a good portion of his life, hence his Asperger-like obsession with all-things alien. Not surprisingly, Neil grew up to be a quasi-psychopathic hustler who enjoys being blown by middle-age men with mustaches for money, whilst Brian degenerated into a sexless nerd that lives in a fantasy world full of alien abductions.

While Neil makes a fairly decent living peddling his ass and acting as the announcer of local baseball games (where men give him blowjobs while he announces!), he cannot stand the homo-hating hicks of his area (or as he states himself, "I'm so fuckin' sick of this stinky little butcrack of a town!") and he has already "fucked every single guy and his ugly uncle" in his "podunk town," so, like many young fags that are looking to 'find themselves' and be around like-minded folks, he opts to leave his mother and racially dubious queer buddy Eric Preston (Jeff Licon) for the big city where he plans to live with his lifelong platonic soul-mate Wendy (Michelle Trachtenberg). Naturally, after arriving in the rotten Big Apple, Neil spends most of his time wandering the streets and selling his tiny twink tail to a much larger and more eclectic clientele that he is used to, including an athletic fellow who likes taking it from behind from scrawny twinks, as well as an old queen dying from AIDS. Upon arriving in New York City, Neil soon learns that he cannot be as sexually careless as he was in rural Kansas, as STDs are all over the place. Indeed, after having a date with an old queer named Zeke (played by perennial screen villain Billy Drago of Clint Eastwood's classic 1985 western *Pale Rider* and Brian De Palma's 1987 hit *The Untouchables*) whose body is covered in Kaposi sarcoma (KS) marks and merely wants a backrub from the boy because it has been so long since another person touched him, Neil is 'scared straight' and decides to quit peddling his man-pussy and gets a minimum wage job as a cashier. Despite quitting hustling, Neil is subsequently savagely raped by a vicious self-loathing shit-stabbing redneck, who forces his victim to snort some coke before being rectally reamed. The experi-

ence of being raped ultimately proves to be 'worthwhile' for Neil because, while he felt like he was in control when he was being molested by his coach when he was an 8-year-old boy, being violently buggered by a boorish pig makes him truly realize what it is like to be defiled against one's own will, thus enabling him to better empathize with Brian's precarious predicament when he meets him at the end of the film.

Meanwhile, 18-year-old banal bitch boy Brian contacts a crippled farm girl named Avalyn Friesen (Mary Lynn Rajskub) after seeing a documentary about her featuring her discussing how she was abducted and probed by aliens over twenty times. Being a weirdo country cripple that lives in the middle of nowhere who clearly has a hard time finding a good man, Avalyn immediately writes back to Brian and covers her letter in cheap perfume. While Brian soon develops a strong bond with Avalyn due to their mutually unhealthy obsession with space aliens, mutilated cattle, and crop circles, he abruptly decides to stop talking to her after she attempts to jump his seemingly impotent bones. If there is anything that is for sure, it is that being molested as a boy has totally destroyed Brian's ability to not only have sex, but to love other people. With Avalyn's help, Brian figures out that Neil, who has haunted his dreams since the fateful night when he was raped at the age of 8, was one of the players on his little league baseball team, so he goes looking for the young hustler in the hope that he will be able to help him connect the dots regarding his hazy childhood. Unfortunately, Neil is still in NYC, so Brian hangs out with his punk queer friend Eric and learns that the hustler will be back in Kansas around Christmas time.

Before Neil arrives in town, Brian spends a lot of time with homo punk-goth queen Eric, who proudly corrupts the autistic teen on his 19th birthday by getting him drunk. On Christmas Eve 1991, Brian wakes and declares, "this is the day." Indeed, Xmas Eve is the day that Brian learns that he was not abducted by aliens, but rather probed by his cocksucker baseball coach. When Brian meets Neil, he brings them to the house where the baseball coach who molested both of them used to live. After breaking into the coach's home, Neil nostalgically shows Brian around the place and explains how he was the child-fucker coach's "favorite" and how he "felt honored." As Brian explains to Neil, the coach would ply the boys with Atari games and other treats and would eventually coerce them into letting him go down on them, among other things. The coach used his 'favorite' Neil to lure the other boys in, including Brian, with both boys taking turns shoving their entire arms up the pedo's ass. Neil also describes to Brian how after being molested, his face looked like he had been "erased" and "empty inside." In the end, Brian collapses and breaks down after Neil tells him how he was molested. Needless to say, Brian would have probably preferred being abducted by asshole-probing aliens over becoming the victim of a charismatic baseball-loving pedophile.

Ironically, despite the innately offensive nature of most of Gregg Araki's previ-

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ous works, *Mysterious Skin* is shockingly inoffensive, even if it features a number of haunting and disturbing scenes, which leads me to believe that the auteur had the most pure intentions and that he may have been molested himself. While Araki's most recent film, *White Bird in a Blizzard* (2014), is in a similar vein in terms of seriousness and its understated approach to drama, it is ultimately much less potent than *Mysterious Skin*, which is probably a work that the director will never top. Next to the distinctly dark and dreary films of gay Spanish auteur Agustí Villaronga whose debut feature *Tras el cristal* (1987) aka *In a Glass Cage* probably features the most disturbing depiction of a relationship between a pedophile and his victim ever committed to celluloid, as well as Michael Cuesta's *L.I.E.* (2001) starring Brian Cox as a pederast who develops an unlikely bond with a young Jewish boy played by Paul Dano, Araki's film indubitably features one of the most mature and intricately nuanced depictions of child molestation in cinema history, which probably does not say much considering the scarcity of such films, but there is no denying that *Mysterious Skin* is a uniquely unforgettable work that reminds one why pedos are probably worse than serial killers in terms of the malignant damage they do. Needless to say, Araki's film is not something you would probably want to re-watch often and I assume that it might make for especially traumatic viewing for real-life victims of sex abuse. As much as I cannot stand gawky heeb Joseph Gordon-Levitt and cannot think of another single decent film that he stars in, somehow he pulls off the whole psychopathic hustler role in Araki's film (interestingly, in the audio commentary for the TLA Releasing DVD of the film, Gordon-Levitt confesses that starring in Araki's film made him realize that, "acting and prostitution are kind of similar"). Certainly, one of the most brave and provocative aspects of the film is that it demonstrates that some molestation victims grow up to be very repugnant individuals who become just as eager to molest as their molesters, with Gordon-Levitt very aptly and eerily acting the part of such a distinctly deranged individual. A contra Lifetime channel film, Araki's dejecting movie offers a more than decent argument as to not only why it is probably not a good idea to raise a child in a broken home, but also why peddling your ass to middle-aged men with mustaches can only have nothing short of deleterious effects. More than an independent film about child molestation, *Mysterious Skin* is a work that also metaphysically molests the viewer.

-Ty E

KABOOM

Gregg Araki° (2010)

After watching the 2007 film *Smiley Face*, directed by renegade queer auteur Gregg Araki — I was left feeling cheated out of the total cinematic experience — at least in a manner comparable to how the ditsy dope smoking debutante in the film feels like after shotgunning the last bit of reef resin out of her \$300.00 bong. Before watching Araki's 2010 film *Kaboom*, I anticipated that the Asian auteur would return to the libertine insanity that made his previous works *Nowhere* and *The Doom Generation* such adversely pleasurable experiences. Despite the cheap (yet charming) aesthetic of the film, I am happy to report that *Kaboom* is another wonderful excursion into the wicked Japanese-American mind of Gregg Araki. Like Araki's previous films, *Kaboom* combines unrelenting sexuality with science fiction elements, launching the viewer into a world of farcical humor and screw loose sexuality. Also, like Araki's past films, *Kaboom* follows a young aspiring film student as he encounters various sexual misadventures in a world vacillating nihilism. The film begins with a dream and concludes with a *Kaboom*, enrapturing everywhere in between. As mAQ also mentioned to me, *Kaboom* proves that Gregg Araki has still "got it."

Kaboom follows 18-year-old film student Smith as he explores his "undeclared" sexuality. It is apparent from the start of the film that Smith is a gay boi with a slight interest in AC/DC. Smith's best friend is a lipstick lesbian that enjoys getting her mouth wet on every moist meat curtain she can find. Upon eating a drug-laced cookie at a debauched college party, Smith has a series of re-occurring dreams involving two beautiful women, one with red hair and another with dark locks. To reveal anymore information about *Kaboom*'s plot would ruin the staggering mystique of the film. I will, however, mention that *Kaboom* features an apocalyptic cult that slightly resembles (in a cheap plastic "user friendly" kind of way) The Process Church of The Final Judgment, which was originally a splinter client group of L. Ron Hubbard's Scientology. Despite being well into his middle age years, Gregg Araki proves he can still keep up with the degenerating times as exemplified in *Kaboom*, a cinematic time bomb gorged with contemporary societal ills, set to the soothing sounds of a modern soundtrack. When it comes to synchronizing opulent images with audacious audio tracks, Gregg Araki always delivers. I was thoroughly delighted to find out that *Kaboom* features a melodic neoteric soundtrack, including catchy numbers from bands like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Interpol.

Due to the film's nonexistent production values and less than stellar acting performances (not to mention the fact that Gregg Araki's favorite star — James Duval — only has a minuscule role in the film), *Kaboom* is not exactly Gregg Araki's greatest masterpiece. Aesthetically, *Kaboom* is comparable to earlier Araki low-budget films like *The Living End* and *Totally Fucked Up*, minus the vintage

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charm (only time will whether or not Kaboom also carries this quality). After seeing Araki's masterpiece *Mysterious Skin*, I assumed that the director would be utilizing larger budgets for his subsequent films. Of course, Gregg Araki is not the kind of film director that is willing to prostitute himself out to the pimps of Hollywood, hence his small, yet loyal fan base. Gregg Araki is an auteur in the truest sense of the word, an artist with a distinct and superlative vision. mAQ and I both agree that despite the film's schlocky style and tacked on ending, *Kaboom* is a worthy addition to Gregg Araki's director filmography. If there ever is a day when an imminent Armageddon scenario comes into play, *Kaboom* is the film to watch and kick back to, whilst this despairing world withers away. Until that day comes, I will be eagerly waiting for Gregg Araki's next cinematic feature.

-Ty E

DANCE OF THE DEAD

Gregg Bishop (2008)

This title is not to be confused with the Masters of Horror Dance of the Dead, but is rather a genius reinvention of the zombie film. With a script originally penned in 1998, one must find it hard to bash this loud-mouthed zombie comedy for predating most of the others in its flock. John Hughes meets Return of the Living Dead in what might be the most fun I've milked out of a zombie film in some time (Not counting re-watching Cemetery Man). Ghost House Underground has recently collaborated on bringing a collection of mixed horror films into distribution. A fruitful and appreciated effort, but many of the films range from bad to worse; The Last House in the Woods being the spotlight, that is until I saw Dance of the Dead. This entirely invigorating experience is sponsored by outrageous characters that you have no choice but to love entirely. Science fiction geeks and furious punk rock rednecks all come into play over a prom night fueled by a zombie massacre thanks to a power plant ala Class of Nuke 'Em High which leaves a wonderful gap that can be concluded with a sequel. Perhaps Afterparty of the Dead? It feels good to be a kid again, I'll tell you that much. This film brings to mind old memories of sneaking geeky horror films and appreciating all the gut-munching entertainment that was available. I expected something of the same out of German film Night of the Living Geeks, but I was too bored to finish the film. Maybe I can lend some time towards a round two. Words get jumbled when I try to pen down the emotions this film allowed to excrete. This is simply a no holds barred blast when it comes down to raw zombie entertainment. Considering that zombie films normally bore me, you should bite into this. While this might be towards the stoner crowd a tad bit, the anti-heroes present themselves as heroes and the geek gets the girl. In all entirety, this film is practically seamless and destined for a cult status, maybe even more so over the over hyped Shaun of the Dead (Which still holds some leverage over the latter films). Featuring a youthful cast of kids who actually look like kids and a Dellamorte Dellamore inspired caretaker roaming the rolling hills of the cemetery, I can't imagine enjoying this film anymore than I already do. All this, plus the rewatchability factor is off the scale.

-mAQ

NEW WAVE HOOKERS
NEW WAVE HOOKERS

Gregory Dark (1985)

Undoubtedly, *New Wave Hookers* (1985) is a porn flick with a reputation that is more (in)famous than the actual quality of its content, namely due to the fact that the original cut of the film was forever removed from distribution in 1986 after it was revealed that star Traci Lords (*Black Throat*, *Kinky Business*) was actually underage when she made the film. As someone who has managed to view the original version of the film featuring Lords as a salacious she-devil, I cannot say that the edited/abridged version of *New Wave Hookers* really suffered from the deletion of those naughty underage teen scenes. Admittedly, my interest in *New Wave Hookers* came from the fact that it is a punk/new wave porn flick that, like Alex Cox's cult masterpiece *Repo Man* (1984), features a score by the Latino punk band *The Plugz*, not to mention the fact that it features Hebraic hardcore superstar star Jamie Gillis (*The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Water Power*) in one of the lead roles as an over-the-hill punk pimp who speaks with a bogus oriental accent. Indeed, certainly a cream of the crop work when it comes to mainstream 1980s porn, *New Wave Hookers* was directed by Gregory Dark aka Alexander Hippolyte aka *The Dark Brothers* aka Gregory Brown (*Let Me Tell Ya 'Bout Black Chicks*, *Sex Freaks*)—a miscegenation-obsessed Anton LaVey-look-alike who is one of the few pornographers to successfully make the transition from the porn ghetto to Hollywood and who has been described as “the Steven Spielberg of the soft-core set” and “the Martin Scorsese of the erotic thriller”—so it benefits from having an actual aesthetic vision, if not a rather aberrant one. The surely sordid and thankfully politically incorrect story of an odd couple—a negro and a Jew—who both share the literal and figurative dream of becoming quasi-high-class punk pimps who whore out mostly Aryan new wave/punk chicks, *New Wave Hookers* works best as a racially-charged comedy that certainly could have benefited from less hardcore scenes and a more eclectic soundtrack. A porn flick that will probably most appeal to fans of old school punk films like Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982), Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia* (1984), Cox's *Repo Man*, and even *Surf Nazis Must Die* (1987), *New Wave Hookers* also features racially-charged comic relief, especially of the oriental-parodying oriented sort, that is comparable to C-grade porn trash typical of the 1980s like *Invasion of the Samurai Sluts from Hell!* (1989). In short, *New Wave Hookers* has more to offer than merely Traci Lords' teenage titties and twat as a work that makes a great argument that Jamie Gillis certainly would have made for a more likeable, charming, and humorous mainstream ‘performer’ than most kosher comedians.

Goofy jigaboo Jamal (Jack Baker) and his Jew boy buddy Jimmy (Jamie Gillis) are watching an interracial blue movie and the latter remarks to the former that he looks just like the mandingo negro in the fuck flick. Jimmy also remarks how

he used to play tennis with spade pimps when he attended Berkeley College and how he has always wondered about the profession. Magically, Jimmy and Jamal fall asleep while watching the porn flick and somehow awake as pimps with different personas. While Jamal is dressed like a poser member of Devo, Jimmy sports an idiotic anarchy symbol shirt and takes on the personality of a stereotypically racist egomaniac Jap. On top of everything else, the two obtain their own personal guard dog (Steven Powers) in untermensch white boy form. Out of all the girls the two could pimp out, Jimmy and Jamal deal in 'New Wave chicks' that can only become sexually aroused by the sweet and sensual sounds of New Wave music, or as the black pimp states himself, "programs bitches to music to fuck." Dressed quite similar to the Scottish duo from Strawberry Switchblade, the nubile and mostly Nordic new wave babes like riding on roller-skates and playing with shiny dildos. When not engaging in cross-species foursomes with their two bosses and their loyal yet seemingly stoned man-dog, the horny hookers sell their sex to a variety of sexually deprived losers, including a towelheaded Arab Sheik (Peter North) and two virginal and seemingly bi-curious dork college boys. When the cops bust Jimmy and Jamal for "subjecting our bitches to a plot" (aka white slavery), the pimps bribe the police with their busty bitches, thus evolving into a magical multicultural orgy in a scene that makes for a great metaphor for the wacked-out cultural and racial mongrel that is the United States of America. Rather bizarrely but nonetheless humorously, black brother Jamal masturbates and yells "come on white boys, do it to dem bitches" while watching the cops break the law with the new wave hookers. Of course, all good things must come to an end and both Jimmy and Jamal wake up to empty 40oz. malt liquor bottles and not a single new wave hooker in sight. Disturbed by the fact that he had the same wild wet dream as his homey Jamal, Jimmy leaves his friend's apartment and drives around fantasizing about the fantastic dream he had about being a pseudo-Japanese pimp.

Featuring great and highly quotable one-liners like, "Fuck you, Negro," "Deadhead, rat's ass, fool to boot," "No nigger music, strictly New Wave," and "Do you think a rat's ass is as good delicacy for a Japanese gentleman?" New Wave Hookers is certainly more funny and outrageous than the average scatological bromance flick defecated out by Hollywood each month, even if it has its flaws and tends to drag, especially during the lackluster pre-condom sex scenes. Indeed, New Wave Hookers was so popular that it would inevitably sire no less than six sequels (with the first three also being directed by Gregory Dark), as well as a reasonably stylish, if not innately inferior, remake entitled Neu Wave Hookers (2006) directed by artsy fartsy 'alt porn' auteur Eon McKai (Art School Sluts, On My Dirty Knees). While New Wave Hookers director Gregory Dark would later become a monetarily 'successful' mainstream music director (directing videos for mainstream pop trash like Britney Spears, Mandy Moore, Linkin Park, etc.) and even directed an episode for the popular HBO TV series Oz

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(1997–2003), he would ultimately degenerate into a Hollywood hack responsible for helming such celluloid garbage as the horror flick *See No Evil* (2006) starring WWE fake wrestler ‘Kane’ and the crap comedy *Little Fish, Strange Pond* (2009) starring Matthew Modine and Zach Galifianakis. Indeed, while an undeniably humorous and audacious porn flick, *New Wave Hookers* seems rather tame when compared to the avant-garde fuck flicks of Stephen Sayadian aka ‘Rinse Dream’ (*Nightdreams*, *Café Flesh*, *Dr. Caligari*). While the sex of Sayadian’s films is typically nightmarish, nihilistic, creepy, and even anti-erotic, *New Wave Hookers* is packed with outmoded orgies with generic plastic Barbie doll babes and seemingly inebriated men who seem to have a hard time obtaining erection, thus I would be hesitant to describe the film as a masterpiece—be it of pornography or otherwise—but it is certainly a tastelessly charming classic of the quasi-iconoclastic and sardonic stereotype-driven sort. Part New Wave minstrel show, part retrograde race comedy, part slapstick vaudeville-esque fuck flick, and 100% culturally and artistically irredeemable, *New Wave Hookers* ultimately manages to epitomize everything that was aesthetically, culturally, socially, and politically revolting about the 1980s yet somehow manages to enthrall and for that reason alone makes it essential viewing for anyone that thinks John Hughes’ films were bullshit and that *The Last Dragon* (1985) was one of the most bizarre Hollywood films ever made.

-Ty E

TWICE A MAN

Gregory J. Markopoulos (1963)

Although a generalization, it seems to be the common consensus that most homos either have mothers they love a little too dearly or that they love to hate, with the common theme here being that gay boys have unhealthy relationships with their mommies that may have contributed to them developing into gynophobic sexual introverts. Indeed, from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) to more recent works like Tom Kalin's *Savage Grace* (2007) and Xavier Dolan's *I Killed My Mother* (2009) aka *J'ai tué ma mère*, hysterical female hormones seem to be a major source of homo cognitive dissonance and sexual perversion in general in the cinematic realm. Unquestionably, one of the most innately bizarre, pathologically hermetic, unflatteringly vulnerable, and decidedly discombobulating, if not strangely aesthetically delectable, works of anti-Oedipal homo hysteria is the American experimental avant-garde work *Twice a Man* (1964) directed by rather reclusive Greek-American auteur Gregory J. Markopoulos (*Psyche*, *The Illiac Passion*), who, with the help of his disturbingly possessive boy toy Robert Beavers—a filmmaker with a similar, albeit strikingly inferior, 'transcendent' vision—made his entire oeuvre completely unattainable after moving to Greece in the late-1960s. Indeed, one of the most inventive and singular experimental filmmakers associated with the New American Cinema movement who also contributed his original film theories to *Film Culture* magazine and taught film at Art Institute of Chicago, Markopoulos—a strange and rather introverted fellow who, like many gay men, suffered a terribly debilitating form of paranoia—and his majorly megalomaniacal blowboy Beavers left America in 1967 for permanent relocation in Europa and shortly after that the filmmaker took all of his films out of circulation, refused to talk to the media, and even went so far as insisting that avant-garde film historian P. Adams Sitney remove a chapter on him from the second edition of the classic text *Visionary Film*. By the early 1970s, Markopoulos fell further and further into a fantasy world of his own making as demonstrated by the increasingly metaphysical nature of his writings and the fact that he would only screen his films in a ritualistic fashion at a special ceremonial theater in Lyssaraia, Greece (the homeland of his parents) in the hope of obtaining his ideal of 'Temenos.' Luckily, I managed to find a copy of *Twice a Man* because it was once screened on German television by the Cologne-based channel WDR (*Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln*) and some gracious kraut had the keen foresight to tape it. A 49-minute work shot on 16mm color film stock by the director with a borrowed camera and with the help of a mere two assistants in and around New York City, Markopoulos' singular masterpiece is a darkly romantic, terribly haunting, and malignantly melancholy homoerotic reworking of the Phaedra/Hippolytos/Aesclepius myth that centers around an 'artist/physician' (supposedly, a stand-in for the director himself) who

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reminisces over attempting to save a suicidal young man who become his lover from his incestuous homo-hating mother.

If there ever was a film that was ridden with the soul-stirring sting of tragic memory and lovelorn regret, it is *Twice a Man*, which incorporates an incessantly spastic use of montage involving single-frame images to demonstrate in a quasi-subliminal way how the wounds of the past perennially bleed over into the present, or as the director himself described regarding his dream of creating a new cinematic language, he wanted to assemble: "a new narrative form through the fusion of the classic montage technique with a more abstract system." Of course, the director's abstract system is surely not for the uninitiated, as it is an arcane cinematic language that demands study. After the beautiful title sequence featuring what seems to be pagan architecture, a couple minutes of a completely blank pitch black screen is juxtaposed with the sound of heavy rain drops hitting concrete, thus inducing a feeling of dreary monotone melancholy in the viewer. From there, the film cuts to shots of tragic gay boy Paul (played by Paul Kilb, whose sole other film credit is for Paul Morrissey's classic 1971 *Women's lib* satire *Women in Revolt*) reminiscing over his loneliness while in the company of happy heterosexual couples dancing. After his lonely and less than nostalgic ferry ride, Paul heads to the roof of a building where he contemplates jumping off, but a handsome 'Artist-Physician' (Albert Torgesen), who is depicted in a previous scene looking on all forlorn on a ferry, that more or less looks like an older version of himself comforts the world weary twink by placing his hand over his shoulder, so he opts out of suicide, at least for now.

As demonstrated by a subsequent scene where he goes to his mother's home in Staten Island and she asks him, "Why do you keep seeing [him]?", as well as a montage where he is clearly being penetrated from behind while feeling the metaphysical scorn of his unpleasant progenitor, Paul is carrying on an affair with the 'Artist-Physician', whose memory the film seems to be recollecting, even though the work is mainly shot from the perspective of the young man. Essentially, *Twice a Man* is an archaic pre-Stonewall gay 'coming-out' film that viscerally depicts the foreboding angst that young man Paul suffers as a result of his pathologically prying mother's traumatic influence. Indeed, it is not without reason that the mother is depicted as both a young woman (played by mainstream Greek-American Academy Award winning actress Olympia Dukakis of *Moonstruck* fame in her first film role) and an old woman (played by English actress Violet Roditi in her first and sole film), as her damaging influence on Paul began during his critical years and lingers today. Likewise, Paul's subversive sexuality has destroyed his mother and she must live with the internal scars of his actions for the rest of her miserable bourgeois life as a lonely woman who will never be a grandmother. Unquestionably, the mother is the figurative cock-block in poor Paul's forsaken fag soul. Indeed, even while being buggering in the woods, Paul cannot get his mother out of his mind, thus she has more or less figuratively

killed him as he is incapable of living as the person that he is really is. While Paul does die at sea, it is not clear as to whether or not he committed suicide or merely was a victim of accidental circumstances. After dying, Paul is reborn in a scene where his naked classically posed body is illuminated in a golden-white cosmic sphere of sorts, hence the title of the film. Of course, the viewer will not realize this unless they pay particularly close attention, as the film lacks any sort of discernible chronology and portrays the mind as it really is as a collection of sometimes vivid but largely fading memory fragments.

No doubt, after watching *Twice a Man*, one can empathize with Norman Bates to a degree when it comes to the metaphysical disease of mommy-mania. Indeed, while the mother in the film is largely responsible for the character Paul's aversion to women, she also dares to spite him for the gynophobia and androphilia that she, at least partially, induced in what amounts to a vicious circle of anti-Oedipal obsession among the perturbed protagonist. While largely cryptic, the film is riddled with homoerotic imagery and symbolism, which led me to conclude that the director learned to hide his homosexuality at a young age and found esoteric ways to express his homophilia, hence his mastery of the largely visually symbolic and allegorical medium of film. Unquestionably, one of the more revealing examples of the film's semi-hidden homosexual essence is a shot of Paul holding a copy of the book *The Prince of Darkness & Co.* (1961) by Canadian poet/translator Daryl Hine who, on top of being an arcane poetic poof of sorts, shared director Gregory J. Markopoulos' affinity for Greek mythology and classic European literature/poetry as demonstrated by the fact that he translated Homeric Hymns and works by ancient Greek poet Hesiod, as well as works by German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine. Markopoulos also incorporated various pieces of art in the film to highlight his homosexuality as demonstrated by a scene where Paul and the 'Artist-Physician' stand in front of a nude male statue, with the penis of the statue being in between their faces. In a scene in the se(a)men-fetishizing spirit of the director's cocksucker contemporary Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks*, *Scorpio Rising*), Paul stands next to a painting of a young sailor, with the face of the seaman staring at him if as he wants to defile the young lad after a long hard day of sailing the seas. With Markopoulos' utilization of ancient pagan imagery, one also gets the feeling that he longs for a bygone ancient utopia where 'boys could be boys' and be buggered by older men, hence the director's strong attachment to his Greek roots, self-imposed exile to Greece where he could be influenced by the ancient classical landscape, and his lifelong obsession of realizing his ideal of 'Temenos.'

While Markopoulos' work, especially his unconventional use of montage, has been somewhat rightfully compared to everyone from his contemporary Stan Brakhage (*Dog Star Man*, *Mothlight*) to French auteur Alain Resnais (*Last Year at Marienbad*, *Muriel*), I think that German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Willow Springs*) shares the most cinematic and poetic

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'kindredness' with the equally arcane filmmaker. Indeed, aside from their mutual love of the Southern European Mediterranean, totally idiosyncratic style of 'queerness,' utilization of divas, love of classical art and ancient mythology, seeming hatred of chronology and linear plots, unnerving utilization of dissonant noise and obscured dialogue, and propensity for making some of the most esoterically personalized and impenetrable homo hermetic cinematic works ever made, *Twice a Man* seems like it could have been one of Schroeter's early films (notably, Schroeter was inspired by Andy Warhol, whose Italian-American Superstar Gerard Malanga briefly appears in *Twice a Man*). Of course, in creating his own fantasy world and idealized occult utopia as influenced by the ancient Greeks and focusing on beautiful Adonis-like men, Markopoulos also shares much in common with gay German Conservative Revolutionary poet Stefan George. Indeed, while *Twice a Man* may be an undeniably queer flick, its influences demonstrate that Markopoulos was a born traditionalist who eschewed any sort of deracinated cosmopolitan world inhabited by raceless and cultureless beings and looked to the past for his ideal of beauty, even if he was one of the foremost pioneers of American experimental cinema. While mere speculation on my part, one has to wonder if Markopoulos saw his self-imposed exile as a sort of rebirth in the spirit of Paul in *Twice a Man*, as both men ultimately escape from their backgrounds and identities. Indeed, while the 'Artist-Physician' character might be a stand-in for the director, Paul, who somewhat resembles Markopoulos as a young man, seems like a depiction of the filmmaker's younger and more naive self. Either way, there is no denying that Markopoulos poured out his soul for *Twice a Man*, as a film that is so distinctly dejecting, dreary, and disconnected from society as a whole that no man would dare to make it unless they felt the undying need to express their inner torment, thus it should be no surprise that the auteur eventually decided to sever contact with most of humanity and enter a fantasy realm of his own making a couple years after the film was released.

-Ty E

SLIME CITY

Gregory Lamberson (1988)

This odyssey that, of course, revels in slime, started as a selfless act of me finding a copy of *Slime City* for a friend to watch. I never had any initial intention to watch the film, much less give it a thoughtful review. This friend has, for some time, had a growing addiction and it's only right that his path be taken downtown, a city of effervescent and oft-runny ooze. After bestowing upon him a *Ghoulies* double feature, why, I should have foreshadowed this long ago but now that I'm at this point - I can stop bitching and attempt to mend the mold that *Slime City* has spread upon every nerve in my brain. Opening with a scene of unspeakable turbulence, a couple glance at an apartment complex but for only the male suitor. Unknown to us, the female is a dedicated full-time cocktease whose occupation borders maintaining chastity and driving the lead male, Alex, mad. This can include many activities as Lori's model is an advanced prototype of female warfare, visiting Alex's workplace, furthering the temptation with her always loaded innocence artillery cannon. Mary Huner portrays both Lori, unloving girlfriend, and Nicole, temptress Goth-Rock man-killer. For reasons unknown to us at the time, the paralyzing performance of Mary Huner digs much deeper into the flesh of *Slime City* than one would care to realize but for now lets stick to the Satanic scribblings at hand.

After Alex moves into his new apartment, the tenants prove his previous assumption of being among retirees wrong by displaying black leather and chains, clearly the height of 80s NY counterculture. After the stress finally buckles his will too far from the lack of intimacy from his girlfriend, Alex spends his dinner with a fellow tenant, Roman, which includes a strange Himalayan Yogurt and an unknown wine created by a deceased soul. Upon further revelation, the wine is clued to be an elixir created by a Satanic alchemist before his suicide in the very basement of the apartment. Down there, shelves are lined with the stuff and Alex's future transformation is beset in stone. For you see, once you consume this dark combination of questionable origin, you must kill or else the slime will consume you. Your skin puses and boils. Clothes give way to seep slime through your every pore and eventually you rot. This drags in a line of clear inspiration from the aforementioned *Ghoulies*, that tale of a wandering masculine identity falling at the heels of property horror while a bubblehead bounces around. Not content with just "apartment horror", never in the vein of Polanski, *Slime City* ups the ante with extremely practical and unnecessary slime, ooze, gunk, and mire, which is more of a monetarily-salvaged helping of Street Trash, if anything. *Slime City* rolls out the mildewed red carpet at this epiphany and reincarnation, dismemberment, and turgid synth take lead of this true "grindhouse" production.

Whether or not *Slime City* is of worth to be occupied with your precious time

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is mainly up to the three key aspects that might make for sparse enjoyment. If promising amounts of seepage, fully clothed sex, and nondescript Satanic occultism seem like any desirable way to spend an evening than Slime City will overcompensate your dwindling taste in filmic luxury. Picking up where I left off, the transformation of femininity in Slime City is a rather quirky one. Nicole plays succubus to Alex's only desire - sex. After all, he is a struggling artist whose hormones were the only unconditional aspect of their seemingly flawless relationship. Refusing to make love, spend the night, or give way from her parents hold, Lori not only sacrifices the life and the will of Alex but also condemns his soul in the process. Striking opposite, Nicole is the gloomy girl-next-door archetype par excellence, especially with her dominating candy stare and the crypt-like apartment that she resides in, complete with wooden boards protruding from doorways. The climax of Slime City reaches a boil all too fast, resulting in an obviously synthetic experience. It feels as if Greg Lamberson forced the script to swallow a bag of pop rocks then wash it down with a spent slug of a .45 to ease the pain and eliminate its coil thus severing expectation. In fairness, I understand his will to want to keep it canon in death. Slime City lives up to its title in some ways, some others, it doesn't. It's not so much a slime city as it is a slime suburb. Either way, Slime City is definitive barf material. Especially in my sickened state did the grueling nature of goop sway me.

-mAQ

HIGHWAY OF HEARTACHE

Gregory Wild (1996)

At long last have I've finally watched Highway of Heartache; one of the most absolutely batshit films I've seen in recent memory. After viewing Gary's Touch, I came to the realization that Canada has some of the greatest avant-garde psychosexual films that refuse to see distribution (for obvious reasons). Highway of Heartache is what you would expect between the 50s clashing with The Anal Birth of Bert. The film's unusual level of camp is derived from the Day-Glo sets that are constantly used and the cartoon-like props and surreal intermissions of animation. Point is, my mindset is as scattered as the surreal jurisdiction of this very clever film. Withering, chain-smoking female Wynona-Sue is the crash dummy of this story. She does nothing but continuously sink into worse and worse proceedings that bring life to her tale. It's such a fate that her downfall leads to our high spirits. A southern gal named Wynona-Sue Turnpike has dreams of becoming a Nashville country star and her only output for her emotional distress is in her lovely songs. After murdering her husband, she hits the road only to get venereal disease diagnosed by an Elvis Presley impersonating gynecologist and expresses her inner woes with very catchy tunes detailed with raunchy lyrics perfectly radiant of the overall theme of the film - "Itch in my ditch | Germ in his sperm." After this and more, Wynona-Sue regroups with her orphaned "nigger" child and evokes many bad memories of her promiscuous past. Highway of Heartache is best described as an trashy country musical of abstract integrity. Regrettably the best and only of its kind. It's film making like this that inspires the underground to aim for originality and quality rather than blind entertainment. It's no secret that this film never got proper distribution but in an event of counter-productivity, this film is an obscure secret shying away from a cult community that would be embracing its many perks as well as flaws. Perhaps the greatest moments of Highway of Heartache is its approach of racial acceptance or lack thereof. It really gives the film color, to see Wynona-Sue approach a Negro calling her special and dark-skinned - monotonously dismissing prejudice all the while calling them "niggers." White people who believe they must apologize to every Negro they meet because of their ancestors absolutely disgust me. As "parodied" in Fritz the Cat, it's this kind of impassioned racial ass-kissing that puts the "brothas" and the white race down. Just live and let live. Also, kill whitey. Big hair is a thing of the past. Cry-Baby tried to reintroduce this dead fashion but I find that film to be as filling as cafeteria food, in other words, I abhor that film's being. Highway of Heartache reinvents a retro schematic for a contemporary musical sans the contrived song writing and uninspired events that unfold. To call this film interesting would be underwhelming and to call this film underwhelming would be a damn lie. While the events and absurdity seem to die down 3/4's through, the finished product is still one of the

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most original products of discourse I've seen on terms of sheer inspired mania. Highway of Heartache might also be the most offensive musical ever produced. Any film brave enough to introduce Blackface, let alone drag-queen Blackface, is an absolute treasure in my book. If you can locate this film, don't let anything stop you from viewing this ridiculous title of surreal trash that follows a doctrine of misanthropy. This film speaks with its own language, with its own culture, and is glorified within the reality present, veiling a lucid adventure of country music stardom with an aesthetic comparable to watching Nickelodeon on acid.

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JACK KETCHUM'S THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

Gregory Wilson (2007)

This film got the best of me. I went into this film expecting a literary port of celebrated whiny autobiography called *A Child Called It* to the TV screen but my expectations were ravaged. This film not only made me sob in disgust but made me vow to never watch it again unless condemning my mother to the same fate. One could call this film soulless or unmerciful, some could call it a damn good movie. This film is not art, no. It is a normal big budget thriller, albeit with a bit of a blood thirst. Complete with its own faults and uninspired imagery, but this film isn't about that - It's about Meg.

David is a grown man, too grown I might add. Too grown including the fact that he has his regrets in the past. What a horrible thing to feel. Not just normal regrets. The regrets that nightmares are made of. We are shown this story through David's eyes. When he is a boy in the 50's, he is caught catching crayfish by the incredibly cheerful Meg, whom he quickly develops a friendship with. Her parents died in a car accident leaving her with many scars and a crippled sister named Susan. After many encounters with her cousins who he is great friends with, he begins to notice horrible things from Aunt Ruth. Harrowing things, horrifying things, and appalling things. Things you wouldn't tell anyone and that is exactly what little David did. I dare not reveal too much about this film. Seeing as how many reviews give away vital information and how I went in knowing nothing, the effect is indeed grand. While being highly disturbing, the film does come short in necessary categories. The ending was missing a lot. It's one of those films that get caught up in the climax and don't give a shit about the resolution. The amazing thing about this film is how well it captures the heart of a child. Playing with bugs, focusing on childish violence and playing in the woods are only the physical depictions of this visual maturity. Perhaps Jack Ketchum is recalling a personal experience, similar to that of the director of *Summer Scars*. Games are the main thing at hand, and of course pornography. So curious, but children's minds are incredibly malleable. We soon find this out as David's closest friends become apart of this sick and twisted game. *The Girl Next Door* takes pride in watching you squirm. Do not expect a happy ending from this narcissistic, voyeuristic film. This is yet another film that seems to try to teach you how "ladies" should act. Of course, it is seen as the "wrong theme" of the film but it is pushed too much and too frequent". All in all, this is a good film that makes you feel a hell of a lot, but it doesn't make it an amazing cinematic achievement. Suburbia hell and hairspray hasn't been this fun since *Blue Velvet*.

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NIGGER LOVER
NIGGER LOVER

Greydon Clark (1973)

To review this film under its intended title is my main priority. To point out its reverse bottlecap propaganda is my second. Given the nature of this film and its history, *Nigger Lover*, also lovingly known as *Tom*, *The Bad Bunch*, and *The Brothers*, is a film directed by a civil rights activist turned schlock maestro. As per his unusual occupation, *Nigger Lover* is a film that gets all too confused in conveying which message it supports. Consider the branching extensions of this film universal. You can plug and play this film into any meaning or racial ultimatum which also happens to do something for the swept sake at stake. This is the film that they didn't want you to see, with reason enough however. *Nigger Lover* is a film wrapped up in its own lost ideology and features a sympathetic look at the white man and dealing with many pig-headed and angry "niggas" as the "bad bunch" cavorts around the streets with intention to harm "Whitey." *Nigger Lover* surely is the *pièce de résistance* of Greydon Clark's expansive gutter career. I support independent idealism transgressed to film but the only thing Clark's created of social importance is regrettably this anchored look at the fabled "aggression gene" present in all blacks.

Restoring my faith within the cracked-black case of cassettes and the corroded picturesque look at materialism in the age of exploitation, *Nigger Lover* starts centering itself within the conversation of a black and white GI stationed in Vietnam (but is obviously shot in a neighbor's backyard). After discussing what they believe home to be like, the wise black man begins to say that the war is still going back home and that he knows the answer on how to stop ebony & ivory confrontations and bring peace to all sides. Lucky for us he is suddenly and humorously shot and utters a violent scream before he can whisper the secret vaccine for *Helter Skelter*. Bringing a letter back home for his fallen friend's family, he encounters a brother reeking of soul who approaches with incredible hostility. It's our dearly departed soldier's brother name of Tom. But don't call him by his slave name, his name is now "Makimba." Along springs his gang of groovy, white-women stealing soul brothers and after utilizing some heavy intimidation tactics, Jim decides to cut his losses and leaves. Makimba, having nothing to do with Jim's lack of confrontation, decides to assault him at an ethnic fair before two "corrupt" detectives break it up waving their pistols around and calling Jim a "Nigger Lover" after claiming Makimba is his friend, obviously to extinguish any more violence from the Negroes.

As you can expect, a campaign of disinformation is thrust upon the sexually-frustrated Jim. While the camera hops between an endless void of interracial nudity and forced repressed ethnic ideals, Jim brings around a heavy aura of indecisiveness while he hops between the love of his life, Nancy (I think I recall that they've been dating for "2 months"), and some barfly hooker named Bobbie.

To beef up the story devices of this film and the jolting ending, Clark sets out to humanize Jim but fails halfway and creates a socially incompetent Frankenstein of faults and idiosyncrasies. While drunk later in the film, he proposes to the bubble-headed Nancy out of reverse-engineered hostility towards her decision to not move in with him because of Sin as a deciding factor. So after the plans and arrangements are set, he makes a progressive decision to possibly not go through with the marriage, thus sparking a several minute long conversation with the priest about the sanctity of marriage. Necessary scene or a clever time divergent? Assessing the run time of *Nigger Lover* at a measly hour and thirteen or so minutes, I suppose this film could use every cutting room floor scene in a final last ditch effort to achieve feature length before a certain deadline.

When you take the poster image of a prone negro holstering a rifle at a fleeing white couple, you can no doubt theorize that this film image is one of the near end shocks of agonizing still-life and the unquestionable lives taken on account of ignorance. Although Makimba had the right to protest and attest the vicious beatings at the hands of the two "pigs", such wonderful lines came out of their confrontations e.g. "Niggers sure bleed!" Of course, no film countering the image of blaxploitation could be without its very own scenes of Jewish discretion! At a pool party, Makimba and his beasts patiently await the arrival of Jim, as they are visiting as his "friends." In the meantime, the bull Negro of the lot decides to mingle with the white women, topless of course. After stealing all the white women with his superior masculinity, the giant picks up a tiny white male and begins to have the females goad the inferior White's size calling him "little man" and "tiny." This infuriates Makimba as he sees this pool turn into a integrated cesspool of spoiled races mixing with such fervor that his devious pose & stare become all the more aggressive with each passing frame. In no time, as the party picks up and the whites become more settled with their chocolate counterparts, one grabs the arm of one of the militants, provoking an angry reaction. Fearing for his safety, he babbles "Is he anti-Semitic or something?" which garners the response "if he iss, we ALLL in trouble!"

What *Nigger Lover* accomplishes is providing a sleazy shell for some disturbingly true stereotypes. These soul militants provide excellent opposition to the weakling Vietnam veteran but to some degree, also dampen the credibility of the constant peace talks from Jim. Trying to take the higher ground dug this Honky in deeper trouble than he originally planned and by the time the credits roll with image and sound intact, we hardly mourn the fate of our white brother. It's yet another casualty of not doing something sooner and elongating the process of physical contact. For scenes of white police officers seeming unfazed by a mention of a murder plot against a white man, only to suddenly become enraged when hearing they were kidnapping white women, *Nigger Lover* provides many hilarious sociopolitical thematic elements and enough subversive VHS sleaze to keep a jaded blaxploitation treasure hunter at ease for the time being. If you

NIGGER LOVER

can handle the atrocious and flimsy editing, that is. Might I add that this is not nearly as anti-white as the original intentions set out to engrave upon the face of exploitation. In the end, Nigger Lover stands triumphant as nigger kitsch.

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THE YOUNG FRITZ

Grigori Kozintsev (1943)

Long before the arrival of Nazisploitation flicks, which were created mainly by money-grubbing Guidos and a couple sleazy American Semites (David F. Friedman produced *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1975) under the curious pseudonym 'Herman Traeger'), kosher commies in the Soviet Union were portraying German soldiers as savage beasts worthy of being exhibited in the zoo as demonstrated by the vaudevillian slapstick satire *Yunyi Frits* (1943) aka *The Young Fritz* aka *Yunyy Frits* directed by Soviet Jews Grigori Kozintsev (*The Youth of Maxim*, *Don Quixote*) and Leonid Trauberg (*The Devil's Wheel*, *Dead Souls*) and based on an anti-German agitprop pamphlet poem written by Soviet Jew poet/writer/translator Samuil Marshak. So unwaveringly hateful in its depiction of the German people that it was actually banned by the Soviet censors and never actually released, *The Young Fritz* is assumed to be lost but someone must have dug up a copy as I managed to see the film recently (I read somewhere that it is a mere 25 minute fragment but the film has a beginning and an end). Despite never having an official release, a non-film marionette version was purportedly a big hit with soldiers of the Red Army during kraut-hunting season at later stages of the Second World War when the pendulum of fate swung to the red side. Originally written by Samuil Marshak in 1942 as a mere satirical pamphlet for the Leningrad Puppet Theatre troupe, *The Young Fritz* eventually evolved into a slapstick puppet show which traveled to the Eastern Front to play for Soviet soldiers so as to inspire homicidal impulses against the dreaded 'Hun.' Indeed, with references to Germans preferring the purity of cattle (and comparing said Germans to said cattle) to the gigantic Judaic intellects of Heine and Einstein, *The Young Fritz*, more than anything, is a venomous, if not greatly goofy, assault on Aryans than any sort of serious commie diatribe. The totally tasteless tragicomic story (narrated by no less than a nazi anthropologist aka "famous nazi racist" to boot!) about a blond baby kraut boy who grows up to be a boorish buffoon of a SS man who senselessly vandalizes famous statues in Paris and turns Europa into his own personal campy concentration camp of sorts, only to be taken prisoner on the Eastern Front and put on display as a "German beast" and "mean-eating ape" in a Soviet zoo in the end, *The Young Fritz* is ultimately in the Hebraic hate spirit of Ilya Ehrenburg (who, during the Second World War, encouraged the murder of Germans and the rape German women aka "blonde hags" via the propaganda pamphlets he wrote that were distributed to Soviet troops) meets the philistine-inspired Yiddish slapstick *The Three Stooges*. Indeed, the sort of film Melvin James Kaminsky would have loved to have made but lacked the testicular fortitude to do so, *The Young Fritz* is a kraut-crushing kosher comedy that makes the melodramatic Yid-bashing of Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß* seem rather tame and classy by comparison.

THE YOUNG FRITZ

The Young Fritz opens with a stereotypically 'Herr Döktor' type German professor, who acts as the film's intentionally unreliable narrator and who pompously proclaims, "Everyone knows me...I'm the professor of anthropology...the famous Nazi racist. I can tell pure blood when I see it. I can tell you if your daddy and uncle are Aryan or not from the way their skulls can ring. I take at random the skulls of all races from my shelves. I get plenty of them from the Gestapo every day," and thus proceeds to tell the terribly tragicomic 'lecture' tale of 'Young Fritz'; or 'How to bring up a kid' in Nazi Germany. Beginning with six month old baby Fritz (depicted by then-middle-age Soviet actor Mikhail Zharov), who comes from a 'very ancient' German family, laying in his baby bed while his fat and boorish brute of a father drinks a mug of fine Bavarian beer and his politically fanatical and sexually frigid mother knits as a "Blut und Boden" (aka "blood and soil") sign hangs prominently in the background, one soon learns that the Aryan anti-hero is descended from a long line of secret agents (his father is described as a 'first-class Gestapo stool') and thus he is fated for a similar career. In between sewing petticoats for her little boy, Fritz's mom sings him Nietzschean 'bird of prey'-themed lullabies and eventually kicks her blond babe out of the house, declaring that he will "earn a cross of honor in battle" and become a "tough sergeant." While still just a wee boy, Fritz is given twenty tanks for his birthday and at grade school he learns to know "no division" in terms of sharing grape jam with others. When Fritz gets old enough to be an asshole with an Adorno-esque Authoritarian personality, he absurdly gives the names of his parents, granddad, and neighbors as conspirators to Hitler himself and the Führer rewards the enterprising young lad by sending him straight to prep school where he becomes an undercover Gestapo agent who spies on other kids. As the 'bully of all Nazi bullies' in prep school, Fritz emotionally torments young girls by lynching plush dog dolls, decapitating teddy bears, and threatening to send them away to an uncertain future in a concentration camps. After six years in the Gestapo, Fritz becomes a polygamist and marries brigade of Aryan babes (one of which has rather masculine shoulders and is missing an eye, but makes up for it by knowing how to crack a whip with sadist glee!) and at the wedding, the groom's father stoically declares, "We worship not the genius of Einstein or Heine, but our cows and oxen" and "Live like cows, love like cows, breed your pure line of offspring so that a son was like his father and mother – a real Aryan ox," thus demonstrating the Hebraic makers of The Young Fritz undying feeling of superiority over Germans as members of god's chosen internationalist gang.

When World War II breaks out, Fritz learns to be a "cowardly murderer" and travels all around occupied Western Europe, drinking beers in countries he cannot be bothered to remember the name of and threatening to shoot locals for "anti-fascist laughter." At the Louvre in Paris, Fritz gawks at Alexandros of Antioch's Aphrodite of Milos statue and criticizes the work of art for its lack of arms, dress, and underwear, etc., ultimately deciding to vandalize the piece

by writing his name on it as if he were a grad school delinquent. Rather unfortunately, things begin to start going downhill for Fritz when he gets involved with the blitzkrieg on the Eastern front and his SS regiment is destroyed. In the end, Fritz is captured by the Soviets and put in a communist zoo where a brainwashed Bolshevik babe self-righteously declares, "Come and have a look, Soviet people! In this cage we keep a German beast. To put it short...his name is Fritz of Nazi family. This beast can talk like a man, wears man's clothes, uses a spoon to eat with and a cup or a glass to drink from, but he is still an ape! A man-eating ape! He killed for nothing. He murdered, burnt and carved! He killed babies in their cradles! He piloted the bombers and the submarines. He robbed, he killed and tortured the captives. We've killed a lot of Fritzes in our lands. But we took this one to the zoo. That man-like beast will survive and live to be studied by scientists as any other viper," thus summing up the perverse proclivity of Soviet Jewish writers/filmmakers towards Freudian projection. Not surprisingly, *The Young Fritz* concludes with the inter-title, "You've watched a movie featuring one of the great mysteries of our time: How a man can degrade to an ape," as if the Soviet Union was not a collectivist hellhole led by murderous self-appointed pseudo-aristocratic dictators who attempted to mold the masses (or at least those they did not execute or starve to death in man-made famines) into soulless killing machines and robotic factory slaves.

Featuring the warped Freudian sex stuff you would expect from Hollywood (i.e. Fritz kissing his father on the mouth, a SS officer smacking Fritz on the ass, Fritz and a buddies heads hovering suggestively under a commie officer's crotch), as well as the supremely stupid sort of uncultivated slapstick humor Tinseltown thrives on, *The Young Fritz* seems much less 'dated' than one would suspect considering its age, which certainly has a lot to do with the particular pedigree of people that made it. An absurdist agitprop work riddled with all sorts of conspicuous kosher comedy clichés, *The Young Fritz* is ultimately most insightful in that it reveals that the same sort of anti-German people that worked in the Soviet film industry before the Second World War are also the same sort of people that dominated Hollywood both then and now. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan (*Natural Born Killers*, *Fight Club*) recently arrogantly revealed that he is an Israeli spy who, among other things, obtained nuclear weapons materials and technology for the Israeli government, just as it is no coincidence that Ilya Ehrenburg—the leading Soviet propagandist of the Second World War—left all his papers and private archives to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem library and archive instead of the Soviet Union, despite the fact he was a lifelong Soviet citizen. Apparently, no less than 600 performances of the play version of *The Young Fritz* were given to Soviet troops during the Second World War, but one can only guess the influence the film version would have had had it been actually officially released. Of course, Mel Brooks and Woody Allen inevitably proved that a little anti-German/anti-Euro-goy comedy goes a

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long way as demonstrated by the fact that their anti-Nazi celluloid caricatures have become American cultural archetypes to the point where most Americans cannot hear the word "German" without thinking of goofy authoritarian goose-stepping oafs. Personally, I found *The Young Fritz* more visceral and authentic in its hatred of Aryans than, say, Brooks' *The Producers* (1967), and thus found this little Soviet agitprop flick much more enjoyable, if not reluctantly so. Like a number of Allied propaganda flicks of its time, *The Young Fritz* also confirms that the holocaust mythos was already long codified before the Second World War ever concluded and for that reason alone makes the film worth viewing, so put on your lederhosen, grab yourself a large overflowing mug of Kölsch beer, and watch what it arguably the most wonderfully warped piece of celluloid Teutonophobia ever schemed up by bloodlusting 'Soviet' Semites with a rather nasty and nefarious knack for crude comedy.

-Ty E

AFRICA ADDIO

Gualtiero Jacopetti (1966)

Action, adventure, horror, drama, tantalizing Technicolor, and real uncensored communist-sanctioned terror and exterminations are just a couple of the classic ingredients that make *Africa addio* (1966) aka *Africa Blood and Guts* aka *Farewell Africa* co-directed by the great Guido mondo movie masters Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prospero (Mondo Cane, Mondo candido) the authentic African epic and singular celluloid safari that it is. Indeed, forget the ethnographies of ethnomasochistic frog bastards like Jean Rouch and René Vautier, *Africa addio* is the real no bullshit deal in terms of depicting the rarely good, mostly bad, and uniquely ugly in regard to the reasons as to why post-colonial Africa is a virtual hell-on-earth that is plagued by rape, murder, poverty, starvation, and countless other tragic things that most people rather ignore (did the colonialists forget about the history of Haiti?). Condemned by exceedingly effete mainstream film critic Roger Ebert as “racist” because he felt it “slanders a continent” (since when do Africans have time to worry about petty pansy white liberal things like slander?), *Africa addio* depicts the horrors that ensue when blacks are left to their own devices when handed a European model for civilization and are expected to run it on their own. Needless to say, the results are not pretty. Arguably one of the most, if not the most, damning depiction of humanity ever shot in Technicolor, the film portrays, among other things, real depictions of genocide and extermination, collective racial and religious hatred, the mass slaughtering of wild life, the nonsensical destruction of imported foods in a place where one cannot afford to waste food, the exodus of affluent whites to their mother countries, the communist-ordained slaughter of white Christian missionaries and school children, and the destruction of legions of black Marxist-Leninist murder squads by a handful of white mercenaries. On top of featuring a uniquely unflattering depiction of humanity, *Africa addio* is a rare example in cinema history where real anarchy is depicted in the purist form, not to mention it is a work where the viewer bears witness to the very potential death of the filmmakers, who constantly carry rifles in plain sight. The film is also notable for being a rare instance where the filmmaker was arrested on a murder charge relating to the work, as co-director Gualtiero Jacopetti was accused of staging the much deserved execution of a Congolese Simba Rebel prior to the film’s release, though he was ultimately cleared of all charges. Indeed, as Jacopetti, who himself was a journalist, has described in interviews, he was the victim of a witch hunt executed by the left-wing press in Italy for obvious reasons (after all, as described in the film, most of the extermination squads, which the left-wing media depicted as morally righteous black liberationists, were backed by communist regimes), but in terms of documentaries on ‘The Dark Continent’ (a phrase that the viewer comes to realize has more than just one meaning after watching the

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film), *Africa addio* is as objective as they come as a work that criticizes whites just as much as blacks, ultimately blaming France and Great Britain's premature withdrawal from the continent for the savage depravity and full-blown social chaos that took place during the decolonization era of the 1960s and still lives on to this very day. Hated by leftists not just for political reasons, the documentary also dares to entertain with seemingly immaculate direction, witty and insightful narration, and music that acts contra to the anti-entertainment 'distancing' techniques of celebrated commie avant-gardists like Jean-Marie Straub and Jean-Luc Godard. In its lavish (yet literally guerrilla-style) direction and extravagant original musical score, *Africa addio* has the look of a big budget Hollywood production, albeit minus the phoniness, sappy sentimentalism, and tagged-on happy ending. Indeed, forget *Zulu* (1964), or any other mainstream Hollywood movie set in the Dark Continent for that matter, *Africa addio* is the work one must see to properly understand the Africa of today and why the continent will probably never get out of its precarious predicament as the rape, murder, slavery, and starvation capital of the world.

Right from the beginning, *Africa addio* prepares the viewer for what they are about to be in store for with the following introductory prologue: "The Africa of the great explorers, the huge land of hunting and adventure adored by entire generations of children, has disappeared forever. To that age-old Africa, swept away and destroyed by the tremendous speed of progress, we have said farewell. The devastation, the slaughter, the massacres which we assisted belong to a new Africa—one which if it emerges from its ruins to be more modern, more rational, more functional, more conscious—will be unrecognizable. On the other hand, the world is racing toward better times. The new America rose from the ashes of a few white men, all the redskins, and the bones of millions of buffalo. The new, carved up Africa will rise again upon the tombs of a few white men, millions of black men, and upon the immense graveyards that were once its game reserves. The endeavor is so modern and recent that there is no room to discuss it at the moral level. The purpose of this film is only to bid farewell to the old Africa that is dying and entrust to history the documentation of its agony." Indeed, the viewer is about to enter a perturbing, if not equally penetrating, place of no return, at least for about 140 minutes or so, where any semblance of civilization and sanity has been flushed down a Marx brand toilet that has become clogged and has caused shit to overflow everywhere.

For anyone watching *Africa addio*, it is quite apparent that post-colonial Africa is a real-life nightmare of rape, torture, and destruction, but who is to blame?! The director's offer the following speculation: "Europe is in a hurry to leave and on tiptoe even if, all things considered, it has given far more than it has taken. Europe, the continent that nursed Africa, can no longer manage this big black baby that grew too quickly, keeps bad company and what's more, hates it because of its white skin. And so it is abandoned, still cranky and immature, just

at the moment when it needs Europe the most.” Indeed, the British and French, who are finally accepting the fact that they no longer have empires and barely have the time to waste on teaching savages how to be civilized pseudo-Brits and Frogs, have left civilization in the hands of people without civilization who, until relatively recently, ran around naked in hunter-gatherer tribes and had no interest in worrying about things like democracy, literacy, liberalism, badminton, rationalism, and clothing. Desiring their own independence and looking to blame whites for every single one of their misfortunes, many of the black liberationists find themselves enticed by anti-Occidental communist propaganda from the Soviet Union and China, who back their genocidal revolutions of extermination and anti-religious hysteria. As depicted early on in *Africa Addio*, the communist-backed Uhuru Movement, which wrecked havoc all across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and rid these areas of white rule, as well as a number of whites and black people with it, demands all black Africans adopt Pan-Africanism. On top of giving white property and farms to blacks (with many of the original owners being tortured and exterminated during the revolutions), Uhuru even made sure to rid Africa of white graveyards, even hiring Indians to carry out the dirty deeds of exhuming the corpses. The whites have been in Kenya for three generations, but now have to give up their rights and safety to blacks that hate their very being, so many of them naturally opt for leaving the Dark Continent and going back to the old country for good. Although the crimes relating to the Mau Mau Uprising are not depicted in the documentary, the aftermath is and one learns via trial footage how black nannies would take part in slaughtering white children that they had brought up since birth, among other countless atrocities that make those of the SS seem rather civil by comparison. One of the more heinous criminals on trial is convicted of cannibalism, which is now a fairly common occurrence today in places like the Congo and Liberia. After the Uhuru’s ‘liberation’ of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, senseless animal slaughterings, including the lynching of monkeys (!) and mutilation of cows (who have to be put down by white farmers), and poaching became all the rage and it even got so bad in the Uhuru countries that the blacks literally begged the French and British whites that they originally kicked out to come back to restore order, but it was short-lived, though privately funded Anglo-Saxon organizations did pop up to help save the animals (in one of the most breathtaking scenes of the doc, a baby zebra is airlifted out of a dangerous kill zone via helicopter right before sunset). Psychopathic rich whites also used the chaos as an opportunity to kill elephants and whatnot, with something called the “1/2 hour safari” becoming especially popular where wealthy whites would land in a helicopter, shoot and kill an elephant at close range like true cowards, and then take a photo of themselves with their effortlessly earned prize as a souvenir. Of course, although more murderous, blacks were much less proficient hunters, as while whites would only need two or three people and a couple rifles to take down an elephant, it was not

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uncommon for a giant mass of 10,000 spear-chucking negroes to occupy an area the size of a large city and kill animals collectively with archaic weapons. As the documentary reveals, the blacks had a special hatred for horses as they associated them with whites and saw them as “physically racist” due to their supposed aversion to negroes.

One of the more standout segments of *Africa addio* is the depiction of the Zanzibar Revolution, which involved the extermination of large segments of the Arab Muslim and Asian populations. Backed by the Soviets, a genocidal negro named John Okello overthrew the thousand year old government of the Sultan and ordered the extermination of Muslims, even dropping off 500 rifles and propaganda leaflets on one island demanding that the blacks kill all the Arabs because they were ostensibly ‘cursed slave traders.’ Rather nonsensically, the blacks mindlessly followed Okello’s demands, with *Africa addio* being literally the only live document of the genocide, which features thousands upon thousands of Arabs piled up in mass graves and sprawled out on the beaches in gruesome postmortem poses. The reason why the Zanzibar Revolution is so under documented is because killer Okello closed all communications and airports in the area, thus only a handful of brave Europeans managed to sneak in and bear witness to a most horrendous piece of history. In one rather disturbing scene featured in the documentary, directors Jacopetti and Prosperi’s German colleagues are taken hostage and have their helicopter burned by a Marxist murder squad, with the Italian filmmakers themselves barely getting away as they are being shot at while taking off in a helicopter. The documentary also depicts the war of the Bantu against the Watusi (aka Hutu), which is described as, “nothing more than racial persecution fomented for political purposes by the presence and propaganda of China in the state of Rwanda Burundi.” Over a two month period, the Bantu massacred 18,000 Watusi people with mere machetes, thus revealing that the sentimentalized revelations featured in phony Hollywood garbage like *Hotel Rwanda* regarding genocidal racial hatred in Rwanda is nothing new. Another hell on earth scenario depicted in the documentary involves Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania, after it went into complete anarchy when the military decided to mutiny and the president disappeared, with the filmmakers describing merely being there amongst all the society insanity as a, “nearly a suicidal endeavor.” The aftermath of the commie Simba Rebellion of 1964 in the former Republic of Congo is also depicted in graphic detail, with bloated, mutilated and dismembered corpses covering nearly every couple square feet of the area. The Simba ultimately had tortured and, in part, eaten 12,000 people during their 100 days of neo-bolshevik occupation, but luckily 100,000 Belgian/European paratroopers and mercenaries came in and saved the day. Among other things, the Simba burned children alive in their schools, participated in collective cannibalism, and raped and killed white Christian missionaries for the mere rare pleasure of defiling the white devil and his God.

Undoubtedly, my favorite scene of *Africa addio* is a segment on Tshombe's army of eccentric white mercenaries, who are aptly described as follows: "the last surviving soldiers of fortune from another century. They're former citizens of a world that kicked them out or that they're running from. Dead and survivors, all of them are or were ex-something. From a restless past, an uncomfortable present, a ruined adventure, lost faith." The white mercenaries are made up of every type of European race imaginable and represent the old school type of Faustian man of yesteryear that were responsible for conquering Africa and other parts of the world in the first place. Highly adept killers, it only takes 14 white mercenaries to kill 400 commie rebels from Kisala and only 40 men plan to execute an operation that 93,000 UN soldiers failed to do: the conquest of Boende. In one scene, the mercenaries save a group of overjoyed white Christian missionaries literally just a couple of seconds before they are about to be slaughtered. Indeed, as narrated in the documentary, "Simba propaganda teaches to strike the white man, especially at his God, a white-skinned God responsible for the centuries-long arrogance of his faithful." After recovering a booty of 50 million Congolese Francs (which was apparently going to be used by a fellow named General Olenga to send 3000 Mulelist warriors to ostensibly occupy America!), the mercenaries celebrate by getting naked and drunk. Indeed, even in war torn and corpse-covered post-colonial Africa, there are still ways to have fun, thus demonstrating that the white man is always at his greatest during moments of complete chaos.

Ultimately, *Africa addio* concludes quite aptly with a rather foreboding segment on the apartheid in South Africa, which is described as follows: "Racial separation, which is called 'apartheid' here, is a short-lived, provisional dam. It is the hysterical reaction to the hysterical situation that threatens to darken the smile of the new generations into hatred." Undoubtedly, South Africa is the only place featured in the entire documentary that has any sort of order and functional infrastructure, which, whether people want to admit it or not, is a direct result of apartheid. In the very last scene of the documentary, the narrator makes an excellent metaphor between Arctic penguins that long ago colonized the southernmost beaches of South Africa and the dubious future for western civilization in SA, stating: "At the end of the Ice Age, a warm current broke this little colony of penguins off of the glaciers of the south and carried them here on huge rafts of ice that then melted in the sun. Isolated and without the possibility of returning to their original homeland, they have for centuries been strangers in a strange land that is becoming more and more heated and hostile toward them surrounded by a sea that grows higher and more and more filled with rage. Perhaps a little peace will descend upon these waters sooner or later, before a wave stronger than the others tears them away forever from this last rock that forms the geographic end of the Dark continent." Of course, since the nearly half a century of time that has passed since the documentary was first

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released and the inevitable end of apartheid two decades ago, South Africa has more or less degenerated into a country just as corrupt and crime-ridden as the rest of Africa, with the rarely acknowledged extermination of the white population already well under way as demonstrated by the epidemic of Boer farmer murders committed by blacks. In fact, one of the most amazing things about Africa addio is that it demonstrates how eerily similar modern day South Africa is to how Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania were during the 1960s.

Undoubtedly, when everything is said and done, the white man's biggest crime in Africa was ever setting foot there in the first place, thus forcing blacks to adopt a European way of life that they were never fit for. Indeed, they might not have their homes, iPods, cellphones, rap CDs, sanitation, antibiotics and basketballs if it were not for white colonization, but they would probably be much happier and less resentful were they still living the hunter-gatherer way of life that they were used to before enterprising Europeans showed up on the Dark Continent and began carving up land, mixing together rival tribes, and creating countries. It should be noted that the perennial problem of starvation in many African countries is itself a direct result of western medicine because, like the rest of the third world, the introduction of antibiotics skyrocketed the survival rates among Africans, thus resulting in unsustainable amounts of mouths to feed. Of course, when white do-gooder philanthropists and so-called nonprofit organizations began providing these starving people with aid for rather dubious reasons, they only guaranteed that even more people would be starving in the next generation. As the history of Haiti clearly demonstrates, which involved the black population exterminating the entire white population, as well as the mulatto aristocracy that was setup by the French, negroes always revert back into the same behavior that they engaged before they adopted a "white mask" (as Fanon once called it), albeit in a degenerative form, as they have already been long robbed of their indigenous culture and do not have much to return back to. Notably, one of the major themes of Africa addio is the inability of blacks to accept whites as 'Africans', even if their ancestors have been there for 400 years. In a scene featuring idealistic Portuguese soldiers being killed by members of the FREILMO in Mozambique and MPLA in Angola during the early stages of the Portuguese Colonial War, the narrator rightfully states, "This is the destiny of a people who wanted to ignore the color of skin. This is Portugal. White or black, we're all Portuguese. But the rebels of Angola don't agree. This is Africa. Only blacks are Africans. White and black, a dilemma which is present, current, universal that is more and more being colored red." It should be noted that I watched the original Italian cut of the film (there are at least three versions of the film), which is less brutal than the American cut entitled 'Africa Blood and Guts,' which was condemned by the directors and features none of the scenes of nudity and 'comic' relief that give the viewer a little bit of time to digest all the blood, destruction, and racial hatred that makes up the majority of the film. Indeed,

Africa addio features a real and uncensored depiction of the rotten fruits of engineered racial diversity in action, ultimately offering a taste of what is to come to Europe, America, Australia, and all the other white-majority areas if they continue allowing hostile aliens (be they legal or illegal) into their countries, for nature is the ultimate fascism and has no sympathy for ethno-masochistic bleeding heart pussies who hate reality and somehow think they can save humanity by throwing everyone into a melting pot that has never and will never melt, as demonstrated by the abject failure of multicultural entities of the past like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In their masterful follow-up epic docudrama/documentary/mockumentary hybrid *Addio zio Tom* (1971) aka *Goodbye Uncle Tom*, directors Jacopetti and Prosperi would predict the largely unspoken war against white America that has transformed the United States into the hate-ridden, divided, and ultimately broken nation that it is today. With that being said, I think it is about time some new filmmakers pick up Jacopetti and Prosperi's torch and carry on their legacy of uncompromising and uncensored documentary filmmaking, as there is no better time than now, as the race-baiting news headlines demonstrate.

-Ty E

GOODBYE UNCLE TOM
GOODBYE UNCLE TOM

Gualtiero Jacopetti (1971)

Goodbye Uncle Tom is the ultimate shockumentary. People have often called the film a mockumentary due to its offensive material and their inability to live in reality. Goodbye Uncle Tom ignores all taboos associated with the historical facts of the United States. The film is also the most offensive of all the Mondo Cane documentaries. Mondo Cane filmmakers Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prospero really went all the way to expose the "dark" history of the United States. Goodbye Uncle Tom documents the history of American slavery and then concludes with a warning for the future. A determined black man is ready to start killing white families and collect some ancient dues. Goodbye Uncle Tom exposes the idiocy and degeneracy of white liberal hedonism that took place during the late 1960s (and still continues today). While pathetic white hippies dance naked in paint and talk about peace, a black man is watching their every move. He is getting ready for attack. Philosophical terrorist Karl Marx is exposed as having his years of "study" being funded by Jewish pirate Jean Lafitte in Goodbye Uncle Tom. Lafitte made a great deal of money during the New Orleans slave trades and sent it to Marx in Europe. The fact that Karl Marx was funded by slavery only confirms his cryptic intentions when coming up with his "theories." Goodbye Uncle Tom also features a Jewish doctor talking about the subhuman qualities of Africans. The doctor talks about the superiority of white Europeans and is eventually questioned about his Jewish heritage. As you would expect, he becomes very offended. This scene gives a closer look at the real reality surrounding the slave trades and real beneficiaries. Goodbye Uncle Tom also documents the weird sexual practices and fantasies of white slave owners. Young black girls were giving to visiting friends of slave owners for the night. The mammy made sure to check their vaginas before being used for aristocratic pleasures. A rich white bitch even has a mass lot of slaves used for sadomasochistic sex and torture. One of the most disturbing scenes involves the selling of young boys and girls by a vaudevillian style black dwarf. Apparently rich pedophiles have lust for 7 year old black boys with painted gold penises. A slave breeding plantation is also featured in Goodbye Uncle Tom. We find out that only a few studs were used as breeding slaves resulting in low genetic variance among slaves. The slave owners and crackers (indentured servants) are also shown adding to slaves genetic variance via brutal rape. Some slaves were even bred interracial to be sold at a higher price for having "part human" genetics. Don't expect any type of censorship in Goodbye Uncle Tom as everything is exposed. Goodbye Uncle Tom is the real story on American history and the African slave trades. All historical elements of the film are from historical letters and documents. You even get to see the role the catholic church played in slave owning (seems like they still practice slavery). Despite its powerfully and unapologetic offensive material, Goodbye

Uncle Tom paints a realistic portrait of American history that disinformation
con artists like Michael Moore only wish they could have pulled out of their ass.
-Ty E

CREW CUT
CREW CUT

Guido Pieters (1979)

Despite being regarded as the least best of the “Great Four” post-WWII Dutch writers following Willem Frederik Hermans, Harry Mulisch and Gerard Reve, Jan Wolkers—a man who was also a prolific sculptor and painter as his oftentimes autobiographical novels more than hint at—has the honor of being the writer with the most worthwhile films based off of his books. Indeed, the most popular and successful film of Dutch cinema history, Paul Verhoeven’s *Turks fruit* (1973) aka *Turkish Delight*—a work that was honored in 1999 with the truly one-of-a-kind award for ‘Best Dutch Film of the Century’ at the Netherlands Film Festival—was based on Wolkers’ 1969 novel of the same name. Of course, various other popular Dutch filmmakers have adapted Wolkers’ work, including Ate de Jong with *Brandende liefde* (1983) aka *Burning Love*, Theo van Gogh with *Terug naar Oegstgeest* (1987) aka *Return to Oegstgeest*, and even *Turkish Delight* female lead Monique van de Ven with *Zomerhitte* (2008) aka *Summer Heat*, but arguably the best of these adaptations aside from Verhoeven’s film is the rather underrated flick *Kort Amerikaans* (1979) aka *Crew Cut* directed by Guido Pieters (*Dokter Vlimmen* aka *Doctor Vlimmen*, *Ciske de Rat* aka *Ciske the Rat*). Set at the end of World War II during the German occupation instead of the ostensibly hip counterculture era like *Turkish Delight*, Pieters’ film is thankfully much darker and, somewhat surprisingly, no less salacious than Verhoeven’s classic. Indeed, instead of *Swinging Amsterdam* and a bodacious blonde beast Rutger Hauer, Pieters’ film features a forlorn Nazi-occupied Leiden and a somewhat demented dark-haired Derek de Lint as an obnoxiously antisocial artist who rather fuck headless and limbless statues than real living and breathing women. In other words, Pieters’ film can hardly be described as a love story, as love is nowhere to be found in the maniac microcosm that it less than flatteringly depicts. Almost apocalyptic and certainly culturally pessimistic in tone, *Crew Cut* is set in a decidedly dreary and decaying South Holland where most young people are away in Germany slaving away in factories and only manipulative weirdos like the antihero seem to be still around. A rare WWII flick that does not pathologically obsess over how evil the krauts are or even dwell on the fate of the Jews, the film ultimately seems like a less than nostalgic look at the old Netherlands before hyper hedonism and atheism practically become part of government legislation. In its depiction of a young artist/man-child who falls further and further into alienation to the point of coldblooded murder and violent self-annihilation, *Crew Cut* is probably best described as an anti-coming-of-age tale where the despairing antihero eventually has to confront the fact that he has literally no future in an almost perniciously playful film that could not have a more senselessly tragic and unhappy ending.

The year is 1944 and 19-year-old protagonist Erik van Poelgeest (*Derek de*

Lint of Fons Rademakers' *De aanslag* (1986) aka *The Assault* and Philip Kaufman's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988)) should be working in a German factory with most of young Dutchmen his age, but he has a totally untamable anarchistic spirit and never could be forced to do such a thing, thus he is hiding out in an attic away from his devout Catholic family, who he rather not be around in the first place. Unlike most people, the war seems to have had little, if any, effect on Erik's psyche to the point where he does not even seem to realize the precarious state of his occupied nation. Erik is highly self-conscious about a purplish scar that he has on the temple of his head, so he has inordinately long hippie-like hair to cover it. Erik got the scar as a result of a childhood accident involving a boiling kettle and he refuses to forgive his parents for it despite the fact that it was not really their fault. Of course, Erik's preoccupation with his scar lets the viewer know that he suffers from a sort of persecution complex, hence his general disinterest of people, including all of his family members. While Erik has a fiancée named Ansje (Cristel Braak of Wolf Gremm's *Fabian* (1980)), it seems like the only reason that he is with her at all is because she is a superstitious Catholic and he gets a quite obvious sadistic kick out of sexually defiling her while she literally cries like a traumatized child and begs from him to stop. Indeed, when Erik borderline rapes his lady friend and she hysterically cries, "You're hurting me. Let me go. I want to see my mother," he proceeds to pound her pussy even harder while sarcastically telling her that she is going to get pregnant. Of course, as a young man that lives in an ancient Dutch city featuring old signs on buildings that read "Rest Leads to Lust," Erik cannot help but delight in his unhinged debauchery, especially during wartime. Seemingly apolitical and certainly amoral, Erik has no problem studying at an old art academy that is headed by a much maligned fascist NSB leader named van Grouw (Bernard Droog), who compliments the protagonist on his "really Germanic profile" and "beautiful skull." Van Grouw also warns Erik that when the Judeo-Bolsheviks arrive in the Netherlands, he will lose his beautiful Germanic head and then proceeds to show him Nazi propaganda photos of dead white Russians that the protagonist jokingly describes as looking Jewish. As to why he is a National Socialist, van Grouw states, "Only a united Europe can stop the barbarians." Although his brother is a member of the resistance, Erik has no qualms about accepting the generosity of diehard fascists. While Erik tells van Grouw that he would like to study nudes, there are no models and the only other student left at the academy has no interest in such things. Indeed, the other student, Kees de Spin aka 'Spider' (Joop Admiraal of Heddy Honigmann's *Hersenschimmen* (1988) aka *Mindshadows* and Harry Kümel's *Eline Vere* (1991)), is an exceedingly eccentric four-eyed fascist supporter of the quasi-autistic sort with a deaf-and-dumb mother and he and Erik seem to get along in their own strange way since they are both social outcasts, but their friendship does not last long as death is coming to Leiden. As Spider reveals while on the

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verge tears, he killed his beloved dog because he wanted the animal, which was his only friend, to talk to him, so he started shacking it to the point where he ended up accidentally strangling it to death. Luckily for Spider, he will soon be reunited with his dead doggie.

When Ansje dumps Erik after he spansks her bare derriere and then fingers her and subsequently licks his finger, the protagonist decides to absurdly take out his rage on an innocent, if not creepy, bald middle-aged named Rozier (Ralph Wingers of Babeth Mondini's *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* (1990)) by accusing him of being a cow-fucker and screaming in his face. To make ends meet, Erik paints 17th-century ships onto lampshades, which are apparently in demand because, "The worse people are off, the more they're interested in our glorious past." Although Erik is not a fan of his aristocratic boss Paul D'Ailleurs (Guus Ooster of Pieters' Ciske the Rat), who considers Germans to be more polite than his fellow Dutchmen, he certainly likes his much younger wife Elly (Tingue Dongelmans), who is a rather sexually aggressive woman that made the monetary-motivated mistake of marrying a cowardly and seemingly impotent cuckold. Paul seems more interested in masturbating to ancient paintings by Sandro Botticelli than sexually servicing his wife, so it does not take Erik and Elly to begin a lurid love affair. In fact, pansy Paul almost seems to get a kick out of the idea of Erik defiling his wife, as he attempts to get the protagonist to admit that he has been secretly messing around with her. When Erik's older brother Frans (Bram Jesserun) gets diphtheria while hiding at the home of an infected family after getting shot by a kraut while attempting to steal food vouchers as a member of the resistance and subsequently dies, it throws the protagonist over the edge and only pushes him further away from his already somewhat estranged family. While his family members are too upset to even look at Frans' corpse at the funeral, Erik curiously opens the casket and touches his dead brother's hair, as if he is a scientist that is coldly conducting some sort of experiment. Erik also decides to sneak into his boss' house late one night to fuck Ansje, who says upon look at his erect member upon examining it with a flashlight in the dark, "What a nice dick." The next morning, Erik gives himself away by opening the bathroom door without knocking and finding Paul curious 'reading' an art book while sitting on the crapper. Of course, any normal mensch would kick the protagonist's ass, but it is actually Erik that ends up laughing at cowardly cuck Paul.

With American troops beginning to make their way to the Netherlands, NSB officer van Grouw decides to abandon the academy with his Nazi art and he allows Erik to stay at the building under the condition that he fill the place up with some new paintings. Before leaving, van Grouw also gives Erik a letter to give to Spider, but when the protagonist goes to his house, he discovers that his classmate has already accepted defeat and has hanged himself. With Spider dead, Erik decides to open van Grouw's letter, which reads, "We fought in vain. Go to

your family in the province [...] We're going to the stronghold. We'll fight until the end." Of course, poor Spider did not fight until the end, but of course he lost an internal mental battle before any enterprising commie resistance fighter could get to him. After spending a couple weeks completely by himself at the art academy, Erik actually becomes artistically productive and manages to create a number of ambitious paintings, including a portrait of van Grouw looking quite stoic in his beloved black NSB uniform and a sort of parody painting featuring his boss Paul and Elly as the titular figure of Botticelli's 'The Birth of Venus.' Meanwhile, Erik starts a lurid love affair with one of van Grouw's cement female torso statues even though it is not exactly anatomically correct (to Erik's credit, he does manage to caress the ass of the statue in a manner similar to Ansje's buttocks). After spending a number of weeks at the academy without leaving the building once, Erik decides to pay Elly a visit and attempts to coerce her into leaving Paul and moving in with him, even going so far as to mock his boss to his face, but the little lady declines as she refuses to ruin her bourgeois comfort, at least for now. Of course, wars oftentimes inspires people to do things that they would otherwise never dream of.

Despite initially rejecting his offer, Elly soon shows up at the academy with bags of luggage and moves in, but Erik is not as happy to see her as the viewer would expect. Indeed, that night Elly asks Erik about the purplish scar on the temple of his head and he goes on a resentful rant about how he blames his parents for it, stating regarding how it has effected his life, "... a child that age looks at its parents for protection [...] I've always felt abandoned and betrayed." To add insult to injury, Erik's father apparently forced him to always get 'crew cuts' (hence the seemingly nonsensical title of the film) since the family was poor and could not afford to get regular haircuts, thus everyone could always see the scar. While Elly tells Erik that she could care less about the scar and that she loves him for who he is, Erik continues to act bitchy and denies her rather flagrant sexual advances. Needless to say, when Elly wakes up the next day and finds Erik having 'sex' with the torso statue, she becomes enraged and berates the protagonist by stating in an almost gleefully sadistic fashion, "Now I understand why you don't need me. I should have known after those stories last night. You're just a coward. You're afraid of life. You're afraid of me...Because I'm alive...Because I'm a real woman...So you get on a piece of chalk. So you don't have to prove anything. She's too fat too. You know what you are? You're crazy. That spot on your head's not that bad. But you've got one in your head. You're rotten in there." Of course, like many assholes who talk tons of shit, Erik is good at dishing it out but cannot handle it when people trash talk him, so he replies to Elly while in a state of abject shock, "You shouldn't have said that. You can't say that." When Elly then proceeds to break the torso statue by dropping it on the ground and then jokes "She's hollow," Erik completely loses it, becomes homicidally enraged and strangles her to death with his bare hands. Not long after

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Erik kills Elly, the Americans liberate the Netherlands while Erik contemplates recent events and his non-future. Ultimately, cow-fucker Razier gets his revenge against Erik by pointing him out to armed members of the resistance and the protagonist more or less commits suicide by inciting the soldiers into shooting him after he pretends to pull a gun on them.

I have seen a number of Dutch films about the German occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War, but none of them are as nearly dark, nihilistic, and apocalyptic as *Crew Cut*, which I would describe as a forgotten classic of sorts, as it seems largely unknown even in its native land despite starring big Dutch star Derek de Lint and being directed by a man whose work *Ciske the Rat* (1984) is regarded as a classic of sorts. Indeed, with more recent works like Martin Koolhoven's *Oorlogswinter* (2008) aka *Winter in Wartime* that romanticize WWII in a repugnantly mystifying and sentimental way as if more inspired by the juvenile fantasies of Steven Spielberg than the actual real Dutch wartime experience, Guido Pieters' film provides a nice and iconoclastic wake-up call that expresses in an almost aberrantly allegorical way that absolutely nothing good came out of the war for the Netherlands. While I certainly did not grow up in the Netherlands at that time, my grandfather, who was slightly older than the protagonist of Pieters' film, did and I know the entire experience left him and his brothers devastated enough to the point where they decided to regrettably immigrate to America. Of course, compared to most WWII films, whether they be from Hollywood or Germany, Dutch films about the war tend to be a lot more ambivalent about the entire experience, but certainly none is more strange and surprising than *Crew Cut*, which ultimately makes it seem like the Dutch were so collectively deranged and miserable in general that the German occupation was not that big of deal. Indeed, there are scenes in the film where the protagonist walks up to and teases an armed Wehrmacht soldier to the point where he is almost shot, as if such behavior was not uncommon among the demented Dutch. Additionally, the film thankfully does not hold back in depicting the extent of Dutch collaboration and why people collaborated in the first place (although seemingly forgotten today, as the film depicts, many of the NSB members felt it was only a matter of time before the Soviets invaded Western Europe and turned into a cultural wasteland). Despite its fairly steady dose of oftentimes graphic nudity, including various bushy beavers and de Lint's semi-erect cock, the film is, quite unlike *Turkish Delight*, rarely erotic aside from a scene or two. Undoubtedly, *Crew Cut* feels like what *Turkish Delight* would have been like had it been set during the Second World War and directed by Fassbinder, as it concludes in such a morbidly melodramatic fashion that I could not help but be reminded of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), which was released the same year (incidentally, *Crew Cut* star Cristel Braak would later relocate to Bavaria and work with Fassbinder's bud Wolf Gremm). While Pieters' film might not be warped to the point of depicting a love affair between a little

Dutch boy like in Roeland Kerbosch's sappy pro-pedo flick *Voor een verloren soldaat* (1992) aka *For a Lost Soldier*, it certainly seems to be the most wayward and whimsical of the Dutch WWII flicks, which says a lot considering it comes from the same nation that produced *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange*, which, quite unlike Hollywood films, takes a rather cavalier approach to the entire war by portraying it as one big murderous adventure as opposed to taking a Spielbergian approach and portraying it as the ultimate historical battle between pure good and pure evil. Indeed, the Dutch have a special hatred for the krauts that began way before WWII, but as a film like *Crew Cut* clearly demonstrates, they are not so stupid or childish as to think of the Germans or even the Nazis as evil incarnate, hence the relative originality and 'objectivity' of their WWII films.

-Ty E

THE RESURRECTION OF A BASTARD
THE RESURRECTION OF A BASTARD

Guido van Driel (2013)

As far as I am concerned, a gangster flick is not a gangster flick without real live Guidos, so naturally I find Guy Ritchie flicks to be innately intolerable and find the idea of 'Nordic gangsters' to be somewhat absurd, even if such Aryan barbarian low-lives exist in real-life like the cocksucking Kray twins. Naturally, I find the idea of a Dutch gangster flick to be especially absurd and not something I would be particularly interested in indulging in, at least not until I came across the startlingly aesthetically pleasing and even transcendental film *De Wederopstanding van een Klootzak* (2013) aka *The Resurrection of a Bastard* directed by graphic novelist and painter turned filmmaker Guido van Driel and starring top Dutch actor Yorick van Wageningen (*Oorlogswinter* aka *Winter in Wartime*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*). Personally, I do not understand the interest in so-called 'graphic novels' (aka overlong comic books), so the premise of a graphic novelist cinematically adapting their own comics à la Frank Miller with *Sin City* (2005) and *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For* (2014) seems about as appetizing to me as hanging out with a bunch of autistic acne-ridden dorks playing *Dungeons & Dragons* or painting Warhammer miniatures for a future 'fantasy battle,' so there are more than just a couple reasons why van Driel's film should be something I would not want to touch with a ten foot pole, yet the film is far from your typical piece of socially retarded beta-male nerd escapism as a rare quasi-gangster flick of the simultaneously brutal yet beautiful, as well as perturbing yet poetic, sort. As director van Driel described at iff.com regarding the film: "I pitched the film to a producer as a mix of Tarantino and Tarkovsky. That might sound arrogant, but you shouldn't be modest if you want to sell your idea." Needless to say, as much as I think Tarantino is a culturally cuckolded turd whose name should never be mentioned in the same sentence with a singular cinematic master artist like Tarkovsky, I could not help but watch van Driel's film.

When I hear comparisons to Tarantino I typically think of a film with preposterous pop-culture platitudes, rather repugnant negrophilia, and frivolous beta-bitch-boy fantasies and fetishes, but van Driel's film features none of that sort of insufferable postmodern pseudo-sophistry, at least to any notable degree, as *The Resurrection of a Bastard* is a decidedly Dutch work set in the rural Friesland that combines magic realism and a darkly comedic take on contemporary socio-political issues that is by no means politically correct but is certainly shockingly artfully executed, as if the director wanted to see how beautiful he could make ugly people and repugnant human actions seem. Like a Friesland Heimat-cum-gangster flick as directed by the perturbed progeny of Martin Scorsese, Aad van Driel, and Gaspar Noé, van Driel's undeniably ambitious debut feature surely does not seem like the first cinematic offering of a novice filmmaker who

spends most of his time drawing so-called 'graphic novels,' but instead demonstrates a keen sensitivity towards an eclectic view of cinema history from Pasolini to Scorsese and everyone in between. Indeed, for better or worse, you will never find a more darkly farcical fever dream featuring fucked gangsters than *The Resurrection of a Bastard*, which ultimately makes Jonathan Glazer's *Sexy Beast* (2000) seem like a cheap overlong music video con that happens to be inhabited by a couple great actors. Based on a graphic novel that van Driel was contracted to write on the occasion of the 1250 anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Boniface, who was purportedly hacked to death with an axe when he made the major mistake of cutting down the then-pagan Frisians' sacred 'Donar's Oak' tree, *The Resurrection of a Bastard* also happens to be one of the most unconventional Germanic pagan flicks ever made. Indeed, in no other film will you find quirky references to Odin in the form of a one-eyed cat and mono-eyed negro drug dealer who lost his eye after having it vacuumed up by his comrades as punishment for stealing drugs and money.

Burly and beefy Amsterdam gangster Ronnie Bazuin (Yorick van Wageningen) is a bloody brutal bastard that has no problem smashing in the faces of children and beating women to death in front of their kids for the most minor of infractions, but after a near-death experience as a result of an assassination attempt, he becomes a completely different man, or as his rather talkative and strangely sensitive muttonchops-adorned bodyguard Janus (Juda Goslinga) states: "He's changed completely. Like...Bruce Willis in *THE SIXTH SENSE* is completely different than in *DIE HARD*. I think something has snapped inside of him. He's not the old Ronnie. He's just not the old Ronnie." *The Resurrection of a Bastard* opens with introducing the new and arguably spiritually improved Ronnie and his comrade Janus as they look around the Friesland town of Dokkum to find the former's would-be assassin. Unfortunately, like most areas of Western Europe, including Friesland, Dokkum has a so-called 'refugee' center which is home to a young eccentric Angolan negro named Eduardo Yondo (Goua Robert Grovogui). Rather coincidentally, Eduardo subscribes to an ancient Angolan religion that, not unlike the Germanic pagan faith that the Friesians followed before they assassinated Anglo-Saxon missionary Saint Boniface in 754 and began following Christianity, emphasizes the worship of trees. Although seemingly unconnected, both gangster Ronnie and negro mechanic Eduardo will be sitting in the same exact Friesland tree together by the end of the film after fate brings the two together.

Ronnie assumes his assassin is in Dokkum because he noticed he had a 'Dokkum Arms' tattoo on his forearm, but while in Friesland, the gangster seems more interested in helping other people than hunting down his would be killer. Indeed, while in the middle of a conversation with Janus, Ronnie gets out of a car and saves the life of a man who subsequently accidentally sets him on fire, as if he could foresee the tragedy before it actually happened. While hanging out

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at a restaurant, Janus notices the curious prevalence of foreigners in Dokkum and complains to his boss, "My God, not here too? They can send all those Turks back to Morocco as far as I'm concerned [...] Let me tell you something: They may integrate all the way into Volendam...and start cake biting and sack racing, I'll never trust them. We'll never trust them, right Ronnie? They've got centuries of Islam in their genes. They'll never accept our values. They shit on them," but Ronnie seems lost in his own world and does not pay his comrade any mind. Ironically, someone has written on the bathroom wall of the restaurant: "Foreigners, please don't leave us behind with just the Dutch." Of course, if most foreigners were like Eduardo, they would probably want to leave the Netherlands behind as the character seems plagued by an almost ominous metaphysical affliction that causes him to cry like a little baby for no reason and suffer bizarre panic attacks for the most petty of reasons. Eduardo's only source of solace is listening to ethereal music via his cellphone and reading through an extremely dated auto mechanic book, which he more or less treats as his personal bible. Like his father before him, Eduardo's dream is to own his own auto mechanic shop, but with the digitization of cars and being a poor negro prole in the Friesland, it seems more like a fantasy than something he can realize.

At about the 18 minute mark of *The Resurrection of a Bastard*, an intertitle appears reading "The Old Ronnie" and the viewer soon bears witness to the unhinged brutality of the eponymous antihero before he takes a bullet to the neck and becomes strangely positive and spiritually-inclined, as if his seemingly forsaken soul goes from being bearing an innately pagan essence to a Christian essence overnight. A negro associate named Stanley (Gustav Borreman) is attempting to flee town despite the fact that he owes Ronnie's boss James Joyce (played by Jeroen Willems, who the film was dedicated to since he died in 2012 before it was released) 250,000 euros worth of pills and cash. After Ronnie pulls a large dental brace out of Stanley's mouth in a fairly rough fashion, someone knocks on the door of the tortured drug dealer's apartment, which causes the gangsters' much warranted paranoia to seep in. According to Stanley, the person at the door is a woman who has come by to buy his couch and fridge before he leaves town, but Ronnie finds it to be somewhat dubious that the negro would stick around the area and face being potentially tortured and/or murdered for a mere 200 euros worth of shitty outmoded furniture. Ultimately, Ronnie has his goon Jaap (played by iconoclastic Dutch cartoonist Eric Schreurs, who previously appeared in Theo van Gogh's *Charley* (1986) and *Terug naar Oegstgeest* (1987) aka *Return to Oegstgeest*) slam the door on the woman's face, not realizing she has brought her small ginger son with her. When the rather annoying redhead kid, Marnix (Johan van der Pol), won't stop crying, Ronnie screams in his face, "Shut the fuck up!" and the rather strange and seemingly spiritually-inclined boy responds by esoterically stating, "There's a red butterfly coming from your throat," which only all the more infuriates the boorish gangster, who vio-

lently grabs the somewhat creepy child. At this point, Marnix's mother's maternal instinct kicks in and she nonsensically decides to jump on Ronnie and starts biting and punching him as if she hopes to tear him to pieces, so the gangster naturally fights back by brutally beating her to death with his fists, thus leaving the redhead boy a literally and figuratively poor bastard. After killing Marnix's mommy, Ronnie has Stanley's eye sucked out with a vacuum cleaner, which he films and sends to his boss James Joyce as evidence that the degenerate crook dope dealer has been properly punished for his rather moronic behavior. Unfortunately for Ronnie, little does he realize that keeping Marnix alive is the worst mistake he can make, as the little lad's Frisian grandfather will soon be coming to look for the gangster to avenge the death of his dear daughter.

Unquestionably, Ronnie suffers from a variety of peculiar pathologies that seem to make his life a living hell, but I guess that is what one should expect if they make their living regularly torturing and killing people. For example, Ronnie suffers a nightmare where a group of bald headed butchers with bloody aprons encircle around his pool while he is swimming in the rain one night and proceed to collectively attack him as if they are steroid-addled zombies. When Ronnie awakens from the sinisterly surreal nightmare in a lawn chair next to his pool, he inexplicably becomes convinced that there is a mark on one of the paving stones next to said pool, so he begins cleaning and eventually smashing the tile with a pitchfork until it is totally destroyed. Ronnie also violently attacks his wife Mara (Katrien van Beurden) for the most minor and petty of infractions. For example, when Mara forgets to squeeze the water out of a dishwater rag, Ronnie slaps her in the face and then yells at her, "Next time I'll rip out those silicone implants and kick you out with your A-cups," but she stuns him by replying, "I didn't even want those breasts." The only person that seems to scare Ronnie is his perniciously passive-aggressive and seemingly queer boss James Joyce, who at one point in the film intimidates the antihero in a semi-surreal scene by randomly shooting a bag with an undisclosed animal moving around in it. When Ronnie asks what was inside the bag, Mr. Joyce responds, "Who cares? First it was alive and now its dead." Apparently, Joyce is not happy with the fact that Ronnie made a scene by attacking Marnix and his mother, which the antihero describes as, "collateral damage." Ultimately, everything changes for Ronnie when he and his comrades attend a 'White Party' (which are typically for gays in the U.S.) and a fellow sporting a white KKK-esque mask begins following the antihero around in a suspicious manner like a predator attempting to stalk its prey. As a big burly bestial man with strong survival instincts, Ronnie knows he is being hunted, so he decides to begin hunting the hunter. After checking all the stalls in a bathroom, Ronnie takes a leak and absurdly waits to be attacked. After being mistaken for having gay tearoom sex with the masked man, Ronnie takes a bullet to the neck in what should have been a fatal attack. Unquestionably, getting shot in the neck seems like it is the best thing that ever could have happened to Ronnie

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as it completely humbles him and makes him appreciate every single little detail of life ranging from the strong scent of a plate of trout with pomegranate to blurry vintage photographs of waterfalls. Indeed, a hotel owner seems to sum up Ronnie's new mellow and intuitively metaphysical personal *Weltanschauung* when she remarks to him, "The mystery of life...is hidden in the visible and tangible. That's what I believe."

Eventually, the little boy Marnix whose mother Ronnie killed ends up living at the same farm where Angolan negro Eduardo works since the place is owned by the little lad's grandparents. When Marnix uses a pencil to outline Eduardo's head and hand on a piece of paper to create what seems like some ancient occult archetype featuring a hand coming out of a mouth, the Angolan mechanic becomes extremely hostile and accuses the boy of practicing black magic. Later, Eduardo, who seems to have developed a deep irrational fear of the rather strange ginger cracker kid, pours gasoline on a rat and goes to set it on fire in front of Marnix, but the boy's grandmother Sientje (Leny Breederveld) shows up before he can do it, so the whacky negro bashes the rodent to death in anger. Later that day, Marnix spots his mother's killer Ronnie at a grocery store, so he immediately tells his grandparents as he is naturally afraid that the big scary gangster will kill him. As it turns out, Marnix's grandfather Minne (René Groothof) was the one responsible for attempting to assassinate Ronnie at the white party and now that he knows that the gangster is in Dokkum, he decides to take a second attempt at assassinating his belated daughter's killer. Meanwhile, Ronnie has dinner with the fat blonde owner of the hotel he is staying at and confesses to her, "I came close to dying. When I woke up in hospital it was as if I crawled back into a wet and sandy sock." When the hotel owner asks him how he feels now, Ronnie responds, "like a peeled shrimp...with no shell." After dinner, Ronnie, who seems to be guided by some unknown sacred force, borrows a bicycle and heads to the sea for a transcendental scene where he will be confronted by Marnix's grandparents Minne and Sientje. In the end, after ironically saving Minne's life, Ronnie ends up sitting in 'Donar's Oak' aka 'Thor's Oak' with Eduardo, who somberly states, "When I feel bad...I've always got my music. It makes me feel closer to my father. I thought it was safe here...but now I know...that in the land of the Frisians...a tree is not a safe place."

Unquestionably, one of the most shocking things about *The Resurrection of a Bastard* is that it was auteur Guido van Driel's first feature as, while it might not be a completely immaculate work, it certainly shows an uncompromising vision from a mensch that wouldn't bow down to political correctness, cinematic convention, nor audience expectation. Admittedly, after I discovered that the film featured a side story about an Angolan refugee, I expected the work to be plagued by some conspicuously contrived and patently pathetic bleeding heart message typical of contemporary European arthouse films that is specially tailored to appeal to ethno-masochistic film critics and the Netherlands' hopelessly liberal-

minded populous, but van Driel thankfully had the gall to portray the negro in an intricate and totally unpredictable way that makes it seem like foreigners from the Global South can only go spiritually and mentally insane by living in the decimated post-Christian Occident. Additionally, unlike the average Tarantino flick, which attempts to be 'edgy' and 'subversive' with its nauseating hodge-podge of negrophilia, cultural cuckoldry, and quasi-feminism, van Driel's film is actually subversive as reflected in dialogue like the character Janus' remark to Ronnie, "This whole advertising and fashion scene is full of gays. They're telling us what kind of women we should like. But what do they like? Boys. So what do they give us? Girls that look like boys. It makes sense. They're not interested in women with ample D-cups." Indeed, in my less than humble opinion, *The Resurrection of a Bastard* is the most audaciously ambitious, thematically subversive, metaphysically foreboding, and idiosyncratically aesthetically pleasing gangster flick since Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg's classic *Performance* (1970) and like the Mick Jagger vehicle, I think the startlingly transcendental Dutch flick will ultimately gain a loyal cult following, though it will probably most certainly remain under-appreciated and under-seen in the United States due to its lack of distribution, among other things.

Undoubtedly, van Driel probably said it best when he remarked regarding the film's decidedly Dutch character: "The magic realism is new in Dutch cinema. At the same time, the film also contains typically Dutch elements. That singularity is a plus for international viewers; we all watch art house cinema for a glimpse of another part of the world. If the plot is worth it, of course. It was this uniqueness that led to *DE NOORDERLINGEN*'s success abroad. Idiosyncrasy is better than trying to work in an international style or copying Hollywood. You can't win that way." Indeed, the best Dutch films tend to be the most decidedly Dutch works as they tend to reflect a singular and highly individualistic Germanic people whose artistic vision has been like no other people in the world as van Driel's pleasantly preternatural gangster flick further confirms. Certainly, the best compliment I can probably pay to *The Resurrection of a Bastard* is that it proved to me that not only can graphic novelist creators be true artists, but also that graphic novels can actually be adapted into artsy fartsy metaphysical works that also manage to feature the lowbrow humor and ultra-violence that such books are well known for. While I have never read the comic since I am not literate in Dutch, I think I can take van Driel's word for it when he stated regarding *The Resurrection of a Bastard*, "The film is better than the book."

-Ty E

HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY
HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY

Guillermo del Toro (2008)

I don't think I've read a single bad review on this film yet. Concluding my viewing experience, I didn't have a willingness to even write on this film. "Let the people form their own opinions. Someone will just write what I feel anyways" I said, but dammit! Seeing all these gloating reviews almost infuriates me, so I must make my opinion known. Keep in mind I didn't really enjoy the first film. Maybe that's my problem. Hellboy 2 opens up with a retarded happy teenage Hellboy. I see a fatal flaw in this. If this bastard had such a happy life, why the hell is he so angry now? I apologize for being so cruel towards Mr. Mike's creation of sweat and labor, but the stories do not interest me at all. When I first saw the final theatrical trailer, I thought to myself "Wow! That looks action-packed and breath-taking!" Turns out I was right about one thing; action. That's about the only depth you will find in the film. That and the forest elemental scene. That really tugged at my heartstrings. Something so beautifully chaotic which was murdered in cold-blood. I've heard of anti-heroes but Hellboy takes the cake. So faeries exist with elves and trolls. This is the basis of the plot. It seems that talking fish, a post-Firestarter emo girl, and the son of Satan don't have the capacity to believe in such things. Ironic, eh? So this evil Prince guy, whose facial scars make him look like the reincarnation of Kakihara, hates humans so he wants to kill us all with an army of golden ED-209's. Terrifying? You bet. Guillermo Del Toro has always been known for his amazing creature designs and there is no doubt that he could fill the empty shoes Stan Winston left behind in his death. The bustling Troll Market scene which is indisputably similar to the Cantina scene in Star Wars features gorgeous creatures and everything that goes bump-in-the-night. He introduces some genius creations throughout the film such as the Tooth Fairy (Flying ants that eat teeth which is shown in a violent fashion) The creatures are the highlight of the film, but allow me to move onto the acting. Ron Perlman is Hellboy, no doubt about it. Hellboy's early self (Child actor.. *shudder*) presents one of the corniest openings to a film that tries to be serious. "Oh papa! Please read me another story!! Please!!" That isn't a direct quote, but it's close enough. Hellboy hits his mid-life crisis mid-film and demonstrates this by drinking beer a lot and acting irritable, which is alright. But then Abe gets mixed in. They then together, make the most horrifying "inebriation" scene ever filmed. And I thought I was stupid when drunk. The new agent is Johann Krauss. I remembered to put the SS at the end of his name due to Hellboy's fear of Germans. He also notes that there are two S's in the name. Quite an anti-German pun they had going on for a while. They used the over-used basis for evil Nazi necromancy and mutants in the first film, and rumor has it that Del Toro plans of incorporating the evil Germans in the last film. I also made note of Seth McFarlane's (Family Guy

creator) voice work to be a parody of a German. I was about to have a shitfit had I heard him say "Und" one more time. Krauss is also a smoke man which is almost a worthy addition. I must admit to being head over heels in love with his abilities. Bumbling around singing Barry Manilow and talking about true love. A predictable ending plagues Hellboy and the cheeriness of the film is halted with a reminder from Death about Hellboy's destiny to fuck up the world. Since Hellboy is going to be a trilogy, I can only hope that the last film borrows heavily from the finale of Berserk. I demand death, sacrifice, and carnage. Hellboy 2 is a feast for the eyes but not the brain. It's depressing that I didn't enjoy this film more. Honestly, some scenes were kick ass, but the film just kind of flopped near the middle.

-mAQ

GUNNAR GOES COMFORTABLE
GUNNAR GOES COMFORTABLE

Gunnar Hall Jensen (2003)

Undoubtedly, contemporary Scandinavia is littered with tons of degenerate and ethno-masochistic cinematic works depicting a pathologically perturbed people who are addicted to Weltschmerz, existential crisis, nihilism, spiritual emptiness, xenophilia, meaningless sex, and pill-popping, but probably no other film from the deracinated Nordic lands depicts these many miserable untermensch things in a more flagrant and personal manner than the autobiographical documentary *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* (2003) aka *Gunnar Goes Comfortable – A Personal Inquiry* directed by Norwegian documentarian Gunnar Hall Jensen (*Cathedral*, *Gunnar Goes God*). A darkly comedic doc that features a lifetime's worth of home movies edited down to just over 70 minutes, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* documents the confused life of angst-ridden auteur Gunnar Jensen; an alcohol, depression and diabetes-addled Norwegian narcissist, borderline psychopath, and 37-year-old man-child of the sometimes majorly moronic sort who makes a Hesse-inspired pilgrimage to India in the decidedly desperate hope that he can find peace with his majorly discombobulated mind, body, and soul. Featuring ambient footage of Gunnar burning his cock with a space heater, hanging out in a morgue with the corpse of the father he never knew, crying constantly like a little girl for seemingly no reason, deriving a grand delight in dumping his girlfriend (who he has been cheating on), and proudly showing off the naked body of his new pregnant wife, among various other things that no sane person would film themselves doing, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is as creepily candid as a colonoscopy as a sort of artfully edited celluloid defecation of the morbidly depressed director's lifelong fear and failure as the bastard son of an unloving ship captain whose emotionally-shattered mother used him as an emotional punching bag. A sort of wayward and wacky window into the perturbed psyche of a modern day middle-class Norwegian man living in a soulless socialist democracy, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* depicts an exceedingly emasculated and eccentric fellow who would love nothing more than to kill his masochistic mind and personality, even if these are pretty much the only thing he cares about and bothers to discuss. Describing his first orgasm as having felt like he was "bleeding to death" and studying the misanthropic dipsomaniac literature of alcoholic Aryan-American author Charles Bukowski as a sad and senseless substitute for a living and breathing father figure, Gunnar still managed to have an inkling of the Faustian man in his soul as his restlessness led him to a spiritual pilgrimage that, although causing him to hit rock bottom with a beer can in one hand and an insulin needle in the other, ultimately leading him to realize that the grass is always greener on the other side and to just accept his shitty personality and mixed up mind.

As Gunnar states at the beginning of *Gunnar Goes Comfortable*, "It all

started with a feeling of being scared. Then my father left me and my mother forever. Mom never got over it. She got sick.” Indeed, apparently Gunnar’s mom got so sick that she suffered “massive menstruations” and he was no different, ultimately developing a debilitating form of diabetes at a young age that would contribute to him not only being a physical cripple, but an emotional one as well. When discovering how he ran through a glass window as a wee lad, Gunnar—a major (sado)masochist who wallows in pain and suffering—has no problem admitting that he, “actually felt good being injured” and continued to seek solace in similar self-destructive behavior. When Gunnar grew up to be an adult man-child he realized that he would need to do dangerous activities to balance out his fear-stricken mind, ultimately opting for jumping off bridges, speeding on long, windy mountain roads and whatnot. Determined to be a ‘messianic auteur,’ Gunnar became a filmmaker, making nonsensical films, including a black-and-black noir-ish arthouse flick featuring men defecating on toilets in a pseudo-Lynchian manner, that he himself would more or less describe as being as messed up as his mind, but eventually he sold-out and began making goofy commercials to financially support himself. Including footage of his one-time hero Charles Bukowski stating, “The further I am from the human race the better I feel,” Gunnar made the wise decision to make a pilgrimage to India—the second most populated country in the world—to do a bit of soulseeking. On top of confiding in the crackpot texts of superlatively pseudo-scientific crazed kosher psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich to learn better masturbation techniques (which he films himself practicing) and getting over his self-described ambivalence regarding women and pleasure, Gunnar studied under a fellow rootless Norwegian named ‘Vasant Swaha’; a racial Nordic turned pseudo-Indian Hindi mystic. Although he freely admits he has no idea what Swaha is talking about when he speaks of metaphysical mumbo jumbo, Gunnar learns from his master that his personality creates so much pain and misery because, “it’s false” and that “your whole life is built around the personality...that means everything is false.” Of course, neither Gunnar nor Swaha seem to realize the adopting an alien religion and form of dress is also ‘false.’

In terms of other heroes, Gunnar lists Japanese far-right novelist Yukio Mishima at the top, describing him as the “ultimate encounter with self-control,” as a gay man who created a virtual martial empire of art and who took his life into his own hand, quite literally, annihilating himself at the height of his physical and artistic prowess. Due to the fact that he also suffered a less than ideal childhood involving nagging and repressive women and had next to nil father figures (Mishima spent his early childhood as a virtual slave of his pseudo-aristocratic grandmother), Gunnar sees Mishima as a father figure, even going so far as glorifying the novelist’s ritual suicide by seppuku after a failed coup d’état as the “ultimate piece of masculine art.” If anything is for sure while watching Gunnar Goes Comfortable, it is that hero Gunnar is far too self-absorbed, ill-restrained,

GUNNAR GOES COMFORTABLE

cowardly, and totally lacking in the capacity to commit to following through with something as serious and permanent as suicide, let alone leading a coup d'état with his own privately trained army, thus he must keep grudgingly treading on with his loser life. Gunnar also theorizes that he would have been a staunch Hitlerite had he been a Teutonic teen during the Third Reich era because, like many of those boys of that time whose fathers had been killed during World War I, he was looking for a father figure and someone like Uncle Adolf would have filled that void. Needless to say, Gunnar did not obtain many new insights in India and eventually went home to Norway to take respectable employment as someone who dubs bad movies from English to Norwegian, but luckily the neglectful father he never knew drops dead, thus creating a new sense of closure in his life. In what is easily the most morbid and disturbing scene of *Gunnar Goes Comfortable*, the hysterical hero goes to the morgue and films himself seemingly fake crying at the bedside of his estranged father's corpse in what is probably the longest and most intimate moment they ever spent together. Proudly admitting he never thought about his father ever again after his degenerate date with his dead daddy's corpse, Gunnar finally realizes his deep love for his mommy, stating although he has tried to avoid her for 25 years, he now misses her, realizing her love for him was stronger than her 'fucked up personality.' In the end, things seem to work themselves out for Gunnar as he marries a single mother with a handicapped child and even has a son of his own with her, thus thankfully continuing the cycle of post-Viking Nordic misery.

While essentially saying everything he has to say about his depressing life with the documentary, Gunnar followed up *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* with a quasi-sequel of sorts entitled *Gunnar Goes God* (2010), which takes a less intimate and Hebraic humor inspired approach to things. Indeed, while Gunnar is now a happily married father with two cars, a nice scenic home with a luxurious landscape, and a four compartment refrigerator, in *Gunnar Goes God* the filmmaker has a spiritual cramp of sorts and decides to take his film crew to Egypt to the oldest Christian monastery where, not unsurprisingly, he does not really learn anything about the void in his soul. Undoubtedly, compared to his first documentary, *Gunnar Goes God* seems like a halfhearted attempt of conspicuously contrived self-parody of the superficial softcore sort, as a man who has finally 'gone comfortable' enough to take on a bourgeois novelty of investigating god and life itself. Indeed, in its own way, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is a minor masterpiece of merrily macabre personal filmmaking as a keenly kaleidoscopic collage of one borderline psychopath's perturbing personality and how he comes to terms to accepting said positively perturbed personality. Considering Gunnar's less than artistic personal favorite films, which are featured throughout the documentary and include *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), *Mad Max* (1979), *First Blood* (1982), and *RoboCop* (1987), and seeming lack of artistic pretensions, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is a shockingly artfully assem-

bled and even strangely ethereal work that takes the viewer on a jaded journey that they will never forget, whether they want to or not. Featuring an eclectic soundtrack, including songs from Sigur Ros, D.A.F. (Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft), Creedence Clearwater Revival, Granddaddy, and Will Oldham, among various others, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is, aside from the music and occasional film clip, an unadulterated 'auteur piece' in the truest sense as an embarrassingly incriminating personal portrait of a messed up mensch who is simultaneously ridiculously narcissistic yet pathologically self-denigrating. A sort of Norwegian equivalent to Jonathan Caouette's *Tarnation* (2003), except way less gay, hysterical, and spastically directed, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is a highly personalized depiction of the spiritual and psychological degeneration of the Viking man who, instead of a conqueror lands, has adopted xenophilia and is making pilgrimages to the third world to 'find himself,' which he naturally did not. Easily the most unintentionally humorous documentary I have ever seen as a work that even makes Timothy Treadwell of Werner Herzog's *Grizzly Man* (2005) seem sane by comparison, *Gunnar Goes Comfortable* is a film that proves that for at least once in director Gunnar Hall Jensen's life, his nauseating narcissism and general mental illness have been given a creative and even productive outlet, even if he screwed up a couple lives in the process.

-Ty E

HEINRICH
HEINRICH

Günter Rätz (1965)

For a fierce far-left feminist filmmaker who even had the gall to denigrate the legacy of her own father as demonstrated in her most popular work Germany, Pale Mother (1980) aka Deutschland bleiche Mutter, German New Cinema auteur Helma Sanders-Brahms has always demonstrated a strange empathy for German male nationalist poets, including alpha-Romanticist Heinrich von Kleist, with her brooding biopic Heinrich (1977) and decadent National Socialist expressionist Gottfried Benn with My Heart is Mine Alone (1997) aka Mein Herz - Niemandem!, which is certainly something I can respect. In my opinion, Heinrich and My Heart is Mine Alone also happen to be Sanders-Brahms' greatest films and not just due to the fact that they prove the feminist auteur is not just simply a frigid feminist who is in desperate need of an orgasm like her less talented, pussy-power-pontificating kraut celluloid compatriots Helke Sander and Margarethe von Trotta. Once a student of gay commie Italian Renaissance man Pier Paolo Pasolini, Sanders-Brahms seemed to have learned from her talented teacher that one can have a lunatic leftist political persuasion, yet still manage to respect one's national cultural and history, at least to some reasonable degree. That being said, Sanders-Brahms' respect for 'proto-Nazi' poet Heinrich von Kleist seems genuine as the filmmaker also had previously directed Erdbeben in Chili (1975) aka Earthquake in Chile, a TV-movie based on the poetic nobleman's 1807 novella of the same name centering around two unlikely lovers caught up in the cultural chaos of the 1647 Santiago earthquake in Chile. Although somewhat more subtly depicted than in her other films, Sanders-Brahms certainly expressed her more-hate-than-love relationship for (Father)land Deutschland with Heinrich, stating quite ethno-masochistically in the documentary The Night of the Filmmakers (1995) aka Die Nacht der Regisseure regarding the vaguely allegorical biopic, "In the film Heinrich, I try to describe my apprehension about this nation that destroys the best people it has brought forth. That is the horrible thing that actually makes Germany into a nation...this ability to destroy people." Of course, Heinrich von Kleist, an eccentric bisexual in love with a fellow nobleman who killed himself via firearm in a suicide pact with a terminally ill woman whose musical and intellectual talents he respected enough to share his premature death with, ultimately destroyed himself, even if the krauts of his day were not worthy of his poetry and gave him some negative criticism that helped lead to his early demise. Largely based off of documents, letters, and other writings written by von Kleist himself, Heinrich is one of the most morbid and melancholy films based on the life of a poet ever made, but it also happens to be one of the best.

As reflected in a letter written to his sister on November 10, 1811 shortly before his suicide, Heinrich von Kleist (played by Heinrich Giskes) was a man

suffering from all-consuming misery as expressed by his words narrated in Heinrich, "...But I swear to you it is quite impossible for me to live any longer. My soul is so injured that I, I'd almost say...whenever I stick my nose out of the window the daylight is hurtful to me that shines upon it. Some people might think this morbid and eccentric....By having been in constant contact with beauty and decorum since my earliest youth, in my thoughts and writings, I have become so sensitive that the slightest attack a person's feelings are subject to during the course of things are hunting me double and triply." Although an aristocrat by birthright, von Kleiſt received a meager education and would probably learn more about life when he joined the Prussian Army in 1792, which he would gladly retire from in 1799 with the rank of lieutenant. While in the military, von Kleiſt met his 'great love' Ernst von Pſuel, who would later become a Prussian general, then Prussian Minister of War, and eventually Prime Minister of Prussia. As depicted in Heinrich, von Kleiſt once wrote professing his undying devotion to von Pſuel, "I shall never get married. You be a wife to me, my children, grandchildren," which is a promise he seemed to honor, even if his last moments on earth were spent with a woman. Heinrich's sister Ulrike von Kleiſt (Grischa Huber), a mischievous tomboy who has a good laugh when their carriage crashes and their horses run away, is no less eccentric than her brother, even if she does not approve of his "Lebensplan" (plan for life) as that of a wandering poet and poor blueblood who had nil interest in 'legitimate' work. With his unconventional romantic views on German nationalism as a Prussian as well as his more than generous words regarding the French enemy, Austrian soldiers looked at Heinrich von Kleiſt as a kooky enemy and a traitor, though his true allegiances became clear when he was arrested by the French for being a spy during a pilgrimage to Dresden. Despite writing rather romantic love letters to an ostensibly special lady named Wilhelmine von Zenge (Sabine Ihmes), who eventually becomes his fiancé, von Kleiſt could not bring himself to see her in person and the wedding naturally fell through. When von Kleiſt meets a terminally ill woman named Henriette Vogel (Hannelore Hoger) whose singing and piano playing inspires him to passionately proclaim, "This is so beautiful one could shoot oneself," the hopeless romantic decides to conclude his lebensplan with a startling suicide that ends with two bangs and two bodies. As for his reasoning for leaving this world, von Kleiſt wrote, "I die because on earth, there remains nothing for me to learn or acquire." Unfortunately, the final letter von Kleiſt wrote to the Prussian State Minister will be responded to posthumously.

While a novice to the life and writings of Heinrich von Kleiſt, Helma Sanders-Brahms' Heinrich inspired me enough to want to dig deep into the suicidal scribbler's work. A sensitively and meticulously assembled piece of celluloid poetry of the unwaveringly pessimistic sort that truly expresses the perennial misery of a man whose pen figuratively bled blood and whose works are no less than what Cocteau called the "blood of a poet," Heinrich manages to bring ethereal alle-

HEINRICH

gorical images and soothing, if not saddening sounds, including music by Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, to the timeless Teutonic writings and internally tortuous times of Heinrich von Kleist. A man who esoterically led the war campaign against Napoleon via the written word, Heinrich von Kleist was indubitably a misunderstood man who simply couldn't bare with the fact that his work was underappreciated during his time, which Heinrich makes vividly clear as a trying but never tedious tribute to the man behind the poetry. It seems I am not the only one that believes this as Helma Sanders-Brahms' Heinrich won the coveted German Film Award (aka Deutscher Filmpreis) in 1977, thus making her the first female filmmaker in history to win the prize. No piece of tastelessly cheap culture-distorting period piece nor hyperbolic hagiography as is typical of Hollywood, Heinrich has no simple happy ending, but, in fact, begins with a tragic ending, thus sending the viewer through a penetrating psychodramatic celluloid journey that uniquely unravels why a talented nobleman decided to end it all at the height of his singular creative powers. As much as I hate to admit it, just by judging by Heinrich alone, no other filmmaker is probably better fit for directing a biopic about Conservative Revolutionary Stefan George. Undoubtedly, the greatest irony of feminist auteur Helma Sanders-Brahms' filmmaking career is she is the foremost director of films about gay German male nationalist poets.

-Ty E

MALA NOCHE

Gus Van Sant° (1986)

Throughout his career, especially after his big mainstream success with *Good Will Hunting* (1997), American queer auteur Gus Van Sant (*My Own Private Idaho*, *To Die For*) has switched around from making uncompromising quasi-arthouse works like *Elephant* (2003) and *Last Days* (2005) to for-hire commercial swill like his senseless shot-for-shot remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1998) to celebrated LGBT propaganda flicks like *Milk* (2008), as if the filmmaker cannot decide whether he wants to be a serious cinematic artistic, wealthy household (homo) name, and/or foremost filmic propagandist of the mainstream gay community, which leads me to believe he lacks a certain testicular fortitude and sense of stern and serious *Weltanschauung*, thus I have never been able to truly respect him as a director, even if he has assembled a celluloid masterpiece or two. Undoubtedly, Van Sant's first feature-length work *Mala Noche* (1986) aka *Bad Night*—a phantasmagorical poof piece shot on bold black-and-white celluloid—is far from a masterpiece, but it does give ample evidence that there was a time when the filmmaker was not cuckolded by Hollywood producers and had no problem offending the authoritarian abberosexuals of the mainstream gay left. Based on a semi-autobiographical 1977 novella of the same named written by Oregon-based pseudo-Beat writer Walt Curtis—a politically incorrect poof poet whose work has been compared to Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs—*Mala Noche* is the sub-sleazy celluloid story of a debauched convenience store clerk who has a rather peculiar weakness for brown illegal alien boys, most specifically two teenage Mexican fellows who are rather wary of gringo fags, but ultimately find the beatnik bitch boy to be an easy target for cash and shelter. Unquestionably racially and culturally 'insensitive' in tone when giving one of his many voice-over narrations, the would-be-poetic protagonist of *Mala Noche* has no problem admitting his sense of intellectual superiority over the boys, matter-of-factly stating such sordid things as, "Every street Mexican on Sixth will think he can stick it in me. Well, they're wrong. But they never were too smart to begin with, or they wouldn't be here." The story of an unmanly masochist who derives decidedly dubious pleasure from having beaners stick their refried wieners in his man-taco, *Mala Noche* undoubtedly exposes the sort of warped xenophilia that inspires certain debauched individuals to become leftists and proponents of multiculturalism because, after all, it is much easier to fuck and/or get fucked by a dirty untermensch if you can pick one up off the street in your hometown. A queer film in the European sense in that it is not about some poor fellow 'coming out' nor some perverse pansy facing a good ol' fag-bashing, but instead, a work about a flagrantly faggy fellow who has nothing on his mind except criminally-inclined brown boys, *Mala Noche* is indubitably Van Sant's celluloid equivalent to Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947),

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Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Love is Colder than Death* (1969), Rosa von Praunheim's *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), and John Greyson's *Urinal* (1988) aka *Pissoir* in that it is the director's first big statement as an unabashedly gay filmmaker.

Walt (Tim Streeter) is a wanton gay store clerk that lives in a Portland, Oregon ghetto who intentionally seeks to lead a wild life, especially of the pseudo-sexual outlaw sort and lately he has a foul fetish for seemingly underage illegal immigrant Mexican boys of the ostensibly heterosexual variety. While Walt probably only makes minimum wage at his less than prestigious dead-end job, he certainly makes enough money to sweet talk a young and desperate anti-gay Mexican boy into sleeping with him. After running into two young and fresh immigrants from Mexico named Johnny Alonzo (Doug Coeoyate, who is actually an American Indian in real-life) and Roberto Pepper (Ray Monge), he becomes instantly infatuated with the former but will settle for the latter boy because at least he is willing to fuck (but not suck) for cash. After Walt and his female friend Betty (Nyla McCarthy) convince the two cholos-in-training to eat dinner with them, things take a sexual route when the poof Portlander offers Johnny \$15 to have sex with him, but the macho Mexican rightfully declines. Looking to satisfy his undying desire for the seemingly unobtainable exotic primitive, Walt settles for less than homely homeboy Roberto, who ultimately reams him in the rectum in a manner the gringo finds uniquely uncomfortable and steals \$10 from him. Throughout *Mala Noche*, Walt narrates his dubious feelings, stating regarding his short experience with spic sodomy and the theft of his money, "They need money...Johnny and him. I hope they got it. Though I was upset that I'd been fucked, violated and lost the money too...for a few moments, thinking about it, in the morning of the Mexicans gloating over having fucked the gringo puto and got his money too...talking about it and laughing, my ass was sore. And the more I think about it, the more I know I asked for a reckless evening." And, indeed, Walt undoubtedly got everything that was cumming to him and he was lucky he did not get his throat slit, so naturally he does not let up in his dangerous desire for obtaining Johnny and whilst pitying himself, confesses like a true cock-sucking cuckold, "Maybe when they're making love they can think about Roberto having fucked me. Roberto's cock fucks Johnny, fucked me. That's about as close to Johnny as I'll ever get." Despite worshiping their bodies, Walt has no problem belittling the boys in his own mind, stating of his lustful attraction to them, "The look on his face is pure ecstasy...incredible, beautiful, turned off face of an ignorant Mexican teenager." Since they seem obsessed with cars, Walt humors the Mex-boys by teaching them to drive in a feeble attempt to get in their pants. To his decided heart-stricken dismay, Walt can never get Johnny alone without one of his friends being around as the uneducated Mexican is at least wise enough to know that the sodomite store clerk is a weirdo white boy with only one thing

on his mind. Eventually wonder-boy Johnny disappears, which severely saddens lovelorn Walt, but he develops a pseudo-romantic and ultimately sexually unfulfilling relationship with Roberto, who apparently has a tendency to “use his cock as a weapon” and act like a “macho fucking prick.” One day while giving Roberto’s driving lesson, Walt tells the Latino lad “you drive like you fuck” after the automobile-challenged boy crashes his car. Not unsurprisingly, Mexican boys like playing around with deadly weapons as proud proponents of machismo and on one rather unfortunate night after a cop shows up to Walt’s apartment after one of the female apartment tenants absurdly complains “a guy who makes Son of Sam look like Tweety Bird” was stalking her, Roberto is killed by the policeman by ‘accident’ after seeing the illegal alien brandishing a pistol. While slightly saddened by Roberto’s death, he still has his mind on Johnny and when the boy finally turns up, he learns that teen had departed, but managed to make his way back to Portland in no more than two weeks. In the end, Walt never gets any closer to Johnny. When seeing Johnny standing on a city sidewalk by chance one day, the store clerk yells “come down to the store and talk to me some time, alright?”, but the boy does not even acknowledge him, thus ushering in a rather anticlimactic end to a mostly aimless movie.

A lavishly directed low-budget flick with a lackluster story featuring totally unsympathetic characters of the crooked would-be-cool sort, especially in regard to the miscegenation-celebrating poofer protagonist, *Mala Noche* ultimately makes for a marginally redeeming work in that it makes no preposterous attempts to glorify nor propagandize a certain real-life gay man’s lifestyle, but instead portrays him as a pathetic and pretentious beatnik prick who goes to absurd lengths to obtain an underage Mexican boy’s prick. Considering the total browning of America since *Mala Noche* was released over a ¼ of a century ago, it is doubtful a film so brazen and ridiculously racially-charged would be made today, so it should be no surprise that some people (most specifically, some of the ‘enlightened’ reviewers at imdb.com) have described the work as racist. Indeed, in its depiction of a homo horndog who longs for immature Mestizo donges and its oftentimes unflattering depiction of said Mestizos acting like nitwitted petty criminals who have nil respect for American laws and customs, *Mala Noche* is certainly a softcore artsploitation flick and a rare queer cult flick, which is indubitably one of the cinematic work’s greatest appeals, which also can be certainly said of director Gus Van Sant’s later works *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) and *Elephant* (2003) as well. Undoubtedly, what ruins *Mala Noche* in part is stupid and vapid ‘exploitation apologist’ remarks from the lead character like, “I don’t want to interfere with their lives. A gringo like me has an easy life. A privileged life. And just because I see someone attractive like Johnny it doesn’t mean I should be able to have him, to buy him or whatever, just because he’s hungry and on the street. Desperate, good-looking. That wasn’t my intention exactly, but it could be misunderstood that way,” when, in reality, the protagonist’s sole

MALA NOCHE

desire is defiling and being defiled by Mestizo meat and using every dubious and groveling tactic to do so. In fact, slavish protagonist Walt even goes so far as confessing, "The plan is simple. I go to his room at midnight. He opens the door, sees that I want him that badly. I lay down at his feet like a dog. Or rather at the feet of Roberto and him. And after an hour or so when none of us know what to do anymore, I get up and I leave. My point is being made, that I want to see him badly, right? And that must mean something. How many gringos have acted that dramatically toward him ever? And whether or not he can respond in any meaningful way doesn't matter. He would think of it as a dramatic, macho act," thus admitting to his innate masochism and desire to be degraded by someone he openly sees as his intellectual inferior. A laughably failed attempt at fetishizing Mestizo machismo and romanticizing the magical 'noble savage' who illegally crawled and climbed his way to the USA from south of the border, Mala Noche ultimately makes for a sometimes unintentionally engrossing account of a discernibly degenerate dude that digs socially and sexually degrading himself and teaching two border-jumpers how proletarian poet poofs get down in the land of the homos and depraved.

-Ty E

DRUGSTORE COWBOY

Gus Van Sant° (1989)

Rather ironically, aside from his horrendous heeb-homo-martyrizing celluloid hagiography *Milk* (2008), queer auteur Gus Van Sant (*Mala Noche*, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*)—a man famous for, among other things, being America's first openly gay Hollywood filmmaker—has received his greatest success from quasi-sentimental fag-free films like *Good Will Hunting* (1997) and *Finding Forrester* (2000), with *Drugstore Cowboy* being the director's first major critical success. I would also argue that *Drugstore Cowboy* is the auteur's greatest non-gay film, as a rather quirky cult flick about the road to nowhere that is the Pacific Northwest's junky degeneracy. A sort of junky *Rebel Without a Cause* updated for the late-1980s (but set in the early 1970s) that is more about lowlife dark humor than inarticulate suburban teen angst, the film is based on the then-unpublished autobiography of career criminal James Fogle, who was incarcerated at the Washington State Penitentiary at the time of the release of the strangely charming cinematic work that would immortalize his loser life (he died in prison in 2012 at the age of 75 after being arrested in 2011 for robbing a Seattle pharmacy). Indeed, despite featuring junky literary outlaw William S. Burroughs as an old school junky priest named 'Tom the Priest' (the character is a reference to the Burroughs short story "The Priest They Called Him," which is featured in the 1973 short story collection *Exterminator!*) and a charismatic, if not morally retarded and even borderline psychopathic, pharmacy-robbing dope fiend as the protagonist (star Matt Dillion once confessed that playing the role of a junky led him to eventually breaking down and crying), *Drugstore Cowboy* is, at least in my opinion, one of the greatest unintentionally anti-drug films ever made, though auteur Van Sant once admitted regarding the work: "It's probably true that the movie will make a junkie want to go out and take drugs, but this isn't a political statement about drugs. I guess I do expect some sort of backlash." A tastelessly charming work of deadbeat deadpan comedy featuring druggy degenerate untermenschen with cool shades and leather jackets who think they are too good for heroin so they ritualistically steal "the best goddamn pharmaceutical dope money can buy" (aka Dilaudid), Van Sant's film proves that the life of a junky is about as appealing as an STD because, as Burroughs once noted, "Junk is the ideal product... the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy." Indeed, while *Drugstore Cowboy* features no superficial anti-drug sermons, I would be lying if I did not admit that the film made me want to get on a strict weightlifting regiment and organic diet. A sort of neo-Beat film for a deadbeat generation that is far too illiterate, lazy, and uncultivated to devour the Burroughs mythos, *Drugstore Cowboy* ultimately makes *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) seem like a sweet and sentimental work of celluloid nostalgia about the good old days when criminals had somewhat

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reasonable reasons for committing robberies and inciting terror in the general public.

The setting is Portland, Oregon 1971 and alpha-junky Bob (Matt Dillon) has just been shot and like William Holden's character from Billy Wilder's film noir masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), he is going to spend 100 minutes or so explaining to the viewer how he got into such a precarious situation. Maybe it's the dope, but Bob is a strangely superstitious individual who has an unwavering fear of bad omens and being haunted by hexes and thus these irrational fears guide most of his major decisions in life. As Bob explains, "It's hard being a dope fiend. And it's even harder running a crew" and indeed, with his loser gang of dumb ass dope fiends, he has a lot of things to worry about, especially when it comes to finding his next big fix. Bob's sidekick and "muscle" is a major moron named Rick (James Le Gros) who, aside from being borderline retarded, does whatever his master tells him to do, including insulting his pretty yet rather annoying pixie-like girlfriend. While Bob's nymphomaniac wife Diane (Kelly Lynch) is a cool chick who loves stealing dope like just one of the guys, Rick's girlfriend young Nadine (Heather Graham)—a former counter girl that they picked up during one of their robberies—is somewhat of an annoying bitch that causes most of the strife among the group, as she cannot stand being the weakest link and she especially cannot stand not being the center of attention. While Bob loves the opium-addled outlaw life, he has to admit at the beginning of the film that, "... deep down, I knew we could never win. We played a game we couldn't win...to the utmost." In one of their more ambitious robbery attempts (the first one depicted in the film), Nadine pretends to have a seizure in the middle of a busy pharmacy so as to distract the pharmacist so that Bob can go behind the counter and rob the place of premium grade legal dope. Needless to say, Bob cannot wait to get home to shoot-up, so he injects himself with his latest narcotic steal while riding in the getaway car. While Bob's road-to-nowhere life is more or less a real-life nightmare where he is only seconds away from another lengthy prison stay, everything seems and feels perfect when he is high on opiates, as if he has reached nirvana via injection.

Upon arriving home, Bob and his crew are visited by a spastic little philistine turd boy named David (played by Max Perlich, who would later depict a wacky degenerate who pimps out a chick with Down syndrome in Van Sant's friend Harmony Korine's 1997 debut feature *Gummo*), who trades the gang some crystal meth for some dope. While Bob treats David like the shady little scumbag dullard that he is, little does the career criminal realize that the little mensch will have his revenge in the end. That night, Bob's house is raided by a goofy golf-loving cop named Gentry (James Remar) and his gestapo-like policemen, who wreck the junky's humble abode. Unlike most junkies, Bob has no hard feelings when it comes to Gentry and cops in general, remarking, "Man, I love cops. If there were no hot shit cops like Gentry around, the competition

would be so heavy there'd be nothing left to steal." Due to a prank-gone-wrong in regard to the cops and a large pissed-off redneck with a shotgun, the crew decides to head out of town, shipping their loads of drugs separately by bus (which they pick up from time to time, so as to not suffer withdrawal), as they cannot risk being busted while driving across the Pacific Northwest. Also, after Nadine makes the major mistake of mentioning dogs (once, Bob and Dianne went to jail after their poor pup 'Panda,' who was later euthanized by the police, led the cops back to their home), Bob and Diane become convinced they have been given a 30-day hex and naturally they want to "outrun" it by traveling. Unfortunately, after a successful robbery that earns the crew \$8,400 worth of Dilaudid (enough dope to last the crew three weeks), Nadine goes and decides to overdose on junk, which she more or less threatened to do only hours before, stating to her boyfriend Rick, "You're just goin' out with them tonight. When you come back, I'll show all of you." When Bob sees Nadine's pretty little pale corpse, he calls her a "conniving little bitch" and berates her boyfriend Rick by stating, "She beat you. Your own woman beat you out of your cut on a score. She got what she deserves." Of course, being a dimwitted cuckold of sorts, Rick does nothing to defend his postmortem girlfriend's honor aside from nonsensically punching a hole in the wall in what can only be described as impotent rage.

Needless to say, after Nadine's death, among various other problems (a sheriff's convention has come to town), Bob decides to "go straight" and get on a 21-step methadone program, but Diane and Rick are not interested in the plan, so the lapsed opium-addled outlaw heads back to Portland all by his lonesome and gets a job working in a metal factory. Bob also moves into Portland's sorry answer to the Beat Hotel and starts hanging out with an elderly junky guru named 'Tom the Priest' (William S. Burroughs), who reminisces over the good old days when one could get free morphine in prison by merely sticking their arm out of the bars of their jail cell and having a jail guard inject them with some good old school smack. When Diane randomly comes to visit Bob, she gives her husband a large brown paper bag full of junk, but she also gives him the bad, if not inevitable, news that she is now dating his best friend Rick. Though Bob tries to get in her panties one last time, Diane states, "I might have been a lot of things, but I never was a tramp" and he says to her, "I wish I could win you back." Done with dope, Bob gives the brown paper bag full of assorted opiates to Tom the Priest, who is so overjoyed by the rather thoughtful gift that he thanks his young ex-con comrade by stating, "God bless you my son...may you go to heaven." Not long after committing his act of kindness, Bob is beaten and shot by dullard boy David and his equally dumb sidekick, who refuses to believe that the ex-junky no longer has the dope on him that they were planning to rob. Indeed, in the end, Bob seemed to be right about that 30-day hex..

Undoubtedly, the greatest and most thoughtful lines featured in *Drugstore Cowboy* are delivered with a sort of autistic American Anglo-Saxon elegance

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by junky sage William S. Burroughs (whose lines were apparently written by his bibliographer/literary executor James Grauerholz), who offers the following all-too-true insight during the film: “Narcotics have been systematically scapegoated and demonized. The idea that anyone can use drugs and escape a horrible fate is anathema to these idiots. I predict in the near future right-wingers will use drug hysteria as a pretext to set up an international police apparatus. I’m an old man and I may not live to see a final solution of the drug problem.” Indeed, drug war or not, junkies are always going to shoot junk no matter what, or as antihero Bob soundly states to an old negress: “Well, to begin with, nobody, and I mean nobody, can talk a junkie out of using. You can talk to ‘em for years but sooner or later they’re gonna get a hold of something. Maybe it’s not dope. Maybe it’s booze, maybe it’s glue, maybe it’s gasoline. Maybe it’s a gunshot to the head. But something. Something to relieve the pressures of their everyday life, like having to tie their shoes.” Indeed, more than anything, *Drugstore Cowboy* manages to, somewhat unwittingly, make a mockery of the post-WWII American rebel, as Matt Dillon’s character, who is more or less sexually impotent (his nympho girlfriend always tries to screw him, but he always disappoints her, as he is more in love with dope), seems like a patently pathetic parody of Marlon Brando’s iconic character in *The Wild One* (1953) and countless other teen outlaw films. Indeed, Van Sant’s film demystifies the American screen rebel yet, somewhat paradoxically, creates a new sort of nihilistic untermensch rebel whose only charm is his lack of charm and whose only real enemy is himself, thus acting as a sort of anti-rebel who signifies the death of the whole film subgenre. Unquestionably, *My Own Private Idaho* (1991)—a work where the director utilized Burroughs’ ‘cut-up’ technique in regard to the script—is Van Sant’s magnum opus, with *Drugstore Cowboy* being like the film’s sub-literate and too-cool-for-school junky older brother. Indeed, unlike Alison Maclean’s similarly-themed work *Jesus’ Son* (1999) and Hebraic pseudo-arthouse hack Darren Aronofsky’s grotesquely moronic and would-be-romantic piece of counterfeit celluloid art *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), Van Sant’s film demonstrates that there is no hope for the young and hopeless, especially in regard to junky ex-cons, so you might as well let them have their fun until they end up dropping dead in some lonely vomit-covered gutter.

-Ty E

MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO

Gus Van Sant° (1991)

My Own Private Idaho is an independent homosexual classic directed by Gus van Sant. Although being a bourgeoisie gay, Van Sant has a thing for homeless male prostitutes. I guess that could be comparable to contemporary rich whites impersonating illiterate blacks. River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves star in My Own Private Idaho in their prime as young actors. Reeves previously had several roles in which he played a stoner already under his hemp belt before acting in My Own Private Idaho. Sadly, River Phoenix wouldn't live much longer after the release of My Own Private Idaho. My Own Private Idaho is a fairly odd and unconventionally structured film. Some parts of the film border along the lines of cinéma vérité, while other scenes resemble modern day Shakespearean (the character Scott is based on Prince Hal of Henry IV) theater scenarios. The film also features random aesthetically rugged flashbacks of the character Mike (played by River Phoenix) with his mother as a child. Mike is a gay narcoleptic with a serious Oedipus complex. The only problem is that he assumes his brother is his father. I guess losing your mother and constantly longing for her can turn one perverted. The character of Scott is a spoiled rich boy who decided to sell his ass to spite his disappointed father. Scott's father is the mayor of Portland and believes that he has been cursed by the heavens because of the son that has been bequeathed upon him by the holy one. A homeless criminal and charismatic slob by the name of Bob taught Scott everything that he knows while also taking sexual rewards from the young boy. Scott states that Bob is more important to him than both his biological mother and father. Scott proves that you can truly find love in the most strangest of places. Legendary Gay German actor Udo Kier stars as a German car parts salesman named Hans. Hans attempts to pick up Mike up on the road and causes the boy to have a narcoleptic episode. I guess Germans with a certain femme in their voice can be quite frightening. Scott and Mike later join Hans in a hotel for some disturbing hedonistic episodes. Afterwards, Hans becomes aroused by the stolen motorcycle he has obtained from Scott. I don't think I have ever seen a man stroke a motorcycle in the obscene way Hans does in a trance-like state. I would have to say that My Own Private Idaho is the most classy film I have seen with such a variety of perverts. I also never thought that barns falling from the sky and crashing onto asphalt could be so beautiful. My Own Private Idaho is easily Gus van Sant's greatest and most ambitious film. The film is the gay American Odyssey that one cannot help but get lost in upon viewing. Apparently River Phoenix started using Heroin during the production of My Own Private Idaho to get into the role of a drug addicted street hustler. What an unfortunate end this decision would prove in the near future.

-Ty E

EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES
EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES

Gus Van Sant° (1994)

Long before banally molesting Hitchcock's proto-slasher masterpiece *Psycho* (1960) by making a soulless shot-for-shot remake in 1998 featuring grade A Hollywood asshole Vince Vaughn masturbating while acting like an autistic peeping Tom, queer auteur Gus Van Sant (*Drugstore Cowboy*, *Elephant*) directed a big budget (or at least big budget from him at that time) lesbo-feminist western/road movie hybrid of the 'quirky' queer sort that failed miserably both critically and commercially. Based on the 1976 'hippie' novel of the same name written by Tom Robbins (who narrates the film), *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (1993) is undoubtedly the most consciously degenerate quasi-western since Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey's *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968), as well as the most pervert-plagued road movie since Van Sant's own previous work *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), and thus the film is not of total disinterest as a work that is the director's most 'Lynchian' celluloid creation to date. Ostensibly a feminist flick, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* ultimately comes off feeling like a cynical satire of disgruntled bull dykes, pseudo-aristocratic queer queens, and the sad sort of all-too-common moronic white folks who romanticize oriental philosophy and Amerindians. Starring the lanky and long-limbed virtual Nordic alien actress Uma Thurman (*Kill Bill*, *Nymphomaniac*)—the daughter of Nena von Schlebrügge, a former fashion model of German aristocratic stock—in a strangely fitting role as a perennial hitchhiker who became a master of her 'trade' due to her abnormally long thumbs, Van Sant's film is also notable due to its eclectic all-star cast, which includes Grace Zabriskie, Crispin Glover, Udo Kier, Rosanne Barr, Sean Young, Lorraine Bracco, alpha-Beat writer William S. Burroughs, and River Phoenix (who the film was dedicated to) in his last film role in a brief uncredited cameo. Van Sant's interest in adapting the source novel goes all the way back to the 1980s when he was finishing up his first feature *Mala Noche* and had the opportunity to meet author Tom Robbins at a book-signing where he told the writer that he hoped to adapt his book, even though he was only making about \$100.00 a week at the time and surely did not have the money to buy the rights to the work, so one can certainly say *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* is a true labor of love, if not a rather convoluted and curious one. When once asked about his interest in the source novel, Van Sant stated, "I think my attraction to COWGIRLS is that it's a kind of New Age novel [...] It seemed Robbins was using the form of the romance novel to write a new fiction. He has the lead character going in and out of different sexual situations to create this very grand, GONE WITH THE WIND type of journey." Although I have not read Robbins' novel and don't plan to, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* is anything but like *Gone with the Wind*, as a work centering around a rather naïve protagonist who may be many things, including a bi-curious virgin who

is coerced into a variety of sex acts with numerous perverts, but she is as far away from being a conniving aristocratic confederate bitch as female characters come. A rather odd and anti-orgasmic odyssey featuring carpet-munching cowgirls, a gynophobic tranny pseudo-aristocrat, a hyper horny old hermit sage who goes by the name 'The Chink' even though he is a Jap, and a distinctly unflattering depiction of loony Women's liberationists who use their long unwashed and apparently pungent nether-regions as a nasty means to wage war against a tyrannical tranny dictator, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* is undoubtedly one of Van Sant's most underrated works, if not for all the wrong reasons as a film of accidental anti-politically incorrect camp featuring countless memorable scenes and characters that are just too marvelously moronic to be associated with the dry cunt cuntiness of feminist cinema.

As narrator Tom Robbins states at the beginning of *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* regarding the film's thumb-endowed protagonist Sissy Hankshaw (Uma Thurman), "The surprise of Sissy Hankshaw is that she did not grow up a neurotic disaster. If you were a small girl in the low-income suburb of Richmond, Virginia as Sissy was and your own daddy makes jokes about you being "all thumbs," then you toughen up or you shatter." While a little girl, Sissy's hysterical mother (Grace Zabriskie) was afraid that her daughter would never be able to find a man due to her long thumbs and her suspicions were right as her daughter remained a virgin well into her adult years, even after becoming a glamorous model for feminine hygiene products. When Sissy was a little girl, her Mother took her to a fortuneteller named 'Madame Zoe' (Rosanne Barr) to see if her daughter would ever get married and it was foretold that the thumb-handicapped little lady would see "men and lots and lots of women" in her life. Determined to make the most of her hand-based handicap, Sissy developed a talent for hitchhiking while still just a young girl as a born master for thumbing a ride and considering the first person to pick her up was driving a Pontiac—a car named after the Ottawa war chief of same name—she also developed an unhealthy fetish for American Indians (or what she describes as a "pleasure in Indianhood"). From 1965 until 1970, Sissy had the honor of being the "only young feminine hygiene Dew girl" and even resembled Edie Sedgwick, but ever since her career ended, she has been a homeless hitchhiker who has made hitching a "way of life" and who has crossed the continent 400 times and passed everyone twice. One day, Sissy gets a letter from her benefactor/mentor 'The Countess' (played by an exceedingly queenish John Hurt)—an aging transvestite with his own pet Asian houseboy who owns a feminine hygiene empire and loathes the smell of vaginas—asking her to come to NYC as s/he has a male companion s/he wants her to meet. Upon arriving in NYC, the Countess is somewhat annoyed by Sissy's unbecoming negativity regarding her freakish thumbs and hilariously states, "All of use are freaks in one way or another...try being born a male Russian countess born into a white middleclass Baptist family in Mississippi and

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you'll see what I mean." The Countess also goes on a notably bitchy tirade against vaginal aromas, stating, "I loathe the stink of females...their so sweet the way god made them...then they start fooling around with men and soon their stinking like rotten mushrooms...like an excessively chlorinated swimming pool...like a tuna fish's retirement party...they all stink, from the Queen England to Bonanza Jellybean, they stink." After going on a number of rather hysterical and even histrionic rants, the Countess sets Sissy up on a date with a successful "full-blooded Indian" watercolorist named Julian Gitche (Keanu Reeves), but the pansy artist is so overcome with anxiety upon meeting her that he has an asthma attack, thus the Hitchhiker is forced to mingle with her would-be-date's perverted artist friends. Before she knows it, Sissy is almost forced to engage in a threesome with Julian's perverted yet pompous pseudo-intellectual friends Howard (Crispin Glover) and Marie Barth (Sean Young), but she manages to escape relatively undefiled.

Since Sissy's romance with Julian was aborted by unfortunate circumstances, the Countess decides to send his protege to his 'beauty ranch', Rubber Rose Ranch, which is named after the aberrosexual aristocrat's best-selling designer douche bag, for her first modeling gig in years. Before Sissy goes on her journey, the Countess warns her to stay away from lesbian cowgirls that are stirring up a rebellion at the ranch, as well as an elderly Japanese-American philosopher/mountain man with the somewhat misleading name 'The Chink' (Noriyuki "Pat" Morita of Karate Kid fame), who is well known for defiling young girls. While masturbating to the thought of asthma-addled artist Julian Gitche while lying on a log outside in public somewhere near Rubber Rose Ranch, Sissy is rudely interrupted by a lady who wears so much makeup that she looks like a drag queen named Miss Adrian (Angie Dickinson), who runs the ranch and warns the hitcher of a "plague of cowgirls" that involves militant dykes having infiltrated every single sector of their beauty program, with corrupt cowgirls Debbie (Victoria Williams), Bonanza Jellybean (Rain Phoenix), and Delores Del Ruby (Lorraine Bracco) being the leaders of the sinister Sapphic revolt. Upon arriving at the ranch, Bonanza immediately attempts to ply Sissy with 'road food in bed' as the cunnilingus-inclined cowgirl has an obsession with the hitchhiker's large thumbs, which can assumedly do much damage to a dirty dyke's meat curtain. The ranch is famous for being the last place in the world to feature a reservation of whooping cranes, so Sassy dresses up like one for a modeling shoot that is being done by an exceedingly effeminate queer kraut director (Udo Kier). Of course, hardcore carpet-muncher Bonanza Jellybean eventually manages to get into Sissy's panties, thus creating a less than ideal situation for the hitcher due to her loyalty to the Countess and her new found friendship with the drag queen dictator's eternal enemies, the cowgirls. Indeed, one day the cowgirls decide to lead a revolt against the Countess, who mocks them by snidely stating, "You pathetic little cutesy poos...You actually believe this exhibition of childhood-like

melodrama is advancing the cause of freedom.” Proclaiming that the Countess owes them the entire ranch as “token payment for disgusting exploitations,” Bonanza Jellybean leads an attack of odious aroma against the feminist hygiene product queen by having her cowgirls drop their pants and panties and declaring, “not one of these pussies has been washed in weeks” while charging their adversary, who holds his little fairy nose in abject disgust.

Totally torn between her longstanding relationship with the Countess and new friends among the cowgirls, Sissy leaves the ranch during the frantic feminist coup d'état and heads to the mountains where she meets the less than charming Chink, who deflowers her that night. Apparently, the Chink has sexually ravaged a number of the cowgirls and respects them, but complains regarding their dubious methods of female liberation, “I love those cowgirls...but...I just can't be a party to their utopian dreaming.” Ultimately, the cowgirls take the Countess' whooping cranes hostage and get the rare birds high on peyote to ostensibly 'literate' their minds. Meanwhile, Sissy gets in an argument with the Countess over the cowgirls involvement in the bird kidnapping that results in the hitchhiker slapping her benefactor so hard she knocks his dentures out. After learning that her thumbs might have caused the Countess brain damage, Sissy decides to have one of her thumbs amputated, with her childhood doctor Dr. Dreyfus (Buck Henry)—an exceedingly eccentric man who constantly quotes painters like Paul Gauguin and who has retired after being sued for medical malpractice after botching a nose job performed on a little boy—being the fellow who 'de-thumbs' her. Needless to say, Sissy's hitchhiking talents are severely weakened after her thumb is surgically amputated, but she still manages to hitch a ride back to Rubber Rose Ranch to reunite with the cowgirls, who are now in a standoff with Federal agents over the kidnapped whooping cranes. After the group's spiritual leader, Delores Del Ruby, has an epiphany after taking too much peyote, the girls agree to give the whooping cranes back and surrender, but when Bonanza Jellybean attempts to make peace with the government agents by dropping her guns, she is shot and a full-blown gun battle breaks out. In the end, Bonanza Jellybean succumbs to her wounds, the peyote-addled whooping cranes finally withdraw from drugs and fly away, the Countess hands over the deeds for the ranch to the cowgirls who rename it 'El Rancho Jellybean' (with Sissy becoming its main overseer), and the hermit chink, who was injured in the shootout and subsequently started a ménage à trios with Sissy and Delores, heads to California.

Despite being easily his biggest failure as a filmmaker, Gus Van Sant actually regards *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* as his favorite cinematic creation, stating of the film, “Sometimes you like the more enfeebled child best. It's the most loved child.” Van Sant also revealed that he could care less about how the critics and the general public responded to the film, remarking, “I can't explain why it didn't work. We all thought it was off-kilter enough to be interesting, and

EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES

I can't explain the reaction. But you can waste a lot of time trying to figure it out, and in the end, they either get our material, or they don't. I make these films for myself, anyway." Undoubtedly, out of all the comments I have read Van Sant make about the film, the most interesting one is in regard to the director's personal speculation as to why the work was hated by critics, which is as follows: "Actually, I think a lot of critics didn't like the previous films, but they felt obligated to give them a good review. . . .COWGIRLS offered critics the opportunity to give me the bad review they wanted to give before." Indeed, with this quote Van Sant more or less admitted that the only reason his films were ever critically revered in the first place is because he was the first big mainstream 'openly gay' filmmaker and the critics merely lauded his work as a means to push their authoritarian neo-bolshevik LGBT agenda. Of course, in its depiction of effete homos as mean-spirited misogynists who exploit women due to their self-consciousness regarding their vaginal odors, portrayal of lesbians as peyote-addled and rather grotesque criminals who endanger the lives of both people and endangered species to further their dubious political cause, and inclusion of a old white-girl-defiling Japanese man named 'The Chink' that is certainly more odious than the Chinaman of D.W. Griffith's 'Yellow Peril' era work Broken Blossoms (1919), Even Cowgirls Get the Blues is not exactly the sort of film that would have benefited the gay agenda, even if it is an innately queer-spirited work full of campy cocksucker clichés that would even make John Waters chuckle with depraved joy. Next to his putrid piece of mainstream gay agitprop Milk (2008), which makes a martyr out of a Hebraic homo who was a known pederast and absurdly depicts Harvey Milk's killer Dan White as a closet-homosexual even though it's a totally libelous fabrication based on not a single inkling of fact, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues seems like an unsung masterpiece created by a still-then-subversive filmmaker who had yet to sell his soul to the gatekeepers of poof political correctness in Hollywood. While not exactly a masterpiece or anything resembling one, Van Sant's film certainly deserves a cult following of sorts as arguably the director's most humorous film to date as a loony lesbo equivalent to My Own Private Idaho. For those that ever wondered what Tony Soprano's psychiatrist's beaver looks like, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues might also be worth your time.

-Ty E

TO DIE FOR

Gus Van Sant° (1995)

To Die For is a satirical film directed by everybody's favorite mainstream homosexual art film director Gus Van Sant. The film follows a seemingly dumb yet cunning blonde by the name of Suzanne Stone as she attempts to become a popular news anchor. On her way to her career goal, she ends up marrying an Italian American rock drummer named Larry Maretto who has fallen for her. The Italian Stallion even ends up selling his beloved drum set for Suzanne. Suzanne Stone decides she would rather go by her maiden as a news anchor. I guess Mrs. Maretto has some issues with taking an Italian surname because of the negative connotations it comes with. Larry's family owns an Italian restaurant and his family is also involved in some illegal activities. Essentially, Suzanne Stone marries Larry for his mob family as she believes it will help her with "connections." Instead, Larry is interested in starting a family with his WASP ladylove to her dismay. Suzanne thinks that Larry's interest in a family will screw up her mindless news casting career so she decides to screw a drugged out loser named Jimmy. After some sex and other romantic activities Suzanne seduces Jimmy with, a murder plan is set-up. For some reason, Suzanne believes that Jimmy and his two equally pathetic friends can murder her husband and get away with it perfectly. Unfortunately for Suzanne, Larry's Italian American family is not as dumb as she thinks. Joaquin Rafael Phoenix does as an incredible job portraying 1/2 retarded and sympathetic yet pathetic high school student Larry Emmett. Metal head Larry is a lovely character that doesn't have much to look forward to in life. This all changes when he meets Suzanne who Larry puts on a pedestal higher than you would expect the young man to put busty Elvira on. When Larry "scores" with Suzanne, you almost feel glad for him that at least at the moment he feels like someone. Gus Van Sant assembled a variety of cinematic techniques when directing the unconventional To Die For. The film features everything from documentary style on-camera monologues to scenes of perverse drama. Van Sant succeeds in directing a film that distorts emotions to such an exaggerated level that he gets his point across about media exploitation in a more than obvious (but still appropriate) way. To Die For, like many of Gus Van Sant's films, is a successful experiment with a moderate Hollywood size budget. Very few directors can say they have accomplished the same in regards to art and business success as Van Sant. Psychoanalytic horror director David Cronenberg almost makes an appearance in To Die For as a mafia hitman. That being said, it is now obvious that To Die For has more than one thing to offer for those interested in viewing the film. The film is a black comedy in the truest sense. Suzanne Stone finally gets her wish of having her face all over News television. A woman that has concocted a murder plan against her husband and has seduced a few high school students, she is one of the greatest conspirators to make day time

To DIE FOR

TV. I have always wanted to see one of those annoying weather girls involved in a murder.

-Ty E

ELEPHANT

Gus Van Sant^o (2003)

Queer auteur Gus Van Sant (*Drugstore Cowboy*, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*) has directed a lot of sickeningly sentimental, liberal feel-good slave-morality-addled movies and has received a great deal of commercial and critical success from doing it, thus proving his wholesome upper-middleclass upbringing did not fail him after all, even if he became a subversive sodomite filmmaker who fetishizes poor young male hustlers as demonstrated by his early works *Mala Noche* (1985) and *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), yet he has also used his success as a means to continue making experimental arthouse works that would only appeal to more cultivated (and pretentious) audiences, with his post-*Finding Forrester* (2000) 'Death Trilogy' (*Gerry*, *Elephant*, *Last Days*)—three artsy fartsy works loosely based on true stories revolving around death—being arguably the most artistically fruitful point in the director's career. Undoubtedly, the best film in the trilogy is the second work, *Elephant* (2003), which takes a largely fictional, if not realistic and almost *cinéma vérité*-like, approach to the events of the 1999 Columbine High School massacre when two degenerate high school comrades, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, killed 12 students and one teacher and then proceeded to blow their defective brains out in the school library. Van Sant decided to take on the project after being approached by actress Diane Keaton and HBO to make a film about the Columbine massacre (incidentally, trash filmmakers William Hellfire and Joey Smack had already made a film about the event, *Duck! The Carbine High Massacre* (1999), which ineptly satirized the media frenzy surrounding the massacre) and he ultimately gave birth to a beautiful little celluloid beast that, although offending certain tight ass viewers due to the film's lack of pseudo-moral sermonizing and rationalizing of the killer's crimes, would ultimately win the top prize (the coveted 'Palme d'Or') at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival. A poetic piece of cultivated Teensploitation that would rise well above the level of the 1989 Alan Clarke film of the same name that heavily inspired its aesthetic and minimalistic observational style, *Elephant*, at least in my opinion, makes all American teenagers—be they bitchy and bulimic cheerleader sluts or bi-curious mass shooters—seem like emotionally and intellectually stunted mini-monsters who cannot see past their own patently petty existences, thus making the work a sort of art-addled antidote to the sorry sentimental teen angst of John Hughes' *Brat Pack* flicks. Indeed, while the 'bullied' kids of Van Sant's film certainly get their revenge against the big bad bullies in the end, rather ironically, their first victim is the most conspicuously nerdy, intolerably introverted, and most consistently bullied girl in the entire school, thus demonstrating the futility and irrationality of their actions. Featuring a homoerotic pre-massacre 'love' scene between the two killers before they go thrill killing, *Elephant* ultimately follows in the marvelously sexually masochistic tra-

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dition of Pasolini's *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) in terms of its unflattering depiction of fagdom and considering Van Sant's lifelong hero worship of junky queer literary outlaw William S. Burroughs and his imaginary 'wild boys', one can almost see the director sympathizing with the killers to an extent, albeit in a romantic fantasy-driven sort of fashion. Indeed, *Elephant* is the sort of Columbine film that only a half-autistic homo could get away with and thus represents a rare piece of American mainstream cinema that makes no artistic compromises, at least for the most part (the film does feature a token negro 'hero', although said hero fails when attempting to take down the homicidal honkies). Comprised of a series of long and voyeuristic scenes shot mostly on a Steadicam and starring mostly non-actors that used their real first names for the characters they played, *Elephant* is a film that ultimately puts the viewer right in the shoes of the unsuspecting teen victims (as well as the killers), only to blow their brains out once you have become accustomed to them in what amounts to a nasty neo-Brechtian Afterschool Special from high school hell that flings dung on Dogme 95 in terms of its delightful diletantism.

Androgynous albino skater boy John McFarland (John Robinson) is being driven to school by his goofy father (played by Timothy Bottoms, who is probably best known for his role as Sonny Crawford in Peter Bogdanovich's 1971 hit *The Last Picture Show*), but since his daddy is a dipsomaniac and already drunk, he has to act as a sort of parent for his pathetic progenitor and forces him to allow him to drive the car. At the high school, a charming young photographer named Elias (Elias McConnell) takes some snapshots of a young punk couple for his portfolio and promises to give them a print, though he will never actually get the opportunity to make good on his promise. Meanwhile, on the high school football field, a nerdy Jewish-looking girl named Michelle (Kristen Hicks) stares up into the sky as if gazing into the bowels of heaven, which she will soon ostensibly enter. Also on the field is popular jock lifeguard/football player Nathan (Nathan Tyson) who, after playing ball with his bros, meets up with his beloved girlfriend Carrie (Carrie Finklea). When John is caught crying by his female friend Acadia (Alicia Miles) in an empty room at the school, he is given a rather sympathetic kiss in what is easily the most tender scene of *Elephant*, but the girl soon leaves to attend a gay-straight alliance meeting where its members discuss whether or not you can tell if someone is a homo by their appearance. While exiting the school, John runs into his two friends Alex (Alex Frost) and Eric (Eric Deulen), who are dressed like 'goth' mercenaries and give their friend the following warning, "Get the fuck out and don't come back! Some heavy shit's going down!," in a rather aggressive fashion. Although John will try to warn other students not to enter the school, his actions are ultimately in vain. As demonstrated in the next scene, Alex is a sensitive nerd who has suffered routine bullying from philistine jocks with a propensity for throwing spitballs during science class. Like Harvey Keitel's eponymous character from James Toback's

Fingers (1978), Eric is a sensitive artistic type with a seemingly split personality who finds solace in playing compositions by Ludwig van Beethoven on piano, but has a lot of pent up hatred that he has no true outlet for, not to mention the fact that he is a virgin. Alex and his comrade Eric, who has a much lower IQ and is a physically frail wigger who dresses like Eminem, somehow magically buy a assault rifle (Bushmaster Carbon 15 Type 21 semi-automatic varmint rifle) online, which they practice using by shooting at firewood in a garage so they can prepare for their dream massacre. When footage appears of the Third Reich, including a scene with Leni Riefenstahl (Van Sant's archenemy?), on television, the two friends have the most mundane conversation ever, with the one asking, "Can you still buy Nazi flags?" and the other responding, "Sure, if you're a nut," thus proving that these young men were not inspired to kill by the ghost of Uncle Adolf and his undead army. In fact, Eric is so uneducated that when Hitler appears on screen, he asks, "Who's that Guy?" (indeed, if kids learn anything in public schools nowadays, it is about how eternally evil Hitler and the Nazis were).

Before going on their killing spree, Eric gets in the shower with Alex and says, "Well this is it. We're gonna die today. I've never even kissed anyone before, have you?" and the two proceed to kiss (for the record, Van Sant has stated in interviews that these two fucked friends are somehow not homos). For about the last 15 minutes of *Elephant*, the terrible teenage twink twosome carries out their reckless reign of impotent terror, with Alex stating to his comrade before they carry out their crimes, "Most importantly, have fun, man." The first place the crazed comrades go to is the library, with bullied nerd Michelle quite ironically being the first victim, with her brain splattering all over a bookshelf sitting behind her. In a scene of seemingly unintentional comic relief, Elias takes a photo of Eric and Alex a second before they start shooting. In a female bathroom, Alex assumedly guns down a trio of annoying bulimic girls, Brittany, Jordan and Nicole, with one of them ironically stating how cool it would be if bombs were going off in the school as it would result in no homework (indeed, Alex tried to explode propane bombs but they did not work). Meanwhile, a negro athlete named Benny (Bennie Dixon) passively (using one hand, which barely touches her body!) helps Acadia escape out of a window after a member of the gay-straight alliance is killed and proceeds to attempt to be a hero by sneaking up on Eric from behind, but he is ultimately gunned down a second or two before he goes to attack the school shooter. From there, Eric begins to torment the school principal, Mr. Luce (Matt Malloy), stating, "You know there's others like us out there, too. And they will kill you if you fuck with them like you did me and Jared." While Eric pretends to spare Mr. Luce, he ends up sadistically shooting the principal while he is running away, thus demonstrating his innate ruthlessness. When Alex and Eric meet in the school cafeteria after killing the majority of their victims, the former shoots and kills the latter while he is discussing his

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dirty deeds. In the end, Alex finds popular couple Nathan and Carrie hiding in a walk-in freezer and plays the children's counting rhyme "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe" with them before shooting one of them, though it is never revealed who was actually shot.

With the mastermind of the massacre, Alex, resembling Van Sant's much beloved actor Keanu Reeves (who appeared in both *My Own Private Idaho* and *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*) and the other killer, Eric, resembling the sort of pedomorphic and seemingly anorexic sort of young twinks that dominate gay pornography, *Elephant* ultimately resembles a sick fantasy film on the director's part, albeit a somewhat inconspicuous one. It should be noted that the film also features a spoken word track ("Meeting of International Conference of Technological Psychiatry") by the director's hero William S. Burroughs, who wrote a series of novels about homicidal homo teen boys (especially his *The Red Night Trilogy* (1981-87)) and who appeared in two of Van Sant's films, *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989) and the anti-American short *Thanksgiving Prayer* (1991). As Van Sant explained in the French featurette *About Elephant*, all of the characters featured in the film are more or less archetypes for high school students and indeed, the film has a certain authenticity in its intentionally mundane depiction of teenagers that is quite a relief from the moronic scat-obsessed 30+year-old frat boy philistines that typically appear in corny coming-of-age films and teen sex comedies. Indeed, compared to the other films based on the Columbine massacre, including *Duck! The Carbine High Massacre*, Uwe Boll's *Heart of America* (2002), Ben Coccio's *Zero Day* (2003), *The Only Way* (2004), and *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011), *Elephant* is the only film that does not seem like a total piece of putrid exploitative garbage, superficial moralizing, and/or vapid sentimentalism. In an interview with Gerald Peary, Van Sant stated the following regarding why he decided to take a more detached and observational approach to directing the film, "It's not that I don't want you involved in the characters, but I want you involved by watching them, an observation, the way documentarian Frederick Wiseman sits back and lets things occur. We could have invented a more traditional psychological narrative. I have my ideas why Columbine happened, but that's not this film. I wanted a poetic impression rather than dictating an answer. I wanted to include the audience's thoughts." Indeed, Van Sant may have been arrogant enough to direct a remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* starring a rather repugnant Hollywood comedian like Vince Vaughn, but he does not have his head so far up his ass to go as far as dictating to the audience the answer as to why two teenage upper-middleclass degenerates shot up their school. While not exactly an exciting and action-packed work, *Elephant* apparently did inspire at least one school shooter, Jeff Weise—an Ojibwe Indian that the media painted as a neo-Nazi (just like they did with the Columbine killers, despite the fact that Klebold was part Jewish and even practiced Jewish rituals) who killed 9 of his fellow native Americans at his high school (located

on Red Lake Indian Reservation) before blowing his brains out—to carry out a shooting spree on March 21, 2005. Of course, anyone who is inspired to kill a bunch of people after watching any film, let alone a slow-moving arthouse film like *Elephant*, was already insane to begin with.

-Ty E

GUS VAN SANT'S LAST DAYS
GUS VAN SANT'S LAST DAYS

Gus Van Sant° (2005)

Undoubtedly, Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain was one of the last people that should have been rich and famous, let alone a hero and icon for an entire generation. I say this not in a cheap and pathetic attempt to belittle Cobain's output as a musician, but in regard to his character and behavior as a tragic individual who failed his entire life, only to destroy everything he had, namely his own life, when he achieved something that most people can only dream of. Indeed, as a man who came from a broken home that ruined his outlook on life at a young age, suffered debilitating mental illness (he was apparently diagnosed as suffering from bipolar disorder as an adult), once wrote a song entitled "I Hate Myself And Want To Die," and had such a warped mind that he once stated, "I am not gay, although I wish I were, just to piss off homophobes," Cobain was essentially a raving vagrant who became rich and famous and, somewhat unwittingly (when it comes down to it, it was the record company executives and MTV scumbags that peddled his degeneracy), poisoned countless minds, ultimately inspiring an entire generation to get into hard drugs and fetishize suicide. The fact he killed himself (or at least died young) seemed inevitable and in Gus Van Sant's experimental arthouse flick *Gus Van Sant's Last Days* aka *Last Days* (2005), one sees a perturbing portrayal of the metaphysical torture and all-consuming loneliness Cobain was suffering from leading up to the days before he decided to end it all and blow his brains out. The third and final film in Van Sant's experimental "Death Trilogy" (following *Gerry* (2002) and *Elephant* (2003)), the film was a decade in the making and was originally intended as a 'straight' biopic, but Cobain's control-freak widow Courtney Love—a whacked out woman that is hated by legions of Nirvana fans for obvious reasons—put a stop to that. Probably the most anti-romantic yet strangely poetic depiction of a rock star ever made, *Last Days* essentially follows the emotional wreck of a rocker as he moves around quite uncoordinatedly like a wounded animal about to take its last gasp. Starring pretty boy Michael Pitt (*Funny Games*, *Boardwalk Empire*) in the lead role (this must have been Pitt's dream as his self-professed favorite film is Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991)), *Last Days* is a decided 'downer' (which is incidentally the name of one of Nirvana's more punk tunes) as a movie that viewers typically either love or love to hate. Personally, as a minor Gus Van Sant and Michael Pitt fan, I was quite disappointed with the film when I first saw it, as I was expecting it to at least top *Elephant* in its visceral approach to the moments leading up to the subject's death, but of course, this film does not feature a climactic school massacre scene. After rewatching *Elephant* recently, I decided it was about time to give *Last Days* a second chance after having almost a decade for the film to digest in my mind. A transcendental realist nightmare that takes the viewer on a experience that, try as they might, will not be shaken

from their mind anytime soon, *Last Days* is penetrating psychodrama of the voyeuristic sort where it seems as if Pitt's body has been corrupted by Cobain's half-dead soul. Tripping and falling down small hills, sitting on the ground in a fetal position while wearing a dress, and pissing in a river in a rather slobbish manner, the 'Kurt Cobain' (the writer/director opted for naming the character 'Blake' instead of Kurt) of Van Sant's film is a metaphysically dead soul barely grasping on to life, but he has just enough life in himself left so that he can end said life and rid himself of the parasites that have feasted on his fame and the debilitating drug addiction that has devoured his purity and very being. Like John Cassavetes meets Béla Tarr (like with *Elephant*, Van Sant cited *Sátántangó* (1994) as having a huge influence on the film) as channeled through the 1990s grunge scene, *Last Days* is undoubtedly the most melancholy and foreboding yet strangely detached suicide-themed film since Fassbinder's *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978). Of course, Cobain makes for a less interesting subject than that of a butcher turned tranny who cut off his cock to impress a psychopathic holocaust survivor.

Morbidly depressed rock star Blake (Michael Pitt) is so mentally out of it that he trudges through the woods as if he is about to drop dead at any moment. When he reaches a river, Blake decides to strip off all of his clothes aside from his underwear and proceeds to piss in the water in an awkward manner as if he is some redneck lowlife who has had one too many cans of cheap beer. That night, Blake somehow manages to figure out how to get a bonfire going and sits by the fire all by his lonesome, as if involved in some sort of private ritual. The next day, Blake walks back to his home and mumbles to himself such nonsensical things as, "Cause I'm afraid... You can't do anything. You can't do anything. I can't. I don't know what I'm—God, it's just—I don't know. Just a—I Just," as a man that is truly and literally at a loss for words. Various people are looking for Blake and his friend Donovan (played by Ryan Orion in a role modeled after Cobain's real-life friend Dylan Carlson, who lent the Nirvana singer the shotgun he would kill himself with) has even hired a fat and goofy private investigator (played by Ricky Jay in a role based on real-life PI Tom Grant, who believes Cobain was murdered) to help find him. Meanwhile, a group of parasites led by a fellow named Scott (played by Scott Patrick Green in a role based on Cobain's drug dealer/Courtney Love's ex-boyfriend Michael 'Cali' Dewitt who some suspect killed the rock star) occupy Cobain's house and attempt to prevent anyone from seeing him, including Donovan and the PI. At one point, Blake enters the room where Scott and his compatriots are sleeping and puts his shotgun to their heads in a somewhat joking manner, as if he would love to rid them from his life but lacks the testicular fortitude to do so. Somewhat strangely, Blake finds the shotgun after finding a note in his fridge reading, "The gun is in the bedroom closet" as if someone is attempting to bait him into killing himself. When an overweight negro salesman from Yellow Pages named Thaddeus Thomas (played

GUS VAN SANT'S LAST DAYS

by a real Yellow Pages salesman playing himself) knock's on Blake's door, the Rocker lets him in and entertains his sales pitch. Apparently, Blake posted an ad in the Yellow Pages the year before for a locomotive parts company (?) and Thaddeus convinces him to renew the advertisement. While speaking in a rather contrived salesman-like manner, Thaddeus senses there is something wrong with the strange and seemingly stoned dress-wearing white man that he is talking to and even asks him if he is OK. After Thaddeus leaves, he remembers he forgot some books and goes back in Blake's house, only to find the Rocker passed out, so he tiptoes around his body as if in fear for his life. When two Mormon recruiters (twin brothers who are both named Elder Friberg) drop by the house, Scott listens to their religious spiel and mocks their claim that they talk to god. When one of Blake's friends, Asia (played by Italian actress/auteur Asia Argento in a role modeled after Cali Dewitt's then-girlfriend Jessica Hopper), finds him passed out on the floor after getting in a weird trance while listening to R&B group Boyz II Men (the sort of negrophile garbage that would replace Nirvana/Grunge in popularity after Cobain committed suicide), she merely moves him aside as if he is a piece of furniture. When Scott and his friends temporarily leave the house and see Donovan and the PI driving up to the home, they yell obscenities at them like "fucking asshole" and "dickhead Don." When Blake hears Donovan calling his name, he runs away into the surrounding woods as if scared for his life. Indeed, Blake does not want to be found.

In what is easily the most trance-like and meditative scenario of Last Days, Blake goes back home and has a one-man band jam session in an exceedingly long dolly shot scene where the camera moves away from the outside window of the room. When a rock executive (played by Kim Gordon of the band Sonic Youth in a role modeled after Cobain's Jewish manager Danny Goldberg) comes by the home, she berates Blake and sarcastically asks him if he has told his baby daughter that, "I'm sorry that I'm a...rock and roll cliché?," adding, "If you stay here you're just gonna..." as if she knows that the Rocker is about to drop dead. Later that night, Blake plays with kittens while Scott and his crew listen to the Velvet Underground song "Venus in Furs." When one of his parasitic friends, Luke (Lukas Haas in a role modeled after Dewitt's friend Rene Navarette), attempts to ask for Blake's advice regarding a song he is writing, Scott gets pissed and says, "Leave him the fuck alone and come upstairs with me, all right?" and the two proceed to go upstairs and have gay sex while the grunge rocker plays some songs on acoustic guitar. Not long after mumbling to himself, "Everyone is treating me like a criminal," Blake is approached by Scott, who complains about how he needs money for a plane ticket and a heater and instead of asking his friend to borrow some money, he merely takes it out of the Musician's pocket without asking, thus signifying the innately abusively and parasitic nature of their relationship. From there, Blake leaves the home and goes to an underground punk show where he bumps into an ostensible friend (played by Gus Van

Sant's filmmaker friend Harmony Korine), who tells a story about how he played Dungeons & Dragons with members of the Grateful Dead and how great Jerry Garcia is at playing a 'Dungeon Master.' Korine attempts to offer Blake a hit of acid, but the Rocker merely walks away without saying a single word. The next day, a 'Tree Trimmer' (Chip Marks) finds Blake's corpse lying in a greenhouse. Magically, Blake's buck naked spirit leaves his body and assumedly enters 'Nirvana.' Of course, after learning of Blake's demise, Scott and his crew decide to make a quick getaway to LA so they are not implicated in their friend's dubious death.

Undoubtedly, one of the more interesting aspects of *Last Days* is that Cobain's death is neither depicted nor explained (aside from a scene where he assumedly writes a suicide letter), thus leaving it to open interpretation for the viewer, which is interesting considering the fact that many people, especially his fans, believe that he did not commit suicide but that he was actually murdered. Notably, Cobain's Widow Courtney Love, who director Gus Van Sant developed a friendship with a number of years before the film was made (after making various attempts to get a Cobain biopic made), is not depicted in the work. It should also be noted that Love's own father, Hank Harrison, who has written two books on Cobain's death, believes that his daughter might have been involved in a conspiracy to kill the Nirvana singer and even says such in British documentarian Nick Broomfield's controversial work *Kurt & Courtney* (1998). Additionally, musician 'El Duce' (the drummer and lead singer of the self-described 'rape rock' band The Mentors) made the claim that Love offered him money to kill Cobain and in Broomfield's doc he even mentions that he knew who killed the Grunge King, but that he would "let the FBI catch him." Two days after conducting the interview, El Duce died in an exceedingly dubious manner after being hit by a train in the middle of the night. While Van Sant's *Last Days* does not exactly accuse anyone of Cobain's death, it certainly points the finger at psychopathic drug addict fiends that were feeding off his soul. Luckily, *Last Days* does not attempt to make Cobain seem like a hero/martyr, but instead portrays him as a pitiable individual who was in over his head and had virtually no one to reach out to. While not exactly a masterpiece, *Last Days* is probably the closest a film will ever come to paying any sort of 'objective tribute' to Cobain's death, even as a largely fictional work, as Van Sant did not seem to have much of a real agenda with the film aside from attempting to get inside the grunge musician's mind during his 'last days' and inserting one of his random signature gay sex scenes. As Van Sant stated in an interview with *Film Threat* in response to the fact that the viewer is unsure as to how Blake actually dies, "You see it from the tabloid point of view, just from the hillside and you're not really part of it." A film about a man who was arguably the worst role model in human history (at least, the worst white one) and who, against his own will, acted as "the spokesman of a generation" and was ultimately even more exploited after his death than when

GUS VAN SANT'S LAST DAYS

he was actually alive (I remember distinctly seeing a store selling 'Kurt Cobain Death Certificate' t-shirts immediately after he died), *Last Days* is probably the only mainstream depiction of Kurt Cobain that the Nirvana frontman himself would have appreciated (after all, he was a huge fan of *My Own Private Idaho*) and for that reason alone makes the film worth seeing. Of course, if you're considering blowing your brains out, *Last Days* is probably the last film you should see.

-Ty E

PARANOID PARK

Gus Van Sant° (2007)

Gus van Sant seems to be going the route of Larry Clark in adoring young skater boys. This odd trend of obsession still has me perplexed. I hope that van Sant is not a member of NAMBLA. He is one of my favorite Hollywood directors. Gus is a director that has managed to bring interesting subversion to the mainstream. *Drugstore Cowboy*, *My Own Private Idaho*, and *Elephant* are all films that I have come to enjoy over the years. I grew up as a skater in a small redneck county. My skateboarding obsession lasted for over 8 years. Skaters were the most despised group subculture (and probably the only real subculture). Like the skaters in Gus van Sant's *Paranoid Park*, we were always in trouble. The teachers had blacklisted us essentially as future criminals (which many of my former friends ended up). We never ended up killing a security guard. I couldn't imagine if I saw a crawling torso heading towards. I probably would have found it very cool. *Paranoid Park* is sort of a trip down nostalgia lane for me. I couldn't help but enjoy the film. It brought me back to the days when my skater friends and I would make gritty skate videos. Everything was about skating. *Paranoid Park*'s slow motion skate sequences were very mellowing and dare I say poetic. The film featured a lot of slow motion scenes which actually worked to the advantage of *Paranoid Park*'s very soothing flow. I can already hear people calling *Paranoid Park* pretentious a mile away. If they can't enjoy a beautiful film than they can enjoy the commercial like "qualities" of a film directed by Craig Brewer. *Last Days* was a disappointment for me and a good number of Van Sant fans. The director has now redeemed himself with *Paranoid Park*. The film opens up with beautiful music composed by Nina Rota which was originally in Federico Fellini's masterpiece *Juliet of the Spirits*. Nina Rota was one of the greatest (if not the greatest) music composer for films. *Paranoid Park* also features music from Elliot Smith (which can be heard in Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting* among other films). The music perfectly compliments *Paranoid Park*'s scattered and flowing feel. *Paranoid Park* features various kids quoting popular TV shows and movies (*South Park*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, etc.). Gus van Sant brings up the staleness of American life. American's grow up (including myself) living their lives through television and film. The skaters of *Paranoid Park* learned more values from watching television than they did from their own parents. Skateboarding is a loner sport (if you want to call it that) and its participants confirm that. Gus Van Sant is not as perverted as Larry Clark. Clark's *Ken Park*, I suspect fulfilled many of the directors dark fantasies. Although Gus van Sant obviously has a thing for skater boys, he at least respects them. Keep in mind I am a fan of *Ken Park*. Gus Van Sant acted as an executive producer on Larry Clark's first film *Kids*. I hope that Clark won't call Van Sant a theft like he basically called *Kids* and *Ken Park* screenwriter Harmony Korine. *Paranoid Park*

PARANOID PARK

owes nothing to Larry Clark.

-Ty E

MILK

Gus Van Sant° (2008) There is no doubt about it, gay has gone mainstream. Lindsay Lohan has her own Jewish dyke girlfriend while Ellen Degenerate has her own show where straight women worship her (the ultimate lesbian fantasy?). Special laws now protect gays from “hate” crimes. Crimes against gays always make front page news. Talk about “progress,” now grade school students even learn about how being gay is completely normal. Gay revolutionaries such as Harvey Milk paved the way from mainstreaming the gay “community” and giving them special protection against evil homophobes. It is no surprise that gay filmmaker Gus Van Sant has decided to cinematically immortalize the homosexual martyr with his film Milk. Gus Van Sant is a filmmaker I have mixed feelings about. I am no doubt a fan of his films such as *Drugstore Cowboy* and *My Own Private Idaho*. Van Sant has also directed repulsive trash such as the *Psycho* remake and *Last Days*. Hell, the commercially and financially successful *Good Will Hunting* isn’t nearly his worst film. *Milk* is a film that combines Gus Van Sant’s notorious Queer New Wave artistry and his knack for mainstream productions. It makes me wonder whether Gus Van Sant is more proud of his gay art films or his gay power films. I wouldn’t be surprised if *Milk* was Van Sant’s proudest achievement yet. I never wanted or expected to ever see a make out session in a film between Sean Penn and James Franco. I watched *Milk* with a special lady friend and she couldn’t help but cringe. It makes me wonder whether the two popular actors agreed to be in *Milk* for subversions sake (Penn is a Commie sympathizer) or to prove they feel secure with their sexuality. Teenage girl favorite Emile Hirsch also stars in *Milk* as a smart ass disgruntled gay nerd. Unsurprisingly Penn, Franco, and Hirsch have no problem pulling off “gay.” Protesters are Gay. Gus Van Sant took it upon himself to make up a little historical fiction with *Milk*. The man that killed Harvey Milk, Dan White, is portrayed as a self-loathing gay in *Milk*. Was this fictional portrayal of Dan White an attempt by Gus Van Sant to show that gay repression leads to murder? Maybe Van Sant’s next film should be the ultimate Jeffrey Dahmer bio-pic. It could have been the pervert killer film that Gus Van Sant wished *Psycho* could have been. Gus Van Sant had no problem having school massacre shooters in his film *Elephant* have a gay shower moment.

Is *Milk* the best gay mainstream film since *Brokeback Mountain*? Probably. Is *Milk* worthy of all the hype and praise that the credits keeping giving it? Probably not, but *Milk* is better than most of the films that Hollywood pollutes the world with. *Milk* has its moments and is well acted, but it’s more a film about power. As brought up in *Milk*, is gayness really responsible for the breakdown of the nuclear family? Probably not, as there are a lot worse subversive “movements” going on that are completely hostile to the western family tradition. I just wonder if Gus Van Sant decided to name his Harvey Milk film “*Milk*” for more than

MILK

just after the subject of the film. Something tells me that Milk is not the only white substance on Gus Van Sant's mind.

-Ty E

THE MIRROR

Guy Hamilton (1980) Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975) is an Oedipal stream of consciousness masterpiece. The film utilized a combination of varying scenes (even Soviet News Reels) to recount memories that become distorted overtime. *The Mirror* is probably the closest attempt at putting the mind's eye on screen. This works effectively as the scenes interweave in perfect rhythm. *The Mirror* makes Sergei Eisenstein's editing techniques look like that of a Burger King commercial.

The actress that played Tarkovsky's assumed Mother also plays his wife (Margarita Terekhova). Tarkovsky's not trying to hide his deep love for his Mama. Pier Paolo Pasolini also loved his Mother enough to direct his own version of *Oedipus Rex*. Commies sure do love their Mommies. Artistic Soviet propaganda wouldn't be complete without newsreel propaganda of Hitler's dead doppelganger. Why Tarkovsky incorporated this in *The Mirror* is beyond me. Random photos of Leon Trotsky and Josef Stalin cover the walls of a decaying Soviet factory. Tarkovsky's mother is a slave to this system. The Communists are staunch Feminists and proponents of "equality." 100 million dead to confirm that equality. Tarkovsky's Mother and Father also lend their artistry to *The Mirror*. His father's poems are narrated throughout the film as well as his mother's voice. This is obviously Tarkovsky's most personal film and in my opinion his best. *The Mirror* is a true "auteur" piece. The slave masters of the USSR were very angered by *The Mirror*. I don't think it benefited the collectivist society that funded it. It's fairly amazing how a country that gives no rights to its citizens could produce such an intimate film. I doubt the USSR had any idea what Tarkovsky's were about.

-Ty E

TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL
TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL

Guy Maddin (1988)

I would not exactly call myself a staunch Guy Maddin fan, even if I like some of his films and respect his influences because he seems to be someone who knows too much about film, most specifically silent and early talkie works, for his own good, thus many of his works, including *Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary* (2002) and *Cowards Bend the Knee* (2003), seem like cleverly conceptualized postmodern fanboy jerk-off pieces assembled by a degenerate dilettante with way too much time on his hands. Sort of like a much more cultivated and less aesthetically barbaric Quentin Tarantino, except with relatively decent taste in film, Maddin is essentially like an archeologist/anthropologist auteur who exhumes long dead cinematic conventions and style and mixes them with traumatic experiences and anecdotes from his own life and Icelandic background, thereupon concocting sort of anachronistic celluloid Frankenstein monsters featuring mismatched parts thus oftentimes resulting in aesthetic tragedies. Undoubtedly, aside from possibly his kaleidoscopic incest-themed neo-mountain film *Careful* (1992), *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1989) is my personal favorite Maddin movie. Originally intended as a short, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* would ultimately evolve into Maddin's first feature-length film and a work that would get the attention of film exhibitor/producer Ben Barenholtz—the man responsible for creating the concept of the “Midnight Movie” and promoting/popularizing cult masterpieces like Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El topo* (1970), John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* (1972), and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), among countless others—thus virtually guaranteeing the campy Canadian auteur a certain degree of fame and artistic merit among cinephiles in the cinema underground overnight. “Set in no particular time period” (as described by Maddin himself) but inspired by a smallpox epidemic around 1874 that ravaged the fishing community of Gimli, Manitoba, Canada (once known as “New Iceland”) and wiped out around 80% of the population, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* is a sort of sardonic and aberrantly absurdist (anti)love letter to his Icelandic heritage, as well as early talkie pictures of the 1920s. Featuring tales of necrophilia, 13-year-old girls disguised as flapper-like nurses, a mocking appreciation of Icelandic language and culture/customs, and bawdy Eddie Cantor-esque blackfaces minstrels, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* is a rare and aesthetically/thematically radical example of the North American Nordic neurosis as directed by a rare man of European descent who actually embraces his heritage, even if he disgraces it in the process. In fact, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* upset members of Gimli's Icelandic-Canadian community due to its less than sensitive portrayal of the historical smallpox epidemic in New Iceland and was even rejected from the Toronto Film Festival, yet in this day and age of excessive and seemingly suicidal ethno-masochism among Europeans and people of European descent,

Maddin's fiendishly farcical approach to human suffering seems more than fitting. Utilizing a beauty salon run by his aunt that occupied the bottom floor of his childhood home as a sort of true Icelandic-Canadian peasant film studio, Maddin ultimately assembled with *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* what is arguably the most 'world famous' piece of Canadian Nordic cinema ever made.

Tales from the Gimli Hospital, although entirely black-and-white (aside from a pink-tinted dream-sequence towards the conclusion of the film), begins at the present in Gimli, Manitoba hospital where two rather young children (played by Maddin's niece and nephew) are watching their mother die as she listens to 'esoteric noise' aka music on her deathbed. While the dying woman apparently has time to drink a Big Gulp (which rather ridiculously sits by her side), the children's grandmother decide that the kids should leave their momma alone so she can enjoy her music. The Icelandic grandmother decides to tell the children the story of 'Einar the Lonely' (an intrinsically cowardly character that Guy Maddin has admitted is a stand-in for himself) who also stayed at the same hospital long ago in "a Gimli we no longer know" after contracting smallpox. Einar (played by Kyle McCulloch, who, on top of starring in a couple of Maddin's other early films, later went on to become a writer for *South Park*), a lowly peasant fisher who uses fish guts as shampoo and became deathly ill after carelessly cutting his finger with a pocket knife, succumbs to small pox and is forced to stay at Gimli Hospital, where he meets his large and in charge neighbor Gunnar (Michael Gottli), who has also become badly bedridden due to the illness. The hospital is essentially run by three beautiful and make-up-ridden young nurses (all of whom were actually played by 13-year-old girls) and features a Svengali-like doctor (played by director Guy Maddin himself, who grew a faggy Little Richard-esque mustache for the role) who gives creepy puppet shows (as a sort of sad substitute for morphine and/or anesthesia) while operating on patients, as well as a pseudo-Negro in blackface (also played by Kyle McCulloch) who has a dandy old time blasting away birds with his rifle that happen to be flying around the building. Naturally, Einar becomes a little bit jealous when Gunnar grabs the attention of the cute nymph-like nurses by telling stories from the "Gimli Sagas" (apparently a real book, which was also the original working title for *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*) involving morbidly merry stories about the corpses of sisters floating on makeshift coffin-rafts and whatnot. To the glee of the nurses, Gunnar also has a keen talent for carving pieces of birch bark into the shape of fishes, so Einar attempts to mimic his neighbor's talents in vain, but no one notices him as if he is a lonely corpse who does not realize he is already dead.

Naturally, things take a turn for the worse when Gunnar borrows Einar's distinctly decorated fish-carving shears and realizes that they are exactly the same pair that he buried his beautiful blonde wife Snjófríður (Angela Heck) with. Gunnar tells Einar the story of his courtship and eventual marriage to Snjófríður, who died after contracting smallpox from her chubby cuckold hubby. Despite

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the large but smallpox-stricken widow's objections to an an aboriginal death ceremony, Gunnar's native Indian friend John Ramsay (Don Hewak) gave Snjófrídur a traditional Indian burial, which included laying a pair of fish-carving shears next to the corpse. Einar tells Gunnar about how he happened upon the shears, which were at the burial ground of a body of a angelic dead woman who he ultimately had sex with against the cute corpse's will. Of course, the corpse Einar committed necrophilia with was that of Snjófrídur and when Gunnar realizes this he is not too happy, but is far too weak to exact his rightful revenge, but if anything is for sure, it is that the two men have now become enemies. Not long after a fire breaks out at the hospital and is put out with milk, which drips down on Gunnar and somehow blinds him. Meanwhile, the jolly black-faced fellow drops dead and Einar considers slaughtering Gunnar with the same shears buried with Snjófrídur so as to save his own skin from an assumedly brutal revenge. Gunnar also threatens Einar in a superlatively sinister yet strangely homoerotic manner by standing over his bed and grazing his stomach with the same fishing shears. Both Einar and Gunnar, who seems to be both in somnambulist states, exit the hospital for what will be a final showdown between the two enemies. A certain Victorian aristocratic fellow named Lord Dufferin, who was the third Governor General of Canada and who Einar hallucinates is a mythical Fish Princess, is giving a speech and the Shriners Highland Pipe Band are playing a song thus acting as the film's inconspicuous soundtrack, while Gunnar hallucinates various curious images while in a hopelessly hostile and jealous state in a surreal scene that was inspired by a scene from Fritz Lang's film noir classic *Scarlet Street* (1945) of Edward G. Robinson's character devolving into a homicidal green-eyed monster of sorts. Einar finally gets the testicular fortitude to approach Gunnar when he sees the big bulky beast's shadow, which resembles the iconic scene from F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) of Count Orlok's shadow climbing up the steps, approaching an innocent little blonde girl in a most malevolent manner. Rather absurdly, Einar and Gunnar engaged in the quasi-homoerotic "Gimli Wrestle" (apparently a real form of Icelandic wrestling), which involves the two men literally playing grab ass and lifting each other until one of the two collapses, and the two men ultimately paw each other's own buttocks until they are bare and bloody as if they were victims of prison rape. In the end, Einar gets well and returns to his fisherman shacks, where he is visited by Gunnar and his new fiancé. Of course, Einar is jealous of his friends new romance because he will forever remain "Einar the Lonely." *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* returns to the present, where the two children are informed their mother is dead, but luckily their Icelandic grandmother has another old historical story to tell them regarding New Iceland.

In an audio commentary for a DVD release of *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, director Guy Maddin stated regarding contemporary Gimli and the decline of Icelandic culture and customs in the community, "The Icelandic gene pool

has been watered down to next nothing. When a person with a non-Icelandic surname like me gets to be one of its/this ethnic group's biggest spokespersons you know your ethnicity is in trouble." Indeed, in terms of cinematic and ancestral influences, Maddin thankfully reluctantly lives in the past, thus acting as a sort of last cinematic gasp for both dying/dead cinematic conventions and the Icelandic-Canadian people. To his credit, Maddin refrained from wallowing in philistine sentimentalism with *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, neither pretending to truly understand his ancestor's struggles nor glorifying them in a silly and sapless Spielberg-esque manner. Most potent in its fixedly foreboding yet farcical atmosphere, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* does certainly deserve the incessant comparisons it has gotten to Lynch's *Eraserhead*, but Maddin's film more resembles a phantasmagorical fable with tragicomic overtones (as opposed to a mostly dead serious psychological horror piece like Lynch's film) as a work directed by a man who, losing his brother to suicide when he was still a wee lad and losing his father while still a young man, has learned to find absurdity and humility in the most stark and life-changing of human tragedies. Notably, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* was actually inspired by a rivalry Maddin had with a friend who dated the same woman as him, later remarking regarding the ordeal that he, rather ridiculously, found himself "quite often forgetting the object of jealousy" and ultimately becoming "possessive of my rival" instead, which the film poignantly portrays in an uniquely unhinged way in regard to the characters Einar the Lonely and Gunnar, two mixed-up men who fight over a dead woman. Like David Lynch with his first feature-length film *Eraserhead*, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* is arguably Guy Maddin's purist and most visceral cinematic work to date as a hallucinatory and hypnotic Heimatfilm of the soul that ultimately acts as probably the most extreme and eccentric example of the director's Icelandic-Canadian peoples' collective unconscious and a rare example of North American Nordic kultur in the age of so-called multiculturalism and American cultural hegemony, where blood and geographical borders are being all the more maliciously despoiled with each passing day. If I never see another Guy Maddin flick that I like again, I will always respect the filmmaker just for *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, a postmodern völkisch work that somehow manages to reconcile Weimar-esque cultural degeneracy, traditional oral Icelandic lore, Riefenstahl-esque 'aesthetic fascism,' and Hebraic Vaudevillian minstrel shows, which is indubitably something that had never been achieved, nor will be achieved again by any filmmaker ever again. Probably the only film ever made featuring a bizarre love triangle between two men and a female corpse, *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* also acts for an audacious (and probably accidental) allegory for not only the death of Icelandic-Canadian culture, but also the Occident in general. Indeed, it is quite telling in regard to the dubious state of contemporary cinema when a modern-day director decides to adopt European cinematic conventions and aesthetics that are well past half a century old as Guy

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Maddin did with *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, the only film that has managed to make me laugh at a late nineteenth-century smallpox epidemic.

-Ty E

ARCHANGEL

Guy Maddin (1990)

After watching the Canadian auteur filmmaker's extra bizarre and surprisingly gay and pornographic short *The Little White Cloud That Cried* (2009)—a kaleidoscopic tribute to compulsively campy homo auteur Jack Smith (*Flaming Creatures*, *Normal Love*) featuring trannys sucking cock and engaging in surrealist orgies, among other things—I felt it was about time to reexamine some of the earlier and more gritty works of Guy Maddin (*The Saddest Music in the World*, *Brand Upon the Brain!*). Considering Maddin's debut feature *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) is unequivocally my favorite film directed by the auteur, I naturally decided to re-watch his second feature *Archangel* (1990), which I found to be equally as obsessively oneiric as obscenely incoherent and convoluted when I first saw the film about a decade ago. Of course, like most of Maddin's films, which are exploding with countless strikingly and singular images and instances of hyper hermetic humor, the film becomes much more coherent and thoroughly enthralling upon subsequent viewings. Naturally, as a work where the central theme is amnesia, the film is an intentionally confusing work that actually manages to induce amnesia and delirium in the viewer, or as auteur Maddin himself once even stated, "ARCHANGEL is a film literally directed by an amnesiac delirious from the strangeness of directing a film." Maybe I have developed a high tolerance for cinematic hermeticism as a result of watching one too many Werner Schroeter flicks, but I found absolutely nothing about the film to be inaccessible upon my recent second viewing. Initially imagined as what Maddin once described in the book *Kino Delirium: The Films Of Guy Maddin* (2000) by Caelum Vatnsdal as "the most irritating pro-war movie since THE GREEN BERETS," *Archangel* would ultimately only offend Germans due to its depiction of the Teutonic race as a group of literally bloodthirsty and cannibalistic child-killing 'Huns' and bratwurst-fetisizing sodomites (in fact, in one scene in the film, a creepily kraut soldier forces a bratwurst down another kraut soldier's throat whilst bugging him in the bum). Of course, Maddin's film does not so much feature Teutophobia as it mocks the sort of patently absurd anti-Germanic sentiment featured in Bolshevik flicks like Alexander Dovzhenko's classic anti-kraut agitprop piece *Arsenal* (1929) and largely forgotten Erich von Stroheim vehicles like Allen Holubar's somewhat gruesome D.W. Griffith rip-off *The Heart of Humanity* (1918) and *The Unbeliever* (1918) directed by Alan Crosland (who is probably best known today for *The Jazz Singer* (1927) starring Al Jolson in his iconic blackface performance), Howard Hawks' *Sergeant York* (1941) and various films directed by Lewis Milestone (real name Leib Milstein) like *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and *The North Star* (1943) aka *Armored Attack*. Set during the winter of 1919 at the end of the First World War in 'Arkhangelsk' in northwestern Russia in a place where the populous suffers

ARCHANGEL

from collective amnesia and is still fighting sinister Huns and poorly dressed Bolsheviks, Maddin's film is a sort of absurdly dark war-romance hybrid featuring an exceedingly eccentric approach to humor that makes the anti-Aryan satire of Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) seem both asinine and philistine in its commie-symph (meta)political satire. Indeed, if one learns anything while watching Maddin's film, it is that Westerners, especially North Americans, seem to have collective amnesia when it comes to not only the anti-German sentiment in cinema (which surely still lives on today in 'Jew porn' like Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and David Ayer's *Fury* (2014)), but the Great War in general.

As one can expect from a Maddin film, *Archangel* is patently politically incorrect, but due to the director and his co-writer George Toles' obscenely obsessive idiosyncrasies in terms of themes, humor, and aesthetics, very few people, including highly irritable social justice warriors, would have the gall to criticize the film. On top of making a mockery of the way old school Soviet and Hollywood films mocked Germans, the film is also riddled with the filmmaker's various dubious fetishes, including half-naked children in compromised situations. Of course, arguably the most offensive aspect of the film is Maddin's sort of passive-aggressive cynicism when it comes love and death, which are portrayed as things that are no more significant than taking a shit or going to the drug store. Apparently most influenced by the somewhat obscure and certainly strange Pre-Code era flick *International House* (1933) starring W.C. Fields and featuring Bela Lugosi, which is (in)famous for a scene where scat maestro Cab Calloway sings a song entitled "Reefer Man" in tribute to weed, Maddin's film is nothing if not one of the most absurdly arcane comedies ever made. As described in the film's very first inter-title regarding the time and place of *Archangel*, "The Northernmost tip of old Imperial Russia. Winter of 1919. The Great War has been over for three months, but no one has remembered to tell those who remain in *Archangel*." Meanwhile, one-legged Canadian soldier Lt. John Boles (early Maddin regular turned South Park screenwriter/voice-actor Kyle McCulloch) is an amnesiac who is all melancholy because the woman he loves but can barely remember is dead. Boles is on a ship carrying an urn holding the ashes of his lover Iris and right after saying, "Goodbye Iris," the ship's captain grabs the vase and throws it overboard before the protagonist can. It seems the captain thought the urn was a bottle of alcohol, as he is depicted in a previous scene taking a couple bottles of liquor from some passengers and throwing them overboard. Instead of getting mad at the captain for destroying a highly personal 'ceremony,' Boles salutes the man, thus setting the sort of madly mirthful yet melancholic tone of the film.

After opening 'The Dirge of Lt. John Boles' sequence, the film features an intentionally morally outmoded montage on the subject of 'love' that degenerates into considerably hilarious anti-German propaganda featuring an elderly

Prussian officer with a giant totenkopf hat surrounded in 'Satanic' flames, a cannibalistic kraut commando chomping on the throat and drinking the blood of an enemy soldier, a couple German soldiers violently destroying ancient paintings and Christian icons, and an Aryan firing squad liquidating a prepubescent Aryan boy that looks like he would make for a satisfactory member of the Hitler Youth. Indeed, while beginning with shots of cute babies juxtaposed with sappy narration like, "Love—what do we know of love? We know a baby loves with all its tiny heart...and is loved in return by hearts as simple and as pure. We know a growing child thrives on love...and with its generous limbs apportions that love to the rest of the world," the montage cuts to shots of genocidal German berserkers juxtaposed with lines like, "Then there is pride or self-love—a malignant vanity, insatiable—the pride of the Teuton [...] Why should such a belligerent urge ravage all that is lovely and right. One must forgive, but a crime against humanity is a crime against god. One must have the discipline to fight for what is right in the Lord's eyes. We must restore peace to his earthly garden...For the love of god." While he barely remembers what country he is from or why he is fighting, Boles is a virtual automaton when it comes to his patriotic soldierly duties, which he will ultimately provide to both the White Russians and a small Russian peasant family.

As described in an inter-title, "Chance leads Boles to billet with a family in need." Indeed, not long after arriving in Archangel, Boles wanders into a random home featuring a Cocteau-esque life-size statue of the Holy Virgin with only eye sitting outside the front door and manages to save the life of a young boy named Geza (David Falkenburg) that has just suffered a seizure by rubbing his body with a horse brush (!) After Boles gets the boy's entire family to rub down the poor lad, the protagonist recommends to his mother Danchuk (Sarah Neville of Madden's *Careful* (1992)) and "cowardly father" Janning (Michael Gottli of *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*) that they feed their son horse hair because he thinks the boy might have worms. As a reward for reviving her son, Danchuk gives Boles a prosthetic leg which he proudly describes as being, "An almost perfect fit." When a fairly beautiful nurse-cum-actress named Veronkha (Kathy Marykuca) randomly shows up, Boles mistakes her for his dead beloved Iris and faints. Veronkha was married to a Belgian aviator named Philbin (Ari Cohen of Bruce McDonald's *The Tracey Fragments* (2007)), but he, not unlike Boles, suffers from amnesia and unwittingly cheated on his wife on their wedding night so she had their marriage annulled. While he forgot the fact he got married on his wedding night, Philbin now thinks everyday is his wedding night (which is described as the, "happiest day of his vague existence"), which greatly pains the terribly lovelorn Veronkha, who complains when he arrives at her home, "Why do you torture me with your presence?" As the film progresses, Boles will not only continue to mistake Veronkha for his dead lover, but the latter will also mistake the former for Philbin.

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While he is told by Danchuk and her family that Veronkha is not Iris while chunky coward Jannings gives him a sponge bath, Boles becomes convinced that the Russian beauty is his soulmate and states, "Then I'm saved. She's not dead after all." When Boles is informed that Veronkha will be performing at a White Russian propaganda play that night, the protagonist declares, "I must look like a prince" and has Danchuk's entire family dress him up like a literal prince for the big event where he will be ostensibly reunited with Iris. Before leaving, Boles becomes quite disturbed upon seeing Danchuk beating her son Geza's bare back with a stick after catching him fiddling some war medals, so the protagonist berates the boy's father Janning by asking him, "Isn't it the man's place to discipline a wayward child?" and proceeds to beat the boy himself after asking his mother, "I'm not used to seeing a woman doing a man's job. Would you mind?" After ruthlessly beating Geza like a rabid dog, Boles tells his mother, "He's a good lad. You should be proud of him." As an assumed result of the fact that he is heroic and handsome unlike her much loathed hubby Jannings, Danchuk falls in love with Boles, who seems to reciprocate her feelings to some degree, though she does not compare to Iris or Veronkha. As does oftentimes happen in real-life, the characters in Archangel are hopelessly in love with people they cannot have, with the film's amnesia theme being arguably symbolic for the forgetfulness of the heart when it comes to love.

When Boles arrives at a theater called 'The Illumination,' he is happy to see Veronkha playing 'Mother Russia' in an absurd agitprop adaptation of the ancient Battle of Weseberg of 1268, which is notable in that both sides, the Teutonic Knights and a coalition of Russian princes, would later designate themselves as the victors. Rather absurdly, during the performance, an actor complains, "I'm sorry. I refuse to portray a German," so gentle giant Jannings is recruited to replace him in the role of a "slavering hun" after an announcer calls for "another blonde beast." During the middle of the performance, Philbin, who still thinks it is his honeymoon, goes up on the stage, repeatedly declares, "We'll bait the Huns with our guns and watch the Kaiser roll," and attempts to embrace Veronkha, who violently rejects him. When the announcer requests that a representative of the "Dominion of Canada" come up on the stage, Boles naturally obliges and soon busts Philbin's face in with a rifle butt after he manhandles Veronkha, who he still believes is Iris. While Boles and Veronkha have a short romantic rendezvous with one another where the former asks the latter, "why did you leave me?," because he has mistaken her for Iris, the two never meet the audience's expectation by making love or even making out. After confessing that she kissed him when he passed out earlier in the film, Veronkha hands Boles a large archaic map that Philbin previously gave her and claimed was their marriage certificate. Before leaving his presence, Veronkha encourages Boles to find both her and Iris using the map, which the protagonist most certainly plans to do.

After Boles' somewhat uneventful late night stroll with Veronkha, he walks back to Danchuk's house like a somnambulist, walks on top the roof, and ultimately falls through a window and injures himself. Needless to say, since she is deeply in love with him, Danchuk immediately comes to Boles' aid and embraces him while her coward husband cries like a little baby in bed because he knows that his wifey is in love with the heroic Canadian amnesiac. Of course, with the barbaric Bolshevik hordes soon arriving in Archangel, everyone in the town has to put their obsessive heartbreak on hold and prepare to fight to the death. In a rather bizarre and even somewhat crappy scene that one could only find in a Guy Maddin flick, Boles sleeps naked in bed with Geza, who wakes up in the middle of the night after becoming disturbed to find dozens of (animated) spiders crawling on his little unclad body. The next day, Boles tells Geza to protect his grandma aka 'baba' from the Bolsheviks and when the boy asks what they look like, the protagonist replies, "Oh, they are terrible creatures. Half-man, half beast. They have great big eyes, great big ears, and great big claws." When everyone eventually goes to battle against the Bolshevik beasts, many of the soldiers, including a Congolese negro and Orthodox priest, fall asleep. Naturally, Boles ends up mistaking these sleeping warriors for corpses.

When a couple Bolsheviks break into Danchuk's home and attempt to steal her baby, lard ass sissy Jannings barely has time get up after waking up from a deep sleep before having his large gut slit open by a red savage. While succumbing to his fatal wound, Jannings manages to shed his cowardliness and strangles a Bolshevik with his intestines, thus saving his baby from being eaten by a rabid Marxist maniac. Meanwhile, Boles uses the map given to him by Veronkha to find her and while walking around, he finds various soldiers making love in the snow. When Boles eventually finds Veronkha on the battlefield, she seems to have more of a lust for blood than him (as expressed in comments like, "Your face is so bloody. I feel so alive"), but she eventually comes around and falls in love with protagonist. Indeed, after once again marrying Philbin and heading to a place called Aerodrome airport, Veronkha states to her hubby during mid-flight, "He struck that hateful head of yours in blood, but not enough. You're still alive." Out of anger, Philbin strikes his bride and, as detailed in an intertitle, "As a result of the shock, Veronkha joins her two lovers in forgetfulness. Total amnesia. Boles now has his Iris." Indeed, Veronkha falls for Boles and the two even steal Danchuk's baby thinking it is their own. Meanwhile, little Geza is killed in battle and his ghost is reunited with his father Janning's ghost, who informs him that he died a hero and not a coward after strangling a Bolshevik with his own intestines. As ghosts, father and son have finally developed a deep bond in what is indubitably one of the more 'sweet' and 'sentimental' moments of the film.

Upon seeing her hubby Philbin, Veronkha regains her memory and complains to Boles, "My husband. What have you done? You've made me a prisoner [...]"

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if you ever touch me again, I'll kill you," thus leaving the protagonist totally destroyed. After his own heart is broken, Boles breaks Danchuk's heart by giving her baby back and making it quite clear to her he has no romantic interest in him. After a kraut blows him up with a bomb reading "Gott Strafe Kanada" on the battlefield, Boles nearly dies and states while melodramatically spitting up blood, "My name is John Boles. I'm in Archangel...fighting a war. I'm trying to find the woman I love. IRIS!" Luckily, a Swiss soldier manages to refurbish Boles' body with some sort of quirky machine, but the protagonist is too late to reunite with Veronkha, who has once again married Philbin and is flying away with him in a plane out of Archangel. In the end, a gang of gorgeous gals kiss Boles, but he is too forlornly lovelorn to give a damn.

In an audio commentary track for a DVD release of *Archangel*, auteur Guy Maddin describes how the amnesia theme of the film was influenced by his own tendency to forget marriages, promises he made, people that died and other personal things in his life that he probably preferred to forget. As far as aesthetic influences on the theme of amnesia, Maddin names Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), the romantic melodrama *Random Harvest* (1942) starring Ronald Colman and Greer Garson, and the Henry Green novel *Back* (1946). Of course, in terms of imagery, the film owes a lot to pseudo-aristocratic Hebrews Erich von Stroheim and Josef von Sternberg, with the latter's 'evil Hun' archetype being quite prominent throughout the film. In fact, certain Germans found the film to be highly offensive, or as Maddin recounted in the book *Kino Delirium*, "The movie had its very first screening in Munich, and there's some really good anti-German propaganda in there. I remember a couple of blond beasts at the back of the room putting up their hands in a very rigid manner to get my attention, and asking me if I didn't like Germans very much. I told them 'No, no. I love Germans!' It seemed the prudent thing to say. I was waiting for years for a question about the minstrel [in *GIMLI HOSPITAL*], but instead here I was getting questioned by Aryans who wanted to know if I liked them or not. I had a more ready answer for any angry minstrels out there than I did for the Aryans."

I got the sense while watching the film that, like most of Maddin's work, *Archangel* is the expression of a Nordic degenerate who feels completely out of touch with the modern world yet cannot quite truly understand the past 'Eurocentric' world in any innate way, hence his propensity for mocking and satirizing film styles and events of the past while simultaneously paying a strange sort of fan-boy tribute to them. Either way, in his own sort of self-loathing and comically idiosyncratic way, Maddin is arguably the most Nordic of the filmmakers today, but then again, there are not really any other filmmakers who make films with titles like *Odin's Shield Maiden* (2007) or phantasmagoric yet fetishistic pieces of offbeat postmodern Icelandic folklore like *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*. Aside from his love of von Sternberg and the classics, as well as seeming disillusionment with romance, Maddin shares a lot in common with the great

late Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid due to their seemingly innate rejection of the modern world (notably, while he was still living in Germany with his pal Fassbinder, Schmid was one of the only filmmakers who vocally rejected the counter-culture movement and other vapid 'liberation' movements). Despite Maddin's seeming love of European culture and tradition, Archangel makes not a single reference to the fact that the so-called Russian revolution, which was started mostly by Jews and other 'minorities,' more or less marked the beginning of the end of Old Europa. Indeed, one of the greatest aspects of Maddin's films is that they demonstrate a certain naivety regarding the modern world and all its ugliness, even if his works reflect a certain cynicism when it comes to issues of romance and interpersonal relations. As a work that sends me to a completely otherworldly cinematic universe and helps me forget about the sad joke that is the contemporary Occidental world, Archangel certainly features the sort of amnesia that I and many other old souls need. Undoubtedly, one of Maddin's greatest talents is that he is a true master of escapism and nowhere else in his oeuvre is this more apparent than in his second feature.

-Ty E

CAREFUL
CAREFUL

Guy Maddin (1992)

Guy Maddin's *Careful* is no doubt the directors fantasies and obsessions shot on film. I don't think many filmmakers would be interested in making a contemporary German mountain film (genre from the 1920s and 1930s). I couldn't imagine someone taking the genre and adding incest. Only Canadian auteur Guy Maddin would attempt such risky conquests. *Careful* for me is a very soothing film. Beautiful cinematography, sets, and lighting makes for a dreamlike experience. Various mountain climbing silhouettes are also featured echoing back to the days of Arnold Fanck and mountain films like *Holy Mountain* (starring master art propagandist Leni Riefenstahl). Guy Maddin is the only filmmaker capable of utilizing almost century old film techniques and giving them new life (Soviet Montage in McDonalds commercials doesn't count). Hand-tinted color sequences also add to the films already vintage aesthetic. Assumed Germanic Alpine village of Tolzbad is where this masterpiece takes place. All animals in this town no longer have their vocal chords as loud noises can (and have) cause deadly avalanches. The actors of the film keep their vocal levels to a quite whisper complimenting their proper linguistic etiquette. Guy Maddin has a very distinct sense of humor. One that would most likely offend most. *Careful* features a very memorable and complimenting soundtrack. This "jingle" got me excited for each new scene. The overall sound of *Careful* is low-fi and cracking. Guy Maddin is very specific with each little detail in his films. Thankfully the Canadian government helped Maddin finance the film as very few filmmakers could get away with how personal his films are. Incest, suicide, skinny dipping, snow flurries, and fatherly ghosts are all found in *Careful*. The film is by far my favorite from Maddin. *Careful* is a surrealist dream of luscious colors that radiate warmth (in contrast to the films snowy setting). The film makes me wish I grew up in the mountains of Germanic Switzerland 100 years ago.

-Ty E

THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Guy Maddin (2000) A compelling and hectic narrative delivered flawlessly in 6 minutes. Wait, What? Guy Maddin's ode to German Expressionism is starkly one of the best short films of our time. Maddin honors the sanctity of the classic Soviet propaganda films, German Expressionism, and Russian silent films. Brief title cards explain the very thick plot in words and much symbolism is to be poured over. Thanks to the amazing song Time Forward by Georgi Sviridov, the film is complete with a "rushed" feeling of apocalyptic urgency. The odyssey portrayed is one basically left up to interpretation. What I garnered from it - Two rivaling brothers with extremely different career paths both share a love for the same woman. A female scientist, she stares into the core of the earth and notices a metal flesh-pod which has a withering heartbeat. Making the conclusion that the world is dying, she herself must announce it. Chaos explodes. Towns people start conducting orgies and mass alcoholism. The one Brother Osip (Had an acting role as Jesus) becomes a messianic figure to half of the population while the other side factions against him. The two brothers begin a fierce rivalry before the end of the world. In between their feuding comes a Soviet banker who woos the beautifully dead-looking Anna off her feet in a paralyzing trance of greed. Realizing what she's done after giving herself up to him, she kills Capitalism (the banker) and burrows into the center of the earth and becomes the Earth's new heart. Osip's effort to win her stand-alone love was converting the masses into his followers. A bold attempt, I might add. Humble Nikolai's attempt is creating phallic statues erupting from coffins of the dead. A young mortician - he defaces the dead in his version of love expression. Soon the dead appear to come to life after the sacrilegious effort. The world has really gone to hell. Soon after, cinema reigns king as the word KINO is chanted over and over again, announcing a time in which cinema rules all as the new "heart" is projected on everyone's bodies. The principle concept of the woman falling for bags of coins and not love strikes a chord with most women in society. The commentary representing the fact that it's "just a phase" is there, but doesn't make me respect "gold diggers" anymore. Eventually, she sacrifices the idea of "love" in general, denouncing the fact that women can change and are born to be corrupted into puppets. She would just rather not hurting either of the men she loves so much. The styles of film-making Maddin expresses are the best of all eras. He takes a bit from all classics to create a new wave silent propaganda expressionist film; A working bastard fusion attempt at creating art. This film features stunning editing and effects along with an accurate yet gorgeous viewpoint on feminism. The Heart of the World represents a male perspective of the experimental style Maya Deren used. A sure-fire symbolic classic.

-mAQ

BONDAGE GAME
BONDAGE GAME

Hajime T. (2003)

When you think of the words disgusting or brutal in association with film, chances are you are thinking of the Guinea Pig series or Irreversible. After watching this rough and extreme two-chapter hentai, I am now pretty haunted by the display of forbidden sexualities and these images will not leave my head. This animated series has all the anti-virtuous fetishes displayed in the most vulgar and vile of ways. Due to the extreme content of this film, it is impossible to find any appropriate screen shots. When Yuu awakens in a mysterious mansion, she discovers she has no memory of anything and discovers herself in a house of slavery and sodomy. Several females are there with the same situation. Yuu soon realizes that she either pleases every whim of the master or even the men he prostitutes her out too or meet horrific consequences. Part Salo, part Bloodsucking Freaks, this series' intentions is only to disturb and please. There is no doubt that you will feel something while watching this. You will either be aroused by some deep desire, or disgusted and appalled by the events on the screen. Do not expect a discernible ending. You will be left with questions and you will still feel like shit. The fetishes are various and revolting in matter. We have extreme scatology including a scene with the toilet hooked up to various tubes throughout the house hooking in a mouth harness, pumping every bit of defecation into these young girls mouths. We have butt plugs and diaper fetishes. Urination galore and sexual mutilation is the placeholder of most commonly used fetish. The women are eventually given a penis in a sex operation. Some of the fetishes are sarcastic and exaggerated such as when a male customer injects a females breast with something that causes them to grow enormously in size, thus allowing them to fuck her nipples. Tit fuck was never a phrase to be taken seriously. People are bound to be offended. Bondage Game is a bastard orphaned child of Jess Franco's films. Women in Prison has never been filmed so atrociously. Expect about an hour and ten minutes of pure rape and degradation. A film like this is hard to rate per say. I can't say i enjoyed it, but it wasn't bad for what it was, a severe rough misogynist porn. I have no choice but to recommend you to not see it, due to the highly graphic content and ill-fated women being used as a tool; an object.

-mAQ

SHAMPOO

Hal Ashby (1975)

By most accounts, it seems that Warren Beatty was the most masterfully manipulative male whore working in Hollywood during the 1960s through 1980s, so it is only fitting that one of his greatest acting performances would be as a super slutty stud that knows how to tell women what they want to hear in a film project that he produced, co-penned, and was largely in control of. Indeed, Shampoo (1975) directed by Hal Ashby (The Last Detail, Being There) stars Beatty as a curiously rampantly heterosexual male hairdresser that fucks virtually every single women in his life yet, despite being a flagrant man-whore that probably puts a Thai tranny to shame in terms of moral bankruptcy, the character somewhat ironically has the total opposite mentality as the actor that portrays him as he is a somewhat passive and self-destructive male bimbo that is routinely sexually used by women as opposed to being the scheming user and abuser like the legendary Bonnie and Clyde star. In fact, despite the film being a sexually-charged farce that lampoons the epidemic lechery of Los Angeles bourgeois during the beginning of the end of the so-called sexual revolution, Beatty portrays one of the most pathetic and tragic characters of his career as a perennial pretty boy player that may incessantly pound premium grade posh pussy but he is ultimately too much of a weak and intemperate fuck-up to ever maintain a lasting and meaningful relationship, thus resulting in the sad stud coming to the bitter realization that he will be forced to wander from needy uptight twat to needy uptight twat for eternity. While most other men need lots of cash if they want grade A Hollywood gash, the film's haplessly horny hero does not even need to hunt for cultivated cunt, as he constantly has women practically incessantly rubbing their asses and pussies in his face. Of course, being a virtual gigantic walking and talking hard-on has its quite glaring negative sides as it means most women see you as nothing more than a disposable dildo that can simply be thrown away or washed and used again every so often. As a film set on November 4, 1968 during the election eve before Tricky Dick took the White House, the film naturally has the sort of lame ass mainstream Hollywood white liberal message that one has come to expect for a political retarded hypocritical celebrities like Beatty who seem to believe that getting involved in shallow and superficial dogooder activism will somehow exonerate them for their sinful lives of debauched hedonism and greed, yet thankfully its political message is, at least artistically speaking, secondary to its sardonic assault on the counterculture zeitgeist and sexual liberation. Indeed, instead of blaming the Manson Family for the death of free love and hippie (anti)values like the mainstream media, the film marks the election of Richard Nixon as the date when finally began to give up on their unhinged utopian delusions, though thankfully it also rips vogue bohemian mores to shreds. Somewhat curiously, it should also be noted that

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one of the most sympathetic characters of the film is a middle-aged conservative businessman who wants to trade in his whore of a wife for a much younger and fresher piece of high maintenance female flesh.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, aspect of Shampoo is its fiercely farcical critique of the so-called fairer sex, which is depicted as trading in motherhood and marriage for senseless hedonism and unofficial prostitution, among other less than noble things that tend to be typical of many contemporary post-feminist broads in the West. Indeed, not only does the film make women seem more sexually voracious and shameless than men, but it also takes place in a sort of Hollywood high-dollar whore microcosm where every single female character engages in hypergamy and is with a man simply because of the size of his bank account, with the lead protagonist being innately incapable of keeping a woman around because he refuses to settle down and make something out of himself. Despite the film's sometimes absurd tone, it was actually based on various real-life characters in Hollywood, as co-writer Betty and Robert Towne based the story on Ashby's then-wife Joan Marshall's Hollywood friends (considering how recklessly lecherous the women in the film are, it should be no surprise that Marshall died of AIDS related causes in 1992). In fact, Marshall, who has a small role in the film, was so upset about how her friends were depicted in her hubby's flick that it more or less ruined her marriage with Ashby and friendships with Betty and Towne. Of course, as Shampoo clearly demonstrates, marriages in Hollywood are about as sacred as a bowel movement, so I doubt that Ashby—a lapsed Mormon and pathological pothead that had a curious fetish for tall and flat-chested blondes—considered it much of a loss.

Somewhat charitably described by puffery-plagued fangirl Pauline Kael—a well known starfucker that was regularly courted by Betty and Towne at the time (as Betty's bud Buck Henry once stated, "Towne had Kael wrapped around his finger")—as a sort of reworking of both Jean Renoir's classic comedy of manners *The Rules of the Game* (1939) and Ingmar Bergman's arthouse sex-comedy *Sommarnattens leende* (1955) aka *Smiles of a Summer Night*, Shampoo is a sort of satirical tragicomedy disguised as a risqué counterculture romp where so-called 'free love' is ultimately revealed to have a hefty emotional and even metaphysical price, even if you're a morally challenged male bimbo. Borrowing its general storyline from William Wycherley's anti-puritan Restoration comedy *The Country Wife* (1675) about a rake that pretends he is impotent so that a group of married gentlemen will not be suspicious of the fact that he is fucking their wives, Ashby's film follows a lovably dopey and compulsively charismatic yet hopelessly dysfunctional and self-destructive dimestore Don Juan that works as a hairdresser who pretends he is a homo so that a potential business partner does not suspect that he is screwing his wife, mistress, and even daughter, among various other lecherous ladies that make up a conspicuously cunt community of rich Los Angeles bitches that think it is perfectly fine to engage in

adultery to get the much needed sexual thrills that their opulent yet less than orgasmically sound sad-sack-of-shit cuckold spouses lack. In short, the wicked yet wanton women featured in the film use their cunts like currency and the only man that gets to penetrate their pussies for free is a buffoonish Beverly Hills male bimbo who knows how to satisfy a woman with his famous gravy-giver. As if he has some sort of magical erotic powers that distinguish him from all other men, the hairdresser protagonist merely has to touch a woman's hair to let her know that he can cause various eruptions of ecstasy in her spunk-pot. Indeed, the character might be a piece of shit who has no qualms about fucking men over by routinely fucking their wives, but he also might be the only flagrant womanizer in cinema history that the viewer comes to feel sorry for, thus underscoring Beatty's singular talent for emotional manipulation and seduction.

As Paul Schrader once stated regarding Beatty and his mastery of manipulating females, "If she was a twenty-two-year-old starlet, he would get her in one way. If she was a sixty-year-old film critic, he would get her another way." In that sense, Beatty is a lot different from the character he portrays in *Shampoo*, as the protagonist has a fairly one-dimensional agenda and is pretty much interested in only one thing: warm, wet vagina. While the less than heroic hairdresser claims that he dreams of owning his own beauty salon (which might as well be a one-man gigolo brothel), one suspects that he is not even really serious about that, or at least that is what the viewer is led to believe as a result of his incessantly reckless behavior. Notably, the film stars Beatty's then-longtime-girlfriend Julie Christie in an unforgettable performance where it is quite clear that her chemistry with her lover was still quite intact, even if the actor dumped his beloved for Mamas & the Papas member turned actress Michelle Phillips during production. As a proud feminist of sorts, Christie naturally loathed the film's script and only agreed to star in the film as a favor to her best beau. While Beatty was used to everyone kissing his ass, Christie had no problem telling him he was a hack that created garbage films, or as Peter Biskind reveals in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998) in regard to what the actress said to her ex-beau while they were filming an important scene in *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), "in the film, romantic music is swelling up on the soundtrack, drowning out their conversation, wherein Christie was saying, in her clipped British accent, 'I can't believe you're still making these fucking dumb movies when, I mean, there are people all over Europe making fabulous films, about real things, Fassbinder and so on, and you're still doing this shit,' and then she'd smile at him as if she had honey on her tongue."

As far as I am concerned, Christie was completely right as Beatty is more of a devilishly charming opportunist than a serious artist and the films he later personally directed (e.g. *Reds* (1981), *Bulworth* (1998)) reveal him to be the worst sort of deracinated and clinically narcissistic WASP white liberal traitor who has led the way for the cultural, moral, and racial decline of the United States, yet

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Shampoo is the one film where I will give him his due as a true auteur, even if he was not actually credited as the director. While he originally planned to direct the film himself, he was concerned about the fact he had no directing experience, so he eventually opted to contract a passive director-for-hire that he could control, or as Biskind speculated as to why the actor ultimately chose Ashby, "Beatty knew him slightly, and liked him. Ashby was a stoner; he smoked dope morning, noon, and night. Not only did this not bother Beatty, it may have been a plus, since it would quickly become apparent that he did not intend to let Ashby do much in the way of directing, anyway." Indeed, Beatty had so much control over the film that there were times during production that he actually kicked Ashby off his own set, but of course it all worked out in the end as Shampoo is easily one of the Harold and Maude director's greatest and most iconoclastic films. While the film might not feature an eccentric love affair between a young wealthy suicidal wuss and an eccentric elderly Holocaust survivor like in Ashby's overrated cult flick, it features more irresistible ingredients like Ms. Christie talking about how great of a cocksucker she is and Carrie Fischer accusing Beatty of being a fag, among other things.

As a man that has penetrated an eclectic assortment of famous fancy-bits, including those belonging to Natalie Wood and her elder sister Lana, Isabelle Adjani, Cher, Twiggy, Madonna, Brigitte Bardot, Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia, Vanessa Redgrave, Daryl Hannah, Jane Fonda, Margaux Hemingway, JFK's widow Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Brigitte Bardot, Maria Callas, and Liv Ullmann, among countless others, Beatty does not exactly seem like he has the appropriate credentials for what might be described as a stereotypical misogynist, but Shampoo certainly indicates otherwise and reveals the actor turned auteur to be a fellow whose contempt for the minds and habits of women is only transcended by his love for their cooters and hooters. Indeed, arguably the closest thing to a cinematic equivalent to German-American sage H.L. Mencken's classic ironically titled text *In Defense of Women* (1918) in terms of being a magnificent piece of satirical American misogyny that takes a rather suave and stylish approach to mocking the vainest, most materialistic and morally bankrupt of female creatures, the film manages to expose many rather unflattering aspects of the so-called fairer sex via a seductive brand of satire that demonstrates why Beatty is one of the most talented glorified hustlers to have worked in Hollywood. While annoying mischling Jewess Carly Simon may have been able to get her revenge against Beatty with the uniquely obnoxious song "You're So Vain," the actor-cum-auteur effortlessly assaults every-women-he-has-ever-fucked-and-then-some with Shampoo, which is a film that ultimately reveals that women are just as untrustworthy and duplicitous in the bedroom as they are in pretty much every other aspect of their social lives and that, if it were up to them, women would have at least two male companions: a happily cuckolded perennial bank to pay for stupid shit like shoes and a sort of human-dildo to

satisfy insatiable sexual needs. Of course, as the film rather rudely and crudely yet nonetheless somehow eloquently reveals, most women prefer to marry an old and sexually pathetic cuckold than a handsome hunk with big junk, as material wealth and security always trumps true love and sexual satisfaction for most chicks, especially glacial bourgeois broads. In short, Shampoo depicts a world where women are fully exposed and not wearing their very carefully applied figurative makeup.

To go back to Mencken, he once delightfully defined a 'misogynist' as, "A man who hates women as much as women hate one another," though there are a couple scenes in Shampoo, namely a feud between character played by Julie Christie and Lee Grant (as well as Grant versus by a rather nubile Princess Leia, who portrays her busty yet bitchy daughter), that hint that women actually hate each other more than any heterosexual man ever could. Naturally, a Hollywood Casanova like Beatty that spends a lot of time in the company of needy hot chicks that are used to getting whatever they want is likely to form some sharply negative opinions of women as a whole, or like the great Viennese anti-Semite semite Otto Weininger once noted, "No men who really think deeply about women retain a high opinion of them; men either despise women or they have never thought seriously about them." Undoubtedly, Beatty and his kosher co-writer Towne (who was the actor's longtime bitch and was even described by mutual friends as Beatty's "shadow" since he followed him around everywhere) spent a lot of time philosophizing on the curious habits and psychology of female kind during the eight long years that they spent writing (and constantly rewriting) the screenplay and thankfully the results are devastatingly hilarious, especially in regard to their incendiary insights in regard to the power of pussy and the oftentimes preposterously petty behavior of those individuals that have one. For instance, in its depiction of a group of women who only seem to think about fucking and/or hating a certain fellow that they believe has fucked them over, the film recalls Weininger's keen observation, "Woman is neither high-minded nor low-minded, strong-minded nor weak-minded. She is the opposite of all these. Mind cannot be predicated of her at all; she is mindless. That, however, does not imply weak-mindedness in the ordinary sense of the term, the absence of the capacity to 'get her bearings' in ordinary everyday life. Cunning, calculation, 'cleverness', are much more usual and constant in the woman than in the man, if there be a personal self end in view. A woman is never so stupid as a man can be." Unquestionably, Beatty's character personifies this specific male stupidity that Weininger speaks of, as he has the potential to totally reinvent his life and become very rich yet lacks the self-discipline it takes to keep his pecker in his pants long enough not to fuck the wife, mistress, and daughter of the nice and generous businessman that could give him everything he needs to achieve his goals. Likewise, the conservative businessman played by Jack Warden suffers from his own form of male stupidity, as he is somehow totally oblivious to

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the fact that his wife is carrying on a lurid love affair with the protagonist even though he himself has a mistress and thus should be aware of some of the general warning signs of adultery. Unflattering depictions of both genders aside, Shampoo also demonstrates that men and women truly cannot live with or without one another, especially when the pesky crippling emotion of love is involved.

Beginning with a nearly pitch black domestic lovemaking scene that would later be put to abject shame by Aryan Kaganof's nihilistic romance *The Mozart Bird* (1993) in terms of lack of visual clarity where the viewer listens as a cheating rich bitch named Felicia Karpf (Lee Grant) forcefully tells protagonist George Roundy (Beatty) how to move his member so that she can best reach sexual climax, Shampoo immediately establishes a biting raunchy yet delicious romp tone that is made all the more joyously humorous by its inclusion of the classic Beach Boy song "Wouldn't It Be Nice," though this same tune will be put to ironic use when it appears again during the film's surprisingly sad and bitterly melancholic conclusion. Marvelous man-whore George—a character that was apparently inspired by real-life Hollywood hairdresser Jay Sebring who, with his ex-girlfriend Sharon Tate, was infamously brutally slaughtered by the Manson Family during the summer of 1969—is a seemingly lucky man with a distinctly unmanly job who has a steady flow of premium grade posh pussy, even though he is technically in a relationship with a borderline braindead blonde bimbo model named Jill (Goldie Hawn), who is so dumb and childlike that she is fully willing to accept all of her serial cheater boy toy's rather lazy lies and cheesy compliments. In fact, at the beginning of the film, George is so preoccupied with pussy that he has to bullshit his way out of leaving his own apartment just so that he can see his girlfriend because hyper horny human feline Felicia seems to suffer the delusional that she is the only one that he is currently fucking. While Felicia seems like a dumb bitch that only cares about her hair and her hairdresser, she is certainly right when she remarks to George that his "problem" is that he "knows too many sick ladies." Of course, George is sick too, but that is just not a fact that he is willing to recognize because if he has anything to be proud of in his life, it is that he has fucked every single woman he knows, or so he proudly explains to his girlfriend after he is forced to come clean about his debauchery towards the end of the film.

Although it is never made exactly clear why George and Jill are even in a relationship with one another since the two are never even depicted fucking, the viewer suspects that the protagonist is with her simply because she is too dumb and naïve to even consider that she is in a relationship with an unrepentant womanizer that has literally nothing to offer her except phony shallow compliments like "you're great" and ludicrous excuses about how he one day plans to get his shit together and open up his own super chic beauty salon. Indeed, as the film clearly reveals, George was dumped by past girlfriends due to his incapacity to settle down and get serious about his life. In fact, Jill's best friend is George's

ex-girlfriend Jackie Shawn (Julie Christie), who states regarding her reason for dumping the protagonist and later getting with an old and less than sexually appealing businessman, "It's really great to wake up in the morning with your rent paid. I'm afraid George was just too much of a gypsy for me." After wising up and realizing that intense multiple orgasms do not pay the bills, Jackie got herself a rather conveniently unwitting conservative businessman sugar daddy named Lester Karpf (Jack Warden), who also happens to be the much resented husband of George's MILF mistress Felicia. Ultimately, the main plot of the film is ignited when Felicia makes the unwittingly foolish mistake of offering to hook up her fuck-boy George with her hubby Lester as a potential business partner for a beauty salon, thus leading to the protagonist being inadvertently reunited with his great old flame Jackie. Of course, as soon becomes quite clear to the viewer, George and Jackie are still very much in love with one another. Indeed, if there is one pussy that George would be willing to settle on for the rest of his life, it is Jackie. As for Jackie, she is a rapidly aging beauty that values security most and thus seems to love money more than George, but that does not stop her from potentially risking everything by riding the protagonist's seemingly world famous fuckstick.

As many other ordinary men would also probably assume, Lester assumes George is a gay boi upon first meeting him since he is a fashionably dressed longhaired hairdresser who asks him for money to start his very own hair salon. Since it is November 4, 1968 on the eve of the presidential election, businessman Lester plans to attend a Republican Party election night soiree and he wants ostensible homo George to escort his mistress Jackie to the event since his wife Felicia will also be attending. As demonstrated by her venomous remark, "Oh, I just can't wait to see Lester with me and that cunt in the same room," Jackie seems especially excited about the Nixon party as she will finally get the opportunity to confront her equally connivingly cunt rival, but of course the event turns out to be a abject disaster for all those involved. Before the big night, George reacquaints himself with Jackie and makes it quite clear that he is not happy with her new beau by remarking, "I don't fuck anybody for money. I do it for fun," thus underscoring the innate differences between the sexes in general. When the two finally get done expressing their long festering post-breakup resentment towards one another, George eventually agrees to go to Jackie's house to do her hair since it makes her look like a "hooker." As can be expected from two ex-lovers who are still very much attracted to each another, it does not take long before George and Jackie proceed to reacquaint their genitals with one another, but Lester unwittingly cock-blocks the protagonist by randomly showing up at his mistress' humble abode with a present. While George pretends to act extra faggy so that George is not suspicious since the businessman walks in on them while his mistress is wearing nothing but a small towel, the ex-lovers will be considerably less lucky after they both get drunk later that night. Needless to say,

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it will not be the last time George and Jackie risk getting caught literally with their pants down.

Naturally, as a considerably cute young woman whose boyfriend never fucks her and is constantly hanging around other women, Jill begins having serious doubts about her relationship with George. At one point, Jill even casually expresses an interest in having children by randomly remarking, "You know what I read in COSMOPOLITAN? If you don't have a baby before you're 30, you'll have a Mongolian idiot," but George simply ignores what she says and changes the subject. When Jill is offered an important photo shoot job that will require her to be away in Egyptian for weeks, she cannot decide if she wants to accept the assignment since it would mean that she would have to be away from George for such a long period of time. Needless to say, when George expresses total disinterest with the fact that she might be away for a couple weeks, Jill serious doubts about their rapidly stagnating relationship only get worse. Unbeknownst to Jill, George has similar concerns about the future of their relationship, as he confesses to Jackie in a somewhat pathetic fashion, "I don't know... I can sense these things. She needs to be with somebody that can take care of her." When Jill eventually decides to verbally berate George for his incessant immature behavior and lack of reliability, the protagonist completely breaks down and confesses to her while on the verge of tears, "You're right. I just want us to have a normal life, like everybody else. Jesus, I just can't take it anymore. All I want is to get up early, run my own business...take you out to a movie on the weekend. I'm trying, honey. I just can't get out of my own way." While Jill is moved by George's rare moment of impassioned vulnerability and attempts to comfort him by lovingly caressing his body, her attitude soon changes when she subsequently finds a female earring in his bed and thus assumes her beau is banging some other dumb babe. At this point, Jill begins considering dating a dorky commercial director named Johnny Pope (actor, director, and producer Tony Bill) who will conveniently be working on the same Egyptian photo shoot that she has been offered. Indeed, Jill may be a hopelessly infantile shit-for-brains dingbat with the emotional and intellectual maturity of a hyper sensitive toddler, but like many women she is already preparing the way for a new boyfriend before she even dumps her current one.

Before the big Republican party, George stops by the luxurious Karpf mansion for a quick fuck with Felicia and he finds himself mounting her extremely nubile (and assumedly underage) daughter Lorna (Carrie Fisher in her film debut) instead. Indeed, almost immediately after first meeting little Lorna, whose nipples are noticeably quite hard, she begins baiting him by asking him highly evasive questions like "Are you gay?" and "Are you queer?" and by stating extremely degrading things like, "Do you have a thing about older women? That's sort of faggoty, isn't it? [...] Beverly Hills hairdresser. You might as well be a faggot." Of course, being a perennial peacemaker that avoids conflict at all costs, especially when it comes to delectable dames, George practically begs Lorna like

a sensitive toddler, “Can’t we just be friends?” to which the inordinately feisty teenage replies after thinking for a moment, “Ok. You want to fuck?” Naturally, George cannot turn down those large teenage titties, so he engages in a little bip-bam-thank-you-ma’am lechery with Lorna in her bedroom. Needless to say, when Felicia finally gets home and realizes that her big bosomed daughter has just gotten banged by her personal fuck toy, she decides to get her revenge against her pernicious progeny by immediately fucking George while the doors to her bedroom are open so that everyone in the house can hear their inter-generational humping. Now that he has already fucked his wife and daughter behind Lester’s back, it is only natural that George eventually concludes the day by screwing the businessman’s prized mistress.

In what ultimately proves to be a majorly moronic move that reveals that he does not really care about his beloved, George agrees to allow Jill to bring Johnny Pope as a date to the Republican dinner, thus giving his girlfriend the opportunity to bond with the mensch who will soon be her new boyfriend. As soon as they arrive at the event, Jackie immediately begins drinking and hitting on George, who tries his damndest to keep the peace while acting like a pathetic little groveling ponce. When Lester finds himself in the supremely awkward situation of having to introduce his mistress to his wife, the negative feminine energy practically engulfs the entire room and both Jackie and her rival Felicia begin individually expressing their hatred for the hapless businessman while the protagonist tries in vain to keep the almost murderously jealous women happy. When the dinner eventually begins, an elderly Jewish businessman of the shamelessly sleazy sort named Sid Roth (Hebraic schlockmeister William Castle) attempts to hit on Jackie by telling her that he could get her whatever she wants. Naturally, the sleazy semite is somewhat taken aback when Jackie points to George and states, “Most of all...I’d like to suck his cock.” At this point, Jackie demonstrates that she has lost all control by asking George, “Who’s the greatest cocksucker in the world?” and then proceeding to attempt to prove that she is the international champion of cocksucking by going under the dinner table and beginning to suck the protagonist off in front of all of the party guests. Naturally, when Lester notices this, he tells George to immediately escort Jackie from the building, but before he can the horny heroine informs her sugar daddy that he is a “phony asshole.” Rather absurdly, Lester somehow does not realize that George is not actually gay even after Felicia gives him head under the dinner table, but luckily the protagonist will make it quite clear that he is far from a limp-wristed cum-guzzling queer later that night.

After the decidedly disastrous Republican dinner, George and Jackie head to a gigantic Bacchanalian orgy of a party that is full of voluptuous unclad hippie chicks covered in crude body-paint, super fly dope-smoking Jimi Hendrix wannabes, exceedingly effeminate white hippie wimps, and other counterculture rabble that seem to think that listening to the Beatles while smoking and

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drinking is a revolutionary act (indeed, during this scene, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" rather fittingly plays loudly in the background). After mutually admiring the legs and asses of some nude chicks, Jackie reveals to George that she always used to get mad at him when they were together because, as she confesses to the somewhat surprised protagonist, "you're always so happy...about everything. I found it rather unrealistic." Upon entering a small guest house away from the party, George breaks down and states to Jackie, "We're kidding ourselves. You know, last night I had a dream. I was 50 years old...and I was supposed to meet Jill at the shop. Boy, it scared the hell out of me. I can't imagine being with Jill when I'm 50 years old. I can't imagine not being with you." Needless to say, the two begin to make love in what is undoubtedly the most passionate sex scene in the entire film. Unfortunately, Lester, Jill, and Johnny end up going to the same party and all three of them happen to catch George and Jackie sharing carnal knowledge. Indeed, when Lester sees George and Jackie having sex, he initially does not realize who they are, so he gestures for Jill and Johnny to watch while crudely remarking, "That's what I call fucking. Am I right or am I right?" Of course, the three eventually realize it is George and Jackie and Jill reacts by immediately leaving the party with her new beau Johnny, but not before throwing a chair through a window and hatefully calling her (ex)lover a, "bastard" and "son of a bitch." After trying and failing to chase Jill down, George ultimately leaves the party alone on his motorbike after Jackie also leaves without him. Had George not betrayed her by leaving her naked and vulnerable in the guest house while he was chasing after Jill, Jackie might have possibly considered getting back with the protagonist, but he is an eternal fuck-up and loser that somehow manages to always make the wrong decision in every single situation.

The next morning when George finally gets home to his dirty apartment, he is quite startled to find Lester and two thug bodyguards in fancy suits waiting for him. Somewhat surprisingly, George manages to get out of the potentially highly deleterious situation without getting his ass beat after coming clean and more or less telling Lester the truth. While Lester fears that he has something personally against him or that he is some anti-establishment degenerate that hates businessmen, George manages to calm most of his fears and insecurities by explaining that he did not plan to fuck Jackie. In fact, in the one insistence during the conversation where the protagonist seems to be lying, George even foolishly tells Lester that Jackie genuinely cares about him and that she is not just some cheap tramp that is simply using him for his money, thus giving the old businessman the incentive to rekindle things with her (indeed, Lester may be cheating on his wife, but he does seem to greatly love and care about Jackie, hence why he is willing to believe George's lie). George also gives Lester so much needed advice about women and how all they think about his how some guy fucked them over, stating, "That's all that's on their minds. That's all I ever

hear about [...] Face it, we're always trying to nail them and they know it. They don't like it. They like it and they don't like it." At this point, it becomes quite clear for the first time that George does not exactly love and respect women as the viewer might have originally assumed. Indeed, George may be a sexual stud, but he is hardly an authentic alpha-man, as he is essentially a weak pussy-addicted moron that is not beneath groveling to members of the opposite sex who long ago realized that catering to female insecurities was the quickest way to get a woman in bed. While somewhat goofy, Lester, who is indubitably George's exact opposite, is a real alpha-male as a self-made businessman and born go-getter who is not afraid to grab life by the balls and achieve his goals, hence why he, and not the all-too-passive protagonist, ultimately walks away with Jackie in the end. When George decides to pay Jill a visit, she predictably tells him that their long disintegrating relationship is over and then sternly demands to know how many women he cheated on her with since she believes it will help her "help" because she'll then know for sure that he's "incapable of love." After stuttering for a brief moment, George gets the gall to triumphantly boast to Jackie, "Let's face it. I fucked them all. I mean, that's what I do. That's why I went to beauty school. I mean, they're always there, and [...] I don't know what I'm apologizing for. So sometimes I fuck them [...] It makes me feel like I'm gonna live forever [...] I don't have any regrets [...] maybe that means I don't love them. Maybe it means I don't love you, I don't know. Nobody's gonna tell me I don't like them very much." While George does not seem particularly heartbroken about his breakup with Jill, he unfortunately does indeed seem to love Jackie. When George randomly shows up at Jackie's house, she begs him to leave and then decides to get in her car and drive away when he refuses. In what is indubitably one of the weakest and most lackluster yet strangely passionate and heartwarming chase scenes in cinema history, George speeds after Jackie on his motorbike until the two eventually symbolically end up at a dead-end on a small cliff overlooking her neighborhood. While George immediately emotionally declares his love and devotion for Jackie and explains how he will do anything for her, she tells him in a sincerely somber fashion that "It's too late" because she is leaving very soon to go to Acapulco with Lester and that they plan to be married since the businessman has finally left Felicia. At this point, George begs while on the verge of tears, "Please, honey. I don't trust anybody but you," but Jackie simply embraces him for a second while crying and then quickly leaves to go meet Lester back at her house. In the end in what is a somewhat surprisingly melancholic lovesick conclusion, George stands on the edge of the cliff overlooking Jackie's house and watches as his great love leaves with Lester. Of course, if one considers that George was apparently partly based off of real-life Manson Family victim Jay Sebring, the conclusion of the film seems all the gloomier and disheartening. It should also be noted that the film comes full circle in the end and concludes with same exact Beach Boys song that it begins with. Of course, considering the

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merry optimistic lyrics of “Wouldn’t It Be Nice,” the image of George staring into what seems to be eternity as he bitterly confronts his harsh reality of his midlife despair seems all the more poignant, as he will never be able to achieve what these seemingly simple and old-fashioned desires express: “Wouldn’t it be nice if we were older, Then we wouldn’t have to wait so long...And wouldn’t it be nice to live together, In the kind of world where we belong [...]Wouldn’t it be nice if we could wake up, In the morning when the day is new...And after having spent the day together, Hold each other close the whole night through [...]We could be married, And then we’d be happy.” Indeed, in the end, George finally comes to realize that his life has reached its peak and that the best he can hope for is that he will be able to maintain his position as a virtual bourgeois gigolo for another decade or so before his handsomeness evaporates and his sexual potency fizzles.

While nowhere near as popular and influential nowadays, Shampoo was so popular and successful upon its release that it inspired a typically pathetic blaxploitation rip-off entitled *Black Shampoo* (1976) aka *Sex at the Salon* directed by exploitation hack Greydon Clark (*Without Warning*, *Skinheads*). Considering its almost shockingly unflattering depiction of women and various sleazy Jewish caricatures (e.g. William Castle as ‘Sid Roth’), there is certainly no way that such a playfully incendiary and iconoclastic film could be made in Hollywood nowadays and, in that sense, I feel it is more important (not to mention more clever and thoughtful) than popular ‘American New Wave’ classics like *The Graduate* (1967), *Head* (1968), *Alice’s Restaurant* (1969), *Easy Rider* (1969), and even *M*A*S*H* (1970), and I say that as someone that generally loathes Beatty. In fact, before watching the film, I assumed it would be the most insufferable sort of mindless and would-be-hip celluloid counterculture crud, yet it ultimately proved to be one of the most mirthfully misogynistic films ever made and a rare example where Beatty’s shameless and seemingly sociopathic charming talents have resulted in something truly positive and artistically merited. As a special added bonus, the film also manages to highlight the fact that the dubious spirit that inspired the so-called ‘Summer of Love’ had completely burned out and that the only thing left of that zeitgeist were the self-destructive qualities like meaningless sex, drug addiction, and vulgar fashion senses. Of course, with his largely shallow and soulless Mercedes Marxist movies like the epically banal pseudo-Lean-esque bolshevik melodrama *Reds*, Beatty would ultimately prove that he was more interested in narcissistic virtue signaling and phony political posturing than actually contributing something new and intriguing to the art of cinema. Considering Beatty’s greatest talent was conning extremely rich, beautiful, and powerful women into helping him further his career and allowing him to invade their naughty bits, it is only natural that his greatest artistic achievement would be creating a film that proves that women are just as shameless and sexually voracious as men, though the fact that their greatest currency is their cunts

means that they have to use it wisely lest they get stuck in a relationship a man who can only offer them orgasms and lazy excuses. To Beatty's credit, quite unlike his character in *Shampoo*, he eventually gave up womanizing, married and had four children with Annette Bening, and unequivocally demonstrated that his family was more important to him than his singular career in Hollywood.

Considering her shallow feminist pretenses and initial moral opposition to even being in the film (notably, when her career began to fizzle out, she appeared in Sally Potter's low-budget feminist experimental drama *The Gold Diggers* (1983)), I find it especially satisfying that Julie Christie gives arguably one of the greatest performances in her career in *Shampoo* and that her real-life ultimately proved to be similarly soulless to that of her character. Indeed, like so many brainwashed beauties of her era, Christie is barren childless woman who decided having a career and various unreliable boyfriends like Beatty was more important than reproducing her clearly excellent genetics. While I might be a man and thus lack maternal instincts, I find very few things sadder than when a beautiful, intelligent, and/or otherwise talented woman neglects to reproduce and pass on her legacy, especially considering the fact that we live in a decidedly dysgenic world where corrupt Western government subsidize the existences of alien *untermenschen* that breed like rats and only exist largely due to Occidental medicine and the involuntary generosity of mostly white taxpayers that typically cannot afford to have that many kids themselves. In that sense, Christie's role as the highly successful yet severely unhappy eponymous sexpot who suffers the eternal regret of having an abortion and cannot seem to find a decent man in John Schlesinger's scathing satire *Darling* (1965) seems to have been eerily prophetic. Of course, one must also give credit to Beatty for getting his proud feminist girlfriend to savagely salaciously state that she wants to suck his cock in a movie that millions of people would ultimately see. Not surprisingly, Beatty did not just exploit his then-girlfriend as he was prone to suavely harass all of the women he worked with, including sensitive virgins, or as revealed in Biskind's *Star: How Warren Beatty Seduced America* (2010) in regard to the Hollywood star's behavior on the *Shampoo* set, "Carrie Fisher had her own problems [...] She remembered that as the producer, Beatty would do whatever he wanted with her, ask her to try on this bra, that bra, no bra. She felt he was just messing with her, treating her like a doll. Even though she felt objectified, she found it hard to be offended because Beatty's manner was so playful. He was having fun, if she wasn't. Beatty teased her for being a virgin in front of the crew and cast, embarrassing her, making her feel like a moron. She recalled, 'He offered to relieve me of the huge burden of my virginity. Four times.'" Although I am not a professional psychologist, the above description of Beatty suggests that he might suffer from some serious form of narcissistic personality disorder, but of course that is ultimately what makes him so intriguing and what makes *Shampoo* especially enthralling. After all, while it is obvious to anyone that has a brain and is not a

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social justice warrior that Beatty's insufferably lame pseudo-altruistic leftism activism was nothing more than moral posturing and a patently pathetic publicity stunt to obscure the fact that he is one of the most supremely self-centered and narcissistic leading men of cinema history, the film is a rare look at the real man, whose womanizing goes hand-in-hand with his covert misogyny. As Shampoo reveals, not all woman-haters are virginal wimps that jerk off to Sapphic Hentai in their grandmother's basement, as there is a somewhat rarer pedigree of misogynist of the alpha-stud oriented sort that has no problem exploiting female weaknesses and insecurities just so that he can get to that special warm and wet place in between her legs.

As the great Teutonic philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once wrote in his classic essay *On Women* (1851) regarding the innate immaturity of the fairer sex, "The nobler and more perfect a thing is, the later and slower it is in arriving at maturity. A man reaches the maturity of his reasoning powers and mental faculties hardly before the age of twenty-eight; a woman, at eighteen. And then, too, in the case of woman, it is only reason of a sort – very niggard in its dimensions. This is why women remain children their whole life long; never seeing anything but what is quite close to them, cleaving to the present moment, taking appearance for reality, and preferring trifles to matters of the first importance [...] In their hearts women think that it is men's business to earn money and theirs to spend it – if possible during their husband's life, but, at any rate, after his death. The very fact that their husband hands them over his earnings for purposes of housekeeping strengthens them in this belief." Of course, things have gotten much worse in the West since Schopenhauer originally wrote these words, as women still expect their husband's earnings but are less apt to clean the house or plop out a kid or two, as man-made (emphasis on "man") technology and birth control have given them the power to artificially survive on their own without the need of a man, thus instilling them with a completely delusional sense of independence and self-confidence (which of course is further compounded by feminist brainwashing) that has influenced them to make greater demands of men while at the same time completely neglecting traditional female duties, hence the surplus of single childless women in their mid-20s through 40s who have fucked too many men and who have become too insatiable in their material greed and quest for optimum personal comfort to ever become decent wives or mothers. While Schopenhauer, who had no problem carrying on carnal affairs with street urchins and prostitutes despite his intellectual prowess and cultivated background, paints a rather unflattering portrait of women in his essay, Shampoo more or less makes women seem like sexually savage social parasites that, whether it be sex or wealth, see men as a means to an end and nothing more. In short, one should not feel too bad about fucking another man's wife or girlfriend, as the woman certainly does not, but then again, if you're like me, you would avoid such lecherous ladies at all costs. In fact, if you are interested in a

woman and want to audit her for moral defects, it might be a wise idea to have her watch Ashby's film and then have a conversation with her about the characters and their behavior. Needless to say, if she describes Beatty's character as a "stud" or Christie's character as "chic" or "empowered," run for the hills!

-Ty E

THE SIMPLE-MINDED MURDERER
THE SIMPLE-MINDED MURDERER

Hans Alfredson (1982)

Undoubtedly, if any Nordic nation has all but totally turned its back on Allfather Odin and replaced him with innately alien slave-morality-driven atheistic humanism and has ultimately been hit the worst by the terminal metaphysical disease of liberalism, it is Sweden. With their most popular contemporary films being the superficially sadomasochistic man-hating crime film trilogy based on the "Millennium series" written by commie feminist cuckold Stieg Larsson, it is quite apparent that Sweden is a spiritually sick country that makes the ethnomasochism of the filmmakers of German New Cinema seem rather benign by comparison. Maybe it all started with the melancholy melodramas of Ingmar Bergman (*Through a Glass Darkly*, *Persona*) or the cynically class conscious and culturally pessimistic feminist flicks of Mai Zetterling (*Älskande par* aka *Loving Couples*, *Nattlek* aka *Night Games*), but few national film industries have been so thoroughly and lunatically liberalized and culturally Marxified as that of the Swedes and there are few better examples of this perturbing phenomenon of both cultural and cinematic self-flagellation than *Den enfaldige mördaren* (1982) aka *The Simple-Minded Murderer* directed by Hans Alfredson (*Egg! Egg! A Hardboiled Story*, P & B) starring a rather young Stellan Skarsgård portraying a half-retarded fellow with an unflattering harelip. Sort of like a Swedish *Forrest Gump*, except relentlessly and stoically somber in the manner only Swedes know how to do and minus most of the humor, *The Simple-Minded Murderer* is an anti-fascist, anti-heimat film of sorts set during the 1930s in rural Skåne, Sweden, that quasi-operatically depicts the tragic events that occur after an Aryan handicapped young man's mother dies and he is forced to become the virtual slave of a stereotypically evil Nazi factory owner who makes his life a living hell. Winning three Guldbagge Awards from the Swedish Film Institute, including Best Director (Hans Alfredsson), Best Movie and Best Actor (Stellan Skarsgård), as well as the Silver Bear for Best Actor (Stellan's role as the protagonist) at the 32nd Berlin International Film Festival, *The Simple-Minded Murderer* is undoubtedly considered an unmitigated masterpiece of Swedish cinema, with alpha-auteur Ingmar Bergman even praising the flick, describing it as, "A deep indignation, turned into a powerful fairy-tale. Hasse Alfredssons resources seem unlimited and my admiration for his creativity and the wealth of his ideas is absolute." However, the film also has the sickening stench of post-WWII self-loathing, which has become a sort of quasi-kitschy cliché of Swedish cinema as demonstrated by internationally revered works like *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2009) and its equally aesthetically and thematically repellant sequels based on far-leftist Larsson's Millennium series. Directed by a man known for his idiosyncratic brand of "humorist humanism," *The Simple-Minded Murderer* is an undeniably powerful and entrancing work largely aesthetically inspired by

the composition *Requiem* (1874) aka *Messa da Requiem* by Italian romantic composer Giuseppe Verdi, but it is also a superlatively sad reminder that one of the most iconic figures of Swedish cinema is a violent and vengeful retarded killer.

Opening with mentally-challenged and harelip-adorned protagonist Sven (Stellan Skarsgård, himself a proud and vocal atheist humanist) driving his paraplegic girlfriend Anna (Maria Johansson) to the middle of nowhere in rural 1930s Sweden and hiding in an old house, *The Simple-Minded Murderer*—with its rather literal title—makes it quite clear from the very beginning that the protagonist has just committed a violent killing and is evading justice, especially after he throws a large bloodstained blade into a well, as the rest of the film provocatively unravels how the vengeful crime came to be. The only images he has seen of his father being that of a völkisch-like painting at the local museum of his dead daddy riding a horse on the beach nude and a small wallet-sized soldier portrait, Sven—a uniquely unlucky lad born with a cleft palate and suffering from both a glaring speech impediment and a lack of intellectual prowess—only had a mother growing up, so when she dies, his life is turned into a virtual hell after he is forced to live with cows and work for free at the farm of an evil fascist factory owner named Höglund (played by director Hans Alfredsson), a superlatively sadistic man that beats his chauffeur, taunts and terrorizes his wife, and takes great personal glee in burning the last bit of rent money given to him by a tenant on Christmas who could not afford to give him the money in the first place. Although giving Sven a sense of dignity for a moment or so by allowing him to act as his personal chauffeur and driving him to debauched aristocratic parties with drunk naked chicks, Höglund eventually goes too far when he forces the halfwit Aryan boy to dress in drag for the entertainment of the local National Socialist party that the factory owner belongs to, thus ushering in an unlikely and ultimately murderous rivalry between a poor retarded fellow and a nasty Nazi aristocrat that concludes in tragedy for all parties involved.

Deciding enough is enough, Sven escapes Höglund farm and takes residence with the Andersson family, who are somewhat successful tenant farmers who lease land from 'fascist pig' Höglund. Under the roof of the kindly Anderssons, Sven develops a sense of dignity and worth he never felt before, even falling in love with the family's crippled daughter Anna, which the girl's parents encourage, but things take a turn for the worst when high-class heathen Höglund, who is quite angered by the family's genuine charity to a mentally-challenged man that he sees as his own personal slave, demands his harelippered serf back. Refusing to argue with peasants (as he states himself), Höglund wages a war of physical and psychological terrorism against Sven and the Anderssons, even attempting to impoverish the family, which, with his monetary prowess, he does quite easily. It is not until Höglund has his callous and perverted (he reads ebony porn magazines while working) chauffeur destroy Sven's fancy motorcycle—a special item

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that the special boy worked hard to buy and get a license for—that the disabled young man begins to see red and decides to take aggressive action of the ostensibly holy homicidal sort. A deeply devout Christian in the ‘true believer’ sense not unlike the crazed character Johannes from Carl Th. Dreyer’s *Ordet* (1955) who went so insane that he thought he was Jesus Christ himself after reading too much Søren Kierkegaard, Sven, who is initially too sensitive and childlike to drown a rat (which he fails doing early on in the film), believes he has angelic homicidal powers after supposedly being visited by three angels and believing the sacred seraphim want him to take revenge and join them in heaven, the outsider hero with a harelip grabs a large blade (with the supposed angels following him behind), goes to Höglund in broad daylight in front of a number of witnesses and maliciously murders the proletarian-exploiting fascist factory man in cold blood in what is indubitably the most therapeutic revenge scene in all of cinema history. In the end, Sven takes his limp limbed lady love Anna with him out to the middle of nowhere so they can assumedly start a new fairytale life together without being discovered by the police. In a rather unhappy twist, Anna, spotting police and her father closing in on them at their forest hideout, shoots both Sven and herself in a sort of handicapped take on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Indeed, while contemporary Swedish cinema certainly demonstrates the Swedes have become spiritual cuckolds and eunuchs of sorts, that does not mean these degenerated descendents of Vikings have become totally passive and pathetic people as one of the most common and potent themes of modern cinema in the Nordic nation is good old unadulterated revenge, albeit of the fashionable anti-fascist/anti-capitalist fashion, with *The Simple-Minded Murderer* being arguably the greatest of these films. Of course, aside from the more bitchy and bitter than sweet feminist-fueled work *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and its equally overrated sequels, the Guldbagge-Award-winning flick *Evil* (2003) aka *Ondskan*—a work based on an autobiographical novel written by treacherous Swedish journalist Jan Guillou who worked as a spy for the Soviet KGB—is also a highly viscerally vengeful anti-heimat work set during the 1950s about a young man who single-handedly destroys the ‘fascist’ aristocratic classic structures and politics of a private boarding school. Even Swedish horror films, most notably the vampire flick *Let the Right One In* (2008) directed by Tomas Alfredson—not by coincidence the son of *The Simple-Minded Murderer* director/actor Hans Alfredson—also focuses on revenge, albeit of the supernatural coming-of-age sort where the boy protagonist sides with an ancient eunuch vampire who helps him literally slaughter his child enemies. Indeed, a sort of degenerate Odin archetype might live on today in the collective unconscious of the Swedish people as demonstrated by contemporary Swedish cinema, but too many centuries of Christianity and decades of anti-fascist communist/feminist/multicultural propaganda have turned these lapsed Vikings into a bunch of slave-morality-sanctioning metaphysical slaves who, as demonstrated

by *The Simple-Minded Murderer*, prefer filmic folk heroes of the deformed and rather retarded sort to heroic knights in shining armor and virtuous kings of the enemy-exterminating sort. A carelessly cliché work set in the 1930s at the rise of fascism that assumes in the Trotskyite sense that fascists and factory owners are one in the same and that all the masters derive grand pleasure for perniciously poking and prodding at the figurative wounds of morally virtuous slaves, *The Simple-Minded Murderer* is a cinematic work that would be great if it were not for its redundancy in self-righteous quasi-red revenge politics. Of course, just as the Germanic races Aryanized Christianity, so have they done the same with commie politics and there is probably no greater cinematic example of Odinic bloodlust meets Nordish Christianity meets Nordic far-leftism than *The Simple-Minded Murderer*, a work of uncompromising celluloid vengeance that is ultimately compromised in terms of pseudo-moralistic redundancy of the hopeless holocaust-atoning variety.

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Hans Fädler (1985)

While there is a long and 'rich' history of queer German cinema that had its peak during the 1970s through early 1980s yet dates all the way back to the silent era with works like Richard Oswald's *Anders als die Andern* (1919) aka *Different from the Others* starring Conrad Veidt and co-penned and featuring a cameo from kosher cockucker sexologist Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld and Carl Theodor Dreyer's bizarre bisexual love triangle *Michael* (1924) starring Häxan: *Witchcraft Through the Ages* (1922) director Benjamin Christensen in the last acting role of her career, Germany's more traditionally conservative Catholic neighbor Austria does not have as nearly an extensive and eclectic aberrosexual film history, though that does not mean it is of total disinterest when it comes to fag flicks. Indeed, as an Austrian comrade told me, in comparison to Germany, "Our degeneracy is saucier and has more style... Austria's Baroque-Catholic heritage at work here." Also, for whatever reason, Austrian queer cinema seems to be dominated by highly idiosyncratic and disturbingly aggressive carpet-munchers as demonstrated by absurdly wayward Super-8 cyber-dyke flicks like *Rote Ohren fetzen durch Asche* (1992) aka *Flaming Ears* co-directed by Ursula Puerrer, A. Hans Scheirl, Dietmar Schipek and the surrealist Sapphic celluloid experiments of Mara Mattuschka like *Der Einzug des Rokoko ins Inselreich der Huzzis* (1989) aka *The Rise of Rococo in the Island Kingdom of the Huzzi People* and the rather bizarre *Godzilla* parody *S.O.S. Extraterrestrica* (1994), which features the director as a truly monstrous, gynocentric erotomaniac that uses the Eiffel Tower as a sort of makeshift dildo while members of the German Wehrmacht blow her away with a storm of bullets. Luckily for self-respecting Austrian Catholics everywhere, the Germanic nation is better known for producing *Übermensch* beings like Arnold a Schwarzenegger than raging kraut queens like Rosa von Praunheim, thus there really is not many cocksucker cult classics to choose from aside from a couple obscure films like *Wiener Brut* (1985) aka *Sounds of Snow* aka *Vintage Vienna* directed by one-time auteur Hans Fädler. A sort of punk-tinged sub-high-camp tragicomedy featuring Viennese punk queer squatters and outstandingly arrogant cocaine-addled aristocrats as portrayed by feisty fags in drag, Fädler's somewhat respectable debauched debut certainly demonstrates that the director could have potentially been Austria's answer to von Praunheim had he not perished a couple years after the film was released as a result of gay cancer. From the von Praunheim and Lothar Lambert school of gay Germanic filmmaking, Fädler's flick is nothing if not great fag filmic fun that will appeal to both politically incorrect poofs and the sort of more discerning heterosexual cinephile who enjoys the films of the Kuchar brothers and the early pre-*Hairspray* cinematic works of John Waters. While Austria is not exactly best known for its campy cult cinema, *Wiener Brut* is unequivocally a

work that manages to be just as intemperately zany, jovially absurd, and shemale-saturated as classic Cockettes vehicles like Michael Kalmen's *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972) and Milton Miron's *Tricia's Wedding* (1972). Sardonicly advertised as a "Heimatfilm," Fädler's farcical flick naturally attacks the Austrian monarchy, Catholic Church, and, quite predictably, the country's infamous National Socialist past, albeit in such a pathologically campy way that is ultimately homos, drag queens, dykes and punks that seem the most ridiculous in the end. Indeed, while watching the film, you would never suspect that a grotesque narcissistic mutant freak like Conchita Wurst would become the most world famous Austrian figure just 21 years later, thus reflecting the deluge of malignant degeneracy that has completely consumed Europa over the past two decades. In other words, *Wiener Brut* was made at a time when it still took some testicular fortitude to be a prancing fairy or a chick-with-a-dick, thus it has a crude charm about it that reminds one how obnoxious, anally retentive, and just plain bourgeoisie fags have become since the softcore authoritarian mainstreaming of aberrosexuality in the Occident.

In what might be described as an act of tongue-in-cheek aesthetic irony (or, more realistically, a lack of funding), *Wiener Brut* was shot in a sort of gritty 'social realist' style typical of far-left New German Cinema works from the late-1960s and early-1970s like Christian Ziewer's *Liebe Mutter, mir geht es gut* (1972) aka *Dear Mother, I'm All Right*. Of course, considering it was partially shot at a real gay punk squat (which apparently still exists today) and stars real-life punks and homos that look genuinely depraved and even sometimes AIDS-ridden, the film does have a certain quite literal 'social realist' dimension to it that is part of its cheap charm. Additionally, with its depiction of such absurd culture-besmirching scenarios as a sexually depraved punk twink sporting lederhosen, the film follows in the (anti)tradition of the overtly silly Heimat satires of Walter Bockmayer like *Flammende Herzen* (1978) aka *Flaming Hearts* and especially *Geierwally* (1988). Beginning with a headshot of a slutty looking blonde tranny diva singing an extra kitschy pro-pot ballad with lyrics like, "Dürnstein Gold! Grass for good times! You don't have to be a Marlboro Man to enjoy it!" and then putting the stem of a pot leaf in between her teeth in a provocative pseudo-sexual fashion, the film then cuts to a satirical prologue that reads: "It is the year 1984! Everywhere in Europe and almost all over the world people are living in grueling slavery. Wantonly addicted to power and possession, sex and drugs and desires of every kind, more dead than alive they are eagerly awaiting a nuclear holocaust or a total ecological breakdown to release them from their drudgery." As indicated by an excerpt from a news program, a dozen queer punk degenerates have taken over an old abandoned building in Vienna that is fittingly located at a place called Grass Street and have turned it into their own little slice of hyper hedonistic homo heaven where men can fuck men while sporting jockstraps while high on heroin and weed without the threat of being gay-bashed. Unfortunately, trouble

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arises when a pesky and hopelessly naive social worker of the fat and homely goes by the squat and begins threatening the squatters' god given sodomite rights.

When a fat, short, stubby, and extra homely social worker of the meek and glaringly socially awkward sort named Hilde Urbanek shows up at the punk squat and dares to ask about the whereabouts of a short blonde teenage babe named Angelika Kotschnik, she is disturbed to discover that the inside of the building is completely pitch black and a weirdo with a commie Red Army hat named 'Ferdl' (Franz Brendinger) is having a hyper histrionic "psychotic fit." When Hilde informs Ferdl that she is a social worker, he proceeds to go on a nonsensical spiel about how he regularly goes by the local unemployment office to look for work and then scares her by absurdly stating, "I'm a cancerous sore on the face of this earth and you are nothing but scumballs." Naturally, Hilde is no less disturbed when she investigates the various eclectically themed rooms in the squat and discovers a demented bull-dyke in lingerie riding on top of a pantless middle-aged bourgeois dork like she is bull-riding, a jaded junky shooting junk into his arm, and two naked poofs spooning each other on a bed with leopard print sheets, among other unsavory things. When Hilde walks in on a topless blonde in the process of beginning a hot and heavy threesome with two gay twinkles and realizes that the girl is actually the teen Angelika Kotschnik that she is looking for, she becomes so shocked that she tells the girl that she plans to report her to the authorities and then abruptly runs out of the room like a petrified toddler. Upon running out of the room, Hilde overhears one of the punks saying, "Well, we can't let her get away like this. Let's grab her" and then has a delusion vision of her strangled corpse inside a telephone booth. In a sort of intentionally ersatz-ominous chase scene that mocks horror genre conventions in a somewhat Schlingensief-*esque* fashion, Hilde is followed in the woods by a sinisterly chuckling Ferdl and eventually passes out upon running up to a car for help and then suffering the shock that it is actually full of the punks, including the savage little slut Angelika. Luckily for the terribly naive social worker, the punks, especially Ferdl, decide to get Hilde addicted to opium tea and brainwash her with a moronic punk Weltanschauung instead of actually killing her.

As can be expected from such a proudly anarchistic low-budget punk (anti)Heimat flick that wallows in its own technical ineptness and narrative incoherence, Wiener Brut has various subplots that either go nowhere or end quite anticlimactically. Since virtually all of the characters are either blond Nordic fags or decadently dressed drag queens (not to mention the fact that some of the actors play multiple roles), it is sometimes hard to tell who is who in the film, at least the first time you watch it. Certainly, one of the characters that you cannot mistake or forget is 'Her Royal Highness Maria Carolina' (Johannes Weidinger, who later partially funded the gay agitprop doc Paragraph 175 (2000) co-directed by American homo Hebrews Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman), who is the supposed niece of the ex-empress of Austria and is naturally portrayed by a minty

mensch in drag. After supposedly suffering the dual tragedy of receiving an internal abdominal injury after falling off an horse and having her valuable jewels stolen as is broadcasted on a special news report, Baroness Maria Carolina is visited by her all the more bitchy cousin with the somewhat fitting Proustian name Baroness von Guermantes (played by Kurt Freimüller, who also co-penned the script), who bitches at Her Royal Highness, “Ma chere cousin, I have always warned you of your fatal desire for wild young studs. You should have known what delicate and painful consequences it could have.” Indeed, while apparently reporting to the media that she was the victim of a horse accident, it seems that Maria Carolina actually fell prey to a violent thieving hustler. Unfortunately, despite her aristocratic cultivation, Maria Carolina has a softspot for seedy male sluts and she ultimately finds herself in a very intricately precarious situation when she decides to hire one of the punk poof squatters as her new butler-cum-whore.

When a certain Baroness Putpus (Rudi Katzer) shows up at her lavish countryside estate, Frogville Castle, Maria Carolina becomes highly agitated, at least until her faithful frenemy whips out some high-grade cocaine and declares, “Virgin snow from Colombia.” Indeed, like all of her blueblood shemale sisters, Maria Carolina is a voracious coke fiend and she will even go so far as to semi-tolerate mere bourgeois buffoons and lumpenprole peasants if the rich man’s candy is involved. After hiring a young punk squatter named ‘Lyn’ (Artur Singer) who she rechristens ‘Bela’ as her new butler after an extensive selection process that involves inspecting the muscles and members of the job applicants, Maria Carolina and her wealthy friends face potential tragedy when their tranny drug dealer aka ‘court coke supplier’ Alfonso (Erna Frühgeburch) is arrested by the cops. Naturally, Maria Carolina eventually orders her new bitch-boy Bela to cop her some coke. As a quasi-bisexual blond beast that fucks dykes (indeed, while fucking one particularly aggressive lily-licker, he compliments her by moaning, “You make John Wayne look like a sugar-plum fairy!”), screws random men in telephone booths while a group of confused Arabs watch, and wins that butler position by proudly showing off his “darkie dicky” and “chocolate balls” to Maria Carolina and her friends, Bela is an unscrupulous opportunist and shameless slut that will do literally anything to get what he wants. While Bela starts out simply sporting lederhosen and being the Baroness’ 24/7 royal fuck-boy, he soon begins driving Maria Carolina around in her Mercedes convertible while hunting for Cocteau’s kick, but things naturally do not stop there as the gay gigolo has uniquely unsavory personal connections that might prove to be quite useful for his employer’s aristocratic ambitions. Indeed, after failing to procure coke, Maria Carolina becomes more ambitious and comes up with the wacky idea to get Bela to convince his punk squatter friends to run a revolution that she names “The Black Friday” (notably, the baroness and her friends mock the Red Army Faction by rightly describing them as, “Political amateurs”) so that

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she and her family can restore the monarchy and once again control all of Austria. As the baroness states regarding her supposed moral right in regard to the revolution, "Since the bourgeoisie cheated us out of our well-earned inheritance, the lumpenproletariat has to serve us in getting our innate rights back." Luckily, Maria Carolina's pedophile cousin is the local Catholic cardinal, so she easily gets the unholy holyman's support for the cocksucker coup. Unfortunately for Maria Carolina, Bela and his punk pals not only make for rather lousy and unreliable revolutionaries since they are dope-addled degenerates who probably lack the intellectual capacity to tie their own shoes, but also have ulterior motives.

As time passes, kidnapped social worker Hilde eventually develops Stockholm syndrome and begins falling in love with punk freak Ferdl, who manages to convince her that work is bad and anarchy is good because, as he absurdly states, "Sure, 'Working frees you', that's what was written at the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp." Ferdl also rationalizes his particularly pathetic pot addiction by stating to Hilde, "The Turks are to blame. When they tried to conquer Vienna in 1683, they left the cellar full of 100 kilo sacks. All hashish." Of course, when Hilde catches Ferdl making out with a hot blonde at a punk show, she decides to dump his sorry ass. Meanwhile, the punks decide to go to a "legalize weed" concert called "INHALE!" (aka INitiative HAsH LEgal!) at a place called the Metropol that is curiously owned by the local conservative party. Not unsurprisingly, bald middle-aged cops show up at the concert in disguise in less than inconspicuous punk garb because they rightly believe it is a "terrorist's nest." During the concert, the lead singer of one of the bands sings super moronic lyrics that epitomize the senseless nihilism of punk like, "Chaos is much better! Chaos I prefer!" and "Fuck yourself! Chaos is much better!," amongst other verbal swill. During the concert, two homo-hating cops decide to gay-bash Bela and even consider raping him, but luckily the seemingly latently gay policemen are scared away when about half a dozen menacing looking punks walk by. As can be expected in such an obnoxiously chaotic film like Wiener Brut, the planned revolution never even happens. Indeed, a large group of the punks end up showing up at Maria Carolina's castle unannounced and make a series of absurd demands to the blueblood drag-queens like how they want to turn the Vienna Opera House into a rock club after the revolution, but the fairly stupid would-be-revolutionaries ultimately give up on pursuing their aims when singing aristocratic ghosts (!) randomly appear out of nowhere and cause them to literally run out of the ancient estate while screaming in terror. In the end, three cops attempt to raid the punk squat, but are scared away when they happen upon junkies shooting up dope, gay orgies, and a political prisoner in a gimp mask and bondage.

With the uniquely undeserved fame of creepy and seemingly half-braindead bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst as a result of winning the the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest as Austria's entrant and subsequently becoming dubbed

the “Queen of Austria” by the anti-Occidental culture-distorting international mainstream media, it seems that the corrosive cocksucker kultur has reached an all-time high in the once great land of legendary Übermenschen like Otto Skorzeny and Schwarzenegger. Indeed, I hate to say it, but I think Russian nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky was right when stated in regard to the wretched Wurst phenomenon, “Fifty years ago the Soviet army occupied Austria. We made a mistake in freeing Austria. We should have stayed,” but I digress. In terms of German-language poof punk squatter flicks, Michael Stock’s ultra gritty debut *Prinz in Hölleland* (1993) aka *Prince in Hell* makes *Wiener Brut* seem like a low-budget Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer flick in terms of sheer of subversive artistry and depravedly debauched idiosyncrasy, yet I still regard it is mandatory viewing for fans of kitsch and camp, especially if you enjoy the early works of Rosa von Praunheim (who was incidentally Stock’s mentor). In its tragicomic satirizing of both the decadent aristocracy and all the more decadent youth subcultures, Fädler’s flick features many similarities Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s rather loose Heinrich von Kleist adaptation *San Domingo* (1970). One of the most interesting aspects of Fädler’s film for me is that all the punk fags and drag queens in it ultimately seem fairly tame and banal in comparison to real-life suburban folk featured in the documentaries of Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl like *Tierische Liebe* (1995) aka *Animal Love* and *Im Keller* (2014) aka *In the Basement*, thus reflecting the decidedly debasing effect that globalization and Americanization have had on everyday Austrians (indeed, many of the subjects in Seidl’s films look and dress exactly like the sort of people I can find at my local Wal-Mart). Surely, in many ways, ostensibly transgressive figures like Conchita Wurst—a totally deracinated and vapid creature that would be totally forgettable were he not sporting the aesthetically revolting combination of a beard, makeup, and a dress—are the ultimate conformists as they represent the sort of model testosterone-free world citizen that certain scheming globalists, who do not want to have to deal with another Uncle Adolf, count on in their campaign for world domination. After all, what could be better for Zionist globalist types like George Soros for easily enslaving a nation than a place that is plagued with a decidedly defective youth population like the sexually and emotionally disturbed and spiritually vapid punk squatters featured in *Wiener Brut*. While punks like to think that they are uncompromising anarchists that are above all forms of law and authority, they are really just the unwitting metaphysical slaves of Marcuse, Abbie Hoffman, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Fat Mike and other phony Hebraic ‘heretics’ who see Europeans and white Americans as nothing more than stupid goyim. Luckily, Fädler’s film manages to make punks seem like shallow drug-addled losers of the emotionally and sexually dysfunctional sort who should probably be all forced to live together in dilapidated old buildings just like in the flick. In its satirizing of a subculture of sexual cripples and dope fiends with stupid haircuts, *Wiener Brut* is probably the closest

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thing to an Austrian equivalent to Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982), albeit sans the sci-fi elements and synthesizer score, thus making it essential viewing for any serious semi-offbeat cinephile.

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RAPE ON THE MOOR

Hans H. König (1952)

Although completely unknown outside of German-speaking nations, the Heimatfilm (“homeland-film”)—a mystical Teutonic film genre typically filmed outdoors in rural settings with a somewhat sentimental tone centering around old fashioned morals, tight knit families, and a quasi-völkisch and mystical infatuation with nature—was quite a popular film genre in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria from about the late 1940s to the early 1970s as the only popular kraut film style that followed in the footsteps of films from the Third Reich era, so it should be no surprise that a number of filmmakers of German New Cinema, including Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, Herbert Achternbusch, and even Rainer Werner Fassbinder, started a fashionable anti-Heimatfilm genre that was somewhat trendy during the late-1960s/early-1970s depicting the Germanic countryside as an absurdly backward place full of bloodthirsty lynch mobs, racist and fag-bashing rednecks, an uneducated and superstitious general populous, and smelly cow turds and mutilated animal corpses. Of course, the far-leftist filmmakers of German New Cinema were not the first people to play with and distort the conventions of the Heimatfilm genre, as demonstrated by the little known (at least anywhere outside of Germany and Austria) and criminally neglected gothic horror Heimat film *Rape on the Moor* (1952) aka *Rosen blühen auf dem Heidegrab* aka *Roses Bloom on the Grave in the Meadow* aka *Dorothee* written and directed by German auteur Hans H. König (*The Little Town Will Go to Sleep*, *Jägerblut*). While only a film director for about a half a decade (he would later work as a TV writer before disappearing entirely), Hans H. König managed to subvert and tweak many conventions of the Heimat genre, while sticking to the general plot structure where a good guy and bad guy fight over a girl, with the good guy winning in the end and everyone ends up living happily ever. Indeed, whilst *Rape on the Moor* essentially follows the typical Heimat plot structure, including the standard romantic subtext, the film does not conclude on a positively positive note as a fiercely foreboding cinematic work that depicts how some things, including boorish rapist kidnappers, that stay the same in the Teutonic countryside are not exactly the most ideal, but nonetheless unavoidable, sort of like cancer. Set in a small Nordic North German village (the film was shot in Bremen (*Worpswede Teufelsmoor*) and Diepholz (*Wietingsmoor*)), *Rape on the Moor* depicts how history has a way of repeating itself when the old Germanic legend of a young beauty named Wilhelmina, who disappeared in a marsh after she was raped by a Swedish soldier during the Thirty Years’ War, is eerily repeated in the modern day when a husky hoghead of a man who will not take no for an answer becomes morbidly infatuated with a young girl who wants nothing to do with him. Featuring swamp scenes that look like a peasant’s take on those featured in F.W. Murnau’s post-expressionist master-

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piece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and a sexually predatory villain who is sort of the proletarian equivalent of the bulky bastard baron featured in *Effi Briest* (1974) directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Rape on the Moor* acts as a sort of celluloid missing link between the pre-Nazi 'grandfather generation' and the filmmakers of German New cinema.

While strolling down a dirt road on her bike, Dorothee Aden (Ruth Niehaus) is approached by lecherous lurker Dietrich Eschmann (Hermann Schomberg)—a boorish and belligerent beast of a farmer that is as tall and heavyset as he is vulgar and unpleasant, thus making quite the apt person for subduing and assaulting fragile young women—who demands to know why the young debutante is avoiding him. Aside from the fact that Dietrich is a married man and she finds him rather repulsive, Dorothee is in love with a young and promising architect named Ludwig Amelung (Armin Dahlen), who will do anything for the woman he loves, even if he must constantly leave town to attend to his job duties. Dietrich, on the other hand, has a rather miserable marriage with his lonely wife Fiete (Gisela von Collande), so much so that when he tells his beloved “I will kill you,” she simply responds with, “Do it” as if she is longing to be put out of her misery. Instead of killing Fiete, Dietrich ends up maliciously molesting his wife, thus demonstrating the sadomasochistic nature of their miscarriage of a marriage. Like a pissed puppy with rabies, wherever Dorothee goes, degenerate Dietrich follows, so the little lass describes him rightfully as being “like an animal” and, like a beast, the bloated ogre has virtually nil control over his sexual urges or so he will prove. During a splendid day while roaming the countryside with her Teuton boy toy Ludwig, Dorothee spots two crows and describes them as being, “The souls of Wilhelmina and the Swede.” According to local folklore, during the Thirty Years' War—a time when, according to Dorothee, “one had to be friendly to the strangers who came from the North or South”—a young and beautiful maiden named Wilhelmina made the mistake of leading a Swedish lieutenant through a moor, where he raped her, so as revenge and, “out of the misery and desperation of her heart,” she later led him to the wetlands where they both disappeared into the earth, never to be seen again. Undoubtedly, Dorothee has a sort of metaphysical feeling that she and Wilhelmina are kindred spirits, which proves to be true in the sense that she is soon raped by Dietrich and she seeks revenge by taking him to the moor, with the goal of killing him and herself, albeit things do not turn out as perfect as planned as her loyal lover Ludwig comes to the rescue in the end. Unfortunately, while Ludwig, with the help of a rescue team (who sport what looks like World War I era German helmets), manage to rescue Dorothee from being forever swallowed up by the earth in just in the nick of time, the emotional damage as a result of the rape and near death/suicide/murder experience may have caused irreparable damage that may or may not destroy the two lovers' relationship in the end. Whether Dorothee and Ludwig ever manage to move on with the traumatic events is questionable,

thus making the kraut countryside seem like a curious and accursed place plagued by blood, soil, and semen.

Although I may be overestimating his love of the Teutons, maybe if he had seen *Rape on the Moor* and the various other subversive Heimat films directed by Hans H. König, Austrian-Jewish-American cineaste Amos Vogel might have thought twice about describing heimat films as “those insufferable, sentimental” kitsch” prosodies to *Fatherland, Soil, and Family*,” in his book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974). Indeed, *Rape on the Moor* takes a more unsettling look at völk history and folklore than probably any others of the 300+ Heimat films made during the 1950s as a work ultimately demonstrating that—aside from love, family, spirituality, and nature worship being a part of folk history—lovelorn jealousy, barbarian invasions, and violent sexual pillaging also came into play because for every happy couple there is a desperate and sometimes deranged third person looking to split them apart who is willing to do anything to achieve their aberrant aims. Unlike anti-Heimat films like *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* and *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) aka *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, which portray Teutonic rural areas as backwards hellholes with a borderline retarded populous of the superlatively superstitious sort, *Rape on the Moor* does not wallow in contempt for the kraut country, but portrays it as a beautiful yet brutal place where both man and nature have the capacity for the most ungodly and unmerciful of atrocities. If *Rape on the Moor* accomplishes anything that is original that makes it stand out from not just Heimat films but horror cinema as well, it is in depicting the countryside as an oneiric and ominous haunted house/graveyard of sorts that has the propensity for literally possessing its inhabitants, especially the character Dorothee, who is summoned by the moor, whispering “The... moor... is... calling” to herself while in an entranced state of wayward ecstasy. Sort of the *Rebecca* (1940) meets *Carnival of Souls* (1962) of Heimat films, *Rape on the Moor* is indisputable proof that Teutonic mysticism and Gothic horror can make for an immaculate combo, but rather unfortunately, aside from Niklaus Schilling’s killer kaleidoscopic work *Nachtschatten* (1972) aka *Nightshade*, I cannot think of another film that has attempted this devilishly delectable celluloid formula.

-Ty E

LUDWIG'S COOK
LUDWIG'S COOK

Hans Jürgen Syberberg (1973)

After discovering the high-camp films of kraut dandy Werner Schroeter (*Der Bomberpilot*, *Deux*) and facing scorn from West German film critics due to his criticism of the far-left counter-culture movement with his second feature *San Domingo* (1970), Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Scarabea: How Much Land Does a Man Need?*, *Parsifal*) totally reinvented his aesthetic with his third narrative feature *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972) aka *Ludwig - Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König*, which was the filmmaker's first film in his masterful 'Germany Trilogy' (preceding *Karl Mary* (1974) and *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977)) and his first attempt at creating a celluloid neo-Wagnerite 'Gesamtkunstwerk.' In between *Ludwig* and *Karl Mary*, Syberberg decided to temporarily go back to his minimalist documentarian roots and directed a strange little film entitled *Theodor Hierneis oder Wie man ehem. Hofkoch wird* (1973) aka *Theodor Hierneis* or *How to become a former royal chef* aka *Le cuisinier de Ludwig* aka *Ludwig's Cook*. A sort of companion piece to *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* that Susan "The white race is the cancer of human history" Sontag once described as, "an austere Brechtian melodrama of ninety minutes with Ludwig's cook as its one character—it anticipates the valet's narrative in *Hitler, a Film from Germany*—and was inspired by Brecht's unfinished novel on the life of Julius Caesar narrated by his slave," *Ludwig's Cook* is a quirky one-man show starring and co-written by stereotypically Bavarian actor Walter Sedlmayr (Volker Schlöndorff's *Baal*, *Welt am Draht* aka *World on a Wire*) following the marginal historical figure Theodor Hierneis, royal chef at the court of Ludwig II of Bavaria, as he fondly reminisces about his past life appeasing the rather idiosyncratic appetite of the mad 'Fairy Tale King' as he walks around rural Bavaria, as well as the mysterious monarch's castles, Linderhof and Neuschwanstein, and royal cabin, Schachen. Essentially one long monologue taken largely directly from Hierneis' memoir, *Ludwig's Cook* attempts to fill in some blanks left by *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* by painting a truly 'picturesque' (indeed, one cannot deny that rural Bavaria and Ludwig's lavish homes are most aesthetically pleasing in a fairy tale sort of way) portrait of the 'perfect Wagnerite' from the perspective of a lowly servant who tends to the needs of a decidedly decadent king who rotted out all his teeth by eating too many sweets and who forced his servants to wander the countryside during the overnight and early A.M. hours. While undoubtedly one of the filmmaker's more minor works, *Ludwig's Cook* is also indubitably an important work in Syberberg's oeuvre in that it acted as a building block for his magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, as it would also feature obscure nobodies like Heinrich Himmler's personal astrologist and Uncle Adolf's personal valet retelling history in a highly personalized anecdotal fashion, thereupon presenting a true 'volk history' that

obfuscates the historical documentary record.

Beginning at the age of 14 in November 1882 as an apprentice in the royal kitchen of the court of King Ludwig II, Theodor Hierneis would become the 'royal chef' in 1884 and his reign would last until 1886 when the monarch died under dubious circumstances that same year. As Hierneis (Walter Sedlmayr) states of the experience, "For four years, I belonged to the household of an unusual king." While describing Ludwig II as 'unusual,' Hierneis' respect for the man is undeniable, even if he was paid only one to two marks a day. On first meeting the king, the chef found him to be, "tall, noble, handsome, pale, a ghost-like apparition with big dark and incredibly luminous eyes...A mysterious king...that's how I saw him the first time." Indeed, Hierneis seems to view Ludwig II in a mystical manner typical of the Bavarian peasants who celebrate the monarch's aesthetically pleasing legacy to this day. Rising from the rabble to the level of royal culinary artist, the chef rightfully describes his personal motto as such: "Laughed at as an apprentice, honored as a master." Of course, Hierneis viewed Ludwig II from a servile class-based distance, and while the King tended to treat his visitors to remarkably lavish gifts, the loyal chef was never once treated to a single one. Instead, Hierneis had the honor of becoming a witness to great history from the sidelines, as a man that got to see The Fairy Tale King interact with 'völkisch avant-garde' poet Felix Dahn and Hungarian-Austrian actor Josef Kainz. One of the things Hierneis enjoyed most about working for Ludwig II was learning that he was just like any other ordinary person, stating of his experiences, "I found this comforting that he too had to suffer pain, like all of us. Later, in my time, the King was almost completely toothless and he always held a perfumed lace handkerchief in front of his lips and kept people at a distance." Indeed, Ludwig II was a terribly temperamental individual of the rather whimsical sort as indicated by Hierneis' remark, "his taste and appetite depended very much on his actual mood," so the chef made a special menu for the monarch and prepared his meals in a manner so that they were soft enough for a new born babe to eat.

Although a King, Ludwig II also had his heroes, with Louis XIV aka 'Louis the Great' being such a major hero that he designed his royal bedroom after the French monarch's bedroom and had a statue of the man that he would greet each day. Of course, Ludwig's Francophilia was not limited to hero worship, as he had his cook him French cuisine even though the Berlin royals dined on Anglo-German dishes. Hierneis also unwittingly hints at the King's homosexuality, stating, "The King did not like female servants. His valet Rutz received him from the bath with two towels," but more importantly he understood that Ludwig II was a fanatical aesthetician who financially supported great artists like Richard Wagner (Ludwig settled all the composer's debts and provided him a lavish villa in Tribschen, Switzerland) and whose, "ideal was to have the most beautiful things from all over the world...buildings and plants, birds, deer, pea-

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cocks, birds of paradise and all that...if he could have gathered it all in one place and perhaps some people too. Well, he wanted to build a paradise...it could have happened in Bavaria." Demonstrating a certain loyalty that is virtually unknown nowadays in the Occident, Hierneis states on the subject of the King's famously curious mental state, "that the King might be ill or mad, this idea would never have occurred to us. We wouldn't have dared anyway. We've loved him far too much for that. We looked upon his character as a sort of luxury of being, he was the King after all. Direct orders of government...we saw very little of that here. In fact, none of it." As Hierneis reveals, when his master Ludwig died, the distinguished culinary artist went on to work as Prince Regent Luitpold's chef from 1886 to 1890 and then went to Berlin to volunteer in the royal kitchen of Kaiser Wilhelm II, eventually becoming court chef. Of course, like any true citizen from the Bavarian free state, Hierneis became homesick and eventually came home in 1901 and with his savings, opening a delicatessen shop in Munich as a man who ultimately "founded a bourgeois existence" as a distinguished cook with an aristocratic clientele who was eventually appointed "Royal Bavarian Court Supplier." Indeed, like Bavaria in general with its ancient fairy tale castles that have proven to become very profitable tourist spots in the long run, Ludwig's wayward reign ultimately proved to be quite a worthwhile experience for chef Theodor Hierneis.

Not all that unlike King Ludwig II, actor Walter Sedlmayr, who was also a gay Bavarian in kraut Catholic land, died a rather bizarre death that adds a certain mystery and intrigue to his character. Found dead in his Munich apartment on 15 July 1990, Sedlmayr was apparently tied up, stabbed in the gut, and beat in the head with a hammer by two of his former business partners, half-brothers Wolfgang Werlé and Manfred Lauber, with a biopic about the actor and his murder entitled *Wambo* (2001) directed by Jo Baier starring Jürgen Tarrach in the lead role being released a decade later. Despite being a rather small film, *Ludwig's Cook* ultimately earned the *Deutscher Filmpreis* for 'Best Non-Narrative Film' (Film Award in Silver) and 'Best Actor' (Film Award in Gold) at the 1973 German Film Awards. I enjoyed *Ludwig's Cook* enough that I kind of wish Syberberg directed a companion piece to *Hitler: A Film from Germany* of a similar meta-history spirit as the famed Führer apparently had a Jewish chef named *Fräulein Kunde* on loan, or so the Jewish author M. Hirsh Goldberg would claim in his book *The Jewish Connection* (1976). It seems British auteur Mike Leigh must have saw some merit in *Ludwig's Cook* as well as his short *A Sense of History* (1992)—a one-man show written and starring Jim Broadbent about a fictional aristocratic fellow named '23 Earl of Leete' who discusses his 900+ year family history while giving a tour of his rather lavish homestead—takes virtually the same aesthetic approach, but ultimately fails to be as interesting as Syberberg's film. In short, *Ludwig's Cook* is an aesthetic achievement as it is discernibly Brechtian yet still manages to have a soul, not to mention the fact it

pays tribute to German kultur as opposed to besmirching it like the kosherphile commie playwright had such a proclivity for (During his Stalinist days, Brecht wrote to a friend regarding the Moscow trials and his countrymen, "The more innocent they are, the more they deserve to die."), which is no small achievement for a little film about a peasant discussing a toothless monarch's strange eating habits.

-Ty E

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Hans W. Geißendörfer (1970)

Between F.W. Murnau's German expressionist masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) aka *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* and Bavarian adventurer auteur Werner Herzog's 'remake'/re-adaption *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) aka *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht*, Germany isn't exactly lacking when it comes to masterful vampire films, especially in regard to adaptations of Bram Stoker's classic horror novel *Dracula* (1897), and the Fatherland certainly has some vintage vamp flicks that are in dire need of being unearthed. Although largely forgotten today, *Jonathan* (1970)—a politically-charged vampire film only very loosely based on Stoker's *Dracula*—was a hit of sorts upon its release over four decades ago as it won its director Hans W. Geißendörfer (Carlos, *Der Zauberberg* aka *The Magic Mountain*), who had never directed a feature film previously, the coveted Film Award in Gold at the Deutscher Filmpreis for Best New Direction and would ultimately take a 'modernist' approach to the outmoded horror genre while simultaneously paying homage to classical Germanic art. The son of a Bavarian clergyman who studied both German literature and African languages before developing an interest in filmmaking, Geißendörfer, while having a romantic vision of sorts that recalls Heinrich von Kleist and a keenness for landscapes that echoes Caspar David Friedrich, was most certainly typical of his generation in his political leanings, at least if one were to judge him simply by his debut work, *Jonathan*, a film advertised upon its release as an anti-fascist vampire flick of sorts. Set in the 16th century and utilizing Heimatfilm, Gothic horror, and quasi-völkisch aesthetics, *Jonathan* is an intrinsically idiosyncratic sort of anti-fascist/anti-capitalist kraut bloodsucker comedy where the vampires, being immune from sunlight, make up a pernicious and parasitic aristocracy and where the peasants—led haphazardly by a certain *Jonathan* Harker—attempt to lead a quasi-Bolshevik revolution against their undead overlords. Advertised with the patently pretentious tagline "The First Adult Vampire Film," *Jonathan* is for the most part an arthouse flick that takes a sardonic approach to genre conventions including Teutonic slapstick, sociopolitical satire, and sadomasochistic Gothic horror, thus making it more a work that is ultimately as uneven as it is intriguing. Featuring vampires in love with humans committing suicide, nuns hanging from nooses, farms full of dead barnyard animals and the real-life killing of a rat, phantasmagorical class warfare, and enough inverted crosses and blasphemous imagery to put a Norwegian black metal band to shame, *Jonathan* was unquestionably an iconoclastic vampire flick upon its release, but not unlike like Margarethe von Trotta's career jumpstarting good looks, the film has not aged as gracefully as one would hope, even if it deserves to be regarded as a minor kraut cult classic of sorts. Like the sort of aesthetically eloquent vampire film one would accept from Werner Schroeter's

rampantly heterosexual and politically-retarded Bavarian brother, Jonathan is a striking example of how far-leftist politics distorted the minds of the filmmakers of German New Cinema to the point where even a classy Bosch-esque vampire flick is tainted by the ideas of psychic Yiddish vampires like Marx, Trotsky, and Adorno.

It is the 16th century in Teutonic Transylvania and sun-tolerant vampires of the blueblooded variety rule the roost and use their finely dressed fascist soldiers to invade small villages and drain the precious blood of the peasantry. The vampires are led by a charismatic fellow that goes by the name "The Count" (Paul Albert Krumm) and who bears a close resemblance, both in appearance and speech, to Adolf Hitler, albeit minus the signature mustache (naturally, it would be quite hard to make a vampire villain serious who sports both a Charlie Chaplin mustache and a gay cape). As the Count tells his compatriots after having a fellow vamp killed who tried to leave his Gothic castle fortress, "All of you know...none of you are alone here. If you try to leave...it's dangerous for us. Be careful. Your betrayal can cost you dearly. Be forewarned. This could also happen to you," as the alpha-bloodsucker wants to avoid compromising his undead kingdom's rule over civilization and humanity. Meanwhile, somewhere not that far away, an elderly anti-vampire professor (Oskar von Schab) of the old school leftist sort gives the following speech to his pupils, "We did our job. We have come to the conclusion...we aren't getting anywhere this way. Although all of us know what's going on...we aren't doing anything to fight against it. We must protect ourselves against the power...of this bloodsucker, who grows stronger...day by day. We must fight against him...not only by stopping the rituals...nor by killing them one by one. The only solution is obvious...the total elimination of the vampires. And now is the best time to strike." Apparently, when all the vampires plan to gather at a castle near the sea, the professor hopes to "push the vampires into the sea" as "they cannot survive in the water," thus wiping out the undead menace for good. Playing from the Bolshevik handbook, the Prof states the entire vampire aristocracy must be exterminated and he sends a not particularly special gentleman named Jonathan (Jürgen Jung), his assistant, to scout out the castle and relay back the information he discovers so that the anti-fang-cist revolutionaries can make their move, which also involves freeing the Count's peasant prisoners who the teacher believes will vengefully help in destroying the Hitler-esque Dracula and his SS bloodsuckers. Rather unfortunately for the vampire-hunters, one of the Count's associates sat in on the Professor's speech, so the alpha-vamp is more than ready for Jonathan when he arrives. While the Count is most certainly a bloodsucker who takes precious sanguine juices from victims whenever and wherever he wants, he is also an empathic 'gift-giver' who allows beautiful babes to drink blood from a perennial Christ-like wound in his side, thus, like Uncle Adolf, he is not a totally bad guy, but a man looking out for the interests of his people, which any thinking person

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can respect.

Whilst sleeping like a wee babe in his carriage, Jonathan's anti-anti-Christ/vampire-exterminating paraphernalia is stolen and the coachman is killed, so the novice vampire-hunter must make his way to the vampire palace on foot and on the way he is joined by a dubious gent named Joseph (Hans-Dieter Jendreyko), who more or less helps the revolutionary tread through the countryside in one piece. Scared and superlatively superstitious, the peasants, whose villages have been ravaged by ravenous vamps and their snake-like soldiers, goes so far as even attacking Jonathan in fear of retribution from the Count and his men. Indeed, the vampires seem to have a stern scorched earth policy in which entire town populations are exterminated, churches are reduced to ruins and holy men executed, buildings burned, and farm animals killed as if a SS Einsatzgruppen took a time-machine to 16th century Transylvania. After killing Joseph via dagger after the curious fellow attacks him while sleeping, Jonathan stops by a house to ask for directions to the Count's castle and is greeted by a rather desperate girl who tells him, "You're the last person I'll talk to" and the two inevitably proceed to get hot and heavy in a haystack. Beforehand, the girl shows Jonathan a room where the remaining villagers ritualistically watch one another have communal sex in the hope of repopulating their towns. Although initially petrified like a bashful boy, Jonathan also contributes to the village's lurid Lebensborn program by sharing his amateurish carnal knowledge with the hyper-horny peasant girl and then proceeds to make his way to the Count's castle at night, where he climbs up a wall, entering the luxurious vampire lair through an upstairs window. During an anti-Christ church session where all the vamps at the castle are adorned in blood red robes and are communally draining blood from human slaves, the Count declares, "There is someone in the castle who may be dangerous to us. He is outside in the hallway" and Jonathan is captured literally seconds later, though the vampire Führer takes a strange liking to the young vampire hunter, even welcoming him as a guest and inviting him to enter any room of the castle he wants to, except those locked rooms where vamps drain their victims blood and where human slaves are boarded. Jonathan becomes an object of adoration among a group of debauched vampire whores, but the Count wants him for himself, so he gives the lethally lecherous ladies an infant peasant baby instead so as to appease their appetites. Meanwhile, Jonathan's comrades, led by the elderly Professor, make their way to the Count's castle to carry out their bolshevik-esque revolution. When Johnny boy makes the almost fateful mistake of breaking into a room holding badly malnourished human slaves, who he luckily warns to prepare for the upcoming revolution, he is naturally violently tortured by Gestapo-like vampires in a sadomasochistic and almost homoerotic fashion, even being branded like a farm animals in the process. Luckily, the Professor and his men, with the help of peasants and slaves, take over the Count's castle fortress, killing all his Satanic soldiers in the process and rounding up all the surviving vampires.

In the end, the Count and his undead aristocracy are merely mercilessly forced into the sea, where they die instantly in a rather anti-climatic fashion. As for the Professor, Jonathan, and the rest of the revolutionaries, it is rather dubious whether they will install the humanist utopia of their dreams as vicious vampire-hunters do not exactly equate to great leaders.

Featuring a sort of dually kitschy/classy aesthetic not unlike *Fantastique* filmmaker Jean Rollin, the politically allegorical vampirism of *They Have Changed Their Face* (1971) aka *Hanno cambiato faccia*, a Teutonic and ultimately superior and sacrilegious take on Hammer horror, the surreal sensuality and kaleidoscopic colors of *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970), psychosexual and ethereally eerie romantic elements similar to *Count Yorga, Vampire* (1970) and *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), the left field genre-smashing of *Grave of the Vampire* (1972), and tasteless yet cultivated genre-inspired comic relief that transcends Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967), Jonathan is undeniably an idiosyncratic and iconoclastic vampire flick and for that reason alone, it is mandatory viewing for fans of the horror subgenre. Of course, politically speaking, Jonathan is rather redundant in its cliché commie message of 'fascists/aristocrats = vampires,' but one can respect director Hans W. Geißendörfer for trying something different and ultimately creating what is undoubtedly the greatest anti-fascist vampire flick ever made. Despite being a blueblood blood-sucker who feeds infants to vampire whores, I actually found the Count to be the most interesting and sympathetic character in the entire film as a melancholy monster with a great eye for aesthetics. In fact, the lead protagonist Jonathan is not much more than an empty and oftentimes annoying robotic vassal who only displays emotions while crying during sex with beautiful busty peasant broads and who follows the orders of his annoyingly idealistic bloodthirsty professor like a mindless slave. Ultimately, at least symbolically speaking, Jonathan works the opposite way as *Nosferatu* (1922) in that while in Murnau's silent masterpiece the monster is a Judaic-like bloodsucker with a hook nose who invades from the East like Jewry and ravages a pure Aryan village like the plague (something that was historically blamed on Jews), the vampire of Geißendörfer's film is essentially Uncle Adolf without a mustache and it is not a bourgeois Nordic village that is destroyed, but the classically European castle of the Nazi undead. In the end, the proto-bolshevik revolutionaries of Jonathan are not much different than the vampires, as they completely exterminate the vamps with extreme prejudice like it's a walk through the park. In that sense, one could argue that Jonathan is also a critique of communism, albeit a mild one that portrays it as the lesser of two evils. Featuring stunning cinematography by Dutch master cinematographer Robby Müller, who must have deeply studied the landscape paintings of his countrymen Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder in preparation for shooting the film, Jonathan, like most of Geißendörfer's films and not unlike the films of fellow Bavarian filmmakers Werner Herzog and Herbert Achtern-

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busch, is a sort of post-Nazi völkisch flick that, although the director is clearly reluctant about his heritage, culture, and nation's history, cannot but help make a typically Teutonic romantic work, albeit of the culturally cynical and slightly ethno-masochistic sort. Indeed, while Jonathan might seem like outmoded Kulturscheisse when compared to Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* and Bavarian adventurer auteur Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre*, it also happens to be not only one of the best 'horror' films of German New Cinema, but also one of the most the delightfully diacritic vampire films ever made that reminds the viewer that the vampire subgenre is not dead, but undead.

-Ty E

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Hans W. Geißendörfer (2005)

Since I am in the process of viewing German auteur Edgar Reitz's mammoth 11 episode and 925-minute magnum opus *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) aka *Heimat - Eine deutsche Chronik*, I have been in the mood to watch other 'unconventional' neo-Heimat/anti-Heimat films, which eventually led me to discovering the somewhat recent work *Snowland* (2005) aka *Schneeland* directed by Bavarian auteur Hans W. Geißendörfer (*Carlos*, *The Wild Duck* aka *Die Wildente*). Not unlike Reitz, Geißendörfer was a filmmaker associated with German New Cinema who had a series of failures with feature films and, as a result, would become mostly a television auteur who directed a number of ambitious TV miniseries, including *Der Zauberberg* (1982) aka *The Magic Mountain*, which is an adaptation of Thomas Mann's highly influential 1924 novel of the same name. Additionally, Geißendörfer is responsible for producing and partly directing the first real Teutonic soap opera, *Lindenstraße* (1985), which celebrated its 20th anniversary on 11th December 2005 with its 1045th episode and still airs to this day. Before viewing *Schneeland*, I had only seen Geißendörfer's award-winning debut feature *Jonathan* (1970) aka *Vampire sterben nicht*—a rather loose and sardonic 'anti-fascist' adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) of the idiosyncratic Gothic 'anti-Heimat' variety—and I was fairly impressed, even if the film suffers from the sort counter-culture contamination typical of German films from that era. Undoubtedly, Geißendörfer has matured a lot as a filmmaker since he originally directed his first film *Jonathan* over four decades ago, as *Schneeland* is easily one of the most emotionally brutal and aesthetically/thematically stark yet paradoxically solacing films I have seen all year, as a work comparable to the malignantly melancholy 'melodramas' of contemporary kraut auteur Matthias Glasner, a filmmaker that managed to make a pathological serial rapist seem sympathetic in his devastating 'rape epic' *Der Freie Wille* (2006) aka *The Free Will* starring Jürgen Vogel. A neo-Gothic (anti)Heimat film set in the icy Nordic north about a morbidly depressed Swedish writer who decides to kill herself after her hubby dies tragically in a car accident and goes to the snowy Laplands to carry out her self-annihilation, only to happen upon a frozen elderly female corpse in the snow and discover a dark romance from the 1930s that involved said elderly female corpse, *Schneeland* is a horribly hopeless and majorly morbid melodrama that ultimately manages to find 'hope' in the most unlikely and unnerving of places and circumstances. Based on the novel *Hohaj* by Swedish author Elisabeth Rynell, *Schneeland* is an uncommonly angst and despair-ridden work about dark Nordic souls, redemption, and the will to survive and prevail under the most pathologically pernicious of circumstances, as a work that ultimately makes *Noi the Albino* (2003) aka *Nói albino* seem like a soulless pseudo-quirky hipster flick.

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As her loving husband Ingmar (Martin Feifel) describes her, Swedish writer Elisabeth (Maria Schrader) is an emotionally plagued woman who finds it “easier to love than be loved.” Of course, when hubby Ingmar dies tragically and unexpectedly around Christmas time in a car wreck, Elisabeth develops an absolutely hysterical and decidedly debilitating level of anguish and melancholy, so she quickly decides to leave her young children with relatives and heads to the Laplands—a sparsely populated winter wonderland where she originally met her deceased husband—where she plans to end her life prematurely. On the way there, Elisabeth’s car breaks down in a blinding snowstorm, so she seeks help in the only cabin in sight, only to find that the elderly occupant has frozen to death and that all the animals on the farm have starved to death as a result in a horrifying scene that resembles a ‘Heimat Apocalypse.’ Upon entering the dead woman’s cabin and reading her old letters/diaries/etc., Elisabeth begins to piece together the life of the frozen dead woman, whose name was Ina (played popular German actress Julia Jentsch, who looks like a German equivalent to Anna Paquin, albeit much prettier). From there, *Schneeland* mostly focuses on a unlikely love story between peasant girl Ina—the true protagonist of the film—and a young and stoic stranger who is uncommonly handsome for a homeless man. Flashback to the 1930s, Ina’s life is forever changed when a wayfaring stranger named Aron (mainstream German actor Thomas Kretschmann) and his loyal dog Lurv mysteriously show up in the Laplands after traveling from an island halfway to Iceland (Aron speaks the Insular Nordic language of Faroese). Before meeting Ina, Aron is taken in as a lodger by husband and wife, Salomon (Oliver Stokowski) and Helga (Ina Weisse), but after the lady of the house becomes discernibly infatuated with the rather handsome stranger, it is decided by a handful of townspeople that he become a herdsman and live outside with the horses. Meanwhile, young lady Ina lives with her parents, who are subsistence farmers, not far from Aron’s new outdoor residence. When her mother drops dead, Ina becomes the brutalized sex slave of her incestuous father Knövel (Ulrich Mühe of Michael Haneke’s *Funny Games* (1997) and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s *The Lives of Others* (2006), among countless other popular German-language films), who is a disfigured and demented hunchback who regards “life as his worst enemy” and who is fittingly nicknamed “Old Satan” by locals. Since Ina refuses to have sex with her creepily cold and callous father, he beats her into it, but she always resists and sometimes manages to get away. Of course, it is only a matter of time before Ina takes revenge against her insanelly insidious devil of a daddy and Aron will be the sort of human archangel that will give her the strength to do so.

When Ina notices handsome Aron while frolicking around the cold countryside, she becomes infatuated and begins leaving him anonymous presents, thus ushering in their unconventional yet deeply romantic relationship. Not only is Ina obsessed with Aron’s rather masculine handsomeness, but she sees him as a

savior and redeemer who will save her from her miserable monster of a fucked father. Somewhat autistic and socially retarded due to her exceedingly 'eccentric' upbringing as a forsaken girl deflowered by her own father and nurtured with incest, Ina decides one day to get totally naked in the freezing cold and offers herself to Aron. Instead of becoming sexually aroused by her unclad display, Aron is somewhat disturbed by Ina's senseless sensual offering and immediately bundles her up in a blanket, thus demonstrating he is a true gentleman and protector and not some sick and craven sex fiend like Knövel. Meanwhile, Knövel gets his head busted in after a failed attempt at sexually pillaging his daughter, so Ina is forced to care for the now-bedridden old devil, which includes using hay to wipe excrement from his satanic shit-covered ass, among other aberrant things that no daughter should be expected to do, but she perseveres due to her love for Aron. Whilst making love, Ina proclaims her love to Aron by stating "You healed me... You've cleaned me..." and he responds by stating "You've redeemed me." And, indeed, Aron is not merely bullshitting to get a piece of Swedish tail because, as he confesses to Ina, his real name is not 'Aron' but 'Kjartan Holt' and he killed a man as a teenager who been using his widowed mother and has thus wandered somewhat aimlessly ever since as a form of self-ordained penance for his sins. After receiving Ina's unconditional love and affection, Aron feels like he has finally reached atonement and the two decide to marry. Knowing her fiend for a father will attempt to impede on her upcoming marriage, Ina decides to take preventive action and murders 'Old Satan' Knövel, but unfortunately something tragic happens to Aron aka Kjartan around the same time. Emotionally shattered, Ina still manages to tread on as she is pregnant with Aron's unborn child. Flashback to the present, Elisabeth becomes completely inspired by Ina's story of being able to live on after the death of her beloved and decides against killing herself. In the end, Elisabeth decides to return back to her children and they assumedly live happily ever after, or something approximating that.

A sort of Nordic neo-Gothic *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) from Heimat hell, *Schneeland* is, among other things, easily one of the most dispiriting and gruesome yet strangely inspiring films I have ever seen, as if director Hans W. Geisendörfer found a small gleam of hope from the homelands and decided to reinvent the Heimat film for the pre-apocalyptic age in a totally trying celluloid work that, despite its daringly dark and disconcerting storyline, ultimately has a positive message about the ability to persevere with life, even under the most debasing and soul-sucking of circumstances. Beautifully shot (the film won "Best Cinematography" at the Deutscher Filmpreis aka German Film Awards in 2005) yet fiercely foreboding and 'coldly' ominous in most of its tone, *Schneeland* is ultimately more of a Heimat film than an anti-Heimat film in that it demonstrates one can learn priceless lessons from the past, especially when comparing it to the petty problems of the present day. Indeed, although protagonist Elisabeth loses her husband in a car accident, her concerns seem almost

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frivolous when compared to the unspeakable trauma and tragedy that Ina suffered, thus giving her the ability to cope with the pain and suffering that life has dealt her. Indeed, a popular Hollywood drama like *Prisoners* (2013) seems like epic pseudo-emotional counterfeit celluloid gibberish when compared to the melancholic majesty of a true unsung, albeit slightly unhinged, masterpiece like *Schneeland*; a virtual naked expression of the Germanic *geist* in the deracinated postmodern age of globalization and cultural mongrelization. Although auteur Geissendörfer failed to gain the international fame and prestige that Fassbinder, Wenders, and Schlöndorff did, he is probably the only filmmaker associated with German New Cinema who has evolved as a filmmaker over the past four decades ago or so. Additionally, *Schneeland* also demonstrates a sense of maturity, spirituality, and unwavering passion that the contemporary works of Wenders and Schlöndorff certainly lack. The sort of Heimat film aberrant-garde auteur Marian Dora might have directed had he had the budget, religious background (Geissendörfer's father was a Bavarian clergyman), and over four decades of experience fiddling with Heimat genre conventions, *Schneeland* is an audaciously unadulterated expression of the 'white iceman's' soul that never wallows in cheap and petty Americanized sentimentalism, but goes straight to the gut with the sort of unfazed artistic fortitude that one would expect from an ancient Berserker running through flames. That being said, If you're morbidly depressed this Christmas season and thinking about offing yourself, watch and bask in the gorgeously grotesque glory of *Schneeland* so you can come to the important realization that you're a spineless pussy living in a soft era of emasculation and self-pity and that a early-twentieth-century farm girl has more balls than you do.

-Ty E

SCARABEA: HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED?

Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1969)

While the figurative ‘heart’ of New German Cinema, emotionally erratic and singularly manipulative enfant terrible Rainer Werner Fassbinder, oftentimes went to great pains to mock and ridicule the insatiable greed of kraut fat cats in post-Wirtschaftswunder West Germany as is especially indicated by Mario Adorf’s character in his keenly kaleidoscopic Josef von Sternberg homage *Lola* (1981), the tragic auteur’s blueblooded Wagernite nemesis Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*, *Parsifal*) directed what is arguably the most bizarre, grotesque, and oddly oneiric cinematic assault on post-WWII kraut capitalism of the greedy fat fuck oriented sort. Indeed, Syberberg’s *Scarabea - wieviel Erde braucht der Mensch?* (1969) aka *Scarabea: How Much Land Does a Man Need?*—the auteur’s first narrative feature following a number of totally Teutonic documentaries, including the Romy Schneider doc *Romy. Porträt eines Gesichts* (1967) aka *Romy: Anatomy of a Face*—is a strange little celluloid beast of the quasi-counterculture krautploitation persuasion that seems like what might happen if a German crypto-nationalist attempted to reconcile the world classic guido exploitation of Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi à la *Mondo Cane* with the visceral and primitive prole poetry of cinematic poet Pier Paolo Pasolini. As the film’s title hints, it borrow its major motifs from Leo Tolstoy’s classic short story *How Much Land Does a Man Require?* (1886), though, more importantly, it also features references to writings from figures ranging from National Socialist Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn to decadent Italian fascist dramatist Luigi Pirandello. Not unlike many of Syberberg’s cinematic works, *Scarabea* is a curious combination of high and lowbrow art, albeit in a somewhat different way. Indeed, instead of the high-camp kitsch of his classic features like *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Syberberg’s debut basks in the viscerally grotesque and genetically deformed. Shot over the course of seven weeks when the auteur was only 32 years old, the film is certainly a noble effort in Syberberg’s oeuvre. In fact, Syberberg would proudly describe how the film “completely satisfies” him after completing it in an interview in *Der Spiegel*. Of course, little did Syberberg realize that he would eventually reinvent Teutonic cinema and start a virtual one-man aesthetic renaissance that demonstrated that Germans did not have to be afraid of making innately Germanic films.

Syberberg before Syberberg actually became Syberberg, *Scarabea* was made when the auteur was still a work-in-progress as a cinematic artist before he discovered the operatic films of Werner Schroeter, completely revamped and refined his entire cinematic aesthetic, further embraced his Aryan birthright, and directed the first film in his celebrated ‘Germany trilogy’ *Ludwig - Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König* (1972) aka *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King*. More like Jacopetti meets Herzog on acid and heroin than Wagner

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meets Brecht like his later films, Syberberg's first feature—a film about a fat and sloppy middle-aged Teutonic lecher that makes a bet for a large piece of land that involves him taking a dangerous odyssey in the Italian bandit island of Sardinia—features unsimulated animal killings and dismemberment, retarded and/or crippled guido peasants, rotten maggot-covered carcasses, low-key bum fights, ecstatic primitive Goddess Nenia breast milk rituals, and various other memorable scenarios that blur the line between the real and surreal in a manner not unlike unhinged heeb Harmony Korine's debut feature *Gummo* (1997). Featuring an original quasi-psychedelic musical score by Eugen Thomass, who later composed music for Syberberg's three-hour biopic *Karl May* (1974), and cinematography by Petrus R. Schlömp (Johannes Schaaf's *Tätowierung* (1967) aka *Tattoo*) that ranges from primitive cinéma-vérité-like garbage to highly stylized celluloid majesty, Syberberg's first feature is indubitably an uneven experiment in eccentricity that sometimes feel like it was directed by an autistic pothead with a BS degree in Teutonic literature yet it is surely one of the more intriguing German films of the late-1960s. In short, the film is certainly no cinematic 'Gesamtkunstwerk' like Syberberg's later great cinematic masterpieces, but it does arguably hold the distinction of being what can be described as the first (and arguably the last) proto-Alt-Right artsploitation flick. Indeed, featuring hilarious real-life racial 'caricatures,' goofy snickering retards and sneering cripples, and a genuinely subversive metapolitical right-wing Weltanschauung of the abstractly expressed sort, *Scarabea* features the sort of aggressive anti-liberal spirit that is comparable to a contemporary Pepe-saluting internet troll army.

Notably, long before Syberberg was accused of being a sinister anti-Semite and virtual neo-Nazi after the publication of his script for *Hitler: A Film from Germany* and especially after the release of his still-untranslated book *Vom Unglück und Glück der Kunst in Deutschland nach dem letzten Kriege* (1990) aka *On the Misfortune and Fortune of Art in Germany after the Last War*, the filmmaker was attacked by a certain popular German left-wing film critic for supposedly being a tad bit culturally insensitive. Indeed, in a review featured in his New Left film journal *Filmkritik*, Enno Patalas—a film historian and film preservationist that was heavily influenced by kosher (anti)kraut commie Siegfried Kracauer—unsoundly complained in regard to *Scarabea*: "Syberberg shows us a German . . . tourist on Sardinia, who eats like a pig, is loud, chases women, is ignorant about Gottfried Benn, and drinks too much wine . . . Thus prepared, it should come as no surprise that Syberberg has the same arrogant attitude to Sardinia and its people as his protagonist." Of course, anyone that carefully watches Syberberg's film can see that Patalas' claim is nothing if not patently absurd, not least of all because the bungling and boorish kraut protagonist is portrayed as a bigger buffoon than a bunch of illiterate and sometimes mentally retarded dirty Sardinian peasants. In fact, it is ultimately the protagonist's absurd arrogance and unwarranted pride that leads to his somewhat pre-

dictable yet nonetheless poignantly pathetic downfall. While I am just speculating, I have to assume that left-wing pansy Patalas was offended by the fact that the film quotes the poetry of a one-time-Nazi like Benn and features a less than flattering depiction of flower children, but then again the film also critiques both Hollywood and capitalist exploitation, thereupon making it appeal enough to the average left-wing lemming that they might get a slight momentary hard-on by watching it.

A walking and talking racial caricature that embodies virtually every negative stereotype that is associated with Germans, Scarabea protagonist Georg Wilhelm Bach (Walter Buschhoff of Clive Donner's *Babes in Toyland* (1986) starring Drew Barrymore) is a fat, red-faced, and alcohol-addled kraut blockhead businessman that, not unlike many post-WWII Germans, suffers from a sort of semi-unconscious materialistic nihilism where he lives and breathes solely for the pursuit of acquiring land, capital, and fancy food, even though none of these things seem to bring him any sorts of happiness. Childless but married to a frigid woman he does not love, Bach clearly lacks any sort of emotional support, hence his nihilistic worship of materialism. After all, as a Heimat-less mensch whose nation was both physically and spiritually annihilated when he was just a young chap, Bach has nothing else to live for. A World War II veteran that became a semi-successful businessman after inheriting a hotel from his father, Herr Bach has come to Sardinia to procure some land because he dreams of building a thriving resort spot on the primitive goombah island. Upon arriving in Sardinia in a lame convertible that he clearly feels 'cool' and 'hip' driving, Bach clearly feels he has power simply because he has wealth and immediately begins hitting on an inordinately statuesque eponymous beauty named Scarabea (Nicoletta Machiavelli, who, as her surname reveals, was indeed a direct descendant of sociopathic Renaissance philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli), who is a sort of subtly sinister flower child femme fatale that seems to get a sadistic kick out of leading the protagonist along a pernicious path of transcendental self-destruction. A girl with a French passport but two German parents that seemingly loves wandering around aimlessly and engaging in artsy fartsy leisure activities like photography and acoustic guitar playing, Scarabea is surely a cosmopolitan kind of gal, though that does not stop her from basking in the pleasantly perverse poetry of naughty one-time-Nazi Gottfried Benn. In fact, Scarabea recites the following lines from the Benn poem "What's Bad" to Herr Bach: "Not reading English, and hearing about a new English thriller that hasn't been translated. Seeing a cold beer when it's hot out, and not being able to afford it. Having an idea that you can't encapsulate in a line of Hölderlin, the way the professors do. Hearing the waves beat against the shore on holiday at night, and telling yourself it's what they always do. Very bad: being invited out, when your own room at home is quieter, the coffee is better, and you don't have to make small talk. And worst of all: not to die in summer, when the days are long and the earth yields easily to

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the spade.” While Bach does not know anything about Benn or his poetry, he will die in the summer during a long day in a fashion worthy of a Benn poem.

After meeting with a somewhat refined old chap named ‘The Count’ (played by real-life part-Jewish Count and Roberto Rossellini collaborator Franz von Treuberg), Bach is able to make a clearly too-good-to-be-true bet with the local peasants and their mayor to acquire a very large piece of land, including a scenic beach spot, if he manages to personally hike through said land before sunset during a single day. If Bach loses the bet, he will have to give away 10,000 marks and his car to the winners. For the local Sardinians, especially the Mayor, it is more or less a win-win situation since they want Bach to build up the area and turn it into a thriving resort spot, thus they welcome his success. After all, to the piss poor peasants of Sardinia, most of the land is worthless and riddled with animal carcasses. Ultimately, Bach becomes the main attraction of a large folk festival where he is inevitably unwittingly sacrificed to his own greed in a doubly ironical fashion where he croaks after passing the finish line. Indeed, while Bach proudly proclaims to be as “tough as Rommel” when it comes to business, he has the physique of a Jewish pawnshop owner and surely was never worthy of being even a mid-level commander like a SS-Hauptsturmführer, let alone an amateur hiker-cum-mountaineer. Still, somehow some of the local yokels seem to have faith in Bach in being successful in his journey, even though a couple locals severely embarrass him at the beginning of the film before the bet is even made by forcing him to drop his pants in front of Scarabea during a mock armed robbery. Of course, no kraut is a match for the lowbrow Machiavellian madness of island guidos, including a greedy buffoon with a busted moral compass like Bach.

While the film more or less features a simple coherent storyline for about the first 30 minutes or so, things get a little bit inexplicable once Bach starts his journey and is eventually engulfed in a sort of anti-paradisical psychodrama of the highly hallucinatory sort that might be best described as a Mediterranean mix of heaven and hell where the protagonist is the unwitting guest of honor. Indeed, not long after seemingly dying while trying in vain to climb hot mountain rocks, Bach falls into a ocean and somehow magically ends up on a beach with Scarabea where he expresses absolutely ecstatic orgasmic delight while gluttonously feasting on a lavish buffet that could feed a small African nation. While a twink-like teenage peasant boy lubes up Scarabea’s lush unclad tanned bod, Bach chows down on lobster tails and tropical fruit like a rabid starving animal while asking his seemingly half-autistic female consort questions that she does not bother to answer. After the feast, Bach and his would-be-babe have a merry time playing in the ocean with fancy translucent inner tube chairs in a semi-surreal scene that seems to mock the idea of a bourgeois utopia. Needless to say, as a somewhat fat and stocky fellow, Bach is not exactly the most mobile of men, so he mainly watches Scarabea as she demonstrates her great propensity for good and hearty

child's play. Before parting company so that the protagonist can finish his journey, Bach and Scarabea go on a deceptively joyous boat ride, but not before the former massages the latter's completely naked body in a scene that is more absurd than it is sensual. While on the boat, Bach expresses his disillusionment with life and even his big hotel plans while Scarabea does not even bother to pretend to listen in what is the one moment in the entire film where the male protagonist is honest with himself. Although a seemingly unimportant throwaway scene, Bach's confession is a crucial moment in the film as it reveals both his pathetic humanity and hidden disillusionment with life in general, thus making his tragic demise at the conclusion of the film seem all the more tragically fitting in the end.

While Bach is finishing up his journey, an exploitative film crew led by a grotesquely fat slob of a director with an ambiguously Hebraic essence arrives in the area and begins documenting the locals in a fashion that puts Jacopetti and Prospero to shame in terms of sheer sleaze and unscrupulousness, but of course as the Count notes in regard to the appetite of mainstream audiences, "The people don't actually want to see documentaries. SEX, CRIME, VIOLENCE!" Indeed, locals are so desperate to be in the film that friends stab friends for posterity and regular peasants attempt to personify the legendary bandits that Sardinia is best known for. When a filmmaker sees Scarabea sporting sort of commie-chic revolutionary garb and shooting an image of Leonardo da Vinci's drawing Vitruvian Man (1490) that somehow manages to bleed in a symbolic scene that represents the pathological urge of the counterculture generation to mindlessly destroy all of Occidental culture and history with great self-annihilating glee, he is so impressed that he offers to make her a "big star." While more or less maintaining her somewhat unsettling flat affect, Scarabea takes up the filmmaker's Faustian offer and begins shooting scenes that seem more like a Sardinian take on the Hollywood western genre than any sort of documentary. Meanwhile, bloated bad boy Bach becomes possessed by horrifying hallucinations involving dung beetles playing with dung and seemingly gallons upon gallons of freshly squeezed human breast milk. Indeed, Bach has so much breast milk squirted on him that he looks as if King Kong busted a load on his face after a rough inter-species blowjob. In what seems like a bad omen towards the end of the film, Bach passes a lynched bird hanging from a tree while a lame multicultural psychedelic rock band plays in the background. When Bach gets near the finish line, he curiously decides to sit down and rest to look at some of the photos that he has taken during his journey using a camera that he borrowed from Scarabea. When Bach hears peasants cheering his long waited arrival while examining the photos, he finally decides to get off his fat ass and reach the finish line, but soon drops dead while disappointed peasants look on and somberly state things like "he won so much land." In terms of the position of his lifeless corpse and even his clothing, Bach's freshly dead carcass strangely foreshadows the highly publi-

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cized assassination of Theo van Gogh, which is certainly fitting considering the anarchic and anti-politically-correct nature of Scarabea. As for Scarabea, she is quite visibly unmoved by Bach's rather pathetic ironical death, though she circles around his body and carefully examines photographs that were taken by the forsaken protagonist with her camera. Of course, it certainly could be argued that Scarabea's flagrant apathy in regard to Bach's demise is symbolic of post-WWII German alienation and the state-sponsored antisocial tendency of contemporary Germans to not care for each other or the survival of their nation (in that sense, the film is certainly more relevant today than when it was first released nearly half a century ago). After all, auteur Syberberg is (in)famous for once stating regarding his nation, "We live in a country without a homeland." As for Herr Bach, he only finds death upon attempting to find a new and hardly improved Heimat, but of course he never realized that no amount of land would fill the void that a lack of culture, spirituality, and family had left in his sad forsaken soul.

Described by auteur Syberberg himself as a "surreal fairy tale," Scarabea is certainly a strange and eccentric cinematic work of the sometimes esoteric sort where the auteur demonstrates his keen contempt hippie scum, kraut capitalist pigs, and smug pseudo-documentarians and exploitative Hollywood hacks, as well as love of classic kraut literature, ancient Occidental kultur of both the low-brow and highbrow sort, and hot guido bitches with fancy surnames like Machiavelli. While the film is indubitably aesthetically subversive, especially compared to the films of other hot Teutonic filmmakers of the time like Alexander Kluge and Volker Schlöndorff, it is unmistakable 'culturally' conservative in terms of sentiment, even if it is not as apparent as in Syberberg's later cinematic (after all, even Syberberg's second feature, *San Domingo* (1970), also features a severe critique of the counterculture generation and their ethno-masochistic fetishization of militant black nationalist negroes and miscegenation). It should be noted that American left-wing Judaic film critic J. Hoberman once described Syberberg, as well as Andrei Tarkovsky and Stan Brakhage, as a "conservative avant-gardist" and even dared to criticize his films for being supposedly "terminally German," thus underscoring his characteristic kosher Teutophobia. Although I guess it does not say much considering the shamelessly Wagnerian essence of his later cinematic work, but I think it is safe to say that, due to its guido island setting and eclectic collection of grotesque Sardinian peasants, Scarabea is Syberberg's least "terminally German" film, though it is certainly more innately Teutonic than anything that trendy left-wingers like feminist hag Margarethe von Trotta, half-Hindu commie Harun Farocki, or Mercedes Marxist Volker Schlöndorff has ever directed. Also, while the film might not be an obvious 'Trauerarbeit' ("work of mourning") piece, it certainly expresses the Syberbergian themes of 'freudlose Gesellschaft' ("joyless society") and 'Auslöschung' ("extinction"), especially as far as the tragic spiritually and culturally moribund male protagonist

is concerned. Unlike most of the left-wing German filmmakers and the quite insanely immature neo-Marxist rock stars of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, Syberberg had at least enough maturity and empathy to understand that the capitalist pigs of his Fatherland were oftentimes tragic individuals that had sold their souls to nihilistic materialism and thus were doomed to live a patently pointless existence plagued by insatiable greed and social alienation.

Out of all the films I can think of, *Scarabea* somewhat ironically reminded me the most of the agitprop artsploitation pieces of underrated iconoclastic Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone (*Spell – Dolce mattatoio aka Man, Woman & Beast, Blue Movie*). In terms of its anarchic storyline, exotic locations and/or extras, entrancing dreamlike essence, obsession with the grotesque, arcane references to art and politics, deconstruction of Hollywood genre conventions, and statuesque quasi-autistic women, Syberberg's debut certainly has much in common with Cavallone (anti)classics like *Le salamandre* (1969), *Quickly, spari e baci a colazione* (1971), *Afrika* (1973), and *Zelda* (1974), among others. Additionally, in terms of being a hallucinatory psychedelic cult flick about terribly naive and decadent bourgeois foreigners wasting away on a primitive Mediterranean island, Syberberg's flick shares many similarities with the bizarre Spanish Dennis Hopper vehicle *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *The Sky Is Falling* aka *Las flores del vicio* directed by Silvio Narizzano. Of course, the flick can also be compared to a couple German films like Roland Klick's *Deadlock* (1970) and Veit Relin's counter-culture Friedrich Schiller adaptation *Chamsin* (1972), but neither of these films are considered part of the New German Cinema movement that Syberberg belonged to (To be fair, Syberberg's film does share some superficial similarities with Werner Herzog's debut feature *Lebenszeichen* (1968) aka *Signs of Life* in terms of its exotic Mediterranean setting). Indeed, it is certainly a humorous irony of New German Cinema history that one of the movement's oldest and most conservative and aristocratic filmmakers was also responsible for some of its strangest and most subversive films. Somewhat strangely, especially considering his reputation among serious and not-so-serious film critics and historians and trendy leftist-wing intellectuals like Susan Sontag, Gilles Deleuze and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, there is not one single mention of Syberberg in Amos Vogel's would-be-authoritative text *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974). Notably, New German Cinema's most famous and legendary filmmaker, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, was more or less Syberberg's greatest arch nemesis and wasted no opportunity to besmirch both the filmmaker and his films. In fact, in his 1981 'Hitlist of German Films,' Fassbinder named *Scarabea* and Syberberg's later film *Karl May* (1974) as two of 'The Most Disgusting' films of New German Cinema. While the film does feature tons of animal corpses and slaughtering, animal feces, and saucy Sardinian titty milk and thus can be described as, by definition, 'disgusting,' *Scarabea* is disgusting in a preternaturally delightful fashion. Additionally, none of the scenes in Syberberg's film is as unnerving as the slaughter-

SCARABEA: HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED?

house scene in Fassbinder's morbid avant-garde melodrama *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* (1978) aka *In a Year of 13 Moons*.

In a 2008 speech entitled *Hans-Jürgen Syberberg: Leni Riefenstahl's Heir?*, the late great British artist and intellectual Jonathan Bowden noted in regard to the filmmaker's singular (meta)political importance in terms of being the one and only post-WWII German filmmaker to figuratively pass on the Teutonic cultural torch, "Syberberg's politics is less important than the spirituality of the artistry that he represents. As with all extremely visual artists like him, describing what he's done makes a lot more sense if you've actually seen the material, but of course very few people are entirely aware that this material exists, even though probably a lot of that comes up on the internet almost instantaneously in English. But the reason for this is because people understand what he's doing. He's positioned himself to be the repository of the sort of sensibility, which didn't come to an end in 1945, that certain forms of German classicism that are not particularly redolent of it. There are certain forms of German medieval art that don't really relate to it. There's something rather trans-German and quasi-Catholic and German in the European sense, in Nietzsche's sense of being European as against German, about him. And there's not very much Protestant in my view about his art aesthetically, for example. But he is the repository of the Romantic *völkisch* sensibility which people know is quintessentially German and yet is largely denied apart from tourism and a few prissy things now. But it is ideologically denied in contemporary Germany." As Bowden's remarks indubitably reveal, Syberberg's films are certainly less accessible to American audiences, yet they contain a perennial spirit that should be celebrated by the growing Alt-Right movement, which thirsts for a true cultural inheritance. I certainly think it is a happy coincidence that Alt-Right animator Emily Youcis looks like a more busy yet eccentric version of Scarabea heroine Nicoletta Machiavelli, which makes sense considering they are both of half-Italian extraction. Interestingly, what no one seems to have noticed about Syberberg is that, not unlike Youcis, he is a very able troll as the subversive subtexts of his film reveal, albeit a rather refined one. Indeed, no other filmmaker in history can be said to have come up with brilliant ideas like allegorically depicting the rampant cultural philistinism of post-WWII 'democratic' Germany via a fat kraut pig that has no idea who Gottfried Benn is. Similarly, only Syberberg could have 'tricked' kosher carpenter-muncher Susan 'the white race is the cancer of human history' Sontag into declaring that he is one of the great masters of cinema history and even stating, "Syberberg belongs to the race of creators like Wagner, Artaud, Céline, the late Joyce, whose work annihilates other work. All are artists of endless speaking, endless melody—a voice that goes on and on." Needless to say, due its relative lack of cultural richness and subtextual significance compared to the filmmaker's later films, *Scarabea* is probably a good start for Syberberg novices, even if it almost like an exercise in advancing trolling when compared to the aesthetic

and intellectual majesty of an unrivaled masterwork like Hitler: A Film from
Germany.

-Ty E

SAN DOMINGO
SAN DOMINGO

Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1970)

Not unlike Herr Heimat Edgar Reitz with *Mahlzeiten* (1967) aka *Lußt For Love* and Rainer Werner Fassbinder with *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969), among countless other auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema, Prussian conservative auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Karl May*, *Parsifal*) demonstrated with his second feature *San Domingo* (1970)—a modernist (anti)counter-culture update of German Romantic poet Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Betrothal in St. Domingo* aka (1811) *Die Verlobung in Santo Domingo*—that he was still in his formative years as a film director and was heavily inspired by the films of French New Wave, as well as various neorealist works. Indeed, Syberberg did not really become Syberberg until after discovering the high-camp kitsch epics of queer kraut dandy Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Salome*), digging into his nation's past and myths, and releasing the first film in his 'Germany Trilogy', *Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972) aka *Ludwig - Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König*, yet *San Domingo* reveals that the auteur had already formed a subversive anti-leftist/anti-counter-culture *Weltanschauung* and had an affinity for the documentary form that he would never abandon, even utilizing such elements in his monolithic magnum opus *Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland* (1977) aka *Hitler: A Film from Germany*. Based on a then-controversial work by von Kleist about an interracial relationship between a white man and black woman set during the Haitian Revolution of 1804 when, to quote the novelist, "the natives were murdering the white men" (pg. 71), *San Domingo* depicts an exceedingly disillusioned, ethno-masochistic, and spiritually patricidal Fatherland where young adults of all stripes want to overthrow the government, recreation drug use is rampant, young girls are willing to bare it all for porn films for just a couple bucks, and stupid hippie hairdos are the norm. Centering on a sort of hopelessly naïve Aryan Christ from a wealthy family who becomes the perfect pawn of a socially ostracized Viennese mulatto and her cracker commune comrades that want to steal the blond Bobo's money, *San Domingo* depicts how the counter-culture movement was so proficient at destroying the minds and lives of normal people from well bred families. A black-and-white psychedelic micro-epic of the anti-anti-Heimat variety that acts a sort of kraut equivalent to Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) and Monte Hellman's *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971) featuring a highly complimentary award-winning score by krautrock founders Amon Düül II, *San Domingo* demonstrates like no other film that Marlon Brando's performance in *The Wild One* (1951) had a decidedly devastating influence on West German youth.

A true believer in the absurd myth of the 'noble savage,' hippie philistine nobleman Michael König (played by Michael König, who would go on to play the hippie lead in the two early Fassbinder flicks, *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970)

and Rio das Mortes (1971)) emerges from the wild jungles of West Germany after fleeing his posh parents' nice big home with virtually nothing to his name, hitches a ride from a taxi that he does not have enough money to pay for, and ends up at a Munich-based rocker commune inhabited by hash heads and other discernibly unclean untermensch rabble. Upon learning that Michael is rich, the scheming anti-social rockers, who cannot bother to work nor earn money in any even remotely honest way, come up with the bright bohemian idea to have one of their whores, a mulatto named Alice (Alice Ottawa), pretend to fall in love with the rich boy and then send a letter to his parents claiming that he has been kidnapped demanding a ransom. Somewhat reluctantly, Alice agrees after being offered \$10 grand of the ransom money. A proud negrophile who states, "It must be beautiful there...Jungle...Desert...It's warm... and wild animals. The people...I'd imagine they are way nicer. San Domingo," yet not realizing that San Domingo is the former name of Haiti where the black population exterminated the entire white population, Michael finds himself instantly infatuated with Alice and follows her during her various failed job attempts around Munich. When attempting to get a modeling job, Alice is denied because of her un-Aryan persuasion and told that the "white majority, average Joes" do not fancy negroes because "they haven't realized yet that black is beautiful." When Michael finally gathers the courage to ask Alice about her ancestry, she unsentimentally states, "My father was a real black-blooded mother-fucking nigger and I'm his daughter. My mother was a nanny. She was a junkie and sold me to a circus when I was five. My grandmother got me out there... My mother died when she was 30. Speaking of...my grandfather was an aristocrat. A knight. I have blue blood in me," thus demonstrating the degeneration of Teutonic blood in the post-WWII/post-empire age. On top of revealing that her American Negro father has the humorous name of 'James Mason' and lives in Virginia, Alice discusses how she was married to a pimp who tried to whore her out and beat her up (she has seven large scars across her body), but she later joined a Brazilian ballet company whose members would later beat her husband up and he never bothered her again.

Failing to find work, Alice barely says yes to playing a token Negro in a porn flick directed by an arrogant degenerate named Sigi (played by Sigi Graue, who starred in Volker Schlöndorff's adaptation of *Baal* (1970) starring Fassbinder) and ends up being reduced to tears after starring in a sleazy scene where she shows off her pussy while playing with a couple pussycats. Meanwhile, the members of the rocker group get in a verbal 'gang fight' with a rival group of communist student activists called the 'Red Cells,' which results in a pansy fight between a member from each group. While the leader of the Red Cell group pompously states, "We've proven that we're not just talking. At the university we stopped the professors from teaching their crap. We actually did it...we obstructed the system a bit" as proof of superiority to their slightly more barbaric contemporaries,

SAN DOMINGO

the leftist intellectuals are just as deluded as the uneducated rockers in their unhinged utopian dreams and their senseless desire to destroy West Germany. Undoubtedly, the most debauched yet laidback member of the rockers is a fellow named Schorsch, who absurdly confesses to Alice and Michael, "I declared myself a German poet because I think they deserve it again. Germany either gets World Wars or Poets, so I gave them a Poet. I intend to revolutionize the film business. I want to shoot a German comedy." Meanwhile, Michael's wealthy yet feeble and emotionally vacant aristocratic parents (with the mother being played by Werner Schroeter superstar Carla Egerer, who is around the same age as lead Michael König) are getting all moody and broody at their mansion after agreeing to pay the ransom money, with the father declaring, "Disgusting. There are terrible people in this world." Ultimately, the terrible people get their money, but the problem is that Alice ends up falling in love with Michael. When the Rockers reveal to Michael that they used him for his money and that they want nothing to do with him, he flips out and stabs Alice to death. While sitting beside her lifeless corpse, Michael is approached by one of the more sophisticated rockers, Hasi (Wolfgang Haas), who states, "It was serious. She never loved someone like you before. Stupid boy." Seconds after learning of his mistake, Michael decides to commit Seppuku and drives the same knife he killed with Alice into his lovelorn hippie heart. Ultimately, San Domingo closes with the rockers driving away on their motorcycles and the following quotes from serial rapist/early Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver: "We shall have our manhood. We shall have it or the earth will be leveled by our attempts to gain it."

Naturally, since San Domingo was probably the only film of its time to be unwaveringly critical of the counter-culture movement and leftwing utopianism in general, the work was venomously attacked by German critics, thus inspiring Syberberg to give up on contemporary events (or as he stated himself, "After this film [San Domingo] there remained only the possibility of a radical new beginning") and instead immersed himself in his Fatherland's dark and mystical past, which was ultimately for the better as he sired his masterful and totally singular 'German Trilogy' (Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King, Karl May, Hitler: A Film from Germany). Despite its failure to appeal to culturally cuckolded film critics, San Domingo did manage to snag the 1971 Deutscher Filmpreis for 'Best Cinematography' and 'Best Music.' While not up to par with Syberberg's subsequent heterosexual 'high-camp' Gesamtkunstwerk films, San Domingo is important simply because it provides a voice of sanity at a time when Germany had been seduced by neo-bolshevik baloney, cultural retardation, philo-Semitism, feminism, infantile utopian ideals, and a will towards destruction for destruction's sake. Cleverly utilizing kraut commie Bertolt Brecht's technique of knocking down the fourth wall against the left, San Domingo, which mainly featured non-actors 'playing themselves' (aka hippie degenerates acting like hippie degenerates), goes so far as featuring lead Michael König going completely out of

character and stating directly to the audience as himself: "People, listen up. I need to tell you something. In this movie I play a part. The others don't, but I do. I was paid for it. The thing is this. The guy I'm playing has a consciousness that's not mine. It's like that: The people smoke, take drugs. I've done that too, 'til about half a year ago. I was able to make use of it in a specific way. It gave me revolutionary impulses. Through LSD, for example, I've realized the possibilities of mankind. That there is matter, something we know nothing about. And this matter, you know refers to the future...to something we could experience...to a change, to something great, awesome, and different." Indeed, not unlike self-described 'conservative' auteur Paul Morrissey's films with Warhol, Syberberg wasted no effort in assembling the most miserable and unwitting motley crew of deluded debauchees he could find for San Domingo, as if they had no idea they were starring in a film that was meant to mock their very existence and wayward way of life. With mindless morons who spout gibberish slogans like "destroy that which destroys you," "Capitalism needs to be destroyed by any means necessary. There are no bad means, everything is valid to destroy capitalism," and "Crazy! The most beautiful word," San Domingo is best looked at today as a quirky 'New Right' comedy created by a true cinematic great during his formative years. Indeed, as a film that invokes the conveniently forgotten genocide of whites (i.e. French frogs) by savage negroes with its very title, not to mention its inclusion of sleazy communist pornographers (with Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg posters adorning their walls), a mischling noble-negro leading lady, and dumb ass drugged-out kraut rockers, San Domingo is a Teutonic tragicomedy with Prussian teeth that sinks deep into the fat of urban counter-culture Bavaria.

-Ty E

SEX-BUSINESS - MADE IN PASING
SEX-BUSINESS - MADE IN PASING

Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1970)

With his second narrative feature film *San Domingo* (1970)—an updated adaption of the story *Betrothal in St. Domingo* (1811) aka *Die Verlobung in Santo Domingo* by German romantic poet Heinrich von Kleist set in a hippie hellhole commune that acts as a warning of sorts to the kind of cultural degeneracy that would engulf Germany as a result cancerous counter-culture ideologies—Prussian master auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*, *Parsifal*) basically announced to the world that he was not a loony far-leftist bent on destroying the Fatherland like most of his kraut cinematic comrades of German New Cinema and naturally he became a favorite target of film critics thereon afterward. Of course, despite being heavily influenced by kraut commie philo-Semite Bertolt Brecht, Syberberg's 'nationalistic' persuasion can be seen in his films predating *Santo Domingo*, with the director's documentary *Sex-Business - Made in Pasing* (1969)—a *cinéma vérité*-like work centering around Bavarian pornographer Alois Brummer—being a thinly disguised indictment of the degradation of both Teutonic cinema and kultur as a work that demonstrates that artless erotic films had eclipsed art films in Germany in terms of popularity and monetary profit. Centering around a rather rotund slimy and sleazy Aryan degenerate who is the German equivalent of a Jewish caricature straight out of National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* newspaper who states regarding his main interest in making films, "Well...if it's not business, what else could it be?...It can only be for business," *Sex-Business* depicts an era when the most superficially 'nationalistic' form of cinema was of the low-camp comedic pornographic sort. Essentially softcore pseudo-erotic spoofs of the Heimatfilm ("homeland-film") genre—a *völkisch* film style that was popular in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria from the late 1940s to the early 1970s and was typically set in rural areas that gave a mystical 'blood and soil' appreciation for the land and promoted traditional family values—Bavarian porn flicks mainly appealed to the post-WWII generation who bought into the lies of the sexual revolution and counter-culture movements. Like its liberal ideological counter-part, the anti-Heimat (i.e. *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* (1969), *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach* (1971)), the Bavarian porn flick sought to undermine the traditional Heimat film by mocking and satirizing the conventions of the genre. In *Sex-Business*, Syberberg deconstructs the Heimat porn flick by revealing the vulgar and parasitic nature of its central figure Alois Brummer—the main producer and sometimes director of Bavarian porn with no real interest in the art of cinema who got in the movie business after selling his truck business and buying four movie theaters. A proud braggart of a sleazebag who proudly admits his knack for pornography as a result of his "primitive instinct," the belligerently boorish Brummer unwittingly reveals

in Sex-Business that pornographers are typically nothing more than odious opportunists who proudly profit off of targeting man's basest and most archaic instincts, thereupon degrading man to the same level as the farm animals in his films. A documentary made a couple years before Syberberg discovered the films of Werner Schroeter, reinvented his aesthetic, and directed his first 'celluloid Gesamtkunstwerk,' Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King (1972) aka Ludwig - Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König, Sex-Business is a discernibly stripped and minimalistic doc of next to nil aesthetic value that derives the majority of its potency in sociological study of the post-WWII counter-culture phenomenon of Bavarian pornography.

As revealed in an inter-title at the very beginning of Sex-Business, "Financially, Graf Porno und seine Mädchen (1969) aka Count Porno and his Girls, produced by Alois Brummer, is ranked third in the first quarter of 69 among all films shown in Germany at the time, including foreign." By the conclusion of the documentary it reveals that the film's central subject, porn producer/director Alois Brummer was awarded the German "Golden Screen" award for selling 3 million movie tickets in a single year for one of his bawdy Bavarian porn flicks. Despite initially facing trouble from the FSK (German motion picture rating system) and German film industry as the "black sheep" of Teutonic cinema, Brummer's latest film Graf Porno und die liebesdürstigen Töchter (1969) was cleared on the same day he won the Golden Screen, thus demonstrating that pornography had finally become mainstream in krautland. In the first scene featuring Brummer, he is documented refusing to increase an assistant cameraman's wages despite the fact his latest film has made millions, stating like a proud miser, "It's like that...if one film was a success...I can't just increase the fee 50%. I don't do that and I never will. He can look for something else...not with me! Plain and simple." As for his 'performers,' Brummer preys on young, self-conscious blonde girls with low self-esteem who are willing to strip their clothes for next to nil. Apparently, "Nice, folksy naive sex" is the "best and most interesting" sort of porn in Germany as nothing is more delectable than a wholesome farm girl from a proud Catholic family who is willing to get naked in a barn and be buggered like an animal while cows with big udders stand in the background. According to Brummer, "Vulgarity and the Mediterranean type, that's not in demand here" as even Teutons in the post-Nazi era prefer blonds. As for why Italians are not in demand, Brummer states, "Take a look at the Mediterranean type, the dark moustache...The strange skin tone...It doesn't appeal to Germans...Blondes are more appealing..." and that even regarding foreigners, "If anything, they like the German mentality even more." Despite using a somewhat passive and skittish fellow named Günter Hendel (So Much Naked Tenderness, Erotic Center) to direct some of his films, Brummer is essentially the 'auteur' behind all of his pornographic works as demonstrated by the fact he can be seen throughout Sex-Business dictating over his film sets like a slave-driving fuck film Führer,

SEX-BUSINESS - MADE IN PASING

threatening to kick any girl off the film if she refuses to bare all. When Brummer shoots some nude scenes in a barn, he and the film crew are attacked by the lady of the farm who believes “the whole mountain will be talking about us” due to the somewhat unconventional debauchery going on around the home, but that does not stop the woman from allowing her baby boy to be totally exposed to the profane display of Southern Teutonic degeneracy at the porn shoot. In the end, the irked farm woman attempts to shovel cow shit on Syberberg for filming her freakout. As revealed at the beginning of *Sex-Business*, 50% of all German films made in 1968 did not earn their production costs back, but Alois Brummer is laughing all the way to the bank.

As Syberberg would later state of *Sex-Business* in his book *Syberbergs Filmbuch* (1979), “For the first time [critics] could see the world of cinema in which they lived as it actually was: practical, proletarian art, commercialized, unimaginative, perverted, clean German sex made in Bavaria. The opposite of blue movies and international porn – witlessly funny, an unintentional joke...Alois Brummer, the genial, harmless Lower Bavarian as the most cogent joker symbol of the inhuman wheeler-dealer cinema in its currently lowest stage,” thus demonstrating his keen cultural pessimism in both the German cinema and political world. Indeed, in no other film aside from *Sex-Business* can I think of a film that so cynically yet oddly objectively demonstrates the mockery that was (and still is) the modern cinema world and the sad thing is that the figure of Alois Brummer seems rather benign when compared to the sick kind of pornography pumped out around the world today. Undoubtedly, now people, including Germans, are no longer able to get turned on just by some blonde babes doing a silly slapstick routine as demonstrated by the proliferation of miscegenation, cuckold, scat, tranny, foot fetish, amputee fetishism, sadomasochism, feederism, gerontophilia, paraphilic infantilism, rape fantasy fetishism, and various other films of mental illness-based digital video degeneracy that the porn industry pumps out like an overflowing sewer. Described by German New Cinema scholar Thomas Elsaesser as a “sarcastic, deadpan deconstruction of this deconstruction” due to its biting demystification of Bavarian pornography’s debauched demystification of the Heimat film, *Sex-Business* fits perfectly into Syberberg’s oeuvre in that it uses Brechtian techniques against the left itself in its up-close-and-personal portrait of Alois Brummer—the mastermind of the porn genre and a true ‘people’s director’ who produced the sort of films the proletariat really wants to see as opposed to the soulless pseudo-intellectual celluloid commie crap defecated out by directors like Alexander Kluge and Jean-Marie Straub. Indeed, Bavarian left-wing auteur Peter Fleischmann would also attempt to satirize German porn (albeit this time focusing on the pseudo-sexual educational skin flicks that were popular in Germany at the same time) with his work *Dorothea’s Revenge* aka (1974) *Dorotheas Rache*, but unlike Syberberg’s *Sex-Business*, it is just as debauched and aesthetically repellant as the pseudo-sex educational films it hap-

hazardly attempts to mock, albeit featuring less aesthetically pleasing chicks. A sort of anti-anti-Heimat film in crude yet captivating cinéma vérité-like form, *Sex-Business* may be one of auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's least aesthetically ambitious works, but is also another work that once again proves that the filmmaker was one of the few voices of reason and sanity of post-WWII German cinema as a man who once stated of modern German art that it is, "filthy and sick... in praise of cowardice and treason, of criminals, whores, of hate, ugliness, of lies and crimes and all that is unnatural."

-Ty E

LUDWIG - REQUIEM FOR A VIRGIN KING
LUDWIG - REQUIEM FOR A VIRGIN KING

Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1972)

Although he had directed a number of films before, the majority of which being experimental documentaries, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg – probably the only filmmaker of 'German New Cinema' to describe himself as being, "conservative in a Prussian sense, of the classic school, without chewing gum and pinball, not for nothing raised in the age of Stalin," – would first make his cinematic declaration against the cosmopolitan liberalism popular among his filmic compatriots, as well as his one-man war against Hollywood with *Ludwig - Requiem für einen jungfräulichen König* (1972) aka *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King*; the first film in the radical auteur's 'Germany Trilogy' of Teutonic myths. An unrelenting blitzkrieg against the Fourth Wall of theatre and a tight Teutonic tsunami of hermetic and operatic tableaux centering around the myths and mystique of 19th century King Ludwig II of Bavaria aka "The Swan King" aka "The Fairy-Tale King" aka "Mad King Ludwig," *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King* was described by cinematic soldier Syberberg as, "a declaration of war against the dominant forms of the cinema of dialogue and the entertainment film in the tradition of Hollywood and its colonies...It was also a declaration of war against psychological dribble, plots based on gags and action, the philosophy of continuity editing and its shot/countershot technique, its metaphysics of the automobile and the gun, its excitement of opening and closing doors, and its melodramas based on sex and crime, in short, against the domination of narrative cinema in principle." Ironically, Syberberg – who came-of-age in communist East Germany, thus becoming untainted by the deleterious effects of American cultural homogenization – began his lifelong passion of synthesizing theatre and film at the age of 17-years-old when Marxist playwright/poet Bertolt Brecht gave him the opportunity to film some of the far-left stage director's Berliner Ensemble productions. Syberberg would go on to be what is probably the only filmmaker in the world to turn cinema into "Gesamtkunstwerk" (a "total work of art" in the Wagnerian sense which strives to include all artistic mediums) with *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King* – a 140-minute film epic featuring an innately abstract and arcane synthesis of elements of Germanic myth, cinema, theatre, opera, poetry, documentary, musical, and metaphysics – but it would be with his 442-minute cinematic epic *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977) aka *Hitler - ein Film aus Deutschland* that the German filmmaker would inspire leftist Jewess Susan Sontag (who once infamously wrote, "The white race is the cancer of human history," to the glee of her racial compatriots and ethno-masochistic white liberals everywhere) of all people to write he had created, "one of the great works of art of the twentieth century," as an 'aristocratic postmodernist' of sorts who, "belongs to the race of creators like Wagner, Artaud, Céline, the late Joyce, whose work annihilates other work." Essentially, the film Syberberg needed to

make so he could experiment with ideas he would take to 'Spenglerian' proportions with Hitler: A Film from Germany – arguably the most thoughtful, insightful, and eclectic approach by anyone, kraut or otherwise, in accessing Adolf Hitler's place in German history – Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King is also a masterpiece in its own right as a work that makes Luchino Visconti's 235-minute depiction of the Mad King, Ludwig (1972) starring Helmut Berger in the lead role, seem like it was directed by a for-hire hack in Hollywood who was solely hypnotized by his subject's homosexuality and royal costumes.

A man who once famously stated, "I wish to remain an eternal enigma to myself and to others," Ludwig II of Bavaria (25 August 1845 – 13 June 1886) is a man now better remembered today through myths than reality, not least of all due to all the extravagant castles he built around Bavaria (through which tourist revenue has partially enabled the state to be the richest in Germany), his financial support of Richard Wagner, dubious sexuality and sanity, and mysterious death. Like with all the other films in Syberberg's Germany trilogy, Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King meticulously massages, mutilates, and molests its subject from the perspective of a 'pomo classicist.' Beginning with a prophecy from Lola Montez (played by Fassbinder's ex-wife Ingrid Caven) – mistress of Ludwig II's grandfather – that due to incest and unruly masses of proletarians, among other things, that, "King Ludwig has no chance," Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King establishes from the very beginning that the "King of Kitsch" lived a terribly troubled and ultimately tragic life plagued by social isolation (aside from his servant 'lackeys' and favorite artists), rotten teeth, and family treachery. A funny fellow of rather refined taste who loves, "the mountains, the forest air, horses...Richard Wagner...Edgar Allan Poe...Friedrich Schiller...the night, the mystic and inexplicable" and "believes in the immortality of the soul," Ludwig II (played by Fassbinder's right-hand man Harry Baer, who mutinied against his master when he decided to work with Syberberg) would seem like a happy-go-lucky monarch were it not for his subsequent remark describing his hatred for pollution caused by English industry, so-called 'progress,' the Prussian empire, nationalism, socialism, and last, but certainly not least, "mass meetings of people." In short, Ludwig II is a reluctant ruler who has nil interest in Realpolitik and his royal duties, thus he escapes into a fantasy world of compulsive castle building, the more than generous financial support of his favorite composer Richard Wagner, among other royally blessed artists, and wandering like a child through the night like a phantom in a fairytale. Naturally, his fellow royals were more than a bit concerned over his abandonment of his kingly duties, incessant borrowing and spending of monarch money as a loyal but loony art patron, and his selling of the Kingdom to Germany for a hefty sum so he could finance fantastic castles, so, as Syberberg more than subtly hints at in Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King, Ludwig II was likely assassinated by his own people and possibly his own uncle Luitpold who later maintained the regency. As stated by Ludwig II's detractor

LUDWIG - REQUIEM FOR A VIRGIN KING

Graf Holnstein (played by Fassbinder's one-time boy toy, black Bavarian Günther Kaufmann), the Kitsch King once, "gave an opera singer expensive jewelry and didn't even sleep with her," which is certainly the sign of a less than sane man, at least among more masculine and power-driven men who seek to conquer and gain power and not waste money on art of all things. As Syberberg wrote, "My Ludwig film begins with the first E-flat major chords of the Rhinegold and ends with the conclusion of the *Götterdämmerung*, in whose last ray of light little Ludwig, old and bearded, steps out of the mist of Erda's grotto as a sadly smiling child. The myth of the Nibelungs presents the frame for my film. In the film the interrelations between allusions to Ludwig and to Wagner shuttle back and forth, creating an inextricable associative deepening of an epic cosmos in which we can recognize ourselves and perhaps celebrate ourselves in the tragic mode. For the theme is the destruction of a utopia in the face of a person looking for a lost or artificial paradise."

Oftentimes labeled a filmmaker of German New Cinema, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg is indubitably the only German filmmaker of his generation to not only embrace his nation's rich (yet now taboo) cultural legacy, but also a rather idiosyncratic blend of 'Prussian conservatism' that somehow manages to reconcile Richard Wagner and Karl May with the likes of cosmopolitan 'leftist' German cultural producers like Bertolt Brecht and Werner Schroeter. In fact, during the second, more apocalyptic and anachronistic second half of *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King*, the character of Richard Wagner (who is played by two different actors of different genders, the female portrayal being the composer's Jungian 'anima' of sorts) as played by actress Anette Tirier (who appeared in both Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* and *Tag der Idioten* aka *Day of the Idiots*) makes the culturally insightful statement (people forget that like Hitler, Wagner was a rebel despite how he is perceived nowadays as an archaic racist), "Save me from these old women with their cream cakes and moneybags. I have belonged to youth and revolution since 1848. I succeeded against the philistines, with my own theatre and 6-hour performances, in forming a 19th century musical underground... Only when Niki de St. Phalle, Jim Dine, Werner Schroeter, Magdalena Montezuma and Ernst Fuchs produce the "The Ring" will I be free again." Of course, Syberberg was the only one who made any serious attempt to make the 19th century rebel genius "free again" with, among various other films, his 255-minute epic *Parsifal* (1983) – an epic and aesthetically 'Nazified' postmodern adaptation of the composer's opera with the Grail being represented by Bayreuth Theatre – but as the audacious extra-avant-garde auteur depicted in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* with Uncle Adolf's allegorical rise from Richard Wagner's grave, it would be next to impossible to rehabilitate Ludwig II's favorite artist, as well as any other element of pre-1933 German history, after the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945. As the man who metaphysically inspired Hitler, who wrote in his infamous au-

tobiography "Mein Kampf," "At the age of twelve, I saw ... the first opera of my life, Lohengrin. In one instant I was addicted. My youthful enthusiasm for the Bayreuth Master knew no bounds," Richard Wagner's legacy will forever be tainted by its association with its innate influence of National Socialism, despite the fact that his most loyal patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria – the "Perfect Wagnerite" who vehemently despised politics, nationalism, socialism and especially, "mass meetings of people" – funded the composer so he could create a complex, if not totally imaginary and mystical, utopia where realpolitik and real people were nowhere to be found as esoterically depicted in Syberberg's Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King.

Indubitably, the most truly Teutonic filmmaker and artist of his generation and uniquely unabashedly so, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg was essentially the ideological adversary of far-left Frankfurt school auteur Alexander Kluge – one of 26 signatories to the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, which marked the launch of the New German Cinema against 'Papa's Kino' and the deep cultural traditions of the Fatherland, so it is no surprise that the Wagnerian auteur would write, "Yes, this land has become brutal and materialistic. Tolerance has degenerated into denunciation, and mediocrity into cultural conformity. Cinema is misunderstood as a practiced mass art, as the fast-food stand of show business—cinema as the smallest common multiple of the leisure industry. Why? For an entire generation, Germany's children learned the statistics of Auschwitz, the virtues of revolution, no matter how misunderstood, from an admittedly puny German tradition without the courage of its convictions, which they promptly "demythified" as hero worship...An intrinsic morality was born (or what they regarded as one), the bulwark of a new rationality; for feelings and ideals lead to disaster, so they had been told." Of course, whereas Alexander Kluge's films mark the height of sterile and soulless rationality and an intrinsic loathing of national identity as especially reflected by him and his fellow far-left filmic compatriots (including would-be-Frenchman Volker Schlöndorff and the master of melodramatic group psychotherapy Rainer Werner Fassbinder) omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978) – an ethno-masochistic cinematic work Syberberg described as being, "without a concept...without aesthetic, metaphysical control and responsibility" – *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King* announced the rebirth of German myths and irrationalism, or as the only "master of celluloid Gesamtkunstwerk" concluded himself upon completing in German trilogy, "If my films *Ludwig*, *Requiem for a Virgin King* and *Karl May* can be understood as positive mythologizings of history through the devices of cinema, and filtered through the intellectual controls of irony and pathos, for our glory and for use as a response to the reality of our days, what can we do with a historical subject like Hitler? That was the question from the very outset, before making this last film. This epitome of our deepest guilt and reflection of our vast grief and turning away from the face of a man such as we understand him, and nevertheless

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accepting here too the title as a motto for all three films of my trilogy: in search of paradise lost here as well?" Of course, Syberberg was the only filmmaker of his generation to truly face Hitler and the troubled history of his fractured Fatherland, so it should be no surprise that the most famous and successful director of German New Cinema, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, would list Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King as one of the "The Least Important" films of the movement in a 1981 "Hitlist of German Films" because while he merely 'cinematically reacted' to the more painful periods of Teutonic history with positively pessimistic, naked melodramas, but never went to the trouble of deciphering Aryans myths and their historical influence, the director of *Hitler: A Film from Germany* brazenly basked in it and accepted his fate as a child of Ludwig II, Richard Wagner, Karl May, and – last but not least – Adolf Hitler.

Near the conclusion of *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King*, protagonist Ludwig II sits in a state of aggravated perennial melancholy in his royal chamber, which resembles a sort of apocalyptic Teutonic purgatory featuring nude Nordic succubi holding torches and candles, after learning of Richard Wagner's death as flame-toned contemporary documentary footage of tourists visiting one of his castles is screened in the background, in what is probably the most potent allegory in the film for The Fairy Tale King's legacy as a long obfuscated historical myth that has degenerated to the point where it makes for one of Bavaria's best selling products. Francis Parker Yockey – a Euro-American far-right neo-Spenglerian intellectual and revolutionary – once wrote in his short political tract *Enemy of Europe* (1953) that if Europe did not unify under a "Prussian-ethical Future" (the sort "Prussian conservative" Syberberg would probably support), then, "the Europe of 2050 will be essentially the same as that of 1950, viz. a museum to be looted by barbarians, a historical curiosity for sightseers from the colonies; an odd assortment of operetta-states; a reservoir of human material standing at the disposal of Washington and Moscow; a loan market for New York financiers; a great beggars' colony, bowing and scraping before the American tourists." Of course, as recent history has proven, Ludwig II, Syberberg, and Yockey's nightmare has become more than a dystopian nightmare of slavery to a culturally and racially mongrelized former colony (United States) with a scant history, malignant multiculturalism, Hollywood cultural hegemony, indigenous population decline, and authoritarian political correctness in what is now a cultural graveyard with virtually no potential for rebirth. Syberberg warned Germany with *Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King* and his subsequent cinematic works, but it seems everyone was too busy atoning to Judea and the rest of the aggressive and unforgiving Tschandala for the sins of their grandfathers to take notice.

Of course, Syberberg would later write regarding the art of his anti-nationalistic nation that it is, "filthy and sick... in praise of cowardice and treason, of criminals, whores, of hate, ugliness, of lies and crimes and all that is unnatural." As

for his reasoning, Syberberg revealed that not all Germans have passive, dead souls when he wrote, "The Jewish interpretation of the world followed upon the Christian, just as the Christian one followed Roman and Greek culture. So now Jewish analyses, images, definitions of art, science, sociology, literature, politics, the information media, dominate. Marx and Freud are the pillars that mark the road from East to West. Neither are imaginable without Jewishness. Their systems are defined by it. The axis USA-Israel guarantees the parameters. That is the way people think now, the way they feel, act and disseminate information. We live in the Jewish epoch of European cultural history. And we can only wait, at the pinnacle of our technological power, for our last judgment at the edge of the apocalypse.... So that's the way it looks, for all of us, suffocating in unprecedented technological prosperity, without spirit, without meaning... Those who want to have good careers go along with Jews and leftists [and] the race of superior men [Rasse der Herrenmenschen] has been seduced, the land of poets and thinkers has become the fat booty of corruption, of business, of lazy comfort." After all, in what other kind of sick, Semitic world would Roland Emmerich be the world's most famous German director and Steven Spielberg the most famous of all?! Something tells me that after watching clips from Spielberg's Lincoln (2012), the superstar of Shoah business has never seen Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a man who has gotten rich on destroying national film industries, appealing to grade school children, and reinventing Occidental history where the Second World War resembles a story from Brothers Grimm fairy-tales. That being said, maybe Syberberg has exaggerated the death of German myths.

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Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (1977)

Without a doubt, aside from being the most hated person in contemporary history, Adolf Hitler – the Austrian-born Führer of the infamous Third Reich who settled for a more serious career in revolutionary nationalist politics after failing as an artist – is also one of the most cinematically depicted figures of film history, which is quite ironic considering he was a cinephile of sorts who had his own little theatre and personal film projectionist where he would apparently watch two or three films a day, with half-Jewish Austrian auteur Fritz Lang's two-part silent Wagnerian epic *Die Nibelungen* (1924) being one of his favorite and most-watched films. Indeed, while Hitler is still portrayed in movies of all sorts, including mainstream Jewish Hollywood scat-comedies, such as *Little Nicky* (2000) starring neo-vaudevillian philistine Adam Sandler in which Hitler is dressed in a female maid's outfit and is repeatedly anally penetrated with a pineapple by Satan himself while in hell, as well as modern mainstream German epics like *Downfall* (2004) aka *Der Untergang* where the dead dictator's last days on earth are dramatized in a fairly objective manner, few films have taken the time to examine the effect he had on the nation, people, and culture he claimed to love so dearly yet ultimately destroyed in an apocalyptic fashion, but if there is a film that does to attempt this arduous and ambitious task and then some, it is most certainly Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's 442-minute avant-garde 'biopic' *Hitler: A Film from Germany* aka *Hitler, ein Film aus Deutschland* aka *Our Hitler* – a four part Franco-British-German co-production that was produced by 'Germany's most successful producer' Bernd Eichinger (*The Neverending Story*, *The Baader Meinhof Complex*) and co-produced by the BBC. A strictly conservative work of the Teutonic romanticist persuasion, a circus announcer in pancake make-up states early on in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* that, "this is no left wing opportunist death-camp sex film. This is a film for us. It's about war and genocide. Auschwitz as the battlefield of race war. Who does the world hold guilty? And what would Hitler be without us?" Of course, the more important question asked by *Hitler: A Film from Germany* is what is Germany without its historical myths, innate irrationalism, dark romanticism?! As director Syberberg quite lucidly yet epically and arcanelly reveals with his *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Germany is nothing without its myths and traditional culture and it was Adolf Hitler, the supposed 'savior' and Wagnerian Hero that Germans had always dreamed of since the beginning of their history – who literally rises from Richard Wagner's tome in the film – who incorporated all the myths and traditions of Teutonic kultur in his propaganda and war campaign, thus ultimately irrevocably tainting them for subsequent unborn generations to come after the Fatherland's defeat after the Second World War. Indisputably one of the most ambitious cinematic works ever made and one of

the few examples of cinema as “Gesamtkunstwerk,” *Hitler: A Film from Germany* is a work where Syberberg did the seemingly aesthetically and politically inexplicable; or as he wrote himself, “I sought an aesthetic scandal: combining Brecht’s doctrine of epic theater with Richard Wagner’s musical aesthetics, cinematically conjoining the epic system as anti-Aristotelian cinema with the laws of a new myth.”

Where German prophet of Occidental decline Oswald Spengler left off with his final work *Hour of Decision* (1933) – a best seller that was eventually banned by the Third Reich, in part, due to its prediction of Germany’s destruction as a result of naïve optimism for National Socialism – Syberberg continues in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* – a work innately in tune with the Teutonic traditions that the allies sought to destroy and the Germans themselves did not think twice about throwing away because, after all, they were spared total extermination and you know what they say: “if you can’t beat them, join them.” And, indeed, Germany, at least the western side, decided to adopt the cosmopolitanism, globalism, Hollywoodism, McWorldism, rationalism and all the other ‘isms’ that make the world mundanely ‘one’ as envisioned and foretold by great men of Jewish history ranging from Leon Trotsky to Henry Kissinger, but Herr Syberberg, a man who once stated about himself that he was, “conservative in a Prussian sense, of the classic school, without chewing gum and pinball, not for nothing raised in the age of Stalin” and a man of minor noble blood who had the good luck of growing up in Eastern Germany, thus missing the narcotizing effects of American mass-culture and capitalism, was able to forego Uncle Sam’s influence, which is quite apparent in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* – a work of postmodern pastiche Prussianism and post-Auschwitz high-camp Hitlerism that quite indisputably aesthetically exterminates any and every celluloid portrayal of Hitler that came before and after it. In many ways, Syberberg’s film is a cinematic manifesto on an epic scale that pleads with the viewer to move on in regards to the infamous legacy of Uncle Adolf – the main point arguably being that he exploited the Germanic myths from Goethe to Karl May and every kraut genius in between – because as the director wrote himself, “We know about the glory and misery of irrationalism; but without it, Germany is nothing but dangerous, sick, without identity, explosive—a wretched shadow of its possibilities. Hitler is to be fought, not with the statistic of Auschwitz or with sociological analyses of the Nazi economy, but with Richard Wagner and Mozart.” In *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Syberberg reactivates the myths with a vivacious vengeance that blitzkriegs the “fourth wall” to let the audiences know he is speaking directly to them so they cannot weasel their way out confronting Hitler and the irreplaceable culture that he has helped to throwaway by making a central ingredient of his regime. Featuring Syberberg’s young daughter, Amelie Syberberg, in the opening and concluding scenes (with her and a puppet representing “Germany” and “democracy”), the director ties his own child to the future of Germany, which is quite telling con-

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sidering Fassbinder, a homosexual who never had children and the central figure of German New Cinema, only foresaw and accepted pessimism and death for the future of his nation, while the director of *Hitler: A Film from Germany* was arguably the only strong link between Germany's rich cultural past and its dubious future.

A fundamentally nonlinear work featuring a number of long monologues, *Hitler: A Film from Germany* is essentially divided into four main segments including: Part I: *Der Gral* ("The Grail"), Part II: *Ein deutscher Traum* ("A German Dream"), Part III: *Das Ende eines Wintermärchens* ("The End of a Winter's Tale"), and *Wir Kinder der Hölle* ("We Children of Hell"). Part I is arguably, with the possible exception of the final segment, the most important part of *Hitler: A Film from Germany* and largely deals with Hitler's cult of personality as disseminated through National Socialist propaganda. Utilizing gigantic cut-outs of German expressionist classics like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Algol: Tragedy of Power* (1920), and *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922), Syberberg recounts Frankfurt school leftist Jew Siegfried Kracauer's argument in his popular work in neo-Marxist pop-psychology *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947) that the early works of Teutonic silent horror foretold the 'cultural insanity' and the rise of a mad men like Hitler. We also see Fassbinder superstar Harry Baer philosophizing on the death of the Occident while holding a King Ludwig II of Bavaria doll, a parody of Chaplin as Hitler from *The Great Dictator* (1940), Uncle Adolf performing cunnilingus on a blowup doll, Hitler as Napoleon, a lycanthrope with a nazi armband with human bodies in its mouth, and a variety of National Socialist propaganda images, including caricatures of Jews from Julius Streicher's tabloid magazine *Der Stürmer* and images of Eva Braun going for scenic nature walks. Sado-masochistic fetishism is an intrinsic element of many images, thus illustrating both the S&M obsessions of both Hitler and the German people themselves, thereupon linking love and death – a theme taking to its fullest extreme in the no-budget arthouse splatter flick of aberrant Aryan auteur Jörg Buttgerreit (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*). One of the most iconic elements of *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, especially during the first segment, is the utilization of grotesque Nazi puppets that makes for the gross exaggerations of Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Eva Braun, and Göring's essences. Unlike the hysterical Hebrew in Hollywood and the ethno-masochistic leftist krauts in the German film industry, Syberberg makes no attempt to disguise the sheer and utter subjectivity of his work, especially when dealing with Hitler and his gang.

As film scholar Anton Kaes wrote in his academic study *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (1992), "Syberberg acknowledges his debt to Wagner not only through numerous musical quotations, in particular from *Rienzi*, Hitler's favorite opera, and from *Götterdämmerung* but also through the overall structure of his film: like the Ring cycle, Hitler consists of four parts. Given also

Syberberg's fascination with German mythology, it is not farfetched to regard his film as a continuation of Wagner's project in the age of technical reproducibility." Keeping Kaes' words in mind, it is not a stretch to say that Syberberg could also identify with Adolf Hitler – the Wagnerite and the artist – as the director even went so far as once admitting he 'could understand' being an SS man at Auschwitz who 'made himself hard' to fulfill a history mission, thereupon making Hitler: A Film from Germany what is quite arguably the closest attempt a filmmaker had made at understanding from every angle, thus antagonistically going against the grain of the over-quoted Friedrich Nietzsche quote, "Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster, and if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you." Indeed, Syberberg's film in many ways resembles a Wagnerian scale Germanic holocaust of the audio-visual sort. One could also say one needs a certain 'hardness' to watch a film like Hitler: A Film from Germany – a virtual uncensored Faustian bachelors degree in not only everything related to Hitlerism and the mad mensch himself, but also German cultural history in general. With references to obscure events of National Socialist history, including Himmler's sending of his personal astrologists to concentration camps, Hitler's favorite films, the torture of Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach's toddler son by American GIs, how Hitler earned his beloved Iron Cross in the First World War after he was recommended for it by a German-Jewish superior officer named Hugo Gutmann, and other seemingly odd and contradictory anecdotes from history. In its eclectic portrayals of Hitler, from the perspective of characters both real and fictional, Hitler: A Film from Germany is the rare sort of film that would inspire both hatred and interest from both Zionist terrorist and Esoteric Hitlerites as a work that says just about what everyone would say about the fallen Führer – a man who went from being a Viennese hobo to being voted "Man of the Year" in 1938 by Time Magazine and would go on to be the most hated and reviled person in the world.

In its utilization of actors of Syberberg's ideological adversary Rainer Werner Fassbinder, including Harry Baer (Fassbinder's right-hand man who oftentimes worked as his assistant director), Peter Moland, and the rather rotund Peter Kern, as well as Austrian Jew André Heller, Hitler: A Film from Germany, quite ironically, takes a rather iconoclastic approach to promoting the restoration of German culture, Teutonic irrationalism, and Faustian myths. In fact, Syberberg goes as far as using quasi-pornographic S&M of elderly naked women grasping a 'scale of justice' (one side of the scale holding large dildos and the other, doll heads) in a 'last judgement court' against Hitler to get his point across because, while he may be a Prussian, he is certainly no prude because in his view it is the mainstream leftists who are callous, cowardly, and impenetrably close-minded. As he once wrote, "Germany was spiritually disinherited and dispossessed; anything that could not be justified by sociology and social policies was hushed up. But how can they comprehend Hölderlin if they have relocated him as a revolu-

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tionary between Lessing and Marx, how could Novalis survive as a model for the American road movie; and without irrationality, no *Die Räuber* [The Brigands] by Schiller and no fairy tales and no folk songs and no Runge. Give everything to Hitler and Goebbels? And is Caspar David Friedrich right-wing and fascist? Is irrationalism right-wing or left-wing? Have they forgotten that their venerated Ernst Bloch was the man who, in the last line of his *The Spirit of Utopia*, spoke of homeland (*Heimat*), the word banished from Germany? And that it was he who, in those days, when faced with the Nazis, warned about undernourishing the mass imagination? What would Judaism be without its Cabbala? Merely Einstein? And what would Einstein be without music, without German Romanticism and Classicism? We live in a country without a homeland.”

In the final segment of *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Syberberg satirizes the post-WWII cult of Hitler where both ex-Nazis and Jews in Hollywood ironically cashed in on the Third Reich. Indeed, for all of Steven Spielberg’s hatred of Hitler and promotion of the Holocaust, he certainly made a killing off those Nazi killings and were not for Hitler, he might not have as many vacation houses or even his beloved holy land, the Jewish state of Israel. *Hitler: A Film from Germany* is, most importantly, a film about the Germans for once and not the Jews, who are certainly not doing too bad nowadays, but the Aryans are a decidedly dying race, who have become a group of freedom-fetishizing pacifists and hedonists with the sort of slave-morality they used to accuse their enemies of having. Towards the conclusion of *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, one hears Thomas Mann’s melodramatic statement from New Year’s 1938, “God help our darkened and misused land and teach it to make its peace with itself and its world.” The narrator then retorts to Mann’s quote with, “What would he say today? Or our children tomorrow? Seeing what we have done with our freedom and ourselves: Soulless dwarf people in the dead plastic womb of an empty doll face are the mirrors of our cities and our language; and they created gods in this image. The end game of our existence today, a new Family of Man, in the inhuman ready-made face of our freedom, which we have gambled away. Freedom without a face....Hitler, here is your victory!” Indeed, World War II was Judea’s victory with the Aryan apocalypse and if the Germanic goy can learn anything from the Jew, it is that guilt is unnecessary and debilitating baggage of the decidedly defeated and dead kind. After all, when was the last time you heard a Hebrew apologize for the doings of a mass murderer of their own ilk, such as failed bourgeois Trotsky or a Mongol apologize for the sins of Genghis Khan?! While it takes the confirmation that Mr. anti-Semite Adolf Hitler really had Jewish ancestry and/or was a homo, or that modern day Zionist Jews are “National Socialist” engaged in ethnic cleaning for modern day Germans to shed their guilt? As a certain totenkopf-obsessed neo-folk group used as the title of their first full-length album: *The Guilty Have No Pride!*

In his posthumously published work *Diary of a Man in Despair* (1947) – a

rather unconventional journal of the writer's hatred of the Third Reich – Fritz Reck-Malleczewen, a personal friend of Oswald Spengler and a good Prussian like Syberberg who was executed at Dachau concentration camp via a bullet to the neck on February 16, 1945, wrote the following words, “Nationalism, no matter how loudly defended today, is almost finished, and the coup de grace will come in this most mob-like of all wars. Tomorrow it will be behind us, an ugly, sweaty dream. The idea of a united Europe was not always upheld by me, but I know now that we can no longer afford the luxury of considering it a mere idea. Europe must either make any further wars impossible, or this cradle of great ideas will see its cathedrals pulverized, and its landscape turned into a plain.” Indeed, Europe is united today in technocratic and economic slavery as a passive cuckold of America, its cultural vitality and spirit were all but destroyed in the Second World War, and cultural ingredients and cultural producers are virtually nonexistent there today, thus making Syberberg's plea for a return to seem rather futile, especially in a strictly German context. In the final paragraph he wrote for the introduction of his screenplay for *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, Syberberg stated, “The final silence of childlike melancholy in a starry tear with a distant freedom fanfare beyond the mountains. That is the end of this Hitler, who is now a film. But how far we have gone in these seven hours of cinema, what things we have gone through and what things we have had to see and hear...” Indeed, if any film could have inspired the same passion that Wagner's opera did for Hitler in dreaming of the Third Reich, it is most certainly *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, but it seems that few people had the eyes, ears, and soul to properly listen. Like most modern day European nations, Germany is a sparkling Teutonic toilet for nations of the third world, which actively promotes supplanting its native population with dusky-skinned *unterschlecht*, and whose indigenous German women are far too concerned with their careers rather than child-bearing, just as German men are too interested in Asian whores to spawn any children. From Spengler to Syberberg, *Hitler: A Film from Germany* is more of an elaborately epic elegy of an *Gesamtkunstwerk* for Germania than a call for rebirth in Germany, especially when watched over 35 years after its release. Even Syberberg seems to have changed, although where his cuckold kinsmen have only become all the more ethno-masochistic and self-denigrating, the filmmaker seems closer to Hitler than ever, at least judging by a statement in 1990, “Whoever joined the Jews and the leftists was successful, and it did not necessarily have anything to do with love, or understanding, or even inclination. How could Jews tolerate that, being that these others only wanted power.”

As for old Uncle Adolf, Syberberg makes the final judgment via *Hitler: A Film from Germany*: “You are the executor of Western civilization, democratically self-elected, voluntarily, with the victory of money, of materialism over us. The plague of our century. The wretched artist as a hang-man degenerating into a politician, voluntarily, cheered as no man ever before. How can I make this

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clear to you and to me, and me and all the children and grandchildren, who didn't know all this, this previous life, which they have all forgotten by now, corrupted by the new legacy of your time... The words "magic" and "myth" and "serving" and "ruling," "Führer," "authority," are ruined, are gone, exiled to eternal time. And we are snuffed out. Nothing more will grow here. An entire nation stopped existing, in the diaspora of the mind and the elite. The New Ones were designed, developed, the New Man is here. The plague of materialism has won out in East and West! Congratulations!" Of course, with MTV aesthetic garbage like *Run Lola Run* (1998) directed by Tom Tykwer – a multicultural-friendly work of crack-laced cinematic ADHD featuring swarthy krauts that would be at home in Iran and the sort of anti-kultur/anti-race audio-visual grotesquery that would wet the panties of a raver whore in heat – I think it is safe to say that even fewer Germans will understand Syberberg's message in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* today. Undoubtedly, if Europe and its colonies (as well as the rest of the world for that matter) were wiped out in a nuclear holocaust tomorrow, it would most certainly not be that big of a loss, at least culturally speaking. As Syberberg teaches us in *Hitler: A Film from Germany*, a people and nation is nothing without its culture, its myths, its irrational, its essence...

Indeed, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, as far as today is concerned, is the last true 'German filmmaker,' a man who, unlike his cinematic compatriots of the German New Cinema, basked in the operas of Wagner, the writings of Nietzsche and Schiller, the paintings of Franz von Stuck and Caspar David Friedrich, the poetry of Heinrich von Kleist and Stefan George, and the ancient Norse mythology of the ancient Germanic people. Indeed, while German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder found his self-destructive *Weltanschauung* in the writings of modernist German Jew Alfred Döblin, barely bothering to scratch the surface of his forsaken Fatherland's history, Syberberg dug deep and found the hole in the collective soul of Germania and tried to fill it by creating such celluloid masterworks as *Hitler: A Film from Germany* – a work that even Susan Sontag – a woman who once wrote, "The white race is the cancer of human history," – had to admit, "is on another scale from anything one has seen on film. It is work that demands a special kind of attention and partisanship; and invites being reflected upon, reseen. The more one recognizes of its stylistic references and lore, the more the film vibrates. (Great art in the mode of pastiche invariably rewards study, as Joyce affirmed by daring to observe that the ideal reader of his work would be someone who could devote his life to it.) Syberberg's film belongs in the category of noble masterpieces which ask for fealty and can compel it. After seeing *Hitler, a Film from Germany*, there is Syberberg's film—and then there are the other films one admires. (Not too many these days, alas.) As was said ruefully of Wagner, he spoils our tolerance for the others." Indeed, such a cinematically and culturally epic work like *Hitler: A Film from Germany* almost ruins the works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Schroeter for me and

if it was not for the former's 15 1/2 hour film Berlin Alexanderplatz (1980), I would have no problem stating that the whole of German New Cinema is totally irrelevant when compared to Syberberg's achievement in porno Hitler-hating of the rather rare right-wing Prussian Wagnerite sort. With no great philosopher and poets in the "the land of poets and thinkers," Syberberg and his celluloid magna opera Hitler: A Film from Germany make for a worthy substitute as a work that combines all the cultural ingredients of Teutonic history that preceded Hitler and prove that the damn krauts were racially and culturally superior, but made the blasphemous mistake of bragging about it via an Austrian untermensch of the far from blond beast (but certainly Faustian) sort. Indeed, Syberberg's Hitler: A Film from Germany is nothing, if not one of the most traditionally Germanic films ever made, thus making it in total and violent opposition to what everything Hollywood stands for, and, in turn, making a truly noble piece of high art.

-Ty E

CHETAN, INDIAN BOY
CHETAN, INDIAN BOY

Hark Bohm (1976)

While not that well known, a number of German New Cinema alpha auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's actors also tried their lot at being filmmakers with mostly disastrous results. Indeed, from Fassbinder's musical composer Peer Raben (*Adele Spitzeder, Heute spielen wir den Boß*) to producer Michael Fenger (*Output, Petty Thieves*) to leading man Ulli Lommel (*Haytabo, Adolf Marlene*), many of the filmmaker's collaborators seemed to think they could build a film making career due to connections with R.W., but of course, most of them more or less failed. Probably one of the more bizarre and somewhat disturbing examples of this is character actor Hark Bohm who starred in a number of Fassbinder flicks as an annoying nerd, effeminate bureaucrat, and even a cowardly cuckold, starting with *Der amerikanische Soldat* (1970) aka *The American Soldier* and concluding with the director's 40th and antepenultimate film *Lola* (1981); what is little known, however, is that he was also directing films of his own throughout this entire period with his directorial debut being the minimalistic 'Bavarian western' *Chetan, Indian Boy* (1972) aka *Tschetan, der Indianerjunge* starring the director's much cooler and more famous brother Marquard Bohm (*Deadlock, Beware of a Holy Whore*) as a lone cowboy who saves and raises a young Indian boy from the Lakota Indian tribe, as well as the filmmaker's Mongolian foster son Dschingis Bowakow, who starred in a number of his foster father's films before going on to be a producer and production manager for various films, including Leos Carax's early New French Extremity work *Pola X* (1999) and Sandra Nettelbeck's popular German-Italian-Austrian-Swiss romantic comedy *Mostly Martha* (2001) aka *Bella Martha*. If Bohm's weirdo western *Chetan, Indian Boy* has anything in common with the films that Bohm would later direct aside from starring Bowakow, it is the director's dubious obsession with preteen boys. Indeed, for better or worse, Bohm was the foremost German filmmaker of coming-of-age films starring sexually ambiguous bad boys with long hair that are somewhat in the spirit of William S. Burroughs' pederaastic cut-up novel *The Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead* (1971), albeit more bourgeois. While I hate to jump to conclusions on such a revoltingly taboo subject, *Chetan, Indian Boy* and the director's various other films have led me to speculate that Bohm may have pedophilic predilections and be a potential boy buggerer. Unquestionably, in Bohm's quasi-revisionist western, like many of his films, gratuitous shots of exotic prepubescent shirtless boys are quite prominent and, probably to most viewers, quite strange and unsavory. Of course, *Chetan, Indian Boy* is not just what appears to potentially be a playful pedo-fantasy but a work that illustrates the more positive view of American Indians that Germans have held in comparison to their American counterparts. Dating back to the adventure novels of Karl May, which were later used by the National Socialists for

anti-American propaganda purposes during the Second World War to demonstrate the savagery of Americans against the Indians, and even during the Third Reich era in films like Luis Trenker's *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien* aka *The Emperor of California*—the sole western made during the Nazi period—the krauts have always been more sympathetic to the plight of Injuns than, say, the plots of John Ford films. In a work predating Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* (2012) by four decades, a brave kraut comes to the aid of a young redskin boy who has been by caught stealing by a proto-redneck farmer/Indian exterminator in a work where auteur Bohm demonstrates his seeming fondness for Mongol boys in thongs.

The time and place is Montana in 1880 and a brave, young hippie-like kraut boy named Jacob 'Alaska' Precht (Marquard Bohm) has just landed in the area with his herd of sheep and beloved mutt Hector because he plans to stay in the region until the winter passes. One of the reasons the area is so safe is that virtually all of the Indians have been exterminated, especially those of the Lakota tribe. After killing and cooking a cute bunny rabbit, Alaska is approached by a rugged redneck farmer named Ben Johnson (Willy Schultes), who has two young preteen blond beast sons, Erick (Erich Dolz) and Edy (Edy Endorfer), and brags about liquidating all the local Indians, even showing off his latest prey, a Lakota boy named Chetan aka 'The Falcon'—the last surviving member of his tribe—and describing the little savage lad, who is tied to a horse, as a "rustler." Although demonstrating his hospitality by providing big Ben with some hot coffee, Alaska soon finds himself a new enemy after revealing he plans to stay in the area for the rest of the winter. Despite the fact that he does not own the land, Ben thinks it is his and resents the fact that Alaska wants to stay in the same area where he plans to have his cattle stay, complaining, "I risk my scalp clearing the neighborhood of the Indians...and there comes a shepherd...who wants to steal the winter pasture from me!" Of course, Alaska makes things worse when he decides to trespass on Ben's property at night and free Chetan, who does not exactly trust the young white man. Indeed, despite the fact that Alaska freed him and ultimately saved his life, Chetan attempts to kill his savior with a machete and escape. Chetan injures Alaska's hand so severely that the cut reaches all the way to the bone, thus leaving him incapable of using it for the rest of the winter. After Alaska has his dog Hector watch Chetan so that he does not escape, the Indian boy, who called the canine "white man's dog," develops a bond with the animal. A true wild child, Chetan immediately strips out of the white man's clothes that Alaska has given him to wear and prefers to sport his Injun thong. Needless to say, Alaska has a hell of a time attempting to train the savage boy how to work, as Chetan only seems interested in playing with animals, attacking white men, and attempting to kill his master's sheep by having them drink poisonous water.

Despite Chetan's inability to learn how to work and violent rascal-like behav-

CHETAN, INDIAN BOY

ior, Alaska continues to provide shelter for the boy, which ultimately proves to be mighty dangerous from the lone cowboy. Indeed, eventually, Ben Johnson's sons, Erick and Eddy, accuse Alaska of harboring Chetan and threaten him by shooting one of his sheep if he does not return the boy. Meanwhile, Chetan finds the corpses of his parents, who somehow have not begun to rot, and he gives his mother a proper Lakota burial. When Alaska finds Chetan at the Indian settlement with his deceased parents, the boy attempts to shoot the kraut cowboy in a cute but pathetic attempt to protect his dead family. Eventually, Chetan warms up to Alaska enough to reveal to him that he knows English because he and his family were put on reservations where many of them starved to death after being promised food and shelter by lying whitey. Chetan also reveals that the white man not only slaughtered his entire tribe, but also the bison population, the Lakotas' primary source of food. In terms of spiritual values, the Lakota believe that all living things, including plants, have souls and one must beg for forgiveness after killing them, though some animals, like eels, have 'bad souls.' Although he never outright says it, one gets the feeling that Chetan believes the white man might also have a bad soul, though Alaska will ultimately prove him wrong. Eventually, evil Aryans Erick and Edy spot Chetan tending to Alaska's flock of sheep and attempt to hunt the young Injun down, but being a magical Indian, he seems to disappear into thin air. Of course, Ben Johnson and his two sons eventually show up at Alaska's cabin for a showdown, so Chetan dresses in traditional Indian garb and pulls out his trusty bow-and-arrow with which he shoots Edy Johnson while he is attempting to set fire to a shack containing Lakota horses. Ultimately, Alaska and Chetan win their battle against the Johnsons, but Ben Johnson threatens that he is coming back for revenge, so the cowboy and his Indian head for the mountains. With Alaska now a 'horse thief' (which is apparently a honorable status among the Lakota, especially in regard to stealing an enemy's horse) for taking the Johnsons' horses during the stand-off, the two have even more of an incentive to leave. While in the mountains, Alaska is ambushed by two Ogalala Indians, which is a sub-tribe of the Lakota, who steal the cowboy's rifles. Luckily, Chetan arrives just in the nick of time to save Alaska, though the Indian boy opts for leaving with the Ogalala, stating, "I go with my brothers...to the land of the great mother." Chetan offers Alaska the opportunity to go with him and the Indians, but he decides to stay behind, though he changes his mind at the last second and heads with the three Injuns to Canada.

Personally, the western is one of my least favorite film genres and the idea of a kraut western, especially from German New Cinema era, is just absurd to me, thus Chetan, Indian Boy ultimately proved to be an innately unnerving experience which was only heightened by auteur Hark Bohm's seeming pederastic predilections. Still, I liked that the film featured a real Mongolian boy as a Lakota Indian because American Indians are essentially archaic Mongols after

all (despite the politically correct left-wing phrase 'Native American,' which has only been relatively recently adopted by younger Indians and the mainstream media/academia, as no race is indigenous to America, with their even being proof that the white European Solutrean man was in America long before the Indians ever arrived via the Bering strait). Bohm's film also takes a more realistic, even anti-Ford approach to the western genre, as a work that features real animal births and what seems to be unsimulated animals deaths, including the shooting of a rabbit. While more sympathetic to the plight of the American Indian than Golden Age westerns, *Chetan, Indian Boy* certainly does not resort to the exceedingly ethno-masochistic lows of Kevin Costner's putrid piece of xenophilic celluloid excrement *Dances with Wolves* (1990), even if it does feature a white protagonist who fights members of his own race to help a savage Indian boy that attempted to kill him. Aside from possibly Mongol or Indian boys, it is dubious as to whether Bohm's film would make for an enthralling coming-of-age flick for young boys. Undoubtedly, with his subsequent, more subversive efforts *Nordsee ist Mordsee* (1976) aka *North Sea Is Dead Sea* and *Moritz lieber Moritz* (1978) aka *Moritz, Dear Moritz*, Bohm improved his craft as the unofficial meister of kraut coming-of-age flicks. Whether actually a pederast or not, Bohm seems to have a genuine interest in youth as a sort of Aryan Spielberg, albeit slightly less Asperger-addled. If you are looking to see the best German westerns of the 1970s, Roland Klick's *Deadlock* (1970) starring Bohm's bro Marquard and Fassbinder's *Whity* (1971) certainly beat the boy-based battles of Bohm's *Chetan, Indian Boy*. While Bohm's western might be tame for a work associated with German New Cinema, I can not help but feel it features a darker meta-secret subtext that is not unlike Spielberg's *Hook* (1991). Indeed, I don't know about other people, but I always find it rather dubious when an extra geeky guy like Bohm or Spielberg takes a special interest in young boys and dedicates their career to making films about them. Certainly a NAMBLA-worthy work, *Chetan, Indian Boy* is ultimately only one small step away from being a 'Boysploitation' flick in the sickly sensual spirit of Ralph C. Blum's *Robby* (1968) and Anthony Aikman's *The Genesis Children* (1972). For those looking for a more tasteful boy-based German New Cinema work that can be enjoyed by the entire family, *Das goldene Ding* (1972) aka *The Golden Thing*—a reworking of the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts co-directed by Alf Brustellin, Nicos Perakis, Edgar Reitz, and Ula Stöckl and featuring children in most of the lead roles—is certainly your best bet. Needless to say, Bohm's *Chetan, Indian Boy* demonstrates that kraut westerns have come a long way since the days of Karl May.

-Ty E

MORITZ, DEAR MORITZ
MORITZ, DEAR MORITZ

Hark Bohm (1978)

It is hard to believe now, but when I was like 10 or 11 years old, I thought that the Cameron Crowe penned teen coming-of-age sex comedy *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) directed by Amy Heckerling was one of the most subversive and delightfully delinquent films that I had ever seen, but nowadays I can only find such a film mildly entertaining, even if only for the fact that one is supposed to believe Sean Penn is a pot-addled Aryan philistine beach bum as opposed to a pot-addled Judeo-Catholic commie with a temper problem. Although I rarely watch coming-of-age films nowadays as I came-of-age what seems to be a rather long time ago, I recently decided to take a chance on the crazy kraut teen ‘comedy’ *Moritz, Dear Moritz* (1978) aka *Moritz, lieber Moritz* directed by Hark Bohm (North Sea Is Dead Sea, Für immer und immer). Admittedly, until rather recently, I had no idea that Bohm – a Fassbinder actor whose brother Marquard Bohm (*Deadlock*, *Beware of a Holy Whore*) was a somewhat popular German cult actor – was an ‘auteur’ in his own right who has directed some of the most anarchic and raunchy coming-of-age films in cinema history that put those churned out by Hollywood, especially the so-called ‘Brat Pack’ flicks, to shame. As someone who tends to play scrawny skidmark of characters, including a stupid hippie bastard in *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun* directed by Rudolf Thome who thinks he can wage a leftist revolution against weather and the Waylon Smithers-like character “Senkenberg” in Fassbinder’s *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), I must say I was rather shocked to learn Hark Bohm directed a film in which a teenager cut out his teacher’s tongue and brutally beats a cat to death, but such is the world of the darkly comedic coming-of-age flick *Moritz, Dear Moritz* – a teen flick made for adults about a slightly disturbed fellow named Moritz who loves staring at his positively pulchritudinous aunt through a peephole and fantasizing about the many methods by which he can voyeuristically observe and/or sadistically torture his arrogant adult enemies in a variety of highly imaginative scenarios that surely must have inspired the deranged dream-sequences in Berlin auteur Jörg Buttgerit’s arthouse splatter flicks.

Coming from a nice upper-middle class family, enfant terrible teen Moritz Stuckmann (Michael Kepschull in his first of only two movie roles) is naturally the laughing stock of his particularly posh and pretentious high school because his father (Walter Klosterfelde), who ran his family’s 200-year-old business out of business in record time, is currently unemployed and spends all his free time studying American Indians. During the beginning of *Moritz, Dear Moritz*, Moritz is run over by a car while showing off for a girl on his bike. On top of establishing the fact that Moritz is far from the luckiest of young men, the boy also calls that man who ran him over an “asshole,” thus proving he does not take

shit from anyone, especially bald bourgeois bastards whose lives revolve around upgrading their Mercedes. Although Moritz resents his pestering mother (Kyra Mladeck), he has a special love for his sardonic and terminally ill grandmother (veteran Hungarian-Jewish actress Grete Mosheim, who starred in Carl Theodor Dreyer's early 1924 gay silent film *Michael* and pro-Jewish propaganda flicks like *Dreyfus* (1930) directed by Richard Oswald) – a feisty elderly woman who shares flasks of liquor with her teenage grandson and even tries to convince him to bring extra sleeping pills next time so she can commit suicide and do away with her miserable life. Moritz has special 'sensual' feelings for his statuesque aunt and makes sure to peep through the keyhole every time she goes in the bedroom or uses the bathroom. At school, Moritz is a laughing stock among his posh peers, who describe him as a "spastic" and tease him about his failure of a father, and his own teacher even says he is probably more suited for doing 'manual labor.' Disgusted with his own prissy peers, Moritz unites with some cool proletarian youth who ride skateboards and have a rock 'n' roll band, which he joins as a saxophonist. Herr Moritz also spends a good amount of his time stalking a blonde and voluptuous Christian girl around town.

Like *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Moritz*, *Dear Moritz* has a number of dream-sequences, but the difference being that instead of featuring fantasies about girls taking off their tops and winning surfing contests, Bohm's films have more to do with S&M splatter and horror films, even if these sometimes sickening scenarios are meant to be farcical. An exceedingly eccentric and slightly autistic young man, Moritz is the constant object of persecution and discipline and the only way he can seek revenge is daydreaming such things as his bitchy mother's tit being mangled via a rabid cat and performing a surprisingly sadistic surgical procedure on his defenseless and naked math teacher who is tied to a table that involves cutting up his tongue with scissors and cutting opening his stomach, placing live honeybees in his organs, and sewing him back up while his whole class watches. Of course, Moritz has a violent side and wastes no time brutally beating a cat to death against a tree that killed his pet rat in a scene no less brutal than the callous kitty killing scenes in Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997), thus proving the wealthy just make for more sophisticated killers. Of course, Moritz also has a couple less disturbing daydreams, including visualizing a group of grade school children playing with guns and actually killing one another. Needless to say, if there ever was a film that could have prevented the unhinged young men who committed the Columbine killings from going on their rather pointless rampage, it is most certainly *Moritz*, *Dear Moritz* – a titillating and seemingly therapeutic film to help those sometimes unhealthy young men suffering from an acute case of angst and pubescent sexual repression.

Undoubtedly, with one look at director Hark Bohm, I think 100% of people will agree that he is an archetypical nerd with a particularly pathetic physique, a more than gulky face with four-eyes, and a high voice and sniveling essence

MORITZ, DEAR MORITZ

that would probably lead some to believe he was a pedophile and his adolescent-obsessed films do nothing to help this very potential assumption. Personally, I do not think Bohm is a pathetic pedo, but a man who suffered a misspent youth due to his overwhelming geekiness and his films are just a way to live vicariously through his characters the teenage years he never had. Easily surpassing Clu Gulager's kiddy arthouse short *A Day with the Boys* (1969) in terms of its subversiveness, albeit executed in a more tongue-in-cheek fashion, *Moritz, Dear Moritz* is a rare coming-of-age flick that everyone from jaded gorehounds to art-house princesses can appreciate, sort of like François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) meets Buttgereit's *Hot Love* (1985). Indeed, if you have an angsty adolescent son and want to give him some proper early life lessons as he transitions into manhood, then it is probably best for you get him to watch *Moritz, Dear Moritz*, and sadistically fantasize about dismembering such depressingly droll and vapid characters as Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus, as opposed to fetishizing them (and ultimately transitioning into a rampant homosexual, or worse yet, changing his name from "Tony" to "Tonya").

-Ty E

JULIEN DONKEY-BOY

Harmony Korine* (1999)

Julien Donkey-Boy is a Dogme 95 film that seems to have broken its “vow of chastity.” One of the contemporary auteur filmmakers worth mentioning, Harmony Korine directed the film. The film was inspired by Korine’s real-life schizophrenic uncle Eddie. Scottish actor Ewen Bremner stars as the schizophrenic teenager Julien who seems to have a hard time even walking without have some type of disturbance. Legendary Bavarian New Waver Werner Herzog stars as Julien’s deranged German father. A father that calls his daughter both a “diletante” and a “slut.”

Julien Donkey-Boy opens with an angered Julien committing a ghastly crime due to his denial by a young boy for a turtle. Julien has Jesus in his heart and preaches the gospel every time he is in a situation of anguish. In an imagined visit with Adolf Hitler, Julien mistakes das fuehrer for Jesus Christ. Was Hitler a Jew like Christ that called out his own kinsman? Maybe Harmony Korine knows. Julien makes sure to let Hitler know he doesn’t want his relatives to know he’s friends with a Nazi. Julien also has a brother named Chris who wants to be a “winner.” Father Herzog attempts to train Chris by hosing him down in the streets during the winter season. Unfortunately, Chris does not take it like a man and Father Herzog becomes enraged. Chris killed his mother during child birth and his father seems to have it out for him. He even attempts to pay Chris \$10.00 to wear his mother’s dress. Apparently, a man that works in a field for a month in Bangladesh only makes \$10.00 for his strenuous efforts.

Julien and his sister have a special kind of relationship. A relationship that is undeniably incest as the young woman is pregnant. One has to wonder what the young lady found attractive in her schizo brother Julien. I can only image it was his gold front teeth and his ability to pull off a mismatch bikini during wrestling matches. Father Herzog becomes enraged by his daughters amateur harp playing and attacks her about her lack of ability. Being the ladies man that he is, Julien defends his sister by slapping his own face.

Near the conclusion of Julien Donkey-Boy, a disturbing event occurs at a ice skating rink. Aside from the loudmouth verbal abuse of a Hasidic Jewish child and his threat to curse at Julien in Yiddish, things seem pleasant at the ice skating rink. Julien’s sister smiles with beauty as she glides across ice. The unimaginable occurs and Julien reacts in a manner that will have most art fag viewers in a state of shock. On a side note, a young lady I know said she wishes she was a man so she could, “beat up retards like Julien.”

-Ty E

ABOVE THE BELOW
ABOVE THE BELOW

Harmony Korine* (2003)

Above the Below is a documentary directed by Harmony Korine on street magician David Blaine. In this somewhat artistic documentary covered in Korine's auteur signatures, Blaine starved himself for 44 days while being suspended from a 30 foot Plexiglas case. The documentary features the street magician talking about his reason for the huge stunt and a few small magic tricks. Blaine is quite the character so it is no surprise that Harmony Korine acted as director for Above the Below. The two Neo-Vaudevillian showmen also happen to be good friends. David Blaine decides that taking blows from an eager and muscular black man is a magic trick worthy of Above the Below. This scene reminded me of Korine's own aborted American comedy feature Fight where Korine would start fights with large individuals and get his ass kicked. Unfortunately for Korine (and fans like me), the beatings were so brutal that he couldn't finish the film. David Blaine takes his blows to the stomach like a man. The shirtless black man seemed infuriated by Blaine accepting such blows and still being able to stand up afterwards. Mr. Blaine also found himself in the company of a group of silicone implanted naked women. A segment of the Above the Below that really has nothing to do with magic but compliments the fluidity of the documentary as a whole. I also thought I would never see the day that Harmony Korine would shoot an image that looked like it came out of trashy rap video. I guess David Blaine also would like to play the role of a pimp. Above the Below features a few sequences that once again demonstrate Harmony Korine's obsession with the aesthetically abnormal. A few of the scenes feature some odd looking English people staring at the camera in ways that were also prevalent in Korine's Gummo. I truly believe that Harmony Korine has an admiration for these people as Korine seems to be a lost soul. These type of individuals would be very appealing to a lost soul. David Blaine is an interesting character thus warranting Above the Below as a documentary worthy of viewing by fans of Harmony Korine. David Blaine has been called a modern Harry Houdini and it is true the man is a dangerous showman. After Blaine emerges from the Plexiglas case after 44 days, he breaks down emotionally and states, "I love you all!" Whether Blaine is a madman or just passionate about his profession (I suspect both), he's quite the character.

-Ty E

MISTER LONELY

Harmony Korine* (2008)

Mister Lonely is the long awaited third film from director Harmony Korine. Former straight-edger Harmony Korine has had some problems with heroin addiction over the years, which also resulted in the dissolution of his relationship with actress Chloe Sevigny. One could say that over the past few years, Korine has been extra lonely. I don't think that it would be far fetched to say that the Michael Jackson impersonator featured in Mister Lonely is modeled after Korine and his own life.

A Michael Jackson impersonator meets a Marilyn Monroe impersonator after one of his performances at a French old folks home. Despite being in France, this pseudo-MJ could care less about learning the language of a bunch of over pretentious frogs. Naturally, Michael feels alone in France so being an impersonator is not a bad way to make a living. The Marilyn Monroe impersonator soon invites MJ to her home full of other impersonators. Her husband impersonates Charlie Chaplin (but acts more like Uncle Adolf) and the couple has a Shirley Temple impersonator for a daughter. A feisty and borderline belligerent Abraham Lincoln impersonator is the strongest of impersonators. A young black boy who sings about his love for women's breasts and chickens stars as Buckwheat. Other notable impersonators are the three stooges, Madonna, Queen of England, Little Red Riding Hood (how can one impersonate her?), and of course the pope. It would be interesting to know why Harmony and his brother Avi decided to pick these individuals to be impersonated. Harmony Korine deciding to have a Michael Jackson impersonator for a protagonist was no surprise to me.

It is quite apparent that Harmony Korine has mellowed out over the years. Whether it's just age or too many euphoric drugs is unknown, but I suspect a combination of both. After viewing Mister Lonely, I can easily say that Gummo is still Korine's masterpiece. Like David Lynch's Eraserhead, Gummo is a debut from a director that needed to unleash his artistic urges. Gummo is also easily Korine's most ambitious film. For Korine, Mister Lonely is a lighthearted and dare I say sometimes dull film. Mister Lonely is certainly Korine's most intimate film in the director's analysis of self. But is that always a good thing?

Mister Lonely also has a subplot featuring Werner Herzog as a "holier than holy" priest out to save the world. He takes a group of multicultural nuns on a flight to drop rice down for starving third worlders. One of the nuns accidentally falls out of the plane and somehow manages to land on the ground without a mark to her body. Due to this miracle, priest Herzog promotes other nuns jumping out of planes. The sequences featuring the skydiving nuns are beautiful to say the least. In typical Jewish tradition, Korine mocks the catholic church which is never a bad thing.

Mister Lonely features quite possibly the most heartbreaking scenes of all

MISTER LONELY

Harmony Korine's films. Although heartbreaking for the Michael Jackson impersonator, he realizes that he is an individual and should live as that individual. For Harmony Korine, I think Mister Lonely is a film about hope. I just wish I could have seen priest Werner Herzog have a beer with the Bavarian pope.

-Ty E

TRASH HUMPERS

Harmony Korine* (2009)

Admittedly, I used to regard Harmony Korine's first feature-length cinematic work *Gummo* (1997) as one of my personal favorite films and a true masterpiece of American avant-garde cinema, yet while I still rank it relatively quite high, I have gradually lost faith in the filmmaker behind it, not least of all because I feel his patently pretentious and platitude-ridden fourth feature *Trash Humpers* (2009) is a glaring garbage-garnished sign that the confederate Jewish-American auteur may have lost his arthouse trash touch after a decade or so of soul-destroying heroin addiction. Undoubtedly, in the subversively stylized spirit of the short film *Massage the History* (2010) directed by Cameron Jamie – a work comprised of internet-found-footage from YouTube of amateur Negro rappers in a ritualistic trance-like state raping bourgeois furniture ever so gently inter-spliced with home-video excerpts of burning Christmas trees and skateboards – which Korine himself described as being one of his favorite films and even going so far as stating, "This shit is fucking mind-blowing." Like jaded Jamie's strangely soothing and spiritual shit-aesthetic short (gyrating jigaboos and the sounds of Sonic Youth have never been so solacing and well synchronized before), *Trash Humpers* features a group of seemingly insane individuals humping animate objects, but what makes Korine's work quite different is that it features a "loser-gang cult-freak collective" aka ghoulish geriatric white Southerners that bare a strikingly resemblance to the incapacitated Grandpa from Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) fornicating with furniture, among countless other seemingly less than erotic objects as opposed to a bunch of puerile pillow-penetrating pickaninnies in a post-Harlem paradise all of their own making (with their parents' affirmative-action-activated career footing the bill for furniture, of course). Shot entirely on the thankfully dead VHS format and assumedly edited in an absurdly archaic linear fashion, *Trash Humpers* unsurprisingly seems more like a terribly contrived and half-spirited Giuseppe Andrews trailer-park-art video like *Touch Me in the Morning* (1999) or *Trailer Town* (2003) than the much anticipated fourth feature from the mischievous little man behind *Gummo* – a curious collage of positively penetrating rustic renegade redneck refinement – which is quite odd considering I always assumed that Korine influenced the Hollywood-actor-trailer-park-auteur and not the other way around, hence my general dismay regarding the ridiculously recherché trasho-phile flick. Indeed, having first seen *Trash Humpers* around the time it was initially released, I was less than impressed and hardly inspired by the Korine effort, hence why I was reluctant to review it a couple years ago, but having given it a second viewing recently, I must admit that I found it so banal that I fell asleep more times watching it than I care to mention. Needless to say, I was quite thrilled to learn that Korine is now completely embracing his ances-

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tral roots by exploiting a bunch of famous goy gals (as well as his own kosher wife) – pedomorphic Disney stars no less – for his wigger-fried upcoming film *Spring Breakers* (2013); a comparatively mainstream movie that will probably remind viewers to what extent the filmmaker’s kosher kinsman in Hollywood have almost singlehandedly contrived what is now consider ‘American kultur’; the true opiate of the American masses, otherwise known as ”Trash Humpers.”

Featuring heretical hobos humping trees, elderly elders eroticizing bushes via maniac auto-erotic masturbation, handicapped homo-haters starved for attention, sorry Satanic sods slaughtering Southern cross-dressers, and grotesque old-timers trading in their shriveled members for large and in charge didos, *Trash Humpers* – not unlike many of Korine’s previous efforts – is a nefarious and mostly improvised neo-vaudevillian act of the rascally and raunchy sort with an assortment of ghaſtly ghouls who moſt likely spent their high school years sodomizing their neighbor’s sheep. An ostensibly unlucky Judaic who had the seemingly fathomless experience of coming of age in the totally alien sub-Aryan untermensch realm of Nashville, Tennessee, Korine ſtill managed to see a number of eclectic films ranging from Buſter Keaton’s hammy silent comedies to classic New German Cinema works by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Werner Herzog during his adolescent years, hence the schizo-Semite filmmaker’s peculiar proclivity towards artiſtically embracing realiſt yet abſurdiſt white trash film settings and real-life crackheads/methheads as wacky yet undeniably wonderful film ſtars (although for *Trash Humpers*, Korine opted for caſting his wife, himſelf, and some friends in the roles) for his exceedingly eccentric arthouse films. To fully underſtand where Korine is coming from as an individual and artiſt, eſpecially in regard to *Trash Humpers*, I believe it is imperative that one watch the episode of the German-French Arte show *Into the Night with...* (TV Series 2002–present) where the feral Israelite filmmaker hangs around Tennessee with Argentinean auteur Gaspar Noé (*I Stand Alone, Enter the Void*). On top of cynically blaming white people for “ruining everything” and claiming random individuals don’t like him because he is Jewish as if every goy has a built-in Jew-dar ſyſtem in their brain to poſitively detect his racial persuasion, Korine also ſeems ſeverely diſappointed when he finds out that Noé is no authentic Hebrew as he long aſſumed and claimed to have read in a random film magazine. Seeing as his own innate Judaic ſupremacism and anti-white hate ſeems to be the topics Korine keeps bringing up randomly during *Into the Night with...*, one can only aſſume that he looks through the world through a hys-terical Heeb lens of lurid Reform Judaism lunacy, albeit an abſolutely aberrant and culturally-mongrelized one as a reſult of his ſocialization with Southern Baptiſt folks in the deep South (Korine once mentioned his childhood Rabbi wore a cowboy hat), which makes his film *Trash Humpers* – a work featuring raging and murderous wild white trash mutants who erroneouſly attempt to reproduce with literal trash – an all the more coherent, if only ſuperficially deranged, video art

work. In other words, *Trash Humpers*, much like *Gummo*, is an exceedingly eccentric expression of the Hebraic collective conscious by a marginalized Hebrew unlucky enough to have grown up in the sunburnt, bloated-beer-belly of decidedly dirty Dixieland. Unfortunately, the film is nowhere as fucked nor fun as the fun-loving, filth-fucking characters in *Trash Humpers* would lead one to assume as a sort of softcore Semitic nightmare of a Southern dream dreamed up by a tiny post-methadone-entranced mensch who blacked-out on black tar heroin one too many times.

As I have mentioned in the past, I'd rather hump trash instead of watching another movie about the holocaust, yet *Trash Humpers* seems like a horror flick for second and third generation shoah survivors on dope and Prozac and a rather hideous yet equally mundane trip through one rather psychosis-ridden anti-Rabbinic Hebrew's mismatched maze of a mind than a film that can also be appreciated by good little goy boys and girls. Naturally, I assume something has gone awry in the film artist's creative mind when he creates a work that seems to be even less creative than the found-footage horror anthology *V/H/S* (2012); a clearly ambitious nostalgia piece that itself is far from being worthy of being described as a minor masterpiece, even amongst the banal bowels of the ever so slapdash horror genre. Like *Korine*, I grew up devouring a steady diet of obscure VHS tapes, but more importantly, the anarchic sort put out by subversive and mostly anti-social skateboard companies that had no problem breaking the law using copyrighted music without paying royalties and exposing teens to the esoteric anti-culture and customs of the then-marginal skateboarding world; a place for completely crude carny criminals who see stylishly savaging private and public property as a truly postmodern art form, amongst other mindless yet magical things and *Trash Humpers* certainly reflects this idiosyncratic influence, if not in a most loony yet longwinded, hopelessly humdrum, and intrinsically hysterical Hebrew sort of way. With his previous feature *Mister Lonely* (2007) – a work plagued by bureaucracy and a relatively huge budget at \$8.2 million (at least for a *Korine* flick) – being both a commercial and artistic failure of sorts, *Korine* seemed to have made a rather extreme decision to head in the opposite direction and go back to his humble yet once-honorable roots with *Trash Humpers*, but as many junkies will tell you if they are not nodding out mid-sentence, it is virtually impossible to go back to normalcy after catching an aimless ride on Cocteau's kick, thereupon causing the lapsed enfant terrible auteur filmmaker to lose himself as an artist during his more rebellious formative years and arguably the most imperative point of his life as a developing filmmaker. As Rob Nelson of *Variety Magazine* remarked, one can only wonder if *Trash Humpers* would have any fans if it were not for *Korine's* already developed "hipster celebrity"; which in itself is a bad sign of an artist's decline to a soulless and superficial status of art fag fandom, thus putting the once-infamous filmmaker in putrid company with fairy Francophiles, pseudo-Semites, and/or Philo-Semites like

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Wes Anderson, Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, and Sofia Coppola. Of course, at least Korine is not one for self-censoring via pathological political correctness like most of his compatriots, thus contributing to why *Trash Humpers* is not a total waste of time, but a terribly tiresome test in accidental self-parodying by a once ambitious auteur that seems to have fallen from heretical Hebrew grace, which makes it all the more tragic considering the United States of America has never been a place known for an ample abundance of audacious avant-garde auteur filmmakers. Maybe Korine should take heed of his own antediluvian scum-sucking-and-fucking characters collective chant, "make it, make it, don't fake it," as the seemingly apathetic artistry behind *Trash Humpers* is a big of a sham as the sentimentalism in Steven Spielberg's shallow cinematic shoah show-case *Schindler's List* (1993).

-Ty E

ACT DA FOOL

Harmony Korine* (2010)

When you're black, one must be a fool or at least act da fool, for the world expects it. Little swarthy Jewish auteur filmmaker Harmony Korine was searching for cinematic truth(s) when he directed the short *Act Da Fool* starring a unconsciously charming debutante Negress and her home girls. Despite being one the best moving picture pieces Harmony Korine has ever directed (surely better than the entire film *Mister Lonely*), he made this Negrophile short film for the Woman's clothing and accessory company Proenza Schouler, known for making deals with high-priced Hollywood cunts like Kirsten Dunst, Julianne Moore, and Korine's ex-girlfriend Chloe Sevigny. One can only wonder whether or not Korine decided to direct a group of 40oz. malt liquor drinking and horsehair-weave-wearing black girls sporting ultra-hip femme wear in hopes of tainting the name of Proenza Schouler and those ladies (especially Sevigny) who just happen to dress in that kind of crucial corporate-gal clothing. If Harmony Korine were to be critiqued solely in regards to his ability as a creative advertiser, he has given Proenza Schouler a certain authenticity that seemed next to impossible and has given evidence that a true artist can make good use of even the most dubious of projects.

One of the things that makes Harmony Korine a standout auteur is his ability to capture American truths and trends in places most Americans, especially film directors, consciously (and subconsciously) ignore. Whereas some bigwig blockbuster filmmaker hack like James Cameron puts tons of money into an aesthetically-synthetic film to make it look "out of this world" usually resulting in a movie that is unrelentingly boring, Korine takes the most common and realistic subcultures of America (especially rural America) that are so bizarre they border on the surreal, creating true Americana art on a welfare budget. In the short film *Act Da Fool*, we are introduced to a black girl who talks about aspects of her day-to-day life. She and her skinny black girlfriends have very long legs, like those of a doe deer that are further accentuated by a pair of high-heeled shoes that resemble hooves. This girl proclaims, "I like the way animals hangout in the trash in parking lots," and she does the same with her friends, representing a true display of walking-the-talk.

Despite acknowledging her admiration and respect for the way animals hangout in trash in parking lots, the black girl also states negatively of herself and friends, "We can act like wild animals, we can do some messed up shit." To the girl and her friends credit, they do not kill people or smoke crack in the parking lot, they merely drink 40oz. Malt liquor and tag graffiti on the side on dumpsters, making use of the few very things they have in life and creating their

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own postmodern nihilistic (not even knowing what the word means) realities. Despite what some spineless whites see as negative stereotypes in *Act Da Fool*, one would have to be a fool not to see Korine's objective neutrality, if not total respect towards these black girls. Personally, I have never found any black girl to be appealing in my life but in *Act Da Fool* it is apparent that Korine made sure to find the best crème of the crop Negro genetics, the kind of healthy Negroid phenotypes a person can only find in rural America. I am afraid it seems that most city blacks have ruined their gene pools by partaking in crack, social welfare, government housing, and the worst junk foods imaginable (or at least more so than their rural brothas).

Harmony Korine has certainly followed in his Jewish Godmother Diane Arbus's legacy of capturing the wonderful and vibrant realism that is often ignored in America. Not that I can say I am a connoisseur of Rap/Hip-Hop videos but with *Act Da Fool* Harmony Korine has given the ultimate justice to the young Negress and her own distinct beauty, especially when one considers that not one gigantic shaking ass (like your typical Rap video) is shown in the short film because Harmony Korine ain't no fool but a documenter of a world very few people have a personal perceptive lens for and that is harmful Harmony's greatest gift as one of America's greatest modern auteur filmmakers. Apparently, the black church used to be the backbone and support network of the Afro-American community, as the great black Reverend James David Manning has stated time and time again. The female narrator of *Act Da Fool* states passionately, "I ain't goin' to church no more, church can suck it." Instead of the Church, these blacks girls now have a parking lot and instead of holy water they have the liquid golden calf of malt liquor. These Negresses may be living in the time of collective Negronihilism and regressive degeneration but as the young narrator states, "The stars ain't never gonna leave us."

-Ty E

UMSHINI WAM

Harmony Korine* (2011)

It seemed like a match made in degenerate art heaven when I found out that Nashville's greatest Jewish filmmaker Harmony Korine and Cape Town's greatest white rap group Die Antwoord collaborated on the short film *Umshini Wam*. After watching the short, I was left aghast by this touching tragedy-turned-triumph regarding wheelchair-bound white Negros Ninja and Yo-landi Vi\$\$er. I make no lie of the fact that I am completely repulsed by all forms of Rap music, especially the kind featuring white-bred-play-thugs, yet *Die Antwoord* seems to be something different; or as the homeboyz say, "they bee real." *Umshini Wam* may not be a conventional biopic regarding the turbulent trials and tribulations of a group of proletarian white rappers from South Africa, but this short film seems to be the most intimate and realistic portrayal of the real personalities behind *Umshini Wam*. Ninja and Yo-landi Vi\$\$er would never claim to be true connoisseurs of high Kultur; be that as it may, they are certainly fresh with zef, mixing disposed and previously rejected cultural ingredients, ultimately concocting the highest grade chronic of white trash flavor. In *Umshini Wam*, Ninja and Yo-landi Vi\$\$er ride around in pimped out wheelchairs and enthusiastically unleash bullets from their fully automatic firearms. To fit in within the wild habitat of Afrikkka, the free-styling duo sport colorful animal costumes whilst passin' a phat joint that is larger than a baby elephant trunk.

My home-Nigga Jescie felt the following rap lullaby by Yo-landi in *Umshini Wam* carried the best zef, "I'm old enough to bleed/I'm old enough to breed/I'm old enough to crack a brick in your teeth while you sleep." I have to concur with Jescie, especially when I consider the sweet manner in which Yo-landi unleashes such loathsome words. In *Umshini Wam*, Ninja seems to have lost all of his new zef flow, even acting aloof from his baby momma ho Yo-landi. Unlike his audacious music videos and live performances, in the beginning of the short, Ninja acts like a down and out white boi that mopes around in a way that seems like he was drained his Faustian soul. Of course, as shown so eloquently by a pretentious South African Bourgie, Ninja is despised by his own racial brothers. After being told by an uptight white South African that he is "A waste of a white skin" and a "white nigger", Ninja and his homegirl Yo-landi unload their pistols on the middle-aged man and steal his designer wheelchairs. Now owning what is considered "the Rolls-Royce of wheelchairs," *Die Antwoord* rises triumphantly in a gangsta state of fleeting self-confidence. Near the conclusion of *Umshini Wam*, Ninja mentions that he once had a dream where he was the greatest rapper in the world. Although *Die Antwoord* is far from the most revered rap group in the world, the group has already gained international preeminence, which is not bad considering they are a group of white degenerates playing Negro music in an African homeland.

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Umshini Wam is an artsy (yet not too artsy) metaphor for the rise of Die Antwoord. Just as Ninja and Yo-landi kill a group of whites in the film, in real life they have rejected the fruits of their own racial forefathers culture. The German philosopher Oswald Spengler once wrote something along the lines that if the white race were to become collectively passive, certain whites who still contained the fighting spirit would join the nonwhites and help them take over the world. I certainly see what Spengler described in the spirit of Die Antwoord; a group that brings true organic Nordic flavor to a style of music that is Negro to the core. When Ninja raps, his rough hyperactive rhymes sound like a Germanic tribesman calling out in preparation for a tribal war. Apparently, "Umshini wami" is the name of a popular Zulu "struggle song" that was commonly used by the military wing of the African National Congress during the battle against Apartheid in South Africa. Now in post-Apartheid; racial discrimination has been reversed. Black South Africans brutally rape and murder white Afrikaan boer farmers everyday, yet the mainstream media (in both South Africa and the U.S.) totally ignores it. In post-white-power South Africa, Die Antwoord raged a cultural war and won. At the end of Umshini Wam, I felt like saluting Ninja and Yo-landi as they gallantly rode across a dark South African road in their pimped-out wheelchairs (featuring alien head and pot leaf holographic rims). With Umshini Wam, Harmony Korine has created an innovative work that will indubitably be revered as one of his greatest cinematic efforts. Forget Eminem's 8 Mile, Umshini Wam is the most eminent hard-knock-life-white-rapper-turned-Negro-approved-freestyle-champion story ever told.

-Ty E

SPRING BREAKERS

Harmony Korine* (2013)

When I discovered that degenerate Judaic auteur and nihilistic neo-vaudevillian Harmony Korine (Gummo, Julien Donkey-Boy) was going to direct a relatively mainstream film featuring Hollywood heartthrob James Franco as a wacked out wigger, not to mention whoring out a couple of Disney mini divas, I was admittedly quite excited, especially considering his seemingly artistically contrived, subsequent post-junky features *Mister Lonely* (2007) and *Trash Humpers* (2009) were monumental disappointments of the first order that made me more than question the once ambitious and seemingly unstoppable filmmaker's artistic integrity. As someone who still regards his directorial debut *Gummo* (1997) as a delightfully debauched kosher carny comedy masterpiece of the intricately goy-hating sort, I did not want to accept that Korine is a one-hit arthouse wonder who put everything he had to give in a single film at the mere age of 24, but it seems that after a decade lost to heroin/methadone addiction and his recent marriage and becoming a father, Korine lost the sort of untamable energy that made him one of the most loved and hated, as well as idiosyncratic and iconoclastic, independent filmmakers of his generation. Unfortunately, it seems that the time he spent directing music videos for hipster bands like Sonic Youth, Cat Power and Will Oldham had a radically negative effect on Korine's once anarchistic vaudevillian directing style as his latest feature *Spring Breakers*—a pseudo-farcical look at a cutesy quartet of girls from the culturally and racially mongrelized iPod generation going on the nihilistic and hedonistic 'rite of passage' known as spring break—seems like one ceaselessly ugly, fiercely filler-filled, and aesthetically vacant music video banally depicting the sheer and utter worthlessness of a decidedly decadent and wanton yet worthless generation of Americans whose sole aspiration in life is pleasure for pleasure's sake at any cost and nothing more. If *Spring Breakers* is another one of Korine's celluloid pranks/jokes, the joke is certainly not funny anymore as his latest work is, at best, a sub-softcore flick for pathetic men (Korine included, as his much younger wife is one of the stars of the film) who swoon after pedomorphic teenage girls of the totally untalented and racially ambiguous sort and, at worst, a sign that the director has finally grown up and turned into the typical Hollywood Hebrew, who revoltingly slobbers over and cinematically defiles youthful shiksa chicks, especially of the ostensibly innocent and virginal sort, while also pushing all the most deleterious untermensch pseudo-kultur ingredients that reflect the racial, cultural, moral, and spiritual nightmare that is the seemingly apocalyptic, post-European United States of America. Like a vaguely heterosexual post-Finding Forrester (2000) Gus van Sant flick as directed by the ungodly hate child of Paris Hilton, Eminem, Hype Williams, and Howard Stern, *Spring Breakers* is a banally bacchanalian depiction of the post-counter-culture American dream where a fucked

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foursome of morally devoid and equally naïve bourgeois gals get a lesson from a loveable white trash wigger in what it takes to rise to the top of the sociopathic and cannibalistic American plutocracy in a film so stupid, artificial, and feckless in its storyline that it could have only been directed by an American Jew of the post-holocaust generation. Described by countless film reviewers as a so called “fever dream,” *Spring Breakers* features virtually every reason why America is the most infectious metaphysical disease the world has ever known as a putrid piece of phantasmagorical and kaleidoscopic celluloid anti-art, insipid nihilism of the needless and heedless sort, and cutthroat kosher capitalism. If you ever wonder why medieval-minded towelheads from the Middle East have described America as “Great Satan,” look no further than kosher Korine’s totally tedious exercise in girls-gone-recklessly-wanton materialistic excess and pseudo-ecstasy, *Spring Breakers*.

The whorishly named Faith (Selena Gomez), Brit (Ashley Benson), Candy (Vanessa Hudgens), and Cotty (Rachel Korine) are four childhood friends and rather naïve college students from a small town who hope to “find themselves” via spring break vacation, but the problem is that they do not have the cash to fund their fun. Out of all the girls, Faith, the only one to not have trashy and unnaturally dyed hair, is also the only with any sort of moral compass due to her semi-serious dedication to Christianity, but her friends are a bunch of soulless sinners who take massive bong hits to forget their complete and utter lack of intrinsic values and spirituality. To fund their trip to the sunny and superlatively superficial sunny beaches of Florida, Brit and Candy nonsensically rob a family fast food restaurant with hammers and squirt guns and Cotty drives the getaway girl, thus figuratively making their pact with the devil. Although baby girl-like Faith is disturbed by her criminally-inclined friends’ senseless, if not monetarily fruitful, actions, she agrees to join them on their all-expenses paid spring break vacation in the dirty Southeast. Upon arriving on the sunny beaches of Florida, the frisky foursome immediately begins engaging in degenerate Dionysian spring break partying, which includes flashing and waving their twats and tits in front of random strangers’ faces, partying hard with fetus-like wimpy wiggers snorting lines of coke off flat-chested breasts, taking countless gigantic bong hits and shot gunning cans of beer, and various other forms of ecstasy-striving forms of momentary mental derangement. Unfortunately, the cops show up at one of these parties and busts the four girls, as well as two identical twin wigger gangstas known as the “ATL Twins” (played by quasi-incestuous degenerate skaters Sidney and Thurman Sewell, who also go by the name the ATL twins in real-life and are known to share the same girlfriend) for narcotic possession. Luckily, a superlatively loathsome yet paradoxically likeable white trash named fellow “Alien” (James Franco), the gang leader of the negrophiliac criminal outfit that the ATL twins belong to, takes an instant liking to the girls and bails them out of jail and hopes to make them special femme fatale-like members of his culturally re-

tarded and proudly illiterate crew of spring-breaker-robbing and extraterrestrial dope and arms dealing philistine thugs with patently putrid pomo style. Not unsurprisingly, the only religious member of the curiously cutesy quartet, Faith decides to stick with her faith and bails on her friends and takes a bus home after being surrounded by Alien's mostly Negroid, gun-stroking, four-wheeler riding, and drug-addled friends, but Brit, Candy, and Cotty take an instant liking to the out-of-this-world gang leader and become honorary half-naked members of his colorful crime ring. A true blue entrepreneur who achieved the American dream by going from rags to riches as the only white boy from an all-black neighborhood and the only member of his family to live to adulthood, Alien is proud to admit while showing the girls around his schlock-ridden and terribly tasteless mansion that: "This is the fuckin' American dream. This is my fuckin' dream, y'all! All this sheeyit! Look at my sheeyit! I got... I got SHORTS! Every fuckin' color. I got designer T-shirts! I got gold bullets. Motherfuckin' VAM-pires. I got Scarface. On repeat. SCARFACE ON REPEAT. Constant, y'all! I got Escape!" and, indeed, he lives a sort of Negro-fried postmodern take on the anti-hero of De Palma's overrated 1983 mob flick, but that all changes when reality smacks him in his ugly gold-plated grill.

Although his former protégé and best friend, Alien now has a major beef with a seemingly half-braindead and beefy black gang leader Archie (real-life criminal rapper Gucci Mane), who feels the jaded white boy is steppin' on his turf and proving to be bad for his black, black market business. In an essentially failed drive-by shooting meant to take out Alien and his girls, archenemy Archie's associate wounds Cotty in the arm, so she comes to the realization that things are no longer fun and are getting dangerous, so her spring break has reached its dramatic conclusion and she decides to go back home, thus proving that Brit and Candy—the two girls who committed the seemingly insane robbery to get the money to go to spring break in the first place—are the two alpha-chicks among their clique. To show their solidarity with his capitalist cause, Brit and Candy engage in a threesome with Alien in his luxurious pool in a ritualistic manner and not long after they head to Archie's neon-colored mansion estate for one final showdown for taking over the criminal underground of St. Petersburg. Rather absurdly, Alien is shot dead with a single bullet to the head before he barely makes it onto his negro nemesis' flamboyant rainbow-colored property, but his two girls Brit and Candy, sporting their signature pink ski masks and bikinis, come in unloading a storm of bullets and killing everyone (no less than ten people) on the big-time crook's property. While leaving Archie's crib, the two lurid and seemingly loony lethal lasses plant a kiss on the head of Alien's cadaver, thus thanking their ghetto guru for schooling them in cannibalistic cutthroat capitalism that they will ultimately utilize after graduating from college and entering the corporate world.

While Faith proved to be too weak and meek to fully embrace her spring

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break and Cotty eventually quit when things got dangerous, ballsy yet brainless bitches Brit and Candy proved to be all-American business women and post-modern feminists as the only two of the foursome that could juggle business and pleasure, the two materialistic ingredients post-racial/post-cultural 'successful' Americans aspire for. Neither truly an indictment nor parody of Generation Y, *Spring Breakers* is essentially a cynical joke on the part of auteur Harmony Korine at the expense of a valueless generation of Americans—the very same zeitgeist of youth his film was marketed towards—that his racial kinsmen in heeb Hollywood, MTV, and the mainstream spiritually defiled with their anti-kultur bogus materialism, xenophilia, and unwaveringly glorification of crime and corruption. Of course, considering the film ending up grossing \$31.7 million at the worldwide box office against a mere \$5 million production budget, Korine is undoubtedly laughing all the way to the bank and has finally established himself as a mainstream Hollywood director to be reckoned with. Not unsurprisingly, Korine went so far as to even whore out his young wife and the mother of his daughter, Rachel Korine, who on top of flashing her little ass and tits, making out with anonymous buff bros, and acting like a tyrannical teen tramp, sings “you’re never gonna get this pussy” while grabbing her naughty bits in a terribly tasteless scene in *Spring Breakers* that proves the director has finally whored himself out to Tinseltown and has taken his spouse and a couple ex-Disney dames along for the pseudo-risque ride. Featuring James Franco giving a sensitive wiggerfied performance of Britney Spears’ “Everytime” on his angelically white poolside piano, soulless tracks by Skrillex and Nicki Minaj, the most emaciated holocaust survivor-esque looking white niggers in the history of filmmaking, a pseudo-hot hodgepodge of the stupidest scantily clad college kids in American history, and an apocalyptic candy-colored anti-aesthetic that once again proves that Korine is a magnet and worshipper of all that is ugly and stupid in this world like his kin in Hollywood as a people who derive almost spiritual satisfaction from destroying beauty and bringing physical and metaphysical disfigurement to the world, *Spring Breakers* is vivid proof that the director no longer has jokes/pranks worthy of telling, but has settled for recycling the same old Semitic gags from the Israelite bargain bin. The fact that Korine recently announced he planned to release a remix of *Spring Breakers* proves all the more that it is nothing more than one big and overly expensive music video of the supremely soulless, racially mongrelized, and culturally retarded sort that does more than enough to conform that what a certain German nationalist party from the early twentieth century said about the director’s people. Apparently, Korine was partially inspired to write the script for *Spring Breakers* to makeup for the fact that he missed out on such MTV-addled degeneracy when he was attempting to become a professional skateboarder during his early adult years and it certainly shows as a work that seems like an ADHD-ridden middle-life crisis piece directed by a curious kosher crackhead with an unhealthy fixation for pedo-

morphic ladies lacking in curves. Still, I wish Korine well on his unintentional quest to help speed up the decline of Judaic America with his future films and I have a feeling that Spring Breakers is just a small taste of the cultural decay and social malignancy that he will bring to Hollywood in upcoming years.

-Ty E

THE BEACH BUM
THE BEACH BUM

Harmony Korine* (2019)

As of late, it has become quite trendy among certain circles to hate the so-called 'Baby Boom Generation' (aka people born between 1946 and 1964) and—considering the current super sorry pre-third world state of the United States—rightly so. Sure, subsequent generations like Generation X and Millennials are certainly not much better, but it was ultimately the Boomers—the most spoiled and, in turn, narcissistic and materialistic, generation in all of recorded human history—that was responsible for gleefully disposing of the ostensible 'everyday fascism' of traditional values and embracing so-called 'free love,' feminism, abortion, xenophilia/multiculturalism, and pretty much every single other social ill that has led to the steady decline of the United States, especially among the nation's increasingly dwindling white majority. Needless to say, the stereotypical boomer mentality is innately insufferable but of course Hollywood—the innately anti-Occidental social engineering system that regularly churns out infantile agitprop disguised as mindless entertainment that is responsible for brainwashing these people their entire lives, hence their total devotion to glaringly socially deleterious things ranging from the counterculture movement to greasy fast food—has rarely dared to openly outright mock its greatest supporters, at least until relatively recently in a somewhat unexpected form. Indeed, with his latest feature *The Beach Bum* (2019), (ex)junky auteur Harmony Korine—a Judaic director that has demonstrated a somewhat strange but not unexpected lifelong disdain for white people in general both in interviews and cinematically—has directed what might be the anti-boomer film par excellence to the point where he even managed to get boomer icon Jimmy Buffett to appear in the film. More than just an assuredly absurdist assault on boomers and their spiritually hollow pseudo-pagan hyper hedonistic tendencies and asinine aesthetic interests, the film also makes a mockery out of various other white American (pseudo)cultural trends since then, including negrophilia, JNCO jeans, lame mainstream rock like Creed, cracker-safe pop rap like Snoop Dogg, soulless extravagant weddings (that soon predictably end in divorce), beach party chic metrosexualism, and the most uniquely uncultivated form(s) of libertinism, among various other ludicrously loathsome things that remind one just how painfully culturally and spiritually retarded the United States really is.

As I regrettably predicted well over a decade ago, Korine seems to have suffered the same auteur curse as Orson Welles in terms of being unable to top his debut film *Gummo* (1997)—the lapsed junky filmmaker's indubitable magnum opus—though I would argue that his latest couple more-mainstream-friendly films are certainly an improvement from where his career was headed for a while. Indeed, while his second feature *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999) was a worthwhile experiment that highly benefited from an unforgettable acting performance from

Werner Herzog, his third feature *Mister Lonely* (2007)—his first flick in almost a decade of sad dope-addled stagnation—was mostly a contrived bore and fourth *Trash Humpers* (2009) seemed like a half-hearted kosher con and rip-off of the organically grotesque aberrant-garde camcorder excursions of Hollywood actor turned true lumpenprole auteur Giuseppe Andrews like *Trailer Town* (2003) and *Period Piece* (2006). While Korine demonstrated some promise with the occasional interesting short like the jungle bunny fever dream *Act Da Fool* (2010) and *Umshini Wam* (2011) starring zany South African wigger rap group *Die Antwoord*, it was only with *Spring Breakers* (2012) that Korine refined his new aesthetic and managed to make a relatively mainstream film that knowingly and winkingly (and, some might say, cynically) mocks the mainstream. Undoubtedly, *The Beach Bum*, which features a somewhat similar nasty neon Florida aesthetic to *Spring Breakers*, goes even further and takes a humorously hypnotic approach to what can probably best be described as hyper hokey hyperrealism. Indeed, featuring sun-soaked hick hobos and preposterously wealthy and equally effete negro dope dealers in their own totally tasteless and tacky vision of heaven, Korine's latest cinematic effort is a surprisingly feel-good-flick that paradoxically manages to inspire a magnificent misanthropy, as if the glistening sunny shots featured throughout the film are a sort of slyly sardonic foreshadowing of the apocalypse. The film also manages to reinvent the stoner film in the sense that it will probably completely dumbfound the average stoner and completely ruin their much undeserved 'good vibes.'

Virtually borrowing its ostensibly seductively sleazy melodramatic shell from the hit David Duchovny Showtime TV series *Californication* (2007-2014) in its degenerate dramedy approach to a hedonistic once-popular struggling writer (or, in this case, pothead 'poet') with a similarly fucked family life that includes a reluctant soulmate and a sassy daughter, Korine's undeniably visually flavorsome flick also winks at (or, probably more accurately, goofily mocks) such classic pothead pictures as Richard Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* (1993) also starring Matthew McConaughey, the Coen brothers' *The Big Lebowski* (1998), and Terry Gilliam's Hunter S. Thompson adaptation *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998). Indeed, just as Korine seemed very much stuck in the late-1990s MTV realm when he directed *Spring Breakers* (in fact, in interviews, Korine explained that he was at least partly inspired to direct the film due to personally missing this rather retarded rite-of-passage as a kid), *The Beach Bum* feels very much like the result of the auteur getting the idea for the film after binge-watching classic 1990s pothead flicks while high on weed, LSD, and/or Pabst Blue Ribbon (which, rather fittingly, is featured prominently throughout the film). Ironically (or not so), the film is also just as re-watchable as the most re-watchable of these classic cult stoner films, as if Korine wanted to ensure that the film would also become a timeless THC-tinged classic for the dope fiend filmgoers that it so merrily mocks. Considering that the boomer generation

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seems hopelessly stuck in the past (as marijuana abuse tends to do that to people), it is only fitting that the titular antihero portrayed by McConaughey is an exceedingly emotionally immature and infantile culture vulture that is like a virtual shit-magnet for virtually every superlatively shitty fashion and cultural trend from the late-1960s to late-1990s. In that sense, it makes perfect sense that the film stars such outmoded Afro-American pop culture figures as Snoop Dogg and Martin Lawrence alongside lame boomer 'yacht rock' favorites like Jimmy Buffet and Bertie Higgins. In short, like with his greatest films, Korine reveals with *The Beach Bum* that he is a sort of Talmudic alchemist by turning radically rancid goy shit into strangely refined kosher comedy gold. Despite being indubitably Korine's most ludicrously lowbrow cinematic effort to date, there is a certain meta-tacky genius to the processions that really underscores the auteur's particular pathology-ridden 'genius.'

As pretty much everything about it, most notably its title and the character's appearance, demonstrates, the film's antihero is supposed to be a lovable-piece-of-hyper-hedonistic-hippie-white-trash-shit that is strangely traditionally American due to his somewhat dubious underdog status and shameless lack of cultivation and pretense, but an early scene in the film unequivocally exposes the fact that 'Moondog' (Matthew McConaughey)—a deceptively merry man that seems to bask in the idea of living in a modern-day Sodom of sun, surf, and semen—is a much more malevolent and malefic figure than his 'hippie hobo chic' persona and 'perennial party' lifestyle hints at. Indeed, while at a less than jamming Jimmy Buffet gig where he is a sort of low-key guest of honor, Moondog gets on stage and engages in a little self-described "poetic foreplay" and declares with a sort of sordid sinister smirk and understated foreboding menace, "One day, I will swallow up the world [laughs] And when I do, I hope you all perish violently," thereupon demonstrating with one easy-to-miss line of dialogue that he is actually a very evil, albeit lazy, man the fetishizes a sort of savage Armageddon and ultimately the extermination of mankind as a whole. Undoubtedly, what becomes immediately obvious about Moondog is that, despite apparently having a legendary reputation as a poet, his ostensible poetry basically ranges from incoherent gibberish to pornographic swill and he even prides himself on stealing great lines from great poets of the past. For example, Moondog brags to his best friend 'Lingerie' aka 'Rie' (Snoop Dogg)—a pathetically pot-plagued drug dealer and rapper whose ghetto-flavored arrogance is only transcended by his effete excess—that he once plagiarized D. H. Lawrence for a 7th grade poetry contest and proudly "won that motherfucker." Despite his relative lack of pretense, Moondog—a sort of severely sun-tanned Shmendrik boomer king—is also not beneath berating his hobo homies for not immediately recognizing the decadent poetry of Charles Baudelaire. Despite usually being so stoned and/or drunk that he can barely stand properly on both feet (in fact, the character has a peculiar posture and similarly goofy gait in general), Moondog is also

not beneath putting up a preposterous tough guy front and stating unintentionally humorous things to wimpy Hebraic lawyers like, "I write poetry you little bitch." In short, Moondog is like a modern-day American equivalent to French decadent Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud if Rimbaud kept writing poetry well into middle-age instead of quitting at age 21 and sans the poesy prowess. Of course, even as a young teenager, Rimbaud never wrote anything nearly as retarded as Moondog self-satisfied words, "I was thinking about you. And I got up at about 4:00 a.m., and I had to take a piss, as guys do, and I looked down at my dick...and I had such affection in my heart when I did. Knowing that it had been inside you twice today...made me feel beautiful." Notably, Rimbaud, who was also heavily influenced by Baudelaire, did seem to live by a personal poetic philosophy at the age of 16 that is quite similar to Moondog's as indicated by his words in a letter to his benefactor Georges Izambard: "I'm now making myself as scummy as I can. Why? I want to be a poet, and I'm working at turning myself into a seer. You won't understand any of this, and I'm almost incapable of explaining it to you. The idea is to reach the unknown by the derangement of all the senses. It involves enormous suffering, but one must be strong and be a born poet. It's really not my fault." Of course, while Rimbaud knew when to quit and decided that being a wandering merchant would be a much more preferable trade to scribbling lines before dying at a fairly premature age, Moondog is essentially a whacked-out wastrel living on borrowed time, or so he discovers after being forced to confront the complete and utter unsustainability of his particularly parasitic existence after his sugar momma unexpectedly croaks.

Not unlike many self-described 'artists' and 'poets' in the United States, Moondog is, above all else, an all-consuming lecherous leech that is only able to maintain his hippie dip-shit poet lifestyle because he is wealthy; or, more specifically, he is very much the piss poor product of misguided generosity and lives off the wealth of his wanton mud shark wifey Minnie (Isla Fisher), who is actually deluded enough to believe that her serial philanderer hubby is a 'genius' and 'great man.' In other words, the only reason that Moondog is able to posture as a poet instead of a bum and maintain an extravagant lifestyle of unhinged bacchanalian buffoonery is because he lives off his would-be-hot-and-hip whore heiress wife, so naturally the antihero is placed in a somewhat precarious situation when his spouse tragically dies in a car crash and he is forced to fend for himself in what ultimately proves to be his own sort of softcore sativa-driven 'mein kampf' and the central (non)plot of the film. Indeed, for the majority of the film, the viewer watches as Moondog wanders around aimlessly and recklessly while he attempts to finish "the next great American novel" so that he can obtain his inheritance, which is frozen in escrow. Wisely (and, ultimately, quite prophetically) fearing that Moondog would "piss away her family fortune," Minnie put a special clause in her will that her husband would not be able to obtain his inheritance until he cleaned up his life and finished his latest book. As can predicted in an anti-

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Hollywood film disguised as a Hollywood film that devilishly plays with mainstream genre conventions to the point of practically projectile-vomiting these mostly negligible narrative ingredients onto the viewer's face, Moondog naturally accomplishes this relatively simple task with a certain grotesque burn-out gusto, but not before going on an absurdist odyssey of magnificent idiocy to pot-head purgatory that involves arrests, court-ordered drug rehab, escaping from rehab with the help of pyromaniacs, degenerate dolphin tours, and dauntingly dumb drug-smuggling flights with old blind negro pothead pilots, among other moronic missions. Needless to say, Moondog naturally kind of just falls into certain situations as he is a high time preference moron that seems incapable of planning ahead and instead just goes with the flow, especially when he has a steady flow of pot and booze as fuel. In fact, even Moondog's new book is nothing more than recycled crap from his various drunken readings at seaside dive bars, as he is not the sort of guy that expends too much energy on anything, including his great 'gift' of the written word. Rather humorously and in a fashion that makes a grand mockery of the entire positively positive happy endings of hollow Hollywood films, Moondog even manages to secure the coveted Pulitzer for his latest collection of infantile scribbling, but then again Tyehimba Jess also once won one thereupon making the prize seemingly worthless nowadays.

There are many less than noble traits that epitomize boomers and the conclusion of *The Beach Bum* is certainly quite symbolic of the most loathsome of boomerisms. Indeed, after finally securing his inheritance of \$50 million, Moondog buys a big boat that he idiotically names "success" and has the rest of the money placed on boat for a huge party involving fireworks, or as he states, "None of that sparkler bullshit that impresses lesbians, pregnant women and babies. No, no, no, let's-let's Valhalla this motherfucker." Needless to say, Moondog, who is no Nordic god, destroys the money by setting it on fire in an allegorical scene that echoes the boomer propensity towards mindless consumerism and wasting money in general whilst refusing to plan for the future (hence why so many boomers are unable to retire and/or do not plan on leaving their children any sort of inheritance despite their relative financial success in life). Like the eponymous bum played by Michel Simon in Jean Renoir's classic subversive frog comedy *Boudu Saved from Drowning* (1932)—a film that clearly had an imperative influence on *The Beach Bum*—Moondog merely drifts away on a raft in the end and, to quote the classic frog comedy, the antihero is, "back to his old vagrancy, a free spirit once more."

Admittedly, I lost a lot of respect for Korine after seeing him on a 2010 episode of the show *Into the Night with...* where he routinely complains about "white people" and even becomes noticeably dejected when Gaspar Noé informs him that he is not of the Hebraic persuasion as the Judaic director had long assumed. Undoubtedly, such sentiments hint that he was merely mocking the hopelessly hapless honkies in his magnum opus *Gummo* and *Trash Humpers*

was nothing more of a grotesque continuation of such keen kosher supremacist sentiments, as if the aberrant auteur saw elderly Caucasian confederates as the most horrific (subhuman) beings in the entire world. Despite these glaring Hebraic hostilities, Korine has unequivocally demonstrated a sort of playfully savagely sardonic contempt for people of various races and creeds, including his own. Indeed, in the film, Jonah Hill—arguably the most insufferable young kosher comedic actor working today—portrays Moondog’s superlatively sleazy (and covertly kosher) agent ‘Lewis,’ who reveals himself to be the ultimate walking-and-talking Der Stürmer-esque stereotype by bragging with a certain awe-inspiring combination of hubris and chutzpah, “You know what I liked the most about being rich? You can just... be horrible to people, and they just have to take it.” Indeed, lecherous Lewis, who apparently once attempted to molest Moondog’s (then-underaged) daughter, looks and sounds like the mud-dwelling Cajun wigger nephew of Harvey Weinstein in what is probably the sole tolerable performance of Hill’s mostly radically repugnant career. Korine also playfully mocks the stereotypical bourgeois Jewish nuclear family unit in the form of the less than lovable Lipschitz family, who have their own atonal theme song that is proudly sung by their fat and bald doctor patriarch that seems like the sort of physician that would have secret cameras hidden around their practice. Luckily for the lovely Lipschitz family, they have enough money to go on an ostensible ‘dolphin tour’ where they pay witness to the fact that sharks like dark meat after a negro named ‘Captain Wack’ (Martin Lawrence)—a singularly inept (supposed) Vietnam War vet and dolphin tour guide dude that, despite accidentally causing the deaths of a number of his previous patrons, somehow always manages to get his permits reinstated (or so he gleefully brags)—has his foot bit off by a shark in a scenario that provides Moondog great grotesque giggles. Undoubtedly fulfilling various highly negative racial stereotypes, Captain Wack not only feeds his pet parrot cocaine and has had only license revoked numerous times due to the deadly nature of his sub-amateur dolphin tours, but he is also so supremely and surreally stupid—to the point of savagely mocking similar beloved black characters from stereotypical semitic stoner flicks—that he sincerely believes he that loses his foot as a result of dolphin with sharp teeth as opposed to a gam of sharks, but of course no character is more patently pathetic and insipidly idiotic as the titular antihero.

While *The Beach Bum* superficially depicts Moondog as a mostly harmless fun-loving Florida Keys freak whose ludicrously lurid ‘laissez-faire’ approach to life is supposed to be admired, the film gives the viewer enough clues to make it quite clear that the protagonist is nothing if not a putrid piece of shit of the ludicrously lonely and sorry sort and his hyper hedonism is nothing more than a pathological coping mechanism for such innate internal misery. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, Moondog not only frankly admits to his wife that, “I’m a bottom-feeder. I got to go low to get high. You know that,” but he also

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rather revealingly confesses in a rare candid non-clownish moment of pathetic self-reflection, "I don't have any friends." Indeed, while Moondog is almost always depicted with other degenerates and debauchees, these supposed friendships are nothing more than displays of mutual parasitism and exploitation where they merely encourage drug abuse and mindless/loveless sexual savagery. Arguably most revealingly, despite presenting himself as a sort of tie-dye Don Juan that is down to drive his dick into any wet and wild hole, Moondog is a literal emasculated cuckold whose wanton wife carries on a long-term affair with his supposed best friend (also, rather revealingly, Moondog is depicted simply performing lifeless cunnilingus and slavish foot fetish shit on his wife, as if he is simply incapable of asserting himself on her like a real man). Naturally, the same best friend, Lingerie—a dope-dealing gangster with his own personal thug mercenary force—not only talks Moondog into making a total fool of himself by encouraging him to wear drag (notably, it is ultimately for no reason, as the anti-hero's drag garb is almost indistinguishable from his everyday colorful crap kitsch costume), but he also gets him involved in possibly deadly behavior, including smuggling drugs in a plane flown by an elderly and nearly-blind Rastafarian negro in what seems to be Korine's ironic nod to the Snoop Dogg celluloid turd *Soul Plane* (2004). Undoubtedly, virtually all of Moondog's behavior ultimately demonstrates that he has very little concern for human life, especially his own, but of course such is the natural result of the pathetically outmoded "Turn on, tune in, drop out" Weltanschauung that he so slavishly abides by.

While *The Beach Bum* can certainly be compared to such prestigious films as *Boudu Saved from Drowning* and the rare bawdy guido cult flick like Pasolini's protege Sergio Citti's *Casotto* (1977) aka *Beach House*, it also manages to be quite comparable to some of the worst celluloid trash in film history, including the somehow-sometimes-entertaining celluloid turd National Lampoon's *Last Resort* (1993) starring Corey Feldman and Corey Haim. Also, if the eponymous corpse of *Weekend at Bernie's* (1989) was reanimated as a dope zombie that fed on cheap beer, expensive weed, and piss poor untermensch pussy instead of human brains (which he could surely use), the creature would not be far off from Mr. Moondog as such a soulless scum-sucking sod barely carries any qualities that can admirably be described as human. In short, the sort of Sunshine State surrealism of *The Beach Bum* makes for an insanely ironical aesthetic when one considers the sheer and utter blackness that is indelibly marinated into Moondog's sad little forsaken heart, subtly splenetic psyche, and cobwebbed abyss-like soul. Of course, one should not expect anything less from a film where slapstick humor is derived from the senseless abuse of elderly women and the brutal beating and robbery of paraplegic boomers by JNCO-sporting-and-Creed-loving evangelical pyromaniacs. When Moondog literally burns his entire fortune at the end of the film, it almost seems like a moment of great allegorical purity as if to symbolize the complete and utter incineration of the plastic post-hippie pseudo-

culture that pretty much epitomizes every single generation since the boomers, though that would be too generous of an interpretation, especially considering that the protagonist—like so many (self)destructive white trash types—survives the ordeal. Instead, Moondog's coastal cash holocaust more symbolizes the all-consuming and all-destructive force that is demonic boomer plague than any sort of 'Baptism by Fire.' Undoubtedly, the cultural, aesthetic, and racial retardation of this plague is probably best highlighted in a scene where Jimmy Buffett and Snoop Dogg sing a song together in what is arguably the most accursed and cringe-worthy duet in all of human history. In that sense, Korine has certainly further refined his aberrant anti-aesthetic since *Spring Breakers*, as no one could dream up such dauntingly disgusting audio-visual vile with a sound mind, thus confirming the auteur's place as America's greatest and most artistically ruthless Judaic troll. Indeed, Korine does for his tribe what Sam Hyde and Million Dollar Extreme do for good goys and gals in terms of his anarchistic use of anti-humor, including the implementation of lovably grotesque racial caricatures that rape and ravish the soul with a twisted smile.

Undoubtedly, it is hard for me to imagine any intelligent person watching Korine's film and not coming to the logical conclusion that the success of Snoop Dogg—both the real 'man' and his clearly quite autobiographical character 'Lingerie'—symbolizes the height of clown world absurdity and mass cultural retardation in that that someone so decidedly dope-addled, dimwitted and delinquent could be so rich and famous to the point of being an ostensibly wholesome household name, which is one of the things *The Beach Bum* (seemingly unintentionally) really underscores in its hyper hokey hyperrealist hysteria. Of course, whereas Snoop Dogg epitomizes every negative stereotype of the 'successful' American negro as a self-centered snake that has gotten wealthy off promoting various forms of degeneracy to his own people (not to mention that various white philistines that love him), Moondog—a racially deracinated dooper that is ruthlessly cuckolded by his beloved wife and supposed best friend—is a sort of anti-Faustian man as a proudly aimless anti-mensch that represents that antithesis of every great quality of white European men of the past. In short, Moondog is a spiritually castrated pile of dog shit that has even eclipsed Nietzsche's last man in terms of abject worthlessness and passivity. While Moondog seems to be mindlessly striving for a completely intangible state of immaculate Ataraxia, he really just enjoys basking in the nefariously necrotic asshole of Sunshine Sodom, especially since it requires the least bit of physical and mental exertion to embrace such a licentious loser life. An excremental expression of the moronic mongrelized Hollywood joke of American (anti)alchemy, Moondog is human manure preposterously elevated to the level of a sort of great literary aristocracy that lives a hedonistic lifestyle worthy of ten debauched kings; or, in short, Korine's most ambitious joke yet. Unfortunately, it is still no Gummo—joke or no joke.

While it is well known that Korine is an (ex)junky, his pothead status seemed

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slightly more dubious, at least until he released *Spring Breakers* and especially *The Beach Bum*, the latter of which could have only been misbegottenly conceived by a full-fledged ganja glutton. Notably, out of all the Hebrews that I have ever personally known, every single one of them was a full-fledged pot-head, including accountants, social workers, robotic students, and self-loathing anti-Zionists far-left wankers (notably, one chosenite I briefly befriended, whose father was apparently a bigwig at the Smithsonian Institution, claimed his entire family smoked, including an elderly uncle that was some sort of ‘weed scientist’ that hooked up all his other family members with high-grade pharmaceutical dope). Of course, the pathetic proliferation of cannabis-crufted kosher comedies reveal that there is a sort collective reefer madness among the tribe and Jewish film scholar Nathan Abrams has highlighted this less than flattering fact in his book *The New Jew in Film: Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema* (2011). For example, when discussing Hebraic hack Judd Apatow’s miscegenation abortion *Knocked Up* (2007), Abrams notes, “Rogen plays another schlubby (Yiddish: clumsy, stupid or unattractive) Jewish stoner, Ben Stone [...] Unemployed, his Jewish and homosocial daily life is characterized by routine drinking and smoking weed [...] Apatow is unapologetic about Stone’s stoner qualities, lovingly detailed in the opening sequence. Indeed, the film celebrates Stone, as he, somewhat surprisingly but entirely in keeping with cinematic tradition, sleeps with an attractive blonde, professional shiksa.” In short, the United States has become such a glaringly semitic stoner dystopia and kosher cultural wasteland that hydro-laced Judeocentric fantasies, especially of the considerably insufferable Apatovian ‘Jew Tang Clan’ variety, are even the norm for the dumb (and probably stoned) white goy majority. Thankfully, Korine manages to at least transcend the sorry cinema of bong breath banality by taking it to such a sickeningly surreally silly extreme that one can only hysterically laugh at—as opposed to with—the rasta rabble and space cowboy untermenschen it depicts, though apparently that was not really the auteur’s true intent.

Apparently suffering from his own idiosyncratic onset of Trump Derangement Syndrome is what largely influenced Korine to make *The Beach Bum*, or as the filmmaker told IndieWire while seemingly possessed by the retrograde spirit of his kinsman Bob Dylan, “I started to feel like the times were changing, things were darker, everything was feeling more intense. I thought, maybe it’s time to laugh. I figured I’d just go for it and make my version of a comedy.” In short, the film is, like virtually all stoner comedies, a piece of inelegant excess-ridden escapism, albeit with an obvious meta-autistic Korine-ian touch. Of course, as everything from his debut acting role as the date-rape-drug-dealing club kid ‘Fidget’ in *Larry Clark’s Kids* (1995) to his various vaudevillian appearances on *Late Show with David Letterman* to his experimental ‘novel’ *A Crack Up at the Race Riots* (1998) to 2000 black-metal-inspired art exhibition *The Sigil of the Cloven Hoof Marks Thy Path* demonstrate, Korine is and has al-

ways been the 'badken.' A Yiddish word for "a professional fun-maker, jester, entertainer, verbose Jewish jokester and showman," 'badken' certainly better describes Korine than auteur at this point in his career and the titular antihero of *The Beach Bum* indubitably acts as a sort of sociopathic boomer gentile equivalent to it. As to how Korine went from directing films featuring gay black dwarfs and Burzum to washed-up mainstream black comedians and Jimmy Buffet, one is certainly more than a little tempted to speculate that it was one-too-many bong hits. After all, weeds has especially deleterious effects in terms of lowering one's standards and causing one to tolerate, well, crap, which explains how Korine has gone from citing great auteurs like John Cassavetes and Werner Herzog to insipidly stupid and soulless shit like the moronically merry multicultural marijuana movies of swarthy dip-shit duo Cheech & Chong as cinematic influences (indeed, Korine has referenced the films of the colored Cannabisseur partners as an imperative influence on *The Beach Bum*).

Notably, in a 1999 interview with Sean O'Hagan, Korine expressed rather high hopes in terms of his future place among the greats of cinema history, or as he explained in regard to his natural evolution as a cineaste, "I'd see a Fassbinder film, then go and get a book about him out of the library, and find out that he was into melodrama and Douglas Sirk. Then I'd go and seek out all of Sirk's work. That's how I figured out there was a continuum in cinema and directing that, hopefully, I'm part of today." Unfortunately, it has been over two decades since Korine directed his masterful debut *Gummo* and none of his subsequent works are even in the same universe in terms of unbridled idiosyncratic majesty, unhinged unforgettably, and grotesque comedic gold. After finally kicking Cocteau's kick, getting married, and becoming a father, Korine seems to have been finally tamed and *The Beach Bum* is the unequivocal proof that he is now a sort of 'spiritual boomer' as opposed to the perennial enfant terrible most of his fans hoped he would forever be. Still, *The Beach Bum* provides enough raunchy retarded fun to make for an aesthetically autistic double feature with *The Big Lebowski* (1998). From Gregg Araki's embarrassingly stale stoner girl odyssey *Smiley Face* (2007) to the positively putrid anti-white multiculturalist agitpop of the heeb-helmed *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* (2004) to the beta boy buffoonery of Kevin Smith's *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* (2001), the stoner comedy is arguably the most insufferable and aesthetically worthless subgenre of all-time so for there to be a film like *A Beach Bum* that is actually highly re-watchable is almost a miracle of sorts. Also, Matthew McConaughey deserves credit for a singular acting performance that is like a modern-day Charlie Chaplin on LSD after being raped by a pack of crack-ridden rasta negroes. As to why one should loathe stoners and everything they represent, I think Teutonic philosopher Oswald Spengler said it best when he wrote, "The common man wants nothing of life but health, longevity, amusement, comfort—'happiness.' He who does not despise this should turn his eyes from world history, for it

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contains nothing of the sort. The best that history has created is great suffering.” In short, nothing good comes out of mindless happiness, especially of the artificial drug-induced sort. Of course, Moondog—a man that cannot even muster a tear when his great love dies probably because he is too inebriated and is no longer in touch with normal human feelings—is a shitty poet because he does not know what it means to suffer. Likewise, Korine’s artistic stagnation seems to also be the result of his lack of suffering as the auteur seems to now be at his most stable and least self-destructive as a result of becoming a drug-free family man. Luckily, Korine does not seem to be pot-free, which has resulted in two of the ‘greatest’ pothead flicks of all-time. Indeed, it is kind of good to know that, as the fiery climax of *The Beach Bum* demonstrates, there are a couple films one can watch and laugh at while the world is in flames. After all, while Hollywood and its films are harbingers-cum-symptoms of clown world, Korine’s films at least bask in clown world and remind one that one is not insane to recognize that the modern world is simply insane and that there is no harm in sharing the occasional laugh from it. In fact, it can certainly be argued that the fact that Korine’s films even exist are a sure sign of end times and, even more than sad Slavs like Tarkovsky and Żuławski, they represent an apocalyptic aesthetic. Judging by Korine’s latest film, the world seems to end with nervous laughter as opposed to a whimper. As for boomers, it is quite unfortunate that most of them will probably not live long enough to see the apocalypse that their nasty combination of narcissism, materialism, hedonism, and cosmopolitanism helped to ignite and accelerate. On the bright side, thankfully John Lennon was assassinated long ago before he could perform an updated version of “Imagine” with Snoop Dogg. In short, when Ludwig Klages decried the ascent of, “the post-historical mankind of the merely pseudo-living larva,” he still never could have foreseen a creature as wretchedly rakish and ruthlessly reprobate as the titular antihero of *The Beach Bum*.

-Ty E

XTRO

Harry Bromley Davenport (1982)

This theme of extraterrestrial life has sprung up on several occasions recently. After hearing rumors for the new J.J. Abrams teaser to be anonymously attached to all Iron Man 2 prints, speculation abound with the rumor mill churning at full speed. With a wild spinner pointing towards Cloverfield canon, Super 8 turns out to be another Abrams cock-tease trailer effort with an exaggerated train accident and an unidentified creature beating at the inside of a heavily armed door. Mentions of Area 51 led me to finally visit the strange world in which Xtro takes place. Xtro is particularly notorious for it's brief stint as a video nasty after a scene in which a woman gives graphic birth to a full grown male. While this scene does not fear reproach in extensively detailing on afterbirth and gore leaking out of her vagina, it's nowhere near as bad as many of the other acts of violence depicted on celluloid at this current place in time.

To simply chalk up my opinion on Xtro would be for me to explain that it is by far one of the greater science-fiction horror films that I've ever seen; not to mention Event Horizon, as that film contained trace elements of a different horror caliber. Xtro is a film about a father who was abducted in front of his son while vacationing up at "the cabin" some odd years back. Wistful wife, Rachel, firmly believes that Harry ran out on her leaving young Tony at the cabin to fend for himself. But Tony knows the truth for he's haunted continuously by terrifying nightmares of the ominous light effect that Harry Broven Davenport uses to great effect as it blinds both the characters and the audience. It's not long before his father returns with "black magic from deep space" as the trailer defines it and he wants Tony. If you know nothing of Xtro before viewing it, the greatest surprises of all will be a vast reward. Pockets of bloody surrealism are tucked under many corners of this film with excruciatingly painful-to-watch prosthetics and bubbling pod-skin and other miserable body-horrors. What Xtro borrows from the genre isn't much to it's own avail. With the alien arc in tow, it builds layers upon this story creating both sublime surrealism of daunting clown entities and layers of emotional and terrifying depth which leaves for one of the most serene and silent endings in science-fiction history. At the moments of the credits rolling, I found myself silent and respectful for the characters fates and that is simply something I don't do unless we are talking about Martyrs. One thing about Xtro that startles me is how frequently this film is panned; one reviewer even stating that the film "falls flat." Now I realize the existence of personal subjective classification but Xtro takes a stale tale and re-wraps the lore of an extraterrestrial entity and encrusts itself in a manic-depressive cocoon of extreme violence, sadistic psychological warfare, and a beautiful french woman who gets eaten out like the dirty tramp she is. In all the films I've seen, I don't think I've seen anything quite like Xtro. If I had to pick the source of Xtro's power I'd circle

XTRO

the soundtrack of what Davenport called "screaming synthesizers." During the scene in which the "father" silently rediscovers his earthly rights off a backwoods road, his startling appearance marks the start of an increasingly delirious soundtrack that will appease any fan of avant-garde or sharp noise. Imagine Façtums at the basic, stripped of its rock core and the only thing left is the space synth with bleep twerps and the grinding ambiance of which I can only describe as looming. Xtro is an incredible sci-fi experience that makes up for what it loses in its inexperienced (at the time) directors hands with its broad perspective of the black beyond and relentless finale. Davenport doesn't care about your feelings towards his characters. He created these people and as a tactful god of his own fiction, he bestows upon whomever with whatever fates he desires. Xtro is merely his puppet and he works the strings fairly damn well. Say what you will about the film but in the end...Xtro > You

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XTRO 3: WATCH THE SKIES

Harry Bromley Davenport (1995)

The original *Xtro* was such a splendid surprise with its dazzling mixture of science-horror and somber surrealism. Setting my eyes on Harry Bromley Davenport who directed all three entries in the *Xtro* trilogy as well as the low-budget low-quality *Mockingbird Don't Sing*, I scoured a comment he made about the quality of his films. Turns out the third film in the series was always his favorite and with this recommendation alone, I set out to find and view these post cursors and delve into what genius the man behind *Xtro* must offer. Fast-forward to present time; I learned something today. I discovered that the fabled "accidental" director is not just a myth but a frightening reality far more terrifying than any film about vengeful aliens or marines without proper haircuts. *Xtro* must have been a fluke because I refuse to believe the talented man who combined screaming synth with inner-clown persona's created this godawful abomination that insults the quality of *Brain Damage* films. The plot centers around a marine lieutenant who gets assigned a mission with a team of rambunctious misfits. Their task? Simple reconnaissance and a bit of demolition..., or so they thought. As soon as they unearth a strange alien artifact the mishaps begin to occur. Each one with special effects worse than the last. Only in one scene does the second sequel barely resemble the original. A silhouette inked in darkness twitches to extraterrestrial life as a spurting white fire sprays out behind this figure. It shames me to appreciate something about this film and it certainly does not excuse any of this garbage but it's endearing to see that Davenport might still have what it takes to make a great science-fiction film. Let's hope he does justice with his newest *Xtro* film. Back on topic, these marines discover a classic "it came from the top" government cover-up cliché that should be known as a classic mistake and not some propelling force for a story. After they find a hermit living on the island who survived all the bloodshed that happened so 50 (40) years before, they attempt to get information of what really went on previously. This is where I note the misuse of the *deus ex machina*. Yet another film technique ruined in the hands of Harry Bromley Davenport. This primitive survivor with his pepper-gray wig and contrived eccentricity proves this character is nothing more than an *Encino Man* facsimile whose only use in the film is to lead the crew to some old Super8 films which document the convenient story behind the antagonist alien's rage. In faux-Roswell fashion, we watch an autopsy scene with no scientific clout as the other caged alien wails on behind his bars. After the female alien is butchered and has its baby removed and put in a surgical dish, the male alien bends the bars and uses his psychokinetic ability to kill everyone off screen with a tempestuous regurgitating power. So not only is Davenport inspired by braindead classics like *Encino Man* but it also appears that he's seen *Orca*. It's too obvious for it to be just a dupe on his part. Borrowing or be-

XTRO 3: WATCH THE SKIES

ing inspired isn't necessarily a negative thing but when you borrow shamelessly from classics and manage to make a film utterly prosaic. Well, . . . I just don't know how to respond other than to eject the disc and stare at the static until my eyes become overwhelmed. Xtro 3 is a unsubstantial failure on all sides; this is a two-sided coin of cantankerous and belligerent film making. How someone can direct the cast which would obviously lead to disastrous results and a lack of artistic integrity is beyond me. For someone who created one of the most daring and essential science-fiction films to suddenly become a bottom feeder is truly a waste of youthful prowess. This film is not only anti-climatic but it renders itself as the best in the series which gives me absolutely no hope for the future of the Xtro saga. Xtro 3: Watch the Skies is pedestrian at best and my last wish before I wash my eyes out with whiskey is to be able to omit this travesty out of my head completely.

-mAQ

MOCKINGBIRD DON'T SING

Harry Bromley Davenport (2001)

The value of a tragedy on film can be somewhat redundant at times. When a film is made to showcase an incident "based on" some event that shocked a small number of people, the result is normally a soulless exercise in directing minimalism. To create an independent "tear-jerker" is a sucker punch for film festivals as most fans of drama love to cry. I don't blame them. Sadness is a much more poetic and poignant emotion than happiness. Happiness is generally hollow. As Robert Downey Jr. so succinctly put it in *Tropic Thunder* - "Never go full retard" For those who haven't heard of *Genie*; the modern Feral child, *Mockingbird Don't Sing* follows the true story of a child raised from near birth strapped to a chair/toilet hybrid. This fabulous piece of carpentry is where *Genie* (Katie in the film) spent all her time during the day, up until she was rescued months before her 14th birthday. What better way to bring a story of a divine innocence than the director of all three *Xtro* films - Harry Bromley Davenport. Maybe I'm of a cold heart but this film didn't quite form the visceral assault that it promised. Rather than accepting this as a whole-blooded film, this seemed more like a dignified Lifetime reenactment. To watch a child actress play dumb and pretend like she lacks linguistic capabilities doesn't constitute awards and praise. In news of more postmodern feral children, thanks to the discovery of Josef "Dungeon Keeper" Fritzl's Pink Flamingos-esque cellar, many more of the "Pepsi generation" have begun to catch on to how cruel life is. I could catch up on some of the case details, but this is a film review highlighting the highs and the lows of this film, which there are many. My convictions allow me to digress the fact that my thoughts may be deemed unhealthy towards the lower class or handicapped, but I just really loathe pointless cinematic excursions in telling a story that has been told time and time again with no new visions in directing. If you've ever read *A Child Called It*, you already know the procedure. There's both rhyme and reason for the fear of feminization depicted by Katie's father. Before he commits suicide, he leaves a note saying "The world will never understand". In many ways, he is correct. The world will never understand why this film was made. While it resonates some emotional distress in some scenes, the rest proves to be entirely inaccurate and too provoked. It would be best to skip this crowd pleaser and just pick up the book. Call me heartless but I got a grip on humanity.

-mAQ

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS
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Harry Kümel (1971)

In terms of 'chic' post-WWII European actresses, no one can touch French blonde Nord Delphine Seyrig (*Last Year at Marienbad*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*), who worked with many of the greatest and most idiosyncratic filmmakers of her strikingly singular and totally unrivaled multi-era career, ranging from Spanish alpha-surrealist Luis Buñuel to French New Wave master François Truffaut to Austrian-born Hebraic Hollywood Academy Award winner Fred Zinnemann to French commie feminist Marguerite Duras to Teutonic dyke adventurer auteur Ulrike Ottinger. Indeed, what other actress can claim the distinction of starring in both Klein's *Mr. Freedom* (1969) and Ottinger's *Freak Orlando* (1981)?! Additionally, Seyrig was a sometimes filmmaker who directed socio-politically charged doc likes *Sois belle et tais-toi* (1981) aka *Be Pretty and Shut Up* where she interviewed an eclectic collection of famous actresses like Shirley MacLaine, Jenny Agutter and Jane Fonda about how they were (mis)treated in the film industry. Interestingly, despite her strikingly singular resume as an superlatively sophisticated and dignified screen diva with somewhat repugnant quasi-feminist airs, Seyrig apparently credited the neo-Gothic lesbian vampire flick *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) aka *Les lèvres rouges* aka *Le rouge aux Lèvres* aka *Blood on the Lips* aka *Children of the Night* aka *The Promise of Red Lips* aka *The Redness of the Lips* aka *The Red Lips* directed by Belgian auteur Harry Kümel (Malpertuis, *De Komst van Joachim Stiller* aka *The Arrival of Joachim Stiller*) as her absolute most favorite of all the films that she ever starred in, which is rather ironic considering she originally did not want to play the somewhat unflattering role of Countess Bathory due to her prestigious reputation as an actress and only accepted the project after being convinced by her then-boyfriend, French auteur Alain Resnais, who loved graphic novels and somewhat rightfully imagined the film would be in a graphic novel-like style. In fact, Resnais apparently like the finished film so much that he said it was better than anything he had directed, or so said auteur Kümel, who certainly did not concur with his cinematic comrade's rather flattering assessment of his film. Indeed, Kümel never wanted to make the film in the first place and has described it as "trashy," even stating in a DVD commentary regarding the work, "I found it a bit trashy for me...it has been a long time since I have accepted it...I had this silly idea that my parents would be looking at all this pornography [...] I didn't really like it for different reasons," though he is proud of its success, as a work that would prove to be the very first internationally successful Belgian flick (indeed, it was the only really successful film of his career and even obtained cult status in the United States shortly after it was released).

A Belgian-French-German co-production that has the delightful ear-solacing distinction of being a rare 1970s "genre" production where all the actors spoke

their lines in English as opposed to having their voices horrifically dubbed in post-production despite the fact that most of the actors were Belgian, French, and German and only spoke English as a second or third language, *Daughters of Darkness* is the post-WWII vampire flick at its most exceedingly elegant and refined as a beautiful baroque bloodsucker piece of the subtly yet forebodingly erotic sort. Indeed, to compare the best of Jean Rollin and Jesús Franco to Kümel's Sapphic vampire flick would be like comparing shit to gold. In that sense, Kümel is a cinematic alchemist because, despite his resentment towards the genre (in fact, he has denied it is even a horror film, stating, "This is not a horror movie...this is a style exercise...this is not meant to frighten.") and mixed feelings towards the film, he still managed to assemble a masterpiece of the exquisitely erotically macabre that is big on style and low on sleazy sensationalism that is typical of so-called 'Euro-sleaze.' Directed by a man from the same puny low country that produced Roland Lethem (*La Fée sanguinaire* aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, *Le Sexe Enragé* aka *The Crazy Sex* aka *The Red Cunt*), Thierry Zéno (*Vase de Noces* aka *Wedding Trough* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie*), Rob Van Eyck (*The Afterman*, *Blue Belgium*), Benoît Poelvoorde/Rémy Beaulieu/André Bonzeland (*Man Bites Dog*) and Fabrice Du Welz (*Calvaire* aka *The Ordeal*, *Vinyan*), *Daughters of Darkness* is a ridiculously entrancing example as to why Belgians, especially the Germanic Flemish, are arguably the foremost masters of making the most artful, cultivated, and hermetic works of superlatively sick stomach-churning celluloid sleaze. Of course, compared to the aberrant-garde films of Lethem, Kümel's hyper-hypnotic vampire flick seems like a high-camp melodrama.

While newlyweds Stefan (played by Polish-American *Dark Shadows* star John Karlen) and Valerie (played by French-Canadian actress Danielle Ouimet who, incidentally, started her acting career by playing the eponymous lead of Denis Héroux's 1969 quasi-artsy exploitation flick *Valérie*) seem like the young perfect couple, at least upon a superficial glance, their relationship is based on lies, hypocrisy, resentment, and contempt. Indeed, despite marrying beautiful yet somewhat dumb virgin-like blonde Valerie, Stefan is secretly a sadomasochistic sodomite who gets aroused by violence and murder and who is the 'kept man' of an opulent yet odious and exceedingly effete fat middle-aged English sugar daddy with a fetish for exotic plants. Unfortunately for her, stupid little girl Valerie is hopelessly in love with Stefan and does whatever he says, no matter how degrading, even though he treats her like a contemptible little child. At the beginning of *Daughters of Darkness* in a scene that was rather risqué and unconventional for its time, the mismatched newlyweds, who are on their honeymoon, make love on a train, and afterwards Valerie asks Stefan if he loves her, to which he replies with a firm, "no." To go along with her bastard of a beau's rather vicious wishes, Valerie lies and also proclaims that she does not love Stefan, to which he sardonically replies, "apparently, we were made for each other" regard-

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ing their ostensible mutual unlove for one another. To Valerie's disappointment, Stefan refuses to tell his 'aristocratic' mother about their unholy marriage. As Stefan confesses to Valerie regarding what his mother apparently routinely said to him when he was a young child: "Stefan, we are different. That is God's gift to us, and we must never debase it," hence the character's unwarranted narcissism, rampant callousness, and all around controlling nature. Indeed, it is more than just a little bit apparent that Stefan feels superior to his new wife, but of course it is quite glaring that his sense of superiority is clearly a self-defense mechanism designed to help him cope with his seemingly split personality and ignore the ugly truth about his confused sexuality.

For their scenic honeymoon, the newlyweds stay in the royal suite of a lavish hotel located in seaside Ostend, Belgium, but unbeknownst to them, a cold-blooded killer with a thirst for blood is running around loose in the local area and is responsible for the deaths of a number of blonde Nordic babes that look a lot like Valerie. When Stefan learns of the killings and walks by one of the murder scenes by accident while doing some sightseeing with Valerie, he becomes discernibly sexually aroused and even hatefully smacks his wife when she gets in the way of his view of a dead chick. A local retired police officer (played by Belgian actor Georges Jamin, who died a couple months after the film was completed) also seems somewhat 'aroused' by the deaths and he plans to discover who the killer, though it will ultimately cost him his life. Meanwhile, in a scene consciously stolen by the director from the famous scene of Marlene Dietrich making her big entrance in Ernst Lubitsch's classic *Angel* (1937), ancient Hungarian lesbo vampire Countess Elizabeth Bathory (Delphine Seyrig) arrives at the Ostend hotel with her flapper-like Louise Brooks-esque muse Ilona Harczy (German actress Andrea Rau) and she immediately becomes entranced upon spotting Stefan and Valerie to the point where her ancient aristocratic sensibilities are not irked by the fact that the newlyweds have already occupied the royal suite that she hoped to stay in, even stating her girlfriend regarding the couple, "look how perfect they are." The front desk clerk of the hotel, Pierre (played by German actor Paul Esser, who is probably best known for his roles in Wolfgang Staudte's *Rotation* and *Der Untertan* aka *Man of Straw*), is immediately disturbed upon seeing the Countess as he remembers seeing her at the hotel four decades ago when he was just a boy and he cannot fathom how she has not aged a day since then. Of course, poor Ilona is immediately jealous of the newlyweds, especially Valerie, and somberly confesses to the Countess, "I wish I could die." Luckily for Ilona, she will get her wish, but not before whoring herself out for the Countess, who has a new love interest in the form of a buxom blonde newlywed.

While Stefan and Valerie intended to leave the hotel the next morning so that they can catch the cross-channel ferry to England so the former can introduce the latter to his supposedly rather bitchy mother, they decide to make

the ultimately fatal mistake of staying a couple more days after meeting Countess Bathory and her cutesy sensual-lipped lesbo lover. A perversely penetrating psychopath of the wholly sensual and incessantly sinisterly smiling sort (as the director has confessed, it was Seyrig's excellent idea to play the role smiling) who can give one an agonizing orgasm with her mere erotically-charged words, Countess Bathory is a lethal lady-licking lesbo yet she has a warm and inviting persona that would not scare a fly, though her red/black/white wardrobes tell otherwise (the director had Seyrig wear these colors to conjure up feelings of the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS), who of course wore the same colors). Indeed, on top of being a supernatural Sapphic bloodsucker, the Countess is a masterful 'psychic vampire' of sorts who preys on people's minds and emotions, which is certainly a trait she shares in common with crypto-homo Stefan, who will ultimately prove to be her rather weak rival in terms of vying for the affection of Valerie. In a somewhat hilarious if not equally awkward scene, Stefan makes a call to his supposed 'mother' in front of Valerie, but as the scene soon reveals, he is really talking to his old fag lover/sugar daddy (hilariously played by great Dutch auteur Fons Rademakers(!), who is probably best known for directing low country classics like *Mira* (1971) and *The Assault* (1986)). After telling his 'mother' that he has done the unthinkable by getting married to a young woman, the snide old queen responds with: "Whatever in the world will we do with her? Well, now, think of it—You working at whatever it is you can do, and that poor little, uh, Valerie, the day she hears about us—Oh, I hate to think about that. And you too! Of course, that's why you called [clicks tongue] Surely you don't really believe you would ever, ever do such a—such an ungrateful thing. I can't wait for you to see our newest *Laelinae*, *Cattleya Violacea*. And by the way, Stefan, be sure to tell that young woman...that Mother sends regards" (it should be noted that the connection between flowers and homosexuality is a subtle tribute to Marcel Proust). Rather enraged by the conversation with his so-called 'mommy,' Stefan unleashes his deep-seated internal rage and sexual frustration on Valerie by brutally beating her with his leather belt and subsequently assumedly raping her. While Valerie sneaks out of the hotel the next morning and attempts to get away on the next train out of town, the Countess uses her charms to convince her to stay. To keep Stefan incapacitated, the Countess sends Ilona to his hotel room to seduce him. Of course, things do not exactly work out completely as the Countess planned.

While Ms. Bathory attempts to flatter Valerie by calling her "little Edelweiss" (a reference to dumb European blondes, especially Swiss girls) and complimenting her ravishing good looks, the now-hysterical young wife eventually freaks out on her, abruptly stating, "I despise you. You're disgusting," and walking away, but of course the carpet-munching Countess follows her like a stud canine shadowing a bitch in heat. When Valerie defensively remarks that her husband loves her after the Countess mocks the genuineness of their relationship,

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Bathory makes the stereotypical dyke feminist misandristic argument: "Stefan loves me, whatever you may think." Of course he does. That's why he dreams of making out of you what every man dreams of making out of every woman—a slave, a thing, an object for pleasure." Meanwhile, Ilona seduces Stefan and they have fairly passionate sex. Unfortunately, a freak accident involving a shaving razor leaves Ilona dead after Stefan scares her by carrying her into the shower (whether Ilona dies as a result of the razor or due to her hinted aversion to water as a vampire is never made completely clear). Right after Ilona dies, Valerie and the Countess walk in on Stefan, who is staring at the dead vamp's naked corpse while in a state of abject shock. When Valerie remarks that she will call the police, the ever quick-witted Countess says to her, "Are you out of your mind? No one will ever believe it was an accident. You are out of your mind," and subsequently kisses her on the lips in an erotic fashion. At the Countess' recommendation, the three head to the beach during the early A.M. hours and Stefan digs a hole and buries Ilona's corpse in it, though he almost buries himself in the process, thus demonstrating his weakness as a man who is not match for Queen Bitch Bathory, who ironically saves his life.

After driving back to the hotel, the Countess convinces Stefan to take a nap and uses the opportunity to seduce and 'turn' poor unsuspecting Valerie into a lesbo vampire. Naturally, Stefan becomes obscenely jealous when he finds out that the Countess has turned his darling into a member of the undead, so he attempts to take Valerie away, but the scheming bitch Bathory blackmails him by threatening to go to the police about Ilona's dubious death. While both of them are 'psychic vampire' of sorts, Stefan seems like an autistic and emotionally crippled little boy compared to the ancient bloodsucking undead blueblood being that is the Countess. Of course, it does not take long before the Countess kills Stefan and feeds on his blood with baby vamp Valerie, who enthusiastically helps her new lesbo lover murder her hubby. After wrapping Stefan's body in black plastic bags, they dump it into a polluted creek like it is trash in what amounts to, like much of the film, a strangely humorous scene that is typical of Flemish/Dutch humor. While mutually deeply infatuated with one another as a sort of figurative quasi-incestuous 'mother-daughter' duo, their lurid 'lady-lickers of the night' love affair is ultimately cut short when Valerie uses her driving skills (or lack thereof) to accidentally crash the Countess' luxury automobile after the sun burns her pale baby vamp skin and she loses control of vehicle. Indeed, after losing control of the car, Valerie crashes into a tree, which causes the Countess to be ejected from the car via the windshield where she is ultimately impaled after her body lands on a large protruding tree branch. After taking a stake to the heart in a cruelly ironic moment of pure happenstance, the Countess is subsequently burned alive when the totaled car explodes, thus leading the viewer to suspect that Valerie also perished in the tragic crash. Flash forward a couple months later in what amounts to a bittersweet twist ending, and Valerie has developed

a satanically seductive persona just like her master the Countess, even parroting her look and voice, so that she can lure in young couples, thus continuing the vicious circle of hetero-hating lesbian-based vampirism.

While *Daughters of Darkness* is a truly exceedingly exquisite and extra-erotic example of 'magical realism,' auteur Harry Kümel would fine tune his talents for his somewhat superior and obscenely overlooked subsequent arthouse efforts *Malpertuis* (1973) and *The Arrival of Joachim Stiller* (1976). Additionally, Kümel's early avant-garde shorts *Anna la Bonne* (1959), which is based on a poem by Jean Cocteau, and *Pandora* (1960), as well as his decidedly bleak Bergman-esque debut feature *Monsieur Hawarden* (1969), are regarded as some of the greatest masterpieces of Flemish cinema, even if the director has always been an outsider in his native homeland, especially after *Daughters of Darkness* was a big international success. Indeed, despite being what is arguably the only internationally successful Belgian film in all of cinema history, at least at the time of its release, Kümel found himself marginalized by the Flemish film community for a work he really had no interest in making, or as Belgian film scholar Ernest Mathijs wrote in the book *The Cinema of the Low Countries* (2004): "Of all the Belgian films of the early 1970s, a boom period in Belgian cinema culture, *Les lèvres rouges* (*Daughters of Darkness*, 1971) is probably the most talked about, yet least known. Although it still stands as one of the most commercially successful and academically referenced Belgian films, it is hardly screened today, and even its DVD and video distribution has been hampered by a series of difficulties, ranging from legal to aesthetic objections. This dual status is perhaps the most typical characteristic of the film, being both a high-profile example of Belgian cinema at its most international, and a consciously ignored part of a nation's cinema heritage."

Somewhat light on blood and bare boobs, *Daughters of Darkness* is a perfect example of subtly yet elegantly executed suggestive potency in the cinematic realm, thus it is almost an absurdity to describe the film as a work of 'exploitation' (unquestionably, 'artsploitation' would certainly be a better label). On top of being one of the most eloquent European 'genre' films of its time, the film is also a cryptic tribute to the great auteur filmmakers of European cinema history, as a formalistic flick that pays homage to everyone from Carl Th. Dreyer to Ernst Lubitsch to Josef von Sternberg to Georg Wilhelm Pabst to Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger to star Delphine Seyrig's beau Alain Resnais. Indeed, in terms of its entrancing atmosphere, oneiric tone, nuanced pacing, lavish 'sets,' and hermetic eroticism, *Daughters of Darkness* is like the *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) of vampire flicks, albeit minus the impenetrable essence, as well as the European cinematic cousin of Richard Blackburn's criminally underrated Lovecraftian lesbo bloodsucker flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973). The happy horror accident of a man who spitefully declared "we are going to do something nasty" and reluctantly decided to direct a

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film for a genre he had no interest in after his directorial debut was poorly critically received, *Daughters of Darkness* is indisputable proof that a pretentious 'auteur' will always direct better genre films than the average horror hack, even if he has little interest in directing them. As Kümel insightfully stated in the audio commentary track for the *Blue Underground* DVD release of the film: "I'm like Paul Verhoeven, you know...the films he doesn't like to make are good movies and the films he likes to make are not so good." Of course, the film also owes a great deal of its endlessly entrancing erotic magnetism and perniciously alluring atmosphere to frog diva Delphine Seyrig's singularly dignified performance as a lethally lecherous undead lady of the night. Apparently, the actress was so confident with her performance that she reassured Kümel regarding his concern that the two young leads were too old and not talented enough for playing the newlyweds by stating to him, "Don't worry, they [the audience] will only look at me." Indeed, as someone that has always found female vampires, especially those of the lesbo sort, to be oftentimes hopelessly nonthreatening and a rather blatant sign that the film was made for largely pornographic reasons, Seyrig proved that middle-aged broads can pull off brutally beautiful and superlatively sensual bloodsuckers in a fashion that no male actor can compete with. Of course, Seyrig was a vampire in the sense that she had the power to glamor any man, woman, or child that saw her on the silver screen, thus all she had to do was play herself in *Daughters of Darkness*. I, for one, can certainly not think of another feminist that was so innately captivating, cultivated, and carnally beguiling.

-Ty E

THE CHASER

Harry Langdon (1928)

This later imagining of the Korean thriller had been optioned for a remake and hadn't even been released. For all the venomous insults being directed at the Hollywood machine, you got to respect productivity while its in plain view and this is just that circumstance. As normal, the "generic" thriller is taken from a foreign vantage and crafted into something enjoyable fresh. The Chaser is a film that lives by its name and spotlights many chase scenes through the misty and thin streets of a darkly lit Seoul during its annual rainy season and if you know one thing about Korean cinema, it's that rain has never been captured as the mystic force that it is outside of the Korean medium of cinematography that is also known as the film core in their native land. Now to creep past the introductory paragraph without the illusion of me adoring this film for its flaws, know that most Korean thrillers re inventions of a reinvention so the blessing is fading fast. In order to explain the elements that do make this film, I'll need to set the scene. In A-typical Western format, we meet an ex-cop turned pimp who lacks a certain trait known as humanity. After pining over lost prostitutes that were "sold" to other pimps, he sends a sick mother to please a man known only to him by the last digits of his phone number - "4885." Soon thereafter, Jung-ho ascertains to the possibility that this creepy man was the one who auctioned his girls so after a rigorous and highly edited phone comparison montage, he makes the shocking discovery that this man is in fact the last person to see his missing girls. Oblivious to the cold truth, he doesn't even ponder the idea of murder so as to is surprise, Mi-jin has been kidnapped and stored in a basement slowly dying while a cat-and-mouse game is being divided by three parties. Incompetence is a normal and noticeable trait in all detective movies. But for one to exceed formalities and slope into blatant incidentals against police inefficiency is another thing that is perfectly paraded by The Chaser. In an attack on subjective sensationalism, two events are juxtaposed by the media within the world of The Chaser; a crazy individual throwing feces at the mayor's face and the capture of a serial killer. Guess which one gets proper coverage and the best of peoples sensibilities. Don't worry, I couldn't believe it either. The outrage is placed into high priority and you find yourself soon scowling at both man's flaws and the basic outline of the human condition. No character is written free from vice, mistakes, and grisly flaws. Speaking of grisly, that's about one of few words that can properly sum out the quota of suspense/violence. In light of recent action scenes, I've discovered that a vast majority of Korean combat scenes of fairly life-like to the actual homicidal counterpart in humanity. The swift punches are fierce and awkward but still packed with a vehement compassion for the ideals of being. During the course of several weeks, I've been exposed to film after film proudly giving emphasis to pathetic male characters that are at the top of the story's hierarchy of figures;

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prominently Wakamatsu's *The Embryo Hunts in Secret* and this, *The Chaser*. To even begin expressing the details of Jung-ho's descent into self-emasculatation would spoil many touching surprises. For being blended post-*Se7en* material, the prize still tastes genuinely fresh. Upon second-guessing the motives of such directors depicting harmful stories, I realized that these harmful stories are all apart of harmless film making. These are films, Korean that is, that are made with style over substance but you will, at times, appreciate plot aesthetics as well as savoring the set theme and gristle of a Hollywood film. *The Chaser* has won many awards and is being led through several festival circuits but seems out of place with the artistic crop. Paired with *Truck*, a recent Korean graduating of Western ideals, *The Chaser* is the kind of film a family could appreciate for hostile ethics and foreign do-good. Expect nothing three dimensional other than the fallibility of law enforcement and an odious approach to misogyny and impotence. The most terrifying side-effect of *The Chaser* is that Yeong-Min makes me think of prostitutes as a lesser species without an earnest attempt as fleshed as it is in contemporary suspense. His stoic demeanor truly is disquieting. The femme fatale is unofficially dead.

-mAQ

THE THIRD GENERATION

Harry Solter (1913)

After watching the 2008 German film *The Baader Meinhof Complex* directed by Uli Edel - a work that romanticizes the German left-wing extremist terrorist group Red Army faction (RAF) - I figured it was about time for me to watch Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Third Generation* (1979); a black comedy that lampoons a fictional German left-wing terrorist cell. Unlike *The Baader Meinhof Complex*, *The Third Generation* simply portrays its subjects as degenerates, buffoons, and irrational tools of German capitalists. Fassbinder directed *The Third Generation* right after *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979); a film that earned the German New Wave auteur critical and commercial acclaim on an international level. Although *The Third Generation* was championed by critics in American and France; the film was hated by critics and general audiences in Germany - probably due to its sadiistically playful and less than flattering portrayal of German left-wing terrorism. In fact, during a screening of *The Third Generation* in Hamburg, Germany - a projectionist was beaten unconscious, and various other theaters in the Fatherland received death threats. German leftist terrorists would later be stigmatized in the Hollywood blockbuster classic *Die Hard* (1988) directed by John McTiernan; a film that presents the German terrorists as traitors to their own political cause; trading in their political idealism, ergo becoming their greatest professed enemy: greedy capitalists. In *The Third Generation*, Fassbinder attacks left-wing terrorists with a clever array of situational theatrics skits, thus making for a hilarious romp into the imbecilic idealist froth of soulless Marxist materialism.

Despite fighting for the worker and the proletariat; virtually all of the leftist revolutionaries featured in *The Third Generation* are from the bourgeois class. In fact, one of the revolutionaries is an aristocratic who regrettably carries the noble name: Bernhard von Stein. Although the cannibalistic class consciousness of these upperclassmen may seem to be strikingly odd and downright irrational; it is undoubtedly historically accurate. In apolitical Italian philosopher Vilfredo Pareto's revolutionary work *The Rise and Fall of Elites*; the inspirational thinker (who influenced Benito Mussolini's fight for power) proves through historical trends that virtually all bygone political elites played imperative role(s) in their own destruction. Over time, individuals from the aristocratic and bourgeois classes become passive due to their leisurely and pampered existences, thus eventually (out of a feeling of nihilistic worthlessness) fighting for the lower classes. As Pareto explains in his book (providing examples from Ancient Greece to modern Italy), it was, indeed, members of the bourgeois who originally published Marxist anti-bourgeois literature and it is always the self-loathing bourgeois failures (Karl Marx was a failed bourgeois and Lenin was a failed nobleman) who have historically led genocidal revolutions against their own people. In *The*

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Third Generation, the leftist terrorist group is made up of the following individuals: Musical composer (the group leader), a quasi-lesbian feminist history teacher, a banker and his housewife, and a record store clerk. Obviously, none of these individuals have ever done a second of real working-class labor in their entire lives, yet they are leading a pathetic nihilistic revolution for the proletariat. Naturally, the funniest aspect of the left-wing terrorist group is that it is secretly funded by Lurz: a capitalist who wants to boost sales for his security computers, thereupon funding the leftist extremists to commit terrorist attacks. In fact, August, the leader of the leftist terrorist cell is a double-agent for Lurz. Indeed, Rainer Werner Fassbinder certainly assembled a vicious satire with *The Third Generation*; a film where leftist terrorists become unsuspecting capitalist pawns. As the once influential German philosopher Oswald Spengler once wrote, "There is no proletariat, not even a Communist movement, that has not operated in the interests of money, and for the time being permitted by money - and that without the idealists among its leaders having the slightest suspicion of the fact."

The secret code for the terrorist group's campaign is: "The World As Will as Idea" - which is taken from *The World is Will and Representation*; one of the most important works written by the great German pessimist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. During the beginning of Fassbinder's *The Third Generation*; the Grandfather of terrorist Edgar Gast tells his grandson that Schopenhauer once stated, "Man's existence is no more important than that of a stone." Grandfather Gast goes on to insult Schopenhauer and he eventually says to Edgar in an idealistic matter-of-fact manner, "Every generation needs a war." Whether they realize it or not, Edgar and his terrorist friends have contrived a war in the form of left-wing terrorism, thus fulfilling Grandpa Gast's (who Edgar constantly mocks) dream of generational war. It is no secret that many of the real-life German left-wing terrorists were inspired to wage class war as an act of rebellion against their Nazi parents/grandparents. Despite attempting to reprieve Germany from Nazi infamy, these German terrorists would go on to further taint the name of their homeland, as so vividly expressed in Hollywood films like *Die Hard*. After meeting aristocratic terrorist Bernhard von Stein, Grandpa Gast mentions to the young man that ever since he was a little boy, he wanted to be an aristocrat. Being a self-loathing aristocrat, von Stein tells Grandpa Gast that the title is nothing special nor is it worthy of admiration. Through their regretful, yet unintentionally comedic interaction, Grandpa Gast and Bernhard von Stein symbolically express that values have been turned upside down and have reached total inversion in post-World War II Germany.

The Third Generation may not feature the aesthetic prowess of Fassbinder's final work *Querelle*, nor the erotic melodramatic depth of *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, but the film is manifestly the German auteur filmmaker's most witty and

humorous effort. Like Fassbinder's *Whity*, *The Third Generation* is a brutal and unflinching indictment on a totally hypocritical and impotent upper-class. Also, like *Whity*, *The Third Generation* features Fassbinder's ex-lover and acting regular Günther Kaufmann (the Mulatto Bavarian), who plays Franz; the best friend and protector of candy-ass aristocrat Bernhard von Stein. Out of all the communist terrorists featured in *The Third Generation*; Franz is the only one that expresses authentic human emotions, as opposed to soulless, yet fanatic, nihilistic left-wing idealism. When a junkie girl living with the terrorists accidentally overdoses on big H - Franz is thrown into tears and resembles a sad teddy bear - as he and the girl had recently started a romantic fling. Unfortunately, Franz will eventually pay the ultimate price for his down-to-earth personality and selfless empathy. By the conclusion of *The Third Generation*, the capitalist is still on top (albeit as a hostage of the terrorists) and most members of the original left-wing terrorist cell are six feet under. Fittingly, the remaining members of the terrorist cell dress up as circus clowns at the end of the film. As so hilariously expressed in *The Third Generation*; anyone looking to lead an unpredictable life of aimless left-wing terrorism is bound to make an inevitable blunder, therefore never fulfilling the impossible and ultimately ostentatious dream of founding a classless Utopia. Despite being a leftist himself, Rainer Werner Fassbinder proved he was an equal-opportunity offender with *The Third Generation*; a work that is patently the greatest satire ever made on German left-wing extremist groups (and leftist extremism in general).

-Ty E

MIDNIGHT HEAT
MIDNIGHT HEAT

Harvey Frost (1996)

Without question, if there is any pornographic equivalent to Martin Scorsese's somewhat nihilistic urban 'crime drama' *Taxi Driver* (1976), it is *Midnight Heat* (1983) directed by exploitation auteur turned auteur-pornographer Roger Watkins aka 'Richard Mahler' (*The Last House on Dead End Street*, *Spittoon*) and starring iconically unhinged porn chic era leading man Jamie Gillis (*Water Power*, *New Wave Hookers*). Indeed, despite being a true blue fuck movie that was made to capitalize off of the more archaic instincts of pathetic old horny geezers who cannot get a taste of real pussy, Watkins' nihilistically wanton work is even more nasty and pessimistic than *Taxi Driver* in terms of its uniquely unflattering and oftentimes depraved depiction of post-civil rights era New York City urban decay. Majorly misanthropic to the marvelously mean-spirited core, *Midnight Heat* is a rare fuck flick where the fucking seems to enhance the pleasantly pernicious plot in a rather aesthetically seamless sort of way, as a work about a philosophical hitman of the pathologically melancholy variety who screws his boss' wife and daughter and thus must go into hiding and be extra weary of the wanton women he purchases from sub-upscale escort services because some of them are truly killer cunts. While not Watkins' greatest porn effort as a work that just cannot compete with the Wagnerite wantonness of *Corruption* (1983), it is pretty damn close as one of the most aesthetically malevolent blue movies ever made. Unlike with *Corruption*, the filmmaker had to make a compromise or two on the film, or as Watkins confessed in an interview with David Kerekes featured in *Headpress 23*: "CORRUPTION and AMERICAN BABYLON are two I had absolute, total control over. MIDNIGHT HEAT is good, except for a really stupid sex scene at the beginning because I felt you needed it. I figured if the audience is stupid, then we got to do this to hold them." Featuring slow-motion footage of real-life hobos, winos, and crackhead negroes that dwell in cardboard boxes, *Midnight Heat* is a porn film for pessimists who could care less about seeing some old slag's gaping gash and are much more interested in seeing the sort of forsaken mentality it takes for one to resort to becoming a pornographer in the first place. In that sense, one could argue that it is Watkins' most autobiographical work. Indeed, directed by a man who was a friend/protégé of Hollywood auteur Nicholas Ray (*Rebel without a Cause*, *Johnny Guitar*) and Austrian-born auteur Otto Preminger (*Laura*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*) and whose debut feature *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) aka *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* showed much promise as far as nasty and nihilistic exploitation cinema is concerned, *Midnight Heat* is ultimately the debasing celluloid hate piece of a disgruntled artist who utilized a film style that is usually specially tailored for lonely losers to wank-off to as an outlet for his own lingering resentment, angst, and misanthropy. A conspicuously corrupt and culturally cynical chamber piece

from the bowels of the Bowery, Watkins' work reminds one why NYC is a dirtier hole than that of any ghetto-dwelling crack whore.

Alan (played by Jamie Gillis in the same \$39 suit he wore in *Corruption*) is a hitman who was probably an associate of Arthur Schopenhauer in another life, as he only kills when he has a good philosophical reason to do so (or if the price is right) and spends most of his time staring out windows and thinking about why life and humanity sucks. When Alan has sex with his wife (Sharon Mitchell) and then proceeds to act all moody broody while staring out a window, his lady love complains to him that he is too "cold" and introverted and threatens to leave him, but he could seriously care less and replies in the following jaded fashion: "Do what you want...I can't stop you." Alan may not give a shit about his bitchy wife, but he cares enough about screwing both the daughter (Tish Ambrose) and wife (Dixie Dew) of his employer (Frederick Rein) to quite literally risk his life just for the mere cross-generational familial carnal pleasure. Of course, Alan's boss inevitably catches him in the act, kisses him on the lips in what can be described as an intimidating figurative kiss of death, and makes the following cryptic threat: "I'll be seeing you in the streets." Of course, Alan knows he's a marked mensch and despite being a rather self-destructive dude with what seems to be a death wish, he does opt for going into hiding in a sleazy dilapidated motel located in a hobo, junky, crackhead, and wino inhabited area of the Bowery. While Alan is able to occupy most of his time staring at the window and admiring all the human filth that plagues the streets, he eventually gets bored enough to hire not one, but two call girls. Of course, little does Alan realize that one of the cash-for-gash gals has been sent to kill him, though it does not take long for his murderous hunter intuition to kick in for him to realize that the rotten whore has homicide on her messed up mind.

When the high-priced hookers get to his motel room, Alan, who has been having random bouts of erectile dysfunction, decides to have the girls screw together while he looks on passively. While pussy-peddler Diane (Champagne) is a tall and swarthy Mediterranean broad, Shirley (Joey Karson) is a short buxom bleach blonde that has just gotten into the prostitution profession. Though Alan eventually has little Shirley leave as she does not have much to offer, he has Diane stay at his room as he finds something rather provocative about her. Of course, Alan soon begins sharing his personal philosophies with the hooker, stating regarding the hobos and winos around the Bowery, "Ever think what separates us from them? One morning they just woke up and said, "fuck it." Precious little separates us." Of course, Alan is also on the brink of saying "fuck it" and throwing his life down the drain, but he still has enough of a sense of self-preservation to know that there is something not quite right about Diane. While Diane has nightmarish flashbacks about being more or less anally pillaged by her hitman husband Tom (Michael Bruce), Alan recalls being cheered up by his hooker friend Nan (Susan Nero), who could not give him a hard-on but certainly could

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make him happy in other ways. If anything is for sure, Alan and Diane are both majorly melancholy individuals who are involved in debasing sexual relationships. When the two finally decide to share carnal knowledge, Alan screws Diane from behind and during mid-coitus asks her if she was “sent by someone.” With penetrative pleasure clouding her judgment, Diane confesses she was indeed sent to kill him, so Alan strangles her to death while he reaches sexual climax. In the end, Alan once again stares out of his miserable motel room window as if looking into eternity from his own metaphysical prison. Undoubtedly, I recommend that the viewer stick around until after the credits end, as a final free-frame shot features a wrinkled newspaper with the haunting headline, “EIGHT DIE IN HOTEL FIRE,” thus hinting that Alan may have intentionally burned down the place and killed himself in the process.

Beginning with the Henry Miller quote, “Sex can become a weapon,” *Midnight Heat* is certainly a work that demonstrates that sex is a fatal weakness that leads both men and women to the slaughter. Of course, with its fiendishly foreboding tone, unnerving *weltschmerz*, abrasive third world-esque set-design, and slow-motion shots of staggering bums and dumpster-dwelling dipsomaniacs roaming around the Bowery as if trapped in some sort of post-industrial pandemonium, Watkins’ work is more about existential crisis in the (post)modern age than it is about mere fucking, for the flick is far too decidedly dreary and disconcerting to give any truly healthy heterosexual man a significant hard-on. As Watkins would reveal in an interview with David Kerekes, star Jamie Gillis’ real-life situation was no less dark and disturbing than that of his character in the film, albeit to a more pathetic degree. Indeed, as Watkins stated, “I like Jamie, he’s alright. I like Vanessa. But they’re in a different world [...] all they do is fuck and nobody cares anymore. We were always trying to think of new ways to fuck or do something. Jamie was telling me he was living with Seka [...] She is this big, blonde porn star. He says to me, “Man, I think I’m losing my mind... Lately, to get off she gets on her knees and I put her head in the toilet and just keep sticking her head in the fucking water while I jerk off. And when I fucking cum, I flush the toilet.”” With random literary references to T.S. Eliot and Henry Miller and a strangely atmospheric and obscenely oppressive theatric chamber piece style, *Midnight Heat* may be the *Taxi Driver* of porn flicks, but more importantly it is an aberrant-garde work that nihilistically delegitimizes art by molesting it with sleazy pornography, thus indicating Watkins’ rather conflicted character as a true artist who whored himself out to the lowest bidder. Indeed, the forgotten prodigal celluloid son of Nicholas Ray and Otto Preminger, Watkins may not have achieved much during his erratic and sporadic filmmaking career, but he achieved more than most by adding an element of danger to cinema, which is something that I, for one, can appreciate.

-Ty E

FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES

Harvey Hart (1971)

Despite ostensibly being the greatest and freest nation in the world, America also has the largest number of people incarcerated out of any other country in the world (in fact, in a 2014 report published by the National Research Council, it was revealed that just under ¼ of the world's prisoners are held in American prisons). Indeed, while the population of America has grown 2.8 times since 1920 to 2006, the number of inmates has grown over 20 times over that same period of time, thus indicating there is something seriously screwed up with the American criminal justice system, among other things (i.e. non-European immigration, liberalism). Indeed, in the glorious United States of America, a person can be imprisoned for selling a soft drug like weed and have the distinct honor of being beaten and sodomized by violent and largely mentally ill murderers, rapists, and other quasi-human rabble. Undoubtedly, as many films and TV shows demonstrate, rape has practically become synonymous with American prisons, yet the general public was not aware of such sickening circumstances until rather recently. In his prison memoir *Men Into Beasts* (1952), German-American poet/Nazi sympathizer George Sylvester Viereck depicted gay sex in prison as a mostly consensual affair and not as the sort of sexually savage plague that goes on today. Of course, with the desegregation of prisons, flooding of America with third world citizens, and the phony crime-creating drug war, things have certainly changed in the prison world. One of the first films to deal overtly with prison rape and sex slavery was the Canadian-American production *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (1971) directed by TV hack Harvey Hart (who is probably best known for the mini-series *East of Eden* (1981) based off Steinbeck's 1952 novel of the same name) and based on the hit 1967 off-Broadway play of the same name written by Canadian playwright John Herbert (who borrowed the title for his play from Shakespeare's *Sonnet 29*). Interestingly, in 1969, Sicilian-American *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) star Sal Mineo, who was bisexual and rather prideful about that fact, directed a stage version of the play in Los Angeles starring a then rather unknown Don Johnson (who was, at that time, a gay icon of sorts) that was much more violent and sexually provocative than Herbert's original play. In fact, Mineo hoped to direct the film version of *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, but Herbert refused to sell him the rights because he eventually became agitated with the Guido stage-director's alterations of his original play. Based on playwright Herbert's own personal experiences in the Canadian prison system (like the character of 'Queenie' in the work, he was known to dress in drag while behind bars), the film is a sometimes unsettling tale of sexual savagery that probably deserves some minor cult status, but would have probably been an all the more intriguing work had it been directed by Mineo, who had no qualms about taking a graphic and even S&M-inspired approach to the material. A

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somewhat troubled production where the original director, Jules Schwerin, was fired after 9 weeks of shooting, *Fortune and Men's Eyes* has a rather unimpressive aesthetic and even sometimes resembles a TV movie, yet it still manages to be a sometimes disturbing and even comical work with a number of memorable performances that might scare someone straight out of a life in crime lest they get their brown-eye invaded.

Separated from his beloved girlfriend after being sentenced to 6 months in prison, Smitty Smith (played by Wendell Burton of *The Sterile Cuckoo* (1969) starring Liza Minnelli) is a baby-faced young man with a neat little boy's haircut who has no idea that he is about to enter a living hellhole of sexual sodomy and slavery where prison guards look the other way when young men are gang-banged and beta-males have to find an "old man" just to survive. Smitty was "busted for grass" after his well meaning old man turned him in and little did his unwitting father realize he would be sentencing his prodigal dope fiend son to forced sodomy. Upon entering prison, Smitty is put in a cell with a flagrantly queer queen named 'Queenie' (played by gay cult film icon Michael Greer of *The Gay Deceivers* (1969) and *Messiah of Evil* (1973)), a Jew-y dork named Mona (Danny Freedman), and a "third-rate hustler"/wop-ish James Dean wannabe named Rocky (Zooley Hall of the c-grade horror flick *I Dismember Mama* (1972)). Like Smitty, Mona was sentenced to 6 months and during his first day in prison he was gang-raped by a group of eight men and naturally had trouble walking for an entire week after suffering the superlatively degrading experience. When a dirty dago attempts to rape Smitty at lunch, Rocky, who seems to have taken a strange liking to the young man, comes to his defense, so another young man gets his rectum reamed instead. When Smitty asks why no one is attempting to rescue the young man who is getting anally pillaged, Rocky remarks, "Ain't nobody gonna' mess with a man gettin' his oats." Of course, the only reason Rocky helped Smitty in the first place is because he wants to make him his bitch and after the two smoke some weed out a shaving razor (!), the former rapes the latter in the shower room. Needless to say, Smitty has learned a lot during his first day in prison and if he ever hopes to be recognized as a man again, he will have to learn how to fight.

As one would suspect, rape victim Smitty becomes Rocky's bitch boy and is not only forced to bend over for his new anti-homo homo master (indeed, like most men in prison who rape other guys, Rocky denies he is a fag and even goes on a series of anti-fag rants), but also has to roll his cigarettes and make his bed, as if he is his loyal wife. Of course, Rocky is not exactly an alpha-male himself as a failed ex-hustler who used to be the personal bitch of a tall, dark, and handsome prison trustee named Screwdriver (Larry Perkins). Like any half-intelligent inmate, Rocky eventually learned the poof politics of prison and eventually became a player himself. Since Rocky is not very bright and fairly small, it is only a matter of time before Smitty smashes his face and ends

his own sexual servitude. Meanwhile, a swarthy Guido prisoner named Catso (Lázaro Pérez), who previously attempted to rape Smitty, is beaten to death by some sadistic prison guards after he makes an accusation to a prison guard that Rocky and Screwdriver stole his lighter. Indeed, Rocky stole the lighter and gives it to his bitch boy Smitty, but the punk is rather tired of being a punk and does not want it, or so he says like a grumpy child whose parents have forced him to eat vegetables at dinner time. After Queenie offers to create a diversion for Smitty while he is in the shower room while ostensibly getting raped, the babyfaced punk punks Rocky and loses his second-rate status in prison. Indeed, Smitty beats Rocky unconscious and the entire prison soon finds out about this rather humiliating fact. At a prison Christmas show where dorky untermensch Mona reads Shakespeare and Queenie does a cabaret show in drag, super macho trustee Screwdriver formally 'disses' Rocky and recognizes Smitty as an alpha in front of the entire prison population. At the same Christmas show, Queenie is thrown into solitary confinement for flashing his penis to the entire audience after becoming enraged when his cabaret performance is cut short due to its provocative nature. Not long after the Christmas show, Rocky pulls a shiv on Smitty and ends up in 'permanent segregation' where he ultimately commits suicide. In the end, Smitty becomes like Rocky in terms of criminal degeneracy and even attempts to rape Mona, who he previously befriended, but the young nerd talks him out of it and the baby-faced prisoner comes to realize prison has turned him into a monster who now likes having sex with men. In the end, Smitty is stripped of all his clothes and thrown into solitary confinement after Queenie, who tends to transform into a violent psychopath when he does not get his wayward way, starts a bitch fight with him upon learning of Rocky's suicide. As the ending hints, the degenerative cycle of turning men into beasts in prison continues, with the whole 'rehabilitation' angle of incarceration being a joke that only naive liberal morons believe in.

While I clearly never saw Sal Mineo's stage adaption of *Fortune and Men's Eyes* as it was performed long before I was born, I suspect the actor was right when he stated in an interview with Boze Hadleigh regarding his opinion of the film version: "Flop time. Unh-unh. Nothin' like my play—my version. Less integrity." Indeed, aside from the fact that the gay element of the film feels exceedingly contrived, *Fortune and Men's Eyes* seems especially outmoded compared to the martial forced sodomy of the HBO prison series *Oz* (1997-2003), which more or less put every single prison film ever made before it to shame in terms of brutality, nihilism, and all-around nastiness. As for films that depict the obvious anti-rehabilitation first-time prisoners experience in jail, the German flick *Die Verrohung des Franz Blum* (1974) aka *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* directed by Reinhard Hauff makes *Fortune and Men's Eyes* seem like some sort of impotent ABC Afterschool Special in terms of its depiction of a somewhat level-headed fellow degenerating into a psychopathic predator as a

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result of his experiences in the pig pen. Ultimately, Fortune and Men's Eyes is a mostly continuously entertaining, surprisingly claustrophobic, and reasonably well acted, if not somewhat blatantly flawed, footnote in prison rape cinema history that would probably have a much larger following if people actually knew the film existed. In terms of educational value, the film is a reminder to prospective criminals to never be a bitch in prison or you might end up being a lapsed man that has to wear tampons on a daily basis.

-Ty E

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

Héctor Babenco (1985)

Kiss of the Spider Woman is easily my favorite “Brazilian-American” production. The film follows two prison cellmates who do not have very much in common aside from being unlucky. Valentin Arregui is some sort of Marxist revolutionary who has been jailed due to his subversive political activity. He shares his jail cell with Luis Molina, a womanly homosexual man who has been charged with playing with little boys. The character of Molina is played by a very out of character William Hurt. Kiss of the Spider Woman is a notable film in that it features a “film within a film.” The character of Molina constantly tells the story of one of his favorite movies to the unimpressed Marxist Arregui. The film Molina speaks of is a fictional Nazi propaganda film called Her Real Glory. When Arregui finally finds out that the film Molina refers to is a Nazi propaganda film, he goes on later to talk about how Nazis put “faggots in ovens.” Eventually, Arregui goes to enjoy Molina’s storytelling. Arregui is your typical hypocritical Marxist guy. He admits to Molina his love for a woman of the bourgeoisie class which he also seems to be a part of. His new proletarian girlfriend is semi-literate as Molina identifies while reading one of her letters. Arregui even seems to be embarrassed of his working class girl. Kiss of the Spider Woman has an interesting “analysis” of Marxist revolutionaries whether intentional or not. I hope no one interprets the film as “borderline fascist” as the Her Real Glory Nazi footage is also shot in a fairly beautiful light. Kiss of the Spider Woman is a film full of strange melodrama worthy of Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s approval. The exaggerated melodramatic nature of the fictional Nazi propaganda film Her Real Glory only helps to setup the drama between the two lead characters of Kiss of the Spider Woman. William Hurt’s acting performance is nothing short of amazing. Whenever I think of the dirtiness and inhumanity of Brazil’s fine prison cells, I tend to reminisce of Kiss of the Spider Woman.

-Ty E

MINDSHADOWS
MINDSHADOWS

Heddy Honigmann (1988)

Somewhat recently, a Soiled Sinema reader from the Netherlands recommended to me a number of notable female-directed Dutch films about mental illness, thus leading me to discovering the tragically hopeless and mostly melancholic cinematic work *Hersenschimmen* (1988) aka *Mindshadows* aka *Mind Shadows* directed by Heddy Honigmann (*El Olvido* aka *Oblivion*, *Forever*). Technically a Dutch-Canadian production that is in both Dutch and English, the film is in many ways typical of Honigmann's other works in that it is a cross-cultural piece but what distinguishes it from most of the other flicks in the director's oeuvre is that it is a fictional feature based on a popular novel as opposed to a documentary. Not unlike Suriname-born filmmaker/producer Pim de la Parra (*Frank en Eva*, *Wan Pipel* aka *One People*), Honigmann is not actually Dutch but a South America Hebrew (her grandfather was a Polish Jew that relocated the entire family to Lima, Peru just a month before Uncle Adolf invaded Poland) who moved to the Netherlands where she established her filmmaking career and eventually gained Dutch citizenship. In fact, Honigmann is the widow of belated Dutch avant-garde auteur filmmaker Frans van de Staak (*Rooksporen* aka *Traces of Smoke*, *Kladboekscènes* aka *Waste Book Scenes*) who, although championed by filmmakers like Jean-Marie Straub and Aryan Kaganof, is little known even among seasoned cinephiles, especially outside of the Netherlands. Although Honigmann is a noted documentarian who has received many awards and much critical acclaim for rather unconventional docs like *Metaal en Melancholie* (1994) aka *Metal and Melancholy* and *O Amor Natural* (1996), one would not be able to tell this from watching *Mindshadows*, which is a carefully crafted piece of perturbing yet poetic narrative cinema featuring various somewhat oneiric flashback scenes about a retired white collar Dutchman living on the outskirts of a snowy northeastern Canadian coastal town who is suffering from the onset of dementia as brought on by the chronic neurodegenerative nightmare of Alzheimer's disease (AD). Based on the popular 1984 Dutch novel of the same name by pseudonymous author J. Bernlef, Honigmann's film probably offers the most realistic depiction of age-related mental deterioration ever committed to celluloid. Indeed, as someone who saw their own grandmother's mind deteriorate from dementia as a result of late-stage Parkinson's disease (PD), it was surely refreshing to see an artful depiction of the degenerative mental illness that does not succumb to senseless Hollywood-esque sensationalism or sentimentalism. Featuring a retired Dutchman going from complaining about the snow to his dog to burning all of his family photos and not realizing he has soiled himself as a direct result of his progressive mental degeneration, *Mindshadows* is one of those uniquely unpleasant arthouse works that might inspire you to kill yourself if you find yourself in the same superlatively sorry situation as the

forsaken protagonist.

Retired protagonist Maarten Klein (Joop Admiraal) may have a surname that is typically associated with German Jews but he and his wife Vera (Marja Kok) are as stereotypically Dutch as can be in terms of appearance and demeanor as modest and highly individualistic people who lead fairly simple and quiet lives, though now they reluctantly call Canada home after living there for about two decades. Indeed, Maarten hates the seemingly perennially snowy weather in his rural seaside Canadian town on the outskirts of Halifax as demonstrated by remarks like, "Maybe it comes from the snow...that I'm already tired in the morning. Not Vera...She loves the snow. For her there's nothing like a snowy landscape. When everything turns white" and "I long for spring." Aside from the snow, Maarten has recently had other problems, especially in regard to his memory. Indeed, only four years after retiring after working his ass off for virtually his entire life doing boring as hell bureaucratic office work, Maarten begins to suffer from senility as brought on by early stage Alzheimer's disease, which not only causes him to lose his short-term memory but also causes him to think that he is living in the past to the point where he mistakes waitresses for old lovers and the bathroom in his own home for one that his old boss committed suicide in. Undoubtedly, it is a scary experience for Maarten as he not only succumbs to senility but is also forced to confront repressed memories of less than nostalgic events from his life that include being yelled at by his Dutch elementary school teacher and failing to come to the aid of a suicidal friend who ultimately offed himself. Maarten's wife Vera first becomes aware that there is something not quite right about her hubby when she finds him fully clothed at the kitchen table in the middle of the night while talking to the dog in the dark and he strangely says to her when he asks what is wrong, "Nothing. Only my head is transparent. Like ice or like glass. Totally clear, but I'm not thinking at all." To help him sleep, Vera recommends that Maarten work on a crossword puzzle, but that only reinforces his foreboding fear that something odd is happening to his mind.

While working on the crossword puzzle, Maarten becomes stumped upon trying to figure out a six-letter word that means "refusal," which is somewhat ironic considering his incapacity to fully accept that his mind is becoming feebler and feebler with each passing day. When Maarten finally figures out the word he was trying to think of for the crossword puzzle is "denial" while taking a stroll with his dog, he triumphantly jumps up and down while yelling, "Of course, DENIAL! Of course, DENIAL! Another word for refusal," as if he has just come up with the cure for cancer. To celebrate his belated conquering of the crossword puzzle, Maarten walks into a bowling alley and absurdly attempts to order some alcohol, which they obviously do not serve, so he settles for a soda while wondering to himself why the waitress does not remember him. Indeed, Maarten thinks the waitress is a Dutch girl with a bushy beaver named 'Lotje'

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(Inge Marit van der Wal) who he lost his virginity to when he was 'just a boy.' Of course, the waitress is not Lotje and when Maarten finally comes to terms with this, he absurdly leaves her a \$20 bill for the soda and abruptly leaves. After leaving the bowling alley, Maarten heads to a bookstore owned by his friend who asks him if he read the copy of Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) that he recently bought there, but the protagonist does not remember buying the book. To appease his friend and make it seem like he is not totally feebleminded, Maarten purchases a copy of Greene's *Our Man In Havana* (1958) and discusses Carol Reed's 1959 film adaptation of the same name starring Alec Guinness. After leaving the bookstore, Maarten's wife Vera spots him and yells at him for disappearing and leaving the dog to wander around. On the awkward drive home, Maarten manages to make things all the more uneasy by confusing Vera with his young love Lotje.

The next morning, Maarten confuses his own bathroom for that of the one where his Slavic boss and best friend killed himself, stating to himself of his confusion that it is, "as if someone inside of me remembers a different house." Maarten's ex-boss Karl Simmitich (Peer Mascini) liked him especially because he was the only person he knew that could properly pronounce his surname. While remembering the tragic event of seeing Simmitich's corpse in a bathtub full of blood as a result of a suicide that involved slitting his wrists, Maarten thinks to himself, "I never should have left him alone that evening" and proceeds to cry. As it turns out, Simmitich committed suicide on his birthday not long after he had practically begged Maarten to stay with him, thus causing the protagonist to suffer repressed guilt which has flooded his mind ever since suffering dementia. After shaving, Maarten and his dog take a bus to the protagonist's old workplace where he gives a speech that he completely botches to an imaginary audience. When a janitor abruptly walks in on Maarten while he is giving a speech that is half in Dutch and half in English on the pointlessness of speeches, the protagonist panics and runs out of the building while his loyal dog follows him from behind. Of course, Maarten has forgotten the fact that he retired four years ago. When Maarten gets home, he unwittingly reveals his terribly faulty memory to his wife by asking her if the book she is reading is on Cuba upon seeing her looking at the copy of *Our Man In Havana* that he bought the day before. Needless to say, Vera breaks down and confronts Maarten about the fact that he seems to forget the fact that both he and she retired four years ago and that his father died all the way back in 1956. When Vera begins crying hysterically and shouts, "You're hurting me. You're hurting me," Maarten attempts to comfort her while being seemingly completely oblivious to the severity of his mental affliction or the dubious future that he has with his wife.

While staring at a traditional white and blue Dutch Delftware vase, Maarten thinks to himself, "A present from mama to Vera. For someone else, it's just a souvenir. He doesn't see it. Without memory, you can only look. I have to

remember this...in order to explain a lot to Vera.” Undoubtedly Maarten’s remarks on the vase is the only time where he seems to be fully cognizant of his precarious situation in life and mental decline. Maarten also soon remembers how he once cheated on his wife with a French chick named Sylvie (Catherine ten Bruggencate) while on a trip in Paris. As his mind further deteriorates, Maarten will unwittingly reveal to Vera that he once cheated on her after confusing his own living room for a Paris ballroom and mistaking her for Parisian babe Sylvie. While Vera initially attempts to deal with Maarten’s mental deterioration by going along with his delusions, it eventually becomes too much for her and she hires a young and attractive live-in blonde nurse with the curious male name Phil Taylor (played by Canadian singer Melanie Doane) to take care of her hubby. Maarten suffers the paranoid delusion that Vera and Phil are part of a conspiracy against him, stating to himself, “Too much is happening behind my back just like at the office.” Meanwhile, Maarten’s memory gets so bad that he forgets what he looks like and angrily yells upon seeing his own reflection in a window, “Go away, you. Go away, you. I see you. Go away. Go away, you.” Upon subsequently finding a photo album with old pictures of himself, Maarten states “There he is. That man must go” and then proceeds to burn every single one of the photos in his fireplace. When Maarten wakes up one morning and complains, “It sure stinks here. My ass is ice cold. God damn it, I shat in the bed. What do you think about that? After a while, one can’t hold anything inside anymore,” it becomes quite apparent that he has now reached an infantile state and needs special professional care. Indeed, Maarten is placed in a nursing home where he suffers the delusion that the nurses want to deport him back to the Netherlands and says bizarre things like, “I’m the only survivor of my own language.” In the end, Maarten mumbles to himself one night whilst lying in his hospital bed in the dark, “Don’t fall asleep. Don’t fall asleep. Really want to. But I won’t.”

Undoubtedly, *Mindshadows* is one of those rare films that I rather enjoyed but would never be interested in seeing again, as it offers a decidedly dejecting experience that reminds one how truly eclectically miserable old age can be, especially if one contracts one of the various mental ailments that oftentimes plague old farts. Indeed, as someone that personally witnessed my grandmother’s mind deteriorate as a result of dementia about a decade before she actually died, Honigmann’s film gave me a bit of nauseating déjà vu. Like the protagonist of the film, my grandmother would oftentimes confuse me and other family members with long dead people from earlier points in her life, including her early childhood. By the last couple years of her life, my grandmother had completely lost touch with reality and could not remember a single one of her family members, thus I found it completely pointless to even visit her anymore, with her death ultimately being a sort of bittersweet relief as it ended her seemingly endless suffering. Towards the end of Honigmann’s film, it becomes disturbingly clear that there are few

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things that induce such a forsaken sense of physical and especially metaphysical loneliness in the sufferer than late-stage dementia. Unquestionably, one of the most interesting aspects of *Mindshadows* is the way that Honigmann decided to portray the protagonist's wife, who ultimately seems more concerned with herself and her own future than that of her dementia-ridden hubby, who she barely takes care of and eventually throws in a nursing home after a live-in nurse proves to be not sufficient enough. Indeed, it almost seems as if wife Vera resents the protagonist, as if she feels cheated in that she always expected him to take care of her and not the other way around. Of course, Vera was put in an impossible situation that is arguably worse than losing a loved one to an unexpected death like a car wreck, or at least that's how Honigmann's film makes the situation seem. Ultimately, *Mindshadows* is a film about the tragically merciless and seemingly senseless character of nature and fate and the impossibility of dealing with and confronting such things, especially when you're mind is deteriorating. Indeed, if anyone is wondering why someone like Flemish novelist and sometimes filmmaker Hugo Claus would opt to end his life via euthanasia after learning that he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Honigmann's work gives you more than enough reason why.

-Ty E

OSTERMONTAG

Heiko Flipper (1991)

Imagine, if you will, an angry German man in a tie running through a complex room structure that summarizes as an almost circular pattern. Now add fury in his step and incapacitated females in every room. To finalize this scene, precipitate this furious man beating all of these women with an empty soda bottle given a forced sound effect of glass "clinking". What you have is one of the most misogynistic films of all time and a completely hilarious work of underground German splatter. This magnificent film is titled Ostermontag and the title is the dividing of bone and the removal of a deformity. This deformity is woman kind and through Flipper's eyes, is the biggest parasite to society. Ostermontag is yet another film from Heiko Flipper. His other film, Das Komabrutale Duell, may sound incredibly familiar after a recent release from Unearthed Films. Das Komabrutale Duell marks the second release in the German Splatter series following the tedious and tepid Hunting Creatures. It seems Unearthed Films is definitely saving the best for last. Ostermontag is in no way a fashionable exercise of quality film making, but the effects are horrendous and the humor is unintentional and misplaced so the overall experience is something to gain from. I can see Heiko Flipper being a closet homosexual blaming females for their wrong-doings. If only he could channel his hatred into a stronger attempt at creating an commendable medium. Gorehounds can find something to squeal about. Spanning from horrific effects such as a scene in which a head is comically smashed to a scene including a man taping a knife to his groin. As you form a mental image, allow me to haze your mentality by forcing the image to take a horrific turn as the evil German rapes a female from behind with his blade-dick. You might wonder which orifice he is penetrating. I can honestly say that the bridge between both has been severed and collapsed into a deep chasm of stringy flesh and blood flow of all putrid degrees. Of course it doesn't show this as this is considered "low budget" but it is a step above implied violence and effective in what it does. The plot follows as such and this wouldn't be known cause the film lacks subtitles currently. "Heiko is in love with his stepsister Fabiane, but Fabiane is not in love with Heiko. Therefore, she sends her twin sister Nicole to visit Heiko. One day Heiko decides to stop this stupid game by killing Nicole. But he makes a terrible mistake - Instead of Nicole, he kills Fabiane! Some years later Heiko has his sights set on Nicole for revenge...incredible and brutal violence starts" Execution is a must and this film has none of that. Named after the character himself, Heiko films his undeniable exorcism of woman-hating genes in the form of a laughably-bad splatter film. Ostermontag is simply a look at the deteriorating infrastructure of a low budget film maker indeed. Posed as a snuff film, nothing actually makes sense with that genre implication. There's no one behind the camera and only a small amount of scenes actually indicate an idea

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of snuff as Heiko shows his victim tapes of him torturing females. Ostermontag owes it to the incredibly bad production values for the maligned humor behind the film. Is it dark and brutal? Sure, but only as dark and brutal as smashing a balloon filled with V8 would be. This is a must-see for fans of both gore and extremely awful splatter films. I must admit this film is leagues ahead of most of German splatter. I also applaud the comedic misogyny that views anyone that has used an Easy-Bake oven as a child as an enemy of man. Plain and simple, Ostermontag is pure insanity.

-mAQ

D'ANNUNZIO'S CAVE

Heinz Emigholz (2005)

While I'm sort of a novice in regard to his life and work, decidedly decadent dago dandy and 'proto-fascist' poet Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938) is certainly someone I can respect as a true Renaissance man who, not unlike Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima, was one of the few artists to be a true master of pen and sword. In other words, D'Annunzio was not merely a sedentary scribbler of flowery bullshit nor passive dreamer, but an active artist whose art far transcended the written word and real-life Übermensch who managed to go from being a mere literary figure to a national war hero whose style, aesthetic, and politics Benito Mussolini ripped off (indeed, among other things, D'Annunzio became the 'Duce' of the short-lived nation Italian Regency of Carnaro in Fiume between 1919 and 1920). After someone tried to assassinate him in 1922 via defenestration, D'Annunzio permanently relocated to the villa in Gardone Riviera overlooking Garda lake in the province of Brescia, Lombardy where he would create what was arguably the crowning achievement of his life. Indeed, with the help of his architect Giancarlo Maroni, D'Annunzio would spend the rest of his life (17 years!) meticulously pimping out his Villa Cargnacco and building a museum, 'The Vittoriale degli italiani' (aka The Shrine of Italian Victories), which he would donate to Italy and what would ultimately become an official Italian national monument (the poet's birthplace in Pescara would also become a museum). Naturally, when I discovered that a German filmmaker directed a documentary about D'Annunzio's Villa Cargnacco, I could not resist, even with a title so brazenly derogatory as D'Annunzios Höhle (2005) aka D'Annunzio's Cave. Directed by a seemingly stereotypical ethno-masochistic German intellectual named Heinz Emigholz (Schindler's Houses, Goff in the Desert) who specializes in experimental documentaries about architecture and who is a Professor of Experimental film at Berlin University of the Arts and at European Graduate School (in Saas-Fee, Switzerland), D'Annunzio's Cave is essentially a failed pseudo-avant-garde agitprop piece that juxtaposes cockeyed shots of the Villa Cargnacco with intentionally annoying and dissonant computer sound effects. In short, D'Annunzio's Cave makes for an unintentionally dichotomous work that demonstrates the stark contrast between D'Annunzio's exceedingly elegant architecture and priceless knickknacks and the unhinged ugliness of a particularly pompous left-wing filmmaker who would not know true beauty if it buggered him in the bum like a Red Army grunt in post-WWII Berlin.

Part of Emigholz's 'Architecture as Autobiography' series (the director has also made films on Bruce Goff, Adolf Loos, Robert Maillart, Rudolph Schindler, etc.), D'Annunzio's Cave is the seemingly aesthetically autistic result of what happens when a little man goes in a dead big man's home and thrusts his impotent jealousy and scorn all over the place with the sort of inane irrationality one

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would expect from a kindergartner throwing a temper tantrum after not being allowed to watch their favorite TV show. On June 24, 2002, director Heinz Emigholz and three of his filmmakers buddies—Irene von Alberti (a xenophile filmmaker/producer who likes directing films about brown people, Elfi Mikesch (a lesbian cinematographer/filmmaker who is best known for shooting Werner Schroeter's films), and Klaus Wyborny (an old school experimental filmmaker who Werner Herzog once paid tribute to by using some of his footage in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974))—go to the Villa Carnaccio and separately shoot footage in fifteen different rooms of D'Annunzio's singularly lavish and delectably decadent home. Despite utilizing four different cinematographers with handheld cameras (Emigholz only opted taking the four-camera 'cinematographic jam session' approach so he would not have to pay location fees for multiple days of shooting), the documentary seems like it was shot by a single seemingly stoned/spastic tourist who has yet to learn how to use their camera properly before going on vacation. Indeed, while it is impossible to tell which cameraman is which, virtually all of the footage in D'Annunzio's Cave was shot in an intentionally erratic and waywardly framed manner so as to induce abject disgust in the viewer. Fortunately, the glorious aesthetic majesty of D'Annunzio's fascist poet pleasuredome is too aesthetically pleasing to be completely molested by shoddy, limp-wristed left-wing camerawork. Ultimately, the most grating and equally redundant aspect of the documentary is asinine atonal sound effects and computer-generated voices, which quote the words of D'Annunzio, Mussolini, Joseph Conrad, kosher commie Joseph 'Red Roth' Roth and apparently some pissy film producer. Indeed, while Emigholz attempts to elicit cognitive dissonance and metaphysical horror in the viewer as if he was attempting to mimic the sound design of a David Lynch flick, the whole thing comes off as a patently pretentious, if not preposterously pathetic, joke as if he wants to conjure evil where evil does not reside. Overall, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that D'Annunzio's Cave makes an infinitely more interesting and captivating documentary with the sound turned off and some neofolk music playing in the background.

Among other strategically calculated tidbits, one learns while watching D'Annunzio's Cave that the decadent Duce indulged in degenerate jazz, especially songs sung by Josephine Baker. Of course, Emigholz attempts to establish a link between fascism and murder/evil by including the following D'Annunzio quote, "I have created this alcove in purple, beautiful color of blood." Undoubtedly, my favorite quote included in the documentary is, "I imagine the dead feel no animosity against the living. They care nothing for them," as it expresses what D'Annunzio would think about a loser like Emigholz, who is not even fit enough to shine the shoes on the poet's corpse. Of course, nothing is more intrinsically fascist than mother nature, so I could not help but smile after hearing the following quote, "A hill so green with small meadows with plain trees—cypresses, laurelin chest-

nut oaks—while help the Latin race rediscover her past greatness.” In a scene shot in the most esoteric and religiously-themed room of D’Annunzio home, Emigholz demonstrates his respect for the dead by including a sound clip of some less than eloquent vulgarian yelling things like, “fuck you” and whatnot. The last five minutes or so of the documentary features the Brian Eno & David Byrne track “The Jezebel Spirit”, which features a sound clip of an actual exorcism. Indeed, leftist true believer Emigholz goes so far as to attempt a cinematic exorcism of atheist D’Annunzio, thus demonstrating the quasi-religious perspective he is taking in his rather corny crusade against the ‘demonic’ decadent poet. If nothing else, D’Annunzio’s Cave proves that Francis Parker Yockey was right when he wrote, “A moment’s reflection shows that Liberalism is entirely negative. It is not a formative force, but always and only a disintegrating force,” as left-wing choirboy Emigholz’s documentary only attempts to defile and negate that which is beautiful, yet it even fails in that regard, as the shitty camera work and calculatingly contrived sound effects of the documentary are no match for D’Annunzio’s classic aesthetic prowess.

Despite auteur Heinz Emigholz’s metapolitical intentions with the film, D’Annunzio’s Cave only made me respect Gabriele D’Annunzio and his irreplaceable legacy all the more. Had Emigholz actually constructed an artistically interesting film out of D’Annunzio’s Cave with the same cliché anti-fascist message still intact, I would give credit where credit is due, but ultimately the documentary—with its contrived computer noise, pseudo-disturbing heavy breathing, and pathologically crooked camera angles—seems like an overextended power electronics music video gone awry. Another glaring flaw of D’Annunzio’s Cave is that even Emigholz’s hatred seems rather misguided and even contrived, as if he made the documentary to impress his academic buddies and wanted to prove that antifascist sentiments can still be ‘edgy’ and ‘provocative.’ Of course, Emigholz was not the first Teutonic filmmaker to direct an experimental documentary on the aesthetics of fascist architecture, as German auteur Alexander Kluge’s first film *Brutalität im Stein* (1960) aka *Brutality in Stone*—a poetic 12-minute short co-directed by Peter Schamoni (*No Shooting Time for Foxes*, Hundertwasser’s *Rainy Day*) that takes a sort of contra Riefenstahl approach and utilizes montage as a means to critique some of the neo-classical architecture of the Third Reich—predates D’Annunzio’s Cave by nearly a century and is infinitely more effective. The only crumb of credit I can give to Emigholz is that he did not attempt to obscure his hatred nor complete and utter lack of objectivity regarding D’Annunzio, as an agitated little man who even went so far as posting the following words on the official site for D’Annunzio’s Cave, “Gardone, June 24, 2002. An abyss of the state of the art. Considering this spectacle, my hate began to recede, covered by my satisfaction at the dust that had settled like acid on everything and the chatter of the guide who had taken over D’Annunzio’s empire and had to present culture to astonished tourists. I felt as if I were on

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the inside of an embalmed corpse whose intestines and brain had been shunted away because they had begun to stink. Now the state has to take care of this empty husk, because the poet wants to communicate with us through it. What the collection shouts out is the recognition that museums are useless and only a method of doubly losing life. The fate of modern art, which begs for patronage, is inscribed in it. Every kind of aimless filth would be prettier than this treasurehold of loot owned by one who, in the name of art, robbed people of language and flushed it as lotion into his own mummy. The thousand-year empire of house dust; house dust mites and those in flakes of skin take command." Indeed, D'Annunzio's villa might have a little dust, but D'Annunzio's Cave is infected with a metaphysical disease that glorifies grotesquery and slavishly mocks aesthetic majesty, as if the film was directed by a jealous lumpenprole who lacks the cultivation to take in what he sees, with his philistine brain overheating as a result. Ultimately, D'Annunzio's Cave is a piece of inverse fetishism where the director projects his irrational hostilities on D'Annunzio, though it is quite clear that the director is hopelessly infatuated with his subject, sort of like how Spielberg is obsessed with Nazis. As for D'Annunzio's villa, I think the Poet said it best when he stated regarding the legacy of his museum that it is "not a fat inheritance of lifeless riches, but a naked heritage of an immortal spirit."

-Ty E

BEFREIER UND BEFREITE

Helke Sander (1992)

Long before the release of the relatively mainstream German war-drama *A Woman in Berlin* (2008) aka *The Downfall of Berlin: Anonyma* (2008) aka *Anonyma - Eine Frau in Berlin* directed by Max Färberböck—a work based on the autobiographical 1954 novel of the same name (known as *Eine Frau in Berlin* in Germany) about the author (who originally had the book published anonymously but was later revealed to be journalist Marta Hillers) and her real-life hellish and positively pitiless experiences as one of the many Teutonic women raped during the invasion of Berlin by the Red Army—kraut communist/filmmaker Helke Sander (*Break the Power of the Manipulators*, *The Trouble with Love*) would release what would be arguably the most controversial and strangely politically correct film of her career, *BeFreier und BeFreite* (1992) aka *Liberators Take Liberties*, a two-part 192-minute documentary about the collective pillaging and despoiling of Berlin's female population by the Slavic and mongoloid Soviet Red Army soldiers. Divided into two distinct yet overlapping documentary parts, *Liberators Take Liberties* first starts by interviewing the victims, as well as male and female members of the Red Army, and the second part focuses on the now-grownup ½ Russian bastard children who were conceived when a commie entered their mommie against their will. What makes *Liberators Take Liberties* especially interesting, unconventional, and seemingly wacky is that far-left feminist director Helke Sander attempts to argue these rapes were worse than the average gang rapes because they were acts of “genocidal rape” aka “sexual genocide” due to the fact that the victims were racially pure Aryans brought up on National Socialist ideology, thus the fact that intermensch/subhuman Slav communists committed these acts made it all the more devastating, so it should be no surprise that over 90% of the women that unfortunately got pregnant this way decided to abort the bastard babies, but as the second half of *Liberators Take Liberties* shows, some of these bastard ‘hate children’ survived and have now filed for “damage caused by occupation.” Unfortunately, but rather unsurprisingly, it seems that very few ex-Red Army veterans want to take credit for their own prized pussy pillaging, but considering the Germans also damaged Russia and Eastern Europe as the Bolsheviks did before them during and after the revolution (and the various man-made mass starvation following it), it is quite understandable that they would engage in such savage behavior as their God given right as vengeful victors who had been dreaming of revenge for decades.

As explained in *Liberators Take Liberties*, the Wehrmacht (Germany army) ran around 500 of their own brothels during the Second World War and each prostitute would service around 30 German soldiers daily. Of course, the Soviets were less accommodating to their soldiers' sexual needs, but luckily they had a

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psychopathic Teutonophobic Jew propagandist by the name of Ilya Ehrenburg who, aside from promoting kraut-killing and the extermination of Germanic peoples with lunatic lines like, "We shall kill. If you have not killed at least one German a day, you have wasted that day... Do not count days; do not count miles. Count only the number of Germans you have killed," promoted the rape of Aryan women and relished the fact that largely due to his kosher hate campaign, to quote his own propaganda, "that blonde hag is in for a bad time," and indeed she was with upwards of 2 million individual women being raped in Berlin alone between the ages of roughly 7 to 70 years old, with at least 10,000 women dying in the aftermath of said sadistic sexual pillaging. Of course, the Russians, including the female members of the Red Army, do not exactly remember it that way and, like many rapists often do, actually go as far as blaming the victims for what happened to them. For example, a Soviet painter who fought in the Red Army as a wee boy claims that Teutonic femme fatales with STDs would aggressively approach Russian soldiers because with their venereal diseases, "one German woman could put 15 Russian men out of action." Of course, with popular and catchy rape revering jingles like "this is my rifle, this is my gun, one is for killing and the other is for fun," it was hard to imagine that rape was anything other than a joyous experience for the sexually repressed Soviet soldiers, many of whom had not seen women in years, let alone fornicated with them. The rapes were so bad in some areas, that one victim in *Liberators Take Liberties*, herself a communist who was imprisoned by the Third Reich, explains that out of some 28 or 30 girls she went to school with, around 16 or 18 of them had ultimately committed suicide after being viciously vaginally ransacked by members of the Red Army. Just to give an idea of how absurd and 'normal' rape had become, one German woman, whose family members were forced to watch, was raped no less than 128 times continuously, but luckily she passed out after the 15th time and somehow survived the absolutely odious ordeal. As one of the more honest Russian gents explains, rapists oftentimes "queued up" in lines of 5-6 fellows to get their turn at pillaging a woman. Naturally, any woman who resisted rape or any German man that attempted to stop it was shot on the spot. These mass rapes were far from a temporary sort of thing and lasted until about the winter of 1947-1948 when the Soviets finally decided to separate the soldiers from the local residents and had them confined to guard posts and camps.

Not unsurprisingly, many of the children that were born out of these Slavic-on-Aryan rapes did not seem especially disturbed by their unholy background as it is the only thing they knew. Quite absurdly, one woman, who is apparently the spawn of a German mother who was raped by a French officer, admits that her family members were not that outraged nor distressed by the rape as the frog rapist was from a cultivated background, unlike many of the ruski men of the Red Army. One of the rape bastards, who was initially told that he was the product of a consented romance between his mother and an American soldier, was quite

disillusioned to learn at age 40 from his elderly mom that he was really spawned from a Russian rapist, so it becomes all the more absurd and ironic that he has gone on to becoming a card-carrying communist who admits he has committed acts of 'sexual violence' against women. Despite the popular portrayal of American troops during the Second World War as being perennial noble liberators who saved Europa from National Socialist barbarism engulfing the continent, GIs were only second to Russians in rapes committed against German women. In fact, German fashion model turned singer/actress Nico (born Christa Päffgen), whose father died in a concentration camp after suffering brain damage as a soldier, was apparently raped at the mere age of 15 by a GI in the U.S. Air Force who was later executed for his crimes. Of course, as briefly mentioned in *Liberators Take Liberties*, it was only typically negroes who were punished for their vaginal pillaging by the U.S. military, which is no surprise as it would be quite obvious what happened if a bunch of little Günther Kaufmanns (himself the product of a Bavarian mother and black American father) ran around as opposed to conspicuously kraut 'pure Europid' Amero-mutts.

Indeed, while Helke Sander portrays other groups as victimized in the documentary, when it comes down to it, *Liberators Take Liberties* is a cinematically and academically vapid 'pussy power' propaganda piece that goes so far as to associate sexual intercourse as a form of violence, with even one of the victims of Russian rape summing up the entire film with the remark that "violence is connected with sexuality" and that she absolutely loathes having sexual intercourse. Quite honestly, I wanted to like *Liberators Take Liberties*, even in spite of the fact that I knew beforehand that it was directed by a humorless femi-commie, yet this two-part documentary could have easily been half as long as it devotes far too much time to interviewing subjects about seeing irrelevant topics as opposed to sticking to facts. While I can appreciate the fact that Sander documented the victims' stories before they died, the filmmaker's almost pathological obsession with women as perennial victims and men as eternal pigs makes *Liberators Take Liberties* a patently prosaic document that will only be tolerable, let alone enjoyable, to those rather unfortunate individuals that had the tortuous task of studying so-called 'women's studies' at the undergraduate level.

-Ty E

UNDER THE PAVEMENT LIES THE STRAND
UNDER THE PAVEMENT LIES THE STRAND

Helma Sanders-Brahms (1975)

To me, there are few things more repugnant in the cinematic realm than feminist filmmakers, as they actively debase the artistic medium of film and seem to think that spreading some sort of innately incoherent and rarely concrete message about 'female power' is all that one needs to do to make a film, as if aesthetics and entertainment value are totally insignificant matters that are, at best, of secondary importance. One of the few self-professed feminist filmmakers that I actually I have a degree of respect for is German auteur Helma Sanders-Brahms who, despite being a feminist, was not afraid to direct films about quasi-fascist poets (i.e. Heinrich, *My Heart is Mine Alone* aka *Mein Herz – niemandem!*) and even went so far as to defend her cinematic mother-figure Leni Riefenstahl by lauding her work *Tiefland* (1954) as an anti-Hitler allegory of sorts and rhetorically asking regarding the film: "How is it possible that after fifty years the fear of dealing with this film is still so great that just the refusal to view it is considered a correct attitude for German intellectuals?" With Sanders-Brahms' rather recent death on May 27, 2014, I decided it was about time that I watch her first feature *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* (1975) aka *Unter dem Pflaster ist der Strand* aka *Under the Beach's Cobbles* aka *Beach under the Sidewalk* starring Grischa Huber (*The Serpent's Egg*, *Malou*) and Heinrich Giskes (*Heinrich*, *Bang Boom Bang - Ein todsicheres Ding*). Created when Sanders-Brahms was totally unknown and had yet to have any meaningful involvement with any sort of feminist movement, *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* is a black-and-white low-budget avant-garde work that went on to become "a cult film in the German feminist movement" and rightfully earned its lead Grischa Huber the *Deutscher Filmpreis* (*Filmband in Gold*) at the 1975 German Film Awards. A melancholy work about two stage actors/left-wing activists who were involved with the German "68er-Bewegung" student movement yet have now become somewhat disillusioned with the cause and further find their ideals tested when the female protagonist becomes pregnant amidst a new abortion law in West Germany that they had previously actively protested, *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* is a thoughtful and relatively nuanced work that ultimately asks more questions than it answers, thus making it quite different from the idiotically idealistic philo-Semitic/man-hating Hollywoodized agitprop pieces of Margarethe von Trotta and the aesthetically sterile celluloid manifestos of Helke Sander. Indeed, like her Austrian celluloid compatriot Valie Export (*Unsichtbare Gegner* aka *Invisible Adversaries*, *Menschenfrauen*), Sanders-Brahms clearly took cinema serious as an art form and demonstrated with *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* she had a keen talent for assembling a realistic modern romance film set during a degenerate zeitgeist when young men and women were increasingly confused about their place in German society.

Grischa (Grischa Huber) and Heinrich (Heinrich Giskes) are stage actors involved in a feminist reworking of a Greek tragedy that is being shot for German television (indeed, during this time, filming theatre for TV was not uncommon in Germany, with Fassbinder directing no less than four of these TV plays). As the narrator (Helma Sanders-Brahms) states of a scene featuring an eclectic group of female actresses: "These actresses act out the rule of women, as it was thousands of years ago, and its abolition ordained by men." Like all the actresses, Grischa rehearses for the play during the day and thinks of her 'role as a woman' during the night, but that is about to change when genuine human feeling gets in the way of cold and abstract political idealism. During one of these nights, Heinrich, who is wearing nothing but a cock-shaped codpiece and has brought his two dogs along with him, visits Grischa in her dressing room after practicing for a play. Assumedly rainwashed by pinko-hippie ideas of communal living, Grischa complains to Heinrich, "I'd like to see an end of the separation of private life and job. What I do on the stage is what I need, you see. What I say comes from deep within me, and, of course, it comes out stronger on stage." Ultimately, the two get locked in the building and after Heinrich describes to Grischa how she resembles his dead sister who was murdered (he was 4 and she was 15 at the time, thus hinting she was murdered during the Second World War), so naturally they make love. As Grischa states of Heinrich and their relationship: "In Heinrich's mind always the hope...that remained unfulfilled with the many...because they were too few and not tenacious enough; hope of fulfillment with one person, taking up the struggle, with love a revolution for two." Indeed, Heinrich complains about how everyone was united in 1968 during the time of the student movement protests, but now everyone has splintered off into smaller groups, which has created a sort of rivalry amongst former comrades. It seems Heinrich has finally grown up and realizes having a family is more important than any sort of abstract political idealism, telling Grischa, "I will give you a baby," though he seems somewhat immature in other regards, as he cannot stand it when his girlfriend does not give him 100% of her attention and acts out as a result. Of course, being more concerned with her acting career and political activism and resenting more than anything the idea of living a "domestic life" as a housewife with children, as if that is somehow beneath her, Grischa tells Heinrich more than one time that she does not want to have a child. Obsessed with feminist ideas that she has clearly been brainwashed with, Grischa begins actively interviewing proletarian factory workers about motherhood and abortions, as if she has been contracted by some feminist think-tank to carry out a study. Virtually every woman that the actress ends up interviewing confesses to having had an abortion at some point in their life as a result of necessity and none of them seem particularly proud of it, though they have no problem stating these things in front of their children.

Meanwhile, 'Heini' (as Grischa affectionately calls him) begins getting all

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moody and broody about his girlfriend's refusal to be pregnant, so he mopes around his apartment while reading Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884)—a work that absurdly argues that the proletariat is free from 'moral decay' (i.e. prostitution, extramarital affairs, etc.) because they lack the monetary means to have an inheritance-based bourgeois marriage, which forces people to marry for monetary reasons and not out of love, thus causing them to seek prostitutes—as if such an outmoded feminist communist text will provide him with inspiration for being a husband and father. Heini is also a fan of the Persian fairytale *Majnun Layla* aka *Lelia and Madschnun*, which he describes as having essentially the same message as Engels' work. Fed up with Grischa's seemingly pathological activism (at one point, he asks her: "Why not let me rot?"), Heinrich begins hanging out with a cute blonde chick and complains to her about he is tired of "play acting," adding: "I'm not so stuck on politics. I think it's arrogant for an actor to go and tell workers what it's all about. I'd like a kind of folk theatre, something like I've seen the French doing. Like "Théâtre du Soleil." [...] something people get a kick out of." When Grischa calls Heini and states, "I understand you wanting your freedom. I want mine, too. But you won't be freer by being alone. It's something different. You just have...to discover a new way of life, right? I know I've made mistakes but we can change that. If we separate for a few days, it'll be all right perhaps," he says nothing, even though she begs him to. Since Grischa has just recently stopped taking birth control after 7 years of continuously using them after hearing they cause sterilization, she naturally ends up getting pregnant, but she is too afraid to tell Heini, so she attempts to get the courage to do so by practicing what she plans to say to her boyfriend and recording it on her tape-recorder (which, is ironically the same tape-recorder she uses to interview prole women about abortions). Eventually, Grischa goes to a feminist rally to look for a feminist gynecologist named Dr. Siebert and while she is there she hears a bunch of hilariously deluded feminist folk musicians singing the following loony lyrics: "We are women and we fight fearlessly for the revolution...With all comrades for communism...United in struggle we are strong." When Grischa finally finds Dr. Siebert, she complains about her worries regarding her pregnancy and asks whether or not she should keep the baby due to her dubious relationship with Heinrich and her concerns about the future of her career. Grischa also complains about how Heinrich suffers a "mother complex" and has no realistic means to become a father. Ultimately, Dr. Siebert gives Grischa advice on how to get an abortion, recommending that she fake being suicidal if she wants a legal abortion. After talking to the gynecologist, Grischa goes by Heinrich's apartment and attempts to reconcile with him, but he complains to his girlfriend that, "You're too strong for me" and claims he has an incapacity for tenderness because, "I was brought up by Nazis, I'm a fascist. I have visions of beating you to a pulp." In the end, Heinrich says he would rather screw his dog than Grischa and even

threatens suicide, though the two seem to more or less reconcile, though the future of their relationship seems dubious at best.

As German novelist Peter Schneider, who was a spokesman for the German student movement, noted regarding his generation and the failure of 68er-Bewegung movement to achieve anything of value: "It is now clear...that the protestors were terribly naïve and unself-conscious in their anti-fascism. There has probably never been a movement at once so obsessed with language and so incapable of articulating its ideas and desires." Indeed, the protagonists of Sanders-Brahms' *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* certainly seem like they have no clue what they are doing, as if their political activism is merely a truly reactionary response to some sort of inner void, as well as a nonsensical means to atone for the supposed sins of their parents' generation, with Heinrich's remark, "I was brought up by Nazis, I'm a fascist," completely highlighting this hysterical post-Hitler/post-holocaust phenomenon of collective guilt and ethnomasochism. Of course, instead of evolving into morally pristine humanist heroes, these student activists essentially became perennial children who denied themselves of adulthood and maturity, with their activism being a mere pathetic substitute for a real life that involves marriage, children, and a fruitful career. As Sanders-Brahms would demonstrate with her most popular film, *Germany, Pale Mother* (1980) aka *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter*, which is highly autobiographical in nature (the director even cast her own daughter to play herself as a baby), she seemed to have not completely forgiven her father for how he treated her mother, hence the director's unsurprising adoption of a feminism *Weltanschauung*. Ironically, at the same time, as *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand*, as well as *Heinrich, Germany, Pale Mother, My Heart is Mine Alone*, and *Geliebte Clara* (2008) aka *Beloved Clara* demonstrate, Sanders-Brahms seemed to have a strange empathy and attraction to weak and mentally disturbed men, so I would argue that her feminism was less a result of feminist brainwashing than her natural reaction to being a truly strong and independent woman who was attracted to weak men, hence her respect for Riefenstahl (who, when she was 60 years old, started a lifelong romance with her cameraman Horst Kettner, who was 40 years her junior!). Indeed, very rarely do women make good filmmakers and the only thing most women have to do to get critical appraisal is simply directing a film, no matter how horrendous it is, and they will touted around as geniuses and the most important voices of their generation. While one can argue that most of Sanders-Brahms' work has some feminist themes, she never followed any sort of artistically-stifling misandrist dogma and was not afraid to branch out by making period pieces about gay proto-fascist poets and rather dark semi-surreal work like *No Mercy, No Future* that somewhat grotesquely depicts literal and figurative schizophrenia in post-WWII Berlin. Although the director's first and most innately feminist-themed work, *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* proves that Sanders-Brahms was first and foremost a serious

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filmmaker who had a rather idiosyncratic obsession with idiosyncratic men who seemed less masculine-minded than she was. Indeed, when the great Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger wrote in his masterpiece *Sex and Character* (1903) aka *Geschlecht und Charakter* that there was a small percentage of the female population that had what it took to be truly emancipated in society despite their gender, he was speaking of women like Helma Sanders-Brahms. Arguably the greatest 'Trauerarbeit' (aka "working of mourning") film ever made about the Teutonic student movement of 1968, *Under the Pavement Lies the Strand* reveals in an understated and totally serious fashion that melancholy did not die with the Hitler generation, but was passed on to the subsequent generation, who quite arguably found it harder to cope with German history than their parents who had actually lived through it.

-Ty E

GERMANY, PALE MOTHER

Helma Sanders-Brahms (1980)

If a kraut feminist were to remake Rainer Werner Fassbinder's masterpiece *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978) and, in the process, suck out all the lifeblood, charismatic character, and entertainment value, and replace it with highly personal resentment of males, it would probably resemble the West German film *Germany, Pale Mother* (1980) aka *Deutschland bleiche Mutter* written and directed by Helma Sanders-Brahms (*Laputa, My Heart Is Mine Alone*) – a woman who apparently learned the trick of the cinematic trade by training under Italian maestros Sergio Corbucci (*Django, The Great Silence*) and Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Accattone, Salo, or the 120 Days of Sodom*). Unfortunately, it seems that neither of these delightful dago directors' cinematic genius left any impression on Sanders-Brahms, but she did develop into her own individualistic 'auteur' herself and her fiercely feminist, albeit highly personalized, flick *Germany, Pale Mother* – a work that blames the sons and fathers of the Fatherland for physically and psychologically degrading the female population – is a vaguely audacious semi-fiction/semi-autobiographical work about the director's personal family experience during and immediately following the Second World War. Although originally made under the working title "For Lene" (in tribute to her own mother), Sanders-Brahms ultimately decided to the title the film *Germany, Pale Mother* after the kraut communist playwright/poet Bertolt Brecht's 1933 poem of the same name, an allegorical work that essentially holds National Socialists (the "sons") males wholly responsible for the corruption and debasement of Germany via Nazi terror. Somehow transsexualizing the Fatherland into a figurative "Motherland," *Germany, Pale Mother* holds the 'Nazi father' responsible for the dastardly degradation of the German woman and the German nation in a manner Sanders-Brahms described as follows, "I am telling my parents' story because I am familiar with it, because it affects me deeply...and because this story is both individual and collective." And, indeed, the ambivalent-Aryan auteuress, while incorporating sensational fictional elements, uses *Germany, Pale Mother* to depict the mostly melancholy story of her parents' early marriage, as well as the her war torn coming-of-age as a child who was literally brought up amongst debris and family depression and where *Weltschmerz* is passed internally via family as a result of Germany's apocalyptic defeat during the Second World War and how such physical destruction sired familial destruction. Using her own 2-year-old daughter to play herself as a young child, Sanders-Brahms stated, "I am the daughter of my mother and the mother of my daughter," thus placing the after-effects of the war on three generations of German women from the same family. Although a fatalistic feminist feature of the exceedingly vagina panegyriizing variety, *Germany, Pale Mother* is one of the first German World War II films to focus on more than the stereotypical Allied version of history,

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which was Sanders-Brahms' main objective and why she dedicated the film to her daughter because, as she told a French interviewer, she wanted her child to know that the era was more than just Hitler, concentration camps, and battles.

During the very beginning of *Germany, Pale Mother*, Helma Sanders-Brahms attempts to absolve herself of any guilt relating to her dysfunctional family and the infamous legacy of the Third Reich with the following off-screen narration: "I can't remember anything of the time before my life. I am not guilty for what happened before I was born. I wasn't around then. It began when my father saw my mother for the first time." We also learn that the director's father Hans (played by Ernst Jacobi), "was not the Nazi. That was the other one, his friend," in an opening shot of the two sub-Nordic pals paddling in a boat. During this same scene, Hans spots a darkhaired woman named Lena (Fassbinder graduate Eva Mattes who looks more like Mongolia, *Pale Mother*) and seems to fall in love at first sight, but he also notices a dead black cat floating in the water, thereupon allegorically symbolizing the decidedly doomed nature of their future relationship. Needless to say, Hans and Lena have the good fortune of being married the day before World War II begins, so at least can delight in one special night together before hubby goes to fight in the Wehrmacht and be involved with killing Slavic women, one (also played by Mattes) of which bares a striking resemblance to his wife and could be her *untermensch doppelgänger*. As a man who refuses to take free condoms from the army because he "love his wife" and refuses to cheat on her, and is, in turn, made the butt of a joke by his comrades (who play a prank on the man by putting a pile of used rubbers lined up spelling out the word "love" on his bed), Hans is a super sensitive gentleman, so naturally he cries hysterically at the sight of the executed Lena look-a-like, thus ushering the slow but steady unhooking of his delicate mind. Meanwhile, Lena has a baby while bombs are dropping and soon her house is decimated and turned to rubble. Suffering from some sort of post-traumatic stress syndrome, Hans finally becomes convinced of the importance of the National Socialist cause and during a curiously cold temporary reunion with his wife, he declares to Lena that Germany must accept either "victory or destruction." Of course, the land of the Teutonic Knights is destroyed, but Lena manages to find childish adventure and romance amongst the rubble and forges a deep maternal bond with her baby daughter. When the war finally ends, the now-destitute family is finally permanently reunited, but a second war begins at the home because the head of the family is no longer right in the head as a virtual walking and talking totenkopf of the terribly traumatized type, belligerently beating his young daughter for calling him a "weirdo" and throwing his wife into a perennial depression. Naturally, the ultimate defeat for Hans is when precious Lena is gang raped by two drunken American G.I.s. As Lena tells her daughter after she witnesses the pudgy American victors' pillage her pussy, "That's the right of the victors, little girl. They take things and the women."

A Trümmerfrau turned diseased and suicidal alcoholic, Lena becomes a dubious archetype for all German women who survived and tried to thrive after the war, whereas the Father is a fallen family Führer that is no longer fit to rule, thus he lunges his failure and resentment at his family. Of course, unlike Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, Germany, Pale Mother fails to acknowledge the fact that many German women earned a new sense of integrity and financial independence as a result of the Second World War and the virtual destruction of men which still lives on today, hence how a female filmmaker as artistically and intellectual vapid as Helma Sanders-Brahms, as well as fellow feminist German New Cinema directors like Margarethe von Trotta and Helke Sander, could have any influence on kraut kultur in the first place. Indeed, to describe Germany as a "pale mother" as opposed to the Fatherland that it always was before is the most obvious sign of the death of the German man. The most cowardly and misleading aspect of Germany, Pale Mother is that the film attempts to diminish total responsibility for women's role and support of the Third Reich, as if they were victims of the patriarch who in no way benefited from nor supported Uncle Adolf. When it comes down to it, women love winners and German men lost the war and acquired the burden of shame and defeat, and one can certainly assume had they won the war, the world would have never seen films like *Germany, Pale Mother* – a one-woman pity party that glorifies German gals at the expense of the guys who risked their lives and oftentimes died in Stalingrad, North Africa, and various foreign lands around the world, only to later have a stocky and boorish broad like Angela Merkel as the Chancellor of the Fatherland. Indeed, modern day Germany might be an effeminized and cosmopolitan place where women are purportedly taken seriously as artists, but it is awfully ironically that they have yet to produce a filmmaker as great as Leni Riefenstahl – a woman who apparently lived during a misogynistic time. But then again, as Germany, Pale Mother inadvertently demonstrates, female emancipation is always the result of male degeneration and decadence and not some imaginary sort of 'progress' and seeing as Riefenstahl was held to a higher standard, a male's standard, she was able to totally transcend the sort of narcissistic mediocrity that feminist filmmakers like Helma Sanders-Brahms wallow in, where everything that women are incapable of doing proficiently (i.e. waging war, conquering nations, displaying physical strength, philosophizing with a hammer, etc.) is portrayed as innately evil. Needless to say, the day Germany became mother was the beginning of the end for of the once great Germania.

-Ty E

NO MERCY, NO FUTURE
NO MERCY, NO FUTURE

Helma Sanders-Brahms (1981)

At the beginning of her independently financed arthouse effort *Die Berührte* aka (1981) *No Mercy, No Future*, New German Cinema feminist auteur Helma Sanders-Brahms (Germany, *Pale Mother*, *My Heart Is Mine Alone*) provided the following disclaimer: "This film began with a letter: Make a film of my story! The woman who wrote it is regarded as schizophrenic. Today, she is almost cured, according to the doctors. The various film boards and TV channels... were not prepared to participate in this project. It was realized never the less... through the enthusiasm of those involved... and with the means at my disposal." Indeed, with the central protagonist of *No Mercy, No Future*, who is based on a real-life woman simply credited as "Rita G.," being a young and vulnerable nymphomaniac schizophrenic girl who swaps sexual secretions with random strangers of dubious motives, including old men, wheelchair-bound cripples, and Negroes and Arabs, because she firmly believes they embody Christ when she is not attempting to commit suicide in a variety of bloody and/or unflattering fashions, one can see why West German producers would be a bit hesitant about funding such a melancholy and even sometimes macabre melodrama. Rarely plodding and pedantic like the majority of Helma Sanders-Brahms' films yet just as challenging (if not more so), *No Mercy, No Future* also stands out among the filmmaker's oeuvre in that it is not a period piece nor biopic, but a work set in the present in a divided post-industrial Berlin that is a seemingly miserable and abhorrent bottomless abyss of alienation and societal capitulation where so-called foreign 'guest workers' feed on the putrefying corpse that is the Occident, national culture has become deracinated, and family ties are all but irreparably broken. Featuring music from kraut synth musician Harald Grosskopf, who has played with Wallenstein, Ash Ra Tempel, and Klaus Schulze, among others, *No Mercy, No Future* is a thematically and vaguely aesthetically audacious work where Sanders-Brahms actually confronts the cold Teutonic cadaver that is the German present, using a sad yet sickeningly sensual schizophrenic who, despite all the traumatic experiences in her life indicating the opposite, cannot help but fanatically believe that she is "God's favorite daughter," even if, as she so eloquently states, "We're all assholes." The innately delusional and deranged victim of pathetic men who have a weakness for taking sexual advantage of a girl who literally believes God is coming inside of her as they fiendish bust their unsavory load behind her maniac meat curtain, *No Mercy, No Future* is certainly a film where one is left with the impression that everyone is an asshole looking to invade the asshole of someone else.

Veronika Christoph (played by Sanders-Brahms' regular Elisabeth Stepanek, who looks like a Slav and has a Slavic name) has some serious problems and it is not just due to the fact that she is emotionally and mentally schizophrenic,

but also due to the unfortunate fact that people, especially weak and pathetic individuals, regularly take advantage of her due to her mental incompetency and general passivity. Early on in *No Mercy, No Future*, Veronika assumedly loses her virginity (her thigh is covered in blood) after a sleazy middle-aged office worker type quasi-rapes her and, being a passive and compliant individual who is totally ignorant to the unsavory intentions of others, she accepts the feebly executed attack of forced entry without much of a real fight. After she realizes she has been irrevocably deflowered, Veronika cries out, "Christ, my Lord!" repeatedly in a hysterical manner as her perverted anti-playboy of a predator makes a rather pathetic attempt at apologizing, stating in a less than sincere manner, "There's nothing wrong. It's not so bad... You're a woman... I can't undo what's been done. I'm so sorry, but it's happened now." And, indeed, the rapist could not have said truer words as Veronika is forever changed and comes under the spell of her own cognitive dissonance as a disturbed woman obsessed with Christian iconography who now sees Christ in every creepy man who wants to get in the virtual paradise on earth that is in her panties. The prodigal daughter of socially proper and emotionally sterile wealthy parents, including an elderly father with a complete and utter lack of testicular fortitude, Veronika's guardians see it fit to help their damaged daughter by having her routinely institutionalized after a number of suicide attempts, including laying naked outside in the snow so as the freeze to death and slitting her wrists. When not strapped down to a hospital bed, Veronika attempts to seek solace by sharing her paltry but developing carnal knowledge with a variety of pathetic men, including an old magician who is depressed about giving his last performances that she attempts to 'cheer up,' a physically repulsive Tunisian gentleman with a Jewtastic afro, a spastic paraplegic, and an obese sub-Saharan African. Veronika also briefly joins an anti-individualistic cult called "Children of God" run by a messianic megalomaniac that, like any wack-job pseudo-religious order, attempts to force its members to abandon their families, but her stint with the deranged group does not last long, even if she goes into a transcendental trance-like state during one of their group rituals. Veronika also becomes pregnant by one of the number of men who have taken advantage of her neurotic nymphomaniac tendencies and she pays tribute to her beloved God by having an abortion. Not long after murdering the child in her womb, Veronika meets a chubby and effeminate man from Ghana named Demba (Jorge Reis) that looks like a rather repellant cross between Jesse Jackson and Ron Jeremy. Despite the fact that she could become infertile if she engages in sex immediately following her abortion, Veronika decides to have the old in-and-out with Demba after he pathetically complains that he has not been laid in over 18 months, thus resulting in a bloody and grotesque mess of miscegenation that thankfully does not sire any children. Veronika and Demba attempt to get married on a whim, but the little loony lady is stopped by her father, who pays off the poor and treacherous African and has his daughter once again committed

NO MERCY, NO FUTURE

to a mental institution, where she is strapped to a bed so she can no longer hurt herself. In the end, an imaginary crucifix burns brightly behind the bedpost of Veronika's bed in the mental institution.

Despite featuring superlatively sordid and sickening scenes of Islamic ritual slaughter, joyless sex involving hymen-broken hemoglobin and gorey post-abortion jungle fever, passionate spiritual insanity, and the slow but steady mental deterioration and sexual abuse of a tragic young woman with a complete and utter estrangement from the real world, *No Mercy, No Future* is indubitably director Helma Sanders-Brahms' most enthralling and penetrating film and probably the only work by the German arthouse auteur that is accessible to people other than frigid and fuming feminists suffering from psychosis and leftists who hate life and love banalistic 'new left' films celebrating illegal aliens, Marxist terrorists, and other 'marginal' works. Of course, Helma Sanders-Brahms portrays religiousness, especially of the Roman Catholic persuasion, as a sign of mental illness and perturbing pathology, not to mention the fact that *No Mercy, No Future* portrays the bourgeois and men in general as the harbingers of mental illness, thus it would be a lie to say the film does not have themes and sociopolitical undertones that are similar to the director's other films. Exploring the themes of hysterical female mental illness and German-Ausländer relations that were typical of Rainer Werner Fassbinder films, including the Sirkian melodramas *Martha* (1974), *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), and *Fear of Fear* (1975), as well as the surrealist and heretical Catholic iconography of Werner Schroeter, Helma Sanders-Brahms ultimately takes its aesthetically salacious and sadistic subject matter to more grotesque and unsettling themes, thus anticipating Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* (2009). Like anti-hero Hazel Motes from *Wise Blood* (1979) directed by John Huston, Veronika of *No Mercy, No Future* develops a sort of spiritual asceticism out of necessity due to her overwhelming inner pain, *Weltschmerz*, and abject isolation from the outside world. With all the bat-shit crazy white broads in the West, who now recklessly and nonsensically engage in miscegenation, not thinking twice about the fact that their baby, like the president of the United States, will more than likely be born a double bastard, one could argue that the Occident and its colonies are now suffering from collective schizophrenia, as the sort of self-destructive behavior displayed by the race-mixing protagonist of *No Mercy, No Future* certainly seems to be becoming the norm, albeit in a slightly less melodramatic and Catholic fashion. Paradoxically, it was the Frankfurt school fetishizing 'new left' types like Helma Sanders-Brahms and their pathological ethno-masochism that led to such a spiritually and culturally mongrelized world, but I am sure she sees her film *No Mercy, No Future* as another xenophiliac tale about a "strong woman" who has suffered immensely under the misogyny of wicked Aryan men.

-Ty E

MY HEART IS MINE ALONE

Helma Sanders-Brahms (1997)

As far as I am concerned, the blacklisting of countless artists, poets, painters, philosophers, and other cultural creators due to their political allegiances was one of the most disastrously deleterious effects for Germany after the Second World War, especially considering many of these important individuals were either fundamentally in contradiction with National Socialist ideology and/or they would later change their political persuasion, and German expressionist poet Gottfried Benn – a nationalistic libertine of sorts who later wavered in his support of Nazism after the fratricidal Night of the Long Knives – was certainly a incidental victim of such cultural barbarism, despite the fact he was essentially an introverted nihilist who, as a physician of medicine, was plagued by the biologically macabre and, even more curiously, bedded an aged Jewess – the Zionist poetess Else Lasker-Schüler who would be one of the first high-profile Jews to be buried in the Jewish Holy Land. Luckily, Benn's pleasantly perverse poetry and 'infamy by association' has been semi-immortalized by kraut feminist auteur Helma Sanders-Brahms (Heinrich, Germany, Pale Mother) of all people, who depicted his discordant life, poetry, and relationship with Lasker-Schüler via her audacious arthouse effort *My Heart Is Mine Alone* (1997) aka *Mein Herz - Niemandem!* – a surprisingly objective cinematic work that manages to depict the once close but ultimately tragic relationship between Germans and Jews via two subversive poet lovers who also happened to be ideological and racial enemies. Like the bisexual-nudist-Satanist-drug-addict author Hanns Heinz Ewers – a rather eccentric and excess-ridden mensch who, on top of having Jewesses as lovers, considered both Germans and Jews to be two equal master races – Gottfried Benn ultimately faced persecution from his National Socialist compatriots and his expressionist poetry was even described as “degenerate, Jewish, and homosexual” in the May 1936 issue of the SS magazine *Das Schwarze Korps*. A physician by profession, Benn, not unlike German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's father, treated prostitutes and was a venereal disease specialist, so he was quite familiar with the more unflattering aspects of man and his putrid flesh, which would ultimately find expression in his poetry, with his lover Lasker-Schüler once describing his strangely seductive, if not sweetly sickening, style as follows: “Every line a leopard's bite.” As factually depicted in Sanders-Brahms's *My Heart Is Mine Alone*, Lasker-Schüler bequeathed Benn with the curious pet names “Giselher,” “The Nibelung,” and “Barbarian,” which are more than apt titles for a jaded Jewess to bestow upon her Germanic goy toy, yet quite ironically, as the film also demonstrates, the naughty National Socialist scribbler found a greater kindred spirit in a radical racial alien than his own Aryan kinsmen. In the end, Lasker-Schüler died in Jerusalem during the final year of the Second World War and Benn would live on to see his poetry banned

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by both the Nazis and the Allies, as well as the suicide of his young Aryan wife, thus proving that loves does not always conquer all, even if remnants of the two ill-fated lovers' romance survive today in the form of their mutual romantic poetry.

Told through the narration of both poets' actual poetry, intentionally theatrical and expressionistic tableaux, and vintage stock and documentary footage, *My Heart Is Mine Alone* is a postmodern celluloid collage that depicts the complexity and subjectivity of history via a love affair destroyed by bad timing and circumstance. Beginning with their radically different childhoods, with Else Lasker-Schüler growing up in a consciously Jewish family with a brother who is adamant about assimilating into a Christian and Gottfried Benn growing up as the son of a Protestant pastor/scholar who taught noblemen and put a premium on Germanic blood and brother loyalty, *My Heart Is Mine Alone* establishes early on that it is rather remarkable that the poet lovers would ever go on to develop such a deep love and understanding for one another in terms of both aesthetic and emotional kindredness. As Lasker-Schüler's mother tells her brother Paul (Leonard Schnitman), who wants to convert to Christianity, "You can't shed your Jewish faith as if it were skin... You were born with it. You are circumcised." Paul believes that the anti-Jewishness of Christians no longer exists, stating, "That was in an age of darkness. We are now safe and secure," but little does he realize that in the modern world, race trumps spirituality among new age anti-Semites, or to quote proto-Zionist communist Jew Moses Hess, "Even an act of conversion cannot relieve the Jew of the enormous pressure of German anti-Semitism. The Germans hate the religion of the Jews less than they hate their race - they hate the peculiar faith of the Jews, less than their peculiar noses." Despite being an apparently true blue Aryan by the grace of Odin, Gottfried Benn (played by Cornelius Obonya) is libelously attacked for the supposed 'Jewishness' of his poetry, with his medical professor even stating, "The newspapers praise you as an infernal snob, a rugged roué, a Jewish half-breed." While Benn states, "I swear to my professor, I have no drop of Jewish blood in me," his teacher certainly has a point when he adds, "You see that as an advantage. Then you and those coffee-house poets must be kindred spirits. They're exhibiting those daubs now, those colored animals... The rabbis with the crooked noses." Of course, as *My Heart Is Mine Alone* progresses, it is revealed that unfounded rumors of Jewish blood will continue to haunt Benn for the rest of his life, with one rival poet even falsely claiming his surname ("Ben" apparently means "son" in Hebrew) was of Jewish origin, but as he once wrote himself in his autobiographical essay *The Way of an Intellectualist* (1934) regarding the apparently Wend origin of his name and his mother's Swiss Calvinist bloodline, "So, what happened was mixture, not miscegenation, producing crossbreeds, not mongrels, and in any case it was an Aryan mixture..." Unfortunately for Else Lasker-Schüler, her bloodlines were not as strictly Aryan in origin.

As quasi-expressionistically depicted in *My Heart Is Mine Alone*, Gottfried Benn and Else Lasker-Schüler were to fall in love at the “Café Megalomania” – a place in Berlin where literary outlaws traded verses and sins of the flesh. Lasker-Schüler (played by Lena Stolze of Michael Verhoeven’s *The White Roses* (1982) and *The Dirty Girl* (1990)) was the ‘high priestess’ of the café, but her beau Benn described her as a “Queen of the Night,” and, indeed, in *My Heart Is Mine Alone*, she certainly rules over her male counterparts with a hyper-horny Hebraic fist. Nearly two decades older than her lover, Lasker-Schüler was essentially to Benn what Lou Andreas-Salomé was to Bohemian poet Rainer Maria Rilke and like the famous white Russian muse, the Jewish poetess had been with a number of men before her little Nazi poet and suffered much heart break during her life, including the death of her son in 1927, which led to a deep depression that she would arguably never recover from. Indeed, until the rise of National Socialism, Benn acted as one of Lasker-Schüler’s greatest sources of solace, thus the German poet’s political proclivities came as a major blow to her. While Benn’s ‘static’ poetry was promoted by mostly leftist subversive types who were often of Jewish blood, and he apparently engaged in homosexuality, he still promoted the Reich, even with his romance with Lasker-Schüler being one of the most passionate points in his life up until that point. When Lasker-Schüler, who won the prestigious Kleist Prize in 1932, learns of Benn’s support of National Socialism she is terribly shocked. He also ends up marrying a Wehrmacht typist and attempts to live the stoic life of a good German while Lasker-Schüler hightails it to the Jewish Holy Land. Sanders-Brahms concludes *My Heart Is Mine Alone* with the ghost of Lasker-Schüler laying next to Benn staring into a mirror in a somnambulist state that is clearly a tribute to the iconic scene of Jean Marais doing the same in *Orpheus* (1950) aka *Orphée* directed by Jean Cocteau. Lasker-Schüler leaves her lover with the following words, “They dug up my bones to build a freeway to Jaffa... So the oranges will reach the sea much faster. Now I have a grave in the sky above the holy city... and all the way to you.” For a Helma Sanders-Brahms film, *My Heart is Mine Alone* undoubtedly ends on a ‘positive’ note, especially when considering Benn’s personal struggle after Lasker-Schüler and the conclusion of the Second World War.

Despite what Helma Sanders-Brahms may have portrayed of his miscegenation-based love life in *My Heart Is Mine Alone*, Gottfried Benn himself regarded the period in 1943 he spent in Landsberg (now Gorzow in Poland) with his young typist wife after his area of Berlin was evacuated as the greatest period of his life, writing, “these eighteen months were the quietest and happiest in my life.” Of course, Benn’s wartime ecstasy was short lived because by the end of the War, he was in Soviet occupied area and his wife, who he had sent away to spare her from the Russian hordes, had committed suicide. As Benn told his friends in 1947, “Though I think every day of my wife and her pitiful end, I just got married again.” Possibly thinking of his romantic past with Else Lasker-Schüler,

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the Wend-descended widow wrote a friend regarding his new wife – a dentist who was only 34 years old (while he was 61) at the time of their marriage – that, “She is sorry she isn’t non-Aryan; it was always her dream, and to her patients she brazenly pretends to be Jewish. She regards that as a distinction...” Indeed, Benn may have fornicated with Jewesses and homos, but his pride never waned, writing, “I will not have myself de-nazified.” To a somewhat ‘noble’ extent, Sanders-Brahms de-nazified Gottfried Ben via *My Heart Is Mine Alone* to a degree as a man who was more than a just a born-again Aryan, but it seems the reality of the two poets’ relationship was more one-sided than as portrayed in the film, as if the director personalized the film in a romantic manner, thus living vicariously through the life of a Jewess as an ethno-masochistic kraut feminist who has the incapacity to put her herself in the unkosher shoes of an Aryan artist (like Leni Riefenstahl) of the same era.

While probably not her greatest film, *My Heart Is Mine Alone* is indubitably my favorite Sanders-Brahms flick and for a number of reasons, including the director’s relatively objective portrayal of Gottfried Benn (thankfully, she refrains from depicting him as a one-dimensional ‘nazi semen demon’) and her aesthetic choices, as the film seems to be a Teutonized, albeit feminized, take on what Paul Schrader attempted with *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985) in its aesthetically eclectic pomo collage approach and utilization of the subject’s own written words, albeit executed in a more minimalistic and avant-garde manner. Combining expressionist tableaux, an improvised experimental score, authentic stock footage, and readings of Benn and Lasker-Schüler’s own poetry, *My Heart Is Mine Alone* is as good as ‘biopics’ get, especially in regard to depicting the seemingly inexplicable and irreconcilable – a lurid yet aesthetically fruitful romance between a tragic Zionist Jewess with a highly conscious sense of Judaism and a naughty National Socialist degenerate of a similarly tragic background who enjoyed a curious cocktail of morphine, men, and mystical Jewish poetesses.

-Ty E

2ND WAR HATS

Henri Plaat (1986)

Not unlike Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*) and to a lesser extent his student Paul de Nooijer (*N.E.W.S.*, *Nobody Had Informed Me*), albeit in his own particularly idiosyncratic way, Dutch experimental auteur filmmaker Henri Plaat (*I Am an Old Smoking*, *Moving Indian Movie Star*, *Postcards*) seems to be totally cut off from any sort of film movement, style or trend, even in his homeland of the Netherlands, to the point where he is not even mentioned in Amos Vogel's relatively authoritative cineaste text *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974). In a sense, also not unlike Zwartjes and de Nooijer, Plaat is the ultimate auteur as the idea of a film crew is completely alien to him as he is the sole person that works on his films, which he shoots on his various handheld 8mm and 16mm cameras that he has acquired from around the world. Indeed, most of Plaat's films, which oftentimes transcend the usually fine line between documentary and absurdism, were shot in various third world shitholes, with the director oftentimes hiding the fact he was filming members of the indigenous population. An eclectic artist who works in various mediums, especially painting and watercolors, Plaat first received a Eumig-camera in 1966 and would ultimately describe his experimental cinematic art as nothing more than, "an exploded hobby," yet he has managed to assemble a totally singular oeuvre with a distinct cinematic language that seems foreign to every except the director himself. The first film I saw by Plaat was *Fragments of Decay* (1983) and it amazed me how Plaat was able to make such things as a dirty rotten dog corpse, a recently dug grave, a retarded Greek boy, and a mostly skeletal horse corpse in a Turkish river, among other various morbid and grotesque things, seem quite magical and beautiful. As Plaat remarked regarding his own work in the documentary *Cadavre Exquis: On Dutch Experimental Filmmaking* (2004) directed by Anna Abrahams, "They are films that perhaps...have more to do with a dream world. Sometimes they tend to lean towards surrealism. But they always start out from reality." Undoubtedly, out of all of Plaat's films, the most overtly oneiric, absurd, arcane, and just plain bizarre is the mere 3-minute short *2nd War Hats* (1986), which was made in collaboration with the filmmaker's artist friend Theo Jeuken and is indubitably the director's closet and most flagrant attempt at making a high-camp work. A 'war film' in sort of the same sense that Werner Schroeter's compulsively campy tragicomedy *Der Bomberpilot* (1970) is a war film, Plaat's perversely playful piece features a cameo from the director in quasi-drag and turns World War II into an absurd fashion show where Nazi officers burn, drag queens vainly show off their latest vulgar hats while sporting equally goofy smiles, and a Slavic city is reduced to smoldering rubble. One of the director's few films that has actually been recognized in any way as the winner of the 1989 L.J. Jordaan Prize, *2nd War Hats* is ultimately a wonderfully ridiculous remainder of how unforgettably potent

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short films can be, as sort of celluloid bombs that, although brief, have lasting effects on the mind of the viewer that long and plodding feature-length works with linear narratives oftentimes lack. Not unlike with Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog* and the shorts of Zwartjes, Gregory J. Markopoulos, Kenneth Anger, and James Broughton, I could probably watch *Plaat's* micro-epic thousands of times and it still would not lose its impact. Indeed, like the greatest of short films, *2nd War Hats* is a virtual celluloid dream that was generously shared with us by its dreamer, who certainly demonstrates that, like most things in life, some dreams are greater than others.

Although opening with the inter-title, "Somewhere in a bombed city...", *2nd War Hats* is set in Warsaw, Poland where the apocalyptic destruction of the metropolis is ultimately trumped by the aesthetic majesty of fiercely flamboyant headwear that is modeled quasi-shemales who don't seem to realize that the most deleterious war in human history is going on despite all the ashes falling from the sky and covering their oh-so fancy 'diva' hats. As if symbolic of the fact that fashions are 'rooted' in cities, virtually all of the people featured in the film are imprisoned in the ground, with only their hat-covered heads poking out of the seemingly smoldering asphalt. In between featuring shots of various sexually dubious models modeling off their hyper hokey and all-around aesthetically repugnant hats, a collage featuring the portraits of dozens upon dozens of German Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe officers burns to the point where only a couple of the men's photos are not reduced to ash. Ultimately, this naughty Nazi collage seems to not only be symbolic of the destruction that the German military brought to Warsaw, but also Germany itself. Notably, one of the models sports a red 'phallic' hat that has a banana sticking out of the end of it. Later in the short, another model takes the banana in their mouth as if they are literally hungry for cock. Eventually, the model with the banana hat goes underground and a model with a silver bullet-like hat appears from the ground, though their head is protected by glass. Meanwhile, sullen hat-less women become quite happy after hats magically fly onto their heads, as if to reflect the rejuvenation of the city after the war. During the final scene of the short in a scenario that seems symbolic of the post-WWII butchering of Europe into the rivaling Americanized liberal capitalist west and enslaved Soviet communist East, a fence featuring a sign of a typical 1950s America advertisement model drinking a bottle of Coca-Cola on it appears. If one thing is quite apparent by the conclusion of *2nd War Hats*, it is that both war and fashion are rather whimsical phenomena that ultimately end with the destruction and replacement of the previous social model. Of course, the National Socialists were indubitably the kings of both war and fashion and those that replaced them were surely innately inferior, especially in terms of aesthetics.

While I can only guess auteur *Plaat's* intent with the short, *2nd War Hats* seems to be an allegory for the 'changing fashions' that occur as a result of war, es-

pecially the Second World War, which destroyed Europe's control over the world as a whole and split the continent into two opposing, albeit if not similarly materialistic and anti-cultural, entities that were controlled by largely alien elements that hardly had Faustian man's best interests in mind. Notably, about 85% of the buildings in Warsaw were destroyed during WWII, thus the city surely made an apt, if not initially seemingly strange, choice for the subject of Plaat's film. Why Plaat did not use the Dutch city of Rotterdam, which was also all but completely destroyed as a result of German bombing, instead of Warsaw is questionable considering the filmmaker is Dutch and all, but I am glad he did because it allows the film to be interpreted in a different way. Indeed, due to the fact that it has survived various wars and catastrophes throughout the centuries, Warsaw has earned the nickname of 'phoenix city,' thus *2nd War Hats* adds more credence to my theory that the film is an allegory for the perennial changing essence of not just Warsaw and other cities, but humanity in general. Whatever Plaat's intent with the film might have been, there is no denying that it is a strangely potent and insanely idiosyncratically jovial work that manages to reduce one of the most apocalyptic and culturally deleterious events in human history into the world's most aesthetically absurd, patently pointless, and pathetically pretentious fashion show, with the unequivocal best dressers—the Nazis—being figuratively burned alive and turned into a representation of 'hardcore fashion' and, in turn, total evil. As indicated by the fact that both a SS officer and a photograph of Adolf Hitler appear in his later film *A Fleeting Dream* (2004), it seems that Plaat, not unlike many Dutchman of his generation, was haunted by the ghosts of the Second World War, which the Netherlands has arguably never fully recovered from (on top of the trauma and devastation that the Dutch people suffered as a result of the war, they still suffer from a sort of undying collective guilt as a result of what happened to the Jews of their country). Notably, Plaat stated in the doc *Cadavre Exquis* regarding his experimental documentaries, "I traveled extensively in South America. Maybe four or five times. The first time I went there...the front pages were always filled with horrible accidents...heads cut off, people hauled from graves...by the police. I felt that it was part of that world. That cruel absurdity." Of course, there was no greater "cruel absurdity" than the Second World War and that is made abundantly clear in *2nd War Hats*, which is arguably the most inexplicably wayward and eccentrically esoteric WWII flick ever made. Indeed, in its own patently peculiar and absurdly awe-inspiring way, Plaat's short says more about WWII and its aftermath than classic Dutch war flicks like Paul Verhoeven's *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange* and Fons Rademakers' *De aanslag* (1986) aka *The Assault* ever could.

-Ty E

THE WILD DUCK
THE WILD DUCK

Henri Safran (1984)

Before overdosing on barbiturates at the pretty premature age of 40, American actress Jean Seberg (*Breathless*, *Airport*) would come full circle with her acting by concluding it the same way she started by appearing in an adaptation of a classic play. Indeed, beginning her career in the eponymous lead role of Saint Joan (1957), which was a British-American adaptation of the 1924 George Bernard Shaw play of the same name directed by Otto Preminger, and concluding her career with *Die Wildente* (1976) aka *The Wild Duck*, which is an adaptation of the 1884 Henrik Ibsen play of the same name directed by underrated German auteur Hans W. Geißendörfer (*Jonathan*, *Die gläserne Zelle* aka *The Glass Cell*), Seberg certainly demonstrates a proclivity towards playing tragic characters. Unfortunately, in her cinematic swansong *The Wild Duck*, Seberg was upstaged by a little girl and a morbidly obese Austrian queer named Peter Kern in a film that is easily one of the greatest and most underrated films based on a play by the Norwegian 'Father of Modern Drama.' Like with her debut acting performance in *Saint Joan*, film critics criticized the director for (mis)casting Seberg, with *Films and Filming* going so far as describing the actress as the virtual Achilles Heel of *The Wild Duck*, writing, "The director makes a few minor errors of judgement, including the uneasy stylization of the scene in the loft, and his admiration for Jean Seberg results in the film's single miscasting... The other players are admirable." In general, *The Wild Duck* was met with wide critical acclaim, with *The New Yorker* writing, "Geißendörfer has just made one of the best film transcriptions of this play... The film is astutely acted, especially by Kern," and *The Los Angeles Times*, writing, "...splendid film...By concentrating on his people and resisting all trite devices used by film makers to 'open up' a play on the screen, Geissendoerfer has succeeded in making THE WILD DUCK a genuine movie and not just a filmed play." Indeed, Geißendörfer even managed to show up the Teutonic master of melodrama Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who adapted Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) as a BBC-esque television play under the title *Nora Helmer* (1974), with *The Wild Duck*. Made at a time when Seberg, who despite having a perverse proclivity towards brown and Jewish men, apparently felt "much too European" (her words), *The Wild Duck* is nothing short of a lost minor masterpiece that is quite fittingly just as tragic as the forsaken American actress who starred in it. A pathologically claustrophobic chamber piece of unrelenting *weltschmerz* that opts for shedding virtually all of the comedy of Ibsen's tragicomedy (though any film feature Kern is in is bound to have some hum, *The Wild Duck* is a statically directed yet innately intense work about skeletons in family closets and the failure of cold intellectual idealism in an emotion-driven world of irrationality and unpredictability.

Professional photographer Hjalmar Ekdal (Peter Kern) is the married father

of an inquisitive 11-year-old daughter named Hedwig (Anne Bennet, the sister of David Bennet of *The Tin Drum* fame) and a beautiful blonde wife named Gina (Jean Seberg), yet he is always depressed and scolds his daughter for awakening him while he is 'working.' Hjalmar uses Hedwig's poor vision as a ridiculous reason to keep his daughter out of school and while the father promised he would teach her himself, he is far too lazy to put forth such effort. One day, daughter Hedwig brings Hjalmar a telegram from his estranged friend Gregers Werle (Bruno Ganz) inviting him to a party hosted by his father Consul Werle (Heinz Moog, who appeared in the Luchino Visconti films *Senso* (1954) and *Ludwig* (1972)). Gregers hates his father and has been in self-imposed exile for some time and at the party he learns some family secrets from Hjalmar that will make him even more of a hateful prodigal son. Upon learning that his father paid for Hjalmar to learn the photography trade and hooked up his friend with Gina, he decides to seek revenge against his father. Gina was previously a maid for the Werles who had an affair with the Consul who, to Gregers' Chagrin, cheated on his belated wife. Needless to say, Gina got pregnant and Consul Werle got the wise idea to pawn his mistress off to Hjalmar, who has no idea that Hedwig is not really his biological daughter. In fact, Hedwig is Greger's bastard half-sister. On top of that, Consul Werle and Hjalmar's Father (Martin Flörchinger), who was an officer and renowned hunter, were business partners and the latter went to jail over purportedly building on federal forests. Seeing his father as a cunning criminal who gets away with the most degenerate of deceptions, Gregers comes up with the self-absorbed quixotic plan to let Hjalmar know that his marriage is a sham and that his dear Hedwig is not really his daughter.

After moving in to the Ekdals' large home, which has a built-in photo studio, Gregers cannot help but look in disgust at what he sees as a counterfeit family sown in lies and sin. In the attic of the Ekdal home is a sort of makeshift 'forest' full of animals, including rabbits that Grandfather Ekdal and Hjalmar 'hunt', as well as a wild duck. Saved from the teeth of Consul Werle's dog, Hedwig nursed the wild duck and, aside from her mother and father, it is what she loves most. Gregers also discovers that Hjalmar has big plans to invest something so as to clear the family name and to restore his father's once-dignified reputation. Of course, Gregers, who proclaims to want to save his friend from a "web of lies," crushes Hjalmar after revealing to him that his wife was Consul Werle's lover and that his daughter is probably not his. Ultimately, Gregers aggressively approached Hjalmar's doctor friend Dr. Relling (Heinz Bennet, the father of Anne Bennet and star of Andrzej Zulawski's *Possession* (1981)), who reveals that he put the idea into Hjalmar's head to create an invention, so as to give some power to the fat man so he would have something to live for. For Hedwig's birthday, Consul Werle, who is getting married to his housekeeper Frau Sörby (Sonja Sutter), gives the little girl a trust fund, which confirms to Hjalmar that his daughter is not really his daughter. Hjalmar decides he no longer

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wants anything that was 'given to him' by Consul Werle, including the wild duck, which rather depresses Hedwig. Meanwhile, little Hedwig somehow manages to speculate that her father has found out she is not his biological daughter. A hopeless idealist, Gregers put the moronic idea in Hedwig's head that she should commit a 'child sacrifice' and kill her pet duck in a declaration of her love to her father. In the end, the 11-year-old instead opts for killing herself instead by putting a revolver to her chest in a rather symbolic act of self-slaughter. Despite everything, Gregers is as idealistic as ever, proclaiming regarding Hedwig's death, "The pain is making him great and noble," but Dr. Relling smashes his idealism by stating, "That's the way it is with most people when they are with a dead body. How long do you think that will last with him? In one year, little Hedwig will be nothing to him but a pleasant opportunity to hold forth about her in moving phrases. You'll hear him lamenting about the child taken too soon from her father. You'll see how he pickles himself in sentiment and self-pity."

In its decidedly disconcerting depiction of a loving and sensitive young girl being driven to suicide, *The Wild Duck* makes for a rather fitting way for Jean Seberg to conclude her career, as she, like little Hedwig, came from a seemingly wholesome Nordic American Lutheran middle-class background but ultimately gave in to self-slaughter (although evidence indicates she may have been murdered) after too much emotional distress. Of course, in terms of her naïve idealism as a supporter of the Black Panther Party and marriage to a sleazy Yiddish scumbag hack filmmaker like Dennis Berry, Seberg had a lot of common with Gregers, as if were not for her ethno-masochistic political activism, which resulted in her being a target of the FBI COINTELPRO project, she probably would not have went down the quite 'dark' road she did. Undoubtedly, in *The Wild Duck*, Seberg looks rather used-up and hopelessly melancholy, as if she is trapped in some sort of metaphysical hell, which she most certainly was. Assumedly blacklisted from Hollywood, Seberg seems to have been planning to become a full-time arthouse superstar, which is indicated by her reasons for starring in *The Wild Duck*: "Hans Geißendörfer came to me in Paris and told me about his plan to film *THE WILD DUCK*. He spoke about his work with such passion and commitment that I was immediately won over for this project. I hadn't even seen the earlier movies of Geißendörfer before I accepted the role. I don't need to, I'm not much concerned about what a director had done previously: I decided to participate if I have a good feeling and a good impression of the director, and if the things he has told me about his movie have convinced me. I have been making movies for twenty years now, and yet only worked three or four times with people who loved their work and took it seriously. Today I would rather not work at all than be involved with something I don't believe in."

As for Peter Kern, he gave one of his greatest and most unflatteringly sensitive performances in *The Wild Duck*. Indeed, aside from Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's high-camp masterpiece *La Paloma* (1974), nowhere else does Kern

give the sort of elegantly pathetic performance that he did in Geißendörfer's masterpiece. While Bruno Ganz is also memorable as the disgruntled idealist, the second best performance in *The Wild Duck* is most certainly given by little Anne Bennent in what is easily one of the most heartbreaking child roles in cinema history. In fact, director Hans W. Geißendörfer would go on to say, "Anne Bennent is Hedwig," thus demonstrating her imperative role *The Wild Duck*, which could have easily been laughable had it been performed by a less talented actress. While I have yet to check out his entire oeuvre, Geißendörfer is certainly one of the most overlooked filmmakers of German New Cinema, as a sort of 'Bavarian Volker Schlöndorff', albeit much darker and more soulful. Indeed, only in his more recent Nordic masterpiece *Schneeland* (2005) aka *Snowland* would Geißendörfer rouse family skeletons in closets to a more unsettling degree.

-Ty E

THE BELIEVER
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Henry Bean (2001)

In terms of the most damning films about Jews and Judaism, I believe it was not the National Socialists nor Islamists who were responsible for greatest and most provocative celluloid examinations of the Jewish question, but cinematic works penned and/or directed by the Jews themselves, with *The Man in the Glass Booth* (1975) directed by Arthur Hiller, *Weininger's Last Night* (1990) aka *Weiningers Nacht* directed by Paulus Manker, and Henry Bean's *The Believer* (2001) being some of the most notable examples. What all of these films have in common aside from featuring great anti-Semitic rants is that all three works feature a self-loathing Jewish antihero with a split-personality who ultimately dies in the end as a result of circumstances relating to their diseased Hebraic mind. Undoubtedly, Bean's *The Believer* is the freshest and most modern of these films, as a work that stars Hollywood heartthrob Ryan Gosling (*Drive*, *The Place Beyond the Pines*) during his pre-fame days in an insanely intense and totally unforgettable role as a Jewish neo-Nazi skinhead who finally loses control of his unhinged mind. Loosely based on the true story of Daniel "Dan" Burros—a former member and propagandist of Yankee Führer George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party and, later, a recruiter for the KKK, who had a purported genius IQ of 154 and who committed suicide on October 31, 1965 by shooting himself in the chest and head while listening to Richard Wagner only an hour or so after an issue of *The New York Times* had been released that uncovered that he was 100% kosher. A rather conflicted fellow who supposedly derived great pleasure from drawing elaborate images of Jews being tortured yet at the same time would do curious things like bring Knish for his neo-Nazi friends to eat and would say things like "Let's eat this good Jew food!" Burros was apparently heavily influenced by the neo-Spenglerian tome *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics* (1948) written by Francis Parker Yockey (who is rumored to have been ¼ Jewish himself), which argued against the 'racial materialism' of the Third Reich and made the dubious claim that the 'spiritual' element of race was more important than the biological, hence why the work would appeal to a Jewish Nazi (incidentally, Leo Felton, a neo-Nazi criminal of both black and Jewish ancestry, was also influenced by the book). A sort of postmodern theological approach to Judaism written by two assimilated reform Jews, Henry Bean and Mark Jacobson, that exposes to the Goyim why it is not all that strange that a Jew might turn into a neo-Nazi, *The Believer* is like a thinking man's take on *American History X* (1998) that is less about skinhead culture than a serious attempt to portray Judaism's place in modern America in an age where true so-called 'anti-Semitism' has become an anachronism and where the religion itself has begun to lose meaning among its people, who typically consider themselves culturally kosher more than anything else. Once described by co-writer/director

Henry Bean as being “embarrassingly philo-Semitic,” the film was nonetheless described by Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center as “a primer for anti-Semitism” and because of this, the *The Believer* was doomed to the deplorable fate of being released straight to cable TV, even though it had won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and the Golden St. George at the 23rd Moscow International Film Festival. To the Rebbe’s credit, Bean’s work has more philosophical ammo against the Jews than the infamous Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew* directed by Fritz Hippler (who was ironically 1/8 Jewish himself) and thus can be seen as one of only a handful of films that will intrigue both rabid Zionist and National Socialists alike.

During the first couple minutes of *The Believer*, Jewish yeshiva student turned neo-Nazi skinhead Daniel Balint (Ryan Gosling) stalks a young Orthodox Jew wearing a yarmulke through a NYC subway and eventually smacks a book out of the young Yid’s hand, hands the book back to him, and then smacks and beats the shit out of the young bookish Heeb for not fighting back like a real man. Most interestingly, Mr. Balint begs the Jew to hit him back, stating, “Do me a favor...why don’t you fucking hit me, okay? Hit me. Hit me! Hit me, hit me, hit me. Fucking hit me. Hit me, please! You fucking kike!” but the cowardly ‘kike’ naturally does nothing. Indeed, Daniel Balint hates the Jews due to their innate cowardliness and pacifism, as he associates Abraham’s obedience to God’s command to kill/sacrifice his son Isaac in the Bible with the fact that most European Jews refused to fight back during the holocaust. As a young yeshiva student, Danny would argue with his teachers over scripture by interpreting it in a rather unorthodox way, but now as a neo-Nazi, he wants to kill Jews and believes he has found true comrades in the form of philistine skinheads who have no idea who Adolf Eichmann was. When Danny and his motley crew of skinhead dumb asses attend a small gathering hosted by intellectual fascists Curtis Zampf (Billy Zane) and Lina Moebius (Theresa Russell), he proposes randomly killing rich and successful Jews, including an investment banker/philanthropist named Ilio Manzetti (Henry Bean). Zampf considers Danny’s anti-Semitism and brute tactics outmoded, but Moebius, who “doesn’t care about the Jews one way or another,” sees a bright speaker and visionary in the young Jewish Nazi, as he reminds her of her ex-husband, who was a fascist revolutionary that went insane and now lives in a mental institution. Moebius’ daughter Carla (portrayed by 1/2 Jewess Summer Phoenix) also takes an interest in Danny and when he gets arrested the same night after getting in a brawl with some savage nig-nogs, she bails him out of jail and the two make somewhat violent sadomasochistic love (Carla is left with a bruise around her mouth). When Danny goes home, it is quite obvious that he resents the fact that his Father (Ronald Guttman) is a weak and sickly Jew. While at home, Danny gets a call from a journalist named Guy Danielsen (A. D. Miles), who flatters the kosher Nazi by telling him that he has

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heard that he has “interesting ideas” and that he wants to interview him. Unbeknownst to Danny, the journalist knows he is Jewish and his life as he knows it is about to change forever as a result.

When Danny meets journalist Guy Danielsen at a cafe, the postmodern Stormtrooper goes on a number of highly sophisticated and articulate anti-Jewish rants, including one in the spirit of self-loathing Austrian Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger where he argues that “the Jew is essentially female,” stating, “Real men—white, Christian men—we fuck a woman. We make her cum with our cocks. But the Jew doesn’t like to penetrate and thrust—he can’t assert himself that directly—so he resorts to perversion.” In his most impassioned speech, Danny makes his most damning attack against God’s chosen tribe most cherished geniuses, arguing: “Take the greatest Jewish minds ever—Marx, Freud, Einstein—what have they given us? Communism, infantile sexuality, and the atom bomb. In the mere three centuries it’s taken these people to emerge from the ghettos of Europe, they’ve ripped us out of a world of order and reason. They’re thrown us into a chaos of class warfare, irrational urges, relativity, into a world where the very existence of matter and meaning is in question. Why? ‘Cause it’s the deepest impulse of a Jewish soul to pull at the fabric of life till there’s nothing left but a thread. They want nothing but nothingness. Nothingness without end.” At this point, the journalist seems rather impressed, but he catches Danny off guard by asking him, “How can you believe this when you’re a Jew yourself?” thus inciting the Hitlerite Hebrew to whip out a Glock pistol and put it in pansy journalist Mr. Danielsen’s mouth while threatening to kill himself if the writer dares to print an article revealing his Judaic origins. Danny ends up going to a training camp setup by Zampf and Mobius with his skinhead comrades and during the first couple minutes upon arriving there, he beats up the biggest and most muscular neo-Nazi after he picks a fight with him, thus demonstrating he is far from an archetypical Jewish wimp. Danny also befriends a dorky explosives expert and a skilled marksman/possible fellow Jewish Nazi named Drake (Glenn Fitzgerald). Meanwhile, Danny attempts to rekindle his sexually violent relationship with Carla, but he soon realizes that Mr. Zampf is also carrying on an affair with her, even though he is in a relationship with her mother Lina Moebius. When Danny and his friends start a fight with the owners of a Jewish deli, they are sentenced to ‘sensitivity training’ by the courts where they must listen to the experience of Holocaust survivors. When one elderly Holocaust survivor tells a story about how his 3-year-old son was impaled with a bayonet right before his eyes by a German sergeant, Danny calls the man a “piece of shit” for not fighting back and protecting his son. Undoubtedly, the turning point for Danny comes when he and his friends wreck a synagogue and plant a bomb in the pulpit of the building. Danny’s racial/political schizophrenia becomes rather pronounced when he yells at his friends for messing up a Torah scroll, which is more or less the only holy object of Judaism. Danny decides

to take the Torah, as well as a 'tallit' (a Jewish prayer shawl), back to the camp with him and comes to realize that being a Nazi alone is not fulfilling and that his Judaism has never left him. After learning the bomb that he planted at the synagogue malfunctioned (the timer stopped at 13 minutes, with the number 13 being a mystical number in Judaism), Danny begins repairing the torn Torah and even does fascist salutes while wearing the tallit and singing a Jewish prayer. When Drake asks Danny, "Do you wanna kill a Jew?," the Judaic neo-Nazi reluctantly agrees. Drake reveals that he has already killed four Jews and when Danny asks him how he knew that his victims were Jewish, the marksman responds by stating, "I can tell. I was a Jew in a previous life." Ultimately, Danny intentionally misses while attempting to assassinate the Jew Ilio Manzetti (the very same Jew he previously fantasized about killing) and Drake soon notices he is wearing the tallit, so a fight breaks out between the two, with the Jewish Nazi wounding his comrade, who later disappears.

When Danny arrives back in NYC, he is asked by Lina Moebius and Zampf to start fundraising for their fascist organization, which they hope will go mainstream, but the tough Hebraic National Socialist is so disgusted by the thought of doing such Jewish work as attempting to con companies out of their money (after all, he drives a forklift for a living) that he vomits, but Carla makes him feel better by licking the barf off his lips in a sick, if not highly sensual, fashion. Rather absurdly Danny begins teaching workshops on hating Jews during the day while teaching Carla, who is a dilettante of ancient languages, how to read the torah during the night. When Danny attempts to get funding from the head of a corporation, he is told, "Forget the Jewish stuff. It doesn't play anymore. There's only the market now, and it doesn't care who you are." Danny accuses the CEO of being a Jew and he replies somewhat strangely by stating, "Maybe I am. Maybe we're all Jews now. What's the difference?" Needless to say, Danny becomes disillusioned with the whole fascist movement and when he gives a speech arguing that anti-Semites should love Jews because it would cause the entire race to disappear into a sea of assimilation, Lina Moebius fires him from his job as a glorified fascist salesman of sorts. Meanwhile, Drake assassinates Ilio Manzetti and Danny is naturally blamed for the crime. Ultimately, Danny gets back in contact with his old classmates from the yeshiva school and decides to go out in a blaze of Christ-like glory. Danny convinces his friend Stuart (Dean Strober) to allow him to take his place reading from the torah at the bema on Yom Kippur. The night before he reads from the torah, Danny places a bomb in the pulpit of the synagogue. On the day of the big event, Danny notices Carla in the synagogue and forces her and everyone else out after telling his friend Stuart that there is a bomb in the building. Of course, Danny, as a suicidal Semite, refuses to leave and is blown up. In the last scene of the film during an ethereal mystical vision of sorts, Danny aimlessly ascends the stairs of the yeshiva school he once attended while being told by his old teacher that "There's nothing up

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there.” Indeed, in the end, Danny—the only really ‘believer’—learns that the Jewish (non)afterlife is truly “nothing but nothingness. Nothingness without end.”

In describing the real-life Jewish neo-Nazi Daniel Burros, *The Believer* director Henry Bean curiously stated, “He was a rabbi manque. Antisemitism is a form of practicing Judaism. He’s sort of a rabbi after all. A Jew by day, a Nazi by night. . . . He was desperately hiding something and compulsively trying to bring it out at the same time. People are drawn to contradiction. He undergoes a conversion, but not back to the Torah.” Bean, who is racially Jewish but never really seriously studied the religious aspects of his religion until working on the film, also confessed that by making a film about a Jewish neo-Nazi, he “began to understand what Judaism was.” Indeed, as *The Believer* demonstrates, unlike Christianity, Judaism is a self-critical religion about constantly questioning things, so it is only natural for a devout intelligent Jew to question the very religion itself, which protagonist Danny Balint did from the very beginning as depicted in his fights with teachers during his early yeshiva days. Although largely forgotten nowadays, some of the greatest intellectuals in the German-speaking world during the late-19th century/early-20th century were ‘self-loathing Jews,’ including the tragic philosopher Otto Weininger (who committed suicide at age 23 by shooting himself in the same room that Ludwig van Beethoven died in), philosopher/historian/actor/theater critic Egon Friedell, Austrian journalist/satirist Karl Kraus, and even one of the most important philosophers of his time, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who once wrote: “My thoughts are 100% Hebraic” and “Amongst Jews ‘genius’ is found only in the holy man. Even the greatest of Jewish thinkers is no more than talented. (myself for instance.) I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively.” Although Ryan Gosling seems far too Aryan in appearance and demeanor to portray a suicidal heeb, his performance in *The Believer* is nothing short of so amazingly visceral and fiercely impassioned that one almost comes to believe he is the real self-loathing Jew deal. While a discernibly low-budget work featuring a couple plot-holes and sometimes amateurish direction (it was Bean’s directorial debut, after all), *The Believer* is ultimately not only one of the most sophisticated films to ever deal with the Jewish question, but also a dark and primal examination of the Jewish collective unconscious that exposes an entire people in their most vulnerable and incriminating form. Indeed, for those that ever wondered why some people, including Jews, think Uncle Adolf may have had some Hebraic blood, *The Believer* is the film to see. Undoubtedly, the fact that a powerful rabbi managed to suppress the film and caused it to miss the mainstream attention it deserved just goes to show how important of a work *The Believer* is, especially in a post-European-dominated age where a largely Hebrew-run entity known as Hollywood is poisoning the world’s brains with its insipid high shekel filth, not to mention the fact that all of the wars in the middle east are a direct result

of Zionist warmongering, among countless other contemporary kosher societal ills.

Ironically, Zionism (which was described by Karl Kraus as a form of “Jewish anti-Semitism”) itself was born out of Jewish self-loathing, as its founder Theodor Herzl was originally a German nationalist (he was even a member of the German nationalist fraternity Burschenschaft, which many future Nazis, including Heinrich Himmler, were also members of) who started Zionism after realizing that Jews would never be accepted as real Germans among the indigent German population and saw the movement as a way to make world Jewry strong (indeed, the early Zionists promoted eugenics and even collaborated with the Nazis during WWII). When director Henry Bean received the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival for *The Believer*, he stated during his acceptance speech for the film, “this is truly a story of love and hate. I love the provocative aspects...the notion of being a Jew and a Nazi at the same time.” Undoubtedly, in those couple sentences, Bean demonstrates the innate strangeness of being Jewish and being from a paradoxical religion where love and hate are not mutually exclusive because, as history demonstrates, Jews thrive on hatred (as Bean’s film mentions, there would be no Israel without Auschwitz) for Hebrews would cease to exist without such hatred, thus making the Jewish neo-Nazi, in a bizarre way, the ultimate and most deeply devout Jew. Indeed, while being one of the most unwaveringly Jewish movies ever made, *The Believer* is also one of the most cleverly and eclectically anti-Semitic, as a work that puts Uncle Adolf’s best-seller *Mein Kampf* to shame. That being said, Bean’s film is more or less the contemporary celluloid equivalent to Otto Weininger’s masterpiece *Sex and Character* (1903) aka *Geschlecht und Charakter*. Of course, it is surely a sign of our socially and morally inverted times when the most cleverly quasi-anti-Semitic film was directed by an actual Jew.

-Ty E

A SAFE PLACE
A SAFE PLACE

Henry Jaglom (1971)

Although it might sound like something straight out of a dystopian sci-fi flick, there are actually special rooms (or other special designated areas) called 'safe spaces' on some college campuses where certain mental cripples that are usually female and/or non-white can go to indulge in happy things like ice cream and footage of puppies if they feel 'triggered' by something that hurts their super special feelings like a so-called 'microaggression.' Indeed, if a mulatto tranny freak gets freaked out because a mean evil white boy in his class questions how someone can be a woman if they have a cock and Y chromosome, they can seek sanctuary in a safe place where pesky things like facts and reality will not hurt them. Long before society became completely spiritually and socially castrated and safe places became a sad and pathetic reality, Hebraic hipster auteur filmmaker Henry Jaglom (*Tracks*, *Venice/Venice*)—a sort of failed Woody Allen type, albeit slightly less neurotic and more Zionist—made his directorial debut with what might be best described as the cinematic equivalent of such outstandingly absurd anti-reality rooms. A complete and utter commercial and critical bomb upon its less than auspicious release, Jaglom's highly personalized first feature *A Safe Place* (1971) was made during the New Hollywood (aka 'American New Wave') era when auteurist cinema had become vogue in America as a result of the unexpected big commercial success of works like *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969). Produced by wealthy dope-addled Judaic (pseudo)bohemians Bob Rafelson, Bert Schneider, and Steve Blauner's production company BBS Productions (which was previously called Raybert Productions before Blauner joined and was responsible for creating both the successful situation comedy *The Monkees* and the initially imaginary band of the same name), both Jaglom's film and Jack Nicholson's rarely-seen quasi-arthouse flick *Drive, He Said* (1971) would mark a sort of turning point for the fairly lucrative company, which had great success with its previous works like *Easy Rider* (which Jaglom played a role in reediting), *Five Easy Pieces* (1970), and *The Last Picture Show* (1971). According to Jaglom, BBS head Schneider sobbed upon first seeing *A Safe Place* and told the filmmaker that he had absolutely no clue what the film was about and felt it would be an abject failure at the box offices but opted to release it anyway since he was a rare producer of his time who was committed to the artistic freedom of the auteur. A conspicuously convoluted and incessantly fragmented doped-out psychodrama that centers around a decidedly dumb and equally morally retarded blonde woman-child that lives in a pathetic fantasy realm that revolves around her nostalgia for her seemingly largely imagined childhood, Jaglom's film follows in the post-WWII Jewish American male tradition of Philip Roth, Norman Mahler, and Woody Allen in that it grovelingly fetishizes the tall, blonde Aryan Shiksa.

Based on a play by Jaglom that he originally performed in NYC in 1964 with his then-girlfriend Karen Black in the lead role and himself portraying a character that would eventually be played by Jack Nicholson for the silver-screen, *A Safe Place* was mainly aesthetically influenced by both improvisational theater and European arthouse films by Fellini, Godard, John Schlesinger, Ingmar Bergman, etc., among various others. Thematically speaking, the film was mostly influenced by Jaglom's desire to stay a perennial child, or as the auteur stated himself in the Criterion Collection featurette *Henry Jaglom Finds 'A Safe Place'* (2010), "I had the character I wanted to explore, which was this amalgam, as I said, of a lot of women I had known and parts of myself...and this resistance to growing up, which was very endemic to [...] that period. A lot of us did not want to grow up in the 60s, you know, when I wrote it. By the time I made it in 1971, I still did not want to grow up and I was still, like, not understanding what that was about [...] and there was a death attraction. A kind of, sort of romance of suicide. A lot of aspects of the popular culture, which I was [...] certainly a part of. And ummm, in *A SAFE PLACE* I just really wanted to tell the truth emotionally up onscreen. There was no question for me that what I had to try to do was make films that, in my sense of things, told the emotional truth about life as I perceived it and I still don't want to grow up. Absolutely, the Peter Pan thing is profound [...] Luckily, I haven't had to grow up and that's kind of the amazing thing about this and I think Anaïs Nin had a whole lot to do with that." Indeed, Jaglom's debut is a proudly masturbatory film culled from a whopping fifty hours of seemingly randomly shot footage that depicts infantile young adults doing infantile things, with the brain-dead blonde lead being exceedingly upset about the fact that she believes that she was able to fly as a child yet no longer remembers how to do it. Featuring the novelty of a rather bloated and broken Orson Welles in a role that Jaglom gave him a color TV to do as a sort of phantom magician with a grating Eastern European Yiddish Jewish accent who pops in and out of the protagonist's life throughout the entire film, *A Safe Place* is like a cross between Ambrose Bierce's classic short story *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1890), Federico Fellini's psychedelic classic *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), and Jean-Luc Godard's *Masculin Féminin* (1966), albeit nowhere near as ambitious and spectacular as it sounds. Directed by the proud great-great-great-great-great-great-grandson of German Jewish Haskala philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, Jaglom's debut is a work that is ultimately quite typical of the sort of neurotic racial schizophrenia that many contemporary Judaic men suffer from as a film that simultaneously celebrates Hebraic kultur and the singular beauty of blonde Nordic women. In that sense, *A Safe Place* is like a hippie art fag equivalent to Elaine May's *The Heartbreak Kid* (1972).

At the very beginning of the film, Orson Welles gives a good indication of the film's helically oriented narrative structure by slowly stating in a quasi-poetic fashion, "Last night...in my sleep...I dreamed...that I was sleeping. And

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dreaming in that sleep...that I had awakened...I feel asleep.” Welles portrays an imaginary character that Jaglom hilariously described as a “lapsed wander rabbi” who tells Hasidic stories “that have no meaning” that were written by an eccentric Orthodox rabbi named Nachman of Breslov and who is also a failed magician of sorts whose sole trick is making things, including money and a silver ball, levitate. For whatever reason, Welles, who acts as a sort of paternal figure (Jaglom has hinted that he is actually her father), watches over protagonist Susan aka ‘Noah’ (Tuesday Weld of Frank Perry’s *Play It As It Lays* (1972) and Richard Brooks’ *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977)) as she makes stupid decision after decision in her patently pathetic life of mindless self-indulgence, self-destructive hedonism, and delusional nostalgia worship. Protagonist Noah—a character named after Noah’s Ark that auteur Jaglom has described as being “1/3 Tuesday, 1/3 Karen [Black], and 1/3 me”—lives in a perpetual dream realm of sappy sentimentalism and careless sensuality where she does everything she can to block out the less than happy events from her waste of a life. At the beginning of the film, a somewhat Jew-y dork named Fred Sapier (Phil Proctor, who is best known for his voice roles in Pixar films like *Toy Story*, *A Bug’s Life*, *Finding Nemo*, etc.) bumps into Noah and more or less immediately decides to dedicate his life to her, thereupon eventually becoming a pathetic cuckold in the process. Unquestionably, Fred is what hippies would call a ‘square’ but because he is completely infatuated with Noah and her plastic pulchritude, he decides to make a valiant attempt at adopting her bohemian way of life by hanging out with drugged-out naked degenerates that babble on about nothing. Unbeknownst to poor Fred, Noah’s troubled heart is owned by a suave and stoic player named Mitch (Jack Nicholson in a largely improvised role where he more or less plays himself) who swings by the protagonist’s apartment anytime he feels like fucking her, even though he is apparently in love with a chick named Rita (which was apparently the name of the girl that Nicholson was dating in real-life at that time). Needless to say, heartbreak is a malignant metaphysical affliction that virtually every single character in the film seems to suffer from to some degree or another.

Throughout the film, protagonist Noah and her hippie friends are incessantly depicted doing childish friends like riding rocking horses and merry-go-rounds, holding broken baby dolls (undoubtedly symbolic of their traumatic childhoods and arrested development), and lying around naked while doing nothing like over indulged babies that are happy to play in their own feces and vomit. As she tells to a somewhat baffled Fred, Noah demands that her television be on at all times, even though she has the sound turned off, as if she needs a constant state of both stimulation and escapism. Noah also shows Fred a special wooden box where you apparently put something that “means something very special to you” and then you make a wish “for something that you really need to happen,” thus reflecting the lead heroine’s completely childish wishful thinking, as if she is afraid of taking actual action in her life and making things happen through

work and determination. For what might be described as their first date, Fred takes Noah to a natural history museum that makes the protagonist somewhat upset and inspires her to complain, “They’re not natural. [It is] supposed to be the Museum of Natural History. Well, there’s nothing natural about it. All those space things and switches. You know, when I was a little girl, we used to go there all the time on school trips. It was all natural then.” Needless to say, Fred is somewhat confused when Noah states in all seriousness, “When I was a child, I flew. I know it sounds crazy, but I did. I did fly. I just can’t remember how.” At this point, Noah becomes considerably upset and complains, “sometimes it hurts” because “if I could just remember it, then I’d be able to fly again.” Of course, when Fred questions if she really had the ability to fly, Noah becomes fairly hysterical and begins sobbing like an irrational child that hates the fact that reality does not conform to her wishes. Naturally, poor cuck Fred is hopelessly pussy-struck and thus reduces himself to dealing with the increasingly nonsensical behavior of a grown woman that acts like an emotionally erratic retarded child with ADHD, but of course it is only a matter of time before a woman as beautiful as Noah gets with a man that does more than just act like a passive doormat.

When her ‘dream lover’ Mitch randomly shows up on her roof and asks while smirking in a knowing fashion, “Well, is it alright – is it all right that I came at this – this time?,” Noah replies like a naïve schoolgirl with wet panties, “Yes, it’s more than all right,” even though she is in a relationship with Fred. Since he knows that she worships his cock, Mitch has no problem insulting Noah and telling her that he misses her because, as he states to the philistine protagonist in a less than flattering way, “...you’re very simpleminded. Do you know why I like simpleminded because? Because it’s real easy to make them do whatever you want them to.” Indeed, it is quite apparent that Mitch can get Noah to do whatever he wants, including fucking him on the roof even though she is in a relationship with Freddy boy, who walks in on the two while they are spooning yet does not have the testicular fortitude to confront his girlfriend about the fact that she is blatantly cheating on him with another man. While Fred hangs out with some naked hippies that are discussing “psychic self-defense” and rapist hobos, alpha-mensch Mitch plows Noah’s pussy in a montage sequence that really epitomizes the moral bankruptcy and degeneracy of the counterculture generation. Meanwhile, lapsed rebbe magician Orson Welles attempts a magic trick where he tries in vain to make Mitch disappear, as if he is Noah’s bargain bin guardian angel and knows that she is on the brink of destroying her relatively ‘healthy’ relationship with Fred.

While playing a mere secondary role, a fairly Aryan-looking Jewess with blonde curls named Gwen Welles (real name Gwen Goldberg) ultimately upstages the lead as a drug-addled hippie named ‘Bari.’ A real-life junky that died in 1993 at the fairly premature age of 42 as a result of anal cancer that she refused

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to get properly treated (incidentally, her younger sister died of colon cancer a decade later), Welles still managed to acquire a somewhat eclectic variety of film roles ranging from the eponymous lead of Roger Vadim's *Hellé* (1972) to a cute no-talent country singer that gets an audience's attention by doing a striptease in Robert Altman's *Nashville* (1975). In *A Safe Place*, Welles gives a totally improvised and considerably impassioned yet somewhat degrading performance where she recalls being stalked by a number of dirty old men and eventually hints while sobbing that she was once date raped after swallowing one-too-many sleeping pills. Indeed, while sincerely crying to her hippie comrades as a lone tear drips down her fairly adorable face, Welles declares, "I mean, I felt completely apart from anything that doesn't resemble – doesn't resemble being miserable," thereupon unwittingly foretelling the tragic course her life would ultimately take. Dyke filmmaker Donna Deitch would ultimately document Welles' final days in the doc *Angel on My Shoulder* (1998) where the deathly ill actress does not even vaguely resemble her former self.

At a certain point in the film, Fred takes Noah to a fancy apartment (which was actually owned by Jaglom's wealthy parents) that is filled with various authentic degenerate quasi-Expressionistic paintings that was apparently the male protagonist's childhood home (thus hinting that pussy Fred is indeed a stand-in for Jaglom). Not surprisingly, Noah decides to hide in a closet (which was, rather revealingly, actually Jaglom's own mother's closet) and ultimately gives a clue as to why she is such a dysfunctional young dame. Indeed, after proclaiming to Fred, "Some people have a light that seems to come out of the center of their eyes. There's – There's something that's so alive in them. You know, it's a quality of hopefulness, of love. People who can love have those lights. You've got them. Little lights that are always on, sparkling and warm," Noah proceeds to describe in a decidedly depression fashion how she has dead eyes. Naturally when Noah states, "In some people...In – In my father, the iris...has a milkiness to it. And they're flat. There's no light. They look, um – They look glazed over and dead. I'm terrified that...I'm all dead in my eyes, like my father. That I inherited an – [nervously laughs] inability to love," it becomes obvious that she has a dubious relationship with her daddy and that he might have done something to her that completely destroyed her inside, hence her current childlike state.

When Nicholson's character Mitch stops by for what he proudly describes as a "late nighttime drop-in" at Noah's apartment, it ultimately ushers in the beginning of the end of the protagonist's fairly prosaic relationship with sad pathetic beta-bitch Fred. Indeed, as soon as Mitch shows up, Noah immediately attempts to get Fred to leave so that she can have enough privacy to be meticulously defiled by her dream lover. While Noah eventually convinces Fred to go in a back room and stay there, the cuckolded boyfriend is more than aware of what is happening and decides to barge back in under the pretense of sharing some fine wine with his less than faithful girlfriend and her super suave fuck-buddy. Of

course, this totally annoys Noah, who is discernibly horny for marvelous Mitch's man meat and cannot tolerate being cunt-blocked, so she firmly tells Fred to leave immediately. Like many men in such a situation, Mitch becomes somewhat uneasy and complains to Noah, "I can't do this...I can't do this...I can't do this. I feel bad about this person coming in and out like this. You know, I mean, I just – I identify with the position, you know?," but the horny heroine reassures him by stating, "Maybe sometimes you should just take what you want when it's there." Indeed, even when her fuck-buddy Mitch demonstrates that he has a large enough of a heart and conscience to attempt to dissuade her from cheating on her beau and ultimately destroying her relationship, Noah cannot help but cheat on Fred in a most overtly emasculating and ultimately soul-destroying fashion. Of course, Mitch cannot turn down free premium pussy, no matter how awkward the situation gets. As for poor pathetic cuckold Fred, he decides to grab all the meaningful mementos that he has collected during his relationship with Noah and then proceeds to burn them in a fireplace in a scenario that seems like it was stolen from a similar scene in Dimitri Kirsanoff's masterful silent short *Brumes d'automne* (1929) aka *Autumn Mists* starring Nadia Sibirskaja. Upon exiting the apartment in a pathetically melodramatic fashion, Fred resentfully shouts to Noah and Mitch "I'm leaving" and "you've won," but they barely acknowledge his presence because they are in the middle of a heated pre-fuck foreplay session. After Fred slams the door like a pathetic sore loser, Noah celebrates by declaring "We won" and then she and Mitch proceed to laugh while continuing to make out.

In an unintentionally hilarious montage sequence towards the end of the film, Fred is featured looking directly at the camera and crying in regard to his bitter breakup with Noah, "These feelings are like...f-feelings of love [...] It's like the confusion of love, you know? Does love hurt, or is it something that makes you feel happy? Well, I guess it's somewhere right in between, just kind of on a tightrope." Of course, it is nearly impossible for any self-respecting man to have sympathy for a character that is as weak and ineffectual as dumb fuck cuck Fred, who ultimately loses Noah because he is a pathetic bore and pedantic pansy who acted in a groveling manner towards the heroine during their entire terribly mismatched (non)romance. In the end, Fred seems to make a desperate attempt to get back Noah by randomly swinging by her apartment, but she is nowhere to be found (indeed, as the film hints in the end, she has probably already committed suicide). Meanwhile, Noah is depicted sobbing in a bubble bath and when Orson Welles tells her to "disappear," she cries "no." In a scene that hints that Noah was molested by her father, she states while sitting in the bathtub, "He loved me as a little girl. I could tell, when the lights came on, when he looked at me." Of course, at this point in the film, there is no question that Noah—a perennial little girl that lacks the capacity to love or have a serious meaningful relationship—has become the way she is as a result of some serious

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daddy issues that she never resolved, hence her love of escapism and various imagined childhood memories, which she seems to have created as a self-defense mechanism to block her real memories out. After some children yell "Time to go now!" and Orson Welles proceeds to levitate a ball, Noah proceeds to commit suicide in her bathtub by swallowing some unmentioned substance in what is undoubtedly the most soft and flowery self-slaughter sequence in cinema history. After overdosing on whatever fatal cocktail that she decided to off herself with, Noah is depicted as a little girl in the bathtub juxtaposed with her adult self declaring, "I remember." Indeed, as one ultimately learns from *A Safe Place*, spoiled girls with serious daddy issues make for terrible girlfriends and tend to be attracted to shitty men. Naturally, the so-called sexual liberation movement gave such damaged dames as Noah a virtual license to speed up their inevitable self-destruction.

Despite my less than positive opinion of the film, I find it absolutely amazing that a cinematic work like *A Safe Place* was ever made in Hollywood, as it is so anti-linear and thematically degenerate that it ultimately makes Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973) seem like George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973) by comparison. After watching the film, I was not surprised to learn that Jaglom has described his fan base as being, "70-80% women and mostly women who are interested in examining the lives of women." Indeed, Jaglom (as well as his much more successful fellow Hebraic contemporary Woody Allen) undoubtedly proves that Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger was certainly on to something when he theorized in his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character* that Jewishness and femininity are one and the same. Notably, Weininger was certainly prophetic when it came to foreseeing the collective moral and cultural degeneration of the Occident, especially in regard to the *zeitgeist* depicted in *A Safe Place*, as reflected in his words, "Our age is not only the most Jewish, but also the most effeminate of all ages . . . an age of the most credulous anarchism, an age without any appreciation of the state and law . . . an age of the shallowest of all imaginable interpretations of history (historical materialism), an age of capitalism and Marxism, an age for which history, life, science, everything, has become nothing but economics and technology; an age that has declared genius to be a form of madness, but which no longer has one great artist or one great philosopher; an age that is most devoid of originality, but which chase most frantically after originality; an age that has replaced the idea of virginity with the cult of the demivierge. This age also has the distinction of being the first to have not only affirmed and worshipped sexual intercourse, but to have practically made it a duty, not as a way of achieving oblivion, as the Romans and Greeks did in their bacchanals, but in order to find itself and to give its own dreariness a meaning." Of course, all the sex depicted in *A Safe Place* is completely soulless and meaningless, not to mention oftentimes downright self-destructive, thus the film ironically ultimately criticizes the very same coun-

terculture movement and hippie chick type that it attempts to glorify, thereupon underscoring the innate nihilism of that particularly pathetic zeitgeist. Indeed, while I find Jaglom to be a particularly repugnant fellow, I can at least respect the fact that he acknowledges that he and his entire generation suffered from Puer aeternus, with his debut film arguably being the most blatant and literal example of this in cinema history, albeit from the curious perspective of a woman as opposed to a man like the filmmaker (who, as I mentioned before, claims that the character is partially based on himself).

Aside from his second feature *Tracks* (1977) starring Dennis Hopper as a deranged Vietnam War veteran, virtually every single one of Jaglom's films focus on women and specifically women themed issues, with *Eating* (1991) centering around female food obsession, *Babyfever* (1994) focusing on child-craving chicks that are struggling with their biological clocks, and *Going Shopping* (2005) depicting the feminine vice of jovially wasting tons of time and money on worthless junk. Of course, I guess that is what one should expect from a man who once stated in regard to his mother's disturbingly gynocentric influence on him, "I had this very enormous influence of femininity in my childhood and I was allowed to be a girl to some extent, which boys weren't. She gave my access. I'm sure that's why I am so connected to women. She never said you can't cross this line, so I got to try on the new lipsticks and be the girl in the family." Going back to Weininger, Jaglom's oeuvre indubitably demonstrates that the Austrian philosopher was right when he wrote, "No men who really think deeply about women retain a high opinion of them." Naturally, considering Jaglom's films present women in a realistic and, in turn, rather unflattering fashion, it should be no surprise that feminists tend to either love or loathe his work (notably, lecherous quasi-feminist Anaïs Nin was one of the few vocal supporters of Jaglom's debut when it was released and even actively promoted it by penning a rave review and showing it to women on college campuses). Personally, I found *A Safe Place* to be a singularly torturous experience due to the fact that I not only felt a bit of *Fremdscham* as a result of seeing a rather bloated and broken Orson Welles being reduced to portraying a babbling kosher clown with a terribly phony Yiddish accent, but also because I had to be reminded that countless Jewish men like Jaglom have a peculiar propensity to prey on Aryan (anti)goddesses with serious daddy issues that no sane or self-respecting white man would ever dare tolerate. Indeed, while Jaglom once proudly stated, "I'm a Jew because of Hitler. More than anything, anti-Semites try to make you not a Jew. So self-respect requires you to be a Jew," he has demonstrated with both his films and actions that he has a curious case of racial schizophrenia (in fact, he has only married and reproduced with goy gals with traditional Nordic features), but then again that is just one of the many reasons why he is one of the most innately Jewish filmmakers of his generation. Aside from validating Weininger's theories on Jewishness and femininity, *A Safe Place* also demonstrates that even the most

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women film oriented gay Aryan filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder seem fairly macho when compared to heterosexual Hebrews like Jaglom.

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Henry Jaglom (1994)

Although a relatively prevalent phenomenon that affects many women, especially of the educated white middleclass sort, Hollywood seems to be totally petrified to touch issues relating to what is oftentimes colloquially described as ‘baby rabies’ when a woman who is approaching middle-age becomes desperate to get pregnant and have a child before her ovaries expire and she is doomed to live the sad and pathetic non-life of a perennially lonely spinster who has failed to accomplish the one thing indisputable thing that all members of the so-called fairer sex are put on this world to do. Of course, in an increasingly spiritually castrated post-feminist world where girls are practically taught from birth by both public schools and television that establishing a successful career and pretending to have a penis is infinitely more important than supposedly outmoded things like getting married and having children, it is easy to why the culture-distorting degenerates in Hollywood would ignore this rather relevant social issue as it would not be in the interests of the kosher clowns of Tinseltown to expose this pathetic yet perturbing trend, for it is arguably just one of the many natural intended results in their culturally corrosive campaign of post-holocaust anti-white hatred. After all, it is no coincidence that Hollywood also incessantly promotes so-called multiculturalism, miscegenation, homosexuality, xenophilia, and practically every other form of degeneracy, but I digress. Somewhat not surprisingly considering his fetishistic obsession with distinctly female issues that no man would ever give a shit about as well as his tendency towards exploiting estrogen-charged excremental emotions, Hebraic quasi-arthouse auteur Henry Jaglom (*Tracks*, *Venice/Venice*) is one of the few filmmakers that has dealt with the absolutely horrifying phenomenon of hormonally imbalanced women in their 30s and 40s that are dying to get knocked up, though he focuses specifically on bourgeois left-wingers of the largely Judaic sort. Indeed, *Babyfever* (1994)—a work that was advertised with the tagline, “For Those Who Hear Their Clock Ticking...,” which hints that Jaglom felt there was a sizable surplus of kid-craving women on the brink of sterility that the film would appeal to—is a nearly completely plotless piece of emotionally grotesque pseudo-philosophical gynocentricism where a bunch of hyper hypocritical hens of the largely professionally successful sort bemoan the fact they do not have kids because they have dedicated their lives to both their careers and weak male partners in what ultimately proves to be a great example of the seeming incapacity for most women to take personal responsibility for their actions. Indeed, *Babyfever* might best be described as the yapping barren yenta show and naturally it is as aesthetically horrifying and radically revolting as it sounds.

Starring Jaglom’s Shiksa second (ex)wife Victoria Foyt, who was also credited as co-penning and co-directing the film (not surprisingly, she has no other

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directing credits, thus hinting that Jaglom gave her a token credit), in a role she probably now finds quite embarrassing since she married and had two mischling children with the 'auteur,' only for him to divorce her for a younger woman about twelve years later, *Babyfever* is a vapid film about vapid spoiled spinsters of the nauseatingly narcissist yet neurotic sort who more than clearly demonstrate why most heterosexual men cannot stand to be in a room full of yapping chicks. Indeed, the film features women that are such loathsomely shameless navel-gazers that they act like getting some stupid chump to cum in their festering cunts and impregnate them is an insanely important issues worthy of deep philosophical discussion. Directed by a self-described "male lesbian" whose own brother, actor Michael Emil, resents him because he is proud of the fact that he's an exceedingly effeminate wuss that loathes masculinity, the film depicts an insufferably insecure heroine who is terribly obsessed with becoming a progenitor yet cannot decide whether she wants to get knocked up by the lame 'safe' corporate asshole boyfriend that she doubts she even loves or a self-centered old flame of the tall, dark, and handsome persuasion who can wet her panties simply by staring into her weary eyes. Not surprisingly considering it is a Jaglom whine epic, *Babyfever* also contains a sort of outstandingly obnoxious quasi-docudrama style film-within-a-film where the fourth wall is less than elegantly broken down and the actresses suddenly play themselves by staring directly at the viewer and candidly revealing their true thoughts on being melancholic barren women who feel extremely empty and discontent because they have wasted their entire lives on worthless careers instead of churning out progeny. Indeed, the only thing I could think about while watching these half-rotten hags excreting gallons upon gallons of fuming verbal diarrhea is how much they need some burly sub-literate bohunk to violently shove his purple-headed monster down their all-too-proper throats and give them a nice hearty wad of high grade baby batter.

As anyone that is even vaguely familiar with Jaglom and his singularly self-involved oeuvre knows, he is a filmmaker that likes to style himself as an actor-liberating 'passive auteur' who gives his poor performers plenty of room to improvise and deliver erratic explosions of masturbatory histrionics (indeed, as he once proudly stated, "As a filmmaker, I don't direct. I take away. I extract. Orson [Welles] said I was like an old Eskimo carving away at a walrus tusk, trying to find what's inside."). Personally, I think Jaglom is really just an inordinately lazy psychic vampire who does not want to be bothered with writing a script or created a truly cinematic *mise-en-scène* and instead relies on his friends' pathology-ridden emotional outbursts for ostensibly enthralling film material (though I must admit that the director got a great performance out of Dennis Hopper in *Tracks* (1977)), which is no different in *Babyfever* where the viewer is forced to endure the largely verbal melodramatic gymnastics of superlatively shallow bourgeoisie Jewesses and Shiksa skanks who all seem to suffer from a sort of pre-menopausal psychosis as a result of the fact that they are too weak,

self-centered, cowardly, and/or stupid to accomplish something that even the most mentally retarded of crackhead negroes can accomplish by getting knocked up and popping out spawn. Like virtually every single Jaglom celluloid circle jerk, *Babyfever* is first and foremost a vulgar vanity piece where the filmmaker tries in vain to convince the viewer just how important and deep the issues in his life are. Indeed, while the film might be about a self-indulgently neurotic chick whose vagina is starting to dry up, it is ultimately really a quasi-covert self-congratulatory tribute to the fact that, out of all the rich and successful men in Hollywood, gorgeous goy gal Victoria Foyt opted to despoil her genetics by practicing miscegenation and having a child with a whiny Hebraic wuss like jack-off Jaglom, who ultimately makes Woody Allen seem like a stoic and highly self-disciplined SS-Sturmbannführer by comparison. Indeed, *Babyfever* unintentionally demonstrates that it takes a special kind of neurotic woman with low-esteem to succumb to the irrevocable racial sin of Blutschande.

At the very beginning of *Babyfever*, reasonably attractive brunette spinster Gena (Victoria Foyt, who only really appeared in her Hebraic hubby's films) is depicted looking quite melancholy while spying on little kids playing at a playground in a fashion that would probably inspire a concerned parent to call the police if she were a middle-aged man instead of a woman. Of course, as her visibly decaying physical pulchritude demonstrates, Gena's biological clock is running out and the only thing she can think about is having a baby, even though she is constantly coming up with absurd reasons in her own mind as to why she should not have one. Unfortunately, Gena does not really love her talk, dark, and hokey preppie boyfriend James (played by overrated novelist J.D. Salinger's somewhat less swarthy son Matt Salinger), who has more than enough money to buy a large house and provide for a fairly large family. At the beginning of the film after the two have seemingly lackluster sex, Gena accuses James of attempting to "trap" her "into getting pregnant," even though she is the one that was responsible for refraining to tell her boring beau that she is ovulating and curiously neglected to wear her diaphragm. James is fairly eager about having a child with Gena and attempts to coerce her into being his baby-momma by saying to her in an insufferably sentimental fashion, "...you bring out the best in me and I bring out the best in you, and it would be a crime if we didn't share that with a child." Of course, Gena does not see things that way, as she finds James to be too damn lame and tame to keep her interest for a lifetime as he is a mediocre man that uses golf metaphors when discussing the maturity (or lack thereof) of their sapless sham relationship. As is hinted throughout the film, Gena is only in a relationship with James because she has suffered great heartbreak in the past and sees her boyfriend as someone that she can count on, even if he is a hopeless bore. In fact, she much prefers her emotionally neglectful and proudly arrogant Hollywood actor ex-boyfriend Anthony Thomas (Eric Roberts in a cameo-like one-scene role), who pays her an unexpected visit at her place of employment

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under the pretense of needing her “financial wisdom” since he apparently suffers from “financial foolishness” in a shameless attempt to get her to have his baby, even though he has not seen or spoken to her in a number of years. Indeed, after describing how he began to develop an affection for children after being in a relationship with a woman that had a young daughter, Anthony states to Gena, “It made me realize I want a child more than anything in the world. When I thought about the reasons I wanted I child, I only thought about you. It’s not like wanting a motorcycle or wanting a horse; it’s wanting a life.” As Gena states to a friend in regard to Anthony and the sort of carnal spell that he has over her, “He’s got this strange kind of effect on me. I see him and I feel myself ovulating,” but unfortunately she cannot trust him since he treated her like trash in the past. Ultimately, Gena must decide whether she wants to let James or Anthony to impregnate her with their seed. Naturally, as a navel-gazing neurotic, it makes for an impossible decision for Gena to make.

Undoubtedly, the ‘centerpiece’ of *Babyfever* is a baby shower for Gena’s dumb blonde co-worker Diane (Jackie Moen, who had a small role in the *Troma turd Class of Nuke ’Em High Part II: Subhumanoid Meltdown* (1991)) where about a dozen or so pseudo-intellectual careerist chicks that wasted their most fertile years on college and work go on hysterical self-centered rants about their seemingly intangible dreams of pregnancy, disillusionment with weak and ineffectual men, and mixed thoughts on being the first generation of women to be seduced by the largely lesbian-led anti-male movement known as feminism, which a couple of these women criticize for not emphasizing the importance of motherhood. While the baby shower is supposed to be a joyous occasion where the guests celebrate the gift of life while acting like catty preteen princesses, the experience ultimately pushes Gena over the edge to the point where she routinely cries and even begins screaming hatefully at a brainwashed Christian negresses who proudly proclaims that her faith in the lord savior Jesus Christ will ultimately lead her to finding the right sort of god-fearing mensch to have children with. Indeed, like many barren women her age, Gena’s mind seems to be slowly but surely deteriorating to the point where she has developed her own idiosyncratic nihilistic *Weltanschauung* that seems change by the minute, so listening to the candid yet oftentimes contradictory thoughts of both mothers and spinsters naturally only compounds her progressive mental derangement. While Anthony has yet to try to contact Gena since he visited her at work, James is so keen on having a child with her that he offers to buy her a large house if she agrees to start a family with him. As James argues to Gena as to why they should get married and have children together, “We’ve talked about children. We’ve talked about marriage. We’ve talked about love. We’ve talked about commitment. We’ve talked about our lives together. I mean, hell, if you wanna be a yuppie, our careers even mesh.” Of course, like psychopaths, women are easily bored and Gena finds James’ perfectly planned proposal to be sterile and passionless and

thus cannot imagine herself spending her entire life with such a patently prosaic pussy. Somewhat ironically, as their emotionally erratic rants during the baby shower segment indubitably demonstrates, many of Gena's friends would love to have a beta-bitch like James. Somewhat humorously, when Gena less than passionately describes his offer to buy her a home as "sweet," James becomes fairly upset and complains in regard to being an accursed beta, "Sweet? The girls in school always used to call me 'cute.' I hated that word just as much."

Among other things, the seemingly unending baby shower segment demonstrates why there has never really been any great female philosophers as the viewer is bombarded with rant after rant by ostensibly intellectual college-indoctrinated spinsters who seem to be finally coming to terms with the fact that they were tricked out of their birthright of reproduction by the resentful feminist dykes and commie agitators of the so-called 'New Left' who began destroying universities during the late-1960s. Undoubtedly what virtually all of these women have in common is that they are admittedly unhappy, even though they seem to have achieved all of their professional dreams, thus underscoring the idiocy of idealism. The only woman that does not seem totally miserable is a vain and vapid happy-go-lucky blonde who proudly proclaims while maintaining a stupidly smug smile, "I think that it's really important for someone like myself to have babies because I have good genes and I think that genes are very important in the world. And all my brothers and sisters have very good features. And I'm bright. I was in all the advanced classes in school." Of course, as her words rather clearly reveal, this dopey dame only wants to have children for selfish and superficial reasons and not because she has the undying urge to be a mommy. In another scene that hints that many women want to have children for largely selfish reasons, a less than fertile-looking dyke-like dame states, "I have four nieces and when I play with them or change their diapers, I see my family in their faces. And then it becomes very personal for me because it makes me realize I might not see my face reflected back." Somehow how I doubt that this woman would be doing the world a favor if she sired more people with her sub-homely face, but I digress. Naturally, the estrogen-driven egomania does not end there, as an attractive dirty blonde is depicted ranting, "I thought for sure by now I would have at least one or two children and the fact that I haven't makes me feel like I have been left out of the secret society; the society of mothers," as if the sole reason to have children is so that you can fit in with other catty conformist cunts.

In a scene that seems to epitomize the quasi-sociopathic mentality that many modern women have, Gena shamelessly attempts to coerce her redhead friend Rosie (Frances Fisher of Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* (1992) and Brad Furman's *The Lincoln Lawyer* (2011)) into intentionally getting pregnant without her unsuspecting long-term boyfriend's knowledge. Luckily, Rosie is somewhat more morally sane and responds to Gena by stating in an angry fashion, "There's two types of women in this world that get accidentally pregnant: idiots and liars."

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Clearly Gena does not care if she is an idiot and/or liar, as she is a slave to the to the curse of her seemingly perennial spinsterdom, thus making it seem all the more absurd that she will not allow her fairly wealthy boyfriend to impregnate her, but such is the perennial paradox that is the innately irrational female mind. Notably, towards the end of the baby shower, a wop-like chick with an oh-so chic goofy little boy hat states while seeming extremely desperate, "When I think about how the body's natural response to a wound is to heal, it reminds me of how I feel that a woman's urge to have a baby, or her desire to have a baby, is a way of the body healing itself. And I feel that it's so strong and powerful and that, in some ways, that's why we feel that we're not whole, or I feel that I'm not whole, by not having a baby. It's as if I've been wounded and if I get to have the baby, I'm gonna be healed." Ultimately, the woman with the atrocious hat on her head seems to be quite right, as the film concludes abruptly with an astonishingly absurd tacked-on happy end where a glaringly happy Gena is depicted caressing her unclad pregnant stomach while proudly declaring with a self-satisfied smile, "I guess you're wondering how this happened [...] I met someone wonderful, you know, and it just happened." As I have certainly noticed in regard to women I personally know, becoming a mother certainly seems to help to cure various forms of female neurosis. In the very last scene of the film, lead actress Victoria Foyt is depicted frolicking around a pool while holding her real-life baby daughter Sabrina Jaglom. Not surprisingly, a title reading "For my daughter, Sabrina" scrolls up the screen during this motherly scene, thereupon confirming that Jaglom largely made the film as a sort of celluloid baby shower.

While *Babyfever* seems like a sort of cinematic love letter to Jaglom's wife and her struggle to find the right man to get pregnant (notably, when Foyt is featured at the end of the film pregnant and stating, "I met someone wonderful," she is clearly talking about Jaglom in what ultimately proves to be a vomit-inducing scene of pseudo-sentimental masturbatory self-indulgence), the film feels like a cheap con packed with phony pathos and kitsch melodramatics when one considers that the auteur would eventually divorce the mother of his children for a redheaded Shiksa actress named Tanna Frederick that is young enough to be his granddaughter and bears a strikingly resemblance to his own daughter Sabrina. Somewhat humorously considering Jaglom's ultra-left-wing politics (as revealed in the book *My Lunches with Orson* (2013), Orson Welles would oftentimes rebuke him for being such a hysterical "bleeding heart liberal"), Foyt, who has reinvented herself as an adult fiction sci-fi writer, was accused of 'racism' because her dystopian novel *Save the Pearls: Revealing Eden* (2012) depicts an inverted world where negroes make up a pernicious ruling class called 'Coals' who came to dominate the world because global warming has killed off most whites as a result of their melanin-deprived skin being too sensitive to the averse environment. In fact, Foyt was so ruthlessly hounded by pathetic social justice warrior types that the new politically correct owners of the long running American fantasy and

horror fiction pulp mag *Weird Tales* decided to renege on their plans to publish excerpts from her novel after these resentful slave-morality-ridden pansies threatened to boycott the magazine (naturally, these same parasites of puritanical racial justice have also flooded book review sites with hysterical negative reviews). Of course, as a beautiful white woman that decided to commit *Rassenschande* and procreate with the proudly effeminate great-great-great-great-grandson of Jewish enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, it is dubious to say the least to accuse Foyt of being a racist propagandist who writes novels to promote the survival of Europids (but then again, considering how her marriage ended with Jaglom, she might have finally wised up). Somewhat curiously considering her mating habits, the eponymous heroine of Foyt's novel is a self-loathing girl that believes she is ugly because she has white skin.

Personally, I see it as a fairly tragic and soulless thing when a beautiful woman that is desperate to get knocked up decides to hook up with a 'safe' but prosaic beta-bitch because he provides her with security, but such sad scenarios seem increasingly common, especially in our abstract technocratic world where physical strength and masculinity are becoming increasingly obsolete in the eyes of many women, who seem to have lost their maternal instincts and never seem to consider that reproducing with a weak, ugly, and/or racially hostile fellow can have catastrophic consequences in terms of the progeny she sires. Indeed, while *Babyfever* somewhat depicts otherwise, most women will always choose a wealthy man that they are not attracted to over a middleclass man that they are madly in love with, as they are cold and calculating and have special archaic instincts to control their emotions, or as Esther Vilar wrote in her classic text *The Manipulated Man* (1971), "We have already mentioned woman's lack of emotional capacity. The fact that women make every attempt to suppress man's ability to express his emotions is a certain indication of this. Yet she still contrives to create the myth of feminine depth of feeling and vulnerability [...] Women really are callous creatures – mainly because it is to their disadvantage to feel deeply. Feelings might seduce them into choosing a man who is of no use to them, i.e., a man whom they could not manipulate at will [...] What an advantage a man would have if only he realized the cold, clear thoughts running through a woman's head while her eyes are brimming with tears."

Of course, while *Babyfever* is full of emotionally grotesque women crying, the only sincere tears shed are those of self-pity. Indeed, I think Jaglom's identifies with woman because he can relate to their tools of emotional manipulation, which is indubitably the director's most glaring 'talent' as a singularly vainglorious filmmaker who has made a career out of shamelessly whoring out his and his friends' toddler-esque temper tantrums and pity parties. Although Jaglom likes to think of his films as "Rorschach drawings of his emotional condition," they have no more depth than the petty phony tears a woman will shed when she has betrayed a lover and wants him to forget that he is mad at her. After all, normal

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individuals who are genuinely miserable do not go around flaunting their misery as if it is a glorious badge of honor, yet Jaglom thinks that is an act of sheer artistic brilliance to make a film like *Always* (1985) where he immortalized his first divorce by casting himself and his first Shiksa wife in the lead roles and reenacted some of the moments leading up to the disintegration of their marriage. If one learns anything from watching *Babyfever*, it is to stay clear of clear of childless women in their mid-30s to early-40s, especially if you're a dignified male that values your sanity, as baby rabies make PMS seem like child's play by comparison and will inspire women to decidedly desperate things that might include destroying your life, not to mention the fact these sort of women tend to carry tons of emotional baggage and rarely stay with their partners. Although a sort of quasi-rom-com, the only humorous aspects of Jaglom's film seem to be accidental, including grotesque Jewish caricatures (e.g. real-life Jewish real estate developer Zack Norman portraying a super sleazy fictional real estate developer who is so desperate for money that he upsets his wife by neglecting to tell her that he has taken a painting that was hanging on the wall of their family home to get it 'appraised') and the largely ridiculous tears of spoiled lapsed beauties who refuse to accept the fact that they long ago reached the peak of their pulchritude. Ultimately, watching *Babyfever* felt like spending nearly two hours in a sort of early-1990s Hebraic Hollywood spinster hell where a strategically multicultural cast of dumb and obnoxious dames in obscenely outmoded clothing demand that the viewer endure their incessant whining and complaining about problems that they are largely responsible for, thereupon making the film the perfect audio-visual torture device as well as something that can be utilized to clear out an entire room of people during a party.

-Ty E

CORALINE

Henry Selick (2009)

Coraline is a 3D adventure brought to the screen by the mind that has delivered us James and the Giant Peach, The Nightmare Before Christmas, and the under appreciated Monkeybone. However, you wouldn't know this because Tim Burton's name has been put on two out of three of his masterworks. Henry Selick is a man who does every bit of slave labor and it treated with the idea of being generally unknown. Hell, until a couple years ago, I'd thought that Tim Burton actually directed both James and the Giant Peach and The Nightmare Before Christmas. Shame on me for not recognizing the talent that could never be the same director as of The Corpse Bride. Coraline is a film released marketed solely as a three dimensional motion picture blowout. On each of the 3D films being released, a slew of animated film trailers accompany the print promoting the new escapades of the theatrical experience while spilling out of the screen. It's a form of oblivious shameful promotion for something that can only do magic for certain genres. Coraline, in question, is a marvelous film but as previously pointed out by Fox, the "depth" adds annoyance to the visual splendor and only impedes the dark, morose effect of Neil Gaiman's horror tale of puberty. Coraline would best be viewed in a home theater of choice rather than a dark auditorium filled with sniveling brats talking aloud, denying the influx of manners. This fairy tale follows a girl who's just bored with it all after moving into an apartment with her dreary mother and father. Like most children, Coraline is blind to the fact that she is loved and seeks out counsel in another world that she discovers through a miniature door. Like Alice, she discovers marvelous wonders but the truth is that it's all a facade put on upon a witch of sorts. The witch aspect of the film comes on upon as a tedious afterthought that's never exploited to an acceptable level. You'll hear mention of her, her purpose, and her legacy, but you'll get nothing more than that. Concerning my reception to the film, Coraline is an animated blend of Silent Hill and Alice in Wonderland. To provide raw support, figuratively and metaphysically, a sidekick called Wybie is introduced early on sporting a mask reminiscent of Tim Burton's Batman Returns goon's. It's only revealed at the end that he is in fact black, by sight of his crusted Aunt Jemima lookalike grandmother. He puts up as a good supporting character and defeats the purpose of such by having his own unequivocal charm and his uncanny ability to deal with the nagging personality of Coraline. Seeing as he doesn't appear in the story by Neil Gaiman, he revealed that this character was needed or else Coraline would have spent the duration of the film talking to herself. In Mike Leigh's Naked, there was a line that reminded me greatly of Coraline's struggle to cure boredom. Louise: So what happened, were you bored in Manchester? Johnny: Was I bored? No, I wasn't fuckin' bored. I'm never bored. That's the trouble with everybody - you're all so bored. You've had nature

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explained to you and you're bored with it, you've had the living body explained to you and you're bored with it, you've had the universe explained to you and you're bored with it, so now you want cheap thrills and, like, plenty of them, and it doesn't matter how tawdry or vacuous they are as long as it's new as long as it's new as long as it flashes and fuckin' bleeps in forty fuckin' different colors. So whatever else you can say about me, I'm not fuckin' bored. Repeat after me - Coraline is not for children. In no way, shape, or form, has this movie been created to appease the hungry eyes of voracious dwarfs. This film highlights phantasmagorical carnivals and stage plays featuring rabid mice, naked obese ladies, dead children that have been kidnapped by a foreign power (i.e. sexual trafficking), and many other meandering surrealist touches. Coraline is a worthy experience for those who enjoy stop-motion or even just the presence of her devoted martyrdom for her parent's sake. It's still a bit disappointing to discover that the hell her parents went through wasn't remembered. If you enjoy every bit of animation and surrealism as you can swallow, as well as appreciating amazing voice work from Keith David, then Coraline is a knockout and no exception from Selick's other works. This comes highly recommended as both a film and a message promoting anti-materialism.

-mAQ

DEPRAVED

Henry Weintraub* (2008)

In the generation of low-budget shorts, only several are honestly worth mentioning. The cinematic genius of Broadstone's shorts 3 Dead Girls! being the most influential of which I've seen. When involved with low-budget films, it's easy to become astray with ideas and try to soar to high, only to fall back down to the ground. Henry Weintraub's short film Depraved follows a paraplegic killer. Killer in the sense of vengeance and self-defense, mind you. Edith is a beautiful woman who is catatonic (In a "play dead" sense) and wheelchair bound. Show through a series of vignettes, we learn why she won't eat or speak, and why she is crippled. Together with her backpack of tools of vengeance, she begins a slow quest to smite those who have ever wronged her. Perhaps this film's most recognizable scene is the house invasion scene complimented with a wheelchair or it's scintillating use of Lloyd Kaufman as a mild-mannered doctor on a house call. Indeed, Lloyd Kaufman is in it, and he has an entirely new stage presence. He speaks in a normal low voice which actually hints a sign of intelligence rather than his goofy get-up where he's normally surrounded by naked "Tromettes" When you bring up these revenge films, most of them incorporate rape as the catalyst of these ironic and justful deaths which usually end with castration or a family left behind by a cheating, raping husband, this seen in I Spit on your Grave. Similar to Nicholson's Torched, Depraved features gruesome bloodshed and a nihilistic atmosphere, creating a raw and tense foreground. The only difference between the two is the lack of a horrible soundtrack and great acting. Weintraub captures the clever malleability of the shadows and provides excellent lighting. Depraved features some amazing acting followed by manipulated gestures that bring the overall force of the film down. While many might scowl at the two bumbling detectives in this film, I appreciate the rudimentary characters. They offer a terrific throwback to when cops weren't given 13 types of personality disorders in order to make it "arthouse depth" Rural America is always to blame in these films. Filthy white trash rednecks are always the people depicted in film to never associate with. I'm sure if a Negro were to play the raping villain that would be considered racist. Depraved is a short film that works within it's own constraints. It offers a glimpse into a mind that really has no other options but to kill and to avenge. After all, Edith really has nothing left to live for except for her final piece of art; a blood-splattered canvas.

-mAQ

BEER CHASE
BEER CHASE

Herbert Achternbusch (1977)

Once again paying penetrating anti-homage to the South German state he loves to hate, rural Bavaria, absurdist arthouse comedian Herbert Achternbusch's *Bierkampf* (1977) aka *Beer Chase* is a film about the collective hyper-hedonistic mass hysteria that is the distinctly Bavarian Oktoberfest – a 16-day festival celebrating the krauts' greatest vice; beer – in all of its gutter-level glory. Starring Achternbusch himself in the rather ridiculous role of an unloved, unlikeable, and disrespected roguish police officer who gets his kicks by kicking people and acting like an all-around Bavarian buffoon, *Beer Chase* is the sort of quasi-gonzo-style mockumentary/documentary/narrative hybrid that psychopathic Sacha Baron Cohen would later seemingly mimic with his Semitic slapstick scat pieces like *Borat* (2006) and *The Dictator* (2012), although on a somewhat less personal and insightful level. To say that arthouse agitator Achternbusch seems to have a great sense of shame and disdain for his Bavarian friends and family would be an unsound understatement as his films, especially *Beer Chase*, feature the same sort of ethno-masochistic mockery of kraut kultur that would predominate in the artistic works of German Dadaist George Grosz – a supposed true blue heinee who created curious and callous caricatures of German figures as subhuman *untermensch* – albeit to a more realistic, intimate, and obnoxious degree. Featuring a self-loathing Afro-Bavarian, an authentic Bavarian in blackface, a theology student who has lost the faith and now hocks cigs and cigars like a Pakistani street merchant, an elderly man who lost his dream of being able to compose orchestras after catching frostbite on his fingers during his tour of Stalingrad, and a slew of sexually repressed authoritarian wives and emasculated, embittered men, *Beer Chase* is the sort of anti-völkisch and peasant-parodying piece that is contra to everything National Socialism was all about, aside from the bodacious barroom beer-chugging of the brownshirts, yet without the Hebraic hate of *Unholy-Wood* to taint the tomfoolery of this distinctly 'German comedy' with the sort of mundane Mel Brooks-esque mumbo jumbo of the kosher conman persuasion that has been beaten to death since the Second World War. In other words, *Beer Chase* was sown in the banal backwoods of Achternbusch's Bavaria as opposed to Vaudeville or some Polish shtetl and for that reason alone makes *Beer Chase* worth the price of admission.

I would be lying if I did not admit that I hate all forms of alcohol, especially beer, as well as bar-dwelling drunkards, novice teenage alcoholics, inebriated vagrants, crypto-alcoholic soccer moms, belligerent bee-bopping black drunks, piss drunk punks, muddled heavy metal morons, pissed preppy pompous asses, bourgeois beer connoisseurs, wine-sniffing wimps, and just about every other dipsomaniac dipshit disposition, but I have slightly less animosity for drunken rednecks, at least of the patently pathetic and, in turn, unintentionally humorous

kind, which is luckily the sort of debauched drinker type that is most prominent in *Beer Chase*; an unlove letter to the Bavarian everyman, the bumpkin barfly whose only source of solace in life is enjoying a cold glass of brewsky with his equally pitiable compatriots. In *Beer Chase*, movie-masochist marvel Herbert Achternbusch – a man that prides himself on getting in trouble on and off camera – stars as anti-hero ‘Herbert, Polizist’ who pits himself against these poor peasant and pisswater-possessed souls as a hysterical human-punching-bag who goes from table to table inciting individuals by using a variety of moronic and boorish antagonizing tactics at a large ‘Oktoberfest’ festival in Bavaria. As a swarthy police man with large black curls and a matching mustache, Achternbusch – the master of German arthouse disguise in a role that is typically contra to his true character – seems most authentic as a despairing fellow that is fed up with life and especially his nagging wife who, like everyone he knows and doesn’t know, treats him like pure scheiße, but to a more extreme degree because as she tells her hubby, “with me – life sentence”; a very real hell that neither will dare escape from as it would be far too taboo for such conservative blue-collar types to dissolve their ill-fated marriage. Crestfallen cop Herbert also seems quite apathetic towards his job, so much so that he allows an upside-down naked man, obviously in great distress as he is furiously kicking at the air, to sink to his demise without lifting a finger to help. Herbert is not the only miserable fellow in town, as a handsome yet humorless theology student turned cigarette-peddler who may or may not be the police officer’s brother believes quite seriously that, “There is no salvation in the world, yet. There cannot be salvation in the world because there is no world, yet. What you see here cannot be the world.” But, of course, the miserable existence these Bavarian proletarians call life is their world and a rather real yet redundant one at that, hence why they celebrate inane inebriation for 16 liver-busting days every October to escape from this world and the dreariness of their horribly humdrum lives.

Totally blurring the line between fiction and reality, especially during the second half of the film, *Beer Chase* ironically gets the most interesting and unbelievable during the real-life scenes at Oktoberfest where the contrived character of policeman Herbert literally bumps heads and beer mugs with the real world for the most ridiculous and looney of consequences, as if the silent humor of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton was to meet the absurdist realism of a Werner Herzog film. Of course, some of the scenes set during the Oktoberfest are contrived, including a conversation with a black Bavarian who states, “I always say, I prefer a Negro to a woman...A Negro has a brain too...How are things in Uganda?” in a most bizarre manner as if this Negro – who has a striking resemblance to Ugandan dictator Idi Amin (who was still in power during the time of the film’s production) – has fully assimilated himself into a banal Bavarian way of life, so much so that he has consummately forgotten his Bantu roots, yet other scenes are totally indistinguishable from reality and fiction,

BEER CHASE

hence the low-brow comedic genius of Beer Chase. At the conclusion of Beer Chase, policeman Herbert goes on an insane rant as if he is experiencing some sort of pornographic psychological break, stating to countless people that "Today I will kill his sod meat! Adieu!....Adieu!" after proclaiming that he has sexually ravaged and impregnated 100 Frauen, thereupon signaling the beginning of the end of the Oktoberfest festivities.

In the end, the drunken policeman lays face down in an undignified manner among trash and other debris left by the seemingly barbarian Bavarian beer devotees, an eventful event that his compatriots remark was the natural result of "a zero" who "wants to be something. A policeman, of all things" that has "killed him, the zero." In a display of what is surely a parody of stereotypical female narcissism, Herbert's mistress also remarks, "How can someone I like kill himself!" and his widow, in a separate scene, similarly declares that their life together amounted to "nothing" in a decidedly cold manner. Like most of Achternbusch's films, the memory of National Socialism is sprinkled throughout Beer Chase such as Herbert mistaking the sound of a brass horn instrument for the Wehrmacht marching band, which is especially interesting when one considers that during World War II, from 1939 to 1945, Oktoberfest was discontinued and Oktoberfest beer (which is 2% more alcohol than normal beer) was banned, thus it seems rather ironic that the backslider Bavarian auteur would depict the festival as the height of South German imbecility, especially when considering his hatred of all things associated with the Third Reich. Thus, one can only assume that Achternbusch – who was born and raised in the land he can't just seem to forget, let alone depict cinematically – hates just about everything and anything distinctly Bavarian, even more so than the Nazis. Ironically, Beer Chase is probably the only film directed by the kaiser of avant-garde German comedy that would be accessible to peasants, especially of the Bavarian brand, and one of the very few truly "proletarian" cinematic slapstick pieces. Say what you will about bacchanalian hillbilly folk, but they are usually the people that are the least inhibited about laughing at themselves and I would not be surprised if Beer Chase is considered a clodhopper cult classic of sorts in Bavaria. I, for one, as an adamant opponent of alcohol, cannot think of another film that made drunken debauchery with homely women and frenzied fists over spilled beer mugs seem like a delectable affair.

-Ty E

THE LAST HOLE

Herbert Achternbusch (1981)

Admittedly, any respect that I once had for Charlie Chaplin as both a man and comedian was virtually all but totally annihilated when I witnessed his lame ass Fremdscham-enducing speech at the conclusion of *The Great Dictator* (1940) where he acts like a slave-morality-ridden and Adderall-addled bleeding heart autist suffering from an acute social justice seizure. Indeed, it was no so much Chaplin's plastic left-wing politics that I found revolting, but his pathetic pseudo-humanistic American-politican-esque pandering, as if he would eat the rotten kosher cunt of Emma Lazarus's corpse to prove that he is the kind of super duper morally righteous humanist hero that was born to wear a nice and shiny Zio-approved 'good guy badge.' While Chaplin might have once proudly stated, "I remain just one thing, and one thing only, and that is a clown. It places me on a far higher plane than any politician," he certainly demonstrated with his fairly philo-Semitic Uncle Adolf satire, which was heavily influenced by his viewing of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (1935) aka *Triumph des Willens* and unsettling personal obsession with the fact that he and the Führer has many personal similarities (aside from their superficial physical similarities and being born four days apart in April 1889, both men were self-made individuals that had risen to international fame from abject poverty), that he would have made for a most successful democratic political prostitute due to his unrivaled groveling prowess (though I must admit that both politicians and comedians need to be fairly proficient at self-degradation and self-exploitation if they hope to be even remotely successful). While anarchistic kraut clown Herbert Achternbusch (*Bierkampf* aka *Beer Chase*, *Hick's Last Stand*) might have (meta)political beliefs and ideals that I find to be somewhat dubious, I have nothing but total respect for him as an artist and filmmaker, as he is a true iconoclast that would never degrade himself to the level of doing some super sentimental speech like some cheap Baptist preacher. Arguably the greatest example of both Achternbusch's uncompromising transgressiveness and incendiary idiosyncrasy as a filmmaker is his rather grim black-and-white 'holocaust comedy' *Das letzte Loch* (1981) aka *The Last Hole* where the truly audacious auteur portrays a psychosis-ridden professional dipsomaniac, fiancée-killer, and private detective who incessantly drinks schnapps in the hope of forgetting about the Jews that were killed in the so-called shoah and who ultimately decides commit his own one-man-holocaust by jumping into a guido volcano after realizing that he will never be able to escape the Hebraic phantoms that haunt his malevolently morbid mind. A killer with a curious conscience, Achternbusch's character is so horrifyingly confounded and bizarrely nihilistic that, despite the fact he kills his fiancée for showing him love, he is deeply emotionally invested with and totally traumatized by the miserable fate of millions of Jews.

THE LAST HOLE

A vocal enemy of kosher commie Theodor Adorno's famously insane statement, "Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," Achternbusch notably once rightly declared, "It must have been then [during the early 1960s] that a German philosopher claimed that one could not write poetry after Auschwitz—which I thought was outrageous, and I replied that after Auschwitz one could only write poetry." Undoubtedly, *The Last Hole* is Achternbusch's most blatant celluloid assault against Adorno's patently absurd statement as an exceedingly eccentric piece of esoteric post-Nazi ethno-masochism where the auteur eventually commits suicide by throwing himself into a volcano because, to quote the character's rather preposterously poetic suicide letter, he wants to "...belong to the death mound of the victims. I do not want to belong to the death mound of the self-righteous Germans." Like virtually all of Achternbusch's cinematic works, the film belongs to the 'anti-Heimat' subgenre, which was somewhat popular during the late-1960s through late-1980s among filmmakers of the New German Cinema movement because it ruthlessly mocked the once highly popular 'Heimat-film' (aka 'homeland-film') genre. Since Heimat films romanticized sentimental Germanic rural living, many filmmakers of Achternbusch's generation saw it as 'fascistic' and thus deconstructed and defiled the genre for their own purposes, with *The Last Hole* representing one of the most extreme, ruthless, and unforgiving assaults against 'cinéma de papa.' Of course, not unlike Volker Schlöndorff with his anti-Heimat piece *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) aka *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, albeit in a more scandalous and scathing fashion, Achternbusch's film dares to pour salt on old wounds by reintroducing the Jewish question in an obnoxiously ironic way. Needless to say, as a work that mediates on Teutonic alcoholism and the infamy of the Nazi holocaust, Achternbusch's film is hardly endearing towards the Aryan homeland, especially the director's southeastern German state of Bavaria, which is portrayed as a grotesquely gothic anti-fairytale realm full of boorish beer-chugging buffoons, sexually-repressed waitresses, and cheap and emotionally dead whores.

Following in the footsteps of the director's first feature *Das Andechser Gefühl* (1974) aka *The Andechs Feeling*, which depicts a schoolteacher portrayed by Achternbusch who slowly drinks himself to death whilst flies drown in his mug of lager, *The Last Hole* is indubitably the most morbid and vulgarly melancholic comedy that I have ever seen as a seriously sick celluloid work about a perniciously passive-aggressive monster who lacks the capacity to love and instead kills his lover while obsessively dwelling on dead Jews. Rather fittingly, Achternbusch, not unlike the late great belated auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel, has been oftentimes described as a comedic heir to avant-garde comedian Karl Valentin—a fellow Bavarian who has been called the "Charlie Chaplin of Germany" and whose preternatural brand of humor has been loosely linked to Dadaism, social expressionism and the degenerate modern art movement known as 'New Ob-

jectivity' (aka *Neue Sachlichkeit*)—though his work is ultimately much more extreme and iconoclastic, albeit in a sort of insanely ironical fashion that will have the viewer questioning whether they should laugh or put a bullet in their brain. Indeed, despite incessantly mocking and satirizing Germany and especially Bavaria, Achternbusch's films are shamelessly Bavarian to the core to the point where he was ridiculed by Australian novelist and sometimes filmmaker Peter Handke (*Chronicle of Current Events*, *The Left-Handed Woman*) due to the patently peasant oriented essence of his work, or as the writer wrote himself: "Achternbusch ought to know better than any other writer. Why then does he content himself with fantasies taken from the pages of the local paper? The result: slavish – or in Achternbusch's case, simulating slavish – adherence to the culture cliché that nobody can be represented as an individual anymore, that we have all become damaged, perforated foils for anything and everything already illustrated and pictured: formless beings, ventriloquist existences. Does Achternbusch offer more than merely rhetorical, literally 'sub'-cultural challenge to the world of the newspaper . . . ? Or are his travesties of plastic mythologies a kind of resistance?"

To answer Handke's question, I would describe Achternbusch's films as Grosz-esque anti-folk flicks directed by a man that—whether consciously or subconsciously—seems to realize that he is a very product of the culture and people that he so absurdly loathes, like a schizophrenic Jewish neo-Nazi who likes to spend his free time chowing down on lox and watching David Duke videos on YouTube while sporting a yarmulke on his freshly shaven head. Indeed, a film where Achternbusch puts on a Wehrmacht helmet only moments before committing suicide in solidarity with the Hebrews that were killed by his family members and countrymen during the Second World War, *The Last Hole* is arguably the most preposterously potent expression of the singularly nihilistic and self-destructive absurdity that is the post-WWII German *Volksgeist*. Like a putrid post-Auschwitz motion picture mockery of the pastoral Aryan utopias dreamed up by Symbolist artist Fidus in his paintings and illustrations, Achternbusch's grotesque anti-folk gothic might technically be a comedy, but it is ultimately more haunting and disturbing than humorous, as if the auteur merely uses his keenly passive-aggressive form of comedy as a therapeutic means to attempt to expel some of the metaphysical poison from his seemingly forlorn soul. Indeed, while I would not exactly call myself a shoah movie connoisseur, I must admit that *The Last Hole* is easily the most disturbing, dejecting, and debasing holocaust film that I have ever seen. In other words, I certainly experienced more pain and discomfort from 5-minutes of Achternbusch's film than in over ten hours of Claude Lanzmann's anti-polak doc *Shoah* (1985). If there is any film that could make a Jew feel sorry for the German persecutor (and I doubt there is), it is most certainly Achternbusch's film, which ultimately demonstrates that German comedy is no less ruthless than the interrogating tactics of SS-Hauptsturmführer Klaus Barbie.

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In short, if Schlingensiefel once candidly stated in the doc *Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme* (2005) aka *Christoph Schlingensiefel and His Films* directed by Frieder Schlaich that he thought he would make a great concentration camp guard, *The Last Hole* demonstrates that Achternbusch is the Josef Mengele of clowns, albeit with more bizarre fetishes.

Beginning in just as an abrupt fashion as any Achternbusch flick, *The Last Hole* starts with a woman with a fairly unflattering physique named Susn (Achternbusch regular Gabi Geist) watering her attic (!) while wearing nothing but panties and a bra. Susn is terribly sexually repressed and trying in vain to appeal to her seemingly spiritually castrated fiancé 'The Nile' (Achternbusch), who merely stares at her in a less than admiring fashion while sitting in a chair like a tired elderly grandfather who cannot be bothered to get off of his old crusty diabetes-ridden ass. While Susn yells, "Get your clothes off, I can't wait any longer! Always waiting...Let's wait afterwards if we can do it a second time!" the Nile—an emotional cripple that seems to enjoy nothing about life, including sex and romance—is hardly impressed by her salacious nagging and proceeds to ruthlessly berate his fiancée every chance he gets. Indeed, when Susn demonstrates that she is a proud peasant by bragging that she works with her hands, the Nile rather rudely replies, "Don't talk rubbish...you're a waitress, and you live so poorly because you drink 20 cognacs a day." Of course, flattery also fails to work with the Nile, as he is only agitated when sex-starved Susn pseudo-seductively states to him, "Without you I live in the desert. Without you I am a desert! A piece of desert [...] Flow through me." In fact, the Nile cannot even tolerate having Susn anywhere near him as indicated by his misanthropic remark to her, "I can't understand people who always have to be so close to one another, when there's so much room in the world! People who have to be so close to one another remind me of car drivers." After curiously cleaning his fingernails with a knife in a fairly menacing fashion, the Nile threatens to stab Susn if she dares to try to kiss him (according to him, "When some Jews were making drawings in Auschwitz, that is a kiss for me!"). Needless to say, the Nile eventually makes good on his perverse promise and stabs and kills Susn when she desperately attempts to kiss him. Of course, he is hardly heartbroken about his fiancée's death because, as he states to her regarding their engagement before mindlessly killing her, "Everyone knows it's just for show. All except the ones I am engaged with." Indeed, as the film eventually reveals, the Nile has started various sexless romances with a number of beat-up bar whores around Bavaria.

The Nile loves playing word games, especially ones involving the timeless phrase "6 million." Indeed, when the quasi-protagonist mentions that he has "6 million" during a flashback scene, Susn assumes that he has "six million marks" and brags to a male co-worker at the bar she works at about her beloved's imaginary wealth. While the Nile "lives on beer" and is a self-described drinker by trade, he is also a highly specialized private detective that investigates cases of

treacherous Jews screwing over their Jewish friends during the holocaust, as if it is a source of solace for him to know that not all Jews killed during WWII were killed by Germans. While the Nile drinks to forget about dead Hebrews, he also believes that after having four drinks he will develop the capacity to feel some sort of sexual arousal for Susn. When Susn begs for the Nile to slit her throat in a flashback scene, he replies, "Your blood may come upon me some other time. I will retire for today. I live in the last hole with my 6 million. And I hope I will not dream of 6 million dead Jews again tonight." Indeed, the Nile lives in an eponymous hole in the ground in the middle of a grassy hill and after emerging from said hole one morning after killing his fiancée, he is given somewhat of a shock while shaving by a lake when Susn's ghost appears, declares she is pregnant, and then states, "I'm dead. I bequeath you my art: a bloodstained dress." Like with the Jews, the Nile clearly does not want to remember Susn's death, so he immediately decides to dig a hole like a dog with her bare hands and bury the bloodstained dress. Luckily for the Nile, he has more than one Susn in his life.

As an assumed result of the fact that he has murdered Susn, two cops that resemble burly beatnik bikers, 'Stupid Cloud' (Franz Baumgartner) and 'Green Asshole,' begin a manhunt for the Nile and opt to start a literal "scorched earth" operation to burn him out of his hole. Rather absurdly, Stupid Cloud opts to shoot and kill his comrade when they are in the middle of hatching their scorched earth campaign. Indeed, for whatever reason, Stupid Cloud has decided to betray Green Asshole and join up with the Nile. Of course, both men, like virtually all of the characters in the film, have a tragic haunted essence about them, as if they are possessed by the accursed ghosts of their ancestors who froze to death on the Eastern Front during the Battle of Stalingrad (incidentally, in his film *Heilt Hitler!* (1986), Achternbusch would portray a German soldier who thinks he is still fighting in Stalingrad after randomly waking up from a long slumber 40 years after WWII has ended). While awkwardly carrying Green Asshole's lifeless corpse, Stupid Cloud spots the Nile, so he decides to drop his friend's body and pick up the protagonist instead, even though said protagonist has no problem walking on his own. While carrying the Nile across a field, Stupid Cloud mentions to him how his grade school teacher forced him to learn "six million foreign words." When the Nile remarks that it is "six million Jews" and not "six million foreign words," Stupid Cloud humorously replies, "Sure... but what's the difference? Of those 6 million foreign words I remember only three. But I couldn't tell you if I still know three Jews." Stupid Cloud also informs the Nile that his teacher used to pass by Auschwitz concentration camp every single day during WWII and noticed that it was always quiet there, thus leading the educator to come to the natural conclusion that no Jews could have been killed there. Despite their minor disputes, Stupid Cloud and the Nile ultimately decide to make a "getaway" together since they are both murderers that are evading justice. Naturally, being fugitives of the law does not stop the Nile and Stupid

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Cloud from hanging around Bavaria for another day while getting good and drunk at various local bars. Of course, before leaving, the Nile must be reunited with the woman that might be described as his one true love.

Upon going to a doctor (Wolfgang Ebert of Uwe Brandner's *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich* (1971) aka *I Love You, I Kill You*) with a fetish for Buddhist religious icons and being informed that he has diabetes, the Nile replies, "I need beer. With one pint of beer I forget 500,000 Jews. But at night they all come back. And when I had 12 pints then 6 million Jews come to me. But the 40 pints I have to drink each day bring me 20 million at night. And that's not even half of those who met their death in the last war. That's just the Russians slaughtered by the Germans." While the Nile then proceeds to beg the doctor to kill him, the physician replies, "Drink schnapps. Beer confuses the memory. On schnapps, you can forget. I'll prescribe schnapps for you." Unfortunately, things get a little nasty between the protagonist and doc when the latter reveals that his father admitted to him on his deathbed that he spared a Jew during the holocaust after coercing the Hebrew into attacking his kosher comrade. Indeed, at this point, the Nile reveals that he is a private detective that looks into the "murders of Jews that had been friends." After the Nile calls the doctor's dead father a "German pig," the physician tears up his prescription for schnapps and throws him out of his office. Unfortunately, it seems that the Nile will have to stick to bars if he wants to forget about kosher corpses. Notably, before being kicked out of the doctor's office, the Nile expresses minor interest in killing a Jewish barber so that his alcohol intake will match up with the number of murdered Israelites that he has on his conscience.

While Susn is dead, the Nile has another fiancée named 'Last Susn' (Annamirli Bierbichler) that works at a strip club called 'Pee Piss' that he can confide in. Unfortunately, when the Nile goes to see Last Susn, she is being mechanically fucked by a random guy, so the protagonist picks up the man during mid-coitus and tosses out of a window. Before defenestrating the stranger, the Nile calmly states to him, "If you can screw, you can also fly." Naturally, the two lovers decide to catch up with each other and Last Susn reminds the Nile how he once said to her, "... I will be your Nile. The Nile that refreshes you in the middle of the wasteland." Last Susn also describes to the Nile how her co-worker Wurmin is regularly held upside down by two men while five others "pour beer into her pussy." Needless to say, as a man that is regularly haunted by six million dead Jews, the Nile seems hardly effected by Last Susn's bizarre sex stories. Ultimately, Last Susn joins the Nile and Stupid Cloud for a pilgrimage to Stromboli Volcano, Italy that they take via train. During the train ride, Stupid Cloud becomes deeply offended when a waiter attempts to serve him a bowl of spaghetti, so he dumps the food on the goofy server's head and then proceeds to trim the noodles that are lying on the man's head with scissors as if he were giving the poor fellow a haircut. While the Nile drinks shot after shot of schnapps

on the train, Laßt Susn exposes her broken heart to him by somberly stating, “I do accept your right not to love me. It’s even my duty to accept it.” Laßt Susn also reveals that she does not want forgiveness from the protagonist for whatever reason, stating “Forgiveness? Why should you forgive me? I’m dead to you. But because you didn’t kill me I wished a little Hitler on you for two days, who would send you through the chimney.” Indeed, it seems that the Nile’s lack of love and incapacity for affection haunts Laßt Susn in a fashion not unlike how the dead Jews haunt the perennially perturbed protagonist. Somehow, the train ends up in the ocean, thus inspiring Stupid Cloud to state, “Dammit, now the rails have ended! And what now? And what now?”

Upon arriving at beaches of Stromboli, the Nile states to himself, “Now I see the lily pad again and the frog on it and the water lily at it. The water lily is the Laßt Susn and the frog is me.” The Nile is wearing a necklace with a flesh-like medallion that looks like a mold of a rectum that he describes as a letter, which he ultimately has Laßt Susn read. As the viewer soon discovers, it is actually a suicide letter and the Nile has come to Stromboli to jump into the volcano to sacrifice himself to the glorious six million. While on the beach, the three friends encounter a fat elderly woman named Barbara who seems disturbed by the fact that the Nile randomly puts on a German helmet. As Laßt Susn tells Barbara, the Nile wears the helmet, “Because he’s afraid [...] Of the Germans.” When Laßt Susn reads an excerpt from the Nile’s letter that reads, “Panzer after Panzer drove over my mind’s eye. Teachers and masters hated me minding my mind’s eye,” Barbara remarks that the protagonist has, “a tumor inside his head instead of brains.” Ultimately, Laßt Susn decides she “can’t go on” with finishing the letter after reading the Nile’s words to her, “I ate jam only out of sympathy for you. Without hope for you I wouldn’t have opened any can [...] That’s why I had become a private detective after all, because I was searching for you, everywhere and in everything. Under the pretense of fornication and infidelity, which to investigate someone had give me the assignment, I snooped around in the houses that had been torn open by the war and blocked up again too quickly, or in others that regrettably had been spared by the war, or in those that were misguidedly built after the war, expecting you behind every door. In the thirty-year-long brutality of post-war Germany, I searched for you, you, the tenderness, the insight, the effortlessness, the modesty, and the pride to endure this life with dignity.” Of course, Laßt Susn eventually opts to finish reading the rest of the suicide letter.

When Stupid Cloud asks the Nile why he is carrying around two tennis rackets, the protagonist astonishes his friends by proceeding to use the preppie sports instruments to dig up a Jewish skull that is hidden under some rocks near the volcano. After the Nile unearths the Hebraic skull, Laßt Susn proceeds to read more of the protagonist’s suicide letter, stating out loud in a somber yet monotone fashion, “every German has his own example [of Nazism] in his

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family, even the still unborn. And the Jews? Everybody was against the Jews, and they're still against them today, they just don't dare to say it anymore, because back then they were allowed to kill the Jews. Susn, I had to find out what's inside the Germans, and I'm telling you: Murder. Most diligent murder. But this murder made them the most famous people of all mankind." At the very end of the Nile's letter, Laßt Susn reads, "I commit suicide, for as a suicide I belong to the death mound of the victims. I do not want to belong to the death mound of the self-righteous Germans. Farewell . . . I'll jump into the volcano." Clearly, self-loathing kraut the Nile did not see the irony in his self-righteous declaration against "self-righteous Germans." As an assumed result of the flattery that she receives in part of her beau's letter where he alludes to Romanian-Jewish poet Paul Celan's poem *Todesfuge* (1948) aka *Death Fugue* and describes her hair as being pretzel-colored, Laßt Susn decides to follow the Nile's lead and jump into the volcano too. Of course, it is rather revealing that the suicide letter alludes to Celan's anti-German poem (which notably features the line, "Death is a master from Germany, his eyes are blue"), which features the line, "you'll rise to the sky like smoke, you'll have a grave in the clouds," and thus foretells the Nile's pathetic self-prophesying fate of self-slaughter via virtual one-mensch-holocaust.

A sort of culturally apocalyptic Teutonic Joe Versus the Volcano (1990) where there protagonist actually goes through with his morbidly zany plan of self-obliteration via volcano, *The Last Hole* is the rare sort of film that offers the viewer the sort of insight as to why contemporary Germans are so gleefully suicidal and inordinately ethno-masochistic that they would actually welcome hostile towelheads from the world's worst Islamic desert shitholes to come into their country and establish Dhimmitude so that thoroughly brainwashed self-loathing and self-flagellating kraut automatons can begin paying penance for the supposed crimes of their long dead Nazi ancestors. Considering the recent New Year's Eve untermenschen rape epidemic committed by swarthy so-called migrants that occurred in every single major German city in late 2015 (not surprisingly, the German police and media attempted to cover up what happened up), it seems that Achternbusch's dream of collective German punishment is finally well under way as it seems none of those "self-righteous Germans" that value self-preservation and self-determination that he mocked in his film are alive anymore. Of course, the great irony behind Achternbusch's film is that it is so thoroughly, intricately, bizarrely, and fanatically Germanophobic that it could have only been directed by an actual German, which is an identity that the auteur even attempts to reject in the film, even though his cinematic works are so radically regional in persuasion that he has had very little success outside of his native Bavaria (in fact, Achternbusch once mocked his Bavarian comrade Werner Herzog for being successful outside of Germany, stating that he is, "the best detergent salesman Germany has ever had, because he is the only one who believes in his product"). Indeed, while Achternbusch's character even

pathetically declares in his suicide letter, “Unfortunately, I am too stupid to be a Jew, but I don’t include myself among the Germans,” he practically bleeds of archetypal Bavarian buffoonery, just like Woody Allen and Todd Solondz reek of Jewish neuroticism and Spike Lee stinks of American negro resentment. Notably, Achternbusch would later write in his novel *Hundstage* (1995), “My sympathy for Jews is only sentimentality, only compassion. I don’t want to be a Jew, and I have rid myself of their belief in one God without, however, being able to cope with the consequences,” thus confirming that he is thankfully not as racially schizophrenic as degenerate German artist Anselm Kiefer, who seems to have dedicated his life to shitting on German culture and transforming himself into a sort of spiritual holocaust survivor. In his later color feature *Heilt Hitler!* (1986) aka *Heal Hitler!*—a sort of anti-Heimat Back to the Future where Achternbusch portrays a German soldier who wakes up 40 years after WWII believing that he is still fighting in Stalingrad—the auteur would present a somewhat more personalized and nuanced take on his thoughts regarding the legacy of National Socialism.

Oftentimes feeling like a sort of ‘Southern Kraut Gothic’ as a starkly and grotesquely yet oftentimes beautifully shot feature that owes much of its strikingly look to cinematographer Jörg Schmidt-Reitwein—a man responsible for a number of Werner Herzog’s pre-Hollywood masterpieces, including *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), *Heart of Glass* (1976), and *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979)—*The Last Hole* is probably best looked at as a piece of modernist absurdist folklore that does for Bavaria what Flannery O’Connor’s writings did for the American South. Indeed, in that sense, Achternbusch’s film, despite seeming so hopelessly bizarre and absurdly alienating, is not all that different from John Huston’s underrated O’Connor adaptation *Wise Blood* (1979) starring Brad Dourif, which was incidentally released in West Germany under the names *Der Ketzer* and *Die Weisheit des Blutes*. As someone that has suffered more holocaust-themed films than I care to admit, the Achternbuschian cinematic realm strangely seems to be the most fitting setting for six million Ashkenazi phantoms. Quite unlike Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993), which more or less uses black-and-white cinematography as a cheap pseudo-poetic gimmick to remind stupid Americans of vintage American WWII propaganda newsreels in the hope that they will eventually not be able to differentiate between Hollywood fiction and carefully contrived wartime nonfiction, the lack of color in *The Last Hole* ultimately compliments the film’s unwavering doom and gloom as a cinematic work with a protagonist that is so terminally lifeless that he could only be properly portrayed in a completely colorless world.

I have to admit that, for at least partially personal reasons, *The Last Hole* probably had a bigger impact on me than it would probably have on most American cinephiles, who would probably find it totally inexplicable and hopelessly arcane for more than just a couple reasons. For instance, one of my ex-girlfriend’s

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had two paternal grandparents that had emigrated from Germany to the United States and both of them were horrible alcoholics that sired a number of equally self-destructive alcoholic children and grandchildren. While my ex-girlfriend's dipsomaniac German grandfather resembled a sort of alcoholic troll when I first met him, I once received the shock of a lifetime when I encountered an old black-and-white photograph of him from when he was in his 20s and discovered that he used to be a strikingly handsome Aryan man with sharp features that clearly totally destroyed his looks and health as a result of his undying weakness for cheap beer. Aside from my ex-girlfriend's family, I know no less than two other German-American families, including a friend whose Danube Swabian grandfather was killed on the Eastern Front during WWII, that are accursed with cross-generational alcoholism, which is clearly a direct result of World War II. Of course, my own Dutch grandfather, whose country was at least partially destroyed by Germany during the war, also succumbed to alcoholism as a result of his decidedly dejecting wartime experiences, thus I think the collective dipsomania among Germans has less to do with the dead Jews than the misery of WWII in general. While *The Last Hole* engages in shameless heeb humoring and shoah-saluting, it is also ultimately a film that appeals to people like myself who enjoy tasteless holocaust jokes. In other words, for a completely humorless and obnoxiously anally retentive Judaic culture-distorter like Mark Potok or Barbara Lerner Spectre, viewing Achternbusch's film would probably be like attending a screening of Kurt Gerron's *The Führer Gives the Jews a City* (1944) at Auschwitz with Herr Döktor Mengele behind the projector. Indeed, after watching *The Last Hole*, I could not help but feel that the collective plague of Bavarian alcoholism was much more tragic than the holocaust. After all, six million dead Jews seems like nothing more than the faint ghost of an abstract idea in the film, yet Bavarian dipsomania, lechery, and ethno-masochism seem like a very real nightmare that become all the more perturbing and penetrating as a result of Achternbusch's uniquely unnerving passive-aggressive approach to angst and Weltschmerz. While *The Last Hole* might be an exceedingly eccentrically esoteric cinematic work that takes provincial filmmaking to ungodly extremes, no one can watch it without feeling like they have been imprisoned in some sort of highly personal pandemonium where all hope for the future has been squashed under the heel of Sturmabteilung jackboots. In Achternbusch's singularly morbid mind, there is not chance for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, thus one must accept death and self-destruction lest they belong to the ostensible "death mound of the self-righteous Germans." Of course, what Achternbusch and many other white people fail to realize due to decades of brainwashing is that empathy only works when it is mutual and reciprocal and that it is insane and self-destructive to invest emotions in people that are hostile to you, hence the steady moral, cultural, and economic decline of the Occidental as a result of so-called multiculturalism where groups of hostile aliens (e.g. 'Syrian migrants')

that lack empathy for their hosts strategically use emotional blackmail as a parasitic means to get infidels to subsidize their pathetic existences and primitive vices (e.g. rape). Indeed, the protagonist of *The Last Hole* should have been more dejected with the fact that he was so obsessed with dead Jews than the dead Jews themselves. If Achternbusch actually cared to understand Jews, he would realize that they owe their survival and perseverance to the fact they have nil empathy for their enemies to the point where they literally celebrate the destruction of said enemies via holidays, but I digress. In the end, *The Last Hole* ultimately demonstrates that there are few things that are more humorous in the contemporary Occidental world than the phrase "six million" being repeated over and over again in a deadpan fashion by an artsy fartsy kraut who seems so emotionally comatose that one might suspect he was the victim of a multicultural gang-rape.

-Ty E

THE GHOST
THE GHOST

Herbert Achternbusch (1983)

Assuredly his most well known and infamous film, Herbert Achternbusch's aweless yet astral anti-Catholic romp *Das Gespenst* (1983) aka *The Ghost* – a work of bodacious and biting black-and-white blasphemy that would be the prolific Bavarian auteur filmmaker's tenth film in eight years as a sin-saluting cinematic artist – featured an audaciously aberrant and surprisingly singular depiction of God's only son Jesus Christ that is comparable to no other before nor after the film's ill-fated release despite the proliferation of Christ-bashing propaganda featuring uncountable Hollywood films and mainstream TV shows. With its portrayal of Jesus Christ as a boorish and ineffectual waiter with beastly baloney nipples and a large, untamable, and perverted tongue, it is no surprise that *The Ghost* was temporarily banned by the FSK, a 'voluntary' yet semi-official German government film regulation organization that also withheld a promised subsidy payment to Achternbusch, and filed charges against the film's distributor because the work was accused of "injured religious feelings and human dignity" against audience members after numerous complaints from various Roman Catholic and Christian organizations in Germany. Although the charges were eventually dropped, the ban on the film was lifted (although the film is still banned today in Austria) and Achternbusch's received his well deserved payment because the court ruled that the work was "to weak" to be worthy of artistic merit and being taken serious, the controversy surrounding *The Ghost* inspired German Federal Minister of the Interior Friedrich Zimmermann – a Roman Catholic and fellow Bavarian like the filmmaker, as well as an ex-NSDAP member – to dramatically cut government funding for all future film productions in the Fatherland, which would now only cover 30% of total production costs and be quite detrimental to idiosyncratic 'arthouse' filmmakers like the anti-Christ auteur himself. Achternbusch's unexpected cinematic crusade led to 50 filmmakers protesting the charges against the film at the 1983 Munich Film Festival and over 150,000 spectators watching *The Ghost* in theaters due to the controversy surrounding the film, which would prove to be by far the Bavarian folk-anarchist's greatest commercial success as a filmmaker. It has been nearly three decades since the release of *The Ghost* yet the film is as silly, sardonic, sacrilegious, and scathing as ever and certainly does not feature the sort of beaten-to-death Hebraic Hollywood mockery of God's bastard son one can expect to see quite frequently just by turning on their TV.

During the beginning of *The Ghost*, "Mother Superior" (played by Annamirl Bierbichler) aka "Oberin" ("waitress") remarks to the living, breathing, crucified Christ on her church wall that he is the "42nd God in our convent...the last God in this building," which is quite interesting because apparently there are 42 generations (names) in the Gospel of Matthew's version of the Genealogy of Jesus

and that for 42 months the Beast will hold dominion over the Earth (Revelation 13:5). Whatever the significance of the 'natural number' in the film, it is quite apparent that the crooked and kooky Christ (played by Herbert Achternbusch himself) of *The Ghost*, who goes by the name "Ober" ("waiter"), is a rather unholy fellow who like the prince of darkness himself the devil, can turn himself into a snake, albeit only when he is scared for his eternal life, but sucks at just about everything else, including collecting stool samples. The obscene ober is not exactly an optimist and overachiever either because he feels that people can't, "expect me to change myself into shit" even if he can morph into a snake, but he does inspire two cops (one of which is played by Fassbinder Superstar Kurt Raab of *Satan's Brew* fame) to attempt to achieve a miracle by defecating into a shot glass; an event that spawns bodily fluids, but not of the terribly toxic and fowl fecal sort. Mother Superior "rather carry" Ober "in the flesh" because in her "womb there's a nest prepared for every snake" but the Catholic church – the "model for all sterility" – does see such biological pure acts as sinful so she recommends he leave the convent with her and became a waiter because he already has given "mountains of his body" and "whole lakes of...blood" for food and drink to his feckless and feeble followers, thereupon making it a fitting position for the foul and frail phantasm. Indeed, Ober can walk on water but such a low-fi carny routine – which was also performed by Christ-like idiot savant Chance (Peter Sellers) in Hal Ashby's similarly satirical but less sardonic cinematic effort *Being There* (1979) – pales in comparison to Mother Superior's wild and woolly water sports activity, which comprises of the callous and crude Catholic lady lifting her dress and revealing a grotesque wig where her genitals and pubic hair are supposed to be. Infinitely wiser and more practical than the oftentimes oblivious and oafish Ober, the good Mother lets her feral-like 42nd god know that without his crown of thorns, he is a "nobody" yet he still finds it to be a rather trying task to be the king of babbling Bavarian peasants, even if said peasants drop 10 marks in his crown, let alone king of the Jews.

To top off all the rather charming yet crass anti-catholic camp of *The Ghost*, German New Wave dandy auteur Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran*) – who was a chain-smoker in real-life and whose recent death due to complications revolving around cancer were probably in part caused by the vice – is featured in a standout role in the film where he seems to care more about having enough cigarettes on tap than doing his sanctified churchly duties. Such is the rather ridiculous realm of anarcho-folk folly and frolicsome avant-garde absurdity that is *The Ghost*; a film that, like his cinematic efforts before and after, proved that the blasphemous Bavarian iconoclast Herbert Achternbusch – a man who writes, stars, and directs his films and does his own "stunts" – followed in a rich legacy that was propelled by silent comedians like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, albeit the German funnyman took his comedy routines to a greater and more arcane, if less physically involved, extremes; the sort that

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guaranteed he would never have an audience any greater than a small and mostly domestic cult following. For an antagonistic auteur who mixed memories of the holocaust with guilt-ridden alcoholism (*Das letzte Loch* aka *The Last Hole* (1981), *Bavarian Kultur* with belligerent barbarian beer-chugging (*Bierkampf* aka *Beer Chase* (1977)), and Hitlerism with a legacy of countryside inbreeding and sexual promiscuity (*Heilt Hitler!* aka *Heal Hitler!* (1986)), it should be no wonder that Achternbusch will probably go down as the greatest anti-völkisch filmmaker who ever lived, at least by those unfortunately few that remember him.

Where Italian poet-filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini (*The Decameron*, *Salo*, or *the 120 Days of Sodom*) – an unrepentant homosexual, atheist, and communist – once stated, “If you know that I am an unbeliever, then you know me better than I do myself. I may be an unbeliever, but I am an unbeliever who has a nostalgia for a belief,” in regard to his respect for the religion of his family and nation, Achternbusch only had slapstick scorn and playfully perverse pooh-pooh for the faith of his ancestors as depicted in the *Gospel of Herbert Achternbusch*; otherwise known as *The Ghost* and a most unfriendly and foul phantom at that. A pleasantly profane fable for foul-mouthed grownups and rural rejects, Achternbusch, as a sort of atheistic and antagonistic “Fidus of the left” and walking contradiction of the Bavarian boonies, was quite ironically and intriguingly able to find a common ground between rooted folks of the countryside with political beliefs that are often associated with deracinated cosmopolitanism. If I did not know better and *The Ghost* was not a work of degenerate art, I might have assumed Achternbusch was inspired by the anti-Catholicism/neo-pagan philosophies featured in National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg’s magnum opus *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930). That being said, I cannot think of another filmmaker who epitomized the often cited and inconvenient truism that people often hate what negative qualities they see in themselves. After all, Achternbusch may have attempted to say “Bye-Bye Bavaria!” in his 1977 film of the same name but looking at his films, one can only conclude: you may be able to take the loony anti-Aryan Aryan Bavarian out of his lederhosen, but never the lederhosen out of the Bavarian.

-Ty E

HEILT HITLER!

Herbert Achternbusch (1986)

A couple years ago, I had the distinct pleasure of speaking with an elderly German mensch named Dieter who came of age during the rise and fall of the Third Reich. To this day, this kindhearted – if often thoroughly inebriated – Teuton, is an unrepentant true believer of the long vanquished National Socialist cause. During one of our talks, he told me how, "Hitler would be in the American White House" had history gone in the direction he thought it would as a young Hitler-Jugend recruit from Frankfurt. Naturally, his American-born children and grandchildren found his nostalgia for Nazism to be a tad bit bothersome due to growing up in a nation that places Steven Spielberg films as the height of cinematic perfection and thus write-off the aged Aryan's hysterical Hitlerism as a sign of mere elderly eccentricity and naivety. Recently, I had the opportunity to watch the fiercely farcical German arthouse epic *Heilt Hitler!*: A German Motion Picture (1986) aka *Heal Hitler!* directed by Herbert Achternbusch (*Das Gespenst* aka *The Ghost*, *Servus Bayern* aka *Bye-Bye Bavaria!*); a film that – somewhat peculiarly but not unsurprisingly – reminded me of my seemingly surreal conversations with the unusually charismatic German old-timer. *Heilt Hitler!* follows a German soldier with a Little Richard/John Waters mustache named Herbert (played by director Herbert Achternbusch) who has become so disgruntled with the war effort in the Battle for Stalingrad that he rather turn himself into a human statue than waste time combating endless swarms of untermensch russkies. Forty years later, Herbert wakes up at a war memorial in Munich thinking he is still in Stalingrad and that the Thousand Year Reich has secured final victory. Like the Dieter I knew personally, Herbert is a living relic trapped in a world he is not mentally (and to some extent, physically) equipped for. At over 2 hours in length, *Heilt Hitler!* is an absurdist super 8 saga that is like *Back to the Future Part II* (1989) meets the consciously and satirically German films of Christoph Maria Schlingensiefel (*Terror 2000*, *The 120 Days of Bottrop*). Seemingly plot-less in structure, *Heilt Hitler!* takes an anti-nostalgic and less than sentimental look at twentieth century German history in the structure of a freeform cinematic poem. In Achternbusch's Germany, Aryan women become quite jubilant at the prospect of offering their minds and bodies to American G.I.s in return for cartons of cigarettes and even attack one of their own men to protect an exotic enemy soldier (aka American Negro), yet such seemingly deplorable scenarios are portrayed in such a curiously caricatured and pleasantly preposterous fashion that one can only respond by smiling jovially; be the viewer a German nationalist or second-generation holocaust survivor.

Despite its many incessant esoteric digressions, nonsensical poetic ramblings, and satirical situationist scenarios, *Heilt Hitler!* is ultimately a film about family and everything it entails (e.g. incest, bickering, philandering, etc), most specifi-

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cally Herbert Achternbusch's own dysfunctional rural Bavarian kith and kin. In the film, the female characters have quite a hard time discerning who the father of their child is. One genius of a Bavarian peasant even convinces an American Negro that he should breed with racially pure German woman so they can, "tell their kids apart. If one of them has a little of your color....these women have looked alike for generations.....No one can tell them apart. Not even the authorities. There's got to be some form of order." Indeed, in *Heilt Hitler!*, the rationalization for miscegenation comes down to the stereotypical Germanic love for order. As much as I disdain dysgenic and nihilistic race-mixing, I think most Fassbinder fans will agree that the world would be a better place with a couple more mulatto Bavarian fellows like Günther Kaufmann (R.I.P.). One can only assume that *Heilt Hitler!* is Achternbusch's own kooky way of discrediting National Socialism and the generation that passionately and unwaveringly supported it. Bastard babies or not, one cannot argue that the illegitimate children of *Heilt Hitler!* are the product of racial mingling and thus – to Achternbusch's blatant and hypercritical disgust – are in league with the National Socialist ideology of Blut und Boden. When Herbert is transported into the future, he is lucky enough to be just in time for a wedding that may or not be for his own child. Although some things have changed in the peasant countryside in *Heilt Hitler!*, other things, like incest and family secrets, are perennial, henceforth leading the viewer to believe that the blood-on-the-hands of previous generations is innate and passed on through the blood with each new generation of Germans. Like fellow German pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer over a century before him, it seems that Herbert Achternbusch is a staunch antinatalist.

At the war memorial in Munich's Hofgarten, the inscription "They Will Rise Again" is engraved. In *Heilt Hitler!*, a Munich couple mocks the memorial and remark that the soldiers died for nothing. Undoubtedly, after viewing the film there is quite clear that Herbert Achternbusch concurs with this ostensibly cynical sentiment. Ironically, Herbert does rise again, but only to eventually realize that the familial discord that plagued his personal life before the war has only been compounded and that Germany has been dealt the ultimate defeat; being conquered by semi-Asiatic Slavic hordes. While wandering around Munich in a daze, Herbert is quite startled to realize that the world no longer has Kotzis and Nazis, but only money; too much money or not enough money. Like the old German man named Dieter that I conversed with a couple years ago, Herbert is a man from a despised generation that time has forgotten. Not even his own progeny (whoever they may be) are interested in honoring his legacy, even if he has been quasi-supernaturally resurrected in a fantastic sort of way. It is most apparent while watching *Heilt Hitler!* that Achternbusch has no empathy for the pain and struggle suffered by his fellow Bavarian countrymen of the past, thus the film comes across as an especially sardonic tragicomic romp that takes no prisoners; blood relative or not. With jocular lines like, "just imagine how

boring it is in a concentration camp? Dead Boring,” it is not hard to see why Heilt Hitler! is an exceedingly facetious family affair of the most meretricious and batty kind that proves that the international tribe that was Germany’s enemy during the Second World War are not the only Kings of Comedy. As for Dieter, he went on to produce five or six different children with four different women (one being of the non-Aryan sort), although most of his family members seem to agree that one his sons – who is apparently really his grandson – was the product of a borderline incestuous relationship between his eldest son and his second wife.

-Ty E

EGON SCHIELE - EXZESSE
EGON SCHIELE - EXZESSE

Herbert Vesely (1980)

Without question, my favorite degenerate painter is Egon Schiele; the young protégé of Gustav Klimt who – like Jesus Christ himself – was publically crucified (in the symbolic sense) and would never live to see his thirtieth birthday. When I describe Schiele as a degenerate artist, I mean it not in a derogatory manner but in a literal sense as the early Zionist leader Marx Nordau described the Austrian painter as a pornographer in a later edition of his infamous tome *Degeneration* (1892); a work that blames Europe's cultural decline on so-called artistic degenerates (including Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Oscar Wilde and Leo Tolstoy) yet totally disregards (while condemning "antisemitism") the wealth of wretched subversive anti-European works created by his fellow Asiatic kinsmen. In fact, if it were not for Nordau's libelous work (in a way, he was the "Tipper Gore" of his time) stirring up the European intellectual world, it is doubtful that Schiele would have ever had to face trial in the first place. Needless to say, when I discovered the somewhat forgotten film *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* (1981) aka *Egon Schiele Excess and Punishment* directed by Herbert Vesely – a work that chronicles the life of Schiele from his criminal trial to his early death as a result of contracting the Spanish flu (which also killed his wife Edith and their unborn child) – I made it my priority to watch it. Of course, like any other film about a real-life historical figure, I had many doubts in regards to the factual authenticity of the work, especially considering the potential for heavy-handed eroticism and exploitation due to the keenly sexual nature of the Austrian artist's work. Indeed, like the paintings of Egon Schiele; the film ambiguously blurs the line between art and pornography, thus the work makes for a worthy tribute to the artist and his somewhat small body of work. Unfortunately, like Egon Schiele, *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* seems to be a "work in progress"; a piece that could have been a masterpiece but lacks the refinement and cohesion so commonly associated with artistic and aesthetic greatness. At times the film seems like it uses the oversexed life of Egon Schiele as a mere pretense for close-up beaver-shots and seemingly underage nudes but at other times the work feels like a brilliant piece of cinema that documents an imperative period of groundbreaking change in European art. If one thing is for sure, *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* will keep the viewer wholly engaged like they are in a sexual act from the foreplay-ish beginning to the lonely climax.

In *Egon Schiele – Exzesse*, German actor Mathieu Carrière plays the role of anti-hero painter Egon Schiele. One of Carrière's first film roles was as the lead in *Young Törless* (1966) directed by Volker Schlöndorff; the cinematic adaptation of the Robert Musil's novel of the same name. Like his portrayal of Thomas

Törless in *Young Törless*, Carrière gave an extremely notable performance in *Egon Schiele – Exzesse*. Not only does Carrière bear a striking resemblance to the real Egon Schiele but he also exhibits a subtle intensity that one would expect from a serious artist who has totally deracinated himself from the general population and has suffered great loss. The real-life Egon Schiele was a protégé of the somewhat controversial Viennese Symbolist painter Gustav Klimt but the student would prove to break his own new ground as one of the earliest subversive expressionist artists. Of course, Schiele's audacity as an artist would prove detrimental to his personal life as so vividly expressed in *Egon Schiele – Exzesse*. Schiele was arrested and charged with seduction, abduction, an exhibiting pornography to minors; the latter being the only "crime" he was ever convicted of. As so vividly portrayed in *Egon Schiele – Exzesse*; Schiele was charged under false accusations given by a teenage girl that the artist had become obsessed with. Of course, Schiele's real crime was offending the mores of polite conservative Austrian society, henceforth foretelling the libertine expressionist and Dada artists that would become quite popular in Europe during the early twentieth century. In fact, had it not been for Egon Schiele, it is undoubtedly quite dubious whether a film like *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* could have ever been made.

Both the artistic works of Egon Schiele and the film *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* are a testament to the refined and tasteful manner as to how Europeans have handled nudity and eroticism when compared to American and Hollywood's handling of similar subject matter. With the virtual destruction and cultural degeneration of Europe after World War II came a flood of erotic European films. In a sense (and a somewhat glaring one), Europe became a virtual prostitute of America. For mostly monetary reasons, Europa churned out a wealth of adult arthouse films (Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) is probably the most popular example of this phenomenon) during the second half of the twentieth century; *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* being a more subtle example of this somewhat depressing but equally stimulating trend. In fact, if it were not for its somewhat popular cast (including Golden Globe Award winner Christine Kaufmann, Serge Gainsbourg's muse Jane Birkin, Gainsbourg himself, and filmmaker Marcel Ophüls), soundtrack (featuring tracks from Brian Eno and Felix Mendelssohn), and abstract drama, I would lump *Egon Schiele – Exzesse* in the same category as films directed by erotic auteur filmmakers like Radley Metzger and Tinto Brass. I would be lying if I did not admit that the film would probably be of interest to those individuals who have no clue as to who Egon Schiele was, as the film features enough nude beauties to appease your typical perverted cinephile, thus *Egon Schiele* will be of interest to two different types of viewers; pervs and pretentious art-fags (and a combination of the two). Out of all the nudity featured in the film, I found the scene where Egon Schiele is inspected by the military upon being drafted into the Great War to be the most unsettling.

EGON SCHIELE - EXZESSE

Although convicted of corrupting a minor, Schiele's deeds pale in comparison to his virtual molestation via a group of clearly enthusiastic Austrian military elders. I think most Egon Schiele fans will agree that Egon Schiele – Exzesse will remain the definitive cinematic work about the prematurely deceased Austrian artist. Despite its many flaws, Egon Schiele – Exzesse is certainly more delectable than anything Hollywood could ever hope to vomit up about the infamous painter.

-Ty E

CARNIVAL OF SOULS

Herk Harvey (1962)

Carnival of Souls(1962) is one of the most important horror films (or film in general) that America has ever produced. Industrial filmmaker Herk Harvey was the man that made the gothic and eerie American cult classic Carnival of Souls. Harvey would also play the main ghoul that haunts the films female protagonist Mary Henry. Harvey intended Carnival of Souls to have the “look of an Ingmar Bergman film” and the “feel of a Jean Cocteau film.” The film certainly had the feeling of a Cocteau as if the poet had directed his own horror film for American audiences. Like many fans of the horror genre, George A. Romero’s Night of the Living Dead left a big impression on me at a young age. It wouldn’t be till many years later that I would see Carnival of Souls, a film that would inspire NOTLD. I can say without hesitation that I consider Carnival of Souls a superior film to NOTLD, despite my nearly lifelong admiration for Romero’s film. Carnival of Souls is a short ride following a woman in a trance that is only recognized at the film’s conclusion. Many films and filmmakers have borrowed a lot from Carnival of Souls. The most obvious being M. Night Shyamalan’s ”masterpiece” film The Sixth Sense, in which he borrowed a very large element from Carnival of Souls. Of course, Shyamalan’s been sued for plagiarism on more than one occasion. But then again, Carnival of Souls would be the film to steal from. Despite it’s cinematic quality, the film has yet to truly get that recognition that it deserves. Too good to be just a “B” horror film and too cult like to impress art fags, Carnival of Souls is a film that is in it’s own league. Not since the days of German expressionism has a film been so atmospheric yet horrific. Carnival of Souls is a film that showed serious promise a revival in artistry in the horror film. It makes me wonder how an educational and industrial filmmaker like Herk Harvey could make a film like Carnival of Souls without any prior feature-length experience. It is a shame that Harvey would never make another horror film (or feature length film). Despite the low-budget quality of Carnival of Souls, it gets across as a serious film for serious horror fans. Carnival of Souls follows a lonely woman who only finds company that she doesn’t really appreciate. A ghastly ghoul and his ball of dead dancers find Mary Henry. She never knows what this rotting dead man is trying to tell her till the end. Carnival of Souls is one of those films that you just have to experience as to articulate it’s power into words would be useless. I felt as if I was touched by something that no other film has ever done after viewing Carnival of Souls.

-Ty E

TAXI HUNTER
TAXI HUNTER

Herman Yau (1993)

To enlighten those who are just now introduced to Herman Yau's work by way of *The Legend is Born: Ip Man*, Yau is also the fellow known exclusively in the "cult" circuit as the man who offered us generous doses of greedy-like gore with his two CAT III hits *Ebola Syndrome* and *The Untold Story*. Previous to those two Anthony Wong vehicles was what many could consider the precursor to Wong's perfected art of ignorance meets derangement and Yau's eventual transcendence into shocking violence. The film was *Taxi Hunter* starring Anthony Wong as a workaholic insurance salesman whose wife is expecting a child until a fateful night with a taxi driver that results in her squirmy death via asphalt challenge. This, with other incidents concerning selfish and rude taxi drivers, is what sparks Ah-Kin's (Wong) bloody rampage as he plays with the idea of murder as a tool for bettering society. Well, that's how Yau planned it but Wong only can represent the charitable executioner for so long until the "hero's" development hits a speed bump and leaves us wondering if we really could root for this respectful monster at all. Unlike the other classic examples of excellence in this particular genre, *Taxi Hunter* is rated CAT IIB (equivalent to "R" rating) but even without the brutality this remains a film that does not disappoint. If you're familiar with *Red to Kill, Run and Kill*, or *Her Vengeance*, then you are aware of precisely what you are getting yourself into; a chop-socky brawl featuring karate cops and ubiquitous violence with that antique HK feel. One recurring theme in these Hong-Kong exploitation pictures that I couldn't help but notice is the inclusion of "Fatty", a character that appears in most everyone I've seen. Whether he is the main character, supporting cast member, or police officer, I can recall scratching my head and wondering whether or not the Asiatics take humorous prejudice to our tubby kinfolk or just plain lashing out at obesity and the disgusting effects of over-consumption. For the matter of repeating thematic elements of film crossing over to similar kind, *Taxi Hunter* is also laden with jazz-pop lullabies that draw a more-than-savory approach to highlighting and tuning into all moods this film has to offer; tragedy, madness, and the giving spirit. When *Taxi Hunter* kicks off into its second gear, the film takes a curious charge in representing the same methodical structure behind 2006's Korean hit *No Mercy for the Rude*, in which a hitman only "cleans" disrespectful targets. Another comparable topic is Michael Douglas's stellar role in *Falling Down*, the story of a man who seemingly had it all until his sanity dissipates. These two films pasted together create the core of *Taxi Hunter*; which will most likely be seen as *Taxi Driver* from an alternate dimension. There isn't much to report on *Taxi Hunter* as it's effortlessly a splendid "revenge" film, if you could call it that. While Ah-Kin denounces vengeance I'm not so easily fooled. His entire murderous charade was using his wife's death as a crutch for the means necessary to expel his rage.

Taxi Hunter might be one of my more brief reviews but I still find much to applaud and support as this is a great film that sizzles into an extended car chase scene. Just as quickly as the credits roll, I too will make this my exit strategy from my affliction of pandering braindry.

-mAQ

THE FINE ART OF SEPARATING PEOPLE FROM THEIR MONEY
THE FINE ART OF SEPARATING PEOPLE FROM THEIR MONEY

Hermann Vaske (1996)

When I was in high school, I completely stopped watching television because, aside from most of it being soulless garbage and degenerate trash as far as entertainment is concerned, I could no longer bear watching TV commercials and having worthless products and cultural Marxist propaganda rammed down my throat. A couple years later, I completely stopped going to movie theaters largely because most mainstream movies are nothing more than absurdly expensive filmic excrement, but also because I felt I should be the one being paid to watch Coca Cola and shampoo commercials at the beginning of screenings and not be the one paying my hard-earned money so some pornographer of consumer products can attempt to brainwash me and profit from it. In the epic and ridiculously overlooked German documentary *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* (1998) aka *Wie man die Leute von ihrem Geld trennt* directed by investigative Teutonic documentarian Hermann Vaske (*The 10 Commandments of Creativity, Invasion of the Ideas*) and hosted by none other than Hollywood actor/auteur Dennis Hopper (*Easy Rider, Out of the Blue*), the viewer is exposed to the 'art of advertising' and sometimes not so fine line between cinematic art and TV commercials. Indeed, featuring candid interviews and commercials directed by some of the greatest (as well as not so great) auteur filmmakers of the late 20th century, including David Lynch, Federico Fellini, Wim Wenders, Spike Lee, Tony Kaye, Abel Ferrara, Alan Parker, Julian Schnabel, Ridley Scott, and Tony Scott, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* demonstrates that in virtually every artist there is an advertiser and in any advertiser there is an artist. Divided into three segments (Art, Humor, and Shock) that take a look at the power and effectiveness of advertising from an aesthetic perspective (as opposed to in the equally worthwhile BBC documentary *The Century of the Self* (2002), which takes a psycho-historical approach to explaining how psychoanalytic techniques were implemented by Freud's nephew Edward Bernays to subconsciously brainwash people), *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* discusses, among other things, how Hebrew humor has been implemented in commercials as it brings peoples' defenses down and tricks them into being sold to, how featuring homo pop(con)artist Andy Warhol and big American Negro boxer Sonny Liston in a Braniff Airways advert together was an act of advertising 'chutzpah,' why Jews and Brits purportedly make better humorists due to their distinct histories, how Spike Lee was able to develop a long-term friendship with his favorite basketball player, Michael Jordan, via directing Nike commercials, and why Tony Scott felt he botched his first feature film *The Hunger* (1983) starring David Bowie because he was used to directing overly-stylized but non-narrative 30 second commercials. Worth seeing simply due to its inclusion of rare commercials directed by David Lynch

and Federico Fellini, among countless others, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* is also a shockingly politically incorrect 'no bullshit' doc that demonstrates that Jews dominate advertising, how art and advertising are almost indistinguishable due to the lack of spirituality and organic national culture in the post-WWII Occidental world, and that even great auteur filmmakers don't mind making a quick buck by whoring themselves to a company whose products they would never use in a million years.

Beginning with Dennis Hopper hopping on a small trampoline and saying, "Hi, I'm Hopper" in what is clearly a goofy and intentionally moronic parody of the 'cutesy' and 'quirky' essence of so many bad American TV commercials, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* immediately establishes a tone of cultural cynicism that might offend couch potatoes and philistine commercial connoisseurs. From there, Hopper, who is sitting on a fancy sofa in what seems to be mountains in Bavaria, proceeds to tell a number of anecdotal tales about successful (con)artists, with the following story being a great example of the monetary-motivated joke that is modern post-national/post-traditional art: "Marcel Duchamp once said that the artist of the future would be able to just point his finger at something and say it was art and it would be art, so he picked out a bottle rack and he sold it for \$5000. Someone came and asked him, "What's the different between your bottle rack and the one I can buy for \$5?," and he said I'm an artist and I chose it. Now, was he a true visionary artist or just a fucking dork?" Undoubtedly, like his fellow culture-distorting comrade Picasso (who Hopper also tells an absurd story about), Duchamp was a fucking dork who used to dressed in drag under the persona 'Rose Sélavy' for his bud Man Ray and his only talent was juvenile iconoclasm that is typical of modern art, yet he made a ton of money doing it. From there, Hopper introduces director/interviewer Hermann Vaske, who is on a mission to uncover the link between 'feature films and advertising' and how a number of British advertising directors, like Alan Parker and Adrian Lyne, have turned into major Hollywood filmmakers, with belated director Tony Scott (*Top Gun*, *True Romance*) being the first person he interviews. Scott confesses that his first film *The Hunger*, which I think is his best work, was a mess because he was only used to directing 30-second adverts and was a novice when it came to feature-length storytelling. On the other hand, a number of already established filmmakers later decided to get into advertising for mostly monetary reasons. For example, David Lynch had free reign to make an 'avant-garde' commercial for Adidas where the only rule he had to follow was depicting a man running out of hell and into heaven. Needless to say, Lynch's commercial is quite curious, if not totally incoherent, to say the least, as if the Eraserhead director was intentionally attempting to make the product he was advertising the most unappealing thing in the world. When director Vaske asks Spike Lee (*Do the Right Thing*, *Jungle Fever*) what attracts him about commercials, the all-American Negro auteur stoically responds, "money...it most

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enables me to do what I do and that is direct. It doesn't have to be films, you know. I enjoy directing commercials and music videos." German auteur Wim Wenders (Paris, Texas, Wings of Desire) sees directing commercials as a necessity, stating, "And as we're living in a time where one cannot say anymore that advertising is imitating movies or art or whatever...but as we move and more advance to an age where it is the other way around I think it's important and to know how they are done and to know how to do them. And you cannot any longer have an attitude where you say, 'Well, I'm doing this and this is a whole different field and profession and I'd rather not touch it.' Maybe that was a possible attitude during the 60s or 70s, but things are changing." Indeed, as *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* readily demonstrates, Hollywoodization, globalization, and 'democracy' have destroyed anything that was once sacred of the artistic medium of cinema.

During the second segment of *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money*, host Dennis Hopper hilariously states, "In the next section we're going to be looking into such questions as: 'Why were all the really great New York creative teams made up of a Jewish copywriter and an Italian art director? Was it because the Jews got the brains and the Italians got the style? If so, what would happen if you had an Italian copywriter with a Jewish art director?'" While it is never really answered as to why it is that most NYC art directors are supposedly of Italian extraction, the Jewish question is beaten to death like a Judeo-Bolshevik revolutionary in a concentration camp. American art director George Lois, whose work for *Esquire* magazine has been exhibited at the Museum for Modern Art, goes on to discuss how in 1958 or 1959 he got the brilliant idea to "sell a Nazi car to a Jewish town," stating of his successful advert for Volkswagen, "If there ever was a miracle advertising story, it was Volkswagen. We took this German car designed by Hitler and Porsche and sold the hell out of it. It is the magic of advertising." When Lois is asked what the criterion is for good advertising, he states, "Jewish humor...New York humor, which basically derives from Jewish humor, which became American humor." American Hebrew sex therapist 'Ruth Westheimer aka 'Dr. Ruth' backs Lois' claim up, remarking, "I know the value of humor because in the Talmud, in the Jewish tradition, it says, 'A lesson taught with humor is a lesson retained.'" As to why members of the Hebraic faith are so good at comedy, a rabbi named Henry Sobel speculates, "I'm convinced that there is a Jewish humor as a consequence of our own history. We had to laugh. Sometimes we had to laugh at others. More often than not we had to learn to laugh at ourselves in order to survive." A British advertising executive gives a similar reason for the prevalence of British humor and its value in Brit society, stating, "In the Victorian times, there was very little humor at all in this country. Queen Victoria said in her famous line, 'We are not amused.' There was very little wit, but it was a very serious country of serious business middle-class aristocracy basically fulfilling their duty to god by running the world [...]"

they had this responsibility, they conquered the world, and they better run it. I think what happened then was Britain started to lose the opportunity to run the world...people left, we had wars, and we've got no money, and suddenly we weren't very powerful. The only mechanism we could find to cope with the loss of power was to laugh at ourselves because otherwise we of cried, so we started to tell jokes, started to make fun of ourselves. It's much easier to, as Jewish people do, to make fun of ourselves than someone else to make fun of you because that you can live with."

In the final section of *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money*, the value of shock in humor is discussed in decidedly degenerate, if not insightful, detail. One of the more humorous scenes from this segment is when a British art director gives the following rant regarding a scatological piece of art by the gay concept artists Gilbert & George: "This is one of Gilbert & George's 'naked shit' paintings. Some people find the representation of the turd shocking. They don't find it shocking that there is more goodness, more vitamins, minerals, and protein in a single everyday turd than a starving third world child gets in a week. All the millions of third world children are dying cause they don't even get as much goodness as the everyday turd that we flush down the toilet [...] people find the picture of an everyday turd more shocking than the fact our four biggest High Street banks make millions of pounds of profits from these deaths. Maybe people treat children in the third world the same way they treat their turds; they pretend don't exist." Indeed, the bitchy Brit ad-man is certainly right regarding humanity's lack of concern for other humans as it is revealed in a very popular commercial for the 'tough clothes' company Kadu; featuring a killer shark eating a surfer, the commercial concludes with a photo of the dismembered entrails of said killer shark revealing that the eaten surfer's swimming trunks survive the shark attack. Of course, sex also sells as demonstrated by pornographic sexual contraceptive ads, including an image of a black cock in the shape of a gun (the message being: black cock = AIDS), as well as a 'vagina dentata' picture of a vicious vag with wolf fangs. Of course, sleazy degeneracy also sells as demonstrated by the fact that British Jewish art director Tony Kaye directed a cinema-vérité-like Morrissey-esque 'PSA' of a real-life deranged junky shooting up and talking nonsensical mumbo jumbo while high, which led to the director getting noticed by producers and ultimately getting the opportunity to direct *American History X* (1998), which he later regretted (he was denied the final cut, while dork Edward Norton was given more screen time). Quentin Tarantino's dubious influence on pop culture is also discussed, with Wim Wenders remarking regarding the recent prevalence of ultra-violence in TV commercials, "Seeing PULP FICTION is a great experience...but seeing the imitators is painful." Indeed, it is probably impossible to quantify how negative Tarantino's influence has been not only on cinema and pop cultural, but society in general.

In the end, Dennis Hopper closes *The Fine Art of Separating People from*

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Their Money by stating with his tongue placed firmly in cheek, "No matter what you thought of this program...at least it was not interrupted by commercials...yet." Undoubtedly, Hermann Vaske's documentary is the most fun I have ever had watching commercial after commercial and talking head after talking head, as if *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* was a MTV documentary with some actual food-for-thought and lacking the usual loony LGBT-Cultural Marxist-miscegenation-propagating bullshit. Featuring a superficial score by Malcolm McLaren, who ironically almost single-handedly invented punk rock by contriving the 'boy band' the Sex Pistols and utilizing sensational advertising techniques via his anti-aesthetic fashion trends, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* is a virtual unintentional manifesto for artists living in the postmodern world, where superficial/sensational images and messages are everything and anything requiring the use of gray matter is considered an abject bore. With the industrial revolution, the rise of the mass man, and globalization, art has been taken out of the hands of cultivated aristocratic patrons and has become proletarianized, thus turning 'art' into something that is mostly special tailored for human rabble and the lowest common denominator. And, of course, the ultimate ideal in a liberalized multicultural world where no one has anything in common is wealth, with the modern artist's 'greatness' and worth being judged by his net worth, as the dubious legacies of Picasso and Warhol certainly demonstrate. Ultimately, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* tells the viewer that serious art does not sell, but humor and shock do, thus one can only assume that advertising will continue to influence people into turning into Judaized philistines who are addicted to mindless violence and pornography and lack any sense of seriousness, cultivation, and intellectual aptitude. During one especially telling scene during the documentary, a Jewish advertising creative remarks, "Not taking yourself serious or, you know, being honest about your shortcomings is again a sort of very American thing that I think Americans find very appealing," which is most certainly true as demonstrated by the anti-reality, humor-added, and fantasy-driven essence of Hollywood. Of course, one of the most important things that *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* reveals is the power of humor as a weapon, as it enables certain hostile aliens that work in Hollywood to create certain misguided stereotypes/pseudo-archetypes (i.e. inbred redneck racists, Negro-lusting trailer park nymphets, sexually repressed white conservative Christian assholes) in a cultural/spiritual war against the American white majority. Indeed, the Harold & Kumar films, which were all directed and produced by neo-Vaudevillian Jews, certainly put Veit Harlan's National Socialist classic *Jew Süss* (1940) to shame in terms of their anti-Europid hatred, but because these pieces of celluloid excrement utilize toilet humor to get their putrid points across, no one suspects they're watching cinematic hate diatribes that have less aesthetic value than Julius Streicher's Nazi tabloid *Der Stürmer*. Sadly, as a work made over 15

years ago, *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* makes it quite clear that the aesthetic metaphysical plague that is American mongrelized toilet kultur has only become all the malignant as time has passed, thus making the documentary mandatory viewing for anyone that takes art and/or cinema seriously. Let's just hope that director Hermann Vaske decides to make a sequel.

-Ty E

HIDESHII HINO'S THEATER OF HORROR: BOY FROM HELL
HIDESHII HINO'S THEATER OF HORROR: BOY FROM HELL

Hideshi Hino (2006)

Hideshi Hino is mostly known for his excellent work on the only good Guinea Pig films, namely *Flowers of Flesh & Blood* and *Mermaid in a Manhole*. He is a manga artist by trade, drawing ghoulish and violent horror stories. For this, he gets respect, so I can only remember being happy for these Twilight Zone-esque episodes. This one in particular is titled *Boy From Hell*. I can see you already know the plot. Daio is a wonderful son to a gorgeous mother. She is a surgeon with a reputation that fits in her 4-or so story house. We see him being rascally and sticking his head out of the back seat window of the car that is being driven by the misses butler/assistant. After some really horrible scenes involving the shittiest green screen ever depicted in a budgeted film, he turns and the boy gets decapitated by a truck. Seriously folks, the effects can't get anymore worse than this film. After seeing her decapitated son walking through the streets looking for his head. She then screams very loud and they all cry and bumble around like the Three Stooges. She doesn't tell anyone apparently and buries him in a wasteland. There we meet a crazy Jap lady with a horrendous wig. She tells the destroyed mother to slit a child's throat with a plastic fang she hands her and let the blood spill on the grave. Doing so will result in the resurrection of her beloved son. She kidnaps a dying cancer patient at the age of 12 and hangs him upside. This will sound malevolent of me, but watching this kid cry and the moment leading up to his arterial severing demise was quite hilarious in an often demented way. That happens, and her son comes back to life...only not as cute. For the most part, his illustrious artistry is used well but with a receding budget which doesn't allow him to paint the blood red canvas he wishes. This monster-boy has a taste for blood and rampages around a drawn city at night and devours people in cases of stupidity. These people deserved to die for lacking any sense. On the case is the only good thing about this film; A crazy detective. Seeing these films make me wish our local law enforcement were this colorful. Most of this film is dumbed down by hideous effects and drawn scenery. While I am a fan of Hino's work, the cartoon-esque doesn't fit like it does in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?". Not to mention the obvious midget playing Demon Daio. Too hilarious for words. This film is only worth a hearty chuckle.

-mAQ

DETROIT METAL CITY

Hiroshi Nagahama (2008)

Organizing Japanese weirdness is easy enough. From a country where you can purchase used underwear in vending machines, no topic is sacred from getting befouled with quirky Japs in "fashionable" clothes all the while mocking something that their culture has no place in doing so. For an elaborated and clever title, Toshio Lee took the existing Detroit Rock City and made it into Detroit Metal City. Get it? The story is simple and charming enough. Closet homosexual Soichi leaves his farm life to become a Swedish pop singer. He finds himself in a rut when he becomes the front man for a death metal band called Detroit Metal City, all the while hiding his identity behind a wig, face paint, and donning the name "demon emperor" Johannes Krauser II. For Krauser's "mask," the traditional death metal approach is taken which aids the non-stop sarcastic viewpoint of metal. Stab a dead dog repeatedly, why don't you? Like Metalocalypse before it, Detroit Metal City just shows how ridiculous and unsavory the effect of Metal is on both social and physical aspects of life. Representing this claim is DMC's choice of lyrics. Such classic verses as "I'm a terrorist from hell. Yesterday, I've raped my mother" are prominent in the philosophy of DMC and thus brings in a youthful, rebellious teenage crowd. Unbeknownst to the fans, Johannes is actually a giggling, bubbly fashionable ex-farm boy who has a perfect mushroom cut and an attitude that can extinguish fire out of fear of homosexuality. This isn't his dream so where did it go wrong? With most tales of inspiration, this one caters to the motives of giving dreams to others and explodes into a heavy metal face off against the legendary Jack III Dark (Gene Simmons). The scintillating versus match plays out like a self-loathing foreign idealist cover of a Tenacious D act. For fans of Japanese cinema, be it cult, horror, or quirky adventures in bubblegum land, DMC coddles to the needs of fans of eccentric comedy. I'd be lying if I denied Detroit Metal City's marvelous ability to make me chuckle, laugh, and grin to no end. For an exclusive and exaggerated view at Japan's culture, Detroit Metal City is a comical touring through the busy streets filled with women that all look the same, super sentai performances, and the arrogant lot of "fashionable males" that stroll through. And just to think, this amusing film was brought to you by a hit Japanese manga. It seems that while we're adapting Japanese horror films to our American market, they're taking their own comics and adapting them to the screen. We perpetrate upon the same soil but normally with foreign works of literature. No "culture" is sacred enough from Hollywood's disheveling blood thirsty scalpel. Just like the many masks adorned in Detroit Metal City, this film will suit any to all demographic unless you're disgusted by romantic comedies detailing the escapades of an aspiring pre-op tranny that completely redefines the term "flamboyant." For a film with revolving ethics sermoning the values of goals, Detroit Metal City

DETROIT METAL CITY

is damn near perfect and a shining light of an absurd comedy. To bogart upon a film that near everyone should see is hard enough as it is. Should I throw in several "quotables?" Detroit Metal City is slam-bang fun? A rocking good time? No, these are just silly word-smithing's that equate to a flaccid discussion. If an idiosyncratic eye with razor sharp wit seems endearing to you, see Detroit Metal City at all cost. Like the source material, the result is incredibly entertaining and sports a fleshy comic feel to boot that will appraise you over and over again.

-mAQ

MUSCLE

Hisayasu Satô (1989)

While I am not even marginally interested in the 'Pink film' (aka Pinku eiga aka Pink eiga) aside from the occasional oddity like Aryan Kaganof's uniquely unhinged cross-cultural curiosity *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy* starring Dutchman Thom Hoffman as a western criminal with a unquenchable thirst for cleanly shaved yellow snatch, I certainly could not turn down seeing a film belonging to the Japanese exploitation 'movement' that pays tribute to Pier Paolo Pasolini and features a highly complementary soundtrack by the English post-industrial group Coil, including their greatest song "Ostia (The Death of Pasolini)." Indeed, *Kurutta Butokai* (1989) aka *Muscle* aka *Lunatic Theatre* aka *Kitami* aka *Mad Ballroom Gala* aka *Asti gesshoku eiga-kan* aka *Asti: Lunar Eclipse Theater* directed by celebrated Pink film maestro and 'V-cinema' auteur Hisayasu Satô (*Widow's Perverted Hell* aka *Look Into Me*, *Splatter: Naked Blood* aka *Nekeddo burâddo: Megyaku*) is the fiercely fucked and quintessentially Japanese yet at the same time ultimately universal tale of a gay muscle mag photographer who goes to prison for a year after cutting off his sadistic male prostitute boy toy's arm with a samurai sword, only to get out of the slammer and become all the more determined to be with his one-armed beau while simultaneously attempting to track down a copy of commie cocksucker Pasolini's infamous cinematic swansong *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975). Indubitably, had Yukio Mishima been born into a later generation, he would have directed a film like Satô's poof Pinku piece, which features a near perfect marriage of sexually perverse poetry and sadomasochistic cinematic schlock, albeit with a sense of romanticism that is rather rare for such works. Indeed, I would go as far as saying that *Muscle* is the all the more aberrant, if not more artless and hardly nationalistic, cinematic son of Mishima's sole celluloid effort *Yûkoku* aka *Patriotism* aka *Rite of Love & Death*. A fellow known as a sort of 'Jap Cronenberg' who once gave real-life cannibal turned Japanese celebrity Issei Sagawa a cameo role in one of his films, Satô is notable for being the first major Pinku auteur to deliver a queer themed work via *Kamen no Yuwaku* (1987) aka *Temptation of the Mask*, which is about a boy that is routinely raped by his sick sod stepfather and grows up to be a sexually confused arsonist who is chased by a gay detective. *Muscle* is Satô's second piece of sadomasochistic sodomite celluloid and, despite its considerably unflattering and oftentimes downright depraved depiction of homosexuality, the film managed to win the grand prize at the Berlin Gay and Lesbian Festival in 1993, thus hinting that both the krauts and Japs inherited some of the same pesky vices after the Second World War. While a wayward work of the homo S&M sort, Satô's film is also dripping with unhealthy obsession, which is certainly something many people, including myself, can relate to. Indeed, *Muscle* features a protagonist whose love for a young male

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prostitute drives him to homicidal lunacy, grisly self-mutilation, and a nasty P.P. Pasolini obsession. Despite my general apathy towards Pinku, when I learned about the plot to Satō's nasty little piece of work I knew I would love it and after watching the film I can happily state that I wallowed up every second of it. A film made during a time when western fag filmmakers were only making films about AIDS and other sterilely banal topics, *Muscle* is thankfully a provocative stab in the gut that never succumbs to superficial sermonizing or senseless sentimentalism as a work marinated in 'mad love' that demonstrates that in every sadist there is lurking a secret masochist and vice versa.

Muscle opens with a super gay montage of a muscleman in a pink thong flexing and posing in a shadowy room juxtaposed with heavy male breathing as if someone is beating off or getting slowly butt-fucked. As fairly introverted protagonist Ryuzaki (Takeshi Itō)—a man who snaps photographs for a Tom of Finland-esque fag rag—narrates in a quasi-film noir-ish somber monotone fashion, "It began when he gave me the flyer for the contest. Back then, I was the editor of the magazine, "Muscle." From there, the viewer is introduced to Ryuzaki's prostitute-cum-performance-artist lover Yukihiro Kitami (Simon Kumai), who the protagonist seems to have fallen in love with at first sight, but as he somberly narrates, "Our beautiful days were brief. Kitami began to get sadistic." Indeed, while the two started out their relationship ball-dancing with one another in the protagonist's cramped apartment and worshiping one another's thong-covered dongs, Kitami eventually got rather sexually sadistic with Ryuzaki and began doing extra naughty things to him like biting his balls and slicing him up with a knife during sex. Ultimately, Ryuzaki eventually decided to hack off Kitami's right-arm during an S&M photo shoot, with his reason being, "I couldn't take it. Something inside crumbled and exploded at the same time." As punishment for his somewhat strange crime, Ryuzaki was sentenced to one year in prison, but it seems that ultra-violence and hard prison time only reinforced his sado-masochistic love for cruel cunt Kitami.

Upon getting out of prison, Ryuzaki takes a leak in a public urinal and a random fag goes up to him and says, "Welcome back. Let me suck it," but the protagonist is a rare monogamous queer who is only interested in finding and being with his beloved one-armed beau Kitami. Unfortunately for the protagonist, finding a mono-armed muscleman hustler is not as easy as the protagonist assumed it would be. During his first night as a free man, Ryuzaki suffers what most normal people would call a nightmare that involves Kitami biting his balls, covering his body with what looks like cream cheese with a knife (!), and savagely raping his bunghole. The next morning, Ryuzaki wakes up with a copy of *Muscle Magazine* on his face as if he fell asleep while masturbating and soon receives a call from his boss, who informs him that they will have to temporarily stop publishing because they lack funds. Clearly, Ryuzaki is disappointed as he is not only out of the job, but also because he is rather sentimental magazine,

stating, "It was really good; an excuse to look at hard bodies." To the annoyance of his boss, Ryuzaki demands to know about Kitami's whereabouts, pleading, "I dreamed of the man," but the only thing he can tell him is that, "I've heard there's a one-armed man walking the streets." Ryuzaki has such a kind and thoughtful boss that he went to the effort of watching all of his belongings while he was in jail, including Kitami's dismembered arm, which the protagonist has on display in a phallic-like jar and which he seems to worship as a sort of religious icon. Of course, in Ryuzaki's mind, the arm pales in comparison to the real living and breathing man that it once belonged to.

Aside from his obsession with finding his beloved bastard of a beau, Ryuzaki develops an unhealthy fetishistic fixation with Italian poet and auteur Pier Paolo Pasolini, who he seems to feel that he is tied to in a sort of spiritual fate as reflected in his remark regarding the filmmaker, "He was killed the same time I cut off the arm." Indeed, both Ryuzaki and Pasolini faced much pain as a result of their masochistic love for young gay gigolos, but unlike the filmmaker, the Jap photographer fought back and now he is fighting for love. Since he is out of the job, Ryuzaki finds new employment as a ticket collector at a bizarre arthouse theater called "The Lunatic Cinema," where he only charges the viewer if they like the film that they see. Naturally, Ryuzaki begins looking at the seediest fag bars in town for his missing boy toy and in one of these places a quasi-tranny man-hooker greets him and states, "Welcome. This is the entranced to paradise. It can also be the exit from hell. We both love to slip in through the back entrance. Around the world, French, Greek, take your pick." Ryuzaki reluctantly agrees to buy the sickening shemale's time in the hope of plying him for info about Kitami, but the sexually confused streetwalker is more concerned with using his self-described "first class" sexual technique, so the conversation goes absolutely nowhere. Meanwhile, Ryuzaki writes to a Japanese friend living in Italy named Sugisaki to ask him if he can track down a copy of Pasolini's *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom since they are not screening the film at any of the theaters in Japan. It almost seems like Ryuzaki believes that *Salò* reveal to him sort of hidden spiritual truth, but fate ultimately has different plans for him.

When Ryuzaki hangs out with his mustached buddy Tschida (You Suzuki), he is rather annoyed upon witnessing the exceedingly fucked relationship his friend has with his sadistic girlfriend 'Yoko' (Kiyomi Itô), who introduces herself to the protagonist by stating in a misleadingly soft fashion, "Yoko for flower. Ko for child. Flower-child. Hello!" and then proceeds to stare at him like a virginal schoolgirl with an innocent high school crush. Of course, Tschida is agitated by his girlfriend's less than polite staring, so he slaps the shit out of Yoko, but she is not as passive and innocent as she looks as demonstrated by the fact that she immediately throws soda in her boyfriend's face, knocks him on his ass, drives her heel into his cock and stomach, and then begins fucking him right in front of Ryuzaki, who seems rather unimpressed with the entire scenario. As it turns

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out, Yoko is turned on by Ryuzaki's coldness and decides to show up at his work when they are screening Pasolini's *Porcile* (1969) aka *Pigsty*. Whilst attempting to use stereotypical female deception by pretending to be a 'damsel in distress' even though she is anything but, Yoko pleads to Ryuzaki regarding her boyfriend, "Help me, please. Tschida will kill me," but the protagonist knows her game and does not fall for her pathetic bullshit as expressed in his stoic response, "I don't think so. Tschida's the one who's going to get killed [...] By you." Instead of denying that she might kill Tschida, Yoko then asks Ryuzaki, "Are you.....S...or M?" and he shows he can be quite the sadist by knocking her on her flat Jap ass after she starts biting him. When Ryuzaki begins handing out flyers the next day reading, "I'm looking for you. The one who lost your right arm" to people around the city, Yoko approaches him and attempts to seduce him by stating, "You're cold as ice. But I like your cold eyes [...] Your eyes were ice cold when I was fucking Tschida [...] You got yourself caught in my web. The spider's web. I won't leave you alone." Luckily for Ryuzaki, he's 100% queer and will not have to go through the ordeal of becoming the lover of a psychotic bitch, but then again, his true love is no less deleterious.

While Ryuzaki manages to receive a VHS copy of Pasolini's *Salò* from his comrade in Italy, he has to convert the tape since it is in PAL format, but when he goes to the conversion place, they refuse to do it since it is 'uncensored' (after all, Japs hate pubic hair and Guidos have tons of it). After leaving the conversion place, Ryuzaki is approached by Tschida, who attempts to talk him out of looking for his one-armed man Kitami by remarking, "I want to turn you into an upright citizen. You're not a criminal. It was self-defense," but the protagonist wants nothing to do with what he is talking about and retorts, "That doesn't change the fact that I chopped off his arm." Rather creepily, as Ryuzaki and Tschida argue, Yoko stalks them. Later that day, Ryuzaki heads to a pier to hand out flyers where he runs into a leather-clad hustler that claims that he and his friends recently hung out with Kitami remarking in an almost fiendish fashion, "Everyone made fun of him because he was so creepy. We were actually afraid of him, because he was indescribably charming and had a divine body." As Ryuzaki and the dubious hustler continue their conversation in a bathroom, the latter remarks, "You've got a big one" while the former takes a very long leak. When the hustler tells an extravagant story about how a man came to live with his family and seduced every single person in the house in a salacious scenario that caused his sister to turn into an insomniac, his mother to sexually degenerate into a nympho that chased "anything with a dick," and caused his father to run out the door naked and never come back home, Ryuzaki becomes exceedingly enraged and spitefully states, "Stop talking shit. Don't steal stories from movies." Indeed, the hustler merely regurgitated the basic storyline from Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968) and pathetically attempted to pass it off as a tragically intriguing anecdote from his own life. When the seemingly sociopathic hustler steals Ryuzaki's VHS copy

of Salò from his hands and smashes it on the ground, the protagonist naturally completely loses it and beats him to death with a metal rod. After all, what better way to avenge Pasolini's legacy than to beat a young hustler to death?!

When Ryuzaki receives an envelope containing a fancy blood red invitation for a masquerade ball and a pair of black pantyhose, he knows that his cocksucking comrade Kitami wants to meet him for a fateful event that will decide the future of their unfinished unhinged sadomasochistic romance. Rather curiously, the masquerade is taking place at the some movie place where the protagonist works. Undoubtedly, Ryuzaki's date with fate at the masquerade initially vaguely feels like something out of Arthur Schnitzler's novella *Traumnovelle* (1926) or Kubrick's adaptation *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), but what ultimately erupts is much more morbidly modern, not to mention quite flamingly and melodramatically, if not quite violently, gay. When Ryuzaki arrives at the theater, a ticket collector sporting pantyhose over his head tells him that him that the place has been rented out for a "private party" and that he must show his invitation and cover his head with pantyhose, which he immediately does. When Ryukazi walks inside the theater, a man with pantyhose walks him onto a stage with a spotlight where they dance to the soothing sounds of Coil. Eventually, various other men wearing different colored pantyhose get on the stage and start pushing the protagonist around in a rather rough fashion until the protagonist yells, "Kitami." After that, the music stops, the lights come on, and everyone takes their pantyhose off their head, including Tschida and Yoko, who were clearly involved in a plot against Ryuzaki from the very beginning but immediately attempt to warn him about Kitami who, to delight of the protagonist, soon reveals himself. Rather absurdly, Ryuzaki attempts to give Kitami his dismembered arm back, but he knocks it out of the protagonist's hand and then gives him a royal beating when he acts like a sentimental pussy and tries to pick it up. As Kitami states to Ryuzaki like a true deranged braggart, "I knew you came here. That's why I chose it as the execution ground. I'm the matador. If you don't attack me, your torture is going to have to wait." Of course, Ryuzaki has no problem enduring torture for love but he is wholly unwilling to fight back, as he feels that he has already hurt Kitami enough and does not want to open old wounds.

Naturally, Ryuzaki fails to fight back and instead declares his undying love to Kitami, passionately stating in regard to his reason for cutting his arm off, "Back then, I couldn't stand the pain. My nerves were shot. Something was wrong with me, even though I needed you. I loved you." When Ryuzaki attempts to embrace his decidedly demented beau after making his impassioned declaration of love, Kitami kicks him to the ground and contemptuously states, "You only love yourself." After describing in a histrionic fashion how he was bedridden for two months and suffered insomnia for another four months because, "My severed arm was trying to find me," Kitami asks Ryuzaki if he "killed the queen on the pier" and then goes on to described how "no one will cry" and "no one

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will care” about the forsaken hustler’s brutal death. Ryuzaki defends himself by saying, “He lied to me. He told me about his family, like it was from some screenplay” and Kitami’s long-haired friend remarks, “it’s true! But it’s Kitami’s family story. He started working out to get over it. Everything is an illusion...like in the movies.” Ultimately, Ryuzaki desperately begs his lover to stay with him by stating, “Please stay with me. If you want to torture me, you can do it until I die” and, somewhat surprisingly, Kitami agrees, but under the stipulation that he demonstrate his devotion to him by allowing him to chop off his right arm so that they will be “50/50” in terms of the abuse and disfigurement that they have bestowed upon one another. Right before Kitami goes to hack off his arm, Ryuzaki yells “Wait! I’ll do it my own way” and proceeds to blind himself with the sword. As blood drips down his face, Ryuzaki states while in a state of completely deranged ecstasy, “Now I’ll see your body the way it was when we me.” In the end, in a most morbidly romantic scene juxtaposed with the quite fitting Coil song “Ostia (The Death of Pasolini)” in a semi-surreal scenario that truly demonstrates that love conquers all, Ryuzaki and Kitami literally dance into the night like two old dapper queens.

Although I probably should not admit it, *Muscle* touched me in a way that no gay S&M exploitation film has ever done before, as it potently depicts in a simple, albeit highly effective and aberrantly allegorical, way the sort of perennially (self)destructive hold that a great love can have over a person. I know personally that I thought I had been in love various times before until I met a certain girl who completely changed how I looked at the world and who I tolerated things from that I had never tolerated from anyone else before. In that sense, as the protagonist of Satō’s film learns, love can have a refreshing humbling effect that helps put things in one life’s into perspective, even if it comes at the price of much metaphysical pain and suffering. By the end of *Muscle*, the protagonist rather chose death than be without his beloved and rather symbolically, he opts to brutally blind himself to save his romance. Indeed, it might be some patently perverted cheapo Pinku fag-fest, but Satō’s work ultimately exposes great truths and insights about love that the seemingly soulless and sociopathic dream-defilers in Hollywood would never dare touch. Another interesting aspect to the film is that it is innately anti-Hollywood in its almost mystical portrayal of arthouse cinema, namely the works of Pasolini. For instance, when the protagonist is asked by the female sadist Yoko if Pigsty is interesting, he replies “That depends on you,” thus alluding to the fact that Pasolini’s work is only for a select few who have the eyes and minds to appreciate it. Of course, to fully appreciate *Muscle*, one must be more familiar with Pasolini than Pinku films. As the protagonist also states to Yoko regarding Pasolini’s film, “If you don’t like what you saw, you don’t have to pay. That’s the principle of the Lunatic Cinema,” thereupon indicating that such idiosyncratic arthouse works are not made for mere monetary reasons and should not be forced on the uninitiated or art-adverse, as it would like be attempting

to teach the blind how to read. After all, like with lovers, taste in cinema is a highly subjective matter and my experience is that people that like banal movies are typically banal people. Of course, my great love and I also have similar taste in cinema as we do in the bedroom and it does not involve tiny muscular Jap men in pink thongs. Ultimately, Muscle is more successful than Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) in terms of depicting a gay romance in a universal way that can be understood by heterosexuals, which is no small accomplishment considering the film features sleazy hustlers, degenerate queens, queer bondage photographers, man-on-man ball-biting and countless other depraved sexually inverted ingredients that would surely cause kraut poof pig Rosa von Praunheim to giggle with glee like a Japanese schoolgirl.

-Ty E

NAKED BLOOD
NAKED BLOOD

Hisayasu Satô (1996)

I don't take much heart in exploitation films. I frequently enjoy the fruitful violence and depravity they offer, especially in a world so quick to judge, but the same formula is applied over and over again. Blood this. Sex that. It's overused in all sense of the word. Hisayasu Sato's film *Naked Blood* is a CAT III exploitation movie with some intelligence. Eiji is the only son of a widowed mother who is also a scientist. His father was lost at sea and never found. Eiji is an aspiring scientist who just invented a new pain killer dubbed "My son". It's the recipe for eternal happiness, turning pain into pleasure (As demonstrated in *Flowers of Flesh & Blood*). Before his mother runs tests on 3 women, Eiji sneaks My son in with the drug his mother and intends on viewing them to watch for side effects. He runs into trouble when the women start mutilating themselves creating ecstasy out of delectable tortures.

The film itself travels through many genres and features many noticeable scenes. One being a sex scene the seems like it inspired some of *Demolition Man* or Tsukamoto's *A Snake Of June*. The most surprising element is the character development. Eiji's mother watches old reels of his father and through some interesting flashbacks, we witness the problem at its core. Sato filmed his vision of the transgression of pain and ecstasy deliriously creating an intelligent, yet nihilistic masterpiece.

Many bizarre situations accompany the scenes in this film. Rika suffers from an extreme case of insomnia and because of this and probably also due to some freakish accident with the scribes personal life, she has hyper sensitive hearing and can hear the plants talking. Her philosophy is that cactuses are always sleeping and for that, she shares an intimate bond with a cactus. Since she cannot sleep, she sits in a chair with a VR headset connected to the cactus which relaxes her into dreamlike situations. The film is a gore extravaganza. Nipples are cutten off and consumed. Vagina's sawn off and eaten. Arteries slashed, gruesome piercings, and even the entrails exposed. This Japanese film has enough blood to please most gorehounds. This is a very solid psychological film with many disturbing scenes, a wicked twist ending, and frequent bloodshed. A great film that should be seen eventually although it does suffer from the casual imperfection.

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ZORN'S LEMMA

Hollis Frampton (1970)

I hadn't updated myself on the consistency of this avant-garde/experimental piece from one of Peter Greenaway's favorite auteurs - Hollis Frampton. I went in a complete virgin to the ideas and anti-synopsis that Zorn's Lemma embraces, or even Hollis Frampton for that matter. The curious title of Zorn's Lemma is the equivalent of the Axiom of Choice. You've heard of the musical genre Math Rock, now witness cinema propelled by the theory of mathematics.

A fan base for this type of material is certainly hard to find. Many viewers will get bored, tired, irritated, and irrational after a small time dealing with Zorn's Lemma. This is a prime example of one of the harder films to get through. I'd personally like to view Frampton's Lemon. I've heard of the techniques he dabbles in, such as dissecting light. Once your eyes and mind adjust to the creeping attack of structured mathematics, you will become accustomed to this. Perhaps, you can open your mind up enough to allow films like this and *La Jetée* to convince you that a slide show effort isn't fruitless.

Hollis Frampton conjures up a sixty minute slide show scored from static and weird glitch blips. Billboards and signs continuously make up a very clockwork alphabet. The pattern soon drills in your brain, absorbing the boredom you may have acquired like a sponge. Pretty soon, your motor skills will eventually cease and a form of a hypnotizing trance will take hold. At least, that's what happened to me. Zorn's Lemma is an experience that is unrivaled. With no stars, no narrative, and no sound, this is a film that is unequivocally one of a kind.

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EASY TO GET
EASY TO GET

Howard Bretherton (1931)

In Woody Allen's *Love and Death*, there is a scene with Russian rookies receiving a morality play about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. The United States Army takes many precautions to alert America's young troops about the dangers of foreign slutty women who moonlight as filthy succubus's who pose a huge threat to our soldiers whilst on their leave. In the presumed 40's, an anti-VD film was created by the Army entitled *Easy to Get* which encompasses an afro-centric view on the syphilitic victims. We soon meet a young Negro. To better fit the film, I'll name him Tyrone. Tyrone's a swell soldier fighting for our country. While on leave, he meets a swell black female in an all black bar. He takes her home and becomes very close to her over the weak, culminating in them making sweet sweet love in a Cadillac or something. A white US doctor tells warns him of filthy Negro women and the dangers lurking behind every female mask. *Easy to Get* centers around the theory that Africans acquire the disease easier, therefore issuing them a vulnerability card. Even behind the most innocent face lurks a da'stardly she-devil who just aims to ruin aspiring men's lives. The novelty of *Easy to Get* is intimidating, good fun, and always present. This 22 minute short features a miniature lecture from a black Reverend warning "his kind" about the dangers of catching syphilis. Just to break the ice rather crudely, you are given surprise close-up shots of diseased and flaccid Negro penises. I don't know what's more revolting while being humorous - the twitching rotten libido's of the displayed "weaker race" or the cow fetus pseudo-Eraserhead looking babies whom the narrator said should have rather been put to death. After Tyrone, we meet a new protagonist. I'll name this one Leroy Jones. He suffers a similar fate from a prostitute in a bar. This training video makes dutiful time to display women (all archetypes and social statuses) as venomous creatures to sap the soul of men by unleashing a plethora of bacteria inside their urethra. Once *Easy to Get* is over, you'll sit there and let it dawn on you that you just watched racial and sexist propaganda in the guise of a training video to promote healthy soldiers. *Easy to Get* is a film that is "easy to get". It's more entertaining than you'd be led to believe. It's available on the special features of the *Heavy Petting DVD*. It's definitely worth a view for the fans of an ignorant America circa 40s. I haven't enjoyed a piece of propaganda in quite some time and needless to say, it's very refreshing. *Easy to Get* is crude, disgusting, free-formed, and filmed incredibly well. The general message conveyed here is "All Negroes gots AIDS".

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SERGEANT YORK

Howard Hawks (1941)

Sergeant York is an American World War II (set during the first war) propaganda film directed and produced by Christian Scientist, Howard Hawks. It is a biographical film about Medal of Honor winner Alvin York. Hailing from Tennessee, York made the ultimate hero story for someone from the middle of nowhere. York epitomized the hillbilly and redneck stereotypes America has about Southern Americans. The irony is that he became a hero and role model for all.

Sergeant York is excellent propaganda in that it could make the poor Southerner feel like he could be a hero. Like World War I, America needed a reason to convince Americans to get into World War II. After the first war, Americans had enough. The depression also did not help with American patriotism. Southerners have always made great soldiers due to being underprivileged, backwards, and working class. At least in this point in American history, Southern soldiers' contributions to America were acknowledged. Most contemporary films dealing with Southerners generally take a derogatory or defaming route. Directors (or should I say showman) like Steven Spielberg have utilized the formulas and conventions of American World War II propaganda films for contemporary propaganda films like *Saving Private Ryan*. Each film features various characters from around the United States. The newer films add a larger collection of characters such as blacks, hippies, and surfers (in anti-Vietnam films like *Platoon* and *Apocalypse Now*) to represent a more diverse and changing America. Sergeant York is where you would probably want to start if searching for the birth of the contemporary War film. Although masterworks such as *Birth of a Nation* set up the model, Sergeant York filled in the little details that made the war film much more entertaining and sentimental. Directors like Steven Spielberg have just taken these conventions and formulas to extremes (especially with sentimentalism). It is a shame that American War films haven't advanced much in comparison to European War films which take endless different approaches. Films like Sergeant York confuse me in my feelings on war and the war film. No one completely wins the war. At the end of each millions are left dead and for what? Alvin York was a hero in his own right. He did what he believed was honorable and important. The real question is whether or not the global bankers, politicians, and countries did the right thing. It is doubtful as human nature has always been one focused on self-destruction. Sergeant York almost makes me feel as if Alvin York was exploited for the use of propaganda. Either way, the film and Alvin York have made history.

I have almost become obsessed with the dishonesty of the American war film.

SERGEANT YORK

After watching countless European war films I can only look at *War* for what it is; barbarianism. Whether it be Elem Klimov's Soviet classic, *Come and See*, or documentary filmmakers Sebastian Dehnhardt, Christian Deick and Jörg Müller's *Stalingrad*, *War* is hell. It will be interesting to see what the future has for the American war film with the failure and disaster America has gotten itself into, in the Middle East.

-Ty E

THE WHITE LIE

Howard Hickman (1918)

While working in a video store, i had the chance to view a lot of independent horror which stretches over every sub-genre. This is a short film from Ron De-Caro and is apart of a trilogy. The Gateway Meat is the last film and is expected to be finished soon. For a film that is only ten minutes long, it is pretty good. The director knows how he wants things to appear and it is pretty shocking.

The plot revolves around Tyler Steadman. He lives in a house with a family but is addicted to drugs. While his wife is arguing with him, he gets a phone call from an anonymous person who he owes a hundred dollars. Of course he hangs up on him and because of that, the man appears at his house and begins a descent into a grotesque art of humiliation. While hitting Tyler with a hammer, the madman hears a baby monitor makes noise. That is when the suspense turns up. The killer walks up the stairs and along the way steps on a toy which starts talking. The talking of the toy starts humming at a noticeable level and mixes with the screams of the baby well. When you hear the babies last scream, it is the most authentic scream i have ever heard from a child. The acting in this short film is so-so. I had no expectations whatsoever so it wasn't a huge letdown. Tyler seems to be too forced with his role and the make-up is painfully noticeable. The madman plays a decent role. Sometimes appearing too fake. His hat bill is so low i dont think you ever see his eyes. I consider that a smart move. Some of his angles i didn't really care for; such as when the camera seems to be on the tip of the killers gun. I have seen the same mistake over and over again in indie cinema. The hammer effects looked really nice though. We hear loud cracks on the head that really remind you of the good days of torture film. The sound effects for the rain are some of the best i have ever heard. Quite childish to love, but it sets the mood up real nice. It carries the tagline "The most brutal 10 minute short film ever!". It certainly isn't but damn if they didn't try. I am really looking forward to his new film.

You can watch "The White Lie" for free on their myspace. <http://www.myspace.com/ftbomp-Maq>

100 DAYS BEFORE THE COMMAND
100 DAYS BEFORE THE COMMAND

Hussein Erkenov (1991)

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest and most biting ironies of the modern world is that, instead of attempting to appeal to the nationalistic anti-communist white mainstream and rabid rednecks in spewing hatred against the Russians as was done constantly during the Cold War era, the mainstream media and mulatto president now target queers and leftists in propagating totally propagandistic hatred against ruskis because the Slavs, who still have testicular fortitude and common sense ideals, do not buy into poof cultural Marxism and logical fallacies like 'equality' and whatnot. After all Russians have more important things to care about than allowing men who penetrate other men's rectums with their penises to be allowed in the military or whether homos should be allowed to be in charge of Boy Scout troops comprised of prepubescent boys. That being said, it should be no surprise that the Russian anti-communist cocksucker flick *Sto dney do prikaza* (1994) aka *100 Days Before the Command*—certainly an ominous and one-of-a-kind celluloid soldier's story if there ever was one about the state sanctioned dehumanization of Red Army recruits—was banned by the Soviets upon its release. In fact, although completed in 1990, director Hussein Erkenov (Kholod, *Ne strelyayte v passazhira* aka *Don't Shoot the Passengers*) was not even able to get the film screened until after starting his own sales company and eventually having it premiered at the 1995 Berlin Film Festival. On top of that, to mislead Soviet authorities, Erkenov, with the help of screenwriters Yuri Polyakov and Vladimir Golodov, had to create two fake screenplays on top of the real one to even get *100 Days Before the Command* made so as to mislead the fine folks at the Gorky Film Studio, a film studio named after a man who ironically stated "eradicate homosexuals and fascism will disappear." Unfortunately, Soviet literary propagandist Maxim Gorky did live to see not only the fall of his commie utopia, but also a film so homoerotic and critical of the Red Army as *100 Days Before the Command*, a film that takes a rather delightfully degenerate approach to Socialist realism. A hyper hallucinatory and sometimes even surreal cinematic work that has no real beginning nor end but instead wanders aimlessly in a sort of charismatically creepy celluloid Soviet purgatory, *100 Days Before the Command* is a mystifying metaphysical fever dream that alternates between heaven and hell, but mostly hell, in terms of the daily routines of boyish soldiers whose sole source of solace is homoerotic tomfoolery and day-dreaming. Depicting the Marxist military manner of molding innocent boys into murderous machinelike men who act as slavish lost souls of the Soviet state, *100 Days Before the Command* makes allegorical references to Christian icon Saint George and his slaying of a dragon at the bottom of a lake that ate babies that were sacrificed to it, the serpent in the film being the Soviet Army. Utilizing real-life soldiers for virtually all the film roles as well as real army barracks,

100 Days Before the Command is cinematic realism at its most flagrantly fragmented and forebodingly transcendental as a film that is totally unforgettable, even if it has nothing resembling a discernible storyline nor plot.

Beginning with the Psalm 22:6 quote, “But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people,” which certainly describes how the characters in the film must feel, 100 Days Before the Command soon cuts to Red army recruits goofing around gayly, but after a mysterious man appears, they are depicted laying in grass in seeming ecstasy, but also as what could also be seen as cold corpses on a battlefield. If anything is clear, it is that doom is in the air as echoed by a failed war in Afghanistan and premonitions of the collapse of the Soviet Union as 100 Days Before the Command certainly translates the dreadful atmosphere of its particular zeitgeist. Although featuring dozens of recruits, 100 Days Before the Command only focuses on five of them as they try in vain to maintain dignity and hope in a hopeless and undignified realm of physical and emotional brutality and 24 hour video surveillance. In terms of fun, the boy soldiers give each other baths and soap one another’s buttocks, which was apparently a common practice among the Soviets. Of course, in between homo-style bathhouse rubdowns, some soldiers bully and beat other soldiers in a somewhat S&M-inspired fashion. Visions, real or imagined, of Red Army corpses appear randomly. A female soldier named “Death”—the girlfriend of a degenerate commander—is the sole ‘bright’ light at the army barracks and she is introduced swimming unclad in the indoor army swimming pool. After discovering one of the boys, who is naked and in despair, imprisoned in a dark room, she complains to a supervisor, but her empathy is simply disregarded because in the Red Army realm, all emotions and innocence must be smashed and mutilated with a hammer and sickle. Another young soldier, working as a guard, imagines lady Death, who is wearing nothing but a rifle over her soldier, coming up to him while he is on watch and he reacts absurdly, assumedly out of fear for human comfort and pleasure, by threatening to kill her, but he eventually accepts her warm embrace, thereupon letting his guard down in a world where such a human luxury cannot be afforded. In one particularly disturbing scene that will rock the cocks of masochists, an elderly commander catches a soldier naked and smoking and assumedly brutally beats the boy (one only hears his horrific screams), but not before staring at his genitals in a rather unsettling manner. Of course, fellow soldiers are no less cruel as demonstrated by a comrade who urinates on a compatriot while he is asleep. Undoubtedly, if 100 Days Before the Command demonstrates anything, it is that political dissidents are not the only people in Siberian labor camps as the film depicts the Soviet Union as a cold and harsh gulag of the soul where even death seems preferable to drudging on.

If 100 Days Before the Command is even remotely accurate in depicting the apocalyptic atmosphere of the Soviet Union, especially among soldiers, then the

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Russians would have been probably been better off had the Third Reich annihilated them during the Second World War. While surely similar in its oneiric and ominous atmosphere, *100 Days Before the Command* is a virtual nemesis film to Elem Klimov's masterpiece *Come and See* (1985) aka *Idi i smotri* in its depiction of the Soviets being in league with Satan. Aesthetically, *100 Days Before the Command* manages to, rather deceptively, dream up visions of Tarkovsky, Sokurov, and Parajanov using cinematic techniques no more lavish than that of Soviet realism. Only so gay as showing naked young men and a couple scenes showing torture and sadomasochism that might turn on some more debauched sodomites, *100 Days Before the Command* is more anti-Soviet and anti-authority than anything, depicting boys being sacrificed to a figurative Soviet serpent of sorts, hence the film's references to Saint George, who is nowhere to be found in the film. More than anything else, *100 Days Before the Command* seems like a Slavic spiritual horror film set in a pre-apocalyptic red regime whose populous had been physically and emotionally raped by a monolithic atheistic authoritarian monster of the soul-draining sort. Featuring phantom nude corpses on autopsy tables, the seemingly demonic surveillance of characters at all places and all hours on a neon green computer monitor, the following of a young boy on a haunting path of corpses to his bed where he sleeps with his adult aged brother, the complete and utter grimness and decay of ruined and dilapidated post-industrial Soviet barracks and swimming pools, and the spooked and possessed somnambulist-like movements of the soldiers, *100 Days Before the Command* is undoubtedly a potent and perturbing collection of petite vignettes that paints a phantasmagoric portrait of Perestroika in an aesthetically allegorical form. A more poetic and esoteric Slavized version of what Claire Denis attempted with *Beau Travail* (1999) set to the Baroque Teutonic melancholy of Johann Sebastian Bach, *100 Days Before the Command* reminds the viewer that every once in a while, an anti-war film cannot only be free of putrid preachiness of the hopelessly contrived sort, but can also be absurdly artistic and atmospheric to the point where it deconstructs and reinvents the entire subgenre. That being said, one could argue that the repression of homosexuals in Russia is a good thing as it forces artists and filmmakers to be more creative and less conspicuous as was clearly the case with *100 Days before the Command*, a film featuring flagrant homoeroticism without the lips, shallow clothing and personalities, and other limp-wristed Glee-loving philistine American aberrosexuals.

-Ty E

OUTRAGE

Ida Lupino (1950)

Takeshi "Beat" Kitano returns to sleeved form with *Outrage*, yet another pivotal outing of Yakuza bloodlines. This excursion into the oft-darkly comic world of shifty kinship is led by Kitano but sustained by the many other incredible characters, although variably disturbed, as a simple gesture of severing an allegiance with a drug dealing family goes far beyond the intended effect. Not at all like his debut feature *Violent Cop*, *Outrage* is the latest stasis of his cinematic evolution which seems to barrage with exquisite examples of "cops & robbers" till you feel the jarring sensation of whiplash. As per Kitano's motif in his more serious and gritty performances, occasionally both lead star and director, Kitano constantly explores many cinematic caverns of critical violence, always consequential. Never does something at all superfluous happen just for the sake of entertainment. Kitano's films have been, for me, a test of cinematic endurance. His films are much harder to stomach than most of any in a similar degree of story, from the curdling climax of *Violent Cop* to the systematic execution of many a friend within *Outrage*. Again, this answered calling is unforgettable as it is a film that allows you time to digest what you had just witnessed. At first I was unsure of exactly how much I enjoyed *Outrage* but it was only a couple days later that I realized I couldn't shake this film from my head, and neither will you.

No incendiary take on a criminal underworld would be complete without the superimposed head mafioso character. In the Japanese culture, this position is filled by the family boss or sometimes known as chairman. In *Outrage*, our chairman is a strange looking fellow whose thick cheeks almost bring to mind Kim Jong-il. His prime involvement is what *Outrage* focuses on - the cause and effect coupled with his issuing of orders. Much of *Outrage* is dizzying as clans are being turned on each other and no one is safe from the quite literal backstabbers. The only fault I call on *Outrage* isn't a fault of the film's as it was an interference on my behalf. Since my induction into Eastern films many years ago, I've slowly become accustomed to the behavioral traits, language patterns, the nationality of characters in writing, and even being able to distinguish nationality from appearance. That is, until I viewed *Outrage*. Once the narrative of *Outrage* reached a boil, the names and faces of the many characters along for the journey began spinning and trading faces and alliances, even identities. Granted, being overwhelmed by a film is truly an awe-inspiring act but *Outrage* had an entirely foreign effect. It took hold up until the hour mark. It is then that I finally had a grip on the characters. Having since toed the line of Kitano's impressive body of work, *Outrage* has greatly inspired me to delve deeper into his world of theatrical treachery. With examples such as *Outrage* and *Violent Cop* (*Hana-Bi*, up next for me), it's clear that these can only be the works of a stark visionary - a man known for being both a quipster and cinematic nihilist.

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A fine trait of Kitano's is his ability and often persistence to manipulate both the camera and production of the film as well as his character. Kitano is a director who knows exactly he wants from his actors and instead of relying on an unknown to lead an artistic vessel often blindsided by inexperience, he lends his divine acting chops to portray characters personalized by himself. A wild scene brought immediately to mind is the soon-to-be infamous dental reworking scene in which Kitano steps the competition of retaliation up several notches. This scene in particular also happens to be one of the few scenes I've seen in a while that offers an excruciating peek into torture, albeit fresh and vivid with the sick sounds of twisting, tearing flesh against teeth and bone. The small portions of savagery within *Outrage* are always surprising and visceral, never redundant or seemingly stapled on. For a new breed of Kitano, the flourishing technological culture of Japan is quite evident as *Outrage* is simply gorgeous, from the smooth, organized asphalt of city streets to Kitano's threads teeming with textures you can practically taste.

More importantly, *Outrage* itself isn't a slow orbit around a single character. No, many clans feature characters as important and progressive to the film itself. Kitano's character, Ôtomo, isn't the only soul whose actions turn the escalated cascade of violence into a raging rapids, leaving many, many dead in scenes that would normally fall into a category of a mental body count but instead wind up tragic and unfortunate. As much as Ôtomo would despise his current standing, being a pawn of the chairman's wicked ways, the fellow hasn't a choice but to play the game until the subtle climax. The kaleidoscopic cast makes up the grand picture of *Outrage*, a film so busy with actions and reactions that you'd anticipate utter failure but as Kitano has shown, dominates a modestly timed gangster epic. *Outrage* simply distinguishes consequential karma out of a genre that has until recently been reserved for silly shoot outs and characters not worth a damn. No one is safe from the judgment of a bullet, not acquaintances or even brothers. We certainly aren't safe, that's for sure.

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TRACKMAN

Igor Shavlak (2007)

"A dreadful foreign slasher film from Russia". That should be the plot synopsis for this lame attempt of creating scares. Most American horror films have become garbage, incorporating jump tactics and shitty remakes. When I saw the poster for Trackman, I was hooked. Boasting dark colors and wicked weaponry, it seemed like a bashful blast in painfully executing Russian teenagers.

The water-thin plot follows a pack of bank robbers receding into the tunnels under Moscow to escape from the police and make their getaway. Armed with guns and two hostages, it seems like nothing could go wrong. They talk of rumors of a creature living down here affected by Chernobyl. This creature in fact plays victim as well. Victim to an unpredictable yet retarded twist that gives shame to all involved in creating the storyboard for nails-on-chalk film.

What they don't realize is that it is actually the lamest attempt at creating a villain ever. My hopes normally stand tall for foreign movies because they do most things right such as creating an Eastern atmosphere, the mood, and setting the character development up a notch. The only thing I applaud this movie for is the set design and partial cinematography. They indeed got the look right for this film but it dragged on and on. The villain, who looks like some failure-casting role for Hellboy, is armed with a cork opener (?) and a bad ass pickaxe. He barely uses the pickaxe and plays with the corkscrew to remove eyes. Didn't I see this in See No Evil? In a scene halfway through the film, Trackman actually picks up an automatic weapon and open fires, instantly destroying any fear you might have felt. The only tension you feel during its hour and a half running time is a bit of tangent claustrophobia. These are not even the worst parts. The absolute fatality to this film was: 1) Complete lack of appreciated violence except for a couple eyeballs here and there. 2) The worst twist ending I have ever seen in my life.

These are the ingredients to make a dodgy, bland Russian slasher film. If you are looking for claustrophobic horror, rent Creep or The Midnight Meat Train.

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SUMMER WITH MONIKA
SUMMER WITH MONIKA

Ingmar Bergman (1953)

Over half a century before the rise of the somewhat pathetic internet culture M.G.T.O.W (aka 'Men Going Their Own Way')—a group that has legitimate grievances against modern women yet is becoming the spiritually castrated mirror image of feminism—Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*, *Scenes from a Marriage*) directed an understatedly sexy yet considerably dejecting melodramatic masterpiece depicting many of the loathsome and just downright insufferable qualities of modern Western women. Indeed, *Sommaren med Monika* (1953) aka *Summer with Monika* could be described as the very first M.G.T.O.W arthouse flick, but of course that would be selling such a thematically nuanced and aesthetically rapturous film insanely short to associate it with such a depressing movement of forsaken fellows. Starring Bergman's then-lover Harriet Andersson in a less than flattering role that was specially tailored for her, the film is quite genius in the sense that, like the hapless and hopelessly naïve male protagonist, the viewer finds themselves falling in love with the heroine despite the fact that she is a hyper hysterical, emotionally immature, histrionic, and corrosively narcissistic cunt that never thinks twice about ruining a man's life for the most petty and self-centered of reasons. In short, *Summer with Monika* is the kind of film that reminds you why women lived under coverture and were not allowed to vote, own property, or make any real important decisions in the Occident until relatively recently. While I do not want to sound like some defeated misogynist that simply hates all women due to bad personal experiences, I would be lying if I did not admit that the eponymous (anti)heroine is like a composite of all the bad qualities of every girlfriend that I have ever had and I suspect many men, not least of all auteur Bergman, would agree. Quite comparable to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's somewhat underrated flick *Ich will doch nur, daß ihr mich liebt* (1976) aka *I Only Want You to Love Me* in terms of its depiction of a somewhat naïve but well meaning young man learning the hard way that women have no gratitude when it comes to a male sacrificing everything for his wife and family, Bergman's film is a delectable downer that reminds male viewers while most men typically want nothing to do with women if it does not relate to sex. Of course, the fact that the film was made over 60 years ago yet features such an insufferably 'liberated' modern woman makes it crystal clear why Sweden is probably the mostly collectively feminized, emasculated, and cuckolded nation in the entire world.

Undoubtedly, the largely forgotten British Nietzschean philosopher Anthony Ludovici could have also been talking about the female lead of Bergman's early cinematic masterpiece when he wrote in his classic text *Woman: A Vindication* (1923), "Whether we appeal to folklore, to the proverbs of the unions, or to the earliest legends of mankind, we invariably encounter the traditional wis-

dom of humanity judgments upon woman which are more or less unanimous in condemning her bad temper, her disloyalty, her vanity, her malice and her indolence.” Following in the tradition of the similarly themed *Hon dansade en sommar* (1951) aka *One Summer of Happiness* directed by Arne Mattsson in terms of fueling Sweden’s dubious reputation as a sexually liberated nation, *Summer with Monika* also contributed to auteur Bergman’s own questionable personal sexual liberation in the sense that he abandoned his journalist wife Gun Grut and young son Ingmar Bergman Jr. for female lead Harriet Andersson after starting what was ultimately a relatively short-lived romance during the production of the film. Naturally, it should be no surprise that Bergman had very happy memories regarding the making of the film as revealed in his inordinately sentimental remark, “It’s close to my heart and one of my films I’m always happy to see again.” Of course, anyone watching the film can see why it would be so easy for both the lead character and Bergman himself to fall in love with Andersson as she radiates a somewhat idiosyncratic pulchritude that is just as entrancing as it is potentially dangerous, thus making it all the more amazing that the viewer is completely disgusted with the very same dame by the film’s less than comforting conclusion. Indeed, the genius of *Summer with Monika* is that Bergman manages to trick the viewer into falling in love with and eventually hating the female lead in what is ultimately the cinematic equivalent of a 90-minute romance where the audience experiences the ecstatic highs and crushing lows of young love from the convenience of their sofa without the long lingering effects of lovesick emotional baggage. Aside from possibly Nicholas Kazan’s debut feature *Dream Lover* (1993) starring Mädchen Amick, you will not find another movie with another lovely lady that you so eagerly learn to love to hate.

While Bergman once (in)famously stated regarding Godard, “I’ve never gotten anything out of his movies. They have felt constructed, faux intellectual, and completely dead. Cinematographically uninteresting and infinitely boring. Godard is a fucking bore. He’s made his films for the critics,” the overly intellectual frog filmmaker was a great fan of the subversive Swede and paid *Summer with Monika* a great compliment by describing it as “the cinematographic event of the year” when it was commercially reissued in 1958 in his native France. In the same review, Godard would also rightly note regarding Bergman’s film, “Ignored when it was first shown on the boulevards, *SUMMER WITH MONIKA* is the most original film by the most original of directors. It is to the cinema today what *BIRTH OF A NATION* is to the classical cinema. Just as Griffith influenced Eisenstein, Gance, and Lang, so *SUMMER WITH MONIKA* brought to a peak five years before its time that renaissance in modern young cinema whose high priests were Fellini in Italy, Aldrich in Hollywood, and (so we believed, wrongly perhaps) Vadim in France.” Indeed, aside from Vadim’s cocktease classic ...*And God Created Woman* (1956), it is hard to imagine that many of the lovelorn arthouse melodramas of Godard and Woody Allen would have

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ever been made were it not for Bergman's film. As for Bergman, he arguably paid the film the greatest compliment himself when he wrote in regard to it in a publicity piece upon its original release, "I didn't make *Monika*. [Source novel author and co-screenwriter Per Anders] Fogelström bred her in me and then, like an elephant, I was pregnant for three years, and last summer she was born with a big ballyhoo. Today, she is a beautiful and naughty child. I hope she will cause an emotional uproar and all sorts of reactions. I shall challenge any different person to a duel!"

Although directed by a man that was usually vocally against adapting novels, *Summer with Monika* was actually adapted from a book by Stockholm-based modernist writer Per Anders Fogelström. Despite its literary origins, the film is indubitably an auteur piece that practically bleeds ravishingly grim Bergmanesque black-and-white as a cinematic work that was clearly directed by a mensch that was hopelessly in love with the hot twat heroine. Indeed, despite only featuring one single nude scene that can hardly be described as pornographic, the film is surprisingly electrifyingly erotic, at least until the heroine turns into an insufferably treacherous bitch and literally cuckolds her beloved in the most cruel and craven of fashions. In fact, the film was deemed so erotic when it was released that American exploitation hack Kroger Babb—a less than charming chap that is probably best known for his scandalous promotion of the pseudo-sex-ed piece *Mom and Dad* (1945) aka *The Family Story* directed by William Beaudine—purchased the US rights to the film in 1955, had it edited it down to a mere 62 minutes, and then had it re-titled *Monika: the Story of a Bad Girl*. Of course, the *Monika* of Bergman's film is more of a dumb bitch and morally retarded modern witch than a lovable bad girl.

Undoubtedly, *Summer with Monika* male protagonist Harry (Lars Ekborg) probably would have done well to read Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's wise words, "There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true," as he is eventually fooled in both manners. Indeed, right from the get go, it is obvious that the film's heroine *Monika* (Harriet Andersson) is the loosest young lady in Stockholm and she lacks the capacity to stay faithful to any man as she is a self-centered and relatively stupid little girl that literally lives to have fun, yet Harry immediately finds it easy to lie to himself about her lack of virtue upon more or less instantly falling in love with her. In fact, it is only when *Monika* essentially emotionally abandons their baby and fucks various other men in their mutual bed that Harry—a young man that, despite his youth, is totally willing to sacrifice everything for his family—is no longer able to deceive himself and thus confronts the pathologically shifty she-bitch. Of course, it does not start out bad, as Harry can only see the good in *Monika* when they start dating at the beginning of spring after the latter invites the former to a movie date to see the Robert Schumann biopic *Song of Love* (1947) starring Paul Henreid and Katharine Hepburn. A decep-

tively cutesy extrovert with borderline grotesque histrionic tendencies, Monika's a predatory chick that initially approaches poor pussy Harry, as she can sense he is an authentic 'nice guy' type and thus can be easily manipulated. A poor white trash girl that just happens to be blessed with a pretty face and relatively banging body, Monika is not even really worthy of bourgeois boy Harry, but he lacks self-esteem and simply cannot deny the advances of a cute chick that practically throws herself at him.

As a dude with a long dead mother and emotionally remote father with chronic health issues, Harry is somewhat vulnerable and surely easy prey for a low-class tramp like Monika. Indeed, as the eldest child of a less than cultivated lumpenpole family headed by an abusive alcoholic father that has no qualms about beating his own young adult daughter when she dares to run her big mouth, Monika naturally wants to flee her pathetic living situation ASAP and she sees meek virgin-boy Harry as the best tool to achieve that fairly realistic goal. Indeed, when her drunken father slaps her one day after she runs her mouth, Monika decides to flee her home with her belongings and then strategically waits outside Harry's house while sobbing so that she can use emotional sympathy as a means to get what she wants. Despite Harry's better judgement, Monika manages to convince him to both quit his job and steal his father's boat so that they can spend the summer basking around the otherworldly oceanic fairy tale realm that is the Stockholm archipelago. In short, Harry and Monika eventually become completely immersed in an inordinately romantic bucolic fairy tale of sorts where they are able to forget all the problems of the worlds and discomforts of being adults, as they have enough food supplies and sexual chemistry to keep each other happy, at least for the length of the summer (apparently, summer only really lasts a maximum of eight weeks in Sweden). Undoubtedly, Monika's love of the exotic and quite ethereal archipelago becomes quite obvious early on when she impresses Harry by stripping off all of her clothes on a rocky coast and then goes skinny-dipping. Of course, the area and its open oceanic spaces make the young lovers feel completely free in both the literal and figurative sense, but their freedom is really just a fleeting illusion as the two are in for a rude awakening when the ruthless reality of adulthood and personal responsibility sets in. Naturally, unexpected pregnancy and a lack of basic resources eventually causes the romance to come to a swift and terribly bitter end. Unfortunately, poor Harry never sees it coming.

For most of the summer, it is all fun and games for the two Swedish lovebirds, at least until Monika's bitterly jealous ex-boyfriend 'Lelle' (John Harryson) shows up, destroys most of their belongings, and then sets their boat on fire. On top of everything else, Lelle manages to give Harry a pretty bad thrashing, at least until Monika hits him over the head with a pan. Unfortunately, nice guy Harry shows mercy and stops Lelle from drowning after he is knocked out face-first into the water. With the revelation that Monika is pregnant and their sup-

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plies all but nonexistent, Harry wisely recommends that they head back home, but like a petulant toddler the heroine adamantly refuses and states, "No, I'm not going back. I want summer to go on just like this." When they are left with only mushrooms to eat, Monika complains in a hysterical fashion, "Fried mushrooms, boiled mushrooms, mushroom soup. If we go on like this, Harry Junior will be a mushroom. We have to think of something." Instead of going back to get food, Monika, who naturally craves special food due to being pregnant, comes up with the less than sound idea to steal culinary items and even gets caught by a bourgeois family upon attempting to steal a roast from their cellar. While the family prepares to call the police, Monika, who has about as much class and self-restraint as a crack-addled ghetto negress, mocks their daughter and then manages to escape with the roast in her hand when the stressed out bourgeois family man goes to get a beer. Rather notably, Monika stops in the middle of escaping from the bourgeois family to chomp down on the roast while crouching down like a wild animal in a forest scene that really underscores her bestially hedonistic character and incapacity to defer self-gratification. When Monika finally catches up with Harry, she berates him for not helping her with the theft, continues to eat the roast like a starving beast (without offering her beloved a single bite), screams like a wild hog being butchered, and then starts crying hysterically like a violent harpy when he recommends that they go back home. Luckily, due to running out of kerosene and other supplies, Harry eventually gets his wish and the two are forced to go back home.

While sailing back home, the film develops a rather grim and ominous tone that signals the beginning of the end of the young couple's magical storybook romance. Undoubtedly, Monika is the sort of insipidly shallow sort of chick that would love the retarded Marilyn Monroe quote, "if you can't handle me at my worst, then you sure as hell don't deserve me at my best," yet Harry somehow manages to tolerate her at her worst and she still senselessly decides to betray him in the most stonehearted of fashions. Indeed, while the two get married and Monika gives birth to a daughter that they name 'June Monika,' these things only depress the superlatively self-centered heroine, who lives for fun and excitement and not much more as a disastrously shallow dame that lives vicariously through phony movie heroines. As for Harry, he has fully committed himself to providing for his family by working hard labor while putting himself through school so he can eventually become an engineer and provide greater comforts to his family. While Monika does not even work, Harry finds himself constantly attending to the baby at night when she cries. Indeed, Monika sees the baby as a great pestilence and clearly has no maternal love for the child. When Harry is forced to leave town for work, he even has to get his aunt to babysit baby June because Monika is simply too lazy to. Before leaving, Harry gives Monika money to pay for the overdue rent, but she ultimately decides to use the hard-earned cash to buy herself a new coat and movie tickets. In fact, as soon as Harry

leaves town, Monika begins cheating on him with guys at a local bar, including her lowlife ex-boyfriend Lelle. Naturally, Monika is nowhere to be found when Harry gets back from his trip and it does not take the protagonist long to realize that his beloved is an unfaithful whore.

After discovering that Monika has been cheating on him with various different guys and blown all their money on frivolous junk, Harry wisely wants to get a divorce so that he can spare what is left of his personal dignity. Of course, like any slutty self-centered bitch that seems to suffer from narcissistic personality disorder, Monika blames Harry for her cheating and the failure of their marriage, even complaining, "You don't care about me, just your studies." While Harry soundly states, "I'm studying so we can be better off," Monika is a small-minded twat that simply cannot bear to defer gratification or plan for the future, let alone concern herself with the future well-being of her child. Not surprisingly, Monika also blames Harry for getting her pregnant and bitches that "I'm all ugly now." Indeed, as if Harry has not already suffered enough emotional abuse, Monika keeps repeating the same nonsensical self-centered bullshit and stating some version of, "You don't care about me, just you and your studying. I want to have fun while I'm still young." When Harry actually gets the balls to yell at her for cheating on him with her ex-boyfriend Lelle, she gets an evil smirk on her face and proudly boasts, "I was in love," thus leading to the protagonist smacking her around while she cries and predictably plays the poor victim. Notably, while all of this is going on, Monika symbolically carries around an old baby doll, thus underscoring the fact that she has the emotional maturity and intellectual prowess of a little girl and thus should not have gotten married or had a baby in the first place. In the end, the couple predictably breaks up for good and the two go their separate ways, though Harry still has the joy of his baby daughter and his memories of his sole happy summer with Monika. Rather fittingly, in the very last shot of the film, old drunks can be seen stumbling around in a background in a scene that hints that these poor old forsaken farts degenerated to such a sorry state are after suffering the abuses of other female mental midgets like Monika just like Harry did.

While it is quite dubious as to whether or not one could force the average football-loving and cheap-beer-chugging American male to watch an old European arthouse film with subtitles, I think *Summer with Monika* should be mandatory viewing for every single teenage boy and young man that has yet to have a serious relationship with a girl. Indeed, the film surely demonstrates that great Aryan pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer was certainly on to something when he declared that women "are big children all their life long" and, not unlike children, they will tolerate anything, no matter how morally dubious, so long as they are not bored as boredom is the ultimate sin as far as most women are concerned. After all, it is ultimately boredom that causes the titular twat of Bergman's film to ruthlessly cheat on her faithful hardworking hubby and aban-

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don her baby daughter. Undoubtedly, the same heroine would have probably stayed with her hubby if he degenerated into a STD-ridden bisexual junky hobo where she able to keep up a steady coke and cock intake as she would at least not suffer from the dreaded metaphysical affliction of boredom. Of course, with the adoption of so-called 'no-fault divorce' in the United States that enables a woman to divorce her husband for the most dubious of reasons while also allowing her to rob said husband of his wealth (especially if they have kids), an entire generation of screwed up adults that are incapable of maintaining normal romantic relationships have been brought as a result of their mothers breaking up families over sheer boredom (indeed, the far majority of divorces are filed by women, as the law is almost always on their side). Undoubtedly, the titular cunt of *Summer with Monika* would have surely wanted to keep her baby if the film was set in contemporary Sweden, as she could use the child as a virtual hostage like so many modern Western women do so that she would have a perennial piggy bank via court-ordered child support. Indeed, the sick irony of Bergman's film for contemporary viewers is that male protagonist Harry comes out of the situation fairly unscathed as he, quite unlike a modern Swedish male, no longer has to deal with his ex-wife or subsidize her hedonistic degeneracy.

In what seemed like an insistence of cinematic kismet, I recently happened to watch *Summer with Monika* the same day as the vaguely similarly themed and absurdly underrated dark romance *Rapture* (1965) aka *La fleur de l'âge* directed by French-British maverick auteur John Guillermin. While a somewhat different love story involving a seemingly autistic teenage girl played by Patricia Gozzi and a young male fugitive played by Dean Stockwell, *Rapture*, which is also set on a scenic coast, is comparable to Bergman's film in the sense that it is also good old fashioned visceral feminine irrationalism that leads to the tragic end of the love affair. Indeed, upon watching these two great films, one might come to the conclusion that early Christian writer Tertullian was on to something when he described women as "the devil's gateway," as a vagina more often than not seems to be the source of most men's downfalls. Female lead Harriet Andersson certainly proved to be a devil in disguise for Bergman, as she inspired him to throwaway both his wife and son without a second thought, or as he nostalgically recounts in regard to *Summer with Monika* in his autobiography *The Magic Lantern: An Autobiography* (1987), "I was at once overcome with euphoric light-heartedness. Professional, financial and marital problems fell away over the horizon. The film crew lived a relatively comfortable outdoor life, working days, evenings, dawns and in all weathers. The nights were short, sleep dreamless. After three weeks' endeavour, we sent our results for developing but, owing to a defective machine, the laboratory managed to tear thousands of metres of film and nearly all of it had to be shot again. We cried a few crocodile tears, but were secretly delighted at our extended freedom." Indeed, one of the world's greatest filmmakers was thrilled to learn a good portion of his film had

been destroyed and had to be reshot because it meant he would have more special time with his beloved. If that is not true love, I don't know what is! Of course, Bergman's various love affairs were imperative to his work, as he often-times modeled his characters after these women, thus it would be somewhat unfair to criticize him too much in regard to his serial philandering and child-abandoning.

I have never seen broody and moody Bergman as ever having been a particularly erotic filmmaker, but apparently making *Summer with Monika* was like one long extended orgasm for the auteur, or as he stated in his autobiography, "Film work is a powerfully erotic business; the proximity of actors is without reservations, the mutual exposure is total. The intimacy, devotion, dependency, love, confidence and credibility in front of the camera's magical eye become a warm, possibly illusory security. The strain, the easing of tension, the mutual drawing of breath, the moment of triumph, followed by anticlimax: the atmosphere is irresistibly charged with sexuality. It took me many years before I at last learnt that one day the camera would stop and the lights go out." Somewhat ironically (or not so considering the two's sexual romance fizzled out long before their professional relationship did), Bergman would go on to direct Andersson in various less than sexy and sometimes even somewhat grotesque roles, most notably *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) where she portrays a schizophrenic and especially *Cries and Whispers* (1972) where she is literally on her deathbed while succumbing to cancer. Of course, Andersson's drastic change of appearance between her iconic youthful performance in *Summer with Monika* and *Cries and Whispers* reveal that a woman's greatest assets, her beauty and fertility, do not last very long and the cunt titular character of the former film is ultimately in for a rude awakening when she no longer has anything desirable to offer men (in short, like many modern young women and their rejection of faithful beta-provider types, heroine Monika would later end up begging for someone like Harry). As for Bergman flicks with likeable young female characters that most men would love to keep around, the director's early classic *Sommarlek* (1951) aka *Summer Interlude* features a tragic beauty played by largely unsung beauty Maj-Britt Nilsson that makes a nice antidote to Andersson's loathsome character. In fact, *Summer with Monika* and *Summer Interlude* make for an immaculate double feature, as they are not only somewhat aesthetically and thematically similar as beauteous black-and-white flicks that depict tragic young love in a scenic seaside setting, but are also the first two truly important works of a cinematic genius.

-Ty E

THE VIRGIN SPRING
THE VIRGIN SPRING

Ingmar Bergman (1960)

In terms of Ingmar Bergman's most brutal and modern work, *The Virgin Spring* (1960) aka *Jungfrukällan*, like *Persona* (1966), seems to be one of the Swedish master auteur filmmaker's 'least dated' (not that many of his works have become outmoded) and most timeless films, which is all the more ironic considering it is a period piece set in post-Viking Age medieval Sweden when the country began to develop as a Christian nation yet still with paganism lingering in the background. In fact, *The Virgin Spring* was later ridiculously remade by a then unknown Wes Craven as the totally tasteless trash exploitation flick *The Last House on the Left* (1972), a nauseatingly nihilistic work that really reflects how the Occident has degenerated as the decades have passed, especially when compared to Bergman's original arthouse film. Somewhat loosely adapted by screenwriter Ulla Isaksson from the 13th-century Swedish ballad "Töres döttrar i Vänge" (aka "Töre's daughters in Vänge"), *The Virgin Spring* is ultimately a more pessimistic work than its source and certainly demonstrates how Bergman, who was the son of a Lutheran minister and lost his faith at the mere age of 8, was quite cynical regarding Christianity and its influence on the Swedish people. With various references and allusions to the one-eyed Pagan God Odin—the central God of Norse mythology and the Allfather of the gods—*The Virgin Spring* is a film that depicts a people that who, although they have adopted the alien Judaic desert religion of Christianity, still have the old religion embedded in their souls and which expresses itself in many different ways, especially through nature and violence. Arguably the greatest 'Odinist-themed' film ever made, *The Virgin Spring* at various points depicts Christians as self-righteous know-it-alls whose smugness leads to their own demise, as well as the worship of Odin as, although innately 'evil,' much more visceral and natural as the sort of dark and deeply hidden soul of the Nordic collective unconscious, which reaches its most potent expression in acts of murder and violence, but especially revenge as demonstrated by Max von Sydow's cold, calculating, and vengeful act towards the end of the film. Set in fourteenth-century Sweden, *The Virgin Spring* is a modern fable in a mystical setting about what happens when the virginal teenage daughter of a wealthy Christian family is nonsensically brutally raped and murdered by some demon-like goatherders and the perpetrators make the unwitting mistake of taking overnight sanctuary in their victim's family home, only to share a fate similarly as brutal yet deserved as the blonde angel they senselessly slayed. Winner of Best Foreign Language Film at the 1961 Academy Awards, *The Virgin Spring* is a paradoxically aesthetically paradisiacal yet spiritually piratical, seamlessly assembled period piece depicting a Northern race in spiritual limbo who have yet to shed their Viking ways, but are willing to make a number of senseless sacrifices, often in vain, to understand and adapt to an alien religious

creed that they now call their own.

Karin (Birgitta Pettersson) is a boastful and beateous, yet proudly pious and virginal teenage girl who belongs to a reasonably wealthy medieval Swedish family. Undoubtedly, Karin's opposite is the family's dark-haired servant girl Ingeri (Gunnel Lindblom), who, on top of being pregnant with a bastard baby out of wedlock, secretly worships almighty Norse god Odin and wishes that perennial good girl Karin was dead out of sheer and utter jealousy. When Karin is appointed to take candles to a local church, she does not take her mother Märeta's (Birgitta Valberg) advice that, "the devil seduces the innocent and seeks to destroy goodness before it can blossom," as the naïve girl is nice to everyone and eventually makes the mistake of talking to the wrong strangers. Ingeri joins Karin on her journey to the church, but when the closet-Odiniſt spots a raven—a bird associated with Odin—while walking through the forest, she begs her Christian teenage master to head back home in fear. Not long after, Karin and Ingeri run into an elderly one-eyed man, who is undoubtedly a stand-in for Odin, living in a dilapidated shack next to a creek. While Karin treads on, Ingeri has some sort of metaphysical attraction to the mystery man and joins him inside his dark home, which is adorned with statues of the one-eyed God. When Ingeri asks the elderly fellow his name, he states "nowadays I have no name" as a God who has been forgotten by his people. The mono-eyed man goes on to say, "I hear what I want to hear and see what I want to see. I hear what men whisper in secret and see what they think no one sees. You can hear it yourself if you wish. Just listen.." and displays some human body parts, including a finger, and also states while touching a particularly odious old statue of Odin, "here is the power." Of course, the elderly wise man's offering of power and knowledge completely petrifies dilettante Odiniſt Ingeri, who runs off in the woods in a state of total terror. Meanwhile, Karin continues her journey and is approached by three herdsmen: a thin man (Axel Düberg) who acts a sort of the leader, a mute herdsman (Tor Isedal) who apparently had his tongue cut out, and a little boy (Ove Porath). Karin offers the trio of herdsmen to join her for lunch and they return the favor by viciously raping her and bludgeoning her to death with a large tree branch, all of which is witnessed by Ingeri, who watches the whole ordeal like a coward (she goes to throw a boulder at them, but hesitates) while hiding from afar.

Undoubtedly the three unluckiest men in the world, the herdsmen make the unwitting mistake of seeking shelter at Karin's home after being offered to stay and eat dinner by the girl's supremely stoic father Töre (Max von Sydow). After eating dinner, the herdsmen are absolutely terrified when they hear the foreshadowing words of a poetic Beggar also lodging at Töre's home who states, "A day can start out beautifully yet end in misery. Rarely have I seen a morning so full of promise as this morning. The sun shone in all its fairness and made you forget winter's rages." While sleeping, Märeta hears the herdsman boy scream

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and when she goes to investigate, one of the herdsmen makes the mistake of stupidly attempting to sell to her the clothes, which are soiled with blood, that he stole from Karin's body to the already suspicious mother, thus incriminating himself and his comrades. After Märeta tells her husband Töre what has happened, he finds Ingeri and asks her what happened, thus causing the guilt-ridden lapsed Odiniſt to beg to be executed and recount her passiveness while watching Karin's grizzly death at the hands of true heathens. Wasting no time, Töre cuts down a little birch tree with a sword and self-flagellates himself with the branches (an ancient pagan purification ritual once common in Sweden during the spring) so as to prepare himself for battle as if possessed with the will power of Wotan himself. With his wife by his side, Töre enters the den where the herdsmen are sleeping and coldly and calculatingly examines their belongings before slaying the men with a dagger with pagan iconography carved into the handle. Despite his wife Märeta's passionate attempt to save the child, Töre even murders the boy herdsman, who he merely picks up and throws against the wall, thus demonstrating that his actions were stirred by pure and unadulterated hatred of the vengeful Odiniſt sort. Afterwards, Ingeri leads Töre and Märeta to Karin's corpse, where a 'miracle' occurs after the dead girl's body is picked up and a pure and clear stream (hence, "The Virgin Spring") is magically sired where the maiden's head once lay. Töre breaks down and confesses, "You see it, God. You see it. The innocent child's death, and my revenge. You allowed it. I don't understand You. I don't understand You. Yet, I still ask your forgiveness. I know no other way to live. I promise You, God... here on the dead body of my only child, I promise you that, to cleanse my sins, here I shall build a church. On this spot. Of mortar and stone... and with these, my hands," thus admitting the unnaturalness he feels towards Christianity but using it as a tool to repress his 'inner Odin' as another blonde beast who was ultimately tamed.

In his now-controversial 1936 essay *Wotan*, pioneering psychoanalyst wrote regarding the Nordic/German people and the influence of their pre-Christian god Odin aka Wotan as a perennial archetype of the race's collective unconscious, "It was not in Wotan's nature to linger on and show signs of old age. He simply disappeared when the times turned against him, and remained invisible for more than a thousand years, working anonymously and indirectly. Archetypes are like riverbeds which dry up when the water deserts them, but which it can find again at anytime," and such is the case in Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. Indeed, it is no coincidence when the one-eyed man in the film states "nowadays I have no name" as his name and identity may not still be acknowledged by his own people, but his legacy lives on through said people's actions as demonstrated by Töre's ritualistic revenge and even the herdsmen's rape and murder of Karin. On the other hand, German race researcher and eugenicist Hans F. K. Günther went so far as writing in his work *The Religious Attitudes of the Indo-Europeans* that, "Thus late on in their period of pagan development the Teutons had accepted

much that was contradictory to the Indo-European nature. What non-Indo-European or non-Teutonic characteristics have been imparted to the Teutonic God Odin (Wodan, Wuotan)? Odin, with his strange blend of “loftiness and deception”, is undoubtedly no longer the ideal example of an Indo-European or Teutonic God, and his worship is no longer characteristic of the Indo-European or the original Teutonic religion. Already one perceives in him the voice of an alien, Non-Nordic race.” Günther further added in the same book, “The figure of Odin-Wodan does not belong to Indo-European religious history. He is the special God of the loosely-rooted expanding Viking Folk, and his composite personality stems from the late period of Teutonic paganism,” which as Bergman depicted in *The Virgin Spring*, Odin had a distinct influence on his own people that never seemed to die, but was during violent and unpredictable atavistic bursts, especially among the resentful (Ingeri) and revengeful (Töre) as a sort of inverse of Christian ‘good.’ While acknowledging the inability of Swedes to totally deracinate themselves from their Viking/Odinist heritage, *The Virgin Spring* ultimately seems to argue that Christianity has at least enabled the blood-thirsty blond beast to keep his less than flattering tendencies in check and has gone to develop great cities and culture as a result, which is symbolized by Töre’s promise to God to build a church to repent for his homicidal sins.

With the exception of the British neo-pagan horror masterpiece *The Wicker Man* (1973) and Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn’s ambient Viking art-house flick *Valhalla Rising* (2009), *The Virgin Spring* is the only Odin/Euro-Pagan-themed film I have seen that has proven to not be worthless, as it neither features a deluded romantic glorification of the Norse war god nor a totally tainted Christianized depiction of the one-eyed god and his esoteric essence. As someone who recently attended a modern day Odinist event featuring everyone from obese Hitlerites to jaded *Dungeon & Dragons* fans to discernibly nonwhite individuals chanting “Hail Odin” while in various stages of degenerate drunkenness, I cannot say I respect contemporary individuals who proclaim to be living as Odinists, but I am sure, as C.G. Jung recognized, that the one-eyed God lives on and can be seen in the spirit of certain National Socialists, outlaw biker gangs, and Anders Behring Breivik just as there is a bit of Huitzilopochtli in Cholo gang bangers. Undoubtedly, what the Christians call the devil can be seen as one in the same as Odin and Huitzilopochtli, as the universalist religion of Christianity has always sought to kill the old of the indigenous people, thus making *The Virgin Spring* all the more an important work as it names and depicts an archetype that is arguably lurking inside all Nordic peoples, but especially those of Viking heritage. In a formerly Viking nation now thoroughly infected with the mind virus of cultural marxism, whose most famous author is cultural cuckold Stieg Larsson—an exceedingly emasculated feminist Trotskyite who seems to get off to the idea of a woman vengefully raping a man with a dildo as depicted in famous novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005) aka *Män*

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som hatar kvinnor (which literally translates to “Men who hate women”)—one can only hope that Odin, who seems to have totally disappeared, will soon make a much needed appearance. Undoubtedly, Sweden needs less Stieg Larssons and more Töres, at least if the nation and especially its people expect to survive another century in the pre-Ragnarök age of nation-destroying multiculturalism, fecund-free feminism, steadily declining birthrates of the indigenous Swedish population, and the cultural and racial homogenization of globalization.

-Ty E

PERSONA

Ingmar Bergman (1966)

Undoubtedly, it is hard to think of an avant-garde film that is more immaculate, elegant, foreboding, and unpretentiously poetic than *Persona* (1966) directed by Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*, *Wild Strawberries*). It is also hard to think of a quasi-horror film that is so ‘modern’ (and, indeed, I mean that in a good way), sophisticated, psychologically penetrating, and unrelentingly visceral, as if Bergman was able to reach into the most dark and forlorn depths of the Nordic collective unconscious, namely in regard to the feminine and irrational side, and transfer that untameable and chaotic energy to the screen. A sort of metaphysical lesbian vampire flick without lesbo sex and fangs, *Persona* is also a work of metacinema that immediately lets the viewer know that they are clearly watching a movie, albeit not in a banal and pretentious Brechtian distanciation fashion, but as German film scholar Thomas Elsaesser recently argued in his recent essay *The Persistence of Persona*: “Bergman does not keep the spectator merely guessing or at a (Brechtian) distance. On the contrary, *Persona* has an almost hypnotic pull; it draws the spectator in and never lets go.” Indeed, Bergman’s work is a rare piece of celluloid deconstruction with a soul, as if the director’s very being was run through a rabid film projector and screened at an arthouse theater in purgatory. Vaguely resembling Swedish playwright August Strindberg’s micro chamber play *The Stronger* (1889) aka *Den starkare* in its depiction of a power game between two women, *Persona* depicts the spiritual schizophrenia that occurs when two very different women—a nurse and an actress—become one to the point where the two beautiful women’s faces literally merge into one. Taking its title from a Latin word that originally meant the masks worn by actors in classical dramas and would later be used by psychoanalyst Carl Jung to describe the artificial personality that people use as a mask to hide their true self, *Persona* is a work that wallows in the idea of the double and the Jungian ‘shadow aspect,’ yet has so much more to offer. Written by Bergman in a mere 14 days under a number of different working titles, including *Cinematography*, *Sonata for Two Women*, *A Piece of Cinema*, and *Opus 27*, *Persona* is such an elusive and esoteric work that even the Swedish auteur himself did not even completely understand it, writing in the preface to the published screenplay, “On many points I am unsure, and in one instance, at least, I know nothing,” thereupon demonstrating the truly transcendental nature of the work. A work so important and influential that masterpieces like Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg’s *Performance* (1970), Robert Altman’s *3 Women* (1977), and David Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive* (2001) would be unthinkable without it, the film was also described by auteur Bergman as follows in his book *Images: My Life in Films*: “Today I feel that in *Persona* – and later in *Cries and Whispers* – I had gone as far as I could go. And that in these two instances, when

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working in total freedom, I touched wordless secrets that only the cinema can discover.” Indeed, arguably more importantly than anything else, *Persona* achieves the seemingly intangible in terms of abstract emotional articulation, thereupon proving that cinema is not only a genuine artistic medium, but a rather distinct one where things can be communicated that cannot be communicated in any other medium.

Right from the get go, *Persona* makes the viewer clearly conscious of the fact that they are watching a film by beginning with a montage featuring bright lights, camera equipment, film reels and a projector. The film also immediately makes it quite clear that they are watching a Bergman film, as the montage features a number of the director’s typical motifs, including god-as-spider, brutal Christian imagery (i.e. crucifixion, lamb being slaughtered), and a cold and impenetrable mother (as depicted in a scene where Jörgen Lindström of Bergman’s *The Silence* (1963) reaches out for a distant, faded, and seemingly intangible image of his assumed mother), as well as clips from the filmmaker’s early work *Fängelse* (1949) aka *Prison*. The montage also features a brief clip of a then-controversial erect cock, with the cock arguably representing the source of all human catastrophes (i.e. humanity itself). The film centers around two women—a nurse and a mute actress—who are in some ways quite the opposite, but in other ways, including their appearances, quite similar, like opposing doubles. While the nurse Alma (Bibi Andersson) is engaged and lives a fairly conventional life, actress Elisabet Vogler (played by Norwegian actress Liv Ullmann, who the director fell in love with during the filming of the work, in her very first Bergman film) lives the life of an artist. Of course, both of these women are hiding dark secrets and unflattering personality traits behind their outward personas. Elisabet fell silent and confused in the middle of a performance of *Electra* and was subsequently found bedridden, mute, and unresponsive the next day. Naturally, Elisabet was sent to a hospital and young nurse Alma was assigned to her case. Alma is told by the head Doctor (Margaretha Krook) that the actress has been in a mute state for 3 months despite the fact that she shows no signs of physical or mental illness. When Alma takes a look at Elisabet, she notices the pretty patient has a soft, childlike face yet seemingly angry and mean eyes. Alma later confesses to the mute actress that she loves film and theater, stating, “I have a tremendous admiration for artists. I think that art is of enormous importance in people’s lives, especially for those who have problems.” Little does Alma realize that, as is hinted at by the head Doctor, Elisabet is more or less ‘acting’ and ‘playing a role’ in terms of her mental illness.

A young 25-year-old who, just like her mother, plans to quit her job as a nurse upon marrying and having children with her fiancé Karl-Henrik, Alma literally talks to herself while she is alone, as if she has to convince herself that she is happy about her life and future, stating to herself while applying makeup in a ritualistic fashion, “All of this is predestined. It’s inside me. I have nothing

to think about. It's a safe feeling. I have a job that I like and enjoy. That's good too...but in another way. But it's good. Good." Ultimately, Alma and Elisabet are heading to the head Doctor's seaside cottage (shot at Fårö Island, which is just a few miles down the coast from where *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) was filmed just 5 years before), so that the former can nurse the latter back to health. Although seemingly catatonic, Elisabet has a rather horribly hysterical response to seeing the iconic footage of Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức committing self-immolation on television and later she even laughs at Alma's favorite radio soap opera. Before leaving for ostensible fun in the sun, Alma reads a letter to Elisabet from her husband, who also included a photo of her young son, and the patient seems rather perturbed by the situation, as if it is the source of her psychosis. Almost immediately upon arriving at the seaside cottage, the roles of doctor and patient are almost entirely reversed, with Alma doing all the talking about her life and problems while Elisabet listens in a seemingly inquisitive fashion. Although Alma first discusses banal subjects like the books she is currently reading and other totally trivial matters, she soon opens up and pours her wounded soul out to Elisabet, discussing how her fiancé Karl-Henrik thinks she lacks ambition, stating, "though not with my career, I suppose in some greater way," as if the nurse is not doing what she really wants to do in real-life. Rather strangely, if not unsurprisingly, Alma begins comparing herself to mute Elisabet, as if she is the woman whose life she has always dreamed of living.

One night, after drinking some fine wine, Alma confesses to Elisabet that she once cheated on her fiancé by getting involved in a ménage à quatre on a beach with her friend Katarina and two underage teenage boys. Although Alma confesses that the orgy resulted in the best sex she has ever had in her entire life, it also resulted in her getting pregnant and, in turn, an abortion that was carried out by her fiancé Karl-Henrik's colleague. Naturally, like any sane woman, the abortion left Alma with some mental hang-ups that she does not know how to process. After telling the orgy/abortion story, the two women sit at a table and Elisabet speaks for the first time, stating, "Go to bed. Otherwise, you'll fall asleep at the table," which Alma repeats, as if the two are sharing the same brain. The next day, Alma drives to town to deliver some letters written by Elisabet, but on the way there she decides to read what her patient has written. Naturally, Alma is quite disturbed when she reads the following words that Elisabet has written in the letter: "Alma takes care of me, spoils me in the most touching way. I believe that she likes it here and that she's very fond of me...perhaps even in love in an unaware and enchanting way. In any case, it's very interesting studying her. Sometimes she cries over past sins—an orgy with a strange boy and a subsequent abortion. She claims that her perceptions do not correspond with her actions." When Alma gets back to the cottage, she is so distraught and anxiety-ridden by what she has read in the letter that she accidentally breaks

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a glass and intentionally leaves shards on a small path for Elisabet to step on. When Elisabet notices her foot is bleeding after stepping on the shard of glass, she begins to stare at Alma in a knowing fashion and *Persona* as a film begins to break apart just like the characters, with scratch marks appearing up and down the screen to the less than soothing sounds of hissing, though the scene concludes with another nightmarish dream-sequence similar to the one featured at the beginning of the film (including more footage from Bergman's *Prison* and crucifixion scene).

Naturally, when the film resumes, Alma tells Elisabet that she is deeply hurt by what the actress has written in the letter and demands that she finally speak. Alma also venomously says to Elisabet: "You can't know how I feel. I thought that great artists had great compassion for people...that they created through a great compassion and a need to help. That was stupid. You have used me. For what, I don't know. Now that you don't need me anymore, you throw me away." Of course, when Elisabet refuses to speak, Alma becomes quite enraged and chases the patient around the cottage, though she is ultimately left with a bloody nose after the actress gives her a nice hit across the face. In retaliation for the bloody nose, Alma picks up a pot of boiling water and goes to throw it at Elisabet, but the actress cries "No!" thereupon temporarily breaking her silence and proving that she does indeed fear death, as the nurse mentions. After Alma cleans up her bloody face, she once again confronts Elisabeth, telling her she is more or less a psychopath who is merely playing another role, remarking: "You are inaccessible. They said you were healthy, but your sickness is of the worst kind: it makes you seem healthy. You act it so well everyone believes it, everyone except me, because I know how rotten you are inside." After that, Elisabet attempts to walk away on the beach and Alma pursues her and attempts to apologize by begging forgiveness in a groveling manner, as if pleading to an upset lover. That night, Elisabet becomes obsessed with a holocaust photo (taken from the Strop Report) of a SS man pointing a gun at a Jewish boy in the Warsaw ghetto. Later that night, Alma hears a man shouting outside and discovers that it is Elisabet's husband Mr. Vogler (Gunnar Björnstrand), who mistakes the nurse for his wife despite the fact she keeps telling him, "I'm not your wife." After Mr. Vogler delivers a monologue about their relationship (stating, "We must see each other as two anxious children," which he also wrote in a letter to Elisabet that is read at the beginning of the film) and how she is the mother of his child, Alma finally pretends to be his wife while Elisabet stands right next to her. In fact, Alma plays the role so well that she and Mr. Vogler have sex together while Elisabet sits by the bed with a noticeable state of panic on her face. Naturally, Alma cries afterwards. The film climaxes the next morning when Alma psychoanalyzes Elisabet, accusing her of having everything but "motherliness." Alma also accuses the actress of always acting due to her fear of her son, husband, "swelling body," degenerating acting career, and virtually everything else in her

life. In fact, Alma even goes so far as accusing Elisabet of hoping that her son had died in the womb or was stillborn, stating, "You wanted a dead child." After her son was born, Elisabet apparently prayed for his death. After Alma does her scathing analysis of Elisabeth, both women's faces somehow merge into one single face. Eventually, Elisabet falls into a fully catatonic state and Alma develops an unsettling mood that inspires her to cut her own arm. After that, Alma forces Elisabet to lick the blood from her gash like a vampire and then proceeds to smack the shit out of her patient. In the end, Alma packs all her things up and leaves the cottage alone, with the camera eventually turning away from the nurse and revealing a camera and director filming a scene. Indeed, at the conclusion, Alma rejects Elisabeth as the 'other' so her ego is not destroyed and she puts her nurse outfit back on, thus putting her persona and, in turn, sanity (or semblance of such) firmly back in place.

An immaculate example of what I like to call "Nordic deconstructionism," *Persona* is a rare example of the modernist technique being used in a totally soulful and deeply emotional way, as opposed to the overly intellectualized and audience-alienating approach used by French/Jewish artists, intellectuals, and filmmakers. Penned by auteur Ingmar Bergman in early 1965 while he was hospitalized due to double pneumonia, penicillin poisoning, and related psychosomatic symptoms, *Persona* was dreamed up while the filmmaker was in a decidedly debilitated state, as he "found it almost impossible to shape words and sentences" and was "interrupted by attacks of fever, disturbances of equilibrium, and the fatigue of hopelessness." Luckily, Bergman's state of delirium gave birth to "not a film script in the normal sense" but something, "more like the melody line of a piece of music, which I hoped with the help of my colleagues to be able to orchestrate during production." Indeed, *Persona* is the hellishly dark yet singularly beautiful and even ethereal result of a cinematic poet reaching into the deepest abysses of both his conscious and subconscious and literally and figuratively projecting it onscreen, in a work of metacinema that makes the viewer completely conscious of the fact that they are watching a movie yet is simultaneously a rare example where a filmmaker pours everything—both spiritually and artistically—he has to give on screen, as if he and the film had become one just as the characters Alma and Elisabeth become one. Like the actress character Elisabeth, Bergman was notorious for being a horrible parent/spouse, but what he lacked in emotion regarding being a father/husband, he transferred onto the screen, thereupon using cinema and theater as an apt place to channel his misplaced empathy and 'humanity.' Indeed, as contemporary Hollywood filmmaker Todd Field (*In the Bedroom*, *Little Children*) once eloquently expressed regarding Bergman's legacy, "He was our tunnel man building the aqueducts of our cinematic collective unconscious." Like most of Bergman's great films and great art in general, *Persona* unmask the 'persona' of the artist by showing him at his most vulnerable, conflicted, and guilt-ridden, albeit in a semi-esoteric sort of

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fashion that does not make it easy for the viewer. Of course, at the same time, the film reveals the 'vampiric' quality of the artist (aside from Elisabet drinking Alma's blood, a vampire appears during the second dream-sequence), who not only preys on the soul of his actors, cameraman, and crew members, but also the viewer as well, as no one can get through watching *Persona* without feeling absolutely metaphysically drained, even if they have already seen the film countless times. Of course, one of the things that makes Bergman's film so great is the endless interpretations it offers to the viewer, as a celluloid work of art created by a man who once tellingly confessed, "A limitless, never-satisfied, ever-renewed, unbearable curiosity drives me forward [...] It never leaves me in peace." Indeed, *Persona* is certainly not a work that will allow the viewer to find some sort of inner peace, but it will certainly inspire them to find some inner truth, so long as they are willing to peel back their persona and investigate a part of their self that might come at the price of their sanity, just as the film almost cost the director his.

-Ty E

HOUR OF THE WOLF

Ingmar Bergman (1968)

While suffering a minor yet artistically fruitful nervous breakdown in 1965, Swedish auteur Ingmar Bergman managed to churn out a most distinguished script that would eventually evolve into two very different (albeit equally personal) films: *Persona* (1966) and *Hour of the Wolf* (1968). Both of these extremely intimate works would prove to be among Bergman's greatest work, but only one would be from a genre the director had yet to work within: the very rarely artistically serious horror film. Of course, *Hour of the Wolf* is not your typical horror flick and it is certainly the sort of horror film one would expect Ingmar Bergman to bring to the mostly schlocky, cheap shock genre. Instead of dealing with real anthropomorphic hellions lurking amongst the shadows, *Hour of the Wolf* protagonist Johan Borg (played by Max von Sydow) – a psychologically unstable artist with a dubious and incessantly pestering past – falls prey to the tragic instability of his own mind and the Jungian archetypes that inhabit it. On top of suffering insomnia, most especially during the *vargtimmen* ('the hour of the wolf'), Johan is constantly approached by taunting and peculiar beings he believes to be demons. The wholly devoted support of Johan's beautiful, pregnant wife Alma (Liv Ullmann) seems to be only in vain as even she – a noble woman who stays up and comforts him during the vicious *vargtimmen* – cannot bring an inkling of solace to his petrified soul. Johan and Alma call a small cottage on a quaint secluded island with an ancient castle their home. This island setting, a virtual microcosm of monotonous metaphysical madness, only adds to Johan's caustic claustrophobia and unflinching feeling of impending doom. Essentially, *Hour of the Wolf* is a fresh and new take on the gothic horror story that is full of bold Bergmanian phantasmagorical imagery and typically stark Nordic isolationism and self-imposed alienation.

Ingmar Bergman has made no lie about the fact that *Hour of the Wolf* is one of his most personal and autobiographical works. Knowing this unsurprising fact (as all of Bergman's films are to some extent autobiographical) makes the film all the more macabre and authentically confounding. Of course, anyone that knows anything about Bergman's life knows that he was not the easiest man to like (as expressed most vividly by his own children), but one must certainly respect the Scandinavian filmmaker's brutal honesty, especially in regard to using the idiosyncrasy of his own internal pain as a proper and constructive outlet to the push the envelope of filmmaking. In *Hour of the Wolf*, through the character of Johan, Bergman attempts to come to terms with alienation from one's lover, an irretractable past, homoerotic demons (resulting in the most deplorable of crimes), and the personal validity of one's art among critical spectators. Unsurprisingly, a couple years before he passed away in 2007, Bergman openly admitted that he could not even watch his own films as he found them

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intolerably disheartening. In *Hour of the Wolf*, the cinema spectator can easily see why the Swedish filmmaker found his art to be so emotionally repellent, but, of course, just like any other horror flick, most viewers have the advantage of not fully identifying with the reality of these distinct psychological horrors. *Hour of the Wolf* is a film about a man on the verge of total, but somewhat unpredictable, self-annihilation; and therein lies the true terror of the film. Johan is a man that has an impossible time dealing with himself, let alone his fellow human beings; a thought that, to a degree, scares even the most fully committed of renegade recluses. In fact, one could easily make the argument that Johan makes the aggressively misanthropic, wolf-like protagonist Harry Haller (also played by Max von Sydow in the 1974 film adaptation) from Hermann Hesse's novel *Steppenwolf* (1927) seem like a dandy puppy with too much free time on his hands. The 'hour of the wolf' featured in *Hour of the Wolf* is when Johan is at his most lycanthropic and vehemently anti-social; the time where he feels most susceptible to turbulently transcending his flimsy humanity. The real 'monster' of *Hour of the Wolf* is undoubtedly Johan, but he is a strangely sympathetic monster nonetheless and even monsters have emotions.

As per usual, Swedish cinematographer and longtime Bergman collaborator Sven Nykvist produced some of the greatest scenes ever committed to celluloid for *Hour of the Wolf*. If any cameraman can be said to have refined and perfected the art of 'Gothic' filmmaking, it is most certainly Nykvist; a man who only minutely worked within the genre. In my humble opinion, *Hour of the Wolf* also features the most brilliant Gothic castle scenes ever featured in a film before and after it. Like many classic horror stories and films, *Hour of the Wolf* features nefarious aristocrats whose cold, astringent souls are only rivaled by the brutality of stone that holds together their empty, dark dungeons. In *Hour of the Wolf*, Bergman manages to combine a realistic psychological portrayal of perniciousness bluebloods who are guided by their conspiring idle hands with mythical elements one has come to expect from classic horror films, which is further consummately complimented by Nykvist's bold, naturalistic (yet strangely somehow supernatural as is the case in *Hour of the Wolf*) filmmaking. Possibly Nykvist's greatest achievement with *Hour of the Wolf* was his ability to make scenes set during daytime seem almost as apocalyptically foreboding as those shot during the dead of night, especially during a scene where a small boy is consumed by an oceanic tomb in what is easily one of the most eerie and memorable scenes in all of cinema history.

Ingmar Bergman described 'the hour of the wolf' as follows, "the hour between night and dawn. It is the hour when most people die, when sleep is deepest, when nightmares are more real. It is the hour when the sleepless are haunted by their deepest fear, when ghosts and demons are most powerful. The *Hour of the Wolf* is also the hour when most children are born." It is also in-

dubitably true that Bergman's marvelous melancholy masterpiece *Hour of the Wolf* was painfully begotten during this seemingly untimely hour. Just as German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stayed wide awake in state of indefinite internal despondency while in an opium trance during 'the hour of the wolf' as he codified his timeless philosophies, Bergman channeled his extremely personal anvil chorus into one of the most adept and ominously sublime horror films (and films in general) that could not have been more ideal for classic black-and-white film stock. Antonin Artaud once said something along the lines that, "no one creates except to get out of hell." If *Hour of the Wolf* is not an expression of personal perdition than I do not know what is. Not only is *Hour of the Wolf* one of the greatest horror films ever made, but it also one of the most gallant and uncompromising artistic expressions from an artist on the infernal internal demons that possess one – and what one must possess – to create great works.

-Ty E

THE SERPENT'S EGG
THE SERPENT'S EGG

Ingmar Bergman (1977)

Undoubtedly, every master auteur filmmaker directs a dud at some point in their career and singular Swedish cinematic genius Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*, *Persona*) is certainly no exception to the unwritten rule, with his pre-Nazi quasi-neo-Expressionist work *The Serpent's Egg* (1977) being an excellent, if not rather unfortunate, example of this. Indeed, as much as I wanted to love *The Serpent's Egg*—a work set in 1923 Weimar era Berlin over a week-long period during the inflation crisis—the film proved to be an absolute abject artistic failure of the aesthetically asinine, culturally mongrelized, and horribly miscast sort that seems like it was directed by a random Hollywood hack and not by the unrivaled Nordic master. Not surprisingly, *The Serpent's Egg* was Bergman's first and last Hollywood-produced project and even though the film was actually shot in West Germany, it might as well have been directed on a studio lot as the work is about as authentically Teutonic in its essence as an Israeli turd. Made when Bergman was in self-imposed exile after suffering a nervous breakdown after being charged with tax evasion and proclaiming that he would never return to Sweden ever again, *The Serpent's Egg* was also the filmmaker's 'biggest' production at that point in his career in terms of the size of the crew and budget, as well as the filmmaker's greatest commercial and critical failure in what amounts to a 'dark' spot in a singular and nearly immaculate oeuvre. Starring autoerotic asphyxiation victim David 'Kill Bill' Carradine (*Kung Fu*, *Absolute Evil – Final Exit*) in a glaringly miscast role as an exceedingly annoying and unlikeable out-of-work American Jewish circus acrobat, *The Serpent's Egg* is a deranging psychodrama that is not actually deranging enough to actually penetrate the viewer in a poignant manner, but instead simply agitates and disgusts. Purportedly inspired by Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) and Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930), *The Serpent's Egg*, not unlike Steven Soderbergh's *Kafka* (1991) and Woody Allen's *Shadows and Fog* (1991), is far too conspicuously calculating and contrived in its attempt to revive the German expressionist aesthetic and thus is rather hard to take seriously, which is only all the more compounded by Carradine's carelessly lackluster acting. On top of everything else, *The Serpent's Egg* features the sort of innately irrational and quasi-spiritual anti-Nazi venom that ranks with the kosher-approved blockbuster agitprop movies of Steven Spielberg and Bryan Singer, which is rather odd (or maybe not so considering Bergman's possible post-WWII guilt) that it was directed by a man who once revered Uncle Adolf as a boy and even attended a National Socialist rally where he saw Hitler speak. Indeed, aside from the actual scene of perverse celluloid poetry, *The Serpent's Egg's* only saving grace is that it manages to make the Warsaw ghetto seem like a posh picnic.

Born to Jewish parents from Riga, Latvia, Abel Rosenberg (David Carradine)

is an angst-ridden alcoholic American circus acrobat and after he discovers that his brother has blown his brains out, he no longer has a partner for his circus routine, nor a reason to live. Since Abel is currently living in Berlin in 1923 when a mere pack of cigarettes costs four billion marks, he is kind of screwed in terms of money, but he has a little bit of American money given to him by his ex-boss Herr Hollinger (Georg Hartmann) and he is a thief so he manages to get by. Hebrew Hollinger attempts to get Abel to leave Germany due to the rise in hatred of Jews and National Socialism and even reads an article from an Aryan newspaper proclaiming, "Terrible times are at hand when circumcised anti-Christian Asiatics on all sides are lifting their gory hands to strangle us. The massacre of Christians by the Jew Isaskar Zederblum, alias Mr. Lenin, was enough to make a Genghis Kahn blush. A Jewish terrorist pack, trained to murder and assault, is prowling through the country, butchering honest citizens and farmers on portable gallows," but Abel shrugs it off by responding with: "I don't believe in all this political crap. The Jews are as stupid as everybody. If a Jew gets into trouble, it's his own fault. He gets into trouble because he acts stupid. I'm not gonna act stupid, so I'm not gonna get into trouble." After finding his brother's brains splattered against the wall, Abel goes to visit said brother's naively loyal and nice beauteous ex-wife Manuela (Liv Ullmann), who is a cabaret singer that moonlights as prostitute, for shelter and the two begin a non-relationship of sorts. Despite the fact his ex-sister-in-law provides him with room and board, Abel decides to seal Manuela's lifesavings and subsequently goes crazy after being brought to a police station for questioning and suspects he is the victim of Aryan anti-Semitism from a certain Inspector Bauer (Gert Fröbe), who insinuates the American Jew may be a serial killer (Bauer brings Abel to the local morgue and shows the corpses of seven of his acquaintances who have all died under grizzly circumstances ranging from suicide to a poisons needle to the heart). While Manuela bails Abel out of jail, Inspector Bauer confiscates the money that the ex-acrobat stole from his lady friend, thus causing the two non-lovers to go broke. On top of that, Manuela loses her apartment after Abel acts like a decided dick to the elderly busybody landlord. On top of everything else, a rather strange and sinister childhood 'friend' named Hans Vergéus (Heinz Bennent), who once performed vivisection on a cat and showed off its still beating heart to his friends while a child and who is now is some sort of scientist, keeps pestering Abel and it is later discovered the sadist is carrying on a romance with Manuela.

Abel's suspicions regarding Vergéus are right, but being broke and desperate, the destitute Jew decides to take a dubious job as an archivist at the Professor's clinic where he is rather bizarrely locked into his workspace as if he is interned to slave labor at a concentration camp. In between watching degenerate blackface-adorned jazz bands, picking up underage prostitutes, and getting drunk and defacing stores, including a clothing store owned by a fat rich Jew with the same

THE SERPENT'S EGG

surname as him, Abel's paranoia begins to grow and his sanity begins to wane. In one scene of quasi-comic relief, Abel asks an ostensibly gay American negro if he is able to screw a female prostitute in front of him and said spade does get his exhibitionistic miscegenation on, albeit in a rather anti-climatic fashion that contradicts the myth of black sexual potency. Abel also discovers that his friend Hollinger's claim that Jew-hate is rising in Germany is true after witnessing a group of naughty stormtrooping Nazis wrecking a degenerate cabaret and literally knocking the teeth out of the Jewish owner's mouth. Of course, as Abel will soon discover, he has much more disturbing and deleterious things to worry about than the Aryan threat. In a rather absurd twist, it is later discovered that both Abel and Manuela are the unwitting guinea pigs of Mengele-esque medical experiments carried out by vainglorious mad scientist Vergéus. After Manuela loses her apartment, she and Abel take up a new residence given to them by Vergéus. Unbeknownst to Abel and Manuela, their new apartment is really a disguised laboratory with one way mirrors and Vergéus experiments on them by releasing toxic chemical gasses that induce psychotic states in the victims. In the end, Manuela is killed and Abel finally uncovers Vergéus' sinister, if not ridiculously unbelievable, plot. While Abel is initially institutionalized after being saved from Vergéus by Inspector Bauer, he later manages to escape and never goes back to Deutschland ever again. Borrowing its name from a line spoken by Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *The Serpent's Egg's* title is a superlatively sensationalized allegorical reference to the birth of National Socialism in Germany as the film concludes with Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch. Indeed, just as a serpent egg has a translucent membrane through which can see the creature forming, Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg* portrays a foreboding pre-Hitlerite period where death and human depravity were at the height in the Fatherland and would ultimately give birth to the National Socialist revolution. Of course, the poisonous gasses that Vergéus secretly unleashes in Abel and Manuela's prison-like apartment are an obvious and exceedingly overdone reference to the holocaust.

Rather fittingly, German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder would utilize the leftover sets of *The Serpent's Egg* for his cinematic magnum opus *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) and would ultimately achieve what Bergman failed to do in depicting the Weimar Republic as an apocalyptic hell-on-earth where the average man became a crook/pimp and the average women a prostitute, and where a dead body here or there was not out of the ordinary. Indeed, assumedly not used to working with so many extravagant sets and such a large film crew, Bergman truly seemed to lose his focus with *The Serpent's Egg*; a work comparable to Fassbinder's horribly uneven big budget international production *Despair* (1978), which also chronicled the rise of Nazism in the Weimar Republic, featured an unhinged racial/cultural outsider in the lead role, and was absurdly shot in English. As Liv Ullmann revealed in the featurette *Away From*

Home, while Bergman apparently became rather depressed having to work in an alien environment, he would later remark that he was rather proud of *The Serpent's Egg*. In the audio commentary for the MGM dvd release of the film, star David Carradine theorizes that Bergman largely made *The Serpent's Egg* in an attempt to be close with Liv Ullmann, who he had a daughter with. Really more reminiscent of a curious cross between *Peeping Tom* (1960) and Orson Welles' *The Trial* (1962) meets Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972) than a purist attempt to create a modern German expressionist film, *The Serpent's Egg* has its moments of movie magic, but ultimately seems like a callous production of the carelessly cynical sort created by a master who had too much money and melancholy to create the sort of uncompromising celluloid work that typically seemed to pour out of his wounded soul. Bergman's sort of pseudo-Teutonic take on *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), *The Serpent's Egg* ultimately seems like a politically correct tribute to kosher commie film critic Siegfried Kracauer, who is best known for his reductionist-oriented and venomously anti-German work *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947), which, among other things, argued that the films of German Expressionism were prophetic and reflected a warped and nightmarish Teutonic collective psyche that would inevitably erupt into Nationalism and the holocaust. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, *The Serpent's Egg* is an aborted aesthetic tragedy that could have been an unrivaled masterpiece had they hired a different lead actor and had Bergman not sold his soul to the art-sacrificing bureaucracy of Hebraic Hollywood. In many ways, *The Serpent's Egg* is a like Bergman film for those with the incapacity for watching a Bergman film and should be viewed as such as it is nearly impossible to enjoy if one dwells on the master responsible for directing it. Arguably Bergman's most ugly and superficially unhinged work, *The Serpent's Egg* stands as a semi-interesting example of how a master auteur can go wrong, but still succeed in making something with a handful of memorable scenes.

-Ty E

THE INVASION OF THUNDERBOLT PAGODA
THE INVASION OF THUNDERBOLT PAGODA

Ira Cohen (1968)

It should be no surprise to readers of SS that I find hippies repugnant and Hebraic ones even more so, so it probably seems somewhat dubious that I would watch a film directed by a man of such a 'preternatural' persuasion. Nonetheless, after I discovered that Judaic Beat generation hippie Ira Cohen's cine-magic 'magnum opus' *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968) was influenced by the films of Kenneth Anger and Sergei Parajanov, as well as the Alchemical theories of 'Aryan Christ' Carl G. Jung, I decided to give it a chance. Although absurdly advertised as "the only psychedelic film ever made," the keenly kaleidoscopic short (although originally only 22-minutes, Cohen decided to add a pretty pointless 8-minute prologue section to the film featuring himself playing naked in the mud for when it was re-released on DVD in 2006) plays more like a poor occultnik's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) than 'thee' ultimate work of celluloid psychedelia, though it is certainly no waste either, as a sort of brother film to works directed by the director's cinematic compatriots like Jack Smith's *Normal Love* (1963) and Ron Rice's *Chumlum* (1964), which incidentally both star underground superstar Beverly Grant. Directed by a comrade of none other than John McLaughlin, William S. Burroughs and Jimi Hendrix who created "mylar images" and considered himself a "mythographer," *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* also demonstrates a certain fetishism for mylar in a work where mylar combined with mercury are utilized in a transcendental fashion to depict the "ever-flowing river" that is nature and creation. A plot-less and wordless piece of oneiric and phantasmagoric psyche-cinema as dreamed up by a Hebraic pseudo-messiah on hallucinogens and his equally inebriated comrades, Cohen's film is one of the rare examples where drugs have a positive, if not somewhat superficial, influence on the film as if it is an aesthetically hypnotic daydream that is made all the more entrancing by the musical score of Angus MacLise, who is probably best known as the original drummer of *The Velvet Underground*. Indeed, if you're looking for real dirty hippie/beatnik cinema, you can probably do no better than the short but somewhat sweet celluloid trip that is *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda*.

After opening with a largely senseless recently added 8-minute sepia-tone sequence involving, among other things, auteur Ira Cohen rising from the mud naked and hanging around with a fellow that looks like a Christ-like holocaust survivor, as well as a couple less than homely hippie chicks acting all 'entranced' and whatnot while they roam around like dejected flesh-eaters and born again junkies, *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda*, which is a film with three different acts, finally begins in the fashion it did in 1968 with a keenly colorful yet fittingly hazy opium smoking scene where a chick smokes some in a room of bendable-mirrors and enters a demented dream featuring green elves, a white

snake (Peter Birnbaum), 'death' (played by the director), and a "maker of mayhem" (also played by the director), who hands out gifts like sea shells and rubber lizards. In terms of iconoclastic imagery, there's a green elf with pointy goblin ears waving around a white baby doll lynched on a stick, as well as an icon of Christ with batwings instead of a cross. Basically, the film feels exactly like what director Ira Cohen described it as in the DVD audio commentary, as a film where a couple friends got together and filmed each other by passing the camera around to one another. In a scene using a extra-use of mylar, Cohen is married during a Jungian 'alchemical wedding.' Towards the end of the film, a scene is shot through a prism inspired by the "Snowflake syndrome" concept featured in the sci-fi novel *Wolf Bait*. During the final scene, while standing in front of the sky (aka "heavenly vault"), Cohen 'plays magician' under his 'Majoon Traveler' persona using a magic wand to dictate the "ever-flowering river" that is nature.

In the audio commentary for the 2006 DVD release of the film, auteur Ira Cohen describes how he and his friends were just merely "winging it" and not putting much real thought into the production of *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda*, as a work where they were merely "acting out" their "real lives." While I am not exactly accustomed to the lifestyles of Hebraic hippies during the late-1960s, somehow I am not surprised that they might get high on opium, create sacrilegious images of Jesus, and use red devil candles to light the 'cock' of a mural, as depicted in a somewhat goofy but nonetheless strangely entertaining way that, while it may only vaguely resemble the campy Crowleyite charisma of Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, nonetheless makes the film mandatory viewing for fans of vintage experimental cinema. Indeed, while Cohen's film might be inferior to similar works of celluloid psychedelia like Smith's *Normal Love*, Federico Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), and Steve Arnold's *Luminous Procuress* (1971), it is also idiosyncratic enough to stand out on its own as a piece of heretical Hebraic hippiedom that demonstrates that the so-called 'flower children' were not just about peace and love, but also metaphysical subversion, deluded drug worship, and moronic pseudo-neo-pagan customs. Featuring a mostly less than homely looking collection of individuals and borrowing from a hodgepodge of religions and spiritual practices, *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* probably features enough 'esoteric excess' and eccentric people attempting to 'find themselves' to make the average person snicker in ridicule, but it is also surely a strange enough celluloid affair to appeal to the most obsessive of cinephiles, be they hippie-haters like myself or not.

-Ty E

YOUNG SOUL REBELS
YOUNG SOUL REBELS

Isaac Julien (1991)

With the recent grizzly and strikingly savage murder of a white British soldier by black Islamist terrorists, I decided it was about time I checkout homo negro auteur Isaac Julien's racially-charged melodrama *Young Soul Rebels* (1991), a lurid interracial romance and murder mystery story set during the pre-Thatcher year 1977 about what happens when a butt-boy of a black DJ hooks up with an ethno-masochistic white punk in a chaotic multicultural setting full of neo-nazi skinheads, racist Rastafarians, West Indians, and racially ambitious 'mystery meat' of all sorts. A work directed by a faggy fellow who has created cinematic works on figures ranging from African Marxist/pseudo-scientist Frantz Fanon to British arthouse alpha-auteur Derek Jarman, *Young Soul Rebels* is a work that I expected would feature an extremist leftist slant, yet I had no clue that the film would be full of politically correct, cookie cutter caricatures where every indigenous Brit, aside from race-mixers and anarchistic fairies, is portrayed as positively pernicious, if not downright evil in the blackshirt Mosleyite sense. In short, *Young Soul Rebels* portrays everything that is traditionally and classically British as absolutely odious and outmoded, while portraying interracial Dorian love as the indisputable height of progressiveness and human perfection, thus being a celluloid work that—rather unfortunately—is more relevant today than when it was originally released over two decades ago. Winner of the coveted "Critic's Award" at the Cannes Film Festival, *Young Soul Rebels* certainly has a 'colorful' aesthetic prowess of European high-camp meets hip-hop vulgarity, which was indubitably utilized by the filmmaker to disguise the surreally retarded sociopolitical bullocks that plagues the film. Part half-ass murder mystery, part pomo period piece, part racially risqué romance, and all agit prop, *Young Soul Rebels* is a curious celebration of "Anarchy in the U.K.," but not like the sort of song of the same name by the Sex Pistols frontman Johnny Rotten, but rather the radically racially apocalyptic sort that reminds one that colonizing a rather large segment of the nonwhite world was one of the now-dead British empire's biggest mistakes, especially if a racial alien can cinematically defecate and culturally debase an adopted nation that has enabled him to get rather rotund and practice his sexual debauchery in safety as opposed to starving to death or being executed for sodomy in some sub-Saharan hellhole. Comparable to William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) in its depiction of a homicidal homo who has stricken fear in the fairy underground and Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam* (1999) in its libelous portrayal of the white devil and its decidedly degenerate disco soundtrack, *Young Soul Rebels* is a great example as to what happens when the colored world uses whitey's art, technology, and kultur against him in what is undoubtedly cultural debasement.

The year is 1977 and during a rather dubious trip to a local park for a good old

anonymous suck and fuck, a closeted gay black man with a ghetto-blaſter boom-box named TG (Shyro Chung) tries to get a blowjob from some cocksucking cracker but instead he is brutally murdered by the faceless cocktease of a homicidal homo honkey. Needless to say, TG's childhood friends, the rather effete yet straight Chris (Valentine Nonyela) and the more masculine yet man-loving Caz (Mo Sesay), who run a pirate radio ſtation together, are rather disheartened by the morbid mysterious murder but their minds soon go elsewhere because, like moſt young black men, they dream of getting rich and famous and they believe fiddling with vinyls and a turntable will be the way to get there. While Chris, who is a mulatto with a trashy British mudſhark mother who ſmokes joints with her half-caſte ſon, ſoon falls in love with a taller girl, high-yellow named Tracy (Sophie Okonedo, a woman of half-Nigerian/half-Aſhkenazi-Jewish extraction) who works for a major music producer, pure melanin-rich black man Caz falls in love with a naughty and nihilistic white punk named Billibud (Shakespearean actor Jason Durr) who bares a ſtriking reſemblance to homosexual English musician Douglas P. (who was once in a Trotsykite punk group called Crisis) of the neofolk group Death In June. Being a poor black playa, Chris is hassled and questioned by blatantly faſciſtic cops in Geſtapo-eſque uniforms, the predictably hate-filled leader of whom even calls him a "coon" and makes fun of the fact he wears bright pink ſocks. Simply because they are ſadiſtic bigots who ſtrut around brazenly like martial leather-fags and brandiſh badges, at leaſt according to director Issac Julien's logic, the cops attempt to convict Chris of the crime of TJ's death, but, of course, it was really a weirdo white dude and he has a recording of the killing to prove. Of course, the beautiful black brothas' are also hassled by nefarious neo-nazi ſkinheads and member of the ultra-nationaliſtic National Front because they be hating and discriminating on the beautiful black ſouls brother as ſoulleſs Nordic beaſts with an intolerance for marijuana and jiga-boo funk. Naturally, in the end, lavender love conquers all and the ſoul brothers keep ſtrutting. Clearly, Issac Julien's ideal for a UK utopia is a place where white and black twinks engage in miſcegenation and drug-addicted British ſlag ſluts produce baſtard mulatto children with green eyes and without fathers. Clearly, ſuch a world would be highly preferable to a place where ſtoic white men in ſharp uniforms walk around protect and ſerve.

All ſtyle and no ſubſtance, Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* is a melodramatically mundane piece of pseudo-sociopolitical homophiliac afrocentricism that is even leſs ſophiſticated than *American Hiſtory X* (1998) in its one dimensional depiction of culturally mongrelized race relations of the poſt-colonial variety, thus making it the celluloid prototype for multicultural-friendly films like *This Is England* (2006), a ſimilar melodramatic mix of punk, ſkinheads, and raſtas. Undoubtedly, the moſt intereſting and curious aſpect of *Young Soul Rebels* is director Isaac Julien's rather dubious depiction of the white policemen who, although depicted as evil raciſts who calls young mulattos "coon," are clearly eroticized and

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fetishized as some sick fag-bashing fantasy on the donut-puncher director's part, sort of like how homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce depicts skinhead-negro relations in *Skin Flick / Skin Gang* (1999), albeit in a less honest fashion. Considering Julien's depiction of explicit white-on-black leather-faggotry of the Tom of Finland-esque persuasion in his sexually-charged sodomite surrealist short *The Attendant* (1993), I think it is safe to say that *Young Soul Rebels* also fetishizes evil whity in a sick sadomasochistic sort of way that makes the films loony leftist political message just seem like a pretext for depicting unattainable white male virility of the ostensibly Occidental white English variety. Undoubtedly someone who was influenced by English arthouse auteur Derek Jarman (*War Requiem*, *The Angelic Conversations*), hence why he directed the documentary *Derek* (2008) about the deceased arthouse superstar auteur, Isaac Julien assembled an 'aesthetist' work with *Young Soul Rebels* that is first and foremost a piece of racially confused 'aesthetic fascism' from the perspective of a Negro fairy than an honest and serious look at anarchic relations in the UK. The fact that *Young Soul Rebels* won the critics prize at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival is nothing short of cinematic affirmative action because, had a white man directed the same film, it would have not been so critically acclaimed, hence why the film has fallen into relative obscurity today. Indeed, *Young Soul Rebels* looks like it was directed by a flaming fashion designer, like a gay Spike Lee, who had more of an interest in getting close-ups of the bulge in a young man's pleather red pants than telling a serious and sophisticated story cinematically. Indeed, one can only wonder what kind of film Issac Julien would assemble if he made a cinematic work about the recent savage slaughter of Drummer Lee Rigby by two Negro Islamic terrorists, but I am sure it would featuring a coon copulating with a cracker and a butch British bitch with a brown baby.

-Ty E

GOJIRA

Ishirō Honda (1954) The epitome of a sympathetic post-war tragedy in a rubber lizard suit. Gojira is single-handedly one of the most important pieces of cinema out there. Few other films have tackled such a ridiculous niche of film owned by industry titan Harryhausen and made such a claustrophobic vision of intimate peril. At the heart of this film lies a sweet confection; a complicated love story. Gojira was created by a passionate independent Japanese company named Toho. From the birth of Godzilla, they have created numerous Giant Kaiju battle films and other quirky works such as Lupin III. Who would have thought that an intelligent monster film would produce animated shows, underwear, backpacks, trading cards, and non-stop adaptations into books? The cinematography present in the original film is a non-stop train ride of extremely misty environments alluding the melancholy score from Akira Ifukube. The original Japanese masterpiece is superior in every form to the chopped & screwed Raymond Burr American edition. Physically the same film, but ideally two separate titles. The American resembles more of what Cloverfield was with the documentation of an attack. The original was more of a portrait painted by Tokyo subjecting poor citizens to an extreme at-first unexplained terror. Gojira was terrifying at the time of its release. While I watch it, I can feel remnants of that feeling. The generation may wither, but the poignancy of this fine piece of cinema stands strong. The original is a beautiful work. The ending is dreary and features a similar fate to the 1998 Godzilla (But that film never really happened). This film is wholly joyless and a brief memory frozen in time. Gojira is a legend and this is his Sistine Chapel.

-mAQ

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS!
GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS!

Ishirō Honda (2019)

Two years after the release of the original Gojira, Hollywood had the right mind to take the film and Americanize it. How else but to digitally crop in Raymond Burr from Rear Window fame and trash most of the already existent story line. The result was a blurred vision of what the original film was, but still retained some of the classic moods and action scenes, although the byproduct love story was initially cut and butchered leaving an experience you never knew you were involved with. This needs no introduction. Godzilla is the spawn of the horrors of nuclear testing. I have recently devoted my time to tracking down all 29 Godzilla films so I can cover all of these epic Kaiju films. What was once a startling look at the horrors of humanity was resurrected as a all-out monster smashbang where the Giant with the biggest balls wins, and it is always Godzilla. Godzilla incorporates an effect which will later be used by Steve Oedekirk for the love-it or hate-it Kung Pow: Enter the Fist. Photo manipulation and translation problems are at the heart of this bastardized version. While I wish to expunge all my hatred on this film and the studio for diluting the amazing score from Akira Ifukube, I cannot bring myself to it. During my childhood, this was the only way I was able to have seen the "original" in a nutshell and I'm grateful to that. Raymond Burr remains in a comatose state most of the film and brushes the way of a monster rumor. Once he encounters the legend, he simply stares devoid of any emotion or personality. Now that I think about it, he doesn't really have a character, He's just a reporter named Steve Martin. Lethargic to boot, he just spends his time off camera with the crowd and requests for translations. As the story holds up, well, The film's eerie shot of two men underwater looking up at a ghostly silhouette of a massive creature resulting from a by-product of mankind still remains, and this remains one of the few classic scenes in any monster film. Godzilla and Gojira have it all, the tension, the sound, the suspense, and the earth-shattering destruction scenes that have made Godzilla so iconic. A masterpiece; simple as that.

-mAQ

CUTTER'S WAY

Ivan Passer (1981)

I have to confess that, nowadays, there are very few films that I can truly relate to in terms of sheer nihilism, pessimism, and cynicism, especially in regard to the Reaganite 1980s when Spielberg was king and the promotion of collective fantastic infantilization was the name of the game among the neo-Vaudevillian shysters, hucksters, and culture-distorters in Tinseltown. Don't get me wrong, the 1980s produced some great dark films including David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* (1986), but I think Ivan Passer's *Cutter's Way* (1981) aka *Cutter and Bone*—a film based on the 1976 novel of the latter name by Newton Thornburg—is the only cinematic work of its era that goes all the way in terms of pure and adulterated cultural pessimism in regard to the state of the United States and its increasingly disenfranchised white working-class majority. Of course, the film has more in common with the aesthetically and culturally subversive films of the American New Wave of the late-1960s and 1970s than most films of its era. Indeed, as Charles Taylor explained in his rather readable yet hopelessly boomer-esque book *Opening Wednesday at a Theater Or Drive-In Near You: The Shadow Cinema of the American '70s* (2017), “WINTER KILLS also calls up the closing days of a decade that has proven to be the richest period in American moviemaking. There were still remarkable movies being made, and wonderful poplar movies that were yet to come, like *E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL* and *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*. But, more and more, daring and gusty pictures went unseen. Two years later Jeff Bridges would star in another of them, Ivan Passer's *CUTTER'S WAY*, and would see it, like *WINTER KILLS*, yanked from theaters after a week (in this case because United Artists was still reeling from the disaster of *HEAVEN'S GATE*—which Bridges also appeared in—the previous month.)” In terms of its cynical conspiracy theme, Passer's film certainly has much in common with a number of great 1970s flicks ranging from Francis Ford Coppola's Antonioni-esque *The Conversation* (1974) to Arthur Penn's decidedly dark post-Watergate neo-noir *Night Moves* (1975) to John Schlesinger's post-shoah Judaic thriller *Marathon Man* (1976), yet it manages to transcend all of these films in terms of both aesthetic and metaphysical prowess. Like a distillation of the darkest and most nihilistic elements of Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) and Paul Schrader's *American Gigolo* (1980) and featuring a miserable ménage à trios that really demystifies such socially sick romantic arrangements as reflected in such absurd bourgeois cinematic depictions ranging from François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962) to Oliver Stone's *Savages* (2012), *Cutter's Way* is indubitably one of the oh-so rare idiosyncratic neo-noir flicks that manages to rival the great classic film noir masterpieces like Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* (1950) and Billy Wilder's *Ace in the Hole* (1951) in terms of depicting the worst of the worst of the particular

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American zeitgeist that they represent.

While he would eventually degenerate into a for-hire hack that would helm forgettable TV movies, Czech auteur Passer originally received international critical acclaim for his association with the Czech New Wave and directing *Intimní osvětlení* (1965) aka *Intimate Lighting* and co-penning the classic early Miloš Forman flicks *Lásky jedné plavovlásky* (1965) aka *Loves of a Blonde* and *Hoří, má panenko* (1967) aka *The Firemen's Ball*. After defecting to the West with the aid of sleazy guido producer Carlo Ponti following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Passer made his way to the United States and made his American debut with the rather gritty and nihilistic ghetto black-comedy *Born to Win* (1971) aka *Addičt aka Scraping Bottom* starring alpha-Jew George Segal as a superlatively sleazy Hebraic junky and hobo that lives to lie, cheat, and steal so that he can get his next big fix in between attempting evade the cops and other dangerous gutter-dwelling scum. Based on a story by Hebraic playwright David Scott Milton—a consciously kosher writer that also penned mundane screenplays for fellow chosenites like Peter Bogdanovich, Sidney Pollack, and Irvin Kershner—the film is notable for featuring one of the most shameless and morally bankrupt Jewish characters since the Third Reich era films of Veit Harlan. In short, the ironically titled film, which features a fairly early young Robert De Niro in a small role, is like a Jewish and more cynical equivalent to Paul Morrissey's *Trash* (1970) in terms of depiction of the virtual purgatorial lifestyle of an east coast dope fiend. While Passer indubitably has an uneven and inconsistent oeuvre, *Born to Win* is undoubtedly part of the same cinematic lineage as *Cutter's Way* as a film that seems to take savagely sardonic delight in ruthlessly murdering what is left of the great myth that is the American dream. Notably, Passer rightly regards both of these films as his greatest achievements as a filmmaker, or as he described in a 2016 interview with *Film Comment*, "I don't have a favorite. I like *BORN TO WIN*, but I think its blend of European and American sensibilities disoriented many critics at the time. It's now considered one of my best films. Maybe *CUTTER'S WAY*, which is perhaps my most American film. It is a damaging account of a nation that has lost its final illusions in the Vietnam War and of a society eaten away by corruption."

In some ways, to describe *Cutter's Way* as anti-American would be a gross understatement but, at the same time, it is also, despite its Slavic director, shamelessly American, at least in terms of depicting everything that is uniquely ugly about the considerably bastardized nation. Indeed, H.L. Mencken might as well have been writing a sort of philosophical synopsis for the film when he wrote in his essay *The Libido for the Ugly* (1926), "Here is something that the psychologists have so far neglected: the love of ugliness for its own sake, the lust to make the world intolerable. Its habitat is the United States. Out of the melting pot emerges a race which hates beauty as it hates truth." A film that only contains pulchritude in its potent putridity and understatedly morbid melancholia,

the film depicts a metaphysically sick, culturally and racially deracinated, and morosely materialistic coastal microcosm where the technically physical beautiful are downright ugly due to their attitudes and personalities and where every sunny beach is despoiled due to its loathsome inhabitants. A sad and pathetic yet undeniably darkly humorous film depicting a failed dime store gigolo and his unhinged crippled Vietnam War veteran pal playing virtual Russian Roulette with their own lives by trying to prove that a powerful local cutthroat capitalist was responsible for the brutal rape and murder of a local teenage cheerleader, *Cutter's Way* is a true antihero's tale where true justice seems all but totally obsolete, as the society it depicts is so innately and irrevocably corrupt that there is no hope for the common man to prevail, at least in any big or meaningful way. As for love and romance, they are nothing but a distant memory as the characters are too sick and internally wounded, drunk, and impenetrable to act on their own conflicted emotions. As the end of the film ultimately demonstrates, only death and revenge can provide these pathetic lost souls with any real sense of personal catharsis. A sort of West Coast buddy flick equivalent to *Taxi Driver* (1976), albeit with protagonists that are slightly more sane and sympathetic, the film will almost unequivocally be regarded as a masterpiece by any serious cinephile that is willing to see American for what it really is; a cultural and spiritual void that is beyond redemption. In fact, despite their glaring flaws, the characters are almost too sympathetic as they force the viewer to confront their own most shameful and unflattering flaws, vulnerabilities, and weaknesses; or at least their own personal capacity for said flaws, vulnerabilities, and weaknesses. After watching the film, one should certainly reconsider Arthur Schopenhauer's words, "The most effective consolation in every misfortune and every affliction is to observe others who are more unfortunate than we: and everyone can do this. But what does that say for the condition of the whole?"

While *Cutter's Way* is certainly, to some extent, an allegory for the disillusionment many Americans felt as a result of the Vietnam War, assassination of JFK, and failure of the so-called Civil Rights movement, among other things, it transcends these themes and acts as a sort of exercise in *Sehnsucht*, *angst*, and a specifically American 20th-century form of *Mal du siècle*. Depicting a rather pathetic situation where two best friends love the same perennially doped up dipsomaniac dame, who also seems to love both of them yet is similarly hopeless in expressing said love, the film ultimately presents an unapologetically forlorn world where love is not enough to establish permanent solid interpersonal bonds and perpetual misery seems more desirable to happiness because the latter only seems like a sick joke due to its scarcity and lack of longevity. While Richard Bone (Jeff Bridges) is a rootless wanderer that cannot commit to anything aside from lacklusterly boning old blonde bourgeois bitches for a couple shekels (not unlike Joe Buck of *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), he is also somewhat bashful when it comes to asking for payment for his sensual services), his best friend Alex Cut-

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ter (John Heard)—a sardonically disgruntled Vietnam War veteran that is missing a couple limbs and sports of an eye patch that fittingly makes him look like a pirate-cum-biker—has more or less declared total war against the entire world as a man that is plagued with fuchsteufelswild. Although Cutter is married to her, Bone clearly loves the female protagonist Maureen 'Mo' Cutter (Lisa Eichhorn) and the three live together like one supremely fucked unhappy (anti)family where nil children naturally are roaming around (after all, degenerates tend not to reproduce, or so once wrote early Zionist leader Max Nordau in his infamous text *Entartung* (1892) aka *Degeneration*). While both Cutter and Mo seem to be longing for death to some degree, Bone is just too damn passive, cowardly, and infuriatingly indecisive to embrace something of such patent permanence, so it is only fitting that both of the former die in the end while the latter finally gains some degree of testicular fortitude. As Cutter complains in regard to attempting to get Bone involved in something important, "It's like trying to seduce a eunuch." While they all seem to be alcoholics to some degree, Cutter is a belligerent drunk and his wife Mo seems to be slowly but surely drinking herself into death in between taking bong hits. Undoubtedly, in some alternate reality where they both were not so screwed up, Bone and Mo seem like they could make the perfect loving couple. Of course, Mo is a supremely bitter bitch as demonstrated by her welcoming remark to Bone, "...you're home awfully early, aren't you? Couldn't you find a matron with a taste for gutter squalor?" In fact, Mo has no problem rubbing it into Bone's face that she is married to his best friend Cutter as demonstrated by her gleefully savage remark, "Really must be tough playing second fiddle to a one-eyed cripple." Indeed, while Cutter might be a cripple that seems to suffer from a perpetual state of *fahne*, he's certainly got more swag and machismo than his best pal, who at least partly owes his lack of masculine prowess to the fact that he went to college instead of the Vietnam War. On the other hand, had Cutter not been physically and emotionally crippled in the war, it would not be hard to imagine him as the ultimate pussy-magnet alpha-male, but instead he is a self-destructively bitter and resentful quasi-suicidal renegade that lives life in the most miserable and misanthropic, albeit charismatic, fashion imaginable. As pathetic as they are all, the trio needs each other, so naturally things begin to fall apart when one of them dies.

Although more focused on character development, mood, and atmosphere, *Cutter's Way* centers around Cutter and Bone's somewhat misguided yet nonetheless respectable mission to expose a local capitalist hotshot named J. J. Cord (Stephen Elliott) for the brutal rape and murder of a beautiful blonde high school cheerleader; or, more accurately, the film focuses on the eponymous antihero's attempt to get his pathologically passive male prostitute pal involved in the exposing of said local capitalist hotshot. The trouble starts when Bone is arrested after he unwittingly witnesses the dumping of the teenage girl's corpse into a back alley dumpster during a nasty rainy night. While Bone—a man that

epitomizes the antithesis to Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power—initially wants nothing to do with the murder mystery, Cutter and the dead girl's older sister Valerian Duran (Ann Dusenberry) make it their mission to get involved and force the hapless man hooker to tag along. Indeed, as is fitting for a film set in a nihilistic post-Vietnam War America, the friends develop a degree of obsession and paranoia that rivals some of the most single-minded investigations into the JFK assassination conspiracy. Despite seeing Cord at a local parade and being initially completely convinced that he is the same killer that he saw before, Bone later tries to reject or contradict any of Cutter's arguments as to why the tycoon is their man. In fact, they even find a newspaper article where Cord more or less sadistically brags about his sinister deeds, stating in a creepily cryptic fashion, "I like to pickup hitchhikers. Especially young ones. I like their input." Of course, as demonstrated by the fact that semen is found in the dead girl's mouth, Cord is actually the one that likes giving input.

When the group conspires to create a "pretend blackmail plan" to see if Cord will reveal his guilt by actually paying the money, Mo, who wants nothing to do with the entire charade, ruthlessly rebukes the group for even considering getting involved in such potentially dangerous criminal activity. Indeed, aside from sarcastically telling Valerie to, "get fucked, sweetie," Mo gets so exceedingly enraged with her hubby Cutter that she even mocks him for being a cripple, stating with the sort of rage that one can only expect from an agitated female lover, "You're not some saint avenging the sins of the earth, you know, Alex. And if you are, what am I doing here? Oh, I know. I'm like your [missing] leg. Your leg! Sending messages to your brain and there's nothing there anymore." Needless to say, Bone is not too happy when his ladylove is smacked by Cutter due to her rather rude verbal indiscretions. Rather ironically, it is ultimately Mo that is the first victim of the group's dubious detective work, as she dies in a rather horrific fashion after someone burns their house down. To make matters more morosely emotional, Mo cheats on Cutter and sleeps with Bone the very same night she is killed. In fact, while having sex, Mo even breaks down crying and says to Bone "I love you," but the pathetic gigolo ultimately lets her down in the end. While Mo makes a rather emotional plea for Bone to stay the night with her and he obliges, he later secretly slips outside and abandons her not long after she falls asleep, thus unwittingly saving his own life in the process. Of course, as someone that is as hopelessly miserable as Mo, it almost seems fitting that she dies, especially during an emotional night where she actually reveals her loving tender side but is ultimately betrayed by the very same weak man that she lovingly confides in. Naturally, Cutter is enraged when Bone admits that he had sex with Mo by meekly confessing in a half-hearted fashion, "That night I left . . . She was pretty depressed, you know, things got kind of heavy." Not surprisingly, Mo's horrendous death makes Cutter and even Bone all the more determined to bring Cord to justice. Unfortunately, two perennial fuck-ups make for a poor

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match against a seemingly all-powerful tycoon that seems to practically own all of Santa Barbara, but luckily Cutter is on a suicide mission and thus willing to go all the way lest he fail the memory of his beloved self-described "wifey."

During their intense investigation, Cutter and Bone discover that Cord has a long history of murdering people and getting away with it. For example, the father of Cutter's friend-cum-boss George Swanson (Arthur Rosenberg) was apparently killed by Cord a number of decades before over a business deal. As a means to both covertly control and keep tabs on George, Cord paid for his college education and set him up as the boss of a boat shop, which Bone also incidentally works at. Despite the fact that George is totally petrified of his tycoon boss, Cutter goes ahead and steals an invitation for a big party at Cord's house so that he and Bone can sneak in and confront the supposed killer. True to his pathetically passive nature, Bone attempts to talk Cutter out of even going to the party, stating, "Alex, what's this gonna prove? It's not like it's gonna change anything. It's not gonna bring her back. It's not gonna take away our guilt. It's not gonna make you whole again, you know that. Nothing's ever gonna do that," but the hardcore headcase vet merely responds by suggestively placing a pistol in his suit jacket and saying "I, uh... I gotta go, I go." Needless to say, not unlike the antihero of Sam Peckinpah's final masterpiece *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974), Cutter is on a suicide mission of sorts as he has lost his beloved and has nothing left to lose. Assumedly out of a sense of obligation to both his best friend and dead lover, Bone reluctantly decides to join Cutter at the party, which proves to be a true shit show. Indeed, not long after joining the party, Bone is captured and beat up by Cord's bodyguards while Cutter rides around the large property on a stolen horse like a deranged bloodlusting berserker high on mushrooms. Upon meeting and talking with Cord, Bone encounters a seemingly reasonable man who states he is willing to discuss with Cutter the supposed "fantasy" that he has created in his head, stating, "I understand he's a veteran. Well, I've been in the war. I know what it does to some men. I'm willing to talk to your friend if you think it will do any good. Do you think it will do any good?" Not long after, Cutter fittingly crashes the horse he is riding through Cord's office window and receives a fatal wound via a broken piece of glass in the process. While holding Cutter as he is dying in his arms, Bone stares at Cord and states with a certain visceral intensity, "It was you," to which the tycoon shockingly and quite mockingly replies with a certain sickly self-assured arrogance, "What if it was?," and then proceeds to put on the same sunglasses that he wore the night the Duran girl was murdered. In a symbolic act where the two broken 'half-men' become one full whole as men in their dual vengeance against the man that killed the woman they both loved, Bone wraps his hand around Cutter's hand and pulls the trigger of the gun that his lifeless metacarpus is caressing in what is ultimately a fittingly ambiguous ending.

While *Cutter's Way* concludes on a somewhat ambiguous note with Bone

shooting *Cord*, *auter Passer* shot a sort of epilogue for the film that he never used, or as he explained in a July 15, 1981 interview featured in *The Soho News* with Jonathan Rosenbaum when asked if it was possible that the protagonist could get away with killing the rich tycoon, "Actually, I shot what happens after that. He walks out of this huge mansion, and it's just before sunset; and he goes faster and faster and finally begins to run through the trees. And there's a scene on his sailboat, which he lives on. he's sailing out of the harbor, and he hears a laugh that sounds like Cutter's laugh. He stops and looks at where it came from, and he sees there are a few sailors on a small cutter. And one of them looks like Cutter; he's drinking a beer. And he laughs again. At that moment, Bone almost hits the coast and the Coast Guard; he almost brushes against this huge boat. But he avoids the accident, and soon gets on the open sea, and sails away. They very much wanted this ending, but it took away something. You know, this film is about pulling a trigger — what it takes — and we felt, the writer, producer, and I, that this would be just a tag that would dissipate the emotional impact of that last shot, and so we pleaded with them, and they finally agreed." While I find this potential ending intriguing, I am glad that *Passer* went the more arthouse route and left the film the way it is. After all, if I have any serious complaints about *Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver*, it is that I think it should have concluded right after *Travis Bickle's* bloody shootout and not with the somewhat absurd revelation that the deranged antihero has been hailed as a local hero.

While it could certainly be argued that the film has elements that can interpreted as everything from a quasi-Marxist critique of the evils of capitalist oligarchs to a pessimistic Buchananian Paleoconservative portrait of the social, cultural, and racial decline of the United States in an age where both sides of the pseudo-dichotomous American political system support globalization and disfranchisement of white lumpenproles, there is no doubt that *Cutter's Way* would never be made in Hollywood today simply because of its many moments of darkly humorous (and simply delightful) racial insensitivity. For example, early on in the film in his very first scene, Cutter pisses off a group of negroes at a bar after loudly stating in regard to a colored friend, "And last but certainly least, is Raustus, the court nigger." Instead of cucking out and denying he said the word, Cutter takes things a little further and remarks to the group of angry negroes that are surrounding him, "What? Do I detect some tension? Oh. Come now, gentlemen. It's a simple matter of semantics. What are we white, well-intentioned liberals supposed to call you cats these days, huh? Blacks? Coloreds? Negroes? Darkies?," thereupon eloquently mocking the legacy of so-called civil rights movement, racial equality, and white liberal ethno-masochistic do-gooder bullshit in the process. Of course, it would not be a proper California film without Cutter making some rather scathing remarks in regard to so-called Hispanics and their American injun brothers. Indeed, while enjoying the sights and sounds of a multicultural Mission of Santa Barbara parade, Cutter declares during a moment of

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great exuberance with unrivaled dipsomaniacal eloquence, "Look, our glorious past, the Mission of Santa Barbara. Happy padres, happy Indians. The blessings of the white man. Wiped out in less than 200 years by disease and forced labor. You can still get one to clean up your kitchen or you know, park your car. They died with Christ's blessing. Happy corpses, each and every one." A natural comedian that knows how to correlate miscegenation with bestiality without even literally saying it, Cutter attempts to squash his wife's worries by telling her when she asks him what he has been doing all night, "Minding my own business. Doing a little research. Oh, and I conducted a modest sociological experiment. Picked up several hitchhikers. Yeah. An Afro-American homosexual and two mestizas with a domesticated simian. Black cat and the two mez chicks weren't bad, but don't ever orgy with a pet monkey. The little fuckers bite." As his rather hilarious remarks and domestic violence against crazy women demonstrates, Cutter is, for better or worse, unequivocally the Jim Goad of disgruntled Vietnam War veterans.

Maybe it is the physical appearance of the characters, but to me Cutter's Way acts as a sort of unhinged cinematic requiem-cum-Ragnarök to American working-class whites—the real people that built America—that had their lives destroyed as a result of the largely Judaic and bourgeois counterculture movement, which introduced this forsaken (and clearly unwitting) generation to hard drugs, pacifism, miscegenation, negrophilia, and other garbage that the same sort of kosher culture-distorters peddled in the Weimar Republic. Indeed, when I see the characters of the film, I am reminded of my mother's hippie junky brother who had his skull crushed in a car wreck and the various uncles my ex-girlfriend had that either committed suicide or overdosed on heroin. Probably for different reasons than he intended them, the film bleeds Austrian mischling Hugo von Hofmannsthal's words, "The weariness of long-forgotten peoples hangs heavy on my eyelids." Of course, it is only fitting that Cutter's Way was an abject commercial failure as it was created in the same Hollywood that got wealthy romanticizing hippie hedonism with films like *Easy Rider* (1969), which is a deceptively culturally corrosive cinematic work that probably inspired more unintentional drug overdoses and hick-hating than any other. While the villain of the film is obviously supposed to be some sort of stereotypical rich WASP villain—a group that was already in steady decline at the time that was being rapidly replaced by members of the chosen tribe—I think it would be more historically accurate to see him as a sort of Bert Schneider figure or, at the very least, one of the Sackler brothers of Purdue Pharma infamy. As Emil Cioran once wrote in his classic text *A Short History of Decay* (1949), "A nation dies when it no longer has the strength to invent new gods, new myths, new absurdities; its idols blur and vanish; it seeks them elsewhere, and feels alone before unknown monsters. This too is decadence. But if one of these monsters prevails, another world sets itself in motion, crude, dim, intolerant, until it exhausts its

god and emancipates itself from him; for man is free—and sterile—only in the interval when the gods die; slave—and creative—only in the interval when, as tyrants, they flourish.” Undoubtedly, the Christian god is dead in the world of *Cutter’s Way* but an “unknown monster” certainly seems to be a hidden ominous force that encourages a sort of collective nihilism where love is an impossibility, passivity a virtue, sex and drug addiction the driving force in life, and procreation a sin. Needless to say, it is no coincidence that when people like the eponymous protagonist of Passer’s film were losing limbs and their minds in the Vietnam War, the Bert Schneiders of the world were calling these drafted soldiers “baby killers” while sitting back and smoking weed, banging shiksa sluts, aiding and abetting Black Panther Party killers like Huey P. Newton, and producing comic agitprop trash like *Hearts and Minds* (1974).

Notably, *Cutter’s Way* is infamous for being the victim of internal politics at United Artists, which just suffered the virtual studio-sinking blockbuster bomb of Michael Cimino’s epic in auteur egotism *Heaven’s Gate* (1980) also starring Jeff Bridges (in fact, somewhat ironically, the studio apparently finally agreed to fund the film after Bridges got on board because they liked him due to his dailies from Cimino’s film). Although championed by various prominent film reviewers, UA spent virtual nil on advertising and promotion for the film, though, as a result of various positive reviews, the studio eventually decided to re-release it in 1981 under its United Artists Classics division and enter it into various film festivals under a new name (indeed, *Cutter and Bone* was later changed to the current title). Not unsurprisingly, auteur Passer, who seems to regard it as his greatest film, was left exceedingly embittered by the entire ordeal and stated in an article entitled ‘Passer’s Way’ featured in the July/August 1981 edition of *Film Comment* magazine, “You can assassinate movies as you can assassinate people. I think UA murdered the film. Or at least they tried to murder it.” Featuring deceptively warm and intoxicating cinematography by Jordan Cronenweth (*Altered States*, *Blade Runner*) and a characteristically idiosyncratically resplendent score by deranged musical genius Jack Nitzsche (*Cruising*, *Starman*), *Cutter’s Way* is probably the most criminally underrated project for every single artist involved in it, not least of all actors John Heard and Lisa Eichhorn. Of course, to quote the titular antihero of the film, “Great art demands a great audience, you know what I mean?,” hence the film’s failure in the early 1980s when *Star Wars* twaddle and mindless Spielbergian fantasy was vogue. While *Cutter’s Way* is a positively and patently pessimistic flick set in a world where heroes are nonexistent and virtually everything about life seems worthless, it does have one very important message in regard to the need to take a stand in life despite it seemingly pointless and futile. Indeed, as Oswald Spengler once wrote in his classic short text *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1932), “We are born into this time and must bravely follow the path to the destined end. There is no other way. Our duty is to hold on to the lost position, without

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hope, without rescue, like that Roman soldier whose bones were found in front of a door in Pompeii, who, during the eruption of Vesuvius, died at his post because they forgot to relieve him. That is greatness. That is what it means to be a thoroughbred. The honorable end is the one thing that can not be taken from a man." Indeed, the eponymous antihero of *Cutter's Way* might have been a deranged drunkard and aggressively nihilistic shithead, but he at least died with something resembling honor, which is something that cannot be said of most people from the dreaded baby boomer generation. In short, forget emotionally counterfeit bourgeois bullshit like Hebraic hack Lawrence 'Star Wars' Kasdan's *The Big Chill* (1983), *Cutter's Way* is the ultimate 'feel-bad' boomer film as it does the seemingly impossible by redeeming the boomers, at least the forgotten white working-class ones.

-Ty E

ARREBATO

Iván Zulueta (1980)

There are many great works of reflexive cinema in respect to “movies-about-movies” and “films-within-films”, including such diverse cinematic works as Fellini’s *8 ½* (1963), Fassbinder’s *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971), Truffaut’s *Day for Night* (1973), Watkin’s *Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), Burton’s *Ed Wood* (1994), Schlingensief’s *The 120 Days of Bottrop* (1997), and Kaufman’s *Terror Firmer* (1999), but none of these works quite compare to the stark, angst-ridden essence of the utterly unrivaled Spanish arthouse flick *Arrebato* (1980) aka *Rapture* directed by Ivan Zulueta; a metaphysical quasi-vampire flick where film itself (or in literal terms, a Super 8 camera) is the life-draining monster. Barely acknowledged upon its original release due to its pathetically brief theatrical run (lasting only a couple days at a mere Barcelona theater) and still relatively unknown today (despite obtaining a steady cult following over the past three decades), *Arrebato* was an absolute commercial failure that would ultimately lead to auteur Ivan Zulueta being restricted to the ignoble bottomless pit of television and movie posters (creating art for films by Pedro Almodóvar), henceforth never directing a single feature-length film again, which is most unfortunate when one considers the ingenious and wantonly intimate artistic tenacity he displayed with the formative work. Originally around 3 hours in length as a workprint, Zulueta decided to shorten *Arrebato* by 30 minutes, and with another 40 minutes of the feature being subsequently cut against his will, the film that exists today, although seemingly taintless, is hardly a director’s approved cut. Fundamentally, *Arrebato* is an avant-garde arthouse film disguised (quite nicely) as a ‘horror’ flick that is altogether cognizant of genre conventions yet wallows in cinematic experimentation, as it was designed especially with cinephiles and filmmakers in mind as indicated by its less than flattering portrayal of the more calamitous side of cinematic obsession where, in a similar vein to David Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* (1983), the contrived reality of the virtual image perpetually replaces reality itself. As the character José states in a matter-of-fact (but in reality, totally delusional) manner at the beginning of *Arrebato*, “It’s not that I like cinema...It’s cinema that likes me.” Like the steady dose of sex and drugs consumed by the three main characters in the film, cinema becomes a baleful, life-shattering addiction that steadily eats away at one’s soul. One only has to glance at the pitiful, frivolous, and platitudinous pop-culture-obsessed postmodern movies of philistine filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, Kevin Smith, and Eli Roth to observe this relatively recent phenomenon progenerated by vaudeville and eventually Hollywood, but unlike the would-be-cool works of these three stilted middle-aged fanboys, *Arrebato* is a staunchly visionary and unprecedented expression of refined (as opposed to revoltingly regurgitated) style.

At the beginning of *Arrebato*, the viewer is introduced to the character of José

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Sirgado (Eusebio Poncela), a hack horror director who is on the verge of completing his latest work; an overdue sequel to his debut vampire film. José lives and breathes celluloid as expressed by the many movie posters that act as wallpaper for his apartment and by his unmitigated ecstasy when he drives by movie theaters (playing works ranging from Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* to Don Coscarelli's *Phantasm*) as if performing some sort of sacred religious ritual, yet despite all of his film fetishism, he is not exactly the most gifted auteur. Upon reaching home after a relieving day from work, José is bombarded with potent remnants from his past: the unexpected presence of his ex-girlfriend Ana (Cecilia Roth) lying on his bed in an opium-induced trance and a mailed package containing audio tapes and processed Super 8 film reels from his long lost protégé Pedro P. (Will More); an erratic, epicene young man suffering from celluloid-obsessed neurosis. José and Pedro act as dichotomous symbols of the two archetypal extremes pertaining to filmmakers: the former being an unambitious hireling who is too afraid to take chances as a filmmaker and the latter being a diehard maverick auteur that will do anything to realize his ever evolving vision as a creator of celluloid art. While listening to the tapes and watching the film footage sent to him by Pedro, José relives the bizarre bisexual love triangle (with Ana and Pedro) of decadent drug abuse, soulless (yet utterly erotic) sex, and cine-mania that consumed and almost destroyed his life a year ago or so. As *Arrebato* progresses, Pedro and his masturbatory experimental auteur pieces begin to become the lead character(s), as a sort of an out-of-control, all-consuming monster on the brink of self-annihilation. Like the psychotic and suicidal anti-hero Claudio from Alberto Cavallone's *Blue Movie* (1978), Pedro has a critical need to fulfill a personal internal void and he uses the creative, pseudo-godlike power of filmmaking to do so. As he explains via audio recording, "All my life, back then, was like a huge wank without cum. Although I, deep down, thought that was to come. How far was I from understanding the sense, the function, the part, the game, that making cinema represents." Indeed, Pedro's foremost goal with cinema is to reach the ultimate "high", "climax", "transcendence", and "rapture" (hence, the title of the film) and he firmly believes that, like a drug addict in denial and despite the deterioration of his physical body and voice (as expressed by his new raspy 'mad scientist' voice on the audio tapes), that his celluloid alchemy is truly messianic. Like all great auteur filmmakers (not that he is great but his films are certainly interesting) and unlike lazy filmmaker lackey José, Pedro is a dynamic and domineering eccentric who is never completely satisfied with his art, hence his monotonous productivity, increasingly nonexistent social life and dwindling health. Always a more dedicated and intransigent filmmaker than his filmic father figure José, it is finally Pedro who has the last laugh at both men's expense (which, unsurprisingly, the latter is happy to pay).

Displaying a true sense of restraint and humility, Ivan Zulueta stated of *Arrebato*, "It was not my intention to make an avant-garde, elitist film, because

my deepest wish is to communicate with my audience the most intensely I can. I know this picture may be disquieting and bewildering at first, but that was absolutely unintentional on my behalf." More captivating and provocative than Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) and over-and-above the psychosexual horrors of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), *Arrebato* is indubitably in a class by itself as a work of lucid and uncompromising cinema, thus the fact that Zulueta never got to direct another feature is nothing short of a tragedy; at least as far as film history is concerned. As an unrepentant cinephile always looking for the next cinematic high, I can honestly say I cannot think of another time a film has resonated with me so thoroughly and penetratingly as *Arrebato* – a rare and singular work about cinephilia that also manages to be a landmark cinematic achievement in itself – that is simultaneously hypnotic, erotic, distressing, and exotic yet startlingly intimate. Forget J.J. Abrams' groveling love letter to Steven Spielberg, *Arrebato* is an unfeigned Super 8 tribute to cinema and the art of filmmaking.

-Ty E

THE ORPHANAGE
THE ORPHANAGE

J. A. Bayona (2007)

There is nothing more terrifying than a child. The evidence lies in every single classic horror film such as *The Shining*, *IT*, *Poltergeist*, and last but not least, *The Exorcist*. The idea of something so innocent and pure carves way for the greatest achievements of horror in marble. Like the latest Spanish fantasy horror films, this one sets the bar even higher. The semi-recent *Pans Labyrinth* was the perfect foreign specimen. That film alone, proved that Spain has a more-than capable film industry and gave adults a wonderful fairy tale. With Del Toro presenting this film, I can safely say that this film might hold its own against *Pans Labyrinth*. Laura is a thirty something year old who bought her childhood orphanage with her husband and child in hopes of re-opening the orphanage for disabled children. When her son finds out he is HIV-positive and an orphan, he confides in his imaginary friends attached to the dark past of the orphanage. When her son disappear without a trace, she must solve the riddles left by the children to uncover the truth about the orphanage. Plot in a nut-shell; A headstrong woman tells the dad that he is no longer needed just to exercise the all-feminist motherly rights. We've seen it many times in film. The father figure is just a plot device and has no real involvement, whether it's work or a scandalous affair. This preposterous feminist front for horror films is the face of new horror. The survivors (if any) are all women who have been pushed to the edge of sanity. To illustrate my example, take a look at modern horror. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* *The Descent* *Frontiere(s)* *Inside* *The Ruins* *Prom Night* *Feast* *Alien VS. Predator* My list could go on. Point is, this facade is just the humble beginnings of a new style of horror. Survival instincts are out the door. There is no more manly lumberjack saving the day with an axe, the throne belongs to Tegan and Sara fans. Regardless of the misandric beliefs in today's horror, the film boils down to the formula of a failed American psychological horror film but with more "zazz". New horror in cultures present a large obstacle. When Japanese horror began to get noticed for it's originality, the style of film never developed and it soon became clear that even the Intuitive Japs were running out of ideas and recycling ideas and sequels. Just as every culture has done before that, Spanish horror films are beginning to dull down. *The Devil's Backbone* was damn near the same film as *Pans Labyrinth* and now Juan Antonio Bayona is starting to mold into a Del Toro copycat. Expect a copied and uninspired ending; albeit it still maintains emotion. Loaded with more chilling moments than your average horror film, It is clear that this is not average. *The Orphanage* manages to be a charming tale of separation anxiety and a woman's scorn towards ghastly ghosties. I was very glad to see a lack of jump-out scares and that they relied on tension being created by a horrifying baghead costume. It's not as beautiful as

Pans Labyrinth or as aesthetically pleasing, but it fits in a nicer niche for scares.
-mAQ

10 TO MIDNIGHT
10 TO MIDNIGHT

J. Lee Thompson (1983)

While it can certainly be argued that an immaculate exploitation film is an innately oxymoronic concept, some fucked flicks, not unlike porn sluts or fast food joints, are certainly better than others, even those produced by the fine kosher smut-peddlers of Cannon Films. Indeed, despite my increasingly disillusionment with the value of virtually all forms of trash cinema, I recently saw two exploitation films, Gary Sherman's *Vice Squad* (1982) and J. Lee Thompson's *10 to Midnight* (1983), that reminded me that sometimes you need the cinematic equivalent of a big sloppy juicy back-alley blowjob from a cheap worthless whore. While both films involve a deranged white villain that butchers wanton white bitches with a certain penetratingly uncanny tenacity, these sexually unsound murderers have quite different motivations and pathologies. Whereas *Vice Squad* features the grand delight of featuring Wings Hauser portraying a violently unhinged pimp that mutilates the genitals of mainly gutter-dwelling white whores (but also the occasional bumbling negro male), *10 to Midnight* features a terminally pissed-off proto-incel of sorts that uses a knife as a sort of compensatory phallus against beautiful young babes that dared to make a mockery of his irreparably broken masculinity. Needless to say, the latter is easily the better of the two films, which largely has to do with Gene Davis' performance as the killer and director J. Lee Thompson's surprisingly competent directing abilities. While surely a hack of sorts that was responsible for directing such lame franchise sequel films as *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes* (1972) and *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* (1973), he also directed some quite notable cinematic works ranging from the WWII epic *The Guns of Navarone* (1961) to the campy Shirley MacLaine whore show *What a Way to Go!* (1964). Certainly more importantly, Thompson has demonstrated a talent for horror and thriller cinema with an inordinate sort of pathos and perversity, including the original *Cape Fear* (1962) starring Gregory Peck and Robert Mitchum, the spiritually incestuous *The Reincarnation of Peter Proud* (1975), and the slightly underrated canuck slasher flick *Happy Birthday to Me* (1981), among others. While I am not sure if I would cite *10 to Midnight* as the director's single greatest achievement, it is unequivocally his most tasteless and, in turn, wildly entertaining film and surely a notable accomplishment in that the filmmaker only agreed to direct the film the night before shooting began after the original director was apparently let go (notably, Thompson previously worked with lead Bronson on films like *St. Ives* (1976) and *The White Buffalo* (1977)). A sort of super sod slasher on steroids that is big on the sensual and sensational in a largely unabashedly morally retarded fashion, the film oftentimes feels like it is set in the same sexually sociopathic universe as William Friedkin's killer cocksucker classic *Cruising* (1980) as both are pleasantly politically incorrect flicks featuring gay serial killers that

never capitulate to bourgeois bitch taste. Additionally, both films star Eugene M. Davis—the somewhat lesser known (and seemingly gayer) younger brother of actor turned AIDS victim Brad Davis (*Midnight Express*, *Querelle*)—and surely benefit from it (notably, lapsed teen idol Leif Garrett also auditioned for the role in *10 to Midnight* and luckily he did not get it).

While I am not sure if Davis was also sexually abused by both of his parents like his brother Brad apparently was, he certainly does demonstrate a seemingly innate proficiency for portraying patently perverse characters (which probably explains his fairly uneven and rather limited acting career that includes roles ranging from a virtual man-whore in Roger Vadim's obscure *Night Games* (1980) to Nicolas Winding Refn's somewhat underrated *Fear X* (2003)). Indeed, whereas Davis portrayed a bitchy leather-clad quasi-tranny hooker in *Cruising* that surely could never pass for a woman despite how unconventionally 'pretty' he is, he's especially believable as an autistic psychopath that likes making dirty phone calls and killing bitchy cunts that won't give up their cunt despite the fact that he seems about as straight as a circle. Made long before the LGBT monster shot its viral load on unhollywood, the film features what might be described as an 'ambiguously gay' serial killer that not only leaves queer porno mags on his toilet but who was also clearly modeled after Richard Speck who infamously gleefully spent his prison years as the tranny whore of a negro cocaine dealer (notably, this was not the first film inspired by the Speck murders as indicated by the curious exploitation flick *Naked Massacre* (1976) directed by Denis Héroux and starring German arthouse stars Mathieu Carrière and Eva Mattes). Just like Speck, the killer targets a group of nubile nurses. Unlike Speck, the killer receives quick and swift justice for his less than gentlemanly crimes. Despite being a reasonably handsome guy with a muscular body and sculpted physique, the killer is a glaring creep that could not smash a gash if he had a hundred horny ovulating hos begging to be banged standing before him as he lacks a certain organic masculine heterosexual assertiveness, hence his compensatory need to penetrate women with sharp inanimate objects while in the nude. Rather curiously, aside from the female lead, most of the ill-fated chicks that the psychosexual killer kills with his virtual metal prick are hardly likeable ladies, thus adding to his incel cred. Not surprisingly, the film was supposed to feature more homoerotic content, including a scene where the killer is hit on by a flaming fagola and another where Bronson was supposed to wrestle a very naked Gene Davis (also, not surprisingly, Bronson was apparently not up for grappling with an unclad pretty boy). While the film is not quite as hyper homoerotic as *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985) as far as 1980s genre cinema goes, there is no doubt that the killer is an involuntary member of the pink team, hence his miserably misguided homo-cidal rage.

Maybe it is simply because he has a less than aesthetically pleasing Asiatic appearance (he had Lipka Tatar roots), overall lack of martial charisma, and/or

hardly intimidating stature/physique, but I have never been particularly fond of Charles Bronson, even if I can superficially appreciate the sentiments of a film like *Death Wish* (1974). Since I can't really back Bronson or the sort of philistine films he is best known for, I found it to the great benefit of *10 to Midnight* that his shamelessly corrupt and callous cop character is fairly unlikable one. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the character is so intrinsically unlikable that, in the end, I found myself rooting for the psychotic serial killer in all of his ambiguously gay naked glory. In fact, it even somehow comes as a genuine great shock at the end of the film when Bronson gets so high on his own unhinged self-righteousness that he puts a bullet in the brain of the mad muscular twink when he is not threat after being apprehended shortly after he massacres some nurses à la Richard Speck. In short, *10 to Midnight* is a surprisingly sick (not to mention simultaneously gritty yet aesthetically slick) flick that some lame spiritually castrated LGBT film theorist could fairly easily argue has an identifiable anti-sod subtext in a sort of subtly hysterical homo-hating fashion to the point where one might believe it inspired a brief trend of fag-bashing in Kentucky. As a film drenched in gratuitous violence and nudity—and, quite nicely, combines the two—it is also the sort of the movie that would entice Gaspar Noé, even if it does not go quite as far as Gerald Kargl's endlessly entrancing serial killer fever dream *Angst* (1983) in terms of plunging the viewer's mind into the deep dark abyss that is the psyche of a raging renegade aberosexual.

Warren Stacy (Gene Davis) is an undeniably handsome yet strikingly autistic young man that is an abject failure when it comes to the ladies and he knows it, but now he has decided to take revenge against the wanton whores, sidewalk slags, and conniving cum-dumps that will not even give him a meager crumb of pussy. Indeed, pathologically obsessed (as indicated by spastic fragmented flashbacks that are inter-spliced with shots of his very feminine grooming habits) with a bimbo bitch named Betty (June Gilbert) that dared to throw coffee in his face after some sort of failed romantic advance, wayward Warren carries out a revenge plan that involves murdering both the girl and her beau at a local park on a nice sunny day. In what is surely symbolic of his sexual perversion, Warren kills Betty while he is completely naked and—rather fittingly—she also happens to be completely unclad due to being interrupted while in the middle of fucking her boyfriend in a car. Due to leaving behind no forensic evidence due to being naked (hence his reasoning behind his completely bare butchery) and creating the perfect alibi by talking to some bitchy babes at a movie theater, escaping throw a bathroom window unnoticed to carry out the murders, and then making his way back to the movie theater before the movie ends so the same bitchy babes can testify that he was there that evening, Warren is a fairly clever unhinged chap and that really pisses off hardened cynical cop Leo Kessler (Charles Bronson) who knows a guilty pervert when he sees one. As a broody old bastard that is clearly approaching retirement, Kessler clearly has

little time for bureaucratic bullshit and a whiny weirdo like Warren proves to really get his goat, thus inevitably leading to an intense showdown between the two quite different (yet arguably equally, if dissimilarly, socially obnoxious) loner types. Indeed, when Warren comes under his radar, Kessler immediately knows that the agile autist is unequivocally guilty but he has to struggle with the annoying complication of working with a young idealistic cop named Paul McAnn (Andrew Stevens)—a handsome yet hopelessly normal young stud—that sincerely believes in law and order and does everything completely by the book as if his life depended on it. In fact, aside from catching bad dudes and bringing them to justice, Kessler doesn't really seem to care about anything, including his own unconventionally beautiful student nurse daughter Laurie Kessler (Lisa Eilbacher) who, rather conveniently in terms of the film's plot, is acquainted with Warren's victims. Needless to say, when his young partner Paul becomes romantically interested in his daughter Laurie, Kessler also does not seem to give a shit about that, but luckily wacko Warren eventually develops an obsessive interest with the police detective's daughter due to being constantly hounded by him to an almost fetishistic degree, as if the crusty old cop also has his own set of subconscious perversions that he is attempting to compensate for. Needless to say, the film concludes with Warren attempting to butcher Laurie while Kessler and Paul try to save her while simultaneously trying to bring down the ambiguously gay naked killer. Thankfully, despite its flaws, *10 to Midnight* is not a film that pussies out in the end and instead closes on a shockingly politically incorrect note that reminds one that a single bullet can do so much more for humanity than a Talmudic Kafkaesque legal bureaucracy where a sort of neo-Sanhedrin reigns that caters to criminals and debases victims.

While crazed closet-case Warren Stacy is indubitably a bad dude that indeed deserves the bullet that ruptures his gray matter, I find it hard to not be at least superficially sympathetic to the savagely psychotic little sod as he is not totally delusional as clearly depicted in the film's deplorable dystopian realm of intrinsically irrational gynocentric terror where any dumb cunt with a room temperature IQ feels free to shame and debase any unfortunate male that does something she might find even the slightest bit unfavorable. In that sense, the film is strangely prophetic for what amounts to a seemingly immaculately polished piece of celluloid trash. In fact, Warren is certainly more sympathetic than, say, hopelessly hapless hapa incel messiah Elliot Rodger—a spoiled yet seriously self-loathing victim of miscegenation that, on top of being autistic, resented the fact his mom was Asian—who, unlike the film's protagonist, did not have enough testicular fortitude to even try ask a girl out yet felt he was somehow entitled to premium grade Europid pussy because his white daddy bought him a fancy Bimmer. Undoubtedly, if Warren simply started hanging out at the sort of savage gay clubs featured in *Cruising*, Jacques Scandolari's *New York City Inferno* (1978), or Fred Halsted's *A Night at Halsted's* (1982), all of his problems would be solved as he

would have an outlet for his sadistic sexual violence and he would not even have to really deal with dreaded women again outside the dreary dames from his lame office job. In short, Warren is, not unlike many gay serial killers that include John Wayne Gacy and Jeffrey Dahmer, among countless others, a pathetic victim of his own self-denial and self-deceptions. Despite being handsome and in good physical shape, Warren inspires horripilation in women because of his intrinsically repugnant personality traits and complete and utter lack of instinctual male heterosexual qualities. Of course, the irony of *10 to Midnight* is that, despite the filmmaker's best intent, Warren is no less repugnant than some of the women he kills, thus underscoring the all-around decidedly dysfunctional nature of the sexes in the post-sexual liberation America where many misguided young people feel completely obligated to embody some shallow (and oftentimes soul-destroying, especially for women) sexual (pseudo)ideal as if pornography and MTV are virtual guides to healthy living. After all, a fiercely fucked freak like Warren would probably feel less inclined to act homicidally as a closeted homo had he grown up in a pre-counterculture environment where there was less pressure on a man to prove his sexual prowess and penetrate as many worthless thots as possible, but I digress.

Undoubtedly, one of the most potent aspects of *10 to Midnight* is the fact that the killer dispatches his victims whilst completely *au naturel*, which certainly has a particularly primal quality that transcends the sheer banality of serial killer genre convention. As to why unclad killing is interesting, degenerate Nietzschean anarchist Georges Bataille made the interesting argument in his text *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (1957) that, "Stripping naked is the decisive action. Nakedness offers a contrast to self-possession, to discontinuous existence, in other words. It is a state of communication revealing a quest for a possible continuance of being beyond the confines of the self. Bodies open out to a state of continuity through secret channels that give us a feeling of obscenity. Obscenity is our name for the uneasiness which upsets the physical state associated with self-possession, with the possession of a recognized and stable individuality. Through the activity of organs in a flow of coalescence and renewal, like the ebb and flow of waves surging into one another, the self is dispossessed, and so completely that most creatures in a state of nakedness, for nakedness is symbolic of this dispossession and heralds it, will hide; particularly if the erotic art follows, consummating it. Stripping naked is seen in civilizations where the act has full significance if not as a simulacrum of the act of killing, at least as an equivalent shorn of gravity. In antiquity the destitution (or destruction) fundamental to eroticism was felt strongly and justified linking the act of love with sacrifice [...] I must emphasize that the female partner in eroticism was seen as the victim, the male as the sacrifice, both during the consummation losing themselves in the continuity established by the first destructive act." Undoubtedly, the way Bataille describes simple nakedness also makes it seem strangely comparable to

the art of bullfighting which, rather fittingly, is an obsession of whacked-out Warren's to the point where he has learned Spanish in tribute to his (assumedly second) favorite form of ritual slaughter. Indeed, Warren is the sort of guy that would probably jerk-off to Francesco Rosi's artful documentary *The Moment of Truth* (1965). Bullfighting aside, Warren's acts of unclad killing certainly have a ritualistic quality and ultimately betray his reputation as an insufferably uptight autist, as if stark-naked slaughters act as the sole relief he has from a loser life of involuntary celibacy and latent homosexuality. Needless to say, such a fucked fellow would never stop killing, hence why he grisly end almost seems mandatory, if not overkill.

Being what is essentially a glorified exploitation film on sleekly stylized sleaze steroids, *10 to Midnight* does suffer from its fair share of problems, namely its tasteless tacked-on 'good guy badge/bad ass vigilante' ending where Bronson pulls-off a degenerate *Death Wish*-esque dispatching of the villain so that the audience can feel self-satisfied that the closeted cocksucker killer is as dead as Jeffrey Epstein's infamous libido. Indeed, in the end, deranged broken boy killer Warren—naked and pulsating like a thoroughly aroused cock that is about to blow a load that is so massive that it would impregnate the entire world with visceral hatred for vaginas—goes on a bitchy mocking rant to Bronson boy about how he is going to evade justice by using his mental illness as an excuse, there-upon inspiring the already-quite-infuriated no-bullshit cop to unload copper in his brain. Seeing as that, by the end of the film, Warren has completely transformed into a virtual modern-day Berserker—high on his own visceral hatred and seemingly immune to all attacks via his unclad body—and lost all contact with rationality and reality, it would seem more likely that he would fight to the death instead of allowing himself to be apprehended by his arch-nemesis. After all, his freedom and, in turn, life is over and such an inherently insane and individualistic individual would not fare too well inside any sort of government institution—be it a prison, mental institution, or otherwise. After all, as *Bronze Age Pervert*—a curiously shadowy and ambiguously gay individual that loves buff unclad bros—wrote in his manifesto *Bronze Age Mindset* (2018), "A beautiful death at the right time is the only key to understanding a life, its only hidden 'meaning.' It is a beautiful death to die after accomplishing a great feat for the glory of one's city, family and for the gods, but it's greater still to die in one's prime, at the height of your powers and at the acme of their discharge. A beautiful death in youth is a great thing, to leave behind a beautiful body, and the best study of this pursuit you find in the novels of Mishima, a real connoisseur." In short, Warren could have gone out like a sort of crazed killer cracker Mishima but instead he dies pathetically like a low-level negro gang-banger, but of course not many films tend to glorify the deaths of gay serial killers.

Notably, the life and death of the film's first murder victim, Betty (June Gilbert), somewhat parallels that of failed tragic actress Christa Helm who, not

unlike the fictional character, left behind a detailed personal love diary of sorts regarding her personal sexual and romantic consequences, hence why some believe she was murdered to cover up certain unsavory facts about sleazy bigwig Hollywood types. Despite dating powerful men like Joe Namath and Warren Beatty, Helm suffered a rather brief and forgettable acting career that included a small debut role in successful porn auteur Gerard Damiano's non-porn horror turd *Legacy of Satan* (1974) and tiny cameos on tiresome hit TV shows like *Starsky and Hutch* and *Wonder Woman*. Immersed in the darker side of Hollywood, Helm also lived with porn auteur Jonas Middleton (*Through the Looking Glass*) and even apparently co-wrote the script for his second fuck flick *Illusions of a Lady* (1974), but quit the production when the filmmaker opted to make it a full-on hardcore film. While all this might seem like barely-related frivolous trivia in relation to *10 to Midnight*, it all ultimately adds further context to film's overall malefic mystique and exceedingly evil essence, as if this virtual glorified exploitation film is really much more as a semi-esoteric expression of the post-counter culture zeitgeist and superlatively sick collective unconscious of Hollywood during that time. Of course, this explains the popularity of actors like Charles Bronson—a symbol of atavistic vengeance against such degeneracy—even if he physically resembled a sort of half-bourgeois Charles Manson. The fact that lead Gene Davis' brother previously starred in Fassbinder's S&M sod swansong *Querelle* (1982)—a film that, despite its certain camp qualities, is imbued with a sort of sexually apocalyptic essence that was clearly influenced by the Todestrieb-inclined spirit of its forsaken auteur—only a year before further confirms the hopelessly collectively necrotizing state of the Occident at that time.

Dubious ancestry aside, Bronson is ultimately a sad symbol of reactionary boomer impotence and nothing more, hence how Hollywood went from churning out films like *Cruising* and *10 to Midnight* to *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and *Call Me by Your Name* (2017) in a mere couple decades as homo-hating is no longer vogue and homos have been homogenized enough to make for sound subject matter in mid-brow films for sentimental grandmothers. In a dying civilization where even a fictional Warren Stacy seems more sympathetic to a real-life Elliot Rodger or Alek Minassian—two misbegotten creatures that, unlike the film character, did not even exhibit a warped masculinity as they are both devoid of masculine qualities altogether—and their impotent perennially blue-balled “Beta Uprising” campaigns, the film is ultimately a delightfully dejecting reminder that things can always get worse and that—no matter the circumstances—there's few things more patently loathsome than a man that cannot procure pussy of some sort. After all, Warren Stacy might have been a raging closest queen with insane standards, but there are always fat chicks with fat asses!

-Ty E

STREET TRASH

J. Michael Muro (1987)

Originally visualized as a 16mm short film directed by J. Michael Muro, *Street Trash* eventually bloomed into one of the greatest masterpieces of high-class-trash cinema. Showing his commitment to capturing the less-than-flattering examples of the American dream, *Street Trash* writer/producer Ray Frumkes stated regarding how he developed the film's script, "I wrote it to democratically offend every group on the planet, and as a result the youth market embraced it as a renegade work, and it played midnight shows." Indeed, leaving no group unscathed, *Street Trash* is a wildly creative indictment of the daft lifestyles (from castrated hobos to humdrum cops) that play imperative roles in the culturally-mongrelized American way. It was no revelation from me to find out that perverted Hollywood blockbuster director Bryan Singer (who had a lawsuit brought against him for taking unnecessary nude photos of adolescent boys during the production of his film *Apt Pupil*) had one of his first jobs in filmmaking working on *Street Trash* as a grip, as the film is dripping with unrestrained libertinism and packed with expertly calculated vulgar wit. After watching *Street Trash*, it will be no wonder to the viewer why Islamic fundamentalists felt it necessary to fly planes into the financial heart of NYC.

Street Trash is surely a film that lives up to its politically incorrect name - featuring a virtual army of delinquent alcoholic hobos who fall prey to a deadly drink - "Tenafly Viper" - a prohibition era vintage wine that melts the flesh of the unsuspecting drinker's body in what seems to be 60 seconds time. *Street Trash* is a wonderful combination of gritty urban horror and blacker-than-a-firebombed-Somalian comedy, guaranteed to give the viewer a gore-geous cinematic ride of the most subversively sinematic kind. Pretentious New York city intellectuals have always presented their own city as the cultural epicenter of the United States, completely ignoring the fact that the big rotted apple is probably best known for its diverse assortment of metropolitan trash contained within a virtual battlefield of crime. If you think Martin Scorsese has painted a bleak picture of New York City during his fruitful career in filmmaking, you have yet to experience the dire pandemonium world contained in *Street Trash* - a film featuring an apocalyptic vaudeville act starring totally dehumanized unintentional performers. *Street Trash* is the kind of film Troma founder Lloyd Kaufman has always dreamed of making, for it offers quality trash without totally degrading the viewer (like a Troma film always seems to accomplish) in the process. *Street Trash* features a megalomaniac wop mafioso, a charismatic hobo Negro shoplifter, and a junkyard Vietnam vet dictator: all of which make up the outstandingly outlandish ingredients which no other film can proudly flaunt.

I have no problem admitting most gore bores me nowadays, yet I was highly impressed by the Tenafly Viper wine induced bodily explosions featured in *Street*

STREET TRASH

Trash. Out of all the things a person sees in America on a everyday basis, few are more repulsive than a morbidly obese slob who feels no shame resembling the blob. In Street Trash, one gets to experience an undeniably therapeutic scene where an obese hobo's stomach boils to the point of a climatic gut-gushing explosion. Street Trash also features some of the most gruesome, yet frolicsome Vietnam flashbacks ever committed to celluloid. If Street Trash accomplishes anything besides the perversely jovial - it manages to capture everything that is intrinsically ugly about America - from the Third-Worldization of American cities to the public neglect of mentally unstable war veterans to the American obsession with committing any abhorrent crime just to make a buck - this is a film about America the unbeautiful - where the dishonorable are the most honored and benefit from the grandest of luck. At the most fundamental level, Street Trash is a raunchy celebration of America - the land of the morally-free and the home of the collectively mentally depraved. For more info on Street Trash, check out Synapse Films.

-Ty E

DISCO GODFATHER

J. Robert Wagoner (1979)

Rudy Ray Moore has had an exuberant life style - no doubt about it. With countless stand-up records and films under his belt, he has actually had a long-lasting impact on Urban society, inspiring rappers and black film directors around the world. If there is one black character that will forever be remembered, it will be Dolemite. Straying from his normal "Dolemite/Pimp" fare, he turns to an ex-cop turned disco dancer, nightclub owning bad ass motherfucker. I'll start off by expressing my shocked claims that this film manages being rated PG. While censorship wasn't nowhere near as lenient as it is now, the rating system was heavily deformed as it allows a film with insane scenes of terror, martial arts violence, gratuitous foul language, and frequent drug abuse to be rated PG. The film, Disco Godfather, is a horrid steaming pile of shit in every conceivable way, but Jesus fuck, did I have fun watching this blaxploitation gem. Arguably one of the worse blaxploitation films made, Disco Godfather gets no respect at all. Incessant ramblings of people flaying the film alive are featured everywhere. I take it that these are the same people who've never seen a blaxploitation film before. If so, they'd realize that it's just as bad, if not, more awful than the original Dolemite. Doesn't mean we don't love and cherish the film regardless of the intense cameo of the boom mic. The Disco Godfather AKA Rudy Ray Moore is typecast as a verbally cleaner Dolemite who demonstrates his ability to grin like a Cheshire cat and to attempt to dance. While the dance floor is covered in the "sore thumb nerdy whitey" and black people who can actually dance, Tucker (Disco Godfather) enters the stage, shakes his arms and the crowd goes wild. The same metaphor could be applied to drug rings. Power doesn't necessarily govern power. Where smart tactics come into play, one of those uber-powerful henchmen could easily overthrow the wimpy ringleader. After Tucker's nephew is given PCP (Angel Dust,) he decides to bring together "his people" from the streets to "attack the wack" or "crack the attack on wack" or "attack the crack wack with a smack from a black mack" You can choose which one you wish to use. I made the last three of them up, but none the less, they fit perfectly with the plot points. Rudy Ray Moore must base most of his acting from those extremely loud and annoying black preachers that scream about salvation but come off as an extremely aggressive and racist bunch. One thing that strikes me in the tactic of entertaining the audience is how well dance scenes translate on film. I remember watching Grease or Saturday Night Fever for the first time, and seeing John Travolta pulling off some amazing numbers. I was instantly hypnotized and couldn't peel my eyes from the screen. Disco Godfather is about as reckless as you'd imagine. In a rude scene, some guys had a pile of cocaine on top of a Saturday Night Fever vinyl to which Rudy Ray Moore discarded promptly. The dancing in Disco Godfather should be amazing considering that's the films fall back. When you watch a film

DISCO GODFATHER

about disco, you want to see dancing, am I right? Well, from Rudy Ray Moore's ..err... zealous entrance, the film is a barrage of horrible dance moves that can hardly register as walking. Then the extras bust a groove that can be labeled as talent, but the scene quickly escapes into more horrible urban moral scenes in which some random black person expresses his interest in preserving "his people" regardless of the excruciatingly high statistic in black-on-black crime."Haven't you heard, Godfather? Our children are dying!"When the stars do PCP, the effects are frenetic and surrealistic in a sense. Going back to the southern roots of Negro folklore and witchcraft, these charismatic characters have bizarre visions of Negro seaweed haired witches swinging swords cutting off limbs. Then we have artistic creations and weird squeals. The technicolor effect reminded me heavily of not almost similar film *Awakening of the Beast*. The racial impromptu dialogue implies heavily that the creation of *Angel Dust* was towards the annihilation of the black community. With such a ridiculous regard towards urban society, they fix the boo-boo but putting scenes of extremely horrible "martial arts."I don't even think it should be labeled as such, but for some reason, I love these horrific fight scenes. Seeing Rudy Ray Moore and his blatant inability to jump kick gets me laughing a riot. There's the deus ex machina guy near the end named Howard who has some ability in martial arts but his foot never gets a foot near someone. The hit detection choreography is horribly flawed at best. *Disco Godfather's* bodyguard also disappears later in the film, it's as if they just gave up and wanted the film to end - much like what I partly desired. This film coheres the fact that Afro martial arts might be the most amazing form to grace the screen. Rather than seeing goofy Asians flying off walls and doing awesome counters with scimitars or katanas, I'd rather see an uppity Negro with a pair of nunchuks, careening through white drug dealers screaming something about loving Jesus as he slaughters hundreds of people. *Disco Godfather* is a long ass Soul-fused Anti-Drug PSA. Or maybe it is promoting the drug? With such a down-beat ending, It's hard to tell if it promotes a drug-fueled revenge or not. Whenever Rudy Ray Moore skip-walks across the screen, It's obvious that he is his people's person. Even though "his children" have lost track during the generations, The black youth still need a positive role model, not some clown with baggy pants screaming about cocaine. Whether Rudy Ray Moore is offing a silly white cowboy hit man by catching his cattle-whip (What an ironic fate) or becoming a recipient of a nefarious psychedelic drug torture, he is always there to kick ass and scream extremely loud. If you don't enjoy early blaxploitation films, then you will hate this. It's something beautiful to see a polyester-suited Rudy Ray Moore discussing the finer points of life while trying to understand one of his greasy gutter "brothers" as the alcoholism and recklessness kick in. A film predicting the near-future, can ya dig it?

-mAQ

WINGS OF DESIRE

J.M. Kenny (2003)

It has been several years since I watched *Wings of Desire*, and my thoughts on the film have changed a little. Over the past few years I have read some of director Wim Wenders writings and I must say that he's quite the annoying little turd. Wenders seems like the German equivalent to a girly mouthed leftist American "filmmaker" like Michael Moore. Only, Wenders actually has artistic talent and sometimes something real to say. Wim Wenders seems to get "hung up" when his politics get intertwined with his artistry. *Wings of Desire* features a bunch of scenes in which Wim Wenders attempts to atone for the Nazi sins of the holocaust. One scene features an old German Jew recollecting on how Germans went from loving to hating him during the rise of Nazism in Deutschland. Wim Wenders also cuts in stock footage of evil Nazis and Germany in ruins. Last time I checked, the allies terror bombed the hell out of Germany, turning it into rubble. Wasn't that enough atonement for little Wim?

Photograph of a typical German citizen during World War II Wim Wenders shows his love for God's chosen by casting Peter Falk as himself. In *Wings of Desire*, Falk is shooting what one can expect to be another holocaust classic. On the film set of this "film within the *Wings of Desire* film," a new generation of Germans proudly wear Nazi regalia. One German young man even thinks to himself how cool the Nazi uniform is that he's wearing. I can only assume that Wim Wenders feels that Aryans don't have enough remorse for the sin perpetrated by their grandpappies. As can be expected, the neo ghetto Jews look miserable yet innocent. Wenders wants Germany to know, "BAD GERMANS, BAD!!!" The dirty girlfriend of Rob from *Nekromantik*, Beatrice M., makes an appearance in *Wings of Desire* as a girl looking to sell her tail. I think I prefer her performance in *Nekromantik* much more. In fact, I enjoy the film *Nekromantik* much more than *Wings of Desire*. *Wings of Desire* seems to lack a certain power that films like *Nekromantik* radiate (and I am not talking about necrophilia). I seriously doubt *Nekromantik* director Jörg Buttgerit feels like he owes any special group of people an apology. The best scene featured in *Wings of Desire* is when the fallen angel Damiel finally confronts the girl he has been stalking for so long. He does that while Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds are performing. The combination of climatic music go perfect with the overall intensity of the scene. That being said, It makes me wonder whether or not the next time I watch *Wings of Desire*, I should just forward to the end of the film.

-Ty E

THE VIRGIN SACRIFICE
THE VIRGIN SACRIFICE

J.X. Williams (2001)

Call me a proud anti-modernist and ardent reactionary, but I think post-modernism is one of the many malignant diseases of a dying civilization that has been extinguished of all vitality, organic-ness, authenticity, and soulfulness and nowhere is this more readily apparent than in contemporary cinema. From Woody Allen (who wishes he was the Jewish bastard son of Fellini and Bergman, yet lacks the originality to even come close to the majesty of the two European master auteur filmmakers) to Quentin Tarantino (whose personality seems to have been taken over by a horribly hokey 1970s Italian exploitation flick) to Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer (who reflect the lowest of lows regarding this aesthetically terminal trend), Hollywood is a culturally apocalyptic garbage dump of superlatively soulless recyclization, regurgitation, and would-be-cute-and-quirky intellectual masturbation where nothing is taken seriously, perennial cynicism reigns with a limp kosher wrist, and where true beauty and soulfulness has been flushed down an Adorno-brand toilet. Of course, pomo pomposity is not just a strictly Hebraic Hollywood disease, but a favorite tool for the tools of academia and the cinematic underground, with the totally imaginary cult filmmaker 'J.X. Williams' (The 400 Blow Jobs, Peep Show) being an excellent, if not somewhat obscure, example of such artistic shallowness and phoniness. Although professing to be an obscure and even 'cursed' underground filmmaker who directed 54 feature films, wrote 78 screenplays, and was the subject of a 6,000+ page FBI file, Williams is really some particularly pathetic postmodernist dork and art school queen named Noel Lawrence who has dedicated his life to inventing the non-legacy of a fake filmmaker with a fake filmography. Taking his pseudonym from a common pen name used by various writers of gay pulp novels from the 1950s and 60s, Lawrence—a self-described “lapsed academic”—has even gone so far as to create an elaborate biography regarding the phony Williams that involves, among other things, conspiracy theories, Satanic curses, mafia and communist ties, and related sensationalistic attention-whore lies that demonstrate that the flagrant fabricator must have succumb to full-blown nihilism, probably suffers from Asperger syndrome, and lacks any trace of authentic artistic integrity, let alone an authentic personality. Indeed, utilizing clips from old forgotten movies and found footage, and artificially tampering said footage to give it a more vintage look (in fact, the counterfeit filmmaker peddles his services at his official website), Lawrence's filmic fabrications represent the non-art of an artistic thief to a most shameless and soulless degree. Out of all of Lawrence's little dilettante creations, the only one I could stomach without feeling like lynching the director is his short *The Virgin Sacrifice* (1974).

Described in a Canal+ Profile on J.X. Williams as follows: “a modern, Satanic masterpiece. All Hollywood flocked to the few secret screenings. Blending orgy

and magic, Williams made use of sensational optical perspectives and framing. Many American critics swore this lost masterpiece was a secret Kenneth Anger film," The Virgin Sacrifice was purportedly originally 3+ hours in length, but the sole print of the film burned up and only 9 minutes of footage survived. Ostensibly funded by a high-profile member (Jewish negro Sammy Davis Jr.) of kosher conman Anton LaVey's atheistic Rand-esque Church of Satan, The Virgin Sacrifice is a work with a pseudo-history shrouded in silly conspiracy theories involving satanists and commies that will bore the hell out of anyone familiar with such things. Essentially, a sub-avant-garde hodgepodge of surreal Satanic horror imagery, Lawrence's film is what you might expect if someone edited out most of the banal parts of various 1970s horror-themed porn flicks (i.e. Kenneth Andrews' *The Night of the Occultist* (1973), Eric De Winter's *Maléfices porno* (1978)) and repackaged them in a pretentious post-structuralist format. Beginning with a typically banal scene that you would expect from some worthless 1970s exploitation flick of a mute girl going to see about an apartment and learning that the current tenants are Satanists that belong to a cult that "recognizes that the evil in this world far outweighs the good. And so, we believe that Satan is our true savior," The Virgin Sacrifice finally gets to business at the two minute and twenty second mark and evolves into a hallucinatory horror trip of surreal and quasi-psychedelic celluloid chaos featuring spinning Gothic castle staircases, seemingly decomposing skull collages, pentagrams, kabalistic symbols (including, a star of David with a naked women inside), Francis Bacon-esque face distortions, graphic surgery footage, animated flying skulls, and a cloaked woman entering a greenish-yellow dawn. Of course, any serious horror-exploitation fan will notice that many, if not all, of the segments are recycled from other films, including *I Drink Your Blood* (1970), *The Brotherhood of Satan* (1971), and various Hammer horror works.

Admittedly, The Virgin Sacrifice is the only so-called J.X. Williams film that I have managed to watch in its entirety, as the postmodern posturing of most of the pseudonymous director's work is just too plain prosaic and ultimately pointless to stomach without getting the urge to unleash a gang of well fed and well exercised skinheads with baseball bats at a multicultural liberal arts college. In a sense, the short is a sort of anti-horror film because, aside from the first two minutes or so, it is entirely comprised of climatic scenes with no build up or storyline, as a work that 'cuts the fat' off the genre and only shows the good stuff, thus making it an ADHD-friendly work. Indeed, The Virgin Sacrifice is more or less hysterical horror porn that treats splattering blood like cumshots, daggers like dildos, skulls like tits, and death like orgasms. The film is also a rather ridiculous example of blasphemy for blasphemies' sake, as a conspicuously consciously wicked work that seems like it was created by an armchair iconoclast who gets a hard-on from the thought of thinking about Christians squirming while watching his more-hokey-than-heretical porno projects. While it is unknown

THE VIRGIN SACRIFICE

as to whether or not Lawrence is of the Hebraic pseudo-faith, the fictional J.X. Williams claims to be a member of god's chosen tribe. Indeed, Mr. Williams contributes articles to filmthreat.com and in one of these articles he wrote regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lars Von Trier: "I don't care how many millions of dollars this loser dumps into the Wiesenthal Center. Believe it or not, Arnie, us Jews care about other things besides money...Speaking of which, you might have heard how Lars Von Trier got Canned after invoking the H-word at a press conference. He reminds me of the two-year old who misbehaves at the fancy restaurant. It's only a matter of time before Daddy yanks him out of his booster seat and locks him inside the station wagon so the adults can enjoy their dinner in peace." Indeed, Williams' remark certainly reeks of good old Semitic snideness. Personally, I hope Lawrence is Jewish, as few things are more patently pathetic than philo-Semitic postmodernists. An intentionally convoluted work of would-be-black-cine-magic that seems like it was directed by the dimwitted and distinctly less talented heterosexual bastard brother of Kenneth Anger, *The Virgin Sacrifice* is ultimately a glorified horror mix-tape that facetiously glorifies aesthetic nihilism and celluloid kitsch and steals from filmmakers of the past and fails miserably at passing itself off as some sort of lost cinematic gem. Indeed, if you ever wondered what kind of film Quentin Tarantino might make had he been an American-bred academic who fried his brain on too much critical theory and deconstructionism, did not know how to work a film camera, and had a massive collection of totally worthless exploitation films, *The Virgin Sacrifice* might give you a good idea.

-Ty E

JAAP HOOGSTRA - A PIECE OF MONOLOGUE

Jaap Hoogstra (1980)

Anyone familiar with the cinematic oeuvre of South Africa auteur Aryan Kaganof (aka 'the artist formerly known as Ian Kerkhof') knows that his early work *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994)—a truly apocalyptic adaptation of French (anti)erotic Nietzschean novelist Georges Bataille's stories *Madame Edwarda* (1941) and *Le Mort* (1967) aka *The Dead Man* that was actually made as the filmmaker's final exam project at the Netherlands Film and Television Academy (NFTVA)—is one of the director's most immaculate, iconic, and beautiful yet dark, grotesque, and fiercely fetishistic efforts to date. It is pretty much a given that Kaganof himself thinks highly of this film as he has incorporated various scenes from it into some of his subsequent works, including "Nique ta mère!" (2004) and *Guerilla Blues and Holy Ghosts* (2012). Of course, anyone that has seen the film cannot forget the shocking nature of the final scene, which is arguably the most perversely potent piece of cinema that Kaganof has ever shot, where the elderly eponymous protagonist basks in a fountain-like stream of urine that is being quasi-ritualistically excreted on his head by a homely whore with a shaved gash who is standing on top of a bar table in what is indubitably the most aesthetically pleasing piece of unhinged urolagnia ever committed to celluloid. Naturally, the first thing that popped into my mind upon seeing this scene was how Kaganof was able to find an elderly man who would be willing to not only allow a woman to piss on his rather wrinkly face, but also allow such a uniquely unsavory image of himself to be immortalized in celluloid form. Upon doing a little bit of investigating, I discovered that the curious old fart's name was Jaap Hoogstra (1915–1998) and that he was almost eighty at the time of the release of *The Dead Man 2*, which would undoubtedly be the last important film role of his fairly long and somewhat eclectic acting career. Although best known for small roles on Dutch TV shows, Hoogstra's greatest contribution to the acting world was bringing the work of Irish avant-garde playwright Samuel Beckett to the Netherlands and the rest of the Lowland countries. Despite there being an age difference between the two of about half a century, Kaganof was friends with Hoogstra for the last couple years of the latter's life and would thankfully document one of their various infamous get-togethers about a year before the actor died. Indeed, in 1997 when Hoogstra was at the ripe old age of 82, Kaganof decided to document the elderly actor while he was rehearsing Beckett's fifteen-minute play *A Piece of Monologue* (1980) whilst smoking dope and taking incessant swigs of liquor, though he would not edit the footage together until a decade later after he had returned to South Africa. Indeed, in the 24-minute experimental documentary *Jaap Hoogstra: Geboorte Werd Hem Zijn Dood* (2007) aka *Jaap Hoogstra – A Piece of Monologue* aka *Jaap Hoogstra – Een Stuk Monoloog*, the viewer has the rare opportunity to spend some quality

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time with an ancient reefer-addled queen who is just as sassy as ever even though he already has one foot in the grave.

More than a mere portrait, Jaap Hoogstra – A Piece of Monologue is a strikingly ‘heartfelt’ (I hate to use that word, but this is one of the rare cases where it is actually merited) tribute from one friend to another. Notably, in a written tribute entitled *Inside Nothing: An Afternoon with Jaap Hoogstra*, Kaganof stated of their rather unconventional friendship, “We were friends. It was a strange and valuable friendship. I think he wanted to fuck me but he never said so. The occasional hand on my knee, nothing more obvious than that. We would get stoned and laugh a lot. Laugh at the stupidity of everything and everyone. Laugh at ourselves laughing. Laugh at Nothing.” Indeed, for the 24-minutes that the viewer sees of the actor, Hoogstra spends most of the time talking about being fucked as a little boy, hitting on a middle-aged man in a pirate-esque outfit, rambling like a dazed and confused grandmother while stoned out of his mind on consumer grade Amsterdam dope, and discussing in a dejecting manner how much it sucks to be old and weak. At the beginning of the doc, Hoogstra mentions how he recently received a phone call where he was informed that his comrade Jean Paul had just suffered a stroke, which is something he fears might happen to him. Despite his rapidly deteriorating body and mind, Hoogstra has mostly positive things to say about his life, especially his youth, which he describes in an almost utopian way. The son of a harbor master from Dordrecht, Hoogstra developed an early love of swimming and especially swimming with other boys, stating of his experiences, “What I found strange about myself, I always hung out with boys. Not consciously, actually yes...I’m a born homo.” According to the actor, he lost his virginity at the rather young age of ten and when asked if he was really deflowered at such a young age, he joyously replies, “Yes. An older boy. At the school. But... I enjoyed it so much I wanted to change schools. To the school that was known as a homo school. I got there by nagging my parents. I got my way. All the boys fucked each other [...] And I had a lovely youth.” Indeed, if we can trust Hoogstra, it seems that the Netherlands had a rather liberal attitude to sex even before the destruction of the country during the Second World War resulted in it becoming the sort of unofficial brothel of Western Europe.

With pictures of himself in an elegant dress and kissing another bald man sitting around Hoogstra’s rather kitschy apartment, it becomes quite obvious that nobody but an old sentimental queen could live there and he is quite proud of his lurid lifestyle. Undoubtedly, a morbid portrait of himself from Kaganof’s *The Dead Man 2* sticks out like a sore thumb in comparison to the rest of the stuff lying around the apartment which includes, aside from goofy gay portraits, a large porcelain pig. It becomes quite clear that Hoogstra is growing more and more aware of his fragile mortality as especially reflected in his somber confession, “I am not somebody who is scared of dying. The way it happens scares me.

I hope it's not a stroke. I find that a terrible...departure. That way...But if it happens suddenly...or an accident. Then I think to myself, at least I didn't know. I also didn't search for it. I'll also have rest." Not unlike the surviving spouse of a heterosexual married couple, Hoogstra began to go downhill in terms of his health after the death of his longtime gay lover, or as he states in a discernibly melancholy fashion, "It actually started with the death of George. With whom I lived together for thirty years. Thereafter my memory deteriorated. I always had a good memory. I confuse things. And that has been this year...also because of the many deaths...of colleagues...it's been exacerbated. It's made me uneasy. No. But...that's life. You realize it when you get very old. That I'm now becoming. You notice that life...is increasingly less pleasant. At least for me." Indeed, it seems that, as the years past, Hoogstra was more and more able to identify with his eponymous character in *The Dead Man 2*.

Despite being on the brink of becoming a corpse, Hoogstra is absolutely shameless when it comes to hitting on a middle-aged man that is dressed a lot like a pirate who shows up at his apartment with the gift of about an ounce of weed which they both smoke together (if you look carefully, you can also see the cameraman take a drag from a joint). When Hoogstra attempts to ply the man with alcohol, the rather happy butt pirate turns him down as he claims to have already drunk six Calvados, though he does share a fat joint with the old-timer. While stoned out of his mind with a cat in his lap, Hoogstra jokes to the pirate, "My puss he said...Is available to you" and then comments about how strong the weed is. While thoroughly inebriated, Hoogstra talks in a somewhat nostalgic fashion about how handsome he used to be, stating, "I didn't know that I looked so young and handsome. If I see myself in photos I think "Jesus Christ!" How I've deteriorated. Also physically, wrinkles everywhere." Indeed, if Hoogstra used to be handsome, it is absolutely impossible to tell so now as he resembles a sort of elderly effete half frog/half gnome. Somewhat fittingly, the doc concludes with footage of Hoogstra from *The Dead Man 2* juxtaposed with music by pseudo-Guido Dutch singer Willy Alberti. Indeed, as a fountain of urine drenches Hoogstra's gleeful face, Alberti hilariously sings, "Your head in the air, your noise in the wind. Not caring about what others may think. Keep your heart full of warmth and love in your chest. But be a Prince in your own space. What you search for no one else can give you. Man dare to live!" Indeed, as a fellow who got buggered at ten and allowed himself to be pissed on for a film when he was almost eighty, Herr Hoogstra certainly dared to live with gusto and grace.

While appearing in a number of notable Dutch films, including Paul de Lusanet's campy Gerard Reve adaptation *Lieve jongens* (1980) aka *Dear Boys*, Orlow Seunke's classic György Konrád adaptation *De smaak van water* (1982) aka *The Hes Case*, and Theo van Gogh's *Return to Oegstgeest* (1987) and Loos (1989), Hoogstra's greatest and most daring role was most certainly in Kaganof's

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The Dead Man 2, thus Jaap Hoogstra – A Piece of Monologue acts as a sort of invaluable companion piece to the film as it warmly deconstructs the man behind the Kaganofian myth and gives him a sense of dignity that one would not expect from an old fellow that was so senile that he seemed to delight in being drenched with female waste fluids. While it is no myth that many gay men are extremely masochistic and are into acts of supreme sexual degradation, it certainly takes a singular sort of sod to allow a woman to initiate him into heterosexual water-sports during his golden years for the sake of a film. As for Hoogstra's sexual proclivities during the time of the shooting of the doc, Kaganof wrote, "We often talked about sex. He loved sex. Was paying a young Moroccan man quite substantial amounts of money every week for butt fucking. He loved to be butt fucked. Fucked in his rectum. His anus. His naught. His Nothing. Fucked inside his Nothing. Ass fucked inside Nothing." As his rarely seen early J.G. Ballard quasi-adaptation Crash (1990) unequivocally demonstrates, Kaganof is a rare heterosexual filmmaker that is able to approach hardcore homo material in an unflinching fashion and with Jaap Hoogstra – A Piece of Monologue he proved it is not for purely exploitative or sensational reasons, as the auteur seems to respect all forms of sexual transgression. As Kaganof wrote regarding Hoogstra's death, "I visited him once at the hospital. But the joy was gone from the visit. It was too much schlepp to take the tram all the way out to the West of Amsterdam. And he wasn't allowed to smoke weed or drink Jenever so what was the point? I never saw him again. I didn't go to his funeral." While Kaganof did not go to Hoogstra's funeral, I cannot think of a more beautiful and genuinely touching obituary than Jaap Hoogstra – A Piece of Monologue where the 'Dead Man' certainly gets his due.

-Ty E

BOSS NIGGER

Jack Arnold (1975)

"They roll into a White Mans town....with Black Mans law" An intense blaxploitation film with a spaghetti western outline, this film is teeming with racial tension and plenty of squibs. This film is a pretty decent non-violent violent movie. Fred Williamson plays Boss (Nigger, but don't let him hear you say that), a bounty hunter with a comical sidekick who are hunting down a man named Jed Clayton, a thief and womanizer who is their ticket to a high life. They stumble upon a town that is sheriffless. Taking lead, Boss fills the role and brings a young woman and gives her a job in a bar. They quickly take reigns of this town, spreading black mans law, placing fines on anyone who uses the word "Nigger" or disrespects them. Along the way, Boss seduces a schoolteacher, and kills a lot of angry white men. This film is surprisingly directed by Jack Arnold, Best known for Creature From The Black Lagoon, Tarantula, and many other science fiction classics. Fred Williamson wrote this film with his own production company in mind. He made this film to parody his many over-the-top violent films. Much like a plethora of Fred Williamson works, you won't find much on them. All cover art normally belongs to an entirely different film. See: Black Cobra, Warriors of the Wasteland, and G.I. Bro.

The design of the small town is near flawless. The town has its own slums littered with spanish mothers and other stereotypes. D'urville Martin is hilarious in his role as Amos. He is a fast talking uppity negro with a penchant for fat women. He has many quotable lines and a fast talking lip. A more noticeable role of his is Willie Green in fellow blaxploitation film Dolemite. He is also the director of that instant classic. What didn't work for the film is some of the camera angles and the opening. They decided to cut the opening title card and original song. Cutting it from "He's Boss Nigger" to "He's Boss..." and changed the title to Boss, while still keeping all the "Niggers" in the film intact. In many scenes, the camera would swerve around characters attempting to catch the action, but the camera always felt blocked. It did work for the feel of a shoot-out though. Perhaps my favorite thing about this film is its soundtrack. Blending old school funk with mellow beats that mix so perfectly with everyone's motion. Clearly a soundtrack with the film in mind. Boss Nigger is a perfect addition to the Blaxploitation genre as well as Spaghetti westerns.

-Maq

STRICTLY FORBIDDEN
STRICTLY FORBIDDEN

Jack Deveau (1976)

Forget the ridiculous fantasy-driven romantic-comedy *Mannequin* (1987) starring a pre-dried-cunt-cougar Kim Cattrall, the quasi-Eurocentric experimental gay porn flick *Strictly Forbidden* (1976) aka *Le musée* aka *Dreamboy* directed by prolific auteur-pornographer Jack Deveau (*Left-Handed, Drive*) is the greatest and most just plain bizarre sensual-statue-come-to-life flick ever made, even if it has been rarely seen since its original dubious release in France nearly four decades ago. Apparently, originally shot on location in Paris and briefly released in an unauthorized manner under the frog title *Le musée* in the mid-1970s, *Strictly Forbidden* was not officially released by Hand-in-Hand films (auteur Deveau's production company) until 1984 when it was reconstructed under the title *Dreamboy* utilizing the original shooting script written by failed French Renaissance man Jean-Étienne Siry. A French-American coproduction partly shot in the Musée Rodin and the Musée Grévin (a wax museum) in Paris, *Strictly Forbidden* is the eerily lecherous celluloid tale of a pansy American art student who travels to Paris to 'cruise' art museums, only to eventually discover a secret 'private collection' of erotic male statues that come to life and cum all over the turd of a twink protagonist. Described by auteur Deveau, who has a cameo in the film as a froggy fag freak, as follows in a 1977 interview with *In Touch* magazine, "An American student traveling in France finds himself one day in a Paris art museum. Wandering around, he comes upon an unlocked door to a private collection. A guard shoos him away, but his curiosity has gotten the best of him. He returns to the museum, managing to sequester himself there overnight. What he find sin the room is a collection of erotic male statues, which come to life and guide the boy from one sexual act into another. In the end, the boy becomes one of them, a statue. The film is seen from the boy's point of view, and takes on the feeling of one sexual act, an initiation into homosexuality," *Strictly Forbidden* is a hyper hallucinatory homo hardcore flick from the Golden Age of pornography that, at least aesthetically, simultaneously echoes the sinister shadowplays of German Expressionism, the 'body fascism' of Leni Riefenstahl and the homoerotic phantasmagoric cine-magic of Kenneth Anger. Indeed, if nothing else, the beyond porn chic *Strictly Forbidden* does the seemingly forbidden in regard to the erotic celluloid arts by being one of the most artsy fartsy fag fuck flicks ever made, as a sort of celluloid prototype for Michael Zen's *Falconhead* (1976) and *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters* (1984) and the sort of neo-Hellenistic homo piece that could have been directed by National Socialist sculptor Arno Breker's gay son.

A young American art student named Allan (Thomas Jeffries) has traveled to the cultural epicenter of Paris and, not surprisingly, the so-called 'City of Love' seems like a pure transcendental and otherworldly heaven-on-earth to the little

lad, but little does he realize that much more magical things are hidden under the aesthetically-pleasing metropolis' undeniably striking surface. While travelling around Paris, Allan is approached by a dirty old monsieur (director Jack Deveau) with ulterior motives who, although pretending to be the young Yank's friendly guide at first, soon propositions to buy the young Boy Scout-like boy's virginal bung-hole. Of course, Allan does not take too kindly to being thought of as pricey meat and merely runs off in a hysterical manner, and not long after, he discovers the entry door to a secret exhibit at a museum, but he is kicked out by a security guard with an American accent (!) before he can get a good look at its decidedly decadent displays. Like any living and breathing human being, Allan is absolutely allured by the forbidden, so he decides to take his chances and sneak into the mysterious museum at night. Luckily, for the bi-curious boy, the private collection not only features superlatively statuesque statues of men with unclad private parts, but said statues also come alive and give the sodomite novice Allan the raunchy supernatural ride of his life. After a handsome and horny statue comes to life and fittingly French kisses Allan, he is lured into another somewhat ominous room where the startling stone-cock orgies begin. While lying on an ancient aristocratic pedestal of sorts, Allan gets in on some mutual oral action with some statues in what amounts to not much more the foreplay. Later on in what seems to be a ritualistic rite of the rectal-reamer sort, Allan has a load busted on him by a beatnik-like degenerate with a bushy beard while he sits passively in a fancy ancient seashell-shaped bathtub. Before Allan knows it, he is involved in a full force five-statue orgy of the gay Ancient Greek variety that mainly involves some majorly masochistic fellow being anally invaded by a gigantic phallic statue. To assumedly initiate Allen into the sodomite statue order, the orgy concludes with all the living works of art shooting their antiquated yet viciously virile loads on the stupid American boy's bare body. In the end in what amounts to a sort of Twilight Zone-esque climax of the creepy colon-choker sort, another young American arrives at the private collection of the phantasmagorical museum and sees that Allan has been transformed into a stoically-posed stone statue, thus confirming the young American's magical man-loving metamorphosis as a work of esoteric European erotic work.

Undoubtedly, if *Left-Handed* (1972) is porn-auteur Jack Deveau's most cynical and aggressively anti-romantic work and *Drive* (1974) is his most unhinged and campy pornographic poof piece, *Strictly Forbidden* is indubitably the director's most conspicuously classy, classical, and aesthetically cultivated work as a pleasingly preternatural film that is not only a playful tribute to Paris, but all of Occidental kultur and art history in general. Indeed, the high-class hypnotic hardcore flick that the pseudo-Anger-esque work *Night of the Occultist* (1973) wished it was, *Strictly Forbidden* is a film that, seemingly unwittingly, questions the very purpose and inspiration behind art, as if every single statue and painting in human history was created by a perturbed individual suffering from sexual re-

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pression and a pathological obsession with the human body and thus used their respective artistic medium as a semi-cryptic means of masturbatory metaphysical release. Featuring nil sex scenes for almost the first 20 minutes and dangerously drenched in unwaveringly artsy to its absolutely aberrant cocksucking core, *Strictly Forbidden* will probably only interest diehard cinephiles nowadays as a rare wanton celluloid work where aestheticism trumps eroticism and poetry trumps penises. Featuring an exceedingly eerie and atmospheric synthesizer-driven soundtrack by somewhat mainstream French composer Didier Vasseur, who also composed the soundtrack for Deveau's *Just Blonds* (1980), and magical camera tricks recalling Jean Cocteau, *Strictly Forbidden* almost seems like a celluloid crime due to its completely curious cocktail of audacious avant-garde artsy and debauched dildo deviancy. Indeed, with a simple reedit, *Strictly Forbidden* could be easily transformed into a non-pornographic experimental film, but then again, that would also destroy the film's aesthetically sacrilegious appeal as the wanton arthouse-porn equivalent to the American horror-comedy *Waxwork* (1988). Featuring a nearly dialogue-less script penned by obscure French writer/actor/director Jean-Étienne Siry (*And God Created Man*, *Snails in the Head* aka *Un escargot dans la tête*), who is probably best remembered today as the poster designer of films like *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965) directed by Otto Preminger and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Lola* (1981), *Strictly Forbidden* is also a work that strangely proves that at one time in history there was some bizarre overlap between the arthouse and porno worlds. Paradoxically semi-impenetrable in its storyline but quite literally visually penetrating, *Strictly Forbidden* is poof porn as poetry as a sort of (unintentional) celluloid love letter to Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Georges Bataille, and Roland Barthes, yet with an appreciation for the European Übermensch form in the spirit of Riefenstahl and Breker.

-Ty E

DRIBBLE

Jack Hannah (1946)

Giuseppe Andrews's contemporary ultra realistic (to the point of bordering surrealism) short *Dribble* is a film of our times. The shorts (at around 30 minutes) follows a washed up ex-professional white basketball player (played by master method actor Bill Nowlin) who has dived into a vodka bottle and somehow forgotten how to get out. He reminiscences over the days of snorting cocaine and mounting sluts. "Those were the days," indeed. The old white ex-professional basketball player's rival is a jolly old black ex-professional basketball player who sports a mean and greasy mullet. His verbal fights with whitey provide a new type of American entertainment (real life?). Another black man befriends whitey in hopes that he will teach retarded tiny tots the skill of basketball. He also calls his penis a "JIGGABOO COCKAROO." Giuseppe Andrews has confirmed himself as a poet of the trailer park. He takes the most pathetic and dehumanized individuals and turns them into Wal-Mart existentialists. Old man Tyree "shakes his dick" for a twenty dollar bill. This scene is both traumatizing and mesmerizing. Tyree knows exactly what he's doing with his gift of laughter to the masses. I would buy him a bottle of Jack Daniels as evidence of my deep respect for. The old white man takes his rival (old black guy) as hostage during the conclusion of *Dribble*. He also orders a pizza in a very sadistic voice while emphasizing the pizza is going to have olives on it. This whole scene takes place in some shitty motel that most likely charges by the hour. Giuseppe loves utilizing dirty motels. They are the second best thing to the trailer. Giuseppe Andrews puts shame Lars von Trier's *Dogme 95* movement. He has no interest in pretentious rules (used to hide pretentions) that stunt him as a filmmaker. Andrews has made all his films on a shitty sony camcorder with budgets capable of buying a couple cases of beer. Giuseppe Andrews is the true proletarian auteur.

-Ty E

PROTEUS
PROTEUS

Jack Lewis (2003)

As far as porno homo auteur filmmakers are concerned, probably none is more artistically and politically subversive than Canadian cocksucker John Greyson (*Un©ut, Zero Patience*), a politically incorrect yet equally degenerate far-left poof whose recent anti-Zionist political activism has given him some rather negative press, especially in the fiercely Philo-Semitic world of filmmaking. Indeed, in a world where fags can marry and one is supposed to accept the act of a man anally penetrating a man as totally normal and even liberating, homosexual 'culture', especially in the celluloid world, has become hardly subversive and just as banal as the bourgeois heterosexual world that ass-pounding abberosexuals once felt superior to. A queerly queer veteran who originally emerged in the Toronto film/fag scene in the late 1970s, Greyson has lived long enough to see the ideas he spread like a venereal disease via his poofster political activism to become mainstream and overwhelmingly socially acceptable, yet he has remained an uncompromising filmmaker whose cinema works tend to appeal to the most esoterically-inclined of cinephiles, be they homos, heteros, or otherwise, and his most recent feature-length narrative film, *Proteus* (2003)—a low-budget (at \$500,000.00 despite being an international production with a large international cast) Canadian-South African co-production of postmodern historical revisionism of the audaciously anachronistic sort that was co-written/directed/produced by SA documentary filmmaker Jack Lewis (a man responsible for producing a series of educational documentaries for the Robben Island Museum in the late 1990s)—is no less perniciously provocative and socially deleterious than his early works *Urinal* (1988) aka *Pissoir* and *Un©ut* (1997). A sort of daringly degenerate cross between Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985) directed by Héctor Babenco, *Querelle* (1982) directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Jean Genet's *Un chant d'amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*, *Proteus* is loosely based on the racially-charged true story about two South African prisoners on Robben Island (where anti-white terrorist turned Nobel Laureate Nelson Mandela spent 18 of the 27 years he was in prison), a gay Dutch sailor and a Capoid Khoi/Bushman Negro, who were both executed in 1735 for the unholy mortal sin of interracial sodomy. Undoubtedly a far-left fag-ciist flick of the militantly homosexualist sort that portrays sexual orientation as a more serious source of discrimination than racial differences, *Proteus* is assuredly incriminating on the director's part as a sometimes sickening and would-be-salacious but mostly sardonic sub-erotic arthouse flick directed by a man who was clearly heavily enticed by the fervently foul fantasy of a Nordic and a Negroid physically and metaphysically destroying racial and national barriers via blasphemous black-on-white and white-on-black buggery. A patently pretentious piece of race and sex hustling

of the curiously carnal and even campy sort, Proteus, despite ostensibly taking place in the 18th-century, features ANC era prison guards as leather-fag-like fascists of the sadomasochistic sort, pancake make-up wearing Goth fags wielding electric guitars, gay orgies taking place on the streets of Amsterdam, and snarky 1960s style fag hag stenographers with beehive hairdos arguing over the middle Dutch origins of the word “fuck” and, indeed, Greyson’s digital video work is certainly a piece where the two persecuted poof protagonists fuck, get fucked, fuck each other, and get fucked over by the Dutch-run South African government.

Taking its name from the South African flower better known as “King Sugarbush” that was named “*Protea cynaroides*” by Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus in 1735 and was proposed as the National Flower of South Africa in 1964, Proteus uses the flower as a faggy ‘flowery’ allegory for the blossoming and eventual death of the romantic relationship between the two pansy protagonists. Claas Blank (Rouxnet Brown) is a rare bilingual black servant fluent in two European languages (Dutch and English) of Khoi Hottentot ancestry (although his father was a Bushman, thus making him still a 100% pure member of the dying Asian-like Negro Capoid race, which Nelson Mandela also symbolically belongs to), thus making him a racial ‘untouchable’ of sorts and a racial enemy of both blacks and whites. Lucky for him, a Scottish botanist named Virgil Niven (Shaun Smyth) of the latent homosexual variety takes Blank in as an assistant and uses him as a model for his homoerotic ‘scientific’ drawings. After receiving ten years of hard labor on Robben Island for the seemingly bogus crime of “assault and insolence on a Dutch citizen,” Blank starts an initially hostile but eventually romantic relationship with a debauched Dutch sailor named Rijkhaart Jacobsz (Neil Sandilands), who has no qualms about committing sodomy, especially when he is on the receiving end, thus volunteering to experience reversed racial subjection. Naturally, Blank’s master Virgil Niven is jealous of his black boy toy’s new fuck buddy friend, but he has his own problems to worry about as a married man who was found guilty of sodomy in absentia, a fate that inevitably led to his ex-lover/assistant’s execution. A crafty and shifty trickster, Mr. Blank lies about the Bushman words for certain South African flowers to his master Virgil Niven, absurdly replacing the real Bushman flower names with words “cunt” and “fart,” among other linguistic absurdities, thus highlighting the dubious research done by Europeans when recording African history. From Niven, Blank learns that his people, the Hottentot people, belong to one of the three subspecies of man, the “bridge between simian and homo erectus.” Of course, that does not stop Niven from lusting over his subhuman partner, but his bourgeois airs prevent him from acting on his impulses, which offends Mr. Blank, who taunts his sexually mixed-up master with the words “I see the way you look at me...I know what it means.” Being a humble sailor of the colonial proletarian prisoner sort with not even the slightest Dutch Calvinist inclinations, Jacobsz has no problem engaging in jungle fever with tribal twink Blank, but when the

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two men are caught literally with their pants down and engaging in multicultural mud-packing, they are convicted of sodomy, an uniquely unholy crime that is punished with death by way of execution, which the victim's family is forced to pay. After being tortured, wussy white boy Jacobsz, unlike his brave lover Blank who never gives in under the pressure of torture, cowardly caves in after being tortured via drowning torture device and admits he committed sodomy with a true blue spade. While Jacobsz is convicted of sodomy and sentenced to death, Blank only has to return to Robben Island as he never confessed to engaging in cocksucking, which the Dutch court requires when carrying out an execution. Displaying his true commitment to his cracker lover, Blank ultimately decides to admit to the Dutch court that he is a homo Negro, thus he and Jacobsz are allegorically chained together and dropped in the sea, thus demonstrating director John Greyson's conspicuous belief that homo-hating transcends racial lines, as cocksuckers of all colors are equally hated by the Dutch court.

With a blatantly queer colonial queen absurdly stating, "as they say, what's good for the motherland is good for the colony. Or rather, vice versa," John Greyson has certainly demonstrated with Proteus that his sardonic sodomite wit has yet to wane over the decades, as colonialism has been entirely deleterious to both the colonizers and the colonized and has been the true root of racial chaos and cultural mongrelization throughout the world. Of course, with South Africa now being in black hands and white South Africans facing very potential genocide as demonstrated by the savage black-on-white murders of white Afrikaner farmers, with Genocide Watch placing South Africa at level 6, "Preparation", remarking "we have evidence of organized incitement to violence against White people," race hate in the rainbow nation has reversed in such a remarkably radical manner of the genocidal sort that it makes John Greyson's criticism of colonial racism in Proteus seem rather trivial and absurdly outmoded. Of course, Greyson's main focus was portraying homosexuals as perennial victims who have it much worse than even blacks, while also portraying male-on-male buggery as something that was believed to only afflict Europeans as depicted in a scene in Proteus where a Dutch lawmaker remarks, "I thought the natives were immune to such unnatural deeds," as if even the apparently racial colonialists even regarded their own imperial way of life as deracinated and deluded, while seeing the savages as still pure and untainted by the anti-organic phenomenon of colonialism and multiculturalism, which has only gotten all the more apocalyptic since the centuries have past. In fact, it seems that Proteus depicts homosexuality as the only positive import to the dark continent, as if technology, medicine/antibiotics, cities, and civilization are totally negligible things.

Of course, in its totally negative depiction of the Dutch East India company—the very first multinational corporation—in regard to its exploitation of South Africans, Proteus ultimately has a nonsensical message of globalization = bad yet cosmopolitan cocksucking and international interracial sodomy = good. Fea-

turing a contrived past where everyone seems gay yet also inexplicably anti-gay, *Proteus* is another great example of John Greyson's keen ability to cinematically sodomize history in a militant far-left homo manner that, in its intentionally belligerent anachronism and oftentimes disinterest in historical truths, is most importantly about today's globalized world and not the old colonial world it is set in. As Greyson admitted in an interview for the DVD release of *Proteus*, the real Claas Blank and Rijkhaart Jacobsz met each other when the former was only 16 years old and would maintain a romantic relation for two decades before they were actually convicted and executed for sodomy, which is quite remarkable considering it was nearly three centuries ago. In a nation where no less than ½ a million rapes are committed a year and child/baby rape (many HIV-infected South Africans believe if they rape a baby, it will cure them of their affliction) is at one of the highest levels in the world yet it also happens to be the first African country to legalize gay marriage, South Africa certainly has more things to worry about than whether the typical Joe Schmo negro tolerates buggery. Featuring the fetishization of quasi-fascist crypto-fag cops, a history lesson in old school European racial theories, the campy homosexualizing of the Dutch aristocracy (the old colonial men in stupid wigs are portrayed as hysterical yet sexually repressed old queens), unintentionally farcical glorification of the so-called "noble savage," and promotion of homosexual miscegenation, *Proteus* is a film that is ultimately far more humorous in its homo-centricity than it is genuinely 'romantic' and socio-politically potent as a sort of unflattering, if not totally accidental and pathology-driven, deconstruction of the degenerate queer artist and political activist. Described by co-director John Greyson himself as a "low-budget sodomy epic," *Proteus* is a proudly profligate piece of ridiculously risqué and pseudo-romantic fag historical revisionism that is sure to offend any self-respecting heterosexual, be they white or black, who has the gall to endure the abberosexual artsy fartsy essence of the film. Concluding with the 1964 Nelson Mandela quote "some of the things so far told the court are true and some are not true" regarding being sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island, *Proteus* is ultimately a film with the message that all history is subjective and written by the conquerors. Of course, with "peace keeper" Nelson Mandela on his deathbed and the looming threat of race war against South Africa's white population, one can only wonder the sort of bogus history black leaders will write in the future of ridding themselves of the culture-carrying and producing Caucasian menace.

-Ty E

MIDNIGHT MOVIE
MIDNIGHT MOVIE

Jack Messitt (2008)

In the all too similar vein of Demons, the greatest horror film ever created, comes a tale of a series of bizarre and unforeseen supernatural mayhem inside of a movie theater. I had somewhat high hopes for this cult throwback to grindhouse cinema of the 70's but I found that the Texas Chainsaw Massacre Spoof was the only thing to really hold this film up on terms of being a faithful rendition. That, and the accidental PSA this film served as regarding child actors. Never use them. A group of mixed archetypes arrange in a huge theater, though claim it's a shabby far cry from ones with stadium seating. Due to the condition of the theater I'm employed at, I don't take this environment for granted. That is, until I saw that the soda syrups were in the dingy, creepy basement ripe for all sorts of murderers to hide in. That is also until I saw the disheveled and grungy restroom that doesn't fit the schematics of the place at all. Need I bring the booth area to mind? Point is, Midnight Movie is as faithful to the doctrine of a theater as it is to a concept of horror film. On terms of iconic slasher figures, Ted Radford is at the bottom of the alleged barrel o' monkeys. His quarter skull mask is laughable, but hilarious once you hear him talk and see his face out of alignment with the mask's positioning. His weapon is a handled bizarre rendition of a corkscrew. He uses it to slice people and in one scene, he manages to remove a cinephile's heart out. Even though it defies every law of math (being of a science), I let it slide. I've always noticed that directors who make a film for the "horror enthusiast" always create a caricature of their demographic that is a pathetic and squirming creature that uses the word "cult" too much. When the film takes a believable turn of a director hellbent on a fanatical fixation of his own project thus going berserk, the film takes a ridiculous alleyway of creating a otherworldly cinema dimension and creating Radford as a film ghost(?). The end is one of those similar endings in which you believe some characters live but they are indeed trapped in a form of purgatory. Not one involving succulent tortures and over-the-top fire FX, but the kind where you are forced to be intimidated by a man in a goofy costume with a voice changer. I could recommend this film somehow to slasher fans. But even still, slasher fans aren't really fans of anything. There's no realism, no substance, and a strong undernourishment of a prime entertainment. Midnight Movie creates a likable environment with some agreeable characters, embarrassingly butchers them (hard enough for a PG-13 rating), and squanders any and all form of satisfaction. That, and I also have an incredible distaste for the symbiosis that heavy metal and horror films have mustered over the years. Brings a bad taste of Brain Damage Films to the surface.

-mAQ

DRIVE, HE SAID

Jack Nicholson (1971)

Unbeknownst to most film fans, archetypal filmic psychopath Jack Nicholson—one of the few Hollywood actors that I think seems to have enough talent, character, and intelligence to become an ‘auteur’—has also worked as film director. Indeed, aside from being one of the five or so uncredited directors (which also included Francis Ford Coppola, Monte Hellman, and Jack Hill, among others) of the cheap Roger Corman-produced horror flick *The Terror* (1963) starring Boris Karloff and directing the forgotten cocaine-fueled comedy-western *Goin’ South* (1978), as well as the unsurprisingly inferior ‘too-little-too-late’ Chinatown sequel *The Two Jakes* (1990), Nicholson tried to jump on the post-classical Hollywood ‘American New Wave’ bandwagon and direct a counter-cultured-themed quasi-arthouse work of the decidedly dark yet equally humorous and teenage-angst-ridden sort with his first ‘official’ directorial debut *Drive, He Said* (1971). While Nicholson became one of the most integral actors of the American New Wave due to his less-than-handsome “everyman” looks, completely natural “fuck you” attitude, and genuine acting talents, he also directed one of the most ambitious, subversive, pessimistic, and—in my opinion—underrated, if not somewhat flawed, films of Hollywood’s most revolutionary, experimental, and auteur-emphasized era. Of course, *Drive, He Said* did not do for the seemingly half-crazed actor turned nihilistic auteur what his comrade Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider* (1969) did for him, hence the film’s relative obscurity today. Somewhat loosely based on leftist literary icon Jeremy Lerner’s 1964 debut novel of the same name about a confused counter-culture-brainwashed college basketball player who has become disillusioned with stardom and the American dream and who has a decidedly negative influence in the form of a commie revolutionary roommate who ultimately burns down their college, *Drive, He Said* was looked at as a reeking pile of bombastic anarchistic shit when it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, received mixed reviews in the U.S., and did extremely poorly at the box-offices. Over four decades later, Nicholson’s misunderstood movie offers one of the most incriminatingly truthful depictions of its degenerate zeitgeist when a bunch of spoiled baby boomer brats brainwashed by The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Trotsky, and Marcuse thought they could change the world but ultimately debased the nation to the point where social disunity, race hate, loveless sex and bastard children, authoritarian educational institutions, gender disharmony, cultural impoverishment, political corruption, economic inequality, and spiritual retardation have become all the more malignant. A dark comedy that depicts the early stages of rot of a dying nation, *Drive, He Said* offers a great argument for the case that Jack Nicholson could have become more important as an auteur than an actor.

Hector Bloom (William Tepper) is a college basketball star who is suffer-

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ing from increasing cognitive dissonance as a result of being brainwashed by his good-for-nothing beatnik Bolshevik roommate Gabriel (Michael Margotta), demanding coach Bullion (Bruce Dern), and dubious romantic relationship with his hippie leftist cuckold professor's beautiful wanton wife Olive (Karen Black) as well as his dread of being drafted into the Vietnam War. At the beginning of *Drive, She Said*, armchair revolutionary Gabriel—a swarthy babbling turd who seems to have raided the wardrobe of frog counter-culture actor/auteur Pierre Clémenti—stages a New Left publicity stunt at one of Hector's basketball games with his moronic Marxist theatre troupe by shutting off the lights in the stadium, pretending to be members of the U.S. military and mock executing a sexually androgynous gook hippie. Of course, Gabriel gets his gang of pseudo-socialist skidmarks to ritualistically chant, "My name is Gabriel... I am a visionary... You have no power," like acid-addled automatons while standing in a holding cell. When a Cop asks Gabriel, "How does it feel to be in jail buddy?" the brain-damaged pseudo-existentialist piece of untermensch excrement rather retardedly replies, "You're in jail buddy. You're in jail." Luckily, one-too-many acid trips eventually take their toll on contra archangel Gabriel.

Right in front of the frail face of his 'progressive' leftist college professor Richard (played by Chinatown screenwriter Robert Towne), who cares more about Gabriel's arrest than satisfying his undersexed wife, Hector carries on an affair with his cuckolded teacher's wanton wife, Olive. Hector claims to love Olive, but there is no way their relationship can go anywhere. After being told by Gabriel that basketball is "jive" and that he should give a shit about Maoist hippie bullshit, Hector also begins screwing up his basketball career by blowing off practice, getting injured by playing in a half-ass fashion, and getting kicked out of a game for fighting. Hector also intentionally screws up an important meeting with some basketball bigwigs by spouting senseless hippie gibberish about the price of hotdogs. Meanwhile, gook-loving goofball Gabriel falls into some sort of drug-induced psychosis after being drafted and destroys a television with a sword while screaming "Viva La Revolution" while in the company of a scared blond toddler boy and an unclad hippie dame. Upon discovering that he might be kicked off the basketball team due to his senseless delinquent behavior, Hector becomes all the more dejected after his MILF mistress Olive reveals to him that she is pregnant with a kid that is probably his and ends their relationship. For whatever reason, Gabriel decides to pay his roommate Hector's ex-mistress Olive a visit while wearing pantyhose over his head. After scaring Olive by letting loose birds around her house, chasing her with a knife, and screaming "you want me," Gabriel begins molesting the whorish housewife and gets her to confess that she loves him and that he is "right." After Olive manages to escape out the front door, Hector shows up in his fancy sports car and attempts to act like a hero, with cuckolded husband Richard showing up soon after. After Gabriel runs out of the house and makes some semblance of sense for the first time in the entire movie

by stating regarding Olive, “She’s a bitch, man...She turns you on and then she backs off,” Hector and Richard get in an argument when the latter threatens to kill the former. In the end, Gabriel presumably achieves his dream of not having to fight in the Vietnam War after being institutionalized after showing up at his college completely naked and setting free all the animals, including snakes and lizards, in the science lab. Undoubtedly, it seems like Gabriel would have most likely suffered less brain damage and avoided spending his remaining years like Nietzsche did by mindlessly smirking like a buffoon in a mental institution had he grown some testicles, accepted the fact that he was drafted, and fought in the Vietnam War. As for disillusioned basketball star Hector, he learned the valuable lesson that it is best to stay away from acid-addled pseudo-philosophic draft-dodgers like Gabriel, who might ruin your life and/or influence you to spout inane hippie lingo.

A basketball flick that no self-respecting negro would ever watch, *Drive, He Said* ultimately makes for a strange synthesis of director Jack Nicholson’s love of b-ball and mixed feelings regarding the counter-culture movement he was a symbol of as a result of his iconic performances in Hopper’s *Easy Rider* and Rafelson’s *Five Easy Pieces* (1970). Of course, Nicholson’s film was meant to be the next big cinematic counter-culture hit, as a sort of spiritual brother film to Hopper and Rafelson’s films, but without the actor turned auteur starring in the film, not to mention its forlorn and patently pessimistic tone, it was almost doomed from the get go to be a celluloid bomb. Lead actor William Tepper, who never really went on to do anything notable after appearing in the film aside from appearing in Jim McBride’s 1983 remake of Godard’s *Breathless*, is one of the greatest weaknesses of Nicholson’s film, as he lacks charisma and charm and seems somewhat like a somnambulist merely sleepwalking through his seemingly confused and one-dimensional performance. Indeed, no charming leads and dejecting themes certainly make for unpopular films for the general public.

In the featurette, *A Cautionary Tale of Campus Revolution and Sexual Freedom* (2009), featured on the Criterion Collection DVD release of *Drive, He Said*, the film’s co-producer, Harry Gittes, states of the work and the decidedly degenerate zeitgeist it depicts, “It was about a very regretful time in history.” Most notably, at the end of the featurette, director Nicholson, who originally intended to make the film more scandalous with an opening featuring what he described as a “symphony of dicks” (the released film was stamped with an X-rating), states of the film, “The tragedy of the story is the problems in all free love.” Of course, there is nothing “free” about an aimless and nihilistic existence where you’re addicted to soulless sex, drugs, and shitty rock ‘n’ roll and *Drive, He Said* more or less lets the baby boomer generation know this, hence their bewilderment with the work. Indeed, with *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* (1970) starring a then-unknown Don Johnson in his debut film, Nicholson’s film is most certainly one of the most undeservedly forgotten cel-

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luloid counter-counter items. After all, what other film features a cuckolded leftist college professor and a commie revolutionary who destroys his brain after one-too-many bad acid trips?!

-Ty E

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2: FREDDY'S HOMOEROTIC REVENGE

Jack Sholder (1985) *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* is possibly the greatest work of homoerotic horror cinema. The second time around in the *Nightmare on Elm Street*, Freddy really has his claws on one boy. The boy, Jesse, has angst and problems growing up as a teenager. He is awkward with his girlfriend that practically throws herself at him and likes to get extra close to his male friend Grady. Freddy Krueger wants Jesse to find him victims which include a few ambiguously gay men.

Freddy's Revenge opens with Jesse on a school bus with a group of young girls. The young girls look at Jesse and laugh. Jesse merely sits and looks awkwardly. There is something not quite right about Jesse and Freddy Krueger takes advantage of this. Jesse is the new kid in town and has a hard time finding close friends. During a baseball game, he makes friends with a guy named Grady. This happens after Grady pulls down Jesse's pants, exposing his ass and a jock strap. The school Gym teacher tells the boys to "assume the position" there afterward. Schneider is a somewhat odd gym coach. With a German surname and an Aryan profile, Coach Schneider would have made a great Nazi SA stormtrooper. Like the stormtroopers, Schneider can be found after school at a militant gay bar. One night Jesse happens to wander into the gay bar and is approached by Schneider. As can be expected, Schneider brings Jesse back to school for a few late night laps and finally tells him to "hit the showers." Freddy Krueger must have been jealous of Schneider as he kills him in the showers just after whipping his naked bare ass. There is more blood in this scene than at a mass prison gang rape. I always thought Freddy Krueger was a bit kinky.

Freddy Krueger also becomes jealous of Jesse's friend Grady. After failing to score with his girlfriend, Jesse runs to Grady's house. Grady tells Jesse that a "female is waiting for him" and asks him sarcastically "And you wanna sleep with me?" Unsurprisingly, Jesse fears for his friend's life and shows his deep concern. Sadly, Freddy decides Grady needs to go since he is getting in the way of their relationship. Phallicism is also prevalent throughout the film, and Jesse is also in the middle of it. In a science lab, Jesse is scared by a gigantic snake wrapped around his neck. I was also disturbed to see Jesse dancing with a phallic object over his crotch while pushing drawers in with his butt. When he says "how do you like that Dad?" while prancing around gaily, I thought that was one of the finest moments in horror cinema. Also while making out with his girlfriend, penises seem to keep getting in the way when his tongue essentially turns into one.

Gay rights groups might be offended by *Freddy's Revenge*. After all, when Jesse fought Freddy it was as if he were fighting his gayness. Only through the power of love for his girlfriend could Jesse beat Freddy. Jesse's girlfriend tells

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2: FREDDY'S HOMOEROTIC REVENGE

Jesse, "you created him, you can destroy him." The message of the film being, if you fight your gayness, you can overcome it. I wonder if Freddy would look good in a pink striped sweater.

-Ty E

FLAMING CREATURES

Jack Smith (1963)

You would be hard-pressed to find a film 'gayer' than *Flaming Creatures* (1963), at least when looked at within its historical context, but don't tell that to the thoroughly emaciated, AIDS-stricken ghost of director Jack Smith (*Buzzards over Baghdad*, *Normal Love*); an overtly outrageous outsider artist that denied his, indeed, blatantly flaming homophile persuasion had any influence on his fiercely flamboyant celluloid brainchild. Although virtually unknown nowadays, even among camp keen cinephiles, *Flaming Creatures* – a 43-minute satire of Hollywood B-movies and tangling tribute to once-popular 1940s Dominican-born actress Maria "The Queen of Technicolor" Montez – would inevitably be a crucial influence on works of 'high' and 'low' camp, including Federico Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965) and *Satyricon* (1969), the patently perverse micro-budget works of Mike Kuchar (*The Pervert*, *Sins of the Fleshapoids*), the celluloid claptrap of Matthew Barney (*The Cremaster Cycle*), the early Dreamland movies of John Waters (*Mondo Trasho*, *Pink Flamingos*), and especially the primitive factory films of Andy Warhol. In fact, Warhol – who co-directed the assumed-lost film *Batman Dracula* (1964) with Smith – superficially aped and bastardized the 'cardboard camp' aesthetic essence invented by the now virtually unknown artist, so it should be no surprise that prolific jazz/noise musician John Zorn (*Naked City*, *Masada*) once stated, "Jack Smith was the real Warhol." Always more proficient at appropriating, selling and promoting art assembled by greater artists than actually forging it himself, Warhol also stole Smith's invention of the B-movie 'Superstar,' as the *Flaming Creatures* director was befriending and casting gutter-level, cum-guzzling drag queens, fickle fag hags, and heftily hung hunks long before the pompous pop-artist utilized them in an imperative, career jump-starting manner that would further contribute to the much undeserved quasi-mystical legacy of his hand-me-down fantasy factory. Described by Jack Smith himself as, "a comedy set in a haunted music studio," *Flaming Creatures* is an intrinsically incoherent avant-garde trash piece full of images of pesky flaccid peckers (appearing everywhere from inside wine glasses to firmly relaxing on the shoulders of drag queens) and massive mammary glands (the are constantly manhandled by anonymous hands), therefore one could argue it is a forerunner to 'body horror,' as it is certainly a film that reminds one how truly malodorous and consternating the human body can be, particularly when genders are brazenly blurred. Considered pornographic by certain authorities (a NYC criminal court) and later mentioned by name in contra-porn speeches by racist race-mixing senator Strom Thurmond, copies of *Flaming Creatures* were confiscated up its debut screening and the work was subsequently banned (and still is to this day), hence the extremely poor quality of most transfers of the film available today. John Waters may tend to exaggerate during his countless

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appearances on various TV shows and documentaries, but he wasn't puffing his perverted mentor when he stated that Jack Smith was, "The only true underground filmmaker" as it is a toilsome task to think of another filmmaker whose aesthetic influence was so pivotal and pioneering, yet only the most rabid and resolute of cinephiles have seen *Flaming Creatures*.

Unfortunately, *Flaming Creatures* – with its blatantly amateurish direction and nonexistent production values; and relatively tame homo-centricity (at least by today's standards) – is, lamentably, not as interesting as the story behind the film, thus the documentary *Jack Smith and the Destruction of Atlantis* (2006) makes for an essential companion piece to the infamous featurette. Although generally used as a slur against homos nowadays, Jack Smith used the word "flaming" as a positive adjective for his favorite things, hence the title *Flaming Creatures*; a very personal (and undoubtedly masturbatory) auteur project featuring some of the late director's favorite self-invented drag queens, including Mario Montez (a Puerto Rican Maria Montez-clone who later became one of Warhol's Superstars) and bountiful, boffo costume designs. Flaunting a number of unspeakable scenarios from mundanely masturbating trannys/hermaphrodites to a brutish and criminally aggressive "cunning linguist," *Flaming Creatures* is an ostentatious orgy of loopy aberrosexuality that demands the viewer to leave their moral compass elsewhere for 43-minutes or so. As a master photographer and subversive saint of scopophilia, Smith's greatest accomplishment with *Flaming Creatures* was dreaming up a variety of meticulously constructed mise-en-scènes (mainly composed of lavishly dressed/undressed bodies) as the autocratic auteur certainly had nil interest in developing any sort of cohesive narrative for the film. As a lifelong committed anarchist, *Flaming Creatures* is the artistic expression of a man who disdained gender roles, heterosexuality, cinematic convention, Judeo-Christian mores, and, probably most of all, mainstream America as depicted by pre-1968 Hays Code Hollywood. In our post-post-modern era where a considerable portion of the American populous shares Smith's sentiments, especially in regard to Hollywood and the 'artistic' world, it is easy to forget why Jack Smith and his celluloid chef d'œuvre *Flaming Creatures* – a decidedly undaunted work of Dionysian derangement – is such an important contribution to the progression of campy cinematic libertinage.

-Ty E

NORMAL LOVE

Jack Smith (1964)

Despite being the director's only feature-length film and filmed in titillating Technicolor, *Normal Love* (1963) aka *Normal Fantasy* aka *Tales of Cement Lagoon* aka *The Great Patsy Triumph* directed by meta-campy cocksucker Jack Smith (*Buzzards Over Baghdad*, *Scotch Tape*) was never actually finished and what remains today is a curious collection of semi-high-camp tableaux with next to nil in the way of discernible plot. Featuring a number of old school art fag superstars (Warhol stole the idea of superstars from Smith) and off-off-Broadway degenerates, including Mario Montez, Diane di Prima, Tiny Tim, and Andy Warhol, among various others, *Normal Love* is more or less the sort of film you would watch if you want to overdose on kitsch and camp to the point where you never want to see a flaming fag in drag and/or haggard hag ever again. Apparently intentionally abandoned after Mr. Smith could not deal with the fact that his micro magnum opus *Flaming Creatures* (1963)—an odious and obscene vampiric orgy of the sometimes scatological sort that the director himself somewhat adequately described as “a comedy set in a haunted music studio”—was seized by the police at its premiere on April 29, 1963 at the Bleecker Street Cinema in NYC and ultimately declared “obscene” by a New York City as he believed if he never completed another film they could not be seized/banned by authorities, *Normal Love* is next to impossible to view today unless you're degenerate and/or aesthetically-disabled enough to dig going to modern art galleries, and thus the film now lies in the camp garbage can of underground cinema history as a work with all the ingredients of a masterpiece, but which somehow falls short of being such, as if the auteur foresaw he would die of AIDS and panicked, ultimately throwing away his very potential opportunity of becoming America's foremost fag filmmaker. The closest to an American Werner Schroeter, albeit with a less refined taste in art and aesthetics and a greater influence from Golden Age Hollywood, Jack Smith was once described by the 'Pope of Trash' John Waters as “The only true underground filmmaker” and, indeed, unlike Andy Warhol, he and his films are still in the underground, with *Normal Love* being the strongest confirmation that the auteur could have never dig himself out of the aberrant-garde netherworld. Part pomo homo Busby Berkeley tribute, part overly obsessive orientalist orgy, part killer camp catastrophe, part humorously hideous homage to “The Queen of Technicolor” Maria Montez, part dimestore drag queen diva debauchery, and part 1930s-style monster movie, *Normal Love* seems like it was directed by an autistic child poof on the verge of schizophrenia and having a DIY sex-change, which, at the very least, is not something you can say about many other films, including those of the unhinged aberrosexual underground.

Unlike the warped warehouse weirdness that is *Flaming Creatures*, *Normal Love* is set in a sort of poof pastoral pandemonium where every beautiful

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freak, fierce fag hag, histrionic whore tranny, and just about every other imaginable/unimaginable social and sexual misfit roams and comes out to play. Featuring crappy and cartoonish plastic spiders, gay men in pink spandex with unflattering man-camel-toes, pregnant chicks with pointy titty tassles, ashy Aunt Jemina-esque tranny negroes carrying around watermelons, Hispanic transman mermaids swimming in unsavory white liquid (played by Smith's muse Mario Montez, who is ostensibly swimming in milk), a shaved head mongoloid 'child' from homo hell, mundane mummies that are more merry than murderous and drink fine wine in a most dapper manner, a wackjob werewolf with a perverse proclivity toward spiritually defiling mermaids via Coca-Cola, and a green Cobra Woman with an unconscious talent for attracting mummy molesters, among various other radical rejects of sub-supernatural subhumankind, Normal Love is anything but what its innately idiotically ironic title advertises. Although far below in the underground and never officially completed, Normal Love would go on to inspire not just would-be-weirdo Warhol, but Italian maestro Federico Fellini, who was shown the film by avant-garde filmmaker Jonas Mekas (who was arrested in 1964 for screening Smith's *Flaming Creatures*) and whose first color film *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965) aka *Giulietta degli spiriti*, as well as his homoerotic epic *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) is suavely serenaded in Jack Smith's keenly kaleidoscopic camp imagery. Of course, no matter how self-indulgent critics claim Fellini's later films to be, they pale in comparison to the plainly plot-less, aesthetic preposterousness of Smith's Normal Love.

As revealed in a vintage soundclip in the documentary *Jack Smith and the Destruction of Atlantis* (2006), Jack Smith started regarding his intention with Normal Love, "After the sickeningly pasty reception in New York City of *Flaming Creatures*, I was not likely to make another movie that the people of my own city couldn't see...So I spent my summer out in the country shooting...a lovely, pasty, pink and green color, movie...that is going to be the definitive pasty expression," yet he ultimately gave up on his perverted pastoral pasty picture, hence one of the many reasons why it is virtually impossible to find today, which is rather unfortunate, if not a cinematic tragedy. Visually speaking, Normal Love is indubitably Smith's greatest work of esoteric high-camp ecstasy, though *Flaming Creatures* is his magnum opus of "raging" and "flaming." While Smith is known to constantly re-edit Normal Love, even during actual screenings, I managed to find a long 1 hour and 46 minute cut of the film that is probably the closest to a definitive cut and I feel vaguely blessed for that. A self-described anarchist who once stated "I want to be uncommercial film personified" and was described by his friends as the "real Warhol", Jack Smith once had the grand honor of George Lucas describing his film Normal Love as "a jumbled mess...even though the pictures themselves were flowing beautifully," which is one of the few things I can agree with Mr. Star Wars on. Interestingly, Andy Warhol, who once quite humbly described Jack Smith's influence on him

as a filmmaker as follows, “Jack Smith was filming a lot out there and I picked something up from him for my own movies — the way he used anybody who happened to be around that day and also how he just kept shooting until the actors got bored,” also directed a documentary/newsreel of sorts entitled Andy Warhol Films Jack Smith Filming 'Normal Love' (1963) depicting the kooky cast and director of Normal Love, but it was unfortunately seized by the police who thought it was Flaming Creatures and is now presumed lost forever. Ultimately dying on September 25, 1989 from AIDS-related pneumonia after previously declaring to friends before actually receiving gay cancer that perishing from AIDS would be a so-called 'glamorous way to die', Jack Smith was unquestionably a debauched dude with a damaged brain, but at least it also gave him the creative capacity to direct a film like Normal Love.

-Ty E

THE BEING
THE BEING

Jackie Kong (1983)

Director Jackie Kong has created several horror films in the 80s but none of them are as synonymous with the terms "horror" and "bad" as *The Being* is. Hearing nothing but abysmal backtalk towards the DVD release of this film, I had to admit to myself that the poster art was quite impressive so I set out to queue this film just to witness how awful *The Being* really is. While unanimously maligned but far from under-produced, *The Being* is a film of filth, as its small Idaho town, Pottsville, hopes to stamp out. A dirty, unshaven detective discovers that the nuclear dumps scattered around the United States might not be as safe as they claim when a slime-covered creature begins terrorizing the townsfolk in traditional horror fashion. The set-up of *The Being* might seem familiar to you and that's because the schematic was lifted from *Jaws*. Juggle this: A quiet detective of a small historical town discovers a danger in the community and alerts the mayor, only to incite rebellion from the codger. After several more fall victim to whatever is out there, the mayor then hires a government specialist to debunk all rumors surrounding the event.

The Being might not be strong in either the monster's regard or the gore scale. There is an impressive decapitation in a drive-thru movie theater but that's about as violent as *The Being* gets, but for a purpose. Later in the film, it's heavily implied, never authenticated, that "*The Being*" was once a young boy named Michael, whose private hang out was near the dump site. To accompany this is the excellently eerie scenes of the boy's mother, walking the streets at night calling out her lost son's name. This lucid interference of creature feature provides a depth unknown of such a monster film. But this isn't the last of the morose MILF, no, she's later "greeted" by a group of neighborhood bullies. A young boy is pressured to sneak up her door step and slap mud on her pane glass window. It's such a tragedy, *The Being*. We also glimpse a first person perspective as the creature slinks upstairs, glances at his troubled mother in some psycho-slumber, then it visits Michael's room to allow the camera to wave from left and right. You'll know when the Being is nearby as it leaves a radiated slug trail. Quite disgusting if you ask me. Which brings to mind, you'd think the scientists would wear gloves, at least any form of protected gear when handling this poisonous matter.

As I explained, never confirmed but quite obvious, *The Being* concerns the typical (when applied) scared beast - the metamorphosis from human to an unsightly condition. Of course the creature is scared and at times it shows through the thick "B" skin of Jackie Kong's debut horror lampooning environmental injustice. To announce the co-star worthy of top billing, Martin Landau plays scientist Garson Jones. Landau's commitment to the film tips the scales in favor of the craft of acting as "Rexx Coltrane", the pseudonym for William Osco, also

director Jackie Kong's ex-husband, dilutes the film with his general uncleanness. For further trivia, William Osco was convicted in 1991 of fraud with a maximum sentence of 51 years in prison. Perhaps "Mortimer Lutz" wouldn't have been such a repulsive character had he not been creeping on the attractive diner waitress or live by his lonesome in a seedy trailer. However, the fact that no evidence exists of him bathing probably would make up the better half of his unpleasantness.

The Being isn't the inane, tacky film you'd accredit it towards. Definite tongue-in-cheek humor is applied with zeal - for instance, the scene of the building condemned by the Christian community. Fear of hedonism for a massage parlor to take residence was reverberating throughout the uppity religious folks. What better way to combat sin than to advocate sin, in this case, arson. After a trio of men break in to set fire to the establishment, the ringleader finds a Playboy magazine. After ogling it for quite some time, he stashes it in his jacket. He never gets a chance to masturbate though as he is soon thereafter passed final judgment by the ravenous little boy's toxic conscious. With dashes of surrealism as indicated with Lutz's dream sequence, The Being isn't as mundane as you'd been lead to believe. While I'm not advocating the DIY horror boom and the willingness towards Karo Syrup, The Being is quite intelligent at times and is consistently entertaining. Coming from the same mold as Jaws, The Being didn't inspire my childhood as much as Jaws did (Writing quick shark attack tales laden with breasts & blood), but this film is certainly undeserving of the slander it has been subjected to since day one.

-mAQ

PIÈGE
PIÈGE

Jacques Baratier (1970)

After by chance discovering his penultimate high-camp quasi-Nunsploitation flick *L'araignée de Satin* (1984) aka *The Satin Spider*, I felt it was time to dig up more films by the somewhat wrongfully forgotten French auteur Jacques Baratier (*La poupée*, *Dragées au poivre*), which not surprisingly, turned out to be a tedious task, especially where English subtitles were considered, yet I did manage to track down a copy of the froggy filmmaker's blasphemous avant-garde flick *Piège* (1970) aka *Trap* aka *Die Falle*. Featuring a curious cameo by Spanish filmmaker/playwright Fernando Arrabal (*Viva la muerte*, *I Will Walk Like a Crazy Horse*) as a prophetic yet perturbing proprietor of an anti-vermin rat poison/trap shop in an exceedingly eccentric epilogue about how the devil used to be a fly but now is a pink pig, *Piège* is a sacrilegious and sadomasochistic surrealist black-and-white medium-length (running at just under an hour) 'haunted house' flick of the ghost-less expressionistic experimental sort that plays with horror genre conventions just as much as it wantonly wallows in S&M imagery, especially leather and whips. Starring French New Wave divas Bulle Ogier (*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Maîtresse*) and Bernadette Lafont (*The Mother and the Whore*, *Out 1: Spectre*) who are invited (or more like demanded to come) to the mansion of a perverse, posh young man and wreak hedonistic havoc not unlike the savagely sweet Slavic ladies of Věra Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966) aka *Sedmikrásk*, *Piège* is a work that falls somewhere in between Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog* and Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jacques Rivette's 1970s 'games' films as a sort of satanic cinematic nightmare of fiercely fetishized illusions and delusions that ends in an apocalyptic manner resembling the aftermath of Europa after the Second World War. Featuring ominous rat trap demonstrations, busybody nuns riding bikes in classic nun regalia, safe cracking by way of femme blowtorching, lipstick lezzy BDSM, fetishistic face plastering, and various other forms of sexually-charged pseudo-existentialist eroticism, *Piège* is certainly a work of its time in that it is an exceedingly experimental work that has not aged as gracefully as other films typical of its time, yet still makes for an entrancing celluloid oddity of sorts. Featuring a delightfully dissident and haunting score by François Tusques (probably best 'remembered' as the man behind the soundtrack of Jean Rollin's *The Rape of the Vampire* (1968) aka *Le viol du vampire*) that bares a striking resemblance to some of the more instrumental tracks from the album *Only Theatre of Pain* (1982) by American deathrock/goth group Christian Death (the singer of the band, Rozz Williams, co-wrote/co-directed and starred in the S&M serial killer short *Pig* (1998) before committing suicide), *Piège* is a macabre yet merry modernist horror flick of the kinky Kafka-esque sort (Franz is even name-dropped!) that, when everything is said and done, is too kooky to be creepy, thereupon mak-

ing it a cultivated carný sideshow that does not know whether it demands respect from the viewer or to offend them, which is certainly a specialty of wacked out maestro Fernando Arrabal, who steals the show as a sort of degenerate street philosopher with too much time on his hands.

A debauched bourgeoisie fellow simply credited as 'Le jeune homme' aka 'the young man' (played by circus performer Jean-Baptiste Thiérrée, whose sole claim to fame is that he married Charlie Chaplin's daughter Victoria Chaplin) walks into a shop entitled "Vermin" looking for traps to use on sexy young girls and gets a lesson or two by the somewhat sinister shop owner (Fernando Arrabal). Arrabal gives the young man a couple demonstrations regarding the efficiency of his traps by using an egg as the bait. Preaching a couple lesson from the commie playbook, Arrabal makes some absurd argument how material objects cannot be stolen, stating, "What can be stolen...Not material things anyway. So if it's not material things, then it's spiritual things...Perhaps, Perhaps...Because you'll have noticed, here we have all kinds of traps. But we don't have hog traps. I'm afraid there isn't something pig-like in this fear of theft." After prying for personal details from the young man and learning that he is a deflowered Taurus, Arrabal arrogantly states to his customer, "I apologize for being so frank with you. But there is a pig, a pink one, inside of you. I've set a trap for you. I told you: Take the machine to kill flies, because the fly is the devil but it was the devil of another era. Now the devil is a pig. A pink pig. Who will look like David Niven. Who will be very elegant. Who will be very, very chic. And that. It is inside of you," which the young twink seems to have no response to upon hearing, as if he is immune to incendiary insults. Meanwhile, two nosey nuns are riding bikes on the street, with one of the holy women stating regarding a girl they are both concerned about, "She's an angel who has too often been possessed by the devil. She's always mixed up in dirty business. There's never the impression, nor the truth besides, that she's told the truth. And what's even stranger is that she's found among thieves. And troublesome elements who aren't even thieves. The underworld who emerge more numerous each day, from the slums of Paris. And who are enraged. She prevents, they say, the students from studying. The workers from working. And they steal." The girl that the two nuns are speaking about is Bulle Ogier (credited as "La seconde voleuse" aka "the second thief") and when she randomly appears on the street as the two spiritual sisters blabber, she pays them no mind and joins her thief cohort Bernadette Lafront ("La première voleuse" aka "the first thief"). Not much later, the jaded young man appears and steals bubbles from a prepubescent little girl, blowing the bubbles in a pretentious manner than only a Frenchman could. While continuing to blow his heart out, the young man pompously and psychopathically demands Bulle and Bernadette's absolute attention, stating, "Listen to me, please. You must come to my place. You really must. I've loads of precious things. Jewels, stones, animals, lots of things. There are no guards there. I don't need, don't like them.

PIÈGE

You must come to my place because... Because I want. It's urgent. You must both come. I don't like single women. Here is my card. Anyway, you won't find it. No one does" and then subsequently disappears just as abruptly as he first appeared.

Indeed, beautiful babes Bulle and Bernadette do find the house and instead of knocking on the door like normal people, they invade the place *A Clockwork Orange*-style and immediately start wrecking it like a bunch of juvenile degenerates who merely destroy for destruction's sake. The girls find a portrait of the young man hanging on a wall and cut out the eyes and his eyes magically appear where holes were cut, as if looking through the two gorgeous yet goofy thief gals' souls. The girls also blowtorch a safe and find a dismembered finger inside, which Bernadette sniffs (it must have smelled good as it seems to give her pleasure). Considering the only thing he does while the girls destroy every inch of his house is watch while hiding amongst the shadows, one at first assumes the young man is simply a masochist voyeur with so much time and money on his hands that he gets a kinky kick from seeing his personal possessions destroyed (after all, material things cannot be stolen, at least according to Arrabal), but he eventually joins Bulle and Bernadette, allowing the girls to make an exaggerated plaster of his face and even putting him in sort of electric chair, thus proving he is truly a masochist, but inevitably the tables turn. In no time, a sharply smirking Bulle is tied to the ground and receives major masochistic pleasure from a leather-bound female dominatrix, who whips the girl for the young man's pleasure. In the end, both Bulle and the young man die when a random explosion occurs, which leaves the two embracing one other in a normal S&M-free fashion that neither of them seemed capable of when they were living, thus making it a most ironically romantic death. In the end, film's unofficial narrator, Arrabal, concludes *Piège* by stating, "It's a story. You would think it ended badly. He tried to know and he was burned alive. It reminds us of Sodom imprisoned in the castle like Kafka. And the fire arrives. Whereas, he believed it was water, he thought he could fight the fire. It has not been possible. The pig that was in him died. With...the acolytes who had women's heads. Me, I consider this story as a premonitory dream. Although I know nothing of it since I never saw it, nor filmed, nor told it," thus providing an apt analysis for Jacques Baratier's celluloid excursion in sadomasochistic surrealism.

The pseudo-sinister yet stylishly sleazy sadomasochistic tale of two Catholic girls gone wild for the raunchy riches of a pretty boy Lucifer character with an unhealthy obsession with chicks with whips and who has an unshakeable fear of being robbed yet ultimately provokes two cutesy kleptomaniacs to execute that fear thus destroying not only all his material wealth but also himself in the process, *Piège* is ultimately preposterous enough in its story to be entertaining due to its calculatingly cliché anti-bourgeois sentiments and its rather shallow and stereotyped characters, but more importantly, it features enough exquisite phan-

tasmagoric imagery to keep one's blood pumping until the brutal yet beautiful end. In its keen cinematic combo of the sexually and sacrilegiously absurd, *Piège* seems like the sort of proto-punk/goth flick Belgian auteur Roland Lethem (*La Fée sanguinaire* aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, *Le sexe enrage* aka *The Red Cunt*) would have assembled had he decided to be slightly less pornographic in his choice of imagery. Additionally, I would find it hard to believe that director Jacques Baratier did not see the surrealist short *La femme 100 têtes* (1968)—a work based on Teutonic Dadaist Max Ernst's 1929 collage-novel of the same name that was directed by French auteur Eric Duvivier (son of filmmaker Julien Duvivier)—before directing *Piège*. If nothing else, *Piège* is schlock celluloid surrealism that is certainly second (or even third) rate when compared to the best of Luis Buñuel or even Fernando Arrabal, yet still makes for a sweet, cheap treat for the initiated. As I can only assume from watching two of his films, director Jacques Baratier, not unlike fellow froggy French filmmakers Jean-Pierre Mocky (*L'Albatros*, *Litan*) and Alain Fleischer (*Zoo Zéro*, *Rome Roméo*), is a would-be-master-auteur who manages to straddle the healthy medium between classy and trashy cinematic surrealism, with *Piège* being a perfect example of this as a work too discernibly derivative to be groundbreaking and too art-addled to be utilized as a cheap masturbation aid. For those that like the sexy celluloid mind games of Alain Robbe-Grillet, but are far too inebriated and/or lazy and need a break from “phenomenological” cinema, *Piège* makes for a pretty philistine delight that can be defecated out of one's mind just as fast it is swallowed, though some images will certainly stay with you forever. A sort of patently preternatural, apocalyptic parable for the post-WWII generation, *Piège* also makes for a great risqué romantic comedy for depressed Goths and born-again psychopaths.

-Ty E

THE SATIN SPIDER
THE SATIN SPIDER

Jacques Baratier (1986)

If Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid (*La Paloma*, *Shadow of Angels* aka *Schatten der Engel*) attempted to direct a sub-high-camp lipstick lesbian-themed Nunsploitation flick, it might have resembled the decidedly decadent dandyish dykefest *L'araignée de Satin* AKA *The Satin Spider* (1984) directed by French auteur Jacques Baratier and starring Ingrid Caven (who was incidentally Schmid's filmic diva/muse and Fassbinder's ex-wife) and Catherine Jourdan (*The Girl on a Motorcycle*, *Eden* and *After*). Co-penned by French feminist filmmaker Catherine Breillat (*Fat Girl*, *Anatomy of Hell*) and based on the marginal 1921 proto-surrealist play *Les Détraquées* written by Pierre Palau and Polish-French neurologist Joseph Babinski revolving around the murder of a young girl at an all girls school by the principal and her accomplice, which alpha-surrealist André Breton referenced in his iconic novel *Nadja* (1928), *The Satin Spider* is a pleasantly politically incorrect combination of sensual Sapphic sleaze, wacky and wanton pop-psychology, macabre diva worship, pseudo-spiritual surrealism, Dietrich-esque teenage drag king debauchery, and other tastelessly tasteful things that is more likely to interest fans of high-camp European arthouse cinema and sadomasochistic Sapphic Gothic girls than art-antagonistic fans of *Women in Prison* films (WiP) and other forms of Euro-sleaze and exploitation cinema. Although virtually unknown today, *The Satin Spider* director Jacques Baratier won the Jury Prize at the 1958 Cannes Film Festival for his celluloid fable *Goha* (1958) starring Omar Sharif and would go on to direct other notable avant-garde works like the campy and surreal sci-fi flick *La poupée* (1962) and the expressionistic gothic 'game' flick *Piège* (1970) starring Bulle Ogier and playwright/filmmaker Fernando Arrabal. Baratier's penultimate work before his death in 2009 at the well past ripe age of 91 years old, *The Satin Spider* is clearly the work of a man who had to sacrifice some of his artistic vision for sex appeal so as to get more perverts into theaters, but one must respect an elderly old school auteur who has the gall to direct a femme fatale-filled film about lethal and lecherous lesbians. A perversely poetic and pathologically phantasmagorical work crammed with lurid, sordid, and sensually sacrilegious themes typical of filmmakers/writers like Alain Robbe-Grillet, Georges Bataille, Walerian Borowczyk, Jean Cocteau, and Fernando Arrabal, among countless others, that unquestionably makes for the perfect double-feature with the abnormally good nunsploitation flick *Killer Nun* (1978) aka *Suor Omicidi* starring Anita Ekberg and Joe Dallesandro, but also makes for a bittersweet guilty pleasure for Werner Schroeter fans, *The Satin Spider*—a perverse period piece set in decadent France right after World War I centering around a kraut carpet-muncher-controlled French Catholic school for girls—brings reasonably superlative style, but not much substance, to lesbo pederasty, aberrant Catholic mysticism, morphine-

inspired exorcisms, and molestation-based mental illness.

It is the early 1920s and Madame de Challens (Ingrid Caven) is the hot yet patently pernicious and perverted Aryan headmistress at the French Catholic Les Fauvettes School for Girls and she rather enjoys her job as it gives her the perfect cover for molesting beautiful young girls and converting them to the cock-less world of lipstick lesbianism. Solange (Catherine Jourdan) is the headmistress' semi-butch lover and the gynocentric gym/ballet teacher of the school who sports a bleach blonde dude cut reminiscent of Mia Farrow from *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and has an unhealthy addiction to morphine and satin fabric, the latter of which has turned her into a reckless kleptomaniac who cannot help but steal any and every piece of satin she spots in stores. Due to her debilitating satin sickness, Solange has been arrested many times, which has led her to be put under the observation of a perverted psychologist, who wallows in parading around the luscious lezzy in front of his quack soul-doctor friends. When an ebony-haired and large-eyed teenage debutante schoolgirl named Lucienne (Alexandra Syclyna), who lost her Iron Cross-decorated Teutonic father during the Great War and has never been mentally the same since, runs away from the Les Fauvettes School for Girls, she brings back a peculiar police inspector named Levron (Michel Albertini), who questions principal Challens about the dubious suicide of a young pupil who apparently threw herself down a well. A callous and calculating cold cunt ice queen in existentialist hell who lost her 'great love' long ago (she ritualistically places flowers in a vase next to a portrait of herself and her dead girlfriend), Challens wears her innate emotional brutality and bodacious bitchiness on her sleeve, so the inspector concludes she might be a girl-killer when she chalks up the suicide of the child to mere "bad luck."

Things get rather risky in the already radically risqué world of *The Satin Spider* when a bizarre love triangle develops between principal Challens, gym teacher Solange, and pupil Lucienne, with the former two vying for the attention of the latter when not rubbing bushes with one another. While Challens is busy looking at pornographic portraits she has taken of her pupils, as well as attempting to get into the panties of as many said pupils as possible, Solange takes Lucienne to a magical island mansion via boat, where the two delight in decadent romance. After Lucienne dresses up in ancient knight armor, Solange declares the regalia to be the "perfect chastity belt" and proceeds to sexually "conquer" her "piece by piece." Whilst molesting young lass Lucienne in a melancholy morphine haze, Solange confesses her satin fetish is the result of being raped on a train as a young girl by a man (also played by Michel Albertini) with satin gloves, who ultimately died when the train crashed and whose presence (she constantly dreams/daydreams of him) and sexual prowess has haunted her ever since. Meanwhile, the rest of the girls from the Les Fauvettes School make their way to the mansion on the 'Island of Sand' for a naughty night of nympho hedonism. After Ingrid Caven as Challens gives one of her iconic diva cabaret

THE SATIN SPIDER

performances in the merry yet melancholy vein of Schmid's *La Paloma* (1974) and Fassbinder's *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* (1975), a psychologist declares she has "an alarming urge for self-flagellation," thus associating lesbianism with self-degradation. After Challens' charming camp act, a number of the school-girls put on male suits and slick back their hair, and as debauched drag queens, dance with other girls, eventually (de)evolving into an all out Sapphic orgy of the non-penetrating sort. The next day, Lucienne, who has a propensity for acting erratically and running away, disappears and inspector Levron smells foul play. As later revealed, a quack of a Catholic priest who has an unhealthy obsession with Thomas Aquinas performs an erotic exorcism on Lucienne while the girl lay nude on the altar. While assuming the exorcism was successful due to Lucienne's spastic snake-like movements that eventually result with the melodramatic collapse on the unclad girl, the lost lesbo soul was actually fed an overdose of morphine by Solange and has simply dropped dead. While in an opium-addled psychosis, Solange mistakes inspector Levron, who as an officer of the law has no problems groping the lunatic lezzy with his satin gloves, as the man who raped her long ago, but she is in for a startling surprise when she is arrested for the murder of lovely fallen angel Lucienne. In the end, the *Les Fauvettes* School for Girls more resembles a lascivious loony bin for lipstick lesbians than a conservative place of Catholic studies.

In what upon superficial glance seems to a banal church scene during the first half of *The Satin Spider*, the school girls sing the symbolic song lyrics "husband of my soul" while with an icon of Jesus Christ superimposed in the background, thus assumedly insinuating that Catholicism breeds lesbianism while also making for the perfect cover for a cock-celibate crypto-carpet-muncher, thereupon making the film the inverse of the stereotypical homo priest pederasty. Like French auteur Alain Fleischer's phantasmagorical surrealist *Zoo zéro* (1979), which also starred Catherine Jourdan, and Jean-Pierre Mocky's absurdist horror flick *Litan* (1980), *The Satin Spider* is an idiosyncratic celluloid oddity that transcends the typically fine line between cultivated kitsch and cheesy Euro-sleaze, which also makes it a cinematic work with a very marginal audience. Aside from possibly its aberrantly amorous Sapphic sex scenes, *The Satin Spider* is also bound to offend lesbians, especially of the loony lipstick sort, as it portrays them as intemperate nymphomaniacs suffering from various forms of neurosis. For example, Solange became a Sappho sadist after being brutally raped, thus making her incapable of consummating coitus with men.

Rather surprisingly, the most politically correct book *Images in the Dark: An Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1994) gave *The Satin Spider* a reasonably favorable review, stating of the film, "this psychological suspense drama drips with lesbian sexuality... The plot revolves around the disappearance of a girl and the ensuing police investigation, but it is not the thriller aspect that will interest the viewer but rather its bold, sensuous depiction of women loving

women.” Not surprisingly, my girlfriend, who is rampantly and unabashedly heterosexual, found seeing her hero Ingrid Caven groping young girls to be rather revolting and even grotesque, which I cannot blame her for, and one can only assume what the actress’ homosexual ex-husband Rainer Werner Fassbinder would have thought about it had he seen the film. Personally, I enjoyed *The Satin Spider* simply because Caven stars in the film in such an atypical role, even if she essentially plays the role she always plays; herself, albeit with a lily-licking twist. A gynocentric Gothic psychodrama dripping with Sapphic sensuality and sizzling diva juices, *The Satin Spider* is like the *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002) from pussy purgatory meets the retarded but more beautiful stepsister of *Day of the Idiots* (1981), even if it is not especially sexually explicit in its imagery as a Nunsploitation film like Walerian Borowczyk’s *Interno di un convento* (1978) aka *Behind Convent Walls*, but it certainly made me think wounded diva Ingrid Caven should have taken on more seductively Sapphic roles during her acting career.

-Ty E

LOVE ME DEADLY
LOVE ME DEADLY

Jacques Lacerte (1973)

There is no doubt that the death of a loved one and/or a family member can irreparably break someone. I know I have a family member who lost their brother in a car accident when they were a teenager that was so horrific that he had to have a closed casket funeral and this person seems to have never recovered from this tragedy and I say that as a person who was not even born when the tragic event took place. Needless to say, a film that attempts to make a connection between necrophiliac tendencies and the loss of a loved one during childhood is probably in poor taste, if not downright sick and disgusting, yet such a superlatively sleazy and mean-spirited cinematic work does exist. Indeed, the crypto-exploitation flick (I use 'crypto' because it seems that the makers were trying to peddle this as a serious film and not as the exploitation trash that it is) *Love Me Deadly* (1973) aka *Secrets of the Death Room* directed by the seemingly pseudonymous trash auteur 'Jacques Lacerte' (which literally translates as 'Jack the Certain') is such a wretched no-class work and on top of being about a young dumb blonde dingbat with fake tits who has a thing for dead dudes that resemble her dead daddy, the film is done in an ostensibly serious soap opera style and seems to target women with daddy issues in a manner not unlike Jonas Middleton's Lewish Carroll-esque hardcore arthouse horror fuck flick *Through the Looking Glass* (1976), albeit in a much more hokey and horribly kitschy fashion. Now, as a longtime fan of such cinematic corpse-fucking classics as arthouse-splatter flicks like Jörg Buttgerit's *NEKRomantik* (1987) and *NEKRomantik 2* (1991) and Nacho Cerdá's *Aftermath* (1994), the darkly comedic postmortem-penetrating of Dominique Deruddere's Bukowskian arthouse epic *Crazy Love* (1987) and Michele Soavi's refreshingly ultra-cynical flesh-eater flick *Dellamorte Dellamore* (1994) aka *Cemetery Man*, the obscure Dutch horror flick *Necrophobia* (1995) co-directed by Frank van Geloven and Edwin Visserand, and even tasteless Euro-sleaze trash like Marijan David Vajda's *Mosquito der Schänder* (1977) aka *Mosquito the Rapist* and Joe D'Amato's *Beyond the Darkness* (1979) aka *Buio Omega*, I'm no prude and enjoy a good necrophile flick from time to time but a sappy and pseudo-melodramatic cinematic soap that is about as charming as an old fart's cancer-ridden scrotum about cadaver-copulating that was meant to appeal to fans of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* about a rather reclusive yet opulent pill-popping uptight bitch and walking-and-talking Barbie doll suffering from a nasty *Electra* complex set to the unintentionally unsettling über-upbeat retrograde sounds of an original musical by a no-name hack composer like Phil Moody (not to be confused with the one-time member of the rather revolting Brit shit anarcho-pop band *Chumbawamba*) is just too much aesthetic insipidity for one mensch to take. Indeed, while *NEKRomantik 2* is a truly, if not admittedly rather idiosyncratically, romantic film for

cinephiles who have read too much poetry by Gottfried Benn and other offbeat romantics, *Love Me Deadly* is about as romantic as a winter funeral for a prematurely born infant, as a sort of *Valley of the Dolls* (1967) of necrophile flicks, at least in terms of its grating melodramatic phoniness and obscenely unsympathetic lead, that make the viewer wonder how and why such an inexplicable celluloid abortion was ever so unceremoniously misbegotten on the world. Created by people who paid prostitutes and homo hustlers \$50 a pop to do nude scenes and illegally shot around gay XXX theaters, *Love Me Deadly* is the sort of film that I seriously believe was created by psychopaths and parasites who do not even have a genuine thirst for the forbidden pleasures of the deceased.

Seemingly all-American girl Lindsay Finch (played by Mary Charlotte Wilcox, who not surprisingly appeared in small roles in horrid soap operas like *Days of Our Lives* and the occasional celluloid horror crud like Eddie Romero's 1971 miscarriage of a movie *Beast of the Yellow Night*) is a tall blonde North American Nordic beauty with a fancy white Mercedes, breast implants (apparently, the actress' husband was a plastic surgeon), and a bad Benzodiazepine addiction who is so independently wealthy that she need not work and even has a slavish Irish maid, yet she does not 'la dolce vita' because she has serious mental and sexual hang-ups as a result of witnessing her beloved father's tragic death when she was just a little girl. Since she does not have to work or do anything else, Lindsay spends all her time dressing up for funerals and visiting her father's grave. While she could have pretty much any man in Los Angeles, Lindsay prefers freshly embalmed middle-aged male corpses that resemble her daddy dearest. Instead of looking through the love classifieds, Lindsay looks through the obituaries in the local newspapers and attends funerals for dead dudes that seem to match her passed papa's profile where she waits until the funeral service is over to swap fluids with the corpse. When she is not making out with random postmortem men, Lindsay visits her father's grave and literally dances on it, nostalgically daydreams about playing with her father as a child, and denies the mildly aggressive advances of handsome young bachelors, including a blonde stud and born lady's man named Wade Farrow (Christopher Stone of *The Howling* (1981) and *Cujo* (1983)), who has his face violently clawed like a cat when he tries to share carnal knowledge with the posh and prissy crypto-necro debutante, as she is a compulsive cocktease who lures men in, only to leave them cold when things get hot and heavy. While calling her a "bitch" and storming out of her house after being so rudely clawed, Wade does not give up on attempting to bone the rich bitch, as his ego thrives on such a forbidden conquest. Unfortunately for him, Wade's obsessive campaign to get in Lindsay's panties will ultimately cost him his life, as his loony object of desire ends up getting involved with a coven of killer necrophiliac satanists and they don't like rampantly heteronormative men stalking around their mortuary.

Ultimately, Lindsay's life of meta-lurid loneliness changes dramatically when

LOVE ME DEADLY

she is approached by a sexually morbid mortician named Fred McSweeney (Timothy Scott, who appeared in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and Terrence Malick's 1978 pastoral classic *Days of Heaven*) who has been spying on her and monitoring her dubious behavior at funeral processions for some time and he decides to confront her after one of the services and attempts to coerce her into joining his satanic necrophilic cult, stating of his cadaver-humping comrades, "they're quite normal people, just with different passions. Our drives and needs aren't understood by many people, so we have to keep them secret. You're not alone. In our group we have several members who...who participate...who enjoy together." Among other things, Fred enjoys cruising for cock-peddlers in the more seedy sides of town and bringing them back to his mortuary (which he tells his victims is a veterinarian hospital) where he embalms them while they are still alive (in a rare moment of comic relief, a homo hustler named 'Billy-Jo' screams, "You're not gay. He's not gay! You're a maniac!", after realizing he is about to die a painful death after being strapped to an embalming table). Luckily, for Lindsay, Fred can procure any corpse she might fancy, but her upper-class uptightness and sexual frigidness (Lindsay will only kiss corpses, not copulate with them) prevents her from initially joining the corpse-fucking convent. After Lindsay makes a failed attempt to join the cult that ends with her running away screaming from Fred's mortuary after she sees the satanic necros ritualistically standing around an unclad corpse in would-be-ominous The Process Church of the Final Judgment-esque hooded cloaks, she decides to attempt to start a normal relationship with Wade, but it does not last long after she meets a wealthy tall, dark, and handsome art gallery owner named Alex Martin (Lyle Waggoner of *Wonder Woman* starring Lynda Carter fame) whose brother's funeral she attended. Naturally, since he resembles her dead father, Lindsay develops an instant crush on Alex and even spies on him with binoculars, but she is initially too scared to accept his advances. When she does get the gall to date Alex, she and he seem to be genuinely in love, but her necrophiliac tendencies do not die and she ends up going back to Fred's mortuary where she accidentally gets her pal Wade killed via ritualistic necro-murder after he sees her driving down the road and decides to follow her to the building. Indeed, Lindsay is a sort of unwitting femme fatale, as virtually every man in her life ends up dying a grizzly death, so it is almost understandable that she is unhinged enough to bed the dead.

To block out the memory of Wade's gruesome death and ostensibly live a life of domestic normalcy as a housewife, Lindsay accepts Alex's hand in marriage after he proposes to her even though she is completely incapable of loving him and refuses to have sex with him. Needless to say, Alex is quite agitated with the fact that his wife, who he spends tons of money on, will not let him have sex with her, so he decides to spy on her to see if she is cheating on him and ultimately follows her to Fred's mortuary, but when he later attempts to ask Lindsay about what she was doing, she acts completely evasive and attempts to

ply him with a new golf bag that she has bought. Upon talking to Lindsay's Irish maid Ms. Pritchard Fischer (Dassa Cates), Alex learns that his lady love has never had a single normal relationship in her entire life and ever since her father died when she was a little girl, she has religiously visited his grave every other day. Upon learning where daddy Finch is buried, Alex takes a drive to the cemetery and finds his wife dancing around her father's grave and singing children's nursery rhymes in a jubilant fashion as if she has the intelligence and self-consciousness of an autistic 4-year-old. Needless to say, Lindsay is horrified when her husband sees her acting like a childish buffoon, so she runs away whilst hysterically screaming "This is not your place, go away!", gets in her Mercedes and drives away in an erratic fashion. When Lindsay later finally agrees to talk to her husband, she calls her maid Pritchard a "prattling old bitch" and forces her husband to fire the old prole even though she has been working for the family for a number of decades. When a postal worker comes by with a certified envelope for Lindsay, Alex signs for it and opens the letter which reveals that Lindsay has been invited to come to the mortuary that night at 10pm by Fred. Instead of sleeping over at his mother's house that night as he originally intended, Alex decides to leave early so he can follow Lindsay to the mortuary to see what she's up to. Needless to say, Alex is quite shocked when he walks in on his unclad wife mounting a cold cadaver while in the company of a coven of naked longhaired hippie satanist degenerates and just after he cries "Oh, God!", Fred stabs him in the stomach and kills him. Now in a borderline comatose state due to her shock over Alex's brutal death, Lindsay remembers a repressed memory of how she killed her father when she was a little girl after she picked up his antique gun and accidentally shot him with it, hence her necrophiliac tendencies. Doubly guilty that she also unwittingly caused the death of the man she married, Lindsay takes out her seething rage and anguish on Fred, who she brutally bludgeons to death with a small statue after he thoughtfully prepares Alex's corpse so that she can copulate with it. In the end, Lindsay gets in bed with and assumedly has sex with her husband for the first time, though I doubt the sex is good because trying to insert a cold and limp corpse cock into a vagina is probably like attempting to shove a marshmallow into a keyhole.

Notably, the Code Red DVD release of *Love Me Deadly* features an audio commentary track with the film's producer and production manager Buck Edwards, who seems like a super sleazy scumbag but he also reveals a lot about the production. On top of mockingly muttering, "I've gotta think of my daddy now because I'm upset. Ohhhh, think of my daddy. My daddy understood, my daddy knew me," like a deranged toddler during a scene where the protagonist is grieving over her dead daddy even though he is an elderly old man, Edwards attempts to blame the director Jacques Lacerte's admittedly inept direction, as well as Gerard Damiano's porn chic classic *Deep Throat* (1972), which apparently premiered in theaters the same day as *Love Me Deadly*, for the abject

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commercial and critical failure of the film, as if the necrophilic melodrama ever had a chance of ever becoming a success in the first place. Edwards also brags about the various dubious ways he saved money on the production, including making a donation to Anton LaVey's Church of Satan so that some of its members would appear as extras during the funeral scene at the very beginning of the film (interestingly, Edwards, who appears in the film as one of coven members and even grabs lead actress Mary Charlotte Wilcox's unclad derriere at the end of the film, resembles a short and pudgy version of LaVey due to his similarly sleazy Semitic demeanor and devilish goatee), stealing shots in front of a XXX fag fuck theater, paying young male and female prostitutes \$50 a pop to strip down for a satanic orgy scene, and conning a negress front-door attendant, who briefly appears in the film, at a real-life black mortuary into allowing him to film a scene there while an actual funeral was going on. Undoubtedly, after listening to the quite 'insightful' audio commentary, I have to say that the the film's production history and producer Edwards, who seems to be the real 'auteur' of the film (Lacerte was a high school theater teacher with no previous film directing experience who more or less worked on the production as a hired hack, hence the film's incessant use of banal medium shots), seem to be more creepy, evil, and revolting than all the satanic sexual rituals and necrophilia featured in *Love Me Deadly*.

Aside from Edwards, H. B. Halicki—the Polish-American stuntman who wrote, directed, produced, and starred in the original 1974 *Gone in 60 Seconds* (which Hebraic hack producer Jerry Bruckheimer later produced a singularly horrendous big budget remake of in 2000 starring Nicholas Cage and Angelina Jolie) and died while shooting a stunt during the aborted 1989 sequel *Gone in 60 Seconds 2*—acted as an associate producer for *Love Me Deadly*, though it seems his only involvement in the film was putting money up for it. Sort of like Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) meets Buttgerit's *NEKRomantik 2* meets the bizarre 'blood horror' exploitation flick *The Black Room* (1983) co-directed by Norman Thaddeus Vane and Elly Kenner with a tinge of Nunnally Johnson's *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957) and Lynne Stopkewich's *Kissed* (1996), albeit not even marginally as interesting as it sounds, *Love Me Deadly* is excellent evidence of the cheap and pathetic parasitic lows that exploitation hacks were willing to go to during the 1970s to make a quick buck and thus makes for a vaguely entertaining lowbrow celluloid affair as a result. Of course, as Buttgerit's oeuvre readily demonstrates, when it comes to celluloid corpse-fucking art, a labor of love will always beat Semite-produced exploitation swill when it comes to creating a truly remarkable and aesthetically pleasing piece of cinematic necrophilia. Indeed, *Love Me Deadly* is hardly a work that demonstrates any sort of respect for the living, let alone the dead.

-Ty E

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Jacques Rivette (1981)

Two and a half hour long improvised post-French New Wave flicks featuring live avant-garde jazz music and swarthy dorks with pervert mustaches are not exactly my cup of tea. In fact, such an aesthetic prospect seems downright dreadful to me, yet I recently managed to watch one such work, *Merry-Go-Round* (1981) aka *L'engrenage* directed by Jacques Rivette (Celine and Julie Go Boating aka *Céline et Julie vont en bateau*, *Duelle*), for admittedly rather superficial reasons. Indeed, my sole interest in seeing Rivette's free celluloid jazz anti-mystery-crime-thriller is because it stars lapsed Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro (*Flesh*, *Blood for Dracula*) and drugged-out bisexual bitch Maria Schneider (*Last Tango in Paris*, *The Passenger*) in the two lead roles of a film that was supposed to be a magical work featuring two arthouse counter-culture icons uniting for a special moment in cinema history but ultimately proved to be a bit of a nasty nightmare for virtually everyone involved with it, especially in regard to the two leads and the director. Aside from possibly Louis Malle's pre-apocalyptic Carroll-esque fantasy flick *Black Moon* (1975) and the rather obscure high-camp work *Queen Lear* (1982) directed by one-time Swiss auteur Mokhtar Chorfi, *Merry-Go-Round* is undoubtedly the strangest work Dallesandro has ever worked on, yet it also features the Italian-American sex icon at his greatest and most naturalistic in terms of where his certainly singular acting is concerned. Directed by arguably the most ambitious and hopelessly avant-garde filmmaker associated with the French New Wave who is noted for the exceedingly long running times of his films (his fourth feature, *Out 1: Noli me tangere* (1971) aka *Out 1: Don't Touch Me*, is nearly 13 hours long, though he released a 4 ½ cut under the title *Out 1: Spectre* in 1972), *Merry-Go-Round* was described by auteur Rivette as his "worst film," and indeed, it is certainly a curiously convoluted and ludicrously labyrinthine epic mess of a movie, yet it is a strangely captivating mess of a movie nonetheless that demonstrates that a failed film directed by a masterful filmmaker is almost always more worthwhile than an immaculately assembled work directed by a for-hire hack. A work that seems like it was edited in the style of the literary 'cut-up' technique used by William S. Burroughs (interestingly, one of the two jazz musicians featured in *Merry-Go-Round*, Barre Phillips, would later contribute to the soundtrack of David Cronenberg's adaptation of Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*), Rivette's shockingly enthralling filmic failure is a work that weaves in and out of fairytale-like dream-sequences without warning and features a series of triple-crosses, mysterious characters with dubious backgrounds claiming to be people they are not, and a tragic end that was only natural for an ultimately tragic film production that could have been a unique masterpiece of French cinema but is now nothing more than a peculiar footnote in one already mystifying filmmaker's history.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

While Maria Schneider was the one responsible for approaching director Rivette (who thought Little Joe was “magnificent in Morrissey’s trilogy”) and professing that she would love to star in a film with Joe Dallesandro, she was also the one that was probably most responsible for destroying *Merry-Go-Round*, which the mentally unstable French actress quit before it was even finished (a stand-in, Hermine Karagheuz of *Out 1*, was used to replace Schneider in the dream-sequences so that the film could be completed), though the director apparently started to lose his mind and began to suffer what would be his second nervous breakdown (the director suffered a breakdown in 1975 just a couple days into shooting his previous production *Histoire de Marie et Julien* aka *The Story of Marie and Julien*, which he would later successfully direct in 2003). Indeed, as Dallesandro revealed in the book *Joe Dallesandro: Warhol Superstar, Underground Film Icon, Actor* (2011) written by Michael Ferguson regarding the chaos of the production: “Rivette was going nutty, and Maria was attempting suicide, and so my crack-up [motorcycle injury] gave us a week to calm down and get it together. Rivette was trying to make this movie last forever—we shot a ton of footage—and it was turning out to be one of those twenty-four hour movies. In fact, when the producers wanted the film to end, because they thought Jacques had lost his mind, they came to me and said, ‘Joe, you gotta tell him it’s over.’ Maria had already walked off [...] I had to say I can’t go on making a movie in which all the other people have left and gone home and you’ve still got me in it. ‘It’s over, Jacques, We gotta stop.’” Indeed, as its title unwittingly reveals (there was originally supposed to be an amusement park scene, but it was never actually shot), *Merry-Go-Round*, which was shot in 1978 but not released until 1984, is an absurdly aimless work that literally goes around in circles, with a good portion of the film featuring Little Joe running around in the woods for seemingly no apparent reason in what prove to be dream-sequences. In fact, Dallesandro has less than pleasant memories of shooting those scenes, recollecting regarding his experience in Michael Ferguson’s biography: “We worked on the film for so many weeks, and they kept shooting these scenes where I was running. Running, running, running. It got so bad that I wasn’t even aware Maria had left the picture. She was so far away during these endless scenes that I had no idea they’d replaced her with a double. That’s when I really understood that this movie could go on forever. If they’d have replaced me with a double, they’d still be out there shooting.” An impenetrable story revolving around greed about an American crook who tries in vain to be a hero, his M.I.A. French girlfriend’s strange sister, the mysterious death of her father in a plane crash, and the dubious disappearance of \$20,000,000 francs, Rivette’s mystifying celluloid misstep is a cognitive-dissonance-inspiring work that ultimately brings up more questions than answers as it progresses in a spastically non-linear fashion that defies cinematic-logic.

Benjamin Phillips (Joe Dallesandro) receives a telegram in the middle of the

night from his estranged girlfriend Elisabeth/Lisa (Danièle Gégauff) telling him to fly out to Paris to meet her at a hotel called Sofitel Roissy, but when he gets there, she is nowhere to be found. Instead, Ben bumps into his girlfriend's rather peculiar sister Léo Hoffmann (Maria Schneider), who was also told by Lisa to meet her at the hotel, even though they have not seen each other in some four years. Not long after meeting each other for the first time, Léo takes Ben to a graveyard to see if Lisa might be visiting the grave of their father David Hoffmann, who may or may not have been killed in a plane crash and whose corpse is not actually in the ground. After missing Lisa by 15 minutes at the graveyard, Ben and Léo nonsensically receive a phone call from her at a pay phone in the middle of a seemingly abandoned train station. When the two meet Lisa at the two girls' deceased father's mansion, it becomes quite apparent that a criminal conspiracy is under way to steal patriarch David Hoffmann's large fortune. Indeed, Lisa tells her sister Léo that she believes that their father is not really dead and that she hopes to steal papa's fortune as she believes it is her birthright. After Lisa is hauled away to a loony bin at about the 30-minute mark of the film, *Merry-Go-Round* begins to degenerate into the sort of innate cinematic incoherency that could have only been artistically sired by a funny fellow suffering from a major mental breakdown as was clearly the case for Rivette while working on the film. Although nothing is as it seems, what is for sure is that Ben is involved in a conspiracy to get frog patriarch David Hoffmann's cash and he and his comrades apparently have the key to get it. Of course, Ben faces a moral dilemma when he has to decide whether he is more interested in the missing fortune or saving his girlfriend's Lisa's life. One of Ben's accomplices is a seemingly sinister and surely flaky lady with a rather unappealing dyke haircut named Shirley (Sylvie Matton), who is apparently the American crook's sister (though she may or may not also be David Hoffmann's ex-mistress and Lisa's best friend). As Léo confesses, she hates her ostensibly belated father and has essentially been emancipated from him since the age of 13 when her late mother died from a complication relating to diabetes, thus she knows less about her family's fortune than outsiders like Ben and Shirley. A virtual cuckold of his big sis, Ben confesses to Léo that Shirley lost all her "great respect" for him after he was once busted for car theft (incidentally, this happened to Dallesandro in real-life during his pre-Warhol years), as he proved to be a shitty thief, thus he wants to prove to his sibling that he can do much better now. Indeed, if there is a common theme in *Merry-Go-Round*, it is that all the characters have rather troubled and just plain bizarre relationships with their siblings/families, with greed being the main reason for familial disharmony.

For a good portion of Rivette's seemingly never-ending celluloid anti-amusement ride, Ben and Léo hang out in a variety of abandoned homes and mansions that range from luxurious and merely unoccupied to totally dilapidated abodes with wild plants growing inside them. While the viewer assumes that counter-culture

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sex icons Joe Dallesandro and Maria Schneider will eventually hook-up and engage in rather passionate and even otherworldly carnal pleasures, as it seems like the main point for such a strategically cast film, they never do much more than frivolously flirt and their relationship inevitably becomes as erratic as the film's increasingly incoherent (non)plot. Notably, while Dallesandro and Schneider got along splendidly before shooting the film, the actress began to hate her friend when shooting for *Merry-Go-Round* began, or as the Warhol Superstar later revealed in an interview with Ferguson: "Me and Maria were best of buddies before we started the movie. As soon as we started the movie, though, Maria hated my guts. Don't know where it came from. I did nothing to her. I'm the charming, wonderful person I always am. And I still kept the film going. She had a girlfriend at the time, which I never interfered with. She was never a love interest of mine. I just respected her as an actress, you know? I loved her work. I loved that she took my hero, Marlon Brando, and brought him back to life." Considering Schneider was wasted on drugs and probably had a jealous girlfriend (what dyke would not be jealous of the fact that their bisexual girlfriend is working on a film with Little Joe?!), there were probably a number of reasons for her seemingly irrational hatred towards her American co-star. Either way, this strange and distinctly female hatred certainly bleeds through the film in an exceedingly effective way that would make any male viewer feel very afraid of Schneider's womanly wrath.

Despite their troubled relationship on and off the set of the film, Dallesandro and Schneider certainly have a wildly idiosyncratic form of chemistry in *Merry-Go-Round* that is one of a handful of things that makes the film worth seeing. While Ben initially attempts to get in Léo's pants by doing childish things like taking his hair out of a ponytail for her, by the end of the film he is attempting to kill her, at least in his own mind (he shoots at her on a beach during one of the film's various dream-sequences). Indeed, the film features a number of seemingly nonsensical scenes that ultimately prove to be dream-sequences of Ben and his non-lover chasing each other in forests and on beaches, with packs of wild dogs, snakes, and medieval knights in shining armor attempting to kill them when they are not trying to kill each other. Back in reality, Ben becomes the unwitting victim of a number of double and even triple-crosses that make him seem like a small-time American philistine criminal who cannot compare to the grand majesty of frog-style white-collar gangster tactics. As Ben reveals to Léo, he has always dreamed of being an effete aristocrat who spends his evenings enjoying decadent candlelight dinners, as a fellow that, "always wanted much more...needed much more," but he lacks the psychopathy to obtain such an unbecoming goal for an uncultivated American. Ironically, Ben's lack of class and sophistication makes him seem like the only even remotely empathetic character in the entire film, as the other characters seem like calculating upper-class psychopaths who more or less reflect every negative character trait one can think

of regarding posh and pompous frogs. In the end, Ben loses his lady love Lisa after she is killed via sniper, which infuriates Léo so much that she goes insane and kills a wacky psychic named Mr. Danvers (played by Maurice Garrel, French junky auteur Philippe Garrel's father), who is pretending to be her deceased father. Indeed, Léo has what some might call an anti-Eleçtra complex. Of course, *Merry-Go-Round* is the sort of film that demands an absurdly tragic ending where virtually every character has a hole burnt into their already forsaken souls.

Despite the handful of negative things that Joe Dallesandro had to say about working with the somewhat unhinged French director, Jacques Rivette had nothing but good things to say about the American sex icon, once stating in 2007 in an interview with *Les Inrockuptibles* regarding the difference between working with the ex-Superstar and dope-addled diva Maria Schneider on *Merry-Go-Round*: "Without going overboard, I felt like Billy Wilder waiting for Marilyn [Monroe] to get ready without ever being certain that she'd actually show up. Very quickly, Joe understood that he'd get nothing out of this film. The relation with the production was very tense, we had a lot of illness crop up at the onset of the shoot. But he had a kindness to him, and an impeccable seriousness. Total respect for Joe Dallesandro." Also, total respect for Monsieur Rivette as well, as he at least had the balls to admit where his film went wrong, or as he stated in the May-June 1981 issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* regarding the legacy of the work: "With *MERRY-GO-ROUND* everything changed. It's an exaggeration to say that we placed Maria and Joe together in front of the camera and waited to see what would happen. We had a starting point, of course, and then we made up the beginning of a story, with a father who had disappeared, but all along we told ourselves, this is just a pretext for Maria and Joe to get to know each other [...] But since the relationship between Maria and Joe rapidly became hostile, we were forced to develop the story-line; from a mere pretext it took on a disproportionate importance. Maybe that gives the film a certain vagabond charm, I don't know, but it really is a film with a first half-hour that's quite coherent, and then it searches for itself three times, three times searches for a way out." Indeed, never have I heard an auteur be so honest and precise regarding why his film does not work, but then again, Joe and Maria's real-life antagonistic relationship gives *Merry-Go-Round* a certain distinctly delightful, if not rather bittersweet, flavor that manages to work in some way. Additionally, Rivette's film is also a rather aesthetically pleasing work that in parts, especially during the dream-sequences and the various scenes when Joe and Maria play around abandoned mansions like naïve children discovering love for the first time, seems like a sort of evil fairytale for adults directed by a mystical-minded mad man who attempted to direct a sexy crime-mystery-thriller and got lost somewhere along the way. Even with a cinematic misfire like *Merry-Go-Round*, it is easy to see that Jean-Luc Godard was right when he said of his cinematic compatriot: "someone like Riv-

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ette who knows cinema so much better than I shoots seldom, so people don't speak of him...if he had made 10 films he would have gone much farther than I."

-Ty E

BEYOND LOVE AND EVIL

Jacques Scandolari (1971)

Naturally, the philosophy of the Marquis de Sade and beatnik bullshit were bound to be mixed at some point during the 1970s in some sort of psychedelic/psycho-sexual movie miscreation and French fag pornographer Jacques Scandolari (*Victims of Vice* (1978) aka *Brigade mondaine*, *Monique* (1978) aka *New York After Midnight*)—a man who later direct a little film entitled *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales* featuring men shoving their meat-poles in the meat-holes of other men as a large bloody animal carcass dangles above them—was probably the right man for the filthy froggy job. With his absurdly aberrant X-rated surrealist art-sploitation flick *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971) aka *La philosophie dans le boudoir*—a work extremely loosely based on de Sade’s work of literary philosophical eroticism *Philosophy in the Bedroom* (1795) aka *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, which argued that post-revolution France would return to a monarchic state if it did not adopt a libertine ideology—Scandolari proved his delightfully deviant dedication to every and any form of mystifying sexual debauchery to the point where it puts the relatively passive sexual looseness of the hippie movement to shame in its loathsome libertinage, even if the film does not feature a single scene of real sexual penetration. Also cinematically adapted by Spanish sleaze-auteur Jess Franco no less than three times, including the cinematic works *Eugenie*, *The Story of Her Journey into Perversion* (1969), *Eugenie de Sade* (1970), and *Eugenie: The Story of a Perversion* (1980), as well as by Italian auteur Aurelio Grimaldi as *L’educazione sentimentale di Eugenie* (2005), Scandolari’s *La philosophie dans le boudoir* certainly rapes the crude competition as a loony libertine work of minor yet rather idiosyncratic aesthetic elegance that makes one wonder why the French filmmaker’s career stagnated over time to the point where, when not producing blue movies for sodomites, he was making third rate exploitation flicks of the surely forgettable sort. Sort of like *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) meets *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) meets *Luminous Procuress* (1971) except more conspicuously and unwaveringly “evil” and decidedly decadent in its charming yet somewhat cheap celluloid excess, *Beyond Love and Evil* is indubitably a product of its particular cultural zeitgeist, to the point of being somewhat outmoded as an anti-authoritarian counter-culture work, especially considering its psychedelic special effects, repellently flamboyant cocksucker costumes and cosmetics, and incessant playing of the main guitar riff from Iron Butterfly’s 1968 hit “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,” thus the film almost acts as an unintentional parody of the Marquis de Sade’s philosophies due to its erratic extremeness, which is not exactly a bad thing, at least as long as you can handle bad celluloid trips of the anachronistic and anarchistic sort where lovely ladies please themselves by rubbing squids on their spunk-pots and depraved aristocrats derive grand pleasure from using the dirty bath water of hysterical hippie

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negresses. Indeed, there is not true love nor anything resembling a moral compass in *Beyond Love and Evil*—a celluloid tale of a bizarre love triangle in a grandiose neo-Grand Guignol gutter.

Posh pretty boy Zenoff (Lucas de Chabaneix), who looks like a slightly less effete version of pedomorphic Hollywood actor Ezra Miller, is a dandy-esque yet rather restrained dude who is in love with an older and much more debauched dame of the blonde beastess sort named Xenia (Souchka), who has moved on to bigger things and is planning to marry an intellectually pedantic, libertine megalomaniac/false messiah of the rather wealthy yet raunchy sort named Yald (Fred Saint-James). Of course, being unaware that his horny hag lover Xenia is about to be married to a psychopathic charlatan, poor Zenoff is in for quite the surprise when he shows up to the couple's mischievous mansion of madness—a perturbing and putrid palace of perversion where women merrily masturbate with slimy squids and fish, wild buck-naked negroes sic German shepherds on unclad and unhinged bitches, Neanderthal-like beast-men rape women for the pleasure of vicious voyeuristic party guests, lanky long-haired fag twinkles wearing nothing but fishnets are whipped by Negro fag drag queens, and countless other decidedly distasteful things that are apparently quite savory to sexual sadists looking for a new kinky kick. Needless to say, Zenoff is turned off by Xenia's strikingly sick salaciousness and her seemingly brainwashed mind, but he especially loathes yahoo Yald as the old geezer quite brazenly brags about his wealth and wild wantonness as a self-appointed nihilist prophet. As Yald tells Zenoff after the younger lad states his disapproval of his lecherous lifestyle, "I find you a victim of your stifling environment...totally unreasonable and without personal individual judgment. I'm past that and I don't care what others think of me. Their opinions are meaningless to me...Their morality a farce. I only care for what gratifies me. And the great point is I am able to afford it." A young man not willing to take no for an answer, especially after being told by Yald to keep his hands off his girl, Zenoff essentially rapes Xenia in the forest after wrestling with her in a pond, but she ultimately rather enjoys it and the two wander around the woods naked like a hyper-horny hippie Adam and Eve, thus making it seem like their past romantic connection has been restored, but the young man has no clue to what degree his would-be-soul-mate has been tainted by her soon-to-be hubby's wicked worldview where senseless sub-erotic excess always comes before true love.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end and Xenia ends up wedding Yald during a seemingly Satanic/Crowleyite marriage ceremony that concludes with the couple committing communal coitus before their disciples. For sexually ravaging his woman before the wedding night, Yald offers Zenoff to play a fateful game where he must pick out who Xenia is among a number of women hidden in Cocteau-esque masks, which he loses, thus forcing him to become the student of his archenemy. After submitting to Yald in a homoerotic

game involving sharp knives and superlatively gay hippie pants, Zenoff drives a dagger into the elder man's gut, thereupon sending him straight to hell. A cold cunt who has just inherited a fortune and a aristocratic chateau full of sexual servants, Xenia does not seem too sad about Yald's premature death via phallogocentric penetration, yet she decided to carry on her short-lived husband's legacy and Zenoff becomes a spiritual cuckold of sorts as a slave of the deranged de Sadian pseudo-religion. Concluding in a fiendish and unintentionally farcical fashion that seems like a parody of the end of Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) in its assortment of extravagant torture scenarios, *Beyond Love and Evil* ultimately works great as a campy comedy of the carnally crazy sort, but is virtually impossible to take literally, although I must admit that I rather appreciated the cinematic work's rather rare and uncompromising 'evil and perversion conquers all' message. In the end, old Yald's legacy of sexual brutality reigns as his widow Xenia puts Zenoff through a libertine regiment that forever changes him and then kicks out the door, leaving the poor lover boy with her colder-than-a-sad-Somalian-in-Alaska words: "We played a game. You have lost and you will forever be conditioned by the principles Yald taught. Instilling them in you has been my revenge for his murder. You are full of cravings and desires that can never be satisfied anywhere else on earth except here with me. I don't want you...I despise you for your sentimentality. That weakness you call love. I have already forgotten you have ever existed...That I ever knew you. You will remember me with bitterness...everyday of your life." Indeed, *Beyond Love and Evil*—for better or worse—is certainly a film that goes 'beyond love and evil,' as erotic (or more like 'anti-erotic') excess triumphs over everything else, especially anything resembling conventional human emotion. Undoubtedly, *Beyond Love and Evil* is surely a film for those who think of the Manson family as opposed to Woodstock when they think of cultural highlights of the late-1960s counter-culture era, as the film may feature mass orgies and LSD-tinged debauchery, but certainly nothing as banal as commie peace and love.

Since the American English edit of *Beyond Love and Evil*, which was edited by a clearly non-French fellow named Stan Rosenthal, was the only version of Jacques Scandelari's film I could find, I can only wonder how the original French version differs, but judging by the absurdly inane and oftentimes mundane melodramatic dialogue of the Yank version, I assume it was butchered for the curious consumption of deadhead and braindead hippies and other Amero-mutt rabble. Since I did have the opportunity to view Jacques Scandelari's masterpiece of hardcore man-on-man mayhem and lurid leather-fag celluloid grit *Cock Tales* (1978) aka *New York City Inferno*—the virtual missing link between Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), except all the more sexually explicit and sensually sadistic—which is totally uncompromising from beginning to end and does not wallow in ridiculous dialogue, I would assume that the English version of *Beyond Love and Evil* has been made

BEYOND LOVE AND EVIL

more palatable for philistines and porn addicts. Of course, being a work that mainly focuses on foul fetishism and that features nil scenes of real unsimulated sex, *Beyond Love and Evil* will probably prove to be a major disappointment for virginal gorehounds looking for mere visual vice of the terribly trite variety. Featuring dismembered Hans Bellmer-esque pubescent doll statues and a variety of decadent surreal pop-art, on top of endless scenes of sophisticated sensual savagery, *Beyond Love and Evil* is undoubtedly an aesthetically penetrating, if not sometimes plainly passé, experience of pervasive psychedelic/psycho-sexual depravity that bows to no one's morals, not even the Marquis de Sade himself. With its antagonistic atheistic message of advocating one to exercise, as opposed to exorcise, one's demons, as well as its less than socially liberal message of master morality over slave morality, *Beyond Love and Evil* is also a virtual recruitment video for the Church of Satan, except with more interesting rituals and more elaborate and intriguing aesthetics. If there is anything to be learned from watching Scandelari's scandalous piece of surrealist cinematic sensuality *Beyond Love and Evil*, it is that stern ideologies, even those grounded in worshipping immorality, are radically repressive and can turn charming twinkles into slavish cry baby toddlers. If you're looking for a rare celluloid treat that manages to blur the line between arthouse and exploitative celluloid trash, few films compare to *Beyond Love and Evil*—the closest thing to a porn flick in the spirit of Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Manson, the Cockettes (rather unfortunately) and, of course, the Marquis de Sade.

-Ty E

BRIGADE MONDAINE

Jacques Scandolari (1978)

If any filmmaker restored my faith in exploitation cinema, it is undoubtedly the assumedly pseudonymous French auteur Jacques Scandolari, a man who essentially turned cinematic sleaze, sacrilege, and sodomy into a vogue and seductive art form, at least for those few lucky individuals familiar with his work. Adapting a novel by the Marquis de Sade to a strangely fitting psychedelic setting with *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971) aka *La philosophie dans le boudoir* and concocting probably the most seedy and sleazy yet artsy sadomasochistic leather-fag flick ever assembled with *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales*, Scandolari surely had a sharp, striking, and singular vision that stood out among his mostly artistically meritless cinematic compatriots. Amazingly, Scandolari managed to direct at least three of his greatest films—*New York City Inferno* (1978), *Monique* (1978) aka *Flashing Lights* aka *New York After Midnight*, and *Victims of Vice* (1978) aka *Brigade mondaine*—in a single year, but essentially quit filmmaking after that, only going on to direct the occasional short 'serious' documentary like Baryshnikov's *Gaiete Parisienne* (1988) for the BBC. Out of all of his films, *Brigade mondaine*—the first of three films featuring a soundtrack by popular frog disco producer Cerrone and based on a series of then-popular trashy crime novels of the same name—is probably Scandolari's most accessible and 'conventional' work, which is in part due to its lack of gay pornography and homoerotic imagery, as well as its incessant appearances by totally nude and under-the-influence women, but also because it is a fairly 'conventional' sort of 'Kojak meets Abel Ferrara meets Miami Vice' storyline. Like all of Scandolari's works, *Brigade mondaine* is almost virtually impossible find today and it is doubtful that it will ever be released in any form home format ever again, especially in North America (where it has never had a home media release). In fact, the 'hardcore disco' soundtrack by Cerrone is much more popular today than the film is. Opening with a blonde babe who is high as a kite being blown away with a shotgun by a mysterious individual of the seemingly feminine sort wearing a ski mask and a leatherjacket, *Brigade mondaine* is a totally titillating, thrilling, and tasteless yet suavely assembled cinematic tale set in Paris, France featuring quasi-corrupt cops into strippers and sadomasochism, voyeuristically debauched aristocrats who are into gazing at infantile modern art and pancake makeup and SS regalia-sporting prostitutes humping Scorpio Rising-esque motorcycles, designer drugs that heighten orgasms but ultimately enslave and brain damage the user, sneaky snake boyfriends who sell their girlfriends into sex slavery via drug/prostitution rings, and what is probably the only disco soundtrack in all of cinema history that does not inspire the viewer to want to jump out of a window in relief like anti-hero Alex from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Brigade mondaine* is a virtual celluloid night club from late-1970s

BRIGADE MONDAINE

Sodom that reminds viewers that not all cops and blueblood Counts are upright sexual cripples.

During the first couple minutes of *Brigade mondaine*, a beautiful blonde chick wearing nothing but a raincoat is killed by a masked assailant in fetishistic black leather. When the ravishing victim falls down to her premature death, her raincoat gratuitously swings open and her blood-soaked and now-unclad body is exposed for the world to see in a scene of overwhelming vulnerability that sums up the essence of *Brigade mondaine*. To his rather strange over excitement, an oversexed and overworked police sergeant in the vice squad named Boris Corentin (Patrice Valota) is assigned to homicide to discover the dubious drug-related death of the shotgun bullet-riddled blonde. It must be a really personal case for Boris because he is a sadomasochist who is into strikingly rough sex, especially choking, and blonde 'sex workers,' and the wanton and drug-addled babe that was killed was just his type. Through his spectacular detective work, Boris learns a ecstasy-like drug has hit the streets that initially intensifies orgasms but eventually turns the user into a braindead zombie who "takes pleasure in his/her degradation," which makes for the perfect slave for a prostitution ring, which the blonde murder victim was part of. Meanwhile, a naive young girl named Micheline (Odile Michel in her second film role, who started her acting career quite differently with Diane Kurys' *Peppermint Soda* (1977) aka *Diabolo menthe*) starts a seemingly magical and heavenly relationship with a half-gay-like hairdresser named Patrick Morel (Patrick Olivier), a character who seems to be modeled after Manson Family victim Jay Sebring, a seedy Hollywood hairdresser that was deeply immersed in the drug/crime world. While promising her everything plus the world, Patrick soon has Micheline engaging in a unhealthy ménage à trois with his dyke hairdresser compatriot Peggy (Marie-Georges Pascal) and before she knows it, the terrible twosome make the formerly wholesome girl a druggie sex slave. Eventually, Micheline is forced by her kidnapers to take the name "Chloé" and she becomes the erotic plaything of a debauched and nearly elderly aristocratic and art collector named Count Paul-Henri Vaugoubert de Saint-Loup (Jacques Berthier). When Sergeant Boris finally discovers the pernicious involuntary prostitution of young girls by Patrick and Peggy, as well as Count de Saint-Loup's role, he absurdly asks his stripper/porn star girlfriend Anne (Florence Cayrol) to be his "goat" in the Hindi sense in a precarious plot twist that only gets all the more ridiculous as the film progress. A totally titillating temptress, Anne has no problem enticing de Saint-Loup, especially after doing some 'performance art' in the form of wearing nothing but a SS officer's hat and G-string while humping a motorcycle and animal furs. Quite infatuated with his new catch, the corrupt Count even gives his sex slave Chloé to Anne as a present, which ultimately leads to his demise and Mistress Micheline's inevitable escape from being a somewhat involuntary victim of vice.

One of the greatest aspects of *Brigade mondaine*, especially when compared

to similarly themed Hollywood films, is the film's almost complete and utter lack of a moral compass as a wildly wanton and ridiculously morally reckless work that features a less than thin line between good guys and bad guys, hence the its porn-like alternate title *Victims of Vices*, which calls into question who are/is the victim(s) and whether or not they are a victim of vice and/or the victim of the police vice squad. Featuring a conspicuously corrupt cop who virtually prostitutes his stripper girlfriend, who herself seems to enjoy her uncover work a little bit too much, just to crack a criminal case, as well as a victim who enjoys the vice, including lesbianism and starring in pornography, until it gets a bit too spicy, *Brigade mondaine* works best as an ostensibly intentionally soulless yet succulently stylized piece of sexy celluloid sleaze that acts as one of the most unflatteringly honest depictions of its libertine post-hippie era. Created in the wake of the death of the so-called 'sexual revolution,' *Brigade mondaine* portrays the natural brutal byproducts of an intrinsically intemperate zeitgeist that tried to pass off self-indulgent hedonism and reckless 'romantic' sexual relationships as serious and liberating political idealism of the 'New Left' as schemed by hostile Hebrews like Herbert Marcuse. Of course, the cocaine and popper-fueled disco subculture that reached its peak in popularity during the late 1970s acted as the final nail in the coffin for the imaginary utopia of 'peace and love' and confirmed what the sexual revolution was really about: cheap and shallow sex, the death of the family and traditional romantic relationships, unquenchable materialism and lack of true spirituality, and all around mindless self-indulgence at any cost. Of course, like victim Micheline of *Brigade mondaine*, one inevitably becomes more deleteriously enslaved to sex, drugs and rock n roll (or in this case, disco) than they ever would be by religion. A forgotten minor master of cinematic libertinage, Jacques Scandelari, not unlike seedy celluloid surrealist Alberto Cavallone (*Blue Movie*, *Blow Job*), was an idiosyncratic exploitation filmmaker whose unfortunately rather small oeuvre is infinitely more interesting than revered exploitation hacks like Jesús Franco and Joe D'Amato, who for every decent film they made, have twenty more that have made a mockery of their trade. While not Scandelari's greatest effort, *Brigade mondaine* proves, if nothing else, that dark disco music and topless seductresses with totenkopfs emblems on their S&M SS hats can make for one hell of a cheap yet captivating celluloid cocktail. Forget *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Brigade mondaine* is rare and indisputable proof that not all disco music is gay, even if it was directed by a rampantly gay porn producer.

-Ty E

NEW YORK CITY INFERNO
NEW YORK CITY INFERNO

Jacques Scandolari (1978)

With Interior. Leather Bar. (2013) – Hollywood-actor-turned-homophile-arthouse-auteur James Franco and his cinematic compatriot Travis Mathews' reimagining of the 40 minutes or so of eternally lost footage cut from William Friedkin's sadomasochistic sodomite 'slasher' flick *Cruising* (1980) – it is a better time than ever for fetishistic French filmmaker Jacques Scandolari's heretical hardcore porn flick *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales* aka *From Paris to New York* to be rescued from ostensible celluloid obscurity. Directed by the man (yet credited under the pseudonym 'Marvin Merkins') who brought the world *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971) aka *La philosophie dans le boudoir* – a super sensual and severe surrealist arthouse flick based on the memoirs of the Marquis de Sade – and penned by American journalist/historian Elliott Stein (who worked with Kenneth Anger on his 1965 tabloid masterpiece *Hollywood Babylon*), *New York City Inferno* is like a pornographic art-exploitation film from the prospective of one of the many real-life boot-and-ass-licking, shit-chowing homo-fascist leather-fag extras from Friedkin's *Cruising* and shot in a exceedingly seedy and glaringly gritty cinéma vérité style that makes it quite clear to the viewer that what they are witnessing is a boner-fide depiction of wild rectum ranger wantonness. Featuring an aberrant army of underground urinal urchins who – not unlike the poofter performers of Interior. Leather Bar. – had no qualms about being credited by their real-life Greenwich Village streets names, *New York City Inferno* is a foolishly filthy film that needs to be believed. Somewhat similar in theme to the fellow frog fag flick *Johan* aka *Johan – Mon été 75* directed by Philippe Vallois – a work about a lonely Parisian lavender cowboy who enters the unsavory underbelly of various sod subcultures of anonymous sex and S&M sacrilege while waiting for his bent boy toy to get out of prison – *New York City Inferno* follows Paris-born pansy Jérôme (played by Alain-Guy Giraudon, but credited as 'Christopher Dock') as he travels to the horribly hostile human sewers of NYC to be reunited with his rebellious lover Paul (Bob Bleecker); a flaming fellow who has fallen hopelessly in love with the big rotten apple's leather-fag subculture. Featuring complimentary and highly stereotypical skin-diver tunes by queer musical icons the Village People, itself the brainchild of a fagola Frenchmen, as well as punk art noise performances in the same gay gutter garage where penetrating poofter orgies take place among the popper-possessed, ass-munching audience members, *New York City Inferno* is a positively potent remainder as to why AIDS is oftentimes described as 'gay cancer.'

If Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964) signaled in the arrival of militaristic libertine leather-fags in NYC, *New York City Inferno* announced the Sodomite SS world revolution where not a single anal or oral orifice is spared. Jaded gen-

tleman Jérôme is quite curious as to why his cock-consuming comrade-in-asses Paul never returned from what was only suppose to be a week-long trip to the STD-stricken and semen-stained homo cesspools of New York City, so he decides to take a trip to the superlatively shitty city himself in the hope of finding his bugging beau. Through a series of letters he wrote to Jérôme each day, Paul cryptically detailed his hyper-hedonistic sex-capades in NYC, henceforth remarking in his final letter that he would never be returning to the supposed city of love. More resembling gutter auteur Andy Milligan – a sadistic scatman himself who derived immense pleasuring from sexually squandering his fellow fairies – than the archetypical swarthy Frenchman, Jérôme already looks the part of a 42nd street semen demon and he is about to find out that he fits right in with the fist-fucking bottomless pit of his most perverse pecker probing pipedreams. Jérôme wants to know why the sin-ridden city is “so magical” as he heard it was a “wonderful place for gay people,” so he ultimately has two objectives planned for his trip: to get fucked and to find his fuck-buddy. Upon arriving to NYC with Paul’s letters in his pockets, Jérôme speaks with a French-speaking taxi-driver who studied medicine in Belgium, thereupon learning about the various ‘cruising’ spots around Greenwich Village, including Christopher Street (home to 4 or 5 homo hang-outs), which he wastes no time visiting. During his first sexual encounter, the froggy fairy ritualistically packs a random man’s (with a matching mustache to boot) meat in a literal meat-packing plant while the mutilated carcass of a farm animal acts as a sick sex object of sorts. After meeting “a strange man, half-sorcerer, half-fortuneteller,” who eventually reads his fortune via his ejaculatory seed, Jérôme is finally on the true path to finding Paul, but he must prowl the streets for “good-looking boys” with “violent tendencies” and venomous but vital juices before reuniting with his sissie soul mate. As Jérôme learns after a number of ballum rancum bumfeſts and leather-laced ring-piece-licking man-jams, to get Paul back, he must become the “Master of his Master” or face Dorian love disgrace.

Most likely the film from where “Dutch Fassbinder” Edwin Brienen (notice the guy in the upper right corner of the poster/banner at the top of this review with the pink shirt and blue hat) developed his signature auteur look, *New York City Inferno* is indubitably a hardcore leather-fag flick with ferocious style and severely subversive spirit and certainly one of handful of man-meat movies that – not unlike the early films of Fred Halsted (*The Sex Garage*, *LA Plays Itself*) – that vanilla-sex-inclined heterosexuals can get hip with, if not for all the wrong reasons. The virtual missing celluloid link between *Scorpio Rising* and *Cruising*, *New York City Inferno* is an essential piece of leather-fag sinema history that deserves a larger cult-following; be it among copulating cock-suckers and/or otherwise. *New York City Inferno* is the film that *Night of the Occultist* (1973) directed by ‘Kenneth Andrews’ – a patently pathetic pornographic Kenneth Anger-wannabe directed by a man whose pseudonym is as transparent

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lack of artistic originality – wishes it was, as a strikingly salacious cinematic work where 'Scorpio' rises from hell and is sucked up and down by the most sordid and subversive street of NYC's secret Sodom. Created at a time before the total homogenization of homos via Hebraic Hirschfeld-inspired Hollywood, *New York City Inferno* is a fag flesh flick with a soul, albeit a surpassingly sleazy, seedy, and scatological sod one. More masculine than the bromide boys featured in contemporary Judaic Tinseltown 'bromance' movies like *Wedding Crashers* (2005) and *I Love You, Man* (2009), as well as anything that nauseating negrophile queen Quentin Tarantino has ever directed, *New York City Inferno* is a gay Grindhouse flick on steroids that, aside from a scene featuring an interview with a theology student who hopes to promote pro-gay propaganda among Christian churches, never demands shallow acceptance from the viewer, but, instead, a strong stomach of steel. Featuring both punk pansies and punk rockers (and a peculiar combination of both), *New York City Inferno* is a highly heretical piece of hidden homosexual film history that features more shadowy trick-turning than Francis Delia's *Nightdreams* (1981) and a more intricate narrative than Jonas Middleton's *Through the Looking Glass* (1976). If you ever doubted a horny homo's keen ability to fetishize and/or fuck billiard balls, meat-racks, defecating negroes, work boots, lonely police officers, fortunetellers, terrible tattoos, and over-educated taxi-drivers, look no further than *New York City Inferno*; a rare erotic French film with an actual pair of testicles, albeit covered in scabies, shit, semen, and sanguine fluids.

-Ty E

CAT PEOPLE

Jacques Tourneur (1942)

Considering underrated cult auteur Curtis Harrington's poesy and hypnotic art-horror-thriller *Night Tide* (1961)—a work about a lonely and seemingly melancholy sailor played by Dennis Hopper in his first leading who discovers phantasmagorical yet ultimately tragic love in the form of a mysterious miss who may or may not be a real mermaid but plays one in a seaside amusement park—is a personal cinematic favorite of mine, I felt it was about time that I got around to viewing the film that probably had the biggest aesthetic and thematic influence on it, *Cat People* (1942) directed by French-American dime-store director Jacques Tourneur (*Nightfall*, *Night of the Demon*) and produced by his RKO Studios collaborator Val Lewton, whose 1930 short story *The Bagheeta* the film was based on. In 1942, Lewton became the head of the horror department of RKO Studios and he was required to follow three artistically constraining rules for the films he produced: 1. All films had to be under a meager \$150,000 budget 2. All films had to be less than 75 minutes in length 3. The monetary-inclined supervisors of the studio had the artistic honor of dreaming up the film titles. Despite these absurd but seemingly creativity-inspiring constraints, Lewton and Tourneur were not only able to create a rare, artsy and ultimately pioneering non-budget Hollywood horror flick with their first cinematic collaboration *Cat People*, but the film also made a relatively amazing \$4 million in its first two years and saved the studio from financial ruin despite its patently pathetic budget of \$141,659, thus proving there is no correlation between a film's budget and its artistic potential, at least when it comes to ostensible horror flicks. Utilizing recycled sets from big budget RKO productions, including Orson Welles' studio butchered period piece *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), *The Cat People*, as well as other Lewton/Tourneur RKO cinematic collaborations like *I Walked With a Zombie* (1943) and *The Leopard Man* (1943) and the films of James Whale (*Frankenstein*, *The Old Dark House*), are probably the closest Hollywood has ever come to directing a poetic horror work worthy of being compared to European art flicks like Carl Theodor Dreyer's ominous and oneiric celluloid horror poem *Vampyr* (1932) and the allegorical surrealist celluloid shadowplays of Jean Cocteau. Not just a piece of beautiful yet beastly B-grade celluloid art of the cinematically poetical variety, *The Cat People* is also a reasonably thematically intricate work that meditates on still relevant and 'controversial' dichotomies like race/culture (Slavic and Anglo-American), gender (male and female), religion (Christian and Pagan), and the intellect (rationality and irrationality) in its depiction of a darkly romantic cultural clash between a Serbian beauty with deep ancestral roots and the archetypal happy-go-lucky American philistine she makes the ultimately fatal mistake of marrying.

While making crude sketches of a black panther while hanging out at Central

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Park Zoo in Manhattan, NYC, Serbian-born fashion designer Irena Dubrovna (played by French actress Simone Simon) is approached by a would-be-suave American-born gentleman named Oliver Reed (Kent Smith), who must look and act dumber than he really is as he is apparently a marine engineer. The two hit it off and Irena immediately invites Oliver back to her apartment for tea, where the little lady shows off her prized statue of her hero King John of Serbia impaling a large cat with a phallic sword, which is essentially an allegorical symbol of rational and masculine Christianity triumphing over female and irrational paganism. As Irena proudly proclaims, she considers King John a hero because he defeated and drove out the Mameluks, whose occupation caused her people to spiritually degenerate to the point of becoming evil witches who bowed down to Satan and subscribed to a sort of hedonistic barbarism. King John also killed the spiritually lost Serbs, but “the wisest and the most wicked” among them managed to find sanctuary in the mountains. Although somewhat disturbed by Irena’s story, Oliver almost spontaneously falls in love with her at first sight (or so he believes) because, after all, she wears a potent form of arousing perfume that is “something warm...living” and she has an exotic accent and an unconventional beauty that one just cannot find anywhere, even in multicultural-friendly NYC. When Oliver buys Irena a kitten as a surprise present, he learns that his lover is the opposite of catnip and that she believes she is descended from the ungodly and lustful cat people of her village who can transform into vicious black panthers upon becoming simply sexually aroused. Like anyone hit with the irrational spell of love, Oliver ignores Irena’s superstitious and seemingly schizophrenic stories and passionately persuades her to marry him, which she somewhat reluctantly does as a woman who is afraid of love (and with good reason) and opening herself up to someone else.

During their post-wedding dinner at an authentic Serbian restaurant, Irena feels the supernatural subconscious of her soul stir when a fellow female Serb randomly remarks “~~XXXX~~a ~~XXXXXX~~a” (“my sister”) in a conspicuously cryptic manner that makes the woman seem like a member of an evil satanic cult. Afraid that it will not just be the pussy in her panties that will purr if she sleeps with her new classically handsome hubby Oliver, Irena keeps her physical distances, which is certainly no way to start a healthy marriage. Cock-blocked by what seems to be his wife’s seemingly insane spiritual blasphemy, Oliver naturally persuades his ostensibly half-insane spouse to see a psychiatrist named Dr. Louis Judd (Tom Conaway), a professionally unethical pervert hack with a god complex who seems to be a composite of rival psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl G. Jung—two men that were known to get more than intimate with their patients—that ultimately sees a sensual Serbian woman whose lack of sanity he will opportunistically exploit. Meanwhile, Oliver confides in his attractive assistant Alice Moore (Jane Randolph) about his marital qualms and she eventually admits her undying love for him, thus a siring bizarre love triangle where Irena

slowly but surely falls out of favor, while her seemingly sociopathic psychiatrist plots to get his prick wet. After Irena learns of Oliver's quasi-extramarital activity when she spots him eating with Alice at a restaurant, the saddened wife stalks the home wrecker as she walks home like a carnivorous kitty cat playing with its mousy prey, but nothing happens. Later, Alice is also nearly scared to death after being stalked by an animal while taking a swim in an indoor swimming pool and Irena comes in looking for Oliver not long after, thus hinting at the seductive Serb's werecat ways. To her credit, Irena's husband Oliver and Alice are conspiring to get her institutionalized so they can marry and they plan to use degenerate Dr. Judd to carry out the scheme, but he has different plans of the more salacious sort that ultimately leave him dead after arousing the Serb's pussy. In the end, Irena accepts her fate as a perennial Slavic werecat and unleashes the panther at the zoo that takes her life, thus allowing archetypal moronic Americans Oliver and Alice to marry and live happily ever after.

Beginning with the fictitious quote "Even as fog continues to lie in the valleys, so does ancient sin cling to the low places, the depressions in the world of consciousness," (*The Anatomy of Atavism*) written by pernicious pervert psychiatrist Dr. Louis Judd, who ironically dies as a result of his own atavistic tendencies, *The Cat People* is a rare work of its time that seemed to side with the dark aspects of humanity, including paganism and irrationality, while also portraying the hypocrisy and pedantic nature of academic psychology and the unwavering arrogance and ignorance of Americans in regard to foreign peoples and cultures. It might be a bit of personal prejudice on my part, but the only character I found even remotely sympathetic and not suffering from a certain deracinated soullessness is Cat chick Irena Dubrovna as she has yet to be tainted by the culture-distorting uprooting force of American universalism, hence her ceaseless feeling of detachment and isolation from her husband and everyone else she comes in contact with, as well as her eventual and ultimately suicidal acceptance of who she really is and where she comes from. Husband Oliver never really seems to love Irena, but has a sort of irrational lust (He's viscerally "drawn to her" and she gives him a "different feeling" from the average American girl) of the metaphysical sort due to her exotic beauty and foreign background and when he finally realizes this, he seeks refuge in his 'safe', modest, and mundane assistant Alice Moore, a woman whose essence is as banal as American pie. Of course, culturally mixed marriages, especially of the miscegenation-based sort oftentimes reveal themselves to be novelties that produce mixed up and miserable children, something that Irena and Oliver thankfully avoid due to her vicious pussycat-like ways.

Followed by a barely related but apparently somewhat worthwhile (non)sequel entitled *The Curse of the Cat People* (1944), as well as an erotically-charged and even gratuitous but extremely loose and thematically lackluster 1982 remake of the same name directed by Paul Schrader and starring Nastassja Kinski and Mal-

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colm McDowell, *Cat People* has certainly left its paw marks in the cinema world and rightfully so as a rare old Hollywood studio system horror flick with actual lifeblood and potent poetry that brought artistic merit to a most aesthetically meritless film genre. Interestingly enough, *Cat People* is one of only a handful of films in film history where the producer artistically contributed to the film to a notable degree where one could argue that Val Lewton—a novelist and poet—was the true ‘auteur’ of the film as its ‘creative producer’, which is further supported by the fact that most of the works he subsequently produced have a similar feel and essence, using shadow and symbols like only a natural artist would, which Curtis Harrington would take to more eerie and esoteric extremes in his debut feature-length work *Night Tide* (1961). Of course, trashy popular television shows like the HBO series *True Blood* (2008-present), a rather guilty pleasure of mine, would be almost unthinkable without *Cat People*, so naturally I felt it was my duty to praise this little film.

-Ty E

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

Jacques Tourneur (1943)

As the largely pathetically plastic and aesthetically and artistically prosaic history of Hollywood—a virtual dream factory designed for dullards and dictated over by demons and devils—surely demonstrates, the producer-as-auteur is a most putrid prospect that, not surprisingly, reached its peak long ago during the first year of the Second World War with such preposterously plush proto-blockbusters as *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Needless to say, it is somewhat shocking yet somehow strangely fitting that during WWII a deracinated Judaic producer would be responsible for creating some of the greatest and most pleasantly poetic horror films of all-time. Influencing everything from Curtis Harrington's delightful debut feature *Night Tide* (1961) to Roger Corman's *Poe Cycle* (1960-1964) to Mike Nichols' sole unexpected horror effort *Wolf* (1994), Val Lewton—the introverted nephew of femme fatale Alla Nazimova who was behind the surprisingly artsy fartsy Oscar Wilde adaptation *Salomé* (1923)—never directed a single feature but to deny him the status of 'auteur' would be insulting to a man that produced films that were certainly weirder and more poetical than anything ever directed by James Whale. Indeed, as a producer at RKO Pictures during the 1940s, Lewton actually managed to rival the Teutonic masters of German Expressionism with a cycle of boldly beautiful and hypnotically haunting horror movies that, despite technically being low-budget quickies, brought artistic credibility to a genre that very few took/take seriously. While most of Lewton's horror films have something to offer, I can state without even the slightest degree of hesitation that *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943) is easily my favorite of these flavorsome fright flicks. Directed by Jacques Tourneur who helmed the greatest (and earliest) of the Lewton films, including *Cat People* (1942) and *The Leopard Man* (1943), and who would also direct the great British horror flick *Night of the Demon* (1957), Lewton's pre-Romero zombie flick is probably the single greatest artistic contribution to the flesheater genre and it does not even feature a single instance of flesh-eating. In short, *I Walked with a Zombie* makes for a great case that George A. Romero may have had a disastrous influence on zombie cinema, but of course that would be missing the point as the film is a piece of cinematic poetry that simply transcends any sort of genre ghetto and is imbued with a sort of warm melancholy and the uniquely uncanny that, not unlike the undead negroes in the film, leaves one in a trance.

While it might just be a mere coincidence, it seems that the most poetic works of horror cinema do not extend much past the 60-minute mark as demonstrated by Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Jean Epstein's *The*

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Fall of the House of Usher (1928), Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), and Jörg Buttgerit's *Schramm* (1993), among various other examples. Of course, *I Walked with a Zombie*, not unlike Lewton's other RKO horror films, is no different as a 69-minute feature with a seemingly immaculate flow and pace that begs for frequent re-watchings. In fact, the first time I watched the film, I decided to immediately re-watch it and I felt no less effortlessly enraptured during this second viewing, which is not something I can say about many films, including many of my favorite ones. Clearly made before the zombie film became a ghettoized gallery of the unimaginatively gory and grotesque, the film—unquestionably the greatest collaboration between dual auteurs Lewton and Tourneur—demonstrates that sometimes taking narrative influence from a classic Charlotte Brontë *Bildungsroman* like *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* (1847) can do a horror film good as a hallucinatory cinematic work that takes an almost somnambulist approach to the art of storytelling. Indeed, a quite literally titled flick less-than-loosely based on the story of the same name featured in *American Weekly* magazine by roving journalist Inez Wallace, it begins in a flashback form and even disseminates narrative bits in the form of a goofy negro calypso singer who seems almost literally possessed with a need to spread the anti-gospel of a romantically accursed white plantation family. A film that is somewhat in the racially-charged tradition of H.P. Lovecraft in terms of depicting the forsaken status of white European colonial types that made the mistake of colonizing exotic lands and mixing with non-Europeans, the film also wallows in the hopelessly hoodooed status of Faustian man and his sorry state in the postcolonial world. Needless to say, *I Walked with a Zombie* makes Wes Craven's particularly plodding *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988) seem like an artless exercise in zany xenophilia by comparison. Additionally, even the watchable second season *The X-Files* episode "Fresh Bones"—a racially confused tribute to the dubious horrors of Haitian Vodou—seems like a feckless fantasy compared to the pure preternatural poetry of Lewton's classic flick. Admittedly, the film also imbues the viewer with a sense that it makes no sense to fiddle with the old dark things of old dark peoples lest one suffer an indelible sort of spiritual miscegenation.

Although himself a *mischling* with tiresomely turgid prose, film scholar Chris Fujiwara makes a great point about the film in his text *The Cinema of Nightfall: Jacques Tourneur* (1998) when he argues that, "To try to synopsize *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* is a peculiarly ridiculous task, since the film, more systematically than any other Tourneur film, abolishes narrative verisimilitude," yet Fujiwara then curiously proceeds to provide a synopsis, but I digress. While Fujiwara tends to puke-out prosaic puffery as is especially apparent in his obscenely banal Otto Preminger biography *The World and Its Double* (2008), he completely nails it when he states, "One of Tourneur's most beautiful films, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* is a sustained exercise in uncompromising ambiguity. Per-

fecting the formula that Lewton and Tourneur had developed in *CAT PEOPLE*, the film carries its predecessor's elliptical, oblique narrative procedures to astonishing extremes. The dialogue is almost nothing but a commentary on past events, obsessively revisiting itself, finally giving up the struggle to explain and surrendering to a mute acceptance of the inexplicable. We watch the slow, atmospheric, lovingly detailed scenes with delight and fascination, realizing at the end that we have seen nothing but the traces of a conflict decided in advance."

I have to confess that virtually every single nurse that I have ever personally known was a cold cunt and it comes as no surprise to me that an inordinately large number of female serial killers were members of the profession, but it would be a lie to say that *I Walked with a Zombie* lead Betsy Connell (Frances Dee)—a white Canadian chick that immediately lets the viewer know via voiceover that she once "walked with a zombie"—is unlikable, though one certainly sometimes questions her borderline cuckquean-like behavior. Although a Canadian nurse, Betsy somehow finds herself relocating to the Caribbean island of Saint Sebastian where she is hired by the severely cynical Paul Holland (Tom Conway)—a cultivated man that seems to hate everyone and everything, especially in regard to his seemingly accursed family and their dubious legacy—to take care of his wife Jessica Holland (Christine Gordon) who may or may not be a zombie. While Jessica's status as a member of the living dead is somewhat questionable, her past life as a wanton whore is unquestionable as she was responsible for bringing misery to Paul's family by starting a lurid extramarital love affair with his hunky half-brother Wesley Rand (James Ellison) who clearly has stronger feelings for the tragic voodoo floozy. Needless to say, Nurse Betsy, who eventually develops curious romantic feelings for Paul, finds herself getting stuck in the middle of the fucked family affair and even gets so desperate in her quest to cure Jessica that she takes her to a voodoo temple called a 'Houmfort' with the help of a titular undead colored gentleman named Carrefour (Darby Jones) with big bulging eyes that puts maestro Mantan Moreland to shame in terms of the unnervingly grotesque and racially caricaturely unfortunate. Naturally, Betsy is somewhat shocked when she discovers that Paul and Wesley's mother Mrs. Rand (who is strangely portrayed by Vincent Price's wife Edith Barrett in old fart makeup) is not only involved in the voodoo scene, but she also takes credit for turning Jessica into a zombie. Of course, it is hard to hate Mrs. Rand as Jessica is the hot twat harpy that ripped her family apart. While Mrs. Rand only makes her curious confession after a local commissioner opts to launch an official investigation into the living dead dame's (ostensible?) illness, her son Wesley decisively puts an end to all the madness by killing Jessica—with or without the help of less than divine intervention—and then drowning himself in a darkly dreamy scenario that rather conveniently takes place at very same time a voodoo

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ritual involving an effigy of Jessica is being carried out by the local voodoo negroes. While *I Walked with a Zombie* does not end on a happy note as potential lovebirds Betsy and Paul do not even start a romance (though such a scenario was rightly excised from the original script), it could not have ended any other way as a film that wallows in the racially apocalyptic legacy of colonialism and, in turn, (proto)multiculturalism. In short, Lovecraft wept.

Undoubtedly Lewton's greatest director, Tourneur apparently also shared his collaborator's 'progressive' outlook when it came to race as is so delicately depicted not only in *I Walked with a Zombie*, but also his later films. Indeed, as Tourneur once stated in an interview with Positif in regard to his then-atypical affection for Afro-Americans, "I've always refused to caricature blacks. I've never or almost never showed them as domestics. I've always tried to give them a profession, to have them speak normally without drawing any comic effect. Watch in *OUT OF THE PAST* the scene in the nightclub where there are only black people, look at the way they're dressed and filmed, the elegance of the young woman in responding to Mitchum. Several times I've been accused of being a 'n*gger lover' and for long months I was out of the studios for that reason. It was a sort of gray list." Undoubtedly, many of the colored characters in Lewton's/Tourneur's zombie flick have a sort of rare 'tragic nobility' that is thankfully not betrayed by the sort of rabid self-righteous resentment and racial hubris that is typical of ostensibly progressive modern-day Hollywood films, especially the sort of black bourgeois pseudo-art horror of Jordan Peele (who has rightly been described as the great Afro-American film critic Armond White as a "race hustler" and "charlatan"). Additionally, whether intentional or not, *I Walked with a Zombie* manages to make a mockery of spiritually castrated white progressive types, namely in a scene where the character Paul—the wealthy yet accursed descendant of slave traders—declares when describing a statue of Saint Sebastian named Ti-Misery that, "it was once the figurehead of a slave-ship. That's where our people came from." Indeed, like the stereotype of the sort of nihilistic self-destructive aristocrat described in Vilfredo Pareto's classic text *The Rise and Fall of Elites: Application of Theoretical Sociology*, degenerate rich boy Paul absurdly identifies with people of a completely different race and class over his own kin, but such is the forsaken fate of a fucked fellow from a unfortunate family that made the rather shortsighted mistake of getting rich off of slavery. Needless to say, Paul's curse is also now that of the entire modern Occidental world.

Notably, in his worthwhile text *Val Lewton: the Reality of Terror* (1972), Joel E. Siegel, who regards *I Walked with a Zombie* as the first of Lewton's two

true masterpieces (the other being the delightfully deathly dark *The Seventh Victim* (1943) directed by Mark Robson) and a work somewhat rightly compared to Robert Bresson's *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) in terms of its technique and mosaic-like structure, soundly argues, "Lewton's strongest abilities are, as [James] Agee observed, poetic and cinematic and not literary or romantic. A very free adaptation of *JANE EYRE*, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* is particularly poetic in its equivocal, often inexplicable, interrelationships between characters [...] At no time in the film, even at its conclusion, do we have any idea of strong, single motivations determining the action and characters. Lewton cleverly sets up a series of perplexing relationships; the mystery of his complexly driven human characters leads us outward, gradually to accept the film's supernatural elements without disbelief. The film's central image, an emblematic crystallization of all this ambiguity, is the figurehead of St Sebastian which came to the island on a slave ship and now stands in the Holland garden. St Sebastian, who exists at the meeting point of paganism and Christianity, is a fit deity for the film, a mixture of the elemental and the tamed, the fleshly and the divine. The figurehead, which at times serves as a quick transition between scenes, is an emblem of the blending of love and hatred, beauty and terror, reason and superstition, at the heart of this complex, remarkable film." Indeed, aside from being a rare example of a film that does not utilize Saint Sebastian in a hokey homoerotic way à la Paul Schrader's dreadful *Dominion: Prequel to the Exorcist* (2005), *I Walked with a Zombie* is a rare horror film that manages to be just as effortlessly enigmatic as it is archetypically perennial.

Apparently, Val Lewton's own loving wife said in regard to the film that is quite arguably her husband's magnum opus, "I would never go to see a movie called *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* unless somebody dragged me there." Rather fittingly, the film even opens with the heroine Betsy Connell mocking the title in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, but unfortunately the title at least temporarily acted as a curse of sorts on the ill-fated-filled film, or as Siegel explained, "It is perhaps characteristic of Lewton's career that this film, one of the rare pieces of pure visual poetry ever to come out of Hollywood, was seen by hardly anybody but the bloodthirsty chiller fans who frequented theaters like the Rialto in New York. Later, through the efforts of critics like James Agee and Manny Farber, readers of magazines like *THE NATION* and *THE NEW REPUBLIC* were altered to the very special quality of Lewton's productions." Personally, I am still pissed off at myself for not watching the film over a decade ago as I already regard it as easily in my own personal 'top ten films of all-time' despite only first seeing it this year. Indeed, while I now generally regard most of the zombie (sub)genre as being about as appetizing as undead excreta, *I Walked with a Zombie* is a potent reminder as to why I love cinema and spend so much time devouring

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cinema despite being routinely disappointed by a good portion of it. While I will always have a softspot for fine flesh-eating filmic feces like Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie*, Lewton's masterpiece is the only zombie film that I can think of that manages to be a virtual perfect poetic meditation on Eros and Thanatos, among other things. Needless to say, the film will probably not exactly excite the sort of genre sociopath that finds themselves effortlessly enraptured by the sight of brutal deaths and cheap sleazy sex. Likewise, the film fails to fulfill any sort of philistine fantasy about frolicsome flesheaters as the (un)dead seem truly (un)dead and hardly the compatriots of rancid Romero retards.

Rather admittedly, I used to feel that filmic voodoo zombies were the height of banality when I was much younger due to my childish reverence for Romero and sustained boredom while watching such would-be-classic as *White Zombie* and Wes Craven's *The Serpent* and the *Rainbow*, but *I Walked with a Zombie* has single-handedly shown me the error of my ways. In fact, as far as I am concerned, it is the only zombie film I really need, though I do not plan to completely abandon the horror (sub)genre despite the appearance of such lifeless flicks as Jim Jarmusch's prosaically pretentious pomo zombie-comedy *The Dead Don't Die* (2019) where the near-elderly hipster auteur demonstrates with a dumbfounding degree of detachment his lackluster love of Romero flicks and basic bitch genre trivia. Not surprisingly, *I Walked with a Zombie* has been remade at least twice and, even less surprisingly, neither of these films are quite as good as the original. The first, *Casa de Lava* (1994) aka *Down to Earth* directed by Portuguese Pedro Costa, is a virtual postcolonial Tondichtung sans supernatural horror where the zombies are replaced by a comatose Cape Verdean 'migrant worker' who is brought back to his decaying and racially (post)apocalyptic volcanic homeland by an attractive young white nurse that tries in vain to live like the natives (and gets fucked by them in process). Unfortunately, the second sequel *Tales from the Crypt Presents: Ritual* (2002)—a gleefully degenerate and equally dumb exercise in schlocky CGI special effects and shockingly stupid lowbrow racial fetishism directed by some Israeli hack and co-produced by genre directors Richard Donner and Walter Hill that is surely not worthy of the name of the hit HBO horror anthology television series that was quite cynically tacked onto it—is a total insult to the legacy of Lewton's masterpiece. While it is surely no surprise that a stupid and sleazy remake was made with kosher cash as it is a virtual tradition of the horror genre, the fact that a perplexing European arthouse auteur like Pedro Costa would seek to rework *I Walked with a Zombie* is certainly strong evidence of the film's perennial artistic potency and integrity.

Although *I Walked with a Zombie* is unequivocally the best voodoo zombie

flick ever made, it was actually not the first. Indeed, aside from the languid yet watchable Lugosi vehicle *White Zombie*—a pre-Code independent film based on a story by writer, occultist, and purported cannibal William Seabrook—having the distinction of being the first feature-length zombie film, it was followed up by various rather racially-insensitive low-budget voodoo horror flicks, including the zombie-free Fay Wray vehicle *Black Moon* (1934) directed by Roy William Neill and *Ouanga* (1936) aka *Love Wanga* aka *Drums of the Jungle* directed by George Terwilliger (who also penned the somewhat similarly themed ‘race film’ *The Devil’s Daughter* (1939) directed by Arthur H. Leonard). While naturally also zombie-free due to being a documentary, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1954/1993) directed by experimental filmmaker Maya Deren makes for a nice double feature with *I Walked with a Zombie*. Although not altogether flattering in its depiction of Haitian voodoo, accursed auteur Richard Stanley’s doc *The White Darkness* (2002) does a good job of demystifying both the literal and figurative darkness of the sort of folk culture/religion that is depicted in *I Walked with a Zombie*. Of course, a love of Lewton’s film does not require an interest in voodoo, zombies, or even horror films. Indeed, just as Robert Bresson’s *Pickpocket* (1959) does not require one to sympathize with petty criminals, Sergei Parajanov’s *The Color of Pomegranates* (1969) does not require one to even be familiar with 18th-century Armenian poet Sayat-Nova, and *Lucifer Rising* (1971) does not require selling one’s soul to charming charlatan Aleister Crowley, *I Walked with a Zombie* does not demand one even appreciate horror or zombie films as a work of singular cinematic art that totally transcends its subject matter to provide the viewer with a virtual aesthetic high that maintains its potency on subsequent viewings. In short, the greatest film with a stupid name ever made and a cinematic work that even rivals Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* (1941) in terms of the greatest film ever produced by RKO Pictures. In fact, sorry Orson, but I have seen *I Walked with a Zombie* more times in one month than I have watched Welles’ masterpiece in my entire life and I do not feel the least bit ashamed of that fact. Undoubtedly, unless Gaspar Noé gets the great gall to direct a film inspired by Lothrop Stoddard’s classic text *The French Revolution in San Domingo* (1914), I doubt we will ever see a Caribbean-themed horror that is even vaguely as immaculately idiosyncratic as Lewton’s doubly dark masterpiece. Likewise, I doubt we will ever see a new Hollywood filmmaker that even approaches Lewton in terms of artistic integrity and great sensitivity. A rare enigma of a film producer that cared more about his art than money and made B-movies that were inspired by artists ranging from William Hogarth to Arnold Böcklin, Lewton also broke racial stereotypes and revealed a certain deep eternal darkness in Faustian man that is so elegantly expressed in *I Walked with a Zombie*. Needless to say, Faustian is more or less a member of the undead nowadays.

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-Ty E

DOGHOUSE

Jake West (2009)

For far too long has the genre of undead been weighed down by the nearsightedness of an aspiring director. The man responsible for the newest Pumpkinhead debacle, Jake West, topples the main convention of a blind toxin and instead allows for all the infected to be exclusively female. This proves to be the only charm within Doghouse, save for several amusing quotes that shy away from crossing over into full court misogyny. Starring Stephen Graham (Snatch) and Danny Dyer (Severance), this British "zom-com" serves a simple synopsis for the creativity of female objectivity. Vince is a down-on-his-luck divorcé whose friends organize a brotherly trip to the town of Moodley, rumored that women outnumber men 5 to 1. Upon arriving to find the town in ghostly shambles, the oblivious factor turns the knob to 11 as the men stumble and cavort beside severed appendages and blood splatter without realizing the dread. This leads to the emasculating situation of braindead wenches slowly killing off the tight-knit band of brothers. Though, without the movie magic glaze I slathered the synopsis over, that sheen of enjoyable horror would barely exist.

Aside from being plagued by flat characters and situational angst, Doghouse's failing point is when the gaping plot holes swallow what was left of the experience whole. Introduced early on in a subtle, propagandized flyers, Meg Nut was the local politician who is apparently a puppet in the scheme of biological weaponry. After her disconnecting and frying of their hijacked circuitry, she disappears along with the mysterious origins of the disease, never to be brought up again. Doghouse does have instances of entertainment, especially in the gents' montage of overwrought women in the opening. Only having Neil's encounter justifiable, the ball-and-chains are tucked away for this weekend as displayed with intertwining scenes of each males shedding of female manipulation as they boil to psychotic proportions. To be fair, Doghouse didn't fall into place as I expected it to. The puzzling escapades of these characters surpassed modern conventions of instinctual evolution. You'll notice that our leads never really adapt to their settings and remain as dimwitted as they opened with. However, with Vince's midlife crisis monologue near the end of the film, that shifts temporarily. But as any blank chav would, fall right back into the grand schematic of error.

Doghouse is all too simple, all too naive, and also happens to be a misnomer. The Doghouse tag was fit to designate the contradictory contagion code of Cathouse but the males never quite have a grasp on the unworldly situation they've been ensnared in. Efforts are made on their part to stencil depth, such as the frequent usage of an iPod loaded with stress-relieving motivational speakers or a character too late and his comically unlucky day shown in "Meanwhile..." sketches. Ill-equipped and unworthy of most domestic televisions and certainly any theatrical screens, Doghouse is an experiment in mediocrity that drowns before it can even

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lift off. The gross-out gags never transcend into asinine but all the while you feel as each quip becomes more painful than the last. Again, the only saving grace Doghouse utilizes is the unhampered negativity towards the callous remove of generalized females. Despite best efforts, Doghouse is just another film that should remain leashed and the inclusion of the cliché Evil Dead geek didn't help this useless "tribute" to horror.

-mAQ

FOXXY MADONNA VS. THE BLACK DEATH

Jakob Bilinski (2007) Imagine an award winning short film. I can, I've reviewed many. Just imagine watching one, where you are confused as to how it has a 9.6 rating on IMDB. That is exactly my emotions towards this film. To name off the things i disliked about this film would be most of my review. To start off, the film calls itself an "exploitation" film. Note this, Foxy Madonna doesn't exploit anything except maybe a mute, but he is the only thing worthy to talk about. This film is a brash, and juvenile attempt at making a blaxploitation film as well. I guess the director didn't realize that Foxy Madonna should have been black. The only character that could have brought any urban feel to this film was the token black character, "The Black Death". Of course, by making him urban, they just have him running around on camera with a gun calling Foxy a "Bitch". The film has been applauded for it's inventive action scenes. Does this include the horrible shot gunfight scene? Which lasted two minutes? No action at all. The plot is a mess as well. This would have been fit for a horrible film instead of a horrible short. In the beginning, we see Foxy Madonna (A renegade secret preacher agent) about to kill some vampire will-smith creature which resembles the Dark Seekers off of I Am Legend. She kills him with holy water, drinks it, then lights a cigarette. Yes, this is the only scene which could give her the "kick ass" feel as she is so notably given. To call Foxy Madonna badass would be like saying Wes Craven can still make a movie. It is a blasphemy to even mutter such. When the priest said "I Kick Ass For The Lord" in Dead Alive. That was awesome. When they try to make Christianity look stylish, it is insulting. The characters were all horrible. None of them could act except Jomar who played The Black Death. This is not exploitation. Putting cracks, grit, and hairlines in a film DOESN'T make it "Grindhouse". There is no nudity, drugs, sex, blood, or any real violence. Only the Chalk character is interesting and to top it all off, it has a forgettable soundtrack. The worst part is, is that it wasn't even entertaining. If you like watching people in their mid-thirties fire guns in a warehouse with empty boxes while moving at really slow speeds while smoking cigarettes, then this is your film.

-Maq

RARE EXPORTS: A CHRISTMAS TALE
RARE EXPORTS: A CHRISTMAS TALE

Jalmari Helander (2010)

Like many others, I consider myself a "late bloomer." To further evidence this notion, I will finally discuss my not-so intimate thoughts with Finland's finest, Rare Exports. You've heard of this film before, most everyone has. Imagine my surprise when unsuspecting family members were asking me if I had seen this film. Knowing their inability to stand anything that isn't English, they must not have known it was a Finnish presentation. The presence of Finnish directors is slowly becoming a bold force in Hollywood. Die Hard 2 director Renny Harlin hails from "Suomi" and became a pivotal figure in Hollywood. It's clearly only a matter of time before Rare Exports director Jalmari Helander is given the same treatment. Finnish natives have already conquered the Western musical interests, is cinema the next stop for Nordic assimilation? Back to the treatment of Rare Exports, my excitement for this film peaked some time ago with the unanimous praise that it had been showered with. Reminiscing of the last great Christmas movie, one to provoke the spirits of joy and holiday, I could only think of the masterpiece *Jingle All the Way* and how eager I was to share that spot.

The plot of Rare Exports is simple - a team of archaeologists unearth Santa Claus but not before vanishing. It's up to a young boy and his father, with a couple of friends, to discover the true nature of Father Christmas and prevent disaster. Rare Exports began in the form of two viral videos. The first addressing the hunting and detaining of the Father Christmases and the second being a safety manual for handling the beasts. Both exhibit clever tongue-in-cheek instances of an offbeat Kris Kringle but the continuity between both film and short predecessors is left splintered and obtrusive. Allow me skip forward a bit and point out some notable differences in the Rare Exports canon. Be warned that spoilers will be discussed following this sentence. Judging from the critical conflict in the motion picture, the archaeologists have just now discovered Santa Claus and unleashed what is thought to be the definitive Santa. Upon discovering that these malnourished bearded gents are actually Elves, the once-nervous boy summons leadership and tiny masculinity within and takes charge, destroying Santa and herding all the elves into an electric pen to be sold as "rare exports." Now that the instances of the film have been hashed over, it's safe to label the short films the sequels to the film, given the situation of rehabilitation. Many discrepancies are to be noted, however. In the film, Santa is never fully revealed, it is encased in a large chunk of ice with horns protruding. The many faces of Santa are researched early on in the film by the boy. He fails to read the text but observes the morbid pictures of he who is thought to be nice. Judge, Jury, and Executioner, rather. In Finland lore, the Santa Claus they used to have were known as "Joulupukki." This tradition involved younger males donning masks made out of the bark of trees with goat horns positioned on them. The idea

was to travel door-to-door on the Eve of Christmas and to solicit food & drink. This legend undoubtedly inspired the horns that make up the mental image of this terrifying beast. It's a shame that Christianity and Coca-Cola tainted the once-Pagan country's holiday into the red, jolly visage that makes up the Western Claus. Another inconsistent principal is the short's labeling of the naked creature as Father Christmas, not the elf that the film leads us to believe. Unless Helander changed his ideology mid-course, there should be no reason for these conflicting miscalculations.

Regardless of the lack of continuity, *Rare Exports* is indeed directed with an impeccable eye. Like most foreign arthouse affairs before it, *Rare Exports* looks too good to be considered an independent film. The style and attention to snow, Finland's most recognizable facet besides underground metal, is an interesting and fresh aesthetic. Where S. Korea utilizes natural rainy elements to give their cinema a dreamlike discourse, *Rare Exports* does the same with snow, creating a winter wonderland without the chilly side-effects. So at your leisure, enjoy *Rare Exports* for what it's worth. Because of the gorgeous composition of the film, *Rare Exports* has been receiving incredible press, some critics making such a bold statement to refer to this film as the definitive Christmas movie - one to revamp the sub-genre. The ratio of Christmas films is almost disturbing though, as *Rare Exports* doesn't have to contend to any challenger but still acts as if it came ahead in a close race. Being as Christmas is only celebrated once a year, that's the equivalent of me riffing Leprechaun for being the best St. Patrick's Day film of all time. Do any others even exist? Am I even interested enough to research? Probably not.

So apart from the cinematography and the excellent effects, what does *Rare Exports* offer you in return for a ticket or video sale? Not much, sadly. Given such a build-up, you'd think that *Rare Exports* would deliver that yuletide evil that's been hinted in taglines adorning viral promotional posters plastered all over cinema sites. The only impression *Rare Exports* left with me was a mound of unanswered questions and a wasted aesthetic. The boy's transition from mousy introvert to general hard action hero is floundering and clumsy. Once the boy fires a shot into the air and leads his seniors into battle with an unwavering speech of motivation, my interest quickly dwindled into but an ember. It's such a shame though. *Rare Exports* is the film whose hype wouldn't deceive me, I refused to allow this much. Almost instantly, this awkward transfer of manhood had preceded the short films, leaving me puzzled. The shorts I mention are the ones in which the boy had reverted into an anti-social mess of female chromosomes, only to revert back into the "manhood" he discovered early on in the *Rare Exports* timeline. Am I the only one who didn't miss his reinvention? Apart from the wounds suffered at the hands of continuity and Helander's inability to commit oneself to a set idea, *Rare Exports* isn't a naughty film. It's charming and well-shot, with enough suspense to last you until the credits grace the screen. If you

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feel that void pulsing in your chest, don't worry. I felt the disappointment thrive as well. No hard feelings though, I'm used to being disappointed on Christmas.

-mAQ

SOME CALL IT LOVING

James B. Harris (1973)

Long before becoming an auteur of ostensibly classy softcore flicks like *Two Moon Junction* (1988) and *Wild Orchid* (1989), Zalman King (who was born Zalman King Lefkowitz, but decided to change his name when he started acting so as to obscure his Hebraic background) starred in a true lost gem of a film entitled *Some Call It Loving* (1973) aka *Sleeping Beauty* aka *Dream Castle* directed by James B. Harris (*The Bedford Incident*, *Fast-Walking*) that would teach him everything he needed to know about creating aesthetically pleasing and orgasmically oneiric works of celluloid erotica. Directed by a little known sometimes filmmaker who is probably best known nowadays for being the producer of early black-and-white Stanley Kubrick films like *The Killing* (1956) and *Paths of Glory* (1957), *Some Call It Loving* was apparently dreamed up by Harris while he was working on *Lolita* (1962), although it would take over a decade before the film started production, so one can only assume it was a dream project of sorts for its director. Based on the short story *Sleeping Beauty* by John Collier—a British writer/screenwriter whose works were adapted for a number of popular horror-themed TV series, including *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Twilight Zone*, and *Tales of the Unexpected*—*Some Call It loving* is a decidedly dark and even disconcerting yet elegant aesthetically exquisite romance of the dream-logic-oriented sort that falls somewhere between a Gothic Hitchcockian melodrama and the arthouse realm as a sort of anti-fairytale for adults and *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) for people that cannot stomach French intellectual twaddle. Although virtually completely unknown today and totally unavailable in home media format, the film has been lauded by a number of highly respected film critics, including Jonathan Rosenbaum, who stated of the work in his classic text *Midnight Movies* (1983): “James B. Harris’s neglected and all but unknown *SOME CALL IT LOVING*, based on a John Collier story, “*Sleeping Beauty*”—a movie about the processes and consequences of erotic dreaming, with a swell score and a great early performance by Richard Pryor—would make a perfect midnight attraction. Like many other rare gems, it might even develop a cult, if given half an opportunity.” Of course, the film was never given a chance and remains just as obscure today as it was when it was first released over four decades ago. While *Some Call It Loving* was such a hit in Europa upon its release that director James B. Harris was invited to attend the quite honorable “Directors Fortnight” at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival and present the film, *Some Call It Loving* was naturally trashed by philistine critics in the United States and received next to no release in American theaters, hence the work’s undeserved obscurity. A work that apparently was an influence on *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) and, in my less than humble opinion, is infinitely more interesting than Kubrick’s somewhat similarly themed work *Lolita*, *Some Call It Loving*

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is a (non)love story in quasi-fetishistic filmic fairytale form that was made for those individuals that have who have fallen in love, only to be demystified of such illusions when reality appeared in its typically ruthless fashion. Indeed, if you plan to watch the film so you can wank off to Tisa Farrow's tits, you might be in for a rude awakening and/or a ruined orgasm.

Robert Troy (Zalman King) is all by his lonesome at a carnival and finds himself enticed by an attraction advertising a 'Sleeping Beauty' of sorts. Indeed, a carny 'Carnival Doctor' (Logan Ramsey) claims that the sleeping beauty in question, Jennifer (Played by Mia Farrow's much more attractive, if not less talented, sister Tisa Farrow) has been supposedly asleep for 8 years. For one single dollar, patrons can attempt to awaken the slumbering angelic beauty with a big juicy kiss, but as the good Carnival Doctor warns, "To wake the Sleeping Beauty, you run the risk of being awakened yourself." The Sleeping Beauty certainly awakens something in Robert, as he offers the carny Doctor \$20,000 on the spot for the living carnival attraction after spending some private time with her and realizing that he has more or less fell in love with her at first sight (when Robert initially asks the Carny to see the Sleeping Beauty in private, the Doc yells at him for making such a 'moral proposition', but when he offers him \$50, that all changes, with the sleazy flesh-peddler saying he can do whatever he wants with her, "no questions asked"). Robert brings Jennifer aka 'Sleeping Beauty' home in a hearse and immediately tells his two girlfriends, Scarlett (British actress Carol White) and Angelica (Veronica Anderson), who are making love together in bed, that he has acquired a real live Sleeping Beauty and he plans to wake her up, as if that is an everyday occurrence. Indeed, Robert, who is a saxophone player in a degenerate jazz band, lives in a baroque mansion where he is in ménage à trios of sorts, but now the only thing he can think of is Jennifer, even though he knows nothing about her aside from the fact that thousands upon thousands of horny men have defiled her body over the past 8 years or so. Although he lives a life of luxury in a majestic mansion that seems like it was taken straight out of a classic storybook, Robert's only friend is a belligerent negro wino named Jeff (portrayed by Richard Pryor in a rather humorous, if not superlatively self-degrading role), who enjoys drawing hearts over urinals and whose liver is about to explode. Despite the fact that Robert does everything he can for Jeff, the jigaboo dipsomaniac is an ingrate, even making the following complaint after his friend attempts to give him a ride home: "I'm a man now, you wanna get down? Because you help me with some bills and took me to the doctor, I owe you something?! Huh, nigga?!"

Needless to say, when Sleeping Beauty finally wakes up and says "hello," Robert is in pure heaven and he immediately treats his new dream lover to an extravagant tap dance routine that is performed with pure Sapphic passion by Scarlett and Angelica. More than anything, Robert is deeply enamored with Jennifer's childlike innocence and purity, as if she is indeed a real living and

breathing undefiled dame from a fairytale. To humor her curious childlike ways, Robert plays hide-and-go-seek with Jennifer around the mansion, though she has a somewhat hard time playing due to the fact that she is confined to a wheelchair as her legs are quite weak from being immobile for 8 years. Meanwhile, Scarlett and Angelica play erotically-charged role-playing games around the house, including pretending to be nuns in a monastery and a master-and-slave scenario (not only is Scarlett the master of the game, but she is also the real master of the house). Since Scarlett is in charge, everyone does what she says, including Robert, who is a sort of unofficial cuckold, though he is getting tired of the lifestyle. When Robert introduces Jennifer to Jeff, the black bum, who is like a virtual walking-and-talking minstrel show, makes a joke that the little lady is 'passing' for white and that she is a Siamese twin who "used to be connected to a black chick because you're black and tan." Over time, Robert begins calling Jennifer his little "jellybean" and even tells her that he loves her. Jennifer then reveals that she feels like "It's like a dream...like I'm not completely awake yet" and reveals to Robert how she was kissed and molested by countless old dirty men when she was asleep. Coming to the conclusion that Jennifer thinks he is someone that he is not and that he wants to do everything he can to preserve her purity and their relationship, Robert decides that he and his beloved will move out of the mansion, but when he tells queen bitch Scarlett about his plans, she makes the following typically female passive aggressive threat: "I don't want to lose you Robert, so whatever it is I have to do to keep you here...I'm going to do it." Of course, Robert ends up staying and Scarlett begins incorporating Jennifer in her perverted role-playing games, including a scenario where they trick the Jazz musician into thinking their engaging in lurid lesbo sex. Bummed out, Robert talks to Jeff, even telling the black bum he envies him because nothing surprises him, remarking: "you're not surprised if you piss your pants or don't piss at all. You wake up in the gutter instead of your bed...that doesn't surprise you either. In fact, you wouldn't be surprised if you didn't even wake up at all one morning, would you? You want to know why you wouldn't be surprised?...Because you don't have any choice and that's why I envy you." Needless to say, Jeff drops dead one day and Robert and his girlfriends are the only ones who attend his funeral. In a pathetic attempt to get over his fanatical obsession with Jennifer, Robert pays a barmaid a wad of cash to pretend to be a cheerleader and do some naughty naked cheers for him, but she does not exactly cheer him up and he walks out of the bar mid-performance. Ultimately, Robert gives up on love and decides to make Jennifer a sleeping beauty again by slipping something into her wine (the carny who sold her to him revealed he kept her asleep with some sort of liquid medication). Ironically, in the end, Robert becomes just like the sleazy 'Carnival Doctor' who sold Jennifer to him, offering strangers the chance to wake her up with a kiss, but warning them: "To wake the Sleeping Beauty, you run the risk of being awakened yourself."

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Undoubtedly, I could relate to *Some Call It Loving* protagonist Robert to some degree, especially in regard to his concern that the untainted Sleeping Beauty has no idea what kind of person he really is, as his love and infatuation has caused him to act in a manner that he never thought he was capable of, hence the warning from the Carny: "To wake the Sleeping Beauty, you run the risk of being awakened yourself." I have certainly fallen in love with a girl before that was so blinded by her love for me that she chose to see what she wanted to see and ignored the rest, only to eventually have the spell broken and come to her senses in the end. Indeed, with the film's inclusion of the Nat King Cole song "The Very Thought of You," *Some Call It Loving* lets the viewer know in a somewhat esoteric way how love, or even an obsession with the idea of love, can make a person do innately irrational things that they would never fathom doing had they not been intoxicated with amore. Like a more romantic and less autistic David Lynch flick meets a post-counter-culture take on *The Twilight Zone*, *Some Call It Loving* is certainly a singular piece of celluloid that is begging to be unearthed. A sophisticated and rarely silly adult fairytale that will appeal to casualties of love that is never sentimental or heavy-handed, *Some Call It Loving* is like a nostalgic film for the anti-nostalgic, as a work that reminds one what it feels like to be in love, but then smacks the viewer across the face with the bitter and soul-draining conclusion that comes with lost love. Needless to say, I have no desire to wake up a Sleeping Beauty and if I need a reminder why, I can just re-watch *Some Calling It Loving* and be also reminded why Kubrick's relatively unknown producer should have probably been the one who directed *Lolita*.

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COP

James B. Harris (1988)

Undoubtedly, it is a sick yet rather fitting irony that mainstream Hollywood movie like, say, *John Wick* (2014), are oftentimes advertised with the line “From the Producers of...,” as if producers are the true auteurs and were not oftentimes behind destroying films and/or taking them away from their directors. As cinema history has demonstrated, producers are rarely artistic people. Sure, there are important historical film figures like D.W. Griffith, Alexander Korda and Stanley Kubrick that both produced and directed, but they typically did this as a means to maintain artistic control of their films and not simply because they were opportunistic producers that used their clout as a means to later establish a film directing career. Indeed, it is no coincidence that very few producers would go onto to become directors, though many have surely tried, including figures ranging from Bernd Eichinger to Richard D. Zanuck’s widow Lili Fini Zanuck to Denise Di Novi, but probably none of these individuals are quite as interesting and neglected as Kubrick’s early career producer James B. Harris. Indeed, as been mentioned by many people writing about the producer turned director, Kubrick once remarked to Harris, who collaborated with him on such classics as *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Lolita* (1962), in late 1962 that, “You’ll never know complete satisfaction until you’ve tried your hand at directing,” which he ultimately accomplished only a couple years later with his little-seen Anglo-American Melvillian Cold War thriller *The Bedford Incident* (1965) starring Richard Widmark and Sidney Poitier. While Harris arguably achieved his greatest and certainly his most idiosyncratic artistic success with his second feature *Some Call It Loving* (1973) aka *Sleeping Beauty*—a sort of similarly esoteric counterpart to his former partner Kubrick’s somewhat uneven swansong *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)—Harris’ fourth feature *Cop* (1988) probably best epitomizes his talents and signature traits as a filmmaker that perfected pulp during an era when the true grit of such tasteful trash had certainly fallen out of vogue.

Based on the dark crime novel *Blood on the Moon* (1984) by James Ellroy—the first book in the writer’s Lloyd Hopkins Trilogy—the film is a gleefully politically incorrect 1980s noir-ish crime-drama that acts as a sort of wonderfully venomous antidote to the fun, sun, and flashy neon multiculturalism of *Miami Vice*. Grittier and all-around superior to Curtis Hanson’s much better known Ellroy adaptation *L.A. Confidential* (1997), the film also arguably has a secondary auteur in the form of James Woods, who not only played the eponymous lead but also acted as its co-producer (notably, the actor also starred in Harris’ previous film *Fast-Walking* (1982) in a vaguely similar role). Of course, considering Woods’ relatively recent virtual blacklisting from Hollywood due to his right-wing political views and battles with liberals, communists, and antifa losers on Twitter, *Cop*—a film with a titular LAPD detective that is among the

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most radically 'reactionary' and culturally pessimistic police officers in cinema history—features, in many ways, the actor in what is arguably the most fitting and fully realized role of his entire rather singular career. In short, it feels like Woods was born to play the lead. Indeed, as much as I love William Friedkin's *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985), it seems like Michael Bay's *Bad Boys* (1995) when compared to the uncompromising cynicism and misanthropy of Harris' film. Like an all the more morally dubious thinking man's *Death Wish* (1974) featuring an 1980s West Coast take on the completely cracked cop-driven cultural cynicism of *The French Connection* (1971), albeit with more respect for cops, the film makes nods to various crime sub-genres while also subtly commenting on said sub-genres without seeming even remotely pretentious or overly intellectual. In fact, I would go so far as to say that *Cop* is a cop's cop film, so long as the cop is not an uptight by-the-book type.

Notably, at the very beginning of his 3 out of 4 star review of the film, Roger Ebert—a man whose girth was only transcended by his tendency to get preposterously offended by films like some uppity queen—argued, "Anyone without a history of watching James Woods in the movies might easily misread *COP*. They might think this is simply a violent, sick, contrived exploitation picture, and that would certainly be an accurate description of its surfaces. But Woods operates in this movie almost as if he were writing his own footnotes. He uses his personality, his voice and his quirky sense of humor to undermine the material and comment on it, until *COP* becomes an essay on this whole genre of movie. And then, with the movie's startling last shot, Woods slams shut the book." Luckily for viewers, especially of the less than intellectually gifted sort, the film is certainly no academic study, let alone any sort of serious art film, yet it does bring a certain unrivaled refinement to cultural pessimism and social decay; ingredients that any real-life cop is all too familiar with. Probably unlike a large majority of viewers, I have a certain personal familiarity with police officers to distinguish the difference between tawdry Tinseltown buffoonery and a certain psychological realism and nuance of character that makes the film believable enough to those familiar with real-life men in blue. While films based on the works of real-life cop turned novelist Joseph Wambaugh like *The New Centurions* (1972) and *The Onion Field* (1979) also starring Woods, demonstrate a certain matter-of-fact respect for the law enforcement trade, *Cop* almost achieves a sort of almost metaphysical understanding of the sort of dispirited spirit that comes with spending many years cavorting with coke-addled hookers and dodging bullets from crack-addled renegade negro thugs. Indeed, in its no-holds-barred approach to depicting a Hollywood inhabited by corrupt cocksucking cops, quasi-autistic artsy fartsy serial killers, and low-rent crooks, the film is as anti-Hollywood as 1980s films come and in the tradition of the great nihilistic works of classic film noir.

Although it might seem like a peculiar theme for a neo-noir featuring a po-

liceman as an antihero, one of the most potent central themes of *Cop* is that it takes a rather brutal approach to depicting the perils of Princess Syndrome (PS) and female entitlement and how these things have created a world of exceedingly unhappy women that sometimes grow up to be hookers or, even worse, feminists, due to the high expectations that society instilled in them as impressionable little girls. Indeed, the titular propagandist is so disgusted with the way that society lies to children about the reality of the world that, to the chagrin of his wife, he excitedly tells his daughter brutal police stories each night before bed as an entertaining way to expose her to the harsh realities of the world. In fact, he notably sums up his rather pessimistic worldview to his unsympathetic wife as follows, "Let me tell you something you should get through your head. They're all little girls, Jen. Every one of them. Every one of those pathetic souls who eventually does herself in is a little girl. Every neurotic who lies on a couch...and pays some asshole shrink good money to listen to her bullshit is a little girl. Every hooker out hustling her ass for a pimp...who winds up with a dyke, a habit, or wasted by some psychopath, is a little girl. All these little girls have one thing in common. You know what that is? Disillusionment. And it always comes from the same thing, expectations. The greatest woman-killer of all time. A terminal disease that starts way back when they're all just little girls. When they're being fed all the bullshit...about being entitled to happiness like it's a birthright. That's what you don't understand...when to stop perpetrating the myths that ruin their lives. Innocence kills, Jen. Believe me. It kills. I see it every fucking day of my life." While the antihero is a reasonably violent man that regularly kills criminals and cheats on his wife, the film reveals that he is completely right when it comes to female disillusionment. While the antihero is a sort of ruthless realist-cum-pessimist that can smell bullshit a mile away, it is, somewhat ironically, a romantic poet that is depicted as an unhinged lunatic and pathological serial killer in what can be possibly interpreted as director Harris' (possibly unconscious) view of 'artiste' types. In other words, in the world of *Cop*, only irrational women and psychopaths are crazy enough to believe that there is still romance and beauty in the world. Needless to say, the film also reveals that there is a very fine line between cops and criminals and that there is no such thing as heroes; just guys that are hard and tough enough to take out the subhuman trash. Indeed, James Wood's unforgettable eponymous character is less a hero than a rabid social watchdog that has developed a decidedly dehumanizing talent for hunting down sick and criminal minds. Indeed, if the antihero were not a cop, he would probably be some sort of hit man or organized crime leader.

You immediately know that *Cop* is not a movie for leftists, ethno-masochists, and pussies because the opening credits is juxtaposed with a laughably idiotic 911 call from some unseen gangster negro that bitches to the operator, "I should be home, like, watching *THE FLINTSTONES*, or some shit," and then non-

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chalantly confesses his criminal trade while reporting a murder, stating, "I was gonna hit this place in Hollywood until I seen what was inside. Heavy shit went down in there, man. Like something out of a Peckinpah movie. You better send some cops right away to Aloha Regency, Apartment B." The scenario that the nameless/faceless negro is talking about is less like something out of a Peckinpah movie than something out of Tobe Hopper's classic *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), as the grisly scene in question involves a female corpse hanging upside from a ceiling like a gutted cow carcass. The film's antihero, LAPD detective Sgt. Lloyd Hopkins (James Woods), is the first people to arrive at the crime scene and he almost immediately comes to the conclusion that the victim was killed by some sort of art fag serial killer due a piece of poetry he soon finds addressed to her that reads, "You grieved me more than all the rest." As Hopkins soon discovers while looking around her apartment, the victim was a feminist journalist named Julia Niemeyer that owned feminist polemics with absurd titles like *Rage in the Womb*. Notably, Hopkins spends a great deal of time at the crime scene before contacting his police department, as if he needs to personally meditate on the madness of the murder by himself without any distractions, especially not the stupid theories of other cops. All these clues will ultimately lead Hopkins to hot babes that he fucks or wants to fuck, as the antihero is certainly a man that likes to both work hard and play hard, though it seems he actually prefers the former as 'workaholic' would be too bland and generic of a description for the fanatically enterprising antihero. Unlike the killer, who is some warped male feminist type, Hopkins really cares about women, or as his much despised Christian boss Captain Fred Gaffney (Raymond J. Barry)—an uptight asshole and bozo bureaucrat that prides himself on playing by the rules—complains to him, "Everyone knows you have a wild hair up your ass about murdered women." In short, Hopkins, who is a great cop that is not beneath fighting dirty, makes it his personal mission to catch the serial killer and he more or less destroys his entire life in the process, but such is the price of such uncompromising fanaticism.

Aside from his quite predatory desire to catch the killer, Hopkins does not seem all that worried about completely ruining his life because his personal life is pretty much in shambles. Indeed, after his wife Jen (Jan McGill) catches him telling their prepubescent daughter Penny about a personal police story about a "queen who did full drag" and "ripped off about \$5,000 in cash and a shitload of pharmaceutical speed and heavyweight downers...in less than a month," the two get in a heated verbal dispute where the antihero discusses the deleterious effects of telling fairy tales like 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' to little girls and how it can only end in bitter disillusionment. When his wife tells him, "Lloyd, I think you're a very sick man...in need of some real help," Hopkins, who seems to have nil sexual desire for his wife despite his overall virility, skips bed to go on a stakeout with his best friend 'Dutch' (Charles Durning). Hopkins is such good

buds with Dutch—a fat, white-haired, and somewhat unintentionally goofy yet smart and loyal chap that is nearing retirement—that he hooks him up with hot hookers to hump, as the two have a natural intuitive bond despite being somewhat of opposites in terms of character. Indeed, quite unlike Dutch, Hopkins sometimes has a problem with self-control and tact, among other things, hence their natural chemistry as partners. Needless to say, Hopkins is more than a little bit upset when his wife steals their daughter and runs off to some unknown location in San Francisco, or as she describes in a quite condescending letter that she leaves for him, “I know that you and I have not communicated for a long, long time and I’m not sure that we can again, as our values are completely different. You’re a deeply disturbed person and I cannot allow you to pass your disturbance on to Penny. I’m withholding our address in San Francisco...until I am certain you will not try to do anything rash.” Clearly no longer in love with his frigid and seemingly perennially bitchy wife and not one to waste a good opportunity, Hopkins almost immediately starts an extramarital excursion after his spouse absconds to Sod Francisco. The sort of cop that cannot help but dwell in the gutter, Hopkins gets involved with a beautiful blonde 35-year-old failed actress turned hooker named Joanie Pratt (Randi Brooks)—a character that acts as a slightly more exciting spin on the ‘whore with a heart of gold’ trope—that is connected to Niemeyer murder. As she describes to Hopkins, Joanie is responsible for setting up scam-like “floating swingers’ parties” where rich swinger pay \$200 a party to fuck and buy drugs and Niemeyer was attending these parties as an investigative journalist with the intent of researching for a book on the seedy scene. Luckily for Hopkins, Joanie is so happy to help that she practically begs for the antihero to fuck her, which he quickly does from the comfort of her kitchen counter. Rather unfortunately, it is not long before the serial killer violently mutilates and murders Joanie just to fuck with Hopkins. Indeed, unbeknownst to Hopkins, the killer is monitoring him at the same time the antihero is trying to uncover the puzzle of his identity.

While far from a cucked out male feminist that loathes members of his own sex, Hopkins—an all-around tenacious alpha-male that knows how to get a woman’s attention—has no problem enticing a painfully introverted male-hating feminist bookstore owner named Kathleen McCarthy (Lesley Ann Warren). Although Hopkins initially goes to see Kathleen about the book *Rage in the Womb* since she is the only local seller in town and she instantly acts quite combative with him and accuses him of trying to infiltrate her seemingly imaginary gynocentric movement since he is a member of law enforcement, the protagonist only needs a couple minutes to put her at ease and entice her to softly state, “I’d like to help any way I can. Really.” As for the book Hopkins is interested in, Kathleen states, “*RAGE IN THE WOMB* is an angry book. It’s a polemic...a broadside against many things, violence perpetuated on women in specific. I think I sold my last copy a month ago. I don’t think I’ve ever

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sold a copy to a man. Actually...I don't think I...I've had a single man in his 30s in here...Never." Adopting rather solitary feminist lifestyle after being gang-raped in high school, Kathleen—a clearly quite broken woman that seems to be afraid of making real human connections, especially with men—certainly intrigues Hopkins with her tragic past, though it is not until much later in the film that the antihero realizes that the killer is actually a warped male feminist that also happens to be a secret admirer of the mousy book dealer. Indeed, as it turns out in what ultimately proves to be an all-too-convenient coincidence, Kathleen, Hopkins, and the killer all went to the same exact high school. In between sending her flowers and poems, the killer kills woman out of a warped and deluded belief that they are the sort of chicks that abandoned her after she was raped. In high school, Kathleen led a court of female poets and these girls supposedly betrayed her after she was gang-raped, which the serial killer apparently personally witnessed, hence his pathological need for revenge against both males and especially females. For 15 pathetic years, the killer has been worshipping Kathleen from afar because, as he eventually confesses in a creepy soft-spoken fashion, "She's not like all the rest." Unlike the killer, Hopkins wastes no time in attempting to get into Kathleen's panties and almost does so the first night they are together, though the antihero rudely leaves her hanging while she takes a warm bath and smokes dope lest she "tense up" during coitus due to her post-rape anxiety issues. Indeed, somewhat absurdly, Hopkins absconds from Kathleen's home and thus loses his opportunity at premium grade misandrist meat curtain after he discovers a lead in the case involving a corrupt street cop and homo hustler that were part of her class.

As Hopkins eventually uncovers in a less than legal fashion, a corrupt street cop named Deputy Sheriff Delbert "Whitey" Haines (Charles Haid) and a poof prostitute named Lawrence 'Birdman' Henderson (Dennis Stewart), who were pals in high school, were two of the men responsible for gang-raping Kathleen in high school. Unfortunately, both men are killed before they can be brought to justice, as the serial killer conveniently murders Birdman and Hopkins is forced to kill Whitey after he dares to pull a shotgun on him after being confronted about his crimes. Of course, at this point, Hopkins is positive that the serial killer is someone that attended Kathleen's high school, but the feminist book peddler refuses to cooperate with him due to not only leaving her high and dry sexually, but also because he broke into her apartment while hunting for clues relating to her high school experiences. With the support of Dutch, Kathleen eventually agrees to look at old yearbook photos of various guys she went to high school with against a cross-reference of suspects, though she refuses to acknowledge any of them as potential suspects even though a dapper chap named 'Robert Franco' that is listed as a "Poet Laureate" clearly catches her eyes. Seeing as Kathleen suffers the delusion that she loves her longtime secret admirer and is unwilling to believe he is a serial killer, she naturally does not want Hop-

kings to hound him. Not long after she leaves the interrogation room, Kathleen is caught by Hopkins talking to Franco on a payphone as she is attempting to warn her assumed secret admirer of the crooked cop's obsession with him. When Franco states to Hopkins, "Let her go, Hopkins. She's not like all the rest" after the protagonist grabs the phone and then proposes a "reunion" at their ex-high school, Kathleen gets the shock of a lifetime when she finally realizes that her secret admirer is indeed the killer. When Kathleen asks Hopkins if he plans to kill Franco, the corrupt cop, who has just been suspended due to his underhanded policing techniques, replies in a suavely sarcastic fashion, "I don't know. Maybe this time you'll get to send him the flowers." As for the reunion, Franco demonstrates a prowess for martial arts and killing gangsters, but he ultimately foolishly runs out of bullets for his MAC-10 machine pistol and thus is forced to suffer the grand indignity of having to 'surrender' to his hunter. Although Franco prepares to turn himself in by snidely remarking, "Aren't you going to read me my rights? Cuff me? Take me into custody? What's it to you, Hopkins? You're a cop. You've got to take me in," Hopkins is not the sort of fellow that likes to play games and reminds him that he is not a 'by-the-books' kind of cop by declaring, "Well there's some good news and there's some bad news. The good news is, you're right, I'm a cop and I have to take you in. The bad news is I've been suspended and I don't give a fuck!" just before unloading three shotgun rounds into the killer, thus bringing an inordinately satisfyingly fucked conclusion to one satisfying fucked film.

While I am not even sure it was a totally conscious decision on auteur Harris' part, I would argue that the greatest theme depicted in *Cop* is the timeless dichotomy between the extroverted alpha-male type and the introverted beta-male and how the latter is ultimately the more loathsome, repugnant, and pathetic of the two classic archetypal figures. Additionally, the film also similarly demonstrates that the masculine 'misogynist' ultimately loves and cares more about women than the feminist 'nice guy' archetype. Of course, the film is also features a less than favorable depiction of queers, as the second most loathsome character in the entire film aside from the serial killer is a closet cocksucker cop that has S&M leather-fag gear lying around his apartment. Undoubtedly, compared to *Cop*, director Harris' subsequent film and celluloid swansong *Boiling Point* (1993)—a mostly banal effort in politically correct casting the stars Wesley Snipes as an inordinately stoic colored super cop that takes down blond white sociopaths portrayed by Dennis Hopper and a very young and super Aryan-looking Viggo Mortensen—seems like a sad and pathetic artistic compromise meant to appeal the insipid cultural marxist socio-political agenda of Hollywood (notably, Harris has revealed in various interviews that the studio took the film away from him and butchered it). In fact, I do not think it would be a stretch to conclude that Harris directed *Boiling Point* simply due to its potential mainstream appeal because, as he admitted in a 2017 interview at MUBI in regard to his early suc-

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cess with Kubrick, "I think it ruined me. I was determined to produce projects of social importance. That's why you see large gaps in my filmography. There's a decade between *SOME CALL IT LOVING* and *FAST-WALKING*. I could have had a larger body of work, but I didn't listen to any of the agents who sent mainstream projects my way or offered to put attractive deals together with their hot clients." Of course, coincidentally, there is just as larger gaps in between films when it comes to Harris' buddy Kubrick's career.

Undoubtedly, if there is any underlying philosophy behind *Cop*, it is probably best summed up by German literary maestro Ernst Jünger words, "Today only the person who no longer believes in a happy ending, only he who has consciously renounced it, is able to live. A happy century does not exist; but there are moments of happiness, and there is freedom in the moment." Indeed, the film's protagonist has stoically accepted the world is an ever-degenerating shithole full of societal decay and misery yet he manages to squeeze in a couple ecstatic fuck sessions with rather ravishing bimbos in between kicking ass and taking names. In fact, I would argue that the titular antihero portrayed by James Woods is a sort of primitive blue collar equivalent to Jünger figure of the 'Anarch,' which is a sort of metaphysical ideal figure of a sovereign individual in the Teutonic 'conservative' sense. As Jünger argued in his novel *Eumeswil* (1977), "The partisan wants to change the law, the criminal break it; the anarch wants neither. He is not for or against the law. While not acknowledging the law, he does try to recognize it like the laws of nature, and he adjusts accordingly," which is probably a good way to describe the antihero's own preternatural thinking. Clearly, the film's protagonist has little concern for the law, which he constantly breaks to ironically bust lawbreakers, but instead completing his job and sticking to his own distinct moral code, thus he would probably understand Jünger's words, "I am an anarch – not because I despise authority, but because I need it," as he would probably be gunning down criminals 24/7 if he did not have some superficial legal guideline that he liberally followed. Likewise, "I am not a nonbeliever, but a man who demands something worth believing in," attests to the character's need for renegade justice in the face of injustice. Additionally, Woods' character certainly lives by the words, "The anarch wages his own wars, even when marching in rank and file."

While his wife and various other characters accuse him of being 'sick' due to his rather culturally pessimistic *Weltanschauung*, the titular antihero of *Cop* is nothing if not someone that has cultivated an appropriate attitude to a sick and savage urban jungle, or as the late great Colombian 'reactionary' writer Nicolás Gómez Dávila once profoundly argued, "Adaptation to the modern world requires sclerosis of sensibility and degradation of character." After all, one would have to be exceptionally sick and/or emotionally catatonic to be unresponsive to a world that is increasingly morally necrotic, racially and culturally apocalyptic, increasingly sub-literate, and mostly aesthetically bankrupt. While the film's

protagonist sees little good in society, he would not be such an effective cop were it not for his low expectations for humanity in general because, as Dávila rather rightly argued, “Optimism is never faith in progress, but hope for a miracle.” The only real complaint I have about *Cop* is that it is not quite as dark and subversive as James Ellroy’s source novel *Blood on the Moon* (1984), which is somewhat curious when one considers that Tom Hanks of all people confessed in an October 13, 2017 New York Times interview that he would be interested in playing the novel’s lead Lloyd Hopkins on the stage or screen. For example, the protagonist is more overtly degenerate in the novel, which was apparently initially rejected by 17 different publishers, as demonstrated by the following hilarious multicultural blowjob excerpt, “He found a Negro prostitute at the corner of Western and Adams who was willing to do the deed for ten dollars, and they drove to a side street and parked. Lloyd screamed when he came, frightening the hooker, who bolted out of the car before she could collect her money.” As much as I am disgusted at the thought of fellatio involving an assumedly STD-ridden street nigger, this brief excerpt reveals the hardcore essence of the novel which, for obvious reasons, Harris was not fully able to cinematically disseminate. Not surprisingly, Harris was largely enticed to adapt the novel because of its less than politically correct tone, or as he explained in an interview with Nick Pinkerton at Film Comment, “I love the character of the cop who pushes the envelope, that could get suspended any time, works on his own, is so obsessed with successfully getting the criminal [...] And I liked the scenes. Some books you read and you don’t see anything you feel you can dramatize effectively. This book had real scenes—like the moment where the cop tells a crime scene bedtime story to his kid. We got a really young kid, so that it would seem outrageous for her to be hearing these stories about breaking and entering and murder. That’s what attracted me to the material, the potential of scenes, the arguments with the wife, Lesley’s character calling him a ‘police person.’ I wanted to make fun of all of that Women’s Lib shit that was so hot at the time.” As for what Ellroy thought of the film, he apparently was not initially happy with it but as Harris explained in the same interview, “We made the picture for very little. We got everyone to cooperate, to work for reasonable salaries. It was Ellroy’s first film, and I don’t think he knew how to handle it when he first saw it. He said he didn’t care for the film when he first saw it. But later he said everybody told him that the picture was terrific, and he went back and reevaluated it and said he liked it now, in fact I think he took the film on a tour to England, through several cities, and he screened the film as an example of a good adaptation. As it turned out, we had a good relationship, and I ended up acquiring *THE BLACK DAHLIA* from him as well.”

As far as I am concerned, Harris is a seemingly mostly unartistic yet highly intuitive and street smart individual that has managed to direct three great underrated films that almost manage to elevate pulp to the level of poetry. If

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Harris learned anything from his buddy Kubrick, it was finding the right source material to adapt. Of course, Harris' choice of material also demonstrates he was more subversive and morally dubious than Kubrick, which is arguably his greatest strength as a filmmaker. Indeed, whereas Kubrick seemed coldly disgusted and pessimistic about humanity (notably, the director-producer team once planned to adopt the lost Jim Thompson novella *Lunatic at Large*), Harris seems to have wallowed in the grit, grime, and slime of humanity as demonstrated by the mirthfully mad essences of *Fast-Walking* and *Cop*. In fact, only in *Some Call It Loving*, which is undoubtedly both the director's most personal and perverse film, does Harris reveal a certain foreboding dejection and melancholy. A sort of never fully developed master of brutally honest cinematic art for proles, Harris' rather simple and unpretentious films arguably demonstrate that Dávila was right when he wrote, "Poetry has died, asphyxiated by metaphors." As to the value of so-called 'corrupt cops,' German-American sage H.L. Mencken arguably said it best when he wrote in 1931, "The curse of the cops, speaking professionally, is the sensitiveness of the district attorney's office to political and other pressure. Every day they see perfectly good cases fall to pieces in the courtroom. As a result of their most arduous labors, sometimes at the risk of their lives, go for naught, and they are naturally upset and full of woe. Not infrequently they beat up a prisoner because they fear that he will be able to escape any other punishment. They know that he is guilty, but they also know that he has a sharp lawyer, so they fan him while they have him. This fanning — or massaging, as they call it — is greatly dreaded by criminals." Aside from misguided liberal morons and certain types of sociopaths, serial killers, and serial killer fetishists, I think most people would agree with the titular antihero's final actions at the quite literally explosive conclusion of Harris' film. In a morally inverted world with an alien-owned mainstream media that incessantly transforms negro thugs into Christlike martyrs and constantly demonizes police officers as sort of pathologically genocidal neo-Gestapo demons, *Cop* is almost as refreshing as waking up to a sloppy wet blowjob, which is certainly something that Lloyd Hopkins could appreciate.

-Ty E

LANDSCAPE SUICIDE

James Benning (1987)

Like most people, I am, to a certain extent, intrigued by murderers and serial killers, especially in regard to their psychological makeup, but I also cannot stand phony films like overrated cinematic artisan David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995) and Hebraic hack Brett Ratner's *Red Dragon* (2002) that glorify bat-shit crazy 'manhunters' and more or less portray them as 'misunderstood geniuses' whose ostensible 'Übermensch' image somewhat absolves them of their aberrant actions. In short, I hate when films, be they big budget Hollywood trash or otherwise, attempt to less than cleverly manipulate me into feeling a certain way about something, especially when it is in regard to something as sensational as serial killers, who, along with black gangster thugs, Jewish white collar criminals, scatological Semitic frat boys, and scheming morally retarded whores, have become the ultimate cinematic antiheroes. Thankfully, I recently discovered what is arguably the most objective film ever made—be it fictional or documentary—on coldblooded murders and serial killers, *Landscape Suicide* (1987) directed by experimental sub-underground auteur James Benning (*Him and Me*, *North on Evers*), who is a rare, truly proletarian America avant-garde voice that does not need buckets of blood, tedious torture-porn scenes, or even a single murder scene to make a chilling point about manhunters. Described as a 'minimalist' and 'structuralist' by various reviewers and film theorists, Benning seems like a fellow who has never seen a single Hollywood film, let alone a horror flick, and has no interest in entertaining anyone except himself. Certainly no trust fund brat or autistic art fag, the filmmaker grew up in a rough German-American working-class community in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where sons were forced to fight their cousins, so it is only natural that the auteur would direct a film about fellow Wisconsin Amero-kraut Ed Gein, whose father was of German extraction and whose beloved mother was the progeny of Prussian immigrants. A man whose works have been heavily influenced by American realist paintings and photography, Benning's *Landscape Suicide* attempts to conjure up the atmosphere and physical environment that might have inspired Gein, as well as suburban California teenaged killer Bernadette Protti, who brutally stabbed to death her 'friend' Kirsten Costas in 1984, to kill. An avant-garde quasi-docudrama where the viewer is forced to act as an investigative reporter and sightseeing tourist in being confronted with two 'classic' murders that are as American as apple pie that took place about 30 years apart, Benning's demystifying doc is like a living postcard featuring excerpts from court transcriptions as specially chosen by the director, who seems to place a special premium on the killer's sexual hangups and mental illnesses. Psycho killer Americana in static 16mm form, *Landscape Suicide* is apparently the director's most 'accessible' work to date but I doubt that it would appeal to a single one of the sort of true crime fanboys that have serial

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killer calendars and sport Jeffery Dahmer t-shirts; yet, due to its 'idiosyncratic' and quite pathological structure and style, I would not be surprised if someone told me the film was directed by an actual serial killer. A work of seeming cultural pessimism and cynicism directed by a man that seems to hate the suburbs and sees rural Wisconsin as a cultural and spiritual void inhabited by the radio broadcasted noise of carny-like evangelist preachers and the malignant spread of pop-'culture' TV trash magazines like Rolling Stone and yellow journalism newspapers, Landscape Suicide ultimately makes murder seem like a temporary relief from the banality of American life.

Beginning in a rather banal fashion with a couple minutes of a woman playing tennis by herself that concludes with a shot of dozens of tennis balls lying on a tennis court, Landscape Suicide immediately gives the impression that life in the suburbs, as unbelievably banal and bourgeois as it is, is no way to live. From there, an off-screen narrator reveals that on June 23, 1984, a 15-year-old high school girl from a suburb in Orinda, California was stabbed to death on her neighbors' front porch by a teenage suspect that was "chunky but not fat with shoulder-length light brown hair driving a gold or yellow older model Pinto that appeared to be in poor running condition." The suspect was the girl's would-be friend Bernadette Protti, who killed her classmate after she rejected a ride home from her. As revealed by crime case records featured in the film, Protti had a "low frustration tolerance despite a higher than average intelligence" and "despite often misleading, overt heterosexual behavior, there may be evidence of unusual suppression of her sexuality." Stabbing Costas with an 18-inch butcher knife five times in front of at least one witness, Protti, who apparently "suffers from an inferiority complex" and "lacks remorse" in regard to her crime, was thought to have not committed premeditated murder due to "the lack of sophistication in the execution of the crime." In the 'docudrama' section of the Protti segment, a one-time actress named Rhonda Bell that looks more like victim Costas than her jealous executioner, portrays the teen guidette killer in a fashion that totally reeks of mundane mental derangement. Among other things, Protti seems hopelessly self-absorbed and only agrees to talk after the off-screen interviewer assures her that, due to being underage, her name won't be leaked to the press. As to how a teenage girl can deal with being a killer, Protti stoically states that she is, "really good at blocking it out of my mind and still am [...]...it doesn't feel real." After killing her comrade, Protti took her dog for a walk as if nothing had happened, stating of her incapacity to accept her dirty deed, "after, I was trying to get out of it by not saying it was me but I really feel it wasn't me. It was weird, it was the weirdest feeling I've ever had. It was exactly like I was watching it. I was hurting her but...then I was thinking, I wonder what happened to her...and that's when I got home. I didn't know if she was dead or alive." Although decrying "popularity" and "friends" as stupid, Protti attempts to blame her actions on "inferiority" problems as a result of not getting on the cheerleading team or being

accepted into the yearbook club. When questioned about whether or not she has any lesbo tendencies, Protti flatly denies it in a fashion that seems somewhat suspect. After the interview, an off-screen narrator portraying Protti's mother reveals that everyone wanted to "strangle" Coŝtas' killer, but they had a change of heart when the real killer was discovered.

Like with the Protti case, the friends and family of Ed Gein were rather surprised when they discovered he was a 'cross-dressing' necrophiliac killer that liked to wear rotten vaginas over his seemingly virginal genitals. When he was asked by a fellow named Wilimovsky why he painted one of his victim's vaginas with aluminum paint, Gein replied, "It was getting a greenish color. I put the paint over to the see if that would preserve it." Gein also had no problem revealing to Wilimovsky that he castrated his own cock, hence why he draped a putrid postmortem pussy over what remained of his pecker. In what is probably the most glaringly and inexplicably 'anti-realist' segment of the film, Gein is portrayed as a rather robust and swarthy little man named Elion Sucher who looks more like a donut-addicted Israeli pawnshop owner than a deranged Germanic dude from rural Plainfield, Wisconsin with murderous mommy issues in a docudrama scene depicting the killer's February 20, 1968 court testimony in the Waushara County Courthouse in Wautoma, Wisconsin. While confessing to killing a woman named Mary Hogan who disappeared from her cabin in 1954, Gein does not own up to killing Plainfield hardware store owner Bernice Worden on November 16, 1957 despite the fact that her mutilated and decapitated corpse was found hanging in his shed upside down, with the victim's torso being "stretched out like a deerskin." Like with Hogan, Gein took a special interest in Worden because she superficially resembled his mother, whose death in late 1945 inspired him to dig up elderly female corpses and engage in "insane transvestite rituals" with them. In a rather cynical yet rather effective conclusion to *Landscape Suicide* that some might find to be in poor taste, a hunter commits an unsimulated butchering and disemboweling of a deer in a fashion quite similar to how Gein carved up and hung Mrs. Worden. I just hope Benning was not attempting to make some sort of heavy-handed PETA-approved "meat is murder" message in what ultimately makes for a grotesquely fitting conclusion to a darkly understated film. Indeed, I think this final scene emphasizes the brutality of cold rural midwestern living and the fact that slaughtering and gutting a deer would probably not be all that different from doing the same to a human.

Out of all of the films I have ever seen, the only one that comes even close to resembling the 'aesthetic' essence of James Benning's *Landscape Suicide* is South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's experimental feature *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994), which takes a similar 'avant-garde docudrama' approach in featuring actors reciting the words of infamous killers like Edmund Emil Kemper, Ted Bundy, and Charles Manson. In its obsessive use of static shots of picturesque rural America and art fag style use of mixed

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media, especially magazines, the film also begs for comparison with the collage-based quasi-doc works of queer auteur William E. Jones, like *Massillon* (1991) and *Finished* (1997). Additionally, *Landscape Suicide* would certainly float the boat of fans of crippled American filmmaker/film theorist Stephen Dwoskin (Dyn Amo, *Central Bazaar*), whose approach to documentary filmmaking is at least equally thematically and aesthetically subversive, as if both men could not make a 'populous' film if their life depended on it. Indeed, for all those that have seen all the Gein-inspired films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), Alan Ormsby's *Deranged* (1974), Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), and the horrid *In the Light of the Moon* (2000) aka Ed Gein, Benning's flick is like a kick to the skull in slow-motion, as a work that not only deconstructs the Gein movie mythos, but demands that the viewer meditate on the most mundane aspects of the criminal case, which was clearly the director's intention. Indeed, as the docudrama comes to an end, an off-screen narrator recites the following words from a girl that grew up in Gein's town, "I was 14-years-old when Bernice Worden was killed [...] I was walking home from [...] junior high school when I saw the headline on the Milwaukee Sentinel: 'Cannibalism in Wisconsin.' Mrs. Worden's heart was found in the soft pan on the stove, but cannibalism was never substantiated," thus highlighting the senselessly sensational tactics of the media on what was already obviously a sensational story. Of course, *Landscape Suicide* does the opposite of the newspaper headline by dwelling on not only the mundane nature of murder, but life in general as depicted in the various long still shots of landscapes and seemingly endless scenes of people engaged in everyday 'suburban' activities like playing tennis and talking on the phone. One also cannot forget that the film features a shot of a *Rolling Stone* magazine featuring ostensibly pretty, fake Hollywood actors John Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis on the cover, as well as an intentionally humorous radio sermon from Jerry Falwell where the good reverend bashes Carl Sagan, thus underscoring the fact that American (anti)culture is as cold, barren, and inhospitable as its landscapes. In that sense, Benning's film is as authentically 'American' as imaginable, as a work where the landscapes are the true characters and the void is penetrable. Indeed, after watching the film, I was not asking myself why Protti and Gein did what they did, but why there are not more people like them. Of course, like everything else, in America, murder is committed more so for monetary reasons, with people like Protti and Gein being the exceptions, hence their interest to people. For fans of Herzog's masterpiece *Stroszek* (1977), which was also shot in Gein's hometown Plainfield, Wisconsin and inspired by the Bavarian auteur filmmaker's interest in the German-American serial killer (notably, Herzog intended to dig up Gein's mother's grave with documentarian Errol Morris, but the latter chickened out and never showed up), *Landscape Suicide* also makes a splendid and somewhat sinisterly scenic companion piece as a strangely vis-

ceral yet paradoxically oftentimes boring work that attempts to enter the real 'heartland' of America that Hollywood has always seen fit to ignore.

-Ty E

PINK NARCISSUS
PINK NARCISSUS

James Bidgood (1971)

I cannot for the life of me think of another film with such a suitable name as *Pink Narcissus* (1971). I discovered the film after watching an episode of the (unfortunately) short-lived film anthology series *John Waters Presents Movies That Will Corrupt You*. As one would most likely guess from the title, the film is about a narcissistic gay man but, fortunately, not in the violently cliché, sardonically shameless and repellant self-obsessed-Hollywood-drama-queen-tabloid-formula that is oh-so common and contagious today. At its worst, *Pink Narcissus* is a barely-feature-length silent surrealist arthouse journey through quasi-pornographic phallogocentric-purgatory that is worthy of being compared to the work of F.W. Murnau, Jean Cocteau, Kenneth Anger, Derek Jarman and Jean Genet but filmed on a budget (estimated at \$27,000.00) one would expect from an ultra-gritty realist work directed by Paul Morrissey (it was originally rumored that Andy Warhol had produced *Pink Narcissus*). The history of *Pink Narcissus* is almost as strange as the film itself as no one even knew who directed the film (the film concludes with the inter-title "Produced by Anonymous") until the mid-1990s when a writer named Bruce Benderson, who was fanatically obsessed with the work, went on a stalker-like journey to eventually discover that it was directed by Manhattan-based photographer James Bidgood. Although featuring a variety of flesh-colored Netherworld realms worthy of any Kenneth Anger fan's total gaze, *Pink Narcissus* was almost entirely shot in Bidgood's small New York City apartment during a 7 year stretch (1963-1970). After watching *Pink Narcissus* and later discovering how it was made, I was nothing short of shocked and awed as the various magical worlds contained within the film left me nothing short of strangely enthralled. Although shot on consumer-grade 8 mm film stock, *Pink Narcissus* features a keen alpha-aesthetic all of its own that takes the viewer on a journey through scenarios that are more colorful than a mongrel circus performer jumping over a neon rainbow on fire.

Like F.W. Murnau's magnum opus *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), *Pink Narcissus* begins with a long atmospheric shot in a seemingly organic wilderness setting, but, in fact, a completely contrived apartment set. After this breathtaking introductory shot, the viewer is introduced to a youthful prostitute who – like the *Narcissus* of Greek mythology – cannot help but look at his own reflection in a most satisfied manner. Eventually, the young gigolo fantasizes about a variety of subversive erotic scenarios where he is naturally the central figure. Not only is this prostitute hopelessly perverted but he is also a dilettante student of history who hopelessly fantasizes about traveling through various historical periods and places. For instance, the young man becomes a Spanish matador who finds himself antagonizing a young Aryan biker that resembles Scorpio of Anger's *Scorpio's Rising* (1964). The young prostitute also trancedly dreams

of the prospect of being a slave who is routinely sexually manhandled by a sadistic Roman emperor and becoming the virtual dick-tator of a male harem. The film also features a gay urban street where pants-less perverts with exaggerated members wander like ghosts on the midnight prow. The downtown street scenes foretell the world Rainer Werner Fassbinder would create with his final work *Querelle* (1982), including a gay sailor who roams the streets in the hopes of satisfying wholly unsavory desires. Like *Querelle*, most objects (including messy hotdogs and slimy snails) are phallic in form. Despite its miniscule budget, *Pink Narcissus* is undoubtedly strangely more hypnotic and phantasmagorical than Fassbinder's infamous film.

Despite featuring surreal cumshots and a boner-swinging belly dancer, *Pink Narcissus* is barely pornographic, thus the film is not restricted solely to sexually inverted male audiences. In fact, I believe that *Pink Narcissus* is a film that every serious cinephile and aesthetic addict should see as it is a work that certainly brings withstanding scopophilic glee long after it concludes. Echoing back to the silent film era, *Pink Narcissus* features not a single line of dialogue but instead demands that the viewer refrain from blinking an eye so as to enjoy the thoroughly enamoring visual ride. Despite being over 40 years old, this delightful cinematic daydream is most certainly as potent and controversial as when it first appeared mysteriously in underground arthouse cinema theaters during the early 1970s. Like all great works of art, *Pink Narcissus* is indubitably the truest and most honest expression of a wonderfully self-indulgent filmmaker, hence the original anonymity of the film's clearly embarrassed creator (although Bidgood claims he removed his name from the film because editors "changed his vision"). Indeed, *Pink Narcissus* may be a figurative and literal work of cinema masturbation on the auteur filmmaker's part but that is to be expected from all truly great and authentic works of art. After all, it is not often that one is treated to such an adroit kaleidoscope extravaganza of killer colors like *Pink Narcissus*.

-Ty E

MIKE'S MURDER
MIKE'S MURDER

James Bridges (1984)

With the vogue Me Too movement—an insufferably gynocentric witchhunt fueled by female narcissism that at least, quite thankfully, resulted in the destruction of singularly grotesque zio-pig Harvey Weinstein—the general public was exposed to the obvious fact that many of the bigwigs and movers-and-shakers in Hollywood are sick sexual predators (though, only Larry David had the balls to note, on SNL of all places, that most of these ‘white’ men are actually Jewish). Rather disappointingly, only a couple queers, including Kevin Spacey, were exposed as predatory perverts. Of course, Hollywood has a history of homo harassment, as the casting couch apparently has just as many male victims as female ones and the predators are not always out-of-the-closet poofsters like Judaic degenerate Bryan Singer. For example, as noted in Rainer Chlodwig von K.’s rather worthwhile tome *Protocols of the Elders of Zanuck: Psychological Warfare and Filth at the Movies* (2018), in 2012 a masseur sued John Travolta for \$2 million after claiming that a \$200-per-hour massage session concluded in a rather curious fashion with the Hollywood star stripping naked, rubbing the man’s leg and then touching his cock. Notably, as a totally hilarious and equally incriminating segment of the suit reads, “Defendant began screaming at Plaintiff, telling Plaintiff how selfish he was; that Defendant got to where he is now due to sexual favors he had performed when he was in his WELCOME BACK, KOTTER days; and that Hollywood is controlled by homosexual Jewish men who expect favors in return for sexual activity [i.e., expect sex in return for favors]. Defendant then went on to say how he had done things in his past that would make most people throw up.” Naturally, it should be no surprise to anyone that is not mentally feeble that “Hollywood is controlled by homosexual Jewish men,” but apparently Tinseltown even has had a couple alleged gay goy predators, including Hollywood auteur James Bridges, who notably directed Travolta in a couple films, including the hit *Urban Cowboy* (1980) and the big turd *Perfect* (1985).

Apparently, Bridges hosted infamous sodomite sex parties which were stocked with underage boys and attended by big household names in the entertainment industry, or so it was revealed after The New York Police Department and District Attorney’s Office launched an investigation in 1975 dubbed ‘Operation Together’ which looked into the mafia control of gay bars and underage boy sex rings (incidentally, the central S&M gay bar depicted in *Cruising* (1980) was mob-owned, or so William Friedkin revealed in his memoir *Friedkin Connection: A Memoir* (2013)). As exposed by *The Mafia and The Gays* writer Phillip Crawford Jr.—a retired attorney from the New York bar and “whistle blower”—in an article at his blog *Friends of Ours*, “The retired officer with whom I spoke stated that that while working on Operation Together he spent a lot of time

undercover as a gay clone in the city's bars and did substantial surveillance including out on Long Island and Fire Island. In the course of his investigation the NYPD officer advised me that he learned about sex parties with underage boys that allegedly were being hosted at a place on the Island by Hollywood film director and writer James Bridges. Bridges had been nominated for an Oscar for *THE PAPER CHASE* which was released in 1973, and later directed *THE CHINA SYNDROME* for which he also received an Oscar nomination, *URBAN COWBOY* and *BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY*. He died at the age of 57 in 1993 from kidney failure after a cancer diagnosis according to his family. The officer staked out Bridge's place, and the attendees were obviously underage boys and household names in the entertainment industry to whom he referred as 'the child fuckers.' James Bridges was not the only name with which I was provided by the retired officer." Not surprisingly, Bridges was never actually charged, let alone convicted, for his alleged cocksucker crimes, but at least one of his films hints at such behavior.

Notably, although some of his films feature homoerotic imagery and gay subtexts, Bridges did not really contribute much to the history of queer cinema as he spent virtually his entire life in the closet, or as written in *Images in the Dark: An Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1994), "An unusual inclusion in this listing of gay and lesbian directors, James Bridges' (1935-93) filmography does not offer much evidence of queerness. As a matter of fact, with the exception of employing several gay stars in his films and the character of Mike in *MIKE'S MURDER* (who, despite the film's title, was only a peripheral figure), there are no gay themes or characters, major or minor, in his films [...] Interestingly, Bridges' gayness was not publicly known until the publication of his obituary." Indeed, while his vaguely semi-autobiographical film *September 30, 1955* (1977) features a teen that strangely cares more about James Dean than having any sort of sexual contact with his bitchy girlfriend and *Urban Cowboy* includes its fair share of homoerotic imagery (namely, Travolta in cowboy garb and Scott Glenn sporting an ultra-faggy mesh shirt), *Mike's Murder* (1984)—a rather seedy yet quite sui generis and tastefully directed piece of largely forgotten cult cinema—is the only Bridges film that seems to take delight into dipping into the cocaine-and-cock-fueled swamp of depravity of the gay underground and associated chic degenerate criminal scenes. By no means a masterpiece and probably 20 minutes too long, the film is exactly the sort of film that you might expect from a relatively powerful gay Hollywood filmmaker-cum-producer that wanted to create his own cryptically confessional auteur piece, albeit featuring a popular female lead so as to provide enough plausible deniability in regard to the filmmaker's sexual orientation. Personally, I was not surprised to learn after watching the film that Bridges was involved in some seriously sick scenes, as the flick is unlike many others of the largely artificial Reaganite 1980s in terms of its authenticity in regard to depicting the radically repellent realm of coke-addled

MIKE'S MURDER

Dorian love debauchery. A decided downer that never offers the the aid of comic relief from its fairly consistent paranoiac intensity, *Mike's Murder* is also a reminder the war on drugs is a sick and pathetic joke and many dumb queer addicts are paying the price while rich old horny queens are picking up the tab.

As far as I am concerned, male bisexuality is mostly a myth propagated by self-loathing gays that have not fully made the plunge into pure and unadulterated puffery, decidedly debased gay-for-pay masochists, and sociopaths (who, lacking real emotional connections to other people, are known to be sexually flexible). In *Mike's Murder*, the female heroine discovers the seemingly unthinkable in that the man she loves—a handsome and athletic fellow of the romantic and sexually potent sort—has not only fucked men, but he pimped himself out to a bitchy middle-aged negro queen. Indeed, the film tells the dejecting story of a likeable yet seemingly clueless chick with a girlish crush that discovers the rather repugnant hidden homo life of the man she thought she loved after he dies under quite brutal circumstances. While it is hard to know where exactly Bridges was coming from, the film sometimes feels like a mockery of women or, more specifically, a woman in love, as the hapless heroine suffers the great indignity of enduring the cold hard reality of her beau being not much more than a male bimbo boy toy for fags and dope fiends. Indeed, whereas Ken Russell's masterful adaptation D. H. Lawrence *Women in Love* (1969) respectfully depicts the need of certain men to have the love of another man despite already having the love of a woman, Bridges' film depicts a sexually nihilistic world where sex is not much more than a commodity and heterosexual love seems like an unhip anachronistic joke. But then again, *Mike's Murder* is arguably best interpreted as an example of gay jealousy in regard to heterosexual love, which becomes most obvious in a scene where a bitchy black queen proudly expresses to the heroine his pangs of lovelorn cynicism for the dead man that both individuals love.

Not exactly a hit when it was first released and barely a cult item today, *Mike's Murder* is a film that I first discovered while reading an article about independent actress Kate Lyn Sheil of all places. Indeed, after making the mistake of sampling a couple Joe Swanberg films and related lame mumblecore crap, I discovered Sheil and felt she was cute in a sort of autistic introverted hipster bitch fashion, so I looked her up on the internet and discovered an article where Melissa Anderson of *The Village Voice* remarks in regard to the actress, "But thanks to friendships she made in 2005 during a brief stint working at Mondo Kim's, that late, lamented cathedral of cinephilia on St. Marks Place, her interest in performing was revived. Employees at the rental redoubt ranked among the city's most movie-mad, as Sheil did (and still does, pulling out her phone, not impolitely, during our conversation to fact-check herself on the name of the director of *MIKE'S MURDER*, a little-known Debra Winger vehicle from 1984)." At the time I read the article, I had just watched Costa-Gavras' uneven yet nonetheless entertaining anti-white nationalist melodrama *Betrayed* (1988) and realized

I rather liked Debra Winger—a brunette Jewess with a certain delectable girl-next-door beauty—despite her ethnic handicap, so naturally I was enticed to see another film with her, especially after I read a somewhat enigmatic film synopsis on Bridge's flick that left me reasonably intrigued. After all, my favorite 1980s films are decidedly dark works like Ivan Passer's *Cutter's Way* (1981), David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), and Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* (1986), so naturally I am always looking out for similarly bleak material. Rather unfortunately, Mike's Murder has yet to be released on Blu-ray and can only be bought as part of Warner Archive Collection's rather disappointing barebones DVD-R series, which is certainly fitting for a idiosyncratic fag flick that would probably be regarded as being 'homophobic' by many of today's overly pampered and brainwashed contemporary gays.

Mike's Murder begins in a rather deceptively traditionally romantic fashion with a montage involving various seamless dissolves of heroine Betty Parrish (Debra Winger) being delicately manhandled on a public tennis court by her bohunk beau Mike Chuhutsky (Mark Keyloun) and then lovingly penetrated in her bedroom by him. After watching the opening, one might assume that Betty is married to a man that she is deeply in love with, but the reality is that they only had a brief yet passionate fling as Mike is an aimless wanderer with the attention-span of a gnat who has been spending a lot of his free time running away from rivals as a petty drug dealer. To his minor credit, Mike sells drugs to merely support his coke habit and pay off old drug debts. In fact, the only reason Mike briefly reenters Betty's life after disappearing for six months is that he is in hiding and does not want to be caught by drug dealers that he pissed off as a result of making the reckless mistake of dealing on their home turf. Indeed, the two are only reunited as a result of happenstance when Betty hears Mike call her name while she is driving down the road. Needless to say, Betty wastes no time in picking Mike up and the two immediately catch up in a manner that you would expect from two lovers that have not seen each other in a longtime. While flirting with Betty, Mike has no qualms about making rather forward remarks like, "I'd like to get you naked again. It's been a longtime. What, like . . . six months at least?," but he also expresses great fear and paranoia about being stalked. Hopelessly smitten like an innocent teenager girl with a hopeless crush, Betty naturally completely embraces Mike and his proposed reigniting of their hot and heavy romance, but it never really happens as the titular male bimbo is about as reliable as an LSD-addled schizophrenic street bum. Instead of achieving her assumed dream of beginning a long-term relationship with Mike, Betty is sucked into a sort of lovesick hell involving a dead lover, bitchy queens, violently paranoid dope fiends, arrogant quasi-punk art fags, and shadowy negroid hit men.

Not exactly a scholar or even someone with an average IQ, Mike unwittingly accepts a death sentence when he mindlessly goes along with his insufferably

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spastic and seemingly sociopathic friend Pete (Darrell Larson) after he decides to steal a sizable amount of cocaine from the wealthy suppliers that provide them with drugs to sell. Needless to say, the theft leaves both Mike and Pete marked men and the former is brutally murdered in his small apartment after being surprised by negro enforcers the very same night that he mindlessly snags the dope. While Betty simply assumes that Mike once again stood her up like he had done to her so many times before when he falls to meet her that night as the two planned, the truth is much uglier and horrifying, or so the heroine learns the next day after getting a random phone call from an eccentric yet annoyingly passive gay middle-aged photographer named Sam Morris (Robert Crosson). Although she does not know him, Sam informs Betty that their mutual 'friend' Mike has been brutally murdered and then invites her to his apartment. After being somewhat shocked that Sam's apartment is completely covered with large posters of Mike, Betty discovers that her dead beau has a dubious connection to a rich and successful gay negro record producer named Philip Green (played by real-life gay negro Paul Winfield), so she decides to visit him to see if she can find out more about the mysterious murder. Rather unfortunately, Betty is in for a rather rude awakening as she discovers the uniquely undignified fact that Mike was once the personal white fuck toy of made spade Prince Philip, who even has a live-in white slave named Randy (William Ostrander). In between being entertained by Randy with coke-snorting and his insufferably gay tryout video for Chippendales, Betty scans old Polaroid photos of Mike as she waits to speak with Philip in what ultimately provides to be an extremely awkward couple minutes. An almost gleefully bitchy old queen that lives the rich hedonistic homo dream, Philip seems initially annoyed with Betty, but it is clearly because he is jealous of her and the real romantic connection she had with Mike. Indeed, Mike might have fucked old men, but he preferred relatively fresh pussy.

Naturally, Betty becomes somewhat upset when Philip tells her in regard to Mike's murder, "You want to know everything? Well... You don't. Believe me, you don't. This wasn't an enforcement killing. I mean, they were making a statement." While Betty seems to find it somehow curious that Philip was the one that was responsible for identifying Mike's corpse at the morgue, it certainly makes more sense to her when she discovers that her lover used to share a bed with the surly sod sambo. Arguably more upsetting is everything else that Philip tells Betty about Mike, including about their gay interracial romance, or as he explains with a certain degree of slightly hidden lovesick melancholy, "It was, however, a very brief physical relationship. It was born on a hot Ohio day. Lot of drugs, Jack Daniels. It was not, as they say, his true bent, as you well know. Well, whatever it was, it was certainly worth a First Class ticket to sunny California. He lived with me in this house just as long as he wanted. Then, what about two years ago, he met you. He liked you. He certainly talked about you enough." Although she clearly does not want to hear it, Philip also explains

how his love affair began with Mike after he randomly picked him up while he was hitchhiking across country. As hinted by Philip's words, "He had all kinds of stories that he used on different people. He was always preparing a face for the faces he met," one also gets the impression that Mike was a happy-go-lucky sociopath of sorts, though he was a relatively benign one compared to his best friend Pete. At the very least, Mike was completely and irrevocably morally retarded. To Mike's credit, he openly acknowledged that Betty was "too good" for him, hence one of the reasons why he never attempted to pursue a serious relationship with her. Of course, by never getting serious with Betty, Mike unwittingly protected her from very potentially being murdered too.

While Betty is desperately running around town and attempting to find out everything she can about Mike and his untimely demise, her dead boy toy's friend Pete—a socially corrosive criminal and all-around degenerate—is lurking in alleys and hiding in friends' apartments as he tries in vain to evade the same negro enforcers that killed his pal. Hated by Philip (who he once called a "nigger" as revealed in a home movie that Randy plays for Betty) and undoubtedly an exceedingly erratic human parasite of the pathetically socially predatory sort, Pete eventually makes his way to Betty's house in the hope she will provide him with sanctuary from the shadowy spade brigade, but he makes the mistake of more or less holding her hostage in her own home and treating her in a most absurdly aggressive fashion. High on the very same cocaine that resulted in him signing his own death warrant and positively petrified to the bone, Pete the prick clearly strikes fear in Betty, who attempts to do her best to not frighten or provoke the dangerously paranoid and unhinged proto-tweaker. Although he claims that he only needs a "friend," Pete does not seem all that concerned about the fact that he completely scares the shit out of Betty. Also, like the stereotypical sociopath, little Pete has a terrible persecution complex and claims that the coke theft that got his best friend killed was nothing more than a simple "mistake," or as he hysterically states in his pathetic defense, "There was so much. We took so little. I just wanted my share. Do you know how much they have? How well they live? Do you know how much I have? How I live? [...] You think it's all my fault. He knew what happened. He was a part of it. He took his share. I have him his share." Of course, like Mike, Pete ultimately has to pay the price for his indiscretions. Indeed, luckily for Betty, a couple nameless and faceless negroes—the same gentlemen that killed Mike—show up at the heroine's house, grab Pete, and take him away in a van before he can do anything too drastic to her (among other things, Pete begins threatening Betty with a knife). In the end, the negro enforcers dump Pete's bound corpse, which includes a plastic bag wrapped around his head, at a remote construction site. As for Betty, she is featured in the final scene bittersweetly reminiscing about Mike after receiving photographs of her and him that were shipped to her by Sam. Needless to say, Mike must have been an absolutely otherworldly good fuck for a mild-mannered banker teller

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like Betty to go to homo hell and back in a rather desperate attempt to solve the puzzle of his grisly demise. In the end, Betty ultimately pays a high prize for rough trade and she does not seem to regret a second of it, even though she now probably suffers from posttraumatic stress and will probably have a hard time maintaining romantic relationships in the future.

Although just speculation, I think it is safe to say that *Mike's Murder* is a sort of masochistic gay fantasy disguised as a sort of dark romantic mystery, even if it is based on a true story. To support my conclusion, I sought out reviews of the film and was quite delighted to find a somewhat recent one from colored contrarian Armond White, who is undoubtedly both the most hated and well known negro film critic working today. Despite being both gay and probably the only (in)famous negro American film critic, White is actually hated by Jews and white liberals due to his trashing of overrated race hustler garbage like black Brit Steve McQueen's superficial sell-out flick *12 Years a Slave* (2013) and Jordan Peele's big brown (pseudo)horror turd *Get Out* (2017). A rare American film critic that vocally values humanism over nihilism and does not subscribe to phony mainstream leftist narratives, White writes review for both the William F. Buckley Jr.-founded rag *National Review* (NR) and the cocksucker kultur mag *Out*, so naturally his review of *Mike's Murder*—a film that would certainly be decried as being homophobic nowadays by the more hysterical members of the LGBT ghetto—is something quite exceptional. Indeed, in his January 2, 2018 review for *Out* entitled *MIKE'S MURDER: Revisiting the Complex, Erotic Tale of an '80s Hollywood Hustler*, White somewhat predictably demonstrates his affinity for the film's gay negro record producer, arguing, "Bridges then shifts his attention to one of the deepest gay male characters in Hollywood history: Phillip, a wealthy, middle-aged music producer, tells Betty how he became Mike's sugar daddy. Phillip steals the movie. Played by late gay actor Paul Winfield, best known for his Oscar-nominated role as the sharecropper father in *Sounder*, he displays a subtle passion. This career risk and personal revelation by Winfield and Bridges was historic. Beneath his elegant kaftan, the older gentleman who procures trim young men reveals a gay man's fully recognizable inner life. Phillip is half-ashamed of the vulnerability indicated by his relationship with Mike (intimately remembered as 'Michael') when recalling their mutual exploitation. He asks Betty, 'Were you in love with him? So was I. In the beginning, I was just desperately in love...It was not, as they say, 'his true bent,' as you well know.'" Of course, despite only being briefly in the film, Philip is a strong and imperative character because he seems to be a sort of negrified stand-in for director Bridges. Also, one cannot forget the unintentionally absurd image of Paul Winfield strutting around in a large hippie-like robe like he some sort of all-powerful and all-knowing aristocrat in Sodom.

While the film is largely forgotten and not really regarded as much more than a strange and subversive artifact of 1980s (semi)mainstream gay cinema, Pauline

Kael, whose second book *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (1968) incidentally played a crucial role in inspiring Armond White to become a film critic, actually wrote a short yet favorable review of Mike's *Murder* and especially Debra Winger's performance in *The New Yorker*. Although I am someone that has always appreciated auteurs over actors, I can certainly agree with Kael words in her June 30, 1986 review where she argues in regard to the lead actress, "Winger has thick, long, loose hair and a deep, sensual beauty in this movie. Bridges wrote the role for her after directing her in *URBAN COWBOY*, and you feel the heroine's expanding awareness in Winger's scenes with Keyloun and her scenes with Winfield. It's a performance that suggests what Antonioni seemed to be trying to get from Jeanne Moreau in *LA NOTTE*, only it really works with Winger—maybe because there's nothing sullen or closed about her. We feel the play of the girl's intelligence, and her openness and curiosity are part of her earthiness, her sanity. There's a marvelous sequence in which Mike calls her after an interval of three months and wants her to come to him right that minute. She says, 'How about tomorrow night?' He says, 'You know I can't plan that far in advance,' and gets her to talk to him while he masturbates. He says he loves her voice, and though we don't see him, we hear a callow sweetness in his tone; he wants to give her satisfaction, too. He talks hot, and she's sort of amused, and goes along with it. I don't know of anyone besides Winger who could play a scene like this so simply." Undoubtedly a rare screen Jewess that takes a rather refined and sophisticated approach to feminine sensuality, sensitivity, nurturance, and compassion as opposed to stereotypically wallowing in the neurotic, obnoxious, arrogant, and/or the ethnically bitchy, Winger certainly deserves credit for much of the film's emotion potency and pathos, even if Bridges was clearly more interested in hustler hunks and heartsick queens. Undoubtedly, Winger's range as an actress becomes rather clear when one compares her role in Bridge's film to her completely unrecognizable performance in drag in Alan Rudolph's somewhat underrated rom-com-fantasy *Made in Heaven* (1987).

Rather curiously but not all that surprisingly considering his sexual bent, Bridges gets the most radically retarded character in Mike's *Murder*—aspiring Chippendale dancer-cum-gigolo Randy—to act as his sort of socio-political mouthpiece. Indeed, in a somewhat preachy scene, the character states in between literally snorting lines of cocaine to Betty, "Well, they outta legalize everything in this country. That's what Philip says. Take it out of the hands of the criminals. You know...prostitution, drugs [...] But I guess there's so much money to be made. Philip has this theory, see, that, uh, the moral majority—whether they know it or not—is being funded by the mafia so that they can keep everything [that is] sinful illegal so that they can clean-up. Big business, you know. Thirty million Americans snort cocaine." Of course, as someone that apparently hosted Hollywood homo orgies, it is not hard to see why Bridges supported the legalization of drugs and prostitution as he personally witnessed

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the totally senseless demise of people like Mike and his friends in real-life. After all, it is no coincidence that Randy complains during the same scene, "It's been a weird week. I've known two people personally that got murdered this week. They were both drug related," just as it is probably no coincidence that Bridges got Mark Keyloun to play the titular character as the actor previously played alongside a then-unknown Kevin Bacon as a gay-for-pay hustler in Paul Morrissey's similarly underrated *Forty Deuce* (1982).

Not unlike Morrissey, Bridges was an auteur that was first and foremost a filmmaker and not a 'fag filmmaker' that emphasized a subversive socio-sexual agenda over an artistic one. In fact, the great irony of a marginal film like *Mike's Murder* is that it would have never been made had Bridges not received a great commercial success with his Travolta vehicle *Urban Cowboy* (1980). Rather unfortunately, the current cut of *Mike's Murder* that exists is not the film that Bridges originally intended as the studio Warner Brothers hated the director's original cut and refused to release it until the director made some drastic changes in regard to multiple aspects of the film. For example, the film apparently originally had a narrative structure comparable to Gaspar Noé's *Irréversible* (2002) in that events were depicted in a chronologically backward fashion. Arguably most infuriatingly of all, the eponymous murder scene was also cut from the film, or as star Mark Keyloun revealed in a 2015 interview featured at TVStoreOnline Blog, "And what happened to *MIKE'S MURDER*, basically, is that when it came time to test-screen the film, the studio put it in front of an audience in some upscale Northern California county. Because of the blood and sex—the film didn't receive a favorable review. I think, that Bridges and the producers ran scared. They went back into the editing room and cut out all of the good stuff. They cut out all the stuff that made the film great. They re-oriented the film, from a point-of-view that sanitized the whole thing. The irony of that—Pacino's *SCARFACE* (1983) had just come out. There's a scene in there with Pacino and some guys cutting up a person in a bathtub with a chainsaw. The producers and Bridges cut out my character's murder—where he was cut-up with a knife in a apartment with blood flying all over. They cut out the butchery, and the sex. There was a bunch more sex in the film that was cut out, and how do you sell a film without the violence and the sex? (laughing)." As far as what the murder scene was like, Keyloun also explained in the same interview, "Mike was stabbed in the chest. It was very graphic. There was cow blood being spewed all over the walls. Mike was stabbed and his throat is cut. He got stabbed multiple times and blood was spraying all over. That was the most-effective part of the sequence. They filmed me flailing around on the floor in slow-motion with blood squirting out of my chest." Rather sadly, aside from the murder scene being excised, a number of sex scenes were also cut, including Keyloun pounding Winger's puss doggy-style. Somewhat ironically, the film would probably be better known today had Bridges not followed the studio's demands and cut out

all of the murder, mayhem, and mammary glands.

Also, less interestingly, the original musical score by English musician Joe Jackson was replaced with a score by English composer John Barry. Of course, both of these musicians seem rather banal when one considers that the film features an unintentionally humorous cameo from 'Spazz Attack' (real name Craig Allen Rothwell), who was featured in David Bowie's Glass Spiders tour of 1988, appeared as a 'demon alien' in Tony Basil's "Space Girls" music video, and is probably best known for his relationship with DEVO (aside from appearing in a couple of their music videos, he portrayed their iconic quasi-mascot 'Booji Boy' during one of their tours). Notably, during his brief appearance in the film, Spazz Attack states, "Art has always been an expression of the backs of people's minds—what they conceive life to actually be." Of course, Mike's Murder is, if nothing else, an expression of Bridges's mind and the unsentimental way he conceived life to actually be. In that sense, aside from September 30, 1955, most of Bridges's other films seem like well constructed hack work by comparison. After all, while his hits like *The Paper Chase* and *Urban Cowboy* are technically more immaculate in terms of their pacing and overall construction, they lack the authenticity and sincerity of *Mike's Murder* (though one must admit that most of these films have certain 'queer' sensibilities). As a filmmaker, Bridges can be seen as a sort of gay Robert Redford as purveyor of middlebrow (melo)drama that is meant to tickle the painfully average intellects of the largely culturally retarded American bourgeoisie. Naturally, what makes *Mike's Murder* stand out is that it transcends simple bourgeois bullshit and tells the sort of sickly sordid story that borders on hybristophilia. Additionally, the film features the sort of emotive hustler worship that is typical of early Gus Van Sant films like *Mala Noche* (1985) and especially *My Own Private Idaho* (1991).

In terms of films featuring the heterosexual horrors of a woman having to cope with the great shock of fact that her beau is also a cocksucker, the subgenre has very few entries and includes films as diverse as John Schlesinger's *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971), Jacques Scandelari's *Monique* (1978) aka *Flashing Lights*, Arthur Hiller's *Making Love* (1982), and Cyril Collard's *Les Nuits Fauves* (1992) aka *Savage Nights*, among various other examples. Undoubtedly, what makes *Mike's Murder* different from all these films is that it takes a more satisfying slow-burning approach to revealing the revelation that the heroine's lover was a prick-peddler (of course, the fact that a middle-aged negro was in love with him makes this reveal all the more awkward and disturbing). Interestingly, not unlike Fassbinder's cryptically autobiographical Sapphic melodrama *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Mike's Murder* is based on a true story where the genders of the characters were changed, or as actor Dan Shor explained in an interview, "MIKE'S MURDER was based on a real guy that [director] Jim Bridges knew. The film was an investigation into the gay community of Los Angeles of that time. Debra Winger was really playing a guy in the film,

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and Mike, Mark Keyloun, was essentially playing a male hooker [...] You got the sense that my character was unsuccessful with everyone, compared to the character of Mike—who was like the Brigitte Bardot of the film.” Indeed, there is no doubt that Bridges’ camera worships Keyloun the same way that Roger Vadim’s did in iconic Bardot vehicles like ...And God Created Woman (1956).

In fact, the facts revolving around the real Mike are eerily similar to the film as revealed by Bridge’s longtime lover and the film’s associate producer Jack Larson, who explained in an interview, “Mark was a terrific, eager, and dedicated young man. I think he may have been from Baltimore originally. Paul Winfield, years prior, had met Mark while he was in Baltimore shooting a film. They met, and Mark expressed an interest in working in films to Paul, but not as an actor. Both Jim [Bridges] and I knew Paul well, because he had been around town for many years, he had done a play that I had written, and also a play that Jim had written prior to the shooting of MIKE’S MURDER. So both Jim and I knew him fairly well, and through Paul, we both got to know Mark Bernalack. Paul had brought Mark out to Los Angeles from Baltimore, and he moved into Paul’s house. Mark was extraordinarily handsome, and indeed, he did start to get jobs on films as a crew member after he came out here. He stayed with Paul for a while, and after he had enough money to get on his feet, he moved out of Paul’s house and took an apartment in Brentwood—where Jim and I lived. It was in the heart of Brentwood near Sunset and Barrington. There was a tennis court around there, and when Jim and I would drive down Barrington we would often see Mark teaching tennis at those particular courts. In fact, those courts on Barrington are the same courts that we used to shoot the scenes with Mark [Keyloun] and Debra [Winger] in MIKE’S MURDER. Mark was a great tennis player. He was an ace. And he was obviously a locale Lothario to all the single girls in that area. And he would often have a bandana around his head while he was playing. He was very gallant looking [...] Mark had been savagely murdered at his apartment in Brentwood. It was all over the papers and on the television. It was a horror. Everyone that knew Mark, liked him. We were all stunned. The newspapers said that he was a drug dealer. He wasn’t. I mean, Mark didn’t ever have enough money at one time to buy himself a car. He wasn’t a drug dealer, but there were two guys, who were African-Americans, who I guess, were drug dealers—they confronted him at his apartment and Mark was murdered. Jim was very haunted by it. It was because of how Mark was called a drug dealer in the newspapers. That was very sad to him. The papers portrayed Mark’s murder as if it was a good thing because he was a drug dealer.” Certainly, one must salute Bridges for his racial realism in terms of staying true to the historical facts and depicting the killers as young negroes, which probably would not happen nowadays due to Hollywood’s commitment to propping up so-called minorities, especially blacks. Although gay, Mike’s Murder is certainly not plagued by political correctness, especially when it comes to gay characters. Indeed, from a middle-aged gay alcoholic pho-

tographer named Sam that creepily secretly takes photos of the young man he lusts after to the glaring white slave dynamic that seems to be the most defining trait of wealthy negro Philip's personal life, Bridges' film paints a particularly pathetic portrait of homo Hollywood.

Of course, more than a murder mystery, the film carries the simple yet important message that if you hang around shit long enough, you start to smell, hence the brutal demise of Mike and the precarious situation that his dubious personal relationships put his lover Betty in. In short, heterosexual Mike has his life completely destroyed as a result of entering the cocaine-driven cocksucking realm. Notably, Bridges' film is not the only movie of the 1980s that depicts such a scenario as Marek Kaniévská's uneven Bret Easton Ellis adaptation *Less Than Zero* (1987) stars Robert Downey Jr. as a self-destructive cokehead that eventually betrays his heterosexuality and begins giving and receiving head from fags as a means to fund his ultimately fatal drug addiction. Ironically, director Bridges' degenerate lifestyle and dubious personal relationships resulted in what is the greatest and most intriguing film of his filmmaking career, thus making it all the more tragic that the film only exists today in a butchered cut that both associate producer Larson (who apparently owns a copy of the director's cut) and star Winger agree is inferior to the original director's cut. Needless to say, the Criterion Collection needs to get in contact with Larson so that we can finally see the release of cinema history's greatest bisexual murder mystery as it was originally intended to be. A very, very long time ago in 1939, the American revolutionary Francis Parker Yockey wrote while still in college, "Appalling numbers of youth have been led into a cynical ultra-sophisticated attitude which regards drinking as a badge of social aptitude, which makes a fetish of sport and professes eroticism as a way of life. A perverted and insane pictorial art, lewd exhibitionistic dancing and jungle music form the spiritual norm of this sector of America's youth." Of course, even Yockey could not have predicted a titular character as stupidly tragic as the titular character of *Mike's Murder*. Undoubtedly, what makes the film so intriguing is that it has a sort of paradoxical morality that seems to both embrace and decry the sort of hyper hedonistic homosexuality lifestyle it depicts, but I guess one not expect anything less from the auteur piece of a closeted gay man. Either way, the titular character and his friends are certainly plagued with an all the more apocalyptically degenerate version of the nihilistic social attitude that Yockey warned of.

-Ty E

DREAMWOOD
DREAMWOOD

James Broughton (1972)

Contrary to common belief, free-love-loving hippie nudist pagans were not born in late-1960s southern California but in fin-de-Siècle Germany during the late-1890s/early-1900s among Teutonic Art Nouveau artists like Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach and 'Fidus' (aka Hugo Reinhold Karl Johann Höppener), as well as the overlapping 'Wandervogel' youth movement, who promoted various forms of 'Lebensreform' ("life-reform"), including vegetarianism, nudism, natural medicine, communitarianism, sexual reform, and various other forms of pagan-inspired social reform. Indeed, it should be no surprise that German novelist Hermann Hesse—a favorite writer among American hippies during the late-1960s—was a proto-hippie of sorts who got involved with the Wandervogel movement in 1907 after seeing four longhaired goofy krauts sporting Jesus sandals walking through his village on their way to Ascona, Switzerland who ultimately cured him of his alcoholism using natural methods. Between 1895 and 1914, tens of thousands of Teutons left the Fatherland for America and some Wandervogel types landed in sunny Southern California where figures such as Saxony-born proto-hippie Bill Pešter and husband and wife café owners John and Vera Richter imported their 'Naturmensch' and 'Lebensreform' philosophies, which were adopted by locals, including recently arrived Brooklyn-bred McJewish songwriter Eden Ahbez, whose song "Nature Boy", which became a No. 1 hit for eight weeks in 1948 after it was recorded by Nat "King" Cole of all people, promoted the Teutonic weltanschauung. Indeed, the iconic image of tanned longhaired blond surfer dudes that people associated with California was a direct result of the Wandervogel movement, which would also ironically influence National Socialism due to its romanticism, nationalism, and paganism, so it is quite depressing that it would take on a completely degenerated form in America like the 'new age' counterculture cocksucker group the Radical Faeries, whose early poet James Broughton's late-1960s/early-1970s films seem like the closest thing to a Fidus painting in celluloid form.

A proto-Beat poet descended from opulent bankers who actually shoved his cock inside of kosher film critic Pauline Kael (who, despite what some of her more queenish detractors have said, was a fag hag of sorts), even producing a mischling spawn that he would abandon before she was even born, Broughton, who once wrote regarding the importance of film in his life, "Cinema saved me from suicide when I was 32 by revealing to me a wondrous reality: the love between fellow artists," first made a big wave in the cinema world with his 38-minute 35mm short *The Pleasure Garden* (1953)—a work filmed in England that features British filmmaker Lindsay Anderson—which was awarded a prize at the Cannes Film Festival by none other than Jean Cocteau. Today, Broughton is probably best remembered, if at all outside of gay academic circles,

among cinephiles for his counterculture short *The Bed* (1968)—a work that asks and then answers the question, “What can happen to and on a bed?” that features cowboys sleeping with their boots on, dope-smoking beatniks, Mammy-like ‘diva’ negresses with mammoth mammary glands, and various people whose dangling genitals betray their general appearances—which, despite being a mere 22-minutes in length, is notable for featuring quite arguably the most nudity in a single film at the time of its release (unsurprisingly, Broughton had to have the film developed at a lab used by pornographers and other smut-peddlers). Somewhat in the aesthetic tradition of *The Bed* due to its outdoor wooded setting, various unclad longhaired hippie types, and paganiſtic counterculture-inspired spirit, *Dreamwood* (1972)—a sort of Jungian celluloid trance featuring a hodge-podge of various ancient myths—is most certainly Broughton’s magnum opus and a work that, despite featuring unclad dyke-like chicks and a cross-dressing longhaired bearded fellow that looks like a member of the drag troupe the *Cockettes*, is probably the closest a film has ever come to capturing the aesthetic and spirit of the Wandervogel movement, thus also making it probably the only cinematic work that would appeal to both old school hippies and völkisch neo-Nazis who worship Wotan.

Before watching *Dreamwood*, I had no idea that it was directed by a man that banged Hebraic hag Pauline Kael, abandoned his wife and children at age 61 to get with a 26-year-old homo heeb homewrecker, and was a member of the dreaded Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (SPI) whose alpha-vulgarian members dress up in radically repugnant low-camp nun drag getups mocking the Catholic Church (rather unfortunately, British auteur Derek Jarman is one of their ‘saints’). Indeed, aside from a moment of camp or two, *Dreamwood* seems to channel the neo-pagan romanticism that inspired the likes of Fidus, Jung, and Hesse. Originally intended as a variation on the Theseus myth, the film alludes to several classic myths, including Hippolytus, Apollo, Sisyphus, and Narcissus, but as P. Adams Sitney wrote in his groundbreaking work *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (2002) regarding these mythical references, “...these allusions become witty intrusions into the otherwise thoroughly personalized vision; they are, in fact, the only vestiges of the ironic self-mockery which abounds in all of Broughton’s earlier films. As a total work, *DREAMWOOD* occupies the space between the trance film and the mythopoeic cinema, much as Maya Deren’s *RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME* had, but from the retrospective rather than the anticipatory position.” Like Cocteau meets post-Wandervogel counterculture drunk on Jung and naked Riefenſtahl-esque bodies, *Dreamwood* arguably comes closer to any film in conjuring up a truly organic American folk spirit, even if it is totally imaginary and only existed in the director’s own mind. The esoteric story of a young ‘Nature Boy’-like poet who leaves the technocratic world behind and sails to a mystical forest where he must go through four initiations before his Jungian “anima” (the feminine inner person-

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ality of the male) is united with his body in a “sacred marriage” that is “blessed by sun and moon,” *Dreamworld* is a somewhat healthy reminder that hermetic knowledge can have a much greater influence on a person’s artistic creativity than any sort of psychedelic drug. Indeed, despite being directed by a gay over-the-hill hippie, Broughton’s film would more or less be perfectly understood by the followers of eccentric Chilean sage Miguel Serrano, who was not only a comrade of Jung and Hesse, but whose brand of ‘Esoteric Hitlerism’ is Jungian to the core.

As auteur Broughton narrates at the beginning of the film, “Somewhere there is a forest, somewhere at the center of the world, there is a forest of the dream, a sacred wood, a grove of initiation. Somewhere there is what has always been, the treasure hard to obtain, the lair of the great goddess, the bed of the ultimate rapture.” This exceedingly enchanted magical forest is called ‘Dreamwood’ and after enduring a spiritual crisis in his tower that results in him ‘throwing away’ his truly angelic ‘anima’ as portrayed by a beautiful brunette broad who resembles a sort of pagan princess, a poet travels there by sailboat with his doppelganger during a night sea journey. Indeed, the Poet hates the modern world and after seeing his anima appear in a post-industrial landscape, he cannot seem to get her out of his head. When the Poet sees the anima appear in a *Wandervogel*-esque poster of himself hanging on the inside wall of his shabby tower, he freaks out, tears up the poster, and throws the pieces out of his humble abode, but when they hit the ground, they turn into the living anima, who is abducted and escorted away in a car by two elderly old farts of the seemingly sinister sort known as the ‘First Parents.’ The Poet decides to follow his anima and sails to an island overnight with the help of a doppelganger-like dude. Upon arriving at the seemingly barren island, the Poet climbs a rocky mountain where he soon encounters an old wench known as the ‘Helpful Crone’ who gives him a bracelet and axe like some helpful character out of one of the various *The Legend of Zelda* videogames. The Poet uses the axe to chop up the mirror, furniture, and creepy body of a revoltingly effete, materialistic, and narcissistic tranny known as the ‘Terrible Mother-Father’ who tries to hold him back in his spiritual quest by offering him fancy jewelry and other spiritually worthless material trinkets (Broughton was known to have serious mommy issues as is especially apparent in his 1948 film *Mother’s Day*). From there, the Poet begins to enter the forest, but before he can receive complete entry, he must strip in front of ‘Mother Superior’—a rather manly and seemingly brazenly bitchy nun whose rather rough face betrays her feminine body—who also strips. After the nun strips and tosses her nun garb over the Poet’s head, he finally awakes in the forest and prepares for his four initiations.

Upon entering the forest, the Poet is violently attacked by a gang of jolly yet violent unclad children in a scene that is reminiscent of Louis Malle’s dark Lewis Carroll-esque fantasy flick *Black Moon* (1975), but that does not stop him. The Poet also encounters stunning naked nymphs bathing in a stream so he does the

same and soon he encounters Artemis, but he makes the mistake of attempting to touch her and is subsequently nearly drowned after she dunks him under the water. After awakening from his near drowning, the Poet finds himself lying on a rock outside the forest again and he soon reenters, but not before whipping a leather-clad S&M she-bitch dominatrix named 'Hippolyta' with her own whip and then throwing it at her. In the forest, the Poet soon encounters Alchemina, who emerges from a rock with a gigantic sunflower in her hand and plays various games with him, including robbing him of his clothes. Ultimately, Alchemina leads the Poet to lecherous wench Lilith who is aided by two equally unclad homos sporting goofy face makeup.

While Lilith's man-slaves hold the Poet down, she mercilessly fucks him as a foggy haze engulfs his body. After being carnally manhandled to the point of losing consciousness, the Poet once again awakens outside of the forest and attempts to reenter it but his progress is temporarily deterred by a 'woodsman' that resembles a hippie lumberjack who is the protagonist's virtual doppelganger, albeit slightly more masculine. Although initially attempting to brutally beat the Poet, the rugged Woodsman soon realizes that he is his brother and then leads him through the forest where both men magically lose their clothes somewhere on the way. The Woodsman takes the Poet to a somewhat rocky area with dead trees where he encounters a creepy looking bitch with a translucent serial killer-esque mask covered in proto-Gothic bone jewelry named 'Old Queen Hecate.' Somewhat reluctantly, the Poet literally enters Hecate's cunt (!) during an inverse birth scenario and subsequently awakes deep in the forest aka 'Green Chapel' reborn. To consummate his love affair with the forest and the Goddess Mother Nature, the Poet disrobes and begins quite literally fucking the ground to the point of spilling his seed inside the soil in a scenario that would anticipate the 'ecosexuality' hardcore flicks of Semitic Sapphic porn star Annie Sprinkle, but not before blessing it with his urine and feces(!) in a completely unsimulated scene of scatological proportions. By fucking Mother Nature, he is finally able to accept his 'anima,' which enters his body in a "sacred marriage" that is blessed by the sun and moon as depicted in the following shot of the film where they enter his chest.

Unquestionably, avant-garde film historian P. Adams Sitney probably paid Broughton's *Dreamwood* the greatest tribute when he wrote that, "No single film in the whole of the American avant-garde comes as close as this one to the source of the trance film, Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète*." Of course, in its graphic depiction of the poet protagonist urinating and defecating on the ground of a forest before sticking his cock into it, Broughton's film could be renamed *The Poop and Piss of a Poet* as a work that certainly reflects the "if it feels good, do it" counter-culture libertine pseudo-philosophy that was quite vogue at the time the work was made. It is interesting to note that while Broughton's work and brand of spirituality have been fairly forgotten, even with the rise of gay power bullshit,

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cine-magician Kenneth Anger—another west coast filmmaker who personally received support from Jean Cocteau—and his Thelema-themed films seem to have only become all the more popular over the past couple of decades. Somewhat recently, a couple queer documentarians did Broughton a great disservice with the superlatively sentimental poof-power hagiography *Big Joy: The Adventures of James Broughton* (2013), which is less about the filmmaker's films than about why he is a homo hero because he abandoned his wife and kids at 61 to start a lurid love affair with a nice 26-year-old Jewish boy named Joel Singer. Notably, the decidedly deluded doc makes no reference to Broughton's magnum opus *Dreamwood* and instead dwells on lesser works like *Devotions* (1983) featuring elderly queer couples naked in bed with their pet dog and a leather-fag couple having a romantic night out on the town, as well as the filmmaker frolicking around gaily with his much younger and assumedly more depraved boy toy Singer (who co-directed the film, as well as two of Broughton's later works, including *Song of the Godbody* (1977) and *Scattered Remains* (1988)). If you're interested in seeing the best of celluloid hippie homo hermeticism or, more importantly, want to see the sort of film that Fidus might have directed had he been a filmmaker instead of a painter, *Dreamwood* is nothing short of mandatory viewing and certainly a work that needs to be salvaged from obscurity before it is forever regulated to the celluloid trash heap of history like so many other American avant-garde works.

-Ty E

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY

James Cameron (1991)

If you have not seen this film, I want you to do either one of two things. 1) Kill yourself or B) Go buy this now. Without any doubt in my mind, T2 is one of the greatest action films, rivaled only by the likes of the original Die Hard and First Blood. Arnold Schwarzenegger has sealed his place in the action gods hall of fame. Not only is this man a governor, but he also beats women and other various illegal things! Yes! Following the events of the original Terminator film, the T-800 is sent back, but this time, to protect the young rebel John Conner (Played by a pre-pubescent Edward Furlong.) Not only does this prove to be infinitely challenging when a bad ass T-1000 (Robert Patrick) is sent to destroy him with a morphing body which challenges the kickass-itude of Carnage's ability in the Marvel Universe. I'm passionate about this film for several reasons. It is the very rare film that can be called an enormous multi-tasker. I laughed, I cried, I was on the edge of my seat, and much much much more emotions were present. T2 (That sounds so perfect) is that one film that was made with a perfect mind for merchandising. 12' Battle Damaged T-800 was among one of the greatest action figures I ever owned. Robert Patrick (Known for his amazing portrayal as Kogo Shuko in Double Dragon) is the "EVEN MORRRE POWERFUL" villain this time. It must really suck to be the Governator. He is always fighting shit heftier than him, sans Commando. Homosexual ex-partners don't put up much of a challenge. The entire craft of this film is built around several things. Whether it's the annoying as hell voice crackling of Furlong, the astounding soundtrack which perfectly compliments the action, or the menacing T-1000 in all his impaling glory, T2 was, and is, an instant classic. T2 did indeed win 4 Oscars which is still pretty bizarre to me. Then I watch Three Six Mafia win an Oscar, then it seems completely fine. I remember the nightmare scene of Sarah Conner horrifying me as a child. The instant when flames ravage the playground and incinerate Sarah Conner is enough to make any young child a temporary insomniac. The visual extravaganza that is T-1000 is executed brilliantly in several scenes. Among my favorite are his hook grips falling on the roadways only to morph into a blob to rejoin the host, and the infamous coffee grabbing security guard scene which made me want to stab people with my fucking arm. Speaking of arms, the props were simply amazing. The O.J. Simpson guy did a wonderful job at sweating and breathing really hard. That's all I can really applaud him on. T2 is in fact, a timeless film. Most things age well, like wine. I'd love to compare T2 to an aged yet exquisite wine, but T2 does not age. You can watch this film right now, and still be blown away by the effects and a time where action didn't include oriental choreographers teaching everyone Kung-Fu. As John McClane once put it, "Screw all this Kung-Fu bullshit" or something like that. I don't exactly remember cause that film was edited.

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY

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THE ALUMINUM FOWL

James Clauer (2006)

The Aluminum Fowl is a nice strange documentary about some bizarre rural and rambunctious Negroes directed by newcomer James Clauer. It seems junkie (or former junkie) auteur Harmony Korine has taken up the profession of producing. Korine with O'Salvation, unsurprisingly produced The Aluminum Fowl. Judging by its style, I wouldn't be surprised if Harmony Korine dictated to director James Clauer what to do with the film. The Aluminum Fowl is certainly a project that has many of Korine's odd but refreshing obsessions in it. The black brothers featured in The Aluminum Fowl love chicken. They love chicken so much that they are even willing to comb chickens feathers while laying in bathtubs. Sadly, some of the brothers aren't as keen on chickens and have them fight each other. Thankfully, due to the sometimes undecipherable dialogue spoken by the subjects of The Aluminum Fowl, the short features much needed subtitles. These subtitles come in handy as I was able to confirm that a young assumed mulatto stated, "Hell I'd fight anything just to see it killed." These are profound words coming from a fine gentlemen that looks like an overweight version of Steve Urkel.

The Aluminum Fowl features a trailer park fight sign that seems to remember the brother skinhead fight featured in Harmony Korine's Gummo. Like Gummo, The Aluminum Fowl makes it known that those that live in the impoverished South are extremely bored and have to invent dangerous activities for fun. Naturally, the brothers of The Aluminum Fowl have the same mother but different fathers. This brotherly biological diversity has created quite an eclectic family of brothers of the same mother. Being someone from a more rural area below the Mason Dixon line, I have met many different black brothers with different fathers. I recall three black brothers, all different ages, but all in the same grade. City fags from the North seem to lack a certain intimacy with the Negro than those from the South. Instead of sporting bling, a young black man named Travis sports Aluminum foil so as to obtain trailer park playa status. Travis also knows how to ride a bike like he just stole it successfully from the local K-Mart. Trash burning also becomes a local sport and favorite past time of these abstract black men. These brothers really know how to take advantage and destroy their natural habitat for their own pleasure. May Jesus Christ give them a hand for their accomplishments. The Aluminum Fowl is another example of art fags turning what would be considered the lowest point on American culture and turning it into art. The reality is however, the rural areas are where real culture (despite its "quality") exists and the city is where culture dies. Despite how backwards a southern rural area may be, it still has a sense of organic community and with that cultural fruits. From my experience, the city is a place of alienation and cosmopolitan materialism. It is no surprise that liberal "liberators" come from

THE ALUMINUM FOWL

the cities as they don't believe in culture. If they have the slightest inkling that culture may exist, their materialist ways seek to stomp it out. The world of Harmony Korine's Gummo and James Clauer's The Aluminum Fowl, despite their backwardness, are worlds where "culture" still reigns.

-Ty E

AUTOMATONS

James Felix McKenney (2006)

Hollywood has been defecating out Armageddon and apocalyptic scenario films for decades now. The past couple years have seen an array of these anxiety promoting films. I personally find most of these movies to be complete trash and reflective of America's (and abroad) apathy towards the continuation of mankind. There seems to be an irrational excitement involved with knowing that the world is about to end. I finally came upon an refreshingly original apocalyptic themed film and it certainly did not come out of Hollywood. The title of this micro-budget film is Automaton. Automaton is a gritty black and white film that looks like it was actually shot in a bomb shelter after an apocalyptic event with the only available resources the survivors could find. The film has a similar aesthetic to Shinya Tsukamoto's Tetsuo: Iron Man. Automaton also features a cyberpunk-like score that you would expect to hear in a Japanese cyberpunk flick. Like Tetsuo, Automaton is also set in a postmodern world of technological equipment overflow. A world where technology has physically and mentally overwhelmed man. Phantasm tall man Angus Scrimm lends his charismatic linguistic talents to Automaton. Scrimm plays a scientist who has witnessed the dawn of "The Robot War." He speaks out through a grainy television screen with words of hope for human survival. Scrimm's wise words appear throughout the film allowing both the viewer and the film's female protagonist know that they are not alone. I personally wouldn't mind having Angus Scrimm's voice guiding me through such catastrophic times. Automaton is the kind of film that is a testament to one individual's drive to get their obsessive vision made. Writer, editor, and director James Felix McKenney can be considered an unconventional individual as Automaton's unique feel reflects. I don't think many filmmakers aspire to make films featuring small metal toy robots fighting, featuring special effects that have a similar look to store bought sparklers (maybe they were?). Automaton is a labor of love of the underground sci-fi geek kind. Automaton is like The Terminator with a low budget tin man's heart. Don't expect to be "wowed" with big special effects and nonstop action. Automaton's strengths lie in the film's somewhat hopeful message and bomb shelter aesthetic. It may be the end of the world, but you won't be lonely when you have Angus Scrimm guiding you through it.

-Ty E

INTERIOR. LEATHER BAR.
INTERIOR. LEATHER BAR.

James Franco* (2013)

Fuck The Exorcist (1973), I think Cruising (1980) is easily the most aesthetically/thematically audacious and least monetary-motivated film Hollywood Hebrew auteur William Friedkin (The French Connection, Sorcerer) has ever directed, so naturally I was intrigued upon learning that the obscenely popular mainstream actor James Franco was purportedly directing a film based on 40 minutes of documentary-like S&M scenes cut from the infamous leather-fag slasher flick. Of course, like so many other people that heard about Franco's film, Interior. Leather Bar. (2013) aka James Franco's Cruising, I did not realize that it was not really actual straight interpretation of the scenes cut from Cruising, but a postmodern pseudo-documentary film-within-a-film about the Hollywood star turned auteur and his gay hipster co-director Travis Mathews (I Want Your Love, In Their Room: London) ostensibly 'playing themselves' and documenting themselves making a "re-imagined idea" about what the deleted scenes from Cruising might have been like. In short, Interior. Leather Bar. is a piece of patently pretentious pomo homo pseudo-intellectual posturing featuring a couple minutes of the re-imagined Cruising scenes co-directed by a hot Hollywood celeb who wants to prove he has no problem watching homos giving each other head and whatnot. Franco began his directing career with the crappy comedy The Ape (2005), which mixes a gorilla suit with a pseudo-Allen-esque tribute to Russian literature, and made a couple more forgettable/unseen non-gay-themed features since then, but ever since directing the homoerotic short The Feast of Stephen (2009)—a rather unfortunate tribute to Kenneth Anger featuring pedomorphic brown boys—he has almost exclusively focused on queer-themed material of the rather contrived sort. With his black-and-white feature The Broken Tower (2011)—a work that the auteur not surprisingly created as his graduate school thesis project at NYC—Franco portrayed the gay American poet Hart Crane and even gives head to another man (a prosthetic prick was used, of course) in what is easily one of the most aesthetically barren and eclectically vapid 'avant-garde' features I have ever seen. With My Own Private River (2012), he paid tribute to River Phoenix's role as a gay hustler in Gus van Sant's My Own Private Idaho (1991) by simply re-editing the film in a seemingly Asperger-addled fashion where Phoenix is the focus and Keanu Reeves is mostly cut out. Undoubtedly, what virtually all of Franco's films demonstrate is that he might know more about queer cinema than the average Brokeback Mountain (2005) fan yet he does not seem to have a personal vision nor original ideas of his own, so he simply caters to the preposterously politically correct LGBT-cuckolded sensibilities of mainstream film critics to prove he is an 'edgy' and 'open-minded' artiste and not a spoiled Hollywood superstar who has enough money to do whatever he wants whenever he wants. Indeed, at best,

Interior. Leather Bar. seems like a fanboy film school project that goes so far as to liberalize, multiculturalize, and metrosexualize Friedkin's original film to the point where it lacks any of the true anti-p.c. gay grit of *Cruising*.

After beginning with an inter-title revealing that *Cruising* was plagued by protests (homos thought it was homophobic), that director William Friedkin received death threats, and 40 minutes of the film (which has never been publicly shown and is now assumed lost) was cut to avoid an X rating, Interior. Leather Bar. cuts to co-directors James Franco and Travis Mathews as they discuss 're-imagining' the long lost scenes of *Cruising*. Seemingly like a fidgety stoner who needs to smoke a bowl, Franco mentions how he was partly inspired to direct the film after reading his homo professor Michael Warner's book *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (2000) and coming to the realization that gay marriage might go against the original anti-bourgeois spirit of true queer politics. While I concur with Franco, Interior. Leather Bar. could not be any more politically correct and socially accessible. For their re-imagining, the filmmakers make the would-be-provocative decision to cast mostly heterosexual actors in the roles, including a seemingly gay but apparently married heterosexual fellow named Val (played by Franco's real-life friend Val Lauren who played the eponymous lead in Franco's 2011 Sal Mineo biopic *Sal*)—a man of dubious racial origin who seems to have as much testosterone as Richard Simmons—to play Al Pacino's character from *Cruising*. As the director wants the viewer to know, hysterical homophobia is lurking everywhere as demonstrated by the fact that Val gets an urgent call from a friend who demonstrates concern for his friend playing a leather-fag in a movie by stating, "I know you're at the Franco-fag project today and I gotta tell ya man, I don't know where your head is on this and I think we really need to talk about this right away." Homos are not the only ones who feel Franco's intentions with the film are dubious, as gay extras on the film question why a heterosexual would want to make a gay film. In a nice nod to Franco's unprejudiced narcissism, the extras also discuss how they hope the director gets naked in the film, which, of course, he does not do (in fact, Franco seems M.I.A. anytime gay sex scenes are shot). When star Val discusses his feeling of unease being around guys fisting each other in the ass and whatnot, Franco becomes pseudo-irate and goes on a rant where he complains: "Here's how I feel... I don't like the fact that I feel like I have been brought up to think a certain way. I don't like thinking that. I don't like realizing that my mind has been twisted by the way the world has been setup around me and what that is, is straight, normative, kind of behavior...and its fucking instilled into my fucking brain." Indeed, Franco seems to believe that bareback buttfucking, fisting, and gay orgies should be everyday images that should bother no one, especially heterosexual men who like big tits and asses. As a man brainwashed by the pink fascist LGBT beast, Franco cannot handle the fact that seeing a man plowing another man's bunghole is not 'normative' enough for him or something. In the

INTERIOR. LEATHER BAR.

end, two erect dicks are shown and the emotionally and physically debased Star Val gets all moody broody as a fellow who has ultimately been debased and has his masculinity undermined for the sake of pseudo-fag Franco's 'art.'

Admittedly, I wanted to like *Interior. Leather Bar.*, but it ultimately felt like a piss poor premature ejaculation from two hipster fanboys with seemingly nil life experience and a pedantic understanding of queer cinema history. Featuring a largely effeminate multicultural cast and none of the naughty neo-fascist imagery associated with the clubs of Friedkin's film, *Interior. Leather Bar.* ultimately seems like a parody of what two politically correct poofs might calculatingly direct so as not to offend the ass-munching authoritarian gatekeepers of mainstream gaydom. Pseudo-Godardian behind-the-scenes banality of the redundantly reflexive and mind numbingly banal yet academically vogue 'meta-filmmaking' variety, *Interior. Leather Bar.* is certainly a film that will bore to death most of its target audiences (i.e. filmmakers, leather-fags, cinephiles, Francophiles, etc.), most especially loyal *Cruising* fans like myself. Not surprisingly, in April 2013, James Franco was awarded the so-called "Ally Award" at the 15th annual Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, thus proving his servile celluloid ass-licking of the politically powerfully sodomite community has paid off. After watching *Interior. Leather Bar.*, I decided to view Franco's most recent auteur piece *As I Lay Dying* (2013)—a jumbled mess that attempts to juggle Faulkner, the iconic spit-screen technique of Warhol and Paul Morrissey's *Chelsea Girls* (1966), and Hollywood Heebys playing hapless impoverished hicks—and it proved to be a totally unwatchable mess of a movie without any objective aside from demonstrating the director is classy enough to cinematically adapt classic American literature in a would-be-avant-garde fashion. A mockery of a mockumentary posing as chic postmodern queer theory swill co-directed by the sort of brainwashed morons that use made-up fag fascist words like 'heteronormative' in a sad slave-morality-driven attempt to molest and sodomize language itself to 'empower' the already preposterously empowered, *Interior. Leather Bar.* is a marvelously mundane manipulation of cinema as well that does not attempt anything that was not done half a century ago by Godard, Jean-Marie Straub, and other soulless and intellectually masturbatory pansy postmodernist filmmakers who get a pathetic kick out of alienating viewers. Indeed, if you're looking for real gritty and uncompromising celluloid leather-faggotry, make sure to skip Franco's failed film-within-a-film and hunt down Jacques Scandolari's *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales*, which probably offers more than what you expect the 40 minutes of missing scenes from *Cruising* might be like as a recklessly wanton work that features real Greenwich Village-based sado-masochistic sodomites engaging in what they do best. Additionally, contemporary queer art-porn auteur filmmakers Todd Verow (*Frisk*, *Bottom X*) and Bruce LaBruce (*Hustler White*, *The Raspberry Reich*) have been doing what Franco and Mathew attempted with *Interior. Leather Bar.* for decades and I must ad-

mit they certainly do it much better. Of course, what should one expect from an actor who seems at his best playing degenerate stoners as demonstrated by his roles in *Freaks and Geeks* (1999–2000), *Pineapple Express* (2008), and *Spring Breakers* (2013). Indeed, at best, Franco's attempt at becoming a controversial avant-garde auteur seems nothing more than another scripted role played by the swarthy pretty boy actor and until he develops a real vision and complex *Weltanschauung* as all great filmmakers do as opposed to pandering to mainstream queers and leftist intellectuals, his cinematic works will never amount to much more than soulless celluloid exercises in poof puffery and shallow con-artistry.

-Ty E

CHILD OF GOD
CHILD OF GOD

James Franco* (2014)

For the past couple years or so, I have been passively watching the progression of A List star James Franco's career from dopey Hollywood pothead heartthrob to ostensibly serious self-funded arthouse auteur and thus far I have not liked much of what I have seen. Indeed, from his mundanely minimalistic Sal Mineo biopic *Sal* (2011) to his pathetically pretentious pomo homo piece of senseless sod-saluting shit *Interior. Leather Bar.* (2013), Franco has demonstrated he is an art film hack who is still making highly derivative formative works despite the fact that he directed his first feature *The Ape* (2005)—a horrendous hipster indie comedy featuring a 'cool' ape that would make Marco Ferreri cringe in disgust—nearly a decade ago. Of course, it is also rather pathetic that assumed heterosexual Franco has largely dedicated his directing career to pandering to poofs and queens, as if it will somehow make him more artistic and subversive, even though being pro-fag is arguably the most trendy socio-political persuasion nowadays. While it may be a tad bit presumptuous of me to say, I think it is safe to say that Franco is never going to be a Pasolini, Fassbinder, or even a Ferrara, but his latest feature *Child of God* (2013) at least proves that he has finally developed an inkling of talent and skill as a filmmaker. Based on the lesser known 1973 Cormac McCarthy novel of the same, Franco's latest effort is a sort of grotesque Southern Gothic (anti)Heimat flick as haunted by the spirit of Ed Gein. Indeed, drenched in blood, semen, and shit, *Child of God* is a sort of semi-scatological tale about a feral man in a feral land who becomes all the more murderous and sexually unhinged as he further self-segregates himself from an already secluded society to the point where he becomes a literal caveman and engages in nocturnal necrophilia. So, what does a nice Jewish boy like James Franco know about a confederate corpse-fucking and cross-dressing hillbillies?! Probably less than Steven Spielberg knows about sexual penetration, yet somehow the film manages to mostly work, which probably largely has to do with the fact that lead actor Scott Haze (who previously starred in Franco's 2013 Faulkner adaptation *As I Lay Dying* and will star in a number of Franco's upcoming films) was so committed to the role that he moved into a shitty remote cabin in Southern Bumfuck (Sevierville, Tennessee, where the original novel was set), lost 50lbs, and even spent some time living in caves to prepare himself for playing a uniquely unflattering role that tells me the actor is no limp-wristed pansy, but a deadly serious actor who has no problem ramming his rectum with a large tree branch if need be. A film in the degenerated Prussian-American proletarian spirit of sexually perverted serial killers like Ed Gein and Carl Panzram, *Child of God* is country fried black crypto-comedy where Franco seems to have attempted to make his very own version of Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977), as work that depicts pre-multicultural 1960s stars-and-bars America as an unholy breeding

ground for some of the world's most misbegotten and decidedly dysgenic Europeans (of course, nowadays America not only has some of the most miserably mongrelized whites on this planet, but also an unsavory selection of genetically damned mystery meat). An absolutely poisonous celluloid American pie in three acts (just like McCarthy's novel), *Child of God* is an unwitting reminder as to why the land of the kultur-free and the daringly depraved has spawned some of the most idiosyncratic serial killers in world history.

As one of the film's various unnamed narrators states regarding meta-hick antihero (Scott Haze) at the very beginning of *Child of God*, "He was of German and Irish bloods. His name was Lester Ballard — a child of God, much like yourself, perhaps." A seemingly half-retarded and aggressively autistic 'adult orphan' whose mother abandoned him when he was a wee lad and whose father committed suicide via hanging when he was only nine or ten years old, Lester is ultimately condemned to an animalistic state of perennial homelessness and isolation when his family farm in Sevier County, Tennessee is auctioned off against his will. Of course, Lester tries in vain to keep the farm by screaming things like, "MOVE, MOVE, MOVE... THIS IS MY PROPERTY," at prospective buyers while menacingly brandishing his beloved rifle, which is more or less an extra limb, but a grouchy old fart soon gets tired of his violently juvenile antics and hits him in the back of the skull with the back of an ax, thus causing the antihero to scream hysterically like a freshly excreted newborn in what ultimately ushers in the beginning of his new life as a cracked country hobo. With nothing left to lose, Lester treks to no man's land and ultimately finds himself squatting in a shack owned by some old geezer. Not long after arriving in the area, Lester happens upon a rather unsympathetic half-naked slag (Elena McGhee) who has just been gang-raped and although the deranged loner does not rape her, he smacks her around a little bit (to Lester's minor credit, she deserved it). Out of spite and just to be an insufferable bitch who is starving for attention, the rape victim falsely accuses Lester of sexually pillaging her, thus resulting in his arrest by a certain Sheriff Fate (Hebrew Tim Blake Nelson portraying a hick) and his proud philistine deputy Cotton (True Blood star Jim Parrack). While in prison, Lester attempts to befriend a murderous negro named "Nigger John" who, as he states himself, is in jail for, "cutting a mother fucker's head off with a pocket knife." After singing a melancholy negro spiritual, Nigger John tells Lester that, "white pussy's nothing but trouble," which is certainly something the antihero will learn on his own, as a man that will develop a strong affinity for postmortem white cooch. After being released from prison and being warned by Sheriff Fate that if he does not straighten out his next crime will be murder, Lester goes back to wandering around aimlessly, though he does make friends with three giant stuffed animals that he won playing a shooting game at a local carnival. Lester also realizes he has an affinity for wild birds after he catches a pigeon with his bare hands and bites off its head in a scene that marks the end

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of the first act of the film.

During the second act of *Child of God*, Lester falls in love for the first time upon happening upon on a running car containing two dead young lovers who have assumedly made a suicide pact. With a lifeless babe (Nina Ljeti) who cannot say “no” or insult him being in front of his rather weary yet hopelessly horny eyes, Lester begins fondling the cutesy corpse’s sensual breasts and sniffs its underwear, but of course, he does not stop there, as he is a man of preternatural tastes who, being a rather bestial good ol’ boy, lacks self-control. Indeed, Lester does not think twice about committing necrophilia with the young nubile corpse, as he pounds the postmortem pussy so hard that the car begins to shake. Not a man to let something go to waste, especially in regard to a cold gash, Lester brings the corpse back to his house and makes it his girlfriend, even buying it an expensive red dress and making it dinner. Of course, all good things must come to an end and after a fire breaks out at Lester’s shack as a result of his own negligence, the aberrant antihero not only loses his shelter, but also his rotting lover and one of his “friends” (aka a big stuffed teddy bear). Now permanently homeless and completely isolated from the rest of humanity, Lester the corpse-molester completely loses whatever little bit of sanity he had left. Indeed, becoming increasingly paranoid, Lester accuses his only two remaining friends—a stuffed lion and a stuffed teddy bear—of betraying him and executes both of them with his rifle while crying and screaming hysterically, thus concluding the second act of the film. Needless to say, Lester plans to go on the hunt for some young teenage pootenanny and he is not going to let anyone stop him on his crazed crusade for crusty corpse cunts.

While only a novice necro during the second act of the film, Lester becomes a serial necrophile killer during the third and final act. Indeed, Lester begins to prey on teenage lovers who make the ultimately fatal mistake of driving out to the middle of the country to make love, as it gives the renegade redneck recluse the opportunity to murder and sexually ravage unlikely young dames in relative comfort without being caught by the cops. After killing the couples, Lester takes the female corpses with him so that he can get down and dirty for nights to come. Now a neo-caveman of sorts, Lester has turned a large mountainside cave into his own personal pleasure-dome where he keeps his various corpse concubines. Taking inspiration from the Ed Gein playbook of country style corpse-copulating, Lester also engages in necrophilic cross-dressing and even sports the scalp of a blonde babe who he had previously shot execution style. Indeed, one day while in his deranged tranny persona, Lester decides to start shooting at an old farmer he does not like, but the farmer shoots back and severely wounds the sexually confused lunatic. Of course, Lester adamantly refuses to confess to Sheriff Fate in regard to his dastardly deeds, so a softcore lynch mob, which includes auteur James Franco, decides to take the law into their own hands. Before putting a noose around Lester’s rather red neck, the mob of rightfully angry

gun-totting hicks offer to spare the necrophile if he agrees to show them where he hid the corpses of his victims. Of course, as a lifelong loner and wilderness-rooted feral man with an uncanny talent for self-preservation, Lester manages to escape after leading the lynch mob to a cave where he makes his getaway via a small tunnel. As to what happens to the antihero after that is anyone's guess, but one can only assume he probably upped the ante in terms of his murderous necrophilic conquests.

A rare example of true Americana artsploitation cinema, *Child of God* is meticulously assembled celluloid trash with a little bit of curious country style class that is, for better or worse, easily the most subversive cinematic Cormac McCarthy adaptation ever made. Irrationally hated by both film critics and filmgoers alike, Franco's fiercely foul flick is certainly an unhinged exercise in (sub)human excess that is probably nothing short of aesthetic terrorism for most viewers, hence its strange charm. Indeed, undoubtedly the most poetic, aberrantly artful, and semi-cryptically misanthropic film about necrophilia since Jörg Buttgerit's two arthouse splatter flicks, *NEKRomantik* (1987) and its sequel *NEKRomantik 2* (1991), *Child of God* offends people not only because it forces (or at least attempts to) the viewer to empathize with an illiterate corpse-fucking serial killer, but also because it depicts such abject human depravity in such an objective yet somewhat eloquently directed way that it reminds viewers that they too have the capacity to act like rabid animals that fiddle with their own feces, fucks corpses, and kill without remorse were they to face similarly less than ideal circumstances in their lives. Taking notes from Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1975 cinematic swansong *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, which Franco himself reviewed about a year ago, the film even features an extended scene early on where the antihero defecates and begins roughly wiping himself with a girthy phallic-like tree branch, as if he is attempting to put his shit back into his bung-hole. Indeed, Franco clearly did not make the film for those preteen fangirls whose panties moisten at the mere mention of his name, nor did he make the flick to cater to the dubious tastes of mainstream film critics with patently pathetic neo-liberal/cultural Marxist political agendas, as the wickedly wanton work is confederate political incorrectness in blood-flavored and fecal-frosted form. Somewhat notably, *Child of God* is not Franco's first cinematic excursion in corpse-fucking art, as he previously directed a 14-minute short entitled *Herbert White* (2010) based on a poem by gay American poet Frank Bidart starring filmic crazy man Michael Shannon as a bourgeois family man who moonlights as a Edmund Kemper-esque serial-killing necrophile. Like John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972) meets the director's buddy Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997), albeit minus the Semitic spastic slapstick, Franco's film may be somewhat derivative and sloppily assembled in parts, but it ultimately proves the actor turned auteur filmmaker's career may be worth following after all. Indeed, if Franco ever gets the gall to adapt something like D.H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*

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(1926) or Jean Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints* (1973) aka *Le Camp des saints*, he will have finally earned my respect. *Amerikkkan Heimat* horror from hick hell, *Child of God* is also a rare film that makes me proud of being an American, which is certainly no small accomplishment, especially since Hollywood reminds me of everything I hate about America.

-Ty E

SUPER

James Gunn* (2010)

The topic of vigilantism is often explored in subversive cinema. Taking a man with a vendetta and unleashing him upon street rats mostly leads to cinematic gems, cases in point - Harry Brown, Death Wish 1-3, Punisher: War Zone, and Death Sentence. A frequent factor in all of these mechanical murderers, rather, exterminators, is the loss of a loved one. Paul Kersey never had a choice, did he? His family was murdered over the length of two films. First his wife then his daughter, and after an extended bout of gang rape to add to the trauma. In James Gunn's *Super*, pathetic pushover Frank D'Arbo (Rainn Wilson) notices the subtle signs leading to abandonment left behind by his wife (Liv Tyler) but fails to retain his property. Once the smooth-talking Jacques (Kevin Bacon - genius) moves in on his lady-territory and gets her to relapse into heroin among other forms of abuse, Frank decides to take action. In his despair, Frank catches a glimpse of a television series starring The Holy Avenger who is laughably inspired by the ridiculous Bibleman show. After receiving a terrifying request of blood via God in his tentacled form, giving him a god-botomy, Frank finds inspiration in comic books, sadistic, subversive persuasion, and dons a red costume and pipe wrench to "shut crime up". What unfolds after this short origin story is trial and error as well as pure cinematic catharsis as the Crimson Bolt brutalizes Negroes and other ilk of society showing no mercy.

Part of what makes *Super* so enchanting is the bold and sinister nature of the Crimson Bolt's actions. It doesn't seem to be in Frank's form as his alternate personality bears the mark of judgment and Frank has only compassion and empathy towards his wife's dire straits. Utterly convinced, at first, that his wife has been kidnapped, a police investigator needed to talk Frank into realizing that this wasn't a case of kidnapping, rather, his (whore) wife fell back into hard habits of opiates and strange cocks all around - the likes of which I've witnessed third-hand. Later following comic protocol, Frank enlists the help of a spunky teenage comic retailer (Libby - Ellen Page) in his effort to fight crime and save the life of his wife. If there is one thing you won't find in *Super*, it is a shred of happiness. Other than the acerbic nihilism, *Super* doesn't offer any misguided tours into positive emotion. In fact, *Super* has one of the most down-beat, utterly defeating, endings in a somewhat-mainstream release that I have seen in quite a long time. The problem with Frank is that he demands to be taken advantage of, if not in the form of his wife using him solely as a crutch, then surely his coworker asking him to wait in the middle of a long line to a theater while he and his significant other take their time. Even Libby decides to use Frank to her own gain, what, fulfilling a strange fantasy of costumed premarital sex and attempted murder. In the end, no one is innocent in *Super*. After all, *Super* contains some

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of the more depraved characters I have seen in a film lately. Especially one that brandishes its badge of black comedy over its concealed weapon.

To call Frank D'Arbo a religious zealot would be a severe understatement. Most of the man's workout sessions take place under a crude sign surrounding the corner above his closet door reading "Some of his children are chosen", which could have favored a darker road had James Gunn decided to trail behind the even-darker motion picture *Frailty*, by all means relevant. By the half-way point of *Super*, Frank's delusions take reign and spiral him into frequent dances with death, if not for being shot, than for blasting men into a pulpy matter that spreads across the earthen ground. What was once a mission from God turns head to bad blood once Frank realizes that he has lost everything important to him. While watching the ending, I thought to myself, was it all worth it? The psychopathy exhibited by Rainn Wilson and Ellen Page is practically unmatched in terms of budgetary motion pictures. While Frank D'Arbo fights for fallacy, unlike the sagely Paul Kersey of *Death Wish*, he unknowingly creates a greater good for society, something he didn't intend at all. Sure, he posted street signs warning crime, but at the end of the day, Frank D'Arbo is just a sad, lonely serial killer who wanted to be loved and due to his selfish and psycho-fundamentalist acts, lost his only chance of companionship that was hidden there all along. *Super* is truly a portrait of the lengths man is willing to traverse in order to save a love that never really loved in return. I pity Frank D'Arbo and the ruination of his introverted character and look forward to more of the morally-bankrupt cinema of James Gunn.

-mAQ

THE GARDENER

James H. Kay (1974)

Before there was William Friedkin's *The Guardian* (1990), there was the rather obscure artsploitation horror-melodrama hybrid *The Gardener* (1974) aka *Garden of Death* aka *Seeds of Evil* directed by advertising director turned one-time auteur James H. Kay and starring counter-culture sex symbol Joe Dallesandro (*Flesh*, *Blood for Dracula*) in his first non-Warhol-related work. A somewhat campy (if not oftentimes unintentionally so) work that seems like it could have been directed by Curtis Harrington's even more effeminate yet less talented little brother, *The Gardener* was such an abject commercial and critical failure upon its original release that director Kay would never again get the opportunity to direct another film (though he apparently got Tennessee Williams' blessing to adopt the playwright's one-act play *The Gnädiges Fräulein* (1966), but the film was never actually made for whatever reason). In fact, Kay's nightmarish experience as a first-time director was chronicled in the documentary short *The Distribution of Low Budget Films or The Gardener's Seeds of Evil Killed My Million Dollar Dream* (1980), which was produced by the associate producer of *The Gardener*, Chalmer G. Kirkbride Jr., as his Master's Thesis in Public Relations at The American University in Washington, D.C. in 1980. The film also arguably destroyed the early career of Katharine Hepburn's niece Katharine Houghton, who previously received much critical acclaim starring alongside her aunt in Stanley Kramer's rancid piece of pseudo-comedic melodramatic miscegenation propaganda *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), even if her character in that film was more or less nothing more than a cipher. A work in the tired tradition of the old school Hollywood Woman's Films disguised as a mystical supernatural horror flick, *The Gardener* is a sort of pseudo-counter-culture/tropic mod art flick that tells the oftentimes tedious and equally tasteless yet would-be-tasteful tale of a sexually repressed bourgeois housewife who becomes completely obsessed with her seemingly magical gardener, only to become intolerably hysterical and killing him in the end instead of simply engaging in the carnal pleasures she so pathetically longed for. A sort of modernist reworking of the Ancient Greek myth of the underworld goddess Persephone with vague shades of Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), *The Gardener* is a work that seems like it probably looked good on paper, but was ultimately executed (or more like excreted) in the worst possible way, as if everything that could have gone wrong did and then some. Indeed, it is one of those films that will probably only appeal to Joe Dallesandro completists and faithful fans of failed celluloid art. Apparently made to appeal to the undersexed appetites of middle-aged middleclass women, *The Gardener* never quite found its target audience and later had the title changed to *Seeds of Evil* (which directed Kay described as being "over-the-top") by the crook distributor so it might wet the lips of the sort of degenerates that hung at 42nd Street in

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NYC during the early 1970s. Filmed in exotic Puerto Rico (though it was originally suppose to be set in the hellhole know as Haiti), *The Gardener* is like *The Last Movie* of obscure American horror films, albeit nowhere as interesting as it might sound. Featuring Latin 'spiritual negroes' and token voodoo references, hyper horny housewives who channel their sexual energy into homicidal hysteria, blacks and mestizos with aristocratic German names, Little Joe bossing around old brown men around like a boss, and such marvelously mundane melodrama that is so ridiculous that it degenerates into low-camp comedy, *The Gardener* is one of those films that is so blatantly bad and pretentiously yet prosaically directed that it baffles the viewer to the point where they wonder how it was ever made in the first place.

Beginning with a bedridden broad named Dorothy Burrows (Tanny McDonald) suffering from an intolerable bout of hysteria and then randomly dropping dead after a nurse brings her some tropical orchids, *The Gardener* immediately establishes a tone of innate ineptitude as far as horror and melodrama is concerned. Indeed, it takes a rather skilled director to make pretty flowers seem horrifying, yet would-be-auteur James H. Kay does not even seem competent enough to direct a credit card commercial, as a man who simply cannot decide whether he wants to be George Cukor, Federico Fellini, or Mario Bava, though his directing style more resembles that of Herschell Gordon Lewis à la *Suburban Roulette* (1968) on Valium. After non-babe Burrows drops dead in the hospital, her two catty/horny bourgeois housewife friends, Ellen Bennett (Katharine Houghton) and Helena Boardman (Rita Gam), meetup and chat like teenage girls about their dead friend's handsome and mysterious gardener Carl (Joe Dallesandro). Ultimately, Ellen—a properly trained housewife if there ever was one who certainly looks but does not dare touch when it comes to muscle men that get her panties all wet—takes home the wild long-haired wonder mensch Carl, who looks like a gay prostitute as a fellow wears nothing but a pair of butt-tight brown corduroys (notably, Dallesandro was forced to wear a ton of brown tanning make-up over his skin to make him look more 'exotic' for the role, thus his trademark 'Little Joe' tattoo is covered up). While the wife a rich and domineering, if not hopelessly dumb, fellow named John (James Congdon), Ellen cannot help but keep her longing eyes on super cocky Carl and his cock. Indeed, while Ellen may be in physical paradise, she is in metaphysical hell as the emotionally neglected and childless wife of a bourgeois brute husband. Naturally, John becomes immediately jealous of Carl, even though it takes a number of days before he even actually meets his exotic employee face-to-face, but when he finally does, his irrational hatred only grows all the more. Of course, while Ellen does not ask her pseudo-hunk hubby for much, she refuses to get rid of her meta-pretty pet gardener. Luckily for Ellen, John's golf friend talks him out of firing Carl, absurdly stating, "You know John, we have a pretty good life here...sometimes I think it's too good. Not enough big worries...so occasionally

when the little ones come along they get out of proportion. Now you've got a gardener you personally dislike...so what, you don't have to like your gardener...as long as he does a good job and your wife's happy, forget it. What you need is some kids to absorb some of that excess energy." Meanwhile, Carl begins taking control of the social structure of the house in a rather elusive and cryptic fashion, even attempting to fire an old servant named Ralph (Roberto Negron), who he later has poisoned via his pernicious plants. As Ellen's friend Helena states of Carl, "He gets straight to work, doesn't he?," and, indeed, soon he will be getting busy being the Don Juan of Puerto Rico, though all the boobeise broads are too scared to touch him.

As *The Gardener* slowly progresses, flower king Carl begins to work his magic around the entire Bennett home, thus striking total fear into every single one of the brown servants, who are naturally closer to the natural world. When a superstitious negro servant named Liza, who is no novice to voodoo, attempts to warn Ellen that Carl is a wicked witch doctor of sorts, the horny housewife patronizingly replies, "Carl is not a witch doctor [...] Carl has a very unusual talent that some people don't understand, that's all" as if the maid is some sort of retarded child that is afraid of an imaginary monster in the closet. When Ellen decides to go against Liza's warning and wears some magical glowing flowers given to her by Carl as part of her costume at a bacchanalian 'Gods of Mythology' party, she becomes seemingly possessed and even injures her husband John with the costume despite the fact he is wearing armor. One darkly romantic night not long after the party, Carl seduces Ellen and kisses her near the swimming pool (where she oftentimes voyeuristically watches him swim naked) and she instantly faints, thus demonstrating the mysterious Gardener's super sexual power over her. After her niece Jane randomly disappears and she witnesses a plant killing a poor kitty cat, Ellen becomes suspicious of Carl and his hermetic plant powers, complaining to Helena that, "something horrible involving Carl," to which her friend replies, "I told you, its sex...Only you're so damn stiff you won't admit to yourself you feel it. That's why your nerves are shot." Not surprisingly, Ellen decides to get rid of Carl and Helena gladly takes him on as an employee/sex object. Meanwhile, Ellen and Helena do some research on Carl's previous employers and discover that most of the women who he used to work for are either dead or crazy. Ostensibly concerned for her friends welfare (but also because she is jealous that she now owns Carl), Ellen goes to check up on Helena and finds her friend entangled in plants and seeming like she has just been gang banged by an entire army platoon. In a horrendous would-be-homage to Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Ellen attempts to slice up the plants that have entangled her friend in organic bondage, but it kills Helena as her veins are connected to the viridiplantae. Of course, from there, Ellen, who is suffering from homicidal hysteria at this point (she seems more pissed off about the fact that Helena got down and dirty with Carl than the fact that Carl is an evil supernatural entity of

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sorts), goes to hunt down Carl and when she finds him, she shoots him, but he runs away and his clothes magically get lost somewhere on the way. Ultimately, Carl morphs into a tree and Ellen continues shooting him. Not satisfied he is dead, Ellen decides to cover the tree with gasoline and set it on fire. Indeed, it seems that Ellen's sexual repression got the best of her and her irrational burning of Carl did little to extinguish her unquenchable sexual appetite.

You know a film is a mess when its own director states of it, "Actually, I think THE GARDENER is a brilliant concept that was never quite realized. I could remake that film and it would be a brilliant film," as James H. Kay matter-of-factly stated in the documentary *The Distribution of Low Budget Films or The Gardener's Seeds of Evil Killed My Million Dollar Dream*. As revealed in the same doc, *The Gardener* cost \$800,000 to make but would only recover \$50,000, with the sleazebag distributor apparently taking the money and running, thus leaving producer Chalmer G. Kirkbride Jr. (and his elderly father, who paid for a good chunk of the film) broke. Indeed, I have to agree with Kay, as *The Gardener* had all the ingredients to be an offbeat cult horror masterpiece, thus making it all the more of a celluloid tragedy that the film falls short on so many levels (with Dallesandro's lack of height not being one of them). For those interested in *The Gardener* and its troubled history, you can learn everything you could ever want to know about the film by checking out the out-of-print dvd release put out by the now-defunct cult label Subversive Cinema, which, among other things, features the first and sole full-length commentary track ever given by Joe Dallesandro, who reveals he has a hard time remembering a lot of aspects of the film (though he confesses to gambling a lot while working on the production), but he does tell his life story. Indeed, Dallesandro decided to star in *The Gardener* on the recommendation of his mentor Paul Morrissey in the hope that it would enable him to break into the mainstream and get away from doing arthouse films with the Warhol crowd. Admittedly, while I found *The Gardener* to be nothing short of an agonizing experience the first time I saw the film, it has turned into a guilty pleasure of sorts for me, as a work that only gets better on subsequent viewings. Instead of ominously orgasmic orchids, the film ultimately features an unintentional satire of the dreaded Woman's Film and the fact that the work features Little Joe as a human-tree hybrid does not hurt, even if his acting is a bit 'wooden.' If nothing else, *The Gardener* certainly offers an overall more enjoyable experience than similar works of the same celluloid species like *The Kirlian Witness* (1979) and Friedkin's *The Guardian*.

-Ty E

THE KING

James Marsh (2005)

No Christian is full of more shit than one of those that lead a life of “sin” and then decide it’s time to atone for their sins and become reborn. Instead of drugs or gangbangs, these born again Christians find their new “high” in the form of making an ass of themselves by promoting Jesus like some deranged civil rights campaign. The pastor David Sandow in the film *The King* has found Jesus to be the ultimate outlet for his con man campaign for Christianity. But what happens when pastor David gets a visit from a half-Latino young man claiming to be his bastard son? What would Jesus do? It seems as of recent that incest has been really hitting the mainstream. I guess if your ½ sibling is biracial it isn’t as bad as there is more genetic diversity. Elvis Valdez is not interested in telling his ½ sister that they are related. It doesn’t take long for this suave psychopath to get into the pants and into the hole of his holy sister. Like Jesus, Elvis is a rebel that is ready to breakdown social morals and barriers. Elvis is played by the charming Mexican actor Gael García Bernal. Knowing how Bernal is a heartthrob with the ladies nowadays, I found his role as Elvis to be quite refreshing. I always thought of Bernal as a sort of stupid model type, but his performance in *The King* leads me to believe that he’s a serious actor. The talented actor William Hurt stars in *The King* as the Christian pastor David. Hurt is a multidimensional actor that can play both flamboyant homosexuals like he did in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* or a dirty mick mafia guy like he did in *A History of Violence*. In *The King*, William Hurt completely pulls off his performance as pseudo-wise and holy pastor. Pastor David is your typical backwards Christian false prophet. A family con man that feeds off the idiocy of those rural peasant folk who still have superstitions about Jesus and his righteous. Pastor David is essentially one of last remnants of a dying faith. The disturbingly weak looking Paul Dano stars as pastor David’s spiritually impotent son Paul. Paul, like the putrid Saint Paul, spreads his Christian message for gentile dupes. Despite his “strong religious background,” Paul seems to be a soulless individual who has never lived a day in his life. It is as if Jesus drained him of his last pint of energy. Thankfully for Paul, his unknown ½ brother helps out with his desire to one day meet Christ. One could say that *The King* is a truly religious experience. The Antichrists of Hollywood have done a lot to mock Christ and his message in history. Whether it be the homoeroticism of Cecil B. DeMille’s biblical films or a priest getting stoned in Detroit Rock City, Hollywood has all Christ hating angles covered. *The King* is different in that it is a complete defilement of the “ideal” Christian nuclear family and its values. What better defiler than the bastard son (Jesus?) of a Latino mother?

-Ty E

ROME '78
ROME '78

James Nares (1978)

If Federico Fellini had been an autistic British queer with next to nil artistic talent living abroad in NYC during the late 1970s, and attempted to adapt *Satyricon* using his uniquely untalented dope-addled degenerate friends as actors and a couple East Village apartment and pseudo-classical landmarks as settings, it might begin to describe the unsurprisingly forgotten, ludicrously low-camp micro-epic *Rome '78* (1978) directed by British painter James Nares (*TV Faces*, *No Japs at My Funeral*). Best remembered today as a footnote in American underground filmmaking history than a revolutionary piece of cinematic art, Nares' first (and last) narrative feature is considered a landmark work of the so called No Wave Cinema, which was a highly derivative and obscenely overrated NYC film movement that probably contributed less to the (de)evolution of the art of cinema than Robert Redford or Whoopi Goldberg. A virtual who's who of late-1970s dope-addled NYC hipsterdom, *Rome '78* features actor/filmmaker Eric Mitchell (*Underground U.S.A.*, *The Way It Is*), lecherous lard ass Lydia Lunch, musician James Chance (*Teenage Jesus and the Jerks*), actor and musician John Lurie (*Stranger than Paradise*, *Down by Law*), platinum blonde East Village diva Patti Astor, and homo proto-reality-TV star Lance Loud, among various other sub-popular figures of the then somewhat artistically incestuous 'No Wave' scene. Notable for being "the first and only No Wave epic," Nares' one-time excursion into Super-8 feature films is easily the most superlatively shitty and compulsively campy 'sword-and-sandal' flick ever made as a work that unequivocally proves that the (anti)aesthetic of Andy Warhol and the man that made his films, Paul Morrissey, can be utilized for making epic costume films. In fact, Nares would confess in an interview with *The Village Voice* regarding his glaring influences, "I think the films I was most thinking about then were the Warhol/Morrissey films—*LONESOME COWBOYS*, *TRASH*, that sort of thing." Indeed, like the shot-on-video Tennessee Williams adaptations of proud 'aesthetic nihilist' John Aes-Nihil (*The Drift*, *Suddenly Last Summer*), *Rome '78* can be described as one of the true bastard (anti)cinematic bastards of the Factory brand of films. Like the early costume films of Derek Jarman (*Sebastiane*, *The Tempest*) stripped bare and lacking the high-camp aesthetic integrity and hyper homoeroticism, Nares' film is riddled with botched lines, obnoxious unintentional laughter, and the in-camera flash-frames that are a grating signature quality of the early Warhol-Morrissey projects like *My Hustler* (1965) and *Bike Boy* (1967). Despite featuring the aesthetic grace of wino vomit, *Rome '78* is, for better or worse, one of the true 'classic' films of the almost wholly disposable No Wave Cinema movement and thus is a must-see film for any cinephile that is masochistic enough to endure it. Indeed, if you enjoy toothless art fags slurring marvelously moronic dialogue, posturing homo hipster man-children trying in

vain to resemble heroic Roman soldiers, Lydia's Lunch's unclad thunder thighs, and non-fratboy oriented toga parties where the only ones probably giving head are the men, Nares' film is probably for you.

While seemingly ceaselessly stupid and senseless on the surface, Rome '78 ultimately features a triple-layer allegorical critique of the decadence of three different cultures, including (but probably not limited to) the ancient Roman Empire, the post-counterculture American plutocracy/pseudo-empire, and the No Wave movement itself, with the latter obviously seeming like the most hopelessly decadent and depraved of them all. Not featuring a single drop of testosterone during its over-extended 80-minute running, Nares' film is delightfully and distastefully tongue-in-cheek to the core in its flagrant, flaming American fag approach to Roman decadence, as a work that ultimately makes Tinto Brass' abortive Gore Vidal adaptation *Caligula* (1979) starring Malcolm McDowell seem like Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960). While featuring a bodaciously bitchy and insanely infantile dictator antagonist that likes little boy dicks named Caesar, Rome '78 is clearly an aberrosexual cinematic molestation of the tragic story of Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (aka Emperor Caligula), who has always been the victim of ahistorical cinematic obloquy, but never to such a uniquely unflattering extent. Indeed, the so-called 'Caesar' of Nares' film is a literal motherfucker and prissy pederast portrayed by 'visual artist' David McDermott (of the duo McDermott & McGough, which is best known for using various archaic 19th-century style photography processes) who screams about realizing his deluded dreams which involve, among other things, Bolshevik-esque methods of genocide and theft. Partly filmed illegally on private property (Nares would pose as a potential renter and would unlock the windows in buildings so that he and his crew could break into the apartments later and film their scenes), as well as neoclassical tourist attractions in NYC like Ulysses S. Grant's tomb, Tribeca's American Thread Building, and a couple places that look too elegant and aesthetically pleasing to be located in the rotten Big Apple, Rome '78 is ultimately a particularly potent reminder that aesthetic autism has always been an innate characteristic of American underground cinema. Featuring a somewhat obvious combination of both scripted dialogue and wayward acting and inexplicable dialogue that was improvised right on the spot, the film was notably described by filmmaker Nares in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier as a work where, "I typecast my friends in roles where they could sort of act out what was going on in their real lives in a way." Indeed, it is quite apparent while watching Rome '78 that Nares had certain 'Superstars' in mind when he assembled the film, which bleeds a certain collective 'scenester' excess and all around degeneracy that one can only assume epitomized the post-punk No Wave scene.

A former slave turned glorious Roman soldier with a low IQ but lofty intentions named Metellus (Eric Mitchell) is scheming to overthrow the government

and murder young degenerate Emperor Caligula (David McDermott) with the help of some campy conspirators, or as he brags to a comrade, "Just between you and me, I don't give a shit about Caesar. Nothing could be more convenient to me than the disappearance of that little brat." Metellus is fucking Caligula's wanton wife Lydia Lunch (who stoically states, "My marriage was just a formality"), but the emperor couldn't care less because, as the Roman soldier says, "Besides his sister, he only really likes boys." Indeed, proud widower Metellus cannot get enough of the Empress' "imperial ass" and she is more than willing enough to give it, so long as the philistine soldier feeds her grapes when not plowing her puss. When Caligula sees Metellus and his wife lying together, he is far from angered and instead cries like an autistic toddler, "No one likes me anymore" in the hopes of being comforted by his apathetic ladylove. Metellus uses the opportunity to berate Caligula for the decline of the Roman economy and then argues regarding his own plans to fix things, "We're thinking about going into the business of selling the Roman way of life." Assumedly stealing his ideas from the bolshevik playboy, Caligula argues that he plans to fix the economy by killing all Roman children and then forcing their parents to give the Roman Empire their inheritance, arguing, "They'll be so happy the emperor came to visit them and then they will die." Indeed, Caligula immediately begins carrying out the plan by rounding up children and slaughtering them, but it ultimately proves to be a bad idea because it just gives his people more reason to welcome his seemingly inevitable assassination. While having his soldiers arrest young children, including newborn babies, Caligula proudly declares he is the only one in Rome that is allowed to wear purple and then proudly states, "I'm the only baby in the room" when all the kids have been cleared out.

As a supremely infantile megalomaniac that loves hearing the sound of his own superlatively gay voice, Caligula likes standing outside and screaming things like "I am the Emperor of the universe" and that he is a "god" that "owns everyone" because he created them in a "dream." Unfortunately for him, no one seems to listen to Caligula, which probably has to do with the fact that he is an incest-inclined pederast who has been cuckolded by an ex-slave. When an eastern empress named Queen of Sheba (Anya Phillips) shows up with her own personal fuckboy (musician James Chance) and attempts to create a merger with Rome and her all the more backward nation, Caligula immediately blows her off, stating, "No one can join with Rome. Rome is too great," and then complains that slaves outnumber civilians and asks for troops. Apparently, Sheba is desperate to join Rome because her own nation is being overrun with a cancerously growing slave population, which absolutely disgusts Caligula as indicated by his remark to the empress, "Well, I have to admit a nation run with slaves would be most distasteful." Meanwhile, John Lurie, who thinks he is Jesus Christ, laments regarding the current sorry state of Roman art that it is certainly also true for the No Wave movement, "Our artists are the worst." Later, while hang-

ing out with Mr. Lurie, Caligula goes on an insane tirade and screams while sounding like a lovelorn poof who has just discovered that his size queen beau has just cheated on him with an AIDS-ridden Puerto Rican, "If my fantasy does not rule, Rome will decay...And the trash and the filth and the garbage of the barbaric tribes will sweep into my city and everyone's civilization will end...And the beauty and the culture that has been handed down from century to century will be lost...Lost to idiots and morons." Of course, since Caligula's "fantasy" involves cross-dressing and bugging little boys, it is nothing compared to the moronic martial prowess of Metellus, who plans to take out the gutter queen posing as an eternal emperor for once and for all.

Needless to say, when Metellus is told by a stunning blonde beastess named Octavia (played by Patti Astor) that "someone...is after your blood" and "It seems that there is a price on your head," he decides he needs to take decisive action and carry out his Game of Thrones-esque coup d'état. Knowing that various factions want him murdered, Caligula decides to fake his own death by telling everyone in Rome that he was murdered in his sleep. Before faking his death, Caligula's brother attempts get him to runaway with him, pleading, "We can't die. If we die, we'll kill the empire ourselves. They're going to murder us now. We have to sustain the life of the empire. Somehow through it all, we are gods. We have to survive," but the Emperor refuses, stating, "Why didn't you tell me this when we were six years old? Why did you wait until I killed twenty million people to ask me to go live on a farm with you?!" After it is announced that the Emperor has died, Caligula appears in drag under the name "The Deity Venus" and then proceeds to have a couple of his enemies murdered, including John Lurie/Jesus Christ. Caligula-as-Venus also rebukes Metellus, bitching to him, "How dare you want to sexually abuse the emperor. How dare you, you piss. How dare you want to use the emperor like a woman [...] You can't have the emperor... You can't." Needless to say, macho Metellus is hardly impressed with Caligula's queen-ish spiel. After killing the Emperor's guard and virtually everyone else, Metellus asks "Who's next?" and proceeds to murder Caligula, who pathetically pleads, "I'm only six years old. I'm just a baby." Using his trusty sword, Metellus proceeds to slaughter Caligula and then shoves his weapon in his mouth like it is a giant cock. While taking the phallic sword in his mouth, Caligula cries, "I'm still alive," but Metellus makes sure to inform him, "You're dead."

Notably, auteur James Nares would brag in an article for The New York Observer regarding an audience response after a screening of Rome '78, "I heard laughter, which was good [...] I think I saw people leave and then they came back again. Very encouraging. This was not very well received and we intended it that way," thus reflecting his hopelessly hipster-like mentality when it comes to his intentionally lackluster style of filmmaking. Somewhat fittingly, Nares seems to consider the film to be nothing more than old news as indicated in an inter-

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view with *The Village Voice* where he stated, "It's my only attempt at a narrative film with actors. It has its moments—quite funny at times, quite beautiful at times, too. But it doesn't interest me so much now." Personally, I consider *Rome '78* to be, at the very least, one of the 'masterpieces' of the No Wave Cinema movement. It should be noted that virtually all of the greatest films associated with the movement were directed by foreigners, including the campy WWII 'thriller' *The Long Island Four* (1980) directed by Swedish twink Anders Grafstrom and starring Klaus Nomi as a Nazi spy, as well as French-born filmmaker Eric Mitchell's *Underground U.S.A.* (1980) and *The Way It Is* (1985) starring a very young Vincent Gallo. Unlike the later works associated with the movement like those of Scott B and Beth B (who helped spawn the innately inferior 'Cinema of Transgression' movement), Nares and Grafstrom's films rely on attitude and gutter grade comedy as opposed to cheap and sensational sex and violence, among other banal beaten-to-death things. While Nares never directed another narrative feature, he did direct some video art work, as well as the fairly worthwhile and brilliantly titled documentary *No Japs at my Funeral* (1980), which features a candid interview with an IRA member. Despite being a decidedly decadent piece of innately amateurish celluloid swill that is ultimately as debasing as the dying cultures it criticizes, *Rome '78* is ultimately of Spenglerian proportions as far as No Wave Cinema is concerned, thus making it a work worthy of following in the lo-fi cinematic tradition of its proudly conservative influence Paul Morrissey. While not exactly depicted from a flagrant conservative angle like Morrissey's film, Nares' micro-budget epic surely manages to express the worst of the worst in terms the particular zeitgeist it belongs to. Indeed, as a work that features homely perennial whore Lydia Lunch as an empress, a frog wimp like Eric Mitchell as the most macho and murderous of Roman warriors, a toothless raging queer queen portraying Caligula, and various deadbeat doped-addled NYC art fags standing around and talking about nothing while acting as the supposed movers and shakes of the Great Roman Empire, *Rome '78* indubitably demonstrates that Sir Nares was quite right when he stated regarding No Wave Cinema in the documentary *Blank City*, "I do think that...the movies were somehow, all about New York...Even when they were about ancient Rome." I almost hate to state it but, despite being a totally tasteless piece of hipster trash, Nares' film is ultimately even more effective than Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969) when it comes to making parallels between the decadence of the Roman Empire and the contemporary Occident and especially NYC. Additionally, I not only had more fun watching *Rome '78* than the obscure Fellini rip-off *Satyricon* (1969) aka *The Degenerates* starring Tina Aumont, but also Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960) and virtually any other Hollywood sword-and-sandal or Italian peplum epic that I have ever seen. After all, when I see a man sporting a dress, it better be for comedic effect, even if he is portraying some sort of genocidal Roman dictator.

-Ty E

LOT IN SODOM

James Sibley Watson (1933)

Between 1930-1968, Puritanism indubitably reigned in American cinema due to Hollywood's self-censorship via the Hays Code. Of course, most of the big Hollywood movie moguls and stars were committed purveyors of sin but very rarely were such hedonistic and heretical lifestyles portrayed on the silver screen. Thankfully, a couple independent filmmakers had the audacity to produce libertine films that rivaled the most subversive of works found in comparably morally-free Europa. One of the most notable and greatest of these early American independent films is *Lot in Sodom* (1933); a silent Avant-Garde short full of surly sins and homoerotic sexual sadism. In fact, *Lot in Sodom* may be the only film ever made featuring a nude man being dangled upside down by two extremely militant yet androgynous sodomites. The short also features some of the first female breasts and buttocks ever committed to celluloid in the United States. *Lot in Sodom* was co-directed by Melville Webber and James Sibley Watson; the latter (somewhat strangely) being a Harvard University-educated medical doctor and philanthropist. Before collaborating on *Lot in Sodom*, the two filmmakers co-directed *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928); a brilliant 12-minute-long hyper-surrealist adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe's short story of the same name. In a mere 28 minutes, *Lot in Sodom* manages to feature a variety of sacrilegious cinematic ingredients that are comparable to the biblical blasphemy of *Häxan: Witchcraft Through The Age* (1922), the phantasmagorical homoeroticism of Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* (1930), and the majestic body-worship of Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938). As one would expect from the film's title, *Lot in Sodom* is based on the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Unlike most other films based on the story, *Lot in Sodom* is surprisingly faithful to the bible tale. In the short film, a character named Lot (who is featured in chapters 11-14 and 19 of the Book of Genesis) – an individual known for his dual-vice of drunkenness and incest in the Hebrew bible and as a prophet of Islam – is warned by an angel to leave Sodom so as to avoid having homo-sex with the sinful city's many shameless sexual deviants and horny homosexuals. Eventually, the Hollywood Babylon-esque metropolis is devoured by a holy holocaust and Lot's overly inquisitive wifey morphs into stone after making the deadly mistake of taking one last glance at her much cherished ex-homeland.

Despite the extremely religious nature of the short, *Lot in Sodom* is undoubtedly a tribute to comrade Satan and his celestial vacation spot Sodom. The fact that the film was directed by an ultra-altruistic doctor makes it all the more interesting. I hate to say it but *Lot in Sodom* even makes F.W. Murnau's *Faust* (1926) – another Satanic masterpiece that features nudity and Luciferian themes – seem rather tame by comparison. Aesthetically, *Lot in Sodom* is worthy of being compared to the greatest of early surrealist and expressionist works. I can

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only assume that *Lot in Sodom* has fallen somewhat into the realm of obscurity due to its relatively short length and its artsy fartsy "European-ness." Like Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927); *Lot in Sodom* is surely a work that baffled the average hopeless American philistine filmgoer due to its abstract artfulness and blatantly erotic nature. Admittedly, upon first viewing the film, I assumed it was European. Of course, like the films of Kenneth Anger, *Lot in Sodom* is the kind of American film that could have only been produced independently. I would not be surprised if Melville Webber and James Sibley Watson created *Lot in Sodom* to fulfill their personal void for sadistic homoerotic pornography. Modern viewers would probably only find the film offensive due to its inclusion of stereotypically despicable hook-nosed Hebrews comparable to the caricatures featured in Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher's infamous newspaper *Der Stürmer*. Naturally, rainbow-power-bolsheviks will also most likely find *Lot in Sodom* to be quite objectionable due to its less than flattering portrayal of sexual inverts. Whether one finds the material featured in *Lot in Sodom* to be offensive or not, it will be hard for the viewer to deny that the short is one of the first and few examples of authentic American cinematic art. *Lot in Sodom* was made at a time when film was still in its infancy and the medium still seemed to have endless possibilities. Despite only churning out a couple short films, Melville Webber and James Sibley are certainly important (albeit mostly forgotten) pioneers of Avant-Garde filmmaking. In short, *Lot in Sodom* is mandatory viewing for all serious fans of cinema and truly transgressive art.

-Ty E

AFRO-PUNK: THE 'ROCK N ROLL NIGGER' EXPERIENCE

James Spooner (2003)

Afro-Punk: The 'Rock n Roll Nigger' Experience is a documentary following the rare subculture within a subculture, black punk rockers. Although I used to be a fan of punk music and still am to some degree, I have always thought punks, especially contemporary punks, are the biggest nihilistic losers around. Whenever going to a punk show I sometimes felt the urge to vomit seeing so many bourgeois punk "rebels" with strategically placed punk patches and ugly piercings in one room. Since the punk rock sub-"culture" is in itself small, it was very rare that I would see a Negro sporting a fro-hawk at any given punk show. Afro-Punk is a documentary featuring black punks and their experience in being part of what they call a "Eurocentric" movement.

The first black punk I ever saw personally was at a skateboarding contest. He had a spiked-Afro hairdo and an army jacket covered in The Misfits patches. Before the contest began, the rebellious homeboy grabbed a microphone and shouted, "I ain't no nigga!" I thought that was a profound moment in my life and it has stuck in my mind ever since. A lot of the black punks in Afro-Punk seem to have a similar attitude. Virtually all the individuals in the documentary reject gangsta black degeneracy. Politically, the individuals range from punk black supremacists (talk about oxymorons) to completely self-loathing blacks that don't even associate with their kinsman. All in all, I found all the perspectives interesting yet sometimes embarrassing. Afro-Punk also looks at how both blacks and whites have responded to the subjects of the documentary being black punks. I found it hilarious when some of the blacks make fun of whites for wanting a "multicultural" punk subculture that is "colorblind." Few things are funnier than when a Negro calls out a white liberal on their fake ass "we are the world" anti-racist idealist garbage. Unsurprisingly, some of the black punks featured in the documentary are your typical victims of cultural Marxism that plagues most modern day liberal arts colleges. One black punk brings up "white" privilege showing her own ignorance to the socio-economic situation of the average white American. Afro-Punk makes it clear that black punks face the most criticism from other blacks. Beatings that result in hospital visits from other blacks is one of the more extreme situations a young black punk faced. Being called "Satanic," "Dyke," and "wanting to be white" are verbal attacks some of these black punks face. It becomes apparent watching Afro-Punk that many of the subjects in the documentary obtained their "black identity" due to their lack of blackness. Being the odd-(black)man-out at punk shows, made many of the Afro-punks realize that they really have nothing in common with their people. Of course, a lot of these individuals overcompensate for their blackness by playing "black power" hardcore music which speaks of a "black revolution." Many prominent political blacks seem to use their own racial background as a tool in improving

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their career and/or power. President Barack Obama is the perfect example, a person of partial black descent, who has virtually nothing in common with the black collective, yet has relied on the black community (whether for white liberal guilt or black votes) to get where he is at. One of the black power punks in the documentary does say something that does stand true however. If a "revolution" does happen, blacks will have other black's backs just as any other race should support their own people. I guess that means white liberals will be the first dead in the gutter. Afro-Punk is a watchable documentary but has very amateurish production to say the least. Director James Spooner, who is himself a mulatto punk, has also directed another film *White Lies, Black Sheep* which looks embarrassing to say the least. This feature-length film follows a young black punk in the almost exclusively white punk scene. One could say that Spooner's film career is of an autobiographical nature. I get the feeling that despite making two films on race relations, James Spooner is even more confused about black identity and race relations than before he sought out to direct films.

-Ty E

FINGERS

James Toback* (1978)

In the 1978 film *Fingers* directed by James Toback - a young man named Jimmy Fingers (played by a youthful Harvey Keitel) - who is quick with both his fingers and mouth - struggles to maintain his split loyalties and his split personality. The unfortunate American son of a Guido loan shark and a typically nagging Jewish mother; Fingers is torn between a unpredictable life of petty crime and his desire to become a professional pianist. To help keep his sanity at equilibrium - Fingers incessantly blasts pop songs like "Summertime, Summertime" by the Jamies and "Angel of the Morning" by Merrilee Rush on a cheap portable radio that he carries at all times - ultimately annoying random citizens while traveling on foot around Manhattan. Despite his sensitive intuitiveness for masterfully playing the piano, Fingers has a barbarian-like knack for starting fights that could easily be avoided. Fingers also suffers from sexual frustration - as he is unable to assert himself with the WASP girl he wholeheartedly fancies, yet has no problem forcing himself upon a whorish lady that he doesn't even know. From beginning to ending: Fingers is a wild, yet tragic roller-coaster ride following a young man who came out of his mother's womb as a ticking time-bomb; set to explode as he ungracefully becomes of age in early adulthood.

For most of his filmmaking career, NYC auteur Martin Scorsese has borrowed Kenneth Anger's occult use of pop music as an ingenious tool to manipulate the emotions of the unsuspecting viewer. In *Fingers*, James Toback also utilizes this Anger-esque hypnotic musical tool in a most imperative manner for setting the mood and intense tone of the film. It is apparent from the beginning of the film that Jimmy Fingers is an unstable character who seems rather hopelessly confused, yet at the same time; vicious and dangerous. To control his mood, Fingers repetitively listens to the same repugnant pop songs over and over again - to the point where it becomes unintentionally humorous from the viewer's perspective. Anytime a random citizen expresses their annoyance to Fingers' public broadcasted radio; he unthinkingly lashes out - sometimes going as far as to physically assault them. Despite being a potential Manhattan Felix Mendelssohn; Fingers has developed the skills of a mafia brute from the streetwise teachings of his boastful and belligerent Sicilian-American loan shark father. Fingers has indubitably inherited his musical talents from his Levite mother, yet seems to favor simple melodic pop songs. If one wanted to make an excellent case against miscegenation; Jimmy Fingers would make for a perfect example.

A certain lady who reads *Soiled Sinema* mentioned that James Toback makes: "Jewish art porn." Although I can agree with that to a certain degree; Fingers is somewhat insulting to God's chosen man. I think most people will agree that Guidos are notorious pussy hustlers who have no problems obtaining ladies, yet half-Guido Fingers is lacking in the mackdaddy department, thus taking after

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his unassertive Judaic background; at least as far as romance goes. Despite his numerous attempts at bedding a pretentious artsy broad that he is obsessively fond of (even secretly spying on her at a careful distance), Fingers has a problem enticing and sexually spellbinding this loose lady. Towards the end of the film, Jimmy Fingers makes the mistake of following his love interest to her alpha-negro boyfriend's pad. Eventually, Fingers is embarrassed to learn that – not only is his would-be girlfriend obviously enamored by the black buck woman-beater, but she also falls helplessly into his muscle bound shoulders for security. In the beginning of Fingers, it is subtly hinted that Jimmy Fingers has homosexual tendencies – as he passes glances at an effeminate bartender. Ironically, despite his troubles with the ladies – Jimmy is an excellent street fighter who has no problem intimidating (and in some cases obliterating) men twice his size. It is no exaggeration from me to say that Fingers includes one of the greatest fight scenes ever committed to gritty celluloid. In the fight scene, Fingers squeezes a man's testicles to point of knocking out his greaseball opponent. I believe this is the first film that I have ever seen a film where a man literally busts a Guido's balls, yet it is a very common weapon used when men fight in such a brutal manner.

I must admit that I was surprised by how much I thoroughly enjoyed Fingers – as I expected the film to be another generic 1970s “gritty streets” picture. Although by no means an expertly crafted masterpiece; Fingers is a highly entertaining and shocking portrait of a everyday street-smart schizoid. Unlike silly films like *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) directed by Ron Howard, Fingers takes a realistic and typical approach to a man in the early stages of schizophrenia. It is more than likely that the majority of lower-middleclass individuals (from the 1970s) who suffered from schizophrenia were never diagnosed as such. That being said, one should not expect Fingers to be a sentimental portrait of a misunderstood genius suffering from a debilitating mental disorder. Fingers is a borderline exploitation flick that succeeds best in entertaining the viewer in a fantastically amoral fashion. Personally, I never felt sorry for Jimmy Fingers, but he did seem like someone who would be cool to hang out with. If Martin Scorsese and Abel Ferrara co-directed a film together in the late 1970s, I have a feeling that it would resemble Fingers. At the very least, one will have an entertaining time watching the fascinating Jimmy Fingers manhandle deadbeats – as well as embarrassingly failing to nail certain females that he admires. Fingers is just another example of why I consider Harvey Keitel to be one of the most interesting and strangely charismatic actors of his time. In 2005, Fingers was remade as *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* directed by French filmmaker Jacques Audiard.

-Ty E

LOVE /& MONEY

James Toback* (1982)

Undoubtedly, James Toback—a swarthy overweight gambler, sex addict, flagrant negropile and unrepentant female-defiler—is one of the most archetypically sleazy Semites working in the film industry today as a virtual posterboy for Julius Streicher's National Socialist tabloid *Der Stürmer* and that is exactly why I respect him as a filmmaker, as he clearly does not give a shit about what people think about him as a man who graduated 'magna cum laude' from Harvard yet makes degenerate films about wiggers, recreational drug abuse, so-called 'pick-up artists' (aka bitch ass beta-males who con women into sex), and his big black belligerent buddy Mike Tyson. Ever since making his debut masterpiece *Fingers* (1978), Toback has directed celluloid failure after celluloid failure, with none of these works quite matching the quality of his first feature (which is something he has acknowledged himself), yet most of these failures have at least something to offer, with the filmmaker's second feature, *Love and Money* (1982) aka *Love & Money*, being a perfect example of this. Like most of Toback's films, *Love & Money* had a troubled production history, as the screenplay was written with Warren Beatty in mind as the lead and film critic Pauline Kael as a producer, but both of them eventually dropped out of the production (though, Toback would later work with Beatty on *Bugsy* (1991), which he penned the screenplay for). After losing Beatty, Toback hired McGuido Ray Sharkey (*Wise Guys*, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*), who later died of AIDS (but not before causing a scandal infecting a number of women with the disease) and who the director would later describe as being "the wrong actor" for the role. A film where a young Jewish banker of the exceedingly egotistical smart ass sort starts a steamy love affair with the extra exotic wife of an evil Aryan billionaire (as played immaculately by Klaus Kinski in a role where the actor radiates his typical stoic psychopathy, albeit in a James Bond villain sort of way) and reluctantly goes on adventure in Latin America after being offered \$1 million dollars by said evil Aryan Billionaire to ostensibly try and talk his quasi-Trotskyite Castro-clone dictator friend out of being a repressive dickhead of a dictator, *Love & Money* is nothing short of a lavish degenerate celluloid 'fantasy' of the hopelessly Hebraic sort that demonstrates why Toback is the closest thing to a Philip Roth of the cinema world, albeit more debauched and adventurous. Starring old school Hollywood auteur King Vidor in his sole credited film role portraying a senile old Jewish man who is paranoid that he is going to be taken away in the night by Nazis, as well as Italian goddess Ornella Muti as a rather conflicted femme fatale who was traumatized as a young girl after seeing her father's naked corpse hanging from rafters, Toback's second feature is a quasi-literate political-thriller minus the thrills that demonstrates what happens when a morally righteous, wise-cracking Jew banker comes under the quasi-Satanic spell of a sensual Shiksa who

LOVE /& MONEY

has a cracked Polack-Kraut capitalist like Klaus Kinski for a husband. Sort of a strangely lively and always curious celluloid abortion that is slightly saved by its wit and a handful of performances, *Love & Money* is, if nothing else, one of Toback's more interesting botched celluloid wet dreams.

Jewish banker Byron Levin (Ray Sharkey) lives in a rather fancy Spanish style villa with his bibliophile/book dealer girlfriend Vicky (Susan Heldfond) and semi-senile ex-banker grandfather Walter Klein (King Vidor). Byron's life takes a dramatic change when he meets with a billionaire silver czar from a German background named Frederic Stockheinz (Klaus Kinski) whose main headquarters of operation are in the fictional South American country of Costa Salva, which is now under a communist dictatorship that styles itself as a nationalist 'people's movement.' Stockheinz knows that Byron wrote a paper on his silver empire for a seminar at Harvard and understands the banker understands his parasitic business model. Stockheinz also knows that Byron is an old friend of the new communist dictator in Costa Salva, Lorenzo Prado (Armand Assante), who is also the son of the kraut businessman's deceased political leader friend. Indeed, Prado is an archetypical prodigal son who wants to destroy his father's political legacy. Stockheinz offers Byron \$1 million to go to Costa Salva to talk Lorenzo out of 'nationalizing' the silver business, explaining that his company is "not a corporation but a civilization" and that "Were not in 1949. Nation-states are dead...The future is just money, not the governments; they have no power now. They are owned. In ten years, multinationals will own 65% of the world." Stockheinz also claims that he loves Lorenzo like a son, but he "should not abuse my love, he must not steal my silver." Needless to say, not only does Byron turn Stockheinz down, but he also hits on his beautiful and much younger wife Catherine (Ornella Muti), even making the following absurd threat to the lady the first time he meets her, "If you ever touch him again, or any other man, I will kill you," which causes the sexy, if not seemingly pernicious, young woman to smirk with seeming satisfaction. Meanwhile, at home, Byron's grandfather Walter is beginning to lose his mind, as he forgets who his grandson is and even thinks phantom Nazis are coming to take him away. Grandpa Walter also begins singing negro spirituals like "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and tells his grandson to call the Metropolitan Opera to book him a show. One night, Byron gets an unexpected call from Catherine asking him to meet her at a fancy bar in 15 minutes, but when he shows up there, she is nowhere to be found. The next day, Walter meets Catherine at her apartment and assertively states "Let's go," to which she seductively replies, "you're never going to make love to me." Naturally, Byron says a number of provocative things to entice Catherine, even proclaiming that it was as if god had shoved his elbow in his ribs when he first saw her, as he knows it is the fastest way to get into a girl's pants. When Catherine asks Byron if he loves his girlfriend Vicky, he says, "we get along," as if that is a remarkable achievement. When Byron and Catherine go to make love,

the horny banker ironically fails to 'rise to the occasion,' so the young lady sucks him off while he sings the "The Star-Spangled Banner." After they make love (or something resembling it) and Byron admires his lover's naughty bits, Catherine later recounts how when she was a child she discovered her father's corpse hanging from rafters, with "his penis was sticking and his feet were blue," hence her rather peculiar relationship with men. Indeed, Catherine is an emotional wreck of a woman who is guided by irrationality, yet she is also playing Byron for the benefit of her husband and soon begins to regret her deceitful ways as she develops a soft spot for the Judaic banker.

After failing in love and then losing his job, Byron realizes he has nothing to lose and decides to reconsider Stockheinz's offer and thus immediately heads to Costa Salva via airplane with the kraut corporatist and Catherine, who taunts him during the plane ride by flirting around with her hubby. Upon arriving in Costa Salva, Byron and his friends are greeted by dictator Lorenzo Prado, who also develops a particular liking to Catherine. Upon hanging out with his old buddy Prado, Byron realizes his friend has dramatically changed and is quite fanatical, claiming he wants to establish, "a society built on impatience" in a half-joking fashion. Prado demonstrates his power over the proletariat by randomly having sex in public with a female 'worker' he spots walking down the road, thus symbolically demonstrating his total power over the people and the land. Of course, things turn ugly when Byron goes to a fancy dinner where Prado and Stockheinz confront one another, with the latter stating the following to the former, "Where did you pickup all this feeling for the people, on your yacht in Monte Carlo...? You don't care if your people starve." Naturally, things do not end well and when Byron leaves with Stockheinz in a limo, the silver tycoon tells his driver to kill the banker, but the driver attempts to kill his boss instead, as he is a double-agent who has been hired by Prado to do so. Rather absurdly, Byron saves the life of the man that tried to kill him and Stockheinz generously repays him by ditching him on the side of the road with the limo driver's bloody corpse, thus resulting in the banker's arrest and imprisonment in a neo-bolshevik dungeon of sorts. Ultimately, Byron is blindfolded and taken to an open field by a bunch of commie thugs where he is assumedly to be shot with a number of other enemies of the state, but Prado spares his life at the last second. When Byron accuses Prado of being just like Stockheinz, the semi-deranged dictator proclaims that the West is dead and that, "There is a new force on this earth and nothings gonna stop it." Byron is left at the killing field by Prado, who has just symbolically ended their friendship in a rather cold fashion, so the downtrodden banker is forced to find his way back home. In the end, Catherine ultimately causes Byron to lose everything as his girlfriend leaves him and he even has to get rid of his house after getting back from personal purgatory in Costa Salva. Upon leaving his house with his grandfather to move elsewhere and start a new life, Catherine magically pops up before they leave and asks if there is room in his

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car for three people, to which he replies with the following question, "Tell me the truth...do you really think we have any chance of lasting together?" Catherine says "No" and Byron replies "neither do I" and *Love & Money* concludes more bitter than sweetly with an ambiguous ending that will probably piss off most viewers. Ultimately, the film has an admirable message regarding how commies are typically more ruthless and greedy when compared to their materialistic counterparts, the capitalists. After all, whereas the capitalists thrive upon competition, communists want it all to themselves, with the interaction between Stockheinz and Prado demonstrating this.

Featuring classical musical compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach and subversive dialogues about politics, economics, revolution, and globalization, not to mention a memorable performance by Klaus Kinski as a sinister Svengali-like character, *Love & Money* undoubtedly has all the ingredients to be a cultivated cross-genre masterpiece, but falls more than a little bit short, as if Toback tried his darnedest to assemble the film without having all the pieces. In a way, the film is classic Toback in that it is clearly the work of a man who is a much better writer than he is a filmmaker. And, indeed, like the protagonist of *Love & Money*, Toback has always taken great risks for his dreams, but very rarely do things work out for him the way he hoped they would, with *Fingers* probably being the sole example where the film more or less matched the director's original vision (Toback once admitted in an interview that his only other film that is "free of mistakes" is his rarely-seen 1989 documentary *The Big Bang*). What makes Toback's film different from the average Hollywood political thriller trash is that the director's singular cynicism, pessimism, and iconoclasm bleeds through the film with a vengeance that only he is capable of. While Toback has never been anything even remotely resembling a handsome man, his shameless tactics for attempting to swoon women are not that far off the protagonist of *Love & Money*, even if he is a bit more pathetic about it as a rather foul fellow who is notorious for lying to underage women about ostensibly giving them acting roles in his latest movie so as to get in their lily white Lolita panties so as to appease his seemingly criminal bestial carnal yearnings. Not unlike his subsequent work *Exposed* (1983), *Love & Money* feels like the curious result of what happens when an American Jew attempts to make a European arthouse film. During the early 90s, the satirical magazine *Spy* would publish a piece on Toback depicting him as a drug-and-pussy-addicted degenerate who pathetically pissed away numerous movies he was working on due to his self-destructive depravity. In 1991 interview with *Movieline*, Toback demonstrated his equal doses of perversity and paranoia by complaining regarding the *Spy* article: "Spy hates Jews and sex. Is there ever anything in it that suggests sex is anything but an odious, creepy and vile activity? If they had their way, the human race would become extinct because nobody would fuck anybody. It's like, "Let's get anybody whom we think fucks." They were smart. They hired this very clever girl, [editor] Susan Morri-

son, who would be really vicious. It's an anti-sexual, anti-Jewish frenzy. Put sex and Jews together and they'd bring on Holocaust II. They're a very dangerous magazine." Undoubtedly, in a sense, Toback is right as the filmmaker's entire oeuvre could be used as a damning case against the Jews and the director's book *Jim* (1971) is no less incriminating, as he brags regarding his wild and seemingly quasi-homoerotic days living with negro NFL player Jim Brown, "Jim [Brown] is making his rounds ... Jane Fonda is there and Sharon Tate ... I drift into an old friend, a delicate girl of angled, Nordic beauty ... and embark with her on an orgy ... Jim joins." Indeed, maybe a better name for *Love & Money* would have been 'Shikhas & Shekels.'

-Ty E

EXPOSED
EXPOSED

James Toback* (1983)

The greatest flop of NYC provocateur auteur James Toback's rather uneven yet reasonably consistently interesting filmmaking career, *Exposed* (1983) starring Nastassja Kinski (*Tess*, *Cat People*), Rudolf Nureyev (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Valentino*) in his last feature film role, and Harvey Keitel (*Mean Streets*, *Toback's Fingers*), was certainly assembled with the grand and notable intention of being an international filmmaking masterpiece but was ultimately destined for the celluloid dustbin of history, with only a couple individuals, including alpha-fan-boy Quentin Tarantino, being an advocate of the film. A sleazy but suavely stylized coming-of-age turned pseudo-European crime-thriller about an ambitious Wisconsin farm girl (played by Nastassja Kinski, a woman not exactly fit to play the role of an American peasant) who becomes a high-profile international fashion model featured on the cover of *Cosmopolitan* and eventually the lover of a seemingly demented stalker violinist with an unhealthy hatred of both Nazis and Marxist-Leninist terrorists, *Exposed* was immaculately described by its director James Toback as follows: "Exposed is an especially significant title for a story that moves through different circuits of revelation. Elizabeth [Nastassja Kinski] learns about herself, and about the breadth of her capacities - which turn out to be wildly beyond her initial awareness - through a series of increasingly shocking events. But it is also a romance about the fatal attraction a charming, talented and obsessed musician has for the girl." Indeed, anyone watching *Exposed* for a mere second would never believe that Nastassja Kinski is the naive girl she is portraying yet she, Rudolf Nureyev, and Harvey Keitel give potent performances that make Toback's thriller thrilling, even if it is ultimately a marvelous celluloid abortion and total artistic failure with all the proper ingredients of a masterpiece that never seems to fully come together. To make *Exposed* all the more absurd, the film features a hollow holocaust subplot of sorts expressing James Toback's heated desire to exact heated Hebraic revenge against the anti-semitic goyim, which takes the form of a Jewish protagonist sexually debasing beautiful German-Polish Shiksa Nastassja Kinski, as well as killing an anti-Semitic terrorist (ironically, played by strikingly masculine alpha-Jew Keitel). A classic work of Tobackian cinema with a 'no bullshit' attitude that is marinated in gall and wit, *Exposed* features hysterical females with big balls, creepy stalker males of the ridiculously romantic persuasion, catchy 1960s pop music, miscegenation of the unadulterated Hebrew-on-goyim sort, and a tragic ending in the post-WWII European spirit of the dispiriting variety that most American audiences seem to love to hate, thus demonstrating why James Toback is the virtual Jewish Abel Ferrara.

Wisconsin farm girl Elizabeth Carlson (Nastassja Kinski) has big dreams and when her sleazy and stereotypically Jewish English professor/boyfriend Leo

Boscovitch (symbolically played by James Toback himself) slaps her in the face and calls her a “cunt,” she decides it is time to drop out of college and to move to the rotten Big Apple and fulfill her potential as a positively pulchritudinous young lady looking to make a big name for herself and possibly fall deeply in love in the process. During her first night in NYC, Elizabeth finds herself in for a rude awakening in regard to the shitty city when she is robbed by a nefarious Negro and his swarthy partner-in-crime, who steal the little money she has to live on. Although hoping to be a performance pianist (she has a knack for playing tunes by Bach), Elizabeth has to settle for a slave-wage waitress job, but luckily while working one day she is discovered by a prestigious fashion photographer named Greg Miller (Ian McShane), who guarantees to make her a worldwide superstar model in under three months in a big promise he ultimately makes good on. Due to her miserable existence in NYC and the seemingly endless swindlers and crooks she has encounter, Elizabeth finds Miller’s offer to make her a star model to be quite dubious to say the least and makes a sardonic remark about menstruation, but he proves good on his offer and before she knows it, she is a world-class model, eventually even landing on the cover of *Cosmopolitan*. Indeed, rather magically and absurdly, Elizabeth’s desire to be rich, famous, and glamorous is fulfilled, but she is missing one very important ingredient, Mr. Prince Charming. Luckily, a weirdo who also happens to be a professional violinist (thus sharing her love of classical music) named Daniel Jelline (Rudolf Nureyev) begins to stalk her, stating odding things like, “You’re very beautiful...but you should never wear make-up, especially lipstick...Your lips are full and generous without it...Don’t call attention to what is already lovely on its own” and then immediately disappearing just as he randomly appears. Despite knowing nothing about the mysterious man in black, Elizabeth begins to immediately fall in love with him. After Daniel breaks into her apartment, she finally begins to learn that he is a professional violinist who does dirty work for an independently wealthy holocaust survivor looking for revenge against evil Nazi goyim and anti-Zionist towelheads. Later, after Daniel convinces her to come to Paris with him, Elizabeth finds out the hard truth that Daniel’s name is not really Daniel Jelline and that he is indeed the holocaust survivor that he claims to work for and he wants to use her to get next to a terrorist he wants to kill, a fellow named Rivas (Harvey Keitel) whose character is modeled after Latino Marxist/Muslim terrorist Carlos the Jackal, who once made a failed attempt to assassinate Joseph Sieff, a Jewish businessman and vice president of the British Zionist Federation. Rivas uses beautiful female models and effeminate gay men to help him carry out his terroristic jihad and Elizabeth gets close to him by befriending one of his female soldiers, a beauteous Nordic blonde babe named Bridget Gormann (Marion Varella). Rivas takes an instant liking to Elizabeth, but he finds her motivations to be rather dubious. Of course, radical terrorist Rivas has reason to suspect everyone as one of his soldiers—a French fag named

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Vic (arthouse star Pierre Clémenti)—sells him out to an enemy, so the terrorist leader makes an example out of him by stabbing him to death with a dagger in front of Elizabeth, which greatly disturbs the Wisconsin wonder girl. Elizabeth runs to Daniel after witnessing the murder of Vic and not long after the holocaust man has a run in with Rivas and his girl model terrorist that ends rather tragically. In the end, Elizabeth is exposed to more than she bargained for, including gaining and losing her first love in the process.

During the beginning of *Exposed*, director James Toback's sleazy college professor character Leo Boscovitch states quite eloquently (in rather gross contrast to his grotesque appearance and character): "The Western world is breaking down. Socially, politically, economically, morally, aesthetically and psychologically. Really, if you look into your own lives there are only two routes of escape from this dark claustrophobic trap: art and romantic love." Indeed, *Exposed* attempts to be epic celluloid art of the apocalyptic sort containing an equally ambitious depiction of romantic love, yet, rather unfortunately, the film is no minor masterpiece like Toback's directorial debut *Fingers* (1978), but instead, a dauntless celluloid abortion with all the ingredients and gall of a masterwork that just does not make the cut. Of course, like most of James Toback's films, *Exposed* has a certain charisma and charm to it that makes it worth coming back to. For fans of either Nastassja Kinski or Rudolf Nureyev, *Exposed* will also prove to be a true celluloid favorite as both of the real-life sexual deviant stars deliver mystifying and mesmerizing performances that are rather hard to ignore, even if it seems like their full potential is never reached. Although Ms. Kinski might not have the acting chops of her depraved papi, she certainly has a wildly idiosyncratic allure that beautifully bleeds through every scene of *Exposed*. As a Harvard graduate and unrelenting 'pick-up' artist who has been known to hit on underage girls with the line "make them a star" (which the photographer character played by Ian McShane literally does in *Exposed*), James Toback undoubtedly made the same offer to Nastassja Kinski in regard to *Exposed* and unfortunately he was unable to deliver on it. A film featuring a vengeful eye-for-an-eye-driven Judaic who has a greater passion for bloodlust than beautiful women and his violin, *Exposed*, quite thankfully, does not resort to the sort of Spielberg-esque kosher clichés that are typical of similarly themed works. Unlike the high-profile Hebrews in Hollywood, Toback is a sleazy Semite with an unhealthy fixation with goy gals who has never been afraid to show it, hence why his works are highly entertaining art-sploitation pieces as opposed to mere superficial smut on monetary steroids. With *Exposed*, Toback displayed his fantasy of defiling Aryan beauties, exterminating murderous anti-Semites, and expressing himself through delightful degenerate art, which is certainly something I cannot blame him for. Undoubtedly, James Toback is a Hebrew fit for the front-page of National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* as a fiercely foul racial specimen, but I doubt the Führer himself could fault him for *Exposed*, an

enthraling piece of personalized Zionist propaganda with a seedy and salacious soul, but a soul nonetheless.

-Ty E

HEAVEN'S GATE INITIATION TAPE
HEAVEN'S GATE INITIATION TAPE

James Toback* (1997)

Heaven's Gate is the infamous cult lead by Marshall Applewhite who all committed suicide in order to ride a spaceship hidden behind a comet to escape earth, not before cutting off their genitals. This is the recorded tape used to induct all incoming members. As you can tell, this is a rare piece of film and has its own disturbing aura surrounding it. When you begin you watch Applewhite in his creepy glory, discussing about how he is the sanctioned reborn Jesus Christ and about how earth is going to be "recycled". He repeats this word over and over again, hinting that through the Heaven's Gate is the only way to evacuate a doomed planet. As you watch, his eyes begin to pierce yours. I can't tell which is more unsettling, his stare or the fact of his ramblings. The first tape was made 5 days before the suicides, in order to try to ease the theory of our shells being expendable. He calls his father (GOD) Te. He goes about offering the truth in his same fashion, discussing re-spading, or recycling the earth, a looming rapture. His rantings go from hard to believe to commenting on "attractive extraterrestrials". It's hard to look past his eyes. It seems that he never blinks. "I'm wearing a human vehicle because I have to wear one for this task" His rants are mostly misanthropic, denouncing genetics and the lust of the flesh. Must be the reason for the castration. He relates his UFO cult as the only religion and all others are ruined records of mankind. First he verbally massacres humanity, then Christianity. Apparently, God flies around in a spaceship. As he makes silly jokes, you hear his deranged followers behind the camera chuckling some viciously deranged laugh. Some of his talks mean a lot. For something as ridiculous as what he follows, he begins to crack up and begins to break down discussing the abortion of our "human vehicles". The tape clocks in at around 2 hours, and can be very hard to stick with. It's like one of those early morning aggressive preachers broadcasts. That of course plus the harrowing details added to the story. The tape is also served as a terrifying look into his mind. Saying that this is a personal thing for him would be an understatement. Apart from being mildly psycho, he has a beautiful mind. Aside from his ramblings, he begins to talk about how he is related to Judeo-Christians and how the only religion worth following is his own and Muslims. After these maniacal two features of introduction, we see archived news footage of the dead lying on cots. The mass suicide instructions were announced and several news stories are explored. We see beautiful people discussing how happy they are about their decisions, normal everyday people falling to a greater scheme of madness. "It is the beginning of the end." So with all this in mind, would you die for god? You can purchase this DVD [HERE](#)

-Maq

TYSON

James Toback* (2008)

Out of all Negro athletes in American history, I have always found heavy-weight champion boxer Mike Tyson to be the most interesting. I would not say that I am exactly sympathetic towards Tyson's personal struggles, but I appreciate his struggle as an urban hoodlum who was able to achieve (for better or for worse) exceptional notoriety. In the 2008 documentary *Tyson* directed by James Toback, Tyson gives a personal and intimate look at his turbulent life, as well as his notable boxing career. Jewish auteur James Toback has always had a glaringly odd obsession with Negro sexual potency (starting with his directorial debut *Fingers*) and urban thugs, so it is quite fitting that he would direct a documentary about convicted rapist Mike Tyson. While watching *Tyson*, it was apparent to me that James Toback was attempting present Tyson as a misunderstood individual whose reputation had been permanently blemished by unfair media portrayals, but I couldn't help but notice that the boxer does a swell job incriminating himself in the documentary; saying things that would make most people suspect that he is a dangerous individual with an unstable disposition. Of course, despite its failed attempt at presenting Mike Tyson in an angelic light, *Tyson* is a highly entertaining documentary worth anyone's time. After all, one can't help but take interest in an individual who once stated, "I want to fight, fight, fight and destruct the world."

Despite his blatant ambivalence towards whites in *Tyson*, Mike Tyson largely owes his success to Italian-American boxing manager and trainer Cus D'Amato; a man that provided the fatherless black youth with a father figure. In the documentary, Tyson admits that D'Amato trained him like a "slave", thus conditioning the illiterate and impoverished boxer into the world heavyweight champion he would later become. When Cus D'Amato died in 1985 (the same year Tyson made his professional debut), Tyson was devastated. Many people have speculated that Tyson's road to criminality and instability was a direct result of D'Amato's death, despite the fact that Tyson started committing crimes during early childhood. Still, it seems that D'Amato would have been able to at least control Tyson to a degree, as he was the man that "tamed the beast." Although D'Amato speaks very lovingly of D'Amato, he does not hold back in admitting his utter contempt for former manager Don King. In *Tyson*, Tyson states in an agitated manner that he thought Don King was his "black brother" and that the eccentric white-afro-puff-sporting boxer manager would, "Kill his mother for a \$1.00." Tyson would later have his revenge against King (who swindled a lot of money out of the trusting boxer); beating him up at a hotel and eventually receiving around \$20 million (which Tyson describes as a "small amount" of money) in court. While talking about his physical altercation with King in the documentary, Tyson mentions that "old decrepit white women" stared at him like he was

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a common thug, but this a minor offense when compared to Tyson's verbal assault against a white spectator who yelled to the boxer that, "he needed to be put in a straight-jacket." In response, Tyson elegantly retorted whilst grasping his crotch in a repellent animalistic manner, "Put your mother in a straight-jacket you punk ass white boy. Come here and tell me that, I'll fuck you in your ass you punk white boy. You faggot. You can't touch me, you're not man enough. I'll eat your asshole alive, you bitch. C'mon anybody in here can't fuck with this. This is the ultimate, man. Fuck you, you ho. Come and say it to my face.... I'll fuck you in the ass in front of everybody. You bitch.... come on, you bitch. You're scared coward, you're not man enough to fuck with me. You can't last two minutes in my world, bitch. Look at you scared now, you ho.... scared like a little white pussy. Scared of the real man. I'll fuck you 'til you love me, faggot!" Although this incident is featured in *Toback's Tyson*, many other controversial incidents are ignored in the documentary (after all, it is only 90 minutes in length). Despite the homoerotic overtones of his emotional tirade against the white heckler, Tyson said the following about his sex life, "I may like fornicating more than other people. It's just who I am. I sacrifice so much of my life, can I at least get laid? Know what I mean? I been robbed of most of my money, can I at least get a blow job?"

In *Tyson*, Mike Tyson also discusses his rape conviction and prison sentence(s). In 1991, Tyson was arrested for the rape of 18-year old Miss Black Rhode Island Desiree Washington. As he mentions in the documentary, Tyson denies to this day ever raping Washington. In *Tyson*, Tyson describes Washington as a "wretched woman" and blames her for causing him to lose his humanity. Despite claiming his innocence in regards to the rape of Desiree Washington, Tyson freely admits that he has abused women in the past. The boxer also bashes his ex-wife Robin Givens due to an episode during their marriage where she attacked Tyson on live television. In a clip featured in *Tyson*, Givens describes Tyson (who is sitting right next to her) as a "maniac depressive" who turned her life into a "pure hell." While Givens is bashing Tyson on television, he sits speechless with a blank stare, as if everything his ex-wife is saying is going straight over his head (which it probably was). During the documentary, Tyson - in an unintentionally hilarious (like many parts of the film) moment in the film - describes what qualities he looks for in an ideal woman. Apparently, Tyson likes strong and intelligent women (like CEOs) that he can "sexually dominant." Considering Tyson's father abandoned his family when the boxer was a youngster and his mother died when he was 16, it is no surprise that the former heavyweight champion is quite dysfunctional when it comes to family matters. As Tyson explains in *Tyson*, one of his daughters is on her way to college and he hopes to provide his younger children with the same opportunities; no doubt many gigantic steps away from his impoverished upbringing.

Pigeon-Thug-Luv

Tyson director James Toback with Mike Tyson and his children

At the conclusion of *Tyson*, Mike Tyson states regarding the public's perception of him, "You can judge me, but never can understand me." I, for one, can find no common ground with Tyson. After all, I certainly cannot relate to a peculiar black man who went from being an impoverished criminal youth to an internationally renowned boxing champion that inevitably fell from grace. In the documentary, Tyson explains that it is a miracle that he lived long enough to be 40 years old, hence why he intemperately blows all of his money (which he describes as "paper blood") and has met bankruptcy despite his millionaire status. Even with fame and fortune, Tyson managed to serve multiple prison sentences. To show his disgust with the United States government (or at least that is what he says), Tyson got two tattoos of communist revolutionary figures (Mao and Che Guevara), as well as the infamous tribal (apparently modeled after an ancient primitive warrior tribe) tattoo that so crudely covers the side of his face. After biting a piece of Evander Holyfield's ear off during their second much anticipated rival boxing match (dubbed "The Sound and The Fury"), Tyson went home and smoked some weed and drank some liquor as a way to relax. I believe that the manner in which Tyson dealt with the Holyfield ordeal is very symbolic of his character – as it shows that he is an emotionally unstable man whose struggles just to reach an equilibrium in mood. I think of Mike Tyson as a real-life (and black) Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando's character from Elia Kazan's 1954 *On the Waterfront*) – as both boxers became entangled as pawns in a corrupt industry that neither could understand. Like Malloy, Tyson also has a strange fetish for pigeons. Although Tyson's boxing career is pretty much over, his legacy will indubitably live on. During *Tyson*, Mike Tyson unexpectedly recites a poem by Oscar Wilde; which sounds somewhat normal considering the boxer's unfitting high-pitch voice and lisp. In a way (as his various hilarious quotes attest to), Mike Tyson is an illiterate street poet whose brutal poetic punches and verbal barbarism will go to inspire many generations of black youth to come. After all, Mike Tyson has achieved (and somewhat lost) the seemingly impossible (for someone of his less than privileged background) by obtaining the much desired American dream. After watching James Toback's *Tyson*, my opinion of Tyson has not changed, yet I highly recommend the documentary as it is certainly better than a typical Hollywood bio-pic. I will end this review with these words of wisdom from Mike Tyson regarding his way of dealing with tragedy, "I don't react to a tragic happening any more. I took so many bad things as a kid and some people think I don't care about anything. It's just too hard for me to get emotional. I can't cry no more."

-Ty E

DEATH SENTENCE
DEATH SENTENCE

James Wan (2007)

What can be said about *Death Sentence* that isn't already expressed with a single image of a bloody and bruised Kevin Bacon? This image has become somewhat iconic for me granted I've revisited *Death Sentence* for the third time in under a week. His frail figure wields a shotgun with every intention of retribution in this stunning remake of Brian Garfield's *Death Wish* series that surpasses everything that *Death Wish* never really touched base on; loss and godawful sorrow. *Death Sentence* is one of those ugly films that creates a textured cityscape of characters and chance encounters while playing god who could be very well listening to aggressive metal. Everything that happens in this film drags a wistful Bacon downwards into a cinematic study of the new and improved, definitive "man with nothing to lose." Coming from the tiny director of the original *Saw* film, James Wan, *Death Sentence* is a hell of a surprise and covers rusty milieu and bitter flavors en masse. Regarding the tact nature of his family's demise, I personally have not seen a film that echoes so heavily the feeling of lonesome as *Death Sentence* does. It was bad enough losing his golden child to a gang initiation trial hosted by a multicultural troupe of degenerates, but once Kevin Bacon strikes back upon the one who sliced his son's neck open, a war erupts instantaneously. The debris and carnage left behind can be tracked back to two key ingredients that throttled the downfall of this bourgeois household; selfishness and vengeance. Had Kevin Bacon not pursued exacting his own brand of justice upon the runt-like Joe Darley, the rest of his family would have been out of harms way and it would have remained the death of one "rich little faggot." So against all psychological happenstance, *Death Sentence* is a film that is multi-gendered; on one hand, it's a film about exacting grisly vengeance and on the other hand, a film chronicling the moral decay of a once-family man as he becomes exactly what he swore to punish. Halfway into the film comes one of cinema's most profound chase sequences committed to celluloid since *Children of Men*. Escaping on foot with his suitcase wildly waving through the alleys of crust and recycled goods, Nick Hume (Bacon) flees through many buildings while being chased by many tattooed and pierced thugs in a suspense-driven pursuit which leads him to a parking garage. Unable to stop the velocity of his body, he crumples into a car setting off its alarm. Taking this idea and systematically using the same survival instinct we later see in the bloodbath of *atonement*, he zigzags from car to car setting off their respective beacon in a dazzling attempt to hurdle his foes into a state of bewilderment. It's set-ups like these that make me understand that there is still fresh life to be squeezed into these modern action thrillers. Once the game of cat-and-mouse has desisted, Nick Hume retracts from noticeably upset senior VP to an afflicted lamb scurrying home to try and make reparations for what he has done. The cast of *Death Sentence* is wildly sup-

portive and over-stricken with sympathy which helps the film establish a credible habitat restrained only by the boundaries of film. As author Brian Garfield said concerning *Death Wish* and Charles Bronson's portrayal, "vigilantism is an attractive fantasy but it only makes things worse in reality." These words ring quite true when comparing *Death Sentence* to its creative predecessor. Also quick to jab at the alleged "blood-and-thunder" that occupies the last twenty minutes, I view this scene of extermination as the meat and the potatoes of the film; not as some violence-prone sweaty nerd but as a man who understands pain and these twangs of emptiness. Nick Hume's final stand is one to be reckoned with, both through the confines of cinema and its regurgitated after-effect. This motion picture is not just one of uncompromising entertainment but a film with a cold heart that pumps the very venom of Hume's absent rage into our visions as this "ostracidal" odyssey continues to tread on the sacred ground of a suburban welcome mat. Coating its grievous nature with a glorifying epic shoot-out scene is exactly what this film needed to do to separate itself fully from the nature of its depression-inciting music video-like scenes of lamenting. *Death Sentence*, as a collected product, is a mean-spirited sucker punch delivered swiftly to the abdominal. Often presenting a desecrated family amidst the hum of dreary VH1-infused folk ballads, the instinct of a bloodthirsty beast incarnated among the labyrinthine hallways of the "Office," the crack-den that looks to be what the safe haven would resemble if Abel Ferrara shot up with junk-used needles while playing *Silent Hill*. A revamped *Death Wish* starring the ghostly Kevin Bacon using expletive and ghastly violence in order to purge the streets from the flaccid youth? Sign me up for what might be the best recycling of an idea proving justly that remakes aren't always bad. Just take *Death Sentence* and *Last Man Standing* along for a wild ride in resuscitating faith in the ultra-violent and macabre and you'll be overdosing on gun play euphoria in no time.

-mAQ

INSIDIOUS
INSIDIOUS

James Wan (2010)

Abnormalities surround us. It seems to be life's way to stumble us upon "glitches". Couldn't this same concept apply directly to dreamscapes with a greater force of evil shadowing? James Wan's latest horror film, *Insidious*, attempts to salve the question, not with an answer, but with more questions. Being a fan of his earlier effort, *Death Sentence*, James Wan's keen eye for stark visuals and grain returns in *Insidious* but with less attention towards the grime and degeneracy but the sterility of a contemporary home setting. Turning the experience into a date movie of sorts, I tagged my ladyfriend along for the ride, for what I had hoped would at least be a thrilling, atmospheric take on hauntings. Paranormal films of the sort always seem to bore me. Flapping shutters and drapes dancing amidst light given off from a flickering flame is the concept. *Insidious* has defied the expectations of its stagnant wellspring and through a unique vision, supplied by Wan, unleashes a volley of consistent scares with some of the most alarming, disconcerting scenes of terror I have ever witnessed to this day. From the opening credits alone, trekking through a dimly lit house scored to screeching strings, I was mortified. When a single loathsome question returns, as it will time and time again, "what's the scariest movie you've ever seen?" - I now will have a fresh answer. Seated up there with select moments of *Jacobs Ladder*, *The Mothman Prophecies*, and the vagrant scene in *Mulholland Drive*, "*Insidious* is".

From the trailer, one surmises the boy to be a haunted vessel, which is a correct observation. It also serves as the tagline boasting the idea of a living being assaulted by spirits. Starring Patrick Wilson and Rose Byrne as the two tortured parents of a catatonic child, *Insidious* quickly sets up the structure of the important grieving parents. After falling through a ladder in a decrepit attic, Dalton passes off his concussion as nothing more and sets to slumber. When Dalton doesn't wake the next morning, the parents shamble to the hospital where doctors proceed to tell them that they don't exactly understand Dalton's condition. Cue the paranormal activities. What largely embodies the runtime of *Insidious* is seeping moments of dread that crawl across the screen. Sound plays an enormous part in providing chills. As mentioned before, wailing violins subtly scream during instances of duress. Barbara Hershey returns from her oppressive position as *mommie dearest* from *Black Swan* and adds empathy to the character pot, equating in one of the most shocking scares *Insidious* has to offer - during a sit down with the always-reluctant-to-believe father. The casting choice of Hershey was as if to conjure some of the magic seated in her incredible role in *The Entity*, and it works. Barbara Hershey was created to be haunted via screen and *Insidious* is the greatest love letter *The Entity* ever got, sans rape. Not even just for the comparable audible aesthetic of the two shocking films, *Insidious* jabs

back with a story device of her knowing exactly what to do and claiming she's been through it before.

Before *Insidious* could possibly fry your circuitry with how intense the shocks are, James Wan makes a decision; a decision that almost ruined what was of the most frightful nature by morphing the finale of the film into something you'd expect in a M. Night Shyamalan picture post-*Unbreakable*. Mixing fantasy with the modern remnants of the roster of *Thir13en Ghosts* (personifying colored demons and phantoms), James Wan's *Insidious* starts harping the unreal, surreal elements of astral projection. Crossing thresholds of a misty nether, Patrick Wilson engages with spooky specters and demons that fancy the melodic neutered tunes of Tiny Tim - is the tune effective? Yes. All the while distracting? Of course. From here *Insidious* only gets worse and irredeemably silly. One can assume the scriptwriter himself suffered from a minor concussion as *Insidious* juggled terror so well only to fumble all of its hard work, spilling spherical shapes on hardwood floor. All is not poisoned, however. *Insidious* recovers its stance with a final hurrah, melancholic to the very core. When the proverbial day is done, *Insidious* stands with yet another recurring tool of horror; utilizing advantage against a mature demographic, their children, and making every sickly-sweet mother's toes curl against the auditorium floor. It is the same happenstance as my mother experienced when she watched *Poltergeist* all the years ago. Regardless of children being used as pawns in a small battle of good and evil and the various other contrived instances, *Insidious* is a fresh experiment in horror that proves there still are scares to be had. You might just have to strap your rain boots on to wade through the shit near the climax.

-mAQ

EDEN LAKE
EDEN LAKE

James Watkins (2008)

Look at me. Look at what I've become. Underneath this pseudonym, I've transgressed through a long journey through the discovery of the arts. It started first in the pits with film, then onto bizarro literature (Thanks to Carlton Mellick III), then onto avant-garde music and such. All of the knowledge, all the experience, even the desensitization I've gone through; nothing could prepare me for *Eden Lake*. While being a film that appeals to a certain crowd, the thematic aesthetics prepared are such that gave me cramps from intense suspense. A new bar in terror has been set. Blossoming from a solemn recommendation from my dear Pete, I couldn't help but feel amazed that the master of the underground suggested I watch a film that would be available in local Best Buy's. That's normally a good sign. I set out to give this film a fluttering chance, seeing as how it sounded like a Chavvy remake of *Them (Ils)*. My respectful opinion (and review) leans towards this film being one of the most brutally uncompromising films of the decade. When I first viewed the "infamous" fire extinguisher scene in *Irreversible*, my jaw was agape. For most of *Eden Lake*, the same symptom occurred. I'd be lying if I denied taking minute breaks from the emotional intensity this film provided. The fine line between complex story lines and artistic merits is surpassed and forgotten about shortly thereafter. *Eden Lake* doesn't need these to weigh it down. I'd rather not admire set pieces while I fear for my beloved Kelly Reilly's life. *Eden Lake* is a blanketed genre film almost similar to that of *Summer Scars*. While being evocative, new thrills are provided and a twist ending that will have you hitting puberty again. The tortured childhood theme works against time in a counter spin creating differing opinions of a fragile adolescence. Childhood has never been so violent, or has it? A loving couple including 300's Michael Fassbender and the super sexy Kelly Reilly decide to escape the world and go on a nature retreat. The encounter some unsavory youths and decide to confront them. This leads into a minor scrapping which leads into a game of cat & mouse in the forest - these kids play place. To better suit the new horror generation, mostly directed towards the French-Euro horror phase, the hero (or rather, heroine) has been developed as a ravishing creature to expunge any leftover feminist "juice" that has been left in the horror generator. When I first watched fellow Dimension Extreme film *Inside*, I felt that what was provided was tense, disturbing, and merciless. This crown is being withdrew and placed on James Watkins' head. After seeing similar Chav hatefests such as *Donkey Punch*, I now realize how horrible the "urban effect" has been on our culture. Sure, this is just a film, but living in Maryland, I witness similar occurrences daily. *Eden Lake* left me speechless with no where to turn to. Love it or hate it, this is a roller coaster ride, if there ever were.

-mAQ

DRAGONBALL: EVOLUTION

James Wong (2009)

This concept was doomed from the start. A genetic disorder is to blame and it's known as an adaptation. In essence, to carry one idea from one medium to another seems feasible enough. Hell, video game ports used to excel in trimming fat off to polish the package but soon fell steadfast under the weight of triple-system licensing. Perhaps Zack Snyder and his patented photo-tracing technique should have been applied to Dragonball: Evolution. Only then would we be able to get the pure and virgin concept we craved for so long. To set forth the final judgment in motion, I'll first need to explain the film's inner workings. Dragonball: Evolution starts out with Goku being an annoying twerp. He's made a promise not to fight all the ignorant black people at school and it's just his luck that his crush, Chi-Chi, would be dating the ringleader Negro. Today is Goku's birthday and unknown to his knowledge, an evil prophecy is springing into action unveiling the villain Piccolo shortly after Goku receives a Dragonball and Grandpa Gohan is massacred by having his house crushed into oblivion. After getting harassed by Bulma, the two seek out Master Roshi to train Goku to help stop the soon-coming apocalypse. This is the plot in a nutshell and trust me, it's a lot more rusty than I led it to be. Not Yamcha To get it out of the way - how does the fighting hold up? I'm sad to say the majority of the fighting is pretty bland. Either that or the camera has been recently diagnosed with SCS (Shaky Cam Syndrome.) and if that isn't the culprit, it's most certainly lack of attention to detail in mind. James Wong went everywhere in this production. He wanted to authenticate the look and feeling of each Dragonball and they do feel as antique as they should but in giving some, he shamefully had to take some. Goku puts on his orange Gi for the "last battle" (If you want to call it that) and turns into his Oozaru form which shamelessly rips off both concept designs from An American Werewolf in London and Super Mario Bros. the Movie. Not Piccolo To top off a ridiculous idea from the start, this is yet another experimental film to come from the bowels of Hollywood. Think about it closely. We sit in a theater, perhaps in a group of friends. A trailer appears and maybe a voice-over triggers memories of a film you heard was in production. You see a quote, maybe it's Watchmen or for this instance Dragonball: Evolution. You scowl and scoff aloud, cracking joke after joke to gain the tranquility of your comrades. You swear that you would never see this movie but you're just lying to yourself. You will, without a doubt, be in line at the theater to see this travesty play out. You need to complain. Restlessness flows through your blood and nothing would make you feel more secure than brandishing your authoritative opinion on something that everyone will be talking about. This is the two-note symphony of Hollywood. Experimentation leads to box office revenue and reverse buzz. "It's that bad?! I need to see this to believe!" It's easier on yourself

DRAGONBALL: EVOLUTION

and your extensive knowledge of Akira Toriyama's works to just breathe in and out and repeat to yourself that this in no way is canon to his masterworks. This might not be enough, on second thought. With a Dragonball: Evolution video game in the works for the PSP and an exclusive action figure line, it looks like the antidote to life (i.e. Street Fighter The Movie The Game) will be repeated causing intellectual properties to dry up and dwindle - thus bringing about an ancient prophecy resulting in Earth being destroyed due to a Dragonball movie. It's obvious that I made that up but with that in mind, let's all agree to spiting the Dragonball trailer as soon as we heard the word "prophecy." I can safely say that most, if not all, films that involve some creeping prophecy are a group collective of turn-offs. To cap this off, Dragonball: Evolution is the film we were expecting; It's rather loud, debilitating, and childish but there are times where you will systematically be entertained, even amused by the meanderings of a churlish director. It will piss off legions of anime fans who draw fan-art of their favorite Saiyans fusing with fictional earrings and further promoting a subversive seed of homosexuality. For what it's worth, I found myself being entertained through out the latter of Dragonball: Evolution. The build-up is rather strong in its own retarded retread of Dragonball lore and I didn't think Justin Chatwin did that bad as a character oddly named Goku. As our Goku however, he falls flat on his face and gets dragged until he gets a skin graft at seventy-five miles per hour*. Piccolo is an abomination but that's me declaring lightly, almost coyly. In fact, just removing Piccolo and having Goku throw weak Kamehameha's at invisible entities would be a better film knowing that charity is indeed a saintly act. There's much to discuss and I'll leave that to a recreational act. Point is, Dragonball: Evolution is euphoric trash but it's not like that's going to stop you from seeing it.

-mAQ

TARD SPASM

Jamie Kastner* (1991) Boiling down to this review, this is where we split cinephiles in half. People who like quality films on one side, and people who enjoy absolute pure shit, in an unclear way. If you are in the second category, I can already assume you love films like *Violent Shit*. *Tard Spasm* is this self appointed "Rare" and "underground" recording of a really bad band called *Gobstopper* playing at a home for retards (Children's Haven in Florida.) Excuse my brash nature towards physical and mental handicaps, but after watching this, I wasn't sure who the real people with deficiencies were, the people who enjoy this, or the cast. An hour and a half film of pure retardation. You will have to excuse the puns or get used to them. The fact that this film exploits handicaps doesn't even bother me. They tried doing that in the horrible buddy comedy *The Ringer* but it turned out as stale as an episode of *The Golden Girls*. The simple fact that the copy has the audacity to try and back up the "over an hour" running time with thirty extra minutes of shock footage (R. Budd Dwyer, suicides, and faux murders) is beyond me. They claim it is the ultimate party DVD but we all know this is a lie. I'd have more fun presenting the special features of *Schindler's List* to a room of friends. In all honesty, you might laugh here and there, a chuckle, maybe two, but it is nothing special in any way. In fact, if you want quality entertainment with more artistic credibility in the opening credits than the entire feature of *Tard Spasm*, go watch Crispin Hellion Glover's *What is it?* If you like extremely shitty rock music and watching the modern age cast of *Browning's Freaks* bumping about on a dance floor, then be my guess, but if you tell me that you actually like this film, I will call you a retard. Bottom line, *Tard Spasm* is entertainment for retards.

-mAQ

KIKE LIKE ME
KIKE LIKE ME

Jamie Kastner* (2007)

A serious problem that plagues many documentaries is that the “filmmaker” often looks to put themselves at the center of the “film.” What would a Michael Moore “documentary” be without slob Michael Moore? Moore certainly seems to think that his jokes and childish insights are more important to his films than his subjects. It seems that Michael Moore’s popularity and white liberal “charisma” has inspired other documentary filmmakers to put themselves at the center of their documentaries. I recently had the misfortune of watching *Kike Like Me*, a documentary that seems to have been made purely so that the maker of the film, Jamie Kastner, could have an outlet for allowing himself to be seen by the world as he complains for just under 90 minutes. According to *Kike Like Me* “filmmaker” Jamie Kastner, he decided to make a documentary because people often ask him if he’s Jewish. After all, white liberals believe “why should it matter?” if one is Jewish or any other creed as they live in a strictly “colorblind” world. Kastner was also influenced by Elia Kazan’s garbage film *Gentleman’s Agreement*, a film so repellent that I had to turn it off after watching 20 minutes as I started to feel sick. *Gentleman’s Agreement* follows a do-gooder Philo-Semite, played by Gregory Peck, as he pretends to be Jewish to expose how the typical European-American is racially prejudiced. Although Gregory Peck doesn’t look particularly Jewish, *Kike Like Me* director Jamie Kastner has the looks and the pantomimes to best as one of “god’s chosen.” Jamie Kastner travels internationally in *Kike Like Me* asking a variety of people what they think of Jews. The first group of people that Kastner visits is the ultra-racist Lubavitcher in Brooklyn, New York. Once Kastner tells the Lubavitchers he’s Jewish, they immediately accept him as one of the tribe. Kastner seems to be slightly put-off by the warmth of these extremely religious Jews. Maybe Kastner doesn’t want people really thinking he’s Jewish? If the Lubavitchers believe he’s Jewish, than everyone is bound to think he’s Jewish. In typical liberal “point your finger” fashion, Jamie Kastner spends most of *Kike Like Me* exposing irrational gentile anti-Semites. Whether it be an articulate British journalist or an Arab peasant, Kastner knows the right person to target to expose taboo Jew-hate. Jamie Kastner is welcomed into the home of Patrick J. Buchanan. Kastner attempts to get Buchanan to admit he is “anti-Semitic” because Buchanan mentioned the Jewishness of the Neo-CON movement in a paragraph he wrote. In the end, Buchanan shows his maturity while dealing with liberal agitators while Kastner looks like a weak asshole. No documentary on Jew hate can be complete without a trip to famous tourist spot Auschwitz. During his trip, Jamie Kastner pretty much has a temper tantrum as he cannot deal with the horrors of Auschwitz. Though in a complete hipster costume, Kastner makes fun of teens at Auschwitz wearing hipster shoes. Kastner feels the tourists are having too much fun at the gas chambers and he can-

not handle it. At the peak of Kašner's womanish outburst, he leaves Auschwitz and proclaims the tourist sight should be blown up and with it the people that created (I assume he means Germans in general) it. What a kind, sensitive, and progressive guy. So, is Jamie Kašner Jewish? At the end of Kike Like Me Jamie maturely lets the audience know that he's not telling. My guess is that he is a ½ Jew with a conflicted identity. In Kike Like Me Kašner admits that he attended at Catholic boarding school. Kašner has a blonde haired mother so I figure his father followed the recent trend of rich Jewish men hooking up with hot Aryan women and producing mischling children. Jamie Kašner seems like a warped individual with quite the confused identity. Although he condemns the Jew-haters (in a contrived and self-righteous manner), he doesn't really seem to identify with the Jews other than being an "outsider." After watching Kike Like Me, I kind of hope Jamie Kašner gets beat up and sodomized by a gang of ghetto Negroes. The documentary ultimately was aimless and merely a vehicle for Kašner to identify with a "victim."

-Ty E

CAPITAINE X
CAPITAINE X

Jan Kounen (1994) You might have seen one of the original series of filth - the infamous Guinea Pig. Now if you know anything about these films, you will know that 87% of the series is complete shite that has little to no entertainment value. Hell, without the violence, this series would be nothing; even more shallow than it already is. He Never Dies is one of those incredibly horrible Guinea Pig films. If I could reward that film with one merit, it would be its set-up and plot. A man who cannot die would only further a story due to immortality, am i right? Jan Kounen (Vessel driver for Vincent Cassel. Ultimate props) directed this short with the intent to create a full length film out of it. Capitaine X (1994) concerns a prisoner who is about to be executed by a roughneck group of insane soldiers. Or at least that is what should have happened. Instead, the man continues to breathe and live through this horrible debacle thus using the many insecurities these men holster against them in a decadent battle for sanity. Which side would win is the ultimate debate. Would you rather wake up after getting shot in the head or witness an immortal as his eyes swell with hatred which could only result in a bloodbath. The director uses a first person perspective the entire film and treats it like a fashion statement. This preemptive decision resulted in a massive increase for originality and entertainment factor. I can't imagine this film without that distinctive "through the eyes" feel. The acting is the other factor that rockets this film from cheap DIY into an excellent category of horror and sadistic comedy. Capitaine X (Born to Die) is a premature gem crafted from a talented French director. I can only imagine Capitaine X translating into Captain X. Perhaps if we ever do see a full length version, our somber mute character will don a costume and use his invincibility to fight evil Germans in a pulp comic book saga.

-mAQ

VIBROBOY

Jan Kounen (1994) From that really crazy French director Jan Kounen (Dobermann, Capitaine X) comes another tale of complete absurdity lathered with stylish editing and featuring a raging homosexual. I do believe that appears to be Kounen's signature style when directing. As I can remember, There was a soldier who wanted the prisoners "nuts" in Capitaine X and in Dobermann, well, just watch the film. Vibroboy takes that killer inanimate object thing and switches the defaults around, dizzying everyone (No Pun Intended). A cross-dressing faggot discovers an ancient artifact and gives it to his best friend - an abused spouse. Things get Tetsuo-ish from then on out, but then again, what film doesn't carry the heavy and original burden of surrealism created from Tetsuo? Soon her crazy rural French husband creates a weapon using a modified chainsaw and attaching the dildo Aztec artifact and begins to chase his wife on sadistic suspicion of her cheating. In due time, a refrigerator talks, a dead rabbit summons evil, and a man is transformed into Vibroboy - A sadistic, sex-crazed man of metal and scraps who plans to reem and rape in the name of his lost civilization. Vibroboy is a clever invention using dark humor, sadism, homophobia, science-fiction, and horror. The end result is no short of stunning. While a longer feature time would have improved upon the short 27 minute runtime, the film bears no ill traits other than the slow beginning. But this alone assures you that good things come to those who wait. Besides, how else would you see a film about a killer vibrator?

-mAQ

DOBERMANN
DOBERMANN

Jan Kounen (1997) As you can see from the tribute to Vincent Cassel, i will pick up any film with even the slightest cameo from him. After having a friend recommend me this film during his stay in France, i knew i had to pick it up. The film opens up with an incredibly bad vibe as we are shown this goofy looking CGI of a dog standing erect like a human licking the screen with blue jeans on. It then quickly flashes to the inside of a church. Today, we will witness the baptizing of a baby named Yann. Only it is interrupted by a troublesome Doberman outside the church doors. After all is said and done, Uncle Joe has a present. A 357 Magnum, customized by an American smith. This gun is not only bad ass but just at the sight of it, the Doberman goes wild fearing for the babies life. After the quarrel, the gun flies in the air and lands in the cradle. Dobermann is born. 20 years or so later we meet up with Vincent Cassel, being badass in the middle of a street, shooting at an armored truck and eventually blows it up. We then meet Nat the Gypsy (Monica Belucci playing his deaf lover) who trots around France terrorizing many men and displaying her wide use of sign language. The dynamic duo and a huge gang of eccentric rats with various skills lead a huge bank robbery plan that extends to an entire city. It's easy to see that Dobermann is the top of his game and no one stands in his way. That is until Cristini comes in the way. He is a mean old motherfucker with a huge scar on the back of his head and a receding hairline. He wants nothing but to kill everyone in Yann's gang. Giving a baby a hand grenade doesn't phase him in the least. A comparison to him would be Sheriff Wydell in "THE DEVIL'S REJECTS" except hopped up on coke and looking for a creative outlook for all his pent up rage. The film while disguising itself as a brainless action film, counters with sincere emotion, and rapid fire mood switches. Scenes that you dont expect to happen, happen. This film can never be called predictable. While it seems cartoonish and humorous, it gets intensely dark and violent. The performances are great and it is laced with enough activity to stimulate your brain for an hour and thirty eight minutes. It actually seems like a re-telling of Killing Zoe except with a French theme and maniacal twist. The film itself is a high-octane action flick that has a sincere comic book atmosphere and feel. While it is skimping in the plot, we do have very creative characters and outcomes. We have a nihilistic priest, a horny sniper, a gum-smacking loose cannon, and a big guy with an axe that loves his puppy properly named Godzilla. All of this forms the mayhem that is Dobermann.

-Maq

BLUEBERRY

Jan Kouven (2004)

Of all of Jan Kouven's works that I have seen so far, I regrettably find Blueberry (Also known as Renegade) to be his most insufficient attempt at another genre hybrid. Blueberry is a mythological western on the verge of The Road to El Dorado meets Tombstone; a film encompassing most aspects towards the rural life of the glamorized cowboy in the wild west, but also branches out towards the Injun side of life which includes their traditions, seeing freaky hallucinations, and also being the middle man between two warring civilizations. Jan Kouven is a director that is very misunderstood in his native land of France. Most of his films have a eccentric touch to them that might fly right over French viewer's heads. Them Frenchies must not take to kindly to films that transcend over France's "unique" romanticist view on everything. Take Dobermann for example; that film took an American action feel and relayed it over a hyper-kinetic French cast which resulted in an explosive good time. Blueberry however, is a solid excuse for their dissent towards the film, the border breaking, and the director. As a fan of many other of Kouven's works, Blueberry isn't the healthy polished film that I wanted from a film with Cassel as the lead character. This plays out as Cassel's mildest film. In all of his American roles, he adopts an accent to humanize his character with his surroundings, but in Blueberry, his accent was a neutral American and needed more southern twang. The last 20 minutes or so is a heavy dose of articulate CGI as Cassel's and Madsen's mind initiates a spiritual battle and the personality of the film wears thin. In this scene, the true natures of both men show as spiders and snakes along with other creatures and anemones slither across the screen, relaying Cassel's memories. As this scene chugs by, you find yourself getting bored with the Michael Bay infused hallucinogen commercial and you wait for a hint of plot driven dialogue as you sit perturbed on a couch. Blueberry is just another comic book serialization that links a leading French actor with many dying American stars such as Michael Madsen, Juliette Lewis in the nude, and Eddie Izzard. Not that there are many like this, but the film wears thin easy. I found the nature of the film to be whole-hearted but lacks any fiber that can make it worth its hefty run time. It would be best to see this film for a grizzled Vincent Cassel tripping balls, but that is about all I can recommend from it.

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THE DEATH OF STALINISM IN BOHEMIA
THE DEATH OF STALINISM IN BOHEMIA

Jan Švankmajer (1991)

Right from the get go, the wonderful short film *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* directed by Jan Švankmajer signifies with a title card that it is “a work of agitprop.” The short is easily the most political work I have ever seen by the stop-motion surrealist but also not without artistic merit. Although *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* is agitprop, it is ironic agitprop, utilizing the editing techniques of early Soviet agitprop auteur Dziga Vertov against the communist motherland. After all, Jan Švankmajer experienced persecution under communism, being banned from in 1972 from filmmaking and remaining virtually unknown in the West until the early 1980s. In *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia*, the Czech auteur audaciously lampoons Soviet Communism and celebrates its much deserved death. If surrealist Communist filmmaker Luis Buñuel had the postmortem opportunity to view the film in his grave, he would be most likely condemning *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* but at the same time admiring Švankmajer’s knack for magically sublime surrealism.

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The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia begins with a bust of Joseph Stalin being cut open on an operation table and from there a history of the 1948 Communist takeover of the Czech people begins. With the Communist occupation of the Czech people came a suppression of what was organically Czech kultur, hence the various stock footage of political personalities from the USSR featured throughout the short. The only thing signifying the Czech people is when Stalin's head is painted with a Czech flag which is eventually cracked open, revealing nothing but human guts, surely symbolic of the cultural void that was left after the death of Czech communism. The communists were not too fond of individualistic personalities, being the good platitude-worshipping collectivists that they are. In fact, communists felt that art should be of a universal collectivist nature and felt traditional European art to be of a bourgeois nature, something they felt had to be destroyed. What the Communists did not realize is that art is one of the few redeeming qualities of the bourgeois as so wonderfully expressed in Hermann Hesse's marvelous novel *Steppenwolf*. In *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia*, Švankmajer animated a production line of proletarian workers that are eventually lynched, finally falling into a bucket of clay oblivion. After all, in Communist countries, the individual is merely another product of the state, an object to be used from birth and to be disposed of at anytime, whether it be mauled in factory or killed in a war.

Despite being a work of agitprop, *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* is as innovative and artistic as Švankmajer's greatest films. After watching the short film, I have a feeling that a lot of the dark elements that dominate the Czech auteur's work are a result of 45 years under Communist slavery. The Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe make no lie that their countries still have not recovered from communism, an internationalist materialistic legacy without a true culturally intrinsic legacy. Dark days in the former Communist states are very much alive today as expressed in more recent Slavic films like Srdjan Spasojevic's *A Serbian Film*, Mladen Djordjevic's *Life and Death of a Porno Gang*, and György Pálfi's *Taxidermi*. If *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* and more recent Slavic films are anyway an expression of the dark collective unconscious of the Slavic peoples, one can probably expect a bloody (and most likely nationalistic) revolution in the old Slavonic lands sometime in the near future.

-Ty E

LUNACY
LUNACY

Jan Švankmajer (2005) AKA Sílání

Lunacy is a film, like no others, that expresses what the entire film is about, only in its title. Lunacy is the newest addition to the extensive filmography of surrealist Czech Jan Svankmajer. He has spawned award winning artists to have imitated his stop-motion style such as the Brothers Quay. Lunacy is a film that bares no short-comings and is one of his best works. What is madness? What is insanity? The director takes these unknown depths of the mind and wipes them on the screen. When you first meet Jean Berlot, he is having a horrible nightmare about two pinheads trying to submit him and straitjacket him. He wakes up violently, causing fires in the hotel where he sleeps. A marquis finds him in his shocked state and offers him a ride. What will become of him as he extends into blasphemy, asylums, and bizarre rituals? The story is a welding of stories from Edgar Allan Poe and the Marquis De Sade. When you take the utmost horrific tales only to blend them with the bizzaro perversion, Lunacy can be the only outcome. Jan Svankmajer continues to defy all conventions by opening the film with his discussing how art is dead. To me, this might be the most important facet of this film. To create a piece as this, and denounce it as art is a bold move. The settings that he create are of the most peculiar. For instance, in one scene as our leads are riding in a carriage, we see a highway in the background, populated by automobiles and life. Jan Triska as the Marquis might be the physical embodiment of insanity. His lazy-eye and never ending cackle might add to this, but it is ultimately his discussions. He makes several key notes in the film, disproving God and all origins of religion. After hammering hundreds of nails into a lifesize "Jesus-on-a-cross", of course. Opposite of him is Pavel Liska, who reeks with embarrassment and awkward feelings. He is truly the hero, but a pitiful one at that. No one could ever pull off a meat puppet show besides Svankmajer. Each piece of the film is separated by a brilliant puzzle piece of a quest involving eyes and a cow's tongue. The delirious music in the background only furthers you feeling unnerved. Lunacy is a brilliant and different film for Svankmajer to create. It can be seen as a social commentary towards the punishment on the insane. Should the insane lead the sane, or should we resort to punishments and heavy medication? Who is really mad and who is sane? What is sanity?

-Maq

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNDERNEATH

Jane Arden (1972)

For me to describe a woman as the greatest “feminist filmmaker” who ever lived would not typically be the most flattering of compliments, at least when concerning the use of the word “feminist” in my own personal lexicon, but when it comes to the tragic Welsh auteur/actress Jane Arden (*Vibration*, *Anti-Clock*), I do not mean it to be totally facetious. During her relatively short life, which was cut short when she committed suicide at the age of 55 years old in late 1982, she only directed two feature-length films and one short, yet her debut feature *The Other Side of Underneath* (1972) aka *The Other Side of the Underneath* – a psychosexually erratic epic avant-garde work combining seemingly aesthetically discordant scenes of surrealism and realism about a schizophrenic girl on the verge of suicide – alone merits her an important place in cinema history as a strikingly singular and innately idiosyncratic work that is without contemporaries, even if it is somewhat plagued by counter-culture mumbo jumbo of the now rather outmoded sort. Adopting the then-trendy socially ‘liberating’ interests of feminism and the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s, Arden became seriously committed to these dubious causes from 1965 on, and in 1970 she started the avant-garde feminist Holocaust Theatre Company, where she wrote and directed the play that would later be adapted into her first feature *The Other Side of the Underneath* – a film shot and produced by her partner Jack Bond (director of *Dali in New York* (1965) and the *Pete Shop Boys* musical *It Couldn't Happen Here* (1987)). Taking its title from a line of her successful 1969 play “*Vagina Rex and the Gas Oven*,” *The Other Side of the Underneath* would ultimately evolve into the greatest artistic achievement of Arden’s relatively short directing career because, aside from being what is arguably one of the most aesthetically and thematically ambitious films of its time, the film also has the distinction of being the only British feature-length film of the 1970s to have been directed solely by a woman (although fellow feminist filmmaker/film theorist Laura Mulvey co-directed a couple flicks with Peter Wollen), thus one could quite easily argue that the director was a rare feminist who more than practiced that which she preached, even to a deleterious degree. Not unsurprisingly for those that have actually seen *The Other Side of the Underneath*, the film had not been screened since a July 1983 National Film Theatre tribute to Arden (she committed suicide on 20 December 1982) until relatively recently in July 2009, thus it developed an almost mystical reputation as a sort of lost holy grail of avant-garde cinema. Seeing Jane Arden star in *Separation* (1968), a bittersweet yet sometimes humorous film she also co-penned set in the Swinging London zeitgeist about the disintegration of a marriage, it is almost hard to believe that she is the same woman who directed *The Other Side of Underneath* – an intrinsically dark gloom and doom work without humor or tangible hope that clearly

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foretells the director's suicide as if she had already accepted her fateful death over a decade before she actually gave into self-slaughter.

Things are not going too well for the unnamed protagonist (played by Susanka Fraey in her sole movie role) of *The Other Side of the Underneath* because, aside from being fished out of a lake in a dubious situation that seems to have been a suicide attempt that should have almost certainly resulted in the young lady's premature death, she is taken to a decrepit old mental institution (most of these scenes were set in the Welsh mining communities of Abertillery and Cwmtillery in Ebbw Fach) in ruins that put the post-industrial setting featured in Paulus Manker's *Schmutz aka (1987) Dirt* to shame in their sinister technocratic decay. Clearly, the all-female nuthouse featured in *The Other Side of the Underneath* is not a concrete reality as the gigantic and mostly vacant building is falling apart, full of debris and trash, and is in an irreparable state far further gone than the mind of the protagonist who sees pernicious phantom children in grotesque masks, a sexually confused female jester named "Meg the Peg" (played by Sheila Allen) with a smile and pantomimes more creepy than Ellen DeGeneres, a cadaverous cellist (played by the actual composer Sally Minford) who plays intrinsically inharmonious tunes in dark hallways, and psychedelic rock bands. The protagonist, like director Jane Arden, is quite antagonistic when it comes to therapists and wastes no time in bitching out the sole 'soul doctor' (ironically, played by Arden herself) at the quasi-lesbian lunatic asylum. When not laying in bed and being tormented by the merrily mischievous Meg the Peg, the pretty protagonist is stabbing to death fellow female patients with a butcher knife slasher-style while a psychedelic rock band performs live, watching herself dance in an antique cabinet in an unnaturally frenzied manner, having some awfully perturbing periods, using the little girl's room where evil little girls wearing monsters masks and wielding axes dwell in the bathroom stalls, looking at shattered glass in a ritualistic manner with a topless fellow patient, having a transsexual marriage ceremony/funeral, walking around the mental institution (which looks more like a bombed-out factory than a hospital for hopelessly hysterical women) in a somnambulist-like state, and encountering women standing naked turned away from the cross of Christ, and various other peculiarly penetrating situations that might make it seem like she is in the humble home of the Whore of Babylon. Later, after regretting the gospel of psychiatry and patriarchy, the protagonist attends a traditional family get-together outside in what seems to be the Welsh equivalent of Harmony Korine's *Gummo (1997)*, where pretty boys engage in heated fistfights, a pig is cooked over an open flame and eaten, the Welsh prove they are much better drinkers than the Irish, and everything is not as it seems in one rather deranged daydream.

In a scene obviously inspired by Ken Russell's *The Devils (1971)* and, in turn, potential 'crucifix envy' on Ms. Arden's part, the lovely yet loony lead protagonist of *The Other Side of the Underneath* is crucified, but instead of bleeding

from her hands and feet, she is bleeding profusely out of her womb as if she just had a miscarriage of a pair of Satanic twins of sin. As someone who had a Christian friend who once matter-of-factly told me that women hemorrhage for about a week every month, have unbearable pain during child birth, and are under subordination of man as a punishment from God because of an evil and deceptive serpent conning the first woman in human history to make the mistake of consuming the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and thus causing the “original sin” of man, I can see why Jane Arden felt it necessary to create such an aesthetically heretical and spiritually hysterical scene of a topless schizophrenic chick with vital fluids oozing from her cunt on the cross in a scene that puts to shame the softcore Hollywood heresy of *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) directed by Martin Scorsese, where Jesus wusses out on the cross and gives into a life of sins of the flesh and self-indulgence. I might be looking too far into things, but *The Other Side of the Underneath* seems to have influenced a number of much better known cinematic masterpieces, but the most blatant seems to be *The Shining* (1980) directed by Stanley Kubrick, especially in regard to the hallucinatory and phantasmagorical scenes of various apparitions (especially of little girls) in the mental institution, which are no less effective than the iconic ghost scenes in the Stephen King adaptation. Undoubtedly, if there ever was a female/feminist celluloid counterpart to David Lynch’s cult masterpiece *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Other Side of the Underneath* is it and it is no less esoteric, if a bit more visually kaleidoscopic and socio-politically blatant in its criticism of gender and women’s role in the modern world. Additionally, if one were ever to dig in to the unruly and ‘possessed’ unconscious mind of Isabelle Adjani’s curiously creepy character in *Possession* (1981) directed by Andrzej Żuławski, it might seem like the psychotic celluloid psychodrama Arden dreamed up in *The Other Side of the Underneath*. Indubitably, if Helma Sanders-Brahms scratched the surface of female schizophrenia in *Die Berührte* aka (1981) *No Mercy, No Future*, Jane Arden dived in deep and without moral or social qualm with *The Other Side of the Underneath* to the point where it potentially contributed to her suicide as it is surely the sort of work that one must be in camaraderie with demons as no virgin of misery could have tackled such uniquely unsettling and—frankly—soul-destroying material without being forever touched by an ugly kiss of death as sired by a very real mental disintegration, thus it should be no surprise that most of the cast was drunk or high on LSD (Arden apparently enjoyed her alcohol while everyone else was tripping) during the filming of the, quite literally, ‘psychedelic’ production. Indeed, whatever arguments one might make regarding the artistic merit of *The Other Side of the Underneath*, it is impossible to deny it was made under the sort of decidedly morally degenerate circumstances that led to the soulless Sodom and Gomorrah that is the West today, but one also cannot deny that Jane Arden knew how to create art that reflected (her) life and vice versa.

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Surely, Jane Arden assembled a celluloid 'bad trip' of thoroughly abstract "anti-psychiatry" surrealism and fierce fecund-free metaphysical feminism with *The Other Side of the Underneath* that makes the strikingly scatological demonic possession of *The Exorcist* (1973) seem rather tame and tedious by comparison, which is no small achievement, especially for a film that has no interest in being described as a 'horror film,' even if the psychological horror never ends. With the release of *The Other Side of the Underneath* (as well as Arden and Bond's other cinematic collaborations, *Separation* and *Anti-Clock*) on DVD and Blu-ray by BFI in 2009, there is no reason that the film should not develop a new cult following, especially with the further spread of female discontent and mental illness in the Western world, where everyone is taking some sort of mind-altering/dulling pharmaceutical drug(s) just so they can get up in the morning and live some semblance of a 'normal' life. Of course, I have one major warning regarding *The Other Side of the Underneath*, especially in regard to the final segments of the film in which the protagonist goes through a sort of 'hippie rebirth' where a sensitive man pays special attention to her sensitive female parts, she is crucified in spite of the holy patriarch Jesus Christ, and she goes through a number of dubious quasi-Buddhist-feminist rituals to reach 'total transcendence' of body and soul, but as Jane Arden essentially proved with her own suicide, all forms of the counter-culture *Weltanschauung* have proven to be—at best—temporarily entertaining and heedlessly hedonistic but ultimately counterfeit and—at worst—totally self-destructive. That being said, *The Other Side of the Underneath* is, at least for me, a cinematic goldmine of entrancing and horrifically hypnotic celluloid images, but also an unintentional how-not-to guide for a woman to lead her life. Indeed, when it comes down to it, Jane Arden was another victim of the Golden Calf that was counter-culture 'liberation.' Although I sincerely doubt Arden would agree, *The Other Side of the Underneath* is one of the most penetrating looks at the positively possessed collective unconscious that is Occidental womanhood.

-Ty E

LITTLE NOISES

Jane Spencer (1992)

Just like the tag line reads, "Don't judge a book by the cover." Little Noises is not a comedy, and nor is it a happy film. The humor of the DVD release is one thing to appreciate. There is none of anything you see on the cover art. Before you begin to judge this film as some romantic comedy in New York, read on. It's a tiny film concerning most negative emotions you can cover. This was one of those straight shot films that Crispin Glover starred in to produce his own features. This story has Crispin Glover in a role where he isn't an eccentric brainiac. In this role, he plays a man named Joey. He has wanted to be a writer more than anything his entire life. The only problem is, is that he lacks any creativity or artistic endeavors. Upon his mute friend Marty leaving his book of poems behind, Joey decides to steal it and publish it. Rik Mayall also has a great role in this film as a bumbling literary agent who has his head stuck up his ass. You might know Rik as Drop Dead Fred. What a career change. A Murder of Crows even seems to take the plot outline and fleshes it out more. This film managed to fix many of the mistakes that were present in Little Noises. Normally, I like a conclusion to my films but Little Noises has a mildly sadistic ending that is as heart-breaking as it is cruel and inhumane. Little Noises is a normal film by all means, but does feature many bizarre elements, such as autistic philosophies, emphasis on the role of the Moon, dream-logic scenes, and the weird contrast of colors. Marty steals the show in this film. I've never known a character to steal it from Glover but it was done. His persistence in creating a friendship is fickle and admirable. His outcome in the story was unbearably depressing. It's like the director despised the character. Without Marty, there would be no Little Noises. Little Noises was billed as a comedy but I cannot back up that assumption. There was little to no humor in this film, just Crispin Glover getting furious with his dimwit friend, Timmy. Little Noises is an effective tale of deceit and shallow love. Crispin Glover is always a name to recommend so I saw no real faults.

-Maq

SAVE THE GREEN PLANET!
SAVE THE GREEN PLANET!

Jang Joon-hwan (2003)

I once attempted to review this film 2 years ago. With the subject matter at hand, I found it nearly impossible to articulate my thoughts of the emotional constant of Save the Green Planet! I set out to hopefully aid you in a quest of enlightenment. Save the Green Planet! is one of my personal favorite films. It also ushered in an era of Korean viewings which have also created a new brand of favoritism, striking almost any Korean film with a whirlwind force of appreciation. Directors love to attempt to layer their creations with many blends of feelings and sequences furthering the intellectual and artistic capabilities of the cumulative emotions nearing the climax of the film. Judd Apatow created a new generation of raunch romantic comedies that appease both smarmy female crowds and the stoner group simultaneously. Such an invention can surely be used to better accord than making dick & fart jokes on a date with Meg Ryan or such. Joon-Hwan Jang penned the script for Save the Green Planet! during his own psychotic stint. I find that directors who serve as a personal scribe to immerse the audience deeper into their vision. This is not only a guideline but a fact. Just as Sion Sono proved with both Suicide Club and Strange Circus, these Asian writers write material that is deranged genius. Perhaps even otherworldly. It's hard to really express the sheer amount of emotional changes you will come through while watching this for the first time. For the first time, I can honestly say I laughed, I cried, and I cringed, without it being an inane quote or word-of-mouth generic reviewing. A crazed conspiracy theorist kidnaps the chairman of a chemical company with this deep notion that he is in fact an alien for Andromeda. He will stop at nothing to save Earth, this even includes aggressive torture sessions and many mind-melding situations culminating in the eventual deterioration of all things cerebral. Oh yeah, there's also a really adorable dog. All this plus many genre covers of Judy Garland's Somewhere Over the Rainbow. I don't know how it was managed, but I believe that Joon-Hwan Jang has himself the perfect and definitive score. The slow drone of the string section towards the tragedy scene leaves my soul shaking. It's easy to tell that Joon-Hwan Jang was heavily inspired by the Hollywood serial thrillers as Misery and Silence of the Lambs. The eventual progression of the film's events blows this film way past expectation - bordering on the insane and cosmically creative. With an ending that needs to be seen to believe, It's possible to say that this is in my top 10 list. Each character has a story and just like any good film should stress, this one will keep you guessing. Plus you never really know who the antagonist is. Save the Green Planet! is a curio indeed. A film concerning a likely savior of earth while this film being the likely savior of cinema. Touché, Joon-Hwan Jang... touché.

-mAQ

VALERIE AND HER WEEK OF WONDERS

Jaromil Jireš (1970)

Inspired by classic iconic fairy tales like *Alice in Wonderland* and *Little Red Riding Hood* and based on the 1935 novel of the same name by avant-garde Czech writer Vítězslav Nezval, who was influenced by themes and settings explored in novels like M. G. Lewis' *The Monk: A Romance* (1796) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and F. W. Murnau's film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922), *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) aka *Valerie a týden divů* directed by Jaromil Jireš (*The Cry, Incomplete Eclipse*) – a phantasmagorical and psychosexual surrealist work that manages to seamlessly blur the line between fantasy and Gothic horror – is indubitably one of the most magnificent and mystifying works of celluloid thaumaturgy ever assembled. Not unlike American auteur Richard Blackburn's devalued Lovecraftian vampire flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is a striking and often sinister cinematic work that follows an innocent 13-year-old girl on the verge of sexual awakening as she is ambushed by a 7-day virtual carnival of unsavory humans, lighthearted lesbians, vicious vampires and ambiguous anthropomorphic creatures. Also, like *Lemora* (as well as many of the weird tales of H.P. Lovecraft), *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is a work where the virginal protagonist must come to terms with the yet uncovered reality of her dubious ancestry and seemingly odious forebears. Featuring perfectly contrasting sequences of angelic achromatic daylight scenes and chimerical twilight scenarios, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is a fanciful filmic phantasy that provides even the most cynical and rationalistic of adults with a remainder of the marvel and enchantment of their less pessimistic childhood years. Of course, with its stirring scenes of frolicsome lesbian sexuality and magical menstruation, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is not the sort of film one should show to immature adolescents, even if many of these saturnine and sensual scenarios are portrayed in an ethereal and enigmatic fashion. In short, it is no exaggeration for me to say that *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is one of the most pulchritudinous and enrapturing films that I have ever seen, but I guess that it is no surprise when one considers that it was created in the same nation that produced such aesthetically-titillating cinematic masterpieces as *Fruit of Paradise* (1970) aka *Ovoce stromů rajských jíme* directed by Věra Chytilová and Jan Švankmajer's direful yet dippy Slaviczized adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* (1994).

The first thing most viewers would probably notice upon watching *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is the youthful and undefiled beauty of Czech actress Jaroslava Schallerová who plays the title role of Valerie. Although Schallerová would later become a popular actress in Eastern Europe, later appearing in works including *The Little Mermaid* (1976) aka *Malá mořská víla* directed by Karel Kachyňa and *Zaklęte rewiry* (1975) directed by Janusz Majewski, it would be

VALERIE AND HER WEEK OF WONDERS

her debut performance at the ripe age of 13-years-old in *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* that would secure her lasting fame in the international film world. During the film, Valerie's torment seems to begin when a drop of her blood falls from her body and lands on a lily white flower, thus despoiling the bud's color and symbolically signaling her new status into biological womanhood. During the beginning of the film, Valerie encounters a nerdy thief named Eagle ("Orlík" in Czech) who steals her sacred earrings, but subsequently returns them out of guilt. Despite his seemingly delinquent intentions early on in *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*, Eagle ultimately becomes a passionate watchful protector of Valerie who warns her of a cadaver-like cloaked monster named "Weasel" who wears a grotesque weasel mask (to hide his even more malformed and sepulchral face) and acts in a weaselly by stalking and teasing the bewildered girl throughout the film. Valerie – whose parents were apparently honorable church leaders (a bishop and a nun) that are now long dead – soon discovers that her deathly pale but conspicuously beautiful blonde-haired and svelte grandmother is hiding pertinent information to her family's seemingly shadowy history. Valerie's grandmother – an intrinsically puritanical woman whose religious fanaticism is obviously a translucent shield to cover her degenerate erotic past – has not gotten over her love for her ex-beau, a sadistic and hedonistic priest named Gracian. On her often macabre but equally majestic week of wonders, which includes rape via profane priest and being burned alive for an adoring peasant audience like a common witch, Valerie eventually discovers the root of her grandmother's perennial suffering (and her eventual treacherous betrayal), as well as the true and surprising identities of her family members. Naturally, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* – being a surrealist postmodern fairy tale of sorts – unfolds in a phantasmal fashion equipped with a sort of delirious and daunting yet delightful dream-logic that defies any semblance of realism, but nonetheless making perfect sense on the metaphysical level because, unlike similarly ambitious avant-garde 'parables' (e.g. Henri Xhonneux's 1989 film *Marquis*), it is certainly not a film that will make you feel hopelessly restrained by an overwhelming aesthetic-onslaught and cheated out a full and engrossing story.

Undoubtedly, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is one of the most elegant, culturally-refined, and spellbinding works of cinematic blasphemy ever assembled; where religious leaders are the most unholy of Satanic fiends and where nature in its most raw form is the height of sacrosanct. But then again, few, if any, things are more immaculate and mysterious to the eye of a child than nature at its most organic and unsullied; be it the decomposing corpse of a still-born kitten or the unkempt hair contained within an adult's odorous ordure-stained underwear. *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is such an extraordinary and transcendental cinematic work that even manages to make sibling incest and menstrual blood seem miraculous and downright divine, which is no small feat by director Jaromil Jireš; an adult auteur whose imagination is not by any

means less developed than a prodigious (if peculiar and oversexed) child genius. Of course, seeing as it features the peeled tiny teats of 13-year-old Jaroslava Schallerová and the real-life death of a live animal, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is a film that is sure to desensitize any child who has the premature honor of viewing it. Although a fairy tale story about a feisty flower-child, I would not recommend *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* to faeries; figurative or otherwise, as it is a work that is not hip to frivolous ideals of peace, passivity and empty epicureanism (even if the images might lead one to assume otherwise), but struggle and self-sanctification in an increasingly hostile world of persuading pleasures and retrogressing morality. Needless to say, for fans of fateful fable films like Maurice Tourneur's *Carnival of Sinners* (1943), Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973), Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984) Robert Sigl's *Laurin* (1989), and Michele Soavi's *The Church* (1989), *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* makes for the most categorical celluloid allegory.

-Ty E

HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN
HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN

Jason Eisener (2011)

After learning that Jason Eisener actually developed a real feature-length film out of the faux *Hobo with a Shotgun* trailer he created for an international contest in promotion of Quentin Tarantino's and Robert Rodriguez's double-feature release *Grindhouse* (2007), I immediately had legitimate skepticism regarding the quality of the work. After all, *Grindhouse* is a total insult to the original grindhouse films, as it lacks both the spirit and gritty aesthetic prowess associated with the original low-budget pictures. Furthermore, Robert Rodriguez's *Machete* (2010) is so horrible that it hardly inspired any illegal immigrants from south of the border to commit bloody machete wielding crimes against whites. In fact, the bloody aftermath that occurred upon the initial release of *The Warriors* (1977) was much more brutal. After watching *Hobo with a Shotgun*, I am happy and admittedly surprised to report that - not only is the film better than both original *Grindhouse* films and *Machete* combined, but it also manages to capture the essence of the original grindhouse films, except set in a zeitgeist more resembling our modern dystopian times. Instead of seeming like a gross mockery of the genre - like *Grindhouse* and *Machete* - *Hobo with a Shotgun* - both in the stark urban brutality and libertine legality of the streets contained within the setting of the film - is indubitably an authentic contemporary grindhouse film destined to stand the test of time. Aesthetically, *Hobo with a Shotgun* resembles the colorfully flamboyant urban decay of exploitation classics like *Street Trash* (1987) and *Class of 1984* (1982). In ultra-violence and carnage, *Hobo with a Shotgun* borrows attributes from the likes of sci-fi-action blockbuster *Robocop* (1987) and countless vigilante revenge flicks made before it.

Dutch born actor Rutger Hauer plays the hobo with a shotgun - in a role so stoically heroic (albeit murderous) - that he makes Clint Eastwood's performance in *Gran Torino* (2009) seem like the prima donna antics of an elderly queen on the verge of senility. I recently saw Hauer play an old hippie charlatan cult leader in an exceedingly mediocre work entitled *Happiness Runs* (2010), so naturally it was quite therapeutic to see the Dutchman blowing off the heads of urban degenerates in *Hobo with a Shotgun*. Rutger Hauer had an excellent early career in his homeland of the Netherlands while working with Dutch filmmaker Paul Verhoeven (*Soldier of Orange*, *Turkish Delight*) and his career started out decently when he first moved to the United States, but it has unfortunately waned over the past two decades or so. Rutger Hauer gallantly fought the Nazis as a Dutch resistance fighter in *Soldier of Orange* (1977), but in *Hobo with a Shotgun* he plays a shabby bum who takes out a new type of enemy in the form of corrupt corporate assholes and bottom-feeding parasitical scum. Metaphorically, *Hobo with a Shotgun* is an assault on modern America and the American obsession with screwing over anyone just to make an extra buck. Upon first

arriving at the corrupt city at the start of *Hobo with a Shotgun*, the Hobo encounters sleazy Hollywood producer types paying a couple of homeless men to completely humiliate and brutalize their bodies for a mere ten dollar bill. The Hobo also soon learns that the city is run by a sadistic capitalist named Drake and his deranged progeny - Slick and Ivan - two young psychopaths who get their kicks by raping women and brutalizing citizens. The general population of the city seems like a parody of American urban citizenry - as they follow blind allegiance to whatever filth is broadcasted on their TV - committing crimes and killing/robbing fellow citizens in an attempt to obtain some kind of deranged semblance of the American dream. Of course, when the Hobo starts annihilating criminals, the citizens begin to notice and follow suit - taking back their city one step at a time - liquidating every criminal they can find.

Hobo with a Shotgun is far from a landmark in motion picture history, but it is, undoubtedly, a full exercise in salacious subversive cinema of the quality kind. It is not everyday that I get to experience a highly entertaining film like *Hobo with a Shotgun* where a stoic master actor like Rutger Hauer liquidates individuals who resemble the white-shoe-boy-pansy-parasites that run Wall Street. I especially enjoyed a scene in *Hobo with a Shotgun* where the Hobo blows away a Santa Claus outfit sporting pedophile who stalks children at a public playground. The Hobo certainly delivers Pedo-Claus' Christmas present early in the form of a fatal shotgun explosion. It also goes without saying that despite portraying a less-than-homely-hobo, the handsome Nordic Rutger Hauer makes swarthy Charles Bronson of *Death Wish* seem like a sneaky rat by comparison. My main problem with *Hobo with a Shotgun* is that - despite Hauer's range as an actor (as opposed to most action stars) - the director did not give Hauer more time to shine, but I guess that is what one comes to expect from a film following in the footsteps of the original grindhouse pictures. Unlike a lot of modern Hollywood films (which contain a liberal relativist morality), *Hobo with a Shotgun* features a blatant dichotomy between good and evil. In fact, the Hobo delivers a very wise message when he states, "Evil will go against evil and wipe itself out." For a real-life historical demonstration of the Hobo's quote just take a look at any political revolution in history, which are usually of a cannibalistic nature. For example, in Joseph Stalin's Great Purge that lasted from 1936-1938 - the dictator liquidated around a million of his own people including communist party members, government officials, Red Army officials, and even his head (Nikolai Yezhov) of the NKVD Secret police. Some really evil assholes must have been running the United States for the last century for it to go down the amoral latrine so fast. If the USA is lucky, hopefully some real-life shotgun wielding hobos will start cleaning up American cities and bring real positive change to this culturally deteriorating country. After all, American youth would learn grandeur ideals of intrinsic value from hobo vigilantes than from all the ill-literate side-show-clown-play-thug rappers featured on MTV combined.

HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN

Near the conclusion of *Hobo with a Shotgun*, the pompous psychopathic villain Drake so arrogantly states to his barbaric peasant audiences, "Do you see what I mean folks, I provide you with NOTHING but the highest quality adrenaline-filled family entertainment." Of course, you can bet that your average Hollywood producer carries the same type of neo-vaudevillian opportunistic philosophy as Drake, for they also provide you with nonsensical philistine entertainment that will cause your blood to rush, yet such mindless lowbrow carnival routines merely degrade the viewer in the long run. For evidence of this, just go to your local bar or restaurant and listen to how many times some modern extreme philistine quotes a stupid movie like Todd Phillips' *The Hangover* or any other work of C-grade Tinseltown comedic smut. Speaking of derogating entertainment, in *Hobo with a Shotgun*, the heroic Hobo has some fun by humiliating and torturing a parasitic producer who creates Bumfight-like digital video filth. Although the Bumfight producer can dish out humiliating situations to desperate bums - when the tables are turned by the hobo with a shotgun - the producer whines and squirms like the parasite worms that he is. Sure, one could say that *Hobo with a Shotgun* is an example of hypocritical entertainment, as it is a trashy portrayal of a man taking out humanoid trash, yet with such an already degraded audience like the American citizenry, one must start small when attempting to spread new virtuous ideals.

Without question, a major flaw of *Hobo with a Shotgun* is the film's lack of multiculturalism nihilism; one of the main driving forces behind Occidental decline. In the film, Drake's less intellectually equipped son humorously states, "They are going to make comic books out of my hate crimes," yet nothing resembling a hate crime can be found in the entirety of *Hobo with a Shotgun*. In fact, it seems the writer and director of *Hobo with a Shotgun* felt it would be safer to show a holocaust of white children in a school bus than any type of true hate crime scenario. Of course, Robert Rodriguez had no problem portraying a Hispanic-led murder campaign of "brown power" in his deplorable piece of cinematic defecation known as *Machete*. After all, if a real Hobo vigilante were to cleanup the streets of an American city, you can certainly bet he would be liquidating cholo gangstas, rapper prankstas, and NYC banksters. After the negative backlash prompted by liberal film critics in regards to Michael Caine's extermination of wiggers, chavs, male prostitutes, drug dealers, and so called minorities in the excellent anti-politically-correct picture *Harry Brown* - the P.C. producers of *Hobo with a Shotgun* probably lacked the testicular fortitude to make *Hobo with a Shotgun* an equally politically-incorrect-free-for-all. It is a fairly simple concept to understand that to stop the third-worldization of the West, one must stop all third world immigration to the West. Elderly veteran *Harry Brown* certainly knew how to fix up a town and replenish it from its prior debasement.

As the bitchy Russian-born philosopher Ayn Rand prophesied in her best

work of philosophy The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution - the United States is now divided into primitive bickering collectivist tribes (except a united white tribe) who proudly expound racial barbarism. The world of Hobo with a Shotgun certainly features a particular brand of anti-rationalist barbarism and the introduction of a new dark age, yet severely lacks the undeniable racial component so closely linked with this unsettling phenomenon. The film also features prostitutes, but lacks black pimps? Also, the director of Hobo with a Shotgun neglected to include any drunken Mexicans that one kind find (with a hand down their pants no less) passed out on urban park benches. Pretty funny how in American on every job application a person fills out, the employers ask you about your race (as they are an "equal opportunity" employer that hires token minorities before a better skilled white person just to meet a "diversity" quota), yet Hobo with a Shotgun completely ignores any realistic racial elements, as well as the obvious detrimental aspects of "multiculturalism." Of course, the film was made in a Canada - a country where a certain type of racially oriented speech is now criminalized and anyone that honestly discusses race is already heading down a slippery slope of illegality. Anyway, although hot prostitute Abby might be right in her assertion in Hobo with a Shotgun that a person cannot solve all the world's problems with a shotgun, one has to start from somewhere as the Hobo did during his diligent reign of head-exploding vigilante fun. Despite the fact that Hobo with a Shotgun is a work of sleazy entertainment, it does include a very true observation that is central to the film's plot; most humans are mindless cattle who follow any societal trend that seems to be hot. After the Hobo starts blowing holes in criminals - the citizens also religiously follow his street cleaning trend, yet when the population becomes afraid of vigilante justice after Drake's family threatens to liquidate their children, the city population attempts to crucify their hobo messiah - once again, proving their herd-like lack of personal idealism. For thousands of years Europeans fought in bloody battles and wars to keep barbarian hordes from the East and South from conquering their nations, yet in the late twentieth and early 21st century it only took a little televised mass communication brainwashing for indigenous Occidental populations to freely let hostile invaders (without even putting up a fight) from the former colonies in. Hobo with a Shotgun is certainly not a work of philosophy, but it provides a keen indictment on the automaton-like nature of modern mass-communication-worshiping humanity. I doubt many people will be inspired enough to read Schopenhauer or Nietzsche after watching the film, but at least Hobo with a Shotgun offers westerners some minor "food for thought" that they won't get from watching the latest Hollywood kkkosher-approved-silicone-titty-filled-stoner-comedy.

-Ty E

DISASTER MOVIE
DISASTER MOVIE

Jason Friedberg, Aaron Seltzer* (2008)

Never in my life had I planned to watch any of this film other than the trailers we received that I promptly trashed and threw a smirk at the garbage with a hint of sadistic glee. While closing up at our theater, I had several minutes to spare, so I began my perilous trek into theater 1. The movie had just started. I hesitated for a second, sweat building at my brow. My fingers cramping up. Could this be the feeling of death creeping up on my back? I slowly sat down into the back so I wouldn't absorb all of the film at once. Visual pain happens to be real; proven so by Friedberg & Seltzer. These are the guys that should scare you, not German mogul Uwe Boll. As the film opened with a CGI rendering of earth morphing into an asteroid and the title of the film exploding on screen, I realized where much of the 20 million dollar budget went. I already can't believe people fund this shit. A retarded running gag of cows falling on Pop Culture icons. I sat through a tedious and yawn-rendering spoof of 10,000 B.C., then watched that turn into a spoof of American Gladiators, then Amy Winehouse, Indiana Jones, then something else that had no relation to disaster movies. I feel my stomach slowly turning in its rightful place. Soon some douche bag model wakes up in his bed. What starts as a slight odor of a plot, Flavor of Love is soon spoofed, followed by several other television shows and Soulja Boy. Cue the vomit arising in my mouth. I sat through around 15 to 20 minutes of this mind-numbing inane film and morally retarded filth and all I got was a vomit stain on my t-shirt. The ONLY parts that amused me: The No Country for Old Men spoof, and the non-stop Juno mocking. Juno had it coming. I feel slightly unable to perform my natural motor skills. I love working at a theater for every reason other than this. I should start working on rigging a death trap for anyone who buys a ticket for this film. I walked out after that 15 minutes of purgatory. I sat silent during the car ride home.

-mAQ

ZOMBIES! ZOMBIES! ZOMBIES!

Jason Murphy (2008)

The 2007/2008 timeline features many historical highs and lows. The first in the history of the United States - A black and female presidential candidate with serious campaigns. The Red Sox win the World Series, and the Beijing Olympics is dominated by American Michael Phelps. These aren't the important things. The hot topic on everyone's agenda is the latest zombie film to come out. People eat up zombie films (Pun intended). To tie up the infinity knot of equilibrium, *Zombie Strippers* and *Strippers VS. Zombies* had to be released within close proximity of each other. Just what we need, more zombie films. Now that I have let out an exasperated sigh, I will begin to explain just how dead the zombie genre is. We've seen loved ones become zombies time and time again. The scene that cemented in zombie film making 101 of having to kill your own family grows tiresome after awhile. I really don't care that Bobby Teenager had to kill his dog with an undisclosed weapon. Zombie films lack the motivation in creation and it's spreading like a disease. Zombies are officially dead to me. The biggest annoyance is the non-stop bitch fest we are treated to. Do not view this product if you have an aversion to bad special effects, horrible plot development, stale jokes attempting to poke and prod pop culture, uninspired zombies, and horrible actors playing horrible characters. With the exception of two, I find the cast of pimps, geeks, and whores to be tiring and a nuisance. The horror stripper film genre wasn't something to be dabbled in until *From Dusk Till Dawn*. This is the definitive anti-female empowerment film. After all, who wants to see "bitches" pretending to cat fight for 78 minutes? As soon as the "zombie drug" gets smoked in rock form, horny middle-aged men begin getting infected but the incident at hand is a contained infection. It's just a boring crowd of no-talent zombie creations groaning in front of a sealed shed that's called a strip club. *Zombies! Zombies! Zombies!* is an attempt to successfully turn another zom-com out but this isn't anything new. The line "I've had it with these mother fucking zombies in my mother fucking strip club!" almost saves it, but nay. *Zombies! Zombies! Zombies!* blows as much as the next year 200? zombie film.

-mAQ

JUNO
JUNO

Jason Reitman* (2007)

Now with the theatrical release of Juno, self proclaimed "Indie" film of the year, this style of film-making often brings up questions in my head. Why do these "independent" (Note the quotations) films have million dollar marketing campaigns, big name actors, and the licensed songs to every popular over-rated acoustic band in such a vagrant editing style? The plot is simple but cute. Juno MacGuff is a social misfit. Nothing about her is normal. Not her love for Iggy Pop nor her hamburger phone. Along with these horrible scenes that try to make her seem oh so different, she misquotes a popular nostalgic phrase. Nearing the end, she exclaims aloud "THUNDERCATS ARE GO". Now, me being a true child of all nostalgic era's, I immediately noticed it should read "THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO". Director Jason Reitman should fire his script supervisor. The film is packed to the metaphorical brim with odd scenes to try and emphasize the couple's quirkiness. The couple being Michael Cera (Of Superbad Fame) and Ellen Page (Of Hard Candy Fame). Whether it be balling up her coveted panties and thinking aloud of her or getting "super psyched" for the rerun of The Blair Witch Project. Now just because i have so much to say on the negative side doesn't mean i didn't enjoy it. In fact, i found it to be adorable, but since the outbreak of "Indie" filmmakers, such as R. Linklater, W. Anderson, and N. Baumbach, i have been disgusted by this contest to see who can shove the most Velvet Underground or Cat Power songs into the extensive soundtrack. The acting of course was exceptional, but the real star is Cera, whose goofy stance and perfect running outfit had most of us feeling adorably awkward. The film is too dumb for it's own good though. Whether it be the same editing that has been seen in every film lately, Quick action cuts paying attention to the very everyday detail of the common life. That tends to get boring. The only film to bring justice to this procedure was Shaun Of The Dead. Also noted that J.K. "J. Jonah Fucking Jameson" Simmons has a role that produces many laughs. Expect the first ten minutes of dialogue to consist of stupid hipster speak, throwing around "fer shizzle's" galore and city talk. This only makes me wish it had subtitles. This film is a great film to own for its cute mannerisms but is not worthy of an Academy Award. See also; Little Miss Sunshine for another "Indie" film with a budget of several million. These movies with the label of such, are funded by producers from big studios; swine of the worst degree. Greedy money hungry thieves who enjoy getting the masses in an uproar over a film that makes you feel original to love. While the film has it's very own pretentious aspects, it also introduces mainstream audiences with Suspiria and Herschell Gordon Lewis, which only infuriates me further. Overall, i enjoyed it but to be honest, it is a dumb film. Packing a film with charisma and chemistry doesn't ensure success, the key to that is obviously putting Velvet Underground on the soundtrack.

EDIT// I am a horrible, jaded cynic
-Maq

[REC]

[REC]

Jaume Balagueró (2007)

Chances are that you've heard of this Spanish shocker or its influences on Cloverfield and Diary of the Dead. The similarities between this and Diary of the Dead are perhaps too much. This film follows a first person camera into a routine mission for a group of firefighters being recorded by a T.V. anchorwoman for her show. This all turns to hell when they encounter "zombies." To me, the zombie film has been dead for a while. All these recent incarnations of the same monster that has ruled the horror screen are just trying to give life to a dead genre. Kicking a dead body won't bring it back to life, nor will making a pointless and vain attempt at altering the myth of zombies. In recent zombie films, directors try and spend too much time coming up with a new method of a zombie outbreak instead of focusing on the scares. After 30 - 40 years of zombie story lines, I crave the terror, not the spooky plot.

[Rec] does just that. It provides non-stop terror, and even manages to mix in a great reasoning behind it. The film is believable for the most part, and has very nice dialogue that is very true to its own screenplay. I often found myself feeling as if I was in on these tenants conversations. Like with most modern foreign horror, these directors pair up in order to share some artistic thoughts and work together. Possibly even an easier way to get their names out there. The directors were successful on their part. They created a terrifying film that starts off slow and lets out with a bang. As with most world cinema, we get a terrifying look at tenants tension mixed with a small bit of racial discourse. Due to the remakes over on American soil being so speedy, ~~US has a shot-by-shot remake in the works already under the title Quarantine.~~ Too bad this gem most likely won't be released until after the remake. What really shines here is the film's clever use of its audio capabilities. Grunts, static, breath, and screaming play a large part. In scenes, the audio even goes out due to blunt force trauma on the camera. Wildly inventive and stunningly tense, this only raises the horror factor a couple notches. [Rec] is a horrifying new-age zombie film. There is no 28 Days Later, no 28 Weeks Later, and no Day/Dawn/Diary of the Dead. These end-of-the-world movies are really pissing me off. I thank the directors for having enough decency and dignity in making this a concealed incident. The claustrophobia of it all is way more terrifying than being trapped in a lovely mall.

-mAQ

HOUSE

Jaume Collet-Serra (2005)

House (Not the awesome 80s horror film) is a film adaptation from a Christian novel by Ted Dekker & Frank Peretti. After the release date was pushed back to Fall 2008, the revamped trailer focuses on more of the possibility of the film centering around horror themes and mind games. In truth, this film ends on such an evangelical term that the film finds itself to be very annoying and tedious. Rated R for religious context and an inanimate plot expressed by actors who've might as well been replaced with mannequins. Two couples are stranded in a bed & breakfast inn after both cars are incapacitated. Upon entering and greeting the house's owners, they find themselves locked inside of the rotting house and pursued by a masked killer simply called the Tin Man. He lays down three rules of staying in "his" house. If only his rules as the autocratic ruler allowed for more fluidity for some free-based camera shots and some sound effects that aren't in every other horror film.

Welcome To My House. House Rules: 1. God came into my house and I killed him. 2. I will kill anyone who comes to my house like I killed God. 3. Bring me one dead body and I might let rule #2 slide.

With these simple rules, a game is sprung into action. A game that churns slowly through scenes intended to make you loathe/love each character for their own flaws. The character Jack looks exactly like Auckland born Martin Henderson (Smokin' Aces). This uncanny reflection gives the film sort form of acting credibility, but most of the time is spent on characters wobbling from one hallway to the next screaming. You must understand that for me to take a film seriously, I want a serious film - not some false advertised Jesus sermon in the guise of a horror film. One can scurry about the analytic factors of the last 10 minutes as how it seems that Madsen killed Susan (I killed God) and how God was feminized as a little girl from an Addams Family screenplay. All this and more curves into a slightly entertaining film that is completely worthless. I found myself visually appeased but this was the only hold this film had over me. Perhaps with every DVD, seat adhesive should be given. Trial packs of course. A film this bad will need all the revenue it can get. House is a bastard celluloid psalm containing strong elements of Saw and Silent Hill. As tempting as this sounds, this film proves that the dark side is always the better side. Much like The Golden Compass was slandered for killing god, this book/film features the same motives but in this film it's all right because of the power of good. I'm sorry, but I'd pick armor-plated warrior polar bear battles over some gay ass Christian horror film. A waste of time.

-mAQ

PARENTS
PARENTS

Jay Roach (2000)

As made quite clear in Neal Gabler's book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (1988) and the fairly stale doc based on it *Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies and the American Dream* (1998) aka *Hollywood: An Empire of Their Own*, Tinseltown was mostly founded by Eastern European and Austrian Jews who ultimately created a fake America and American dream via their movies that is quite different from the American of the white Christian majority. Quite unlike many of the Judaic culture-distorters that run Hollywood nowadays, these early pioneers were, relatively speaking, very adamant about assimilating and were very sensitive about their Jewishness, which they attempted to obscure with new goyish names and hot blonde shiksa wives, among other things. In fact, even Charles Blühdorn—a Vienna-born Jewish industrialist that did not get involved with the film industry until 1966 when his conglomerate Gulf+Western Industries purchased Paramount Pictures—was quite shy about his Hebraic background and, despite being connected to the Yiddish mob and Zionist warmongers like Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, he more or less incessantly denied his Jewishness and even curiously received a private Christian burial when he died. In fact, as described in *Star: How Warren Beatty Seduced America* (2010) by Peter Biskind, Hollywood alpha-leftist and all-around-shithead Warren Beatty once bragged in regard to getting the Jewish industrialist to fund his singularly plodding commie epic *Reds* (1981), "One of the things that gives me the biggest kick about making this movie about an American Communist is that I got the money to do it from one of the most right-wing fascist people in Hollywood, Charlie Bluhdorn!" Of course, it was not really until the rise of the 'New Left' and birth of New Hollywood during the late-1960s that Jewish filmmakers and their shabbos goy white liberal comrades like Beatty finally felt safe enough to begin producing far-left anti-American movies that openly mocked America's white majority and its culture, religion, and traditions. Undoubtedly the most obvious example of these subversive Semites was rampant womanizer and Judaic dope fiend Bert Schneider who, despite being born into an extremely wealthy Jewish family, made it his business to promote communist movements and to fund the Black Panther Party (in fact, he even developed a sick friendship with Huey P. Newton that involved harboring the violent black nationalist in his mansion when he was a fugitive killer) when he was not producing movies.

Of course, horror cinema eventually received the cultural Marxist makeover as well, though one could certainly argue that the anti-white agenda began in the genre long before the rise of New Hollywood with the superlatively sleazy and wholly aesthetically worthless exploitation films of kosher comrades Herschell Gordon Lewis and David F. Friedman, especially the anti-Confederate piece

of uniquely unrefined and fiercely farshtunken schlock *Two Thousand Maniacs!* (1964), which portrays Southerners as disingenuously hospitable cannibalistic subhuman yokels with a perennial bloodthirsty legacy of singular murderous hatred. Indeed, thanks to goy-hating Hebrew Lewis—a man that dubiously bragged in the hagiographic doc *Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Godfather of Gore* (2010) that he once beat up a man because the fellow supposedly called him a “kike”—the evil ‘redneck’ caricature has become a major staple of horror as demonstrated by works ranging from Tobe Hooper’s classic *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) to even somewhat contemporary artsy fartsy European films like Fabrice Du Welz’s *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal*. If Lewis is keen on cinematically crapping on crackers in an uniquely uncultivated fashion where he dubiously fetishistically sensationalizes that savage sadism that he ostensibly condemns, unnervingly beady-eyed Ashkenazi actor turned director Bob Balaban demonstrated with his somewhat quixotic debut feature *Parents* (1989) that he was fond of shitting on clean-cut white suburbanites from the 1950s. Admittedly, I decided to watch Balaban’s film after reading English auteur Ken Russell’s highly complimentary remarks regarding it in his autobiography *Altered States: The Autobiography of Ken Russell* (1991). Notably, Balaban previously starred in Russell’s sci-fi cult classic *Altered States* (1980), so I wonder if the filmmaker was succumbing to partiality and committing puffery when he wrote in regard to his favorite contemporary films, “...But for me the two most outstanding new talents are Bob Balaban, whose *PARENTS* made David Lynch’s *BLUE VELVET* look like *CARE BEARS*, and Bruce Robinson with *WITH-NAIL AND I*—about two out-of-work actors in the Sixties. Both these directors have a frighteningly perceptive vision and the unique ability to capture a particular moment in time as well as the heart and soul of the characters under observation. They have humour, imagination, style and flair. I have high hopes for their future.” Of course, Balaban never became the great auteur that Russell hoped he would be, as he more or less degenerated into a TV hack cum perennial character actor, with his directorial debut assuredly being his magnum opus.

For better or worse, *Parents* is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most preternatural black horror-comedies ever made, though for reasons that the director at least partly did not intend. Featuring lovable whack-job Randy Quaid and Paul Schrader’s wifey Mary Beth Hurt as the eponymous crypto-cannibal parents of a keenly kosher kid named Bryan Madorsky that clearly could not be their biological child (notably, Madorsky never starred in another film and went on to take up the stereotypical Judaic trade of accounting), Balaban’s debut feature is a quite strange film in that the boy lead seems to be a stand-in for the director himself. Indeed, more than anything, the film seems to be the absurdly autistic yet nonetheless fairly consistently entertaining result of a Jew imagining the horrors of being raised by pathologically passive-aggressive and anally retentive white bread WASP suburbanites from the 1950s. Somewhat seeming

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like the patently absurd and inexplicable result of the aesthetically-challenged bastard brood of Herschell Gordon Lewis and Paul Bartel somehow suffering the grand delusion that he is a real artist and attempting to direct a satirical gore flick with the cultivation of a Jean Renoir social satire like *La règle du jeu* (1939) aka *The Rules Of The Game*, albeit in the style of a David Lynch flick, Balaban's film is ultimately a rare and unintended example of the sort of atavistic ethnocentric paranoia that has inspired so many Jews in Hollywood, the mainstream media, and politics to wage a cultural war against the very people that built America. To H.G. Lewis' very, very minor credit, his anti-suburbia flick *Suburban Roulette* (1968) is nowhere near as venomous and anti-Anglo-American as the fierce filmic fart of a farce that is *Parents* where a cannibalistic 'fascist' father that suffers from a sort of perniciously passive-aggressive form of what Jewish Marxists and psychoanalysts call an 'Authoritarian Personality' becomes increasingly hostile with his son for refusing to eat human meat. On a slightly less serious note, the film also can be seen as a sort of allegory for post-JFK youth rebellion and the birth of the counterculture (de)generation due to its depiction of a troubled and somewhat socially ostracized young boy who learns to both hate and distrust his parents and reject his heritage.

Not unlike Norman Mailer with his shockingly delightful pseudo-Lynchian celluloid disaster *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1987), Balaban opted to hire Angelo Badalamenti to compose music for his film so that no one would be confused by the fact that he was attempting to make a poor man's *Blue Velvet*. Of course, like his fellow Judaic Mailer, Balaban unwittingly attempted the innately impossible by contriving a film in the spirit of the work of one of America's most organically poetic and preternaturally instinctual filmmakers, for Lynch's talent does not come from a dry and calculating intellect but the soul. Indeed, as the great $\frac{3}{4}$ Hebrew Ludwig Wittgenstein once wrote in regard to the lack of originality of the Jewish mind and the tendency of Jews to merely copy others instead of pioneering, "Amongst Jews 'genius' is found only in the holy man. Even the greatest of Jewish thinkers is no more than talented. (Myself for instance.) I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively. I don't believe I have ever invented a line of thinking. I have always taken one over from someone else [...] It might be said (rightly or wrongly) that the Jewish mind does not have the power to produce even the tiniest flower or blade of grass; its way is rather to make a drawing of the flower or blade of grass that has grown in the soil of another's mind and to put it into a comprehensive picture [...] It is typical for a Jewish mind to understand someone else's work better than he understands it himself." In other words, Balaban has a superficial understanding of some of the material ingredients that go into a Lynch flick, but he lacks the innate understanding and soul to sire such a film, for only Lynch can direct a Lynch film. Thankfully, quite unlike Lynch, Balaban has nil love for the people or place he depicts and has used the traditional Hebraic weapon of humor as a

means to express his undying hatred for the evil WASPs that would not allow his parents and grandparents to play golf at their posh country club.

In a sort of cold, detached, and wholly materialistic fashion, Balaban might be able to explain the mechanics and superficial peculiarities of Lynch's films better than Mr. Eraserhead ever could (after all, Lynch is notorious for being ludicrously sentimental and superficial when explaining his work), but as the great German-American sage H.L. Mencken once noted regarding Jewry, they have "learning without wisdom." Indeed, where a great Lynch film has a deep, dark, and foreboding metaphysical presence that engulfs the viewer's entire soul, *Parents* thrives on sterile domestic absurdism and a sort of nefariously neurotic spirit, but of course that is not why it is a somewhat worthwhile cinematic work. While the film was not actually penned by the director but a fairly unknown fellow named Christopher Hawthorne—an assumed goy that Balaban randomly met on a plane who worked in a cubicle at pay-cable TV network Showtime's marketing dept—it is immediately apparent while watching *Parents* that it was created by a racial/cultural outsider who sees 1950s WASP suburbia as a sort of sinister Aryan American utopia that breeds mindless conformism, racial purity, and bizarre pathologies. In other words, there is no doubt that Balaban sees 1950s America as the worst thing since the Third Reich, so naturally it is only fitting that he cast an extremely Hebraic looking little boy that looks like he could be the son of Rick Moranis to play the child protagonist. Somewhat ironically, the film concludes with the boy causing his totally unkosher parent to be burned up in a sort of explosive suburban holocaust that feels like a sick fantasy on the director's part. It should also be noted that the cannibalism is ultimately revealed to be inter-generational, thus underscoring the irreparably tainted heritage of these extra evil Aryan flesh-eaters.

Notably, French erotic novelist and unconventional Nietzschean Georges Bataille once wrote, "This [cannibalism] is a desire no longer active in us, one we never feel now. Archaic societies, however, do show the taboo as alternatively in force and suspended. Man is never looked upon as butchers' meat, but he is frequently eaten ritually. The man who eats human flesh knows full well that this is a forbidden act; knowing this taboo to be fundamental he will religiously violate it nevertheless [...] The object some indiscriminating animal is after is not what is desired; the object is 'forbidden,' sacred, and the very prohibition attached to it is what arouses the desire." Keeping Bataille's words in mind, one could argue that the cannibalism depicted in *Parents* is merely the therapeutic means by which the all-too-normal titular characters in the film deal with their seemingly emotionally and spiritually draining lives of pathological conformity. Indeed, it is no simple task acting like a fake bourgeois sociopath all the time, thus cannibalism—the ultimate forbidden taboo—acts as the ultimate orgasmic release from a sham life of self-basing and self-denying suburban conformity. If Wiggstein was right when he wrote, "The face is the soul of the

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body,” then 10-year-old protagonist Michael Laemle (Bryan Madorsky) must be the most patently soulless little boy in the entire world yet, despite his highly debilitating social retardation, he somehow learns to deeply loathe his parents, especially his father, due to their taboo eating habits. Indeed, if there is anything constantly captivating about *Parents*, it is Michael’s brutally flat affect, which is apparent to both his parents Nick (Randy Quaid) and Lily (Mary Beth Hurt) and everyone he encounters, though he seems to be completely oblivious to his glaring social inadequacies. On top of his absurdly autistic essence and seemingly complete and utter incapacity to experience simple human emotions like happiness and joy, Michael tends to say inordinately random and inappropriate things and to ask extremely redundant questions that especially annoy the hell out of his father, who is a peculiarly private man that is obsessed with appearing completely normal. Michael and his family have just moved to a new undisclosed suburb from Massachusetts and on the first day of school, the protagonist makes quite the first impression when he states to his entire class after his teacher Miss Baxter (Kathryn Grody) asks him to name one new thing he learned over the summer, “Um, if you take a black cat and broil it on the oven...and you peel off the skin of the bones and take it off...and you check on the bone, you’ll be invisible.” While his teacher treats him like a foolish retard and his classmates laugh at him for his nonsensical black cat spiel, he impresses a tall blonde girl named Sheila Zellner (Juno Mills-Cockell), who was held back a grade because she may or may have not done sexually inappropriate things with male classmates and who tells the rather gullible protagonist that she is originally from the moon. While she is a good foot taller than him, sassy Sheila wastes no time in aggressively flirting with Michael by stating, “You ask a lot of question. I like that in a man.” In other words, Sheila likes the fact that she is the one that gets to wear the pants in their budding relationship. Additionally, Michael takes a likening to her because he genuinely believes she is a space alien. In fact, when Michael informs his parents that he has made a new friend and that she is an extraterrestrial of sorts, his father Nick gets angry and states, “We can’t make friends by telling lies, Michael.” In fact, virtually anytime they interact, Nick gets mad at his son because he says weird things and especially because he refuses to eat. After all, it must be a hard thing for a cannibal to have a son that refuses to eat human flesh that he went to relatively dangerous lengths to procure. While Michael might be quasi-autistic dunce that seems to be pretty much oblivious to everything, it is only a matter of time before he finally realizes the source of his subconscious dread towards his parents’ hermetic home cooking habits.

As demonstrated by the fact that he routinely refuses to eat and incessantly has horrendous nightmares involving tons of blood and dismembered body parts, Michael seems to subconsciously realize that his ostensibly clean-cut and wholesome progenitors are actually savagely sadistic cannibals with a kinky blood fetish. Indeed, one night after suffering an extra bloody nightmare, Michael goes down-

stairs and is shocked to find that his half-naked parents are doing some 'erotic wrestling' while partly soaked in blood. While he is not beneath killing to acquire corpses, Nick, who is conveniently employed as a scientist at a lab in the Division of Human Testing of a seemingly evil corporation called Toxico, mainly gets his man meat from work where he has a witless nerd underling specially prepare the bodies for him. As for mommy Lily, she does most of the good clean cannibal cooking, though Nick tends to do the grill cooking. Undoubtedly, Michael has a much better relationship with his mother, who, unlike Nick, does not yell at him when he says rather insane things to her like, "[I] found a way where we never have to buy gas anymore. You find some people but they have to be hanged. And you. . . And you chop off their hands and you throw them in the fire and they burn forever." As a little lad with a fiercely flat affect, Michael naturally makes himself seem all the more creepy by incessantly blankly staring at people as if he is trying to smother their soul. In fact, when Nick catches Michael staring at him one day, he remarks to his son during an extra awkward moment of father-son anti-bonding, "You watching me? That's smart. It's good to watch. But you know what? Other people are watching you [laughs] At school, at home. . . maybe even in the bathroom. Don't let them. First law of survival. Do you understand? It's the next best thing to being invisible." Of course, considering his increasingly antisocial behavior and reluctance to eat meat, Nick keeps a special eye on Michael, who does just the same exact thing, albeit in a more uniquely unnerving way.

When Michael is forced to draw a picture of himself and his family for class and decides to add tons of blood to the sketch as if he were a serial killer-in-training, his worried teacher seeks a social worker named Millie Dew (Sandy Dennis) for help. Miss Dew is somewhat neurotic and when Michael first sees her, he says rather rude things to her like "You're not a real doctor" and "You're not a real grown-up. Real grown-ups don't get upset." Somewhat predictably, when Michael's mother comes in to meet with Millie in regard to his aberrant artsy, she lies her ass off and claims that her husband and son have a great relationship. In reality, Nick is perpetually pissed at Michael for refusing to eat meat and usually only spends time with him during dinner time. When Michael dares to ask his father, "We've had leftovers every day since we moved here. I'd like to know what they were before they were leftovers," Nick absurdly replies, "Well, before that, they were leftovers-to-be." Indeed, it seems that Nick believes that all humans are potential leftovers-to-be. While no one is allowed at his house, Michael simply cannot hold back his little girlfriend Sheila when she runs inside and begins wrecking havoc around the entire place. Naturally, daddy Nick is more than a little bit annoyed when he catches Sheila pouring the patriarch's prized Château Margaux wine on Michael's unclad torso while the two both sit inside a meat freezer in the basement, which is where all the human flesh is kept. Aside from banning Michael from ever playing with Sheila again

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even though the bad little girl is the daughter of his boss, Nick tells him the following creepy pseudo-fairytale while tucking him in the for night, "This is a story about a boy...a very naughty little boy about your age, who thought he was better than everyone else. So he played where he wasn't supposed to play and he destroyed other people's private property. Do you know why this little boy was this way? He only cared about himself. And in the end, he grew up to be a very lonely, unhappy, self-centered little man." When Michael's mother tells Nick to stop telling the story since it is clearly scaring him, the flesh-eating family man expresses his seething hatred for his prodigal son by stating, "Oh, well, mister, you scare me too. You don't look like me. You don't act like me. You hate me. Well, you know what? I'm not so crazy about you either." Needless to say, things only get worse from there.

Despite being banned by his father from visiting, Michael soon sneaks over to Sheila's house and she warns him that all parents are evil phonies and then inspires him to distrust his father all the more by remarking, "Daddy says your father has a lot going on inside his head. Doesn't say much. Just like you." Considering she seems to be the only person he truly trusts and respects since she is the only person that accepts him for who he actually is, Michael ultimately takes Sheila's words of wisdom very seriously as he immediately decides to sneak into the 'Division Of Human Testing' laboratory of his father's work where he hides under an autopsy table while Nick is carefully dissecting an elderly male corpse. When Nick accidentally drops a pair of surgical scissors on the ground, Michael foolishly grabs them and then runs out of the building. While Michael manages to evade being spotted by his father, it does not take long for a hopeless paranoiac like Nick to realize what his son has been up to. Of course, things get a little bit unnerving for Michael when his father not only discovers him walking him home, but also later discovers that he has his scissors while they are sitting at the dinner table, thus confirming that the protagonist has been spying on his father. When Michael lies and absurdly states that he found the scissors on the front lawn, his father states, "Do you know what happens to little boys who tell stories? The muscles in their jaws start to tighten and then their lips get stuck together permanently" and then violently stabs a slab of meat with said scissors that is sitting on a plate right next to the protagonist. Later that night after his parents go to bed, Michael finally gets enough testicular fortitude to go looking around the basement and he ultimately gets the shock of a lifetime when he finds a dismembered human leg hanging from a meat hook.

When Michael finally tells Millie about his concerns regarding his parents' antisocial eating habits, the sullen social worker reluctantly accompanies the protagonist back to his house to prove that the decapitated body parts that he claimed to have seen in the basement are just a figment of his imagination. Of course, the two eventually happened upon a corpse, thus causing Millie to scream like a banshee that is being gang-raped by a gang of meth-addled Mexican bikers.

Not surprisingly, Millie's piercing scream alerts Michael parents and thus leads to the social worker being hunted around the house while the protagonist hides. In a scene that was blatantly lifted from *Blue Velvet*, Millie hides in a closet while Lily stabs through the door with a butcher knife. Though Millie puts up a valiant fight for a neurotic woman that even includes her intentionally wounded her hands by grabbing the knife blade so as to make Lily think that she has been mortally wounded, she is ultimately killed and cooked on the family grill, though Michael vehemently refuses to eat it. In fact, Michael trips his father when he is carrying a tray of Millie's grilled body parts to the kitchen table, thus hinting that the protagonist developed a special affection for the social worker despite his general distrust of grownups. As punishment for his reckless indiscretions, Michael is tied to his dinner chair while his father states to him in a sadistically self-satisfied manner, "I've been watching you, Michael. You're an outsider. You're not like them. You're like us [...] We're bound for life. No matter how much you hate us. I'm untying you and when you're free, you can sit down with us and eat, or you can run outside and shout your little secret to the world. And you know what they'll do? Michael, hmmm? They'll come here, and they'll burn us." As it turns out, Michael would rather see his parents burn. Indeed, aside from telling his parents that he does not love them anymore due to their quaint eating habits, he stabs his father immediately after he unties him. At this point, Nick decides enough is enough and resolves to kill his only son, even yelling like a disgruntled mad man, "Kids! Who made the little bastards? [...] We'll have another one, Lily. We'll bring him up right." Of course, despite being a deranged bitch, Lily loves her son too much to allow him to die, so she stabs Nick in the back while he is carrying Michael down the basement stairs. Naturally, Nick stabs Lily back and while he is lying on top of her and penetrating her wife with a knife, it seems like they are making love in what ultimately proves to be a sick (anti)sentimental moment that seems symbolic of their unhinged marriage. While Nick makes a dramatic attempt to catch and kill Michael while succumbing to his wounds, he ultimately causes the entire house to blow up after breaking a gas line and knocking over a large wine rack containing dozens upon dozens of bottles of *Château Margaux*. Luckily for Nick, he at least dies in his cannibalistic mancave while drenched in his two favorite drinks: blood and wine. In the end, Michael is happy to go live with his grandparents in the country, though he is left somewhat uneasy when his elders leave a sandwich filled with dubious meat on his nightstand after they tuck him in at night in what is a superlatively stupid and entirely predictable yet somehow fitting twist ending.

Be it looked at as a poor Judaic's take on Lynch, pro-Vegan crypto-propaganda piece, satire of lame old school TV sitcoms like *Leave It to Beaver*, allegorical depiction of American's Jewry's innate feeling of alienation in WASP suburbia, PSA for young Jewish children about the dangers of white goyim or all of

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the above, *Parents* thankfully invites many interpretations that—for better or worse—oftentimes transcend what is probably the film's true intrinsic intellectual worth. For example, it should be noted that the protagonist's family surname, Laemle, is very close to that of German-Jewish Hollywood pioneer Carl Laemmle, who was a founder of Universal Studios and who both financed and sponsored hundreds of Jews from Laupheim and Württemberg to emigrate from Nazi Germany to the United States in the 1930s. Notably, director Balaban comes from a similar background as his uncle Barney Balaban was president of Paramount Pictures for nearly 30 years from 1936-1964, his father co-owned a movie palace chain, and his mother was an actress. If one were to take the Laemle surname seriously as a subtextual reference of sorts, one could argue that the cannibal family is a metaphor for American Jewry's attempt to assimilate into the white Christian majority, with the boy protagonist ultimately rebelling against the secret cannibalism (translation: crypto-Judaism) of his parents (interestingly, there is no evidence in the film that the Laemle are Christians, as they have no crucifixes or portraits of Christ on their walls, which was quite common among white families during that time). After all, whether it be the Marrano crypto-Jews of Iberia or the Ashkenazim of Germany and Prussia during the early 1800s who, like Karl Marx's family, oftentimes disingenuously converted to Protestantism as a means to enjoy all political rights of citizenship, Jews have a very long history of living schizophrenic existences and acting in a completely different manner while behind closed doors. Either way, there is no question that *Parents* is a playfully pernicious assault on pre-counterculture white American before feminism, cultural Marxism and the so-called 'New Left,' sexual liberation and birth control, civil rights and multiculturalism, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, and no-fault divorce turned white gentile America into the innately amoral and irreligious chaotic nightmare it is today.

While not exactly a hit film among most respectable film critics and academics, *Parents* actually received a fairly rave review from respected American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, who gave it three out of four stars and listed it as a "must-see." Indeed, Rosenbaum audaciously wrote, "Choosing a movie to take with me to a desert island, I would opt without a second's hesitation for *Parents* over such relatively predictable Oscar-mongering exercises as *RAIN MAN*, *THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST*, or *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*, because it's a movie that kept me fascinated, guessing, and curious — even when it irritated me." On top of quite generously comparing Balaban's directing techniques to that of Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick, and even Raúl Ruiz, Rosenbaum, who is a proud leftist Jew (and, like Balaban, comes from a family of movie theater owners), lauds the film for not succumbing to what he sees as the "politically conservative," "reactionary," and "retrogressive" nature of David Lynch's films, arguing, "Far from being nostalgic about the 50s (i.e., the present) like *BLUE VELVET*, *PARENTS* is corrosively analytical about the subject, and there's no

real innocence to be found or celebrated here; even Michael has too much of a morbid streak to qualify as “pure” (like the Laura Dern character in *BLUE VELVET*.) Personally, I have to agree with Rosenbaum’s sentiments, even if I do not subscribe to his outmoded political beliefs, as it is plain to see that Lynch loves white suburbia and Balaban absolutely loathes it. Interestingly, in the same review, Rosenbaum notes the curious fact that many of Lynch’s fans are leftists, thus underscoring the seeming willful ignorance of his fan base. Of course, to his great credit, Lynch has thankfully never made a film with imaginary negro rocket scientists or ultra altruistic Judaic humanitarians, as he seems to be completely incapable of following in line with the cultural Marxist Hollywood narrative. After all, only Lynch could get away with directing a film like *Wild at Heart* (1990) that begins with Nicholas Cage violently beating to death a supremely sleazy sambo to the less than soothing sounds of heavily distorted metal music. In many ways, Lynch seems to be the living embodiment of the deranged white suburbanite that inspired Balaban’s debut feature. Personally, I cannot even count the many times that I have seen wholly worthless horror films with both covert and overt anti-WASP sentiments, so it was almost refreshing to see a film as preternatural and nuanced in terms of its goyim-bashing as *Parents*. Indeed, more than just simply moronically mocking white suburbia, the film is practically dripping with Balaban’s own angst, paranoia, and disdain for mild-mannered blue-eyed and blond-haired people. For whatever reason, it seems 1988 was a good year for wildly idiosyncratic anti-Aryan horror, as it also saw the release of the all the more perversely autistic horror-melodrama *Pin* (1988) directed by kosher Canadian Sandor Stern. Despite its absolutely bizarre brand of anti-Aryan paranoia, Stern’s film is absolutely beloved by an extremely gay Belgian nationalist/Odinist/neofolk fan that I used to somewhat know, but I digress.

A film that does for 1950s white suburbia what *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984) did for traditional Anglo-run universities and WASP fraternities in terms of mirthfully yet mercilessly maligning the old Euro-American mainstream and celebrating its demise in a fashion comparable to when Stalin’s Hebraic chief henchman Lazar Kaganovich bragged “Mother Russia is cast down. We have ripped away her skirts” while standing at the ruins of the great Cathedral of Christ the Savior after he had it destroyed, Balaban’s debut is an unintentional reminder why pogroms happen but that is also one of the reasons why it is so surprisingly intriguing, as it offers a rare insight into the sort of Hebraic paranoia that has led to Jewish politicians to promoting multiculturalism and the flooding of the United States with the sort of hostile third world people that have been brought here specifically to destroy the traditional racial, moral, and cultural character of the country. Of course, this is also why most Jews, including the so-called conservative ones like Zionist warmonger and neocon Bill Kristol, are so petrified of Donald Trump becoming the president of the United States

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as he is a symbol of both WASP power and a serious threat to Jewish power and subversion, even if he pays superficial lip service to the welfare apartheid state of Israel. Undoubtedly, it is hard to hate a film that the rather rotund celebrity film critic Roger Ebert once described as, "a real weirdo, one of the strangest, most depraved, certainly most depressing films I have ever seen." Of course, Ebert was also famously offended by *Blue Velvet*, so Balaban's film is in good company. While Balaban would take one more shot at the horror-comedy subgenre with the rather lame undead romcom *My Boyfriend's Back* (1993) and would direct episodes of various horror oriented TV series like *Eerie, Indiana* (1991-1993) and *The Twilight Zone* (2002-2003), he never again directed anything nearly as interesting or socially substantial as the cryptically hateful iconoclastic idiosyncrasy of *Parents* and is probably best known nowadays for his acting roles in Wes Anderson films and quirky cult films like his fellow four-eyed Hebraic homeboy Terry Zwigoff's *Ghost World* (2001). Certainly, it is strange to think that the four-eyed dork that conned Jon Voight out of a free suck-fuck in John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) would go on to direct arguably the most sardonic and socio-politically esoteric of cannibal films. On a more personal level, I can thank Balaban for strengthening my craving for red meat. Indeed, I have never considered Schrader's ladylove Mary Beth Hurt to be a particularly sexy broad, but in *Parents* she looks rather delectable while both fingering red meat in a dress and engaging in a sort of cannibal sex ritual while vital bodily fluids are covering her quite fair flesh. Likewise, I never thought wild mensch Randy Quaid would be so good at portraying an unnervingly uptight bourgeois bastard who has more dark secrets than Jerry Sandusky.

-Ty E

THE ETERNAL RETURN

Jean Cocteau° (1943)

While I would have never dreamed of such a seemingly splendid yet equally unlikely aesthetic marriage in a million years, French poet and cine-magician Jean Cocteau (*La belle et la bête* aka *Beauty and the Beast*, *Orpheus* aka *Orphée*) was actually responsible for penning and collaborating on a Vichy era Nazi themed Nietzschean reworking of *Tristan und Isolde* featuring Jean Marais as the ultimate screen blond beast and a swarthy evil midget as the most repugnant, if not hilarious, of untermensch villains. Indeed, the rather underrated film in question is *L'éternel retour* (1943) aka *The Eternal Return* aka *Love Eternal* and it is most certainly the most Cocteau-ian of the Cocteau cinematic adaptations that the poet did not actually direct himself as a work that makes Jean-Pierre Melville's *Les Enfants Terribles* (1950) starring Hebraic hag Nicole Stéphane (real name 'Nicole de Rothschild') seem like cheap counterfeit Cocteau by comparison. Directed by Golden Age era French filmmaker Jean Delannoy (*La symphonie pastorale* aka *Pastoral Symphony*, *Notre-Dame de Paris* aka *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*)—a once well respected film director whose career began to suffer during the late-1950s because he was attacked by the then-trendy members of the young French New Wave, including Truffaut and Godard, who considered him the ultimate 'anti-auteur' because he did totally 'uncool' things like carry a briefcase to film sets—*The Eternal Return* features a classic story with an emphasis on Nordic beauty that not only features an overt Aryan propaganda angle, but also contains nostalgia for France's Norman Viking history as personified by the platinum blonde heroine played by Madeleine Sologne who, like her tragic lover, is an "orphan of the sea" whose racially superior ancestors hail from the great white North. Condemned by the National Legion of Decency in 1948, this underrated classic masterpiece certainly has a certain pre-Christian romantic spirit about that is hinted at in its title which, as revealed at the beginning of the film, was borrowed by Cocteau from Nietzsche, who first wrote about the ancient idea of 'eternal return' (or 'eternal recurrence') in his work *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) aka *The Gay Science*. Featuring a somewhat asshole hero who gets a kick out of torturing the weak and who certainly does not subscribe to what Nietzsche described as a Christian slave-morality, an oftentimes bitchy heroine whose lifetime of misery and poverty has made her hard and frigid, and an old ugly fat scheming wench and her malevolent midget son as villains who owe their god-given visceral hatred to genetic misfortune, *The Eternal Return* is certainly a work that contemporary viewers will find politically incorrect yet at the same time it does not subscribe to the old school Hollywood idea of good and evil, thereupon making for a truly timeless work that transcends *zeitgeist* and is tune with a cyclical, as opposed to linear, view of history. Delannoy's Cocteau adaptation is also probably the only film made before the late-1960s that I found

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myself laughing at loud at, as few things seems to be funnier than the pathological buffoonery of an evil young dwarf, especially of the superlatively swarthy bulging-eyed frog sort. Additionally, to me the tragedy of Cocteau's take on Tristan und Isolde was not that the two lovers die at the end, but that the hero ultimately died for such an ungrateful and treacherous bitch of a 'heroine' who could have easily thwarted her and her beau's tragic fate had she not chosen wealth and luxury over the man she loved. In that sense, *The Eternal Return* is more relevant today than it was upon its original release over seventy years ago.

As stated in the introduction written by Cocteau: "The Eternal Return... This title, borrowed from Nietzsche, means here that even legends can be reborn unbeknown to their heroes. An eternal return of the very simple circumstances which comprised the most famous of all great love stories." Indeed, the same stupid circumstances do tend to repeat themselves, though in *The Eternal Return* they play out in a slightly more eccentric way. Despite being a rich and opulent man who lives in a castle, Marc (Jean Murat) has become more or a less a slave and cuckold in his own home, which is inhabited by his deceased wife Edith's scheming and calculating old cunt sister Gertrude Frossin (Yvonne de Bray of Cocteau's *Les parents terribles* (1948)) and her evil 22-year-old midget son Achilles (played by 'Piéral', who would later appear in Delannoy's later Cocteau adaptation *Princess of Cleves* (1961)) and weak and lazy husband Amédée (Jean d'Yd of Carl Th Dreyer's 1928 masterpiece *The Passion of Joan of Arc*) who, like so many mainstream American republicans, collects guns as a pathetic means to compensate for his lack of masculinity. The only person that lives in his home that Marc likes is his 24-year-old orphaned nephew Patrice (Cocteau's lifelong muse Jean Marais), who he more or less considers a son since he has raised him ever since the boy's parents drowned when he was very young. Indeed, as a tall, blond, handsome, athletic, and enterprising young man, Patrice is everything that Marc's other nephew Achilles—an exceedingly resentful ankle-biting dwarf who is a thorn in everyone's side, including his parents—is not. A superlatively shrewd scheming old bitch that hates the world because her sole progeny is a puny midget who will most certainly never produce an heir, Gertrude hopes to inherit Marc's fortune, but she most get rid of Patrice first, which seems like an unlikely task considering that the wealthy widower loves his blond nephew and is not exactly too fond of his sister-in-law or her pint-sized progeny. Even though her evil dwarf son kills a dog with one of her husband's shotguns, Gertrude has the gall to lie and claim that Patrice got his dog 'Moulouk' to bite her bastard boy Achilles. Of course, as a young man who acts like a perennial toddler and oftentimes eavesdrops on people by listening to them through keyholes, Achilles is not exactly someone that Marc believes. Hoping to help get Gertrude and her family off his uncle's back for good, Patrice offers to hunt down a hot new young wife for Marc who, although initially rejects the idea, eventually gives in. Unfortunately for Patrice, he never considers that he might become attracted

to such a young woman.

In the hope of procuring his uncle a young beauty, Patrice sails to a nearby island with his dog Moulouk where it seems somewhat unlikely that he will be able to find any sort of delectable dame as the remote area is mostly inhabited by ignorant drunken seamen and superstitious old women that seem completely untouched by the civilizing effects of Christianity. The first place Patrice heads to upon arriving at the island is a bar where he gets in a fight with a tall drunken cretin named Morholt (Alexandre Rignault of Georges Franju's *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) aka *Les yeux sans visage*) after the big boorish brute grabs a stunning, if not seemingly bitchy, 22-year-old young blonde beauty named Nathalie (Madeleine Sologne in her most famous role) by her hair and attempts to force her to drink liquor off a bar table after she refuses to take a shot of cognac. While Patrice manages to defeat Morholt by breaking a bottle over his head, he suffers a horrible knife wound to the leg and is left bedridden, so Nathalie, who has fallen in love with the dashing young blond beast who came to her rescue, nurses him back to health with the help of her adoptive mother Anne (Jane Marken of Marcel Carné's *Children of Paradise* (1945) aka *Les enfants du paradis*). An overtly frigid chick that was dealt a sorry lot in life as a Norwegian orphan who was left a bastard as a little girl after her parents drowned after their boat capsized, Nathalie soon makes Patrice realize he and she, "We're both children of the sea" and were practically born for one another as soul-mates in the most truest sense, but the hero still absurdly asks her to marry his old fart of an uncle. Knowing that she will most likely be killed by her 'fiancé' Morholt if she stays on the island and realizing that she can at least be close to her beloved Patrice if she marries his uncle, Nathalie reluctantly agrees to marry Marc, not realizing how hard it will be to hide her feelings from the man she has so hopelessly fallen in love with while living in the same home with him. While Patrice and Nathalie are unequivocal soul-mates who would most certainly sire the most immaculate of brood and memories, time and circumstance has forsaken them to a truly tragic fate that would make any sane man question the existence of god and morality.

To everyone in the castle, especially cold cunt Gertrude, who initially enjoys seeing the two platinum blond Aryans interact with one another in such joyous fashion, it is readily apparent that that Patrice and Nathalie were born for one another and are deeply in love, yet uncle Marc has also fallen in love with the little lady and asks her to be his wife, which she naturally accepts, even though she clearly does not love the old man and wants nothing more than to be with his Adonis of a nephew instead. Indeed, only knowing poverty in her seemingly accursed existence, Nathalie cannot turn down a life of wealth and luxury in chateau. Of course, assuming they might lose their chance at receiving a hefty inheritance, Gertrude and Achilles begin plotting a way to catch Patrice and Nathalie together doing dirty deeds so that they can convince Marc to kick them both out of the castle for good. One night while Patrice and Nathalie are flirting

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with one another in front of a fireplace, menacing midget Achilles finds a bottle with the label 'poison' and secretly pours the serum in the two love bird's alcoholic beverages, not realizing it is a love potion. Indeed, before leaving the island, Anne, who is a pagan witch of sorts who managed to heal Patrice's wounds with herbs, gave Nathalie the love potion and put a 'poison' label on it so that no one would touch it. If the two lovers were not in love before, which they most certainly were, before taking the potion, they are deleteriously joined at the hip with one another after taking the serum and it does not take long for Marc to catch them in bed together with the heinous help of Gertrude and Achilles.

Naturally, heartbroken Marc decides to banish both Patrice and Nathalie from his castle, which initially seems like a blessing in disguise as it gives the two lovers the opportunity to finally be with one another and they soon settle into a small shack where everything seems to be absolute perfection despite their poverty. Unfortunately, one day while Patrice is out working to provide nourishment for his darling, Marc shows up and takes away the heroine, who is so soulless inside that she chooses wealth over love, thus causing her to almost instantaneously develop a metaphysical affliction that no amount of comfort or luxury from her cuckolded husband can cure. Needless to say, Patrice is heartbroken when he comes back to the shack and discovers that both Nathalie and his dog Moulouk are missing, so he heads to the city where he takes a job at a mechanic shop owned by a goofy yet friendly chap named Lionel (Roland Toutain of Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* (1939) aka *La règle du jeu*) who lives at the business with his sister who the hero is saddened to learn is also named 'Nathalie' (played by Junie Astor, who originally appeared in works by Renoir but later appeared in exploitation trash like José Bénazéraf's *Joë Caligula - Du suif chez les dables* (1966)) and who is a femme fatale-like brunette. Naturally, as her name hints, the brunette Nathalie becomes a sort of sorry substitute for Patrice's true love of the same name. In terms of appearance and character, brunette Nathalie is the complete opposite of her blonde namesake, so naturally Patrice is not too happy when Lionel attempts to get the hero to marry his chain-smoking and tabloid-reading sister. When Patrice hears bullshit rumors that blonde Nathalie is apparently happy with Marc when in reality she is so lovelorn that she falls bedridden, he reluctantly agrees to marry his pal Lionel's sister in a desperate attempt to get over his undying love for his soul-mate. In the hope of seeing Nathalie one more time before he is married, Patrice schemes to have the wedding on the island where he first met his beloved.

Naturally, it does not take long for brunette Nathalie to realize that she is nothing more than a 'rebound' babe at best after arriving at the island and talking to Anne, who shows her a photograph of the golden-haired Nathalie. When Lionel learns of Patrice's love for a woman other than his sister, he decides to confront the hero, who tells him everything about his heartbreak and then agrees to marry his sister so long as he accompanies him on a journey to his uncle's cas-

tle so he can see blonde Nathalie one last time to confirm that she no longer loves him. When the two arrive at the castle, Patrice is shot by his evil midget cousin Achilles before he even has the chance to see Nathalie. Upon arriving sailing back to the island after their failed mission, it is obvious that Patrice has been fatally wounded, so the hero begs for Lionel to fetch blonde Nathalie for him before it is too late so that he can see his lover one more time before he dies. Unfortunately due to brunette Nathalie's lies, Patrice loses the strength to survive long enough for his beloved and perishes just seconds before she gets there. When blonde Nathalie sees Patrice's still warm corpse upon finally arriving at the island, she is so heartbroken that she also dies after shedding a tear and collapses next to his corpse. As Marc says to Lionel upon seeing Patrice and Nathalie's corpse lying next to another, "No one can reach them now." Indeed, although dead, Patrice and Nathalie are reunited with one another for eternity and their corpses are symbolically laid next to one another in an empty room in Marc's castle.

In terms of its attributes as a Vichy era National Socialist propaganda flick, *The Eternal Return* is far too quirky, cynical, and just plain French to appeal to staunch Hitlerites, though it has Aryan mystical elements that would certainly appeal to fans of Alfred Rosenberg's classic tome *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930) aka *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, especially in regard to its *völkisch* allusions to an ancient godly blond race from the north (notably, during one scene, Aryanness Nathalie remarks regarding Patrice, "His face isn't from these parts," as if she instinctively knows that he is part of the same godly race). It should be noted that Cocteau's biographer James S. Williams described him as "naturally Right-leaning" and his friend, Nazi sculptor Arno Breker, convinced him that Uncle Adolf was a good guy and a serious patron of the arts. Notably, in the German documentary *Zeit der Götter* (1992) aka *Age of the Gods* directed by Lutz Dammbeck, it is revealed that Cocteau speculated that Hitler was a homo who saw Breker as a sort of sod son. In the same doc, it is revealed that Cocteau's man-muse Jean Marais was certainly no Nazi sympathizer as demonstrated by the fact he was arrested for beating up a pro-Nazi journalist during the occupation and if it were not for Breker using his influence over Hitler, the actor may have met a terrible fate. Physically speaking, Marais was as Aryan-looking as Frenchmen come, but as a queer and the father of a half-caste Arab, he was certainly no real-life Tristan. Incidentally, *The Eternal Return* director Jean Delannoy would later direct a controversial gay-themed work entitled *Les amitiés particulières* (1964) aka *This Special Friendship*, which was based on a novel by queer French novelist and diplomat Roger Peyrefitte who belonged to a homoerotic neo-Männerbünde group called the 'Alexander Order' that was co-founded by Cocteau's Nazi sculptor friend Arno Breker and who supported longtime National Front leader and founder Jean-Marie Le Pen.

As a tragic romance where jealous scheming family members commit shame-

THE ETERNAL RETURN

less and treacherous acts to destroy the two soul-mate lovers and where the discernibly frigid heroine is so dead inside that she ultimately chooses comfort and wealth over the truest of love and sexual compatibility, *The Eternal Return* is a work that I can strangely relate to, which certainly is not true in regard to most romance flicks. Indeed, I must admit that I consider the film to be superior to *Beauty and the Beast* (1946) aka *La Belle et la Bête* even though the latter work was actually directed by Cocteau and features far superior special effects. Interestingly, *The Eternal Return* director Delannoy would later collaborate with Cocteau, as well as Marias and the midget Piéral, on *Princess of Cleves* (1961) aka *La princesse de Clèves*—a kaleidoscopic reworking of the anonymously published 1678 historical novel of the same name by Madame de La Fayette—but the film was not as well received as their earlier collaboration because the director's reputation had already been largely ruined by members of the French New Wave and thus the work was considered far too old fashioned and wrongly assumed to be a moronic swashbuckling flick (which star Marais was famous for at the time). While I have yet to see *Princess of Cleves*, I do not have to think twice to say that I found *The Eternal Return* to be superior to any of the romance flicks directed by the likes of Godard or Truffaut and I say that as a longtime fan of former's *Contempt* (1963) aka *Le mépris* and the latter's *Jules and Jim* (1962). Indeed, as its Nietzschean title reveals, there is something timeless about the tragic romance contained within the darkly beautiful Cocteau-Delannoy flick and were it not for the film's Vichy associations, it would probably be regarded as one of the greatest works of its kind.

-Ty E

ORPHEUS

Jean Cocteau° (1950)

Jean Cocteau – the flaming French King of high camp, and full-time poet and sometimes filmmaker – once wrote, “Buñuel’s masterpiece *Un Chien Andalou* proves that cinema is a wonderful and dangerous weapon in a poet’s hands,” which is certainly a quote that applies to all artists, but especially his celluloid masterpiece *Orpheus* (1950) aka *Orphée*; a suave surrealist retelling of the classic Greek myth of Orpheus set in post-WWII France (and partially in the actual ruins of the war) and the second entry in the masterfully mystifying auteur’s black-and-white yet considerably colorful Orphic Trilogy (following *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) and preceding *Testament of Orpheus* (1960)). Utilizing the strikingly surrealist special effects and elegant camera tricks he pioneered with his first film *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) aka *Le Sang d’un Poète* and further fine-tuned for his highly reflective cinematic swansong *Testament of Orpheus* (1960) aka *Le Testament d’Orphée*, Orpheus manages to bring relative narrative coherence, albeit of the charmingly campy (but never schlocky) and casually carnal sort, to carefully constructed transcendental images that make for the most delightful of daydreams. Speaking of Orpheus in particular, Cocteau wrote, “Beauty hates ideas. It is sufficient to itself. A work is beautiful as a person is beautiful. The beauty I mean (the beauty of Piero della Francesca, Uccello and Vermeer), causes an erection of the soul. An erection is unarguable. Few people are capable of having one: most, as in the famous drawing by Forain, consider that ‘it is much better to talk.’” And, indeed those suited for metaphysical arousal via aesthetics know that Cocteau’s inventively idiosyncratic images, especially in regard Orpheus, also know that the auteur poet’s visuals speak louder than the character’s words. One of the French artists least affected by the tragic chaos of the Second World War, Cocteau – a personal friend of Nazi sculptor Arno Breker and Conservative Revolutionary ‘proto-nazi’ novelist Ernst Jünger (who often socialized with the poet when he was stationed in Paris as an administrative position as a German army captain), as well as the likes of Pablo Picasso and Coco Chanel – still managed to implement reminders of the Occidental apocalypse via authentic ruined buildings (representing an apocalyptic sort of industrial hell) destroyed in the war, genuine radio recordings from the French resistance, and leather-clad servants of death on motorcycle who echo back memories of the Gestapo in Orpheus; a film where a middle-aged poet must reinvent himself by accepting sweet death in voluptuous hourglass, femme fatale form of fetishistic forlornness and fecund fury. A world of abject aesthetic decay where books with blank pages without words are considered the height of cultural vogue, Orpheus features a provocative story that is, unfortunately, even more relevant today about a once-important poet who must literally go to hell and back to save his life, wife, and artistry from the charms of death.

ORPHEUS

Starring Cocteau's real-life beefy blond beau boy Jean Marais in the title character "Orpheus" in a perfect performance which he responded to critics' praise of by stating, "The film plays my parts for me," Orpheus is as aesthetically rapturous and solacing as cinematic works come despite the film's sometimes gloom and doom yet always gorgeous subject matter. According to Cocteau himself, "Orpheus has three major themes: 1. The successive death through which a poet must pass before he becomes...changed into himself at last by eternity. 2. The theme of immortality. 3. Mirrors: we watch ourselves grow old in mirrors. They bring us closer to death." Of course, Orpheus also features a handsomely assembled hodgepodge of Orphic and modern themes that are so seamlessly synchronized that one need not be familiar with the film's ancient source material to embrace it for eternity. In the beginning of the film, we meet protagonist Orpheus – an aging poet who feels he is past his prime and whose all-consuming pessimism is only all the more inflamed by his friend's frank statement that he stopped writing at age 20 when he no longer had anything to say – who feels quite out of place in the company of youthful wordsmiths while lounging at the Café des Poètes, especially the young and popular dilettante lyricist Jacques Cégeste (Edouard Dermithe); a pretentious prick of (non)poetry whose wordless work "Nudisme" ('nudism') of naked pages is all the rage in post-WWII Paris. Orpheus is now so positively passe that even police men respect him, which certainly puts him out of sway with the youth, who are more subversive than ever before, as iconoclastically destroying the aesthetic and political systems of yesteryear is now the trend of the day and apparently no one does it better than charismatic conman Cégeste. To his dismay, Orpheus' young rival, who is more than a bit inebriated, arrives at the café in grandiose style in a seemingly sinister Rolls-Royce with a Gothic "Princess" (María Casares) in all black and pompously snorts like a pig at the elder poet elder, but the pretentious poetaster's glamour, fame, and fortune has run out because his ghastly gal (who funds Cégeste's unwritten, written works) instigates a brawl that concludes with his death via Satanic SS-like phantoms in black leather on motorcycles. No real princess at all, Cégeste's macabre muse is really lady death and cons Orpheus into leaving with her in the beauteous Grim Reaper's Rolls-Royce on the pretense of witnessing the finish of Cégeste (who Orpheus believes is only injured and believes they are going to a hospital) and is transferred through a daunting dimension of negative-color skies and nonsensical noise on the radio. Orpheus is taken to a dilapidated Chateau and is quite enraged and perturbed by lady death, but soon he becomes totally entranced by her audacious aristocratic charms despite being married to a woman named Eurydice (Marie Déa). Likewise, Death's chauffeur Heurtebise (François Périer) falls hopefully in love with Eurydice, who is eventually killed by the fatal female's ghastly Gestapo goons. Split by his love for death and the death of his bewitching blonde wife, Orpheus ultimately decides to jump through a mirror (with help from Heurtebise and

some special gloves) to save his slain spouse from the Underworld; a poet purgatory where even death is put on trial. A strikingly sacrificial she-Satan, lady death is mature enough to admit, "I don't have the right to love anyone...yet I love." If one learns anything from Orpheus, it is that even death is fueled by passion and a poet's passion is perpetuated by death.

In regard to a verbal summary of Orpheus given by a less than arduously analytical radio host made, Cocteau wrote, "But when a serious and attentive man (who I do not know personally) takes the trouble to recall a plot and, in several stages, with an almost childlike elegance, tries to draw a simple and easy-to-read storyline out this very complex plot, without abandoning either his personal viewpoint, or precision, I can only refrain from criticizing him. To do so would be as inappropriate as those critics who hastily condemn a work that is the product of thirty years of research." Indeed, Orpheus can be interpreted in many ways by many people, but only to Cocteau himself did this poetically phantasmagorical cinematic work have the truest meaning, hence his written words, "Orphée is a realistic film; or, to be more precise, observing Goethe's distinction between reality and truth, a film in which I express a truth peculiar to myself." Admittedly, Orpheus was a film that changed my life, or at least the way I look at the artistic medium of film and what it is capable of, when I first saw it a decade ago or so. Since then, if I have come to the realization of what my favorite filmmakers, including auteur directors ranging from F.W. Murnau to R.W. Fassbinder, have in common (aside from being queer krauts) it is that they are all poets, thus underscoring the character of Orpheus' seemingly contradictory that a poet's job is, "to write without writing." That being said, few poets "wrote without writing" (although he was a penetrating master of pen as well) better than Cocteau's himself with Orpheus being arguably his finest moment as a poet who made better films than the majority of self-described filmmakers.

-Ty E

LA VIE EN ROSE
LA VIE EN ROSE

Jean Faurez (1948)

I find myself being less and less able to appreciate contemporary works of French cinema, especially in regards to their more popular films. *La Vie en rose* is a film that has slightly rejuvenated my interest in froggy works, but I owe the lovely Marion Cotillard the most credit for my extremely pleasant experience with the motion picture. She is a woman that may have froggy eyes, but also some of the most appealing of eyes that I have had the luxury of experiencing cinematically in sometime. Marion Cotillard also happens to look enough like Edith Piaf for her performance in *La Vie en rose* to be exceptionally believable. Not since Val Kilmer's performance in Oliver Stone's *The Doors* as Jim Morrison have I seen an actor magically capture the power and charisma of a singer. One of my favorite actresses of all time is Giuletta Masina. People have often compared Masina's comic acting performances to the female equivalent of Charlie Chaplin. I consider that a fair assertion, although naturally Masina's big eyes are much more pleasurable to look at in comparison to Chaplin's dirty Sanchez moustache. Marion Cotillard's performance in *La Vie en rose* echoes back to the days of Giuletta Masina's heartwarmingly cute performances in films like *La Strada*. In fact, during the whole experience of *La Vie en rose* I could not get enough of Ms. Cotillard. It is very hard to find a woman that is genuinely funny (or a man for that matter), but even harder to find a woman that is both funny and cute. Not that I care for Academy Awards or anything, but Marion Cotillard without question deserved the Oscar she received for her performance (the first ever given for a French-language performance). Edith Piaf certainly deserves her cultural icon status as France's greatest popular singer. Like your typical modern day Frenchman, Piaf was a mixture of ethnic backgrounds, certainly no Huguenot. Piaf's rise from the gutter was to her talent's advantage, giving rise to an organic emotional voice that lacked any type of pretension, going against the French stereotype of unwarranted cultural arrogance. In *La Vie en rose*, Marion Cotillard is her most passionate when swooning over her French Algerian boxer boyfriend Marcel. Edith has not interest in psycho-babbling over existentialism or rambling about New Left politics, she just wants to sing and party. She may have been friends with the great poet Jean Cocteau and other important French culture figures, yet that never seemed to inflate her ego. Even when Marion Cotillard as Edith Piaf has aged and stars looking fairly decrepit, she still expresses the same spunk that made her magical in the first place. *La Vie en rose* is one of the few contemporary French films worth watching multiple times. The film is also evidence that a French film does not have to feature decadent and nihilistic sex for it to be notable. The sex appeal of Marion Cotillard permeates throughout without the actress having to shred a layer of clothing. I cannot express how boring nudity has gotten in cinema, especially in European films, an

unflattering post-ww2 result of the European film industries having to prostitute themselves out just to get by in the world market. As shown in *La Vie en rose*, fortunately for Edith Piaf her best money commodity was her voice and not her body.

-Ty E

UN CHANT D'AMOUR
UN CHANT D'AMOUR

Jean Genet (1950)

Un Chant d'Amour (A Song of Love), completed in 1950, was the only short directed by subversive gay French writer and petty criminal Jean Genet. Cinematic poetic genius Jean Cocteau lent his marvelous cinematography skills to this short film. After watching Un Chant d'Amour, Cocteau's contribution to the film is more than obvious for anyone that has seen Cocteau's underappreciated Orphic Trilogy. Un Chant d'Amour is like what would have happened if Jean Cocteau just happened to direct an artsy porn flick. There is no doubt that Cocteau helped Jean Genet immensely in the production of the film. For being Genet's first film, it is quite professionally done and the shot composition is well thought out to say the least. A collaboration between Jean Genet and Jean Cocteau was a very good idea that actually panned out.

From what I know of Jean Genet, he was obsessed with homosexual violent criminals. The prisoners featured in Un Chant d'Amour are way more tamed than the sadistic sailors featured in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's adaptation of Jean Genet's novel *Querelle*. The short film, however, is a film about caged perversion and a homoerotic freakshow of the criminal type. Although made over half a century ago, Un Chant d'Amour is the type of film that would offend even the most "liberal" of hipsters. I also have to admit that the short is one of the boldest, if not the boldest, film I have ever seen to come out of France. Nowadays, Marxist French New Wavers like Jean-Luc Godard are often thought of as the greatest and most important directors to ever come out of France. Personally, I have always felt Jean Cocteau to be France's greatest and purest filmmaker. Cocteau, foremost a poet, looked at filmmaking from a much different perspective than most filmmakers. Jean Genet's Un Chant d'Amour certainly follows in Cocteau's tradition of fantastic cinematic dreams. Un Chant d'Amour also features some elements that may offend cultural Marxist types. Two of the prisoners featured in the short are obviously an Algerian and another being a Negro. These prisoners are obviously the products of French colonialism. I don't believe it would be to far-fetched for someone to interpret the prisoners featured in Un Chant d'Amour as colonial sex slaves used for the sexual enjoyment of French authority. The security guard featured in the short certainly enjoys fondling his gun and shoving it into an Algerians mouth as it were his phallic. The prison guard is a paid voyeur that gets to enjoy a jigaboo doing a disturbing erotic jungle dance and other prisoners slapping his erection against the cement wall of his prison cell. Un Chant d'Amour is not the type of film that the producers of *Brokeback Mountain* would want the American public to see. Un Chant d'Amour does have one serious flaw. The short lacks a score which is very detrimental considering the film features no dialogue. Knowing how the score that was later added to Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* greatly improved the

film, makes me realize that someone should really create a complimentary score for Un Chant d'Amour. With a score, the short quite possibly become one of the top ten short films ever made. Despite the lack of score, Un Chant d'Amour is a film of undeniable poet power that transfers the viewer into a world that they probably don't want to be in. Apparently, director Jean Genet disowned Un Chant d'Amour which I find somewhat irrational. The short is no doubt a masterpiece that had been hidden from the world for decades. Upon it's release, the French government had the film banned and the US version was highly edited. I assume that one of the reasons he may have disowned the film is that it wasn't very successful due to it being banned and not being seen by the eyes of true cinephiles worldwide. Now Un Chant d'Amour is available in an uncut format so that it can finally receive the recognition that it no doubt deserves.

-Ty E

GRAND ILLUSION
GRAND ILLUSION

Jean Renoir (1937)

Grand Illusion is French art royalty (son of Pierre-Auguste Renoir) Jean Renoir's masterpiece. Joseph Goebbels declared the film "Cinematic Public Enemy No. 1." and with good reason. Grand Illusion is a pacifist antiwar film that was released in 1937. The "Grand Illusion" is the war itself and the man made country borders surrounding it. Fascism was Nationalism in its most extreme form hitting its peak during this time period (in response to Bolshevism which promoted Internationalism). Renoir was able to accomplish showing similarities between nations and the absurdity of fanatic Nationalism. The end of the Second World War proved this to be true with the largest amount of deaths in both European and Human history.

Grand Illusion also represents the end of old Europe and European royalty. Legendary actor Erich von Stroheim plays the role of Captain von Rauffenstein, a German officer. Von discusses with French Captain de Boeldieu that they are no longer needed and are part of European history. These two officers acknowledge they have more in common with their international aristocratic counterparts than they do with their fellow countrymen. This is also the same for the proletarians. Renoir acknowledges the dividers aren't the Nations but the classes (he may have had a Marxist fetish).

The wealthy Jew Rosenthal also brings up another interesting element going on in Europe. Rosenthal represents the famous Rothschild family. The Rothchild's had a part in funding most of the wars in Europe and America over the past couple hundred years. Rosenthal brags of his wealth and many acquisitions for being a Frenchman for so little time. The other Frenchmen are unconcerned as Rosenthal is very generous with his food and other desired POW luxuries. The Rothchild's would later go on to funding 80% of Israel.

Grand Illusion should be mandatory viewing for History classes as it is full of the true relevancies surrounding both the first and second war and European history in general. No film better identifies the fall of Europe and the irrational variables surrounding it. Shortly after Grand Illusion was released Jean Renoir decided he was no longer a pacifist. He came to America and made anti-Nazi propaganda films.

-Ty E

LA BÊTE HUMAINE

Jean Renoir (1938)

Genetic taints and evil loose women are two of my favorite cinematic subjects (and, of course, subjects in general), so it is only natural that *La Bête Humaine* (1938) aka *The Human Beast* aka *Judas Was a Woman*—a film that also belongs to my preferred frog cinema movement of ‘poetic realism’—is unquestionably my favorite Jean Renoir (*The Grand Illusion*, *The Rules of the Game*) film; or so I just discovered this past week after watching the film for the very first time and joyously discovering a totally timeless and haunting romantic tragedy that reminded why thots kill. Indeed, featuring the ultimate femme fatale portrayed by Simone Simon—a little lady with the perfect femme fatale pedigree as a half-heeb/half-guido mischling with a rather revealing taste for less-than-handsome wealthy chosenites—the film undoubtedly sparked my less than latent misogyny and contempt for cold cunts that use their cunts as weapons. While Renoir’s masterpiece might be nearly ancient in terms of age, it is as fresh as a Mormon teenage girl in terms of offering forgotten perennial wisdom, which you will not find in contemporary cinema, in regard to the ways of women; or at least the sort of woman that is a true whore and beyond any sort of redemption when it comes to love. A rare cinematic example of the degeneration theories of Judaic proto-eugenicists Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau where a scheming whore meets her match in the form of a genetically forsaken train engineer that is plagued with sexually homicidal tendencies due to being the degenerate descendant of countless hardcore dipsomaniacs, *La Bête Humaine*—a film that is more or less an extremely abridged adaptation of the 1890 Émile Zola novel of the same name—is also a grim yet gorgeous celluloid love letter to love, sex, death, and locomotives where man and machine almost seem to become one in terms of visceral intensity of libido. While the film does not feature a literal train wreck, the film’s protagonist’s cataclysmic demise is certainly an apt substitute as he literally and figuratively kills his love and then himself in the end after succumbing to the contrived charms of a cunty conniving succubus.

By sheer happenstance, I watched *La Bête Humaine* for the first time only days before watching the documentary *Maurice Pialat: Love Exists* (2007) where criminally unsung French auteur Maurice Pialat (*À Nos Amours*, *Under the Sun of Satan*)—a new personal favorite who, in terms of unmasking the nasty nuances of humanity, is like a sort of heterosexual frog Fassbinder—credits Renoir’s masterpiece as influencing his decision to become a filmmaker, stating, “The film that made me realize...I guess you could call it a vocation...It was the film that, at that time, oddly...We’d see a film one, never twice. But this one I saw 3 or 4 times. It was Renoir’s LA BÊTE HUMAINE.” In the same doc, Pialat also expresses his love and admiration for Renoir’s technically-unfinished 40-minute featurette *A Day in the Country* (1946) aka *Partie de champagne*. As a recently

LA BÊTE HUMAINE

devout Pialat fan, I am not surprised by his assessment of Renoir's work as these two films express a purity of aesthetic spirit and sort of perverse poetic humanistic realism that certainly transcends the director's more famous flicks like *The Grand Illusion* (1937), *The Rules of the Game* (1939), and *The River* (1951). In fact, even Renoir's *The Southerner* (1945)—a sort of proto-neorealist exercise that was heavily influenced by the documentary work of New Deal propagandist Pare Lorentz and Robert Flaherty—does not come close to these films in terms of presenting certain archetypal truths. Depicting the ultimate femme fatale from hell in a petite doll-like form, *La Bête Humaine* is a beautifully bleak bittersweet tragedy where forsaken genetic destiny and feminine evil collide and ultimately cancel each other out in an almost ironical fashion. While Renoir's film contains a fairly simple yet sensually-charged (anti)love story that would make for a nice subplot on *Twin Peaks*, it is ultimately a timeless tale about the miserable absurdity of human relationships, especially of the 'romantic' sort where the hopelessly despoiled conspiring whore finally meets her match in the murderously passionate male genetic degenerate. In short, the central 'couple' was practically made for one another in the worst sort of way in what seems like a sick joke of fate.

Notably, in her magnum opus *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (1990), Camille Paglia—a virtual degenerate dago dyke Spengler—remarks in regard to male's greatest weakness, "Love is the spell by which he puts his sexual fear to sleep." Despite knowing full well that he gets the homicidal urge to strangle women to death when sexually aroused, *La Bête Humaine* protagonist Jacques Lantier (Jean Gabin)—a strong and stoic workaholic that is able to repress his well-hidden deep-seated sadness via his virtual lust for train work—makes the mistake of a lifetime by falling in love with a married harlot named Séverine Roubaud (Simone Simon) who he knows full well was involved in a murder. The bastard broad of a lecherous maid, Séverine—a pernicious pedomorphic parasite that lives off bad men yet then has the audacity to cry for herself when said bad men treat her badly—certainly has a stereotypical whore background and her involvement in the robbery-cum-murder of her wealthy godfather, 'Grandmorin' (Jacques Berlioz), was partly a means to appease the undying jealousy of her rather pathetic husband Roubaud (Fernand Ledoux). Indeed, when Roubaud discovers that his beloved moonfaced wife is a serial liar and that she did not disclose the fact that she was being defiled by Grandmorin (who the film hints may actually be her biological father) when she was still just a little girl before the two got married (as he reasonably remarks, he did not realize his was marrying an "old man's cast-off"), he irrationally decides robbing and killing the old fart will somehow help him deal with his murderously malicious jealousy. Rather ironically, instead of dissolving his jealousy, the coldblooded killing of Grandmorin leads to Roubaud's flagrant cuckolding as Séverine is forced to utilize her fierce femme fatale wiles on the film's hap-

less yet hearty hero Jacques Lantier as he is a passive witness at the scene of the crime. Unfortunately for Séverine, Lantier is a man with a genetic taint that causes him to 'see red' when sexually aroused and the femme fatale might not have many talents but she does know how to prime a guy's pump.

In what proves to be the perfect setting for an inordinately fluidly moving and rhythmically immaculate film, the murder of Grandmorin takes place on a train. As a man of such fiery passions, it is quite fitting that Lantier is a train engineer, though his co-worker Roubaud—a somewhat sad and pathetic fellow with a degree of superficial charm and certain antisocial qualities—might not be the best choice for deputy stationmaster at Le Havre. While Roubaud clearly cares more about his wanton wife Séverine than his job, Lantier is so proud of his job that he describes his train as his "wife," even stating quite joyously, "I'm already married to Lison. She's good enough for me." Of course, Lantier has good reason to prefer his work to any sort of woman, as he nearly strangles to death an (ex)lover named Flore (Blanchette Brunoy)—a voluptuous blonde beauty that rather enjoys mocking men sans the protagonist—near the beginning of the film as the two attempt to make love on a grassy hill. Rather symbolically, it is only when a train passes by that Lantier falls out of his homicidal haze and releases poor Flore (who is not nearly as nice in Émile Zola's source novel) from his seemingly demonic grip. As Lantier explains to Flore in regard to the strange nature of his aberrant actions, "I didn't even know what I was doing [...] It's like this haze fills my head and twists everything out of shape. I start feeling like a mad dog. I never drink, mind you. Even a drop and I go crazy. I feel like I'm paying for all those fathers and grandfathers who drank. All those generations of drunkards who poisoned my blood and saddled me with this madness. It's a terrible thing. But I love you with all my heart. So much that I was afraid to come here." Despite nearly killing her, Flore still expresses her desire to marry Lantier, but the protagonist seems to love her too much to put her in such a precarious predicament where every potential sex act could bring more literal meaning to the French phrase *La petite mort*. Needless to say, succubus Séverine—a deceptively cutesy ice queen that practically drenches men with perfumic pussy juice with her mere sweet-eye glance—makes for a more fitting lover for lady-killer Lantier, especially after she attempts to get him to kill her husband and thus loses any marginal degree of empathy the viewer might have originally granted her.

Not only is Séverine a superlatively salacious slut that has no qualms about getting involved in the coldblooded killing of a godfather that apparently provided her much materially, but she also seems to really bask in such sadistic seductress savagery as demonstrated by the fact that she slyly smirks while stating, "There must be a way to win over a fellow like that" after coming to the instinctual decision to seduce Lantier and, in turn, cheat on her husband. Of course, considering her almost vampiric good-looks, Séverine—a virtual proto-goth girl that knows

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how to drain a man of both his emotional and ejaculatory juices—does not have to do much to completely seduce Lantier despite the fact that the protagonist is fully aware that she and her husband were responsible for the dubious demise of Grandmorin. In fact, even when a goofy poor prole named Cabuche (Jean Renoir in the most unforgettable acting role of his career) is charged with the murder, Lantier still cannot bring himself to tell the truth as sassy slut Séverine has already completely invaded his mind and compromised his godforsaken soul. As more than hinted by an unforgettable scene where Lantier and Séverine have a long coital session in a muddy shack that symbolizes the purity (or lack thereof) of their unsavory union, the two seem to have great sexual chemistry so it is only natural that their uniquely ungodly romance eventually concludes with the most permanent of releases.

Not merely satisfied with simply cuckolding her long-suffering husband, Séverine soon conspires to have Lantier kill Roubaud. Indeed, Séverine dubiously promises to be Lantier's wifey if he kills her husband, as if she would not do the same exact thing to him in the future if she got the chance. The most shamelessly flagrant of femme fatales, Séverine even follows Lantier—a fairly uncomplicated man that sentimentally dreams of a simple future where he comes home from work everyday to a wife that loves him—along and provides him with inspirational kisses on his first failed attempt to kill Roubaud. Of course, Lantier does not want to kill Roubaud and when his conscience gets the best of him only seconds before he is about to bash in the brains of the stationmaster during a quiet night at the tracks, Séverine immediately expresses her dissatisfaction by disappearing into the night like a runaway Maenad looking for a new victim. Fully committed to becoming a young widow, Séverine immediately begins using various forms of manipulation to inspire Lantier to kill, including openly flirting with much younger men and saying contrived melodramatic bullshit like, "There's no way forward for us now. We can't go any further. Tomorrow will be just like yesterday: the same grief and sorrow. It doesn't really matter. What happens, happens." Not unlike most women, it is hard to tell if Séverine is telling the truth or merely strategically exploiting some manipulative distortion of the truth, but she does seem to be expressing some honesty when she remarks to Lantier, "We should have stayed like we were in the beginning, when we loved each other but didn't pursue it. You remember those innocent walks we used to take? They helped me forget about Grandmorin. When you've experienced all the disgusting things I knew as a young girl, it's madness to hope for a true love of your own." Indeed, aside from revealing the female tendency toward embracing escapism at all costs when being confronted with even the slightest degree of discomfort, Séverine's remark hints at the incapacity for a whore to actually truly love someone. Just like Grandmorin and Roubaud, Lantier would be nothing more than a means to an end for Séverine were he to carry out the killing. Luckily, a genetic taint intervenes and Séverine's venomous vaginal menace is

eradicated from the world.

Rather interestingly, in his classic (yet scientifically dubious) text *Degeneration* (1892) aka *Entartung*, pioneering Zionist theorist and eugenicist Max Nordau argues that genetic degeneration is a sort of self-solving problem as degenerates do not tend to reproduce. Undoubtedly, this can certainly be said of protagonist Lantier and his beloved femme fatale Séverine. Aside from randomly impulsively murdering Séverine in her bed instead of her husband (as he originally intended), Lantier is so consumed with lovesick grief and guilt that he soon commits suicide by jumping off his beloved train *Lison*, thus leaving his best friend and co-worker Pecqueux (Julien Carette) behind to pick up the pieces. Shortly after committing the killing and before arriving at work to eventually commit suicide, Lantier—like a train that has derailed and is about to smash into eternity—forcefully treads down the train tracks in an unforgettable scene that anticipates the similarly bleak conclusion of Peter Lorre's sole directorial effort *The Lost One* (1951) aka *Der Verlorene*. Not unlike Lorre's character, Lantier is a virtual walking and talking ghost after killing his lover and thus his suicide seems like not much more than an incidental detail from a tragic wasted life. As Pecqueux remarks while looking at the corpse of his dead comrade, "Poor guy. How he must have suffered to come to this. I haven't seen him look so peaceful in a long time." Notably, Lantier's corpse is found in a place near train tracks that looks strikingly similar to where the protagonist almost strangled to death his (ex)lover Flore at the beginning of the film in a poetic scene that underscores the tragically accursed nature of his love life; or literal *La petite mort*.

While *La Bête Humaine* has many simple (yet perennial) themes, one of the more obvious yet easily overlooked ones is the incapacity of man and woman ever becoming one despite the seemingly indomitable force of attraction that might have initially thrust them together. Indeed, as Pecqueux wisely states to Lantier, "Love is best early on, before you know each other well, when you're both on your best behavior." Of course, had Lantier actually killed Roubaud and gotten away with it, sinful slut Séverine would have no need to be on her best behavior and would probably immediately begin cuckolding the protagonist as being a homicidally hypergamic ho is, of course, her recklessly whorish nature as the femme fatale par excellence. In that sense, Séverine is the ugly extreme of femininity and, in turn, one of cinema's greatest archetypal villainesses. As for Lantier, he is a sad symbol of male naivety when it comes to the so-called fairer sex and the potentially deadly blinding that comes with love. As *La Bête Humaine* rather viscerally reveals, it only takes one woman to come along to destroy a happy man that has passionately mastered a trade—not coincidentally, a trade that no woman could ever master (which is something Renoir really underscores during the film's unforgettably triumphant opening scene where Gabin's character looks quite joyously glorious as he operates the train as if it is an extension

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of both his body and soul). Of course, human progress is largely the story of man's instinctual desire to impress women, yet it is ironically oftentimes women or womanly men (read: Weininger) that impedes this progress. While *La Bête Humaine* does not express the sentiment that a man should find a woman that inspires and supports his work and evolution as an artist or artisan, the film certainly reveals the sort of woman one must avoid: the whore; or the reproductively retrograde harpy that uses her sex as a deleterious weapon for infantile person gain.

As Paglia noted in regard to the sort of cuntcentric creature that *La Bête Humaine* delightfully depicts, "The femme fatale can appear as Medusan mother or as frigid nymph, masquing in the brilliant luminosity of Apollonian high glamour. Her cool unreachability beckons, fascinates, and destroys. She is not a neurotic but, if anything, a psychopath. That is, she has an amoral affectlessness, a serene indifference to the suffering of others, which she invites and dispassionately observes as tests of her power." Personally, I can say that virtually every single woman that I have ever 'known' embodied these anti-qualities to some degree at some point, for the femme fatale, not unlike like male lust killer, is just the ultimate ugly extreme of feminine evil personified. As to why one might want to rethink the opportunity to fuck a whore—no matter how hopelessly hot—Paglia offered some unsettling food for thought when she wrote, "I follow Freud, Nietzsche, and Sade in my view of the amorality of the instinctual life. At some level, all love is combat, a wrestling with ghosts. We are only for something by being against something else. People who believe they are having pleasant, casual, uncomplex sexual encounters, whether with friend, spouse, or stranger, are blocking from consciousness the tangle of psychodynamics at work, just as they block the hostile clashings of their dream life. Family romance operates at all times. The femme fatale is one of the refinements of female narcissism, of the ambivalent self-directedness that is completed by the birth of a child or by the conversion of spouse or lover into child." Undoubtedly, *La Bête Humaine* depicts a sort of idealized version of the femme fatale that has enough agency in terms of carefully calculating her kills, but the modern-day world seems plagued with a new sort of degenerate whore (of the usually Cluster B sort) that, completely incapable of love (let alone keeping a man), uses her body to defile as many men as possible as a sort of pathetic substitute for a real relationship (as if a bloated 'body count' is not an expression of self-hatred/self-annihilation, at least for women). Of course, just like the archetypal femme fatale, this tragic degenerated 'failed femme fatale' will bring chaos and destruction to your life, albeit of the totally nonsensical nihilistic sort.

Notably, near the end of his autobiography *My Life and My Films* (1974), Jean Renoir notes while singling out some of his best films, "Whether the setting is natural, or imitates Nature, or is deliberately artificial, is of little importance. I used external truth in so-called 'realistic' films like *LA CHIENNE* and

LA BÊTE HUMAINE, and apparently total artificiality in films like LA PETITE MARCHANDE D' ALLUMETTES and LE CARROSSE D'OR. I have spent my life experimenting with different styles, but it all comes down to this: my different attempts to arrive at the inward truth, which for me is the only one that matters." And, undoubtedly, *La Bête Humaine* certainly achieves this truth in a manner that, not unlike Nietzsche's philosophizing with a hammer, is akin to the raw rhythmic precision of a locomotive in Mussolini's Italy and does so with a stark brutalism that makes it hard to believe it was directed by the same auteur that dreamed up the singularly goofy and relatively lighthearted *Boudu Saved from Drowning* (1932). While a penetratingly pessimistic film for its time, the romantic realm nowadays certainly resembles something more in tune with Delphic delirium and purgatorial paranoia of André Delvaux's masterpiece *One Night... a Train* (1968) aka *Un Soir, un Train* where, among other things, a surreal apocalyptic nightmare scenario offers a temporary reprieve from a catastrophic train accident. Still, despite its age and relation to the present, Renoir's film is an all-around decided downer and a film that even transcends the auteur's previous masterpiece *La Chienne* (1931) aka *The Bitch*—a film so unforgettably stark and pessimistic that Fritz Lang remade it as the film noir *Scarlet Street* (1945)—in terms of devastating anti-romantic dejection.

In his excellent tome *Jean Renoir: A Biography* (2012), French film critic Pascal Mérigeau underscores the all-encompassingly forsaken spirit of the film when he notes that, "Of all the films directed by Renoir in the thirties, *LA BÊTE HUMAINE* is the one that could be said to resemble a film by Renoir the least [...] In choosing to ascribe Lantier's wound to heredity, as announced by a quotation from the Zola novel at the beginning of the film, the director evokes a fate that at the time would stick to Gabin's roles one-screen, condemning to certain death some of the characters he played. Stretching from *Pepel* in *THE LOWER DEPTHS* to Jacques Lantier in *LA BÊTE HUMAINE* are all the hopes born of the Popular Front and abandoned along the way, and everything Renoir liked to believe, or pretended to want to believe. That dark fate is shared with the other main characters [...] Never in Renoir's work has fate had such crushing weight. Lantier cannot stand it, and he kills himself by throwing himself off the top of *la Lison* as it is running at top speed, whereas in the novel Pecqueux and he kill each other. "They'll be found without heads or feet, two bloody trunks still pressed together, as if to suffocate each other." At the risk of sounding like a humorless philistine, one of the reasons I liked *La Bête Humaine* so much and was totally shocked by it is because it's totally devoid of the sort of the satirical silliness that one expects from a Renoir flick (in fact, the only goofy aspect of the film is Renoir's admittedly quite humorous performance as a bombastic boor). Of course, the fact that Renoir opted to not use some of the more darker elements of Zola's source novel and changing of Lantier's death from brutal murder to guilt-ridden suicide reveals how much of a hopeless hu-

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maniſt that the filmmaker really was. Additionally, there is no doubt that the film owes much of its pathos and melancholic intensity to lead Jean Gabin as demonstrated by the actor's similar perturbingly potent performances in classic films like Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* (1937) and Marcel Carné's *Port of Shadows* (1938) aka *Le Quai des brumes*, among various other examples. Naturally, being a great artist, Renoir was even great when dealing with subjects and moods that were not exactly innate as the *La Bête Humaine* underscores (and, as Nietzsche noted, there is "praise in choice" as "The artist chooses his subjects; that is his mode of praising," hence Renoir's use of Zola's nasty novel). As to Renoir's support of idiotic leftist politics, Nietzsche also offered a clue when he wrote, "Liberality is often only a form of timidity in the rich." Luckily, Renoir was not timid when it came to whores and genetic taints.

As to the value of a film like Renoir's in our certainly more degenerate and gynocentric age where virtually every form of sexual sickness is celebrated by everything from public schools to multinational corporations and virtually every aspect of society is meant to appeal to the petty whims and wants of female narcissism while normal heterosexual male behaviors are routinely pathologized and treated as grotesquely criminal, I am reminded of Paglia's words, "The more nature is beaten back in the west, the more the femme fatale reappears, as a return of the repressed. She is the spectre of the West's bad conscience about nature. She is the moral ambiguity of nature, a malevolent moon that keeps breaking through our fog of hopeful sentiment." In a world where the dumb fictional dragon bitch of *Game of Thrones* is celebrated as a hero among grown wine-addled women, a sapless modern witch like Elizabeth Warren is a serious presidential candidate, and a half-retarded autistic-cum-downsie like Greta Thunberg is taken seriously by the U.N., a classic femme fatale like the one portrayed by Simone Simon seems almost refreshing. Luckily, as Paglia also notes, "Eroticism is mystique; that is, the aura of emotion and imagination around sex. It cannot be 'fixed' by codes of social or moral convenience, whether from the political left or right. For nature's fascism is greater than that of any society." After all, there will always be femme fatales like the one featured in *La Bête Humaine*, but Warren and Thunberg are special aberrations that come with an absurdly abnormal repressed society of the morally and culturally inverted sort where the complete transvaluation of values has made the tranny queen and the culture-distorting ex-ghetto-dweller king. In that sense, it is better to become a happy victim of an old school femme fatale like Simon than live in a world where fecund-free feminist feces like *Ghostbusters* (2016) exists.

-Ty E

THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH

Jean Renoir (1947)

Just like with goombah giallo flicks, I tend to prefer classic film noir films that completely break the conventions of the 'style' by being set in the country (as opposed to the stereotypical shitty city) and feature femme fatales that are not necessarily fatal like in Nicholas Ray classic films *They Live by Night* (1948) and *In a Lonely Place* (1950) and Edgar G. Ulmer's magnetically melancholic filmic road-to-nowhere *Detour* (1945), so naturally it came as no surprise to me that I absolutely loved French master auteur Jean Renoir's much maligned final Hollywood film *The Woman on the Beach* (1947). A rare example of 'beach noir' featuring surreal and phantasmagoric imagery in a cinematic work that might be best described as an 'allegorical ghost story' as the main characters are haunted by a perturbing past that has resulted in a forsaken present, the film is undoubtedly my second favorite Renoir flick and certainly an eccentric entry in his oeuvre as a decided downer of the delirious dream-like sort where the prospect of death almost seems like a great gift from the gods. Indeed, aside from his poetic realist masterpiece *La Bête Humaine* (1938) aka *The Human Beast*—a deathly dark picture where suicide ultimately acts as the greatest of permanent reliefs for the foredoomed protagonist—the film is the only one that Renoir directed that bleeds misery, misanthropy, and just downright meanness, which were certainly not innate characteristics of a good goofy and jolly humanist like Monsieur Renoir. With that said, it should be no shock that Renoir was not particularly fond of the flick to the point where he was even bored during its pre-production, even complaining to his older actor brother Pierre, "My agents have stuck me with a film, at RKO, a studio where I'm dying of boredom." In fact, in his autobiography *My Life and My Films* (1974), Renoir, like a good little idealistic humanist, expresses his innate philosophical discomfort for the subject matter, stating, "It was a story quite opposed to everything I had hitherto attempted. In all my previous films I had tried to depict the bonds uniting the individual to his background. The older I grew, the more I had proclaimed the consoling truth that the world is one; and now I was embarked on a study of person whose sole idea was to close the door on the absolutely concrete phenomenon which we call life. It was a mistake on my part which I can explain only by the relative isolation enforced upon me by my limited knowledge of the language of the world in which I now lived." In short, not unlike *La Bête Humaine*, *The Woman on the Beach* is a film where Renoir demonstrates his majesty as a cinematic auteur by directing a great gloomy and doomy film that was completely at odds with his own personal *Weltanschauung* and overall personal human spirit and in that sense, more than any other, one truly comes to understand the cinematic artist's genius for his chosen artistic medium.

Based on the novel *None So Blind* (1945) by Stella Adler's physicist-turned-

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novelist hubby Mitchell A. Wilson and originally plagued with the terribly unfitting title *Desirable Woman*, *The Woman on the Beach* was actually originally a project of great horror producer-auteur Val Lewton, but he abandoned the project not long after disagreeing with female lead Joan Bennett's demand that Renoir direct as he felt that Fred Zinnemann, Jacques Tourneur, Robert Wise, Lewis Allen, and Edward Dmytryk would make for more suitable directors. In fact, although the producer quit the film long before it began shooting, it often times feels more like a Lewton flick than a Renoir one (which might be partly explained by the producer's possible (co)writing of the screenplay, which was soundly theorized by Pascal Mérieau in *Jean Renoir: A Biography* (2012)). Interestingly, Renoir's description of Lewton in his autobiography is more or less in tune with the spirit of the film, as the auteur states of the producer, "Then he too died, alone or nearly so. His solitude certainly did not surprise him: he had often said that the closet groups were nothing but solitudes brought together." Speaking of Lewton, *The Woman on the Beach* certainly has much more in common with Curtis Harrington's favorably Lewtonian debut feature *Night Tide* (1961), which is also a darkly romantic film with a gothic beach setting where the oceanic becomes oneiric, than any of Renoir's other films. Indeed, I honestly cannot think of any other films aside from these two that seem inspired by the spiritual essence of Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem 'Annabel Lee,' especially the final line, "In her tomb by the sounding sea."

It seems that, despite being made for a Hollywood studio, even Renoir regarded the film as a sort of artsy horror flick as indicated by his words, "To conclude, *THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH* was the sort of avant-garde film which would have found its niche a quarter of a century earlier, between *NOSFERATU THE VAMPIRE* and *CALIGARI*, but it had no success with American audiences." Of course, as a fiercely foreboding, moodily morose, and paranoia-plagued film that flirts with a sort of 'Liebestod' involving a bizarre love triangle between a damaged Coast Guard officer with PTSD, a cold cunt proto-goth whore, and her blind resentment-ridden ex-artist husband, the film was doomed to fail on all fronts. Totally devoid of any phony 'good guy' and 'good gal' types, the film is also notable for having a trio of 'broken' characters that are almost equally unlikeable yet, somewhat paradoxically, somehow similarly sympathetic in terms of all-too-human failings and tragic characters (or, as the famous quote from *The Rules of the Game* goes, "everybody has their reasons"). In that sense, the film feels more European than America and it is no surprise that such a romantically moribund movie would be an abject failure with the Tinseltown-narcotized American audiences of that time. As Renoir wrote in regard to these 'solitary' characters, "There is a race of genuine solitaries, but they are rare. Those born to be solitary contrive to isolate themselves in a world entirely of their own making. Most solitaries only appear to belong to this category, having been born to play a part in the world around them. It is only after

what is as a result a deeply hurtful event that they have become solitaries. If they fight against it, it is generally at the cost of fearful inward turmoil. This drama of isolation is for the artist an episode in the tragedy of which we are all actors and which ends only with our departure into eternity. The artist is simply a man endowed with the gift of making these inward conflicts visible. Art is the materialization of an interior and often unconscious dream." Naturally, Renoir utilizes nightmarish dream-sequences to expressionistically underscore the inwardly infernal metaphysical hell that plagues the haunted protagonist in what ultimately proves to be a practical use of avant-garde techniques. In short, no one can watch *The Woman on the Beach* without being reminded that they have been plunged into the dark despairing abyss that is the perturbed protagonist's mind.

When Camille Paglia wrote, "At some level, all love is combat, a wrestling with ghosts," she certainly could have been thinking of *The Woman on the Beach* where the quest for love, or even just maintaining a thoroughly necrotic love with a person that used to love you but now hates you, reeks of a sort of grotesque desperation comparable to the theft of items from half-rotten corpses on a bloodstained battlefield. Indeed, the film's pathetic protagonist Scott (Robert Ryan)—a tall, dark, and handsome would-be hunk that, aside from suffering from bad dreams, is absurdly all-American, like a figuratively puss-filled parody of the banal American military type—is engaged to marry a classically beautiful blonde named Eve Geddes (Nan Leslie) but he soon finds himself considering murdering a blind (ex)painter named Tod Butler (Charles Bickford) after falling for his cold cunt wife Peggy (Joan Bennett) who dreams of escaping her miserable life with her all the more miserable husband. Of course, as a half-crazed military bro that is having reoccurring nightmares involving romantically embracing a ghostly underwater 'siren' of sorts resembling his fiancée that lurks inside a quasi-apocalyptic oceanic realm of the creepy chthonic sort full of skeletons and wrecked ships, Scott—a Coast Guard officer that, rather inconveniently, is now afraid of the mere sight of a busted up boat—is probably in the 'right' frame of mind to fall for a proudly whorish femme fatale that wants to free herself from the obsessively jealous husband that she was responsible for blinding during a drunken row. A man that lived to paint and did his best work in the form of nudes of his wife just before he lost sight at the hand of his greatest source of inspiration, Tod—an unconventionally charming chap with a name that, not coincidentally, means 'death' in German—is now a resentment-ridden shell of a mensch that lives hopelessly in the past and both literally and figuratively cannot see the present. In fact, Tod is so obsessed with holding onto the past that he refuses to sell his last paintings despite their great value as the final creations of a painter that can no longer paint. While Peggy feels some guilt for blinding Tod and, in turn, ruining his life by leaving him incapable of doing what he does best, she is also a calculating cuckolded cunt and thus cannot help lust after Scott as soon as they meet. Naturally, Peggy eventually realizes it might be

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wise to kill her husband and sell his valuable paintings, which she hates, so that she can start a new life and Scott makes for the perfect pawn for such a scheme as the two both dream of a better life. Unfortunately, Scott is too unhinged and Peggy to emotionally erratic and scatter-brained for the pernicious plot to work.

Although Scott will be discharged from his dreaded Coast Guard position in a week and thus will soon get his dream of leaving the seaside area for good as it reminds him of a past monstrous maritime tragedy that has haunted him with nightmares ever since, his life is completely changed one day while riding on the beach with his horse and unexpectedly encountering gorgeous proto-goth bitch Peggy—a drop-dead gorgeous dark-haired dime-store diva that, due to her almost delectably demonic essence, seems like she has had her fair share of eclectic dick—as she curiously scavenges from the ruins of a shipwreck (which is surely symbolic as the protagonist's fiancée Eve is the total opposite as a blonde beauty that builds ships at a shipyard). As the sight of the ruined ship clearly incites his PTSD, Scott somewhat irrationally berates Peggy for gathering the rather crappy wood and she responds by noting his quite glaring spiritual unease, even stating, “You even looked at me as if I were a ghost.” While Peggy is not a phantom in the literal sense, she might as well be as she lives a static ghostly existence in a quaint shack with her husband in a lackluster life of mutual stagnation and (self)hatred. While Scott takes an instant liking to Peggy to the point where he seems to instantly forget about his fiancée, he feels somewhat annoyed when the older and wiser Tod attempts to befriend him and even begins to question whether he is actually blind or not as if he cannot bear to have sympathy for the man whose wife he so desperately wants to fuck. In fact, Scott intentionally puts Tod in a precarious situation where he almost dies after falling off a cliff in the hope it would prove that the retired artist would be revealed to be faking his own blindness. While the incident proves that Tod is not a fraud, Scott is still not interested in being his pal, especially after he discovers the ex-artist physically abuses Peggy and comes to the conclusion that he will commit his life to freeing the poor little harlot from her rather repressive husband. Rather sickly, Scott's sexual desire for Peggy seems to be largely intertwined with the degree of misery and abuse that plagues his lover's disharmonious marriage, as if he gets a hard-on just thinking about her being brutalized by her husband. In that sense, this is a beachside bizarre love triangle that only sad sickos would find romantically.

Needless to say, when Scott starts pounding Peggy's pussy (despite her openly admitting to him her lack of virtue by boasting, “I'm a tramp. You just finding that out?”), it does not take much for the protagonist to be motivated to murder Tod so that he can start a new life with his femme fatale lover, but he is such a sad self-destructive sack of shit that he uses borderline suicidal means to accomplish this decidedly demented task. Indeed, in what is the biggest of two major climaxes of the film, Scott takes Tod on a fishing trip where he rather absurdly attempts to drown his blind rival by piercing a hole in the boat during

a nasty storm, thereupon causing both men to be swallowed up by the waves. In a scenario that contradicts the protagonist's reoccurring nightmare of an Eve-like virtual sea witch seducing the protagonist in a skeleton-ridden underwater hell, Scott and Tod are saved by a small group of Coast Guards that includes the protagonist's long-suffering fiancée Eve. Of course, Tod is not happy after barely surviving Scott's murder plot, so he decides to take his revenge against his scheming wife despite the fact that, unbeknownst to him, she tried to stop it at the minute and ultimately saved both men's lives by alerting the Coast Guard of the situation. In the end in what is ultimately the second and final climax, Tod goes completely berserk and not only burns his remaining paintings—art pieces that are apparently worth tons of money due to being created by a famous 'dead artist'—but also his beach house, as he no longer wants to be a prisoner of his past and finally plans to move on with his life. Of course, that also includes letting Peggy go, or as he tells Scott as they watch the house burn down, "I had to do it. Those paintings meant everything to me. But they became an obsession. They had to be destroyed. Now I'm free. I've new work to do. I've things to say. Many things. And Peggy's free. I clung to her as I did the paintings. To the past. I made her live in it with me. I had no right to do that." Somewhat ironically considering the circumstances, Tod and Peggy seem to reconcile in the end despite the ex-painter's promise to let her go. As for pathetically forlorn protagonist Scott, he literally walks away with nothing, which is even less than he started with as his fiancée Eve has even left him. Since Scott is a psychotic prick and Tod is at least a man of wisdom that learns something in the end, I would have to say the film concludes on a relatively happy note.

Notably, *The Woman on the Beach* was such a disastrous flop that it resulted in Renoir having to abort a planned adaptation of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (which, interestingly, he had already adapted in 1934 with less favorable results) that he already had in pre-production. In fact, the film put a complete end to Renoir's career in Hollywood, or as the auteur stated in his autobiography, "I was under contract to make two films for that company. A few days after the premiere I had a visit from my agent, Ralph Blum, who reported that they were ready to buy me out for a fixed sum. I am no fighter; I accepted, and that was the end of it. But it was the end in the widest sense. The failure of *THE WOMAN ON THE BEACH* marked the finish of my Hollywood adventure. I never made another film in an American studio. It was not only that particular failure that was held against me. Darryl Zanuck, who knew something about directors, summed up my case to a group of film-people. 'Renoir,' he said, 'has a lot of talent, but he's not one of us.'" Of course, the fact that Renoir was not a for-hire-hack-whore type like so many in Hollywood is why *The Woman on the Beach* is such a great film as not even subversive mavericks like John Huston or Howard Hawks would ever dream of directing such an unsettlingly dark and experimental film. As for Renoir, he was not really fond of any of his Hollywood

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films except for *The Southerner* (1945) aka *L'Homme du sud*, which he once described as “really the only thing that justifies my trip to America.” Personally, I cannot agree with Renoir’s assessment of his own work, as *The Southerner*—a sort of proto-neorealist film clearly informed by the auteur’s idiotically idealistic leftist politics—is certainly worth a watch yet ultimately seems like a prosaically patronizing experiment in proletarian fetishization when compared to deep dark aesthetic and emotional extremes of a rare arcane aesthetic object like *The Woman on the Beach*.

Notably, it was not until the film was rediscovered by film critics at the *Cahiers du Cinéma* that would later become major filmmaker of the *La Nouvelle Vague* that *The Woman on the Beach* finally received some positive praise, or as French film critic Pascal Mérigeau explained his massive text *Jean Renoir: A Biography* (2012), “Éric Rohmer would make the film the touchstone for his admiration of Renoir. Truffaut would cite a certain scene showing Joan Bennett crawling on all fours as one of the ten most erotic in the history of film. Jacques Rivette would speak of ‘pure cinema’; and, with the hindsight of years, he’d call the film ‘the first in a trilogy of great masterpieces.’ All such loving protests are also a defensive reaction to the extent of the rejection to which the film was subjected, and all of them are perhaps justified and accurate. However, they would be more convincing if Renoir’s name on the credits hadn’t contributed to steering the vision of the film and constructing opinions about it.” Personally, I could not disagree more with Mérigeau as I found the film to be great in part because it is rarely Renoirian unless one compares it to the auteur’s similarly unconventionally dark and morbid *La Bête Humaine*. In short, it is no surprise that the film had its genesis with Val Lewton—the great producer-as-auteur that even managed to overpower a great filmmaker like Jacques Tourneur with his almost devilish esoteric influence.

Despite Renoir’s supposed apathy for the subject matter, the film has certain undeniable autobiographical elements, especially in regard to the filmmaker’s famous painter father. Indeed, not unlike Renoir’s Impressionist painter padre Pierre-Auguste Renoir who painted nude portraits of his mother Aline Charigot, the eponymous femme fatale is the subject of her husband’s much beloved nude paintings. Strangely, neither Renoir nor his biographer Mérigeau reference this seemingly obvious connection between the film and auteur’s famous family. Interestingly, whereas Renoir would once state of his father’s paintings in his book *Renoir, My Father* (1962), “His nudes and his roses declared to men of this century, already deep in their task of destruction, the stability of the eternal balance of nature,” the nude paintings of Tod in the film are such a source debilitating internal sickness that he must burn them so that he can get on with his life. Of course, on a more personal level, the subject of an artist that becomes blind is a visceral fear that should appeal to any serious filmmaker (notably, the character Tod more or less described himself as a ‘dead’ painter due to his blindness),

which probably partly explains why the auteur drastically changed the storyline from its source material (in the novel, Tod just pretends to be blind). As to what a filmmaker might create if they went blind, Gay English auteur Derek Jarman provided at least one example with his AIDS-addled swansong *Blue* (1993). Notably, Renoir would never again direct anything so serious and instead would stick to virtual celluloid confections before fizzling out like a weak old fart. While the auteur directed one or two more notable films after his failed career in Hollywood, I am certainly more than tempted to see *The Woman on the Beach* as Renoir's virtual artist obituary as a film that is not only consumed with doom and gloom that features a retired artist that no longer wants to live life but also because it was the consequence of artistic compromise on the filmmaker's part. On the other hand, I believe the film probably greatly benefited from artistic compromise as apparently the dream-sequences were not added until late into the film's production after Renoir was forced to reshoot a good portion of the picture (according to the filmmaker's own varying statements, between 1/3 and 1/2 of the flick had to be reshoot).

As someone with artistic inclinations that is somewhat haunted by the past and grew up with a close blind relative, I probably found *The Woman on the Beach* more relatable than most people would to the point where it at least partly inspired me to write this review. As a goofy man motivated by humanistic impulses and, for a time, shallow leftist idealism, Renoir is certainly not an artist I can seriously relate to on any innate personal level, so to me it proves his artistic genius that he was able to somewhat successfully take a poesy Poe-esque approach to such uncharacteristic material, as if he was temporarily haunted himself. Of course, Renoir had his own objective with the film, or as he once wrote in regard to his first version of the flick, "This is a film in which I wanted to proceed more by suggestion than by demonstration: a film of acts never carried out." In the end, *The Woman on the Beach* is largely about the (in this case, negative) influence of a female lover on an artist, as Tod is virtually magnetized to Peggy before and after she caused his blinding (and, as the viewer assumes at the end of the film, her influence enters a third and more positive phase at the end of the film). Notably, in Jean-Jacques Beineix's classic modern romance *Betty Blue* (1986) aka *37° 2 le matin*—another frog-helmeted film depicting the perturbing perils of *l'amour fou* that is (at least partly) set on the beach—the male lead 'loses' his eponymous lover once he finally achieves his artistic dream of penning a successful novel, as if such self-destructive vaginal venom has already completely served its purpose and thus he can finally move on. Notably, even the non-artist protagonist of *The Woman on the Beach* is driven to action by Peggy in an almost magical fashion as he self-deludes himself into believing that it is his mission to 'save her' from her ostensibly sinister husband and not because he has a fetish for fiendish femme fatales, hence his loss of interest in good girl Eve. As the film demonstrates, women tend to in-

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spire both the best and worst in men as if the so-called fairer sex is god's greatest curse.

Of course, as Luis Buñuel and his Surrealist comrades believed, "desire is the one true motor of the world," hence why the 'ship sunk' in the end when it comes to Scott and Peggy as the latter has finally achieved reconciliation with her husband. It is also no coincidence that Scott (ex)fiancée Eve tells him "I finally realized you're sick" as he is consumed with the sort of l'amour fou that causes an otherwise rational man to degenerate into a Dionysian dildo that lives to fuck a void of a hole. Undoubtedly, only in a fantasy flick like Henry Hathaway's Peter Ibbetson (1935)—a truly idiosyncratic film based on a story by George du Maurier that, not unlike Renoir's flick, is a rare example of a Hollywood movie with dream-like avant-garde elements—does l'amour fou lead to something truly eternally heavenly as *The Woman on the Beach* so ruthlessly reminds the viewer in a somewhat ambiguous ending where a lovelorn young man loses his great love to a defeated old fart that has finally decided to let her go free as if the truest way to a woman's heart is getting over her. Needless to say, Tod probably had the better idea when he was following a path more in tune with the Marquis de Sade's words, "The only way to a woman's heart is along the path of torment." In fact, Tod, who is easily the most intriguing character in the film, is certainly a sort of low-key Sadean of sorts and his misguided abuse towards Peggy assuredly reflects the Marquis' words, "Certain souls may seem harsh to others, but it is just a way, beknownst only to them, of caring and feeling more deeply."

While Renoir originally intended for *The Woman on the Beach* to be "a story about love in which the reasons for attraction between the different parties were purely physical, a story in which sentiment would play not part at all," he ultimately assembled something much more insanely intricate and metaphysically infernal where love becomes more or less one and the same with the Todestrieb and where artistic obsession and the abject desperation associated with a premature 'artistic death' compels a desperate ex-artist to virtually keep his favorite artistic subject prisoner. While the film certainly led to the death of Renoir's career in Hollywood and, in turn, his artistic decline in general, the film is unequivocally the most enigmatic, preternatural, and esoteric film that the auteur ever created, not to mention one of the most radically *recherché* film noir flicks of all-time. Indeed, the film is arguably the unintended artistically fruitful consequence of Renoir being forced to endure a sort of Bressonian method of filmmaking as demonstrated by French master auteur Robert Bresson's words, "These horrible days—when shooting film disgusts me, when I am exhausted, powerless in the face of so many obstacles—are part of my method of work." Undoubtedly, a lack of suffering causes an impoverishment of spirit, especially artistic spirit, and Renoir—a man that had a fairly privileged bourgeois bohemian upbringing—rarely suffered until he was forced to flee his homeland in May 1940 after Germany invaded France and relocated to Hollywood where he

worked under artistically unfavorable circumstances. Had Renoir suffered even more and earlier in life, one can only speculate the sort of masterpieces he might have churned out as a sort of potential frog Bergman. Speaking of the great Swedish auteur, *The Woman on the Beach* certainly shares aesthetic and thematic similarities with Bergman flicks like *Hour of the Wolf* (1968) and *Shame* (1968), among others. In terms of strange seaside cinematic works that helped to sink the career of a once-respected European auteur, the film is also comparable to Scotsman Alexander Mackendrick's uneven yet somewhat underrated *Don't Make Waves* (1967)—a rather idiosyncratic late entry in the 'beach party' sub-genre that benefits from a rather nubile Sharon Tate—which Tarantino recently paid tribute to in his latest film *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019).

As Renoir stated himself in regard to how the conquering of his homeland effected the film, "It was natural that I should look for themes having nothing to do with a motherland who was no longer herself. I had a horror of sentimental images of pre-war France. Better a void than the pointed bear of the film *Frenchman*. But a void offers no solid foothold. Realizing the fragility of the thing I was making, I tried to change the story while the film was being shot. The result was a confused scenario leading to a final work which I consider interesting but which is too obscure for the general public." Of course, nowadays the totally dumbed-down and obscenely aesthetically retarded general public would find most of Renoir's films to be totally inexplicable, thus allowing a film like *The Woman on the Beach* a more notable place in the auteur's singular oeuvre as an ostensible oddity that underscores the filmmaker's unexpected eclecticism and capacity to embrace the entire range of human emotions. Indeed, I certainly never expected that it would be a cheap RKO B-movie that finally enabled me to fully appreciate the Gallic greatness of Monsieur Renoir. In short, fuck the totally trying Technicolor xenophilia of *The River* (1951) aka *Le Fleuve*, evil wanton white bitches on the beach are forever.

-Ty E

THE IRON ROSE
THE IRON ROSE

Jean Rollin (1973)

The Iron Rose is the fifth feature length film directed by the French auteur who created among the first of the X-rated genre and gore film within his country of France. With most of his film entwining vampirism and erotic elements, The Iron Rose is a detachment from the formula of his normal vampire films and is treading more on territory paved by Jodorowsky's *Fando y Lis*. The theme of The Iron Rose will later be taken and given a highly controversial subtext of pedophilia and retitled *Maladolescenza*. Young lovers escape into a graveyard at night for passionate adventures and love making sessions. In the midst of their heated moments, night breaks and they are lost within the walls of the cemetery. As the night bleeds more, their character's explode into a frenzy, prompting many violent situations, running, and surrealist scenes of gravestones at night. Wrapping up with a truly poetic final scene, The Iron Rose is sincere and disquieting but completely illogical. Many of the fairytale situations encountered by the incredibly lovely Françoise Pascal and the Crispin Glover lookalike Hugues Quester could have been avoided had common sense been employed. Rule of thumb: If you're lost within a walled establishment, walk till you reach the wall, then follow the wall until you reach the exit. Rather than ending the film properly, and on a happy note for that matter, Rollin decided to make his characters appear mentally handicapped in their quest for escape. I haven't explored much of Rollin's filmography but I hope his Fantastique cinema offerings conjure up some logic and sense rather than embarrassing and frustrating me. As I mentioned, the formula was perfected both in the past and the future by *Fando y Lis* and *Maladolescenza*. These films come highly recommended over this one. The Iron Rose does feature the ravishing Miss Pascal dance around in the nude but after her frequent outbursts of childlike screaming, the aforementioned scenes become anti-titillating and disappointing. The Iron Rose is your generic French arthouse fare but this is dressed up more like a midnight movie than artistic impressionism. If you can manage to discover this, the most mistreated film in his oeuvre, you'd be minded the give it a chance.

-mAQ

LOST IN NEW YORK

Jean Rollin (1989)

While it is safe to say that I am not exactly the biggest fan of French ‘fantastique’ artsploitation auteur Jean Rollin (*Le Viol du Vampire* aka *The Rape of the Vampire*, *Les Raisins de La Mort* aka *The Grapes of Death*), I have found some value, if only in aesthetic terms, in some of his cinematic works, with *Perdues dans New York* (1989) aka *Lost in New York* certainly being a strikingly singular and soothingly surreal work among the froggy fetishist filmmaker’s innately uneven cinematic oeuvre. Essentially the whimsical result of director Rollin having the opportunity to visit New York City while taking two of his beautiful actresses along with him and shooting a variety of improvised yet meticulously stylized scenes and later coming back to France to shoot the rest of the film, *Lost in New York*—a short yet sweet filmic fever-dream-within-a-fever-dream that is just under an hour at 52 minutes length—is undoubtedly one of the director’s most, if not most, personal works, which is rather ironic considering it lacks the horror and gore the filmmaker is best known and revered for. Described by Rollin himself as “an anthology of all the themes and obsessive images I have used in my films” which had ultimately “brought to an end what had been started within the previous 13 films,” *Lost in New York* was somewhat rather strangely made for French television, although it is surely impossible to tell that while watching the film, as a work that is a sort of superlatively surreal celluloid travelogue tone poem depicting both urban NYC and rural France at their most oneiric and otherworldly. Working from the idea to “improvise a theme” of “two young women separated and desperately looking for each other” while cruising NYC with his two youthful dimestore divas, Rollin ultimately concocted a celluloid dream that is just as rooted in the subconscious as conscious, if not more so, though *Lost in New York* ultimately manages to be a shockingly literate work of sub-avant-garde celluloid that makes fitting references to both the world of cinema and literature. More arthouse-addled than erotically excessive, *Lost in New York* is a celluloid testament to the fact that although Jean Rollin eventually became a degenerate pornographer to pay the bills, at heart, the filmmaker was a somewhat serious artist who found his greatest source of inspiration in the form of beautiful and bewitching women. A sort of celluloid dream-within-a-dream-within-a-dream about an old woman who reminisces how she and her friend are magically transported from the unpopulated seaside of Northern France to the diversely and densely populated streets on New York City, only to become separated, *Lost in New York* is like Rollin’s celluloid equivalent to his countryman Jacques Rivette’s *Celine and Julie Go Boating* (1974) aka *Céline et Julie vont en bateau*, albeit nowhere near as innately impenetrable, but certainly just as overly self-indulgent and rightfully so!

During the beginning of *Lost in New York*, one is introduced to a sad and

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overly nostalgic elderly French woman named Michèle who lives in a rather decrepit and poor rural area and who has nothing left in her life aside from her magical memories. While grasping a primitive looking wooden charm she calls the “Moon Goddess” that her semi-blind eyes can barely see, Michèle tells a tale about how she met her sort of spiritual sister and best friend Marie, a “magic little girl” from the coal region of rural Northern France who had no one to play with, hence her hysterical crying, until her empathetic little friend came along. After the two little ladies discovered the wooden Moon Goddess idol, it enabled them to travel from their quaint French rural village through both space and time, ultimately taking them to New York City and transforming from little girls into beautiful young women. Using the magical world of film and literature as a guide, elderly Michèle explains that the Moon Goddess took them on a journey, “where the young girls from Picnic at Hanging Rock Disappeared, where Errol Flynn takes Micheline Presle in *The Adventures of Captain Fabian*,” but also the celluloid realms of Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936) and Georges Franju’s *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) aka *Les yeux sans visage*, among various other works. Not surprisingly, reference is also made to Jean Rollins’ films by Michèle, who narrates, “We were inside the music box of “*The Living Dead Girl*” and “hidden in the clock of *The Shiver of the Vampires*, which opens at the stroke of midnight behind the theater curtain of *The Naked Vampire*.” As stated by an unseen male narrator, “In New York City, this ghost city, in a present which is not the real one, Marie and Michèle run towards each other, entering deeper into the mysteries of New York’s streets, buildings and blocks,” but inevitably they lose one another and must fight all by their lonesome against the bitter realities of life, especially those of the multicultural hellhole which is the Big Rotten Apple, which includes lesbian thieves and a gigantic yet largely invisible Chinese community that represents a subculture within a subculture in a deracinated postindustrial wasteland where everyone is doing their damndest to survive. Naturally, the world of *Lost in New York* is also somewhat sensually supernatural as testified by the narrator’s remark, “With the parting of the day comes the hour of magic. The most beautiful appearance, more sumptuous than the black night, is of the white woman vampire who will haunt the New York night,” and the timely appearance of said nocturnal Aryan bloodsucker. Indeed, while nowhere near as graphic as some of Rollin’s more (in)famous celluloid works, *Lost in New York* features the occasional unclad female body (mostly some sexually unappetizing black broad) and even the occasional death, which happens to Michèle when she is forced to fight an aggressive switchblade-wielding bull-dyke chick whilst lost in NYC. Just as the little girls manage to find one another again after morphing into young adults and being transferred to and lost in New York City, so will they be reunited at the conclusion of *Lost in New York* as elderly women, ultimately morphing into little girls again and thus coming full circle in life. As the narrator states at the conclusion of *Lost in New York*, “The path that Michèle

and Marie enter is forever sealed. You only go there once, never to return.”

Unquestionably a more sentimental than sordid cinematic work that wallows in nostalgia and imagination in a decidedly literate yet nonlinear manner, *Loſt in New York* is a phantasmagorical film that reminds the viewer that “Fantasies die at dawn,” but with every new day there is a new dawn, even when you’re old and lonely and feel that you have experienced all that life can offer. Featuring a number of dichotomies, including the cinema world vs. the real world, youth vs. old age, timelessness vs. temporality, the rural and organic vs. the urban and manmade, innocence vs. defilement, etc., *Loſt in New York* is certainly a work that demonstrates that even though Rollin was a hack pornographer in his 50s at the time of directing the film, he had yet to lose his appreciation for the fantastic and imaginative, as if he was still holding on to a part of his youth. In that sense, *Loſt in New York* is a strangely positive and uplifting work as a sort of surrealist fairytale for adults who need a bit a relief from the disillusionment, pessimism, and apathy that comes with living and learning. Indeed, if I have ever gotten anything out of viewing of Jean Rollin flick, it was most certainly the phantasmagoric playfulness and arthouse fantasy of *Loſt in New York*, a celluloid work that manages to be both cinematically reflexive yet tastefully (and even childishly!) sentimental in a transcendental sort of manner that is nothing short of true movie magic in an age of cultural and spiritual darkness. Indeed, while featuring an authentic footage taken by Rollin in NYC, the Big Apple of *Loſt in New York* is certainly not the same place I had traveled to about a decade or so ago, but a place of pernicious otherworldly phantoms and pestilence that seem not much more real than a Disney movie as an outsider’s depiction of a place and time that has been endlessly depicted cinematically, but not in such a classically classy and even ‘gothic’ manner that brings mysticism to a metropolitan nightmare that usually inspires misery and misanthropy. A sort of cinematic swansong to Rollin’s classic auteur signature as a filmmaker who clearly realized he had reached his peak as a filmmaker and decided to become totally self-indulgent one last time, *Loſt in New York* is certainly the director’s most ambitious achievement as a cinematic artist who had fallen from auteur grace. Featuring an exceedingly ethereal and completely complimentary musical score by Rollin collaborator Philippe d’Aram (*Fascination*, *The Living Dead Girl*), *Loſt in New York* is a must-see film for anyone interested in the art of celluloid, but especially people like myself who previously thought that Jean Rollin had not even the slightest inking of artistic talent. Ironically, I discovered the film after coming upon a music video by happenstance for the song “I’m God” by Italian-American hip hop producer Clams Casino featuring scenes from *Loſt in New York*. Needless to say, it was the first and likely last time a hip hop artist gave any sort of artistic recommendation to me.

-Ty E

A BRUTAL GAME
A BRUTAL GAME

Jean-Claude Brisseau (1983)

If France has anything resembling its own sort of refined arthouse equivalent to the classic low-budget American serial killer flick *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1990) directed by rebel auteur John McNaughton, it is most certainly *Un jeu brutal* (1983) aka *A Brutal Game* directed by Jean-Claude Brisseau (*Noce blanche* aka *White Wedding*, *Les anges exterminateurs* aka *The Exterminating Angels*). Indeed, in terms of its combination of violent killings, decidedly dysfunctional family dynamics, and provocative moral ambiguity, Brisseau's film shares some notable superficial similarities with *Henry*, but it is ultimately an inately more intricate and enterprising work that would probably bore the hell out of jaded gorehounds and can hardly be described as a horror flick (I have read some somewhat misleadingly describe it as a "Bressonian serial killer movie," though I guess one can see it as a sort of *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) of serial killer flicks, albeit sans the donkey). While the film might feature a serial killer and some disturbing murder scenes juxtaposed with an eerie and unnerving score, *A Brutal Game* is really one of the most bizarre and grotesque yet strangely humanistic coming-of-age flicks ever made as a work that depicts the intellectual and especially sexual maturation of a rather nihilistic and equally sadistic crippled girl whose estranged crypto-killer scientist father takes her out of the Catholic convent where she has been most of her life and makes her learn some real Spartan discipline. Part sadistic slasher flick, part existentialist coming-of-age flick for ephedrophiles, part eccentric dysfunctional family drama, and part morbid murder mystery, Brisseau's cult film without a cult should surely be considered a classic now, but considering it is far too visceral, tough, and politically incorrect for the sensibilities of the ludicrously liberal nation of Frogland, it seems to have never gained the notice or success that it rightly deserves as one of the most preternatural serial killer flicks ever made (of course, France would also produce *Sombre* (1998) directed by Philippe Grandrieux). Made at a time in his career before the success of *De bruit et de Fureur* (1988) aka *Sound and Fury* when he still worked his original job as a school teacher and only directed films part-time as a sort of super serious hobby, *A Brutal Game* is indubitably the work where Brisseau most emphasizes the importance of education in not only the academic but also sexual, emotional, and spiritual sense. Indeed, the crippled chick protagonist gets a little bit of 'tough love' from her father and ultimately goes from being a feral-like blonde beastess that loves killing animals to a calm and thoughtful nature-loving artist of sorts, thus I could certainly see the film being criticized by certain hysterical left-wingers as being ostensibly 'fascistic' due to its positive depiction of cold and hard discipline. Notably, Brisseau has described the film as being heavily influenced by Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969) in the sense that he knew it would initially offend

the critics in terms of how hardcore and visceral the material was. As Brisseau has described in various interviews, the central theme of the film is the meaning in the life and the point of one's existence in this merciless yet beautiful world. Ultimately, *A Brutal Game* demonstrates that once you give up free will and begin putting too much stock in spiritual delusions, you let yourself become more susceptible to the most heinous and irrevocable of acts. Simultaneously erotic and grotesque, as well as brutal and beautiful, Brisseau's undeniably underrated film is a rare piece of existentialist cinema that does not seem like it was directed by some pretentious ponce and/or grad student dropout.

Opening with the following quote from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's literary swansong *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), "Listen! I took the case of children only to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity, with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its centre I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose," *A Brutal Game* immediately informs the viewer of one of its greatest intellectual influences, as well as the fact that it merely uses a crippled girl as a pretext to explore the meaning of life and how life is different for everyone, as everyone takes their own unique path in life which they must discover on their own. At the very beginning of the film in a scene of disturbing yet strangely serene slasher-esque horror, a middle-aged man named Christian Tessier (of William Friedkin's *Sorcerer* (1977) and Brisseau's *Sound and Fury*) stalks a 12-year-old girl until he finds her sunbathing topless in the woods and then brutally butchers her with a knife. Tessier is a respected scientist of the seemingly psychopathic sort and he has decided to abruptly quit his job at a lab where he burns all of his precious research before leaving for good, as he is a pathological paranoid who has convinced himself that his co-employees want to steal his work. When a mailman tells Tessier, "We'll miss you. A great scientist such as you," he does not even acknowledge the man but instead focuses intently on a letter informing him that his mother has suffered a heart attack and, "She wants to see you before she dies." As the viewer will soon discover, Tessier's mother (Belgian veteran actress Lucienne Le Marchand) is one of the few people that the character actually listens to and respects. While on her deathbed, Tessier's mother berates him for quitting his job and giving up "all that responsibility" and then begs her son to reunite with his crippled teenage daughter, stating, "That poor thing was abandoned when her mother left you. Actually, she never had a father either." Tessier's mother also tells her son to take his daughter to his place of birth in rural Saulière as she also wants him to get in touch with his roots. When Tessier's mother subsequently dies, he refuses to attend her funeral because he sees her corpse as nothing more than an "object. A thing like a stone," but he does honor his progenitor's wishes and immediately has his crippled daughter retrieved from the Catholic convent where she has spent the majority of her pathetic life and soon meets her in Saulière.

Upon first meeting his marginally attractive dirty blonde daughter Isabelle

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(Emmanuelle Debever of Andrzej Wajda's *Danton* (1983)) in Saulière, Tessier must immediately acknowledge that the wheelchair-bound little girl is quite hateful, spiteful, malicious, and possibly somewhat deranged as she proceeds to go into great detail to her father about how she would love to set bombs all around the small village they are at, stating with a sense of sadistic glee, "First I'd blow up the market when it's the most crowded. Bodies torn apart, women and children screaming. Sewers blown apart, mud, and corpses spreading blood everywhere." A servant named Lucien (Brisseau regular Lucien Plazanet of *Sound and Fury* and Céline (1992)) attempts to excuse Isabelle's insane rant by stating, "You have to indulge her. She was born like that and she will die like that. And she has always lived in solitude," but Tessier refuses to excuse such unhinged behavior as he does not believe in further crippling cripples and retorts, "We're all alone. You have to cope with that." When Tessier takes Isabelle to a local river and she proceeds to kill a bird and some insects, the concerned father asks her why she is engaged in such reprehensible behavior and she replies that it amuses her and that she hates animals. When Tessier attempts to talk some sense into the tyrannical teen, she becomes enraged and calls her father a "dirty old sod," so he responds by violently picking her up, throwing her into his car, and locking her into her room after demanding that she clean and wash herself. As Tessier tells Lucien regarding his plans for his daughter, "At the moment she is just an animal. She needs discipline, or else the devil will get a hold of her." Indeed, Isabelle is so helpless and worthless that she cannot even dress herself even though she has full use of her arms and hands and is merely unable to walk as a result of having a piece missing from the base of her spine, so Tessier demands that she learn these things and when she refuses and throws a fit, he locks her in her room without any food. Ultimately, Tessier creates a stringent daily regiment for Isabelle that describes what she must eat, learn, and do every single day.

Aside from having to learn to be a normal human being, Isabelle is also forced to receive both a physical and academic education from a young pretty live-in teacher named Anne Lorraine (played by Brisseau's wife/editor María Luisa García aka Lisa Hérédia), who previously worked with retarded kids and luckily has a high tolerance when it comes to dealing with uniquely unruly students. From Anne, Isabelle also begins to discover her sexuality, as she spies on her teacher while she is masturbating and then proceeds to masturbate for the first time while staring at her unclad body in the mirror. While Isabelle has a rather nihilistic attitude at first, complaining to Anne, "I should have never been born!" after learning that she will never be able to walk because she is missing a piece of her spine (indeed, despite being nearly adult, Isabelle somehow never came to the conclusion that she is permanently disabled, as if everyone was too afraid to inform her of this important fact), the teacher's exceedingly empathetic attitude works wonders on the eclectically damaged dame. When Isabelle screams at Anne regarding her father, "I'm sick of you! Especially him! He never leaves

me alone! I haven't seen him in years, and then he shows up just to annoy me!" after Tessier yells at her lack of empathy in regard to a poem by French poet and screenwriter Jacques Prévert (who was responsible for penning the classic work *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945) aka *Children of Paradise* directed by Marcel Carné) about an injured horse, the teenage protagonist is punished with being locked in her room for 28 hours straight without food. When Anne forgets to lock the door to her room, Isabelle manages to escape on her crutches and heads to the river near her house where she accidentally falls in the water while trying to kill bugs. Luckily, Anne's semi-handsome brother Pascal (Albert Pigot) spots Isabelle while she is drowning and narrowly saves her life.

Needless to say, Isabelle soon falls in love with nice and sensitive pretty boy Pascal, who humors the cute yet crippled teenage girl by taking her on hikes and carrying her while the two skinny-dip. Indeed, Pascal is the first person that Isabelle is nice to and she even professes her love to him at one point by confessing, "The only beautiful person on this earth is you [...] Thanks to you, I'll never be alone or unhappy again. I'm starting to even like people I used to loathe." Pascal also somewhat successfully helps Isabelle get over her irrational fear and hatred of animals and insects by telling her after she freaks out when a small spider crawls across her unclad stomach, "Since you don't know how to look at it, you compare it to yourself. It's a being in its own right. Regardless of us, it will keep on going." Of course Pascal is not as romantically interested in the teen as she is in him and when Isabelle finds him in bed with Parisian brunette babe, she throws her crutches at the two lovers and cries hysterically after falling to the floor. Naturally, Isabelle's melodramatic behavior wakes up Anne, who tells her brother to pack up her things. So that the lovelorn teen will not be able to kill herself, Anne immediately hides all the scissors and knives around the house, but Isabelle still proclaims, "You can try to hide everything away from me. I'll kill myself. I'll kill myself anyhow." While Isabelle almost succeeds in accidentally killing after falling down a mountain and hitting her head on a rock, Pascal manages to save her life again just before he leaves for good.

When Isabelle spies on servant Lucien one night and discovers that he is a gay cross-dresser upon seeing him posing with fancy dresses that were owned by her recently deceased grandmother, she develops empathy for the old queen and begins asking him questions about her family and is startled to discover that her father—a man that had previously berated her for squashing bugs and killing birds—was just as pigheaded and cruel to animals when he was a boy. Indeed, apparently Tessier once horrified Lucien by dismembering a frog and pouring acid on its wounds just to see what would happen, hence the reason why he probably became a scientist. Meanwhile, Tessier continues to stalk and brutally murder children while on supposed business trips. When Isabelle decides to disobey her father by breaking into his room to put a flower under his pillow as a display

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of affection, she discovers a photograph on Tessier's wall of six children and a list of their names, with most of the kids' faces and names being crossed out, as if to indicate they are dead. Ironically, around the same time Isabelle begins suspecting that her father might be involved in some rather unsavory behavior, her relationship with him grows stronger and the two began regularly frolicking around gaily in the countryside. When Tessier buys Isabelle a pet snake and she becomes disheartened when it eats a frog, the father explains to his daughter that it is normal and natural because it is merely "nature's law" and "nature is a self-balancing system." When Isabelle complains that she finds the idea of snakes eating frogs "awful," the father demonstrates her has a sort of Nietzschean worldview by stoically remarking, "Awful. Unfair. In fact, these words are meaningless. Happiness comes from pain, pain from happiness. Death impels life as life does death. The same goes for good and evil." Ultimately, Tessier tells his daughter that if she gets rid of her emotional and sentimental "illusions" then the world will appear to her in all of its splendors. Around this time, Isabelle takes up painting and seems to be at peace with herself and the world, but a problem arises when she discovers upon watching the news that one of the little girls from the photograph in her father's room was murdered.

When Tessier discovers Isabelle snooping around his room and realizes that she has figured out he is a serial killer, he surprises the viewer by not killing his daughter. When Isabelle hesitantly asks her father, "You didn't really kill innocent children, did you?" he replies in a rather calm manner, "No one is innocent. Remember that. We're all just links in the chain. The world is full of signs. Silent to the ignorant, the incapable, the fools. Yet, clear indications to those who know how to interpret them." After going on a paranoid rant about how his fellow scientists and the government were spying on him and attempting to steal his research, Tessier explains to his daughter that the six children that he has been slowly but surely killing were collectively involved in breaking into his home and destroying all the research he had done at a secret lab he had setup. It seems that Tessier is a paranoid schizophrenic of sorts and he believes that killing the children is part of "God's plan," or so he explains in a fiercely fanatical fashion that screams pathological mental psychosis. To demonstrate his point, Tessier has Isabelle write down the first letters of the first names and surnames of the six children, which ultimately spell out "Diable Tueles" aka "Devil, kill them." From there, Tessier explains to his daughter, "It's a message. Those kids were sent by the devil to foil God's work," and that he believes god sent the children to him to be dispatched and sent straight to hell. When Isabelle tells her father that he is crazy, he responds by calmly threatening to kill her and then tells Lucien and Anne to make sure she is locked in his room for the next 36 hours. Part of the reason Tessier believes the killings are part of god's plan is because he has yet to be caught, but when he goes to kill the sixth and final child after having Isabelle locked in his room, he ultimately finds himself in

a precarious faith-crushing situation when the police corner him in an apartment building shortly after he snatches the little girl that he intends to butcher. While Isabelle prays that her father is stopped, Tessier miraculously comes to realize that he was wrong, proclaiming, "My god. What have I done?" while staring with a deep sense of guilt in his eyes at his prospective child victim. When the police walk in on Tessier touching the little girl while he is attempting to comfort her and assume he is attempting to hurt her because he has a knife in his hand, they shoot him dead. After her father is killed, Isabelle somehow instantly realizes this and sees an apparition of Tessier reaching out to her from a distance and she responds by reaching back at him, as if to say goodbye. In the end, Isabelle sits at the top of a mountain in a symbolic scene that demonstrates that she has finally conquered her spiritual journey and reached personality serenity.

In its depiction of a well dressed child killer that stalks children around dark alleyways combined with a subplot about an uncommonly tolerant teacher attempting to tame and train an innately intemperate girl that is more like a beast than a human, *A Brutal Game* is almost like a fiercely fucked frog hybridization and mutation of Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) and Arthur Penn's Helen Keller biopic *The Miracle Worker* (1962), yet this description would indubitably betray auteur Jean-Claude Brisseau's main objective with the film and that was getting out a particularly dispiriting point in his own life, or as the director explained himself, "... [the film] came out of a difficult period that I was going through. I was asking myself about the meaning of life and what made life worth living." Of course, in the end, the teenage protagonist comes to the conclusion that life is worth living, even after facing the fact that she will always be a cripple and that her father is the most loathsome sort of criminal as a child killer. Brisseau's decision to make the serial killer somewhat sympathetic was inspired by his reading of Dostoyevsky as the director revealed in an interview when remarking regarding the film, "I was interested in making it so that in the end the audience ends up almost feeling compassion for him, because if you... If you refer to Dostoyevsky, for example, who believed in God, when you forgive someone, the problem is not to forgive your friend or those whom you love, it's to forgive your worst enemy." Of course, what makes *A Brutal Game* especially notable for a serial killer flick is that the serial killer miraculously discovers the error of his ways and becomes consumed with guilt, though it is ultimately too late and he ultimately pays for his seemingly unpardonable sins. Personally, I would have liked to see the serial killer survive, as it would have made Brisseau's film an all the more subversive and uncompromising work, but not unlike the pernicious priest of Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972), the killer must pay for his exceedingly bastardized reading of the Catholic holy writ.

In its depiction of a respectable French bourgeois intellectual and father with a home in the countryside who lives a second life as a highly predatory serial killer of the highly meticulous, anally retentive, and psychopathic sort, *A Brutal*

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Games certainly shares superficial similarities with the vaguely arthouse-ish popular Dutch psychological thriller *Spoorloos* (1988) aka *The Vanishing* directed by George Sluizer, but ultimately Brisseau's work is much more subversive, philosophically intriguing, and erotic, as a work that is dying for cult status that has more testicular fortitude than anything associated with the French New Wave. Indeed, like a Michael Haneke flick with a soul and without the pretense that takes a hardcore approach to Hitchcock and takes an almost sadistic approach to genre-bending, Brisseau's film dares to propose the idea that a man can be a decent and inspirational father even if he is a coldblooded child killer. Notably, Brisseau included some cryptic autobiographical details in the film from his career as a teacher. Indeed, like with protagonist Isabelle in *A Brutal Game*, Brisseau forced his students to read and attempt to interpret Charles Baudelaire's poem "Music" (aka "La Musique"). As Brisseau explained regarding Baudelaire's poem, "The guy [Baudelaire] is saying that when he listens to music, it arouses passions and pain which was forgotten long ago. It brings these things back to the surface, but it soothes him. How is that? Either the guy is a masochist or, and this is not a contradiction, the arts allow you to find...and particularly music, cinema and literature, allow you to find your own emotions and pain, but in a way that helps you to live." Undoubtedly, the best compliment I can pay *A Brutal Game* is that it has the same emotional impact as the way Baudelaire's poem describes the affect that music has on him. Indeed, as far as serial killer flicks are concerned, you probably will not find one more transcendental and strangely uplifting as Brisseau's. Additionally, you will also probably not find a coming-of-age flick featuring a female protagonist that will be more appealing to men than women. Of course, you know it is a Brisseau film when a half-crazed cripple is given a certain nymph-like yet virginal sex appeal. Undoubtedly, after watching *A Brutal Game*, I think understand why Brisseau was a teacher, but it was only when he became a filmmaker that he was able to coerce young chicks into taking their clothes off.

-Ty E

SOUND AND FURY

Jean-Claude Brisseau (1988)

While France once had a good portion of the world's population under its control as the second-largest colonial empire and caused much mayhem and destruction to Europe in its spreading of so-called 'human rights' and the three-headed dragon "Liberté, égalité, fraternité," the French have a reputation for being preposterously pretentious pansies amongst most Americans as a result of their patently pathetic role in the Second World War, among other things. Admittedly, most French films, especially those associated with the *La Nouvelle Vague*, have only reinforced this seemingly unshakeable stereotype for me. Indeed, I cannot think of bigger candy ass pseudo-gangsters than those featured in early Jean-Luc Godard flicks like *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* and *Bande à part* (1964) aka *Band of Outsiders* and the criminals and conmen of films by François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Pierre Melville, and Louis Marie Malle are not much better. It was only until I discovered the oeuvre of frog misfit auteur Jean-Claude Brisseau (*Un jeu brutal* aka *A Brutal Game*, *Noce blanche* aka *White Wedding*), who has made films that are empathetic towards everything from child-killing serial killers to Lolita-loving heterosexual pederasts, not to mention the fact that the filmmaker was arrested in 2002 on charges of sexual harassment, fined and given a suspended one-year prison sentence after a couple of chicks performed sexual acts on one another during an extra intimate audition for the director's work *Choses secrètes* (2002) aka *Secret Things*. Instead of attempting to hide the fact that he was arrested, Brisseau—a filmmaker that is fiercely French in the best sort of way (and, no, I am not trying to be ironic) as a mensch with a clearly jovially anarchistic heart—valiantly decided to direct a film about his criminally carnal experiences entitled *Les Anges Exterminateurs* (2006) aka *Exterminating Angels* which, although an official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, was much maligned by critics and described by many as nothing more than preposterous and pretentious pornographic trash disguised as art. Admittedly, I have not even seen half of Brisseau's films, but judging simply by his early cult masterpiece *De bruit et de Fureur* (1988) aka *Sound and Fury* aka *The Sound and the Fury*, I can only assume that he has more testicular fortitude than any and every single one of the filmmakers associated with the French New Wave as a sort of French Abel Ferrara, albeit more cultivated and hardcore.

Like his mentor Éric Rohmer before him, Brisseau was a teacher and part-time filmmaker at the time that *Sound and Fury* had propelled him into critical and commercial success after it premiered at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival where it won the Special Youth Jury Prize. Championed by so-called 'left-wing' (translation: armchair communist) film critics because they felt that it's auteur was a "socially concerned filmmaker" due to his no bullshit depiction of Parisian

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ghetto teenage gang ‘culture’ and criminality, the film is a decidedly dark, bleak, gritty and pessimistic work that also manages to be quite hilarious, endlessly enthralling, strikingly beautiful, and even sometimes heartwarming in a pre-apocalyptic sort of way. Indeed, with its so-called ‘new naturalism’ combined with random scenes of otherworldly oneiric pulchritude, the film is what you might expect if Teutonic dandy auteur Werner Schroeter was a rampantly heterosexual frog instead of a morbidly melancholy homo and attempted to direct a work that film was a mix between Vittorio De Sica’s *Ladri di biciclette* (1948) aka *Bicycle Thieves*, Nicholas Ray’s *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Ken Loach’s *Kes* (1969), and the underrated kraut ‘socialist realist’ work *Das Ende des Regenbogens* (1979) aka *The End of the Rainbow* directed by Uwe Frießner, albeit all the more magical and nihilistic. Featuring psychopathic lesbo negress gang leaders, anti-brotherly teen-on-adult rape, senseless acts of spontaneous patricide, violent youth suicides, and an amorous apparition that looks like an angel but acts more like a debauched demoness, *Sound and Fury* is more than likely the most gorgeously grotesque gang flick ever made, which probably does not say much considering the general aesthetic sterility of subgenre, but then again it would almost be criminal to simply lump the film in that subgenre in the first place.

After the death of his grandmother, strange and sensitive boy protagonist Bruno Scamperlé (Vincent Gaspé in his first and sole film role)—a young man that is apparently 13-years-old but more resembles a prepubescent child—is forced to move in with his mother at a Parisian ghetto apartment complex with his beloved pet canary ‘Superman,’ who is his only true friend. When Bruno arrives at his mother’s apartment, he finds a sign reading “Welcome My Darling” and a kitchen table full of food and treats, but the protagonist’s mommy is nowhere in sight. Indeed, the viewer never actually gets to see Bruno’s mother because she works 24/7 just to make ends meet, thus the unwittingly forsaken protagonist is left to fend for himself without moral guidance or emotional support in a world plagued by senseless violence and criminality. As a mostly emotionally monotone lad with next to no moral compass aside for a deep compassion for animals, Bruno is surely a young man that is quite vulnerable to pernicious influences, so it is rather unfortunate that he lives in the same building as the most decidedly depraved and proudly morally bankrupt kid in the Parisian multicultural ghetto. Indeed, a young leather-jacket-clad teenage degenerate named Jean-Roger Roffi (François Négret of Leos Carax’s *Mauvais sang* (1986) aka *The Night is Young* and Louis Malle’s *Au Revoir Les Enfants* (1987)) also lives in the low-income apartment complex and the Bruno first sees him upon arriving at the building while the somewhat loony lad is merrily setting a rug on fire. When a young man becomes outraged by Jean-Roger’s pyromaniac proclivities and drags him back to his apartment and demands that his father Marcel (Bruno Cremer of William Friedkin’s *Sorcerer* (1977) and François Ozon’s *Sous le sable* (2000)

aka Under the Sand) discipline the boy, the proud patriarch responds by brutally beating the nosy concerned citizen, proudly declaring “Nobody has the right to beat my sons. Nobody but me,” and then smacking his son. Unfortunately for him, Jean-Roger and his father Marcel will soon become two of the most prominent figures in Bruno’s life, thus eventually leading to his totally tragic downfall. Not long after arriving at his mom’s home, Bruno spots an angelic ‘apparition’ (Spanish-born Brisseau regular María Luisa García) wearing a blood red 17th-century dress and holding a falcon inside the apartment. The falcon is actually Bruno’s pet bird Superman and it transforms into a bird of prey every single time the mysterious sensual spirit appears. Bruno follows the apparition into a back bedroom where she appears naked and has the boy kiss her and touch her unclad body, though the falcon also sinisterly scratches the boy’s face, thus hinting the dubious spirit is not as heavenly as she looks. When a female teacher begins playing an important role in Bruno’s life as a surrogate mother of sorts, the apparition suddenly no longer appears, thus reflecting that the spirit is a sort of anti-mother who, instead of lovingly nurturing the protagonist, leads him on a dead-end road of self-obliteration.

Aside from living in the same apartment building, protagonist Bruno and teenage delinquent Jean-Roger are also in the same class with a beautiful young female teacher (Fabienne Babe) who the latter incessantly gives trouble which includes embarrassing her in front of the entire classroom by slapping her on the ass. Ultimately, the teacher and Jean-Roger will fight for the ‘heart’ of seemingly morally retarded protagonist Bruno, who is highly impressionable and stuck somewhere between a figurative heaven and hell. Notably, Bruno and Jean-Roger’s friendship begins when the latter steals the former a motorbike so they can ride around their ghetto and cause havoc. When Jean-Roger dares to torture a dog by wickedly tying a rope around its neck and dragging it from his motorbike, Bruno becomes exceedingly enraged and attacks the sadistic philistine teen. When Bruno reveals that he attacked him because he does not like it when people hurt animals, Jean-Roger replies, “You’re weird” and then proceeds to play a prank on two dipsomaniac bums by lighting their clothes on fire, though the protagonist does not mind as he does not have much empathy for humans. When Jean-Roger takes Bruno back to his apartment, his father shoots a gun a couple feet away from their heads and then says to the boys, “Don’t ever forget! Always be on your guard!,” which inspires his son to say to the protagonist, “You see? He’s great, my dad. He’s severe but he understands life.” Jean-Roger’s young adult brother Thierry (Thierry Helene) is less impressed with incessantly reckless behavior of his father Marcel, as he has a job and serious girlfriend and is tired of living in a dangerous criminal environment that is full of plenty of beer and bullets. Indeed, Marcel is a proud career criminal who, aside from stealing cars and pinball machines, contracts underage teens to do his dirty work for him since they are less likely to go to prison if they get caught. In Marcel’s mind,

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doing a couple years in prison is preferable to living in the figurative jail of mainstream bourgeois society. Marcel's favorite son is Thierry, so he takes it rather hard when his progeny refuses to go drinking and shooting with him. Naturally, Jean-Roger is extremely jealous of Thierry due to his father's special affection for him, so he goes out of his way to be as wayward as possible so as to earn Marcel's respect, but his efforts seem in vain. Also living at the apartment is Jean-Roger's virtually rotting dying grandfather, who can no longer properly speak or walk but merely lies in a small bed all day and is not in a hospital because his son Marcel is a sort of criminal anarchist and has a complete distrust of all institutions. As later revealed in the film, Marcel seems to have derived his distrust for authority and law after serving in the army and being exposed to mountains of corpses and war atrocities.

When Jean-Roger starts a virtual riot at his school after jumping out of his classroom window, climbing onto the roof of the building, and hanging off the end as if he has a death wish, a social worker is sent to his family's apartment and when she gets there she is greeted by a sign reading, "Death to the Social Worker" and a gun being pressed against the side of her delicate little head. Indeed, while sporting a goofy pink children's mask that makes him seem like some sort of monstrous child, Marcel puts a gun to the young female social worker's head and threatens her by hatefully stating, "Why the hell are you hassling us here? Bitch. If you come and try to bother us again, you'll wish you'd never been born." Ultimately, the social worker resigns after her run-in with Marcel and Jean-Roger is temporarily suspended from school for his behavior, thus giving Bruno the opportunity to bond with his beautiful teacher, who gives protagonist private lessons after school and attempts to instill him with so much needed self-esteem. Of course, Bruno still continues to hangout with Jean-Roger and the two do things like watch lesbian porn flicks and George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) when they are not outside committing petty crimes. One day, Bruno accompanies Jean-Roger and Marcel when they go by Thierry's place of work. Marcel is mad that his son Thierry is moving out of the small family apartment and into a new place with his middle-class journalist girlfriend, so the bizarrely heartbroken father attempts to coerce his son to dump his ladylove and become a criminal like himself, stating things like, "Those people, they're not like us" and "When you're done fucking her, what will the two of you talk about? You'll find yourself imprisoned for the rest of your life in a golden jail. If you're lucky." When Thierry remarks, "I want peace. A real job, and to be esteemed by respectable people," his father replies, "Like a slave...all your life. I saw corpses, piled, thrown in the mud in heaps, halved...kids with their eyes gouged out, scabby old women tortured... We counted the dead by the number of trucks." Indeed, Marcel developed his degenerate nihilistic criminal philosophy as a result of his experience in the army and when Thierry remarks that he never told him about that before, he replies, "I've never told anyone, no. There's no

god, no punishment. There's nothing, my boy. Nothing but the big black hole at the end. There will always be war, everywhere. It will never end. I won't ever bust my ass again for those people. And I don't want you to either. The only thing that counts, is yourself. Laws are for suckers. Be like me – don't set your sights to high. You'll have both money and freedom." Ultimately, Marcel gives Thierry a thick wad of cash and tells him to take a vacation in the country and spend some time thinking about whether he wants to become a law-abiding bourgeoisie cuckold or a 'free' criminal like himself.

As time passes, Jean-Roger gets more and more involved with an extremely violent and predatory teenage multicultural gang led by a butch bull-dyke that looks like a negro-arab hybrid named Mina (Fejria Deliba). After setting a car driven by a rival gang on fire by throwing a Molotov cocktail at it, Jean-Roger ends up murdering one of the boys after he escapes from the inflamed automobile with a shotgun in his hands by stabbing him in the back with a knife while Bruno does nothing to stop the sadistic behavior of his comrade. While the gang rejects Bruno, the group's sadistic Sapphic leader tells Jean-Roger he can become a member after he proves that he is man enough. Meanwhile, the teacher ends her after-school tutoring sessions with Bruno at the recommendation of the school's pussy principle after Jean-Roger spray-paints "Go on and you will croak bitch" on her car. To add insult to injury, Jean-Roger also has an anonymous letter sent to the principle that claims the teacher is having sexual relations with Bruno. While the teacher teaches Bruno somewhat romantic things like how to waltz to Nana Mouskouri's cover of the highly popular traditional Bretagne song "Aux marches du Palais," she stops the protagonist when he instinctively attempts to kiss her. Ultimately, Mina demands that Jean-Roger that he must rape a girl in front of the entire gang if he wants to be a member, so the decidedly depraved teen requests that he be able to sexually pillage his brother Thierry's bourgeois journalist girlfriend, thus leading to a series of senseless tragic events.

While Thierry manages to stop the defiling of his girlfriend mid-rape by attacking and beating Jean-Roger, Mina's crew soon gangs up on the loving boyfriend and beat him unconscious. Ultimately, Mina and Jean-Roger decide to have a bonfire where they wait for Thierry to wake up so they can "teach him a lesson." When Marcel finally catches wind of what is going on and spots members of the gang carrying his favorite son Thierry towards the fire, he begins shooting at the juvenile delinquents and manages to kill a number of them before going after his son Jean-Roger, who is extremely drunk on liquor and is carrying around a revolver. Of course, novice dipsomaniac Jean-Roger dares to shoot his father and hits him in his rather large gut. In the fear of what his father might do to him for shooting him, Jean-Roger follows the advice of Mina and her girlfriend and decides to hang his father from a tree right next to the bonfire. Meanwhile, Bruno goes outside and looks for his pet canary Superman after it flies out of his apartment window. After Jean-Roger shoots and kills the bird

SOUND AND FURY

moments after it lands on his lynched father's shoulder, the apparition guides Bruno to the spot where the bodies of both Superman and Marcel are. When the apparition hands Bruno Jean-Roger's revolver, the protagonist opts to blow his 13-year-old brains out. In the end, Jean-Roger, who is apparently somehow now reformed as a result of being incarcerated, writes the Teacher a letter in prison where he apologizes for his previous behavior, explains how he saw the spirit of Bruno, and begs for forgiveness.

While *Sound and Fury* is oftentimes compared to so-called 'urban youth' films like Jean-François Richet's *Ma 6-T va crack-er* (1997) aka *Crack 6-T* and Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995), it is ultimately infinitely more authentic, poetic, magical, and entertaining than those two films, which are not much more than pseudo-artsy xenophiliac trash that provide a safe way for white liberals to wallow in their fetish for ghetto garbage from the third world while feeling superior over the white working-class. While I hate to use the word since it has become nearly meaningless in our morally inverted world, I have to say that Jean-Claude Brisseau's film is a rare true piece of cinematic 'humanism' that dares to depict the most unsavory members of the Parisian lumpenprole in a way that enables the viewer to understand their behavior without making pathetic slave-morality-inspired excuses for their abhorrent actions. Indubitably the character of Marcel is one of the most reprehensible fathers in film history yet in the end you cannot help but see him as a sad tragic figure who, in the end, found minor redemption by saving one of his sons while ultimately becoming the victim of another. Of course, Brisseau must also be commended for the way he opted to have protagonist Bruno Scamperlé meet his end. As a man that taught at public schools for two decades, Brisseau surely came to the conclusion that there is no hope for the hopeless and that public education systems are the height of bureaucratic impotence and inefficiency. Of course, a lot has changed in France since *Sound and Fury* was released nearly three decades, namely that the country has much worse problems than its white underclass, which has been virtually swallowed up and eaten alive by Islamic colonizers who are effortlessly outbreeding the seemingly suicidal indigenous French population.

As someone that pretty much agrees with the validity of the Mudsill theory, I think it is absurd to even pretend that the forsaken underclass featured in Brisseau's film is in need of saving, for a marginal superior few like Marcel's son Thierry might escape such a pathetic existence, but the rest are doomed to remain in prole pandemonium and rightly so, as it is their god given birthright. Aside from some of the other Mediterranean countries, France is the most senile rotten corpse of a country in Europa and not unlike the equally extreme Paris-ghetto-based French-Italian coproduction *La Dernière femme* (1976) aka *The Last Woman* directed by Marco Ferreri, *Sound and Fury* demonstrates that the French capital, like most major European cities, will only see the further growth of a sort of neo-barbarism as expressed in an expanding sub-working-

class that lives to destroy and would love nothing more to bring birth to an apocalyptic world where their nihilistic hedonism can be fully expressed without consequence (not that the current French criminal justice system is not ludicrously liberal, especially when it comes to their melanin-privileged populations). With his film, Brisseau has managed to do the seemingly impossible by giving great beauty and sensual realism to a fiercely forlorn world that thrives off of ugliness, savagery, and the sort of highly confident stupidity that one can only find among people that are sired in shitholes. Like a more honest update of François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (1959) aka *The 400 Blows* as directed by a man who seems to enjoy lesbian porn and Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* more than Hitchcock and Godard, *Sound and Fury* is arguably the least patronizing and most artful white ghetto film ever made, thus not only making a truly singular oddity of French cinema, but cinema in general. Indeed, Brisseau's film was certainly not made for bleeding heart liberals (although they have misguidedly attempted to claim it as their own), though it certainly makes the viewer's heart bleed.

-Ty E

THE EXTERMINATING ANGELS
THE EXTERMINATING ANGELS

Jean-Claude Brisseau (2006)

Not at all the Luis Buñuel film of the near-same title, *The Exterminating Angel(s)* is Jean-Claude Brisseau's somewhat-biographical film in response to his arrest with charges of imposing women to masturbate in his presence as part of his auditions. In the film, our lead character François commits to exploiting women for the sake of art, or France's long standard of art for the sake of women. Right off the bat, I was immersed in this film for its blunt portrayal of women, even so to the script. As I quote one auditionee, "We're all a bit weird. A bit slutty too." Let this women speak for the gender, will you? As François begins auditioning for a film (film within a film) exploring transgressive sexuality, *The Exterminating Angels* takes no time to dive headfirst into the shallow pond known as female sexuality. Certain desires all let be known, such as being fucked by strangers, gang-bangs, and other perverted desires branching from the central theme: anonymity. Eventually, several women get too attached to the director which is a cause for problems. I suppose clitoral stimulation and voyeurism is a quick mix for obsessive love.

Brisseau subversively reveals himself to be a bit of a narcissist after transforming what should have been an otherwise seedy character into a Casanova. Audition after audition, which translates into a ridiculous amount of on-screen masturbation, frustration builds for François as his marriage is clearly on the rocks. Nights are spent in hotel rooms with other women in hopes to achieve artistic enlightenment. François is stupidly chasing the end of a rainbow in his futile quest. The sexual resentment soon reaches a simmer of which he unleashes upon his wife, providing the only bit of humanity this two-dimensional character has. These results of which I had been patiently waiting for are explosive, and to think I had began to doubt our character's sexuality. If *The Exterminating Angels* is based around loose fact, let it be known that the portrayal of the selectiveness of the female orgasm seems concise. To continue the reign of egotism, two characters are introduced who are hinted to being "the Exterminating Angels", two female apparitions who supervise his actions. When fate spreads that cruel grin towards François, one of these angels of death admits that she too, has fallen in love with our director. Such a vain boy you are, Mr. Brisseau.

The director surely fancies himself a provocateur. While his actions can be overtly analyzed as a footnote to create the art, one can only bring to mind that [hilarious] news story not too long ago where a man traveled door-to-door, offering up free breast exams. Brisseau allows very little to take away from the erratic and irresponsible taboos of the female wunderkind. Angels prefer to remain stationary as women are pleasing one another, giving the film a sense of strict pornography - a film about the orgasm more than the struggling director. The biographical context is limited to only this, altering the outcome into a scene

of brief and phony violence. Call the cause & effect retribution if you will, but high-brow art this isn't. The sexuality on display is rarely erotic and quite tedious. If I wanted to watch legs splayed in an uncomfortable fashion, I'd search for amateur pornography. The Exterminating Angels neither shocks nor humbles. My hopes were far broader than what I had in store. Included with the film are negative connotations towards lesbianism. Within, several lesbian characters are established. The foundation for their love is built off lust and not understanding. The only emotion displayed is channeled straight through their vulva. No brain chemistry required, The Exterminating Angels is a rather disappointing film concerning the destructive tendencies of women, in this case, cockroaches, as they slobber and hunger to reach their peak. This film simply proves that it's lurid to a fault. Not to mention the terrible pacing and mechanic voice-overs spouting prose before each scene - truly, madly, pretentious.

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SNAILS IN THE HEAD
SNAILS IN THE HEAD

Jean-Étienne Siry (1980)

Although best remembered, if remembered at all, for her small role as a high-class whore in Marco Ferreri's savage anti-bourgeois satire *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) and playing alongside Isabelle Huppert in Claude Goretta's class-conscious erotic romance flick *The Lacemaker* (1977) aka *La dentellière*, French actress Florence Giorgetti deserves to be recognized for probably being the only actress in cinema history who has starred in multiple artsy horror-thriller films as a hysterical woman who suffers the ultimate female insult of being in a relationship with a pansy poof painter who prefers men over women (to make things stranger, Giorgetti also happens to be the mother of French painter Frédéric Arditi, though I am not sure as to whether or not he is on the pink team). Giorgetti's first cinematic excursion in the realm of flicks about chicks that unwittingly date guys that like dicks was as the eponymous character of superlatively strange quasi-Hitchcockian sodomite slasher flick *Monique* (1978) aka *Flashing Lights* directed by undeservedly forgotten artsploitation auteur/gay pornographer Jacques Scandelari (*Beyond Love and Evil*, *New York City Inferno*). The second film Giorgetti starred in playing the role of a forsaken babe with a boy-bugging beau, *Snails in the Head* (1980) aka *Un escargot dans la tête*, was also directed by a fag frog filmmaker/pornographer by the name of Jean-Étienne Siry. When not directing homo hardcore flicks like *Mâles hard corps* (1977) and *And God Created Man* (1978) aka *Et... Dieu créa les hommes*, Siry was working in the more respectable trade of designing poster art for films ranging from Richard Lester's Beatles vehicle *Help!* (1965) to Otto Preminger's *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965) to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Lola* (1981). As far as I can tell, *Snails in the Head* is Siry's first and sole directing excursion in the non-pornographic realm, as a rather idiosyncratic psychosexual horror-thriller with surrealist elements. Indeed, like Scandelari's *Monique*, Siry's film is from a forgotten time in film history during the late-1970s/early-1980s when gay auteur-pornographer's thought they could capitalize on the popularity of horror/exploitation cinema while also including a semi-cryptic gay subtext depicting the 'horrors' of a homo attempting to live an ostensibly heterosexual lifestyle. Featuring an ambient synthesizer-driven soundtrack by Didier Vasseur, who also got his start in gay porn (he scored Jack Deveau's *Le musée* (1976) aka *Strictly Forbidden*, which Siry penned and also starred in) and also appears briefly in the film as a musician, *Snails in the Head* is a nasty and surprisingly nuanced, if not predictably uneven, little celluloid nightmare that is quite unquestionably trashy and even kitschy in parts, but also manages to be quite unnerving, as if the viewer has the distinct displeasure of being wrapped up in the perturbing (psycho)drama going on inside the fagola filmmaker's unhinged head. The film is also notable for conforming to racial stereotypes, as the slur 'Snail-Snapper' is not used against

the French people for nothing, thus making *Snails in the Head* a sort of French (anti)Heimat horror flick.

Opening with the generic warning, "Between dream and reality is a frontier that no-one should ever cross..." *Snails in the Head* immediately lets the viewer know that they are about to enter a sometimes surreal world that blurs the line between reality and fucked fantasy. H el ene (Florence Giorgetti) is a somewhat successful novelist, but something must be wrong with her as she is currently staying in a mental institution and one night while sleeping in her hospital room she suffers a horrible hallucination where she sees snails crawling out of the wall during what seems like an earthquake (undoubtedly, this scene seems to anticipate the hospital scene from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*). When H el ene's ex-boyfriend Antoine (Jean-Claude Bouillon) comes by to check on her at the nuthouse, it is revealed she is a highly hysterical woman that has a hard time keeping a mensch around. Happily married with a child, Antoine accuses H el ene of destroying her previous relationships with him and her husband Philippe, venomously stating, "You wanted him to live only through you and for you [...] You always destroy everything you touch. It seems you take delight in doing people's misfortune." Of course, more daunting drama and devastation eventually comes into H el ene's life when she becomes involved with a widowed painter named Edouard (played by underrated frog actor Renaud Verley, who previously starred in Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) and Claudio Guer n's *A Bell From Hell*), who had himself been institutionalized after losing his ability to paint after both his wife and daughter were tragically killed in a car accident. Naturally, H el ene is delighted to hear that Edouard is a fan of her latest novel, though she is saddened by his remark that he does not like the portrait of her that was featured on the back of the book. As it turns out, the novelist's ex-husband Philippe took the photo, which Edouard concludes was taken by a man who, "didn't like women very much." If one thing is for sure, it is that Philippe haunts the nut-job novelist's life, as she constantly daydreams about being sexually devoured by her ex-hubby who, although not actually featured in the film (aside from a couple flashback sex scenes), has a certain mystique about him that little Eddie seems to lack.

Of course, when both H el ene and Edouard get out of the loony bin, they begin dating one another, with their first date being at the former's dimly lit houseboat. After introducing Edouard to her beloved pet owl Dimitri, H el ene plays a record of Wagner's "Liebestod" and the painter morbidly and ultimately prophetically declares, "Wagner is the King...Die loving...Love to death...to the height that only death can understand." As one can expect, Edouard eventually gets his wish to "love to death," though it is not nearly as romantic as he probably hoped it would be. Of course, in no time, H el ene moves out of her quaint houseboat and moves into Edouard's considerably eerie and equally disconcerting rural farmhouse. Indeed, a man that has not gotten over the death of his wife and child, Edouard not only keeps two mannequins at his dinner table

SNAILS IN THE HEAD

to make him feel less lonely in regard to his recently deceased family, but he has also kept the smashed car that his loved ones died in. While H el ene has, to some dubious degree, fallen in ‘love’ with Edouard, the painter’s elderly friends, an old busybody bitch named Mrs. Sevetier (Jeanne Allard) and her quasi-cuckolded husband Mr. Sevetier (Marcel Gassouk), describe her as a “whore” behind her back. As a man who describes his deceased wife as having a “bitch look” and sometimes nostalgically recollects murder fantasies he has had in the past, Ed is not exactly the most stable of individuals. Indeed, after describing how his dead spouse and her friends were once, “posing and parading like fags to mock me. I could have killed all of them! All of them!” Edouard violently stabs a piece of food like an autistic child with a unhealthy addiction to Ritalin and shitty slasher flicks, which does not exactly cheer up H el ene who, despite having just fallen in love, has an impenetrable case of melancholy. Upon learning Ed and his friends the Sevetiers love raising and eating snails, H el ene begins having grotesque nightmares about slimy mollusks, including one rather disturbing dream where she gives birth to hundreds of these slimy creatures while doctors celebrate by drinking wine (after all, France is the land of wine-sniffing Snail-Snappers). Of course, things get all the more strange when Edouard paints a portrait of H el ene with a giant snail on the top of her head.

When H el ene and Edouard go to see the former’s ex-boyfriend Antoine, their relationship ultimately comes tumbling down in a most deleterious sort of way that no love affair could ever recover from. Indeed, when Antoine reveals to H el ene that her lawyer has been trying to get in touch with her for days because her ex-husband, who she constantly has flashbacks of having sex with, has committed suicide via self-lynching. Naturally, H el ene becomes completely hysterical and irrationally hostile and when Ed attempts to comfort her, she absurdly blames him for the suicide of her ex-husband, calls him a “dirty faggot,” and tells him to get away from her. To top everything off, H el ene’s beloved owl attacks Edouard, so the painter breaks the cute little creature’s neck, throws it at his decidedly distraught girlfriend, and storms out of the house. Taking what H el ene said to heart, Edouard decides to become a “dirty faggot” and begins a romantic relationship with a Viking-like dude with longhair and leather-fag mustache named Etienne (Charles Dubois), but before joining the pink team, the poof painter ritualistically burns his two mannequins and the car his wife and child died in, thus symbolically destroying all ties to his past and previous life as a heterosexual family man. Instead of painting portraits of H el ene, Ed begins working on a morbid portrait of his boy toy Etienne’s decapitated head. When H el ene shows up at Edouard’s humble abode in a desperate attempt to rekindle their scorched relationship and defiantly declares to Mrs. Sevetier, “I come to see my lover to get laid,” she discovers that her less than sane beau, who is too drunk on snails and sodomy to care about some sad slag, wants nothing to do with her. Eventually, H el ene receives a letter from Edouard telling her

to meet him at his house, but when she does, she discovers her lover dead with snails crawling on his fairy face. In the end, the film comes full-circle, as H el ene awakens in her room at the mental institution and discovers snails, as well as Edouard, coming through cracks in the wall.

Equal parts aberrant arthouse absurdity, tasteless quasi-supernatural celluloid trash, and crypto-anti-family homo hysteria, *Snails in the Head* is certainly a work that defies classification as an artsploitation flick that could have only been created in late-1970s/early-1980s post-counter-culture France. Indeed, auteur Jean- tienne Siry came from the same circle of iconoclastic frog fag filmmakers like Lionel Soukaz (*Race d'Ep* aka *The Homosexual Century*, *Ixe*), Philippe Vallois (*Johan - Mon  t  75*, *Rainbow Serpent* aka *Halt roffic*), and St phane Marti (*La cit  des neuf portes*, *Mira corpora*) that, although now largely forgotten, took French cinema to unforeseeable realms of unhinged libertinism and aesthetic subversion that make the filmmakers of the French New Wave seemed like a bunch of prudish old farts. While apparently receiving mostly favorable reviews when it was first released over three decades ago, *Snails in the Head* was destined to be forgotten, as it is just too plain preternatural, warped, perverted, and distressing to have ever developed even a small fan base, as a work that was clearly directed by a genuinely sick and depraved sperm burper who seem to see heterosexuality and vaginas (hence, the 'slimy' snails) as quite horrifying. Indeed, not unlike the work of J rg Buttgerit and Marian Dora, Siry's film is too intelligent, subtextual, and poetic to appeal to the average philistine horror fan and bourgeois arthouse fans would probably piss their Criterion Collection brand panties if they were forced to endure such a fucked flick that dares to mix kitschy supernatural horror conventions with perverted celluloid poetry. Admittedly, as a work about a mentally deranged woman who falls in love with an even more mentally deranged man who converts to cocksucking after being called a "faggot" one-too-many times and who eventually dies in a distinctly undignified fashion with snails crawling across his face, *Snails in the Head* is not exactly an uplifting work, but instead, a spasmodic piece of heterophobia that challenges the bounds of aesthetic and thematic sanity. Indeed, when it comes down to it, Siry's film is a cryptic cautionary tale about the abject misery that colon-chokers might suffer if they deny their god given right to buggering bros and do the unthinkable by marrying a woman.

-Ty E

DIVA
DIVA

Jean-Jacques Beineix (1981)

I don't know about other people, but when I hear the word "diva" I usually think of bitchy childless broads with deep voices that are mindlessly worshiped by both effete fags and fag hags alike. Of course, when it comes to the world of cinema, the importance of divas in both the personal and professional lives of gay filmmakers is no different. Indeed, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Paul Morrissey, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Schroeter, Daniel Schmid, Paul Bartel, John Waters, and Steve Balderson are just a couple of the auteur filmmakers that were/are obsessed with divas and utilize(d) them for their films. For his debut feature film *Diva* (1981), mainstream heterosexual French auteur Jean-Jacques Beineix (*Moon in the Gutter*, *Betty Blue*) would appropriate elements of gay culture and somehow managed to make a film featuring a wild chase scene with exactly nil cultivated cocksuckers about a young moped-riding frog mailman of the supposedly straight sort whose obsession with a black diva accidentally leads him to being targeted by both Taiwanese gangsters and a physically grotesque alpha-pimp police chief of the miscegenation-proliferating sort. Unquestionably a work with a majorly moronic and oftentimes absurd plot, Beineix's flick features the sort of storyline you might expect from a Hollywood blockbuster where the studio heads attempting to appeal to a minority of gay southern hairdressers instead of the hopelessly proud philistine majority. Indeed, *Diva* and some of Beineix's works are the sort of films that the technically proficient hacks of Hollywood should make, as true cinematic experiences that may not be big on nuance, subtext, and thematic complexity, but do have a certain alluring artfulness that almost makes one forget that they are watching what really amounts to frivolous frog twaddle of the aesthetically spectacular sort. Part of the so-called 'Cinéma du look' movement—French works directed by Beineix, Luc Besson, and Leos Carax during the 1980s that emphasized style over substance and that were largely influenced by late era American New Wave works (e.g. Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, Coppola's *One from the Heart*), late era Fassbinder (*Lola*, *Querelle*), music videos (especially of the New Wave and New Romanticiſt variety), fashion photography and even TV commercials (!)—*Diva* is cultivated kitsch drowned in a fulfilling visual feast of throbbing blues, Italian Romantic opera, and naughty neon nights that almost make multicultural Paris seem like a magical and mystifying place that totally transcends its world famous reputation as Europe's modern day Sodom. Based on the 1979 crime novel of the same name written by French novelist/poet Daniel Odier (under the pseudonym 'Delacorta'), Beineix's film fell into my lap by accident while checking out 'official' music videos by the drug-addled electronic group Thieves Like Us, which 'unofficially' used clips from the famous chase scene for one of their videos. Set in a modernistic 'post-racial' multicultural France flooded with sexually alluring

women from virtually every single race except white, the only major white female character is a frigid chick who thinks her gun is an appropriate substitute for a dick, a quasi-megalomaniacal American negress is the ultimate diva, and all forms of authority/order are depicted as being overtly 'fascistic,' Diva does virtually every annoying politically correct thing one can imagine to the point where it had me fantasizing about France being once again occupied by Germany yet somehow the film works. Co-produced by Russian-Jewish-French producer Serge Silberman, who previously collaborated with Luis Buñuel on such masterpieces as *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1964) and the director's swansong *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977), and featuring a pastiche of Erik Satie's *Gnossiennes* created by Romanian composer Vladimir Cosma and a nocturnal chase scene that Roger Ebert compared to those featured in classic films like *Bullitt* (1968) and *The French Connection* (1971), *Diva* is, if nothing else, certainly one of the most successful cinematic marriages between high and low art, as a sort of proletarian arthouse flick.

Young French mailman Jules (played by Frédéric Andréi, who would later become a filmmaker) is a cultivated prole of the seemingly half-autistic sort who rides his beloved moped to a Parisian opera house one night to watch and illegally record his favorite opera singer Cynthia Hawkins (Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez)—a celebrated black American soprano opera singer—performing "La Wally," act 1, by Italian Romantic composer Alfredo Catalani. Unbeknownst to gentleman Jules, two sunglasses-adorned Taiwanese gangsters saw him record the performance and they want the bootleg recording because Ms. Hawkins is an old fashioned 'artiste' who refuses to record albums, thereupon making the mailman's recording an extremely rare and truly one-of-a-kind item that is all but priceless. After the performance, Jules awkwardly attempts to chitchat with Hawkins and when that more or less fails, the peculiar postal worker subsequently steals her gown from her dressing room, thus demonstrating his particularly perverted obsession with the colored diva. Of course, Jules' danger is doubled when he unwittingly comes into possession of a cassette tape that is dropped in his bag by a Slavic prostitute named Nadia (Chantal Deruaz), who is subsequently murdered in broad daylight by a mean midget skinhead named 'Le curé' aka 'The Priest' (Dominique Pinon) and his tall Svengali-like Mediterranean comrade 'L' Antillais' aka 'The Caribbean' (Gérard Darmon). The hitman odd couple work for a considerably corrupt Police commissioner named Jean Saporta (Jacques Fabbri) who is secretly runs a global prostitution ring where he trades hard drugs for brown, black, and yellow girls that he has hustle for him in the streets of Paris. Before being murdered, Nadia, who was the former mistress of the crypto-pimp police commissioner, recorded an incriminating testimony regarding Saporta's carnal underworld empire. No small-time crime novice, Saporta has set it up so that the local authorities and media think that the Parisian hooker industry is under the control of a fictional Indian man and

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Nadia's tape reveals this fact. Unbeknownst to Jules for most of the movie, he is in possession of this rather incriminating recording as Nadia dropped it in his mailbag shortly before she took a fatal knife to the back, so it takes the mobile mailman a while to figure out why he is a marked man. Meanwhile, two 'good cops,' Paula (Anny Romand) and Zatopek (Patrick Floersheim), who seem to represent the ignorant yet well-meaning French middle class, attempt to catch up with Jules to get the tape. Ironically, it is when good cop Zatopek attempts to catch Jules that the film features its iconic chase scene. Indeed, Jules does a lot of running from various parties, but it is not until towards the end of the film that he realizes who he should be truly afraid of.

After being impressed by her thievery at a hip record store and nude black-and-white pin-ups, Jules strikes up a mostly platonic relationship with an underage Vietnamese chick named Alba (Thuy An Luu), who loves stealing, modeling for ostensibly artsy nude portraits, listening to her headphones, and rolling around buildings in roller-skates. Alba is the muse/girlfriend/slave of a genius artist/gangster/philosopher figure named Gorodish (Richard Bohringer)—a man that initially seems like a total recluse because he spends most of his time hanging out at his lavish home yet is a truly worldly man that seems to know just about everything about everything, no matter what the topic may be—who states to Jules while wearing a goofy snorkel and buttering a baguette regarding his theory of Zen, "Some get high on airplane glue...detergent...fancy gimmicks...My satori is this: Zen in the art of buttering bread." Gorodish is also overprotective over his tiny Asiatic muse Alba (who, it should be noted, was a pale blonde girl in the source novel) and when she shows up late one night after hanging out with Jules, he threatens her by calmly stating, "Do this again and I'll drop you off back on the interstate, with the Vietcong." As he will ultimately prove, Gorodish is the "master of the game" and "deus ex machine" who will manage to solve all of Jules problems by virtually singlehandedly taking out the Taiwanese gangsters, as well as Saporta and his two 'fascistic' goons, by merely playing them like chess pieces. Indeed, compared to Gorodish—a man with a somewhat flat affect who seems to personify stereotypical French pretense, sexual degeneracy (after all, his girlfriend is an underage gook thief with a seemingly low IQ), and artistic dilettantism but ultimately proves to be a super sly criminal genius of the seemingly indomitable sort—Jules is a stupid kid with a celebrity crush who lives in a fantasy world and has no idea of the magnitude of the trouble he mostly unwittingly got himself into. Indeed, if it were not for his new comrade Gorodish, Jules would most certainly be one extra-pale froggy corpse.

Unquestionably, one of the most ridiculous elements of *Diva* is the 'romantic' subplot between protagonist Jules and his dark divine diva Cynthia Hawkins. Not long after awkwardly attempting to speak with her in her dressing room after her performance at the beginning of the film, Jules randomly swings by Cynthia's lavish luxury hotel room and absurdly reveals to her that he is the

crazed fan that swiped her gown. Initially angry and threatening to call security, Cynthia soon begins wallowing in Jules' somewhat unsettling fan boy worship. In fact, Jules has such a bizarre obsession with the diva that he pays an Indian prostitute to model the gown he stole from Cynthia, though he does not dare to look at the streetwalker's bare body when she changes into the glittery dress, as if he is an embarrassed schoolboy who lacks the tools to get down and dirty with a delectable dame. When the brown prostitute remarks to Jules, "You seem a little nutty," the young mailman is not at all offended and proudly replies, "I am," as if he feels special due to his strangely obsessive behavior. A lonely and unpredictable artist with very specific demands and routines, Cynthia refuses to take her manager's advice and record an album after it is revealed that a bootleg of her Paris performance has surfaced. Of course, in the end, the opera singer does not have to worry about anything after Jules recovers the bootleg recording and brings it back to Cynthia and plays it for her, to which the diva remarks, "never heard [herself] sing," as if she feels humbled by the experience. Ironically, despite being a world famous opera singer, Cynthia only manages to feel like a true 'diva' after being swooned by a French lumpenprole mailman on a moped who was swooned by her singing.

I think it is only fitting that my first viewing of *Diva* was via dubious download (as for who made this dubious download, I cannot be sure), as a crime-thriller centering around a bootleg recording that was created in an era when the internet did not exist and one had to deal with shady characters if one wanted to obtain rare artistic materials by less than official means. A rare film with a great and rather iconic chase scene that actually has a bit of artistic merit, Beineix's debut feature proves that there actually be a healthy medium between mindless entertainment and celluloid art that one might describe as 'proletarian cinematic poetry.' Indeed, next to Belgian auteur Patrick Conrad's absurdly underrated flick *Mascara* (1987) starring Charlotte Rampling and Michael Sarrazin, *Diva* has to be the best from the 1980s about divas, death, and aesthetic excess. While technically a crime-thriller, Beineix's work will surely be more appreciated by fans of new wave/punk/goth stylized cult flicks like *Liquid Sky* (1982), Eckhart Schmidt's *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance*, *The Hunger* (1983), *Repo Man* (1984), *Pejzazi u magli* (1984) aka *Landscapes In The Mist*, and even *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985) than by Brian De Palma fanboys. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the film was advertised in the United States with the following tagline: "Here comes a new kind of French New Wave." Unquestionably, as much as I love some (emphasis on "some") films and filmmakers of *La Nouvelle Vague*, I have to admit that I lean more towards the 'new romantic' aesthetic of *Diva* and some of Beineix's other films and I say that as someone that is rather repelled by the mainstream auteur filmmaker's flagrant multicultural fetishism and proclivity toward typical frog twaddle. Indeed, a film has to be doing something right if it manages to make a romance between a goofy half-autistic frog dork and a Amer-

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ican negress opera singer seem somewhat cute and touching.

-Ty E

THE MOON IN THE GUTTER

Jean-Jacques Beineix (1983)

Personally, I cannot think of a cooler and more aesthetically appealing film title than *The Moon in the Gutter* (1983) aka *La Lune dans le caniveau* and I came to that conclusion years before I actually got around to watching French auteur Jean-Jacques Beineix's almost grotesquely gorgeous celluloid oddity. As far as I am concerned, the film is associated with one of the biggest tragedies of cinema history in a sad cinematic scenario that rivals Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* (1924), Tod Browning's *London After Midnight* (1927), Orson Welles' *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), Andrzej Żuławski's *On the Silver Globe* (1988), and most of gutter auteur Andy Milligan's early films in terms of a potential masterpiece needlessly succumbing to studio stupidity, negligence and/or petty vindictiveness. Indeed, the French studio, Gaumont Film Company, absurdly and nonsensically (and, apparently, quite illegally) intentionally destroyed Beineix's original fully-edited 4-hour and a 3-hour versions of the film to supposedly "make space" in the film vaults despite such film reels taking up relatively little space. Apparently, Gaumont, which forced the auteur to cut the film to a mere 137-minute running time (as it exists today, which, according to the filmmaker, apparently destroyed the entire "rhythm" of the film), was so unhappy that the film was such a critical and commercial box-office bomb that they took a sort of symbolic revenge for ostensibly destroying the reputation of the studio by maliciously destroying these two original cuts. In fact, Beineix, who is still haunted by the nightmarish artistic experience even to this today, only discovered of this great betrayal after assembling a 3-hour director's cut of his subsequent feature *Betty Blue* (1986) aka *37° 2 le matin* and requesting to give the same special director's treatment to *The Moon in the Gutter*. Still, even as it exists today, the film is, at least in my less than humble opinion, Beineix's unmitigated magnum opus and one of the greatest masterpieces among flawed masterpieces as the cinematic equivalent of a back-alley opium high where the viewer comes up and down but, not unlike the protagonist, is ultimately left in the same melancholic metaphysical hell as he began. Oftentimes feeling like it is set in a different purgatorial port city of the same narcotizingly artificially-stylized, chthonic Genet-esque cinematic universe as Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Querelle* (1982)—a film that, incidentally, was also produced by Gaumont in a big studio city—the film is masterpiece of meticulously stylized mise-en-scène where Beineix demonstrates with nil vainglorious CGI visual sophistry the great aesthetic heights of the cinematic form while lavishing the viewer with some less-than-feel-good archetypal truths. One of the key works of the so-called *Cinéma du look*—a movement that Fassbinder's later films, including *Querelle*, aesthetically influenced—the film makes it seem as if the *La Nouvelle Vague* never existed and that it is merely the gothic/darkwave

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contribution to the ‘Tradition de qualité’ that the pedantic frogs of the Cahiers du Cinéma so passionately despised. In short, the film has more to do with Marcel Carné and Jean Cocteau than Godard and Truffaut, though it also seems to be influenced by the most obscure and esoteric of film noir flicks like Arthur Ripley’s labyrinthine Cornell Woolrich adaptation *The Chase* (1946) and John Parker’s exceedingly experimental *Dementia* (1955) aka *Daughter of Horror*.

While fiercely French in many ways, *The Moon in the Gutter* is actually adapted from the 1953 pulp-noir novel of the same name by Jewish-American novelist and screenwriter David Loeb Goodis—a cinephile fave that provided source material to various important directors, including Delmer Daves, Jacques Tourneur, Sam Fuller, and François Truffaut, among others—and thus has the pedigree of an eclectic cinephile’s wet dream. Attracted to the novel’s decidedly dark essence, Beineix described it as, “A totally negative story, very black, it was a dark journey with flashes of light, shimmers, glows ... There was also the eruption of a particular embodiment of woman, that girl who arrives in that car, it really was the myth of the femme fatale at its purest ... And then there was gnawing doubt, jealousy ... In short, lots of things which affect the unconscious.” Indeed, one of the film’s greatest attributes is its ominous and oppressive oneiric essence, as the viewer is engulfed in the antihero played by Gérard Depardieu’s perversely paranoid unconscious as he grapples with his beloved late-sister’s rape-turned-suicide and the sensual charms of an almost otherworldly femme fatale portrayed by Naštassja Kinski. A film that practically reeks of tacky designer perfume, stale piss, rank pussy, and cheap beer where the Nietzschean sense of the ‘eternal feminine’ reigns supreme, *The Moon in the Gutter* is a film that, unlike the director’s previous big hit *Diva* (1981)—an enthralling exercise in action-packed style that, rather unfortunately, succumbs to quixotic xenophilia and an exceedingly embarrassing sort of racial fetishism—is hardly politically correct and is set in a wayward ghetto realm of evil obese negress stepmothers and lonely synagogue-side-suicides. In fact, instead of subscribing to some trendy quasi-marxist message like frog filmmakers from the previous generation, Beineix strived to make a completely apolitical flick, even once stating, “I am not interested in political or philosophical demonstrations, they are too simplistic. In *LA LUNE DANS LE CANIVEAU* there is a contrast between poverty and wealth, but it is resolved in a common distress, which is a metaphysical distress where the social divide is no longer operable.” Or, to quote the auteur again as referenced in Phil Powrie’s insightful text *Jean-Jacques Beineix* (2001), “I wanted to make the subconscious materialize on the screen. I didn’t want to be in the service of logic, of reality.” Exceedingly stylish, sensual, steamy, surreal and even sophisticatedly sleazy, the film is thankfully not completely senseless despite whatever certain spiritually and/or culturally cucked film critics had to say when the film was originally released.

A virtual cinematic drug, *The Moon in the Gutter* is a film that, not unlike

Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) or Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985), one need not remember the plot for it to be one of the most memorable movie experiences of your life. In fact, not unlike Scott and Gilliam's flicks, I probably could not give a coherent description of the film's storyline the first couple times I saw it, as to do such a thing seems almost redundant and completely missing the point (notably, somewhat ironically, the film has sort of intentionally redundant narration, as if Beineix reluctantly included it at the behest of the studio). After all, one is not compelled to critique a dream for its supposed incoherence, yet *The Moon in the Gutter* is hardly incoherent (in fact, the storyline is, relatively speaking, fairly simple) and it is certainly more accessible than most of David Lynch's greatest films (and, of course, most cinephiles will probably be tempted to compare it to *Eraserhead* (1977) and *Blue Velvet* (1986), though that would largely be pointless). In short, the film is, first and foremost, an understatedly phantasmagoric experience of the ruthlessly romantic yet ultimately demystifying sort where a seriously messed up man is in both literal and figurative reach of his greatest dream in the form of a dream girl from a dream world where the air doesn't smell like a sort of slightly fishy salty semen and things like self-respect and dignity have actual currency.

While I cannot say I have had the luxury of being with a real rich bitch or true blueblooded aristocrat, my experience is that, the higher social class a chick, the more innately insufferable and sensually sterile she is, thus I can understand the hatred for bourgeois or—more specifically—the sapless (upper)middleclass that fears the smell of human bodies and always puts material wealth above culture and security over love and affection. In fact, out of all the women I have been with, the poorest and most low-class was also the most loving, affectionate, and sexual and she is probably the one I most regret fucking things up with, but I digress. In *The Moon in the Gutter*, tough street frog Gérard Delmas (Gérard Depardieu, who would later trash the film by referring to it as, “The Film in the Gutter”)—a moody and broody stevedore from a decidedly dysfunctional white trash family that includes a rather abusive uppity negro stepmother—finds himself the reluctant object of desire in a bizarre love triangle involving his main whore-cum-stepsister Bella (Victoria Abril in a role originally given to Robert De Niro's high yellow then-wife Diahnne Abbott) and the wealthy yet wild woman of his dreams Loretta (Nastassja Kinski). Unfortunately, Gérard is pretty mentally perturbed and not quite in the soundest of minds to make such a big romantic decision as he has a pathological obsession with finding the malevolent mystery man that raped his beloved sister Catherine (Katya Berger)—a virginal beauty that was apparently too pure for the pernicious lumpenprole world that ultimately destroyed her—who immediately committed suicide with the protagonist's shaving razor. Indeed, the titular moon in the gutter is reflected via Catherine's ruby red blood in the dark slimy alley where she abruptly committed self-slaughter in a perversely poetic scene that finds great beauty in ungodly

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human brutality. While technically a neo-noir flick, *The Moon in the Gutter*—a film that, aside from a couple scenes, was shot entirely in a studio—brings a certain preternatural glamour to the gritty as if god himself decided to polish the demented dirty work of his misbegotten (sub)human creations.

Not surprisingly considering Gérard's obvious incestuous feelings for his dead *lil sis*, both Bella and Loretta look vaguely similar to Catherine to the point where the three could be sisters (in a drunken dream-sequence of the borderline necrophiliac sort, the protagonist has a somewhat erotic encounter with Catherine's unclad corpse at the morgue, only to discover Loretta's face on said corpse). Gérard is even convinced that his alcoholic brother Frank (Dominique Pinon)—a small and grotesque frog that seems like the genetically accursed consequence of France's Alpinid majority's virtual genocide of the Huguenots—was responsible for raping Catherine, but one almost gets the sense that the protagonist is merely projecting his own sense of guilt. After all, Catherine was raped after she fled a hospital as a result of Gérard asking her, "Now you dress like a hooker?" after she went to the trouble to dress nicely for him and borrow a white dress after he was injured at work, hence the protagonist's undying guilt. Undoubtedly, Gérard's pathological paranoia eventually rubs off onto the viewer to the point where one cannot help but even suspect the protagonist of the crime. Notably, quite unlike the mysterious murder of Laura Palmer on *Twin Peaks*, the crime is never solved but it is almost irrelevant as *The Moon in the Gutter* is first and foremost a uniquely uncanny mood piece where dark dreams and repressed desires are one and the same. A miserably melancholic man that lives in a nightmare, Gérard is ultimately unable to embrace his dreams even though, rather improbably, they are practically served to him on a shiny silver platter.

Somewhat intriguingly, Gérard finds a wealthy counterpart in the form of nihilistic drunk named Newton Channing (Vittorio Mezzogiorno) who also happens to be the brother of darling dream femme Loretta. While Gérard has been left with an indelible internal wound as a result of the rape and suicide of his little sister, Newton also suffers inwardly in isolation, even while technically in the company of others, as a result of killing both his parents in an intentional car wreck that involved him insanely driving his white BMW into a big rig truck. As Bella states to Gérard in regard to Newton, "He's weird... He doesn't like himself" and he has decided to start lurking in the local Mikado Bar—the protagonist's virtual second home—because he can, "...play games the rich don't allow. Anything goes here." As with virtually every other male character featured in the film, Gérard initially suspects that Newton, who he competes with in a bizarre ice-eating contest, might be his sister's rapist, but instead the rich playboy unwittingly provides him with the literal/figurative girl of his dreams—a voluptuous beauty that is like both a dream lover and substitute sister—in the form of his own sister. Indeed, being his self-described "Guardian Angel," Loretta—a gal so glamorous that wind seems to be always blowing in her hair—arrives

at the Mikado Bar to pick Newton up and encounters ungentlemanly gentleman Gérard as a result. Undoubtedly, the initial encounter between Gérard and Loretta recalls the Nietzsche poem “Accidentally a Seducer” that reads, “He shot an empty word...Into the empty blue; But on the way it met...A woman whom it slew,” as the protagonist spouts nonsense yet seems to cause the little lady to fall in love with him at first sight. Indeed, when Gérard half-jokingly gives Loretta his address after inviting her to dinner, Loretta actually shows up at the preposterous time of 2 a.m. in her fancy convertible beside a billboard that all-too-symbolically reads “TRY ANOTHER WORLD.” From there, Loretta takes the protagonist on a ride to the docks where she practically offers him a dream life with a dream girl—an almost preposterously paradisaical prospect that simply seems too unbelievable to such a terminally miserable man—and even attempts to talk him out of his gloomy defeatism, stating, “I frighten you! One day you’ll tell me. You’ll open your heart. You’ll see blue skies. A highway to the sun. Ships like birds... Gentleness... You won’t be frightened... Things’ll be fine. No one is doomed.” Instead of accepting Loretta’s quite glowingly warm embrace, Gérard literally turns his back on her and then once again visits the sad site of his sister’s murder as if to rationalize his own infuriatingly idiotic rejection of virtual romantic bliss.

While Gérard initially rebuffs Loretta’s rather bold romantic advances in an oftentimes obnoxious and even aggressive fashion, he eventually gives in, dresses virtually like Newton with a fancy suit and slicked back hair, and even marries the dream dame at an extra eerie gothic cathedral where the priest absurdly declares “Faith isn’t a matter of size” in regard to dildo-like Virgin Mary statues that are sold at the church. Needless to say, Bella—a fiery prole femme and assumed prostitute that, at one point, attempts to stab the hero with a broken bottle just because she suspects he might be cheating on her—does not take too kindly to the dubious mixed-class marriage and plots with Gérard’s pathetic dipsomaniac brother Frank to have the protagonist brutally murdered. Indeed, since life is cheap in the barf-and-feces-filled frog ghetto, Bella only has to pay a mere \$100 to two ex-con thugs to have Gérard snuffed out, but the hired amateur assassins fail miserably as the protagonist has enough visceral pent-up hatred to give him the inspiration to virtually slaughter an entire army. When the protagonist confronts Bella by nonchalantly whipping out the \$100 and declaring, “A guy’s life comes cheap. Here’s your money back,” she completely breaks down, practically denies culpability, and blames perennial fuck-up Frank. Naturally, Gérard decides fratricide is the answer and prepares to kill Frank, but Bella, who clearly genuinely loves the protagonist despite conspiring to kill him, attempts to stop him by telling him to leave town with Loretta, stating, “Don’t do it! Stay here! You’ll spoil everything! Listen...take your ride uptown. She’s waiting. You’re right, she loves you! Go away, never come back!” but he complains “I don’t deserve so much love.” Of course, Gérard is the sort of self-destructive guy that

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likes doing things the hard way and is more interested in satisfying his deep-seated desire for bloodthirsty revenge than simply embracing the more sensible route of romantic rapture with his new wife Loretta. Although Gérard proceeds to attempt to kill his brother in the very same gutter where his sister died using the same exact razor that she used to kill herself, he is stopped at the last minute when a local painter named Jésus (Bernard Farcy)—a painfully gawky art fag that loved Catherine so much that he painted her portrait—hits him over the head with a bottle and declares, “You’re crazy! You know...he didn’t do it.” In the end, Loretta finds Gérard at the site of the suicide and softly cries, “I’m cold,” but their surreal storybook romance is not meant to be and the hero ultimately goes back to his main brown bitch Bella. Indeed, as the narrator states at the end of the film, “Gérard dreamed of a white city...of proper blinds, shady lanes...hidden tennis courts, smooth lawns... He heard the sound of fountains, of birds singing. But he was afraid of that city...of feeling out of place...of that opening door... And the woman waiting for him.”

In an excerpt that would certainly confound Marxist materialists, Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, “He is now poor, but not because everything has been taken from him, but because he has thrown everything away:—what does he care? He is accustomed to find new things.—It is the poor who misunderstand his voluntary poverty.” And, indeed, it is the ‘poor’ that will be confused by Gérard’s decision in the end, as if it is better to be a rich automaton and married to a virtual Victoria’s Secret mannequin than being yourself and married to a wonderfully wanton woman that understands everything about you, including your insatiable masculine appetite (indeed, it is no coincidence that Gérard immediately declares that he is “hungry” upon coming back to Bella in the end). Far from unconventionally picturesque ‘poverty porn,’ *The Moon in the Gutter* demonstrates that home is where the heart is, even if you live in a sort of nasty neo-Sodom hellhole.

Over a decade ago, my long-time girlfriend at the time, who expressed more love and passion than a dozen ‘normal’ basic bitch white girls combined, once told me that, if we ever broke up, she would eventually randomly show up unannounced at my house and assumedly cause chaos with whatever girl I might be with in a dramatic attempt to get me back. While this girlfriend, who both physically and psychologically resembled the eponymous babe portrayed by Béatrice Dalle in *Betty Blue*, never did this (in fact, she is currently married with a kid), sometimes I feel like I’m still waiting for her to arrive. After all, as devastatingly depicted in Maurice Pialat’s classic anti-romantic *We Won’t Grow Old Together* (1972) aka *Nous ne vieillirons pas ensemble*, it is oftentimes not until someone finally leaves your life that you realize what you have truly lost. In that sense, I somewhat suspect that if I saw *The Moon in the Gutter* when we were together and realized what we had (and understood her oftentimes warranted rage, which was not unlike Bella’s, as an irrational yet well-meaning expression of her

love), I might not have senselessly sabotaged our relationship but, as obnoxious boomers and bourgeois people sometimes say, hindsight is 20/20. Despite its almost ominously oneiric essence as dreamlike film filled with dream-sequences and pseudo-dream-sequences where a mensch is confronted with a dream girl and dream life, Beineix's butchered masterpiece is, in my mind, ultimately a film about embracing reality and appreciating those individuals—no matter how irreparably fucked up—that actually love you as opposed to fantasizing about idealized phantasmagoric femmes that will never exist in any tangible reality. While Nastassja Kinski's character Loretta Channing technically does not do anything evil like attempting to get the protagonist killed (while, rather ironically, the protagonist's true love Bella does), she is still a femme fatale in a sort of figurative and symbolic sense as she puts Gérard on a precarious path that leads to the death of authenticity and selfhood (which, not coincidentally, is Loretta's spiritually necrotic bourgeois brother Newton's main objective, hence why he gets engaged to a nearly-ancient and, in turn, infertile, prostitute). Undoubtedly, *The Moon in the Gutter* is probably the only noir-ish film I can think where the femme fatale is not someone you learn to hate, thereupon making her seem all the more preternaturally sinister on retrospect, especially on subsequent viewings of the film.

While the general storyline of *The Moon in the Gutter* is finally burned into my brain after multiple viewings, it will forever remain, most importantly, a cinematic drug of delirious lovelorn lunacy and paranoid intrigue for me where—not unlike F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* (1934), and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*—I watch for the not-altogether-mindless drugless high that sends me into a bittersweet deluge of emotions that ranges from romantic nostalgia to a sort of hypnotic regretful heartsickness, among other things. As to auteur Beineix's main method in accomplishing this delectable dream cinema, he once noted, "I sought to make the real a bit unreal and vice versa so as to place the whole thing half-way between dream and reality. To take an example we colored the smoke coming out of a chimney-stack." Of course, whereas Francis Ford Coppola failed terribly with his would-be-romantic exercise of absurdly ambitious artificiality *One from the Heart* (1982)—a film that was not a total failure in that it influenced Beineix to cast Nastassja Kinski—*The Moon in the Gutter* manages to conjure the darkly soulful and archetypically sound in a film where most characters are virtual ciphers and artifice acts as a sort of cockeyed spiral stairway to the primordial truth, at least as far as sex and romance are concerned and, in that sense, it could not be more immaculately (not to mention aesthetically pleasingly) titled.

In describing his artistic objective with the film, Beineix once confessed his intent was to create a completely new cinematic language, remarking, "I asked myself what the essence of cinema was, what was the language of the image. I

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sought another dimension of this language. The cinema is not necessarily at the service of a story, in other words chronology and reality; it is perhaps also at the service of matter.” While it is questionable as to whether or not he truly accomplished this (notably, pseudo-arthouse hack Olivier Assayas of all people went so far as to write in *Cahiers du cinéma* that “...there is no film”), there is no denying that *The Moon in the Gutter* is a singular cinematic achievement and that Beineix would never again create something quite as aesthetically alluring, cinematically revolutionary, or endlessly engulfing. Indeed, while *Betty Blue* is an eccentrically epic amour fou masterpiece and *Roselyne and the Lions* (1989) aka *Roselyne et les lions* manages to be both classically romantic and carnally carnival-esque, they just cannot compete with the strangely cold blue ‘heat’ that practically radiates from the screen of the deceptively darkly romantic celluloid dream that is *The Moon in the Gutter*. As for Beineix’s latest and certainly least greatest features *IP5: The Island of Pachyderms* (1992) aka *IP5: L’île aux pachydermes*—an aesthetically excremental exercise in would-be-zany xenophilia and negrophilia with an ugly and would-be-triumphantly-morally-retarded unhinged undermench spirit—and *Mortal Transfer* (2001) aka *Mortel transfert*—a sometimes visually alluring yet ultimately vain and superficial genre-bender without brains—they are probably best left completely forgotten, as it pains one to be reminded that they were directed by the same dude that started his filmmaking career with three arguable masterpieces. Not unlike Michael Powell with *Peeping Tom* (1960) and John Schlesinger with *The Day of the Locust* (1975), the critical and commercial failure of *The Moon in the Gutter* seems to have destroyed Beineix’s artistic will as if he ultimately became too afraid to once again test the bounds of cinematic possibility. Largely unsung auteur Eckhart Schmidt (*Der Fan*, *Alpha City*)—a sort of Teutonic low-budget Beineix that also took a romantic anti-intellectual approach to cinema—attempted something similar the same year as *The Moon in the Gutter* with his underrated nocturnal celluloid nachtmahr *Das Gold der Liebe* (1983) aka *The Gold Of Love*, which is like a punk/new wave *Dementia* meets *Eyes Wide Shut*, but few other filmmakers have dared to take a similarly darkly dreamlike path lest they be accused of aesthetic (crypto)fascism or some nonsensical horseshit. Needless to say, the cinematic neo-romanticism of Tom Tykwer (*Run Lola Run*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*)—a protege of queer agitpropagandist Rosa von Praunheim of all people—seems like frivolous fluff when compared to Beineix’s greatest films, hence his collaboration with the Wachowski weirdos.

Clearly working from sort of quasi-Freudian perspective, Phil Powrie sees the ending of *The Moon in the Gutter* as extremely negative and tragic, arguing, “Gérard’s crime is to have desired his sister, and therefore his mother. His punishment fits the crime: he will marry his stepsister and be hen-pecked by his stepmother, as his father was before him, the ideal Loretta forever refused so that he can continue to expiate incest and voluntary castration.” While Powrie

has made a fairly good argument given the details of the film, my personal experience tells me otherwise and I am reminded of the Carl Jung quote, “May love be subject to torment, but not life. As long as love goes pregnant with life, it should be respected; but if it has given birth to life from itself it has turned into an empty sheath and expires into transience.” Love aside, the film also deserves credit for rivaling Charles Laughton’s *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) in terms of featuring what is probably the most shamelessly sensual and exquisitely beautiful female corpse in cinema history. Indeed, when it comes down to it, I would not be surprised if both the public and critics alike still have not forgiven Beineix or *The Moon in the Gutter*—a film that should have a cult following that at least rivals any retarded slasher franchise—for providing the world with the most devilishly delectable of dead dames in a flavorsomely fucked film opening that reminds viewers of the unfortunate truth that sometimes women are just as hot when their bodies are cold. In that sense, if you ever needed evidence for the innate anti-aesthetic idiocy of the Bechdel bull-dyke test, Beineix’s films, especially *The Moon in the Gutter*, nuke such flippant feminist pseudo-intellectual ordure altogether as one exquisite female corpse will always beat hundreds of ugly squawking hens.

-Ty E

I LOVE SNUFF
I LOVE SNUFF

Jean-Louis Coctes (1995)

Every once in a while, it is important to take a break from static arthouse films and important cult movies and watch a film so ridiculously revolting, aesthetically primitive, morally retarding, and patently pointless that it puts things into perspective in regard to how endlessly entertaining, innately idiotic, and mindlessly assembled scat films can be and the very un-French French work *I Love Snuff* (1995)—a film about an impotent man who achieves sexual ecstasy after receiving ransom videos of his black wife being tortured by two alpha-degenerates—is certainly such an amusingly appalling vice-ridden video affair. Co-directed, co-scripted, and co-starring (although I doubt a physical script was ever written) Jean-Louis Coctes, a nasty noise musician and putrid performance artist oftentimes described as the “French GG Allin” due to his proclivity towards playing with poop and piss, shoving Barbie dolls up his already ripped rectum, and mutilating his genitals on stage via box cutter, *I Love Snuff* is no less deranged and debauched as a penetrating piece of anti-aesthetic/anti-erotic video art that could have been directed by Beavis and Butthead’s slightly more cultivated frog cousin. While the man who he is oftentimes compared to, GG Allin, absurdly thought of himself as a sort of ‘Rock N Roll Messiah’ (his real-life birth name was Jesus Christ Allin), in reality he was a totally artistically untalented megalomaniac junky who would be better described as the last great American slapstick comedian who turned fecal-flinging into an apocalyptic art form and comedy routine and I see Jean-Louis Coctes in a similarly unintentionally entertaining light, although I suspect he is more conscious of his behavior than his belated American spiritual brother. Making cameo appearances in libertine European arthouse films like Gaspar Noé’s *Irréversible* (2002) as a deleteriously deranged fist-fuck-loving faggot in a sick sodomite S&M bar, as well as Edwin Brienen’s *Lebenspornografie* (2003) aka *Berlin Nights: Grand Delusions* as a poop-loving poof pornstar, Coctes’ own movies are innately less artistic and can hardly be described as serious, but they are indubitably all the more recklessly wanton and warped in their themes and visuals. Describing his own no-budget shot-on-video auteur works as “just stupid films” and his directing technique as follows, “I write a scenario and that’s it. There are some where I’m drunk, I switch on the camera, and I talk absolute nonsense,” *I Love Snuff* looks like an amateur anti-pornography experiment shot over a couple hours in some multicultural sewer in Paris, yet it manages to consistently captivate in its bottom-of-the-barrel visceral vulgarity and vice-venerating technical ineptitude as the sort of work that was clearly assembled by a man with a lot of unhinged passion, but not much sanity and intellectual sophistication. Featuring a dress-wearing degenerate defecating in the middle of the street in public, a man passively taking a tampon and a strap-on dildo in his blatantly bulging bunghole, a

white woman in full-body blackface (labia included) magically turning into an authentic Negro as the film progresses, a white wuss torturing a black broad via Dijon mustard and French fries, and an impotent man achieving sexual climax at the climax his wife's death, among various other case examples of philistine Psychopathia Sexualis, *I Love Snuff* is like German auteur Peter Fleischmann's porn-parody *Dorothea's Revenge* (1974) aka *Dorothea's Rache* except actually funny and without artistic pretense.

"Le branleur impuissant" aka "The Impotent Wanker" (Pascal Keller), who not has fucked "in ages" and whose penis is more flaccid than the excessive flabby skin hanging off an elderly woman's arm, is in the proper position to make love with his African queen of a wife Rose (played by "Rose"), but, rather unfortunately, he has the sexual virility of an East Indian eunuch, so naturally he cannot rise to the occasion and complete his husbandly duties and he throws his sexually frustrated spouse of their flat and later unrealistically dreams of having a magic Johnson with a humungous shaft and a human-sized human head as his dick-head. Meanwhile, a female pimp of a BDSM bitch that goes by the cliché name Mistress (Anne van der Linden) is walking around her cuckold boy toy, who describes himself as "just a turd," like a dog on a leash. Taking on the groveling role of a subservient canine, the man, who is also wearing a dress, bends over and defecates out what seems to be at least four feet worth of real fecal matter and proceeds to blow a student for fast cash not long after, but the jack-off John runs away without paying him and then, to make a bad day all the more worse, he is immediately raped by a long-haired degenerate. Since the Mistress and her cuckold canine cannot pay their bills, it is the bitch beta-males job to "sell his ass to queers," but thankfully a more rewarding and racially-charged way to earn quick cash randomly arrives in the form of a disgruntled wife. It must be these two predatory perverts' lucky day as they run into the Impotent Wanker's sad spouse Rose and proceed to kidnap her, humiliate and molest her, and take her home and lock her in their basement dungeon as their very own personal plaything/hostage/slave. They call the Impotent Wanker and demand that he pay a hefty ransom of 10,000.00 francs or they will kill Rose and to prove they are deathly serious, they decide to send homemade torture videos of his babe being belligerently brutalized. Unfortunately for the victim and victimizers, the Impotent Wanker is rather amazed to learn that he finds himself absolutely aroused by these crude videos of his wife being physically and sexually violated. Giving new meaning to the French phrase "La petite mort" ("The Little Death"), the Little Wanker is finally able to bust his load to the point of his own gentlemen's relish covering his entire face, but it comes at the seemingly worthless price of his wife's life. In the end, a black woman suffers Dijon mustard, clotheslines and a fork to the nipple, hot French fries to her unclad body, semen to the chest, and eventual death-by-degenerate because her hubby has the sexual stamina of Michael Jackson. Of course, the sickest scene in *I Love Snuff* is saved for the

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very conclusion, which features a pretty and wholesome rose flower blowing in the wind, thus paying tribute to sexually unsatisfied wife and snuff victim Rose, another black victim of the hopelessly xenophobic French people.

Sort of like *Story of O* and the Marquis de Sade meets early John Waters and Troma in a pre-apocalyptic postcolonial French slum, *I Love Snuff* is the film that jaded Judaic frog Serge Gainsbourg never had the gall to make, but apparently kraut arthouse-splatter auteur Marian Dora (*Cannibal, Melancholie der Engel* aka *The Angel's Melancholia*) because he is supposedly currently working on a remake of Jean-Louis Coctes' carelessly crude camcorder experiment. Of course, considering Dora's rather severe and unflinching seriousness, it is very doubtful that his Teutonic take on *I Love Snuff* will contain the same 'campy' comedy value as Coctes' work. Indeed, if nothing else, *I Love Snuff* works best as an intrinsically intemperate sadomasochistic black comedy that is so ceaselessly over-the-top that no one can take it even remotely seriously, even if it does feature real unsimulated depictions of a seeming insane pervert showing stuff in and out his rather rancid rectum. While *I Love Snuff* will do nothing to strength your faith in humanity, it will give you a deeper respect for the biological comedy act that is the human body. While I cannot agree with Gaspard Noé's puffery-plagued remark that "Coctes is the French Pasolini," he at least deserves to be described as the frog GG Allin, which, considering the patent pretentiousness of the French and their supposed love of high kultur, is no small accomplishment. In *I Love Snuff*, Coctes defecates in the street while wearing an ugly dress, is orally and anally penetrated by a sadistic Madame with a strap-on and then guzzles a couple gallons of said woman's piss like a champ cuck, and has a steamy and sleazy one-sided love affair with a black slave in bondage, among various other forms of self-debasing behavior that the average normal man would not do even if he were demanded to at gun point, thus making the Franco-libertine a sort of flagrantly politically incorrect postmodern sideshow freak of sorts with a deep and unwavering metaphysical masochism, which I am surprised is not all the more rampant in a country like France (or virtually any other postcolonial European nation) where collective guilt and ethno-masochism, xenophilia, sexual aberration, gynocentric feminism, and all-encompassing worship of every and anything that is weak, ugly, and historically persecuted and reviled has been put on a kosher pedestal and is now worshiped as the height of moral superiority. With such slavery-morality-sanctifying swill dominating every aspect of Western life and culture, the only thing one can do at the end of the day is laugh and just wait for the world to burn, and Coctes' *I Love Snuff* certainly has a gas chamber worth of laughs, but be forewarned that such a strikingly sick work might rot your soul and/or cause you to piss your pants laughing.

-Ty E

NUMÉRO DEUX

Jean-Luc Godard (1975)

While *La Nouvelle Vague* alpha-auteur Jean-Luc Godard (*Alphaville*, *Pierrot le Fou*) is credited with many singular accomplishments as a filmmaker, including discovering and defiling Danish diva Anna Karina and inspiring multiple generations of filmmakers in terms of how they looked at and created films, few people seem to realize that he has directed what is undoubtedly one of the most epically banal and uniquely incoherent yet nonetheless somewhat intriguing fuck flicks ever made. Indeed, *Numéro deux* (1975) aka *Number Two* is an insanely inept anti-erotic abortion of the oftentimes infantile sort where the viewer has the distinct voyeuristic misfortune of spying on the sexual habits of three generations of one family under a single roof in a very cramped apartment where the children regularly pay witness to their mouthy Marxist mother's rather bushy beaver and impassioned rants about her irregular bowel movements and lack of sexual satisfaction. Originally ostensibly intended as a remake of the director's legendary debut feature *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless*, the film has virtually nothing in common with its black-and-white predecessor aside from being also produced by Georges de Beauregard on a fairly meager 6,000 franc (or \$120,000) budget. In fact, it was de Beauregard that originally proposed that Godard direct the remake, which the filmmaker agreed to do, but like many of his film projects, he had no real intention of honoring his agreement with the producer and instead ultimately sired something totally different with decidedly dull and innately materialistic and sexually pathetic Marcusian undertones. As Godard stated himself in regard to the importance of utilizing the same exact 1960 budget as *Breathless* for naughty non-remake, "the originality consists in saying that the cost of living has increased by a factor of four, but we are making a film with . . . the same budget." Made after the director's two failed marriages, declaration of the death of cinema in *Weekend* (1967), foolish adoption of then-trendy culturally corrosive scam of Maoism, less than artistically fruitful five-film collaboration under the quite fitting name 'The Dziga Vertov Group' with young Jewish communist Jean-Pierre Gorin between 1968 and 1973, and troubled recovery from a life-changing motorcycle accident that resulted in the loss of one of his testicles and the development of various psychological problems like agoraphobia, *Number Two* was intended as a big comeback film of sorts for Godard, but it was, somewhat predictably, an abject failure that remains fairly obscure to this day even among the filmmaker's die hard fans. Of course, Godard should not have expected anything less when he deceived his fans by agreeing to remake his first and arguably most popular film, but instead created what seems like a quasi-feminist family film for the hopelessly sexually autistic and vaguely incestuous.

Once described by Godard himself in 1975 in *Politique Hebdo* as an "ethno-

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logical film” that could literally be named “The Sexual Economy of the Inhabitants of Lower Grenoble,” Number Two is ultimately an unintentionally absurd and bizarrely comedic anti-erotic cinematic experiment where the auteur demonstrates his pathological obsession with both Marxism and sexual perversion by crudely attempting to link poverty and unemployment with sexual impotence and constipation. Indeed, centering around three generations of one family living under the same roof in a white prole ghetto in the southeastern France city of Grenoble, Godard’s somewhat creepy and oftentimes embarrassingly ridiculous film depicts a patently pathetic microcosm of (post)Marxist moaning and bitching where a young mother complains that she has not shit in two weeks because she cannot find a job, an elderly grandfather plays with his tiny shriveled up penis while recalling the good old days of communist activism and his friendship with kosher commie leader Henri Krasucki, and a young father confesses his minor shame in regard to a sad and pathetic “family affair” involving his prepubescent daughter witnessing him brutally sodomizing his cheating wife. A film featuring perennially flaccid pricks, close-up shots of a little girl’s vagina, and a mother and father that give their children a rather intimate lesson about their genitals and what they describe as ‘love,’ Number Two is a film that is unmistakably the work of a pathetically perverted sexual cripple and tiresomely pedantic intellectual with a strange talent for draining out all of the joy, magic, and intimacy of sex, hence why he was probably divorced by two of the cutest French film stars of their era.

Aside being a comeback film for Godard, this piece of unintended kitsch was also intended as the director’s first attempt at creating a new type of cinema that had completely transcended anything that he or any other filmmaker had done before. Armed with a new film studio full of then-state-of-the-art video equipment (in fact, a good portion of the film’s budget went into said equipment) and a new central collaborator in the form of his photographer companion Anne-Marie Miéville, Number Two—a film that’s title indubitably announces the second big phase in the filmmaker’s uniquely uneven filmmaking career—is the sometimes intriguing and almost always awkward failed first cinematic experiment of an artistically desperate auteur in the middle of both a personal and artistic rebirth. As his American Judaic biographer Richard Brody noted in *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life Of Jean-Luc Godard* (2008), Godard began publicly attacking his former comrades from *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1975 by accusing them of being nothing more than derivative hacks as indicated by remarks like: “I am amazed that people who lack ideas for new films (including some old friends like Truffaut, Rivette, who don’t have any more ideas than the guys whom they denounced twenty years ago), continue to adhere to the one and self-same system of filmmaking, which is easy to describe: a sum of so many million, multiplied by so many weeks, multiplied by a certain number of people.” Suffering the supreme and seemingly aesthetically retarded delusion

that the new video technology of that time was a superior medium to actual film, Godard was convinced that, not unlike a megalomaniacal mad scientist in his laboratory, his new film studio would lead to revolutionary cinematic creations that would change mankind, yet *Number Two* is anything but groundbreaking unless you look at it as a rare example of a quasi-incestuous family film for politically active pedophilic art fags. Indeed, not unlike Anthony Aikman's *The Genesis Children* (1972) and Pier Giuseppe Murgia's *Maladolescenza* (1977) aka *Puppy Love* starring Eva Ionesco, Godard's film is a patently preposterous post-counterculture cinematic oddity that some might describe as kiddie art-porn. Thankfully, unlike Aikman's and Murgia's films, Godard's cinematic work is relatively conservative when it comes to the naked naughty bits of children.

Seemingly partly inspired by the plotless and naturalistic gutter realism of Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey, *Number Two* could easily be mistaken as a piece of eccentrically assembled *cinéma-vérité* were it not for the random mundanely executed and clearly contrived Marxist and feminist diatribes that are sprinkled throughout the film. Indeed, the commie dialogue and narration in the film is so phony and inauthentic sounding that it is as if Godard included these things in the film to convince himself of his own misguided and clearly abstract political beliefs. Somewhat giving the viewer the impression they are watching security footage that was shot in a claustrophobic apartment with little room for movement, the 'film' features the tiresome gimmick of having one or more video monitors in virtually every single frame, with Godard himself immediately breaking down the fourth wall by appearing at the very beginning in an extended introduction from the comfort of his own film studio and babbling pretentious pseudo-hermetic twaddle about how it is a "factory" where he is the "boss," thereupon underscoring his glaring post-Maoist psychosis. In short, Godard wants the viewer to see him as a 'worker' in the commie sense who has achieved the bolshevik dream of owning and controlling his own factory where he produces true blue prole cinematic products via his own extensive self-directed 'labor.' Somewhat ironically, Godard's old school Hollywood hero Nicholas Ray would beat him to the chase in terms of cinematic innovation with his similarly experimental multi-monitor swansong *We Can't Go Home Again* (1973), with a rough cut of the film having its Cannes premiere in 1973. Additionally, Jane Arden and Jack Bond's extremely underrated final collaboration *Anti-Clock* (1979) makes Godard's film seem like both literal and figurative child's play in terms of its clever and fairly idiosyncratic utilization of archaic video technology as a tool of dark voyeuristic intrigue. On the other hand, *Number Two* still proves to be quite the shocker to anyone familiar with the director's early overtly cinephiliac classic cinematic works like *Breathless*, *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt*, *Bande à part* (1964) aka *Band of Outsiders*, and *Alphaville: une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution* (1965), among countless other examples, as the film seems like

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it was created by someone with a deep-seated contempt for cinema, especially of the genre oriented sort. Indeed, one certainly gets the sense that Godard's one-time leading man Jean-Paul Belmondo was right when he declared in 1980 in retaliation for his former collaborator unkind public remarks, "There's no doubt that the person I saw who called himself Godard, with his lies and his little tricks, has nothing to do with the auteur of *BREATHLESS*, *PIERROT LE FOU*, or *BAND OF OUTSIDERS*. The Godard of the 1960s is dead forever."

If Godard's foremost object with *Number Two* was to alienate his audience in a most obnoxious fashion to the point where they want to violently smash their TV, he indubitably does a splendid job at the beginning of the film where he rambles on in his film studio while his four-eyed face is visible on a monitor that is sitting a couple feet from his partly headless body. Indeed, Godard spends about the first ten minutes of the film speaking in a somewhat unnervingly self-righteous fashion about his new and hardly improved form of pseudo-metaphysical Marxist filmmaking, stating, "I'm the boss. But I'm a special kind of boss because I'm also a worker. And I'm not alone as a worker. We've taken power [...] I was ill for a long time and that made me think about the factory. I'd say what's wrong here is, there's too much DNA, not enough RNA. We learned it in school. You can't ever use what you learn in school. It's a pain in the ass. The government has closed half the schools in the area. They shove us into school and teach us useless things. If I say 'DNA, biology' to you, you wonder what I'm on about. I'm talking about you and your program." According to Godard, "wordplays" and "puns" can cure illnesses, thus they are not "worthless." While Godard makes vague reference to having been "ill," he neglects to mention that he lost a testicle during said illness, which may or may not explain his new sense of cinematic perversity in the form of obsession over the interfamilial sexual habits of card-carrying commie proles. Undoubtedly, if *Number Two* convinced me of anything, it is that Godard only understands sex in an abstract and intellectual sense, as if he was born without the capacity to get aroused by the smell or curves of a woman and thus looks at the flesh of the so-called fairer sex with the cold detachment of a space alien, hence his quite questionable sexual interest in prepubescent children.

While Godard's strange introduction is oftentimes incredibly intolerable, it is nothing compared to the repugnant narrating of an unseen female narrator that follows him who asks many redundant questions and then sometimes includes equally redundant answers as indicated by the following innately irritating piece of intellectual masturbation, "This film, *Number Two*, shows all of this. Unbelievable things. Things in close-up. Ordinary things. Shitty things and pleasurable things. Where does it happen? Pleasure is complicated. I think so anyway. I think pain is simple, but not pleasure. I think unemployment is simple. Not pleasure. And you see, when you find pleasure in being unemployed, it leads to Fascism. *Number Two*. This film is not left or right, but before and behind.

In front are children. Behind is the government. The children of the homeland. Of the homeland. In school, you learn it's a factory. Cinema is a factory, too. A factory that manufactures images. Like television. There was once an image. There were once two images. There was twice a sound. There were once two sounds. Number one and number two. Number Two. A film by Anne-Marie Miéville and Jean-Luc Godard, with Sandrine Batiſtella, Pierre Audry and others. Number Two. Coming to this screen son. And this screen is on a wall. What do you think this wall is between? Another political film? It's not politics, it's sex. No, it's not sex, it's politics. So is it about sex or politics? Why is it always either/or? It can be both sometimes. Sometimes. Which times? We always say, 'There was once.' Why don't we ever say, 'There was twice.' This film, you see, is called Number Two. What does it talk about? Talk, talk. You can listen sometimes. You can watch. You see, Number Two, is a film you can watch. Watch peacefully. Watch what? You don't always need to go far. There's quite a lot to see." As the above quote clearly demonstrates, the female narrator is not only redundant, but exceedingly obnoxious, not least of all because she a fiercely grating froggrette voice.

When the 'feature presentation' finally begins and the viewer no longer has to suffer Godard and the female narrator's pseudo-esoteric ramblings about mostly pointless nonsense that rarely provides insight as to what will follow, the viewer is introduced to a precocious little girl named Vanessa who asks her more or less completely naked mother Sandrine Batiſtella, "Will I bleed between my legs when I'm big?," to which she receives an affirmative "yes" and is told to watch out for boys because they can be "hard work." While Sandrine describes boys as "hard work," her hubby Pierre Oudrey has a lot trouble just getting a proper hard-on. Of course, as the viewer might have predicated, Godard attempts to link Pierre's impotence with capitalist tyranny and poverty, among other asinine absurdities, even though everyone knows the Bertolucci-esque stereotype of peasants making for passionate and virile lovers. Notably, towards the beginning of the film, Pierre pisses in a sink while his hysterically horny wife bitches, "I love your cock. But it's always you who decides! It's hard work" and then tries in vain to get his cock hard by stroking it. In fact, Sandrine is so desperate for dick that she apparently cheats on her husband Pierre, who naturally decides to get revenge, or as he states himself in regard to his wife while sounding rather pathetic, "I wanted to rape her. She let me, so I fucked her in the ass. She started screaming. Afterwards we realized Vanessa had been watching. Family affairs, I suppose." Somewhat curiously, an image of little girl Vanessa is superimposed over a shot of Pierre sodomizing his wife, thus underscoring Godard's dubious fetish for awkward interfamilial fucking. Needless to say, it is no surprise when Vanessa confesses, "Sometimes I think it's pretty, Mummy and Daddy, sometimes I think it's caca." After all, a child cannot help but think of the perils of poop after seeing their enraged father penetrate their mother's bunghole with a

pulsating pecker.

Out of everyone in the family, Sandrine, who is always flashing around her tits and dark bushy beaver in front of both of her kids, is easily the most insufferable and just all around repulsive, which largely has to do with her whimsical bitchiness, lame leftist sloganeering (e.g. "Anarchy isn't a bomb, it's justice and freedom"), self-absorbed fits of rage, and overall anti-maternal behavior. Indeed, aside from giving her daughter a bath while talking about her vagina and giving her kids a fucked up form of sexual education that involves exposing her aroused genitals, Sandrine does virtually nothing for her children and instead spends most of the time trying in vain to arouse her unsurprisingly impotent husband, who seems to know better than anyone that there is no greater turn-off for a man than a bitchy broad that loves to pontificate about her poop problems. In fact, when Sandrine is not bitching about her lack of cock intake, she is yammering on about the fact that she has not had a proper bowel movement in two weeks. In what is arguably the most overtly 'tender' moment of the entire film, Sandrine calls her kids into her bedroom while she is completely naked with her husband, touches her vagina, and then states while playing with her labia, "See this? They're lips. My sex lips," to which Pierre replies in a fatherly fashion while touching his peter, "See here, it's a kind of mouth. And with this mouth, you kiss your lover's sex lips." After showing off her pussy to her kids, Sandrine states, "It's called love. Love teaches us to talk" and Pierre adds, "And when it's all over, Death put its finger to its lips and tells us to be quiet." Unfortunately, it seems no one has ever told Sandrine to be quiet, as she is always talking even though she has nothing to really say. As for Sandrine's thoughts about being a mother, she makes things fairly clear when she states in regard to the birth of her son, "I shitted him out from between my legs. And now everything's blocked. I had to stuff myself. Even gladly. But it's too strong. My tissue is torn. I get the feeling that everything I say is shit."

In what is arguably the most grueling segment of the entire film, Godard juxtaposes footage of 'grandma' (Rachel Stefanopoli) bathing using a wet rag and a sink with insane feminist (translation: anti-female) quotes from loathsome female eunuch Germaine Greer like, "Women do not realize how much men hate them. Punished, punished, punished for being the object of hatred, through her orifices, her mouth and cunt, poor Taralala. Women never commit sexual crimes even when they are enacted upon the bodies of men. The male perversion of violence is an essential condition of the degradation of women. Women cannot be liberated from their impotence by the gift of a gun, although they are equally capable of firing them as men are. Men are tired of having all the responsibility for sex, it is time they were relieved of it. The vagina must come into its own. It's worth repeating. The female attitude to violence is inseparable from this problem." As subsequent narration indicates, Godard seems to believe that a woman can only be truly happy if she revolts against traditional female norms and tradi-

tions, which is somewhat ironic when one considers that Sandrine—a reckless mother and intolerable wife that puts her sexual drive before her own children—seems to be totally miserable, but of course the viewer is expected to blame her misery on capitalist tyranny and imaginary bogeymen like the patriarchy. Of course, as a sad impotent cuckold that can only get an erection upon feeling enraged that his wanton wifey has cheat on him, Sandrine's husband can hardly be described as a tyrannical patriarch. In fact, in Sandrine's family, the grandfather is even berated by his grandchildren without the children having the slightest fear that they may be punished for their less than respectful indiscretions to their elders.

If grandma seems to be a little bit senile, grandpa (Alexandre Rignault of Jean Renoir's *La Chienne* (1931) and Georges Franju's *Les yeux sans visage* (1960) aka *Eyes Without a Face*) is strikingly sharp by comparison for an old school Marxist true believer, but then again, as he proudly describes himself, he was a revolutionary at a time when it was not exactly safe to be a revolutionary and thus he can hardly be compared to the candy ass 'bobos' (aka 'bourgeois bohemians') that became Maoists during the late-1960s like many of Godard's friends and acquaintances. Unfortunately for grandpa, he gets little respect from his rather ungrateful family and even his own grandson will not let him use the television so that he can watch a Soviet propaganda film (or what he describes as a "Russian film"). As Grandpa remarks in regard to his past employment at Auschwitz, "You don't tell anyone you worked in a death camp and the CEO was Hitler, or that you took the wages simply to survive." According to Grandpa, he was once a loyal shabbos goy deputy of French Jew commie and trade unionist Henri Krasucki, but clearly he never received even a tiny degree of the power or prestige of his ex-boss, as he now spends his golden years rotting away in a tiny apartment with children and grandchildren that treat him like he is a great nuisance. During a slightly humorous scene where Godard seems to mock the viewer for enduring his softcore family sitcom, Grandpa sits completely naked at a table while telling old commie stories about his glory years as a frog Bolshevik and eventually remarks with gusto while grabbing his tiny shriveled penis, "Instead of watching movies, I watch my prick." One certainly gets the sense that if Grandpa had not raised his kid(s) to be Marxist morons, his film would be, at the very least, slightly less fucked up. In short, *Numéro deux* might fail in many regards, but it indubitably makes for a great case against commie parenting and virtually every form of the Marxist Weltanschauung. Indeed, the Marxist lumpenproles of the film do not seem to believe in anything aside from their own misery. Rather fittingly, Godard reappears at the conclusion of the film while looking fairly dejected and distressed, as if he has realized the film he has just realized he has produced the artistic equivalent of diarrhea and he is not happy or comfortable with what he sees.

While I am somewhat hesitant to accuse him of being some sort of proud pe-

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dophile based solely off of Numéro deux, I cannot ignore the fact that Godard would continue to demonstrate with subsequent films that he has some of little girl fetish and that he hardly seems to be ashamed of that fact. Indeed, for one of the episodes of his largely forgettable 12-part TV series *Six fois deux* (1976), Godard directed a disturbing scene of his companion Anne-Marie Miéville's then-10-year-old daughter doing a completely naked ballet routine. Arguably even more disturbing, Godard blackmailed 9-year-old Camille Virolleaud to get naked for his TV miniseries *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* (1977-1978) by threatening to stop the shoot if she refused to comply with his serious demand for completely unclad preteen titillation. Not surprisingly considering that virtually all of her classmates would see her naked after the miniseries was broadcasted television, Virolleaud was totally traumatized by the self-described "hyperviolent" experience to the point where she denied ever even being part of *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* for two decades. Of course, it should be no surprise that Godard was a comrade of kosher commie Daniel 'Daniel the Red' Cohn-Bendit, who is infamous for describing in his book *The Great Bazaar* (1975) aka *Der grosse Basar* how he engaged in erotic encounters with 5-year-olds while a teacher at a so-called 'anti-authoritarian kindergarten.' Rather disturbingly, Cohn-Bendit's pro-pedo views were not exactly atypical, as it was a common belief among both intellectuals and layman alike associated with the student movement of 1968 that children should not be forbidden from anything sexual, including child-adult relations. One must also not forget that both Miéville and Camille Virolleaud's mother gave their full consent to Godard to direct scenes featuring their unclad prepubescent daughters, thus underscoring the warped parenting trends of that time. Either way, it is unequivocally creepy and alarming when a middle-aged four-eyed 'intellectual' is so concerned with getting a little girl disrobed that he threatens her in the sort of manipulative manner that one would expect from a craven sexual predator, but then again Godard does not look like a sort of frog Woody Allen for nothing (incidentally, Allen would have an uncredited cameo in Godard's preposterous cinematic disaster *King Lear* (1987)). While not plagued with child nudity, *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (1980) aka *Every Man for Himself* is another example of where Godard exploited a child for sexual reasons. Indeed, apparently Godard developed a strange infatuation with Swiss auteur Alain Tanner's daughter Cécile Tanner and, not unlike the stereotypical scheming pedo, attempted to appeal to her by promising to direct a film about her involving her favorite sport of soccer. While Tanner would eventually get to play a soccer girl in *Every Man for Himself*—Godard's self-described "second first film" and, unlike *Number Two*, his true comeback flick—when she was 12-years-old, she had no idea it would be in an incestuous pedophilic context. Indeed, as Richard Brody noted in regard to Tanner's response upon first seeing the film and realizing that Godard had exploited her in a cinematically sexual fashion without her knowledge, "When I

saw it, at the private screening for the crew, I crawled under my seat, I was dying of shame.” Of course, considering that Godard is a long celebrated figure among film academics and a good number of respected mainstream film critics and virtually all of these individuals are staunch leftists, if not downright communists, he obviously gets a pass for his dubious sexual proclivities just like Allen and Polanski. In fact, Godard’s Judaic biographer Brody spends more time in *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life Of Jean-Luc Godard* complaining about the filmmaker’s supposed antisemitism than his more overt and well documented little girl fetish, but I digress.

As a result of my somewhat recent discovery that Godard is a longtime enemy of Zion, noted critic of Claude Lanzmann’s singularly overrated Zionist pity party *Shoah* (1985), and fan of great alpha-antisemite Louis-Ferdinand Céline (whose classic novel *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1972) aka *Journey to the End of the Night* he once attempt to adapt), my general disdain for Godard began to wane over the past couple months, yet after watching *Number Two*—a virtual vision of prole parenting purgatory as directed by a man that seems to think that carnal knowledge and crapping are of equal significance—I cannot help but feel overcoming disgust for the auteur. Still, at the same time, I somehow cannot help but to feel a bit of pity and *Fremdscham* for old man Godard, as his film strikes me as the product of a socially and sexually inept emotional cripple who has retreated to a hopelessly lonely inward realm of worthless and outrageously outmoded quasi-Marxist abstractions and debasing aberrosexual fetishes because he can no longer stomach the metaphysical pain of living in the real world. Indeed, *Number Two* is ultimately the curious product of a childless unmarried family suffering from a curious combination of neurasthenia and delusions of grandeur who looks at a nuclear family with less passion and intimacy than a microbiologist would look at bacteria, hence why he has probably never had a family of his own (apparently, he once got his first wife Anna Karina pregnant, but she had a miscarriage). Undoubtedly no sane man sexually healthy father with a daughter would have a sort of self-destructive urge to direct nude little girls or depicting them in sexual situations with naked adult men that are fiddling with their cocks. Ultimately, *Number Two* features about as much socio-political insight and carries about as much cultural weight as Godard’s somewhat autistic remark, “Once we know the number one, we believe that we know the number two, because one plus one equals two. We forget that first we must know the meaning of plus.” Of course, one can never truly trust the art or thoughts of a goofy looking guy who let a marriage to a great beauty like Anne Wiazemsky go to shit because he devoted most of his attention to a young Jewish communist like Gorin. Forget inbred Appalachian meth heads, Detroit wiggers, and oxy-addled second generations polacks from Baltimore, *Number Two* features what can be described as the ultimate white trash family in what is the post-Sartrean intellectual equivalent to literal poverty porn.

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-Ty E

GERMANY YEAR 90 NINE ZERO

Jean-Luc Godard (1991)

Without question, I must concur with Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman when he soundly stated regarding Jean-Luc Godard, "I've never gotten anything out of his movies. They have felt constructed, faux intellectual and completely dead. Cinematographically uninteresting and infinitely boring. Godard is a fucking bore. He's made his films for the critics," and, indeed, it is doubtful the French commie director would have gained the prestige he did had he been a right-winger, hence why no one has shown much interest in anything he has directed since some three decades ago when the student movement grew up and eventually took over, ultimately becoming the booboisie mainstream. Aside from *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt* and to a lesser extent *Weekend* (1967), it is hard for me to think of a Godard film that does not remind me why I hate the pedantic pinko froggy in the first place, yet when I discovered his later work *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (1991) aka *Allemagne 90 neuf zero*—a reflexive documentary-like work made for French television in the wake of the fall of the Berlin wall and the German reunification—I decided to give it a shot, as I thought it would be interest to see what a misanthropic Marxist Frenchman has to say about his cultural and racial superiors, the Teutons. Needless to say, being a French communist who is still stuck in the late-1960s, Godard demonstrates with *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* that his sheer and utter contempt for Germans and German kultur is not simply resigned to the Third Reich, but virtually all of German history as a work that even goes so far as attacking the German language and Faustian spirit as innately flawed and defective, as if National Socialism was a most natural and inevitable step for the krauts to take in history. A sort of half-incoherent and sometimes impenetrable deconstructivist celluloid collage featuring everything from concentration camp footage to scenes from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Harlan-esque high-camp Third Reich epic *Lili Marleen* (1981), *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*—a film that's title pays homage to Roberto Rossellini's neorealist flick *Germany Year Zero* (1948); a decidedly depressing and even nihilistic work that depicts the horrible life of a young lad living in the ruins of post-WWII Germany—is not only a work that mourns the death of Marxism as symbolically depicted early on in the film in a scene where a Karl-Marx-Straße street sign with funeral flowers laying next to it is ran over by a car, but a work that somewhat celebrates the destruction of Deutschland, depicting it as an inevitable result of the sort of historically dynamic 'Teutonic irrationality' that Hans-Jürgen Syberberg championed and celebrated. A sort of pseudo-sequel to Godard anti-sci-fi/film noir flick *Alphaville: A Strange Adventure of Lemmy Caution* (1965), *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* features Eddie Constantine, who went on to star in a number of great German New Cinema flicks, including a number by Fassbinder, during the 1970s/1980s, reprising his

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role as secret agent Lemmy Caution, although now, being “the world’s last spy,” he has aged into a morbidly melancholy and defeated man who most certainly acts as a stand-in for Godard himself. Considering his imperative influence on the auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema, Godard also pays reluctant tribute to his Teutonic spiritual protégés as *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* is a virtual cinematic response to Alexander Kluge’s celluloid answer to the ‘German question’; *Die Patriotin* (1979) aka *The Patriot*.

The cold and damp Germanic winter is weighing heavy over old and now overweight Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine), or at least one would assume so as the spy, who no longer knows what side he is working for, is moping around East Germany like someone who has been just been gang raped by a group of sexually repressed bikers. Depressed that communism has taken its last gasp, Caution even goes so far as making the puffery-plagued remark, “You have to admit, Marx did triumph. When an idea is born among masses, it becomes a material force,” as he is in denial that the workers’ utopia has never nor will ever be realized, with the fall of the Berlin wall being a symbolic sign of the end of that deluded dream. Making pilgrimages to various communist holy sites, Caution demands that Don Quixote tell him, “Which way is the West?” while treading through the German countryside, which looks like a post-industrial völkisch dystopia due to noisy and ugly large machinery destroying the earth of the land of blood and soil. On the way, Berlin’s Landwehr Canal—the place where treacherous anti-German Judeo-Marxist agitator Rosa Luxemburg’s dead body was dropped—is passed in tribute as if it is one of the most important places of German history. Caution also runs into a Jewess with two names named Dora / Charlotte Keßner (Claudia Michelsen) who is lost in history and who sadistically states, “It was a great day for Weimar when the Red Army took over the city,” as if the Soviets did not rape every single woman in sight upon their inhospitable arrival. Needless to say, in between footage from German expressionist masterpieces like Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) and F.W. Murnau’s *The Last Laugh* (1924), vintage photos of dead Jews and sinister Nazis are featured throughout to make it seem like the holocaust was the most important event of German history, though Godard saves some of his seething scorn for America, attacking both nations and peoples with the following quote, “The US never understood the war, or took part in it. At best, their fight was not the state’s fight, nor on the same battleground. The US can only imagine a civil war. It’s always themselves and their own defects, personified by the enemy, that they combat in all wars. For them, war is a moral dilemma. When they were English, they fought the English. When they became Americans, they fought Americans. Once sufficiently influenced by the Germans, morally and culturally, they attacked the Germans. The first American to take a prisoner in 1917 was Meyer. The prisoner’s name was also Meyer.” Naturally, Godard’s reductionist thinking will be lost on most Americans as hamburgers, canned beers, and Christmas trees

are about the only things that Americans have taken from Germany, though the average Yank, even one of German descent, is completely unaware of the origin of all of these things.

Of course, in *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, it is not communist materialism that is blamed for the death of Germanic culture, but as narrated by a translator named Count Zelten (Hanns Zischler), "It was a drunken American soldier who killed Webern." Indeed, as displayed in a title card towards the end of *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, the 'decline of the west' that Spengler prophesied is in full swing, which is highlighted by a trashy human-size cigarette ad featuring a dominatrix and bourgeois businessman for the ironically named German tobacco company 'West.' In an assault on the legacy of *völkisch* art, Jewess Dora / Charlotte Kestner narrates, "All these painters only served the state. They were hypocrites. They only painted what they were told to. Consider Velasquez. Nothing but official art. Giotto. Purely official art. Like the awesome Dürer, precursor and predecessor of Nazism, who put nature on his canvas and killed it," as if Godard forgot the fact that virtually all of his films are influenced by Marxist mumbo jumbo. When Mr. Caution finally gets to West Germany and goes to a motel for the night, the maid states "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes (you) free), which aside from being the slogan at the entrance of the Auschwitz concentration camp, has to be the greatest joke at the expense of both Jews and communists, though I doubt Godard is laughing. Needless to say, Caution is not humored by the maid's remark and kicks her out, but he becomes even more irked when discovering a bible in his hotel room. Beginning with a trampled Karl-Marx-Straße street sign and concluding with a standing Martin-Luther-Straße street sign, Lemmy Caution is ultimately cautioned that German history may be repeating itself, but as narrated in French early on in the *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, "History is beyond good and evil, and the things of everyday life. Bliss is not to be found in world history. Periods of happiness are only its blank pages."

Featuring curious but not surprising quotes like, "I accuse Germany of accusing everyone else of failure" and "Passion is an integral part of the German psyche, more so than reason," *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* may be the most thoughtful philosophical attack on German history and the German people ever made by a filmmaker, at least by an outsider, though, being French, it is patently passionless and soullessly rationalized as if it were directed by a Trotskyite robot with a couple short circuits. Indeed, with its quotes from everyone from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to Thomas Mann, paintings from Franz von Stuck to Otto Dix, music from Beethoven to Liszt, and films from Murnau to Fassbinder, *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* certainly pays tribute, if not reluctantly so, to a number of great kraut culture creators, yet next to an epic piece of celluloid Gesamtkunstwerk like Syberberg's *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), Godard's work of reluctant celluloid Teutophobia seems like a sterile experiment

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in novelty intellectualism from a bored filmmaker whose confused contempt for classical kraut culture is only transcended by his contempt for the medium of cinema, the very medium to which he ironically dedicated his life. Featuring a number of 'inside' references to German culture that, aside from stereotypical references to the holocaust and Hitler, will absolutely stupefy the Teutonic novice, as well as a number of cryptic pretentious jokes from the ever so intellectually masturbatory director, *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* is essentially irrefutable proof that Godard only makes films for himself and a handful of circle-jerking comrades.

Still, as much I absolutely loathe Godard and most of his films, *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* is certainly one of my favorite flicks by the uniquely unlovable froggy bastard because, aside from taking a serious, albeit denigrating look at the once-titanic Teutons, it demonstrates that the filmmaker is almost at the level of Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran—a fellow who once described himself as a 'Hitlerist' and who once supported the ultra-nationalist Romanian Iron Guard movement—in terms of his pathological pessimism and dead set belief that the Occident is decaying at a drastic rate as Spengler predicted, as if the filmmaker finally realized that life and history is more complex than a materialist history preached by Marx. Indeed, it is a sure sign that a communist filmmaker has gotten bored when he makes random references to obscure proto-Nazi figures like German Conservative Revolutionary writer Ernst von Salomon—a onetime Freikorps member who provided the getaway car for the 1922 assassination of rich Jewish politician/industrialist Walther Rathenau (Foreign Minister of Germany during the Weimar Republic) who, despite writing screenplays for Nazi propaganda flicks like *Carl Peters* (1940), had a Jewish lover who he protected throughout the Nazi era (though both were later arrested, imprisoned, and tormented by the Allies as chronicled in the writer's book *Der Fragebogen* (1951) aka *The Questionnaire*)—for seemingly no reason at all, as if to demonstrate his Nazi-related knowledge. Admittedly, when I finished viewing *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, I felt like for the first time in my life that I found some common ground with Godard, as I think we can both agree that Europa, including Germany, is a rotting corpse of cultural degeneration, social alienation, spiritual devitalization, post-industrial waste, and cheesy would-be-sexy advertising in a lost land where the politicians are American-trained pimps and the citizens are indentured whores imprisoned in a Adorno-esque Gulag of the mind. As for a sequel to *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, it is rather doubtful as Eddie Constantine is unfortunately long dead, but Godard is rumored to be considering cinematically adapting gay Hebrew writer Daniel Mendelsohn's holocaust-themed memoir *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* (2006), which could confirm his though status as French cinema's most foremost shabbos goy, though his lifelong anti-Zionist tendencies and curious relationship to German history and culture say otherwise.

-Ty E

NOT RECONCILED
NOT RECONCILED

Jean-Marie Straub (1965)

If an autistic communist industrial-hack film director got addicted to meth, attempted to shoot a feature-length film on a couple thousand dollars, finished shooting only a ¼ of the intended footage, and haphazardly edited the incongruent scenes into a feature film, it would probably resemble a work like *Not Reconciled* (1965) aka *Nicht versöhnt oder Es hilft nur Gewalt wo Gewalt herrscht* aka *Not Reconciled* or *Only Violence Helps Where Violence Rules* directed by neo-bolshevik kraut-frog Jean-Marie Straub (*The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach, From the Clouds to the Resistance*) and rather loosely but strategically (the author was a darling of the Teutonic left at that time!) adapted (or some may say butchered) from far-left kraut-counter-culture favorite Heinrich Böll's novel *Billard um halbzehn* (1959) aka *Billiards at Half-past Nine*. 304 pages of convoluted satire condescended down to less than 50 minutes of superlatively soulless and totally tedious post-Auschwitz Teutophobia, *Not Reconciled* is an anti-cinematic piece of deconstructed post-structural agitprop cinema of the Brechtian audience-alienating sort that is more plodding and anticlimactic than a Leon Trotsky-Emma Goldman sex-tape would most certainly prove to be. Straub and his wife Danièle Huillet's (who co-write and stars in the film) second Böll adaptation following the short *Machorka-Muff* (1963), *Not Reconciled* is essentially a post-holocaust masturbation aid for far-leftist intellectuals and other pedantic anti-bourgeois bourgeois prudes with slave-moralities who hate life and, quite naturally, hate soulful and aesthetically-pleasing cinema as well. Directed by a miserable little man who is still pissed that the Germans forced him to learn German as a child and who once callously confessed, "I don't believe in the cinema. Even when it's Godard who says these things, it's interesting and has meaning, but it gives me a stomach ache. I don't fetishize the cinema at all. I think of it as an instrument, a tool," *Not Reconciled* is film that halfheartedly attempts two main things: berating German history and culture and making cinema as intricately banal yet simultaneously propagandistic as possible. More than just a mere film, *Not Reconciled* is post-fascist filmic flatulation from a Teutonized frog with an incapacity for digesting the German past, so he shits all over the present as if he is hooked on Adorno prescribed Ex-Lax. Notably mainly for being one of the first post-WWII films to depict cross-generational relations between Germans (here focusing on fathers/mothers and sons, grandfathers/grandmothers and grandsons, etc.), *Not Reconciled* would certainly go on to influence the films of Fassbinder and so many other great German New Cinema auteur filmmakers, but more importantly, the work is what German film scholar Thomas Elsaesser described as a 'terrorist film' and the sort of ethno-masochistic micro-movie that probably influenced unhinged individuals like the far-left terrorists of the Baader-Meinhof Gang.

Although nearly impossible to discern while watching the film, *Not Reconciled* is about three generations of architects/demolition experts—Heinrich Fähmel, his son Robert and Robert’s son Joseph—and is set between the early twentieth-century and the present, though most of the film takes place during the present with various abrupt flashbacks sprinkled throughout. With the full title of the film being ‘Not Reconciled or Only Violence Helps Where Violence Rules,’ the film ultimately has a message of waging war against contemporary West Germany by any means. In the end, the true hero (or heroine) is an elderly grandmother named Johanna Fähmel (Martha Staendner)—the mad matriarch of the testosterone-deprived Fähmel architect family—who shoots an ex-Nazi turned West German Secretary of State as he watches a military parade from a hotel balcony in what is probably the most insanely impotent and audaciously anti-climatic assassination scene in cinema history. Johanna’s leftist activism started early at age 30 (she is symbolically portrayed at this age by Straub’s wife/collaborer Danièle Huillet) when during the First World War she decided to denounce the Kaiser as a “fool” and was subsequently punished. This is revealed during a flashback scene in *Not Reconciled* where elderly Heinrich via narration his regret in regard to the fact that he is a born coward and failed to come to his wife Johanna’s aid after she denounced the good old Kaiser despite the fact that he totally agreed with his beloved’s sentiments and actions. Indeed, if there is anything innately wrong with the Fähmel family, it is that the men are too soft and the women are too hard. Although not referenced in *Not Reconciled*, in Böll’s book it is revealed that Johanna was put in a mental institution during World War II for attempting to save Jews from cattle cars.

Set mostly in and around the prestigious Prince Heinrich Hotel, the patriarch of the Fähmel family, 80-year-old architect Heinrich Fähmel (Heinrich Hargesheimer), concludes the film with his rather somber birthday party at the hotel. As the title of the film makes quite clear, members of the Fähmel family refuse to reconcile with ex-nazis, including a rather robotic fellow named Nettlinger (Heiner Braun), who converted Robert Fäehmel’s brother Otto, who died in 1942 at the Battle of Kiev, to National Socialism. Among other things, the youngest Fähmel male, Joseph (Joachim Weiler), learns that his father Robert destroyed a beautiful building—the St. Anthony’s Abbey—which his grandfather had built long ago, thus indicating a sort of generational destructiveness in the family influenced by the tides of war and the rise and fall of different Reichs. For whatever reason, Robert decides to adopt a young blond beast of a bellhop named Hugo (Georg Zander), but not before telling the lad that Nettlinger, who now proclaims to be a ‘democrat by conviction’ and who had hoped to reconcile with the demolition expert, was a nefarious nazi policeman who he blames for destroying his family. Robert also confesses to the bellhop that he is a demolition expert who was responsible for blowing up bridges, apartments, churches, railway viaducts, villas, and crossroads during the Second World War, which he

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seems to regret, but was forced to when American forces were approaching from the west. Of course, as a proud 'progressive' feminist, Straub made sure to depict nurturing mother-grandmother Johanna Fählmel as the true hero of *Not Reconciled* as she manages to assassinate the ex-nazi Secretary of State responsible for West Germany's rearmament while her cuckold husband was merely cowering around.

As German film authority Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his landmark work *New German Cinema: A History* (1989) regarding *Not Reconciled*: "Straub pared away all of Böll's satire, leaving the spectator with a film that resists the family chronicle, but also narrative and the linear logic of cause and effect. This is done for much the same reason as his male protagonists reject the conciliatory gestures of their former political enemies and persecutors, and the old lady resists German rearmament by violence." Indeed, despite its innate aesthetic and thematic inanity and particular propensity towards boring and/or alienating most viewers, *Not Reconciled* is, at its most fundamental level, a work of nasty neo-Bolshevik celluloid nihilism that is fueled by the sort of patently pedantic hatred that seems quite characteristic of slave-morality-driven leftist intellectuals who hate everything except hatred and destruction (with Straub's focus being not only the hatred and destruction of German culture and history, but the art of cinema as well). With various pseudo-religious references to the "beast" (a reference to both the devil and the Nazis, though Straub certainly seems to truly think that the Nazis were devils in human form) and shots of angel statues in ruins, *Not Reconciled* is essentially a work of Marxist (pseudo)metaphysics directed by a man who threw out Christ for the Gospel of Anti-Christ Marx and other related Hebraic intellectual rabble. An unintentionally hilarious film where the most courageous and heroic character is an elderly bourgeois woman, *Not Reconciled* also unequivocally demonstrates that auteur Straub was a perennial cuckold, hence why he allowed his wife Danièle Huillet to be in charge of editing and post-production of his films (which might explain why they are so incoherent, impenetrable, and nonsensically assembled!). Indeed, *Not Reconciled* seems like the work of a resentful old queen, or as Thomas Elsaesser stated of the film: "Straub's adaptation of Heinrich Böll's novel proved a harsh and unforgiving film, whose diagonals and sharply angled compositions even in the visuals seemed to want to stem the tide of those whose ultimate moral wisdom was that life must go on." In other words, if you want to find out what it feels like to be a tedious Teutophobe who hates art and beauty and is still resentful of the fact they had to learn German as a child, watch *Not Reconciled* and wallow in the wonders of pseudo-kraut commie celluloid dribble.

-Ty E

THE BRIDEGROOM, THE ACTRESS AND THE PIMP

Jean-Marie Straub (1968)

Undoubtedly, Jean-Marie Straub (*Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* aka *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, *L'inconsolable*) is one of the most, if not the most, brazenly banal, anti-cinematic, and anti-German filmmakers who has ever lived. In fact, Straub once proudly and pretentiously boasted, "My films will be ever more uncinematic, because the films one sees are becoming more and more cinematic. The commercial cinema is getting more cinematic, which is to say, more and more pornographic." Quite frankly, I have never had any interest in watching any of Straub and his wife/collaborator Danièle Huillet's films, but recently I decided to watch his short *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* (1968) aka *The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp* aka *Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter* simply because it features pre-famous Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Hanna Schygulla, Irm Hermann, Peer Raben, and various other Fassbinder superstars during their formative years. Indeed, while I have yet to see any of Straub's other films, I doubt a single one of them is so flagrantly anti-Teutonic as *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp*, which begins with a static shot of the following graffiti scrawled onto a wall: "Stupid old Germany. I hate it over here. I hope I can go soon." Indeed, while proclaiming to be a French refugee and having a frog first name, Straub has an unmistakably Germanic surname (meaning "one with bushy or bristly hair" and "destroy or rob") and thus his ethnic background is dubious at best, especially for a man who spent a good portion of his career directing films in West Germany for German audiences. Not to get off topic, but I once had a girlfriend whose grandmother was German but she told everyone she was French because she spoke the language and grew up in the French-occupied area of Germany and was ashamed of her true heritage as a rather reluctant member of a defeated nation and I would not be surprised if Straub is of a similar background as he seems to hate krauts in a more personal way than the average pompous frog (after all, Straub was not the first German filmmaker to attempt to become French as demonstrated by Volker Schlöndorff's culturally confused career). As Straub once stated regarding cinema and his film *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp*: "I don't believe in the cinema. Even when it's Godard who says these things, it's interesting and has meaning, but it gives me a stomach ache. I don't fetishize the cinema at all. I think of it as an instrument, a tool. I could say that the deconstruction one makes in *THE BRIDEGROOM, THE ACTRESS, AND THE PIMP* is interesting, but the whole film is the history, the story, of a hatred and that is all. The hatred is affirmed at the beginning, in the inscription on the wall: 'Stupid old Germany. I hate it over here. I hope I can go soon.'" Indeed, as the director himself described it as "history, the story, of a hatred and that is all," *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* might be a piece of anti-cinematic hatred, but

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a superlatively soulless, platitudinous post-structuralist one at that, that offers nothing but the halfhearted expression of a pedantic intellectual whose perennial animus is as sterile and impotent as his pseudo-convoluted celluloid art.

Although it is hard to discern by watching the film, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* is about a middleclass actress named Lilith (Lilith Ungerer) whose posh pussy is peddled by her degenerate Aryan pimp/actor boyfriend (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who, indeed, was a pimp of sorts in real-life before becoming a filmmaker). After she meets an American negro named James (Jimmy Powell), Lilith falls in love and flees the parasitic brutality of her Bavarian pimp boyfriend. Naturally, Lilith and James proclaim their love by consolidating a miscegenation-based marriage. When Lilith and James arrive home after the Catholic wedding, pissed pimp Fassbinder is waiting for them, so the bride shoots him dead and everyone assumedly lives happily ever after. While featuring twelve different shots, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* is essentially comprised of three seemingly disconnected segments: 1. A long and static tracking shot of the streets of Munich from the perspective of negro James (who the viewer never sees) driving around in his car as he watches prostitutes attempting to peddle their plush product (in a totally silent scene, though Johann Sebastian Bach's "Ascension Oratorio" appears at the end). 2. A 10-minute single shot of Fassbinder's micro-studio Antiteater (aka Anti-Theater) performing on stage (including appearances by Fassbinder, Hanna Schygulla, Irm Hermann, Lilith Ungerer, Peer Raben, etc). 3. A scene of Lilith and James' marriage and Lilith's subsequent killing of her ex-boyfriend/pimp Fassbinder. Apparently, the theater segment of *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* was taken from a performance of Austrian Jew playwright Ferdinand Bruckner's play *Krankheit der Jugend* (1929) aka *Illness of Youth* aka *Sickness of Youth* that Straub was asked to direct, but since the director do not like dialogue of the source material, he cut it down to about 10 minutes (opposed to original length, which was several hours). As Fassbinder revealed in an essay he wrote entitled *Hanna Schygulla—Not a star, Just a Vulnerable Human Being Like the Rest of Us: Disorderly Thoughts about an Interesting Woman* regarding Straub's mutilation of Bruckner's play: "Since Straub's piece was going to be scarcely ten minutes long, however, and since small theater groups generally get the biggest runarounds from publishers when it comes to the production rights for the sort of plays that interest people like us, I decided to fill out the evening by writing a play of my own, my first...It was *Katzelmacher*," thus enabling to novice auteur to write the script for what would ultimately be the filmmaker's second feature-length film and his first commercial and critical success.

Undoubtedly, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* only begins to make slight narrative sense in the final third segment when one realizes that Lilith and the Pimp were also in the second segment of the film as characters performing in the play and that the play is merely a play-within-a-film. Of

course, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* feels exactly like what it is; a decidedly disjointed piece of petty dilettante celluloid deconstructionism of the aesthetically degenerate and innately inane sort. As for Straub's reason for employing the segment in the film, it was for cryptic softcore agitprop reasons, or as he stated himself: "Then there is the play, which contains the characters that place themselves against the inscription from Mao printed on the back wall. That says, "Even if the arch reactionaries are still, today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow..." Again it's hidden, you can't read it. The enemy is flexible, anyway. And in front of all this is a very precise spectacle. It's not only a parody of bourgeois theater. The characters who appear later are within it, and the class struggle begins to appear within it." Not surprisingly but rather absurdly nonetheless, Straub has stated that negro James is the real protagonist of *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp*, even though he does not actually appear in the film until the last couple of minutes. As to the point of the film, Straub offered the following insights: "The film is a look entirely at Western decadence. And finally there is the gunshot of the girl (sic) who has married the black and who doesn't even hesitate to shoot, because her hatred liberates her, or rather, it liberates itself. One sees clearly at the end of the film that there is a liberated Utopia, but the girl (sic) is burned. She is burned by her hatred." Indeed, a find it rather ironic that Straub—a man himself that seems burnt by hatred—would describe *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* as a film about 'Western Decadence' when it is about an Aryan woman who marries an American negro and kills her Aryan (but admittedly degenerate) boyfriend, as nothing would be more taboo for a girl from a formerly racially proud National Socialist to do than marry a man not only from an Allied nation, but a black untermensch as well. Of course, Fassbinder would later portray a similar scenario in his masterpiece *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) where the eponymous female protagonist marries an American negro soldier, only to kill him when her assumed-dead German husband returns home. As Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his book *New German Cinema: A History* (1989), "With some justification, Fassbinder's *Katzelmacher* has been compared to the Straubs' films, especially in its starkly geometrical conception of scenic and dramatic space. The similarity may only be superficial, and Straub has had little sympathy for Fassbinder's subsequent work," thus one might assume that the cataclysmic negro-Aryan marriage in *The Marriage of Maria Braun* might have been a celluloid "fuck you" to Straub. After all, Fassbinder would later go on to describe his Straub-esque work *Katzelmacher* (1969) aka *Cock Artist* as one of "The Most Disgusting" films on German New Cinema in a 'Hitlist of Germans Films' he wrote in 1981.

Indeed, like with the films of Godard and other far-leftist French New Wavers, Fassbinder would only become a master auteur after disposing of Marxist 'avant-garde' influences like Straub and becoming heavily influenced by the kaleidoscopic melodramas of Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk. The fact

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that Straub would go on to hate Fassbinder's films only confirms this. Of course, history has proven who the greater auteur is, as while very few people have seen the films of Jean-Marie Straub and his wife/collaborator Danièle Huillet outside of old Marxist cinephiles (aka the new European bourgeoisie), Fassbinder has gone on to be regarded as not only the greatest and most famous filmmaker of German New Cinema, but post-WWII Teutonic cinema in general. Indeed, just when I thought no filmmaker could be more pretentious and plodding of an auteur than Frankfurt School lawyer-turned-filmmaker Alexander Kluge, I discover the sorry cinematic sacrilege of Jean-Marie Straub; a man that even managed to make miscegenation-based murder and ethno-masochistic hatred seem boldly banal. Of course, in its platitude-ridden pomposity, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* is a film that needs to be seen to be believed. While I am about as far away from a proponent of Hollywood as cinephiles get, *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* is truly a work that makes me reconsider the value of culturally-cuckolded fanboy Quentin Tarantino's oeuvre. If you ever needed indisputable evidence that Neo-Spenglerian theorist Francis Parker Yockey was right when he wrote, "A moment's reflection shows that Liberalism is entirely negative. It is not a formative force, but always and only a disintegrating force" and "Liberalism can only be defined negatively. It is a mere critique, not a living idea," just watch *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp* and see how avant-garde neo-Bolshevik culture-distorting plays out cinematically.

-Ty E

THE CHRONICLE OF ANNA MAGDALENA BACH

Jean-Marie Straub (1968)

While determined avant-gardists during their entire filmmaking careers, French-born self-exiled husband-and-wife team Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (Moses und Aron aka Moses and Aaron, Klassenverhältnisse aka Class Relations) did manage to direct at least one film, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968) aka *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach*, that was more or less made with a general audience in mind and, as far as I am concerned, it is their greatest film. A project that was apparently ten years in the making, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, which was Straub and Huillet's first feature-length film, only started shooting in the second half of 1967 after the filmmakers managed to get the Committee on Young German Film and producer Joachim Wolf to produce it after various filmmakers and critics actively campaigned for the work. As a man whose first two films, *Machorka-Muff* (1963) and *Not Reconciled* (1965) aka *Nicht versöhnt*, did as much as they could to trash Teutonic history (while also portraying West Germany as a 'post-fascist' entity of sorts run by ex-Nazis), especially in relation to National Socialism, Straub seemed paranoid that the German government was trying to prevent him from creating his first feature, complaining, "It was of course idealist in the bad sense [to try and work within the subsidy system] because I didn't know the power relations yet that operated in film production and distribution. [We thought], if they try so hard to stop us making this film, then we just have to make it. I realized exactly what the score was when the Ministry of Culture in Düsseldorf rejected my application for subsidy three times in five years. They were desperate to prevent *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* from coming out in the cinemas [...] It is obvious, a film made outside the system will never get inside. The system takes revenge." Of course, Straub also took his revenge because, as he bragged in the documentary *The Making of Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* (1967) while smirking in solidarity with his wife, he intentionally hired a non-German for the lead role of Johann Sebastian Bach, stating regarding the decision, "I wouldn't want anyone to view this as a nationalist statement in any respect, that is...neither anti-, nor something else, but I do believe it is also...important that the person who, let's say, impersonates Bach in this film—he impersonates Bach after all—is not German. Because of what happened in this country, mainly between '33 and '45, I am glad to have found a Dutchman." Indeed, undoubtedly one of the film's greatest qualities is its immaculate musical performances by Dutch harpsichordist, conductor, musicologist, Gustav Leonhardt, who specialized in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, in what would ultimately be his first and last film role. Ironically, I think Leonhardt's inclusion in the film only all the more Aryanized the work, as the Dutch people (the composer included!) tend to have more classically Nordic phenotypes that, according to most racial theo-

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rists (i.e. Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard), most Germans lack. While a majorly materialistic work (the film focuses on Bach's struggles with money and patronage) that attempts to deconstruct and dismantle Bach's 'mythical' legacy as a national hero and bearer of Teutonic high kultur, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, which is based on a fictional diary ostensibly written by the composer's second wife, attempts to make its own myths, ultimately presenting the great German Baroque musician as a 'proto-revolutionary' who subverted the system, at least musically. Rather ironically, with its utilization of authentic wardrobes/instruments, static direction, and obsession with monetary matters, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* seems like a hopelessly bourgeois work that feels like it was directed by a book store owner suffering from Asperger syndrome with a pathologically pedantic understanding of music history.

Beginning with no less than 4 minutes of Johann Sebastian Bach (Gustav Leonhardt) playing on his harpsichord, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* then proceeds with the incessant off-screen narration of Anna Magdalena Bach (Christiane Lang), which is accompanied by historical documents, vintage sheet music, old drawings, etc. While an ostensibly aesthetically subversive avant-garde work, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* essentially has the same structure as Hollywood musicals (and, in turn, pornography), albeit minus the flamboyant pageantry. Indeed, the structure of the film is more or less like this: narration from Anna Bach, Bach playing, narration from Anna Bach, Bach playing, etc. While watching the film, one learns that Anna's father was a trumpeter at the court of the Weissenfels and her brother did the same thing for the court of Anhalt-Zerbst. Chapel Master Sebastian (Anna calls her hubby by his middle name) was previously married to another woman in a marriage that sired three sons and a daughter, so 17 months after his first wife died, he married Anna and created a clavier book for her and his children. Sebastian originally received patronage from a music-loving Prince, but after his 'serene Highness' married a princess from Bernburg, things sort of fell apart. From there, Sebastian headed to Leipzig and became a Music Director and Cantor at the St. Thomas church but it was not an ideal situation for the composer to go from being a Chapel Master to a mere cantor. Apparently, Sebastian, who was born into a great musical family, always had an obsession with great organists and would travel to Hamburg and Lübeck on foot to hear such musicians play. Like many people of his time, Sebastian was not immune to tragedy, as his firstborn child, Christiana Sophia Henrietta, and second son Christian Gottlieb, died while still young children (although not mentioned in the film, between 1723 and 1742, Anna and Sebastian had 13 children together, though seven died in early childhood). Of course, during his career, Sebastian faced "vexation, envy, and persecution" from rivals, namely from a guy named Krause (Walter Peters) at the University of Leipzig. When Sebastian composed funereal music for a dead queen, the director of the 'New Divine Service' of the university protested,

and thus he was only able to perform his music “purely as a favor” for a period of time. As Sebastian writes in an appeal for patronage regarding the imperative nature of financial assistance in enabling a composer to dedicate their time to composing new and original music: “It is in any case wonderful that one should expect German musicians to be capable of performing all kinds of music, from Italy or France, England or Poland, just as the virtuosi for whom it is written, who have studied it so that they almost know it from memory, and receive heavy salaries besides, as a reward for their care. This is not taken into consideration, but they are left to their own anxieties, so that many, worried over their bread, cannot think of perfecting, even less of distinguishing themselves. For example, one only has to go to Dresden and see how the musicians there are salaried by His Royal Majesty. All concern for their livelihood is removed. Chagrin is left behind. Each person has only one instrument to cultivate. It must be excellent to hear.”

As *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* progresses, Sebastian’s unwavering assertiveness as a composer who is more interested in creating revolutionary works than merely following an outmoded game plan only increases all the more. As a means to appeal to a Prince, Sebastian gave a number of cantatas in honor of the princely household. When Sebastian is told by his superiors that he is a cantor and should yield to Herr Principal and the Rector of the university, he replies to the threat with, “I really don’t care; cost what it may.” Indeed, Sebastian’s superiors make the following complaints regarding his character: “Not only does this cantor not do anything, but he doesn’t want to explain himself. He doesn’t give the singing lessons, and there are other complaints. A change will be necessary. It must break one day.” When students at the university refuse to play after Herr Krause gets his way, Sebastian is eventually given the title of ‘Court Composer.’ Upon composing works for a certain Count Keyserlingk, Ambassador to His imperial Russian Majesty at the court of Dresden, so that the royal could have solacing music to listen to during sleepless nights, Sebastian was handsomely rewarded with a golden goblet filled with 1000 gold Louis. While Sebastian’s eldest son Gottfried Heinrich’s genius never developed, his 18-year-old son Johann Christoph Friedrich’s genius did, as he entered a fellow named Count Schaumburg-Lippe’s chapel a few weeks before his father’s death and created a grand credo. While working on the beginning stages of a piece entitled *Art of the Fugue* (which was never completed), Sebastian lost his eyesight, yet he managed to create an organ chorale on the melody “When we are in greatest need” while blind. While he eventually gained back his vision, a couple hours later he was overcome with apoplexy, followed by a high fever and expired “mildly and blessedly” on 28 July 1750 (modern historians believe he died from a combination of stroke and pneumonia).

As typical far-left feminist academic Caryl Flinn wrote in her stereotypically holocaust-worshipping philo-Semitic work *The New German Cinema: Music*,

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History, and the Matter of Style (2004) regarding the Frankfurt School influenced essence of *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*: “In the film, Bach’s music is performed on period Baroque instruments, not a common practice in the mid-1960s. That choice insisted on a concrete historical context for a figure whom, as Theodor Adorno argued at the time, Germans had transformed into an ahistorical myth of German nationality. Bach had become museumized, his music confined to the rarefied realm of concert halls. Certainly film theatres were not the place to hear him, as Straub and Huillet learned while trying to get *CHRONICLE* produced and distributed. Their use of Bach, then, was not just historically appropriate to the film, but helped criticize the contemporary deification that Adorno observed.” Indeed, the greatest aesthetic asset of *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* is undoubtedly its authentic instruments and wardrobes, with Gustav Leonhardt’s harpsichord-playing being easily the most emotionally potent aspect of the film (in fact, without his score, the film would be an exceedingly empty celluloid communist manifesto), yet that does not save Straub and Huillet’s work from being an innately static piece of historical revisionism and mythmaking twaddle disguised as state-of-the-art historical authenticity. Like with Straub’s next film *Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter* (1968) aka *The Bridegroom, the Actress and the Pimp*, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* concludes in a pseudo-spiritual manner with the lead character gazing out of a window as if staring into eternity. In that regard, as much as the film opts for taking a typically materialistic Marxist approach to history, it still ends up wallowing in the mystical world, if only for a moment (but at quite arguably the most important moment), as if Straub saw the act of creation as the greatest spiritual act and the only true form of transcendence. Ultimately, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* is most interesting as a historical footnote of German New Cinema, and German film historian Thomas Elsaesser probably best summed up the importance of the film in his book *New German Cinema: A History* (1989) when he wrote: “Bach’ is heard (rather than seen) struggling equally hard with poverty, child mortality, musical form, court intrigues, dull insensitivity, the blows of fate and bad medicine. He is seen with the only weapon at his disposal, which is his music. Deceptively coded as piety, J.S. Bach’s response to adversity is one of the clearest articulations of the possible freedom that the artist can have in relation to social demands: the freedom to resist through the discipline imposed by form. [...] Precisely because it is not an allegory of the subsidy system, but an act of resistance to it, *THE CHRONICLE OF ANNA MAGDALENA BACH*, even before it encountered its difficulties with the public and the press, was already a formulation and a critique of the Autorenfilm and its concept of the artist.” Indeed, the influence of the film on German New Cinema is incontestable as Fassbinder would make the aesthetic style of Straub and Huillet’s work more palatable with his period piece *Effi Briest* (1974). Wim Wenders would also pay tribute to *The*

Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach with his work *Falsche Bewegung* (1975) aka *The Wrong Move*, which includes an excerpt from Straub and Huillet's film where the suicide of a vice-rector is mentioned. An anti-melodramatic arthouse musical that wallows in antagonizing the audience in its aesthetic sterility and static camera work, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* is ultimately a great argument as to why 'French' filmmakers should not touch Teutonic historical figures. Indeed, Fassbinder, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, and Alexander Kluge would only become great filmmakers after they discarded their French influences. As for Straub and Huillet, they would never make a greater film than their first feature *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*.

-Ty E

THE BUNKER OF THE LAST GUNSHOTS
THE BUNKER OF THE LAST GUNSHOTS

Jean-Pierre Jeunet (1981)

If you thought the mental and physical deluge portrayed in Adolf Hitler's bunker in the German epic *Downfall* (2004) was somewhat intense and even excruciating, you have yet to experience the distinct cinematic majesty of the neo-fascist dystopian sci-fi short *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* (1981) aka *Le bunker de la dernière rafale* directed by popular collaborating French auteur filmmakers Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet. *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* is a 26 minute abstract work where the viewer is tested to their limit in regard to claustrophobic paranoia and an overall supreme agitation of the senses. Although the film includes no back story about its characters, the anti-heroes (if they can be called that) of the film seem like the sole survivors of an apocalyptic war who seem like they would be better off dead, hence the title of the film. The characters of *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* sport neo-fascist uniforms worthy of Heinrich Himmler's ghost and bald heads that are typical of a philistine skinhead tribe. In fact, the sardonically sinister and progressively depraved characters of the short make the protagonist Sam Bell of Duncan Jones' *Moon* (2009) seem like a feeble-minded wimp. These nameless men call a postindustrial bunker ruled with a technocratic iron-fist in outer-space their unwanted virtual prison home. I wouldn't be surprised if many neofolk and power electronics musicians borrowed their wardrobe styles from the boys in the bunker. It is no exaggeration for me to say that the sleek and supremely suave fascist uniforms featured in *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* make the stormtrooper uniforms of the *Star Wars* films seem like schlocky Halloween costumes. One of the commanders featured in the short, who sits in a wheelchair paralyzed like Dr. Strangelove, has a striking resemblance to Erich von Stroheim; the iconic actor/auteur who was greatly loved and later died in France. On top of featuring charming wardrobes, *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* was shot in a black-and-green night vision style that further accentuates the overall aesthetic martial prowess of the film. Like many of the great films of the silent era, the short relies exclusively on the visual as this exquisite frog flick features not a single line of dialogue, which only adds to the overall intensity and delightful dissonant ambiance of the film. From the beginning of *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots*, it will be apparent to the viewer that the mechanical stormtroopers of the film are on the break of deadly malfunction. While many of these malevolent men seem more machine than man, others are noticeably weary of their dubious comrades. One soldier seems to derive sexual pleasure from torturing and killing bugs while others find murdering fellow comrades to be quite an apathetic affair. Another soldier also find himself being experimented on by his comrades and crippled leader. By the end of *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots*, the boiling bunker inevitably explodes into all out mutiny of the murderous kind.

The Bunker of the Last Gunshots co-director Jean-Pierre Jeunet would later go on to direct the extremely popular French romantic comedy *Amélie* (2001). If *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* has anything in common with Jeunet's cutesy girl comedy, it is that they are both aesthetically pleasing cinematic experiences that make love with the viewer's eyes. With *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots*, one's eyes are most certainly raped yet total pleasure is still derived from the rather vicious visual experience. Of course, it will be no surprise to most viewers of the short that both Jeunet and co-director Marc Caro would go on to direct the dystopian fantasy film *The City of Lost Children* (1995). Out of all of Jeunet's films, *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* is certainly the most brutal, as the characters of the short fail to inspire any empathy in the viewer, which, of course, was the intention of both directors. After all, one can only assume the characters featured in the film are mass murderers as they kill each other with a stoic precision that is undoubtedly foreign to a novice killer. *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots* is like a cross between Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Shinya Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989), and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970), packaged in a neat, no bullshit 26 minute running time. I cannot think of many other films like *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots*, where mindfucking murder in a paranoiac microcosm is so vivid and well executed (especially during scenes of execution). If there is any film that can induce temporary schizophrenia in the viewer, it is, without fail, *The Bunker of the Last Gunshots*.

-Ty E

LE SILENCE DE LA MER
LE SILENCE DE LA MER

Jean-Pierre Melville (1949)

If there is any specific sort of film that I can do without seeing for the rest of my life, it is any kind of Nazi and/or holocaust themed that was film directed by a 100% kosher Jew, as I cannot think of a single one that I do not find to be phony, pseudo-moralistic, grossly historically inaccurate, insipidly stupid and/or chronically clichéd, at least until relatively recently when I saw *Le Silence De La Mer* (1949) aka *The Silence of the Sea* directed by Jean-Pierre Melville (*Le Samourai*, *Le Cercle Rouge*). Indeed, as a result of my relative disappointment with his Jean Cocteau adaptation *Les Enfants Terribles* (1950)—a film that would have surely benefited from being directed by its singularly idiosyncratic surrealist source writer—I have never been that big of a Melville fan, at least until more recently when I realized that the auteur had contributed much more to cinema history than simply a masturbatory affection for old school American film noir. After all, simply the mere idea of an auteur that is famous for Americancentric frog noir adapting Cocteau was totally preposterous to me and I ultimately found *Les Enfants Terribles* to be like a sort of unintentional parody of the poet-cum-cinemagician, though I have learned to appreciate the film more over the years. Eventually after watching his nihilistic neo-noir *Le Samourai* (1967)—a film that is seemingly infinitely superior to perennial hipster Jim Jarmusch's negrofied neo-Beat homage *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999)—I came to appreciate Melville slightly more and decided to dig further into his oeuvre. While I still consider the director's classics like *L'armée des ombres* (1969) aka *Army Of Shadows*—a film that is, not without good reason, regarded by some critics as the auteur's most personal film—to be overrated, I cannot praise enough Melville's particularly preternatural and equally poetic debut *Le Silence De La Mer*.

In his entry on Melville in the invaluable two-volume tome *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980) edited by Richard Roud, Tom Milne stated in regard to the film that it was, "An entirely outlaw production, since Melville had no union, no authorization to buy film stock, and no rights to Vercors' novel, *LE SILENCE DE LA MER* was an act of defiance in more ways than one, and not least because Vercors' story was, as Melville remarked, essentially anticinematographic." Based on the 1942 book of the same name by Jean Bruller (who published clandestinely under the pseudonymous 'Vercors')—a somewhat experimental piece of literary defiance famous for promoting a 'mental resistance' against the krauts during the Vichy era—the film was not only Melville's debut feature, but also the first of a number of cinematic works that the auteur would direct about the French Resistance, which he only relatively recently had been demobbed from thus making it a rather personal work for the auteur. Indeed, unlike shoah showmen like Spielberg and Edward Zwick, Melville—an Alsatian

Jew born Jean-Pierre Grumbach who adopted the nom de guerre Melville after the American author Herman Melville upon joining the French Resistance—actually fought the Nazis, lost a brother and various comrades in the war, and had very personal reasons to make a ‘anti-Nazi’ oriented film. Of course, what makes *Le Silence De La Mer* especially intriguing is that the central figure is a rather sympathetic aristocratic Wehrmacht officer that defies stereotypes and is ultimately more internally destroyed by the Third Reich than the conquered French people that he tries in vain to establish a relationship with after being billeted in their home. Indeed, a rather romantic and absurdly idealistic artistic type, the German officer is a proud Francophile of the sorts that dreams of a long awaited marriage between Germany and France and thus is naturally completely internally obliterated when he realizes that his comrades plan to turn the country into a complete cultural wasteland.

Featuring a fittingly German Expressionist-like aesthetic of warmly gloomy shadows and iconic chiaroscuro shots, including the somewhat misleadingly yet nonetheless potent introduction of the German officer making his initial appearance in the film like some sort of ethereally elegant young Teutonic Dracula, the film even has a strangely gothic and even unheimlich essence that certainly makes it stand out in Melville’s oeuvre simply on an purely aesthetic level. Interestingly, if the Nazi officer is a ‘monster,’ he is ultimately more sympathetic and likeable than the proudly defiant French male hero and his niece. The deceptively simple story of an elderly intellectual and his niece using the absurdly passive-aggressive tactic of refusing to say a single word to a German officer that rents a room in their home as a form of ‘resistance,’ *Le Silence De La Mer* is also a film that does not do much to help French stereotypes in regard to arrogance and cowardice yet somehow it manages to give the French a certain understated dignity. Incidentally, according to Melville, Soviet-Jewish writer and propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg—a dubious dude responsible for siring the official holocaust narrative during WWII and inciting the mass murder of Germans with agitprop leaflets featuring remarks like, “There is nothing as beautiful as a German corpse. Kill the Germans! – your old mother begs you, kill the Germans! – your child pleads. Germans are not humans, they are wild beasts”—felt that Vercors’ novel was, “a work of provocation, certainly written by a Nazi to support the Gestapo’s insidious propaganda campaign.” Surely, it is no big surprise that a seemingly sociopathic semite like Ehrenburg would believe such a thing as it does the opposite of his wartime propaganda by humanizing the Teuton and presenting an almost absurdly unconventional relationship between a kindly kraut conqueror and a bitterly defeated frog.

Despite its less than realist stylization and almost gratingly minimalist mise-en-scène, *Le Silence De La Mer* is a film that is largely inspired by historical fact and even has some covert ‘realist’ attributes. For instance, the film was actually shot on location at Vercors’ real home where the writer’s real-life interaction

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with an unconventional German officer took place, or as Melville explained in *Melville on Melville* (1971) edited by Rui Nogueira as to why he shot it there, "Because it was there that Vercors imagined this story on the basis of reality. A German officer who limped and played tennis as therapy for his leg had actually lived in his house. No rapport grew up between them, but Vercors had noticed that this officer was rather unusual, for his room was not only full of books that bore witness to his exceptional culture also contained a bust of Pascal instead of Hitler's portrait. Starting from there, Vercors had translated the story into poetic terms. Thus his wife became his niece, for instance, to permit the introduction of a sublime love them." Indeed, the film certainly does feature one of the coldest and most hermetic yet nonetheless potent (anti)love subplots in cinema history, but I digress. Also of note is that the German officer was apparently at least partly inspired by German writer Ernst Jünger who not only served as an army captain in German-occupied Paris, but also, like Melville, was a personal friend of poet and cine-magician Jean Cocteau. Additionally, Jünger and Melville had similar political persuasions as both men were 'right-wing anarchist' types that stayed true to a sort of extreme individualism despite their obvious nostalgia for wartime experiences. Undoubtedly, the experimental doc *La guerre d'un seul homme* (1982) aka *One Man's War* directed by Argentinean Jew Edgardo Cozarinsky makes for a great double feature with *Le Silence De La Mer* as it juxtaposes excerpts from Jünger's Paris WWII diaries with Vichy propaganda from the same era, thereupon bringing more complexity to the figure of the conflicted cultivated kraut officer.

To underscore the historical importance of Vercors' source novel, *Le Silence De La Mer* begins with a nameless/faceless resistance fighter opening a suitcase that contains resistance material hidden beneath clothes, including the literary work in question, which is revealed to be written in tribute to "assassinated poet" Saint-Pol-Roux (aka Paul-Pierre Roux). In what ultimately proves to be a rather blunt yet respectably honest disclaimer from Melville, the film also opens with an inter-title that reads, "This film has no pretension of solving the problem of Franco-German relations, for they cannot be solved while the barbarous Nazi crimes, committed with the complicity of the German people, remain fresh in men's minds." Of course, after watching the film, one gets the impression that France and Germany shares an indelibly apocalyptic relationship that will remain forever forsaken. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Hitler declared on June, 25 1942 following news of France agreeing armistice terms that it was, "[The] most glorious victory of all time," especially considering France's seemingly perennial history of aggression against Germany. Needless to say, for the French, to be conquered and occupied by their ostensible inferiors came with much shame and resentment, which is pretty clear in Melville's film. Luckily for the French, Hitler was no Napoleon.

Notably, the film begins with a nameless French uncle (played by Melville's

wartime comrade Jean-Marie Robain)—an elderly four-eyed intellectual type that seems to spend most of his time on his ass pondering the deeper meanings of life—stating in regard to the seemingly suicidal absconding of an aristocratic German lieutenant, Werner von Ebrennac (Swiss actor Howard Vernon), from his home, “And so, he had left. And so, he submitted, like the others, like all the others of that miserable nation, and I tried to etch into my mind the events of these last six months: Our evenings, his words, his revolt. Yet not even he, of all men, had the courage to resist his master’s order. His arrival was preceded by a major military deployment.” For the rest of the film, the uncle recounts how he and his niece (lesbian Rothschild Jewess Nicole Stéphane) spent the last half a year or so ignoring a cultivated and kind, albeit somewhat insanely idealistic, German officer that was renting a room in their humble abode. While it was somewhat easy for the uncle to stay silent, his niece clearly develops a mutual affection and true forbidden love for the German officer that eventually reaches a climax in a most anticlimactic way. A rather (anti)romantic cinematic where the sexual, social, and metapolitical ideals of a German romantic are crushed in a ruthless manner not unlike that of a half-frozen Iron Cross-adorned corpse of a German soldier being run over by a Soviet T-35 tank on the Eastern Front, *Le Silence de la Mer* is indubitably a anti-Nazi film yet somehow the viewer finds themselves condemned to suffer the internal misery of a quite cultivated kraut. Of course, considering the heavy influence of France and its culture on German Conservative literary figures like Stefan George and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (the latter of whom notably killed himself), the figure of the German lieutenant becomes all the more tragically nuanced. Indeed, the unrequited love subplot in the film is so intensely anti-climatic that it apparently greatly pained queer French Nobel Prize-winning French writer André Gide, or as Melville once explained himself, “I realized that poetry in the cinema is dangerous the day André Gide saw my film. After all, Gide was a man well qualified to understand a story like *LE SILENCE DE LA MER*, but he was terribly bothered by the girl’s attitude. At the screening, it was obvious that he wanted them to rush into each other’s arms. Of course, he was already very much in decline when he put himself out to come and see my film. The cinematic side of it passed completely over his head. He couldn’t even remember having read the book, which was odd because, for a long time, it was thought in London that Gide had written it, and as a matter of fact, there are things in Vercors’s work that are pure Gide. The influence is unmistakable. After the screening, the only thing he could find to say to me was: ‘I think the girl was a fool. She deserved to be spanked.’”

As a sensitive musical composer that once blew off a beautiful blonde bombshell because it disturbed him that she took pleasure in tearing off the wings and limbs of a bug because it bit her, Werner von Ebrennac is the preternaturally poetic sort of individual that has enough wild optimism to succumb to the utopianism of truly believing that the conquering of France by the Third Reich

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will eventually lead to the "...most beautiful marriage in the world." As an artistic type, Werner seems somewhat absurd sporting a German officer uniform despite the fact that it looks rather good on him. In fact, the young German lieutenant eventually goes to great pains to not be caught dead in his uniform by the French man and his niece, though that does not stop them from refusing to say a single word to him. As his narration reveals, the French uncle is absolutely obsessed with Werner and carefully studies his every move and word. For example, if Werner farted, the Frenchman would probably reluctantly write an intensely intimate piece of stream-of-conscious poetry about it and how it greatly impacted his day. As for the Frenchman's niece, it is revealed by the end of the film that she is an ice queen of sorts that has been hiding painfully strong romantic longing for Werner, who seems to completely reciprocate her feelings as revealed by his constant smiling at her and somewhat curious vocal denouncing of German women. In fact, when the French girl finally gets the gall to look at Werner, he is so deeply affected that he is literally blinded by the light of her penetrating gaze. As the Frenchman narrates in regard to Werner, "Each day, the same survey of the room, the same pleasure. His eyes rested on my niece's face in profile, as always, stern and impassive, and when he finally looked away, I was certain I saw a kind of smiling approval." Undoubtedly, Werner and the niece's aborted-before-it-ever-started love affair is symbolic of the German lieutenant's romantic pan-European utopian dream about a grand cultural marriage between France and Germany where the literary prowess of the former is combined with the musical domination of the latter.

Not unlike many German aristocrats of his time, Werner is a Francophile and wastes no time in expressing to his silently hostile two-person audience his great appreciation for French kultur, especially French literature, or as he enthusiastically states, "Balzac, Baudelaire, Corneille, Descartes, Fenelon, Gautier, Hugo. What a list. And I'm only up to H. Not to mention Molière, Racine, Rabelais, Pascal, Stendhal, Voltaire, Montaigne, nor any of the others. For England, Shakespeare immediately comes to mind. For Italy, Dante. For Spain, Cervantes. For us, Goethe. But to find others, you have to think about it. But when they say 'France,' who comes to mind? Immediately leap forth Molière, Racine, Hugo, Voltaire, Rabelais and who else? Names jostle like a crowd outside a theater, each trying to enter first. But for music, it's my country. Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart. Which name comes to mind first? And we warred against each other. But it will be the last war. We'll never fight again. We will marry. Yes, we will. It will be the most beautiful marriage in the world." Rather romantic statements like these make Werner the perfect candidate for tragedy when he comes to the quite brutal realization that his National Socialist comrades are not exactly frog-friendly and instead see the French as an old perennial enemy that needs to be completely crushed with extreme prejudice. While Werner has many great things to say about France and its culture, he

is somewhat less charitable when it comes to the nation's politicians, or as he explains in regard to his somewhat love-hate relationship with the country as a whole, "I've always loved France. I was a child during the last war, so my opinion then doesn't count. Since then, I've always loved it, but from afar, like a faraway princess...because of my father. Because of my father. He was a great patriot bitterly wounded by our defeat...and yet, he loved France. He loved Briand. He believed in the Weimar Republic and Briand. He was enthusiastic. He said, 'He'll unite us like man and wife.' He thought the sun would finally rise on Europe, but Briand was defeated and my father realized France was still led by your cruel bourgeoisie, industrialists like de Wendel, Henry Bordeaux, your old Marshal Foch. He told me, 'You must never enter France except in boots and a helmet.' He was on his deathbed, so I swore. When war broke out, I'd visited all of Europe except France."

As if the Frenchman and his niece are his therapists, Werner acts completely vulnerable around the two and confesses to them not only his hopes and dreams, but also his internal pains and greatest fears, as if he feels totally obligated to offend no one and unequivocally prove that he is indeed also human like the people of the nation his nation conquered. In what is arguably one of the film's various allusions to Melville's comrade Cocteau, Werner even compares himself to titular 'hero' of *La Belle et la Bête* in what seems to be his cryptic way of flirting with the niece. While Werner is initially quite optimistic about the NS occupation of France and how it might lead to a Franco-German empire featuring an aristocracy of *Übermensch* artists, that all changes when he hooks up with some Nazi comrades. Indeed, as depicted in a flashback scene, Werner is not only told about Treblinka and gas chambers by a comrade in the SS, but the same chap also stoically states in regard to the French question, "We have the opportunity to destroy France and we will do so. Not only its might, but also its spirit. This is where the biggest danger lies. That's our mission. Don't kid yourself, my friend. We will be smiling. We will proceed with mercy. But we will turn France into a cowering dog." In fact, Werner is even mocked for his love of a France, as another Nazi states to him, "You're blinded by your love of France. That's dangerous. But we will cure Europe of this pestilence. We will utterly destroy this poison." Of course, considering the Nazi's words and how Werner is momentarily blinded by her mere gaze, the niece can see symbolic of France (notably, as if influenced by Melville's film, Louis Malle would include a Jewess heroine that is literally named 'France' in his masterful WWII flick *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974)). Needless to say, Werner cannot help but report his dejecting experiences to the Frenchman and his niece and he even practically suffers a nervous breakdown while shrieking with a sort of foreboding doom and gloom, "There is no hope! No hope! No hope! Nothing, no OHS. Not only your modern writers, your Péguy's, your Proust's, your Bergson's, but all the others! All these, all of them! They'll extinguish the flame completely. Europe

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will no longer be illuminated by their light. ‘Nevemore.’” Arguably, the biggest disappointment for Werner comes in the form of a longtime friend that he describes as “sensitive and romantic” but who eventually became infected with a sort of almost demonic Nazi fanaticism, or as he explains, “He was the most rabid, veering from rage to laughter. He glared at me and said, ‘The serpent must be drained of its venom.’ He said, ‘Do you realize what you’re doing?’ I looked at him – looked deep into his blue eyes – and he was sincere. That’s the horror of it! They’ll do whatever they say – methodically and relentlessly. I know the determination of those devils.” At this point, Werner has become anti-German, or, more accurately, anti-Nazi, though he is more intent on self-destruction than rebellion.

After giving an eerie defeatist monologue about his great disillusionment with the Third Reich, Werner reveals to the Frenchman and his niece that he plans to leave the next day as he is decided to go on a suicide mission “To Hell” as he has requested to go fight on the Eastern Front where a miserably cold death is highly probable. After saying his final farewell, the niece finally breaks her silence and softly says goodbye while on the verge of tears, or as her uncle narrates, “To hear it, you’d have to be listening for it, but I heard it and so did Werner von Ebrennac.” As for the Frenchman, he is disappointed that Werner has not decided to pull a Claus von Stauffenberg like so many of his aristocratic background and rebel against the Nazi machine. The next day just before leaving the Frenchman’s house for good, Werner finds an open book with the following words, “It is a noble thing for a soldier to disobey a criminal order.” After reading the text, Werner looks up and discovers that the Frenchman is staring right at him in what is ultimately a particularly passive-aggressive attempt by the old man to goad the German lieutenant into rebelling. After Werner leaves for good, the Frenchman states while he and his niece eat soup, “It seemed very cold outside,” as if to foretell the German lieutenant’s grim future. Of course, if *Le Silence De La Mer* was a Hollywood movie, it would conclude with Werner fucking the French niece and successfully leading a German Resistance movement against the Third Reich, hence the intricately anti-Hollywood essence of the film.

For those that have studied German literature and history, it is not hard to see why it is believed by various film scholars like Ginette Vincendeau that the character of Werner von Ebrennac was at least partly based on Ernst Jünger, who became totally disillusioned with the Third Reich. In fact, as a result of the Third Reich, Jünger even lost his elder son Ernst Jr., who was killed near Carrara, Italy in battle after being forced to join a penal unit due to anti-Nazi sentiments he made (notably, his younger son Alexander, a physician, committed suicide in 1993). Interestingly, as if embarrassed by his previous nationalistic tendencies, Jünger, who lived in self-imposed exile after WWII, heavily revised his most internationally famous book, *Storm of Steel* (1920) aka *In Stahlgewittern*—a memoir of his WWI experiences—and excised the more nationalistic elements

from it. While Jünger arguably wrote some of his greatest novels after World War II, some critics, like the magical Baron Julius Evola, argued that he suffered from a sort of spiritual and aesthetic deterioration as a result of his somewhat tragic experiences during WWII. Indeed, as Evola, who was such a big fan of Jünger's early work that he translated it into Italian, explained in his 'intellectual autobiography' *The Path of Cinnabar* (1963), "On the other hand, over the years Jünger has come to distance himself from the book I had introduced to the Italian public, and has abandoned his original views. While the most recent writing of Jünger has significantly contributed towards his fame as a writer and man of letters, on a spiritual level it reflects a lapse: both for its merely literary and aesthetic nature, and because it betrays the influence of ideas of a different, and often antithetical sort from the ones that inform *The Worker* and other early books of Jünger. It is as if the spiritual drive that Jünger had derived from his life in the trenches of the First World War, and applied on an intellectual level, had gradually run out. Besides, not only did Jünger play no significant role during the Second World War, but it also appears that, when in service in occupied France, he got in touch with those members of the Wehrmacht who in 1944 attempted to murder Hitler. Jünger, therefore, should be numbered among those individuals who first subscribed to 'Conservative Revolutionary' ideas but were later, in a way, traumatized by the National Socialist experience, to the point of being led to embrace the kind of sluggishly liberal and humanistic ideas which conformed to the dominant attempt 'to democratically reform' their country; individuals who have proven incapable of distinguishing the positive side of past ideas from the negative, and of remaining true to the former. Alas, this incapability to discern is, in a way, typical of contemporary Germany (the land of the 'economic miracle')." While it would have been artistically unfortunate if he had chosen such a fate, it would have arguably been more fitting in regard to his legacy if Jünger had pulled a Werner von Ebrennac and tested his fate on the Eastern Front instead of staying in Paris and hanging out with Cocteau and Picasso, but I digress.

While none of Jünger's novels have really been cinematically adapted unless you count Cozarinsky's experimental doc *One Man's War* or the rather goofy and hardly faithful short *Die Ungenierten kommen - What happened to Magdalena Jung?* (1983) directed by the late great iconoclastic auteur Christoph Schlingensief, Melville's film is vaguely Jüngerian and, more importantly, it does act as a fine antidote to the platitude-driven antiwar sentiments of the German writer's frog-blooded nemesis Erich Maria Remarque's obscenely overrated novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929)—a sort of anti-*Storm of Steel* that was used by Americans as anti-German propaganda—and especially the pre-Code 1930 film of the same name directed by kraut-hating heeb Lewis Milestone. Unlike the idiotically emotionally manipulative Milestone movie, Melville's film manages to be antiwar without being insipidly pacifistic and experimentally nonlinear and relatively unpredictable instead of banally linear and painfully predictable.

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Indeed, despite his love of American culture and Hollywood, *Le Silence De La Mer* is as anti-Hollywood as films come, at least aesthetically.

Despite his later reputation for neo-noir films with very heavy American influences, Melville's debut feature had a crucial aesthetic influence on one of the greatest anti-Hollywood auteur filmmakers of all-time. Indeed, the French master auteur Robert Bresson, who previously cast Melville in a small acting role in his second feature *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945), would not fully develop his signature auteur style until his third feature *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (1945) aka *Diary of a Country Priest*, which clearly borrowed much from *Le Silence De La Mer*. In fact, Melville himself was convinced of this and even once complained, "I sometimes read [...] 'Melville is being Bressonian.' I'm sorry, but it's Bresson who has always been Melvillian [...] *DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST* is *LE SILENCE DE LA MER*! Some of the shots are identical [...] As a matter of fact, Bresson did not deny it when André Bazin put it to him one day, that he had been influenced by me. All this has been forgotten since." In fact, Bazin wrote in his classic text *What is Cinema?: Volume I* (1967), "The technique of Bresson's direction cannot adequately be judged except at the level of his aesthetic intention. Inadequately as we may have so far described the latter, it may yet be that the highly astonishing paradox of the film is now a little more evident. Actually the distinction of having set text over against image for the first time goes to Melville in his *SILENCE DE LA MER*. It is noteworthy that his reason was likewise a desire for fidelity. However, the structure of Vercors' book was of itself unusual. In his *JOURNAL* Bresson has done more than justify Melville's experiment and shown how well warranted it was. He has carried it to its final conclusions." Indeed, *Le Silence De La Mer* is one of the rare examples in European art history where a Jew had a crucial revolutionary influence on art as opposed to simply parroting and aping the style of Aryan European artists, which becomes all the more strange when one considers Melville's fetish for American trash. Indeed, Melville would later become more of what Ludwig Wittgenstein describe as a 'reproductive artist,' but his debut feature demonstrates a sort of Aryan artistic pioneering comparable to Carl Theodor Dreyer. In fact, France is rare in cinema history in that it produced a number of Jewish and part-Jewish cinematic pioneers, including Jean Epstein and Abel Gance (like Truffaut, the latter was the bastard son of a Jewish professional). Of course, as Wittgenstein also once wrote in regard to the unoriginal nature of Judaic artists, "It might be said (rightly or wrongly) that the Jewish mind does not have the power to produce even the tiniest flower or blade of grass; its way is rather to make a drawing of the flower or blade of grass that has grown in the soil of another's mind and to put it into a comprehensive picture. We aren't pointing to a fault when we say this and everything is all right as long as what is being done is quite clear. It is only when the nature of a Jewish work is confused with that of a non-Jewish work that there is any danger, especially

when the author of the Jewish work falls into the confusion himself, as he so easily may [...] It is typical for a Jewish mind to understand someone else's work better than he understands it himself." Melville would certainly demonstrate he understood American film noir better than the people that actually directed the original films, but with *Le Silence De La Mer* he at least managed to draw his own 'blade of grass.'

Despite being based on a famous anti-Nazi French resistance novel and directed by a Jew, *Le Silence De La Mer* can surely be interpreted as a piece of revolutionary pan-European cinema that promotes the uniting of Europa in a real cultural sense and not in the current globalist neo-bolshevik/Sorosian anti-European neo-liberal EU sense. Indeed, while watching the film and listening to Werner von Ebrennac's romantic monologue about a great marriage between Germany and France, I could not help but reminded of the Napoleon quote, "I wanted to prepare the fusion of the great interests of Europe, as I had accomplished that of the parties. I concerned myself little with the passing rancor of the peoples, for I was sure that the results would lead them irresistibly back to me. Europe would in this way have become in truth a united nation, and every one would have been, not matter where he traveled, in the same Fatherland. This fusion will accomplish itself sooner or later through the pressure of the facts; the impulse has been given which, since my downfall and the disappearance of my system, will make the restoration of balance possible in Europe only by merger and fusion of the great nations." Undoubtedly, one of the greatest mistakes of Third Reich was its shallow Nordic/Teutonic supremacism and discrimination of other Europeans, even if France arguably got what was coming to it as it had a long history of waging war against Deutschland and ultimately became a decadent hellhole that persecuted Germany after WWI. Although a fan of Uncle Adolf and his Dozen Year Reich, Euro-American revolutionary Francis Parker Yockey—a man that, according to his FBI records, had an astonishing genius IQ of 170—would have certainly agreed with many of Werner von Ebrennac's sentiments as demonstrated by his neo-Spengerian magnum opus *Imperium* (1948) where he argued, "Thus it is, that both for material and spiritual reasons, nationalism of the 19th century type is dead. It is dead spiritually for the reason that Europe has reach in its Cultural development the stage of Imperium. Even if there were no such frightful outer threat as exists, this would still govern. But, in addition, the basis of the power of every one of the old Western nations has been destroyed. No single one has sufficient resources, spiritual or material, to engage in world-politics independently. Their only choice is to be vassals collectively, or to form a unity of Culture-State-Nation-Race-People. This creates automatically an economic-political-military unit." Of course the Europa of today is a dystopian anti-Imperium of ethnocide and racial suicide that is ruled by culture-distorters, traitors, and perverts that flood the continent with hostile (and oftentimes rape-happy) low IQ racial aliens from the Global South, and

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promote every form of sexual degeneracy and social dysfunction while outlawing certain healthy nationalistic tendencies. Surely, even the commie and anarchistic members of the French Resistance would not approve of the singularly degenerate frogland of today.

Despite what one might think of the Third Reich, it is hard to deny that Yockey was right when he argued that, "From 1940 to 1944, nearly all Europe was united, and the eventuation of the Second World War showed to the entire world the unity of Europe, for all Europe was defeated, despite the tricky attempt to make some parts of the West feel 'victorious.'" Indeed, while the UK and France might have played their roles in successfully destroying Germany during WWII, it cost them everything as they lost their empires and their spirits and are today only a pathetic necrotizing shell of what they once were and are being fed on by virtually every type of brown maggot from around the world. Likewise, while Charles de Gaulle might have defeated his Nazi foes and went on to rule France for over two decades, by the late-1960s even he was seen as a sort of Nazi by the degenerate Americanized younger generation—the dreaded frog boomers—who would go on to transform the nation into the crime-and-terrorism-ridden multiculti nightmare that it is today. Despite Melville's film's message of Nazi cultural colonization, it is hard to imagine that France would be in a more culturally retarded, artistically autistic, spiritual sick, infertile, decrepit, and seemingly pre-apocalyptic state as it is today had Germany won the war, but of course most Frenchmen (and Europeans in general) lack the intellectual honesty, integrity, and courage to even consider such an idea, especially since the Third Reich has become a virtual scapegoat for the rest of Europe. It is also probably no coincidence that the most powerful and successful pornographer in France today is a kosher chap named Greg Lansky that is infamous for his 'Blacked' videos where negroes defile white girls. Somehow, it seems quite symbolic that, in a country where virtually all rapes are committed by Arabs and Africans, a Hebraic pornographer would get rich off my making grotesque interracial fuck flicks.

Notably, Vercors' source novel has been adapted at least two other times, including a 1980 BBC English-language TV version and a French-Belgian TV movie version entitled *Le Silence de la Mer* (2004) directed by Pierre Boutron, with the latter rather cheaply focusing on the doomed romantic subplot between the German lieutenant and French niece. To understand the grand cinematic majesty of Melville's adaptation one just need to compare it to the 2004 version, which has about as much aesthetic value as a MiniDV home-movie of WWII historical reenactors. Although he would admit in interviews that he would have directed a totally different type of film had he created it later in his career, Melville seems to have been proud of his first film as demonstrated by remarks like, "LE SILENCE DE LA MER is the work of professional, even if well-known professionals of the time—who have completely disappeared since—described the film

as ‘amateur stuff.’” Aside from considering it nearly immaculate in terms of its construction, I also regard *Le Silence de la Mer* as Melville’s greatest film. Indeed, after recently watch Melville’s other WWII/Resistance-themed films like *Léon Morin, Priest* (1961) and *Army of Shadows* (1969), I cannot help but feel that the auteur reached his peak in terms of political messages and aesthetic innovation with his very first flick. Additionally, despite being the work of a French Jew that lost a brother in WWII, I cannot think of another film that features a more nuanced and sympathetic ‘Nazi soldier,’ but I guess that is what one should expect from a right-wing Israelite that once stated in an interview on television, “I have friends who were once SS.” Of course, Sam Fuller, who also fought in WWII, also depicted Germans in a somewhat more sympathetic manner in *The Big Red One* (1980) than most Jewish filmmakers. If there is any body part that is most memorably focused on in *Le Silence de la Mer*, it is unquestionably eyes, namely those of Adolf Hitler (in portrait form) and lead actress Nicole Stéphane. What I found especially interesting about this is the strikingly similarities between Uncle Adolf and the Hebrewess’ eyes. While I am bored with conspiracy theories, I cannot help but be reminded that Stéphane was a Rothschild (her real name was Baroness Nicole de Rothschild) and some people believe that Hitler was a Rothschild bastard. In fact, the speculation about Hitler’s dubious heritage was first brought forward in *The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report* (1972), which is not exactly conspiracy trash as it is based on a Office of Strategic Services (pre-CIA) prepared by German-American psychoanalyst Walter C. Langer during World War II. While I find Stéphane to be annoyingly unattractive, not least of all because her Sapphic sensibility is always apparent, she demonstrates a sort of understated sensitivity that I think lifelong cinephile Hitler could have appreciated; whether he is actually related to her or not. Accordingly to Melville himself, *Le Silence de la Mer* was made completely independently without unions and he agreed to burn the print of the film if it was rejected by a single member of a jury of ex-Resistance fighters selected by source writer Vercors, who was initially against the adapting of the novel despite allowing the then-novice auteur to use his home as the main location for the film. Luckily, the jury apparently loved the film, though it would be two years before it was actually released (indeed, the auteur started production on the film on August 11, 1947 in a shoot that would last 27 days). Considering its source novel, auteur, and the year it was shot, one could certainly argue that *Le Silence de la Mer* is the French World War II film par excellence. I certainly cannot think of a superior French WWII flick and I say that as someone that appreciates classics like Alain Resnais’ *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) and Malle’s *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974). Notably, Nietzsche once wrote, “History belongs to the living man in three respects: it belongs to him so far as he is active and striving, so far as he preserves and admires, and so far as he suffers and is in need of liberation.” Undoubtedly, Nietzsche’s words certainly correspond to

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Melville and his lifelong relation to WWII, with his films undoubtedly providing him a certain liberation from suffering (which he seemed to hide quite well). Going back to Nietzsche once more, I think the greatest complement I can pay *Le Silence de la Mer* is that it succeeds in the Nietzschean historical sense as it fulfills the advice of the Teutonic philosopher that, "If you want to strive for and promote the culture of a people, then strive for and promote this higher unity and work to annihilate modern pseudo-culture in favor of a true culture; dare to devote some thought to the problem of restoring the health of a people which has been impaired by history, to how it may recover its instincts and therewith its integrity."

-Ty E

LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

Jean-Pierre Melville (1950)

French poet Jean Cocteau was one of the greatest and most innovative filmmakers of all time. I would even argue that he is the best filmmaker that France has ever produced. Opium helped to fuel Cocteau's unlimited creativity. A born artist, he directed films that captured beautiful dreams of the highly transcendent sort in a hopelessly terminal world. Jean Cocteau would have fellow French director Jean-Pierre Melville direct the film adaptation of his novel *Les Enfants terribles*. *Les Enfants terribles* follows the sadistic relationship of an ambiguously incestuous brother and sister. Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci seems to have taken some inspiration from the film with his recent incest orgy fest *The Dreamers*. Jean Cocteau is not doubt a superior director to Jean-Pierre Melville (who for the most part directed gangster films). I was disappointed to find out that Cocteau allowed Melville to direct *Les Enfants terribles* (especially after Cocteau's success with *Orpheus*). Jean Cocteau's writing carries the power of *Les Enfants terribles*. Melville merely constructed Jean Cocteau's novel into a minor masterpiece. I look at Melville as merely the artisan where Cocteau is the artist. *Les Enfants terribles* lacked the celluloid magic found in the masterwork films directed by auteur Jean Cocteau. Paul and Elizabeth are siblings that share a room together (among other things). They spend most of their time in this room playing games and planning trouble. Eventually an attractive blond resembling Elizabeth (Agathe) catches the fancy of Paul. Elizabeth becomes jealous and plots a plan to destroy any type of romantic relationship between Paul and Agathe that may occur. All of this results in utter tragedy. Melville's direction of the final scene in *Les Enfants terribles* is his greatest contribution to the film. *Les Enfants terribles* is one of the very rare films that finds its major strengths in its powerful and undeniably unique writing. Jean Cocteau was incapable of telling a boring story as his character wouldn't allow banality. During his early twenties, supposedly Cocteau could reach full orgasm just by using his imagination (without touching himself). I believe that to be true and reflexive of Cocteau's fantastic imagination.

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LITAN

Jean-Pierre Mocky (1982)

In my less than humble opinion, “Folk horror” (or what one might call “Heimat horror” in certain contexts) is one of the most effective, underused, and underappreciated sub-genres of horror cinema. Indeed, it is hard to think of a horror film that is more organically immaculate than *The Wicker Man* (1973) directed by Robin Hardy, yet few filmmakers have had the gall to tackle the sub-genre (though, it was somewhat trendy in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s). From William Dieterle’s *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941) to Ben Wheatley’s *Kill List* (2011), the somewhat loose and unofficial sub-genre has pretty much always been around and has made filmgoers change the way they perceive their homelands and culture/religious heritages, with *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) being a more unfortunate example. As a country of ‘liberty loving’ anarchists and sexual degenerates that has never been big on horror or folk history in general, France seems like one of the last places in the world that would produce quality folk horror flicks, yet the nation is responsible for at least one of the most wildly idiosyncratic and inventive works of the subgenre. Indeed, although featuring elements of black comedy, satire, surrealism, and absurdism, *Litan* (1982) directed by actor/auteur Jean-Pierre Mocky (*Les Dragueurs* aka *The Chasers*, *Agent Trouble*) is folk horror (or, more like ‘anti-folk horror’) in its most preternatural and iconoclastic form. Directed by a mensch from a Polish Jewish family who has fathered at least 17 children (he has claimed that the first was born when he was only 12) and who developed a deep loathing of the Catholic Church after being molested by a Priest as a schoolboy, *Litan – La cité des spectres verts* aka *Le voleur de visages* aka *Litan ou les messagers de l’au-delà* depicts an apocalyptic world where the intellectually-challenged peasants worship death and where religion and traditional culture are more or less atavistic viruses that lead to mass psychosis and countless senseless deaths, among other things. Although Mocky has been directing films for over half a century, he got his start as an actor (in fact, he plays the male lead of *Litan*) who has worked with Luchino Visconti and Jean Cocteau and is best known for directing commercial oriented comedies and thrillers and certainly not arthouse folk horror. In fact, after being rather impressed by *Litan*, I attempted to watch some of his other cinematic works and found them completely unwatchable, thus making it seem unlikely that he is capable of directing anything even remotely like surrealist folk horror, yet he did and should be remembered for it by serious cinephiles, if only for that one film. Indeed, while Mocky’s film is clearly influenced by *The Wicker Man* (there is at least one ‘borrowed’ scene involving masked children peering out of windows), it features a complete and utter disrespect for faith, religion, and traditional culture where as Hardy’s film is a bit more ‘respectful’ when it comes to these cultural ingredients (it should be noted that Hardy’s flick was penned by a

Hebrew named Anthony Shaffer, hence the film's somewhat negative portrayal of Christianity, yet arguably favorable depiction of paganism). Set in a small eccentric French village during a yearly region-oriented folk holiday that is full of pageantry and flamboyant customs and can probably be best described as a frog redneck equivalent to Mexico's "Día de Muertos" (aka "Day of the Dead"), Litan depicts what happens when two 'progressive' liberal-minded lovers fall prey to the labyrinthine lunacy of a town suffering from a spiritually retarded sort of mass psychosis where friends run over friends with their cars, jealous husbands brutally slaughter their wives for merely dancing with other men, death is worshiped while life is neglected, and people more or less become degenerate versions of the ancient archetypes they dress up as, or at least attempt to be. Like George A. Romero's *The Crazies* (1973) meets Juan López Moctezuma's *The Mansion of Madness* (1973) meets Werner Herzog's (anti)Heimat flick *Herz aus Glas* (1976) aka *Heart of Glass* as directed by the majorly mongrelized lovechild of Alejandro Jodorowsky and Roger Corman, Litan is a curious little piece of cultivated arthouse kitsch that reminds one that small villages always beat cities when it comes to truly fantastic, mystifying, and horrifying horror cinema.

As described in an inter-title at the beginning of the film, "Masks, music and dances: in the town of Litan each year, one celebrates deaths thus." Indeed, automaton-like musicians with red suits and creepy semi-anatomically-correct silver masks (that sort of resemble the face of the eponymous puppet in Sandor Stern's 1988 horror flick *Pin*), a man balancing a bike on an outdoor tightrope, an ogre-like peasant shoveling a grotesque pile of what seems to be hay mixed with trash, and mysterious men in skull and quasi-zombie masks are just some of the strange folks celebrating the cherished local holiday, though some people are not exactly excited about the festivities, including a cosmopolitan couple from out-of-town. Indeed, after waking up from a seemingly real nightmare involving the death of her geologist boyfriend Jock (Jean-Pierre Mocky), who has temporarily relocated to the village to study a place called Black Rock, Nora (played by Marie-José Nat, who is probably best known for André Cayatte's 1964 *Anatomy of a Marriage* aka *Françoise ou La vie conjugale* and the holocaust comedy *Train of Life* (1998) aka *Train de vie*) becomes quite hysterical and immediately goes looking for her best beau after receiving a dubious phone call regarding his whereabouts, only to run into a number of weirdoes who attempt to approach her on the way, including zombified frogs of the philistine peasant sort, babbling cross-eyed lunatics, and seemingly pernicious fellows in skull masks, among countless others.

After witnessing a decidedly deranged dude intentionally running over a medic with his car, Nora hitches a ride from a car full of malevolent musicians (aka the weird dudes with the red suits and silver masks), who get a kick out of spooking her, with one sinisterly remarking, "Don't be scared! Today is Litan's day, everybody is thrilled!" after making her squirm with fear. Meanwhile, a

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group of boy scouts that vaguely resemble the Hitler Youth (they sport khaki-colored uniforms with fascist-esque insignia and whatnot) have tons of good jolly fun while carrying out their yearly tradition of attempting to catch an imaginary monster at Black Rock, but the fun ends when a rather Aryan-looking young man named Eric Bohr (Terence Montagne) is found lying face down in a stream inside a catacomb by Jock, who does what he can to save the unresponsive boy. On top of that, deadly glowing electric eels(?), which are assumedly responsible for crippling Eric, are haunting the waters of the local river and streams. Indeed, with one touch from the electric eels, a person is instantly killed and/or evaporated. When Nora arrives, she accompanies Jock and Eric's father Monsieur Bohr (Georges Wod) as they take the seemingly half-dead boy scout to the hospital, but things only get weirder from there. Of course, the hospital is a packed madhouse full of babbling nuts sporting makeup and moronic haircuts, violent freaks strapped to beds, and other vaguely human rabble. The doctors there are no less deranged, as one of them dedicates his time to removing the vocal chords of canines, while the head doctor, Dr. Steve Julien (Nino Ferrer)—a rather serious quack who proudly believes in the “metempsychosis of the souls”—has a special secured room in the hospital where he attempts to talk to the dead, which he eventually manages to do. When a corpse has a spirit inside, a person's face appears in its pupil. Naturally, little Eric becomes a guinea pig in Dr. Julien's dubious experiments. While roaming around the hospital, Jock enters a room covered with walls upon walls of white sheets where he discovers the freshly mutilated corpse of Eric's father, whose neck has been slit in multiple places. Indeed, there is a conspiracy going on at the hospital and Dr. Julien seems to be heading it.

When Jock and Nora make the mistake of contacting the local police, they find themselves being chased by a lard ass philistine cop named Commissioner Bolek (Roger Lumont) and his fascistic blackshirt officers in a subplot that makes up 1/3 to 1/2 of the film, though everyone is running from something in Litan, be it physical or metaphysical. As Dr. Julien reveals in a conversation with Bolek, when people die in Litan, their corpses are locked in lead coffins and buried in stone vaults, thus hinting at the undead quality of the ancient village's postmortem citizenry. When the good Doctor discusses his obsession with metempsychosis with Bolek, the cop hilariously states, “It's always smart and cultured people like you who believe that kind of twaddle.” As a woman that stoically states, “I don't care what is after death,” Nora—an 'empowered' little lady that is quite 'liberal' and 'modern' like her husband, hence why the two are not married and do not have kids despite being deeply in love—is inately different from the general Litan populous, with even the scientists and doctors being prone to superstition, irrationality, and mysticism. As the chase between the couple and Bolek and his men continues, more and more people in the town fall into seemingly inexplicable catatonic states. Eventually, Jock and

Nora are caught by Bolek, though their imprisonment does not last long, as the village has entered a state more chaotic than Berlin during the remaining days of WWII, which enables them to get out of prison fairly easily (actually, Jock sacrifices himself for his lady love, so Nora never spends a second in a jail cell, though she finds herself imprisoned by the townspeople). When Dr. Julien's wife becomes a member of the undead, he becomes even more determined to be successful with his experiments and he ultimately manages to talk to his dead rival Koonst via boy scout Eric's corpse. While being interviewed by Dr. Julien, Koonst ultimately reveals that there is no heaven and hell, but only lonely perennials floating among the dead. While the dead can feel one another, they cannot communicate with each other. As for the meaning of life and morality, Koonst remarks, "We're dreaming your life and when the dream stops, you die." Near the end of the film, the only people that have yet to succumb to mass psychosis or death are Nora, Jock, Dr. Julien and his highly attractive blonde female assistant, Bolek, and a gang of 'three little pigs.' Indeed, three degenerates sporting real hog heads as masks attempt to pillage the village as well as Nora, but they ultimately succumb in the end as well. While that premonition Nora had regarding Jock's death does not play out as she originally imagined, she and her husband ultimately fall victim to the glowing electric eels as well. During the exceedingly eerie and less than happy ending of the film, all the undead townspeople, who have gone through metempsychosis, meet at the local church and the head pasture declares, "You'd chose Litan's day to put us through this terrible ordeal, God almighty. But we don't want to die a second time. We just want to sleep and dream. Be merciful on us, Lord. Sleep. . .And dream." In a rather bizarre twist, it is revealed that Jock's spirit has now taken over his dead girlfriend Nora's body, thus making him a spiritual transvestite of sorts.

Undoubtedly, while watching *Litan* the following quote from belated French arthouse-pornographer Jean-Daniel Cadinot (*Les minets sauvages* aka *Tough and Tender, Charmants Cousins*) certainly came to mind: "An erect phallus is a symbol of life, a cross a symbol of death." Indeed, homoerotic overtones aside, Cadinot's critical remark regarding Catholicism certainly highlights one of the major themes of Mocky's film, as a work that associates traditional culture and Catholicism with death. The fact that the two lead characters, Nora and Jock, have committed the big Catholic "no, no" of living together in sin and out of wedlock only highlights this as two people that have chosen real flesh over 'metaphysical necrophilia.' Of course, it is well known that Mocky hates the Catholic Church, though he has softened a little bit of the years in terms of his anti-Catholic sentiment, remarking for a May 2010 article entitled 'The Arty Semite' at the *Jewish Daily Forward*: "Today, priests have become a minority; I never attack minorities." While a rather strikingly original film, many elements of *Litan* bare a glaring resemblance to German auteur Peter Fleischmann's dystopian sci-fi flick *Die Hamburger Krankheit* (1979) aka *The*

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Hamburg Syndrome which, on top of featuring a deadly virus that leaves people in a catatonic state and various anti-Heimat sentiments, also includes malevolent characters wearing goofy skull masks. Featuring a somewhat cheesy soundtrack that seems like it was stolen from some forgotten Italian cannibal exploitation flick from the late-1970s and equally schlocky special effects in regard to the glowing eels, Litan is a rare cinematic work that manages to straddle a healthy median between cinematic class and low-grade trash, as if Mocky thought he could make a multidimensional work that would simultaneously appeal to pretentious art fags and Troma untermenschen, hence the relative obscurity of the film today.

It should be noted that Mocky's film features some of the most aesthetically displeasing and just downright vulgar Frenchmen ever captured on celluloid, as a work that puts Veit Harlan's unkosher National Socialist classic *Jud Süß* (1940) to shame in terms of unflattering racial caricatures (interestingly, the Jewish director/lead more or less looks like an archetypical French fellow). Of course, as a work that was directed by not just any Judaic gentleman, but one of the Polish persuasion who fell prey to the carnal vices of an unholy pedophile priest, Litan wallows in anti-völkisch and anti-Catholic sentiment in a rather predictable way, yet the film ultimately transcends these rather cliché limitations due to its rather penetrating and peculiar aesthetic prowess and assortment of both aesthetic and thematic idiosyncrasies. Although I am a bit more cosmopolitan than a farmer and I find Catholic services to be somewhat unsettling, I can think of things that are much worse than death-worshipping mystics who worship a Hebraic bastard on a stick. Indeed, redneck villagers are the least of France's worries, as the nation is on the verge of racial and cultural suicide, as demonstrated by its indigenous population's declining birth rates, dangerously growing populations of mostly hostile aliens from the third world, and prevailing neo-liberal ideologies, which have turned the French into a bunch of groveling cultural cuckolds. While I consider Litan a minor masterpiece of sorts, it mostly seems like pure absurdist comedy compared to the very real and prophetic horrors of a novel like French author/adventurer Jean Raspail's masterpiece *The Camp of the Saints* (1973) aka *Le Camp des saints*, but of course you will never see someone like Mocky cinematically adapting a work like that for the silver screen. Indeed, true folk horror should feature a scenario where the folk is threatened by an outsider and not the other way around, but then again, a horror flick set in an Israeli settlement featuring IDF thugs as satanic villains sounds like a great and rather relevant concept for a film.

-Ty E

MALOU

Jeanine Meerapfel (1981)

As far as I know, Argentinean-born feminist auteur Jeanine Meerapfel (*Days to Remember* aka *Die Verliebten*, *The Girlfriend*)—the daughter of two German Jews who fled Deutschland after Uncle Adolf became a little less tolerant towards God's chosen tribe—is the only 'kraut' Jewess filmmaker working today whose cinematic works reflect a sort of post-Auschwitz Ashkenazi perspective on the still troubled relationship between Germans and Jews. As Meerapfel stated in a voiceover in her documentary *Im Land meiner Eltern* (1981) aka *In the Land of My Parents*—a work featuring Jews, many of whom are the director's friends, discussing how she feels and what it means to be living in Berlin as a Hebrew in the 1980s—regarding history, especially in regard to her family, "If Hitler had not existed, I would have been born a German Jew, more German than Jewish, in a small village in southern Germany..." yet the feminist auteur opted for becoming a German anyway, making a filmmaking career for herself in a nation she would have been outlawed from working in only a couple decades earlier. To her credit, Meerapfel, despite being a racially conscious Jew and a feminist working in the West Germany film industry where ethno-masochism and philo-Semitism is the neurotic norm among racially pure Aryan auteur filmmakers, had the courageous gall to give an unflattering portrayal of a Nazi-persecuted German Jew businessman in her first feature-length work *Malou* (1981), seemingly a somewhat autobiographical work about a Argentinean-born Jewess who is married to a classically handsome blond German that digs into the dubious past regarding her French gentile mother's marriage to her German Jew father. A sort of softcore feminist 'woman's film' clearly inspired by melancholy melodramas by German New Cinema auteur filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helma Sanders-Brahms, and Margarethe von Trotta, as well as Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid, *Malou* is ultimately a work that will appeal to women and that was certainly made for the fairer sex in mind, yet it will also be of appeal to Germanists and those interested in German cultural history as an outsider's view of a nation that has yet to come to terms with its past, especially in regard to the now-taboo Jewish question. Starring Fassbinder's ex-wife Ingrid Caven (*La Paloma*, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*), filmed by Fassbinder's cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (*Whity*, *Satan's Brew*) and scored by Fassbinder's friend/composer Peer Raben, *Malou* is a sort of less esoteric and more accessible 'answer' to the German-Jewish question brought up in *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel* and *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* in its more conventional depiction of Aryan-Jew love. Somewhat interestingly, it is a German Jew and survivor of Nazi persecution that is depicted in a less flattering light than a post-WWII German, which one could interpret as auteur Meerapfel's personal attack on her own father and/or mature

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and un-p.c. recognition that anyone can make mistakes and be assholes, even cultivated Judaic gentlemen who almost found themselves winning a vacation to a secluded concentration camp.

Hannah (Grischa Huber) is an Argentinean Jew who makes a living teaching Deutsch to foreigners and who is married to a workaholic German architect husband Martin (Helmut Griem). Upset by the fact that she is married to a man who works too much and too hard and that she believes has been treating her in a patronizing manner due to her innate foreignness, Hannah begins to obsess over the failed yet strangely glorified marriage of her tragic alcoholic mother Malou (Ingrid Caven), a French orphan turned Alsatian-based dining hall diva who converted to Judaism and completely devoted herself to her husband, and her father Paul (Fassbinder regular Ivan Desny), a wealthy German Jewish businessman who has led a rather privileged and prestigious life, even if the National Socialists caused him a bit of trouble for a period of time. Unfortunately, Hannah has a rather romanticized view of her mother, which is part due to her mommy's dubious recollections of her own past, so it becomes rather hard for the young Jewess to discern fact from fiction. Apparently, before marrying Paul, Malou had a semi-successful career in Strasbourg as a Dietrich-esque nightclub singer/diva and she was more than willing to throw it all away to marry a rich Jew who seemed to be the perfect lover and gentleman. Not thinking twice about shedding her identity as a Frenchwoman and Christian, Malou agreed to convert to Judaism for Paul so the two could wed under Hebraic law. Not long after getting married, National Socialism rears its anti-Semitic head and Malou and Paul flee Teutonia for the Netherlands. While living in Amsterdam, Malou becomes pregnant at what could not be a more inconvenient time as Paul falls in love with a young Jewess named Lotte (Marie Colbin), who he helps escape from the nefarious Nazis. After giving birth to baby Hannah, Malou is visited by the Gestapo, so she, her husband Paul, and Lotte make their way to Argentina. Not long after arriving in Argentina, Paul dumps Malou for Lotte. Despite pleading with Paul desperately for him to come back to her, Malou is ultimately abandoned and forced to raise Hannah by herself. Forever lovelorn, Malou starts a number of deadend relationships with sleazy men that she describes to her daughter as 'uncles.' Since Paul considers Malou a negative influence on young Hannah, he has her sent to a European boarding school. In the end, Malou, lonely and melancholy, essentially drinks herself to death. Hannah comes to realize her mother's relationship with her father was not the ideal fairytale romance that she always assumed as it resulted in a woman giving up everything to a man, including her identity, career, religion, and nationality, only to have him throw her away like an old newspaper in the end. Despite her seemingly petty annoyance at her husband Martin's halfhearted attempt at 'Aryanizing' his Jewish wife by correcting her command of German and negatively critiquing her exotic way of dress, Malou ultimately realizes that her husband is a decent

and devoted man who may not be a storybook prince, but still makes for a relatively decent husband, thus *Malou* concludes with a reasonably happy ending, especially for a post-WWII German film.

As *Malou* star Ingrid Caven somewhat ethno-masochistically noted in an interview in the book *Chaos as Usual: Conversations About Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (2000), “Our generation in Germany is skeptical about the culture of the past. All that German culture accomplished didn’t prevent people from turning into murderers. That’s why there’s all this denial. We had to find new ways of expression. We needed to recognize that German culture is unthinkable without German-Jewish culture. Germans, whether they are Jewish or not, must understand this. That the Jews were persecuted and murdered is part of it. To us, it was impossible to simply go on as before, to forget what happened.” Indeed, director Jeanine Meerapfel certainly notes that “German culture is unthinkable without German-Jewish culture” in *Malou*, but she, unlike most 100% kraut filmmakers of her generation, does not feel the need to denigrate Germans into oblivion for the crimes of their parents/grandparents, nor she does stoop to the science fiction level of portraying all Jewish characters as morally pristine angels as is done in Hollywood and most contemporary European cinema. As much as I hate to admit it, Jewish feminist Jeanine Meerapfel demonstrates with *Malou* that she is essentially more honorable and honest than most of the filmmakers of German New cinema, whose Marxist far-left fanaticism, patronizing xenophilia, pathetic and pandering Philo-Semitism, self-satisfied ignorance of traditional German kultur, and flagrant finger-pointing of their parents/grandparents are clearly symptomatic of a people suffering from a suicidal collective unconscious. Aside from its aesthetic similarities, *Malou* is quite similar to the films of Daniel Schmid—a filmmaker who was wrongly described as a ‘reactionary’ and ‘fascist’ by the film critics of his zeitgeist—due to his somewhat reluctant nostalgia for the past, which was further confirmed by director Meerapfel’s personal insight regarding her film, “During Filming in Madrid we heard an Argentinian singing tangos in a bar. It became clear to me that the sentimentality of the story in the film, this longing for the past, this melancholy mood, were feelings which I had learned or rediscovered in the tango.” Indeed, the great irony of *Malou* is that, despite its ultimately unflattering depiction of the past, the past still seems all the more alive, culturally vital, and romantic than the postmodern present where materialistic gain trumps all other human motives. As director Meerapfel stated regarding her reasons why she is a filmmaker in the documentary *The Night of the Filmmakers* (1995) aka *Die Nacht der Regisseure*, “We can show how time is connected...That’s something wonderful about films...We can show 40 years of a life, we can show a 100 years...And we can show how time passes...how people age; that’s what films can do. And we can have our parents come to life again...We can have children we never had...And we can be children. That’s probably why we make films,” and with *Malou* she certainly accomplished all

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of these goals, even demonstrating that technocratic Teutons can make better husbands than wealthy Hebrews.

-Ty E

ANDY WARHOL'S BAD

Jed Johnson (1977)

Andy Warhol's *Bad* (1977) directed by Jed Johnson is indubitably a bad movie. Not bad in the banal or unwatchable sense, but a sincerely mean-spirited work that contains some of the most repellant, deplorable, and eclectically appalling people ever captured on celluloid. Warhol (or at least his hired filmmakers) was no stranger to depicting human depravity and emotional disfigurement, but out of all the films he was involved with, *Bad* is easily his most callously misanthropic and pessimistic work and one of few X-rated films that is conspicuously anti-erotic in nature, but like most of his previous efforts, such seedy and surly portrayals are executed facetiously with a most biting satire. Indubitably, Paul Morrissey was Warhol's greatest director, Danny Williams is all but forgotten, and pop-art capitalist himself seemed like nothing more than an uninspired mentally-defective dilettante while in the director's chair, but Jed Johnson – a man who never directed a film before (nor would after) – assembled what would prove to be the Warhol Factory's masterpiece. Before directing *Bad*, Johnson had helped with the editing on Andy Warhol's *L'Amour* (1973) and *Blood for Dracula* (1974) aka Andy Warhol's *Dracula* and even interior decorated a townhouse that he and the Factory dictator would call home. Of course, *Bad* features a different sort of domestic living than the ever so dainty and urbane homophile sort probably shared by Warhol and Johnson, as one might describe the film as somewhat misogynistic, but it is most certainly a wanton work of exceedingly eremitic extremes and sardonic snipes. *Bad* centers around a beauty salon owner named Hazel Aiken (played by Carroll Baker of *Giant*, *Baby Doll*) who also happens to be a slumlord that supplements her income by pimping out ferocious criminally-inclined white trash girls that rent rooms from her. Hazel also hires these boorish broads to carry out extremely profitable contract "hits" on everything from pet dogs to seemingly retarded school children. As a supremely ballsy bourgeois bitch and bottom-feeding capitalist who virtually enslaves the more debauched members of the fecund proletariat, Hazel even makes Martha Stewart seem like less of a soul-sucking cunt.

Hellish Hazel has a variety of dejected human-garbage gals and jaded Jezebels staying with here, including a humble (if mentally-feeble) and aesthetically displeasing daughter-in-law named Mary (and her equally annoying infant child), two wopesses R.C. and P.G., and a duo of bitchy brawling sisters named Marsha and Glenda. On a trial basis, queen harlot Hazel also takes in a wop bohunk named L.T. (Perry King) who acts as a hustling Joe Dallesandro-clone of sorts (apparently, the real Dallesandro declined to be in the film as he was working on pictures in Europe). Although Hazel is an eristic nag that treats most of the girls as emotional punching bags, she seems to hold her most marvelous malice towards L.T., probably due to his flagrant handsomeness and her seemingly

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sexually-repressed disposition. Undoubtedly, L.T. is a delinquent philistine who does not think twice about stealing and selling odious Hazel's expensive perfume, but at least he is an unintentionally humorous fellow whose petty criminality and lack of manners acts as a haphazard stand-up comedy routine of sorts. Whatever the true merit of their acting abilities, all the actors featured in *Bad* certainly get the job done as I indubitably found myself anticipating their much warranted downfalls, but I fond Hazel's delightful descent – which involves an emotional Negro who does not take kindly to the word "Nigger" – to be the most comical and befitting. Essentially, *Bad* is one of the finest cinematic documents depicting the innate despitefulness of the fairer sex and the assets of such female viciousness and coldness within a domestic criminal network. The film also highlights the intuitive materialistic nature of the female gender and how such mercenary behavior is all the more evident in our unspiritual post-modern Capitalist world, especially in New York City of all places; the home of Wall Street and the world capital of international bloodsucking capitalism. Ultimately, it is from L.T.'s selfless empathy for a helpless autistic boy that leads to the much deserved demise of she-bitch Hazel's smutty and intrinsically amoral enterprise. Had Hazel remained the cold gutter baroness that she always was and characteristically resisted the charismatic charm of suave con-man L.T. from the get go, she probably would not have gotten herself into such an unbecoming and easily avoidable situation that would inevitably lead to her demise.

For a man who directed a scene of an infant falling to its death from a 12-story building, barefaced animal cruelty, and a toilet overflowing with what seems to be a couple gallons worth of feces, it is almost fitting that *Bad* director Jed Johnson himself would die tragically in the Trans World Airlines TWA Flight 800 plane explosion of 1996. Not since the brutal murder of Pier Paolo Pasolini in 1975, shortly after directing his final and startlingly self-prophetic film *Salo*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975) has a filmmaker's art so tumultuously and appalling imitated his death. *Bad* may also be the only film featuring a scenario where a number of filmgoers are burnt alive in a movie theater, so to say the film also pokes fun at the viewer would be a glaring understatement. I find this scene to be awfully farcical when I consider that fact that out of all of Warhol's films, *Bad* had the most lavish and celebrity-celebrated film premiere as actors as famous as Warren Beatty, Julie Christie, and Jack Nicholson attended the film's debut screening in May 1977. In reflection, *Bad* was not a bad way for Warhol to end his career in filmmaking, particularly when considering that he was the same man behind the all but unwatchable *A Clockwork Orange* adaptation *Vinyl* (1965). As *Vinyl* demonstrated, Warhol may not have understood male violence nor masculinity, but he was certainly savvy about what makes women tick as so candidly, if venomously, portrayed in his completely worthwhile masterpiece *Bad*; a sordid cinematic spectacle of screwy spite.

-Ty E

FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM

Jeff Burr (1987)

When I was about 10 or 11, I received a box full of old ex-rental horror VHS tapes that were donated to a library and ultimately and thankfully came into my hands. That auspiciously received box proved to be a horror university for me as it included classics like Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and Dan O'Bannon's *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985), but also more obscure works like Avery Crouse's *Eyes of Fire* (1983), Katt Shea's *Stripped to Kill* (1987), and Dan Hoskin's *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown* (1989) featuring a then-unknown Billy Bob Thornton. While all of these films have been permanently burned into my mind for one reason another, the relatively dead serious 'folk horror' anthology *From a Whisper to a Scream* (1987) aka *The Offspring* directed by Jeff Burr (*Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III*, *Night of the Scarecrow*) holds a special place in my blackened heart in terms of hateful horror flicks. A sort of 'southern gothic horror' featuring a necrophiliac old nerd killing the retarded sister he regularly gives baths to, hick criminals killing colored folk, and confederate bastard children killing Yankee soldiers, *From a Whisper to a Scream* (which, until relatively recently, I thought was called simply 'The Offspring' due to the fact that it was originally released in the U.S. under that title) is a film that I thought was a total piece of shit when I first saw it as a kid and, while I still believe that to some extent, the film has never left my mind, so I thought that, considering it is the Halloween season and all, it was a better time than ever to re-watch the film for the first time in nearly two decades. The film is noted for, among other things, featuring scream screen aristocrat Vincent Price, who refused to star in horror films at the time due to being typecast, in his final role in a horror film (though he would later appear in the goofy zombie-themed action-comedy *Dead Heat* (1988)) as an old Tennessee historian who acts as the storyteller of the frame story in between segments of the anthology. Somewhat interestingly, director Jeff Burr showed up at Price's house with a bottle of wine (Price was a wine connoisseur) and the script to *From a Whisper to a Scream* in a desperate attempt to get the veteran actor to star in the film and the rest is history. Oftentimes described as a *Creepshow* rip-off, Burr's film is much more brutal than the Romero-King anthology as it lacks the audience-comforting dark humor, as a cruel yet creamy country fried hick-heavy horror show where various deadly confederate degenerates get their just desserts. By no means art of any sort, *From a Whisper to a Scream* is just good old B-grade shock and scare Southern celluloid Americana that reminds the viewer why the deep south makes the best and most atmospheric setting for American scare flicks.

A blond middle-aged journalist with a chic 1980s dyke cut named Beth Chandler (played by cult diva Susan Tyrrell of Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone*

FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM

(1980) and Marco Ferreri's *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1981)) decides to visit the quaint home/library of a historian after witnessing the state sanctioned execution of his niece in prison via lethal injection. The historian's name is Julian White (Vincent Price) and he is reasonably annoyed when reporter Beth rudely walks into his library after business hours. When Beth asks about his niece who was just executed for murdering a number of men starting when she was just 7 and ending when she was caught at 32, Julian remarks, "It all ended tonight...but there will be more" and proceeds to explain how his Tennessee hometown of Oldfield has "a long history of violence...it's as though the very foundation of this place was...human suffering." From there, Julian begins to tell four sordid stories from Oldfield's past that span from the recent past to all the way back to the American Civil War, thus hinting that the south has been cursed ever since the Confederacy was destroyed in what was ultimately the deadliest war in American history. If one thing is for, it is that the savagery and sadism of Sherman's legacy is very much alive in the hearts and minds of the accursed populous of good old Oldfield.

The first chapter of the film is set in contemporary times and revolves around a seemingly half-autistic old nerd with slicked back bleach blond hair who works as a meager grocery clerk Stanley Burnside (played by Clu Gulager in what is easily one of his more memorable, revolting, and overlooked roles). On top of having nightmares about performing cunnilingus on corpses and giving ice baths to his half-retarded sister named Eileen (played by Gulager's then-wife Miriam Byrd-Nethery) who has an incestuous crush for him, Stanley has a disturbing crush on his beautiful boss Grace (Megan McFarland) that ultimately has deadly results. Indeed, after somehow coercing Grace into going on a dinner date with him, he impulsively strangles her to death in his car after she aggressively rejects his rather grotesque kisses and mocks his patently pathetic love for her (she tells him, "you just don't have it" and that he is a "pathetic joke"). Of course, Stanley is still in love with Grace, so he breaks into a church and fucks her corpse. Flash forward seven months later and Stanley is enjoying life aside from the fact that his retarded sister keeps trying to put the moves on him, so he violently strangles her to death in a fit of repressed rage while giving her a bath. Not long after that, a small Ghoules-esque creature rises from Grace's grave, which proves to be Stanley's bastard demon seed son (hence, the film's alternative title *The Offspring*). When the deformed mutant spawn arrives at the nefarious nerd's house, Stanley hilariously threatens it like a good ol' boy by stating, "Don't you fuck with me boy." Needless to say the prodigal son gets all ominously Oedipal against its deranged daddy.

The second and antepenultimate chapter of the film is set in the 1950s and revolves around a trailer-dwelling small-time con hick named Jesse Hardwick (played by Terry Kiser, who played the eponymous corpse in the *Weekend at Bernie's* films) who is mortally wounded after his trailer slut sells him out to two

criminals that he has just double-crossed. Jesse manages to fall in a small rowboat before collapsing and drifts out into a swamp before awakening in the shadowy shack of an old voodoo-inclined negro named Felder Evans (Harry Caesar), who has taken it upon himself to nurse the redneck back to the health. As Jesse snoops around the old spook's dilapidated shack when he is away, he learns that Felder is a 200-year-old ex-slave who has lived many full lives. Naturally, Jesse demands that Felder show him the voodoo secret to eternal life, which he agrees to do, but the rowdy redneck has ADD and does not have the patience to learn, so he knocks the old man out and threatens to drown him the next day if he doesn't give him the potion to eternal life. Of course, Jesse loses his cool and kills the old kindly colored witchdoctor, but the black black magician rather predictably comes back to life and takes revenge at his would-be-killer. After tying Jesse to some sort of makeshift voodoo curse device, Felder reveals that he had already given him the potion and adds, "I already gave you the potion, Jesse...and you tried to kill me for something you already had." After revealing to Jesse that he has given him enough potion to live another "70 years or more," Felder takes his revenge by quartering his body with an ax and setting it on fire. In the end, Jesse's burnt and dismembered undead corpse waits for 70 years to die in a hospital.

The third and penultimate segment of the film is set in the 1930s at a carnival called 'Lovecraft's Traveling Amusements' in tribute to American Spenglerian horror literary master H.P. Lovecraft and is about a glass-eating entertainer named Steven Arden (Ron Brooks) who falls in love with a sweet local blonde girl named Amarrillis Caulfield (Didi Lanier). Unfortunately, the glass-eater's boss, an overtly and proudly evil ebony beastess named 'The Snakewoman' (played by Rosalind Cash, who is best known for playing Charlton Heston's love interest in *The Omega Man* (1971)) who runs the carnival like a brothel and treats her employees like white slaves, is jealous of Amarrillis and wants to keep her freaks in servitude. A voodoo witch, the Snakewoman has given all freaks, who are all escaped convicts, their special powers. The Snakewoman also has the power to torture and kill her freaks voodoo style merely by using a piece of their hair or a drop of their blood. When Steven and his lover Amarrillis manage to escape together with the help of a kind dwarf, everything seems perfect, at least until the Snakewoman tears the glass-eater's bodies to shreds. The Snakewoman forces Amarrillis to take Steven's place in the circus and she becomes 'Amarrillis the Human Pin Cushion.' Notably, unlike virtually all the other killers of the film, the Snakewoman is the only murderous character featured in the entire movie that does not meet a grizzly end, not to mention the fact that the two morally pristine young lovers also meet tragic ends, thus making it a somewhat odd and nonsensical part of *From a Whisper to a Scream*, as if the director could not think of a good way to conclude the piece and merely tacked on a contrived ending at the last minute.

The fourth and final segment of the film is set during the end of the Ameri-

FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM

can Civil War and centers around a mean and murderous Union sergeant named Gallen (Cameron Mitchell) who forces his men to kill every single confederate soldier in sight, including those surrendering. After agreeing to rape any southern women they can find and shooting one of their comrades for desertion even though they have just learned that the war has ended, Gallen and his men eventually end up at an old plantation house in Oldfield that is occupied by sadistic confederate war orphans who hate adults. Within seconds of being at the heavily guarded home, one of the sergeant's men is stabbed in the genitals by the leader of killer confederate children due to his somewhat unruly and typically rude and uncultivated northern behavior. While imprisoned in the house of children-ruled confederate horror, Gallen tricks a sweet crippled girl named Amanda (Ashli Bare) into thinking that he will adopt her so that she will untie him. When Amanda unties him, Gallen opts for breaking her little neck instead of adopting her. When Gallen escapes from the house, he finds the child soldiers playing games with the dismembered limbs of his comrades. Of course, the children eventually kill him and introduce him to their leader, 'The Magistrate,' which is a sort of human scarecrow made out of the dismembered limbs of all the orphan's dead parents. In the end, the children ritualistically kill Gallen by setting him on fire and American flag is lifted in a glorious fashion while the leader of the orphans stoically declares, "Brothers and Sisters, the time has come to rebuild Oldfield and to restore her to her former glory." In an absurd twist ending to *From a Whisper to a Scream*, after the four stories have been told, journalist Beth kills librarian Julian by throwing a switchblade at his throat after revealing she developed a quasi-Sapphic relationship with his recently deceased niece via letter correspondence. Apparently, Beth believed she had the right to kill Julian because he "poisoned" his late niece's mind. Indeed, it seems that Beth is one of those university-lobotomized and slave-morality-ridden urban feminists who do not believe that women should be held accountable for their own actions.

Despite agreeing to star in *From a Whisper to a Scream*, Vincent Price would later express regret in a letter to his friend, German actor and puppeteer Gerd J. Pohl, claiming that his agent had misrepresented the film and he had been trapped in a contract, even though it was actually director Jeff Burr who convinced him to star in the movie in the first place. Indeed, as Burr explained in a 2012 interview featured at the website of drag performer/filmmaker Peaches Christ regarding how he randomly showed up at Price's house and convinced him to be in the film: "We came bearing gifts, and wouldn't you know... he opened the door himself when we knocked! It was a flurry of "Gee, Mr. Price, we're fans of your work..." and "we wrote this script," and he actually invited us inside. He had every reason to ignore us, and even if it was on a polite level, he could have said, "Okay boys, contact my agent," but he was just so gracious. He invited us in, sat and talked with us for about 15 minutes, took the script, and that's how it all started." Despite Price's unkind words regarding the film,

Burr, however, only had good things to say about the actor, stating he was “professional, gracious, and accommodating” in spite of the fact that it was probably “the lowest budget film [Price] ever made as a professional.” Of course, Mr. Price makes for a much more charismatic storyteller than the Crypt Keeper and *From a Whisper to a Scream* is ultimately worth seeing just to see old Dr. Anton Phibes declare, “Lovecraft and Poe...I’ll drink to those two masters of horror!” while sipping on wine. Luckily, Burr’s film manages to also transcend simple sensationalist horror tradition as an eclectically grotesque confederate gothic nightmare that ultimately makes a connection between the atrocities committed by Union General Sherman and his men against the South to the sorry state of the confederates today. Indeed, unlike exploitation trash like hick-hating Hebrew Herschell Gordon Lewis’ *Two Thousand Maniacs!* (1964), *From a Whisper to a Scream* is a work of the south and not made to make fun of Dixie. After all, director Burr grew up in Georgia and his first feature was the Award Winning American Civil War flick *Divided We Fall* (1982). Interestingly, Burr only credits three of his films—*From a Whisper to a Scream*, the dramedy *Eddie Presley* (1992), and the horror-war hybrid *Straight into Darkness* (2004)—as being the only works of his ‘own,’ as the others had been butchered by the studios, or as the director stated himself, there were, “decisions that were made, in my estimation, that weren’t the best. So, those are the three I stand behind without a mountain of qualifications.” If one thing is for sure, Hollywood would never produced a horror film as sick nor as shamelessly southern as *From a Whisper to a Scream*, which is a work that you might suspect would be directed by the rampantly heterosexual necrophile nephew of Tennessee Williams.

-Ty E

LEATHERFACE: TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE III
LEATHERFACE: TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE III

Jeff Burr (1990)

Ignoring the previous Texas Chainsaw Massacre film, Leatherface intends to strictly stay parallel to the source material of focusing mainly on the masked killer. Instead of sticking to the same structure the series was headed - expanding the cannibal family's mythology, director Jeff Burr attempts to humanize Leatherface in a blundering embarrassing spectacle which builds up a scene of the mad butcher typing "food" repeatedly into a Speak N' Spell like toy.

The film turns from bad to worse as soon as you meet our 80s caricatures that illuminate the screen with a deep-seated lust for annoying the piss out of you with their moldy dialogue and abominable screen presence. To sit still during a barrage of horror cliches that acknowledge their own existence is the worst and this film, being a horror circle jerk, doesn't make this experience any more warm and/or inviting. Don't bother. Ken Foree joins in on the fun as not a cameo, but the only reason these wastes survive the ordeal (Or some of them). Concluding on a high note, the ending might be the only acceptable asset of the film. While Foree isn't throwing his bad boy black dude attitude at you full force, he's spouting nonsense about being a top notch survivalist. One might find several disputable claims about said boast, but the result is never-the-less still painful. Almost as painful as watching Flyboy slowing turn into a member of the legion of dead. As horrible as the sequel adheres to, the "controversy" that the film isn't present. While there is a workprint floating around, the film proves entirely that a bloodier version isn't needed. Leatherface is a slow mirage of a dying idol. Leatherface (character) is slowly fading into a world of contemporary hell. As with most horror genre classics, the Texas Chainsaw Massacre remake was funded by Michael "Explosion" Bay. Ty E previously stated that the Texas Chainsaw Massacre (2003) was a propaganda film of sorts, catering to the city folk and college kids. The trend started in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre saga before the remake. While the 2nd entry embraced its southern roots, In the third film, they bump the anti-rural accusations up full blast slightly echoed by Viggo Mortensen posing a solid question - "So? How do you like Texas?". This eerie line resonates through out the film leaving a sulfur smell of national deceit and timeless propaganda. Posing Southerners as mentally deficient socials isn't anything new to the film industry. To add to their already decrepit status in modern film, Burr creates an atmosphere in which these "yahoo's" attempt to learn, advocating the wonders of technology, hence the "learning" scene in which Leatherface plays with an educational toy, ending abruptly when he goes in a blind rage. All this forms the sense that Jeff Burr or the scribes believe that the rural folks are resistant to change and ignorant to the classic saying from Bob Dylan - "The Times They Are A-Changin'". A childhood friend's mom actually told me that she used to date Gunnar Hansen (The Original Leatherface).

The stories proved Gunnar to sound like an endearing fellow. I've heard of such love letters but I've never perused through them. As the myth of Leatherface stands, Gunnar should be disappointed with the outcome of an idol he created. His manic swings and staggering figure added to the horror. Leatherface claimed to have suffered from many cuts and reshoots. These claims may be the truth but even the workprint didn't touch what was spoken as the "original vision". What was once is not anymore. I don't fancy watching a hypothetical documentary on a film I have no respect for to theorize how the film could have turned out. Jeff Burr created a product regardless of how big of a flop it was, and marketed it. I blame Jeff Burr solely for the slaughtering of an original and fresh massacre. In an eagle eye view, Leatherface has no real material to it; nothing to differ it from the rest. I enjoy the fact that they suited up Leatherface with a leg brace to bring memories flooding back from the climatic ending of the original Texas Chainsaw Massacre, but not much else exists. There's a couple of entertaining southern archetypes floating around, mainly Alfredo, but Leatherface is as dry of a film as the trailer would lead you to believe. No Excalibur here, just a rancid slasher film.

-mAQ

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON
THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON

Jeff Feuerzeig (2006)

I was introduced to Daniel Johnston by a dear former friend of mine. Like Johnston, my friend has an obsession with Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds*. He also suffers from many of the same mental disabilities. After my initial viewing of the documentary *The Devil and Daniel Johnston*, I was thoroughly touched. The documentary is one of the most intimate portraits on an individual. I assume the reason for this is that Daniel Johnston is oblivious to the contents of the documentary (allowing for its intimate style). In Daniel Johnston's teenage years, he was a filmmaker. He shot super 8mm comedies featuring the mockery of his mother and his discontent with her Christian authoritarianism. Johnston would later become delusional and dedicate his life to the battle against Satan (my friend had a similar incident which lasted a week). I especially liked when Daniel Johnston performed for some New York intellectuals and art fags. He cries out to Christ in true emotion. The New Yorkers probably wanted to hang themselves. Daniel Johnston (whether you like him or not) is a true artist. A character that lacks any type of pretension (the irony being many of his fans are full of it). I rarely see any other contemporary artists with such true and raw expression. Johnston cannot help who he is. *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* is an almost perfectly constructed documentary on the life and art of Johnston. The documentary features intimate interviews with Daniel Johnston's family and friends. People that both inspired and hurt Johnston (whether intentional or not). The most telling portions of the documentary are old audio tapes that Johnston had compiled over the years. They range from stream of consciousness poetry to direct testimonials. Daniel Johnston became an endorser of McDonalds, MTV, and piss colored soda. He cares only about what he does and fits no type of collective mold. Indie music fans would call any other musicians that support corporate interest heretics. Johnston's endorsement of evil corporations only adds to his already limitless credibility. Bye Kurt! Unlike Daniel Johnston, my friend has found a love of sorts. He disappeared from my life in a world of perverse and abusive sexual encounters. I can only assume that Daniel Johnston's sex life is nonexistent. He probably owes some of his artistic talents to this biological void. May Daniel Johnston live a long and prosperous life.

-Ty E

NATURAL ENEMIES

Jeff Kanew (1979)

Getting a fair amount of praise from a friend, I made excellent time in tracking down a copy of *Natural Enemies* for my visual consumption. Starring Hal Holbrook and directed by Jeff Kanew of *Revenge of the Nerds* fame, *Natural Enemies* takes its fleeting philosophy on the poisonous effects of marriage and applies the title quite aptly to suit the needs of the cynical Paul Stewart. A man of science and intellectualism, Paul Stewart decides to soon take the life of his three children, his wife, as well as his own, in an effort to keep the family intact while ending their domestic misery. Fear not, I haven't divulged any more information than what Kanew would have himself given. After all, *Natural Enemies*, more in fact, captures the presumably last day of a man whose belief in love and family has faltered to the point to allow cynicism total control. It's an act of criminal negligence that *Natural Enemies* isn't released on a later video format other than mildewing big box VHS tapes.

AN ERROR OCCURRED.
AN ERROR OCCURRED.

Try watching this video on www.youtube.com, or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.

Paul Stewart is a character I find myself sympathizing with the longer the film goes on. Throughout his dreary and routine day, he encounters strange examples of human life, people as detached as he is and wish for some flicker of hope entailing what was once known as life. Stewart purchased a secluded cabin in the countryside as he had hoped the wooden beams supporting the wooden domain would collect and capture a tenderness between his family. Arguably, you could say that Paul Stewart has what is commonly referred to as the "American dream" and *Natural Enemies* just makes a point to show how miserable the good magazine editor is because of it. Taking a two hour train ride to work nearly every day has exhausted the already delirious housewife, Miriam (Louise Fletcher, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) to the point of total reclusion from her husband. This wasn't the reason for their emotional separation anymore than Miriam's previous overdosing on Ritalin was. *Natural Enemies* makes a clear point in sympathizing and humanizing the needs of both man and wife, until death do they part. As Paul continues about his day at the office of his scientific publication, he absently stares at his beautiful assistant Anne and questions why he's never taken her to bed. Paul and Miriam's marriage is continuously trivialized throughout *Natural Enemies*, neither character can give a reason for shunning the idea of divorce other than softly quipping "maybe we're old-fashioned."

The children featured in *Natural Enemies* aren't so much children as they are dining room parasites. Shown only in brief scenes, the children, Tony, Sheila, and Alex, make up much of Paul's festering hatred as they are shown humorously as detached as the parents are, taking time from the day to absorb cartoons, eat frozen waffles, and gorge upon junk food. Miriam is no different from the lot. She is a marginalized woman who was terrified of maturity which led to her overdosing on Ritalin, a scene I am very privy to as my own uncle overdosed off of my very same medication at a tender age. It's no coincidence that Miriam attempted suicide and was of a tortured artist archetype. It appears that most films glorify this very same ideal as the connection of women, acoustic guitars, watercolors, and prescription medication seem as in tune with media as the sexualized usage of cocaine by divas and celebrities in modern culture. The frequent bashing of marital norms and Paul Stewart's gloomy narration adds thick a layer of matrimonial destitution that never fails to keep the pacing intricate and flawless. Through Paul's malaise a door is opened into a subjective view on the phenomena of familial murder/suicides, one that doesn't blister a previously opened wound but, rather, shows the sick charm of confusion held by these men and women. I can recall the ending of *Natural Enemies* as an illustration of hope-

lessness and the insatiable spirit of depression but I can also state that the finale was quite akin to a punch in the gut. Bleak in every sense of the word and venomous to the touch, Natural Enemies makes no attempt to vilify any character, any means of release, or any reason of escape - Pure brilliance in storytelling and a film to be reckoned with.

-mAQ

THE DREAMS AND PAST CRIMES OF THE ARCHDUKE
THE DREAMS AND PAST CRIMES OF THE ARCHDUKE

Jeff Keen (1984)

Personally, I have always wondered the sort of films that might be created by a rampantly heterosexual auteur that made cinematic works in the camp-oriented spirit of great underground cinematic queens like Andy Warhol, Werner Schroeter, and Jack Smith, so naturally I was quite astonished when I discovered the rather large and undeniably singular oeuvre of English auteur Jeff Keen (*Marvo Movie*, *Mad Love*)—the unconventional son of a butler and nurse—who ultimately sired his own insanely idiosyncratic artistic universe for both he and his family to live in. A virtual trashcan renaissance man and proud proletarian bohemian that dabbled in basically every artistic medium, including graffiti before it was a hip trend among urban negroes and wiggers, and oftentimes combined said mediums in a decidedly distinct fashion that is unmistakably his own (e.g. multi-screen ‘diary films’ and ‘Expanded Cinema’), Keen was one wonderfully crazed cat that was keen on creamy cunts, classic comics, crayons, cardboard costumes, and Catwoman, among various obsessions that permeate throughout his films. Although he did not get involved in filmmaking into he was well into his late-30s, Keen managed to create no less than 70 films and video art experiments during his inordinately prolific yet little known artistic career. Additionally, despite being nearly middle-aged by the time he first picked up a super-8 camera, Keen’s films always demonstrated an innate youthful energy and excitement, as if the auteur never lost touch with his inner child. After all, there is probably no other man that created extra slimy graffiti oriented video art during his golden years like Keen’s ‘Artwar Video’ series, including such overwhelming colorful pieces as *Blatzom in Artwar* and *Artwar: The Last Frontier*. As the oftentimes bizarre titles of his films demonstrate, Keen also created his own distinct esoteric lingo. Arguably best known among contemporary cineastes for co-directing the dreamlike experimental short *The Autumn Feast* (1961) with Italian-born New York Beat poet and Warhol associate Piero Heliczer, Keen’s works were pretty much impossible to find until relatively recently with the release of the BFI DVD box-set *GAZWRX: The Films of Jeff Keen* (2009), which I recently had the distinct pleasure of devouring. After indulging in the greater portion of the director’s oeuvre, I came to the conclusion that *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* (1979-1984)—a darkly romantic cinematic nightmare of kaleidoscopic pornography, murder, sadomasochism, and zany Hitler fetishism—is unequivocally my favorite Keen flick. A perversely poetic window into Keen’s seemingly haunted yet nonetheless hyperactive unconscious, the unbelievably penetrating psychosexual cinematic horror show is a wonderfully rude yet strangely elegant reminder that pure and unadulterated creativity and spirit always trumps a big budget. In short, you will not find a film that is so hopelessly kitschy yet wonderfully creative, original, poetic despite being made on a

budget of next to nil shekels.

Described by Will Fowler at BFI as, “a sort of coda to his earlier stylistic phase,” the film was made during a dark period in Keen’s life after he and his wife and perennial muse Jackie Keen (aka Jacqueline Foulds) separated, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is a piece of intemperate idiosyncrasy and iconoclastic aesthetic raw power that might lead some viewers to suspect that the auteur is a poetic yet autistic serial killer with a nasty collection of infantile fetishes and juvenile obsessions, but of course that is what makes it such an uniquely unforgettable cinematic experience. Admittedly, my immediate interest in Keen came as a result of randomly happening upon a screenshot from the film featuring a cute brunette that I would later discover was the director’s daughter Stella Keen (aka ‘Stella Starr’), who began her own filmmaking career as a child star in her father’s films (she would later sometimes act as her father’s cinematographer). Indeed, forget Fassbinder and his dysfunctional kraut superstars, you will not find a filmmaker with a more intimate relationship with his stars than Keen, who has arguably probably paid tribute to the beauty of his wife Jackie’s bare body more than any other filmmaker in cinema history. Likewise, you will not find a filmmaker who is more at both the literal and figurative center of his films than cool cracker Keen, whose art, especially his films, are magnificently masturbatory in the best sort of way. A king of intricate art-trash who turned his entire life into a ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ where every single film, painting, drawing, poem, graffiti tag, and performance art routine that he created seems to be an important piece in one giant esoteric psychosexual autobiogasm from post-WWII Brit beatnik purgatory, Keen is, for better or worse, the best argument for the auteur theory and I would certainly say that *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is the best introduction to his pleasantly preternatural outsider aesthetic and artistic Weltanschauung. Indeed, love him or hate him, but it is impossible to deny that Keen was a true visionary that might be best described as the Wagner of celluloid outsider art (in fact, Keen was also heavily influenced by Nordic mythology). Of course, quite unlike comparable artists like Joseph Cornell (Rose Hobart, *Nymphlight*) and Henry Darger, Keen seems to have led a relatively sane sex life, hence his focus on curvy women instead of prepubescent children, yet there is no denying that there is something intrinsically childlike about him, even if his daughter once described him as a, “typical nostalgic English man.”

Notably, in an interview with National Arts Trust, Keen’s daughter Stella stated regarding her father’s work, “He wasn’t interested in the commercial side of things at all, apart from a fascination with the universal appeal of popular culture. He appreciated the fact that this and certain ‘lowbrow’ forms of art, e.g. comic books, rock ‘n roll etc were easily read and understood by everyone. He liked the idea of creating a universal language. He wanted all art to be more democratic – not elitist but easily accessible to all.” While Keen’s films certainly

THE DREAMS AND PAST CRIMES OF THE ARCHDUKE

wallow in a ludicrously lowbrow aesthetic of superheroes, broken Barbie dolls, and pornography, you would probably be hard-pressed to find working-class individuals that would prefer watching his cinematic works to the latest big budget Hollywood action flick. As for Keen's own cinematic tastes, he revealed he was far from your typical pretentious art fag when he once described the Pre-Code Béla Lugosi vehicle *White Zombie* (1932) as, "possibly the most beautiful film ever." Needless to say, Keen's films are the perfect antidote to the preposterously pedantic and mostly soulless Structural/materialist filmmakers that were prominent in the UK during the late-1960s through 1970s like Malcolm Le Grice, Guy Sherwin, Mike Leggett, Peter Gidal, and Annabel Nicolson, among various others, though he has somewhat strangely associated with them due to his involvement with the London Film-Makers' Co-operative (LFMC) (1966-1976). It should also be noted that, aesthetically speaking, Keen's films are more authentically subversive and anarchic than those created by the No Wave and Cinema of Transgression filmmakers that would follow in his footsteps decades later. Indeed, while Keen might have had a somewhat juvenile essence, none of his films are plagued by the repugnant philistine misanthropy or wholly pointless sexual degeneracy that is typical of the abortive flicks of glue-huffing causalities like Nick Zedd and Tommy Turner. Like Keen, fellow William S. Burroughs associate and underground British avant-gardist Antony Balch (*Towers Open Fire*, *The Cut-Ups*) also experimented with creating anarchic collage oriented films that combined lowbrow and highbrow influences, but he eventually graduated on to making sleazy feature-length exploitation films like *Bizarre* (1970) aka *Secrets of Sex and Horror Hospital* (1973) that were made for more mainstream oriented consumption. In other words, Keen never even attempted to sellout and his films only became all the more arcane and inaccessible over the decades. Indeed, aside from its potent combination of melancholy and lechery, it is hard to determine what *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is really about, though I suspect it is mainly a semi-cryptic meditation on heartbreak, hence why it features Keen's daughter portraying an artist that creates a literal broken heart via a large paper quill. Began in 1979 but not finished until 1984, the film is also notable for featuring the director's wife despite the fact that they were long separated when it was finally finished. Instead of portraying a sassy tigress or perennially smiling nudie cutie like in his earlier films, Keen's wife Jackie fittingly portrays a sensually deadly femme fatale in what was undoubtedly their last great collaboration with one another.

Beginning with an oneiric image of a classy beautiful woman that is ultimately revealed to be the front cover of *MON FILM* magazine, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* then immediately bombards the viewer with a frantic combination of hypnotic imagery, including vintage stag footage superimposed over shots of a seemingly half-ruined artist's workroom that is covered with broken baby dolls and naked Barbies hanging from ropes in what is ultimately a sort

of overture for the film. While Keen's daughter once described her father's film influences as being, "John Ford, Sam Peckinpah, Cocteau, Bunuel, Film Noir directors like Nicholas Ray + B Movie hero Ed Wood and so many more," the film immediately seems like a no budget Werner Schroeter flick on acid, albeit with a decidedly heterosexual focus where creepy fake boobs and pieces of cheap naked female plastic inspire unnerving erotic horrors. A sort of cine-manic micro-triptych, the short has three distinct segments that really underscore the auteur's natural affinity for cinematic subversion in all forms, including technique, structure, imagery, editing, and morality. At about the 1:30 minute mark of the film, the inter-titles "Blonde Destiny" and "A Reconstructed Thriller" appear juxtaposed with the less than solacing sounds of fighter aircrafts in what ultimately proves to be a relatively intricate micro-film-within-a-film that emphasizes the timeless relationship between killer and the carnal. Indeed, a short but sickly sweet sex noir-thriller set at Brighton train station, "Blonde Destiny" depicts the director's wife-cum-muse Jackie being both brutally threatened and embraced by a killer with a gun, as well as still photos of a naughty bitch flashing her bushy beaver in public. While watching this short segment, ones does not doubt that Keen has had many elaborate fantasies regarding the ancient art of Lustmord, which is probably not all that uncommon for a artist that has separated from his lifelong muse. Of course, Jackie's character is far from innocent, as she is depicted handling a large knife, not to mention the fact that she enjoys the tight embrace of a coldblooded killer, but I digress. Featuring both blue and purple tinted scenes, "Blonde Destiny" contains a sort of effortlessly elegant yet raw and visceral neo-Victorian elegance that cannot really be found in any of Keen's other films.

While less than 7 minutes long in its entirety, it is not until at about the 2:18 mark of the film that the main show begins and the official inter-titles appear that read, "Hitler's Double & The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" and "With the Spectres of E.A. Poe and Carol Borland in the Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke." Indeed, not only does Uncle Adolf play a prominent role in the film, but the viewer is also exposed to the youthful melancholic pulchritude of Keen's debutante daughter Stella, who looks like she could have inspired the cover-art for the Smashing Pumpkins' Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness (1995), as she practically bleeds a sort of highly refined feminine somberness. Before the real action begins, the viewer is exposed to still photos of a babe in bondage and war footage that echoes the director's lifelong obsession with the Second World War and how he narrowly missed taking part in the D-Day landings, which ultimately consumed many of his friends and colleagues in what would ultimately prove to be a seminal influence on both his life and art. One of Keen's rather intimate "self portrait" films like Victory Thru Film Power (1980s) and Omozap (1990-1991), The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke is, not unlike many of the director's later films, a meta-artistic work that makes

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obsessive references to the director's own physical art pieces, including the "The Poet's Cot" and "The Book of the Film" (notably, Keen oftentimes created his own 'books of the film' that featured signed photos of the stars of the film in question). Of course, it is very telling that there is a scene in the film where the legendary Poet's Cot goes up in flames. Making heavy use of extra bright neon reds and blues that inspires ideas of romantic murder and sullen midnight walks in the moonlight, the film is indubitably one of Keen's most accomplished work in terms of sheer visuals. Likewise, the film also features strangely aesthetically pleasing neon blue stock footage of der Führer. As for Hitler's double (aka Keen in a cheap Hitler mask), he seems like a creepy hopeless romantic that has fallen from grace and has been doomed to walk for eternity with wilted roses and dead children in his arms.

In what is arguably the film's most memorable and aesthetically alluring moment, Keen's daughter Stella creates a large broken heart with a giant paper paintbrush while blindfolded. Moving very slowly like a romantically condemned somnambulist that is haunted by the memory of a lover that she lost long ago, Stella seems completely possessed in a completely tragic fashion, hence why she does not even need to use her eyes to paint literal heartbreak. Of course, one also cannot forget the image of a Keen-as-Hitler carrying around naked baby dolls in his arms in what is assuredly the creepiest yet cryptic scene from the film. In one of the more bizarrely darkly romantic scenes, a red rose is superimposed over a man threatening a cringing little lady with a large knife. In another similarly unforgettable scene, ghost-like beatniks sporting pancake lounge in a room where a fat old woman reads from the "The Film of the Book" while a dorky dude with skeletal makeup plays a kitschy violin. Undoubtedly, these ghostly characters sorrowfully echo the truly colorful players in Keen's previous films, as if the auteur is both haunted by and nostalgic about his artistic past. After wrestling with a large translucent sheet of plastic, one of the ghost girls is attacked by the macabre musician. Towards the end of the film in what is ultimately a perversely preternatural family portrait of sorts, Keen sits next to his wife, daughter, and some naked and bloody Barbie dolls while sporting a sort of makeshift metallic robot costume. In the end, the film concludes with the poet-auteur flipping through "The Film of the Book" inter-spliced with vintage pornography of a sitting nude beauty basking in her carnal glory in a scene of poesy cinematic necrophilia (after all, the nude beauty is undoubtedly long dead). In that sense, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is the ultimate gothic horror flick of the underground.

I am not even going to pretend that I fully understand what *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is really about (after all, Keen loathed attempting to intellectualize his own work), but I do know that, aesthetically speaking, it is a gift that keeps on giving that could be played on a loop for eternity and not seem the least bit banal or trite. Of course, the same could be said about

many of Keen's films, but this is one of the only films by the English auteur that emphasizes pathos over pure energetic audio-visual overload, even if it is no less overwhelming in its chaotic aesthetic fury. Although just speculation, I am fairly convinced that the film is an expression of a man that felt like he was living in a personal pandemonium where he was haunted by the past yet even more horrified about the prospect of the future. Surely, one of the aspects of the film that makes it so potent is Keen's daughter Stella's central role as a sort of magical yet melancholic somnambulist art goddess. While researching Keen and his film, I happened upon various tributes by Stella to her father where she reveals an undeniably heartwarming love, admiration, and respect for her father. In fact, I do not think it is a stretch to say that Stella is her father's greatest fan, scholar, and protégé, among other things. As Stella once noted, the essence of Keen's oeuvre can be summed up in a sentence that he wrote across one of his paintings from the 1990s that read, "All life is war and the long voyage home," which is especially true of *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* where Hitler, family members, and ancient porn stars inhabit a sort of hyper hermetic psychodramatic fever dream of the purgatorial sort that pays frenzied (anti)tribute to the perennial struggle that is life. Needless to say, the film also features one of the most bizarre and inexplicable examples of an artistic collaboration between a father and daughter. Undoubtedly, compared to the inordinate interfamilial intimacy of Keen's film(s), underground films made in collaboration with bohemian buddies like Ken Jacob's *Little Stabs at Happiness* (1960), Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963), Ron Rice's *Chumlum* (1953), and Ira Cohen's *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968) seems a cold, calculated, and phony as the average 1980s Hollywood action flick by comparison. In other words, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is like the most vulnerable yet hermetic, gritty yet meticulously stylized, and domestic yet dreamlike of home movies.

Surely, one of the most stunning aspects of *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* and many of Keen's films is the amount of effort and obsessive attention to detail that was put into what are ultimately no budget cinematic experiments that were assembled in the rather restricted confines of the auteur's flat. Naturally, I was not surprised to discover that, not unlike many serious artists, Keen created for largely therapeutic reasons, or as his daughter once wrote, "For Jeff, the finest human inventions were the bicycle and the hand gun. He used his brush, pen and camera like a gun. Each tool was simply a device – a means to an end. The creative act itself was the important thing, rather than the finished work. This would explain my father's frequent habit of destroying his own work once he'd finished it; to 'rip it up and start again'. This form of collage – the cut-up re-invented story – is fundamental to Jeff's metier. His writing, film and painting transgresses all boundaries – but ultimately it always comes back to the drawn line. The artist's hand is ever present, and the artist himself is always active, often viewed in action. In Jeff's words, "It's auto-bio-graphik, not auto-

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biography... direct projection, not an illustration... a comic strip of life, printed on semtex." Indeed, Keen turned his life into a sort of unending avant-garde cinematic comic strip where the monsters and mad scientists are the good guys, nude women act as an extra solacing Greek chorus, and creativity and destruction are one and the same. Surely, you will not find a more impenetrable yet kitschy oeuvre, as Keen is like the missing link between Walt Disney and Warhol. Likewise, Keen is probably the only filmmaker that has managed to reconcile the exquisite high-camp decadence of Herr Schroeter with the shameless schlock of Troma.

Undoubtedly, few films make you feel more like a shameless voyeur than *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* where Keen violently yet jovially shouts and ejaculates his pathologies, fetishes, and dubious obsessions with the imperative help of his entire family. Indeed, watching the film seems like something akin eating shrooms and walking in on a family engaged in a bloody psychedelic orgy involving Hitler cosplay and Bellmer-esque baby doll worship. On a somewhat less degenerate yet surely more depressing note, the countless baby dolls and appearance by the auteur's sole child in the film reminded me of Stella Keen's genuinely heartfelt eulogy to her father where she stated, "My greatest tragedy is that I wasn't able to show any grandchildren to my dad, but there will be continuity to the Keen line somehow and, certainly, I am making sure his legacy continues to be protected and promoted long after I'm gone. Also his influence continues to filter through my own work which will hopefully go from strength to strength and inspire others as well." Although the Archduke's bloodline has indubitably come to an end, his cinematic works will, to some degree, live on. Arguably cinema history's most proficient yet overlooked alchemist as a man that used literal trash and figurative artistic shit like cheap comics to create an entire elaborate cinematic universe, Keen is not only arguably the UK's greatest master of art brut, but one of its greatest avant-garde filmmaker period. After all, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke* is nothing if not the sort of film that causes the spread of cinephilia, thereupon making it the perfect flick for Keen virgins to get infected with.

-Ty E

THE KINDRED

Jeffrey Obrow (1987)

One of my earlier horror movie interactions I encountered was the empty VHS case sitting in my father's Ford F-150. An empty case with the words "The Kindred" etched into the cardboard, above that lie an almost disturbing image of a creature in a baby bottle. The loose definition of Kindred is "similar in quality" which in turn brings the sibling horror plot full circle. This film doesn't even need to borrow any of the terror from its infantile creature on the one sheet. I tried to revisit this film approximately a month ago, this with many of childhood favorites like Skeeter. I refrained from allowing myself to become absorbed with this picture because the beginning bored me at a time when entertainment was necessary. Rather than dismissing it like any other cruel bastard, I merely set it aside for a more reasonable time and place. Today was the day where I gave this film its final chance. John is a scientist struggling with absolutely nothing other than his own narcissistic side. He has a loving girlfriend, a generous job, and a dying mother (the kind that doesn't seem to disturb this suburban living). Upon her death bed, she lapses and remembers a horrific experiment she left at her house. She calls it "Anthony" and it happens to be his brother. Taking a team of scientists to clean and organize her experiments, Anthony is unleashed and begins killing the crew using horrific means. Anthony, on terms of 80s horror creatures, is near flawless. With Giger-esque skeletal features and tendrils/tentacles that bring to mind the Urotsukidōji era of hentai; Anthony creates nerve-shredding howls and uses his appendages to purge your every orifice as graphically detailed on a human guinea pig. This guinea pig is a female character written in the script solely to be visually experimented upon. A watermelon becomes an incubator for a prototype of Anthony. "He" uses his tendrils to penetrate your nose and creep in your flesh. On terms of 80s horror, The Kindred stands above the crowd. With no directing style, this film performs exceptionally well. Another film that has the same aesthetic approach is the infinitely worse Monkey Shines. With a similar cast and tale of scientific madness, The Kindred is highly recommended. I'm very fortunate to find that this film performs well over its extended hiatus and found a place in my mind with a memorably horrifying scene of a beautiful woman turning into a fish-woman. The Kindred is truly an experiment of "grueling terror". The film even manages to relay some creepy moments for me, which is normally unheard of in schlock horror.

-mAQ

THE WIZARD OF GORE
THE WIZARD OF GORE

Jeremy Kaſten (2007)

Another remake of a classic Herschel Gordon Lewis film in the early 2000's. The first remake effort was 2001 Maniacs which remarkably turned out to be an extraordinarily entertaining splatter fest with a great cast topped off with a role from Giuseppe Andrews. This one features a starring role from personal favorite Crispin Glover as Montag the Magnificent as he shreds his way through "gothic" bitches. An extremely "noir" journalist begins to suspect foul play when a magic show used to horrify audiences, by slaughtering Suicide Girls only for them to reappear fine, takes a horrifying turn when the victims show up dead by ways of similar deaths. All of this leads to a horrifying conclusion that things may not be how they seem. Lead by an all star cast of Brad Dourif, Jeffrey Combs, Kip Pardue, Crispin Glover, and Bijou Phillips, The Wizard of Gore is another reimagining of a classic that tends to out-produce the originals talent. I love the misogynist that Glover acts through the duration of the film. His stern voice, dominating stage presence, and fierce T-Bird hair-do gives him an irrevocable stature that only adds to his larger than life ego. Kip Pardue (The queer from Remember the Titans) plays a trust-fund sapping, tattooed journalist. He frequently has anxiety attacks and grows quite fond of a brown lunch bag used to alleviate stress. Brad Dourif turns a role as a man named Mr. Chong. Due to the name and the haggard appearance of Dourif, I assumed it was played by Tommy Chong. Appearances can be deceiving, and that brings me back to the storyboard of the film. This film wasn't without its faults. Much of Kip's dialogue was forced and the only real acting credit goes to Mr. Glover. As comforting as the film is, it's common to find yourself groaning as Kip tries to be a bad ass dude over the edge. Parts of the film remind me of Naked Lunch mixed with Funny Man. An incredibly dashing film that features sadistic violence, lots of Suicide Girls in the nude (Which may or may not be a bad thing), and Crispin Glover playing another horror role for money to fund his own art projects. Suffice to say, Crispin Glover admitted to not watching the film in its entirety. A bold man and a bold film. The Wizard of Gore is another great remake contender with an interesting premise which climaxes with a "twist".

-mAQ

BAXTER

Jérôme Boivin (1989)

Baxter is a late 80s French film exploring the first person narrative life of a bull terrier whose boredom has unleashed murderous conclusions, or so the DVD release states. Interesting enough, the French answer to such flyweight "pussy shit" as *The Adventures of Milo & Otis* is labeled a dark comedy, a genre I feel does not support the going-ons within the leashed Baxter. Displayed in 3 acts, relishing both the modern play and stages of life, Baxter experiences certain childhood with his elderly recluse, Mrs. Deville. After being shut in for quite some time and much pestering, Baxter begins to have brief, vivid flashbacks to a time before. These unnatural thoughts seem to provoke some aggression and cunning to this sweet bull terrier's coat. In typical French black comedy convention, see also: *Bernie* (1996), lengths of extremism are constantly touched in brief and gripping fashion. In particular, the scene in which Baxter causes an infant to nearly drown as his jealously tipped to the boiling point. It's no wonder John Waters' short-lived television show surrounding the basis of cinematic corruption featured Baxter on only the fourth episode.

Switching to the second act, Baxter could have only made the transfer to the neighboring house by staging a terrible accident. The long existential windings of Baxter pad the scenes of conscious desire. This alone creates the illusion that Baxter is a humanized canine. Certainly a film not meant for dog owners, I even find myself staring at my own and questioning the dog's intent, wondering if my next step will be my last. Successfully appealing to and aiding the *Tales from the Darkside: The Movie* short, *Cat from Hell*, Baxter is a new breed of creature film - injecting pathos and wisdom into an able-bodied companion, or what one would hope. While this film certainly brandishes elements of comedy, it consistently heeds horror of the rawest nature. Baxter presents such morbid fascination of its canine character that the dog fitting Baxter's role was by far the greatest performance of the film. Baxter's seething rants of misanthropy burned through the film as this "sharkly" creature stared out from a window looking at a life he longed for. Such sights and smells he wanted and when he finally acquired them, he hungered for something more. Just goes to show how superfluous need is.

The effect Baxter had on me was utterly terrifying and foreign. I found myself scoffing the want or will to love or kill. Once Baxter reaches "the Happy Days", I found myself breathing a sigh of relief as the slowly coiling suspense of his sheltered past began to unwind back to its original state. That happiness didn't last though. When the woman took on child, and in preparation, ignored Baxter, these feelings of contempt for both he and I returned full force. It's as if they never subsided but lie dormant within me the whole time. Concocting an-

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other devilish plan to eliminate the obtrusive, Baxter yelps too soon and spares the child's life inadvertently. However, this action thrusts Baxter into the hands of his soul-mate, a young boy obsessed with the final days of Hitler and the love he and Eva Braun shared. By now, you no doubt believe that Baxter is an incarnation of evil, I mean, who would purge to reach like-minded goals? Once Baxter meets that "someone like him", a strange masochistic bond is formed. As Baxter once was disobedient, he is now cultivated and obeys the boy's every command at the expense of his own beatings. The boy molds Baxter into an attack dog, trains him well, but slowly sheds his ruse of proper schoolboy to reveal the greater evil. By the end of the film, you'll feel sorry for ever doubting Baxter as his assertions have been mostly correct. Who really favors the weak? We all thrive off of fear, in one way or another.

By the end of the film, many questions will be asked. For instance, was the abuse given to Baxter authentic or controlled? Judging from France's history of cruelty towards animals in film (Here's to you, *Carne*), the answer would appear to be genuine. Given the stationary measures of camera work taken in *Baxter*, the dog's yelps and skittish behavior whilst being whipped and kicked is something that cannot be easily fabricated. Let this film be yet another testament to the demerit of motherhood in which *Baxter* also explores the jeopardy children are placed in when the female libido is in question. The gift given to *Baxter* is an indomitable portrait of a canine with stunningly human traits. Sexuality towards human females is bestowed and the thrill of non-consensual sex is displayed, much to his chagrin. Like your best friend, *Baxter* is somebody you'd love to keep close, but fear of rebellion would resonate soundly. *Baxter* is so much more than an *Animals Attack* film and retains the same harrowing element of hatred that it did the day of its release.

-mAQ

KILLDOZER

Jerry London (1974)

Only due to a strange blue hue emanating from a restless meteorite does Killdozer take sentience and proceed to pick off its blue collar victims one by one. Directed by Jerry London, one who could easily be considered an inner-company chameleon in the television industry, Killdozer represents all the knowledge accumulated at this point in his career while still reflecting just how much he wasn't privy to. Taking a talented cast of rugged actors, some even iconic, London weaves sick desperation through a patchwork quilt of a sci-fi tale that concerns its biggest obstacle as an "aware" and malevolent bulldozer that seeks nothing but extermination of those who awakened and fed its discourse. Now, given the material granted by Theodore Sturgeon in the form of pulp patronage, Killdozer's cinematic cousin can only tread so far before its fuel supply ceases to feed its starved mechanized workings. The reason behind Killdozer's refuse-to-die cult attitude is surely based on marquee jests. That, and Conan O'Brien's meticulous slip of the tongue. How could one not chuckle at the mere mention of Killdozer, as I had when I heard of Death Bed as well as comedian Patton Oswald before me. Film like this serves more duties as an oasis of punchlines hardly tapped than of something considered recreational annulment. These projects are crude comedy resources just waiting to be harvested, really. Had Killdozer been born with humor in mind then maybe the tale would fare differently. Nobody enjoys self-aware shit unless they've got non-conformity on the mind. With London's ability to pick up a television episode at random and direct with iconoclasm in mind - breaking down a once unique vision of primetime luster in order to continue the assembly line of case and trial comes the soul-stretching remnants of something so moderate and tasteless in execution that it becomes near impossible to categorize. Such is the case for Killdozer; an example of a film living in the shadow of its title.

Starting off strong with dead-sight of the meteorite hurtling towards earth almost clumsily, you get the implication that simple serenity wouldn't last on Earth. Civilization would occur in the future, guaranteeing not a short enough rest from the dark abscess of space. But London quickly and briefly abandons the science-fiction badge for the camaraderie and destruction-loving nature of a group of working class construction workers on a Pacific island. Soon after the opening credits are we "treated" to the origins of our catty tractor come-to-life in a quick spurt of virility as man controls machine all too forcefully. As soon as you know it, dozer blade meets rock and sets to course the vindictive nature of the non-material being while simultaneously fatally poisoning the one worker not situated behind the drivers seat. Alien radiation is the only cause of death up for assumption at this point in time. Not before long is when the subtle hysteria

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kicks in as we watch an often unmanned piece of machinery trample radios, tents, the basic necessities for off-civilization survival, leaving only a handful of perturbed men feigning superstition and hanging on to bare threads of earthly exceptions. After all, that's one thing that makes up the sometimes grand essence of horror/terror - those earthly exceptions - that moment in time we all submit to when nothing can be ruled out. Not to say that your lifetime will include made-for-TV sobriety or a rough tumble act of gymnastics while trying to outrun a remarkably slow killing machine, but this aspect of horror is the last thing one can really cling on to anymore for an effect - which doesn't include a vast amount of differing mutilations. That's really just medical pornography mixed with big-breasted track and field - here's looking at you, slasher films.

During this moment in the Killdozer canon is when the string of continued denial of otherworldly interference becomes tiresome and the short-supply of charm becomes noticeably absent. After witnessing friend after friend fall victim to Killdozer, always in an unbelievable and idiotic fashion (who would hide from a rampant machine in a thin pipe just begging to be crushed?) to the heavy metal plate adorned by the crawling constructor, the denizens of Killdozer's wrath continue to play transparent as to what is occurring. In such an age where people toy with the idea of world-ending disasters and various notes of apocalypse daily, one would think the feeble mind of man would collapse easier than Lloyd Kelly's - leader of the outfit and a disbeliever to the very end (I don't count his scripted acknowledgment, that bastard was too stubborn to turncoat so swiftly). Even at just an hour and nine minutes does the runtime of Killdozer weigh in deep to my dormant filmic narcolepsy. I in turn washed my sorrow away with early morning liquor which only furthered a bad day. A film that drones on as slow as Killdozer should be put to death without trial. I accept fully the label of novelty to Killdozer's name but refuse to acquiesce to the misinformed opinion that is "Killdozer rocks!" Killdozer is not hip, cool, underrated, or amazing. You will not feel better about enjoying it unless you grew up with the film and in turn, allowed it to affect your impressionable mind. Killdozer is slow and painful, a brain-death as agonizing and embarrassing as allowing your friends to know just what you've finished watching. It's not that I hate Killdozer. My negativity is more due to the fact that I hate myself for not stopping while I was ahead and playing something else, anything else. As long as something actually occurred would my spirit rest easy. Stick to snippets for this long-term poisonous experience in dry cinematic mediocrity.

-mAQ

DEEP END

Jerzy Skolimowski (1970)

Maybe it is just me but, with a couple exceptions like Lindsay Anderson, I find most British cinema of the 1970s to be a sad joke, especially compared to the films that were made in West Germany and Italy at the same time, so it only seems fitting that one of the best UK productions of that time period was not only directed by a foreigner from backwards Slavic lands, but was also shot mostly in Munich, Germany, not to mention being a co-production with the dreaded 'Jerry' nation. Indeed, *Deep End* (1970) aka *Starting Out* directed by Polish cult auteur Jerzy Skolimowski (*The Shout*, *Essential Killing*) is, at least in my less than humble opinion, not only the greatest and most underrated film of the British 1970s, but also one of the most uncompromisingly scathing depictions of post-Swing London/post-counterculture London ever made. A true lost masterpiece that was rarely seen upon its release, especially outside of Great Britain due to poor distribution by its distributor, Skolimowski's eccentrically erotic coming-of-age flick seems to have only gotten its due somewhat recently with the re-release of the work on DVD/Blu-ray in the summer of 2011 by BFI's BFI Flipside series, yet some great auteur filmmakers have lauded the film, with David Lynch notably remarking in a 1982 interview with NME: "I don't like color movies and I can hardly think about color. It really cheapens things for me and there's never been a color movie I've freaked out over except one, this thing called *Deep End*, which had really great art direction." Skolimowski's second non-Polish film following the similarly thematically themed French-language Belgian comedy *Le départ* (1967) aka *The Departure* starring La Nouvelle Vague icon Jean-Pierre Léaud, *Deep End* is a wickedly wonderful and waywardly wanton virtual celluloid botched orgasm where a gawky 15-year-old turd of a boy has an ultimately tragic and even deranged sexual awakening after starting a super servile job at a whorehouse-like bathroom house where he is introduced to the birds and the bees by a bunch of old and horny sexually repressed hags and a somewhat sadomasochistic young whore who exploits the naive teen's youthful crush as a parasitic means to inflate her self-esteem, as well as a means to derive a regular empowering dose of sadistic glee and petty manipulation.

Starring the Beatles frontman Paul McCartney's one-time fiancée Jane Asher (*The Masque of the Red Death*, *Alfie*) as the cruel redheaded cocktease that exploits the budding sexuality and erratic hormones of the hopelessly shy and seemingly half-autistic teenage protagonist, as well as blonde bombshell Diana 'The British Marilyn Monroe' Dors (Carol Reed's *A Kid for Two Farthings*, *Tread Softly Stranger*), Skolimowski's darkly and sardonically mirthful work makes a major mockery of the social changes that occurred as a result of the counterculture movement and so-called sexual liberation, as a film where sex, which is used as a tyrannical tool of cryptic-power, is about as sacred as a public communal

DEEP END

urinal and where age, maturity, and professional prestige are just prerequisites for having free reign to defile a certain demographic of the general population. A sort of playfully venomous antidote to superlatively soulless Semitic teen sex comedies like *American Pie* (1999) and the would-be-angst-ridden dramedies of weak ass wasp wuss John Hughes, *Deep End* is a somewhat nihilistic quasi-arthouse shocker of the rather rude and gritty sort that almost seems to parody the then trendy 'social realist' works of its time like Tony Richardson's *A Taste of Honey* (1961), Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* (1963), Ken Loach's *Poor Cow* (1967) and *Kes* (1969), and Barney Platts-Mills' *Bronco Bullfrog* (1969), as it floods kitchen-sink-realism with absurdism, surrealism, and a mean and grimy yet kaleidoscopic and relatively minimalistic *mise-en-scène* that is misleadingly simplistic. Indeed, *Deep End* makes *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) seem like a second-rate episode of *Happy Days* by comparison. Featuring melodically melancholy music by Cat Stevens and raw rock by krautrockers Can and set in Soho, London, the film takes a beautifully brutal look at the dark side of sexual liberation without preaching to anyone, let alone to the choir.

Everything changes for clumsy, goofy, and exceedingly awkward 15-year-old lower-middle class Brit boy and naive high school dropout Mike (John Moulder-Brown of Luchino Visconti's 1972 epic *Ludwig* and the underrated 1969 Spanish proto-slasher horror flick *The House That Screams* aka *La residencia* by Narciso Ibáñez Serrador) when he decides to take a job as an 'attendant' aka 'softcore whore' at an offbeat and seemingly crumbling London-based bathhouse where sex is on everyone's mind and swimming is just a pretext for carrying out fantasies with the poorly paid employees of the dubious establishment. For example, Mike's first customer is a busty, if not somewhat overweight, middle-aged blonde (British screen alpha-whore Diana Dors) who more or less manages to achieve an orgasm by violently rubbing the teen's head into her almost terrifying tits and who rambles on about famous soccer players 'scoring' in an absurdly salacious fashion. Needless to say, little Mike is terrified by the experience with the carnally carnivorous old bird, but he soon learns from his externally gorgeous yet internally ugly co-worker Susan (Jane Asher)—a dangerously ravishing 25-year-old redhead who uses her body to get gifts and special treatment from various older men despite the fact she has a fiancé and who the protagonist will ultimately tragically fall in love with—that fulfilling the sexual desires of the patrons is an unofficial part of their job description and to "Just go along with the gag...that's all they want." When Mike's parents unexpectedly show up at the bathhouse, Susan reveals her innate jealous and bitchy character by remarking to her co-worker, "Your mother's a silly old cow!" When Mike says the same thing to Susan about her mother, she replies "She can't be. She's dead," thus revealing the potential source of her bitchy and whorish behavior. Despite the fact that Susan gets a gang of boys to beat him up and throw him into a pool, Mike more or less falls in love with her at first sight, even daydreaming about

her unclad body swimming under the water after the goons hurl him into the pool. Susan loves to sadistically tease Mike and even takes a British government propaganda poster of a pregnant man (!) captioned with, "Would you be more careful if it was you that was pregnant?" and drapes it over the teen's body to make him seem like he has a baby in his belly, thus emasculating him in the process. Indeed, the more Mike demonstrates his undying devotion and infatuation to Susan, the more she ridicules and cockteases the poor lad. Of course, a young man can only handle blue balls for so long before he explodes as the shocking conclusion of *Deep End* savagely demonstrates.

Of course, Mike is not the only one that Susan teases, as she often ridicules a blonde middle-aged spinster cashier (German actress Erica Beer of Wolfgang Liebeneiner's 1956 film *Waldwinter* aka *Winter in the Woods* and George Seaton's 1962 war flick *The Counterfeit Traitor*), even hatefully stating to her, "I'm very lucky to not have your weight problem. I can eat almost anything" while showing off a chocolate sundae. In fact, Susan is such a seasoned sadist that she lures in a dog just so she can maliciously hit it over the head with a large snowball. When Mike discovers that Susan has a fiancé named Chris (Christopher Sandford), he begins stalking the two, even following them to a sleazy Red Light district X-rated theater to a screening of an pseudo-scientific sexploitation flick called Dr. Lotte Fiedler's *The Science of Sex* where a big bosomed blonde bimbo pseudo-doctor with a fake Teutonic accent ridiculously declares that women have "3,267 erogenic zones." While the movie is playing, Mike, who is seated behind the couple, brings a smile to Susan's face after he begins groping her tits while her unwitting fiancé watches on. Of course, being a scheming slut who derives a sadistic kick from getting her many 'gentlemen callers' in trouble, Susan eventually slaps Mike on the face, complains "this bloody bastard's touching me up," and demands that her fiancé tell the movie theater manager who calls the police. While Susan demands that there be criminal charges placed against Mike (even though she French kisses him while her fiancé is getting the manager), she and her boyfriend leave before they can be taken. After being released by the police, Mike goes by Susan's apartment and stalks her fiancé Chris when he leaves, even accusing him of trying to molest him after running into a police officer. Indeed, in a warped sort of way, Susan becomes Mike's teacher, as the lad soon begins to not only lie and cheat, but also learns that he has a masochistic streak that compels him to become more and more obsessed with a sadistic little bitch who loves to use and abuse men, even when it is not monetarily or materially beneficial.

When Mike discovers that his would-be-ladylove not only has a fiancé, but is also carrying on a lurid love affair with his ex-PE teacher (Karl Michael Vogler of *Downhill Racer* (1969) and *Patton* (1970))—a man who enjoys touching the youthful derrieres of underage girls to whom he gives swim instruction at the bathhouse—he goes berserk and pulls the fire alarm while the two are having sex in one of the bathrooms. As revenge, Susan uses the PE teacher's car to

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run over Mike's bike. When the protagonist's high school crush Kathy (Anita Lochner of Erwin Keusch's *Das Brot des Bäckers* (1977) aka Baker's Bread and the popular German detective TV series *Derrick* (1974-1998)) shows up at the bathhouse and attempts to seduce him by disrobing and putting his hand on her small teenage tit, Mike completely blows her off and reveals to the viewer how obsessed he has become with Susan by stating to his ex-crush, "I don't know how to explain. It's not you, you're all right. It's just that...I don't know, all that old scene seems so strange now. As if it were someone else, not me at all. I'm sorry, Kathy." Needless to say, Mike continues stalking Susan and her fiancé around the Red Light district. When Mike finds a life-size cardboard cutout of a topless woman named 'Angelica' that may or may not be Susan in front of a strip joint, he steals it and then runs inside a whorehouse after men begin chasing him where he meets a used-up middle-aged whore who tries her darnedest to take the boy's money. In fact, the whore even offers to hold the cardboard cutout of 'Angelica' while Mike screws her so he can pretend to make love to his beloved, but the bashful lad opts out and is told by the hooker he must pay her anyway because, as she complains, "you've had my time, my drink, my emotions. You made me nervous." In between stalking Susan, Mike routinely buys hotdogs from a Chinese vendor in a rather hilarious recurring scene. When Mike spots Susan get in a fight with her boyfriend and head to the subway by herself, he follows her there and confronts her with the life-size cardboard cutout that may or may not be her. To torture Mike, Susan does not deny that she is the one in the cardboard cutout, though she does state, "I'm much worse than that." After his little spat with Susan in the subway, Mike visits the bathhouse during after hours and goes skinny-dipping with the 'Angelica' cardboard cutout that night while fantasizing that he is actually swimming with Susan. Little does Mike realize that he will soon be caressing Susan's unclad body in the pool late at night, though the experience will be nowhere near as pleasurable as he imagined.

After beating his ex-classmates in a race during one of his ex-teacher's gym classes in a pathetic attempt to show off in front of Susan, Mike decides to take more desperate measures to appeal to the affection of his lecherous love interest. Since Susan has borrowed the PE teacher's car, Mike decides to place a broken bottle under the tire of the automobile. After the car receives a flat, Mike pops out from hiding and brags about his delinquent actions to Susan, who becomes so enraged that she calls the protagonist a "little bastard" and punches him in the face, thus breaking one of his teeth. As the two soon learn, it was not actually Mike's tooth that was broken, but Susan's fancy engagement ring, which proves impossible to find since the diamond that fell off the ring was lost in the snow. Ultimately, the two have the somewhat odd idea to carry the snow back to the bathhouse so they can melt it under the lights inside in the hope of finding the lost diamond in the process. While melting the snow in the deep

end of the empty bathhouse, the PE teacher arrives and demands his car keys and that Susan leave with him, but she becomes enraged by his attitude and mocks his sexual prowess (or lack thereof) by claiming that he screws teenage virgins because of lack of carnal knowledge (during the scene, Susan also reveals the teacher deflowered her, hence her contempt for men). After the PE teacher leaves, Mike manages to find the diamond while Susan calls her fiancé to tell him that she will be late. When Susan gets off the phone, she finds Mike lying on the ground naked with the diamond on his tongue. Realizing that Mike wants her body in return for the diamond, Susan strips completely naked and is soon given the glistening rock without so much as having to give a blow job or even allow the boy to touch her body. When Susan notices Mike lying in a fetal position and looking so pathetically forlorn, she decides to give him a sympathy fuck, but when the virginal boy attempts to mount his fair lady, he fails to rise to the occasion. After the failed sex session, Susan calls her fiancé to tell him to come pick her up, but Mike is adamant about consummating the dream sex session that he has worked for so long to obtain and begins hassling the girl. Meanwhile, the bathhouse handyman who has no idea that Susan and Mike are there turns on a pipe valve, which begins to fill the pool with water while the protagonist becomes increasingly erratic in his attempts to coerce his love interest into coitus. When Susan begins to climb out of the pool via the ladder, Mike becomes enraged and pushes a swinging lamp at her, in the process accidentally knocking over a bucket of red paint which hits the lecherous lady in the head, thus fatally wounding her. While red blood begins to darken the pool water, Susan's blood also dilutes the water. In a rather darkly humorous scene, Mike caresses Susan's seemingly postmortem body while the Cat Stevens' song "But I Might Die Tonight" plays in the background.

Unquestionably, one would be hard-pressed to find a coming-of-age flick with such a senselessly tragic ending as *Deep End* which, as various IMDB.com user reviews demonstrate, has been known to irk certain less sophisticated and/or more sensitive viewers. As auteur Jerzy Skolimowski reveals in the 'making-of' featurette *Starting Out* included with the 3-disc Blu-ray release of the film, an American film critic asked him after a San Francisco screening of the film, "Why did you ruin such a lovely film?," as he and the various other spectators there were quite perturbed by the film's uniquely unhappy ending. Apparently inspired by a true story, Skolimowski built the storyline around the murder and not the other way around as so many misguided viewers seem to suspect. Of course, considering *Deep End* begins with blood dripping during the opening title screen and features various glaring shots where red blood is heavily emphasized in a symbolic fashion, the ending of the film does not really come out of nowhere as many reviewers of the work oftentimes claim (notably, the original poster art for the American Paramount release of the film makes it seem like a bloody horror film). Immaculately cast in virtually any way you look at it, Skolimowski's film owes

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much of its particular potency to its lead actors, especially Jane Asher's unwavering bitchy and sadistic behavior which is so believable that I was almost happy when her character dies tragically in the end at the hands of a young degenerate who probably would not be beyond necrophilia as arguably hinted at during the final shot of the film. Of course, as an upper-class woman who suffered the internationally broadcasted shame of walking in on her world famous fiancé Paul McCartney in bed with a remarkably less attractive American Jewess (American scriptwriter Francie Schwartz, who detailed the incident in her 1972 autobiography *Body Count*) and the suicide of her famous physician father Richard Asher—an endocrinologist and hematologist, who is best known for naming and detailing Münchhausen syndrome—in 1969, Asher was probably not in the best of spirits nor happy with men when she starred in Skolimowski's film, so one can certainly argue that her personal trauma added to the quality of her striking and undeniably unforgettable performance. *Deep End* is easily the best British film about 'unnatural love' featuring a seemingly Asperger-plagued antihero since Michael Powell's masterpiece *Peeping Tom* (1960), as well as a kindred celluloid spirit to the work of German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder with its central theme of master-slave power relations between the sexes and hysterically melodramatic depiction of the lumpenprole reacting violently due to not being able to properly articulate themselves, as well as a more handsome cinematic brother to gutter auteur Andy Milligan's London-based X-rated anti-romance *Nightbirds* (1970) in terms of its delightfully debasing depiction of a young man being seduced and emotionally destroyed by a sadistic older woman. Indeed, if you have a teenage son or little brother who is enslaved to their overwhelming hormones and cannot get some manipulative little floozy out of their mind, divert them from the phony Hebraic pseudo-hedonistic Shiksa-fetishizing high-jinks of *American Pie* and other related scatological kosher coming-of-age crud and force them to dive into the delightfully dejecting depths of *Deep End*.

-Ty E

NECRONOMICON - GETRÄUMTE SÜNDEN

Jesús Franco (1968)

To be quite honest, I have no clue how anyone could be a serious Jess Franco fanatic (indeed, to my surprise, a number of these people exist) or even be able to stomach the majority of his super sleazy cinematic works, but recently, I had the opportunity to watch one of his rare 'masterpieces,' *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* (1968) aka *Succubus*, and I was quite literally shocked that the film was not only of an ostensibly esoteric and surrealistic nature packed with sub-sexy S&M imagery, but also 'artistic.' By happenstance, Mr. Franco, who was at the decrepit age of 82, died the same day, 2 April 2013, as when I initially watched *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, thus making the film experience all the more of a strangely eerie escape in 'high (s)exploitation' cinema. To make things even more interesting, Chicago Sun-Times star critic Roger Ebert – a pudgy and prissy individual who I have always had an affinity for hating to the fullest (mainly due to his poor taste in film and politics) and who once described *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* as one of the worst films of the year and "a flat-out bomb. It left you stunned and reeling. There was literally nothing of worth in it. Even the girl was ugly." – ended up finally kicking the bucket on 4 April 2013 after looking and sounding like one of the creepiest men in the world (and certainly more disturbing than any monster from a Franco flick) for a number of years after having his jaw removed due to cancer, only two days after Herr Franco – the man he loved to hate in what was nothing short of cinematic fate. A rather idiosyncratic work any way you look at it, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* is a West German production directed by a superlatively sleazy Spaniard and produced by and starring future Fassbinder actor Adrian Hoven (*World on a Wire*, *Lili Marleen*), who would go on to play a cross-dressing Nazi cabaret singer in *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel* directed by Daniel Schmid – a controversial film based on the banned Fassbinder play *Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod* aka *The Garbage, the City, and Death*. When the kraut financial bankers pulled out, Herr Hoven called in pompous blueblood Pier A. Caminnecki for monetary support and he was more than willing to oblige as he started a romantic relationship with lead Janine Reynaud (who Franco 'discovered' in a bistro in Rome, Italy) and would also be credited as the writer (apparently, Franco only assembled a 3 page story for the film), associate producer, and actor. To add to the artistic absurdity that is *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, Karl Lagerfeld – one of the world's most famous fashion designers, as well as head designer and creative director for the fashion house Chanel – acted as the costume designer for lead actress Janine Reynaud's wardrobe. Indeed, as a woman that was nearly 40 at the time of her appearance in *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, Reynaud is not exactly my ideal as a stunning lead with fresh flesh that is screaming to be undressed, so

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I can actually understand Roger Ebert's less than kind words regarding her appearance, but she is surely the sort of woman that a pack of elderly alcoholic aristocrats, not to mention Jesús Franco, would jump on given the opportunity as a sort of Peggy Bundy of the posh pervert realm. A rather hypnotic and hallucinatory hodgepodge of marvelous mansions and phantasmagorical hallways, high fashion and low horror, and nightmarish and nonlinear storytelling, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* is the sort of film that reminds you that Europe is taking its last gasp and the only thing Mr. Franco can think to do is cinematically celebrate like a nymphomaniac toddler in a classy kraut whorehouse.

According to Jess Franco, the fictional grimoire the "Necronomicon" was not an invention of American novelist H.P. Lovecraft, but a real tome by a Jew or Muslim named Abdul Alhazred or so the director claimed in a somewhat recent DVD release of the film by Blue Underground under the American title 'Succubus.' While Franco seemed quite sure of the unverifiable real-life origins of the 'Necronomicon,' he is proudly unsure of the point of his film, admitting in an interview, "They'd say, 'I didn't understand the film.' I'd say, 'I didn't either.'" So that obviously created a legendary buzz. "This guy doesn't understand his own movie."™ Indeed, what one won't have trouble understanding about *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* is that it is about a lecherous lady named Lorna Green (Janine Reynaud) who gives simulated snuff shows for degenerate jetsetters and debauched aristos at a naughty and nefarious nightclub of the supposedly super chic persuasion. Unfortunately for her and every 'made man' that catches her fiercely frisky fancy, Lorna's manager William Francis Mulligan (Franco favorite Jack Taylor in his first collaboration with the Spanish sleaze auteur) has her under a literal Satanic spell that has transformed her into "the essence of evil...a devil on earth!" so much so that she is a succubus/somnambulist that violently murders wealthy men and women, but cannot recollect doing so. A wildly wanton woman who admits horror movies are her "weakness" and that Nietzsche will never be shunned, Lorna begins to lose her little head when she becomes totally unable to differentiate between dream and reality in a depraved and debauched maniac microcosm of the delirium-ridden sort where nothing is as it seems and a certain daunting dream logic takes possession of *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* before the viewer can even get in a single blink.

Featuring surrealist scenes of lethal lipstick lesbianism, the Bava-esque sexualization and sinister-ization of mannequins in a plastic orgy from hell, well dressed dwarfs and noble blood drunkards, quasi-beatnik mumbo jumbo about the genius of auteur filmmakers Jean-Luc Godard, Fritz Lang, and Luis Buñuel (filmmakers who apparently "never outmoded"), and the spiritual enslavement of a woman in war with her own forsaken soul, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* is indubitably an eccentric and – dare I say – artsy piece of Euro-sleaze by a filmmaker who will probably be best remembered as a prolific horror pornographer who never swayed in transplanting his vision into sinful and salacious cinema,

even if his eyes oftentimes seemed to be too badly blurred. When I first saw the Austrian arthouse splatter-punk porn flick *Mondo Weirdo: A Trip To Paranoia Paradise* (1990) aka *Jungfrau am Abgrund* directed by the late Carl Anderson about a year ago or so, I could not make sense of the film's opening inter-title "dedicated to Jess Franco & Jean-Luc Godard," but after watching *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, it finally made perfect sense, even if the Franco film does not. As for Franco's seemingly nonsensical references to Godard in *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, he had the following to say in a rather recent interview, "And you'll find I often refer to Godard because his new style of cinema was a discovery for me. Godard always said that a film doesn't have to be understood to be successful, and it's true. Because people...I came to the conclusion that, in general people don't understand anything. They don't understand *Necronomicon*. They don't understand *The Adventures of Zorro*, either..." If one thing was easy to understand about Franco's films, it is the domineering, if rarely delightful, eroticism that permeated throughout his work, with *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* being his first big statement of over-sexed and intrinsically incoherent celluloid that would degenerate into all out pornography about a decade later.

In a recent interview, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* star Jack Taylor had the following to say about Jess Franco as a filmmaker, "I think Jess' best period is when he had a producer over him to control him a little bit, my particular impression is that Jess would get bored in the middle of a film and want to start on something else." Short but sweet as if directed by a less cultivated heterosexual Kenneth Anger who read the CliffsNotes on works written by the Marquis de Sade instead of the collected works of Aleister Crowley, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* is the first film where Franco had complete artistic freedom (as he admitted it in an interview) and it certainly shows, so Taylor's comment seems rather peculiar, unless he is speaking in more regard to the Mediterranean maestro's masturbatory degeneration into pure pornography. While I cannot say I am a Franco fanatic in any sense, I can at least say I appreciate two of his films, *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* and *Faceless* (1988) – a totally tasteless unofficial remake of the French-Italian horror classic *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) aka *Les yeux sans visage* directed by Georges Franju. Indeed, although I may only like two of the 160+ films Franco directed during his admittedly eventful and prolific lifetime as a filmmaker of fetishistic filth, that is more than I can say about Michael Bay and Eli Roth.

-Ty E

VENUS IN FURS
VENUS IN FURS

Jesús Franco (1969)

When I originally saw *Venus in Furs* (1969) aka *Paroxysmus* aka *Paroxysmos* aka *Black Angel* directed by Spanish sleaze-auteur Jesús Franco (*Vampyros Lesbos*, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead*) about a decade or so ago, my thoughts essentially echoed that of *The New York Times* when they stated of the work that it, “features much inept fancy moviemaking (including echoes of “*La Dolce Vita*” and even “*Vertigo*”), some semi-nudity, and virtually endless confusion,” but over the past year I have developed a certain guilt-ridden fondness for the proudly decadent dime-store director and felt it was my duty to reexamine the supernatural sex flick that many of his faithful fans describe as his unsung magnum opus of sorts. Indeed, after my recent re-watching of *Venus in Furs*, I came to the bittersweet conclusion that it is one of Franco’s finest masterpieces, if not his magnum opus of the macabre, as a sort of continuation of the oneiric and foreboding arthouse horror surrealism the director codified with his startlingly pretentious yet nonetheless pleasurable pseudo-*Lovecraftian* work *Succubus* (1968) aka *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*. A virtual non-adaptation (Franco apparently changed the name of the film to cash in on the novel’s infamy) of the 1870 novella of the same name written by Austrian debauchee Leopold von Sacher Masoch (notably, the word “masochism” was derived from his name), *Venus in Furs* is an innately incoherent, fiercely foreboding, and freakishly phantasmagoric work of the idiosyncratic Gothic-Jazz-Psychedelic persuasion that demonstrates that somewhere in Jess Franco’s cheap-sex-absorbed Latin lunatic soul was a serious and even talented cinematic artist with a wild and wanton *Weltanschauung* of the largely incoherent and subconscious yet particularly penetrating sort. A work of aberrant arthouse exploitation featuring degenerate jazz, nauseating negrophilia (Franco originally intended to have a black protagonist who is in love with a white woman) and outmoded jet-set counter-culture debauchery set in a sunny and scenic beachside paradise, *Venus in Furs* is like Curtis Harrington’s *Night Tide* (1961) meets Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960), but with the surrealist kaleidoscopic colors of *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), psychedelic paranoia of *Performance* (1970) directed by Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, and the noir-ish jazzy paranoia of David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* (1997) and narratively whimsical wild woman weariness of *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Like a fantasy vacation in hell hosted by Klaus Kinski and haunted by Maria Rohm, *Venus in Furs* makes for an argument that celluloid art can be totally pointless, idiotic, incoherent, and tasteless yet potent and aesthetically tasty.

After what seems to be a narcotic-fueled all-nighter, white jazz trumpeter Jimmy Logan (James Darren), for whatever ungodly reason, has buried his trumpet and its case in the sand on a beach in Istanbul, which is akin to spiritual suicide for a musician, but he cannot remember why. On the beach, Jimmy also

pulls the naked dead body of a beautiful blonde named Wanda Reed (Maria Rohm) from the surf that he fell in love at first sight with just the evening before. The night before, little Jimmy played his trumpet at a wild and crazy jet-set party at the mansion of a seemingly sinister millionaire Turk playboy (Klaus Kinski) where he witnessed said millionaire Turk playboy playing a violent game of blueblood rape and sadomasochism with Wanda, even cutting the girl's neck and drinking blood from it like a vampire. While witnessing the S&M spectacle like a true degenerate voyeur brainwashed by counter-culture mumbo jumbo, Jimmy could only think to himself, "Man it was a wild scene, but if they wanted to go that route, it was their bag," but little did he realize that the undead spirit of wanton Wanda will go on to haunt him (or maybe not), even after he makes his way for Rio de Janeiro for a change of scenery and becomes the fuck buddy of an ebony jazz singer. Despite the fact that Wanda is ostensibly dead and he has a black nightclub singer girlfriend named Rita (Barbara McNair), Jimmy becomes morbidly obsessed with the dead diva he found on the scenic beaches of Istanbul. Somehow, Wanda or someone that looks exactly like her washes up on the beaches of Rio and Jimmy becomes dead set on dedicating his spiritually-cuckolded soul to her. The minor problem is that Wanda has come back to seek revenge and kill the rich dandy-esque degenerate that tortured (and assumedly killed her) on that fateful night in Istanbul. Wearing not much more than a frisky fur coat, Wanda seduces and sacrifices her torturers, which include an obese and effete art dealer named Percival Kapp (Dennis Price), a fashion photographer named Olga (Margaret Lee), and millionaire playboy Ahmed Kortobawi (astonishingly, one is supposed to believe that Kinski is a Turk towelhead!), who allows the undead blonde beauty to treat him like a slave before killing him. After Wanda exacts her wrathful revenge killings, the *Venus in Furs* theme song, "Venus in furs will be smiling" plays as a declaration of 'female power'-inspired climatic victory, as if auteur Jess Franco got off to the idea of a lethal lady wasting her unhinged un-lovers. As a result of the mysterious deaths, Jimmy is eventually contacted by a cop and comes to the conclusion that Wanda really is dead, especially after discovering her weirdly inscribed epitaph. Of course, the real shocker comes for Jimmy when he realizes that he is also dead after discovering his own body washed up on the shore, with *Venus in Furs* concluding in a manner stolen right from Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962).

A pseudo-esoteric artsploitation flick ridden with hip hedonistic excesses, degenerate jazz, and psychedelic insanity, *Venus in Furs* is an exceedingly eccentric expression of everything that was decidedly deplorable (minus the retarded politics) about the late-1960s, yet it still manages to be a devilishly delightful work as the jet-set backdrop makes for a strangely fitting atmosphere for this hopelessly hallucinatory horror flick. Apparently (or so said director Franco), inspired by the reckless life of white American jazz trumpeter Chet Baker, who was addicted to heroin and died in 1988 of a drug overdose (a heroin/cocaine cocktail), *Venus*

VENUS IN FURS

in *Furs* portrays the beatnik bad boy life as a hellish haze of confusion and paranoia that no high—be it of the narcotic and/or sexual sort—can block out the misfortune and misery such a lurid lifestyles sows. Although an undeniable and unhinged aesthetic mess, *Venus in Furs* is as immaculate as Jess Franco's films come as a work dripping with delightful dream-like delirium, lucid yet lunatic lyricism, and perverted poetry that ultimately does not have a single dull moment. Featuring a suavely dressed Kinski getting kinky, Rohm getting ravenous and revengeful, and Darren portraying a lovelorn dullard, *Venus in Furs* also includes shockingly memorable acting performances, even with all the lackluster acting and poor dubbing that positively plagues the film. A cinematic work that almost proves that Jess Franco might have become an Alain Robbe-Grillet (not that Franco probably does not have more fans than him nowadays!) or even David Lynch had things worked out better for him, *Venus in Furs* is also a self-reflexive (albeit largely subconsciously so) work of sorts directed by a man suffering from an artist's crisis that would only be further compounded when his leading lady Soledad Miranda (Count Dracula, *Vampiros Lesbos*) died tragically and unexpectedly in a car wreck in 1970. Indeed, *Venus in Furs* is one of only a handful of examples why Franco is more than just a 'European Ed Wood' but more like a 'Spanish Ulli Lommel' who, although directing mostly worthless celluloid duds during his singularly uneven filmmaking career, directed an aesthetically malevolent masterpiece or two. Of course, my thoughts on *Venus in Furs* might be different today had the film been a cultural cuckold celebration of miscegenation with a black protagonist as Franco had originally intended it to be. Franco's exotic international *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), *Venus in Furs* deserves its rightful and semi-dignified place as a rare and singular work that blurs the line between sleazy swinging 60s exploitation trash and aristocratic arthouse elegance.

-Ty E

A VIRGIN AMONG THE LIVING DEAD

Jesús Franco (1973)

Maybe it is because my morality has reached an all-time low and/or because I find myself less and less gravitating towards the sort of French arthouse classics released by the Criterion Collection, but the older I get, the more I seem to like a 'marginal' (emphasis on the marginal) selection of films directed by Spanish maestro of super seedy celluloid exploitation Jesús Franco (*The Awful Dr. Orloff*, *Vampyros Lesbos*). Indeed, it was only a year ago or so ago that I would not touch a Franco flick with a ten foot pole, but after rather enjoying his shockingly atmospheric and strangely artful, if not all but totally incoherent, West German 'arthouse' horror work *Succubus* (1967) aka *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden*, as well as *Faceless* (1988)—a terribly trashy, loose pseudo-remake of Georges Franju's French horror masterpiece *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) aka *Les yeux sans visage*—my semi-addiction to the works of the Spanish Euro-sleaze maestro has taken on a most self-destructive form, so much so that I finally got around to watching his quasi-Gothic pseudo-zombie/vampire flick *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* (1973) aka *Zombie 4: A Virgin Among the Living Dead* aka *La nuit des étoiles filantes* aka *Une Vierge chez les Morts Vivant* aka *Christina, Princess of Eroticism* aka *The Erotic Dreams of Christine* aka *A Young Girl Among the Living Dead* aka *Una Vergine tra gli Zombi*. Originally shot under the title *The Night of the Shooting Stars* aka *La nuit des étoiles foilantes*, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead*, not unlike many Franco flicks, has a dubious background history, with the fact that French vampiphile Jean Rollin directed a couple pointless zombie scenes for a 1981 re-release being one of the most glaring and bizarre facts regarding the film. Described by kraut film critics Rolf Giesen and Ronald Hahn as among "The worst Movies of all Time" and featuring Jess Franco himself in the role of a blabbering retarded house servant of sorts in what is arguably the debauched director's greatest screen appearance, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is undoubtedly one of the most autistically atmospheric celluloid sleaze-fests ever made, as the Spanish filmmaker's celluloid equivalent to Ed Wood's *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959), albeit marginally more artistically merited. Featuring big black evil dildos, bloodlicking lipstick lesbians, blind undead bimbos with perky bosoms, mad maestro Franco speaking gibberish to a decapitated chicken head, and phantasmagorical lynchings, among various other things that do not typically happen in superlatively shitty horror films, let alone in real-life, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is pure Jess Franco with an aesthetically nonsensical vengeance that reminds the viewer why the cinema world will never forget the philistine Spanish 'auteur,' no matter how much we would like to.

Cutesy dark blonde Christina Benson (Christina von Blanc, who also appeared in Claudio Guerín's neglected masterpiece *A Bell from Hell* (1973) aka

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La campana del infierno) has never met her estranged biological father and assumedly never will as he has died, but that all changes when the little lady is invited to a small gothic mansion in rural Spain to hear the reading of her dead daddy's will. Unbeknownst to Christina, the manor is occupied by a motley crew of macabre and misanthropic undead degenerates who do not exactly have the girl's best interests in mind. As Christina will come to find out, her father Ernesto Pablo Reiner (Swiss character actor Paul Muller) committed the ungodly mortal sin of suicide and thus his soul has become the personal property of a lily-licking succubus that goes by the fitting title "The Queen of the Night" (Anne Libert). Ultimately, the Queen of the Night wants the entire family for herself and that includes Christina. After being warned by an innkeeper that no one lives at her deceased father's mansion and that no one in their right mind would visit the apparently evil family home, Christina is taken there the next day by a babbling retarded servant named Basilio (Jess Franco) and soon feels an ominous presence at the house of horrors. Upon arriving at the mansion, Christina meets her flaming gay Uncle Howard (Howard Vernon), who is naturally less than impressed by all the voluptuous and oftentimes naked women that frolic around the highly hedonistic home. Christina enjoys sleeping without clothes, so she is in for quite the surprise when she awakes one day finds the house whore Carmencé (Britt Nichols) sitting by her bedside with her naughty bits in plain view. Christina is also in for a seductive scare when she catches a very naked Carmencé licking the vital fluids off a blind chick with crooked eyes named Linda (Linda HaStreiter) as number of of dead vampire bats fly around the room. Needless to say, Christina is also quite unsettled to find braindead butler Basilio babbling incoherent nonsense while carrying around a dismembered chicken head. If only Christina had taken heed of her dying stepmother's warning to leave the house, she would have avoided being the pawn of unhinged undead debauchees whose ultimate goal is to 'reunite the family.' Although her daddy is ostensibly dead, Christina meets her father, who has a noose tied around his neck, a number of times. Even a giant black dildo that greets her on the floor upon awaking is not enough of an incentive for her to run away while she still can. In the end, Christina is reunited with her family as she is lead to the bottom of a pond by the Queen of the Night with the rest of her accursed family members. Whether or not Christina was actually dead all along à la Carnival of Souls (1962) is a question that Jess Franco took to his grave.

Thought by some Francophiles to have been created as a way for Jess Franco to deal with the death of his screen diva Soledad Miranda (Eugénie de Sade, Vampyros Lesbos), who died in a tragic car crash in 1970, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is a film that, if nothing else aside from exposing the right bare angles of young babes, wallows in death and is set in a sort of patently perverse celluloid pandemonium that is big on atmosphere and curiously incompetent when it comes to logic and a storyline. A sort of kindred cinematic spirit to

underrated American cult art horror flick *Messiah of Evil* (1973) aka *Dead People* in its depiction a young debutante coming to a strange land to 'reunite' with her dead daddy, only to be attacked by undead vampire-zombies who are under the influence of blood and evil, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is a totally tasteless artsploitation abortion that ultimately, at least as far as I am concerned, redefines the phrase 'guilty pleasure' in terms of its propensity to emphasize sensual style over substance as a macabre yet titillating mood piece. Simultaneously onieric, ominous, and orgasmic, *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is a hard film to look away from, even if it might give you brain damage or some sort of temporary psychosis. Featuring absurd dialogue like, "Even the flowers have the stench of death," *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* is the film that I will always blame for keeping my softcore Jess Franco addiction going and my taste in cinema from further degenerating. As for dopey diva Christina von Blanc, something tells me she was far from a virgin at the time of shooting *A Virgin Among the Living Dead*, but, of course, that is one of the appeals of a Franco flick.

-Ty E

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Jesús Franco (1973)

After being routinely pathologically pestered by a certain proudly pedophilic British rodent and unwavering Heather O'Rourkephile to see (and, of course, review) the film, I finally decided to give in and view the French-Belgian co-production *Female Vampire* (1973) aka *La comtesse noire* aka *Bare Breasted Countess* aka *Sicarius - the Midnight Party* aka *The Black Countess* aka *The Last Thrill* aka *Insatiable Lust* aka *The Loves of Irina* aka *Yacula* aka *The Bare-Breasted Countess* aka *Lustful Vampires in Sperm Frenzy* aka *Les Avaleuses* aka *The Swallowers* aka *Erotic Kill* aka *Erotikill - Lüsterne Vampire im Spermarausch* directed by belated Spanish Euro-sleaze maestro Jesús "Jess" Franco (Marquis de Sade: Justine, Vampyros Lesbos). I also decided I needed to see the film after my girlfriend become enamored enough with its visuals to edit together a music video featuring the film's amorous anti-heroine bathing in blood in a Countess Elizabeth Báthory-esque fashion. Made at the end of what the writers of *Obsession: The Films Of Jess Franco* (1993) would describe as the director's "Peak Years" (1970-1973) and on the brink of his "Porno Holocaust Years" (1973-1979), the film is notable for featuring the 'official' debut of Lina Romay as Franco's perennial muse (although Romay appeared in some of his earlier films, it was not until she appeared in *The Female Vampire* that she had really arrived, made an impact on the Euro-horror realm, and took over Franco's oeuvre). Released in no less than three different cuts—the neutered 'straight' vampire cut titled *La comtesse noire* aka *The Black Countess*, the softcore horn-dog horror show titled *La Comtesse aux seis nus* aka *The Bare Breasted Countess*, and the extra-sloppy and sleazy hardcore porno version *Les avaleuses* aka *The Swallowers* (a Teutonic hardcore cut was also released under the curious title *Lüsterne Vampire Im Spermarausch*)—*Female Vampire* also more or less marks the beginning of Franco's career as an out-and-out pornographer, which is a label that he adamantly rejected, later using Japanese auteur Nagisa Oshima's controversial yet shockingly prosaic arthouse work *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976) as a comparison to his bloodsucker 'erotica,' stating in an interview featured in Danny Shipka's book *Perverse Titillation: The Exploitation Cinema of Italy, Spain and France, 1960-1980* (2011), "there are lots of hardcore shots but nobody would say 'Oh, it's a porno film!' No. It's a very important story. I felt in [*Female Vampire*] I did the same thing. There was a need to show it, like you must show how Dracula sucks his blood, you need to show how this Countess sucks the semen." In Franco's film, the eponymous high-class vamp tramp is a mute yet opulent orgasm-driven and somnambulist-like post-jet-set countess who enjoys sunbathing(?!), blood-and-semen-sucking of both the penial and vaginal sort, and meeting with the press in between living the cursed life of eternal luxury and lechery. As a work about an unhinged undead dame who

likes dining on dicks and refuses to have children because she is a self-loathing blueblood who wants to be the last of her Teutonic vampiric kind, one could argue that *Female Vampire* is an allegory for the suicide of the European aristocracy and Europe in general, but that would probably be giving Franco too much credit, as the auteur clearly only has eyes for his muse's muff-ridden meat-curtain, supple tits, sensual lips, sizable derriere, provocative stares, and not much else, including most aspects of classic vampire mythology. Indeed, Franco's flick may not big on plot, storyline, character development, or general coherence, but if you wallow in amorously atmospheric bloodsucker flicks, *Female Vampire* makes for a singularly delectable celluloid affair of relatively idiosyncratic cinematic incompetence that puts the work of Jean Rollin to shame.

Opening with the certainly stunning anti-heroine, Countess Irina Karlstein (Lina Romay), appearing amongst a misty fog wearing nothing but a black cape and matching leather belt in a shot that ends with zoom-ins of the character's eyes, tits, and bushy beaver (which I had initially mistaken for a bikini or thong!), *Female Vampire* immediately lets the viewer know that they are about to endure the erotically eerie "Lina Romay Exhibitionist Show" and auteur Franco does not care what the viewer thinks, but he is probably confident that if you're male you will get a hard-on and if you're female you might get a little bit wet. At the beginning of the film, the Countess approaches a gawky blond Aryan farmboy who awkwardly asks her, "Can I help you? What do you want?," takes his hand, and begins performing fellatio on him against a chain fence that climaxes with the man screaming after the sensual succubus bites on his cock and sucks out his blood, semen, and life, thus killing him. Unquestionably, *Female Vampire* is a film that takes the French phrase "La petite mort" (aka "the little death") quite seriously and most literally. Meanwhile, a blond playboy named Baron Von Rathony (American exploitation/Franco regular Jack Taylor, who went on to have small roles in mainstream productions like Milius' *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) and Polanski's *The Ninth Gate* (1999))—a fellow that looks like a cross between AIDS era John Holmes and Franco Nero—hears the scream of the ill-fated farmboy who has just had his cock sucked dry, but little does he realize that he will eventually fall in love with the killer cocksucker. While Countess Irina literally lives to do deadly things to dude's dicks, she is not exactly happy with her erotically evil existence, or as she narrates while cruising around the countryside in her virtual batmobile, "Today is the 22nd of February and only after a few hours of my being in Madeira, I have already killed a man. I earnestly wish an end would come to this bloody race that I am forced to run on this earth through the ages. Alas, I am a prisoner of the curse of that weigh heavily on the Karlsteins. A malefic influence forces me to commit these heinous crimes." Naturally, the Countess' carnally killer existence becomes further tested when she falls for a human, albeit of the fellow aristocratic sort.

The Countess is staying at a resort at the volcanic Portuguese archipelago of

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Madeira where one of her family's chateaus is located with her loyal male servant, who is also a mute and seemingly half-retarded and he helps his master procure men with meaty members. Although a vampiress, Countess Irina enjoys sunbathing and one fine sunny day while doing so at the pool of the hotel she is staying out, she is approached by a journalist named Anna (Anna Watican of Jean Rollins' *The Demoniacs* (1974) aka *Les démoniaque*), who interviews her for all the major newspapers in America and Europe. During the interview, the Countess nods "no" when asks if she plans to have children and then nods "yes" when asked if she wants to be the last descendant of the glorious Karlstein aristocratic dynasty. Meanwhile, a forensic scientist named Dr. Roberts (played by director Jess Franco under the somewhat humorous Germanic pseudonym 'Jess Franck') tells a police inspector that a male murder victim that he performed an autopsy on was "bitten in the middle of an orgasm...and the vampire sucked his semen and his life away," but the no bullshit cop contradicts him and remarks that the killer had to be either a sadist or madman and certainly not some fanciful supernatural bloodsucker. Somewhat angry, Dr. Roberts says to the inspector, "believe what you want...I refuse any discussion with you. You couldn't possibly understand it in any event" and then leaves to hunt down a mysterious blind dude named Dr. Orloff (played by French film critic, film editor, and sometimes pornographer Jean-Pierre Bouyxou) to help him, as he is the son of his "best friend and best teacher" and surely inherited his father's "genius." Upon meeting with Dr. Orloff, he immediately realizes that he has found an equally enthusiastic comrade who wants to prove the presence of a nubile female Nosferatu. As Dr. Orloff tells his comrade, he is in Madeira to discover, "the sources of good and evil." Unfortunately for Herr Roberts, Dr. Orloff is not nearly as sanguivoriphobic as he is and will ultimately prove to be an unreliable partner in supernatural anti-crime.

On top of fellating men to death, Countess Irina is a naughty necrophile who fornicates with the corpses of her victims after sucking them dry of their vital fluids, which she proudly does to a seemingly queer hotel hustler with a curly mullet who goes to her room after her loyal mute servant passes him a note telling him to come to her room. No prude, Irina is also a lethal lily-licker who chows on women's carpet until they are licked dry in a most deleterious fashion. Indeed, after 'glamouring' a female victim by sneaking up on her in her bed and staring at her in a lecherous fashion while licking her lips, the Countess performs cunnilingus on the forsaken female until she drops dead and then proceeds to masturbate over her corpse in a triumphant manner. The Countess' masturbation techniques must have supernatural reanimating properties, as Irina makes the female victim comeback to life (strangely, she is the only one of Irina's victims to come back to life, as if the bloodsucker is some sort of undead feminazi who will only give females the accursed gift of eternal life) and has her follow her in a foggy forest like an entranced automaton-like porn star. Later while hanging

around her hotel, the Countess is approached by her future love interest Von Rathony, who absurdly asks her, “are you not a ghost too, one of these strange beings gifted with magic power?” but of course, being a mute, she does not answer, but she does seem intrigued with the Baron’s dubious charms. A born sadomasochist who also sometimes enjoys being on the receiving end of pain, the Countess also goes to an underground S&M club where she has opulent bulldykes whip her unclad body. Of course, the Countess also goes to the club as a means to procure fresh meat and to ultimately drain the head dominatrix, who has a massive bush that seems like it would put even the average Arab woman to shame, of her precious vaginal secretions.

Upon taking her through a daytime stroll through the volcanic mist of the island, Von Rathony declares his love for the Countess and says their meeting “must be destiny” as he purportedly prophesied it in a piece of melodramatic poetry he had previously written. After Von Rathony touches her cold black dead heart with his contrived poetry, the two begin to make love, but the Countess eventually runs away and sobs hysterically upon latching onto and embracing a nearby tree, but her man ultimately forgives her exceedingly erratic, flaky, and stereotypically female behavior. Meanwhile, Dr. Orloff digs into the snatch of the dead dominatrix and concludes that the woman was a victim of a vampire after observing that, “two canines pierced the lips and deformed the clitoris,” but unlike Dr. Roberts, he welcomes the existence of undead bloodsuckers and has no intention of hunting down the vamp. When Countess Irina takes Von Rathony back to her family home, the latter remarks, “what a strange house...it looks like a tomb” and then more or less tells his lover that he knows that she is a vampire but he doesn’t care and just wants to be with her, no matter what the cost. The Countess loves Von Rathony so much that she manages to fellate and fuck him without killing him in the process. Unfortunately for him, the Countess decides to give Von Rathony a second blowjob during their over-extended carnal session that inevitably results in the fang-fucker’s ill-fated death via fatal semen-sucking. After killing her beau, the Countess thinks to herself while driving in her luxury automobile, “Why? Why? Yes, why, all this time, this never-ending time...the hours of sorrows, of pleasures, of solitude and fear in the cold coffin lost deep down in the mausoleum. My implacable destiny has led me to a wonderful being who has also become a victim. I have been his judge and involuntary executioner, for nothing can stop of the march of destiny.” After a failed blackmail attempt by Dr. Orloff, who proves to be a two-faced scumbag of the somewhat Renfield-esque sort, the Countess decides to relax by engaging in the age-old aristocratic pleasure of bathing in blood. Meanwhile, after being denied entry into the Countess’ home by her loyal half-retarded servant, Dr. Roberts decides to sneak in and watches voyeuristically as Irina basks in blood. After killing her servant, Dr. Roberts also goes to kill the Countess, but he becomes so enamored with her blood-curdling pulchritude that he just can’t do it. Luck-

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ily, the fatally seductive vampiress perseveres in the end like all self-respecting vampires should.

If I did not know better, I would say Lina Romay was quite the trooper for enduring the ostensible abuse of Franco's brazen brand of filmmaking, but as the actress has revealed in various interviews, she was a born exhibitionist who lived to flaunt her curvy Catalan flesh. If I were to speculate what the subtext of *Female Vampire* is, if any, it is that the titular anti-heroine is a metaphorical figure representing the seemingly accursed archetypical loveless whore who leaves many victims in her reckless path of fleeting carnality, even destroying the one and only man that she grows to love, but other than that, the film is not much more than a strikingly atmospheric, eccentrically erotic, and semi-arousing showcase of Franco's favorite lady in a highly expressively and sensually stylized celluloid form. Indeed, Romay IS the 'Female Vampire' and Franco knew the actress well enough to capture her real essence on film and I can only assume that he decided to make her character mute for reasons other than just because the actress could not act and/or was not particularly proficient at memorizing her lines, as her cruelly carnal character manages to express more with a mere seductive stare than most mainstream actors can communicate while delivering an entire monologue. Of course, Franco's obsessive personality was not only regulated to Romay, as he was arguably more enamored with filmmaking to the point where he suffered withdrawal symptoms when he was not directing, or as *Female Vampire* co-star Monica Swinn stated of Franco in an interview in the book *Obsession: The Films Of Jess Franco*; "He's out of his mind...well, that's one way of describing him, coming from me, it's a compliment. He is totally wrapped up in his own trip, in his own private world, and everything that comes out of it is nice. All he ever thinks about is the cinema," adding, "Jess was very obsessive: he'd always use things he'd used before, like stories of women in prison, with the same characters put in different places, even using the same names" and "If he hasn't got a camera in his paws, he feels quite ill [...] Sometimes I get the impression that Jess makes films the way a small boy plays with a train set, with miniature carriages instead of great big ones...and every now and then he sets up an accident. When you walk along the street with him, he never stops filming with his hands. He has an absolute need to film, even if it all is cheap shit; he can't stop himself." The fact that Franco continued directing films until his death in early 2013 even though he hadn't directed a decent film in decades just goes to show he must have been suffering from Asperger's syndrome or some other similar autism spectrum mental illness like the British human hamster that recommended I watch *Female Vampire*. Ironically, it seems the filmmaker was at his best when not directing pure pornography as especially demonstrated by the hardcore cut of *Female Vampire*, which only slows down the film with its absurdly anti-erotic close-up scenes of Romay sloppily sucking on various aesthetically displeasing cocks.

Essentially comprised of a series of extra devilishly titillating tableaux punctuated by a couple scenes of dialogue and narration that barely hold the storyline together, *Female Vampire* is unapologetically sleazy and hyper hypnotic pseudo-arthouse heteromania at its most brazenly self-indulgent, as if Franco just made the film so he could later screen it for himself from time to time in the comfort of his own living room and nostalgically reflect over the good old days when his muse was at her physical and sexual prime. Of course, one can only guess how many people that Franco was able to provide a masturbation aid for with his wickedly wanton and strangely transcendental bloodsucker flick. It also does not hurt that the film is, visually speaking in a manner not unlike early Werner Herzog flicks like *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas* and *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), rather romantic and exceedingly ethereal, with a number of the outdoor landscape and misty forest scenes even resembling paintings by Teutonic Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, who was not surprisingly famous for his paintings of Gothic ruins. While his films may lead some to think Franco was an unabashed philistine, it could not be further from the truth, with the auteur naming Fritz Lang, Luis Buñuel, Jean-Luc Godard, and Orson Welles (who he once worked with), among others, as major influences on his work. Unquestionably, the reason why Franco and his similarly perverted and technically inept cinematic kindred spirits Ed Wood and Andy Milligan still have relatively faithful cult followings today is that, unlike the average Hollywood hack who blows tens of millions of dollars on films that just plain blow, their films feature distinct and highly personalized visions that are readily identifiable by anyone familiar with their work whereas mainstream filmmakers tend to be, at best, vapid technicians and, at worst, cheap and willing whores who seem to approach filmmaking like a telemarketer approaches selling junk or a drive-thru clerk approaches asking customers if they would like fries with their orders. As someone whose various ex-girlfriends bear a superficial resemblance to Romay and as a fellow that tended to be solely attracted to almost solely pale girls with dark hair and curves for a fairly long time, only to realize it was a sort of fetish after getting with a lady whose pubes were the same color as mine (and who, I must proudly confess, is curvier than the most exotic of Mediterranean divas), Franco's film proved to be an extra bizarre and even somewhat horrifying experience for me. Indeed, to me, Romay is a sort of erotic caricature from a bygone era in my life, thus lending an extra added personalized layer to *Female Vampire* that gives the film a special resonance for me that made me appreciate the work more than I probably should have, as if a segment of my past was transported to an early 1970s Portuguese resort spot inhabited by strange half-braindead sub-beautiful people and haunted by a more literally vampiric version of one of my ex-lovers. In that regard, out of all the film's various alternate titles, I see 'Female Vampire' as the perfect name for Franco's fiercely fetishistic flick.

-Ty E

SINFONÍA ERÓTICA
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Jesús Franco (1980)

While I certainly have no plans to watch every single one of the director's 160 or so films as the great majority of them are probably insipid celluloid swill of the totally meritless and pointless sort, I am fairly confident that *Sinfonía erótica* (1980) aka *Symphonie érotique* aka *Erotic Symphony* is the most cultivated, effortlessly artful, entrancing, ethereal, dignified, and all-around 'immaculate' film that Spanish Euro-sleaze maestro Jesús Franco (*The Awful Dr. Orloff*, *Der Heiße Tod* aka *99 Women*) ever deliriously dreamed up with his particularly keenly perverse mind and famously lecherous libido. The second and best of three films that the director liberally adapted from the de Bressac episode of the classic 1791 Marquis de Sade novel *Justine, or The Misfortunes of Virtue* aka *Les Infortunes de la Vertu* (the other two films are *Plaisir à trois* (1974) aka *How To Seduce a Virgin* and *Gemidos de placer* (1983) aka *Moans of Pleasure*) and a work notable for featuring most of 19th-century Hungarian-German Romantic composer Franz Liszt's *Second Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1839-1861), Franco's undeniable celluloid symphony is a morally odious yet hyper hypnotic piece of aristocratic arthouse sleaze that manages to be as opulent and otherworldly as it is obscenely orgasmic, which is no small accomplishment, especially for the madly amorous Mediterranean mensch that lovingly assembled it. The superlatively sordid and scabrous tale of a bisexual blueblood libertine who conspires with the two younger members of his unhinged ménage à trios to kill his stunning yet sadly sex-starved wife as pleasantly played by the director's Catalan muse Lina Romay after she returns from a long stay in a mental institution, *Sinfonía erótica* is a truly dark and decadent romance of the quasi-Gothic horror sort with a tiny yet nonetheless superlatively sacrilegious smidgen of nunsplotation debauchery that reminds the viewer why Franco was indeed an 'artiste' of sorts, even if he was also responsible for directing some of the worst films ever made and more or less deserves his reputation as the 'European Ed Wood.'

More Francoean than Sadean and more erotic than pornographic, the film fully demonstrates the director's background as a musician via its endlessly music-filled landscapes and thankfully it does not wallow in the degenerate jazz that the filmmaker played, as a work that makes full use of Liszt's *Second Concerto* with Franco's own strangely soothing synthesizer score to the point where hysterical mental illness, truly evil extramarital deceit, sadomasochistic sexual savagery, and even nun rapes become rather rapturous and orgasmically oneiric experiences of the exceedingly aesthetically enthralling and hyper hypnotic sort. Indeed, forget Franco's West German jet-set arthouse nightmare *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* (1968) aka *Succubus*—an intriguing, if not innately incoherent, work that somewhat strangely namedrops seemingly unlikely influences like Fritz Lang and Jean-Luc Godard (Franco must have been a huge

Le mépris (1963) aka Contempt fan—or his psychedelic Leopold von Sacher Masoch (non)adaptation Paroxismus (1969) aka Venus in Furs, Sinfonia erotica is the auteur at his most brazenly aesthetically decadent and indulgent. Notably, like Venus in Furs, the film bears a superficial resemblance to Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet's esoteric collaborative effort Last Year at Marienbad (1961) due to its dreamlike essence and extravagant château setting and baroque architecture and sculptures, albeit Franco's film is undeniably more erotic and coherent. Also notable for being a rare Franco flick featuring explicit fag content and not just the superficial 'Sapphic' scenarios that are quite typical of his work (not that the film does not feature some iconic 'cunning linguist' scenes between Romay and a young lady), Sinfonia erotica would probably be deemed 'homophobic' today as the antihero is depicted as a sadistic bisexual misogynist and unrepentant wife-abuser who, among other things, fiendishly grabs his male negro servant's ass and brags to his undersexed wife about how much pleasure his twink boyfriend gives him while said boyfriend passionately fellates him.

It is the golden age of blueblood degeneracy in old world Europa and Martine de Bressac (Lina Romay)—a wild and wanton yet cutesy big bosomed faux-blonde whose ample mammary glands are only rivaled by her similarly grand eyes and lips who moves around like a sensual somnambulist hunting for a rock hard cock that she will certainly never find—is the somewhat estranged wife of an overtly evil and decidedly debauched aristocrat named Marqués Armando de Bressac (Armando Borges in his sole film role) who has just gotten out of a mental hospital after staying there a number of years as a result of schizophrenia provoked by hereditary syphilis. While her rather empathetic caretaker Dr. Louys (Albino Graziani of 1982 'classic' Oasis of the Zombies aka La tumba de los muertos vivientes) drives her back to her ancient luxury estate in a carriage, Martine pseudo-poetically asks herself, "Are the leaves newly colored by the summer sun? Or are they the same ones as when I left? I know every leaf that fell in the Autumn...fell like pieces of my life. I don't know how much time has passed since I left the house. And I don't know why my husband sent me away." Dr. Louys lets Martine know that it has been years since she was locked up in the loony bin and then expresses his doubt over the Marquis' decision to have her institutionalized in the first place, to which she replies with the rather confused remark, "Everything will go the way you and I planned. Everything will go as he and I planned...Everything conforms to our desires. May luck be with us...and if we are good and have faith in God...Then heaven will accept us. Heaven! What is the point? And where is hell? Who...really knows what evil is? And who can truly judge? Where does the day end...And where does the night begin? When does pride start and self-esteem end? What is sin?" If one thing is for sure, it is that Martine's husband is a conspiring debauchee with exceedingly unsavory intentions and he is certainly a threat to his younger wife's very existence.

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Among other things, the Marquis Armando de Bressac is carrying on a lurid love affair with a young curly-haired twink named 'Flore' aka 'Flower' (Mel Rodrigo of Franco's *Slave of Crime* (1987) aka *Esclavas del crimen* and *Ópalo de fuego: Mercaderes del sexo* (1980) aka *Two Female Spies with Flowered Panties*), who turned into a homo after his parents dressed him up in dresses as a child and showed him off in front of their friends. Armando and Flore's homo twosome turns into a bisexual threesome after the two depraved androphiles find a bloody nun named Norma (Susan Hemingway of Franco's legendary nun-exploitation flick *Love Letters of a Portuguese Nun* (1977) aka *Die Liebesbriefe einer portugiesischen Nonne*) on the latter's estate and make her the third member of their morbid little ménage à trios. Assumedly because she has been irreparably defiled and can no longer devote her body and mind to god, Norma begs Armando to let her stay at his less than humble abode, even after she awakens to the debauched aristocrat and his butt beau Flores fingering her bloody post-rape meat curtain. Meanwhile, Martine's extremely loyal servant Wanda (Aida Gouveia, who also starred in *Love Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, as well as other Franco works like *Swedish Nympho Slaves* (1977) aka *Die Sklavinne*) warns her that her husband Armando is carrying on a lurid fag love affair with Flore, who she states "seems to be sent by the devil" and speaks of "ancient morality" as if he is a vampire. Of course, Martine is in denial that her husband is a homo, stating to Wanda that, "my husband is not a homosexual" (of course, she is only half right). To make matters worse, Martine is sex starved (or as she states herself, "I must make love or I'll go insane") because her discernibly deranged hubby will not hump her, so instead she fingers herself and subsequently sucks on her finger as if sucking on her spouse's scat-covered cock. In one particularly disturbing scene, Martine walks in on bitch boy Flore giving her husband a blowjob and when Armando notices his wife meekly peeping on him, he sinisterly yells, "Martine. Why are you hiding? I know you're there. Come and watch! Maybe you'll learn something from my friend. He knows how to give me pleasure...what are you waiting for?" Of course, Armando has more pernicious plans for Martine than merely mocking her with the fact that he is preternaturally penetrating the man-cunt of a pansy pretty boy.

One evening, Martine walks in on lapsed nun Norma in a spare bedroom and becomes so infatuated with the young lady's appearance that she begins immediately chomping on the strange girl's cunt, but the fun soon ends when Armando and his boy toy Flore walk in on her dining on their mutual lover's naughty bits. When Armando pulls his wife off of Norma, Martine reacts hysterically by grabbing his cock and begging him to fuck her but he does not oblige her and merely maliciously mocks her. When Armando brings his two lovers to eat dinner with Martine, he emotionally tortures his wife by discussing her schizophrenia-based lunacy, stating of her body "With skin like old, withered fruit...Skin like alabaſter. A sweet fruit. Smooth. But be careful...it's full of worms," and pulls

her tender tits out for all the gawking guests to see. After dinner, Armando has a threesome with his lovers and then asks Norma to help him 'dispose' of his wife by putting a "strong stimulant" in her milk, stating, "You must help us. Our life will be heaven when she's dead. And besides, all of us will be rich." Luckily, Martine's loyal maid Wanda overhears this conspiracy. Meanwhile, Martine has a freakout after achieving orgasm while fondling her own tits and goes back to see Dr. Louys, who Armando later attempts to bribe by offering him an aristocratic title if he helps cover up his wife's future 'accidental' death. Meanwhile, Armando's young lover's Flore and Norma proclaim their undying love for one another and decide to later run away from the Marquis, stating of him, "You know...we really hate him to death." Of course, the two agree to wait around for the riches they hope to receive after helping to kill Martine.

After Armando strangles Wanda to death upon learning that she told Dr. Louys of his intention to kill his wife, Martine seems to have no one to protect her and becomes completely vulnerable, especially to the lethally lecherous charms of Norma. One day, Martine comes into Norma's room early in the morning after drinking some assumedly poisoned milk and begins performing cunnilingus on the once-holy unholy young woman and before the two know it, Armando and Flore wander in and a foursome begins. Indeed, for the first time in the film, Armando begins penetrating his wife just as she has begged several times before throughout the flick and just before the foursome almost turns into an interracial fivesome when a negro servant named George (played by Philippines-based production manager George Santos) abruptly walks into the room, Martine drops dead during mid-coitus, or so it seems. Naturally, Armando and his lovers mock Martine by chanting, "Poor Martine. She's dead. Poor Martine" over and over again. After Martine's death, Armando becomes jealous of Flore and Norma's love affair and states to his negro servant George when he asks if he is surprised about the fact that his boyfriend has found true love with a woman, "Flore is a child. He doesn't have any understanding of evil nor of morality. But you don't have a right to judge him." Predictably jealous of the fact that his beloved boy toy has discovered true love in female form, Armando kills the two by psycho-sexually penetrating them both with a sword while Flore is penetrating Norma with his cock. Unlike with Martine, Armando is rather upset after killing his beautiful man-muse Flore and begins sobbing like a baby next to his and Norma's still joined corpse. Needless to say, Armando is rather shocked when his dead wife Martine appears wearing an opened purplish-pink robe exposing all her naughty bits while he is sobbing and he asks his assumedly undead wife, "You! Are you returned from Hell? Have you come to help me or participate in my destruction?," to which the sensual phantom replies, "I've returned to see you die," adding, "...and now you'll pay once and for all for everything!" Somewhat surprisingly, Armando thanks her for coming and begs for death, yelling to Martine, "Why are you waiting? Do it!

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Do it!” Of course, Martine obliges Armando and after killing him, she meets up with Dr. Louys, who states to her, “My love, have courage. Life begins again for you.” As it turns out, Dr. Louys plotted to have Martine fake her death, so they could later seek revenge against Armando and run away together with the Marquis’ wealth. As Dr. Louys states to Martine after revealing that he has already written Armando’s death certificate, “you must forget these old walls and this sad story.”

A raunchy and risqué yet elegant erotic dark romance that indubitably proves that auteur Jess Franco was somewhat surprisingly one of the most cultivated pornographers of his time, *Sinfonía erotica* is surely an unsung masterpiece as far as Euro-sleaze erotica is concerned. Indeed, in its depiction of a tragic ménage à trios and titillating Teutonophilia, Franco’s flick is certainly superior to Italian auteur Liliana Cavani’s similarly themed arthouse work *Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) aka *Al di là del bene e del male* aka *Seeds of Evil*, which is a costume piece that depicts a fictional threesome between German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, white Russian psychoanalyst and perennial muse Lou Andreas-Salomé, and German-Jewish philosopher Paul Réé, with the latter of whom being absurdly depicted as dying as a result of a homosexual gang-rape as committed by a group of sexually virile lumpenproles who demonstrate the power of their Teutonic sexual prowess over their victim’s impotent Judaic intellectualism. Unquestionably, aside from Franco’s shockingly artsy fartsy direction as immaculately accented by Franz Liszt’s *Second Concerto*, *Sinfonía erotica* owes a large portion of its pleasantly perverse potency to Lina Romay’s audaciously amorous no bullshit performance, as she seems as genuinely unconsciously hysterical as she seems hyper horny. Indeed, one certainly gets the feeling while watching the film that the filmmaker worships his muse, whose unclad body becomes a virtual character of its own in the film. Despite the film’s almost high-camp aristocratic setting that oozes with rot and decadence, bestial and almost satanic homo-sex scenes, and exceedingly effete wardrobe and quasi-male characters, *Sinfonía erotica* is the work where Franco—the hyper-heterosexual swarthy Spaniard—most reinforces his rampant heterosexuality by depicting an over-the-hill bisexual blue-blood dandy bastard who sinisterly betrays his rather beautiful wanton wife as the ultimate highly heinous and exceedingly evil antagonist, which is certainly a more nuanced way of declaring his love of lecherous women and hatred of homophilia than featuring an unclad pseudo-diva being haunted by a ghostly big black dildo like he did in his classic uniquely unnerving zombie flick *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* (1973) aka *La nuit des étoiles filante*. Indeed, with this film, Franco almost seems to channel the decadent poetry of Italian proto-fascist poet-warrior Gabriele D’Annunzio, who I am sure would find something to like about the work due to its dapper celluloid decadence, though I do not want to give him too much credit. Indeed, *Sinfonía erotica* is ultimately the film that made me realize that I am more of a Franco, as opposed to Jean Rollin, kind of

guy when it comes to sloppy quasi-artsy horndog Euro-horror.
-Ty E

BLOODY MOON
BLOODY MOON

Jesús Franco (1981)

Jess Franco is perhaps the most prolific Spanish director alive. With over 50 pseudonyms and over 180 films under his belt, he has created art, shit, shit art, and any other possible combination of the sort. His specialty is relentless sexual situations entwined with graphic violence and horror. He is one of the few Spanish film makers who've adapted giallo into a Spanish form and created a mix of slasher/erotica/giallo out of it. If you haven't seen a Jess Franco film, you really have a lot of catching up to do. Jess Franco makes us of his verbatim artful and post-sleaze effect on the maligned Bloody Moon. The effort in question is a weird hybrid of the slasher and with scream queens. Bloody Moon takes few seconds in order to escalate into the film that it is and keeps the perfect amount of tension to flow by ways of being protean and fluctuating. Despite having some intelligent and awe inspiring violent deaths, the real lure is the cast of beautiful German girls picked off by a mysterious killer. The proper thing done with the mystery - thriller element was the slow plot that was slowly revealed. By the end of the film, all the prior scenes will come together in a bloody puzzle and will leave you saying "I should have known!" aloud. Of course, this film needed a Franco twist so a ghoulish incest plot line was inserted that was between a hideously burned ex-murderer and his beautiful sister. You will constantly second-guess the intelligence of the film and the only reason you would is the direful dialogue. Lost in translation is the proper term for this. Sure, it has a caseous disco theme but this is a perfected and refined sleazy slasher. And if you think you've seen it all, watch the killer run down a little boy in his luxurious car without even looking back. I'm no stranger to child violence in film, but the grunt made by the 10-or-so year old was frighteningly realistic and I could actually hear the breath escape from his crushed chest. Along with the sound effects, a masterful score of bubbly synth-pop and a luminescent science-fiction humming loop are presented in what might be the greatest Franco soundtrack. There's no reason to not view Bloody Moon and give it a try. Other than the real (?) snake getting decapitated with a pair of hedge clippers, this film is a fun and harrowing film of obsession and greed wrapped in a horror film package. I've read some negative reviews and they all center around the atrocious lines from the characters. At worst, they prove to just be comedic relief. Bloody Moon is one of Franco's highlight films and a violent one at that.

-mAQ

FACELESS

Jesús Franco (1987)

Jesús "Jess" Franco was indubitably one of the most uniquely untalented and artistically inept auteur filmmakers who ever lived as a sort of "Spanish Ed Wood" with stunted artistic pretensions and a wealth of passion, albeit more prolific and prone to pornography, yet the strikingly unsophisticated filmmaker did direct a semi-decent film or two during his admittedly long and eventful lifetime and his totally tasteless cinematic work *Faceless* (1987) aka *Les prédateurs de la nuit* – an exceedingly exploitative 'anti-bourgeois bourgeois' slasher flick starring none other than Austrian queen Helmut Berger (Ludwig, *Salon Kitty*) as the lead, if not ludicrously lethargic, villain – is undoubtedly one of highest points in the filmmaker's eclectically artistically-lowly career as a prophet of torture porn, as well as horror films totally rid of genuine human emotion. An unofficial remake and deplorably degenerate update of the French-Italian horror classic *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) aka *Les yeux sans visage* directed by Georges Franju with a storyline reminiscent of Franco's first feature *The Awful Dr. Orloff* (1962) aka *Gritos en la noche*, *Faceless* is undoubtedly an absurdly artless and asinine piece of curiously crude cinematic storytelling, yet it does have a couple moments of genuine horror and austere aesthetic brutality, albeit of the scientifically nonsensical sort as inspired by the holocaust mythos, thus making for a startlingly superficial flick that is big on sadistic shocks, sheer stupidity, and super soulless and shitty style, which is arguably the filmmaker's greatest legacy as a would-be-auteur filmmaker. A fiercely feckless and philistine piece of filmmaking, *Faceless* is one of those many horror films that reminds the viewer why the post-silent era horror genre is almost exclusively without a shred of artistic merit, but it is also an aesthetically and thematically reckless work that reminds one why it is also a fun genre with its complete and utter disregard for anything resembling intellectual integrity, artistic dignity, or aesthetic soundness. In short, *Faceless*, like the disfigured women in the film, is an aesthetic abomination that in certain contexts can be enjoyed, but is ultimately nothing more than a bottom of the barrel guilty pleasure, even if it features a nefarious Nazi surgeon who experimented on Jews, Helmut Berger, an ugly bastard mongrel of a necrophile henchman, and some of the most sickening medical surgery disaster scenarios ever depicted in cinema history.

Pretty boy French doctor Frank Flamand (Helmut Berger in an against type and ultimately worthless performance) thinks he is at the top of the world due to his social and financial prestige, but things take a terrible turn for the worst when a certain Mrs. Francois (Tilda Thamar) – an ex-patient of his whose face he caused to be disfigured in a botched plastic surgery disaster – seeks revenge by attempting to throw acid in his face like a savage Islamic terrorist, but instead it splashes the good doctor's lovely sister Ingrid (Christiane Jean), thus leaving her

FACELESS

horribly disfigured and less than sexually delectable in the process. Naturally, Dr. Flamand blames himself for his sister's premature facial degeneration, so he gets his beautiful yet butch lesbo assistant Nathalie (Brigitte Lahaie) to kidnap an American model babe named Barbara Hallen (Caroline Munro), who is taken to the basement floor of the good doctor's clinic, as he plans to perform a face transplant so he can give his severely scarred sis the gift of natural beauty like she has never had before. Of course, kidnapped girl Barbara's father Terry Hallen (Telly Savalas) becomes deeply concerned when he does not hear from his daughter, so he hires a would-be-wise-cracking private detective named Sam Morgan (Chris Mitchum) to track her down. Following a lead, Mr. Morgan pays a visit to Barbara's photo director Maxence (Marcel Philippot) – a stereotypically anally retentive homo with an unhealthy obsession with buying abhorrent art pieces, which the private detective happily destroys to get answers from the feisty flamer – and learns that the girl moonlighted as a high-priced hooker and that she vanished without a trace with an expensive gold watch during a photo shoot. When Morgan pays a visit to Flamand's clinic after tracing Barbara's credit card there, he notices the doctor's assistant Nathalie is wearing the watch and concludes that some sort of foul play is involved. Little does Morgan realize that Dr. Flamand has hired a Nazi doctor named Karl Heinz Moser (Anton Diffring) to transplant the face of female slaves onto the deranged doc's sister Ingrid and Barbara is one of the involuntary donors signed up for the highly experimental surgery. Luckily, Barbara's face was badly damaged by a mongrel freak with a Euro-trash mullet named Gordon (Gérard Zalberg, who played the rather repellent Mr. Hyde in Walerian Borowczyk's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* (1981)) – a fiendish fellow that does all of Flamand's dirty work, including brutalizing and murdering gorgeous women – so they do not plan to use her for a transplant, but other women are not so lucky. After kidnapping an actress (Florence Guérin), Dr. Moser attempts to transplant her face onto Ingrid Flamand's but the face falls apart during mid-surgery and Gordon disposes of the mutilated woman by cutting her head off with a chainsaw (as the eyes of the faceless actress move frantically), but does not forget to kiss the bloody skeletal lips of the fallen beauty during a sickening and senseless scene of quasi-necrophilia. Eventually, Morgan finds Barbara imprisoned in the clinic basement in a dark holding cell, but ultimately finds himself imprisoned as well not long thereafter. In the end, *Faceless* concludes on a curiously anti-climatic cliffhanger that is as satisfying as an aborted orgasm during a warm summer night.

With an absolutely appalling and totally uncomplimentary soundtrack by Italian-Canadian pop singer Vincenzo Thoma, the emotional authenticity and moral integrity of an Eli Roth film, the worst sort of cultural and aesthetic decadence of 1980s Euro-sleaze, horribly contrived comic relief scenarios that are scarier than the actual murder scenes, and a near total waste of a couple great

actors, especially in regard to Helmut Berger, it is hard to give a film like *Faceless* any sort of serious critical reverence, but I would be lying if I did not admit that I watched the film no less than three times this year as there is something about it that makes you keep coming back, if not for all the wrong reasons. Like his incoherent surrealist 'arthouse' horror flick *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* (1968) aka *Succubus*, *Faceless* is one of the very few Jess Franco films I can recommend as a delectable-enough dirty diamond in the rough from a filmmaker with an unhealthy obsession with seeing beautiful women die grizzly deaths. Indeed, unlike Yukio Mishima or Veit Harlan, Mr. Franco seemed to be quite against beautiful corpses. To his credit, while wallowing in the materialistic vanity of the 1980s, Franco also manages to portray such smug vainglory in an exceedingly unflattering light via *Faceless* to the point where he literally has it ripped to shreds like paper via the angelic faces of statuesque beauties. Also to his credit, Franco managed to 'master' what he first sought to achieve with his debut work *The Awful Dr. Orloff* (1962) by taking the gore, unsettling sensuality, and brutality to stomach-churning extremes that would make Mario Bava scream. Indeed, if you ever get the urge to take a break from serious arthouse films, *Faceless* makes for a bittersweet treat as a sort of anti-arthouse affair and an Alain Robbe-Grillet flick for philistines set in a banal France without Godard or Resnais, but with only Jesús Franco on a pseudo-modish murder rampage of the marvelously misogynistic sort. It is with *Faceless*, as well as *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* (1968), *99 Women* (1969), *Venus in Furs* (1969), *Vampyros Lesbos* (1971), and a couple other films, that Jess Franco will be remembered in infamy as an idiosyncratic libertine auteur of marginal artistic talent yet unlimited passion, and not as the typical nameless and faceless exploitation/horror hack, which is no small achievement (relatively speaking, of course).

-Ty E

DEUX
DEUX

Jim Abrahams (1993)

Being literally beaten and urinated on as a child by other children, growing up in a defeated nation that had been reduced to ruins and rubble, blaming himself for the suicide of his Polish grandma (when he was only 13-year-old) and later his teenage male lover, the death of his boyfriend Marcello from AIDS, losing his movie muse Magdalena Montezuma at the height of his film career to cancer (which he would inevitably lose a battle to later in his life), facing public ridicule by ex-lovers (i.e. Rosa von Praunheim), and being relatively rejected in his homeland for being too much of an “art cunt,” Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, Palermo oder Wolfsburg) – the most decidedly dandy and exceedingly eccentric filmmaker of the German New Wave – was certainly a terribly tortured man, which he made no lie of considering he is well known for wearing signature all-black outfits throughout his entire life, so naturally his cinematic autobiography and penultimate work (*This Night* (2008) aka *Nuit de chien* being his final film), *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*, is a hyper hysterical and harrowing yet hypnotic cinematic work that made me seriously wonder whether or not the filmmaker’s premature death at the age of 65 was not for the best because at least now we know he no longer suffers. A daringly discordant, deranging, debasing and esoteric movie memoir with two transexualized female protagonists, identical twin sisters (both played by Isabelle Huppert, who the director wrote the roles specifically for), *Deux* would mark Schroeter’s return to film after over a decade break in what is seemingly his most impenetrable and personal work; a work of horrific high-camp grotesquery in the spirit of one of the director’s favorite poetic novels *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror* written by the mysterious Uruguayan-born French poet who went by the pseudonym Comte de Lautréamont (real name Isidore Lucien Ducasse). On top of featuring off-screen narration of verses from literary libertine de Lautréamont’s iconoclastic and quasi-satanic proto-surrealist novel by an unseen male narrator, *Deux* features incessant images of old school sailors that would substitute for Schroeter’s aborted dream film project of cinematically adapting French fag/criminal writer Jean Genet’s novel *Querelle de Brest* (1953), which would end in treachery when the director’s friend, Rainer Werner Fassbinder – who did not think much of the work, apparently describing it as a, “third-rate police story” – ended up directing it, thus souring the two filmmakers’ friendship. Featuring obfuscated anecdotes from Schroeter’s own life (which is a mystery in and of itself), including the self-slaughter of his lover via hanging, *Deux* is a decisively deranged and daunting celluloid daydream where one has the feeling that the filmmaker told himself throughout the production of the work, “It’s my film and I can cry if I want to.”

Inverting the sex of the characters for *Deux*, Schroeter seemingly follows in the footsteps of his ill-fated friend Fassbinder’s film *The Bitter Tears of Petra*

von Kant (1972) aka *Die Bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* – a work based on the auteur’s failed romantic relationship with black Bavarian Günther Kaufmann, except with lesbians substituting for gay men – but the decidedly decadent auteur has never made a lie about the fact that his films are byproducts of his failed love affairs and if it were not for the fact that he was a singular filmmaker whose cinematic career is unparalleled, one would assume he had a failed life, at least judging by his celluloid autobiography; a work riddled with sex, death, and self-destruction of the cultivated kitschy and sometimes tragicomic sort. Centering around two identical twins separated at birth who know of neither’s existence, *Deux* seems to be a combination of Poe-esque ‘fear of the doppelgänger’ and Jungian ideas like the shadow aspect (unconscious aspect of the personality that the conscious ego does not recognize) and the anima (feminine inner personality in the unconscious of the male, which Schroeter seemed rather conscious of), thus the murderous conclusion acts as a sort of complete idiosyncratic “individuation.” The fact that both of the twins, Magdalena and Maria (both played by Huppert), never physically age (whether playing a 5-year-old or a 50-year-old version of the character) and that the events in their lives become quite indistinguishable and all the more indecipherable as the film progresses only make it all more clear that *Deux* is a torrid trip throughout Schroeter’s totally tortured and terrified unconscious and oftentimes irrational mind, thus making him more of a ‘German’ filmmaker than he would ever want to admit, at least in the dark romantic sense where the auteur gazes into the abyss and the abyss gazes back. Like the twins of sin, sordidness, and sorrow, their seemingly manic mother Anna (Bulle Ogier), who likely fornicated with a sailor and spawned two heirs that were irreparably severed and brought up by separate adoptive families, longs for maternal love and a lasting romantic relationship (their failure with both seems interconnected), but all three ladies are accursed matrons of misery and isolation-based misanthropy with a propensity for damningly destructive love affairs and emotional and physical violence. Maria is the more extroverted of the two as someone who actively pursues ‘revolutionary’ politics and her love of music via debauched opera and cabaret, thus symbolizing Schroeter’s identity as an artist (or his self-created ‘persona’) while Magdalena – a successful school girl turned low-spirited lesbian with a disdain for men – is the director (who, indeed, like the character, attended international boarding schools) as his truest and most unflatteringly personal self, so naturally when the two finally collide physically at the conclusion through their intrinsic metaphysical bond, there are deplorable, if not entirely inevitable consequences. That ‘Magdalena’ is Schroeter’s most personal self becomes all the more clear with the cinematic recreation of the filmmaker’s tragic real-life coming-of-age love affair, which the director described as follows in the documentary *Mondo Lux : The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* (2011) directed by Elfi Mikesch (cinematographer of *Deux*), “Siegfried was the first man I really loved, but he hanged himself. He was 16, and I was 13 or

DEUX

14.” Despite the rather ambiguous conclusion (as well as the film as a whole) of *Deux*, Werner Schroeter will undoubtedly be remembered as the ‘artist’ (outside persona), albeit one whose highly inner and intimate yet fuddled blood and tears stain every frame he ever shot of celluloid. *Deux* is indubitably Schroeter at the height of his hyper hermetic yet particularly personalized artistry in a considerably compelling and compulsively concocted celluloid work of daunting and deranging fragmentation where byproducts of love and death act as a fierce form of all-consuming cognitive dissonance and despair, thus it should be no surprise that the filmmaker once also stated in *Mondo Lux*, “harmony does not exist unless you work hard to create it.”

Featuring hundreds of distinct tableaux ranging from quite literally killer kitsch, including Isabelle Huppert dressed in Soviet regalia standing on a battlefield with hundreds of dead naked corpses, to gross-out absurdity, including Huppert being violently attacked by a fox, coupled with a meticulously dismembered (non)narrative that is intentionally impossible to follow in terms of both chronology (skipping in between the years 2000, 1955, 1977, 1963, 1993, 1981, etc. without warning or reason) and plot, *Deux* makes for Werner Schroeter’s celluloid magnum opus of melancholy in the macabre tradition of the Grand Guignol and German romanticism, albeit in a highly deracinated, dissonance-driven form. A work of cultivated and complex despair and dispiriting decay that makes concessions to no one except Werner Schroeter himself, *Deux*, a depiction of debilitating delirium in celluloid form, is the thing that dead dreams are made of. A cinematic work I cannot even recommend to the most courageous of cinephiles, *Deux* is a totally trying test in terror and torment sprinkled with Schroeter’s apparent disdain for the Zionist state of Israel and goofy Japanese tourists, love of Dutch painters like Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh, antinatalism, radical politics and sex, the semen of seamen, megalomaniacal divas, and lifelong obsession with opera. With the debauched, deadbeat mother featured in *Deux* telling someone on a public telephone that, “We must murder all pregnant women... We must kill all the children before they’re born. We must take this hunt to all the world. We must! We Must!” in a most heated, hysterical, and flagrantly fanatical fashion, one can only guess the source of Schroeter’s reckless weltenschmerz, but considering he was born 7 April 1945 – literally a month and a day before Germany’s unconditional surrender during the Second World War – thus literally coming of age in apocalyptic Teutonic year zero, it is no surprise that his cinematic swansong, *This Night* (2008) aka *Nuit de chien*, is about the death of a nation and a people in one night. And so it would follow that Schroeter became a rootless cosmopolitan of sorts, but as *Deux* demonstrates, there is no getting away from home, no matter where one runs. Who knows, maybe if Germany had won the war, Schroeter might have grown up to be a hyper heterosexual following in the footsteps of Veit Harlan – a true purveyor of aristocratic National Socialist kitsch – but instead he realized what his friend Fassbinder prophesied as

having, “a place in the history of film that I would describe in literature as somewhere between Novalis, Lautréamont, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline,” which is no small accomplishment, with *Deux* being his “*Les Chants de Maldoror*”; an inexplicable and uncategorizable work of aesthetic anarchy and unwavering idiosyncrasy that will prove to perplex both cinephiles and auteur filmmakers for generations to come.

-Ty E

THE FINAL SOLUTION TO ADOLF HITLER
THE FINAL SOLUTION TO ADOLF HITLER

Jim Condit (???)

The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler is a one man show documentary featuring Jim Condit Jr. On Condit's personal YouTube account he has described himself as, "Kind of a good reporter, not much else." Condit's clearly controversial documentary The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler takes a completely unconventional look at the German dictator and his mysterious background. In the documentary, Condit introduces a series of old and new books regarding Adolf Hitler's assumed Jewish background and the Jewish bankers that financed him. Jim Condit's main point with the documentary is that Adolf Hitler played a crucial (if not the most important role) in founding the Jewish state of Israel. I have personally read many of the books Condit introduces and I can say that some are much more credible than others. The evidence ranges from official classified Nazi documents to hearsay amongst Nazis and Jews themselves. The fact is that collaboration between Nazis and Zionist Jews is an indisputable fact, something they leave out in Bolshevik style American public schools and even at the graduate level. In America, people seem to care more about things that cause irrational impulsive responses rather than rational fact base discussion. Jim Condit Jr. is far from the most charismatic guy around. In The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler, he constantly stutters, mixes up facts, and even sometimes seems confused. Condit reminds me of an eccentric community college professor that wears bad suits and has unconventional ideas. I especially liked the 1980s style computer monitor in the background of the documentary. It added a sort of "underground" and broke truth seeker aesthetic. The real wealth in the documentary is his introduction of these books so that individuals can do their own personal research. So-called "mainstream" and "accredited" historians are not at all trustworthy. The majority of these individuals just rehash and recycle ad hominem attack style unscholarly history for their unthinking (and apathetic) masses to consume. Any historian that starts to drift off into uncovered history (yet fact based and scholarly history) is almost immediately discredited, shunned, out of work, jailed, and possibly even killed. The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler features Jim Condit Jr. talking at his desk for two hours. The production of this documentary couldn't have cost more than \$100 to do. Unless you consider having to buy a pro-consumer mini DV digital camera, the books Condit introduces, and other related documents. Despite Condit's lack of production values and overall presentation with The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler, he deserved to be commended for his studies. Very few individuals (especially Americans) have the audacity or shamelessness to go against the accepted historical norms in this country. Most have accepted Steven Spielberg's hateful and idealistic view of history as emotions speak louder to them than words. Watch The Final Solution to Adolf Hitler

-Ty E

PERMANENT VACATION

Jim Jarmusch (1980)

Admittedly, while I tend to either love or hate most auteur filmmakers, especially those of the arthouse or avant-garde oriented sort, Jim Jarmusch (*Broken Flowers*, *Only Lovers Left Alive*) is a rare a filmmaker that I both like and loathe, though his most recent films have caused me to feel mostly more of the latter. Of course, unlike a lot of contemporary cinephiles (who typically borrow most of their ideas and fetishes from the French New Wave and the anti-Occidental Frankfurt School influenced academics and critics), xenophilia, non-ironical ethno-masochism, flagrant *La Nouvelle Vague* worship, dimestore existentialism, post-Beat Generation hipsterdom, and degenerate jazz are things that leave a rather bitter taste in my mouth, so naturally I find it to be an innately impossible task to fully embrace any of the films in Jarmusch's somewhat uneven oeuvre. Although not really a major figure of the movement when it was still around, Jarmusch's roots lie in the underground No Wave Cinema scene of the mid-1970s through mid-1980s where he did things like work as a second recordist on his bud Eric Mitchell's largely forgotten midnight movie *Underground U.S.A.* (1980), acted as a cinematographer on his longtime girlfriend Sara Driver's Paul Bowles adaptation *You Are Not I* (1981), and ultimately directed his first and mostly rarely seen feature *Permanent Vacation* (1980), which I finally decided to watch the other day after many years of procrastination. According to Jarmusch himself, it was his comrades of the No Wave scene who talked him into directing his first feature, or as the auteur stated in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, "I used to sort of follow Eric [Mitchell] and Amos [Poe] around and they were always saying, 'Jim, when are you going to make a feature film. Come on, Jim make a film.'" I must confess that, after reading a couple reviews of *Permanent Vacation*, I expected the worst and braced myself for a film that I assumed would be an all the more slow, pedantic, and posturing take on Jarmusch's second feature *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984), yet it ultimately somewhat surprised me and exceeded my admittedly fairly low expectations. Indeed, while I would probably hate Jarmusch if I met him in real-life, his debut at least allowed me to somewhat understand where he is coming from and why he has an insatiable love for old dead negro jazz musicians, goofy anachronistic clothing, emotional sterility, and seemingly pointless posturing (or what he and his fans probably call 'style').

Shot on a relatively miniscule budget of around \$12,000 as an intended master's thesis while Jarmusch was attending the film program at NYU (somewhat humorously, he was denied a degree because the university did not appreciate the fact that he used his Louis B. Mayer Foundation scholarship to fund the film), *Permanent Vacation* is a slow burning, very consciously stylized, semi-autobiographical (the lead character is a composite of Jarmusch, his fac-

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tory worker brother, and lead actor Chris Parker), and a virtual manifesto of the filmmaker's seemingly fairly consistent Weltanschauung as a passive nihilist, self-stylized NYC hipster, degenerate jazz lover, and perennial too-cool-for-school rebel-without-a-cause. Indeed, for a Jarmusch fanboy to describe the film as one of the director's lesser works (even respected critic Jonathan Rosenbaum described the film as, "The only Jim Jarmusch feature that qualifies as apprentice work") is nothing short of hipster heresy and strong evidence that they do not actually sincerely like the auteur or his films, but instead are more interested in what he and his films stand for (e.g. negrophilia, hipsterism, passive nihilism, etc.). Featuring a real-life eternal wanderer and decidedly disillusioned social outcast in the lead role (Jarmusch specially tailored the character for the lead 'actor,' who fittingly uses his real name), *Permanent Vacation* is a sort of overtly off-beat (anti)bildungsroman about a metaphysically dead hipster hobo and fiercely forlorn fashion victim who probably felt he found a true kindred spirit (or at least, a cool quote to steal) when he read Arthur Rimbaud's words, "I found I could extinguish all human hope from my soul." While Jarmusch's film will not give you hope for hopeless hipsters, it will give you the sense that Nietzsche was right in regard to his ideas of the 'eternal return' and especially 'Amor fati' (of course, Jarmusch is still interested in these themes as *Broken Flowers* (2005) especially demonstrates).

While fairly unknown (it never received a theatrical release) and poorly reviewed in the United States, *Permanent Vacation* was well received in Germany where it earned the Josef von Sternberg Award at the 1980 Mannheim-Heidelberg International Filmfestival and impressed New German Cinema 'alpha-auteur' Wim Wenders so much that he gave Jarmusch some film stock to work on his next feature *Stranger Than Paradise* (notably, Jarmusch also worked as an assistant on Wenders' doc *Lightning Over Water* (1980) aka *Nick's Movie* about the remaining days of Hollywood rebel Nicholas Ray, who the filmmaker also acted as a personal assistant to). Undoubtedly, one of Jarmusch's greatest 'talents' as a filmmaker is that he is one of the few American filmmakers that has been able to express the sort of existential despair that is quite common in the films of the great European arthouse filmmakers of the post-WWII era, especially those of New German Cinema. Indeed, as a largely plot-less work sprinkled with occasional cinephile references that features a quasi-antihero with a flat affect and nothing to live for except vintage negro music and attempting to look and act 'hip' (personally, I found the young man to be quite unwittingly ludicrous, which is probably the only thing charming about him), *Permanent Vacation* almost seems like Jarmusch's attempt to make a NYC equivalent to early Wenders flicks like *Summer in the City* (1970) and *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1972). With its gritty and almost cinema-vérité realist aesthetic, Jarmusch's film falls somewhere between the scum-covered American-dream-damning of exploitation auteur Nick Millard's anti-masterpiece *Crimi-*

nally *Insane* (1975) and the German era 'hard ghetto' meditations of Iranian auteur Sohrab Shahid Saless like *Tagebuch eines Liebenden* (1977) aka *Diary of a Lover* and *Ordnung* (1980) aka *Order*. As far as American influences go, aside from the No Wave scene, Jarmusch's film seems to owe a very heavy debt to the fairly small yet nonetheless very important and highly influential oeuvre of largely forgotten NYC underground auteur Peter Emmanuel Goldman. Aside from the plight of the lead in *Permanent Vacation* being quite similar to the protagonists in Goldman's features *Echoes of Silence* (1967) and *Wheel of Ashes* (1969), the opening scenes of the almost somnambulist-like masses walking in slow-motion in the seedy streets of NYC bears a strikingly resemblance to various scenes in the forgotten auteur's short *Peñstilent City* (1965) to the point where it almost seems like borderline plagiarism. Luckily for Jarmusch, Goldman is now largely forgotten today, including among serious cinephiles, even though his final feature *Wheel of Ashes* starring Pierre Clémenti is probably the only real direct link between the NYC underground and *La Nouvelle Vague*. Of course, what makes Jarmusch important and singular is that he dared to make such decidedly dejecting and audience-alienating works in the land and era of Spielberg and Lucas where movies are mostly made with the exact opposite intent as *Permanent Vacation*, which is a work that prides itself on escaping from the escapism of Hollywood and instead dwells in an inwardly dead state of mind where *Weltschmerz* reigns.

Almost terminally nihilistic teenage protagonist Aloysious Christopher Parker (Chris Parker) is a man with no plan aside from perennially drifting from one place to another, or as he less than eloquently narrates in a fairly monotone fashion that makes one question whether or not he is a eunuch (he sounds like a drug-addled lesbian hooker), "My name is Aloysious Christopher Parker and, if I ever have a son, he'll be Charles Christopher Parker. Just like Charlie Parker. The people I know just call me Allie, and this is my story -- or part of it. I don't expect it to explain all that much, but what's a story anyway, except one of those connect the dots drawings that in the end forms a picture of something. That's really all this is. That's how things work for me. I go from this place, this person to that place or person. And, you know, it doesn't really make that much difference." A sort of passive misanthrope who probably does not even have enough energy or will power to truly love or hate people, Allie compares people to inanimate objects and rooms, stating that, when it comes to individuals, there always comes a time when the, "newness is gone [...] And then there's this kind of dread, kind of creeping dread. You probably don't even know what I'm talking about. But anyway I guess the point of all this is that after a while, something tells you, some voice speaks to you, and that's it. Time to split." Although he is still just an adolescent, Allie is already wise enough to know that, "People are going to be basically the same" and thus has no problem physically and emotionally drifting in and out of peoples' lives like some sort of melancholic ghost (actually,

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Allie's parasitic lifestyle, superficial charm, lack of long-term goals, criminality, emotional shallowness, and proneness towards boredom, among other things, indicated that he might suffer from psychopathy). Upon randomly dropping by the dilapidated apartment of an assumed lover named Leila (Leila Gaštil), Allie is asked, "Where have you been? I haven't seen you since Thursday" and he less than emotionally replies as if it is no big deal that he has worried the shit out of his quasi-girlfriend with his unexpected absence, "Walking...Just, walking around. I can't seem to sleep at night. Not in this city." Not even seemingly vaguely interested in love or even carnal pleasures, Allie proceeds to goofily dance to degenerate jazz while Leila hypnotically stares out of a window as if hoping that she could be anywhere else other than where she currently is in life. When his culturally confused one-man dance session is over, Allie demonstrates he is a degenerate descendent of Narcissus by intently staring at himself in a mirror while combing his hair and proudly declaring, "You know, sometimes I think I should just live fast and die young. . .and go in a three-piece suit like Charlie Parker. Not bad, huh?" Needless to say, Leila is less than impressed with the protagonist's outmoded James Dean-esque declaration, but it seems that in Allie's own mind he is a misunderstood superstar who is the only person that is truly capable of understanding his own brilliance.

In a scene that seems to reflect Allie's fragmented mind and incapacity for concentrating on anything for any extended period of time, the protagonist reads an excerpt from mysterious pseudonymous French poet Comte de Lautréamont's classic proto-surrealist poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1868) aka *The Songs of Maldoror* and then says to Leila, "I'm tired of this book, you can have it." When Leila tries in vain to receive some warmth and affection from the protagonist by complaining, "I'm tired of being alone," Allie matter-of-factly replies, "Everyone is alone" and then goes on a predictable pessimistic rant where he attempts to rationalize why he is proud of being a bum and then mentions how his once-normal mother went totally insane after his father abandoned their family. After discussing the fact that he has not seen his institutionalized schizophrenic mother in over a year and that he would like to visit the ruins of his childhood home, which was supposedly destroyed in an imaginary war by "The Chinese," Allie leaves Leila for good and heads to the place where he was apparently born, though he does not seem to find what he is looking for. In the ruins of where he was born, Allie bumps into a shell-shocked war veteran (Jarmusch regular Richard Boes) who is convinced that he is still fighting the Vietcong. After giving him a cigarette, Allie gives the mentally unhinged vet the somewhat sound advice "go some place different [...] that's what I'm going to do" and the ex-soldier abides as if following an order given to him by a drill instructor. Unfortunately for Allie, he is far less open to taking advice from others, as he is a young man who treasures personal sovereignty above all else, even if it requires that he lead the life of the most destitute of rootless cosmopolitans.

When Allie visits his mother (Ruth Bolton) at the scum-covered mental institution where she has been interned, it becomes quite apparent why the protagonist has a hard time emotionally connecting to other people, as his mentally perturbed progenitor barely acknowledges him and treats him like he is a pestilence when she actually does, randomly stating to him regarding his eyes in a fashion that reveals that she clearly has yet to get over her husband leaving her, "They don't belong to you. They were taken out of your father's head." With his mental mommy treating him with an emotionally crippling combination of disdain and apathy and her all-the-more-mental roommate laughing hysterically for seemingly no reason, Allie naturally decides to use the opportunity to leave when a nurse (played by Jarmusch's longtime girlfriend, filmmaker Sara Driver) comes in the room and tells the protagonist to temporarily leave so that she can give the patients their clearly much needed medicine. After his brief stop at the ghetto nut-ward, Allie walks through a ruined neighborhood that resembles a bombed-out third world city where he happens upon a literally raving mad yet stunningly beautiful Hispanic woman (María Duval of Roger Vadim's *And God Created Woman* (1988)) who is wearing nothing but a slip and has make-up smeared across her tragic little face. When Allie asks the loony Latina "Are you alright?," she screams, "Go! Get out of here!," so the protagonist decides to go on his less than merry way. Of course, seeing such a ravishing babe in such a sad and sorry state only provides validity to Allie's hopelessly pessimistic personal philosophy. Indeed, it as if misery, absurdity, and destitution follow Allie everywhere he goes, but I suspect he would not have it any other way.

In a fairly blatant tribute from Jarmusch to his mentor, Allie wanders into a movie theater that is screening Nicholas Ray's *The Savage Innocents* (1960) starring Anthony Quinn and Peter O'Toole, though the protagonist seems less interested in seeing the film than chatting up random strangers that he meets in the lobby. After buying some popcorn and asking an attractive movie theater employee about the "Quinn Eskimo movie," Allie is told a story relating to the Doppler effect that he surely will forever cherish about a suicidal saxophonist playing "Over the Rainbow" by a jolly middle-aged negro (Frankie Faison of *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and HBO's *The Wire* (2002-2008)) with a bad case of the giggles. After leaving the movie theater without actually watching the movie, Allie happens upon an avant-garde saxophonist played by John Lurie (who co-composed the film's musical score with Jarmusch), who asks him, "What do you want to hear, Kid?," to which the protagonist replies in an uncharacteristically excited fashion, "I don't care, as long as it's vibrating bugged-out sound. Man, what a sax." After Lurie passionately plays an autistic avant-garde jazz version of "Over the Rainbow" on his sax, Allie goes to spend the night on a roof on some random apartment building. The next day, when some random young bourgeois bitch in a fancy convertible asks Allie to do her the simple favor of putting her envelope in a mailbox that he is obnoxiously leaning on, the

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protagonist retorts in a prissy fashion, "What do I look like, the mailman?" and then steals the young lady's car after she makes the mistake of attempting to deal with the letter herself. As the young lady bitches about the fact that Allie has stolen her car, some random negro hobo pops out of nowhere and adds insult to injury by boorishly blabbering, "That dude was wild style. Ohhh, no. You better get your ass out of her before he snatches that up too." After some momentary hesitation, Allie decides he needs quick cash and opts to sell the stolen convertible for a mere \$800 to some lowlife crook played by French-born No Wave auteur Eric Mitchell. Of course, since the car is stolen, it is no big loss for Allie, who just wants to get the hell out of the rotten Big Apple before he rots with it.

Ultimately, Allie gets a passport, buys a boat ticket, and prepares for a pilgrimage to Paris where he assumedly plans to live in exile for an indefinite period of time just like so many artists and would-be-artists before him. Almost too fittingly in what one would might describe as a borderline mystical scene, Allie spots his French doppelganger (Chris Hameon)—a character that may or may not be inspired by a young version of Jarmusch's French-born buddy Eric Mitchell (who somewhat fitting plays the crook who gives Allie the money that he uses to buy his boat ticket)—while leaning against a fence while waiting for his boat to France. When Allie asks the stylish frog, "Are you going on the boat, too?," the suave Frenchman says "No" and explains, "See, I had a lot of trouble, so I have to get out of Paris. And now my friends are crying. See, I never cry. 'Cause I know when things change, I have to go somewhere. And now I think that New York is going to be Babylon for me. Well, that's where I've got to live." After sharing their tattoos (the Frenchman has one reading "mommy"), the two kindred spirits part way and Allie narrates, "I was thinking about the note I left her when I got on the boat. But how can you explain something like this to someone? I'm just not the kind of person that settles into anything. I don't think I ever will be. Isn't really anything left to explain that can be. And that's what I was trying to explain in the first place. Just not like that. I don't want a job, or a house, or taxes although I wouldn't mind a car, but... I don't know. Now that I'm away, I wish I was back there more than even when I was there. Let's just say I'm a certain kind of tourist...A tourist that's on a... permanent vacation." In the end, Allie stares back at NYC as the city gets farther and farther away as his boat drifts to Frogland where the protagonist probably hopes to find a surplus of pretentious plodding deadbeats just like himself.

The fact that *Permanent Vacation* was included as a mere extra feature with the Criterion Collection DVD release of *Stranger Than Paradise* as opposed to receiving its own individual release is a true testament to the fact that it is most certainly Jarmusch's most wrongly neglected and most understood work and the fact it only received a warm reception in Europe, especially Germany, is only fitting. After all, as the great cinematic works of New German Cinema certainly demonstrate, no group of people expressed a great sense of exis-

tential despair, deracination, social and cultural alienation, and nihilism better than the post-WWII German filmmakers, but I digress. Personally, I would rather re-watch the director's debut any day over his later and more conspicuously contrived works like *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999), *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003), *Broken Flowers* (2005), *The Limits of Control* (2009), and *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013), but then again I am not a Jarmusch cheerleader and find many of fetishes and obsessions to be nothing short of odious, obnoxious and, in many cases, laughably shallow and insincere. Indeed, if I want to watch a film that pays homage to Godard and the French New Wave, I will watch an early Fassbinder flick like *Götter der Pest* (1970) aka *Gods of the Plague* or *Der amerikanische Soldat* (1970) aka *The American Soldier* and on those rather rare occasions where I get an irrational thirst for ebonics and negrophilia, I will most certainly go to a real black director like Melvin "Block" Van Peebles, Felix de Rooy, or Jarmusch's perennially pissy pipsqueak pal Spike Lee. Indubitably, what makes *Permanent Vacation* so raw, refreshing, and authentic is that it features a real-life shrieking hipster hobo of the pathologically posturing sort in the lead role as opposed to a dry Hollywood clown like Bill Murray or all-too-stoic exotic spade like Isaach De Bankolé (ironically, one of the biggest complaints that most reviewers seem to have against the film is lead Chris Parker's grating voice and dubious acting skills, but I personally found these admittedly annoying ingredients to be perfect for the specific character). In fact, the film is such a singularly delectable and unadulterated expression of its particular zeitgeist that Jean-Michel Basquiat was snoozing in a sleeping bag in John Lurie's apartment while Jarmusch was shooting the scenes where Parker hangs out with melancholy hipster diva Leila Gaštil. Additionally, Jarmusch structured the film around Parker's authentic natural aura and attitude, or as the auteur explained regarding the film in the doc *Blank City*, "...I wrote it for Chris who's a very animate person in real life. And, as I started filming, he was not animated in the same degree, so I followed that and the style of the film sort of slowed down." Indeed, *Permanent Vacation* is surely slow, but it would not work any other way, just as Jarmusch's buddy Wenders' greatest films would not either. After all, there is nothing really exciting or action-packed about existential despair and passive nihilism.

Although it might surprise some, Italian self-described 'super-fascist' philosopher Julius Evola had some positive things to say about beatniks, bohemians, hipsters, and other counterculture types in an essay featured in the volume *L'Arco e la Clava* (1968) aka *The Bow and the Club*, where he stated, "From our point of view, a brief study of these phenomena is justified, because we share the opinion, expressed by a number of "beats": namely — and in opposition to what psychiatrists, psycho-analysts and "social workers" think — in a society, a civilization, like ours, and, especially, like that of the USA — one must in general admit that the rebel, the being who does not adapt, the a-social being, is in fact the sanest

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man. In an abnormal world, values are inverted: whosoever appears abnormal, in relation to the existing milieu, is most probably precisely the “normal” person, in the sense that in him there still subsist traces of integral vital energy; and we do not follow those who want to “rehabilitate” such individuals, whom they consider to be sick, and “save” them for “society.”” Of course, what separates super-fascists like Evola from neo-Beat hipsters like Chris Parker and Jarmusch is that, while the former supports a sort of active nihilism as endorsed by Nietzsche, the latter embraces a sort of frivolous passive nihilism that can only lead to a life of nothingness upon nothingness without end. In a chapter entitled ‘Sartre: Prisoner Without Walls’ featured in his classic text *Cavalcare la Tigre* (1961) aka *Ride the Tiger*, Evola would point out that commie existentialist messiah Jean-Paul Sartre once absurdly wrote, “Freedom, choice, nihilation, and temporalization are one and the same,” but of course such naive thinking only leads to the sort of psychological prison and metaphysical purgatory that plagues the protagonist of *Permanent Vacation*, which was highlighted by the Guido Baron when he wrote, “One finds oneself already faced with the well-known situation of a freedom that is suffered, rather than claimed: modern man is not free, but finds himself free in the world where God is dead. ‘He is delivered up to his freedom.’ It is from this that his deep suffering comes. When he is fully aware of this, anguish seizes him and the otherwise absurd sensation of a responsibility reappears.” Of course, like the protagonist of his film, Jarmusch seems to have bought into the existentialist con that he is totally free, even if the self-satisfied cynicism and literal jazz worship of his films says otherwise.

Luckily, Jarmusch apparently does not fully embrace the attitude and lifestyle of the patently preposterous ‘pretentious deadbeat’ protagonist of *Permanent Vacation*, or as he stated in an interview with *Bomb Magazine*, “I think nihilism is a realistic outlook, but I see both positive and negative aspects in the approach of the main character. His self-imposed exile from existing institutions: work, school, family, etc., is certainly positive, but his difficulty in communicating with other people in the same situation is relatively hopeless. More and more, intelligent young people are put into this almost hopeless situation. That’s what the film is about.” While it is certainly true that more and more people are dropping out society, these individuals, not unlike the protagonist of Jarmusch’s film and the countless carbon-copy hipsters with ironic Civil War mustaches that currently live in NYC and other trendy urban neighborhoods, have ultimately taken a path that is ultimately more hopeless and senseless than that of the average sub-literate Evangelical Christian hillbilly. Certainly, the same defeatist ‘postmodern slave morality’ that led Hebraic hipster Norman Mailer to proudly proclaim himself to be a “White Negro” and inspired William S. Burroughs to become a trust-fund-sponsored “junky” and “queer” also led Jarmusch to directing a film like *Permanent Vacation*, which also acts as a sort of unintentional cautionary tale about what might happen to you if you’re a bourgeois

white boy who starts mimicking the culture of poor old dead negroes. Naturally, the same dead-end passive nihilist (anti)philosophy also explains why that, aside from technical prowess and overall professionalism, Jarmusch's films have not changed all that much since his debut, as they typically rehash the same sort of offbeat scenes and eccentric encounters. In fact, Jarmusch's treasuring of the Tschandala and metaphysically dead deadbeats and derelicts seems to have only grown over the years, yet he is now much more personally distanced from his material and, to the decided detriment of his films, instead of hiring his friends to play themselves, he dreams up rather ridiculous fantasy characters like jigaboo samurais and undead rockers. At least when *Permanent Vacation* was first released, the viewer could entertain the idea that Jarmusch might one day grow out of his already-then-outmoded hipster Weltanschauung.

-Ty E

GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI
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Jim Jarmusch (1999)

Next to European arthouse directors from the 1960s-1980s, especially the pretentious French sort he rips off of, Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger Than Paradise*, *Night on Earth*) seems like a pedantic dilettante who make counterfeit post-counter-culture celluloid crap of the obscenely banal 'offbeat' sort, yet he has made a film or two that is worth seeing, if not for totally novel reasons, with *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* being one of those films, even if I found myself cringing at the film's compulsive and conspicuous culture cringing. The story of an overweight negro samurai named 'Ghost Dog' played by Forest Whitaker (in a role specially tailored for him by Jarmusch) who finds himself to be a marked man after committing a hit for the Italian mafia which the Mafioso boss' daughter witnesses, *Ghost Dog* is a kooky postmodern crime flick and celluloid cultural mongrel that is steeped in would-be-quirky negrophilia and superifical Far-Eastern warrior philosophy that pays blatant, if not somewhat blasphemous, homage to Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (1967) starring proud French nationalist Alain Delon. A film depicting two dying warrior codes—that of the samurai and the mafia—*Ghost Dog* presents a changing 'multicultural' world where old school masculinity has become outmoded and where an uncommonly stoic negro anti-hero has adopted an alien creed which he utilizes for his own paradoxically Afroncentric means to kill elderly and discernibly degenerated members of the American Cosa Nostra. A typical Jarmusch work where the exotic 'other' is ritualistically fetishized and the white man, even swarthy ones from the Mediterranean, is depicted with the utmost malice, which reaches its zenith in a scene where an American Indian calls a stereotypically hotheaded wop a "stupid fucking white man" for shooting a pigeon, *Ghost Dog* is excessive ethno-masochism and xenophilia in its most pseudo-esoteric form directed by a man who never got over the fact that his hair turned completely white when he was a mere teenager. With various shamelessly contrived fanboy references to Jap literary classics like *Rashōmon* (1915) and *Hagakure: The Way of the Samurai*, as well as films ranging from *Le Samourai* to Seijun Suzuki's *Branded to Kill* (1967) to *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), *Ghost Dog* is a sort of pseudo-daring dilettante deconstruction of ancient traditions/folklore and film genre conventions that, like any serious work of pomo puffery, takes great pride in its cultural references, yet does not have much of a soul, despite featuring a samurai soul brother as the lead character. Featuring a musical score and cameo role by rapper RZA—the de facto leader of the orientalist hip hop outfit, the Wu-Tang Clan—*Ghost Dog* is a superficially strange film where black turns yellow and takes out white, thereupon making a virtual celluloid wet dream for cultivated wiggers and negro nerds.

A strict follower of the samurai code who lives in a mostly black ghetto, *Ghost*

Dog (Forest Whitaker) is in a peculiar position as the voluntary 'retainer' of a local mafia boss named Louie (John Tormey), who saved the black samurai from a very potential death while just a young black buck. Now a phantom-like hitman who carries out contract killings for the mafia via Louie, Ghost Dog finds himself in serious trouble when he kills a gangster named Handsome Frank who has been sleeping with the daughter of a mafia boss named Vargo (Henry Silva), not realizing that said daughter of the mafia boss, Louise Vargo (Tricia Vessey), is in the room when he commits the crime. After Ghost Dog kills less than Handsome Frank, Louise shows no concern for the death of her beloved, but instead lends the jigaboo samurai a copy of *Rashōmon* that she had just finished reading, stating with a most flat affect, "It's a great book... Ancient Japan was a strange place." Ghost Dog makes the mistake of letting Louise live and he is rewarded by Vargo and his associate Sonny Valerio, who decide to get rid of the spade samurai as he can implicate them for committing the mob sin of not only killing a 'made man,' but using a black brotha' to do it. Unfortunately for them, Ghost Dog is not an easy fellow to find as he lives like a hermit in a shack on the roof of a pet shop and only communicates with Frank, who is ordered by Vargo to find the samurai, by way of small paper messages sent via pigeons. Ghost Dog's only friend is a flamboyant Haitian ice cream man named Raymond (Isaach De Bankolé) who can only speak French, yet the two idiosyncratic negroes seem to understand each other perfectly as demonstrated by the fact that they both always say the same thing. Luckily, Ghost Dog makes a new friend in the form of a feisty little black girl that looks like Whoopi Goldberg named Pearline (Camille Winbush), who the samurai gives Louise Vargo's copy of *Rashōmon* to read. Meanwhile, Vargo's elderly mob underlings go around looking for Ghost Dog, killing an innocent pigeon and old black man in the process, which rather irks the sensitive samurai, who is respected by both members of the 'Crips' and 'Bloods.' Of course, Ghost Dog retaliates by killing the mafia men one-by-one, which becomes rather bizarre due to the fact that his master Louie is on their side. After invading Vargo's mansion and singlehandedly killing everyone except for Louise Vargo and Louie, Ghost Dog demonstrates his peculiar sense of 'black power' by senselessly killing two white hunters who have just killed a bear, which is the samurai's spiritual animal. In the end, Ghost Dog and Louie have a final showdown, where the pseudo-Japanese black warrior allows his mafia master to kill him, thus allowing both men to follow through with their archaic codes in a world that no longer recognizes either. Before he dies, Ghost Dog gives his copy of *Rashōmon*, which was just given back to him by Pearline, to Louie.

A sort of bastard celluloid love child that was clearly created by a person that, not unlike alpha-fanboy Quentin Tarantino, was directed by a mixed-up man with a bad case of xenophilia and piss poor taste in cinema, Ghost Dog is a film that proves that deconstructing film genre conventions and mixing cultural ingredients almost always makes for sapless celluloid that begs for importance

GHOST DOG: THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI

and notoriety, but ultimately offers nothing new in the way of cinematic art. Indeed, while I would be lying if I did not admit that Ghost Dog kept me vaguely entertained through with its overly contrived quirkiness, and I can respect director Jarmusch for flipping through Hagakure, I certainly cannot respect the putrid pomo idea of overweight American negroes pretending to follow in the tradition of ancient Japanese samurais, as if samurai code is interchangeable between races and that any race of people can aptly adopt such unique culture ingredients, hence why the film seems like one big joke at the expense of not only the Japanese, but American wops as well. Personally, if I was Japanese, I would rather see the code of the samurai die out totally before seeing a little black girl adopt it as hinted at the end of Ghost Dog. Ultimately, an intertextual celluloid turd that, rather absurdly, is seemingly meant to stroke the egos of film school fanboys and culturally confused negroes who are down with the old school "Land of the Rising Sun," Ghost Dog is celluloid cultural mongrelization at its most stylistically superficial and soulless, as if a diehard atheist 'true believer' attempted to make a metaphysical martial arts film. Featuring old wop gangsters practicing their own brand of feminism by shooting female cops ("they want to be equal...I made her equal") and respecting black men for killing them ("there's one good thing about this Ghost Dog guy...He's sending us out the old way...Like real fucking gangsters"), Ghost Dog manages to compile everything that is culturally and spiritually retarded about America and disseminate it through a bastardized and negrofied pseudo-Far-East package of pomo hip-hop puffery that reminds one why America is devolving into a third world sewer of racial and cultural chaos. Call me nostalgic, but I prefer the Sicilian mafia to the Bloods and the Crips any day because at least they knew how to dress and keep their pants around their waist.

-Ty E

GLEN AND RANDA

Jim McBride (1971)

Although just mere speculation on my part, I have to assume that if a nuclear holocaust or any other sort of apocalyptic scenario ever really went down, hippie, hipsters, beatnik, and other passive pansy untermenschen rabble would be the first to die, hence I think a dystopian avant-garde work like *Glen and Randa* (1971)—a film featuring an almost all-long-haired-hippie-cast oftentimes frolicking around naked and making ‘free love’—is a tad bit too unrealistic. Directed by McJewish auteur Jim McBride, who is probably best known for his semi-autobiographical docu-fiction debut *David Holzman’s Diary* (1967), his Godard remake *Breathless* (1983) starring Richard Gere, the multi-genre crime-thriller-romance hybrid *The Big Easy* (1986), and especially the Jerry Lee Lewis biopic *Great Balls of Fire!* (1989) starring Dennis Quaid and Winona Ryder, *Glen and Randa* is a sort of offbeat and laidback pre-Mad Max post-civilization piece about a seemingly half-autistic feral hippie boy and his equally unclad and mentally challenged girlfriend who decide to trek across a rural wasteland to reach the imaginary city of ‘Metropolis,’ which the boy reads about in a vintage *Wonder Woman* comic book. Sort of like a stripped and bare-bones American independent take on Vera Chytilová’s *Fruit of Paradise* (1970) aka *Ovoce stromu rajských jíme*, albeit minus the kaleidoscopic imagery and special effects, as a sort of counter-culture influenced reworking of the story of Adam and Eve, McBride’s film seems like it was actually made for a post-apocalyptic population, as a superlatively slow-moving flick that will surely put to sleep and/or severely irritate most ADD-addled contemporary audiences. Indeed, set in a world where broken televisions, horses, comic books, and outmoded sex technique manuals are quite intriguing to the borderline infantile protagonists, who have never seen such things before, *Glen and Randa* is a sort of subtle yet paradoxically overemphasized reminder how tainted modern humans have become. A sort of post-Christian pagan parable as co-penned by talented novelist/screenwriter Rudy Wurlitzer (*Two-Lane Blacktop*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, *Walker*), McBride’s celluloid second genesis is probably the most benign and pure of spirit X-rated films ever made. Certainly a work of its zeitgeist such that the director has confessed that he was high at least half the time he made it, *Glen and Randa* seems like the more bitter than sweet results of what might have happened had the hippies got their decidedly deluded dreams of “simpler times” and “greater self-reliance.” Despite being listed as one of the top 10 films of 1971 by *Time Magazine*, the film essentially fell into celluloid ash heap of history immediately after it was released due to poor distribution, among other things, thus making for one of the best and strangest kept secrets of both counter-culture and post-apocalyptic cinema. Indeed, a film has to be doing something right if I somehow managed to enjoy it despite the fact that it was made by drugged out

GLEN AND RANDA

hippies for drugged out hippies.

Glen (played by Steve Curry, who is probably best known for being one of the various one-time husbands of buxty Warhol superstar turned TV actress Patti D'Arbanville) is a sort of neo-caveman who lives in a primitive post-apocalyptic world and enjoys the simpler things in life like creating stone tools and tickling his girlfriend Randa's flesh flower with flowers. Despite living in a sub-hunter-gatherer fashion, Glen and his extremely petite girlfriend Randa (played by Shelley Plimpton, who appeared in counter-culture cult classics like the 1960 works Robert Downey Sr.'s Putney Swope and Arthur Penn's Alice's Restaurant) fight like contemporary lovers, as neither of them seems to agree with one another on anything aside from their mutual love of fucking one another. Despite not having electricity or even clothes, the two lovers find much fun, excitement, and adventure in their lives. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, the two find a totaled car in a train and make love in it. Unfortunately, their tree-based carnal pleasure is probably responsible for the pregnancy that will ultimately result in Randa's death. Both Glen and Randa live for figurative 'Forbidden Fruit,' but it is the former's desire for finding a seemingly mystical city where people can apparently fly that will inspire the two to take a deadly trek in a land that they know nothing about. Of course, if their innocence was not already lost beforehand, it is certainly lost after the pilgrimage.

Things ultimately change for Glen and Randa when they meet a nomadic Magician (Gary Goodrow) on a motorcycle that proclaims he is "not here to steal your food or feel your women" or "grab your stuff or treat you rough" but "here to play" and provide "fun and games." The Magician seems like a creepy pedophile with unsavory intentions, but he does provide the "fun and games" as he advertised, including introducing the two lovers to the poetry of English Romantic poet John Keats, as well as a beat-up vintage Wonder Woman comic book that will inspire Glen and his lady love to travel to the city of 'Metropolis' where people can fly. After reciting, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever: Its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness; but still will keep a bower quiet for us, and a sleep full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing," from the beginning of Keats' 1818 poem "Endymion," the Magician states of the poet, "That guy died when he was 25...I guess that's the name of the game." Unfortunately for Randa, she will come to know the name of the game all too well. Aside from Keats and Wonder Woman, the Magician also introduces the lovers and various other rural hobos to The Rolling Stones via a scratched LP of "Time Is On My Side." If something is for sure, Glen and Randa have a lot of time on their hands, or so it seems.

While the Magician, who grew up in the Bronx and was apparently 15 years old when "the whole place was totaled," warns Glen and Randa to forget the city, they decide to ignore his wise words and begin their pilgrimage across the wilderness where they meet a new friend in the form of a horse that they are

initially scared of and mistake for a camel. Indeed, upon bumping into the horse, Glen pathetically pleads to it, "don't hurt us, we just want to go to the city," as if the wild beast can talk. Naturally, as the film will demonstrate, the horse should have more reason to be afraid of the two humans than the other way around. While the two bring canned foods and boxes of matches upon which to survive, they soon run out of their supplies and before they know it they are eating roly pollies that they find crawling in a totaled car near a river bank. Glen also manages to catch and beat a gigantic fish to death on the way. Of course, things eventually become rather desperate when the two reach a rocky mountain, so they are forced to eat their beloved horse, though Glen has to literally force that meat down his terribly delicate girlfriend's throat, as she is disgusted by the whole ordeal of having to devour her new four-legged friend. Unfortunately, Randa also discovers that she is pregnant, so it is probably not a good time for her to be starving in the middle of the wilderness. Luckily, the two lovers eventually reach a scenic beach just in the nick of time where they meet a kindly yet semi-senile old fart named Sidney Miller (played by Woody Chambliss, who appeared in the made-for-TV 1972 cult flick *Gargoyles* and Robert Fuest's 1975 career-capitulating work *The Devil's Rain* featuring Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey and John Travolta), who has not seen another human being in 20 years and gladly gives them a dilapidated house that, in spite of being covered in moss and missing part of its roof, Randa can reside in until she gives birth. Indeed, to the slight chagrin of Sidney, Glen tosses out a skeleton that is lying on the couch in the home and makes himself comfortable. Of course, the anonymous skeleton will not be the last piece of human remains that will grace the meta-humble abode.

Upon talking to Sidney, Glen learns that a city that "used to be a city called Boise" used to exist only 10 miles away from the house but it apparently burned down long ago. Of course, that does not stop Glen from maintaining his almost religious dream of reaching his much idealized imagery utopia of 'Metropolis.' Meanwhile, Randa becomes increasingly lethargic due to her pregnancy and Glen ignorantly complains to her that she should stop acting like she is sick all the time, not realizing just how exhausting gestation can be. Glen also finds some old books around the home and begins developing an idealized view of civilization, so when Randa urinates on the floor of the home in a frolicsome fashion, he freaks out and yells the following while pronouncing about half the words wrong: "We're not animals; we're people. We have to start living like people. We have to be civilized." When Glen finds an old book on various sex techniques, he decides to try them out on Randa, but her pregnancy has made her too incapacitated to derive pleasure from such things. When Glen does finally get her to have sex, he does so in front of horny old geezer Sidney, but their pleasure ends during mid-coitus when Sidney touches the young lady's stomach and she begins to go into labor. While Randa manages to give birth to a healthy

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baby boy, she dies in the process, so Sidney burns her body inside the dilapidated home in a ritualistic fashion, with Glen not quite realizing that his lady love is gone forever. At Glen's demand of reaching Metropolis and against Sidney's better judgment as an old man who has "never been anywhere else before," the young man, old man, and baby get in an old small sailboat and begin to sail to an ostensible utopia. The End.

Interestingly, in a 30+ minute interview featured as an extra feature on the 2009 DVD release of *Glen and Randa* by VCI Entertainment, director Jim McBride explains in an unintentionally humorous fashion how he remembers virtually nothing about production of his minimalistic post-apocalyptic sci-fi flick nor what inspired him to direct the film in the first place. When the interviewer asks McBride if he attempted to use certain metaphors in the film, the director denies it and simply states, "It's just a movie." As to whether the film was supposed to have a message or not, McBride stoically states, "not really." In fact, the director more or less discredits the film, even describing it as "embarrassing," though adding: "I shouldn't be putting down my own movie on camera for the DVD...and I don't mean it as a putdown but it really is something of another time that just seems a little odd in the present. You know, it's useful to look at these ancient artifacts...particularly for a younger generation, because it does reflect something about the times that your standard, pop-culture, Hollywood movies may not have really reflected." Indeed, *Glen and Randa* is, in its essence, gloriously outmoded to the point where some younger viewers might think it is a collection of deleted scenes from Michael Wadleigh's 1970 *Woodstock* documentary and the fact that McBride stated of the production, "I was stoned half the time and I really don't remember it all that well [...] We really were a hippie production" is certainly no surprise, but luckily it lacks the bellbottoms, bad music, and senseless sense of optimism typical of similarly themed works. With its utilization of a real, half-demolished house covered in plants, rusted derailed train cars submerged in water, and moss-covered antique automobiles in trees, *Glen and Randa* also has a sort of mystifying intrigue about it that Werner Herzog might describe as "ecstatic truth." A strangely 'cozy' celluloid odyssey of perennial aimlessness that makes the post-apocalyptic realm seem lonely and banal yet at the same time, paradoxically exciting as it would probably be if most of humanity was really wiped out in a devastating nuclear holocaust, *Glen and Randa* may not be an unsung masterpiece or a super sophisticated analysis on the failing of civilization and humanity as a whole, but it is certainly one of the most idiosyncratic and delightfully 'lighthearted' post-apocalyptic flicks I have ever seen, as a sort of American big brother to the equally eccentric and experimental Spanish post-nuclear-holocaust sci-fi flick *Animales racionales* (1983) aka *Human Animals* directed by Eligio Herrero, albeit minus the darkly humorous dog-on-girl style comic relief. Although somewhat disputable, *Glen and Randa* also has the distinction of being one of the few quasi-pro-doomsday flicks ever

made. Indeed, while the lead characters live like hippie hobos and one of them even dies a painful death that ultimately denies her the opportunity to raise her child, there is a certain purity to their sub-meager existences that almost seems heavenly, which is certainly not something I can say of similarly themed works, which tend to fetishize the modern world, as if the death of Americanization, globalization, technocracy, bureaucracy and other contemporary social ills would be a bad thing.

-Ty E

BREATHLESS
BREATHLESS

Jim McBride (1983)

While I am one of those assumedly many people that hoped that the urban legend that leading man Richard Gere shoved gerbils up his ass for sexual satisfaction was true and find the remaking of popular European arthouse films to be one of Hollywood's more pernicious culture-distorting practices, I cannot deny that I am a recently converted fan of *Breathless* (1983) aka *A Bout de Souffle Made in USA* directed by Jim McBride (*The Big Easy*, *The Wrong Man*). A fairly unwanted and seemingly absurd big budget Hollywood remake of *La Nouvelle Vague* alpha-auteur Jean-Luc Godard's undeniably groundbreaking black-and-white debut feature *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* co-written by François Truffaut, the fairly unloved cinematic might be one of the greatest examples of the film maudit in cinema history but it ultimately proved to be seemingly infinitely more entertaining and romantic to me than its almost unanimously respected French predecessor. Seeing as I found Godard's film to be one of the most decidedly disappointing films I have ever seen in terms of its importance in the context of cinema history, I initially had absolutely nil interest in watching a Hollywoodized *Breathless* remake set in Los Angeles and starring Mr. Gere, but after reading that legendary underground auteur George Kuchar (*Hold Me While I'm Naked*, *The Devil's Cleavage*) modeled his performance as a macho tranny-killing brute in the underrated experimental horror-comedy *Screamplay* (1985) directed by one-time-auteur Rufus Butler Seder after the lead in McBride's remake, I found myself somewhat intrigued and decided to give it a watch, thereupon ultimately discovering a somewhat shockingly engrossing and genuinely romantic love story with sex appeal. Somewhat ironically, Godard's arthouse flick was heavily influenced by less than respectable American B-movies, which is the undeserved status that McBride's remake would eventually obtain as a quasi-softcore lovers-on-the-run flick featuring a super sassy, sensual, and somewhat stupid yet thankfully oftentimes unclad frog babe with an extra erotic accent that probably millions of teenage boys masturbated to while it was aired on cable TV during the 1980s alongside similarly fun filmic trash like Paul Schrader's Gere vehicle *American Gigolo* (1980). Directed by a fellow from a self-described "normal middle-class, half-Jewish, half-Irish upbringing" who first gained attention among cinephiles and cineastes for his experimental docufiction piece *David Holzman's Diary* (1967) starring screenwriter L.M. Kit Carson (who co-penned *Breathless*) as a young Godard-quoting filmmaker and who went on to direct everything from X-rated counterculture-themed arthouse dystopian flicks like *Glen and Randa* (1971) to stupid bawdy Porky's-esque sex-comedies like *Hot Times* (1974) aka *A Hard Day for Archie*, McBride's *Breathless* is a stylish and sexy 'true romance' that is full of love and life and has very little in common with the Godard flick to the point where it would almost be

disingenuous to describe it as a remake. Indeed, thankfully McBride did not pull a Gus van Sant and assemble a sterile and pointless shot-for-shot remake, but instead he completely revamped the entire story and aesthetic to the point that the average American viewer would never suspect that it was a reworking of a French art film that completely changed world cinema and highly influenced the proliferation of the auteur theory in Europe and eventually the United States.

Featuring a tastelessly charming rockabilly-fueled lady's man and super slick car thief that finds inspiration from reading Silver Surfer comics and considers fighting for the body and soul of the woman that he loves to be the most important objective in his life as opposed to a goofy frog petty criminal that lives a pathetic parasitic existence and is more infatuated with an ugly mug like Humphrey Bogart than his blonde dingbat girlfriend like in Godard's flick, McBride's *Breathless* films pays intercultural homage to its predecessor in a couple of ways, most notably in terms of the female lead. Indeed, instead of a boyish American love interest with a blonde dyke haircut like in Godard's flick, the film features a classically feminine brunette French female lead. Of course, what makes the casting even more interesting is that Richard Gere and his 'French' costar Valérie Kaprisky (who is actually of Polish, Argentinean, and Turkish extraction) were actually extremely sexually attracted to one another in real-life and their carnal chemistry is quite obvious onscreen to the point where even when the two are fighting, you can tell that they really want to fuck each other's brains out (in fact, Kaprisky once went so far as to say that the love scenes were not acting, stating, "It was wonderful working with Richard...He [Gere] gives you everything to react to. We were not acting the love scenes. They were half real. You can't say you act only when they say 'Action!'...I think it shows in the movie. If you don't really feel like doing it, it shows."). Not surprisingly, Kaprisky had previously starred in a couple pieces of European cinematic erotica, including alongside swarthy bisexual kraut heartthrob Horst Buchholz in English auteur Robert 'Dr. Phibes' Fuest's fairly disappointing softcore swansong *Aphrodite* (1982) and she was ultimately discovered by *Breathless* producer Martin Erlichman (who is probably best remembered today for the quite dubious achievement of discovering singularly vulgar and repellant Jewess Barbra Streisand) after he came upon bootleg nude photographs of the actress, though it was apparently Gere that actually selected her for the role after flying to Paris and picking the most sensually sound frogette (of course, Kaprisky makes Jean Seberg in Godard's film seem like a bratty little boy by comparison). In fact, in a similar sense to Robert De Niro (who incidentally was apparently interested in playing Gere's role) with Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1996), Gere acted as a sort of secondary auteur on the film, or as director McBride once stated himself, the actor "was a collaborator [and] a co-conspirator" who "worked on the final version of the script, was interested in the art direction, [and] sat in on casting." As someone that typically cannot stand even looking at Gere, let alone seeming

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him portraying a sort of archetypal alpha-male, *Breathless* ultimately managed to do the seemingly impossible by inspiring me to root for the man (or at least his character) just as much I rooted for the ice-axe in Joseph Losey's *The Assassination of Trotsky* (1972).

The story of a self-described “all or nothing” kind of car thief who accidentally kills a cop and plans to flee to Mexico yet has fallen in love with a feisty French college student and thus postpones his self-imposed exile until she agrees to do him the grand honor of being his main babe so that they can commence a happy storybook life together, *Breathless* ultimately not only depicts how society and the world in general oftentimes destroys lovers and their romantic ambitions, but also the perennial relationship plague of female decisiveness as well as how members of the so-called fairer sex oftentimes have the (anti)emotional capacity to betray their true love because he does not fit perfectly into their big idealistic plans for the future. In that sense, the film is even more relevant today than when it was first released over three decades ago, as we now live in an uniquely ungodly age where the rotten fruits of feminism have reached an all-time high in the United States and especially Europe as reflected by defeatist men's rights movements like MGTOW and the hordes of unhappy childless spinsters in their 30s and 40s who have nothing to show for their lives aside from an intrinsically worthless career that contributes virtually nothing to society aside from more bureaucracy and mindless consumerism (indeed, places like Starbucks would go out of business without these women). Indeed, McBride's film might look, feel, and sound like your typical big dumb stupid Hollywood studio film, but it contains a philosophically insightful love story in the tragic spirit of classic works like the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and *Tristan and Iseult* and thus naturally concludes in a less than happy fashion (though the ending is hardly as cynical as the one featured in Godard's film). In that sense, *Breathless* is a pure and unadulterated romance flick for real men who value testicular fortitude and loathe white knight faggots, so-called ‘male feminists,’ hipster homos, autistic tech dorks with yellow fever, and culturally cuckolded wiggers, among other rabble who do not deserve a real woman.

Jesse Lujack (Richard Gere) is a sort proletarian man's man who refuses to live by anyone's rules and sees the lyrics of Jerry Lee Lewis and the personal philosophy of fictional Marvel comic hero The Silver Surfer as a passionate and practical *Weltanschauung* to live by. Indeed, while Jesse highly respects the fact that the Silver Surfer is constantly thinking about his lover even though she is trapped in a totally different galaxy, Lewis' songs provide him with both the dance moves and prole ‘poetry’ he needs to let a lady know how much he loves her. Although not actually depicted in the film, while in Las Vegas, Jesse hooked up with a hot young French architecture student named Monica Poiccard (Valérie Kaprisky of Andrzej Zulawski's *La femme publique* (1984) aka *The Public Woman*) and during their couple days of sharing carnal knowledge with one another, the pro-

tagonist fell in love with her, or so the viewer soon learns at the beginning of *Breathless* after he suavely steals a “Little Baby Porsche” in front of a casino and then begins driving through the desert to make his way to Los Angeles so he can reunited with his beloved and make her his outlaw queen. It is quite apparent that Jesse truly loves Monica because at the very beginning of the film he does not think twice about blowing off a beautiful big bodied blonde that practically throws herself at him. While cruising through the desert, Jesse practices ways to ask Monica to come to Mexico with him, stating, “All right. So, first I go get the money, and then I go ask Monica. I say, ‘Monica, you ever been to Mexico, honey?’ I say—I say, ‘Monica, darling, you coming to Mexico with me? Monica, you’re coming to Mexico with me!’ Me and Monica. ‘Cause I’m gonna tell you how it’s gonna be. Mon-a, Monica and me. Me and Monica. Yeah, me and Monica go to Mexico.” After ironically declaring, “I know what we need. We need the killer” in regard to listening to a Jerry Lee Lewis song, Jesse discovers a handgun in the glove compartment of the stolen car that will soon get him into some serious trouble in a way that might destroy all his big plans. When Jesse proceeds to drive like a jackass through the desert to impress some young sluts in another car, he soon finds a police car trying to pull him over, so he naturally decides to get away since he’s driving a stolen automobile. Unfortunately, after opting to drive through a roadblock in an attempt to outrun the cop, Jesse crashes his car and in the process causes it to get stuck in a ditch. When the officer finally catches up to him and threatens him by yelling things to him like, “Get away from the car, I’ll blow you away!,” Jesse ‘accidentally’ ends up shooting and killing the cop. Of course, it is not long until the media begins dubbing Jesse the “I-15 Killer” and cops begin hunting for him everywhere, so he must act quick to get both money and Monica so that he can establish a little piece of paradise somewhere south of the border where most sane gringos would never dare go.

As a man that is wholly willing to risk his life for love, Jesse naturally refuses to leave without Monica, even when she routinely acts like a fiercely frigid cunt when he comes to see her. Indeed, when Jesse decides to surprise Monica by randomly showing up at her university, she is hardly happy but instead bitches like a cold witch on the rag who would rather see him dead. To Monica’s credit, Jesse shows up in the middle of a college exam where Monica is showing a small model of a building that she has designed and begins both verbally and physically assaulting her seemingly sapless teachers while pretending to be a janitor, so it is only natural that she would be mad at the protagonist, but not really for the reasons that the viewer initially suspects. Indeed, like most modern women, Monica is a self-absorbed social-climber who is geared towards engaging in hypergamy and who seems more interested in having a successful career than having children and a family with the man she loves as demonstrated by the fact that she is fucking her dorky and impotent architect professor Paul (William Tepper,

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who played the lead in Jack Nicholson's underrated X-rated quasi-arthouse debut *Drive, He Said* (1971)), who is the complete opposite of wild gentleman Jesse as a groveling beta-bitch academic who seems like he would auto-ejaculate in his pants if a woman merely touched his leg. Apparently, Monica left Jesse in the middle of the night during their lurid love affair in Las Vegas, thus hinting that she is afraid of love and emotional commitment, so it is no surprise that she gets scared when Jesse passionately declares to her, "...I'm desperate for you, Monica. You know what it's like blasting along the highway, going like ninety, maybe a hundred miles an hour? All of a sudden there's this dip in the road. It likes to suck your guts out. Your breath is gone. That's me around you, sugar. That's me. BREATHLESS." In fact, Monica admits so much when she responds to Jesse's remarks by practically crying, "You scare me, Jesse. You can't just burst into a person's life and explode it all up like this [sighs] Las Vegas was a holiday. This is my life." Of course, Jesse is determined to make himself the most important part of her life, even if he is a petty con turned fugitive who is wanted for the murder of a police officer.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles, Jesse wastes no time in breaking into Monica's apartment building by pretending to be a Mexican pool boy and then making himself at home in her flat after picking the lock on her front-door. When Jesse randomly discovers a photograph of Monica and her professor Paul at Disney world while snooping around his lover's apartment, he tears the romantically hapless teacher out of the photo while calling him a "smuck" and then pockets the pic for himself. Despite the fact that she was willing to have sex with him when they were total strangers, Monica constantly cock-blocks Jesse when he initially arrives in LA because she seems to want to continue her phony love affair with Paul so that she can further her academic career and does not want to emotionally complicate things. Indeed, at one point, Jesse literally asks Monica, "Why are you so afraid to sleep with me again?" and she replies "Because you scare me. I don't know what you want from me," thus revealing that she is denial that one can actually have a romance with another person that is based purely on love and not merely personal gain. Of course, Jesse reveals to Monica the error of her ways when he remarks to her, "you're like one of those girls who'll fuck everybody in the whole world...except the guy who loves her." Like with a lot of women, it is ultimately the small sentimental things that Jesse does for her that makes Monica realize that he truly loves her. Indeed, when Jesse randomly robs a tranny that is taking a dump in a stall in a Hispanic bar restroom, he discovers a blinking light-up heart necklace in the shemale's purse and gives it to Monica, who cherishes the completely childish piece of jewelry to the point that she wears it all the time, even though it looks quite preposterous on such a sexually mature woman.

When Monica quotes her favorite author William Faulkner's line, "Between grief and nothing, I will take grief," and asks Jesse which one he would choose if

he had a choice, the protagonist stoically replies “nothing” because, as he extra confidently states, “Like I told you, baby, all or nothing with me.” Although Monica, who certainly has a melancholic essence about her, prefers “grief” over “nothing,” she seems impressed with Jesse’s reply as demonstrated by the fact that she proceeds to make love to him, but her professor Paul interrupts by leaving a would-be-flirty message on the heroine’s answering machine that pisses the protagonist off. Quite irked at the fact that his lady love is sexually servicing an obnoxious academic dork who is probably too big of a pansy to even penetrate a puss, Jesse pushes Monica away, unplugs the answering machine, and then throws it in another room while the heroine, who is completely naked, opts to get out of the awkward situation by going into the bathroom and taking a shower. While Monica is showering, Jesse’s anxiety and depression is only worsened when he sees a special news report on TV about how he is a fugitive cop-killer and how the police are currently leading a manhunt to find him, but luckily the protagonist manages to get out of his depression by simply singing Elvis lyrics. Indeed, Jesse then proceeds to invade the bathroom and loudly sing to his beloved while simultaneously stripping his clothes, “I can’t walk out... Because I love you too much baby. Why can’t you see what you’re doing to me when you don’t believe a word I say? We can’t go on together with suspicious minds and we can’t build our dreams on suspicious minds,” which are words that certainly parallel the dubious circumstances of their relationship. Monica is certainly delighted with the protagonist’s solo performance, as Jesse proceeds to penetrate her in the shower and then the two conclude their carnal session in the bedroom. When Monica gets out of bed to get dressed, Jesse passionately states to her without the slightest hint of irony, “Hey. Don’t take a shower. I want us to smell like we’ve been fucking,” which is a sentiment that anyone that has fallen in love can identify with. From there, Jesse begins describing to Monica about the mythos of the Silver Surfer and how the rather romantic superhero is always thinking about his girlfriend despite the fact that the two lovers are, “trapped on two different galaxies.” Jesse’s romantic remarks about the Silver Surfer incite a deep emotional reaction in Monica as she then proceeds to confess to the protagonist in regard to her extremely confused and stereotypical female worries, “I’m afraid because I’d like you to love me. And then – I don’t know. I wish you wouldn’t love me. You don’t fit into my plan for my life.” Indeed, assumedly brainwashed by a lifetime’s worth of frog style feminist brainwashing, Monica is highly idealistic about establishing a career as a successful architect even though her intelligence and fashion sense hints that she does not even have the artistic prowess to compete with a third rate queer fashion designer, let alone design fancy and innovative buildings. When Monica confesses to Jesse that she might be pregnant, he seems shocked at first but soon gets very happy, at least until his lady love abruptly declares, “Why don’t you understand me, Jesse? I have to think about the future,” to which he fittingly replies, “The future is bullshit,”

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thus causing her to act out like a petulant child who is pissed because her daddy will not buy her a pony. Indeed, Jesse might be a man with nothing to lose, but his indestructible love for Monica is not something the female protagonist can simply purchase after she has become a successful architect, hence her mixed emotions.

When Jesse drops off Monica to meet with a famous French architect named Dr. Boudreaux (played by Ukrainian-born French producer designer and director Eugène Lourié, who got his start working with Jean Renoir and later went on to directed Hollywood sci-fi flicks like *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953)), he is identified as the fugitive cop-killer by an old Jewish man that is sitting in front of the ancient Mishkon Tephilo Synagogue located where Venice meets Santa Monica in West LA, but luckily he manages to get away and then goes to a junkyard to sell a stolen convertible to an obscenely sleazy Hebraic con named Birnbaum (played by Art Metrano of *Police Academy 2* (1985) and *Police Academy 3* (1985), who incidentally currently has a one-man comedy tour called "Jews Don't Belong On Ladders...An Accidental Comedy"). Birnbaum dresses like a dipsomaniac slob that jerks off to Beach Boys music videos and grotesquely sucks on a Popsicle like it is a cock while he is conducting business with Jesse, who soon realizes that he is doing business with an unscrupulous scumbag. To make a long story short, Jesse beats and robs Birnbaum and his Mexican underling after the gutter grade kosher conman refuses to pay him for the convertible that he stole him by threatening to call the cops on him since he is a fugitive. Meanwhile, Monica is harassed by two completely humorless and absurdly anally retentive cops who threaten to arrest her if she does not tell them where Jesse is, so she lies to them and tells them he is headed to San Francisco. When Jesse subsequently happens upon one of the cops harassing Monica, he immediately steals a car, runs over the officer, and then coerces his lady love into getting into the automobile, thus ushering in their sex-filled outlaw road trip.

Considering she is actively evading the police while on the run with a fugitive cop-killer and thus has probably already completely ruined both her academic career and personal life, among other things, one would assume that Monica has finally become completely dedicated to Jesse and is happy to live an outlaw lifestyle and start a family with her bad boy toy in rural Mexico, but of course it is only a matter of time before her stereotypical female anxiety comes into play and threatens to completely ruin everything, most especially the man she loves most. When she and Jesse manage to escape from a virtual army of armed cops that raid an underground New Wave club, Monica seems to practically have an orgasm as a result of the experience even though she badly cuts her hand in the process. In fact, the two lovers subsequently seek shelter in an antiquated movie theater that is screening *Gun Crazy* (1950) aka *Deadly Is the Female* directed by Joseph H. Lewis and starring Peggy Cummins and John Dall and while the movie is playing they make love with one another even though the screening

room is full of people. While making passionate love, Monica quotes a line from the film where lead actress Cummins declares, "I don't want to be afraid of life or anything else," but of course fear and anxiety will eventually get the best of her. After wantonly watching the movie, Jesse lets Monica pick out a car to steal, so she chooses a red El Dorado convertible and then the two head to a place called 'The Pines,' which is at the ruins of "famous crazy fucker" Errol Flynn's mansion, for the night until they can meet the protagonist's suave Guido criminal friend Tony Berrutti (Garry Goodrow) the next morning to get money so that they can finally make their way to Mexico. That night while parked at the "Honeymoon Suite" (aka an old swimming pool) of the Pines, Monica unwittingly reveals that she is having second thoughts about going with Jesse to Mexico by asking her beau a series of questions about what they will do for money in the future. Of course, when Jesse acts somewhat aggravated with Monica the next morning when she attempts to flirt with him while he is tuning up the El Dorado, the female heroine begins to panic.

When Monica discovers that the heart necklace that Jesse gave her is cracked after she drops it on the ground, she completely succumbs to female superstition and sees it as a serious sign that their relationship is ruined. Ultimately, Monica betrays Jesse by calling the cops from a payphone after the protagonist makes the stupid mistake of telling her to go to a nearby convenience store to buy imperative things like, "a carton of milk, some ding dongs, [and a] newspaper." After betraying her beau, Monica then goes back to him and attempts to rationalize her treachery by stating to him in a fairly hysterical fashion, "I don't wanna love you. I don't want to go with you. Just now when I went down the hill, I wanted to keep going on. I was not gonna come back. I was not going to come back! But I knew you would come after me, and I knew you wouldn't stop coming after me [...] That's why I called the polices...so that you would have to go." Of course, Jesse refuses to leave and instead goes to meet Berrutti as planned to get the money, but the only thing that his friend, who is naturally afraid of getting busted by the cops, gives him is a handgun. Just as Berrutti abruptly drives away and Jesse tosses the gun on the ground, a number of police cars show up and a cop demands that the protagonist put his hands in the air. While Jesse initially follows the cop's orders and raises his arms air, he soon begins dancing and singing the lyrics from the eponymous Jerry Lee Lewis song, "If you're gonna love me, lover please don't tease. If I can hold you, honey let me squeeze" while lovingly staring at Monica. Naturally, Monica is totally moved by Jesse's inordinately romantic performance and proceeds to run up to him while crying, "Jesse! I love you, Jesse!" thus inspiring the protagonist to grab the gun and point it at the cops in a true demonstration that he is really an "all or nothing" kind of guy. One can only assume that the cops unleash a storm of bullets on Jesse after he puts his gun on them, but the viewer never finds out as *Breathless* concludes with a still shot of the protagonist aiming his weapon at the police in what

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is indubitably auteur McBride's (pseudo)Godardian equivalent to a Hollywood ending.

While one of the main reasons I loathe alpha-fan-boy filmmaker Quentin Tarantino is because I think that he has absolutely horrendous taste in cinema despite being such an obsessive cinephile, I can at least respect him to a marginal degree for acknowledging that McBride's *Breathless* is an underrated classic of sorts. In fact, Tarantino is such a huge fan of the film that he not only featured a poster of it in his partially lost black-and-white debut film *My Best Friend's Birthday* (1987), but also included a Silver Surfer poster in *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) in tribute to protagonist Jesse's love of the superhero. Of course, the script Tarantino penned for *True Romance* (1993) was also obviously heavily influenced by *Breathless*. Additionally, both Serbian auteur Emir Kusturica's *Time of the Gypsies* (1988) aka *Dom za vesanje* and avant-garde auteur Thom Andersen's experimental documentary *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003) pay tribute to the flick, with the latter cinematic work featuring excerpts of McBride's film spliced in throughout. Speaking of Andersen's film, *Breathless* features the most ambitious use of Los Angeles and its landscapes that I have ever seen in a film aside from sadomasochistic experimental gay pornographer Fred Halsted's masterpiece *LA Plays Itself* (1972), which portrays the city as a sort of concrete jungle that is being perpetually being consumed by industrialization. Indeed, watching the LA depicted in big budget Hollywood blockbusters oftentimes makes me feel completely nauseated due to the seeming outstanding superficiality and singular soullessness of the city in these films, yet *Breathless* gives the West Coast metropolis a sort of truly magical feel that has not been seen since the great cinematic works of Hollywood's Golden Age. Certainly McBride's film could not be any further away from Godard's static and fairly prosaic film in terms of both spirit and aesthetics. Notably, when interviewed by *Film Comment* in 2013 about his film and its relation to Godard's original work, auteur McBride remarked, "I would call it an exploitation of the Godard movie [laughs]. Look, I was a huge fan of the original film. If it was only one thing, then *Breathless* was the thing that made me want to make movies. But in reality, the chance to make a remake of this film that I loved so much came up rather accidentally, and once it was going to actually happen it seemed to me ludicrous. I felt terribly embarrassed! I was really just taking advantage of an opportunity that gave me a chance to direct a movie. Of course, as Kit Carson and I were writing it, it grew into its own thing [...] by the end it was something very different from the original, for better or worse." Arguably, if *Breathless* was not a remake of a classic French arthouse film, it would probably be more revered and respected today instead of simply being regarded as a curious footnote of cinema history.

If *Breathless* is a shameless Hollywoodization of Godard's film, contemporary French auteur Bruno Dumont's fairly brutal arthouse horror flick *Twenty-nine Palms* (2003) seems almost like a ruthless rape and murder of McBride's

film, as if the frog auteur was committing a sort of cinematic revenge against a mainstream American filmmaker who dared to defile one of his nation's most respected films. Indeed, while I have no clue if Dumont had the Gere vehicle in mind when he created his film, I could not help but notice the similarities between it and McBride's flick in terms of its depiction of a sex-heavy relationship between a stupid American philistine who drives fancy cars and his strikingly beautiful yet emotionally erratic French girlfriend. Quite unlike McBride's film, the male protagonist of *Twentynine Palms* is a conniving weakling and capitalist whore who has no real love for his girlfriend and seems to only see her as nothing more than an imported carnal delicacy that he goes to a great pains to erotically exploit while denying her true love and affection, among other things. While largely seen as big budget erotic kitsch nowadays, *Breathless* is, at least in my less than humble opinion, a shockingly enthralling work that probably can be regarded to heterosexual males what *Gone with the Wind* (1939) has been to countless generations of American women, as a truly epic romance flick with passion and pathos that at least semi-successfully expresses the emotional ups and downs of a great romance relationship in 100-minutes.

In its depiction of a man risking everything and putting all his time and energy into a romance that seems completely impractical and doomed to fail, *Breathless* features a scenario that many men who have fallen in love can completely relate to, which certainly cannot be said of Woody Allen flicks and the countless other Hollywood films where a neurotic Hebraic wuss is all lovelorn over a statuesque Shiksa that could probably kick his ass. Not surprisingly, McBride later went on to direct a Jerry Lee Lewis biopic entitled *Great Balls of Fire!* (1989) starring Dennis Quaid and Winona Ryder, but his filmmaking career essentially fizzled out after that and he has spent most of his career since the early 1990s directing TV movies and episodes for TV shows ranging from *The Wonder Years* (1990-1991) to *Six Feet Under* (2001). Directed by a man whose legendary debut David Holzman's *Diary* was shot under the Godardian cinephile philosophy that "cinema is truth twenty-four times per second," *Breathless* is probably my all-time favorite 'sellout' film an underground auteur turned Hollywood hack, even though I only saw it for the first time about two weeks ago. Showing no evidence that it was directed by a man that once was part of the underground (though the comic book sequences did remind me of Paul Morrissey's obscure pre-Warhol short *The Origin of Captain America* (1965)), McBride's shamelessly Hollywood-esque flick might not be a masterpiece but it is a quintessentially American movie in the best sort of way a flagrantly flashy, stupidly entertaining, and seductively stylish work that features an obscenely arrogant and hopelessly naive outlaw go-getter who is symbolic of the sort of people that once made American a great place. If there is anything you can learn from *Breathless* aside from that there is no way that a man that manhandles a hot French chick like Gere does in the film could have a fetish for shoving furry

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rodents up his manhole, it is that it is better to risk everything for love than to waste your most fertile and sexually virile years going to college so that you can eventually become a cold cunt career or bourgeois automaton.

-Ty E

BREATHLESS

Jim McBride (1983)

I finally got through finishing Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*. I originally attempted to watch the film a couple years ago and immediately felt disgusted with myself for actually watching 40 minutes into it. I didn't remember much of *Breathless* and for good reason. *Breathless* is as soulless as the existentialist world view that inspired it.

Breathless obviously inspired many of the more recent "auteurs" directors. I am sure Richard Linklater, Jim Jarmusch, and Quentin Tarantino were schooled with it. Keep in mind I do like a couple films from each of these directors (including Godard). Godard helped to innovate the horribly contrived philosophical conversations new "Independent" directors consider the highest expression of art. I felt embarrassed to be human after watching Richard Linklater's *Before Sunset* and *Before Sunrise*. Are honkies really that lame?

"Each cigarette is one step closer to death" I honestly can't think of one redeeming characteristic of *Breathless*. When French "badass" cop killer Michel finally is forced into closing his mouth via bullet, I did feel somewhat refreshed. But of course this wasn't enough to save *Breathless*. I'm not surprised that Michel's character was based on Humphrey Bogart. My hatred for this man cannot be accurately articulated.

Breathless appeals to the most pretentious of Marxist film fans. The reason for this is there's nothing in it to complain about. No racism, No sexism, No ageism, and No sign of life. Contrived sunglasses, half burnt cigarettes in mouths, and fancy hats make for the ideal COOL cosmopolitan criminal. But really, Michel seems more like the victim of a gang raping in Washington D.C.

"My sunglasses hide the inconceivable pain that my eyes reveal" If you want to watch a film that features boring dialog about questions in life that are somehow supposed to create the essence of their lives than *Breathless* is the film for you. Novelty intellectualism has been trendy for a while so this "masterpiece" hasn't tarnished. *Contempt* is my favorite film from Godard and the title sums up my feelings for the New Wave auteur. "I am the truest of auteurs. My films are my soul on celluloid." There's no doubt in my mind that Jean-Luc Godard truly feels cinema is dead. *Breathless* perfectly compliments that theory.

-Ty E

DEADBEAT AT DAWN
DEADBEAT AT DAWN

Jim Van Bebber (1988)

Deadbeat at Dawn is the first feature length film by director Jim Van Bebber. It would take the burnout genius almost another two decades to finish his second feature The Manson Family. Deadbeat at Dawn stars Van Bebber as Goose, gang leader of "The Ravens" who decides to quit his life of crime due to his love for his girlfriend. Sadly, Goose's girlfriend is murdered by members of rival gang "The Spiders." A psycho drug addict by the name of Bonecrusher even rips out Goose's girlfriend's intestines, which reminded him of "snakes."

I'll be honest. I think most action, kung-fu, and related films completely blow. Deadbeat at Dawn really has nothing to do with those films. The film is a sort of fucked avant garde action trash film which constantly resonates unexpected poetry both visually and lyrically. Van Bebber claims that he was inspired by everyone from Bruce Lee to Chuck Norris. I have even more respect for the film after knowing Van Bebber's unpretentious influences. All of his films have the distinctive Van Bebber auteur traits that border between artistic insanity and comedy.

Jim Van Bebber also had the genius idea of having a gang fight sequence take place in a graveyard. As soon as I saw the first graveyard scene in Deadbeat at Dawn, I knew that the film was a masterpiece. All of the other film's settings also compliment Deadbeat at Dawn's feeling of urban decay and over all American city failure. Jim Van Bebber performing his own stunts within this urban decay gives me the feeling that he's an individual that really knows how to get around in the city. Heads rolling down the road and throats getting ripped out also help to accentuate the overall urban shithole.

Goose's Dad is a psycho Vietnam War veteran that has both an opiate problem and a schizophrenia problem. He believes that Goose has gone over to the enemy's side and demands money so he can shoot it in his toes. Goose eventually ditches his deadbeat Dad and joins "The Ravens" again. He eventually starts wasting members of the "The Spiders" in a rage of revenge for both his girl and former gang members.

Deadbeat at Dawn is mandatory viewing for any serious fan of the horror, exploitation, or action film. The film makes me want to hunt down Jim Van Bebber and take away his bong so he will be more proactive about filmmaking. He dropped out of college and used his student loan money to make Deadbeat at Dawn. It would be good to see Van Bebber have the same type of ambition now with his filmmaking. Jim Van Bebber is without doubt one of the greatest filmmakers of the American underground. Deadbeat at Dawn is a film I always go back to.

-Ty E

MY SWEET SATAN

Jim Van Bebber (1994)

Jim van Bebber's short film *My Sweet Satan* is truly an American classic. The short centers a Satan worshipping drug dealer who kills one of his friends for stealing his hard earned cash. *My Sweet Satan* may also be funnier than all of the shorts Charlie Chaplin ever produced. Jim van Bebber is the darkest stoner director to ever live. He even took up a job at Wendy's to finish his masterpiece *The Manson Family*. *My Sweet Satan* manages to contain all of van Bebber's auteur signatures in one short but SWEET joyride. Satan approves!

I assume that Jim van Bebber was able to cast *My Sweet Satan* using his stoner friends. Despite its warped nature, the short has a certain realism that you could find only at a Black Sabbath reunion concert. The young mullet sporting man that gets his head smashed in looked like he was picked up at a trailer park cul-de-sac and given a 12 pack of Coors light to do the film. I would like to believe that the whole cast and crew of the film was intoxicated during its production.

Smoking bowls in graveyards in tribute to Satan is the ideal life for any American. The inability to do this is probably what really prompts *My Sweet Satan*'s protagonist Ricky to hang himself in a prison cell. Jim van Bebber stars as the "Acid King" Satan worshiper. Before killing the unholy thief, van Bebber forces him to feed his shirt to the flames of Satan. Obviously Satan doesn't approve of this ritualistic act as the young mullet head is stripped naked and has his head stomped in.

Real Life Satan Worshiper Ricky Kasso

My Sweet Satan is based on the true events of Ricky "Acid King" Kasso who killed his friend Gary and later killed himself in jail. Jim van Bebber obviously could care less about Kasso as the short proves. Although coming out hilarious, I still don't know the van Bebber's emotional intent with *My Sweet Satan*. Drugs can do a lot of numbing.

It's a shame that the low budget short *My Sweet Satan* hasn't gotten the exposure that it deserves. Short films have always been neglected due to their inability to be properly marketed and seen by audiences. *My Sweet Satan* would great in a short film marathon featuring Luis Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou*, Maya Deren's *Meshes in the Afternoon*, Rozz Williams *Pig*, and a couple Guy Maddin shorts. Jim van Bebber needs to start directing again.

-Ty E

THE MANSON FAMILY
THE MANSON FAMILY

Jim Van Bebber (1997)

Very few films fit into a category all alone. Jim Van Bebber's *The Manson Family* is one of those oh so rare films. Is *The Manson Family* a docudrama meant to scare the shit out of audiences so they realize the gruesomeness and depravity of the slaughters committed by "the family?" Or is *The Manson Family* a mockumentary about the brainwashed idiocy that Charles Manson indoctrinated his loyal followers with? Or even more to the point, is *The Manson Family* a film to have fun to and watch while stoned on weed and/or intoxicated on alcohol? In my humble opinion, I believe the film to be whatever you make of it. It seems that director Jim Van Bebber does not have any serious or concrete ideas as to why he made this cinematic masterpiece of Americana mayhem. Thankfully, *The Manson Family* was actually finished after about 15 years of production.

Jim Van Bebber makes no lie that real sex and drugs went down during the filming of *The Manson Family*. While watching the film, it is apparent real-life hedonism was to the realist advantage of the film. Despite how silly and goofy some of the family members seem in the film, I certainly felt that the actors lent a certain authenticity that most films about "true crime" lack. *The Manson Family* also has a psychedelic feeling that allows the viewer to become pseudo-disenchanted with reality and in tune with the nonsensical world of *The Manson Family*. I once screened the film for a bunch of young drunk rednecks and they became so agitated with the film that they aggressively made me turn it off. It was apparent that while watching *The Manson Family*, that these rednecks saw something about themselves they didn't like. Keep in mind that these young men were both drunk and stoned.

Of course, like virtually every other film ever made, *The Manson Family* has its flaws. The most glaring being the added subplot of contemporary Manson fans and their unnatural obsession with Sex, Drugs, and "Rock N Roll." Even many of the actors that played *The Manson Family* members were disappointed with this added group of bottom feeding losers. The subplot of contemporary Manson fans conspiring to kill a "piggy producer" just comes off as a stupid (and hopefully unintended) message about Manson's negative influence on American young adults. If I wanted to find about that, I would read Vincent Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter*. I figure that Jim Van Bebber added the new and unimproved footage so that *The Manson Family* would be at a longer running time.

I believe that *The Manson Family* is Jim Van Bebber's masterpiece. Honestly, I don't see the guy topping this film. Heck, I don't know if I can even see Jim Van Bebber completing another feature length film. When I watch Van Bebber's exciting and very unconventional action-packed film *Deadbeat at Dawn*, I see a promising director that looks like he will eventually make headlines in the future. Sadly, however it seems that drugs and alcohol have consumed too much of Jim

Van Bebber's life for him to put his "all" into filmmaking. Honestly, after each time watching The Manson Family, it does not surprise me that it took two decades for Jim Van Bebber to complete two modest budget (but superb) films. Maybe if we take a bowl hit in tribute to Satan, that might change things?

-Ty E

GATOR GREEN
GATOR GREEN

Jim Van Bebber (2013)

Leave it up to underground artsploitation auteur Jim Van Bebber (*Deadbeat at Dawn*, *The Manson Family*) to direct a film featuring a deranged drunken Vietnam War vet that refers to his pet alligators as “gooks” while feeding them the dismembered remains of an ex-Marine who committed the sin of seeing no action during the war. Indeed, such is the sickly sweet and sometimes strangely hypnotic scenario that plays out in the alcohol-addled outlaw auteur’s latest but unfortunately not greatest celluloid offering *Gator Green* (2013) starring Van Bebber himself in the lead role as a rather rowdy and always ruthless renegade redneck bar owner with a psychopathic sense of humor that moonlights as the leader of a sort of a killer cult made up of disgruntled war vets that spend their free time feeding pussy hippies and other (sub)human rabble to bloodthirsty alligators. Like the angrier, drunker, and more intemperately nihilistic bastard brood of Sam Peckinpah on acid, Van Bebber is a rare modern American filmmaker with big balls and an untamable spirit that is quite apparent in every single one of his films, including the hyper-kitschy horror fetish music videos that he directed for the death metal group *Necrophagia*. Unfortunately for cult horror cinephiles everywhere, Van Bebber also happens to be one of the most seemingly accursed and, in turn, uniquely unprolific auteur filmmakers of his era as a man who has only managed to complete two feature films and a handful of shorts over the course of over three decades despite conceiving countless different projects over this period of time. For example, it took Van Bebber nearly two decades to complete his modern cult classic *The Manson Family* (2003), which the director partly funded by regularly donating blood as well as working at the drive-thru window at a Wendy’s fast food restaurant. Indeed, aside from the countless projects that never left the pre-production stage (including a young Al Capone flick, which Dark Sky Films ultimately cancelled the funding for), Van Bebber has released a couple films that are essentially unfinished works, including the 4-minute *Chunk Blower* trailer (which was shot in 1990 on 35mm and was intended as a promo to inspire a potential investor to contribute \$1 million dollars to the rather ambitious slasher production) and the ultra-violent Gein-esque 15-minute serial killer piece *Roadkill: The Last Days of John Martin* (1994). Unfortunately, the 15-minute short *Gator Green*, which was shot on 16mm and thankfully does not feature any digital special effects, is more or less what survives of another prematurely aborted Van Bebber feature. A promotional short that was Kickstarter-funded and apparently adapted from a sequence from the middle of Van Bebber’s feature-length script, the film certainly wets one’s lips with the promise of a gorgeously grotesque neo-psychedelic white trash monster flick of the pleasantly politically correct sort, thus it is almost disheartening watching the flick and realizing that it will most likely never be

created. Like Tobe Hooper's much maligned third feature *Eaten Alive* (1976) meets Buddy Giovinazzo's aberrant art-shocker *Combat Shock* (1984) with a tinge of Luis Buñuel's *The Young One* (1960) aka *La Joven*, *Gator Green* was partly inspired by real-life Texas serial killer Joe "The Alligator Man" Ball who, like the lead character portrayed by Van Bebber, was a whacked out war vet that owned a bar and purportedly fed women to his beloved pet alligators. Although a work that clearly suffers from being a mere random fragment of a projected full-length feature, Van Bebber's film ultimately manages to effortlessly capture the neo-retro exploitation aesthetic and essence that both Tarantino and Rodriguez tried in vain to channel with their decidedly dumb double-feature *Grindhouse* (2007). Set in 1973, *Gator Green* is much like Van Bebber's arguable magnum opus *The Manson Family* (2003) in that it manages to bleed and cum the particular zeitgeist it depicts without seeming like the misguided masturbatory fantasy of an autistic fan-boy who wants to pay hyper-conscious to some totally worthless 1970s exploitation flick that no one cares about.

Beginning with a pleasantly politically incorrect title sequence that includes real stock footage of captured Vietcong gooks and multicultural American GIs, the film then features the following prologue: "Captain Jack Andrew has completed the construction of his much-ballyhooed tavern, 'The Gator Hooch'. Jack has hired his dabbled assistant door gunners from the Vietnam war, Harry Moore and Bobby Mackinaw. The three combat veterans have all committed atrocities in the war and have an unholy empathy for each." After the prologue, the film cuts to an outdoor shot of a goofy alligator-shaped bar superimposed with a title reading, "Sunday, June 17, 4:15 AM." Naturally, in the next shot, the viewer is taken inside the bar where discernibly deranged antihero Captain Jack Andrew (Jim Van Bebber) berates his old used up slut barmaid Lynette Taylor (Maureen Allisse) for doing nothing but "sittin' around here" and "drinking all of my booze." At the command of Captain Jack's wheelchair-bound comrade Bobby 'Bob' Mackinaw (Rogan Russell Marshall)—a crazed cripple with an impenetrable psycho stare and overall comically creepy persona due to the fact that he speaks through an electrolarynx—bar slut Lynette calls her similarly used up, chubby, and slutty looking daughter Chi Chi (Betanya Grant), who is the girlfriend of a preposterously arrogant longhaired blond hippie dope dealer named Hank Williams (played by Scott Gabbey, who also appears in *American Guinea Pig: Bouquet of Guts and Gore* (2014), which was shot by Van Bebber and directed by *Gator Green* co-producer/Unearthed Films owner Stephen Biro). Lynette sets up a drug deal between Captain Jack and Hank for four lids of weed that is scheduled to take place at the bar around noon the next day. Unbeknownst to Hank and his perennially glazed girlfriend, Captain Jack is more interested in procuring fresh human-grade gator meat than cheap Mexican marijuana.

It is quite obvious that Captain Jack has no plans to actually carry out the

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drug deal when the bar owner's black pimp comrade Harry Moore (portrayed a white dude named Troy Grant, who hilariously sports feces-colored blackface makeup) puts an electric meat cutter to Lynette's throat shortly after she gets off the phone with her daughter Chi Chi. Additionally, Captain Jack violently attacks and drowns his personal bar bitch Steve Buckner (co-producer Biro), who the antihero deeply resents because he is an ex-marine that never saw real action in the Vietnam War. As the viewer later learns, Steve is actually a buddy of Hank and the drug deal would probably not even be going on were it not for their somewhat unfortunate friendship. The next morning, Captain Jack strips Steve's corpse naked, dismembers the body like a dead pig with a machete, and then feeds his fatty body parts to his pet alligators. Rather fittingly, about two dozen vultures watch on while perching on a dead tree as Captain Jack turns fat boy Steve into low-quality gator meat. While happily throwing Steve's dismembered limbs to the gators, Captain Jack says to his pernicious pets while maintaining an expression of sadistic glee, "Eat your Gook food" and "American flesh...your gook food," thus demonstrating the savagely sadistic antihero's perturbing degree of posttraumatic stress as a result of the multicultural horrors he experienced during the Vietnam War. Of course, Captain Jack is just warming up for campaign of carnivalesque cracker carnage that he will carry out later that day when hippie Hank and his homely hoe Chi Chi finally arrive.

Captain Jack may be a murderously malicious maniac that almost seems to derive sexual satisfaction from murdering and dismembering people, especially when his green gator pals are involved, but he is also a rather refreshing no bull-shit man's man who hates hippies and other pussies and even has portraits of masculine Hollywood figures like Humphrey Bogart, Lee Marvin, and Marlon Brando hanging on the walls of his bar. Naturally, a prissy pot-peddling hippie bitch like Hank will ultimately prove to be rather grating to Jack's sensitive psyche. When Hank and Chi Chi, who made the mistake of taking LSD before the drug deal, arrive at the bar in an exceedingly effeminate baby blue Volkswagen Beetle, they immediately become uneasy upon being less than warmly greeted by Captain Jack and his mostly silent pal Bob, especially since their comrade Steve is nowhere to be found. After serving the dildo dope-dealer and his lady friend some 'Gator Green' wine in shot glasses that was supposedly fermented with snake poison, Hank acts quite rude and complains that he wants to get the drug deal over with because he and his girlfriend supposedly have somewhere else to be. Of course, Hank's lack of manners enrages Jack, so he naturally decides to fuck with the seemingly pathologically passive-aggressive hippie by asking him, "What's your fucking problem, man? [...] Did you serve your country in 'Nam?" Of course, being an effete bohemian bitch that would probably cry hysterically if he got a small stain on his fancy proto-metrosexual cowboy outfit, Hank managed to dodge the draft as a result of supposedly receiving a 4-F classification, which was primarily given to people with muscular and bone malformations,

hearing and circulatory ailments, mental problems, hernias, and certain STDs. Indeed, like the insufferably whiny weasel scumbag that he is, Hank goes to great pains to dubiously explain that he has advanced Lateral epicondylitis, arrogantly stating in a insufferably passive-aggressive fashion, "I don't expect you to know what that means, but it's kind of like a bad case of tennis elbow." At this point, Captain Jack becomes completely delusional and accuses Hank of being one of the hippie protesters that supposedly flung feces at him when he returned to the United States after the war, stating to the pot-peddler in a hysterically hostile way, "you remind me of these jokers that met me at the airport. They threw fucking dog shit at me [...] You guys called me babykiller... You motherfuckers." Meanwhile, Bob makes his comrades laugh by aggressively shouting at Hank with his unsettling electrolarynx voice, "draft-dodger." Not surprisingly, things get even more tense when Captain Jack states, "You wanna' know where Steve is?" and high yellow negro pimp Harry brings out a bloody basket with a blanket covering the top of it. When Harry uncovers the basket, Hank and Chi Chi are in for quite the surprise to see their buddy Steve's dismembered head, as they naturally sense that they are probably next to be butchered.

When Chi Chi panics and attempts to escape, high yellow negro Harry puts a pitchfork to her throat before she can even reach the door while Captain Jack manages to knock out pussy hippie Hank with a single blow to the face. When Hank eventually wakes up, he finds himself outside with his faced covered with war paint and his beloved Chi Chi, who has been stripped down to her underwear (notably, her beaver bush is so large that it protrudes out of her panties, thus demonstrating Van Bebber's commitment to making a truly retro 1970s era film), gagged and tied to a tree that is hovering over a algae-covered pond full of hungry alligators. Meanwhile, Bob rolls out Chi Chi's mother, who is also only wearing underwear, in his wheelchair. In a demonstration of his sick and sadistic sense of humor, Captain Jack hands Hank a handgun and declares, "Alright, draft-dodger, let's see how that 4-F arm works in combat," but when the hippie proceeds to pull the trigger the only thing that comes out of the pistol is a flag that says "bang." Indeed, the joke is on Hank and of course deranged dipsomaniac Captain Jack is laughing hysterically. When Hank tries in vain to defend himself by throwing a weak punch at Jack, the antihero blocks his fist and reacts by swiftly chopping the hippie's arm with a machete and then proceeds to throw both the dismembered limb and its half-dead owner to the gators. While the gators are gorging on Hank's body, Jack hilariously yells to the dying hippie, "Peace and love, peace and love...now what?!" Annoyed with Chi Chi's hysterical screaming, Bob shoots her about a dozen times from the comfort of his wheelchair while the girl's petrified mother is sitting in his lap. In the end, Gator Green comes full circle by concluding with classic stock footage from the Vietnam War.

Somewhat hilariously, before Gator Green was ever even released, a curi-

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ous small-time guido actor named Vic Noto, whose greatest claim to fame was playing a redneck biker that gets shot by Michael Imperioli on *The Sopranos*, began an almost disturbingly pathological one-man smear campaign against both Jim Van Bebber and horror journalist Heidi Martinuzzi. Indeed, Noto, who seems to believe he is the true mastermind of the film despite the fact that he had nil actual creative influence on it (apparently, he wrote a ostensibly serious drama called *Scales* about a World War II Bataan Death March survivor named Ray Scales who owns a gator-farm-themed tourist trap), has apparently attempted to sue both Van Bebber and co-producer Stephen Biro. On top of that, Noto has gone to the patently pathetic effort to stalk Van Bebber online and leave incredibly loony and highly libelous comments on virtually every YouTube video and article about the filmmaker. In fact, the only reason I know about Noto is because I came upon many of these oftentimes unintentionally humorous comments by happenstance. Of course, the fact that Van Bebber could enrage someone so much is also probably the same reason that he is such a great filmmaker as one of only a handful of contemporary horror directors that can be described as an auteur as opposed to a mere hack or artisan. While Van Bebber might direct films that are described as 'exploitation' or 'artsploitation,' he is anything but the typical exploitation hack as a man that lives and breathes the movies he makes and the characters that he plays. After all, only Van Bebber would dare to utilize blackface and bushy beavers in a fashion that is not ironic. While the average exploitation hack makes films that feature cheap sex and violence as a tasteless gimmick that is utilized for the sole purpose of attempting to receive a large monetary profit, Van Bebber makes the films he does solely because he wants to and has, hence why he alienates so many viewers with his biting savage wit and uncompromisingly artfully nihilistic approach to sex, death, and ultra-violence. As he demonstrated with his classic short *My Sweet Satan* (1994), Van Bebber is probably the only living filmmaker that is able to give a certain absurdist poetry to smoking bowels in tribute to Satan, which is certainly no small accomplishment.

Certainly, if there is a filmmaker that makes genuinely artistically merited genre trash with both heart and spirit, it is Van Bebber. Indeed, I think the auteur summed up his own personal cinematic philosophy and approach to filmmaking when he stated in an interview with John Szpunar featured in the book *Xerox Ferox: The Wild World of the Horror Film Fanzine* (2014) when asked what puts "high art" and "low art" on an equal playing field, "Well, I'm looking for passion. And a lot of great art films have the same passion as *THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE*. You can tell that Fellini was fucking throwing himself full-bore into his greatest work, and the same can be said for Welles and the rest of the greats. I could give you the whole laundry list, but I consider *TEXAS CHAINSAW* and *EVIL DEAD* as high art. And I think that the people who dismiss horror films as being base don't really have an open mind."

Speaking of Welles, it seems that he and Van Bebber are sort of kindred spirits in a sense as perennial rebels that burned many bridges and failed to complete many dream film projects during their rather rocky careers. In that sense, Gator Green is like Van Bebber's own equivalent to Welles' aborted *Around the World in Eighty Days* adaptation, albeit thankfully at least part of the film was released. When asked by Szpunar what we can expect from the film, Van Bebber stated, "I can't really compare it to anything. Maybe people will see a little bit of Tobe Hooper's *EATEN ALIVE* drifting around. Maybe a little bit of *FROGS*. But at the same time, it's more like if the Coen brothers made a nasty fucking horror film." While I find the Coen brothers comparison somewhat dubious, I can safely say that I found the 15-minute *Gator Green* promo more enthralling, creative, and idiosyncratic than all 91-minutes of *Eaten Alive* and I say that as someone that has never been particularly fond of the whole killer animal horror subgenre. Indeed, I have about as much as interest in killer gators as I do Turkish folklore, so that just goes to show why I think Van Bebber is a sort of carny celluloid alchemist as mensch that is able to turn genre shit into gritty cinematic gold. While I would not be surprised if it took another decade before we saw another Van Bebber flick, a documentary about the filmmaker's life and struggles entitled *Diary of a Deadbeat: The Story of Jim Vanbebber* (2015) directed by Victor Bonacore was just completed, so hopefully some independently wealthy eccentric will see it and decide to give the auteur funding so that he can once again bless the world with another piece of merrily misanthropic movie mayhem before he drinks himself to death in some dilapidated junky-infested Florida apartment complex.

-Ty E

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Joachim Trier (2011)

Since France has always led Europe in terms of collective degeneracy, especially in the cultural, social, and artistic realm, it is only natural that they would adapt a decadent novel about four decades before any Nordic filmmaker would ever dare to touch it, but then again, the book in question is also French. Indeed, the great French dandy turned literary fascist Pierre Drieu La Rochelle's addiction-and-suicide-themed novel *Le feu follet* (1931) aka *Will O' the Wisp* was originally adapted by famed frog filmmaker Louis Malle (Lacombe, Lucien, *My Dinner with Andre*) as the melancholy classic *Le feu follet* (1963) aka *The Fire Within* starring the somberly suave Maurice Ronet, so it seems somewhat strange and almost inexplicable that a contemporary Norwegian auteur would also cinematically adapt a book inspired by the suicide of a largely forgotten real-life Dadaist poet some 80 years after the work was written, but relatively young auteur Joachim Trier (*Reprise*, *Louder Than Bombs*)—a more restrained long distance relative of Danish eternal 'enfant terrible' Lars von Trier—did just that for his second feature-length film *Oslo, August 31st* (2011) aka *Oslo, 31. august*. Though Malle and Trier's films are superficially similar in terms of plot and storyline in their depiction of the last day or so of a recovering drug addict who decides to commit suicide after having various less than ideal encounters with old friends, aesthetically speaking, the two works have virtually nothing in common and certainly make for great comparison pieces in terms of how much European cinema has changed over the past four decades or so. The works are also quite similar in that the central city where the story is set is a sort unofficial guiding character that is only secondary to the protagonist, especially in Trier's film, as the seemingly living metropolis seems to have sucked the soul out every single person in the film to one degree or another, but especially the hopelessly forlorn lead, who has come to the bitter conclusion that, "I'm 34 years old. I've got nothing" and decides to take decisive action for one of the first times in his perennially stagnating life. Having more in common with Drieu's source novel in that the protagonist is a H-shooting junky instead of an alcoholic (the protagonist of the novel was addicted to opium, which was considered old-fashioned during the early 1960s when Malle made his film), *Oslo, August 31st* depicts one man's losing fight with a deadly drug that has been eating at the Nordic world and white world in general since the late-1960s, but has become even worse since the growing popularity of narcotic prescription painkillers over the past couple decades. Indeed, I can think of at least two pill popper turned dope fiend ex-friends of mine who died after overdosing on the Big H, but it is unclear to me as to whether either the two intended to die, though another ex-friend of mine who did survive admitted to me that he did it intentionally. What is arguably most interesting and original about Trier's film compared to Malle's is

that the protagonist is depicted as more or less a casualty of a leftist academic upbringing as a fellow with a mother who “held a tolerant view on drugs” and a physically weak pansy father who “said people who valued military experience were dull.” Shot in a quasi-realist handheld style the falls somewhere in between Gus van Sant’s *Elephant* (2003) and the work of Philippe Grandrieux (*Sombre*, *La vie nouvelle* aka *A New Life*), *Oslo, August 31st* is certainly a bummer of film that lacks the refined eloquence and cultivation of Malle’s *The Fire Within*, yet its sterile and primitive aesthetic certainly reflect the lack of poetry, culture, warmth, love, and life that both contemporary Oslo and Occidental metropolises in general lack, thus reflecting our devastatingly decadent, spiritually bankrupt, and emotionally glacial zeitgeist.

Oslo, August 31st begins with a quasi-nostalgic montage featuring vintage footage of Oslo over the past three decades or so (the protagonist is 34) juxtaposed with various faceless and nameless citizens discussing what they remember most about the city, stating mostly mundane things like “I remember how tall the trees seemed compared to those in Northern Norway” and “We moved to the city. We felt extremely mature,” thus giving the viewer the feeling that the utopian dream has died in the Nordic metropolis. Protagonist Anders (played by childhood actor turned physician Anders Danielsen Lie, who also starred in Trier’s first feature *Reprise*) does not seem like he has many happy memories of Oslo even though he is a self-described “spoiled brat” who had a rather comfortable, if not deleteriously liberal, upbringing, but then again he has spent the last ten months living as an impatient at a drug rehabilitation center so he could wean himself off various narcotics, especially heroin and alcohol. Anders had been given an “evening pass” from the clinic, so he decided to use it to go have sex with a Swedish chick named Malin (Malin Crépin) instead of meeting up with his estranged sister Nina as he had originally planned. After sex, Anders just stares into space and when unclad Malin wakes up and smiles at him, he cannot bring himself to smile back because, as he later tells a friend regarding the anti-climatic carnal experience, “I wasn’t quite there. I felt nothing.” As is quite clear by his melancholy demeanor, Anders no longer enjoys the hedonistic activities that used to make his life worth living, hence his disillusionment with life in general. After leaving Maline’s apartment, Anders walks to a nearby forest, fills his pants and jacket pockets with tons of rocks, picks up a large boulder, and somewhat absurdly attempts to drown himself in a nearby lake, but he botches the job and then proceeds to cry hysterically upon emerging from the water. Unfortunately for Anders, he has to go back to the rehabilitation center and keep up a charade of seeming to have the semblance of a sound of mind for at least one more day before he ends his life for good.

On the last day of his life, Anders plans to do at least two things: meet with his sister and go to a job interview. Not surprisingly, both of these plans fail miserably, thus reinforcing the protagonist’s undying desire to off himself.

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In between the interview and attempting to meet up with his sister, Anders attempts to reconnect with some old friends who he has not seen since he became a full-blown junky and they kicked him out of their lives. After being given a 'day pass' to leave the clinic, Anders takes a taxi to Oslo and swings by the apartment of his old best friend Thomas (Hans Olav Brenner), who could not have a more different place in his life as a straight and somber bourgeois family man and pedantic academic professor who quotes Proust during personal conversations as if he has been completely zapped of any genuine personality. Married to a beautiful blond babe named Rebecca (Norwegian singer Ingrid Olava) that he has two young daughters with, Thomas does not really know how to talk to Anders about his problems and even absurdly jokingly describes him as a "drug troll" to his prepubescent daughter after she creates a crude drawing of the protagonist. When Anders describes his soulless sex with Malin, Thomas nonsensically replies, "Proust said, 'Trying to understand desire by watching a nude woman is like a child taking apart a clock to understand time,'" so his wife Rebecca berates him for not only pretentiously quoting Proust during a highly personal conversation, but also for saying something that is the exact opposite of what his comrade expressed. When Thomas mentions that he recently saw Anders' parents and remarks, "They still seem so much in love, attentive, like a model couple," the protagonist confesses that his parents had to sell their house so they could pay for him to go to drug rehab.

When the two friends go for a walk, Anders hints at his plans to commit suicide, stating to Thomas, "...it's not about heroin, not really. Look at me. I'm 34 years old. I have nothing. I can't start from scratch. Don't you understand?" When Thomas mentions to Anders that he has more options than most of the people at his rehab center, he cynically, "Yeah, but they are happy to work in a warehouse and have kids with some ex-raver." Indeed, Anders is a bourgeois failure who physically and emotionally resembles a wigger low-life and he could never submit to a loser working-class lumpenprole life of mediocrity, as he considers it a fate worse than death. When Anders says, "If that's how it ends, it's a choice I've made" regarding his intention to overdose on dope, emotionally autistic academic Thomas seems somewhat baffled and replies, "I can't relate to you tell me you're planning to commit suicide." As for Thomas, his life is not exactly as perfect as it seems as he virtually never has sex, no longer has the desire to write, and spends his free time passively watching his wife defeating players while playing Playstation games, which he describes as "the best part" of his banal and highly domesticated life. After parting ways with Thomas, Anders heads to his job interview with nice and smug magazine editor David (Øystein Røger), which seems to go good at first, at least until when the protagonist is asked why he does not have a work history after 2005 and he admits that he is a recovering drug addict. When David asks Anders what kind of drug addict he was, he replies, "Just about anything...Cocaine, ecstasy, alcohol...Heroin as well. I was

dealing a bit as well. Should I put that on my CV?” and then reveals he has been clean for ten months. When David patronizingly replies, “Not many people manage to get through that. So that’s...Extraordinary,” Anders gets angry and acts rather self-destructively by demanding his resume back, storming out of the building, and trashing his resume. Indeed, Anders’ self-esteem is about as low as that of a crack-smoking American ghetto negro.

When Anders goes to a restaurant to meet his sister Nina, he attempts to call an ex-girlfriend, Iselin, who he has been trying to contact throughout the entire day, but he has no luck. After waiting forever, Nina’s friend Tove (Tone Beate Mostraum) shows up instead of his sister, which rather angers Anders, who gets the keys to his family home from the girl and leaves. Apparently, Anders’ sister Nina is afraid of the fact that he will be getting out of the rehab center soon and could not bring herself to confront her big bad druggo bro. After spending hours wandering around various parks in Oslo whilst thinking about his pretentious liberal intellectual parents’ somewhat deleterious parenting skills (in his mind, he never references his parents as ‘mom’ or ‘dad’ but instead ‘she’ and ‘he,’ thus reflecting the cold, sterile, and detached nature of his relationship with them), Anders heads to a party at his friends Mirjam (Kjærsti Odde Skjeldal) and Calle’s apartment where he finds himself feeling increasingly lonely and detached being around so many old friends who, unlike the protagonist, all have things going on in their lives. Anders used to date Mirjam and during the party he decides to talk to her after seeing her sitting all by her lonesome and looking rather lonely. Mirjam is depressed that her birthday is tomorrow and complains, “It’s a bit easier for you guys to reach the thirties. Look at your pals. None of them have girlfriends their own age. My flat’s full of girls I don’t know. 20-year-olds with perky tits,” so Anders attempts to cheer her up by stating, “Your tits seem pretty perky to me.” Although having been together for nine years, Mirjam and her boyfriend still do not have kids and she is feeling fed up with the banality of life, which the protagonist can surely relate to. Of course, things get awkward when Anders kisses Mirjam in a sensual fashion, so she goes somewhere else. Depressed about Iselin not returning his calls, among other things, Anders decides he needs to buy enough heroin to kill himself with so he robs the coats and purses of the party guests, but unfortunately Mirjam walks in on him doing it and looks at him disapprovingly, though she does not confront him.

Ultimately, Anders decides to buy a gram of heroin from his drug dealer friend and then spends the rest of the night partying with his degenerate mustached pal Petter (Petter Width Kristiansen) and two young and dumb college girls in their early twenties. While Anders flirts with one of the girls, he is far too detached and dejected to seriously pursue her, even telling her that their night together is more or less meaningless, stating, “No, no, you’ll have a thousand nights like this one. You won’t remember this...Everything will be forgotten.” While at a bar, Anders spots a guy named Øystein (Anders Borchgrevink) who slept with

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his ex-girlfriend Iselin when they were still together, so taking what he learned at drug rehab, he absurdly decides to 'forgive him.' Needless to say, Anders' meager attempt at atonement does not go well, with Øystein letting him really have it by stating, "I don't know you...But I've seen the consequences of how you treat people close to you [...] whether I slept with her or not, I mean, does it matter? [...] I don't have to listen to this. I have friends far worse off than you...But they don't act like assholes. And this isn't about...the fact that you're an addict." Shocked by the fact that a virtual stranger has more or less summed up his shitty loser character, Anders salutes Øystein in a sarcastic fashion and heads to a local rave with Petter and the two chicks where they spend the rest of the night getting drunk and acting stupid. When the sun rises, they all head to a closed pool and everyone gets in except Anders. Indeed, not even the prospect of a hot topless 20-something-year-old who wants to jump his bones can get Anders into the pool. While Petter and the girls are having fun in the pool, Anders randomly walks away without saying goodbye and heads to his empty childhood home where he plays piano for a bit, leaves Iselin a voicemail telling her to ignore everything he said previously, and then shoots up enough heroin to stop his heart from beating within mere seconds.

It should be noted that long before he became a filmmaker, Oslo, August 31st director Joachim Trier was a top Norwegian skateboarder who, not unlike Harmony Korine, originally intended to become a pro-skater. Unlike Korine, Trier actually had the talent to become pro but fate had much different plans for him and he blossomed into one of Norway's most interesting contemporary filmmakers. Ultimately, both filmmakers were obviously influenced by the gritty aesthetics of skate videos, albeit in somewhat different ways, with Oslo, August 31st certainly reflecting the sort of shaky, erratic, and voyeuristic 'realist' handheld digital video essence of modern sk8 tapes. As anyone who has ever been seriously involved with the so-called 'extreme sport' will tell you, skaters look at the physical world, especially urban areas, in a completely different way than non-skaters and I have to admit that as an ex-skater, I felt that Trier's film oftentimes feels like it could have been filmed in between skate sessions in Oslo with the director's friends and family. More importantly, the film demonstrates how the city is a sort of soul-draining and socially alienating postmodern pandemonium of sorts that makes it impossible for anyone with any sort of vices to live in peace and harmony. It is interesting to note that, aside from the suicidal protagonist, virtually every other character in the film is either depressed and/or drug addicted as well and everyone seems to be too consumed with their own lingering dejection to bother to notice that their friend is about to engage in self-slaughter. Undoubtedly, Trier's film does not make for the most enjoyable of filmic experiences as a sort of cinematic condemnation of the modern era that offers no solutions, not relief, and, arguably most importantly, no redemption to abject hopelessness of the modern world. For me, it is nearly impossible to

think of Oslo, August 31st without comparing it to its French predecessor *The Fire Within*, as the two make perfect companion pieces when attempting to distinguish the innate soullessness and cultural and social retardation of today with the eloquence, cultivation, and cultivation of yesteryear. Indeed, even the dope fiends and dipsomaniacs of Malle's film seem dignified compared to the Nordic bourgeois nihilist slobs of Trier's film, which features a protagonist that, unlike the character played by Maurice Ronet, seems devoid of even the most rudimentary virtues as a completely charmless chap who probably did himself and everyone else a favor by shooting a lethal dose of Cocteau's kick into his scrawny arm. Also, seeing a bunch of towelheaded camel jockeys walking around Oslo is not exactly a pleasant sight to see, thus reflecting the racial and cultural suicide of the Norwegian people in general (notably, in 2013, 40% of Oslo's elementary school pupils were registered as having a first language other than Norwegian or Sami, which indicates almost half of the city's adolescent population is foreign and thus will replace the indigenous population in a couple generations). Indeed, it certainly a sign that something is wrong when young upper-class whites are suicidal junkies while Arabs are sucking on the supple teat of the inexplicably generous Nordic welfare state. Of course, as the protagonist of the film states himself, he is a brat who refuses to accept anything other than a life of upper-middleclass luxury as a decidedly decadent young man who is a direct product of a lazy liberal upbringing, hence why he did not even have the testicular fortitude to off himself like a man like the protagonist of Malle's film and instead takes the easy way out with a pleasurable narcotizing death that is surely symbolic of his life in general as a self-destructive hedonist. Degenerate bourgeois liberal upbringing or not, Oslo, August 31st is surely the last film you should watch if you're a recovering addict.

-Ty E

AWAKE

AWAKE

Joby Harold (2007)

A normal aesthetic of a thriller is the feeling of paranoia and uneasiness. *Awake* works in such a flawed way that it morphs from trite Hollywood garbage into a semi-decent film fare halfway into the movie. If you believe for a second that Anakin Skywalker's acting has improved, you might as well cash your chips in now. It's still horribly wooden. *Awake* stars the moody-eyed Christiansen as a billionaire playboy. His role is such that you couldn't distinguish the fact that he owns half the city. His character is predominately created to humanize the greedy corporate scum and he does just that. All he wants is love and life, so when he gets a new heart, he can have both of those with his new wife. "Five hundred it is!" His midichlorine count fails him when while getting anesthesia, he finds himself to be a victim of a rare condition called anesthesia awareness, in which you are paralyzed but still possess all sense - including pain. During this ridiculous process, he overhears a nefarious plan to kill him on the operating table being led by his surgeon friend. Jessica Alba co-stars as the unfairly hot recent blushing bride of business tycoon Annie. She puts up as good of a role as she can when she plays "meat puppet" like most women do in major releases. Not till later does she have the ability to demonstrate acting. Terrence Howard plays his surgeon friend who recently became his best friend. Howard has this rewarding stage presence that saturates each of his roles with this "Hey, this character fucking sucks, but I'm going to make him look good" and he does just that. Much of *Awake* literally had me on edge. It made me nervous, frustrated, and perplexed at this rare and curious condition that might have me permanently scared of getting surgery in the near future. *Awake* is a film that received only moderate success and should be seen by a wider audience. If it weren't for the pseudo-surreal elements tacked in to try and explain the tortured soul he is, this film would have been consistent. I wish these directors would realize what film they are trying to make before initial shooting as to not create a hideous spawn.

-mAQ

VIA APPIA

Jochen Hick (1990)

If serving a lengthy prison sentence is a 'rite of passage' for black gangbangers and barbarian neo-viking bikers, it would seem that receiving HIV would be somewhat the approximate equivalent for sadomasochistic sodomites or so it seems in the curious kraut cocksucker flicker *Via Appia* (1989) directed by homo-auteur Jochen Hick (*Sex/Life in L.A., No One Sleeps*) – an aberrant Aryan whose obsession with AIDS and the men who intentionally spread it is only rivaled by his particularly perverse proclivity for feverishly fawning over perverse poofers, especially of the Germanic persuasion, traveling abroad for anonymous tearoom and steamroom sex. Described by Robert Ellsworth of *Edge Magazine* in what is a patent piece of journalistic puffery as, "a sexy, exciting film...that is both stimulating and suspenseful, an interesting combination of Hitchcock and Jodorowsky," *Via Appia* is an unrepentantly homosexualist work that can hardly be described as a contrived and theatric 'Freudian thriller' in the sense of *Rope* (1948), nor a surrealist acid western full of naked women with marvelous mammary glands and occultnik religious iconography like *El Topo* (1970), but it does feature a smutty smorgasbord of psychosexual tension and fag fetishism in a certain sin-ridden Sodom of South America. Centering around a Teutonic twink airplane steward in what wakes up one morning to see that a random Brazilian boi he just had a steamy semen-swapping one-night stand with has just written, "Welcome to the AIDS-Club" on his bathroom mirror as if the joke of a very real gay urban legend, *Via Appia* is a pseudo-documentary-within-a-film about a HIV positive homo who travels to Brazil in search of the 'gift-giving' gay hustler who, following in the rather rich S&M semen demon tradition of Canadian flight attendant Gaëtan "Patient Zero" Dugas (the sanitized subject of queer Canadian auteur John Greyson's 1993 AIDS-themed musical *Zero Patience*) and French philosopher Michel Foucault, deliberately gave the young German man the priceless gift of gay cancer at a time when treatment for such an internecine illness was mostly futile. A softcore gay porn flick featuring countless brown dicks of the racially dubious sort, *Via Appia* is undoubtedly gay fantasy in a *cinéma vérité* style that seems like an exotic m(isc)arriage between the wanton wild boys of the Third World as depicted in the novels of alpha-Beat writer William S. Burroughs (notice the xenophilic original cover of his 1983 novel *The Place of Dead Roads*) and the gritty 'poverty porn' and gutter libertinism of Jewish-Brazilian auteur Héctor Babenco's *Pixote* (1981), thereupon making it an exceedingly exploitative, minor kraut cult classic of deranged and deleterious celluloid Dorian Love that only further confirms the unflattering stereotype that fags are the foremost spreaders of one of the world's mostly deadly diseases.

A lot of dirty and dastardly things can happen when you're a sexually promiscuous Lufthansa German Airlines steward who engages in unprotected sodomy

VIA APPIA

with Third World conmen of the calculating, conniving, and callous cocksucking variety when not helping bourgeois boobs to get nice and comfy on their trips abroad or such is the impression one gets while watching *Via Appia*. Like real-life fag flight attendant Gaëtan Dugas, flaming Frank (played by Peter Senner in his first and only feature-length film role) learned the hard way that STDs spread quick and come from the most curious of places when one has a cosmopolitan career that involves traveling the world. Now taking routine trips to the hospital to treat the debilitating symptoms of HIV, fucked Frank is quite obsessed with finding the malicious man-eater Mario, who gave the flight attendant a literal kiss of death during an ominous yet orgasmic one-night stand from homo Hades, yet he does not want to seek revenge, but instead seems to feel that confronting his figurative gay Grim Reaper would give him the courage to look death straight in the eyes in an audacious act of unflinching stoicism. Ignoring the sound advice of his doctor not to travel abroad, especially to a Third World sewer of sin and sexual savagery, Frank and a documentary filmmaker (Yves Jansen) fly to Brazil and soon hire a professional conman and hunk hustler named José (played by real-life criminal Guilherme de Pádua, who, with the help of his wife, killed an actress on the same Brazilian soap opera he starred in). An amateur photographer who takes pictures of strangers' pricks, as well as his own, Frank finds the ultimate guide of Brazilian buggery in José, who takes him to the most sinfully steamy bathhouses and hustler hotspots in Rio, thereupon resulting in a wealth of rather risqué portraits and many mischievous memories with many miscegenated men, yet maniac mud-packer Mario seems nowhere to be found. Obviously someone who has learned from a master, Frank decides he will be like super sodomite Mario and refrain from telling people about his pandemic sexual sickness, even rhetorically remarking to his filmmaker friend, "Why should I run and tell everybody I'm sick? You don't live according to what some sauna Joe says," and "You think I want to be known as a walking virus bomb?" With so many more than men and so little time to live in the most literal sense, Frank has to be less than frank about his bad blood if he wants to have the time of his short life in the sanguinary Sodom and Gomorrah of South America – a place where Nordic sodomite stewards like the protagonist have been known to be maliciously murdered in the past when patronizing the wrong penis-peddler. With creepy and exceedingly emaciated hustlers literally masturbating in the street and an overflowing ocean of studs and twinks in sordid saunas of sacrilege, Frankie certainly has no need to worry about people catching on to the fact that he is a poz-cock giftgiver. Indeed, to borrow a cynical phrase from the film, *Via Appia* is not your typical celluloid "the world is full of whores" routine as the homo harlots very much feel at home in their figurative hell of fagdom and biologically kaput kraut protagonist Frank is more than willing to join them.

If *Via Appia* has an underlying (and, in this case, unhinged) 'message' at all, it is that poof protagonist Frank seemed rather liberated by the fact that he was

infected with HIV in a most insidious manner, even if his life is inevitably cut short by this inauspicious and ultimately irrevocable situation. Instead of arguing that having sex with random men at bathhouses while being HIV positive is a bad and, dare I say, particularly pernicious, deplorable, and absurdly dishonest thing to do, *Via Appia* makes it seem like the 'cool' and liberating thing to do as if giving the protagonist all the more reasons to be a pathological powder puff on the prowl. During the beginning of the film, Frank makes it seem as if his planned, would-be-fateful meeting with Mario will make accepting death all the more easy to deal with, but it is ultimately the sort of unsavory behavior that led him to contracting the terminal illness in the first place that gives him a seemingly 'sick,' quasi-spiritual sort of solace. Even the filmmaker that follows him along notices Frank's deleterious behavior, stating, "I don't want to film someone's self-destruction." Aside from stoically accepting death like a 'real man,' Frank makes for a rather unsympathetic protagonist, but, to his credit, he does not damn nor seek sympathy, thereupon acting in stark contrast to the sort of sanitized sodomites portrayed in Hollywood movies and the media today, who arrogantly and, quite fag fascistically, demand not only acceptance of their aberration, but also the glorification of it, as if the entire world is one big gay bar. In fact, it would not be a stretch to say that Frank uses his morbid search for Mario as a pathetic and perverse pretense for engaging in voyeurism, exhibitionism, and promiscuous homo sex in an exceedingly exotic land as if he was acting out a lifelong fantasy he developed after listening to Duran Duran's album *Rio* (1982) one too many times, because he is "hungry like the wolf" and seems like he is taking his one, "Last Chance on the Stairway" of self-sanctified sodomy. With its audaciously unapologetic message and in its attempt to turn a personal journey for nirvana and harmony into aberrant avant-garde pornography, *Via Appia*, for better or worse, has more honesty in a mere 5 minutes than a propagandistic poofy melodrama like *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) directed by Ang Lee has in its entirety. With an erotic and exotic existentialist ending on a beach that makes for the queer cinema equivalent of the conclusion of François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*, *Via Appia* reminds one that life is a bitch, so you might as well have fun in the meantime, even if you contract AIDS in the process.

-Ty E

NO ONE SLEEPS
NO ONE SLEEPS

Jochen Hick (2000)

Despite the number of 'great' sodomite serial killers that have stalked the tea-rooms and glittery fag clubs of America over the past couple of decades or so, including John Wayne Gacy, Jeffrey 'riding dirty' Dahmer and Robert Berdella, few true blue homo auteur filmmakers, aside from Todd Verow with highly controversial Frisk (1995), have tackled the subject and have left it to heterosexual horror hacks to cinematically portray these creepy cocksucking killers. One super fagola filmmaker, Jochen Hick (Via Appia, Menmaniacs - The Legacy of Leather), a quasi-politically incorrect German aberrant-garde filmmaker that has mainly directed unflattering documentaries about queer subcultures, did direct a serial killer flick entitled No One Sleeps (2000), but unfortunately it is not a masterpiece, but rather a plot-hole-ridden and conspiracy theory-obsessed 'twink thriller'/man-on-man murder mystery piece set in the gay capital of the world, San Francisco, where virtually every character in the film, including the extras, are not only gay but are in some stage of dying off from AIDS and love Puccini's "Turandot," which is even described by an old homo in the film on his death bed as the gayest opera ever written. Undoubtedly, No One Sleeps is a superlatively sloppily assembled piece of piss poor poof propaganda that is not much more aesthetically merited than a loony Lifetime made-for-TV movie, yet in terms of ending entertainment value, Hick's Amero-Kraut serial killer thriller has a certain undeniable magnetism to it that compels to the viewer to watch the film to the very end. In fact, I originally had no intention of rewatching the film, let alone reviewing it, yet after boring forced to view it a second time, I realized it is certainly a 'good bad movie' with a gigantic wad of replay value, which is indubitably a result of German actor Tom Wlaschiha's strikingly charismatic performance, but also Hick's compellingly inept direction and curious casting of mostly non-actors that he seems to have found licking the floors of some seedy gay bar. Following the sexual and detective excursions of a young gay medical student who is trying to find proof regarding theories created by his discredited and deceased East German scientist father who came up with the controversial theory that AIDS was a manmade virus created by the U.S. military in the 1970s and tested on inmates at San Quentin prison, No One Sleeps is a would-be-lecherous and unintentionally loony labyrinthine look at self-loathing gay serial killers, corrupt fag-bashing American doctors and politicians, and the even more corrupt world of underground S&M sodomite parties, where a HIV-positive cocksucking killer is lurking and hoping to take some of his fagola friends with him straight to homo hell.

Twenty-something kraut medical student Stefan Hein (played by Tom Wlaschiha, who has gone on to star in the popular HBO TV series Game of Thrones) may be a gay man in the heart of modern day Sodom, San Francisco, but his main

concern is proving that his East German scientist father's discredited theory that AIDS was originally found in sheep and was perniciously transferred to humans via the U.S. Department of Defense, who experimented on a bunch of prisoners who would go on to infect the general gay population. Not long after arriving in San Francisco, Stefan discovers a crime scene at the Golden Gate Park where a murdered homo with AIDS lays dead. Stefan ends up discussing the murder with a radically repellant homicide detective Louise Tolliver (Irit Levi) whose voice is so whiny and neurotic and whose arrogance is so audacious that she could easily be Woody Allen's sullen Semitic sister, and rather unfortunately for the Teutonic medical student, the cold kosher cop will continue to check up on him from time to time. During his stay in sodomite SF, Stefan hopes to find all the ex-prisoners that were in the AIDS experiment, but unfortunately, they also happen to be the same people that a mysterious serial killer is killing off one-by-one. Meanwhile, kraut Stefan starts a relationship with a violent ex-con/café waiter with a discernibly Hebraic phenotype named Jeffrey Russo (Jim Thalman), thus their relationship seems to have a certain inborn tension that is demonstrated by the constant physical and verbal violence between the two men. In seeming tribute to New German Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter, a gay man named "Malina" is killed at a fag underground party and posed in a manner not unlike the iconic pose of 'queer icon'/Christian martyr Saint Sebastian. At an AIDS conference, Stefan discusses his father's theories and his intention to find the ex-prisoners from the government AIDS experiment, but most of the audience finds his efforts and ideas dubious, except for a somewhat nefarious neurologist who is ironically Dr. Richard Burroughs (played by Richard Conti) in ostensible tribute to queer junky literary outlaw William S. Burroughs. Considering the same HIV-positive men Stefan is looking for also happen to be the same people the serial killer is eradicating, Detective Tolliver continues to verbally terrorize the young Teuton and questions him about his 'HIV status.' After having a telling and wee bit nasty chat with Dr. Burroughs, Stefan decides to break into the good doc's office and steal documents, thus confirming that all of the serial killers victims are the same ex-cons that were part of the AIDS experiment. Unfortunately, little does Stefan realize that his big bad boy toy Jeffrey was not only one of the ex-prisoners that took part in the AIDS experiment he has been doing detective work on, but also the serial killer that is liquidating said ex-cons. After Jeffrey bumps off Burroughs, Stefan is charged with his murder by the FBI, but luckily he is transferred to Tolliver, who lets him go. While Jeffrey misses the big performance of Puccini's "Turandot" and never really gets to confirm his father's theories, he does manage to get pumped full of the Semitic seed of a hebraic serial killer with AIDS.

Taking its title from the aria "Nessun Dorma" of Puccini's "Turandot" ("No one shall sleep!" is a permutation of "Nessun Dorma"), *No One Sleeps* is ultimately a work that strives for stylistic and intellectual sophistication, but ul-

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timately fails in all of its objectives, even if the film makes for a surprisingly enthralling celluloid ride through poz-cock pandemonium that rather ridiculously makes the San Francisco gay underground seem like a devilishly exciting place of AIDS-packed action, adventure, and mystery. Undoubtedly, Jochen Hick's objective with *No One Sleeps* was to inspire viewers to keep their minds open regarding alternative theories to the origins of AIDS, but this seems ultimately unimportant and irrelevant when you consider the fact that most of the characters of the film, including poor protagonist Stefan Hein, are so adamant about engaging in anonymous unsafe sex in what seems to be nothing less than a (sub)conscious death wish thus making all evil government conspiracies seem rather small in importance. Featuring a cameo from HIV-positive gay American extreme performance artist Ron Athey, who made headlines in 1994 when old school Reaganite senator Jesse Helms falsely claimed the AIDS-ridden artist of exposing his diseased blood to audience members while mutilating himself at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, *No One Sleeps* is quite possibly the only gay-sploitation/AIDS-sploitation thriller ever made that could have only been directed by a unrepentantly gay filmmaker who had next to nil interest in whitewashing the HIV homo community, which is certainly something I can appreciate.

-Ty E

DYING BREED

Jody Dwyer (2008)

A common tactic in provoking irrational fear; take a true story and apply a "What if" element to the story in order to blindly steer the script direction in which ever way gravity prefers. We've seen *Open Water*, *The Host*, *From Hell* (and the graphic novel), *Wolf Creek*, and many others that barely open up the possibilities of pseudo-historical horror. Taking both the legends of the Tasmanian Tiger and Alexander "The Pieman" Pearce - an infamous cannibal, *Dying Breed* "interweaves" both tales into one fact-fiction survival film that rings bells true although reminding you of every other camping terror film. This Horrorfest addition has garnered some publicity for its less-than-sanitary poster display that was banned in Australia for displaying a delicious meal cracked open to contain some organic ingredients. In general, *Dying Breed* has a fantastic marketing campaign but the film just wastes it all away taking in the bland script, characters, and events glazed over by a mesmerizing forest setting. And of course, the addition of an anti-GeoConservative friend to the trip was necessary. Jack (Nathan Phillips) kills animals, fucks everywhere, slashes tires, and befouls the hospitality of his captors. If he hadn't been on the trip, their situation wouldn't be rectified but their redemption might have been merciful. Taking an interesting theme of forced impregnation as seen and popularized in *Pink Flamingos*, *Dying Breed* invokes the aid of a town birthed entirely on hostages put in the same situation as the stars of this show. Female backpackers looking for the enigmatic Tasmanian Tiger are chained down and raped repeatedly giving *Dying Breed* a grotesquely erotic edge that will collect with the final product and make the final scene very visceral and bleak. The Pieman is regarded within the film as a slasher villain thanks to the camera tactics of scarcely revealing his underlying motives, while at the same time, glamorizing his ruggedness. His stalking sequences and such are less than horrifying and even invokes questions such as "Uhhh....." and "Errrrr....." I mean, honestly, how old is this guy? I doubt a diet of horny college girls instills the gift of eternal, inbred life. *Dying Breed* follows Nina, an Irish zoologist who's on the trail of a Tasmanian Tiger and her sister, who disappeared 8 years before in the very same territory; not before sending a paw print of the Tiger though. Her boyfriend, Leigh Whannell, has organized the trip for her and he remains the saving grace through the film being both rational and sympathetic. *Dying Breed* is yet another boring exploit of a film depicting a male, innocent and solemn, going out of his way to please a female, only to get ravaged, beaten, and shit on by the end of the credits; meanwhile - glorifying the female as the hero (rather, heroine). *Dying Breed* will never receive glowing reviews but from a fan expressing extreme appreciation for a legless nude female strung over a tree. It's these seldom gory and ridiculous moments that even qualify *Dying Breed* for a watch. I will wholeheartedly admit though, those scenes where you

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caught a slight and tiny glimpse of the elusive Tiger, these sent shivers down my spine and brims my mind with hope for a decaying species line. As for the Horrorfest line, as a collective, reformation is a must. Hopelessness aside, these high-grade low-quality films are the real dying breed to shower concern over, or rather, lack thereof.

-mAQ

OBSERVE AND REPORT

Jody Hill (2009)

I do not think that the readers of Soiled Sinema would be surprised to read that I think Seth Rogen is an over glamorized turd that has even met an all time low in arrogance and annoyingness for a Jewish comedian. Rogen is the kind of guy that you want to punch in the face just by looking at him but want to punch even more once his monotone mouth excretes verbal defecation. How can an undeniably ugly and banal comedian such as Seth Rogen have such international critical acclaim? Why are people so obsessed with an individual that is less impressive and entertaining than a German Shepard taking a crap?!? The world may never know the answer to these questions, but I make sure to stay away from his shitematic abominations as best as I can. Unfortunately, a lady friend of mine wanted to see Seth Rogen's new movie *Observe and Report* and I could do nothing but accept the unsettling request. *Observe and Report* follows a mentally disturbed man named Ronnie Barnhardt, played by Seth Rogen, who is in charge of security at a mall that looks typical of many that can be found in the United States. In *Observe and Report*, Seth Rogen (for once) plays a character that may actually have testicles and testosterone pumping through his unflatteringly tubby body. The character of Ronnie is a dysfunctional individual who has serious social problems that seems to put people in jeopardy with physical harm quite often. A lot of people have been comparing this character to that of Travis Bickle from Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*. Yeah, maybe both characters are psychotic and socially dysfunctional types looking to make the decaying world a "better place" but the comparisons stop there. Whereas Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (which is arguably the director's masterpiece) is a serious lone man's look at urban and human decay, *Observe and Report* is merely another outlet for Seth Rogen's assumed criminal impulses. I mean come on, Rogen described his own Zionist Israeli "Kibbutz loving" parents as "radical Jewish socialists." Need one say more? I do have a confession to make and it is quite ugly. *Observe and Report* is Seth Rogen's "greatest performance" and easily the best comedy that the young Zio-Turd has starred in. Although much of the film is typical of something Rogen would act in, *Observe and Report* goes much further in the "dark comedy" section. So far as to offend that chicks that suffer from penis envy (feminists) are outraged by the film. Apparently, when you fuck a girl after she's blacked out drunk it's considered rape. Obviously these feminists forget their experiences at college. Of course, *Observe and Report* doesn't just feature hilarious borderline rape. It also features a man with a very small penis. This man that suffers from having a chode loves to flaunt it at girls (and guys) at the mall. Catching this flasher is the main subplot of *Observe and Report*. Although it's a cheap shot at getting people to laugh, seeing that chubby man with the button size penis had me laughing out loud in the movie theater. The catching of this pathetic

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pervert by Seth Rogen is by far the most rewarding segment of the film. I have to give props to Seth Rogen for not mentioning that he is Jewish in *Observe and Report* like he does in every other movie he's in. In fact, in *Observe and Report* Seth Rogen plays a sort of white trash guy but not in the condescending way so typical of Hollywood. Seth Rogen's character even beats up a group of Mexican drug dealers. If only more trashy white people would do a proud service like that for the good of USA. Instead of being hooked on crystal meth or crack, Ronnie has ambition. Let's face it, most white trash people are completely and utterly worthless. Someone like Ronnie knows who the lowest of the low are and how to dispose of them. He is also a man that knows how to dress as demonstrated when he goes on a date and sports a wardrobe that looks like a Negroes Sunday best. It's amazing that Seth Rogen was able to pull white trash yet suave. Of course, *Observe and Report* is full of stupid comedy to keep the typical American lemming happy. The "quality" segments of *Observe and Report* are even more uneven than how Rogen's gut hangs over his belt. I may not watch *Observe and Report* again but I will always remember Seth Rogen touting a naked (except for undone robe) and wounded lardass on a golf cart. Will Seth Rogen ever match his performance in *Observe and Report* again? Probably not but one can never really tell. Maybe this recent trend of ultra dark comedies will continue. To be honest, I wouldn't mind seeing a Seth Rogen comedy taking place in an Israeli Kibbutz featuring Zionists killing Palestinian pre-schoolers. What an honest and beautiful film it would be.

-Ty E

SMOKIN' ACES

Joe Carnahan (2006)

In light of the recent outbreak of "over-the-top" action films, it seems easy to make a quick buck. Action films are the easiest films to get into, thanks to the endless amount of masculinity pouring out of them. Films like last year's slop-fest "Shoot Em' Up!" are reasons why trying to make film purposely bad is not a wise choice. Joe Carnahan takes the grittiness of his underrated crime classic *Narc*, and adds a cartoonish crew of sadistic hitmen. The film is packed with big-name stars. Some of which include Ryan Reynolds, Alicia Keyes, Common, Jeremy Piven, and Ben Affleck; just to name a few. The plot is not limited by the bullets, which is more than most blazing gun films can say. The plot was fully intact with flashy yet hyper-kinetic editing to lay down the stories behind each of the hitmen and situations quite nicely. Buddy Israel is a bastard illusionist who has recently had a million dollar bounty on his head and his heart. The FBI agents have put together a task force to keep him alive while hitmen come looking for him. Not since *Lord Of Illusions* has an illusionist been put in this sort of light. Nolan's *The Prestige* did nothing but immortalize them despite their greedy existence. Thank god for Tesla to keep the show interesting. Contract killers can be a fickle thing when handled incorrectly. Thank god Carnahan has done this ultra-violence thing before.

Normally, I'm not too keen on Reynolds due to his infatuation of baring his abs in every film regardless of what the script says, but he did a great job in this film. He even prepares a heartfelt ending for this film that left me emotionally distressed. There is no sense trying to hide that the pacing is a little off, being as how there are a plentiful amount of characters, but they all fit snugly. *Smokin' Aces* can be a platter of things; Vengeance, lust, longing, and racial gripes. All come hitting fast and hard to ensure ultimate entertainment. When popcorn was invented back in 1948, I'm sure they had *Smokin' Aces* in mind. The film can be slightly annoying. For example; ADD kid. I wanted the little bastard to die. *Smokin' Aces* can be called *Lucky Number Slevin* meets the comic book world, including bizarre executioners, redneck rampagers, black sisters packing big heat, and a European master of disguise. When we saw Rambo pump away enemies with the 50 caliber, it was a marvelous sight. Well now we can watch it from the glorious hotel setting, safe from mosquito's. Buddy Israel is more of a gangster than Tony Montana ever was, Slime bag and all. The film churns gears into full-throttle at about an hour in and doesn't let up the insane violence, sadistic criminals, wacky situations, and nihilistic attitude brimming with an accelerated soundtrack. *Smokin' Aces* is an action fans wet dream. Despite all the negative reviews, i happened to fucking love this film and the only way to find out is to watch it for yourself.

-Maq

THE GREY
THE GREY

Joe Carnahan (2011)

Think of yourself, for a minute, unable to move, unable to process the current test fate has begun to put you through. Now switch your attention to this instinctual cry for life as your body reacts without a moment's thought or hesitation. Alien in nature, you watch without words as you fumble for an oxygen mask. This problem could have been solved a whole lot easier had you not been harnessed by not one seat belt, but two. For what is surely a danger is not the worst of your problems. Would you know it that not even a couple hundred feet below what is left of your chartered airplane lies a cold, white wilderness whose dark skies were lit up with the fireworks of what is left of your burning plane - many of your own kinds fate. God knows what lurks in the absence of scenery or in the frosted lines of pine because fuck faith. This wordless mantra of Liam Neeson's character Ottway is carved into his own frozen face through the entirety of the film until one of the finer flames decides to finally spew forth a riddance that is worthy of a crack of a smile - one of the few located in the bright hopelessness of *The Grey*. Boiling are these instances where decisions that amount to life's uncontrollable circumstances seem so sinewy and cruel. You've seen it before. Those moments where leadership must be presumed and the following party's favor is not-so carefully balanced. Had I been thrust into this very same situation, I'm not sure I'd know who to lay allegiance to, either, let alone possess the will to survive. Then again, this is *The Grey's* strongest weapon, not action, and certainly not taking action. If *The Grey* had to be akin to anything then I would have to compare its strong sense of questionable camaraderie with John Carpenter's *The Thing*, only replacing a hostile shape-shifting alien being with a animus wolf and removing almost any sort of weapon and replacing them with doubt.

To briefly summarize, *The Grey* follows a small group of plane crash survivors, previously oil-rig workers, through the Alaskan wilderness while being stalked by a large pack of gray wolves. The largest step the viewer will have to take in order to accommodate a more comfortable and caring perspective on *The Grey* is to take a second to pause, contemplate, and eventually realize that the film will not concern itself with a multitude of cliché long action shots featuring wolf carnage. The trailer is guilty of making it seem like such a film, but there lies the portion of the budget reserved for the marketing campaign. With brief glimpses of men freezing to death with the creeping peril of feral beasts should come to the obvious realization that a virtually frozen man isn't the best man for a wild fight for his life. In these frigid conditions where mobility is restricted and where indigenous beasts of prey lay, the only thing one can really do is hopelessly run. Taking a stand is a fool's dream, though I'm sure wrestling with a furry predator

and bathing in your own blood would be one way to escape the crushing cold of the weather presented in *The Grey*. For this and many other reasons, *The Grey* is careful with its steps, knowing full well that you were enticed by the spectacle of viewing the ever-so stoic Liam Neeson gearing up for a critical culmination of wildlife vengeance. It monitors the life of each contestant featured on this wild game (show) and extends the warranties past their expected due date. The effectiveness of the desolation is only increased by the main antagonist (s); a malevolent pack of wolves whose ground has been trespassed upon. Second weather to wolves and you will begin to see the harrowing implications of their crash and its site. Sure, *The Grey* does lessen the screen-time with the wolves, subtracting the once possible nature-run-amok aspect of this, but that is not to say they aren't involved enough. In fact, with previous expectations in tow, *The Grey* not only surprised me with the implied notion of the ever so watchful eyes of the pack, but also the course taken for full development of these contemptuous human characters. As for the wolves and their combined undomesticated omniscience, *The Grey* perfectly emulates what was done so well in *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996); creating a smothering setting in which death paces against the grain of natural landscapes, making all sounds but rare sights.

In this day and age, when it comes to a film from Hollywood that boasts a somewhat unconventional premise, it always seems that politically-correct pitchforks are raised and whining fully commences. It would appear that nit-picking "petaphiles" have gathered up the slack left behind from our mostly satiated responses towards a harrowing survival thriller and begun to spin webs of slander towards director Joe Carnahan (*Smokin' Aces*, *Narc*) and actor Liam Neeson for indulging on wolf meat stew for preparation of "hate." It is true that Carnahan purchased a total of four wolf carcasses for use on the set on *The Grey* as to give way for a CGI intermission because, let's face it, digital animation only goes so far when attempting to garner authentic human empathy. For an example of the brashness and overall creepiness of the Internet com-plaintiffs, simply visit the IMDb forum for *The Grey*. All you really need to do is observe casual keywords, hell, even screen names (here's to you "mister_wolf"), for my point to be put across. To be succinct, *The Grey* is a heavy dose of malicious and arctic nihilism; it's a sad, sad cinematic creature liberated by only the attitude of the wounded and the altitude of the setting. For those who enjoy frequenting a couple hours worth of mind-numbing entertainment, you might find your brain to be hurting as experienced by a fellow co-worker of mine during the mid-night screening. I can still distinctly hear the aggravated murmuring and the ineffectiveness of the auditorium's doorstep ringing in my memory banks. *The Grey* should be seen, if not for the celebration of the archaic human instinct for survival, then surely for a condensed lesson in masculine conditioning, which is quite rare coming from a film market that is mostly populated by liberal pussies. Take it or leave it, as is - *The Grey* is the best film to come from the early weeks of 2012 and that

THE GREY

means a whole hell of a lot more than it should.

-mAQ

TERROR TOONS

Joe Castro (2002)

I think this is the first and only time you will ever see me talk in a shining light about a Brain Damage film, so pay close attention. I've stalked over the idea of renting Terror Toons for several years now. I think the idea of some rampant childhood nightmare mixed with a pseudo-psychedelic feel just appeals to me in some unknown manner. After hearing that a Brain Damage film was getting a sequel, my curiosity had to be nourished. Terror Toons is a film that is undeniably hated by most people and for that, I can find much to adore about this sideshow like twisted straight to video release. A disturbing curvy pre-teen girl receives a package in the mail of a cartoon called TERROR TOONS. After popping it in and not noticing the giant title card that says Directed by Satan, she unwittingly releases two sadistic and largely entertaining killers into her household, thus destroying their form of reality as beyond their house is a giant hypnotic spinner. Terror Toons inundates with insane and carefully placed editing to further the look of a cartoon hell. Animated vultures carefully make their entrance as intestines are pulled from the Orientals cavity. Only a man child such as director Joe Castro could create such a psychotic and madcap entry in our frail and dying slasher genre. Think of a childhood memory involving cartoons. All of your memories might even be wrapped up in animation. Now imagine if your very own Wily E. Coyote were to attempt to sever your limb from limb in order to play with your intestines while hypnotizing your friends into a disgusting vegetable while puking all over oneself. That's Terror Toons in a nutshell. This is the only single title of the entire Brain Damage library that warrants a viewing. I would even begin to think that Castro has a place in his heart for Christopher Lee's Funny Man. The characters of Dr. Carnage and Max Assassin have instantly become iconic in my mind. I cannot imagine having more fun with any villains than with this devilish duo. Dr. Carnage is the rather green fellow in a lab coat who performs many botched procedures and involve an extreme amount of pain and the normal dose of a purplish liquid inside your head whereas Max Assassin is a giant gorilla with a Tommy gun. The costumes for these characters are extraordinary for the small budget of only \$2300 dollars. Every action they perform is dubbed over with maniacal FX and character quips. This is an extremely unconventional low budget horror film that is teeming with the feel of a Saturday morning cartoon. If we had more zaniness in our horror genre, I'm sure that random experiments could be successfully pulled off rather than sacrificing an idea to the bowels of a cinema hell in which no one respects. With that in mind, Yes, Terror Toons is awful, but it is the most fun I've had with a horror film in a while. Now I just need to see the sequel.

-mAQ

THE WATCHER
THE WATCHER

Joe Charbanic (2000) I remember as a young teenager always wanting to see *The Watcher*. Not for James Spader who I've only recently noticed or Marisa Tomei who redefines the need for a mature and elder sexual appetite but for Keanu Reeves, who I have loved as an A-list Hollywood actor since the release of cybergem *Johnny Mnemonic*. Following the release of this film, I never paid attention to its video release date and never pursued viewing it until finding a copy at our local thrift store. With top billing of James "Sexrat" Spader as a homicide detective suffering from the removed effects of trepanation and Keanu Reeves as a maniacal and loony serial killer, I felt that *The Watcher* had nowhere to go but up. Upon viewing I wasn't quite as right as I would have liked to be. What I received in return for a stifling price of .33 cents was one of the earlier seditious gay serial killer films. As with most games of cat-and-mouse projected in almost every James Patterson "Alex Cross" novel or thriller period, this story involves a serial killer tormenting a subject of a previous crime. With malice and curious man-love as his initiative, Reeves follows the relocation of Joel Campbell (Spader) from Los Angeles to Chicago as he waits timelessly to rekindle his own twisted brand of anonymous, ambiguous homosexuality. After a painful opening showcasing the track that single-handedly killed the 90s, Rob Zombie's *Dragula*, we are tethered down and forced to watch Keanu Reeves dance around waving his(!) handgun in a shamanistic manner. Not to mention that Keanu Reeves isn't dancing to the song accordingly or the lack of music in the foreground thanks to the third wall set up by this archaic time capsule of dated editing but had they picked any other track over *Dragula*, the film would have been a lot better off as it brings to mind heavy doses of *The Matrix* and every Playstation game worthy of nostalgic memories.

The dosage of disturbing affection that was meant to ripple the waves uncorks itself near the three-quarter marker of the film. The scene's composites clue you in on this with the addition of Campbell's psychiatrist as more of a bargaining chip than a pretty supporting actress with no climaxual involvement. Once he breaks into her office searching for the recorded sessions with Campbell and escapes with his masturbatory evidence, he scrutinizes the audio in a jarring fashion while he rewinds and repeats the line of "Do you need him?" The instances of subliminal faggotry only become more intense and frequent. During the showdown in a waterfront building, *The Watcher* suddenly switched to the thematic innocence much alike that of *The Voice of the Night* penned by Dean Koontz. As Campbell and Griffin both stand off over the life of an unnecessary female element to their ragtag boy element consisting of vengeance and chase scenes, it was hard not to imagine little Colin and Roy's scuffle over poor Heather at the finale of the very same mentioned book. After all, Griffin would never let a "bitch" ruined the love he has worked so hard for, all those pretty women near or far.

The opposition would never have a chance to escalate of Griffin silenced them; after dancing in front of them and embarrassing himself of course. Throughout his victims, Griffin shows so much compassion towards them before the deed that it becomes an endearing practice, murder, that is. His slayings seems to be so intimate and personable yet disastrous as well. As I expected, Keanu Reeves made for a solid nemesis for the protagonist but I wouldn't codify him as simple as a villain. You see, Griffin's intentions are nothing more than illicit feelings for Campbell but Griffin's demeanor is largely cheerful and curious so it detracts from the actual suspense. Most of the suspense and thrills are actually on fault in part to the chase sequences, only certain ones though. The car chase scene proved to be expertly shot save for the clandestine gas station explosion. As much as the camera weaved through traffic, it couldn't sustain after Griffin lobbed the zippo lighter to ignite the building, killing 3 police officers only to make his getaway in a flaming car. The Watcher is a self-cynical 90s thriller which spiraled the expectations pretty low for my fluctuating standards. Be that as it may, it proved to be a rather entertaining ride through the eyes of a cloak-and-dagger serial killer and James Spader whining while abusing barbiturates. Even though the effects and editing are isolated in a time of awkward practices in action/thrillers, I find that I'm able to resist slapping judgment on this film on account of its terrible grainy-viewcam that we utilize for Griffin's stalking vision or the abundant negative exposure flashes to insinuate foreboding extermination. Not to be mistaken as a film about the streets, The Watcher is about the possible dangers of homosexuality and a testament to the madness that festers within the eyes of the rich boy hustler that Reeves' has portrayed in several roles spanning his career.

-mAQ

BEYOND THE DARKNESS
BEYOND THE DARKNESS

Joe D'Amato (1979)

Joe D'Amato's *Beyond the Darkness* (Buio Omega) was a pleasant surprise. The master of Italian sleaze and trash was actually able to make a film that resembled art!! *Beyond the Darkness* is a tale about a young man and the horrifying loss of his only love. A rich orphan; the loss of love the young man experiences must have been especially traumatizing as he never had the love of a family. Despite all of his power, money, and prestige, he can't buy what is forever gone. Instead of trying to buy another love, the young man decides he'd rather butcher young women. He takes his lost love (after stuffing her rotting body) and puts her on display in a bed at his mansion. What else is a heartbroken young man supposed to do?! The young man is also constantly shadowed by his mature housekeeper who wants his love. The housekeeper tries to play on the man's mental imbalances but he eventually gets tired of that and takes appropriate action. Her only benefit to the man is that she helps him dispose of the bodies of the women that he slaughters. *Beyond the Darkness* features a tranquilizing score by legendary Italian musicians, Goblin. I was surprised by the emotional impact that *Beyond the Darkness* had during scenes of sadness of the young man's lost love in combination with the melodic talents of Goblin. Throughout the film, the music is very consistent with the overall feel of *Beyond the Darkness*. Even when the young bachelor burns a young woman's body alive, I couldn't help to feel sorry for the depressed lad. *Beyond the Darkness* is a masterpiece of Italian horror cinema. I have yet to see another film by Joe D'Amato that had any redeeming qualities. *Beyond the Darkness* features the full frontal nudity you would expect from the Italian sleaze director, but it also features genuine human emotion. I wouldn't be surprised if *Beyond the Darkness* was a personal and "auteur piece" of the stereotypical Italian director. Maybe old D'Amato had a lost love he could never get over. Every director has to put themselves into their film at least one time during their career.

-Ty E

THE HOWLING

Joe Dante (1981)

The werewolf film is a certainly a severely neglected sub-genre of the horror genre. That being said, the number of genuinely quality werewolf films is absurdly scant. Of course, the horror genre has a rotten wealth of mediocre zombie flicks (will these ever stop?!?), but it is sorely lacking in the classic supernatural wolfman department. Unfortunately, it seems that most modern day werewolf movies are not much more than sterile action-packed cross-genre works (e.g. the supremely overrated *Underworld* franchise) that are designed to be sexy, cool, and even funny, but totally lack the distinct nuances of the ancient monster myth. Joe Dante's *The Howling* (1981) is one of few notable works that manages to capture some of the elements of the traditional werewolf story, but, unfortunately, time has been a little unkind to this mostly worthwhile horror flick. It is not often that a serious female professional goes to a sleazy porno theater to meet a murderously perverted werewolf. Of course, television anchorwoman Karen White thinks that she is just going to meet a mere pathological serial killer. Naturally, she is met with quite a surprise of the lethal lycanthropic sort. After suffering amnesia after her less than charming meeting with the somewhat degenerate werewolf, a doctor orders Mrs. White to stay at a highly suspect colony getaway. Karen and her husband decide to go and end up at a peculiar rural colony inhabited by mysterious individuals that are somewhat similar to the violent villagers of *The Wicker Man*, minus the odd proclivity towards Celtic paganism. As one soon comes to suspect, the dubious individuals of the colony are actually a pack of werewolves who don't take too kindly to silver bullets. Unfortunately, some of the werewolves featured in *The Howling* look exactly like what they actually are in real-life: people wearing werewolf costumes. Due to age and less than stellar special effects, the werewolves in the film aren't very petrifying and even disappointing at times. Like a lot of older horror films, *The Howling* has more than shown its age. Additionally, the vintage wardrobes of the characters featured in the film are nothing short of repellant, but, of course, such blatant aesthetic-displeasantsness comes with the territory for a horror film created in the early 1980s. The real meat of *The Howling* lies in the buildup leading to when the eccentric colony residents collectively morph into werewolves and do as werewolf do. Whether it be Richard Ramirez-look-alike Eddie or nefarious nymphomaniac Marsha, one can't help but yearn for the little lycanthropic legion to shred their human prey apart. Like most worthwhile werewolf flicks, *The Howling* has an imperative erotic component that is probably best expressed when seductive beastess Marsha lures in Karen White's husband and brands him on the back via her she-wolf claws, thus marking her property. In regard to Mr. White, one must ask themselves whether or not the man committed active adultery when engaging in bestial intercourse whilst entranced by an exceedingly sexual super-

THE HOWLING

natural being? To answer my own question, I give a positive: NO. The Howling has a number of glaring flaws and aesthetic blemishes, yet it is most certainly one of few werewolf films worthy of viewing and returning to. The film has enough nudity, violence, and true horror to at least keep most viewers reasonably gratified. Still, I can't help but feel that while The Howling shows immense promise during its undeniably captivating opening, it never quite reaches its full potential. Then again, the actual ending of The Howling is quite splendid, especially for those viewers that fancy scenes of extravagant mass bodily dismemberment. Unfortunately, it seems that Karen White never reaches the solace of soul that she originally sought out to achieve in the first place on her luxurious vacation retreat. In conclusion, I highly recommend that viewers should take the opportunity to bite into a big juicy hamburger upon finishing The Howling, so as to heighten the overall experience of the film.

-Ty E

THE PAGEMASTER

Joe Johnston (1994)

LeVar Burton of Reading Rainbow rolls in his grave concerning this film. That is, hypothetically assuming that he is already dead. Kunta Kinte would be very disappointed to take note the average effects of *The Pagemaster*, considering I'm well past being an adult and the general synopsis of this magical tale has me biting my nails wanting to skedaddle over to the nearest library and immerse myself into classic literature. I'll admit *The Pagemaster's* animation is severely dated and doesn't retain the classic feel of such classics as *Watership Down* and *The Plague Dogs* (Both of these animated styles have an intimidating gritty and vintage aesthetic), but this is more than a Disney feature brimming with racism and vapid morals. Macaulay Culkin stars as a sheltered child who is terrified of absolutely everything. Irony aside, he would later grow up to be busted on several drug charges and traffic violations. These incidents would later mark his role in *The Pagemaster* to be an exercise in masterful acting seeing as how statistics had no role in his later arrests and fall from fame and his subsequent rise into indie stardom with his cult "orgiastic" hit *Party Monster*, which I admit is almost a great film. With only few live-action roles with the most recognizable being Christopher Lloyd, *The Pagemaster* focuses more on the landscape of colorful and diverse genres as Adventure, Fantasy, and Horror. The few instances of CGI are proudly and fluidly brought to life due to an amazing team. At the time, the scenes of a rotunda melting and eventually creating a tidal wave of pastels could even rival the majesty of the effects of *What Dreams May Come*. Boasting many excerpts from literature classics as *Treasure Island*, *Moby Dick*, *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Pagemaster* does many of these tale cinematic justice with literary translations. Most notably is the enthusiastic and menacing performance of Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick*.

A bit of nostalgia never hurt anyone. My favorite childhood viewing activities revolved around frequent viewings of *The Rescuers Down Under*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, *We're Back: A Dinosaur's Story*, and *The Pagemaster*. After viewing this film after the years, it still lives up in ways to the standard that it has survived with. There's no real depth here other than a massive reading propaganda video. I'd expect courageous adventure from a film telling your children with complexes to venture outside more but sadly the farthest this goes is an underused dragon battle. *The Pagemaster* represents a huge part of childhood development and also manages to rehabilitate many children into enjoying reading. If it worked on me, then in all theory it should work on many. Those especially who can still manage to stomach a children's film or even an animated film. The future of Hollywood has a storm brewing. Director Joe Johnston who has created simple tales of *The Pagemaster* and *Jumanji* has moved onto *The Wolfman* (2009) and *The First Avenger: Captain America*. May god bless these projects with the age

THE PAGEMASTER

old meaning of quality over quantity.

-mAQ

WRONG TURN 2: DEAD END

Joe Lynch (2007)

With most horror being as bland as processed cheese, It does come as a surprise to see something that would benefit the horror community. When Wrong Turn first came out in 2003, it didn't have any contemporary aspects. Nothing about this film was original. Whether you analyze the use of the backwoods as a target fear or notice the beautiful broads and gut-munching gore, the film blatantly appears bland and would never reach the emotional anxiety quota of Deliverance. Wrong Turn 2 grasps the past-time knowledge of the greats and comes to terms with the failure of this first and attempts to fix this by adding more gore, more nudity, and more action. In order to make this work right, no doubt they'd need a hand from someone who is used to this madcap carnage. With this whim, Joe Lynch was brought in. You'd know him from Terror Firmer and nothing else. For being his first film, he has already proposed a delightful future in horror. Some of the events and controversy are perhaps the more interesting subject. In Australia, a government officer showed a group of teenagers incarcerated for sex crimes the film Wrong Turn 2. This led into the community questioning what their tax money was being paid for and news headlines broke out, insisting that the officer be "sacked" Why you would show a film that can hardly be taken seriously on a serious note is beyond me, but i do thank the officer for a hilarious scandal. On to the values of the film, It has a group of the clichéd characters that American cinema is known for. We have the Dyke military officer, pervert skateboarder, a football playing Negro with morals, an artfag who cuts herself, and a handful of sluts. On the subject of the Negro, it seems odd that he portrayed the character as the only pure soul on the film. The one that would rise above the foul plays of temptation and would be the most useful. His all-American name, Texas Battle, needs some explaining as well. Dale Murphy (Sounds like a NASCAR Racer) is played by Henry Rollins. From Rollins performance as a motivational speaker in Feast, to him playing the Patriotic bad ass warrior, his demeanor in films proves that he can play anything. Actually, his role in Feast was the only proof that I needed. Last time I remember Rollins in a film, he was getting a blowjob, art style, in a Richard Kern short film depicting misogyny and grainy black & white. It's needless to say that his performance carried the film home, and without Rollins, Wrong Turn 2: Dead End would have an accurate name. Wrong Turn 2 is a satire of sorts, using the art of sensationalism to it's own advantage, while silently mocking reality TV. Wrong Turn 2 did a much better job than Halloween: Resurrection did. Although, I did enjoy watching Bu\$ta Rhymes negro-riffic performance. Years later, that memorable scene featuring the fight between the "black knight" and the "pasty face killer" would become a hilarious inside joke between friends. Wrong Turn 2 is a film that will be hated by some, if not most. If you manage to glance at the big

WRONG TURN 2: DEAD END

picture, and absorb the great performances, mutant pregnancies, and America incarnate lighting up redneck freaks with a dynamite bow & arrow, then congratulations. I'm just as glad to love this film as you should. Vote Rollins for President.

-mAQ

BITTER FEAST

Joe Maggio (2010)

The seasoning of *Bitter Feast* is the flexible premise: disgruntled celebrity chef kidnaps asshole blogger who delivered a scathing review belittling his refined culinary artistry. What creates *Bitter Feast* into the personable account of not vengeance, but rehabilitation is its setting of a soulless cyberspace pseudo-reality and the rabid clicking that leads to this collective unconscious feeling (influenced by anonymous bloggers) morphing into public opinion. In other words, what I say about this film in particular may or may not lead you to subconsciously go out of your way to view this film. This clever revision to the classic kidnap/torture staple of modern horror is in part of director Joe Maggio's utter disgust with a review towards Gordon Ramsay.

"The origins of BITTER FEAST go back to June, 2007. I was reading a Frank Bruni review of Gordon Ramsay's first New York City restaurant, "London Hotel." There was a lassitude in Bruni's writing that gave you the sense he liked the food, but wanted to dislike it, and so he delivered this odd, middling, lazy review, ultimately condemning it for lack of what Bruni considered "the most important thing of all - excitement." It struck me that this was totally ridiculous and unfair. Then I started thinking what I would do to Frank Bruni if I were Gordon Ramsay. After many strange imaginings, I concluded that more than anything else, what Ramsay would probably want is to somehow force Bruni to live in Ramsay's shoes for a bit, to teach him empathy, to force him to care about cooking with the intensity that Ramsay cared about it, and then to randomly and arbitrarily shit all over Bruni's dreams. Thus, BITTER FEAST."

Starting out with a flashback that's revisited several times, each time with a fraction of a revelation, *Bitter Feast* quickly but barely establishes the inspired Gordon character as a hard-ass with very little patience for his co-star's taunting and dull female sense of humor. This sleight against his art that he presents to a nationwide audience has driven him mad with frustration. This annoying blond character is perhaps the reason why Gordon chose to launch a campaign of terror against uneducated blogger, JT Franks. For a visual image, JT Franks isn't an honest reviewer of any sense - he's a sadist wielding his own shortcomings and grief as a weapon to bring down others with their success. For instance, the pseudo-critic makes no effort to enjoy the tastes and settings offered up to his palate. Scathing review after another, even his own wife realizes that his hobby has taken a wretched route into unnecessary and unreliable tabloid skid marks. To the horror community, this is the equivalent of a third-rate "gore-fiend" swearing off Matt Reeve's *Let Me In* without even acquiring an opinion - it's all boulder-dash to me. The refusal to view a film, one that is well within your own interests all for the facade of purism and elitism is deplorable and as

BITTER FEAST

demonstrated in *Bitter Feast*, really pisses people off.

Bitter Feast's roots also give it a commendation of expression: a reaction to reactions. It's an abstract theme to divulge with violence, especially in the guise of a brutal thriller. Escaping away from the confines of predictably (at least until the climax), *Bitter Feast* approaches the genre with a fine platter of culinary torture games. For instance, Gordon swears by a credo of which states that if Mr. Franks believes his taste buds to be so divine, could he not discern which dish had a scent of belladonna hidden amidst the prepared mulberries? Several cuisine-themed challenges await this man, JT Franks, a person of which has no humanity left to be sympathetic towards. Through the flashbacks and stoic vocalizing is Peter Gray's character slowly unearthed. While shallow but supported, Gray represents a character whose hardships and accidents make up what he is. His primitive side meshes with the luxuriant in which a medium is discovered. This is presented as scenes are interwoven to reveal the serene fortitude in such tasks as collecting berries, then rivaled with hunting, the true masculinity flourishing through his past brother's cruelty.

Without the introduction of a private detective, I feel *Bitter Feast* would have been more linear to the rehabilitation of Franks in his pretentiousness. While *Bitter Feast* revels in what is certainly a creative wig to put atop the head of generic horror, it never truly rockets towards the marginal yet loyal cult cinema success it could have acquired had it focused on more unconventional shocks and games. However, this culinary thriller was vastly entertaining and never boring. I even found myself patiently waiting for this Peter character to turn wind towards the path of German hero Armin Meiwes. Although hampered by the typical conventions, *Bitter Feast* is quite the low-budget spectacle of fine dishes and exacted justice towards a pointless opinion. Well-played and conservatively sadistic, *Bitter Feast* is exactly what the title implies.

-mAQ

BARTON FINK

Joel Coen* (1991)

While I would not exactly call myself a true Coen Brothers connoisseur, I feel confident enough in my appraisal of their somewhat uneven oeuvre to say that *Barton Fink* (1991)—a cinematic work that has been eclipsed in terms of popularity by probably half a dozen or so of their other, oftentimes glaringly inferior, films—is their unequivocal magnum opus. Indeed, fuck the autistic acting and quirky Cagisms of *Raising Arizona* (1987), nauseatingly nice Amero-Swede musicality of *Fargo* (1996), and sophisticated sunbaked stoner humor of *The Big Lebowski* (1998), the Coen brothers' 1991 period piece, which is set in 1941 on the eve of America's entry into World War II, has the most to offer in terms of sheer aesthetic potency and curiousness, thematic intricately, meta-cinephilia, and eccentric esoteric Judaic self-loathing. A virtual 'Jewish Eraserhead' featuring John Turturro portraying a sort of kosher commie intellectual equivalent to the David Lynch protagonist Henry portrayed by Jack Nance in terms of obscenely absurd haircut and Fremdscham-inducing awkwardness of character, the film was even executive produced by Hebraic cineaste Ben Barenholtz who was also responsible for popularizing Lynch's debut feature by screening it as part of the midnight movie circuit. Indeed, the film even features a number of blatant Lynchian shots juxtaposed with ambient noise, not to mention the fact that it is arguably the brothers' most hermetic film. While undoubtedly somewhat overlooked compared to many of the Coens' other films, it managed to snag three major awards at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival, including the coveted *Palme d'Or*, thus underscoring its somewhat preternatural arthouse quality. Of course, as a film that dedicates much time to ruthlessly mocking both egomaniacal far-leftist Jewish intellectuals and the distinct Ashkenazi immigrant flavor of the Hollywood's Golden Age studio system, it is easy to see why modern academics and film critics seem to suffer amnesia when it comes to discussing the film and comparing it to the filmmakers' other work. Needless to say, *Barton Fink* makes for a great double feature with the Coen brothers' most overtly Jewish film *A Serious Man* (2009) and one can only hope that the siblings will finally get around to achieving their projected goal of directing an adaptation of Michael Chabon's hyper Hebraic detective novel *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* (2007), which they have already adapted into a screenplay. Notably, Jewish American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum wrote an entire article entitled *Crass Consciousness* featured in the August 23, 1991 issue of the *Chicago Reader* where he expressed in his strange misreading of the film a certain highly personalized uneasiness, complaining, "A final point should be made about the broad, comic-book-style Jewish caricatures in the film — Barton, Lipnick, Geisler, and Lipnick's assistant Lou Breeze (Jon Polito). Spike Lee was lambasted on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* and by Nat Hentoff in the *Village Voice* (among other

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places) for Jewish caricatures in *MO' BETTER BLUES* that employed one of the same actors (Turturro), occupied only a fraction as much screen time, and were if anything less malicious than the caricatures in *BARTON FINK*. So I assume the reason Lee was singled out for abuse and the Coens won't be to the same extent is that the Coens happen to be Jewish. For whatever it's worth — speaking now as a Jew myself — I don't consider any of the caricatures in either movie to be racist in themselves, and it seems to me somewhat absurd that Lee should be criticized so widely for something that the Coens do at much greater length with impunity. Being white, having the minds of teenagers, and believing that social commitment is for jerks are all probably contributing factors to this privileged treatment." The grandson of a wealthy businessman that owned a small chain of movie theaters in Alabama, Rosenbaum notably comes from a far-leftist background and was involved with the organizing of angry negro communists during the civil rights era. Although just speculation, one can only assume that he takes personal offense to the less the flattering of the eponymous protagonist—a Jewish leftist writer like himself—and his hypocritical quasi-Marxist politics. While Rosenbaum makes the assumption that the Coens are just philistine jerks that are simply too selfish and immature to embrace the oh-so precious social justice warrior lifestyle, Barton Fink demonstrates that the brothers have a keen understanding of the Jewish leftist mindset and all of its hypocritical idiosyncrasies. Notably, in his book *The Jewish Mystique* (1969), Dutch-born American sociologist Ernest van den Haag, himself an ex-commie activist that spent nearly three years in one of Mussolini's prisons, made the wise observation in regard to the questionable nature of Jewish left-wing activism, "Since the Jews suffered for so long from oppression by dominant groups, laws, and traditions, their sentimental identification with minorities, underdogs, the poor, the humiliated, the shunned, the maltreated, the outlawed is quite understandable. Yet, explanation is not justification. And unfortunately, the Jews have not used their intellectual powers to analyze Utopian, reformist, and revolutionary doctrines as effectively as they have used these powers to analyze traditions and ideologies supporting the status quo. Wherefore, within the Jewish cultural establishment, Jewishness as an entrance ticket has tended to be fused with vaguely leftist, pro-underdog attitudes. Jewishness alone merely gets you into the lobby." While they might use somewhat aberrant humor as their weapon of choice as opposed to some turgid academic text, the Coens demonstrate with *Barton Fink* that they are, quite unlike Rosenbaum, the sort of genuinely intellectually curious Jews that a great sage like van den Haag could have appreciated.

Although one of the more intellectual and culturally refined film critics that America has produced as a protégé of iconoclastic artist and film critic Manny Farber, Rosenbaum seems to suffer from the stereotypical Judaic trait of a lack of self-awareness, especially on the collective racial, as opposed to personal, level.

Not surprisingly, the eponymous protagonist of *Barton Fink*—an ostensibly ‘revolutionary’ far-leftist that, despite being a pretentious navel-gazing prick intellectual that has probably never did an hour of real physical labor in his entire life, claims to be fighting for the so-called “common man”—is plagued by a certain infuriating degree of a lack of self-awareness, but luckily reality eventually ruthlessly smacks him in the face in the form of a literal fiery holocaust of sorts and a grotesquely obscene Semitic studio mogul that reminds him that a communist is really just a failed kosher capitalist that seeks power via different, albeit similarly materialistic (and anti-goyim), means. While Rosenbaum describes the characters in the film as “comic-book-style Jewish caricatures,” I think they more clearly represent perennial post-religious Jewish archetypes that most Jews, like Rosenbaum, probably wish did not exist yet are ultimately quite clear to anyone that is familiar with Hollywood—both of the past and present as Harvey Weinstein has recently highlighted with his Philip Roth-esque sexcapades in shiksa-defiling. In fact, the Jewish lack of self-awareness is depicted in a cleverly allegorical fashion at the conclusion of the Coen brothers’ *A Serious Man* in a scene at the end of the film where a group of young Hebrew students absurdly stand helplessly as a tornado begins to make its way in their general direction. Undoubtedly, Israeli-born jazz musician and anti-Zionist activist Gilad Atzmon probably said it best when he wrote in his review of the film, “The Coen film ends with a chain of scenes initiated by a tornado alert given during a Hebrew class in a Jewish orthodox school. The young Bar Mitzvah kids are ordered to evacuate the class immediately. Next we see the storm rapidly encroaching towards the boys and girls who are now standing in the open school yard. Paralysed by awe, perplexed they gaze towards their own inevitable disaster. They stare at it, they are hopeless on the verge of impotence. Their elder teacher is right behind them, frantically struggling to find the right key for the synagogue shelter. The key to life should be in his hands, but he is obviously not going to find it. At the same cinematic time Larry Gopnik, the protagonist of the film, receives an urgent call from his doctor, his X-ray diagnosis is back. Apparently, something is horribly wrong with his body. Prior to the call, Larry was obviously totally unaware of his affliction and is thrown into a state of profound shock. Allegorically, this is the meaning of Jewish detachment and alienation according to the Coens. The People of the Book consistently fail to detect when something is going horribly wrong. They somehow fail to anticipate the storm that is coming or brace themselves for its devastating impact. They fail to interpret some minor signs of resentment before it turns into a tide of hatred. And even when they do manage to notice a rise in antagonism, they somehow employ the wrong strategy to placate it. As we often read, Jewish ethnic campaigners and institutions (ADL, AJC, BOD etc) are always flagging up statistics, they prefer to present numbers of ‘anti Semitic’ incidents instead of wondering why these incidents occur in the first place.” In *Barton Fink*, the eponymous protagonist

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also fails to process danger after unwittingly befriendng a serial killer who he initially pisses off after complaining to the front desk of a hotel they were both occupying despite said serial killer also being the sort of goy “common man” that that he oftentimes speaks so reverently about. Of course, as the Coen brothers reveal, the working-class is nothing more than a mere abstraction to the protagonist, or so he assumedly learns when it is already too late. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons that the Coen brothers are such great filmmakers is their sort of razor sharp racial self-awareness and intricate and nuanced approach to the Jewish question, whether it be the exploiting a goy’s empathy by an insufferably slimy bookie Bernie ‘chisellin’ Little Yid’ Bernbaum and his femme fatale sister Verna in *Miller’s Crossing* (1990), the completely spiritually cuckolded Milius-esque neocon Jewish convert Walter Sobchak in *The Big Lebowski*, or the titular kosher cuckold and his cryptically corrupt Minnesota community in *A Serious Man*. While it is indubitably true that the Hebraic duo have created their own fair share of uniquely unflattering goy bad boys and unsavory shiksa sluts, it can certainly be argued that the Coens’ most pathetic and repugnant characters are swarthy Israelites that love the smell of their own kosher farts. In *Barton Fink*—a film with a protagonist that was modeled after kosher commie playwright and screenwriter Clifford Odets who, not unlike the film’s protagonist, left for Hollywood after the production of his play *Clash by Night* (1941) in the 1941–1942 season—the viewer is exposed to the innate hypocrisy and phoniness of the bourgeois-bred Jewish Trotskyite intellectual and how such a figure is even more loathsome and grotesque than the miserly ‘happy merchant’ archetype. Indeed, after watching the film, it is easy to see why Uncle Joe Stalin went to such absurd extremes to have an ice axe driven into Trotsky’s diseased gray matter, as there is no greater threat to a real lumpenprole revolution than a comfortably smug intellectual in unstained worker’s clothing. Of course, the great irony of the film is that it was directed by two intellectuals that look like they could be the dope-smoking grandsons of rabid postmodern rebben Trotsky. Indeed, forget Lubitsch and his all the more cynical protégé Billy Wilder, the Coen brothers are the two true kosher kings of subversive Semitic comedies. While racist alt-Israelite Douglas Rushkoff—a bombastic dork with an unintentionally humorous god complex that once bragged regarding his race, “In a sense, our detractors have us right, in that we are a corrosive force . . .”—proudly argued in his book *Nothing Sacred: The Truth About Judaism* (2003) in regard to the innately iconoclastic nature of Judaism, “Iconoclasm destroys all man-made symbols and leads to abstract monotheism, which in turn leads to an ethos of social justice,” the Coen brothers go all the way and smash both Judaism and its post-religious metaphysical affliction of SJWism.

Notably, in his book *The Wicked Son: Anti-Semitism, Jewish self-hatred, and the Jews* (2006), right-wing Jewish Zionist playwright and sometimes filmmaker David Mamet makes a somewhat dubious claim in regard to mainstream

zio-ganda flicks like Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) and Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002), stating in a somewhat paranoid (yet quite stereotypically Jewish) fashion, "I wrote, years ago, that Holocaust films are 'MANDINGO for Jews,' and that the thrill, for the audience, came and comes from a protected indulgence of anti-Semitism: they get to see us killed and to explain to themselves that they feel bad about it." Judging by his quote and by the fact that he is also a Jewish writer, I would love to hear Mamet's thoughts on *Barton Fink*, which, on top of featuring a number of greedy and/or otherwise grotesque Jewish characters, features a Judaic writer protagonist that probably epitomizes everything that he abhors in his race as a mensch with strong Zionist tendencies. In the same book, Mamet complains in regard to his kinsmen, "Why do some Jews reject their religion and their race? For two reasons: because it is 'too Jewish' and because it is not Jewish enough." While I have to assume that Mamet would deride the Coen brothers' film as the work of unabashed self-loathing Jews, I would certainly argue that—for better or worse—it is, culturally speaking, one of the most innately Jewish films ever made as a hyper hermetic cinematic work that follows in the grand culturally kosher tradition of Franz Kafka, Bruno Schulz, Hermann Ungar, Carlo Michelstaedter, Harold Pinter, and David Cronenberg in terms of being an intricate and highly idiosyncratic expression of Jewish neurosis, albeit of the slightly more immature sort. Despite the fact that they work in very different (sub)genres, the Coen brothers are somewhat comparable to Canuck body horror maestro Cronenberg in the sense of their subversive post-Talmudic intellects and somewhat detached affinity for the curiously morally depraved and/or preternaturally pathological. Similarly, just as only a member of god's chosen tribe could have directed a werewolf flick as dementedly darkly humorous and shoah-stained as John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) and a film as unabashedly perverse neurotic and aesthetically autistic as Todd Solondz *Palindromes* (2004), only a Jew (or two Jews, in this case) could have dreamed up a film as intrinsically and intricately Jewish despite being a film where the word "Jew" is only used once and "kike" is flagrantly used about half a dozen times.

Although a decidedly distastefully swarthy four-eyed geek with an eccentrically elevated jewfro, titular protagonist Barton Fink (John Turturro)—a pretentious playwright that just received somewhat of a hit with a painfully banal social realism oriented play entitled 'Bare Ruined Choirs'—seems to secretly believe that he is the most revolutionary writer since Marx, so naturally he is somewhat hesitant to take a job offer as a scriptwriter under contract at a big Hollywood studio named Capitol Pictures. Despite his semi-cryptic commie sympathies, Fink finds a \$1,000-a-week contract to be rather appealing since it is 1941 and he is somewhat unsure what to do with his life, or as he complains to his manager with a certain glaring lack of self-confidence and authenticity, "I'm not sure anymore. I guess I try to make a difference." Immediately upon arriving in Holly-

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wood, Fink is greeted with an ominous atmosphere when he meekly checks into a quasi-gothic and painfully dilapidated Art Deco dump named Hotel Earle—a building that clearly has seen better days, as if it lost what was left of its initial extravagance the same year that a janitor tossed the cut footage from Erich von Stroheim's magnum opus *Greed* (1924) into a MGM studio dumpster—that is run by a eerily emasculated and and merrily masochistic bellhop named 'Chet' (Steve Buscemi) who seems to derive great pleasure at the thought of shining the shoes of his hapless tenants. Despite the sorry state of the rotting hotel, Fink, who refuses an offer from his studio to pay for a nicer hotel, seems to have an instinctual and almost ascetic attraction to the building, as if he knows that it is his own little special piece of purgatory where he will have a spiritually luminous experience and be forced to truly find himself and mature as both a man and artist. Assigned to pen a script for a b wrestling movie that he has nil interest in, Fink is, not surprisingly, almost immediately plagued with writer's block, as if he cannot bear to write something that he believes is so innately beneath him. Indeed, while Fink acts like he has a great big hard-on for the working man, he cannot even be bothered to take interest in the perennial prole sport, but luckily a jovial fat bastard will soon give him so much needed pointers.

As Fink discovers in a rather rude fashion, Capitol Pictures, like most studios of that era (and today), is an almost 100% kosher studio that is lorded over by absurdly rude and grotesquely loudmouthed chosenites. Unfortunately for Fink, he is forced to work with a cynical producer named Ben Geisler (Tony Shalhoub)—a character clearly inspired by revolutionary Judaic Hollywood producer Irving 'The Boy Wonder' Thalberg (Camille, *Mutiny on the Bay*)—who makes it quite clear that he cannot stomach the pansy pretenses of artsy fartsy NYC intellectual types like the protagonist. Although the studio's founder and head Jack Lipnick (Michael Lerner)—a grotesque beast of a man that bears a striking physical resemblance to MGM co-founder Louis B. Mayer (who, like Lerner's character, is also a Belarusian-born Jew) and possesses a revoltingly arrogant and bombastic personality worthy of disgraced Miramax cofounder Louis B. Mayer—takes an immediate liking to Fink, the hapless screenwriter will soon discover that the obsession while ultimately lead to his artistic downfall. While Lipnick does everything he can to kiss Fink's ass, including literally kissing his feet and gleefully stating, "The writer is king here at Capitol Pictures. Don't believe me, take a look at your paycheck at the end of every week. That's what we think of the writer," he also reveals himself to be a megalomaniacal mad man by boasting with a certain degree of otherworldly chutzpah, "I'm bigger and meaner and louder than any other kike in this town." Undoubtedly, there is a certain sickly sardonic irony in the fact that Lipnick loves throwing around the classic anti-Semitic slur "kike," as Fink will ultimately become the victim of what a Jewish (anti)hate group like the ADL might describe as stereotypical 'financial canards' in terms of the ruthless abuse of business power and materialism that

the protagonist will suffer at the hands of the studio head. Indeed, Fink might to be a self-deluded prick and hypocrite that loves the smell of his own farts despite incessantly pontificating on his ostensible respect for the “common man,” but he does seem to have a certain genuine respect for art and the process of artistic creation. As for Lipnick, he seems to pride himself on profiting handsomely from incessantly producing formulaic philistine motion-picture entertainment for the most mindless of knuckle-dragging goyim, hence the popularity of the sort of kitschy boxing pictures that his studio regularly defecates out. Supposedly illiterate and relying on his meek assistant Lou Breeze (Jon Polito) to read scripts for him, Lipnick judges a film’s quality as to whether it is “fruity” or not. Needless to say, Fink’s script is ultimately judged to be “fruity,” but first the protagonist must go to virtual metaphysical hell and back before he can create what he will eventually personally judge as his greatest work.

Despite being a quasi-hipster-esque Jewish NYC intellectual that only works with other Jews, Fink somewhat ironically develops a relatively close and tender relationship with a bawdy and somewhat boorish goy insurance salesman of the rather rotund sort named Charlie Meadows (John Goodman). Not surprisingly considering the Fink’s somewhat strange luck, his friendship with Charlie develops under somewhat awkward circumstances after he calls the front desk of his hotel to complain about the fat mensch for making too much noise while he is trying in vain to write. When Charlie swings by his hotel room to make amends for the noise, Fink initially seems somewhat scared but eventually gets the gall to bring up his favorite subject, himself, and arrogantly remarks when his new friend asks about what kind of writing he does, “Strange as it may seem, Charlie, I guess I write about people like you – the average working stiff, the common man.” Indeed, Fink practically suffers from diarrhea of the mouth and won’t let Charlie speak as he is pathetically pontificating about stereotypical commie gibberish, including stating that he wants to, “create a theater for the masses based on a few simple truths, not on some shopworn abstractions about drama that don’t hold true today, if they ever did.” While working stiff Charlie—a rather agreeable insurance salesman that proudly proclaims that he loves working with the public—selflessly offers to help Fink with his writing and chimes in with remarks like, “Hell, I could tell you stories,” Fink just continues to passionately proselytize and spout bullshit that he doesn’t even truly believe like, “The hopes and dreams of the common man are as noble as those of any king.” Of course, whether he wants to admit to himself or not, Fink sees himself as a sort of messianic king of abstract intellect and he cannot help but treat virtually everyone he meets as if they were servile paupers that are lucky to be in his presence.

One day while taking a leak at a urinal at a local restaurant, Fink hears the gratefully grotesque sounds of a drunk puking his guts out in a nearby stall, so naturally he is delightfully shocked to discover that the shameless dipsomaniac in question is his writer hero W. P. Mayhew (John Mahoney)—a character in-

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spired by William Faulkner—who also works as a Hollywood screenwriter, or as he states himself with a certain inebriated elegance, “All of us undomesticated writers eventually make our way out here to the great salt lick. That’s probably why I always have such a powerful thirst.” While Fink somewhat breaks character and gleefully proclaims to the elder writer like an excited schoolboy with a fan-boy crush, “You’re the finest novelist of our time,” the protagonist will soon discover that his great hero is a deranged boozier and pathetic artistic fraud who has his long-suffering servile secretary-cum-girlfriend Audrey Taylor (Judy Davis) ghostwrite all of his work for him. While Audrey proudly proclaims to love Mayhew, who is old enough to be her father, and even demonstrates it by passively accepting his constant verbal and physical abuse, that does not stop her from eventually seducing Fink when she is supposed to be helping him write his screenplay. Rather unfortunately, the next morning after their carnal session, Fink is absolutely horrified to discover Audrey’s bloody corpse lying next to him. Rather absurdly, Fink only discovers that Audrey is a lifeless corpse after he makes a valiant attempt to swat a mosquito that is feasting on her cold unclad body. Luckily, Fink’s good old buddy Charlie, who was able to hear the ill-fated lovemaking session the night before via a pipe, is curiously more than willing to help get rid of Audrey’s corpse, though Mayhew’s dead body is, somewhat strangely, also found a couple days later. Needless to say, Fink, who has no other friends in Hollywood, suffers a virtual emotional breakdown when Charlie informs him that he temporarily leaving town. Somewhat unfortunately, Fink makes the mistake of giving Charlie the address of his parents and beloved “Uncle Maury.” Unbeknownst to Fink, who, despite his ostensible formidable intellect, is plagued by a certain socially autistic naïveté, Charlie is a deranged serial killer and his real name is the chillingly Teutonic Karl ‘Madman’ Mundt. Indeed, Fink is somewhat taken aback when a wop-American cop named Detective Mastrionotti (Richard Portnow) and his kraut-American partner Detective Deutsch (Christopher Murney), who both insult him from being a Jew, inform him that Charlie is a crazed killer and show him a goofy mugshot of his pal. Notably, before leaving town, Charlie shows Fink some wrestling moves and even violently pins him down on the ground in a manner that is probably more passionate than the protagonist’s coital encounter with Audrey. While Charlie undoubtedly demonstrates that he could probably effortlessly kill Fink with his bare hands, he opts to teach him a lesson in respect and humility instead.

Before leaving town, Charlie drops off a dubious wrapped package that looks like it would be a nice fit for a decapitated female human head and asks Fink if he would be so kind enough to watch it for him since the box ostensibly contains everything that is important to him. Somewhat inexplicably, the package, which manages to spark his curiosity, seems to cure Fink’s writer block, as he manages to finish his entire script, which he previously only had written a mere couple words of, in a single night. Indeed, not only does Fink finish the script, but he

also calls his producer Geisler the same night and proudly boasts that “I think it’s really big” and “This may be the most important work I’ve ever done.” In fact, Fink’s creative accomplishment gives him such a massive ego boast that he manages to cause a small riot at a dance hall after boasting to a group of sailors while possessed by delusions of grandeur and screaming twaddle like, “I’m a writer, you monsters! I create! I create for a living! I’m a creator! I’m a creator! This is my uniform! [points to head] This is how I serve the common man.” As to what caused Fink to act in such an unbecomingly hysterical fashion, a sailor dared to kindly ask to “cut in” and dance with the same girl he was dancing with because he was “shipping out tomorrow” and probably wanted a little female warmth before going to war. Undoubtedly, Fink probably deserved the same treatment that was unleashed on Kenneth Anger’s character in *Fireworks* (1947) by a couple of suavely dressed sailors, but luckily for him he only received a single punch to the face. Arguably, in no other scene does Fink’s hypocritical contempt for the so-called “common man” become so unbearably glaring, especially since the young military men are going to risk their lives in a war that involves rescuing European Jewry, so it is only fitting that the viewer receives the therapeutic relief of seeing one of the prole sailors punching him in his loudmouth. Of course, it will take more than a punch to knock Fink down a couple pegs, as he is a mensch that has a hard time suffering humility.

If the punch did not bring Fink back to reality and force him to confront his innately counterfeit Marxist metapolitical Weltanschauung, Charlie’s rather abrupt and quite literally explosive holocaust-esque homecoming certainly does. Indeed, not long after Detective Mastrionotti and Detective Deutsch come by his hotel room and prepare to arrest him for mysterious murders that he clearly did not commit (as the menacing detectives make quite clear, they are no friends of the Jews), Charlie announces his arrival by setting the hotel on fire and then dispatching both of the overtly fascist cops, who are completely unprepared for the final showdown, with a shotgun. Indeed, after blowing away Mastrionotti and sardonically screaming “Look upon me! I’ll show you the life of the mind!” while running down the inflamed hotel hallway, Charlie, who seems to be fueled with homicidal glory, wounds Deutsch and then finishes him off with a close-contact blast to the brain, but not before relatively calmly declaring with a strange foreboding fatalism, “Heil, Hitler,” as if he is concluding a symbolic ironical performance art routine that sums up the outcome of the Second World War. Indeed, fat and jovial yet homicidal and unhinged Charlie’s scorched-earth routine can certainly be seen as a sick allegorical depiction of America’s dubious role in WWII. Somewhat calmer after killing the cops, Charlie has a little post-rampage chat with Fink where he justifies his pathological homicidal tendencies by declaring, “They say I’m a madman, Bart, but I’m not mad at anyone. Honest, I’m not. Most guys I just feel sorry for. It tears me up inside to think about what they’re going through, how trapped they are. I understand

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it. I feel for them. So I try and help them out. Jesus. Yeah. Yeah. I know what it feels like when things get all balled up at the head office. They put you through hell, Barton. So I help people out. I just wish someone would do as much for me. Jesus, it's hot." When Fink dares to ask "why me?," Charlie goes completely berserk and screams in his face, "Because you don't listen!" and then adds, "Come on, Barton. You think you know pain? You think I made your life hell? Take a look around this dump. You're just a tourist with a typewriter, Barton. I live here. Don't you understand that? And you come into my home and you complain that I'm making too much noise." Luckily, Barton seems to truly listen to another human-being for the first time in his entire life and seemingly sincerely declares in almost a whisper, "I'm sorry," to which Charlie gratefully replies, "Don't be." While Charlie manages to spare Fink's life by freeing him from a bed frame that the dead detectives previously handcuffed him to, the sympathetic serial killer also informs him that he paid an unexpected visit to his parents and uncle in NYC. On top of everything else, Charlie also confesses that he "lied" about the wrapped package and simply declares that it is "not mine." Needless to say, Fink subsequently has trouble contacting his parents and uncle over the telephone. As for Charlie, who previously expressed a desire to be put out of his misery, one can only assume that he commits suicide via avant-garde self-immolation, as he simply goes back to his room while the hotel is burning down. Of course, one can only speculate that Fink managed to give Charlie the comfort and security he needed to commit suicide after managing to temporarily put aside his ego and apologize for his rude behavior. Needless to say, all the pain and suffering that Fink suffers probably could have been avoided were he not a insufferably narcissistic twat, just as World Jewry probably could have avoided a pogrom or two had members of its leadership respected the wishes of its host population and not double-downed and incited more antisemitism with its actions. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Charlie declares to Fink, "You're just a tourist with a typewriter, Barton. I live here," as the protagonist is surely symbolic of the iconoclastic wandering Jew who, lacking in self-awareness and consumed with unwarranted hubris, proceeds to immediately shit on the place and people he has invaded.

If Charlie was not able to teach Fink a lesson in humility, fellow Israelite Lipnick, who now demands to be addressed as "Colonel Lipnick" because, as he states with a hint of unintentionally hilarious arrogance, he was "commissioned yesterday in the army reserve. Henry Morgenthau arranged it. Dear friend," certainly does as he cannot stomach the pretenses of intellectual yids that do not know their place. Indeed, Lipnick verbally tears both Fink and his prized script into pieces, declaring, "We don't put Wally Beery in a fruity movie about suffering. I thought we were together on that." When Fink meekly protests, "I tried to show you something beautiful. Something about all of us," Lipnick becomes enraged and declares, "You arrogant son of a bitch. You think you're the

only writer that can give me that Barton Fink feeling. I've got 20 writer under contract I can ask for a Fink-type thing from! You swell-headed hypocrite, you just don't get it, do you? You think the whole world revolves around whatever rattles inside that little kike head of yours." Although Fink seems to think he is some sort of precious intellectual revolutionary that is worthy of being treasured and adored by some kosher literary elite, he clearly does not understand the true harsh reality of the Eastern European ghetto realm of Lipnick, who simply cannot abide his self-absorbed intellectual onanism. Undoubtedly, the difference between Fink and Lipnick is somewhat summed up by Ernest van den Haag in his book *The Jewish Mystique* where he argues in regard to the innate difference between poor Jews and their somewhat more spoiled American-born sons and grandson, "His children now can afford the radicalism the father had to relinquish—at least as an active pursuit—to bring them up. The father became a liberal. He was once upon a time radical because he was poor. He felt he had nothing to lose, everything to gain. The children once more are radical—but this time because they are rich enough not to worry about earning money. Whereas the father's and grandfather's motive for radicalism was poverty and oppression, the marginal existence they were compelled to lead, the son's is a product of his parent's suburban success. The son discovers that 'money isn't everything.' It isn't. He is bored by money, by making it and by spending it. Money shelters him materially; but for that he had to pay a price: he feels mentally uncomfortable, psychologically anxious, bored, restless, aimlessly rebellious—what is he to do with himself, with his life?" Undoubtedly, van den Haag's description of the "son" certainly describes Fink, at least in a superficial sense. Maybe if Fink had to do a week or two of real hard labor, he might appreciate his lot in life, drop his unconsciously condescending attitude toward the proletariat and rethink his pinko idealism and fetish for the "common man." Additionally, while Lipnick seems to be a proud "kike," Fink seems to be the sort of post-Yiddish kosher cosmopolitan that would agree with Marx's words, "The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism." Indeed, while Fink is certainly hopelessly Jewish in terms of appearance and psychology, he is probably behind on his Talmud studies. In the end, a rather defeated-looking Barton takes a walk on the beach while carrying Charlie's package and is somewhat taken aback when he happens upon a beautiful babe that resembles the image of a woman in a kitschy beach painting that was hanging in his hotel room. As demonstrated by his obsessional glaring at it throughout the film, Fink undoubtedly developed a strange infatuation with the painting, so he naturally finds the young lady rather appealing. After Fink asks her, "Are you in pictures?" and she bashfully replies "Don't be silly," and then positions herself on the beach in a manner that, rather surreally, more or less perfectly duplicates the image from the painting, though a seagull randomly drops dead and falls into the ocean, thus assumedly demystifying the scenic splendor that it originally had for the protagonist and thereupon

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probably adding to his growing cynicism and disillusionment with art and life in general. In short, both Fink's political and idealism have died an undignified death just like the lone seagull that fell into the ocean. Surely, Fink has had an exceedingly Ernüchterung experience in Hollywood, but luckily he might rethink his fetish for Trotsky.

While Barton Fink was generally well received among all the right mainstream critics up on its initial release, a couple of them were not so happy with the film's portrayal of certain Hebraic characters. Indeed, as noted by Jew Josh Levine in his book *The Coen Brothers: The Story of Two American Filmmakers* (2000), Jewish *The Village Voice* film critic J. Hoberman—a lifelong far-left cheerleader that incidentally co-wrote the somewhat worthwhile text *Midnight Movies* (1983) with Jonathan Rosenbaum—would complain, “At the period when BARTON FINK is set, the virtual acme of worldwide anti-Semitism, America's two most potent Jewish stereotypes were the vulgar Hollywood mogul and the idealistic New York communist. . . . BARTON FINK locks these stereotypes in sadomasochistic embrace.” Of course, what Hoberman is ignoring is that these so-called stereotypes are based on real individuals that are far less sympathetic than the characters that the Coen brothers created. Notably, good goy media critic James Wolcott was no less critical of the kosher elements of the film, complaining in his *Vanity Fair* review, “What makes the movie such an audacious sickie is that the Coen brothers – themselves Jewish – never attempt to make us identify with Barton's plight. They keep him and his attitudes in a jar.” Judging by Wolcott's review, it seems as if he failed to even watch the movie and/or he could not image a Judaic film character that was not portrayed in a 100% positive light like the insufferably sagely social justice Jewish character Sol Roth portrayed by Hebrew film noir icon Edward G. Robinson in fellow Judaic Richard Fleischer's SJW sci-fi classic *Soylent Green* (1973), but such groveling shabbos goy thinking goes with the territory when you're a mainstream American film critic. To Wolcott's credit, he did not go as far as accusing the the Coen brothers of being self-loathing chosenites but instead argued, “I never felt watching the movie that the Coen brothers were indulging in something as obvious and personal as Jewish self-hatred. The movie has too much conscious effrontery. . . . It satirizes the Jewish sense of victimization, without denying that victimization exists.” Naturally, like virtually every Coen brothers film, the Semitic siblings approach their characters in a certain detached fashion, hence one of their greatest strengths as filmmakers. Naturally, the Coen brothers do not believe that the titular protagonist of Barton Fink deserves the torment and suffering that he ultimately faces, but they also acknowledge that Fink was also at least partially responsible for said torment and suffering due to his arrogance, narcissism, and quite literally laughable lack of self-awareness. After all, most of Fink's misery could have easily been avoid had he pulled his head out of his ass every once and while.

While the Coen brothers are probably not exactly stereotypical self-loathing Jews despite what certain Zionist JDL types might think, they have certainly demonstrated in past statements that they are not the sort of hysterical Jewish leftist agitpropagandists or neocon Zionist war-pigs that can be found working in Hollywood, but instead a sort of American filmic auteur equivalent to great Jewish Viennese satirist and wordsmith Karl Kraus. Indeed, Viennese novelist Stefan Zweig might as well have been speaking of the Coen brothers when he once wrote regarding fellow Austrian Jew Kraus that he was “the master of venomous ridicule.” As the brothers’ films surely demonstrate, they are equal-opportunity offenders who, quite unlike other members of their race (e.g. Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer), are willing to be just as ruthless when it comes to depicting Judaic characters. Also, like Kraus, who attacked prominent Jewish (pseudo)intellectual movements like Zionism and psychoanalysis and its lead figures like Theodor Herzl and Sigmund Freud, the Coen brothers have also attacked certain Jewish types that they find deplorable, most notably the titular kosher turd of Barton Fink. Needless to say, the siblings are no mindless Zio-bot propagandists, but the foremost cinematic critics of the most repugnant elements of their ethno-cultural group. As recounted by Josh Levine, despite having an older sister named Debbie that moved to Israel after becoming a physician, the Coens originally refused to visit the Jewish state because they feared it would be like an “armed Jewish summer camp,” which is surely something that no sane individual would want to experience (incidentally, the Coens were practically bribed to travel to Israel in 2011 under the dubious pretense of receiving a million-dollar award from Tel Aviv University, though the two did not do any shilling for Israel while there as demonstrated by Joel’s remark, “We grew up in a Jewish community, but we never thought to make a story that deals with Israel. We don’t really know Israel — we write American stories. That’s what we know”). Although the Coen brothers got their start in filmmaking working with fellow Midwestern Jew Sam Raimi on *The Evil Dead* (1981) and the siblings would approach the Zionist fundraiser Hadassah so that they could obtain a list of the 100 wealthiest Jews in their state under the pretense of approaching said wealthy Jews about becoming investors for their debut feature debut *Blood Simple* (1984), the two were apparently not swamped with Jewish influence growing up and never became part of hermetic Hebraic suburban neo-ghetto culture, or as Joel Coen’s blonde shiksa wife, actress Frances McDormand, once noted, “They grew up pretty isolated as the only Jewish kids around and they’re pretty big on loyalty and dependability,” hence their lack of racial chauvinism. In short, Barton Fink could have never been created by stereotypical American Jews that have fond members of Hillel college events or a Birthright Israel pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Likewise, the film could have never been directed by someone that is deluded enough to take intellectual inspiration from the demented scribblings of Wilhelm Reich or Herbert Marcuse like Herr Fink probably would.

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While the Coen brothers have completely denied in the past that the film has any sort of specific esoteric allegorical message, Barton Fink is unequivocally a film that begs for deep and creative analysis, especially when it comes to the perennial 'Jewish question.' For example, the scene where Charlie Meadows dispatches the kraut and wop detectives—characters that are clearly symbolic of the Axis Powers as indicated by their names 'Mastrionotti' and 'Deutsch'—can be seen as symbolic of the semi-feral white Americans saving the European Jews during the so-called holocaust. Notably, it is interesting that Charlie's real name is the quite Germanic 'Karl Mundt' as German-Americans, somewhat ironically, made up for the largest single ethnic group to fight in the American military during WWII. I would not be surprised if the Coen brothers—in their jaded kosher cynicism—see the white American goyim saving the Jews as both a sick irony and a potentially dangerous situation, as if they expect the same whites that saved their as being just as capable, if not more capable, of carrying out a fully successful shoah after meeting too many whiny subversive Jews like Fink (after all, the film hints that Meadows aka Mundt has exterminated Fink's family). Naturally, it is no coincidence that American Jews were at the forefront of promoting the flooding of the United States with non-whites from the Third World. Indeed, the so-called Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (aka Hart-Celler Act), which is directly responsible for the browning and third worldization of America, was the demented brainchild of Jewish politicians that include NY Senator Jacob Javits, Congressman Emanuel Celler, Leo Pfeffer (Former President of American Jewish Congress), and Norman Podhoretz (Writer and Member of The Council of Foreign Relations). As to why the Jews would want to the U.S. to degenerate into a third world hellhole, American Jewish Congress (AJC) and World Jewish Congress (WJC) bigwig David W. Petegorsky made it quite clear when he declared in 1948, "Jewish survival can only take place within the framework of a progressive and expanding democratic society, which through its institutions and public policies gives expression to the concept of cultural pluralism." Of course, like Fink, none of these Jewish politicians seemed to have the self-awareness to consider that the fruits of their actions might eventually result in an antisemitic backlash. Of course, another sick irony of the film is that it is ultimately Hollywood studio mogul Jack Lipnick—a man that cannot help but use the word "kike" in every single sentence—is ultimately a true, if mostly symbolic, savior of the Jews as a military officer and propagandist while far-leftist Fink is never depicted even contemplating the Third Reich, WWII, or European antisemitism despite the film taking place in 1941. In fact, Lipnick even mentions that he is a good pal of Jewish U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. who, on top of working hard to rescue Jewish refugees during WWII, was the creator of the so-called 'Morgenthau Plan,' which was designed to completely de-industrialize and more or less destroy Germany and turn it into what Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels described as a giant potato patch (un-

doubtedly revealing his completely anti-Christian/anti-American semitic sense of justice, Morgenthau also suggested to FDR in the summer of 1944 that the top 50 or 100 German “arch-criminals” be immediately exterminated upon being captured). Surely, it is no coincidence that Lipnick comes off seeming like a sort of fascist dictator, as he is like the illiterate hate-child of Martin Bormann and Harvey Weinstein. Surely, as artists and writers, the Coens see Lipnick—a loudmouth philistine that boasts of virtually enslaving writers under contract yet refusing to use their work—as something more monstrous than Hitler.

As far as I am concerned, *Barton Fink* is an unmitigated masterpiece that, cinematically speaking, manages to offer a little bit of everything despite being a period piece that takes place during a very specific time and place. Indeed, both a mix of kitsch and high-kultur, Lynch and Polanski, *Künstlerroman* and buddy flick, comedy and horror, antisemitism and philo-Semitism, Art Deco and dime store, arthouse and Hollywood, surrealism and realism, heaven and hell, Southern Gothic and Vaudeville, *The Twilight Zone* and the History Channel, and the grotesque and gorgeous, the film might not be seen by many film critics as brothers’ magnum opus but it would be very hard to deny that it is their most aesthetically and thematically ambitious film to date (I think the Coens might believe this as well as they are considering directing a sequel entitled *Old Fink*). In terms of innate Jewishness, the film is only second to the Coens’ later work *A Serious Man*. Of course, both of these films reveal a rather reluctant and highly self-critical Jewishness, or what David Mamet would probably describe as ‘The Wicked Son’ mindset. Indeed, as Mamet once wrote, “This is the wickedness of the wicked son. He feels free to enjoy his intellectual heritage, the Jewish love of learning, and reverence for accomplishment; he enjoys, aware or not, a heritage of millennia of Jewish law and values; he enjoys his very life, which would have been denied him and his ancestors in the Europe they suffered to leave; he enjoys the right to protection from the community he disavows and, through it all, parrots, ‘My parents were Jews, but I do not consider myself a Jew.’” Although not staunch Zionists, the Coen brothers would never deny their kosher credentials, just as they would never direct a film as personally self-loathingly Jewish and strangely Zionist as Mamet’s *Homicide* (1991), but I digress. On the other hand, if he had a greater sense of humor and flare for aesthetics, the great so-called self-hating Jew Otto Weininger might have directed a film like *Barton Fink*. After all, Weininger, who lived a lonely and haunted purgatorial existence not unlike Herr Fink before killing himself in the same Viennese rented room that Ludwig van Beethoven died in, believed that “The Jew is an inborn communist” and he saw Judaism as a nihilistic belief in nothing, which is certainly how the religion seems in *A Serious Man* due to its depiction of mindless rabbis. Unequivocally 100% kosher in terms of both appearance and psychology and sharing a kohanim surname of the Judaic Aaronic priesthood, the Coen brothers indubitably represent the best in terms of

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aesthetic and intellectual post-religious Judaism, with Barton Fink indubitably representing a 'Hebraic Eraserhead' as a poetically paranoid expression of a Jewish protagonist in an insufferable semi-cryptically kosher world. Undoubtedly, one of the innate ingredients of Judaism is iconoclasm, which is one of the Coen brothers' greatest talents. Of course, what makes Barton Fink so paradoxically Über-Jewish and antisemitic is that it takes an iconoclastic approach to an intrinsically Jewish world and contains Hebraic characters that are easily more repugnant than those featured in National Socialist classics like Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) and even mischling Fritz Hippler's agitprop piece *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew*. Indeed, when watched through a Jew-wise lens, the film offers Nicholas Donin-tier condemnation for Hebraic Hollywood and Jewish left-wing politics yet, at the same time, the Coen brothers' greatest films are more innately kosher than anything ever directed by Mel Brooks or Woody Allen. In short, the Coen brothers are probably the only filmmakers that can be easily loved or loathed by both Kahanite terrorists and National Alliance members alike.

-Ty E

BURN AFTER READING

Joel Coen, Ethan Coen* (2008) The Coen brothers are the quirky and film noir savvy brothers that are known for their original black comedies. Their most recent release *Burn After Reading* finds the two brothers once again dealing with similar themes found in their other films. I felt that *Burn After Reading* was made around the idea of having smiling Brad Pitt's brain blown out. Underneath the Coen brother's niche for unsettling humor lies a certain contempt towards certain individuals. The humor added to the Coen Brother's films merely acts as an excuse for the brother filmmakers to not feel bad about their cinematically channeled hatred. While watching *Burn After Reading* I couldn't help but think that the character Osbourne Cox, played by John Malkovich, was modeled after the arrogant character traits of the Coen brothers. Malkovich, an actor I have always hated, plays a weasel-like and arrogant narcissist that is not too pleasant to look at. The character of Osbourne Cox is the sort of individual that reminds me a deranged yapping Chihuahua that seems to ignore the confused people looking at it. The question is; who really deserved a bullet in the skull? A yapping Cox or a retarded Brad Pitt? Once again, Joel Coen casted his manly and unintentionally funny wife, Frances McDormand, in yet another film. McDormand once again proves that she has nothing new to offer in the way of interesting characters. She gave her "best" in *Fargo* as the tough and ambiguously female police officer. In *Fargo*, her character has a sort of sexual role reversal with her passive husband. I wouldn't be surprised if the same situation was present at the Coen household. Just because Frances McDormand wears the pants in the relationship, doesn't mean that "hubby" Joel should passively accept her demands in starring in his films. I truly believe that the Coen brothers pretty much made the same film their entire career. Their greatest achievement is the almost masterpiece *Barton Fink*. *Burn After Reading* should be burned after watching. But I say this with respect to the brothers Coen's finer achievements of yesteryear. *No Country For Old Men* showed that the Coens might have a little spark left in their now banal minds, but it's doubtful. Over a decade of disappointments is hard to burn out of your mind.

-Ty E

BACCHANALE
BACCHANALE

Joel Schlemowitz (1998)

As an individual that is relatively disinterested in pornography as both an 'art form' and a pathetic masturbation aid, I cannot think of a greater hardcore flick than the dreamy celluloid LSD trip *Bacchanale* (1970) directed by John Amero and Lem Amero (*Lusting Hours*, *Blonde Ambition*). A virtual remake and cultural update of the exquisite cult flick *Dementia* (1955) aka *Daughter of Horror*, *Bacchanale* follows the seductive spirit of a lonely blonde beauty as she meets faceless "all-knowing" phantoms, revisits the more surly anecdotes of her licentious youth, and engages in phantasmagorical free love with a variety of anthropomorphic beings. With their subsequent work *Blonde Ambition* (1981) – a XXX-rated film with the outlandish tagline, "if you liked *Deep Throat* and *Singin' in the Rain* you're gonna love *Blonde Ambition*" – the Amero brothers proved they could do the seemingly impossible by paying film-literate homage to Hollywood comedies/musicals of the 1950s in pornographic form and with *Bacchanale* they did the same for classic cult horror films of the same era, except with a psychedelic twist. Starring the beautiful blonde bombshell Uta Erickson (Marcy, *The Ultimate Degenerate*) as the wandering and often naked protagonist Ruth, *Bacchanale* is a psychosexual psychedelic trip that is part-nightmare and part-romp, but never redundant, which is quite the feat for a vintage work of pornography. In fact, if one is merely looking for a kitschy and kinky porn flick that captures the aesthetic essence of a bygone era, *Bacchanale* – being just as every bit cinematic as sexual like the things vivid wet dreams are made of – may prove to be too much as it rivals (and often eclipses) the arthouse-sleaze works of Radley Metzger (*Score*, *The Image*), Tinto Brass (*Salon Kitty*, *Caligula*) and Walerian Borowczyk (*Blood of Dr Jekyll*, *La Marge*).

After falling asleep in a seedy motel room, Ruth's spirit awakes and she wanders to an ultra-hip (to the point of parody) hippie costume party, but not before revisiting an incestuous sexual encounter she had with her dead brother Gordon many years ago. Despite the lurid and salacious past of the character she plays, Uta Erickson – with her natural breasts, fully intact labia, and all-American gorgeous looks – is quite elegant, thus making her much more appealing than the typical plastic cum-guzzlers with bleached, blown-out assholes that plague porn films nowadays. In fact, all of the performers/actors in *Bacchanale* – with their public hair, proportionate-sized penises, and lack of tacky tattoos – are totally organic in appearance, thus making the film all the more "fantastic" and "other-worldly" for modern day viewers. Contemporary viewers will also be happy to know that *Bacchanale* is hardly politically correct in its portrayal of pompous gay fashion designers (as best epitomized by a hysterical homo named "Go Go") and its total lack of colored folks. Despite its lack of melanin-privileged folks, *Bacchanale* does feature a kaleidoscopic exhibition of hypnotic and psychotropic

colors that further accentuates every cum-shot and blow-job featured in the film. On her pleasurable phantasmal pilgrimage, Ruth finds herself falling further and further away from reality but closer to orgasmic transcendence. When not jerking-off dead guys and performing stripteases for the grim-reaper in graveyards, Ruth is looking for the ghost of her dead brother, but she must endure the wrath of a sadomasochistic lesbian dictator and her slavish undressed underlings in a cave to find what she is truly looking for. As a forsaken fallen soldier of the Vietnam War, brother Gordon is the only man who has what it takes to give Ruth the solace that she so desperately needs.

Often regarded as the greatest film ever created by the anomalous auteur-pornographers Amero brothers, *Bacchanale* is most assuredly one of the most unprecedented and preeminent works in porn film history. For fan of Alain Robbe-Grillet (most specifically *Eden* and *After* and *Successive Slidings of Pleasure*), Alberto Cavallone's *Blow Job* (1980) and Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), *Bacchanale* makes for a distinctly delectable yet debauched dream-story where erotic daydreaming and hallucinatory nightmares become one. That being said, take careful heed of the original 1970 poster: "If You Never See Another Adult Film, You Must See...*Bacchanale*."

-Ty E

THE LOST BOYS
THE LOST BOYS

Joel Schumacher** (1987) Hollywood “rebel” and self-proclaimed “Sexual Outlaw” Joel Schumacher has made a variety of failure films for all different genres. His masterpiece(which he stated himself) is the ambiguously gay The Lost boys. This film completely destroyed all vampire conventions and most likely had them rewritten by the ghost of Jim Morrison. Hollywood does have a couple of dark gems.

The gang of rebellious vampires in The Lost Boys call a cave located in a cliff as their home. I like to think that it’s the same cliff that Buzz drove off while playing chicken with Jim Stark(James Dean) in Nicholas Ray’s masterpiece Rebel Without a Cause. When the vampires in The Lost Boys take flight they offer some of the most aesthetically pleasing night shots that can’t be found in any other film. Thomas Newman’s score perfectly compliments these midnight flights.

The cast of The Lost Boys is easily recognizable. The two Coreys (Haim and Feldman) are in their best roles, before they fried their brains on various extra curricular activities. Haim’s character proudly displays posters of beefcake homos on his wall. Alex Winter (Bill and Ted’s Excellent Winter) plays a demon dwarf-like vampire before taking a stake in the heart. This scene is much more interesting than all of his film Freaked.

Schumacher’s The Lost Boys is obviously an allegory for a young mans transformation into a homosexual. Interesting, a bloodsucking gang of leather clad neo-Brando’s help him with the transformation. Was this Schumacher’s deepest and darkest fantasy? Was Corey Feldman’s army fatigues a conscious decision on the director’s part?

The money men at Warner Bros. have decided to make sequels to their franchise friendly films. Among them is The Lost Boys II: The Tribe. This would be a fantasy for me if I were still a child. Now I can expect it to be a piece of cold blooded garbage. Corey Haim has decided he is not having any part in it. On a positive note, coke head and special effects master Tom Savini has also been said to make an appearance as a surfer.

-Ty E

8MM

Joel Schumacher** (1999)

Snuff films are hard to come by. I have yet to talk to someone that has claimed to see one. In fact, it is doubtful that any such films exist. I have heard rumors that the Israeli mafia and the Russian Jewish Mafia have made a few with the eastern European girls that they have put into white slavery. I wouldn't put it past these international criminals, but until I see proof I will not believe. Joel Schumacher's 8mm follows a private investigator as he obsesses over finding out the authenticity of a snuff film. Maybe Schumacher being in the "know" might know something that the general public does not.

I cannot help but like Nicholas Cage as he seems like a swell guy. Despite how serious a role he plays, he still comes out as a goofball that is truly oblivious to the evils of the world. Watching Cage as a private investigator obsessed by something that would most likely burn a hole in his soul can be quite "thrilling." The private investigator's response when he finds out the truth is both reasonable and admirable. It is good that at least someone has a logical set of morals instead of believing in "the law."

The private investigator also hires a porn shop employee named Max California. Max is a guy that wanted to become famous playing music. Instead, he ended up being surrounded by degenerates and human filth. The private investigator can see that Max has intelligence and shows the young lad some respect. I could not help but notice a homoerotic element to their relationship. After all, director Joel Schumacher is an outspoken homosexual and has always had his eyes on the right actors. It also doesn't surprise me that *The Lost Boys* is still the director's favorite movie that he's directed.

Bloated Sicilian James Gandolfini has a role in 8mm as a sleazebag pornographer ("Talent Scout") who is connected to the assumed snuff film. I believe Gandolfini's role in 8mm is even more fitting than his role as Tony Soprano on *The Sopranos*. The way in which Gandolfini's character excremented words at the private investigator seemed to be a little too natural for the Italian-American. The beating the pornographer took from the private investigator was more than fitting.

8mm is one in a handful of worthy films directed by Hollywood director Joel Schumacher. Unlike most thrillers, 8mm is not insulting to the audiences intelligence like Schumacher's more recent film *The Number 23*. The film even features a homicidal fan of Glenn Danzig that wears a mask and goes by the lame name "Machine." Schumacher has described himself as a "sexual outlaw." Is 8mm an attack against degenerate heterosexual fetishes of rich old guys? Or is the film just an outlet for the director to present "outlaw" sexual degeneracy in Hollywood? Either way, 8mm is a surprisingly enjoyable thriller.

-Ty E

BLOOD CREEK
BLOOD CREEK

Joel Schumacher** (2009)

When it comes to the Nazis, Hollywood and the mainstream media have left no area uncovered in regards to the pure, unadulterated, and indisputably evil character of Germany from 1933-1945. According to mainstream sources, the Nazis were homophobic yet homosexual, anti-Semitic yet Jewish, and Christian fundamentalists yet neo-Pagans. Chances are, if you have something that means a lot to you in your life and/or your character, Hollywood has portrayed the Nazis destroying and persecuting it. Out of all the criticisms leveled against the Nazis, probably the most ludicrous and bottom-feeding is that they practiced black magic and obtained absolute power via the black arts. Of course, some members of the National Socialist leadership did dabble in the Occult and many held anti-Christian sentiments, but these esoteric studies were more of inspirational tools than a means to obtain otherworldly supernatural powers. When I discovered Joel Schumacher's *Blood Creek* (2009) – a film about the supposedly sinister SS occult forces of the Third Reich – I was naturally reluctant. After all, every Hollywood film (for example: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Hellboy*, etc.) that features Nazi occultism tends to be quite silly and ultimately lowbrow (yet sometimes effective) propaganda, thus, it is no surprise that *Blood Creek* proved to be no exception. Thankfully, *Blood Creek* was not packed with the ancient Judaic folklore that resonated throughout the prematurely born flick *The Unborn* (2009); a film whose undeserved popularity unfortunately eclipsed Schumacher's superior flick *Blood Creek* (which was also released the same year). At worst, *Blood Creek* is a decent way to fantasize about Nazi occultism being alive and well in the good ol' US of A during a boring Tuesday night.

When it comes to reality, proto-Nazi and Nazi occultism more resembled a scene out of *The Wicker Man* (1973) or the artwork of German folk artist Fidus than something you would see in Steven Spielberg's typically overrated film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981). Völkisch renaissance fairs, ancestor worship, and a Blood / Soil ideology could be seen throughout Germany during the relatively short time that the Third Reich lasted, but black magic spells and the sardonic sort of Nazi occult scenarios portrayed in Hollywood films lay in the realm of pure fantasy. In the film *Blood Creek*, a Nazi professor named Richard Wirth (played by the devilishly suave German-Irish actor Michael Fassbender) – a name probably derived from Richard Walther Darré; one of the leading "Blood and Soil" ideologists of Nazi Germany and Herman Wirth; the Dutch-German historian/scholar of ancient religions who was the leader of the *Ahnenerbe*; a quasi-occult Nazi think-tank – arrives at the German-American Wollner family's farmstead in West Virginia (no doubt a scary "no go zone" for Hollywood types). Little does the family know that Wirth is really a völkisch occultist who is solely interested in the ancient Viking runes of his ancestors that just happen

to be located on their rural farm. After becoming acquainted with the runes he blatantly lusts after, Wirth begins his transformation into a grotesque Aryan Übermensch of demonic proportions. After introducing Wirth, the film jumps to present and introduces the film's protagonist, Evan Marshall, an EMT who is haunted by the mysterious disappearance of his war veteran brother Victor; a family tragedy that happened during a camping trip in West Virginia a couple years earlier. When Victor finally appears (initially resembling Jim Morrison during his final years when he sported longhair and a full beard), he demands that his brother Evan go with him on a trip with no questions asked. From there, the film turns into a deranged mix between *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* remake (2003) and *Shockwaves* (1977) with aesthetic qualities echoing back to Schumacher's previous film *The Number 23* (2007). It has been 70+ years since Wirth's initial appearance on the Wollner farm yet the West Virginian family has barely aged. It is revealed that Victor was held hostage by the farm family and used as fresh Aryan meat for Richard Wirth's ancient Aryan blood transformation. Some have wrongly described *Blood Creek* as another Nazi Zombie flick, but aside from Wirth's grotesque appearance, it is nothing of the sort. Instead of being a brain-dead-rotted-meat-head mute typical of your conventional zombie flick, rune-master Wirth is a hyper-conscious Luciferian-being whose ultimate goal is to obtain a third-eye in the center of his large Nordic forehead. As far as intelligent and thoughtful material goes, *Blood Creek* is an artlessly shallow pool of blood diluted philistine drool, but, as entertainment, the film makes for an entertaining ride into post-World War II Nazi purgatory where the Teutonic occult spirit is still very much alive, but hidden amongst nighttime shadows. Of course, in real-life, present day Nazi occultism has taken the form of writings by deceased esoteric Hitlerites like Greek Hindu Savitri Devi and former Chilean diplomat Miguel Serrano, therefore, *Blood Creek* is ultimately a work of total fiction with not even the slightest inkling of truth.

If you listen to the audio commentary given by Joel Schumacher on the *Blood Creek* DVD, he ignorantly cites the book *The Spear of Destiny* by Trevor Ravenscroft – a dubious work on Nazi Occultism (that alleges that Hitler started World War II to obtain the spear that pierced Jesus Christ) that has been debunked many times as a sensational fiction – as a major influence during his direction of *Blood Creek*. Although the film is nowhere near as entertaining as Schumacher's self-proclaimed masterpiece *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Blood Creek* does feature auteur themes typical of the director's previous work. The gashes and cuts inflicted on Wirth's male victims and the cruel way the whippings are executed evoke the same sort of homo-sadomasochistic eroticism that is customary of a Joel Schumacher film. Also, like *The Lost Boys*, the film's female lead (who blurs the line between protagonist and antagonist) conspires (like an unwilling whore of Satan) with the ghoulish antagonist, but ultimately saves face (although inevitably losing her virginal face and beauty) as the film progresses. Unfortunately, unlike

BLOOD CREEK

The *Lost Boys*, *Blood Creek* features a score that is, at best, nothing short of forgettable. *Blood Creek* also ends in an abrupt manner that provides evidence for a possible (but unnecessary) sequel. One of the things I found most striking about the film was the contrast between the present and past. During the beginning the film (set in 1936), times are much simpler and more wholesome (despite Schumacher's dramatic portrayal of farm animal slaughtering), but in the present (2007) rural white folks are completely out of their mind and on crystal meth, as if the Nazis destroyed all hope for whites in the future. Of course, it was really the defeat of Nazi Germany that confirmed the death of the Occident (whether one wants to admit this or not). If one thing is certain about the foreseeable future, it is that Hollywood and their international admirers (*Dead Snow* is a great example of the Americanization of European cinema) will continue to pump out more sensational anti-Nazi propaganda films. At best, films like *Blood Creek* are examples of anti-Nazi propaganda at the most crudest level, but sometimes they make for passable multi-million dollar trash entertainment.

-Ty E

DON'T DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Joël Séria (1971)

The mysteriously perverse Comte de Lautréamont (pseudonym of Uruguayan-born French poet Isidore-Lucien Ducasse) and his sole novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* (*The Songs of Maldoror*) had an imperative influence on the anti-bourgeois/anti-Christian sentiments of the already debauched Dadaist/Surrealist artists (including Salvador Dalí, André Breton, Antonin Artaud, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, etc) of the early 20th century, but one can only wonder what kind of affect the quasi-satanic long prose poem would have on two increasingly subversive Catholic convent girls. In the exquisite once-lost French film *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971) aka *Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal* directed by Joël Séria, such a succulently sardonic and sacrilegious scenario is played out for the pleasure of the viewer in a most cunningly cruel yet charmingly carnal fashion. Like Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is loosely based on the 1954 little lesbians Parker-Hulme murder case in Christchurch, New Zealand, but, more than anything, the film is a potent therapeutic expression of actor-turned-director Joël Séria's personal disdain for the sexually-repressed authoritarian nature of Catholic Church. As an angry Catholic schoolboy, Séria, like the two anti-heroesses of his directorial debut *Don't Deliver Us from Evil*, found much solace in the devilishly decadent poetry of Lautréamont and Charles Baudelaire. Of course, probably thinking that no one would want to watch two heretical frog-boys hop around for 100+ minutes, Séria opted for casting two exceedingly cute girls to play the lead roles than teenage boy characters modeled more after his own particular and less eventful misspent youth. Séria made the wise decision, as the two lead cutesy gals of *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* – Anne (played by Jeanne Goupil) and Lore (played by Catherine Wagener) – are quite the barely-legal eye candy. Anne, a Mediterranean-like girl with black hair and dark eyes, is the master in the relationship and little Lore, a blonde Nordic girl, is her loyal and obliging girl slave. After becoming disillusioned with the hypocritical mores of the Catholic Church and seeing two nuns involved in Lesbian blasphemy, the two girls rightfully decide to make an unofficial pact with Satan and bring havoc upon the cold convent they so thoroughly abhor.

The girls of *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* are truly bloomed flowers of evil. Quite conscious of the appeal of their fresh and curvy virginal flesh, Anne and Lore lure in a variety of older men by flashing their white panties in a terribly tempting way. After nearly getting raped in the process, the two girls reap revenge by doing everything from killing their prospective rapists' precious pet birds to brutally murdering them in a bloody good fashion. Although much more stunning and alluring than her loyal compatriot, Anne uses the more saintly-looking Lore as the underage object of horny old men's desire. Director Joël

DON'T DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Séria has stated that *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is less about a teenage lesbian relationship and more about one girl possessing complete psychological dominance over another. For those filmgoers looking for their quasi-pornographic fantasies of teenage girls to be fulfilled, *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is probably the wrong film to see as it may bring about castration-anxiety in certain viewers. Like mute anti-heroess Thana of Abel Ferrara's exploitation masterpiece *Ms. 45* (1981), the lovely little ladies of *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* have an uncompromising disdain for criminally perverted untermensch and thus act accordingly. Of course, to an extent, *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is an erotically-charged work, but the various scenes of sick teenage sensuality are ultimately eclipsed by the film's Satanic anti-Catholic and anti-bourgeois themes. In fact, upon its release, *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* was banned not for its steaming portrayal of enfant terrible eroticism, but due to its glaring anti-Catholic themes, hence the relatively obscure status of the film until somewhat recently. Virtually plotless in form, *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is almost as anarchistic in structure as it is in sentiment. Although director Joël Séria claims that the film is almost wholly inspired by his personal youthful experiences and communal readings of decadent French poetry, he did, unsurprisingly, cite the films of Luis Buñuel as a minor influence. That being said, a dual screening of *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* with Buñuel's final work *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) would make for a flawless ungodly double-feature, as both films offer a distinguished and uninhibited exhibition of anti-bourgeois sex and politics, minus the overly preachy intellectual masturbation typical of such works.

Although a non-actor before appearing in the film, Joël Séria made the right decision when he decided to cast Jeanne Goupil as the lead in *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* as she would not only prove to give an iconic (if mostly unseen) performance, but would also go on to be the director's longtime lover. Despite going on to mainly direct comedies, Joël Séria would make one more wonderfully wicked film with gorgeous Goupil as the lead. In 1976, Séria directed *Marie, the Doll* aka *Marie-poupée*, a work that like *Don't Deliver Us from Evil*, examines the aberrant nature and inevitable symptoms of bourgeois sexual restraint, including pedophilia. In a sense, *Marie, The Doll* is a much darker film with an even more tragic ending, but *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* certainly holds its own as a magnificent work of singular movie malevolence. If you're a fretful young lady that wants to put an end to the dubious and undesirable propositions of a certain aggressive dirty old man in your life, recommend that they see *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* and let those pathetic perverted fellows know how you really feel. I would never call myself a proponent of feminism, but *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is one of few works that reminds me that women have certain inalienable rights, including the right to kill if necessary. Of course, I would be lying if I did not admit that one of the greatest appeals of *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* is Jeanne Goupil and her plentifully profane yet wholly persuading presence. If the

Church of Satan ever gets around to updating their Video List, I think it is safe to say that they should make an effort to add Don't Deliver Us from Evil to it, as it makes Rosemary's Baby (1967) seem like a cautionary Catholic fairytale.

-Ty E

MARIE, THE DOLL
MARIE, THE DOLL

Joël Séria (1976)

Although later best known for his sex comedies and work in television, French auteur Joël Séria would make one more film in the shuddersome spirit of his debut heretical arthouse-exploitation masterpiece *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971). Also starring his lush lover Jeanne Goupil, *Marie-Poupée* (1976) aka *Marie, the Doll* is another sombre yet sweet film about unhealthy obsession, little girls and the dirty old men that love them. After the relative commercial success of his sex comedy *Cookies* (1975) aka *Les galettes de Pont-Aven*, Séria would take the opportunity direct what would arguably be his most artistically ambiguous and prestigious effort *Marie, The Doll*; a minor masterpiece of 1970s French cinema. Innately minimalistic, nicely nuanced, and less sensational and gratuitous, *Marie, the Doll* is ultimately a more mature yet significantly dismal and disheartening work than *Don't Deliver Us from Evil*. Centering around a unsuspecting woman-child named Marie – a cute and cutesy teenager that strives for moral perfection and believes in the innate goodness of mankind – who makes the drastic mistake of marrying a man that she doesn't even remotely know how to begin to understand due to her gross naïveté and social ineptness, let alone seriously love, *Marie, the Doll* is a splendid, diacritic heart-breaker of a film, akin to watching a litter of puppies being drowned at a scenic lake, where one gazes on as a young, softhearted girl slowly but surely perishes as she progressively glowers like a wilting flower until her inevitable date with the blue hour. Throughout *Marie, the Doll*, Goupil is featured in a variety of comprised and often unclothed positions, thus leading the viewer to conclude that Joël Séria was very serious about filmmaking to treat his lover that way for the sake of art; that or he is some sort of sneering sadist (I like to think the former). Either way, Goupil herself is quite the tiny trooper, but one wouldn't expect anything less from the girl that read *Comte de Lautréamont* and was subsequently inspired to commit self-immolation with her blonde gal pal in *Don't Deliver Us from Evil*. Instead of not being unshackled from pernicious forces, Goupil is unknowingly delivered to it in *Marie, the Doll*; a work that tests one's endurance where cinematic work itself acting as a bittersweet torture device.

Marie, the Doll centers around a quasi-autistic 17-year-old orphan girl named Marie (played by then-25-year-old Jeanne Goupil) who was raised by her amorous but detrimentally old-fashioned grandparents and seems to have never advanced past her toddler years in terms of erotic and emotional maturity and love of baby dolls. One day, merry Marie meets a respectable and debonair bourgeois shop owner named Claude (André Dussollier) who shares her odd obsession with dolls, thus leading to their swift and headlong marriage. Vaguely resembling the perverted Jewish-Polish auteur Roman Polanski during his younger years in appearance and startlingly foretelling the filmmaker's arrest for statutory rape 1-year

later – one can only wonder where Séria got the inspiration for the character of Claude – as Marie, the Doll is surely a work that would both titillate and terrify the Rosemary's Baby (1968) director due to its themes of pedophilia and master-slave relationships. Upon first marrying him, Marie seems quite jubilant with her relationship with Claude as they share a similar distinct fanaticism for dolls, but it soon becomes blatantly apparent that the older man sees the girl as just another one his objects that he can dress up however he wants whenever he likes. On the night of their wedding, Claude gives Marie her first doll-dress and forces her to play a roleplay game where she must pretend to be inanimate as he carefully undresses and subsequently bathes her. Initially, this scene may seem like a tender and intimate moment capturing Claude's gentlemanly and loving adornment of Marie, but it is far from it. Quite agitated and hurt by Claude's sexual disinterest in her and accelerating authoritarian demeanor, Marie begins to entertain the seedy sexual propositions of a low-class farmer – who she also doesn't seem quite able to understand – due to her overwhelming feeling of rejection and abandonment and her unquenchable desire for intimacy. Undoubtedly influenced by the early works of Italian Marxist-Freudian auteur Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Conformist*, 1900), the two men act as archetypes for extremes of male sexuality: Claude, being a mostly impotent and hopelessly perverted member of the decadent bourgeois and the farmer, symbolizing the virile sexuality and rampant heterosexuality of the proletariat. Of course, both of these men prove to be too much for supersensitive Marie – who due to her latent sexuality and lack of emotional maturity – seems too infantine for any man.

Almost like a modern (albeit erotic) fairy tale in theme and style, Marie, the Doll is a remarkably original film that is impossible to classify. Far too restrained and genteel to be considered an exploitation work, Marie, the Doll is an aberrant arthouse film with a typically French, nihilistic ending which although unsettling, fairly abrupt, and menacingly melodramatic, acts a perfect puissant testimony to the loss of one girl's innocence, which is quite a dramatic shift for director Joël Séria, who in *Don't Deliver Us from Evil*, persuaded the viewer to root for Satanic teenage lesbian lovers with a penchant for torturing holy men. In Marie, the Doll – a work that neither fits in nicely with the genre conventions of horror nor drama – a suave and physically unintimidating man who is fond of dolls becomes the most contemptible of human monsters, which has a lot more to do with the actuality of real-life predatory archfiends than a retard in a hockey mask and a choleric, terminal cancer patient. I do not think it would be a stretch to say that Marie, the Dolls is the cinematic equivalent of Stuart Gordon's *Dolls* (1987), *Child's Play* (1988), and *Puppetmaster* (1989) for Truffaut and Fassbinder fans.

-Ty E

AMSTERDAM GLOBAL VILLAGE
AMSTERDAM GLOBAL VILLAGE

Johan van der Keuken (1996)

My grandfather was born in the Netherlands in 1919 and after the German occupation during the Second World War, as well as the subsequent colonization of the low-lying Germanic country by the United States, he could no longer stand seeing what his homeland turned into, so he made the mistake of immigrating to America in the 1950s. Homesick, my grandfather would revisit his homeland in the 1960s and was only further disconcerted by his native nation's cultural degeneration. Had my grandfather lived to see the epic arthouse documentary *Amsterdam Global Village* (1996) directed by Dutch auteur-documentarian/photographer Johan van der Keuken (*I Love Dollars*, *Het Oog Boven de Put* aka *The Eye Above the Well*), he would have thought the Netherlands of the mid-1990s (ironically, around the same time he died) was probably a modern day Sodom and better off under kraut rule. Indeed, for a whimsical 245-minutes, *Amsterdam Global Village* portrays a so-called 'multicultural' nation where its inhabitants are increasingly refugees from the third world who, although demonstrating their unwavering solidarity with their birth nations, have relocated to Amsterdam to take advantage of the socialist luxuries of one of the most modern cities in the world. Aside from the occasional pothead, DJ, skater, degenerate lesbian artist, 'outsider' model with Down syndrome, race mixer, prostitute, etc., Van der Keuken's doc of pre-apocalyptic decay strictly focuses on subjects from the third world, including a young hash-addled Moroccan courier, Bolivian musician, Chechen businessman, and an elderly Jewish singer, among various other 'people of color' (or whatever). Rather objectively directed with an ambiguous message, *Amsterdam Global Village*—whether intentional or not—portrays a people and city that is losing its identity and where the ancient scenic architecture, canals, bridges, and sculptures stand in rather stark contrast to its growing third world population. Auteur Van der Keuken all the more highlights the innate foreignness and unassimilable character of these assorted individuals by traveling with them to their mostly poverty-stricken and sometimes war-torn homelands, where they seem discernibly more happy and social, even if there are dead corpses lying in the streets. Due the documentary's seemingly unintentionally unflattering depiction of the international plague that is multiculturalism, it should be no surprise that *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS)—the most widely accessed commie website on the internet—gave a rather unfavorable review of *Amsterdam Global Village*, writing, "Aside from the reality that poverty and historical circumstances have forced many people to take refuge or seek employment in a handful of relatively prosperous countries, such as the Netherlands, it is not clear to me what van der Keuken is trying to say," as if everyone is a Marx fetishist whose responsibility it is to portray brown people and internationalism as god's great gift to the world. Instead, Van der Keuken takes a wandering and

voyeuristic non-partisan approach that thankfully leaves it up to the viewer to decide whether or not Amsterdam will eventually degenerate into a third world gutter.

Opening with a shot of a bunch of Dutch children sporting blackface and dressed as 'Zwarte Piet' aka 'Black Peter' (the companion of Sinterklaas, the Santa Claus of Dutch folklore), Amsterdam Global Village portrays a 'changing' Netherlands where actual real live African children stick out like sore black thumbs while admiring a goofy Dutch guy in black face. The 'bridging figure' of the documentary is Khalid, who makes his living as a moped courier and enjoys listening to shitty techno music and hanging out and smoking dope with other non-whites next to a small skate park. Spending virtually his entire life in Amsterdam, Khalid found it rather difficult to readjust to the low standard of living of Morocco when he followed his parents back there when he was a teen, so it did not take long for him to decide to move back to the Netherlands, even if he does not consider himself Dutch. Andean musician Roberto still loves his small village in Bolivia, but he knocked up a native white Dutch woman, so he is pretty much stuck in white man's land and he is not exactly complaining, though he misses his dark brown kinsfolk. When Van der Keuken follows Roberto to Bolivia, he discovers his subject has a single mother who has over a dozen children she cannot support. Luckily, Roberto brings everyone tons of gifts and gives an impassioned speech about the need for his people to preserve their culture, language, and customs despite the fact he now lives in Europa and has spoiled his ancestor's blood by siring a half-caste Dutch son. Back in Amsterdam, a Chechen businessman named Borz-Ali watches on the news about how his home city of Grozny has been leveled to the ground by the Russians during the First Chechen War. After learning that Borz-Ali's warrior brother was killed in the war, Van der Keuken follows the businessman to Grozny where the corpses of Chechen 'heroes' lie in the streets and armies of hysterical elderly Chechen women shout venomously about destroying "Russian fascists." Of course, there are no such barbarian antics in mostly quiet Amsterdam, though there are homeless people from the Slavic lands that walk around without socks and shoes, not to mention the fact that there are decidedly degenerate photographers that take photos of striking young mongoloid men, with Moroccan courier Khalid being the one responsible for transferring the negatives to photo labs and then bringing the developed photos back to the photographers. Meanwhile, the native Dutch get wasted and fight each other like queenish pansies while paddling around in dilapidated rowboats in a canal. Mourning over a tragic past, an elderly Jewish singer named Hennie Anke and her 55-year-old son visit the apartment that they once lived in during the German occupation during the Second World War. While her hubby was sent to Westerbork transit camp and eventually met his premature demise, the Jewish mother went into hiding and was separated from her son for a couple years. Naturally, Hennie no longer recognizes her old apart-

AMSTERDAM GLOBAL VILLAGE

ment as it has been totally remodeled and is now inhabited by an overweight black woman from Surinam. Of course, Amsterdam Global Village features less serious segments, including courier Khalid buying hash from a Jewish dealer at a 'coffee shop' (Khalid even says his farewell to the Hebraic hash dealer by saying "mazel tov"), a female Dutch DJ looking like a certified spastic while spinning records, a bisexual orgy, Chinese children learning Chinese and Dutch simultaneously at a preschool, an interview and live performance from some third rate punk rockers from Sarajevo, a lesbian photographer shooting pretentious nude photographs, and the Courier remarking regarding the grey alien that they are, "Not the most beautiful race." In the end, footage of courier Khalid riding his moped is superimposed with narration of the young man describing how he feels "pretty Muslim. If I believe anything, it's that" and how "When I become a van courier...I will be more satisfied." Of course, it is doubtful Khalid would achieve his dream were he not living in the globalist village that is unfortunately post-WWII Amsterdam.

In an interview conducted by Serge Toubiana in regard to why he chose to shoot the sole sex scene of Amsterdam Global Village as 'multisexual' as opposed to 'multiethnic', auteur Johan van der Keuken gave the thankfully anti-liberal response, "The thought occurred to me, but I wanted to avoid it being "politically correct,"" thus demonstrating his integrity as an artist as opposed to being a mere propagandist like so many documentarians. Indeed, in its lack of sentimentalism and fetishism for its nonwhite subjects, Amsterdam Global Village is probably a work that will seem 'culturally insensitive' to certain bleeding heart xenophiles. Van der Keuken was certainly not afraid to offend during his filmmaking career because, as Thomas Elsaesser wrote in *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (2005) regarding the filmmaker's documentary *The Palestinians* (1975): "An openly partisan film, commissioned by the Dutch Committee for the Recognition of Palestine, the film is perhaps the closest Van der Keuken came to making a *cinéma vérité* or direct cinema documentary. But it was also so openly pro-Palestinian that it lost him many friends, especially among the left-wing Jewish-Dutch filmmaking community." Of course, Van der Keuken displays neither hate nor disdain for any of the subjects featured in Amsterdam Global Village, but instead, the subjects' words and actions merely speak for themselves. With the assassination of Dutch anti-multiculturalist politician Pim Fortuyn at the hand of a far-left environmentalist lunatic in 2002 and the brutal murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh at the hand of a crazed Moroccan Muslim in 2004, the so-called global village of Amsterdam nowadays more resembles a quaint cage full of rival packs of dogs that will one day make the German occupation during WWII seem like a picnic. Indeed, while a semi-likeable guy, central subject Khalid of Amsterdam Global Village makes it quite clear that he is a Moroccan Muslim and diaspora member first and foremost and that he only lives in the Netherlands because he can get good weed and decent employ-

ment that he could never find in his own homeland. Of course, cultural clashes can only end one way and that is with the conquering of one group over all of the others. Thankfully, with Amsterdam Global Village, Johan van der Keuken has proved a poetic picturesque document of how things were before the future deluge in the Netherlands.

-Ty E

LUCKER THE NECROPHAGOUS
LUCKER THE NECROPHAGOUS

Johan Vandewoestijne (1986)

Nekromantik has almost become synonymous to the act of necrophilia. One might not help but to allude back ravishing memories of a classic vile Super8 art piece. Necrophilia has always been a tough subject to visually instill within thoughts with ease. To this day, only Jörg Buttgerreit and Nacho Cerda have been able to bring something to perhaps the most primal taboo out there. When Belgian director Johan Vandewoestijne attempted to create his own exploitation chronicling a serial killer and necrophilia, the result is inferior to Nekromantik (filmed a year later). We follow the 2D exploits of a serial rapist newly awakened from a coma. Lucker, being a shallow being fit only for z-grade exploitation, begins randomly killing "sluts" and "whores" in order to satisfy his once dormant sexual rage. The picture culminates into a boring spectacle of a lumbering man with an uncanny resemblance to the horrid hair that Bill Murray flaunts. I didn't know what to expect from Lucker other than extreme over-the-top violence and extremely disgusting sexual situations. I was only awarded with one of these appetizing treats in a scene where he lets a prostitute's corpse "freshen" up so he may manhandle the decomposing stiff. Lucker isn't an anti-hero, and he isn't really any sort of character. The script propels the shuffling man into a variety of murder scenes with little to no provocation. Lucker is a dying species of human. If life were to be lived without life, then life itself would be pointless, and that sums up the entire film with one simple word - pointless. It's a beautifully pitiful thing at times. Mr. Johan claims Lucker the Necrophagous to be a merciful creation of "anti-art". What he has created might be blissfully misogynistic and nihilistic, but drags in circles for a period of time not warranted for such dry material. As much as Lucker the Necrophagous should be rewarding, it remains in existence and memory due to the rarity that the film once was notorious for. Not so much for the sexual brutality, but the OOP VHS version with hard-coded Dutch subtitles. I'd love to appreciate this film in a blinding light, or even settle to respecting the film's justful creation, but I fear that Lucker the Necrophagous is nothing but a case to fill a gap in a perfectionist's DVD collection. Definitely one of the unworthy films to get a beautiful treatment for Synapse Films.

-mAQ

F

Johannes Roberts (2010)

Ah, F, where should I possibly begin? You boast cinematic recollection of true events although you're ultimately taking a pseudo-realistic premise and then turning it into a "hard" slasher. Unbelievable, of course. "Unnerving"? Never. Post-Columbine still rings through the ears of the sensitive. I, personally, had forgotten about the tragedy as two more of substantial pop value have occurred since. It seems the director, Johannes Roberts, hasn't. Or it is possible that he is simply referencing another academic slaughter, but with the incredible likenesses F shares with the earlier released *The Strangers*, it is unlikely. You see, I've heard all about F and how wildly exciting or bland it may be. I expected, embraced, and shed all recognition of material before viewing because I simply wanted a pleasurable experience. I didn't ask for much. Further attracting and promoting the horrendous tag of "hoodie horror", F takes the subjugated sub-genre all too seriously by having a doppelgänger-like cast of similarly structured hooded villains which we never see. That's right, the film which open begging the question of who? or why? is never answered. Just another reason to avoid F entirely, in case you were hoping for even the smallest droplet of conclusion.

In case one assumes that I need to be "spoon-fed" a story, I'll have you know that it is quite obvious that the problem lies not with me, but the film I so righteously brought forth for judgment. F opens with a rather cruel old teacher handing back graded tests when one of the students, who received an F and further humiliation at the hands of the teacher, stands erect, pursues, and assaults the frail male. 11 months after the attack, after the humility, and after the separation, Mr. Anderson returns to teaching with a debilitating case of paranoia and a weakened liver (one he personally assaults with hard liquor. typical). The director chose a fateful day of Mr. Anderson's to be documented because his daughter (who is a student of his class) is given detention, more or less for attention, as the family has been severed. This serves as a slight lottery of who the killers could possibly be. Regardless we will never know. F basically pulls a similar move as did *The Collector*, in which it takes a macabre and sinister scenario, hints to a previous face, and giggles menacingly as we fumble with the last chapter option on our remote controls. As you could probably guess, F turns its charade from chilling and sympathetic foreshadowing to a hard, yet stupid slasher film. F's decision to mask the killers could have been done marvelously had they not been manufactured fodder and perfect in execution. Each individual faceless and characteristically amorphous entity is exceptional in amateur parkour, meaning they scale shelves, drop down onto their prey from strategically placed set perches, and cover a large amount of ground in a small fraction of time. They are the perfect hunters. Wielding a large arsenal of melee weapons, the killers

F

of F also happen to be unrealistically vicious and messy. Instead of fulfilling the vapid desire to simply take lives, which is a sadly easy process, the shadowed figures of F fulfill the stalwart standards of your average horror/gore fan which includes some pretty "out there", albeit horrific and sickening, acts of carnage committed on anyone unlucky enough to be stationed at the school at such an hour. F implies with a white flag in hand that the killer has been revealed to be a face. F just doesn't have the gall to present us verification.

The plot has been marketed as a group of teachers surviving a massacre. To call bluff, not on the lack of survivors, but on the absence of teachers excluding one that is not the main character, the unfortunate father of a cunt, F disavows such a spectacle in favor of a merciless father (the lone teacher expect for the nod towards a possible gym instructor) of a rebellious teenage daughter (by now this should be obvious, this malice I hold). PSA of film waste - F is digital litter. F is the embodiment of a film treatment tragedy that at a glance seems respectful, in light of the blight of a decade, but in fact, tosses all known and ineffective conventions to better suit the fans of such grisly torture cinema like, dare I say it, Saw - whose entire existence depended on writers clashing heads to one-up the year priors. The thought never came to mind, that we're dealing with brutish youth. It would appear to be, rather, phantoms. Facial concealment came as a surprise as the "hard knock" boogymen prowl in plentifully-lit sets, although with their faces obscured the entire time. It serves as a smear on fluid storytelling. Not only has F committed various acts of criminal cinema behavior but its upbringing actually hinted towards a few notches shy of greatness. This is one product that you cannot blame on its environment. F knew where it was going all along. It just revels in mischief. Far from being the worst film I have seen in some time, F just skips that step into full-blown disappoint. F could have been the better man and kept its morose dignity by films end but would rather taunt both the after-school victims and us, the viewers, by giving us never a reason or a whim. Simply put, F is methodically stupid.

-mAQ

TRAUMSTADT

Johannes Schaaf (1973)

Based on *The Other Side* (1909) aka *Die Andere Seite*, the sole novel written by Austrian Expressionist/Symbolist illustrator and entartete Kunst extraordinaire Alfred Kubin (1877-1959), the German film *Traumstadt* (1973) aka *Dream City* directed by Johannes Schaaf (*Tätowierung* aka *Tattoo*, *Momo*) is a cinematic work that has undoubtedly been drastically altered from its early twentieth century source material. Penned by Kubin in his twelfth century castle, the anomalous Austrian artist must have had the perfect setting for the novel that would later be adapted for film as *Traumstadt*. Like the sphinxlike figure Patera in the film, Kubin concocted his phantasm dimension with the utmost secrecy, but unlike the character in the celestial celluloid work, the monsters created by the artist never inspired mass rape, murder, and social chaos, although such sordid scenarios would appear at his castle doorstep during the Second World War, thus inevitably inspiring Aryan auteur Johannes Schaaf's thematically-updated script for *Traumstadt*. Created after the colossal devastation of two fratricidal World Wars and during the onset of the televised violence executed by fame-hungry commie-would-be-rock-stars of the Baader-Meinhof Group, *Traumstadt* is a wildly idiosyncratic cinematic work about two married middle-aged artists who move to a "utopian" town ("dream city" aka "dream empire") where, according to one of its seemingly sinister ambassadors: "To a citizen of Dream City, the only thing of importance is his dream. We nourish and grow it. To disturb it would be unthinkable high treason." Of course, like most fantastic utopian ideas, especially of the postmodern liberal and leftist sort, things don't exactly turn out as advertised by its proponents and propagandists, as soon discovered by the lead protagonists of the film, therefore making *Traumstadt* a work that is undoubtedly more relevant today than when it was first released nearly four decades ago. Unfortunately, *Traumstadt* is not exactly the most accessible film in the world as it has never been released on VHS nor DVD and the only copies floating around today come from a poor transfer of an old TV broadcast, thereupon making the hunt and discovery of this delightfully distinguished phantasmagoric cinematic work a 'magical' endeavor in itself. Of course, with its patently foreboding essence, terrible dreary musical score, and seemingly decrepit and decaying sets and asinine and anachronistic wardrobes, *Traumstadt* is a decisively dystopian work that reminds the viewer that one man's utopian dream is another man's deranged nachtmahr. After all, in a curiously secluded state that is founded on the satirically self-centered principle, "every citizen has the right to fulfill himself directly and purely. Every mood can be expressed, every need can be fulfilled and every nature can be pursued" and where the only law is, "the total respect of the individuality of the others," one can rightfully assume there will be social dissonance between conflicting personalities, espe-

TRAUMSTADT

cially when they wear the malevolently merry mask of smug righteousness and feigned friendliness. Originally advertised with the terribly tempting tagline Bizarre Like Fellini. Surreal Like Bunuel. Explosive Like Cocteau, Traumstadt is as artistically daring and aesthetically delectable as it sounds.

Somewhat discontent with their marriage and lives in general, childless married couple Florian (Per Oscarsson) and Anna Sand (Rosemarie Fendel) decide to move to dream city after being recruited by a somewhat ominous agent with an almost grotesque appearance named Mr. Gautsch. Florian learns that his schoolboy friend Klaus Patera is the “sole ruler” of the town-sized dream empire, correspondingly giving him a sense of security in his decision to become a citizen of the anti-romantic romantic-themed town, yet upon arriving at the supposedly utopian dream realm, his old mate is nowhere to be found. In fact, the oneiric city – with its total lack of children, feverish death cult worship, incompetent death-wishing doctors, repugnant and downright eccentric citizens (including an elderly professor who collects dust mites), proposterous bureaucratic government, shifty and sinister civil servants, sidewalk sodomy, menu-less restaurants, worthless junk stores, valueless currency and schizophrenic stage shows – is hardly the place of delightful dreams, as it mostly resembles a deathly bizarre daydream without end. To get to the city, the Sands book a flight from Munich to the Near East on Lufthansa and eventually arrive at what seems to be the middle of nowhere with a couple medieval Muslims. From there, the couple crosses a miniature desert of sorts, only to be greeted by a repulsive jester-like midget who guides them to the dream city as if he is the gatekeeper of hell. Filmed in Český Krumlov, a small and quite quaint city in the South Bohemian region of the Czech Republic, a region that was largely German before the conclusion of World War II and fell into general despair during the communist era of the Czechoslovakia, Traumstadt is set in an area that is both aesthetically and symbolically complimentary in character. Indefinitely Kafkaesque in disposition, but of the German-Slavicized instead of Aryanized-Semitic persuasion, Traumstadt is undoubtedly a film that will spark acute trauma in certain less stable viewers, but they will undoubtedly be at a pains to explain their metaphysical affliction for it is a subtle work were few things are explained, ergo putting the viewer in the same boat as the star-crossed Sands.

Ultimately, Traumstadt seems to be a work about the intangibility, bankruptcy, and hopeless of utopian ideals; be they political, philosophical, spiritual or otherwise. Klaus Patera – the mysterious MIA dictator of the contrived chimera cosmos – is just another cryptic and destructive cult of personality like Marx, Lenin, Mao, Oprah and Obama. For Florian Sand, Patera represents the innocence and joy of his youthful years and for a Negro citizen of the dream world he represents a bridge towards equality as testified by his agitated cry, “black and white! We could’ve built a new world together!” yet in the end, all inhabitants of the town are inevitably left with a feeling of hopelessness and emotionally-

charged chagrin. Not unlike many real-life revolutionaries, Hercules Bell, the lone black member of the town – who resembles a Negro Trotsky and rightly describes its inhabitants as a, “colony of lunatics,” decides to aggressively to stir the masses and annihilate the out-of-control monster he helped foster so many years ago, but he is no match for the deluging imbecility of the townspeople, thus leading to his earthly demise in a Christlike fashion. Traumstadt concludes in a manner echoing a historical Europa in ruins: totally ravaged, rotted, and ultimately ruined by idealism. Needless to say, Traumstadt is a particularly pessimistic work that does for fantasy cinema what Schopenhauer and Spengler did for the written philosophical aphorism; making the doom and gloom of the Occident a most aesthetically pleasing affair. Recalling themes featured in such cinematic masterpieces as Victor Fleming’s adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Orson Welles’ adaptation of *The Trial* (1962), and Werner Herzog’s *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970), but of an emphatically post-cultural middle Europe persuasion, Traumstadt is an absurdly rarely-seen and barely acknowledged film that is in dire need of being unearthed, lest we forget that not all dystopian cinema are flaccid, formulaic, anti-artistic, and ill-begotten like those so furiously defecated by the high-profile hacks of Hollywood. That being said, Larry ‘Lana’ Wachowski would make for an apropos citizen of dream city. After all, in the specter state featured in Traumstadt, every form of self-worship is possible, no matter how degenerate, so long as you relinquish your self-ruling right to repudiate individualism.

-Ty E

MANSON FAMILY MOVIES
MANSON FAMILY MOVIES

John Aes-Nihil (1979)

Undoubtedly, if Jim Van Bebber's *The Manson Family* (2003) is the greatest, most aesthetically ambitious, and psychedelic-driven Manson-themed movie ever made, *Manson Family Movies* (1984) directed by self-proclaimed 'aesthetic nihilist' John Aes-Nihil (*The Goddess Bunny Channels Shakespeare*, *The Drift*) is the most obsessive, gritty, pathologically tasteless, and historically accurate (anti)tribute to the dirty derelict deeds of the hillbilly hobo antichrist and his fucked family of fallen bourgeois degenerates. Indeed, while occult guru Nikolas Schreck's documentary *Charles Manson Superstar* (1989) probably provides the best and most objective look at Manson Christ and his crazy gals, *Manson Family Movies* is the most aggressively visceral and vicious look at the sordid story and thus makes for singular viewing (dis)pleasure that simultaneously manages to both trivialize the bloody beatnik events and aesthetically terrorize the viewer in an uncompromising fashion that one would expect from a mad man. Inspired by the supposed urban legend that Manson and his acidfreak pseudo-family had actually filmed their aberrant activities and even went so far as creating the murders for posterity, *Manson Family Movies* is an innately morally retarded no-budget piece of pathetically provocative celluloid shit that was shot on consumer grade 8mm film stock so as to give it an audaciously authentic essence as if one of the family members was sober enough to keep a camera rolling as the rest of the gang partied homicidally hard. Indeed, shot silently and featuring not a single line of audible dialogue, *Manson Family Movies* certainly feels like a home movie from hyper-hedonistic hippie hell and a work that seems like it was filmed by a spastic speed addict for his own aimless brain dead amusement. Described by cine-magician Kenneth Anger, who was once a mentor of sorts to Manson associate/killer Bobby Beausoleil (who starred in Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969) and scored *Lucifer Rising* (1972) while in prison), with the highly flattering compliment that it, "Looks like the real thing," *Manson Family Movies* is undoubtedly the delightfully dubious expression of a fellow with a rather foul Manson obsession. Probably the most ambitious and oddly obsessive cinematic attempt to recreate an infamous true crime case, *Manson Family Movies* was shot at the actual locations of the events leading up to, and including, the flower-power-exterminating Tate-LaBianca murders (including the very spot where the hippie killer dropped the bloody clothing of Sharon Tate and her fellow victims). A mischievously merry and wantonly witchy Mansonite jamboree movie, *Manson Family Movies* features gay negro drag queen maids reading Nietzsche, three different (non)actresses playing Susan Atkins aka Sadie Mae Glutz, degenerate hippie bastards in Nazi helmets sieg heiling the police, and a hip and happening neo-völkisch hillbilly folk soundtrack by Mr. Alpha-Anti-Hippie himself; Charles Manson.

As anti-aesthetic auteur John Aes-Nihil revealed in the audio commentary for the Cult Epics dvd release of *Manson Family Movies*, Charles Manson was played by a strange fellow ('Rick the Precious Dove') who had the dignified distinction of being an ex-Green Beret, five foot two, half Mexican/half German by ancestry, and apparently being "rather psychotic." Interestingly, it is rumored that the real Charles Manson was the bastard son of a mulatto, but I digress because whatever the real racial stock of Mr. Manson, micro Mestizo-Kraut 'Rick the Precious Dove' certainly can pass for the crazed cult leader, even if he is a slight bit more swarthy than the real man. Opening with Manson strumming his guitar and subsequently carnally manhandling Sadie Mae Glutz, *Manson Family Movies* ultimately takes an abridged fragmented approach to cinematically telling the torrid tale of the life and times of the Manson Family. Hanging out at Spahn ranch, one of the mad Manson girls receives cunnilingus (Aes-Nihil claims this scene was totally unsimulated) from the rather voracious ranch owner George Spahn (played by 'Palmo') in a less than pretty quasi-pornographic scene. Of course, Lucifer-like Manson associate Bobby Beausoleil ('Porn Michael') and a couple of the gals pay a visit to hippie teacher/dope Gary Hinman and torture him for a couple days because he purportedly sold them bad acid. Being a deluded Zen Buddhist, homo hippie Hinman does not even put up a fight and even goes so far as peacefully handing a weapon to one of his deranged torturers. Manson also pays a visit to the Hinman home and cuts the drug dealer's ear with a sword. After Beausoleil wastes Hinman, the Manson girls write "Political piggy" on the wall to make it seem like the Black Panthers committed the murder. Meanwhile, a black tranny maid (The Cosmic Ray) religiously reads from Friedrich Nietzsche's posthumously released tome *The Will to Power* and carefully dusts a LP soundtrack for *Valley of the Dolls* (1967) starring Sharon Tate. Indeed, the black tranny is Tate's maid and the shemale spade also force-reads excerpts of *The Will to Power* to the bimbo-like babe as if her life depends on it. Of course, the Manson family eventually pays an unexpected visit to the Tate-Polanski home and they slaughter all the inhabitants of the house, but not before making macabre jokes about the fact the actress is pregnant and her baby will die a violent death as well. In what is easily the most artful and transcendental scene of *Manson Family Movies*, Charlie is lovingly crucified by his family in a scene rivaling the campy crucifixion from *The Devils* (1971) directed by Ken Russell. In the final scene of *Manson Family Movies* in a sardonic scenario auteur Aes-Nihil proudly described as "a moment of devout cynicism," three members of the family throw away the gigantic crucifix that Charlie was previously hanging from into a park trashcan. Quite fittingly, *Manson Family Movies* concludes with the 1970 Charlie quote, "It wasn't my children who came at you with guns and knives, it was your children," thus demonstrating Aes-Nihil's sheer and utter contempt for the American mainstream.

Featuring nil dialogue, upwards of three amateur actors playing a single char-

MANSON FAMILY MOVIES

after (thus making it nearly impossible to discern who is who during various scenes), a horribly homely and overweight Sharon Tate smiling as she is violently stabbed in her fetus-filled stomach, unsexy unsimulated sex featuring elderly men on LSD, a sassy negro tranny with a nasty Nietzsche obsession, bargain bin blasphemy of the culture-less American sort, and happy-go-lucky ultra-violence of the totally unbelievable variety, *Manson Family Movies* is certainly a film that epitomizes the phrase “trash cinema,” so it should be so no surprise that the ‘Pope of Trash’ himself, John Waters, stated of the film: “*Manson Family Movies* is a primitive, obsessional, fetishistic tribute to mayhem, murder and madness. Enough to appall even the most jaded VCR junkie... The home movie effect really added to it. Attention to fetishy detail was really astounding—Abigail’s scarf, Tex’s gun, plus Sadie, Tex and G. Spahn looked more like the originals than *Helter Skelter*. Very rude—all the rumors, MDA deal, Leno the bookie, Tate S&M... I liked the Valley of the Dolls and Nico touch. The most obscure was Leno’s vacation—I had never even imagined those sights.” Indeed, for those with little knowledge and/or interest in the Manson Family and their macabre misadventures, *Manson Family Movies* will probably prove to be the most brazenly banal, badly directed, and patently pointless film ever made, but for the already initiated, Aes-Nihil’s Mansonite fetish flick is a tastelessly tasty treasure trove of serial killer-like pathological obsession and homicidal hillbilly aesthetic majesty.

For those familiar with Manson’s oftentimes dark and intensely idiosyncratic folk music, *Manson Family Movies* plays like a genuine Mansonite musical. Also featuring music by director Aes-Nihil’s band *Beyond Joy and Evil*, The Beatles (namely “*Helter Skelter*”), Patty Duke’s theme from *Valley of the Dolls*, Richard Wagner’s “*Liebeshod*,” and a couple random punk tracks, *Manson Family Movies*—a whimsical work erratically synthesizing cultural ingredients from both high and low culture—is certainly a putrid piece of celluloid ‘aesthetic nihilism’ directed by an auteur who personifies being a ‘degenerate’ in the truest Nordau-esque meaning of the word. In addition to receiving critical acclaim from such great queer auteur filmmakers as Kenneth Anger and John Waters, *Manson Family Movies* also received perverse praise from unhinged underground filmmaker George Kuchar, who stated personally to director Aes-Nihil, “I remember your film very well and it looked SCARY! It had an authentic feel to it that made us squirm. Well, it looked gritty and homespun and made me NERVOUS. Keep up the original and disturbing atmosphere.” A sort of misbegotten movie marriage between Roger Watkin’s Manson-inspired flick *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) meets the audaciously amateurish art-trash of Harmony Korine’s *Trash Humpers* (2009), *Manson Family Movies* certainly makes for a great, if not one-sided, date with the celluloid gutter. For those that enjoyed *Manson Family Movies*, contemporary punk artist Raymond Pettibon’s somewhat inferior shot-on-VHS epic of lo-fi video-art-filth *The Book of Man-*

son (1989) also makes for mandatory viewing. A sub-cult classic of the crazed campy sort, *Manson Family Movies*—in its outstanding aesthetic ineptitude, innate immorality, and general narrative incoherence—is ultimately a reminder why there will probably never be a definitive Manson family movie as Hollywood will never touch the subject in a serious and sincere manner and those genuine underground auteur filmmakers that are willing to dive deep in the world of *Helter Skelter* lack the sanity, budget, and production values to execute it properly.

-Ty E

THE DRIFT
THE DRIFT

John Aes-Nihil (1989)

Although I cannot say I have read a single word written by southern sodomite playwright Tennessee Williams, I don't think I have ever seen a bad film adapted from one of his works and I say that as someone who hates old school Hollywood as much as contemporary Hollywood. Needless to say, I was quite glad to discover that self-described 'aesthetic nihilist', archivist, and auteur John Aes-Nihil (Manson Family Movies, The Goddess Bunny Channels Shakespeare) adapted two of Williams' plays in acutely aberrant art-trash hysterical-camp form, which include *The Drift* (1989) and *Suddenly Last Summer* (2008). While *Suddenly Last Summer* is a sort of iconoclastic 'anti-remake' of Joseph Mankiewicz's 1959 Tennessee Williams' adaptation of the same name, *The Drift* is a take on the playwright's less revered first novel *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950), which was also adapted by José Quintero in 1961 as a British production starring Vivien Leigh and a rather young Warren Beatty and later adapted in 2003 by Robert Allan Ackerman as a TV movie starring Helen Mirren and Anne Bancroft. Needless to say, with its combination of paraplegic, Amazonian, and Latino trannies, as well as no-budget camcorder aesthetic and classical European architecture, *The Drift* is easily the most innately absurdist, aesthetically repugnant, and melodramatically preposterous take on a Tennessee Williams work that I have ever seen. Indeed, not unlike the late great German Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensiefel's film *Mutters Maske* (1988) aka *Mother's Mask*—a radically ridiculous 'freeform' remake of Veit Harlan's classic high-camp National Socialist melodrama *Opfergang* (1944) aka *The Great Sacrifice* that takes the conventions of high drama and throws them through a sadistic scatological celluloid blender—*The Drift* is a savory yet sickening sardonic take on Williams' novel that wastes no time in deconstructing and debasing the 'cryptic' gay subtexts of its source material. Like the work of Tennessee Williams as molested by Paul Morrissey's *Women in Revolt* (1971), John Waters' *Polyester* (1981), and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), *The Drift* seems like the result of what an elderly old rich Anglophile with dementia who used to be a fan of the so-called 'Woman's Film' might visualize as her brain rots away in a multicultural old folks home. A decidedly deranged depiction of demented man-divas of the physically and emotionally misbegotten sort, *The Drift* is the sickly sassy tale of a famous theater star who quits acting for her billionaire industrialist hubby, only for said billionaire industrialist hubby to die shortly after and leave her a widow and the prey of her scheming shebitch friends. A divinely nightmarish and nihilistic work from the apocalyptic aristocratic gutter, *The Drift* depicts everything that is repellant about the bombastic bourgeois bitches, albeit portrayed by poor tranny proletarians.

After giving up her dead serious career in theater, Karen Stone (portrayed by

gay Christian punk musician Glen Meadmore, the foremost proponent of cock-sucking 'cowpunk') also loses her stinking rich billionaire industrialist husband to a heart attack and thus loses everything she has aside from, of course, her giant fortune. Deciding to stay in the ancient European paradise that is Rome, Mrs. Stone has no idea that her life will ultimately take a tragic turn for the worse after becoming the more than willing pawn of a male prostitute puppet and his tranny pimp puppet-master. While Mrs. Stone has self-deluded herself enough to believe she really loved her dead hubby, her best friend Meg Bishop (Daniel Hernandez aka 'Cosmic Danielle') believes otherwise and has no problem matter-of-factly stating to her friend, "Oh, you can't fool me darling... You can't tell me you love that fat little porky man with the little penis... You loved his money. You can't fool me. We have been friends far too long, darling." Meanwhile, enter the queen bitch madam 'The Countessa' (portrayed by the ever elegant and the one-and-only, 'The Goddess Bunny' in what is his most elegant role). A 'matchmaker' in the most wickedly Weiningerian sense, the Countessa has a sinister talent for hooking up young ambiguously gay gigolos with lonely wealthy old widows. Needless to say, Mrs. Stone becomes the Countessa's latest victim, or as Meg states, "romance... that dreaded disease... rears its ugly head in the form of that dreaded Countessa." When the first male hustler attempts to ask for money under the dubious pretense that it is for his friend's kid with multiple sclerosis, Mrs. Stone becomes exceedingly offended and states, "How dare you! I have never ever been so insulted." When Meg encourages Mrs. Stone to get back into acting, the widow acknowledges she was a non-talent hack actor, to which her friend cleverly replies, "Talent is merely the ability to pull wool over somebody's eyes." Of course, Mrs. Stone is nowhere near as talented of an actor as a handsome hustler named Paulo (Michael Kleats), who makes the lonely widow fall under his spell. While Meg warns her friend, "Darling, I simply must tell you, you've got to be careful. I mean, scandal can ruin a name and in this town it will drive you down faster than the Titanic," Mrs. Stone has already been touched by the kiss of death that is love. As the Countessa sinisterly confesses, "To have something on Mrs. Stone is my ultimate number #1 thrill" and, indeed, with the help of her underling Paulo, she manages to get pornographic footage of Mrs. Stone and her bought beau, which is projected at a tea party hosted by the hostile madam. On top of that, Paulo cheats on Mrs. Stone with another woman (portrayed by Paula P-Orridge, the ex-wife/baby-mamma of tranny aesthetic terrorist Genesis P-Orridge). Pathologically lovelorn and suffering from the worse fate a woman can meet, a ruined reputation, Mrs. Stone wanders around the European countryside like a ghost searching vainly for some sort of intangible love. In the end, Mrs. Stone enters a villa (in a scene which was actually shot at the Los Angeles Movie Palace on Broadway) and a gunshot is heard shortly after, but like Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Chinese Roulette* (1976), it is left up to the viewer's imagination as to who was actually shot.

THE DRIFT

With the possible exception of *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Drift* has to be auteur John Aes-Nihil's most infectiously campy work to date. Described by pioneering lo-fi queer auteur George Kuchar (*The Devil's Cleavage*, *Symphony for a Sinner*) as being "really quite hypnotic and riveting. It's hard not to see the whole thing in one sitting but once you're caught in that web of decorated decadence it's impossible to budge the buttocks toward more saccharine seating," *The Drift* is certainly the cinematic equivalent of a sleazy mass market romantic page-turner as found in the porn collection of Werner Schroeter. Starring a humungous he-heroine who is literally twice the height of her friends and two real-life rivals, the Goddess Bunny and the Cosmic Danielle aka Cosmic Daniel, playing cinematic rivals, *The Drift* is undeniably equipped with an unhinged universe that delicately defiles the viewer's soul with egomaniacal tranny glamour. Featuring exquisitely delivered jokes about lesbo-on-lesbo rape, crack-addled paraplegic welfare receipts portrayed by cunning yet cultivated aristocrats and Hispanic trannies portraying gay twink-loving German barons (Cosmic Danielle plays a second role as a character named 'Baron Waldheim'), preposterously pompous anti-American micro-tirades ("Americans, trash trash"), cultivated goombah-bashing ("Not all Italians are dirty filthy things"), and classical European music and architecture, *The Drift* is a hysterical hodgepodge of the aesthetically high and low but always camp and uniquely underground. Interestingly, *The Drift* was once screened at the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival in Massachusetts. That being said, my only complaint regarding *The Drift* is I will never get to hear Tennessee Williams' thoughts on the film.

-Ty E

THE MA BARKER STORY

John Aes-Nihil (1990)

In a review of the campy true crime exploitation flick *The Ma Barker Story* (1990) directed by preternatural historian, aesthetic nihilist archivist, and aberrant-garde auteur John Aes-Nihil (Suddenly Last Summer, *The Drift*), underground art designer/journalist/artist/editor George Petros (*EXIT* magazine (1984-1992), *Propaganda* magazine (1982-2002)) rightly described the sub-underground film as a “whacked-out mutation of Corman’s *Bloody Mama*.” Indeed, *The Ma Barker Story* is like *Bloody Mama* (1970) as remade by the psychopathic Mansonite stepbrother of Paul Morrissey (*Flesh*, *Women in Revolt*) and Andy Milligan (*Vapors*, *The Body Beneath*) as an appetizingly tasteless and spiritually sick piece of morbidly melodramatic high-camp aesthetic nihilism of the hysterically hilarious sort. Made over a 13-year period and shot with a consumer grade camcorder in an innately cockeyed fashion as if seen from the perspective of a sadomasochistic voyeur who has no intention of reporting the crimes he witnessed to the cops, *The Ma Barker Story* quite consciously transcends *Bloody Mama* in terms of taking sensational (but surely not sensual!) artistic liberties regarding the facts relating to the point of the real-life Barker-Karpis gang—a quasi-incestuous gang from the Depression era spanning from 1931 to 1935 that is probably best known today for being ostensibly led by the mother of its leaders—and thus reduces the true story it is based on to the level of a decidedly debauched white trash homevideo soap opera. A sort of thematic and aesthetic prequel to Aes-Nihil’s first feature *Manson Family Movies* (1984) due to the fact that Barker gang leader Alvin ‘Creepy’ Karpis acted as a father figure for Charles Manson while the two were imprisoned at Alcatraz federal penitentiary and even taught the younger career criminal how to play guitar, *The Ma Barker Story* also has the rather refined distinction of featuring original cracker folk music by Manson himself. Also, like *Manson Family Movies*, *The Ma Barker Story* was also partly filmed at the Spahn Ranch (as well as Barker Ranch) where the so-called Manson Family lived and engaged in lecherous LSD-fueled orgies. A truly fucked folk flick and a sort of American tragicomic equivalent to the ‘anti-Heimat’ of German New Cinema during the late-1960s/early-1970s that is set in the homicidal heart of sunny Southern California, *The Ma Barker Story* is nothing if not a scrumptiously unsavory slice of Americana that has the gall to celebrate America’s timeless tradition of pioneer-style ultra-violence and criminality.

Beginning at Alcatraz with the classically melodic yet strangely melancholy Manson tune “Big Iron Door,” *The Ma Barker Story* soon cuts to the Barker Ranch and the viewer is treated to a one week day-in-the-lives musical-melodrama-western hybrid about Ma Barker and her rape-happy, moonshine-marinated, and insanely incest-driven boys. While ambiguously gay FBI queen J. Edgar

THE MA BARKER STORY

Hoover puked out some preposterous puffery out of his mouth when he described Ma Barker as “the most vicious, dangerous and resourceful criminal brain of the last decade,” she was apparently really just a lazy old fat gal who “couldn’t plan breakfast” and was oftentimes stashed in motel rooms and various hideouts because she was jealous of her sons’ girlfriends and the gang wisely wanted her to know as little about their crimes as possible. While Ma Barker is portrayed as a mad matriarch of sorts in Aes-Nihil’s *The Ma Barker Story*, she is also depicted as an intrinsically inept individual who cannot even bother to fry a single egg for her sons. Portrayed by crippled tranny Aes-Nihil superstar ‘The Goddess Bunny’ (aka Sandy Crisp aka Johnnie Baima), the eponymous anti-heroine of *The Ma Barker Story* has an unquenchable sexual appetite and thus demands her sons sexually satisfy her each night with eloquently expressed questions like “Well... which one of you youngin’s is gonna service me tonight?” without even the slightest sign of shame. While husband Pa Barker (Harlan) and son Herman (‘Gator’ of the racially insensitive industrial/noise project *Psycho-Drama*) are more or less cuckolded by Ma Barker, son Freddy (‘Bubba’ of *Psycho-Drama*) is a vocal misogynist who is not afraid to get lippy with his momma. In between raping and killing chicks, Freddy teaches his brother Herman about the ‘birds and bees’ by endowing him with positively poetic wisdom like, “The trouble with pussy—it’s attached to a woman. Now, woman is the bad part of pussy, you understand, you know, like the cob is the bad part of the corn.” When a god-bothering Christian pansy comes by the Barker homestead and begins proselytizing while waving a large but rather poorly made crucifix, the Barker bros take him out back and kill his Jesus-loving gay ass. When the local Sheriff shows up at the gang’s home regarding rumors the Barker boys have been raping young girls, musically-inclined Barker gang leader Alvin (played by Canadian ‘cowpunk’ musician Glen Meadmore, a fellow who has been described as “...the world’s greatest exponent of the genre known as gay Christian punk”) attempts to calm the cop’s worries by stating regarding Herman, “Sheriff, I know this boy here. He wouldn’t touch no girl. He’s been, he’s been boning these little boys around here.” When the Sheriff comes by the Barker home for a second time, he suavely states to Ma Barker, “I think I might know a way we can straighten this mess out,” and the two proceed to begin a steamy love affair, which naturally rather irks the mother-fucking Barker boys, so fiendish Freddy ends up wasting the lawman like a dirty pig. Of course, the Sheriff was right as Ma’s boys raped, tortured, and murdered a pretentious art-fag chick named Rembrandt (X-Tina), who proudly states whilst being tortured, “My parents are artists and so am I” as if such a pretentious proclamation will save her life. Quite notably, the scene featuring Rembrandt being tortured and killed was filmed in the former bedroom of Stanton LaVey, the grandson of Church of Satan founder and High Priest Anton LaVey. Of course, Ma Barker does not come from as nearly a cultivated background as Rembrandt, but her elderly god-fearing Mama truly

loves her and makes sure that the gang leader daughter gets straight on a moral and righteous path, but that never happens because two of homo Hoover's FBI G-man goons maliciously murder the matriarch with a storm of government bullets. In what is a retardedly melodramatic scene, Ma Barker has a flashback of her mother's speech while dying a grizzly and agonizing death. Of course, a young protégé of Alvin Karpis named Charles Manson would ultimately carry on Ma Barker's legacy of lowlife criminality, henceforth demonstrating that Ma Barker's motherly teachings were not in vain.

While John Aes-Nihil might owe an aesthetic debt to Tennessee Williams, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Paul Morrissey, and George Kuchar, contemporary arthouse trash auteurs like Harmony Korine (*Gummo*, *Spring Breakers*) and Giuseppe Andrews (*Trailer Town*, *Period Piece*) certainly owe the aesthetic nihilist a debt as well. In terms of Aes-Nihil's oeuvre, *The Ma Barker Story* is certainly cream of the crop 'cinema' of the cynically campy sort that blends high and low elements from American (non)culture in a Nietzschean libertine blender and projectile vomits them in the viewer's face without mercy like a serial killer in the middle of bloodlusting all over his prey. Immaculately accented by Weltschmerz-addled folk numbers of Mr. Manson and gay cowboy Glen Meadmore, *The Ma Barker Story* is a sort of culturally apocalyptic anti-western that makes John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962)—a work described by wop western maestro as “the only film where he (Ford) learned about something called pessimism”—seem like a pathetically pussyfooting attempt at deconstructing the very same generic genre that he essentially single-handedly sired. Daring enough to utilize a polio-crippled tranny in the role of malevolent matriarch whose immorality and lack of daintiness is only transcended by her superlatively sickening sexual voraciousness with *The Ma Barker Story*, Aes-Nihil has even managed to one-up German dandy Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Willow Springs*) in terms of cinematically immortalizing the most ungodly idiosyncratic diva the world has ever seen. Featuring furry fat fucks fucking trees, shockingly tender moments between elderly mothers and murderous daughters, Freaks-esque sideshow sex, cocksucker country blues of the Canadian queer Christian persuasion, Mansonite mysticism, and what is the most queerishly queer tragicomic acting the North American continent has ever seen, *The Ma Barker Story* has a truly rebellious rustic charm that almost makes the viewer forget that America is a cultureless wasteland, but it of course also reminds the viewer that the land of the culture-free and bravely stupid has always been Europe's (and now the world's) toilet. Indeed, as a nation that has the largest and richest film industry yet has only managed to sire outmoded genres like westerns by artisans (as opposed to artists) like John Ford, America is quite lucky it has even been able to produce an innately iconoclastic filmmaker like John Aes-Nihil who, with *The Ma Barker Story* and his other films, has managed to destroy what American cinema is all about and do it on a budget probably

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lower than Roger Corman paid a single film extra for a day's work. A honkey home-video from anti-Hollywood Hades, The Ma Barker Story pisses on American celluloid wet dreams with the venomously vicious yet glamorous and campy vengeance of 2000 bottom-feeding Mansonite acidhead freaks.

-Ty E

MOSLEY

John Alexander (1998)

Out of all the fascist leaders from the first half of the twentieth century, Sir Oswald Ernald Mosley, 6th Baronet, of Ancoats, the Anglo-Irish founder of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), was possibly the only one who is not remembered today as the definitive and gross epitome of reprehensible evil. One of the reasons for this is that, unlike Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, Mosley failed to assume the leadership of his nation, thus, he was never able to prove to his extremity and brutality as a dictator nor contract a significant amount of "blood on his hands." Also, unlike Hitler and Mussolini, Mosley came from a well bred aristocratic stock (he was the fourth cousin of Queen Elizabeth) and was not a self-made man but a natural born gentleman whose social status was confirmed long before his birth. Unlike most of his aristocratic elders, Mosley was a visionary who foresaw a changing England that was threatened by the diabolical twin-head of materialistic international finance and culture-destroying communism. In the 1998 television mini-series *Mosley*, the viewer is introduced to the political career Oswald Mosley; beginning at his bachelor years as a young and ambitious army officer during World War I and concluding during the middle of World War II when his potential as the Duce of Great Britain began to sway in a most humiliating and career-destroying manner. It should be no surprise to readers of *Soiled Sinema* that I have seen my fair share of fascist related flicks and I must admit that Mosley is easily the most sympathetic post-World War II portrayal of a fascist figure that I have had the proletarian pleasure of viewing. Although most forms of nationalism began to be looked on in a negative manner in Europe and Great Britain due to the triumph of communism in the East and democracy in the West and Uncle Adolf's infamous legacy, the Brits still manage to produce exceptional public television and the Channel Four Television produced mini-series *Mosley* is certainly no exception.

Mosley is based primarily on the books *Rules of the Game* and *Beyond the Pale*; both of which were written by Oswald Mosley's son Nicholas Mosley, thus one can speculate that Mosley has a certain authenticity that most fascist biopics tend to lack. Ironically (or not so ironically), Nicholas Mosley also wrote the book (which was adapted into a movie that same year) *The Assassination of Trotsky* (1972); a book about Stalin's assassination of his former commie comrade Leon Trotsky; the genocidal judeo-bolshevik revolutionary who spent his remaining days exiled in Mexico after losing the power struggle for leadership in the Soviet Union with the man of steel. Although I can't say I have read Nicholas Mosley's works on his infamous fascist father, it seems that Mosley screenwriters Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran and director John Alexander utilized his works to the fullest degree as the mini-series presents the blackshirt Führer as a multifaceted man of exquisite charm who enjoyed subversive politics

MOSLEY

as much as he had a weakness for beautiful birds and expensive bourbon. One also must commend British TV actor Jonathan Cake as he seems to be the next best thing to the real man in his exuberant and totally believable portrayal of Sir Oswald. As portrayed in Mosley, Oswald Mosley was a man that truly loved his nation and thus saw Benito Mussolini's successful revamping of Italy as an imperative guideline for restructuring England. I was also surprised to see that the mini-series accurately presented Oswald Mosley and the blackshirts as being more often the victims of crimes and violence than the actual perpetrators. Despite his somewhat moderate take on fascism (at least, at that time), the real-life Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists often found themselves verbally heckled and physically assaulted by various communist and Jewish groups (among others). In fact, during the so-called "Battle of Cable Street" (which took place in Cable Street in the East End of London), Mosley and the BUF were so overwhelmed by hostile antagonists (the area itself being heavily concentrated with Jews) that Sir Philip Game, the local Police Commissioner, aborted the blackshirt march. Naturally, real-life scenarios like these make for some of the most interesting scenes of Mosley.

What sets Mosley apart from most films that portray fascist leaders and movements is that it gives fascism a human face. Whether one is a fanatical fascist of the unrelenting murderous kind or a tranny s/he bitch of the third kind, it is likely that that viewer cannot help but be somewhat empathetic towards plight of the Oswald Mosley presented in the mini-series. I cannot say the same for the deplorable Italian mini-series *Benito* (1993) starring Antonio Banderas; an excruciatingly long and exceedingly banal portrayal of young Benito Mussolini and his love affair with his elder Jewish communist mentor Angelica Balabanoff. The Canadian mini-series *Hitler: The Rise of Evil* (2003) is nothing short of being a work of tabloidesque pseudo-history with an aesthetic that pales in comparison to the most mediocre of Nazi-exploitation films. On May 23, 1940, Oswald Mosley and his wife Diana (of the eccentric aristocratic Mitford clan), who advocated a peace campaign with Germany, were imprisoned at a house on the grounds of Holloway prison. Personally, I cannot help but wonder what would of happened during World War II (had the war even started in the first place) had Mosley been the leader of the now defunct British empire. If one thing is for sure, it is that tens of millions of lives would have been spared and Europa would still be the monolithic entity of global supremacy that it once was. Of course, Mosley never had the opportunity to lead and execute his plans (and enemies), thus one can only speculate what "could have been." In the excellent alternative history work *It Happened Here* (1966); a cinéma vérité-style film that was partly shot on leftover film stock from *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) that was donated by Stanley Kubrick, the viewer is offered a view of German-occupied Britain where it is suggested the Oswald Mosley and the BUF have assumed power. Mosley and the blackshirt fascist aesthetic would also inspire some

of the greatest scenes featured in Alan Parker's *Pink Floyd—The Wall* (1982). Although Mosley concludes in 1940, Oswald Mosley would go on to found the Union Movement; a quasi-fascist political party that advocated the unification of Europe into a one-state imperium that covered all of Europe. Mosley's expounding of a united Europa is further evidence that he was a true visionary that was savvy at predicting future cultural and political trends as Europe eventually would become united via the EU, albeit being of a dystopian anti-European/pro-globalist nature. American neo-Spenglerian genius (who according to FBI records had an IQ of 170) and writer of the neofascist masterpiece *Imperium* (a work that shares many fundamental similarities with Mosley's plan for a united Europe) joined Mosley's Union Movement but left the group after the ex-blackshirt leader punched the poor yank in the face. In the present, most "neofascists" and third position proponents also share the Mosleyite/Yockeyite dream of truly uniting Europe through cultural and political rejuvenation, thus Oswald Mosley tends to be lauded by those that share these political beliefs.

I would be lying if I did not admit that Mosley is one of my favorite (if not my favorite) mini-series. Aside from a couple cheesy scenes of melodrama, Mosley makes for a notable historical work that that can be compared to few others. Mosley is essentially the British equivalent of the German film *Downfall* aka *Der Untergang* (2004) directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel as both epic works contextualize the fascist historical legacy of their respective nations of origin in a fairly objective manner that is all but unheard of in Hollywood. On top of offering a somewhat impartial history of Oswald Mosley and the BUF, Mosley is a beguiling work that seems much shorter than its 197 minute running time. In fact, my biggest complaint with the mini-series is that it is not long enough, thus I recommend that viewers steer scopophilically clear of the 99 minute feature-length cut of the film as your eyes will be indubitably hungry for more. With the recent 2011 England riots (and the many that have occurred throughout the decades after World War II), I can only assume that many modern Brits are asking themselves whether or not Oswald Mosley was right as current socio-political trends certainly point in his favor. Mosley once stated, "There are periods in history when change is necessary, and other periods when it is better to keep everything for the time as it is. The art of life is to be in the rhythm of your age." I think it is obvious to most people who live in the "postmodern" occidental world that critical change of a revolutionary stature is needed and it is not of the wretched sort that was so dishonestly promised by a double-bastard American commander-in-chief who is nothing more than a glorified pimp who has developed a refined form of huckstering. I wouldn't doubt that if in three or four decades from now, an Obama mini-series will be created that is much more critical of its subject than Mosley. After all, who can hate a fascist leader that was gentleman enough to share his rationed fags with a well dressed wog.

-Ty E

THE DEATH OF SCORPIO
THE DEATH OF SCORPIO

John Amero (1979)

While probably better known for hallucinatory experimental heterosexual quasi-hardcore horror works like *Bacchanale* (1970) and cultivated comedies like *Blonde Ambition* (1981) which he co-directed with his brother Leo, John Amero was also a prolific gay pornographer who directed brutal butt bandit flicks under the pseudonym 'Francis Ellie' (and sometimes the variant 'Francis Elise'), which was also a name used by veteran exploitation auteur Michael Findlay (*The Curse of Her Flesh*, *The Ultimate Degenerate*). Indeed, from the sodomite serial killer flick *Killing Me Softly* (1979) starring Jack Wrangler as an unfortunate fellow who falls in love with a deranged dude that has an, "uncontrollable need to kill in order to have an orgasm" to the brutal S&M flick *Boots & Saddles* (1982) also starring Wrangler as a man who must save his lover from a sadomasochistic neo-Nazi played by poof porn icon Scorpio, Amero was one of the most innovative and artistically subversive auteur pornographers when it came to porn chic era fag fuck flicks. Unquestionably, one of Amero's strangest, darkest, and most sensitive yet minimalistic works is the sensationally titled flick *The Death of Scorpio* (1979). Indeed, although starring white-trash-like gay porn icon 'Scorpio' (real name Wilbur James Weiss Jr.)—a fellow who, like so many men of his time, inevitably succumbed to complications to AIDS (including stomach cancer)—the iconic porn star does not play the lead character, but instead a secondary 'character' who invokes the wraith of the beyond bitter antihero, but not before getting involved in a little balls-to-the-wall pre-condom bareback brutality. A sort of warped psycho-sexual thriller and fiercely foreboding carnal chamber piece made very vaguely in the spirit of Alfred Hitchcock's ambiguously gay classic *Rope* (1948), albeit with cocks and minus the quasi-Nietzschean philosophy, *The Death of Scorpio* depicts that revengeful short-time serial killing of a perennially internally wounded artist who decides to get revenge against his long-term ex-lover/great lover and the mutual 'friends' that destroyed their relationship. An award winner from the Gay Film Institute, *The Death of Scorpio*, which mostly takes place in a single dreary and scantily blue room, was largely shot for a live-audience at Show Palace Theatre in Soho, NYC where Scorpio regularly performed while high on "poppers" (Amyl Nitrate) and thus offers a rare raw window into a lost time that was largely vanguardized by "gay cancer" (AIDS) and, later, aesthetically insipid shot-on-video smut.

As antihero Shawn Gregory (Amero's *In Search of the Perfect Man*, *All Tied Up*) writes in a 'therapeutic' letter that to his ex-lover Michael Stone (whose only other film credit was on an episode of the forgotten TV series *Sons and Daughters* (1982–1987) created by Reg Watson): "Ten years... Ten years...or at least it would have been ten years today, Michael. Oh Michael, how did you let our friends destroy such a wonderful relationship? The day I met you at Jes-

sica's, I knew you were all and everything I needed. She was the cause of it, you know. Jessica knew that Giuseppe and Scorpio wanted to be more than just 'good friends.' They wanted you...they used you, but they never loved you. Not the way I did, Michael. I never tricked with them...our so called 'best friends.' But in one year you let them ruin all the togetherness we had developed in the best 8 years of our lives. I need my peace of mind...my course is set...my anguish will be resolved. I will end this torment." Indeed, struggling painter Shawn plans to "end this torment" by not only killing his ex via poison, but also their mutual friends Giuseppe Welch (Amero and his partner Findlay's Christopher Street Blues, Amero's Killing Me Softly) and Scorpio (Jack Deveau's Just Blonds, Christopher Rage's Street Kids), who he blames for destroying his relationship. Indeed, appealing to their flagrant narcissism by offering the opportunity to be the subject of a painting that will be in his supposed upcoming art gallery showing, Shawn convinces the men to come to his apartment where he paints and then defiles their nude bodies, and afterwards plies them with alcohol, which he has spiked with poisonous pharmaceuticals.

The first forsaken fellow that Shawn gets to come by his rather pathetic apartment of death is Giuseppe Welch, who poses for the aberrant artist in nothing but a rather unflattering jockstrap. Shawn convinces Giuseppe to come over by pleading with him over the phone regarding the supposed bad blood between the two men: "I'm all over that. No, no hard feelings. Michael and I just weren't meant to be. I've got my head together...don't even go to the shrink anymore and I really want to paint you." After Shawn paints his unsuspecting victim, he worships the young man's jockstrap and the two proceed to share carnal knowledge with one another, but both men seem to have trouble keeping their members hard. After Shawn gives Giuseppe poisonous wine, the latter soon dies and days later a newspaper headline states regarding the death: "Body Found in Soho...Poison Suggests Murder." Next, Shawn gives good old Scorpio—a dirty blond mop-head with an equally unflattering mustache that would probably scare away any sensible young child—a call and lets the porn star know regarding their upcoming painting session, "Can't wait to get you in oil!" While Shawn seems to have fun with Scorpio during their post-painting session after engaging in a little 69 pleasure and aggressive butt banditry, that does not stop the lethally lovelorn artist from perniciously poisoning his subject's vodka. In what ultimately amounts to a rather pathetic lonely death, Scorpio merely drops dead on the hot NYC asphalt like a common bum, with no one even noticing his degrading demise. In a quasi-poetic post-coitus rambling, Shawn states: "Oh Scorpio, how incredible it is that in this fragile existence we should hate and destroy one another. There was someone that said a man at the point of death was more free than all others...because, Scorpio, death levels all things. Goodbye, sweet Scorpio."

Of course, Shawn saves the best for last. Indeed, knowing that his ex-boyfriend

THE DEATH OF SCORPIO

is mourning the dubious death of Giuseppe, Shawn calls Michael and states the following like a true scheming psychopath: "Michael, I just heard about Giuseppe...how awful. What?! Oh my god, not Scorpio too! Michael, I must see you, especially after what's happened. Please come. Remember the good times. I want to be with you. There must be a very sick person somewhere in this city." Of course, totally unaware that Michael is a malevolent mad man with a thirst for carnally killer revenge, Michael shows up and the two instantly make love in a scene of almost Riefenstahl-esque "body worship." After having sex, Michael ends up accidentally finding Shawn's "kill list" while the painter is mixing together a poisonous alcoholic beverage for his ill-fated lover. In a twist ending, Michael switches glasses with Shawn while the two are kissing. Somewhat ironically, Shawn dies in peace in the arms of the man he loved so much that he was driven to coldblooded murder. Indeed, things may not have worked out as Shawn had originally planned, but at least the perturbed painter was able to "end this torment" in a most fitting and, dare I say, romantic fashion, thus giving *The Death of Scorpio* a sort of morbid and sadistic Shakespearean vibe.

While nowhere near as masterful, entrancing, and aesthetically 'idiosyncratic' as Amero's haunting esoteric psychedelic-gothic hardcore effort *Bacchanale*, *The Death of Scorpio* is no less dark and depraved, as an unwittingly prophetic piece of pornographic poetry. Indeed, created just before the AIDS epidemic more or less decimated the strongly organized gay community that popped up after the Stonewall riots of 1969, Amero's film certainly seems like it anticipates the internal 'self-destruction' that hit the homosexual world after gay cancer spread like the plague in NYC and every other American metropolis. Despite the fact that the title of the film certainly tells the viewer otherwise, *The Death of Scorpio* is surely not a mere Scorpio vehicle but a decidedly disturbing chamber piece wherein Shawn Gregory and Michael Stone (whose haunting portrait is focused on in the antihero's apartment throughout, thus highlighting Shawn's superlatively sick and obscenely obsessive heartbrokenness) are the real stars. Indeed, when it comes down to it, Scorpio's contribution to the film is no more captivating or iconic than that of a grimy blowup doll (in fact, a blowup doll would have added something more 'novel' the film). While a little too 'porn-heavy' for my tastes as someone who watches vintage fuck flicks for solely aesthetic reasons, Amero's perturbing piece of homicidal homo pornography will certainly disappoint those looking for a quick and painless masturbation aid, as an oftentimes melancholy blue movie with an upbeat yet paradoxically strangely eerie electronic/disco soundtrack that anticipates the collective screams of countless AIDS victims. Indeed, with Scorpio now long dead as a result of the same plague that devoured his friends, lovers, and fellow porn star comrades, *The Death of Scorpio* has gained more meaning with age, thus guaranteeing that not all old school wank material will succumb to the dirty semen-stained dustbin of porno history.

-Ty E

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE ORPHAN
FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE ORPHAN

John Ballard (1979)

Even as a kid, I hated most movies about or made for kids, as I felt they were patronizing and portrayed children with a sort of obnoxious pseudo-sophistication and moral righteousness that made me question whether or not the filmmakers were pedophiles (of course, as tragic child actor Corey Feldman revealed a couple years back, a number of them apparently are). In short, I tend to try to avoid virtually any and every film featuring a child protagonist, but there are certainly exceptions where a kid hero can be an advantage of sorts. Indeed, the somewhat unclassifiable coming-of-age horror flick *Friday the 13th: The Orphan* (1979) aka *The Orphan* aka *David* directed by one-time-auteur John Ballard benefits from the fact that it features what is most certainly one of the most bat-shit crazy and hysterical boy protagonists in cinema history. Better known for its somewhat unfortunate title and the fact the producers of the *Friday the 13th* slasher franchise had to pay the producers of Ballard's film to use said title, the work is based on the short horror story *Sredni Vashtar* by Saki (Hector Hugh Munro) written between 1900 and 1911 that was also adapted by Andrew Birkin and countless other filmmakers about a sickly 10-year-old boy who hates his cousin-guardian and ultimately invents an eponymous god that he summons to seek revenge against his pseudo-parent after she dares to sell his hen. Despite being released in 1979, director Ballard began shooting in 1968 and the film was not released until about a decade later after the filmmaker was forced by two presumably financially enterprising and artistically retarded female producers to cut out about 30 minutes of what was originally a 110 minute cut that was edited by Ralph Rosenblum, who edited a number of Woody Allen flicks, including *Annie* (1977) and *Interiors* (1978), as well as Sidney Lumet's Eugene O'Neill adaptation *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1962) and Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1967). Undoubtedly, it is obvious while watching *The Orphan* that Rosenblum's seamless editing was ripped at the seams, as the film seems so compulsively spastic in its editing. Seeming like a sort of Southern Gothic tale made for psychopathic prepubescent boys, the film, which originally had the working title 'Betrayal,' was notably directed by a Harvard and NYU educated child progeny who became an accomplished oil painter at the mere age of seven. Admittedly, as a result of assuming it was another disposable 1970s horror flick, I had no interest in seeing the film until reading about it in classic tome *NIGHTMARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* (2007), of which author Stephen Thrower stated, "THE ORPHAN is one of the most literate, intelligent and unusual films covered in this book," but luckily I did as it proved to be one of the most bizarre, idiosyncratic, and terribly misunderstood American genre flicks.

Part tragic coming-of-age flick, part hallucinatory hagsploitation nightmare,

part surrealist horror show, part misguided minstrel show, part 1930 period based melodrama, and part arthouse revenge-thriller, *The Orphan* probably will not appeal to most diehard horror fans and especially not Jason Voorhees fan-boys. Set in the post-WWI era, the film tells the increasingly disturbing and nightmarish story of a curious and excitable 10-year-old boy who is forced to live with his exceedingly bitchy, anal retentive, and sexually repressed old spinster aunt after both of his wealthy parents end up dying tragically. Of course, as a young boy who invents a religion with a taxidermied monkey as the godhead and whose best friends are a middle-aged African negro who was a traveling companion of his explorer father and an Irish maid, the eponymous protagonist is not your typical boy and it ultimately comes as no surprise when he completely snaps and becomes a seemingly schizophrenic psychotic killer of sorts. Featuring the sort of deadly family dysfunction and somewhat 'eccentrically' executed killings one would expect from an Andy Milligan flick, the film certainly owes comparisons to Jack Clayton's classic Henry James adaptation *The Innocents* (1961) and Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander* (1982), but also Richard Blackburn's *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973) and especially Philip Ridley's *The Reflecting Skin* (1990), as one of the most feel-bad coming-of-age films ever made.

After a fairly aesthetically pleasing kaleidoscopic opening montage featuring happy photographs of the protagonist and his dead parents and retro images of Harvard University banners and WWI era American soldiers, among other things, juxtaposed with outmoded ragtime music, the viewer is introduced to boy protagonist David (Mark Owens), who narrates to the viewer how he fought a couple of his male relatives when they forced him to look at the corpse of his father at the viewing. On top of being told by a mean-spirited androgynous little girl that he is now an orphan, David is forced to kiss the cold corpse of his truly deathly pale father, who he loved very much, even though his father was oftentimes away travelling around with his Afro-negro comrade Akin (Afolabi Ajayi), who is what one might describe as a 'magical negro.' After his parents die, David's maternal Aunt Martha Fairchild (Peggy Feury of *Matt Cimber's The Witch Who Came from the Sea* (1976)) moves into the large rural family estate to become his legal guardian and she immediately begins bitching, stating of her new luxury home, "I can't believe my sister slept here." Akin, who lives in a shack on the family estate, immediately realizes that Aunt Martha is a deleterious influence and decides to stay with the protagonist until he becomes strong and independent, or as he states like some sort of wise negro tribal elder, "I'm going to stay here until I feel that David has the strength to stand on his own two feet. Once he knows what his father stood for, there is no way she can influence him." Despite being a rather wealthy and handsome chap, David's father was a sort of wild child and perennial wander who could not help but spend much of his time dicking around the Dark Continent (or as one of his less than

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE ORPHAN

sympathetic relatives states, “jackassing around Africa”). Like his father, David has an aversion to Christianity and is a pagan at heart, though he decides to codify his own religion involving a taxidermied monkey named ‘Charlie’ as his god. While Aunt Martha bitches to him, “Your know, David, our family has always made a contribution to the Christian community...and we expect you to do the same. Frankly, we can’t afford to have you grow up to be like your father,” the protagonist is just like his dead daddy in that he is more interested in being an African pagan tribesman than a sterile bourgeois ‘cultural Christian’ fraud and social automaton.

By today’s candy ass pussy standards where people throw around made-up pseudo-academics words like ‘microaggression’ to highlight completely imaginary forms of racial discrimination, David and his negro friend Akin have what one might describe as a somewhat strange and awkward relationship, with the protagonist asking the strange African questions like, “Why are you black?” and him replying, “I’m not. Nooooo...You’re are black and I...I’ll be white.” In a somewhat curious scene, David touches Akin’s steel-wool-like hair and remarks “That’s wild,” and the humble homeboy proudly replies, “I’m glad you like.” In fact, Akin likes David so much that he always asks him to smoke out of his hookah with him. Unfortunately, Aunt Martha spots David and Akin together while lying on a leopard skin rug and she goes completely berserk and attacks the protagonist. When Akin attempts to physically restrain Aunt Martha, she hatefully, if not hilariously, yells, “Don’t you touch me, you black nigger Man!” and complains that she does not want her nephew being around “dirty” things like the decidedly dark negro. Not surprisingly, Aunt Martha demands that Akin leave the estate immediately and even goes so far as ordering the jolly black brother to kill David’s pet chicken Apple Betty before he leaves. While demanding that he not say goodbye to David before he leaves, Akin manages to write a letter to the lad reading, “David, your aunt has ordered the destruction of your hideout. I have killed the animal but she’s to blame. Prayers are no longer good. You must stand on your own two feet and face her.”

Naturally, with his best friend gone and his favorite pet dead, David’s rather fragile mind begins to unravel and he begins spending a good portion of time hanging out in the chicken coop where he intentionally burns his hands over a flame and sees his ‘god’ Charley come alive and his dead father appear with glowing hands and proclaiming, “Don’t you forget me.” In a blatant tribute to *Persona* (1966), David and his father’s faces become one just as Bibi Anderson and Liv Ullmann’s faces did in Bergman’s masterpiece. Meanwhile, it becomes quite apparent that one of the reasons Aunt Martha hates David’s father so much is because she might have been in love with him and was quite possibly even once his lover. While looking around the house in a frantic fashion for a photo of David’s father, presumably to masturbate to, Aunt Martha accidentally kills the protagonist’s cute little white puppy dog ‘Henry’ upon unwittingly

slamming its body into a door. Rather tragically, David walks in just as the dog dies and when he cries, his considerably insensitive aunt has the gall to rebuke him, stating, "Don't cry, David. He's dead. Leave him alone." When David rebels against his aunt by writing "bitch" on a bathroom mirror with lipstick and leaving her a threatening message in the form of a pile of chopped up bread with a butcher knife sticking out of the top, Aunt Martha decides to lock him in his room. In a fairly bizarre and seemingly sexually confused scenario, David decides to mock his aunt by dressing in full drag and complaining in an exceedingly grating fashion by saying things like, "Now, David, you must take your medicine." Judging by his tragic childhood, fascination with becoming like his father, and tendency to dress in drag while he is pissed off, one can only assume that David will grow up to be a pervert of sorts.

David inherited a breathing problem from his father, so when Aunt Martha opts to tie him to his bed in a cold room that lacks a heater, he naturally becomes quite sick. Luckily, the family maid, Mary (Eleanor Stewart), decides to comfort David by saying things to him like, "Sleep, David, while I watch over you. I love you, like I would my own son." Naturally, Aunt Martha becomes infuriated that Mary slept with David and ultimately decides to fire the feisty Irish maid, thus causing the protagonist to lose his last friend. To make matters worse, David overhears Mary state to a family friend named Dr. Thompson (Stanley Church of Peter Godfrey's *The Great Jewel Robber* (1950)) regarding him, "I don't care about him. I just want you." Indeed, in a scene inspired by William Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932), David hides under a bed while listening to Mary attempting to get in bearded 'bear' Dr. Thompson's pants by negating her affection for the protagonist. For her sins, Mary is subsequently mysteriously murdered while hanging sheets after having her entire body is rolled up in a sheet and repeatedly stabbed.

After being injured after crashing through a greenhouse window upon attempting to escape from his aunt, David is confronted with his greatest fear after being told that he will be sent to a boarding school. Indeed, after Aunt Martha patronizingly states to him, "I know you'll be happy there. You'll make lot of friends," David suffers a hellish *A Nightmare on Elm Street*-esque hallucination where he is sent to a sort of post-industrial orphanage (which was shot on Roosevelt Island where parts of William Friedkin's *The French Connection* (1971) was shot) full of grotesque negro children where he receives an Auschwitz-esque numbered tattoo on his arm and Dr. Thompson and Aunt Martha in drag operate on him and cut his tongue off. Of course, the ominous orphanage dream throws David completely over the edge and with a psychodramatic montage featuring a flashback scene of the protagonist's mother committing suicide by putting a gun in her mouth after accidentally killing her hubby with Charlie the chimpanzee attacking Aunt Martha, the film finally reaches its natural conclusion. Indeed, while Aunt Martha is being violently mauled by

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE ORPHAN

Charlie in the chicken coop, David appears with a shotgun and pulls the trigger while recalling his mother putting a bullet in her brain. In a scene that hints that the protagonist has been brainwashed by one-too-many holocaust classics, David stares at Aunt Martha's corpse, which is covered with mice and states "never again." After liquidating his aunt, David celebrates by eating toast. Of course, he chows down on the toasted bread in celebration of the death of his aunt, who regularly berated him any time she saw him eating it.

Aside from being one of the most patently peculiar and genre-bending coming-of-age films ever made, *The Orphan* is arguably also the most anti-Oedipal and even 'misogynistic.' Indeed, while virtually all the adults featured in the film betray the boy protagonist in one way or another, the female characters are especially cold, calculating, and irrational in their treachery. As Stephen Thrower noted in *NIGHTMARE USA*, it was not exactly common for a young director in the late-1960s to make a film with a sort of pro-patriarchal piece where 'father knows best' and where the death of the male parent is depicted as the most deleterious of things that can happen to a boy (notably, the protagonist's few recollections of his mother are negative, as she is ultimately depicted as the source of the eponymous character's problems). Indeed, unlike Jason Voorhees, the orphan is no *momma's boy* but a young boy who lost his father at a critical age, thus guaranteeing that he will never be as great of a man as the fellow that sired him. In its unintentionally hilarious depiction of a cracked cracker adopting tribal negro garb and customs, the film can only be compared to similarly strange works like Karen Arthur's *The Mafu Cage* (1978), which depicts a deranged dame with delicate daddy issues and an unhealthy chimp fetish, among other things. Of course, as one would most certainly suspect from watching the film, director John Ballard is a negrophile of sorts. In fact, aside from being actively involved in the so-called Civil Rights movement during the mid-1960s, Ballard attempted to direct a film entitled 'Hoops' about inner city negro basketball players around the same time he was putting his finishing touches on *The Orphan*, but gave up on the project upon being flown to Hollywood and being told by producers that they wanted a black coach character, which was originally supposed to be played by James Earl Jones's father Robert E. Jones, changed to a white man. Indubitably, the height of Ballard's cultural cuckoldry is probably most apparent in a scene that was from *The Orphan* where the evil Aunt Martha character fantasizes about giving negro Akin a blowjob. Ballard must have realized the scene was the height of libelous Judeo-negro propaganda in its depiction of a supposedly racist rich old cracker lady longing for darkie dong as he would later state of it in Thrower's book, "I didn't mind that being taken out." Negrophilia aside, Ballard at least seems to have some sane views about race as reflected in the following remark he made to Thrower in regard to Blaxploitation cinema, "SWEET SWEETBACK was creative; most of the others were really stupid. It's the same feeling I have about Tarantino. He has a wonderful talent

with actors, but what is he doing? He's like a wannabe black person."

Of course, as its sometimes incoherent and wayward structure demonstrates, the film also had a number of other imperative scenes cut that make more sense of the overall story. In fact, Ballard has gone on to confess that the entire structure of the film was mutilated when it was reedited at the behest of its two art-annihilating female producers, or as the director stated himself, "There was a structural design to the film, to do with pastel autumnal scenes at the beginning and cold winter scenes at the end, but because the film was restructured for its final release, this structure is compromised, with scenes from winter added to the early stages." Indeed, it might be part delusion on my part, but I sincerely think that *The Orphan* had the potential to be a hit midnight movie and artsploitation classic, but meddling producers and poor distribution put a stop to that, thus making the film now seem like a sort of pretentious yank cinematic cousin to Italian arthouse auteur turned exploitation hack Romano Scavolini's totally tasteless trash classic *Nightmares in a Damaged Brain* (1981). Although too blatantly butchered and 'politically incorrect' for arthouse fans and too tame and bloodless for gorehounds, Ballard's shockingly original and truly one-of-a-kind work most certainly has more artistic merit than all of the films in the *Friday the 13th* franchise combined. Naturally, it also has to be the most curious film ever directed by a former child prodigy, as one certainly gets the feeling while watching *The Orphan* that Ballard still has a special visceral hatred for adults, especially women, as a result of some dubious experiences he had with grownups while creating masterful oil paintings while just still a wee lad. I would even go so far as to argue that the film makes it seem as if Ballard never wanted to grow up, at least not in the conventional sense, as the eponymous protagonist of *The Orphan* dreams of becoming like his dead father who, as a man that spent his entire life going on exotic journeys and playing around in general, was more or less a perennial kid with Peter Pan syndrome. Indeed, aside from Charles Laughton's masterpiece *The Night of the Hunter* (1955), I cannot think of another film shot from the perspective of children where adults seem so collectively flawed, deceitful, and just plain despicable. Although a coming-of-age flick that would probably greatly appeal to certain children due to its ridiculously rebellious boy protagonist, *The Orphan* probably makes for uniquely unhealthy viewing for kids, especially of the highly impressionable, criminally-inclined, and/or mentally imbalanced sort, though, admittedly, I wish I had the opportunity to see the film when I was a budding juvenile delinquent, even if I would have cringed at the titular character's patently preposterous proto-wigger dream of becoming a magical Zulu warrior of sorts.

-Ty E

ZARDOZ
ZARDOZ

John Boorman (1974)

With just the title fresh in your mind, do images assault you? Ones resonating, rather vividly, landscapes of fantastical wonders from which could only be created from the genius mind that of Piers Anthony? Perhaps even the countenance of being a Dystopian film accompanied by the laser-engraved image of a lone Sean Connery in a bright red loin cloth-like uniform. Zardoz is all these things plus more. It's a sinful piece of allegorical relations to every medium of art imaginable; sculpting, painting, literature, film of sorts, and even music.

Zardoz might be the greatest and only post-Dystopian film ever created. The flow is that of a dream like atmosphere with candid colors and vicarious retro-futuristic designs. What Dario Argento's films are critically acclaimed for, John Boorman does better without the side-effects of experimental tactics and takes the mystical theory of dream scenarios as demonstrated in *Suspiria* and *Inferno* and morphs it into a perfect film adaptation. Where normal Dystopian films "end", post-Dystopian "begins". After the alluded apocalypse ravages more of the mind than the land, a new strain of being is introduced, although this Utopian incarnation is far from the Eden we'd expect. Set in a landscape of archived nihilism, "Exterminators" are designed to kill "Brutals". Their God, Zardoz, is realized as a floating stone head easily reminiscent of the colorful drawings that occupy much of Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Upon landing, the statue bellows the importance of the gun and proceeds to spew forth mountains of weapons and ammunition to aid them in their "holy crusade". As eager as the Exterminators are to go forth and murder Brutals, they are warned of the dangers of the penis. "The penis is bad", the head promptly exclaims. After questioning his idol, Zed (Sean Connery at his mustachioed best) stows away aboard the vessel and kills the pilot and magician aboard without a moments hesitation. Zardoz soon lands in the "Vortex" - the other half of the divided lands. Rather than being a killing ground, the Vortex is a divine Utopia with intelligent life and strict moral codes. The Vortex is that of science; a land where no one dies and your only aging is issued as punishment. As you can tell from the plot essentials, Zardoz is cunningly elaborate and effectively substantiated in the Dystopian genre. A premature omniscience known only as "the Tabernacle" is the main "villain" of Zardoz, other than the inhabitants of the Vortex. Each is guilty of sin for allowing such a lifeless existence to occur. Zed has come to bring change but with change comes uncertainty. The inhabitants of the Vortex are split between executing Zed and studying his masculinity and admiring his seed and bold erection. Note: Sean Connery can only become fully erect while looking at Charlotte Rampling, who defies controversy and transcends into a realm of Nazi fetishism with her role in *The Night Porter*. Zardoz sets off on a mystic quest which features scenes of epic savagery and subversive el-

ements such as condoning rape as something hereditary and for the most part, normal.[SPOILERS] The scene in which life is renewed and death appears for the citizens of the Vortex is stunning and violent in context. Eager to be rid- den of their unnatural lives, everyone screams to be shot as the Exterminators raid the camp. A brutal symphony occurs as classical music rings true as bodies hit the grass. Erotic subtleties are quietly passed around as bouncing cleavage is spotted instantaneously. [/SPOILERS]Science fiction has never been so ma- ligned, artistically ahead of its time, and revolted beyond the point of failure as Zardoz has been. A true auteur's working of Dystopian film while adding heavy theological elements. Zardoz isn't for you or I. It truly feels as if this film beckons the audience calling of an otherworldly society.

-mAQ

SHORTBUS
SHORTBUS

John Cameron Mitchell° (2006)

John Cameron Mitchell's "Sex" film Shortbus more resembles a cultural Marxist cosmopolitan car wreck than any type of sexual statement. Keep in mind that I am a huge fan of Mitchell's Hedwig and the Angry Inch. Shortbus is a film about sexual hedonism and the enslaved individuals that fall victim to it. Gay orgies, lesbian seafood buffets, and old man confessions only go so far in keeping ones interest. Mitchell thought he could make a feature length by mixing real sex with conversations about sex. He could have done this with a 10 minute short. Despite the variety of sexual interests, the characters are fairly boring and one dimensional. The most interesting character of all is an Asian sex counselor that can't have a orgasm. She decides to take it upon herself to ask lesbians for advice. The butch with the Mexican mustache from Le Tigre even adds her opinion. What a horrifying sight. Mitchell is doing nothing new with his "cinematic" sex film. The sexploitation films of the 1970s and 80s have much more character, not mention better music. The combination of some of the sex scenes and the horrible pansy music make suicide a reasonable consideration. It is depressing to know that the director of Hedwig and the Angry Inch could go from fun music to something that could be played in the coffee bar at Borders. Shortbus was supposedly inspired by European films featuring sex. Unfortunately Mitchell had no clue how to execute these scenes and construct a solid film. Shortbus comes out more like a porno flick for fans of the Jean-Luc Godard. It can be certain that the film is highly revered on liberal arts universities countrywide.

Fans of Hedwig and the Angry Inch should consider watching Shortbus. It confirms that directors of musicals shouldn't bother doing anything too far out of the genre (although Shortbus had a couple horrible musical numbers). Musicals and porn films have a similar format. Scenes of intense "action" and a little bit of plot.

-Ty E

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

John Carpenter (1986)

Big Trouble in Little China is a title that is fresh in most of your minds. For me, it's a new experience. I've meant to view this Russel/Carpenter film since I've heard of how odd-ball it is. Now that I've seen it, I'm not sure I have the same view on this film as others who viewed this film in their childhood. This is yet another attempt to assimilate Asian culture perfectly within Western audiences. What better way than to allow the action to take place in Chinatown. Jack Burton, at first glance, is the ideal American hero - Wife beater tee, American blue jeans, grizzled facial hair, and a fierce extensive firing arm. All this is intimidating, but during a closer look, Burton is no more a caricature of American heroes than the rest of them. His many adventures have him hiding out from harms way during "comedic" scenes. The rebuttal is swift as the cowards love interest is taken by the evil immortal sorcerer. He then relies heavily on his Kung-fu friend to rescue both damsel's in distress. Big Trouble in Little China is one of the fortunate films to not be influenced by CGI or anything other than practical effects. An iconic "Storm" dons an ancient Chinese gi-of sorts. His powers revolve around electricity allowing for maximum killing efficiency. It would be safe to say that Midway stole the idea for Raiden in hit arcade game Mortal Kombat. Metal Gear Solid at least took the initiative to credit Snake Plissken for his influence, whereas Midway felt it better to hide their scandal under chart-topping records. As the film progressed, I found myself overwhelmed and underwhelmed. I could have went into shock as quickly as the cornball humor came and went. The ending came swiftly with no remorse and like any John Carpenter ending, left me speechless and stunned. His generic remark to any ending with closure must be less than satisfactory. The only trait that Carpenter has distilled upon this 80s humor fest is his usual casting of Kurt Russel (Elvis, The Thing, and Escape from New York) and his merciless endings. The action/adventure genre is scrapped for a pliable adventure film. The action scenes are few and are salvaged in an effort to bring more laughs in the film. One could get enjoyment from the incredibly over-the-top scenes, but I found myself asking myself "Did they really need to go that far?". Carpenter's effort at forging an 80s cheese ball fantasy film works incredibly within its own limitations, but I discovered that there was something missing indeed. Big Trouble in Little China is sadly a film that I needed to see while young to retain most of the mind-blowing nostalgia that many to this day still reminisce upon.

-mAQ

PRINCE OF DARKNESS
PRINCE OF DARKNESS

John Carpenter (1987)

Following the box office stroke that was *Big Trouble in Little China*, John Carpenter grabbed his tool bag of familiar faces and set out to return to the reigns of horror with *Prince of Darkness*. Carpenter's career has been an odd one, for sure. The fellow has directed an extremely diverse cast of individuals with inventive and fresh story lines so in some respect, it's as if Carpenter was a peddler of quality, more than the average film maker with cult acclaim. *Prince of Darkness* is the second film in Carpenter's "Apocalypse Trilogy", beginning with *The Thing* and ending with *In the Mouth of Madness*. It would seem so the arbitrary opinion of the masses have crucified this film for obvious reasons - the intellectualism behind it. Fusing science and religion seamlessly, *Prince of Darkness* offers you two doors, one encompassing the mundane world of horror concentrate and the other brimming with pseudo-scientific explanations and theoretical sacrilege. For these reasons, *Prince of Darkness* should be a film universally accepted as a masterpiece in horror storytelling. Even with the monument I have built around it, its flaws don't put any cracks in the hull nor endanger the ultimately woeful and haunting climax.

I firmly believe that John Carpenter borrows many ingredients from Lamberto Bava's devilish discourse, *Demons*, whether he realized it or not. What first lent the idea was the similarly styled soundtrack in which Carpenter fashioned himself, perhaps in the mold of Italian prog-rock maestros Goblin. My next clue was the particular attention to detail of the systematic infection and the confinement within a "marked" piece of historical architecture. *Prince of Darkness* maintains the similar layout until the actual thesis of antimatter and he also known as Satan are divulged. For what it's worth, the beginning and the end of this film highlight the peak of horrific success. The opening scene, while shuffling through the credits, is magnified with silent instances of conversation amidst the influenced soundtrack. The anxiety present on certain faces sets the tone for what is sure to be a hell of a night. A romantic rendezvous with obsession is even met while Brian Marsh quietly longs for Catherine Danforth from afar, a student of a rivaling reality. This alone makes the final scene almost intoxicating, achieving the same affect that 1986's *The Hitcher* and *Goosebumps - The Haunted School* had on me at such an impressionable age.

Following atomic theory, Carpenter left not a single instrument of mathematics out, leaving *Prince of Darkness* exactly that of an equation. Using the clues left by brief moments of academia, one can determine the fate and origins of the "dream tape". Spoilers will be present in the remainder of this paragraph so resume with caution. Early on in the film while the students discuss the lucid crossroads each and every volunteer has been subject to, Brian Marsh brings up a likely hypothesis of the images being linked to tachyons, which are subatomic

particles that travel faster than the speed of light. Due to the tachyons nature of relativity, you would not see it but two visible impressions of it departing and arriving. Fast forward to the ending in which Catherine is revealed to be stuck in the "mirror image", it's hinted that the warbled person narrating could in fact be Brian, as the voice hopes to alter past events. Given that tachyons are clued to travel back in time, throttling backwards, it's only obvious that Brian's detailed obsession with Catherine has led to the evolution of this equation, giving him access to the past in an attempt to rediscover his love in order to tell her that which he did not. I have not even begun to highlight the subversion of reality that Prince of Darkness so shamelessly conquers. Let the fine filmmaking speak for itself.

On account of the entertaining aspect of horror, I must divulge the second side to Prince of Darkness. As you'd guess, eventually the canister containing the primordial ooze that is the son of Satan is unlocked releasing pure and utter terror into the narrow halls of this ancient church. So in some regards, Prince of Darkness takes the throne of holy horror after I was left underwhelmed by what I have seen of Soavi's The Church - also considered a sequel of sorts to Demons. To switch from my stern approach to this underrated horror classic, Donald Pleasence's character credited as "Priest" is known as "Father Loomis" with the English subtitles turned on. Just another log in the fire, I suppose, as Carpenter had already established his date with the past by including many regulars in Prince of Darkness. Carpenter is that very rare directing force of which I could not state a personal favorite. I can spend hours discussing my affection to all three films in the trilogy but If I were to be challenged to pick a single, I'd be lost without words. All I can issue is my determination to get others to see Prince of Darkness for what it really is - an absolute success in menace and faith. Easily one of his best directorial efforts in which startled me and left me in a somber daze.

-mAQ

THEY LIVE
THEY LIVE

John Carpenter (1988)

John Carpenter is a horror studio director that never really interested me. Aside from the original Halloween, I never really could say that I was a fan of his contrived horror lexicon. That was until I saw his masterpiece *They Live*. Carpenter was able to capture the alien Big Brother world we take for granted today in the form of a horror film. *They Live* also manages to capture the sociological elements facing the proletariat and their faceless masters. The international mass media is able to “win” public opinion simply by having the biggest voice. Despite the fact that the media and entertainment industry only make up 2% of Americans “national” gross, these industries (aside from the dreaded American “public” schools) are possibly the most important “programs” in America (and international) for molding the lives on “individuals.” To put it simply, the media has a much more important purpose than “to make money.” John Carpenter’s *They Live* takes a look at this in a most frightening way. The hero of *They Live* is a blue collar man (Roddy Piper) simply looking for hard work to do for little pay. Whatever job he should have had was probably outsourced to China so that Ari Cohen can have an extra vacation house in Las Vegas that his wife won’t know about. The blue collar laborer eventually finds a black friend in a similar job situation. Both men realize something is not right but are incapable of articulating their thoughts. It is not until Roddy Piper finds a pair of “alien” seeing sunglasses that he realizes there is evil behind the slave like irrationality of society. The media masters and their “cute” puppets love to pretend that they are the good guys. The reality is that they are relatives of the same criminals that own the war promoting international bankers. They put on a Zio-clown like John Stewart because he’s “funny” and he “really sticks it to Bush.” Another robust and jelly filled media favorite is “documentary” filmmaker Michael Moore. Moore is an individual whose credibility lies in his “everyday fat American slob appearance.” Obviously someone like Moore is a “good guy” just looking out for the small guy. The Weinstein’s certainly approve of his genuine and honest look at the evil white men. The media bosses are as honest with their “news” as Bolshevik mass murderers Leon Trotsky and Vladimir Lenin were real “proletarians.” The two proletarians of *They Live* realize that the only way to stop the mind numbing filth found on television is to destroy it’s various sources. The problem is even normal people are siding with the soulless aliens. What is one to do in a world where no one is trustable and the majority of individuals seemed to have suffered a TV induced lobotomy? The reality is that public schools and big media sources are most crucial sources for causing racial tensions. This is brought up in a subtle way in *They Live* when a fight occurs between the muscular protagonist and his unconvinced black friend. Once realizing that poor blacks and whites have much more in common than they want to believe (through a fight to “look

through“ the glasses), they join together to battle the real cancer. Whether it be the Jena Six Hoax (in which the Southern Poverty Law Center paid 20,000 blacks to invade a small Louisiana town) or the gothic white supremacist executed Columbine massacre (despite the fact that Dylan Klebold was Jewish), the media uses these events to propagate race based hatred and impotent white guilt. They have to have the masses consumed with hatred against each other so that no one can stop them from committing their evil genocidal deeds. They Live is John Carpenter's most powerful and important film. A film that takes a look at the hidden infestations in society, and has common men attempting to destroy it at its very source. They Live is an even more relevant film today than when it was released 20 years ago. The media, television, and films are by far the biggest influences on Americans. For some reason, people seem to believe the televisions are just magic boxes that provide them viewing with no real reason behind it. I wonder what kind of face the Ghoul Rupert Murdoch has behind his already grotesque human mask.

-Ty E

THE DAMNED
THE DAMNED

John Carpenter (1995)

The 1# favorite film of German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who described the epic Italian-West German co-production as, "perhaps the greatest film, the film that I think means as much to the history of film as Shakespeare to the history of theater," *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei* aka *Götterdämmerung* directed by Italian maestro Luchino Visconti (Ludwig, Conversation Piece) is perhaps one of the most elegant pieces of post-WWII high-camp melodramatics ever assembled and quite a curious one at that due to the filmmaker's not so inconspicuous homoeroticism and delightfully debauched depiction of loony libertine Teutonic aristocracy. Although a man of deep and ancient royal roots as someone "born into an ancient aristocratic family in Milan, one of seven children of the Grand Duke of Modrone," Luchino Visconti—a man once known as "Count don Luchino Visconti di Modrone"—also had some German ancestry and even admitted to American journalist Boze Hadleigh that, "I like the German personality—with the big exception of the Nazi madness. I feel almost German, sometimes. I am more calm than most of my country's people. Many of my friends are German..." And, indeed, even regarding the "Nazi madness," Visconti seems to have a special, albeit rather conflicted and rather risqué affinity for, if not on purely aesthetic grounds, as depicted in *The Damned*, a virtual blueblood Nazisploitation flick that, like Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974) and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975), would go on to influence the Nazisploitation subgenre, especially Tinto Brass' *Salon Kitty* (1976), which would reference all of these works of hysterically horny celluloid Hitlerite works. Featuring the single greatest, if not wildly exaggerated and conspicuously campy depiction of the Night of the Long Knives aka Operation Hummingbird—the period between June 30 and July 2, 1934 when Hitler treacherously used the elite Schutzstaffel (SS) and Gestapo to purge the Nazi brownshirt Sturmabteilung (SA) leadership, including its opening homosexual leader Ernst Röhm (one of Hitler's longtime good friends) and his boy toy Edmund Heines, to destroy the original National Socialist paramilitary wing's independence and so the Führer could prove his solidarity with the Reichswehr (Germany military), who saw the big bad brown boys as rival and gangsters—ever captured on celluloid, *The Damned* is a film that still has the power to shock and awe modern viewers as a daunting depiction of the early history of the Third Reich that few outsiders, especially Americans, are aware of. Starring some of post-WWII Europe's greatest actors, including Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, Charlotte Rampling, Helmut Griem, and last but certainly not least, Helmut Berger—Visconti's one-time boyfriend who was nearly four decades the Italian auteur's junior—*The Damned* is not only an exquisitely exploitative depiction of the beginning of the end of Deutschland as a cuckold

democracy, but also the beginning of the end of the European aristocracy and traditional Europa as a whole.

It is the night of the Reichstag fire when a half-retarded Dutch communist apparently committed arson against the Reichstag building in Berlin on 27 February 1933, thus proving that commie scum were plotting to destroy the German government and enabling the National Socialist party to consolidate total power in Germany and things are looking to change dramatically for the Von Essenbeck family/steel empire as well as the family patriarch's Baron Joachim von Essenbeck (Albrecht Schoenhals), an old school Junker conservative of the old aristocracy, has been mysteriously assassinated while lying asleep in his bed on the night of his birthday. Herbert Thalmann (Umberto Orsini), the family firm's vice president who has an unflinching hatred of Nazis, be they were brown or black shirts, is framed for the crime and he hightails his way out of Germany and away from the Gestapo, but his beautiful wife Elisabeth Thalmann (Charlotte Rampling) and children are left behind and must face very definite persecution from Hitler's homeboys in the SS and Gestapo. With the honorable and just Baron dead, the von Essenbeck empire is initially put in the dubious and degenerate hands of a SA officer Konstantin (René Koldehoff), a decidedly swinish sodomite of an aristocrat in a working-class National Socialist paramilitary group who personally has twink blonde supermen give him baths. To his decided disgust, Konstantin has an extremely effete and left-leaning student son named Günther (Renaud Verley) who is also interested in taking over the family business but he is too big of an art fag to be any sort of real threat, but his nefarious cross-dressing cousin Martin (Helmut Berger)—a fellow who does a mean impersonation of Marlene Dietrich's song and dance routine from Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930) and likes molesting prepubescent girls, especially his own nieces and poor little Jewish ones—makes for a much more malicious threat as the absurdly amoral grandson of the dead patriarch. On top of maniac misfit Martin, his mother Sophie (Ingrid Thulin), the widow of Baron Joachim's only son, a fallen fighter-pilot World War I hero in the spirit of the Red Baron who would have been probably the right man to take over the von Essenbeck empire—is plotting with her social-climbing lover Friedrich Bruckmann (Dirk Bogarde) to take over the business. Of course, the keenest chess player is a Faustian beautiful blond beast of a SS officer and family member named Aschenbach (Helmut Griem), who ultimately pits the family members against each other, using others to ruin others, only to ultimately ruin the person he once helped in a mere second's time. Indeed, if you thought members of Irish white trash, Mestizos, black gangsters, and Islamic towelhead families were malicious to one another, you have yet to see the venomous and totally uncompromising treachery and two-facedness of the bold, beautiful, and damned von Essenbecks.

Featuring a SA drag number of *Horst-Wessel-Lied*, the anthem of the Nazi

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party, as well as a drunken homo-love rendition of Richard Wagner's "Liebestod" ("love death), the final, tragic yet touching aria from the 1859 opera *Tristan und Isolde*, by sodomite SA officer Konstantin before he and the *Sturmabteilung* is totally exterminated in a Teutonic twink blood orgy during the Night of the Long Knives, *The Damned* is indubitably the most masterful depiction of National Socialist high-camp ever depicted and it took no one less prestigious than a literal aristocrat, an Italian Germanophile of noble Guido and German blood to do it. Featuring sensitively assembled scenes of son-on-mother coitus of the catatonia-inflicting sort, one can only wonder what sort of blueblood depravity Luchino Visconti was exposed to as a true blue aristocrat himself during his rather long and eventful life as one of Italy's last true and completely cultivated Renaissance men. Despite being a staunch anti-fascist and even a member of the Italian Communist Party who once almost had a date up against a wall and in front of a blackshirt firing squad, Visconti was surely not a sincerely proletarian-sensitive filmmaker and even though his early Italian Neorealist works focused on the working-class, *The Damned* as well as virtually every one of his later epics, focuses on the ridiculously wealthy and recklessly wanton. As anti-Nazi conservative author Fritz Reck-Malleczewen described in his journal *Diary of a Man in Despair* (1947), a work chronicling Germany's dramatic transformation during the Third Reich, it was only the most debauched and opportunistic of aristocrats who found themselves kissing Uncle Adolf's ass and certainly is the case in *The Damned*, a film where a pedophile and literal mother-fucker rises to the top of a steel empire (based on the Krupp family, a prominent 400-year-old German dynasty from Essen, Germany) that will be responsible for providing the ammunition and armaments used in the Second World War. Indeed, while melodramatically embellished in a campy fashion and at a pace and running length that is far too intolerable for most modern viewers, *The Damned* offers a rare and enthralling depiction of the secret workings of the Third Reich and its imperative utilization of industrialization—the final ironic Faustian nail in Occidental man's self-destruction. Indeed, it is quite symbolic that Adolf Hitler once stated to the Hitler Youth, "In our eyes, the German boy of the future must be slim and slender, as fast as a greyhound, tough as leather and hard as Krupp steel." Of course, it is doubtful that Germany would have gotten as far as did during the war if it was only as hard as demonic dandy like Helmut Berger.

When I first saw Visconti's *The Damned* over a decade ago, I thought it was an inferior work to Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), a work of melodramatically macabre celluloid Nazi naughtiness also starring Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling, but now I see the former as an epic masterpiece of world-class cinema and the latter as a novelty arthouse smut flick of the rather superficial SS sort. Indeed, a work featuring Nietzschean Hitler quotes like, "Personal Morals are dead. We are an elite society where everything is permissible," *The Damned* even goes so far as making National Socialism seem like

some cool quasi-Satanic apocalyptic religion that came all too quickly and disappeared all too soon in a Wagnerian Germanic pagan holocaust of the body and mind. The first film in Visconti's Germany trilogy, preceding *Death in Venice* (1971) and *Ludwig* (1972), *The Damned* was the virtual film school Rainer Werner Fassbinder never attended and its aesthetic and thematic influences can be seen clearly in *Despair* (1978) starring Dirk Bogarde, *Lili Marleen* (1981), *Lola* (1981), and *Querelle* (1982), among various others. More than anything though, *The Damned* probably gave Fassbinder the courage to not only direct revolutionary National Socialist period pieces, but also come to the realization that if he was born a couple decades or so earlier, he would have probably been a brownshirt and a back-door commando one at that.

-Ty E

SPACE IS THE PLACE
SPACE IS THE PLACE

John Coney (1974)

Personally, I have no fear of a black planet, as long as I do not actually live it on myself. Undoubtedly, Afrofuturist jazz musician and black nationalist 'cosmic philosopher' Sun Ra would not want me living there either as he makes it quite 'crystal clear' (both literally and figuratively) in the audaciously Afrocentric avant-garde sci-fi flick *Space Is the Place* (1974) aka *Sun Ra & His Intergalactic Arkestra: Space Is the Place* directed by cracker TV director/producer John Coney and produced by fellow white cuckold TV producer Jim Newman. The closest thing to a 'negro Lucifer Rising,' *Space Is the Place* is suavely surreal celluloid racial mysticism of the forward-looking variety that portrays a futuristic fantasy in the apocalyptic racial utopia spirit of *The Turner Diaries* where a stoic spade messiah played by Sun Ra comes to earth to colonize black America with hypnotic power music and takes its most upstanding citizens to the homeboy planet and where, in the end, earth, as well as all the white devils and Uncle Toms, is totally destroyed. Originally envisioned as a mere 30-minute performance documentary on "The Arkestra" (Ra's musical group) after Sun Ra came to the attention of producer Jim Newman when the musician was teaching a course at the University of California, Berkeley on "The Black Man in the Cosmos" where he promoted thinkers ranging from Russian occultist Madame Blavatsky to black poet Henry Dumas, *Space Is the Place* eventually evolved into a feature-length narrative film with the help of screenwriter Joshua Smith, although two different films exist day. Writing all of his own lines and dialogue, Sun Ra ultimately rejected the 85-minute director's cut due to what he rightfully perceived as featuring exploitative blaxploitation themes, thus a shorter 60+ minute Ra-approved radical cut of the film was released on VHS missing two sex scenes and a scene with a junky degenerate, among various others. Admittedly, I preferred the decidedly degenerate director's cut as Ra's version of the film seems like a poor black man's puritanical take on Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) and Steve Arnold's *Luminous Procuress* (1971) as it lacks the ludicrously lurid and racial-stereotype-charged angle of the longer cut. Indeed, blaxploitation scenes or not, *Space Is the Place* is still a strikingly singular esoteric black empowerment flick steeped in blood mysticism and radical Afrocentric historical revisionism that combines intentional race-based myth-making akin to National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg and the collectivist black identity politics of revolutionary pan-African leader Marcus Garvey. Sort of the sci-fi fantasy genre equivalent to the Afrocentric horror flick *Ganja & Hess* (1973) directed by Bill Gunn and starring Duane Jones of *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Space Is the Place* is a work that reminds the viewer, despite what the Hebrews, homos, and other assorted cultural Marxist types in Hollywood have to say with their inorganic and culture-distorting films, racially

nationalistic cinema is more about love and true culture than hate and soulless cosmopolitanism, consumerism, and other vapid values that are setting the world on a path to self-destruction.

Taking his pseudonymous name from the Egyptian God of the Sun, *Space Is the Place* features a sort of Aeon of Horus of the Afrocentric persuasion that espouses self-realization, albeit of the racially collectivist as opposed to individualistic self-absorbed and hedonistic sort. Originally a somewhat lowly but locally legendary jazz musician at speakeasies around the time of the Second World War, Sun Ra vanished from the planet in June 1969 while on tour in Europa, ultimately landing on a funky celestial planet with his (musical) crew “The Arkestra.” As for his reasons for heading to outer space, Ra is quite blunt, stating, “We set up a colony for black people here...see what they can do all on their own without any white people there.” With the potent stench of black power in the air, Sun Ra decides to head back to earth to spread his message and recruit new broths for the mother planet, using music as his mad cool medium of galactic transportation. First time-traveling to 1943 Chicago where he used to play piano under the lowly name “Sonny Ray,” Sun Ra confronts his nasty nemesis named ‘The Overseer’ (Ray Johnson)—a kind of black devil who symbolically wears all white, loves white whores, and who is a pimp and ‘psychic vampire’ of sorts that styles himself as a community leader of the negro community but is really just the ‘enemy within’—and the two agree to duel using Afrofuturist tarot cards for the fate of heart and soul of the black race. As Mr. Ra tells a couple black national activists who question whether or not he is ‘real,’ “I’m not real...I’m just like you...you don’t exist in this society. If you did...your people wouldn’t be seeking equal rights. You’re not real...if you were you’d have some status among the nations of the world. So we’re both myths. I do not come to you as a reality. I come to you as the myth because that’s what black people are...myths. I came from a dream that the black man dreamed long ago. I’m actually a presence sent to you by your ancestors. I’m gonna be here until I pick out certain ones of you to take back with me,” thus demonstrating the need for blacks to make their own history and reality and stop living in whitey’s world as second-class citizens.

Upon arriving in Oakland, California, Sun Ra opens a place called the ‘Outer Space Employment Agency,’ where he turns down an Aryan man that worked for NASA with the most bluest of white devil eyes, a slutty white MILF, and a homeless black wino who refuses to work, as the mature Amero-Mandingo metaphysician musician is looking for negroes of upstanding characters and even prefers morally keen ‘ghetto blacks’ to ‘white physicists.’ Meanwhile, two radical young negroes—Bubbles (Jack Baker) and his mulatto friends—are told by the evil Overseer that Sun Ra is a charlatan and a fraud, stating, “The dude wants you to buy his records, you dig?!...He’s not dealing in black magical soul power...He deals in cold cash, you understand?,” but the two young black bucks disagree, stating, “But he hasn’t yet traded his black brethren to the exploitative, racially

SPACE IS THE PLACE

and culturally co-opted Caucasian power structure.” Sun Ra also faces spiritual trouble when a Svengali-like brotha’ Jimmy Fey (Christopher Brooks)—the cracker-loving minion of the Overseer who is a sort of archetype for the fake Uncle Tom type blacks in the mainstream entertainment industry—coerces the out-of-this-world musician to ‘sell-out’ by doing radio appearances, a music album, and a large concert of biblical performances. On top of that, a duo of honkey hellions working for Nazi NASA begin spying on and plotting to kill the subversive spade Sun Ra. Of course, Ra has the power of Afrofuturist music on his side and believes that most blacks are depressed because, “The people...have no music. That is...in coordination with their spirits...because of this... they are out of tune with the universe. Since they don’t have money...they don’t have anything,” so he naturally decides to give them the gift of music to fight back against the white menace. Just when Bubbles tells his comrade that he thinks Sun Ra has degenerated into a sell-out Uncle Tom, stating “I think this whole big concert business is a byproduct of the Eurasian Occidental conspiracy...he’s been coopted, coauthored, and correlated,” the two Afrocentric revolutionaries spot the two white devils from NASA kidnapping the Afrocentric musician, so they rescue and free him. Not long after, Bubbles gets shot and killed by one of the white NASA dudes while shielding Sun Ra during a botched assassination attempt, but the musician ultimately saves his life by putting him on his spaceship, which will take him to the glamorous intergalactic ghetto. Aside from Bubbles, his friends (a mulatto and a Fat Albert-esque negro), Sun Ra also allows Jimmy Fey’s “black part” to board his spaceship, leaving the evil “white part” of Fey behind to taunt the Overseer. In the end, the most noblest of negroes fly intoouterspace on Sun Ra’s spaceship and planet earth explodes not long after, killing the whole wide white world in the process and thus ultimately securing black domination of the entire universe, thereupon making *Space Is the Place* easily the greatest and most uncompromising black power sci-fi flick ever made.

As the scatological Semite Norman Mailer wrote regarding the Apollo 11 moon landing and its uniquely Aryan and Faustian character, “the real mission of the Wasp in history was not, say, to create capitalism, or to disseminate Christianity into backward countries...It was to get the U.S. to the moon” and “To wit, he can project himself’extraordinary distances through a narrow path. He’s disciplined, stoical, able to become the instrument of his own will, has extraordinary boldness and daring together with a resolute lack of imagination. He’s profoundly nihilistic. And this nihilism found its perfect expression in the odyssey to the moon—because we went there without knowing why we went,” yet clearly the self-proclaimed “white negro” novelist spoke far too soon and jealously as *Space Is the Place* demonstrates there is not only a transcendental and spiritual element to space travel, but also that proud national black men would love to do it too, even if whitey was there first. More importantly, the film proves that black Americans can produce idiosyncratic mystic kultur that does not revolve

around crude and animalistic sexual habits, 'ill' literacy, nihilistic materialism, and philistine-style hate-for-hate's sake. In fact, the antagonist of *Space Is the Place*, the Overseer, is a pernicious cultural parasite who enslaves his own people via drugs and addicts, prostitutes his own people for profit, is totally irreligious, and will do anything for a buck or fuck. Like the Aryan operatic "Gesamtkunstwerk" films of proud Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King*, *Hitler: A Film from Germany*), *Space Is the Place* is a cinematic work that, aside from its humor and classic sci-fi conventions, would be totally inaccessible and misunderstood today in our spiritually vacant and monstrously materialistic times due to its promotion of cultural myths among the respective group the film was made for. Indeed, it may be a total fiction that ancient Egypt was a black civilization, but such grandiose sentiments unify a people, which is a message that Sun Ra more or less tried to spread with *Space Is the Place*. Pro-black without being matriarchal and black Bolshevik like the cinematic works of Senegalese auteur Ousmane Sembène (*Xala*, *Camp de Thiaroye*) meets primitive science fiction cinema of the outmoded old school sort, *Space Is the Place* ultimately did for avant-garde Afrofuturist jazz what Slava Tsukerman's cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982) did for punk/New Wave/electroclash, thus making it a must-see for fans of the music subgenre (I must admit I am not one of them). With curiously comical and highly quotable quotes like, "looks like we got another dead nigger on our hands," "we'll put a coon on the moon by June," and "sometimes when you lose you win," *Space Is the Place* is accidental satire at its best. Rather ironically shot concurrently on the same sound-stage as the porn chic classic *Behind the Green Door* (1972) considering Sun Ra's disciplined monk-like ways (the Afrofuturist did not cut out the sex scenes out of his cut of the film for nothing!), *Space Is the Place* is not only a celluloid space oddity, but a cultural oddity that is more thematically relevant today than when it was when released nearly four decades ago, especially considering a certain mulatto president of the United States of America bears a certain resemblance to the villain of the film as a false messiah leading not only blacks, but also whites and every other race, on a path of total destruction.

-Ty E

SCHWITZKASTEN
SCHWITZKASTEN

John Cook (1979)

While West Germany went through an exciting era during the 1970s that managed to grab both critical and commercial attention around the world, the nation's sister country Austria was going through a somewhat static and generally uneventful period, with directors like Axel Corti (*Totstellen*, *Young Dr. Freud*), Maximilian Schell (*End of the Game*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*), Peter Patzak (*Parapsycho – Spektrum der Angst*, *Kassbach – Ein Portrait*), Wilhelm Pellert (*Jesus von Ottakring*), and Valie Export (*Mann & Frau & Animal*, *Invisible Adversaries*) being some of the more notably, but hardly world famous, directors of that period in Schluchterscheisser cinema history. Oddly, one of the most important yet now largely forgotten figures of Austrian cinema during the 1970s, John Cook (1935–2001), was not Austrian at all but a Canadian fashion photographer turned minimalist filmmaker who was, in his own weird words, “Viennese by choice.” Despite being ‘Viennese by choice,’ Cook had no problem callously criticizing his adopted city as demonstrated by the snide remark, “To live in Vienna, you either have to be cynical or stupid,” which is made by a ‘character’ (aka alter-ego) played and penned by the auteur in the documentary-like work *Langsamer Sommer* (1976) aka *Slow Summer*. Immigrating to Vienna in the late-1960s, Cook made four films (penning four and directing three of those four) between 1972 and 1982 before becoming fed up with the increasingly bureaucratic film subsidy system in Austria and decided to leave Vienna and filmmaking altogether. Arguably, the most accomplished work Cook ever directed was his social realist work *Schwitzkasten* (1978) aka *Clinch* aka *Sweat Box*, which would be the director's first attempt at directing a ‘proper’ film (Cook's first work, *Ich Schaff's Einfach Nimmer* (1973) aka *I Just Can't Go On*, was a documentary that was only about 50 minutes and his second work, *Langsamer Sommer* (1976) aka *Slow Summer*, was shot on black-and-white Super 8 flick stock) that actually had a discernible storyline and would be seen by people aside from cineastes and leftist activists. Once again focusing on the Austrian Lumpenproletariat like his previous works but adapted from the novel *Das Froschfest* written by Communist Party of Austria member Helmut Zenker, *Schwitzkasten* certainly suffers from the sort of cardboard ‘workers’ message typical of works by German New Cinema directors of that same era, but thankfully it has a genuine sort of warmth and empathy for the loser ‘everyman’ protagonist that films by pedantic avant-gardists like Jean-Mari Straub, Helke Sander, Alexander Kluge, and related cappuccino commies lack.

Hermann Holub (Hermann Juranek) is a short blond man in his 30s suffering from ‘Weltschmerz’, although being an uneducated fellow, he probably does not know what that word means, and like a character from a Fassbinder flick, he has a hard time expressing his pain, so he is prone to acting out irrationally

and violently when he gets angry. Like most of his friends, Hermann is a lazy 'gardener' who works for the local Viennese city council and with his equally crude and unsophisticated co-employees, he verbally sexually assaults any half-attractive woman that might pass his animal-like gaze. When Hermann and his friends start aggressively hitting on a Catholic chick who is looking for a rosary that she lost in a park, the devout lady calls them "rotten shitheads" and "calls the wrath of the Lord" on them. Hermann has a part-time girlfriend of sorts named Vera Pausinger (Christa Schubert), but that does not stop him from patronizing prostitutes and attempting to screw his friend's girlfriend. One night after making love with his girlfriend, Hermann gets out of bed in the middle of the night and gets dressed, thus making poor Vera cry. When a new engineer's delegate is appointed at Hermann's work, he decides to quit as the new man given the position, Larry Chalupa, "lives up the Engineer's ass," so he gives his friends his farewell by calling them, "idiots" and leaves the lousy position forever. Naturally, as a grown ass old man who still lives with his parents, jobless bum Hermann faces scrutiny from his father (Josef Boselmann), who demands he seek new employment asap. Hermann goes to his only successful friend for help, a pretentious prick writer named Ehrlich (Franz Schuh), but his friend is a stuck up scumbag that pretends to allow him to have sex with one of his concubines, but when the unemployed gardener goes to seal the carnal deal and is half-undressed, the novelist barges in, cock blocks him, and demands he go pick up something for him at the store (rather wisely, Hermann opts for using the money on a prostitute).

When Hermann's semi-successful brother (Werner Juranek), who walks around arrogantly in a fancy black suit and narcissistically admires himself while incessantly combing his hair in front of the mirror, confronts him about his lack of employment (Hermann openly admits he is not even bothering to look for new work), stating, "You're just a lazy dog. Look at me. There. Look at me. A suit made to measure. Our boss had them made for us because this year we've sold much more than last year. All you've got to be nowadays is efficient, that's all," the down-and-out ex-gardener loses his cool and leaves the family home abruptly. Unfortunately for him, the brother follows Hermann outside and unloads a couple bullets out of his handgun, which angers the hapless gardener so much that he brutally beats his bro to a bloody pulp. Naturally, Hermann passively attempts to evade justice by hiding at his girlfriend Vera's flat, but the cops soon pick him up and he spends some time in jail due to a minor prior conviction until his court date arrives, where he is given 3 years probation. Desperate for somewhere to live aside from his parents' cramped home, Hermann convinces Vera to let him move in and on the same night she reveals that she has been impregnated by another man, and since she is 33 and is afraid she might not ever again get the chance to have kids due to her age, she decides to keep the kid. Taking an underpaying job as a delivery driver, Hermann ironically ends up

SCHWITZKASTEN

working with his enemy Larry Chalupa again, but they both agree that when it comes to working that an “Aryan calm is called for” and that there should be “no Jewish hassle.” When Vera jokes about getting a divorce despite the fact she is not married, Hermann states, “let’s first get married and then divorced.” Indeed, Hermann and Vera end up getting married despite the fact that bride is pregnant with the child of another man. Since they do not have enough witnesses for the marriage (neither Hermann’s father nor brother bother to attend the wedding), Hermann pays an unwitting Canadian who does not speak German a couple bucks to act as witness at the wedding, which takes place at a sterile court house. In the end, Hermann’s female boss Frau Gretl (Johanna Froidl) congratulates the newlyweds after the wedding with a bouquet of flowers, but she ultimately fills the lovers with a bit of unease after discussing her own failed marriage. Vera tells Hermann’s boss that when it comes to money that, “We’ll manage, somehow,” to which Gretl soundly replies, “Well, you must. If only for the child’s sake.” In the final scene, Hermann stands outside all by his lonesome while surrounded by beers. Undoubtedly, the viewer gets a foreboding feeling while thinking about Hermann and his wife’s future.

Undoubtedly, in its unpretentious gritty proletarian realism, *Schwitzkasten* is certainly comparable to the works of ‘no bullshit’ German filmmakers like Roland Klick (*Büchchen, Supermarkt*), Klaus Lemke (*Rocker, Arabian Nights*), Uwe Frießner (*The End of the Rainbow* aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens, Baby*), and Iranian exile Sohrab Shahid Saless (*Ordnung* aka *Order, Utopia*). In placing *Schwitzkasten* in the context of Austrian cinema history, the Museum of Modern Art wrote: “Today, the film is considered one of the few undisputed masterpieces of the New Austrian Cinema: a freewheeling, tender, and strangely humorous portrait of working-class (and out-of-work) lives. At the time, however, Cook’s genial and unpretentious approach was remarked upon only by the most ardent critics, who compared it with that of Eric Rohmer and Jean Eustache.” Personally, I think it says more about the sorry state of post-WWII Austrian cinema than expatriate auteur John Cook’s actual talents as a filmmaker, as *Schwitzkasten* is certainly nothing new nor original, but a vaguely bright light in a country with a mostly marginal cinema history. Viennese film critic Dominik Kamalzadeh also paid tribute to the film when he wrote of Cook’s film: “*Clinch* is no longer a formal hybrid but finds its own modus operandi: neorealism, Vienna style. The film is lyrical, but down-to-earth, its tone is precise without crossing the border to the social grotesque as so many Austrian films unfortunately do. And above all: it shows solidarity with the main protagonist without turning him into a poster hero.” Indeed, protagonist Hermann is certainly no hero and definitely not a winner, but a miserable and pathetic man that is like millions of other people in his country and that is exactly what makes a *Schwitzkasten* a semi-important work. One must also credit John Cook for opening the door for later culturally pessimistic Austrian realists like Ulrich Seidl

(Tierische Liebe aka Animal Love) and Michael Glawogger (Das Vaterspiel aka Kill Daddy Good Night, Whores' Glory), whose exceedingly grotesque realism make a film like Schwitzkasten seem like it was made for PBS. That being said, what probably makes Schwitzkasten most disturbing for modern viewers is that it demonstrates that things have only gotten all the more worse since Cook's film was released some 35+ years ago. After all, Schwitzkasten does not feature a single person wearing a turban (let alone a single foreigner from the third world), white single mothers with mulatto babies, rambling crackheads, nor illiterate wiggers. Undoubtedly, you would be hard-pressed to find a young person nowadays like Schwitzkasten protagonist Hermann who is willing to step up and act as the father of a kid that is not his.

-Ty E

THE POUGHKEEPSIE TAPES
THE POUGHKEEPSIE TAPES

John Erick Dowdle (2007)

I used to work for a pseudo-Jewish intellectual boss at a theater. At times, he would escape to "New Yaok" for the term of several days and come back with an all-too forced accent as to accentuate his Jewishness. I recall one of his talks describing how he had breakfast with J.Lo and how he almost made it into the NBA but "fame's not for him". It doesn't take a genius to realize that he's both talking out of his ass and presenting the trait of a habitual liar. And then he began telling us about The Poughkeepsie murders that occurred near his home with the discovery of a tiny library of snuff tapes. I had seen the viral video showing the woman tied to a chair being toyed with by a masked killer. Instantly, I knew the authenticity was not valid but my manager claimed that this was genuine footage (Yes. On YouTube). That was the last I heard about the film The Poughkeepsie Tapes until it finally leaked. I had been waiting too long to see this film. After hearing my manager's rants about how the Poughkeepsie killer terrified his community, I pushed his words aside. Thankfully so, as upon further inspection this entire film is a faux documentary depicting incredible loose events of a serial killer that murdered 8 women.

Apart from the hilarious lies & scandal I had been fed by an inane egomaniac, The Poughkeepsie Tapes fares up pretty well to other serial killer incarnates of the present. The intent to procure your attention with graphic over-edited imagery is a valiant effort on behalf of the creators of this alternate universe. The presented statistic of there being 30 active serial killers in America is curiously not as intimidating as the numbers should allow. I find that the country we live in is a relatively secure area, that is, until a personal incident allows for paranoia to seep in, blurring the illusion all the while. The composition of this documentary is many interview scenes that appear "over budgeted" and often trash the build up of intensity. The other scenes are the reason why you'd be viewing this film in the first place; the sweet chocolate center - the killer's tapes. From featuring brutal acts of dehumanization and a master & slave relationship that spirals into an absolutely depressing fictional case of Stockholm syndrome, these scenes don't disappoint but allow for the fluff of the film to stand out like a sore thumb alleviating any melodrama this film pursues.

The Poughkeepsie Tapes has had a long journey ahead of it for quite some time. When I first became employed at the theater over a year ago, we had rotting trailers for that film in a bin. Using basic mathematics, it's quite clear that this film has been delayed for quite some time. Maybe not as bad as "Duke Nukem For-ever" but the gap in dates is still partially substantial. Now that The Poughkeepsie Tapes is released in some form to the public, is it worth a viewing? It's hard to classify this film. The entertainment value doesn't strike me much but it was noble in its vain quest to find an audience. I wouldn't go

out of my way to view this. You can find the highlight scenes on YouTube and it would spare you over an hour of police drama.

-mAQ

QUARANTINE
QUARANTINE

John Erick Dowdle (2008)

A film can only be as good as its experience allows it. I repeated this thought in my head allowing it to work its way through uncharted territory in a vain attempt to gain back what was lost. Reflecting on what I had saw wasn't an easy task as the screams of many haunted my every thought. A friend and I decided that traveling an hour to the nearest Quarantine showing would be a great idea. In the end, the only thing partially satisfying about my film was the lingering thought that I might have been the only one to have seen [Rec] in that audience. The odds of surviving were slim. Directly in front of us was a big stern black couple that reeked of rudeness, flanked from the right was an Urkel suburbanite complete with annoying voice box with 8 different sayings. The worst of these perpetrators were the trailer trash wiggers behind us that seemed excited to loudly exclaim their nullified opinion of every scene. Imagine a Maryland-esque version of Mystery Science Theater 3000 and that's what we experienced. All shock factors and jump scenes were immediately pulled into a reversal as someone in the sold out show was bound to laugh or guffaw. This American presentation of Spanish horror was given no mercy by its ravenous audience. I'd been thinking about Quarantine for a bit. [Rec] was a surprisingly clever film. Taking the feminist hero point, it adds a subversive sexual tension to Ángela that isn't denied. She is a lovely character and fronted by an amazing actress; Manuela Velasco. Quarantine's Jennifer Carpenter is ...meh..When I first heard the news of both a "shot by shot" American remake and a Spanish sequel,, I went into a form of shock. One of these was incredible news while the other left a rotten taste in my mouth. Doesn't take a genius to match the correct answer. When I finally watched Quarantine, I found many substantial differences that isolated many optimum moments and either strengthened the weaknesses or basked in its inability to follow a story without butchering the characters. Manu's character has been helmed by Hostel's Jay Hernandez. This alteration creates a very chivalrous character and turns him into a tag-team pervert duo that doesn't have that macho presence that Manu had. That, and when Manu turns rabid, it produced an absolutely horrifying scene of a raged Manu downstairs look up blasting you into a cacophony of fear. For once being a self-proclaimed exact remake, too much is different here. Sure, it's risky and yeah, I can agree with some changes that work towards making this film more visceral. More gore was added into the film with a charming effect. Bones break and bend which delivers a stomach churning crowd reaction which might have been the only good thing about my experience. I enjoyed watching them suffer. With [Rec] being as grand and fresh as it is and a planned sequel in development, It's easy to disregard Quarantine. Nothing much to see here other than a dull American version with Violence v2.0 downloaded into its mainframe. There's

a huge possibility that Angela didn't even die in both films, but I'll leave that up to your imagination to put the pieces together. Quarantine is one of those self-conscious films that refuses to say its own title in dialogue regardless of how natural the word should come in its depicted situation. *Lame.*

-mAQ

ROLLING THUNDER
ROLLING THUNDER

John Flynn (1977)

With promises of enlightening me with an all-American experience in vengeance and psychological trauma, Rolling Thunder pulls no strings in acquiring instant favoritism of all the films I've seen from the seventies. Starring William Devane and Tommy Lee Jones, Rolling Thunder is an absolute treat as I was expecting a trashy exploitative motion picture of relentless gun play in the name of several fallen souls. Could you imagine my surprise when the central whore character was martyred early on in front of the withdrawn Major Charles Rane by Brain-scan director John Flynn? Besides from the pivotal and expected scene of retaliation towards his attackers, Rolling Thunder encompasses many American influences of hatred and gender prejudiced cinema. What is slowly unraveled over the entirety of the film is what First Blood could have been had the character of Rambo been written into the cold-blooded killer that he is in the Morrel novel of the same name and not the pacifistic pussy that Hollywood made him out to be.

A prime element of Rolling Thunder in which dazzled me is the emotional crucifixion of the military spouse. Upon returning home from a POW camp after 7 long years of torture, Major Charles Rane greets his wife and child with eyes that reflect calm but hide a seething inferno behind his glasses. After the initial car ride home, a police officer named Cliff expresses curious sentiments with Major Rane's wife which is later revealed to be her secret lover since his capture. Instead of a sordid affair continuing or trying to patch up the relationship that died in the camp along with Major Rane, the creature known as Janet promptly tells him that Cliff and her are currently engaged and she refuses to call off their ceremonial coupling. After he silently sits on the same couch that he once comfortably sat on some years earlier, Janet becomes enraged with his dead eyes, goading him to present displeasure, as this is where the sluts derive their complacent ego from. This very facet of spousal abandonment reflects an age-old consistency not just in film, but based in and around reality as well.

If you've paid attention to film then you will not be surprised with examples of a classic case involving a callous woman removing a significant male from their life only to replace it with the next best thing, preferably with a steady source of income. a prime example of women objectifying men while shrieking vice versa: Dear John, Pearl Harbor, and Cast Away (a misdemeanor in this case). These are but a small handful which fit the bill. In contrast, the films in which men refuse to give up their idea of a sanctified reunion mark the same redundancy seen in cinema and the "real world." The biggest myth commonly regarded as fact is that women are more romantic than men. This assumption is ridiculous and insulting as one only can wonder how being needy has replaced the definition of true romance, giving it all and investing into a commitment and

not shoes and blouses. But yet again, no one ever really expected anything from a military spouse other than trust, which very few reciprocate. *Rolling Thunder* just goes to show that "forever" means nothing to a whore. Hell, even B-rate international action films like *Wasabi* tend to the real nature of men with Jean Reno's insistence to pine over a woman who left him many years back. *Fear X* is another shining example; Nicholas Winding Refn's tale of a man refusing to let go of his past in hopes for new love and maintains a debilitating obsession with a woman who is now dead. To spring into more recent territory, John Carpenter's *Prince of Darkness* is another film concealing an obsessive love that is unknown to women.

Also present are the themes of S&M and homoerotic tidbits scattered throughout. For example, the Texan constantly referring to Major Rane as a "macho motherfucker" and the slow spreading of lips to reveal teeth as the pain rolls right off of Rane's shell. Major Charles Rane refers to himself as "dead" throughout *Rolling Thunder*. Apparently all of his persona was squeezed out of him, forcefully, by the gooks that had him imprisoned for those seven years. In one of the most iconic scenes out of the film, Major Rane convinces Cliff to rope his hands behind his back and "pull it up in the air like you're gonna take me clear on up to the ceiling." After Cliff reveals to be noticeably troubled, Charles grunts "Higher, man, Higher! Till you hear the bones start to crack". This thesis on shell-of-a-man is frequently at work within *Rolling Thunder*. While one man would demonstrate a compromised behavioral approach to vengeance, Charles Rane doesn't seem to seek vengeance on a count of his family, rather, it's the appropriate, human, thing to do. One can argue that this very same notion is applied to Showtime's *Dexter* as Dexter Morgan was taught to flaunt emotion and actualize trigger responses. To quote Major Rane, "you learn to love the rope. That's how you beat them."

With a screenplay written by *Taxi Driver*'s Paul Schrader, also director of *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, *Rolling Thunder* dons many similarities with *Taxi Driver* as the common denominator is social decay and an unwillingness to the world. I've always been disinterested in the angst chronicles - the mediums that encapsulate post-Vietnam Americana and the "War = home" that near every film of this era is guilty of portraying. Better yet, *Rolling Thunder*, while taking the slogan of such, avoids making it a highlight of the film and would rather focus on annihilating Mexicans with merciless glee. In a later scene, my favorite, Charles Rane reunites with fellow soldier/prisoner Johnny Vohden (Tommy Lee Jones) and tells him simply that he found who killed his son. Saying nothing more, Vohden replies that he will get his gear with a smile on his face and a purpose about him. Collecting his Winchester Model 1897 Shotgun, Vohden quietly bags it as they prepare to head out to a whorehouse located in Juarez. Upon arriving, both Vohden and Rane make it very clear that they both don't care who is injured in the upcoming shootout. Every Mexican character that

ROLLING THUNDER

was encountered in *Rolling Thunder* proves to be perverted degenerates; the sleazy folk who still hang onto the ideal of a Reconquista Mexican Texas. It's in this violent philosophy of exterminating the various Mestizo cockroaches that *Rolling Thunder* becomes one of the few films that wrap around the American virtues of crushing the weak and undeserving.

Rolling Thunder is single-handedly one of the most contemptuous movie experiences I've sat through as of recent. The silent pain barely expressed by Charles Rane is among one of the more powerful performances I've seen in a film. *Rolling Thunder* also aspires to be more classy than the average revenge film from the seventies. From the sheer violence left to the imagination and to Rane's unwillingness to love anything but his son, what is evident in *Rolling Thunder* is its fascinating portrait of an empty dead man. Major Charles Rane is a thousand times deeper than Paul Kersey and with his prosthetic hook-hand, more iconic as well. This Vietnam volume also ends perfectly, with Denny Brooks' "San Antone" filling the debris coated hallway as the two heroes return from another battlefield, one of which seems to purify and recapture the essence of life these soldiers had lost. *Rolling Thunder* is a goddamn masterpiece of wit and brutality and should be seen by every citizen of the U.S.A. This film will make you a better American, guaranteed.

-mAQ

BRAINSCAN

John Flynn (1994)

Before Edward Furlong was arrested for “freeing lobsters” at a seafood restaurant, he was a rad young fellow. *Brainscan* is a perfect example of what Furlong could do right when he was still young enough to have a sassy girl attitude. The film follows a lonely teenager (played by Furlong) as he kills people under hypnosis via computer game. *Brainscan* brings up the ethical question, “Do horror films and video games really promote murder?” I would hope so. *Brainscan* made it’s debut when America was still under the spell of grunge. Judging from the wardrobe of the actors and the film’s music (I.e. Mudhoney), *Brainscan* was meant to cater to the teenage audience of that time period. Edward Furlong’s character seems a hybrid of “grunge” and “metal” style. As any good American teenager, he has posters of Iron Maiden’s Eddie plastered all over his walls. If only heavy metal had influenced as many murderers as the degenerate human garbage rappers have. A wiseass demon looking guy by the name of “Trickster” is the main character of the computer game *Brainscan*. This exaggerated widows peak sporting fellow spends his time trying to influence teenagers to kill. Trickster is charismatic and cunning, yet out of date. Edward Furlong is enraged with Trickster for “tricking” him into one murder after another. Only the son of Satan would influence a teenager to play violent videogames. But since when did the son of Satan dress so gothic yet colorfully gay? The young videogame playing fellow of *Brainscan* also has his eyes on a young lady. He watches her through his window like Jimmy Stewart in *Rear Window*. The difference between Furlong and Stewart’s “peeping tom” behavior is that I could actually see Stewart involved in such voyeuristic activities. The young lady makes sure to flaunt her breasts at the budding Edward Furlong. I am sure many American teenage girls of that time period would have done the same thing. *Brainscan* is a fun film that offers a little bit of horror and a little bit of laughs with a nice music jingle. For anyone that enjoys vintage video games and tacky early 90’s style, *Brainscan* is the film to watch. The film has an out of place dreamlike quality throughout, and that is something I can appreciate. Most horror comedies (or whatever you want to call them) are complete filth, but *Brainscan* is a diamond in vomit.

-Ty E

JOE

JOE

John G. Avildsen (1970)

Undoubtedly, if the white working-class and white bourgeois united as an anti-leftist, anti-globalist collective, they would take America back virtually instantaneously and start reversing its decided degeneration via multicultural third worldization and Hebraic Hollywoodization and such a sweet scenario seemed to be deranged Jewish screenwriter Henry Wexler's worst nightmare, at least if one were to judge by his screenplay for *Joe* (1970) directed by Hollywood 'for hire' hack John G. Avildsen (*Rocky*, *The Karate Kid*). *Joe* is the ultra cynical celluloid tale of a corporate executive Wasp type who accidentally kills his daughter's drug dealer boyfriend and subsequently joins up with a blue collar bro named Joe of the seemingly Irish-American sort who respects the banal bourgeois boob for wasting a piece of hippie shit. Penned by a man whose own daughter described him as "a brilliant man with an IQ of 180 and a Russian-Jewish immigrant drive" and that was "capable of emptying a 13th-floor hotel room on to the street and announcing on a plane his intention to kill President Nixon, inciting the FBI to arrest him. Horrified by her son's mental illness and consumed with guilt and shame, my grandmother committed suicide," *Joe* is certainly a work scripted by a man who simultaneously hates the Anglo-Saxon bourgeois in a Trotskyite fashion, but also the white working-class in a rich kosher capitalist manner, which he portrays as being nothing short of barbaric and vulgar, especially in regard to the film's 'white and proud' title character. Quite similar to Paul Schrader's *Hardcore* (1979) in its depiction of members of an older and more self-restrained generation entering the decidedly debauched counter-culture realm of the boobtube-brainwashed baby boomers—the first generation brought up on and brainwashed by TV and arguably the most spoiled generation in all of human history, hence their self-righteous need to turn America, as well as the Occident, into the corrupt cosmopolitan cesspool it is today—*Joe* shows the needlessly nasty results of what happens when a concerned and respectable father attempts to save his daughter from a life of drug addiction, loveless sex, and borderline poverty. Of course, before he knows it, at least according to Wexler's Hebraic logic, the traditional western man's hippie hating also leads to nigger and faggot hatred, as well as coldblooded murder of the totally nonsensical sort. Luckily, *Joe* backfired on its crazy kosher creators because instead of working to vilify the anti-liberal anti-heroes as intended by Wexler, many viewers saw the flower child killers of the film as all-American heroes, so much so that star Peter Boyle was rather perturbed to witness audience members cheering on his character's homicidal liquidation of an entire house of hedonistic hippies. Starring Susan Sarandon in her debut role as a naïve hippie poser who takes too much speed and has a 'bad trip' at a grocery store, *Joe*, despite the political campaign of its director and screenwriter, is indubitably a therapeutic

piece of accidentally politically incorrect carnage that delivers shotgun bullets to the degeneration generation of peace and love and other phony self-absorbed pseudo-cultural swill.

Despite growing up comfortably in a rather wealthy family from New York's Upper East Side, brainwashed would-be-beatnik broad Melissa (Susan Sarandon) has decided of her own free will to live in near destitution with her heroin addicted, drug dealer boyfriend, who is such a good boyfriend that he virtually enslaves his girlfriend with a candy bowl full of drugs. After taking a little too much speed, Melissa has an unbecoming public freak out at a mom-and-pop grocery store and is hospitalized, which infuriates her father, stoic Bill Compton (Dennis Patrick), who goes to his daughter's ghetto apartment to collect her stuff and ultimately runs into the jaded junky boyfriend, thus resulting in a confrontation that thankfully leaves one dirty hippie dead. Bill gathers up the drugs he finds laying around the apartment and goes to a blue collar bar where he runs into American 'everyman' Joe Curran (Peter Boyle), a crudely charismatic working-class mick fellow who loves to rant about his sheer and utter hatred for fags, queers, nigs, social workers, and the young in general. As far as gentleman Joe is concerned, "The niggers, the niggers are gettin' all da money. Why work, tell me, why the fuck work, when you can screw, have babies, an' get paid for it?" and "And the kids, the white kids. They're worse than the niggers. Money don't mean nothin' to them. Motocycles, Marijuana. Five dollar records." Undoubtedly in a state of shock after wasting a "skinny fucker" of a deadbeat junky, Bill mentions to random stranger Joe that he killed one of these very same worthless hippies that he was ranting about (Joe even goes as far as saying "I'd love to kill one" in regard to beatnik bastards), which rather impresses the brazen blue collar worker, thus striking a 'stranger than fiction' bond between the two born class enemies. Sticking it to bourgeois failure Marx (a man who never worked a day in his life and lived off the generosity of others) and his bogus materialistic theories for introducing class war to the Occident, Bill and Joe ultimately become friends united in their hatred for hippies and disgust from aberrant America's cultural decline. While Bill likes the working-class man's 'no bullshit' attitude due to his own bourgeois friend's impenetrable phoniness, Joe respects the somewhat uptight advertising executive for doing what he always wanted to do: trampling on a flower child without mercy. After overhearing her mother and father talking, Melissa learns that Bill killed her bum boy toy and naturally she runs away and goes missing. Using the drugs he stole from his daughter's apartment, Bill meets up with Joe and they start searching for Melissa, eventually partying with a group of hippies that they hope will lead them to the runaway drama queen. Both Bill and Joe smoke some weed out of a hookah and even have sex with some hot hippie hoes, but things take a turn for the worse when two of the male hippies of the group steal the older men's wallets and drugs. Joe smacks the shit out of a loose hippie chick he just screwed and learns the beatnik crooks are prob-

JOE

ably staying at a commune in upstate New York. Arriving with shotguns blazing, Joe wastes some hippie pigs and Bill regrettably joins in, bringing carnage to the commune and the literal and allegorical death of a nuclear family.

Undoubtedly, screenwriter Henry Wexler's Hebraic hatred for traditional Anglo-America and everything it represents reaches its peak at the conclusion of Joe when a wealthy white father unwittingly puts bullet holes in his own daughter in a scene that is nothing short of a Judeo-bolshevik wet dream. In the end, one cannot help but think Wexler had a self-satisfied smirk on his semi-Asiatic face while penning Joe knowing, as portrayed in the film, that no matter how much love and good intentions a father may have had for his children, they had already been lost to a lifetime's worth of brainwashing and spiritual degeneration via Talmudic television and addiction to sex, drugs, and rock n roll, hence why daughter Melissa states "What are you gonna do, kill me too?" Indeed, only after her death is Melissa truly 'saved' from a life of senseless sacrilege and STD-ridden sensuality, as the girl essentially died in the spiritual sense the day she bought into the unholy gospel of counter-culture garbage. Interestingly, Melissa's druggy boyfriend, who is a hack degenerate artist who seems to be a pathetic parody of Warhol Superstar Joe Dallesandro characters in the "Paul Morrissey Trilogy," especially *Flesh* (1968) and *Trash* (1970), which are sardonic satires of the toilet culture that is liberalism and the related counter-culture movements. It has been my experience that most viewers of Joe empathize with the anti-hippie plight of Joe and Bill, and it's highly doubtful that a film like this could be made in Hollywood today. After all, nothing strikes fear in the dead souls of the heebs of Hollywood and the mainstream media more than the idea of the white working-class and bourgeois uniting against the metaphysical disease of leftist degeneracy and taking back America by force. Nowadays, with a good portion of young proletarian whites being shameless wiggers who wish they were poor Negroes and the white upper-classes being contaminated with slavish liberalism, philo-Semitism, and hyper-hedonism, the unlikely alliance of the Euro-American blue collar and white collar in Joe seems all the more ridiculous, but as a famous assassinated colored man once so eloquently stated, "I have a dream" and some dreams, like Joe's, are greater and more righteous than others.

-Ty E

SCARCE

John Geddes (2008)

Scarce is another attack on the rural backwoods area. To fit even snugger to the bored sub-genre, this "hillbilly" is a cannibalistic man with depravities galore. Scarce is a sucker punch aimed with the intent of stealing the thunder left from better, more successful films like Calvaire. Calvaire gave me chills from its barbaric displayed violence towards "faggots" and the Freaks moment of an unabashed barroom masquerade. The constant scenes of the "evil honky" staring off with dagger eyes gets tedious and irritating. The somber progressive orchestral score kicks in and your eyes roll. Just as the film displays city folk as the weaker species, Scarce transcends into a level of stupidity much sooner than expected. I thought to myself "sure, this film is going to be bad" but the novelty of independent film making wears thin and this film has reached its peak. It's not until the evil countryman dons a metal mask with an accomplice that the film reaches any momentum. Pointless flashbacks and annoying attempts at shock factor are not successful in any form. Scarce is a film depicting the death of college kids with spiky hair as well as the symbolic death of what was once juicy rural terror. Only several entries in this over-drawn genre were fresh - Calvaire, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, and Deliverance. Although I did enjoy 2001 Maniacs, that was strictly a comedy. What Fargo did with the snow pasted over with blood, Scarce attempts to recreate with a scene scored by what sounds to be the orchestral sounds of Diablo II. When I ponder about the inconveniences of watching Scarce, the idea of them being labeled "snowboarders" without any indication comes to mind. The idea reminds me of that Devon Sawa film Extreme Ops, but with more gay and less snowboarding. The prime antagonist is a yellow-teethed "old fashioned" man who randomly fits the word "fuck" in his sentences which ruins any cognitive idea that these are simple people. Like Hostel, the idea is twisted into a "business" of sorts. Every accent in this film is horrible enough to make your teeth grind. I promise you won't have an endearing experience with this picture. By the hour mark, I found myself wholly depressed at the thought of another grueling half an hour of insipid "frostbitten terror". The ending was already spoiled by the plot summary. When you say "the fate of three snowboarders", God knows that you are going to kill them off before you even have the chance to predict this awfully predictable film. The beginning pales in comparison to the ending, as the ending actually builds up and maintains savagery and sadism. The only ways you'd appreciate this film is being a cinema masochist or having a god-awful taste in horror.

-mAQ

URINAL
URINAL

John Greyson (1988)

If a gay man afflicted with high-functioning autism and an unhealthy proclivity towards bath salts, Adderall, and Microsoft Paint directed a thematically and aesthetically frenzied, freeform video-art, butt-dart project about his love of semen-covered toilet bowls in tearooms and tiny Chinese men and a loathing for law and order and historical reality, it would probably resemble Canadian aberosexual auteur John Greyson's decidedly demented debut feature-length *Pissoir* (1988) aka *Urinal*; a curiously confused attack on Toronto police for their crack-down on heated homo sex in public restrooms that is simultaneously a work of homoerotic historical fantasy fiction, queer rights documentary, and excessively eccentric cinematic essay. Like a mystifying mix between Frank Ripplloh's *Taxi zum Klo* (1980), Ulrike Ottinger's *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, and Rosa von Praunheim's *Anita – Tänze des Lasters* (1987) aka *Anita: Dances of Vice*, minus the perverse Teutonic persuasion and anything resembling professional production values, *Urinal* is a discombobulating and unconventional work of unrivaled neo-Uranian unbalance, hermetic homophile psychobabble, hysterical gay activism, and an unofficial 'outing' of various unvocal and ambiguously gay artists/intellectuals figures of the early 20th century. Needless to say, despite its determined agenda to the contrary, *Urinal* does a great disservice to debauched dick-suckers everywhere as it portrays homosexuals as hyper-horny whores who do anything to hump and/or be humped, including the risk of exhibiting such bestial and deplorable deeds in front of minors, so naturally Greyson's morally gray work makes for an unintentionally and idiosyncratically mirthful experience.

In an interview in the book *The View From Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers* (2007) written by Montreal-based film critic Matthew Hays, *Urinal* auteur John Greyson stated the following about his first fecal feature: "The film is a response to emerging theories of sexuality from the 1970s. The shadow of Foucault hangs heavily over that piece, his expansive notion of social history being vital to understanding the social construction of a particular phenomenon. Thus, we dug up these six very unwilling, not openly gay, activist figures from our past—like Sergei Eisenstein and Yukio Mishima—to deliver various forms of discourse on the phenomenon of sexuality and public toilets...The wonderful thing about *Urinal* was that I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I just went in and did it, going where angels fear to tread. If I'd know what I was getting myself into, I'm not sure I would have run with it." Considering French philosopher Michel Foucault was a sadomasochistic sodomite and arguably, a sociopath that was infected with AIDS who intentionally squirted his virulent juices into unknowing twinks' gaping holes while

engaging in leather-fag orgies, thereupon spreading ‘gay cancer’ around to countless unsuspecting frog fellows and that director John Greyson would go on to direct a fiend-friendly film such as *Zero Patience* (1993) – a merry and seemingly maniacal musical about AIDS with a subplot about a rather ridiculous romance between famed British explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton and a ghost – one has no reason to suspect that *Urinal* is a rational expression of so-called “LGBT” activism, but then again, that is why the film is so irresistibly beguiling and unwittingly frolicsome as a sort of conspicuously convoluted expression of pathological perversity and queer quackery of the most delightfully deranged kind. In short, I cannot think of a single anti-gay activist or crusading Christian evangelist who has created a more detrimental depiction of homosexuality than those portrayed in Greyson’s *Urinal*, but of course, with ‘cissexual’-ambivalent works like Tom Kalin’s *Swoon* (1992), Michael Stock’s *Prince in Hell* (1993) aka *Prinz in Hölleland*, Cheryl Dunye’s *The Watermelon Woman* (1996), A. Hans Scheirl’s *Dandy Duft* (1998), *A Home at the End of the World* (2004), and Rosa von Praunheim’s *Your Heart in My Head* (2005) aka *Dein Herz in meinem Hirn*, who needs homo-hating hogs like Hagee when you have so many self-destructive auteur filmmakers?!

Beginning on June 28, 1937, *Urinal* gets started with the title introduction, “...They all began arriving, one after the other on that Friday afternoon. Dorian Gray was first, then Frida Kahlo from Mexico and Langston Hughes, and then Yukio Mishima, all with forged letters of invitation signed with our names, inviting them to some conference or other. When Sergei Eisenstein arrived, we were all in the garden, trying to make the best of it. Frida was painting a portrait of Dorian Gray...” (From the unpublished memoirs of Florence Wyle). Upon arriving at the gardenside location, Eisenstein slaps his fellow sodomite Soviet supporter Langston Hughes a high-five and bisexual unibrow painter Kahlo expresses her severance of ties with Judeo-Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky. Needless to say, *Urinal* would be a socialist sod’s wet dream had the film not featured bitch-turned-butch Jap novelist/nationalist Yukio Mishima as one of the most important and interesting lead characters. Things start to get notably weirder and nonsensical when the old school artists of the film receive an audio-message dated half a century later on June 28, 1987 declaring “happy lesbian and gay pride day everyone” and apologizing for bringing them to the same location under false pretenses. Apparently, somehow these ‘outstanding’ gay figures of yesteryear are needed to help battle a bugger-based “crisis” where hundreds of gays in Ontario, Canada are being arrested each year by fat fascist pig police offers for publicly sucking cock through bathroom stall glory holes and squatting and defecating on more things than just toilets. Throughout *Urinal*, each of the six dead gay artists (Sergei Eisenstein, Frances Loring, Yukio Mishima, Florence Wyle, Frida Kahlo, and Langston Hughes) gives a personal video-art report, including such salaciously titled works as *A Guided Tour of Toronto’s Hottest*

URINAL

Tearooms by Sergei Eisenstein, A Survey of Small Town Washroom Busts in Ontario by Langston Hughes, The Policing of Washroom Sex In Toronto by Florence Wyle, and The Policing of Sexuality In Society by Frida Kahlo. Juxtaposed with farcical fictional footage of the historical homo heroes is footage of candid but strikingly less carnal interviews with real-life public perverts who have been busted for busting loads in public commodes and semen-stain steam-rooms, including an extremely epicene Chinese-Canadian man whose insistence on wearing a variety of retarded masks during the interviews does little to hide his oriental eyes, as well as an unmistakably mundane middle-aged civil servant whose former career centered around watching small children. Of course, whether gay or straight, I doubt any parent would want this tearoom termite to be whacking off in front of their six-year old cub scout in a place specifically designated for the excretion of human waste.

Is your washroom breeding Bolsheviks? Probably not, but it is probably spawning STD spreaders or at least one would assume so after watching John Greyson's *Urinal*; an unbelievably micro-epic undertaking of the insanely unsanitary scatalogical and illogical kind that oftentimes seems like a collection of unrelated aborted film projects due to its daunting and discordant mix of video and film stock, and fantasy fiction and matter-of-fact reality. As a work of gay gladiatorial activism, *Urinal* is assuredly an abject failure, unless the director's main objective was to offend and obfuscate, but as a postmodern play-on-potty piece of the most uniquely unhinged variety, it certainly warrants a serious viewing by any crackpot cinephile and/or fanatical fan of crude celluloid camp. As a softcore Yukio Mishima junkie myself, I found *Urinal* to be especially enthralling yet preposterous as I doubt the tragic Japanese novelist would have had a sexual interest in a sorry sod like Sergei Eisenstein, let alone would he have appreciated being characterized by an effete freak with a boyish physique as he is portrayed by a fellow of Filipino (a delicacy of Dahmer and Murnau no doubt, but hardly a preferred pedigree for the master of pen and sword) extraction named David Gonzales, but, then again, that was undoubtedly one of John Greyson's most pressing and personal agendas; demystifying and reinventing the closeted-gay figure to his notably lewd liking. A ludicrously lurid yet at the same time asininely academic excursion into homophilic eso-terrorism, *Urinal* is indeed a work that must be seen to be believed and I mean that for uncountable reasons, but if you just need one, watch it for the torridly traumatizing toilet humor fun. Featuring condoms being unwrapped over crucifixes, childish chink twinks in flamboyant children's Halloween masks, Dorian Gray as a gay oriental, 'Sir Gay' Eisenstein as a feces-fetishizing bathroom interloper, and Langston Hughes' as a buggerer of revolutionary bolshevik filmmakers, among various other sensually vexing yet strikingly sardonic scenarios, *Urinal* is indubitably a keen kitsch work that even eclipses the perverted poofery pomposity of Rosa von Praunheim's films, which says a lot considering the German filmmaker has a special affinity for fudge-

packing neo-nazis, elderly Eastern German trannies, Jewish socialist sexologist
sausage jockeys, and cock-chowing, anal assassin cannibals.
-Ty E

ZERO PATIENCE
ZERO PATIENCE

John Greyson (1993)

A certain special lady I know used to work for a certain Sicilian-American biomedical researcher who is quite rich and famous for the major contributions he has made to HIV/AIDS research, thereupon making him the target of various unhinged conspiracy theorists and whatnot. When not having his Negro chauffeur drive him around town and creeping out his female assistants with his less than savory stares, the now-elderly little doctor continues to conduct search on the devastating disease that made him famous. His pronounced megalomania and peculiar pomposity aside, I doubt spurring Canadian homo auteur John Greyson (Pissoir aka Urinal, The Law of Enclosures) would have a nice things to say about this man and his research, at least judging by the fairy filmmaker's tragicomic postmodern fantasy-musical *Zero Patience* (1993); a superlatively splashy and sardonic cinematic work of the pseudo-historical sort that calls into question virtually everything everyone thinks they know about HIV/AIDS. Centering around the ghost of French-Canadian flight attendant Gaëtan Dugas – a homosexual sadist with AIDS who claimed to have had sex with no less than 2,500 sexual partners, thereupon, in many cases, intentionally spreading it all around the world (but most specifically in North America) in the process – *Zero Patience* debunks the outmoded thesis (proposed in Randy Shilts' 1987 best-seller *And the Band Played On*) that "Patient Zero" (Dugas) was the first one with the disease in North America. In the film, famed British explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton – who is still alive and well at the antiquated age of 170 due to an "unfortunate encounter" with the "Fountain of Youth" in 1892 – now lives in Vancouver, Canada and works as taxidermist at the Museum of Natural History and decides an extravagant exhibit about Patient Zero/AIDS will make for a most splendid centerpiece. A snobbish closest queen from a proper, pompous Victorian background, Sir Burton has no idea that he is about to fall in love with his STD-ridden ghost of an exhibit, thereupon leading to the most hap-hazard of homoerotic HIV-themed consequences. Featuring literal singing assholes, loony lesbian green monkeys, colorful and flamboyant walk-and-talking STDs, unfriendly gay ghosts, and a lurid love affair between the historically deceased, *Zero Patience* is one rare gay musical where the descriptive word "gay" is used literally and not necessarily as a negating adjective.

Despite being one of the greatest, if not the greatest, explorer who ever lived as a man that purportedly knew 29 different languages (European, Asian and African), wrote a number of invaluable books on eclectic subjects, unearthed an amazing collection of cultural treasures (including an unexpurgated translation of *One Thousand and One Nights* aka *The Arabian Nights*), worked as a captain in the army of the East India Company, and was awarded knighthood for his amazing activities, Sir Richard Francis Burton, also known as "Dick Burton"

(at least in Greyson's film), is no more prestigious than a glorified 'cock-size collector' and "19th Century Sexual Radical" in *Zero Patience* where he tirelessly works as the Chief Taxidermist at the Toronto Museum of Natural History. Sir Richard Francis Burton (played by John Robinson, who has a strikingly resemblance to director John Greyson) considers 'Patient Zero' (Normand Fauteux) aka Gaëtan Dugas (his real name is never used once in the film) a serial killer of sorts, so he has no problem presenting photoshopped photos to the press of the AIDS victim with Kaposi's sarcoma in preparation for his upcoming AIDS-addled Patient Zero exhibition due to the fact that only a couple "lackluster footnotes" exist on his subject. Part of his Hall of Contagion project – a collection of exhibits that also include "Typhoid Mary" and "Tuskegee syphilis" – Burton hopes that the Patient Zero exhibit will act as the shining piece in a proposed taxidermist masterpiece that may possibly, "restore his reputation as a world-class intellectual." Burton must have really pissed off Zero's pansy phantasm, as the postmortem homo – who is "suspended somewhere between existential limbo and the primordial void" – magically materializes at a homosexual bath house as a gay ghost more under the spell of cock than he ever was during his brief orgy-obsessed lifetime, but unfortunately for him, no one can see him except his new nemesis Richard Francis Burton. Despite his initial repulsion towards the famed explorer, Zero agrees to be in Burton's Patient Zero exhibit if the bodacious Brit agrees to do the inexplicable by making the wholly hysterical and horny homo haunt visible to the rest of the world.

Dismayed by the fact he cannot get laid since no one can see him, nor his wretchedly wild willy, Zero eventually finds himself an unlikely vintage sex partner in the form of sexually-repressed Victorian explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton; a man who once theorized that, "England was too cold for sodomy to occur" so as to appease his anally-retentive countrymen. Canada is not much warmer, but that does not stop Burton from buggering his gay display Zero. Due to his extra-eccentric erotic excursions with the poofster poltergeist, as well as his own scientifically astute research, Burton soon realizes that the whole Patient Zero theory – that a single individual, Gaëtan Dugas aka Patient Zero, introduced HIV/AIDS to North America – is nothing but an urban legend of the totally scientifically dubious sort propelled by journalistic sensationalism as opposed to hard science. After chatting and singing with the awfully angry African green monkey (the animal that supposedly transferred HIV to humans) display at his museum, which magically morphs from an inanimate taxidermied monkey into a dyke Jewess of sorts with a biting sense of sarcasm, Burton also concludes that she, like Zero, is also a carefully selected scapegoat. After all, being a lily-licking lesbian, the monkey could not have possibly spread the disease, especially among bum-bandits into bestiality. Naturally, Burton decides to revamp his Patient Zero exhibit, but he is too late as the media has already started a pernicious propaganda campaign with the gay ghost as its plainly perverse posterboy/playboy.

ZERO PATIENCE

Luckily, ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which includes Patient Zero's own mother, ex-gay lover, and former airline colleague named Mary (Dianne Heatherington), crashes the museum like a group of softcore terrorists and proceed to obliterate the Hall of Contagion exhibit. Zero Patience also features a somewhat fractured subplot about a Negro French teacher named George (Richardo Keens-Douglas) – an ex-lover of Zero with AIDS who is going blind and is taking a dubious drug promoted by a big pharmaceutical company to treat his illness – that is also a member of ACT UP. Needless to say, Zero Patience, despite its pro-multicultural and homophile message, is far from politically correct in persuasion.

Despite what one thinks of director John Greyson's sociopolitical message(s) in regard to Zero Patience, one must admit that his central point – that "Patient Zero" was a sleazy sidehow scapegoat of sorts – is ultimately correct, not least of all due to the undeniable fact that Robert Rayford, a black American teenager from Missouri who died in 1969 (but starting experiencing symptoms in 1966) is now considered the earliest confirmed carrier of HIV/AIDS in North America. Although Gaëtan Dugas as "Patient Zero" is portrayed as somewhat of an annoying prick who has a hell of a time keeping his sexual potency and perversity in check, the real-life French-Canadian was much more of a subversive sexual sadist/sociopath who in a manner not unlike French philosopher Michel Foucault (whose writings had a major influence on Greyson's first feature *Pissoir* aka *Urinal*) – a HIV-positive sadomasochistic sodomite knowingly and intentionally spread around fatal affliction – once stated, "I've got gay cancer. I'm going to die and so are you" (thus expressing his desire to 'take people with him') so Zero Patience does go as far as presenting an abhorrent overzealous libertine lunatic as some sort of posthumous victim, even if he was not solely responsible for spreading the disease around North America. As John Greyson stated in an interview for the book *The View From Here* (2007), his main objective with Zero Patience was, "paying tribute in a larger form to what so many video artists, activists, performance artist, and filmmakers were already doing – taking the feistiness of ACT UP and throwing it in the face of the Reagan administration, the pharmaceutical companies, and the homophobic public. Zero Patience was inspired by my involvement in AIDS Action Now in Toronto in the late '80s, and was really about taking those activist techniques of humor and irreverence and applying them to the scapegoating that was going on. The film was meant to play very much like the anti-*And the Band Played On*...author Randy Shilts constructed the narrative around a very sexy subplot – the demonization of Air Canada flight attendant Gaëtan Dugas as a queer vampire – in the interests of making it as bestseller." Indeed, while it is quite easy to deduce that Dugas was a "queer vampire" of sorts due to his own wicked words and aberrant actions, Zero Patience does offer some provocative food for thought of the frenziedly farcical sort that proves audacious auteur John Greyson is not only a masterful cinematic

propagandist of the heretical homo persuasion, thereupon making him the "Rosa von Praunheim of Canada," but also a studied student of homophile history as he has proven time and time again, with his avant-garde AIDS musical being arguably his greatest artistic accomplishment. Of course, I guess one should not expect anything less from a flaming fairy of a filmmaker with zero patience for those that probe and penalize his pansies pals.

-Ty E

UN©UT
UN©UT

John Greyson (1997)

Long before being described by Hebraic Canadian film producer Robert Lantos (eXiſtenZ, *Barney's Version*) as, to paraphrase, a “fasciſt, ſtormtrooper, apartheid ſupporter, homophobic anti-Semitic terroriſt regime ſupporter” and as someone, “whose fasciſt agenda is to impose their views on others” due to his withdrawing his documentary ſhort *Covered* (2009) from the Toronto International Film Feſtival (TIFF) feſtival to proteſt the feſtival's preliminary City-to-City Spotlight on the city of Tel Aviv, Israel because of the Gaza War and the expansion of ſettlements, Toronto-based John Greyson was already proving to be a bad goy with the release of his feature-length film *Un©ut* (1997); a gentle agitprop piece of poſitively perverse cinema that makes its caſe againſt circumciſion, cenſorſhip, and copyright laws, as well as pointing at the political impotence of cuckold and closet-queen Pierre Trudeau (the 15th Prime Miniſter of Canada from April 20, 1968 to June 4, 1979, and again from March 3, 1980 to June 30, 1984) with a bit of goofy yet grotesque Michael Jackson-mania thrown in for good meaſure. Part-documentary, part-docudrama, part-cinema-essay, part-sardonic-surrealiſt-satire and all flamingly gay with a ſuperficially ſordid ſubplot featuring a bizarre buggerer love triangle to boot, *Un©ut* is an outlandiſh odyssey of the obſcenely unclasiſiable ſort that makes for one of the moſt ambitious, if not afflicting, independent pomo homo ſociopolitical projects ever aſſembled. Like a diſtinctly diſconcerting marriage of miſfits between Nickelodeon SNICK ſhows and PBS' Reading Rainbow episodes from the early-1990s with the films of ſweet-and-sour Sapphic miſchling auteſſeſ Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*) and Byzantine British buttboy Derek Jarman (*Sebaſtiane*, *The Laſt of England*), *Un©ut* is a ſeemingly unexpurgated expreſſion of Canadian auteſſeſ John Greyson's grating gray matter that – much like his previous works *Piſſoir* (1988) aka *Urinal* and *Zero Patience* (1993) – forces the viewer to partake in the filmmaker's ferine yet frolicſomely framed fetiſhes and oftentimes prepoſterouſly yet poſitively penetrating political propaganda. That being ſaid, what makes *Un©ut* eſpecially effective, preeminently as a work of filmic art, is that Greyson offers a full-force aſſault of downright diacritic, if not periodically deluded, viſion with a film that ſpits bittersweet, vehement venom at the viewer. In ſhort, *Un©ut* reminds the viewer why ſanitized sodomite Hollywood films like *Far from Heaven* (2002) and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) are made, because Greyson does not play nice but he certainly plays for keeps.

Originally intending to realize *Un©ut* as a mere 20-minute-length ſhort film and focusing ſolely on circumciſion and Pierre Trudeau, Greyson's original ſcript was rejected by the Canadian Film centre and he reacted by creating *The Making of Monſter* (1991) – a muſical ſhort that was in part inſpired by the filmmaker's

reading of works by German marxist poet/playwright Bertolt Brecht and various far-left Frankfurt School theorists, as well as abstaining from creating Norman Jewison-esque “feel-good liberal” works – thereupon leaving his campy cock-cutting flick in limbo for a number of years. To paraphrase, Greyson himself described the original script for *Un©ut* as “not all that good,” so luckily his temporary misfortune during pre-production worked for the better. A feature-length flick that dabbles in homoerotic ‘anti-Semitism,’ a mixed-medium aesthetic featuring the mangling and mongrelization of Michael Jackson songs/portraits, the taunting and terrorism of technocratic copyright police, and photoshopping of vintage nude photos of Dutch and Mestizo twinks, among various other intensely and insanely idiosyncratic aesthetic and thematic ingredients, *Un©ut* is an aberrant audio-visual experience that is not soon to be forgotten by the viewer; whether one wants to or not. Centering around three central characters, Peter Cort (Matthew Ferguson) – an extremely effete researcher writing on a book on circumcision tentatively titled *The Psychosexual Meanings of Circumcision and The Foreskin*, Peter Koosens (Michael Achtman) – Cort’s ½ Jewish typist assistant who has an unhealthy obsession with Pierre Trudeau, and Peter Denham (Damon D’Oliveira) – a hack video artist who directs works featuring deranged Jackson Five song remixes. On top of the petty problems the three perverted Peters face with their rather ridiculous romance, they ultimately encounter aesthetic terrorism from the state after they are arrested by an ogre-like operatic police officer for copyright infringement, brought to trial that is set to an excruciating rendition of *La Habanera*, and sent to a farm-side bootcamp – no doubt a deeply distressing nightmare for any full-fledged vagitarian – where they are forced to binge eat McDonalds Big Macs and fries, defecate aside one another in barnyard stables, and sleep in open fields like cattle. Somewhat disharmoniously juxtaposed with the narrative melodrama of the three individual peculiar Petes is documentary footage of various real-life artists discussing their problems with copyright issues and stock footage of Trudeau acting like a jolly queen. Needless to say – with its inclusion of an edited photo of MJ with a bushy beaver and bosoms (apparently taken from the 82nd contestant in the 1984 “Miss Nude World” contest) and uncountable images of cut and uncut cocks of all lengths and girths – *Un©ut* seems to be an unabashedly uncensored work as advertised in the film’s pun-ridden title.

What makes *Un©ut* especially diverting and bizarrely controversial is Greyson’s attack on the Talmudic traditions of the Jewish Brisk, most notably in a scene where the character Peter Cort nonchalantly reads the following excerpt from his book-in-progress: “The ritual of the Jewish Brisk is likewise permeated with homoeroticism.” During this matter-of-factly stated yet strikingly side-splitting scene, pedomorphic boy poindexter cites how during the Jewish religious male circumcision ceremony of ‘mezizah,’ the infant-ravaging Rebbe sucks the blood off of the almost-kosher baby cock with his mouth after removing the foreskin.

UN@UT

Cort also remarks about how certain seemingly homo Hebrews grab each other's mangled members and ritualistically recite "take hold of my shaft, my circumcision" in tribute to another bugger-like Brisk tradition. Considering director Greyson's recent anti-Israeli action in the past couple of years, including his membership in the "Queers Against Israeli Apartheid" group, his participation in the Freedom Flotilla II (a peaceful flotilla that was designed to break the maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel by sailing to Gaza on 5 July 2011 that ultimately never took place), and his withdrawing of his own works at film festivals tied with the Jewish state, it is quite doubtful that unlike many artists of his particular pedigree, he is far from a full-fledged Philo-Semite of the gregarious, groveling sort, which is quite a noble sentiment to have in a nation that has partially criminalized freedom of speech (Section 13(1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act) especially for certain circumcised Canadians. As stated in *Un@ut*, around 85% of American infant boys are circumcised each year at a cost of 1/2 a billion dollars (in 1997) for supposedly hygienic purposes in a nation that has the largest Judaic population in the world (despite only making up 2.2% of the general population as of 2008). That being said, one would not be far off to argue that the peculiar phenomenon of male genital mutilation in the United States of America makes for a great, if not particularly perturbing, metaphor.

Albeit an acutely awry, at times tawdry and annoying (Greyson's incessant inclusion of bizarre communication between characters via silent finger-tapping on various flat surfaces, as if to mimic typing on a typewriter – a thoroughly beaten-to-death and aggravating feature of the film that appears while the characters are engaging in everything from effeminately flirting to fighting), and fortuitously aesthetically dissonant film, Greyson's *Un@ut* is also a sophisticated piece of sociopolitically-conscious camp that dares to go where few other filmmakers, especially gay cultural marxist Canadians have the audacity to tread. A virtual gay Guy Maddin genre-bending homophilic flick, *Un@ut* makes for an especially significant entry in Greyson's filmography and probably the only quirky queer flick that would be of educational value to heterosexual couples expecting a baby boy.

-Ty E

SHAFT IN AFRICA

John Guillermin (1973)

Shaft in Africa brings to life the beneficial idea of sending an ethnic man back to his country of origin and in the process, creates an all-around awkward environment that leaks moments of a self-loathing African-American. Now, normally I don't consider the phrase African-American but in John Shaft's case, I beg to differ. Baring in mind the Afrocentric culture around John Shaft further explained in quirky novels with such tenacious titles as Shaft among the Jews, I found the set-up of this film to be competitive brilliance. While I adore the classic film that started it all, Shaft had a clumsily structured narrative that had the suaveness, the characters, and the sex machine in action, but the ending had too much faith in nothing and suffered from being severely anti-climactic. To my surprise, I noticed something very peculiar about Shaft in Africa and the presentation. Upon hitting "Play" on the DVD menu, I encountered the typical MGM logo with Leo the Lion but underneath the banner was a Blackface caricature of a Pickaninny Negro. I had never really paid much mind to these snipes beginning in every film. Merely a coincidence? I fear not. After perusing through categories of Metro-Goldwin-Mayer films and animated cartoons of the 40s, I found that 1/3rd of every animated MGM production had racially "charged" representations of Uncle Tom's. For a company known for faux-minstrel animated toons, they brazenly slapped their culturally defining show piece on the logo. For better or worse, this is a significant piece of probable coincidence that really aids the temperament of Shaft in Africa and John Shaft's cool cat attitude.

The plot is simple, pulpy, and utterly fantastic. After getting punched out and drugged, John Shaft finds himself being forced into helping a group of Africans (and their inane traditions) break apart an Africa-to-Europe slavery ring. Along for the ride is a dog, a Big Buck bodyguard, and a "drop-dead accomplice" who happens to be a princess of the Manta tribe. In a humorous scene of the super-suave nature of John Shaft, he instantly charms a princess into propositioning sex. She warns him softly that come February, in a couple months, she will enter "chela" which she will undergo a clitoridectomy. His response bordered a flabbergasted "what the fuck?!" and flashed a side of John Shaft we've never seen - a self-loathing African-American. Throughout the picture, you will see John Shaft doubt even his own culture as he questions motives, traditions, and the hostile, ignorant nature of his brethren. When asked if he could carry "a piece," they handed him a stick. The street-smart detective was suddenly cast out of his comfortably hazardous environment into the almost-dystopian landscape occupied by brutish savages. Shaft in Africa puts "the Brother man in his Motherland" but against everyone's better judgment, Shaft isn't too enthused to suckle on his "mother's" bosom. Shaft in Africa stands still as one of the greatest blaxploitation entries to ever surprise the hell out of white folks. Armed with a

SHAFT IN AFRICA

stick doubling as a camera and urban survivalist techniques not including jive-talking, John Shaft turns a sequel with low expectations basing itself off an idea of a Negro Bond into a frivolous foray into euphemisms and the idea of a self-deprecating Tom that refuses to embrace his upbringing. While not being born in Africa, most would beg to see that Africa is the motherland of John Shaft but his cold remarks suggest otherwise. John Shaft holsters many weapons but the most lethal is his contempt for Africa. I don't entirely blame him, I despise the hellhole too. Perhaps I'm being insensitive but it seems that John Shaft shares similar views on his "mothering land." For that matter, It's almost a shame that the Shaft television series was canceled after only seven episodes. While Shaft connoisseurs loathed the property, It would have been nice to see the concept fully fleshed before being aborted. Shaft in Africa remains one of the most surprising gems to have come out of a classic license. For a series compromised of putting-on Whitey and his ways, It's refreshing to see the blow returned to the African kind. I can imagine this film having Blacks tucking their tails between their legs upon exiting the theater.

-mAQ

FEAST II: SLOPPY SECONDS

John Gulager (2008)

Feast was an admirable horror attempt. It thrilled audiences and was a remarkable horror satire armed with quick character title cards that made the film seem like more of a game than anything. In what I imagined to be a theatrical release due to the wildly popular original film, Feast II was released DTV which halts any real imagination this film could have had. Instead of having a crisp take on the continuance of these creatures, what we get is sheltered and dull. Feast II isn't the film that fans have been craving. This disappointed me the most. I could handle the fact that the plot revolves around a lesbian butch biker gang from hell that seeks to avenge a fallen comrade that was explicitly betrayed in the first film, but the fact that this film goes all out and pulls no effort in attempting to make this film differ from the first is beyond any amount of disappointment I could guarantee. The films highlights are one and few. A very politically incorrect scene of a baby getting eaten is present, but the sheer fact that they use this a lure for humor is what shows me the size of this filmmakers balls. Many characters from the original film return if only for a brief second. This causes the film to lose coherency as a character is reintroduced to have a title card flashed, brief music, and his death that should have been notarized in the previous film. Feast II also features something abysmal on its on level; an ending which offers no compromise. You never make a film that ends itself on a high note, then make a sequel to that only to cut it off with entirely too many questions unanswered. Another sequel won't be worth it if it's spent on flashbacks and its trademark title cards. For leverage towards its fan base, the lovely female Feast II co-stars lose their clothes for an "experiment" which leaves lovely ladies armed with weapons in the nude. One of the few high points of this film. Feast II is indeed a piece of sloppy second film making. When Feast II isn't trying to go over top of being over the top, It can form an entertaining horror experience but the fact that they thought it was clever to put every form of oddity and taboo into an average running time film just states something about how little of an attention span these film makers of new-wave horror have. Feast II isn't anything near what I wanted it to be. For shame.

-mAQ

FEAST III: THE HAPPY FINISH
FEAST III: THE HAPPY FINISH

John Gulager (2009)

Allow me to speculatively reminisce for a second. I happen to adore the first Feast film; The gooey subversive eroticism, The cameo of Jason Mewes only to have his face removed with razor nails. The first film was exactly this, a prize. It was a winner of Project Greenlight. This in itself is quite an accomplishment. For retrospect and due to my generous nostalgia, allow to relay over the series for you and I. Feast opened with a bar. You were quickly introduced each character without a moments delay. Spoofy title cards were broadcast amongst us. Some of us chuckled quietly, some of us paraded about the originality of the film already. The film ended and we were left with many questions but we forgave it. We appreciated the audacity and the cunningness of the feature. A storm was brewing suddenly. A sequel was announced. We knew what the cost could be but we pushed forward despite the hazardous conditions. Many agreed to enjoy the film but they were lying, even to themselves. Feast II: Sloppy Seconds was awful, corrosive, and over over-the-top. It featured (and I mean featured as in the only thing spotlighted) midget dicks, exploding entrails, train genitals, razorblade orgies, and every other impossible oddity you can summon up. This is about the time a rumor came about that John Gulager, winner of Project Greenlight 3 and director of Feast, was actually a fraud and the director was show creator Chris Moore. This claim has been alleged on all 3 of the Project Greenlight films. Meanwhile, fans wait eagerly for the closing chapter and to figure out where these creatures come from. No one could have seen what was next. Feast 3: The Happy Finish came all too soon. From the release of 2 & 3, one should easily be able to assess that no creative force was put behind either as they are churned out as fast as Pulse sequels. The jump from the hyperkinetic directing style of Feast to Feast II is highly noticeable. It's vantages like these that almost affirm the rumors into something malleable and venomous. Feast III picks up with the gang led by the Biker Queen into the sewers. The instant you turn the film on, you will be marauded by this = random decapitations, annoying title cards, expletive vocabulary's, rehashing's of the last film's events, tits, and every character of the last film, promised to live, dying horrible, violent, subsequent deaths at the hands of unimaginable freak accidents. That brings me to my first point. It isn't clever anymore. It isn't inventive or funny. If you're reading this, John Gulager - Die. Feast III is still that film that generates "Witty" name cards explaining the characters with interlaced pop culture injections that smirk aloud as you glance over them. The fact that Gulager takes anyone over 18 as a child comes round as pretty fucking offensive. These oddball traits mean nothing to the cast other than to take up screen space and to waste time with pointless reading. Every character is then dead and the bulk of the characters are going to venture without harm for the next 30-40 minutes until the next

"hero" enters. Imagine if Final Destination 4 opened with 5 out of 8 characters dying within the first five minutes. Exactly. Feast III is an absolute monstrosity supposed to be running strong but falls flat rather soon. A part of me longed to care for the movie and upon the entrance of the character "Shitkicker", I felt something towards the film. I said "Finally! Now I can lay trust in the hands of a character". Then he was accidentally shot in the face by a stupid female - Of course. Jokes tend to get stale by code of the stand-up comedian. These laws of common sense apparently do not apply to Mr. Gulag. Feast III lived up to one expectation and one expectation only - a conclusion to a story well drawn out. You will not get this. To spare you the accidental purchase of this disaster, I will spoil the "ending". A giant robot steps on one of the survivors as the old man begs to repopulate earth. I said it, yes. The old man begs to fuck the survivor and witnesses her promptly squashed by an enormous robot/mech. There is no explanation, no closing grace. You will be cheated out of every cent of your purchase and promptly treated with a Elvis mariachi singing a song about how pissed you are due to the still-enigmatic origins of the beasts. Sure, I enjoy absurd film experiments but this is a scientific survey segregating horror fans from DVD buyers. Logic will be discarded for cheap thrills and inevitable disappointment. If you cater to the product, help yourself. I'm just flabbergasted at the ineffectiveness of Whiskey during this masochistic series of unfortunate events. No substance could make this film any better than it is at core. I wouldn't consider this a review, just an incendiary, scorching assault of Feast III: The Happy Finish (Get it!?! LOLLOL)

-mAQ

AMERICAN GOTHIC
AMERICAN GOTHIC

John Hough (1987)

Director Carlos Batts had a very interesting idea. He reinterpreted a parody of rural American Life and made it grotesque. Batts saw something different in the painting that not many other people saw. American Gothic attests that. There is no other film that I have seen like American Gothic. Batts, an acclaimed photographer, obviously had a different type of attitude on how to direct a film. American Gothic comes out more as a stream of consciousness collage of images than your standard horror flick. The farmers narration accentuates this dream-like experience. Batts paid a lot of attention to detail as the film proves. He has a photographers eye as the image is first and foremost to everything else. The detail in everything from costume to color redefines the focus of a horror film. American Gothic's lack of plot, which is unnecessary to the film, forces the viewer to have to interpret the film on their own. This is another similarity between American Gothic and still photography. Sound plays an importance in both the films strengths and weaknesses. The voice of the old farmer is one of monotone decay. After hearing his pathetic voice, you can almost sympathize with his malevolent activities. Unfortunately the effect of the old farmers voice is weakened by generic metal music played throughout. It seems as if Carlos Batts was trying to help out one of his friends by adding his bands music to the film. This unsavory music weakens the film as a whole and almost discredits its merit. The old farmers performance in American Gothic does stand out. It is very believable that he is the man in the painting, he plays him well. This old farmer is both a poet and a sadist. Years and years of working on the farm have given this horticulturist many ideas. When he's covered in blood he seems finally complacent with life. His years of blood and sweat have finally met its climax.

With each viewing, American Gothic becomes even more engaging. I still can't decide whether it's a cheap pretentious attempt at surrealist art or inside the mind of a sadist. I hope it's the second, but the films pseudo satanic music continuously stops me from making that decision.

-Ty E

REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE

John Huſton (1967)

In the Hollywood Southern Gothic classic *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), Paul Newman's character Brick Pollitt expresses his undying love for his deceased friend Skipper over the brazen erotic yearnings of his feisty wife Maggie "the Cat" played by Elizabeth Taylor. Almost ten years later, Marlon Brando, as sexually repressed homophile and military man Maj. Weldon Penderton, would also chose a young man over would-be-Queen Elizabeth in John Huſton's under-rated film *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967); a plentifully peculiar and perverse Southern Gothic work set in a military training camp during the homo-hating 1940s based on the Carson McCullers novel of the same name. As hinted at by its curious title, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is an aesthetically magnetic work that shimmers a golden tone (or a "golden haze" as Huſton described it) throughout, but protagonist Weldon Penderton has his gaze on a young recruit's brown-eye; whether he wants to admit it to himself or not. Major Penderton's wife Leonora (Taylor) is a luscious and loose woman who gets her kicks by mocking her husband's pathetic passivity and sexual impotence by forthrightly flaunting her hypnotic naked body and having a steamy love affair with his married friend Lt. Col. Morris Langdon (Brian Keith). Needless to say, Major Penderton is an internally conflicted fellow who wears the sort of fixed stoic mask of deceit that only a seasoned military man of the 1940s could have pulled off. Of course, when the Major sees Pvt. Williams (played by then-newcomer Robert Forster), his unspeakable love interest, riding a white horse while au naturel, he begins to lose his cold-cock cool, thus eventually culminating into a calamitous climax that reminds the viewer why AIDS-ridden S&M leather bars exist. Unfortunately for Mr. Penderton, Williams – who is not exactly the most mentally stable young man – has a fetish for sneaking into Leonora's bedroom and ritualistically inhaling the pussycat pheromones from her panties and lingerie.

Before Brando obtained the lead role in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, Elizabeth Taylor's good friend Montgomery Clift was cast to play Maj. Weldon Penderton, but instead died of a much anticipated heart attack before a single frame of film was shot. Lee Marvin was also considered for the role, yet he turned it down, probably because he was too hard-featured and unrepentantly manly, but one can only speculate. Brando – who although masculine in his own right but also a pugnacious pretty boy – was indubitably the right man for the job as further testified by a statement he made in 1976, "Homosexuality is so much in fashion it no longer makes news. Like a large number of men, I, too, have had homosexual experiences and I am not ashamed. I have never paid much attention to what people think about me." Of course, his character in *Reflections in a Golden Eye* certainly cares about what people think about him, so much so that he rather stay with a woman that unceasingly repels him

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than become a full-fledged patriotic member of the pink army brotherhood. In terms of theme, aesthetics, and overall atmosphere, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is essentially the total antipodean to the ultra-campy comedy *The Gay Deceivers* (1969); a silly fag romp were two straight friends pretend to be queer lovers so they can avoid being drafted into the military. After initially watching *Reflections in a Golden Eye* for the first time, it was quite apparent to me as to why the film failed at the box office. On top of featuring diacritic homoerotic themes set in the sort of period and place that most individuals would regard as a man-molding testosterone factory of inborn anti-fagdom, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* alienated many mainstream viewers due to its puissant gold tint, so much so that the film was subsequently re-released in a normal color format (thankfully, the "golden haze" was later reinstated when the film was released on dvd) so as to appease the typically mundane tastes of unadventurous mainstream filmgoers. Ultimately, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is a tragic tale were not a single quandary is resolved, let alone properly addressed, but I guess one cannot expect much optimism from a film where a man unabashedly commits serial adultery against his sick suicidal wife (who cut off her own nipples after having a miscarriage during childbirth) with the spoiled, over-sexed spouse of one of his best friends. Despite its many poignant moments of human despondency, duplicity, and contretemps, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* has a few instances of (seemingly unintentional) comic relief in the form of an effete Filipino houseboy who has a queer eye for the golden eye as exhibited by his drawing of gold peacock whose ogle acts as a reflection of the world, hence the title of the film.

Reflections in a Golden Eye is very possibly the greatest example of a semi-subconscious bizarre love triangle and one of John Huston's most artistically ambitious and uncompromising efforts, as it is a work that was destined to be a commercial failure due to its terribly taboo themes and iridescent gold imagery. The fact that Mr. Huston made such an audience-antagonistic and emotionally-draining work with an all-star cast featuring Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor only adds to the case for the filmmaker's artistic integrity. At the very worst, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is work that eclipses its Southern Gothic predecessors *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), and *The Fugitive Kind* (1959) in terms of ever seething starkness, domestic social dysfunction, and psycho-sexual derangement. Out of all the characters featured in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, it is hard to designate which one is the most mentally unsound and abhorrent, but somewhat queerly, Brando's character Weldon Penderton eventually seems to be keenly cognizant of his affliction by the end of the film, even if he blows something other than his load as a result of it. Aside from being a latent homosexual, I think many male viewers, especially older ones, can identify with Penderton's plight and impasse with life. On reflection, it is not the honor and prestige that comes with being a decorated officer that the Major nostalgically ponders on, but his youthful days of impassioned brotherhood

as a new recruit. In a sense, Penderton's sexual longings for the stark-naked peeping tom on the horse seem to be a rather perverse way for him to recapture the sprightliness of his long lost salad days. Although expressive in tone and sometimes even phantasmagorical in imagery, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is in consummation a very realistic portrayal about self-imposed (and sometimes subconscious) prisons and the self-annihilating misery that such preternatural constructs sow. Next to Sidney Lumet's *Equus* (1977), you won't find a more penetrating and historic film about hysterical homos and horses than *Reflections in a Golden Eye*.

-Ty E

WISE BLOOD
WISE BLOOD

John Huston (1979)

It must be a sick joke of sorts for a serious actor to be best known as the voice of a killer doll, but such is the case for eccentric character actor Brad Dourif (*Blue Velvet*, *The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*); a talented man who always feared being typecast as a player of disturbed and deranged characters, yet made the career mistake of getting involved with the Child's Play horror franchise (with the original 1988 *Child's Play* being the only film where the actor did more than just providing his voice, acting as Chucky's human progenitor, serial killer Charles Lee Ray). Indeed, although Dourif is rarely known for playing lead roles, especially in famous films, he does play the anomalous anti-hero in John Huston's (but credited as "Jhon Huston") fiercely farcical celluloid 'low comedy' *Wise Blood* (1979), a relatively faithful adaptation of Flannery O'Connor's 1952 Southern Gothic novel of the same name. Criticized throughout her career for concocting so-called 'grotesque' characters, *Wise Blood* was a literary work that had this claim leveled at it and Huston's idiosyncratic and iconoclastic film is no different as an ostensibly heretical yet strangely holy work that portrays the American Deep South as a place populated by two people: charlatan Christian preachers of the bastardized protestant persuasion who always have some master scam and the everyday philistine citizens that embrace these con men of Christ. Technically an American-West German production (*Der Ketzer* or *Die Weisheit des Blutes* in Krautland and *Le Malin* in France) and filmed mainly in and around Macon, Georgia, the Deep Fried South featured in *Wise Blood* is the sort of sordid and unsophisticated degenerate dead civilization that Baltimore anti-Christ/wordsmith H.L. Mencken wrote about where medieval metaphysics is the norm, so certainly things turn strange for a community of unreformed Confederates when a disillusioned ex-G.I. returns to the Bible Belt and radically rebels against his upbringing, thus becoming a nihilistic preacher who starts a 'Church of Truth without Christ' (and without a brick and mortar church) where, "the deaf don't hear, the blind don't see, the lame don't walk, the dumb don't talk, and the dead stay that way," and proudly and petulantly proclaims in a peeved manner, "I don't believe in anything" and that, "sin is a trick on niggers." Of course, being a passionate pessimist and subversive skeptic in "The Sahara of the Bozart" (as Mencken called it) is bound to drive one crazy or so the perturbed protagonist of *Wise Blood* finds out as he does everything in his means to subconsciously crucify himself.

A man with a very large and in charge chip on his shoulder, Hazel Motes (Brad Dourif) – an ex-soldier who apparently earned the Purple Heart for his service in the Second World War, but is disappointed to discover his family home in Tennessee is abandoned – immediately begins to develop an all-consuming bout of megalomania when he arrives at a small Southern town via train. After

a taxi driver remarks that he looks like a preacher due to his 'preacher hat' and curious brand of charisma, Motes 'finds his calling' on the path of the godless as an absurdly agitated and antagonistic anti-Christ proletarian prophet who dedicates his life to discrediting the word of God and his only bastard son. Luckily, Motes does not have to look hard to find his first disciple, Enoch Emory (Dan Shor) – a half-retarded zookeeper who hates and verbally taunts a monkey in the zoo because, "he acts like he thinks he's as good as me or you," – obsessively follows him around upon first meeting him because he, "don't know nobody" and no one will have, "nothin' to with him." Of course, Hazel is not exactly the most handsome nor humble man, so he finds himself sleeping with obese Southern Belles from hell, which result in nightmares about how he misspent his youth as the grandson of a carny huckster preacher (ironically played by life-long atheist, director John Huston). Intelligent yet uneducated and charismatic yet anti-social, mad Motes is on a futile campaign against crooks of Christ that starts with a debunking of pseudo-blind preacher named Asa Hawks' (Harry Dean Stanton) supposed blinding via lime and defiling his bastard daughter Sabbath Lily (Amy Wright) after he moves into the same boarding house in which they live. Of course, Hazel becomes turned off when he discovers that Lily is a lecherous nymphomaniac who was deflowered a long time ago because after concluding that she was born a bastard and would be going to hell as a result, she decided might as well engage in her fair share of sins of the flesh. After Hazel reveals that Hawks did not have enough gall to actually blind himself, he leaves town, thus leaving his daughter Lily in the carnal care of the nihilist prophet. Meanwhile, dullard boy wonder Enoch Emory steals a mummified shrunken dwarf from a display case in a degenerate museum because he is convinced it will make for a stupendous 'baby Jesus-like' prophet icon for Hazel's church. In a scene parodying the famous 'Madonna and Child' icon, Lily cradles the dried up dwarf in her arms as if it is her baby while a blanket is draped over her head, which inflames Hazel, who smashes the mummy to pieces and throws it out the window. When a local conman named Hoover Shoats (Ned Betty) – who initially tries to go into business with the 'Church of Truth without Christ' but the anti-priest (who is not interested in cash but spreading the gospel of the godless) turns him down – starts a rip-off of Hazel's church entitled "The Holy Church of Christ Without Christ" featuring a drunk wino modeled after Hazel as the pseudo-religion's prophet, the young godless preacher is quite enraged, murderously so. One night, Hazel follows the rag-to-riches derelict in his car (which is just like Hazel's) and runs him off the road, orders him to strip, and then violently murders the man by running him over multiple times. Needless to say, Hazel, despite his spiritual iconoclasm, is a 'true believer' and maybe the only truly 'religious' man in town (aside from Enoch). On top of killing a bum and having his beloved car destroyed by a sinister yet hospitable police officer, Hazel becomes withdrawn like a monk and does what Asa Hawks never had the

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gall to do – blinding himself via lime and living as a self-flagellating sinner, thus discovering ‘humility’ for the first time in his life.

Oddly enough, director John Huston disagreed with the ‘meaning’ of the ending of his own film *Wise Blood*. While star Brad Dourif and most other viewers of the film tend to agree that unholy heretic Hazel finally “finds God” in the end, albeit in an exceedingly grotesque way, stern atheist John Huston apparently disagreed with this interpretation, but in the end, it is without question that the anti-priest inevitably adopts a life of asceticism and abstinence where all worldly pleasures of the flesh, including the ability to see, are fully revoked in a most unwavering manner. As the now-blind Hazel tells his landlady, “You can’t see,” but he indubitably seems to believe he can as a lapsed nihilist. Of course, anyone who has ever met an atheist ‘true believer’ sort – the type of close-minded individual who genuinely believes they know the truth and has a pathological, almost perverse drive to proselytize to everyone about it, especially happy Christians, because they want everyone to be just as miserable as they are as a godless prophet with the key to the universe – one could argue that John Huston cannot see the world outside the narrow lenses of his orthodox anti-religious religion of self-satisfied atheism, but he surely made a sardonically spiritual film with *Wise Blood*; a work more holy and theological than his religious epic *The Bible: In the Beginning* (1966), a cinematic work that depicted the first 22 chapters of the Book of Genesis. Very possibly the only worthwhile ‘Southern Gothic’ film of its time and certainly one of the most overlooked works of John Huston’s long and cinematically fruitful career, especially considering the auteur was already over 70-years-old when he directed it. I guess Huston had some of that ‘Wise Blood’ – an instinctive worldly knowledge and *weltanschauung* of what direction to take to take in one’s life that does not need spiritual nor emotional guidance – that rhapsodic retard Enoch Emory spoke of, but I am sure the unbelieving atheistic auteur would have fervently denied it.

-Ty E

UNDER THE VOLCANO

John Huston (1984)

While I certainly feel accursed in other ways, I feel quite blessed that I am more or less allergic to alcohol and thus have never succumbed to the distinctly malevolent metaphysical affliction of alcoholism, as I have a feeling that I would drink myself to death if I were a dipsomaniac since I am not the sort of person that does things halfway and would probably prefer to be perpetually drunk than to deal with hangovers and alcohol withdraw. On a more personal level, I have seen friends go from be cerebral and deeply thoughtful individuals to extroverted drunken retards and insufferable human excrement practically overnight as a result of becoming drunks, not to mention the various friends and family members I have know whose childhoods were ruined by disgusting boozier bastards, thus I have a low tolerance for liquid courage fetishism; be it from date-rape-inclined fratboys that rock out to the Dave Matthews Band or schizophrenic negro hobos that get aggressive if you decline to give them the change that they shamelessly beg for whilst polluting urban areas with their bottom-of-the-barrel social parasitism. In fact, I must confess that I absolutely loathe just about everything about alcohol and alcoholics, so naturally a film about a degenerate drunkard has to be pretty damn good for me to be able to even finish watching it, let alone consider it a notable cinematic work. Of course, Barbet Schroeder's *Barfly* (1987) starring Mickey Rourke as the far-too-handsome alter-ego of perpetually shit-faced Ameri-kraut wordsmith Charles Bukowski is a fun novelty and Marco Ferreri's delectably debauched 'dirty realism' adaptation *Storie di ordinaria follia* (1981) aka *Tales of Ordinary Madness* is even better, but both of these films utilize lowlife dark humor as a means to make the rather dejecting material easier to swallow without vomiting in disgust. In a somewhat difference fashion, Bavarian auteur Herbert Achternbusch's darkly yet mirthfully melancholic absurdist comedies like *Bierkampf* (1977) aka *Beer Chase* and *Das letzte Loch* (1981) aka *The Last Hole* manage to somewhat distance the viewer from the true severity ugliness of kraut carousers, who sometimes seem demonically possessed by drink, by incorporating humor. Undoubtedly, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's early masterpiece *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* (1971) aka *The Merchant of Four Seasons*—a film loosely based on the German auteur's tragic loser uncle—features one of the best and most harrowing depictions of a drunk ever committed to celluloid to the point where it makes the dipsomaniac as portrayed by Robert Stack in the director's mentor Douglas Sirk's *Written on the Wind* (1956) seem like a bad Jim Carey sketch by comparison. Aside from Fassbinder's flick, I would have to say one of the greatest and most entrancingly devastating depicts of rampant drunkenness is Hollywood maverick John Huston's antepenultimate feature *Under the Volcano* (1984) starring English actor Albert Finney in arguably the greatest performance of his career as an eloquently erratic drunkard who has

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not put down the bottle once ever since his much younger and more handsome half-American bastard of a half-brother had a lurid love affair with his gorgeous actress wife. Based on the semi-autobiographical 1947 novel of the same name written by tragic alcohol-addled Englishman(child) Malcolm Lowry, the film has the perfect setting for a cinematic work with a protagonist that has given up on life and is about to die as it takes place in a small Mexican town during the Day of the Dead in 1938 on the eve of the Second World War.

As the lives of savage satirist and fabulist Ambrose Bierce, who completely disappeared while he was in his early 70s after traveling south of the border in 1913 to get first-hand experience of the Mexican Revolution and joining Pancho Villa's army, and junky queer William S. Burroughs, who 'accidentally' killed his second wife during a less than fortuitous game of 'William Tell' while living in Mexico City, clearly demonstrate, Mexico is a place that self-destructive, suicidal, and/or otherwise dysfunctional gringos travel to when they have given up on life and want to gamble with their mortality. Notably Huston's third and final film in a sort of unofficial Mexican trilogy following *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948) starring Humphrey Bogart and the director's father Walter Huston and the tastefully trashy black-and-white Tennessee Williams adaptation *The Night of the Iguana* (1964), *Under the Volcano* is a tale of exotic and oftentimes eccentric self-obliteration where a cultivated yet spiritually vacant and deracinated Englishman that is quite fond of noble savages learns the hard way that good manners, elegance, and refinement only go so far when you're dealing with a group of people who are not beneath shooting and killing their best amigo during an argument over the prowess of a young matador. Not unlike French libertine poet Arthur Rimbaud, the emotionally perturbed protagonist is a perennial drunken wanderer that is just as every bit rude and crude as he is refined and charismatic, as a sort of fallen spiritual aristocrat and upperclass wino that has decided that self-imposed exile in a strange foreign land that resembles both heaven and hell is the only appropriate existence for a foredoomed fellow like himself with nothing to lose to live. Quite fittingly shot by veteran Mexican cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa, who began his career shooting Sergei M. Eisenstein's unfinished masterpiece *¡Que viva Mexico!* (1932)—a film that is also set partly during the Day of the Dead and features a somewhat paganistic portrayal of Mexicans—*Under the Volcano* is, not unlike various films by Huston's fellow rough old hard-ass Hollywood maverick Sam Peckinpah, especially *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974), a beautifully bleak and nihilistic love letter to a culturally conflicted yet deeply spiritual third world hellhole that the gringo may have officially created and still somewhat controls but ultimately still very much contains the spirit of human-sacrificing Aztecs that once ruled the land. Featuring a spiritually castrated loser who has lost both his soul and purpose in life and thus has replaced them with the devil's mouthwash, Huston's film is an almost sometimes infuriating tragedy that reveals in a somewhat subtle

way how it is usually the most broken and hopeless of individuals that fall into the (anti)solacing metaphysical purgatory of alcoholism. In its depiction of a superficially dignified dipsomaniacal degenerate that is driven to drink due to both his incapacity to grieve and stop loving the woman that betrayed him, I think *Under the Volcano* also says a lot about Huſton and might arguably be his most auteuriſt oriented cinematic work.

As someone that has never really cared for that virtual human booger Bogart and thus have little affection for the filmmaker's early classic films *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *The African Queen* (1951), I can state without even the slightest degree of hesitation that I believe Huſton directed his greatest, most original, and subversive films during his golden years, which is somewhat ironic considering he assembled some of his most astonishingly horrendous cinematic works during the same exact period. Indeed, his commissioned works like wholly worthless horror-thriller *Phobia* (1980) and the WWII POW soccer flick *Victory* (1981) seem like they could have been directed by the worst of Roger Corman-trained-for-hire hacks. According to Orson Welles, who starred in a couple of the Huſton's films (and vice versa), the filmmaker did not even bother to actually direct a number of his films and instead he would coerce someone else to do it for him, or as the *Citizen Kane* director stated to Henry Jaglom during a conversation featured in the book *My Lunches With Orson* (2013), "What you don't understand is that he [Huſton] doesn't [direct his films]. He just knows how to make a picture without directing it. He just sits and lets the choreographer or somebody else do it. He stays up and plays poker all night, and when he's shooting, that's when he's resting." Of course, despite his early training as both a fine painter in Paris and writer (notably, German-American iconoclast H. L. Mencken bought two of his early stories for his popular magazine *American Mercury*), Huſton never considered himself an auteur and virtually all of his greatest films are adaptations of popular novels, including his last three films: *Wise Blood* (1979), *Under the Volcano*, and *The Dead* (1987). Personally, my favorite Huſton film is his almost sadistically sardonic Flannery O'Connor adaptation *Wise Blood*, which feels like it was directed by a young rebellious anti-Hollywood auteur and not an old golden age studio filmmaker that was in his 70s. Aside from being unquestionably my second favorite Huſton flick, *Under the Volcano* is the film that I regard as the director's most overtly personal and auteur orientated cinematic work, even if lead actor Albert Finney's true tour-de-force performance is indubitably the most potent and memorable aspect of the entire film (notably, Huſton would state of the actor's performance, "I think it's the finest performance I have ever witnessed, let alone directed"). In fact, Finney's performance is so great as a jovially nihilistic alcoholic (ex)consul that many people seem to believe that the actor was actually thoroughly shit-faced during the filming, which he most certainly was not.

Beginning with an unforgettable chiaroscuro opening sequence that was actu-

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ally directed by the director's then-21-year-old-son Danny Huston (who went on to be a Hollywood actor and sometimes director and who gave his own Finneyesque tour-de-force performance in Bernard Rose's underrated Tolstoy update *Ivansxc* (2000)) featuring dancing Day of the Dead skeleton marionettes, the film then cuts to a shot of a volcano juxtaposed with an title reading, "Cuernavaca, Mexico – November 1, 1938 – The Day of the Dead." Despite the fact that he has quit his job as the British consul of the area, protagonist Geoffrey Firmin (Albert Finney) has decided to stay in Mexico as he rather enjoys the scenic region and its equally exotic people, even though most of the locals seem to find him to be quite inexplicable and see him as either a deranged old gringo or a drunken old fool with too much money (to his credit, the protagonist sometimes appeases the many beggars that seem to be always bothering him). While he can barely communicate with many of these individuals in linguistic terms, Geoffrey has some bizarre wordless relationships with rather eccentric folks, including an elderly Indian peasant woman that plays dominoes with an alcoholic chicken (in fact, said elderly Indian peasant woman attempts to save the protagonist's life towards the end of the film, but he fails to take heed of her rather clear warning). The film begins the night before the Day of the Dead and Geoffrey spends most of the evening strolling around in the dark in black sunglasses while a stray dog that he lovingly feeds follows him around town. The only local that Geoffrey has any sort of truly meaningful friendship with that involves actual deep conversations is a charming old Mestizo chap named Dr. Vigil (Ignacio López Tarso), who may be a man of science but he seems to be just as supremely superstitious as every other Mexican in the area. Indeed, when the protagonist states, "Only in Mexico is death an occasion for laughter," Dr. Vigil unwittingly illustrates the innate difference in terms of mindsets between Mexicans and ungodly Anglo-Saxons by replying, "On the Day of the Dead, when their spirits come back to us...the road from heaven must be made – made easy...and not slippery with tears." Of course, being a perpetually drunk nihilist of sorts who is fed up with everything about his life except alcohol, Geoffrey is not exactly your typical Anglo as reflected in remarks like, "How, unless you drink as I do, can you hope to understand the beauty of an old Indian woman playing dominoes with a chicken?" Likewise, when a friend of Dr. Vigil describes the plot of Karl Freund's classic Maurice Renard adaptation *Mad Love* (1935) aka *The Hands of Orlac* and how a character in the film named Stephen Orlac becomes extremely upset and sorry that the new hands he received in a transplant are responsible for killing people against his will, Geoffrey remarks with a certain poetic confidence, "There are things for which one cannot apologize," which ultimately prove to be weighty words if considered in the context of the romantic betrayal that his (ex)wife Yvonne (Jacqueline Bisset) and half-brother Hugh (Anthony Andrews) committed against him. Naturally, as the losing party of a bizarre love triangle involving two much younger and more attractive individu-

als, Geoffrey is consumed with a sort of undying sense of despair that seems to be reminding him that death is not too far away.

On the night before the Day of the Dead when locals are getting good and wasted while hanging up flashy traditional holiday decorations, Geoffrey follows Dr. Vigil to a church and, despite being an innately irreligious chap, prays to Mary the Blessed Virgin that his estranged wife will come back to him, stating during a rare moment where he totally submits to vulnerability, "I'm dying without you. Come back to me, Yvonne," which ultimately prove to be somewhat ironic words considering how the protagonist ends up at the conclusion of the film. In what Dr. Vigil later sincerely describes as a "miracle," Yvonne does indeed return the next day, but it is hardly a happy reunion, as Geoffrey is trapped in a tequila-fueled inward pandemonium and lacks the capacity to embrace her the same way he did when they were once happily married together because he cannot get over the fact that she betrayed him and had a lurid love affair with his little half-brother Hugh, who also seems to be still in love with her as his behavior will demonstrate. Indeed, despite divorcing him in a rather cold and unexpected way without even giving him any forewarning, Yvonne still believes that she is in love with Geoffrey and has yet to even take her wedding ring off, hence why she has traveled all the way to the fiery bowels of Mexico to see and reconcile with him. When Yvonne unexpectedly arrives at a bar where the protagonist is telling a dubious story about how he was the commander of a ship named S.S. Samaritan during World War I and how he received a prestigious medal for capturing an enemy ship, even though he was also court-martialed for ostensibly incinerating seven German officers in a furnace, Geoffrey literally cannot believe his eyes upon seeing her and he only realizes it is really her and not a hallucination after continuing to tell his story and taking a second hard look in what is indubitably a brilliant Hustonian moment that demonstrates that the director has a good grasp of the pathetic perpetual delirium that is the dipsomaniacal mind. While one would expect that a man that prayed to the Mother Mary to bring his estranged wife back would immediately engage in a long, passionate, and otherworldly orgasmic love session with their estranged beloved within minutes, if not seconds, of being reunited with her, Geoffrey is largely evasive and does not do much more than awkwardly kiss her, even though Yvonne gets somewhat aggressive and forces him to get in bed with her. While Geoffrey joins Yvonne in bed, he cannot seem to restore the love and affection he once had for her and soon finds an excuse to exit the room so that he can get even drunker. Needless to say, as the film progresses, Geoffrey only gets all the more intoxicated and, in turn, irrational and belligerent, among other things. Rather unfortunately, like most addicts, Geoffrey has unwittingly accursed his love ones and will ultimately bring them down with him in what is ultimately one of the most tragically anti-romantic endings in cinema history.

It is not clear what the exact circumstances were in regard to the adulterous

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affair between Yvonne and Hugh, but what is clear is that it left Geoffrey an irreparably broken man who, despite his desire to move on with his life, unfortunately lacks the capacity to forgive both of them. Of course, naturally the viewer strongly suspects that the affair was partly the result of Geoffrey's belligerent drinking. After all, it is much easier to both sexually and emotionally satisfy a woman when you're not drunk off your ass all the time, on top of the fact that the protagonist would have been more aware of the relationship between his wife and brother had he not been perpetually inebriated (indeed, while MTV and shitty Hollywood comedies love linking sex and alcohol together like peas and carrots, alcoholism oftentimes causes sexual impotence in men). Undoubtedly, as a younger and handsomer chap with a talent for music, poetry, and showing off like a fearless jackass, Hugh has certain attractive qualities that his somewhat more docile brother lacks, not to mention the fact that he is much closer in age to Yvonne. In fact, defeatist cynic Geoffrey is more or less the total opposite of Hugh, who has a thirst for life instead of drink and spends much of his time traveling around the world as a communist journalist who fought on the side of the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War (at one point, he lovingly describes a British comrade that perished in the war as, "a communist...approximately the best man I ever met"). While ex-consul Geoffrey is certainly no patriot, let alone a fascist, he is far too wise and cynical to have faith in the big Marxist scam. Naturally, Geoffrey's lack of political idealism does not stop him from mocking a German Attaché named Herr Krausberg (Günter Meisner of *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) and Agustí Villaronga's *Tras el cristal* (1986) aka *In a Glass Cage*) by alluding to Nazi murders and screaming in a ballroom full of tons of people, "Corpses must be transported by express. Each of these express corpses...must be accompanied by a first-class passenger. Now, let's supposed, uh, the treaty fails and it's bloody Armageddon. Just thinks of it. Railways stand to make a fortune [...] The whole world will learn to laugh at the sight of stinking cadavers. Oh, ha! Ha! Ha! Bloody, ha! Ha! Ha!" As a favor to his brother, Geoffrey also has the gall to ask Herr Krausberg if his Hitlerite homeboys are responsible for funding a Mexican fascist group called the Sinarquistas (National Synarchist Union). Rather unfortunately, Geoffrey will eventually bump into members of the Sinarquistas at a remote rural bar-cum-brothel on an insanely ill-fated night when he is especially erratic and emotional in his self-annihilating inebriation, henceforth leading to catastrophic consequences for both him and his beloved.

As can be expected from a seemingly forsaken boozier that is still grieving over the fact that his more youthful and positive half-brother defiled his wife, Geoffrey only gets all the more unpredictably unhinged in his drunkenness when brother Hugh randomly shows up at his home no long after Yvonne arrives. In one rather bizarre scene that is just about as uncomfortable as it is comical, especially considering the circumstances, both Yvonne and Hugh strip Geoffrey

naked and try to get him to snap out of his drunkenness by forcing him into a shower and shaving him, but they of course have next to nil luck in their active attempt to get the protagonist to figuratively crawl out of his whisky bottle. Still, Geoffrey seems initially excited about roaming around town during the Day of the Dead with his half-bro and high-class whore of a wife, even though he does somewhat cruel things to embarrass them like sarcastically yelling, "Hugh. Where are you? Where can the young pup be? Hugh! An emissary calls. The Consul of Cuckold's Haven. Come and give thou wife a 'welcome back' kiss." Needless to say, Hugh and Yvonne try their best to ignore these obscene drunken outbursts, even if they are no match for the cuckolded (ex)consul's scathingly sardonic wit. Every so often, Geoffrey reveals the sensitive loving man that is hidden behind his mask of deranged dipsomania by randomly stating things like, "No si puede vivir sin amar." When Yvonne asks her (ex)husband to translate what he said, Geoffrey replies in a similarly tender yet nonchalant fashion, "One cannot live without love," but nothing else is said about the matter, as if the characters are shocked by the perturbed protagonist's fleeting moment of pure humanity. Of course, the viewer certainly suspects that Geoffrey means what he says and is not just being a pretentious would-be-poetic conman like his pompous brother, as his current sad state of internal purgatory is a direct result of the fact that his romantic relationship with a woman he still deeply loves has been irreparably despoiled, hence the tragedy of both the character and the story as a whole.

While Hugh is being carried around and practically worshiped by a large crowd of Mexicans after he randomly jumps into a bullfighting pit and proves that, despite being a fairly effete gringo, he has immaculate matador skills, Yvonne seizes the opportunity to attempt to talk Geoffrey into starting over again with her, stating in an extremely impassioned fashion, "Listen, Geoffrey. There's nothing holding us here any longer. We can start again." While Geoffrey initially seems excited about the idea and discusses moving to a rural area in the north where they can socialize with Eskimos and "escape into the wilderness like good old William Blackstone," things eventually get ugly and the protagonist states with a certain stereotypically upper-class British refined seething hatred while his brother is also in their company, "when Brother Hugh comes on a visit...fresh from his heroics in, uh, Spain or wherever...I'll show proper Eskimo hospitality and give him my wife...to bed down with during the cold northern night." At this point, Yvonne breaks down and states while shaking and on the verge of sobbing terribly, "Geoffrey. Geoffrey, I've come...cr-crawling back. What m-more can I do? Let me be your wife," but of course the compulsively cynical protagonist is unimpressed with his lady's fresh tears. When Hugh gets the nerve to ask him, "Geoff, what possesses you?," the protagonist stoically replies, "Sobriety, I'm afraid. Too much moderation. I need drink desperately. Get my balance back." Undoubtedly, this rather revealing scene gets most dis-

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turbing when Geoffrey proceeds to ignore both Hugh and Yvonne and has a very irritable conversation with himself while they are both still in his company and attempting to get his attention, thus revealing his hopeless case of internal torment. Indeed, while Yvonne and Hugh watch on with great horror, Geoffrey states to himself, "When has she ever been a wife to me? Where are the children I might have had...that drowned to the rattling – of a thousand douche bags? Hugh, on the threshold of paradise...puffing over her gills like a codfish, veins like a racehorse...prime as a goat, hot as a monkey, salt as a wolf in pride. Let them wallow here in their bliss with my blessing. Hell's...my preference. I choose hell [chuckles] Hell is my natural habitat." After deciding that he will submit to eternal metaphysical misery, Geoffrey leaves his bastard brother and treacherous spouse and heads to a nearby jungle to make his way to an inordinately seedy bar near a volcano where he will fully embrace a sort of backwoods third world hell and ultimately succeed in a manner that he probably never felt was possible before.

At the beginning of the film, Geoffrey states to his friend Dr. Vigil, "No Mescal. I'd go thirsty before drinking Mescal," yet by the end of the film he cannot get enough of the "tequila of the poor." In fact, the protagonist's progressive deterioration is symbolically reflected by the fact that he goes from drinking whisky to tequila to mescal. Of course, as can be expected from an erratic drunkard that is used to drinking more refined alcoholic beverages, the less than merry mestizo favorite of mescal gets Geoffrey into serious trouble that no amount of British charm can get him out of, especially when talking to murderous Mexican thugs that are far from literate in their own indigenous language. Indeed, when the protagonist arrives at a supremely sleazy rural bar named 'El Farolito' where an intense cockfight is going on right outside not far from the entrance door, he is almost immediately bombarded by a supremely slimy scheming dwarf pimp (José René Ruiz aka Rene Ruiz 'Tun-Tun'), who immediately advertises his rather unhealthy and seemingly highly diseased human meat menu, which includes a morbidly obese mestizo beastess, grotesque overweight tranny that makes John Waters' muse Divine seem like Debbie Harry by comparison in terms of sex appeal and overall daintiness, and even a little beaner boy. While Geoffrey initially turns down the humorously sinister dwarf's offer to be a satisfied carnal customer, his mind somewhat changes when he guzzles down a couple shots of mescal and proceeds to read letters from Yvonne that were wrongly delivered to the backwards bar. Indeed, while lurking in the darkness by himself like a mad scientist on the brink of a insidious discovery and readings Yvonne's carefully chosen words, "Geoffrey, why don't you answer me? If you no longer love me and do not want me to come back to you...will you not write and tell me so? It is your silence that frightens me. What has happened to our hearts? Don't we owe it to ourselves...to that self we created apart from us...to try again. I am sorry. I am so sorry," the protagonist eventually becomes bitterly enraged and

shouts out loud while in a state of almost demonically possessed contempt, “Not enough. Not enough. It’s not possible. Not... in this world.” At this point, Geoffrey is vulnerable enough to embrace the dwarf’s best looking whore (who is certainly no prize, but she does have nice tits) to a backroom where they have what seems to be fairly lackluster and equally dejecting sex.

After exiting the mescal-marinated Latina’s (anti)love chamber, Geoffrey looks like a defeated man and refuses to pay the mischievous dwarf more money when he dubiously asks him for extra payment, even though the protagonist has already paid both the girl and the midget for what is probably the worst and most distinctly dissatisfying sex of his entire pathetic life. After Geoffrey refuses to pay the extra money, the dwarf seems satisfied enough and then more or less reveals to the protagonist that he has just probably contracted an STD by stating, “Okay, my England Man. No worry for you. Maria, she very clean. If you need doctor, I send all my amigos to this man. Good man doctor. Here. Come on.” Indeed, the midget shocks the protagonist by handing him a business card for a local doctor that specializes in STDs. Unbeknownst to Geoffrey, while he was busy getting laid by a sub-lumpenprole Latina whose vag is probably less sanitary than a gay bathhouse in San Francisco during the early 1980s, Yvonne was standing outside the door crying after the dick-headed dwarf revealed to her in a rather grotesque way that her hubby was being sexually serviced by a supremely skanky spick chick. When Geoffrey dares to insult the degenerate dwarf after he incessantly berates an American bar patron that claims Mozart was responsible for writing the bible, he soon finds himself being bullied by the little man’s Sinarquista comrades. Aside from one of them accusing him of attempting to steal his horses (even though said horse was actually stolen from an Indian that the Sinarquistas killed earlier that day), the clearly racially mongrelized mestizo fascists falsely accuse him of being a spy, Al Capone, Leon Trotsky, and Russian Jew, among other things. Indeed, in broken English, one of the men hilariously asks Geoffrey, “You Bolshevik prick? Anticristo Jew?” Of course, there is only so much one man can take and Geoffrey eventually goes ballistic and begins waving a machete at his murderously malicious Mexican tormentors, thereupon committing the unpardonable act of threatening their much valued machismo prowess in the process. Needless to say, one of the Sinarquista banditos eventually shoots Geoffrey and the others subsequently join. Rather unfortunately, Yvonne becomes fearful when she hears the gunshots while walking through the woods and begins running back to the bar in the rain, only to be instantly killed when she is trampled by her hubby’s killer’s horse. Naturally, when Hugh soon finds Yvonne’s lifeless body, he completely breaks down, thus hinting that he did indeed love his brother’s wife. Meanwhile, Geoffrey humorously states while covered in mud and succumbing to his wounds as rain drops from the sky, “What a...dingy way to die,” thereupon demonstrating that, even in his last dying moments, the protagonist never shed his razor sharp wit.

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Arguably the first and last great cinematic semi-masterpiece in the spirit of the so-called 'Lost Generation,' *Under the Volcano* certainly provides ample reason as to why director John Huston was once called, "cinema's Ernest Hemingway" by British film magazine editor Ian Freer. Described by screenwriter Guy Gallo (who, for whatever reason, never worked on another film) as a "Tragedy of Failed Intention," the film somewhat cleverly interweaves the failure of a man to reconcile with his estranged wife and little brother with the failure of the West to avoid another World War and, in turn, the death of the British Empire and the overall destruction of the Occident as a whole. In that sense, one could argue that whereas Geoffrey is symbolic self-destructive nihilist Lost Generation types like Harry Crosby and Hart Crane who had completely given up on any semblance of a normal life or a bright future and thus had completely embraced their personal inner demons and succumbed to hedonistic self-obliteration, Hugh is symbolic of the ridiculously naïve and idiotically idealistic leftists like Hemingway, Isadora Duncan, and even Huston himself who somehow absurdly believed that the revamping of the Occident with a communist or far-left systems would result in a sort of immaculate atheist utopia that would save civilization from complete capitulation. Of course, in its depiction of the protagonist being senselessly murdered by Nazi-backed Sinarquista thugs (it should be noted that in real-life, the National Synarchist Union, which still exists today, is a Roman Catholic extreme right group that had little interaction with the Nazis and preached hatred against Anglo-Saxons), Huston's film, like most mainstream and Hollywood sources, uses the Third Reich as a convenient scapegoat for the death of the West, as if the British, the Soviet Union (and communist movements in general), Pan-Slavism, Zionism, and the culturally and economically cuckolding American occupiers did not play crucial roles in destroying every single European empire and turning Europa into the stinking and rotting multi(cult)tural dystopian anti-imperium that it is today, but I digress.

In her less than favorable and even less insightful review of the film, emotionally erratic Jewess Pauline Kael complained regarding *Under the Volcano* and its male lead, "For the movie to mean anything resembling the novel, we would have to see something of what Firmin—with his psyched-up consciousness—perceives. But all that it does is take a literal approach to the novel, as if it were no more than an account of the final binge of a drunk who becomes suicidally careless and gets himself killed [...] Finney can't help making us aware that he's giving the role more than his best shot—that he's pushing too hard (frequently in closeup), and overusing his facial muscles [...] the movie has a deep-toned flossy and 'artistic' clarity and a peculiarly literary tone—the dialogue doesn't sound like living people talking." Aside from Kael's complete failure to see its references to the Lost Generations and its allusions to the apocalyptic disaster that was the Second World War, she gives the strong impression that she only watched about

15 minutes or so of the film and then had one of her groveling acolytes tell her about what happens during the rest of the movie so that she could write a review and meet a deadline for her column in *The New Yorker*. Personally, I think filmmaker Rian Johnson, who is certainly no master auteur himself (to his grand discredit, he is the writer and director of the upcoming big budget toy commercial *Star Wars: Episode VIII* (2017)), demonstrated that he had a much better understanding of the film and Finney's performance than Kael when he stated in Robert K. Elder's *The Best Film You've Never Seen* (2013), "...[UNDER THE VOLCANO] really does draw you into this feeling; it almost feels like you're sinking into a swamp through the course of watching the film. You really feel yourself sinking deeper and deeper along with Finney into a mire of jealousy and a web of that place where love and loathing intersect." Indeed, it is no surprise that the film was far from a commercial success and is only remembered today by a certain breed of cinephile, as it radiates a certain haunting malignant unease as a less than pleasurable cinematic work where the patently perturbed protagonist tries in vain to mask his spiritual sickness and pangs of *Sehnsucht* and *Weltschmerz* with his incessant indulgence of hooch. In other words, *Under the Volcano* is the closest that Huston ever got to directing something worthy of Ingmar Bergman.

Undoubtedly, while watching Huston's film, I could not help but recall an excerpt from C.G. Jung's imperative text *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) where he wrote, "I have a Red Indian friend who is the governor of a pueblo. When we were once speaking confidentially about the white man, he said to me: 'We don't understand the whites; they are always wanting something—always restless—always looking for something. What is it? We don't know. We can't understand them. They have such sharp noses, such thing, cruel lips, such lines in their faces. We think they are all crazy.'" Indeed, Jung's words describe how I assume that the Mexicans felt about the protagonist in Huston's film, as the character more or less exemplifies the restless white man stereotype to an almost transcendental degree, but of course it somewhat makes perfect sense when one considers that he suffers from arguably Faustian man's greatest and most debilitating vice: alcoholism. Notably, Jung believed that chronic dipsomania was largely a spiritual affliction that could only be adequately cured if the addict had a life-changing "vital spiritual experience" that involved the alcoholic replacing the addiction with a strong religious conviction, hence the tendency for ex-addicts to become born-again Christians. Certainly, if there is anything more disturbing than the film's protagonist's alcoholism, it is his all-consuming sense of defeatism and cynicism, hence why he was doomed to die drunk in the mud like a pig. Of course, the worst aspect of this tragic conclusion is that, like many drunks, the protagonist never becomes aware of the fact that he unwittingly dooms the person he loves most to a similarly lowly fate. Surely, I cannot think of another film that is as subtle yet blunt in terms of depicting the decidedly deleterious

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effects of alcoholism as *Under the Volcano*, which is thankfully never plagued by any phony preaching or proselytizing. On the other hand, although the film is quite empathetic toward its accursed alcoholic protagonist, I would probably refrain from recommending it to anyone that attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Ultimately, the general emotional essence of *Under the Volcano* reminds me of the lyrics from the song “Heartworms” by the British experimental industrial/electronic group Coil: “There’s too much blood in my alcohol (Can’t you get enough to numb me?) [...] There’s too much blood in my heart...In my heart (It’s preventing coagulation)...I’m faithful that this stagnation’s feeding my heartworms...Feeding the heartworms...The demons generally enter in through my ears...It all feels off of me...Ghosts vomit over me, over the old me...This knife’s gonna make some young woman a fine husband.” In fact, Coil singer John Balance—a clearly troubled individual with a dubious fetish for scatology and Crowley—died at the premature age of 42 in late 2004 in a manner that even rivals the film’s protagonist’s senseless demise in terms of being shockingly pathetic, as he perished in a freak accident after getting drunk and falling from a two story balcony at his Weston-super-Mare home that he shared with his longtime lover/band mate Christopherson Peter ‘Sleazy’ Christopherson (who himself died in his sleep under dubious circumstances in Bangkok in late 2010 at the age of 55). Undoubtedly, I see ‘Jhonn’ and ‘Sleazy’ as sort of contemporary kindred spirits to the character Geoffrey Firmin (and its creator Malcolm Lowry) as clearly gifted and cultivated artistic individuals of the perennially-seeking-but-never-finding wanderlust oriented sort that wholly embraced their inner demons and would never dare to defer hedonistic personal gratification, even if it would ultimately come at the hefty price of their lives. Of course, as seemingly coprophiliac Crowleyites and self-described “Born Again Pagans” that created truly grotesque and seemingly pederastic music videos with underage brown boys in Bangkok and were friends with such supreme degenerates like lifelong trust-fund junky William S. Burroughs and megalomaniacal meta-tranny Genesis P-orrIDGE, the Coil members make the film’s protagonist seem like Sir Oswald Mosley by comparison in terms of sheer lack of restraint and are surely symbolic of the malignant social decay that is eating at the soul of what is left of Britannia. Incidentally, Coil has a song entitled “How To Destroy Angels,” which I think is an apt what to describe Geoffrey’s ultimate influence of his beautiful wife. Indeed, while one could argue that *Under the Volcano* somewhat feels like a sort of left-wing quasi-Spenglerian allegory for the seemingly self-destructively intoxicated old wino that is Western European man, the film is also a potent and nicely nuanced reminder about how Oscar Wilde’s famous line “Yet each man kills the thing he loves” is especially true when it comes to devout disciples of bacchanalian buffoonery.

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AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

John Landis (1981)

While Hollywood is probably inhabited by more odious and degenerate individuals than anywhere else in the world, pseudo-funnyman filmmaker John Landis (*The Blues Brothers*, *Beverly Hills Cop III*) is certainly in his own league in terms of distinctive loathsomeness, as a man that seems to have the soul of a psychopathic vaudevillian clown and who always brings abject disgust to my stomach when I hear his grating voice and conspicuously contrived humor in interviews. Aside from being once charged with involuntary manslaughter due to his involvement in the deaths of actor Vic Morrow (the father of Jennifer Jason Leigh) and two prepubescent Chinese girls while directing his segment of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983) and neglecting to accept culpability, let alone apologize, for his actions (against the advice of various crew members, the director decided to have a helicopter fly a little too close the actors, thereupon resulting in their tragic deaths—a move deemed so scummy that even Steven Spielberg cut ties with him), Landis has carelessly contaminated the world with his patently deplorable personality and his uniquely, aesthetically repugnant and intrinsically impotent films. Indeed, aside from the filmmaker's kindred spirits/kinsmen Friedberg and Seltzer (*Epic Movie*, *Meet the Spartans*), when it comes to crude kosher comedy, you can do no worse than the one-note schtick of super schmuck Landis. Of course, as someone who likes to give credit where credit is due, even where my most hated directors are concerned, I have to admit that Landis has directed at least one notable film, *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), though I probably like it for all the wrong reasons. Originally penned by Landis all the way back in 1969 while he was living in the now-defunct hellhole formerly known as Yugoslavia while working as a production assistant on the goofy WWII satire *Kelly's Heroes* (1970) and heavily inspired by the director's happenstance encounter with a group of exceedingly superstitious gypsies who were performing rituals on one of their dead comrade's graves so that he would not ostensibly "rise from the grave," *An American Werewolf in London* (undoubtedly, *An American Jewish Werewolf in London* would have been a more accurate and fitting title) is a thematically and aesthetically schizophrenic cinematic work that is half classic horror, half sleazy Hebraic humor, though it would probably be a mistake to describe it as a traditional horror-comedy. Oftentimes recognized as Landis' greatest and most personal film to date, this loony and sometimes cartoonish yet also somewhat violent lycanthropic movie is riddled with rather bizarre personal Judaic references from the writer/director, including yid-extermimating Nazi mutant werewolf soldiers and a random and ultimately pointless reference to the fact that the sick Semitic tradition of male circumcision is quite vogue in the United States, where Jewish doctors have largely replaced the Catholic doctors that once dominated the now conspicu-

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ously corrupt medical industry. Indeed, one could even interpret the film as an allegory for the supposedly hostile environment a Jew faces when in a foreign land, especially of the Western European sort. Made in the wake of the relative success of Joe Dante's *The Howling* (1981) and the environmentalist-friendly Whitley Strieber adaptation *Wolfen* (1981), *An American Werewolf in London* tends to be regarded as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, lycanthropic movie ever made, yet the film seems to be more about Landis' 'anti-philistine' (aka anti-gentile) sentiments and idiosyncratic blend of post-holocaust paranoia and Philip Roth-esque Shiksa-fetishizing than the standard cinematic wolfman affair.

American Jewish college students David Kessler (David Naughton) and Jack Goodman (Griffin Dunne) have opted for backpacking across North York Moors in North Yorkshire, England as opposed to taking a birthright pilgrimage to their spiritual homeland in Israel like most Hebrews their age and rather symbolically, they arrive in the area in the back of a pickup truck with a bunch of sheep. Like a lot of good Jewish boys, the two friends love to make cynical jokes and insult one another's girlfriends, with David stating of his friend's current love interest, "I think Debbie Klein's a mediocre person with a good body." Of course, as the film will soon reveal, David is more into Nordic chicks as they tend to be more beautiful and less annoying than the typical complaining Jewess. Not long after landing in heather moorland, the two wisecracking Israelites happen upon an ominous local bar called "The Slaughtered Lamb" in a scenario reminiscent of *Dracula/Nosferatu* where local superstitious hicks express their fears regarding their local phantom(s). After some of the locals discuss how horrendous they think the John Wayne movie *The Alamo* (1960) is and another local makes a 'racially insensitive joke' involving a Texan throwing a Mexican out of a airplane while yelling "Remember the Alamo!," Jack remarks to David regarding a mysterious 5-pointed pentagram on the pub wall, "Lon Chaney, Jr., in Universal Studios maintained that's the mark of the Wolf Man." Needless to say, when Jack gets the gall to ask the local yokels about the pentagram in the pub in a scene of classic kosher comedic awkwardness, they find themselves no longer welcome, though some of the patrons seem worried about letting the boys walk around on their own on the moors, as it is apparently not a safe place to be at night, especially if you're a stupid American. While David and Jack are warned that they should stay on the road and keep away from the moors, the two Semitic subversives naturally do the exact opposite of what the Aryan hillbillies advise them to do. Before they know it, Jack is mauled to death by a werewolf, which also bites David, though some of the patrons from the bar ultimately save the latter young man from a very certain violent death. After being shot by the peasants, the killer lycanthrope transforms into an unclad, balding middle-aged man and dies, though David temporarily forgets all of this after falling into a coma. Of course, little does David realize that he will be taking his friend Jack's

furry killer's place as the only living werewolf in London.

While David is at a hospital recuperating in his bed while unconscious, a slightly overweight nurse named Brenda Bristols (played by porn star Linzi Drew, who starred in a couple Ken Russell films) remarks to her fellow nurse Alex Price (Jenny Agutter) that she "had a look" at the American's member and that she thinks that he is a member of god's chosen tribe. After Alex remarks that circumcision is "common practice now" in the barbaric United States, an assumedly Jewish physician named Dr. J.S. Hirsch (John Woodvine) verbally berates Brenda for discussing the patient's butchered penis. When David finally awakens from his slumber after being unconscious for three weeks, he is told by a humorless and quasi-fascistic cop named Inspector Villiers (Don McKillop) that he and his friend Jack were attacked by an escaped mental patient. While David fails to remember what happened to him and his deceased home-boy Jack, he finds the mental patient story to be quite questionable and he becomes rather enraged, arrogantly asking the cops, "Who are you people? What's going on here? Where's Jack?," as if the men in blue are members of some sort of British neo-Gestapo. While David does not take too kindly to the police, he develops an instant affection for the sweet maternal qualities of nymph-like nurse Alex, who spoon-feeds the young Hebrew some assumedly non-kosher food. Meanwhile, David begins to have a series of bizarre and seemingly unending nightmares-within-nightmares, including an absurd scenario where a group of mutant Aryan Nazi lycanthrope soldiers blitzkrieg their way into his quaint American home and liquidate him and his entire family and proceed to burn the house down. Indeed, it seems director Landis' greatest nightmare is having a SS Einsatzgruppen brigade of undead Teutonic wolfmen drop by his safe American Jewish home and provide him with a rather rude awakening.

Somehow, Jack, who is now a mangled undead corpse, appears in David's hospital room and warns his friend that he, "now walks the earth in limbo until the werewolf's curse is lifted." Indeed, as Jack explains, "The wolf's bloodline must be severed. The last remaining werewolf must be destroyed," with David being the last werewolf in London as a result of being bit by a limey lycanthrope. Ultimately, Jack wants David to commit suicide to lift the curse, but he is not really interested in self-slaughter because he has found a new lady love in the form of sensual nurse Alex. After Jack is discharged from the hospital, Alex invites him to stay with her at her apartment where the two love birds develop a decadent miscegenation-based romance. One night after a full moon appears, David painfully morphs into an exceedingly hairy kosher wolfman in what is easily the most painful lycanthropic transformation in cinema history. Ultimately, David hunts and stalks six degenerate Londoners and finds himself waking up naked in the wolf section of the London Zoo with no recollection of his carnage-filled carnivorous behavior the next day. After failing to get himself intentionally arrested so that he will not kill again (the Hebraic werewolf states to a cop, "Come

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on. I want you to arrest me, you asshole! Queen Elizabeth is a man! Prince Charles is a faggot! Winston Churchill was full of shit! Shakespeare's French! Fuck! Shit! Cunt! Shit!" in the desperate hope that he will be put behind bars), Jack goes to watch a vintage blue movie at an underground porn theater and he is once again visited by undead Jack, who is now almost completely decayed and who introduces his werewolf friend to some of his victims, who are now also quasi-zombies with a knack for goofy British-flavored comedy. While at the adult theater, David once again transforms into a werewolf and goes on another marvelous murder spree, even biting off authoritarian asshole Inspector Villiers' head in the process. In the end, Werewolf David is cornered by the police in an alley where he is shot and killed after attempting to lunge at the cops. Although Alex tries to save David by expressing her love for him, she is too late.

In his rather intriguing, if not scientifically dubious, work *Man Into Wolf: An Anthropological Interpretation of Sadism, Masochism and Lycanthropy* (1948), Robert Eisler—a rare Austrian Jewish intellectual who was a Jungian as opposed to a Freudian and who survived internment at both Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps—argued that werewolf legends were spawned from the belief that certain tribes of men, namely of the carnivorous and war-like sort, began to imitate the predatory nature of wolves and other beasts of prey around the time of the ice age, with Teutonic man being especially prone to lycanthropic proclivities. Eisler also argued the National Socialists were modern descendants of these werewolves who had tapped into their atavistic qualities of the German *Volksgeist*, writing in *Man Into Wolf*, “The uncanny word was resuscitated in Germany in the secret terrorist and para-military ‘Organization Werwolf’ after the first World War, and again in Himmler’s rabid speech on the new *Volkssturm* of 1945 destined to harass ‘like were-wolves’ the allied lines of communication in occupied Germany. It was of were-wolves that Hitler was thinking when he said in his programme for the education of the Hitler Jugend ‘You must be indifferent to pain’. There must be no weakness or tenderness in it. He wanted ‘to see once more in the eyes of a pitiless youth the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey’ and to ‘eradicate the thousands of years of human domestication’.” While it is questionable as to whether or not John Landis had read Eisler’s work, it seems indisputable that both men shared the same sort of quasi-mystical line of thought in terms of their perennial enemy: the Europeans, especially of the Germanic sort. Indeed, *An American Werewolf in London* would have certainly been more effective had it been set in Germany (especially in Lower Saxony in northwestern Germany where the Hermann Löns’ novel *Der Wehrwolf* (1910), which is where the Nazi resistance group ‘Werwolf’ derived their name, is set), but of course Landis, as a rather proud Jew, was probably too afraid to have made the film in the land of the Teutons. Indeed, as the director described in the featurette *John Landis on: An American Werewolf in London* regarding his personal identification with the protagonist of the film, “In *WEREWOLF*, he’s

afraid he's losing his mind, and so his dreams have to relate to his own experience, which is why he thinks of his family, where it's safe. And because he's a Jewish-American kid who grew up—He was my age at that time, so he grew up with images of the Nazis.”

Despite its innately darkly comedic tone, director John Landis vehemently denies his film is a horror-comedy, stating at the beginning of *An American Werewolf in London*: “AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON is not a comedy. They keep calling it a comedy, it's very funny, I hope. It is not a comedy. We meet these two boys in a truckload of sheep. This is not subtle. You know these boys are dead at the end of the movie. This is not a happy story. This is a horror film, and a pretty classic and traditional one. If anything, WEREWOLF is a throwback. I mean, I was trying to make a contemporary version of an old movie.” Indeed, in a sense, I have to concur with Landis as the film seems to be less of a horror-comedy than a distinctly American Hebraic take on the whole largely Germanic werewolf legend, with the original *Universal Monsters The Wolf Man* (1941) starring Lon Chaney, Jr. and Claude Rains, which is referenced throughout *An American Werewolf in London*, being penned by German-bred Hebrew novelist/screenwriter Curt Siodmak, who left Deutschland in 1937 after being rather dismayed by a less than philo-Semitic speech made by the little National Socialist doctor Joseph Goebbels. Rather unfortunately, Landis' film is indeed one of the greatest werewolf films ever made, but of course, there are not exactly a large number of great lycanthrope flicks to choose from. Aside from classic horror flicks and his own trademark quasi-vaudevillian humor, Landis was also heavily influenced by the later works of Spanish surrealist master Luis Buñuel, especially *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), hence why *An American Werewolf in London* features a number of dreams within dreams. Of course, as one can expect from any decent horror flick, the film spawned a sequel 16 years later, *An American Werewolf in Paris* (1997), which in terms of horror and humor is about as potent as poodle excrement, which is largely a result of the fact that Landis had no involvement with the film. While I consider Landis to be a sort of Trotsky of horrendous Hebraic Hollywood humor (indeed, no other Hollywood director has been involved with so many deaths, be they inadvertent or otherwise), I cannot deny the curious staying power of *An American Werewolf in London* as the world's most paranoid, incriminating, and highly personal Jewish werewolf flick ever made.

-Ty E

MEN IN ORBIT
MEN IN ORBIT

John Lurie (1979)

When I saw avant-garde jazz musician and all around 'hipster renaissance man' Jim Lurie for the very first time while watching his buddy Jim Jarmusch's classic 'buddy flick' *Down by Law* (1986) well over a decade ago, my immediate instinctive reaction was to want to kick his ass and knock the perennially 'tragically hip' look off his relatively swarthy face, yet my view of him has changed somewhat since then after seeing him in other roles like the strip club manager/quasi-pimp in Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984) and as the inmate Greg Penders in the tastefully trashy HBO prison series *Oz* (1997-2003) and now I can actually watch him in films without getting the urge to cause his hospitalization. Indeed, one cannot look at someone as a totally insufferable pretentious twat who would dare to get high on LSD with his comrades and direct a film in his apartment about spaceflight involving the most ludicrously 'lo-fi' of science fiction scenarios. Indeed, for his second (he previously directed a short the same year entitled *Hell Is You* (1979)) and ultimately last film *Men in Orbit* (1979)—a largely plot-less and superficially experimental 45-minute anti-sci-fi *Arte Povera* that seems like it was assembled in a couple hours that might be best described as the *Le Voyage dans la lune* (1902) aka *A Trip to the Moon* of the Colab-sponsored No Wave Cinema movement—Lurie boldly went where no self-stylized hipster had gone before by pretending his dilapidated apartment could pass for outer-space, thus making the flick a great double feature with Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982). Hopelessly hipster-esque in its innately ironical portrayal of burnout neo-bohemians as brave and adventurous men of science, the film was shot on Super-8 with an incredibly low but not surprising budget of \$500, which Lurie managed to secure via a quite questionable insurance claim he made after staging a phoney robbery in his own apartment where his beloved saxophones were supposedly stolen. Considering that James Bidgood created a kaleidoscopic Uranian universe in his mere apartment for his high-camp queer masterpiece *Pink Narcissus* (1971) and Apollonian pornographic auteur Wakefield Poole achieved something nearly as grand with his experimental fag fuck flick *Bijou* (1972) long before Lurie assumedly thought he had a bright idea while stoned to make a film in his flat about a space trip where he and his comrade are actually tripping, *Men in Orbit* is in no way cinematically revolutionary and is ultimately more plot-less and, in turn, more pointless than the most static of Andy Warhol's mostly botched pre-Morrissey cinematic experiments, yet it still has its charms as a sort of hyper hokey Super-8 abortion that demonstrates the inexplicable lows that those involved in the so-called 'No Wave' scene went to when it came to effortlessly defecating out what is nothing short of true disposable art. In fact, with the original film print being long lost, it was assumed for a period of time that Lurie's celluloid anti-love letter to true Aryan tech-

nological supremacy was forever lost, but a fittingly low-quality version of the work was eventually accidentally located at the end of a mislabeled 3/4" U-matic videotape that turned out to be compilation reel for a weekly Manhattan public access TV program called *Red Curtain* (1979-1983) and later released in 2012 as part of the offbeat sci-fi DVD set *Orphans in Space: Forgotten Films From the Final Frontier*. Needless to say, *Men in Orbit* will probably only appeal to Lurie fanboys, No Wave completists, and fanatical fans of lo-fi sci-fi. Admittedly, why I decided to take the plunge and actually watch the film is still somewhat of a mystery to me, but I have a suspicion that it was largely the result of me wanting to confirm my assumption that the No Wave scene was comprised of a collective of the most singularly lazy, decidedly derivative, and uniquely uncreative filmmakers that ever got together and formed a noted filmmaking movement.

In an assumed attempt to rationalize why *Men in Orbit* is so superlatively shitty and patently pointless, director Lurie stated in the fairly worthwhile documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by French documentarian Celine Danhier regarding the film and the curious artistic philosophy of the No Wave movement, "I hid the fact that I knew how to play the saxophone from people...and I would make these movies because nobody was doing what they knew how to do. If you knew how to do something it was like, 'No, no, no...you can't have any technique.' Technique was so hated. The painters were in bands, the musicians were painting or making films. I mean, nobody was doing what they knew how to do." Undoubtedly, if the film has any real discernible technique, it was provided by British filmmaker turned painter James Nares (*TV Faces*, *No Japs at My Funeral*), who acted as the cinematographer of the film (notably, Lurie previously appeared as a culture-cripping Roman dandy who proclaims to be Jesus Christ in Nares' sword-and-sandal No Wave epic *Rome '78* (1978)). Indeed, if there is any possible indication that *Men in Orbit* might be set in an atmosphere lacking in gravity like outer-space, it is the result of Nares' oftentimes cockeyed and spastic 'floating camera' technique, which he achieved by standing on a ladder while hovering over Lurie and filmmaker Eric Mitchell as they less than triumphantly trip in their piece of shit makeshift spaceship. In fact, it would probably be more logical to credit Nares as the true director of the film and Lurie as simply the star, 'co-writer' (obviously, the film was completely improvised and had nothing resembling a real physical script), and musical composer. In fact, in an interview conducted by filmmaker and media artist Andrea Callard (who unwittingly "saved" *Men in Orbit* from being lost forever after sending a tape featuring her own work and Lurie's film in one of the twenty-two boxes of materials she had given to New York University's Fales Library and Special Collections), Lurie would admit, "I probably put more thought into the sound than the camera. And what James Nares did was more than brilliant, achieving a weightless quality by floating the camera, constantly, above us. It was shot in Super 8." On top of that, Lurie more or less holds his co-star Mitchell responsible

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for forcing him to assemble the anti-NASA vanity piece in the first place, or as he also revealed to Callard, “The driving force behind all of this was Eric Mitchell, who basically demanded that everyone make a film. I doubt much would have happened without his unstoppable and sometimes annoying energy. He had an idea to open a theater using the films that we would all make.” Of course, as the innate incoherence and technical ineptness of *Men in Orbit*—a work that seems like the director’s half-hearted attempt at making a film with the same structure as the discordant degenerate jazz he composes—surely demonstrates, Lurie is at his best when doing virtually nothing like creating preposterously pretentious facial expressions and poses in his buddy’s films and not when assaulting the art of cinema by laughably attempting to degenerate it into the filmic equivalent of freeform jazz.

Notably, Lurie has become a recluse of sorts over the past decade or so because he has suffered debilitating neurological problems as a result of chronic Lyme disease, which was only further compounded by the fact that he had to leave the rotten Big Apple because an unhinged six-foot-three half-Korean/half-Jew ex-friend named John Perry began stalking him. Of course, one would never suspect this while watching *Men in Orbit*, which makes Lurie seem like a sort of exceedingly extroverted and buffoonish hipster party boy that loves nothing more than indulging in McDonalds and LSD with his friends. Indeed, the film hardly seems like it was created by an artist of any sort, as it is essentially an absurdly amateurish homevideo that feels like it was created solely to entertain the director’s hipster friends. In terms of political messages, the film makes a fairly passive attempt to mock NASA and mainstream America’s Cold War obsession with the Space Race of 1955 through 1972, though I suspect Lurie would agree with his Hebraic hipster ‘spiritual father’ Norman Mailer when he wrote, “the real mission of the Wasp in history was not, say, to create capitalism, or to disseminate Christianity into backward countries. [...] It was to get the U.S. to the moon” (of course, one could much more easily argue that, as noted at the end of Uncle Adolf’s Bavarian bohemian junky poet mentor Dietrich Eckart’s classic posthumously published pamphlet *Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin: Zwiegespräch zwischen Hitler und mir* (1925) aka *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin: Dialogues Between Hitler and Me*, the real mission of the Jews in history is to destroy the world via the atom bomb and class warfare, among other things). Probably one of only a handful of people in the world that has the racially schizophrenic distinction of being both half Hebrew and half Welsh, Lurie still manages to look and act quite like his frog buddy Mitchell in *Men in Orbit* to the point where the viewer might confuse the two while watching the film. Despite being ostensibly brilliant and cultivated neo-beatniks tripping on the supposedly creativity-inspiring drug of LSD (which certainly acted as an inspiration to right-thinking writers like Ernst Jünger and Aldous Huxley), the two would-be-iconoclasts strangely manage to not say a single eloquent, intel-

ligent, or insightful thing during the entire film, thereupon making them seem like the all the more stupid and swarthy fathers of Beavis and Butt-head (of course, at least the latter two are devoid of pretense and have at least a tad bit of good old-fashioned prole charm and wit).

To write a detailed synopsis of *Men in Orbit* would be patently pointless, as the film is mainly comprised of the two leads, who seem hopelessly in love with one another and their own imagined witticisms, sitting in their big boy toy spacecraft and doing such marvelously mundane things as shaving, slurring words, giggling like preschool girls, pointlessly bickering with 'Mission Command,' and eating greasy McDonalds hamburgers in a slob-like fashion that would most certainly deeply offend modern-day hipsters, who tend to like to wear the coveted 'good guy badge' of partaking in veganism. Admittedly, I think it is most fitting that Lurie and Mitchell's 'inebriation' seems to begin to peak after takeoff and especially once the two vaguely delightful dullards have reached outer-space. When engaging in messy verbal diarrhea while in orbit, the two men spend more time heckling 'Mission Control' (Michael McClard) than admiring the view. In fact, the two autistic astronauts probably spend most of their times giggling like a Mexican schoolgirl whose brother just touched her nipple. In between shoving McDonalds hamburgers down their throats that they have hanging from a wall next to their seats in the cockpit of their spacecraft, Lurie and Mitchell also engage in 'avant-garde shaving' to ostensibly demonstrate they are real men who do real manly things. Of course, no film featuring John Lurie would be complete without the musician playing an instrument in an obscenely obnoxious fashion that is bound to alienate and/or inspire Fremdscham in most viewers. Indeed, while Lurie strums his git-fiddle in a merrily lackluster fashion, Mitchell delivers his most humorous dialogue when he ironically sings, "America is really great...I like Texas, that's where I come from." Via TV monitor, the boys also talk to their discernibly homely 'wives' (played by their then-real-life girlfriends Becky Johnston and Mary Lou Fogarty) in a manner that resembles a couple people plagued with 'trisomy 21' (which would most certainly be a great name for their spacecraft) attempting to flirt with one another. Strangely, after talking to their spouses, Lurie remarks, "I'm not sure if I want to go back or not" and his comrades concurs, replying, "I'm not sure myself either." Towards the end of the film, Lurie states in an overtly tongue-in-cheek fashion while smoking and eating junk food, "We're going to spend these last days of space as relaxed as possible." Unfortunately, Lurie and Mitchell's spacecraft does not pull a Space Shuttle Columbia style disaster in the end, which would have been the perfect way to conclude such a chaotic film.

As Andrea Callard would note in her introduction to her interview with John Lurie in regard to *Men in Orbit* and how the original print of the film is presumed forever lost, "It was not unusual in the 70s for Super 8mm filmmakers to cut and edit their original footage, handle it many times, then screen the re-

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sults using unpredictable projectors, without ever making prints or video copies. Keeping track of everything one made did not seem so important at the time. One just moved on to the next compelling idea.” Indeed, Lurie’s film, like many contemporary consumer goods, looks like it was made to be disposed of after only a few uses, yet it somehow lives on today, which is quite possibly the most strange thing about it (it should be noted that a number of classic No Wave films are either completely unavailable or assumed lost). In fact, Lurie seems so proud of the film that he actually went so far as to have it taken down from YouTube after filing a copyright claim, thus more than hinting that he no longer subscribes to the ‘no bullshit’ punk-beatnik ethos of his youth. I can only assume that Lurie is somewhat of a hypocrite as he stated in his somewhat recent interview with Collard regarding *Men in Orbit*, “It was great back then. It was all energy and ideas. There was no concern for money or credit. It was really pretty wonderful. Very soon after that everything changed for the worse.” Of course, Lurie should probably feel lucky that there are actually foolish people out there like myself who would dare to watch such a remarkably retarded piece of painfully schlocky Super-8 sub-twaddle. Notably, when asked in an interview with *Filmmaker Magazine* how he came up with the idea to shoot a sci-fi film in his apartment and how it was to act while high on LSD, Lurie got a little bit pissy and stated like a true art fag queen, “How did you come up for the idea is a question that really baffles me. Acting on LSD is not acting at all, is more the capturing of a weird event. Dock Ellis pitched a no hitter once on LSD but it is not something I would recommend to young actors take to improve their performance.” Indeed, “a weird event” is probably a good way to describe *Men in Orbit*, as it is hard to fathom that such a work was not only made, but is also still championed by the sort of shameless cultural parasites that like hanging out a modern art museums where images of erect horse cocks and unclad bull-dykes with mega-bushes are passed off as art. Considering that musician Arto Lindsay (who not surprisingly played guitar in Lurie and his brother Ethan’s jazz group *The Lounge Lizards*) once described it as, “one of the best movies ever made on the Lower East Side,” one must just assume that the film is simply one of the most longwinded inside jokes ever made, though I doubt Lurie intended to make it at the expense of both the No Wave scene and himself, which it ultimately accomplishes.

When everything is said and done, *Men in Orbit* ultimately proves to be a more tolerable experience than Lurie’s Jap-produced proto-reality-TV series *Fishing with John* (1991), as it is short and almost sweet and thankfully does not feature the *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984) star engaging in the pointless platitudes that he is arguably best known for. Additionally, the sci-fi featurette benefits from featuring an original quasi-punk and noise soundtrack as opposed to the sort of aesthetically aberrant avant-garde jazz music that one typically expects from proud negrophile Lurie. Indeed, arguably the greatest thing about watching *Men in Orbit* is that, if one did not know better, the viewer would

probably assume that Lurie is the sort of guy that likes drinking cheap beer while watching football and *Girls Gone Wild* videos as opposed to being a pathologically posturing neo-beatnik whose greatest contribution to film is being a mensch that has the dubious talent of looking simultaneously intricately bitchy yet pretentious in most of his major acting roles. A work that might be best described as a heterosexual hipster low-camp take on science fiction that semi-succeeds in its assumed objective of attempting to make space-travel seem hopelessly banal, the film ultimately seems like it features the most real and vulnerable depiction of Lurie to date, which is no small accomplishment considering that he seems like a fairly impenetrable guy. In that sense, *LSD* certainly seems to have some benefits, as it forced two of NYC's most perennially posturing and image-obsessed hipsters, Lurie and Mitchell, to take off their carefully constructed masks and do more than leaning against a wall while looking so tragically forlorn like they do in most of their acting roles. A stupendously stupid piece of passive-aggressive NASA-parodying, *Men in Orbit* is to Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) what the scribblings of Anton LaVey are to the philosophical hammering of Friedrich Nietzsche, as a cheap carny-esque sub-bastardization that does not even touch the surface of its progenitor yet still makes for a fleetingly entertaining experience. Of course, one of the film's greatest attributes is that Lurie—a hardly productive half-Hebrew hipster—is the ultimate anti-Faustian man and thus the idea of him becoming a brave astronaut is about as likely as Haiti becoming a world power or Austrian avant-garde Peter Kubelka directing a feature-length film with a linear plot and starring mainstream Hollywood actors.

-Ty E

LOVE IS THE DEVIL: STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT OF FRANCIS BACON
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John Maybury (1998)

Before becoming super pseudo-suave British secret agent James Bond in 2006 and having women all around the world swooning and wetting their panties over him, English leading man Daniel Craig (*Road to Perdition*, *Munich*) portrayed sub-literate gutter-grown hustler-like sodomites, or at least he did in the somewhat under appreciated film *Love Is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* (1998) directed by queer Brit auteur John Maybury, a man probably best known in America for directing the semi-interesting psychological thriller *The Jacket* (2005) starring Adrien Brody. A sort of experimental melodramatic biopic about gay Irish-born English figurative painter Francis Bacon and his dark and destructive romance with a young, uncultivated criminal thug from the East End of London, *Love Is the Devil* depicts in quasi-figurative fashion how the painter's torrid and torturous relationship would give birth to his greatest and mostly internally tormented artistic creations. Not unlike the men German New Cinema auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder would date, Dyer was in many ways Bacon's inferior and the former would develop a deep dependence for the latter that ultimately resulted in suicide when the painter became fed up with his tragic beau's needy behavior. Maybury's first feature-length work as a filmmaker, *Love Is the Devil* is not only an aesthetically audacious work that attempts to seamlessly synthesize Bacon's biographical details with the aesthetic essence of the painter's oeuvre, but also features a completely complimentary and fiercely foreboding original score by Japanese composer/actor Ryuichi Sakamoto, who got his start in film composing the score and acting in *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence* (1983) directed by Nagisa Oshima and would later earn an Academy Award and Grammy Award for his score for *The Last Emperor* (1987) directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Although it probably does not say much, *Love is the Devil* is certainly as fine and immaculate as biopics about artists come, though I doubt middle-aged Daniel Craig fangirls will enjoy this aesthetically apocalyptic and delightfully disconcerting flick that depicts nothing short of one artist's internal metaphysical hell. Based on the authorized biography *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* (1994) by the artist's personal friend Daniel Farson, *Love Is the Devil* depicts a decidedly degenerate yet undeniably hardworking painter who enjoyed dressing in drag as a flapper as a teen, spent his early adult years reading Nietzsche and supporting himself by petty theft and rent-dogging, and would ultimately develop into a world famous painter who rather enjoyed being buggered in the bum by low-class young men.

It is the year 1964 and proletarian petty criminal George Dyer (Daniel Craig) has just broken into a flat he plans to rob but he is clearly not a genius and after noticing what seem like thousands of visceral paintings, Hitler photographs, and pictures of various corpses that adorn the home, he becomes quite stunned and is

soon rather bizarrely greeted by the tenant, who appears slowly from a door and states in a rather stern fashion, "And who might you be? You're not much of a burglar, are you? Take your clothes off! Come to bed...and you can have whatever you want." The owner of the home is poor painter Francis Bacon (played by queer actor Derek Jacobi in a role Malcolm McDowell once displayed interest in taking on) and Mr. Dyer accepts the exceedingly effete artist's strange but generous offer. Ultimately, Bacon comes to love Dyer due to a combination of two seemingly contradictory qualities, 'amorality' and 'innocence.' While Dyer's sleazy urban peasant friends attempt to convince him that Bacon and his clique will "drop you like a ton of shit when they're done with you," the small-minded, small-time con believes he is in control and the one with the capacity to 'push the buttons' when it comes to his relationship with his much more quick-witted and callous partner. Of course, as Dyer learns soon enough, Bacon does not always give the intended response when one pushes his buttons. Bacon is a proud 'bottom' as demonstrated by his confession, "Submitting entirely to the service and pleasure of a dominant partner is, I find, a catharsis in that all responsibility is relinquished...every move is dictated. No decisions are your own. You exist solely for the service and pleasure of another man," but he also becomes a strong father-figure and mentor of sorts for Dyer, at least when the two are not engaging in sadomasochistic sex. Since the painter surrounds himself with pretentious art fags, fag hags, and bull-dykes (one of whom states she likes "carpet-munching and nothing else"), meager yet masculine Dyer is mostly rejected by Bacon's preposterously pompous 'Soho' clique. For example, photographer John Deakin (played by Karl Johnson, who is best known for his roles in Derek Jarman's *The Tempest* (1979) and *Wittgenstein* (1993)), whose photos Bacon based a number of his paintings on, is quite jealous of Dyer and even has the gall to snidely ask the small-time con, "still posing as a sodomite?" while in the company of numerous individuals at a bar. Of course, Bacon defends Dyer by pouring a cup of alcohol over Deakin's head and remarking, "Champagne for my real friends, real pain for my sham friends," but such uncommon loyalty between men from very different classes and cultural backgrounds does not last for long.

Naturally, like many one-sided relationships, breadwinner Bacon becomes rather weary of Dyer's needy dependence and begins cheating on his boyfriend and locking him out at night. After all, how could Bacon respect a man who does not understand the art of Jean Cocteau, let alone his own art? Somewhat paradoxically, as Bacon and Dyer's relationship deteriorates, the more the former begins to use the latter as the central subject of his paintings. As Bacon's friend Isabel Rawsthorne (Anne Lambton) notes, "The pictures of George are like exquisite love poems. You seem to put more into the work than the relationship itself and ultimately you suffer just as much." In terms of Bacon's philosophy of art, he remarks to Isabel, "There is no beauty without the wound. Lucifer was the most beautiful angel...that was his fatal flaw," and indeed, visceral pain and

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internal suffering become the hallmark of the artist's work. The more Dyer is rejected by his lover, the more he attempts to mimic Bacon's behavior, which includes treating handsome young twinkles to lavish dinners and gifts, and living a melancholy life of incessant alcoholism where a cure for a hangover is to merely imbibe yet again. To get Bacon's attention, Dyer plants his own marijuana in Bacon's house and calls the cops on him, thus resulting in the painter's arrest and causing him bad press. Of course, Dyer's actions only further push Bacon away, but the painter keeps painting his favorite subject. When both men travel to Paris in October 1971 for a retrospective of the painter's work at the Grand Palais, things take a predictable turn for the worse. On the eve of the retrospective, Bacon and Dyer argue with one another in a hotel room they share together and when the latter states, "I love you Francis," the painter replies with the sadistically snide remark, "Where do you get your slogans from George, off the television?" in what will be the final straw that breaks the camel's back for the destructive relationship. Needless to say, Dyer commits suicide by taking a killer cocktail of barbiturates and alcohol and Bacon, seemingly unphased by the tragic turn of events, continues to give the retrospective.

As a painter who once cited Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) as key catalysts to inspiring his own artistic creativity, it is only fitting that someone would direct an experimental biopic about Francis Bacon and luckily *Love Is the Devil* is a rather worthwhile one that neither sentimentalizes nor glorifies the artist, but portrays him as a patently perturbed individual whose infernal internal pain and sexual perversity were the very source of his rather grotesque genius. Clearly a cinematic work that was more influenced by painting, most specifically those of Francis Bacon himself, than actual cinematic works, *Love Is the Devil* is a painter's film and I say that as a cinephile and not as someone familiar with the film's subject's oeuvre. That being said, *Love Is the Devil* is certainly a rare cinematic work that, unlike contrived Hollywood works centering on famous creative individuals like *Amadeus* (1984) directed by Miloš Forman, *Basquiat* (1996) directed by Julian Schnabel, and *The Rum Diary* (2011) directed by Bruce Robinson, made me want to dig deeper into the subject's work. Indeed, I got the sense while watching *Love Is the Devil* that in some rather harsh and hermetic way that Francis Bacon's work embodies a certain discernible despair, chaos, and insanity of the Occidental soul and collective unconscious, specifically that of the British. As the late great British 'New Right' political figure, author, and painter Jonathan Bowden (a man who once told an interviewer to think of him as a "heterosexual version of Francis Bacon") once wrote about Mr. Bacon in his book *Skin*, "Francis Bacon's work . . . is an attempt to find an image that will explain the 20th century to itself. His support for the Right, on the other hand, is an attempt to further the artistic process. Basically, if the Right guarantees inequality, as it does, then the distinctiveness of the artistic personality is preserved. The fragility of the artistic

ego is safeguarded by the social inequality that the Right safeguards. In short, the Right guarantees the importance of an artist, his inherent superiority, by virtue of the fact that it upholds order. As a consequence, the artist always prefers hierarchical inequality to humanitarian anarchy—as Louis-Ferdinand Céline once put it.” Indeed, Bacon was certainly a dictator of emotions who understood power and inequality and who ruled his friends, most notably George Dyer, with an iron-fist that ultimately resulted in both aesthetic and literal deaths. Not just a biopic about a famous artist, *Love Is the Devil* is also a psychodrama about the forsaken artistic soul and is thus mandatory viewing for anyone with an interest in 20th century Occidental art and/or a love of cinema as an art.

-Ty E

HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER
HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER

John McNaughton (1986)

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer is an indisputable classic of the unofficial serial killer sub-genre. The film is based on the sick escapades of real life serial killers Henry Lee Lucas and Ottis Toole. Both of these disturbed and all around fucked up individuals easily rank as two of the most infamous serial killers to grace the asphalt roads of the United States. Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer is actually tamer in regards to the real criminal acts of the two portrayed serial killers. The dialogue featured in Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer is sparse yet brilliant. One of my favorite lines happens when Becky, sister of Ottis and love interest of Henry, asks Henry "Did you really kill your mama?" Henry admits he did kill his mother during this conversation and states, "Yeah. I killed my mama. One night. It was my 14th birthday. She was drunk, and we had an argument. She hit me with a whiskey bottle. I shot her. I shot her dead." Somehow Henry forgets how he killed his mother in this same conversation. I dare anyone else to find another serial killer film with such genius dialogue and conversations. Surprisingly, Henry is not the most deranged of characters in Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer. Ottis is into murder, homosexuality, and sadomasochistic incest. He spends his days drinking beer and kicking in TV screens. Ottis Toole, despite his lack of humanity, is no doubt a true American. Henry and Ottis have a good serial killer relationship at first, but mental illness is bound to make one of these fellows snap. Henry is forced to put a little disciplinary action on Ottis that has deadly results. The music featured in Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer is a sort of eerie corny style that parallels the feeling of the overall film. Despite the film's lack of budget, all of the artistic variables add up right. There is nothing more soothing than when Henry and Ottis drive down the road as the score of Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer powers the scene. Henry and Ottis are the real Night Stalkers. Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer is a classic and masterpiece of the horror genre. It is a film that follows the habits of a real nomadic serial killer in pathetic depth. Serial killers aren't mystical geniuses with some type of black magic power. Most of them are white trash individuals that were abused as children and of course latent homosexuals. I salute Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer director John McNaughton for directing such a sick and solid film.

-Ty E

WILD THINGS

John McNaughton (1998)

The femme fatale is a dying breed in today's cinema world. One reason could be that Hollywood has cowered to the demands of feminists (and of course Hollywood is full of feminists) that lack a certain degree of much needed estrogen. Another reason could be that Hollywood prefers women to lack the manipulative genius of the femme fatale. Hollywood usually prefers beautiful women to be mindless whores that dye their hair bleach blonde to reek the benefits of a wall street investor that needs a trophy wife. Despite the lack of contemporary films featuring the much sought after femme fatale, Hollywood offers us one or two brilliant performances by sociopathic woman each decade. The 1998 film *Wild Things* features a new type of femme fatale that deserves to be seen. The femme fatale made herself best known in the legendary low budget film noir films. Of course, Vamps have been around since the early years of the silent era. Also, one cannot forget about Louise Brooks' seductive performance in G.W. Pabst's German masterpiece *Pandora's Box* (1929). These films were aesthetically dark as the hearts of the female leads featured in them. The film *Wild Things* changes the darkness of the film featuring the femme fatale and sets it in sunny Florida. The setting of the film is beautiful from the get with an array of "wild things" such as carnivorous alligators and sexually decadent heiresses. *Wild Things* is easier on the eyes than most wild life nature documentaries. Women aren't the only ones to use their sexual talents to their advantage. In *Wild Things*, Matt Dillon plays a High school guidance counselor who is known as the man that has fucked every woman in town. Although Dillon's character lacks the grace and charm that Montgomery Cliff displayed in *The Heiress* (1949), his character still can get what he wants from women to a certain degree. Kevin Bacon also plays a man that uses female style conspiring techniques to obtain a life of pure pleasure and fun in the sun. Let's just say that *Wild Things* is a film full of Femme Fatales (and their male counterparts) battling it out to get as much as they can with their criminally minded scams. It is a given that *Wild Things* is a film full of eroticism and controversial sexuality. I never thought that I would see Kevin Bacon videotaping two lesbians (Neve Campbell and Denise Richards) making out in a pool. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Bacon also have a moment in *Wild Things* that borders on the homoerotic. The femme fatale has always been a woman which seem to have certain lesbian inclinations. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the male equivalent would be treading through a similar swampy Florida water. Sexual perversion has always been a common trait of the criminally minded. *Wild Things* was directed by Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer director John McNaughton. Like the masterpiece that is *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, *Wild Things* features unintentional (or possibly intentional?) comedy throughout. Also like McNaughton's realist serial killer romp, *Wild*

WILD THINGS

Things has an atmospheric soundtrack that makes the viewer “comfortable” until the films conclusion. John McNaughton may not be the most technical or artistic of directors, but he knows how to put together a more than competent film. Wild Things is a threesome of sadistic crime and erotic passion. I came into the film expecting a piece of typical Hollywood trash and was presented with a truly “thrilling” thriller. The cast played all their characters brilliantly and that includes Kevin Bacon (a man I have always had a certain superficial contempt towards). Going too in depth about the Wild Things storyline in this writing may spoil the many “wild” twists and turns throughout the film. This is a film that delivers what it advertises.

-Ty E

PREDATOR

John McTiernan (1987) Hollywood Aryan superman Arnold Schwarzenegger fucks up an ugly tentacle sporting (looking like dreadlocks) alien in the 1987 action, sci-fi, and horror film Predator. This film is like Apocalypse Now meets Aliens directed by Die Hard director John McTiernan (which it was). Predator follows a US Army Special Forces team as they blast away commie scum in a rebel camp. After wasting all the putrid Marxist garbage (except for an attractive exotic woman of course), they confront another conflict, a humanoid (looks like a guy wearing a costume) alien hunter.

When Arnold Schwarzenegger's character Dutch says, "If it bleeds, we can kill it," he was not speaking a lie. This quote is one of the most poetic lines to ever be spoken in film history (or maybe just the action genre). Arnold Schwarzenegger is the only person man enough to take on the alien predator. Governor Arnie can't even take on illegal aliens.

Predator is another film produced by action producer Joel Silver. Silver is a Jew that loves to produce action films where big scary Aryan men kill tons of people and blow stuff up. In the end, these Nazi butchers are heroes. Whether it be Schwarzenegger in Commando or Bruce Willis in Die Hard, Joel Silver put up the money that confirmed his belief in Aryan supremacy. Predator is another one of Joel Silver's productions that features a gay subtext of sorts (see Commando). When one of the soldier Mac's friend dies he states sadly, "he was um... my friend." Mac turns from cold blooded killer to sad little girl in seconds. He finally says his last farewell to his friend with "Good-Bye, Bro." A scene that confirms that even big black bald killers can have special love for an equally sized white killer. The son of post World War II Austria, Schwarzenegger turns the Predator into a little shit talking bitch. His utilization of the woods calls back to the days of Schwarzenegger's Teutonic ancestors. Now Schwarzenegger is using the stereotype of his ancestry as a means of making millions of dollars. Arnold Schwarzenegger may just be an Aryan sellout.

-Ty E

DIE HARD
DIE HARD

John McTiernan (1988) Die Hard is the greatest action film ever made. It is entertaining, action packed, and full of all the bullshit stuff that makes action films American. Star Bruce "McClane" Willis shines as a stoic NYC cop who even makes a couple clever jokes. By far the best role I have seen Willis in. I have yet to see any of the other films in the Die Hard franchise. Maybe I should.

German terrorists make the ultimate capitalist villains in Die Hard. Terrorist leader Hans (played by English actor Alan Rickman) makes for a charismatic villain that that was never believable as a German (which makes Die Hard even better). Carl Winslow (Reginald VelJohnson) also stars as McClane's Cop walkie talkie bud. Carl Winslow's teen killing confessional is one of films most dramatic scenes. McClane even lets out a little empathy in response.

Limo driver Argyle is one of the best characters to ever grace Hollywood's silver screen. His character acts as the silly African American character that can't seem to hold a job because of his "goofiness." What was Hollywood trying to say? Later Argyle knocks out a super evil African American computer hacking terrorist. Was Hollywood also trying to say something here? Is Die Hard a film that is supposed to go against stereotypes but then ends up being more racist than the stereotypes themselves? Was Jaleel "The Urkel" White offered a role as a German Terrorist?

Hollywood films are embarrassingly incriminating. Die Hard is no different. Sadly, Hollywood is no longer capable of producing propaganda films that offer any type of character. Especially in regards to excellently executed stylized propaganda. Die Hard would have made Sergei Eisenstein proud.

-Ty E

ROLLERBALL

John McTiernan (2002)

I'm an action junkie, plain and simple. Most of these Hollywood churn-outs over the years have managed to entertain me. None of them can stand up to the classics, but I am always satiated with an ample dose of chases, explosions, and vulgarity. My adrenaline drive is what I need quick fixes for and this is why I go out of my way at times to watch something I don't expect anything from but merriment. From the director of the greatest action films of all time, Die Hard's John McTiernan has an illustrious and short filmography. Rather than quantity over quality, his short run has provided massive enjoyment for fans of any genre. In fact, I didn't even realize how many of my childhood favorites he directed. We got Predator, Die Hard, Last Action Hero, and Die Hard with a Vengeance. McTiernan has developed into a shallow reflection of what he used to be. Yes. I hate your film too. With a cast of Chris Klein, LL Cool J, and some dame with weird eyebrows, I found this film to be tipping the scale of depravity for its innocent viewers. Chris Klein is that annoying douche on American Pie. It's rather relieving to see him in a film where he wouldn't be a douche. Well, what do you know? He's still a douche, but this time in the future. LL Cool J is a horrible rapper and actor but somehow I am still drawn to his works as I am to Bruce Willis' blues album, but sadly his lack of acting talent isn't exploited. 10 minutes into the film, I discovered that they erased any socio-political ties that the original film held and just made an extreme sports film for the MTV gene pool. I find Rollerball (2002) to be in that same category of Extreme Ops. Don't remember that film? Me either. With the pleasant surprise of including Jean Reno in this film as the villainous Russian tycoon Petrovich, I found his character and charisma underused as I watched them run his character into the ground. While this film pertained to boldly debasing the Russian population, I'm surprised the cast wasn't crucified. Picture related. With all this in mind, expect a 15 minute action scene filmed entirely in night vision. That's correct. Of all the vapid ideas for visual excitement and yearning to think "outside the box", this has to be one of the worst ideas since Blade Runner 2. Rollerball (2002) is a film that should have never been made. It is one of the worst Hollywood films I've seen in ages. Boring, bland, and led by a cast of buffoons, this film's only achievement is to ruin John McTiernan's reputation.

-mAQ

DEATH IN JUNE: BEHIND THE MASK
DEATH IN JUNE: BEHIND THE MASK

John McTiernan (2005)

I can say with the utmost sincerity that my favorite musical outfit that is still in existence is the English neofolk group Death in June. I like different musical groups for a variety of reasons ranging from novelty to a deep emotional connection but Death in June is one of few groups whose entire aesthetic package I am completely enamored with. Although the Di6 has been around for over 30 years, the only remaining member of the group from their early days as a post-punk project is the charismatic and undeniably charming front man Douglas Pearce. In the 2006 documentary *Behind the Mask* Douglas P. gives his most revealing interview in regards to his personal life as well as the equally personal artistic influences behind Death in June. Due to Death in June's use of imagery associated with the Third Reich (on top of being of a shamelessly occidental cultural nature in general), the group has always been attacked (having shows picketed and canceled) by the kind of bourgeois white liberal types that read Mao Tse-tung whilst drinking decaffeinated pisswater at Starbucks which is hilariously ironic when you consider the early political backgrounds of the men behind Di6. Founding Death in June members Tony Wakeford and Douglas Pearce were originally in a punk group CRISIS which Pearce describes in *Behind The Mask* as a leftist Agit-prop project which had the conscious goal of being more extreme than the so called "New Left," a perverted political persuasion they felt was already too old and far from extreme.

During the beginning of *Behind the Mask* Douglas P. cleverly bastardizes one of Friedrich Nietzsche's most famous quote to fit his own experiences with the witty remark, "Once you truly look into the abyss you get a bit of the giggles." Pearce then goes on to discuss how he grew up in a dysfunctional post-World War II working-class English family where both of his parents hated each other, no doubt a critical influence on his fairly introverted personality and staunch individualism. Despite his Father being an English World War II veteran, Douglas P. developed an early fetishistic obsession with the bold aesthetics of Nazi Germany. When Pearce's Father found out about his son's romantic longing for figuratively bedding the enemy he was unsurprisingly enraged. Pearce even jokes in the documentary that he was a demon seed son sent to haunt his war torn Father. Douglas P. is not joking when he states during *Behind the Mask* in a matter of fact manner, "Every war has it's artistic consequences." Pearce's Father finally allowed his son to prove that he was being genuine in regards to his affection for Teutonic trinkets by allowing him to buy an unearthed German helmet, so long as little Doug promised to refurbish it to a like-new condition. After telling this anecdote in *Behind the Mask*, Douglas P. concludes the story with a "bit of the giggles" by mentioning that although he made his Father proud by fixing up his German helmet, he died soon thereafter.

It is obvious in *Behind the Mask* that out of all his family, Pearce only had strong feelings for his Father whose death left an emotional void that even seems to be apparent in the sorrowful 2010 *Death in June* single *Peaceful Snow* as expressed in the following lyrics: In the Peaceful snow As my father knows, I will go into the, into the snow

Original Di6 lineup Douglas Pearce, Tony Wakeford, and Patrick Leagas

During *Behind the Mask* Douglas P. reveals the obvious (at least to *Death in June* fans) when he mentions that the founding members of Di6 (Douglas P., Tony Wakeford, and Patrick Leagas) all carried a strong misanthropy, especially for the leftist punk rockers who they used to be in camaraderie with. All three original *Death in June* members had the goal of producing the musical mirror image of most people's ugliness. Douglas P. goes on to explain in *Behind the Mask* that he and his musical comrades realized how all the self-righteous leftists they knew treated people worse than any other group. The *Death in June* song *C'est Un Reve*, which is one of the most "controversial" musical pieces ever written by the group due to the song being about Gestapo "Butcher of Lyon" Klaus Barbie, was written as a bold political statement that there were worse "Barbies" in the French resistance. Douglas Pearce would also go on to say that despite being recognized as heroic freedom fighters nowadays, members of the French resistance killed around 250,000 of their own people after World War II. These kind of politically ambiguous statements by Pearce, along with Di6's use of Nazi Germany imagery, have given enough evidence for leftist types to pathetically attempt to censor the beautiful music of the group as being of a fascist nature which in their true believer eyes makes it non-art that must be destroyed. Nazi imagery or not, the typical cultural Marxist turd would consider *Death in June* fascist for the mere fact that their music is pro-occidental and a true expression of the European soul and not deracinated noise (the true soundtrack to culture-less multi-"culturalism"). Another aspect of *Death in June* that infuriates the band's detractors is that the group produces truly revolutionary and inspirational musical which gives artistic credence to "fascists."

Another thing that causes discommod in the enemy combatants of *Death in June* is the fact Douglas Pearce is an open homosexual. Flaunting his racial chauvinism and gayness, Douglas P. once stated, "I prefer to suck white uncircumcised cocks of a certain age so I suppose that rules out quite a few races and religions in one huge act of sexual discrimination. However that's natural selection for you. It follows on that, of course race is important to me." No doubt, Pearce's statement would cause a public outcry of race hate and confusion had he stated that for the mainstream media in the United States. I cannot imagine some repulsive homo singer like Michael Stipe ever actively displaying the personal integrity that Douglas P has always diffused. *Death in June* is also often labeled fascist because of the groups use of a grinning SS totenkopf skull. To show his proud commitment to Euro-libertinism, Douglas P. recently altered

DEATH IN JUNE: BEHIND THE MASK

the Di6 totenkopf to include a gay rainbow flag in the background. During *Behind the Mask*, Pearce admits that he is fond of men that are old enough to be his Father. At age 20 Douglas P. was with a man that 58 years old who tagged along with him at punk shows and chatted with Captain Sensible of the legendary punk group *The Damned*. I cannot help but think that Pearce's odd fetish for bugging old men is the dejected result of longing for the Father he lost at a very tender age. I make music videos for a certain American neofolk project that will go unnamed. The singer of this group told me that when he saw a clip of Douglas Pearce piercing an elderly man's anal staircase in a gay porno movie, he was left in a state of distressed melancholy for months to cum. Despite being repelled by circumcised kosher sausages, Douglas P. played a *Death in June* show in Israel where he notoriously stormed the stage waving an Israeli star of David flag with a Di6 flag totenkopf appearing in the background. Only a man of refined charm could get away with flaunting a totenkopf (the SS symbol probably most associated with death in concentration camps) in front of the most fanatical of Jewish nationalists in their own holy land.

Despite being worth more than it's weight in gold to *Death in June* fans, the *Behind the Mask* documentary dvd has fairly barebones production values but I say this without complaint. The documentary is almost entirely made up of Douglas P. elegantly lurking around in macabre poses, resembling a phantom German soldier in his iconic mask and military fatigues. *Behind the Mask* also features snippets of Pearce in typically somber and snowy settings bringing visions in my mind of a ghost from the battle of Stalingrad, often making the documentary feel like a collage of Di6 album covers. By the end of *Behind the Mask*, I was astonished to realize that Di6 probably would have never existed had Douglas P. not engaged in acid trips as the saintly sinner singer credits his drug experimentation as opening his mind's eye to realizing that creating art would be appropriate path to take in his life. During *Behind the Mask* Douglas P. also mentions how ex-*Death in June* member David Tibet told him he would probably have severe mental problems had he not found his fate in music. After 30 years of playing live, Pearce has also pretty much confirmed that he will no longer be doing live shows which is certainly a heartbreaking and unimaginable realization for Di6 fans. During *Behind the Mask*, Pearce makes it very clear that he sees anonymity as one of the greatest virtues stating, "you can do a lot behind the scenes." In the documentary Douglas P. also mentions how the Japanese Samurai (Japanese nationalist Yukio Mishima being one of his favorite writers and a huge influence on Di6 Lyricism) virtue of secrecy also provided him with a critical influence in reinforcing his ability to find a warm well being during cold seclusion whilst sticking to the rule "many enemies bring much honor." As the great German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once stated, "A man can be himself only so long as he is alone."

Despite the fact that *Death in June* is the musical group that essentially prompted

the neofolk movement (with their revolutionary album *Brown Book*) in Europe, Pearce states in *Behind the Mask* regarding his albums that he does not "put them in those ghettos (of generic genre labels)." Douglas P. clearly articulates in his typically eloquent manner that upon finishing every *Death in June* album in the studio, his majestic musical creations end up being a magical surprise as he allows his organic occidental nature to unconsciously conjure up something that is truly "neofolk" instead of attempting to assemble the same generic formula like a lot of musicians do. Even after over 30 years of Di6 albums, Pearce is still able to reinvent his völkisch music with each subsequent album as he once again proved with his newest effort *Peaceful Snow*, a completely deconstructed masterpiece of love and murder featuring only his haunting voice and a piano. Douglas P. has hinted that *Peaceful Snow* is probably the final chapter in the marvelous Di6 song saga. At the end of *Behind the Mask*, Pearce states that he hopes to produce two new *Death in June* books in the near future: An autobiography (a Di6 biography was recently released but it is only available in the Italian language) and a scrapbook which I anticipate almost more than a new Di6 album. Despite being literally behind the mask most of the documentary, *Behind the Mask* is truly the most revealing (aside from his music) priceless package of Pearce anecdotes. In media interviews, he often seems slightly agitated by the ignorant nature of many interviewers who lack the artistic sensitivity that a songwriting genius of Pearce's caliber deserves. *Behind the Mask* was shot in the most appropriate place for a Douglas Interview session at 40 feet below the surface of a New York City skyscraper, giving the Di6 poet the perfect atmosphere to express himself in the solace of secrecy that he has always found comfort in. If there is ever another revolutionary renaissance in Europe, the leadership will no doubt take metapolitical influence from *Death in June* just as Adolf Hitler and Zionist founder Theodor Herzl were influenced by the operas of Richard Wagner. Like all great art, *Death in June* purifies the soul and inspires in a way that no Hollywood film or modern major record album ever could.

-Ty E

BIG WEDNESDAY
BIG WEDNESDAY

John Milius (1978)

While I spent almost a decade fucking up public property with my skateboard, own a surfer style longboard that I mess around with sometimes, and have lived at the beach for a good portion of my life, for some reason I never got around to learning how to surf and after watching the obscenely underrated cult item *Big Wednesday* (1978) directed by proud right-wing Hebrew John Milius (*Dillinger*, *Red Dawn*), I now realize that it is one of the single greatest regrets of my life. Indeed, after recently getting around to watching the film for the first time this month, I can say without exaggeration that it is probably one of the most, if not the most, underrated and obscenely overlooked films of the New Hollywood era, but of course it was probably considered to be too 'reactionary' for people at that time of its initial release since it portrays hippies as gleeful drug-addled automatons, features an extremely likeable and sympathetic all-blond Aryan cast, was inspired by ancient Greek and Norse mythology, does not feature any gratuitous sex scenes, and does not attempt to make any sort of heavy-handed leftist political statements about the Vietnam War (which Milius notably attempted to fight in, but was denied entry into the Marine Corps due to having chronic asthma). Originally expected to be a huge box office hit by a number of Milius' filmmaker friends at the time, including a fairly young Steven Spielberg, who somewhat absurdly described it as, "AMERICAN GRAFFITI meets JAWS," the film was a huge flop and was ruthlessly trashed by all the predictable mainstream leftwing film critics, who probably had a hard time sympathizing with a bodacious brigade of shamelessly masculine happy-go-luck blond beast beach rebels that makeup what is undoubtedly a modern-day West Coast Männerbünde. Admittedly, Milius' film is somewhat like a sort of surfer equivalent to *American Graffiti* (1973), albeit a whole lot less lame and more subversive in terms of spirit. Directed by a rightwing Jew who has proudly described himself as "Zen Fascist" and, according to Arnold Schwarzenegger's autobiography, once declared "There is only one Nazi on this team. And that is me. I am the Nazi," when Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis bitched that he did not want to cast the Austrian actor as the eponymous lead *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) because he thought he was a "Nazi," *Big Wednesday* is a fairly simple yet highly rewarding coming-of-age film with unwavering testicular fortitude that reveals in a somewhat melodramatic way the fairly pathetic fact that some peoples' lives reach their peak when they are only in their late-teens and early-twenties. Set over a twelve year period beginning during the summer of 1962 and concluding during the 'Great Swell of '74' when the protagonists give their swansong to surfing during an eponymous day when the waves reach upwards of 20 feet, the film is undoubtedly Milius' closest thing to an auteur piece as a work that was largely based on his and his co-writer Dennis Aaberg's personal experiences as Malibu

surfers. Seamlessly adding Arthurian overtones to largely autobiographical anecdotes, Milius' rather entrancing cult flick features a hero's journey with a sort of Nietzschean theme about the 'Eternal Return' and the cyclical (as opposed to linear) nature of history and how each generation produces a group of sort of surfer aristocrats and bluebloods of the beach that act as influential surfer gods to the younger generation, who ultimately replace them with their own surfer royalty when it is their turn to rule the beach. Of course, as the film somewhat sentimentally demonstrates, the best thing a man can hope for is to leave a legacy. Indeed, the lead protagonist might be a dipsomaniacal lumpenprole that makes his living cleaning the pools of anally retentive people that probably think he is poor white trash, but among surfers he is a legend whose legacy simply speaks for itself.

While Milius—a mensch that hardly looks like he could have ever made for an apt model for an Arno Breker statue—has described his reasoning for casting tall, muscular, and blond actors as being because he wanted the protagonist to look traditionally “heroic,” there is good historical reasoning for having men of such an overtly Aryan physique as the leads, as they are symbolic of Southern California's German Wandervogel and Naturmensch roots and the fact that Germans immigrants would ultimately play a crucial cultural influence on both the surfer and bohemian/hippie way of life. Indeed, 60 years before long-haired blond surfer dudes and their equally unclad lady friends were living a radical communal way of life on the beaches of Southern California during the late-1960s and early-1970s, Teutonic novelist Hermann Hesse (Siddhartha, Steppenwolf), whose literary works would ultimately have a huge influence on the counterculture movement, met four longhaired sandal-sporting Wandervogel members in 1907 who took him to their commune in Ascona, Switzerland where he received a natural cure for his debilitating alcoholism. Naturally, I bring up Hesse to illustrate the deep roots of the Wandervogel movement and how it went on to influence many individuals and subcultures that have never even heard of it. The Wandervogel movement would also influence the proto-hippie Nature Boys of California, who were largely German immigrants and were promoting a life of veganism, nudism, and beards and long-hair during the 1910s. Of course, the Völkisch artwork of Fidus (aka Hugo Reinhold Karl Johann Höppener)—a Wandervogel member who lived in a proto-hippie commune and who once served a prison sentence for public nudity (in fact, his mentor, German Symbolist painter Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach, bequeathed him with the name “Fidus” aka “faithful” after he served said prison sentence)—would ultimately inspire the psychedelic aesthetic of both surfer and counterculture art during the 1960s.

As a coming-of-age flick that depicts a group of young surfer friends who ultimately begin succumbing to more hedonistic vices, *Big Wednesday* depicts what is arguably the last ‘innocent’ generation of surfers before the age of criminally-inclined rock star surfers like Bunker Sreckels and Rick Rasmussen, who both

BIG WEDNESDAY

joined the surfer division of the 27 Club and died particularly pathetic deaths before they even reached their thirties. Notably, Spreckels (real name Adolph Bernard Spreckels III), who was a German-American that claimed to “come from a Viking line of Teutons” via his paternal line (he was the great-grandson of German-born sugar baron Claus Spreckels), was the stepson of Clark Gable and experimental filmmaker Kenneth Anger would pay tribute to his legendary Luciferian spirit and Aryan handsomeness with the 4-minute short *My Surfing Lucifer* (2007). While *Big Wednesday* depicts a group of young surfers that were from the generation before heroin and shitty rock music began plaguing surfer greats like Spreckels and Rasmussen (who were both involving in drug dealing), it is clear that these characters, who are perfectly played by leads Jan-Michael Vincent, William Katt, and Gary Busey, have the same sort of innately rebellious spirit, as sort of modern-day Norse Berserkers that are prone to trance-like fits of fury while both on and off their surfboards. Making up a sort of unconscious Malibu Männerbünde as an eccentric collective of inordinately loyal surfer comrades with their own set of rules, rituals, routines, and even lingo, the sunbaked beach boys of the film reveal that, although surfing is a fairly individualistic activity that is in stark contrast to popular collectivist-minded team sports like baseball and football, personal relationships are certainly one of the most important and memorable aspects of the lifestyle. Indeed, as an ex-skater, I can certainly say that I have more fond memories of the many people that I skated than the best tricks I ever landed. Somewhat unfortunately, I can also attest that, not unlike the surfers in Milius’ films, some of the greatest skaters that I was friends with also become some of the biggest fuck-ups and degenerates when they reached their late teen and adult years, but I guess that is what one should expect from individuals derive fun from intentionally putting themselves in various dangerous life-or-death situations.

Next to his buddy Paul Schrader, there has probably never been another screenwriter who went on to have such a successful career as a filmmaker as John Milius, who most notably penned the best lines of dialogue from *Dirty Harry* (1971) and its first sequel *Magnum Force* (1973) and received an Academy Award nomination for his screenplay for *Apocalypse Now* (1979). Originally written by Milius in 1969 under the somewhat less tempting title *The Psychedelic Soldier* (he was later inspired to change the title to its current name to mock a popular hippie button of the late-1960s that read “Nirvana Now”), Milius is the man responsible for the most memorable lines of *Apocalypse Now*, including “Charlie don’t surf!” and “I love the smell of napalm in the morning.” Needless to say, watching *Big Wednesday* sometimes feels like the cinematic equivalent of hanging out with the friends of *Apocalypse Now* character Lance B. Johnson, who notably rides some waves after his new pal Lieutenant Colonel Bill Kilgore covers him from enemy bullets by having helicopters drop napalm on a surrounding gook village. Of course, the film also deals with the issues of the Vietnam War and

how one of the surfers dies in battle, but it never resorts to petty political sloganeering, emotionally manipulative sermonizing, or pathetic melodramatics, as the characters deal with war as if it is a normal fact of life. Featuring special water cinematography by innovating surfer George Greenough, who also did camera work for Bruce Brown's classic surf doc *The Endless Summer* (1966) and Peter Weir's early masterful metaphysical mystery *The Last Wave* (1977), *Big Wednesday* is certainly as technically accurate and innovative as fictional surf movies come, yet you do not have to give a shit about epic 20-foot waves to enjoy it.

Sentimentally narrated by lovably ugly Aryan actor Robert 'Freddy Krueger' Englund at the beginning of each of the film's four main chapters, *Big Wednesday* begins with a segment entitled "THE SOUTH SWELL – Summer 1962" where the viewer is introduced to the main three protagonist, or as the rather nostalgic unseen narrator states, "I remember the three friends best: Matt, Jack, Leroy. It was their time. They were the big names then. The kings. Our own royalty. It was really their place...and their story." Although a seeming loser in just about every other aspect of his life, Matt Johnson (Jan-Michael Vincent in a most fitting and perfectly played role)—a character inspired by a real-life surfer named Lance Carson who suffered from alcoholism for most of his life and who was inducted into the International Surfing Hall of Fame in 1991—is the greatest surfer in town and the uncontested 'king' of his beach, 'The Point.' As an anally retentive yet inordinately mature and stoic chap, Jack Barlowe is certainly Matt's total opposite, yet they are still best friends and the best surfers in town. Although not nearly as pathetically self-destructive as the lead protagonist, Oklahoma-born beach hillbilly Leroy 'The Masochist' Smith (Gary Busey) is easily the most unhinged yet simultaneously most jovial of the trio and he wastes no time in hassling a couple young surfers for a board at the beginning of the film after a quite hungover Matt misplaces his own. As Leroy's playfully authoritarian behavior demonstrates, the beach has its own set of unofficial rules and those individuals (e. g. 'Hodads') that do not follow them must pay the price. At the entrance of the Point is a sort of Lovecraftian gate in ruins that hints that a great civilization once thrived there, but now blond beast barbarism rules the beach and Matt, Jack, and Leroy rule by example with their oftentimes ethereal and entrancing wave-riding. In fact, Matt is such a legendary figure among young Malibu surfers that they can only seem to recognize him when he is actually surfing, as if he is too meek and pathetic looking to impress anyone otherwise. Unfortunately for the trio and their equally blond friends, they are at a point in their lives when their carefree existences are about to be threatened and they soon must come to accept that not everything in life is fun and games, even if you happen to be one of the greatest and most radical surfers of your generation.

If the protagonists of the film have any sort of all-wise father figure and men-

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tor, it is a burly bearded beach bum named 'Bear' (Sam Melville), who is a Korean War veteran that seems to have no life of his own and instead lives vicariously through Matt and his friends. When Matt and his friends have parties, Bear also symbolically hangs outside the entire time, as if he knows he is too old to be truly a part of the group and thus always stays slightly off to the side. Bear's greatest claim to fame is that he used to regularly surf crazy waves in Hawaii and, as he states like an old wise man recalling his experiences, "Once I rode it alone in Point Surf at Mākaha at 20 feet." As a sort of compulsively cerebral yet carefree surfer priest/philosopher/poet who only gets pissed when someone or something impedes on his surfer lifestyle, Bear stoically declares to some young kids in regard to the innately individualistic nature of surfing, "You're always alone, anyway. That's the test of a surfer to ride alone. You shouldn't have to depend on anybody but yourself." As his words and actions reveal, Bear considers himself a sort of perennial surfer, even if he is never depicted riding a board once in the entire film. Bear does not believe that the leads have truly lived up to their full potential yet and as he tells the kids while working on a longboard in regard to Matt and his friends' ultimate Arthurian mission, "It'll be a swell so big and strong it will wipe everything that went before it. That's when this board will be ridden. And that's when Matt, Jack and Leroy...they could distinguish themselves. That's the day they can draw the line." Of course, the longboard is symbolic of Excalibur and, not unlike like King Arthur with the legendary magical sword in the stone, Matt is the only one that will be able to use it, but only on the right day at the right time when god has blessed him with the appropriate waves that will challenge both his courage and talent. Naturally, both Jack and Leroy will join him in surfing these waves on the eponymous big day, but it is ultimately alpha-surfer Matt that will reach the deepest and fullest form of transcendence, as he is the greatest hero of his generation.

While Leroy pretty much seems to be willing to fuck anything that moves so long as it has a warm wet hole and thus does not seem like the sort of fellow that could settle down and share his life with a woman for any notable period of time, both Matt and Jack soon acquire girlfriends. Indeed, while Matt hooks up with a supposedly lecherous female surfer and tomboy named Peggy Gordon (Lee Purcell) who is just as tough as the boys and who will ultimately act as the lead protagonist's much needed backbone, Jack hooks up with a cutesy Chicago-bred diner waitress that just moved to the area named Sally (Patti D'Arbanville), who states to her new beau in regard to the stark contrast between sunny Southern California and her ex-hometown, "It's really different here. Well...back home, being young was...just something you do until you grow up. And, well, here...here it's everything!" While everything seems to be going great for the protagonists after they have a party at Jack's mother's house where they beat up a gang of proudly arrogant party-crashers from Burbank, reality smacks them in the face when they decide to travel south of the border to Mexico to engage in mindless

hedonistic activities and ultimately realize that they are not as tough or brave as they thought when they are out of their element and left vulnerable to the unpredictable hostilities of the rather unforgiving third world. Indeed, aside from Peggy revealing to Matt that she is pregnant and plans to keep the baby while she is absurdly chugging down a can of cheap Mexican beer (!), the boys get in an ugly bar fight involving knives and bullets, not to mention the fact that Jack's prized car is practically left totaled. Not surprisingly, self-described masochist Leroy is the only one that enjoys the trip and he even impulsively marries a teenage Mexican girl, though he ultimately leaves her behind.

As the narrator states at the beginning of the second chapter entitled "THE WEST SWELL – fall 1965" in regard to the decidedly dispiriting spirit of time, "The summers passed with each year. I don't seem to remember them anymore. I remember the fall and the coming of winter. The water got cold. It was a time of the west swell. A swell of change. A swell you usually rode alone." Always the mature and disciplined friend in the group, Jack annoys his comrades by joining the enemy and becoming a lifeguard at their surf spot. In fact, while at work, Jack even unwittingly yells at Matt for sleeping on the beach after assuming he is just some random drunken wino. Of course, Matt is indeed drunk and Jack is forced to punch him in the face and banish him from the beach that he was once the king of after he causes a car crash while playing around in the street and pretending to be a matador that dodges cars instead of bulls. To make matters worse, all the boys have received draft notices for the Vietnam War, hence Matt's perpetuation state of inebriation. Somewhat ironically, while his protégés have more or less hit rock bottom and no longer speak to one another, Bear has become a successful surf store owner with his own surfboard brand and he is getting ready to get married, so naturally he becomes quite disheartened when Matt randomly shows up at his shop and pathetically declares that he no longer wants to be a surf hero, complaining like a true loser, "I don't want to be a star. My picture in magazines, having kids look up to me. I'm a drunk, Bear. A screwup. I just surf because it's good to go out and ride with friends. I don't even have that anymore." Of course, big burly Bear refuses to listen to such pathetic crybaby talk and sternly states to Matt, "It's just not going right, and you can't understand it. Growing up's hard, ain't it, kid? Those kids do look up to you, whether you like it or not." While Matt is convinced to get serious about surfing again and he and Jack subsequently make up at Bear's wedding after symbolically sharing a swig of cheap liquor together, the happy reunion is unfortunately short-lived, as all the boys are forced to face the draft board and not all of them are successful in their attempts to scam their way out of fighting in the Vietnam War. Indeed, while Matt manages to dodge the draft by pretending to be a barely mobile cripple with an antique Forrest Gump-esque leg brace and Leroy gets out by merely exaggerating his madly masochistic tendencies after a darkly humorous encounter with a military psychologist played by Joe Spinell

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that ultimately has him strapped to a stretcher and hauled off to a loony bin, Jack and their mutual friend 'Waxer' (Darrell Fetty), who unsuccessfully pretended to be a flamboyant homo to get out of military service, are drafted, with the latter ultimately dying in the war.

As the coarse horse-voiced quasi-commie agitator Robert Zimmerman once arrogantly yet rightly sang "The Times They Are a-Changin'" and working-class hero Matt is certainly not happy with it, especially after going to a local restaurant with his baby-momma Peggy to get a cheeseburger and being told by a repulsively effete long-haired burnout hippie server, "We're off that trip. We don't serve animal hostilities. Dead flesh." While Matt yells at the hippie server in a threatening manner, "I'm not your brother...and turn down that crappy music," he must live with the fact that blacks are burning down American cities and that spoiled white hippie degenerates have turned rebellion into a lame form of slave-morality-based social signaling where the weak and meek are worshiped and all forms of Occidental traditional and morality are mindlessly mocked and demonized by people that lack the self-discipline and moral fortitude to even be able to uphold such values. Not surprisingly, Matt and his friends are fairly apolitical individuals that care more about their friends and personal lives than abstract political ideas, yet it is quite obvious that they loathe hippies and are disillusioned with they way that the country is heading. All of this occurs during the third chapter of the film entitled "THE NORTH SWELL – winter 1968." After attending the premiere of a surf film entitled *Liquid Dreams* that leaves him somewhat upset when spectators mock a small excerpt of the surf movie that he appears in, Matt seems like he is totally done with surfing and he is only coerced into getting back onto his surfboard when Jack randomly comes back after serving in the Vietnam War. Indeed, instead of going to see his estranged girlfriend Sally, Jack immediately goes to the beach in his military uniform where he soon reunites with his best bud after playing with his pal and Peggy's toddler daughter Melissa. While Jack has a great time catching up and riding waves with Matt, he is startled upon going to visit his longtime girlfriend Sally and discovering that she has married someone else without even telling him. As the film hints in a less than subtle fashion, it seems that, for most people, life only gets shittier and shittier as the years pass, especially if you were a hot shit during your teenage and early adult years like Matt and his surfer homeboys. In tribute to their fall comrade Waxer—a lovable lunatic that wore a Nazi jacket and would ironically die in the Vietnam War wearing a lame looking American uniform—Matt, Jack, and Leroy drink some wine at his grave one night and pay tribute to his memory. Although a man of very few words, Matt breaks down and manages to articulate his brotherly love for his comrade and declares in memory of Waxer, "I'd just like to say...he was a good surfer...and a really great guy. He had a nice cutback. He rode the nose real well. He was kind of screwed up, they way he treated women...but he always got the one he wanted, so it doesn't matter any-

way, because he was just a good guy all the way around. He'd always give people waves. Just give them away. He'd always stick up for his friends in a fight. He wasn't worth a damn, but he was always right in there. I don't ever remember a day Waxer wouldn't go ride with his friends. Waxer was our friend. He was a little part of us. And we're gonna miss him." Of course, Matt's word somewhat epitomize the loyal brotherly spirit of the Männerbünde. After paying tribute to Waxer, the three friends go their separate ways.

The fourth and final chapter of the film is entitled "THE GREAT SWELL – spring 1974" and, as the narrator states at the beginning of this segment in a manner that makes him sound like a metaphysician of surfdom, "Who knows where the wind comes from? Is it the breathe of god? Who knows what really makes the clouds? Where do the great swells come from? And for what? Only that now it was time...and we had waited so long." As a result of a 'The Great Swell' that he and his friends have been virtually waiting their entire lives, Matt attempts to hunt down both Jack and Leroy, but he has no luck and eventually gives up. After failing to find his friends, Matt visits Bear at a pier at night to bring the bad news and is surprised when his mentor gives him his legendary Excalibur-like longboard. Indeed, after giving Matt the surfboard and joyously declaring, "She's yours man," Bear, who is clearly in a thoroughly inebriated state, breaks down and confesses to Matt during a rather vulnerable moment, "You know, all these years, there were damn few things that mattered. But the thing that mattered the most...was knowing how you three felt about me. That you respected me...and that you felt I had given you something." After giving him the unfortunate news that he could not locate Jack or Leroy, Matt attempts to talk Bear into coming home with him to eat dinner with and hang out with his family, but the discernibly dejected dipsomaniac becomes somewhat irritable and demands that he leave without him. Needless to say, Bear is considerably less grumpy the next day when he goes to the beach and discovers that the three friends have been reunited on a particularly sunny morning while gloriously monstrous 20 foot waves are brewing.

Ultimately, 'Big Wednesday' is the day where, as long ago prophesied by Bear, Matt and his friends figuratively draw the line in the sand and establish themselves as true surf legends that have reached their peak in terms of both personal and collective accomplishment. When Matt arrives at the Point on the big day, he notices seemingly hundreds of people watching from a cliff as lifeguards try in vain to force surfers to get out of the water since there is a rip tide and the waves are getting rather large and quite deadly. In a rather uplifting scene where the friends are both literally and symbolically reunited, Matt makes his way down the steps of the ruined beach gate and is delighted to discover that both Jack and Leroy are waiting for him at the bottom with their surfboards, as if they somehow had the intuition to be at the beach on exactly the same day at exactly the same time. At around the same time Matt arrives, Gerry Lopez (real-life Hawaii-born

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surf legend of the same name portraying himself)—the hottest new young surfer in the world—also shows up and proceeds to ride the same waves with the protagonist and his friends, though there is no real sense of rivalry between the men. Abandoning all forms of fear and hesitation, the all-blond trio bravely rides a series of very potentially deadly 20-foot waves while Bear watches from the beach with devout admiration, as if he were a father admiring the accomplishments of his grownup sons. Indeed, Matt and his friends are so entrancingly triumphant with their wave-riding that even professional surfer Lopez looks on with great respect and admiration, as if he did not expect to be surrounded by old dudes that couple keep up with him.

Of course, all good things must come to end and the trio decides to quit while they are ahead after Jack and Leroy are forced to bail their boards and pull Matt out of the sea after he has a terrible wipeout and injures his leg. After emerging from the ocean, a young blond surfer dude hands Matt his board and states to him in a meek and extremely humble fashion as if he were in the presence of a god, “This belongs to you. I’ll tell you what, that was the hottest ride I’ve ever seen. I just wanted to tell you that.” Somewhat symbolically, Matt gives the surfboard to the young man and states, “Keep it. If it ever gets big again, you can ride it,” thus signaling that the protagonist is passing on Excalibur to the next generation in what ultimately proves to be a somewhat bittersweet scene where the hero accepts the fact that his great lifelong journey is finally over and that he must retire to a life of domestic banality. Meanwhile, a younger surfer asks a rather jolly Bear if he surfs and he humbly replies in a somewhat humorous fashion, “Not me. I’m just a garbage man. See you around,” thus indicating that the master feels that his job is done when it comes to preparing Matt and his friends in terms of reaching their full potential and establishing an enduring legacy. After walking up the stairs of the beach entrance, Matt remarks to his friends, “Lopez. He’s as good as they always said he was” and Leroy replies “So were we.” After Matt remarks, “We drew the line,” he says before completely parting ways with Jack and Leroy, “keep in touch.” Of course, the titular ‘Big Wednesday’ session was the group’s swansong to surfing and it would almost seem blasphemous if they were to actually keep in touch as the trio has reached their zenith in terms of both surfing and their friendships.

Notably, in the Blue Underground featurette *Capturing The Swell* (2003), Big Wednesday director John Milius states regarding the commercial failure of his film and the ruthless reviews it received, “Oh, it was totally received horribly...attacked by every critic, you know. I was called a Nazi. I don’t know why I was called a Nazi, because I guess I was a surf Nazi [...] It was just totally lambasted and I was excoriated to the point where I remember taking a long walk one night, wondering if I should join the French Foreign Legion...but I didn’t.” Despite being an abject commercial and critical failure, Milius has described the cinematic work as being, “In many ways, it’s my most beloved movie,”

which is no surprise considering it is both his most personal and autobiographical cinematic work and surely a flick that is more timeless and artistically merited than his hits like the big Cold War agitprop cumshot *Red Dawn* (1984). Of course, despite being a failure at the box offices, *Big Wednesday* has developed a loyal following over the decades in both Europe and the United States and is now a beloved cult item that has outlived most of the degenerate leftist film critics that trashed it when it was initially released. In terms of celebrities, Quentin Tarantino of all people has described it as one of his favorite films, even though he hates surfers, or as he once stated himself as revealed in the book *Quentin Tarantino: Interviews* (1994), "I don't like surfers; I didn't like 'em when I was growing up. I lived in a surfing community, and I thought they were all jerks. I like this movie so much. Surfers don't deserve this movie." While Tarantino loathes real surfers, he is somewhat strangely quite fond of imaginary intergalactic surfing superheroes like the Silver Surfer, but I digress.

As someone that has spent a good portion of my life living at the beach, I probably have more direct personal experience with surfers than Tarantino, especially since I would oftentimes spend hours a day with them at local skateparks where they would typically ride longboards instead of regular sized skateboards, yet I loathed many of these individuals for quite different reasons than the repugantly pompous pop filmmaker. In fact, the reasons I disliked these individuals were for reasons that would probably influence Tarantino to like them (after all, like Tarantino, all these guys were proud potheads). Indeed, despite the fact that these dope-addled 'dudes' looked like stereotypical surfers in the sense that they usually had long blond hair, and wore tie dye shirts and hemp jewelry, they spoke a curious combination of old school surfer lingo and ebonics, listened to superlatively shitty gangster rap music, and suffered from the sort of profoundly philistine generic negrophilia that oftentimes occurs when a person with a fairly low IQ watches too much MTV. Of course, aside from possibly their rebellious spirits, the surfers of today are hardly representative of those depicted in *Big Wednesday*, which portrays a time when men were still men and ethno-masochism and xenophilia were hardly vogue (indeed, if the film were remade today, it would probably feature a Mexican protagonist that was good friends with a white tattoo-covered tranny and a jive-talking token negro). While just a guess, I am going to have to assume that the last generation of truly subversive surfers with testicular fortitude were probably the guys associated with Southern California punk/hardcore groups of the late-1970s through early-1980s like T.S.O.L. and Agent Orange. Like the character of Waxer in Milius' film, the band members in these groups and punks in these scenes would oftentimes use Nazi imagery as a means to piss people off. Naturally, these bands would also write sardonic songs relating to surfing like "Hang Ten In East Berlin" by D.I., which also makes satirical references to the Third Reich.

A pure-of-heart piece of shameless celluloid nostalgia that, at least visually

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speaking, feels like it was directed by the subversive surfer son of American realist painter Edward Hopper (though many of the breathtaking ocean and landscape scenes reminded me of the paints of 19th-century German Romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich), *Big Wednesday* is true masterful proletarian cinematic art in the way that none of the Soviet commie filmmakers could really figure out (incidentally, in *Red Dawn*, American prisoners imprisoned at a Soviet concentration camp are forced to watch Sergei Eisenstein's anti-Teutonic/anti-Nazi/anti-Catholic epic *Alexander Nevsky* (1938)), as a shockingly timeless piece of cinema that appeals to the heart and soul of just about any man or boy that understands the value and importance of both manhood and brotherhood. In that sense, the film is certainly more important now than when it was first released, as we now live in a morally, spiritually, and sexually inverted era where even innately masculine institutions like the military are forced at virtual gunpoint to accept the patent absurdity of having supremely mentally defective trannys in dresses as respectable commanders. Certainly, *Big Wednesday* is one of the only Hollywood films from the 1970s that I can think of that has a truly decent and inspiring message, not to mention the fact that it is decidedly devoid of any insufferable moral posturing or soulless outmoded leftist messages. On a lighter note, the film was a somewhat surprising reminder to me of my love for the beach and ocean. Indeed, while I am nowhere near as physically active as I was as a teenager, I can safely say that, even over the past year, many of my fondest memories involve the beach (though, instead of hanging out with male friends, I was basking in the singular pulchritude of a lady friend that enjoyed disposing of her pesky bathing suit once she has entered the ocean). In fact, after gleefully wallowing in *Big Wednesday* more than once this past month, I have no excuse but to get off my ass this summer and finally learn how to surf, even if I am probably too old to start my own beach Männerbünde or even develop into a halfway decent surfer.

-Ty E

MAX PAYNE

John Moore (2008)

What better way to bring back noir sentiments than with Max Payne - A long overdue adaptation that hit me in the liver for featuring an outstanding trailer, one of which I preserved. Immediately following the first negative review, my mood became sour and I trekked onwards to collect my own opinions, as venomous as they are. Max Payne is a shitty movie, plain and simple. If professional asshole John Moore has focused more on the Max Payne quintessential instead of calling the MPAA "Nazi cockgobblers", the douche might have created an average and proud adaptation. Instead, we're given a film that is all too relatable to our own soil. Max Payne was something I respected for showing the environments as foreign as possible. The seedy dialogue and the snowy grain covering the ground. Also props when props are due for the graphic novel cut scenes. "We're suffering from what I call Batman blowback. The Motion Picture Association of America gave The Dark Knight a PG-13 rating and basically sucked Warner Bros. cock. I have a serious amount of issues with the MPAA. Did you know it was made up of volunteers? As if that somehow excludes them from some type of wrongdoing. You can't serve on it if you're a homosexual or if you didn't grow up in a shared parenthood home. Go to their website and read their charter about what gives a fair and balanced view for typical parents. We're still strangled by an association that's straight out of the House Un-American Activities Committee." In the game, you took the role of Max Payne - a disturbed ex-father and vigilante cop addicted to painkillers. You'd take part in adrenalized gun battles worthy of John Woo's camera that were stylized with a feature called "Bullet time" in which time slows down and you can dive while firing in the air. The game was a breath of fresh air towards the tired third person shooter genre which wasn't done right until Resident Evil 4. Testosterone + Wit + Drugs + Guns = easy movie to make? Apparently not. I've seldom been guilty of watching a film and thinking of how I could do it better. When I was in Max Payne, I found myself furious at Moore. The kind where I'd jump him outside of his house for ruining something which should be child's play. This picture better represents the film whilst rotated. Mark Wahlberg has been under some fierce fire lately. After The Departed, his reputation was soaring through open skies. Up until The Happening, it seemed that he was destined for an godly A-list life but has instead been dragged into the ground thanks to insignificant critics. He is the perfect brand of actor. He's not the kind of guy to take liberties but would rather work. This explains how when M. Night makes the glorious decision for Wahlberg to stare perplexed at a given point for 80 minutes and call it an eco-terror movie. This is also why when Scorsese told Wahlberg to be an incendiary asshole, he delivered gold. Give this power to John Moore and everything explodes into hell. Had the name not been attached, this film would be at least

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tolerable. The sound effects were something that bothered me. His hand cannon in the bathroom scene sounds more of an ox mixed with plastic explosives. I prefer the hollow shell sound deployed in the video game. Max Payne suffers from trailer hype. It's a common disease. With the slow riffs on Manson's *If I was your Vampire*, it molded the film's image into the emotionally draining song that was present. You can't expect the writer of *The Shield* to write a noir. This is Hollywood idiocy. Would it hurt to hire some original project workers in order to ensure a safe transportation? Oh wait, this is the director of *The Omen* (2006)? Silly me. The real star of this film is the stunning Olga Kurylenko who suffers a short role. This exotic beauty should have been given the title role. Similar to the Edwin/Edwina A. Salt film controversy, it should have been Maxine Payne. Other than pretty faces and some stylish cinematography, Max Payne was dead before he started. After an end-credits scene, it seems that the *Fall of Max Payne* was indeed the inspiration of the first film. A shame with how wonderful the promotional materials are.

-mAQ

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK

John Newland (1973)

Among the made-for-TV horror spectacles that have found their way into very comfortable households includes *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, with *Trilogy of Terror* as close kin. The original film stars Kim Darby, a tomboy who could "get it", as a reluctant inheritor of a decrepit mansion whose basement study is home to a bricked and sealed fireplace that she insists upon opening. Even after kindly handyman Mr. Harris warns her against the repercussions of mishandling things that are meant to stay the way they are, she does so anyways and seals her and her loved ones fate. For in the bottomless ash pit exists a world of inky darkness as somewhat recently stylized in the obviously inspired Wes Craven's *They*. *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* is a film that not only features a magnificent array of lighting and the lack thereof but also imaginative creepy totems brought to miserable life with camera tricks and stop-motion. Kim Darby sets the tone nicely as a lush and almost virginal desperate housewife of a workaholic trader who starts the film off as a low-budget vaginal suppository of midlife angst but ends on a bit of a high chord with a drugged Darby being dragged down the hall and stairs as she moans and groans. The perkiness of her breasts and rope really lends to the scene seeming as a spare remnant of a great pinku film. This scene provoked a new fetish for me to pursue; gremlin hostage situations. Just thinking about the ending alone brings to light so many questions. Was the camera recovered? Were there pictures of the creatures on the film? What happened to the house? *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* leaves you with many staggering questions and few answers. Even so, the quality of this film is of a special caliber of noxious horror entertainment, even with a criminally short runtime this film manages to accomplish so much given its hindrance as being directed by a fellow known only for directing episodes of classic television series. Once the demons marked Sally (Darby) to be their blushing den mother, the foul play appears almost instantly resulting in a suspense that continues to rise and never lets up. If anything, this film allows an unconventional look at an unholy obsession with the perfect wife which is also tenaciously appears to be the domineering pseudo-Labyrinth but without a single trace of avant-garde homosexuality. As per usual, the curiously dimwitted nature of a woman is to blame for this supernatural travesty of what could have been a fruitful marriage. This nightmarish concept of deniability is seen in most, if not all, feminist outings of hyper-realized motion pictures of the illicit damsel in distress. The obstacles she must overcome however are more of a terrifying fairy tale rather than a problem manifesting itself on the bounds of reality. This film presents multiple options of anxiety, you can either fear the shadows or fear the dark. Accepting the notion that these beings need just a fraction of darkness to inhabit their hijinx creates ample anxiousness as pitiful Sally slinks through the hallways not noticing that

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her leg carefully strafes through a minimal pocket of shade which may or not be her last breath. Even lines regarding the party Sally plans in the beginning of the film leads to a disquieting aura as she states "He said if the place was dark enough..." Announced recently was a remake of the made-for-TV cult film *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* which sparked an outcry from fans of the original as all remake do. After having watched the original and inspecting it at several vantages, I come to the realization that this is one of those sacred safe properties in which the original might have prophesized this by making the history of the house and creatures/gremlins/homunculi pretty vague, tenebrous enough to barely skim the esoteric past of this house that used to belong to several families before all resulting in the same fate. For anyone to be against the remake is a foolhardy excuse to get riled up for the sake of tarnishing the reputation of a film that only a handful of people have seen. Even with the original property taken as is, it still could be about the elaborate dementia a neglected hostess is suffering from; lack of communication and light tricks could lead to a wavering sanity complex. Sleeping pills are the bane of horror films, constantly getting heroines in messy situations. Notice how men never suffer from this medicated problem? It's always Nancy Thompson who gets stuck in these situations, these asylum settings of fractured feminine identity that really debases the usage of these prescriptions to help the ladies sleep. After viewing *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, it's high time to realize and cope with the understanding that regardless of your elitism towards films of your childhood era, they will be remade in terrifying productivity. Nothing is untouchable and they will find away to lurk in the shadows and steal what you feel is rightfully yours. *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* is an excellent ambient horror film that is touching, erotic, wistful, and creepy in its own regards. I couldn't be more excited nor proud for a remake than I am for this one.

-mAQ

DEMENTIA

John Parker (1955)

Somewhat embarrassingly, I never got around to seeing the phantasmagorical film noir (advertised as a 'beat-noir') flick *Dementia* (1955) written and directed by Bruno VeSota (but often falsely attributed to producer John Parker) until fairly recently. Maybe it was because I got the film mixed up with Francis Ford Coppola's inferior, early Roger Corman-produced horror flick *Dementia 13* (1963) and assumed it was another conventional and equally forgettable 1950s/1960s horror film, but, regardless, I am glad that I actually took the time to view it. Antagonistically transcending the usually fine line between free-form avant-garde art film and bodacious B-movie, *Dementia* is a rather ridiculously overlooked work that is quite like no other. Originally only available in its butchered cut version (at 56 minutes as opposed to the original 61 minutes) as *Daughter of Horror* with redundant and artistically proposterous narration by (then-unknown) comedian and game show host Ed McMahon, *Dementia* is now widely accessible in its original abstract necromantic form. Shot MOS ("Motor Only Sync" aka without synchronous sound) and equipped with an eerie and seductive soundtrack by German-American avant-garde composer and inventor George Antheil and sung by Marni Nixon, *Dementia* is a strictly cinematic work that has more in common with great films of the silent era than horror films from its own epoch. Quickly forgotten upon its initial 1955 release, *Dementia* would not gain the cult following it always deserved until the late 1970s, thus earning a (still somewhat marginal) reputation as one of the most strikingly strange and idiosyncratic films ever made. Sharing aesthetic influences from both German expressionism and film noir, but of an especially proto-Lynchian nature in its portrayal of a weird girl in trouble in a viperous seaside post-industrial netherworld, *Dementia* is a hypnotic hypnagogic journey through one less than cuddly colleen's afflicted and overwrought mind. *Dementia* often has a sinister and surreal semblance comparable to Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) – a work noted for its entrancing organ score by Gene Moore and sepulchral, otherworldly essence – but to a more pronounced, penetrating, and perturbing degree. The relentless phantasm realm of *Dementia* fits in somewhere in between Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1917), F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927), Curtis Harrington's *Night Tide* (1961), and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), but one can only get a true aesthetic articulation of the film by actually viewing it.

Dementia begins in the seedy hotel room of the film's austere anti-heroess aka 'the Gamin' (played by unknown/forgotten actress Adrienne Barrett) who has just awakened from a less than blissful beachside nightmare. Although some reviewers have described this young lady as "sexy" and whatnot, I found her to be quite androgynous in both appearance and affectation as she could have eas-

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ily played Sal Mineo's role opposite of James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Adorned around the cadaverous gal's neck is a necklace and sphinx-like amulet as if she is an initiate in some sort of arcane occult tradition. Soon after awakening from her somber slumber, the girl grabs a switchblade out of a dresser drawer and leaves the apartment for the shadowy alleys of the menacing metropolis. Encountering a number of curious human creatures on her seemingly aimless but remarkably eventful journey, including a minatory midget, abusive husband, delirious drunk, pestering pimp, and a rich hedonistic fat cat, the girl is clearly stirred and frightened by the less savory elements of the male gender. The girl begins to realize that her past has come back to haunt her when she buys a newspaper from the midget with the headline, "Mysterious Stabbing." Eventually, the girl is brought to a lonely graveyard somewhat resembling the one featured in Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outerspace* (1959) by a faceless entity. Incidentally, *Dementia* cinematographer William C. Thompson would later film Wood's less than artful 1959 'masterpiece', as well as the cross-dressing horror hack's infamously atrocious works *Glen or Glenda* (1953) and *Night of the Ghouls* (1959). While at the graveyard, the daunted debutante recollects the life-shattering night when her abusive father sadistically slaughtered her trashy, trifling mother. The scenic cemetery scene is probably best remembered for appearing in the popular independent sci-fi/horror flick *The Blob* (1958) during the movie theater sequence when the blob attacks, but it also happens to be one of the most poignant and illuminating moments of *Dementia* as it reveals the source of the lead anti-protagonist's debilitating mental sickness; dementia.

Although barely recognized and instantly forgotten upon its original release; and still relatively underrated today, *Dementia* has gone on to inspire various subsequent cinematic works. Some have argued that the film influenced Orson Welles' nearly immaculate direction of his chimerical mystery masterpiece *Touch of Evil* (1958). Somewhat fortuitously (or not), the obese fat man featured in *Dementia* also resembles Welles' repulsive character police Captain Hank Quinlan in *Touch of Evil*. The esoteric hardcore porn flick *Bacchanale* (1970) directed by the Amero brothers also seems to be heavily inspired by (if not an extremely loose remake of) *Dementia*. Like *Dementia*, *Bacchanale* follows a young girl (this time played by a voluptuous bombshell blonde) as she awakens in her hotel room and wanders pell-mell through the city, henceforth encountering faceless spirits in graveyards and other exceedingly debauched, eccentric, and erratic beings. Also, like *Dementia* – which features a variety of Kerouac-esque beatniks – *Bacchanale* is a marginal yet uniquely revealing work of its time, featuring hapless hippies and loose morals that reflect the degenerate zeitgeist of the hyperhedonic counter-culture movement. Needless to say, *Dementia* is a decidedly nihilistic work with nil redeeming characters, including the foreordained lead character, thus making it an audacious aberration of 1950s American cinema. Not even the more surly and sardonic works of the so-called "American New

Wave” of the late 1960’s to early 1980s can compare to the ever-present apocalyptic and amphibological persuasion of *Dementia*; a celluloid tribulation of the most terrorizing yet transcendent sort. In 2001, carny noise musician and perennial dilettante Boyd Rice (with the help of Dwid Hellion of the ‘metallic punk/hardcore’ band Integrity) composed a new score for *Dementia* and performed it live at the 17th annual L’Etrange Festival, which is unequivocally a *comme il faut* tribute to a work that was heavily inspired by the more morose films of the silent era; a lamentably lost period of cinema history when image was everything and a live orchestra acted as an accentual ritualistic sound procession of sorts. One can only wonder whether or not a version of the film featuring Rice’s score will be released, but I doubt it will add anything to *Dementia*; a hyperphysical and hallucinatory cinematic expression of hopeless female hysteria.

-Ty E

FRANKENSTEINS BLOODY NIGHTMARE
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John R. Hand (2006)

FrankenSteins Bloody Nightmare is in a genre all its own. Writer/Director/Main Lead John R. Hand has his own techniques dearly noted with the release of his debut film. The film plays out like a psycho-surreal retelling of the original Frankenstein novel. Much of the film is immensely abstract and for virgin viewers of any form of cult or art house cinema, it would be best to avoid. Now the plot follows a very thick, yet hidden plot that is very hard to notice due to the directors ingenious sound transfer on the film. Voices are so muddled you turn up the volume and get assaulted by bizarre beeps and long drones. Brilliant physician Victor Karlstein is in a state of manic depression and he gets reality blurred together with dreams and nightmares for that matter. His girlfriend is dying from an unknown disease and he is unable to help her. Watching from afar as she slips in and out of consciousness, he comes up with a bizarre idea to use a "mechanically enhanced" burn victim to kill people to harvest their raw organs to create a new body for her. Personally, i think the story already sounds better. FrankenSteins Bloody Nightmare has nothing to hide, but it refuses to answer any questions after the film is over. It's clever use of heat vision-like scenes and amazing color spectrum's splattered on walls provides it with a misty, grainy, yet sleazy feel. John R. Hand was perfect as the lead role in this film. His character had compassion but chose to not share it. Besides that, nothing else is known. The ending alone set it's self up for a sequel or at least a prologue. Much is needed to be explained. Such as the mysterious company he owns, the turmoil from his family life, and the unexplained voice conversation. I also feel i should warn you of the dreamlike fisting scene with his monster. It took me a while to figure out what was happening but once i found out, what i had seen could not be unseen. Once the credits roll, you will be wondering to yourself "What just happened?". It's very nonchalant about its use of imagery and angles to help capture the overall silent intensity of this film. This film is definitely only for seasoned viewers of the obscure and bizarre. The score composed by The Greys is worth it alone. The violence is little to none but only proves that you don't need buckets of blood or scream queens to make you feel uneasy.

Purchase this film at [Unearthed Films] First Iskanov, and now Hand. Unearthed Films is doing a great job releasing modern day autuers.

-Maq

MIDNIGHT COWBOY

John Schlesinger (1969)

Midnight Cowboy was the first major assault against rural (or to the filmmakers “rednecks”) Americans. A film with a male Texan gigolo using a cowboy gimmick most likely offended John Wayne fans. Only

42nd Street

scum would mount this naive bimbo according to grease ball Ratso. Cowboy in costume Joe Buck (Jon Voight) and cripple Enrico “Ratso” Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman) make the best couple in Midnight Cowboy. Squatting in the city takes commitment.

There is no doubt that Midnight Cowboy is one of the greatest American films ever made. It is the only X-rated movie to win an Oscar. Of course, this isn’t saying much considering when examining other “great” American films. Midnight Cowboy actually deserves the recognition it has acquired since its debut. It even beats out its historical competitors The Graduate and Easy Rider. Midnight Cowboy is by far the most extreme of the three.

The editing in Midnight Cowboy is some of the best that I have seen come out of Hollywood. The film’s various flashback collages make for some of the most segments of the film. One involves the gang raping of Joe Buck and his girlfriend by a group of good ol’ boys. Ratso also makes a ghostly appearance in these segment (don’t bother considering it foreshadowing). This was quite a bold move by director John Schlesinger. It also seems that Soviet montage was put to contemporary use (although still for propaganda purposes).

Midnight Cowboy also features one of those late 1960’s movie soundtracks that works perfectly with the film but you would never listen to on your own free time. The late 1960s (and its music) sparked the end of old American and beginning of new so-called “progressive” America. I guess a young Cowboy is expected to fail in this new world. Joe Buck can’t even get paid for his homosexual activities. Donating blood seems to be the best source of income.

Joe Buck is a sad yet funny young man. Director Schlesinger had at least a little love for his star character. Even when he beats and robs a gay old man you can’t help to feel sorry for Joe. Midnight Cowboy’s ending is truly a sad when Joe ends up lonely and broke in Florida. I would not want to end up in Florida under such conditions.

Midnight Cowboy almost makes me proud to be America. A film that that brings the naively backward to the modern degenerate is always a fun experience. From the roadside diner to the Warhol style drug party, you will find a little bit of America for everyone. I only wish I could find out what later happened to Joe Buck.

-Ty E

THE DAY OF THE LOCUST
THE DAY OF THE LOCUST

John Schlesinger (1975)

While on a recent much-needed and long-awaited vacation where I did very little of anything aside from watching a shitload of films, I found myself almost ritualistically devouring an eclectic plethora of (mostly great) ranging from Jan Troell's epic diptych *The Emigrants* (1971) and *The New Land* (1972) to John Schlesinger's *The Day of the Locust* (1975). While these particular films might seem like a curious combo as they share very little in common in both the aesthetic and thematic sense, they really highlighted for me what I both love and hate about the United States; or, the real organic settler Euro-America that created this nation and the phony Hebraic Hollywood anti-America that colonized the minds of its creators. While Troell's singularly epic diptych—two masterful films that Terrence Malick seems to have spent his entire career attempting to model his own cinematic works after—provides an exceedingly earthly and sometimes realist yet nonetheless transcendental depiction of the great struggle involved with enterprising Europeans becoming (true) Americans after courageously abandoning their homelands and pretty much everything else they knew, Schlesinger's film provides, in many ways, the complete opposite experience as an oftentimes gorgeously grotesque and absurdist portrait of the phony culture-distorting America where phony shallow cinematic dreams are dubiously conjured and hopelessly forsaken people and their oftentimes devastatingly deluded dreams go to die a particularly pathetic death. Not surprisingly, the films also had considerably different receptions among critics, which is why I feel the need to defend the much maligned Schlesinger feature, which I would argue is the 'British' auteur's true magnum opus and greatest and most ambitious artistic achievement, especially considering its current questionable reputation compared to much inferior and, in turn, absurdly overrated films (e.g. *MASH* (1970), *Harold and Maude* (1970)) from the same so-called 'New Hollywood' era. Indeed, the film is a strange reminder that, on very rare occasion, Hollywood was curiously involved in the production of subversive cinematic art that metaphysically eviscerates everything that Tinseltown represents.

Based on the 1939 novel of the same name by NYC-bred Ashkenazi writer Nathanael West—a Hollywood insider of sorts that worked as a screenwriter on films like John Farrow's *Five Came Back* (1939) starring Chester Morris and Lucille Ball—*The Day of the Locust* is a largely plot-less and deceptively dream-like (anti)odyssey of oftentimes aberrant and even grotesque spectacle that dares to ruthlessly demolish the conspicuously counterfeit kosher Hollywood version of the so-called 'American Dream.' In that sense, it is hard to imagine that David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001) would exist without Schlesinger's sort of 'Tinseltown Gothic,' which oftentimes feels like the brooding baroque cinematic equivalent to Kenneth Anger's gossip classic Hollywood *Babylon* (1959), albeit

focusing on the everyday misfortunes of Hollywood's failed nobodies instead of the tragic ends of opium-addled superstars and coveted closet-queens. Indeed, featuring strange references from films ranging from Robert J. Flaherty's classic silent (pseudo)anthropological doc *Nanook of the North* (1922) to Josef von Sternberg's classic Marlene Dietrich vehicle *Blonde Venus* (1932) and a somewhat fitting cameo from Hebraic horror huckster William Castle as a dictatorial studio director that literally directs his crew into disaster, *The Day of the Locust* is an ideally idiosyncratic piece of cinephilia for cinephiles that hate Hollywood or, at least, the phony hokey Hollywood that acts as a mask for the festering moral rot and decay that is barely hidden beneath. Of course, the best films about Hollywood tend to touch on this subject, including works ranging from classics like Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) to more obscure (and underrated) works like John Byrum's X-rated Golden Age era celluloid grotesquerie *Inserts* (1975) to the Coen Brothers cult classic *Barton Fink* (1991), but *The Day of the Locust* arguably transcends all of these films in terms of sheer unending eccentricity, mirthful misanthropy, and slow-burning necrotic spirit.

While Schlesinger—a gay British Jew that is surely best remembered today for his Academy Award-winning gay-for-pay counterculture nightmare *Midnight Cowboy* (1969)—can hardly be described as 'right wing' or 'conservative' in any sort of sense, he was fairly aesthetically apolitical as demonstrated by his controversial collaborations with Nazi composer Herbert von Karajan and surprisingly vocal appreciation for Leni Riefenstahl's films, including *Triumph of the Will* (1935). Undoubtedly, many of the auteur's films can certainly be described as 'red-pilled' by today's decidedly degenerate standards, which probably has more to do with Schlesinger's subversive spirit as an artist than any sort of serious political allegiances. Indeed, *Darling* (1965) starring Julie Christie demonstrates the great perils of being a soulless careerist whore and how a misguided lust for fame and fortune can quickly turn a beautiful young debutante into a lonely and unlovable monster that treats an abortion like a hair-cut. In *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1967), Christie reprises the young dumb (yet delectable) know-it-all-bitch routine and portrays a so-called 'independent women' that thrives on hypocrisy and narcissism, makes all the wrong decisions, deceitfully uses men to run her farm and ultimately engages in petty behavior that leads to the destruction of the lives of two of three suitors that want to marry her (and, rather fittingly, she is ultimately stuck with a boorish man that she liked least of the three). In *Marathon Man* (1976), the Hebraic hero is arguably less likeable than the evil elderly Nazi doctor trying to kill him. Also, Schlesinger's most famous film *Midnight Cowboy* can hardly be described as featuring a positive portrayal of poofers or Warholian art fags and the filmmaker himself even once described it as being "viewed as somewhat antigay." In *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971), a middle-aged gay Jewish doctor and bitchy shiksa spinster seem to thinking have an affair with the same young (and seemingly sociopathic)

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quasi-hustler acts as an apt substitution for marriage and children, thereupon underscoring the biting soullessness of their sad lives. While Schlesinger spent much of the later part of his career directing largely forgettable hack work, including the shockingly banal supernatural horror flick *The Believers* (1987) and the yawn-driven yuppie pseudo-psychological thriller *Pacific Heights* (1990), it is clear from his greatest films that he was no petty propagandist and that he had the rare ability to embrace the ugliness of humanity without succumbing to any sort of shallow sermonizing, as if the auteur was a mere passive observer among his own idiosyncratic cinematic creations. In *The Day of the Locust*, Schlesinger exposes the viewer to an eclectic collection of eccentrics, lecherous losers, (self)destructive drunks, lost souls, and odiously opportunistic whores, yet one never gets the feeling that Schlesinger has any unkind feelings towards these mostly forsaken individuals. At the same time, it is probably the only film where one almost feels a deep sense of therapeutic joy when kid is stomped to death in a scenario that ultimately unleashes a sort of Hollywoodland holocaust. Needless to say, this is no feel-good-film, yet it somehow maintain an unexpected degree of rapture and unconventional humanistic intrigue, which are undoubtedly some of Schlesinger's greatest attributes as a filmmaker.

Notably, Schlesinger's mischling journalist nephew Ian Buruma once described *The Day of the Locust* as, "Perhaps John's darkest picture—made at the happiest time of his life—it failed to win a major award." In other words, aside from being his most artistically ambitious film, it is also his most absurdly neglected and misunderstood. As Schlesinger remarked to Buruma himself, "MIDNIGHT COWBOY, SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY, and THE DAY OF THE LOCUST were all made cheek by jowl. This was probably the moment I felt most liberated, when I felt I could make films on these sort of subjects. Perhaps I've never reached that point since." Beyond its subversive subject matter, the film was also a long marinating passion project that Schlesinger would have to wait many years to make until he acquired the commercial and critical success that came with *Midnight Cowboy* and even then he faced many roadblocks from the studio and producers, which makes perfect sense considering the film depicts Hollywood as a schlocky Sodom run by virtual slave-driving sociopaths and overflowing with alcohol-addled whores that will do virtually anything just to get even the least prestigious of barely-paid positions on a seedy studio lot. In short, Schlesinger savagely yet exceedingly elegantly demolishes the legendary (plastic) glamour and shallow intrigue of unholywood while at the same time sardonically assaulting the very same sickening system that the film was made within. Indeed, even Robert Evans—the legendary (and then-relatively-young) Hollywood film producer and studio executive that completely revitalized the studio system during the American New Wave era with classic works like *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *The Godfather* (1972), and *Chinatown* (1974)—was completely against the film, or as Schlesinger explained himself,

“Robert Evans—who ran Paramount—absolutely hated the idea of *THE DAY OF THE LOCUST* and said so forcibly and did anything that he could to prevent the film being made [...] Essentially Bob Evans is a Hollywood man [...] I think he just didn't like what the film stood for. People in the industry didn't like the story; they didn't like the rather downbeat, critical attitude of West's novel. Evans also didn't think it was commercial, which, of course, it wasn't.” Luckily, Schlesinger had the kosher clout to have his way and create what is arguably the biggest and most epic ‘anti-Hollywood Hollywood’ film ever and the auteur was even such a nice guy that he subsequently collaborated with Evans on the surprisingly subversive ‘Jewish thriller’ *Marathon Man* despite the studio executive's poor treatment of his dream film.

While he virtually disappears for a good portion of the film, ostensibly straight-laced WASP Tod Hackett (William Atherton)—an ivy league boy that looks like he was descended from America's most thoroughbred Anglo-Saxon stock—is certainly the lead protagonist of the film and he soon discovers after moving into a tiny apartment with a literal ‘hole in the wall’ at a crusty complex called San Bernardino Arms in Hollywood that the town is completely morally bankrupt at all levels, as it takes a certain razor sharp unscrupulousness to not only merely compete, but especially to get ahead. Luckily for him, Hackett—a man whose name hints that he is a ‘dead hack’ of sorts—immediately becomes hopelessly infatuated with an exceedingly empty cocktease of the platinum peroxide blonde philistine sort named Faye Greener (Karen Black) after encountering her living at the same apartment complex with her father and he soon finds it easy to assimilate to the amorality of his rather pathetic excess-ridden environment. Aside from being willing to do virtually anything to get into Faye's panties, which seems to be protected by an invisible chastity belt, Hackett also discovers that he must lose his soul if he wants to establish a successful career as a pre-production artist at Paramount Studios where a hyper-cynical booze-and-porn-loving screenwriter named Claude Estee (Richard A. Dysart) takes him under his wing as a sort of protégé of mindless hedonistic perversity that entails dumb debauched parties involving primitive S&M blue movies and alcohol-driven cock fights, among other things. In a scenario that seems to have been taken from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Hackett begins working on a large Otto Dix-esque painting on his earthquake-worn wall that not only unmasks the true demonic essence of Hollywood as if the protagonist has special *They Live*-like glasses, but also foreshadows an apocalyptic scenario at the very end of the film. Indeed, while Hackett comes to Hollywood to perform frivolous hack work for insipid popcorn pictures, the malignant spiritual moribundity, innate immorality, and all-encompassing soullessness begins impact that artist deeply and his art soon begins to resemble something that might be created by the bastard son of Edvard Munch and Leonor Fini.

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Despite the fact that Faye is a fiercely fake and frigid bitch that impulsively says stupid shit like, “I hate people with thin lips. People with thin lips are mean. That’s true. I read that Somewhere,” and refuses to give up even the most minuscule crumb of poontang because she is strategically saving her clearly over-appraised virginity for the ideal rich and handsome man that she absurdly thinks she has the potential to marry despite not being much more than a poor man’s lobotomized Marilyn Monroe, Hackett accepts being friend-zoned because he is so hopelessly horny for her ice-cold-cunt that he is willing to wait for a day that ultimately never cums. While Faye makes it known to everyone that he thinks she is hot shit, her fairly banal blonde Barbie doll good looks are the sole thing she has going for her, as she is literally the bastard brood of a whore that abandoned her for a “magician bastard” and a washed-up dipsomaniacal ex-vaudeville performer turned failed snake oil (or ‘Miracle Solvent’) salesman named Harry Greener (Burgess Meredith). In a sane world, Faye would gladly accept Hackett as her male suitor as he is almost in every way her superior, including arguably looks, but she is deluded by big dreams of Hollywood stardom due to getting minor roles as extras in c-grade movies and—as she confesses to the protagonist—he surely is not her type. Aside from planning to marry a rich dude that has the capacity bloat both her ego and bank account, Faye seems to take after her estranged whore mother in terms of being naturally sexually attracted to low-status savages as demonstrated by the fact she eventually self-destructively fucks a superlatively swarthy Mexican cockfighter that lives in a garage. When Hackett declares his love to her not long after meeting her, Faye—the Hollywood hypergamic harpy par excellence—rather bluntly reveals her self-satisfied shallowness and stereotypical feminine propensity towards self-deception by responding, “Don’t make me hurt you. You’re very kind and clever, but I could only let a really rich man love me. I could only love someone criminally handsome. Please try to understand.” As a sort of Dr. Jekyll/ Ms. Hyde grotesque caricature of the virgin-whore archetype(s) as clearly irreparably despoiled by a lifetime of Hollywood propaganda starring hunky heartthrobs like Cary Grant, Faye epitomizes virtually everything that is insufferable about modern womankind, which is quite fitting since Hollywood—a narcotizing delusion factory that produces romantic twaddle that tricks stupid chicks into fantasizing magical imaginary men and luxurious lifestyles that they will never be able to obtain—is largely responsible for women having such preposterously high expectations despite very rarely having anything to bring to the table aside from the purely physical. To Hackett’s credit, he is treated relatively kindly by Faye, especially compared to a poor sapless sap named Homer Simpson (Donald Sutherland) that eventually find himself caught in her web of contrived femininity and counterfeit glamour.

While Faye seems to genuinely appreciate Hackett’s friendship, even after he attempts to rape her while screaming that she is a “bitch” after she rejects his rather aggressive sexual advances, she only displays visceral hatred and re-

sentiment towards poor hapless homeboy Homer. Indeed, after being forced to sell her virginity to some old fart to pay for her father's funeral when he unexpectedly dies, Faye eventually sets up a 'business relationship' with Homer that seems to be totally sexless and simply involves the heroine living in his house as a sort of less than subservient pseudo-wife that refuses to even make him dinner (in fact, mirthful masochist Homer ultimately becomes the servant). Naturally, Faye almost immediately begins rather flagrantly cuckolding Homer, as she not only has her fake cowboy friend and his Mexican pal move into his home, but she also even fucks the latter. Clearly disgusted by Homer's weakness and incapacity to 'assert' himself with a woman, Faye seems to derive sadistic glee from psychologically torturing the poor cowardly cuck, so naturally it is only a matter of time before he completely snaps. Unfortunately for him and his not-all-that-innocent victim, Homer, like many people that completely crack-up, loses his shit at the wrong place and wrong time in what ultimately proves to be a sort of burst of apocalyptic fury. Needless to say, it is only fitting that Homer is a devout Jesus freak of sorts, as it underlines the capacity of Hollywood to erode anyone's soul, not matter how deeply religious and/or terminally sexually repressed. Of course, as someone that goes to a phony spiritually vacant proto-megachurch with an electric crucifix with the words "Give To Jesus" written across it that more resembles a vaudeville show than a serious house of worship, Homer—an extremely fearful and nervous autistic of sorts that seems to be perennially internally wounded as a result of a lengthy childhood illness—is not exactly the most mentally sharp of men despite having a little bit of wealth and a nice house due to his accountant background. As someone that clearly cannot support herself, Faye only reluctantly decides to shack up with Homer after her father dies and she is left without a home, though, to her credit, she does demonstrate an unexpected degree of selfless sacrifice when she sells her much-prized virginal puss to pay for her papa's funeral. Indeed, instead of becoming a big Hollywood starlet, Faye is forced to settle for being what she has clearly always secretly suspected she was—a cheap unlovable whore. As for Hackett, Faye's moral deterioration does not deter his desire to defile her and he even preposterously rationalizes her cash-for-gash deflowering by stating to a drunken ambiguously Hebraic midget, "She waited till the old guy was dead. I'll give her that much." Rather pathetically, even after Faye loses his virginity, Hackett still fails to seal the carnal deal.

Considering that Faye predictably dedicates her life to increasingly ruthlessly mocking and emasculating him after moving into his home, it is only a matter of time before Homer—a terribly nervous Nellie that has absolutely nil outlet for his seemingly perpetual internal misery and misfortune—completely explodes, which ultimately acts as a catalyst to the film's savagely surreal climax that quite fittingly takes place at a big movie premiere. Notably, the ending is somewhat foreshadowed in an unforgettable scene that would probably give John Landis—a morally dubious director that is certainly no stranger to catastrophic movie set

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mishaps—cold chills where a huge Battle of Waterloo battlefield set directed by William Castle completely collapses during filming and injures tons of actors and extras portraying soldiers. Despite being a fairly cold and stoic man that rarely expresses emotion aside from when less than suavely attempting to fuck Faye, Hackett, who created sketches that acted as virtual blueprints for the set pieces, is somewhat shocked by the senseless tragedy, which he immediately realizes is the direct result of both the studio's negligence and shameless apathy towards human life. When Hackett attempts to warn the studio head about how the accident was easily avoidable and the direct result of senseless negligence, he is treated to a haircut and shoeshine from a jolly old negro and is later told by his screenwriter friend Claude that it "wouldn't have made a difference" if people had actually died (while apathetic toward human life, Claude does get a thrill from drunken cock fights with Hebraic midgets and Mexicans). Naturally, the event inspires Hackett's apocalyptic mural collage/painting, which literally comes to life at the film's conclusion, at least in the protagonist's mind.

At the a world premiere of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Buccaneer* (1938) at Grauman's Chinese Theater is where the Hollywood dream turns into a fiery phantasmagoric holocaust. Indeed, when a creepy proto-tranny child named 'Adore Loomis' (Jackie Earle Haley)—a platinum blond(e) kid pervert that plays the peeping tom when his mother isn't whoring 'him' out for small roles movies—dares to tease Homer one-too-many-times in between obnoxiously singing "Jeepers Creepers" and hitting him in the head with a rock, among other forms of childish degradation, he ultimately finds himself resigned to the strangely fitting undignified fate of being stomped to death. Already totally distraught because Faye has left him, the insufferable child's taunts ultimately cause Homer to completely explode to the point where he does not even bother to notice that he stomps the kid to death in front of seemingly thousands of people, thereupon sparking a full-scale riot where he is seemingly ripped apart by an angry lynch mob while a rather rotund studio announcer unwittingly brags about the excitement of the crowd in a totally twisted scenario that really underscores the curious combination of insipidly stupid spectacle and emotion retardation that personifies Hollywood. In the end, the entire area is burned down, including pine trees, while Hackett loses his mind as he finally acknowledges the virtual hell that he has been condemned to. In the end, Faye goes by Hackett's apartment and sadly discovers that he has wisely vacated the premises, though his rose-in-the-wall remains. In short, this Hollywood film hardly has a happy Hollywood ending, though it is certainly bittersweet that Hackett wisely hightails it out of Hollyweird hell. As to the status of Hackett's sanity, one can only speculate.

Rather unsurprisingly considering its decidedly dark and respectably audience-alienating subject matter, *The Day of the Locust*—a big budget film that only grossed about \$2,300,000, which was about a third of its cost—was one of the biggest flops of 1975 and it seems that Hollywood, including the studio that

produced it, was not exactly sad about this fact. For example, as Schlesinger explained to Buruma in regard to how the film was received among friends and associates when it was first screened, “Afterward, in a rather smart Italian restaurant in Beverly Hills, we found Polanski and Jack Nicholson, and a lot of people who were in CHINATOWN, sitting at the next table. They looked very embarrassed. Eventually someone came over and said, ‘I want to congratulate you,’ but they were obviously very embarrassed by their reaction—or lack of it—and so was I. I think the film generally wasn’t being received terribly well.” Apparently other people, including respected Hollywood filmmakers, were more vocal about their disdain for the film, or as Schlesinger’s official biographer William J. Mann explained in *Edge of Midnight: The Life of John Schlesinger* (2004), “Hollywood was, quite frankly, appalled; many took the film as a personal affront. John was told that at a screening at a movie executive’s home in Bel Air, the exec’s wife stood up halfway through and apologized to her guests for making them sit through such an outrage. Even some who seemingly shared John’s spirit of challenge found the film too hard on the industry. Sidney Lumet, director of *SERPICO* and *DOG DAY AFTERNOON*, was bashing *LOCUST* all around town, reportedly asking, ‘How can Schlesinger shit where he eats?’ Word got back to John, who was furious, prompting a four-page hand-written apology from Lumet.” Indeed, it seems that even fellow semitic subversive auteurs found Schlesinger’s film to be an unforgivable assault on the studio system they seemingly pretended to rebel against, which is exactly why *The Day of the Locust* is ultimately considerably more transgressive than the filmmaker’s much more widely beloved *Midnight Cowboy*. Of course, as a patently preternatural arthouse affair on Hollywood steroids that concludes with the protagonist’s and, in turn America and the entire world’s, (Hollywood) dreams going up in smoke in a violently surreal and hypnotically haunting Hollywood holocaust that can be seen as both a cold ruthless execution and deservedly cynical eulogy for Tinseltown—as if Schlesinger had some sort of (subconscious) belief that the studios had committed certain ungodly crimes and they would eventually be ruthlessly punished for said crimes in a big brutal kismet fashion—the film was naturally doomed to offend the majority of people. In that sense, it is rather fitting that this apocalyptic conclusion is sparked by the brutal murder of an obscenely obnoxious sort of proto-tranny child, as it hints at the seemingly perennial rumors of (sexual) abuse in Hollywood as noted by people Corey Feldman as well as the aberrant sexualization and androgynization of children in Hollywood films (somewhat fittingly, the kid was portrayed by Jackie Earle Haley, who would go on to portray child killer/molester Freddy Krueger in the abortive *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (2010) remake). It is also fitting that it is a largely innocent and seemingly virginal Christian man—the sort of individual that Hollywood regularly targets for abuse—ushers in this apocalypse. In that regard, I would not be surprised if certain Hollywood producers and studio heads

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interpreted the film as some sort of prophetic threat where these very powerful individuals were forced to consider for the very first time in their entire lives that their degenerate movie miscreations might provoke a backlash of biblical proportions, hence the fitting setting of a Cecil B. DeMille—a filmmaker of Hebraic extraction that oftentimes took a curiously homoerotic approach to his religious epics—movie premiere.

As reflected in its uniquely unflattering portrayal of Hollywood and its history, there is good reason that studio heads and filmmakers loathed the film, as it has a certain scathing covert contra kosher spirit. For example, before succumbing to Hollywood-inflicted alcoholism, Harry Greener semi-cryptically alludes to the Judaic control of Hollywood by stating while making certain vaudevillian shylock-like gestures, “you ain’t got a chance in hell if you ain’t one of them. You know what I mean? And they got it all locked up. To hell with them.” Of course, the character’s sentiments are not random, as famous figures even used to express such concerns, even card-carrying communists like novelist Theodore Dreiser. As Neal Gabler explained in *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (1988), “Even within Hollywood itself there was mumbling about Jewish control. For some it was the handiest rationale for thwarted dreams. Theodore Dreiser had been lured out to Hollywood in the thirties to oversee the film production of his monumental novel *AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY*, but he had battled hammer and tongs with Paramount over what he felt was the ‘traducing’ of his masterpiece, and now he had departed, trying to raise money for a new project on tobacco monopolist James Buchanan Duke. When that failed, Dreiser blamed the Jews. He wrote a Swiftian satire suggesting that Jews be rounded up and packed off to Kansas where they could do no more harm. To a friend he wrote, ‘The movies are solidly Jewish. They’ve dug in, demploy only Jews with American names. . . . The dollar sign is the guide—mentally & physically. That American should be led—the mass—the direction is beyond all believing. In addition, they are arrogant, insolent and contemptuous.’” Apparently, such counter-kosher sentiments were not simply isolated to gentiles as Louis B. Mayer was apparently quite fond of throwing around antisemitic slurs as alluded to by the character based on him played by Michael Lerner in *Barton Fink* and Jewish New York film executive Herbert Somborn even immediately plotted to get Gloria Swanson “out of the hands of these Eastern European Jews” after marrying her. Knowing all of this, it is surely fitting that excerpts from *The Day of the Locust* appear in the documentary *Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies and the American Dream* (1998), which is a sort of superficial adaptation of Gabler’s book. After all, not unlike Gabler’s book, Schlesinger’s film is one of the few honest examples of the hermetic Hebraic history of Hollywood. Needless to say, it is hardly a subtle nod to the character of the typical semitic studio director when Hebraic hack William Castle portrays a ‘fascistic’ filmmaker that screams at the crew and ultimately directs them into literal tragedy. It is also notable

that said tragedy is set during the Battle of Waterloo, which is a historical event that is noted for creating a good portion of the Rothschild Banking Dynasty's wealth. In fact, the Nazi propaganda film *Die Rothschilds* (1940) aka *The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo* directed by Erich Waschneck depicts this scenario and there's a good chance that Schlesinger was aware of this fact as it is known that he was at least familiar with some Nazi cinema. Even more incriminating, the pre-Code Hollywood film *The House of Rothschild* (1934)—a vehemently pro-Jewish production that, although quite successful as the biggest hit of the year for Twentieth Century Picture and a work that was even nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture, is curiously completely unavailable today—concludes with Nathan Rothschild becoming the richest man in the world as a result of the Battle of Waterloo and even gleefully bragging, "Europe hides its head in shame because it borrows from the Jews." On a more unintentional yet nonetheless still subtextual level, the film even exploited the work of old Israelites that very quite possibly worked in Golden Age Hollywood, or as Mann explained in regard to a scene involving Harry Greener, "Even less orderly was the faith-healing sequence. Several hundred extras were bused in to act as Geraldine Page's faithful followers. 'Old-age pensions,' John reported, 'many of whom had come from Jewish old people's homes and who were confronted by three neon crosses saying, 'Give to Jesus.' Up on stage, the choir mistress was trying to rouse the extras by urging them to pray to the Savior. Some in the crowd didn't understand they were to be in a movie and were terribly offended; some stormed back to the bus, complaining loudly. 'Looking back on it,' John said, 'it was really very funny.'" Undoubtedly, the fact that Schlesinger personally felt that the semitic scenario was hilarious only adds to the absurdist hilarity of this scene in subsequent viewings.

I don't know what motivated me to endure such frivolously schmaltzy, shallow, and just downright soulless celluloid bromide, but I recently watched George Stevens' classic RKO musical *Swing Time* (1936) and it reminded me how much Golden Age Hollywood polluted the world with outstandingly artistically bankrupt kitsch crap that really has no redeeming qualities whatsoever, as if the major studios were largely run by a sociopathic race of hedonistic space aliens that had nil clue as to how to express organic human emotions and merely substituted them with the great aesthetic sin of brashly bombastic spectacle. Of course, this is just one of the many reasons I treasure a film like *The Day of the Locust* that, not like Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992), takes an oftentimes darkly humorous approach to forcing Hollywood to drown in its own grandiloquent depravity and almost otherworldly hypocrisy while exposing its excremental excesses and ludicrous lies. In fact, I think it might be fitting punishment for the more corrupt studio heads to being subjected watching the film on a loop for eternity while being forced to shine Robert Bresson's shoes, clean P.P. Pasolini's toilet, and wash Carl Th. Dreyer's underwear. Surely, it is a sort of poetic form

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of cinematic kismet that Teutonic master auteur F.W. Murnau died tragically in Hollywood after having his films like *4 Devils* (1928) and *City Girl* (1930) tampered with by the studios and then temporarily escaping to the South Pacific for his swansong *Tabu* (1931). While Schlesinger would live a number of years longer than Murnau, his experience with Hollywood was not all that different as virtually all of his later films were tampered with or mere soulless hack work after the flop of *The Day of the Locust*. Indeed, as Mann rightly noted, “THE DAY OF THE LOCUST was the last of John Schlesinger’s ‘great’ films. It was the last time he would so completely immerse himself in an attempt to create something monumental, in which he and a group of brilliant, trusted collaborators truly sought to find an original, artistic interpretation of the material they were putting on the screen.”

While Schlesinger’s previous film *Sunday Bloody Sunday* was also a flop, it at least received very positive reviews from most of the right respected critics whereas *The Day of the Locust* was attacked by most critics, including many of those sympathetic to the auteur’s previous films. One of the few people that seemed to both appreciate and understand the film was Judith Crist, who paid it a great compliment when she described it as a, “Consideration of the American dream by way of the factory town that dispensed it . . . To call it the finest film of the past several years is to belittle it. It stands beyond comparison.” Crist’s words are no mere puffery because, in terms of sheer scope and ambition as well as epic eccentricity, Schlesinger’s arguable magnum opus is like *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) of sardonic (anti)Hollywood Golden Age period pieces as a (sometimes) subtle satire of the strikingly idiosyncratic sort that also packs pathos and even manages to be genuinely horrifying than the best horror flicks (undoubtedly, the conclusion of the film somewhat echoes the more phantasmagorical scenes of Herk Harvey’s classic *Carnival of Souls* (1962)). Of course, this is no surprise as anything resembling cinematic art that comes out of Hollywood tends to defy genre and audience expectation, though *The Day of the Locust* goes beyond this as a largely plot-less portrait of preternatural misery and misanthropy where virtually every single character is forsaken and ‘happiness’—or, at least, any sort of long-term happiness—is exposed as, at best, a terribly naive ideal and, at worst, a shallow fantasy sold to suckers by innately manipulative Hollywood culture distorters, hence the lack of love for such a film. In short, the film gives a way the garbage game of Hebraic Hollywood and does with a sort of understated acidic aesthetic style of one thousand dope-addled failed screen divas courteously of the great cinematographer Conrad L. Hall (*In Cold Blue*, *Fat City*). In terms of its sort of plot-less promenade approach where the viewer randomly encounters an eclectic collection of characters like an ant at an ant hill and rather misanthropic spirit and mostly unflattering depictions of sex and sexuality, the film is certainly comparable to Georgian auteur Otar Iosseliani’s classic *Les Favoris de la lune* (1984) aka *Favorites of the Moon* of all films.

I recently watched David Robert Mitchell's darkly comedic neo-noir *Under the Silver Lake* (2018) and, while I did not find it as enjoyable or immaculate as the auteur's previous film *It Follows* (2014), I could not help but wallow in the fairly singular cinematic experience it provides due to its sometimes surreal approach to depicting Los Angeles as a virtual hellhole disguised as heaven where the rich and famous voluntarily prematurely end in their lives in a tomb of hedonism due to an absurd (pseudo)religious belief that their souls will magically 'ascend' like ancient Egyptian Pharaohs. Indeed, whether it be the brutal S&M sods of Fred Halsted's classic experimental homo hardcore flick *LA Plays Itself* (1972), the sinister quasi-vampiric Hollywood Hills brother-sister duo that drain swingers of their precious sanguine fluids in *The Black Room* (1982) co-directed by Elly Kenner and Norman Thaddeus Vane, or the slow-burning post-Lynchian lunacy of the Coen brothers' cryptically contra kosher *Barton Fink* (1991), I love films that absolutely annihilate the Hollywood dream and present Tinseltown as a nefarious nightmare that the Devil himself would be proud to call home. After all, how else can one think of a patently phony place involved in greatly profiting from a global social engineering project that regularly defecates out putrid cinematic products that teach women promiscuity and abortions are a form of liberation, portray perverts and aberrossexuals as lovable bourgeois types, and have even gone as far as attempting to pass off Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand as highly desirable sex symbols, among other distinctly despicable things. While she was mostly a dumb twat that undoubtedly inspired countless young women to ruin their lives, Marilyn Monroe was probably onto something when she said, "Hollywood is a place where they'll pay you a thousand dollars for a kiss and fifty cents for your soul." Of course, considering Monroe's degenerate background, I would wager that *The Day of the Locust* is more reliable in terms of ultimately demonstrating that one only has to simply live in Hollywood to lose one's soul and that the studios need not sacrifice fifty cents to ensnare the average person. After all, most people are willing to shell out their own hard-earned cash to have Hollywood colonize their minds with anti-human trash that pollutes their psyche and defiles their soul. Somehow, I think this will eventually contribute to something more horrifying holocaustic than the ending of Schlesinger's film, but then again I stopped going to movies theater to see blockbuster schlock about a decade ago because I much prefer the life-affirming misery and misanthropy of Fassbinder and Bergman to the sugar-coated celluloid cyanide of Spielberg and Singer. Speaking of Spielberg, we can at least partly credit him and his early blockbusters like *Jaws* (1975) for helping to kill the artistic auteur cinema of the so-called New Hollywood era that *The Day of the Locust* belongs to. While Spielberg probably wields more international influence than the average Western European prime minister, films like *Under the Silver Lake* and shows like *Million Dollar Extreme Presents: World Peace* (2016) ultimately demonstrate that the true Faustian spirit is still not completely

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conquered.
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John Schlesinger (1976)

As far as film (sub)genres go, there is probably none that is more patently oxymoronic and outstandingly absurd than the “Jewish Thriller,” which is exactly how queer British-Jewish auteur John Schlesinger (*Billy Liar*, *Darling*) described his fairly commercially and critically successful film *Marathon Man* (1976) starring Dustin Hoffman as a somewhat unlikable Jewish doctoral candidate and legendary British master actor Laurence Olivier as a murderously greedy and vain Nazi criminal criminal who is forced to resume his favorite old pastime of elegantly torturing Israelites with his masterful Aryan dental skills. If Ronald Neame’s *The Odessa File* (1974), Franklin J. Schaffner’s badly botched Ira Levin adaptation *The Boys from Brazil* (1978) starring alpha-white-liberal Gregory Peck in the hilarious against-type role of Dr. Josef ‘Angel of Death’ Mengele, George Roy Hill’s *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984), Éric Rochant’s *Les patriots* (1994) aka *The Patriots*, Eytan Fox’s *Walk On Water* (2004), and Stephen Spielberg’s *Munich* (2005) are notable examples of the Jewish thriller than I can certainly completely do without the entire subgenre, yet somehow I found Schlesinger’s film to be strangely enthralling, especially for a highly commercial movie that was directed by an exceedingly effete Hebraic queen who was not exactly suited for such a film and who apparently mainly opted to take on the fairly masculine project because his previous film—the rather underrated cult flick *The Day of the Locust* (1975)—was an abject commercial and critical failure and, as source writer William Goldman once revealed, he was “terrified he was dead in Hollywood.” Of course, Schlesinger made the right decision, as the film ultimately proved to be his last extremely successful cinematic work, though it has never really been considered a masterpiece and its popularity surely has dwindled as the decades have passed. It should also be noted that, despite being an extremely Jewish film in many regards, Schlesinger’s somewhat eccentric thriller is a rare Hollywood production that features various defective and even loathsome Hebraic characters. While certainly a piece of sleekly stylized kitsch like most thrillers, *Marathon Man* has enough memorable idiosyncrasy and preternatural paranoiac energy to warrant modern day reexamining, even if the world is already contaminated enough with goyim-gearred Zionist propaganda. Indeed, featuring a super sly blue-eyed Chinese hit man that gets in a homoerotic fight to the death with a macho gay Jew government secret agent, angry Auschwitz-esque German Shepherds that horrify the neurotic titular protagonist, scheming German shiksa spies, an unintentionally hilarious elderly Jew versus elderly Aryan road rage incident that is ignited by the extremely hostile and seemingly senile Hebrew and climaxes with both men dying in a mini urban holocaust after they accidentally crash their cars into an oil truck, and Laurence Olivier in the last great role of his career as a diamond-fetishizing Nazi war

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criminal that acts more like a stereotypical evil Jew than an evil Nazi, Marathon Man is a sort of conspicuously kosher Kafkaesque thriller that makes more allegorical references to the holocaust than Orson Welles' rather dark masterpiece *The Trial* (1962), albeit in executed in a less abstract and more organic fashion that makes one realize that auteur Schlesinger has a deep-seated and visceral fear and hatred of both Nazis and Germans. In fact, in an interview with his mischling half-Dutch nephew Ian Buruma featured in the book *Conversations with John Schlesinger* (2006), the director confessed in regard to his Teutophobia, "We all have prejudices, of course, and one of mine is a hatred of all things German, as a result of the Holocaust [...] Going to Germany after the war and even working there, in Berlin on Ian McEwan's *THE INNOCENT*, made me very conscious of my anti-German feelings. I never suffered personally at their hands, but I do remember a relative in Holland named Martin Schuster, who was in a wheelchair. Martin, who was much older than me, had the same birth date as I did and always used to remember my birthday. Then suddenly the birthday cards stopped. I heard subsequently that he had been sent to a concentration camp and was exterminated. I find it awfully difficult to divorce all that from my basic anti-German feelings." In other words, like many modern Jews, Schlesinger seems incapable of differentiating between Nazis and Germans and sees them both as sort of perennial mortal enemies. To Schlesinger's credit, his anti-Aryanism did not stop him from collaborating with Austrian master conductor and one-time Nazi party member Herbert von Karajan on a production of Giuseppe Verdi's classic opera *Un ballo in maschera* aka *A Masked Ball*.

Despite his keenly kosher hatred of krauts, Schlesinger, who had three German-born grandparents, was somewhat ironically raised with a deep appreciation for German high culture and he has even expressed a deep appreciation for both antisemitic proto-Nazi composer Richard Wagner and (in)famous Third Reich filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, not to mention the fact he had an equal appreciation for English culture and the royal family, hence his fairly European sensibility as a filmmaker. Indeed, *Marathon Man* is what you might expect if the eccentric queer son of Jean-Pierre Melville and Ida Lupino made a respectable failed attempt to direct a big budget Mossad recruitment video disguised as a Hollywood thriller. Admittedly, as much as I would typically rather perform cunnilingus on the decaying corpse of an AIDS-ridden negress crack whore than watch another Zionist celluloid turd, Schlesinger's film somehow manages to transcend the whole Israeli agitprop angle and becomes something more bizarre as a cinematic that seems more like an incriminating Hebraic horror film that exposes some of the more absurd forms of Judaic paranoia and thus actually somehow manages to enable less than philo-Semitic individuals like myself to empathize with the curious kosher plight of a Jewish doctoral student that proudly identifies as a liberal pacifist. Additionally, while he is not depicted absurdly shooting Jews for target practice while drunk with his beer belly hanging out from the com-

fort of his chateau balcony like the highly fictionalized Amon Göth featured in Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), the Mengele-esque Nazi war criminal depicted in Schlesinger's film is easily the most enthrallingly evil and delightfully menacing Hollywood screen Nazi I have ever encountered, as a sort of mystifying and highly secretive National Socialist war criminal that is plagued with many of the highly stereotypical negative flaws of his Jewish enemies, namely a fiendish fetish for diamonds and material wealth. On the other hand, I have never seen a film that featured so many hordes of weird and creepy Jews flooding city streets that range from hysterical Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors to slimy jewelry dealers to packs of yarmulke-sporting Orthodox pups. In short, sometimes *Marathon Man* feels like it could be renamed *Dawn of the Judaics* or *Day of the Jews*. Indeed, due to the film's sometimes *cinéma-vérité* style and various scenes featuring Jews in medieval orthodox garb crowding the streets of the overtly dirty and sleazy NYC diamond district, I sometimes felt like I was watching a Hollywood big budget remake of Fritz Hippler's Nazi agitprop piece *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew*.

When Schlesinger proudly referred to *Marathon Man* as a "Jewish Thriller," he was not just trying to be cute, witty, or ironic, or as he stated himself to *Buruma*, "I always called it my Jewish thriller because that aspect of it was quite important. I remember asking Laurence Olivier whether it would be a good idea for him to grow a little [Hitler] mustache, and he said: 'No, no, no. Don't you think you should use to the maximum my mean little mouth?' I could see his point." Of course, Schlesinger, star Dustin Hoffman, and novelist/screenwriter William Goldman are not the only Hebraic ingredients of the film, which was co-produced by Paramount Pictures studio head Robert Evans (real name Robert J. Shapera) and fellow Jew Sidney Beckerman (*Kelly's Heroes*, *Red Dawn*). Quite atypical in many ways for both a Hebrew and Hollywood studio head, Evans—a hardly humorless fellow that, at the mere age of 12, annoyed his family members by reinventing himself as a "Jewish Nazi" and playing a Nazi concentration camp colonel on "Radio Mystery Theater"—was, by most accounts, an extremely handsome, charming, likeable, loyal, and warm fellow that Peter Biskind once described as, "...very much the ladies' man, a sharp dresser given to sartorial clichés like suede jeans and gold chains. Had he not had the good fortune to meet [Charles] Bluhdorn, he might well have spent his youth as a gigolo, squirting dowagers around the spas of Europe." More or less a model turned brief reluctant actor turned studio head, totally inexperienced but quite eager go-getter Evans managed to totally revamp Paramount and its image and took it from being the ninth largest studio in Hollywood to the most successful during the 1970s as the man behind important and highly successful movies like Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Chinatown* (1974), Hal Ashby's *Harold and Maude* (1971), Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972), among countless others. Despite hating the project and assuming it would be a major commercial

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failure (which it was), Evans still had the integrity to back Schlesinger's artistic vision on *The Day of the Locust*, but more importantly the studio head was also the man responsible for giving Laurence Olivier back his dignity by securing him the main villain role in *Marathon Man* at a time when no one would hire the legendary British actor because he was considered uninsurable since he was cancer-ridden. In the end, not only did Olivier earn an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his performance, but his cancer also went into remission and he lived for another 13 years, with his final acting performance in any medium being that of a wheelchair-bound WWII war veteran in Derek Jarman's rather underrated Benjamin Britten adaptation *War Requiem* (1989).

In an opening sequence that somewhat seems like a sadistic overtly Jewish take on *Grumpy Old Men* (1993), an elderly 72-year-old ex-Nazi that looks Jewish named Klaus Szell (played by German-born vaudevillian performer Ben Dova, who was both a survivor and suspect in the explosion of the Hindenburg) and a equally old and disgruntled four-eyed German-hating Jew that looks like he could be Woody Allen's father get in a sort of pointlessly tragic slapstick road rage car chase that ultimately results in both of their deaths after they crash into a oil truck in New York City during Yom Kippur while tons of baffled orthodox Jews watch on. This literal holocaust will ultimately have tragic unexpected consequences for unwitting protagonist Thomas 'Babe' Levy (Dustin Hoffman), who is a self-proclaimed "liberal pacifist" that will have to face the wrath of shadowy fugitive Nazi war criminal named Dr. Christian Szell (Laurence Olivier), whose brother Klaus was the man that died in the car crash. Indeed, Szell's brother's death acts as a catalyst to the film's entire plot. While Babe believes that his big brother Henry 'Doc' Levy (Roy Scheider) is a capitalist whore that works in the oil business, he is actually member of a highly secret and supremely morally bankrupt government agency called 'The Division,' which does dubious jobs that the FBI lacks the capacity to do and the CIA does not want to touch. While both a government agent and Jew, Doc is involved in an elaborate international network of couriers who transport diamonds that were stolen during World War II from wealthy Jews seeking to flee Germany for the benefit of Dr. Szell, who now lives a Mengele-esque life of luxury in South America on the wealth that he has acquired as a result of the jewels that he plundered from the Jews while working as a dentist in a concentration camp. Initially becoming rich off the gold teeth that he would pull out of the mouths of Jewish prisoners, Szell eventually worked his way up to diamonds. As a result of his brother's unexpected death, Szell has become paranoid that his couriers, especially Jew Doc Levy, intend on stealing his diamond stash, which he has locked away in a safe deposit box in Manhattan. Since his brother was the only other person that had a key to his fortune, Szell presumes that all his couriers are after his wealth and decides to begin liquidating them, even though he has nil concrete evidence to support his paranoid delusions. Unfortunately for Szell, he makes

that mistake of beginning to go after Babe Levy who, although a self-righteous college doctoral candidate, has a lot of pent up rage and hatred because his father committed suicide after he lost his job and his reputation was ruined during the Communist witch hunts of the Joseph McCarthy era. Of course, in the end, destroying a Nazi war criminal and his entire operation becomes the ultimate form of redemption for left-wing Jew Babe, who seems to have been waiting his entire life for someone to blame for his kosher commie father's self-inflicted death.

As the title of the film somewhat hints, pint-sized yet strong-willed Marathon Man protagonist Babe is an avid runner and he is especially obsessed with Ethiopian double Olympic marathon champion Abebe Bikila as indicated by photographs of the African champ hanging on his apartment wall and stock footage of the proud barefoot runner featured at the beginning of the film. Babe is also somewhat of a paranoid who almost seems to suffer a mental breakdown when he witnesses a German Shepherd attempting to bite a fellow runner at a local park, as if the canine gives him visions of Auschwitz, even though he is not a Holocaust survivor. Of course, as someone whose father committed suicide after having his career ruined due to highly political reasons, Babe has a special sensitivity when it comes to signs of imminent danger and conspiracy. Although apparently a fairly intelligent individual as one of only four individuals that was selected for a history Ph.D. seminar that had 200 applicants, Babe seems to lack common sense and lives like a virtual bum in an extremely dirty, trash-covered studio apartment in a city ghetto where he is routinely mocked and called names like "creep," "chicken," and "twinkle-toes" by local criminally-inclined deadbeat Puerto Rican thugs. Of course, being a stereotypical passive-aggressive Jewish intellectual, Babe does not dare to defend himself against the exceptionally swarthy Hispanic quarterons, octroons and quintroons that lurk around his less than luxurious neighborhood. Indeed, it is only when his sole brother is murdered and his own life becomes extremely endangered that Babe develops the sort of testicular fortitude it takes to take serious action and defend himself like a man.

One day while studying at a table in the library at Columbia University, an extremely beautiful blonde babe with a Germanic accent named Elsa Opel (Swiss actress Marthe Keller of John Frankenheimer's *Black Sunday* (1977) and European arthouse works like Romuald Karmakar's *Nightsongs* (2004)) asks Babe a question about extremely corrupt 19th-century NYC politician William M. 'Boss' Tweed, but then abruptly exits the building after arousing protagonist's attention, thus hinting that she is a serious cocktease. Luckily, Babe thinks fast and steals one of Elsa's self-addressed books before she leaves, thus giving him a reason to chase her down and hit on her. While Babe demonstrates that he has about as much charisma as a wet paper bag, Elsa reluctantly agrees to go on a date with him and, somewhat improbably considering the protagonist's lack

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of looks and wealth, a hot and heavy romance begins between the two. Indeed, somehow a short and dorky Jew-boy and a tall and statuesque Aryanness prove to be both quite emotionally and sexually compatible, or so it initially seems. Of course, unbeknownst to Babe, Elsa is a Mata Hari-esque hired-whore of sorts who was contracted by Dr. Szell to spy on him. In fact, when his brother Doc eventually comes to town and provides irrefutable proof that Elsa has been lying to him and thus probably has unsavory ulterior motives, hopelessly lovestruck bitch-boy Babe still refuses to believe that he has been emotionally cuckolded by a conniving kraut cunt who hardly has his best interests in mind. Somewhat intriguingly, Elsa ultimately proves to be a somewhat reluctant secondary femme fatale whose cold and calculating deceptions are ultimately put to shame by an inordinately well dressed and groomed male government agent with a somewhat questionable sexual persuasion.

After being nearly killed by a blue-eyed Chinaman named Chen (James Wing Wong) while in Paris, Doc realizes that his clock is ticking and that it is only a matter of time before Dr. Szell has him exterminated, thus he decides to immediately fly to NYC and pay a visit to his little baby brother Babe. Of course, unbeknownst to Doc, Szell is already monitoring Babe's behavior via hired whore Elsa. In fact, while romantically strolling in a local park, Babe and Elsa are mugged, beaten, and robbed by two well dressed middle-aged men that hardly resemble the sort of ghetto thugs that typically mug people. Not surprisingly, these two suavely dressed muggers, Karl (Richard Bright of *The Godfather* trilogy) and Erhardt (blacklisted Jewish communist Marc Lawrence in a most ironic role), are eventually revealed to be Dr. Szell's two foremost Nazi henchmen. When Doc arrives in NYC, he plays a sort of sick trick on his little brother by breaking into his apartment in the middle of the night while he is asleep and playfully smothering him with his own pillow like he is trying to kill them. While the two estranged brothers are quite happy to see one another, Doc becomes immediately annoyed when Babe attempts to show him research documents proving that their suicidal leftist intellectual father was innocent and angrily states to his little bro, "You think he wanted you to be throwing your life away on this shit? [...] Nothing you write is going to change anything. It's over. Forget it." When Babe asks him if he should become a "corporate hustler" just like him, Doc exposes his glaring sense of hopelessness and despair by replying, "No. My life's throw away, anyway." Of course, Doc does not dare reveal that he is a secret government agent who works for a Nazi war criminal that is trying to kill him. Naturally, when Babe reveals to him that he and Elsa were mugged by two elegantly dressed men that wore similar suits to his own, Doc immediately suspects Dr. Szell's involvement, though he makes the mistake of saying nothing to his brother.

When Doc takes Babe and Elsa out for lunch at a fancy French restaurant where the sloppy protagonist becomes annoyed when the waiter forces him to

wear a tie, it does not take long for the naturally suspicious secret government agent to figure out that his little bro's ladylove is a femme fatale who he presumes works for Dr. Szell. Indeed, Doc exposes the fact that Elsa is lying about her identity and background by tricking her into claiming that she grew up near an imaginary mountain in Switzerland that he simply made up. When Doc reveals she is German instead of Swiss and accuses her of having ulterior motives, Elsa somewhat dubiously cries in her defense, "Why don't you ask me if I care for him?" and then runs out of the restaurant like an embarrassed child. While Doc tries to warn Babe, "She's a phony. She's after something. Can't you see it?," the pathetically pussy-whipped protagonist replies, "Why don't you stay out of it?" and then also leaves the restaurant. Later that night, Doc shows up late to a meeting with Dr. Szell and his henchmen and immediately accuses the old Nazi of trying to assassinate him. Naturally, Doc also berates Szell for getting involved with his brother, stating, "It is a violation. We do not involve family. We never involve family," to which the deceptively mild-mannered old Aryan replies, "Think of it as a warning, nothing more." Needless to say, Doc makes a big mistake when he slaps Szell to the ground and states "Think of that as a warning and nothing more." Of course, Doc makes an even bigger mistake when Szell asks him if he can be trusted and he replies "No" and then adds, "Can I be candid? I couldn't give a fuck about you—Uhh!" Rather unfortunately, Doc does not get to finish what he says because Szell abruptly fatally stabs him in the gut with a large retractable blade that he has concealed under his sleeve.

While Doc manages to stumble all the way back to Babe's apartment before completely croaking, he is unable to warn his quite unwitting brother that he is in grave danger and simply succumbs to his wounds while saying the protagonist's name. Thankfully, in terms of both the film's tone and storyline, things only get all the more bizarre from there. Indeed, in an eerily Kafkaesque scene that screams neurotic Hebraic paranoia, Babe practically suffers a total mental breakdown when police come by his apartment and question him about his brother's somewhat dubious death. While on the verge of crying hysterically in front half a dozen or so exceedingly stoic cops that seem totally unimpressed with the protagonist's histrionics, Babe accuses them of trying to interrogate like he is a criminal. Needless to say, when Doc's coworker Peter Janeway (William Devane) shows up and reveals to the protagonist that his brother was not a "corporate hustler" after all, but instead a government secret agent, he is left all the more shocked and confused. As Janeway states to Babe in regard to his employer, "Now, when the gap gets too large between what the FBI can handle effectively and what the CIA doesn't want to deal with, that's where we come in...The Division." Janeway also informs Babe that the same people that killed Doc will also probably go after him and that he wants to use him as "possible bait" to catch his brother's killer(s). Of course, as fits the sometimes Kafkaian logic of the film, Janeway is actually a dirty double agent that is working with Szell. To

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make matters all the more bizarre, despite betraying him and ultimately playing a role in his death, Janeway was also tough guy Doc's secret gay lover, though this is never made all that overt in the film like it was in the source novel. In fact, the only part of the film that hints of the secret gay love affair between the two secret agents is a scene early on in the flick where Doc talks to some unidentified person on the phone while in Paris and states to them in an aggressively salacious fashion, "Janey. Well, London was hectic, but I'm fair. Just fair. Listen, why don't you hop into a cab and get your ass over here? I've got plenty of room. Oh, screw appearances. I miss you [...] Listen, Janey, why don't you finish what you're doing and get your ass over here." Of course, 'Janey' is Doc's pooft pet name for Janeway and the duplicitous double agent was probably reluctant to meet up with his boy toy because he felt guilty since he was involved with plotting to have him killed. In that regard, Janeway is in some ways more despicable and loathsome than Szell.

In what literally feels like only minutes after Janeway leaves and his brother's corpse is taken away in a body-bag, Dr. Szell's dapperly dressed neo-Gestapo goons Karl and Erhardt break into Babe's apartment while he is bathing and daydreaming about his father's suicide and then proceed to begin drowning the protagonist in his own bath water until he is knocked unconscious. When Babe eventually regains consciousness, he finds himself strapped to a chair in a large, brightly lit, and mostly empty warehouse room where he is eventually visited by Dr. Szell, who begins repeatedly asking the protagonist: "Is it safe?" Naturally, poor Babe has no clue who Dr. Szell is or what he wants from him. Although initially proclaiming that he has no idea what Dr. Szell is talking about when he asks him if it is safe, Babe's inner arrogant passive-aggressive Jewish comedian eventually emerges and he states, "No, it's no safe. It's...very dangerous. Be careful." Of course, Dr. Szell does not find Babe's comment to be funny and reacts to it by whipping out some rather intimidating dental tools and proceeding to look at the protagonist's teeth and rebuking for not taking care of them properly since he has a cavity. When Babe refuses to answer whether it is "safe" or not after he is asked a couple more times, Szell proceeds to torture Babe by digging into his cavity with one of dentistry tools, though the good doctor soon relieves the protagonist pain by applying oil of cloves to his tooth and then gloats, "Isn't that remarkable? Simple oil of cloves, and how amazing the results. Life can be that simple. Relief...discomfort." After the interrogation, Babe is brought to a sort of makeshift cell where he is soon abruptly rescued by Janeway, who ostensibly kills both Karl and Erhardt.

While driving away in the getaway car after escaping from Dr. Szell's warehouse, Janeway ultimately reveals to Babe all the things that he has probably wanted to know since his brother was killed, stating to the discernibly startled protagonist, "Those two guys I just wasted worked for a man named Christian Szell [...] He ran the experimental camp at Auschwitz, where they called him

the 'White Angel,' the 'Weisse Engel,' because he had this incredible head of white hair. He's probably the wealthiest and most-wanted Nazi left alive, and he's hiding out somewhere in Uruguay. In 1945, Szell let it be known around Auschwitz that he could provide escape for any Jew who was willing to pay the price. He started out with gold, naturally, but very quickly worked his way up to diamonds [...] Szell saw the end early and he snuck his brother into America with his diamonds. They're right here, in New York, in a safe deposit box. Szell's brother had the key. The only other key was kept by Szell in Uruguay. And now if he has to come out of hiding to use it, he's gonna expose himself to incredible risk. Well, everything worked out fine, until his brother got killed in a head-on collision with an oil truck." At this point, Babe realizes that the demented dentist that tortured him is actually the 'Weisse Engel' that Janeway just told him about, albeit with a shaved head. When Babe asks Janeway if his brother worked for Szell, Janeway gets somewhat agitated in a somewhat phony smart-ass fashion and excitedly replies, "No! He worked for us. Everything we do cuts both ways. Szell ratted on all of his buddies. He kept track of all the old Nazis throughout the world. Whenever we wanted to bring one of them in, we went to Szell." Unfortunately, Babe is in for quite the shock when Janeway drives him back to Szell's warehouse after he fails to tell the government agent what he wants to hear when he asks if he brother told him any important information before he died. Indeed, aside from the fact that he had no idea that Janeway is a double agent, Babe becomes shocked to the point of suffering a hysterical fit upon seeing that Karl and Erhardt are still alive and then begins screaming at his dead brother's treacherous ex-beau while in a state of complete and utter shock, "I saw you kill them! You killed them! You killed them! You killed them! You fucking killed them! You killed my brother!"

Needless to say, after being delivered back to the warehouse, Dr. Szell immediately begins torturing Babe again and does so by drilling a healthy tooth in the protagonist's mouth since it is "infinitely more sensitive" in comparison to a decaying tooth. After the unnerving dental torture session, Szell becomes completely convinced that little Babe knows nothing and states to Janeway, "He knew nothing. If he had known, he would have told. Get rid of him." While Szell tells his men liquidate Babe since he knows too much about the Nazi fugitive, the protagonist manages to break free from his enemies and after a long chase he manages to outrun Karl, Erhardt, and Janeway due to his trusty marathon runner skills, as if all of his obsessive training was leading up to this one quite critical life or death situation. After giving a shady negro taxi driver his dead brother's expensive Rolex watch for a ride back to his apartment and a dime, Babe uses the latter to call Elsa on a payphone at 5:00am to tell her to pick him up at drug store at 51st and Broadway in a hour. Since he does not want to be detected by Janeway and Szell's men, Babe offers a Puerto Rican thug named Melendez (Tito Goya of Andy Warhol's *Bad* (1977) and the prison cult

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flick *Short Eyes* (1977)) all his personal belongings in his apartment to break into said apartment and retrieve the handgun that his father used to kill himself with. While Elsa picks up Babe, the protagonist begins to suspect that she is one of Szell's employees when she drives him to a remote country house that ultimately proves to have been owned by Szell's deceased brother. Not long after Babe takes Elsa hostage at gunpoint after getting her to admit that she works for Szell, Janeway, Karl, and Erhardt show up in a car and the protagonist threatens them by lying and telling them that he has called the cops and that they are on their way. Of course, it is not long before one of Szell's men attempts to whip out a gun and shoot the protagonist, but luckily Babe somehow manages to magically shoot and kill both Karl and Erhardt before they can kill him. At this point, Janeway pretends to offer Babe a peace offering of sorts by declaring "I'll give you Szell for your brother" and then telling him where he can find the murderously miserly Nazi war criminal. Not surprisingly, when Babe turns around and begins to leave, Janeway makes a cowardly attempt to shoot him in the back, but luckily Elsa warns the protagonist. While Babe manages to shoot and kill Janeway before he can kill him, the double agent has time to shoot and kill Elsa as revenge for warning the protagonist. Indeed, Elsa might have been a lying whore, but she ultimately becomes a martyr of love in the end.

In what ultimately has to be a particularly paranoid Nazi war criminal's worst nightmare, Dr. Szell finds himself in a sort of super surreal Jewish diamond ghetto that feels like some sort of kosher purgatory and is flooded with hordes of both Orthodox and assimilated Jews, including extremely aggressive jewelers that naturally annoy the shit out of the elderly Aryan dentist. Somewhat magically, not one but two holocaust survivors manage to recognize Dr. Szell, including an elderly Jewess who causes a huge scene after nearly getting hit by a car while attempting to chase down her former tormentor while hysterically screaming "White Angel" in German. When an elderly Hebrew with a foggy memory begins to recognize Szell after briefly meeting him at a jewelry store, the good doctor pretends he is a fellow holocaust survivor that fled Germany for London in 1933. When the old Jew's memory eventually comes back and he realizes that Szell is actually the dreaded White Angel, he chases him down and attempts to make a citizen's arrest, so the old Nazi is forced to slit his rather wrinkly throat. Unfortunately, Dr. Szell is not so lucky when it comes to young chosenites, as Babe pulls a gun on him soon after he gleefully retrieves his diamonds from the safety deposit box that he had them stored in. Demonstrating that he is not completely humorless, at least when it comes to tormenting his enemies, Babe states upon surprising Dr. Szell from behind, "It's not safe" and then forces him at gunpoint to walk to a somewhat ominous water treatment plant in Central Park. While Szell is delighted when Babe tells him that he has no interest in keeping his diamonds, he gets somewhat offended when the protagonist tells him that he can keep as many of the expensive rocks that

he can swallow and then forces him to eat one. While all this is going on, Babe sadistically taunts Szell by throwing handfuls of diamonds at him, which are ultimately lost in water below them. After having trouble swallowing just one diamond, Szell refuses to eat anymore, stating in a somewhat aristocratic fashion, "No. You'll have to shoot me." At this point, Szell proceeds to accuse Babe of being too much of a coward to shoot him, stating just before rudely spitting in his face, "You're too weak. Your father was weak in his way, your brother in his, now you in yours. You're all so predictable." Naturally, Babe becomes quite upset at this point and proceeds to lunge at Szell and ultimately drops his gun in the process. After dropping his gun, Szell reveals the large blade he has hidden under his sleeve and proceeds to attempt to strike Babe, who opts to throw an open briefcase containing the remaining diamonds down a stairwell that leads to water. Of course, Szell instantly forgets about his fight with Babe and dives down the stairwell, only to absurdly commit accidental suicide in the process as a result of tripping after impaling himself with his own blade. Indeed, in what is arguably the mostly seemingly unintentionally ironic and insanely improbable conclusion in film history, a young Jew chooses personal integrity over a life of fortune and guaranteed financial security and in the process accidentally causes a sinisterly parsimonious Shylock-esque Nazi war criminal that is greedier than kosher swindler Bernie Madoff to kill himself, thus giving him his much desired revenge but also leaving him completely free of the guilt of killing an elderly man. In the end, Babe also demonstrates that he has gotten over his Oedipal hang-ups, as he tosses his father's pistol into a river. Undoubtedly, in Babe's mind, causing the demise of Dr. Szell and his henchmen was a sort of therapeutic means for him to feel like he had avenged his father against the supposedly antisemitic McCarthyites that ruined both his life and career and, in the process, destroyed both the protagonist's childhood and overall mental well-being.

Notably, apparently as a result of Herr Hoffman, who at that point in his career was already acting like a supreme primadonna, being dissatisfied with the original ending of the source novel, which involves Babe sadistically taunting and killing Dr. Szell and thus in the process becoming just as sadistic and inhumane as his Nazi enemy, perennial script doctor Robert Towne (another member of the tribe whose real name is Robert Bertram Schwartz) was brought in by Robert Evans to rewrite the ending and came up with the patently preposterous idea of a young Jew forcing a Nazi war criminal to eat diamonds. Somewhat humorously, source novelist and screenwriter William Goldman, who felt his whole Nietzschean theme of, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you," had been ruined, was quite vocal about his disgust for the film's the new Hollywood-esque ending. In fact, in the featurette *Going the Distance: Remembering 'Marathon Man'* (2001), Goldman states of Towne's fairly phony and uniquely improbable ending, "I thought it was Holly-

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wood horseshit,” which is certainly a more than charitable way to describe it. Indeed, as virtually all Jewish holidays and the constant attacks against both Germans and Europeans/European-Americans in contemporary Hollywood and the mainstream media clearly demonstrate, there is nothing quite like the venomous and oftentimes craven ruthlessness of Jewish vengeance, yet *Marathon Man* concludes with an unintentionally absurd feel-good cop-out ending where the inordinately principled Jewish liberal pacifist protagonist gets so lucky that he accidentally causes the death of his brother’s killer while simultaneously humiliating and degrading the once highly powerful Nazi war criminal, thereupon completely keeping his much cherished moral principles intact, as if such an obscenely ideal outcome has anything to do with real-life (of course, in his superior films *Midnight Cowboy* and *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, Schlesinger would clearly demonstrate that he is not exactly an optimist). Thankfully, the moral and philosophical hypocrisies of ostensibly pacifistic left-wing Jewish intellectual types are exposed throughout the film in somewhat subtle ways, not least of all in a scene where the protagonist’s brother Doc states to him, “For a liberal pacifist, you’ve got some sense of vengeance.” Indeed, Babe may lack the testicular fortitude to physically fight and confront people, but his entire life is driven by a deep-seated desire to avenge his disgraced father, even if he refuses to admit it himself, hence why he initially neglects to admit to his Judaic professor Biesenthal that his dissertation on “The use of tyranny in American political life” will focus on the McCarthy witch-hunts that destroyed his father. Notably, Biesenthal, who was a protege of the protagonist’s father, states to Babe regarding his father’s demise, “I think he was guilty. I think he was guilty of being arrogant and brilliant and of being naïve. He was guilty of not being able to cope with the humiliation of being dismissed. But of the charges, I know he was innocent. And, if it matters, Levy, I wept the day he died.” Of course, Babe, who seems to suffer from the same sort of self-deceptive arrogance and naivety as his father, seems to ignore Biesenthal’s kind critique of his dead daddy as he wants to remember his progenitor as a total innocent, hence his remark to the professor, “Sir, I don’t have to worry about clearing him because he was innocent.”

Of course, *Marathon Man* is not only a thinly veiled act of quasi-artistic vengeance against Germans and Nazis, but also U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy and so-called ‘McCarthyism,’ which has been the object of incessant ridicule and scorn by Hollywood ever since at least the release of half-Hebrew John Frankenheimer noir-ish suspense-thriller *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962). Indeed, good little shabbos goy actors and filmmakers like George Clooney demonstrate their allegiance to Judaic leftists by directing wholly worthless and absurdly artless big budget agitprop pieces disguised as serious filmic art like *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005), which are predictably honored with tons of awards and award nominations simply because of their asinine anti-McCarthy messages. Not surprisingly, *Marathon Man* even goes so far as to compare the

United States Government and U.S. Government secret agents with the Third Reich and members of Schutzstaffel. Indeed, during one particularly notable scene in the film that takes place right after the protagonist is tortured by the Nazi villain, double agent Janeway remarks to Dr. Szell after being accused of using underhanded tactics, "I'm just doing my job. I believe in my country" and the old National Socialist stoically replies, "So did we all," though the viewer suspects that neither of them really cares about their country and instead has exploited powerful positions for solely opportunistic reasons. After all, as a closet homosexual who lives a constant life of deception, Janeway probably has no loyalty to anyone or anything and has merely exploited his keen survival instincts as a secret member of a much maligned sexual minority to get ahead in life. Of course, history has demonstrated this is not an uncommon phenomenon among homosexuals. In fact, director Schlesinger was well acquainted with the story of the British double agents of Cambridge Spy Ring as recruited by NKVD officer and Soviet scout Arnold Deutsch, who was incidentally the cousin of prominent English Jewish movie theater chain owner Oscar Deutsch. In fact, Schlesinger considered *An Englishman Abroad* (1983)—a 60-minute BBC TV production written by English queer playwright Alan Bennett about gay Cambridge Spy Ring member Guy Burgess, who was also the subject of Marek Kanievski's critically acclaimed Julian Mitchell adaptation *Another Country* (1984) starring Rupert Everett—to be one of his personal favorites of the films he had directed. Rather revealing, Kanievski's *Another Country* points to so-called homophobia as being one of the reasons as to why Burgess opted to betray his country and spy for the commie cause, even though homosexuality was a serious crime in the Soviet Union. Naturally, one of the reasons McCarthy is still so ruthlessly attacked by Hollywood is because he was right about commie infiltration as demonstrated by the fact that America has degenerated into a anti-Christian multicultural shithole where a Zionist Jewish Trotskyite like Bernie Sanders, who belonged to the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) and volunteered at Sha'ar HaAmakim kibbutz in northern Israel, could be considered an ideal presidential candidate among largely university educated young people who do not even realize that the pseudo-intellectual twaddle that they were brainwashed with while in college was largely inspired by the vengeful anti-European theories of highly scornful and resentful Jewish émigrés of the Frankfurt School like Herbert "Father of the New Left" Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno who had committed their life's work to destroying Occidental Civilization because Uncle Adolf kicked them out of Europe and sent their family members to concentration camps (though it should be noted that they were all already well committed to the anti-Aryan cause long before the Nazi takeover). Undoubtedly, after obtaining his doctorate in history, the protagonist of *Marathon Man* would probably dedicate his life to writing hardly historically accurate swill about how innately evil, racist, sexist, and homopho-

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bic Europeans are and how the United States is an evil fascist empire that is run by psychopathic WASPs. As for Schlesinger, he had good reason to loathe McCarthy, as the U.S. Senator linked communism and homosexuality with mental instability and even once hilariously stated to a reporter, “If you want to be against McCarthy, boys, you’ve got to be either a Communist or a cocksucker.” Of course, considering the close intersecting ties of the political homos and dykes of the LGBT movement, colored crybabies of the Black Lives Matter movement, and countless left-wing Jewish groups, it seems that McCarthy was quite prophetic and that, if anything, he actually underestimated his enemies and the sort of corrosive effect that they would ultimately have on the United States.

Somewhat ironically, it was sod director John Schlesinger that ultimately opted to obscure the gay subtext of *Marathon Man*, though it was apparently for largely artistic reasons. Indeed, as Schlesinger told his nephew Buruma in regard to an important revelational scene that he decided to cut from the film where the protagonist learns that his macho brother is actually a homo, “There was a wonderful moment in *MARATHON MAN*, the final sequence, when he had a very long speech, which was lifted from the boo, in which he [Olivier] said to Dustin Hoffman: ‘There are things that you must know about your brother. Your brother was a HOMOSEXUAL!’ And it was sort of shouted out in such a hammy way that I had to cut it.” Of course, it was also probably to the commercial benefit of the film that the gay subtext was dropped, even if said gay subtext was not exactly pro-gay (incidentally, Schlesinger was criticized by gay groups when *Midnight Cowboy* was released because they felt that the film featured an unflattering portrayal of homosexuals). Undoubtedly, with the exception of his assumedly lost documentary *Israel: A Right to Live* (1967)—a Zionist propaganda piece that was written by London Jew Wolf Mankowitz and produced by kosher Canadian Herschel Saltzman that was apparently screened a couple times and then quickly fell into obscurity (though, according to William J. Mann in his bio *Edge of Midnight: The Life of John Schlesinger* (2005), the director never actually completed the film “due to ‘creative differences’ with the BBC”)—*Marathon Man* is surely Schlesinger’s most overtly and shamelessly Jewish film. To be fair, Schlesinger was a more ‘humanistic’ filmmaker than a ‘political’ one and he was quite vocal about the fact that he most enjoyed directing more personal gay-themed works like the quite autobiographical *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971), which depicts the somewhat pathetic life of a middle-aged gay Jewish doctor who suffers much heartbreak and loneliness as a result of having to share his young goy boy toy boyfriend with a bitchy divorced bourgeois broad in her mid-30s in what ultimately proves to be a decidedly doomed bizarre love triangle.

While a sometimes shameless piece of action-packed big budget kosher kitsch where Schlesinger has some fun by subtly subverting and ultimately sodomizing

genre conventions by portraying the most pernicious femme fatale a duplicitous crypto-cocksucker and including an interracial homoerotic fight scene (indeed, in the film's gayest fight scene, an almost completely naked Roy Scheider wrestles and ultimately breaks the neck of a blue-eyed Chinaman that attempts to strangle him to death with a garrote wire in a scenario that almost resembles *Born to Raise Hell*-esque sadomasochistic sod porn), *Marathon Man* is important in that it is rather incriminating as a rare mainstream movie that exposes a lot of things about the highly temperamental, paranoid, and vengeful people that operate in Hollywood, academia, and the government, especially those of the Judaic sort. Indeed, in many ways it is quite symbolic but also ironic that the film begins with a seemingly half-deranged old Jewish guy acting as an unwitting catalyst to a series of political murders and conspiracies after becoming enraged and acting like a villain in *Death Race 2000* because an equally elderly German guy is blocking his way on a Manhattan street. After all, had the savagely senile Semite controlled his tyrannical Hitler-esque temper and primal Teutophobia, he would have not only prevented himself from perishing in a mini-Shoah, but he would have also prevented the deaths of at least one gay Jew (Doc) and at least one Holocaust survivor (the elderly Jew with the concentration camp tattoo who identifies Szell near the end). It should be noted that the elderly Jewish, who totally initiates the road rage scenario, calls Szell's brother a "kraut meathead" and "limburger-loving schmuck" immediately upon realizing that he is German, but then has the hyper hypocritical gall to accuse the elderly Teuton of being an "anti-Semitic bastard" when he retorts by simply calling him a "Jude." Of course, this extremely hilarious racially-charged name-calling scenario can be seen as a sort of metaphor for the history of antisemitism and reminds me of the Polish proverb, "The Jew Cries Out in Pain as He Strikes You." Another great irony of the film is that the Nazi war criminal villain also proves to hardly be a real Nazi at all (at least as far as his ideals and actions prove), but instead an opportunistic traitor with stereotypically Jewish character flaws who ratted out all of his Nazi friends and who has no problem working with Jews in the diamond world. After all, aside from helping Jews to escape concentration camps if they provided him with their gold teeth and ratting out his own fellow Nazi war criminal friends to protect himself, Szell relied on Jews and homosexuals to act as couriers for him in his international black market diamond smuggling operation. In that sense, Szell is somewhat of a Hans Landa type figure, albeit without the sense of humor and propensity for childlike joy. Of course, also like Landa in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), Szell is easily the most intriguing and intimidating character featured in *Marathon Man*.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest ironies of *Marathon Man* is that one of the reasons that it is so captivating and thought-provoking is because it is such a hopeless mess of a movie that is full of plot holes and loose ends that allow the viewer to use their imagination and fill in the blanks when it comes to the more curi-

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ous aspects of the film (for example, Szell mentions Babe's fathers like he knew him, though it is never made clear how he knew him), thus making it nearly unwatchable for younger audiences who are used to being spoon-fed contrived movies where everything is spelled out for them and tied up in a neat package in the end. Indeed, ultimately the film is the quixotic result of an extremely effete gay European arthouse director attempting and failing to direct a highly accessible blockbuster for the unthinking masses. Of course, while Schlesinger had the honor of directing the only X-rated film ever to win the Academy Award for 'Best Picture' with *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), he tended to fail horribly when attempting to create contrived genre-oriented trash like the unintentionally hokey horror turd *The Believers* (1987) and his miserable mainstream gay swansong *The Next Best Thing* (2000) starring alpha-fag-hag Madonna and prince of the British screen poofs Rupert Everett. Despite his self-admitted hatred of Germans, Schlesinger belonged to the last generation of cultivated Jews with a deep respect and admiration for real European culture and not the prepackaged post-postmodern multicultural swill that pollutes the continent nowadays. Indeed, it is no coincidence that virtually all of the great Jewish filmmakers of film history, including Fritz Lang, Erich von Stroheim, Ernst Lubitsch, Max Ophüls, and Josef von Sternberg came from Austrian and German backgrounds, as Jews have no real culture of their own, hence the overall cultural and artistic poverty of contemporary Hollywood (one also cannot forget that Kubrick deeply immersed himself in European culture and more or less transformed himself from a lower-middleclass Brooklyn Jew into a cultivated Englishman, not to mention the fact that he married and reproduced with the niece of one of the greatest filmmakers of the Third Reich).

Although innately flawed and sometimes convoluted, *Marathon Man* is what I see as the ideal Hollywood thriller as a consistently enthralling roller-coaster of a movie that is equipped with just enough sophistication and eccentricity to appeal to serious cinephiles that care more about nuanced cinematic art than the sort of grandiose and bombastic blockbuster farts that culturally retarded anti-auteurs like Michael Bay and J.J. Abrams unleash on the worlds. If *The Day of the Locust*—a film that, like the 1939 Nathanael West novel of the same name that it is based, is a scathing and even sometimes grotesque satire of Hebraic Hollywood from a Hebraic perspective—unequivocally demonstrated that Schlesinger saw Tinseltown as sort of a vaudevillian brothel city, *Marathon Man* reveals that the auteur and probably a good percentage of his kinsmen, see anti-semitism (and, to a lesser extent, homo-hating), especially of the Nazi oriented sorts, as the ultimate real-life Kafkaesque nightmare. Indeed, the film may fail in many regards, but it indubitably succeeds in expressing the seemingly inborn pathological fear, paranoia, and obscene obsession that members of god's (seemingly forsaken) chosen tribe have for their enemies. Undoubtedly, I have seen more Nazi and holocaust themed films than I care to admit, yet *Marathon Man*

is the only one where I felt like I was able to actually understand the sort of crippling primordial fear and paranoia that seems to epitomize a lot of post-WWII Jews. While Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* exposes the sort of sadistic bloodlust that the more Zionist Jews have for their enemies, *Marathon Man* exposes in a sort of psychodramatic form the sort of internal hell that plagues the mind of a Jewish intellectual when he thinks of having to personally confront his enemies. Indeed, more than just a fictional Nazi war criminal, Laurence Olivier's Dr. Szell is like a composite of all the gentiles that Jews fear, including the stoic aristocrat, Nazi doctor, ruthless businessman, and evil goy genius. In other words, not only is *Marathon Man* that ultimate Jewish thriller, but it is also arguably the greatest Hebraic psychological horror flick, thus making it all the more fitting that it was produced by an inordinately masculine and handsome member of the tribe who once described himself as a "Jewish Nazi."

-Ty E

FREEZE FRAME
FREEZE FRAME

John Simpson (2004)

Freeze Frame is a British psychological thriller film set in a bleak, dark world similar to one pictured in *Dark City* or *City of Lost Children*. This is a potentially hazardous film to create, due to it being shown mostly in a third/first person format. Much of the film is spread onto 5 years worth of constant surveillance (In world)The plot involves comedian-turned-serious actor Lee Evans playing an increasingly paranoid and detached man who was suspected for a triple homicide years earlier. Now he is a wreck of a human being. He has himself under surveillance 24/7 so he can never be framed for another crime again. That is until a new crime emerges and his alibi is missing.The film has a very similar feel to that of other films such as *Fear X* and even traces of *V for Vendetta*. With each passing minute, the suspense grows fiercer. In some scenes, the acting is incredibly vivid and pristine. Lee Evans could be called a method actor. He shaved his head and eyebrows despite the warning that the eyebrows might not grow back.The film of course plays on the constant surveillance issue in the U.K. Citizens are being watched as the shop or walk down the streets. Surely an invasion of privacy and lends a hand to the dark voyeurism displayed in this film. Freeze Frame is a neo-noir set in a dreary dystopia, which lends much of its tension to the wonderful over-editing. With all the great factors of this film, it was hard to get furious when the ending got tangled up in it's self. Instead of a simple, or even a discernible ending, we are treated to a clusterfuck of an ending, leaving many questions unsolved. Despite the ending, it is still a grandly uncomfortable film and should be seen for it's dismal eroticity.

-Maq

PINK FLAMINGOS

John Waters (1972)

Without question, I have hated every single American city I have ever been to for more or less similar reasons, but Baltimore is easily the most patently pathetic, aesthetically and culturally repugnant, racially chaotic, culturally vacant, and innately irredeemable city I have ever had the grand misfortune of wasting time in, so naturally I can respect anyone who brings further disgrace to the decidedly decaying 'metropolis' and quasi-local auteur John Waters (*Desperate Living*, *Hairspray*) certainly did just that, if not ironically bringing some minor fame and hipster status to the post-industrial human garbage dump in the process. Bourgeois McCatholic by birth, Waters came of age in Lutherville, Maryland, a strikingly soulless suburb outside of Baltimore City, so he never really grew up around the pigtown hicks, totally degenerated German-Americans (although totally deracinated and mongrelized, Balt-krauts make up the largest white population of the city today), philistine Polaks, bottom of the barrel blacks, and other racial/cultural rabble that populate the third world-esque city, but luckily his posh upper-middleclass background gave him the monetary and educational resources he needed to more or less infamously immortalize these poor urban peasants, with *Pink Flamingos* (1972) aka John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* being his greatest tribute to people that are totally unworthy of tribute. Utilizing what he learned from watching the films of Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey, Herschell Gordon Lewis, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Mike Kuchar, Jack Smith, and various other exploitation/arthouse auteur filmmakers, Waters gave some major, if not absurdly amateurishly assembled, movie magic to the less than ideal untermensch idiosyncrasies of Balti-morons everywhere with *Pink Flamingos*, which would go on to be one of the most insanely iconoclastic, greatly grotesque, and supremely shocking Midnight Movies ever made. Featuring chicks with dicks, deranged drag queens, dainty dog-shit devouring by said deranged drag queens, infantile obese elderly women with egg fetishes, real live chickens being killed during violent white trash coitus, and festive trailer park cannibalism, among countless other examples of low-camp bad taste, *Pink Flamingos* is arguably the greatest cultural artifact created in Baltimore City since the sardonic scribbling of Nietzschean German-American sage H.L. Mencken. Aesthetic nihilism in its most tastelessly charming Charm City form, *Pink Flamingos*, not unlike *Harmony Korine Gummo* (1997), is irrefutable proof that 'celluloid art' can be sired out of even the most decidedly dysgenic culture-less hellholes. The superlatively sordid, sleazy, seedy, scatological, and satirical celluloid tale of a matriarchal white trash family led by a deadly degenerate drag diva named Divine that declares total trash war against a pretentious married couple who wants to steal the mad matriarch's well earned tabloid-given title of "The Filthiest Person Alive," *Pink Flamingos* is revolutionary transgressive cinematic filth that

PINK FLAMINGOS

makes Dadaism and other forms of degenerate iconoclastic art seem cultivated and classy by comparison.

Big, butch, and part bald 'Divine,' who is living under the alias Babs Johnson (Divine), is proud to be 'The Filthiest Person Alive' (as named by a tabloid called *The Midnight*) and her mobile-home-hermit filth family, which includes egg-phile mommy Edie (Edith Massey), criminal cracker son Crackers (Danny Mills), and traveling cunt companion Cotton (Mary Vivian Pearce), only add to her rather dubious reputation, but troubles arises in paradise when jealous rivals, middle-class married couple Connie (Mink Stole) and Raymond Marble (David Lochary), decide that they want to steal the tabloid title and they are willing to go to just about any lunatic libertine extreme to do so. Under the farcically false front of being a bourgeois 'adoption clinic,' the majorly misanthropic Marbles run a black market baby ring where they kidnap stupid young girls, which are subsequently impregnated by their flamingly gay manservant Channing (Channing Wilroy), who masturbates into his hand and inseminates the women via injection, and nine nauseating months later, the bastard babies are sold to lesbian couples. Of course, the Marbles are more ambitious than they might seem upon a superficial glance as they use the monetary proceeds of their rather unconventional adoption clinic to fund a network of drug dealers who are pushing heroin in intercity elementary schools, not to mention the fact that Raymond moonlights as a phallogentric public flasher (he shows off a giant kielbasa sausage tied to his much smaller penis) who robs young ladies of their purses after they become rather repulsed by his mangled man meat. To spy on Divine's family and to prove the Babs Johnson is indeed Divine living under an alias, the Marbles hire a crafty cunt named Cookie (Cookie Mueller) to infiltrate the family under the guise of going on a date with Crackers. Of course, Cookie cums to rather regret it as Crackers shares carnal knowledge with her while crushing a chicken (which was actually killed in real-life for the scene) between their two unclad bodies, but at least the slut spy gets the information the Marbles were after, including Babs' real identity as 'Divine', her sad family situation, and her upcoming birthday bash. In their first act of petty trash terrorism, the Marbles send Divine a special package containing an authentic turd and birthday card, which is addressed to "Fatso" and proclaims that they are really "The Filthiest People Alive." When Divine's hick freakshow of a birthday party of arrives, the busybody Marbles go there to spy from afar, where they spot, among other things, the big birthday girl sharing poppers with her hippie mutant friends and a fiercely fucked fellow with a 'singing asshole' who makes his rather flexible sphincter sing in tune with the song "Surfin' Bird" by The Trashmen. In a more precious and lighthearted moment, a romantic Egg Man (Paul Swift) with an absolutely grotesque Baltimore accent proposes to the egg-shaped Edie and she naturally accepts, so he carts her away in a wheelbarrow for their romantic honeymoon around an egg factory.

Eventually, the Marbles suffer all they can stomach at the bawdy birthday bash, especially after the singing asshole routine, so they call the cops and report the perverted party, but when the men in blue arrive, Divine and her cohorts kills and roast the pigs, subsequently eating their corpses in what amounts to something much more special than a simple b-day cake in a scene that seems to give a satirical H.G. Lewis-esque nod George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). After receiving a lead from a happening chick named Patty Hitler, who resembles Uncle Adolf's beloved Eva Braun, Divine and Crackers find the location of the Marbles home and decide to pay their rivals back by physically and metaphysically molesting their house, licking and rubbing their furniture with their "filthiness" and sharing a passionate mother-son blowjob ("The most divine gift a mother can give!" or so says Divine) in a rather dated parody of porn chic classic *Deep Throat* (1972). When Divine & Son find manservant Channing (who has been imprisoned by the Marbles for trying on Connie Marbles clothing, including her panties), they hand him over to the kidnapped girls to berate and torture accordingly (he is ultimately castrated and left for dead). Unfortunately, while Divine was away with her son molesting the Marbles humble abode, the Marbles were burning down her luxury pink-and-green trailer. After that, it is no more Mr. Nice Lady-Guy for alpha-degenerate Divine, who takes the Marbles hostage at gunpoint and holds a press conference (one of the media men is not coincidentally named 'Larry Goldstein') at the less the scenic site where her trailer burned to the ground and proudly espouses her 'filth politics' *Weltanschauung*, degenerately declaring, "Blood does more than turn me on, it makes me cum. And more than the sight of it, I love the taste of it. The taste of hot, freshly killed blood...Kill everyone now! Condone first degree murder! Advocate cannibalism! Eat shit! Filth are my politics! Filth is my life! Take whatever you like." Not simply stopping there, Divine holds a bolshevik-esque kangaroo court, listens to the trashy testimony of Cotton and Crackers, and ultimately declares the Marbles guilty of "first-degree stupidity" and "assholism," for which they are executed via a bullet-in-the-head, but not before they are tied to a tree and tarred and feathered accordingly. After capturing "live homicide" on camera, the morally retarded representatives of the media leave and Divine, Crackers, and Cotton decide to relocate to Boise, Idaho, but Divine, being a decadent lard ass with bad taste and a voracious appetite, gets rather hungry during the trip and decides to eat a freshly defecated dog dropping, thus fittingly concluding *Pink Flamingos* with an offscreen narrator stating of the dimestore drag diva that s/he is, "not only the filthiest person in the world, but is also the world's filthiest actress."

Rather unfortunately, John Waters wrote a screenplay for a *Pink Flamingos* sequel entitled 'Flamingos Forever', which Troma Entertainment offered to finance in 1984 (though Waters was not too keen on their old school *Moviolas*

PINK FLAMINGOS

editing system), but Divine refused to do it (s/he felt it would be a bad career move, especially after having the luxury of being able to play actual male roles in films like Alan Rudolph's neo-noir flick *Trouble in Mind* (1985)) and Egg Lady Edith Massey had already died by then. Of course, it was guaranteed with the premature death of Divine in 1988 that *Flamingos Forever* would never be made under any circumstance, but with its hysterically humorous hodgepodge of interspecies coprophilia, chick with dicks, crooning bungholes, obese-drag-queen-on-scrawny-redneck fellatios, fecal felons, and countless other uniquely unspeakable sinematic acts, it is rather questionable whether or not Waters would have been able to top *Pink Flamingos* with the sequel, though with *Desperate Living* (1977) he certainly came close. Personally, *Desperate Living* will always be my favorite John Waters film, even if it lacks the aberrant-garde filmmaker's main diva Divine, but *Pink Flamingos* certainly comes in a close second. Indubitably, the sort of film sadomasochistic sodomite gutter-auteur Andy Milligan would have probably directed had he had a larger budget to work with and was a wee bit less puritanical, *Pink Flamingos* is like the 'Fleshpot on 42nd Street of Baltimore,' albeit much more merrily misanthropic and visually and thematically vulgar. Essentially, Waters' anti-love-letter to the straight Catholic bourgeois Baltimore background he was reared in (ironically, Waters' father funded the film with a loan of \$10,000, but he would never get around to seeing the flick that ultimately made his son (in)famous), *Pink Flamingos* is an uniquely ugly, unhinged, and morally miscreant anti-aesthetic assault on traditional American mores that still manages to shock today despite the fact that the USA has morally and culturally deteriorated quite drastically since the film's release over four decades ago. Luckily, growing up near Baltimore City, Waters did not have to look far to see examples of real-life social sickness in action, as *Pink Flamingos* would be nothing without its preternatural Balti-moron flavor, which a self-segregated semite like Barry Levinson (*Diner*, *Avalon*) has done his damndest to ignore with his sheltered middle-class Ashkenazi films. In its incendiary iconoclasm, 'wanton' wittiness, and lack of respect for good pre-counter-culture WASP society, *Pink Flamingos* prestigiously follows in the traditional of H.L. Mencken, minus the literacy of course. Indeed, John Waters may have become so popular since the release of *Pink Flamingos* that he had a hit musical on Broadway and is featured as a commentator on what seems like every single TV show and documentary released over the past decade or so, but as he stated at the very end of the documentary *Midnight Movies: From the Margin to the Mainstream* (2005), "I don't think I've change, I think my humor is the same...I think the American public has changed." Of course, Waters started to tone down the content of his films with the semi-mainstream flick *Polyester* (1981) starring burnout Aryan-Jew heartthrob Tab Hunter, but he never stopped paying (anti)tribute to the strikingly shitty city that has one of the highest Chlamydia rates in the country, which is a fact that I am sure the auteur is rather proud of. Forget HBO's

The Wire (2002-2008), Pink Flamingos is Baltimore in all its unhinged unglory before it turned in a pre-third-world jigaboo war zone.

-Ty E

FEMALE TROUBLE
FEMALE TROUBLE

John Waters (1974)

While John Waters has made an entire career out of cinematically portraying degenerate proletarian white trash and rednecks from Baltimore City in a uniquely unflattering manner, he grew up as a bourgeois Irish Catholic in one of Baltimore County's most bland and crime-free areas (Lutherville, Maryland) and attended prestigious private schools, thus his films are mostly from the perspective of a posh, if not particularly peculiar, poof that might not think much of the human pigs of pigtown, but he was at least able to give a sort of immortality to their 'legacy' of riff raff lunacy, which certainly no other filmmaker has accomplished, especially "city of neighborhoods" Hebrew Barry Levinson (Diner, Rain Man). Personally, I rather respect Waters' contribution to cinema as an eccentric camp exploiter of one-of-a-kind Balti-morons who seems to have more 'respect' for perverted proles and unhinged urban hillbillies than people from his own anally retentive boobeoise background. Of course, Waters' pre-Hairspray (1988) "Trash Trilogy" (Pink Flamingos, Female Trouble, Desperate Living) is where the "Pope of Trash" made his most intemperate and callously camp-addled attacks against "Natty Boh" drinkers and crab fetishists of not so charming Charm City. With Female Trouble (1974), wacked-out Waters' combined his propensity for cinematically pissing on proles with his infamous serial killer fetishism. Lovingly dedicated to Manson Family member Charles "Tex" Watson—an honor student and football star turned deranged psycho killer who John Waters paid a number of visits to in prison and even still sends Christmas cards to every year—Female Trouble is the discernibly debauched and aesthetically delinquent tale of a less than dainty dame named Dawn Davenport (played by Waters' muse "Divine") who goes from banal schoolgirl to maniac mass murderer after a tragic Christmas experience where her parents fail to give her the gift that keeps on giving: a pair cha-cha heels. Inspired by Tex's practically practiced philosophy of "crime is beauty"—something that French queer thief Jean Genet wrote about—Female Trouble is anything but beauteous as the sort of celluloid equivalent of the aged barf of a gang-raped Baltimore beggar. With the original working title being "Rotten Mind, Rotten Face", it should be no surprise that Female Trouble is one of the most uniquely ugly, undyingly unhinged and undignified, and aesthetically and thematically reprehensible works to be defecated out of a film director's decidedly despoiled soul. A film that reminds you why no other filmmaker has a more fitting name than "John Waters" (aka toilet water), Female Trouble is less than fresh farcical filmic feces that could have only been directed by Baltimore's most debauched member of the bourgeois.

It is the year 1960 in Baltimore and Dawn Davenport (Divine) is an aesthetically displeasing, obese juvenile delinquent who enjoys eating meatball sandwiches and wreaking havoc at her posh all-girls school, especially where lying,

cheating, and fighting are concerned, though she is not particularly good at any of these things. When gutter dilettante Davenport fails to receive a pair of glorious cha-cha heels for Christmas from her uptight parents, she loses more than her cool and knocks over a Xmas tree over her mommy and makes the mistake of running away, thus ushering in her new life as a criminally-inclined whore with a bastard baby aka daughter of a rapist. While hitchhiking, Ms. Davenport is picked up by a boorish blue collar slob named Earl Peterson (also played by Divine), who viciously rapes (indeed, Divine rapes Divine!) and ultimately impregnates the enfant terrible teenage runaway. Stuck supporting a brat daughter named Taffy as a less than sexy slut single mother, Davenport takes employment as a reckless waitress, sleazy go-go dancer, hapless hooker, and petty thief with a crooked eye for aesthetics. For her more criminally-inclined jobs, Davenport has teamed up with her equally repulsive but much thinner and more 'beautiful' friends Chicklette (Susan Walsh) and Concetta (Cookie Mueller). By the year 1968, Taffy is such a little bad bitch at the age of 8-years-old, that her mother Dawn Davenport wastes no time in beating her with a TV antenna. Luckily, after Chicklette and Concetta recommend to Dawn that she get her hair done, she meets and falls in love with white trash hairstylist Gator (Michael Potter), whose conspicuously obese and crippled aunt Ida (Edith Massey) wants the hill-billy hunk to be 'progressive' and "turn queer" but he's no fag (or as he states himself, "I'm straight, I mean I like a lot of queers but I don't dig their equipment") and the two dirt bag love turds inevitably marry. Flash forward to 1974 and daughter Taffy (Mink Stole) is now a terrible teen at age 14 and she hates her stepfather Gator—a man who is more sexually attracted to the tools in his toolbox than his wife—so she lucks out when her mommy catches her hubby screwing other women and reading porn mags, so divorce proceedings are carried out. Meanwhile, Dawn seeks refuge in Lipstick Beauty Salon—the same place her ex-gator worked as the world's most redneck hairstylist—which is owned by a wacky weirdo couple, Donald (David Lochary) and Donna Dasher (Mary Vivian Pearce), who use the single mother as a rather unconventional guinea pig in an experiment to prove Jean Genet's dictum "crime is beauty," thus ushering in the beginning of the end of the obese whore's life as a nobody who inevitably turns into a crazed criminal somebody.

Dawn proudly beats her daughter with a chair for a crime-inspired photo shoot, but her less than photogenic face is truly ruined after Ida disfigures the single mother by throwing acid on her face in retribution as she blames her for Gator's decision to move to Michigan to work in the prestigious auto industry. The Dashers kidnap and put Aunt Ida in a giant birdcage and vengeful Dawn cuts off the hand of the acid-thrower after getting out of the hospital. Meanwhile, daughter Taffy finds her real father after her mother refuses to reveal who he is and after meeting daddy dearest, she ends up killing him after the pathological rapist tries to sexually pillage his own daughter. Not long afterward,

FEMALE TROUBLE

Taffy becomes a Hara Krishna and frees Ida, which enrages her mother Dawn so much that she kills her own little girl, which is cheered on by the degenerate Dashers. Dawn, although disfigured and looking like she was raped by a gang of transvestite bikers, starts a naughty night club act involving jumping on a trampoline and swimming in a waterless playpen full of death fish, subsequently proudly confessing regarding her dedication to criminality, "I framed Leslie Bacon! I called the heroin hot line on Abbie Hoffman! I bought the gun that Bremer used to shoot Wallace! I had an affair with Juan Corona! I blew Richard Speck, and I'm so fuckin' beautiful I can't stand it myself!!!" thus demonstrating her prestige as a purveyor of bad taste. After absurdly yelling "Who wants to be famous? Who wants to die for art?" to her adoring audience of aberrant psychopaths and jaded degenerates, Dawn shoots at the crowd and makes her escape in the woods, even living like a wild animal for a time, but is soon arrested by the cops. Ironically, during the trial, the Dashers—the people who egged on Dawn to commit the crimes, including the murder of her own daughter—are granted "total immunity" in exchange for their testimony. The Dashers also pay off Ida to lie. In the end, Dawn is found guilty and condemned to die in the electric chair, but she is rather proud of it. After starting a lesbian relationship with a fellow prisoner (played by male-to-female post-op tranny Elizabeth Coffey, who previously played the 'chick with a dick' in *Pink Flamingos*), Dawn proudly states being executed will be "like winning an Academy Award" and, indeed, while strapped in the electric chair, she gives an extravagant speech, concluding with the remark, "Please remember, I love every fucking one of you!" thus rather climatically concluding a career in glamorous criminality with electricity.

Sparked largely by auteur John Waters' interest in the members of the Manson family, most specifically his 'friend' Tex Watson, who came from a similar 'wholesome' background as the director yet turned into an infamous acid killer freak, *Female Trouble* is unadulterated celluloid bad taste from a hokey yet quasi-highbrow homo who is one of the only filmmakers able to reconcile William Castle with Federico Fellini, and Jean Genet with the Manson Family. Notably, Waters described his mainstream flick *Serial Mom* (1994) as "the Hollywood version" of *Female Trouble*. More accurately, *Serial Mom* is the tight-ass Towson bourgeois version of *Female Trouble*, thereupon making it a film closer to the director's heart in a sense. Despite its reckless white-trash-sploitation angle, *Female Trouble* is certainly a work of its 'zany' zeitgeist in depicting a young girl going from being a loser schoolgirl to a mass murderer, as it takes place during the rise of counter-culture groups (Waters did not include Hare Krishnas for nothing!), a time when mainstream-brainwashed teens of the 1960s senselessly threw away their parents' traditions/religion and adopted bogus beliefs and lifestyles, which is most extremely personified in the man to whom the film is dedicated, Tex Watson, the honor student and star athlete turned mass-murdering drug dealer who threw his life away with a stoned blink of an eye. Additionally, John

Waters has never lied about the fact that he, like his man muse Divine, was on a steady dose of ganja during the writing and directing of his Trash Trilogy, thus fitting in with the era the film was made. Ultimately, Female Trouble is like an unholy marriage between the naked melodramas of Rainer Werner Fassbinder with the Hebraic exploitation hate of Herschell Gordon Lewis, portraying Baltimore's urban hillbilly population in a manner that only a warped and exceedingly effeminate yet eccentric homo could, most specifically the sort that sports a child molester-esque little Richard mustache. While my least favorite chapter of compulsively campy celluloid sleaze in the Trash Trilogy, Female Trouble is nothing short of a hysterically humorous trash masterpiece that proved that John Waters is the last iconoclastic Baltimorean since H.L. Mencken to prove that some people from Baltimore are actually conscious-minded and have scathing wit when it comes to making fun of such a uniquely cultivated, shitty city. As someone who has had at least two relatives that were murdered in Baltimore in bizarre fashions worthy of a John Waters flick, Female Trouble is just another reason why the "Prince of Puke" is probably the only thing charming about contemporary Charm City. With eloquent quotes like, "I wouldn't suck your lousy dick if I was suffocating and there was oxygen in your balls!" in Female Trouble, Waters has singlehandedly put Baltimore on the map in the cinema world and for that feat alone, he deserves a statue in one of dilapidated row-house neighborhoods in the city that are now populated by the sort of feral-like beasts that would murder the filmmaker for a nickel.

-Ty E

DESPERATE LIVING
DESPERATE LIVING

John Waters (1977)

Although John Waters is now a friendly household name, he used to direct some of the most repulsive and disgusting films ever made. Mr. Waters has the flattering nicknames "Pope of Trash" and "Prince of Puke" for good reason. Out of all of John Waters early films, I believe the deranged masterpiece *Desperate Living* to be his greatest. I also believe the film to be John Water's greatest auteur piece as his late star drag queen Divine did not appear in this film. Although I enjoy Divine's appearances in John Waters early films, it's interesting to see how a Waters film plays out without the infamous he/she taking up all the spotlight.

Out of all the film directors from Baltimore, John Waters best represents that dying gutter of a city. Sorry Barry Levinson, but *Diner* only portrays those suburban Yiddish turds that are afraid to even walk around the city. Baltimore City has some of the most uniquely ugly and scary yet sometimes friendly people in the country. *Desperate Living* features some of these Baltimore folk caricatures in a world similar to what one would expect if Italian maestro Federico Fellini was on crack while directing a film that was casted behind a shady Baltimore Wal-Mart. *Desperate Living* features highly aggressive redneck bull dykes, the most miserable looking homeless ever (played by real homeless people), unflatteringly sassy obese black women, and a suburban neurotic prude.

Desperate Living follows a virtually paranoid schizophrenic housewife named Peggy Gravel and her servant black maid Grizelda as they escape the suburb to hide in the awful dystopian nut town know as Mortville. Mortville is run by an evil and missing tooth dictator named Queen Carlotta. Queen Carlotta has a gay looking Gestapo that fulfills her desire for lust and killing. The queen also has a horribly painted painting of Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson on display in her cardboard like castle. When Peggy and Grizelda arrive in Mortville they regrettably have to submit to the irrational demands of tyrant Queen Carlotta. The Queen was played by the strangely charismatic Edith Massey who happened to own a thrift store in Baltimore City. In *Desperate Living*, she also happens to forget her lines which only add to the films already extremely unique character.

It is hard to decide what is the most disgusting scene featured in *Desperate Living*. Seeing an extremely obese black woman having cunnilingus performed on her by an ugly and skinny white woman is quite a hideous sight that will even stun the most desensitized of cinema fans. Seeing Queen Carlotta being penetrated by a lanky and obviously uncomfortable actor is also hard to watch. Surprisingly, I did not find myself disgusted by a scene involving a real dead dog being run over by Peggy and Grizelda. Although I am a huge dog lover, I found this scene to be completely hilarious. John Waters is no doubt brilliant in his ability to make the most horrible and tragic of scenarios funny. For those that enjoy *Desperate Living* I also recommend watching the film again with

John Waters audio commentary. Mr. Waters has great stories to tell about the production of *Desperate Living* and interesting details surrounding the film. For example, John Waters talks about how the actor that played Lesbian bull dyke wrestler Mole McHenry is in real-life, a beautiful woman and mother. I found these kind of details interesting especially after seeing Mole cut off her very own new penis she received during a sex change. I can only wonder if the actress allowed her children to see their mommy's big acting performance. John Waters' genius is his ability to take the most seemingly normal people or places and turn them into his own unique trash invention. *Desperate Living*, a film with a wonderfully trashy and bizarre world, is one of John Waters best examples (if not his best) of his "trash genius."

-Ty E

POLYESTER
POLYESTER

John Waters (1981)

As far as a healthy medium from his absurdly amateurish assembled arthouse trash flicks like *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Desperate Living* (1977) that originally made him infamous as Maryland's "greatest" filmmaker and his later more mainstream and socially 'conservative' and strikingly less scatological like *Hair-spray* (1988) and *Cry-Baby* (1990), bawdy Balti-moron auteur John Waters' work *Polyester* (1981)—a campy satire of subversive Hollywood melodramas by Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk as fetishistically filtered through exploitation cinema conventions and themes from the 1950s and 1960s—is certainly the filmmaker's first serious attempt at going mainstream without being too flaccid and, indeed, ostensibly respectable critics like Janet Maslin, as well as the middle-class people the film ceaselessly lampoons, found the somewhat less scat-driven work to their liking. Waters' first flick to receive an R-rating, as well as a work featuring a "big star," Tab Hunter—the popular teenage twink icon turned B-movie star—*Polyester* also proved that the filmmaker finally learned some basic directing and editing techniques of the rather conventionally campy sort in the spirit of Russ Meyer meets Douglas Sirk. Using the almost worthless gimmick of "Odorama"—a scratch-and-sniff card where one smells certain things on screen that was popularized by the director's major influence and personal hero William Castle (although his version was called "Smell-O-Vision")—Waters also proved his inner 'artiste' was a carny huckster of the nauseatingly nostalgic persuasion with his lifelong irrevocable influence from exploitation schlockmeisters like Meyer and Castle, but also more respected auteur filmmakers like Sirk. In fact, *Polyester* was so influenced by the keenly kaleidoscopic melodramas of Sirk that Mr. Toilet Waters made a noble effort to utilize the same filmmaking equipment, lighting, and conventions the master auteur of melodrama used for his romantically nihilistic Hollywood works, except utilizing homo blond beast Tab Hunter as opposed to closet queen and AIDS victim Rock 'I love cock' Hudson. Unfortunately, John Waters' "Dreamlanders" Superstars only have minor roles in *Polyester* and the filmmaker's subsequent works would feature even less of the actors as they began to drop like flies from old age, drug overdoses, and heart attacks. A salacious and semi-surreal spoof of Sirkian morals in the particularly pompous and superlatively soulless American middle-class suburbia where men are fiendishly philandering half-men and their wives stay at home and try to ignore the fact that their children are sexually degenerate criminals who absolutely loathe their parents, *Polyester* comically chronicles the degeneration of bourgeois white America via liberalism, feminism, and obsession with everything sexually insane. With its sadistically satirical scenes of Orthodox Jews being hit via 'drive-by brooming' and an obese Negress popping a car tire with her mere King Kong-esque teeth, *Polyester* is low-camp done right and

raunchy—totally politically incorrect and unwaveringly so.

Large-and-not-so-in-charge middle-aged housewife Francine Fishpaw (Divine) has a rather pathetic life as a morbidly obese whale of a woman whose husband and two sexually perverted children hate her with a pathological passion. Francine's husband Elmer (David Samson) is an oafish and odious man who wears cheap polyester suits, bangs proto-wigger sluts of the seemingly physically disfigured sort, and owns a pornographic X-rated theater, thus putting much unwanted attention on the more than little lady of the house by both the media and fierce feminist protestors, who protest at the front of their humble suburban abode. Francine's cruddy children include the lecherous Lu-Lu (Mary Garlington) a dumb and bitchy slut who breaks out in sexually suggestive dances whenever she hears music—and deranged Dexter (Ken King), a drug-addicted dildo who gets high on poppers and stomps on random women's feet to derive maximum sexual gratification, thus earning him the infamous title "Baltimore foot stomper." With a seemingly anorexic, cocaine-addicted would-be-*aristocrat* named La Rue (Joni Ruth White) for a mother, Francine does not have a single blood relative who shows her love nor respect and thus receives all her emotional support from her special lady friend Cuddles Kovinsky (Edith Massey), a wonder woman who happens to be the 'world's oldest debutante' and not exactly a particularly intelligent nor beautiful one at that, but she has a 'great love' in the form of her Teutonic chauffeur Heintz (Hans Kramm), who is an Erich von Stroheim type character with aristocratic airs that sports a marvelous monocle. When Francine catches her husband having an affair with his absolutely repulsive secretary Sandra Sullivan (Mink Stole)—a white whore who wishes she was a big black bitch—she demands a divorce, begins to binge drink, and futilely attempts suicide via refrigerator door hanging. Meanwhile, Fran's dumb whore of a daughter Lu Lu gets pregnant by her criminally delinquent boyfriend Bo-Bo Belsinger (punk rock icon Stiv Bators of the Dead Boys infamy) and demands to have an abortion as she is a victim of feminist brainwashing, hysterically arguing to her mommy dearest, "It's stealing part of me you mean. I can feel it like cancer getting bigger and bigger like the blob. One day it will rip me open and it will be there in my life, ready to rob me of every bit of fun I deserve to have." Lu Lu is ultimately kidnapped by two nuns (Mary Vivian Pearce and Sharon Niesp), locked in the back of a car trunk, and is taken to a Catholic home for unwed and wanton young mothers, while dastardly Dexter is finally nabbed for stomping on women's feet while high off poppers and is incarcerated, and by some sort of miracle both of the Fishpaw brats manage to be purged of sin and their psychopathic tendencies when they are released from their respective institutions of higher learning. Things begin to look especially good for Fran when a handsome hunk of a man named Todd Tomorrow (Tab Hunter) with a cool corvette and hit arthouse drive-in movie theatre proposes marriage to her. Unfortunately, Mr. Tomorrow is too good to be true and is really in romantic

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cahoots and criminal conspiracy with Francine's malicious mommy La Rue. Tomorrow and La Rue hope to effortlessly embezzle Francine's divorce settlement money by driving her insane, not to mention the fact that Elmer and Sandra want to kill her and steal her money as well. Luckily, Fran's brainwashed children, as well as Cuddles and Heintz, come to the rescue and totally abort the conspirators' malicious plans. Undoubtedly, relatively speaking at least, Polyester ends on a much more positive note than the typical Douglas Sirk flick.

Frankly speaking, the "Odorama" gimmick for Polyester, which includes generic fart, roses, and pizza smells, is rather pointless and ineffective and with the film's introduction from some goofy jack-off hack scientist named Dr. Arnold Quackenshaw with a would-be-quirky Yiddish accent that seems like it was taken from the comical mongrel hate child of Mel Brooks and Roger Corman, I initially expected John Waters' film to be a truly bad exercise in superlatively shitty bad taste, but thankfully the curiously crude celluloid work does not degenerate into a contrived and rather goyish Vaudeville act. In terms of Sirkian inspired cinema, Polyester is at the other extreme of works inspired by the Danish-German auteur filmmaker; while German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder mastered and built on the Hollywood filmmaker's idiosyncratic melodramatic style with masterpieces of melodramatic misery like *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), *Martha* (1974), and *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), John Waters merely exploited the eccentric dramatics of such works by adding elements of "women's pictures" exploitation flicks of the 1950s-1960s and psychosexually exploitative works like *The Arousers* (1972) aka *Sweet Kill* that fallen teen icon Tab Hunter starred in at the lowest point in his career. Incidentally, Divine and Tab Hunter would later be reunited in campy and retarded celluloid romance via *Lust in the Dust* (1985)—a work that John Waters was asked to direct but turned down since he did not write the script, thus it was ultimately given to Paul Bartel (*Eating Raoul*, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*), who also almost turned down a chance to direct the film as he felt it would be too much of a Waters-esque flick—but Polyester is indubitably a superior effort and much more in its bitter sweetly scathing scatological satire of the now virtually extinct bloated Baltimore bourgeois (which is now being replaced by Jews and an affirmative-action-based black bourgeois that has destroyed Baltimore towns like Towson), as well as its sassy spoofing of iconic Douglas Sirk melodramas from the 1950s and uniquely unhinged application of classic exploitation conventions.

Indeed, with cultural chaos like bourgeois black youths killing college professors for fun at the once-snobbish Towson Mall (which, incidentally, is right next door to the cemetery where Divine is buried) and Third World invaders from the global South owning what seems to be virtually all the local businesses (as opposed to sleazy crackers who cheat on their obese wives), the wonderfully wacky, wayward world portrayed in Polyester seems rather tame and even nostalgic com-

pared to the nefarious real-life nightmare that now consumes ever corrupt crevice of the decidedly degenerate area. Like most of John Waters' work, Polyester is undoubtedly a film that will be of more interest to people familiar with the area as the film is charmingly contaminated with inside-jokes and the utilization of many real (and now largely defunct) locations from Charm City, including the Charles Theater, which instead of being a porn theater like in the film, was really a pretentious movie palace that oftentimes played works by Federico Fellini and Ingmar Bergman. Of course, being from Baltimore, a city with areas with such flattering nicknames as "Pig Town," it was only natural that John Waters was more inspired by exploitation and immoral melodrama than someone like Bergman and while Polyester is about as far away as a film could be from a somber Nordic melodrama, it does pay a grand (dis)service to the area and the people it portrays like the films of the Swedish auteur. When it comes to depicting the culturally retarded 'collective unconscious' of Baltimore, John Waters is only second to iconoclastic Nietzschean H.L. Mencken and both men shared a rather sharp and severely sardonic wit, which certainly bleeds throughout Polyester.

-Ty E

CRY-BABY
CRY-BABY

John Waters (1990)

Cry-Baby is the undeniable mainstream cult success of John Waters' career. Although *Pink Flamingos* is more known to the midnight movie crowd, *Cry-Baby* steals the limelight with Johnny Depp and mock-Grease antics. John Waters might be attempting to parody "high school musicals" but his film ends up in the ditch prematurely after the defining points are far too few and the plot never elevates properly to be diagnosed as a structured film. Angst has never reached such a low point. The moment a tear streams down Depp's baby face is the day I cried for the woes of being a "normal" departure for Waters. Having seen *Hair-spray (Original)*, I decided that Waters is also a competent director for films that aren't lurid escapades of sexual delinquents. Even though *Cry-Baby* is Waters' first major studio production, the cult success allows me to see past the brainless entertainment and romance inserts to spot a form of amateurism evident mainly by the lack of a finale or proper build-up. The 50s fashion of rockabilly is transferred impeccably thanks to the keen eye of John Waters. He always did have a way with "period pieces" and the costume department. For a musical, this film is potentially stale. Of the song numbers, only few turn out to be catchy. The rest mainly exist to piece together the story by implementing plot devices and personality traits. If the songs were to be removed, much of the characters would never be explored but the film would have a smoother transition from film to music. A clashing of art mediums should be both entertaining and memorable. *Cry-Baby* is definitely entertaining but lacks in memorability save for Traci Lords. *Cry-Baby* mainly stays fashionably afloat thanks to the soundtrack, Depp's fan phenomenon, and sheep to the herd. During many of the scenes, I found myself shouting "OH COME ON!" while rolling my eyes. This strenuous activity did spare my eyes from a majority of shameful scenes of girls doing double back flips into the arms of Johnny Depp for a quickly thought up ending. *Cry-Baby* isn't anything special, least not for me to continue expressing my thorough distaste for this film. I'll just say that I did not like *Cry-Baby* and leave it at that. Also, John Waters has a natural talent for finding ogreish looking people. This review is dedicated to Hatchet-Face and not the obese Ricki Lake. Suck it up.

-mAQ

CECIL B. DEMENTED

John Waters (2000)

Aside from possibly *A Dirty Shame* (2004), *Cecil B. Demented* (2000) is undoubtedly John 'Pope of Trash' Waters' most aesthetically repulsive and inately idiotic semi-mainstream film to date, which is rather ironic considering it is not only a satire of Hollywood and its plague-like diseasing of the American populous' already fragile minds, but also a sardonic cinematic snipe at both underground filmmaking and avant-garde auteurism; two worlds the director has worked in and cinematically defiled. Aside from being a proudly debauched director of both mainstream and underground trash, Waters is also a lifelong cinephile and in no other film does he pay greater (anti)homage to his celluloid heroes and enemies than *Cecil B. Demented*; a film about terrorist filmmakers in the spirit of the Red Army Faction (in fact, one of the original promotional posters for the film featured a star/gun logo similar to the RAF logo) led by an eponymous character played by Stephen Dorff who kidnaps a positively pompous A-list Hollywood actress played by Melanie Griffith and forces her to star in their own sub-underground film, which is shot in a psychopathic cinema vérité-like manner of nonsensical ultra-violence that makes the radical realism films of Werner Herzog and Harmony Korine seem like they were produced by George Lucas. Like the *Patty Hearst* (who actually has a small role in the film!) story meets *The King of Comedy* (1983) directed by Martin Scorsese meets the Troma-maniac 'masterpiece' *Terror Firmer* (1999) directed by Lloyd Kaufman, *Cecil B. Demented* shows what happens when a queen bitch of a diva develops a nasty case of Stockholm Syndrome and engages in cinematic terrorism against the mainstream Hollywood studio system, the 'social-conditioning' centers aka movie theaters that screen high-budget trash, and the brainwashed mainstream filmgoers who keep on literally and figuratively buying into Tinseltown's lies, thus giving credence to Baltimore sage H.L. Mencken's dictum, "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public." A film that is just about as emotionally and aesthetically vapid as any of the mainstream films it ludicrously lampoons, except with seemingly infinite references to various films and filmmakers that only an idiosyncratic sleaze cineaste like the unholy "Prince of Puke" could dream up, as well as low-camp exploitation scenarios featuring a number of mainstream actors in uniquely unflattering positions (Melanie Griffith's career essentially ended after being in the film), *Cecil B. Demented* is not only Waters' most cinematically reflexive film, but also proof that a cinematic work can be totally aesthetically and thematically irredeemable, yet be wildly witty and exceedingly entertaining. Featuring then-rather-unknown Michael Shannon (*My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*, *Boardwalk Empire*) as a gay white trash trucker and Fassbinder fanboy, *Meztizo* Entourage star Adrian Grenier as a heroin-shooting junky with an unhealthy obsession with

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Herschell Gordon Lewis, and Maggie Gyllenhaal as a seemingly autistic Crowleyite who worships the films of Kenneth Anger, among various other certifiably sick cinephiles turned cinematic terrorists, Cecil B. Demented is cinema history heresy in its most hopelessly and haphazardly humorous form.

Like any rational person who has been to the superlatively shitty quasi-Third World city, popular A-list Hollywood actress Honey Whitlock (Melanie Griffith) hates Baltimore, but being a psychopathic actress seemingly modeled after Julia Roberts (whose brother Eric Roberts has a cameo role in the film) and whose ostensible sweetness and positivity is nothing but a false front for the press, she tells the media that, "Baltimore is the best," even if crab cakes make her want to puke. Luckily, little does Ms. Whitlock know that an anti-Christ auteur named Cecil B. Demented (Stephen Dorff) and his motley crew of 'Kamikaze filmmakers' named 'Sprocketholes', who live in a shabby Warhol Factory-esque factory in an abandoned movie theater, have plans to kidnap her, makeover her appearance in a manner that seems like she was run over by a truck driven by John Waters' deceased man-muse Divine, and force her to play the lead role in their ultimate work of unhinged underground cinema, which involves real terrorism, shootouts, and deaths. Having infiltrated every movie theater in Baltimore as undercover employees, including the place of the premiere where they kidnap Honey Whitlock, the Sprocketholes have already carefully calculated where their entire film-within-films will be set. Upon kidnapping Honey Whitlock, who has very little respect for the art of cinema, especially of the low-budget underground variety, Mr. Demented has his Sprocketholes, a slavish crew of screwballs with idiosyncratic personalities and flagrant sexual perversions, who sport tattoos of their favorite directors, introduce themselves, which include an art director named Lewis (Larry Gilliard, Jr.) who is probably the only black rapper in the world that likes David Lynch, an ex-porn star turned lead actress named Cherish (Alicia Witt) who worships Warhol but is in lecherous love with Mr. Demented (even if she can't fuck him until they finish principle photography for the film), a self-loathing heterosexual hairstylist named Rodney (Jack Noseworthy) who has a special place in his balls for homo Hispanic auteur Pedro Almodóvar, and a negative Nelly of a negress named Chardonnay (Zenzele Uzoma) who works as sound artist and wallows in the celluloid hate of Spike Lee, among various other rejects of the film world whose taste in cinema parallels their perversions and pathologies.

After being given a Liquid Sky-inspired makeover from hell by faux-fag Rodney, Honey Whitlock, who would almost rather drop dead than star in a no-budget movie, is forced to give the performance of her lifetime, which she initially does less than halfheartedly, but after having her life threatened, she does it with gusto, even upstaging her 'dead serious' (they are more than willing and will ultimately die for celluloid) kidnappers. The group's first major filming location is a beyond bourgeois luncheon featuring a number of anally

retentive Hollywood turd types for the Baltimore Film Commission and against her better judgment, Honey Whitlock jumps off a building in a daring stunt at the behest of Mr. Demented and in the aftermath, a shootout breaks out between the Sprocketholes and the cops, which kills Rodney and wounds Cecil. In the chaos, Ms. Whitlock makes the amateur mistake of attempting to turn herself in after committing the cinematic crimes, but her new comrades save her, thereupon completing her course in Stockholm syndrome, even declaring herself “Demented forever!” and embracing a demented brand being burned into her arm. In a seeming unlikely scenario, a sequel to *Forrest Gump* entitled *Gump Again* is being filmed in Baltimore and the Sprocketholes make it their business to crash the film production, bringing celluloid carnage that ultimately results in the maiming and death of a number of Demented’s debauched comrades by way of obese Teamsters who hate non-union film crews. Honey and the Sprocketholes seek shelter in a porno theater where there is a showing of ex-porn star Cherish’s anal sex flick, so a bunch of masturbating perverts help her and her comrades evade the police. In the end, the final scene of Cecil B. Demented’s movie is shot at night at a Baltimore Drive-in theater and to show her commitment to the cause, Honey Whitlock sets her precious hair on fire and the Sprocketholes commence the shooting wrap-up by having sex (Demented demanded nothing less than abstinence during the production!) While screwing Mr. Demented, Cherish is shot dead via a bullet in the head by a cop and the deranged director, who is crippled from the various times he has been shot/maimed, sets himself on fire and rides a wheelchair off a building, thus enabling Honey Whitlock to make a great escape, which she fails at, but does not matter due to her newfound popularity as America’s most famous A-list criminal actress and certified demented diva, even if she will probably have a lengthy stay in prison.

Described by Roger Ebert as being like a “a home movie [with] a bunch of kids goofing off” and featuring music by synth-driven grindcore/mathcore group The Locust, Liberace, Moby and even a negrofied rap theme song entitled “Demented Forever,” Cecil B. Demented is indubitably celluloid trash at its most aesthetically worthless and degrading, yet it is also an iconoclastic piece of sardonic cinephilia directed by a man who clearly loves cinema, be it the homoerotic Hollywood Biblical epics of Hebrew Cecil B. DeMille, the artistically meritless exploitation films of Semitic smut-peddler Herschell Gordon Lewis, or the autistic anti-auteur pieces of Andy Warhol, thus making it a sinephile’s semi-botched wet dream. Satirizing Hollywood for their vanity-inspired philanthropy (the film begins with a scene of a crippled kid who was able to have a heart transplant due to donations from a film premiere) and soulless comedy-dramas like *Patch Adams* (Cecil B. Demented’s crew invades a theater where audience members are sentimentally crying about kids with cancer) which turn audiences into infantile philistines, but also underground filmmakers with the auteur-inspired egomania and proclivity toward celluloid fetishism (indeed, it is

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no mistake that every Sprockethole has some sort of preternatural sexual perversion), Cecil B. Demented is a true work of equal-opportunity cinematic offensiveness that is more like a cinephiliac romp than a rant. While I did not take too kindly to Cecil B. Demented upon its release over a decade ago, the film has certainly grown on me since, sort of like a pair of goofy boxer shorts, and I now regard it as one of John Waters' greatest mainstream flicks. After all, who could hate a film directed by the Pope of Trash featuring Michael Shannon playing the role of a homo hick who is unsoundly obsessed with the girth of Mel Gibson's Catholic cock?! If there ever was a filmmaker with a total incapacity for taking anything serious in life seriously—be it cancer patients, terrorism, or his own films—it is most certainly John Waters and, quite arguably, no other film of his better personifies this in 'mainstream' form than Cecil B. Demented, a work featuring a fantasy underground cinema revolution that would be great if it actually happened, but certainly never will, especially in an anti-culture sewer like Baltimore. Also, one must give credit to John Waters for ruining Melanie Griffith's acting career, for the actress never looked so ludicrous in a totally tasteless way and that is saying a lot!

-Ty E

A DIRTY SHAME

John Waters (2004)

A Dirty Shame is the most recent film from the “pope of trash” John Waters. Only a pile of cultural garbage such as Baltimore could produce such a director of “bad” taste. Mr. Waters attempts to go back to his early gross out roots with A Dirty Shame, a film that follows sex addict revolutionaries as they battle puritanical “neuters” in suburban (not shithole ghetto) Baltimore. Johnny Knoxville plays Ray-Ray, a messiah of the perverse and unclean. His latest recruit is Sylvia Stickles, a neuter housewife turned cunnilingus obsessed sex addict apostle. I am not a very big fan of Johnny Knoxville. I remember him from his early days as the fake redneck that did stupid shit in the Big Brother Skateboarding videos put out by the Larry Flynt owned skateboard magazine of the same name. I must admit that Knoxville’s role as Ray-Ray in A Dirty Shame is fitting as he does play a cunning pervert leader quite well. The horrid and repulsive looking (and acting) Tracy Ullman also does a great job with her performance that will have me turned off for the next two weeks. John Waters did a lot of research on sex perverts and fetishes in preparation for writing A Dirty Shame. Seeing Gay hairy “bears,” “splashing,” and eroticizing dirt made me want to vomit more than laugh. A Dirty Shame also features some of the most unappealing nudity I have seen in a recent film. I think I was even frightened by some of the unnatural erect suburban neighborhood trees. I never thought that I would see the day that David Hasselhoff’s feces would turn someone into a sex addict. My favorite films from John Waters are Pink Flamingos and Desperate Living. I am also a fan of his later more mainstream films like Cry-Baby and Pecker. Although John Waters attempts to create a film similar to his earlier works with A Dirty Shame, it isn’t particularly successful. Whereas a film like Desperate Living is “trash art,” A Dirty Shame is just trash. But then again, the film does have a couple good laughs.

-Ty E

THE GREEN BERETS
THE GREEN BERETS

John Wayne (1968)

I have never really been a John Wayne fan. I have always found him to be a pseudo tough guy playing the role of the definitive masculine hero. Wayne made this clear when he dodged World War II service (when many other people in Hollywood contributed). Knowing this, it makes his anti-communist films much more interesting. I constantly asked myself whether or not Wayne believes in what he promotes. To add, I wonder if Wayne is in character 100% of the time. Wayne may have even traded in his real personality for the role of a heroic alpha male. Acting never seemed to be too manly of a career. Communists openly admitted they sought world domination through international revolution (by use of ignorant and exploited proletarians). I also think its fairly obvious that communists were barbaric. They ended up killing the largest amounts of human beings who didn't fit well into collectivist societies in human history. Finally, I think its fairly obvious communists sought to destroy the family, church, and personal freedoms. Communism was no doubt designed to destroy Western Civilization. John Wayne obviously oversimplifies these themes. In Green Berets, they even become comical. The film is very black and white with no real interesting concepts. But then again, that makes the best propaganda. Gay Cowboy icon John Wayne representing the Red, White, and Blue. The interesting thing about the anticommunist Hollywood films is their lack of condemning Americans involved with rise of the Soviet Union. New York City wall street banker Jacob Schiff gave \$20 million dollars to Leon Trotsky (David Bronstein) to fund the Russian revolution of 1917. Without American bankers, the Soviet Union would have never existed. It's interesting that without Capitalism there would be no Communism. Knowing that, the Bolshevik leaders seemed to be uninterested in their theories but more of an interest in the enslavement and control of people as a collective. That's exactly what happened. Green Berets epitomized all lies that American war films presented. The Americans were always fighting the good and noble war. The war that would result in peace. At the end of Green Berets John Wayne tells a little orphan boy that he is the reason America fights. I couldn't help but laugh at this scene. It was the most entertaining point in the film. But then again, I felt Green Berets was truly an American film so I can't really hate it. The film gives you the comfort of feeling like you are at home. I totally agree with the common assertion that the Western is a part (or extension) of the combat genre. It's comparable to the Western inspiring the Samurai, and the Samurai inspiring Star Wars. All these different films fit essentially into the same genre. They have the same black and white (good vs. evil) plots. I personally have never been a fan of any of these genres really for that reason. After viewing Green Berets I felt as if I had seen nothing new. To be honest I don't even remember most of it. It's comparable to countless other shitty war films.

-Ty E

BOARDINGHOUSE
BOARDINGHOUSE

John Wintergate (1982)

I have a very low tolerance for celluloid schlock and especially shot-on-video schlock, so I have been putting off watching the curious cult item *Boarding-House* (1982) aka *Housegeist* aka *Bad Force* aka *Boarding House* directed by and starring one-time-auteur John Wintergate, which was hailed by no lesser exploitation cinema authorities as Stephen Thrower in *NIGHTMARE USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* (2007) and by Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford in *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002) due to its various retrograde idiosyncrasies, for about a year now, but I finally decided to give in and watch the flick the other day when I realized I had simply nothing better to watch and somewhat to my surprise, I am glad I did. Like the outstandingly aesthetically autistic result of a coke-addled preppie with a meta-Reaganite sense of materialism and a softcore psychopathic sort of narcissism who attempted to make a work of psychedelic horror video art after frying his brain after one-too-many William Castle movie marathons and misreadings of Alan Watts while high on mescaline, Wintergate's positively preposterous pride and joy is notable for not only apparently being the first horror feature shot on video (Betacam to be exact), but also for being blown-up to 35mm (something that apparently cost between \$45,000 to 50,000 at the time), thus also making it the first (and possibly the last) SOV production to be screened in an actual movie theater (apparently, it premiered alongside *Jaws 3-D* (1983)). A vanity piece gone terribly, terribly yet insanely intriguingly wrong created by people who seem to have no sense of cinema, *BoardingHouse* was originally intended as a hokey horror spoof and the original cut ran at the absurd length of 2 hours and 38 minutes but at the recommendation of an old distributor named Howard Willette that once worked for RKO Pictures and Howard Hughes, the director decided to completely reedit the film in a fashion to make it seem more like a 'serious' and 'straight' horror film, thus resulting in a totally berserk mongrel of a monster movie set in some alternate universe of preppie philistine psychopathy of the perniciously plodding sort where nothing is as it seems, let alone makes sense, and all genuine human emotion and rationality has taken a backseat to inanely idiotic irreverence, senseless supernatural stupidity, dumbfoundingly dumb and unintentionally surreal dialogue, sickeningly sterile sensuality and plastic blowup-doll-like sexuality, mindnumbingly moronic metaphysical mumbo jumbo, special ed grade special effects, preposterous visual puns (i.e. a woman fondling a stuffed monkey, thus 'spanking the monkey'), and some of the most hysterically histrionic death scenes ever excreted onto archaic video. Featuring the aesthetic integrity of a post-porn-chic-era fuck video combined with the the shameless showmanship of William Castle had he been a stupid goy instead of a seasoned Semitic smut-peddler, as well as a badly

bastardized hodgepodge of themes from popular mainstream horror films like *Repulsion* (1965), and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *Carrie* (1976), *Halloween* (1978), *Phantasm* (1979), *The Amityville Horror* (1979), *Motel Hell* (1980), and countless others, Wintergate's pathologically outré epic of accidental eccentricity and suburban excess also features the would-be-iconic gimmick of 'Horror Vision' where a psychedelic shot of a leather-glove-clad hand appears alongside swirling noise anytime a murder is about to happen to warn "viewers with nerve or heart conditions" to "cover their eyes and ears," thereupon further accentuating the already potent psychotronic schlock surrealism of the film. The waywardly and wonderfully retarded story of a seemingly sexless narcissistic preppie douche, self-stylized guru and metaphysician, and proud confirmed bachelor of the scrawny blond Aryan sort with telekinetic powers who inherits a haunted killer home from his uncle and turns it into a boardinghouse (aka softcore whorehouse) for generically beautiful bimbos between the ages of 18 and 25, only for absurdist murder and mayhem to ensue shortly after, *Boarding House* is like horror-porn for schizophrenic eunuchs and Mormon gorehounds, albeit only all the more bizarre than it sounds.

As revealed on an archaic computer screen at an imaginary police station featured at the beginning of *Boarding House*, on Sept. 18, 1972 two 'Nobel Prize Winners,' Professor Don Hoffman and his wife—supposed leading authorities on telekinesis and the occult—were found dead in their home during their 16th anniversary party and the only witness was their 13-year-old daughter Deborah, who later testified that her parents died in a double suicide and who was committed to a mental institution a couple months later after suffering an "emotional breakdown." Ever since the dubious deaths, anyone who has moved into 'Hoffman House' has died under mysterious and oftentimes ultra-violent conditions, including an old fart named Dr. Royce, whose sole heir, a 30-something-year-old nephew named Jim Royce (director John Wintergate), inherits the home. Meanwhile, on the day that Deborah Hoffman is supposed to be released from a nuthouse, two employees at the mental institution where she is interned are brutally murdered, with a nurse named Sherry (Aryen Winter) being telekinetically hanged and a bald dork being strangled and disemboweled. Upon officially inheriting the Hoffman House after meeting with a weasel-like lawyer, Jim places a superficially sleazy ad in a newspaper reading: "Girls! Girls! Girls! If you're between 18 and 25, unattached, and beautiful, then I want you to share my ten bedroom house with me for approximately \$100 a month... Call Jim at the Boardinghouse." While prowling around his pool, Jim somewhat sinisterly thinks to himself, "I can just imagine all those hot numbers... hanging around the pool. Yeahhhh! It's going to be a real bachelor's paradise." Despite his obsession with having a bare-skinned brigade of slutty and big bosomed concubine babes at his disposal, Jimbo spends most of his talk yelling at the girls for having pets in the house and walking around in nothing but a faggy leopard print thong when

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the girls eventually move in, though he develops a special interest in a would-be rock star named Victoria Spelling (played by director Wintergate's real-life wife and muse 'Kalassu,' who also acted as second unit director of the film). Unquestionably, the girls of BoardingHouse are rampantly heterosexual and discernibly sex-starved, but Jim—a casual collector of women whose entire existence seems like one grueling masturbation routine where he never actually cums—seems to like to keep the girls hanging around and is not actually attracted to them but rather the fact that they are so shamelessly attracted to him and love showing him their titties, as he wallows in all of the shallow attention. Indeed, there were multiple times during the movie that I thought Jim would start jerking off to his own image in a mirror, as he is a sort of Narcissus of suburban Hollywood, albeit nowhere as charming, attractive, or witty as he thinks.

Whilst meditating guru style on his desk at work in nothing but a rather revolting thong and listening to some metaphysical inspirational tapes and attempting to levitate something with his nauseatingly self-centered mind, Jim is rudely interrupted by his old Jewish dipsomaniac boss Joel Weintraub (Joel Riordan), who provides minor comic relief in the film as a boorish yet jolly overweight buffoon who at one point during the flick falls flat on his face while attempting to swing a golf club. Somewhat strangely, Jim seems to be just as interested in Joel as his eclectic collection of boardinghouse babes, if not more so. As Victoria states to her incessantly snickering teenybopper-like gal pals after a failed attempt at seducing Jim regarding the peculiar appearance-obsessed protagonist, "he's not physical at all. He's too into metaphysics. I don't know. It's really interesting though, he's different than any guy I've ever met." Indeed, instead of fucking her when Victoria comes to see him in some rather revealing lingerie that more or less reveals her pussy and tits, Jim autistically performs telekinesis on a bar of soap and then pushes the little lady in the bathtub with him, but just before you think he is going pound her puss, he gets out of the tub and leaves her high and dry, at least sexually speaking. Since Victoria cannot get Jim to seduce her, she decides taking a trip to the local library to pick up some books on metaphysics as it is the next best thing to being fucking by Jim as her act of devotion might grab her prospective lover's attention since he is an obsessive occultnik and all. Considering that Victoria is such a superlatively self-centered narcissist that she has posters of herself hanging up in her room as if she worships herself in an almost religious fashion, it is a huge sign of how much she likes Jim that she would go so far out of her way to grab his attention, but unfortunately something in the Hoffman House has its eyes on her and its not a preppie pseudo-stud with a blond mullet. Indeed, the Hoffman House is haunted by a leather-glove-clad killer from another dimension who is able to cross over to the human world via the evil home, which holds many pernicious spirits. While Jim pretentiously proclaims, "I'm into harnessing cosmic energy so that I can learn the secrets of the universe," he seems totally oblivious to the

fact that a supernatural slasher killer is in his humble abode, as his head is so far up his own ass that even when some of the girls in the house begin getting mutilated and murdered by inanimate objects, he has no clue what is going on. Indeed, when an ice-pick magically moves on its own and stabs one of the boardinghouse babes in the hand, the only thing dullard preppie dude Jimmy can say is, "All her fingers work...I checked them." Being female and all, Victoria's intuition tells her something evil is lurking in the house, so she nonsensically buries the ice-pick while absurdly proclaiming "I hate ice-picks" like a bratty toddler performing a mock funeral for a pet goldfish or hamster that died as a result of her neglecting to feed it. Indeed, most of the things people do and say in BoardingHouse make absolutely no sense, thus making for an obnoxiously otherworldly atmosphere that is as strangely and awe-inspiringly addictive as it is mentally and aesthetically grating.

Also lurking around the Hoffman House is an unnamed Gardener (also played by Wintergate) with a pseudo-punk fashion sense and crippled arm in a chain-sling who suffers from posttraumatic stress as a result of doing a couple tours in the Vietnam War. When the Gardener acts like he is going to attack Victoria with hedge-clippers and rudely knocks her in the pool, all the girls complain about the old disheveled and beat-up creep's presence, but as Jim tells them, he "comes with the house" since he apparently saved his belated uncle Dr. Royce's life during the Vietnam War. Aside from being a physical cripple, the Gardener is also a sexual invalid of sorts that is terribly afraid of women, so when he starts to approach one of the boardinghouse babes with a chainsaw, the chick uses her boobs as a weapon by flaunting them in the seemingly semi-retarded horticulturalist's face, thus causing him to run for his dear life. Aside from being inhabited by a inter-dimensional killer, the house also causes people to hallucinate hellish things that seem to be dreamed up by some sort of demonic pig fetishist. For example, when one of the girls cuts herself while shaving in the shower, the tiles on the shower wall become drenched in blood and before the little lady knows it, her lovely little blonde head has transformed into that of a grotesque balding male mutant pig creature (!?) in what is undoubtedly one the most bizarre and quaintly unnerving yet humorous scenes in the entire film. Aside from supernatural elements, one of the girls, Cindy (Mary McKinley), also faces harassment from her wealthy ex-boyfriend, Richard (played Josh Brolin's brother Brian Bruderlin), who hires a moronic horndog with a mullet named Harris (Dean Disico) to scope out the boardinghouse where he ultimately becomes the object of mindless worship and amorous adoration among the girls of the home, with one of them immediately shouting, "A man! Let's get him in the pool ladies" upon seeing him. Ultimately, Harris is enthusiastically defiled by the sole East Asian chick at the house, Su Ling (Victoria Herron), but shortly after they share miscegenation-based carnal knowledge, the dimwitted jock detective is killed via electrocution after a blow-dryer levitates and lands in the water of

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the bathtub where he is washing the Oriental sex juices off of his body. Shortly after his rather pathetic death, his employer rich dick Richard shows up to talk his estranged girlfriend Cindy into accepting his less than romantic marriage proposal, but she has less than fond memories of him brutally raping her, so she has to give the idea some thought. To help cheer Cindy up about her rapist boyfriend coming by, Jim takes her to the beach and the two begin making love, but that is cut short when the supernatural gloved killer, who somehow magically managed to get out of the Hoffman House, beats them both over the head with a large rock. Possessed by the spirit of the sadistic inter-dimensional killer, Cindy drowns herself by walking into the sea and not looking back in a fashion not unlike that of Georgina Spelvin's character in Gary Graver's Bergman-esque hardcore flick *3 A.M.* (1975).

In one of the most nightmarishly nonsensical and phantasmagorically schlocky scenes in the entire film, Victoria is grabbed by a monster arm that pops out of the mattress on her bed, so she runs outside and eventually ends up in a graveyard where a bloody monster man with a rotting pig head attacks her. In some sort of convoluted dream-within-a-dream borrowed from Don Coscarelli's *Phantasm*, Victoria decides to sleep in a bed that she discovers in the middle of the graveyard, but she is soon rudely awakened by a corpse, not once but twice in a row as she is transferred from dream to dream, only to truly wake-up after two nonsensical bedtime encounters with dead bodies, or so it seems. Luckily, after having a massive globule of semen-like yogurt ejaculated on her face by a malicious being hiding inside a refrigerator, Victoria is taken to a steamy shower by Jimmy boy and has her meat-curtain rigorously reamed in what is probably the most awkward, unintentionally creepy, and seemingly unending sex scene in all of film history. While Victoria is more than a little satisfied after being buggered senselessly by Jimmy boy in a steamy shower, her happiness is soon completely shattered when one of her roommates, a mousy British broad named Debbie (Lindsay Freeman, who had a small role in Brian De Palma's 1984 film *Body Double*), hands her a fancily wrapped present that she claims is from Jim that contains the mutilated corpse of her beloved kitty cat named 'Pumpkin.' Of course, at this point in the film, it is quite clear that there is something not quite right about Debbie.

At the end of *BoardingHouse*, Victoria has her generic rock band 33 1/3 play at a late night pool-party-cum-magic-show at Hoffman House on the tenth anniversary of the night when the Hoffmans were murdered during their own anniversary party. A young high yellow negro cop with a small afro named Officer Weston (Elliot Van Koghbe, who also acted as the assistant producer of the film) attempts to warn Jim of the unfortunate timing of his party, but he does not seem to mind that his friends might be brutally murdered by a malevolent entity. After Officer Weston is forced by sinister forces to unload some bullets into an ebony princess that looks like she could be his sister, the same forces

make him turn the service revolver on himself. The Gardener is also attacked by the same entity and subsequently stumbles around the party wounded, but the party guests mistake his belligerent behavior for mere drunkenness and laugh at him like he is some sort of cheap novelty while he bleeds out. When Brit bitch Debbie gets alone with Victoria's band manager—a seriously scuzzy pimp-like scumbag that proudly declares that there is, “nothing that I like better than a little head and some coke”—and begins feeling the old geezer up while calling him her “daddy,” things get a little bit interesting. Indeed, it turns out that Debbie is not British at all, as her full-name is Debbie Hoffman and she is the deranged child who was institutionalized after seeing her parents killed at the Hoffman House. In fact, Debbie was actually the one responsible for killing them, as she slaughtered her mother after she had walked in on her and her Noble Peace laureate father having incestuous pederast sex. Debbie also decided to kill Daddy Hoffman out of jealousy after he refused to give her his ‘heart’ and after Victoria's band manager fails to do the same, she quite literally rips the old fellow's heart out of his chest and drenches her body with his blood with the utmost orgasmic sadistic glee. When Jim sees Debbie's deadly dirty work and realizes she is the crazed Hoffman daughter, he wages a telekinetic battle with her that results in the crazed cunt with an evil sort of Electra complex being pushed into another dimension. In the end, it is rather ridiculously revealed that Jim went on to become a digital systems analyst for the space program, Victoria became a “hot RCA property” and is now on a world promo tour, and Debbie Hoffman's body was never recovered. Although the Hoffman House ended up mysteriously burning down, a mystery lady named ‘Angela Hart’ bought the charred remains in 1983, thus leaving room for a BoardingHouse sequel that has still yet to be made.

In the audio commentary track for the 2008 Code Red DVD release of BoardingHouse, director/star John Wintergate and his wife/co-star Kalassu, who are still married after all these decades, revealed that they are preparing a sequel and that their daughter Shanti Wintergate—an aspiring musician/actress that appeared as an extra in *Donnie Darko* (2001), has an unhealthy obsession with frog pseudo-avant-garde filmmaker Michel Gondry as depicted in an appalling music video she made, and is married to the singer of the pop-punk group the Bouncing Souls, Greg Attonito—will be starring in the film and that she might even bare some skin. Personally, I do not really see how a proper sequel can be made for the film, as most of its preternatural character and particular potency comes from its conspicuously kitschy Betacam look, singularly schlocky pre-digital special effects and equally archaic computer text, and primitive synthesizer-based score, which are all obscenely outmoded aesthetic ingredients that simply cannot be reproduced today in any sort of genuine or effective way. It should also be noted that in the summer of 2013, *Slasher // Video* released the remastered 2hr 38 min director's cut of BoardingHouse on DVD, which is certainly the sort

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of epic (non)cinematic endurance test that separates the true gutter cinephiles and cineastes from the autistic DVD-collecting virginal fanboys. Personally, as someone who has indulged in my fair share of recreational drug use, I always get annoyed when people describe works like Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969), Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo* (1970), and Alan Parker's *Pink Floyd: The Wall* (1982) as "Head" movies and compare them to drug trips, but I must admit that Wintergate's betacam horror show is certainly a work that seems like it was made by dope fiends for dope fiends and considering all the mindnumbingly moronic metaphysical twaddle in the film and tendency for the characters to sit around half-naked and do nothing, I think that it is fairly indisputable that the auteur/star and his muse/co-star conceived of the work while they were fucking and getting stoned. Indeed, for better or worse, *BoardingHouse* is a bad trip in vintage video form, as one of those oh-so-thankfully rare horror flicks like George Barry's *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* (1977) or even the avant-garde counterculture films of James Broughton (*The Bed*, *Dreamwood*) that transports the viewer to a completely capricious, uncanny, and idiosyncratic cinematic realm that is strangely inviting and fun to get lost in, even though it gives you every indication that it shouldn't be. Forget *Black Devil Doll from Hell* (1984) or *The Video Dead* (1987), *BoardingHouse* is the only shot-on-video horror turd that matters, as a strangely playful, fairly fanciful, and almost always whimsical piece of 'accidental art' that reminds the viewer that there are actually rare occasions when someone who has no business getting behind a camera, let alone directing, churns out something that is more curious and enthralling than any of the films that played at that year's Cannes Film Festival. Indeed, the film may be the zaniest labor of audio-visual love ever conceived by two drug-addled real-life lovers, as a post-counter-cultural Betacam abortion that manages to express the worst of its zeitgeist in a uniquely unwitting way that reeks of tasteless charm and conspicuously kitschy accidental charisma. In other words, enter the *BoardingHouse* if you dare to delight in odiously outmoded accidental video art of the horrifyingly horrendous horror-comedy sort.

-Ty E

THE KILLER

John Woo (1989)

Strolling through the decadent and backwoods gas station rental oeuvre, I'd see selections after selections of films that I'd be able to watch effortlessly, however, only with age. Finding it in myself to pick up *Ghoulies Go To College* seems like such a far cry from my habitual rental of *Tremors* or *The Kindred*. Other than the typical action films, I'd frequent *Face/Off* and *Broken Arrow*, respectively, and their Hong Kong predecessors were virtually unknown to me. Had I known this Eastern-Western director created 2 bodies of work that are complete mirror opposites of archetype and rival every action film released in the states (in terms of bullets and psychotic violence), I would have converted to Wooism years ago to save me the embarrassment of my friends goading me for not seeing John Woo's *The Killer* and only until this year, *Hard-Boiled*. The tale of an introverted and valiant assassin is something that most every subject has glanced at, their tales sweeping the screen in the lingual form of French, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. What really spikes *The Killer* above the enamored expectations alongside *Leon: The Professional* is the chemistry between Ah-jong and Inspector Ying, while border-lining male romance, the obsessions they carry differ in routes but never-the-less scrawl to many climactic confrontations.

Having watched both *The Killer* and *Hard-Boiled* within the span of a sweat-soaked evening, Chow-Yun Fat has fashioned himself to be an indecently versatile actor, harnessing giddy-boy in *Hard-Boiled* as the "serious-when-he-needs-to-be" Tequila and channeling an intensified yet poetic hitman whose heart is too big for the sordid expectations of him and his weapon. In *The Killer*, Chow-Yun Fat plays past his genetic baby-face and manages to shed that image upon the opening shootout scene which gives birth to the wonderfully important subplot of a blinded lounge singer named Jennie whom, out of guilt, Ah-jong decides to follow, protect, and love, tenderly, with plans of a final job to afford her cornea transplant surgery. Simple basis enough with a dash of betrayal and healthy amounts of gun play for an excellent HK splurge. Not necessarily the post-meditated state on violence that *Hard-Boiled* unabashedly hurls you into wondering who is on which side, however. Through all the environmental carnage, it's hard to discern who is shooting and what exactly is getting lit up with slugs. *The Killer* is much more distinguishable as an action/thriller though not without heavy doses of detective narcissism and a terrible score to topside the action with primordial jazz.

Acting as ringer for the entire project, *The Killer* only becomes the legend that it is due to the raw, shocking nature of the ending and how utterly hopeless you feel after the credits roll. Brought to a simmer, this tale of brotherly obsession and acceptance of dreary philosophies on the wielder of guns, killers and cops, crawls to a conclusion that will no doubt burrow in your mind as you can't help

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but feel sick over the fates of all three characters. Thinking I had the course of predictability down to a "T", what a fool I was and left bewildered staring at the screen with a guttural hankering for affection and co-dependency. Ironically enough, *The Killer* has been hailed as Woo's "magnum opus" but with great evidence to back upon these claims. To think of it, this might even be a near perfect film if the soundtrack was recycled and refined. Sadly so, there is not much to say about this film and the festering hatred that is spawned by the tragic finale. All thoughts and impressions can all be retraced back to the solemn, iconic scene of Ah-jong letting a cigarette slowly burn out; pure visual existentialism. That and the heroic bloodshed nature of idolizing the power of weaponry as phallic extensions of machismo. As I stated, a perfect companion piece to *Hard-Boiled* for any particularly sleazy night.

-mAQ

HARD TARGET WORKPRINT

John Woo (1993)

On the fringes of modern consumerism concerning film & media lies something known as a workprint. Essentially, a workprint is a beta or prototype (if you will) of a film. Normally, the workprint is used for digital editing and test audiences to determine if and what should be cut from the motion picture. In 1993, John Woo began production on his first Hollywood film starring Jean Claude Van Damme called Hard Target. This film was yet another rehash of The Most Dangerous Game, this time addition came before a dread-locked Ice T rocked the story (Surviving the Game), which we are all heartbroken about the decision to exclude a Rastafarian Van Damme. A screening of this film debuted for a single audience which featured an extra 20 minutes that was cut off of the theatrical and DVD release. Today, the workprint is near impossible to find except via torrents and bootlegs. The differences are many and small, some ranging from large to hardly noticeable. The most prominent features are a love scene and extreme gun play. Many more bullets are fired and the death toll is greater. The vintage feel of a Woo film is restored and it showcases many wounds including a man getting shot 29 times with an upside down Beretta.

Various angles and little scenes were clipped but I read that the real fear came from a NC-17 rating which I couldn't see happening, although the ear removal scene (ode to Tarantino) might have pissed some people off. Studio exec's told Woo that he cannot kill seven henchmen in one scene. Such censorship obviously led to a lackluster vision in which the director probably regrets not challenging the system at that time. The source copy of this has a time stamp which tends to bother me until I forget it's there and the quality is almost horrid. Although I'd rather absorb the director's vision of a hyper-violent Cajun vigilante so I much prefer the workprint. Now onto the actual film - Hard Target is an American Hong Kong action film. While Woo makes poetry with absurd violence, Hard Target is one of his lesser works but it still stands strong. Several scenes kill the stern visage set on by Van Damme's face such as the infamous snake punch scene in which he knocks a snake out cold with a swift fist in the kisser. Hard Target features some very enjoyable scenes of extreme disregard towards shop windows and the human life. Led by Lance Henriksen and Imhotep, the villains create a daunting atmosphere led on by the stark fear in their victims eyes. Exploiting veterans has been going on since the dawn of Vietnam and it is just as sad to see scum like these torture these people. I'd like to see an alternate reality of this film in which Henriksen employs a lonely John Rambo to be his prey. Oh how sweet the suffering would be.

-mAQ

THE ODD ONE DIES
THE ODD ONE DIES

Johnnie To (1997)

For my money, the strongest work to come out of Milkyway Image, if not Hong Kong cinema as a whole, was the initial burst of nigh-forgotten classics released before the company's break-out hit *Running Out of Time* in 1999. Among these were a trio of films "directed by Patrick Yau" (*Expect of the Unexpected*, *The Longest Nite*, and *The Odd One Dies*) which have since been proven to be almost solely the work of Milkyway head honchos Johnnie To and Wai Ka-Fai. And while these fellas have provided us with some very consistent, effortlessly cool cinema over the years, none of it compares to the liberated burst of fuck-all experimentation that sparked it all.

So from what I understand, Patrick Yau was an assistant director to Johnnie To, and To either decided to cut the kid a break and Yau wasn't able to pull his weight, or to direct a few flicks for him to get him on the path to career, or something, but the whole house of cards came tumbling down about the time *Expect the Unexpected* came out and was nominated for some HK Film awards. At this point, To and Wai owned up to the fact they directed all but about three scenes of the film, and whether any of this has anything to do with these films sliding into obscurity I don't know (more likely than not it's the blink-and-you've missed it accelerated culture of HK than anything else), but if you can hunt down copies of any of these flicks (also Wai Ka-Fai's absurdly inventive *Too Many Ways To Be No. 1* and To's heroic bloodshed send-up *A Hero Never Dies*), you'll be duly rewarded.

Of all the above-mentioned films, *The Odd One Dies* is in many ways the strangest of the bunch, a surprisingly tender inversion of the familiar tropes of Wong Kar-wai's mid-nineties work that manages to both stand on its own as a winning alternate reality romantic comedy for fucked up weirdos and in a lot of ways comments on exactly what WKW's flicks are lacking. As a formative filmgoer, Wong Kar-wai was among the first non-exploitation directors to really grab me. The lyricism of *Chungking Express*' lonely urbanites and the unbridled cool of *Fallen Angels*, with Chris Doyle's everything-but-the-kitchen-sink camera ejaculation, spoke directly to a teenager for whom Godard was not yet a four-letter word. As time has dragged on, I can still appreciate Wong's work, but mostly on technical or nostalgic terms. There is a certain shallow center to all of the hip posturing, cool tunes, and picture-perfect casting (I mean, are we really supposed to believe that Leon Lai's existential hitman in *Fallen Angels* wouldn't drop everything to run away with Michelle Reis? And that she would pine for THAT guy? Look at her! What does she have to be all sad and lonely about? She's the fucking hottest babe of all fucking time) that doesn't quite hit the spot like it once did. Perhaps it has something to do with the aging process? As a teen I wanted my adult life to consist of blurry montages with

a catchy pop soundtrack, a revolving cast of angsty babes secretly cleaning my apartment, excellent clothes and perfect hair and endearing monologues to myself about how my bar of soap is sad and shit. The reality of life has proven to be anything but a live-action WKW flick, though. Body fat, bad haircuts galore, some attractive women, granted, but not sadly pining for me, just beating me with umbrellas and bemoaning my fashion blunders. When I try to look off into the distance and smoke a cigarette and smoke gets in my eyes and instead of looking like some existential superhero for the Pitchfork Media set I'm just a smelly-fingered advertisement for quitting, while my interior monologues aren't quirky and metaphor-laden but pathetic and disturbing.

Fortunately, Johnnie To and Wai Ka-Fai took it upon themselves to make what is essentially a Wong Kar-Wai film for strange schlubs like us. Instead of populating *The Odd One Dies* with model-types bemoaning their inability to feel emotions or get over one unattainable hottie for another one, *The Odd One Dies* is the story of two imperfect, inherently flawed individuals who are briefly brought together, and within the rough edges of the story, some truly uplifting and real emotions are mined. Takeshi Kaneshiro (one of the stars of *Chungking Express* and *Fallen Angels*) is cast as a wannabe gangster who, wanting to prove himself after a humiliating beating and in need of cash, agrees to kill a Thai man for some actual gangsters in what is obviously a suicide mission. After a card game in which his bad fortunes are temporarily reversed (a great scene showcasing the understated, off-centre black humor of the film), he is flush with cash and decides to contract out the killing to someone else. That someone else happens to be a fresh out-of-jail, thoroughly pitiful Carman Lee, who agrees to the suicide mission either for the money and a chance to escape her past or because she is genuinely suicidal. The antithesis of the runway model WKW heroine, an early scene reminiscent of a similar section of *Chungking Express*, also featuring Kaneshiro, has him lovingly removing and washing her socks as she sleeps (much as he removes Brigitte Lin's shoes in that film) in a hotel bed opposite his, but undercuts the romance of the situation with the fact he does so because her feet fucking REEK. Furthermore, Lee's character knows REAL tragedy- she wasn't simply rejected by some pin-up pop idol taking a celluloid vacation, but tricked into killing her own cousin as a teenager by a conniving husband who hardly remembers her. As the todd pair share hotel rooms and plan the killing, the only expected element is that they are brought together romantically, though where it goes from there is completely unpredictable.

Further ribbing of Wong's flicks comes when Lee tries to give herself a hip, short haircut a la Faye Wong in *Chungking Express* and with Kaneshiro's help manages to shore her long locks into a horrifying mullet. When he respectfully acquiesces to a similar mane butchering, we know we are not in quite the same suave universe as Wong's flicks, but one strikingly similar to our own. Kaneshiro does a magnificent job of playing a conflicted, thoroughly confused young slacker,

THE ODD ONE DIES

in some ways a reflection of his endearing mute slapstick performance in *Fallen Angels* (the sole pathos earned in that film comes via his mugging silent comedy, though it is almost robbed by going full-tilt sentimental towards the end), but instead of making the character saccharine sweet to the point of a toothache, in this flick he is merely severely stupid and in over his head, but given to moments of betraying his tough guy posturing with moments of compassion, typically in the form of beating those who dare offend the put-upon Carman Lee. One last mention of Wong Kar-Wai to be made before getting into what really makes this film an unheralded classic - Raymond Wong's synth-tango score is in some ways reminiscent of the similar musical direction of WKW's *Days of Being Wild*, but the main theme is far more infectious, and the casiotone kitschiness make it all the more shaggy dog endearing.

What really sends *The Odd One Dies* into another level altogether is how deftly it plays with our expectations. There is a scene where Lee manages to confront her scumbag scam artist husband, and with his snide dismissal, pulls out a gun and shoots him. The emotion rings true, but doesn't seem to fit the altogether more reality-based pull of the script. Then she snaps out of it and we realize it was but a daydream and, as in real life, she is forced to confront the situation without catharsis. One blackly comic recurring gag involved a gangster who, first by Kaneshiro, then Lee, is shorn of his fingers. Both scenes involve his henchman running like madmen looking for ice, while we the audience are blown away by the fact that this movie's idea of side-splitting humor is a dude getting his fingers lopped off. YES! But at a certain point, this character, after catching Kaneshiro and deigning to cut off his hand, looks like he will again be shorn his re-attached digits and the most unexpected thing of all happens. Forgiveness. This scene of redemption all but makes the film, subverting both the expected outcome and the comedic thrust of the finger-loppings by taking it into unexpectedly touching territory (mirroring an earlier scene in which a snobbish hotel clerk reveals himself to be far less one-note than anticipated). As the film nears its end, things are wrapped up in a similarly low-key and road-less-travelled manner. From the word go, To and Wai (er, Patrick Yau), prove themselves to be sly genre revisionists of the finest caliber. While the recent work of Milkyway is continually inventive, classy, and often, like this film, the ultimate rarity- meta without devolving into film-geek condescension or mere homage - I can't help but wish they could still work in the occasional lower-budgeted, understated piece like *The Odd One Dies* or *Expect the Unexpected*. Genre cinema as a whole would benefit from more of this kind of expert capsizing of conventions.

-Jon-Christian

88 MINUTES

Jon Avnet* (2007) 88 Minutes is a new crime thriller starring Al Pacino. While it is a below average thriller with predictable twists, this is not the topic of the article. Al Pacino, since starring in the over-rated Scarface, has been living in Tony Montana's shadow for far too long. The film opens up with a vulgar hip-hop song, to either show the forensic psychiatrist's party side, or perhaps a subliminal ode to Pacino's glory days. When Scarface first debuted, this film wasn't associated with airbrushed tall tee's and rap songs. Scarface was about a brutal crime syndicate ran by a sadistic cokehead. De Palma's film started as one thing, then completely changed directions. It's impossible to watch a Pacino film and not think of Scarface. Urban youth feel inspired by the damndest things. Later in 88 Minutes, Bubba Sparxxx's song "Mrs. New Booty" plays loud and noticeable, even when it doesn't tie in with the film in the slightest. Instead of promoting his crime films as a gritty portrait of city decay, he caters to these urban ideals that have been imprinted on his career. After all, if he didn't suck up to the young blacks, he wouldn't have gotten much of anywhere nowadays. Other than Pacino's role in the film, this film also borrows heavily from other films in the genre. Many serial killer films use the same "You will die in ____" See also; The entire SAW series. The capital punishment perspective is also derived from the film The Life of David Gale. One thing I picked up while viewing this film, is the the casting. 88 Minutes is a film marketed towards the urban audience, with it's voracious use of rap in the soundtrack and it's key role, it does deliver, but I noticed something very strange. In all of it's run time, I recall only 1 black person. This character was so minor, I don't even recall him saying a single word. Perhaps some form of detachment or hidden racism is at play. This film seems to be anti-black. The pitch black poster was soon ditched and a new poster with Al Pacino surrounded by clocks and fire were distributed. The film is just a collage of crazy white people, screaming and framing each other. 88 Minutes is a mess of racial expectations intended to destroy "white" America. When things get too blurred, what tactic does the film incorporate? Throw a speeding fire truck driving into a crowd to spice the film up with action. Overall, the entire feel of the film feels too forced and presents itself as extremely generic, but it does reward you with a semi-watchable film. 88 Minutes might give Pacino the chance he needs in order to revive his film career into at least something visually edible. He just needs to learn how to move on, and to realize that he is getting old. Need I mention that the film revolving around a runtime of 88 Minutes is 108 minutes?

-mAQ

RIGHTEOUS KILL
RIGHTEOUS KILL

Jon Avnet* (2008) Two senile detectives track a deranged serial killer thought to be a cop. Deranged meaning a plain old serial killer. They always use drastic words to over accentuate the viciousness of a murderer. What makes this film stand out from the average thriller is that the killer only targets sinners or wastes of life. In truth, this is nowhere near as original as the producers would have liked this to be. Those producers being the ones who produced *The Wicker Man* remake. De Niro and Pacino, both hailed as mobster hall-of-famers, headline a film that focuses more on the fact that the "legendary duo" are back together for the first time since *Heat*, rather than fleshing out the characters and traits. Many attempts are made to make these men more like rabid animals but the results are laughable at best. De Niro is seen fucking a female co-worker who likes to be abused and dominated. The final product is old, sweaty, and wrinkly. The city of New York is given a seedy approach on cinema. While some parts of the city wouldn't be an exaggeration to film this way, bewitching the settings is deemed a must by director Jon Avnet. Steam ascends from manholes in order to distinguish a mood but the film has already sacrificed too much plot to wow the crowd with pretty "hood" streets. Avnet took a stab at creating a "street lamp noir" with the many dark alley scenes with hoodlums aimlessly wandering. Blame the films disappointing reception and product on the youth that are fanatically obsessed with *Scarface*. It's their devoted fan base to an average crime film that persuaded Hollywood to make the casting decision of including 50 Cent (Curtis Jackson) siding Al Pacino to sell more tickets. The films climax and ill twist features a surprising homosexual suggestion. When the audience discovers Pacino was the killer (Called it upon viewing the trailer) and his motive lacked passion or rage, I heard moans and groans. Or maybe it was just my mind overreacting to my own letdown. His M.O. was that Turk (De Niro) disappointed Rooster (Pacino) by planting a gun on a criminal. After all, Turk was his male idol and he holstered a deep love for him. Tony Montana had a deep love for the aging De Niro, how sweet. When *Righteous Kill* doesn't patronize you with its lifeless ending or "filler" scenes of personal dysfunctions to boost the darkness of the characters, It can be somewhat-enjoyable. Watching Robert De Niro waddle everywhere scowling at everyone reminiscent to *March of the Penguins*, however is not. Admission price is not for the film as a whole but for the scene you all wait for. 50 Cent's amazing death. Watching Mr. Jackson take a slug to the back of the head only to rag doll out a window is worth \$8.50.

-mAQ

IRON MAN

Jon Favreau* (2008)

Every comic book film has a serious flaw. This is a common fact amongst every adaptation of comic to film. The main problem lies within the source material focusing on being outlandish and bringing us into a fantastical world of a crime free zone and a patriot fighting for our cause, even if he is doing so being politically blind. Iron Man is a different kind of film. Whether praising his dad for helping kill Nazi's or womanizing reporters for Vanity Fair, Tony Stark is a bachelor of every sense of the word; Rich, powerful, and sex-crazed. After being taken hostage by a rebel faction in the middle-east content on being a high power, Stark decides to build a suit capable of not only ultimate destruction, but ultimate crime fighting. Not so much crime fighting, but more of a global reach. When i saw that Stark could not live without a arch-reactor built into his chest, I felt sickened. I appreciated his life so much more than i have many characters. This moment signified that monogamy could be his only choice. He was officially a mutant. For being a PG-13 film, It had some incredible violence such as Terrorism, operations, weird abstract holes in chests, and tubes sickeningly being removed from noses. Iron Man fixes the key problem by casting the perfect character and fitting the mold. It lives up to the hype and promises every little detail to fit the comic. In X-Men, we all had problems with the characters, whether it be Cyclops's sissy actor or Wolverine's lack of sever facial hair or signature costume. In Iron Man, we all agree Stark is a douche bag. In fact, we revel in the fact that he is an asshole. This allows for a metamorphosis of the soul. He realizes his flaws and evolves into an amazing creature with a hilarious personality. Iron Man's themes are mainly political, stretching from scenes declaring the importance of weapons just like this years Rambo did. In fact, what is peace without war? As Stark's father apparently said, He who is peaceful is the one with the bigger stick. All is true in the sadistic games of war. Iron Man did a much better job of political propaganda than Captain America did. All i can remember Captain "Sam" doing was rescuing children. Their representation of a "middle-easterner" was incredible; incredibly false. I love how these "American" blockbusters bill the "Taliban" as being dirty fools with beards who do not know how to fire a gun. Every Arabian fool in this film just sprayed bullets everywhere and were depicted as cowards without loyalty. This even goes against their way of life. Surprisingly, these "dirty sand mongrel" manage to salvage most of his prototype in an attempt to rebuild it. The action in the film is incredible and so is the product placement. Due to the Burger King deal with kids toys, after Stark is freed from captivity due to his amazing prototype suit, he wants nothing more than the symbolization of America; fast food. After dealing with a press conference in which he gobbles down delicious "AMERICAN" cheese-burgers (Because there is no other), he reveals he no longer wants to be an angel

IRON MAN

of death. If you are one of two things: A) Comic Book fan B) Super Hero fan If you agreed to one of more of these choices, you will absolutely love this movie. There is a lot of character development so don't expect too much of an epic final battle, but due to realist issues in the film, It cannot exceed more than his power limit could. Whether Robert Downey Jr. is being a cokehead in his free time or playing some Noir-ish detective, he will always be Iron Man. This role was made for him; built for him. Holy shit, I cannot wait for a sequel. Fanboys, Beware. Stay after the credits for a comic surprise.

-mAQ

THE DESCENT: PART 2

Jon Harris (2009)

The Descent was the first of its kind; a near perfect feminist horror film that didn't come off as hokey or burdening to the male race. In a property spoiling turn, director Neil Marshall thought he'd earn a slimy wad of cash by overseeing and allowing the production of a direct sequel aptly titled "Part 2." The continuation finds Sarah returning to the surface covered in blood and negating all layers of interpretation left open by the original's incredible ending. If there is one thing The Descent is known for, it's "women spelunking." The Descent: Part 2 brings nothing but tired tricks and storybook devices to this morbidly banal sequel which features a cast of both genders, diluted Negro-centric crawlers, and an ending that will have you ripping your hair out in tufts and cursing the day that "inbred redneck" films were ever created. As mentioned previously, Sarah is out of the caverns that were to be named after her by the affair-having whore Asiatic friend, Juno, and is recovering peacefully and ignorantly in a hospital bed. The doctors claim she has no recollection of the past 2 days and this pampers the plot and character enough to allow her stupid ass to descend into hell yet again to find out the truth of what happened in the first subterranean blood bath. Much like the fetid S. Darko, The Descent: Part 2 takes much, if not everything, that made the film and reincorporates the same angles, techniques, and scenes. The Descent: Part 2 still uses collapsing crawlspaces, night vision bogeymen, and women going berserk to ill effect and demonstrates the law of every terrible sequel e.g. rotating lead character kills as seen in effect in most of the Nightmare on Elm Street follow ups. Neil Marshall's involvement in the film was purely to oversee the production to ensure a claustrophobic experience in grueling terror. I'm sure his intention was solely for the benefit of growth but this film only demonstrates one thing about caverns and that is that most are created with prop boulders and it doesn't exactly benefit that Jon Harris' entire career is that of editing quality films and not directing them. To fit the pieces together in a visually digestible way might be a form of art but Mr. Harris has yet to learn how to create the pieces for completion. My strong opinion can be argued with but I feel, as I'm sure most do, that this sequel is entirely unnecessary and only taints the unknown terror of the original. The introduction of a hybrid human-like beast that hunts with a skillful variety of tactics including scouting and pack assault was a much needed fixture on the tag of horror that has been largely dominated with names, faces, and motives. These creatures started out with a glossy blood/mud luster in the original film then switched to grotesque make-up reconditioning and an entirely different makeover treatment in the second. Without the returning characters or use of archive footage this film would be utterly nameless and just as equally disappointing. After the males had been twiddled away to recreate the original's feminist spirit, the select group of fe-

THE DESCENT: PART 2

males featured in *The Descent: Part 2* begin to die in terrible, horrible fashions. Even with all the tomato soup butcherings, these girls shouldn't be frightened of these beastly crawlers. No, they should have turned hide and retreated from the real villain at large - creative control. It's high time for an uprising against the tyranny of continuation. As Lizzy Caplan said in the incredible comedy *Hot Tub Time Machine*, "embrace the chaos," we should never more accept the standard retail price for something so less than chaotic. *The Descent: Part 2* isn't the affable sequel to a classic of raw horror that you were expecting. I shouldn't even be writing about this film as near everyone's opinion should strongly lean towards mine. It's a given that this film is nothing to be respectful of. I don't even respect myself anymore having since watched it.

-mAQ

HAROLD /& KUMAR ESCAPE FROM GUANTÁNAMO BAY

Jon Hurwitz, Hayden Schlossberg* (2008)

Disquieting racism is in every film you see now-a-days. Whether they are presenting the ignorance in a harmful light or not is the true argument. The first Harold & Kumar film focused on the drug-life rather than anything else. The film was boring with only a few scenes that could be seen as comedy, Harold & Kumar 2 took everything wrong with the first film, revamped it, and made a fucking hilarious film that doesn't argue semantics. On a flight to Amsterdam, Harold & Kumar get mistaken for terrorists due to the color of their skin and wind up in Guantánamo Bay awaiting their first "cockmeat sandwich" They escape from the prison and are on their way to Texas to try to get help from politicians. Also, Neil Patrick Harris. If Harold & Kumar 2 did one thing right, it would be the clever marketing of the iconic Patrick Harris. The fact that so many idols of B-films get a mascot job of sorts, or even headliners for more shitty films, such as Casper Van Dien from Starship Troopers or Bruce Campbell from Evil Dead. The teaser poster showing Neil on a unicorn with the words "What would NPH Do?" is only a taste of the ridiculous antics to come. The film is a satire of child actors, fashion trends, and racial stereotypes. These are explained briefly in scenes that are the highlights of the movie. One scene involves a Department of Homeland Security agent trying to get questions out of a Negro commuter. He decides that the only way to get him to talk, would be to open a can of Grape Soda and pour it out. This Negro orthodontist is horrified by the white man's ignorance and the only thing that can be heard is the neighbors screaming "That's racist!" (Jew's never stray far from their coins) A similar scene is also present, involving 2 Jew-clowns in an interrogation room. You might remember Goldstein from the first film. Well, this time his role is small and the majority of his screen time you see him collecting gold coins. Roger Bart plays the Jewish intellectual who constantly downplays the head agent's intelligence and opposes him. He's the only one that can see that these two boys are innocent. President George W. Bush even makes an appearance in the film that leads to huge laughs as he calls his father and tells him "Fuck you!" This scene alone grants it a film that embraces its political incorrectness and displays scenes of southern inbreds, KKK members, and jokes against all races. I personally promise you this is a vast improvement over the sloth-comedy that was present in the original. Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantánamo Bay is like Euro-Trip, except it doesn't suck. Stick around after the credits.

-mAQ

LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE
LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE

Jon Jošt (1977)

Out of all the filmmakers that have been associated with the hermetic aesthetic autism of so-called 'Structural film,' Jon Jošt (*Angel City*, *The Bed You Sleep In*), who to his credit does not actually associate himself with the movement (in an interview with Jonathan Rosenbaum, he stated candidly regarding Structural film, "I've hardly seen any. What little I've seen strikes me as technical exercises, so I end up not being too interested—or I'm interested only if there's some technical thing I can learn from it"), is probably the only one who has directed cinematic works that would appeal to more people than just actual Structural filmmakers and certain pedantic film theorists that consider Stan Brakhage a right-wing 'reactionary.' A self-taught auteur and born rebel who had to temporarily put his filmmaking career on hold in 1965 after only directing a couple shorts because he had to serve over 2 years in prison at the behest of U.S. authorities for adamantly refusing to cooperate with the Selective Service System by burning up his draft card (ironically, the filmmaker was a military brat), Jošt is a rare true lone wolf of cinema who is not part of any avant-garde movement or the mainstream, though, unlike a lot of his underground contemporaries, he actually desired be part of the latter. Indeed, as his distinctly gritty and visceral (anti)road movie *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* (1977) vividly demonstrates, Jošt's most accessible works also tend to be his greatest, which is a sentiment that top American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum also seems to share as reflected in his book *Film: The Front Line 1983* (1983) where he wrote, "At once the easiest and most disturbing of Jošt's features, and to my mind the best, *LAST CHANTS* conceivably gets closer to the mentality of the alienated and seemingly motiveless killer than either Mailer or Capote." A delectably disturbing and refreshingly confrontational work that was written, directed, shot, and edited by Jošt on a mere budget of \$3,000, this truly radical road movie, which was notably the auteur's first excursion in narrative feature filmmaking, easily comes closer than any other cinematic work that I have ever seen in terms of depicting the innately nihilistic life of an authentic everyday psychopath. Indeed, while people typically think of them as lawyers, bankers, CEOs, Hollywood producers, and genocidal dictators, the average psychopath is actually an ill-restrained, irresponsible, sexually impulsive, and parasitic emotional void and perennial lowlife loser that essentially drifts through life with no real long-term plans and typically relies on the generosity of the weak and/or inordinately empathetic to survive, but of course Hollywood would never dare to make a film about such a hopelessly humdrum individual and instead makes quasi-tributes to such unsavory individual like Martin Scorsese did with Zionist swindler Jordan Belfort via his keenly kosher big budget Bacchanalian celluloid Shylock bugger *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). Inspired by the loser life of American killer Gary Gilmore

(who was executed the same year the film was released and who was formally diagnosed by a prison psychiatrist as suffering from antisocial personality disorder with intermittent psychotic decompensation) and the sort of degenerate hardened criminals that Jošt met during his prison sentence for draft-dodging, the auteur notably described his objective with the film as follows to Rosenbaum, "I tried to make an honest picture of a small segment of American society." Of course, there is no glamour in Jošt's America.

A sort of Wrangler Jeans 'realist fever dream' that would probably make even the driest of feminist cunts wet due to its depiction of what misandristic she-bitches regularly refer to as "toxic masculinity," *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* is chilling in a manner comparable to when you are having an awkward conversation with a fellow that you know has actually murdered or raped someone. To a European, sheltered bourgeois pansy, or NYC Jewish intellectual who has nil experience with or understanding of America's white working-class, Jošt's film might be misinterpreted as a portrait of the typical Montana neo-cowboy 'everyman' who thinks that John Wayne is the greatest American who has ever lived and who enjoys watching the pseudo-hillbillies on *Duck Dynasty*, but it is really a candid depiction of a lumpenprole psychopath who lets his family suffer while driving aimlessly in his truck and living life more or less off the grid. In terms of counterculture road movies, Jošt's film makes Monte Hellman's existentialist cult classic *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971) seem like the prototype for the dreaded *The Fast and the Furious* (2001) franchise by comparison. Indeed, a sort of more eccentric yet calm celluloid cousin to Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) as a work that depicts America and its people and landscapes in a way that is usually more typical of European arthouse filmmakers, *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* features an outlaw man in an outlaw land where sex, death, and alcohol are the only available ingredients for making life worth living, especially if you're an emotionally, spiritually, and economically bankrupt loser who will do anything to avoid confronting the reality of your dead-end (non)existence. Featuring an original dark and dejecting yet sometimes lyrically ironical country-western soundtrack composed by Jošt that seems like something Ed Gein might have basked in while suffering a melancholic episode while confronting the loss of his beloved mommy, the film is not only the most organic of existentialist road movies, but also a completely stripped down modernist western where the cowboys has a truck instead of a horse and just kills to kill in a most cowardly and inexplicable way that reminds the viewer that there is not much left of the great wild American frontier, as all the injuns have been defeated and the only real rebels left are pacifistic pansy hippies who take pride in living off the government and banging the girlfriend of some sorry sap who is overseas in some nightmarish third world country fighting for an America that hardly has his interests in mind. The first film in Jošt's 'Tom Blair Trilogy' preceding *Sure Fire* (1990) and *The Bed You Sleep In* (1993), *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* features the hidden America that

LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE

makes Hollywood producers question whether or not they should permanently relocate to Israel.

After opening with a black screen with the film's title flashing across the middle of the frame, *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* dissolves to footage of scorching Montana asphalt juxtaposed with a man saying, "We're on the road again," thus making the viewer think that Willie Nelson will unfortunately soon start singing, but nothing of the sort happens, as the viewer is soon subjected to the incessant self-pitying ravings of the disturbingly loony yet sometimes crudely charismatic lead character. The man talking off-screen is perennially unemployed blond antihero Tom Bates (drama teacher Tom Blair) and he is incessantly running his mouth off to a dirty young longhaired hippie hitchhiker who he complains to, "No, I never did think about where I was going. I can hardly remember where I've been. Shit, it's like life's too complicated, you know?" Without the hitchhiker even asking him a single question, Tom more or less tells him the abridged version of his pathetic life-story, including how he was regularly whipped by his parents as a child and how he remembers it "really good." Ostensibly on the road to find a job, working-class antihero Tom oftentimes ran away from home as a kid and now he is a deadbeat dad and less than loyal husband who has no problem admitting, "I've always been that way I guess, like...too much, too much inside my head, you know...and some of it I just had to get out, you know...just go off and drive and drink beers and get laid, you know." Obviously, Tom's ceaseless driving and traveling is an ultimately futile way for him to both physically and emotionally escape from personal responsibility and the patently pathetic nature of his life in general, yet somehow he has not realized that he is really trapped and has nowhere to go.

Despite having two young sons, Tom has no problem admitting to the hitchhiker, "I never wanted any kids, I never did, I never wanted any kids. And I got two of them, two of them. For not wanting any, that's a whole lot," hence why he is never home. Tom has been driving around for two months while pretending to look for work, yet he has the gall to say regarding his wife, "Of course Darlene is on my back, fucking bitch." It is only when Tom begins speaking about his favorite subject, "pussy," that he begins to tone down his grating self-pitying rants. Despite having a reasonably attractive wife that has sired two healthy sons, Tom still seems to think he is a young bachelor and tells the hippie hitchhiker, "Pussy, I can smell it, I can smell it a mile away. If I was blind I could smell it a mile away, I can smell it see. Smell that? There's some pussy out there, you smell that? Gimme pussy! Fuck I'm horny, there's some pussy around." When Tom asks the hippie, "Hey, you got pussy waiting for you?" and he somewhat meekly replies, "I got a girl. I don't think of her like that," the mentally perturbed protagonist begins acting irrationally agitated and attempts to accuse his passenger of being a queer, stating, "Hey sunshine, all girls are pussy. You got me?" and asking him, "You one of them god damn funnies? That's it, you're one

of them...what do you call them?" When the hippie complains regarding rural Montana, "everything is burnt up" and "...a lot of people will be in trouble if they don't get some rain," Tom gets even more ticked off and bitches, "What's that got to do with me? [...] I don't see that shit, I don't load that shit. There's nothing there. There is nothing out there." Naturally, when the hippie responds to Tom's prideful and hostile ignorance by remarking, "You'd have to be blind not to notice that," the protagonist decides that the hitchhiker is an enemy and soon kicks him out of his car, but not before the young man accuses him of being crazy. Unbeknownst to the hitchhiker, he is lucky that he survived the car ride, as Tom will soon kill another man for a much pettier reason.

Naturally, after randomly showing up at the house without so much as calling once over the course of the past six weeks, Tom is forced to face the wrath of his emotionally neglected wife Darlene (Jessica St. John of John Cassavetes' *Ted Allan* adaptation *Love Streams* (1984)), who frankly states to her emotionally estranged hubby while applying make-up in the mirror, "You come home all lovey dovey trying to honey me up...and get you a piece of ass. I'm not dumb Tom. That's one thing I'm not." After Darlene complains about the fact that people look at her strange while she is at the grocery store because she has been reduced to using food stamps to get groceries since he refuses to work and properly provide for his family, Tom demonstrates his deep sense of psychopathy by refusing to accept guilt and instead angrily retorting, "Fuck. You think this is gonna help Darlene? I mean, you think this is gonna make me want to stay here and put up with all your shit? I mean, what? This is supposed to make me want to get a job...this is supposed to make me get up in the morning and make money...and what? Drive that fucking truck down in that fucking hole for Anaconda?" (apparently, Tom used to work as a miner). When Darlene tells Tom that he is "really fucked up," he somewhat humorously replies, "I know that, I admit that. But you just have to say it again and again and again," thus demonstrating that he is less perturbed by his defective mind than the fact that Darlene reminds him of the fact that he has a defective mind. Of course, Tom is not too happy when Darlene reveals that she is pregnant and then threatens him by asking him, "Am I gonna have to D-I-V-O-R-C-E you?" and then laughing in an almost sadistic fashion. Naturally, after his disharmonious conversation with Darlene, Tom decides to get back to doing what he does by best by wandering aimlessly on the open road.

After driving around aimlessly all night, Tom goes to a diner where he unwittingly exposes his morbid mind by asking a swarthy hippie slob sitting next to him if he has read a letter featured in a tabloid newspaper where a woman complains that her husband forced her to soak herself in bath water for a long time so that she would resemble a wrinkly corpse while they had sex on their honeymoon. After self-righteously proclaiming that the newspaper is "nothing but garbage," the idiotically idealistic hippie goes on a paranoid rant that somewhat

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intrigues Tom where he states, "It's all bullshit. You know, these rags are put out by the government just to pacify people so that they forget about their real problems." A deluded hippie bum that proudly lives off the government, the hippie espouses a sort of bullshit pseudo-back-to-nature philosophy and tells Tom, "If you just quit reading that stuff and do as the animals do, you'll be alright." Of course, for Tom, everything goes back to pussy, so he cannot help but ask the hippie about his sexual experiences with college girls. While there is no way in hell he would ever consider seeking a formal education and having to suffer listening to some bombastic beta-male liberal professor spouting off esoteric anti-reality theories about how to transform the world into a pan-sexual multicultural collectivist utopia, Tom is at least happy to hear from the hippie regarding the sexual proclivities of college girls that they are, "as willing as they get." Undoubtedly, the diner scene with the hippie emphasizes that, despite his unyielding arrogance, Tom can get along with certain strangers, so long as they are just as morally bankrupt as he is, hence why he did not get along with the young dirty bohemian at the beginning of the film who was offended by his pathological use of the word "pussy" to describe women.

With his wife denying him her naughty bits during his brief stop at home, Tom soon goes on the prowl for young pussy at a local bar and soon begins somewhat awkwardly hitting on a 22-year-old dame named Mary who he foolishly accidentally calls "Sarah" while plying her with cheap beer and shallow flattery. Notably, it seems to take all of the energy that he has for Tom to pay another person a compliment and muster up the courage to say to Mary, "I'm guess I'm trying to say...I think you're real pretty," which the young lady is absolutely delighted to hear, but of course pussy is one of the few things that the protagonist is willing to make a 'sacrifice' for. When Mary playfully remarks that he is drinking too much, Tom almost botches his chance at young gash by getting somewhat angry with her and grunting, "I don't like women telling me how to drink." Like virtually all psychopaths, Tom cannot handle any form of criticism, even if it is in the form of a silly flirtatious joke. Of course, Tom eventually seals the deal by going back to Mary's apartment and getting some pussy in a long 14-minute scene where *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* plays while the two characters have remarkably quiet and seemingly lackluster sex in the other room. Somewhat absurdly and inconsiderately, Tom makes the careless decision to call his wife Darlene in the same exact bedroom where he had sex with Mary not long after coitus has commenced. While Mary is lurking around the corner and listening to every single stupid thing that he says, Tom ends his phone call with his wife by calling her a, "Fucking bitch." Although Mary heard a good portion of the phone conversation, including the antihero reciting his wife's name in a nagging fashion, Tom treats his one-night-stand like a stupid fool and lies to her face by claiming that he was talking to somebody "about a job." When he finally realizes that he can no longer keep defending his stupid

half-ass lie, Tom's inner-psychopath rears its ugly head and, as a man that refuses to accept any form of responsibility and culpability, he blames Mary for his extramarital affair by saying to her, "I don't remember being asked about a wife last night." In fact, Tom goes so far as to accuse Mary of being a lecherous bar whore who was looking to catch herself some cowboy cock, stating to her, "Last night you would've taken on the whole goddamn bar." Ultimately, Mary asks Tom to leave her apartment by saying "okay, bye," to which the protagonist replies, "Fucking shit...wherever you go. I don't have to listen to this bullshit [...] Hey, no hard feelings." As a psychopath that completely lacks empathy, Tom is never wrong, so it is only natural that he will inevitably up the ante in terms of his mean bastard behavior.

While Tom tells his one-night-stand "no hard feelings" after being a complete and utter asshole to her, it is clear by this point in the film that he is about ready to give up any pretense of humanity that he might have pretended to have before and begins studying the case records of various criminals, as if to compare himself with their backgrounds and to see if he has what it takes to be just like them. Indeed, Tom seems like he is admiring the funny page of a newspaper while reading the criminal profile of a 21-year-old high yellow negro named Roosevelt Green from Minter, Alabama who committed armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, and murder. Unlike the real-life people that he interacts with on a daily basis, Tom seems to feel a special kinship with these violent criminals and drifters just from reading their criminal records. In a scene where Joist seems to insinuate that it is not much of a leap for a country boy who hunts and kill animals to become a coldblooded murderer (Structural filmmaker James Benning seemed to use a similar technique in his feature *Landscape Suicide* (1987) in a scene where the dismembering of a deer is abstractly connected to the necrophiliac crimes of Ed Gein), a live bunny rabbit is not only depicted being clubbed to death, but also decapitated and then completely dismembered while its limbs are still moving. Immediately after the hare is hacked into pieces, Tom is depicted pulling off the road in his truck to assumedly help a somewhat overweight fellow whose car has just broken down. Upon talking to the man, Tom learns that his name is Fred Wilson and that he is also from his hometown of Butte, Montana. While Tom initially acts fairly cordial with Fred and intentionally asks him if he has children (which he does), he is merely putting up a false front as his motives are certainly less than savory.

After agreeing to take a look at Fred's broken down car, Tom goes back to his truck under the pretense of grabbing some tools so that he can grab his trusty revolver. After shooting the shit a little bit more with Fred in a extremely comfortable and relaxed way that would make one assume that they are longtime best friends, Tom randomly declares, "Well I guess it's time...it's time, as good as time as any. Fred, I got something to tell you" and then points his revolver at the poor unwitting family man, who just happened to be at the wrong place

LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE

at the wrong time. As reflected in petty remarks he makes, Tom is jealous of Fred because he is a fairly successful family man who owns his gas station and whose loving wife just bought him a new car (even if it is a piece of junk that broke down on him). Even though Fred only has a couple dollars on him, Tom demands all of his money, stating with a sickening sense of self-pity, "I'll tell you why I have to have this. See...I haven't got a goddamn job or a goddamn thing, Fred. You just bought this car...and you got a goddamn gas station. See this? [points to gun] This is all I got left. Now, I ain't ever going home so it don't much matter to me." After taking his money, Tom leads Fred to the woods with his gun and deceptively attempts to calm the unfortunate gas station owner's fears by claiming that he only plans to tie him to a tree, adding, "ain't nothin' gonna happen to ya.'" Of course, Tom is lying and not long after the two men enter the depths of the woods and disappear from the frame, two gun blasts can be heard. Ultimately, Tom runs out of the woods by himself and seems somewhat excited by what he has down. In the end, Tom is depicted driving with a vacant expression on his face while occasionally picking his nose for about five minutes in a scene that potently reflects the antihero's complete and utter lack of guilt in regard to killing a man. At the very conclusion of this final sequence, a rather fitting inter-title pops over Tom reading "(Dead End)," which is a perfect summary of the character's life as a lone drifting loser of the psychopathic sort. Judging by how he executed the craven killing of Fred with such gleeful ease, the viewer can only assume that Tom has just begun his murderous reign of terror. Indeed, it seems that Tom has more than just pussy to look forward to now.

It is not very often that I watch a film and then completely forget that I had ever seen it, but that is exactly what happened to with me *Last Chants for a Slow Dance*, which I originally viewed about three years ago and rather enjoyed but completely forget about until rather recently after deciding to checkout Jošt's oeuvre and instantly gravitating towards wanting to watch his slow-burning psychopath road movie. Undoubtedly, upon watching the film for the second time, I genuinely felt like I was catching up with an old enemy. Personally, I think that I completely forgot about viewing the film because it felt more like a real life experience than a piece of vintage fictional celluloid art that I watched from the comfort of my living room. Indeed, the film's antihero Tom Blair reminded me a lot of an undiagnosed psychopath that I have known for most of my life who has spent a good portion of his distinctly deplorable existence figuratively and literally wandering around in an aimless fashion while destroying various lives in the process just so he can have some temporary relief from the barrenness of his truly dead-end life of perpetual (self)destruction and nihilistic excess. Indeed, if someone were to ask me to recommend a film about an 'everyday psychopath' that lacks the gross romantic glorification of such psychologically forsaken individuals that is typical of Hollywood films like *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991),

Cape Fear (1991), Basic Instinct (1992), and The Good Son (1993), among countless other examples, I would unequivocally name Jost's masterpiece, which the auteur hoped would be seen by more mainstream audiences as indicated by his remark to Rosenbaum, "I mean, there's no reason why *LAST CHANTS FOR A SLOW DANCE* shouldn't book as well as a lot of Fassbinder. It's certainly no less accessible." It is interesting that Jost mentions Fassbinder, as the only film that I can really compare to his flick to is *Warum läuft Herr R. Amok* (1970) aka *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, which is also a fairly minimalistic work with long static takes about a fairly mediocre mensch who commits a shocking and completely senseless act of violence in the end after getting fed up with the banality of his life and no longer being able to ignore his deep resentment towards his family. Certainly, aside from more or less reinventing cinematic storytelling, Jost was also able to make the psychopathic mind accessible to virtually anyone with his film which, although carefully constructed and exquisitely nuanced, never resorts to asinine arcane avant-gardism. Despite the director's clear dislike for certain aspects of the American West, Jost's respect for the landscape and kind simple folk of the area also bleeds through the film in an entrancing manner that you would never find in a Hollywood movie, so it should be no surprise that the auteur once stated in relation to *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* and its production, "I had lived in Oregon and Montana for five years, and the rural West was very real and familiar terrain to me, a place in which I felt at home and comfortable, nevermind its many rough manners. Despite the gun racks, the macho sexism, and the overall conservatism of the West, it is generally a place where people are genuinely friendly and helpful. For shooting a no-budget film like *LAST CHANTS* it was ideal: ask for a bar, you got it, no questions asked, no money exchanged. Aside from Tom Blair, whom I'd met when living near Kalispell when he was the theater department of the local community college, and Jessica St. John, a type-cast hooker sort in Hollywood TV productions who I'd met in LA, the rest of the cast were locals who I gathered in the space of a week. Places, trucks, people—what little I needed fell easily in my hands for the asking. True West."

While not exactly the sort of film that one can expect the Criterion Collection to release anytime soon (though the company did include the documentary short *Godard 1980* (1980) co-directed by Jost as an extra feature with their DVD/Blu-ray release of *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (1980) aka *Every Man for Himself*), *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* did manage to make it into the fairly popular film reference book *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* (2003) edited by Steven Jay Schneider where film critic Adrian Martin argues regarding Jost's film, "The best index of its ambivalent sensitivity to the real world it traverses are its constant songs, simultaneously soulful and ironic tunes ("Hank Williams wrote it long ago," runs one chorus) that take us far deeper than the smarmy musical pastiches in Robert Altman's *NASHVILLE* (1975)." Indeed, aside from being

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thankfully devoid of the left-wing nihilism of Altman's epically long-winded anti-musical, Jošt's film makes John McNaughton's *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1990) seem like a Herschell Gordon Lewis flick due to Jošt's cultivated true grit approach to a lone psychopathic cowboy in America's 'Land of the Shining Mountains.' Ultimately, the film seems like the sort of work that the dilettantes of Dogme 95 hoped to make but mostly failed miserably at. If there is any benefit to going to prison, *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* certainly stands out as a notable example, as if it were not for Jošt's real-life experience with hardened lowlifes while he was in the slammer, it is dubious at best that he could have created such an intriguingly insightful cinematic work that should be made mandatory viewing for any prospective police officer or film student. Of course, the irony is that Jošt must have had an inordinately high capacity for empathy for him to understand the psyches of the less than empathetic psychopathic inmates who acted as the inspiration for the antihero of his film. One can only speculate the sort of war film that Jošt might have assembled had he not been a draft-dodger and actually fought in the Vietnam War. As Jošt's hero Jean-Luc Godard once stated regarding his great contribution to cinema, "He is not a traitor to the movies, like almost all American directors. He makes them move," and in nowhere does he move further than in his truly radically rugged road movie *Last Chants for a Slow Dance*.

-Ty E

JACK BROOKS: MONSTER SLAYER

Jon Knautz (2007)

It's been awhile since i have uncovered a flashy nostalgic trip through the finer points of cinema. Director Jon Knautz has brought celluloid life to a film worthy of legendary comic books. Everyman plumber Jack Brooks witnessed his family get murdered by a monster at a young age. Due to this event, he cannot connect with most people and finds him self with an immeasurable aggression. When an ancient creature poses his spoofy teacher (Robert Englund,) he must now face his past in order to guarantee his future. This story just screams as a mash-up of every iconic monster film or amazing 90's cartoon. Jack Brooks: Monster Slayer is the equivalent of an ultra-violent episode of the Beetleborgs except with masculinity for a weapon. This is now the definitive Super Mario Bros. movie. The film reminds me heavily of Japanese sorcery film Eko Eko Azarak: Wizard of Darkness, in which a handful of students get trapped in their school and start getting picked off by an evil force. The film works its wonders with enticing you with its fluid colors and slimy creature FX. Robert Englund is a marvel as the kooky science teacher turned tentacled abomination. Jack Brooks (Trevor Matthews) is a man who is stuck in a dead end relationship with childhood trauma; sounds like the normal blue-collar worker. It's easy to relate to his character in this spoof dark comedy. Some of the creatures are reminiscent to the creatures on Hercules or even Xena. The love for the genre is evident. The only thing that could have made this better would be a guest appearance from Maurice (Little Monsters.) If you like Mighty Max, Creepy Crawlers, or anything with slime, goo, monster vomit, and a climatic action-packed ending, this is the film for you. Jack Brooks is here to stay. Now let's just hope for a sequel or action figure line. The new Danger After Dark line-up has never looked so good. Playing at the 17th Philadelphia Film Festival www.phillyfeasts.com

-Maq

DAVID ICKE: THE LIZARDS AND THE JEWS
DAVID ICKE: THE LIZARDS AND THE JEWS

Jon Ronson (2001)

I am a fan of reading conspiracy theories whether to be enlightened in some way or to be merely entertained. Since I do not know too much about him, I decided to watch the documentary David Icke: The Lizards and the Jews. I knew that Icke was a former professional soccer player and that he believes Reptilians are our secret leaders. After watching the documentary, I did not learn much more about his conspiracy theories. I was just further convinced that left-wing "activists" are probably the weakest people (both physically and mentally) to ever survive childbirth. For much of David Icke: The Lizards and the Jews, left-wing activists stalk Icke during his tour in Canada in hopes to shut him down from appearing publicly as they consider him "anti-Semitic." David Icke seems to be what fellow Brit Steven Morrissey would call a "charming man." After declaring himself the "son of god" on television, apparently Icke became the laughingstock of England. David Icke, however, would have the last laugh when he would later gain a larger following of individuals that believe his theories of Reptilian humanoids known as the Babylonian Brotherhood are a global elite that happen to control everything we hear and see. Apparently, many of these reptilians also happen to be Jewish thus resulting in a negative backlash from Jewish groups like the slimy ADL and annoying turds like the ARA. What these people do not realize is that people like David Icke help to discredit "anti-Semitic conspiracies" by talking about people being reptilians. Apparently, the reptilians have a resemblance to the anti-Jew propaganda that used to be so prominent in Eastern Europe. Maybe it's the nose? Despite not really believing in Icke's message, I do have respect for what he is doing. David Icke seems to really believe in something and it has given his life some meaning since his soccer career was cut short. Plus despite their sci-fi elements, Icke's conspiracy theories are most likely more credible than any of Michael Moore's documentaries. The annoying and loudmouthed Texan Alex Jones seems to have some beef with David Icke as the documentary reveals. Jones referred to David Icke as a 'turd in a punch bowl.' According to Alex Jones, the Arabs own Hollywood. I am assuming that Mr. Jones only watches DVDs of himself. Or maybe his Zionist wife told him about how these evil terrorist Arabs run Hollywood? It is believed that a lot of Alex Jones' anger comes from the fact that he has found it nearly impossible to get Israeli citizenship as he would complain about it in his radio show. Having a Kosher wife and children still makes it hard for a goy to get citizenship. Only the chosen amongst god's chosen have that privilege.

The climax of David Icke: The Lizards and the Jews occurs when a group of anti-anti-Semites decide they are going to throw a pie at Icke when he speaks. Talk about rebellious and subversive, these soldiers of the rainbow really know how to make progress with being progressive. Unfortunately, the limp wristed

fellow that throws the pie misses and ruins a bunch of innocent children's books. They also end up making asses of themselves by dressing up in Lizard suits and yelling at Icke that he is "Anti-Semitic." After their failed mission, the group of goodhearted anti-fascists brag about their attack. They also claimed to have seen real-life Nazis with swastika and SS bolt tattoos. Surprisingly, no Neo-Nazis or skinheads are seen in the documentary footage as the activists claim to have seen. One of the anti-fascists, who also happens to be one of those stereotypical shaved head bull dyke lesbians, also states that most of David Icke's fans seem to be "rich white people." I thought according to progressive types, stereotyping is bad? After watching David Icke: The Lizards and the Jews, I may read one of Icke's books for the hell of it. Icke may not be the son of God, but he seems to piss off anti-fascists just as much as Jesus. The journalist who follows David Icke in the documentary, Jon Ronson, also seems to grow to like Icke as the documentary progresses. What's not to like about a father who plays soccer with his son and tells his kids that evil reptile humanoids rule the earth?

-Ty E

ILLUSIONS OF A LADY
ILLUSIONS OF A LADY

Jonas Middleton (1974)

While best known today for his truly depraved and audaciously anti-erotic cult horror arthouse porn masterpiece *Through the Looking Glass* (1976), Georgia-born auteur and all-around gentleman Jonas Middleton had previously directed two adult films which long ago fell into obscurity. Luckily, I was recently able to track down a rather scratched print of the once-mysterious filmmaker's second film *Illusions of a Lady* (1974), which is a virtual prototype for *Through the Looking Glass* and features the sort of hallucinatory hardcore 'horror' that Middleton is revered for, albeit in a more rudimentary, minimalistic, archaic, and gritty form. The sadistically salacious and unwaveringly cynical celluloid story of a malicious yet cultivated megalomaniac lady psychiatrist with serious daddy issues who gets off to fucking with her patients' minds by coercing them into fucking other patients in rather bizarre and even hateful ways under the false pretense of providing them with 'therapy' in an exceedingly loose plot that vaguely resembles Jacques Scandolari's *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971), *Illusions of a Lady* is a patently perverse psychodrama of the brutal blue movie sort that reminds one how genuinely cruel and artfully grating pornography can be in the 'right' hands. Indeed, as auteur Middleton recently revealed in a podcast interview, he originally wanted to be a serious filmmaker and never had any interest in becoming a pornographer, but was offered the money by some young hotshot investor types at his church who wanted to make a pretty profit, so naturally the popularity of porn chic was the answer. Indeed, somewhat unbelievably funded by capitalist-minded Christian friends at the director's elite Christian church, *Illusions of a Lady* would prove to be the second yet ultimately penultimate avant-garde porn work by Middleton as the auteur did some soul-searching after being charged with five felony charges of obscenity and realized he was taking an unrighteous path and quit though he had much monetary and artistic success, especially with his magnum opus *Through the Looking Glass*. Purportedly co-written with Middleton's then-girlfriend Christa Helm (*Legacy of Satan, Let's Go for Broke*), who was mysteriously murdered in 1977 under dubious (and unsolved) circumstances (some have speculated that she was killed by the same person warped pizza delivery guy that killed Sal Mineo), as an R-rated script that would eventually (de)evolve into an aesthetically ferocious fuck flick that would set the stage for *Through the Looking Glass*, *Illusions of a Lady* is nothing short of a lost classic that reminds the viewer that there was actually a time when pornography pushed more than just sexual boundaries as a vicious and venomous aberrant-garde work that has the opposite effect of *Viagra*.

Degenerate Dr. Miranda Woolf (Andrea True) has invited a number of her sexually perverted patients for a two-day orgy at her beachside mini-mansion (which was apparently owned in real-life by French prostitutes who 'retired' at

the home) in the Hamptons in Long Island. Despite being a professional psychiatrist, Miranda seems to have a screw or two loose as she records sexually sadistic rants on a tape recorder for her father and she owns more cute and cuddly girly toy stuffed animals than a toy store. While Miranda describes the debasing get together as a form of “therapy to break inhibitions,” she has much more odious objectives like, as she states herself, “I’m going to make Howard fuck Lorie in the ass,” among various other perverse plots she has nonsensically recorded in a tape-recorder. The first thing Dr. Woolf does when her patients arrive is force them to all strip totally naked, which all the guests rather reluctantly do. From there, a patient named Howard (Roger Caine) describes his dismay about losing a race with a girl at age 11, so Miranda orders him to relive the experience with another patient named Lucy (Helen Madigan); indeed, to the dismay of his partner, he proves ‘fast finisher’ in the bedroom. Meanwhile, Howard’s wife Trala (Michelle Magazine) is forced to get involved in a carpet-munching session with an aggressive lesbo. While everyone else is involved in a twosome, an infantile Jewish mamma’s boy named Stuart (Jamie Gillis) goes drag by putting on a bra and a pair of panties and begins masturbating while licking a pair of high heels. Of course, Dr. Woolf is not too happy when she walks in on Stuart urinating in her panties. In the kitchen, Dr. Woolf prepares dinner by shoving a carrot up her cunt, while an impotent twink named Robin (Davey Jones) prepares the ‘special sauce’ by masturbating. Possibly inspired by the ‘Cake of Light’—the bitersweet eucharistic host of Aleister Crowley’s religion Thelema—wimp Robin squirts out a small batch of baby-batter into a spoon as the secret ingredient for dinner. For whatever reason, Miranda eventually gets pissed off that her patients are starting to have passionate orgies in her living room, so she tries to kill all said patients in her house of sexual horrors and whores, but they rebel and take revenge against the debauched doctor. Ultimately, all of the patients collectively rape and torture Miranda and eventually she seems to begin to enjoy it. Indeed, after being beaten bloody with a whip and raped by a lesbo with a strap-on dildo, Miranda is the one who will need a psychiatrist by the climatic conclusion of the daunting two day orgy. Of course, as the title of the film hints at, the whole entire weekend, including the rape, is merely the perverse product of the psychiatrist’s damaged mind. While Miranda did indeed invite her patients over for a two day getaway, the party has yet to begin and everything that happened, including her brutal gang rape, was merely the result of schizophrenia. When Miranda’s patients finally arrive to the party, Miranda makes her escape out of the backdoor of her house and heads to the beach while wearing nothing but a loosely fastened robe. In the end, having lost control of her mind, body, and authority, Dr. Miranda Woolf drowns herself in the bay.

In terms of pornography, *Illusions of a Lady*—with its limp dick porn stars who cannot completely ‘rise to the occasion,’ lesbian ‘cunning linguist’ scenes where the women do not go beyond licking the pubes of their partners, and all

ILLUSIONS OF A LADY

around monotonous and seemingly narcotic-fueled sex scenes—is nothing short of marvelously mediocre, but in terms of aberrant celluloid art, the film is most certainly a minor masterpiece of sorts. Rather unfortunately, as auteur Jonas Middleton revealed in a fairly recent interview on the Rialto Report, he has no interest in re-releasing *Illusions of a Lady*, stating of his second porn flick that “It’s a marginal film” and adding “it’s not the kind of message I would want to get across to people so much so yeah its not something I’m particularly proud of.” Personally, I have to respectfully disagree with Middleton as while *Illusions of a Lady* is not up to par with the almost demonic majesty of *Through the Looking Glass*, it is certainly one of the most foreboding, strangely atmospheric, spiritually sick, and uniquely uncompromising fuck flicks that I have ever seen. Featuring an excellent soundtrack by Arlon Ober (*Through the Looking Glass*, *Eating Raoul*) that ranges from eerie and discordant proto-industrial/power electronics noise to spiritually sinister Gregorian chants, as well as mostly pathetic forms of sexual dysfunctional and fetishism, *Illusions of a Lady* is ultimately a uniquely anti-erotic piece of celluloid perversion that could only arouse the most lost and damned of sexual degenerates. As director Middleton stated in the Rialto Report regarding his artistic agenda while creating *Through the Looking Glass*, “I think there was a part of me that wrote that movie where I was in a way kind of laughing at the people who went to see these kind of movies because you know in a way it was kind of sad,” and, indeed, despite their pulchritude and sensuality, the characters of *Illusions of a Lady* are ultimately rather depressing fuck-ups who cannot fuck properly and who no semi-normal person would think of respecting or glorifying. Somewhat surprisingly, Middleton was charged with five felony accounts of distributing obscene material across state lines in Louisiana in regard to his porn flicks, yet a group of old women deemed the films “socially redeeming” and he was cleared of all charges. Indeed, I have to concur with those old Southern gals as *Illusions of a Lady* is one of the few films that damningly depicts the dark undercurrent of both the porn industry and sex in post-counter-culture America in general, thus making Jonas Middleton a sort of dead serious Paul Morrissey of pornography, albeit with a more cultivated aesthetic with a talent for iconic tableaux. More sophisticated and socially conscious than the films of Radley Metzger (*The Image*, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*) and more tenebrous and anti-titillating than most of the films of Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*), *Illusions of a Lady* may be a small and largely forgotten film, but it is also one of only a handful of porn flicks that curdles one soul.

-Ty E

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Jonas Middleton (1976)

After my recent re-watching of the phantasmagoric avant-garde porn flick *Bacchanale* (1970) directed by the Amero brothers, I decided to give the similarly artistic and cultivated but infinitely more depraved surrealist-hardcore film *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) directed by Jonas Middleton (*Cherry Blossom*, *Illusions of a Lady*) a careful and serious viewing. Like *Bacchanale* (1970), the subject of incest is central to the plot of *Through the Looking Glass* (1976); a film about a socially-inept, rich socialite who reunites with her distinguished, deceased father, who is now in demon form, via a mirror she ritualistically masturbates in front of in a most narcissistic fashion. Created in the middle of the revolutionary 'Golden Age of Porn' (late-1960s to the early-to-mid-1980s), a bygone epoch when pornographers were more ambitious in their sensational quasi-artistic endeavors, *Through the Looking Glass* is one of few films from that era that has aged relatively gracefully over the years, especially when compared to more popular works like *Deep Throat* (1972) and *Debbie Does Dallas* (1978), which is probably due to the fact that it is a strikingly vulgar yet superficially Victorian nature and, dare I say, an anti-pornographic work that has very few redeeming qualities in terms of conventional eroticism, but functions well as a surrealist horror work that is like Federico Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1955) meets Ken Russell's *The Devil's* (1971) with a splash of Andy Milligan-inspired kitsch thrown in for good measure. Also released in a R-rated cut version that played in U.S. and European arthouse theaters, *Through the Looking Glass* has more in common with the artsy adult films of European auteur pornographers like Tinto Brass (*Caligula*, *Paprika*) and Walerian Borowczyk (*The Beast*, *La Marge*) than similarly themed American adult flicks, thus making it an entirely singular work in the history of American porn cinema that would undoubtedly go on to inspire the sleekly stylized pseudo-New Romanticist works of alt. porn auteur Stephen Sayadian (*Café Flesh*, *Dr. Caligari*). Starring Catherine Erhardt (*Cinderella 2000*) as the lead protagonist and porn veteran Jamie Gillis (*Deep Throat Part II*, *WATERPOWER*) as her dashing, demonic father, *Through the Looking Glass* is very possibly the most doleful and ferocious attempt at 'adapting' the popular Lewis Carroll novel of the same name.

No stranger to experimental avant-garde pornography, Jamie Gillis starred in Roger Watkins' (*Last House on Dead End Street*) experimental adult hardcore flicks *Midnight Heat* (1983) and *Corruption* (1984), but I doubt any of his performances are quite as idiosyncratically Mephistophelian as his role in *Through the Looking Glass*. Notably swarthy and Semitic in appearance and a true blue NYC Judaic in character and pantomime, Gillis makes for a dubious and downright odd choice as the father of fair-skinned and blonde-haired

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Nordic beauty Catherine Erhardt (aka Catharine Burgess), but when looking at the *Through the Looking Glass* as an allegorical piece of particularly perverse anti-pornography, it makes perfect sense. As a rich and spoiled wasp whose greatest dilemmas involve what sort of catering company she should use for her next party, Catherine represents the old, significantly weakened, and dying Anglo elite of America. While Jamie Gillis – being as kosher as Kashrut – represents America's new and wholly hostile Judaic elite as a virtual Golem of the goy gal's nightmares; a Hebraic Freddy Krueger and an extra-cynical "cunning linguist." In every war, one of the first things that the conqueror takes for bounty is the bootys of the defeated female population. *Through the Looking Glass*, like many films of its era (and especially those created afterward) reflects this transition – whether a conscious or unconscious decision on the director's part (I would go with the latter) – of one group triumphing over another to a most degrading and pitifully prurient metaphysical degree; where a girl's father becomes her most flagrant defiler. Thus, it is only fitting that Catherine begins to question whether or not the necromantic archfiend that appears to her through the medium of her mirror is really her padre or an exceedingly perverted imposter. Becoming increasingly detached from her Anglo husband and daughter, Catherine falls under the nefarious spell of the debonair demon until she is literally dragged down to hell in a scene that echoes the Hades of the classic Italian silent film *L'Inferno* (1911) directed by Giuseppe de Liguoro; a work based on Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*. Although it would be a stretch to compare the film (as a recent dvd synopsis does) to the Biblical art of early Dutch Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch, *Through the Looking Glass* is indeed a film of discarnate proportions that metaphorically presents the crushing, defiling, and dismantling of a formerly dominant people and a religion. The Jewish community has never shied away from bragging about their contributions to civilization and few are more glaring as their pioneering and undying domination of the porn industry. As Jewish-American 'actor' Robert Kerman aka R. Bolla (*Cannibal Holocaust*), who at one time lived with Jamie Gillis, once stated, "Sex is not the greatest sin in the Jewish religion" and "I hope that porn is the most unrighteous thing I do. If we go out of our way to be scumbags, that's the sin, when I do porn, I offend Shakespeare more than God." Jewish Professor of American History at Aberdeen University in UK, Nathan Abrams, noted in his article "Triple Extnics" (*The Jewish Quarterly*, winter 2004) that: "Jewish involvement in porn, by this argument, is the result of an atavistic hatred of Christian authority: they are trying to weaken the dominant culture in America by moral subversion. Astyr remembers having "to run or fight for it in grammar school because I was a Jew. It could very well be that part of my porn career is an 'up yours' to these people." Ironically, *Through the Looking Glass* looks more like the work of a decadent and thoroughly demoralized European filmmaker than a profiteering Judaic pornographer, but aside from writing and producing the Jeff Lieberman

directed slasher flick *Just Before Dawn* (1981), director Jonas Middleton seems to have totally disappeared from the filmmaking realm, thus one can only speculate in regard to his background.

Featuring one of the first candid 'gyno-cam' shots ever featured in a porn flick where one truly gets to explore protagonist Catherine's insides in a less-than-flattering fashion, as well as a wicked wealth of incestuous scenarios highlighted in between drudging dinner scenes of monotonous pseudo-wasp-speak, *Through the Looking Glass* is an authentically abominable, loathsome, and disenchanting work that one can't help but never forget. If the German phrase "entartete Kunst" (degenerate art) was invented for anything, it was to describe a film like *Through the Looking Glass*; a work where everything that is beautiful, sacred, and holy is laboriously despoiled. That being said, I would not surprise if the main artistic motivation behind the film was to attack and wreak havoc upon the viewer, most specifically of the Anglo-American persuasion, as it was certainly not a work that, unlike the majority of adult films, was made with monetary gain as the most influential factor as expressed in by its exceptionally deranged and distinguished fetishism and all-around ridiculously repellant attributes. There is no doubt in my mind that if cultural marxist darling Herbert Marcuse got around to seeing *Through the Looking Glass* before he croaked, I am sure he was quite tickled to see a potent example of the ungodly excesses of his incendiary Occident-overturning legacy.

-Ty E

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS
THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

Jonathan Demme (1991)

I have very fond memories of watching *The Silence of the Lambs* at the ripe age of 5 years old. I remember watching Buffalo Bob covered in make-up and dancing with his “weewee” between his legs. This very memorable scene (with the haunting song “Goodbye Horses” by Q.Lazarus) scared and perplexed the shit out of me. My Mom assured me that the “man” had his penis hidden between his legs. Now I am in my early twenties and *The Silence of the Lambs* still entertains me. The film brought the serial killer to the mainstream. Director Jonathan Demme had for the most part only worked in the comedy genre. Demme’s niche from comedy even surfaces in *The Silence of the Lambs* (whether it was intentional or not). The cinematic crafting of the film demonstrates Demme’s knack for detail and perfection. I generally don’t like films that are too contrived (as for the most part they are soulless). *The Silence of the Lambs* is a notable exception. *The Silence of the lambs* is no doubt a feminist film. I often loathe estrogen driven films. They are generally poor films that hide their sloppiness behind a “good” and “empowering” message. *The Silence of the Lambs* shows the strength of a female (played by Jodie Foster) through her progressive drive, intellect, and powerful self-reliance. There is no preachy message to “enlighten” misogynist souls. Anthony Hopkins is superb as Hannibal Lecter of course. He is quite the loveable guy with a type of charisma that can’t be bought at an evangelical church. I wouldn’t mind having dinner with Hannibal as long as I get to cook. We could dine over a discussion of other man eaters such as Jeffrey Dahmer, Ed Gein, and the more recent Armin Meiwes. *The Silence of the Lambs* is Jonathan Demme’s greatest achievement. I also have to say the same about Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins. Although it’s not Jörg Buttgerit’s Schramm, it holds its place in serial killer cinema history. Being the only horror film to win the Academy award for best picture, *The Silence of the Lambs* has somewhat subverted the mainstream. Much props to hack Jonathan Demme.

-Ty E

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED

Jonathan Demme (2008)

Jonathan Demme has come a long way since directing his early comedy films like *Something Wild* and then later serial killer dramas like *The Silence of Lambs*. Now Demme has jumped on the new Hollywood pseudo-artistic bandwagon of directing realist documentary style feature-length films. The arrogant Dane Lars Von Trier really seemed to inadvertently inspired the Hollywood studio system he so greatly desires. Now Jonathan Demme has given up directing big budget and polished production values for a more “naturalistic” style feel. Personally, I never thought Demme would ever be interested in directing a film such as *Rachel Getting Married*. Well, he is getting old and I am sure directing a “shaky camera art film” was less of a strain on Demme’s aging back. *Rachel Getting Married* stars the rising Hollywood talent Anne Hathaway. Hathaway has really become ambitious with her acting career by taking roles in various subversive films over the years. Hathaway first became popular with little girls starring in the Disney films, *The Princess Diaries*. Hathaway would first bare her breasts in the lame direct-to-video wigger flick *Havoc*. The film follows a bunch of lame ass rich white people that want to be poor and illiterate gangbanging Negros. Hathaway for some disturbing reason becomes sexually attracted to a short and criminal Mexican gangsta. One could say *Havoc* is a despicable film. But since that atrocity on celluloid, Anne Hathaway has proved she has acting talent and *Rachel Getting Married* is evidence of that. In fact, Anne Hathaway is what really carries *Rachel Getting Married* as a “quality” film. I wouldn’t say the direction in the film is notable and most of the other actors are repellent. Hathaway plays a self-centered bitch named Kym in *Rachel Getting Married* who also happens to be a recovering junkie. Kym comes back to her hometown from drug rehab so she can attend her sister Rachel’s wedding to a nerdy black man named Sidney. As soon as she arrives, Kym is a complete cunt that demands attention from everyone. Kym attempts to get attention in a variety of creative ways such as bringing up to everyone how she would do stupid things while on drugs or fucking a random guy she just meets. Kym certainly is not going to allow her sister to have all the attention though it’s her own wedding. Anne Hathaway is so flawless in her acting performance in *Rachel Getting Married* as a wacked out bitch that it almost had me worried. I have a very personal liking of Anne Hathaway as she has a certain resemblance to a young woman that I am fairly close to. Her performance in *Rachel Getting Married* has me wondering if she possibly has some unflattering behavior in real-life. Maybe it’s the misogynist in me, but I don’t believe that many actresses (and this goes for many of their male counterparts) working in Hollywood these days are at all talented. Hathaway may be the most talented young actress in Hollywood and I really hope her performance in *Rachel Getting Married* was just acting. The only

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED

thing lamer and more impotent than your typical white liberal American bourgeois family is a multicultural bourgeois family. Yes, to “get with the times” the family in *Rachel Getting Married* has variety of deracinated individuals that lack any culture or interesting lives. To make up for their lack of commonness and true family loyalty, the individuals make such things as washing dishes the most eventful activity in the film. Like your typical real-life white liberal bourgeois, the family in *Rachel Getting Married* talks to their minority friends like they are pets. They give big contrived smiles to the tamed minorities and talk about nothing except banal small talk. One cannot forget how white liberals like to grind and groove to the sweet sounds of jungle jazz and hip hop. Druggie Kym is the most interesting character and she is deranged. Kym and Rachel’s father, like virtually all male white liberals, is weak and effeminate. One could say that his mongrel wife wears the “docker” pants in the family. Only an “open minded” individual like the father in *Rachel Getting Married* could still be proud of his druggie loser daughter and dancingly ecstatic to the fact that he’s having a mulatto grandchild. But this is no surprise, I cannot remember the last time I saw a strong independent and virtuous white man in a Hollywood film. Something tells me that *Rachel Getting Married* is an accurate portrayal of many bourgeois families. I like to think the film is even white liberal exploitation but that may be a little far-fetched. Either way, *Rachel Getting Married* is a worthwhile film to checkout. Sure, the film has various scenes that feel like “documentary-like” filler and I wouldn’t be surprised if it was made over a long weekend, but *Rachel Getting Married* is entertaining. Anne Hathaway is probably the only American actress whose career I will be following in the future.

-Ty E

UNDER THE SKIN

Jonathan Glazer* (2013)

Mainstream big budget arthouse films are certainly a strange and mostly oxymoronic anomaly of cinema, with Bong Joon-ho's *Snowpiercer* (2013) and Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013) being more recent examples of this bastard cinematic breed that is known to divide filmgoers of all different types. Unquestionably, Judaic Brit Glazer's film has probably managed to divide viewers more than any other film of 2013 as an artsy fartsy sci-fi flick that features seductive ½ Nordic Jewess Scarlett Johansson as an oftentimes naked femalien fatale who harvests the bodies of mostly ugly and short Scotsmen by luring them to her deadly apartment with her busty body and tricking them into walking into an innards-and-bones-draining abyss. Directed by a man who got his first big break in filmmaking by directing music videos and adverts, *Under the Skin* is naturally big on aesthetics and style and low on emotion, subtext, and nuance, yet a good portion of filmgoers and film critics have treated it as the most innately baffling, arcane, and inexplicable films ever made, thus demonstrating the complete and utter lack of cinematic literacy among the general public. Indeed, Glazer's work seems like it was directed by the bastard broad of a rape committed by a senile Tarkovsky against the philistine daughter of Kubrick, as an undeniably aesthetically striking and ethereally atmospheric work with about as much emotional depth as the truly inhuman erotic extraterrestrial played by Ms. Johansson. Partially experimental in the sense that Johansson went driving around in a van with hidden cameras and hit on random unwitting Scottish men in what are ultimately totally unscripted scenes that capture that rather rare event of average-to-ugly men being seduced by a somewhat wanton woman that is considered one of Hollywood's top sex icons, *Under the Skin* is a film that manages to combine *cinéma vérité* and *Candid Camera* with a sort of pseudo-Kubrickian technical perfectionism and marginally philosophical pessimism for mankind. Loosely based on the 2000 surrealist sci-fi novel of the same name written by wandering Dutch novelist Michel Faber (who, although currently residing in Scotland, is 100% Dutch), *Under the Skin* is a work of modernist sci-fi (post)folk horror that manages to mix contemporary special effects with *Heimat*-like landscape scenes in a work that makes Glasgow, Scotland seem like a scenic and beautiful yet mostly melancholy and decidedly dispiriting place that is inhabited by a surplus of physical and emotional cripples who would bring great disgrace to their ancestors. By no means anything resembling a masterpiece, Glazer's film is a sort of blueprint for what Hollywood should (but never would) strive for if they wanted to create more demanding audiences, as a work that straddles a reasonably healthy line between cinematic art and accessible entertainment. Indeed, I must admit that coercing Johansson into getting completely unclad for the film was a clever way to con normal people into seeing a patently pretentious arthouse

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science fiction flick. While *Under the Skin* may not be anywhere near as great as Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968), it is certainly the most innately idiosyncratic and (anti)erotic mainstream sci-fi flick since Nicholas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) starring David Bowie, which also deals with the central theme of an alien coming to earth and ultimately becoming debased by mankind.

Although never actually revealed in the film, Faber's book is about aliens that are sent to earth by a wealthy extraterrestrial corporation to lure in lonely hitchhikers whose flesh is sold as a delicacy on the alien mother planet (in that sense, the film had the potential to vaguely resemble Peter Jackson's early darkly comedic splatter flick *Bad Taste* (1987)). After a long and rather pretentious close-up shots of eyeballs juxtaposed with the unsettling sounds of an alien attempting to learn the English language, *Under the Skin* begins with an alien motorcyclist (played by real-life British champion motorcycle road racer Jeremy McWilliams)—a sort of ruthless extraterrestrial overseer who makes sure that female aliens successfully execute their jobs regarding the hunting and procuring male earthlings—scooping up the seemingly dead body of a young woman off the side of a road and putting it in the back of a van. Although never clearly indicated, the lifeless woman is an alien who has assumedly failed at her mission, as she has done the unthinkable by developing human emotions like empathy and sadness, as indicated when she sheds a tear (the sole indication that she is not completely dead). An unclad buxom alien babe (Scarlett Johansson) strips her corpse-like alien comrade and puts on her clothes, as she has replaced the disgraced extraterrestrial femme fatale predator as a superficially salacious space-woman whose main mission is to procure young, lonely, and horny Scotsmen via her glaring streetwalker chic sexual appeal. To complete her already alluring femme fatale uniform, the alien seductress drives to a mall in her van and buys some pink lipstick. The first young man the Alien attempts to pickup is so intimidated by her out-of-the-world beauty and uncommonly aggressive advances that he declines her offer for a free ride, thereupon unwittingly saving his own life in the process. Of course, most of the men the Alien encounters are not so lucky and not a single one of them gets to probe her pussy. Indeed, aside from being a cold and calculating extraterrestrial cunt killer, the pseudo-amorous Alien is a genuine cocktease who does not even give her victims a free sample of her flesh before killing them, as she is seemingly asexual, at least when it comes to alien species.

When the Alien does finally manage to lure a man into her van, she coerces him into following her back to her 'apartment', which is nothing more than a perfectly pitch black room with a sinking abyss-like floor, which imprisons the prey in a manner not that unlike a spiderweb. Like the prey of a spider, the men are not killed instantly but most bide their time in almost darkness. When the unlucky hitchhiker follows the undressing Alien through her apartment as

if he is completely possessed and has tapped into the most archaic part of his brain during some sort of atavistic awakening, he strips off his clothes (with his erect penis literally guiding the way!) and eventually sinks into the floor and disappears without even attempting to put up a fight. The next day, the Alien goes to a rocky beach and approaches a Czech man (Kryštof Hádek) who seems somewhat disinterested in her, as if he can sense that she is an evil succubus bitch. When the Czech man attempts to save a drowning couple, the emotionless Alien watches the totally tragic scenario in a completely unmoved fashion while a baby screams hysterically in the background, thus demonstrating her complete and utter incapacity for empathizing with humans. When the Czech man washes up on the shore half-drowned after failing to rescue the couple, the Alien cravenly hits him on the head with a rock and takes his inanimate body with her. Later that night, the motorcycle-riding Overseer comes back to the beach and collects everything at the scene of the tragedy except the drowned couple's baby, who continues to wail in the darkness (interestingly, the Alien later hears on the radio that although the husband's corpse was found, the baby and wife are still missing). When the Alien goes to a club and procures a sleazy Chav-like scumbag, the macabre mechanism of the extraterrestrial's killer apartment is eventually revealed. Indeed, after a human falls through the liquid abyss located on the apartment's floor, their blood, guts, and bones are eventually sucked out and sent down a large conveyor belt, with the deflated skin of the victim being the only thing that remains. Undoubtedly, these gutless pieces of floating epidermis resemble the sort of grotesquely distorted human figures that you might expect Irish-born Figurative painter Francis Bacon to have painted.

Eventually, everything comes falling apart for the femalien fatale when she begins doing what led to her predecessor's downfall by developing human emotions and feelings of empathy for her human prey. It is the job of motorcyclist Overseer to inspect the female alien to see if she is beginning to develop any human emotions, which he does by staring deeply into her cold and seemingly lifeless pupils. One night while prowling the streets in her van, the Alien spots and picks up a horribly disfigured fellow of the friendless and assumedly virginal sort that looks like the Elephant Man (the role was played by a real-life disfigured man named Adam Pearson who works in TV production and suffers from facial neurofibromatosis) and she eventually manages to swoon him by complimenting his "beautiful hands" (notably, Pearson apparently suggested to Glazer how a woman might successfully seduce him, which was ultimately incorporated into the film's screenplay). While the Alien also lures the Elephant Man back to her extraterrestrial murder factory of an apartment and seduces the poor disfigured man into being consumed by the abyss (he states, "...dream, yes, dreaming..." while in a seemingly hypnotized state as the Alien takes her clothes off), she later has second thoughts after noticing a trapped fly and decides to let her prey go, though she does not bother to give him his clothes back, thus the deformed

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monster mensch must suffer the public humiliation of going au naturel in the countryside. Indeed, the disfigured dude escapes to the Scottish Highlands but unfortunately the crotch-rocket-riding Overseer decides to hunt him down and catches him just as he makes way into the backyard of his suburban home.

Meanwhile, the Alien decides to ditch her job, so she abandons her van and attempts to live like a normal human being. Of course, nothing quite works, as the Alien lacks both the psychological and biological characteristic of a real human. Aside from gagging/choking upon attempting to eat like humans do by taking a bite out of a pie, the Alien makes for a rather pathetic lover. Indeed, after meeting a guy at a bus stop whose home she temporarily stays in, the Alien attempts to consummate coitus for the first time, but freaks out when the man's member gets too close to her nether-regions. After spreading her legs and holding a lamp over her bearded clam to get a good look at what is inside, the Alien flees the man's home out of assumed fear and embarrassment and seeks isolation in a 2,000 acre forest where she finds a bothy to sleep in. Not long after arriving in the forest, the Alien runs into a low-class middle-aged Logger who warns her to watch her step, though he adds regarding the area, "It's a nice place if you want some solitude." Of course, the Alien learns otherwise when she is rudely awakened the next morning to the same Logger molesting her body with his sneaky hands. Needless to say, the Logger subsequently attempts to violently rape the Alien but he is quite taken aback after accidentally ripping the extraterrestrial's fake white girl epidermis, thus revealing that "under the skin" she is not actually human, but a dark phantom-like being. Indeed, after the Alien decides to tear off the rest of the skin off, a svelte and featureless black body is revealed that completely lacks all the warm positive qualities one associates with the physique of mankind. Before she knows it, the Logger returns and doses the Alien with gasoline and lights her on fire. In the end, the Alien burns alive, with her ashes floating back to the sky where she once came from. As for the motorcycling Overseer, he stands stoically on a hill while looking for his missing space slut in a rather aesthetically pleasing shot that resembles a landscape painting by German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich.

Undoubtedly, I would be lying if I did not admit that I was reasonably entertained by *Under the Skin*, even if it is a purely aesthetic-driven work of the rather shallow sort that ironically critiques the supposed innate shallowness of human beings, especially males, which is made most clear at the end of the film when the rapist Logger kills the femalien fatale played by Scarlett Johansson that he previously wanted to fuck after it is revealed that her human pulchritude is only skin-deep and is purely counterfeit. Admittedly, I have read various interpretations of the film, especially of the frigid feminist and male cuckold sort, and I have found most of these critiques to be complete and utter bollocks (to borrow a goofy word from where the film was set), yet reading these reviews/articles made me realize that *Under the Skin* has gotten people thinking, which is quite

a rarity in cinema nowadays. While I somewhat doubt it was the director's conscious decision, I personally interpreted the film as a tragic metaphysical horror depiction of the archetypical 'Seductive Jewess'—a descendent of Salome and every Rothschild daughter—as a work where a true racial outsider seduces and kills dumb European goy boys for the benefit of her kinfolk. Of course, what better Seductive Jewess than Scarlett Johansson for the role as someone that is proudly Hebraic yet looks rather Aryan due to the fact that she is the progeny of a Swedish man (isn't it ironic that virtually all of the most attractive Israelites have mixed blood and look the least stereotypically Jewish?!), even if her behavior and the expressions in her eyes say otherwise. It should be noted that 'British' director Jonathan Glazer is not only Jewish, but proudly so, with him once stating in a June 7, 2001 interview for the JewishJournal.com, "Cinema, synagogue, what's the difference? [...] You get fairly dominant Jewish personalities in both." Of course, had Glazer been a goy and stated the same thing, he would probably be instantly blacklisted from Hollywood, but I digress. In addition to tribe members Johansson and Glazer, the film was co-produced by American Hebrew Nick Wechsler and the musical score was composed by English bull-dyke-like Jewess Mica Levi, thus making it a largely Semitic sci-fi creation.

Like the stupid male pawns featured in *Under the Skin*, countless culturally cuckolded males from America and Europe (and pretty much everywhere else) worship Johansson while being totally oblivious to the open secret that her tribesmen pollute peoples' minds via Hollywood and countless media outlets, destroy their countries by de-industrializing them and flooding them with mostly hostile and uneducated aliens from the third world, and start seemingly perennial doomed-to-fail wars in the Middle East and elsewhere that are fought by mostly white males in what is ultimately a real-life dystopian scenario that is more or less reflected in John Carpenter's cult sci-fi flick *They Live* (1988). Indeed, Johansson's character's succubus-like seduction powers are so great in the film that she merely needs to strip and a character loses all capacity for rational thought and conscious thinking and subsequently walks into a dark abyss to his own death. And, of course, like the wandering Jew in a foreign land, Johansson's character only faces true conflict when she begins to empathize with humanity and attempts to live the life of a normal human being, which one can argue is an allegorical reference to Jewish assimilation (which has been described as the "Silent Holocaust" among certain hysterical Jewish groups and leaders). Either way, whatever way you approach *Under the Skin*, one gets the feeling that the root of all female evil is pussy, which is a message that virtually any man can relate to. With that being said, one can also argue that the film carries the message that if women actually learned to empathize with males instead of being completely self-absorbed and oftentimes scheming opportunists, they would perish just as Johansson's character does. Somewhat notably, *Under the Skin* is oftentimes compared to the films of Stanley Kubrick who, like Glazer, was a Judaic who

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was not big on emotional depth but was certainly keen on cultural pessimism, especially within a post-WWII Western context. While I am not exactly sure the sort of cultural pessimism, if any, that Glazer was trying to disseminate with his film aside from the obvious, *Under the Skin* is certainly a foreboding and apocalyptic work where, somewhat absurdly, the most stunning person is a Jewess and most of the whites seem like the distantly related kinfolk of the cast of Judaic junky auteur Harmony Korine's cinematic debut *Gummo* (1997), which is also a work that makes it seem like the Occident is taking its last gasp.

-Ty E

THE PUNISHER

Jonathan Hensleigh (2004)

Second in line, Thomas Jane's *The Punisher* film that ignores the previous Dolph Lundgren casting, this film deviates from not only the prior motion picture but even more so from the source material of the revenge-laden comics. I remember vividly when *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* was released. I remember the swollen red faces of fans when they saw that Galactus has been transformed into a purple cloud. Well, Jonathan Hensleigh has turned a vengeful devil into Smokey the Bear. In an interview with UGO, Thomas Jane explained that his interest in *The Punisher* was derived from the intention of it being similar to *Taxi Driver*. Of course, this pretentious statement led to not only a film so disappointingly lacking action, but a film whose emotional depth can be represented by a puddle on the side of the road. Should I even bother to bring about the Punisher's logo and its point of origin? The only surprising facet of this film is the brutal paper slicer death scene which took long enough to build up to. Just when you think that Thomas Jane's acting can't get worse, John Travolta is flamboyantly introduced into the happy family. *The Punisher* takes the male's fascination of muscle cars and creates an inanimate object into a major player that attempts to steal the scenes with its horsepower. This *Punisher* plays out more like Robin Hood with bumbling tenant sidekicks that cater to the countercultures with an irritating character with a plethora of facial piercings. It wouldn't be until the year 2008 where a *Punisher* film would strive for a beautiful art direction that appeals to fans of the comics and an absolute demonstration of what Max Payne attempted to do. The only sadist viewpoint from this film is the fundamental Castle family slaughter. Not only does Frank's family get murdered by New Jersey Guido's, but near every guest at his party gets massacred by a sea of machine gun fire. Thomas Jane does the legend of *The Punisher* no justice at all and only clutters the gene pool of Marvel adaptations. Thank God that the sequel to this didn't hold tact. I guess we have to thank Jane's adamant stubbornness on account of this film failing as a *Taxi Driver* clone. *The Punisher* (2004) is a swift kick in the nuts of *Punisher* fans. The naked truth's that none of the crew or cast has read a *Punisher* comic book and this is plainly manifested in a venomous format for none to enjoy. I've heard comments before following these guidelines - "Well, I'm not a fan of the comic book but I think the film did well as a standalone.. *shrugs*- It's this kind of response that makes my stomach churns. Shit will always be shit. Nothing you say or do can prove this film to be of substantial quality. This is a far cry from Dolph Lundgren's *Punisher* which spent more time with personalization rather than tedious subplots.

-mAQ

TRUCK TURNER
TRUCK TURNER

Jonathan Kaplan (1974)

I remember thinking to myself one day as I browsed the action section at Suncoast, "Holy fuck! The Godfather of Soul is in a blaxploitation film?!" About a year later, full of procrastination, Isaac Hayes passed away without me seeing his film. I was devastated and vowed to finally view Truck Turner via Netflix, and it does not disappoint. Isaac Hayes plays Mac "Truck" Turner, an ex-football star turned skip tracer. After killing a local pimp, name of Gator, the whole criminal underworld has their eyes set of Trucks head for a vengeful hoe. Along with random jive talking assassins, a kingpin named Blue is looking to seal the fate on the soulful black bullet. Now if there is one thing that Isaac Hayes would never be horrible at, it would be an actor. If you've ever listened to his amazing music, you feel a vibrancy of funky soul pulsing up your veins. He can project massive surges of emotions in any media or art form he touches. Truly a man with a gift. In most blaxploitation films, when a love scene boils down, things aim to get intimate but end up looking goofy. Isaac Hayes doesn't front about his love-making abilities. Nor does he front on the size of his gun. Isaac Hayes was built for action cinema. His large build frightens feeble white boys and allows him to put maximum force behind his fist in order to beat the shit out of women. Isaac Hayes created a character with such assertiveness that it scares me. A bold player without pimping, Mac Turner is a fine role model for black audiences. A much more suitable one than Dolemite. The climax of the film lingers with such a profound melancholy that the silence of the scene will have you flabbergasted. Isaac Hayes is a fierce warrior with a handgun. He is correcting the streets and promoting his therapy of Hot Buttered Soul. I will admit that Truck Turner starts out slow, but damn if it doesn't pick up and deliver a blaxploitation classic instantly. R.I.P. Isaac Hayes. I hope you're pimp-smacking some fine ass angel hoes in heaven.

-mAQ

BLACK SHEEP

Jonathan King (2007)

Ever since the release of *Shaun of the Dead*, the European (Not England) film companies feel the need to mass market their films in our patriotic soil, regardless of how many Americans don't understand Euro humor. The recent slew of films includes the similar film *Severance*. Well, due to America's love of animals and zombies, it seems they found the perfect formula. Meet *Black Sheep*. While this review opens up sounding like another walk in the park with a jolly bit o' tea, be warned, for this film is pure filth. A boy is scarred by his brother and develops a lifetime fear of sheep, quite ridiculous for such a pitiful prank. He is an adult, still pitiful, and still is afraid of sheep. His father died, and has gone back to his hometown to mourn. Well, some retarded animal rights activist steal a diseased sheep fetus in a tube built like it was from *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*. This is all dandy until they break it. Now New Zealand is plagued with zombie-sheep and zombie-sheep-people. I guess the company felt special for changing the *Romzomcom* (Romantic Zombie Comedy) into a *Romzomshom* (Romantic Zombie Sheep-omedy.) While this alone is only a plot worthy of a Troma release, Dimension Extreme nabbed it. Nothing in this film is extreme, not even the plot. The plot, while not being completely horrible, isn't enough to strengthen this film's weaknesses. The acting is poor, and the twists are feeble. These random twists in film need to cease. The whole point of a twist is to surprise. It's hard to surprise an audience that expects one. The effects are laughable. *Black Sheep* seems like a rip-off of *Poultrygeist*. Regardless of which was first. *Black Sheep* is not funny, it is not entertaining, and does not have a humanitarian outlook. Even if sheep had an outlook or market in film, this would still horribly disappoint.

-Maq

RINGS
RINGS

Jonathan Liebesman (2005)

Ah, Jonathan Liebesman. How we hardly knew thee. When I first heard of this short film, I'd figured it was a fan film that turned out to be better than its own inspiration; No More Souls and Batman: Dead End comes to mind. I was half right, but then I found out he was actually the one behind that horrid piece of Hollywood trash Darkness Falls. He later directed the prequel to the Michael Bay remake of The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Rings was constructed to bridge the gap between The Ring and The Ring Two. Its star is a young kid who enters this cult-like club of video watchers. It seems after the events transpired in the original The Ring, Samara has become a prom queen from hell. It's a tight circle of people who videotape their experiences after watching the tape, then pass it off and have someone else watch their tape. In other words, A giant fucked Russian Roulette via Video tape scenario. Dreamworks Pictures thought it would also be a great idea to attempt a viral marketing campaign. These prehistoric viral attempts seem amateurish compared to the recent greats with Cloverfield, LOST, and The Dark Knight. I didn't bother browsing the page due to my "I don't give a fuck" attitude towards the series in whole. VIRAL PAGE Initially, the effects of hysteria designate themselves to be pretty fucking creepy, but on further inspection of my room, I can count multiple rings everywhere. Circles surround us (No pun intended) and it seems more of an exercise in ripping off Uzumaki than anything. Uzumaki had the phobia of spirals and such down long before this shitty series came into play. Rings is a solid little short that had a shitty ending. I don't like the main character. What started off as a sniveling brat who saw ladders became some fucking asshole who feared death too much that he'd kill people who cared about him. Rings features some great effects trickery (Horizontal drippings forming vertical puddles on walls) but occasionally does feature the horribly CGI'd centipede. A diamond in the rough, but don't take that as too much of a compliment.

-mAQ

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

Jonathan Mostow (2003)

Take what you have, a science-fiction genre classic, and an action genre classic, and you have yourself a pretty fucking solid franchise. Now add some feminism, a total screw-over of the already confusing Terminator timeline, and the shit-tiest visioning of adult John Conner turned to script, and you have yourselves T3 in the flesh... err, living tissue over metal endoskeleton. Nick Stahl might have seemed like a good choice for our reluctant hero on paper, but the result is nothing short of devastating. A simple rebel teenager has turned into an "emo" drifter who hides from "the system" and breaks into local veterinary's offices to steal medication to give his character "tortured depth." Alright, enough with the quotations. He gets captured embarrassingly by the ugly-as-a-horse Clair Danes. After some run-ins with a female Terminator (Ugh) and the "I'll be back" T-850. Turns out this is the very same Terminator that assassinates him in the future, using the same model to recall boyhood memories to get in closer. Jesus, this storyline gets way too ridiculous. So after all is said and done, what we have is a mess of action, romance, and ridiculous time-travel paradoxes. The introduction of the T-X (Female Terminator) is what might have doomed it from the start. Not even the nipple slip in the beginning was enough to grip in fans of the original. Her mutating polymorphing body and reverse ion particle thruster cannon over-kill arm just made it a one-sided fight. There was always that "T-800 can kill the T-1000 if he believes deep inside" bull shit, but this time, there's no real fun action here. The only real sense of destruction is the T-850 shooting cops but not killing them. Yes, a pacifistic Terminator. I remember in the original 2 where this bad motherfucker in a leather jacket would haul ass and shoot down every bastard who looked at him the wrong way. Now they toned down the cop-killing, as to fit calmly in with our paranoid and controversial society. None the less, the T-X murders everyone, cause she is a woman and deserves equal rights. The male should have the License to Kill before the female. No, die. You're not a cool villain. Nick Stahl was a teen frenzy when he was in films like *Bully*, but somehow in this film, he looks like someone bludgeoned him with a shovel. He is easily the bitchiest John Conner I've ever had to deal with. I'm excited for Christian Bale to play John Conner in the upcoming PG-13 shitfest *Terminator: Salvation*. I've read the close-off to T4, and trust me, It's a steaming pile of shit. The detail that went into portraying the war-torn dystopian world of the future was trashed for shitty CGI and crappy green screened settings. No longer are skulls crunching under the metal feet of the enemy. The Terminator was a dismal piece of tech-noir. T2: *Judgement Day* was an unmatched action film that conjures up thrills and a bit of classy humor. T3 is a feminist film with shitty guns and Arnie wearing fag glasses in the beginning. What a horrible way to continue these films. If I had connections with Skynet, I'd send a Terminator

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

back in time to assassinate Jonathan Mostow and rejoice in the 2 part classic.

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BARTLEBY

Jonathan Parker (2001)

Bartleby is a slight re-visioning of Herman Melville's unappreciated masterpiece *Bartleby the Scrivener*. When you adapt a novella about an enigmatic man who is solemnly creepy, of course you'd enlist Crispin Glover to play this role. Indeed he does, and with the fewest amount of lines, he manages to deeply haunt you long after the film is over. Now when I say modern, I don't necessarily mean present times, but more of an incredible 60's feel to it. The public records office is a comfortable place to work, already equipped with enough dysfunction to last till the next pay check. Flirtatious secretaries fit good with swinger co-workers. When an extremely sordid employment ad goes out in the local newspaper, only a single man answers the ad. His name is Bartleby and he is calm, collected, and a weird charmer. Crispin Glover's performance is stunning in this film. Only someone of his caliber and notoriety for bringing out more than enough charisma could fit this role. Back to the subject of it's "Retro" appeal, the colors of the office are exuberant and striking. The personalities in the office match perfectly. A good comparison to the look of this film would be the hit underrated game for SNES/GEN - *Zombies Ate My Neighbors!* Just as *The Boss* began to lose sleep over Bartleby's creepy nature, I too felt haunted after viewing this film. The all too similar "I don't want to work" theme has been explored in such farces as *Clerks* or even *Office Space*. Not to bunch up Bartleby in with this illicit crowd, but it is of a similar nature, but with a surreal context. Much of this is due to the score. The soundtrack was all composed with a machine called the Theremin. This instrument is a series of antenna's and electronic loops that you play with hand gestures. The resulting drones and hums are then sent to a loudspeaker. Similar to the game *ZAMN!*, the score features ambiguous tracks that not only alter your state of reality, but bring more life in an air-conditioning vent that Lynch couldn't do with a radiator. Bartleby is a woefully mysterious being of humanity. An amazing point of this film is it's replay value. Immediately after it was over, I wanted to be assaulted by his weirdness again. Jonathan Parker's debut film is an enormous cult success. I was very surprised, this coming from a Jew who claims to be a tall, elongated Woody Allen. I could go on and on about how deeply the film distressed me, but I'd prefer not to.

-Maq

BAGMAN - PROFESSION: MEURTRIER
BAGMAN - PROFESSION: MEURTRIER

Jonathan Prévošt (2004)

Bagman - Profession: Meurtrier (Which I will call Bagman for short) is an extremely low budget splatter short filmed in Quebec. This title would always come up to me at very weird times and it felt natural to view it, but I refused due to hard drive space issues. Finally, In a creepy fit of Déjà vu, I gave in and downloaded this film immediately. I went into this trivial film experience only expecting a lot of horrible murder effects, ones that I have grown oh so tired of. It makes more than just blood to motivate my psyche into enjoying a film and thankfully, Bagman has not disappointed me in the slightest. Bagman isn't just a simple gore film, It's a loud-mouth screwball comedy with insane amounts of limbs featuring awesome action choreography. I don't think I could have been more surprised then I was.

Bagman's glorious introduction reminds me a lot of Sheitan and Versus. Take a group of French would-be gang bangers and thugs, then just throw these inconsiderate bastards in a hell storm of murder and mayhem. A woman who survived a previous Bagman incident is hit by a car full of white "thugs", upon their inspection of her body, she jumps up babbling about Bagman coming after her. She mention that you cannot say Bagman's name 3 times. This of course, happens. Gangsta backup is soon called when Bagman appears which results in the most zany fight scene I've ever seen. Each exquisite and over the top death is better than the last, resulting in unrivaled mayhem and entertainment. The production values on Bagman were surprisingly fit as well. I expected a film that had the feel of Violent Shit, which is how the film is described, but no! We're treated to a fresh HD-looking slasher addition which is finally getting its own full-length sibling. Bagman is an exercise in good taste, concerning horror that is. Originality is fine and all, but I'd much prefer something that works over a film that is drowning it its own excess. If you like any of the following: Gore, intestines, gratuitous gang banger slaughterings, screaming, arterial spray, dismemberment's, stabbings, hackings, or plain ole' dark comedy, Bagman is a must see.

-mAQ

RECKLESS

Joram Lürsen (2014)

While it is unfortunately not uncommon for Hollywood to take successful European films and remake them in a decidedly dumbed down fashion for subtitle-shy American philistines who cannot be bothered with artsy fartsy things like nuance and subtext, among other things, it is not exactly common for European filmmakers, especially Dutchmen, to remake semi-mainstream hit indie thrillers, yet the somewhat popular Dutch filmmaker Joram Lürsen. Indeed, despite being a TV hack turned mainstream director that is responsible for romantic-comedies like *Alles is liefde* (2007) aka *Love is All* and *Alles is familie* (2012) aka *Family Way* and sappy family films like *In Oranje* (2004) aka *In Orange*, Lürsen managed to create a vastly superior film to the British psychological crime-thriller *The Disappearance of Alice Creed* (2009) written and directed by J Blakeson with his latest feature *Bloedlink* (2014) aka *Reckless* aka *De Verdwijning van Vera Muller*. While a fairly faithful remake with some of the same exact shots and most of the same scenarios, Lürsen's version is ultimately more tightly directed, culturally subversive, and just plain more hardcore. A three-person chamber piece that is largely set in a single apartment, the film indubitably feels like it is based off of an original play but is actually the brainchild of Blakeson, who dreamed up what would probably be the greatest homo thriller since Alfred Hitchcock's classic *Leopold and Loeb* flick *Rope* (1948). Luckily, Lürsen took Blakeson's original idea and ultimately proved that he is the superior cinematic craftsman. Of course, considering his hit film *Love is All* (which, incidentally, was remade in both Belgium and Germany) is more or less a raunchy Dutch rip-off of the retarded British rom-com *Love Actually* (2003), it seems that Lürsen is a sort of perennial artisan as opposed to a serious auteur, but I digress. Aside from receiving a screener of the film from Artsploitation Films and wanting to see how it compared to *The Disappearance of Alice Creed*, I decided to watch *Reckless* because I wanted to see how Dutch leading man Tygo Gernandt (*Van God Los* aka *Godforsaken!*, *The Black Death*) sized up as quasi-psychopathic cocksucking kidnapper. Although he is a fairly popular actor in the Netherlands, I am mainly familiar with Gernandt for his early role in the Aryan Kaganof classic *Naar de klote!* (1996) aka *Wasted!* as an innately impotent longhaired pothead neo-hippie bum whose reasonably more masculine girlfriend cheats on him with a wigger pseudo-gangster degenerate with whom she is dealing ecstasy. Undoubtedly, in Lürsen's film, Gernandt demonstrates he is just as good at playing authoritarian shit-stabbing criminals as he is at playing exceedingly emasculated pot-addled breeders.

A work that is notable for featuring one of the most bizarre love triangles in thriller cinema history, *Reckless* is ultimately more intriguing than *The Disappearance of Alice Creed* because it features an added racial dynamic that was

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totally absent from Blakeson's film. Indeed, the film features a 'bisexual' male femme fatale (or 'homme fatale') as played by an actor of Tunisian Arab stock who ultimately double-crosses both his white male and white female lovers in what one might describe as an allegory for multicultural Holland if one did not know better. Undoubtedly, *Reckless* is a great example of a film that would be completely banal to write about without revealing certain spoilers, as it is a work that deceives the viewer just as much as the characters deceive one another. Surely, one of the most clever aspects of the film is that it tricks most viewers into watching what one would describe as a somewhat 'queer' film, especially considering that it belongs to a genre that is traditionally rampantly heterosexual and stars male actors that are hardly homophiliac when it comes to choosing film roles. Of course, the film's initially hermetic 'heteroflexible' themes are among the things that make it so potent, unforgettable, and suavely sleazy. Indeed, while *Reckless* is unequivocally a thriller, it also features a winsome hint of trailer trash melodrama that ultimately makes all the difference when it comes to distinguishing the film from countless other disposable works of the obscenely outmoded genre. In short, if Hitchcock had a too-cool-for-school Dutch grandson with a fetish for S&M and bondage, he might have directed *Reckless*.

For nearly the first five minutes of the film, the viewer watches ex-con Victor aka 'Vic' (Tygo Gernandt) and his somewhat younger brown Arab underling Ricardo aka 'Rico' (Marwan Kenzari of Jim Taihuttu's *Wolf* (2013)) as they silently buy materials and build a soundless padded room in a dilapidated apartment for an upcoming kidnapping that they plan to carry out. Ultimately, the two plan to kidnap a young and fairly slutty looking blonde named Laura Temmink (Sarah Chronis) and then demand that her stinking wealthy Fortune 500 realtor father Leo pay four million Euros in ransom money to get her back. While he initially seems like a brown slave and cowardly cuck of alpha-prick Vic, who is indubitably the most the more domineering of the two, Rico has a secret scheme that his unwitting comrade has no clue about. Upon grabbing Laura off the street and putting her inside the sort of unnoticeable plain white van that one would assume a serial killer might use, the two men put a gag ball device into her mouth that is typically used by people involved with BDSM role play and drive her to a secret apartment where they have installed a sort of pseudo-S&M prison room. Indeed, upon tying her legs and feet to the bedposts of the bed, Vic and Rico quickly cut all of her clothes off, including her underwear, with scissors and then take photos of her unclad body in bondage with a digital camera to send to her father (!) to prove to him that they have kidnapped his daughter and that she is in a precarious situation that seems to have an unsettling 'sexual' component to it. After snapping photos of their victim, the two criminals put a sack over her head and lock her in the room by herself while she is still strapped to the bed.

Since the two criminals do not want their victim to croak, they irregularly

bring her water, though Vic warns her the first time he takes her gag device off, "If you scream we have to hurt you. OK? We don't want to kill you, but if it's necessary we will. First pain, then death." When Laura attempts to plead with them by lying and stating, "Please let me go. My daughter needs her medication," Vic assertively replies, "Don't. Don't. We know everything about you. You don't have a daughter. You help yourself and us if you just do as we say." Of course, Laura does not like Vic's response, so she bites him in an aggressive animalistic fashion and he responds by smacking the shit out of her and firmly stating, "Listen, you cunt, there are two people who can get you out of here. That's us...He and I. So we're your new best friends from now on." From there, Vic informs Laura of what hand signals she needs to give him and Rico anytime she needs to use the bathroom, telling her, "If you wet yourself, it's your problem." Anytime Laura has to take a leak, Vic and Rico are forced to pull her pants and panties down and make her piss in a jug while she is still lying down and bound to the bed. It is quite apparent that Rico is not exactly comfortable with snapping S&M photos of Laura and making her piss in a jug, but his reasons for having these feelings are quite different than what the viewer might expect.

Vic is an absurdly anally retentive and obscenely obsessive compulsive guy who literally monitors every single little move that his turd-colored comrade makes. When Rico attempts to drink some beer after getting done tying up Laura, Vic will only allow him to have a single can, telling him "we're not amateurs." When Rico refuses to eat dinner after a long hard day of quasi-S&M style kidnapping, Vic becomes fairly paranoid and accuses him of becoming "sentimental" and a "sissy," so the seemingly melancholy Arab finally gives in and eats. Somewhat curiously, when Vic decides to leave the apartment to run some errands, Rico visits Laura in her padded room and freaks her out by sniffing her body. Meanwhile, Vic makes a deal with Laura's father to give her back for four million Euros. To demonstrate to her father that they are serious, Vic films Rico with a knife to Laura's throat as she pleads to her daddy to do whatever they say or she will be dead.

Ultimately, things get fairly more interesting in the film when Laura signals to Rico that she has to defecate while Vic is away. When Rico makes the mistake of agreeing to turn around while Laura is taking a shit in a bucket after she complains "I can't do this with someone watching me," he gets hit in the head with said bucket by the kidnap victim, who also manages to grab his gun. After Laura somewhat senselessly fires a round from the weapon into the wall of the room, Rico declares "it's me," takes off his mask, and reveals that he is her lover. Naturally, Laura is quite angry with her dubious brown beau, but Rico rationalizes his behavior by saying he did it for her to rob her much maligned father, stating, "You always said you hated him. He never gives you anything. He thinks the way you live sucks. You said yourself that he doesn't give a shit about you. This is it, Laura. This is the way to get money off him. We talked

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about it, but didn't know how. This is it." After moronically revealing Vic's name to her and that he plans to rip his partner off, Rico promises to Laura, "You and me will have the money and go to some tropical beach." When Laura complains, "You told me you loved me," Rico acts like the stereotypical lying would-be-pimp 'playa' by replying, "I do love you. So much. It's the only reason why I did this." When Rico tells Laura that he planned to tell her about his plan after receiving the ransom money, she sarcastically replies, "So what would you have told me? 'Sorry I chained you to a bed like some S&M whore. And that I ogled your pussy with some retard.'" Of course, when Rico informs Laura that all she has to do is 'play victim' for another day or two and they will receive four million euros in ransom money from her father, she agrees to go along with the charade and allows him to tie her back to the bed after Vic knocks on the door and demands to be let back in the apartment.

While Vic has no idea that Rico and Laura are lovers, the second day in the apartment he begins becoming extra paranoid when his comrade spends a little too long in the bathroom, so he kicks down the door. Unbeknownst to Vic, Rico had just swallowed a bullet shell from the round that Laura shot off. While Vic proclaims, "I don't smell anything" upon entering the bathroom after Rico makes the claim that he was in there for a long time because he had to take a dump, he finally stops being paranoid and stops giving his super swarthy sidekick a hard time. In fact, Vic theorizes to Rico regarding his mysterious bowel movements, "Adrenalin... That's what causes it. Suddenly having to crap, foul taste in your mouth." As demonstrated by the fact he refuses to sleep one night, Vic is about to go over the edge as a result of his paranoia in regard to the kidnapping, but his worries are not just in regard to money. Indeed, after remarking to Rico that they will both be "set forever" after getting the ransom money, Vic romantically embraces his 'partner' and adds that in two days they will be on a plane "and away from here. You and me together. Away from this hell hole. A new beginning. A new life. The first few days we'll barely leave the hotel. We'll just stay in our room." While the two men kiss, Vic tells Rico, "I love you" and he replies by saying the same exact thing he previously said to Laura, "I've never loved anyone so much. Never," thus indicating he is probably a psychopath of sorts.

Of course, everything goes downhill for everyone involved when Rico makes the mistake of untying Laura from the bed while Vic is away. Indeed, while Rico is making out with Laura on the same exact bed that the little lady was just tied to, the poor little rich girl manages to handcuff him to a bedpost while he is naked and then she calls 911, though she has no idea where she is and thus cannot give the dispatcher her whereabouts. After the failed attempt at getting the police to rescue her, Laura finds a handgun on a table in the apartment, goes back into the makeshift dungeon room, and demands that her deceitful lover hand her the keys to the apartment so that she can escape. Ultimately, while acting like he is going to hand her the keys, Rico manages to drive his foot into Laura's neck

while he is still handcuffed to the bed. At this point, Laura attempts to shoot Rico but the gun still has the safety on and does not fire and her beau mocks her while choking her by stating, "Safety catch, stupid bitch."

While Rico manages to get free, he becomes convinced that he has killed Laura after failing to resuscitate her after driving his feet into her throat to the point where she loses consciousness and he breaks down as a result, even barfing in the toilet as a result of shock (of course, he pukes out the bullet shell, so he is forced to swallow it again). When Vic gets back, he reveals to Rico that they are going to do the tradeoff with Laura's father for the ransom money. While Vic manages to revive Laura when she initially fails to wake up, he still has no idea that something is out of the ordinary. After telling Rico to go get their van so that they can prepare to transport the girl to the drop off site, Vic goes to untie Laura and is in quite the surprise when a cellphone falls out of her pocket which reveals that she has called 911. Although initially refusing to tell him where she got the phone, Laura soon spills the beans after Vic smacks her around a good bit and states regarding their mutual lover, "he's going to screw you over." While Laura tells Vic pretty much everything about Rico's plans, the hardened criminal never gives any hint as to how he plans to respond to the situation. Before taking Laura to the drop-off sight, Vic acts somewhat passive-aggressively with Rico and then somewhat ironically says to him, "Goddammit, man. What would I do without you?" and gives him a loving hug. Of course, when Vic tells him he loves him, Rico replies, "Yeah. I love you more."

After dropping off Laura at a dark half-ruined abandoned factory in the middle of nowhere where they handcuff her to a pipe, Vic takes Rico to a wooded region where the ransom money has been supposedly placed. When Vic has Rico look in a hole where the money is supposedly placed, he discovers nothing inside and complains "We've been screwed over," but his comrade replies, "We haven't been screwed over. I've been screwed over. By you." Of course, at this point, Rico realizes that Vic has figured him out and begins pleading for his life like a little bitch by trying to prey on his comrade's love for him by stating while sobbing, "Vic... remember at first in jail? I was scared. I was so scared, but you protected me. You, Vic. Vic, please. Believe me, you're the only one. The only one for me." As it turns out, Vic and Rico met and became gay lovers in prison, though it seems the latter adopted homosexuality as a form of 'protection.' Of course, the fact that Vic protected Rico in prison makes his betrayal all the more despicable. While Vic is portrayed as a sort of pathological psychopath for most of the film, he breaks down and begins sobbing while attempting to gather enough strength to liquidate his lover. Vic tells Rico regarding the consequences of his betrayal, "You know what you did? You're dead and so is she. I have no choice," adding regarding their dubious romance, "You're tired of her and you're a liar. Everything was fake. Everything. Douchebag. Every kiss, every time." When Vic goes to ask Rico if he ever kissed Laura, the Arab homme

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fatale manages to push him and run away in the woods. While Rico manages to get away from Vic, he is severely wounded after his comrade manages to shoot him. As for who survives in the end and gets away with the money, I won't give that spoiler away.

Of course, one of the greatest payoffs for the viewer during *Reckless* is when the two unwitting members of the bizarre love triangle both come to realize that their ostensible lover has another lover of a different gender. In that regard, I would not be surprised if some LGBT-lobotomized film critic goes on to describe the film as 'homophobic' and/or anti-bisexual propaganda just as certain 'sensitive' reviewers absurdly complained regarding Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* (1992) when it was first released. While Lürsen's film does not exactly portray homos as the morally superior and infallible perennial victims that the Hebraic cultural-distorters in Hollywood would have you believe they are, it is a rare film that manages to make so-called 'queer' themes accessible to the heterosexual majority, even if it manages to do so in a sort of deceptive way that makes it quite clear that source writer J Blakeson was desperate to make people embrace his sexual proclivities. Make no mistake about it, *Reckless* is certainly no masterpiece and is fairly mainstream as far as Dutch cinema comes, yet it makes a refreshing change from typical thriller genre twaddle, even if it does not exactly compare to a genre-revamping work like, say, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Chinese Roulette* (1976) in terms of thematic subversion. Surely, *Reckless* is the sort of thriller that Hollywood might produce if they had more faith in the intelligence of the American filmgoer and were not so concerned with portraying every single fag film character in a putridly positive light. Naturally, Hollywood would also not dare release a film where a brown man of dubious racial origins is portrayed as a considerably craven and despicably deceitful scumbag of the seemingly psychopathic sort who was the personal bitch boy of a white man while he was in prison. Of course, as the various half-caste bastard children in Europe and America certainly reveal, brown bro Rico's romantically treacherous behavior with his white lovers in *Reckless* is arguably the most realistic and culturally redeeming aspect of the film, hence its innate superiority over Lürsen's *The Disappearance of Alice Creed*.

-Ty E

GONE THE WAY OF FLESH

Jordan McMillen (2006)

Tagged with more than favorable reviews, I had cemented views that this film was going to be good, If not good, then fun. I don't think i have ever regretted viewing a film so much as this one. Gone the Way of Flesh is a film that has been loved by the likes as Ted V. Mikels, Tom Savini, and Herschell Gordon Lewis. The fact that these horror legends made such classy remarks about such an appalling film is beyond me. Hell, the title doesn't even make any sense. To me, I feel that this film is merely a cover for trying to promote the directors band "The Jason Martinko Revue." A similar play has been used by Brandon Small's hit cartoon Metalocalypse. This marketing ploy might work, but the difference is that Metalocalypse is entertaining, which itself is an understatement. This piece of trash seems to be a carbon copy of a story from Troma's Tales from the Crapper. It's always wise to steal from great source material. A serial killer is killing off rock'n'roll groupies following the director's band. That is the only depth you will find in this film. Regardless for the bland story which is accompanied by a horrible band, the production values of this film is degrading to watch. I'm almost positive the director stole some kid's lunch money and made this film. The director may not "give-a-damn" now, but he sure as shit better start soon, lest I'll have to verbally massacre more of his future projects. Gone the Way of Flesh is an amateur perverts delight on film. This is not material for any single person to enjoy. With many horror directors in this generation, controversy is a simple tool for success. Gone the Way of Flesh is very excited to announce that JewTube banned their trailer. The very fact that people support low-brow exploitation films is why they are becoming more diluted. Quality is a very rare occurrence in modern "trash" Expect this foul project to be released on Troma video soon. As always, the "Tromatic" special features including the Radiation March will prove to be better than the Feature Presentation. Perhaps Mystery Science Theater 3000 should make a comeback slandering this film. Most likely not, but then again, there's always Rifftrax.

-mAQ

HOT LOVE
HOT LOVE

Jörg Buttgereit (1985)

Assuredly, when it comes to the pre-Nekromantik short films of Teutonic enfant terrible Jörg Buttgereit, his lurid and less than 30-minute-long featurette *Hot Love* (1985) – a softcore punk rock splatter flick shot on Super 8 with a soothing melodic score and pseudo-melodramatic romanticism – is his best and still fresh amateur effort. Starring and featuring a musical score by Daktari Lorenz, who also provided the same artistic services for Buttgereit's subsequent film and first feature *Nekromantik* (1987), *Hot Love* is a proportionately pleasant prototype for the sort of psychosexual arthouse gore-comedies that would earn the bodacious blond beast director the marginal yet loyal underground cult following he has today, thereupon making the film mandatory viewing for fanatical fans of corpse fucking art. More than anything, *Hot Love* – like Anger's *Fireworks* (1947), Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961), Morrissey's *Flesh* (1968), Waters' *Mondo Trasho* (1969), Fassbinder's *Love is Colder than Death* (1969), Cronenberg's *Shivers* (1975), Solondz's *Fear, Anxiety & Depression* (1989), and Noé's *Carne* (1991), is an important formative work that acted as an artistic bridge for the Berlin filmmaker, who went from being a budding 'work-in-progress' filmic artist as exemplified in amateur shorts like *Captain Berlin* (1982) and *Blutige Exzesse im Führerbunker* (1984) to an auteur with a distinguishable aesthetic signature as exhibited in his mature feature works *Der Todesking* (1990) and *Nekromantik 2* (1991). While it has been nearly two decades since Buttgereit directed his last serious arthouse horror flick *Schramm* (1994), the filmmaker has gone on to direct live stageplays (one of which – *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* (2009) – was shot on digital video and released on DVD) and documentaries on Japanese monster movies (in 2009, he created *Monsterland* for the French-German TV channel Arte), and a writer of stage and radio plays (*Green Frankenstein + Sexmonster*) and horror film criticism, yet all of these obsessions and talents were already perceptible in *Hot Love*. As a sort of "poor man's Schlingensief" who is aware of culture trends and genre conventions but sort of a ham when it comes to politics, Buttgereit is indubitably a fiendish yet funny renaissance man of sorts and *Hot Love* is a fine, if less than fine-tuned, example of the sort of honed horror he does best.

Aside from the majority of the cinematography and some piddly special-effects, Jörg Buttgereit claims he is responsible for every aspect of the filmmaking process regarding *Hot Love*, including playing one of the lead characters. That being said, the story of *Hot Love* is simple yet effective enough, as the film was in part inspired by Buttgereit's own experience with heartbreak, albeit of the less bloody and brutal sort. *Hot Love* centers around puny punk protagonist (Daktari Lorenz) who falls madly in love with a girl named Marion (Marion Koob) after meeting her by chance at a alcohol-fueled party. Daktari

– a rather homely homeboy whose room is a proletarian punk rock pigsty – experiences unfathomable bliss, but particularly precarious problems arise when Marion finds a new boyfriend – a tall, blond, and handsome bully (played by Buttgereit himself) – who brutalizes both the lovestruck loser’s body and heart. Stricken with a jumbo Judas Kiss from his fleeting flame, Daktari naturally develops acute animosity, overwhelming heartsickness, and a profoundly penetrating and all-consuming lust for revenge that compels him to literally take the heart he was symbolically given by Marion. After Daktari barbarically batters and rapes Marion after stalking her one fine day in the woods, he commits suicide in a final desperate attempt to reach eternal solace, yet unbeknownst to the renegade Romeo, he has impregnated his defiled darling with his sinister seed, thereupon creating a sort of Frankenstein of the flesh that is ripened with rancor.

Needless to say, German film has come a long way since ill-fated love stories of Veit Harlan’s melodramatic National Socialist propaganda film *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß* and the darkly romantic arthouse flick *Opfergang* (1944). In traditional German films, including Harlan’s, it was always the female that was sacrificed in the name of love and the male protagonist was always honorable, handsome, and heroic, yet Buttgereit turns these film conventions upside down in a fiercely facetious yet seemingly and unconsciously ethno-masochistic manner. What I have always found especially interesting about the films of Jörg Buttgereit – and *Hot Love* is certainly no exception to this rule – is that despite being a handsome, archetypical Aryan *Übermensch* of sorts himself, the Berlin-born auteur always casts especially physically loathsome and patently pathetic actors for the protagonists of his films as if he is ‘rooting for the underdog’ *untermensch* of the distinctly American, Hebraic Hollywood persuasion. Of course, the dark horses of his delightfully demented films are always doomed to a downright deplorable fate, but Buttgereit clearly empathizes with these curious characters all the same. In a tradition more in tune with Judaic Tinseltown films like *The Graduate* (1967), National Lampoon’s *Animal House* (1978), *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984), and *American Pie* (1999), the ‘hero’ of Buttgereit’s *Hot Love* – like *Nekromantik* (1987) and *Nekromantik 2* (1991) – is not a conquering athletic and aristocratic winner, but a reasonably revolting deadbeat of the most irritatingly impotent kind. That being said, although *Hot Love* has a determinedly Germanic feel to it, it could not have been made with the crucial influence of classic Hollywood and Japanese B-monster movies, as well as the sort of slave-morality-driven dramas and comedies that have dominated Hollywood for some time now, but I guess that is what one should expect from a nation that is not exactly best known in the international film world for its slasher killers and fart jokes.

With its grainy and sometimes scratched Super 8 footage, intentionally and unintentionally laughable acting, stylized but sometimes sterile direction, and sometimes realistic (i.e. a genuine cow heart) but oftentimes strikingly synthetic

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(i.e. a plastic vagina) special effects, *Hot Love* – much like his subsequent work *Nekromantik* – is a merry yet macabre cinematic miscreation of the idiosyncratic kraut quasi-arthouse horror-comedy sort and for that reason alone, it will remain a minor classic in my mind. Similar to Kenneth Anger with *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and Clu Gulager with *A Day with the Boys* (1969), Buttgerit wasted no time telling a compelling and aesthetically titillating story in under 30 minutes with his first notable work *Hot Love*, which is no small accomplishment considering the lack of production values for the work. In our increasingly turbulent times where true romance has gone rancid and eroticism in movies is more akin to watching a live hysterectomy on television than oxytocin-driven emotions, *Hot Love* offers a humorous, if less than sensually heated, portrayal of Aryan amorousness run amok. *Hot Love* may not be Fassbinder's *I Only Want You to Love Me* (1976), but it does remind us that even the dreaded Hun can be somber, if spiteful and swinish, slave of love.

-Ty E

NEKROMANTIK

Jörg Buttgereit (1987)

With the death of Rainer Werner Fassbinder—the virtual heart of German New Cinema—Teutonic film essentially became kaput and the kraut celluloid corpse has yet to be revived ever since, at least artistically speaking, so it is only fitting that Berlin-based sub-underground auteur Jörg Buttgereit (*Der Todesking*, Schramm) made a no-budget film about necrophilia that managed to create a marvelously misbegotten marriage between arthouse and splatter cinema. Indeed, I would argue that despite its next to non-existent budget and sometimes amateurish direction, *NEKROMANTIK* (1987) is one of the most important German films of the post-Fassbinder era as a work that is not only distinctly Teutonic in its gorgeously grotesque and perversely poetic essence, but is also more symbolic of the contemporary German psyche than any film ever directed by the likes of bourgeois kraut leftist filmmakers like Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta, or Alexander Kluge, which at least partially has to do with the fact that Buttgereit is essentially an apolitical filmmaker who has more interest in entertaining Lucio Fulci fans than appealing to prissy and pedantic Frankfurt school schooled film critics. Rather bizarrely (or not if you consider how the general German populous originally received most films of German New Cinema), *Nekromantik* was not even a hit among German horror fiends, or as Buttgereit revealed in an interview with David Kerekes, “When *Nekromantik* was first released nobody seemed to like it. In Germany all these horror guys, these horror fans, said ‘Oh, it’s boring and much too arty’, Then they read the critics from England and America and suddenly they take it seriously. If you show an American film in Germany the audience call it a great film; if you have a German film shown in Germany then it’s not so interesting, unless you’re dead like Fassbinder, then it’s okay.” It is only a guess on my part, but I can only assume that *Nekromantik* was initially poorly received by German audiences because the film hit far too close to home in its daring depiction of a degenerate German couple who not only worship death, but fuck a rather foul corpse that looks it could have been taken from the ruins of Dresden after the Allied powers firebombed into oblivion during the Second World War. Directed by an archetypal blond beast with a Hallstatt Nordic profile, Buttgereit is a virtual posterboy for the Schutzstaffel, which only adds to the unflattering affect a film like *Nekromantik* might have on more ethno-masochistic Germans. Probably the only rightful cinematic heir to German expressionist poet Gottfried Benn, as well as Satanic National Socialist Renaissance man Hanns Heinz Ewers, Buttgereit demonstrated with *Nekromantik* that the “Haunted Screen” (as German Jewish film critic Lotte H. Eisner once called it) did not die when Uncle Adolf came to town, but merely went underground and became all more strikingly unhinged, venomously visceral, and decidedly deranged because of it.

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Banned still outright to this day in diverse countries including Iceland, Norway, Malaysia, Singapore, and the provinces of Nova Scotia and Ontario in Canada, *Nekromantik* is a film that ultimately manages to find singular beauty in the most savage and sickening of human behavior.

Robert Schmadtke (played by Daktari Lorenz, who was also responsible for scoring most of the soundtrack) is a born loser with a superlatively scrawny physique, but at least he has a quasi-beauteous girlfriend named Betty (Beatrice Manowski, who also appeared briefly as a prostitute in Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* (1987) of all movies) who shares his fiendish fetishism for serial killers, gore, and aberrant apartment decorating. Rob works for a company that sounds like it was named by a stupid American, JSA ('Joe's Cleaning Agency'), which is responsible for, among other things, collecting human roadkill and other corpses from public places. Sometimes Rob likes to surprise his girlfriend by bringing home postmortem souvenirs from work, including human eyeballs, which makes his rather lecherous lady friend's panties wet. Ever since Rob witnessed the brutal slaughtering and skinning of his cute pet bunny rabbit by his Heimat-esque Teutonic redneck father as a child, he has had a rather warped mind and routinely daydreams about performing autopsies on corpses, among other unsavory things. One day after picking up a rather rotten male corpse with his cleanup crew comrades at JSA, Rob has what proves to be a truly life-changing idea and decides to bring back the badly decomposed body home to his girlfriend Betty as a romantic gift. Needless to say, a majorly macabre ménage à trios begins between Rob, Betty, and the tall, dark, and handsome dead dude that would give Georges Bataille a hard-on. Since the corpse's cock has been castrated by nature via decomposition, Rob cuts off the end of a broom handle to use as a pseudo-member for the dead fuck and Betty proceeds to ride it with grotesque glee, but not before putting a condom on it so as to avoid pesky splinters. Having bisexual coitus with a corpse that does not complain in the charming company of his cute girlfriend, Rob's meta-risqué romantic relationship with body-buggering bitch Betty only grows stronger, but like all living things, all good things must come to an end.

Unfortunately, as his shabby appearance indicates, Rob is a major fuck-up and due to compliments at work from his comrades regarding his unsanitary work habits and incessant tardiness, the hapless necro is fired from his job. Meanwhile, Betty's begins to develop a deep and deadly serious bond with the corpse, even going so far as reading it lurid love stories. After coming home and telling his beloved he has lost his job, Rob is verbally reamed into oblivion by Betty in a manner no self-respecting man would tolerate. Later, Rob buys a kitty cat and brings it back home to Betty as a reconciliation gift, but she has already left him for the corpse and has taken the hunky piece of rotten flesh with her. Naturally quite hurt and angered, Rob beats the kitty cat to death and pseudo-erotically bathes in its tiny entrails. Belittled at a movie theater by fellow audience mem-

bers, Rob acts little a little girl and makes a pitiful attempt at suicide by taking a curious cocktail of whiskey and pills, but instead of dying he has a fantastic dream about emerging from a black plastic trashcan bag (!) as a partially decayed corpse and is given the gift of a rotten human head in a box by a beautiful blond babe and the two proceed to play a blissful game of catch with human guts. After surviving his patently pathetic attempt at self-slaughter, Rob becomes a stronger man because of it and becomes determined to get over Betty, so he picks up a bitchy prostitute and brings her to a graveyard so they can fornicate romantically amongst the dead. Rather tellingly, Rob is unable to 'rise to the occasion' for a living woman and the sleazy streetwalker belittles him for this, so he strangles her to death and busts a load in the slag corpse's still warm cunt. Unfortunately, Rob makes the mistake of sleeping with the postmortem hooker in the graveyard that night, so when he wakes up he is less than warmly greeted by an elderly farmer. Rather uninterested in dealing with a petty nuisance like the police, Rob dismembers the old fart with a shovel and goes on his merry way. Tired of life and lacking the capacity to deal with heartbreak, Rob kills himself by stabbing himself in the stomach, which gives him the ultimate sexual kick and causes him to sexually climax in what is literally and figuratively one of the most singularly climatic scenes in the history of horror cinema. In a more than fittingly ironic twist, *Nekromantik* concludes with a young woman digging at the ground of Rob's gravestone, thus setting the stage for the equally great and grotesque sequel *NEKRomantik 2* (1991).

Undoubtedly, during my life, there have only been a handful of films that changed the way I looked at the art of cinema and *Nekromantik* is certainly one of them as it managed to combine two of my favorite, yet typically seemingly discordant, cinematic obsessions—extreme horror and arthouse—while also being pretty damn darkly hilarious yet beautiful at the same time. Rather unfortunately, by the time I discovered the cinematic oeuvre of Jörg Buttgerit about a decade ago, he had already quit filmmaking. After recently receiving a DVD featuring three of Buttgerit's satirical horror stageplays, *Monsters of Arthouse* (2013), it only made me wish all the more that he would once again become serious about making filmmaking. Luckily, Buttgerit is currently attached as one of three directors for the upcoming horror anthology *German Angst*. As someone who was essentially born a horror fan, I can say without reservation that no other national style of horror cinema has had a deeper impact on me than that of the Germans. Recently, Buttgerit has been 'upstaged' in terms of the cinematically unhinged by a pseudonymous German auteur named Marian Dora (*Cannibal, Melancholie der Engel* aka *The Angels' Melancholy, Reise Nach Agatis*) who, on top of being obsessed with real animal killings and unsimulated scat, has no interest in the biting irony typical of films like *Nekromantik*. Of course, like Dora, Buttgerit's works, although humorous, demonstrate a certain apocalyptic and foreboding death-drive in the post-Auschwitz Teutonic Volksgeist.

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Indeed, *Nekromantik* is the sort of ‘celluloid holocaust’ that would make Spielberg and other hysterical Hebraic Teutophobes in Hollywood piss their pants in fear. In its delightfully deranged depiction of krauts copulating with corpses, *Nekromantik* presents a sort of unintentional allegory for the ‘Todestrieb’ that has overtaken the German collective unconscious after two singularly deleterious World Wars and the deracination of Teutonic kultur via American occupation. As Buttgerit anti-lovingly depicted in his short *Mein Papi* (1982)—a work that makes a mockery of the director’s father’s slow but steady physical and mental degeneration and inevitable pathetic death—there is a generational self-hatred among Germans that has only grown since 1945. As anti-völkisch yet paradoxically distinctly German as horror films get, *Nekromantik* is ultimately a work that brought new meaning to the old school National Socialist phrase “Blut und Boden” (Blood and Soil) in a film where corpses are unearthed and dead flesh is the most devastatingly delectable. Indeed, when it comes to true artsploitation and celluloid necrophilia, you will not find two finer films than *Nekromantik* and *Nekromantik 2*.

-Ty E

DER TODESKING

Jörg Buttgerreit (1990)

Jörg Buttgerreit's *Der Todesking* is the German director's most ambitious film. It has no plot or central characters. *Der Todesking* is a compilation of suicide scenarios taking place during seven different days of the week. Buttgerreit was especially thoughtful when creating this masterwork of macabre. He brings real horror to the screen. I look at *Der Todesking* as the repressed psyche of a post World War II German. The first thing the average American thinks when they hear the words "German" or "Germany" is Nazi. American public schools and hateful media sources scream anti-German propaganda endlessly. They preach of "tolerance" yet single out groups as "evil" and "unprogressive." These propaganda institutions look at different people as collectives. They promote "individualism" yet practice collectivist thought. German victims of Bolshevism *Der Todesking* can be looked at as all the built up guilt and blame placed on Germans generations after World War II atrocities took place. No one ever speaks of the 2 million ethnic Germans murdered throughout Eastern Europe by Stalin and his Bolshevik thugs, America and England's (England was the first to start this, not Germany) terror bombing of German cities with intent of killing women and children (Dresden for example), Dwight D. Eisenhower's killing of up to 1.7 million German POWS in Death Camps, and countless other atrocities. Contemporary academia and historians can only see in black and white. No one was able to stop Jörg Buttgerreit from making a joke about these historical perversions. On the Tuesday segment of *Der Todesking* a German rents a Nazi exploitation VHS tape obviously modeled after *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS*. The video features a SS women (women weren't even allowed to become "official" SS) cutting off the penis of a man (played by Buttgerreit). This scene makes a mockery of the childish obsession with fairy tales surrounding concentration camp events. Tales of human soap, skin lamps, and other ridiculous propaganda have been long discredited. Steven Spielberg would put a price on Buttgerreit's head if he saw *Der Todesking*. The Tuesday segment is the only slightly comedic part of *Der Todesking*. The other segments focus on real pain and suffering. The Thursday segment shows various shots on a German motorway bridge. Throughout this segment various names are superimposed of people who committed suicide by jumping off this bridge. All people listed were from actual suicides. The most disturbing suicide comes on the final segment Sunday. A young man laying on a mattress is losing his mind. He is crying and screaming while repeatedly banging his head against a wall (quite pathetically). The man looks like he could have been found in a concentration camp. This scene is both the most brutal and effective. Buttgerreit utilizes some of his signature camera techniques creating a distorted perspective forcing the spectator to become part of the deranged fun. Throughout *Der Todesking* a body decomposes as the film progresses from

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day to day. The body starts naked and fresh. Effective stop motion animation shows the body being eaten by maggots and eventually turning to a mess of bones. Jörg Buttgerit's films have always had believable dead bodies and artistic special effects. I get annoyed when I hear people obsessing over cokeheads like Tom Savini. His special effects could have been created by anyone. They lack any sort of artistry. His remake of Night of the Living Dead was a mockery of the original and a confirmation to his lack of creative capabilities. Gregory Nicotero is a much better mainstream horror special effects man. Jörg Buttgerit is not a director that is accessible to the average horror fan. I can assume that most Rob Zombie fans would become hopelessly bored by Buttgerit's small film lexicon. Zombie is a director focused on being reflexive of horror film history. He is a postmodernist and lacks any type of originality. Buttgerit is an auteur director that has established his own one man film movement. Buttgerit's films invoke emotions and beauty that are wasted on those that prefer cheap thrills (which I enjoy in their own right). All aspiring filmmakers should forget George A. Romero and study Jörg Buttgerit. The horror genre needs more artists and less artisans.

-Ty E

NEKROMANTIK 2

Jörg Buttgerleit (1991)

As far as great film sequels go, few can compare to the technical and aesthetic innovation of Jörg Buttgerleit's bizarre anti-love triangle NEKROMantik 2 (1991) aka NEKROMantik 2 - Return of the Loving Dead. While the original Nekromantik (1987) film is a masterpiece in its own right, aberrant Aryan auteur Buttgerleit was still 'a-work-in-progress' as a filmmaker as far as his craft and peculiar Weltanschauung was concerned when he directed the film. Had it not been for Buttgerleit's sicko campy humor, it is somewhat questionable as to whether or not Nekromantik would have the loyal cult following it has today. After reading various negative reviews of Nekromantik 2, one can only come to the conclusion that most people who loathe the film are repelled by its artistic seriousness, slick direction, and lack of cheap schlock. In contrast to the original film, Nekromantik 2 is an aesthetically and thematically refined work that has more in common with German New Wave arthouse cinema than what one would typically expect from a horror film about a Nordic beauty sharing vital bodily fluids with a notably decrepit and aesthetically-displeasing cold cadaver. Nekromantik 2 essentially begins where the first film left off, with the corpse of scrawny and swarthy untermensch Rob Schmadtke (anti-hero of Nekromantik). Rob may have had problems with the fairer sex when he was living, but as an inanimate carrion, he is quite the passive lady's man. During the beginning of Nekromantik 2, Rob's green gelatin-coated corpse is most lovingly exhumed and brought home by necrophiliac-nymphomaniac Monika (played by Monika M). Tall and slender, but blessed with more than ample breasts and a delightful derrière, Miss Monika is the virtual Venus de Milo of corpse-fuckers. Not long after finding the lifeless love of her life, Monika reluctantly begins a seemingly conventional (but barely romantic) one-sided relationship with a less than handsome fellow named Mark (played by Brit Mark Reeder) who has a terribly frail frame and bad teeth but is well meaning and genuine in his desire for reciprocal love. Although he does not know it, Mark is on the losing side of a battle with a corpse for the women of his dreams. Throughout Nekromantik 2, it is more than apparent that Monika prefers the increasingly rancid and rotting body of Rob to the chivalrous geek charm of hopeless romantic Mark, thus leading to an inevitable, but totally unpredictable, wet climax that more than rivals that of the original Nekromantik film.

Until about a week ago, it had been a couple years since I peered my (soon hypnotized) eyes at Nekromantik 2. Like all of my favorite films, Nekromantik 2 has proven to be a more personal and artistically potent work with each subsequent viewing. While the ultimate anti-romance flick, Nekromantik 2 is also an eclectic aesthetic event that features a beauteous buffet of bawdy blasphemy and classy elegance for the eyes and ears. Of course, such seemingly

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unbecoming beauty has proven to be too anti-climatic for certain pedigree of quasi-psychopathic and philistine gorehounds, but that is undoubtedly part of the film's distinct charm. Jörg Buttgerit has openly admitted to his conscious intention of utilizing humorless artistic pretension as an act of subversion during the production of *Nekromantik 2*. After noticing a barrage of horror film critics using Louis Malle's conversation-based film *My Dinner with Andre* (1981) as a redundant guideline for discerning cinematic banality, Buttgerit took it upon himself to actually watch the film, which, to his surprise, he actually ended up thoroughly enjoying. In tribute to the film horror fiends love to hate, Buttgerit created a mock remake of *My Dinner with Andre* (as a film-within-a-film) that the characters Mark and Monika go to see upon first meeting each other in *Nekromantik 2*. In Buttgerit's micro-version of Malle's film, two exceedingly ugly and swarthy krauts – a hyper-intellectual mini-mensch with an unhealthy bird fetish and a mostly mute broodingnagian Fräulein – dine on a variety of exotic eggs at an apocalyptic setting in a most absurd yet frolicsome manner. *Nekromantik 2* also features a variety of segments that will leave most artistically-disinterested viewers hopelessly confounded, such as a salamander falling off a coffin in slow-motion and extended scenes of Mark and Monika romping around a scenic amusement park in a strangely wholesome fashion. Of course, such so-lacing scenes are in stark contrast to images of Monika dismembering Rob's corpse and authentic stock footage of baby seals being slaughtered. In terms of theme, Buttgerit has also described *Nekromantik 2* as a pseudo-sequel of sorts to his lurid and bestial pre-*Nekromantik* romance short *Hot Love* (1985). Like its predecessors (both *Hot Love* and *Nekromantik*), *Nekromantik 2* features an inordinately complimentary soundtrack that further accentuates the antithetical poetry that is Teutonic corpse fucking art. Featuring musical compositions from Hermann Kopp, Daktari Lorenz (who played Rob in the original film), John Boy Walton, and Peter Kowalski, the *Nekromantik 2* soundtrack is indubitably a work of art in itself. Beyond question, the greatest marriage of sound and image featured in the film is a marvelously macabre dream-sequence of Monika M. singing the French-language song "Scelette Delicieux" as a skull orbits majestically in the background. This celestially phantasmagorical scene also features a pianist whose traditional appearance resembles that of the great classical composers that make up Germany's unparalleled musical legacy. This scene is just one of the many imperative parts make up the decadent cinematic body that is *Nekromantik 2*.

In tribute to Leilah Wendell, very possibly America's most infamous female necrophiliac, *Nekromantik 2* features a reproduction painting created by the real-life corpse-fucker during a scene of avant-garde corpse-fucking. Although slightly annoyed by Buttgerit's unofficial use of her art, Wendell apparently loved the film, thus *Nekromantik 2* has the grand distinction of coming necrophile-approved. Wendell also agreed to act as a 'creative consult' for *Nekromantik 3*; a

still unmade film that has lingered in pre-production for over 20 years. Although Buttgereit and his co-writer Franz Rodenkirchen wrote a script for *Nekromantik 3* long ago, the *Nekromantik* director has continuously acknowledged that he has no intention of making a third film unless he obtains independent funds to do so. In spite of having directed a number of documentaries (*Monsterland*, *Video Našty*), TV series episodes (*Lexx*, *Into the Night With...*), and a video stage-play (*Captain Berlin Versus Hitler*) over the years, it has been nearly twenty years since the Buttgereit directed his last arthouse splatter flick *Schramm* (1994). Needless to say, it would be an artistic tragedy of sorts if the now middle-aged and married filmmaker failed to complete the *Nekromantik* trilogy, but I remain quite skeptical about the prospect of its actual production. Even if Buttgereit were to never direct a third *Nekromantik* film, I am still more than content with both of the previous films for quite different reasons. While *Nekromantik* offers deranged laughs and the seemingly nefarious novelty of crude corpse-fucking, *Nekromantik 2* offers a brutal yet strangely beautiful look at romance in an increasingly decaying, neurotic, and intrinsically ethno-masochistic Occidental world. An academic film critic once offered the dubious and predictably politically-correct theory that the corpse-lust in the *Nekromantik* films acts as a subconscious metaphor for the generational burden modern Germans hold due to their ancestor's legacy of murder during the Second World War. Personally, I see the corpse-fucking as symbolic of Germany's (and the rest of Europe's) inherited fatalistic self-loathing and population decline as a result of the all-encompassing devastation brought about during two very fratricidal World Wars. This suicidal and inorganic post-WW2 phenomenon of ancestor-hatred can be clearly seen in Buttgereit's documentary short *Mein Papa* (1982); a sadistically cynical (yet admittedly humorous) Daddy-denigrating home-video document of the German filmmaker's father's progressive degeneration leading up to his pathetic death. In regard to German Conservative Revolutionary Ernst von Salomon's post-WW2 book *Der Fragebogen* (1951), celebrated (yet once discredited for 'authenticating' forged Hitler diaries) British historian H. R. Trevor-Roper snidely described the German mind as a, "dark, sinister, skeleton-laden cupboard." Despite the blatant seething hatred embedded within Trevor-Roper's venomous remark, there is much truth in his statement, at least in regard to German art, as expressed quite vividly in everything the Grimms' Fairy Tales to the mystical artistic works of symbolist painter Franz von Stuck to the films of Jörg Buttgereit. In spite of appearances and opinions to the contrary, the films of Jörg Buttgereit follow in a rich and ancient tradition of Germanic art, although being of the exceedingly and profoundly decadent pre-apocalyptic post-nationalist sort. I don't see it as an exaggeration to state that *Nekromantik 2* is an expression of an artist at the height of their artistic prowess and precision.

-Ty E

SCHRAMM
SCHRAMM

Jörg Buttgereit (1993)

Before Christopher Nolan ever directed *Memento*, German auteur Jorg Buttgereit utilized the reverse chronological technique in his masterpiece *Schramm*. Unlike *Memento*, *Schramm* is not a film revered by cliché college film students. Instead, *Schramm* is a treat for those looking for artistically merited murder, sadomasochism, and sexual deviance. Not many directors are able to treat the subject in a way that Buttgereit has.

Many have criticized *Schramm* for its lack of murders and body count. I found this argument irrelevant as the film main focus is the day to day life of *Schramm*. We see the obsessions of this killer and how they build up to his actual killings. *Schramm* is obsessed with masturbation and penis mutilation. He is unable to participate in normal sexual acts so he prefers to satisfy himself after his victims are either dead or drugged.

Schramm captures a similar isolationist feel as Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*. In both films the protagonist seems even more alone while in the company of others than by themselves. Their obsession with women are also very unsettling as they seem to have no clue on how to function with those of the opposite sex. Their sex comes out in their violence. Every kill is a sexual climax.

Both protagonists in the films also have a fear of sexual encounters. This becomes blatantly obvious in *Schramm*'s delusion of a vagina monster with teeth. He has a schizophrenic form of castration anxiety. In reality, *Schramm* is figuratively castrated in his inability to use his phallic in a pure way. Whether he is driving a nail through his foreskin or having sex with a blow-up doll, *Schramm* lacks a real sexual encounter.

Like Buttgereit's other films, *Schramm*'s musical score perfectly compliments the film. When we see *Schramm* doing sit-ups, the intensity of the music allows us a peek into his twisted mind. In each dream sequence, beautiful music is played. Buttgereit is obviously not afraid to experiment with several different emotions.

Schramm is a film that combines dream sequences, flashbacks, and surrealism to create the ultimate collage of a serial killer's mind. As the viewer, you are expected to join in the film as being part of the experience. *Schramm* shows you his world and you just have to watch. Some may have a hard time just doing that. In the end you may even feel enlightened.

-Ty E

CAPTAIN BERLIN VERSUS HITLER

Jörg Buttgercit (2009)

(C) Jörg Buttgercit Proto-Nazi völkisch writer Arthur Moeller van den Bruck believed that Germany had the right to take over lands of alien races due to their superior kultur and völk- as the Teutons could only bring progress to these inferior nations. After the devastating defeat of Germany in two World Wars - völkisch theories like Moeller's were pretty much universally discredited throughout the Occidental world - at least in regard to military prowess and in a relativist humanistic sense. Of course, the allies had no problem stealing defeated German's technological inventions - for Germany was easily the most scientifically advanced nation at that time. Ever since the end of World War II and the split of Germany into two separate states (which were only considered "secondary" nations as far as power goes) - as predicted by Oswald Spengler - organic German kultur has been on the steady decline (despite the end of the Berlin wall). Of course, Germany is still one of the greatest industrial producers (despite being de-industrialized by the allies after the second World War) in the world, yet the country is nowhere near as innovative as it was during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, Germany has yet to produce an artistically innovative filmmaker greater than F.W. Murnau nor has the country produced a filmmaker more technically innovative as Nazi state-funded auteur Leni Riefenstahl. F.W. Murnau would later work in Hollywood and direct his masterpiece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*, but still utilizing a virtually all German film crew, and later Hollywood blockbuster filmmakers would steal Riefenstahl's groundbreaking Teutonic cinematic techniques - producing big budget artificially-stylized cinematic dribble. One of the reasons why I like German necro-auteur Jörg Buttgercit so much is because of the distinctly German quality of his original five feature-length films: *Hot Love*, *Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*, *Nekromantik II: Return of the Loving Dead*, and *Schramm*. After a 16 year absence from feature-length filmmaking, Buttgercit eventually released *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* (2009) - a film shot over the course of 3 days in a Berlin theater. Unlike Buttgercit's previous feature-length films, *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* was shot on digital video during a live stage play. Also, unlike Buttgercit's previous efforts, *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* is highly reflective of the Americanization of German culture.

(C) Jörg Buttgercit

The most glaring aspect of *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* that reflects the post-World War II influence of America on German culture is the film's superhero protagonist Captain Berlin. It is no secret that most of the early comic book innovators in America were of the Jewish persuasion. In fact, America's most popular superhero - Superman - was created by Zionist Jews Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster. Ironically, Superman (who was originally supposed to be "evil") -

CAPTAIN BERLIN VERSUS HITLER

like Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg and his völkisch theories - was inspired by the übermenschlich philosophies of Teuton philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Of course, Buttgerit's Captain Berlin is Germany's answer to Superman (with characteristics of Captain America thrown in for good measure). Also taking influence from America - the Dracula vampire featured in Captain Berlin Versus Hitler resembles the iconic Universal Pictures Dracula played by Bela Lugosi and not that rat-like vampire Count Orlok featured in German auteur F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922). Last but not least, Captain Berlin Versus Hitler is mostly a parodic comedy - certainly a traditional trade of Jewry but not so much a common characteristic of conventional German artistry. During his childhood, Buttgerit's Grandmother bought him Creature Feature bubblegum cards, thus sparking the horror movie obsession that would eventually erupt into an artistically successful "Art House Horror" filmmaking career. In 2009, Buttgerit finished his cinematic *Frankenstein - Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* - the auteur filmmaker's greatest tribute to genre that caused him to develop into the mad-German-scientist-film-director that he is today. Essentially, Captain Berlin Versus Hitler is Buttgerit's answer to Syberberg's *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977) - taking inspiration from an eclectic range of seemingly unrelated works including Mel Brook's *The Producers*, *Universal Monsters* (especially *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*), *The Boys from Brazil*, and the director's nostalgic love for American comic books.

(C) Jörg Buttgerit

(C) Jörg Buttgerit

In 1982, Jorg Buttgerit originally introduced his German superhero Captain Berlin in a short of the same name. Over a 1/4 century later, Buttgerit finally realized the feature-length film *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* - set in 1973 - where Captain Berlin battles against Adolf Hitler's preserved brain. Isle von Blitzen - a sexy Nazi chic doctor who saved Hitler's brain during the conclusion of World War II - acts as the antagonistic caregiver of Hitler's gray matter. Von Blitzen creates a Frankenstein-type creature named "Germanikus" out of the bodily remains of decomposed SA and SS soldiers - which is designed by the sadistic SShe-wolf as a vessel for Uncle Adolf's brain. To von Blitzen's disgust, she has to hunt down communist vampire Count Dracula in Romania - as his antique blood will animate the Totenkopf-Frankenstein body she has assembled. Despite being a count, Dracula is a true believer in the internationalist cause - a fighter for the proletariat who enjoys sipping on hot Aryan blood. Captain Berlin, who in his normal everyday life works as a leftist yellow journalist, becomes distressed when Isle von Blitzen and Dracula steal his voluptuous Aryan daughter Maria. After Germanikus acts in a typically Frankenstein-esque manner of mental and physical instability, Ms. von Blitzen produces a Krupp steel HITLERROBO body for Adolf's lonely brain. Historically, Krupp steel - a 400-year old German dynasty - became the center for German rearmament af-

ter Hitler's rise to power in 1933. In *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler*, Buttgerreit successfully interweaves horrible historical fact with phantasmagorical science fiction - certainly a grand achievement that will bring happiness to any serious underground cinephile. As one would expect from a film by Buttgerreit, *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* features an excellent synthesizer-driven soundtrack that fans of Kraftwerk would certainly admire. From beginning to end, *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* is a comedic absurdist ride through the perverse mind of Jörg Buttgerreit and his greatest personal obsessions.

All pics (C) Jörg Buttgerreit

Before the end of World War II - whilst growing up in the Fatherland - German youth looked up to the historical heroes (from Frederick the Great to Goethe) of their past for inspiration. After World War II, any sort of National pride in Germany was mostly considered taboo - as it was usually associated with Nazi Germany and the propaganda that was spouted by that regime. Having no Germanic heroes growing up (one could say, "a father-less fatherland"), Buttgerreit invented the fictional hero Captain Berlin - a German superhero who waged war against Uncle Adolf and gave Germany some lasting integrity by helping to clean-off the infamous legacy of Nazi taint. In Buttgerreit's short *Mein Papi* - shot between 1981-1995 - the Teutonic auteur belittled his own father - documenting his lifetime of steadily accelerating degeneration - starting out as a handsome young Aryan of Germany and eventually morphing into a typically obese-philistine-couch-potato Yankee-like creature whose personal integrity had worn to nil. *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* is undoubtedly Buttgerreit's most escapist film - offering an alternate pseudo-reality where the good Germans defeated Austrian peasant Adolf Hitler and restored Deutschland's posterity from within. Buttgerreit also grew up in the wake of the Baader-Meinhoff terrorist attacks in Germany, thus it is no surprise that he also lampoons the shallow nihilistic idealism of Communism in *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler*. In the film, Dracula - the most cunning of all monsters - militantly states, "You're corrupted by the ugly face of capitalism" - in a feeble attempt to validate his genocidal monster brand. In the world of *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* - both opposing collectivist political ideologies: National Socialism (Nazism) and Communism (Marxism) - the real-life historic monsters that led to Germany's ruin - are the true bogeymen of the film. Dracula and Hitler's brain merely act as entertaining archetypes for these historically disastrous political ideologies.

Peter Synthetik (theme song creator), Claudia Steiger (Dr. Ilse von Blitzen), Jörg Buttgerreit (director)(C) neverhorst.de Although some fans of the *Nekromantik* films might not appreciate *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler*, I, for one, was pleasantly surprised by the unconventional work and have now come to the realization that Buttgerreit is an eclectic artist whose talent is marvelously multifaceted - proven by his ability to innovate, gross out, humor, and intrigue the viewer - despite creating only a handful of cinematic offerings during his

CAPTAIN BERLIN VERSUS HITLER

low-budget filmmaking career. After my first viewing of *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler* - I knew the film captured the artistic prowess of Buttgereit's earlier works (albeit of a different flavor) - as I already have the impulsive desire to revisit the unconventional cross-genre-gothic-horror-science-fiction-hybrid superhero flick and once again become enthralled by the Germanic artistry that no other artist could successfully duplicate; nor would any other filmmaker have the gall to capture the post-Nazi German zeitgeist Herr Buttgereit has so wickedly, yet lavishly dreamed up. For more info on *Captain Berlin Versus Hitler*, check out [The Official Website of Jörg Buttgereit and Media Target Distribution](#).

-Ty E

WE ARE WHAT WE ARE

Jorge Michel Grau (2010)

This Mexican cannibal family drama had always clued in coupons of potential value for me. What better way to divert attention towards a soiled family ritual than to film it in the diseased streets of Mexico City? With this in mind, *We Are What We Are* opens on such a note to allow witness to a mud-complexioned vagrant stumbling about a sterile strip within a mall. Taking only a short amount of time to stare at mannequins with questionable intent, this unknown character begins to slowly crash to the floor, spitting up a toxic black slime in the process (which is never explained). After crawling a few feet, this man eventually passes away and is carried off by mall officials. *We Are What We Are*'s debut scene sparks what is to be the cause & effect device as it glimpses into the life of a cannibalistic family without a pack leader. In addition, you also receive an irritating bumbling police subplot which is the bane of my existence. The opening scene almost resembles foreshadowing. Not the looming presence of capture or possibly death, no, rather, hints towards how esoteric the final product turns out. Not only does *We Are What We Are* activate my gag reflex in question to picking sides but it also stands as a film that held such dear promise, fleeting moments of brilliance, that it actually pisses me off to the extent of how convoluted the finished piece is.

Undeniably beautiful to look at, *We Are What We Are* then zeros in on this man's family - an introverted circlejerk of varying hermit clichés and enough insecurities to fuel the subtle incestuous tone throughout. If *We Are What We Are* accomplishes a single thing, it would be tossing out the need for courtesy and/or professionalism as its sordid roots stem deep in its own belligerence on account of teenage cannibals. Once the family discovers that their father has passed away - word from the sobbing daughter who inexplicably happened to catch wind of gossip - the mother experiences bouts of seclusion and leaves her children to starve. If you were to enter *We Are What We Are* with no prior knowledge of what you will encounter, the film's cannibal aspect might conceal itself nicely until the shocking realization that they are referring to human flesh. But if this was the case, one would not venture off the beaten path to watch it. Come on, a Mexican family drama? Once the already-existing revelation of dining on "long pigs" is pronounced, *We Are What We Are* encompasses its family values in a very uncommon manner - the hunting of humans. The plot begins to juggle rude commentary on the steady flow of whores prowling the streets to the fragility of family life and the responsibility of being the "man of the house". One thing I'd like to add is my adoration of younger brother Julian's (Alan Chávez) short temper. In many-a scene do we find the irrationality of his gene pool break through, leaving him beating women and various offenders of his being. Chalk this up in line with the misogynistic genius of Nicolas Cage's

WE ARE WHAT WE ARE

performance in *The Wicker Man* (2006). In related news, actor Alan Chávez was killed in 2009 from what I'd presume to be a gunshot wound following a dispute with both friends and police.

The previous fixation from man to whores doesn't come from sexual gratification of any kind, which throws the reasoning behind the mother's stern rules of never eating whores off balance. In a scene of psychopathy and unwarranted jealousy, the mother acts on impulse and beats a captive whore to death before the children could dine on her flesh. Instead of consumption, the mother instead wraps the dead slut in a sheet and drops her on the street corner in front of shocked escorts and ladyboys. Threatening death to the tramps for making passes at her lovely sons, this scene sets up for a greater thrill in the end. The effectiveness of *We Are What We Are* stops at about this point. The disconcerted, dysfunctional family turn of expression is exhausted before the credits are given a chance to roll. I admire that makings of a cannibal drama without filthy sensationalism. I am all for new ideas and pathways to reach cinematic goals. For this aspect, *We Are What We Are* is an enjoyable ride for over an hour. Essentially, the naivety of the children and the mysterious fanaticism of this clan is so high that you'd rather witness the origins of the upbringing of radicalism to the family rather than an aspiring teenage alpha male french kiss a "fag" in a night club in an effort to devour gay meat. In the end, *We Are What We Are* stands as a reasonably frustrating discourse that is heavy on the melodrama and light on the sauce. There are ample opportunities for redemption that *We Are What We Are* aimlessly wanders past so for this reason, I cannot pity. Though as it stands, *We Are What We Are* does seem to have a perfect ending for a film of this caliber. You just have to wade through healthy helpings of tripe to get to it.

-mAQ

MARIKEN VAN NIEUMEGHEN

Jos Stelling (1974)

Forget Ken Russell's alpha-nunsplotation masterpiece *The Devils* (1971), Michael Armstrong's abortive artsplotation piece *Hexen bis aufs Blut gequält* (1970) aka *Mark of the Devil* starring Udo Kier in the preposterous against-type role of a heroic heterosexual, and Paul Verhoeven's entertainingly macabre Late Medieval Period epic *Flesh & Blood* (1985), Dutch auteur Jos Stelling's darkly decadent and depraved directorial debut *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (1974) aka *Mariken* from Nieumeghen is the most brutal, grotesque, and aesthetically merciless work of period-based European 'folk horror' ever made, which is somewhat ironic when one considers that the most obscene and offensive scenes were cut out of the film so as to make it more digestible for polite society. Indeed, based on the popular anonymously authored late medieval Dutch 'miracle play' of the same name that was written in a bawdy 'Burgundian' lumpenprole style, Stelling's first feature was a longtime in the making as a work that the director began planning in 1966 and ultimately spent five years on pre-production and almost another two years shooting as a largely homemade 'labor of love' that was shot on weekends with the help of about three hundred dedicated miserable souls, including bright graduate students, real-life toothless bums and limb-less cripples, morbidly obscene women of the unfortunately exhibitionistic sort, authentic wanton whores from the Red Light District and various other sorts of people. Despite the work being shot on an extremely low-budget (although the average Dutch production was around two million guilders during that time period, the film only cost about 146,000 guilders), Stelling managed to produce seven hours of useable footage that he had a frustrating time editing (the original cut was apparently three hours), so he brought in producer Rob du Mée—a man who had much experience dealing with 'difficult' auteur filmmakers as someone who had previously produced works by Harry Kümel and Adriaan Ditvoorst—for pre-production and the film was edited down to a mere short but deliciously bittersweet 80-minutes, with the more morbid and grotesque moments unfortunately apparently excised from the film. As a production that was comprised of about three hundred or so amateurs who enjoyed drinking on the set, real-life and fiction apparently became indistinguishable during the making of *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, which is a sort of apocalyptic Dutch medieval bacchanalian celluloid orgy-cum-freakshow of the largely godless sort where Christianity is used as a pretense for misogynistic mass murder, among other things. Notably, Stelling decided to drop the major theme of 'repentance' that is a prominent in the source play and ultimately sired a 'humanist' (in the most wholly negative sense of the word) coming-of-age piece where a blonde virgin becomes a 'woman' in a backwards barbarian-minded hell-on-earth where women are considered disciples of Satan whose seemingly rancid medieval pussies are more or less considered responsible for the plague.

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Needless to say, Stelling's Mariken van Nieumeghen does not feature a romanticized Hollywoodized view of the Middle Ages, but instead depicts the period as a god awful time when virtually everyone was stinking filthy, murderously superstitious, uncontrollably rape-hungry, and pathologically bawdy. A work apparently guided by the director's motto, "If it's dirty and brown it looks authentic" in regard to realistically depicting the Middle Ages and featuring hissing dwarfs carrying decapitated heads and real half-rotten dead animal corpses being gnawed at by live rats, Mariken from Nieumeghen ultimately contains an unrelentingly brutal and morbidly merry yet nonetheless preternaturally pulchritudinous depiction of one young dumb bleach blonde dame's figurative dance with the devil in disguise.

The plague has completely ravaged the Flemish city of Antwerp, so all women, be they young beautiful virgins or crusty old fat whores, are wrongly blamed and subsequently brought to trial for ostensibly summing the Black Death via devil worship. Hoping to spare her young friend from a very likely premature death involving torture, a middle-aged whore named Berthe van de Saspoort (Diet van Hulst), who believes, "There are worse things than dying," helps blonde virginal protagonist Mariken (played by pedagogy doctorate student Ronnie Montagne, who never acted again after appearing in the film) evade from being captured by an angry gang of men lest she be burned alive for being a supposed slut of Satan. Actually, Mariken is Satan's slut, but she is totally ignorant of that fact as she suffers from the grand delusion that she has found the mensch of her dreams when in reality he is the harbinger of her most nefarious real-life nightmares. Berne is right in her suspicions because, despite being an overweight old hag who could not possibly intrigue the devil with her less than delectable body, she is ultimately accused of "having sold her soul to the devil and thus have brought a curse upon the city" and faces execution, though she rightly blames the plague on a charismatic mono-eyed chap who has physically and spiritually possessed poor maiden Mariken. Before Mariken runs away, Berne warns her to keep away from her suave, sophisticated, and seductive yet equally sinister lover Moenen (played by young physicist Sander Bais who, like female lead Montagne, also never appeared in another film) who seems to have disappeared into thin air. Indeed, Moenen is a one-eyed actor who is really the devil in disguise and he has already taken possession of Mariken's terribly naive soul. After bringing the plague to Antwerp, Moenen leaves Mariken behind to fend for herself.

After narrowly evading an angry mob of archaic misogynists by pretending to be one of the many corpses caused by the bubonic plague in a frightening scenario that ultimately makes the protagonist realize that live humans are more deadly than plague-plagued-bodies, Mariken thinks to herself, "Perhaps the dead are the living...and the living are the dead" and then her life proceeds to flash before her eyes. From there, the film flashes back to a time in Mariken's life just before she met and fell prey to the master of deceit, Moenen. Mariken's story

begins with her pastor uncle ordering her to go live with her aunt in the eastern Netherlands city of Nieuwmechelen, but upon arriving there she makes the grave mistake of watching a miracle play performed in the middle of the town and before she knows it, she is soon spotted by mono-eyed monster Moenen, who is onstage playing the ironical role of the devil as indicated by his Baphomet-esque goat mask. When Mariken 'feels' Moenen's menacing metaphysical glance, she is stricken with a feeling of overwhelming fear as if she has just seen the devil (which she has!) and immediately seeks sanctuary at her aunt's house, but when she gets there, she discovers that her beloved relative has mysteriously committed suicide by hanging herself. Naturally, Moenen soon tracks down poor vulnerable Mariken and makes her his sort of Satanic Shieldmaiden after promising to "teach" her things as they make their way to Den Bosch and eventually Antwerp where the crypto-devil will ultimately unleash the plague. Moenen may be a satanically psychopathic liar of sorts, but he ultimately honors his promise to educate Mariken, who is able to survive a literal witch hunt with what she learns regarding human nature. As Mariken will soon discover but initially chooses to ignore, Moenen incites death and destruction wherever he goes while putting on the front of seeming like a mere bystander amongst the chaos, as if he is able to control the collective unconscious of the people with his mere pernicious presence. When Mariken daintily dips her feet in a pond while the two are taking a break from their long journey to Den Bosch, Moenen humors himself by strangling to death a miserly aristocrat and subsequently forcing a pathetic legless cripple with seven children to drown himself. Later on that day upon arriving at a warehouse in Den Bosch, Moenen has Mariken thoroughly washed and cleaned by a group of old women and then dressed in a 'christening gown' so that she is in pristine shape to be deflowered. While riding in a carriage to Antwerp, Moenen scares the hell out of the little lady by singing the following lyrics: "...the virgin, the whore and the wife, laid themselves on him...but they didn't get past his skin, his blood stayed as cold as ice." Indeed, while the devil is always incognito, he is also a braggart and cannot help but hint at his true identity, which absolutely petrifies Mariken, as she wants to pretend he is a sort of super sophisticated dandy that every woman fantasizes being with. Of course, Moenen will eventually put Mariken in precarious situations just for the hell of it after he begins getting bored with her once he defiles her.

Upon arriving at a bar in Antwerp full of bawdy beer-chugging bums, half-witted cripples, sadistic young men, and wayward whores of every stripe, Moenen makes enemies with a gang of four depraved young degenerates that are led by a savage little rascal named 'Tede' who plans to defile lady Mariken the first chance he gets. Instead of Tede and his pals, Moenen is the one that gets to sexually ravage Mariken that night while a group of people from the pub watch voyeuristically in delight. In a sardonic assault against the viewer, Mariken drives a dagger in the eye of a disfigured voyeur in a scene shot from the perception of

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said disfigured voyeur, thus giving the impression that the filmgoer is being punished for watching the devil fuck. Before Moenen even sticks his jolly member in Mariken's fresh virgin meat-curtain, the group of literally drooling spectators get so horny by what they see that they begin licking walls and fondling one another, so naturally when the devil finally dips his purple-headed love truncheon into his fair lady's virginal grindstone and she screams in agony as her hymen is ripped apart by the Great Beast, the gang of seemingly possessed hobo-like horn-dogs begin defiling one another in a rather violent and sadomasochistic fashion that eventually erupts into a full-blown satanic orgy. In fact, things get so heated that a peeping tom standing on a ladder outside loses his balance while peering through a window due to all the erotic excitement and subsequently falls to his grizzly death onto a pole that impales him and ultimately soaks that street in so much blood that pieces of cloth have to be put down the next morning to soak up the vital fluids.

After being officially deflowered by the devil, it seems as if Mariken has matured by a decade in a single night and she begins physically and mentally resembling a cultivated countess as opposed to the poor peasant girl that she actually is. Upon later encountering Berne, Mariken is warned that she is enslaved by Moenen and that she must escape his wrath before it is too late. Being a seasoned old whore, Berne knows more than most women care to know about men and is quite cognizant of the fact that Moenen is no mere man. When Mariken argues, "I'm strong because of him" and "I love him," Berne retorts, "But your love isn't enough for him." Of course, Berne is right as demonstrated by the fact that once Moenen receives Mariken's complete undying love and devotion, he soon loses interest in her and begins disappearing during the day and during one of these absences, the eponymous protagonist is rudely visited by Tede and his gang of sadistically smirking degenerates, who have one thing on their minds: RAPE! Indeed, while his comrades hold Mariken down on a bed, Tede vaginally pillages her but of course, as the viewer anticipates, Moenen eventually shows up mid-rape and takes his swift and ruthless revenge. Interestingly, instead of deriving satisfaction from personally killing Tede, Moenen's uses his nemesis' comrades to get the job done. Rather fittingly, rape-ravaged Mariken finishes off the job by swinging an axe into her rapist's unclad body in what is ultimately a more deleterious act of forced penetration.

After Tede's comrades dump their friend's body into a swamp to cover up their crimes, the somewhat moronic criminals are approached by Berne, who warns them that they are fools that have been manipulated by the devil himself. Naturally, when rats carrying the bubonic plague begin gnawing at Tede's corpse, the Black Death hits Antwerp and Moenen predictably soon disappears in a manner as abruptly and mysteriously as when he first appeared. Ironically, despite the fact that she is the one that originally warned the villagers about Moenen and his marvelously malevolent nature, Berne is burned at the stake by an angry mindless

mob à la Russell's *The Devils*. Ultimately, the film manages to come full-circle when Mariken awakes in the burial pit where she hid to escape the wrath of the hysterically homicidal mob. As a result of her experiences, Mariken concludes, "The living... Now, I know. It's the living that bury the living. The dead do nothing. Without evil, they sleep in between all the other things that died." In the end, Moenen/*The Devil*, who has rejoined his band of freakish traveling actor friends, rhetorically asks both Mariken and the viewer, "Did you really think you could go on without me?" Indeed, you cannot have heaven without hell, or good without evil, as Moenen so eloquently demonstrated and Mariken so dreadfully learned.

Somewhat strangely, despite being a low-budget work starring an all-amateur cast and directed by a completely unknown novice filmmaker, Mariken van Nieuweghen is notable for being the very first Dutch film to be invited to compete at the Cannes Film Festival where it competed against big films by well known auteur filmmakers like Werner Herzog's *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* aka *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle*, Bob Fosse's *Lenny*, Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, Shūji Terayama's *Pastoral Hide and Seek* aka *Den-en ni shisu*, and Walerian Borowczyk's *The Story of Sin* aka *Dzieje grzechu*, among various others. Not surprisingly considering it was the director's first feature, Mariken van Nieuweghen is indubitably Stelling's most visceral, excess-ridden, fragmented, and rough work to date, which is one of the reasons I enjoyed it so much as it feels like it was almost directed by one of the bloodthirsty peasants that it so unflatteringly depicts. Indeed, while the work sometimes has an ominously oneiric feel about it that is further underscored during fleeting moments of dream-logic-oriented scenarios, Stelling's film is like the closest thing to a *Cinéma vérité* approach to the Middle Ages as a work where it is obvious that the director wanted the viewer to feel the true grit and steaming piles of human shit that haunted the era. In fact, Stelling was so obsessed with creating a sense of raunchy realism for the film that he forbade the actors from washing their costumes in between days of shooting and even encouraged the amateur performers to not wash themselves for excessive periods of time, not to mention the fact that he actually hired real wanton whores for the sex scenes. Marinated in a sort of post-Calvinist misanthropy and keen cultural cynicism as reflected in the fact that Satan is easily the most likeable person in the entire film and virtually all the humans are nothing more than perennially vulgar eating-and-shitting-machines who are almost as hopelessly intemperate as the truly colorful populations of great contemporary Afro-American cities like Detroit and Baltimore, Mariken van Nieuweghen is most certainly decidedly Dutch in its venomous finger-wagging. Indeed, in Stelling's medieval realm, Satan is a pretty cool guy as a sort of dapperly dressed dandy Odin (after all, he has one eye and all) who merely helps guide people to their foreordained destinations of self-destruction, thus merely speeding up an inevitable process. Additionally,

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Satan ultimately fulfills his promise to the eponymous protagonist in regard to teaching her about the mysterious ways of the world, and by the end she comes to the life-changing revelation that it is living people and not rotting corpses that are the most rotten.

In terms of the importance of Mariken van Nieumeghen in the context of all of Dutch cinema history, Dutch film scholar Bas Agterberg probably said it best when he wrote in his article featured in the book *The Cinema of the Low Countries* (2004) edited by Ernest Mathijs regarding the work: "In short, it is the remarkable debut of a self-educated director, made over a period of seven years, with amateurs as cast and crew, a stunning depiction of the Middle Ages and uniquely financed, Jos Stelling changed Dutch film culture not only by his production method, but also as a film auteur and as founder of the Dutch Film Days." Notably, Stelling's savagely beautiful debut was not the only film he made about the Medieval period as he would go on to direct the morality play adaptation *Elkerlyc* (1975) aka *Everyman*, as well as the masterfully eccentric epic *De Vliegende Hollander* (1995) aka *The Flying Dutchman*. In fact, Stelling became such a scholar of the Middle Ages that he even began teaching college courses on the subject to earn extra money. If there is anything to be learned from Mariken van Nieumeghen it is, to quote the titillating titular character's uncle, that 'living' is, "A game...Of life and death. It will never let you go. It rips you apart with its invisible claws." In his own special way, Dutch avant-garde Frans Zwartjes demonstrated the same thing with his cynically titled work *Living* (1971) and pretty much every other work in his oeuvre, as people might not die of the Black Death nowadays, but is slaving away at an office job for forty hours a week for forty years or chemotherapy any better?! After all, at least people in the past could blame their misery on evil and the devil and look forward to the metaphysical insurance policy of an afterlife in the most immaculate and unimaginable of otherworldly paradises. In its post-Calvinist take on good and evil and life and death, Stelling's Mariken van Nieumeghen is completely different than its source play in that it dares to offer no form of solace or chance of redemption in either life or death, though I guess one can argue death can be a relieving escape from life, especially when you're in the middle of being burnt at the stake or suffering agonizing pain while succumbing to the bubonic plague.

-Ty E

THE POINTSMAN

Jos Stelling (1986)

It seems that everyone who has ever watched and wrote about the rather whimsical and somewhat elusive quasi-‘magical realist’ cinematic work *De wisselwachter* (1986) aka *The Pointsman* directed by Dutch auteur Jos Stelling (*The Illusionist*, *Het Meisje en de Dood* aka *The Girl and Death*) has a different opinion about what the film is actually about, but I personally found the message of the film to be fairly obvious, though that might just be because I am an unrepentant misogynist who has a low opinion of most of female kind and thus do not have as hard of a time as most males do in terms of spotting the conspiratorial behavior of malevolent women of the ‘penis flytrap’-oriented sort. Directed by a true autodidact who obtained his initial fame from his brutal debut feature *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (1974)—a more or less ‘homemade’ work based on the popular sixteenth-century Dutch miracle play of the same name that Stelling dedicated five years of pre-production and almost another two years shooting to (in fact, he began planning the film in 1966, so it was a sort of long-in-the-making ‘dream project’)—*The Pointsman* is a largely dialogue-less work featuring two main quasi-lovers who do not even speak the same language, thus making for a work that some might describe as ‘pure cinema,’ at least in the eccentrically tragicomic Dutch sense. Auteur Stelling notoriously hated Dutch filmmakers who attempted to make films in a Hollywood style and thus reacted accordingly with his gritty and even grotesque debut *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, which the importance of in the context of the history of filmmaking in the Netherlands was notably described as follows in Elsevier magazine: “...this is a Dutch film not trying gaspingly to follow fashionably foreign trends. A film that (despite its technical imperfection) feels so bog-ore Dutch, that one amazingly wonders what other native filmmakers have been doing up until now.” Of course, distinctly Dutch filmmakers like Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*) and Adriaan Ditvoorst (*De blinde Fotograaf* aka *The Blind Photographer*, *De Witte waan* aka *White Madness*) existed before the release of *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, but the works of these uncompromising avant-garde filmmakers were much less accessible to mainstream Dutch audiences, thus Stelling is important in the sense that he proved that indigenous films could be made in the Netherlands that were accessible and popular with natives but might confuse foreign audiences due to their distinctly Dutch persuasions. Luckily, unlike other popular Dutch auteur like Paul Verhoeven and, to a lesser extent, Theo van Gogh (who went from making subversive avant-garde works to dialogue-heavy quasi-chamber pieces), Stelling has more or less stayed true to his totally original yet decidedly Dutch approach to filmmaking and *The Pointsman* is arguably his greatest and most insanely idiosyncratic cinematic accomplishment, as a sort of darkly mirthful and aesthetically resplendent (anti)romance that puts into ques-

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tion the meaning of love and the impossibility of both genders ever living in complete harmony. A sort of tragicomic parable about how it only takes one beautiful broad to effortlessly, albeit cryptically, completely rupture the equilibrium of a male society and turn a visceral male beast into a sex-obsessed slave of the meek and ultimately suicidal sort, Stelling's film manages to depict male-female relations in the most primitive yet hermetically humored sense. Shot in idyllic pastoral Scotland and set in an unmentioned pre-modern time period before the rise of feminism and the counterculture movement, *The Pointsman*—a work loosely based on the 1981 Jean-Paul Franssens novella of the same name—is like the otherworldly outdoor aesthetics of Tarkovsky meets a more philistine-oriented approach to the sexual politics of Fassbinder meets a distinctly Dutch take on the physical humor of Buster Keaton.

A classically beautiful French-speaking woman (Stéphane Excoffier) in a striking cunt-chic redcoat falls asleep on a train and makes the mistake of getting off said train when it stops after she wakes up and assumes that she has arrived at her desired destination, thus leaving her stranded in the Scottish highlands after the locomotive randomly starts again. Unquestionably an archetypical member of the fairer sex, the Woman has tons of unnecessary luggage with her, including a vintage babydoll, a phonograph, and half a dozen or so large suitcases that she clearly has a hard time carrying on her own. The Woman is stranded in the middle of nowhere at a place which only contains a small building where trains are switched to other tracks by the eponymous protagonist (Jim van der Woude of Stelling's *The Illusionist* and Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991)). While the Woman is the blatant 'beauty' of the film, the protagonist is certainly the 'beast' as a boorish yet unintentionally amusing fellow who eats with his hands like an uncultivated caveman and carries around a shotgun like it's his cock. While the protagonist is good, if not sometimes belligerent, with his shotgun when need be, his cock is unquestionably comatose as a result of living in a remote all-male environment for such a longtime. When the Woman meets the Pointsman, she first vainly looks at her compact mirror to check her appearance, not realizing the protagonist is a nearly middle-aged virgin who would never notice her sensual lipstick and whose sexual urgings have been long dormant as a consequence of his somewhat strange form of employment and particularly primitive lifestyle. By doing brazenly belligerent things like unloading his shotgun inside his house to kill uninvited rats scampering around his certainly humble abode and eating greasy meat with his discernibly dirty hands like a uncivilized vulgarian, the Pointsman somewhat scares the Woman at first, though she also seems annoyed by the fact that he seems to be totally sexually disinterested in her, so she takes it upon herself to change that by using distinctly feminine allurements tactics so that she can become the protagonist's object of unwavering worship. Of course, over the time, the Pointsman's penis will awaken and a tragicomic mating ritual will commence that will ultimately have deleterious

and even murderous consequences that ultimately demonstrate why women, especially stunning ones, are one of the most dangerous things for a man's health.

When an elderly friend who works for the railroad company comes by the protagonist's home, he semi-cryptically tells him regarding the Woman "I know who she is" and then tells a strange and borderline nonsensical story about himself (which he attempts to obfuscate to save himself from embarrassment by describing it as being about a friend instead of himself) regarding how he once blew all his money on an expensive hooker. Regarding his seemingly magical erotic encounter with the hooker, the old man says, "It smelled of fresh moss," which the Pointsman takes quite literally as demonstrated by curious actions he will take towards the end of the film. When a four-eyed 'fascistic' mailman (Josse De Pauw of Dominique Derudder's classic 1987 Bukowski adaptation *Crazy Love*) that sports a Gestapo-esque black leather trench-coat comes by the Pointsman's place, he immediately begins to hassle the Woman while simultaneously flirting with her in a preposterously transparent way. Although the Pointsman and Mailman are apparently friends, the Woman will transform them into murderously violent enemies. While initially apathetic towards her, the Pointsman becomes afraid of and eventually intrigued by the Woman, who laps up any attention she is given, as she clearly enjoys being the only woman in an all-man environment despite the fact that she is a cultured urban dame and they are exceedingly dumb and unconscious rugged rural shack-dwelling hicks. When the Pointsman's old man friend notices he has taken a liking to the Woman, who he clearly thinks is a manipulative cosmopolitan whore, he warns the protagonist, "She probably lives in a city. She'll get you into trouble. Give her some money and send her away! The mailman has a grudge against her. I'm warning you. She'll eat your sweets too." Of course, the pussy-obsessed Pointsman does not listen, but instead scares his friends away with his shotgun and preposterously destroys all of his money, as if it will prevent the lady from ever leaving.

When it comes to sex, the Pointsman seems erotically autistic as demonstrated by the fact that he annoys the Woman by burying his head in her crotch like a child attempting to reenter his mother's womb, as if he does not yet know that penises go inside of vaginas. Notably, the protagonist has an old portrait of his mother (which is actually, rather humorously, obviously lead actor van der Woude dressed in drag) hanging on the wall in his house that he constantly looks at, as if attempting to gain some sort of spiritual guidance from his assumedly deceased progenitor. Later on, the Pointsman decides to strip off all his clothes and surprise the Woman in bed, but upon entering her room he feels terribly ashamed, covers his dangling flaccid genitals with his hand, and runs away in a most moronic manner. When the protagonist eventually develops enough instinctive knowhow to actually seduce the Woman, he becomes paranoid just before he vaginally penetrates her after hearing someone laughing in a most sinister fashion outside. As it turns out, the mischievous Mailman was the one doing

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the laughing and he has come to 'rape' the Woman. While the Pointsman is outside looking for the person that was laughing at him, the Mailman enters his home and begins cornering the Woman, who is clearly afraid of being sexually ravaged by the sadistic nerd. When the Pointsman runs home after noticing the Mailman's motorcycle hidden behind some bushes, he finds the postal worker cornering the visibly petrified Woman, so he shoots out the window of the home to scare the intruder, who subsequently smirks at the protagonist to demonstrate that he thinks he is a pansy who does not have the testicular fortitude to kill him. Ultimately, the Woman demands that the Pointsman shoot the Mailman by screaming "Shoot!" twice in French, so being the cuckolded male 'knight' who wants to save the 'princess' from the figurative dragon, he does, thus instantly killing the prick postal worker and leaving blood plastered against the wall of his dilapidated homestead. After burying the corpse of the Mailman, the ungrateful Woman, who just coerced a man to kill his friend yet won't give up any pussy, becomes afraid and demands that she be allowed to leave, so the Pointsman pulls out his trusty shotgun and imprisons her in his home. While it is a given that women love to lead men on, no matter how big of ugly losers they are, to feed their own exceedingly vain sense of narcissism, it is another thing for a man to kill another man at the urging of a woman who does not feel the need to repay him for committing such an irreparably ungodly act.

Eventually, the Woman submits to the Pointsman in what is one of the most absurdly anticlimactic, pathetic, sad, and just plain dead and Fremdscham-inducing 'pity fuck' scenes in film history. Of course, it is not just a mere pity fuck, as the Woman mainly does it so that she can be released from the literal and figurative imprisonment of the Pointsman, who has made the horrible mistake of putting pussy on a pedestal, which no female respects and ultimately became the main source of the protagonist's grand misfortune. After the superlatively sad sex, the Woman goes outside and waits for the train while the Pointsman begins gathering moss, which he strangely covers his entire home with. While the Pointsman pulls his gun on the Woman when she goes to get on the train when it finally arrives after a year or so of cabin-fever-inducing semi-captivity, she ultimately gets away in the end after the Pointsman finally accepts that lady does not want him and certainly does not feel the same way about him as he feels about her. Ultimately, the lethally lovelorn Pointsman commits a sort of ritualistic suicide by lying on a moss bed that he has created for himself and goes to sleep permanently. As the seasons pass, the Pointsman's body becomes symbolically covered in cobwebs and eventually snow. In the final scene, the Woman smiles after capturing a fly that was resting on her hand in a symbolic scenic reflecting the ease in which the female character 'spun her web' and ultimately trapped and sucked dry her rather naive male prey. Notably, Ms. Beauty touches her stomach during the last scene as if to indicate she is pregnant with the bastard son of the figurative Beast.

Undoubtedly, *The Pointsman* has to feature the most unconventional, hermetic, subtle, and esoterically manipulative femme fatale in cinema history, as a woman who does not even speak the same language as the protagonist yet manages to completely destroy him with a most impressive ease and elegance. While the film can be seen as a sort of cryptically misogynistic work of Dutch magical realism, I think the film also glorifies beautiful women in the sense that the female lead holds special arcane powers that few men can fathom, or at least that is the way Stelling's flick depicts it. For instance, the older and thus wiser man in the film knows that the gorgeous woman is dangerous to the titular protagonist but he cannot really articulate why. Additionally, from the vulgarly obvious flirting techniques of the four-eyed Mailman to the pathetic failed attempts by the protagonist in regard to the art of sexual initiation, *The Pointsman* ultimately features an almost wholly unflattering depiction of mankind and its completely hopeless naivety in regard to the way of women. Considering the pathetic state of contemporary Western males today as reflected by so-called 'pick-up artists' and the growing so-called male rights movement, Stelling's film is ultimately more relevant today than when it was first released nearly three decades ago, though obviously contemporary audiences will probably find the work even less accessible than those filmgoers that saw it when it was first released in 1986. While Dutch film academics like Bas Agterberg have gone as far as to describe *The Pointsman* as "arguably Stelling's best film, featuring the perfect synthesis of theme and style," American film critics were largely bewildered by the work, with Janet Maslin complaining regarding the film in her April 8, 1988 review, "There is no easy way to ascertain what the Dutch film maker Jos Stelling has in mind with *THE POINTSMAN*, and not much reason to try." Unquestionably, there is certainly something satisfying about a European films that manage to dumbfound obscenely obnoxious and arrogant overrated Hebraic yank film critics, as it demonstrates that the directors are making works that cannot be understood by mere over-indulged yet sterile intellects, but by something more innate and organic that reflects a truly national cinema.

-Ty E

LITTLE TONY
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Jos Stelling (1993)

Undoubtedly, my first impression of a film with a title like 'Little Tony' is that it is about a dumb and sub-literate yet keenly charismatic wop who knows how to smooth talk his way into many women's panties but can barely hold an unskilled construction job. While *Kleine Teun* (1998) aka *Little Tony* directed by Dutch auteur Alex van Warmerdam (Abel aka *Voyeur*, *Borgman*) does feature an illiterate philistine who manages to get some relatively sweet blonde ass and who has a wife that looks like the virtual doppelgänger of Tony Soprano's rather rotund dyke-like dago sister, the film is far too savagely sophisticated, callously cynical, and decidedly Dutch to be about a gregarious pussy-pounding guido meathead. Rather intriguingly, auteur van Warmerdam not only plays the lead character of the film, but his real-life wife Annet Malherbe—an extra wide and chunky woman of the inordinately dark and swarthy sort, at least for a Dutch chick, who has appeared in most of her husband's films—also plays the role of his character's overly domineering spouse, thus making for one fiercely fucked flick that once again proves why the director is arguably the most playfully psychopathic filmmaker working today. A delightfully deranged (anti)heimat comedy set in rural Central Holland on the outskirts of the city of Utrecht, which has been the Catholic religious centre of the Netherlands since the 8th century, van Warmerdam's film is certainly the closest thing to the New German Cinema films of the late-1960s and 1970s directed by people like Walter Boockmayer (*Flammende Herzen* aka *Flaming Hearts*, *Geierwally*), Peter Fleischmann (*Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* aka *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*, *Die Hamburger Krankheit* aka *The Hamburg Syndrome*), and especially Herbert Achternbusch (*Das letzte Loch* aka *The Last Hole*, *Heilt Hitler!*) that portrayed Bavarians as goat-fucking and beer-chugging redneck retards, albeit all the more hopelessly hateful yet paradoxically goofy at the same time. Based on van Warmerdam's own three-person 1996 chamber play of the same name, *Little Tony* is quintessential Dutch 'anti-comedy' as a work that is so dark, depraved, and dehumanized in its less than hospitable yet highly addictive humor that only the Dutch and people just as fucked up as them will be able to understand it. Indeed, van Warmerdam's fourth feature tells the truly timeless tale of a borderline morbidly obese and infertile middle-aged farm beastess who is tired of reading movie subtitles for her illiterate hick of a hubby, so she hires a somewhat hotter and much slimmer middle-aged blonde of the obnoxiously anally retentive sort to teach him to read, only to later plot to have her superlatively stupid spouse start a romantic relationship with the teacher because she desperately wants a baby and hopes the two will produce one for her. Set in a misleadingly paradisiacal pastoral land that is despoiled by its insanely inane and insipid inhabitants that are dumber and/or fatter than cows and more stubborn than horses, *Little Tony* is the almost

maddeningly malicious and certainly mirthfully misanthropic story of a moronic ménage à trios that ultimately erupts in tastefully distasteful tragicomic murder, mayhem, madness, and callous rejection, among other things. Undoubtedly, van Warmerdam's film also happens to be what is probably the most fiercely farcical farm-based flick since Tom O'Horgan's Rochelle Owens adaptation *Futz* (1969), albeit infinitely more enthralling.

Brand (Alex van Warmerdam) is a goddamned moron hick from Holland who is so ludicrously lowclass that he proudly admits that he managed to get the money to buy his wife's favorite dress by killing a goat. Unfortunately, Brand's wife Kate (Annet Malherbe) is now so obscenely overweight that she is now at least three times as wide as the dress, so her hubby no longer wants to hump her. Indeed, Kate is so desperate for Brand's cock in her cunt that she is willing to give him a rimjob while he is defecating if he agrees to do the unthinkable by committing coitus with her, but of course the Dutch peasant may enjoy hanging around goat shit and all but he is certainly no scat fiend. Although Brand is a rugged redneck man, he is also a committed cuckold, even though he has nil sexual interest in his wife, who seems to have carefully whipped her hubby into shape over the past two decades or so that they have been married. Tired of spending her mornings reading subtitles to her husband (since when do rednecks watch foreign films?), Kate comes back to the house one day with a marginally attractive middle-aged blonde chick named Lena (Ariane Schluter) who Brand is clearly immediately attracted to but pretends to dislike so as not to offend his corpulent cock-starved wife. Lena has been hired to teach Brand to read, but after their first session, he flips out like a hyperactive toddler, chops off the head of a lawn gnome, and complains to his wife, "A kid like that, teaching me. Homework. I'm 45, damn it!" to which Kate replies, "You're doing it for me," thus reaffirming her cuckoldry over her husband. Meanwhile, Kate is obsessed with having a baby as demonstrated by the fact she asks to hold a random stranger's baby while at a grocery store and then, to the chagrin of the child's mother, soon disappears with it while roaming around the building and pretending that it is her kid. Since Kate is infertile, she has decided to make Lena her baby maker, but first she must convince her moron of a husband that it is ok for him to lay some pipe in his teacher's seemingly tight twat.

When Brand tries to give his wife's favorite dress to Lena, it becomes fairly obvious that he wants to get in her assumed granny panties. Rather curiously, Kate ends up giving the same dress to Lena literally minutes after Brand offers it to her, as she knows that piece of clothing gives her hubby a hard-on. Although he does not go to church (indeed, van Warmerdam breaks with the Hebraic Hollywood comedy convention of portraying all rednecks as being hopelessly superstitious Christian true believers), Brand wants Lena to meet him at the church wearing the dress, but when Sunday arrives, the sex-starved blonde spinster is depressed to find her 'student' is a no show. While Lena calls Brand a "peasant" in

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an overtly hateful fashion after he kindly requests to see one of her breasts, deep down inside she wants to devour his Dutch dong. Although Lena is passably attractive, especially for her age, she clearly has some control issues and can only bring herself to give herself to Brand when he treats her like a worthless piece of shit that is only worthy of ridicule. In fact, Kate absurdly coaches her hubby in regard to how to seduce Lena as she proclaims to “knows her type” and that “She wants to be impregnated...By authority.” Indeed, when a set of stairs in his barn collapses while he is walking up them and he is left hanging from a ledge that is about two stories tall, Lena refuses to help him even though he could break his neck because she has no respect for weak or vulnerable men. Ironically, it is only through Kate’s authority over him that Brand is able to develop enough of an authoritarian personality to cause Lena to wet her panties. Naturally, when Brand spitefully states to Lena, “You’re like my father...He took me to the fair but never opened his wallet. Little Brand could just ogle,” and adds, “To me you’re just a twit like all the others,” the shrewd sadomasochistic blonde gets all hot and bothered and whips her tender titties out. Ultimately, Kate comes up with the dubious scheme to tell Lena that she and Brand are actually brother and sister even though they look nothing alike and that they were lying about being married so that the Dutch instructor feels more comfortable about letting herself be defiled by the middle-aged farmboy. Of course, Lena wants to believe the lie, so it does not take long for her to begin making out with Brand in front of Kate, which she seems to do just to rub it in the morbidly obese woman’s face.

In seemingly no time, Lena begins demanding that Kate not only move into the spare bedroom, but also eat horsemeat (!), which she is repulsed by as revealed her remark, “My father called horsemeat unhappy meat,” even though she regularly eats an absolutely grotesque offal stew that resembles boiled diarrhea, hence her obesity. Of course, since she desperately wants a baby, Kate swallows her pride and meekly submits to Lena’s mostly petty demands. Unquestionably, when Lena finally reveals that she is pregnant the discernibly deleterious threesome reaches its peak in terms of social stability, but after eponymous baby boy ‘Little Tony’ is born, all hell breaks loose and coldblooded murder begins to look like a very attractive idea to Kate, who wants both the brood and her hubby all to herself. As can be expected from a delusional woman who believes she is the rightful mother of a baby that she did not even give birth to, Kate becomes irate when Lena walks in on her breastfeeding little Tony and brutally berates her by stating that she disapproves of, “Letting little Tony suck on an empty breast. The empty breast of a strange woman.” Ultimately, Kate decides to use the classic female method of murder by slowly poisoning Lena with tainted food, which nitwit Brand somehow eventually figures out, though he cowardishly neglects to warn the mother of his child as he is too afraid to disobey his wifey. Indeed, when Kate begins acting even more domineering than she did before Lena came into their lives, Brand is more or less instantaneously cuckolded by his wife again,

even though he has nil sexual interest in her and is totally sexually obsessed with his baby boy's frisky mother. In the end, Brand has to make a quick choice between his lard ass wife and his baby-mama after Kate begins attempting to drown Lena in a large puddle after the latter realizes she is being poisoned and reacts accordingly. Unfortunately, Brand ultimately seems to make the wrong choice in the end as he not only loses both of his lady friends, but also his sole son.

Out all of auteur Alex van Warmerdam's cinematic works, *Little Tony* is certainly the one that most resembles a sort of collection of grotesque cinematic postcards of the Dutch hinterland, which indubitably largely has to do with the fact that the film is mostly comprised of static yet carefully framed still shots. Indeed, as a man that is also a painter who worked in that artistic medium before he ever got involved with theater and eventually film, Warmerdam's shots and camera angles are naturally largely inspired by the style of landscape paintings, thus strangely following in an old Dutch artistic tradition that goes all the way back to at least Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Interestingly, despite the highly stylized and carefully constructed aesthetic of the film, van Warmerdam originally had no intention of adapting his play into a film as he felt it was far too theatrical, but luckily he eventually changed his mind after various people recommended that he do it. Aside from possibly his latest feature *Borgman* (2013), *Little Tony* is indubitably van Warmerdam's most brazenly brutal, delectably distasteful, and sardonically sinister work as a perniciously playfully tragicomic anti-romance that completely obliterates both males and females in terms of its devastating depiction of a total war between the sexes. Of course, the film is all the more potent and provocative due to the fact that writer/director van Warmerdam plays the lead in a work where his real-life wife plays alongside him as his character's murderously manipulative and sexually neglected spouse. Indeed, after watching *Little Tony*, I find it almost unfathomable that van Warmerdam is still married to Annet Malherbe, as very few men could get away with making a film where they depict their wife as innately sexually undesirable via a character who is ugly on both the inside and outside, not to mention the fact that she is brutally slaughtered in the end like a big fat pig. Judging solely by the content of his films alone, it would probably not be too hard to make the case that van Warmerdam is a swine, but somehow it is impossible to hate him because he does it all in good humor and that is surely his genius as both a playwright and filmmaker. As a work set in bumfuck Holland that depicts the power dynamics between the sexes in a uniquely unflattering fashion that seems like it could have been inspired by the writings of everyone from German-American sage wordsmith H.L. Mencken to Argentinean-German-Jewish anti-feminist writer Esther Vilar, *Little Tony* may very well be the ultimate anti-romantic-comedy, which is certainly no small accomplishment on van Warmerdam's part as a man who has more or less turned what one might describe as 'theatrical trolling' into

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a distinct celluloid artform.

-Ty E

HITLER THIRD WORLD

José Agripino de Paula (1968)

Something tells me that Adolf Hitler would have never even visited an area of sheer and utter racial chaos and, in turn, mongrel trannies, like Brazil under any circumstance, but such is the absurdist scenario of the rarely-seen Brazilian work *Hitler III° Mundo* (1968) aka *Hitler Terzo Mundo* aka *Hitler Third World* – an innately iconoclastic film that was not released until the symbolic year of 1984, which was 16 years after it was initially completed, due to its highly controversial subject as a naughty anti-Nazi scat flick with a far-left message. Featuring scenarios of sickening and sardonic scatological surrealism, *Hitler Third World* directed by unknown-auteur José Agripino de Paula is the virtual missing celluloid link between the films of Alejandro Jodorowsky and Christoph Schlingensiefel as a work of tyrannical tragicomedy that never wavers in its brazen bombardment of the viewer with a bodacious blitzkrieg of highly cynical yet campy imagery, albeit of the quasi-genocidal and classless sort, where everyone is poor and destitute (in a film that literally utilizes the poor and destitute as extras). Famous Brazilian folk singer Caetano Veloso – a man that was hated by the country’s military dictatorship – once stated, “It is worth repeating that *Hitler, Third World* of 1968 is the most radical and extraordinary attempt at alternative cinema out of everything that has been tried in Brazil,” and, indeed, it is undoubtedly unlike any Brazilian film I have ever seen, even if it is no *Pixote* (1981), but it certainly has its fair share of peculiar ‘poverty porn,’ including groups of racially dubious feral children without shoes following around a degenerate and highly suicidal samurai who, due to his grotesque obesity and sheer lack of mobility, probably should have been a sumo wrestler instead. Unquestionably one of the most uniquely unconventional and aesthetically debauched Uncle Adolf flicks ever made—not least of all because we are supposed to believe that the fallen Führer and the Third Reich has risen in a massive Third World sewer of all places—*Hitler Third World* is indisputable proof that degenerate cinematic dreams can happen, even in a nation where the Nietzschean *untermensch* is the norm, even among the elite, including the hedonistic homo Hitler featured in the film. A morally retarded work with an innate non-Aristotelian logic that was made illegally utilizing guerrilla filmmaking techniques in the ghettos of Brazil, *Hitler Third World* is an indisputable left-wing libertine work made at a time when not all quasi-Marxist types were politically correct pansies. Indeed, as *Hitler Third World* proves, the motto of Brazil is not “*Ordem e Progresso*” (“Order and Progress”) for nothing.

With super swarthy would-be-Hispanic revolutionary Che Guevara dead (yes, despite what various rappers and pseudo-hippie other sub-literate degenerates think, the “great liberator” was a white man), Brazil is ready for a new kind of revolution and with 99% of Brazilians being ‘indifferent’ in political polls and

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1% being fascist, Uncle Adolf, who is running as a 'conservative democrat,' is ready for a big takeover of the multicultural third world nation, where he will eventually turn it into a libidinous Third World Reich of the even more culturally retarded and racially chaotic sort. Meanwhile in Brazil, a morbidly obese and suicidal samurai (played by Brazilian comedian Jô Soares) is trying, quite feebly, to commit seppuku around the empire of sewage and trash that is Brazil, but before that, he wants to succeed where Claus von Stauffenberg failed by assassinating Hitler. In another part of the city a mutant 'rock man' that looks like some sort of crack-addicted X-man, causes minor trouble around the city, but his greatest sin is being ugly as sin. Thankfully, novice National Socialist soldiers torture leftist students and a seemingly cross-dressing judge decides it is wise to exterminate an extra-erotic beautiful naked woman from an unmentioned crime. Uncle Adolf, who no longer seems to admire the aesthetically pleasing works of Richard Wagner and Arno Breker, does such important things as admiring his beatnik friend's gigantic Batman painting and brushes his teeth while naked as his one-eyed friend masturbates in the shower. Not long after, a less than young woman asks Hitler aka 'War Lord' if he knows anything about her young lover's dubious imprisonment, but in bureaucratic fashion, he tells her to consult the 'Torture Department.' Not long after, Hitler's one-eyed friend somehow morphs into the fat samurai and kills the seemingly faggy Führer, where he lays bloody with his shriveled genitals exposed, but somehow the Nazi leader is alive again in the next scene wearing a fruity Hawaiian shirt and listening to his favorite song, Schubert's "Serenade." Uncle H makes no lie of the difficulty of keeping order in the Third World and he uses torture chambers with cages full of anal-probing stormtrooper cavemen to do so. One of the Nazi Neanderthals castrates the cock of a communist student and a blind black man shows up not long after for whatever reason. Meanwhile, the politically radical rock-man is arrested in the streets by the military police and the samurai is finally successful at dying, but it is not by his own hand, but that of a bullet shot by a Svengali-like one-eyed Nazi that is friends with Hitler. Luckily, multicultural Brazilian children, including Negroes, Indians, and something in between, decide to cover the samurai's extra-bloated corpse with a newspaper. In the end, Adolf Hitler congratulates his long-haired, mixed-raced student soldiers for graduating into the multicultural regime of the Third World Reich, while the samurai—who is, quite inexplicably, once again alive—finally gets to commit seppuku after becoming quite agitated with what he sees on television regarding the state of Brazilian politics. Needless to say, he is no Yukio Mishima.

When it comes to films about Nazis in Brazil, *Hitler Third World* is about as far away as it could be from the almost equally nonsensical Hollywood film *The Boys from Brazil* (1978), as a sort of neo-Dadaist piece of crude celluloid debauchery as if directed by George Grosz for a group of mestizo mental patients. While an absurdist avant-garde work of the amateurishly directed sort with a

plot that is about as coherent as a Matthew Barney flick, *Hitler Third World*—a politically far-left work—does feature rather cliché political messages, including associating the United States with the Third Reich and portraying Hitler as a hysterical homo, but the film does not even feature a single authentic Aryan (but maybe a couple of Mediterraneans and Hebrews), aside from a blonde midget. Of course, I would be lying if I did not admit that *Hitler Third World* lives up to its exquisitely schizophrenic title as an absurdist work about the long post-mortem Führer attempting to put order into a world without order and without racial purity. Indeed, one need not worry about Brazil ever turning into an European ethno-state as the country acts as the virtual archetype for globalists and multiculturalists around the world as a place where people of non-white ancestry (i.e. black and Amerindian) proclaim to be white as social class is more important there than blood and—unlike the United States—miscegenation has been rampant since the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500. As a work of sardonic arthouse trash, *Hitler Third World* rates just under Schlingensief's early work of scatological libertinage *Menu total* (1986), but in terms of sociopolitical message, José Agripino de Paula's film has about as much depth as a Spielberg or Michael Moore film, which is not bad considering it was the director's only feature-length effort. If one thing is for sure, it is that *Hitler Third World* would have probably flabbergasted and repelled Adolf Hitler more than Charlie Chaplin's Hitler-hating satire *The Great Dictator* (1940). With all the hateful 'anti-hate' portrayals of Hitler and the Third Reich that feature kosher cliché after kosher cliché, *Hitler Third World* is certainly a breathe of aesthetically foul and farcical anti-Führer fresh air.

-Ty E

PISTOLEROS
PISTOLEROS

José Loza (1981) Many reviews have stated that the director of this Mexican-style bonanza worship the pedestal of Robert Rodriguez. I see that this is not the case, for with one film, Shaky Gonzalez has exceeded Rodriguez. I have not had so much fun with a western film in a long time. Gonzalez pays his dues to his inspirations and continues with this grim blast of an actioner. Frank Lowies is an infamous gangster who gets involved with a heist that leaves 5 million in cash missing. Martin is an aspiring director who is writing a script on the events. In hopes to get more material, he meets up with "Crazy Uffe" who tells his a long story of the characters outcomes which bring hilarity, death, bloodshed, betrayal, and sexy strippers. Like a cross between Rat Race and The Good, Bad, The Ugly, this film packs a punch. Pistoleros is like a double-barreled fiesta loaded with dueling weapons, a case of money, and the worst double-crossings you can imagine. You will constantly be thinking as this film twists and turns with its multiple storylines eventually colliding into one. This film would have been above average had it not been filmed as a story within a story. The acting and fighting is amazing. Sonny who pulls the Martial arts out frequently shines, as he roundhouse kicks his way through any opposer. The makeup designs were incredible. The bruises and grime on Ramirez's face were intimidating to say the least. Shaky Gonzalez may have started with love for Rodriguez, but playtime is over. It's time for this director to pursue new tasks and goals. Thankfully, the film works to the highest degree ensuring lots of entertainment. Of course, it does have it's flaws. The pacing in the beginning is a bit tedious and the length is a bit drawn out. All in all, an excellent package for fans of run-and-gun, no mercy western/gangster films. Keep an eye out for this murder margarita.

-Maq

AT MIDNIGHT I'LL TAKE YOUR SOUL

José Mojica Marins (1964)

At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul was the first Brazilian horror film. Not a bad introduction for the Brazilian horror genre. Coffin Joe(or Zé do Caixão) is a man not to be reckoned with. Those that negatively cross his both end up dead in seconds. Coffin Joe's bloodshot eyes foreshadow the deaths that he is responsible for. Coffin Joe makes Bela Lugosi look like a thieving gypsy. Mario Bava was obviously a huge influence on At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul. Bava's Black Sunday would go great with a double feature screening of At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul. Both films feature great early 1960s special effects and cheese evil. At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul is quite extreme for it's time(as was Black Sunday). Coffin Joe has no problem blinding someone with his bare hands(with a bloody mess as a result). Bava had no problem letting the blood flow freely with Black Sunday. Coffin Joe opens At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul with an intense and philosophical speech about blood. He does so with an intense and serious face. This give me immediate respect for Coffin Joe. Any killer that demands respect like Coffin Joe is true dark gentlemen. Leatherface makes introductions with his arms sprawled out in the air making noises like he was raped at a biker's bar. Jason Vorhees walks around in a retarded stupor. Coffin Joe is a man's man. Badass Coffin Joe also puts all Western lone men to shame. He is able to battle a whole town single handedly. He has more confidence and charisma than John Wayne does on his best day(even in The Searchers). Coffin Joe also has more style with his complimenting and appropriate wardrobe. He looks like a mortician from a century ago. The end of At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul features some of the best and corniest vintage horror special effects. I wasn't too thrilled about seeing Coffin Joe in fear but something scares everyman. Joe's eyes change a lot from the beginning of the film to its climatic ending. You have been warned!

-Ty E

AWAKENING OF THE BEAST
AWAKENING OF THE BEAST

José Mojica Marins (1970)

To call this film an acid trip on celluloid would be to undermine the nature of this film. José Mojica Marins developed the character Coffin Joe and carried him through two sequels, This being the last. This film views upon drug use and urban violence in his beloved hometown. Upon release of this film the Brazilian dictatorship outright banned this film. Never before has it done such a thing. It sat in a vault for 20 years and only until 1989 was it finally released.

To understand the importance of this film, one must know of the history of Coffin Joe. Coffin Joe first appeared in "At Midnight, I'll Take Your Soul", Brazil's first horror movie. It was an atmospheric horror film and paved way for new standards. From that day forward, Coffin Joe is considered Brazil's national boogeyman. His prospect on life is that there is no god. We were based on continuity of our blood line. I really got to hand it to Marins for making this film. He used negatives from other film directors at the time. It was ragdoll composed and was even arrested during the filming due to a rumor there was real drugs involved. Funny part is that cop that arrests him plays the sleazy film producer. The plot is a pseudo documentary showing the effects of drugs on teenagers and adults. A group of psychiatrists experiment with four volunteers depicting the effects of LSD when mixed with the ideas of Coffin Joe. What begins as a mild trip on black and white film turns into a Kafkaesque funhouse of horrors in color. Frenzied and hypnotized, the hapless volunteers are stuck in purgatory but what is to blame for these happenings? Is it the drugs or perhaps Coffin Joe? The film is composed of vignettes which resembles parts of *Der Todesking*. From seduction, to drug abuse, and to the perversion of modern youth. Coffin Joe might be the creepiest guy around. Sporting his Black Top Hat, Talon like fingernails and is a cold-blooded philosopher. From a casual cinemagoers perspective, this movie is as deep rooted as they come in terms of culture and drug awareness. For such a dated film, it doesn't lose any of its power and has stood the test of time.

-Maq

HALLUCINATIONS OF A DERANGED MIND

José Mojica Marins (1978)

In case some of you may be uninformed, Coffin Joe is a starring character in an original trilogy of philosophical ancient Brazilian horror films. He also affirms to a "Crypt Keeper" status by retelling horror stories, as seen in *Creepshow* and *Tales from the Crypt*. When his film originally debuted, he almost instantly became the native "boogeyman", rocketing director José Mojica Marins to fame. What fate had befallen *Awakening of the Beast* was many cuts, trims, shortenings, and a lengthy ban, Marins, unlike every other director, decided to use his unused footage in a recyclable film - namely, *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind*. The weary plot follows a psychiatrist that is haunted with visions of Zé do Caixão stealing his trophy wife. The following scene would be followed up with at least 10 - 20 minutes of surrealist smut barely forming a cohesive plot line. Thankfully, it's all gold, but strictly for fans only. Most of the "fluff" revolves around desirable surrealism and homoerotic elements. A feminine under leg-arch vividly allows you to witness a deformed dwarf rotating around a barely clothed beauty. Many tarantula scenes are added, incorporating a forgotten occult status to this prime departure from the Coffin Joe mainframe. As always, Coffin Joe's quest for the fertile female to bear his super child continues. Marins fruitful pornographic past collides with the then-present as many scenes meant to be in *Awakening of the Beast* detail the fragile, yet nubile female form, unmasked. The title yields all compromise. The plot is essentially thoughts from a deranged mind. How else better to put a scrapbook to film? Perhaps *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind* was expressed to bring Marins inner homosexual to mind. After all, Zé do Caixão simply doesn't walk over weak masculine bodies as a sign of gender empowerment. Much of the sexually explicit material was reused from past engagements, which almost makes this film void in the thought department. Luckily, this is one film that a fan of Coffin Joe can enjoy. The prospect of a surreal overdose is disheartening. In order to flesh out a feature length run time of scrapped footage, one must create a hollow shell in which to house said ideas. I'm just glad Marins is a productive enough director to put his artistic images to work rather than just throwing them away, losing them to the depths of darkness. Within *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind*, you will be drawn into 10 minute long hallucination scenes, which equals tough viewing. What better way to waste time than to watch a Coffin Joe deleted scene montage? Needless to say, the result is fruitfully erotic.

-mAQ

A QUINTA DIMENSÃO DO SEXO
A QUINTA DIMENSÃO DO SEXO

José Mojica Marins (1984)

José Mojica Marins is not the first master of horror to descend (or rather, ascend) into the underbelly of the pornographic world. Just like Joe D'Amato, Marins has created masterpieces and among them, there is smut. *A Quinta Dimensão do Sexo* (Fifth Dimension of Sex) is a bold new direction for the beloved director of films that exist on a plane of existence beyond genres. *Fifth Dimension of Sex* involves two chemistry students (who I will dub Gomez and Pedro.) These two students are having trouble with women. Using the gifts of science and research, they create a serum that causes them to become crazed rapists. This plot seems very close to *El Violador Infernal*; a film that concerns a sleazy Mexican as he rapes men & women alike to please Satan. If the *Fifth Dimension of Sex* had to be recognized for one thing, it would be an appearance by Zé do Caixão. Coffin Joe is the world's foremost Boogeyman. I cannot think of any single man, creature, or entity as sinister and intelligent as the Joe of the Coffin. This is the first hardcore sex film Marins has filmed. The following grotesque sexual horrors he filmed are *24 Hours of Explicit Sex* and *48 Hours of Hallucinatory Sex*. The very fact that this film is a pornographic video is enough to drive anyone either away or draw them in. Mostly, drawing them into this film in search of something "hot." This will never be the case. Marins captures the very lustful aura around sex on camera. The rarity of this happening can be compared to capturing a specter on film. The very ways he captures the eyes and expressions in mid-coitus is something of an animalistic majesty. The fact that this is a very dated and obscure piece of smut doesn't make it easy to come by. Marins shouldn't hide from his XXX background and embrace it. If he were still making material like this, he could grab perverts and arthouse fans at the same time. Tapping in different markets could be very profitable and lead to more Zé do Caixão films. When *Awakening of the Beast* was made, the Military Regime had it banned for nearly 20 years. Something like that makes me wonder about their reaction to his adult films. This film doesn't have the normal uncompromising positions of its time period. Instead, we have urination and penetration with a giant artificial penis which in turn rips her open. Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of this film, even more bizarre than the idea of a Coffin Joe porn, is its subversive homosexual undertones. As soon as these raving sex fiends begin to cool off, they reveal a slight queer side to them, leading to the first homosexual kiss on Brazilian cinema. The same goes the first inter-species erotica scene in *24 Hours of Explicit Sex*. José Mojica Marins invented horror. No timeline or piece of cinema literature will convince me otherwise. He invented the abstract homo-surrealism. Nobody may have seen it, but it lies within his mind. Coffin Joe is a brand you can trust.

-mAQ

EMBODIMENT OF EVIL

José Mojica Marins (2008)

I cannot think of a single film more dreadfully awaited than Coffin Joe's blazing finale to an untitled trilogy that began with *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul* and remained left open with *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*. His recently announced *Encarnação do Demônio* (*Embodiment of Evil*) sent shock waves through the horror community, or rather, those lucky enough to have heard of the icon's terrifying legacy of subversive and philosophizing horror film of macabre dreams. Something didn't rest well with me. Something was returning to the surface. As the teaser poster "teased" fans with Coffin Joe's memorable razor nails protruding for a grate in a cell, these bold colors and magnificently well shot stills brought a similar experiment in neo-revivification; Dario Argento's desperate *The Mother of Tears* rings steady in my mind. Argento replaced hallucinogenic set pieces and the giallo tradition of supernaturally violent deaths with exceptional lighting and cinematography destroying most ambiance and replacing the complex murders with a gore bath worthy of a French new-wave feminist film. Terror filled my heart and just like Coffin Joe in his latest installment, I too was filled with fantastical visions of future suffering. Could you have guessed that *Embodiment of Evil* isn't the worst film to come out this year? It isn't the worst but I'd have a difficult time finding one more disappointing than this expedition in frequent nudity and pointless gore. In the final moments of *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*, the exalted Coffin Joe exclaimed "God! I believe in your power!". Of course the line originally read "I don't believe in God! I'll be back!" but censors wouldn't pass the film unless this ending was changed. José Mojica Marins decided to find a lookalike to film some additional footage in the aesthetic style of his 60s endeavors. Incredible lookalike Raymond Castile plays the part reenacting Marins' vision for his second film. Thus leaves the entrance of the third film a bit more explained, but this is not the redemption the film needs. It's never explained how *Zé do Caixão* ended up being imprisoned. All we realize is that upon his release, his outside community has changed drastically. This is displayed rather crudely and comically as Joe stares disapprovingly at 2 dark "slumdogs" on the sidewalk huffing inhalants.

Like any intelligent man, Marins first attempts to relive the intelligence of his dreary monologues of the past by visually inserting ideals of the continuity of blood line in newcomers psyche's. In the past, his words had a rustic value. Each individual syllable grates your ear canal with often pretentious but magical words illustrating Coffin Joe's intentions for life, death, and his revival (sort of) within a perfect child conceived by a perfect woman. In the past, Coffin Joe has been known to torment his beautiful captors with terror games including spiders and snakes. In the present, he would much rather cover them with cheese to insert a rat in their vagina. Yeah, that totally wasn't stolen from American

EMBODIMENT OF EVIL

Psycho or anything. To be ridiculously fair, few scenes stand out amongst the garbage. Coffin Joe mating under a torrential rain of blood is quite fascinating and a woman sewn inside a pig corpse make up most of the prime scenes of this film.

The magic of Coffin Joe is gone, evaporated. I still immensely enjoy his classic outings, even his pseudo-film experiments such as *Hallucination of a Deranged Mind* and *Awakening of the Beast*, but this new film is an absolute disgrace to be in the same list as *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul* and *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*. Clever vintage antics have been replaced by Big budgeted editing with amazing special effects and stunts involving the degradation of women for no means. Coffin Joe's quest is in vain by this time and he's too old to have any of the screen presence that he has been known in the past for. The best method of making a choice if you should see this is clear. If you liked Argento's *The Mother of Tears*, go for it. Give this film a chance it doesn't deserve but don't say I didn't warn you. The day I see Coffin Joe busting shots at corrupt police officers would be the day I decided to hang up the towel. After roughly explaining the plot, my friend responded "You mean like *Saw*?". Yes Derek, like *Saw*.

-mAQ

DUFFER

Joseph Despins (1972)

It has certainly been sometime since I saw a film as intrinsically fucked up as the all but totally unknown British work *Duffer* (1971) directed by Joseph Despins and William Dumaesque (who also penned the script). The film follows a tragic young man named Duffer, a seemingly kindhearted and selfless bastard boy that has a deep semi-conscious desire to engage in steamy and seedy intercourse with both his father and mother – a dually destructive dichotomy (an oedipal and gay Electra complex if you will) of ailing ying contra yang – but being without a family and a strong independent personality of his own, he divides his time between two radically conflicting lovers: an exceedingly deranged middle-aged queer named Louis-Jack (played by co-director/screenwriter William Dumaesque) and a tacky yet affectionate middle-aged hooker named ‘Your Gracie.’ Duffer is a part-time masochist and Louis-Jack is his ever so clever personal (and oddly paternal) sadist, as the older man is always devising new and inventive methods to test the lad’s mortality, so as to derive maximum erotic pleasure through his malicious pseudo-fatherly endeavors. Indeed, Duffer has no problem being Louis-Jack’s personal dog, but he also enjoys assuming the role of a precious man-boy whose penchant for total amorousness knows no bounds. Luckily for Duffer, Miss Your Gracie is a tad bit more conventional in her sexual yearnings, as her only demand of the boy is that he should develop better sexual stamina. Miss Your Gracie also loves to spoon Duffer as if he were her vulnerable infant son. Despite taking it in the pooper like a seasoned pooper, Duffer is quite repelled by loveless lunatic lover Louis-Jack’s violent sexuality, but he rationalizes his passive abuse with reflective lines like (to paraphrase), “I wouldn’t want to deprive him of something that gives him great pleasure.” Quite openly, Duffer admits that he frequents the charming company of pseudo-mommy Your Gracie so as to, “re-store my manhood”, or so he says. Of course, Duffer has a hard time firmly establishing his manhood due to Louis-Jack’s insistence that he have a baby; an impossible task that the swinish old man thinks he can accomplish by sodomizing the boy until he has thoroughly bloodied his rectum and raped his mind. Being a precariously loyal lad, Duffer takes it upon himself to make Louis-Jack’s ludicrous dreams come true, henceforth culminating in the most despicable, yet sardonically symbolic, of results. Quite vividly and even viciously, Duffer illustrates the benefits of being a bland breeder as opposed to being an undaunted buggerer.

Throughout the entirety of *Duffer*, the leading boy reflects on his thoughts and emotions by speaking directly to the viewer via voice-over narration. What makes this particularly disheartening is that co-director/writer William Dumaesque narrated the voice of Duffer and not the young actor (Kit Gleave) that actually played the boy. Admittedly, this was probably for the better as the dirty old man’s

DUFFER

overly involved and elaborately detailed (bordering on the fetishistic) commentary adds another imperative layer of distinct aberrancy to Duffer that is destined to shadow the mind of the viewer for many decades to come after watching the film. Indeed, Duffer is one of those rare cinematic works that one would be most inescapably ashamed to show to friends, family members, and lovers, as the film acts as a carrier for what could most suitably be described as an incurable metaphysical STD. Simply put, Duffer is one of the most thematically revolting films ever made as it exhibits human beings at their most hopelessly debauched, pathologically-enslaved, and morally unsalvageable, yet it is also an irregularly enrapturing work without any serious contemporaries, aside from maybe Peter Whitehead and Niki De Saint Phalle's inferior work *Father* (1973). Duffer is like a collection of case studies from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's revolutionary work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) come to life, except portrayed in a fashion that totally contradicts the emotional sterility of an objective scientist. Indeed, not only is Duffer a victim of vice, but, as much as one does not want to admit it, so are his two elder 'lovers', even the ever so morally and mentally insane Louis-Jack; an unrepentant sadistic sodomite with a keen proclivity towards combining the worst elements of his organ-piercing perversity and cerebral precariousness. After all, it is quite doubtful that Louis-Jack was born a brutish boy-buggering beast (as he certainly does not look like one), but, more likely, as a young boy, he sexually debased in a manner similar to the way he treats Duffer, thus proliferating a vicious circle of hysterical homo-sadomasochism. By the end of Duffer, the boy protagonist has gone from being a sensitive and passive boy looking for love in all the wrong places to de-evolving into a man whose lack of mental stability and newfound tendency towards gross criminality rivals that of his spiritual father Louis-Jack. One can only wonder what kind of life Duffer would go onto live after the film's conclusion, but it is not a stretch to suggest that he, like his maniacal mentor, could very likely go onto to produce a number of equally perverse protégés. On top of being all but totally desensitized to every sexual perversion imaginable, Duffer – who is not always able to distinguish between reality and his erratic imagination – seems to be on his way to becoming a full blown schizophrenic. Although clearly uneducated, Duffer is a deeper thinker and ghetto philosopher/psychologist of sorts who constantly immerses himself in books as a form of therapeutic escapism. Of course, indulging in literary classics can only sway the irrational impulses of a brain-damaged mind for so long....

As a reflexive nod to the audience (and probably to himself), Duffer co-director William Dumaesque (as sick fuck Louis-Jack) appears in Duffer as a gutter auteur who directs a number of borderline snuff films depicting his poor boy toy in various exceedingly comprised and devilishly disbarred positions. One can only wonder whether or not Louis-Jack aspires to be the next Paul Morrissey, but his naturalist knack for candid realism and exquisite exploitation is unquestionable.

In one particularly odious scene in *Duffer*, Uncle L.J. simultaneously films Duff as he covers the sleeping boy's naked body with an assortment of slimy worms. Demonstrating his commitment to creatively degrading his victim from every angle imaginable, Louis-Jack also forces Duffer to watch the edited final cut of his wicked worm-meets-willy micro-mondo movie. Unsurprisingly, Duffer, in his typically insightful forthrightness, is inordinately critical of the dubious artistic merit behind Louis-Jack's latest cinematic effort. Being Louis-Jack's greatest fan and most active supporter, Duffer's articulate criticism cannot be easily dismissed; and neither can this film. *Duffer* is a masterpiece, but of what cinematic breed, I cannot say exactly, however, it is plainly apparent that it comes endowed with its own deep and diacritic pathology. Amateurishly (but more than adeptly) directed and shot on gritty black-and-white 16mm film stock, *Duffer* has a look that consummately compliments its themes and images of proletarian sexual perversity. Making the mental defectives of Frank Perry's *David and Lisa* (1962) appear like bourgeois brats and the films of Harmony Korine seem ineptly contrived (a certain baby scene in *Trash Humpers* more than resembles a scene in *Duffer*) by contrast, *Duffer* is as authentic as fictional films come in portraying the irreparable dejection and soul-destroying afflictions that often times take hold of economically disenfranchised whites. *Duffer* is the sort of film Andy Warhol always strived to make, but lacked the artistic ingenuity and humility to do so. It is also a work that makes William Friedkin's portrayal of gay leather-bound sadomasochists in *Cruising* (1980) seem flattering by comparison. The Brits may have colonized and ruled the many citizens of India in the past, but the lives of the untouchable ghetto rats of Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) seem inconsequential when compared to the life of perdition that pure-blood Englishman *Duffer of Duffer* leads.

-Ty E

THE MOON OVER THE ALLEY
THE MOON OVER THE ALLEY

Joseph Despins (1976)

Nearly three years ago, I saw a little known British cult masterpiece called *Duffer* (1971) about a rather naïve and seemingly half-autistic young bisexual twink who allows himself to be the personal sexual plaything of both a sadistic middle-aged sodomite with a rather repugnant worm fetish and a kind yet chubby over-the-hill prostitute in what one might describe as the truest of bizarre love triangles. Needless to say, when I discovered that one of the film's two Canadian expatriate co-directors, Joseph Despins, was also responsible for directing a gritty black-and-white lumpenprole musical, *The Moon Over the Alley* (1976), I had to hunt it down, which was not exactly that hard considering it was included with the BFI Flipside DVD/Blu-ray release of *Duffer*. Notably, the musical was penned by *Duffer* co-director and star William Dumasq, who demonstrated a natural knack for sexually torturing a young man onscreen despite the fact that it was the first (and ultimately the last) acting role he ever had. I probably cannot think of a cinematic persuasion that I would be less interested in enduring than that of a British multicultural musical set in a London ghetto full of beatniks, bums, blacks, and bastard kids haunting the streets like lost souls, but of course, Despins' film is no phony Hebraic Hollywood movie and takes a more honest and, in turn, politically incorrect approach to shitty city living where the only harmony present is in the form of crude folk and soul songs sung in sleazy strip clubs, in front of butcher houses, and on dilapidated park benches. Set in a world where, to quote the eponymous song sung by Joanne Brown, "the moon over the alley makes the world seem sad," the film might be described as a work of 'proletariansploitation' were it not for auteur Despins' quite discernible empathy for his hopelessly disenfranchised and forlorn characters who have been foredoomed by their own birthright as perennially struggling members of the so-called 'lumpenproletariat.' Featuring a musically eclectic score by screenwriter Dumasq's lifelong collaborator, Grammy Award winning Canadian composer Galt MacDermot of *Hair* fame, *The Moon Over the Alley* is a left-leaning work for sure, but not in the college lobotomized 'social justice warrior' or Frankfurt School fanboy sort of way, as a work that depicts the rarely good, the often-times bad, and the uniquely ugly in regard to London's most desperate social bottomfeeders. More oriented towards magic realism than kitchen sink realism that was popular among British filmmakers of that time, *The Moon Over the Alley* manages to be both gritty yet stylish and even somewhat expressionistic as a work that owes more credit to Fritz Lang and G.W. Pabst than Ken Loach and Tony Richardson. Somewhat like a 1970s British take on Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) minus the serial killer (although it does have a pedo and a gang of killers!) as penned by a less annoying Brit Bertolt Brecht and directed by a less cynical and more sentimental Robert Altman, Despins' second feature is set in a sort

of neo-Dickensian dystopia inhabited by an eclectic collection of poor working-class characters, including a tough and equally tyrannical Teutonic landlady who looks like she was spawned from an American trailer park, a homesick Indian who can only dream of Calcutta and is thoroughly convinced the world is about to end as a result of the moon supposedly being covered in blood, a drunken Irish bartender who stereotypically beats his fiancée and hates England, and a motley crew of droog-like juvenile delinquents that have a propensity for pernicious things like gang-rape and murder. Sentimental without being sappy or phony, *The Moon Over the Alley* is surely the rare kind of arthouse film about the working-class that could actually be enjoyed by the working-class, thus making for a work that would probably leave a bitter taste in the mouth of pathologically pedantic New York City liberal types who look at people, especially poor people, as statistics and who refuse to believe that there are whites struggling in ghettos.

The Moon Over the Alley opens with a truly odd couple—a large and in charge 50-something-year old hobo lady named Sybil (Doris Fishwick) and her much younger and shorter intellectually-challenged beau Akki (Peter Farrell)—walking down a dark London alleyway under the moonlight. As Sybil tells her beloved dullard boy, “...in a little while, you will see that the moon won’t be so bright as it is now. Clouds will cover it...clouds will cover it and spirits will cover it. It will love that, but it will lose in days to come [...] it will lose more and more of itself, it will get broke up there. I hope it won’t break us.” As Sybil adds in her particular brand of peasant poetry, “the moon makes you play...the moon makes me sing...the moon means everything to what we do...or don’t do,” and indeed, the fuller the moon gets, the crazier the dirt poor people in the Notting Hill section of London seem to get. The film mainly focuses on the borderline destitute inhabitants of a dilapidated boardinghouse owned by a rough acting and looking German woman named Bertha Gusset (Erna May, who played the sweetheart prostitute ‘Your Gracie’ in *Duffer*) and her kind but somewhat cuckolded and feeble-minded husband Bert (John Gay), who have a young and considerably gawky teenage son named Ronnie (Patrick Murray, who went on to play small roles in Brit cult flicks like Alan Clarke’s *Scum* (1979) and Brian Gibson’s *Breaking Glass* (1980)). Bertha acts rude and aggressive to everyone, including her son, at whom she screams, “wake up, you good for nothing!” right in front of his face to wake him up, though she does tend to get in a happy mood anytime one of her favorite songs comes on the radio to the extent where she starts singing, dancing, and even kissing her loved ones. Despite having an obscenely bitchy mother, Ronnie is a fairly nice fellow who has a little girlfriend named Nellie Tudge (Lesley Roach of the BBC children’s fantasy show *Jackanory* (1965–1996)) in what is a sort of Romeo and Juliet-esque relationship, as the two teenage lovebird’s mothers hate each other.

If Bertha is a rude kraut cunt, Nellie’s mother Ethel (Joan Geary of *Fräulein Doktor* (1969)) is a two-faced busybody bitch who talks trash in secret to her

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emasculated tobacco shop owner hubby Joe (Norman Mitchell of the Hammer horror flick *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1974)), who seems rather turned-off by his wife's pathological negativity but does not have the testicular fortitude to stand up to her. Ethel is irked that her daughter is dating Ronnie, who in her mind is "the son of his mother" and a half-kraut. Indeed, Ethel hates krauts and thinks that all Germans are Nazis, stating in regard to Bertha, "Don't tell me Hitler's dead. If he is dead, he won't lie down. Don't tell me Hitler's lying down because I know different...Fascists just a stones throw away from here." Although she still speaks broken English, Bertha has been living in England for over three decades and hates foreigners more than the average Brit. When a seemingly deranged middle-aged Hindu fellow comes up to her while she is washing off the front porch of her house, asks her for a room for "just one night," and eccentrically states, "These stairs are wet! What is happening to the earth? Do you not glimpse in the cracks of the pavement? The hidden worth...the values hidden here. We shall all be dead tomorrow. I'm faraway from home...", Bertha becomes quite agitated and tells him that she has no problem with colored folks but that she refuses to rent out a room to him. After declaring, "In Calcutta where I was born and educated, life is worse than this...but it is still better in Calcutta" and describing how there will be a "drop of blood on the moon tonight," the Indian eccentric goes on his merry way while continuing to mumble bizarre gibberish. To her minor credit, Bertha has good reason to be a bitch because a government bureaucrat came by her house and told her that her house has been scheduled to be demolished in one year's time, which is a complete and utter outrage since she and her hubby rightfully own the building and should not have their increasingly socialistic government dictate to them what they can and cannot do with their own property.

Probably the only thing that all the inhabitants of the boardinghouse have in common is that they are all poor and, at least to some extent, miserable to the point where they seem used to feeling like shit all the time. Jack MacMahon (Sean Caffrey of Val Guest's Hammer dinosaur flick *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (1970)) is a stereotypical Irish drunkard with a shitty attitude in his mid-30s who works as a bartender and has no problem beating up his longtime fiancée Belinda (Sharon Forester) if she gets out of line. When Belinda shows up outside of her fiancé's boardinghouse sporting a tacky bleach blonde wig and dressed like a cheap hooker, Jack complains "you seem like a changed person" and looks at her if she's an alien. Despite turning 30 soon, Belinda got engaged to Jack when she was 12 and he was 15, but her boy toy will only agree to marry her when she gets enough money to afford a proper apartment for both of them, so she has taken it upon herself to save up enough money to buy a suitable flat by stripping in the red light district. When Jack calls Belinda a "fucking little whore" and smacks the shit out of her because of her new choice of employment, Bertha runs in and smacks the shit out of him, even knocking him out with a single

blow, thus demonstrating that an Irish man is no match for a German woman. The newest tenants of the boardinghouse are a Jamaican negro couple, which include the young patriarch 'Washington,' his wife, and their baby son 'Little Washington.' They live in the upstairs apartment of the boardinghouse with two other black families and Washington has just started working at the same bar as Jack, though they don't realize that they are neighbors until they begin shooting the shit together. Unquestionably, the creepiest, most introverted, and lonely person living in the boardinghouse is a grotesquely elderly cadaver-like fellow named Mr. Deray (Basil Clarke, who appeared in P.J. Hogan's *Muriel's Wedding* (1994)) who lives with rats in squalor and who is an assumed pedophile who spends most of his time stalking and crudely staring at prepubescent little girls, especially when no other adults are around.

When Mr. Deray spots a lonely little girl named Katie (played by stunt motorcyclist and top Hollywood stuntwoman Debbie Evans of *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) and countless other Hollywood blockbusters when she was a fairly chubby little girl), he goes up to her in a supremely creepy fashion and tries to ply her with candy by sinisterly asking her if she "wants sweets," but luckily the little lass has enough intuition to sense that he is a sexual predator with unsavory intentions. Katie is outside on the street by herself in a less than safe area because her mother is a floozy and alcoholic who is such a heartless woman that she remarks regarding her progeny while she is standing right there to some guy she has just picked up at a bar, "you wouldn't think she was mine, would you? That's the trouble with having a kid like that...I mean she's got no spirit...that's what's wrong with her." Of course, Katie's lack of spirit is probably the result of the fact that she has no father and her mother is a self-centered slut who cares more about getting banged by random bros that she meets at the bar than properly taking care of her daughter and watching out for her safety. Luckily, some dirty hippies cheer up Katie and give her "spirit" by teaching her to sing a folk song. When a gang of violent boys spot Mr. Deray gawking at little Katie in a less than savory fashion while she sings, they decide to hunt him down and beat him to a bloody pulp with the utmost malice. On the other side of town, McDrunk Jack goes searching for his fiancée in various seedy bars and strip clubs and when he eventually spots her singing and dancing on stage as part of a girlish schoolgirl-like quartet, she becomes so embarrassed that she stops singing and dancing mid-performance and even forgets to show off her derriere at the end of the song like the rest of her co-dancers. After the bawdy burlesque routine, Jack, who is now angrier than a latent lesbian nun in a porno theater, charges the stage and nonsensically attacks the girls, thus resulting in him being subsequently severely beaten by the bouncer of the club. Luckily for Jack, his faithful fiancée comes out and comforts him while he is lying in the middle of the street after being beaten to a bloody pulp. Indeed, in the proletarian world, it seems like people are more liable to stay with you no matter how big of a dick you act

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like, as people have nothing but each other and thus have a much greater asshole tolerance.

Meanwhile, Ronnie takes his quasi-girlfriend Nellie for a romantic stroll and pathetically tries to talk her into having sex, but she is too afraid, though she does end up losing her virginity that night, albeit in a heinous fashion that she and her boy toy probably never thought imaginable. Indeed, the same gang of violent hoodlums that brutally assaulted Mr. Deray attack Ronnie and ultimately beat him good and bloody while forcing him to watch his beloved girlfriend Nellie being brutally raped while a dirty adult hippie secretly watches on via a crack in his door and does nothing to help the couple, thus signifying the general apathy of people in Notting Hill when it comes to violent crimes. Meanwhile back at the boardinghouse, an aspiring American singer named Jim (Leroy Hyde)—a fellow that is symbolic of the delusional view that yanks have of England as a dimwitted yet well-meaning dude with a lot of excess cash who decided to move to the UK because he thought it would be easier for him to become a famous folk singer since, after all, the Beatles are from there, and who has willingly paid an inflated rate to live underneath the stairs of the building—spots brutalized and bloody Mr. Deray stumble into the building and immediately informs slumlord Bertha when the old fart refuses help and locks himself inside his apartment. Ultimately, Bertha and Jim find Mr. Deray's corpse in his apartment and are shocked to see that the old dead pedo has a horrified expression on his lifeless face, as if he saw the Grim Reaper before being sent straight to hell. Meanwhile, since their daughter is late coming home, Nellie's parents go looking for her and Ronnie, who are ultimately found with the help of hobo couple Sybil and Akki, who were also once victims of the youth gang's savagery. As it turns out, Ronnie was so brutally beaten by the boy gang that he suffered a small skull fracture and has totally lost vision in one of his eyes. In the end, the government forces the tenants to move out of the boardinghouse and the building destroyed to make way for Soviet style public housing.

Notably, near the beginning of *The Moon Over the Alley*, teenage lovers Ronnie and Nellie go on a date at a movie theater where they see the once-controversial British cult flick *It Happened Here: The Story of Hitler's England* (1964) co-directed by film historian/documentarian Kevin Brownlow and military uniform expert Andrew Mollo, which depicts an alternate historical scenario where Britain has been occupied by Nazi Germany. Unquestionably, after watching Joseph Despins' film, I cannot help but think that England would have been better off if the Third Reich had taken over the country and won the war, as that would have certainly beat the multicultural nightmare depicted in *The Moon Over the Alley* where educated Indians are thrown into near insanity due to homesickness and where poor sub-literate negroes and perennially pissed off mick drunkards are forced to fight over lousy jobs and stale bread crumbs. Of course, if the film was remade today in an authentic way (which would never

happen in a million years considering the sort of authoritarian political correctness that prevails today in less than jolly old England), the central ghetto setting would be a no-go-zone for whites and even police that is inhabited by hostile Islamic Arabs and Pakis who are not beneath raping preteen white girls and forcing them into sex slavery. In *The Moon Over the Alley*, the only racial tension is caused by whites and white cops, but overall the ghetto is depicted as a largely culturally pluralistic place where everyone is equally poor and similarly struggling, thus making it seem like some sort of multicultural utopia could somehow spring up under the right circumstances, which is pure wishful thinking of the deluded far-leftist idealist sort. Although I absolutely loathe musicals and found most of the songs in the flick to be nothing short of auditory torture, the musical numbers in *The Moon Over the Alley* are seamlessly interwoven into the film's narrative to the point where I never really became conscious of the fact that I was watching a quasi-musical, as the work is more of a postcolonial Dickensian parable depicting the excess rabble of a once great but now pre-apocalyptic empire than some sort of pornographically structured celluloid sing-and-dance-a-thon like *Guys and Dolls* (1955) or *West Side Story* (1961). Unquestionably, for better or worse, there is no other film quite like Despina's work, which even features a sort of proto-Goth scene featuring a holocaust survivor-esque tranny doing a spooky drag show in pancake makeup at a bar fittingly called 'Danse Macabre.' Of course, one can only wonder if certain members of British Goth/deathrock bands like Bauhaus, Sex Gang Children, and the Virgin Prunes saw the film, though I certainly would not be surprised if they did (notably, Despina and Dumaresq two films were released on DVD/Blu-ray by the BFI largely as a result of industrial musician Peter 'Sleazy' Christopherson of Throbbing Gristle/Coil championing Duffer). Indeed, in a strange sort of inexplicable fashion, *The Moon Over the Alley* feels like a work of proletarian Gothic horror, albeit with a crummy old boardinghouse instead of a haunted castle and realistic human 'monsters' instead of archetypal supernatural beings. After all, the characters in the film do not need to watch horror films, as they live in a virtual living hell where their neighbors are much more scarier than Christopher Lee or Boris Karloff. I noticed that a lot of reviewers have written that Duffer and *The Moon Over the Alley* could not be more different types of films, yet to me, they both captured the same sort of dispiriting spirit of impending doom and abject misery that plagued white London ghettos during the 1970s, although I guess one could argue the latter work is more 'lighthearted,' if only because it features catchy songs and does not feature man-on-boy sexual sadism and baby corpses being disposed of in dumpsters, among other things. Not surprisingly considering the marginality of their work together, Despina and Dumaresq would never collaborate on another film after *The Moon Over the Alley*, which is a shame considering they could have certainly become a sort of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger of the underground cult/arthouse world.

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-Ty E

DON'T GO IN THE HOUSE

Joseph Ellison (1979)

On the outer shell of this cult video nasty lies the subtle appearance of just another trashy bargain bin horror film. The 80's were bombarded with these little wonders. One might question whether films such as *Death Spa* were really necessary. If I've been shocked to find treasure from trash, it's with this multi-layered symphony of madness. Donny Kohler is an extremely disturbed individual. Not the suppressed Hollywood kind, but the type where his anxiety and torment leaks through his pores and retinas on screen. His character is one that makes you feel alone, vulnerable, and uncomfortable. Through his experiences on the screen, we learn of his past and his sickness. I really appreciated the nods towards matadors, fire, and the color red, all blending within to create some form of illness not recognized. Through his forced misogynistic eyes, he picks up young woman and brings them to his house in several extremely embarrassing scenes. He doesn't just magically whisks them to his abode without trouble. At times, he stumbles, stalks, bribes, and flat out makes a fool of himself in order to satisfy the voices that talk to him and push him over the edge. (The 80's *Psycho*) *Don't Go in the House* is far from a conventional horror film. The intimacy between Donny (Dan Grimaldi) and the camera is one upped by none other. If the film lacked the support of Donny's one and only friend Bobby, this story might be far too grim for anyone to view. This film is dark, unsettling, and nihilistic. Despite the psychological elements, the film fares overly well with its horror roots. When I decided to view this film last night, I was coming off of a good buzz. At the first burning scene, I was almost disgusted by the barbaric context in which such a sweet female was burned alive. Soon, I began to adapt to his extreme misogyny and I loved nothing more to watch the next whore burn and suffer for what they've done to Donny. Surely a film that enthralls and seduces your judgment could be dangerous, but that's the special merit about this film. The slasher influence stays intact as Donny menacingly stalks his corridors searching to knock out beautiful hitchhikers. Other than this, the film features extremely shocking and startling jump scenes of fire and his decomposing charred mother egging him on and torturing him that much more. The most notorious feature is a surprise ending, one of which that horrified me, and this surprise ending is worthy of *Sleepaway Camp* fame, regardless that this came out before. I chose not to ruin anything for you on this film. Only what we illustrate in our minds can lead us to that ultimate terror. I'm a stern horror fan who has no visual fear. I will be completely honest on this one. *Don't Go in the House* took me, left me vulnerable, horrified with with a scintillating score echoing in the background. I don't think I'll ever enjoy another 80's horror film as much as I did this one.

-mAQ

BOOTS /& SADDLES
BOOTS /& SADDLES

Joseph Kane (1937)

From Kenneth Anger's homoerotic bike boy classic *Scorpio Rising* (1964) to Italian auteur Liliana Cavani's tragic yet titillating S&M themed dark romance *The Night Porter* (1974) aka *Il portiere di notte* to totally tasteless exploitation excrement like *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1975) to the Danish-Swedish skinhead-themed gay drama *Broderskab* (2009) aka *Brotherhood* starring popular Danish actor Thure Lindhardt, Nazis and Nazi imagery have more than proven their worth in terms of filmic fetishism, so it should be no surprise the shadow of Uncle Adolf's 12-year-long millennial Reich would also darken the gay pornography world, especially in regard to the leather-bound sadomasochistic realm. Indeed, a typical yet somewhat standout example of this is the gritty fag fuck flick *Boots & Saddles* (1982), which is the third film of a four part tribute to gay porn icon 'Scorpio' by Cream of the Crop Entertainment that should not be confused with the 1975 homo hardcore flick by Zachary Strong of the same name. Directed by the sexually flexible pornographic auteur John Amero of the Amero brothers (*Christopher Street Blues*, *Killing Me Softly*) under the pseudonym 'Francis Elise,' this sub-low-tech porn piece depicts what happens when a bourgeois bitch boy falls prey to the decidedly depraved desires of a long-haired neo-Nazi lunatic with a foul fetishism for brutally beating strangers with big black dildos and raping the mouths beta-boys while posing in a Breker-esque fashion next to his beloved swastika flag. If Amero and his straight brother Lem (*Checkmate*, *R.S.V.P.*) somehow managed to turn New York City into a foreboding psychedelic Gothic nightmare for his masterful heterosexual experimental blue movie *Bacchanale* (1971), he opted to utilize the sleaze, slime, and true grit of the rotten Big Apple to give *Boots & Saddles* a rawer and more realistic vibe. Starring old school porn icon 'Scorpio', who previously starred in Amero's morbid male-only chamber piece *The Death of Scorpio* (1979), as a sadistic neo-Nazi that cruises local gay bars for potential victims that he can bring home, tie up, and bugger in front of a large portrait of Hitler and a swastika flag, *Boots & Saddles* is surely a sicko classic that reminds the viewer that maybe William Friedkin was not that out of hand when he sparked protest with his absolutely savage sodomite slasher flick *Cruising* (1980). The closest thing to an urban gay revisionist western and the perfect companion piece to Friedkin's *Cruising*, Amero's film was made at a time when the gay porn industry had still had some testicular fortitude and was not afraid of scaring queens with depictions of unhinged masculinity. The most warped and sexually perverse reworking of the western genre since Neuer Deutscher Film alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's underrated racially-charged work *Whity* (1971), *Boots & Saddles* certainly makes the few gay erotic westerns that exist like *Song of the Loon* (1970) seem like castrated sentimentalist celluloid swill.

Beginning with a shot of a pair of Gestapo-esque boots sitting in front of a white background, *Boots & Saddles*—a film that borrows its name from the name of the bar that the characters regularly ‘cruise’ for urban cocksucking cowboys—then cuts to an shot of sadomasochistic gay neo-Nazi ‘Karl’ (Scorpio) walking down a New York City street while sporting a maroon bomber jacket (the typical ‘uniform’ of neo-Nazis), black leather boots, and a National Socialist iron cross necklace. Indeed, for whatever reason, Karl has a rare “Spanish Cross” aka “Spanienkreuz” in silver, which was awarded to German troops who participated in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the nationalist general turned Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. Somewhere, not far away, an effete bourgeois type from Albany named ‘Bob’ (Chip Kingsley) visits the apartment of a female business associate, but as he learns from her exceedingly extroverted neighbor Jack Wrangler, who is outside sweeping in an uncommonly jubilant fashion, the woman moved away three months ago. When Bob asks Wrangler where he can get some “good Irish coffee,” he says, “yeah, right up stairs,” and then the two proceed to dine upon one another’s bodies upon entering the rather messy flat. While the two men share oral pleasure via 69, fuck, and cum again, Bob freaks out when he finds a letter while looking for matches sitting around the apartment revealing that his new joy boy has a venereal disease. When Wrangler asks him if he found the matches, Bob replies in a bitchy fashion, “I sure did. Thanks for nothing, I hope” and then proceeds to run out of the apartment in fear that he might have contracted an STD. Ultimately, Bob decides to head to a gay bar called ‘Boots & Saddles’ where he will inevitably meet a menacing psychopath with a fetish for swastikas, iron crosses, and bound boys.

While hanging out the bar, Bob watches as the Bartender’s hustler boyfriend (played by Roy Garrett) enters the bathroom followed by a cocksucking cowboy who proceeds to suck him off to the fitting sensual sounds of “Like an Eagle” by gay porn star turned disco singer Dennis Parker aka Wade Nichols. Naturally, the Bartender gets rather pissed by his Hustler’s boy toy’s “riding” of the cowboy and complains to him, “Listen, you dumb bitch...where do you get the balls to fuck around right in front of my face? When we moved in together, we agreed that you would hustle and I would bartend. Well, your ever faithful lover wants a piece of it and he wants it now!” Indeed, the Bartender and Hustler go up stairs and bang next to a bunch of boxes of Heineken beer. Eventually, Scorpio arrives at the bar and wastes no time cruising Bob and coercing him to come back to his apartment with him. Despite the fact that he thinks he has probably just contracted an STD, Bob has no problem blowing Scorpio. Meanwhile, Wrangler calls around looking for Bob and discovers that he was spotted at the Boots & Saddles bar. When Wrangler arrives at the bar and asks about Bob, he learns from a bartender that he left with “that crazy one with the cross.” After complaining that “Karl...that fucking Nazi” has taken his beloved new beau Bob, he naturally makes his way to the fag Führer’s swastika-adorned apartment.

BOOTS /& SADDLES

When Bob notices the portrait of Hitler and the Nazi flag that are hanging in Scorpio's apartment wall while being sucked off by the sadistic would-be-SS-man, he complains, "You know, I don't feel so good. I think I better go" and attempts to make his great escape, but he does not get far. After telling Bob, "You'll leave when I'm through with you and not a moment before," Scorpio handcuffs his victim to a chair and forces him to fellate him while he wallows in pleasure and glory next to his swastika flag. To the grating sounds of Marlene Dietrich singing in German, Scorpio perniciously penetrates Bob's man-cunt. After blowing his load on a meager untermensch, Scorpio begins beating Bob with a giant black dildo (!) and states to his victim in a sinister fashion, "this should help you get your rocks off." Of course, Wrangler soon shows up at the apartment and yells, "open up you twisted bastard!" while beating on Scorpio's door. After breaking down the door, Wrangler knocks out Scorpio, calls him a "twisted bastard" again, and rips his swastika flag off the wall, thus causing a fire to start when the flag lands on a candle (since Scorpio is a sadistic creep, he likes to have tons of candles lit while ritualistically raping men in an almost satanic fashion). When Scorpio becomes conscious again, he gets in a physical struggle that results in his balls and bunghole being burned. Ultimately, Wrangler handcuffs and leaves him in the middle of his apartment so that his landlady will find him. As a completely humiliated would-be-Übermensch who has been beaten and defeated, Scorpio cries out, "Mein Gott" in German. In the end, Bob and his hero Wrangler discuss living with one another. Indeed, as it turns out, the chivalrous Wrangler apparently no longer has a STD and only kept the letter as a "souvenir."

While depicted as a brutal 'blond beast' of the savagely sexual and marvelously masculine sort in *Boots & Saddles* and various other fuck films, Scorpio was apparently an effeminate mamma's boy in real-life who worked as a hair stylist after retiring from porn. Of course, Scorpio was also as far from a National Socialist as a person could be, as a sort of gay chauvinist who even refused working with "gay for pay" porn stars, as demonstrated by his remark, "I'd rather work with a complete gay cast, instead of straights. I don't like straight people in a gay film. I want someone that's going to reciprocate. I don't need a 'do-me queen.'" As he described himself in the documentary *Wrangler: Anatomy of an Icon* (2008), Jack Wrangler was a quarter Jewish (his paternal grandfather was a Jew) and he somewhat identified with his Judaic side, thus his role in Amero's film as a heroic character who saves his beloved from a nefarious neo-Nazi and then literally burns the balls and buttocks of said neo-Nazi had more personal significance to him. In fact, that is not the only way the film had personal meaning for Wrangler, as his half-Jewish father Robert Thurston Stillman was a Hollywood film and TV producer who produced a western-themed TV series called *Boots and Saddles* (1957-1958), hence the assumed tongue-in-cheek origin of the title of Amero's film, as well as its unconventional use of genre conventions. Indeed, any

John Ford fan would know almost immediately upon watching *Boots & Saddles* that is a sort of wanton reworking of the western genre, albeit set in urban NYC instead of the rural Wild West and featuring neo-Nazis instead of Indians as villains. After all, one of the main settings of the western genre is a saloon, which is largely where Amero's film is set. Of course, with the appearance of a rowdy and raunchy urban cowboy who uses a hustler like a cowgirl, *Boots & Saddles* also gives a cynical nod to John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). With its curious cocktail of Nazi leather-fags, gay disco music, hustler-humping cowboys, men with mustaches, and seedy gay bar inhabited by rugged men, Amero's film features a virtual catalog of vintage gay stereotypes and clichés, thus making it mandatory viewing for any self-respecting fan of porn chic era fuck flicks.

-Ty E

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER
SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

Joseph L. Mankiewicz (1959)

Finally graduating from the nauseatingly nostalgic true grit of VHS to digital video, sub-underground archivist, historian, and auteur John Aes-Nihil (Manson Family Movies, The Dreamachine Exhibition) would eventually complete the second film in his proposed Tennessee Williams trilogy (following *The Drift and the mysterious Boom*), *Suddenly Last Summer* (2008). As Mr. Aes-Nihil told me in an e-mail, the only reason the auteur got around to actually finishing (many of his films are ‘works-in-progress’ that take upwards of decades to complete) *Suddenly Last Summer* is so it could premiere at the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival in Massachusetts where it was screened alongside Joseph L. Mankiewicz’s 1959 Hollywood adaptation of the same name starring Elizabeth Taylor and Katharine Hepburn, as well as the 1993 BBC Great Performances TV play starring Maggie Smith, Rob Lowe, and Natasha Richardson. Described lovingly by David Kaplan—the director of the Tennessee Williams Festival—as follows, “SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER channels the wake of the Titanic: recognizable chunks of Tennessee Williams’ original text, plot, and cast bob and float on a soundtrack of malice,” Aes-Nihil’s recklessly wayward take on both Williams and Mankiewicz’s tale of fucked family matters turns its deadly serious source material(s) on its homo head and goes so far as to make a manically melodramatic mockery of death, cannibalism, mental illness, lobotomies, and scandalous family tragedy. Aberrantly adapted from the 1958 off-Broadway Williams play that was inspired by the poof playwright’s personal experiences, as well as the life of queer American poet Hart Crane (who committed suicide in 1932 at the age of 32 by jumping overboard on the steamship *Orizaba* after being beaten up for making homosexual advances to a heterosexual crew member of the ship) and various then-trendy psychoanalytic theories, Aes-Nihil’s *Suddenly Last Summer* is hysterical queen camp with the moral fortitude of an autistic transvestite toddler addicted to Ritalin and second rate Italian soap operas. Starring beyond beefy black tranny Vaginal Davis (Hustler White, *The Lollipop Generation*)—a meta-mensch of a perverse performance artist who has performed in bands with such charming names as ‘Black Fag’ and ‘The Afro Sisters’—in the decidedly diva role that Katharine Hepburn played in Mankiewicz’s adaptation, *Suddenly Last Summer* is the sort of film that could be used as aesthetic torture against about 6 billion people around the world, so it should be no surprise that John Waters stated of it, “It’s Fabulous, I Love It! Vaginal’s Performance is Phenomenal!” in what could not have been a more apt endorsement. The exceedingly bitchy and campy tale of a wealthy grief-stricken mother/widow who wants her niece-in-law to have a lobotomy so the truth about her gay poet son’s tragic death will never be revealed to the world, *Suddenly Last Summer* is probably the only film ever made where a queer Negro manages to

pull off the role of a stinking rich white matriarch of the conspicuously cultivated and sinisterly scheming son-loving sort.

Venomous spade she-bitch Violet Venable (Dr. Vaginal Davis) is rather melancholy over the fact that her art-fag poet son Sebastian (portrayed by both Lawrence Elbert and David Organisek) will never write another poem again (during his short life, he would write a whopping single poem a year in between vacationing), but that does not stop her from being so disgustingly hateful as to plot to have her niece-in-law Catherine Holly (Jade Gordon) receive a lobotomy so as to hide the fact that her pretentious pansy progeny enjoyed engaging in mass orgies with dirty and uneducated proletarian boys. As is revealed in gay gossip detail, twink sodomite Seb used to use his cousin Catherine as a means to lure men and since she knows he is a homo who died via ritualistic cannibalism, Mrs. Venable wants a piece of her brain pulled out of her niece's pretty little head. Since her scheming mother Ms. Holly (lapsed Warhol superstar Bibbe Hansen, who is probably best known as the mother of musician Beck) and greedy philistine brother George Holly (Jason Majik) stand to receive \$500,000 from Mrs. Venable as a reward for her lobotomy, Catherine really has very little choice about whether a piece of her grey matter will be drilled out of her thick skull or not. Venable has hired a small fellow named Dr. Sugar (his real name is 'Cukrowicz', which is Polish for 'sugar') played by Lance Loud (who died long before the film was released in 2001 and to whom the work is dedicated) to examine Catherine and see if she is worthy of doctor-approved brain damage. While waiting for a date with the doc at a mental institution, Catherine burns a sassy nurse/nun named Sister Felicity (played by the Goddess Bunny in what is easily the paraplegic tranny's most butch film role) with cigarettes. After stating, "I am going to give you a simple injection of the truth...whether you like it or not" and giving Catherine an injection of some good pharmacy grade smack, Dr. Sugar learns that Saint Sebastian was a scheming sodomite who took his cousin to Europe and treated her to a lavish vacation of decadence, but whose generosity was merely a ploy to con his relative into carrying out dirty deeds for him. Indeed, Sebastian forced his little cousin to wear scandalous curve-exposing bathing suits to capture the attention of young men, so he could later defile them. Before using Catherine to procure prole peckers, Seb the sod also used his unwitting mother, who never in a million years would consider that her little baby boy was a debauched boy-buggerer. One day, while on vacation with Catherine, Sebastian was worshipped as a god by a horde of young boys who got so horny and hungry that they killed and cannibalized the poet in a Dahmeresque fashion. In the end, Catherine and Sebastian's beachside rendezvous are pseudo-sentimentally recalled in preposterous detail. Undoubtedly, I found it hard to cry about the fact that suddenly last summer a sod of a poet who wrote one poem a year was devoured by a perverted pack of brown boys, thus resulting in the end of pretentious poetry for Violet Venable.

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

While I must admit that I discovered more delightful aesthetic debasement and diva derangement in director John Aes-Nihil's previous Tennessee Williams adaptation *The Drift* (1989), *Suddenly Last Summer* still has enough post-postmodern trashcan camp to wet the panties of 101 attention-starved white trash tranny junkies from Southern California. Indeed, while big and bombastic blacktrass Vaginal Davis lacks the handicapped homo glamour of thee Goddess Bunny, he certainly lent a certain untamed energy to the role of Violet Venable that reminds one why Katharine Hepburn is one of the most absurdly annoying, uniquely unfeminine, and outrageously overrated queen bitches to be shat out the kosher gloryhole that is holy-wood. After watching *Suddenly Last Summer* back-to-back with Mankiewicz's dark 1959 melodrama starring Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor, I can safely say that Aes-Nihil did an innately iconoclastic job reducing a Hollywood classic to the level of an off-off-off-Broadway drag show that would even make gay gutter-auteur Andy Milligan gawk in abject disgust. A sardonically sordid story about a scattered-brained queer-cousin-loving dame who fails to "cut that HIDEOUS STORY out of her head" after taking a narcotic-filled needle in her arm and vomiting the quasi-spiritual event where her cock-sucking megalomaniac cousin was eaten by a tribe of cannibalistic twinkies, Aes-Nihil's *Suddenly Last Summer* ultimately reveals with its strikingly simplistic style of storytelling that Tennessee Williams essentially wrote pumped up poof pulp trash in play form. If you ever wondered if Katharine Hepburn was less feminine than a black drag queen and/or if Tennessee Williams has anything in common with John Waters aside being effortlessly effete, *Suddenly Last Summer* is certainly a work that answers a number of life's many mysteries, albeit in a manner that personifies delusional dollar store glamour that only can be found in the modern day Sodom that is sunny Southern California.

-Ty E

A BELL FROM HELL

Juan Antonio Bardem (1973)

Attempting to dig up a decent horror-related film that I had yet to see became a rather redundant task for me a while ago and I have essentially given up on attempting to defend the genre (with a couple exceptions, of course), but when I do end up happening upon a surprisingly decent film from the genre, it happens to have at least one (but usually both) of the following qualities: 1. It's European 2. It is at least over 30 years old. Of course, it was no surprise for me that my latest noteworthy horror-related discovery, *A Bell from Hell* (1973) aka *La campana del infierno*, was not only made over a decade before I was born and is a Spanish-French coproduction, but also features a fairly decent cast, including French actor Renaud Verley (who played the troubled young man Gunther Von Essenbeck in Visconti's high-camp masterpiece *The Damned* (1969)) in the lead role and Swedish-born veteran actress Viveca Lindfors (who horror fans will recognize for her performance as 'Aunt Bedelia' in *Creepshow* (1982) segment "Father's Day") in the role of an evil wheelchair-bound cripple aunt who perniciously plots to steal the protagonist's inheritance. Featuring a quasi-psychopathic and highly charismatic anti-hero who beats Alex in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) in terms of sadistic suaveness and aberrant allure as the lead character, *A Bell from Hell* is undoubtedly a character-driven work yet it also a scandalously sardonic scare-fest featuring a startlingly idiosyncratic hodgepodge of surrealist, gothic, and Mondo Cane-esque imagery to the point of almost aesthetic overload. In fact, like most great films, *A Bell from Hell* is so chock full of captivating imagery and cleverly naughty nuances that a mere single viewing of the film will not suffice for the viewer to appreciate what a truly lavish and meticulously assembled work ill-fated Spanish auteur Claudio Guerin (*The Challenges* aka *Los desafios*, *The House of the Doves* aka *La casa de las palomas*) assembled. Surprisingly Buñuel-esque in its absurdist attacks on the Spanish bourgeoisie, yet all the more brutal due to its utilization of then-totally-taboo horror imagery, including blood and guts, full-frontal nudity, and incestuous eroticism, *A Bell from Hell* is a radically rare piece of left-wing gothic-gore that actually manages not to bore the viewer due to its patently political persuasion. Foretelling the psychosexual sadism that would dominate Italian cinema in the late-1970s but with the poesy aesthetic cultivation of Italian maestro Mario Bava (*Black Sunday*, *Blood and Black Lace*) and the more interesting works of Hammer Films, *A Bell from Hell* also manages to reconcile the aesthetic and thematic differences of the horror genre of old and new in a most strikingly seamless manner. In fact, *A Bell from Hell* was penned by Santiago Moncada, who also wrote the script for the Bava flick *Hatchet for the Honeymoon* (1970) aka *Il rosso segno della follia* and actress Christina von Blanc appeared in the Jess Franco/Jean Rollin flick *A Virgin Among the Living Dead* (1973), thus

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illustrating the ‘range’ of horror talent in Guerin’s artful horror-thriller. The wantonly and recklessly witty tale of a black sheep of a bourgeoisie who gets out of a mental institution and seeks revenge against the aunt and relatives who put him there so as to steal inheritance, *A Bell from Hell* is the kind of conspicuously class-conscious cinematic work you would have been directed by a bloodthirsty Bolshevik revolutionary with a scathing and seemingly Satanic sense of humor and a cultivated bourgeois talent for cinematic art.

John (Renaud Verley)—a rather peculiar pretty boy with a seemingly sadistic yet good humored knack for elaborate practical jokes and creating realistic mask replicas of his own face—is randomly released from a mental institution on probation and given a summons for his upcoming hearing in two months regarding whether or not he is sane enough to become a productive member of society. John moves into his deceased mother’s home, which is somewhat dilapidated and dust-ridden due to being unoccupied for what seems like a number of years. Although bourgeois by way of blood and a rather large inheritance, John decides to take up the less than glorious work-class trade of working as a butcher (actor Verley gutted a cow in real-life for the film), but he suddenly quits after he’s “learned enough” as it seems he wants to utilize his new slaughtering skills on a more bipedal sort of animal. Even more endlessly explicit than the bloody slaughterhouse scene in Fassbinder’s *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), *A Bell from Hell* spares no viewer in depicting the grizzly process it takes to turn cute cows into ground beef. Although destined to inherit a hefty fortune due to his mother tragically committing suicide by way of apparently jumping off a cliff, John believes his wheelchair-bound witch of an aunt Marta (Viveca Lindfors) wants to get rid of him so she can get the money and that his stint in the loony bin was a result of his aunt bribing a doctor to declare him insane. Marta also has three gorgeous teenage daughters that include Esther (Maribel Martin), Maria (Christina von Blanc), and Teresa (Nuria Gimeno), the latter two seeming to be still attached to their mother by the umbilical cord due to their groveling natures. It is quite apparent upon reuniting with his trio of cute cousins that John and his blood kin share incestuous feelings, which is further supported by the fact that he has nude photos of one of them on his wall. John also has feelings for an elder woman (Nicole Vesperini) who he is most mad at for selling-out and marrying an old bourgeois bastard named Pedro (Alfredo Mayo), so he plays an elaborate practical joke on her by pretending to rip out both of his own eyes, which causes the petrified woman to faint. Of course, the pernicious prankster does not stop there as John also takes off the panties of the newly married woman after she passes out and makes it seem like he molested her so as to play another vengeful joke on her. An uniquely unhinged yet contradictory young man, John becomes a hero the same day by saving the local town hermit shepherd’s daughter from being raped by some bourgeois hunters, which includes pernicious prick Pedro, after showing up on his motorcycle like

a knight in shining amour. Pretending to break his arms, which are in ridiculous wing-like casts, John plays a joke on prick Pedro by convincing him to hold his cock whilst pissing in a urinal. Meanwhile, John begins constructing an elaborate torture chamber at his mother's home, which he has also redecorated entirely with a curious combination of pop-art and gothic themes. John has also filled his house with wild animals, including monkeys, birds, turtles, etc. and when his aunt asks him why he has so many animals, he matter-of-factly states, "I like animals...they're real...they eat when they're hungry...they sleep when they're tired...and they fuck when they're in heat," thus hinting at what he believes is the soulless, pretentious, repressive, suppressive, and oppressive nature of the bourgeois, especially in regard to his own family. In a postmodern tribute to horror films of the past, John madly plays an organ like *The Phantom of the Opera* while a black Poe-esque raven sits perched to his side. When John has his aunt and three cousins come over for a special dinner, he arrives at the conclusion that he must take total revenge against his relatives after pleading to Marta, "Give me back my passport...you'll never hear from me again, I swear it," and she turns him down. It becomes quite apparent in this scene that aunt Marta not only wants John's inheritance, but it seems that she is even more concerned about her naughty nephew 'tainting' the reputation of her incestuous family.

A mental young man with a more bitter than sweet nostalgia for the past, John fanatically watches old homemovies and looks at pictures of his family, reminiscing over singing the French nursery melody "Frère Jacques," and even sentimentally declaring to one of his cousins, "We were all free then...the past didn't exist and the future wasn't a threat. We weren't trapped in a web." Unwilling to break with the past, John sets to take revenge against his relatives and his first target is aunt Marta, who John, after nursing her to sleep in her wheelchair by sociopathically acting like a truly empathetic gentleman, unleashes a horde of bees on her in a scene in the spirit of Curtis Harrington's TV-movie *Killer Bees* (1974). Not long after, John ties up his most innocent cousin Esther after sexually seducing her and then goes to his room where he finds succubus Maria, who he has presumably had a sexual relationship with in the past as his cousin begins to undress and attempts to seduce him. After rejecting her sexual advancement, bragging about killing her mother, and proudly proclaiming, "I don't know the difference between right and wrong...and do you know why?!...there is no difference" as a man who has gone beyond good and evil, John slaps and smacks his unclad cousin Maria around and subsequently ties her up. Teresa, the most intelligent and perceptive yet bitchy of the cousins who once made up a complete fabrication about her cousin raping her to help get him committed to a mental institution, is the last of the titillating threesome to be tied up, but he rapes her for real beforehand in an act of perverse poetic justice and she actually begins to enjoy it. With their clothes stripped off, mouths taped shut, and hands and feet bound, the three cousins' disrobed bodies are hung from meat racks by John,

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who intends to slaughter them like the bourgeois cattle that they are, but he does not have the gall to go through with it and the girls ultimately escape after Pedro's wife rings his doorbell to confront the boy about his pigheaded pranks. Not long after, John goes outside and is hit on the head with a shovel by Pedro, who is in cahoots with aunt Marta, who, although disfigured, has surprisingly survived the bee attack. Pedro, aunt Marta, and cousins Maria and Teresa have John tied to the rope of a new church bell, where he will be hanged the next day at a Catholic sermon celebrating the new church. Before he is left to die, John asks his aunt if he really is insane or if she had him setup and she callously responds without the slightest sense of guilt, "A malignant tumor must be cut out. I could not sleep as long as you were alive," thereupon expressing her lack of guilt for her conspiratorial deceit. Assumedly dead, John still manages to have the "last laugh" against senior Pedro with the help of the eccentric shepherd whose daughter he saved from being vaginally pillaged from bourgeoisie bastards of the village. Not not does John have the literal and figurative 'last laugh,' but his murder inspires his sweetest and most rebellious cousin Esther to leave the family and move faraway, thus the anti-hero's spirit lives on in a sense as his cousin vicariously enjoys the freedom he had always sought but failed to obtain.

Rather ironically yet somewhat karmically, *A Bell from Hell* director Claudio Guerin fell to his death in real-life from the tower containing same title bell responsible for killing the angst-ridden anti-hero John of his film. Although it will forever remain unknown whether Guerin committed suicide or just simply fell in what was a senseless freak accident, I like to think he took his own his own life as such nihilistic and self-destructive tendencies are certainly reflected in *A Bell from Hell* via anti-hero John, who although extremely talented and artistic, cannot seem to stop himself from sabotaging his own life as a self-loathing member of the illiberal bourgeois who will do every and anything to uproot himself from his background. Made during the last years of Francisco Franco's reign in Spain, *A Bell from Hell* is not only an aesthetically and thematically subversive work, but also a lurid far-left-leaning satire of the sort of 'repressive' bourgeois church-going types who helped the Spanish dictator stay in power for so long. The fact that the protagonist of Guerin's film was institutionalized by his aunt after he ran off to London and became a hippie libertine only goes to show the traditional Catholic background in regard to the 'unconventional' villains of *A Bell from Hell*. Unfortunately, aside from one other (and ultimately inferior) feature-length film, *The House of the Doves* (1972), directing a segment from the omnibus film *The Challenges* (1969), and a couple shorts and one TV show, talented auteur Claudio Guerin never directed any other notable works aside from *A Bell from Hell*, which is indubitably his magnum opus. After his tragic death via falling from a real-life bell from hell on the last day of shooting *A Bell From Hell*, Juan Antonio Bardem (incidentally, the uncle of popular actor

Javier Bardem), who, like alpha-surrealist Luis Buñuel, faced persecution under Franco's regime, was responsible for editing/finishing the film. One can only guess where Guerin's career would have went had he not tragically fallen to his death at the mere age of 33, but few other horror filmmakers can boast directing a horror film so masterful, nicely nuanced, and poetically allegorical as *A Bell from Hell*, which is undoubtedly one of the most underrated works of not just the 1970s, but in the history of the mostly disposable genre.

-Ty E

THE MANSION OF MADNESS
THE MANSION OF MADNESS

Juan López Moctezuma (1973)

Out of all the surrealist oriented Mexican filmmakers like Gelsen Gas (*Anticlimax*), Alejandro Jodorowsky (*Santa Sangre*, *The Dance of Reality*), and Rafael Corkidi (*Angels and Cherubs*, *Pafnucio Santo*) that were revolutionizing cinema during the late-1960s/early-1970s, Juan López Moctezuma—an auteur best known for his salaciously sacrilegious vampire flick *Alucarda* (1977) and producing his Latinized Jewish buds' masterpieces *Fando y Lis* (1968) and *El Topo* (1970)—seemed to be the one most desiring of mainstream success, especially in America. Indeed, for his most popular works, *The Mansion of Madness* (1973) and *Alucarda* (1977), the director opted for shooting in English instead of his native Spanish because, as the auteur stated in an interview, "It was shot in English, as it was aimed at the American market," thus most viewers would probably assume his works were directed by a degenerate European if they did not know better (indeed, a number of ignorant reviewers on imdb.com described *The Mansion of Madness* as 'European' and 'Eurotrash'). In fact, when asked in an interview if the film was influenced by popular Mexican cinema, Moctezuma firmly answered, "No. The Mexican tradition for such films is very simplistic and very conformist, in my opinion, in spite of their surface delirium. I don't really like them very much," and indeed, to this very day, the director is still considered a cult filmmaker in his homeland. I was certainly shocked to see that *The Mansion of Madness* does not feature a single *Meztizo*, but then again, the film is supposed to be set in the outskirts of Southern France. Known by a number of alternate titles, including *Dr. Goudron's System* aka *Dr. Tarr's Pit of Horrors* aka *Dr. Tarr's Torture Dungeon* aka *House of Madness* aka *The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather* aka *La mansión de la locura* aka *Edgar Allan Poe: Dr. Tarr's Torture Dungeon*, Moctezuma's film is loosely based on Edgar Allan Poe's darkly comedic short story *The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether* (1845), which was written in promotion of mental asylum reform, as medical care for the insane was apparently a highly politically-charged topic in America during the mid-19th-century. Of course, as a psychedelic exploitation flick, *The Mansion of Madness* is not exactly a work that demonstrates a special sensitivity for the mentally deranged, as it makes a marvelous mockery of the mentally ill, but then again, the film features gorgeous and lecherous lunatics that one does not mind seeing running around naked and doing nonsensical things. Shot by filmmaker/cinematographer Rafael Corkidi, who is best known as the guy who helmed Jodorowsky's *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain* (1973), *The Mansion of Madness* is the sort of insanely aesthetically idiosyncratic work that you might suspect of having been directed by a wayward white Mexican of pure Spanish blood who was intoxicated on cheap Mexican beer and Ken Russell flicks, as a work in the humorously heretical spirit of *The*

Devils (1971), albeit taken to more whimsically wacky and innately incoherent extremes. A exceedingly goofy flick featuring an unhinged hermetic universe where an eclectic collection of mental patients have taken over the nuthouse, *The Mansion of Madness* is a merry yet mischievous and morally retarded dark comedy where mental illness is treated as the most literally and figuratively colorful of vaudeville acts, as a work that is like the Grand Guignol meets a less politically conscious Luis Buñuel. A consciously eccentric celluloid endurance test full of playfully perverse pageantry, pseudo-Sadean sexual savagery, and delightful one-dimensional deranged degenerates all suffering from some sort of unbelievably pronounced mental pathology, *The Mansion of Madness* is the dubious, if not intriguing and reasonably worthwhile, result of what happens when a seemingly ethno-masochistic Mexican suffers from a bad case of the cultural cringes, binge eats European art cinema, and suffers from culturally confused celluloid diarrhea.

Gaston LeBlanc (played by Arthur Hansel, who would later star in Moctezuma's 1975 slasher film *Mary, Mary, Bloody Mary*) is a famous journalist who is excited about going back to the remote rural area of Southern France where he was born, but was forced to leave after his mother died and his father was placed into a mental institution. As LeBlanc explains, his maternal side blamed his father for his mother's death, thus resulting in his padre's placement in a sanatorium where he eventually died under questionable circumstances. Planning to write a piece on a mental institution that is famous for its novel methods of treating the mentally perturbed, LeBlanc is travelling by coach with his school friend Julien Couvier (played by Martin LaSalle, who previously starred in Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959)) and his cousin/lover Blanche (Mónica Serna) to the nuthouse in question, but when they get near the gates of the countryside loony bin, they have guns pointed at them by whacked out soldiers that would have probably made for fitting revolutionaries during the French revolution. Needless to say, Julien opts for abandoning his trip to the nut ward after his cousin/girlfriend Blanche becomes afraid, but LeBlanc is not about to abandon his one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to stay at the world's most bizarre sanatorium. Upon arriving at the mansion of madness, LeBlanc is given a guided tour of the perturbing place by a discernibly dubious dude named Dr. Maillard (portrayed by Claudio Brook, who starred in a couple of Buñuel films, including *The Exterminating Angel* (1962) and *Simon of the Desert* (1965)), who also introduces the journalist to his beautiful harp-playing niece Eugénie (Ellen Sherman, whose credits include an appearance on *Three's Company*), as well as a funny fellow named 'Mr. Chicken' who naturally believes himself to be a chicken. Meanwhile, Julien and Blanche are attacked in their coach by a gang of weirdo warriors wearing antlers on their heads. Of course, Blanche is raped and she, Julien, and the Coachman, Henri (Jorge Bekris), are tied up and taken hostage.

Undoubtedly, it is only at about the halfway point of *The Mansion of Mad-*

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ness that the film begins to develop anything resembling a coherent narrative structure. When Dr. Maillard takes LeBlanc on a tour of an underground dungeon prison where he discovers a starving man crucified on a cross and hundreds of dirty and dejected prisoners caged in cave-like jail cells, the journalist complains, "I have seen enough to last me a lifetime." That night while sitting in a bedroom he has been assigned by the good Doctor, LeBlanc begins to lose consciousness upon reading an ancient book and then sees an arousing vision of Dr. Maillard's supposed niece Eugénie, who is totally unclad and begs him to meet her at a garden that night. When LeBlanc begins wandering around the mansion, Dr. Maillard catches him and has him locked in his bedroom, but the journalist manages to escape by tying a bunch of bedsheets into a rope and eventually climbs out the window of the building where he takes his chances against the asylum's legion of psychotic soldiers. LeBlanc eventually finds Eugénie, who is stark-naked aside from some grapes, lying on a ritual table in a greenhouse, so he shoots some fat bald 'Cult Priest' (David Silva) that is attempting to perform a bizarre ritual on the beautiful girl and saves her life. After being saved from a ritualistic death, Eugénie reveals to LeBlanc that Dr. Maillard is not really Dr. Maillard, but an imposter named Raoul Fragonard who took over the asylum after convincing the mental patients to run a coup d'état against their caretakers. The real Dr. Maillard is Eugénie's father and Fragonard led a revolution against him that involved him not only taking over the mental institution but also allowing the mental patients to trade places with the doctors and throwing said doctors in the dungeons where the mental patients once stayed. Eventually, Julien, who is tied up, 'hops' into LeBlanc and Eugénie and the three manage to kill a couple of deranged mental patient soldiers by using the beautiful young woman as bait, but eventually Fragonard and his motley crew of degenerates capture them. Among other things, Fragonard takes his prisoners on a tour of his underground spa/orgy room where tons of beautiful nuts hang out naked and do nonsensical things like fish for imaginary fish and give the prisoners erotic massages. The prisoners also witness a wack-job practicing necrophilic bestiality with a skinned goat corpse, among other things. After revealing that the real Dr. Maillard is alive and well (and covered with celery!), Fragonard brags about his rather unlikely plans for world domination and tells his prisoners that he is going to burn them alive because "fire purifies everything." Of course, Eugénie begs for a pardon, so the great Dictator unleashes a trio of murderous bird-women who dance in a provocative fashion on her and LeBlanc, but luckily the real Dr. Maillard and his doctors manage to escape from their jail cells and lead a counter-revolution against Fragonard. In the end, Julien's cousin Blanche shoots Fragonard, who absurdly uses a giant dead sea turtle as a weapon, in the heart and declares, "Vive la Revolution!"

Heavily inspired by the American experimental theatre group The Living Theatre, the Panic Movement, Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty," and Juan

López Moctezuma's own experience as a stage director, not to mention the counter-culture aesthetics that was still popular at that time, *The Mansion of Madness* certainly has an absurdly outmoded look, but that is also one of the film's greatest appeals, as a psychedelic celluloid romp that acts as a sort of accidental parody of its aesthetic influences. It should also be noted that British-born Mexican surrealist artist Leonora Carrington was both the art and wardrobe supervisor of the film, so she must be largely credited for the film's intensely idiosyncratic look, as *The Mansion of Madness* has the eccentric essence of a work created by an occult artist, as if the director was attempting to make a movie in the esoteric ritual orgy spirit of Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1966), albeit made palatable for mainstream audiences. Despite its rather revolutionary and subversive aesthetics, the film also has a notable counter-revolutionary message as a work that depicts a revolutionary leader as a murderous raving mad megalomaniac and his followers as literal mental patients who blindly obey his orders. An anti-revolutionary political fable featuring slapstick surrealism and a mirthful mockery of utopian dreams, *The Mansion of Madness* is more or less a Mexican equivalent to Johannes Schaaf's rather underrated dystopian flick that was released the same year, *Dream City* (1973) aka *Traumstadt*, which also features highly theatrical Panic Movement-esque eccentricities. Undoubtedly, compared to his comrade Jodorowsky's work, Moctezuma's film is fair less serious and certainly not a celluloid spiritual quest, but an art film for those that can only handle so much art. Undoubtedly, in its aesthetically corrosive celluloid cocktail of art, exploitation, and eroticism, *The Mansion of Madness* makes the perfect double feature with French auteur Jacques Scandolari's de Sade adaption *Beyond Love and Evil* (1971). Indeed, if you like exotic olive-skinned Mediterranean chicks with marvelous mammary glands who sport striking surrealist makeup, exceedingly charismatic villains that are far more likeable than the hero, grotesque antique puppets, and pretty feral people inside glass cages, *The Mansion of Madness* makes for a delectable celluloid treat that may not be a Jodorowsky masterpiece, but is surely one of the greatest and original horror comedies ever made.

-Ty E

ALUCARDA
ALUCARDA

Juan López Moctezuma (1977)

After watching Mexican horror auteur Juan López Moctezuma's debut feature *The Mansion of Madness* (1973), I decided it was a better time than ever to watch the stylish blood and boobs celluloid shocker that the director is best known for, *Alucarda* (1977) aka *Alucarda, la hija de las tinieblas* aka *Sisters of Satan* aka *Innocents from Hell* aka *Mark of the Devil Part 3: Innocence from Hell*. A lurid and strangely luscious piece of Latina Lolita lesbo artsploitation supernatural horror that takes a more naughty and nubile approach to the nunsploitation subgenre, *Alucarda* is a great example as to why auteur Moctezuma is not exactly a household name in his homeland as a work that wallows in Catholic sacrilege in a fashion that makes William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) seem as tame as a Cecil B. DeMille biblical epic by comparison. Ostensibly loosely based on Sheridan Le Fanu's classic 1872 Gothic vampire novella *Carmilla*, Moctezuma's third feature is a Sapphic satanic possession piece with vague bloodsucker elements about two 15-year-old Catholic orphan girls who make a pact of lesbo love among themselves, as well as with the devil, after meeting a Svengali-like gypsy hunchback who looks like a large leprechaun. In fact, Moctezuma denied *Alucarda* was a vampire flick in a 1977 interview and claimed to pay tribute to Bram Stoker and not Le Fanu, stating: "No, even though the title is certainly a homage to Count Dracula. However the film draws on the vampire tradition and in a way the protagonist is a female vampire... but not in the sense of a blood drinker. In fact she has all the powers and attributes of the classic vampire. Except that she doesn't have to drink blood. I've given *Alucarda* all the vampiric powers Bram Stoker mentions that never get shown in films as well as the ones you'd expect." Not featuring a single Mestizo actor and starring two Mediterranean nymphets in the lead roles, *Alucarda* ultimately seems more like a product of Spain or Italy than some sub-schlocky celluloid swill from south of the border. Apparently funded with money the director 'stole' from Alejandro Jodorowsky (Moctezuma produced *Fando y Lis* (1968) and *El Topo* (1970)), *Alucarda* is an audacious anti-Catholic diatribe that depicts priests as sexually repressed pervert dictators and nuns as sexless self-flagellating masochists who have a special affinity for pretty preteen girls. Indeed, if anything is demonically possessed and in dire need of an exorcism, it is *Alucarda*, as a work that mocks and eroticizes Catholic superstition in such a fiercely antagonistic fashion that even a non-Catholic like myself can appreciate its incendiary iconoclasm. Like a hardcore supernatural take on Joël Séria's *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971) aka *Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal* meets Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971), albeit minus most of the campy elements, Moctezuma's work is one of only a handful of films that I can think of that makes heresy hot yet, unlike most nunsploitation flicks, also manages to be not too hopelessly hokey. For those with a

fetish for blood, you also probably cannot do better than *Alucarda*, as a work featuring rather striking images of seductive young satanically-possessed señoritas soaked in sanguine fluids, which certainly looks more aesthetically pleasing on a woman than 'spilled seeds.' De Sade meets Mexican Gothic horror with a tinge of Huysmans and Bava, *Alucarda* is the film that was practically tailored for true Catholics like my quasi-psychotic Italian-Cuban childhood friend who used to get off to looking at Renaissance paintings of unclad sinners being tortured in hell.

A beautiful young woman (Tina Romero) gives birth to a baby in a cobweb-adorned building covered with gargoyle and demon statues and assumedly dies a couple minutes later after being attacked by some unseen evil entity. Flash forward 15 years later and the baby is now a pretty psychic vampire of sorts named *Alucarda* (also Tina Romero) who lives in the orphanage section of a Catholic convent that is presided over by a bunch of sexless nuns that look like bull dyke mummies due to their rather strange white cloaks. When a girl named Justine (Susana Kamini) arrives at the convent after her mother dies, *Alucarda* immediately becomes obsessed with the new young lady and asks her, "Do you want us to be sisters?," and naturally the shy newcomer agrees. After telling Justine about how one of the sisters has committed suicide, *Alucarda* goes on a rant about how there can be happiness after death and the two are then approached by a mischievous Gypsy Hunchback (Claudio Brook), who takes them to a small gypsy camp. While Justine is warned by a gypsy woman to not, "believe such a creature. He'll only tell you lies" in regard to the rather grotesque looking Hunchback, *Alucarda* takes an instantly likely to the deformed degenerate, who gives her a strange dagger, at least until he says, "I see clearly. Your past and future, your dreams. You've come from the dew in the forest and there they will be waiting for you. Strange creatures they are, and you must take care. If it obsesses the young lady, here I am and here is my box of charms. If she wishes I will make her free from such a dream...then if the dream comes true, I shall be expecting her," thus provoking the two girls to runaway in fear. After escaping the Hunchback, the girls end up accidentally discovering a mysterious and seemingly abandoned ancient building with rather sinister architecture which also happens to be the same building where *Alucarda* was born and her mother died. Upon entering the strange and ominous building, *Alucarda* becomes extremely excited and tells Justine, "I live in you. Would you die for me? I love you so. I have never been in love with anyone. And never shall. Unless it's with you." *Alucarda* also confesses that she is jealous and how she wants Justine to "love her to death," so the two youthful lesbian comrades agree to make a blood pact using the knife that was given to them by the Gypsy Hunchback.

Unfortunately, *Alucarda* and Justine's blood pact is cut short when they open a crypt and become horrified with the decomposed corpse they discover inside. Somehow, the whole experience leaves Justine sick and bedridden, especially

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after watching a church sermon given by an egomaniacal priest named Father Lázaro (David Silva). While recuperating in bed, Justine is visited by Alucarda, who describes with great excitement how voices talked to her from the woods just like the Gypsy Hunchback said they would and then states in a trance-like state, "Only you and me. Only you and me Justine. We will make them pay. Bit by bit. For all they have taken away from us. Lucifer. Satan! Lucifer!" After ripping a cross necklace from Justine's neck, Alucarda declares, "we shall make them pay" (in regard to the nuns and priest, who she believes has caused Justine's sickness) and then the Gypsy Hunchback somehow magically appears out of nowhere, strips the girls of their clothing, and makes them more or less make a pact with the almighty Great Satan. While making the pact, the two girls lick blood from one another's lips and tits and Baphomet even makes an appearance, thus somehow transporting the two proto-Goth gals to a lesbian witch orgy. Meanwhile, a loving nun named Sister Angélica (Tina French) pleads to god to save Justine from the devil, which causes the nun to levitate and her face to severely hemorrhage. Now possessed by the devil, Justine later declares in her bible class, "God with his lack of knowledge does not understand the truth, and opposes it with false thoughts and prayers" and the two friends proceeds to chant: "Satan, Satan, Satan, Our lord and master. I acknowledge thee as my God and Prince. I promise to serve and obey thee as long as I shall live. I renounce the other God and all the saints."

Needless to say, Justine does not live long as Father Lázaro forces her to endure a brutal S&M-like exorcism that involves cutting her up naked body (they strip her to prove that she has the 'mark of the beast') after the padre comes to the conclusion that the girls are victims of the devil's evil messenger, a heliophobic demon—a sixth category devil who hates light. Indeed, after Alucarda scares the Priest by telling him that she worships life and he worships death, Father Lázaro forces all the nuns to get half-naked and engage in sadomasochistic flagellation and decide an exorcism is the only way to rid their church of the satanic conspiracy. When a doctor named Dr. Oszek (Claudio Brook) walks in on the exorcism and sees Justine's naked corpse, he becomes enraged and declares, "the most shameful thing I have ever been a witness to. This isn't the 15th century, I thought that reason replaced superstition. This is not an act of faith...this is the most primitive expression of ignorance I have ever seen. You... You...have just killed Justine." After damning the priest and nuns, Dr. Oszek takes Alucarda with him and introduces her to his blind teenage daughter Daniela (Lili Gazara), not realizing that the girl he has exposed to his progeny is demonically possessed. Naturally, being a little lesbo Lolita, Alucarda takes an instant liking to Daniela and makes her promise to stay with her, which she does. Meanwhile, back at the convent, Justine's corpse somehow disappears and a nun is burnt alive, with her corpse later rising from the dead and spitting out blood in a rather rude fashion. Naturally, a priest decides to decapitate the demonic zombie nun. Eventually,

Sister Angélica discovers Justine's naked undead body inside of a coffin full of blood. While Sister Angélica manages to stop zombie-vampire Justine from killing her at first, Dr. Oszek throws holy water on the undead she-bitch, thus provoking her to bite the sister's throat, which naturally kills the holy woman of god. In the end, demonically possessed Alucarda becomes hysterically homicidal and begins killing countless priests, nuns, and monks with flames summoned from hell, though she eventually drops permanently dead after staring at a giant burning crucifix. Naturally, Dr. Oszek and his daughter Daniela escape relatively unscathed.

In terms of films about the demonic possession of Latina Lolitas, you will certainly be hard-pressed to find one better than *Alucarda*. In fact, the film is certainly cream of the celluloid crop when it comes to nunsploitation, exorcism films, and Mexican horror cinema as well, though not that I am any sort of connoisseur when it comes to these typically sleazy and sickeningly superficial types of films. I can say, however, that as a hopeless cynic who lacks a superstitious mind, I found *Alucarda* to be exceedingly effective, as the sort of film that I expected *The Exorcist* to be but was not. Indeed, featuring nuns that dress like mummies and bleed profusely out of their naughty bits, a melancholy sister who keeps her face about a foot or two away from a dead teenage girl's bare postmortem bush, and a towering Baphomet randomly appearing during a satanic Sapphic blood pact between two titillating 15-year-old girls, *Alucarda* is a hard film to top in terms of salacious supernatural horror, especially considering the film manages to depict all these typically distasteful things in a shockingly cultivated way. Apparently, a sequel entitled *Alucarda Rises From The Tomb* was in the works, but director Juan López Moctezuma unfortunately died before he could ever realize it. Personally, I am one of those rare people that actually prefers the director's first feature *The Mansion of Madness* to *Alucarda*, but that probably largely has to do with the fact that I was not brought up Catholic and I prefer psychedelic arthouse aesthetics and wayward dark humor to most supernatural horror films. Indeed, *Alucarda* features none of the Jodorowsky-esque surrealism and Theatre of Cruelty-like spastic acting that made *The Mansion of Madness* so memorable. Indeed, I cannot say that the idea of demonic possession is something that scares me, but then again maybe it is because I have met far too many moronic, ugly, and morally repugnant people to be able to be horrified at the sight of a nubile naked girl covered in vital fluids declaring her love for the fallen angel Lucifer. For those that cannot stand hysterical young women incessantly screaming as if suffering from a deadly orgasm, as well as hyper histrionic acting, *Alucarda* may seem like a grating slice of celluloid hell. A hostilely heretical work where madness, eroticism, violence, and spirituality become indistinguishable, *Alucarda* is ultimately an innately iconoclastic work that relentlessly mocks the irrationality of the Catholic Church yet at the same time criticizes the hyper rational man of science, thus making for a film that is

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eclectically misanthropic, albeit in a fairly cryptic fashion that is actually quite admirable. Indeed, as someone who typically loathes big fat whiny atheist humanists more than priests and nuns, I appreciated the fact that the doctor character featured in the film was also portrayed as a self-righteous fool of sorts, but I digress and will close by saying that *Alucarda* is easily the most elegantly visceral and hatefully violent yet erotically-charged lesbian quasi-vampire flick I have ever seen and that Jess Franco and Jean Rollin probably could have learned a lot had they taken the opportunity to watch it.

-Ty E

MINOTAUROMAQUIA

Juan Pablo Etcheverry (2004)

Minotauromaquia is a clay stop-motion animated short film directed by writer/director Juan Pablo Etcheverry. This isn't as brilliant as say Švankmajer's work or the Brothers Quay, but still manages to be a bold piece of animation layering the psyche of an artist. As expected, there might be several analytical pieces on the film utilizing symbolism in the form of our given Dove. Being as he created inner peace using art as his elucidation, he was able to complete a perilous task. Over seven hundred sketches concludes a serious piece. In light of the eve of Halloween fast approaching, I'm experiencing a magnetic force towards monsters so it may not come as a surprise as I fancy the stern minotaur stalking the maze of a canvas for his victim. The hallways are a swift stroke from Picasso's brush as he paints Les Demoiselles D'avignon. Creative inspirations and motivations are visualized by this award-winning director. His influences lie in dissecting what goes on in the psychodrome of such lauded "artistic" minds. What is created is the spawn of a world famous painting and the Myth of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur.

Abstract creatures are given a three dimensional depth and provide a truly breathtaking after drop. To break such silence would be a sin. For a 9 minute short film, Etcheverry has successfully captured the closest relic of Picasso's work on film and managed to think up a innovative way to express an artists expression. Just like the original painting was deemed a "rapid stylistic metamorphosis", this too can attribute for the one and the same praise. Sometimes funny, sometimes shocking. A wonderful experience for those who can must a somber extended chase.

-mAQ

SLUGS
SLUGS

Juan Piquer Simón (1988) Don't expect anything serious out of this movie. That would be your first mistake. With a title like *Slugs: The Movie*, you can't really expect too much. If you are as big of a fan of nature gone awry films as I am, you'll definitely have fun with this movie. I grew up as a kid with cheesy novels written under various pseudonyms such as *The Pack*, *The Nest*, and of course *Slime*. This film brought back great memories of impossible situations taking place with hilarious results. The plot follows a small town being invaded by killer mutant slugs. Our hero is Mike Brady, the town's health inspector. Lucky for him, he might actually get to do some work this week. The characters in this film do not seem to have a personal life except for the occasional sex request. Besides from spending time with his wife, he follows the sheriff around while checking up on eviction notices. The certain notice is for a drunken fool who has a dog. He hides in his house with no electricity and throws all his garbage in the basement. Severe health hazard there. When they walk in, they see nothing until Mike points out the gore soaked skeleton with its eyes eaten out laying on the couch in a position that is just screaming *Vogue*. After noticing slime trails, the sheriff dismisses it as wild dogs. So while this is happening you are marauded with close ups of slugs using a lens trick to make them look gigantic. I guess they were trying to get under people's skin with the creepy crawly factor. Afterwards, many more town people are getting picked off by these carnivorous slugs. An old man who is tending his garden doesn't realize a giant slug crawling in his work glove. When he puts them on, it instantly starts biting him. Him being in a panic, he begins to hit it with a hammer and try using hedge clippers with one hand but never tries to pull it off. After a couple of minutes he decides to grab a rusty hatchet and lop off his hand Berserk style. His wife comes in and watches in horror as sulfuric acid starts a flame trail that leads to a bucket of gas and BOOM. Whole house blows up. Back at the Brady residence, his beautiful wife notices these huge slugs and points them out. Putting two and two together, he decides that they are dangerous. In a hilarious scene, we watch him get bitten by a slug with teeth. Quite an awkward moment indeed. He then captures it and takes it to a scientist at a school who has an extraordinarily fake British accent. He then comes up with some solution that may put a stop to these menacing creatures. The film was led up to its conclusion in an awkward manner. First of all, we have all these high school kids setting up to go to a huge Halloween party. The average horror film fanatic thinks, "Hey, the slugs are going to show up there!". Wrong. That scene is dead. One of the girls does die after trying to be raped, which I thought was a hilarious turn of events, but sadly there is no high school massacre. With the effects dating back to 1988, we are treated to a lot of blood but little sex. A teenage chick sneaks her asshole Heath Ledger look-alike boyfriend in after her parents leave to have pre-marital sex.

All goes well until he gets off the bed drunken and a slug bites his foot. We then notice the nice wood floor is covered completely covered with this slimy suckers. She panics and falls off and we witness a bizarre scene in which a naked girl is crawling in a puddle of slugs screaming and we get the hint this is supposed to be sexy. This goes on for at least a minute. Then we have the ending which is pretty normal for a film of this type. Nothing to argue about, but nothing to really boast about either. The acting, of course, is really corny and the dialogue is not interesting but we are treated to a fantastic score which doesn't seem to fit the film in retrospect. An interesting yet dodgy 80's horror film. If you have the chance, it deserves a viewing.

-Maq

OSTIA
OSTIA

Julian Cole (1987)

Pier Paolo Pasolini was certainly one of the greatest and most authentically innovating filmmakers to ever live. Like Jean Cocteau before him, Pasolini was a poet who used film as a more sensual outlet for his obsessions and vices, resulting in auteur cinematic works like no director before or after him. I recently discovered the short film *Ostia* directed by Julian Cole, a micro piece of subversive cinema that follows Pasolini on his last night before he was murdered under very mysterious circumstances. Who better to play Pasolini in the film than gay British auteur Derek Jarman? Like Pasolini, Jarman would also die tragically in circumstances revolving around his vice of buggery. The official story is that Pasolini was murdered on the beach of Ostia by a young proletarian prostitute, who ran over the Italian poet repeatedly with his own car. The film *Ostia* asks the question of whether or not Pasolini foresaw his own death. With Pasolini's last film being *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* (the best film a director could end their career and life with), I am sure the Italian Renaissance man expected his life to end poetically with a bloody and climatic conclusion. After all, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* is largely a film about the degradation of the human body, a lifelong pursuit of Pasolini and also the manner in which he would die.

In *Ostia*, Pasolini states, "I'll never have peace, never" as he cruises for young proletarians in the most slimy area of town. Director Julian Cole seems to borrow a few cues from Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* and Fassbinder's *Querelle* when exhibiting this seedy devil's playground of semen. Pasolini felt he would never have peace but his own climatic death would give him his final release. Like fellow Guido Marxist auteur filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, Pasolini's interest in the working-class seems to be mainly influenced by the proletariat's sexual potency as expressed in *Ostia*. After all, the working-class is where Pasolini found the gigolos he was most fond of. During *Ostia*, after noticing the young male prostitute he picked up is watching a fight on TV, Pasolini comments about how it's just a bunch of old men paying young men to beat each other up. In response, the young gigolo, irked by Pasolini's arrogance, responds that it is not so much different from what he does. Pasolini's hypocrisy becomes most evident during this scene as he is a capitalist (who freely buys men and wine) yet preaches the bad opiate-based gospel of atheistic Talmudic economist Karl Marx. Only by death at the hands of the exploited prostitute, can Pasolini be genuinely Sainted as a true believer of Marxist materialism.

Although a flawed film, *Ostia* is a brief yet respectable portrayal of Pier Paolo Pasolini in his final hours. The most glaring negative aspect of the film is that it is British, but one couldn't possibly expect any Italian filmmaker to pay respectful justice to Pasolini, for they would have probably made an exploitation film as a gross insult to a director who was misunderstood in his own country (like many

great artists are). The world will probably never know the real circumstances surrounding Pasolini's death. Thirty years after it happened, Giuseppe Pelosi, the prostitute that confessed to the murder of Pier Paolo Pasolini, retracted his confession claiming it was three men who killed Pasolini because he was Communist. This makes one wonder whether or not the killers were students of the great Sicilian Baron Julius Evola, for he did inspire "right-wing" terrorism throughout Italy. If one thing is for sure, it was a gay communist atheist that directed the best film about the life of Jesus Christ; Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. Like Christ, Pasolini died for his own sins, not the sins of others, God Bless his gay Commie soul.

-Ty E

A LONELY PLACE TO DIE
A LONELY PLACE TO DIE

Julian Gilbey (2011)

I can recall, vividly, a learning experience taught by Renny Harlin's *Cliffhanger*, an important lesson on the dangers of empty space and what it doesn't mean to chase thrills. Thrill-seekers could view the mountain climbing featured in *Cliffhanger* as a gateway to adrenaline and a telescope to rarely seen sights and sound. I, however, see it as the senseless threat it is and would rather shed my mortality in a more humble and all-together boring matter - not cartwheeling through the air, drowning on my own screams. Which is precisely what had happened in the opening of *Cliffhanger*, that ever-important message of trust branded on each frame, which is also a recurrent theme in *A Lonely Place to Die*. And unlike *Cliffhanger*, *A Lonely Place to Die* is actually a terrific thriller without an air of predictability, one of its many sweet spots. Starring Melissa George and directed by Julian Gilbey (*Rise of the Footsoldier*), *A Lonely Place to Die* tells the story of a group of mountaineers in the Scottish Highlands who have planned a vacation around various sites when they discover a kidnapped girl and find out they are being hunted by the abductors. From this set-up, *A Lonely Place to Die* rappels into rather grim territory with scenes of sudden violence and a composure of extreme panic that never ceases to surprise you.

Admittedly, I am acrophobic but this rarely has applied to cinema for me. I can count the number of films that supplied heavy helpings of unease due to high altitude on one hand, the two most recent theatrical films being *Cloverfield* and *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol*. That isn't to say I don't mumble aloud to various screen characters for dangling in a stationary position (See also, *The Grey*), but these two films in particular, in-theater, had me clutching at my armrest and counting the seconds until I could see the sweet gift of feet planted firmly on soil. *A Lonely Place to Die* is the exception to the category, although the reasoning not being the height, but the risk. Those previously mentioned films do not relate to my reality therefore the rush of worry, while being eminent, dissipates almost instantaneously. *A Lonely Place to Die's* scenery chews at the rope all film long, leaving me in disgust at the thought of the next cliff face our unfortunate crew might have to scale. Melissa George, the beloved lead in *Triangle* (2009), takes on quite a task bringing physicality into the mix and Sean Harris performs as expected of him: sneering, villainous, and with incredible presence. Perhaps one of the more paramount aspects of *A Lonely Place to Die* is that Julian Gilbey isn't afraid to cycle settings and terrain against what one would expect, that, and his detachment from his characters. Enough so to provide a darker element of murder than one would presume to witness.

You can also tell from *A Lonely Place to Die* that director Julian Gilbey had fun assembling the pieces of this superior thriller, enough so to twist the formula into unfamiliar variations, such as presenting a pair of could-be villains who are

victim only to your perspective, just to have the camera pan out and introduce a more plausible threat. This world presented is a very real world, full of agony and misfortune, meaning to say, humanity suffers in *A Lonely Place to Die*. Whether it's a bystander or a friend, colleague, and even lovers; no one is safe and no one gets a pass. It is why this savage behavior meshes so well with nature, but seems even more at home in suburbia. Matter of fact, *A Lonely Place to Die* occasionally brings allusions to the highly-effective British thriller, *Eden Lake*, though with horror and nihilism replaced by a John Rambo-less First Blood aesthetic of survival. A character throughout *A Lonely Place to Die* curses himself discovering the abducted girl and wishes nothing more than to be rid of this burden of barbarity. This character has since the opening been unhappy of most everything handed to him. Now, because of him, his friends lives are challenged at every turn. It's funny to me - tinkering with the thought of chance and coincidence, especially with the recollection of a young, beautiful, innocent socialite on the floor of a bar with an uncontested fatal gut wound. *A Lonely Place to Die* is just that; a place of ever-heightening suspense and an always growing body count that makes this trip worth the bloody price of admission.

-mAQ

SUMMER SCARS
SUMMER SCARS

Julian Richards (2007)

I don't consider this to be a film per say. I see Summer Scars as a re-enactment or documentation on an event that is based on true events, like in America's Most Wanted but with a stunning youthful cast and a budget. In this case, It isn't some word of mouth local legend. The events that transpire in the film are based on a scenario the director himself got caught in as a teenager which brings the chilling realism all too close. Six rebellious teens nick a moped and meet up in the forest on a day where they should be at school. On this day of hooky, they meet up with a mysterious vagrant who presents himself as a tattered man with a past that is never uncovered. Scenes hint to him being a war veteran, but I can't be for certain. Now the events that took place in Julian Richards childhood appear to be an esoteric situation. I wonder aloud how much of this film is based on true events and which character Richards fit the role of. I can narrow it down to 4 of the 6 preteens. Summer Scars is synonymous to a wild beast running rampant through a crowded street. Everyone must sacrifice something in order to get through this film cause if the horrifying presence of Kevin Howarth doesn't get to you, the violence directed towards children certainly will. Summer Scars is virtually impossible to review. Bringing it back to my point, It's hard to review due to its substance not really being a film. Clocking in at 67 minutes, it's short, exemplary, and vicious. Dubious in nature, Summer Scars features all the key points to make this a classy rough thriller. The very pellet gun that Howarth brandishes reminds me of a classic Luger which only adds to the weapons menace. Don't let the cover art fool you. This would be that film you'd pass up in Movie Gallery for looking like another Sundance quickie, but there is more to this film than meets the eye.

-mAQ

BASQUIAT

Julian Schnabel (1996)

I am very weary when it comes to critics as well as the masses celebrating any type of “exotic” colored art as some type of real revolutionary artistic achievement. Due to the lack of cultural accomplishments from the Third World, it seems that anything that resembles “art” is considered a piece of profound artistic achievement by self-loathing white art critics. To be honest, I cannot really think of any colored art that has ever truly caught my fancy. I will have to admit however that after seeing the film *Basquiat*, I believe there might be exceptions to my view. Jean-Michel Basquiat was apparently the first black painter to ever become an international art star. Mr. Basquiat was considered a Neo-expressionist painter and with his paintings it is obvious he created a hybrid of European expressionism and Afro-Caribbean aesthetic, a true Neo-Creole painter if one were to ever exist. As dramatized in the film *Basquiat*, Jean-Michel was criticized by agitating critics for what they saw as “exploiting” black urban poverty due to his middle class upbringing. I guess Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s paintings should also be discredited due to the fact that the Dutch painter did not live up to the same pathetic reputation as the peasant subjects he painted, even though he helped to immortalize their meager existences.

Like most real artists, Jean-Michel Basquiat led a fairly pathetic and tortured existence and like Adolf Hitler before him, Basquiat made a meagerly artistic living by selling hand painted postcards for sympathetic patrons. It was not until Andy Warhol started promoting Basquiat that the artist started receiving the international fame that he reluctantly craved. In the film *Basquiat*, David Bowie plays an extra spacey and faggy Andy Warhol, a successful performance no doubt. Although I very much enjoyed Crispin Glover’s cameo as parody-like version of Andy Warhol in Oliver Stone’s *The Doors*, I think David Bowie did a better job expressing the true character of American’s favorite Pop “Artist.” The chemistry between Jeffrey Wright (who plays Basquiat) and David Bowie is no doubt believable but also notable. Other excellent performances include a cameo by the disgusting rock-slut Courtney Love (who plays Madonna, a former girlfriend of Basquiat) and loveable burnt out weirdo Dennis Hopper as Swiss art collector Bruno Bischofberger. In general, most performances in *Basquiat* were excellently cast with the right actor for the right job.

Basquiat was the cinematic debut of Neo-expressionist painter Julian Schnabel, who was part of the same art movement as Basquiat in real-life. I believe this gives the film a feeling of authenticity that could not have been accomplished by a director who had not known Basquiat personally. For a first film, Schnabel certainly accomplished more than most novice directors. Of course, *Basquiat* has its weakness like most bio-pics do. After the film is over, it feels that segments of Basquiat’s life were brushed over (which they no doubt were), but director

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Julian Schnabel was able to makeup for this with the unconventional assemblage of the film. The real power of Basquiat lies in the power of each scene, for the film is truly the sum of all it's parts just as Basquiat's paintings are.

Viewing Basquiat was kind of a wonderful surprise to me. I expected the film to be some sob story about how a persecuted Negro rose above his urban ghetto limitations and proved that he could be part of the international white art world. Instead, the film shows how a bunch of lame white people kissed Basquiat's ass because he knew how to hold a paint brush which seemed to ultimately push him towards self-destruction. Basquiat is not a feel good crock of cultural Marxist vomit but an expressive tribute from one Neo-expressionist to another. Certainly a film that does not romanticize the life of an artist like most that come out of Hollywood.

-Ty E

INSIDE

Julien Maury, Alexandre Bustillo (2007)

AKA: A l'Interieur Rarely does a movie terrify the audience, and it is even more rare when a film terrifies and disgusts you. Thank god for the dynamic duo of Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury. Lately, they have become a target of rage from fanboys everywhere due to their remake of Hellraiser coming soon. After seeing this debut film, of all places coming from France, home of the worse new-wave film trend as of late, i graciously accept their warm gift of Hellraiser presented in a beautiful bloody digital package. The film follows a plot so simple, that it would be pointless to explain the film. Whereas you go and purchase it on March 4th, you can view this cinematic tour de force. This film's emotions will lay you down so quick with the sheer amount of travesty presented in this film. In order to explain the feelings i encountered during this film, you must know that this is a drive through hell and back. Not only are the performances impeccable but the intensity of the acting down to their habits when frustrated, angered, or traumatized, are down right a masterful art. Not since underrated film of the century Fear X has a film made me feel shivers so deep and honest, yet cry not caring who sees you. Thanks to directors such as Alexander Aja and these two new ones, my faith in French horror, cinema even, has been restored to full power. Béatrice Dalle is downright one of the most sensitive lunatics to ever grace film. The subtlety of her moods and her frustration causing her to go ballistic was all apart of her plan. I am sure that with out the collaborative minds of actresses and directors alike, this film would have been another gore-soaked disaster. So the plot in layman's terms, a woman who is pregnant gets in a car crash. Leaving no survivors including her boyfriend. Somehow her baby made it out of the mess. Thankfully it is almost due four months later but someone shows up outside her house. Let the bloodbath ensue. The film uses similar bloodshed and gore to the short film Cutting Moments. The editing is terrifying, mixed in with the sound effects that make your brain go crazy, and you yourself begin to feel the insanity leaking into your own brain. The drones in this film are similar to the ones Aja used in his The Hills Have Eyes remake. Granted these ones are more effective. So when Inside is released on March 4th, i expect you to purchase this film from Dimension Extreme at all costs. This might be the most narcissistic, violent film i have seen in a long while.

-Maq

BULLET
BULLET

Julien Temple (1996)

I once lived with this little Jew that looked like Rick Moranis. Despite growing up in a nice upper middle class Jewish neighborhood and having two doctors as parents, this little Jew started dealing drugs at the ripe age of 13, surely not long after his Bar Mitzvah, the day he became a "man." I always tried to imagine this weak and tiny Jew getting busted by the cops and being sent to one of the various American prisons aka rape factories. How would such a little guy fair against horny Tyrone and deranged delinquent Darnell behind bars? In the film *Bullet*, I thankfully got to see such a scenario. The film stars the very Un-Jewish Mickey Rourke (who also co-wrote the film under the pseudonym Sir Eddie Cook) as a good criminal Jew boy named Bullet who has been recently released from prison and is now a changed (and morally stained) man.

Despite growing up in a nice upper middle class, Bullet fell into drugs and crime at an early age. His brother Louis (played with love and empathy by Ted Levine) is a Vietnam Vet who now suffers from some type of debilitating psychosis where he believes he is leading an invisible army towards final victory. Bullet's baby brother Ruby (played eloquently by Adrian Brody) is an aspiring street artist who most fancies illegally painting buildings and other forms of public/private property. The overweight alcoholic father of these three brothers sees them all as bums and disappointments, sons on the apocalypse. Their Mother seems in denial about her boys, an elder Jewess who loves to play piano and probably never misses Temple. After Bullet gets back from prison, most of his family does not seem to recognize him as a new and changed man, a victim of prison sodomy.

Tupac Shakur stars in *Bullet* as Tank, a drug lord enemy of Bullet who seeks bloodthirsty revenge. Bullet was responsible for taking out one of Tank's eyes whilst they were in prison. Tank must have some respect for his Judaic friend's background as he claims to be evening the score by looking to get an "eye for an eye." To show Tank what Bullet really thinks of him, he stabs an anti-Semitic Latino in the eye with a lovely knife in a fairly concerned fashion. Bullet's only interest after getting out of prison is shooting up H and speeding up his own belligerently executed suicide, kind of like Mickey Rourke's tragic character in *Rumble Fish*, only less suave. Bullet may be one of the last films Rourke acted in before his face was butchered by botched plastic surgery, but his character looks like a miserable mess, wearing a not-so-flattering hoodie, sunglasses, beanie, and star of David gold chain at all times. No one has ever accused the Jews of being great dressers or being proponents of aesthetics but Bullet looks like he belongs in a homeless shelter habitat. Of course, a Sicilian-American gangster business associate lets Bullet know that one must always dress to impress.

Tank may be a drug lord but he is also obviously a play thug carny huckster

at heart who lacks real tact. Instead of killing Tank with his own bare hands, he decides giving a poisonous package of junk is the best way to treat the man who stole his eye. When that fails, Tank brings in a beefy buck Negro to pound Bullet into the ground but that ultimately fails as well. I have a feeling that the real Tupac was much like Tank, a Nigga who talked a bunch of shit but had nothing to really back it up with, hence his early death. Tupac's death also came the same year that Bullet was released, a wonderful example of trash art reflecting trash life. Thankfully, the bright and infinitely intrinsically valuable life of Tupac has been immortalized in a Jewish dysfunctional family crime film like Bullet.

I must admit the funniest and most fulfilling part of Bullet is the ending. Bullet's deranged Vietnam Vet brother goes on one more special-ops mission that involves Tupac's throat, a large expertly sharpened knife blade, and an albino rat. I hate most contemporary crime and gang films because they glorify the lowest gutter trash imaginable. Of course, I can respect the well dressed Italian-American men featured in The Godfather as well as the coked out Mafia men of Goodfellas but never nor ever the contemporary urban jungle cretins of the intercity. There is nothing glamorous or ideal about the world featured in Bullet. Bullet makes this clear when he shows his happy heroin track marks to a couple of up and coming hoodlum play thugs. He was doing them a favor knowing his own life ended the day he entered a jail cell. If only my Jewish ex-roommate would listen to the wise words of stoic street philosopher Bullet.

-Ty E

DAYS OF NIETZCHE IN TURIN
DAYS OF NIETZCHE IN TURIN

Júlio Bressane (2001)

If any nation should make a film about German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, it is the ill-fated thinker's own, but Germany, being very possibly the most self-loathing country in the world since their catastrophic defeat during World War II, would not dare make a film about one of their greatest national figures, even if he was an anti-hero and anti-Christ of sorts. Admittedly, I was quite reluctant to watch the Brazilian film *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* (2001) aka *Dias de Nietzsche em Turim* directed by Júlio Bressane; an experimental biographical-drama about the German philosopher's lone contemplative wanderings around the Northern Italian city; the area where the often misunderstood thinker would dream up *Twilight of the Gods* and his less-than-honest but extremely aesthetically-pleasing autobiography *Ecce Homo*. It is one thing for a film to feature a portrayal of Nietzsche speaking in the totally alien language of Portuguese but another for the film to have the prophetic Aryan anti-Christ be portrayed by a swarthy, dark-and-greasy-haired fellow whose exaggerated mustache is the only tool that allows the viewer to dispense belief that the man in anyway resembles the great philosopher. Not only is the actor who portrays Nietzsche in *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* a physical mockery of the terrible Teuton but he also goes as far as fully exposing his wienerschnitzel; the last area of the German philosopher that a diehard Nietzschean would want to uncover. In fact, a good portion of *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* is dedicated to the philosopher's dubious sexuality and his problems with the unfair, fairer sex. Nietzsche one stated, "Ah, women. They make the highs higher and the lows more frequent" but in *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* most of Nietzsche's intimate contact with women is voyeuristic and in the imaginary realm of his exceptionally introverted mind. If the film does anything right, it is that it adequately expresses how far the German philosopher had escaped into his own thoughts; a retreat that would prove to be the root of his genius and transcendence into *Übermensch* status, but also the source of his break into total insanity and an early and lonely death. Indeed, *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* may not be an extraordinary tribute to a man whose life and work has yet to get an exquisite cinematic tribute that is long overdue but for those individuals interested in the Titanic Teutonic thinker, the film is a passable homage that will have to do for now.

German conservative revolutionary philosopher Oswald Spengler recognized that Friedrich Nietzsche – being a dilettante composer and music addict – was a thinker who philosophized through his ears and that his prose was not "written" but "heard" through a sort of "physiognomic tact." Spengler believed that Nietzsche intuitively felt the rhythm of "culture" and "nobility, ethics, heroism, distinction, and master morality." In that regard, *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* also successfully expresses Nietzsche's inspirations and thoughts as he can be

seen throughout the film basking in musical melodies as if it is vital to his very existence (which it undoubtedly was). The film also somewhat successfully expresses Nietzsche's sensitivity to life and his organic surroundings in general but, of course, most of the film relies on mere speculation in attempting to recapture his last days of sanity. I would even go so far as to nickname the film *The Passion of the Anti-Christ* as the work permeates a spiritual and almost religious portrayal of his sacrifice as a thinker and prophet of Occidental decline and rebirth (which partially inspired the National Socialist revolution). Nietzsche may have ended his career as a philosopher with a short work entitled *The Anti-Christ* (1888) but his dire concern for the death of god and reign of slave-morality-based mediocrity in Europe was not in vain. Although his works were written over a century ago, many great thinkers – of all religious and political persuasions – look to Nietzsche's writings for answers today. What *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* does best is expressing how Nietzsche – both on an intellectual and personal level – was all by his lonesome. Surely, *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* is more successful and respectful in capturing Zarathustra's essence than *When Nietzsche Wept* (2007) directed by Pinchas Perry. Visually, the film is also flawed in its almost anarchic anachronisms as the work combines modern shaking documentary-style digital video with seemingly vintage film stock from the early days of cinema. Luckily (but certainly unsurprisingly), *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* features a score by Nietzsche's former friend/father figure and (later) enemy Richard Wagner with excerpts of Nietzsche's writings narrated throughout.

Undoubtedly, the most powerful segment of *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* is after Nietzsche's mental collapse near the conclusion of the film. In a manner comparable to Woody Allen's underrated mockumentary *Zelig* (1983) and superior to Robert Zemeckis' *Forrest Gump* (1994), Bressane was able to animate and give life to the infamous real photo series "The Ill Nietzsche" by Hans Olde in a totally believable and ostensibly authentic way. As someone who has seen these distressing photographs many years and times before seeing *Days of Nietzsche in Turin*, I could not help but feel awed but slightly saddened by the pseudo-stock footage of the great thinker in a state of total and irrevocable incapacitation. Naturally, the film also portrays the dubious and unverifiable story of Nietzsche's collapse after witnessing a horse being whipped in Turin. That being said, *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* is a film that will certainly be of interest to those familiar with Nietzsche and his work but it is doubtful the film will be anything more than a hopelessly tiresome struggle for the uninitiated. Unlike *When Nietzsche Wept*, it is also obvious that *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* director Júlio Bressane has a strong passion for the German philosopher's life, work, and selfless sacrifice. Unfortunately, it is doubtful one can expect a superior cinematic work about the tragic philosopher-poet anytime soon, thus *Days of Nietzsche in Turin*, albeit flawed, makes for mandatory viewing for those who have gazed

DAYS OF NIETZCHE IN TURIN

into the splendid abyss of the German philosopher's mind.

-Ty E

GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER

Jun Fukuda (1966)

aka Ebirah, Horror of the Deep The Godzilla lexicon consists of several generational series that create cultural gaps between styles, themes, and recurring costumes that more-or-less match the economy and social climate of its native Japan. The Showa series is compromised with many early Godzilla classics such as Godzilla vs. Hedorah, Godzilla vs. Gigan, Destroy All Monsters, and the obvious debut volume of his long-destructive legacy, Gojira. The many branches of Godzilla lore that have rambunctiously spread out through time only planted seeds in fan base and in such a clever manner, alerted all walks of life of this phenomenon. My special lady friend scoffed at the idea of Godzilla being honored on the Walk of Fame. Inquiring about her experiences with Godzilla, she admitted to have never seen a Godzilla film but within this statement I made the point sincere that even with no knowledge of his story she knows who and what Godzilla is. That's the strength of this cinematic hero who has created seismic, cultural quakes that have reached every corner of the world. The favorable post-war tragedy aesthetic is still in the past and has not been recently brought back to the surface. The evolving Godzilla spin off now encompasses monster mash entertainment inside an airtight, flimsy plot line that shows both the struggle of humans and monsters. For this "vs." film, the spotlight is not on the "Big G" but rather a lonely sibling hijacking a boat to go search for his brother who is thought to have survived a shipwreck by crashing on an island under a strict military and terrorist rule who is also being terrorized by a local monster-lobster kept at bay named Ebirah. From this, man encounters both friend and foe and decides to awaken a hibernating Godzilla to start the epic entertainment and set forth the greatest boulder-catch match this side of Tokyo. As far as Godzilla "genrefication" goes, this one isn't as experimental or sci-fi as say Godzilla vs. Hedorah, which took the preconception and predated a Happy Feet-esque environmental musical, rapes the idea, and creates a flying 150 foot tall lizard that fights an alien cloud of slime. As a kaiju film, this is an exceptional entry. Toho posters have this inverted charm that provides a visual assault with colors and always highlights mesmerizing montages of both man and monster. With Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster, you will notice an incredible technicolor-like aesthetic that shines with a smooth presentation and color palette. What's even more surprising is this is Jun Fukuda's first entry out of five for the Godzilla legacy. He directed the established Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster (aka Ebirah, Horror of the Deep) then went on to create Godzilla vs. Gigan, but what happened after remains a mystery. He must have spent a night with an African hooker, caught an advanced case of HIV and decided to direct the equivocally abysmal Godzilla vs. Megalon. Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster is a worthy venture to continue this monster cavalcade of bromance, rubber suits, and evil military regime

GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER

whether it be a human or alien effort. From its slick design mechanics to the ill-suited humor between unintentional kaiju boulder volleyball, *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* finds itself in a safe zone with a partially accepting fan base. This is a very solid demonstration that not only emphasizes monster destruction but as well as commits to the memory of "little people." Each *Godzilla* film has this amazing structure that leaves one memorable scene to be desired. They all have it and as I've mentioned before, *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster's* is the boulder ball game. The Tennis effect is infectiously contagious as your eyes trail a foam boulder bee-lining between monster, back and forth. With each catch and toss, you find yourself becoming stupider. It's a rough game out there, people. With my final words, the only real advice I can really build upon is that this is a must-see *Godzilla* film for a wacky adventure scenario.

-mAQ

GODZILLA VS. GIGAN

Jun Fukuda (1972)

An entry in the Shōwa series of Godzilla films, this story features the very similar brainwashing plot device and amasses a surreal feel throughout the film. This isn't the usual space invader film. This is due to the mystery element and the thought put into the philosophy of the cockroach being the species most likely to survive an apocalypse, which fits perfectly into the premise. Cockroach spacemen (Ala Men In Black) create a giant Godzilla tower secretly armed with state-of-the-art technology and a low orbit Ion cannon solely with the intent of creating frequencies used to control the giant inhabitants of Monster Island; mainly King Ghidorah (Space monster), Gigan (Debut space monster), Anguirus, and Godzilla. This is a worthy addition into the Godzilla archives even though much of the film is made from stock footage. Such is what Toho had to go through to get things done; See also: Toei's The Return of the Street Fighter. Much of that film features lengthy flash backs with no purpose other than to chisel away at the time frame. Although this is hokey and ridiculous, it's a classic Monster vs. Monster vs. Humanity story ever so apparent in Kaiju films, but it revamps this tale to create added destruction and a mellow suffering not often seen other than in this abstruse film. Old animatronics coincide with the "Man in the Rubber Suit" aesthetic that differentiated Godzilla films from the likes of Harryhausen and King Kong. Some of the movements are extremely terrible and create a clumsy lizard who fights too human-like. Through out this film, Godzilla's appearance constantly changes and it becomes tedious. You can blame that on the incredibly low budget. I don't expect a perfect Godzilla sequel. You learn that after you come to terms that the war-torn monster you fell in love with is no more. A surprising addition is the tag team effort and humanization of Anguirus: Godzilla's mortal and first enemy. The duo teams up to defeat an unstoppable menacing force. Both Godzilla and Anguirus almost perish in the blazing wrestling match. As Emperor Palpatine repeatedly struck down young Skywalker with his signature force lightning, Godzilla too was in grave danger from a similar attack. To add to the already sorrowful fact that I'd never seen Godzilla shed blood, Anguirus was inches from a cold death, foreshadowed by his stifling and quieting roar. Five films into the collectanea of Godzilla, and I can manage to appreciate this one more than some others. An applaudable story with humorous characters and exceptional villains plus the debut of Gigan (who strikes fear into the heart of my childhood). Godzilla vs. Gigan is as monstrous as it sounds, plus I happen to enjoy a vulnerable side of Godzilla now and then. In regards to the scene of Godzilla talking to Anguirus, I only heard the roars. Thankfully I had nothing to do with the alleged speech bubbles.

-mAQ

BULLET TRAIN
BULLET TRAIN

Junya Satō (1975)

Sonny Chiba. Anything that Sonny Chiba acts in is pure gold. It's science. It's one of those weird ticks that people have. Some people are addicted to sex or nicotine or any other substance. I am addicted to Shinichi Chiba. The day this legend passes, I'm getting plastered while watching *The Street Fighter* and bawling my eyes out. With that in mind, I set out to buy a 3 DVD pack of some of his films of which I have not seen. First up, *Bullet Train*. Now if I had known that *Speed* was a remake, I'd partly be impressed. Despite its flaws or down right shitty structure, I enjoyed *Speed* when I was a child so the film has that heavy nostalgia effect on me. Now if you had told me that *Speed* was a remake of a Sonny Chiba film, well, I might have spontaneously combusted. It's true, but I was in for a bigger surprise. I was led to believe that this film starred Sonny Chiba but what I was delivered was a modicum of his presence as he sweats his run time away. Chiba plays a nervous bullet train conductor as he realizes that there is a bomb on his train that will explode if he decelerates. Led by the dynamite villain Ken Takakura, *Bullet Train* stands as a solid and respectable action film from Japan. I normally don't sympathize with pigs on film. Shallow police officers and co. have been pissing me off on the silver screen since birth, so the sympathy involved with the cast of good guys was a welcome addition to my extensive cinema taste. I'm a bit disappointed at Ronin Entertainment for promising me 3 ass-kicking Sonny Chiba action movies and giving me ones that only feature around 15 minutes of screen time, sans *Golgo 13*. My only real complaint is the entire gist of the film in general. These "disaster on wheels" films all have one thing in common; man-made attempted claustrophobia. These films strive to make you feel anxious to be trapped in a speeding metal doom device. This is what *Bullet Train* sets off to do, but since over half the film follows the police as they attempt to track down the bomber, much time isn't spent with the train, and even so, the scenes are too scattered. *Bullet Train* is like an aged wine; not an over-priced one, mind you. It transcends that border between mediocrity and something a bit special. I can't exactly jump up and down over this one, folks. But I did enjoy it greatly. I'm just glad that Sonny Chiba eventually saved the day. Even if he looked exasperated the entire film.

-mAQ

THE CREMATOR

Juraj Herz* (1969)

Mainly due to its curious inclusion of Austrian actor Paulus Manker portraying the great Viennese Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger—a character he would play on stage and ultimately immortalize by directing and starring in the rarely-seen masterpiece *Weiningers Nacht* (1990) aka *Weininger's Last Night*—I recently made the mistake of watching the fiercely flaccid pseudo-metaphysical feminist flick *My 20th Century* (1989) aka *Az én XX. Századom* directed by Ildikó Enyedi and felt the need to cleanse my soul with another black-and-white art film from one of the other strangely dejecting (mostly) Slavic areas that used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While the last thing I want to see is another holocaust film, I actually decided on the rather grim Czechoslovak New Wave classic *The Cremator* (1969) aka *Spalovač mrtvol* directed by Slovak semite Juraj Herz (Morgiana, Habermann) as it is a rare piece of singular tragicomic shoah cinema that actually manages to be both humorous and aesthetically pleasing in a strangely aberrant-garde sort of fashion. In fact, despite technically being a holocaust film as directed by an authentic Hebraic holocaust survivor, the film is so innately idiosyncratic, abrasively absurd, and surreally schizophrenic that I never felt that I was watching a film that would be endorsed by the ADL or the sort of especially naive idiot that sincerely believes that *Schindler's List* (1993) is a serious film about the perils of prejudice and heights of human suffering (or whatever).

Clearly owing a hefty spiritual and aesthetic debt to German Expressionism and some of the more grotesque Teutonic Dada artists like Otto Dix, the film notably stars the popular Czech star Rudolf Hrušínský—an actor that, quite humorously but not surprisingly, was previously best known for lovable comedic roles—who resembles a sort of all-the-more-bulging-eyed (but hardly Hebraic) Peter Lorre. Since Lorre became a symbol for Judaic criminality and depravity due to his iconic performance in mischling master Fritz Lang's serial killer masterpiece *M* (1931), which was infamously referenced in Nazi mischling filmmaker's agitprop flick *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew*, it is certainly strangely fitting that the actor's Czech doppelganger portrays a naughty Nazi cremator of sorts who murders his part-Jewish family members as it—whether intentional or not—surely symbolizes both the triumph of Judea and the death of the Occident, for such a film would have been completely unthinkable only 25 years before during the Third Reich era. Of course, the film is, quite thankfully, just as anti-commie as it is anti-nazi as the setting is at least partly symbolic of the sort of artistically stifling and all-oppressive Soviet totalitarianism that would dominate shortly after the cinematic work was created as a result of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (aka 'Operation Danube') that effectively destroyed the Czechoslovak New Wave. In fact, despite being selected

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as the Czechoslovakian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 42nd Academy Awards, the film was banned soon after it was released and would be completely hidden from the world until the collapse of the communist system in Czechoslovakia in 1989. And, indeed, *The Cremator* certainly feels like the sort of singularly subversive film that had been imprisoned in a vault for decades as it manages to be merrily macabre and misanthropic in the sort of audacious alienating fashion that would offend individuals of all political stripes, especially completely humorless authoritarian bureaucrat types that somehow get a hard-on from soulless schlock like socialist realism.

While I would be a liar if I tried to pass myself off as a Czechoslovak New Wave expert of sorts, I think I am familiar enough with the movement to say that, during its all-too-brief existence, it unequivocally produced some of the most preternaturally dark, perturbing, and artistically enterprising films in all of cinema history. Indeed, while kosher Czech filmmaker Miloš Forman is unfortunately the best known filmmaker associated with the movement since he would later go on to direct hit Hollywood films like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) and *Amadeus* (1984), his classic Czech New Wave flicks like *Loves of a Blonde* (1965) and *The Firemen's Ball* (1967) are pretty softcore and less than aesthetically ambitious when compared to the anti-kraut celluloid pagan blood orgy that is František Vlácil's *Marketa Lazarová* (1967) or the kaleidoscopic coming-of-age vampirism of Jaromil Jireš' *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970). Fans of degenerate 'food play' bullshit like wet and messy fetishism, feederism, and nyotaimori can also rejoice in Czech auteuress Věra Chytilová's classic psychedelic psychodrama *Daisies* (1966) where a debauched dumb dame duo gets all down and dirty with dick-shaped devourables and cutesy cunt chaos, among other things. With her all-the-more-avant-garde Adam and Eve reworking *Fruit of Paradise* (1970), Chytilová once again demonstrated a singular talent for finding the most organically beautiful color schemes in the darkness of men's souls. Of course, considering the strange Teutophobia of Vlácil's films like *Marketa Lazarová* and *The Valley of the Bees* (1967), the filmmakers of the Czech New Wave were naturally also interested in the historical subject of the Big H.Long before the holocaust became a jadedly Judeocentric cinema subject of the cliché-ridden and unwittingly cynical sort, Czech enfant terrible Jan Němec bombarded the world with his exceedingly esoteric and exquisitely elliptical debut feature *Diamonds of the Night* (1964), which makes Schindler's List seem like a retarded Richard Donner action movie by comparison in terms of artistic and emotional complexity. And, to go back to *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*, it is like a vampire flick as directed by the lovechild Sergei Parajanov and a Völkisch auteur à la *Ewiger Wald* (1936), albeit shamelessly surreally Slavonic. As for *The Cremator*—undoubtedly Juraj Herz's greatest film and a cinematic work that the director himself has described as having total artistic control of—it is arguably the greatest, most idiosyncratically immaculate, and

unforgettable film associated with the Czech New Wave and somehow it rather abstractly, aberrantly, and, arguably, aloofly, meditates on the shoah. Thankfully, the film also has a masterful musical score by Czech maestro Zdeněk Liška who of course created music for great films by great directors like Jan Švankmajer, František Vlácil, and Věra Chytilová, among countless others.

The Cremator was not the first hit Czech holocaust film of its era as director Juraj Herz, who was self-taught, actually worked as a second-unit director on two shoah cinematic showcases, including Zbyněk Brynych's *Transport from Paradise* (1962) and Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos' Academy Award-winning *The Shop on Main Street* (1965)—a film that seems pretty tame and banal by today's sensational shoah standards—before going solo with the non-shoah short *The Junk Shop* (1965). Like Kadár and quite unlike Spielberg, Herz was also actually a holocaust survivor that spent his childhood in Ravensbrück concentration camp and, according to film programmer Irena Kovarova, he apparently developed certain perverse interests in regard to sex and death as a result of what he personally witnessed there (or as she so calmly states in a featurette included with The Criterion Collection blu-ray release of *The Cremator*, “he came from the camps knowing way too much about sex and way too much about death”), which is quite apparent in his film as it is a stylishly sleazy cinematic work that seems to say more about its curious creator than the nasty Nazi numbskulls it so devilishly depicts. Of course, belated NYC cineaste Amos Vogel—a Vienna-born Jew with certain obvious ethnic/political biases—tries to spin it a different way in his classic text *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974) where he argues that is, “A provocative attempt to penetrate the origins of sado-sexual Nazi mentality is made in this oppressive, strongly expressionist film about an inhibited petty bourgeois family-man whose work with corpses at the local crematorium – to free them for the after-life – gains unexpected proportions during the Nazi occupation [...] Editing and camerawork is strongly influenced by the new cinema in the West. Equally surprising for the puritanical East is its clear, yet entirely ‘hidden’ portrayal of fellatio, with the girl under a table and the man sitting behind it: at the end, she merges, wiping her mouth.” Indeed, probably not realizing Herz is a fellow chosenite, Vogel highlights supposed Nazi perversity while unwittingly exposing his own perversion and spiritual contempt for Slavic folk. When it comes down to it, *The Cremator* is really the freewheeling artistic expression of a damaged and debauched holocaust survivor who, as a Eastern European Jew, is a quite worthy heir of Franz Kafka and Bruno Schulz (who of course influenced the Brothers Quay who were also heavily influenced by Herz's friend and collaborator Jan Švankmajer).

If any film manages to reconcile the grotesque expressionist poetry of Gottfried Benn with the disturbingly degenerate caricatures of the poet's ideological nemesis George Grosz, it is indubitably *The Cremator* which, rather fittingly, oftentimes feels like a tribute to virtually all forms of pre-Nazi Entartete Kunst. If

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Italian-Jewish criminologist was right when he argued in his text *Man of Genius* (1889) that artistic genius was oftentimes a form of hereditary insanity, Herz's films certainly support that thesis as they are clearly not the product of a sound mind but a debauched dude whose potent aesthetic vision is only rivaled by his clear affection for the fantastically rancid and risqué and it is next to impossible to separate the two in a frolicsomenely fucked film like *The Cremator* where social conformity becomes a symbol of moral corrosion despite the film itself being a gleeful expression of moral corrosion where morbidity is made merry yet the everyday and bourgeois is somehow supposed to be the sickest thing of all. In its horror-ish depiction of the mental decline of an enterprising bourgeois family man, the film can certainly be compared to works ranging from Arturo Ripstein's *The Castle of Purity* (1973) aka *El castillo de la pureza* to Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), but Herz's magnum opus is ultimately a singular flick that really has no contemporaries. While it is easy to describe it as an anti-nazi/anti-bourgeois critique straight from the blackened heart of a renegade holocaust survivor, I think it is also a film that resonates with fellow Jew Gustav Mahler's words, "In my works can be found my whole existence, my whole view of life. . . . There too will be found my angst—my anxiety, my fear." In terms of its unwaveringly subversive spirit, gorgeous yet grotesque neo-gothic aesthetic, and rather brazen approach to depicting the ultimate taboo of familicide, I think the film comes closest to Italian auteur Marco Bellocchio's truly iconoclastic debut feature *Fists in the Pocket* (1965).

Auter Herz wants you to immediately know right from the get-go of *The Cremator* that the titular protagonist is a banal bourgeois guy with a banal bourgeois family, but he also wants you to know that there is something serious off and unnerving weird about this somewhat cartoonish protagonist who acts if he is the autistic star of an insanely idealized dream than a real person with a real life. Indeed, as Karel Kopfrkingl (Rudolf Hrušínský) states to his wife at the very beginning of the film in a spasmodically edited scene while hanging out with his nuclear family at the local zoo, "My sweet... This is the blessed spot where we met 17 years ago. Only the leopard is new. Kind nature long ago relieved the other of his shackles. You see, dear, I keep talking of nature's benevolence, of merciful fate, of the kindness of God. We judge and criticize others, rebuke them. But what about we ourselves? I always have the feeling that I do so little for you [...] Thanks to your dowry... to your blessed mother's support and the support of your aunt. Perhaps I furnished our apartment, but that's about all. Dear, I must take care of you. Zina is 16, Mili 14. Come now, children... Cages are for mute creatures." Undoubtedly, Herr Kopfrkingl is big on freedom as he sees his job as cremator as a form of liberation where he is selflessly liberates souls as inspired by his curious influence from *Bardo Thodol* aka *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. As a mensch that respects his Judaic physician Dr. Bettelheim (Eduard Kohout), new employee Strauss (Jiří Lír), and half-Hebrew wife Lakmé (Vlasta

Chramořtová who also portrays the protagonist's favorite prostitute), Kopfrkingl seems totally devoid of racial prejudice, but it does not take much for him to be convinced of the virtues of completely betraying all the Jews in his life when his brutal kraut Nazi comrade Walter Reinke (Ilja Prachař) tells him of the new Aryan agenda that includes many personal perks, including an all-blonde brothel and a nice new job as an all-power cremator that dedicates his life to "liberating" souls. No longer content with just burning bodies, Kopfrkingl graduates on to coldblooded murder so that he speed-up the process of liberating souls. While initially thinking of himself as nothing more than a proud cultivated Czech that even enjoys the "Jewish way" of "jellied carp" during Christmas, Kopfrkingl begins stating things like, "even the old Teutons, dear friends, burned their dead, entrusted them to flames," after his rather culturally confused Nazi conversion and it is ultimately his beloved mischling family the pays the most pernicious price in a film where ideology and insanity are virtually depicted as one and the same.

Indeed, aside from betraying his Jewish friends after receiving the distinguished honor of being invited by his boy Bettelheim to a Chevra Suda dinner and providing phony talk of a Jewish conspiracy to his Nazi friends, Kopfrkingl goes completely crazy and kills his Jewish wife and son (although he also tries to kill his beloved daughter, the Nazis promise to do the job for him) so that they can be properly cremated with Aryan corpses and obtain a patently preposterous posthumous purity of sorts. Despite being clearly unhinged, Kopfrkingl is provided with top secret knowledge by a Nazi bigwig about a souped-up crematorium and gas chambers, which he naturally fully approves of. Not surprisingly, Herr Kopfrkingl's mental decline parallels his rise to power and he increasingly comes into contact with his rather dedicated Dalai Lama doppelganger who confirms to him the crucial spiritual necessity of his work. In fact, at the very end of the film in an ominously otherworldly scene where Nazi bigwigs drive him away in a fancy car in the rain as a virtual young witchy Angel of Death sees him off, Kopfrkingl declares with a strange degree of deranged gleeful dedication, "No one will suffer. I'll save them all" as he schizophrenically imagines himself being driven to Dalai Lama's Potala Palace where he assumedly believes he will be taking over (notably, the film takes place in the aftermath of the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso, in 1933, which was also the same year as the rise of Hitler and National Socialist takeover of Germany). Of course, as Cioran once so rightly and elegantly wrote, "Nietzsche's great luck—to have ended as he did: in euphoria!" Indeed, Kopfrkingl might have brutally murdered his family members and betrayed virtually every friend he has ever had, but he is nothing if not exceedingly enraptured as if he has literally died and gone to heaven.

With its captivating combination of severely spasmodic schizo editing, sometimes nauseating and even necrotic yet simultaneously faux-merry melodrama, gorgeously grotesque gothic aesthetics and tone, charmingly creepy caricature-

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like characters, heterodox horror ingredients and somehow paradoxically antiquated yet avant-garde essence, *The Cremator*—a film that manages to both define and transcend the movement it belongs to—is surely the cream of the Czech cinematic crop and a rare merry celluloid testament to the metaphysics of morbidity and misanthropy. In its depiction of an almost transcendental transformation of a bourgeois bore and striking experimental dreamlike cinematography, the film sometimes almost feels John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* (1966) as produced by the ghost of Val Lewton had he died brutally and morbidly in a concentration camp (as opposed to rather impotently croaking from a low-key heart attack like he did in real-life). Of course, despite the film's preternatural persuasion, auteur Juraj Herz wears his many eclectic aesthetic influences on his sleeve, most notably during a scene in the film where the film's protagonist stands in front of great Early Netherlandish master Hieronymus Bosch's masterpiece 'The Garden of Earthly Delights,' hence Kopfrkingl's classic lines from the film like, "The only certainty in life is death...and the implementation of a propitious new order. The Fuehrer's new, fortunate Europe and death are the only certainties that we humans have." While executed in an innately ironical fashion, Herz's film is nothing if not a truly hypnotic celebration of Spanish homeboy José Milán Astray's classic motto: "Long Live Death." Instead of hysterically harping on the holocaust, Herz seamlessly interweaves classic pieces of art (including of the archaic Judaic sort) and even vintage Aryan pornography to tell something profoundly (disturbing) about the (in)human condition, thereupon confirming the perennial nature of truly great art in a cinematic work that, despite its decidedly degenerate essence, should be celebrated as a truly great piece of cinematic art. Of course, it should be no surprise that the film also pays tribute to the grotesque grandiosity of *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol* as it is a key aesthetic influence in a cinematic work that audaciously borrows from the highbrow and lowbrow without ever once attempting to discriminate between the two, hence the aberrant artistic brilliance of the film. Indeed, *The Cremator* might contain the aesthetic integrity and overall meticulousness of mise-en-scène of an early Tarkovsky flick, but it also has the unhinged spirit and intense amorality of an Andy Milligan flick à la *Seeds* (1968). In that sense, it is no surprise that Herz later went into more genre-driven artsploitation oriented territory with a film like *Ferat Vampire* (1982) aka *Upír z Feratu* which is notable for being a bloodsucker flick with a blood-fueled automobile.

By sheer happenstance, I was recently reading Emil Cioran's classic text *The Trouble With Being Born* (1973) around the same time I re-watched *The Cremator* and soon discovered the Romanian philosopher gave what would be a nice thematic description of the film when he wrote, "Annihilating affords a sense of power, flatters something obscure, something original in us. It is not by erecting but by pulverizing that we may divine the secret satisfactions of a god. Whence the lure of destruction and the illusions it provokes among the frenzied of any

era.” In fact, the book contains a number of aphorisms that would make for suitable descriptions of the film. For example, the deranged protagonist is strangely likeable because, as Cioran noted, “We forgive only madmen and children for being frank with us: others, if they have the audacity to imitate them, will regret it sooner or later.” In terms of the film’s depiction of paternal filicide, one might be tempted to awkwardly laugh at Cioran’s remark, “My vision of the future is so exact that if I had children, I should strangle them here and now.” As for the film’s shamelessly merry misanthropy and overall decided worship of death, one cannot help but wallow in Cioran’s words, “Man gives off a special odor: of all the animals, he alone smells of the corpse.” As for the film’s director Herz, who I have mixed feelings about but regard his shoah flick as a masterpiece, *The Cremator* is a good example of what Cioran was hinting at when he wrote, “A writer has left his mark on us not because we have read him a great deal but because we have thought of him more than is warranted. I have not frequented Baudelaire or Pascal particularly, but I have not stopped thinking of their miseries, which have accompanied me everywhere as faithfully as my own.” Indeed, as someone that could certainly do without ever see another holocaust flick again, I have to argue that Herz is, to some extent, a rare artist with virtual alchemical abilities as morbid mensch that can clearly take the shittiest and most play-out subjects and molds them into something akin to artistic gold. After all, there is more genuine horror in a single slice of dark humor in *The Cremator* than there is in the entirety of *Schindler’s List* but I guess that should be expected from a film that basks in the banality of big budget bathos. Of course, it would probably be fairer to compare Herz’s flick to *The Pianist* (2002) as it was also directed by a holocaust survivor of sorts but ultimately *The Cremator* has more in common with Roman Polanski’s early Polish avant-garde features like *The Lamp* (1959) aka *Lampa*—a film that certainly can be seen as a sort of allegory for the holocaust and the apocalyptic nightmare nature of the Second World War in general, especially in Eastern Europe—than the director’s hit *Palme d’Or* and Academy Award-winning Hollywood holocaust flick.

To shamelessly borrow another quote from Cioran, I think that auteur Herz would approve of his words in relation to a major theme of *The Cremator* when he wrote, “When we think of the Berlin salons in the Romantic period, of the role played in them by a Henrietta Herz or a Rachel Levin, of the friendship between the latter and Crown Prince Louis-Ferdinand; and when we then think that if such women had lived in this century they would have died in some gas chamber, we cannot help considering the belief in progress as the falsest and stupidest of superstitions.” Of course, one of the most brilliant aspects of the film is that it seems like a Hebrew-helmed aesthetic hodgepodge of numerous pre-Nazi European artistic movements over the last two centuries that concludes with German Expressionism, thereupon associating, not unlike Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), the Third Re-

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ich with the dubious legacy of the destruction of European art and culture as a result of the Hitlerite taint. In short, the capitulation of Nazi Germany also resulted in an absurd aesthetic holocaust sorts, hence Frankfurt school Führer Theodor Adorno's despicable dictum that, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." Of course, *The Cremator* is pleasantly putrid cinematic poetry as directed by a holocaust survivor and it certainly says more about than shoah than, say, Claude Lanzmann's badly bloated 566-minute anti-polack doc *Shoah* (1985). Indeed, Herz's film is the closest thing the world will ever have to a film as directed by Otto Dix, albeit from a savagely sardonic post-shoah Jewish perspective instead of a savagely sardonic post-WWI kraut one.

Notably, in her insightful text *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* (1995), German-language folklore and literature scholar Maria Tatar noted that in Nazi Germany, "Jews came to be linked not only with the perpetrators of sexual murder, but with the victims as well. Like the prostitute, the Jew is seen to represent a serious threat to the moral, fiscal, and sexual economy of the social body. As Sander Gilman has pointed out, both prostitutes and Jews have been linked by what is seen to be a sexualized relation to capital—they have 'but one interest, the conversion of sex into money or money into sex.' Unable to find value in transcendent spiritual matters, their interests remain fixed on the material and financial. More important, prostitutes and Jews, because of their spiritual corruption, are considered carriers of sexually transmitted diseases, a view clearly articulated in Hitler's *MEIN KAMPF*." Of course, one of the most intriguing and perversely trollish aspects of *The Cremator* is that auteur Herz completely subverts these stereotypes and depicts the Nazi characters in the fashion Tatar describes as the Nazis have their own special all-blond bordello where they debased Aryan dames as a reward for their role in the destruction of Eastern European Jewry. Additionally, lead character Karel Kopfrkingl is a particularly perverted hypocrite with a strange fear-cum-fetish of STDs to the point where he regularly sees his Jewish physician friend Dr. Bettleheim, who he eventually betrays to secure his place as a patron of Aryan prostitution, to see if he has contracted a sexually-transmitted disease (in fact, Kopfrkingl seems especially enamored while admiring a grotesque Bellmer-esque STD display at a local carnival in a scene that really underscores the character's innate association of sex and death). As Tatar also noted in her book, the "Jewish vampire" was another common trope of (proto)Nazi culture as arguably most brutally described in Arthur Dinter's popular Weimar era novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (1917) aka *The Sin Against the Blood* but also largely apolitical cinematic works like F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922). While *The Cremator* does not feature any literal bloodsuckers, it does feature its fair share of blood and Kopfrkingl can certainly be seen as an unconventional 'psychic vampire' of sorts. Needless to say, it is no surprise that director Herz would later work in the vampire genre. In that sense, one can see Hebrew Herz as an artist that is so gleefully transgressive

in both the aesthetic and (meta)political sense that he has fully embraced the negative Nazi racial stereotypes to the point of nihilistic fury as if his main goal with his art was to destroy the very meaning of early twentieth-century race, art, and culture. After all, one simply cannot finish *The Cremator* without being 'touched,' if not being downright tormented. Indeed, the film almost makes me want to agree with Cioran, who I will quote one more time, when he wrote, "The number of fanatics, extremists, and degenerates I have been able to admire! A relief bordering on orgasm at the notion that one will never again embrace a cause, any cause . . ." Naturally, things get a big complicated when one finds themselves being able to respect both Herz and Dinter. In terms of attempting to reconcile a film like *The Cremator* and NS thinkers like Dinter, Alfred Rosenberg, and Hans F. K. Günther, the alpha-neofolk outfit *Death In June* is your best bet, especially their somewhat obscure album *Free Tibet* (2006) where *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* receives a tribute of sorts.

-Ty E

THE CHILD I NEVER WAS
THE CHILD I NEVER WAS

Kai S. Pieck (2002)

Great German serial killer films are certainly a dime of dozen. From German Expressionism with Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) to German New Cinema with *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* directed by Ulli Lommel and produced by Rainer Werner Fassbinder to the post-German New Cinema no-budget underground with Jörg Buttgerit's *Schramm* (1994), it seems that krautland is king when it comes to fiercely fucked yet audaciously artful flicks about psychopathic killers of the insanely idiosyncratic sort. Of course, one of the reasons for such a prevalence of these films in Deutschland is due to the fact that Germany had a serial killer problem after the First World World (in fact, the childkiller of Lang's *M* is a composite of a number of real-life killers, including Peter Kürten, Fritz Haarmann, Carl Großmann, etc.). Indeed, social and economic chaos made post-WWI Weimar Germany the perfect playground of perversity for both budding and refined serial killers alike. Of course the Second World War, which was even more deleterious than the First World War, also spawned a number of notable deranged psychopathic killers with an aberrant affinity for bloodlust, with kraut queer child killer Jürgen Bartsch—a foul fiend of a fellow who used to carry around the mutilated corpses of his child victims in plain public view via a suitcase (aka 'children's coffin') of sorts and rather enjoyed fiddling with the naked and dismembered corpses of his kid victims in a secret cave hideout—being arguably the most creepily pathetic of these ice-cold killers. Born Karl-Heinz Sadrozinski in 1946 as the bastard son of a mother who died of tuberculosis shortly after his birth, Bartsch spent his first couple months being cared for by a group of nurses and was eventually adopted at eleven months of age by a butcher and his wife from Langenberg (today Velbert-Langenberg). With a wacked-out adoptive mother who suffered from OCD who would not little her little boy play with other children and who was forced to attend a sexually-repressive Catholic boarding school, bastard Bartsch was already a crazed cocksucker killer by 1961 at the mere age of 15 and would ultimately kill and dismember four boys between the ages 8 and 13 until he was caught and arrested in 1966 when his fifth would-be-victim managed to escape. As depicted in the German flick *The Child I Never Was* (2002) aka *Ein Leben lang kurze Hosen tragen* directed by Kai S. Pieck (Isola, Ricky: *Three's a Crowd*), the Bartsch case is notable due to the fact that it was the first trial in German jurisdiction history where psycho-social factors (i.e. the killer's warped childhood) came into play when handing down the decidedly deranged defendant's sentence. In the partially fictionalized biopic *The Child I Never Was*—a quasi-docudrama/melodrama hybrid utilizing the serial killer's own letters and essays (Bartsch spent some time while institutionalized documenting his tragic childhood, fears, passions, perversions, etc.)—Bartsch's troubling teenage years,

malevolent mutilation-based homoerotic murders, and post-trial confessions are depicted in strenuous and even sickening detail. In other words, *The Child I Never Was* is a terribly dark and uniquely ugly film about a terribly dark and uniquely ugly individual whose crappy childhood, overbearing pseudo-mother, and cock-blocking Catholic upbringing helped mold him into a pernicious poof pervert with a pathological case of Peter Pan syndrome.

For anyone to describe *The Child I Never Was* as an 'enjoyable film' would be nothing short of a puffery-plagued lie (or as sign of sexual sadism on the part of the viewer), though it is by no means a bad film, just a rather disheartening and thematically disgusting one. Aesthetically cold and sterile and thematically deadly serious and morbidly melancholy, *The Child I Never Was* is a film about a born bastard loser that was destined for infamy. Melodramatically depicting the life of Teutonic twink teen serial killer Jürgen Bartsch during his killer coming-of-age years, as well as his equally lonely prison years in the somewhat aesthetically sterile form of a docudrama-like tape confession, *The Child I Never Was* is the patently pathetic celluloid tale of a fucked fellow who would enter this world in a misbegotten manner and would leave in no less a 'tragic' fashion. As Jürgen Bartsch (Tobias Schenke) tells a camera at the beginning of the film, "During these six years in prison, things have been great with my parents. Maybe it's because I'm a good boy now. The way I was at 9 or 10, maybe... I can't imagine being apart from my parents. I also can't imagine my parents dying. That's a completely unbearable idea. I really like my parents. I'm happy when they come to visit me. Mind you, to be honest, 15 minutes is enough, you know?," but as one learns while *The Child I Never Was* progresses, the demented boy's 'love' for his family is no more genuine than his halfhearted attempt at becoming a heterosexual via his failed teenage experiences with Essen-based female prostitutes at the age of 17 and post-arrest marriage to a naive nurse. The virtual slave of his exceedingly overbearing adoptive mother Getrud Bartsch (Ulrike Bliefert) for most of his short and sad life, Jürgen was not allowed to play with other kids as a child and if he got dirt on the rug, his pseudo-mommy would not think twice about calling him "a piece of shit" and slapping him around. As for Jürgen's butcher adoptive father Gerhard (Walter Gontermann), the meathead of a man apparently never displayed a single inkling of emotion towards his adopted son until it was revealed that he was adopted. Of course, Jürgen's biggest problem was that he was a closeted homo of the Catholic-reared sort and that he was so terribly desperate for little boy ass that he was literally willing to kill just to get it. With the peculiar boyish charm of a sort of kraut Leopold and Loeb, Jürgen would lure younger boys that looked quite similar to himself (i.e. dark/swarthy hair, small, scrawny, pedomorphic, etc.) with the promise of money/goodies, murder them inside his secret cave hideout, and fondle their dead corpses. After attempting to molest a friend who managed to getaway and tell his parents, Jürgen's father Gerhard found out and quite naturally became concerned, even con-

THE CHILD I NEVER WAS

tacting social services about the incident, but apparently the 'progressive' West German government felt there was nothing to worry about. Of course, Jürgen eventually got bored with merely orally pleasuring the genitals of the dead boys, so he began cutting his victim's body open and fiddling with their guts for maximum orgasmic excitement. Living with the subconscious desire to be caught for his actions as he confessed in his writings, Jürgen was eventually caught after making the mistake of leaving a lit candle for his fifth and final would-be victim, who managed to escape using the candle flame to burn off the rope that the pedo-killer bound him with. Apparently, Jürgen left the boy to watch television with his parents and planned to skin his victim alive when he got back, which certainly demonstrates the domesticated depravity of his mind and the schizophrenic double-life he led before he was caught.

While *The Child I Never Was* concludes pseudo-farcically on a strangely light note with Jürgen Bartsch doing a childish magic trick (or what he calls a "phenomenal trick"), the real-life sodomite serial killer disappeared from the world in 1976 in a strikingly fitting manner when he was only 29 years old. After marrying a nurse in a feeble and insincere attempt to 'reintegrate himself into society,' Bartsch opted for having voluntary castration (probably a procedure more pedophiles/serial killers should have!) in the hope he would not have to spend the rest of his life in a mental institution, but fate was not in his favor as he ultimately died on the operating table after an unskilled (and probably unsympathetic) nurse gave him an overdose of Halothane (inhalational general anesthetic). Undoubtedly, in its attempt to portray Jürgen Bartsch as patently pitiable being whose aberrant actions were not surprising considering his unhinged upbringing as an unwanted post-WWII bastard, *The Child I Never Was* is a total anti-titillating and emotionally terrorizing cinematic success as a sort of melodramatic kraut equivalent to the harrowing HBO documentary *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996). Additionally, the actor that played the young Bartsch, Sebastian Urzendowsky, was a perfect match in terms of appearance and essence. Like the real Bartsch (whose real birth surname was Sadrozinski), actor Urzendowsky is a pedomorphic fellow of the swarthy yet pale sort who, at least judging by his surname, is also a German of Polish ancestry. In that sense, *The Child I Never Was* also makes for a great piece of accidental anti-Polack propaganda as a work that features the most unflattering depiction of an ethnic Pole since the National Socialist propaganda flick *Feuertaufe* (1940) aka *Baptism of Fire* directed by Hans Bertram. Of course, in terms of Teutonic serial killer flicks, *The Child I Never Was*, not unlike *Der Totmacher* (1995) aka *The Deathmaker* directed by Romuald Karmakar, may be one of the better more recent works of the subgenre, but it is certainly not up to par with timeless works like Fritz Lang's *M*, *The Devil Strikes at Night* (1957) aka *Nachts, wenn der Teufel kam* directed by Teutonic Israelite Robert Siodmak, and *The Tenderness of Wolves*. After failing to think of a Xmas-themed movie

to view/review and remembering Kai S. Pieck's serial killer flick had a deathly dreary Christmas dinner scene between Jürgen Bartsch and his maniac mommy, I decided that re-watching *The Child I Never Was* today would probably make for a 'memorable' tribute to J.C.'s birthday. Needless to say, *The Child I Never Was* managed to ruin any Christmas spirit I did have and if that's not a good enough recommendation for a serial killer flick, I don't know what is.

-Ty E

RAPTURIOS
RAPTURIOS

Kamal Ahmed (2007)

We're no strangers to horror. You know the rules and so do I. Kamal Ahmed (*The Jerky Boys*) takes the barren and unpopulated sub-genre of Urban horror and releases a film that most viewers will come to terms with. *Rapturios* is a flawed piece of cinema but one cannot help but enjoy what they are being served. Call it a guilty pleasure, if you will.

Slip into the Rabbit hole with *Rapturios*, an up and coming horrorcore rapper (Judging from his monotone and stale lyrics). He's the average honky sculpted in the Korn's Jonathan Davis ala father molesting scandal. His fragmented past and his famous future collide in an endless clash. He, just like many others, begins dabbling in Latino provided mind-altering drugs to boost creative juices and forget his trauma. After doing it all, he is given a new experimental drug called *Afterlife* which throttles him into nightmarish hallucinations or murder. Like so many Urban horror films before it, *Rapturios* makes quick to exploit the "vices" of blacks, this being drugs, white women, money, and hip-hop. The dream is being lived till this is jeopardized by a fucked up whitey dropped on their studio's doorstep. Originally, Urban horror films like *Tales from the Hood* used polar opposite blacks to create a composite difference between the respectable Negro and the ignorant gang-bangers. *Rapturios* drops the race message and focuses on a film that is a *Creepshow* version of *8 Mile*. Filming horror in a gritty and dirty style, both psychological and manifestation scenes, is always a huge risk later when editing. Production value can be sacrificed as your film looks like utter garbage. Many precautions should be taken, lest you want your film to look like the filler scenes of *Rapturios*. While the presentation of the nightmare scenes, sex scenes, and hallucinations are stellar, I found the drama section of this film to be filmed by a director who doesn't bleed for his work. To continue with the unpleasantness, the story was as shattered and hole-ridden as *Rapturios*' forced persona was. The duration of this film lays on thick a pretentious coating of a self-boasting mindfuck surprise ending, when in reality the ending was guessed 20 minutes into the film. The ending doesn't have closure and you're left with a period piece side story of Native Americans, the west frontier, and a Tim Curry devil wannabe. For a rap horror film, the "freestyles" were laughably bad. Not as much as, lets say... *Ragdoll*. Even though *Rapturios* ain't much of a rapper, he is an interesting character and as well as a hell of a good actor. I couldn't help but enjoy *Rapturios* for being an Urban horror film with flair and conflict. God knows we need another *Killjoy* (sarcasm alert). It's nowhere near as perfect as *Ragdoll* is, and it isn't racy and sublime like *Tales from the Hood*, but *Rapturios* came a long way with its white rapper so I'll let it be. *Rapturios* is nearly as sharp as its Devil's claw.

-mAQ

THE GAMBLER

Karel Reisz (1974)

If there is any single great example of an 'auteur' who is a much better screenwriter than he is an actual filmmaker with a talent for the strictly visual, it is indubitably rather loathsome and singularly sleazy Judaic degenerate James Toback (*The Pick-up Artist*, *Harvard Man*). Indeed, aside from his debut feature *Fingers* (1978), the greatest screenplays he ever wrote, *The Gambler* (1974) and *Bugsy* (1991), were directed by other filmmakers. Notably, in his rather insightful essay *Toward the Devaluation of Woody Allen* originally featured in the May-June 1990 issue of the Jewish leftist rag *Tikkun Magazine*, Jonathan Rosenbaum, himself a Jew, more or less argued that Jewish filmmakers might have an innate handicap when it comes to the visual, noting, "[Woody] Allen is far from being the only comic director who thinks verbally more than visually; the same is true of Mel Brooks, and an overall orientation toward the word rather than the image may have something to do with the nature of Judaism as an oral culture." Not surprisingly, aside from *Fingers*, which derives the greatest part of its potency from lead Harvey Keitel's performance, virtually every single film that Toback has ever directed is either a celluloid abortion with interesting elements (*Love and Money* (1982)) or an awe-inspiringly atrocious joke (*When Will I Be Loved* (2004)), though—to the director's credit—it is not hard to recognize a Toback flick, thus he must be recognized as an 'auteur,' even if he is not exactly a good one. After all, no many other filmmakers make cinematic works with such a shamelessly flagrant mix of pathetic pick-up artist posturing, racially schizophrenic eroticized negrophilia, proto-wigger fetishism, eccentric Jewish ethnocentrism, sexual neurosis, and cuck-ish Mike Tyson worship, among various other deplorable ingredients that put mainstream Hollywood to shame in terms of sheer Judaic degeneracy. Somewhat ironically, Toback's most overtly autobiographical film, *The Gambler*, was directed by someone else (who he apparently hated so much that he vowed to never work with him again), which was ultimately to the film's great artistic benefit. Luckily for Toback, virtually everyone involved with the film was a fellow member of the Hebraic tribe, including Brit-Czech-Jew director Karel Reisz (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Isadora*), stereotype-shattering Jewish tough guy star James Caan, producers Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff, degenerate jazz composer Jerry Fielding (notably, the film also features "Symphony No. 1 in D" by late-Romantic Ashkenazi composer Gustav Mahler), and even cinematographer Victor J. Kemper. Largely autobiographical but also loosely based off of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's short existentialist novella *The Gambler* (1867), Toback's film is, culturally/racially speaking, shamelessly Judaic to the core as a rare mainstream cinematic work where Jewish chutzpah, (sado)masochism, white collar criminality, blonde shiksa worship, and ethnocentrism are central themes. Indeed, no

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one cannot finish the film without coming to the obvious conclusion that Toback is an unsympathetic scumbag that fully deserves (and seemingly desires) the grand misfortunes that he masochistically sires via his own unhinged egomania. In many ways, Toback's outstandingly assholeish autobiographical antihero is an unintentional anti-Semitic racial caricature worthy of Julius Streicher's National Socialist tabloid *Der Stürmer* and, were it not for lead Caan's inordinate Hebraic handsomeness and stoicism, the film might be completely unbearable, even if Reisz is a very capable and even somewhat underrated filmmaker (indeed, for what it is, Reisz's John Fowles adaptation *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981) is nearly immaculate). Although also a member of the tribe, it seems that Reisz highly benefited from coming from a European arthouse background (in fact, it is probably no coincidence that many of cinema history's greatest Jewish filmmakers, ranging from Erich von Stroheim to Josef von Sternberg to Stanley Kubrick, were either European-born and/or worked in Europe).

Before she became a personal friend of Toback and made a disastrous failed attempt to begin a career in Hollywood by working on his all-too-ambitious cinematic abortion *Love and Money* (1982), Pauline Kael wrote a short yet fairly scathing review of *The Gambler* where she focused on the antihero's Hebraic pseudo-aristocratic airs, stating, "The gambler here is a brilliant young Jewish prince, professor of literature to ghetto blacks, and potential great novelist [...] He's as flamboyantly superior as Norman Mailer's *Rojack*, and the prevailing tone of the film is Mailerian dread [...] The script, by James Toback, is a grandiloquent, egocentric novel written as a film; it spells everything out, and the director Karel Reisz's literal-minded, proficient style calls attention to how airless and schematic it is." Herself from a working-class community of Jewish farmers, Kael held a lifelong disgust for wealthy Hebrews and resented the pomposity of the rich liberal protagonist played by Caan, or as Brian Kellow explained in his book *Pauline Kael: A Life in the Dark* (2011): "Toback had in fact come from a well-to-do New York family, while Pauline had come from working-class stock. 'She never liked to talk about being Jewish,' Toback observed. 'It was never anything she really identified with. At the same time, she had a real social and cultural antagonism for Jews she felt were sort of pretenders to society. She felt the character in *THE GAMBLER* was that, and therefore I must be.' To Toback, Pauline's conflicts about being Jewish were securely rooted in her relationship with her father, a working-class man who was looked down on by certain strata of society—in particular, boy other, wealthier Jews." While I rarely agree with Kael's opinions of films, she is right on the mark when she mocks Toback's uniquely unlovable kosher prince, who absurdly plays the self-appointed patron saint of ghetto negroes and athletes while living a disgustingly decadent self-indulgent existence where he pisses away the wealth and opportunities that his rather privileged background afford him. Hardly motivated by empathy, the protagonist's shvartzer fetish seems to be mainly due to his mis-

guided admiration for the stereotypical impulsive, intemperate, and irrational nature of negroes. In short, the titular character is the sort of establishment leftist type that, influenced by the delusional pseudo-scientific Boasian view of race, would deny innate differences among the races, yet adores darkies largely due to exaggerated racial stereotypes that he, as a pampered white collar Israelite, totally lacks. After all, the intriguingly incriminating film was penned by a man that is well known for bragging about engaging in orgies with black football players. Far from a mindless moron that foolishly gambles money he does not have because he is desperate and/or simply does not know better, the antihero is a self-destructive addict and anxiety junky who is quite conscious of the true psychological nature of his vice and its deleteriousness, yet proudly partakes in it anyway while boasting about intentionally making risky gambles instead of safe ones. Indeed, Paramount Pictures took a big risk when they opted to produce the film, as the protagonist is nothing if not a distinctly unlikable mensch-that-you love-to-hate. Surely, one of the things that makes *The Gambler* so special is that it features an eponymous piece of human excrement that the viewer wants to strangle by the end of the film due to his brazen disregard for all good common sense and the effect that his pathologically criminal behavior has on his own loved ones.

As a proud Jew from an affluent family with roots in some Eastern European ghetto who has a racially schizophrenic fetish for both blonde Aryan Shiksas and black athletes (notably, Toback has the same exact obsessions as clearly revealed in his quite literally titled pre-Hollywood book *Jim: The Author's Self-Centered Memoir of the Great Jim Brown* (1971)), Axel Freed (played by James Caan, who was battling a bad cocaine addiction at the time) is in many ways a walking cliché. Axel owes his privileged life to the sweat, blood, and tears of his old school businessman grandfather A.R. Lowenthal (blacklisted Yiddish-speaking kosher commie Morris Carnovsky) who, on top of giving his grandson a good life, taught him to hate Slavs and only date nice Jewish girls. Due to the fact that his father died when he was young, Axel's grandfather also acted as his father figure. Undoubtedly, it is hard to understand Axel and his mentality without knowing a little bit about his beloved grandfather. Indeed, Axel's strong Eastern European Jewish background and anti-goyim sentiment is revealed in a long speech that he gives in tribute to his grandpa's eightieth birthday where he proudly states, "We are living in an age...that subverts the breeding of men like A.R. Lowenthal. In Lithuania, when he was 13...he stuck a knife in the back of a Cossack pig...who had knocked his mother to the ground. At 15, he prowled New York as a bandit...until he had the cash to feed a family of five. At 20, he opened a furniture store, which he built into two, then fifteen, then fifty, then a hundred. Until finally he had the largest chain America had ever seen. But not matter where he went...or what he did...he always found a place for every person bound to him by blood. Your families and your fami-

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lies' families—to say nothing of his own children, my Uncle Hy here...my dear mother Naomi...whose rare intelligence he nurtured...and to whom he gave an extra measure of support...when she was widowed early by my father's death. But I'm the one most deeply in his debt. Because every time I think my reach has stretched too far...I remember the moves that he has dared. So, I drink this toast on his 80th birthday. This man that seized what he wanted with nothing there to back him up...but wit and balls...and will. This killer, this king." Of course, as a man that was born with a kosher silver spoon in his mouth, Axel seems to be at least partly psychologically wounded by the fact that he will never be a truly great man like his completely self-made grandfather. Indeed, while Grandpa Lowenthal might have been born in an Eastern European ghetto, he now lives a life of great luxury in a large mansion where he spends much of his time in his study reading the works of degenerate British philosopher Bertrand Russell while being constantly waited on by a high yellow negro butler.

Undoubtedly, Axel inherited his chutzpah from Lowenthal, but unlike his grandfather, he has never really had to struggle and take risks, so his completely contrived gambles in life have only had mostly had negative consequences. Had Axel been born in a Polish shtetl a couple generations before, he might have grown up to become a NKVD Commissar or a bigwig in Murder Incorporated due to his particular yichus of ancient deep-seated hatred and resentment against the perennial goy enemy, but since he is from a posh yid family he naturally became a negrophiliac quasi-intellectual professor that does ridiculous lectures about how Dostoevsky was cool because he argued against the limits of rationalism and how trying to argue with people that $2 + 2 = 5$ is a bold demonstration of pure will. Of course, with his risky gambling bets, Axel also feels he is expressing his will in a rather visceral fashion, which is extremely important to him because, as he passionately argues to his class during a lecture, "Reason only satisfies man's rational requirements. Desire, on the other hand, encompasses everything. Desire is life." Indeed, unlike the stereotypical Jewish intellectual, Axel absolutely loathes cold and calculated rationalism and rather literally risk his life than drown in a placid sea of bromide bourgeois banality. Axel also seems to (arguably subconsciously) suffer the absurd delusion that by taking insanely irrational risks that he will somehow approach the greatness of his grand-pappy. Naturally, Axel's obsession with irrationalism, desire, and fanaticism also explain his rather ridiculous negrophilia, as he seems to long to be as deleteriously shortsighted as the average dope-peddling ghetto jigaboo. Of course, as all negroes know, you can't fake the funk and Axel will always be a spoiled self-loathing Jew-boy who cannot bear to confront the fact that he is a failed intellectual with an easy ivy league junior professor job who, quite unlike his grandfather, has never had to face real hardship, thus he simply invents said hardship to test the bounds of his own largely empty existence. Naturally, instead of impressing his family with his dangerous risks, he only brings them

shame and disgust.

Despite being a self-destructive Jewish junior professor of literature with not much to offer a woman aside from cold charm and superficial good-looks, Axel has managed to nab a relatively beautiful blonde shiksa named Billie (Lauren Hutton), though he treats her somewhat resentfully, which is probably due to the fact that she is not a bright Jewish physician like his beloved mama. Indeed, Axel truly cares about what others think about his girlfriend and even takes her by his grandfather's house so that the sagely old Semite can judge her. While grandpa Lowenthal is nice to Billie's face and compliments her on her fine Nordic physique and golden hair, he considers her to be completely unworthy of being his grandson's fuck-toy because she lacks Ashkenazi genes and he even goes so far as to tell Axel to immediately break up with her. In fact, grandpa demonstrates his strong racial chauvinism by stating to Axel in regard to Billie after she fails to recognize Walt Whitman's 1855 poem "I Sing the Body Electric" (1855), "She's is not for you. Avoid her. Break it off today. She's not for you [...] She was not meant for a scholar. That girl was meant for a club man, a playboy. Not for a man of character and virtue. Not for a Jew." Naturally, as a relative failure in comparison to his grandpa and mother, Axel's relationship with Billie seems to be largely based on a sense of inferiority. After all, no nice Jewish girl would dare to marry a failed intellectual that regularly gambles away his meager junior professor pay. Of course, Axel does not just treat his girlfriend like shit, as he has also brought great sorrow, worry, and pain to his widowed mother Naomi (Jacqueline Brookes). A practicing physician that seems to have effortlessly assimilated into WASP society, Naomi seems to not suffer from any of the mental problems and vices that plague her prodigal son. When Axel goes into serious debt and ends up owing \$44,000 to some gangster after not following the advice of his guido bookie-cum-comrade 'Hips' (Paul Sorvino), he is ultimately forced to beg his mother to borrow the money. When Axel tells his mother how much he owes by writing the large figure in sand during an initially happy day at the beach, she completely breaks down and hysterically cries, "\$44,000? Are you so naïve, you don't know...what those monsters do with the money you give them? They shoot it right in the arms of ten-year-old schoolchildren. I see them every day at the clinic. My god, Axel. Have I been such a failure...that I've raised a son to have the morals of a snail?" Needless to say, Axel's mother provides him with the money by emptying out a couple of her bank accounts because she realizes that there is a good chance that her sole son will be murdered under brutal circumstances if he does not pay up, but the antihero is such a piece of shit that he almost immediately opts to gamble the money instead of paying his debt. Indeed, aside from gambling on three basketball games for \$15,000 a piece, Axel takes Billie to Las Vegas to flaunt his addiction at some sleazy casinos. While Axel wins a little bit of money at the casinos, he loses all of the money in the basketball bets. Of course, Billie is not too happy when slimy loan sharks break

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into his apartment in the middle of the night and Axel gets somewhat agitated when she dares to complain. After all, a bestial piece of shiksa trash has no right to complain to a wise Jewish prince.

As revealed by his blunt remarks like, "You know what's standing between your skull and a baseball bat? My word," gregarious guido bookie Hips really attempts to convince Axel to immediately pay off his debt lest his brains be bashed out by sadistic Sicilian mafioso goons. In fact, Hips even risks losing his best customer by opening up to Axel and candidly confessing in regard to the stupidity of gambling, "Listen. I'm gonna tell you something I've never told a customer before. Personally, I never made a bet in my life. You know why? Because I've observed firsthand the different types of people that are addicted to gambling. What we would call degenerates. I've noticed that there's one thing that makes all of them the same. You know what that is?" Needless to say, Hips is absolutely flabbergasted when Axel correctly answers his question by retorting, "Yes, they're all looking to lose [...] I could have wiped the floor with your ass. By playing just the games I knew I'd win. Listen, if all my bets were safe, there just wouldn't be any juice." More than winning or losing, Axel gets a major high during the intermediate waiting time before he actually discovers whether he is a winner or loser, hence the seeming incurability of his vice. Somewhat similarly, Axel only seems interested in fucking Billie during the moment before he discovers whether she actually wants it or not. When a sleazy pimp friend offers Axel the opportunity to fuck his attractive girlfriend for free, the protagonist is totally disinterested, as he is not enticed by the prospect of a sure thing. Naturally, Axel seems most aroused during the final thirty minutes or so of the film when his life is in jeopardy and he must find a way to pay his debt or be forced to sleep with the fishes courtesy of local wop mob goons.

After being beaten and kidnapped by the greasy haired soldiers of a mafia boss that he owes money to, Axel is coerced into getting a negro student of his named Spencer (Carl W. Crudup) to rig a basketball game at his university where the spade b-ball star must not win by any more than seven points. Indeed, Jewish liberal hero Axel ultimately exploits Spencer's Afro-African roundball talents for his own benefit just like the Jewish moguls in the NBA like Donald Sterling. While Axel only offers Spencer \$5,000 for his criminal efforts, the protagonist stands to benefit the most monetarily as he will have his entire \$44,000 debt paid off if his student is successful in rigging the game. Before the big game, Axel confronts his grandfather about the fact that he refused to help him with his debts and then brags that he managed to "fix it" himself. When Axel insinuates that he also used similar unsavory businessman tactics to get rich, his grandfather gets angry and proudly declares, "My way? How would you know how I did things? I was as honest as any man with great responsibility ever could be. I dealt with those vipers because I had to...not because I wanted to." Of course, Axel fails to realize that he, quite unlike his grandfather, lacks the intrinsic

sis understanding of the great pride that comes with being a successful self-made businessman of the rags-to-riches oriented sort. Additionally, Axel's grandfather has no respect for the senseless behavior that led to his spoiled grandson acquiring such a quite literally deadly debt.

Although Axel manages to get out of trouble and get rid of his debt when his student Spencer makes good on his deal by rigging the game and winning by less than seven points, the masochistic antihero does not seem all too happy when fate acts in his favor and instead he stares into space with an intense and seemingly insane look on his face. While the protagonist almost seems disappointed that he has absconded a very potentially fatal fate, Hips is so happy that Axel manages to get out of trouble that he wants to celebrate and even offers to pay for a night a celebratory carnality, stating, "Let's get outta here. We'll eat some lasagna, grab some pussy, drink some wine. I'm supplyin'. Come on," but the professor seems possessed by a delusional sense of invincibility due to his good fortunes and decides to celebrate in his own perversely precarious fashion by risking his own life and heading to a whorehouse in a dangerous black ghetto where white people are regularly verbally assaulted just for walking down the street. Although Hips attempts to stop him from entering the both literally and figuratively dark depths of the trash-covered negro neighborhood and yells, "I don't want to lose my best customer. Hey, there's nothin' but cannibals down there. Hey, you can't go down there. You'll get killed!" Axel decides he wants to sample some STD-ridden negress streetwalker pussy. While Axel manages to easily procure said negro pussy, he gets in a fight with the prostitute and steals his money back when she refuses to take all of her clothes off (to the pussy-peddler's credit, she does not want to risk messing up her hair by taking her weave off). When the prostitute's pimp pulls out a knife and puts it up to his throat in an attempt to get the money back, Axel horrifies the negro by daring him to try to kill him by stating, "Why don't you kill me, then you can have the money!" while looking intensely into his eyes. When the pimp demonstrates that he is not the hardcore brotha' he pretends to be and fails to make good on his initial threat, Axel becomes enraged and decides to nearly beat him to death during a somewhat morbid moment where the protagonist reveals that he is not the great champion of ghetto negroes that he pretends to be. Rather revealingly, it is only when the prostitute slashes Axel's face with a knife that the antihero stops brutalizing the pimp. In the end, Axel stumbles out of the hotel room, walks down a staircase while frightened negroes look on, and then reveals a sadistic smile upon admiring the large flesh wound on his cheek after seeing his reflection in a symbolically dirty mirror. Of course, Axel is happy that he has finally acquired the curse of Cain, though the viewer suspects that he will not be truly happy until he is actually killed. In that sense, one could argue that the only true cure for addiction is death.

Notably, in a 2008 interview with Tony Macklin, *The Gambler* star James

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Caan would reveal in regard to his own artistic contribution to the ending of the film and his less than flattering feelings regarding screenwriter Toback, "I put this odd smile at the end, because I knew the real guy James Toback – this real person, who came from a very wealthy Jewish family, and he was a teacher. He was full of crap; he was so crazy. You know how the character coned his way through. The ultimate gamble – fighting with that pimp, walking out in Harlem. When he got his face cut, to me, what that meant, and what that little smile was – he didn't have to hide anymore. His ugliness was now apparent." Undoubtedly, it says a lot about a man when the actor portraying him in an autobiographical film describes him as "full of crap" and "so crazy." As the son of a German-Jewish butcher that grew up in a tough working-class neighborhood in Sunnyside, Queens, NYC that was comprised of wop, mick, and yid families, it is easy to see why Caan could not empathize with the self-destructive hedonism of an upper-class Hebrew like Toback. Of course, considering that Toback is an obnoxious slob of the hardly handsome sort, he owes a great deal to Caan for his contribution to the film. Certainly, the film would not be half as engrossing if a pretentious tub of kosher lard like Toback played himself as the filmmaker's unintentionally humorous quasi-autobiographical cameos in his films *Exposed* (1983) and *When Will I Be Loved* (2004) reveal in a rather glaring manner. Needless to say, it was only natural that a megalomaniac like Toback was far from happy when he discovered that his film was being remade by the same producers as the original film. In fact, Toback was very vocal with the press about his disgust for the film before it ever even began filming (notably, during the pre-production stage, Martin Scorsese was actually set to direct the film). To Toback's minor credit, *The Gambler* (2014) directed by for-hire hack Rupert Wyatt (*Rise of the Planet of the Apes*) and starring lapsed wigger Mark Wahlberg as the eponymous lead is a hopelessly goyish affair that seems to have been made to appeal to sexually confused fratboys and philistine fans of soulless trash like HBO's *Entourage*. Rather bizarrely, despite Jewish characters and themes being more prominent in Hollywood now than any other time in cinema history, the remake is almost totally de-judaized aside from John Goodman portraying a truly grotesque baldheaded Jewish loan shark. Indeed, Wahlberg's pretty boy antihero is hardly the mean Mailerian metaphysical gambler as portrayed by the great kosher screen king Caan in the original film. Not surprisingly considering contemporary Hollywood's compulsion towards rather repulsive cinematic cuckoldry, the remake basks in an almost supernatural level of negrophilia to the point where it features an ostensibly genius gangster-philosopher portrayed by Michael K. Williams that makes the titular protagonist seem like a pathetically stupid white boy with his elegantly expressed words of ghetto wisdom. Undoubtedly, to compare Karel Reisz's *The Gambler* with Wyatt's remake is like comparing Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) to Marcus Nispel's 2003 *trying abortion* or George Sluizer's *Spoorloos* (1988) aka *The Vanishing* to

his own retarded American-audience-friendly 1993 Hollywood remake.

Considering that it features a less than flattering portrayal of a Hebraic quasi-intellectual and even the New York City Jewish community in general, it is actually really not all that surprising that the remake has more to do with so-called 'goyisher mazel' than the insatiable chutzpah of a Hebraic megalomaniac with an unhealthy fetish for shiksa sluts and shtarker thugs. In fact, I would argue that *The Gambler* is only slightly less subversive than Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) in terms of its portrayal of greedy shiksa-defiling Israelite with self-destructive compulsions and vices. In terms of his nihilistic desire to gamble his entire life away despite being extremely privileged and suffering from an acute case of chutzpah that will inevitably lead to his grisly demise, Axel Freed is unquestionably a grotesque Judaic caricature of sorts, thus making it seem all the more perversely poignant that said caricature is autobiographical. In fact, one could argue that Axel Freed is a symbolic of Judea as a whole and the fact that Jews have been collectively expelled from 109 locations since AD250. Of course, like Axel Freed, the Jewish community seems to lack the capacity for self-reflection and suffers from the eternal delusional notion of Judaic blamelessness, as if they believe that they can do no wrong and that every single goy suffers from an inborn form of irrational antisemitism. Indeed, after recently re-watching *The Gambler*, I could not help but be reminded of the conclusion of the text *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin: A Dialogue Between Adolf Hitler and Me* by Uncle Adolf's junky poet mentor Dietrich Eckart, which reads: "The truth," he said, "is, indeed, as you once wrote: one can only understand the Jew when one knows what his ultimate goal is. And that goal is, beyond world domination, the annihilation of the world. He must wear down all the rest of mankind, he persuades himself, in order to prepare a paradise on earth. He has made himself believe that only he is capable of this great task, and, considering his ideas of paradise, that is certainly so. But one sees, if only in the means which he employs, that he is secretly driven to something else. While he pretends to himself to be elevating mankind, he torments men to despair, to madness, to ruin. If a halt is not ordered, he will destroy all men. His nature compels him to that goal, even though he dimly realizes that he must thereby destroy himself. There is no other way for him; he must act thus. This realization of the unconditional dependence of his own existence upon that of his victims appears to me to be the main cause for his hatred. To be obliged to try and annihilate us with all his might, but at the same time to suspect that that must lead inevitably to his own ruin -- therein lies, if you will, the tragedy of Lucifer." While many film reviewers, including Patricia Erens of *The Jew In American Cinema* (1984), might be tempted to describe the eponymous antihero of *The Gambler* as a sort of 'Christ figure,' I think it would be more accurate to describe him as a modern-day Lucifer who is just too much of a fuck-up to be considered a respectable member of the Synagogue of Satan.

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WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN

Karel Reisz (1978)

While it can certainly be argued that the Occident died with the capitulation of the German 6th Army (Wehrmacht) at the Battle of Stalingrad (or as Louis-Ferdinand Céline once stated, “Stalingrad. . . The fall of Stalingrad was the end of Europe. There’s been a cataclysm. Its epicenter was Stalingrad. After that you can say that white civilization was finished, really washed up”), I think it is safe to say that the rapid decline of white America—a decidedly deracinated Euro-mutt population with a rapidly dissolving bastardized WASP culture mixed with other European elements—was more or less officially confirmed with the rather spiritually and culturally corrosive 1960s counterculture movement, so naturally any film that depicts this phenomenon in any way is something that I am very interested in as I can only think of a handful of serious films that even dare to touch, let alone thoughtfully explain, this seemingly apocalyptic paradigm shift. Certainly, at least in an allegorical sense, *Who’ll Stop the Rain* (1978) aka *Dog Soldiers* directed by Czech-born British Jew Karel Reisz (*Isadora*, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*)—a somewhat underrated filmmaker that was not afraid of alienating audiences via a subversive blend of morally dubious antiheroes, cynicism, misanthropy, and less than happy endings—depicts this scenario, even if it was not exactly the director’s true intention. Indeed, when it comes down to it, the genre-defying film is really a largely bleak expression of (post)hippie nihilism featuring a sort of Nietzschean active-nihilist action hero, a doped-up half-heeb heroine, and said heroine’s unhinged passive-nihilist husband. Based on the novel *Dog Soldiers* (1974) by Robert Stone, who co-wrote the script, the film also has the misfortune of being cheaply named after a rock song (in this case a Creedence Clearwater tune, which of course appears throughout the film). Luckily, unlike Sam Peckinpah’s terribly tedious and twaddling trucker turd *Convoy* (1978)—a film named after the 1975 country and western novelty song performed by C. W. McCall—Reisz’s film has much more to offer than simple mindless entertainment for beer-guzzling proles and meth-addled mechanophilic pricks. Luckily, Reisz is certainly one of the more ‘European’ of Judaic filmmakers as even his American films like *The Gambler* (1974)—a film based on a semi-autobiographical screenplay by Judaic pervert James Toback—reveal a style and cerebral essence that has more to do with European arthouse than Hollywood entertainment. After all, *Who’ll Stop the Rain* is nothing if not a pensive yet prodding philosophical bummer that does the seemingly impossible by managing to be one of the most dejecting and suicide-inducing films relating to the Vietnam War that does not really depict any battle scenes from said war. In its depiction of a couple (ex)hippies ostensibly greedily transporting a large amount of drugs (in this case, three kilos of heroin) across the country and ultimately destroying their lives in the process, *Who’ll Stop the Rain* is like

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an intelligent man's *Easy Rider* (1969) as it lacks the inane leftist-boomer agit-prop and anti-redneck hysteria. Notably, the source writer Stone based the lead character, Ray Hicks, off of Beat Generation figure Neal Cassady—a somewhat tragic and self-destructively nihilistic criminal-cum-muse that acted as the inspiration for the character of 'Dean Moriarty' in his pal Jack Kerouac's famous novel *On the Road* (1957)—who he became acquainted with due to their mutual friendship with LSD-addled countercultural novelist Ken Kesey. While the Beats are undoubtedly (somewhat rightly) regarded as proto-hippies, their philosophical roots are somewhat complex and include German conservative revolutionary sage Oswald Spengler's two-volume magnum opus *The Decline of the West* (1918-1922), which was gifted by literary junky William S. Burroughs to Kerouac in 1945 and inspired both writers' obsession with the spiritual and cultural decay of the United States. As *Beatdom Literary Journal* writer Lee McRae noted in his essay *The Plurality of Beat Spirituality* in regard to this imperative Faustian influence, "...Spengler suggests that it is those who are downtrodden and downbeat who will prevail when social structures collapse. Spengler denotes these as the 'fellaheen,' a term originally ascribed to an Arabian peasant or labourer. Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs found that the 'fellaheen' were all around them in America; the underclass, the racially marginalised and the generally inferior were all considered to be part of this much darker but all the more real existence [...] In an article by Stephen Prothero entitled *ON THE HOLY ROAD* he links the Spenglerian notion of the 'fellaheen' to two inspirational Beat figures, Neal Cassady and Herbert Huncke [...] It was only in the hedonism and voyeuristic stability of Neal Cassady where the Beats would begin a new route and move forward in their establishment of a 'New Vision.' What distinguished Cassady from Huncke was a criminality that was awash with pleasure, a larceny of delight regardless of economic reward. This led to Cassady being idolised as a free-thinking Beat contemporary, or as Ginsberg coins in his poem 'Howl,' 'secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Denver – Joy to the memory of his innumerable lays of girls.'" Of course, the film's antihero is a fictional character and might be best described as the hopelessly hotheaded yet surprisingly brilliant blond beast hate-child of Cassady and Rambo. A disgruntled Vietnam War turned merchant marine that moonlights as a pot dealer and has turned his war inward and believes in nothing aside from his own strength and will-to-power, Hicks senselessly decides to risk his life and freedom to transport coke simply for the thrill of helping a friend in a precarious predicament and not because he is compelled by any sort of petty greed. A sort of self-stylized Nietzsche Zen Warrior, Hicks is certainly not afraid to fight but he seems to be hardly interested in joining another army. Indeed, Hicks' philosophy and motivations are arguably summed up in Julius Evola's description of the Beats in *Ride the Tiger* (1961) where the right-wing anarchist philosopher notes that, "The heritage of the precursors of European nihilism has largely been translated,

in these movements of ruined youth, into the crude forms of life as it is lived. An important trait here is the absence of any social-revolutionary motive and the belief that no organized action can change things. That is the difference from the left-wing intellectuals who condemn bourgeois society, and from the nihilists of the past. 'Work, read, prepared in groups, believe, then have your back broken—no thanks, that's not for me,' says one of Kerouac's characters. This is the end result at which the 'revolution' of the left has practically arrived after its triumph, after passing the phase of simple revolt. Camus made it quite plain after the period of his communist illusions: The revolution has betrayed its origins with the constitution of new yokes and a new conformism, more obtuse and absurd than ever." With no political movement or revolution to support, Hicks simply settles for the joy and excitement that comes with any sort of anti-bourgeois rebellion, no matter how stupid and pointless the 'cause,' hence the tragedy of the character.

Of course, there is no denying that director Reisz was, like many of his tribe, a leftist and he attempted to direct the film from that perspective, or as British film theorist Colin Gardner explained in his book *Karel Reisz* (2006), "DOG SOLDIERS is a watershed film in Reisz's career because it marks the culmination of his long relationship to the New Left, beginning with his involvement with the CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] and MARCH TO ALDERMASTON and his theoretical writings on the social role of documentary for UNIVERSITIES AND LEFT REVIEW in the late 1950s. His collaboration with Stone reflects his growing acknowledgement of an irreparable rift between organized politics, rooted in party discipline and commitment to external social change, and the counter-cultural idea of living in and for oneself as a community of enlightened individuals. The former idea was rooted in Marx—a question of changing the world through direct action—the latter in visionary, utopian thinkers such as Emerson, Thoreau and Rimbaud, whereby a change in consciousness will necessitate a concomitant change in life itself." Luckily, aside from being what I see as a symbolic depiction of the death of white America as incited by a degenerate anti-culture and corrupt government, the film seems to be an allegorical expression of Reisz's own dejection in regard to the abject failure of the counterculture movement and how it devolved into mindless self-destruction nihilism, hedonism, and—arguably most hypocritically and revealing—greed. Indeed, although lapsed hippies that are into Nietzsche, the two main male (anti)heroes are set on a course of self-destruction ostensibly out of greed, or to quote Nietzsche by way of Gardner in relation to Reisz's film, "Man would rather will nothingness than not will." In the film, antihero Hicks goes on a senselessly dangerous mission to smuggle dope just for the hell of it but at least it offers him the chance to play the Übermensch and not live by anyone else's rules because, as he states, "When I left the Marines I made myself a promise. Never again am I going to be fucked around by morons. The next

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mother who tries to make me back off is going to have to live it out with me.”

One certainly realizes that Robert Stone's source novel was practically begging to be adapted into a film when reads vintage reviews like that of *The New York Times* that describes it as, “A version of *THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE* in which the object of human greed is not gold dust but three kilograms of pure unadulterated heroin . . . three kilos of heroin that become a resonant metaphor of a corruption spreading across America . . . great power and emotional impact.” It should also be noted that reviewers oftentimes compared the novel to the literary classics of such greats as Ernest Hemingway and Joseph Conrad (in fact, the book begins with a quote from the latter's classic 1899 novella *Heart of Darkness*). Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the film is nowhere near as ‘politically incorrect’ as the novel and does not feature unforgettably hilarious lines like, “He's a Jew from television, a big faggot. We show him the blade, man, he'll shit his pants.” Luckily, the very rotten essence and core aspects of the novel are retained and these things come together in a manner that would more likely appeal to a right-wing anarchist than to a ‘bobo’ (bourgeois bohemian), Limousine Marxist, or burnout boomer hippie bum. After all, it is no coincidence that the film is largely forgotten. Indeed, *Who'll Stop the Rain* contains no ‘positive vibes’ nor ‘California Dreamin’ for some deluded hippie utopia, as the film is a decided downer that, aside from being anti-authoritarian, is not likely to appeal to a leftist pussy with any sort of half-baked peacenik (anti)ethos. Despite the film's Judaic director, it is also somewhat unintentionally covertly counter-kosher, as the female heroine, who causes much trouble for the male leads due to her innate incompetence as a result of being a lazy suburban junky in a perpetual dope haze, is the (half)Jewess daughter of an arrogant Judaic intellectual that owns a bookstore. On top of that, the most despicable villain is depicted by ogre-like kosher character actor Richard Masur, who has clearly mastered the lowclass Jewish gangster caricature. In short, the film is more about the Age of the Aryan American apocalypse than the Age of Aquarius (though it can certainly be argued that they are one and the same). To go back to Nietzsche, the film is certainly a bittersweet reminder of his remark, “We have art in order not to die of the truth.”

The film begins in Saigon at the height of the Vietnam War, but instead of exciting battle scenes involving the gunning down of gooks the viewer is exposed to the uncomfortably monotone ravings of a disillusioned war correspondent named John Converse (Michael Moriarty) as he narrates the words of a letter to his wife Marge (Tuesday Weld) where he complains about the fact that the U.S. military has declared elephants “enemy agents” and rationalizes his dangerous self-destructive plan to smuggle dope, or as he writes, “Dear, Marge. I'm coming home. I remember your saying when I left that people were dying and that I was crapping around with fate to come here. You were more right than you could imagine [...] I have no more cheap morals to draw from all this death. So

I've taken action. An old friend from my marine days will be coming to see you soon. His name is Ray Hicks. We owe him \$1,000. I want you to pay him. I have started something here that I can't stop. And it's the right thing, I know. You see, in a world where elephants are pursued by flying men, people are just naturally going to want to get high. I'll explain when I see you, and you'll understand." Indeed, John has "taken action" in a most irrationally deleterious fashion by agreeing to smuggle three kilos of heroin from Vietnam to San Francisco, but he is somewhat of a passive pansy and uses his much tougher ex-marine buddy Ray Hicks (Nick Nolte)—a merchant marine that sells pot to college girls on the side—to take virtually all the serious risks. As a result of his dubious drug smuggling scheme, Converse causes his wife and best friend to become the hunted in a film that naturally evolves into an offbeat road movie that makes for a nice counterpoint to similarly themed works like Monte Hellman's *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971), Richard C. Sarafian's *Vanishing Point* (1971), and James William Guercio's *Electra Glide in Blue* (1973) in terms of taking a (quasi)existentialist approach to dismantling the counterculture dream. Arguably, out of all these films, *Who'll Stop the Rain* is the most meditative and philosophically ambiguous. Naturally, Hicks uses the merchant marine vessel that he works on to smuggle the drugs, but he initially refuses to get involved with Converse's dubious scheme for obvious reasons. Aside from the great risks associated with smuggling such a large amount of narcotics, Hicks begins to rightly question his old friend Converse's sanity when they reunite. For example, when Converse declares that "Jesus, that's fucking piquant" after discovering that his friend reads Nietzsche, Hicks is somewhat taken aback by the remark and replies, "Piquant? I don't know what the hell that means. You turned me on with that book." In short, Converse seems to have a totally different personality from the one his friend best remembers and seems to be suffering from some degree of amnesia and mental feebleness as if he is on the brink of suffering a similar sorry mental fate to his one-time hero Nietzsche. While Hicks believes it is "bad karma" to smuggle the dope and does not really trust his friend, he ultimately makes the major mistake of agreeing and stating, "Okay, I'll carry your scag, Johnny. Hell, why not? A little adrenaline cleans the blood. But make sure I get treated right. Self-defense is an art I cultivate." Quite unlike his insufferably mercurial pencil-pusher buddy, Hicks is a man of action and martial prowess that has no qualms about inviting great danger into his life, but unfortunately the nihilistic odyssey proves to be ultimately fatal for the manly merchant marine. Unbeknownst to Hicks, Converse set up the drug deal with a dubious dame named Charmian (Gail Strickland), who is friends with a corrupt DEA agent that plans to utilize whatever means necessary to get the dope once it lands on American shores. In short, Hicks became the pawn of a pawn, but he is not all that unwitting about it and immediately suspects danger right from the get-go, hence his interest in the deleterious mission in the first place.

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While Hicks manages to make it safely to San Francisco with the dope, Converse's jaded junky wife Marge forgets that he is coming and does not even bother to procure the money that her husband promised. Indeed, when Hicks arrives at Converse's house to drop-off the bag of junk and get his monetary reward, Marge acts obnoxiously confused and behaves as if her husband's friend is some sort of scary nuisance that she just cannot be bothered to deal with. Unfortunately for Marge, she is forced to deal with it. Indeed, the money is the least of the two's problems as they are being trailed by two gangsters, Danskin (Richard Masur) and Smitty (Ray Sharkey), who work for a corrupt DEA agent named Antheil (Anthony Zerbe). As it turns out, Converse has been being unwittingly used by Antheil as a pawn in the drug smuggling operation and the two goons are there to collect the dope and possibly kill all the occupants of the house, including Marge's/Converse's young daughter Janey, but luckily Hicks proves to be such a fierce fighter that he brutally beats and ties both of them up. A somewhat Loki-like jokester, Hicks even takes a certain sadistic glee in taking out his enemies and even demonstrates a certain tendency to add insult to injury when doing so. In fact, even a sociopathic lowlife like Danskin feels a deep sense of degradation when Hicks dares to chain him to a toilet as if to remind him he is a piece of shit. Despite not knowing or particularly liking one another (for example, only minutes after first meeting, Hicks says to her, "You dumb cooze. What are you, a junkie?"), Marge and Hicks are forced to flee together in what is ultimately the beginning of a totally unintended but rather crucial road trip where they hope to sell the dope whilst attempting to evade Antheil and his goons. Needless to say, Antheil has Danskin and Smitty capture and torture Converse when he finally arrives in San Francisco. A decidedly dejected dude that seems completely dead inside, Converse maintains his flat affect and acts less than entertained by the torture and bogus claims by Danskin and Smitty that his buddy Hicks is banging his wife. Seemingly apathetic about even sparing his own life, Converse spews banal nonsensical bullshit to Antheil when questioned. For example, when Antheil asks for information about his wife Marge and her mindset, Converse simply replies with the enthusiasm of a benzo-addled street hooker, "She's 30 years old. She's half Irish, half Jewish" and "Pretty moral basically," thus underscoring his great apathy for his wife and seemingly lack of interest in sparing his own life. Indeed, it only seems to be when Antheil threatens to do something to his daughter that Converse begins to display any sort of superficial desire to help. While Converse's initial desire to get involved with drug smuggling seems like an absurdly misguided and desperate attempt at becoming some sort of neo-Beat Übermensch, his actions and attitude reveal he really personifies a degenerate form of Nietzsche's 'Letzter Mensch,' albeit lacking even the desire for comfort. While Antheil is a treasonous criminal scumbag, he manages to perfectly sum up Converse's pitiful leftist hypocrisy and amorality when he states to him, "I think you're the kind of wise cocksucker that writes a

tear-jerk play against the Marines and then turns around and smuggles a shit-load of heroin into this country.” Indeed, while Converse might be against the Vietnam War and mass slaughtering of gooks, he has no qualms about profiting from the epidemic misery, death, and destruction that comes with the flooding of his nation with heroin which is, not coincidentally, the drug that destroyed the counterculture movement. Indeed, in *Who’ll Stop the Rain*, heroin is certainly a symbol of the greed and mindless hedonism the destroyed utopian dreams of the hippies and ultimately discredited their entire movement.

While Marge is a closet-junky that regularly semi-covertly downs Dilaudid (aka Hydromorphone) tablets, Hicks gets high on Nietzsche, Zen, and great risk-taking. For example, after reading to her the Nietzsche quote, “In danger all that counts is going forward. By growing used to danger, a man can allow it to become part of him. He grows used to evil,” Hicks reveals to Marge that he agreed to smuggle the dope for her husband simply, “Because he asked me,” adding, “I don’t always have to have a reason for the shit I do.” As demonstrated by his remark to Marge in regard to the heroin that, “It belongs to whoever controls it,” Hick certainly believes in and lives by a Nietzschean master-morality, which was indubitably informed by his wartime experiences. Although totally doped up, Marge is well aware that her husband came back a very different man as a result of his wartime experiences, but when she asks Hicks about how these horrific events might have affected her hubby, he simply states, “In some ways he was beautiful. In some ways he had his head up his ass.” Although he is initially annoyed by her dopey dopehead demeanor and she is initially disturbed by his combination of redblooded brute violence and intense extroversion, Hicks and Marge soon develop such a glaringly socially imperative yet totally organic affection for one another that the viewer finds themselves rooting for their romance despite the great betrayal associated with such an extramarital union. Quite unlike like the mercurially autistic absurdities of her husband, Hicks is exactly the sort of man a damaged dingbat like Marge needs as he could provide her with the sense of protection, security, and strong male affection she desperately needs. Of course, the viewer never doubts that their romance is doomed to fail miserably just like the drug smuggling operation.

After making a failed attempt to sell the dope to a fat fag friend named Eddie Peace (Charles Haid)—a Hollywood-connected dealer that seems like the sort of degenerate that prides himself on having a harem of underage boys—and nearly killing an English writer named Gerald (James Cranna) by intentionally shooting dope into a vein in the wrong fashion after his preposterously effete comrade insults his intelligence by brazenly attempting to rip him off, Hicks loses some of his stoicism and exposes his truly misanthropic feelings in regard to most of humanity to a visibly disturbed Marge. Indeed, when Marge asks why he almost killed an assumed innocent like Gerald—the seemingly soft and innocent husband of a similarly naive heiress—he angrily replies, “Cause he’s a

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Martian. They're all Martians. And I'm a loyal American who fought for my flag. Peace was fucking with me and I don't take shit from Martians. In Vietnam I had men that were dead the day they hit that place. In the morning they were in Hawaii, in the afternoon they were dead. That's right, fuck Gerald. I was pissed off. It seemed like a good idea." At this point, it becomes quite clear that Hicks is a disgruntled war veteran with assumed repressed posttraumatic stress and he is probably not mentally sound enough to ever reenter the American mainstream, so naturally it is only fitting that he go on one more serious military mission.

After the botched dope deal with Eddie, Hicks drives west with Marge in a stolen Land Rover to a southern New Mexico mountain named 'El Ojo Grande' (aka 'The Big Eye') to hide out in a former Jesuit settlement turned hippie colony that is owned by the antihero's German Buddhist roshi-cum-pal Dieter Pravda (who, rather curiously, never actually appears in the film despite being an important character in the source novel). As Hicks nostalgically explains to Marge, he did much partying on the mountain in the past and even rigged the entire area with tons of lights and speakers, even remarking with a certain jolly pride, "You know, when I came up here in '65, there were all kinds of people here. Dieter hauled in a couple of tons of hardware. He had speakers, amplifiers, tape decks, microphones, all kinds of lights. Came in and said we'd got to get it all together. Hook it all up. One big circuit. Well, I'm the only one that knows anything about that shit. So I get the job. Everybody else is so ripped, they couldn't change a battery in a Jap radio. I'm laying wire from hell to breakfast. Took me about four weeks. And half the time I'm so stoned I couldn't even talk. But by Christ we did it. One big circuit. Man, we made this mountain boogie." Needless to say, little did Hicks ever suspect that he would ever use the lights and speakers as imperative weapons in a sort of neo-cowboy guerilla battle against a DEA agent and his goons. It is certainly no coincidence that Hicks decides to return to the magic mountain of his bohemian youth in the end as it is clearly a solacing and even spiritual place that reminds him of his life before his emotionally devastating wartime experiences. While at the mountain, Hicks reveals his feelings for and desire to runaway with Marge, softly stating to her, "We're going to win this one. You know that? Huh? Listen. If we can lay that stuff of, we'll go down to Mexico. I know some people there. Hey, hey, maybe we'll get a boat." In fact, Hicks even remarks to a Mexican friend in regard to Marge that she's, "Nothing but class. She's the love of my life, no shit. Beats the hell out of all of them." Rather unfortunately, both Hicks and Marge seem to realize that they have no future together, even if they are spared the wrath of the degenerate DEA agent Antheil.

Rather predictably, there is a climatic showdown of sorts between Hicks and Antheil and his goons near the end of the film. Indeed, in what proves to be a psychedelic battle that vaguely anticipates the more viscerally hallucinatory ele-

ments of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Hicks guns down Antheil's degenerates as a light show and Canadian country singer Hank Snow's 1950 single "The Golden Rocket" provides a certain absurdist ambience to the situation as if the counterculture movement and the war it opposed are depicted in a symbolic struggle. While Hicks efforts lead to him being able to rescue his friend Converse and reunited him with his wife Marge, the friends decide to temporarily separate since the antihero wants to provide cover for his comrades. Although the friends agree to meet the next day near some desert train tracks, Hicks is severely wounded after being shot by Danskin, who he subsequently kills only seconds later. When Converse and Marge eventually arrive the next morning, they are distressed to discover Hicks' recently deceased corpse near the tracks in a scenario that was inspired by Beat figure Neal Cassady's somewhat mysterious death in 1968 (notably, Nolte would subsequently portray Cassady in John Byrum's somewhat underrated film *Heart Beat* (1980)). Indeed, Marge immediately cries, "No, no, no, no, Ray! Ray! No, he's not dead." When Converse replies, "Marge, I've got to bury him," she demonstrates her hysterical degree of denial by senselessly hitting him while yelling, "No. You're not going to bury him. Don't you touch him. Don't you dare touch him. Get out of here. Get away." After Marge eventually calms down, Converse buries Hicks' corpse and then, upon finding the heroin in his dead pal's bag, pours the dope in the sand in what is ultimately one of the most infuriating gestures of passive-nihilism ever committed to celluloid. In the end, Converse says to Marge, "Move over, Marge. If we stay here and grieve, we'll be just as dead as he is" and then the two drive away into a white desert devoid to a decidedly dubious future. Needless to say, the film would probably have had a slightly happier ending if Converse had died and Hicks became Marge's new lover. Of course, with the alpha-male dead and the less than happily married couple comprised of a neurotic junky and self-destructive beta-male introvert driving off into what visually seems like oblivion, the film's conclusion can certainly be symbolic of the white America's forsaken future.

There is no question that *Who'll Stop the Rain* and the novel it was adapted from were both influenced by Nietzschean philosophy, which is arguably most obviously personified by the two very different male leads. Indeed, while John Converse is an expression of the sort of 'passive nihilism' that Nietzsche bemoaned as expressed by his obnoxious 'will to nothingness' and overall absurd ascetic weakness that he tries in vain to transcend with his idiotic drug smuggling scheme, Ray Hicks—a proud 'Zen Warrior' and archetypal man-of-action—embodies 'active nihilism' as a muscular mensch of strength that seeks to destroy the world and recreate it in his own image, so it is only fitting that he, not unlike the revolutionary counterculture movement he was part of, dies in the end. Notably, in his book *Karel Reisz* (2006), Colin Gardner would argue, "...it would be a mistake to say that the film condones the characters' misguided existentialism [...] Reisz undercuts the subjective indulgence of both Converse and Hicks

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to draw attention to the dangers of an immoral individualism by portraying both the war and its seeming antidote, the escapism of the drug culture, as twin jaws of the same trap. Both men turn to Nietzsche's amor fati from a helpless sense of the absurdity of war, but they apply its tenets in very different ways." In his (pseudo)autobiography *Ecce Homo* (1908), Nietzsche wrote, "My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendacity in the face of what is necessary—but love it." While the two characters have undoubtedly accepted their fates, it is doubtful that they 'love it' and would embrace the Nietzschean idea of 'eternal recurrence' in that they are so content with life that they would relive every second of the same exact life over and over again for eternity. While his wartime experiences have turned Converse into such an emotional cripple that he can barely even remember reading Nietzsche, Hicks' battle scares have influenced him to be able to live life 'beyond good and evil.' As Gardner noted, "Like Converse, Hicks' existentialism in the novel is born of a traumatic episode in Vietnam [...] Since then Hicks has adopted Nietzsche's idea of will-to-power through a Zen-like faith in the Samurai code (a poster for Akira Kurosawa's *YO-JIMBO* hangs by the door of his Topanga Canyon hut) [...] This allows him to see events less in terms of right and wrong, but like Nietzsche [...] as a question of pure Machiavellian power. The heroin for Hicks, as he explains to Marge, is simply another object, which belongs to whoever controls it, and he follows its trail logically and unquestionably to the bitter end."

Needless to say, judging by *Who'll Stop the Rain*, one can only assume that Reisz thought very little of Nietzsche's philosophies and the characters of Hicks, but as Carl Jung once wrote, "The Jewish race as a whole – possesses an unconscious which can be compared with the 'Aryan' only with reserve. Creative individuals apart, the average Jew is far too conscious and differentiated to go about pregnant with the tensions of unborn futures. The 'Aryan' unconscious has a higher potential than the Jewish; that is both the advantage and disadvantage of a youthfulness not yet fully weaned from barbarism." Indeed, the same 'barbaric' Aryan spirit, which is totally alien to the Jew, that led to the conquering of North America and creation of the United States is also the same healthy 'barbarian' spirit that leads to Hicks' demise. While the more Jew-like character Converse (and his half-Jewish wife) survives, he achieved none of the glory of his dead friend and is plagued to live the rest of his days as the same miserable banal fellow that he always was. Had *Who'll Stop the Rain* been directed by an Aryan like Sam Peckinpah or even a self-described "Zen Fascist" Jew like John Milius, it probably would have had a much more overt and nuanced Nietzschean edge. On the other hand, one of the most interesting aspects of the film is the director Reisz's critical approach to the subject matter, which is certainly more nuanced than Alfred Hitchcock's critique of the idea of the Ni-

etzschean Übermensch in his Leopold and Loeb inspired psychological-thriller *Rope* (1948).

While it would take the so-called 'acid fascism' of Charles Manson to put the final nail in the already-corroded coffin of the counterculture movement, Michelangelo Antonioni seemed to cinematically prophesize such a forsaken fate for the subculture with *Blow-up* (1966), which he unequivocally confirmed with the bizarre surrealist ending of *Zabriskie Point* (1970). In the Maysles brothers doc *Gimme Shelter* (1970), Mick Jagger is arguably even depicted coming to the realization that the movement is dead in real time as he watches himself performing "Under My Thumb" while a 18-year-old negro named Meredith Hunter is being stabbed to death by a Hells Angel at the 1969 Altamont Free Concert. In the little-seen (non)cult film *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* (1970) starring a very young and then-unknown Don Johnson, it is demonstrated the counterculture is dead and that even the coolest and most intelligent of hippies sometimes commit suicide as the movement is a soul-destroying spiritual dead-end. In Ivan Passer's masterpiece *Cutter's Way* (1981), it is revealed that over a decade after the end of the Vietnam War and death of the counterculture movement, the wounds of war and drug addiction are still very fresh, thereupon underscoring the distinctly deleterious long-term effects of hippie hedonism and the shallow anti-authority (pseudo)ethos that accompanied it. I could go on and on, but I think it is safe to say that *Who'll Stop the Rain* features the most nuanced depiction of the seemingly perennial dark clouds that followed the so-called 'Summer of Love' and how these things contributed to the death of white America. If one sees the final scene of the film where Converse and his wife are driving away in a seemingly endless desert as an allegorical depiction of the aimless road to nowhere that white America has taken since the late-1960s, then one can only imagine that, after four decades, that very same road would now be full of infernal potholes and beat-up cars full of drunken illegal aliens and that the once-barren landscape is now increasingly flooded with every and any sort of forsaken brown person from around the world.

Notably, in his text *The Dispossessed Majority* (1972), which was written nearly half a century ago, American racialist writer Wilmot Robertson noted that American cinema no longer represented the character of the country's white majority population, or as he explained, "The ban on displays of Majority ethnocentrism in art—a ban written in stone in present-day American culture—also reaches back to the Majority cultural past. Chaucer and Shakespeare have been cut and blue-penciled and some of their work put on the minority index. The motion picture of Charles Dickens's *OLIVER TWIST* had a hard time being released in the United States because of the recognizably Jewish traits of Fagin. The masterpiece of American silent films, *THE BIRTH OF A NATION*, can no longer be shown publicly without the threat of picket lines, while Jewish-produced black 'sexploitation' films like *MANDINGO* (1975), replete

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with the crudest racial slurs against whites, are shown everywhere.” Of course, in a world where a mundanely minimalistic coming-of-age film about a gay negro dope dealer like Barry Jenkins’ *Moonlight* (2016) wins countless highly coveted awards, including the Academy Award for Best Picture, it is quite clear that things have gotten much more aesthetically and racially degenerate and that the white majority has seemingly given up on making its own true organic cinema, but such is the predictable fate of a nation where a subversive culture-distorting racial minority owns and/or runs all the major film studios despite only making up about 2% of the population (though one can certainly argue that lame independent movements like Mumblecore represents a genuine white movement, albeit of the spiritually neutered and largely racially deracinated post-bourgeois sort).

Undoubtedly, the only reason a somewhat ‘illiberal’ film like *Who’ll Stop the Rain* even exists is because it covertly (and, largely, seemingly unintentionally) depicts white American’s decline (also, it probably does not hurt that it was directed by a British Jew). Despite being a Jewish leftist, auteur Reisz was always dubious of leftists movements, at least starting with his commie family comedy *Morgan – A Suitable Case for Treatment* (1966), or as Gardner explained, “However, while Reisz’s skeptical indictment of Morgan’s madcap, symbolic lip-service to Marxist icons seemed both prescient and justified in 1966, when the British New Left were mired knee-deep in theoretical debate, *DOG SOLDIERS* seems to be fighting a rearguard action in a factional war that has already been lost. If there were any doubt, then *EVERYBODY WINS*, Reisz’s final entry into the political stakes (in which Nick Nolte once again plays a compromised seeker of truth), is clear proof that only an absurdist cynicism can prevail when conventional moral values have lost all meaning.” Of course, only an extremely self-destructive absurdist cynicism can prevail in a country where minorities—whether they be racial, sexual, social, etc.—are pampered at the great expense of the majority, hence the real implicit appeal of ‘Donald Trump’s Make America Great Again’ campaign. If America is to survive, at least in any healthy organic form, I think one should remember Ray Hicks’s rather simple yet poignant words, “All my life I’ve been taking shit from inferior people. No more.” After all, the United States is a nation sown in rebellion by Eurypid rebels. While it is easy to write-off *Who’ll Stop the Rain* antihero Hicks as a sociopath, I would argue that he largely personifies everything that once made America great as a fearless and heroic rebel that is willing to risk death out of loyalty his friends, which can hardly be said of the many boomer dopers of his era. After all, as Evola noted in his insightful 1968 essay *Youth, Beats, and Right-Wing Anarchists* featured in his late book *The Bow and the Club* (1968), “...I agree with the claim made by some Beats that—contrary to what psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and ‘social workers’ believe—in a society and civilization such as ours, and especially the American one, it is generally in the rebel,

the misfit and the antisocial person that the healthy man is to be found. In an abnormal world, all values are inverted: it is precisely the one who appears abnormal in relation to the existing milieu who is most likely to be 'normal' and to preserve some vital energy. I cannot agree at all with those who would like to 'rehabilitate' such individuals, whom they regard as sick, and to 'readapt' them to 'society.' One psychoanalyst, Robert Lindner, had the courage to state this explicitly." Indeed, in a world where 'diversity is our strength' is the most common corporate/government mantra, people with two digit IQs are considered equal to people with three digit IQs, autogynephiles are considered sane enough to read books to elementary school children, miscegenation is a fad, disability is a virtue, Hebraics are lauded as world history's greatest humanists, killing ones unborn baby is regarded the most imperative 'female right,' and an overall slave-morality reigns, it is hard to imagine why anyone would want to be considered normal. In that sense, smuggling heroin as a sort of Nietzschean thrill seems sane by comparison; or, as Ernst Jünger once remarked, "better a criminal than a bourgeois," especially when the current bourgeoisie is largely comprised of box-wine and Xanax addicted feminists and soy-soaked sods, fanboys, and ethno-masochists.

-Ty E

THE MAFU CAGE
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Karen Arthur (1978)

In past centuries during the good old European colonial days, it was no uncommon for degenerate European artists, especially those of the deracinated and sexually introverted sort, to seek exile in exotic foreign lands. Indeed, after giving upon poetry for good before even turning 21, Symbolist poet and scandalous libertine prick Arthur Rimbaud lived everywhere from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) to Harar, Ethiopia (in fact, he was apparently the third European to have ever set foot in the city) before having to return to his native France upon abruptly acquiring bone cancer, having his leg amputated, and soon dying on November 10, 1891 at the premature age of 37. Additionally, frog commie cocksucker André Gide's writings were oftentimes inspired by his dubious travels and sexual escapades in places ranging from Arab Algiers to the decidedly dark Congo. Of course, alpha-Beat William S. Burroughs' writings were inspired by similar experiences as a perennial wanderer who lusted after the young boys he met while living abroad in third world hellholes like the South African Amazon and Morocco. Naturally, one of the reasons certain artists and left-wingers in general support so-called multiculturalism is that it allows them the opportunity to easily fulfill their fetishes for melanin-privileged people without even having to leave their homelands. In rather bizarre and inexplicable 'mainstream arthouse' horror-melodrama hybrid *The Mafu Cage* (1978) aka *Don't Ring the Doorbell* aka *Deviation* aka *The Cage* aka *My Sister, My Love* directed by Karen Arthur (*The Jacksons: An American Dream*, *True Women*) is intriguing in that takes the stereotype of the degenerate white xenophile and takes it to ungodly extremes in a somewhat anomalous and surely aberrant film that belongs to the unofficial psychotic woman subgenre. Adapted from the play *Toi et les nuages* aka *You and Your Clouds* by fairly unknown French playwright Éric Wesphal, Arthur's curious cult enigma depicts a crazed and pathologically 'Afrocentric' chick whose glaring lack of sanity seems to be, at least partially, the result of the fact that she grew up running around with negro tribesmen because her father was some sort of kooky cultural anthropologist who had an undying fetish for living among savages. Indeed, in Arthur's fairly forgotten film, racial schizophrenia and general psychopathy are closely intertwined in a work about a rich white girl who grew up in various Africa jungles that will stop at nothing to pretend that she is still living in said African jungles.

Starring exceedingly eccentric squeaky-voiced blonde Jewess Carol Kane (*Hester Street*, *Annie Hall*) in what is unequivocally the most patently perverse and perturbing performance of her eclectically quirky career as a decided deranged dame of the quasi-autistic/psychotic sort whose less than conventional upbringing living among Pygmies and other African negro tribesmen has inspired her to live in a highly hermetic fantasy realm of her own making involving African tribal

masks and artifacts, real living and breathing orangutans that she murders when she gets tired of them, and one-person avant-garde blackface performance art performances, among other things, *The Mafu Cage* is a strikingly strange and ultimately tragic tale of quasi-incestuous sisterly co-dependence about a crazed cunt and the unwavering negligence of her anally retentive enabler sister-cum-caretaker. The second of only three features directed by Ms. Arthur following her rarely-seen psycho-bitch arthouse debut *Legacy* (1975) and preceding the dreamlike thriller *Lady Beware* (1987) starring Diane Lane, the film demonstrate that the auteuress actually has a distinct vision that was almost surely mispent in the bottomless pit known as the television world where she would direct almost fifty different TV movies and TV series during her 40+ year career. Like Robert Aldrich's *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) meets Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) meets the Maysles brothers' *Grey Gardens* (1975) as seemingly directed by an Afrocentric feminist dyke with a very personal disdain for the white bourgeoisie, *The Mafu Cage*—a work that features the intriguing aesthetic theme of 'Africa vs. The Victoria era'—is a film that some will love and most will probably hate but surely something that no one will ever forget. After all, Ms. Kane was probably the first Hebrew to sport blackface since the days of Al Jolson when Israelites became sort of proto-wiggers by playing and promoting degenerate jazz.

Before he kicked the bucket, an eccentric African primatologist/anthropologist told his eldest daughter Ellen (Lee Grant of Norman Jewison's *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) and David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001)) regarding her younger sister, "Give Cissy freedom to create her own familiar environment [...] for civilized institutions have no understanding of the soul of a wild thing." Apparently, the anthropologist was one of those liberal quacks that did not know how to discipline his kids so he lied to himself and everyone else by regularly proclaiming that, "All brilliant children are eccentric," as an excuse to pretend that his clearly mentally damaged daughter was fine and did not need any help, even though she tends to randomly get murderously violent. Indeed, little Cissy (Carol Kane) is a conspicuously crazed cunt of the absurdly Afrocentric sort who is watched over by her sister in a large old mansion filled with primitive negro artifacts that were left to them by their dear daddy. Cissy is totally obsessed with owning and playing with monkeys that she lovingly calls "Mafu," but she always ends up killing these poor primates during her various mental breaks. While Cissy is rather bestially visceral and artistically-inclined as a gal that goes somewhat grotesque sketches of monkeys and unclad women, her sister Ellen is the complete opposite as a fiercely frigid and ultra logical astrologist with next to nil visible emotions aside from the occasional melancholy stare. At the beginning of the film, Ellen comes home from work and finds her sister Cissy gardening with no clothes on aside from a goofy hat, so she tells her little sis to get dressed, stating, "I mean decently covered, like the young lady mother and I tried to raise you

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to be. I think sometimes you'd rather be back in Africa running naked with your nasty little playmates," to which her sassy sibling replies, "They were not nasty. They were the best friends I ever had... Besides you and daddy, of course." One might assume Cissy is mentally disturbed as a result of running around naked with negroes as a child, but her particularly penetrating psychosis is clearly much deeper than that and seems to be something she was born with. In fact, Cissy's hardcore negrophilia seems to be the only thing keeping her from going completely insane, as she cannot stand the real world and real people and has created pseudo-jungle in her living room as a safe space where she can act like a moron in peace and comfort.

A perennial woman-child who has an extravagant shrine to her deceased daddy that she regularly prays to and who says things like, "I hope I do die. I hope I do... then I could talk to daddy again. I try and talk to him now... It's very difficult. I don't know how to talk to people – living or dead," Cissy is indubitably a girl that lives in a fantasy world of her own making. Aside from her eccentric Eleetra complex and tendency to wear only colorful and flamboyant African clothes that make her seem like a culturally schizophrenic hippie jackass, Cissy also has an irrational fear of men and has maintained what seems like a lifelong lesbian relationship with her sister Ellen, who would like to have a male lover and start a family but has already promised to dedicate her life to taking care of her less than sane sibling. When Cissy murders her latest 'Mafu' (aka monkey) during a fit of rage and then bathes in it's blood, she absurdly immediately begs her sister to get her a new pet primate by stating childish things like, "My daddy understands. I know my daddy understands that he wants me to have a new Mafu," but Ellen will not budge as reflected in her remark "not impressed by childish blackmail," so the cracked chick decides to use suicidal emotional blackmail as a rather desperate last ditch effort to get what she wants. Indeed, Cissy threatens to kill herself and then slits her wrist to coerce her sister into getting a new Mafu, so Ellen gives in and calls her father's friend 'Zom' (Will Greer of John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* (1966) and the popular TV show *The Waltons* (1971–1981)) to get a new monkey. Although Zom is well aware that Cissy has murdered all the previous Mafus, he reluctantly agrees to "loan" an orangutan to the wicked wild child. Zom also give Cissy an scarecrow that was used by Pygmies to scare away idol-worshiping Bantu tribesmen from destroying what the old man describes as the, "oldest living example of primitive man on earth." Of course, Zom makes a major mistake by lending the orangutan to Cissy.

Aside from being an enabler who allows her mentally sick sister to literally get away with murder, Ellen also uses Cissy as an excuse as to why she has no boyfriend or personal life, as she seems to be afraid of such emotional things even though she desperately longs for male love and affection. Naturally, Cissy is jealous of Ellen's interest in men and accuses of her "wanting to get married

and have children,” adding, “You think a woman who hasn’t had children isn’t a real woman.” Of course, as an innately sexually and emotionally immature little lady who literally goes crazy and suffers a major mental meltdown if a man simply taps her on the shoulder, Cissy seems ashamed of the fact that she will never be a real and full woman and rather resents the fact that her sister actually desires such things. Ellen’s coworker David (James Olson of *The Andromeda Strain* (1971) and *Commando* (1985)) is deeply in love with her and she more or less feels the same way about him, but she is too terribly afraid to act on her feelings because she is inexperienced and knows that her wack-job sister will be consumed with violent rage and jealousy if she starts a serious relationship with a man. It is more than implied throughout the film that Ellen has an incestuous lesbo relationship with Cissy, who states to herself while giving her an overtly erotic body massage, “I just love making you feel so good. Your skin feels so smooth...it’s just like velvet [...] It’s like I’m touching you and myself at the same time...like we’re the same person. Is that what love is? Not just sacrificing to make someone else happy but being that happiness, that person.” In another creepy pseudo-intimate ‘love’ scene, Cissy states to Ellen while lying naked with her in bed, “You used to be so beautiful. You still are sometimes when you’re naked with me. It’s been a longtime since anyone but me stroked your breasts...Made you gush.” When Cissy ends up brutally murder the orangutan by beating it to death with its own chains, Zom attempts to convince Ellen that she must get a personal life and have her sister institutionalized if her mental health does not get any better. Ultimately, Ellen decides to leave Cissy behind and go on a work trip while promising to David that she will finally proceed with their romance. Unfortunately for Ellen, David makes the unwittingly foolish mistake of deciding to go by his lover’s home while she is away on business and Cissy ultimately decides to make the poor scientist her latest involuntary Mafu, thereupon have completely deleterious consequences.

When David enters Ellen and Cissy’s mansion, the only thing he can say is “Jesus Christ” upon seeing a large monkey cage, which is certainly the ‘centerpiece’ of the large home, and hundreds upon hundreds of ancient primitive African artifacts. Needless to say, David is quite delighted when Cissy tells him that Ellen has described him as “warm and wonderful” and that she sincerely wants to be with him. Ultimately, David makes the mistake of agreeing to get drunk on wine with Cissy and engaging in African tribal dances with her. During one of these goofy dances, David causes Cissy to suffer a mental breakdown merely by touching her in a completely harmless. After coercing David into allowing her to put shackles on him and complaining about how her last orangutan would get erections (she seems completely ignorant about heterosexual sex and the male gender), Cissy makes him her new Mafu, though it does not last long as the deranged dame has a hard time handling the verbal aggression of her latest monkey, who does not take too kindly to being locked up in a cage like an

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animal. Indeed, after David dares to scream for help and attempts to attack his kidnapper when she tries to get him to drink some water, Cissy decides to sport blackface and pseudo-ritualistically murder the scientist by bludgeoning him to death with some sort of African club. After maliciously murdering David in a freakishly cold and detached fashion that totally exemplifies her complete and utter lack of empathy for other human beings, Cissy bathes in the man's blood as if it gives her a great sense of solace that borders on a totally transcendental spiritual experience. When Ellen finally gets back from her seemingly fruitful trip, she is quite delighted to see that Cissy seems uncharacteristically mentally balanced and in good spirits, but when she eventually notices David's car outside her home, she assumes the worst and completely loses it after her greatest fears are confirmed upon discovering a sketch that her sister drew of her boyfriend as a monkey. In a sort of role reversal of their sick 'symbiotic relationship' of incestuous co-dependence, Ellen becomes the 'caged animal' and is chained in the Mafu cage by her sister. With her sole male suitor dead and her sister reaching a place of no return in terms of totally malevolent mental derangement, Ellen decides to commit passive self-slaughter by refusing to eat and going on a suicidal hunger strike of sorts (which is notably and not coincidentally something that Cissy threatened to do at the beginning of the film). After Ellen finally croaks, Cissy creates a large sicko Sapphic mural in tribute to her dead sister inside in the Mafu cage where she ultimately locks herself inside so that she can reunite with her sister via death by starvation.

Admittedly, I decided to watch *The Mafu Cage* after reading about it in the book *House of Psychotic Women: An Autobiographical Topography of Female Neurosis in Horror and Exploitation Films* (2012) where Canadian author Kier-La Janisse makes comparisons between her own lifelong female hysteria and neuroticism and that of characters in classic cult, horror, and exploitation films. Though Arthur's film is certainly somewhat kitschy, it also dares to authentically depict the bizarre behavior of some of the less mentally stable members of the fairer sex. While ostensibly an exotic Sapphic horror-thriller featuring the striking novelty of both Afrocentric and Art Deco aesthetics, Karen Arthur's film is really a sort of psycho-sexual crypto-arthouse chamber piece disguised as debauched celluloid trash that features a dichotomous depiction of the two complimentary extreme of female psychosis in the form of two extremely different but more or less equally unhinged sisters who suffer from a foreboding form of codependence that ultimately pushes both of them over the edge and into a personal pandemonium of no return that reaches its climax in self-obliteration. Undoubtedly *The Mafu Cage* also superficially follows in the tradition of the classic 'Grande Dame Guignol' exploitation subgenre, but what makes it notably different is that it stars two relatively young and up-and-coming beauties instead of washed-up old hags and was directed by an actual woman as opposed to old queens like Curtis Harrington (*What's the Matter with Helen?*, *Whoever*

Slew Auntie Roo?) or Silvio Narizzano (Fanatic aka Die! Die! My Darling!). Unquestionably, another interesting and unforgettable aspect of the film is its strangely addictive harpsichord musical score by Roger Kellaway (Evilspeak, The Silent Scream), which somewhat resembles the one featured in the avant-garde counterculture short *The Bed* (1968) directed by James Broughton. Indeed, in terms of its various seemingly contradictory idiosyncratic aesthetic ingredients, you probably will not find a more bizarre and preternatural quasi-mainstream film of its time than *The Mafu Cage*, which is certainly a work that was doomed to obscurity right from the get go but is surely deserving of the small cult following that it has acquired over the nearly four decades since it was originally released.

While *The Mafu Cage* had the honor of being the opening film at the tenth anniversary of Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival where auteur Arthur got to hold hands simultaneously with Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, the film was naturally a box office flop that certainly did nothing to help the director's career, hence why she would only direct one more feature film and spend the rest of her career as a relatively success 'TV auteur' that was responsible for made-for-TV agitprop like the venomous feminazi flick *The Rape of Richard Beck* (1985) and the putrid Zionist propaganda piece *Evil in Clear River* (1988). Indeed, while *The Rape of Richard Beck* depicts archetypal tough guy Richard Crenna as a pigheaded cop who believes rape victims "bring it upon themselves" and ultimately learns the error of his misogynistic ways after being raped himself, *Evil in Clear River* stars Randy Quaid in a role based on real-life 'heretic' James Keegstra about a respected high school teacher who becomes the first Canadian convicted of the bogus crime of 'hate speech' due to the less than Semantically correct things that he says about the Jews. It should be noted that Arthur really went to great extremes to get *The Mafu Cage* made, so it does not surprise me that she would eventually settle for the fairly safe and reliable world of television. Indeed, as she explained in the featurette *Visions of Clouds* that was featured as a special feature on the 2010 Scorpion Releasing DVD release of the film, Arthur not only visited mental institutions to find inspiration for the character and artwork of Cissy and traveled to Paris to meet with playwright Éric Wesphal so that she could secure the rights to his play, but she also plied screenwriter Don Chaſtain with sex and food, among other things, so that he would finish the screenplay for the film in a relatively timely fashion. Notably, according to Arthur herself, she was the first female film director to become a member of the Directors Guild of America (DGA) since film noir auteur Ida Lupino (*The Bigamist*, *The Hitch-Hiker*), so it is kind of sad and pathetic that should had to dedicate most of career to directing insipid TV agitprop when *The Mafu Cage* clearly demonstrates that she had some real talent and was a rare filmmaker—be it male or female—that dared to take an uniquely unflattering look at female psychosis. Indeed, certainly no contemporary female

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filmmaker would dare to direct a work featuring a Sapphic psycho of the incestuous and psycho-autistic sort who has an uncontrollable compulsion towards killing men and monkeys. Of course, regardless of time periods, it is absolutely amazing that a film like *The Mafu Cage* even exists, which is more than enough reason why it should be seen by any semi-serious cinephile and/or trash cinema junkie, not to mention the fact that it has the added bonus of making xenophilia seem like the product of a sort of psychosis that is suffered by people with serious identity issues.

-Ty E

THE DEAD GIRL

Karen Moncrieff (2006)

The Dead Girl is another "indie" drama that I've recently seen. Where else to go but in the led direction? With this review, I will also delve into yet another "indie" film starring the genre darling Ellen Page, *The Tracey Fragments*. *The Dead Girl* managed to take the same aesthetic that *11:14* had acquired through vigorous character tales that had interwoven to create a very linear plot that had ended with fantastical results. In my area of cinematic expertise, *11:14* reigns as the superior film but *The Dead Girl* doesn't leave without a fight. To begin, allow me to state the obvious on Brittany Murphy's career. We can all agree that she is a stunning, stunning woman. But the scintillating revelation unveils itself as the persona of the character that indeed harnesses the energy of her attraction. Brittany Murphy would be nothing with her portrayal of junkies, hookers & other beasts that prowl the night streets in search of money, security, and a seedy sexual environment. This is her fate in *The Dead Girl* all in fact that she is the dead girl of which the title speaks. Her role is one littered with deeply affecting tragedy. The one thing I can't shake my mind from is how these new-wave "indie" dramas with their esteemed recycled actors steal so much from an existing film that is so much better than the uninspired reimagined film at hand. Several characters explore an odyssey of many virtues that all systematically revolve around a "dead girl". There's the sister, the wife, the stranger, the mother, and the dead girl. Each narrative fleshes out related characters and the "small world" we live in. If anything, *The Dead Girl* is thought-provoking on a level that causes me to stop and ponder thoughts reenacting possible fates for everyone that I've interacted with recently. While *The Dead Girl* is an overused and overexploited mosaic narrative, the ideas are fresh and cunning which boosts it from rental fodder to a film that is worthy to own. *11:14* is a film that can be called a dark comedy when terms become placed freely. Although the film does feature sparse drama, the collective piece is generally kooky and a case inimitable fun. *The Dead Girl*, on the other hand, is a collective of narrative tragedies. Plot holes are left in purposely to pose a threat of anonymity to the film. It works to a degree but upon second guessing, it becomes annoying to leave fates unexplained. *The Dead Girl* is one of the perfected recipes of character-woven films. From Giovanni Ribisi to Josh Brolin, *The Dead Girl* is all star talent packed with a stellar script. I highly recommend this over bull shit like *Juno*, *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist*, and other Wes Anderson films save for *Rushmore* and *The Life Aquatic*.

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SUBCONSCIOUS CRUELTY
SUBCONSCIOUS CRUELTY

Karim Hussain (2001)

For most viewers, the experimental horror film *Subconscious Cruelty* directed by Karim Hussain will be a blatant exercise in the director's conscious cruelty, as the work treats sadistic sacrilege in a most viciously visceral yet artistically sound light that is surely unconventional for such an exceedingly depraved work. Packed with ultra-bloody-flesh-shredding-anti-sex that was assembled with a precision that is comparable to the human-meat-mutilating surgical skills of Jack the Ripper, most audiences will feel unconsciously guilty for finding the bodily dismemberment featured throughout the film to be of an aesthetically pleasing persuasion. Simply put, *Subconscious Cruelty* is a minor masterpiece of the macabre that will never be rightfully recognized as a work of cinematic art by your typical taste-challenged arthouse film snob. To be fair, *Subconscious Cruelty* has its fair share of flaws, but they can be easily overlooked and forgiven due to the film's uncanny aesthetic prowess. Although influenced by auteur master filmmakers like Alejandro Jodorowsky, Luis Buñuel, and Dušan Makavejev, *Subconscious Cruelty* lacks the thematic depth and subtle symbolism associated with its influences. While dreaming up his phantasmagorical nightmare, director Karim Hussain was mainly inspired by the unpleasant plague of heroin addiction and nihilism that was vogue among art subcultures during the mid-1990s. Of course, *Subconscious Cruelty* is a potent film due to its stark imagery and ambient atmosphere and not due to the intellectual pretensions Hussain had while creating the film. After all, most viewers will be too startled to notice the passé philosophical nature of the film after seeing a scene where a woman's sacred meat curtain is ripped to shreds via nightmarish childbirth. I am willing to bet that most people who own a copy of *Subconscious Cruelty* also own works by Jörg Buttgerit and Nacho Cerdà but it is unlikely these same individuals own any films directed by Jean-Luc Godard. In fact, it will probably be no surprise to most viewers of *Subconsciously Cruelty* that Karim Hussain co-wrote the script for Cerdà's *The Abandoned* (2006). I was certainly not surprised to learn that Hussain also provided his cinematographer skills to *Hobo with a Shotgun* (2011); a film that owes a lot of its distinct character to its kaleidoscope of killer colors.

Like all truly audacious works of art, *Subconscious Cruelty* was plagued by production setbacks and trouble with the law. While coming home from a business trip in the United States, Hussain was stopped by Canadian custom agents who viewed parts of *Subconscious Cruelty* and confiscated it as illegally obscene material. With a name like Hussain's, I wouldn't be surprised if the custom agents were under the suspicion that the filmmaker was a terrorist, as *Subconscious Cruelty* is undoubtedly a delightful work of aesthetic terrorism that cinematically vomits on the medieval morality of American evangelical Christians.

I have a feeling that if Hussain were to have created *Subconscious Cruelty* in a country like Iran, his life would have reached its climax in a rainstorm of peasant pelted middle eastern stones. If I were to lump the film into a category all of its own, I would describe *Subconscious Cruelty* as an arthouse porn flick for misogynistic serial killers of the more culturally refined kind. Bodily fluids are some of the most imperative components of life as semen is the seed from where all human life begins and blood keeps life sustainable but in *Subconscious Cruelty*, these precious fluids are demoted to a level that falls below toxic fecal matter. Of course, *Subconscious Cruelty* is a film that will have its viewers chanting Long Live Death, for few films have made bloodbaths so soothing and depravedly delectable.

With *Subconscious Cruelty*, Hussain admirably achieved the seemingly impossible; constructing a work of libertine cinematic art as sadistically powerful as Nacho Cerda's short *Aftermath* but in the form of a perfectly paced feature-length film. Naturally, I assume many viewers will find themselves ejecting *Subconscious Cruelty* from their dvd player after the first five minutes of viewing it, but for those rare and initiated lovers of blood drenched cinematic bliss, the film makes for a truly rewarding and liberating experience that has next to no worthy rivals. After watching uncountable horror films over the pass year that are typically nothing more than a mediocre celluloid (but more often digital) mess covered with repulsive schlocky blood, I certainly found myself invigorated after watching *Subconscious Cruelty*; a distinctly flavorful flick where blood is beautiful and genital mutilation is as serenely scenic as a sunset on a beach during the summertime. I just wouldn't recommend watching *Subconscious Cruelty* if you're pregnant, unless you're hoping to have a painful miscarriage. Despite its bodacious message of remorseless blasphemy, the film certainly puts the fantastic story of Jesus' birth from the womb of a virginal mother in perspective. I, for one, cannot think of another film like *Subconscious Cruelty* where the tall tale of immaculate conception is immaculately murdered in a most tasteful manner that is bound to stain most viewer's souls.

-Ty E

THE LAST BATH
THE LAST BATH

Karl Krogstad (1975)

Maybe it is just pure wishful thinking on my part, but I like to think that stochastically sardonic writer, satirist, and small-time American Civil War hero Ambrose “Bitter Bierce” Bierce (“The Damned Thing”, *The Devil’s Dictionary*) would have gotten a kick out of the idea of someone adapting one of his works into pornography. On the other hand, I am not sure he would have been too keen on some high ass hippie college student degenerates creating a hedonistic “head” flick featuring out of one of his most classic works. Indeed, some seemingly dope-addled debauchees did just that for the psychedelic quasi-avant-garde blue movie, *The Last Bath* (1975) aka *Dark Dreams*, which seems to be a rather ‘loose’ and uncredited reworking of Bierce’s fierce classic 1890 short story “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” aka “A Dead Man’s Dream”, which has been cinematically adapted countless times, including by French auteur Robert Enrico under the title *La Rivière du Hibou* (1962) aka *The Owl River* aka *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (notably, this classic Academy Award winning short was later released in America as an episode of *The Twilight Zone* in 1964) and by British auteur Rupert Wyatt under the title *The Escapist* (2008). Additionally, the story has been referenced in everything from songs by the *The Doobie Brothers* (the 1975 song “I Cheat the Hangman”) to episodes of *The Simpsons* (season 25, episode 6, “The Kid Is All Right”), but unquestionably *The Last Bath* has to be the most idiosyncratic, surreal, and surely ‘salacious’ nod to Bierce’s beautifully brutal short story as an experimental hardcore flick of the somewhat esoteric and incoherent sort that reminds one why filmmaking and hallucinogens do not always make a sensible combo.

Not be confused with the inferior occult-themed vintage porno piece of the same alternate name *Dark Dreams* (1971) aka *Inner Circle* directed by Roger Guermantes, *The Last Bath* was assumed lost for about 25 years but unearthed a couple years back and subsequently released by the vintage smut label *After Hours Cinema*, though the surviving film print that was released on DVD looks like it was raped by a film projector with a bad case of *vagina dentate*, thus adding to its already glaring hypnotic sleaze appeal. The story of a young, well hung, and handsome pornographic still photographer who finds himself to be prey in a psychosexual psychedelic nightmare involving two bisexual nurses—a less than homely honkey slag and her no less unattractive quasi-bull-dyke negress friend—and recurring dreams of a bridge-based suicide, this little known hardcore flick is anything but banal, but if you’re looking for a cheap masturbation aid, look elsewhere as the film is barely hardcore and mostly features close-up shots of sloppy blowjobs juxtaposed with kaleidoscopic psychedelic imagery. Owing blatant influence to the cine-magic works of meta-queer Crowleyite Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks*, *Scorpio Rising*), *Maya Deren’s* avant-garde

micro magnum opus *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), and Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg's counter-culture classic *Performance* (1970), as well as similarly esoteric erotic works like the Amero Brothers' esoteric hardcore horror filmic fever dream *Bacchanale* (1971), *The Last Bath* is certainly a 'lost classic' of sorts, at least where obscure vintage porn is concerned. Somewhat shockingly directed by self-proclaimed "Seattle avant-garde independent filmmaker" Karl Krogstad (under the pseudonym 'Charles Straumer,' which the director used in tribute to the cinematographer of the 1959-1963 TV series *The Untouchables* of the same name)—a rather unknown auteur who made a couple forgotten low-budget thrillers during the 1980s like *Catharsis* (1982) and *Strings* (1985) and is arguably best known outside of Seattle for being a friend of Hollywood homo auteur Gus van Sant—*The Last Bath*, not unlike the nihilistic pornographic works of Roger Watkins aka 'Richard Mahler' (*Her Name Was Lisa*, *Midnight Heat*), is the sort of fuck flick that was clearly directed by a man who had no interest in actually making a fuck flick, as an oneiric celluloid non-orgy of orgasmic imagery where the male protagonist is prettier than the female performers and where the psychedelic special effects easily trumps the pornographic imagery, though they do manage to mix well together.

In an alluring opening sequence that is clearly a rip-off of Kenneth Anger's 3-minute Ford Foundation-produced short *Kustom Kar Kommandos* (1965), a bronze-colored Jaguar E-Type is depicted in a flagrantly fetishistic fashion. From there, hippie-like protagonist David (Templeton Blaine) is depicted running away from two prostitutes in a rather goofy way, as if he is too high or drunk to out chase two horny little girls. When the two vaguely attractive hookers catch David, they slam the back of his head against the wall and proceed to perform fellatio on him in a somewhat violent fashion, with a rather aggressive ebony she-bitch taking the biggest chomps out of the boy's cock. After the involuntary oral sex ends, David has otherworldly visions of a bridge and awakens in his rather quaint beach house. After getting dressed, David bangs his blonde babe girlfriend, but soon wakes up again, thus revealing he is trapped inside a dream-within-a-dream, or as he mumbles to himself in a somewhat strange monotone fashion that makes him sound like a disgruntled middle-aged man, "I dreamt I was in a bridge in between dreams...maybe I'm still dreaming...or wide awake. I must get up in time to go down...to go down to work in the dark." The "dark" that David speaks of is his dark room where he develops porn photos. When not dreaming of sex, David dreams of committing suicide by jumping off a bridge. Of course, after beginning a nightmarish ménage à trios with two rather unattractive cabin-dwelling miscegenating nurses, David will eventually realize that suicide might offer him the sense of solace that he has been looking for.

While hitchhiking, the film's too-cool-for-school protagonist David is picked up in a convertible by a high yellow black chick with a micro-afro named 'Husky'

THE LAST BATH

and her sub-homely honky homegirl Donna. Despite being wine-chugging pill-poppers of the carpet-muncher sort, both women work as nurses and they plan to give poor David a full physical. Being witchy and bitchy nympho nurses that live in a old secluded cabin in the woods, Husky and Donna are also into the occult, but that does not interest David because he just wants to fuck. When David complains, “sooner or later I gotta take a bath” while eating dinner with the girls at their cabin, Husky runs a bath for the boy in the hope that he will bone her, but he does not seem to like dark meat, as he coerces Donna to take a “bath” with him instead. In between fuck sessions with Donna that are largely comprised of close-up shots of the protagonist getting his pole smoked, David catches up on his “work” by taking nude photos of both girls. When the image of one of the photos begins moving, it becomes clear that David is either having a bad acid trip or that he is dead (considering how incoherent the film is, one never really knows for sure). Hoping to finally get humped by cracker boy David and his swollen white snake, Husky coerces David into going on a trip with her to the beach and on the way they pick up some bananas in a not-so-politically-correct scene associating the negress with monkeys (and of course cocks and bananas). After David fucks Husky in a field, the two screw next to a beach and during mid-coitus, the seemingly unhinged negress flips out and kicks the white boy and he falls into the water. After some psychedelic special effects, it becomes rather clear that David is dead (and has been dead the entire time) and the film concludes with the two naughty nurses having sex with one another in a bathtub and the protagonist running into some sort of never-ending acid-addled psychedelic abyss.

As a film with a title that is in reference to the protagonist’s pre-death segregation-based bath with an ugly white wench who he chooses to defile over the similarly ugly jigaboo chick that kindly ran the bath for him, *The Last Bath* is, quite thankfully, a conspicuously politically incorrect porn piece that is just as racially insensitive as it is compulsively ‘avant-garde.’ Indeed, the protagonist of the film is somewhat vocal about his disinterest in bedding butch negress Husky (who later molests him when he is asleep!) and when he actually does allow himself to commence coitus with the creepy colored girl, it results in him hitting a literal, as well as figurative, ‘rock bottom’ on a beach and subsequently entering a sort of perennial psychedelic pandemonium of no return. Featuring a plot-hole or two, absolutely horrendous dubbing, undeniably unattractive chicks with unimpressive tits (among other things), and an innately incoherent structure, Krogstad’s piece of exceedingly eccentric experimental erotica may scream of abject artistic failure and decadent dilettantism, but it also makes for a reasonably entertaining celluloid trip that is more psychedelic than it is pornographic. Considered assumed “lost” until a surviving print was magically discovered a couple years back, *The Last Bath* apparently stars “a member of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in the city [Seattle]” (notably, assumedly pseudonymous lead “Temple-

ton Blaine' never stared in a single other film and some have speculated that his family members bought and destroyed every print of the work that they could find, hence its 'lost' status for quite some time), thus making it a work that will probably be of more interest to Seattle locals than the average eccentric pornophile, though both groups will probably find something to like about it.

Of course, for those looking to see what an erotic reworking of Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" might be like it were it directed by the LSD-addled heterosexual brother of Kenneth Anger, *The Last Bath* makes for a curious celluloid oddity that demonstrates that sometimes there is not a very fine line between art and pornography, as well as avant-gardism and fetishism. Once advertised in a newspaper alongside an ad for a rival screening of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), the film was created during a seemingly unfathomable time when the aesthetic potential and artistic integrity of pornography seemed unlimited, hence why the era is rightfully dubbed the 'Golden Age of Porn.' Being a work created by a group of film students at the University of Washington in Seattle, *The Last Bath* certainly permeates a certain youthful spirit and energetic freedom of expression that few other pornographic works can boast. Indeed, it may be a hardcore fuck flick featuring suicide, interracial sex and belligerent drug use involving red pills being chugged down with wine as a chaser, but *The Last Bath* certainly has a sense of innocence and naivety about it that makes it strangely charming and even unforgettable.

-Ty E

THE LOVELESS
THE LOVELESS

Kathryn Bigelow (1981)

When it comes to topnotch renegade motorcycle gang films, it seems like only the world of independent film has contributed notable works to the highly neglected leather-bound genre. Sure, Hollywood gave us the iconic biker gang flick *The Wild One* starring Marlon Brando, but unfortunately the film has aged in a less than a graceful manner. With his masterwork of risqué biker art *Scorpio Rising*, Crowleyite auteur Kenneth Anger gave us a film that exposes the most esoteric of desires, which only an artistic individual with an instinctive knack for psychoanalysis could have visually dreamed up. For their dark and gritty biker film *The Loveless* (1982), co-directors Kathryn Bigelow and Monty Montgomery re-invented *The Wild One* in a most culturally subversive manner, thus creating what I have come to believe is the definitive motorcycle gang film. After having seen Bigelow's subsequent psycho-sexual vampire film *Near Dark* (1987) many times in my life, I can say with the utmost certainty that the female filmmaker's fetishistic auteur signatures also vividly resonate in her first feature-length picture *The Loveless*. Although Bigelow's directorial stamp is obvious in *The Loveless*, co-director Monty Montgomery's contribution to the film must also be noted. After watching *The Loveless*, it will be no surprise to the viewer when realizing that Montgomery was also responsible for co-producing David Lynch's TV series *Twin Peaks*, *Hotel Room* (TV Miniseries) and *Wild at Heart*. Like the surly Americana works of David Lynch, *The Loveless* is a picturesque joyride through a cryptic-subculture left virtually forgotten by Hollywood filmmakers.

Kathryn Bigelow

Although Willem Dafoe is certainly no Marlon Brando, he does a wonderful job portraying the main protagonist Vance in *The Loveless*. Despite being a novice actor while acting in the film, Dafoe radiates such a high potency of suaveness that it becomes totally believable when he effortlessly manhandles every lady that passes his predatory gaze in *The Loveless*. During the beginning of the film, Vance nonchalantly gropes an older woman he calls "Mom." Vance, a young man that makes no lie of the fact that he disdains work, more resembles Marlon Brando's character Valentine from *The Fugitive Kind* (1959) than Johnny from *The Wild One*. And just like the anti-heroes from *The Fugitive Kind* and *The Wild One*, Vance comes under attack from a group of townie red-necks that don't take kindly to strangers who wear stylin' jackets. In a manner comparable to David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*, the reverb-laced soundtrack of *The Loveless* - which includes a complimentary mix of blues, rock, and rockabilly tunes - accentuates the overall wildly audacious aesthetic of the film. Robert Gordon, who is a rockabilly musicians in real-life, plays the vehement biker Davis in the film. Unsurprisingly, Gordon also composed most of the music

for *The Loveless*. Eddy Dixon, who composed the anthem "Relentless" for *The Loveless*, would also go on to play the character Rex in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*. As someone who has always had an affinity rebel greasers and rockabilly/psychobilly music, I regard *The Loveless* as a motorcycle gang masterpiece worthy of the leatherjacket sporting gods of rockabilly heaven.

I am not exaggerating when I say that *The Loveless* concludes in a manner comparable to a holocaust of bikers. Like most decent films, *The Loveless* guides the viewer into an unrelenting climax that will stay with you until your life ends. I credit Kathryn Bigelow's female touch as giving *The Loveless* the distinct sensuality and wild sexuality the film so naturally reverberates upon the viewer. *The Loveless* is no small effort when you consider that it was originally created as Bigelow's film school thesis. It will be apparent to the viewer that Ms. Bigelow fell in love (as you will too) with characters that she created for *The Loveless*. This seems especially true for the character of Elena; Vance's tragic love interest. Unlike Brando's love interest in *The Wild One*, Elena is a multifaceted lady, whose life of misfortune finally erupts at the conclusion of *The Loveless* in a way that will shock even the most desensitized of film fanatics. Before watching *The Loveless*, I always wondered how much of Kathryn Bigelow's auteur signature was discernible in her films. After watching the film, I know that Bigelow has been using many of the same themes throughout (from *The Loveless* to *The Hurt Locker*) her notable directing career. I can say with sheer sincerity that Kathryn Bigelow is now one of my favorite female film directors, only second to Leni Riefenstahl. If you fancy aesthetically pleasing nihilistic rebellion, you will certainly love *The Loveless*.

-Ty E

NEAR DARK
NEAR DARK

Kathryn Bigelow (1987)

Long before she became arguably the most overrated female filmmaker in cinema history, Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*, *Zero Dark Thirty*) directed a couple of cult flicks that did not get their due upon their releases and made the future of her career seem dubious at best. While her considerably overlooked debut work *The Loveless* (1981)—a nihilistic reworking of the Marlon Brando vehicle *The Wild One* (1953) co-directed by David Lynch producer Monty Montgomery (*Twin Peaks*, *Wild at Heart*, *Hotel Room*) and starring a then unknown Willem Dafoe—is still pretty much unknown except among certain types of cinephiles, Bigelow's genre-bending 'vampire western' *Near Dark* (1987) has developed a sizable cult following over the decades. Admittedly, when I first saw *Near Dark* as a kid, I was fairly disappointed, as I expected a modernist too-cool-for-school vampire flick that was even 'cooler' than the similarly leather-clad and genre-twisting bloodsucker blockbuster *The Lost Boys* (1987), but ultimately discovered a redneck cowboy vampire flick that was big on atmosphere, low on comic relief, and as stoic as a rampantly heterosexual hillbilly on black market steroids. Of course, when I first saw the film, I did not realize it was originally intended as a western by director Bigelow, who only decided to make it a cross-genre undead cowboy flick after she and her co-writer Eric Red (who previously penned *The Hitcher* starring Rutger Hauer and who would later co-pen the 1996 TV movie *Undertow* with Bigelow) realized it was impossible to find funding for old west style celluloid dung during the Reaganite 1980s. Indeed, vamp flicks were quite vogue at the time as demonstrated by the commercial success and/or popularity of bloodsucker flicks as varied as *The Hunger* (1983), *Fright Night* (1985), and *Once Bitten* (1985). Unfortunately, *Near Dark* was released only three months after the highly successful vampire classic *The Lost Boys* (which grossed over \$32 million)—a work that had a lot of advertising muscle behind it as a Warner Brothers produced picture—and was thus seen as a poor rip-off and failed miserably at the box office, though serious film critics ranging from Jonathan Rosenbaum to David J. Skal were more perceptive regarding the work and realized its somewhat singular aesthetic value. Apparently the third vampire-western film ever made following the mostly worthless works *Curse of the Undead* (1959) and *Billy the Kid vs. Dracula* (1966), *Near Dark* is more than just a genre-hybrid flick as a work that also owes credit to *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) due to its outlaws-on-the-road theme and even *Wim Wenders' Paris, Texas* (1984) due to its postcard perfect cinematography of scorching American deserts and ethereal open plains. Borrowing a good portions of the cast of *Aliens* (1986) directed by James Cameron (who knew and later married Bigelow and even has a cameo role in the film 'flipping the bird' to Paxton's character), including Lance Henriksen, Bill Paxton, and Jenette Goldstein, the film

certainly has memorable performances and standout characters, but owes most of its potency to its poetic cinematography by Adam Greenberg (a Polish Jew that previously shot *Once Bitten* and *The Terminator*), strangely soothing yet foreboding atmosphere, eloquent pacing, and visceral eroticism. Indeed, if it were not for the film's Hollywood style one-liners, (anti)genre conventions, and big explosions scenes, the film would almost qualify as a rare semi-mainstream art-house 'horror' film. The more rebellious yet more mature and stoic little brother of *The Lost Boys*, *Near Dark* is also a rare example of where the largely European vampire subgenre has been seamlessly and appropriately Americanized to accommodate the ostensibly fearless and feral-like frontier spirit of the Yanks, who ultimately drained the North American continent dry. Indeed, for better or worse, if it were not for Bigelow's undead redneck rebel flick there would be no *True Blood*.

Young dirty blond twink cowboy Caleb Colton (played by Adrian Pasdar, who is of ½ Iranian/ ½ German ancestry) is a young horny buck looking for a cowgirl and while hanging out with his immature cowboy comrades, he spots a blonde 'heroin chic' white trash beauty named Mae (Jenny Wright) that looks like she could be his twin sister. Caleb and Mae hit it off instantly as if they were born for one another, though the latter sometimes acts strange as if she is not telling her new beau something important. When it gets close to sunrise, Mae becomes increasingly strange and abruptly tells Caleb she has to leave, but before she can, the cowboy demands a kiss, but he ultimately gets more than a mere juicy peck as the naughty nymph-like beauty bites him on the neck and runs away. Of course, Caleb begins chasing Mae just as the sun rises and becomes startled by the fact that his flesh is burning. Unbeknownst to Caleb, Mae has given him a sweet kiss of death that has transformed him into a member of the bloodsucking undead. Before Caleb knows it, he is scooped up off the road and pulled inside a blackened 'Winnebago from Hell' (as Bigelow has described it) by Mae's outlaw 'family' of cool-as-a-corpse confederate bloodsuckers, including charismatic yet seemingly half-crazed leader Jesse Hooker (Lance Henriksen), butch pseudo-blonde bitch Diamondback (Jenette Goldstein), neurotic and equally nasty child-vampire Homer (played by Joshua John Miller, who previously played the deranged kid in Tim Hunter's underrated 1986 masterpiece *River's Edge*), and psychopathic Lizard King wannabe Severen (played Bill Paxton, who would once describe regarding his role, "I guess I was kind of living my Jim Morrison fantasy"), who wants to kill the hopelessly naive cowboy. Unfortunately for sick Severen, Mae has turned Caleb into a bloodsucker so instead of draining him of his vital fluids, the van of vamps decide to give the novice vampire a trial period to prove whether or not he has what it takes to be one of them. As Mae tells Caleb regarding their potentially perennial future together as vampire lovers, he and she can do, "anything we want...until the end of time...but you have to learn to kill" because, after all, "the night has its price." Unfortu-

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nately, Caleb is a pussy poser cowboy who does not have what it takes to kill. Meanwhile, Caleb's former father Loy (Tim Thomerson) and little sister Sarah (Marcie Leeds) begin traveling the open road looking for their loved one and naturally they seem like no match for a pernicious pack of bloodsucking predators of the country fried sort.

Since Caleb is hopelessly shy when it comes to slaughtering and draining blood from humans, his lover Mae does the murdering and even feeds him like a baby, with a nice negro truck driver being the first victim of their peculiar feeding arrangement. To the vampire family's credit, they mostly kill and feed on subhuman scum, including carjackers, cheap cowboy-riding sluts, dickheaded rednecks, and other rabble that will hardly be missed by the general populous. When the vampires take Caleb to a bar as a last test to see if he will kill, the undead pseudo-family ultimately slaughters virtually every patron in building, including the bartender. Of course, coward Caleb pussies out in regard to killing a young man that is about his age, so the vamps decide he is too weak and plan to exterminate him. Ironically, Caleb falls into favor with the family the next morning after saving the day when the same young man he let go the previous night calls the cops, who raid a seedy motel where the vamps are staying. Indeed, after putting his life on the line during a Bonnie and Clyde style police raid, Caleb buys himself some time, but it does not last long, as his father and sister end up staying at the same hotel that night by happenstance. When Homer—a rather old child-vampire who is quite self-conscious of his pathetic prepubescent body and is pissed that the newcomer has stolen Mae from him (apparently, Homer was the one responsible for 'turning' Mae)—spots Caleb's Sarah, he decides he wants to make her his baby vampire bride. Of course, Caleb is not happy with this and begs bloodsucker boss Jesse to leave his family alone. Ultimately, Caleb manages to escape with his family when the sun comes up. In a scenario that defies all vampire film logic, Caleb is transformed back into a human after being given a blood transfusion. Seeking revenge and knowing that the Colton family can reveal their undead identities, the vampires decide to wage war. While using Mae to distract Caleb, the vampires steal Sarah, who Homer still wants to make his mate. Riding on horseback because the vampires have slit his car tires, Caleb goes looking for his sister and first encounters sarcastic psychopathic sicko Severen, who he gets in a long battle with using a tractor-trailer that ultimately leaves the bad ass bloodsucker in pieces after the twink cowboy jackknifes the big rig, which almost instantly magically explodes into seemingly millions of pieces. Of course, Jesse, Homer, Diamondback, and Mae go after Caleb, but the two girls help the young man escape. Somewhat absurdly (or maybe not so if one considers how rough some rednecks live their lives), the vampires begin chasing Caleb at daybreak in an automobile with blackened windows that they have covered with spray paint. Quite selflessly, Mae helps save Sarah by breaking through the back window with the little girl in her arms. Of course, Homer, who still wants

his virginal child bride, follows them, but he is burned up by the sun. In a last ditch effort to takeout Caleb, Jesse and Diamondback attempt to run over the cowboy and his little sister, but they and their car explode due to exposure from the light. In the end, Caleb manages to reverse Mae's transformation by giving her the same sort of barnyard blood transfusion he had, thus enabling them to live a short banal life together as boring everyday human beings.

As far as I know, *Near Dark* is the sole worthwhile hick bloodsucker flick, as well as the greatest vampire-western ever made, though fanboys seem to like conspicuously contrived works like *Sundown: The Vampire in Retreat* (1989) starring Bruce Campbell David Carradine and Robert Rodriguez's *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996). Of course, *Near Dark* is the only one of these three films that has any true class and plays everything straight and does not wallow in being tediously tongue-in-cheek, as a work that thankfully lacks the putrid postmodern irony of the two other mentioned works. The rather bizarre film *Billy the Kid and the Green Baize Vampire* (1987) directed by British far-left filmmaker Alan Clarke (*Baal, Made in Britain*) may seem like a vampire-western upon a superficial glance as the title hints, but it is actually a goofy semi-absurdist comedy-musical about the 'cue sport' snooker. Featuring a highly complementary musical score by Teutonic electronic music maestros Tangerine Dream, as well as a cover of the song "Fever" by punk proto-psychobilly group The Cramps (who also contributed music to other 1980s horror classics like *The Return of the Living Dead* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*), *Near Dark* is undoubtedly an all-around aesthetically agreeable work that ultimately proves that there is still some room to rework the vampire subgenre without resorting to the predictable cynicism and irony that plagues so many similarly themed flicks nowadays. In fact, Bigelow's film does not even feature the use of the word 'vampire' a single time as if the human characters in the flick are completely unaware of the fact such supernatural beings exist, thus adding to the mystique of an already mystifying film where the bloodsucker is the ultimate outlaw and where holy objects, roses, garlic, holy water, and mirrors never come into the equation, thus enabling the viewer to fantasize about the possibilities of the largely unexplained mythology.

A remake of *Near Dark* co-written by Bigelow and Canadian actor Matt Craven (no relation to Wes) and starring Bill Paxton and Heather Langenkamp of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) fame began shooting in 2007, but the studio apparently did not like the dailies and the production was apparently aborted (even though apparently over a 1/3 of the film had already been shot), though as of November 2011, another remake was in development. Of course, the last thing the world needs in another super shitty horror remake that rapes and defiles everything that was great about the original film. Largely erotic in the sort of way a budding trailer park beauty is before she has had one too many beer bottles and dirty dicks in her mouth, *Near Dark* manages to give the whole

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cowboy outlaw way of life some much needed legitimacy that has not been seen in cinema since the nihilistic revisionist westerns of Sam Peckinpah. Indeed, the film also demonstrates that Bigelow has more of a poetic vision than her mostly banal and obscenely overrated political thrillers indicate. Interestingly, in the featurette *Living in Darkness* (2002), cold and cool Nordic American man man's Lance Henriksen stated regarding the experience of working with Bigelow on the film, "She made me think a matriarchal situation in filmmaking is really wonderful." Indeed, despite featuring nocturnal homicidal hicks and redneck 'rebel flag' renegade bloodsucking (Henriksen's character claims to have fought for the Confederate Navy during the American Civil War and even has the stars-and-bars flag from his ship stitched inside his trench coat), *Near Dark* certainly has the sort of nicely nuanced eroticism and subtle yet perversely potent sensuality that only a feminine touch could have been capable of, thus acting as a rare example where lacking testicular fortitude can be beneficial to a filmmaker.

-Ty E

NOTHING BAD CAN HAPPEN

Katrin Gebbe (2013)

As the nation that produced arguably cinema history's greatest and most ambitious female filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl (*Triumph of the Will*, *Tiefland*), as well as numerous eclectic female art house and avant-garde auteur directors, including pioneering animator Lotte Reiniger (*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, *The Magic Flute*), proto-feminist Ula Stöckl (*Neun Leben hat die Katze* aka *The Cat Has Nine Lives*, *Geschichten vom Kübelkind* aka *Tales Of The Dumpster Kid*), Sapphic surrealist and adventurer ethnologist Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*), and subversive feminist Helma Sanders-Brahms (*Heinrich*, *Germany*, *Pale Mother*), among countless others, Germany (as well as its Germanic brother nation Austria, which produced aberrant auteuress Valie Export and cyber-dyke director A. Hans Scheirl, and Bulgarian-born iconoclastic avant-gardist Mara Mattuschka), the Teutonic Fatherland is incontestably the greatest producer of notable filmmakers of the 'fairer sex,' so I typically tend to be less dismissive when approaching flicks directed by kraut chicks as opposed to their American counterparts. Of course, considering the relatively sorry state of German cinema today, I am hesitant to watch any Teutonic films, let alone those directed by women, yet after hearing good things about 30-year-old Fräulein filmmaker Katrin Gebbe's award winning debut feature *Tore tanzt* (2013) aka *Nothing Bad Can Happen*, I figured what the hell and learned soon after watching the flick that the Fatherland still has some of the most ferocious film directors in the entire world. A seemingly pathologically paced passion piece about a gawky young Christian punk cult member (or "Jesus Freak") who goes on a decidedly deleterious Christ-like journey of the truly transcendental sort after becoming the unofficial member of an 'evil' untermenschen white trash family who, in the most vulgar and despicable ways imaginable, tests his faith and determination to living the way Jesus did by "turning the other cheek," no matter what the consequences, Gebbe's paradoxically dejecting yet somewhat uplifting debut was apparently inspired by "true events," as well as by the "purely positive" titular character of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's classic novel *The Idiot* (1869).

A work that seems more influenced by the transgressive arthouse works of directors associated with the so-called 'New French Extremity' like Philippe Grandrieux (*Sombre*, *Un Lac*) and Bruno Dumont (*Twentynine Palms*, *Hors Satan*), the Dogme 95 period works of Lars von Trier, and the proletarian-perpetrated horror of films like James Watkins' *Eden Lake* (2008) and Justin Kurzel's *Snowtown* (2011) than those associated with contemporary kraut film movements like the mostly banal 'Berlin School' (aka 'Berliner Schule') and the bombastic and pageantry-plagued films of so-called 'neo-romantic' filmmakers like Tom Tykwer, *Nothing Bad Can Happen* is certainly a fresh change of pace

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for German cinema, as an audacious low-budget work with a conflicted yet potent spirit that, despite its seemingly foreign influences, says a great deal about modern Germany and its post-WWII *Volksgeist*. Indeed, while largely a work about testing one's faith in the face of the ultimate evil, the flick also tackles the oftentimes tragic Teutonic tradition of unwavering idealism which led to, among other things, the Protestant Reformation, the National Socialist revolution, the birth of New German Cinema (as outlined in the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962), and the far-left terrorism of the Baader-Meinhof Gang. Of course, like the four above mentioned phenomena, *Nothing Bad Can Happen* also ends with death. A devastating depiction of a sort of patently pacifistic Christian (anti)Faustian man who sacrifices himself and finds a sort of redemption in the end, Gebbe's three chapter modernist metaphysical horror show reminds the viewer why 'arthouse' is not always a synonym for banality, pretense, or asininity.

Tore (novice actor Julius Feldmeier in his first feature film) is a tall, blond, and blue-eyed Hallstatt Nordic Jesus addict (with unusually curly hair who somewhat resembles Martin Gore of Depeche Mode) who suffers from epilepsy and belongs to a Hamburg-based chapter of the punk rock Christian group the "Jesus Freaks" and he takes his recent baptism rather seriously and seems totally incapable of negative thoughts and emotions, though one assumes that, like his fellow cult members, he comes from a broken home. Tore is best friends with a seemingly delinquent and destitute but equally Christ-crazed young man named 'Owl' aka 'Eule' (Daniel Michel of Florian Eichinger's *Nordstrand* (2013)), who converted him to "Christcore" because Tore enjoys singing hardcore punk songs with lyrics like, "There's only one way you can be saved. You must overcome your fear, and trust in god. Jesus, show me the way. I believe in you, and have no fear. What can man do to me?" and who, in typically Christ-like fashion, enjoys helping anyone that he can. One day, Tore and Owl attempt to help a family whose car has broken down by praying to Jesus to fix the folks' truck and somewhat magically, the Lord answers their prayers. Despite having seen a miracle of sorts performed on his GMC redneck truck engine, the patriarch of the family, Benno (Sascha Alexander Gersak of the popular German TV series *Tatort*)—a small, swarthy, and stocky man with serious anger issues—doubts the power of "the Captain of the Universe", but he takes up Tore's offer to come by the local Jesus Freak bar/venue to hear the latest Christ-phile punk rock sermon. When Tore sees Benno at the Jesus Freak show while moshing like a spastic toddler to a holy punk band 'Magic Messiah', he suffers a seizure, so the patriarch picks him up, puts him in the back of his truck, and brings him back to the dilapidated trailer/shack of the lowbred sadomasochistic white trash family for which he will ultimately become a saintly Aryan yet avowedly masochistic sacrifice.

Although initially a seemingly caring and friendly fellow who sometimes likes to use playful sarcasm to poke fun at Christ and Christianity, Benno soon be-

gins showing his true, rather demonic self, especially after he becomes jealous of Tore's totally harmless relationship with his 15-year-old tomboy stepdaughter Sanny (German pop/soul singer Swantje Kohlhof). Indeed, although Benno has two children, melancholy teen Sanny and a prepubescent boy named Dennis (Til-Niklas Theinert), neither of them are biologically his as they are from his wife Astrid's (Annika Kuhl of Leander Haußmann's *Lehmann* (2003) and Uli Edel's *The Baader Meinhof Complex* (2008)) previous relationship, thus he feels he has the right to rape his stepdaughter. When Tore shows up Benno upon giving Sanny a better present on her birthday (the Jesus Freak gives her an iPod and Benno gives her a giant stuffed kangaroo and a couple of bucks!), the pernicious patriarch decides to punch the Christian in the face in front of all the partygoers. On top of that, Benno also makes Tore his personal slave, coercing him into handing over his welfare debit card and forcing him to do all his lazy wife's domestic chores. The archetypal worthless whore mother in many ways, Astrid's only objection to her husband raping her daughter is that she is jealous that he finds her progeny more attractive. As blatant (sub)human garbage who more or less squat in a Hamburg allotment garden (the family seems to be borderline homeless), Benno and Astrid soon begin resenting Tore due to his pure and untainted character and deep faith and employ various sadistic and craven methods in an attempt to break his faith. When Benno self-righteously states, "people always pray when they're scared shitless" and Tore replies "courage is when you trust god," the pernicious patriarch becomes so enraged he begins beating the Jesus Freak, who suffers a seizure as a result. While Tore attempts to go back to his Jesus Freak commune after suffering Benno's psychopathic brutality, he discovers that the Hamburg branch of the cult has been closed and while his friend Owl offers to take him to Berlin, the warrior of Christ ultimately comes to the conclusion that he must go back to the untermensch family as a test from god, even proclaiming while praying to the Lord, "Jesus, I know Benno is my test." Of course, judging by what Tore ultimately endures at the savage hands of Benno and his wife, one might assume that Christ was a scheming psychopath who got a kick out of completely destroying people for his own sadistic pleasure.

When Tore goes back to Benno's less than humble abode, he is treated as if he is a non-person and someone that does not even exist. Indeed, on top of no longer being allowed to eat at the dinner table, Tore is no longer allowed to eat period, as Benno has his wife lock up all the food in cabinets in the shitty shack, so the Jesus Freak must resort to eating crumbs he finds around the house and digging through the trash. On top of that, Benno has his stepson Dennis regularly piss on Tore's tent in the yard (indeed, even when the Jesus addict was in favor with the family, he was still forced to sleep outside). Only Sanny, who unsurprisingly unsuccessfully attempts to consummate coitus with the Jesus Freak (who is naturally "saving himself" until he is "married"), treats Tore with any respect, though she finds his pacifism and religious faith to be somewhat

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maddening. Of course, as Tore states to Sanny when she mocks religion, “If I don’t believe, I have nothing.” When Astrid discovers that Tore has “stolen” a rotten baked chicken carcass out of their trash which is now covered in maggots, Benno demands that his wife come up with a punishment for the near-starving Jesus junky, so she recommends that they force him to eat the rancid fowl corpse. Benno and Astrid restrain Tore and literally shove the rotten chicken meat down his throat while the patriarch fiendishly sings the children’s prayer, “god is great and god is good. And we thank him for our food” in a malevolently and maniacally mocking fashion, thus causing the Jesus Freak to become terribly ill to the point of being on the brink of death. Luckily, Sanny manages to sneak Tore out of her family’s dilapidated home and calls an ambulance after dropping him off at a train station. While Sanny tells Tore never to return, the Jesus Freak does just the opposite after recuperating in the hospital. While in the hospital, Tore hallucinates seeing a small Christ on a crucifix transforming into the real full-size J.C.—hemorrhaging hands and all—so he sees it as a sign that he must carry out his mission and return to bastard Benno for more tests of his selflessness and faith. Indeed, all of these brutal experiences have only reinforced his faith and he seems to realize that going back to Benno will be a mission of no return, but he has a girl to save and a god to satisfy.

When Tore returns to Benno’s home after his extended stay in the hospital, the patriarch gives him food and even lets him eat with the family again, but of course, the scheming little sadist has big plans for the hopelessly naive Jesus Freak. Indeed, one night Benno drives Tore to a homo whorehouse and sells the virgin’s untouched bughole to a nearly elderly ponytailed creep named Dieter (Uwe Dag Berlin of Oskar Roehler’s *Quellen des Lebens* (2013) aka *Sources of Life* and Anton Corbijn’s *A Most Wanted Man* (2014)), who brutally buggers the boy to the point where blood drips down his leg and goes down the drain when he takes a shower after being anally pillaged. Despite being regularly defiled by a truly dirty old man, Tore handles his beyond hellish circumstances like an ‘impenetrable’ champ and even seems to get comfortable with his most unfortunate circumstances. Of course, Tore’s stoicism towards being a slave to sadistic sodomy only all the more infuriates Benno, as he cannot seem to put even a small dent in the boy wonder’s faith. Determined to break Tore’s faith by allowing him the opportunity to get revenge, Benno forces the boy to sit on his stomach and smother his face with a pillow, but the Jesus Freak just cannot find it in himself to truly attempt to rightfully murder his perennial tormentor. When Sanny walks in on Tore feebly attempting to suffocate Benno with the pillow, she joins in and begins ruthlessly killing her stepfather with a sort of bestial passion of a slave who has finally gotten the opportunity to get back at their master. Determined not to allow her to fall into the forsaken existence of being a sinful murderer, Tore stops Sanny right before Benno is about to take his last gasp. Of course, Benno is enraged when he realizes that his stepdaugh-

ter/sex slave has tried to kill him, so he takes the girl's beloved electric keyboard and nearly beats Tore to death with it. After that, Benno demands that his wife Astrid "deal" with Tore, so she and her equally bottom-feeding ghetto whore friend Cora (Nadine Boske) pull down his pants, put out their cheap cigarettes on his head, and begin spitting all over his face like they are sadistic toddlers. From there, Astrid begins crushing Tore's genitals with a pair of stilettos she is wearing and utters the very real threat, "we can cut something off." Needless to say, Tore meets a grizzly end, but in his own way, he carried out his Christ-like mission, with Sanny and her kid brother receiving another chance at life. As for Benno, he is even more hateful and resentful in the end, as a man who beat, raped, tortured, and starved the truly pure and innocent Jesus Freak, but never destroyed his spirit.

While one film critic has gone so far as to describe *Nothing Bad Can Happen* as being, "reminiscent of Lars von Trier at his most pessimistic," Gebbe's film ultimately has a much more hopeful message as the flick may portray the protagonist as a hopeless naive slave of Christ, but his Christ-like sacrifice not only enables him to obtain transcendence but also save the lives of two previously accursed children who would have never had any chance in life otherwise. Indeed, somewhat ironically, Tore—the slave-morality-ridden Christ fag fanboy who seems to suffer from both schizophrenia and Asperger syndrome—more or less fully implements a more metaphysical take on Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power by realizing his full potential in regard to his faith and majorly masochistic determination to "turn the other cheek." Interestingly, Gebbe did not conceive of the religious angle of the film until later while writing the screenplay and she was not really aiming to make a film that critiques Christianity or wallows in callous von Trier-esque cynicism as most reviewers seem to believe, or as the auteur stated herself in a summer 2014 interview with *The Moveable Feast*: "I didn't want to have answers to everything, but I felt it could be really interesting to put on one side a lot of darkness and have a really beautiful, super-perfect protagonist who's very moral as a contrast. He would forgive everything, he would allow everything. He would be like a modern Jesus Christ or as we were also discussing it, a modern Gandhi or something like this, but I felt the Christian religion is something a lot of people know about." Christianity aside, I think Gebbe's 'true believer' brand of faith is quite typical in Germany and the rest of the Occident, albeit in a more 'modern' post-Christian humanist form. Indeed, the cultural marxist and multiculturalist true believers who insist on flooding their nations with largely hostile aliens from the third world despite the fact that multi(cult)uralism has proven to be an abject failure as indicated by the fact foreigners commit the vast majority of murders, rapes, and violent crimes in Europe and virtually all live on welfare demonstrates that these exceedingly ethnomasochistic Europeans subscribe to a sort of nihilistic post-Christian faith. After all, how else does one explain a feminist blaming white racism for

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the fact that she was raped by an African negro or the fact a white European can receive more jail time for ostensibly 'denying' the holocaust than a gang of Arab teens would receive for gang-raping a white girl (not to mention the fact it was recently exposed that the British government tried to cover up that Pakistanis were running a massive 1,400-victim slavery ring mostly comprised of white girls ages 12-15). Indeed, when Tore states, "If I don't believe, I have nothing," it is a virtual metaphor for the post-counterculture Western/Central European mindset. Like Tore of *Nothing Bad Can Happen*, it seems these faithful ethno-masochists, which comprise the bulk of modern Europeans, will only be happy when they are raped, beaten, tortured, and bred out of existence and/or left for dead, for only then will their 'post-racial' utopia be fully realized.

Interestingly, the three chapters of *Nothing Bad Can Happen*—'Faith', 'Love', and 'Hope'—also are the names of the films in Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl's recent "Paradise" (aka *Paradies*) trilogy, but as director Gebbe stated in the interview with *The Moveable Feast*, it was a mere coincidence, or as she explained: "It was not that we saw the films and thought, 'Oh, he had a good idea.'" [laughs] Later on, I heard about this trilogy and then I thought "Ack, this sucks." But I wouldn't change it because of Ulrich Seidl. He didn't invent it. [laughs]." Although Gebbe's film has some superficial aesthetic resemblances to Seidl's work, *Nothing Bad Can Happen* owes more to the darkly transcendent films of French auteur filmmakers like Philippe Grandrieux and Bruno Dumont. A work that could have degenerated into a tedious torture-porn flick or a plodding Petzold-esque 'arthouse' turd if put in the wrong hands, the film demonstrates that Gebbe is a restrained yet empathetic filmmaker who knows how to horrify and deject without resorting to mindless shock gimmicks, as a rare modern day German filmmaker who is not afraid of emotion and does not bow down to political correctness. I am sure if misandristic feminist hack Margarethe von Trotta saw *Nothing Bad Can Happen*—a film where the white trash wife of the antagonist is just as bad, if nothing worse than her husband—she would denounce it as misogynistic. Indeed, one can only hope that Gebbe has started a new post-feminist trend in German filmmaking where a female director is judged by her actual artistic talent as opposed to feminist polemics, pathological misandry, and artistic posturing. Unlike brazenly banal filmmakers associated with the Berlin School, Gebbe not only hopes to bring life, passion, and spirit back to Teutonic cinema, but also hopes that her countrymen stop masochistically dwelling on the past and, in turn, sacrificing their artistic potential out of irrational fear and creating more pointless beaten-to-death *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* garbage (sometimes I seriously wonder if German children are forced to recite kosher commie Adorno's 1949 dictum "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" each night before they go to bed), or as she stated herself in an interview with Peter Krausz: "In my mind, Germany is still a country which fears the past because of its history. I guess nobody wants to do something wrong.

Everybody tries to fit in this sort of scheme. But the new challenge is about trying to experiment a little bit more. A new movement is developing. I'm sure that there is potential out there and I hope that we get the chance to see a lot of great work in the future." While Gebbe will probably never become the next Leni Riefenstahl, she has already proved that she has more testicular fortitude than 99% of her kraut male counterparts as a sort of female Matthias Glasner, albeit slightly less nihilistic. I might be being a tad bit optimistic, but Nothing Bad Can Happen almost gives me the 'faith' that Germany will soon have its next great cinema Renaissance since the New German Cinema era, with the assumedly not-too-faraway deaths of the von Trottas, Schlöndorffs, and the rest of the old leftist fart filmmakers being a most auspicious time for it to commence.

-Ty E

FUNKY FOREST: THE FIRST CONTACT
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Katsuhito Ishii (2005) *Funky Forest* is a 2 and a half hour mash-up compilation from the directors of various Japanese cinema. One of the more popular examples is Kasuhito Ishii (Director of *Shark Skin Man* and *Peach Hip Girl*). The film follows a non-linear structure and is a frequent barrage of various dream-like states; sort of like a dumbed-down hipster space version of *Waking Life*. The segments incorporate mainly physics as space is shattered and balls of matter are being controlled by loli's in latex. While this may appeal to a numerous amount of viewers, there is nothing to feed off of. Many scenes will have you applauding the variety of these three directors, while many will leave you running in fear of ever viewing that again. Many scenes will take influence over better directors. Inspirations such as Cronenberg can be spotted, but these scenes are childish when mixed with the childish mind of these Japanese directors. Many of the highlighting characters are thrown at each other to create nonsensical conversation and discuss dreams. Linklater did it better. If i had to choose from these scenes, my favorite had to be the alien - naval scene. *Funky Forest* is a box of delicious cereal that contains both stale and fresh combinations. It all depends on the person if you would enjoy this. If you enjoy things rapid-fire with no sense to them, then you might like this film more than i did, but i prefer a story to the least, not a mash-up of music video clips.

-Maq

ALL NIGHT LONG

Katsuya Matsumura (1992)

All Night Long: Volume One is the theatrically released upbringing of a classic series. All Night Long had the benefit of a doubt towards being an utter piece of shock garbage but barely managed to raise above expectations to deliver a thrilling experience more in the vein of Dean Koontz's *The Voice of the Night* rather than a psycho-sexual tale of revenge. Adolescence is a danger to the malleable mind, says Matsumura. After watching so many of Matsumura's films, I do consider myself a fan of his work, which is an honor (Excuse my lack of modesty). The first All Night Long film is a relatively dull and dreary film until the climatic conclusion that leaves you nearly second-guessing. If you'll allow me to express a certain disdain for the film, I found myself jumping through Asian after Asian so fast that the faces melded together in a yellow-skinned mosaic, both of the physical impression and character traits. I couldn't differentiate friend from foe and many random incidents occurred leaving me in a daze. Three young adults meet in various ways and all have one thing in common; humility. Whether it's the local gangs or cherished women, these boys cannot catch a break. They range from sweet and condensed to man-child and irritating to the bookworm stereotype. All three of these very different persona's clash in the end for a blood bath similar to the likes of *Battle Royale* or *2LDK*, sans any political or science fiction undertones. The end is the culminated arrival of what the series is known for but as the old saying goes "Too little, too late". To further fit to the wise scheme of needless sensationalism, the Japanese obsession with Nazis is displayed mind-numbingly well. As our trio of mistakable heroes enters the den of an "evil" gang of bullies, you will notice a swastika banner sticking out on the far back wall. This is a dead end philosophy of the characters whose life span is thankfully shorter than yours. Just as shown and demonstrated in *Beautiful Girl Hunter*, it seems there's more members to the National Socialist Japanese Workers and Welfare Party than meets the eye. The original All Night Long is an entry needed to experiment with the audiences on the level of sadism and torture. Had Matsumura throttled all out on his first assignment, what could have been would have most likely been cluttered and polluted with inane situations, much like his *Concrete-Encased High School Girl Murder Case*. Considering the idea of him directing a sequel, I'm sure it would have been a vast improvement, maybe even transcending into territory of "marvelous". All Night Long is essential, but due to the series having non-connected story lines, I'd start with the second and work my way up. I kid you not.

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ALL NIGHT LONG 2: ATROCITY
ALL NIGHT LONG 2: ATROCITY

Katsuya Matsumura (1995)

This is the second volume of an original series of 5 films, each carrying the same misanthropic tone and view. This is one of the more disturbing films of the series by far seeing as how the first is a portrait (although clumsy) of madness. Katsuya Matsumura shows that he is capable of making you (Average viewers) see humanity as garbage, especially women. Women are cattle herded for sexual pleasure. They exist only as a luxury, blissfully demonstrated by most Japanese directors. The plot is best described as familiar, just never shown with such a bold yet degrading look. The first one was released theatrically but the rest were denied due to the subject matter concerning these visionary tales of depravity. You meet Shunichi, an awkward otaku-obsessed computer geek who lives in his room. He enjoys painting anime models, caressing them, and rubbing his lips all over them. It's easy to tell through Masashi Endô that Shunichi could snap at any time. He is constantly bullied to extreme lengths by a gang of cold-blooded could-be killers. This includes various tortures, both physically and emotionally. All this for 100,000 yen. Eventually he gets a strange message on his computer from a deus ex machina whom is never explained known only by GOOD.MAN. Much of the plot is a surprise so I mustn't spoil it for you. We meet some very sweet characters along the way and we have some interesting practical effects. The kicker about these films is the lack of happiness in them. It's as if some psycho-slug with an affinity for pride, happiness, and glee comes around and absorbs it all leaving only carnage and harshness in its slime trail. The eventful breakdown should be glamorized because few have had the insanity as this one had - Of course, not since the brutal NC-17 film *Bad Lieutenant* starring Harvey Keitel. The second installment in the All Night Long series has symbolism, foreshadowing, blowtorch to the mouth, and enough heroin-laced rapes to please the average seeker of disturbing material. Filmed with hardly any music, it shows that a soundtrack is sometimes only extra icing on the cake and is not always necessary. It's a film that shows the difference between the eventual revenge or just plain insanity. The past and future All Night Long films attempt to perfect the routine but this one strikes gold. Becoming a murderous tornado, killing and destroying anything in its path. Expect some black humor and wonderful hamsters. Overall, a great film that blends horrible emotions and a bloodbath together. It's satisfying to see it done successfully. This film hypothetically shows the dangers of homosexuality.

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CONCRETE-ENCASED HIGH SCHOOL GIRL MURDER CASE

Katsuya Matsumura (1995)

Concrete-Encased High School Girl Murder Case is a sexploitation piece of "disturbing" Japanese filth slowly bathing in its notoriety. Based on a true case of what the title implies, the truth and case details most likely vary from the real incident. With a fragile tale as this teamed with a horrible actress who was hired cause she will take her clothes off, the result would be similar to watching Open Water but with underwater shark boxing scenes and jet ski chases. From the director of the All Night Long series, Katsuya Matsumura has a stylized filmography of directorial efforts. In fact, all of them have to do with the subject of rape and sexual torture. It's no myth that the Japanese are the main staple in the line of extreme fetishism. With this film, you are given a slight factual depiction of the events that transpired but focused more on the eroticism than the sadism, but you of course already knew this as soon as you see the film was released under HOT Entertainment. On January 4th 1989, Junko Furuta was bludgeoned, beaten with an iron barbell, sodomized with an iron rod, forced to drink her own urine and fed cockroaches, had fireworks inserted into her anus, forced to masturbate, had her nipple cut, and ultimately died from immolation. She died soon thereafter from shock and had her body stuffed in an oil drum filled with cement, hence the stretched title explaining its plot seamlessly. Rape is an authoritative fetish no matter which morals or virtues are present. In context, rape may seem perverse, disgusting, and inhuman but the fact of dominance and sexual prowess/power being a general turn on for humanity is conclusive. Just like making "whoopie" in public might make you feel like an outlaw, the same could be said for rape. Perhaps it's the adrenaline rather than the forced copulation. I don't condone said task but I will not deny the existent titillation of the act of rape (simulated or not). Separated at birth? The Japanese are known for practicing many fetishes before our western counterparts. For example, the inquisitive and arousing schoolgirl. One would think that a reformed collective of education-seeking peers could produce a cleverly deceptive female capable of intelligent thought or adhering character, but according to Matsumura, all females are made to star in a rape-exploitation film. A piece of stringy cattle; fuck meat, if you will. Many fans of the exploitation genre have lost their way. Rather than appreciating the sleaze product for political tones, super stock, artful cinematography, or non-PC plot devices, it seems only to entertain with a reciprocating violence factor - the endless urge to kill, maim, and rape for brutality's sake. While I admit of having my own guilty pleasures, I found my way past this and such an occurrence has given me a critical eye of gore horror. For an accurate and disturbing re-enactment of the events in form of a translated manga - download the RapidShare here. The manga works where the film does not. The comic creates a soul for the girl; one who enjoys games and school. Matsumura

CONCRETE-ENCASED HIGH SCHOOL GIRL MURDER CASE

has created another generally displeasing depiction of cruelty, however lacking any of the atrocities or extreme situations presented in his classic All Night Long trilogy (Before 4 and R). At the epicentre of the film, what you are aware of is that Concrete Murder Case is just fluff surrounded with a tangible plot.

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THE YOUTH KILLER

Kazuhiko Hasegawa (1976)

Kazuhiko Hasegawa has been hailed as an unsung hero of Japanese cinema since directing 2 motion pictures: *The Youth Killer* and *The Man Who Stole the Sun*. Both of these films feature the central idea of rebellion and the oft-anarchic nature of youth. *The Youth Killer* was introduced to me with very esteemed remarks towards the burgeoning guilt of our cocky lead, Jun. After Jun visits his parents to discuss their son's employment and relationship with free-spirit Keiko, things turn bloody twisted as Jun finds himself standing over his father's corpse, a bloody knife in his hand. Jun's father had hired an investigator to dig into Keiko's past, resulting in most of what Jun had thought to be the truth to be lies from the harlot's mouth. This "trigger" results in the slaying of his father and eventually his mother. This slow-burn effect of losing grip on sanity could have been relatively shortened. These events that I've highlighted make up the first hour of film. One hour of slipping in and out of hysteria. That's enough to drive anyone crazy, especially with the camera assigned to "realistic" tendencies. Jun and his mother switch psychosis and attempt to clean up the body, looking somber at the corpse while loudly recalling past instances.

I had previously attempted to watch *The Youth Killer* quite a few months back but lost interest and opted to do something else, resulting in me forgetting the entire experience. The second time around wasn't so much the charm as it took dead set determination to finish. Starting off and succeeding in making it as far as I could remember, the pacing didn't seem to get any better. I felt sluggish and tired. This modest look at patricide and rebellion in youth can be seen as an important film due to the current state of youth in Japan. The past several decades have seen Japanese youth reach new peaks of extremity to break free of social norms. Much of the impact of *The Youth Killer* is fumbled onto the trail it glides on. The predetermined fate of the characters is set in stone and could bestow enormous and powerful social commentary but siphons all efforts with ludicrous scenes which only boil my dissent. One scene in particular is the passing of Jun's mother. Both Jun and the mother swap roles of grieving and headstrong. This doesn't last because soon Jun's mother begins to sense Jun's reluctance to leave the tramp, Keiko. Realizing just the gravity of the situation, she wraps a knife to her hand with a towel and begins furiously stabbing at Jun, leading to her being pinned to the ground in a sheet. She begs "Thrust it gently" and wishes for her lovely Jun to take her life. Eventually succumbing, Jun stabs his mother only to be shocked by her screams - "It hurts!".

One scene caught my eye and forced me to finally break silence about the plight of technology. As Jun walks down the street during the opening of the film, a large delivery truck passes through a puddle, dousing Jun from head to toe. In this age of rampant technology, this seemingly innocent incident would

THE YOUTH KILLER

render the victim several hundred dollars behind in debt. Think about the accessories an average puppet to the digital age carries: iPod, mobile phone, PDA, Bluetooth. Sure this is irrelevant to the film but it's this antiquity of culture that really has me scratching my chin and thinking of a better time, a time in which everything isn't run by a processor of some sort. This crime of passion soon turns Jun from a guiltless punk into a suicidal clown who waxes poetic much too often. Godiego provided the unfitting soundtrack for *The Youth Killer*. They're the folks responsible for the soundtrack to *Hausu*, whose kooky demeanor benefits from the soul jams Godiego has to offer. *The Youth Killer's* blatant drama does not support the cheery tunes whatsoever. While *The Youth Killer* is hailed as a brilliant mark in Hasegawa's tiny span as a director, I found it lame and overly sensitive to life. Watching several characters bumble around threatening and attempting to kill themselves grows tiring, the same as what one would suffer from reading poetry on Livejournal written by 13 year old angst princesses.

The strongest portion of *The Youth Killer* is Keiko's revealing of Jun's father telling the truth. At first the blame is laid on Keiko as she should have never kept the secret of rape from her significant other but soon Jun slips into his shell and broods about the mistake of killing the kindest man in his life. This is touched on quite beautifully as Jun and his father sumo wrestle on the construction site of their future bar. This scene of bonding that's featured is powerfully moving. It's scenes of fatherhood like this that really make me regret not having anything in common with my own dad. The only other scene of worth is the party hallucination near the finale of the film. All the characters in the film are wining and dining, laughing and taking photographs. The iconoclast essence of Jun is teased with this daydream sequence. It's such a shame that Hasegawa had such technique in characterization but didn't pleasure us with its company. The two withstanding themes of *The Youth Killer* lies within Keiko's discussing how she enjoyed being raped by her mother's lover and that truth kills. These two facets saves *The Youth Killer* from being entirely unwatchable garbage. Even though I sat frustrated and unsatisfied by the closure, *The Youth Killer* is still a film I greatly respect but will never endorse.

-mAQ

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN

Kazuhiko Hasegawa (1979)

Earlier on in the year I reviewed a film entitled *The Youth Killer*, a Japanese coming-of-age film that could be accurately labeled a "snoozefest". Past the infantile antithesis, *The Youth Killer* is remembered as one of two films from Kazuhiko Hasegawa, a director who disappeared from the scene as early as he arrived. It is as if Hasegawa picked up a camera for a short period of time just to perform a ritual similar to the act of trepanning - alleviating pressure allowing for a permanent "high". Hasegawa's other film, which garnered skepticism upon finishing *The Youth Killer*, is an award-winning Japanese satire called *The Man Who Stole the Sun*. Going in with the promise of excellence, *The Man Who Stole the Sun* not only kept me enthralled but actually managed to inspire, impress, and polarize me on the battlefield of criticism towards his few works. Was I being unfair in my review of *The Youth Killer*? This is a question that I asked myself after watching *The Man Who Stole the Sun*. Nevertheless, only time and an additional viewing can cement my position on the lower-half of Hasegawa's "career".

Born in Hiroshima on the January of 1946, Hasegawa managed to be given life under the most dynamic of post-war scenarios - directly following the detonation of "Little Boy". These dire straits of which he was sheltered through no doubt influenced his greater good and lent much to the creation of *The Man Who Stole the Sun*. The plot follows a renegade science teacher who short-circuits under the pressure of a hostage situation and the tedious nature of Japanese youth and decides to create a personal atomic bomb. These are assumptions without much physical evidence, though. In all honesty, I'm really unsure of the definite reason behind our lead character, Makoto Kido's, lapse in violence. Surviving the hostage situation with the help of a police inspector named Yamashita, Kido makes ample usage of his new lease on life and burgles a power plant for a large amount of plutonium (of which is shot in a manner that reflects the groovy nature of *Danger: Diabolik*). Shown in incredible detail, Kido then creates his atomic bomb and then proceeds to hold Tokyo hostage. Unsure of what he wants, Kido assumes the identity of "Nine" and goads a bubble-headed disc jockey named "Zero" into helping him decide his demands - which includes bringing *The Rolling Stones* to Tokyo.

Sadly, *The Man Who Stole the Sun* has fallen into the long list of films that precede discussion with "...the Japanese answer to *Taxi Driver*", which couldn't be farther from the truth. Other than wielding a handgun and displaying general misanthropy, Makoto Kido isn't the Japanese Travis Bickle and never will be. One might be able to substitute the role of Jodie Foster's for the atomic bomb as both are similarly idolized as a token of peace and a guiding light for both reign of terrors. In fact, the relationship between Makoto Kido and his nuclear

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN

weapon borders obsession. He sleeps at night cradling the plutonium in its raw compound and even spoons with the finished armament. As the plot progresses the hinting of plutonium poisoning is dropped like an anchor when Zero pulls out a clump of Kido's hair. Even when Kido finds out, he refuses to leave the beauty alone, lest he becomes as powerless as he was prior. Hasegawa spits in the face of the preconceived notion of refusing false idols with this visual memorandum of his. The atomic bomb is the center of our story and is given much more depth into its creation and purpose than Kido's driving force for terror. Another incredible aspect of Kido's character is the two-toned behavior patterns he exhibits. During chase scenes and the many confrontations that await him with Inspector Yamashita, Kido demonstrates a remove of a villainous archetype. Yet, when with Zero and his weapon, he battles his demons either by seducing Zero then tossing her into a river or displaying bouts of happiness mixed with melancholy. Makoto Kido is surely a conflicted character of interest.

The Man Who Stole the Sun is nowhere near a perfect film; essentially, it bathes in pop culture, giving the events a certain familiar weight, but unfortunately over-complicating elements of the plot. Hasegawa has certainly created his masterpiece - an often humorous, often thrilling, and often frightening experience in pulp cinema. Armed with the finest elements in post-war terror, action, and occasional caper material, The Man Who Stole the Sun is an entry in personal filmmaking that is widely accessible to all. Its blend of biting satire with allusions to genocide are rather sobering in contrast with the nonstop hi-jinx of the film. For instance, the scene in which Kido fantasizes about dumping the shreds of spare plutonium in the pool, killing women and children, is a punch to the gut that disagrees with the tonally challenged happenings of the first hour (did this really take place?). Most importantly, Hasegawa is, himself, a part of the history behind an atomic bomb which makes this superior project fitting in a historically important sense. Tyrannical spirits the world over can find something to love in the better half of Hasegawa's body of work. When it comes down to it, The Man Who Stole the Sun actually gives me better memories and insight of his previous film The Youth Killer. This is what it is - total, senseless anarchy and a kaleidoscopic mishmash of Japanese culture served fondly with an ending that will leave you staring blankly at your television set. How did it get to this point?

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KARATE BEAR FIGHTER

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi (1975)

Karate Bear Fighter is the second film in the Masutatsu Oyama trilogy preceded by the aforementioned Karate Bull Fighter. In this pulp martial arts biography, Sonny Chiba plays the legendary Oyama who has killed man & beast at separate points of his life. His fists are lightning fast and his apathy for human life knows no bounds. This is but a continuation of the first film. Intended for timeline viewers only. Oyama continues his quest for personal enlightenment and ultimately becomes the most bad ass zen guy around. He trains under raging waterfalls to heighten his tolerance and to discover what a wise man said to him about a presence of a circle. Oyama is portrayed fluently by Shinichi Chiba. Sonny Chiba's height of 5'9 attacks Asian height standards in film allowing Chiba to stand tall over any fighter giving a visual menacing advantage. The portions of these films are divided in a spiritual pie graph. Each film in this trilogy features amazing martial arts action and violence that is gratifying and flammable. As soon as the "one man against a mob" scenes are over, switch to a touching side story of how Oyama has deceived someone in some way and temporarily sets out to touch a human's life in some way. This film is deeply engrossing in more than one manner. Alcoholic. Hausu was another Japanese masterpiece and in no way is connected to this film, but the choice of bright settings links them together. Although Hausu had pastel horizons, Karate Bear Fighter gave a foreboding shallowness to the country of Japan. Kill or be killed; Chiba's universal tagline of revenge and brutality is no stranger to these pulp biographies. Now for the role of exploitation and foreshadowing, One could guess that Chiba gets in a fight with a bear and this is true. In no way as remarkable or graphic as the makeshift matador scene in the prior film, this time around, the animal cruelty is limited to Chiba punching the creature into a cyclops. I preferred the bull battle to be honest. Karate Bear Fighter is the middle man of a trilogy. With one more to go, I continually find more and more appreciation for the man that was named Oyama. I noticed his counterpart is heavily glamorized as Chiba was to play an overweight role. Nonetheless, If you've seen Karate Bull Fighter, watch this sequel for a direct continuation. If you haven't seen any of them, drop what you are doing and pick up copies now.

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KARATE BULL FIGHTER
KARATE BULL FIGHTER

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi (1975)

A dream come true. A film to rival how bad ass Sonny Chiba's *The Street Fighter* was. *Karate Bull Fighter* is just the first entry in a trilogy where Chiba plays Karate legend Masutatsu Oyama. He was the man who invented Kyokushin Karate (The first full contact Karate) which is now practiced by over 12 million martial arts enthusiasts. The legends and myths surrounding this martial artist including him wrestling and killing live bulls which later became the glowing point of a film based on his life. Sonny Chiba was the perfect casting choice for due to the small fact of him being trained by the real life Oyama for 5 years. He delivers the same action that we've grown to love over the course of his *Street Fighter* trilogy plus he really surprises with an incredible ability to act as soon as the drama begins. I have had a sweet tooth for all his films ranging from *Kill Bill* to the wacky *Samurai Resurrection*. The choice of settings really flow freely with the cultural bonanza to which we acquaint with over the runtime of our beautiful film. The violence is almost off the charts for a Chiba film. While not featuring as extreme violence as the kind committed by Terry Tsuguri, we have many surprising shots of facial impalements as well as a bulls horn getting ripped out. As usual with any Sonny Chiba film, the choreography isn't really much, just Chiba flying around with a voracious appetite for destruction but that is just his own unique style. One cannot call fault on his behalf because he does his job and he does it extremely well. If the mental image of Sonny Chiba karate chopping a bulls horn off doesn't appeal to you and excite every male gene in your body, then you are a lost cause. *Karate Bull Fighter* acts as an extraordinary action film laced with these delicate scenes of earnest emotion delivered by our Japanese muse himself. *Karate Bull Fighter* is one of Chiba's bloodiest and most brilliant.

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KARATE WARRIORS

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi (1976)

Japan's lethal "fists for hire" Sonny Chiba wasn't decorated with such a label with no just cause. Within the first ten minutes of *Karate Warriors*, the volatile scoundrel (Chiba) finds him self in one of the most astoundingly shot fight sequences I've seen come out of a oriental classic. While taking the scarce technique of slow-motion (as time would have) and combining it with a quick speed-up upon point of impact, the result is electrifying and an experience that traversed the very nerves on my spine rendering me hapless as this Yojimbo-inspired clone of several clones assaulted its way into my very neural databanks. It isn't even up to the sting of high-velocity Chiba impact to woo me over with this tragically named unheard of classic, *Karate Warriors* blends a spice of charitable virility crossed with *Lone Wolf and Cub* and with this the result is a film that you can find yourself playing over and over again, have you the capacity for Chiba's fecund charisma and wrathful throat noises.

In *Karate Warriors*, (roughly translated into *Killing Fist with Child*) Sonny Chiba plays knight-errant to a young boy whose father is Chiba's rival. As I already mentioned, *Karate Warriors* is a loose remake of *Yojimbo* borrowing the rival gangs device and recycling the deceitfulness of our story's hero as he plays both sides in an effort to get rich quick. The motivation of brotherly love turned sour? Heroin. In this film which is often labeled a prequel of sorts to *The Street Fighter*, Sonny Chiba displays his convictions with incredible fortitude. Sure, he's a ragtag karate warrior who steals rice cakes from little Asian boys but that didn't stop him from murdering some 20-30 people with only his fists and a samurai sword in a beach bloodbath that will forever resound as one of the most engaging no-rules brawls this side of Chinatown. That, and he did it for a hollow love that is unknown to our hero. *Karate Warriors* excels in all categories because it is heartfelt and ruthless in one sitting; a breezy sexploitation with much violence and enlightenment - equally.

As of recent I've been on a huge Sonny Chiba kick, indulging in such classics as *The Bodyguard*, *Virus*, *Golgo 13* (again), *G.I. Samurai*, and the currently presented *Karate Warriors*. The problem with most of these films are the American releases are littered with terrible English dubs over the original, authentic Japanese audio track. These leaves terrible room for humiliating interpretation as Sonny Chiba's American counterparts always sound ridiculous and gaudy. The majesty of Chiba is his incredible dexterity and flexibility. His roundhouse kicks bring about this illicit form of fluid contact that is just something you can't explain with the limitations of language. If there ever was a martial arts physical performer, Sonny Chiba would be the headliner; top billing and all. When you level the field of Chiba within eye sight it's hard to sift the classics through the heap of supporting roles he portrayed. While I enjoy any helping of Chiba and

KARATE WARRIORS

I'm hardly picky, I demand a certain amount of screen time to be interested. Karate Warriors is one of his best films never seen by the commercial viewers eye, which is a shame. I've rarely seen a martial arts classic like this that braves the profitable sex nature of Japan while appealing to the Chiba enthusiast. Knowing Japan and its sexual proclivities, I'd be hard pressed to deny that Karate Warriors is one of the most true-to-form and gutsiest martial arts films without treading into Shaw Brothers territory. If you enjoy Sonny Chiba as much as the next bargain-bin dweller then Karate Warriors is an absolute necessity. It's only fair to me that my two favorite action stars, Bruce Willis and Sonny Chiba, act in both the same film. Viva Chiba!

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KARATE FOR LIFE

Kazuhiko Yamaguchi (1977)

Bringing the series to a close, Oyama got the film treatment he deserved. Karate for Life contains the same ingredients as the other films; epic battles and touching moments of humanity. Karate for Life opens up with a humongous bang. Sonny Chiba walks into a dojo and challenges the sensei to a duel to showcase his full-contact brand of karate. He then defeats over 100 warriors even after they cheat and manages to stab the sensei's eye out with his index finger. Karate for Life is the closing chapter that Oyama needs, but the ending still leaves many possibilities. The films never chronicled the rise of his fighting style or the other events that occurred. The film transpires over a small amount of time when Oyama was a thug and bodyguard stretching to his moments with children. Oyama is a great father figure and I myself wouldn't mind getting my ass handed to me by him for a righteous discipline. Oyama engages in a ridiculous and often humorous job of professional wrestling. He is part of a team that points jests towards the Japanese. Due to Oyama's fighting spirit, he cannot fix a match and gets over his head with mobsters and sharks. The scenes of professional wrestling fixate on the American military in the crowd hollering a fierce chant warranting death. Surely the Japs think little of us, but portraying us as rabid animals is taking it a bit far. From what I've written on the previous films, not much changes. The film plots stay perfectly linear and the director doesn't like to sample change. I can't say much more than I've previously written but the Oyama trilogy is one of the best martial arts series' ever made. It's unfortunate that his saga wasn't continued past three films and that Sonny Chiba has aged past his prime.

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SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Kazuho Ikegami (1996)

Not to be confused with the herd of other Sonic related animated works. This one is entirely in its own league. Originally two OVA's fused together in Japan, this outflows both the horrid Sonic X television show and any "Adventures of" series that features useless and dramatized critters with spunk. Sonic is definitely a fragile franchise, as seen by his slow demise thanks to the plethora of Sonic games released by Nintendo/Sega that are rotting to the core. Sonic the Hedgehog is an intense and sentimental relic of my childhood. Being a child born without a silver spoon in my mouth, I had no way of ever hoping for a video game system, seeing as how the economy was back in those times. My father's friend gave me, out of the blue, his Sega Genesis with Sonic the Hedgehog. I was instantly addicted to the world of the silent hero. Migraines had never been so sweet and homework was never so useless. Who needs education when going the speed of fictitious sound? Then the unthinkable happened - Chairmen decided Sonic was lacking a personality, so they took Keanu Reeves' role in Point Break as an inspiration to give him "spunk". Ruined my childhood as well. The appointed film starts off with Sonic being totally nihilistic whilst tanning. This allows for you to witness first hand that Sonic doesn't care about anything, let alone his friends. They took the Tails-falling-behind mechanic too seriously. Representing the English dubbing, the verdict is guilty for an almost-unbearable dubbing. The only one they managed to nail on the head was Dr. Robotnik (I refuse to call him Eggman). The Japanese touch is present while viewing this film. Constant references to sexual humor and assault are noticeable. Sonic stares at the stunning Sara's camel toe as well as many cut scenes including breast-grabbing, middle finger flicking, and Knuckles screaming "SHIT!". What works so well is the flawless port of the action included in the award winning franchise. Sonic indeed speeds, rolls into the light speed ball, springs up, and homing attacks caterpillar baddies. It's almost invigorating to view a fight worthy of fame against Metal Sonic. Had this been Sonic slaying fat Robotnik in various machines, this would have been an absolute disaster. But thanks to the menacing presence of Metal Sonic, the film has that "Ultimate Showdown" scenario that creates a motion picture mood. The Japanese pop used in the film's soundtrack might be an elusive "of what's to come" in the disappointingly underrated game Sonic R. Most of Sonic's classics are sadly not appreciated as much as should be, leaving the ripe trash to be picked by fanboys who know nothing of a good video game. Dr. Wiley may have created the greatest robot designs by Robotnik's Metal Sonic encompasses the soul of a villain - merciless, cold, intimidating, and incredibly powerful. Sonic the Hedgehog: The Movie is a film worthy of the title of the bad to the bone Hedgehog. Entertaining, fun, and calculated - this is definitely worth a viewing.

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GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE
GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE

Kazuki Ōmori (1989)

Of all the Kaiju films I've laid my eyes upon, of all the monster mashes I've been subjected to, none has been as story driven as *Godzilla vs. Biollante*. Following up the events that transpired at the end of *The Return of Godzilla*, we find that Godzilla is still sealed in the volcano and while scientists excavate what's left of Tokyo, they find a sample of Godzilla's ultra-radiated hide. This sparks a battle between corporations and mercenaries which will stretch across 5 years time making this a *Godzilla* epic. When the dust settles, a scientist has eventually combined the DNA of both rose and Godzilla. This seems like a great idea so the scientist is a little bit surprised when the plant eventually turns into an aggressive plant that escapes into the ocean and develops a "large" problem. That being said, Biollante is possessed with the spirit of the Doctor's dead daughter, Erika. Soon the Godzilla genes take over and Biollante challenges Godzilla to a brawl. Being a tentacled acid-spitting evolutionary beast of burden, Godzilla has some trouble in this one and even becomes scarred by the excreted venom. The Biollante is a creature of applaud. A dentist won a contest hosted by Toho and created a storyline featuring a plant creature. This venture proves to be a breath of fresh air from dinosaurs and other lizards. At least *Rampage* and *Primal Rage* had giant apes. *Godzilla vs. Biollante* features an infamous versus set up or match/rematch. While many films have the similar pattern, none explore the possibilities of setting up the rest of the film without a confronting obstacle. Just when you mistakingly convince yourself that Biollante is in fact dead, the creature exacts its own instincts and archaic survival methods, thus resulting in a pseudo-photosynthesis allowing the creature to reach 100% final form and becoming more monster than plant. This battle becomes more thrilling than the last and becomes one of the greater destructive forces in the *Godzilla* library. Being the eighteenth film in a franchise is no easy task. *Godzilla* is truly its country's mascot. Being able to still be able to sell well over a million tickets way past his prime, but there's the beauty; there is no prime for *Godzilla*. *Godzilla* is eternal. If Uwe Boll were to make a *Godzilla* film, I'd gladly watch it and enjoy it. While some entries aren't needed, they aren't necessarily horrible. Then again, I haven't gotten to *Godzilla vs. Megalon* as of this moment. The definition of a popcorn flick should officially altered to read "*Godzilla*". Plain and simple. *Godzilla vs. Biollante* is much more than a destruction derby with rubber suits - it's a thriving character drama that almost focuses more on the stars than our lovable lizard and various cohorts. While many of the exploits of the tiny people of Tokyo border on creeping slow and bland, it's more than most *Godzilla* films can say. That being, them incorporating mysterious tiny Island representatives, faeries, and the like. *Godzilla vs. Biollante* features a psychic but I'm not letting it get to me too much. *Godzilla vs. Biollante* isn't much

of a departure from the original sequel formula, but contains enough zest and creativity to mold an unexplored environment for you. There's no fancy space gizmo's and gadgets in this film. Although, Biollante's spores form the soon coming villain, SpaceGodzilla. Hrm...

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I'M GONNA GIT YOU SUCKA
I'M GONNA GIT YOU SUCKA

Keenen Ivory Wayans (1988)

The Wayans brother/brothers have created another parody classic in the guise of a blaxploitation spoof. *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka* is essentially a post-blaxploitation flick. But not in such familiar territory that Master P. once tried to dominate with his horrible film aptly titled *Black Supaman*. Exhibit A: Notice the *Supaman*. Surely these ebonic syllables must be a dramatic representation of the urban roots. With the words "Git" and "Sucka", The Wayans Brothers have already snagged half of the black population in as a potential audiences. To first dissect the blaxploitation genre is your first step. One must realize that blaxploitation is a mongrelized stab at film noir aimed towards the Negro kind. If some sort of dramatized action/female empowerment attempt were to be made cinematically to lure in the young black kids, it would be an exercised notion to expunge all the nihilistic attitude in the black actors. The same femme-fatale with guns shtick still stands, but prostitution and black widowing are on two sides of the female spectrum. Blaxploitation manages to parody not only the film noir genre, but also its own niche. It's purely race entertainment. One might even become "more white" while watching these films. Same to say as most of Wu-Tang Clan's demographic has suddenly turned paler. The Wayans Brothers successfully make a mockery of black entertainment in this endeavor. This is definitely a film which humor requires preemptive training. *Shaft*, *Superfly*, and *Black Caesar* are but a few of the films ruthlessly spoofed in this prequel of sorts to *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood*. After all is said and done, what is created is a successful comedy but lacking a gross appreciation for the genre itself. *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka* can be seen as a hateful film. *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka* can be dubbed a racial Rorschach. Depending on which precise films you've seen or examined, each joke can be seen in an incredibly different insight. Your expectations are still practically mince meat for the horde of slapstick jokes that line up one after another. When I first heard of this film, I couldn't believe my eyes. What I expected was a classic and smooth action film, but as soon as I say the Wayans name, I knew some sacred things were soon to be crushed. *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka* is a fresh comedy but to some it might be stale. Please take the time to also notice a toned down Truck character from Isaac Hayes.

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THE CHOCOLATE WAR

Keith Gordon (1988)

While I was attending an American public High school, students were required to read a couple books over the summer. Of course, it seemed very few people actually did this. After all Tyrone and Dervon could never even get close to reading a mere page, let alone a full-length novel. Most of the honkies could finish a book if they wanted, but that would require much more effort than reading text message slang and whatnot. Literacy is just too Eurocentric and should be looked at as crypto-racism. It would be against America's dire commitment to equality if white students were actually pushed to their full potential and forced to read the great works of "dead white men." It is much more important to read the fantastic works of half-literate Negress Zora Neale Hurston as it makes whites realize the true quality of Negro Kultur. Me, being the naughty bigot that I am, found most of the Negro Novels to be completely and utterly unintentionally hilarious. Despite not being Catholic, I decided to read the book *The Chocolate War*, a novel about the inter-politics of an elite Catholic Boys school. Sure, maybe I could not relate to the Catholic school system, but I could at least relate to a group of white boyz who know how to use big words like "education" and "institution." With the novel *The Chocolate War*, I also decided to watch the 1988 film based on the book.

How many Negroes attend the Catholic school in *The Chocolate War*?! ZERO! How could a film be called *The "Chocolate" War* without a B-Balling brotha' or a blunt blazin' blackie? The film is about as white as they come featuring a group of well dressed gentlemen who display self-control and can use complex words beyond two syllables. I was surprised for such a book to make the reading list in High School, but because of the obvious message against the "system" of the Catholic School makes it appropriate subtle Cultural Marxist propaganda for those committed culture-distorters out there. Still, with all the corruptness of the Catholic school, I found much more quality in the school than say a public multicultural sewer (AKA American public school). After all, as the good Brother Leon says in *The Chocolate War*, "Boys will be Boys" and the boys in the film have a little conspiratorial fun not for destruction, but just for a little wholehearted power play-action. In *The Chocolate War*, one realizes there is a big difference between in-group games and out-group alien subversion such as that which has been plagued American public schools since the late 1960s. *The Chocolate War* was directed by Keith Gordon, the fellow that played the automotive-obsessed nerd in the cinematic adaptation of Stephen King's *Christine*. Due to the low-budget of *The Chocolate War* and Gordon's keen business sense, the director was able to have virtual free reign over the creative process. Mr. Gordon cites auteur Nicholas Roeg as one of his main influences for the film and it shows. *The Chocolate War* has some interesting

THE CHOCOLATE WAR

editing techniques that add to the film's fluidity and it does not get as masturbatory as Roeg's films sometimes do. With the unique and sleek editing of the film also comes an 1980s synthesized soundtrack that puts the works of John Hughes to shame. In fact, *The Chocolate War* is kind of like a John Hughes film had the recently deceased director taken his cinema a little more seriously. *The Chocolate War* lacks all the silly melodrama that made many of the dramatic scenes in *The Breakfast Club* embarrassingly unwatchable. Being an experienced actor, Keith Gordon was able to cast the right actors for the main roles in *The Chocolate War*. Lead protagonist and High School Freshman Jerry Renault was played excellently by *Weird Science* star Ian Mitchell-Smith. Renault's mother has just died and now he has a Catholic school student "secret society" known as *The Vigils* request him to do the dirty deed of not selling chocolates for a school fundraiser. The sinisterly suave leader of the *Vigils*, Archie, is played brilliantly by Wallace Langham. Despite Archie being the man of Renault's torment, the two characters rarely communicate with one another in the film. Director Keith Gordon was able to quite nicely direct the lead characters of *The Chocolate War* and their relative worlds. Jerry Renault maybe a Freshmen nobody, but Mr. Gordon was able to get a performance out of the character that fully resonates the characters introverted world. Although "enemies," both Jerry Renault and Archie are not the most different people in the world, quite the contrary actually. Their differences mainly comes from the system and hierarchy of the school more than anything with the Catholic system being the most dangerous element in the film, certainly much bigger than any one person. *The Chocolate War* is a film that makes one realize how big of a joke American public schools are. Yeah, maybe the Catholic school system might have an "evil" power contained within it, but it is certainly no joke like the American public school zoo. I would have much preferred wearing a uniform in a serious private school instead of attending an American public school full of people who should have never been in school in the first place. There is a reason that less than half of students in America's third world cities are graduating from High School. Even with all the low and pathetic standards of your typical American public school curriculum, the dullards aren't passing anything but the crack pipe and scabies. I would not have minded partaking in a Chocolate war, but I would never have tolerated being part of an American public school urban Guerrilla war.

-Ty E

CENTIPEDE HORROR

Keith Li (1982)

Wai Lun is in a deep supernatural conspiracy. After getting bugged by his sister to let her go to S.E Asia and ignore her late grandfathers plea's, he finally collapses and lets her go. ONLY, if she agrees to where a magic amulet that protects her from evil. Of course, her being a naive little twat, she takes it off to go to a vendor. The vendor instantly recognizes said amulet and using a lost article of hers induces a venomous spell. She then passes out in the forest covered with disgusting, foot-long centipedes. Her brother then flies to S.E Asia and begins investigated her death. Might i add it was gruesome, including wounds that birth baby centipedes. That scene truly made me squirm. While investigating, he locates a man called "The Centipede King" and brings him to her bed. He looks in fear and pushes them to go see his uncle. Wai Lun begins hearing very disturbing sounds everywhere only to find centipedes. Truly a devil's creation, these insects have been added to my list of phobias. After this incident, it is shown that his grandfather had done a horrible thing which resulted in a village being burnt to the ground and had a curse put on his entire family. This film was directed by Keith Li and is known for it's incredible acting. I am not talking about Oscar acting. I am talking about vomiting up live centipedes and scorpions. That by itself isn't all too squeamish. Christian Bale himself ate maggots for Herzog's new film "Rescue Dawn" but you need to keep in mind these are giant, venomous centipedes. They can kill you. The commitment alone is enough to shout encore. This film fits nicely with the other CAT III films released in the 80's such as The Untold Story or Dr. Lamb. Truly disgusting, and i understand why Sam Raimi said this was the most disgusting film he has ever seen. In all my years of living i have learned one thing. Do not fuck with Voodoo. Let alone Chinese Voodoo. The vomit is disgusting and this film has some incredible scenes. With ghost chickens and flaming fireballs chasing sorcerers, this film is an amazing supernatural film. One thing i hold high about this film is it's exorcism scene. This woman has a scorpion curse and has a bizarre rock stomach which reminds me of Nacho Cerda's Genesis. It involves blood stamps and bones clacking. They truly had the myth of magic in mind behind the scenes of this film. It also has a twist ending. Kick starting the trend since '88. The film has no unique style or anything identifiable in his later works. The acting could be more believable and the costumes could show more effort, but regardless of these minor flaws, this is an excellent piece.

-Maq

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Ken Russell (1971)

Ken Russell (*Lisztomania*, *Salome's Last Dance*) is certainly a filmmaker whose oeuvre I haven't completely made up my mind about, namely because the idea of a rampantly heterosexual camp auteur seems patently preposterous to me, which is certainly reflected in some of the director's more obscenely outlandish works, but I cannot help but like the man. Indeed, if there ever was a filmmaker who ever brought a flagrantly unfaggy flavor to camp, it was the ridiculously shamelessly rampantly heterosexual Russell, whose entire oeuvre contradicts virtually every single stereotype regarding the British, which is certainly something in the filmmaker's favor. Notably, Russell seemed to be perplexed by his own camp sensibility as demonstrated by his humorous response when a close friend accused him of being a latent homosexual, "Fine, maybe I am, who knows, I don't think anyone knows themselves. We can all pretend, but I have no idea what I am, I'm me!" in what is one of his many classic quotes. Of course, Russell sometimes had help from homos in regard to his audacious camp aesthetic, arguably most notably with his masterpiece *The Devils* (1971) aka *The Devils of Loudun* aka *Ken Russell's Film of The Devils* aka *Die Teufel*, with queer avant-garde auteur Derek Jarman (*The Angelic Conversation*, *The Last of England*) working as the production designer on the film before becoming a notable filmmaker in his own right (it should be noted that in Russell's audio commentary for the BFI DVD release of the film, he credits Jarman for the look of the film, as a rare period piece with a truly modernist look). Based on the nonfiction novel *The Devils of Loudun* (1952) by Aldous Huxley as well as the 1960 play *The Devils* by John Whiting, Russell's film is a wholly idiosyncratic work set in a foreboding Fellini-esque 17th-century frog hell-on-earth of Catholic cruelty and bloodthirsty blueblood brutality of the spiritually apocalyptic high-camp sort where witch-hunters derive sadistic glee by performing ostensible exorcisms via primitive enemas and queer monarchs perform Schroeter-esque drag shows in between shooting protestants dressed up like black birds for sport. A film well known for being raped by its aesthetically retarded American backers at Warner Bros who to this day refuse to release the film in its completely uncut and undefiled form, *The Devils* is a rare work that straddles a healthy medium between Nunsplotation, pastoral 'folk horror,' Buñuel-esque arthouse surrealism of the sensually sacrilegious sort, and dichotomous Catholic and anti-Catholic sentiments and imagery that certainly reflects the filmmaker's remark regarding his own works, "I always start out thinking that I am going to make a pastoral film but the darker side eventually creeps in. All of my films are moral, or immoral, depending on your point of view." The surely sordid and oftentimes darkly humorous story of a pimp-like progressive Jesuit priest who has all the nuns begging at his knees for sins of the flesh and righteously fights to keep his pluralistic

multi-religion town from being taken over by a scheming cunt of a queenish Catholic cardinal who wants to take complete control of France by destroying every single town and village, *The Devils* is arguably the most eccentrically yet elegantly bawdy tale of religious martyrdom ever committed to celluloid. Indeed, created in a country that has a history of producing so many wretched and brutally banal period pieces, Russell's film was surely a cinematic revelation of sorts.

Opening with grotesquely effete monarch King Louis XIII (Graham Armitage) giving a drag show inspired by Sandro Botticelli's classic 1486 painting *The Birth of Venus* for a nauseatingly nerdy power-hungry Catholic leader named Cardinal Richelieu (Christopher Logue), *The Devils* immediately establishes a tone of wayward mockery for the Catholic Church and French monarchy, or at least for certain elements of the two. A seemingly sexless fellow who lives such a decadent and less than Christ-like life of leisure that he has people wheel him around on a cart instead of walk like a normal person, Richelieu humors Louis XIII's truly aristocratic sense of narcissism so that he can con the king into allowing him to consolidate power over all of France via a universalist nationalist revolution by destroying every single town and village. The problem is that Louis XIII has agreed to keep one town, Loudun, intact as a promise to its recently deceased governor Georges de Sainte Marthe, who just succumbed to the plague. Before dying, de Sainte Marthe gave the much beloved yet superlatively sinful priest Urbain Grandier (Oliver Reed) reign over Loudun until the next election. As a man that loves women and their bodies just as much as he hates Catholic bureaucracy and greed, preternatural priest Grandier will ultimately prove to a thorn in Richelieu's side. The problem is that Grandier cannot keep his cock in his pants and after impregnating an ditzy young aristocrat named Philippe Trincant (Georgina Hale) who was sent to him for Latin lessons, the priest must face the wrath of the girl's father Magistrate Trincant (John Woodvine), who will do anything to get his revenge against the Jesuit priest for defiling his little girl and bequeathing her with the grand dishonor of giving birth to the bastard brood of a sinful holy man. Unbeknownst to Grandier, the Mother Superior Sister of the Ursuline convent in Loudun, Sister Jeanne (Vanessa Redgrave)—a hyper cynical and hyper horny old spinster who less than flatteringly states of her fellow sisters, "Most of the nuns here are noble women who have embraced the monastic life because there was not enough money at home to provide them with dowries. Or they were unmarriageable because ugly, a burden to the family. Communities which ought to be furnaces where souls are forever on fire with the love of God are merely dead with the grey ashes of convenience"—is deeply infatuated with him and sees him and his cock as being quite Christ-like as depicted in various nightmarish hallucinations she suffers, but being a self-loathing hunchback who engages in self-flagellation after masturbating while thinking of her Catholic crush, she would never dare confess her

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undying love to the super pimp padre, who does not even know she exists.

While Grandier has both holy and unholy women of all ages throwing themselves at him left and right, he ultimately falls in love with a more simple and mostly morally supreme girl named Madeline De Brou (Gemma Jones), who has been ordered by Sister Jeanne to read a book by Ursuline convent foundress Angela Merici. After telling Madeline that Merici's book is "sanctimonious claptrap," Grandier discusses marriage with the little lady and the two decide to get married. When Sister Jeanne learns of Grandier's marriage after a group of nuns do a mock drag reenactment of the marriage at the convent where one of the nuns dresses like the priest, she goes completely insane. After all, Sister Jeanne is a woman who hallucinates seeing Grandier as a Christ-like figure who can walk on water and who gets off the cross so that she can lick his Christly wounds with the utmost satisfaction, so after learning that her crush has given his heart to another woman, she completely loses it and ultimately unwittingly unleashes a micro-crusade as a result of her loony lovelorn hysteria. Meanwhile, Cardinal Richelieu sends a fellow named Baron Jean de Laubardemont (Dudley Sutton) who plans to use an army of protestant slaves to level Loudun to the ground, but Grandier temporarily stops him with the armed threat, "if one more stone be torn from our city walls, you will be dead before it touches the ground." The Baron has been brainwashed to think that Loudun is "a nest of dangerous Huguenots" and he goes back to Cardinal Richelieu to scheme a way to obtain the power to demolish the city. Meanwhile, Grandier heads to see King Louis to ensure that nothing happens to Loudun. Luckily for Cardinal Richelieu, Laubardemont, and the rest of the conspirators, Sister Jeanne, who wants her crush to pay for ostensibly betraying her, tells new convent priest, Father Mignon (Murray Melvin), that Grandier is not only a lecherous lady's who has gone against church rules by getting married to a young woman, but also makes up the absurd fabrication that the priest practices witchcraft and has 'possessed' her. Needless to say, Father Mignon tells Magistrate Trincant, who in turn tells Baron de Laubardemont, and the three plot together to use this information to destroy Grandier. Ultimately, they decide to bring in a "professional witch-hunter" named Father Pierre Barre (Michael Gothard)—a patent fraud and hateful bigot who does not even speak Latin and thus is incapable of even properly doing his job as a character that director Ken Russell intentionally made look like a hippie to show he is a "false messiah" and charlatan—to 'prove' that Sister Jeanne is possessed, the nuns of Ursuline convent are practicing witchcraft, and Grandier has made a pact with the devil and is the black magician behind all of this sinister behavior.

When carny-like witch-hunter Father Barre arrives in Loudun, he decides to perform an 'exorcism' on Sister Jeanne by giving her a brutal enema with some sort of archaic device that looks like it would be more than a little bit painful, even for a power bottom, in front of everyone in town. Needless to say, Sister

Jeanne had no idea that her malicious lies regarding Grandier would backfire against her in such an absolutely hellish fashion and she even screams, “unhand me you Christ-loving runts” at Barre and his comrades when they go to perform an enema on her, thus making it seem as if she is indeed possessed by Satan. Determined to get all the ‘evidence’ and testimony against Grandier that he needs, Father Barre has all the young Ursuline nuns brought to the woods by a group of soldiers and threatens to brutally kill every single one of them if they do not confess to being devout devil worshipers. Indeed, Barre is such a shameless and maliciously manipulative little liar that he actually tells the nuns how they should act while pretending to be possessed, stating like some sort of third-rate theater director, “The evil spirit of Grandier has taken possession of your souls. Now you resist him, but soon he will have his way! You will scream. You will blaspheme. You will no longer be responsible for your actions. Denounce your devilish master Grandier! And we will save you!” while the sisters grab onto him in a sensual fashion to demonstrate their relief that they will not be executed. The nuns immediately take advantage of the “possessed by the devil” sham by stripping completely naked and carrying out every single hedonistic fantasy they have ever dreamed of, including lesbo orgies, giving handjobs to holy candles, molesting priests and other holy men, and destroying everything in sight in a scenario that culminates in the (in)famous ‘Rape of Christ’ scene where the sinisterly sensual sisters take down a gigantic life-size crucifix from the high altar of the church and savagely molest and destroy it. During the middle of the unholy orgy, King Louis XIII shows up at the church barely disguised as a fellow named Duke Henri de Condé with an entourage of makeup-adorned little boys à la Federico Fellini’s *Satyricon* (1969) and wallows in the waywardly wanton degeneracy, thus indicating that he could truly care less about Catholicism and has only joined up with the Catholic Church for purely political reasons. To play a prank on Father Barre, King Louis/Duke de Condé pulls out a supposed golden holy relic containing the ostensible blood of Jesus and asks the witch-hunter to use it on the pseudo-possessed nuns in an attempt to free them of demonic possession. Somewhat humorously, when Barre uses the holy relic on the nuns and they immediately claim to be cured, King Louis reveals there was nothing inside the golden case, thus exposing the witch-hunter for the showman carny fraud he is.

When Grandier finally gets back to Loudun after his pilgrimage to see the king and walks in on the chaotic nun orgy going on at this church, he loudly declares, “You have turned the house of the lord into a circus. And its servants into clowns” and adamantly denies engaging in witchcraft, but lovelorn lunatic Sister Jeanne self-righteously contradicts him, so he and his new wife Madeleine are immediately arrested under the bogus charge of “heresy” at the order of Baron de Laubardemont. From there, Grandier is forced to undergo a series of absurdly pointless torture scenarios to prove he is a member of Satan’s legion.

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After Laubardemont has everything in Grandier's home searched through and destroyed in a Gestapo-esque fashion, the persecuted priest is given a preposterous Soviet style show trial that is presided over by a group KKK-esque dudes in white cloaks. Of course, the only real 'evidence' that they have against Grandier is love letters from his various sexual conquests, thus making it seem like he would indeed defile an entire convent of young nuns. Of course, Grandier is ultimately found guilty and sentenced to be burned at the stake in front of the entire population of Loudun. Before he is executed, Grandier suffers the public shame of having the priestly mop on his head shaved and is tortured with various bone-crushing blows to his legs by Father Barre, who tries in vain to get the priest to admit his guilt. Meanwhile, Sister Jeanne attempts suicide via hanging and even recants her claims regarding Grandier due to her overwhelming guilt, but of course professional bullshitter Barre blames her actions on demonic possession and then proceeds to rape some sense into her. Even when offered the opportunity to go free and become an active player in the increasingly powerful Catholic Church, Grandier refuses to give in and continues to maintain his innocence, which eventually convinces Mignon he is innocent, for no man would pointlessly endure such pain and torture unless they were innocent and actually believed what they were saying. While initially supporting him, the entire populous provides credence to Gustave Le Bon's theory of mass psychology and herd behavior by actively supporting and even eagerly awaiting Grandier's execution by throwing a huge festival, not realizing that his death will also result in the death and complete destruction of Loudun. While the executioner promises to strangle Grandier just before he is burned alive, Mignon nonsensically ties the rope in a knot after becoming consumed with guilt over the priest's innocence. As Grandier burns alive, the bastard baby spawned from his affair with high-class harlot Philippe Trincant is forced to watch the execution while some perverted old rich geezer says to the child, "lucky little bastard, it's not every day that baby sees daddy burn to death." Immediately after Grandier is burned alive, Baron de Laubardemont orders the demolition of Loudun and the entire place is reduced to rubble. After the priest's execution and martyrdom, Baron de Laubardemont visits Sister Jeanne and reveals that Father Mignon has been institutionalized for being 'demented' due to his claims that Grandier was innocent. Before leaving, the Baron hands Sister Jeanne Grandier's charred femur bone as a "souvenir" and she subsequently diddles herself with it. In the final scene, Grandier's young widowed wife Madeline climbs through the rubble of ruined Loudun and leaves the town for good.

In its strangely 'feel-good' and mirthful approach to depicting religious and political corruption, mass hysteria, heresy, religious hatred, sexual perversion, mental illness, the plague, medieval style torture, enemas, and exorcisms, among other things, *The Devils* ultimately demonstrates Ken Russell's greatest talent as a filmmaker as a man so charming that he could make coprophagia seem like

an absolutely delectable experience. Indeed, in its highly addictive compulsively carnivalesque approach to everything from human atrocities to religious martyrdom, Russell's film is like the artsploitation equivalent of a 'popcorn movie,' as a classic work with seemingly infinite replay value that can be enjoyed by even the most prideful of philistines, though the film might offend more anally repressive types as Roger Ebert, who was himself a lapsed Catholic, and seems to have suffered a yeast infection after watching the work and gave it a notoriously scathing review. Notably, considerably cunty kosher film critic Pauline Kael also once wrote regarding Russell, "What Sen. Joe McCarthy did to people's reputations is nothing to what Ken Russell does...he is the chief defiler of celebrities of the past and present," yet I doubt any man or woman could get through *The Devils* without thinking that Urbain Grandier is the ultimate charismatic pimp, player, and man's man, which cannot be said of many priests, be they fictional or nonfictional. Russell's film is also notable for bringing celluloid life to ancient paintings ranging from Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* to the work of Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder, especially his 1562 oil panel painting *The Triumph of Death*. Of course, the film's production designer, Derek Jarman, should be largely credited for the film's overall look. Unquestionably, the influence of *The Devils* on Jarman's oeuvre can be seen everywhere from the sadistic queenish Emperor Diocletian (who has more than a couple of things in common with Louis XIII) of his debut feature *Sebastiane* (1976) to the allegorical religious imagery of his highly autobiographical arthouse work *The Garden* (1990). Of course, with its emphasis on hairy cunts over flaccid cocks, Russell's film demonstrates a singularly rampantly heterosexual camp sensibility that is second to none. Not surprisingly, Russell's work is not the only film inspired by the Loudun possessions of 1634, as the event also influenced the Polish film *Mother Joan of the Angels* (1961) aka *Matka Joanna od Aniołów* aka *The Devil and the Nun* directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz and the West German TV opera *Die Teufel von Loudun* (1969) aka *The Devils of Loudun* directed by Rolf Liebermann (who also adapted his version from Huxley's novel and Penderecki's play). Although more overtly serious and thus more brutal than *The Devils* as a work featuring a far from campy portrayal of Sister Jeanne receiving a holy water enema, Liebermann's *The Devils of Loudun* seems to have too many similarities for Russell to have not seen it and been influenced by the work. Interestingly, William Friedkin also used part of the score from *The Devils of Loudun* for *The Exorcist* (1973), which is another work that blurs the line between Catholic celluloid and pure heresy. While it is true that Russell converted to Roman Catholicism in the 1950s, the circumstances of the filmmaker's conversion seem somewhat dubious as reflected in his remark in the audio commentary track for the BFI DVD release of *The Devils*, "I was brought to the faith by intimate intercourse with a nun in the Poor Clares." Personally, I see the character of Urbain Grandier as a sort of alter-ego for Russell, as a

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sort of proud sinner who truly believes, albeit in his own highly idiosyncratic sort of way, with *The Devils* not only being the director's final word on religion, but also authority in general, the aristocracy, politics, and the masses as well as a work that more or less encompasses his entire weltanschauung, thus making it the perfect introductory work for novices of the singularly eccentric English auteur.

-Ty E

ALTERED STATES

Ken Russell (1980)

With my recent reexamination of the director's darkly humorously heretical yet strangely spiritual alpha-nunsplotation masterpiece *The Devils* (1971), I decided it was about time that I re-watch English auteur Ken Russell's most 'Hollywood' effort *Altered States* (1980), which is notable for being both the filmmaker's first American film, as well his first and only excursion into science fiction. Indeed, a sort of metaphysical and psyche-philosophical horror-sci-fi-cum-romance hybrid that one might describe as Russell's own equivalent to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972), the film hardly seems like it could be a typical personal auteur piece for the director upon looking at its troubled production history. Based on the only novel ever written by three-time Academy Award winning screenwriter/playwright Paddy Chayefsky (*The Hospital*, *Network*) that was inspired by neuroscientist/psychonaut/philosopher John C. Lilly's sensory deprivation research conducted in isolation tanks while under the influence of counterculture psychoactive favorites like ketamine and LSD, *Altered States* was originally slated to be directed by kosher counterculture auteur Arthur Penn (*Bonnie and Clyde*, *Little Big Man*) and according to director Russell he was Warner Brothers' 27th choice for director after the previous 26 directors had declined, thus making the work what might be described as the most personalized and idiosyncratic for-hire 'hack' piece ever made, as a phantasmagoric Faustian trip that is like a chaotic marriage between a Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster, the then-trendy prehistoric man flicks of the 1980s like Jean-Jacques Annaud's *La guerre du feu* (1981) aka *Quest for Fire*, and the more psychedelic-oriented films of the American avant-garde like Jack Smith's *Normal Love* (1963), Ron Rice's *Chumlum* (1964), Ira Cohen's *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968), James Broughton's *Dreamwood* (1971), and Herr Anger's oeuvre. Of course, considering writer Chayefsky, who was apparently barred from the film set after trying to have Russell fired, later had his name taken off of the film and special effects man John Dykstra resigned from his duties, I think it quite obvious who was in control of *Altered States*, which with its allegorical religious imagery (snakes and all!) and daunting depiction of a deleteriously fanatical madman of the quasis-megalomaniacal sort whose obsessiveness ultimately gets him in serious trouble, is a pure and unadulterated Russellian work to the core, even if it lacks the auteur's characteristic campiness. While critics have described *Altered States* as everything from a modernist reworking of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth to an aberrant adaptation of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, I think source writer Chayefsky was most accurate when he described the work in an interview as a love story. Indeed, despite its hysterical hodgepodge of largely horrific hallucinatory imagery of the apocalyptic sorts, the film is ultimately the

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tale of a fanatical scientist with intimacy problems and the woman that is rather reluctantly hopelessly in love with him and will stand by her mensch no matter what, even when he transforms himself into a rather revolting mass of primordial matter and almost kills her, himself, and their friends in the process. A rare special-effects-heavy sci-fi flick that does not seem like it was specially tailored for impotent, virginal, and/or asexual fanboys who prefer seeing imaginary exotic alien planets to real-life pussies, *Altered States* may bring up quasi-existentialist questions about the origin of mankind, the Book of Revelations, pain and suffering, and the Faustian nature of Occidental man, but these themes are merely more or less window dressings for an idiosyncratic romance featuring the fairer sex at its most strangely empathetic and respectable, which is surely no small accomplishment.

Edward Jessup (William Hurt in his very first feature film role) is a Harvard University professor of abnormal psychology that is so obsessed with his work and research in such a deleterious way that he has no personal life and seems to suffer from Asperger syndrome, but luckily he is a tall, blond, handsome, and charming chap who doesn't seem to have a hard time getting hot tail like most socially retarded academic types do. In between practicing sensory deprivation in a floatation tank with the help of his dorky Jewish pal Arthur Rosenberg (played by real-life Hebraic nerd Bob Balaban) where he hallucinates like a "son of a bitch" and experiences "a lot of religious allegory, mostly out of Revelation," Edward meets a hot and equally Nordic-looking 24-year-old physical anthropology student working on her doctrinal thesis named Emily (Blair Brown) and they screw the same day that they meet each other, though he suffers hallucinations of "God. Jesus, crucifixions" during mid-coitus that make it fairly clear that the two will have a somewhat troubled relationship. As Edward explains to Emily after they fuck for the first time, he started hallucinating images of Christ when he was a young child even though his parents were pretentious atheistic scientists and it was only when his father succumbed to a "protracted and painful death from cancer" when he was 16 that he started to stop hallucinating and believing in Christ. From there, Ed warns Emily "what kind of nut" she is getting mixed up with if she decides to keep dating him and she replies that he is a "fascinating bastard," thus demonstrating her early devotion to him. Since most of the research into alternate states of consciousness is basically "radical-hip stuff, drug-culture apologias," Edward hopes to prove via his floatation tank trips that "our other states of consciousness are as real as our waking states" and he is more than willing to destroy his mind and body in the process. When Edward suffers nefarious visions of his father on his death bed and Baphomet on the cross, as well as images of people suffering in hell and various other apocalyptic visions, even that still does not stop him from continuing his dubious studies. Meanwhile, even though she thinks he is an "unmitigated madman" and complains to him, "Even sex is a mystical experience for you. You carry on like a flagellant,

which can be very nice...but I sometimes wonder if it's me that's being made love to. I feel like I'm being harpooned by some raging monk in the act of receiving God," Emily makes a somewhat strange marriage proposal to Edward, which he accepts, but not before rambling on about administering dimethyltryptamine aka DMT to a schizophrenic girl, thus reflecting his pathological preoccupation with his work. Indeed, at best, Emily is of secondary concern to Edward, as nothing gets in between him and his research.

While Edward and Emily ultimately get married in a seemingly immaculate romantic union that produces two cute little girls (one of the Jessup girls is played by Drew Barrymore in her debut film role), the Asperger-ridden scientist cannot handle devoting himself to a family and thus asks his wife for a divorce even though she is still deeply in love with him. When his friend Arthur finds out about the divorce and states to his friend, "My God, if anybody has it made, you have" in reference to the fact that he has a totally beautiful wife that is completely devoted to him despite his glaring peculiarities, Edward, who rarely expresses any emotions aside from a disturbing mania for his scientific research, coldly replies that if he doesn't get a divorce, he will "go out of my fucking mind." As Edward adds while sounding like some drop-out hippie moron who has devoured too much Timothy Leary twaddle, he is determined to search for his "true self" and he is "going to find that fucker," even if it means hanging out in caves and getting stoned with fossilized third world savages. Indeed, Edward plans to "find that fucker" by tripping on psychedelic mushrooms with a tribe of ancient Mexican Indians. Before tripping with the old Injuns, the head Indian chief cuts Edward's palm and mixes his blood with the psychedelic soup. Ultimately, Edward has such a nightmarish trip with the Indians that he hallucinates seeing a large lizard morphing into Emily, among other unsettling visions that might further scare him away from his wife. After the somewhat ominous ordeal, Edward learns that he brutally slaughtered a large lizard while he was tripping, but he is in denial about his actions, complaining to his mestizo translator/tour guide, "And this whole hideous business is just a joke...the Indians have played on me to make the gringo look like a fool!" Despite his intolerable gringo arrogance, the Indians give Edward a tincture from psychedelic mushrooms to take back with him to the United States so that he can trip while in his isolation tank, thereupon heightening the entire experience and potentially throwing him into a truly altered state of consciousness. Around the same time, Edward begins to face major criticism from his comrade Mason Parrish (Charles Haid), who begins secretly telling his estranged wife Emily about his eccentric and increasingly dangerous experiments. When one of Edward's isolation tank trips results in him being covered in blood and growing a sack inside his throat, the half-deranged scientist concludes, "I obviously regressed to some quasi-simian creature," but perennial skeptic Mason does not believe it for a second and concludes that his strange friend is losing his sanity and has contracted

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cancer due to all the drugs he has taken.

With his friend Mason adamantly refusing to help him with anymore of his experiments, Edward makes the mistake of going on one of his isolation tank trips all by himself without supervision and in the process he suffers from a form of biological devolution where he degenerates into a hairy feral monkey man. Upon morphing into a true *untermensch*, Edward almost beats a security guard to death, fights a pack of wild dogs, and eventually ends up in a zoo where he savagely hunts and devours a deer. The next day, a cop arrests Edward after finding him naked near the dead deer that he devoured the previous night. Naturally, Edward is bailed out of prison by his beloved wife Emily and instead of being fearful as a result of his experiences, he describes transforming into a simian as being the “most supremely satisfying night of my life,” which is certainly not the sort of thing a normal man says to his wife. Somewhat preposterously, Edward convinces Mason, Arthur, and his wife Emily to accompany him to his next isolation tank trip where he ultimately transforms into a grotesque globule of primordial matter that somewhat resembles Belial from Frank Henenlotter’s *Basket Case* trilogy. Demonstrating her undying devotion to Edward, Emily risks her life to bring back her husband by pulling him out of a foggy abyss and ultimately preventing him from being lost in some sort of alternate reality as an unconscious and non-physical pile of primordial puke. While Edward rests after almost being lost in oblivion, Emily begins suffering a hysterical episode and complains to Mason, “Of all the goddamn men in this world, why do I have to love this one? I can’t get him out of me. Do you know how many men I tried to fall in love with this past year? But it won’t work no matter who I’m in bed with, I have to imagine it’s him or nothing happens...No matter who I’m eating with or walking with...there’s always this pain because it isn’t him. I’m possessed by him.” The next day, Edward begins to suffer a spontaneous attack of temporary partial devolution and when Emily grabs his hand to help him, she also begins to degenerate into some sort of glowing primordial being of the hardly human sort. Proving ‘love conquers all,’ Edward manages to use mind over matter and saves his wife and himself from transforming into worthless genetic garbage. Upon transforming back into normal humans, Edward says to his beloved for the first time ever, “I love you, Emily,” thus reflecting the fact he has finally accepted his humanity and is determined to devote himself to the one who loves him the most, or as he states before his last transformation, “The final truth of all things is that there is no final truth. Truth is what’s transitory. It’s human life that is real.” Notably, *Altered States* ultimately concludes in the best way any aesthetically pleasing film can with a shot of a rather ample sized female derriere.

While not exactly an immaculate work by any means, *Altered States* is easily one of the most strikingly romantic sci-fi flicks I have ever seen, which I guess does not say much considering the autistic nature of the genre and the sort

of sexless and socially defective people it attracts, but knowing that it is a Ken Russell flick, one can certainly expect that it is the sort of work that features a singular rebel's love affair with no vomit-inducing clichés. As a fanatical man and filmmaker who was more than a little bit obsessed with his own work and who was married no less than four times during the course of his life, Russell certainly had reason to be attracted to Paddy Chayefsky's source novel. Indeed, I certainly cannot think of one single girlfriend I ever had that was not jealous of my interests or artistic projects, as if it was another woman competing with them. Of course, *Altered States* protagonist Edward's wife Emily is like the ultimate dream woman, as she even stays devoted to him after he divorces her so that he can spend all his time figuratively jerking off in an isolation tank while tripping on Injun shrooms. Like a Salvador Dalí landscape painting come to life as molested by Russell's curious obsession with Catholic religious iconography, the film attempts to visually depict the living hell of being, especially if you're a deracinated and emotionally retarded intellectual like the protagonist, in a fashion that romanticizes yet ultimately rejects the obsession with retrogression. Indeed, in his obsession with coming into contact with his primitive side, Edward is no different from the many ethno-masochistic bourgeois whites that listen to rap music and absurdly parrot the sub-literate slang and repugnant mannerisms of poor negroes in a pathetic attempt to feel more in tune with nature and the visceral side of life, as if it will make them feel any more soulless. As for self-loathing intellectuals who take psychedelic drugs in a desperate attempt to have some semblance of human emotion and spirituality, I personally know of one fellow who took one too many trips and was ultimately institutionalized after declaring he was some sort of messiah and attempted to murder his girlfriend with his bare hands. Like the protagonist of *Altered States*, this certain individual had a complete and utter incapacity for love and empathy, but unlike Edward, he was also apparently more or less sexually impotent, which seems to be common among scientifically-minded individuals. While I could never see the sort of protagonist featured in Russell's film ever reaching an epiphany about the gift of his humanity, let alone the ability to reciprocate love, even after he is turned into primordial waste, *Altered States* was an enthralling enough cinematic experience for me to the point where I was able to temporarily suspend my disbelief and consider that human touch and emotional affection might be able to destroy the Asperger-like traits in certain individuals.

-Ty E

CRIMES OF PASSION
CRIMES OF PASSION

Ken Russell (1984)

There is probably no other filmmaker that my opinion of has changed so drastically in the past decade or so than English auteur Ken Russell (*Women in Love*, *The Devils*), whose films I used to regard as mostly obnoxiously bombastic hagiographic celluloid swill and/or asininely aesthetically decadent quasi-pornography. Undoubtedly, out of all of Russell's films that I had originally seen during my first attempt to tackle the auteur's oeuvre, the one I found to be the most innately worthless and just plain unwatchable was *Crimes of Passion* (1984) aka *China Blue*, which I could not even bear to finish when I attempted to watch it about a decade ago or so. As a result of my newfound affinity for Russell's films, I naturally decided to give the film a second chance, which I am glad I did as I now regard it as one of the most underrated films of the 1980s and easily one of the director's most innately subversive and seedy cinematic works. Indeed, forget black Brit Steve McQueen's *Shame* (2011), Russell's film makes the Michael Fassbender vehicle seem like a shallow exercise in sterile decadence in terms of its deceptively sleazy yet ultimately rather intricate and nuanced examination in regard to the perils of sexual addiction (or what might be better described as 'sexual nihilism') and issues relating to fears of intimacy and monogamy. While the film might feature hilariously perverse things like Anthony 'Psycho' Perkins menacingly wielding a deadly silver dildo named 'Superman,' the bloody slaughter of a blowup doll (!) by Perkins, and a corrupt cop being sodomized with his own baton while stiletto heels are simultaneously penetrating his flesh, among numerous other equally darkly erotically eccentric examples of cinematic alchemy where trashy scenarios and imagery are executed in an inordinately elegantly stylized fashion, *Crimes of Passion* is indubitably, for better or worse, one of the most sophisticated films ever made about the stark contrast between soulless sex and genuine sexual intimacy and how many people that regularly engage in the former lack the emotional capacity for the latter. Indeed, in Russell's wayward celluloid realm of transcendental sleaze, a smart and beautiful fashion designer is more afraid of love and commitment than violently shoving long inanimate objects up men's asses while wildly riding their cocks. *Crimes of Passion* is also probably the only film ever made where a ghetto reverend manages to find the ultimate form of redemption by being murdered with a dildo while dressed in extra kitschy drag.

Adapted from a screenplay by a fairly unknown homo Hebrew named Barry Sandler, who is arguably best known otherwise for penning the gay love triangle piece *Making Love* (1982) directed by fellow Israelite Arthur Hiller, Russell's film also features a bizarre love triangle, albeit of a considerably seedier and more sexually depraved sort that does not involve sodomy. Not unlike Sander with his screenplay for *Making Love* being bastardized for mainstream consumption,

Russell had bad experiences with Hollywood studios butchering or otherwise manipulating his two previous American efforts *Valentino* (1977) and *Altered States* (1980), so the two made for perfect partners for a cinematic collaboration, or as the auteur better explained himself in *Altered States: The Autobiography of Ken Russell* (1991), “Recently some of the most popular evangelists on TV were exposed for the scum they are, but at the time I was asked to direct my first truly original American screenplay their mask of sanctity was yet to be torn away. Yes, my agent had at last landed me a job—a real job, not a development deal but a definite offer to make *CRIMES OF PASSION*. It was a package deal. The writer, Barry Sandler, was handled by the same agency. Barry was something of a maverick, though not as far out of the Hollywood mainstream as myself. He was, however, equally disillusioned. Having written an adult screenplay for Fox about a married couple who turn into a ménage à trios when the husband comes out of the closet with his boyfriend, Barry had the painful experience of seeing his creation castrated for being too ballsy. He hoped for better things from New World, who didn’t have such a high moral profile to uphold. So did I. They were known for their cheap exploitation movies and, because no one else seemed to want us, they got us cheap too—with Kathleen Turner into the bargain [...] The screenplay dealt with identities, split personalities and the masks those in the rat race for the American Dream feel compelled to wear if they’re out to win. Sometimes the mask becomes more real than the face underneath, especially if it’s a public face. And then we’re in trouble.”

Arguably what might be best described as the most cultivated, nuanced, and sophisticated exploitation film ever made, Russell’s devilishly dark and satirical anti-romcom neo-noir is indubitably a cinematic work of Elephantiasis level testicular fortitude where two very different people—a young and naive yet kind-hearted family man and a socially alienated workaholic fashion designer that moonlights as a pimp-free ghetto hooker—that hide behind masks learn to be themselves and embrace reality after unexpectedly falling in love with one another. Also featuring a morally depraved ghetto reverend portrayed by Anthony Perkins who completes the bizarre love triangle that attempts to ‘save’ the hooker from her lonely life of self-destructive lechery due to his belief that they are same due to their pathological longing for self-destructive sexual debasement, *Crimes of Passion* is like Andy Milligan’s *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973) meets Andy Warhol’s *Chelsea Girls* (1966) meets Werner Schroeter’s *Malina* (1991) with shades of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960). In short, there is nothing quite like Russell’s darkly romantic romp of Reagan era raunchiness, yet, despite its glaring degeneracy, the film ultimately contains a surprisingly positive and important message about emotional alienation in the age of porn, big hair, and rampant materialism.

In a morally inverted and exceedingly emasculated (post)feminist world where many young woman waste their most fertile years working as virtual corporate

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prostitutes doing abstract paper-shuffling in offices and ultimately end up unhappy unmarried old maids and where young white men have become disillusioned with starting a family and even sometimes give up on women altogether as reflected in dubious online communities like MGTOW, *Crimes of Passion* is arguably more important now than when it was first released in terms of diagnosing what is wrong with modern couples and society in general. Of course, as a fetish-fueled man that was married no less than four times during his rather eventful life, director Russell certainly had some special insights in regard to the problem between the sexes and the importance of sex in a healthy relationship. As the film demonstrates, genuine organic intimacy is an imperative ingredient in terms of maintaining a healthy relationship, especially as far as the male partner is concerned (as the film hints, women are better suited to live sexually unsatisfying lives, especially if it is to their material benefit). Likewise, as the hooker portrayed by Kathleen Turner demonstrates, sexually promiscuity is innately soulless and typical of a damaged and most likely morally bankrupt individual that is either afraid of and/or lacks the capacity for true sexual intimacy, hence the tendency of so-called 'sex workers' (e.g. prostitutes, strippers, porn stars, etc.) to be the unfortunate products of child molestation and/or a single mother. While the male protagonist of the film portrayed by John Laughlin lies to himself about the fact that his marriage is a sham and that his fiercely frigid wife is sexually repulsed by him, the female protagonist has created an entire phony prostitute persona that allows herself to feel strong and in control when, in reality, she is a terribly lonely emotional cripple that is afraid of devotion, intimacy, and love, hence her need to live a double life as the city's most brazenly sensually eccentric pussy-peddler. Luckily, in Russell's film, opposites attract and the young married businessman and bourgeois prostitute are able to shed their masks and embrace reality after falling in love with one another. Of course, the film would not be complete without Mr. Perkins' performance as psychotic pervert reverend that partly acts as the chic hooker's unlikely savior. A piece of meticulously stylized high-camp trash-with-class with the sort of strange hermetic melodrama that you would expect from a classic 1960s George Kuchar flick like *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) or *Eclipse Of The Sun Virgin* (1967), including lavishly stylized silhouette sex scenes, *Crimes of Passion* is a rare cinematic work that manages to communicate an important message without succumbing to cheap sentimentality or heavy-handed art fag pretentiousness. In fact, as a result of using exaggerated fetishistic imagery and kinky quasi-pornographic scenarios, Russell ultimately tricks the viewer into devouring what is, thematically speaking, a relatively wholesome film that says more about love than any Woody Allen or Wes Anderson film could.

The film begins awkwardly yet hilariously enough with all-American male protagonist Bobby Grady (John Laughlin)—an unhappily marriage middleclass electronics store owner with two kids—sitting in on a sex group therapy session

while he listens to men and women expression their hatred for the opposite sex (for instance, one fine chap makes a joke about vaginas smelling like fish). While Bobby claims that he is only there to support his homey Donny Hopper (Bruce Davison), he loses his cool when an unseen misandriſtic bitch singles him out for verbal venom and absurdly accuses him of being a “lousy lay” despite knowing literally nothing about him. As a poor horny fellow that juſt wants a little bit of sex yet is married to a fiercely frigid bitch that will not even give him a meager peck on the lips, Bobby takes offense to the woman’s completely fabricated accusation and retorts in an impassioned fashion that reveals he has serious marriage problems, “I’m not the one who complains how tired I am every night. Getting her to make love . . . It’s like asking her to run the Boſton Marathon. And then those times when we actually do go through with it, I don’t know whether to embrace her or embalm her. So don’t tell me that I’m a lousy lay.” Needless to say, Bobby then proceeds to walkout of the group therapy session, but that does not ſtop him from obsessing over the fact that his wife refuses to fuck him. Despite the fact that he is a handsome man with an athletic build and a great provider for his family, Bobby’s preternaturally prudish wife Amy (Annie Potts)—an oftentimes cuntſy ſtay-at-home-mom that seems more offended by the mere idea of sex than the average Catholic prieſt—refuses to have sexual contact of any kind with her fairly loving hubby. Needless to say, when Bobby comes into contact with a ſophiſticated fashion designer named Joanna Crane (Kathleen Turner) that moonlights as fetish oriented ſtreetwalker with the pseudonym ‘China Blue,’ he cannot help but cheat on his wife and reconsider his marriage altogether. When the viewer firſt ſees China Blue, she is doing a ſort of bad performance art routine where she pretends to give an acceptance ſpeech for “Miss Liberty 1984” while ſome random sleaze-bag chows down on her meat-curtain. As an emotionally damaged divorcee and workaholic that is absolutely afraid of intimacy and commitment, Joanna uses her ‘China Blue’ routine to give herſelf a false ſense of control and sexual power, but it is obvious that she is morbidly lonely and ſecretly longs for ſomething more than juſt cheap carnal thrills. Needless to say, Bobby eventually shatters Joanna’s delusions of sexual grandeur when he pays for her ſervices and she cums with extra creamy glee. After all, as a certain character ſtated in David Mamet’s *Homicide* in regard to the wiſe worlds of an old whore, “When you ſtart cumin’ with the customers, it’s time to quit.” While virtually all of her customers act like white knights after fucking her by acting as if they want to ſave her, only Bobby is actually ſerious about it, though the female protagonist does have unexpected help from an uniquely unholy holy man.

Before she ever meets Bobby boy, Joanna is haraſſed by a quasi-psychotic ſtreet preacher named Reverend Peter Shayne (Anthony Perkins in arguably the moſt overlooked role of his career), who regularly inhales poppers (aka alkyl nitrites) in peepshows while guys maſturbate beſide him in a ſort of pay-to-play

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communal circle-jerk and who regularly carries around a black leather doctor bag containing an eclectic collection aberrosexual sex toys (notably, Perkins designed and/or obtained these toys himself). Upon first encountering Joanna while she is roaming the streets as 'China Blue,' the Reverend immediately decides that he and she are the "same" person and that he will be her "holy messenger" and save her from a miserable and lonely life of sin and self-destructive sexual degradation. Indeed, as the Reverend eventually tells Joanna, "All you need to know about me is that I intend to save you. And all you need to do is . . . be there. Stay with me, China Blue. Trust me. I'll free you." While he is indubitably a lecherous lunatic of the psychosexually murderous sort that seems like he would rape a rotting corpse if he inhaled enough poppers, the good Reverend genuinely wants to save Joanna from herself and he is willing to sacrifice himself to achieve that goal, even if he does not waste an opportunity to verbally degrade and berate her in the process. As a hyper hypercritical religious man that seems to see his own life as a lost cause, the Reverend believes that saving Joanna will be his final act of redemption lest he be regulated to hell like all the other sinners in the 1980s neo-Sodom where he dwells.

Aside from owning a modest electronics store where he is beloved by his handful employees, Bobby also moonlights doing semi-sleazy surveillance work and it is as a result of being hired to spy on Joanna that he learns about her and her secret double-life as a flamboyantly dressed gutter grade whore. Indeed, Bobby is hired by Joanna's stingy Jewish boss Lou Bateman (Norman Burton) to spy on her for somewhat dubious reasons. In fact, Bateman has no problem telling Bobby, "I want you to nail her lily white ass" because he believes Joanna is secretly selling unreleased patterns and designs from his clothing company to rival brands, even though he has no real evidence to support his claim aside from his general disinterest of her due to her strong work ethic, seeming disgust of penis, and seemingly nonexistent personal life. Of course, Bobby literally nails Joanna's ass, but not in the way that Mr. Bateman hoped. When Bobby first sees Joanna while she is working at her day job, he states to Mr. Bateman, "How could someone that looks like that be a criminal?," but he ultimately learns later that night that she is the kinkiest little hard-working white whore in town. At first, Bobby merely spies on Joanna and films some of her nocturnal excursions, but after having a vicious fight with his wife Alice he eventually gets the gall to follow both his heart and hard-on and procure her sensual services. When Bobby first goes to see Joanna, he reveals his inordinate sensitivity by warning her "Go slow. I'm just a Boy Scout" and then attempts to ask her who she really is, but she merely replies "It's not a prom date, sweetie. I'm a hooker, you're a trick. Why ruin a perfect relationship?" and hands him a Quaalude so that he can "fly" while fucking. To her most pleasant yet perplexing surprise, Joanna really gets into being sensitively banged by Bobby in a variety of positions and cannot believe that she is sharing a seemingly immaculate sex session that involves real

visceral feelings and deep intimacy. As demonstrated by the fact that she passionately sucks his toes and massages his entire body with the utmost sensitivity during foreplay, Joanna seems to have a special affection for Bobby before he even demonstrates that he has a talent for pleasuring her pussy with his pulsating prick. In what is undoubtedly one of the most unforgettable and aesthetically pleasing sex scenes in cinema history, Russell highlights the orgasmic majesty of Bobby and Joanna's first sexual encounter via kaleidoscopic silhouettes.

As a woman that has a serious problem with intimacy, Joanna almost immediately starts a fight with Bobby after they have otherworldly sex as a sort of defense mechanism, so he passionately states to her, "Why are we acting like this? I thought fucking was supposed to bring people closer together, not drive them apart." When Bobby emotionally states, "What we did today . . . You felt it too, didn't you? You weren't just acting. You felt what I did. Tell me, please. I have to know," Joanna cannot deny it, so she changes the subject by asking him if he wants to see her again, but he somberly replies, "Yes . . . but I can't" and then leaves. Needless to say, when the Reverend shows up right after Bobby leaves and immediately begins berating her, Joanna is more than a little bit pissed and wastes no time in berating the bat-shit crazy holy man, though she is not as tough as usual and is more vulnerable to his venomous attacks. Indeed, as a result of being made to feel vulnerable by Bobby, Joanna almost completely breaks down when the Reverend declares that he has written her a poem and then recites with a sort of sadistically smug hateful glee that you would expect from a half-psychotic white bourgeois social justice warrior, "Behold this wicked woman. She falls, she mends, she crawls, she bends. She sucks it, fucks it, picks it up and licks it. You can whip her, beat her, maul her, mistreat her. Anything you want as long as you don't touch her. Show her affection, she turns to stone." Additionally, Joanna can hardly argue with the Reverend when he screams in her face, "Do you know what you are? DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE? A cheap painted slut who makes a fortune selling illusions yet still ends up broke." As a highly secretive and all but completely emotionally impenetrable S&M oriented hooker with a phony persona that is in stark contrast to her real personality, Joanna naturally never expected that her less than legal profession would lead to her being consumed in the most absurd of bizarre love triangles, but luckily for her both men will ultimately inspire her to reassess her life and inevitably embrace true love over soulless fleeting lust.

In between his regular ghetto soapbox sermons where he proselytizes with venom with hilariously bastardized pieces of scripture like, "Their blood have they shed like water round Jerusalem. Like, like, like . . . They fuck and they piss and they shit like the fucking scum they are," the renegade Reverend regularly spies on Johanna via a fancy makeshift peephole. Indeed, the Reverend is so obsessed with Joanna that he rents out a motel room right next to her China White blue pad that he fills with bizarre pornographic collages that seem

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like the were inspired by the artistic works of English outsider artist and filmmaker Jeff Keen (*Mad Love*, *The Dreams and Past Crimes of the Archduke*). A psychosexually schizophrenic sermonizing sicko that is hopelessly torn between his degenerate sexual fetish(es) and religious faith, the Reverend becomes increasingly mentally unstable after meeting Joanna and it soon becomes obvious that he will soon explode in full-blown insanity and commit a most horrific act of the strangely spiritually transcendental sort. Meanwhile, Bobby becomes increasingly annoyed with his snooty sexless wife Amy, especially after she gets a considerably bitchy attitude at a cookout party where the male protagonist does a totally tasteless yet nonetheless humorous “human penis” routine where he acts like an ejaculating cock by spitting tons of milk out of his mouth. In fact, that night, Bobby gets so angry at Amy’s insufferable passive-aggressive bullshit that he yells at her until she finally opens up and meekly confesses that she never enjoyed sex with him and would even fake orgasms to make him happy. At this point, Bobby becomes even angrier and yells in an impassioned fashion to his wife, “What do you think I am. Some kind of machine? That I just need a hole to cum in? I mean, what do you think makes me cum? [...] I’ll tell you. I thought it was being inside the woman that I love. And giving her as much pleasure as she was giving to me. You know, the two of us, together.” Of course, Joanna makes Bobby cum in exactly that perfect way that he describes to his wife, so naturally he cannot help but proceed to pursue her in real-life as an actual and person instead of mere cheap whore and fantasy, especially after finally accepting the fact that his marriage with Amy is a lost cause.

Needless to say, when Bobby randomly shows up to her apartment and reveals that he knows her true identity, Joanna is more than a tad bit taken aback and acts if she is going to suffer a major panic attack. Luckily, Bobby has a way with words and somewhat lightens her up by stating, “You remind me of this hamster I had when I was a kid. He ran away whenever you tried to touch him. So I wanted to show him there’s nothing to be afraid of. So one day, I just picked him up real fast and I held him [...] he shit in my hand.” When Bobby soon leaves in just as an awkward manner as he first arrived, it obvious by the express on Joanna’s face that she is glad he came and wishes that he stayed longer. Not surprisingly, when Joanna later engages in sex with a young cop and penetrates him in the ass with his nightstick and his skin with her stilettos, she seems to realize the soullessness of such a fleeting fetishistic encounter, especially after the perverted policeman hatefully spits in her face when she tells him a goofy joke regarding ivory soap being “99 and 44/100% pure” that Bobby once told to her. Likewise, when she attempts to engage in a threesome in a limousine with an uptight middle-aged yuppie couple that complains about their daughter’s Jewish boyfriend not being able to go to their country club, she becomes so agitated that she swiftly aborts the mobile ménage a trio before it even gets past the foreplay stage. Ultimately, it is not until an old woman picks her up off the streets to have

sex with her terminally ill husband Ben (Gerald S. O'Loughlin) that Joanna truly realizes the morally bankruptcy and soullessness of her carnal trade and decides to give up her sensually counterfeit China Blue persona for good. Indeed, when Ben demonstrates his love for his wife by stating things like, "I didn't want her to do this. I haven't been with another woman in 28 years. But she insisted" and ultimately refusing to have sex with her because he cannot bear to be unfaithful to his beloved, Joanna is so deeply moved by the dying old fart's untainted love and devotion toward his spouse that she takes off her silly platinum blonde wig and tells the old man that her real name is "Joanna," thereupon symbolically shedding her prostitute persona.

After deciding to leave his wife, Bobby heads over to Joanna's apartment and tells her, "The first time Amy and I made love, she asked me if I still respected her. Hell, I thought that's the reason we did it. Well, it's all over," but she is clearly still scared of intimacy and commitment and replies, "It's so hard, Bobby. No man's ever given me that kind of faith before, that kind of respect. But that hotel is the safest place in the world. I can do anything there, I can be anything I can dream of because it's not me. Don't you see? I'd only end up disappointing you." After Bobby swears to Joanna that he is totally "tough" and can handle anything, especially after being in a sexless marriage for over a decade, the two more or less decide to become an official monogamous couple. Unfortunately, Bobby's wife Amy, who is the virtual stereotype of a pathetically helpless woman, is not used to not having a man around to do everything for her and thus makes a desperate and highly insincere attempt to get her hubby back. When Amy finally comes to the bitter realization that Bobby is seeing another woman, she naturally becomes extremely jealous and bitchily asks him if his lover has "the morals of a bitch in heat," but he makes her seem like an infantile puritanical idiot by smoothly retorting, "It may come as a shock to you but sex is one hell of a way to show what you feel." While Amy tries in vain to demonstrate that she still loves him by making him dinner and giving him a nostalgic symbolic present in the quite literally priceless form of his old high school varsity football jersey (apparently, said jersey used to turn-on Amy when they were high school sweethearts), she cannot deny her sexual apathy for Bobby and eventually literally runs away like a scared little girl. Of course, that is the last straw for Bobby, who decides to completely dedicate himself to Joanna. Unfortunately, the Reverend has big plans for Joanna that involve killer cross-dressing and quite deadly phallic weapons.

Before Bobby can go and officially declare his complete and utter devotion to Joanna, the Reverend arrives at her apartment to perform "last rites" and to "save her for once and for all." Of course, considering the fact that he soon hands her a deadly silver dildo named 'Superman' and demands, "Kill me Joanna. Give my life value. Give me something to die for! Same me! You are me. One of us has to die so that the other can live," the Reverend seems to be merely projecting

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his own desires when it comes to exorcising (or possibly exercising) his demons. Hoping to experience death-by-dildo, the Reverend then gets on his knees and attempts to egg Joanna into killing him by shouting, "Kill my you worthless cunt. I'm all the men who have ever hurt you, who made you feel like shit. Who stole your self-respect and turned you into China Blue. Kill me! Release the rage. Get it out. Get even." While Joanna seems like she might kill the Reverend, she takes too long, so the Reverend eventually gets up and coldly demands, "Strip, bitch." When Bobby finally gets back to the apartment, he is disconcerted to discover that the door his locked and Joanna is screaming like a banshee, so he breaks said door down and discovers what looks like a brutal murder scene sans blood. When Bobby sees who he assumes is Joanna cowering on the ground in her iconic China Blue outfit, he gets quite the surprise when his little lady leaps out of nowhere from behind him in holy drag and plunges the dildo into the Reverend's back during a moment of bittersweet transsexual sacrifice. In a successful attempt to bait Joanna into killing him, the Reverend acted as if he was going to stab Bobby with a pair of scissors. Before succumbing to his wounds, the Reverend reveals that his holy work is done and that he is quite satisfied with the results by lovingly stating to the female protagonist, "Goodbye, China Blue." In the end in a sassy conclusion that, at the very least, rivals the final words of Kubrick's swansong *Eyes Wide Shut*, the film comes full circle with a moving monologue from Bobby at the sex group therapy session where he states, "I'm here tonight . . . because I wanted to finally start telling the truth. My wife and I, we've split up for good. That's right. Me, the boy scout. I just never had the guts to admit the truth, that Amy and I had just stopped loving each other. There's nobody to blame. That's just what happened. Then . . . I met this woman, Joanna. She saved my life. We're together now. I'm not sure if it's gonna work out. We don't have a whole hell of a lot in common other than the fact that . . . we both need help and each other. The thing, you see, that scared me the most during my marriage was just admitting that I was scared, and letting Amy down. Well, I can't pretend anymore. I was scares shitless to come back here. I told Joanna. And she took me in her arms and she said, 'It's OK to be scared.' I felt . . . stronger. And freer. And more like a man than I've ever felt before in my life. Then we fucked our brains out."

Despite being a cinematic work that, aesthetically speaking, shamelessly epitomizes the 1980s, it is still hard to fathom that *Crimes of Passion* was released during the Reagan years when Tinseltown had regressed to such a pathetic level that they were virtually mimicking the worst of the Hollywood Golden Age in terms of morality and lack of innovation of any sort. Indeed, Russell's film is indubitably the antidote to phony 1980s bourgeois melodramas like Robert Redford's patently pathetic philosemitic joke *Ordinary People* (1980), as well as extra lame proto-neocon propaganda like Tony Scott's *Top Gun* (1986) and John Milius' *Red Dawn* (1984). In terms of sheer debauchery and both sexual

and aesthetic idiosyncrasy, there really aren't that many 1980s films that Russell's flick can really be compared to aside from the random celluloid oddity like Nicholas Roeg's *Bad Timing* (1980), *Insignificance* (1985), and *Track 29* (1988) and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986). Of course, next to Russell's film, Roeg's somewhat uneven chamber piece *Insignificance* seems like a piece of pedantry as created by someone that is more interested in talking about sex than actually engaging in it (of course, the idea of Marilyn Monroe flirting with Albert Einstein is just plain repugnant and surely a hopelessly cucked white liberal's degree, but I digress).

Notably, when a gay friend-cum-fan once accused Russell of being a "latent homosexual," the auteur humorously replied, "Fine, maybe I am, who knows. I don't think anyone knows themselves. We can all pretend, but I have an idea what I am. I'm me!" so it is interesting that *Crimes of Passion* manages to be one of the oh-so-rare cinematic works that can unequivocally be described as rampantly heterosexual high-camp in the best sort of way. Of course, one cannot deny the film's crypto-queer influence in the form of screenwriter Barry Sandler and star Anthony Perkins, who both acted as sort of secondary auteurs to the film. Indeed, aside from portraying an unforgettable unhinged character that is like a rock-bottom version of his titular character from *Psycho*, Perkins designed his own insanely idiosyncratic set pieces, got high in real-life inhaling poppers like the stereotypical degenerate promiscuous faggot, and even became a 'real' Reverend after sending \$10 and an application to the so-called Universal Life Church (in fact, when Russell got married to his second wife Vivian Jolly, Perkins was responsible for blessing the union). Needless to say, it is a sad irony that Perkins ultimately died of an illness that was caused by the same reckless sexual debauchery that plagued both his character and the film's female protagonist, but then again knowing this fact only makes for an all the more potently perverse cinematic experience. Undoubtedly, there is no doubt to the viewer while watching the flick that Perkins is having so much fun playing, as if it is his dream role. As revealed in the fairly mundane Sandler penned movie *Making Love* (1982), monogamy is not really a gay virtue, thus making it all the more seemingly inexplicable that *Crimes of Passion*—a rather pro-monogamy/pro-intimacy film that makes a clear distinction between true sexual intimacy and soulless fucking—was written by a gay man (somewhat strangely, Sandler's most recent effort was writing the negro horror-comedy *Knock 'em Dead* (2014) directed by David DeCoteau).

Thankfully, Sandler revealed his inspiration for the screenplay in an interview with *Queerty*, stating, "I started writing it at the tail end of the '70s and we were living in an age of rampant sex, particularly in the gay community. This was before AIDS so everybody was fucking around and having sex everywhere you looked. You'd stop at a red light to cruise the guy next to you and you'd end up back at his place. Yet I was thinking there was a story there about how people use

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sex to avoid intimacy and replace having to work at a relationship. It was so out there and so accessible. I thought that if I could take that theme and concept and weave it into a story — not a gay story, because I'd just done *MAKING LOVE*. I wanted to do something that would speak to gay people but would speak beyond that as well. I used whatever utensils I had as a writer to come up with the story, as twisted as it may be. It wasn't based on any one person. It sort of evolved in a strange way. It was initially a two-character piece with China Blue and the reverend, who was originally a shrink. It's probably the script of mine that took the longest to evolve. A lot of that had to do with studios who were afraid to touch it. Beyond that I just kept going back to it and add certain layers."

Rather sadly but not surprisingly, *Crimes of Passion* is, in many ways, more relevant today than when it was first released over three decades ago. Indeed, in an era where many young women have taken countless cocks and thus will probably never have a successful marriage (despite what the feminists say, there is indeed a direct correlation between how many sexual partners a woman has had and her chances of having a successful marriage) and young men are no longer interested in marriage due to the lack of real incentives (after all, you no longer need to marry a girl to fuck her nowadays) and fears regarding divorce court, Russell's film seems like a rare unlikely voice of sanity in a slimy sea of celluloid swill, but of course its message will probably be lost on most viewers who are probably more interested in obsessing over Über-bitch diva Kathleen Turner sporting a super trashy platinum blonde wig while riding a cop's cock and Anthony Perkins wielding a bloody dildo of death. Of course, the genius of the film is that it manages to use shock humor and sexual debauchery to disseminate a relatively wholesome message about the virtues of monogamy and the perils developing of a phony persona in a manner that can be understood and appreciated by even the most sexually intemperate of degenerates and perverts. After all, it is not often that one encounters a morally sound satirical neo-noir featuring artwork by Art Nouveau illustrator Aubrey Beardsley and Pre-Raphaelite painter Sir John Everett Millais (I must confess that "Ophelia" is a personal favorite of mine), a narcotizing synthesizer-heavy score by Rick Wakeman that is based entirely on Antonín Dvořák's *New World Symphony* (1893), and Anthony Perkins more or less parodying his legendary killer tranny character Norman Bates. In his relatively popular film reference book *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (2004), David Thomson complains, "The overall need to sensationalize artists and to reduce them to comic-book Freud and TV commercial glamour is justified by Russell as a means to making them more popular." Of course, Thomson makes a valid criticism, which is especially apparent upon watching *Altered States* and *Crimes of Passion* since neither of these films, quite unlike much of Russell's earlier films, are plagued by these flaws. Indeed, I would even go so far as to argue that, aside from possibly his magnum

opus *The Devils* (1971), *Crimes of Passion* is Russell's most immaculately assembled film. I certainly cannot think of another film where the whole 'hooker with a heart of gold' motif is actually used in genuinely intriguing fashion and is not used as a pathetic attempt at cheap humanist sentimentalism or Marxist agitprop. As a successful and sophisticated fashion designer that treasures art and is more geared toward love and sexual compatibility than succumbing to the cold female instinct of hypergamy, Kathleen Turner's character is, quite ironically, the virtual ideal woman, which would explain her sense of isolation; while the male protagonist's sexless wife is the total opposite as a seemingly soulless woman that married solely for material reasons in a film that, somewhat inadvertently, clearly demonstrates why many modern men avoid marriage lest they become cuckolds of divorce court. As to how a beautiful and cultivated woman could turn into a prostitute, Georges Bataille offered a good idea when he wrote, "Not every woman is a potential prostitute, but prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude. In so far as she is attractive, a woman is a prey to men's desire. Unless she refuses completely because she is determined to remain chaste, the question is at what price and under what circumstances will she yield. But if the conditions are fulfilled she always offers herself as an object. Prostitution proper only brings in a commercial element. By the care she lavishes on her toilet, by the concern she has for her beauty set off by her adornment, a woman regards herself as an object always trying to attract men's attention. Similarly if she strips naked she reveals the object of a man's desire, an individual and particular object to be prized."

-Ty E

GARY'S TOUCH
GARY'S TOUCH

Ken Takahashi (2006)

Who's to say my mind isn't twisted? Gary's a relating character...relatively speaking. I used to have questions towards insemination and female restrooms and I don't blame adolescence for such a bizarre inquest. Gary's Touch is a rather...quirky examination of a disturbed psyche. Where to say the film goes, no one really knows. But what is known is that Tom McSorley's quote reading "some of the most awkward and decidedly twisted sex in all of Canadian cinema." is entirely accurate. Gary's Touch not only touched me in naughty places, but also disgusted me. The obsession of procreating himself is lent effectiveness by Gary's brutish primitive facial features. The most noticeable of all is his protruding caveman lower facial area. I'm not too keen on medical terminologies but needless to say and easy to point out is that his "snout" is sickening. Add Madonna to the mix, an Asian (?) retarded old street lady, and what you got is glorious sexual gold although tipping the scale on absurdities, disgusting uses of ejaculation, and down right uncomfortable scenes of subterranean sex. After the short film is over, you will be tainted with the cinema equivalent with filth. I can't recall a short film other than Douglas Buck's Trilogy of America that made me feel the immediate need to bathe, hoping that the scalding water would wash the sin from my eyes. Gary's Touch is also the first film in a long while that almost made me regurgitate whatever delicacies I had dined upon earlier, I cannot recall. Upon the indulging on defrosted lump semen, Gary's cock finally reaches erection status so he may fuck her but no, he presses on to fulfill his wildest urges with his own discharge. Gary's Touch isn't powerful by any means, just crude and vulgar. It speaks a language that of which fetishists speak of. Who's to judge a fetish anyways? I've encountered the weird of the weird such as people who get off by zipper trouble and tickling. Procreation is definitely not as obscure as others I've seen but none of which have been presented in such an artful manner as this. This film makes Canadian culture seem a tad more standstill on terms with other cultures. After I saw this film, I felt disgusted, violated, and changed. Gary's Touch is certainly not for the light-hearted and upon further studies, I can't really judge who this film would be for. An overall twisted experience, this film comes highly recommended regardless. Gary's Touch gets the SS stamp of approval.

-mAQ

NIGHT OF THE OCCULTIST

Kenneth Andrews (1973)

Although very few of his fans seem to realize this, avant-garde cine-magician and devout Thelemite Kenneth Anger's (Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome, Kustom Kar Kommandos) imperative influence on early 'porn chic' era gay hardcore flicks is unquestionable. Indeed, starting with his first major work *Fireworks* (1947), which resulted in the director being arrested on obscenity charges in a case that went all the way to the Supreme Court of California, to the homoerotic sadomasochism of *Scorpio Rising* (1953), which also went to the California Supreme Court and was protested by Yankee Führer George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party for purportedly disgracing the National Socialist party swastika flag, Anger's oneiric and oftentimes orgasmic oeuvre more or less acted as both the aesthetic and thematic prototype for some of the best fag fuck flicks ever made. As belated exploitation cinema expert and historian Bill Landis wrote in his Anger angerring work *Anger: The Unauthorized Biography of Kenneth Anger* (1995)—a rather incriminating and wholly worthwhile book that offended the American underground auteur so much that he put a curse on the author (interestingly, Landis died unexpectedly from a heart attack in 2008 at the premature age of 49, so maybe the curse actually worked)—regarding the cinematic trend that was pioneered by the celluloid semen demon: "In a less academic realm, the homosexual pornographic cinema Anger had given birth to was flourishing. Many filmmakers were now using the segmented format Anger had established with *SCORPIO RISING*—Wakefield Poole in *BOYS IN THE SAND* and Toby Ross in *REFLECTIONS OF YOUTH* and *BOYS OF THE SLUMS*. The most unusual and publicly visible of these directors was Fred Halsted, a heavy user of Tuinals and acid who had been around the L.A. leather scene since 1960." More recently, Anger experimented with full-blown pornography for his decidedly disappointing digital video effort *I'll Be Watching You* (2007), which the director described in an interview with the UK magazine *Electric Sheep* as a, "tribute to my late friend Michael Powell and his 1960 film *PEEPING TOM*." Of course, it should be no surprise that someone would actually direct a not-so-inconspicuous gay hardcore homage to Anger and his films. Indeed, *Night of the Occultist* (1973) directed and produced by pseudonymous auteur 'Kenneth Andrews' (indeed, the mysterious auteur could not have used a more blatant tributary pen name) is more or less a Kenneth Anger fanboy fuck flick that is so bad at parroting the seemingly half-crazed Crowleyite cine-magician that it almost seems like a perverse parody piece gone terribly wrong, albeit in a strangely charming way that is nothing short of unforgettable.

Initially, *Night of the Occultist* starts rather stereotypically for a gay porn flick with an ostensibly heterosexual man reminiscing over a fight he had with his wife over the dubious future of their deteriorating marriage while rolling around

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his bed restlessly with his balls hanging out of his tighty whities in a rather unflattering fashion. Indeed, proto-preppie protagonist Chuck Paxton (played by Qwave Dalton aka Quave Dahon, who later appeared in Roger Earl's brutal classic 1975 S&M flick *Born to Raise Hell*) remembers how while being "inside" his wife Mary, he was thinking about any and everyone but her. After four years of marriage, the tall blond Nordic-like protagonist moved out the home that he lived in with his wife and now lives on his own and is constantly haunted by the ghosts of his less than sexually satisfying past as an unhappily married man with a sexually starved spouse. A sort of pseudo-playboy that lives in his own lurid one-man fantasy world of banal bourgeois luxury, Chuck spends his days working a terribly prosaic job at a bank, but when he comes home at night he becomes the master of his own domain. Indeed, after putting on an obscenely ostentatious silk robe that screams "gay," Chuck reads a newspaper, listens to some generic champagne music, and masturbates on his sofa as if narcissistically wallowing in his own self-loving glory. Of course, Chuck's domestic lifestyle will change drastically after looking through a newspaper with the glaring headline "SEX SOLUTIONS THIS WEEK" and reading an ad for an "Egyptian sexologist" who he thinks may be able to help him regarding his lack of sensual interest in his wife. Not seeing the warning signs that sexologist might be a Svengali-like individual with ulterior motives (for starters, "666" is part of his phone number), Chuck the limp fuck calls the eroticism specialist and soon makes his way to crypto-magician's scantily furnished office.

Not surprisingly considering the doctor's dubious profession, Chuck is immediately repelled upon meeting the so-called 'Sexologist' aka 'Occultist' (Gareth Burton), whose flamingly flamboyant button-up shirt, goofy LaVey-esque facial hair, propensity to talk pseudo-sophisticated esoteric mumbo jumbo, and preposterously pretentious persona reeks of carny-like charlatanism. Of course, it is also a little odd that the Sexologist claims to be descended from ancient Egyptian royalty despite the fact that he looks like a little Irishman. Chuck manages to take the Sexologist slightly more serious when he mentions that he is a "descendent of the royal priest of ancient Egypt" and a "graduate of the University of Cairo" and explains that he wear the flamboyant "getup" to appeal to the "average man." Before Chuck knows it, the Sexologist absurdly attempts to coerce him into dabbling in homosexuality as a patently preposterous potential cure for his spouse-based impotency. Indeed, after Chuck confesses that he no longer can have sex with his wife Mary after four years of an initially sexually satisfactory marriage, the Occultist posing as a sexologist begins channeling Crowley and describes an ancient ritual in his country called the "Sacrifice to Osiris" where, "an adolescent boy is sodomized by four priests in the shadow of the great pyramid." From there, the film cuts to an expressionistic scene of the "Sacrifice to Osiris" ritual, though the "adolescent boy" is really a 30-something-year-old man with a goofy goatee and the so-called priests look like a bunch of rejects from sort of

third rate Mexican amateur wrestling organization as they sport silly cardboard costumes that seem like they were made by a couple autistic teenagers who read one-too-many Harry Potter books. Before breaking out into a fierce fog-fueled fivesome of the four-on-one sort, the ersatz-adolescent sucks off all the priests to initiate the rather ridiculous ritual. Needless to say, the bearded boy is more than a little sticky and shaky after being manhandled by four men in majorly moronic masks.

Ultimately, the Occultist convinces Mr. Paxton to devote his free time to hooking up with local homosexuals, but first he must “get to know them” and “investigate” before diving into full-on shit-stabbing. To find real live fags, Paxton first goes to a gay bar called “Go Go Bar” that advertises “Nude Boys” and features two rather effeminate go-go surfer boys with long pseudo-blonde hair and swarthy black pubes dancing exceedingly gaily on stage. Chuck also later checks out a porn theater where they have a new 3-hour hardcore show every Thursday. At the theater, Paxton finds himself giving his own ‘one man show’ in the shadows while watching a rather crude vintage boy-on-boy blue movie that makes *Night of the Occultist* seem like a lavish erotic epic. For whatever reason, Chuck also develops a somewhat peculiar predilection towards doing the five-finger-shuffle while driving around in his fancy convertible. Upon stopping into a nondescript handyman shop/garage to get his trusty lighter fixed, Chuck is initiated into the wild and wanton world of sacrilegious sodomy after the store clerk—a greaser with a greasy pompadour—takes him aside and aggressively smokes his pole like the most masculine of lumpenproles. Indeed, being a bourgeois bank boy, it is only natural that Chuck learns to fuck from a real working-class mensch. After Chuck busts his load and the greaser once again takes his member in his mouth, *Night of the Occultist* abruptly cuts to a full-blown 6(66)-man S&M sodomite orgy set in some sort of dark and fiery homo Hades featuring whips, big dicks, bondage, and mischievous men whose skin has taken on a red demonic tone. During the final shot of the film, which is certainly the most Scorpio Rising-esque scene of the entire flick, a close-up of the words “The End” written on the bare bum of Chuck, who is hogtied and sporting a leather-jacket, is juxtaposed with the Occultist narrating, “And so this orgiastic ritual continues into the night and tomorrow the participants shall resume their respective roles in conventional society,” thus reflecting the literally occult-like nature of homosexuality during the 1970s. Indeed, by using black magic in the LaVeyan sense (“the change in situations or events in accordance with one’s will, which would, using normally accepted methods, be unchangeable”), the Occultist/Egyptian sexologist has managed to convert heterosexual protagonist Chuck Paxton into a hyper horny hedonistic homo who has learned to have one hell of a time hanging out in hemorrhoid hitman hell.

It should be noted that *Night of the Occultist* was one of the three big “hits” of the now-defunct gay porn studio Jaguar Studios, which is probably best known

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for their “serious” male-on-male melodramas *The Light from the Second Story Window* (1973) directed by David Allen and Stu Drexyl and *The Experiment* (1973) penned and directed by Gorton Hall. Clearly, *Night of the Occultist* was the studio’s most idiosyncratic production as an aberrant-garde flick featuring the lo-fi aesthetic of Mike Kuchar’s underground cult classic *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), the heretical hermetic mysticism and bike boy fetishism of Kenneth Anger, the uniquely unhinged underworld counter-culture cocksucking of Steven Arnold’s sensual surrealist masterpiece *Luminous Procuress* (1971), and the gritty, raw, and mostly macho ritualistic sadomasochism of Fred Halsted. Indeed, if you’re planning to watch the film with the intention of using it as some sort of preternatural masturbation aid, you will surely be disappointed, as the work features nothing new in terms of blue movie buggery and will mainly only interest the more discerning sin-ophile who thrives on uncovering dirty little forgotten gems of celluloid excess. Indeed, with its horrendous yet strangely hypnotic audio (much of the dialogue is completely inaudible and features far too much reverb), no-budget neo-expressionistic set-design (aside from the naked dudes, the set of the “Sacrifice to Osiris” scene seems like it could have been designed by some of the same people that worked on *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*), untalented yet unforgettable acting performances, and preposterous pretense towards being serious ‘erotic art,’ *Night of the Occultist* is nothing short of a lost cocksucker cult classic that reminds libertine cinephiles why they are obsessed with obscure cinema in the first place. While best known for influencing MTV music videos and inspiring Martin Scorsese’s obsessive implementation of pop music, Kenneth Anger is probably personally more proud of the fact that he influenced more ‘sinister’ and underground cinematic forms and this is nowhere more obvious than in *Night of the Occultist*, which may not be up to par with Wakefield Poole’s *Bijou* (1972), Fred Halsted’s *LA Plays Itself* (1972), or even Jacques Scandelari’s *New York City Inferno* (1978), but it is certainly one of the most endearingly (pseudo)evil erotic fag fuck flicks ever made.

-Ty E

FIREWORKS

Kenneth Anger° (1947)

Fireworks was occultist filmmaker Kenneth Anger's first masterpiece. The film features sadistic sailors, phallogentric fireworks, and what seems to be a nightmare gay bashing. I can only assume that Fireworks is both Anger's greatest fantasy and nightmare. Anger was one of the first very honest filmmakers. Fireworks was such a spectacle when it was released in 1947, that Anger was arrested on obscenity charges. French filmmaker and poet Jean Cocteau was a fan of Fireworks and with good reason. Kenneth Anger follows in the footsteps of Cocteau's cinematic masterpiece *The Blood of a Poet*(1930). Like *The Blood of a Poet*, *Fireworks* is a surrealist journey of an individual in pain that can only be expressed through the avant-garde film medium. Of course, with *Fireworks* Anger shows that he also has a very humorous side.

"A dissatisfied dreamer awakes, goes out in the night seeking a 'light' and is drawn through the needle's eye. A dream of a dream, he returns to bed less empty than before."-Kenneth Anger

Was Kenneth Anger's ultimate fantasy a 17 year old to be beaten and sodomized by a group of muscle sailors? I can only imagine the response that the general American public would have had during this time if they had seen *Fireworks*. After all, America had just won itself a war and no one wanted to see patriotic sailors as gay sado-masochists. Things get so bad that Anger's intestines even get ripped out. *Fireworks* is the American art film at it's finest. At the end of the film, a sailor reveals a roman candle in his pants that makes you think of a nice American fourth of July. Not that I care much for "end" titles, but Anger even managed to get quite creative with that. It is a tragedy that very few American filmmakers have been influenced by the works of Kenneth Anger.

-Ty E

INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME
INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME

Kenneth Anger° (1954)

In many ways, *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) is the most arcane, thematically and aesthetically intricate, and innately impenetrable work that American cine-magician Kenneth Anger (*Scorpio Rising*, *Lucifer Rising*) has ever directed. Not surprisingly, it also happens to be longest film Anger ever made (unless, of course, you count *Don't Smoke That Cigarette!* (2000), which would be a mistake since there was not much actual directing involved with that 'recycled' film). Loaded with Thelemite, Crowleyite, and kabalistic themes/symbols/iconography and starring real-life occultists and witches, *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* is also the pathologically private auteur filmmaker's most spiritual cinematic experiment, yet it is also a piece of pure cinema that pays seamless tribute to everything from Italian silent epics to German expressionism to classic Hollywood musicals, with Anger's biographer Bill Landis even describing the work as the director's, "version of a glittering MGM musical." A proto-psychedelic work (it has been described as a one of the first 'head movies' and reached the height of its popularity a decade later in the 1960s) that has been released in a number of different cuts (including a 1966 version entitled the 'Sacred Mushroom Edition' featuring a complete performance of Glagolitic Mass by Czech composer Leoš Janáček, as well as a third version made in the late-1970s featuring most of the 1974 *Electric Light Orchestra* album *Eldorado*), *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* is a keenly kaleidoscopic celluloid ritual of the decidedly decadent and fetishiistically transcendental bacchanalian sort that reminds one why Anger once stated, "I've always considered movies evil; the day that cinema was invented was a black day for mankind." Based on a masquerade party-like group ritual created by Anger's unholy hero Aleister Crowley's where members of a cult take on the identity of a god or goddess for All Sabbath's Eve, *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* stars a number of real-life virtual artistic gods and icons, including Anger himself, erotic novelist Anaïs Nin, avant-garde/cult auteur Curtis Harrington (*Night Tide*, *The Killing Kind*), artist/occultist Marjorie Cameron (the crazed widow of the equally crazed rocket scientist/Thelemite Jack Parson, who blew himself up), and reclusive Hollywood actor Samson de Brier (real name Arthur Jasmine), who, among other things, starred in Alla Nazimova's Beardsley-esque Wilde adaptation *Salomé* (1923) and whose house the film is set in. Equipped with aesthetic nods to the Yellow Nineties and Hieronymus Bosch and featuring Nin wearing a birdcage over her little round head (apparently, it was not the first time, as the film was largely inspired by a "Come as your Madness" Halloween party that both she and Anger attended), a very young Harrington portraying somnambulist Cesare from Robert Wiene's German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) with a certain foreboding Teutonic swag, and *Scarlet Woman* Cameron smok-

ing ganja in tribute to *The Great Beast 666*, Anger's phantasmagorical celluloid ritual is nothing short of an immaculate piece of exceedingly elegant high-camp evil of the cinematically aristocratic sort that proves the director was able to synthesize the best elements of European master cine-magicians like F.W. Murnau and Jean Cocteau.

Opening with Aubrey Beardsley style inter-titles (painted by handsome blonde beast Paul Mathison, who also played Pan), *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* then cuts to exceedingly effete master magician/Master of Ceremonies (Samson De Brier)—a man who will take on the persona of Lord Shiva, Hindu deity and the Supreme God within the Hindu sect Shaivism, among countless other identities—playing with jewelry, putting on a series of fancy rings, swallowing some jewels, slowly arising from his bed, picking up a pair of scissors, and heading to a bright red room where he stares at a dual mirror (with one of the mirrors featuring the reflection of a pentacle) intently, and paints his face like a decadent dandy with a tinge of pancake makeup. Meanwhile, the redhaired Scarlet Woman (Marjorie Cameron), *Whore of Heaven*, offers a small figurine of a horned devil to a creepily colorful character named the Great Beast (also De Brier), who uses his tentacle-like fingernails to communicate, but the small statue instantly bursts into flame as soon as the ominous entity touches it. Immediately after, the Scarlet Woman lifts up a fat joint and the kaleidoscopic devil lights it, with a blue image of Aleister Crowley smoking a pipe in Arab garb being juxtaposed in the background. In the next scene, a rather beateous Lilith (played by Renate Druks, who would later direct the obscure short film *Space Boy* (1973) starring Florence Marly)—the kabalistic goddess of destruction—arrives from an endless void of nothingness and attempts to offer Emperor Nero (also De Brier) a golden apple, but he seems rather disinterested in the gift. From there, a fag hag-like Isis (Katy Kadell), who looks more like Cleopatra on crack, attempts to catch the interest of her corpse/reptile-like brother-husband Osiris (once again, De Brier), but he is disinterested, though he is flattered by the Great Beast's attention. While Nero was less than intrigued by Lilith's offering, Count Alessandro Cagliostro (De Brier again)—the great hypnotist and enemy of the Catholic Church who Crowley celebrated in a Gnostic Mass—gladly accepts and swallows the ruby jewel she has to offer him, which she takes out of a pretty pentagram-shaped box. Meanwhile, De Brier as Lord Shiva is offered grapes by an almost albino-like Pan (Paul Mathison). As Pan begins to walk slowly in a pair of blood red leather boots, Isis dances for the entertainment of Osiris, Lord Shiva and Lilith toast each other, and Cagliostro is presented with a large pendant, the ritual begins to get underway.

Undoubtedly, *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* begins to pick up speed when Astarte (Anaïs Nin)—the goddess of the moon—appears with a bluish moon-shaped object superimposed over her head (which is covered with a bird-cage) like a halo and Pan seems to be becoming rather sexually aroused by her

INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME

angelic pulchritude. After Astarte disrobes (Nin is virtually naked), she catches a silver sphere from the sky and hands it to all-powerful pothead god Shiva. In Shiva's hands, the sphere shrinks and when it finally gets small enough, he eats it, thus causing him to grow fairy-like wings and become a very happy boy. After the Scarlet Woman gestures to the Great Beast for another light for her magic joint, Germanic somnambulist Cesare (Curtis Harrington) magically appears. The Somnambulist is under the sinister command of the Great Beast, who forces the sleepwalker to enter a labyrinth with a image of a witch with a pentagram on her forehead and a classic Baphomet pentagram. Ultimately, the Somnambulist enters a white room where he is handed an urn containing the hallucinogenic wormwood brew 'yage' by Hecate (Kenneth Anger), who looks like an Arab drag queen headed to a gothic funeral. A silent servant of the Great Beast, the Somnambulist serves the yage to all the gods and goddesses. The exotic elixir causes Shiva's face to turn green and he begins to suffer paranoia, among other things. Everyone else seems more or less happy and ecstatic, with Pan even accidentally spilling the bittersweet brew on himself in a playful manner. While Pan is admiring Lilith's stunning beauty, scheming trickster Lord Shiva drops a dubious substance in blond beast's drink, thus causing him to suffer a series of nightmarish hallucinations, including confusing visions of a number of the party members taking off various masks (i.e. Lilith takes off two identical masks before revealing a skull-like face with a huge mouth inspired by Crowley's sketch "High Priestess of Voodoo"). Pan's hellish hallucination is a triple-layered superimposition where Anger incorporated scenes from his 6-minute short *Puce Moment* (1949), which was shot by Curtis Harrington. From there, an all-out orgy ensues, with Pan—the only masculine man at the entire masquerade—acting as the 'prize,' especially for the lecherous goddesses, who claw him like rabid pussycats. Indeed, the gals strip, scratch, and torment Pan while supreme queen Hecate gets off to the entire scenario by performing what seems like a spastic belly dance. Eventually, the Goddess Kali (Marjorie Cameron) appears as blood-red-tinted-scenes from Giuseppe de Liguoro silent masterpiece *L'Inferno* (1911) are superimposed in the background. Kali manages to strike fear into the Great Beast, but the pernicious party keeps going, with the Somnambulist even sneaking in a smile. As Anger stated at the end of an audio commentary for *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, "So the ultimate feeling is one of spirituality."

In describing the 'pleasure dome' of *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* in an audio commentary for the film, Anger stated as follows, "The pleasure dome that is being inaugurated is actually a prison...it's something you can't escape from once you're in it, and I wanted to create that feeling of claustrophobia, like you can't escape these people or this place." Indeed, Anger's film is certainly one where the viewer is trapped in an almost demonic dance of metaphysical decadence, thus making it the next best thing to going to some sort of real-life

Crowley Mass (which would probably make for a less pleasurable experience, not to mention the fact that it would probably be comprised of far less attractive people). I have to admit my interest in Crowley/Thelema is about next to nil, yet *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* makes such spiritual degeneracy seem nothing short of ethereal and delightfully divine. For Curtis Harrington, starring in the film was apparently nothing short of an (un)holy experience, or as he wrote in his autobiography *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013): "For me, it was a dream come true to play Cesare the somnambulist from *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI*. Cameron, a painter and occultist, played the sorceress and was extraordinary in a mantilla and Spanish shawl. Anaïs was her counterpoint in a blue cocoon and golden mesh. Samson, who played the host to these personages, appeared in many guises, all of them magical. It was a vibrant gallery of portraits, each transformed by the film itself." America's once-foremost cineaste Amos Vogel was so impressed with the "wicked film" that he paid a great compliment to Anger, describing the auteur as, "one of the true subversive iconoclasts of the cinema." Indeed, while I hesitate to describe *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* as my favorite Anger film, it is most certainly the filmmaker's most accomplished work as both a filmmaker and as an occultist, as an innately penetrating piece that celebrates the evil essence of cinema as an artistic medium of ritual and manipulation. With that being said, it almost seems unimaginable that Anger never really faced a strong backlash from religious types, especially when one considers when the film was made. A devout tribute to the so-called "wickedest man in the world," *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* ultimately reminds undying agnostics like myself that magic takes its most potent and influential form in celluloid.

-Ty E

SCORPIO RISING
SCORPIO RISING

Kenneth Anger° (1963)

Kenneth Anger's experimental short *Scorpio Rising* is a camp masterpiece that was a hit on the underground film circuit. Anger proved that cultureless America was also capable of art at a time when degenerate hippies were about to start spreading around America like cancer. *Scorpio Rising* is also a real camp film, a film full of homoerotic ambiguity (or not so) that brings the viewer into a confusingly powerful world. Now the word "camp" is thrown around by ignoramuses that think anything silly is worthy of the word. As Jean Cocteau said of camp, "it is the lie that tells the truth." *Scorpio Rising* begins with a biker massaging his motorcycle parts like they are sensitive human parts. The bikers featured in *Scorpio Rising* seem to worship their bikes just as much as Kenneth Anger worships the bikers. With *Scorpio Rising*, it becomes apparent why he's a fan of Marlon Brando in the rebel biker gang classic *The Wild One*. Kenneth Anger obviously feels that the motorcycle reflects male sexual potency, power, and indestructible horsepower energy. Anger made sure that his name and the film's title were plastered on the back of a biker's leather jacket for a reason. Kenneth Anger, like the greatest of filmmakers, is a shameless voyeur using the film medium as an outlet for his deepest of obsessions. Scorpio is a biker with a cramped room surrounded by his many obsessions. Above his bed is an old school SS totenkopf flag. Scorpio also makes sure to have pictures of James Dean plastered around his cat friendly room. On his TV screen, *The Wild One* is unsurprisingly playing. Not only does Scorpio have a picture of James Dean riding a motorcycle, but he is also a member of the James Dean memorial foundation. Kenneth Anger dedicated a not so flattering chapter to Dean in his controversial book *Hollywood Babylon II*. Scorpio is an Aryan blond beast that casually lights up cigarettes as a display of phallic power. He also happens to sport Nazi regalia and the swastika can also be seen throughout *Scorpio Rising*. After all, the swastika is the ultimate symbol of white (Aryan to be exact) aesthetic domination. Kenneth Anger sees the Nazis as a group that proclaimed "we are the best because we look the best." Hitler also makes an appearance as he was probably the most powerful homosexual ever. Lothar Machtan's book *The Hidden Hitler* makes a great case for the fuhrer's questionable sexuality. Jesus is also featured cut in with footage of Scorpio strutting down the street. It is apparent that Scorpio has much more flare than the rebellious 'King of the Jews.' *Scorpio Rising* is one of the greatest cinematic art pieces of American film history. That being said, if the general public saw it, it would also be one of the most hated. *Scorpio Rising* is full of so many powerful taboos that I am sure Mr. Crispin Hellion Glover took notes from it during his preparation for the making of *What is it?* Kenneth Anger effortlessly proves that cinematic power lies not in how much money is pumped into the film, but the mastermind behind the art. If only Scorpio (or Zombie

Scorpio) had his only feature length film. Maybe the elderly Kenneth Anger is still up for it?
-Ty E

KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS
KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS

Kenneth Anger° (1965)

Coming of age, I never could understand the infatuation other guys had for swooning over automobiles. Of course, I loved the freedom and convenience of driving but unlike other guys, I never had the desire to put thousands of dollars into a car that was probably worth less than my CD collection at the time. It has been over a decade now since I originally obtained my license and I still consider putting money into a car to be one of the most worthless investments a person could ever make. In the 3-minute long Kenneth Anger short *Kustom Kar Kommandos*, we watch as a Nordic Northern American Superman engages in foreplay with his stylistically audacious automobile. Despite my overall repugnance towards car worship, I found the short to be another example of Kenneth Anger's commitment to creating the most striking and sumptuous *Mise-en-scène*. Also, it does not hurt that the short was shot in 1965, a time when cars seemed to more resemble custom automotive art as opposed to the tacky jalopy four-wheelers that now flood American streets.

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The soothing pop song "Dream Lover" by The Paris Sisters is played while the unnamed young man in *Kustom Kar Kommandos* buffs his shimmering automobile. Kenneth Anger makes the automobile symbolic of the young man's genitals and the revving of the engine acts as a auditory state of arousal. Of course, I am persuaded that Kenneth Anger wishes he was the car in the film so that he could be buffered by the young dream lover. Unlike most other films directed by Kenneth Anger, *Kustom Kar Kommandos* disguises the director's homoerotic scopophilia by making the car the main subject instead of the young rebel. Irish dandy Oscar Wilde once wrote, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves" but I prefer subscribing to the inverse of that piece of wild exiled wisdom. After all, was it not James Dean's beloved Porsche 550 Spyder that led him into a time-pausing fate of infinite cinematic youth? It is also one of the oldest stories in the world that man has always been willing to risk his life or even lose it to stay in favor of the woman that exploits his heart. *Kustom Kar Kommandos* ends climatically simply with the young man finally driving off. Upon first viewing the short, I anticipated seeing the young man mutilated in an accident but instead Kenneth Anger leaves the fate of the subject to the viewer's imagination.

Kustom Kar Kommandos was originally supposed to be a much more ambitious feature-film about young males with car fetishes but Anger's grant money of \$10,000.00 from The Ford foundation ran out quite swiftly. It is a depressing thought to realize that revolutionary experimental filmmaker Kenneth Anger has never directed a feature-length film. Not since Aryan auteur F.W. Murnau (one of Anger's greatest influences) has there been a director like Kenneth Anger whose *Mise-en-scène* even strikes the jaundiced eyes of those that see cinema without artistic merit. *Kustom Kar Kommandos* is just a meager taste of what could have been a cinematic masterpiece yet is still highly notable in the aborted state that it is in. Luckily, the short caught the Sicilian eyes of Martin Scorsese as seen in the various extravagant car scenes featured in *Taxi Driver* and his various mafia films like *Goodfellas*. After all, a couple minutes from a Kenneth Anger film usually contains more Occult power and aesthetic magick than your typical Hollywood film director's entire filmography. Anyone can direct a film if they have the monetary advantage to do so but few have the gift of the all-seeing artistic eye and an enchanting organic vision that Kenneth Anger was blessed with.

-Ty E

INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER
INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER

Kenneth Anger° (1969)

Invocation of My Demon Brother seems to be Kenneth Anger's most glossed over film. I find the short to be one that I keep coming back to. I just can't get enough of real-life convicted killer Bobby Beausoleil and his suave top hat. Beausoleil would later go on to kill a worthless hippy-wannabe-Buddhist drug dealer. One would be a liar if they didn't admit that Bobby Beausoleil's acting and actions are certainly a contribution to this dying world. I also enjoyed seeing Anton LaVey when he was in his prime and still dressing up as a sort of carny Satan. I just find it kind of odd to see LaVey in Kenneth Anger's world of Aleister Crowley and Thelema. Rolling Stones mouthpiece Mick Jagger also deserves praise for the synthesizer score he created for Invocation of My Demon Brother. Sympathy for the Devil, indeed.

Invocation of My Demon Brother opens with a young albino man that seems to have problems with his eyes. It is probably all the naked homos in the shadows that have haunted him. This young albino is a very aesthetically unappealing individual that looks like the bastard hate child of a Germanic barbarian warrior and a degenerate Mongolian thief. Maybe this fellow has eye trouble because he looked too closely at himself in Kenneth Anger's mirror. I wouldn't be surprised if this fellow is one of Kenneth Anger's ex-boyfriends who Anger would later put one of his infamous spells on. Either way, this blond haired untermensch is surely a creep.

Kenneth Anger certainly embarrassed himself in Invocation of My Demon Brother with his undeniably flaming gay performance in a sparkle covered red robe. Anger flaunts a magic wand with a sort of flamboyance that would put Richard Simmons to shame. Kenneth Anger also waves around a swastika flag which I found interesting considering Anger (Anglemyer)'s dubious ancestral background. Despite Kenneth Anger being the black magician lead of the short, Anton LaVey steals the show just by hovering over a skull and some candles. Invocation of My Demon Brother is as close to a marriage as there will be between The Church of Satan and Aleister Crowley's Thelema.

Despite his sympathy for the devil, Mick Jagger's concert performance footage brings a "heavenly" feel to the world of Invocation of My Demon Brother. Mick is probably the most innocent of these black artists and also the most famous. I wouldn't be surprised if Mick Jagger's attraction to the work of Kenneth Anger was primarily fueled by his strong thirst for vice. I must say that I am happy that Beausoleil, LaVey, Anger, and Jagger got together and made a short film like no other. Invocation of My Demon Brother certainly invoked a celebration of the demon in myself.

-Ty E

LUCIFER RISING

Kenneth Anger° (1974)

As far as Crowleyite/Thelemite films are concerned, Kenneth Anger's perennially unfinished work *Lucifer Rising* (1972) is the greatest celluloid expression of the hedonistic English Occultist's prophecy of the Aeon of Horus as depicted in his central sacred text *The Book of the Law* (aka *Liber AL vel Legis*). Crowley described the third Aeon as a time of self-realization and self-actualization controlled by a child god (as symbolized by the solar god Horus) where, ". . . the crowned and conquering child, who dieth not, nor is reborn, but goeth radiant ever upon His Way. Even so goeth the Sun: for as it is now known that night is but the shadow of the Earth, so Death is but the shadow of the Body, that veileth his Light from its bearer" (*Heart of the Master*). The version of *Lucifer Rising* that exists today is Anger's second attempt at directing the film. After having a dubious falling out with his innately heterosexual Luciferian Don Juan Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil that resulted in the disappearance of most of the footage (which Beausoleil denies was ever stolen/ever existed) of his initial attempt at directing *Lucifer Rising* that began production sometime around 1966, Anger abandoned the project and would not reattempt to direct the film until a number of years later. In one pompous drama-queen scheme inspired by his severed relationship with boy Cupid, Anger even went so far as putting out a full-age ad in *The Village Voice* newspaper with the text, "In Memoriam Kenneth Anger 1947-1967" inscribed over the image over a gravestone, henceforth setting sail to Europa. As indicated by Anger's brilliant short *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969) – a work assembled from the surviving footage of Anger's first attempt at *Lucifer Rising* with Beausoleil playing the leading role (described as "A fragment made in fury... the last blast of Haight consciousness" in a 1975 interview with Anger) – the Crowleyite auteur filmmaker's ideas and aesthetic developed quite drastically from his original attempt at the film. Although Beausoleil would only go on to play himself in the mediocre mondo flick *Mondo Hollywood* (1967) and as an Injun in the C-grade/X-rated western *Ramrod* (1969) and never get to star as Lucifer in the released version of *Lucifer Rising* due to his imprisonment for murdering hippie drug dealer Gary Hinman while hanging out with Charles Manson and the family, he would go on to replace a rock star as famous as Jimmy Page (Anger was quite dissatisfied with his opium-inspired melodies) and compose a potent psychedelic score for the film while in prison, thus still lending his suave Svengali metaphysical influences in a most hypnotic, memorable, and enduring way. Anger stated of the entire melodramatic incident with Beausoleil, "but the fallen angel and I had a falling out. Well, it almost worked out." While missing the irreplaceable carnal and charismatic Cupid in the starring role, *Lucifer Rising* turned out much better than expected under the circumstances. Featuring vivacious special ef-

LUCIFER RISING

fects created by Wally Veevers (Lawrence of Arabia, 2001: A Space Odyssey) and extrinsic transmundane footage from an erupting volcano in Iceland, the iconic ruins of Luxor, Egypt, Stonehenge, England and the Externsteine rock formation of Ostwestfalen-Lippe, Germany – a spot some argue is an ancient Teutonic solar temple – among various other famous/infamous occult hotspots, *Lucifer Rising* is a true work of awe-inspiring world cinema with nil contemporaries.

Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer* (largely inspired by Crowley's poem *Hymn to Lucifer*) is not the devil portrayed by Christianity, but a rebellious god of beauty and light similar to the one depicted by the tragic German medievalist-writer-turned-disloyal-SS-Obersturmführer Otto Rahn (*Crusade Against the Grail*, *Lucifer's Court*). In a totally fitting manner, Anger casted Scottish cult auteur Donald Cammell (*Performance*, *White of the Eye*) as Osiris – the lord of death – which is no surprise considering the morbid, death-obsessed filmmaker grew up with Aleister Crowley as a neighbor and would later take his own life in a manner not unlike that of the lead character in his legendary debut feature-length film. Apparently, Cammell was so preoccupied with quietus that he asked for a mirror to watch his worldly demise shortly after fatally wounding himself, thus making his performance in *Lucifer Rising* seem all the more pertinent and penetrating. Osiris is summoned in the beginning of *Lucifer Rising* by Isis – the ancient Egyptian Goddess that was worshipped as the ideal mother/wife and the patron of nature and magic – played by Myriam Gibril; a topless tanned beauty who perfectly personifies the role. In ancient Egyptian cosmology, unlike within Christianity, there are no false dichotomies (e.g. good vs. evil), but a balance between life and death as the characters of Osiris and Isis ultimately symbolize. Junky singer Marianne Faithfull played the role of Lilith; a powerful demoness that emblemizes female discontent, as expressed so vividly by the grayish/bluish tones of her costumes and make-up, due to her emotionally-crippling rejection by Lucifer. Throughout the production of *Lucifer Rising*, Ms. Faithfull faithfully snorted heroin that was conveniently located inside her make-up compact; an act that according to Anger, could have gotten the whole crew of the film executed by way of firing squad in Egypt had she been caught. Anger felt she was unerring for the role due to her overwhelming melancholy at the time, as expressed by various botched suicide attempts that even occurred during the production of *Lucifer Rising*, thus bestowing an ensured psychodramatic authenticity to her performance. Considering blonde-haired Marianne Faithfull, a spoiled lady of Jewish ancestry, walks through the Externsteine – a SS holy site that the National Socialists built a bridge for (as seen in the film) and the spot where the Hitler-Jugend leader Baldur von Schirach gave the Hitler Youth boys their first daggers – *Lucifer Rising* often has a certain depraved irony that Aleister Crowley would have undoubtedly appreciated. Due to their torn relationship and Beausoleil's imprisonment, Anger casted Leslie Huggins – a

relatively unknown English-steel-mill-worker-turned-French-farmer who the auteur described as, “a real Lucifer” and “an authentic demon in human form” due to his mysterious disappearances throughout the production of *Lucifer Rising* – for the iconic role of Lucifer. Chris Jagger, brother of Mick, was originally casted as the high priest in the film but only one scene of the inquisitive young lad was used in the final cut of *Lucifer Rising* due to his constant pestering of Kenneth Anger in regard to the meaning of the Thelemite symbols and archetypes featured throughout the work. As a non-initiate and someone that previously had little interest in Thelema, I can honestly say that like Mick’s lesser known brother, *Lucifer Rising* has inspired me to want to dig a little deeper into The Great Beast 666’s hyper-hedonistic pseudo-religion.

In a 1995 interview with Austrian ‘neofolk’ musician Gerhard Hallstatt aka Kadmon (Allerseelen), Kenneth Anger revealed regarding *Lucifer Rising*, “I have filmed another part – the two parts together are one hour long. But I only have the work print for the second part and I need some additional money for the special effects after the printing.” Considering it has been nearly two decades since the interview and the aged auteur is well into his mid-80s, one can only wonder whether or not Anger will release the definitive cut of *Lucifer Rising*. By itself, the 29-minute short is a masterpiece of cine-magick and arguably the homophile auteur filmmaker’s celluloid magnum opus, so the prospective of an extended version of *Lucifer Rising* sounds like it could either be a beautiful blessing or a cinematic travesty as testified by Francis Ford Coppola’s butchered 2001 Redux of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), but then again, Kenneth Anger is not one known for making artistic compromises, hence the relatively small number of films that make up his masterly *Magick Lantern Cycle*. Not unsurprisingly, *Lucifer Rising* has gone on to inspire a number of artists and musicians from generations both old and new. In 1971, Donald Cammell began the production of the short film *The Argument* (1999); a once-lost work that was released posthumously nearly 30 years later starring his *Lucifer Rising* costar/lover Myriam Gibril in a mystical performance (as ‘Aisha, the witch’) very similar (and also topless), if more comical, to her role in Anger’s film. *Lucifer Rising* has also been very influential on various musicians, especially among the European neofolk/martial industrial/post-industrial movement. On their classic album *Swaſtikas for Noddy* (1988), neofolk group Current 93 featured a song entitled “Beausoleil” featuring various references to the films of Kenneth Anger, Thelema, and Aleister Crowley. In 1999, the French record label Athanor released a *Lucifer Rising* tribute album featuring songs composed by Allerseelen, Ain Soph, Blood Axis, Changes, Der Blutharsch, and even Bobby Beausoleil himself. Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page also released an album featuring his unused musical score for *Lucifer Rising* entitled *Lucifer Rising and Other Sound Tracks* in 2012. In 1999, Church of Satan priest Gavin Baddely released a book titled *Lucifer Rising: A Book of Sin, Devil Worship and Rock ’n’ Roll*

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about the influence of Satanism on modern culture/counter-culture featuring interviews with everyone from Kenneth Anger himself to New Zealand-based 'far-right' writer Kerry Bolton (*Artists of the Right: Resisting Decadence, Revolution from Above*). Needless to say, *Lucifer Rising*'s influence has been quite wide and vast and of a sonorous quasi-sacerdotal nature; and I don't see it desisting anytime soon with sociocultural tools like the internet making Kenneth Anger's work all the more accessible.

Undoubtedly, even before the release of *Lucifer Rising*, the Aeon of Horus had already been in full swing via Crowley's semi-thaumaturgic influence on popular British musicians ranging from The Beatles to Led Zeppelin. In an era where 'free love' is pretty much the norm, homosexuality is vogue, mass drug consumption is a rite of passage for many western youths, and where Christianity is assuredly on its last gasp, a film like *Lucifer Rising* has even more socio-political and spiritual relevance today than when it was first released. Some fans of the film have even argued that the surprise explosion of the Lucifer Mark IV cake (which actually turns out to be a bomb) towards the conclusion of *Lucifer Rising* is a symbolic prediction of the September 11 attacks; a claim which Anger himself gaudily replied, "and perhaps it is." Socio-political significance or not, *Lucifer Rising* is very much Kenneth Anger's most singularized, intrepid and unprecedented work. Shedding the iconic pop music and Murnau-esque mise-en-scènes that originally gained him a prestigious reputation among both cinephiles and avant-garde filmmakers alike, *Lucifer Rising* is a monolithic metaphysical masterpiece of cine-magick that literally goes as far as being 'out of this world.' In fact, Kenneth Anger still insists to this day that he saw real-life flying-saucers at the ancient Egyptians ruins, stating in a 1995 interview, "I saw such a saucer when I was in the temple of Luxor – a real one!...Traces of the saucers go back to ancient myths." Combining eternal spiritual wisdom with puissant aesthetic ingredients; both old and new, *Lucifer Rising* transcends the mere typical cinematic experience and thus can be best described as a devilishly divine work of high-class Elysian decadence that better reflects our age than Mel Gibson's anachronistic *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) ever could.

-Ty E

ICH WILL!

Kenneth Anger° (2000)

Despite narcissistically putting out a full-page ad in 1969 to announce his retirement from cinema (he would also go into retirement again in the early 1980s, not making another film for around 20 years), Kenneth Anger still continues to make films despite being in his golden years. Although being known as a magnificent magician of *mise-en-scène*, Anger's newer films lack the extensive labor of love that were obviously put into his earlier films. Unfortunately, like David Lynch, Anger has decided to give up using film and has committed himself to using digital video. In the digital short *Anger Sees Red* directed by Kenneth Anger, the film reaches its climax when Anger literally sees a young muscular man named Red; surely a disappointing film that looks like it was made in a couple hours. Unsurprisingly, not all of Kenneth Anger's recent films are total disappointments, his tribute to the Hitler Youth *Ich Will!* being a perfect example of the Crowleyite director's (still somewhat seemingly intact) cinematic brilliance. For *Ich Will!*, Anger compiled together Nazi propaganda footage, news reels, and stock footage of Uncle Adolf's heroic, yet ultimately damned - youth.

Ich Will! starts in the tomb of teenage Nazi martyr Hans Mallon, a young man that was killed by Communists in 1931. On the tomb reads "The Fame of the Dead Lives Forever," a motto stressing the Nazi value of giving one's life for the collective good of Germany. The rest of *Ich Will!* features everything from members of the Hitler Youth kayaking to parades taking place around various German towns. Kenneth Anger tinted the short with the color red, most likely to stress the "Satanic" Nazi religion of blood and ancestor worship, not to mention the "blood" these German youth would have permanently embedded on their hands after the German defeat at the conclusion of World War II. I must admit that I have seen my fair share of Nazi footage and none of the footage in *Ich Will!* seems like recycled material like you find on the History Channel, where it feels like they play the same three clips of Adolf Hitler over-and-over again. Of course, Kenneth Anger is no fan (only a fetishist) of the Third Reich as he made clear in his sadomasochistic Nazi leather-fest *Scorpio Rising*. Like *Scorpio Rising*, *Ich Will!* stresses the homoerotic undertones in male camaraderie and hero (Hitler) worship.

Ich Will! ends just as ritualistically as it starts, concluding with a gigantic flame-lit Nazi rally which gives off an atmosphere that feels like German army is preparing for a holy war after making a Faustian pact with the devil himself. Despite having most of his works banned and his assets/property seized by the German government in 1934, I am sure German writer and occultist Hanns Heinz Ewers would be still proud of his contribution to the Third Reich (he wrote a biography of Nazi Martyr Horst Wessel) had he personally seen the

ICH WILL!

Nazi Hellfire rally featured at the conclusion of Ich Will!. Although the short is essentially various Nazi-era footage woven together, Ich Will! is a powerful film (Dr. Goebbels would have no doubt approved) certainly worth watching alongside Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will.. Nowadays, your typical American youth looks up to a mulatto messiah and krappy kosher klowns like Jonah Hill. Knowing that, the values of heroism, athleticism, and comradeship as featured in Ich Will! don't seem half bad.

-Ty E

MY SURFING LUCIFER

Kenneth Anger° (2007)

Being a loyal patron of Occult Auteur Kenneth Anger's Faustian cinematic visions; I feel the need to cover the filmmaker's lesser known works. In 2009, Kenneth Anger released *My Surfing Lucifer* - a short tribute to his millionaire German-American surfer pal Adolph Bunker Spreckels III - a true "prince of Bel Air" that the independent film director described as "Surfing's divine prince of decadence." On top of being a surfing legend, Adolph Spreckels was also the stepson of legendary Hollywood actor Clark Gable. In *My Surfing Lucifer*, supreme libertine surfer Spreckels carves oceanic waves in a fluid laid-back manner that compliments his luxurious, yet consequently tragic life. Of course, despite his monetary prosperity, Spreckels is prone to flesh splitting wipe-outs as shown at the end of the short. Despite inheriting fifty million dollars at age 21, Herr Spreckels' life was ultimately cut short, thus in tribute Mr. Anger has created this micro-epic-bio-pic-surfing-Tour-de-force *My Surfing Lucifer* with 8mm "found footage." After too much sex, drugs, and rock & roll; Spreckels passed away due to heart failure at the premature age of 27, but enough with the sad talk. As one can expect from the cinematic works of Kenneth Anger; *My Surfing Lucifer* is equipped with a complimentary soundtrack featuring the song "Good Vibrations" by the pseudo-surfer pop group The Beach Boys. Kenneth Anger has a distant connection to The Beach Boys through his longtime collaborator Bobby Beausoleil. Like Beausoleil, Dennis Wilson (the drummer of The Beach Boys) was at one point an associate of The Manson Family. Of course, everyone knows: Charlie don't surf. It is doubtful that Dennis Wilson would have made for a decent surfer, as his life wiped-out in a drunken drowning accident. Like Charles Manson, Kenneth Anger has always displayed a certain disgust with Hollywood types; albeit in a less murderous fashion.

LA-based sneaker store UNDFTD collaborated with Kenneth Anger to spotlight the original 2009 premiere of his film tribute to Bunker Spreckels: *My Surfing Lucifer*.

When compared to Kenneth Anger's earlier more laborious efforts, *My Surfing Lucifer* doesn't seem like much, yet it has a serene atmosphere that gives one "good vibrations." Additionally, the short is a labor-of-love, concocted by Anger using mere vintage "found footage." Personally, now that I live on the beach, my appreciation for the organic, chaotic nature of waves has reached its peak. I spent many years sidewalk surfing (skateboarding), yet I have never had the opportunity to carve a wave - which is certainly something my body now craves. Most of the surfers I have personally known were beach-tanned-dead-head Aryans - whose eclectic and all-encompassing ignorance - I never could stand. As a hero of Kenneth Anger, I would hope that Herr Adolf Bunker Spreckels III intellectual capacity was a bit grander than the everyday beach bum surfer, but it is

MY SURFING LUCIFER

most likely that the Crowleyite auteur admired the surfing legend for his uncompromising decadence (combined with his daredevil surfing), and that alone. Although I am no expert on surfing - Lucifer Spreckels seems to be able to ride a hellish wave - even if he ends his surf session slightly scathed. In My Surfing Lucifer, the rich devil has already risen and is engaged in a joyous battle against mother nature's celestial oceanic crest; certainly a spectacular, yet momentary vision from the diabolical auteur Mr. Anger. For those viewers that found themselves reveling in the bestial flames of Lucifer Rising, you will certainly find yourself momentarily basking in the luxuriating waves of My Surfing Lucifer.

Note: A feature-length film on the life of Bunker Spreckels is also in the works.

-Ty E

MISSONI

Kenneth Anger° (2010)

Although I thought Kenneth Anger had given up on creating the kind of extravagant and boldly colorful surrealist works that were typical of his past films for more minimalistic and less labor extensive works, he has thankfully astonished me with his 2 ½ minute short Missoni (2010). Aesthetically, the short echoes back to the dreamy decor featured in Anger's Puce Moment (1949) and the psychedelic kaleidoscope of colors prominent throughout Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome (1954). Luckily, the prestigious Italian fashion house Missoni hired Anger to direct this short as a fresh and stupendous way to advertise their 2010 collection. It seems that as of lately, Anger has been landing many of his filmmaking jobs from advertisers as the director also created the 42 second short Death (2008) for the vodka brand 42BELOW as part of their One-DreamRush film compilation; a cinematic anthology that also includes works by fellow subversive filmmakers like David Lynch, Harmony Korine, Larry Clark and Gaspar Noé. Naturally, Missoni is more intoxicating than any vodka drink could ever be and one will fail to receive a killer hangover after watching the lucid and colorful short. As one would expect from the artistically audacious Italian fashion house; eleven members of the Missoni family modeled their own creations for Missoni. I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if the Missoni designer clothing featured in the short was in one way or another inspired by those wardrobes featured in past films directed by Kenneth Anger. As is typical of an Anger film, Missoni features an equally hypnotic and complimentary soundtrack that is sure to draw the viewer in; whether they want to be under the spell of the Luciferian filmmaker or not. Missoni's score – which was composed by the French group Koudlam – sounds like an ambient neo-darkwave track. After initially viewing the short, I had no idea what it was supposed to be about (but I was still completely enamored by it) and I certainly did not suspect that it was part of a marketing campaign. For those (myself included) that were under the terrible impression that Kenneth Anger may have lost his moviemaking magick, Missoni makes for a soothing and ecstatic awakening.

AN ERROR OCCURRED.
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Try watching this video on www.youtube.com, or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.

Despite being an advertisement, it seems that Kenneth Anger has equipped Missoni with occult symbolism. Considering that I am far from a Crowleyite, I have no idea what the esoteric message contained within the short means, but I am sure that it is clever. With Missoni, Kenneth Anger once again proves why he is one of the few modern filmmakers who can be compared to such pioneering directors as F.W. Murnau and Carl Th. Dreyer; as the short's mise-en-scène is as intricately and expressively assembled as one would expect from the canvas of a master painter's work. Indeed, Missoni is a hallucinatory collection of sinister, yet spectacular holograms that were designed with the utmost precision by an auteur with an irreplaceable vision. The fact that Missoni was created in Italy only makes it all the more fascinating. After all, Anger's spiritual father and metaphysical guru guide Aleister Crowley was expelled from Italy by Il Duce Benito Mussolini, yet the American themelike auteur was welcomed to the country as a serious artistic celebrity. Instead of fascist propaganda, modern rich Italians with disposable incomes now have the honor of being subconsciously brainwashed into buying overpriced wardrobes via the cine-magick talents of svengali auteur Kenneth Anger. If anyone doubts Anger's authentic talents as a magician with an otherworldly vision, one just has to blissfully bask in the minute phantasmagoric motion-picture dream Missoni; a film that proves not all advertising and subliminal messages are bad. It is undoubtedly a sad time in cinema history when a 2 ½ minute fashion advertisement directed by an elderly man (albeit a cinematic genius old man) has more artistry than the majority of independent films that have been released since the new millennium. I just hope that Kenneth Anger has the opportunity to direct more shorts like Missoni in the future for if he were cease to concoct such majestic works, I would indubitably suffer from a long-drawn-out case of cinephile torture.

-Ty E

TAKE AN EASY RIDE

Kenneth F. Rowles (1976) I had viewed *Take an Easy Ride* several days prior to this review. Upon finishing it, I was stirred but not shaken. The idea of combing the experience for particular nuggets of truth seemed not worth the effort, that is, until I had a very similar experience the same night that touched base. Coming out of the liquor store, I was accosted by a ogre-like feminine creature that had the finesse of a cricket suffocating in semen. Begging for a ride and not taking no for an answer, I simply had to walk away while she scurried from car to car in the background. This is but an example of the odd little things that come your way during any given period and after watching *Take an Easy Ride*, I not only feel uneasy about the situation but I feel inclined to finally put to rest these hitchhiking demons vibrating in my skull.

Take an Easy Ride was originally programmed to be a public information film, the sort of which have made rounds about the Internet as we poke fun at its terribly dated and contrived material. This dream of educational celluloid squalor went sour though as Rowles was approached by legendary producer and peddler of smut, David Grant. Taking the ideas of public interest and intertwining this with vintage smut seemed innocent enough but the end result is a strange one. *Take an Easy Ride* begins with several interviewees on the street conducting short Q&As with the young English gents asking for thoughts on hitch-hiking. Of course, to thin the context of the future events, they speak of spooky happenstance, the connection of rape, murder, and hitching rides. After this segment, the triptych tale of feminine motorway terror begins. The first instance of young girls hitchhiking finds two females "taking an easy ride" off a trucker. After some time though, the blonde hikes up her skirt as if to situate her supple figure, but her veil is wafer thin. This is a classic example of an instinctual act of manipulation, if the woman realizes it or not. On several sites regarding this film, I've witnessed reviewers and "genre fans" writing off this trucker character for being "perverted" or "sleazy", which infuriates me to no end.

Another of the side-plots involves two girls hitchhiking to a rock and roll concert. Despite one receiving fare from her father, the elder hippie decides for whatever reason, whether to save money for drugs or plot progression, to hitch a ride. The fellow who picks them up was previously outlined in a short sketch showing the dashboard of his car and disembodied hands digging through the glove-box in order to flip through a crusty nudie mag; ergo, this man is a devilish victim of persuasion. All comparisons between *Take an Easy Ride* and *Last House on the Left* are sourced from this subplot in particular as these young girls are violated, raped, and murdered in the woods. The parents are the victims here, same as the laughable peers in Craven's *Last House on the Left*. Leave it to daddy's little girl to bring more trouble than their pitiful existence wrapped around boys is already worth. Intertwined with these scenes is two

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more "examples" of the dangers hitchhikers face. A staged street introduction leads to an impromptu interview that begins with a cherry disposition that then turns its ugly head on the carelessness of women, especially when inebriated off of wine. A young girl is presumably sheltered from the hazardous asphalt from the kindness of a strange couple. Later relaxing in a bath, the hitchhiker is surprised in the bathtub by the "girlfriend" and is led into acting out her suppressed desires on the bed. During this foreplay feigned rape, the chubby male snaps shots of the lesbian interaction. Immediately preceding the warm-up exercise, the male removes his clothes and climbs atop the wriggling mass of lady flesh; yet, we're led to believe the hitchhiker is the victim in this story. A victim of her own carnal ineptitude, perhaps.

The shortest, and in my opinion, weakest of the short interactions between victim and prey swap sides to present the driver as the victim. In this scenario, a gentleman offers a ride to two women who, unbeknownst to him, rob a gas station while his back is turned. This later escalates in him getting stabbed repeatedly by the vixens. This ends the short saga of Take an Easy Ride; a wonderfully distorted campaign of safety. Rowles' determination to take on public safety is repeatedly undermined by the perversity of David Grant. While the assertion that Take an Easy Ride is similar to that of Last House on the Left is credible there's not much else besides the single skit that could lead to this conclusion. Sure, Take an Easy Ride features a scene of rape and murder. This, in turn, draws sympathy from the reaction of the parents. But no other strand of evidence exists to suggest this claim other than the "gentle" scene of rape within Take an Easy Ride. Nevertheless, Rowles' cinematic contribution excels in the art of sleaze and under the ever watchful eye of David Grant, Take an Easy Ride becomes something so strange, esoteric, yet, utterly creative. It's my guess that these abrasive forms of public interest are making a comeback with the inclusion of "shocking" accident commercials, obviously led by forerunners Take an Easy Ride and Forklift Driver Klaus. It seems the media mavens have finally realized brute force is the most effective method of persuasion.

-mAQ

YO-YO GIRL COP

Kenta Fukasaku (2006)

A title like this is destined for greatness. A film like this should have been written in stone. Yo-Yo Girl Cop is a flat monotone action film stealing the subplot of Suicide Club and converting it to the "Kawaii" American crowd. Kenta Fukasaku (Director of Battle Royale II) took the reigns on a film that should have played it safely. Instead, we're treated to a decomposing mess that loses all coherency and plausibility only mere minutes in. Before you rip at the notion that this is an adaptation and this is supposed to be oddball entertainment, watch the film. You'll forgive me soon enough. As for the plot, I can only spare pieces that were legible to me at the time. A rogue feminist bad ass is Escape from New York'd into joining a special task force armed with a mission of stopping some suicidal judgment day from happening. Many geeky Asians are strapped with bombs throughout the film and blown to CGI smithereens. I can't tell what got the shit end of this stick in this one; the cast or the characters? Get used to the fact that things in this film will happen for no reason. Characters will be introduced in a rush only for them to be evicted from the script. Enemies will become apparent and lack any motive. You can't use insanity or misanthropy for these 2D baddies. Asian action cinema normally has a look derived from cases of Red Bull and cinematographers over the edge. Calling films like Tube and Killzone "sleek" is undermining the film. Those are but two examples of fine Asian action. Fukasaku should count his losses and release this under the title of "How to butcher an Asian action film". To give credit where credit is due, the idea of a school girl fighting crime with a hi-tech yo-yo is exciting, but this film lacks any compassion towards weaponry. The last battle with the villain was a sparkle to what should have been an explosive brawl. He on one hand, used his weapon well. I cherish the idea of weaponry being used as an extension to carry out nefarious plans. Good guys using weapons doesn't have that menace behind it. They carry an arsenal to protect themselves. The enemies armor up for an approaching protagonist holocaust. Yo-Yo Girl Cop is a film that no one will understand. You can pass it off to feel better about yourself for, let's say, appreciating this film, but too much is left undiscussed. The end product is fishy, slimy, and inedible. I don't buy anything this film had to offer. I see Yo-Yo Girl Cop as a tragedy. The first ten minutes were good and the last ten minutes were painfully average; the middle is all shit. Sad to say that Aya Matsuura isn't as ravishing as she tries to be, kicking her way through eunuchs. If you read manga and eat Pocky, then this is the film for you. But if you enjoy engaging action cinema, stay far away from this one.

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ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS
ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS

Kevin Bray (2002)

It all started out as a joke. "Soiled Sinema is all about the Benjamin's!" - Which we are. This drove me to purchase a film that most every generation X youth had already seen save for me. Starring the glorified action star Ice Cube and pathetic funnyman Mike Epps (whose pathetic career has involved him in various colorful situations where he flaunts an annoying persona), All About the Benjamins features rampant glamorized displays of idiosyncratic greed and ethnic superiority as the two positive Black leads trump the "underlings." Poor, poor Francesco. May our memories go out to him. He's in a better place now. Ice Cube has dug himself in a safe zone with his collaborating rap efforts of N.W.A., Westside Connection, and even his solo projects. For this, I bare nary foul feelings for the man; the legend. After his comedic enterprises flourished with the subsequent hit release of Friday, Cube Vision formed with the motive of creating Ice Cube starred comedies and such which spawned 3 Friday sequels and other black cultured comedies revolving around barbershop hi-jinx that bored white audiences around the world. With the eventual release of All About the Benjamins, the probable theory of "big" action stars was born. I say this because after watching a chunky Negro run around the set of XXX: State of the Union, I can swear that the action genre has never been the same. Ice Cube's film credits have always had an edgy racial context to them. Despite he himself being an inspiration to many black people, he creates films showing black people as disgusting citizens who shit constantly while twitching and cooking meals out of "fried chikin" and collared greens. All About the Benjamins strays from normal African stereotypes and focuses on greed in many forms. A self-gaining sort and an oblivious form. In this film, Ice Cube's searching for diamonds to produce his own P.I. firm while Mike Epps is attempting to recover his \$60 million dollar winning lottery ticket to which he shouts daydreams of spending it all on "bling". The idea itself is insulting to the current state of our economy. This wasn't as bad of an idea as the creation of Confessions of a Shopaholic. The action sequences are decently shot and don't suffer too much from jump-cuts and obnoxious editing techniques. Just when the getting is good, Mike Epps saves the day by bumbling around, dropping weapons in water and just generally fucking everything up. The final product is highly entertaining but irritating in seasoned retrospect. It seems that Ice Cube has a habit with pairing up with the most annoying actors in existence, a stooge if you will, as if to make himself look cool by comparison; but hey, it works wonders for his large ego. All About the Benjamins is a bit of a blunder baring subversive sociological elements but in the end makes the project contrived, nevertheless amusing on a high level. In a way, Soiled Sinema is all about the Benjamin's.

-mAQ

WHERE EVIL DWELLS

Kevin Connor (1982)

With the exception of a handful of Nick Zedd flicks, the proudly amateurish aberrant-garde filmmakers of the so-called Cinema of Transgression movement were hardly responsible for producing any actual notable feature-length films, so it is somewhat ironic that one of the few features associated with the NYC underground scene, *Where Evil Dwells* (1985) co-directed by the seemingly mismatched duo of marginal underground auteur Tommy Turner (Simonland, *The Black Knights of the Skillman*) and queer anti-Renaissance man David Wojnarowicz (*A Fire in My Belly*, *Fear of Disclosure: Psycho-Social Implications of HIV Revelation*) was, somewhat fittingly destroyed in a fire, especially considering its decidedly destructive quasi-Satanic message and wickedly wayward essence, before it was ever completed (according to Wojnarowicz, about 3/4 of the film was completed before he called it quits, left the project entirely in Turner's seemingly careless hands, and went on to work on more personal projects). Luckily, a 28-minute 'preview' cut of the decidedly D.I.Y. art-punk-trash slasher (which was originally titled *Satan Teens*) that was screened at the 1985 Downtown New York Film Festival has survived and, judging by this sort of trailer on steroids, which certainly feels complete in an abstract avant-garde sort of way (indeed, the film has a beginning, end, and tons of things in between), I would not be surprised if this butchered cut is more effective than the original proposed feature-length version (which was apparently around 120 minutes in length) would have been. Indeed, seeming like the abortive celluloid miscreation of the sub-literate punk gorehound progeny of Luis Buñuel and Frans Zwartjes, the film was originally intended as a Super-8 feature with sync sound and a linear plot but now exists as a sort of sadistically spastic montage-driven (anti)tribute to slasher cinema that even features the NYC art fag equivalent of masked retardards like 'Leatherface' of Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and Jason Voorhees of the dreaded *Friday the 13th* franchise. A sort of celluloid anti-exorcism against the mainstream media and carny-esque televangelists, the film is based on the particularly pathetic true crime story of drug-addled self-stylized teenage Satanist Ricky 'The Acid King' Kasso, who committed the singularly senseless act of murdering his 17-year-old friend Gary Lauwers by stabbing him in the neck and head somewhere between 17 and 36 times (on top of gouging out his eyes and burning his body) during a bonfire in Long Island in June 1984 merely because the young man allegedly stole 10 bags of cheap PCP from him. Naturally, after foolishly bragging to teens that he had murdered Lauwers in tribute to Satan and even taking unbelieving friends to the site of the decaying mutilated corpse in a fashion not unlike in *River's Edge* (1986) directed by Tim Hunter, Kasso was soon arrested and he apparently found jail so unpleasant that he opted to commit suicide by hanging himself in his cell only

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a mere two days after he was detained, thus demonstrating that the cartoon Satan hardly empowered the moronic metalheads that mindlessly worshiped him. Divided into four main segments, including a lengthy introduction, a montage depicting the murder, Kasso's failed attempt to enter heaven and eventually the teen's successful attempt to enter hell, *Where Evil Dwells* is ultimately a bad celluloid trip where mainstream Christian America and pop culture are heretically defiled by hopelessly amateurish subversive sod art of the largely obnoxiously unholy, superficially iconoclastic, and oftentimes absurdly fetishistic sort. Indeed, Turner and Wojnarowicz's film is more or less as politically retarded and morally bankrupt as most of the films associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement, but luckily it at least features striking and sometimes allegorical imagery, a largely oneiric structure and atmosphere, and a fairly tolerable soundtrack that certainly sounds like the kind of music that some teenage degenerates from the 1980s would listen to while sadistically slaughtering their friend while high on acid in retaliation for stolen angel dust.

While *Where Evil Dwells* is considered a sort of landmark work of the Cinema of Transgression movement, co-auteur David Wojnarowicz—the only filmmaker associated with the scene that was already an established artist of some notability (in fact, he funded the film with money that he had made off of some of his paintings)—certainly was not completely playing by Nick Zedd's megalomaniacal rules, or as he once stated himself, "I think maybe it's just philosophically or something, but I thought I was pretty peripheral to that whole film scene. I participated in some of it...I always felt like I was watching from or witnessing it from the side." Indeed, while horribly hokey and awkwardly amateurish in parts, the film oftentimes has a genuine hellishly foreboding quality about it that almost seems to mock the all-too-self-conscious crap celluloid kitsch of Mr. Zedd. As his spoken word sessions and poetry certainly demonstrate, Wojnarowicz was a perennially pissed off fag with a genuine hatred of the mainstream American evangelical right, which he would ultimately blame for his death via AIDS. Notably, both directors could relate to quasi-archetypal alienated teen Kasso, but neither could relate to his heinous crimes nor the seemingly hypocritical authoritarian structure of his (pseudo)Satanic social circle, or as Wojnarowicz once wrote as revealed in an interview featured in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, "We were using the script to talk about relationships of power: how the leader was given power by the other kids and even though he was kind of stupid, the other kids' adulation and respect kept him propped up there in control. It's kind of like Ronald Reagan." Somewhat curiously, *Where Evil Dwells* features a quasi-narrator in the form of a creepy old Howdy Doody ventriloquist doll with a sadistically sardonic attitude that seems to reflect not only the murderous yet childish behavior of upper-middleclass loser Kasso and his Guido metalhead comrades, but also the contrived morality of the American Pie 1950s and the death of suburbia and, in turn, the so-called Amer-

ican dream. At the beginning of the film, the doll is rather fittingly held by Wojnarowicz, who is seemingly dead as demonstrated by the fact that his eyes are hanging out of his eye sockets and he is covered in Buttgerit-esque guts and gore. When the doll jokes, "Hey, checkout this girl. She hung around the wrong crowd," the film cuts to a delightfully morbid shot of a chick hanging by her neck from a noose in a post-industrial hellhole in a sardonic scene featuring girly 1950s romance music. Eventually, the film cuts to a shot of Wojnarowicz, who was also a noted street artist that would tag quotes by William S. Burroughs onto the side of buildings, spray-painting "Where Evil Dwells" over a suburban neighborhood juxtaposed with the distortion-and-drums heavy eponymous 'theme song' by J. G. Thirlwell's electronic noise-rock project Wiseblood in a scene that less than subtly ultimately accuses suburbia of being the true source of all-things-sinister. From there, a nihilistic montage begins featuring an old Volkswagen on fire, Kasso and his degenerate buddies destroying buses by beating them with metal rods, and various other examples of decidedly dumb teenage delinquency. To go with the film's potent theme of moronic teenage delinquency and Kasso's own personal taste in music, the popular song "Hell Bells" by AC/DC is blasted on the soundtrack (notably, Kasso was arrested while wearing an AC/DC shirt).

The second unofficial segment of the film focuses on the crimes of the main subject and fittingly begins with a vaguely dream-like scene where a priestly Devil (charismatically portrayed by lowbrow pop surrealist artist Joe Coleman, who was incidentally raised the Irish-Catholic tradition) initiates Kasso into the hermetic spiritual realm of the Dark Arts by sharing with him some blood from a goblet as a fairly poorly made inverted cross humorously hangs on the wall in the background. In his first act in tribute to Satan, Kasso goes graverobbing with some of his long-haired burnout buddies and senselessly attempts to destroy a skeleton that he has just dug up by trying in vain to decapitate it with the same shovel he used to dig it up. Of course, fiddling with a decayed corpse is nothing compared to transforming a living human-being into worm meat, or so Kasso will eventually learn on his quest to satisfy Satan's unquenchable thirst for all-things-evil. When the film cuts back to Howdy Doody, co-director Turner appears, knocks over Wojnarowicz with a machete, and takes over his co-director's place as the ventriloquist. Ultimately, Howdy explains to Turner regarding the supposed objective of *Where Evil Dwells* that, "It explores the constructions of evil in contemporary America." When Turner naively asks the doll "What's evil?," Mr. Doody states "I'll show you" and then proceeds to repeatedly stab the filmmaker in the chest with a knife while expressing a sense of savagely sadistic glee that will ultimately characterize Kasso when he kills his comrade. While playfully succumbing to his wounds, Turner cries, "the devil got me," in a line of dialogue that is clearly meant to mock the tendency of the mainstream media and Christian Evangelists to blame murder and various other

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crimes on evil forces, especially Satan, instead of the actual criminal.

After the dummy wastes Turner, Kasso and his comrades up the ante in terms of their crimes by dropping a fully dressed skeleton dummy off of a bridge on the Long Island Expressway, which smashes into pieces upon being hit by a car driven by a unsuspecting motorist played by Wojnarowicz (indeed, it seems David W. had the most eclectic 'roles' in the film). In what is arguably the most intricate and abstract segment of the film in a nearly 10-minute-long abstract montage that intersects a scene of a first-person-perspective rollercoaster ride (this scene recalls the ending of the No Wave 'classic' *She Had Her Gun All Ready* (1978) directed by Vivienne Dick), shots of the devil hanging out at an abandoned railroad station and eventually self-combusting (as his performance in the film *Mondo New York* (1988) demonstrates, Coleman used to do a performance art routine under the persona of 'Dr. Momboozoo' where he would shock audiences by randomly setting off fireworks that were hidden under his clothing), nighttime shots of a wooded bonfire where Kasso violently murders boyish blond Gary Lauwers by repeatedly stabbing him the eyes with a knife, and daytime shots of the location of the crime where natural violence is depicted in the form of hundreds upon hundreds of maggots feeding on the corpse of a dead dog and a wounded bird succumbing to its wounds, among other things. After the death of Lauwers, Howdy Doody makes his final appearance in a scene where he is dragged away while screaming after showing off the bloody knife he just used to kill Turner in a scene that seems to symbolize 'dummy' Kasso's 'fall from grace' as a moron that mindlessly killed a friend in ostensible tribute to Satan who now has to face the less than comfortable consequences of his nonsensical actions. Somewhat unfortunately, Kasso's untimely post-arrest suicide is not depicted in the film, thus leading the viewer to suspect that the scene was destroyed in Turner's apartment fire.

In the third and shortest segment of the film, killer Kasso, who has clearly already committed self-slaughter in his jail cell, attempts to enter 'heaven,' which is in the form of a decrepit and dimly lit restaurant featuring only a handful of occupants where a decidedly degenerate Jesus Christ (played by Sid Vicious' one-time drug dealer, guido junky Rockets Redglare of Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984) and *Down By Law* (1986)) voraciously eats greasy chicken legs and chugs down cans of cheap beer like a gluttonous pig. Not exactly the flashiest of dressers, Kasso attempts to enter heaven while sporting nothing but a pair of jeans and is denied entry by a sort of suavely dressed blond angelic bodyguard, who does not exactly seem particularly impressed with the young killer's pleas for perennial paradise. Notably, the scenes of the debauched Jesus taking drags of cigarettes and belligerently spitting out bits of his food are juxtaposed with degenerate jazz and audio clips of a televangelist proselytizing and stating unintentionally humorous things like, "What kind of preacher do you think Jesus was? Some of you picture him as some little sissy holding a little billy goat

in his hands.” Ultimately, the heaven segment concludes with Jesus flinging his food synced with the carny Christian preacher declaring, “Why do you think the Apostle Paul had his head chopped off? They laid him on a tree and killed him. They killed him because he looked the Pharisees right in the eye. I haven’t been that brave yet. I do it through a television camera.” Clearly, Wojnarowicz and Turner find nothing brave in what the preacher does, but I suspect they feel like they are brave for creating a film like *Where Evil Dwells*.

Undoubtedly, the fourth and final segment of the film is pure post-industrial apocalyptic anarchy and depicts Kasso’s chaotic descent into hell, which is rather fittingly set to the less than soothing apocalyptic sounds of Diamanda Galás. Shot at a warehouse in lower Manhattan containing a train locomotive that the directors took full advantage of, the segment seems like what might have happened if a couple beauty-hating punks decided to remake Derek Jarman’s classic kaleidoscopic surrealist short *Art of Mirrors* (1973) in tribute to their favorite slasher killers and S&M bondage flicks. Completely chaotic in direction, framing, narrative, editing, and even wardrobe, the hell segment mainly seems to be a platform for the directors to depict certain sexual fetishes and fantasies they might have had at the time, hence the abundance of unclad men and women in chains and general BDSM-esque imagery that involves supposed demons punishing the damned in a variety of sexually degrading ways that ultimately seem rather tame and goofy in comparison to the torture scenes featured in Pasolini’s swansong *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975). In its depiction of one half-naked demon sporting both a Freddy Krueger glove and Jason Voorhees face and another half-naked masked demon resembling the more hedonistic yet less homicidal little brother of *Leatherface*, the segment ultimately has a sort of conspicuously kitschy low-camp character to it that makes it more than clear that the filmmakers do not believe in hell and have seen one-too-many shitty slasher flicks. In a scene that seems like *Kenneth Anger’s Scorpio Rising* (1964) meets *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), a hot leather-clad blonde and two leather-fag-esque male friends sit on a large motorcycle together while joyously whipping a prisoner in bondage while *Leatherface* stands close by and jumps around like a jubilant retard. Baphomet also makes an appearance in the form of a man with a large goat-skull perching on a wall as if he is a bird of prey that is waiting to bite Kasso on his candy ass. Arguably, the most creepy ‘character’ featured in the segment and film in general is a sort of post-apocalyptic tribal negro with a horn on his forehead who is wearing nothing but a straw skirt and chains and who crawls across the top of the train locomotive like a gay ape that is looking for somebody or some thing to rape. Indeed, as demonstrated by a scene where a demon takes a look down the booty shorts of a slightly muscular blond twink that is lifting weights, sodomy is wholly permitted in Wojnarowicz and Turner’s wayward vision of hell. As for Kasso, he is almost wholly irrelevant to the segment and only makes fleeting appearances as a sort of cipher who has

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already served his purpose for the film as a whole. If there is any star of the hell segment, it is certainly Coleman as the Devil, who is depicted at one point biting off the heads of live rats that have been served to him on a silver platter by a fairly unsavory Satanic butler that is clearly modeled after Alfred Hitchcock. In a scene that is obviously one of Coleman's self-combustion performances ran in reverse, the devil manages to suck an ominous cloud of smoke and sparks back into his body, thus marking the end of the film and the beginning of Kasso's eternal internment in the hyper-hedonistic pleasure-dome known as hell.

If there is any film that seems to manage to depict the collective unconscious of too-stupid-to-be-tragic suicidal killer Ricky Kasso and his similarly infantile metalhead comrades, it is indubitably *Where Evil Dwells*, which ultimately feels like the most intricate, idiosyncratic, and aesthetically ambitious homemade horror flick ever made as a sort of crack-addled 1980s equivalent to the classic cult horror flick *Equinox* (1970). In fact, I would argue that the two similarly primitive horror films make for a greatly insightful double-feature, as comparing the flicks will really help the viewer to understand how drastically the morality and spirituality of American's youth has changed over the course of a mere two decade period (while released in 1970, *Equinox* was actually shot in 1967). While *Equinox* features a fairly traditional depiction of good and evil and was obviously heavily influenced by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft, *Where Evil Dwells* depicts the suburbs as a sort of figurative hell and contains a curious moral compass that is almost as broken as that of its subject Ricky Kasso and the mediocre mainstream heavy metal bands that the killer listened to. Notably, exploitation auteur Jim Van Bebber's undeniably hilarious short *My Sweet Satan* (1994) is almost as morally retarded as Wojnarowicz and Turner's flick in terms of its cynical depiction of Kasso's crimes, but at least it does not feature a sort of glaringly superficial pseudo-(meta)political subtext about the supposed sinister character of the suburbs. In terms of films presenting a less artsy fartsy approach to the Kasso case, Matthew Carnahan's *Black Circle Boys* (1997) features a fictionalized account of the story and it is not much more than an eclectically mediocre coming-of-age melodrama that was made to wet the panties of preteen girls as demonstrated by the fact that it stars intellectually vacant pretty boys like Donnie Wahlberg, Scott Bairdow, and Eric Mabius portraying teenage Goth druggie degenerates. While certainly superior to *Black Circle Boys*, the unreleased feature *Ricky 6* (2000) directed by Hollywood screenwriter Peter Filardi (*Flatliners*, *The Craft*) and starring Vincent Kartheiser as a fictional character based on Kasso can hardly be described as a masterpiece. Incidentally, at the end of the somewhat generic but informative Kasso documentary *Satan in the Suburbs* (2000), narrator Will Lyman's final three last words are, "...where evil dwells." Of course, judging simply by the doc's grating docudrama reenactment scenes, I doubt the makers ever bothered to watch Turner and Wojnarowicz's bizarrely kitschy Kasso piece.

In many ways, *Where Evil Dwells* is strikingly different from Wojnarowicz's other films, namely in that it is almost completely devoid of homosexual content and reductionist orientated accusations against Christianity, Ronald Reagan, and the U.S. Government for supposedly being directly responsible for the fact that armies of tearoom homos were kicking the bucket as a result of gay cancer. Of course, the film is also in many ways typical of the filmmaker's oeuvre due to its aberrant allegorical imagery and in that it features overtly hateful one-dimensional agitprop style assaults against Christianity and suburbia, thereupon oftentimes making the film seem like the lurid yet somewhat botched wet dream of some bitterly enraged and innately irrational punk rock poser who dropped out of high school and wants to take out all of his anger on his parents for not understanding him. Judging by Turner's short *Simonland* (1984)—a mind-numbingly dumb and remarkably technically inept film about mind-control that, according to Nick Zedd in his work *Bleed*, was not surprisingly shot while all the actors and crew members were "high on dope"—one can probably assume that the more goofy and philistine oriented aspects of *Where Evil Dwells* can be credited to him and not Wojnarowicz, whose avant-garde queer works like *Fear of Disclosure: Psycho-Social Implications of HIV Revelation* (1989) co-directed Phil Zwickler and *ITSOFOMO: In the Shadow of Forward Motion* (1991) co-directed by Ben Neill are completely devoid of narratives and hardly feature the sort of less than half-baked stoner humor that is typical of his comrade. Indeed, the film might be not much more than a 'glorified trailer' that was directed by two serious fuck ups, but *Where Evil Dwells* is certainly one of the more idiosyncratic and inventive films of the Cinema of Transgression movement and one could fairly safely argue that this is largely the result of Wojnarowicz's angst-ridden *Weltanschauung*, which was clearly more cultivated than that of one-note wonders like Zedd and Richard Kern.

Notably, it seems that Wojnarowicz, who funded *Where Evil Dwells* with money that he made from selling his paintings, decided to give up on the film before it was finished due to problems Turner and his drug addiction (it is rumored that he shot part of the film's budget into his arm), or as he said in a 1991 interview with Jeri Cain Rossi, "I mean, it just kept going and going and going [...] It was fun. But it just got too scattered because of the addiction and stuff, and so finally I just said 'Look, I've got to stop. I can't go any further.' And we shot at least three quarters of the film. I think there are still a handful of scenes. We wanted to get down but we never had a chance." Of course, as a sometimes filmmaker who is probably better known for everything else he did aside from filmmaking (though his film work made posthumous headlines in November 2010 when his work *A Fire in My Belly* was removed from the Smithsonian Institution as a result of pressure from a Catholic group that felt it contained 'hate speech' due to a silly scene where ants crawl on a crucifix), it should be no surprise that most of Wojnarowicz's cinematic works remain unfinished and

WHERE EVIL DWELLS

largely exists in fragmented excerpt forms. As a man that is largely (in)famous for going on heated performance art rants where it seems like his head is going to explode (notably, in the Rosa von Praunheim doc *Silence = Death* (1990), he states regarding his belief that the U.S. Government is responsible for homos dying of AIDS, "It's not my sucking dick that is responsible for my death, or my getting fucked in the ass, or any of these things. These people, at this point, are responsible for my death because their inactivity and their total gesture of silence after eight years of this"), Wojnarowicz seems like a perennial angry teenage boy and *Where Evil Dwells* is certainly nothing if not a surprisingly potent yet pathetic piece of visceral youthful celluloid rage. Indeed, as a sometimes reluctant supporter of the auteur theory, I tend to believe that most good films can only have one god and the film certainly suffers from the masturbatory fantasies of a resentful queer in a sort of internal personal hell who hates Christianity more than homo-hating Evangelicals hate gay agitators like himself. Undoubtedly, the best compliment I can pay *Where Evil Dwells* is that it almost has a mystifying essence about it to the point where one could almost believe that it was made by a cult of murderous Kasso fanboys who dug up the teenage junky killer's grave and placed the film inside his casket, only for it to be unearthed a decade or so later by another group of morbidly misguided Kasso fanboys and unleashed onto the world without warning. Of course, I also like to think that Kasso would have loved and worshiped the film more than he purported to love and worship the devil.

-Ty E

THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND

Kevin Macdonald* (2006)

The Zionists that run Hollywood certainly have a keen talent for producing fictional works (presented ambiguously as fact) demonizing their enemies and influencing Americans to hate these notorious Anti-Zionist figures. Virtually every American has an irrational hatred of the Austrian painter with the Charlie Chaplin mustache from a lifelong bombardment of propaganda via Judaic Hollywood but not as many people are familiar with a charismatic dictator from Uganda known as Idi Amin. Who better than master Uncle Tom actor Forest Whitaker to grossly caricature Idi Amin in the Hollywood Zio-Bio-Pic *The Last King of Scotland*? After all, Whitaker proved his affinity for playing peculiar Negro perverts when he acted as a British soldier who enjoyed the company of a racially/sexually ambiguous tranny in the film *The Crying Game*. In *The Last King of Scotland*, Hollywood goes all out parodying one of the greatest independent leaders that Africa has ever known.

Nelson Mandela and Lithuanian Jewish Communist Joe Slovo giving the clenched fist salute in front of a Bolshevik Hammer and Sickle flag.

Everyone knows that one is supposed to glorify former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela as a sterling example of humanism and peace. After all, he won The Noble Peace Prize in 1993. Of course, Hollywood loves Mandela, especially since the Terrorist organization African National Congress (ANC) that he was part of was masterminded by two Communist Jews, Albie Sachs and Yossel Mashel Slovo, the kind of anti-Nationalist leaders that the vaudevillian swindlers that run Hollywood adore. On top of giving the clenched fist salute to the iron and sickle flag of bolshevism, Mandela blew up white South African civilians by utilizing (with his Jewish buddies) his talent for terrorist bombings. After all, if you are anti-European/anti-white and pro-Jewish, you fit in perfectly with the peace-loving humanists that run Hollywood. On the other hand, if you're black and promote black self-determination (without Jewish handlers), you're surely an enemy of Zion as was Idi Amin.

Idi Amin's greatest achievement as president and military leader of Uganda was his ability to completely nationalize Uganda and destroy foreign influence from the East/West. Of course, Jews being the ancient rootless cosmopolitans that they are, hate any nation that does not allow them to take over their monetary system. Out of interest for an independent Uganda and the country's financial welfare, Idi Amin decided to expel Israeli military advisers from his country and even had plans to wage war against Israel. In fact, in the documentary *General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait* directed by Barbet Schroeder, Idi Amin explains that he had to kick the Israelis out of his nation as they were attempting to bankrupt him. Of course, in the Hollywood film *The Last King of Scotland*, Idi Amin's nationalizing of Uganda is presented as an act of irrational

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and despicable racism. For all the condemning of racism Hollywood does, it surely does not want the black man to stand on his own two feet but to cripple him and “pick him up” with special Kosher blessed crutches (at the cost of the evil European/Euro-American, of course).

In the film *The Last King of Scotland* (based on a novel written by English author Giles Foden), Idi Amin finds his top adviser in the form of a young Scottish doctor in his early twenties. After all, what better way to discredit a true Black Nationalist leader than having a fictional second-rate Brit (a Scotsman, not an Englishman) acting as the true brains behind Idi Amin’s militaristic regime. The Idi Amin featured in *The Last King of Scotland* is such a buffoon baboon that he thinks that he is dying as a result of drinking too many beers and popping too many aspirin. Naturally, The Scottish doctor soon realizes that Idi Amin’s pain will soon be expelled via a bomb of flatulence. I do not think Hollywood has even gone as far as presenting Adolf Hitler in such an impotent and pathetic scenario as Idi Amin is in whilst passing bad gas in *The Last King of Scotland*. Maybe the quasi-bolshevik filmmakers behind the film were thinking about Uncle Adolf when they were making *The Last King of Scotland* as the Austrian Wagnerite did have a problem with flatulence in real-life.

Not only does the Scottish doctor advise Idi Amin on the most imperative issues surrounding Uganda but he also enjoys coitus with one of the dictator’s many wives, surely the ultimate insult to the super pimp of Uganda. When Idi Amin finds out one of his many Negress wives bedded a white devil, he has her body so mutilated that the scene could be best described as The African Chainsaw Massacre. Of course, just as the Zionist media has portrayed Idi Amin as a cannibal with no evidence whatsoever, they have also portrayed him as a wife mutilator in *The Last King of Scotland*. Unlike the rumors regarding Idi Amin’s love for dark meat, it has been factually proven that the Israelis have engaged in organ harvesting, international sex slavery, and the intentional radiation poisoning of their own children (or at least the “second-rate” Sephardi Jews). Quite fittingly, *The Last King of Scotland* concludes with the incident at Entebbe airport where Idi Amin allowed a Palestinian hijacked airplane to land. Like all Hollywood films regarding World War II, *The Last King of Scotland* lets the audience know that Jews are special victims when Idi Amin gives freedom to all hostages except the Israelis. The film closes with the Zionist Braggart text: “Forty-eight hours later, Israeli forces stormed Entebbe and liberated all but one of the hostages. International public opinion turned against Amin for good.”

The Real Idi Amin and his feelings on World Jewry Despite being a film that is supposed to carry an anti-racist message, *The Last King of Scotland* is surely a film that attempts to exploit racial feelings, especially in white males. The viewer is supposed to identify with the fictional Scottish protagonist as he progressively experiences Idi Amin’s sadistic Negro barbarism. The real Idi Amin made no lie of his racial chauvinism but unlike Red Saint Nelson Mandela, Idi

Amin was never canonized as a fighter for peace and tolerance. Despite blowing up white people left and right, Nelson Mandela has been glorified for helping to end apartheid. Of course, Idi Amin attempted to end apartheid as well, only it was the one that the Zionists have been running murderously against the Palestinians (who, according to Zionists, don't exist) ever since they started occupying Palestine. If Hollywood only had the opportunity teach gentiles one lesson, it is this: European/White Institutions = Evil/Must be destroyed. Jewish supremacist/Anti-Nationalist Globalist institutions = Good/Peace. Idi Amin stood up against Zionist supremacy/global homogeneity and despite his regime collapsing long ago, his enemies have concocted a cinematic trophy in the name of his defeat. Personally, I will always think of Idi Amin as the Negro Hermann Göring, a charismatic man with valuable principles flawed by his own eccentricity.

-Ty E

BLOOD IN THE FACE
BLOOD IN THE FACE

Kevin Rafferty (1991)

It has been sometime since I originally saw Anne Bohlen's *Blood in the Face* documentary on Neo-Nazis and Christian Ku Klux Klaners. After just watching it for the second time, I must admit that the documentary is an embarrassment to the white race. No matter how much people hate the original National Socialists from Germany, they at least have to admit they were a powerful force to be reckoned with. The most power these "subjects" have in *Blood in the Face* is controlling an audience of 30 or so Christian anti-intellectual followers. Although most documentaries and films on Neo-Nazis are obviously biased, *Blood in the Face* is pretty fair in the treatment of its subjects. The documentary for the most part just features Aryan wannabes incriminating themselves as a pathetic fringe of the white race. The Neo-"Nazis" obsession with white power is the final resort in these miserable people's dead end lives.

The Elite American SS Ironically, many of the "Aryans" in *Blood in the Face* seem to have some type of nonwhite blood admixture. One of the first speakers in the documentary has a certain kosher charisma that you could only find in a vaudeville performance. When this goofy fellow in fatigues and a beret has "shabbos goy stooges" roll off his lips it seems a little too natural. One also cannot forget the far from Nordic elderly man who declares he hates all "mud people." I wouldn't be surprised if this man had some type of Negro blood somewhere in his mutated family tree. Church burner and best friend killer Varg Kikernes had something profound to say when he mentioned why purely Aryan type whites generally don't gravitate towards Neo-Nazism. Varg stated in the fun book *Lords of Chaos*, "The people who really could claim the Nordic heritage, they don't bother. They don't really think about it because it's so obvious to them...when they look in the mirror they see a true Norseman. They don't see mixture. It's not so easy for them to become aware of it." Hail Victory!!...or something My favorite segment of *Blood in the Face* is the footage of the first American Neo-Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell. Unlike virtually all Neo-Nazis, Rockwell was fairly intelligent, charismatic, a natural salesman, and a comedian. In fact, I would even go as far as saying that Rockwell was one of the greatest American comedians of the past century. George Lincoln Rockwell's father Doc was a fairly successful vaudevillian comedian and friends with famous Jewish comedian Groucho Marx. Even when not joking George Lincoln Rockwell warrants laughing out loud humor. For example, when a news reporter asks how many American Jews are traitors, Rockwell responds with something along the lines of, "my guess with no type of scientific evidence to back it up is that 80% of Jews are traitors and will have to be gassed." Aside from Rockwell, most of the other people in *Blood in the Face* make me want to vomit. Unfortunately, the boyish looking and extremely nice David Duke is only featured in *Blood in the*

Face for a minute or two. I assume this is because he is one of the few legitimate and successful of pro-white politicians who had the good common sense to take off the Ku Klux Klown mask and put on a suave suit.

Excerpt of George Lincoln Rockwell in Blood in the Face

Many of the geniuses featured in Blood in the Face are huge fans of Jew Jesus Christ. All these supposed anti-Semites consider the greatest man ever to live to be megalomaniac Jew Jesus. A fellow named Pastor Butler brings out a crucifix with a swastika on it. The title of the documentary "Blood in the Face" also comes from Adam in the bible who showed his big red cheeks. One of the Christian Neo-Nazis also brings up how only the humble white man can show red in the cheeks. The real Nazis, although presenting themselves as Christians of sorts, were for the most part hostile to Christianity. Nazi philosopher Alfred "Rosenberg" promoted "positive" Christianity in his philosophical masterpiece The Myth of the Twentieth Century. About a ¼ of the book is dedicated to promoting the Anti-Christ philosophies of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The Neo-Nazis in Blood in the Face would obviously never make it anywhere with their beliefs as they have the slave mentality of Christianity. Is this gnome a future white leader and white revolutionary? Blood in the Face is a depressing documentary for any people that care about white culture. The only chance of any type of "white revolution" is if whites are finally backed into a corner far enough that they are forced into fighting. There are surely many more Michael Moores (who is surprisingly slimmer in the documentary) than there are "pro-white" activists. Any white person that watches Blood in the Face will no doubt have blood in their face showing out of embarrassment after watching it. At the very least, the viewer will have blood in the face from laughter.

-Ty E

RED STATE
RED STATE

Kevin Smith (2011)

I have always made no lie of my irrevocable repulsion towards fatty fanboy filmmaker Kevin Smith and his fecal-fuming films. I don't know about most people but I find Smith's adolescent cinematic contemplations on romance-gone-wrong and prepubescent sex jokes to be nothing more than symbiotic of the white-man-child epidemic that has plagued America for the past two decades or so. After all, if any film director (and I use this word loosely for the mere convenience) epitomizes the thoroughly emasculated American white male, it is Kevin Smith; the pudgy comic book super-nerd-nerd-enabler whose generous sized bitch tits would undoubtedly put prematurely deceased Baltimorean Divine's man-mammary-glands to shame. When I found out that Smith directed a horror movie, I couldn't think of a more appalling prospect for a film. After all, it is no secret that most horror films suffer from poorly written dialogue but a horror flick with dialogue dreamed up by Kevin Smith could only bring further shame to the seemingly shameless genre. Smith's horror film is entitled *Red State* and as one would expect from the title, it is also of a blatantly political nature. Indeed, just by knowing the synopsis of the film and the mental-eunuch man behind it, one can assume that *Red State* is arguably one of the worst ideas for a film ever. After his recent fallout with brothers Weinstein and a number of cinematic abortions over the past decade or so, one can only assume that *Red State* is a work of desperation created by a one-trick pussy filmmaker whose artistic impotence and lack of passionate vision is only rivaled by his lack of testosterone. Unsurprisingly, I found *Red State* to be not only the worst film I have seen all year but also Smith's most lackluster attempt at assembling something resembling a feature-length film.

Despite Kevin Smith's assurance that *Red State* would feature nil of the preschool-potty-mouth humor that permeates throughout his work; the plot of the film is essentially a propaganda piece for such repugnant and sexually immature themes and unsurprisingly features them as well. In the film, a trio of toddler-like teenage turdlings travel to a stereotypically bigoted rural county so they can gang-bang a milf that one of the boys met on a sex website. Of course, the three friends travel under a false pretense and fall prey to a militant Judeo-Christian family church modeled after real-life pastor Fred "I hate fags" Phelps's infamous church. Todd McCarthy of the *Hollywood Reporter* described *Red States* as, "A potent cinematic hand grenade tossed to bigots everywhere" yet the film itself is a flaccid work of atheistic intolerance with anti-Southern and anti-Christian stereotypes that are so predictable that it is essentially an unintentional parody of typical liberal Hollywood parodies. I don't know whether or not God hates fags but he most certainly hates bovine fanboy filmmakers as the mediocrity of *Red State* attests to. Ironically and hypocritically, Kevin Smith modeled his self-

distribution of *Red State* after Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). Unlike Gibson's film, *Red State* lacks brutal carnality and an apt atmosphere; two imperative ingredients one expects from quality horror films. Instead, *Red State* seems to be merely an outlet for Kevin Smith's seething hatred and fear of rural America, the Second Amendment, masculinity, tradition, Christianity, and any other individual or institution that upholds conservative values. Of course, if Smith had substituted the white Christian fundamentalists with Jewish or Islamic fundamentalists of a similar nature; he would have been branded a bigoted spreader of hate and thrown his career into an abyss much deeper than where it has already fallen.

Indeed, not even the wonderfully obnoxious charisma of celebrated character actor John Goodman could save the genre-confused and half-inseminated cinematic conception that is *Red State*. Various supporting cast members of the surprisingly entertaining TV series *Breaking Bad* are also completely wasted in the film. Michael Angarano (*Lords of Dogtown*, *Black Irish*), who played the lead protagonist in *Red State*, was also unable to give anything resembling a memorable acting performance; no doubt due to Kevin Smith's incompetence as a writer and director who has yet to graduate onto the maturity of a young adult. Of course, childish fantasies can make for brilliant films (e.g. the early works of Terry Gilliam and Tim Burton) yet Smith's fantasies, at best, seem to be wholly and soullessly contrived and merely an outlet for his stereotypically Hollywood liberal political agenda. If it weren't for the popular political views preached by schoolyard antichrist Kevin Smith, it would be hard for anyone to be able to revere *Red State* as anything more than an uninspired work of postmodern trash that falls miles below the films of Tarantino, Rob Zombie, and every other obscenely overrated fanboy would-be-auteur filmmaker. *Red State* is so thematically and aesthetically redundant and clinically cliché in its political agenda that it is the kind of work that will most likely make even the most faithful of libertine atheists and agnostics question the self-righteous dehumanization of the Christian "other." Suffice to say, *Red State* has more liberal dogma than Smith's earlier effort *Dogma* (1999) and less genuine horror than *Chasing Amy* (1997). If one can learn anything by watching *Red State*, it is that the mainstream left is more intellectually bankrupt than the most inbred of Southern Baptist preachers. Maybe if Kevin Smith were to have studied the work of Luis Buñuel instead of jerking off to overpriced comic books, he would have learned a couple tricks in regard to nuance and subtlety in his execution of *Red State*. As a film, *Red State* has nothing to offer to even the least demanding of horror fans. I hate to say it but maybe Kevin Smith might want to consider giving his tiresome soul back to the Weinstein bros. because at least then he would be able to make the sort of whiny beta-male garbage that made him the holy patron saint of feeble and rotund white male virgins.

-Ty E

SHEITAN
SHEITAN

Kim Chapiron (2006)

Due to my fanboy-ism of multi-cultural actor Vincent Cassel, there was no way I would miss out on our film driven by his acting. In this outing of film, Cassel plays a lunatic satanic Shepard who attracts a bunch of club hopping French youth whose main pastimes include French underground rap and unorthodox drugs with fine women. While many of us can relate to these flesh-like temptations, I don't think anyone would agree that they would deserve a fate such as the one in store for them. This film succeeds where most films similarly fail. Sheitan is the shining light, the bringer of justice, for films that have a problem of being over-edited. The film incorporates flashy visuals and brightly contrasted colors, as not seen by most French films. When you view most of their outgoing cinema, it seems they produce a film in black & white and slap the art label on it. Sheitan is a work of the similar "You have sex, you die. You do drugs, you die" but with a religious spin that involves a creepy fucking doll. The film is entirely star driven. Cassel found this lost script so intriguing, that he funded most of the film out of his bottomless pockets. If there is one thing I loved, it was Cassel's racism in the film. I have never seen any one mustachioed man call a Negro out using crude vulgarities and still maintain his sly grin as if nothing of temperament was handled. Despite the black racism, there is also hate for other colors. The film is top-notch, sans a couple of scenes that it could have been without. Sheitan delivers on a top-notch entertainment level. Vincent Cassel not only shines, but he illuminates the entire film. If I had to use only one word to describe Cassel in this film, it would be sinister. You will cheer him back on screen, only to be horrified by him, and demand that he leave. Sheitan is fierce, fast, and unmerciful. Satan would be proud.

-Maq

SQUALOR MOTEL

Kim Christy (1985)

Forget Gregory Dark's (in)famous hardcore crossover hit *New Wave Hookers* (1985), *Squalor Motel* (1985) directed by Kim Christy (*Dream Lovers*, *She-Male Sanitarium*), which was released the same year, is the ultimate punk/new wave/new romanticist fuck flick. Indeed, like Slava Tsukerman's dystopian cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982) minus the sci-fi meets Mark L. Lester's *Class of 1984* (1982) minus the crime elements meets the old school video game *Maniac Mansion* (1987) on *Viagra* as directed by the tranny and *Yazoo* obsessed grandnephew of Norman Bates, Christy's preternaturally lecherous celluloid labyrinth is unquestionably one of the most idiosyncratic, bizarre, and memorable hardcore flicks of the late porn chic era. Featuring an eclectic freak show of perverted motel dwellers with a new wave/new romanticist fashion sense, a multicultural transvestite punk band, an original synthesizer-driven musical score, and a sensual surrealist mise-en-scène that seems like that result of kraut cult auteur Eckhart Schmidt attempting to mimic everything from Jean Cocteau to Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Squalor Motel* is celluloid sleaze with style that is as just as fetishistic in its set design, wardrobe, and music as it is sexually. Set in a patently politically incorrect pervert pandemonium of pleasure that is inhabited by a lady-licking bald bastard with a rather repellant French art fag mustache, a deranged blowjob-demanding doorman as portrayed by Jamie Gillis (*Through the Looking Glass*, *Water Power*), a Hitler-like physician of the Nazi mad scientist sort portrayed by Hebraic porn star Herschel Savage (*Debbie Does Dallas*, *Blonde Ambition*) that attempts to cure a Jewess of her frigidity by giving her an extensive gynecological exam with his tongue and member, and an impotent redneck with a seemingly supernatural collection of blowup dolls, Christy's extra curious post-punk porno will certainly appeal to fans of both the oeuvre of avant-garde pornographer 'Rinse Dream' aka Stephen Sayadian (*Nightdreams* trilogy, *Café Flesh*, *Dr. Caligari*) and *Liquid Sky*, as a delightfully deranged and decadent dream-within-a-dream where nothing is as it seems, especially during sex. Indeed, *New Wave Hookers* might be good unclean fun featuring Judaic Jamie Gillis and a little negro fantasizing about "white bitches" that get horny from listening to new wave music, but *Squalor Motel* is a shockingly stylish and nicely nuanced proto-alt-porn piece that features an entire unhinged universe that reminds the viewer that there was indeed once a time when the degenerates in the porn industry cared about creating salaciously stylish and creative celluloid art. Either that or cult porn auteur Kim Christy, who is a transvestite that specialized in tranny porn, was more interested in set-design than heterosexual sex.

Miss Clark (played by Colleen Brennan, who previously appeared in popular exploitation works like Jack Hill's *Foxy Brown*, Russ Meyer's *Supervixens* and

SQUALOR MOTEL

Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS) works at the front desk of a sleazy yet stylish new wave themed motel and she constantly reads extra-erotic novels with delightful little titles like “Bound Pig Fuckers” and dreams about all sorts of meta-sexual debauchery, so sometimes she has a hard time separating reality from fantasy, especially when it comes to sensual matters. Miss Clark works for a sleazy, swarthy, and considerably repulsive Hebrew-like fellow named Manny (Nick Random), who she incessantly cock-teases by saying super sassy things like, “Too bad you don’t have any class. You know, if you were half the man...some nights I might let you lick my ass. You would like that, would you Manny...running your tongue between the cheeks of my butt.” Not unlike Norman Bates, Manny loves cross-dressing and spying on his guests via peepholes that he has assembled in all of the rooms of his truly offbeat motel from hedonistic hell. While a certified scumbag of the patently pathetic sort, Manny is not greedy, as he allows Miss Clark to join him while looking at guests engaging in carnal games via peepholes. Indeed, through a secret peephole in a ‘hip’ and ‘edgy’ lounge segment of motel called ‘The Reptile Room’—a seemingly perennially changing pleasure-dome that is frequented by a dominatrix that wears an SS officer hat and parades around a gimp on a leash—Manny and Miss Clark get off to spying on a seemingly faggy fellow with a French art fag mustache and pancake makeup who quite shockingly exerts his rampant heterosexuality by bending over a babe on a pseudo-classical sculpture of a little girl. Of course, this sex scenario is rather tame compared to what Miss Clark while voyeuristically gaze at during the rest of the night at the maniac motel.

When a young blonde babe named Nancy (Desiree Lane) who has just married a nerdy Guido shows up to the motel to wait for her husband so they can prepare for their upcoming honeymoon in Hawaii, she has no idea that she is about to be extensively defiled by the guests and employees of the somewhat esoteric establishment. Indeed, after being forced to devour the dick of a demented doorman (Jamie Gillis) who wears a trenchcoat full of black market items ranging from Preparation H to K-Y jelly, Nancy enters the Reptile Room where a multicultural tranny new wave group is playing for an eclectic collection of erotic eccentrics, including a chain-smoking new romanticist babe who is giving a handjob to an unseen gentleman whose cock is poking out of a gloryhole. When the tranny band stops playing, all the guests of the Reptile Room stare at and mock Nancy, but luckily Miss Clark, who has a thing for the naïve and seemingly virginal newlywed as demonstrated by a long cunt-chomping dream-sequence, comes to her rescue and salaciously states, “I know just how to relax that muscular tension.” After sending Nancy somewhere so that she can ‘calm down,’ Miss Clark begins peeping inside various rooms at the hotel as a proud voyeur who admits regarding her vice, “Oh, I love to watch. Watching is almost as good as doing it.” In a sea-themed room, a stupid surfer-like dude is carnally serviced by a high yellow negress on a bed in the shape of a ship. In

another bizarrely-themed room, an impotent redneck finally manages to ‘rise to the occasion’ after one of his many blowup dolls transforms into a real flesh-and-blood woman. Meanwhile, pedophile-like motel owner Manny, who is sporting nothing but a Miss Piggy mask, tiny pink bikini, and a little girl’s ballet tutu, masturbates to the bro with the magical blowup doll.

Unquestionably, one of the most sickest and shocking segments of *Squalor Motel* is a scene where a fellow named Dr. Thumbs (Herschel Savage)—a Svengali-like medical physician with an Uncle Adolf mustache who speaks with a horrendous pseudo-German accent and sports a bloody lab coat—‘successfully’ attempts to make a frigid Jewess named Mrs. Shipowitz (played by Tantala Ray, who previously appeared in Stephen Sayadian’s *Café Flesh*), who sits with her legs spread open on an operating table, sexually aroused. After Dr. Thumbs cures Mrs. Shipowitz of being a frigid sexless bitch, he tells his nurse to schedule a follow-up session, stating, “12 months or 12,000 fucks... whatever comes sooner.” In easily one of the most artfully phantasmagoric fuck scenes of cinema history, Miss Clark engages in a shadowy quasi-expressionistic threesome with a male guest whose face make-up somewhat resembles that of David Bowie’s from the cover art of the post-Ziggy Stardust album *Aladdin Sane* (1973) and his corpse-like lover. In the end, Nancy’s husband finally arrives, only to discover his sweetheart masturbating furiously in a closet while queen bitch Miss Clark laughs manically.

On top of being an aberrantly aesthetically pleasing experience that makes *Liquid Sky* seem like sentimental celluloid child’s play, *Squalor Motel* is a genuinely humorous cinematic affair, albeit in an innately immoral fashion that makes the literary satire of Ambrose Bierce seem quite puritanical by comparison. Indeed, one has to wonder about a porn production where Judaic porn star Herschel Savage—a man who developed his stage name with his kosher comrade Jamie Gillis (who was incidentally born on the same day as Hitler) by combining a stereotypically ‘nerdy Jewish identity’ with that of a stud—devours an ambiguously Jewish character’s cunt while donning an Uncle Adolf mustache. In other words, *Squalor Motel* is what one might expect in a sort of campy celluloid new wave hell. Indeed, aside from Teutonic auteur Eckhart Schmidt’s art-horror flicks like *Der Fan* (1982) and especially *Das Gold der Liebe* (1983) aka *The Gold of Love*, as well as Austrian cult auteur Niki Liš’s sardonic comedy *Malaria* (1982), Christy’s rather underrated fuck flick is probably the only film that adds an element of danger and darkness to the new wave and new romanticist subcultures. Indeed, new wave is like punk with a better fashion sense sans the visceral potency. Luckily, *Squalor Motel* manages to be simultaneously strong, raw, and stylish, even if it does feature ebony tranny rockers and hysterical Hebraic Hitler-wannabees.

-Ty E

A BITTERSWEET LIFE
A BITTERSWEET LIFE

Kim Jee-woon (2005)

I've heard nothing but solemn praise towards this Korean film. Regarding my preliminary viewing, I refused to accept a summary of the film. Like with all my Korean cinema, I prefer to have the entire experience to be fresh and immaculate. At the end of the day, *A Bittersweet Life* is plentifully engaging and another prime example of the superiority of the Koreans crafted art. Stylish, cunning, and with mastered formulas, Korean films are the best of the lot. They do what we do even better. As with the "sad hitman/bodyguard/enforcer" lifestyle, this film not only manages to breathe life into an archetype that is populated with persona clones (*Bangkok Dangerous*, *No Mercy for the Rude*, *The Professional*, *Another Lonely Hitman*). While some of these films may fare exceptionally well or even be masterpieces, *A Bittersweet Life* really does something fresh. One of which that *A Bittersweet Life* does better is the outstanding direction of the "Action" scenes. I quote action there to illustrate that the idea of action isn't an idea that is focused upon. The philosophy of combat and explosions, thrilling tense environments, are nowhere to be found. What is presented are series of brutality, plain and simple. *A Bittersweet Life* excels in delivering the facets of a powerful melodrama even in the midst of a final shoot out that gives *Hard-Boiled* a run for it's money. Many of the theory's of set art follow from Korea's earlier *Oldboy*. Much of the key thoughts are provoked here save for a certain twist at the end of *Oldboy*. Much of *A Bittersweet Life* revolves around subtext, as you will. The theme of revenge is tossed around quite a bit, shaking up loyalties and providing a code of the Korean mob. During a dialogue-driven scene, a line in particular will sum up the life philosophy of this film - "No one can ever see what's coming next." This provides a set-up for the ultraviolent extended climax that caps off the glorious pride/honor drama that *A Bittersweet Life* accompanies. In the final moments of the film, you see Sunwoo demonstrating two moments of happiness and we're not talking about his effort to normalize with several cans of Guinness. We watch behind glass as Sunwoo cracks a smile while watching Heesoo play the cello and also, his flashback to shadowboxing in the reflection of a glass window over the comforting metropolitan skyline. You might sense familiarity with Lee Byung-hun's face etched in the back of your mind. His performance in *Three Extremes' Cut* guaranteed the set of three films at least a bit of commercial success as how the other two films did nothing for me, really. If you haven't seen any of his work, you most certainly will with the release of *G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra* come this summer/fall. *A Bittersweet Life* is filled with "bittersweet" moments such as his encounter with a gun for near the first documented time. Soon thereafter, he must "race" putting a gun back together in order to deliver the finishing blow on a humorous character. Such an action could not be complete with a horrible consequence. *A Bittersweet Life* is some-

thing to marvel at. It's organic and structured similar to a double helix strand. One could shower Taxi Driver with acclaim for introducing an incredibly violent character whose only weakness remains love, but the timeline stretches farther over Scorsese's head than realized. He only commercialized the nihilistic tone of violence and the beauty of vengeance. With symphony-like composed scenes of murder placed delicately over a light classical jingle, you can not go further. His initial entrance into the hotel marks a scene that makes relatively cheerful music something to once again fear. Films rarely get better than this. Well, maybe the Bollywood remake entitled Awarapan will capture something this missed, but I doubt it.

-mAQ

I SAW THE DEVIL
I SAW THE DEVIL

Kim Jee-woon (2010)

I've been picking my brain raw in consideration of a review on Kim Ji-woon's latest effort in the form of vigilante nihilism. Every social construct or approved branch of justice is at its mercy in *I Saw the Devil*. The characters understand the game at hand so flawlessly that mistakes and repercussions are merely shrugged off as the witty cat-and-mouse exploits have created a form of rivalry so potent that agony itself is suppressed from both of the leading men. The scale of inert mayhem reaches the point of becoming a staggering rendition of what *The Chaser* could have been had rape and brutal violence been introduced to the mix. Not to inhibit *The Chaser's* universal appeal to even those who aren't wary of the wonders of foreign cinema, but *I Saw the Devil* has more things going for it and maintains a steady pace at all time with *The Chaser*. In the end, both of these films seem to be likely companion pieces to each other, leaving *I Saw the Devil* with administrative rights over *The Chaser's* toned foundation. Too bad *I Saw the Devil* didn't introduce yet another anti-social butterfly to weed out the whores and scum - children or not.

Lee Byung-hun follows the universal-piece-of-shit G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra with a reuniting of Kim Je-woon, director of *The Good, the Bad, the Weird*. Along for the ride is Choi Min-sik who most of you know as the sociopathic lead of the gateway Korean film, *Oldboy*. After losing his fiancée to a serial rapist/murderer, Lee Byung-hun utilizes his skills from being an NIS agent to capture and tease the killer with bludgeonings and many unanswered questions. As detailed in the script, *I Saw the Devil* is essentially a twisted hunt, "Catch and release..." is the only way Byung-hun can fulfill the promise he made to inflict 1000 times the amount of pain his beautiful broad suffered at the hands of this killer. But on a positive note, it is noted that Min-sik "always gives pleasure before pain." What follows is a series of cringe-worthy torture scenes, brief however, and stellar performances by both of the starring monsters. Taking in Min-sik's role of Oh Dae-su, it was still hard to imagine him stooping so low to scrape the bottom of the barrel for what might be the most twisted and ambiguous profile of a killer in Korean cinema yet.

A strange renaissance has occurred recently. It seems that the sometimes-banal horror community has started to flock and mingle about this film's release. Had there been no severing of an Achilles tendon or multiple decapitations, one must wonder if the pimply Krueger fans would have ever been wary of *I Saw the Devil's* existence. But even with the content remaining, wiping the drool left from "respectable" communities who pride slaughter over sympathy, *I Saw the Devil* is being shown in an edited form, lacking over seven minutes of runtime to keep from getting a +19 which is the strictest rating in South Korea. *I Saw the Devil* does have a soul, however. It isn't a film about the mercy of love, rather,

revenge. The tragic incident unfolds through the first 5 minutes of the film in order to jump start the intensity and chronicle the heartbreak rather than the romance, which seems to be a South Korean standard in film. A fun fact is Yeonpyeong Island, home to Choi Min-Sik's ruthless character, was fired upon with artillery by North Korea not too long ago, tying film fact and fiction to current events.

This film eventually boils over with the excess torture and extreme misogyny/degradation, which is a miracle in my book. Before this reaches into the realm of error though, Ji-woon finally releases the leash to allow the once slow-burning baggage to rain down in glorious last-minute hysterics, rendering the odyssey itself an artifice. Truly one of S.Korea's more versatile and extinguished actors, Lee Byung-hun proves himself to be a game changer and with the closure of this tale, a huge sigh of relief escapes me. I've been widdling away at the most anticipated releases of the past two years. Worse off is the fact that the list just keeps building itself back up to an intimidating length. Next up, Mr. Oizo's Rubber. Chalk that up to bad cinephile behavior. To wrap my thoughts up in a decorative piece, I Saw the Devil isn't exactly S.Korea's best foray into criminal minds. With Memories of Murder, No Mercy, The Chaser, and the many others flooding the theaters faster than they can make them, I Saw the Devil merges quite fittingly into the latter. The script-writing is razor-sharp and the production is as lively as it is maddening. All in all, definitely worth the wait.

-mAQ

HAUNTERS HAUNTERS

Kim Min-seok (2010)

More prominently referred to as *Psychic*, I've decided to settle for the more inventive title, *Haunters*, for South Korea's latest superhero opus starring *Secret Reunion*'s Kang Dong-wo. Applying directly, the *Unbreakable* mantra, *Haunters* is the modern day fable of a dangerous psychic and the "simple" man blessed with immunity to his terrifying power. *Haunters* does indeed hold the torch of "grittiness" in favor of a nontraditional, now traditional, comic book-esque film. The result is something wildly inventive but still flawed beyond all control. I personally blame the inclusion of multiculturalism to Kim Min-suk's debut feature, fresh off co-writing the epic western *The Good, The Bad, The Weird*. Bubba and Al are the lead character's (morally grounded) best and only friends. It seems possible that Kim Min-suk has taken inspiration from Mathieu Kassovitz's politically charged *La Haine* as they share the inclusion of a Tracy Morgan lookalike and an Arab. Normally this sort of cultural interruption upon cinema wouldn't bother me but it is frequently visited upon in such a joking manner that it becomes irritating. Their existence is nothing but to broaden the appeal of what could be Korea's answer to *Unbreakable*; although different in creation, still retains a similar texture.

The film opens with the subtle brooding of a boy with bandages over his eyes being escorted down the street. The hesitation permeates through the sweat dripping down his mother's face as she catches her son in the act of removing the bandages. She explains to him woefully that they aren't to be removed for he hasn't healed yet. Soon after, the abusive boyfriend of his mother returns home and in an aggressive stupor, beats the woman senseless. The boy, driven to rage by his mother's screams, removes the bandages and walks towards the male, fists clenched. The man drops his guard and slowly backs up, mimicking the steps taken by the child. Walking into the middle of a busy street, the man then grabs his own head and twists his neck 180 degrees, obviously killing himself. This backdrop sets the tone quite fittingly for *Haunters* as I was unsure if what the child committed was considered an evil deed. You'd find it hard for me to lie in regards to rooting for the fate of this womanizer. His form was tasteless and tact. The boyfriend obviously needed proper instructing on how to tastefully hit a woman to release that forbidden carnal geyser dormant in every woman. Following this scene is the introduction to the heroic figure of the story. Im Gyoo-nam is an introverted junkyard worker who slacks about with his two friends, the aforementioned Bubba and Al. After getting comically bulldozed by a speeding car, Im is found unemployed and motivated, leading to him getting a job at a pawn shop run by *The Host*'s Byeon Hee-bong.

This leads up to the pivotal reunion of the two, who, by all reason, shouldn't have met and this is even repeated in the film's tagline. These opposing spir-

its shouldn't have met but for some twisted reason, did. This recalls echoes of Shyamalan's *Unbreakable*, undoubtedly one of the greatest superhero films of its time. Whereas *Unbreakable* had its roots firmly planted in comic books and the chaotic side's obsession with them, *Haunters* does the opposite and exists in a universe that such deploring titles as superheroes are nonexistent. Something is amok, that's for sure, but our characters never admit it especially with pop culture twinkling in their eyes. Another aspect I favored about *Haunters* is the lead character who is referred to throughout as Representative Im. The man becomes a magnet for extreme and sadistic pain. The situations in which he is grievously harmed are somewhat shocking in a sense, even for the jaded viewers. *Haunters* is a classic case of banality overcoming the extraordinary. Yet, Representative Im isn't exactly normal. No, *Haunters* houses a secret from itself. After initially getting wrecked by the car, Im sees his cast off later in the day. No wound, a minor limp, but that's the only identifying mark of a once injury. This is repeated over and over as Im is shattered beyond belief but recovers with incredible speed. *Haunters* fails to reveal that our "average cho" is, in fact, super in his own regard. Color me surprised when *Haunters* capped the experience of a Western-influenced action/thriller with a weighted ending, a definite tailspin from the playfully dark habitat into stranger waters.

Haunters is not a sigh of relief from the barrage of always-excellent Korean detective thrillers but instead a worthy placeholder. It doesn't break ground with a new, conspiring definition of entertainment but *Haunters* is an excellent way to waste 2 hours. Simply from the disregard of human life as arranged by our psychotic psychic with mommy issues is *Haunters* pushed into a nihilistic atmosphere all its own. Watching bodies drop in unison in the lobby of a sterile apartment complex is jarring enough without the light-hearted buddy adventure hidden in the very core of this film. Like I said, *Haunters* is no award winner but a grab at attention with enough eye candy to satiate even the hardest Western film snob. Kang Dong-wo's performance is enough to warrant a view for any fan of South Korean film. Consider me thoughtful and open to the remainder of Kim Min-suk's career, however bedridden it may end up with the inflation of Korean crime dramas. As enjoyable as *Haunters* might be, I still cannot shake the inclusion of the two radically racial characters in an otherwise chameleon Korean film. What a waste of cultural exclusivity.

-mAQ

SAMURAI REINCARNATION
SAMURAI REINCARNATION

Kinji Fukasaku (1981)

Samurai Reincarnation is a film I had bought a while ago during a vacation in Philadelphia. I purchased it solely based on the tag line which excited my over-active imagination "When a Samurai seeks Revenge, It's HELL!". Similar to Michele Soavi's *The Church*, the film opens with the brutal slaughtering of thousands of good Christian people. These spirits, full of hatred, are led by a single evil entity to revolt against their oppressors and humanity as a whole. Sonny Chiba sort of stars in this action fantasy film directed by Kinji Fukasaku (The man behind *Battle Royale* and its sequel before his death caused by Terminal Cancer). From what I've seen of his films, *Samurai Reincarnation* really shows in its old age. This film is under-produced, under-directed, and features some of the worst action choreography I've ever seen for a Samurai film. It's nice to see an original Samurai vision that isn't an explicit cultural gang bang like the inconsequentially long collection of Kurosawa films. Each little film getting an approved Criterion release that no one should bother with. Justly my opinion, I find Criterion to be ass-grabbing with Kurosawa on such an extreme plane that I find it revolting. It's a problem when you have an accomplished action star and a worthy actor only to use him for child's play. Sonny Chiba maybe has 3 battle scenes. Each run under a minute in length and are extremely laughable. If our past ancestors were such horrible combatants, surely such a thing as world peace would be existent. This is Sonny Chiba's worst performance and for no fault of his own. The plot is entirely jumbled populated only by characters that never stand for their own introduction. Random important historical figures appear with no exposition only to maim and kill. It's verily galling to imagine a film from the director of *Battle Royale* to be so repellent. Not even the graceful presence of "JJ" Chiba could fore fend this film from the own hell it dares to mention. From featuring homosexual Christian samurai's and bouncing-talking heads, I cannot fathom what vile creation Fukasaku had in mind, but whatever it was, the outcome will always be *Samurai Reincarnation*.

-mAQ

I AM NOT A FREAK

Kirby Dick (1987)

From what I can gather, *I Am Not a Freak* is a made-for-TV documentary directed by Kirby Dick. If you've heard his name, it's from one or two sources most likely. One being the recent *This Film is Not Yet Rated* (The documentary which made way to expose to MPAA) and the 1997 cult documentary *SICK: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*. This prior outing is a small yet sweet little appetizer of freak show nostalgia. The process of this film's ascension into maximum runtime is built upon 6 deformed humans. Humans being the key word, this doc. describes scenarios and tries to dissolve hate and confusion by humanizing such people; Men and Women who fit the title of "Creature" We have an Elephant Man, a Progeria victim, an extremely obese woman, a dwarf of an extreme nature, and the story of an Asian villager whose dead twin's head was visible on the right side of his face. This film reminds me of a book I had found in my mother's closet as a child. The dust flap was missing, leaving a flat engraving of a siamese pair. The pictures promptly horrified me. I blame this book and the collected series of *Man, Myth & Magic* for my corruption. The film opens up with stories of the old times where people went to freak shows to be horrified. It stated how attractions would rake in thousands of dollars a week. From story to story, their success and careers began to bloom. One acted in a film and another is a regular motion picture actor. I did notice one thing about this film, and it is that the film is mildly hypocritical. It seemed to shun the effects of freak shows but then applauded the usage of "freaks" in Hollywood films, playing aliens and what not. The film led me to believe that Mickey Hays (Progeria) had acquired the role in *The Aurora Encounter* out of his sheer looks (A wrinkled raisin) but I later found out he had begged the Make A Wish foundation for a role in a major motion picture. Too bad it was a negatively received pile of family filth. Starring in a film due to your extremely disgusting looks is more or less the same role in society that ye ole' freak shows. When we watch horror films, Do you expect us to not gawk at the tiny man with three mouths? Equality with conditions such as these is a hard goal to aim for with such hatred spreading. I myself, find it hard to not stare crudely at someone with a deformity.

-mAQ

BOTCHED
BOTCHED

Kit Ryan (2007)

Botched is a crime thriller that is in a league of its own. Never before have I seen the fusion of such absurdities encountered in this film with a swift brand of suspense. Botched carries the feel of a Guy Ritchie film with 100% more blood, dismemberment's, and romance. Surprisingly, this film hasn't been marketed at all towards the gorehound public. Richie Donovan is a down-on-his-luck small time crook who is in a world of trouble from his boss after failing the previous heist. In a final attempt to settle the debt, he plans to steal an ancient cross from a penthouse suite in Moscow. His luck goes from bad to worse as the elevator stops on the abandoned 13th floor which is shelter for twin serial killers. Botched doesn't deserve all the negative opinions that seems to plague this little film. Just like films of a similar caliber like Hot Fuzz, Botched is an incredibly witty film that is directed by someone who understands pure, unbridled entertainment. This is a film that spends the first half-an-hour immersing you in the story of an interesting character, and suddenly throws a dinner of death at your doorstep; much like From Dusk Till Dawn. The central hostages that were taken by Donovan's crew make up a diverse and dysfunctional bunch. The most memorable of the crew is security guard Boris. Ex-spetsnaz, Combat veteran, and master trap setter, Boris is the show stealer here. Not much is known about him or his character. In fact, judging by his kooky antics throughout the film, all of those claims undoubtedly could be lies. Behind the comedy-horror veil is a wonderful love story occupied by two people caught in a hellish scenario. The chemistry between the two leads flourishes even though Stephen Dorff comes off as a supreme douche bag in every role he plays. The violence is over the top and the villains of the film are evil and religious. In a horror scenario, those are two things that you never want to mix. Instead of separating church and state, they should separate church and horror films. Botched is a madcap good time. From all the filth that has been released in the past few years, Horror really is rusting up. But from the ashes of this dying genre, new life can be given. That life is Botched. A film that doesn't really know what it wants to be, but it just does it. Botched is what I'd like to see come out in theaters, maybe even a wide release. It's this small-handful of good releases that makes me have faith in "splatter horror".

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OROZCO EL EMBALSAMADOR

Kiyotaka Tsurisaki (2001)

Orozco The Embalmer is a film unlike no other. Do not get this one confused with a mondo film. On the outer shell, It is a bizarre shockumentary that features grotesque embalming, foul treatment of the dead, and a fucked environment, but at its core, it is a commentary on many things, including both spectrum's of life and death. The genre of shockumentary is plagued with generic grindcore based outings of simulated and non-simulated death footage. The result is wholly shallow and unapologetic. The guideline of the film is following the legendary Orozco. He is perhaps the worlds greatest embalmer who resides in Colombia. Each day he wakes up and embalms anywhere from 5 to 10 corpses a day, leaving him at a number over 50,000 that he has embalmed throughout his life. The very parallel idea of being able to sleep peacefully with the blood of thousands on your hands perplexes me. Orozco is a man of legend. Tsurisaki Kiyotaka is a reporter turned corpse photographer who gets his kicks by photographing the dead and compiling it into films that mainly exploit the fear of death. See his film Junk Films for a collection of shorts. The original plan was to just document a short on him but the society claimed otherwise. The area in which he documents is of the worst social order. People get murdered in the streets in front of the innocent eyes of children. No taboo is left intact throughout this film. Babies are mishandled and disturbing samba music just ups the mood to a level of extreme unfelt in modern documentaries. The reason for Kiyotaka's prolonged stay was due to the fact that Orozco could mourn everyday of his life. Such an intimate connection between man and death, perhaps the most personal ever documented.

To this degree, it seems to contradict itself. Orozco violently tugs on his victim's obese flesh, laughing at dead children, posing with them, and manages to not have the slightest expression change. Orozco the Embalmer can be considered a vast exercise in anti-art. The violence is graphic and in your face. You will not leave this experience without being marked. This film does something that none other has; made me fear death in it's entirety. I never really pondered the effects of death. The nothingness. What does it do? These thoughts have sent me into mild panic attacks, and to think all this because of a documentary? Does death really boil down to being assaulted by a disgustingly over-age Colombian? Orozco The Embalmer is a gripping documentary capturing the horrid quality of life that goes on, and what we should really fear about death.

-mAQ

48 HOURS TO ACAPULCO
48 HOURS TO ACAPULCO

Klaus Lemke (1967)

While he is nearly forgotten today despite the fact he has been directing films for nearly half a century and virtually totally unknown outside his Teutonic homeland, German auteur Klaus Lemke (*Arabian Nights*, *Die Ratte*) was a major early influence on the filmmakers of German New Cinema, especially a very young Rainer Werner Fassbinder, whose early avant-garde gangster trilogy—*Love is Colder than Death* (1969), *Gods of the Plague* (1970), and *The American Soldier* (1970)—was heavily influenced by his countryman's gangster flicks, namely his super stylish cult hit *48 Stunden bis Acapulco* (1967) aka *48 Hours to Acapulco* aka *Time for Action*. Indeed, aside from naming Lemke's *48 Hours to Acapulco* as a film he would have liked to have directed in an interview featured in the April 1978 issue of the German version of *Playboy*, the auteur once stated regarding his appreciation for the film: "The heroes behave like gangsters, but at the same time as they imagine gangsters would behave. The Hollywood stereotype comes through: but Lemke has attempted not to imitate them." In Fassbinder's debut feature *Love is Colder than Death*—a work where the characters are more or less crude parodies of their favorite characters from old Hollywood movies—the quasi-poser gangster played by Ulli Lommel stylizes himself after Alain Delon's character from Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (1967), thus demonstrating Lemke's meta-cinematic influence on the figurative heart of German New Cinema. Of course, Lemke was not a figure of GNC, but the lesser known movement called the New Munich Group ('*Neue Münchner Gruppe*'), which also included similarly anti-intellectual, film noir-obsessed auteur filmmakers like Eckhart Schmidt, Rudolf Thome, and Roger Fritz. Made before Lemke fully developed his gritty realist *cinéma vérité*-like aesthetic with his Hamburg-based nihilistic crime masterpieces like *Rocker* (1972) and *Paul* (1974), *48 Hours to Acapulco* is a blatantly genre-conscious black-and-white noir pastiche piece featuring jet-set aesthetic influences and a then-'hip' soundtrack featuring Cher, Johnny Rivers, The Ventures, and a degenerate jazz cover of "Hey Joe" in a German film that seems as deracinated as they come, yet the work's post-WWII *Weltschmerz* does not betray its obvious Germanic origins. Although sometimes similarly ironic like Lemke's comrade Rudolf Thome's absurdist pomo-noir piece *Detektive* (1969), *48 Hours to Acapulco* does not merely utilize cynicism and offbeat humor to obfuscate its innate pain and apathy towards life. Shot by auteur Niklaus Schilling (*Nachtschatten* aka *Nightshade*, *Rheingold*), who was also the cinematographer for *Detektive* and would go on to become one of the most unjustly forgotten filmmakers of German cinema, Lemke's early minor masterpiece is an exotic international kraut film noir that trades in shadows and urban turf for the sun and surf as a work partly set in Rome and Acapulco, Mexico, yet it is also as metaphysically tortured and hopeless as

crime flicks come, as an allegorical work where a Bavarian gangster attempts to play industrial espionage and finds himself in a losing battle with an American industrialist.

Gangster Frank Murnau (played by German actor/producer Dieter Geissler, who later produced blockbuster works like *The NeverEnding Story* (1984) and Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* (1999)) has been hired by his boss Gruner (Alexander Kerst) to deliver 500,000 marks to a fellow named Cameron (Roland Carey) in Rome for some dubious documents, but having that much cold hard cash gives the career criminal some bad ideas. While Frank is sent with his boss' reasonably attractive daughter Laura (played by Christiane Krüger, the daughter of popular German movie star Hardy Krüger), who he is carrying on a sexual affair with, his true love is a femme fatale named Monika (Monika Zinnenberg), who ultimately cons the con into changing his plans with her conniving cunt. Indeed, the first thing Frank does upon checking out a hotel with Laura is call Monika, who knows an American industrialist that wants to buy the documents he is supposed to give Cameron for \$500,000. The night before heading to meet with Cameron in Rome, Frank makes passionate love to Laura, but he makes the major mistake of calling her "Monika" during sex. When the two arrive at Cameron's scenic beachside flat, Laura has sex with the buyer on the beach after the half-assed conman falls asleep on an outside patio. When Cameron finally asks the Munich criminal for the money, Frank says he does not have it and an anticlimactic fight breaks out where the latter is beaten like a bitch. Of course, Frank came to the exchange ready with a handgun and shoots and kills Cameron while laying on the ground while all beaten up and bloody. After killing Cameron and robbing him of the documents, Frank confesses to Laura that he loves Monika and that he is flying out to Acapulco to be with her. Despite being betrayed by Frank, Laura lies and tells her father that "everything's ok" regarding what happened with the disastrous transaction.

As Laura's unwavering loyalty readily demonstrates, Frank probably should have stayed with his boss's daughter, as Monika ultimately proves to be a true fatal female. Upon arriving in Acapulco, Frank is picked up by a fat, bold American gangster thug who remarks, "Soon you can't spend your money nowhere anymore. Nothing against communism but if everybody can afford everything...Where's the deeper meaning?" The obscenely ugly bald man takes Frank to the home of an elderly man named Mr. Wayne (played by real-life playboy/musician/night club owner Teddy Stauffer), who is the American industrialist that wants to buy the documents. Instead of the \$500,000 Monika said he promised, Mr. Wayne only offers Frank \$50,000 for the documents, so the German gangster makes the ultimatum, "\$500,000...Do what you want to do?" and leaves. Upon leaving Mr. Wayne's less than humble beachside abode, Frank drives away in ecstasy while loudly singing, "California, California, California!" as if he plans to start a new life on the American west coast, but he eventually stops at a Mexican bar,

48 HOURS TO ACAPULCO

buys an entire bottle of Johnny Walker, and gets thoroughly inebriated. Upon meeting up with Monika, Frank confesses that he killed Cameron and when she asks him why he did such a foolish thing, he simply responds with, "because I love you." Of course, Monika does not say "I love you," but instead warns Frank, "Wayne is dangerous, take the money. I booked a seat for you on the next plane." Of course, Frank refuses the insulting offer. When Frank and Monika are driving on a secluded desert road that night, a group of Mr. Wayne's men run their car off the road. Of course, Monika has betrayed him. Ultimately, Frank is shot dead on a beach, though he pushes Monika away when she attempts to console him just before he receives a deadly bullet.

Interestingly, in the film *Baader* (2002) directed by Christopher Roth, West German far-left terrorist and Red Army Faction leader Andreas Baader is depicted as a gangster poser who was enamored with film noir/crime flicks and who took his girlfriend/collaborator Gudrun Ensslin to see Lemke's *48 Hours to Acapulco* on their first date together. Indeed, the antihero of Lemke's film also certainly seems like a delusional moron who saw one too many gangster flicks that went way over his head, hence his rather predictable death in the end. As German film historian Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his book *New German Cinema: A History* (1989): "The reasons which made Fassbinder or Wenders approach traditional American genres are several [...] For example, Lemke's *48 HOURS TO ACAPULCO* (1967) was an influence on Fassbinder, not so much in its subject (that of a small-time Munich crook caught up in an affair too big for him to handle), but because Lemke's attitude to his characters was to become typical of Fassbinder's. The secret was to take seriously the image the characters have of themselves, because the director is willing to recognize as 'reality' [...] and an inner truth, what are merely the characters' fantasies." Of course, by making the characters of their films wannabe gangsters, Lemke and Fassbinder were revealing that they were fully aware that they could never be American and had no interest in fully appropriating an alien 'culture.' While *48 Hours to Acapulco* was a cult hit and won the auteur a Bambi award, Lemke decided to take the hard road and instead of capitalizing on his newfound success, he moved to Hamburg to hang out with real-life criminals, including pimps, prostitutes, drug dealers, and bikers, thus inspiring the complete transformation of the director's entire aesthetic for the better and spawning realistic cult masterpieces like *Rocker* and *Paul*, which largely star real-life criminals and non-actors. Indeed, whereas *48 Hours to Acapulco* is the product of a sort of proto-Tarantino fanboy in his semi-formative years, albeit less autistic, Lemke's Hamburg era works are the strikingly sincere expressions of a true guerilla auteur who has attempted to make next to no distinction between the real world and the cinematic world.

-Ty E

ROCKER

Klaus Lemke (1972)

Forget Easy Rider (1969) and the popular multicultural-friendly popular FX TV series Sons of Anarchy (2008-present), those crazy krauts did it better with mediocre medium of mere German television with *Rocker* (1972); a biker flick with actual brazen balls and a brutal body without the cowardly cop-out of a bullshit hippie message. Directed by agile Aryan auteur Klaus Lemke (Paul, Finale) – a self-proclaimed ‘anti-intellectual’ filmmaker known for his sometimes offensive personal opinions – whose debut feature-length film *48 Stunden bis Acapulco* (1967) aka *48 Hours to Acapulco* was described by German New cinema König Rainer Werner Fassbinder as one of the “most important” German films of its time, *Rocker* is no less an important film, even if it was made for the idiosyncratic social and culture climate of early 1970s Hamburg, Germany where long-haired blockheads in scratched leather jackets and fueled by deep visceral hate, active nihilism, and unhinged hedonism roamed the streets on their motorcycles and blessed the crooked concrete city with blood, piss, and liquor. If anyone wonders where Austrian martial music musician Albin Julius – a man with an identity crisis who went from being a pseudo-Goth to a ersatz fascist to a retro retard – copied his latest look from, look no farther than *Rocker*; the indisputable real deal when it comes to masculine men with mut-tonchops, motorcycles, merry misanthropy and murderous Männerbünde. The sons of German soldiers who were the first to display Schutzstaffel (SS) insignia on their totally killer choppers, the raging and riotous renegades of *Rocker* are dedicated to blood and honor, even if not in the same manner as their fierce forefathers, but among an urban ghetto of daring delinquent friends. Utilizing amateur actors and real bikers, including “Die Bloody Devils” motorcycle gang, *Rocker* lends itself to a certain gritty realism that most films of a similar persuasion lack, which director Klaus Lemke utilized in his later film *Die Ratte* (1993). For those who have to have their biker flicks featuring classic rock ‘n’ roll tunes, *Rocker* also features an iconic soundtrack, including hits by Led Zeppelin, Santana, Them, The Rolling Stones, Van Morrison and a couple others that put the soundtrack to *Easy Rider* to shame, but just like any other decent cinematic work, Lemke did not need the gimmick of popular counter-culture music to make a classic cult film. In a rich and reckless Teutonic tradition of stark street trash cinema that was followed by *Supermarkt* (1974) directed by Roland Klick and *The End of the Rainbow* (1979) aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens* directed by Uwe Frießner, *Rocker* shits on high kraut kultur and does a splendid job doing so, but it was only reflecting a degenerate zeitgeist that plagued the Fatherland during the post-WWII years.

Things were looking up for charismatic street criminal ‘Rocker’ Gerd (Gerd Kruskopf) after getting out of jail and being warmly welcomed back by his biker

ROCKER

buddies, but a lot has changed since his life-idling imprisonment, including his girlfriend, who went from being a biker babe to a would-be-bourgeois bitch now working in a dapper department store. Somewhere else in town is a degenerate car thief named Uli (Paul Lys) with a certain seedy scumbag swag and misleading boyish good-looks, sort of resembling a German Jim Morrison except minus a marvelous way with words that allows him to trash talk random girls into allowing him to prod their meat curtains. One day, Uli gets mixed up with the wrong kraut pimp with a fucked up pseudo-chic bleach blond hairdo and is beaten to death one night while in a drunken stupor in front of his impressionable yet intrepid 15-year-old brother Mark (played by Hans-Jürgen Modschiedler who also starred in Lemke's 1975 TV movie *Teenagerliebe*). Naturally, Mark, although a wee lad that could easily be mistaken for girl, vows revenge against the flesh-peddling mensch who killed his bro and he eventually meets up with rough Rocker Gerd to help him carry it out. Given grief by his blue collar father because of his noisy rock music and eventually having his house burned down by phantom rival gang members as he is beaten senseless while tied to a tree, barely escaping with his life, Gerd basically loses everything he has left, so he humors the young boy Mark when he comes to his local bar, teasing the boy for his pronounced "purity" and ignorance towards the more wanton and reckless ways of the world. Although neither realizes it at first, Mark's brother Uli was a friend of Gerd's ex-girlfriend, thus the union between the bodacious biker and the young buck seems to be the result of a rather romantic yet certainly sleazy storybook fate in a cinematic work that has more in common aesthetically with *Cinéma vérité* works than some sort of fantasy knight tale. After Gerd casually cons some American drug dealers into buying a suitcase that they assume is full of drugs but is instead full of junk and not the sort you shoot into your arm, he buys a new motorcycle with his sweetly swindled deutschmarks and hits the road with little Mark. On the way, they face some misfortune, including the destruction of the newly accorded motorcycle by a disgruntled, morbidly obese trucker that Gerd heckles, but ultimately the two down-and-out misfits have a showdown with the prick of a pimp and his homo-like hoods who was responsible for brother Uli's premature death.

A gorgeously gritty and exceedingly exciting piece of anti-rational German proletarian neo-romanticism, *Rocker* – a rough and tough cinematic work that is far from immaculate in terms of technical direction and having a clandestine plot, but never settles for anything less than aesthetically abrasive imagery and lovely lowbrow entertainment – is a film that deserves more recognition than the cult status it has in the marginal Teutonic ghetto of Hamburg. Not settling for the 'victim mentality' that *Easy Rider* wallows in, especially during the conclusion nor pathetic political propaganda of the quasi-hippie sort, *Rocker* presents the timeless story of "us versus them" without resorting to pathetic moralistic preaching nor promoting acceptance of the wild 'other' as just fine with the ob-

scurity of his blood brotherhood. Innately influenced by a Hollywood-contrived foreign culture that they seem to only understand superficially as demonstrated by Gerd's poster of Marlon Brando from the iconic rebel motorcycle gang flick *The Wild One* (1953), the brassy blockhead bike boys of *Rocker* have fashioned a sinful and subversive subculture all of their own that demands loyalty before death and death before loyalty. *Rocker* ends with the face of teenage troublemaker Mark, who just got involved with his first gang fight, staring into the distance of a future that may be less than fruitful in terms of monetary gain and social prestige, but he can now sleep in safety knowing that his ill-fated brother has been avenged and that he will be regularly devouring the fruit that made man wise with fierce fast-fucks and moonlight motorcycle rides, even if he has an old lady heckling in the background to get a job at the local convenience store.

-Ty E

RUSSIAN ARK
RUSSIAN ARK

Knut Elstermann (2003)

Alexander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* brings nationalism back to Russian cinema. The film was done in one Steadicam shot. This cinematic tool works in complete opposition to the Bolshevik obsession with Soviet montage and editing. The Bolshevik filmmakers strove for mind control and international revolution. *Russian Ark* destroys all those Bolshevik conventions while at the same time emphasizing Russian history. Sokurov's earlier films were quite often banned by the Soviet authorities. Now he is one of the most innovative directors to come out of Russia (and the world). *Russian Ark* was filmed in the Winter Palace. This building was considered the official milestone of Bolshevik attacks during the "October Revolution." Alexander Sokurov shatters that "revolutionary milestone" with a tour through Russian history and culture. Leon Trotsky is probably crying about this in hell and calling for a second "revolution."

A narrator and companion guide *Russian Ark* through different periods of Russian history. The guide reminded me of Italian journalist Mr. Orlando from Fellini's *And the Ship Sails On*. Both comedic characters guide each respective film through forgotten parts of history. I prefer Russian history to be told by a Russian as opposed to one of Steven Spielberg's associates. *Russian Ark* is no doubt a great introduction to Russian culture.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* pretends to be filmed in one single shot. *Rope* was actually filmed in 10 different shots (color film reels had a maximum length of 10 minutes during this period). *Russian Ark* is a nice follow-up to Hitchcock's revolutionary experiment. Sokurov succeeds in his groundbreaking cinematic experiment. It makes me wonder if *Russian Ark*'s artistic success will start a new movement of single shot feature length films.

Russian Ark was an aesthetically pleasing experience for me. The film presents a beautiful world of historical wealth. *Russian Ark* made me fantasize about being transported through Russian history and all the treasures it has to offer. Alexander Sokurov is a director to look out for in the future.

-Ty E

EX DRUMMER

Koen Mortier (2007)

The minute this film began, as soon as i heard the glorious song 2 Morro Morro Land from none other than Lightning Bolt, i knew that this track would be a metaphor for the entire film. Just like the song, it starts off with a slow bang, then eases it's way into the chaos that you come to expect. As soon as the repetition sticks with you and you think it won't pick up anymore, it does. So there i was, watching this film thinking it couldn't get anymore screwed up. I love surprises. As savage as this film is, It's impossible to not notice its poetic moments. Ex Drummer is a Belgian film directed by Koen Mortier. From the rock n' roll aspects of the film and it's use of unsimulated sex, I guess you could call this the bastard love-child of John Cameron Mitchell's films, except with artistic integrity. Some of Mortier's situations and set-pieces can be called a travesty of Gondry's work, but all the more effective. For a direct example, we meet a guy named "Big Dick", who as you might have guessed, has a big dick. We see him here explaining how big it is. This film has a big heart and it's full of hate. We have extreme misogyny, extreme homophobia, hate crimes, and a band called Six Million Jews. Needless to say, nobody cares about Six Million Jews, and we never hear them play, which is a hilarious move for the director. The plot involves several gutter punks who are missing a drummer for their band. Each of the members go to a local celebrity looking for a drummer. He accepts and is told that every member needs a handicap. Dries states that he cannot play the drums. Koen de Geyter is the skinhead rapist of the group. He lives in his apartment on the ceiling; upside down. Expect some interesting effects and crazy aggression scenes played out backwards. Everyday he brings another woman home and paints his walls with her blood during the rape. Jan is the homosexual who has a stiff arm and an extremely fucked up family. Ivan is the dope fiend who has a disgusting wife and a child. Together, this group of assholes form The Feminists. The comical situations in this film are the highlights, and to be frank, this film is very graphic, vulgar, obscene, and highly offensive. Several of the situations called attention to similarities in Ken Park and Bad Boy Bobby. Ex Drummer is a smash bang film with some notorious bloodshed and a very moral behind it. It won't be long before this reaches cult status. Some could even say these characters have hearts of beasts.

-mAQ

THE GIRLS REBEL FORCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMERS
THE GIRLS REBEL FORCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMERS

Kôji Kawano (2007)

I don't intend on droning on concerning the depth of a film when it is as shallow as this one. With all H2O puns aside, TGRFCS is just another lackluster Asian splatter film that throws in cheesy arterial sprays and soft-core lesbian scenes to make up for the lack of plot and/or acting performances, so expect a short 'to the point' review. The plot is a standard zombie romp but this time it spreads through a school. When they or I say school, we actually mean a swim team. This is a closed off virus that seems to affect only horny school girls or their horny teachers. What seems like it would be a marvel companion piece to the marvelous film- The Machine Girl, is actually just another horrid Japanese film that attempts to cash in on the zaniness of such films as Stacy or Marrionier, and I'm not saying these films are good either. The production values on this film present them as worse as they possibly can. Competitive Swimmers looks as if it was shot on Digital Video and had a classroom retard design the special effects and gore for this film. Just when something "saucy" would be happening, the camera creates some angle or trick that could save them money but not showing said injury. After a few very soft-core lesbian scenes which climaxes "sexplode" with the most obnoxious, high-pitched orgasms I have heard in a motion picture, the film returns to scenes of the coach whipping the females and then the females cry and then they turn into zombies and then they kill each other and cry. That is the plot. What an awful, awful film. No type of B-expectations could have prepared you for this.

-mAQ

PERFECT RED

Kōji Wakamatsu (2004) Making a good short film isn't necessarily a difficult chore, but an original idea that is unlike anything, that is where the challenge resides. PERFECT RED is an above-average short film about a tortured artist (Go figure) who is having a mental block finishing her painting. Along come a group of criminals who break into her house and become pawns of the "twist" ending. Being a 13 minute long short doesn't guarantee any depth to the film, but it generates as much as it needs. The entire film runs along the twist ending, sort of like the love-hate film Haute Tension. Perfect Red goes without saying that it is an interesting twist to a certain genre which i cannot name, otherwise i would ruin the film for you. It features some interesting effects and some mundane "girl talk" but if given the chance, it's hard to look at a film of such a low running time with scornful eyes. Just to mention, the soundtrack was great and very effective. The only thing that could have strengthened this short would be some much-needed length and more depth.

-Maq

WHITE ROSE CAMPUS: THEN EVERYBODY GETS RAPED
WHITE ROSE CAMPUS: THEN EVERYBODY GETS RAPED

Kôyû Ohara (1982)

Beauty has certainly proven to be more curse than gift. From crashing conflict to physical desecration, attraction handles disasters like a magnet, flooding with shit until you're immobilized. This hex of social-accepted beauty and the veins leading to such lands a bus full of giddy high school ladies prepping to be hijacked by three crazed rapists. But the pipe dream of eternal pussy isn't clear of ulterior motives as there is a conflict of physical interest amok. In short, to be beautiful never seems to be worth it other than possessive desires. Clocking in at only 66 minutes is this 80s pink film coming from the reigning Nikkatsu corporation. To be honest, this was a hard sell at first. I tried enjoying the tearing of shirts and the rough foreplay but *White Rose Campus* just wasn't quite doing anything for me or the genre. I gradually grew tired of the lard whose fetish is apparently menstruation. His crowning of comedic vessel seemed all too abrupt, this molestation slapstick had wore thin once it started and it seemed to be a hopeless situation, enjoying the film.

Utilizing the optical blurring, *Then Everybody Gets Raped* is one of the few pinku eiga films that I can recall the blurring. It's been common to degrade and violate but rare seems full penetration. Then again, I've been out of the Roman porno phase for several months now, returning on a whim and promise of an exploitive journey of over-the-top sodomy. While the women were selected for future endeavors, the lard makes the effort to halt the bus and forcibly remove any girls deemed "ugly", many of which were among the prettier of the ladyfolk. This twist of conventional rape thrusts a setting other than the bus unto us and provides quite a great deal of relief. It's not claustrophobia, it's just derivative. Once a pair of fashionable truck drivers collect the stranded girls, they're then told news of the hijacking and offer to kick their ass. Thus begins the chase between the uglies and the pretties. An added subplot involves the spoiling of the teacher whom turned down the romantic offer of her boyfriend to elope. Look where her selfishness got her, not that she or it matters though. All these characters, correction, women, have a mindset built for rape. It's not a defensive instinct but more of an offensive.

The problem I suffered with *Then Everybody Gets Raped* is my expectations of this particular genre got caught in a cycle which forced me to expect the poetic textures of Hasebe or Wakamatsu. These two artists molded the rapescape for me, turned violence into beauty and altered not only my cinematic tastes, but the way I handle sensuality and the successful relationship I am currently in. Early in the film, I was convinced that *Then Everybody Gets Raped* was one of the worst offenders of violent pinku that I had seen in recent memory. As the film played out, what was once juvenile became genuine and what was three males vying to get off became a plot of depth, no matter how utilized the device

has been in past. I didn't anticipate cinematic prose but as the film blossomed, I noticed that while it isn't artistic, it is groundbreaking in the sense of masculine injustice. For an added bonus, the final rape of Yoko unearths the deep psychology of sex and spites the possibility of an instinctual affair existing after all. As a completed package, *Then Everybody Gets Raped* toggles from inane to brilliant. Such authoritative power lies in the attitudes and reactions of the women, who start their journey with fear and end it with lust. The concluding twist of the truck drivers seals this pinku eiga film and its perilous adventure as an undoubted classic of the genre. There's no last house on any street, Nikkatsu brings the sodomy in a loaded bus.

-mAQ

THE ISLAND OF THE BLOODY PLANTATION
THE ISLAND OF THE BLOODY PLANTATION

Kurt Raab (1983)

While many fans of German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's cinematic oeuvre find it quite baffling that Ulli Lommel – the star of the filmmaker's first film *Love is Colder than Death* (1969) aka *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* and director of the Fassbinder-produced homo-cidal serial killer flick *The Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* – would go on to haphazardly and half-assedly direct some of the worst digital diarrhea works, including *Daniel - Der Zauberer* (2004), which was once voted the worst film ever made on imdb.com, as well as countless sub-schlock and similarly titled direct-to-dvd serial killers flicks like *Zodiac Killer* (2005), *B.T.K. Killer* (2005), and *Green River Killer* (2005), the most embarrassing Fass-bande-related work is indubitably *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* (1983) aka *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* aka *Escape from Blood Plantation* aka *Prison Camp Girls, Jailed for Love* directed by Kurt Raab (although it is often contended that Peter Kern was either the director or co-directed) and produced by Peter Kern. Although the star of such Fassbinder classics as *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1971) aka *Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?*, *Satan's Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten*, and *The Stationmaster's Wife* (1977) aka *Bolwieser*, as well as the star/writer of *The Tenderness of the Wolves* and production designer for virtually every single Fassbinder film leading up to 1977, Kurt Raab, for whatever reason (but most likely a tasteless attempt at hoping to earn a relatively hefty monetary return on a shallowly contrived cinematic work that relies on its exotic location and people as its sole appeal), decided to direct a *Women in Prison* (or *WiP*) film; a totally trashy and thoroughly tacky subgenre of exploitation cinema oftentimes containing lurid and crudely contrived lesbian action between braindead scream queens and scenes of softcore quasi-pornography and intrinsically idiotic gore scenes. Not unsurprisingly, Kurt Raab – a flamboyant homosexual who inevitably died of AIDS and whose death was chronicled in the documentary *Yearning for Sodom* (TV 1989) aka *Sehnsucht nach Sodom*, which he also co-directed – did not feel the need to include too many bare-skinned buxom blonde and brown beauties in his *WiP* flick *The Island of the Bloody Plantation*, but instead, countless scenes of homo-hustler-turned-actor Udo Kier in compromised, unclad and oftentimes shirtless situations and a couple shots of small yet perky Filipino tits. An absurdly asinine celluloid abortion from whatever angle you look at it, even as a work from the innately idiotic and aesthetically competent subgenre of *WiP*, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* – a would-be-wild-and-wanton work that also features Fass Superstar and blonde beastess Barbara Valentin in a radically ridiculous role as a comrade-raping neo-nazi she-bitch who has packed on a couple pounds since her days as an astute attendant at Auschwitz; a place with a great starvation diet – is not only fuming filmic feces on Fassbinder's grave, but

also further proof that without the fallen filmmaker as their all-powerful Führer and father-figure, his incestuous film family, aside from a couple exceptions, was nothing more than a group of misguided moneymakers.

Like *Island of Lost Souls* (1932) meets *Apocalypse Now* (1979) meets *Iron Sky* (2012) as if directed by Jess Franco's half-retarded, gay kraut bastard brother, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* is set on a secluded yet heavily guarded tropical island (like many cheap exploitation films of its time, it was shot in the Philippines) ruled by a terribly debauched nazi doctor named Otto Globocnik (played by boxer-turned-actor Karl-Otto Alberty and clearly named after Slovenian-Austrian SS leader Odilo Globocnik) in what is a maniac neo-nazi microcosm that includes countless Filipino islander slaves, especially of the female persuasion but also some mutant man-loving 'house Fligga' midgets, and a handful of traitorous Flip men, including Hartman (Udio Kier); a race traitor who has fallen with a wily eye half-caste native named Cora (Karen Lopez). On top of committing the unholy sin of racial treason, Hartman – a heartfelt hero with a bleeding heart for exotic primitives – is loved by the queen nazi bitch of the island, Olga (Barbara Valentin) aka "Bloody Olga" (her nickname during his early days as a concentration camp guard). Naturally things are not as glorious as during the golden age of the Third Reich, as the fallen Führer, who used to be called "white stallion" during his illustrious and murderous years as a super suave SS officer, likes to have sex with his brown slaves, which enrages Olga as demonstrated by her rather brazen rhetorical question to him, "What kind of example are you setting for your men...messing around with subhumans?" Of course, good ol' Globocnik is not the only one with a feverish fetish as Olga is in love with handsome Hartman, so much so that she rapes him at gunpoint and makes his naked native girlfriend Cora watch. A bodacious butch yet clearly once-beauteous blonde and salacious sadomasochist who is quite proud of her old moniker "Bloody Olga" from her old Jew-gassing days, Olga states to Hartman, "I love it when you hate me...it puts fire in me," while he reluctantly ravages her puss. Needless to say, the unhinged and fetishistic fascists of *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* are so extreme that they are a virtual parody of the "Authoritarian Personality" as described by Jewish Marxists of the Frankfurt school like Erich Fromm and Theodor W. Adorno. Some of the Nazi guards, including Bevney (director Kurt Raab somewhat playing himself as a perverted pederast who loves quoting bible verses) and some fat kraut, force some of the natives to fornicate in front of them so as to obtain optimum scopiphiliac pleasure. Naturally, things go awry for the island of aberrant authoritarian Aryans when Hartman helps the islanders to run an untermensch revolt in the spirit of the Haitian Revolution where the Asiatic islanders exterminate the white leaders (minus Hartman and Olga's 'secret' and innocent daughter). With a little help from primitive magic from one of the flip girls and a poisonous spider, the Filipinos prove that the Germans are not the only masters of genocide, but, of

THE ISLAND OF THE BLOODY PLANTATION

course, they need race traitor Hartman to help them pull it off.

With its particularly poorly dubbed English dialogue, curiously corny and poorly aged theme song, mindless worship of the nubile "noble savage," lackluster direction and use of generic genre conventions, farcical treatment of Fassbinder Superstars, lunatic left-wing social message, crude low-camp comedy, and cheap softcore sensuality, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* is, at best, a dedicatedly disgraceful but surely symbolic celluloid artifact for the forsaken future of German cinema after Fassbinder's death (it should be noted that the film was released only a year after R.W. overdosed on cocaine) that features a handful of entrancing scenic beach shots and, at worst, something that borders on the equivalent of a celluloid lobotomy. Featuring a boorish brigade of blond and debauched nazi nihilists who seem to openly welcome their own demise, especially Olga (who inexplicably allows the natives to run their revolution due to her hard-on for Hartman), *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* also makes for a vaguely eccentric yet rarely entertaining work of erratic ethno-masochistic exploitation cinema. On a personal level, I did enjoy Barbara Valentin's particularly peculiar and rather against-type performance as Olga to some degree because instead of playing her typical role as a blonde bimbo, she plays a passionate psychopath who will do anything for her man and daughter, even if it results in her inevitable self-destruction, despite being a genocidal cunt and whatnot. Of course, unlike *The Tenderness of the Wolves*, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* offers no psychological insight for the self-loathing of its oftentimes vainglorious villains aside from their nostalgia for Nazism under Hitler, thus backing Wagnerian-Brechtian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's argument that modern German art is, "filthy and sick... in praise of cowardice and treason, of criminals, whores, of hate, ugliness, of lies and crimes and all that is unnatural." Indeed, while *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* tries to play off its overwhelming hatefulness and degeneracy as merely sardonic like the typical Hollywood quasi-commie comedy, it is quite obvious that the film wallows in wantonness and was made to make a quick buck under Fassbinder's legacy and as a way for the ex-Fass-bande actors to spend a nice tropical vacation. If Kurt Raab is in hell, which some more superstitious individuals might believe since he was denied Christian burial at the Catholic cemetery near where he grew up in Bavaria due to prejudices against his perverse passing via gay cancer, I am sure Fassbinder has penetrated his poofer poop-chute with a pitchfork for directing *The Island of the Bloody Plantation*, but, for some reason, I am sure he likes it hot in his marvelously mangled man-hole.

-Ty E

YEARNING FOR SODOM

Kurt Raab (1989)

Unquestionably, German actor, screenwriter, playwright, and production designer Kurt Raab was one of the most important and talented members of German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's incestuous circle as a man who collaborated on no less than 31 films with the filmmaker between 1969 and 1977 until the kraut comrades had an nasty 'break up.' Among other things, Fassbinder converted Raab to homosexuality in 1970 and would later get his friend hooked on cocaine while the two were working on their last film together, *Bolwieser* (1977) aka *The Stationmaster's Wife*. Like Fassbinder, Raab would also die prematurely as a result of his vices in 1988 at the age of 46 as a result of AIDS related complications. In the posthumously released and sensationally titled documentary *Sehnsucht nach Sodom* (1989) aka *Yearning For Sodom* aka *Yearning for Sodom or Projections in Front of an Empty Screen on a Dazzling Futile Wonderful and Wasted Life with a Thankless Medium* co-directed by Raab, the viewer gets an uncomfortably close look at the actor as he stoically stares death in the face whilst succumbing to AIDS in rather inhuman quarantine conditions after facing abject rejection from scared family members. Not long before he died, Raab was commissioned by the West German government to write a book on German New Cinema, but later decided to shelve the book idea and create a video art doc on the same subject with Hanno Baethe. Co-directed by Baethe and fellow Fassbinder superstar Hans Hirschmüller (*The Merchant of Four Seasons, Eight Hours are Not a Day*), *Yearning for Sodom* was originally intended as a documentary directed solely by Raab about German New Cinema, Fassbinder, and his life's work, but after discovering he had AIDS after only creating 6 of the 33 sketches he dreamed up, the actor decided to make a sort of poetic video art obituary where it seems as if the dead man is speaking from the grave while confined to a sterile Hamburg hospital bed. Neither a pathetic pity party nor a superficially sentimental self-tribute, *Yearning for Sodom* is nothing short of a macabre window into the deteriorating yet still sharp mind of a charismatic yet sometimes creepy man who in the past portrayed cannibalistic cocksucking serial killers and heterosexual Stefan George wannabes, but has taken on the morbid non-identity of a virtual corpse who literally takes a wheelchair ride in the very same cemetery that he will be buried in only months later. Indeed, the man responsible for the mystifying Bavarian Catholic iconography and rooms of mirrors that make Fassbinder's films from 1969-1977 so memorable, Raab was no less a flamboyant production designer when it came to his own funeral, even choosing his coffin to the last detail as depicted in *Yearning for Sodom*.

In his essay book on all-things-sodom, *The Book of Sodom* (1995), author Paul Hallam wrote, "A small room off the main Sodom season should house

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a video monitor for viewing the 1988 *Sehnsucht nach Sodom* (A Yearning for Sodom), a record of the dying days of the German actor Kurt Raab. This fierce and moving video demands viewing intimacy. Though it is short, the pace is slow, the rhythm dictated by the restrictions of Raab's illness. The actor remembers a melancholic all-night drinking bout in Berlin/Sodom, long before his HIV diagnosis, and smiles as he remarks, 'the sun shining into a gay bar is something terrible.' The dawn was, however, to bring a lover." That lover, a young twink that was no less than two decades the actor's junior, would end his own life 'poetically' (or at least that is how he apparently described suicide) by taking an overdose of sleeping pills and drowning in a bathtub, but not before assumedly giving Raab the death sentence known as 'gay cancer,' thus demonstrating that Fassbinder was on to something when he decided to title his first feature 'Love is Colder Than Death.' Beginning the documentary eerily singing, "Yearning... Yearning for Sodom. Yearning... Yearning for Sodom" and less fondly remarking, "Who will be next? To fade away in the twilight? Our beloved friends are dying. Dying like flies. I shed fervent tears for I know...Gone. Forgotten. Over. Thanks," the almost zombie-like Kurt Raab featured in *Yearning for Sodom* certainly does not resemble the hysterical incestuous homo brother he played in *The American Soldier* (1970), nor the cuckolded civil servant of *The Stationmaster's Wife*, as his face is emaciated to the point where it resembles a weary skull and his corpse-like body is covered in Kaposi's sarcoma spots. As to how Raab copes with the fact that he is about to have a date with the Grim Reaper, he remarks, "We were making films almost all the time. I made 31 with Fassbinder between 1969 and 1977, the year I broke up with him. That was very hard for me. It was my best, wildest, most chaotic and most creative time ever. So when this illness gets me down, I say: 'Who has been so lucky as to work with a Fassbinder? Who is world famous, and whose films are still seen?...And that for 10 or 11 years. You've always been lucky, despite some bad times. You always had work. So it's not as if I never lived when I die here of Aids because I have lived my life,'" thus appreciating the fact he has lived a fuller life than most.

To help his friend live the last couple months of his life in as comfortable a manner as possible considering his clearly terminal condition, German actor Hans Hirschmüller has become Raab's own nurse, stating upon taking on the thankless job, "I was reluctant to get involved with Kurt and his illness. I knew: one hospital visit and there'd be no turning back. We've been acting together for 20 years. Our last engagement was at the Deutsche Schauspielhaus, where I had to take over Kurt's role." Hirschmüller, who is heterosexual, also goes on to detail the dirty job that is wiping a AIDS-addled sodomite's ass, confessing regarding the entire experience, "I was far less involved in my mother's death, with the process of dying. I'd never have nursed my mother. Or changed my kid's diapers. I did Kurt Raab's. I caught up on some things that I was silly enough to miss out on. But I have caught up. Then something happens to you. No disgust. Nothing.

Not even sympathy. I was even cruel to him. I wanted to help him. Please him.” Unfortunately, Raab’s little sister is nowhere near as empathetic as she not only denies her dying brother a room in her home (thus forcing him to stay in a prison-like atmosphere in the hospital) because apparently local peasants think he is possessed by the devil, but also a plot in the family cemetery, claiming that there is not enough space for a despicable diseased fag corpse. During a more merry moment of the documentary, Raab reminisces about how he was once engaged to a woman, stating to Hirschmüller after he questions how a gay man can make love to a woman, “Homosexuals have horny cocks too...No. I really loved her.” After being carted around in a wheelchair at the somber graveyard in which his corpse is to be interred in a mere couple months, Raab disappears and Hirschmüller reads the actor’s specified plans for his funeral. Needless to say, Raab opts for a lavish old school German style casket, so as to leave this cruel world in classic style. Yearning for Sodom concludes with Fassbinder’s ex-wife Ingrid Caven singing a song in tribute to Raab, which fades to a shot of the actor’s Kaposi’s sarcoma spots dissolving into stars.

Aside from co-directing Yearning for Sodom, Raab previously directed one other film, the rather redundant and bizarrely anti-erotic ‘women in prison’ (WiP) flick *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* (1983) aka *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* starring Udo Kier and Barbara Valentin. Needless to say, while I can only recommend *Island of the Bloody Plantation* to Fassbinder completists and the most wayward of WiPhiles, Yearning for Sodom is mandatory viewing for Fassbinder fanatics and German New Cinema fans alike as a sort of entry from the historical necrology of German New Cinema. Indeed, in one of the sketches that appears in Yearning for Sodom that Raab made before contracting AIDS and totally changing the entire objective of the documentary, he hysterically shouts while sporting women’s lingerie, “Realism. Naturalism. Surrealism. Expressionism. Futurism. The German silent movie. The German talkie. Cinema in the Weimar era. Cinema in the Nazi era. The German film. The pan-Germanic film. The sex education film. The Reich propaganda film. The Reich film. The public enlightenment film. The war film. The post-war film. The German homeland film. The German film of fortune. The German tear-jerker. The German box-office draw. Grandpa’s cinema is dead. Daddy’s cinema is dead. Long live baby’s cinema. The New German Cinema. The young German cinema is dead,” thus giving an entire terminology-based history of Teutonic cinema in a matter of a minute or two thus ultimately reflecting the death of kraut cinema in general. While I would be lying if I did not admit that Yearning for Sodom is a daunting downer of a documentary, it also features Kurt Raab as his typically darkly humorous self, suckling on blut like he did in the serial killer masterpiece he penned and starred in, *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves*, as well as channeling William S. Burroughs in a self-denigrating scene where he plays his doctor and tells someone on the phone, “In my opinion,

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Mr. Raab is no longer completely sound of mind," thereupon demonstrating his ability to keep his tongue placed firmly in cheek whilst physically and mentally deteriorating in a rather grotesque way. Despite his rather pitiable fate, there is no ignoring the fact that he gave some of the most memorable and idiosyncratic lead performances of cinema history in such masterpieces as *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1971), *The Tenderness of Wolves*, *Satan's Brew* (1976), and *The Stationmaster's Wife* (1977), not to mention his similarly memorable supporting roles in *The American Soldier*, *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970), *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971), *World on a Wire* (1973), and *Adolf and Marlene* (1977). Indeed, rather than look back on Raab as a socially scorned victim of gay cancer, I will always remember him as the crazed bourgeois cuckold who run amok in sterile technocratic Deutschland, as well as the sodomite serial killer who was truly looking for Sodom, but instead opted for bugging and butchering young boys and feeding them to his charming kraut friends.

-Ty E

LOLA AND BILLY THE KID

Kutluğ Ataman (1999)

Turbulent Turkish trannies, raging cock-sucking skinheads, homophobic Turk leather-fags, brother-raping fagola family men, dapper ass-bandit Aryan aristocrats, and Turk tonk twinkles just make some of the more sexually and socially confused characters of the culturally and racially mongrelized German film *Lola and Billy the Kid* (1999) aka *Lola und Bilidikid* directed by queer Turkish auteur Kutluğ Ataman (*Karanlık Sular*, *2 Girls*); a work that wonderfully, wildly, wantonly depicts the trouble German-born Turks face in the Fatherland that is not their own father's. A uniquely unhealthy yet undeniably provocative convergence of seedy and sometimes superficial melodrama and skin-deep sodo-mania, an astute study on fag-on-fag fag-bashing, mischievously macabre ultra-low-camp carnal comedy, ridiculous yet relevant race hate, and an endearing ending fit for a sentimental eunuch, *Lola and Billy the Kid* is the sort of flick one would expect was directed by a cosmopolitan yet racially-conscious foreigner who was at some point in his life deeply influenced by Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), the films of Pedro Almodóvar, personal political science, and the most deleteriously debauched drag shows in little Turkey, Berlin. In terms of engrossing entertainment, *Lola and Billy the Kid* is a near Memetis mud-packer masterpiece, but as a work of stoically serious celluloid art, one might say that the film leads one to conclude that director Ataman does not deserve to lick crusty kraut queer auteur Rosa von Praunheim's pretty pink shoes, although it is a work that will surely appeal to fanatical fans of New German cinema, if only for the fact that there has been a void in Teutonic cinema for a number of decades now, so it is ironic that a foreigner would fill it to some extent. Although featuring a number of standout characters and an engaging plot and subplots that could be easily followed by the typical pedestrian American filmgoer, *Lola and Billy the Kid* – a work featuring politically incorrect puffs and a celluloid call to castration anxiety – is not exactly the sort of film that will appeal to mainstream audiences, let alone entire families, despite the fact that perturbing family matters are an innate characteristic of the plot. Although I certainly cannot vouch for them, I seriously doubt the average Turk would be a fan of *Lola and Billy the Kid* as it makes it seem like every Turkish man is a turbulent self-loathing turdburglar or tormented masochistic shemale and that every Turkish mother is a fervent fag-enabler. Needless to say, these Turk Teutons are not in Istanbul anymore, but a nation that trashed their own culture and customs after losing two cataclysmic World Wars and replaced it with a degenerate dedication to hyperhedonism, senseless self-indulgence, and any human weakness for pleasure that would could imagine of.

Seventeen-year-old street-rat Murat (Baki Davrak) has one warped Turkish sodomite family as it is full of incestuous semen demon secrets that would even

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shock kraut queen von Praunheim, if not influence to stalk gay bars on Turkish ghetto section of Berlin. For starters, Murat's older brother Osman (Hasan Ali Mete) – who is apparently a lapsed limp-wrister himself despite now having a family of his own – wants to set his young bro straight by various methods, including treating him to strippers and statuesque German prostitutes, which he firmly turns down as he rather takes his chances giving away tricks in tearoom toilet stalls located at the Berlin Olympiastadion (Olympic Stadium; site of the 1936 'Nazi' summer Olympics) while on school field-trips, even if his male suitor – a novice neo-nazi in training – is compelled to smear the queer at the insistence of his Turk-terrorizing friends. Unbeknownst to Murat, he has another brother named Lola (Gandi Mukli) who was disowned by his family because he is an unrepentant member of the prissy pink team who once showed up in his Islamic homestead wearing a female neon red wig, thereupon resulting in his permanent banishment (with Murat being as a result of his father's need to 'replace' his exiled son). Lola's boyfriend Bilidikid aka Billy (Erdal Yildiz) – a homo-hating, ultra-masculine iron hoof poofter who earns his living by allowing guys to blow him in bathroom stalls with semen stains covering the wall – wants his buttercup boi toy to cut his cock off so the two can go back to Turkey and form a 'proper family' as man and wife and not live a openly gay life like "German fags." Meanwhile, a degenerate German aristocrat named Friedrich von Schmidt (Michael Gerber) begins a relationship that starts with a bought blow-job in a public park with Turk hustler Iskender (Murat Yilmaz), who also happens to be a colon-choking compatriot of reluctant bent boy Bilidikid. An anachronistic aged aristocrat who is in denial about her less prestigious position in society, Friedrich's mother Ute (Inge Keller) cannot get down with her son's brown beau. On top of dealing with insanely inflamed flaming inter-gay Turkish relations, the ripped rectum realm of the Turkish ghetto is stalked by a group of hostile and, in some cases, homosexual, German skinheads who especially have a desire to smash and gay bash Lola while s/he is dressed in drag. Beginning with absurd but highly hilarious incendiary verbal insults like "camel fucker" and "go back to Bagdad" at the Turkish sods, it is only a matter of time before the two had a shadow that makes for some sort of hyper-degenerate postmodern globalist West Side Story from multicultural hell.

Despite being directed by a Turk, Lola and Billy the Kid makes no attempt to portray his people in a pristinely positive light nor does he layer the film with pathetic politically correct puffery as is typical of similar racial 'outsider' films in ethno-masochistic Europa. After all, I doubt any sane person would find it normal to see a nearly elderly Turkish peasant woman giving her son a bath in an archaic washtub. Indeed, while portraying Turks and Teutons as fatally flawed individuals trying to retain their dignity in a state of impenetrable racial and cultural chaos. While a whole family of Turks has produced a family of all flaming fairies who would have otherwise lived rather conventional lives had they

grown up in their homeland, even if buggering adolescent boys on the side, the everyday blue-collar Germans – fed up with a nation that has nothing to offer them yet harbors mostly illegal ‘refugees’ – takes out their hatred on the foreign other; individuals, who when especially dressed in flamboyant drag, stick out like sore brown thumbs. Somewhat nihilistic in its message, *Lola and Billy the Kid* is certainly not the kind of liberal feel-good sentimentalist drama that left activists would praise as artistic evidence of the oxymoronic statement that “diversity is our strength.” Directed with a distinctly Turkish and queer persuasion, *Lola and Billy the Kid* reveals that auteur Kutluğ Ataman has seriously studied the kultur of the nation he depicts, most obviously with references to morbid melodramas of New German cinema Über-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder, especially *Katzelmacher* (1969), *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) and *Lola* (1981) without assembling an inept gross accidental parody of these films. For an enthralling if not overly ambitious look at multicultural Germany after *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) and Fassbinder from a positively personal and peculiar perspective, *Lola and Billy the Kid* makes for an audacious cinematic affair with the culturally, socially, and sexually abstracted *ausländer* that might make one think twice about visiting bathrooms in the Turkish sector of town.

-Ty E

FRIEND
FRIEND

Kwak Kyung-taek (2001) During my descent into my favoritism of Korean films, it is obvious they have a knack for cinematography and amazing character development. It's a matter of fact, not opinion. If you don't believe me, you can just check out *The Host*, *Memories of Murder*, *Save the Green Planet!*, or *Tae Guk Gi*! My personal favorite Korean film is also my favorite gangster film. *FRIEND* shows the upcoming of life-long friends from the roots of many various families. Some stay straight, some go crooked, and some become sociopaths. The film opens up similarly to *City Of God* with godly cinematography and also takes the reigns of being a self-autobiographical film of a rough childhood with bold decisions thrust at our youth at a tender age. *Friend* is a peg holding the gangster film bar up waiting for films to spread the weight. The only one even worth mentioning in this review would be *The Departed*. With the words of Coffin Joe echoing in my mind "There's the most perfect creation of nature: children! Pity that they grow up to become idiots. In search of nothing. Lost in a Labyrinth of egoism... and dominated by a non-existent force: the faith in the immortality of the spirit.", *Friend* has new meaning. The situations these perfect creations face of that of unspeakable atrocities. Classroom violence, gang wars, rivaling schools, disastrous love, and having nonsupporting parents are only a few of the obstacles this group of four friends face. Each of the four main leads brings a distinguished charisma to their roles. Emotions ranging from goofy, yet hiding his sorrow, to the "bad ass" troublemaker who is victim to his own persecutions. These are just a few of the quirks of these personalities. *Friend* on the entertainment level is monstrous. It also features one of the most epic fight scenes ever. This one doesn't use slow-motion digitally captured effects, just a couple teenage gangsters against an entire school. *Friend* is a film to redefine film. That is me putting it simply. You must do everything in your power to view this film. At all costs.

-Maq

TRUCK

Kwon Hyung-Jin (2008)

John Q sympathy plot. How far would you go? scenario but not as effective in parts as to blame the horrendous butchering of the Korean language committed by Yoo Hae-jin. The only compassion this film plays towards us, the wonderful cultured audience, are the many twists & turns along the way. A battle of social identities scourge throughout the film broadening the canals of thriller films accepting an upkeep of suspense. Korean films always look good, this fact is present and accounted for. While looking like a trapper keeper, few Korean films lose their way amongst hits such as *A Bittersweet Life*, *Save the Green Planet!*, and *Friend*. *Truck* acquires a target audience with a momentous build-up and a depressing lack-luster ending. A blue-collar truck driver's daughter is dying of the same heart condition that took the life of her mother. In order to raise \$60,000, he agrees to drive a truck bed full of corpses to dump them. Doing this sounds like an easy enough job, that is until he picks up a wounded police officer chasing after a demented serial killer. Come to find out, the cop is actually the killer and the two archetypes representing certain alignments escalates to a superbly crafted tale of mind games. Then of course, the ending pretty much sacrifices all integrity for a Pan-Asian staple in dramas by including a final shot of a family on the beach. Those tricky bastards. *Truck* has a cheerful disposition towards violence, more concerning a dormant expressive type, aided by the sight of persuasive corpses. Serial slaughterer Kim's furious rusty blade slices arteries in his own quest for an extension of life. The overall film feels like *John Q* meets Michael Mann's *Collateral* but the finalized product isn't as dramatic and sensationalized as these American contemporary dramas. The viewpoint of violence is of a rather noble one. Cheol-min becomes of which he is disgusted by due to a slight malfunction in defense. After accidentally killing a young male, he turns into some what of a beast as scoped in *Straw Dogs*. *Truck* merely exists as a bland thriller for some quick box office success and would do starkly well in the land of opportunity if it decided to be optioned for an American remake. *Truck* is a rather disappointing film that starts off promising. The beginning is the precise definition of a suspense film with remarkably shot footage of human humility. In search of something a bit more, *Truck* loses its way to serial killer norms and spades of clichés. The death of a film is something to sympathize over but *Truck* still manages to be an obscure experiment in the deterioration of a film from within. So far, *Truck* is near impossible to find out information on and doesn't even have an IMDb page. Perhaps that's for the best. This would be worth a rental if it happens to pick up a distributor. I can envision Magnet picking this one up.

-mAQ

Doggy Poo
Doggy Poo

Kwon Oh-sung (2003) *SPOILERS* Doggy Poo is exactly what you'd think it would be, plus more. What Doggy Poo essentially starts out as, seems like a Christmas story or even a story about a lone "thing" trying to make his keep in the world but this film morphs slowly into a film which seems to force religion onto the viewer by asking ourselves "Why has God put me on earth?" The tactics it uses are that of manipulating sorrow and harnessing it into a cocktail of emotions. Doggy Poo is like Milo & Otis, It is a children's story from Asia, dubbed over with over-dramatic voice acting. It is the claymation story of a lone piece of shit dropped by a dog that cries every couple of scenes cause God made him as a waste of space. At the end of this half an hour story of a turd crying, he copulates, more or less, with a weed, creating a dandelion. The scene of fusion between the poo and the weed is quite beautiful for being an absent-minded Korean animation film. It's hard to take the film serious for it's intense subject matter dealing with a talking turd. South Park has a more believable atmosphere surrounding it's poo hero. Many of the scenes are well constructed and are plausible. Many situations are comical and try too hard at making the viewer cry. All these, are in vain. Doggy Poo is a highly absurd film regarding shit. Not one directed by Spielberg, mind you. But rather one about trying to find a purpose in life, but falls short when it reveals it's sinister nature by spreading a message which states God loves shit.

-Maq

THE AMERICAN DREAMER

L.M. Kit Carson (1971)

I don't really give a shit about actors, especially Hollywood ones, yet actor turned auteur Dennis Hopper—a man with a totally singular acting career who appeared in two films starring James Dean (who was personal friend and mentor), played his first lead role in the Poe-esque gothic cult flick *Night Tide* (1961) directed by Curtis Harrington (who taught Hopper you did not need to work in the studio system to make a movie), directed and costarred in a little film entitled *Easy Rider* (1969) that started nothing short of a cultural and cinematic revolution in the United States, totally destroyed his career with his second feature *The Last Movie* (1971) and lived in drug-addled exile from Hollywood for about a decade, and ultimately made an unlikely comeback in iconic performances in masterful films like *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Out of the Blue* (1980), and especially David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986)—is someone I have always respected, even before knowing his actual name and seeing his performance as the one-legged maniac acting 'Feck' in Tim Hunter's cult masterpiece *River's Edge* (1986) when I was a young kid. Indeed, as an innately impassioned actor who starred in films by filmmakers ranging from Nicholas Ray to Roland Klick, an auteur filmmaker who directed only seven feature films but at least two masterpieces, a professional photographer who snapped shots of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Andy Warhol, a part-time painter/poet/art collector, and a sort of American counter-culture Casanova and (in)famous lecherous ladyman/hippie hedonist, Hopper was a postmodern Renaissance man of sorts who, in his own way via acting, directing, and his personal life, reflected everything that was good and bad about America, so it is only fitting that he once played the subject of a rarely-seen and wholly worthwhile documentary entitled *The American Dreamer* (1971) co-directed by L.M. Kit Carson (who, on top of penning the script for *Paris, Texas* (1984), would associate produce and pen *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986) starring Hopper) and photo journalist Lawrence Schiller (whose claim to fame is he was the last person to take nude photos of Marilyn Monroe, but is now a TV hack who has directed films with titles like 'JonBenet: Anatomy of a Cold Case' (2006)), who were both personally invited by the *Easy Rider* director to spend 18 days filming him and his girls. Made when Hopper fled to from Hollywood to Taos, Texas with the stolen master print of his second feature *The Last Movie*—a work that the actor/auteur was given \$1 million to make by Universal Studios in the hope that they would receive a major monetary return like they did on *Easy Rider*, but were ultimately disappointed with the director's edit—*The American Dreamer* is an unintentionally darkly hilarious yet sometimes depressing depiction of a filmmaker at the height of his success, but, as he would prophetically predict in the doc itself, would ultimately lose it all. Featuring a nihilistic hippie hedonist pseudo-guru

THE AMERICAN DREAMER

Hopper who looks (and kind of acts) like a cross between Jim Morrison and Charles Manson (who he would visit in prison), *The American Dreamer* is a virtual catalog of the societal ills that would lead to the early demise of so-called 'New Hollywood.' An innately incriminating and undeniably unflattering portrait of Hopper rolling joints and smoking dope, engaging in orgies, describing himself as a lesbian who would "rather give head to a beautiful woman than fuck her," shooting rifles in deserts with gigantic crucifixes, describing his ex-wife Michelle Phillips of *The Mamas & the Papas* as the person he is most afraid of, and detailing how he looks to turn innocent virgins into wanton whores (his ideal woman is a 'virgin-whore'), and pseudo-philosophizing about things for which he has no clue about what is he talking about, *The American Dream* is also, quite arguably, if not unintentionally so, one of the best anti-drug films ever made.

It seems Herr Hopper has smoked too much Mary Jane by the time *The American Dreamer* began production, as he certainly is a man who has lost inhibitions as demonstrated by the fact that he begins the documentary answering his door wearing nothing but a towel, which he soon takes off to finish the bath he was in the middle of, thereupon baring his boney hippie ass to the viewer. Hopper regularly smokes grass, drops acid, and engages in orgies and as far as he is concerned, "whoever hates me for that...terrific and whoever loves me for it...terrific." While people seem to think that his hit film *Easy Rider* is some sort of pro-counter-culture/pro-hippie/pro-drug agitprop meant to rile up the youthful against old school conservative America, Hopper declares that the film was influenced by his belief that America is a society that "glorifies criminals and glorifies the outlaw," adding regarding his film, "The people at the end of *EASY RIDER* that kill us and shoot us off the bikes... What's the difference between the two on the bikes and the two in the truck?," thus demonstrating that he is not exactly in solidarity with those kosher clowns of Hollywood who think rural America is populated by demonic redneck savages, but instead thought all groups and subcultures of America were innately tainted and prone toward a sort of barbaric criminality. When asked what he sees as happening to him if *The Last Movie* fails, Hopper envisions a sorry fate similar to Orson Welles, stating, "What's gonna to happen to me? Nothing's going to happen to me because...like you know...I was sleeping on a mattress when I edited *Easy Rider* and I can sleep on a mattress again. I have friends...*THE LAST MOVIE* is going to be acceptable...It's going to be accepted...It's going to be much better than *EASY RIDER* and if it's nothing more than like *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS*, which was like Orson Welles' second film and *CITIZEN KANE* was his first...made no money and *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS* made no money, probably a very happy man because, like, it will be that good." After describing Welles as a "poor bastard," Hooper goes on to bash the complete structure of the Hollywood studio system, stating, "If they can't build up Orson

Welles...make up a movie for half a million dollars and show it in the universities then fuck 'em. And fuck the universities and fuck everybody, man...because like, you know, then there's no audience...it's only a lot of frivolous, cheerleaders." Indeed, now a sort of megalomaniac auteur, Hopper clearly has an uncompromising benevolent view of the Hollywood studio system, but he also seems to suspect the days of the 'soup du jour' Tinseltown are about to end.

During multiple segments of *The American Dreamer*, it seems that Hopper is quite annoyed by the filmmakers. On top of complaining, "you sure are nosey" to a cameraman who is filming him rolling a joint, Hopper also berates the directors for what he sees as them not being able to direct a subject in the proper context. Of course, Hopper wastes no time displaying his various exotic concubines, including a young Asian chick that the actor/auteur admits upon first seeing her, "I immediately attempted to take that virginity and turn her into a whore." Naturally, when a young 'actress' approaches Hopper on the street, he tells her he is the easiest person to talk to in the world and then he proceeds to sweet talk her so as to presumably get in her panties. When Hopper is asked by one of the filmmakers what kind of girl he looks for in terms of marriage material, he gives the following confused response: "I had the classic American concept... I wanted the virgin that I married, that had my children and stayed at home...then when I discovered that I was a whore, I decided that I wanted the whore, you know, who could understand me and we could understand each other. So, I don't know really, I'm caught between two worlds...like I think that everyone wants the virgin and wants the whore, but I'm just hoping someday I will find the...virgin whore." Despite Hopper's harem of hyper hedonistic hippie sexpots, he ultimately seems like a rather lonely fellow, which he pretty much admits when he remarks, "I don't believe I can relate to one person anymore and give my trust to one person anymore." After Hopper absurdly proclaims, "I'd rather give head to a beautiful woman than fuck her really" and then nonsensically adds, "Basically, I think like a lesbian," one of his chicks has enough sense to bring him back to reality and remind him that he is a man. Indeed, despite Hopper's fruity pseudo-philosophical musings about his inner-lesbo, he is no pansy pacifist as testified by his remarks, "I believe that a man that doesn't protect himself is really a fool. You have to protect yourself" and "I believe in love and hate," not to mention his seemingly pathological proclivity for shooting off rifles in the desert, as if he is a born-again Mansonite preparing some sort of societal collapse of the apocalyptic sort. In a sort of shockingly senseless anti-bourgeois revolutionary act, Hopper strips all his clothes in a Los Alamos suburb (what he describes as 'scientific suburbia') and declares of his pseudo-Aktionist action on retrospect, "that was really far-out symbolically...I was really self-conscious." In terms of metapolitics, Hopper declares in all seriousness, "It is very difficult at times...if you believe in evolution, not to believe in revolution." As for plans for the future, Hopper gives the classic response, "I would like to make movies

THE AMERICAN DREAMER

on the moon...I like to put people on. Hahaha.”

While Dennis Hopper babbles on about a lot of brain-dead bullshit in *The American Dreamer* he says a lot of insightful, if not sometimes obvious, things about the film industry and the art of cinema in general. In terms of cinema's power to brainwash the mentally feeble (as well as the not so mentally feeble), Hopper, referencing one of the rare occasions when a Bolshevik revolutionary was right, states, “The camera doesn't remind me of a gun but it does remind me of a weapon...and Lenin believed that the revolution would be fought with the camera...with films...and at a certain point guns would be unfeasible...and that minds would be won in the theater rather than on a battlefield.” Indeed, Hopper's own film *Easy Rider* would start a cultural revolution of sorts that changed the way people looked at the cinema as an art form, the American landscape and its 'eclectic' populous. Ironically, Hopper would more or less give a scathing criticism of the counter-culture zeitgeist with his third feature *Out of the Blue*, which makes *Easy Rider* seem like a work of highly idealistic youth naivety of the shamelessly sensational and retardedly romantic sort. To fully respect *Out of the Blue* and much of Hopper's post-dope/post-cocaine acting, including in Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (despite playing a deranged rapist killer in the film, Hopper would tell Lynch regarding why he wanted to play the role, “I have to play Frank because I am Frank”) and Hunter's *River's Edge*, *The American Dreamer* is mandatory viewing as it demonstrates that the somewhat unhinged actor/director wised up, got his shit together, and dropped most of the false nihilistic non-values that so many other people of his degenerate generation bought into it, screwing up their lives as a result. As Peter L. Winkler reveals in his Hopper biography *Dennis Hopper: The Wild Ride of a Hollywood Rebel* (2011) as to why the documentary would ultimately become a lost film: “At the beginning of *THE AMERICAN DREAMER*, Hopper says that he welcomes the opportunity to lay his life bare in the film, whether people love him or hate him as a result. After early screenings of the film, he changed his mind. Lois Rudnick wrote that he blocked the film's distribution, though a soundtrack album was issued.” Undoubtedly, *The American Dreamer* makes for the perfect double feature with the Dutch documentary *Dennis Hopper: The Decisive Moments* (2002) directed by Thom Hoffman, which is also unfortunately rather hard to find. Of course, Hopper makes no mention of *The American Dreamer* in *The Decisive Moments* but he does demonstrate that his mind is no longer clouded by drugs and self-destructive tendencies. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of longhaired and high as hell hippie era Dennis Hopper, *The American Dreamer* is a celluloid train wreck about a true 'survivor' who managed to survive the crash. Ultimately, *The American Dreamer* proves without a doubt that Hopper was a more interesting and complex fellow than the one-note wonder character he played in *Easy Rider*, which one certainly cannot say about most stars in Hollywood. Indeed, Hopper is probably the only actor in the history of

the studio system whose public actions and behavior where more juicy than the dubious rumors cine-magician Kenneth Anger wrote about in his Hollywood Babylon books.

-Ty E

HER VENGEANCE
HER VENGEANCE

Lam Ngai Kai (1988)

I thought I had seen it all, that is until I peeped this CAT III (or II, depending on the release) Chinese rape-revenge exploitation piece with gratuitous violence and wheelchair kung-fu. It all starts with Pauline Wong working in a night club. This fateful night sees her shoo away a gang of drunken hooligans who regroup outside and assault her leading to a scenario of gang rape and the shocking aftermath. Truth be told, It's quite evident that this is a piece of trash art from the director of Riki-Oh: The Story of Ricky. Upon inspection from a doctor, he humorously starts screaming that she has AIDS and that her vagina's going to start spewing green funk. Putting it lightly seems out of the question. Upon the degradation that she suffered, a beam of hope flutters to the spotlight. She seeks what any female exploitation star desires - a painful revenge. Along the way, she expresses absolutely no strength resulting in a pathetic message of anti-violence but the film finds support weight from the crippled co-star that plays her father. The wheelchair bound, ex-Triad, and full-time dad (Ching-Ying Lam, friend of the legendary Sammo Hung) who resembles an Asiatic Neil Patrick Harris steals all the attention turning this trash piece into a glamorous CAT III ordeal. Decency is a rare find in exploitation. Most films spill guts hollowly with out fearing repercussion. Seen in I Spit On Your Grave, Keaton slays all of her rapists with very little consequence other than the prior elongated rape. In this film, our beloved infected Pauline stumbles around the city plotting her revenge. In what could have been a feminist CAT III classic by definition, we're given a film tainted with the very idea that females are the weaker gender. She eventually relies on her dad's enthusiastic Home Alone approach to his bar. The result is a blood bath that will forever be memorable over such trap infested cinema as Raiders of the Lost Ark. Two existing versions of the film have been released. Depending on which label you purchased (or downloaded) yours from, you will either get the longer CAT II release which features not-as-graphic depictions of violence or you could get the shorter CAT III film with more inserted brutality for all your gorehound needs. Her Vengeance is a special kind of film though, one that doesn't depend on the violence, rather the crippled antics and black humor to propel it into safe territory. Her Vengeance is a rare breed of trashy Chinese aesthetics. It brings light to a possible madcap sophistication within its doomed genre. Blood. Sex. Mayhem. Repeat. This is the doctrine from which many exploitation film makers pry their designs from. Her Vengeance is something to cherish. Easily one of the top 10 CAT III films I've seen. I couldn't recommend this enough, even if for just the wheelchair antics.

DVD/VCD Comparisons

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RIKI-OH: THE STORY OF RICKY

Lam Ngai Kai (1991)

This is one film that doesn't need any sort of introduction but I'll relay one for those folks unfortunate enough to have not seen this splatter classic. The Story of Ricky is an unusual tale of a psychotic behind bars who quickly establishes himself as somewhat of an anti-hero. Where he had reason to murder the gangster responsible for his girlfriend's death, this reason does him no good behind bars in a maximum security prison ran by a sadistic warden and a gang of four villains, each with their own specific eccentricities and styles. Like most prison films but lacking in the department of male rape. With a wacky disposition of murder and subpar kung-fu, Riki-Oh is comic adrenaline concentrate. The film has enough sense to embrace a comedic aspect of the violence. Had it not, this film would have sunk with the low-budget German splatter trash pouring out of their country by way of big boys with little dreams.

Advancing on a tier-type ladder is what leads Ricky to triumph. The standard progression of "boss battles" bridges the gap of narrative and flashbacks to create something animated with quirk. Lam Nai-choi has done his homework indeed. Basing off of what is the Westerner's approach to action films with unbelievable bad asses, the quota is met with both the ingredients of a protagonist that bleeds and the invincible hero trope. This is on display during the fight with Oscar, but one of the Gang of Four, when Ricky's tendon is severed with a blade. Standing statuesque, he slowly raises his arms and proceeds to pull his tendons out to tie them together, successfully giving him mobility in his arm again. With the simple formula of "best of both worlds", there is simply nothing to not love in this minimal epic. Being adapted straight from a manga of the same name, Riki-Oh is an excellent adaptation worthy of every meter of notoriety earned.

Interestingly enough, Riki-Oh was the first film to receive the CATIII rating for its violence, and not sex. The world of exploitation over in the East is strictly dominated by perversion and not dismemberment, as us Westerners advocate. To see a nipple is obscene, but for ruthless bloodshed, enjoyment will be had. This hypocrisy is why I normally traverse to indulge in film. I am one of the few who prefer complex eroticism and lewd fetishism to the beheadings and bludgeoning. Riki-Oh, of course, is the exception. Being completely void of any sexuality, Riki-Oh manages to entertain and amass enormous respect from me for the grossly nostalgic effect it has on all. Even to strangers of cinema is Riki-Oh endearing and charming, in that gross syrupy way. Simply, The Story of Ricky is short and sweet. The pacing is quite efficient as well as to never skip into the plane of mundane. If you're reading this, most likely you've seen this gem. If you haven't, I recommend doing so immediately as you'd be hard pressed to enjoy any other such lunacy as much as this.

-mAQ

THE TORTURER
THE TORTURER

Lamberto Bava (2005)

Lamberto Bava's *The Torturer* is a picky little film. It is a soft core porn and a ultra-bloody stylistic slasher film. It seems too much like the underrated erotica films entitled *FANTOM KILER*. A slew of attractive women accidentally pull off their blouses and get sexually mutilated until they are no longer desirable. While flashy, the plot is water thin and leaves a lot of confusion. It follows a mysterious killer who tortures young, busty actresses in very inventive ways. Doesn't really pave too much room for any kind of feeling in the film at all. We have the suave yet shady theater director who auditions stunning sluts forcing them to do ludicrous acts. He then promises them the world. After that, some villain whose identity is cleverly hidden with darkness much like the *Wizard of Oz*, proceeds to torture these women in many different forms. All the torture scenes even open with the same guitar power chord which builds up nicely, but seeing as it plays about 30+ times during the film, it gets very repetitive and stale quick. We then meet the heroine leading lady who finds an earring of her friends on the audition stage. She puts two and two together and realizes she is missing. So she begins a classy search for her friend while beginning a love story with the director. Cue the entering of his madness. He has some sort of psychological problem resulting in him hallucinating a red toy car and a creepy *Carrie*-esque loop of a child saying something. While being a mundane film, it does have great effects. Gore that makes you slightly queasy from showing you new forms of methods. Most gore nowadays are all very similar. Dismemberments and such plague our horror film. We don't see anything new and wondrous to "ew" at. In this one, we are given a cheek mutilation and nipples ripped off. Spikes embedded in women's tender flesh and a soldering iron torture scene. Oh, did I forget the vagina ripping/melting? That scene caused me to shudder. The film has a very inane story with very naive characters with some great effects. What really made me like this film in the least bit is the editing and look. It's glossy, stylish, and very pretty to look at. Too bad so much had to be sacrificed for this look. Don't expect *A Blade in the Dark* with this classic director's newer film. You'll be sorely disappointed. Loaded with a shitty twist ending, a horrible last-minute plot device, it's visibly an attempt to make it sleazy with a brief scene explaining the filthy traits of women, and the worse acting/dub seen in an Italian giallo film, *The Torturer* is nothing special but has enough to prevent it from being recommendable. Italians should teach American directors a thing or two about well placed misogyny.

-mAQ

LIPSTICK

Lamont Johnson (1976)

With my recent re-watching of the erotic artsploitation thriller *Tattoo* (1981) directed by Bob Brooks, I felt it was about time that I re-watch the somewhat similarly themed mainstream 'rape and revenge' flick *Lipstick* (1976) directed by TV hack Lamont Johnson (*Naked City*, *The Twilight Zone*) and starring sisters Mariel and Margaux Hemingway in both their debut film roles. Indeed, like *Tattoo*, *Lipstick* features a quasi-artist with a serious inferiority complex who becomes fanatically obsessed with a naïve model way out of his league and decides to force himself upon her. Of course, the main difference between the two is that, while *Tattoo* is a politically correct work that has been accused of being misogynistic and was protested against by frigid feminists upon its release, *Lipstick* is a pathetic piece of sub-erotica disguised as a sincere (pseudo)feminist agitprop, as well as a sleazy courtroom melodrama. Indeed, before junky McGuido auteur Abel Ferrara's suavely stylized gynocentric celluloid sleaze masterpiece *Ms. 45* (1981), *Lipstick* appeared and demonstrated that the Hemingway sisters make for rather annoying rape victims and autistic avant-garde musicians make for exceedingly pathetic rapists. A project originally offered to Michael 'Death Wish' Winner, who turned it down, by Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis, *Lipstick* has the look of an exploitation film on retrograde 1970s Hollywood steroids as if it was directed for the Lifetime channel and thus should be approached as such so as not to make the viewer squirm in total disgust due to its due to philistine brand of feminism. Such a decidedly degenerate work that the director tricked Mariel Hemingway, who was only 15 at the time of shooting, into doing a rape scene without her knowledge, *Lipstick* is respectable in one sense in that it is seemingly unbelievable that unhollywood had the gall to produce a work that combines gratuitous nudity and rape scenes with an anti-rape message pleading with lawmakers to take a greater stand against male vaginal (and in *Lipstick*'s case, anal) pillagers. Of course, one must also give credits to the producers for attempting to cash in on both prospective rapists and feminists. The ostensibly titillating tale of a failed musical composer turned Catholic school teacher who rapes a self-absorbed model with an affinity for BDSM and gets away with it, so he also rapes said self-absorbed model's underage little sis, *Lipstick* is also a paradoxically politically correct yet politically incorrect work that also rather absurdly makes it seem like well educated white males are the foremost champions of forced anal entry.

Catholic school preteen Kathy McCormick (Mariel Hemingway) has a "classic 13-year-old crush" on her music teacher Gordon Stuart (Chris Sarandon), so she introduces him to her top model big sister Chris (real-life model Margaux Hemingway, who was the first person of her trade to sign a one-million-dollar contract) under the pretense that the dilettante musician can show off his origi-

LIPSTICK

nal musical compositions. Kathy and Gordon meet Chris at the beach for one of her photo shoots, but the model is too busy flashing off her tits for the photographer to hear the teacher's pretentious twaddle. After seeing Chris' breasts on the beach, Gordon becomes instantly infatuated with the model, so when he is given the opportunity to swing by her apartment to show off his music, he naturally obliges. Rather unfortunately, Chris forgets the little musical play date, so when Gordon arrives, she is barely dressed and has little time to give the somewhat effeminate and rather bitchy musician attention. Indeed, Gordon does get the chance to show off his music, but it is cut short after the phone rings and Chris goes elsewhere to talk to her lover Steve Edison (Perry King). Enraged by the model's disinterest in his compositions and jealous of her numerous photographs of masculine males, including Paul Newman, hanging on the wall, Gordon hatefully confronts Chris, asking her, "You fuck priests, too?" while holding a picture of her priest brother Martin (John Bennett Perry), and proceeds to brutally beat and eventually sodomize the little lady after tying her to her own bed, with darling little Kathy walking in to witness the bloody aftermath.

Needless to say, when Gordon makes his escape, Chris calls the cops and the musician is arrested later that night. Chris gets herself a nice no bullshit Italian-American feminist lawyer Carla Bondi (Anne Bancroft), who tells her client only a small fraction of rapes are reported to the place and even less result in the victimizer being jailed. When the case goes to trial, autistic psychopath Gordon pretends he was merely the victim of Chris' sadomasochistic fantasies, which she ostensibly forced him to carry out, including the destruction of her apartment. Undoubtedly, Gordon's sleazy lawyer, who namedrops the classic French BDSM novel *Story of O* (1954), is of the archetypal immoral Hebraic sort and even attempts to coerce Kathy into believing her big sis is a masochist. While being cross-examined, Chris makes the mistake of admitting she gets off to S&M and thinks about cunnilingus while attempting to look seductive for her photo shoots, which sways the opinion of the jurors. In between trial dates, Gordon sinisterly taunts Chris by calling her and playing his discordant synthesizer music while he stands naked in his apartment like a true mad man with a sadistic psychosexual affliction. Of course, Gordon is found not guilty and Chris finds it hard to adjust to her post-rape life, which costs her a number of photo jobs. One day not long after the trial, Chris takes Kathy to one of her photo shoots and when the latter wanders around the large and partially unfinished building where the photo shoot is taking place, she runs into Gordon, who is now involved with playing pretentious dissonant synth music for some preposterous dance performance art involving preteen girls. Needless to say, Gordon rapes Kathy and when Chris finds out, she goes berserk. Armed with a large shotgun she recently bought to protect herself from any more prospective rapists, Chris hunts down Gordon, who is making his getaway in his car, and kills him in cold blood. In the end, despite quite literally blowing away Gordon's balls in broad daylight, Chris is

found not guilty in court, thus demonstrating the new feminist flavor of the court system in the post-counter-culture era and the need for feminist-brainwashed rape victims to get their 'own phallus' by buying a gun and unloading bullets on their rapists.

Probably more empowering to an old pervert's libido than America's female majority population, *Lipstick* is certainly a curious piece of failed Hollywood agitprop in that even the court scenes are intrinsically eroticized, not to mention the fact that an underage female victim is given dubious 'sex appeal.' Of course, in its depiction of a bimbo top model morphing into a stoic vigilante of the ostensibly morally righteous sort, *Lipstick* almost degenerates into a dystopian sci-fi work by the time it is over, though that is quite admittedly one of the film's greatest appeals. In its vapid and tasteless tacked-on concluding depiction of feminazi ordained male-murdering retribution (including close-ups of the rapist being 'castrated' in what is undoubtedly the ultimate scene of closeted penis envy), *Lipstick* proves it is the sort of senseless estrogen-charged work that is meant to appeal to the sort of people who support Pussy Riot and the sanctimonious bourgeois sluts of SlutWalk and/or women who think prostitution and pornography are forms of female empowerment. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the 'anti-hero' of *Lipstick* is a not all that likeable chick who peddles her flesh for a living, as the film seems like it could have been actually penned by one of the various intellectual heavyweights of the SlutWalk movement. A rather vain vigilante flick for chicks with less than moist vaginas that is surely the favorite masturbation aid of certain rapist fetishists (be they male or female and/or misogynist or feminist), *Lipstick* is so bad that it actually managed to inspire not one but two Bollywood remakes (!), *Insaaf Ka Tarazu* (1980) and *Edi Nyayam Edi Dharam* (1982). An anti-Catholic film that depicts Catholic schoolgirls as dumb little sluts and nuns as stuck up hypocrites who support rapists, not to mention a work that depicts avant-garde musicians (and underground/experimental artists in general) as socially retarded rapists who suffer from acute megalomania (admittedly, I have known a number of so-called 'power electronic musicians' who fetishize rape and suffer from delusions of grandeur and whatnot), *Lipstick* is ultimately a singular low even for the slave-morality-minded culture-distorters of Hollywood, but then again it was produced by an Italian.

-Ty E

HELL RIDE
HELL RIDE

Larry Bishop* (2008) "Quentin Tarantino Presents..." isn't as boastful as it might come off. Tarantino, for once, did the inspiring as he told pal Larry Bishop it was his calling to write and direct his own motorcycle "exploitation" film. The end result was dubbed Hell Ride, which is a fitting name for this shallow romp through the desert with several bike gangs including over-the-top nudity and satanic biker gangs. The film comes off as childish and completely unnecessary. Every segment is separated by some form of biker party as aging Larry Bishop seduces some American whore in the sack. Belligerent and uninspired, Bishop is just another director trying to imitate classic exploitation cinema, failing in the process. I admit that I saw potential in this film with its cast and impressive cover art, but yet again, looks can be deceiving. The technical aspects of the film are the only things to really admire, when you're not staring at sand and listening to Madsen perform a monologue on dust. Bishop allocates a psychedelic freak-out scene to confuse the audience into thinking there's some shadowed depth behind the badass main character. The hidden son plot reminded me of a violent Indiana Jones film. I was waiting for Short Round to pop up at any time. The plot is strung together like stringy raw chicken. Minutes cannot cleverly pass without a flashback crudely thrown in your face, leaving you to decipher some ambiguous riddle that has a dud payoff. While I was watching this "Biker revenge film", it felt like I was watching a cutscene from a Grand Theft Auto game. Imagine if you will, a film that steals from Tarantino and Rodriguez and splices it together. What you get is a rehash of several rehashes. It's as stale as it sounds. The only "real" talent in this film is Eric Balfour who plays Comanche; a cold-hearted kid who packs a mean punch. This is just another one of those Hollywood films that tries to make you feel cool for buying it. This isn't a grindhouse Easy Rider, no matter how much Dennis Hopper is in it. This is a self-indulgent stew of pretentious ingredients, boiling to an unsatisfactory climax. Nothing about this film really shined at all. It's just best to stay away.

-mAQ

BULLY

Larry Clark (2001)

Larry Clark has been heralded time and time again for his stunning and raw teenage characters chasing drugs, punk rock, and lust. Through his career, he has presented us with unflinching portraits of teenage rebellion and sexual freedom, such as *KIDS*, *Ken Park*, and *Tulsa*. With the recent untimely death of Brad Renfro, I have decided to dig *Bully* out of the garbage for a review. *Bully* is one of those films based on "factual" events but presents them in such a preposterous way which is far from the real details. Instead of casting appropriate choices, Clark decided to cast hunky white males who love to take their shirts off as the lead, and to repay the audience for making Bobby a skinny white prick. The real Lisa Connelly was actually a fat chick, not skinny and sexy as we were lead to believe. Not to mention, the real Bobby was Iranian and was a muscular man, not a teeny-bopper boy who resides as a sidekick to Freddie Prinze Jr. Nothing alike. His "descent into teen sub-culture" is a failed one at that. All the characters were given these quirks to give them depth but backfire and make them seem inept. From Bobby's fascination with gay porn to Ali's fetishes, these have no effect on even the most vulnerable viewer and should be over-looked. Michael Pitt's character was, arguably, the most well-acted, albeit "fucking retarded." Pitt's character is comparable to a ten year old boy on a sugar high, but then again, knowing Larry Clark, that is probably what he was aiming for. The plot of this film involves Bobby and Marty. Marty is a loser and bends up Bobby's car so Bobby punches him in the face. Marty gets pissed off and cries about this. This leads to deep psychological damage due to his "abuse." Bobby then, "rapes" Bijou Phillips, which leads to the groups set-up of his murder. When I put rape in quotations, I mean that the rape was about as consensual as the rape in *Straw Dogs*. Larry Clark's tag line for the film "Where were the parents?" is a boisterous claim, especially coming from arthouse's sweetheart pedophile himself. The parents were probably preventing their children from watching this stagnant piece of filth. Tell me, why does Larry Clark have pointless shots zooming into a woman's crotch for no apparent reason? I'll admit, nudity is pretty awesome and so is violence, but this is past the point of ridiculous. Larry Clark has always been known for his amazing realist factors to his film. Who knew that all evidence of this would be to vanish after *KIDS* and suddenly reappear with the release of *Ken Park*? Without *Harmony Korine*, Larry Clark is nothing. He might be capable of filming disgusting Mexicans with their shirts off or take still pictures, but with video, he's not so good. Perhaps the strongest thing going for *Bully*, was the performance by Leo Fitzpatrick. Too bad he is so rare to see nowadays. Thank god I watch *My Name is Earl*. For his guest appearances, It makes that show that much worth it.

-mAQ

MARFA GIRL
MARFA GIRL

Larry Clark (2012)

Picking up where he left off with *Wassup Rockers* (2005) – a relatively light-hearted work considering the director's previous, more nihilistic efforts *Kids* (1995), *Bully* (2001), and *Ken Park* (2002) – quasi-pornographer and arthouse auteur finally releases a new feature-length work after a 7 year hiatus entitled *Marfa Girl* (2012) that once again focuses on the sexuality of Hispanic skaters and the white haters they face. Fed up with certain business aspects of film-making, Clark has decided to take a different and unconventional approach to film distribution when he released *Marfa Girl* exclusively on larryclark.com – his "first and only website" – on Tuesday, November 20th, 2012 and claims the film will never be released in theatres or on DVD, stating this way he can "cut out the crooked Hollywood distributors," which is undoubtedly a noble sentiment and certainly – whether one wants to admit it or not – the way of the future, as I for one cannot remember the last time I went the movies, nor can I recall a time when I was able to catch a Larry Clark film in the theaters. Although somewhat disillusioned with his work for the past decade or so, I make sure that I watch any film Larry Clark puts out, as his debut work *Kids* had a huge influence on me during my adolescent years, both as a budding cinephile who – being a preteen, I had only seen a handful of so-called 'independent' films – and as a skateboarder that for the first time was about to see a relatively realistic depiction of skaters in all their inglorious glory, thusly he will always remain a 'distinguished' filmmaker in my mind, even if he has yet to learn any new tricks over the years. The same can certainly be said of his newest effort *Marfa Girl*, a film that, like Clark's positively partially pornographic work *Ken Park* – which has yet to be officially released in the U.S. since its completion due to copyright issues (the producer neglected to get music rights) – features explicit and some would say gratuitous sexual imagery (erect penises, candid beaver shots), albeit to a lesser degree. Like *Kids*, *Ken Park*, and *Wassup Rockers*, *Marfa Girl* focuses on a shirtless teenage skater and his youthful experiences with sordid sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. In the spirit of *Wassup Rockers*, Clark's newest film also laments over the implied racial discrimination of a young Latino (or in this case "1/2 Latino") by law enforcement, but instead of the concrete jungles of South Central Los Angeles, *Marfa Girl* is set in the desert wasteland of a quiet yet quaint West Texas town on the Mexico–United States border. Like a loose and lurid remake and cultural update of the underrated film *The Border* (1982) directed by Tony Richardson and starring Jack Nicholson, *Marfa Girl* is most provocative in its portrayal of white-brown relations and the corruption of certain members of the border control.

A lot of things have changed in American since the release of Richardson's *The Border* some three decades ago, which is depicted most glaringly in *Marfa*

Girl by the fact that two of the three border control officers depicted in the film are Hispanic, as is the lead protagonist and virtually every other male character in the film. Of course, the brown border control bros are referred to as "coconuts" (brown on the outside and white on the inside), as prudishly insinuated by a rather pretentious and pompous bourgeois-born 'artiste' otherwise known as the "Marfa Girl" (Drake Burnette); a gross gal who flashes her pussy at teenage Tex-Mex boys, most notably the film's lead protagonist Adam. Somewhat inexplicably, virtually every single white woman is with a *mezito* man as if the film is a work of science fiction depicting a sort of dystopian (or in Clark's case, 'delightful') parallel universe. Indeed, I realize that miscegenation mania is now in vogue throughout the Occident and its bastard brother the United States, but I certainly cannot remember the last time I saw 5 foot 2 Mexican and a 5 foot 8 Europid walking hand-in-hand down the street, but then again, although almost always of a rather intrinsically 'realist' persuasion, Larry Clark's photography and filmmaking has always been more about his self-indulgent idiosyncratic fetishes than an ostensibly objective portrait of wild boys and girls as a sort of contra Paul Morrissey of the far-left and advocate of adolescent flesh of the gangly, gawky, and particularly pedomorphic sort. Generally of a fiercely and fiendishly Freudian-kitsch persuasion, Clark's films scream sexual pathology, but like Italian communist auteur Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Conformist*, *Last Tango in Paris*) before him, the voyeuristic American filmmaker passes the blame of perversion to the easy and equally clichéd target of the fascistic 'authoritarian personality,' and Marfa Girl is certainly no exception to this role to the point where one does not need a lot of speculation as to how the patently played-out plot in the film will play out. Centering on the purposeless yet promiscuous daily life of 16-year-old Latino libertine Adam (Adam Mediano) – the bastard son of an blonde Anglo woman named Mary (played by Mary Farley) and an absent and unmentioned Mexican father – who on his birthday receives some greatly gratifying fetishistic corporal punishment from his young pregnant teacher and Caucasian flesh from slutty girls (including his neighbor; an aspiring stripping/single mother of a 1/2 brown boy and the less than mystifying "Marfa Girl") aside from his Latina girlfriend, the young man's fun is ultimately hampered by a hysterical and significantly sadomasochistic white border control agent who resembles a "human pitbull" in both his physique and character named Tom (Jeremy St. James), who stalks the boy, his mother, and his 16-year-old girlfriend Inez (Mercedes Maxwell). Constantly stalking 'Mother Mary' in a variety of curiously creepy and pathetically perverted ways, including knocking on her door and showing her pictures of diseased female genitals, peeping Tom is a menacing man of the law whose foreboding presence erupts in the final minutes of *Marfa Girl*; a work of 'skin-deep' Mexicacaphilia and miscegenation monumentalization masquerading as high cinematic art.

Recycling one of the most spuriously shocking oral sex scenes from Ken Park

MARFA GIRL

and borrowing a beginners guide to the 'Frankfurt school of filmmaking,' Marfa Girl is surely an exemplary example of Larry Clark at his most artistically tasteless and vapid and personally cuckold-ish. As an apparently white man, Clark seems to get off to the idea of scrawny skateboarding Miguels filling the greasy ghetto tacos of whorish white women with their sour cream, not to mention the fact that the sole Anglo featured in Marfa Girl is a senselessly sick bisexual sado-masochistic who literally gets offs to the thought of his own father (and anyone and everyone else) beating the shit out of him. Indeed, if any semi-mainstream filmmaker epitomizes the earnestly ethno-masochistic and emasculated white (non-Semitic) white man, it is Larry Clark; an unflinching and uninhibited purveyor of teenage flesh galore. To his minor credit, Clark is one of very few filmmakers to take a marginal segment of Hispanic youth in America serious and giving a voice to the voiceless, if not in an emphatically eroticized manner not unbecoming of William S. Burroughs, except to a notably less esoteric degree. Like William E. Jones' documentary *Is It Really So Strange?* (2004) – a work about the particularly peculiar phenomenon of Latino Morrissey/The Smiths fans – Clark's *Wassup Rockers* and *Marfa Girl* only give a cursory glance at a customarily clandestine subculture, thereupon making these films somewhat spirited and spicy, if not sometimes dubious, cinematic voyages in voyeurism of the visibly vicarious sort by a filmmaker with a paradoxical and perennial case of Peter Pan syndrome.

-Ty E

THE SMELL OF US

Larry Clark (2014)

If you are an American ‘artiste’ that has some degenerate sensational garbage you want to peddle and pass off as legitimate art, your best bet is probably to go to France where artistic alchemy is the norm and worthless shit is oftentimes highly revered as provocative cutting edge art. Indeed, from the film critics turned filmmakers of the Cahiers du Cinéma like Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut that re-evaluated Hollywood trash and declared it high cinematic art of the auteur oriented sort to the frog love of obscenely obnoxious American kosher comedian Jerry Lewis (who some regard as “Akin to Godard”), the French have a curious appreciation for lowbrow yank trash that even most ‘cultivated’ Americans do not even seem understand, as if they are attempting to rationalize the fact that they have been culturally colonized by an inferior mongrel (anti)culture. Needless to say, I thought it was a match made in heaven (or hell) when I discovered that debauched American photographer turned cinematic auteur Larry Clark (*Kids*, *Wassup Rockers*) directed his most recent film in France for a French production company using a seemingly completely French cast and crew (incidentally, his previous and most pornographic flick, *Ken Park* (2002) written by Harmony Korine and co-directed by cinematographer Edward Lachman, was a American-French-Dutch coproduction). Of course, considering that France is currently at the forefront of producing pornographic arthouse films with oftentimes unsimulated sex as reflected by cinematic works by Catherine Breillat, Leos Carax, Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi, Patrice Chéreau, Alain Guiraudie, Gaspar Noé, Laurent Bouhnik, and Jean-Claude Brisseau, among various others, there is no question that Clark picked the perfect place to make a film featuring incessant sleazy sex scenes featuring scrawny and oftentimes racially ambiguous teenage skater boys that seem just as excited about trying out a new dick as they do a new skateboard deck. In fact, not only is *The Smell of Us* (2014)—the director’s last film since his somewhat mediocre racially-charged Mestizo twink fest *Marfa Girl* (2012)—arguably Clark’s most decidedly debasing and just all around sexually deranged film to date, but it is indubitably his most flagrantly faggy, as if the auteur felt he could only get away with achieving his dream of making a full-homo flick if he created it in France. If his trademark motif of shirtless armpit-scratching and ball-grabbing skater boys in his previous films was not evidence enough of Clark’s affinity for fresh young cock, the filmmaker’s latest film unequivocally demonstrates that he is hot for sweaty skater twink twat. While somewhat aimless and devoid of a storyline like most of Clark’s films, the film’s most prominent subplot involves a doomed love affair between an emotionally detached and exceedingly epicene skater boy with serious mommy issues and his gawky Quadroon-like comrade who is emotionally tortured by the fact that his best friend sells his bunghole to dirty old men but

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refuses to be his lover or even have sex with him. Part skater crypto-porno and part hysterical homo romantic tragedy, *The Smell of Us* is, for better or worse, the sort of joyously debasing and rudely in-your-face art-porn trainwreck film that only a dirty old man like Clark could have assembled.

Notably, French right-wing theorist Guillaume Faye—a controversial politically incorrect thinker who, as a man that briefly worked in the porn industry, can hardly be described as a prude—describes in his book *Sexe et Dévoisement* (2011) aka *Sex and Deviance* how he believes that his forsaken nation and its media are plagued by what he describes as “general sexual obsession.” Undoubtedly a superlatively sick sort of “general sexual obsession” certainly plagues the fiercely fucked frog purgatory of Clark’s film where a group of teenage skaters become collectively involved in both straight and gay-for-pay prostitution after two of their friends happen upon an escort website while watching internet porn. Featuring an extremely pedomorphic male quasi-lead who is so irreparably psychologically damaged that, despite being more or less a child, is incapable of initiating a real emotional relationship with the best friend he loves despite the fact that he allows dirty old man to brutally sodomize him for quick cash, *The Smell of Us*—a unwaveringly sleazy piece of fairly literally titled sinema that is unmistakably a Clark product—is arguably the director’s darkest and most disturbing and damning film yet as the sort of film that John Wayne Gacy would have loved to stroke his wrinkly old choad to. Indeed, while there might be no mention of a teenage AIDS epidemic like in *Kids* (1995) or a brutal drug-addled orgy of braindead murder and mayhem like in *Bully* (2001), the forsaken post-Reichian Parisian youth of Clark’s latest film have not even the slightest chance of hope or redemption and the worst part is that they do not even seem to realize it as they are too concerned with ordering the latest new skate deck or surfing porn sites to ever consider that there might be more to life than skating and fucking. Somehow both decidedly dejected and enthralling, the film is probably the best example of Clark’s expertise when it comes to both exploiting and exposing the forlorn fates of a group of supremely shortsighted and oversexualized frog fuck-ups whose self-destructive sexual promiscuity seems to be their only true reason to live. Also, somewhat ironically, despite being an arthouse flick where the American auteur demonstrates his ostensible artistic cred by making a film in France, the flick confirms the vaguely misguided American belief that all Frenchman are faggots and all frog broads are lecherous and cuntty whores, as *The Smell of Us* ultimately reveals Clark to be the stereotypical American philistine. Listed as one of the Top Ten films of 2015 in *Cahiers du Cinéma* and beloved by none other than John ‘Pope of Trash’ Waters, Clark’s film might even be described as underrated in the sense that it more or less remains unreleased in the United States and is more interesting and entertaining than the majority of critically acclaimed films that have been defecated out of Hollywood over the past couple years.

Rather fittingly considering the course of the director's filmmaking career as cinema history's foremost skater boy fetishist with a somewhat sexually aberrant form of Peter Pan syndrome, *The Smell of Us* begins playfully enough with footage of Clark, who portrays a largely inanimate wino weasel named 'Rocker,' lying in the middle of a Paris city center while a dozen or so skaters ollie over his beat-up elderly body. Even though he rarely speaks or does much of anything aside from vomit and mumble incoherent gibberish, the skaters seem to consider 'Rocker' to be a sort of respected mascot for their crew, as if they subconsciously realize that they too will one day reach such a patently pathetic and tragic state if they happen to have the honor of living long enough. Acting as a sort of vaguely enigmatic Greek chorus to the film, Michael Pitt, who previously starred in Clark's *Bully* as a borderline mentally retarded teenage sex beast, portrays a dirty unnamed street musician whose all-but-totally-insufferable blues guitar and singing playing provides a strangely fitting soundtrack to the loser lives of the skaters depicted in the film as indicated by his lyrics like "Streetwalking zombie." Undoubtedly the central character of the film is a boyish twink with blond curls named 'Math' (Lukas Ionesco) who spends the beginning of the film closely inhaling the sexual fumes of a male friend while he fucks a lecherous high yellow negress named Céline (Eva Menis-Mercier) during a party. When Math goes to a large rave later that night, he allows his cock to be freely groped by a creepy bearded fat man and then, as if aroused as a result of being briefly molested, proceeds to smell the river of sweaty male bodies that surround him. Despite the fact that he is clearly a latent cocksucker that loves taking in the youthful BO of his fellow skater boys, Math is in denial of the fact that he has the hots for his best friend JP (Hugo Behar-Thinières)—a rather racially ambiguous chap with a strange phenotype that hints that he has an unfortunate combination of European, negro, and Arab blood—who is rather upfront and forthright about his undying homoerotic feelings. Instead of giving into his fairly obvious gay feelings for JP, Math opts to follow the lead of some of his non-white comrades and makes the ultimately psychologically catastrophic mistake of beginning to peddle his little man-pussy to largely creepy and physically grotesque old homos that clearly have a predilection towards young and relatively despoiled adolescent meat. Indeed, while there is no indication that he is hurting for money or has some deep dark daddy complex, Math decides to become a gigolo that, unlike most of his friends, sells his flesh to old men instead of old women.

Considering there is really only one girl in their group, the skater crew in the film is what one might described as a real 'sausage fest,' though none of these young men would have trouble getting pussy from their little female friend if they actually wanted it. Indeed, despite being a hot sassy little frogette bitch with sensual lips, fairly nice tits, and wildly lecherous eyes that practically beg to be buggered, virtually none of the skaters boys seem interested in sexually

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ravaging skater slut Maria (Diane Rouxel), who dumps her asshole boyfriend 'Pacman' (Théo Cholbi)—a sadistic bully who beats and robs his 'friends'—at the beginning of the film and then begins looking for new dick. Aside from the fact that they are afraid that her (ex)boyfriend Pacman will beat their asses, the skater boys do not seem to be interesting in sexually servicing Maria because they seem more interested in fucking each other when they are not being fucked by less than youthful paying customers. Like all her friends, Maria loves smoking fat blunts and is prone to seduce her friends while stoned, including gay boy JP, who she coerces into fucking her after getting him to dance with her naked while Math gets lost in a videogame. As Maria tells Toff (Terin Maxime)—a young skater that films everything his friends do, including skating, sleazy sexual encounters, and various pretty crimes they commit—regarding the asexual nature of young French boys in a line of dialogue that seems to say a lot about writer/director Clark, "...it is 2013. All the guys are gay." While Toff naturally denies he is a homo, that does not stop him from later filming Math being violently sodomized by an agitated bald john that slaps him in the face while screaming "wake up." Indeed, as JP states of his friend to Maria in regard to Math's tendency to fall into a quasi-comatose state at the strangest of times, "Sometimes he disappears," to which she replies, "It's like talking to a retard." Of course, the more Math allows himself to be anally pillaged by predatory perverts, the more he succumbs to a sort of impenetrable catatonic state that especially disturbs loverboy JP. Naturally, Math's psychological deterioration is not just the result of him being a self-loathing homo, or so the film eventually reveals.

While she might be a dangerously lecherous little lady with an insatiable thirst for cock who complains regarding her mostly seemingly gay male friends, "I'm tired of the stereotypical skaters who believe they have swag," Maria eventually becomes quite concerned with the fact that her male cohorts are selling their cornholes for cash and attempts to intervene. Indeed, when Maria follows Math one night and discovers that he is about to peddle his flesh to an exceedingly effeminate and nearly elderly frog pervert with similarly curly hair that looks like he could be his grandfather, she calls JP in the hope that he will come to the rescue of their mutual friend. When JP arrives at the old john's apartment, he discovers that Math, who is clearly not concerned with the health or mortality of his clients, has caused the pervert to pass out by giving him an overdose of wine, Viagra, and various other drugs. When JP attempts to proclaim his love to Math by telling him that he will "follow him anymore" and kissing him, the mentally damaged teenage gigolo punches him in the face and then shouts in a less than believable fashion, "I'm just gay for the bucks! Just for the money." Naturally hurt that his love has been so rudely and crudely rebuffed, JP yells at Math, "you're damn toxic. You're shit" and then declares he is heading "south" to the assumed homeland of his maternal racial kinsmen (while JP's father is revealed to be white, it is quite clear that his mother, who is not in the picture, is not). After

JP leaves, Math has a large party at the unconscious John's lavish apartment, which is completely destroyed by the young skaters. Naturally, when the John wakes up the next day and discovers that his flat has been completely wrecked, most of his possessions have been either destroyed or stolen, and someone has driven a large piece of glass into his flesh, he is more than a little bit irked, but he is unable to do anything about it since virtually all of the culprits are already long gone.

When lovelorn loverboy JP makes one last ditch effort to simultaneously save Math from his own self-destruction and declare his love for him, he is disturbed to find his friend being more or less molested by his own mother (Dominique Frot of Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury's *À l'intérieur* (2007) aka *Inside*), who both looks and acts like a sexually sadistic witch as she rants and raves in a raunchy fashion about the innate selfishness and sex appeal of her son while the large pulsating veins on her chest and neck seem like they could explode at any second. Naturally, after describing her own son as sexually "irresistible" and doubting his self-proclaimed love for him, JP becomes rather disturbed by Math's mother's behavior and eventually leaves while in great emotional distress, thus leaving his exceedingly emotionally forlorn friend a victim to a most disturbing scene of mother-son incest that ultimately reveals the central source as to why the male protagonist is incapable of love and is so emotionally and sexually disturbed. As a troubled young man that is heartbroken that his one true love will not reciprocate his love and instead sells himself to dirty old men that clearly have nothing to offer to him in terms of love and sexual satisfaction, JP throws in the towel on life and opts to commit suicide by passively jumping off a large ledge in a pretentious art gallery where his much hated white stepmother (Valérie Maes)—notably the only parent in the entire film that seems concerned with their children's self-destructive behavior, even though she is not his actual biological progenitor—works. In the end, the surviving skaters sans Math demonstrate their nihilistic spirit has not died despite JP's suicide by collectively taking part in a display of mindless destruction by destroying and setting a car on fire, which perennial cameraman Tuff dutifully films. Somewhat bizarrely, the closing shot of the film looks almost exactly the same as the final shot of the late great Christoph Schlingensiefel's satirical horror-comedy *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* (1990) aka *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* aka *Blackest Heart*, but somehow I doubt Clark has ever seen that film.

Featuring boys rubbing their sweaty balls with their hands and then wiping them across their friend's face, a young skater selling a used cum-filled condom to a bearded old bear, a girl pissing in a bucket in public as urine drips off her meaty labia, an elderly pervert sucking the toes of a teenage boy and then using said toes to violently fuck his own nostrils with glee, a boy licking his computer screen as he watches another boy masturbate on webcam, and various other largely ugly and fetishistic displays of aberrant sexual dysfunction that probably give

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perennially lascivious Larry Clark a giant Viagra-induced hard-on, *The Smells Of Us* ultimately unwittingly reveals a number of obvious reasons as to why Muslims hate France and why the French have become so pathetically passive, inept, and otherwise incapacitated when it comes fighting the Islamic terrorists that freely lurk around the no-go-zone areas of Paris. Indeed, if Clark's film has anything to do with reality when it comes to French society and especially French youth, one can only assume that Frogland is on the brink of both a racial and sexual apocalypse that is only being sped up by primitive jihadist degenerates that should not be anywhere near the country in the first place. Featuring a cast that covers all of the colors of the mostly dark racial rainbow, including mongrel actors that defy any discernible racial type, the film also unwittingly celebrates the surrealist racial nightmare that is postcolonial France where the degenerate descendants of the colonized are now engaging in what one might describe as reverse colonization that can only end badly for all parties involved.

Like with many of his films, Clark attempts to spread the patently absurd idea in *The Smell of Us* that all males are bisexual and that every man has an inner faggot, but as Guillaume Faye noted in his book *Sex and Deviance* regarding this sick and outrageously libelous propagandistic lie and its relation to other big leftist lies, "One of the basic ideas of the whole homosexual lobby and homophile ideology is that everybody is bisexual by birth and that homosexuality is a lifestyle choice like any other, purely cultural and not indicative of any inherent difference. This idea is not merely false but pernicious. Such a mental perversion is a symptom of the most extreme development of egalitarian dogma, that is to say, the negation of natural differences between humans. Not only do races not exist but, taking things to their logical conclusion, neither do the sexes or sexual attraction. It is the androgynous reign of homogeneity and undifferentiated uniformity. Those who serve up these hallucinations do not believe them for a second, but it is of the very character of totalitarian language to not believe what one says." Of course, what makes Clark's different from the Hollywood and mainstream media homophile propagandists is that he seems to actually genuinely believe that all people are sexually malleable and that every teenage boy dreams of being buggered by their best friend, or so one would assume after watching his fiercely foul smelling yet nonetheless fairly entertaining frog skater flick. While Clark has children, one might naturally assume he was a flaming faggot simply by watching his films, especially when one considers Faye's remark, "Heterosexuals do not put their own sexuality at the centre of their personality or their works; homosexuals do. It is the very definition of obsession: one is a homosexual before one is oneself. The homosexual's sexuality governs him, precisely because it is pathological and non-reproductive."

To Clark's credit, *The Smell of Us* make great use of ancient French architecture and sculptures, which seems somewhat absurd when contrasted with the teenage sexual savages that loiter around such classic artistic works that were

clearly made in saner times when French leaders still sought world domination instead of flooding their nation with culturally corrosive, low IQ aliens from the third world that do not take too kindly to fag, dykes, and other sexual degenerates. Undoubtedly, Clark's incorporation of various ruined angel and child statues also gives the film a surprisingly eerily tragic feel, as if these ancient works of art are looking down in sadness at what has become of France and especially French youth. Additionally, Clark included a number of shots of vintage bourgeois family photos of elegantly dressed individuals as if to provide rather obvious yet effective stark contrast to the dysfunctional non-families that exist in France today (indeed, it is no coincidence that only one of the character has anything resembling a traditional family, albeit with a stepmother as opposed to a real biological mother). One could certainly argue that Math's mother—a seemingly senile yet somehow sexually savage bitch of a witch of the unabashedly incestuous son-sucking-and-fucking sort—is symbolic of France as a whole as a once powerful empire that has degenerated into the apocalyptic dementia-ridden and sexually dysfunctional motherland that it is today that welcomes all the bastards and rabble of the world. Indeed, instead of great cocksuckers like Cocteau, who was fairly restrained when it came to his gay pederastic tendencies, France now has the luxury of ugly Americans creating pornography disguised as art featuring lurid interracial twink action, but then again I am sure André Gide, who had a weakness for underage brown boys, would have loved Clark's film. Then again, there is probably more truth in two seconds of one of Clark's gratuitous crotch shots than in all 180-minutes of Tunisian turd Abdellatif Kechiche's patently preposterous lily-licker fantasy *La Vie d'Adèle – Chapitres 1 & 2* (2013) aka *Blue Is the Warmest Colour*. In terms of classic frog flicks about prostitution, *The Smell of Us* undoubtedly makes Godard's classic *Vivre sa vie: Film en douze tableaux* (1962) aka *My Life to Live* seem like an archaic Lifetime movie by comparison in terms of sheer energy and audacity (though, to Godard's credit, he also played the dual role of the director-pimp when he directed his then-wife Anna Karina in that film). Indeed, Clark may be an odious sexual deviant of sorts that has made a living out of exploiting mostly screwed-up and oftentimes drug-addled adolescents during their most vulnerable and unflattering moments, but I cannot think of a more able filmmaker when it comes to capturing the volatility, spontaneity, sexual goofiness, and raw energy of youth. Additionally, for all the film's ugliness, it manages to capture the beautiful spirit of youth, which is something that I think that most people can admire, even if they do not want to admit it. Notably, the great reluctant fascist turned meta-nihilist philosopher Emil Cioran once described his adopted hometown of Paris as an "apocalyptic garage," which is indubitably both a literally and figuratively immaculate way to describe the foredoomed urban pandemonium of perversity depicted in Clark's film. Slightly more than just an all the more debauched frog *Kids*, *The Smell of Us* is an unsentimental look at some of the youngest and most irredeemable

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members of a dying nation as seen from the somewhat cockeyed perception of an American Vietnam War vet who sure loves his shirtless boys, even if they are not exactly worthy of love, let alone sympathy. In the end, for various reasons that relate to both the film and my own skateboardcentric youth in relation to said film (incidentally, I initially discovered Clark and Korine due to my juvenile love of skateboarding and not because of cinephilia, which came much later), I cannot help but recall French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud's words, "Idle youth, enslaved to everything; by being too sensitive I have wasted my life."

-Ty E

BONE

Larry Cohen (1972)

Out of all the films that can be described as being even vaguely belonging to the Blaxploitation subgenre, *Bone* (1972) aka *Dial Rat for Terror* aka *Dial Rat* aka *Beverly Hills Nightmare* aka *Bone: A Bad Day in Beverly Hills* aka *Housewife* directed by kosher cult filmmaker and perennial screenwriter Larry Cohen (*It's Alive*, *The Stuff*) is probably the most iconoclastic, idiosyncratic, and overtly anti-Anglo. Indeed, as Cohen's directorial debut, *Bone* is a sort of satirical Blaxploitation take on Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1969) of the more anti-WASP than anti-bourgeois type meets Joe Orton's Off-Broadway play *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1964) as a post-counter-culture flick that follows a gigantic jolly yet mischievous negro as he robs and terrorizes an ostensibly wealthy used car salesman and his younger blonde trophy wife in a work that acts as a sort of allegory for the decline of white male heterosexual power, as a result of various slave-morality-ridden social movements of the late-1960s, including Civil Rights, feminism, sexual liberation, and various other counter-culture groups/movements. Indeed, *Bone* is, if nothing else, a sick Semitic fantasy flick where the director seems to vent his rage over the fact that WASPs were once so terribly mean that they would not have allowed his family to enter their banal country club. As a superlatively spiteful hate piece that depicts Nordic males as spineless bullshitters and psychopaths who steal money from their wives and also depicts blonde women as half-braindead gold-digging whores that secretly long to be brutally raped by big black bucks, Cohen's work reveals the sort of contemptible lows that certain Hebrews are willing to go to undermine Aryan manhood, perfectly exemplifying the sort of subversive Semitic behavior that led to actions like Kristallnacht and Bergen-Belsen. Arguably Cohen's most intricate, anarchic, and artistically merited effort to date, the film is like the closest thing to a Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (1967) of Blaxploitation cinema, though it would probably be more accurate to describe it as a WASPploitation work directed by a member of the post-WWII Judaic plutocracy. A work where a rat acts as a catalyst to all the events that transpire, *Bone* gives the viewer the impression that Cohen may have watched Fritz Hippler's *Der ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew* and took the Nazi propaganda film's decidedly degrading comparison between the Judaic tribe and packs of disease-carrying rodents to heart.

As noted in a prologue at the beginning of the film: "The year is 1970. The most powerful nation on earth wages war against one of the poorest countries—which it finds impossible to defeat. And in this great and affluent nation exists its smallest richest city...and it is called Beverly Hills." Opening with a surrealist Arrabal-esque scene of a pseudo-commercial of (anti)protagonist Bill (Andrew Duggan) attempting to advertise totaled cars containing the bloody and mangled corpses of young hippies inside, one gets the impression that the Anglo-Saxon

BONE

car salesman is a figurative dealer of death and destruction (Cohen's website describes the character as a symbol of, "The Establishment, the oblivious leader of a dying regime that can't see the protest for the pleas"). Bill lives with his much younger blonde sub-MILF wife Bernadette (Joyce Van Patten) in a fancy house in Beverly Hills that was built in 1929 by the family of William Randolph Hearst and was once owned by Hollywood's first Western megastar, Tom Mix (apparently, the house, which was then owned by director Cohen himself, was indeed built by the Hearst family and lived in by cult director Samuel Fuller around the time he directed 1951 anti-Korean War flick *Steel Helmet*). Later that day, Bill dives into his swimming pool and has his and wifey's entire day more or less ruined upon finding a rat floating in the drain. Luckily, a gigantic negro in a jumpsuit named Bone (played by black Israelite Yaphet Kotto of Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar* (1978) and Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979)) randomly appears out of nowhere like a genie in a bottle and fishes the rat out of the pool. While Bill and Bernadette offer the initially seemingly servile negro a tip, Bone really has a bone to pick with the rich white folks and wants to rob them of their wealth and possibly rob the white woman of her pussy. While going through the car salesman's papers and documents, Bone discovers, to the dismay of Bernadette, that Bill is not only on his third mortgage (which he forged his wife's signature to get) and has no real physical cash on tap, but also that he has a secret bank account containing \$5000 that he has hidden from his discernibly moronic wife. After declaring his intention of raping Bernadette if he fails to do what he tells him to, Bone demands that Bill pick up the five grand from the bank within the next hour while he holds Bernadette hostage at the home. If Bill does not come back in time, Bone claims he will cut Bernadette's throat with a gold letter opener. Of course, since he really does not give a shit about his trophy wife, Bill decides to take his sweet time on the bank trip, especially after meeting two very generous, if not exceedingly eccentric, women. As is quite apparent, Bill is contemplating whether or not to let his wife die.

After going to the bank and meeting a hippie broad played by Jeannie Berlin who he will later bone, Bill goes to a bar and is approached by an eccentric old broad named 'X-Ray Lady' (Brett Somers), who compliments him on the sleazy TV commercials he makes for his used car business. When the X-Ray Lady remarks her love of the mascot German Shepherd featured in the commercials, Bill demonstrates his deep-seated hatred of heebs by coldheartedly stating, "Every time I looked at that mutt all I could think of was his grandfather chasing across the yard of some concentration camp biting some Jewish ass. Ad agency nightmare." After going on a bizarre rant regarding a conspiracy involving dentists taking x-rays of her late beloved's teeth that may or may not have resulted in his premature death, the X-Ray Lady saves Bill from shame by paying for his bar tab after he dubiously claims he left his wallet in the car. After Bill's rendezvous with X-Ray Lady, Bill hangs out with a lecherous flower child/hustling hoe named

'The Girl' (played by archetypical 'Jewish American Princess' Jeannie Berlin of the Heartbreak Kid and Sheila Levine Is Dead and Living in New York), who has used the concept of 'free love' as a way to swindle men out of their money so she can support her lazy hippie loser lifestyle. Despite fantasizing that Bill is the same smelly old man that molested her as a little girl, 'The Girl' has sex with the malodorous used car salesman, though he fantasizes about making love to a used car while humping the young and rather sexually aggressive hippie. Aside from doing the seemingly unthinkable by humping a hippie, Bill, who hates peaceniks and bohemians, also has a flower child son who pulled a Midnight Express and is now serving a six year sentence in prison in Spain for smuggling dope out of Tangiers. Of course, Bill and Bernadette lie and tell Bone that their prodigal son is a hero who is overseas killing gooks in the Vietnam War.

Since Bill is late with the money due to the fact he decided to waste so much time banging the beatnik broad, Bone decides to rape Bernadette and while ripping her clothes off, he states, "I'm just a big black buck that is doing what is expected of him." Ironically, the big boisterous black buck Bone cannot 'rise to the occasion' while attempting to sexually pillage the hysterical cracker cunt, which largely has to do with the fact that the 'The Nigga Mystique' has died in America due to Civil Rights and the rise of the black bourgeoisie and release of horrendous Hollywood movies like Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967). Indeed, Bone is a walking and talking anachronism who is nothing more than an outmoded sexual fantasy for Bernadette, who is quite upset when the nefarious chuckling negro fails to force himself upon her. Indeed, despite his lack of negro sexual prowess, Bernadette, who has now developed a sort of fucked feminist mentality, decides to be Bone's whore and plots to kill her hubby. As Bernadette explains to Bill after hunting him down with the help of Bone, she plans to kill him and use the insurance money to fund her miscegenation-based future with the black buck. While Bill agrees to be a cuckold who will fund Bernadette and Bone's raunchy relationship, they prefer to have the insurance money. Unfortunately, after Bernadette joyously murders Bill by burying his head in the sand, black brotha Bone, who like most homeboys who get what they are after from a cracker chick, disappears, thus destroying the bourgeois housewife turned mariticide feminist's fantasy illusions.

A film where a dumb blonde bourgeois slut housewife longs for being raped by a savage negro, a sleazy used car salesman with 'anti-Semitic tendencies' dreams of defiling a car while being defiled by a jaded Jewish American hippie princess, and an impotent buck negro cons a dumb white rich bitch into killing her hubby and running away with the insurance money, Bone is a work where virtually every character is some other character's fantasy figure, but ultimately it is really auteur Larry Cohen's fucked fantasy and big kosher wet dream of a post-white-gentile-male-ruled America where even the negro untermensch can kill whitey, rape his wife, and not feel afraid to do so. Of course, as the rape statistics for the

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United States and Europe demonstrates, black-on-white rape has only become all the more vogue since the film's release, but I digress. Hebraic anti-Aryan sentiment aside, *Bone* is unquestionably Cohen's most ambitious, experimental, and artsy fartsy work to date, which is certainly something the director himself agrees with. Indeed, in the *Blue Underground* DVD release of the film, Cohen confesses in the audio commentary regarding the film: "This was truly the kind of movie I wanted to make and if this picture had gotten the acceptance that I dreamed of it getting, it would have changed my whole career around. I mean, this is the kind of pictures I would have done...these very eccentric, individualistic stories." Of course, the film was not a success and Cohen had to whore himself to the generic Blaxploitation genre with the much more conventional effort *Black Caesar* (1972), which proved to be a big enough success that it spawned the predictably inferior sequel *Hell Up in Harlem* (1973) and the rest was history, with the director churning out a couple more worthwhile efforts, though he has spent most of his career penning screenplays. Unquestionably, next to similarly themed works like *Fight for Your Life* (1977) and *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* (1979), *Bone* is certainly the best of the hate-fueled and Hebrew-concocted 'hate whitey' exploitation pieces.

-Ty E

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Larry Cohen (1984)

The sleazy B-movies of indie horror auteur Larry Cohen have always intrigued me, but I have always found myself equally repelled by them in one way or another. From the venomous anti-Anglo hatred that permeates throughout his pseudo-blaxploitation (it is really an Aryan-ploitation work) flick *Bone* (1972) to the mind-numbingly blatant satiric anti-consumerism message of *The Stuff* (1985), Larry Cohen's pretensions towards making quasi-intellectual cult masterpieces is – to say the least – quite silly. The other night I had the opportunity to watch one of Cohen's less well known works – *Special Effects* (1984) – an erotic psychological thriller that wishes it was Hitchcockian in nature, but instead, it seems more like a rip-off of a rip-off, as if some totally mediocre filmmaker attempted to create a low-budget Brian De Palma clone. Despite the less than spectacular quality and special effects of *Special Effects*, I can say without straining my honesty that it is now my favorite Larry Cohen film. At the most superficial level, I enjoyed *Special Effects* because it features my favorite junky renaissance woman Zoe Lund. After first seeing Lund's performance in Abel Ferrara's *Ms. 45* (1981), it didn't take me long to realize that she was the most beautiful woman to have ever grace the torn screens of gritty grindhouse theaters. After all, most exploitation actresses are a dime a dozen with acting talents that fall below that of your average porn star (albeit, many were actual porn stars). Of course, I found *Special Effects* interesting for other reasons; namely the way in which Cohen seems to glorify the film's villain; a filmmaker – who like himself – exploits the most archaic instincts of the viewer just to make an extra buck.

During the beginning of *Special Effects*, the viewer is introduced to psychopathic filmmaker Christopher Neville – a man who cites Abraham Zapruder – the man that accidentally documented the assassination of JFK with his handy 8mm camera – as his greatest influence as a filmmaker. Saint Christopher describes Zapruder as “honest Abe”, but the filmmaker is not so honest himself. Neville – a man whose filmmaking career is on the steady decline – decides that killing a girl from the country (who he certainly sees as disposable white trash) and making a borderline *Cinéma vérité* film about the murder (replacing the girl's husband as the killer) will reboot his plummeting filmmaking career. Neville kind of reminds me of John Landis, as he also put people's lives in jeopardy for the sake of making sensational smut. During the filming of *Twilight Zone* (1982), horror/comedy hack Landis caused the death of Vic Morrow (Jennifer Jason Leigh's father) and two small Asian children due to his negligence while directing the film. Of course, in Larry Cohen's *Special Effects* – the murderous filmmaker is fictional, yet it is quite apparent that Larry Cohen seems to sympathize with his anti-hero, as if he is living through his invented character. After all, Cohen surely does not identify with the intellectually handicapped

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female protagonist nor her idiotic (yet well meaning) Southern husband. Like Larry Cohen, the killer film director featured in *Special Effects* is also of the Jewish persuasion. In fact, Cohen equipped the film with insider Judaic dialogue. For example, the deadly director states at one point of the film (out of nowhere) to one of his film actresses, "Tell them you went to Israel to work in a Kibbutz or something." Although Jerusalem is technically the Judaic capital of the world; the setting of *Special Effects* – New York City – is no doubt the unofficial Jewish capital of the world. The film also features a variety of Jewish stereotypes that would put most Nazi propaganda to shame. Filmmaker Christopher Neville demoralizes and enslaves every person that has the misfortune of crossing his conspiring path. Neville believes that the "glorification of a nobody" is what is hot in Hollywood and he plans to capitalize off of that trend. Neville also does not shy away from saying "murder, madness; that is what stars are made of nowadays." As you learn in the film, Neville not only murders an ambitious actress, but he also frames the victim's husband – a good ol' southern goy boy – into inheriting the blame.

Despite being a sub-par horror work, *Special Effects* – a film with a somewhat misleading title – still manages to titillate and invigorate the viewer. Thankfully, *Special Effects* lacks the intellectual pretensions that are so commonly associated with conman Cohen's work. It is not often that one gets to see a film where Hollywood hack filmmakers are portrayed as parasitic pimps and enthusiastic murderers, thus, *Special Effects* makes for a fairly therapeutic and equally liberating work. In fact, *Special Effects* features a story worthy of Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon*. Although Larry Cohen never obtained the real-life prestige that fictional psychopath filmmaker Christopher Neville acquired; he at least got the opportunity to live through that character via *Special Effects*. Unfortunately, Bone does not pay a visit to Christopher Neville, but, of course, he is a fellow defiler of white women, thus a man after his own heart. If you're looking to watch a smashing and equally trashy kind of horror film, *Special Effects* will provide one with a special (albeit incriminating) experience for those that still doubt that lack of nobility that is the norm in Hollywood.

-Ty E

THE LAST WINTER

Larry Fessenden (2006)

Spoilers An unknown friend mentioned this Weinstein produced Blockbuster exclusive and the idea of this seemed so familiar. I do remember hearing about this film; all the hype, all the positive reviews. The Last Winter is the latest eco-horror film. After attempting to enjoy the abysmal The Happening, I was welcoming a change of scenery with open arms. The Last Winter was what I actually wanted out of horror. The setting was bleak and a glistening white. The tundra really does make for an environment perfect for crafting true horror. We all know what lies in the dark, but what hides in the open is worse. Just like [REC] before it, one scene managed to scare the hell out of me. This is a remarkable achievement which immediately made me swoon with affection towards this film. The presence was bold and the mood was a grave reminder of the terrors to come further down the road. What really worked was taking the "Global Warming scare" and using it as a pawn to escalate the realism that works so well in the screenplay. That is, until the last half-an-hour. Things only go downhill from here. The mysterious force that plagues the crew makes a startling and horrifying debut. You're shocked to find out that no one seems to realize what you're seeing, but that's the idea. You have to "believe" in order to see them, or be infected. Or any of the thousand other theories that could explain this otherworldly event. My point is, nothing is explained. If you are seeking enlightenment on the plot, tread elsewhere. The plot device used is as vast and empty as the filming location itself. The Last Winter is relatable to The Thing. This in its own right is an amazing accomplishment. However, the ending is too open-ended. Forgive me for sounding like I'm close minded, but when the plot involves -Ghost Zombie Eskimo Moose- I'd like a bit of information to assure me that what I'm witnessing is sincere. That, and the director completely ripped off 28 Days Later for the ending. What starts off as an amazing thriller with many moments that have brought shivers to my spine and a surplus orchestral score that is nothing but hair raising, I expected a bigger payoff. What I got was cheated and scammed. I don't care if The Last Winter is an eco issue or Native American spiritual propaganda, I still feel horrible for having to hate this movie due to the last 30 minutes. In all honesty though, The first half comes highly recommended.

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HITLER'S JEWISH SOLDIERS
HITLER'S JEWISH SOLDIERS

Larry Price* (2006)

Hitler's Jewish Soldiers is a documentary based on a book of the same name. The film (or digital video) features a variety of interviews with a variety of Germans of Jewish descent who fought for Germany in World War II. These men were classified as Mischling by the German government. Over 150,000 men of Jewish descent fought in Hitler's army (compare that to the 600,000 full Jews who lived in Germany before Hitler's rise to power). Germans that had two Jewish Grandparents were considered Mischling in the first degree and those with one Jewish grandparent were labeled Mischling in the second degree. Virtually all Mischling were Roman Catholic as the majority of Jews that converted to Christianity decided the pope was their fuehrer of choice. The majority of ethnic Germans were of the Protestant faith (obviously). The fact that the majority of Jewish to Christian converts were Roman Catholics is interesting as virtually all of the main Nazi leaders (including Adolf Hitler) came from Roman Catholic backgrounds. The faith of many international crypto-Jews such as the Spanish Sephardic Marrano's also decided to outwardly practice Roman Catholicism (although practicing Judaism in secret). 1/2 Jewish Aryan poster boy Werner Goldberg

1/2 Jew Horst Geitner was awarded both the Iron Cross Second Class and the Silver Wound Badge

Hitler's Jewish Soldiers features interviews with various elderly Mischling and their own experiences with being Jews in Hitler's Army. Many of these individuals still consider themselves Jewish today. One of these men has even become a Zionist extremist who spouts the Jewish hate slur Goyim (meaning cattle in reference to all gentiles). None of these men seem reluctant in telling their own stories and experiences in the German Wehrmacht. The documentary also takes a look at German generals and other prominent military leaders of Jewish descent. German field Marshall Erhard Milch (who was half Jewish) is even exposed as someone that used Jewish slave labor.

Of course, you can expect a very politically correct angle taken in Hitler's Jewish Soldiers as not to offend certain individuals. The documentary even mentions how Hitler would have probably killed all the Mischling after the war if Germany had won the war, although the film offers no evidence to back up those claims. This would be highly unlikely as many people in the German government and military with prominent positions were of Jewish descent. The fact of the matter is that Jewish and German relations in Nazi Germany were much more complicated than Steven Spielberg or Eli Wiesel would want to admit.

1/2 Jewish Nazi Field Marshal Erhard Milch

Hitler's Jewish Soldiers has a fairly simple and almost amateur construction. The real wealth of the documentary is in it's exceptional interviews and stories.

The documentary is more of a companion piece to the book written by American military historian Bryan Mark Rigg. Do yourself a favor and dilute the propaganda you learned at the unscholarly American public school you attend. Hitler's Jewish Soldiers is a testament to the complexity of history. There is no such thing as objective history so it's up to the individual to do their own research and develop their own interpretations.

-Ty E

CARNY TALK
CARNY TALK

Larry Wessel* (1995)

As a child, one of my favorite pastimes was tooling around on rides at various amusement parks and traveling carnivals. At some point in my early childhood, I began to take notice of the carnys who slavishly and grudgingly operated the rides. I was somewhat surprised that these individuals were in stark contrast to rides themselves, as they seemed hopelessly misanthropic, bitter, and – in some cases – quite violently vulgar. I also vaguely remember one incident as a child where an extremely obnoxious carny yelled at me and all the other kids who were walking through a room of distorted mirrors to “hurry up” as if we were a pack of feral dogs. By the time I was in high school, the mystical and fantastic appeal of amusement parks had worn thin, but I still attended them out of a sense of obligation to family tradition. During a summer vacation when I was in my late teens, a friend and I decided to ride a popular haunted house ride on an ocean-front boardwalk. While cruising through the moderately dilapidated haunted house, a gigantic plastic bat dropped from the ceiling and my curious friend innocently touched it. Before we knew what happened, a thoroughly exacerbated carny startled us by jumping out from amongst the dark shadows and said to my friend with an almost indecipherable slur, “how would you like it if I HIT YOU on the head!?” Naturally, my friend and I thought the carny was a humorless sub-literate prick, but looking back on that event, it was indubitably a hilarious affair. Due to my countless carnival memories, I was reasonably delighted to receive a copy of *Carny Talk: And Other Amazing Anecdotes* starring Robert Williams and directed by Avant-garde documentary filmmaker Larry Wessel. In the documentary, ex-carny Robert Williams gives the viewer a one-man show where the cryptic-world of carnys is luridly and intimately exposed in a manner never seen before.

Immediately upon watching *Carny Talk*, I noticed that ex-carny Robert Williams somewhat spoke and looked like he could be the long lost brother of Jimmy Stewart. Of course, while Jimmy Stewart is regarded as one of Hollywood's greatest icons and a charmer loved by multiple generations of moviegoers, Robert Williams represents the darker and seedier side of lowbrow American entertainment that has been given next to nil credit by its patronizing patrons. In *Carny Talk*, Robert Williams gives the ultimate inside story on his escapades as a carny libertine who adventurously lived life in the moment. Had I read Williams' anecdotes in a mere book, I would have probably found such stories mildly entertaining at best, as the main appeal of *Carny Talk* is Williams' unconventional brand of dirty barroom storytelling. If I saw Robert Williams randomly loitering on a city street, I would assume he is the kind of guy that picks up muscular shemale prostitutes on the weekends and spills his seed on the floors of adult movie theaters. Williams seems like one of those rare individuals who can con-

coft an elaborate fictional story and have the listener believe it without question. Carny Talk was shot on gritty video (I assume Hi8), a dead format that I am quite comfortable with due to growing up on skateboard videos of the mid and late 1990s. Although some might be repelled by the gritty aesthetic qualities of Carny Talk, I found that the visuals accentuated Robert Williams' surly and sordid stories. Over the past couple of days, I have been watching a number of Larry Wessel's documentaries and I must admit that he has a keen eye for capturing unconventionally charismatic subjects. Wessel undoubtedly has a talent for documenting subjects that would even scare Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog. After all, Robert Williams is the kind of guy that would be interesting to share a dialogue with at a gas station, but not the kind of person that you would feel comfortable having in your home.

If you're the type of person that finds natural disasters appealing and receives solace in societal declension, Carny Talk is a film that you will most certainly fancy. While watching the documentary, the viewer becomes a voyeur in a forgotten world that is probably best left forgotten. Of course, after watching Carny Talk, one is not likely to forget Robert Williams' candid carny tales, as his wickedly alluring personal stories are told with such a distinct swindler charm that the viewer can't help but to like the man. After all, one can't help but to respect a man who owns up to dropping dozens of stillborn fetuses on the doorsteps of homes in a prissy bourgeois neighborhood. Unlike a lot of folks of his time, Williams did not shy away from subversive sex and criminal perverts, although he does seem rather repulsed by lesbian couples. After watching the film, I found myself contemplating about how many other real-life characters like Robert Williams have never had the opportunity to tell their stranger-than-fiction stories, thus one must commend the director for documenting an individual that Hollywood wouldn't even hire to clean their studio toilets. If you ever wanted to know what it feels like to be an active voyeur without the burden of having to serve jail time, Carny Talk will provide you with such a degrading yet extremely enthralling experience from the luxury of your own home. For more info on Carny Talk, check out Larry Wessel's official website: Wesselmania.net

-Ty E

ULTRAMEGALOPOLIS
ULTRAMEGALOPOLIS

Larry Wessel* (1995)

H.L. Mencken, one of America's greatest critics and commentators, once wrote, "A home is not a mere transient shelter: its essence lies in the personalities of the people who live in it." To add to what Mencken said, I think that different regions and cities also personify the spirit of those human beings living within them. In Larry Wessel's voyeuristic epic documentary *Ultramegalopolis* (1995), one is exposed to the various subcultures of conflict in the director's home city of Los Angeles, California; a world where sexual perversion is the norm, cults of collectively schizophrenic Negroes think they are the true ancient Israelites, white proletarian bastards are brought up by father-less father figures like Charles Manson, Hispanic taggers are the most genuine of artists, and where 1960s ideals of peace and love have mutated into a malignant metaphysical cancer that has completely consumed the souls of its inhabitants. Charles Manson and his estranged pseudo-family may have been imprisoned for over 40 years, but their legacy of magical bloodlust lives on in the hearts of every Los Angeles native. If you're one of those dangerously optimistic individuals that happens to be a tad bit dubious of America's cultural and economical decline, just insert a copy of Larry Wessel's *Ultramegalopolis* into your dvd player and your mind will be made up within 2 minutes time, as the documentary reveals the most hidden cavities of L.A. in a somewhat pornographic manner. Thankfully, unlike a lot of documentaries, *Ultramegalopolis* is a fairly objective work that does not wallow in philistine sentimentalism and sickening social commentary.

Essentially, *Ultramegalopolis* is a comprehensive collection of cultural case studies that were assembled in an audacious and unabashedly politically incorrect manner by Satanic documentarian Larry Wessel. Indeed, I would even go as far as saying that Wessel is the Jean Rouch of Satanists due to his seemingly instinctive knack for documenting quasi-anthropological ethnographies in a most daring and hands-on manner. *Ultramegalopolis* might be a *cinéma-vérité* film created for and by sinners, yet the subjects of documentary are certainly more depraved than the most wacky and weird of Satanists. The documentary features a miserable microcosm where all respective natives featured in the film have something socially muculent and malevolent seeping through their glaringly tainted auras. In the maniacal metropolis, Christianity is at best dead and pimping itself out via porn shop parking lots while the devil cryptically leads the city's citizens into a world of self-destructive vice and crime that often pays. During the beginning of *Ultramegalopolis*, the viewer is introduced to a convicted felon named Andrew who shared a prison cell with Charles Manson. This individual – who is quite sympathetic towards his messianic ex-cell-mate – had the distinct pleasure of witnessing Manson's hair in flames after a rival prisoner poured paint thinner on his head and sadistically set it ablaze. On the post-industrial wasteland streets

of Los Angeles, illiterate schizoids and self-appointed messiahs of the vagrant variety unashamedly ramble on endlessly in hopes of attracting hopelessly apathetic pedestrians. Also featured on the streets of L.A. are crude pseudo-carny freak performers and musicians that provide ordinary citizens with unwanted soundtrack for their bitter end of days. In fact, these street performers fittingly act as the unhinged score for Ultramegalopolis. If you're one of those individuals that feels art is the product of a certain race's/culture's collective unconsciousness, you will be thoroughly alarmed after witnessing the schlock street art featured in Ultramegalopolis. As featured in the documentary, loco Latino's use the concrete ruins of urban decay as their choice medium for creating poetic graffiti. If a person were to have watched Ultramegalopolis when it was first released in 1995, it would be no surprise to them that California has been virtually reconquered by mestizo Amerindians. Los Angeles, California may contain Hollywood, the land of manufactured dreams, but in the real L.A., phantasms are of the nightmarish variety. After watching Ultramegalopolis, I couldn't help but wonder why there haven't been a plague of killings in the tradition of Helter Skelter or the hedonistic derangement featured in the early hidden Hollywood of Kenneth Anger's Hollywood Babylon. Whatever the future has in store for L.A., I wouldn't be surprised if resembled the collective mass chaos and destruction featured in *Zombieland* (2009), except with real starving cannibalistic humans in a state of indefinite bloodlust instead of comedic undead zombies that were invented by a hack screenwriter. Ultramegalopolis is just another example as to why I wouldn't be surprised if Charles Manson were to live long enough to see his prophecy of an apocalyptic race war fully realized.

If you have an interest in viewing a real-life Spenglerian pandemonium, Ultramegalopolis makes for an engrossing daydream document of delirium-inducing audio-visual derangement. Even those rare individuals that tend to be repelled by a pessimistic spirit will find themselves debauched and morally neutered after watching the film. After viewing Ultramegalopolis, I felt even more disconnected from the thought of ever visiting Los Angeles. I don't think it would be a stretch to say that the documentary is like a virtual prequel to the apocalyptic neo-nazi pulp novel *The Turner Diaries*, but, unfortunately, Ultramegalopolis is an authentic documentary of gritty and mainstream media ignored truths. For all the derogatory and disdainful portrayals of rural America in Hollywood films, they seem like childish pranks compared to the undeniable third worldization of Los Angeles. I think that director Larry Wessel might want to consider creating a sequel to Ultramegalopolis as the moral and cultural fiber of L.A. has only furthered deluged with unsettling debasement and all-encompassing decadence since he originally released the daunting yet strangely delightful documentary. Although the decline of America (especially American cities) is out in the open for virtually everyone in the world to see, very few people are willing and perceptive enough to confront such a less than ideal reality. With Ultramegalopolis,

ULTRAMEGALOPOLIS

Larry Wessel gives the viewer a window into a manmade world on the break chaos and inevitable destruction. On top of everything else, Ultramegalopolis is jocular work of exceedingly eccentric entertainment. For more info on the film, checkout Larry Wessel's official: www.wesselmania.net/

-Ty E

SEX, DEATH /& THE HOLLYWOOD MYSTIQUE

Larry Wessel* (1999)

When it comes to the history of Hollywood, the behind-the-scenes antics of its participants and stars has always intrigued me more than the actual films they produce. Sure, Rudolph Valentino may have been the first male heartthrob in cinema history, but the facts regarding his magical rise and rather pathetic fall have always interested me more than his actual movie roles. Even German expressionist director F.W. Murnau – who is arguably the greatest filmmaker to have ever worked in Hollywood – had quite an interesting personal life whilst working in the foreign world of Tinseltown, as not many people can say they died as a result of an unruly mix including an underage quasi-slave Filipino boy, a blowjob mishap, and a moving motor vehicle. Of course, some of these purported historical facts are somewhat dubious yet the libertine mystique of Hollywood and its past live on. In Satanic documentarian auteur Larry Wessel's *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique*, a number of forgotten Hollywood entertainers and suave pseudo-historians give you the inside dirt on Sunset Boulevard's most depraved, perverted, and downright degenerate stars and its equally unethical business practices. During the early days of Hollywood, actors/actresses were essentially the prostitutes of the pimp-like producers and sexually barbaric businessmen who virtually owned them. Although Austrian born Hollywood director Billy Wilder exposed some of the ostentatious oddities of Hollywood (in the form of an ungracefully aged silent screen queen) with his masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* and absurdo auteur David Lynch would later make films of a similar nature (albeit, in a more ambiguous, ambitious, stark, gritty, and exceedingly grotesque manner), few films have seriously examined the creepy cryptic history of the L.A. worldwide entertainment epicenter, especially from a strictly fact-based (or as close to fact as one can get for such a mysterious underbelly of sin masquerading as a saintly promoter of moral and ethical progress) and documentarian perspective. Thus, those who have found themselves more addicted to Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon* than internet porn will find *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* to be a lucid piece of uncensored film history gold of the most glimmering and rewarding kind. It also doesn't hurt that the documentary features a complimentary video aesthetic that echoes back to porn flicks of the 1980s, as *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* makes such sex flicks seem like wholesome and banal Sunday morning programming.

One aspect of *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* that especially intrigued me was when I found out that John Gilmore – a man who has made a career out of exposing controversial Hollywood based crimes and serial killers – is one of the main subjects of the documentary. As someone who has read many of his books for the mere pleasure, I knew that Gilmore would provide a certain charisma to the documentary that is quite rare and underappreciated

SEX, DEATH /& THE HOLLYWOOD MYSTIQUE

nowadays. After all, no other true crime author has been able to uncover such odd and obsessive facts like Bobby Beausoleil's pre-murderer interest in American Neo-Splengarian philosopher and political activist Francis Parker Yockey's tome *Imperium*. In *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique*, Gilmore reveals the cunning criminal tactics of semen-slurping Hollywood pimp-producers and the revolting facts behind his friend James Dean's painful rise to post-life stardom. According to Gilmore, Dean became the sex slave of various Hollywood producers before making his way to the silver screen. Knowing that Dean subjected himself to sexual torture yet never got to reap its rewards just makes his life seem all the more tragic. In early Hollywood, it was not uncommon for up-and-coming actors of both genders (but especially males) to use and abuse their body as a rite of passage in Tinseltown. Apparently, James Dean was sub-literate but he had a keen knack getting what he wanted via his sometimes charming antics and his ability to perfectly mimic other people's behavior. As John Gilmore explains in *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique*, very few people in Hollywood gave Dean the time of day before his godlike and quasi-mythical success, but when he died, these disingenuous individuals (including Maila Nurmi aka Ms. Vampira) claimed to be his best friend. Naturally, the documentary also covers a variety of iconic L.A.-based serial killers and murderers, including Charles "The Pied Piper of Tucson" Schmid, the Manson Family, and the unsolved Black Dahlia murder. As someone who has read various books on these subjects/individuals, I must admit that *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* does an excellent job in "cutting the fat" in regard to providing only the most unconventional and naked facts about the murderers and their victims, and not merely regurgitating the same kind of cheat-sheet and beat-to-death yellow journalism facts you find on television programs like *60 Minutes* or in books written by Vincent Bugliosi.

Personally, I see it as no sort of revelation that Hollywood has a genocide worth of skeletons in its many closets as the contrived and artificial nature of its films gives evidence that its owners have something to hide; or, at the very least, they do not want to reveal the true nature of their characters. After all, it is no mere coincidence that some of Hollywood's best films, including Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* and David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*, have been set in the fey and cryptic criminal underworld of Tinsletown. To my knowledge there is not another documentary like *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique*; where the devil's warehouse of showbiz is showcased in a most pleasantly uncensored way. Of course, the documentary is undoubtedly a continuation of its star John Gilmore's lifelong work, as well as Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon* series, but *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* is much easier to digest for those that loathe literature (myself, not included). For me, the documentary was like revisiting Gilmore and Anger's work, minus hours of reading. If you're a friend, foe, or fan of Hollywood, you will certainly find *Sex, Death & The Hollywood*

Mystique to be a stimulating affair where the seedy sex, exploding stars, and sinister business of Hollywood is displayed on a sparkling dimestore platter. For more info on this film, checkout: www.wesselmania.net

-Ty E

ICONOCLAST
ICONOCLAST

Larry Wessel* (2010)

I have been following the work of so called "Occult Fascist" Boyd Rice for many years now yet I wouldn't call myself a true fan. Quite honestly, Rice's antics annoy me more than anything. When I first discovered his work years ago, I felt as if I had finally found a modern artist with testicular fortitude, but I soon realized that I was sorely mistaken. Although Rice is a man who has no problem butchering sacred cows nor violently stirring politically incorrect controversy, his lack of genuine idealism and inconsistent belief system(s) just goes to show that he is first and foremost a conman who reinvents himself anytime his routine begins to be boring and no longer alluring. During his unconventional career, Rice has played the role of a Satanist, pseudo-fascist, Mansonite, satirical social Darwinist, artsy fartsy noise musician, promoter of Tiki Bar Kultur, and many more other controversial roles, yet he has neglected to stay truly committed to anything aside from his Carney and contrarian nature. Had Mr. Rice lived in a time when fascism was vogue, he would have most promoted the Marxist or anarchist line, but, instead, he grew up in an era where racial elitism (of the Aryan persuasion) is purely taboo, hence his ambiguous attraction and flirtation with it. Of course, anyone that knows anything about Boyd Rice is aware that the self-proclaimed iconoclast developed many of his greatest friendships over the years with Jews and people of Jewish descent, thus those that think he is an antisemite of sorts know next to nil about the subversive showboat showman. Despite his lifelong aversion to Christianity, Boyd Rice has also spent sometime attempting to prove he is a descendent of Jesus Christ himself. In the 4 hour long "tour de force" documentary *Iconoclast* directed by Larry Wessel (I will leave it up to the reader to figure out this filmmaker's racial character), Rice's life story is unraveled in a sentimental manner worthy of a Joseph Goebbels' style propaganda flick on a modest budget. Despite his self-proclaimed elitist philosophy, Rice is a proud high school dropout who stated of his rather successful but marginally notable artistic career that it, "is a testament to the idea that you can achieve whatever the hell you want if you possess a modicum of creativity, and a certain amount of naivete concerning what is and isn't possible in this world. I've had one man shows of my paintings in New York, but I'm not a painter. I've authored several books, but I'm not a writer. I've made a living as a recording artist for the last 30 years, but I can't read a note of music or play an instrument. I've somehow managed to make a career out of doing a great number of things I'm in no way qualified to do."

After watching *Iconoclast*, I have to admit that the documentary neither fell short nor exceeded my relatively apathetic expectations. After all, I see Boyd Rice's body of work as nothing more than a dubious but sometimes entertaining collection of novelties. By his own admittance, Rice has shown pride in his

lack of skill in each artistic medium he has dabbled in, like a dilettante who is oddly more interested in monetary success than the artistic outcome of his experiments. In my opinion, the individuals that Boyd Rice has had the honor of collaborating with over the years have always tended to be much more talented and equally more dedicated than he is. For example, Boyd Rice has collaborated with Douglas P. of alpha-Neofolk group Death in June on a number of occasions. In my opinion, all of the Death in June albums Rice worked on are infinitely more interesting and enjoyable than anything NON (Rice's main musical project) has ever produced. Michael Moynihan - the humble protégé of Boyd Rice - has also completely outdone his former teacher. Although Rice has bitterly stated some not so nice things about Moynihan's Neofolk/Post-industrial musical group Blood Axis in the book *Art That Kills: A Panoramic Portrait of Aesthetic Terrorism 1984-2001*; the project certainly puts the non-musical nature of NON to shame. Moynihan has also shown that he is a far more literate and serious writer than Rice; producing translations of works by aristocratic Sicilian philosopher Julius Evola, an excellent occidental pagan kultur journal (*Tyr: Myth—Culture—Tradition*), and various other notable works (*Lords of Chaos*). Although Boyd Rice wrote some interesting pieces for RE/Search Publications on forgotten/bizarre films and pranks during his early career, his writing skills have never really advanced since then. A couple years ago, Rice released his noticeably thin book "NO"; a collection of essays and personal insights. Although NO is a clever book that is certainly worth checking out, the work can be quite annoying in parts, especially when Rice (who is now a middle-aged man) belittles his own father in a totally petty and immature manner. In my opinion, NO is quite symbolic of Boyd Rice in general, as it is a work that shows evidence of a witty fellow who seems to be somewhat lazy due to his obsessive misanthropy, hence his less than serious body of work. Accordingly, in the documentary *Iconoclast*, Boyd Rice makes it perfectly clear that he is a lifelong jokester and prankster with an incapacity to take anything too seriously, thus it should go without saying that one shouldn't take the iconoclast himself too seriously.

During his lifetime, Boyd Rice has had friendships with some of the most hated men in the United States of America. Rice was friends with Church of Satan founder and High Priest Anton Szandor LaVey until the good Doktor's death in 1997. During *Iconoclast*, Rice joyfully recollects his personal experiences with LaVey. Rice also discusses his quasi-friendship with Charles Manson; a brief relationship that eventually turned bitter. The only segment of *Iconoclast* that offers any criticism of Boyd Rice is from Manson who describes his former friend as a poser rock star that likes to play dress up in military uniforms but is incapable of following orders nor respecting others. I have to admit that Manson's criticism of Rice was quite hilarious and undeniably true. For whatever reason, Rice neglects to mention his only son Wolf; a boy that apparently suffers from some type of debilitating physical disorder (so much for Rice's top-

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notch Christ-like genetics). Instead, it seems that Rice's only real family are his carefully selected friends and followers. I must admit that I was quite happy to see footage of Rozz Williams (lead vocalist of Christian Death and Shadow Project) featured in *Iconoclast* that was taken right before his suicide on April Fool's day. According to Boyd, Rozz Williams used to pathologically stalk Rice around Los Angeles. Unsurprisingly, Rice also inspired Marilyn Manson and his pseudo-fascistic Carney cabaret routines. Out of all the friendships Rice has developed over the years, his cordial relationship with Christian Televangelist Bob Larson (which spans over two decades) seems to be the strangest. Of course, Rice and Larson are not total opposites as they are both talented showman who have an knack for spellbinding lesser beings. Anyways, if you expect *Iconoclast* to be in anyway an objective portrayal of Boyd Rice and his unconventional life, you're probably looking for a film that will never be made. At the most fundamental level, *Iconoclast* is a celebration of Boyd Rice's life with the subject as the somewhat unreliable narrator. Boyd Rice is a man that most people either love or love to hate, although I find myself fitting into neither of those groups. That being said, *Iconoclast* is the kind of film that the viewer will either love or hate, but it is doubtful that anyone will find it to be forgettable.

As mentioned in *Iconoclast*, Boyd Rice once created a painting of a primitive looking skull using the vaginal blood of a thirteen year old virgin girl. During the last hour of *Iconoclast*, Rice proudly admits that he learned from such mentors as Anton LaVey and Charles Manson that one must "break-in" a girl (like a pimp) before another man gets the chance to do so. Call me a puritanical prude, but I found Rice's interest in virtual preteens to be, to say the least, quite deplorable. Of course, that is just one of the many things that I found to be repellent regarding Boyd Rice's life and philosophy. Personally, when I hear the word "iconoclast", I think of people like German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and German-American sage journalist H.L. Mencken, as both men left a penetrating, highly influential, and an ultimately erudite body of work. I would certainly never put someone like Boyd Rice in the same league as a Nietzsche nor a Mencken, but, instead, in a category with nihilistic punk rock frontmen like Darby Crash of The Germs or subversive filmmakers like Bruce LaBruce. Of course, we live in an era where the general public is increasingly less literate and gravitates towards the primitive and highly sensual, thus keen literacy and complex creations are not as important in the present day. As Rice has freely stated in a totally braggart manner, he is quite proud of his limited artistic skills and less than minimalistic creations. After all, most American's easily fall prey to gimmicks and scams; two things that Boyd Rice indubitably has a (albeit, unconventional) talent for. Although I am far from flabbergasted by the fact that Rice cites Ray Kroc's *Grinding It Out: The Making of McDonald's* as one of his favorite books, I do find it extremely odd that he also referenced National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg's tome *The Myth of the Twentieth Cen-*

ture and Francis Parker Yockey's magnum opus *Imperium* as major influences, as both works seem to fall out of line with the aesthetic terrorist's mostly materialistic *weltanschauung*. Indeed, Larry Wessel's *Iconoclast* is the most "epic" exposé of Boyd Rice's career, therefore, if you're looking to learn about the non-man; the documentary will provide you with a comprehensive portrait of his seemingly incomprehensible life. If you're already familiar with Boyd Rice and his career, you will find *Iconoclast* to be at least somewhat entertaining, yet it is doubtful the documentary will provide you with any new revelations regarding the film's subject. The most unusual aspect of the documentary is that it is an atypically sentimentalist look at an emotionally cold "Occult Fascist" musician, thus — more than anything — *Iconoclast* is a tribute to Boyd Rice and his loyal fans/supporters. *Iconoclast* is a testament to the fact that even Occult Fascists have feelings. For more info on *Iconoclast*, checkout Larry Wessel's official [ICONOCLAST MOVIE](#) website.

-Ty E

LOVE
LOVE

Larry Wessel* (2014)

If there is a common thread that ties together all the work of Satanic documentarian Larry Wessel (Taurobolium, Ultramegalopolis) aside from his pathological voyeurism and seeming love of the medium of video, it is his obsession with the artist, most specifically the subversive and much maligned artist on the fringes of society. Indeed, from the aberrant carny anecdotes of Ed “Big Daddy” Roth protégé Robert “The King of Lowbrow Art” Williams in *Carny Talk* (1995) to the life story of noise pioneer and (in)famous ‘occult fascist’ Boyd Rice of NON in the epic three-part documentary *Iconoclast* (2010), Wessel has demonstrated that he wants to know every detail about an artist and their influences, no matter how random and irrelevant, and in my humble opinion, that is one of his greatest merits as a filmmaker as a sort of satanist Jean Rouch. With his latest debauched doc *Love* (2014), Wessel takes his most literal approach to documenting an artist and their work, as it is a conspicuously candid doc where a somewhat marginal yet nonetheless semi-successful cult painter describes the origin and influences of all her major paintings while oftentimes in the company of a mentor. Of course, considering the artist, New Mexico-based painter Beth Moore-Love, has done paintings of southern belles masturbating to the sickening sight of naked lynched negroes, daughters gang-banging up on and raping their elderly fathers, a blonde preteen angel reading ‘outsider artist’ Henry Darger’s 15, 145-page work *In the Realms of the Unreal* to a pale little Aryan boy corpse that suffered a grotesque gunshot wound to the face in bed, an Elizabeth Taylor-esque little girl holding a platter with a bald bearded fellow’s decapitated head while a naked woman is being tortured by three gringo amigos in the background, a farm mother savagely slaughtering her own infant daughter and subsequently slitting her own throat, and a sadistically cynical work featuring the frozen corpses of the ill-fated British Captain Sir Franklin’s lost Arctic expedition to the last uncharted section of the Northwest Passage, Ms. Moore-Love is not exactly a pedantic or even pleasant subject, but no one would dare say she is uninteresting. Despite being a petite and rather thin woman that likes wearing vintage Shirley Temple-esque dresses, Moore-Love is certainly no lady, at least not in any conventional sense, as demonstrated by her glaring seething hatred for modesty and humility, daintiness, old school white patriarchy, pre-Civil Rights era American history, and colonialism in a variety of ‘idiosyncratic’ fashions throughout the documentary. Of course, as a chick with a Vietnam War veteran for a father who likes shooting assault rifles and bow and arrows in dresses and seems to have an innate aversion to political correctness, even if her sentiments are more or less of the ostensibly humanistic left, the painter is not some putridly pompous feminist or art school trust fund dyke and thus her art seems totally genuine and not the product of pathetic pretense and repugnant

postmodern artistic trends. Technically, it is not the first time that Moore-Love, who was once not surprisingly associated with Boyd Rice and Brian M. Clark's avant-garde UNPOP art movement, is collaborating with auteur Wessel, as he used her black-and-white 1995 painting "Starlet" of Elizabeth "The Black Dahlia" Short standing in front of her dismembered corpse as the poster art for his Hollywood Babylon-inspired documentary *Sex, Death & The Hollywood Mystique* (1999). Shot on location in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Berlin, Germany, and Los Angeles over an 8-year period spanning from 2005 to 2013, Wessel's long in the making love letter to Love ultimately more than demonstrates what the eponymous subject meant when she proudly declared that, "My 'artwork' has always been very cynical and ANGRY," as a delightfully debasing doc that does many things but thankfully it does not make any attempts to separate the seemingly aberrant artist from her undeniably aberrant art.

Born in 1964 in Des Moines, Iowa to a Vietnam War army recruiter named Tom Moore who oftentimes saw the young men that he helped to recruit come home in body bags, Beth Moore-Love certainly seems to have death on the brain and I would not be surprised if it is at least partially rooted in the wartime experiences of her father, who she initially did not recognize as a little girl when he came back from the war. Feeling bad that he allowed his little girl to be married away at the mere age of 19, Papa Moore took up an offer from artist Dale Caudill aka 'Bo' to properly train his daughter to "hone her skills" and develop an admirable body of work so long as the old man footed the bill for a year. Despite describing her as the "laziest woman I had ever met" (in fact, the painter even states of herself, "I've always been lazy"), Bo managed to whip his seemingly plain Jane protegee, who previously was commissioned to do banal amateurish paintings of horses and cats, into shape and helped her establish a respectable oeuvre largely revolving around 'neo-American Gothic' paintings featuring dead and/or mutilated children and the dismembered corpses of adults that, aesthetically and thematically speaking, seem to fall somewhere in between the work of Midwestern painter Grant Wood, American lowbrow pop surrealist Joe Coleman, controversial American artist Stud Mead (who is a personal friend of the artist), 'Naïve painter' and writer Henry Darger, and obscure controversial kraut painter Herbert Smagon. For example, her early painting "Dwarf Toss" features a dark apocalyptic landscape featuring a naked legless girl in the foreground 'fingering' the bloody gore around the area where her leg was ripped off while two wolves collectively devour said leg and buildings burn in the background. Using pictures of vintage mannequins as the main influence for the discernibly loony little girl subjects of these paintings, Moore-Love managed to create a foreboding body of work that makes it seem like that she is haunted by a perennial state of lost childhood, as if something horrendous happened to her as a little girl that she just cannot exorcise from her seemingly forsaken soul. For her self-portrait, which was used as the poster art of Love, she painted an image of herself on a

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rat-infested pirate ship (the artist claims she has pirate ancestry) as a half-topless figurehead with angel wings that is being pointed at by a crazed prepubescent child carrying a decapitated head while her assumed mother's corpse is being torn to shreds by a vulture in the background.

Unquestionably, Moore-Love's greatest artistic obsession seems to be figuratively shitting on America and the colonial white world's past (it should be noted that feces does appear in much of her work), which probably takes its most mean-spirited, nightmarish, and iconoclastic form in her painting "Southern Comfort", which features a group of southern belles, including one with her dress hiked up and masturbating, standing around the dangling unclad corpse of a lynched negro and which the artist described as follows: "This was the nightmare of Southern manhood that their wives were in to it, you know, in the middle of the night furiously masturbating thinking about black cock. This is one of my favorite paintings that I have ever done," thus demonstrating the painter's seeming innate hatred and resentment towards white men. Her painting "The Franklin Expedition", which was inspired by the doomed 1845 voyage of British Captain Sir John Franklin and 138 officers, depicts the frozen corpse of a British officer who Moore-Love only has the utmost contempt for as demonstrated by her remark, "They were far too arrogant to imagine that maybe there were people already living in that region that could help them [...] they were never found again, except by Eskimos, but that didn't count." Of course, a little research proves that most of the British officers probably died from other causes like starvation (there is evidence that the men actually resorted to cannibalism), lead poisoning and diseases including scurvy, tuberculosis, and pneumonia than from hypothermia. Unquestionably, one of the artist's most revealing paintings is from 1996 and entitled "A Closer Walk", which features an apocalyptic farm landscape showing a mother, who has just butchered her infant, committing suicide by slitting her own throat while the family home burns down in the background. In regard to her influences for "A Closer Walk" and what it means to her, Moore-Love remarks, "...After I read the WISCONSIN DEATH TRIP, I just realized there was a lot of that stuff going on at that time and at that place...and it doesn't surprise me, being, you know, I wouldn't have liked to be a woman living in that era. Some of the paintings seemed nostalgic but I'm not nostalgic at all for the old days, unless we're talking about, you know, the stone age when things were probably a little bit simpler." As one would suspect, Moore-Love has no children.

For "immigration reasons" and the "possibility of living in Europe and America", Moore-Love, who had already divorced her first husband (though, not unlike Tina Turner, she opted to keep the catchy surname), married Berlin-based experimental musician, artist, and writer Ghazi Barakat of Boy From Brazil in 1997 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Barakat paid tribute to his then-wife in his essay "The Late Great Aesthetic Taboos", which was featured in the 2000

book *Apocalypse Culture 2*, which was edited and published by director Wessel's comrade Adam Parfrey via his publishing company Feral House. In the essay, Barakat wrote, "The work of [UNPOP Artist] Beth Love of New Mexico expands on an "innocent" Victorian aesthetic by integrating sick-minded contemporary horror beneath her primary subjects, and within the background. The stowing away of such dread renders the id-forms all the more astonishing." Naturally, while living in Berlin, Moore-Love found new influences as demonstrated by her painting "A View of The Hinterhoff", a rare commissioned work (the artist typically refuses to do commissioned art), which depicts the Teutonic metropolis as a "very insectoid" Kafka-esque post-industrial rat maze where the sun never shines. While in Berlin, Moore-Love also contributed work to an art exhibit called "When Love Turns To Poison" that also included works by artists like Stu Mead, Mathias Seidel, Skip Hunter & Ella Verparajugs, Thomas Hauser, and Frank Gaard that caused a huge scandal in Germany where the artists were "accused of peddling kiddy porn." Rather humorously, a large and morbidly obese Christian extremist showed up at the exhibit and began destroying the art. Moore-Love also goes on to describe how she was elated that an Aryan woman called a painting she did of a naked prepubescent girl in a forest "rubbish" in a German newspaper, stating that for her, it "was the equivalent of an Academy Award because every artist worth their salt in the history of art has had people call their work rubbish or worse."

While I find some of her work interesting and even aesthetically pleasing, Beth Moore-Love is certainly not an artist I like, but I suspect that her ultimate goal is not to be liked as indicated by her 'artist's statement': "I read a quote once, I don't remember who said it, something about the purpose of art being to soothe the spirit after a hard day of 'reality'. What does that mean? I once saw a two-page advertisement for some stupid car, on one side of the fold-out was a photo of Monument Valley, morphing into the skyline of Manhattan. On the other page, over Monument Valley was written, 'The Dream', over Manhattan was written, "The Reality". And I saw right away that this was completely backwards. So my purpose as an artist is to soothe these people who turn our world upside-down for profit? These people who feel spiritually bereft after a hard day of raping and pillaging? Fuck that. I will NOT. I'm going to sneak it on the wall, and slap the shit out of them with the truth of it. Is there ugliness and horror in my work? Absolutely. Do you think that my work is distasteful? You are correct!" Indeed, Moore-Love is certainly someone who finds a perverse sense of pulchritude in things including her own cat as a dead roast for a feast, infanticide, apocalyptic catastrophe, prepubescent female nudity, white heterosexual male misery, feces and scatological scenarios involving cute little girls, anti-maternal gestures like women breastfeeding poisonous Gila monsters and mothers and daughters savagely butchering one another (it should be no surprise that she has described her paintings as her "children"), so no one could call her a hack, even

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if they wanted to. One thing that Moore-Love certainly makes clear during the documentary, even if she does not say it outright, is that she uses her art as a sort of therapy, with her work "Cloacina Russula" being made to get out of a long depression and her work "Our Mother of Compassion" created out of anger and rage. Moore-Love once stated, "I paint for a society that's dysfunctional. I don't paint to make things better for people; I paint a mirror of this society," but as I watched Wessel's doc, I came to the natural conclusion that the art is more of a product of her own dysfunction than a mirror of society, which I think can be said of any decent and authentic artist. Arguably, most importantly, I respect that Moore-Love has a sense of humor regarding her work, even stating in the doc, "I think a lot of these paintings are funny." I know I certainly had a smirk on my face while seeing a number of them, especially her "self portrait."

Arguably Big Larry's most intimate and professional documentary to date and certainly his most polished and evenly paced, Love reveals Wessel to be a man with a deep respect and almost childlike enthusiasm for the artist, which is quite rare for artist-based documentaries of any sort, which typically resemble insufferably banal virtual tours of art galleries or hokey and/pedantic hagiographies. Indeed, featuring shockingly breathtaking aerial shots of the deserts, mesas, mountains of New Mexico and shot on two different continents, the doc certainly demonstrates that Big Larry has come a long way since the days when he went by the name 'Laurence Von Wessel' and shot and assisted directed campy kitsch pieces for 'outsider auteur' and aesthetic terrorist extraordinaire John Aes-Nihil like the Tennessee Williams adaptation *The Drift* (1989) starring the crippled tranny Goddess Bunny (who would become the central subject of his 1995 L.A. drag queen doc *Sugar & Spice*) on consumer grade camcorders. While not Wessel's longest and most 'epic' work to date, Love is certainly his most immaculate and revealing work, which largely has to do with the subject Moore-Love who, unlike say Boyd Rice of *Iconoclast*, is fairly self-deprecating, honest to a fault (much like her art), and does not attempt to hide behind a bloated and puffery-plagued persona. For better or worse, Moore-Love's art does offer a window into the modern world that seems like it might shatter at any moment, but so does the artist who I could imagine would be the next Lorena Bobbitt or Gesche Gottfried were she not a painter and did not have a serious therapeutic outlet for her pain and hatred.

-Ty E

HOMEBOODIES

Larry YuSt (1974)

I cannot even remember when, but I certainly learned at a very, very young age that being old sucks. Naturally, having a crippled devout Christian grandmother who always complained about how she wished she was “in heaven” with my grandfather when I was a young kid probably played a large part in forming my opinion of what life is like as a senior citizen, but it is also hard for me to think of a single old person I have ever met that did not seem defeated, senile, and/or otherwise miserable. Of course, who wants to live long enough to see your loved ones and everyone you knew drop dead until you’re the only one left. Additionally, if a person has not given up on their life by middle-age like most people do, they almost certainly have by the time they have reached their glorious so-called ‘golden years.’ Naturally, considering my particularly pessimistic outlook old on age, I could not help but be excited by the prospect of a film about a gang of old farts that decide that to defend their homes and, in turn, their honor and dignity, by killing people so that they don’t get kicked out of their own apartment which is set to be demolished to make way for a new apartment complex for bourgeois bastards. Indeed, in the darkly comedic ‘horror’ flick *Homebodies* (1974) directed by Larry YuSt and co-penned by Mel Brooks’ cousin Howard Kaminsky, an eccentric sextet of elderly pensioners played by veteran actors decide it is no more Mr. Nice Guy and begin tragicomedically liquidating construction workers, enterprising business men, and bitchy young blonde bureaucrats who have brought great discomfort to their lives and dignity by demanding that they leave an apartment building that some have been living at an upwards of four decades. Although virtually unknown today, YuSt is probably best remembered for his short 20-minute Shirley Jackson adaptation *The Lottery* (1969)—a work produced for the “Short Story Showcase” series by Encyclopædia Britannica (of which director YuSt’s father Walter M. YuSt was the American editor-in-chief of from 1938 to 1960) that has been ranked by the Academic Film Archive as “one of the two bestselling educational films ever”—as well as his quasi-Blaxploitation flick *Trick Baby* (1972) starring Kiel Martin as a super high yellow mulatto who is able to pass himself off as white. For better or worse, *Homebodies* is indubitably YuSt’s magnum opus, as an idiosyncratic cult flick that is still sweetly sick, cynical, and shocking after over four decades since its original release. Indeed, the film might be somewhat slow-paced and directed with the uniquely uncultivated elegance of a for-hire TV hack, but it is a truly one of a kind work that manages to pay rare tribute to the plights of geriatric folks yet is simultaneously absurdly amoral in a fashion that will just downright disgust many people. Like a Hagsploitation reworking of *Grumpy Old Men* (1993) with a sadistic shade of *Weekend at Bernie’s* (1989) as directed by a less campy nephew of Curtis Harrington and Paul Bartel, *Homebodies* is

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unequivocally one of the most fucked 'feel good' films ever made.

While walking by a construction site near her dilapidated apartment complex in Cincinnati, Ohio, quasi-antihero Mattie Spencer (played by Paula Trueman, who was nearly blind at the time of shooting the film and had to do chin-ups during her audition to prove she was fit enough for the role) a young Guido construction worker asks her, "Hey, you got something for me granny?" so she gives him a prune, thus demonstrating she eats stereotypical old people food. Less than a minute after Mattie gives him the prune, the less than polite goombah laborer falls to his death upon foolishly riding on a steel beam that is being lifted to the top of the building. While one would assume most elderly women would be traumatized after seeing a young and vibrant wisecracking wop fall to his death a moment after talking to her, Mattie is given a somewhat strange idea as to how she and her neighbors can avoid being evicted from their apartment. After witnessing the somewhat hilarious death, Mattie goes by the apartment of her neighbor and best friend Miss Emily (Frances Fuller of *One Sunday Afternoon* (1933) starring Gary Cooper and Fay Wray), who suffers from such bad agoraphobia that she has not left her apartment in two decades. Surely, Miss Emily is a melancholy reminder of how much can change over a relatively short time as she is the barren, post-debutante daughter of a wealthy man that used to own fourteen different apartment buildings, including the one she lives in, in the area yet she can barely afford to pay for the rent at the antiquated apartment she lives in and now spends most of her time talking to her long dead daddy and nostalgically reflecting how great things were in the good old days, stating things like, "This is only one of fourteen buildings my father owned in this neighborhood. He wouldn't let something like this happen. That was a long time ago, of course. Things were very different back then. People respected us. We were very elegant here." While talking about the dead Guido, Mattie and Miss Emily both agree that it is nice and quiet outside since the construction workers stopped working as a result of the freak accident. Needless to say, it does not take Mattie—a half-crazed crypto-cunt with a discernible spark of malefic mischief in her world weary eyes—long to come to the epiphany that she and her geriatric comrades do not have to vacate their apartment complex as demanded by their landlord, as murder always complicates things and will certainly postpone their inevitable eviction if the right people kick the bucket.

When a fiercely phony and pigheaded attractive blonde relocation official named Miss Pollack (Linda Marsh of Elia Kazan's *America America* (1963)) is brought in to kick the old folks out, it only adds insult to injury, as she thinks she can tell the senior citizens to do whatever she wants since she is attractive and in good shape. Of course, the irony is that Miss Pollack never expected a single one of the old farts to outlive her, but every single one ultimately does. Widower Mr. Sandy (William Hansen of *Willard* (1971) and *1776* (1972)) refuses to leave because his apartment is cluttered with stacks upon stacks of research he has done

for a memoir he wants to finish in tribute his long dead wife, who he was married to for 55 years. Apartment superintendant Mr. Loomis (Ian Wolfe of *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *THX 1138* (1971)) is in the process of painting the outside of the entire building and neither he or his beloved wife (Ruth McDevitt of *The Parent Trap* (1961) and Hitchcock's *Birds* (1963)) have any interest in leaving where they have spent the last forty years of their lives. Stoic old blind man Mr. Blakely (Peter Brocco of Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* (1971) and Milos Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975)) might not be able to see but he is certainly not looking for a change of scenery. When cold hearted cunt Pollack shows up at the apartment, the old people eventually talk her out of leaving the building and blind Blakely even shows her the courtesy of walking her out the door, but she is not going to back down without a fight as reflected in her spitefully spoken words, "We've moved out thousands of old people like you. What makes you think you're any different?" When the police come back the next day, all of the old folks aside from Mattie and Miss Emily are escorted to their new apartment which is a cold and clinical building flooded with elderly lost souls that resembles a giant mental hospital. When Miss Pollack goes looking for Mattie and Miss Emily around the almost haunted house-like apartment building, she gets the shock of a lifetime when the latter pops out of the closet and stabs her in the gut and kills her almost instantly. Of course, the rest of the old folks come back after Miss Pollack is liquidated and proceed to live life like nothing has happened, at least at the beginning. Rather humorously, the old-timers wheel around Miss Pollack's corpse in a wheelchair and eventually dump it off of a bridge and onto a train where it will not be found anytime soon.

On top of killing Miss Pollack, the old gang liquidates three construction workers who were 'mysteriously' killed and "fried like bacon" via electrocution at the site of another new, nearby apartment complex that is being built, thus temporarily halting construction. The next person to meet death is a rich and pernicious prick of a building owner named Mr. Crawford (Douglas Fowley of *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)) who is not much younger than the people he wants to evict yet he mocks them due their age and is certainly not going to allow his \$50 million dollar project go down the drain so a couple whiny old farts can live their remaining years in relative comfort. In a fitting way to immortalize the man in his own monstrous creation, the geriatric gang put Mr. Crawford inside a structure at the new apartment complex and drop cement on him while he is still alive. Unfortunately, a piece of Mr. Crawford's foot is sticking outside of his new concrete coffin, so Mr. Loomis chops the pesky appendage off and puts it in his pocket. While Loomis is quite the trooper when it comes to exterminating his enemies, his wife is much more sensitive and even attempts to turn her herself into a cop, but Mattie stops her and later threatens her and everyone else by stating, "There are six people dead and there will be more if someone gets in the way. Do you understand me?" Of course, Mattie eventually decides Mrs.

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Loomis has to go when she sees her walking to the police, so she throws an urn carrying Miss Emily's father's ashes from an upstairs window and knocks her out. While Mrs. Loomis does not die immediately, she does drop dead not long after as her comrades refuse to take her to the hospital due to their precarious situation. Meanwhile, Mattie decides to bludgeon Mr. Sandy to death for seemingly no reason at all, thus depriving the man the opportunity to honor his deceased wife by finishing his memoir. Indeed, it seems that, unlike her neighbors, who just want to be left in peace and maintain some dignity, Mattie is a psychopathic old wench who will use any excuse she can think to kill someone, as she rather enjoys it.

When Miss Emily confronts Mattie about killing her friends by soundly stating, "It doesn't make any sense if we start killing each other," and she replies, "You be careful! I killed the old man too. I kill any of you if you don't let me alone," it becomes quite clear that the old lady is more than a little bit off her rocker and needs to be stopped before she kills everyone or gets the entire group busted. The last straw for the old folks is when Mattie chases Miss Emily up to the top floor of the new apartment construction site and attempts to throw her off the building. Luckily, the old men and a security guard stop Mattie before Miss Emily's brains are splattered on the asphalt. After chasing Mattie around town in a variety of situations that one might describe as 'senior citizen slapstick,' Mr. Loomis, Mr. Blakely, and Ms. Emily end up collectively drowning the miserable old bitch after chasing her down in small rented rowboats. Unfortunately, when the mature murderers get back to their apartment, they discover their building is in the process of being demolished, so they grab whatever they can and start looking for a new apartment complex. When they reach an apartment complex that looks cozy enough, the equally elderly superintendent informs them that their building is set to be demolished to make way for apartments for rich people, but Mr. Blakely replies with a knowing smirk, "I think we'll move in for a bit, anyhow" and Miss Emily adds, "Maybe we can help." In a bizarre and seemingly inexplicable twist, as the group is talking to the superintendent, assumedly dead Mattie appears and jovially states, "It's me...Mattie."

While more darkly humorous than chilling, *Homebodies* is guaranteed to petrify or unnerve certain people because many individuals have a sort of unconscious fear of the elderly as they are a dejecting and less than aesthetically pleasing reminder of where their future is heading. Considering the guilt so many people probably feel due to how they end up putting their elderly loved ones in so-called 'retirement homes' and in general treat old people like retarded children, the idea of a group of mischievously murderous grandpas and grandmas seems like a frightening prospect as their actions would almost seem warranted as a sort of revenge for what most non-elderly people would probably consider abuse or neglect, among other things. Notably, the scenario depicted in *Homebodies* cannot be all that uncommon, as one-time Warhol superstar Taylor

Mead—an exceedingly effete fellow who not only appeared in Factory films like Taylor Mead's *Ass* (1965) and *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968), but also important and/or otherwise notable works like Gregory J. Markopoulos' *The Iliac Passion* (1967), Michel Auder's *Cleopatra* (1970), Eric Mitchell's *Underground U.S.A.* (1980), and Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003)—spent about a decade attempting to stop his eviction from his Lower East Side apartment by a relatively young and enterprising Jewish real-estate mogul Ben Shaoul, only to be evicted in 2013 at the age of 88 and die a mere month later after relocating to Denver to live with his niece. Considering Mead was a rather respected individual among certain art fags and Warhol whores, one can only imagine what the average experience is like for your everyday elderly person. More recently, when the negroes carried out their senseless destruction of Baltimore city a couple weeks back over the death of a degenerate drug dealer who infected his own community with dope, they totally destroyed two brand new buildings that were made for poor elderly black old folks. Of course, like old people in general, these are issues that people rather ignore, which is easy to do since senior citizens have no real voices.

Aside from its bizarre combination of absurdist amorality and old farts' rights message, *Homebodies* is also notable for being shot around Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood which, as its name hints, was German before being taken over by poor negroes and thus features discernibly Teutonic architecture, thus exposing another tragic element of urbanization and inner-city redevelopment schemes. Indeed, with all the vulgar and just plain ugly and stupid architecture in American cities, the last thing these areas need is to lose what little examples of real European-like culture and cultivation they have, but then again there is probably no one left in the area that could appreciate Gothic Revival spires, or as Oswald Spengler once wrote: "One day the last portrait of Rembrandt and the last bar of Mozart will have ceased to be — though possibly a colored canvas and a sheet of notes will remain — because the last eye and the last ear accessible to their message will have gone." Apparently one of the first films ever to be screened on HBO, *Homebodies* will too reach a Spenglerian fate before Mozart is forgotten, which is rather unfortunate as it one of only a handful of films and probably the only 'horror' flick that gives old folks their due as a deadly force to be reckoned with. Indeed, with the film's incessant, vaguely intimidating low-angle shots of the eponymous elderly folks and goofy yet strangely ominous yet old time style theme song "Sassafras Sundays" featuring the lyrics like, "Days of let's pretend...John Philip Sousa and Parfait tunes ...phosphate and needlepoint afternoons...sassafras Sundays with all your friends...Horses and carriages coming soon...guests in the parlor this afternoon," Yuft's film dares to make senior citizens look dangerous, which certainly beats looking weak and feeble-minded. Indeed, aside from a rare elderly person like 87-year-old Ursula Haverbeck who dares to face serious prison time in Germany by questioning the

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official holocaust narrative in a country that has made certain beliefs a major criminal offense, the only place you will find old farts with tenacity, drive, and rebelliousness is in a fictional film like Homebodies.

-Ty E

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Lars von Trier (1982)

While we are constantly beat over the head virtually at birth with tired tales of shoah survivors and victims of Nazi persecution that resemble something out of some bad melodrama (or, worse, a Spielberg movie), we rarely ever hear about the forlorn fates of the other side, especially those that made the less than auspicious decision to fight for Europa against communism via the Third Reich as so many foreign recruits believed they were doing (as the post-WWII enslavement of half of Europe by the Soviet Union demonstrates, that is certainly what they were doing). Indeed, it cannot be a good feeling to be on the losing side in what was probably the most disastrous and nightmarish war in human history while so many criminals and killers on the (so-called) 'resistance' side would be regarded as heroes and be free to execute bloodthirsty Judaic eye-for-an-eye vengeance on the 'guilty' and—sometimes—not at all guilty. While SS-Oberführer Oskar Dirlewanger probably deserved his (suspected) grisly fate, one has to really question the motives behind the recent craven and inordinately petty harassment of virtually zombified 90+-year-old retirees (John Demjanjuk being probably the most well known example and Bruno Dey the most recent) being persecuted by conspicuously corrupt western courts under the suspicion of being concentration camp guards when they were young and dumb (while, rather notably, Israel is infamous for refusing to extradite its savagely sadistic genocidal mass murderers like Salomon Morel). While my Dutch grandfather was involved in the resistance and his family even hid teenage Jewesses inside their home, he had cousins in the Waffen-SS and apparently they spent the rest of their lives in exile in Germany after WWII lest they succumb to prosecution and very potential execution in some Nuremberg-esque show trial where Judaic justice reigns. While it was always very clear to me that my grandfather suffered immensely as a result of WWII as the trauma it caused has acted as a virtual inter-generational family curse of sorts, I could not help but wonder about the lives of his black sheep Waffen-SS cousins. Needless to say, not many films exist on the subject of a relatively sympathetic portrayal of the misery of ex-German soldiers in a post-WWII Americanized world aside from a couple notable examples like Belgian master auteur André Delvaux's surely underrated *Een vrouw tussen hond en wolf* (1979) aka *Woman in a Twilight Garden* starring Rutger Hauer as a terminally dejected Flemish (ex)Waffen-SS officer and Danish director Martin Zandvliet's rather mid-brow *Land of Mine* (2015). Undoubtedly, Jan Troell's Knut Hamsun biopic *Hamsun* (1996) does a good job depicting the patent absurdity of how the Norwegian Nobel-Prize-winning writer was robbed and persecuted in his old age by the post-WWII government, but it is not a particularly aesthetically alluring cinematic work like the auteur's previous films. Arguably, the most subversive and certainly most experimental of these films is Danish au-

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teur Lars von Trier's little-seen fiercely fucked and forsaken celluloid fever dream *Befrielsesbilleder* (1982) aka *Images of a Relief* aka *Liberation Pictures*—an ostensible war film that defies classification yet also undeniably demonstrates the auteur learned a thing or two from Tarkovsky, Bergman, and Dreyer.

Although von Trier would eventually discover in 1989 that his biological father was a WWII resistance fighter of German goy extraction by the name of Fritz Michael Hartmann, he believed at the time that he made *Befrielsesbilleder* that he was Jewish via the pseudo-father he was named after, thereupon making the film, which practically bleeds Wehrmacht blut, seem all the more subversive and insanely idiosyncratic in terms of post-Auschwitz sentiment. After all, von Trier himself portrayed a creepy Jewish artist named Victor Marse in his previous film *Orchidégartneren* (1977) aka *The Orchid Gardener* that not only curiously dresses in both Nazi cosplay and drag, but also concludes the film by molesting a little girl pushing a baby doll carriage. Right before discovering he was actually Aryan as opposed to a chosenite, von Trier appeared as a character simply credited as 'Jew' in his classic film *Europa* (1991) in a curious director cameo comparable to Fassbinder's kosher character in *Lili Marleen* (1981). As Jack Stevenson noted in his worthwhile text *Lars von Trier* (2002), von Trier, who grew up in a degenerate hippie nudist far-leftist household, had even contrived a false Jewish identity of sorts as exemplified by the filmmaker's words, "I am very taken with my Jewish background. Jewishness has something to do with both suffering and historical consciousness which I miss so much in modern art. People have left their roots, their religion behind." Notably, in *Befrielsesbilleder*, not only does von Trier conjure pangs of suffering and preternatural historical consciousness, but he also unwittingly gets in contact with his Teutonic roots in both a historical and deeply atavistic fashion as if he had been possessed by the spirit of Hermann Löns after attending a Hans-Jürgen Syberberg film retrospective. Indeed, the Danish auteur that added the German nobiliary particle 'von' to his name in tribute to great Judaic filmmakers with phony aristocratic titles like Erich von Stroheim and Josef von Sternberg arguably reveals with *Befrielsesbilleder* that sometimes the *Volksgeist* can appear deeply on a subconscious artist level as surely no true blue Hebrew has ever directed a film that is even remotely similar both in terms of aesthetic and subject matter, but I digress.

Despite the fact that probably virtually no one would suspect so much upon viewing it, *Befrielsesbilleder*—a sort of mid-length feature at just under 60-minutes in length—was actually made by von Trier as his film school graduate project (for a similar example of an enterprising young auteur, checkout Aryan Kaganof's aberrant-garde *Bataille* adaptation *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man* (1994)). Of course, to even mention such a perversely poetic cinematic work was created in film school is an unfortunate fact that surely undermines it, but facts are facts and von Trier is—for better or worse—not your typical filmmaker but a born-artist from an Aryan family with a long artistic legacy

(in fact, von Trier's communist mother attempted to defend her cuckolding of her kosher husband by telling the filmmaker that she wanted to bless him with "artistic genes"). Aside from revealing an unbelievably mature degree of aesthetic and technical refinement, the film also demonstrates von Trier's unconventional dedication to the historical documentary record as the auteur dared to dig up unseen documentary footage of resistance fighters tormenting supposed Nazi collaborators in the city of Copenhagen in the wake of the liberation of Denmark in early May 1945. Undoubtedly, in its shockingly seamless combination of vintage documentary footage and almost surreally stylized footage directed by von Trier, the film anticipates the auteur's later utilization of different sorts of stock footage and film and digital formats in works like *NYMPH()MANIAC* (2013). Ultimately, the entire film feels if it is set in some purgatorial post-Hitler hell where a limbless human-torso Dirlewanger is being double-penetrated by the devil with a big black razor-sharp dildo for eternity, though the Nazi (anti)hero does curiously ascend to heaven in the end in what is indubitably one of the most shockingly transcendent moments in all of von Trier's work.

Although he has a very Jewish-sounding name, Leo Mendel (Edward Fleming)—a four-eyed nerd that radiates a certain pathological pitifulness and deep-seated despondency—is an officer in the Wehrmacht and his prestigious position has now turned him into a virtual dead man walking as he is caged in a nightmarish POW prison in Copenhagen after the liberation of Copenhagen in May 1945. Like his kraut comrades, Leo plans to blow his brains out and prepares for the big event by writing his lover Esther (Kirsten Olesen) a rather brief 'goodbye letter' of sorts that reads: "Darling, Esther. This frightful war, which brought us together, has now separated us again. It is terrible to write that we shall never meet again. But so it must be. Don't forget that what you do for love stands above good and evil. Forever yours, Leo." Unluckily for him, Leo does meet Esther again after he escapes from prison upon failing to successfully commit self-slaughter after his gun malfunctions and gets somewhat of a dark surprise. Surely, Leo's incapacity to even kill himself really underscores his loser status, though things only get much worse from there. Rather unfortunately, while lurking in the shadows in preparation for reuniting with his lover, Leo gets the sickening shock of a lifetime under already less than ideal circumstances when Esther eventually shows up in the arms of an American buck negro GI in a scene that recalls a similar scenario of interracial romantic disharmony in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's hit film *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978). While the jigaboo liberator kisses and sensually embraces Esther, she pushes him away by complaining "Can we do something else?" while looking clearly dejected as if she is painfully cognizant of the fact that she is nothing more than an involuntary spoil of war and that she probably much preferred being a Nazi slut.

While one might initially suspect that Esther would be eternally grateful to see her assumed-dead lover, she is more or less a total bitch in the sort of

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way a woman get when they still love a man but realizes that the relationship is completely doomed. Indeed, after bitching to Leo, “What do you want? You promised, didn’t you?” Esther momentarily complains about lanterns blowing away and then accuses Leo of being culpable for war crimes, stating, “Everybody’s talking about what you did. The partisan boy you took last week. You ruined his eyes!” Leo seems to believe he is equipped with plausible deniability by coldly retorting “SS—they were from the SS,” but Esther—being an intuitive bitch that knows bullshit when she hears it—replies, “I know you were there. Don’t you see that you have a responsibility too? You’re so brilliant. You don’t care what you see. You can be used. What sort of morality is that? But you store it up. At some time a reaction will come. When will you scream?” Ultimately, Esther provides the answer to her own question the next day by causing Leo to unleash a deathly scream after playing the femme fatale, luring him into an insidious trap, and betraying him in the most cravenly personalized sort of fashion; or, a one-sided sort of Liebestod.

While it is hard to tell considering he is a marked man and officer in the most hated military in the world and thus probably not completely mentally sound, Leo has a rather flat affect as if he is an autist of sorts and Esther hints at this by complaining to him, “I could never see my reflection in your eyes.” Indeed, one gets the sense that if Leo was less cold and mechanical and offered more of himself, Esther might not betray him. Leo seems to sense this—or at least the impossibility of satisfying a uniquely unhappy woman—when he remarks “For a woman it’s always something different” after Esther complains, “It’s different now” in regard to their current less than ideal predicament. Undoubtedly, things are different and Leo is so ludicrously low that he can only go up; or so he does after reaching the lowest of lows in terms of abject desperation and infernal isolation. While he should probably know better, especially after seeing Esther with the yank spade stud, Leo agrees to meet her the next day at a secluded place in the woods in what ultimately proves to be an almost quintessentially Teutonic fairy-tale setting where the protagonist actually manages to briefly break out of his seemingly impenetrable shell and embrace life and nature just before he dies. Indeed, while Esther stands with her back to him while dressed like some sort of drag king Gestapo agent, Leo declares with the utmost conviction and sincerity, “Something happened to me yesterday—which disturbed me. All at once I found myself thinking of the world of my childhood. The forests—and the birds. It’s never happened to me before. To have images coming back. When I was a boy I could talk to the birds. When I was a boy I could talk to the birds. And they would answer me.” While Leo attempts his childhood talent for talking to the birds at Esther’s dubious recommendation in what ultimately proves to be a trap, American soldiers and their Danish comrades begin encircling the protagonist. After a soldier ties Leo to a tree, Esther declares “Those eyes. They don’t love. They don’t despise” and then personally blinds him in a brutally prim-

itive fashion by stabbing him in each of his eyes with a sharpened branch in a literal/figurative 'eye-for-an-eye' scenario that concludes with the protagonist literally ascending to heaven during sunrise while his treacherous yet nonetheless clearly guilt-ridden beloved sobs in his car. In the end, the film is not just the paradoxically uplifting yet dispiriting story of an autistic Aryan Christ, but also the timeless (yet transcendental) tale of a woman betraying a mensch she loves because he did not make her 'feel' the right way at the right time; or, the real perennial war of the sexes.

Despite the fact that *Befrielsesbilleder* is, in many ways, a more aesthetically alluring and arcane cinematic work than many of his later films ranging from the Dogme 95 retard-a-thon *The Idiots* (1998) to his latest serial killer effort *The House That Jack Built* (2018), apparently the auteur had a somewhat trollish mindset when he conceived of it, or as Jack Stevenson explained, "Von Trier later claimed that many viewers fainted during the 18 June screening at the Film School, 'because', as he put it, 'I quite on purpose gave no release for the excitement which had been built up. ... I purposely increased the excitement by setting the characters in extreme situations.'" Of course, anyone that has seen the film's co-writer and cinematographer Tom Elling's own directorial efforts like *Perfect World* (1990) will know that he clearly had a strong aesthetic and technical influence on the overall quality of the film, yet it is still assuredly Trier-ian in its provocatively and preternaturally haunting essence. As with von Trier's greatest films, the auteur reveals his innate disdain for the Hollywood model by refraining from making insufferable moral judgments against his characters—whether it be the Nazi officer or the Danish whore who betrays him, which says a lot considering he was under the impression that he was an Israelite at the time. Of course, as a man that regards Liliana Cavani's vaguely esoteric exercise in SS sadomasochism *The Night Porter* (1974) as one of his favorite films, one should not expect anything less from von Trier. Naturally, despite depicting a naughty Nazi in a sympathetic light, von Trier was not trying to express any sort of pro-Hitlerite message with the film as revealed by his words, "I have not taken the side of the German officer because he is a Nazi but because he is the loser. ... I permit myself to be fascinated by that which has always fascinated people, among other things, death. War is always a good subject." Not surprisingly in our ultra-PC Zio-authoritarian times, such a rare open-minded mentality would get von Trier in deep trouble during a now-infamous press conference for his film *Melancholia* (2011) at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival where he joked about how he "understands" and "sympathizes" with Hitler and expressed some negative sentiments regarding Israel and the horrendous Hebraic hack Susanne Bier (*After the Wedding*, *Bird Box*). Of course, as a subversive European 'artiste' with a deep interest in politics and history, especially WWII, it is only natural that von Trier would try to understand Uncle Adolf and his undeniable influence and the auteur's early films like *The Orchid Gardener*, *Befrielsesbilleder*, and *Europa cer-*

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tainly proves that. After all, artists are oftentimes interested in politics because, not unlike art, it gives them the opportunity to create their own world, which is something that, despite his eventual failure and defeat in the end, Hitler fully achieved, hence his special interest in architects like Albert Speer and sculptors like Arno Breker.

Despite winning the 'Special Award' at the European Film School Festival in Munich in 1982 and receiving some positive reviews, *Befrielsesbilleder* was naturally met with much controversy and attacks, namely due to its unflattering depiction of the Danish resistance, or as Stevenson explained, "Liberation Day in Denmark had really been Judgment Day: passive collaborators and fence-sitters became patriots overnight – old scores were settled and accusations, true and false, were leveled. Five years of pent-up emotions boiled to the surface in a blind frenzy of anger, joy, patriotism and lust for revenge. While today public debate about the sensitive issue of the Occupation in Denmark is wide ranging, in 1982 perception of this complicated time conformed to a much more 'official' line: Germans were bad, Danes were good, and the Resistance had been heroic and widespread. Von Trier's attempts, however perhaps half-formed, to investigate the ambiguous nature of good and evil and guilt and innocence within the sensitive context of the War, was sure to offend many, particularly his elders." Undoubtedly, aside from the rare exception like the somewhat esoteric *Death In June* song "C'est Un Rêve," there are not many similarly fearless examples of European art comparable to von Trier's film where an artist dares to confront the cold black hypocritical heart that inspired some of the harsher actions of the 'freedom fighters.' Of course, as the film hints, not unlike Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* did before it, the outcome of WWII becomes more than a little bit dubious when it involves American negro 'liberators' taking native European women as whores and neighbors killing neighbors after the war had already ended. Also, certainly no common sense or humanity was applied when pioneering French film theorist Robert Brasillach—one of the first Western critics to seriously study great Japanese auteur filmmakers like Yasujiro Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi—was executed for his pro-fascist journalism after Charles de Gaulle refused to grant him a pardon. After all, until the Third Reich began losing the war and yanks and Brits invaded the continent, the German occupation of fellow Germanic countries like the Netherlands and Denmark was relatively peaceful. One certainly cannot say the same of the many countries that the United States have occupied since then and Europe has hardly benefited from the Americanization of the continent as its moral and spiritual degeneration, cultural retardation, dwindling populations and perpetual invasion by hostile so-called 'refugees' from the global south clearly reveals. In that sense, it is somewhat of a surprise that a filmmaker as great, revolutionary, and relatively young as von Trier even exists today in modern-day Europe, but then again, he still seems like a childish dilettante compared to his fellow Dane and cinematic hero Carl Theodor Dreyer

(surely not coincidentally, *Medea* (1988), which is based on Dreyer's unused screenplay adaptation of Euripides' classic play, is among von Trier's maturest and most metaphysical works).

When the great film critic André Bazin wrote, "If there is a cinema of cruelty today, Stroheim invented it," he certainly could not have predicted von Trier or his singular talent for bringing immense poetic pulchritude to such striking cinematic cruelty as is fully apparent in *Befrielsesbilleder*—a film that is quite probably the auteur's most underrated cinematic effort to date in the sense that virtually no one has seen it despite the fact that it was directed by one of the most important and iconoclastic filmmakers working today. A film that begs for interpretation due to its hyper hermetic symbolism and ominously oneiric atmosphere, I cannot help but interpret it as a (probably largely unintentional) eulogy for Europa. Indeed, in a scene where a pocket watch burns in a fire while German soldiers—the last defenders of Europe against communism and other innately anti-Occidental alien forces—commit suicide in rather brutal fashions that really highlights the almost otherworldly desperation of their situation, one cannot help but be reminded that time has run out and the so-called West is dead, or, at the very least, on its last gasp. Additionally, it goes without saying that the Nuremberg trials—a craven charade that involved the torture and lynching of men like philosopher Alfred Rosenberg for writing philosophy and propagandist Julius Streicher for writing sleazy yellow press propaganda, among other patent absurdities—were, as the late great Francis Parker Yockey noted while working as a lawyer there, a fiendish farce guided by a Judaic sense of justice and, in that sense, it is only fitting that a white European woman commits brutal literal/figurative eye-for-an-eye justice against her lover in von Trier's film. As General George S. Patton—a truly honorable military man that, rather conveniently, died under beyond dubious circumstances after wisely criticizing America's nonsensical stance on the Soviet Union and support of so-called denazification processes—once wrote regarding the Nuremberg Show Trials, "I am frankly opposed to this war criminal stuff. It is not cricket and is semitic." After all, as Nietzsche once wrote, "Sin, as it is at present felt wherever Christianity prevails or has prevailed, is a Jewish feeling and a Jewish invention; and in respect to this background of all Christian morality, Christianity has in fact aimed at 'Judaizing' the whole world." In short, for better or worse, *Befrielsesbilleder*—a rather original film with a sometimes primeval paganistic spirit directed by a virtual novice with the flare of a master—deserves a special place in cinema history as a rare expression of a sort of 'cruel humanism' and almost transcendental pathos that dares to confront the harsh reality of the post-WWII German plight and go beyond good and evil whilst ironically flirting with Christian symbolism. Undoubtedly, von Trier would master this approach while tackling the woman question in *Antichrist* (2009) where feminine irrationalism and betrayal also leads to a nasty time for a dude in the forest.

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DANCER IN THE DARK

Lars von Trier (2000)

Film director Lars von Trier was the product of a deranged childhood. Poor Lars was brought up as both a communist and nudist. Because of his "liberal" childhood, he hates the United States and makes films about his hatred of it. *Dancer in the Dark* is a film directed by Lars von Trier attacking evil American things such as money, the death penalty, and guns!

Lars von Trier has admitted that he is basically afraid of everything. He is afraid to visit the United States because he's afraid to fly on a plane. On his fears von Trier has stated, "Basically, I'm afraid of everything in life, except film-making." Sadly, Lars seems to even be afraid of filmmaking. As a member of the Dogme 95 collective, Lars prefers shooting films in a similar way that home videos are made. *Dancer in the Dark*, although not officially a Dogme 95 film, features home video style digital quality. It also features a wealth of childlike "zoom-in" and "zoom-outs" that would make the youngest child in a family feel proud.

The alien-like Björk stars in *Dancer in the Dark* as Czech immigrant named Selma who comes to the United States to obtain a better life. Her arrogant boss questions her about being a communist but shows her strength by acting with a certain peasant stoicism that bourgeoisie commies like Lars von Trier wish they had. Selma is close to being completely blind and wants to save her son from a similar burden. Selma seems to have a problem with daydreaming to the point of singing and dancing. She truly is a dancer in the very dark United States of the 1960s. With the peculiar facial expressions of Björk, it is no surprise that her character Selma seems to be a borderline schizophrenic.

Dancer in the Dark tackles all the type of things weakling liberal cosmopolitan college students claim to be fighting against. The film features crooked cops, fascist (and unjust) courts, guns that kill, male dominance, rural areas, and a complete lack of ever so wonderful multiculturalism. Seeing as the film takes place during the earlier half of the 1960s, so-called civil rights activists hadn't started burning down cities yet. Talk about injustice.

Dancer in the Dark, to be fair has it's moments. Björk's final song at the end of the film is about as climatic as films can get. Although the film is full of many banal moments and sometimes dubious fruitiness, *Dancer in the Dark* demands the attention of the viewer even if they don't want to give it. If one looks past Lars von Trier's predictable politics and sometimes half-ass filmmaking, *Dancer in the Dark* has it's artistic merits.

-Ty E

DOOMSDAY
DOOMSDAY

Lauren Montgomery (2007)

Neil Marshall is a name in horror that i trust. His iconic British werewolf film *Dog Soldiers* was all kinds of awesome. Next, *The Descent*, was a feminist film that i could actually tolerate and had a brilliant multi-layer ending. With *Doomsday* on the way, i was excited for it, no matter how bad the trailers looked. I was actually forced in submission to screen *Doomsday* for any print errors. I had no idea i would be in the most cinematic pain i had ever been forced to behold. The film starts off with a climax of sorts. The containment of Britain due to the "Reaper Virus." This leads to complications and the mass killing of civilians. They seal off the country with a huge China-esque Great Wall. It starts off with 28 Weeks Later, moves to *Aeon Flux*, goes into *Escape from New York*, switches to *The Road Warrior*, then mixes with *Gladiator* or *First Knight*. *Doomsday* is a complete piece of trash. The only thing i can really admire about the film is the make-up and costumes of the neo-punk mutants. The acting on their part was equally admired but had too much screaming. *Class Of Nuke'Em High* did it better. It got all too bland, all too quickly. Marshall thought it would be surprising to mix a Medieval setting in the mix; a clashing of era's. This only digs the hole deeper.

These dystopian films that have been churning out lately are some sort of propagandist subliminal message. Films like *I Am Legend*, *Independence Day*, *28 Days and Weeks*, and *Cloverfield* all lend a hand in delivering this end-of-the-world feel that has been terrifying the weak-willed as this supposed biblical date looms closer. The crew sent on the mission to find the cure is among the stupidest band of hooligans save for *Dog Soldiers* "Spoon." It had it's own brand of racism to make such an idiotic token black character. Of course, to compliment the on-screen atrocities, Marshall felt the need to incorporate characters who are just plain invincible. People who get shot and beaten but will not die. Cars that auto-heal all broken glass and can fly through a bus unscathed. The beginning was annoyingly set-up and the family drama shit could have been left alone. The ending was completely oblivious to the whole film and just defeated every purpose this rag-tag clan of pussies fought for. Bob Hoskins wasn't Mario, and the all of a sudden stunt driving was so out of place for a woman who grew up in a confined area where there is a strict curfew. How can i respect a film that has Bob Hoskins not as Mario? Action is not a ridiculous genre. It does not call for these blasphemous scenes that challenge the viewers intelligence. *Doomsday* is devoid of any artistic merit, atmosphere, or any original concept. I feel bad for anyone who watches this post-apocalyptic over-produced piece of shit.

-Maq

THE DRAGON LIVES AGAIN

Law Kei (1977)

In many religious tomes, the devil has been exemplified as a being of red. A coarse demon with a serpent's tongue and wings. Well, ...Bruce Leong made sure to change that as he starred in a "Brucesploitation" film that depicts the prince of darkness as an aging Jap wearing a lamp shade on his head who might suffer a heart attack if he has crazy active sex. The Brucesploitation film to end all others, *The Dragon Lives Again* takes the afterlife philosophy to the next step by adding a rule that once you die, you no longer appear the same. With this in consideration, this allows the film to have Bruce Lee and Popeye the Sailor fight the Exorcist, the Godfather, Clint Eastwood, Zatoichi, Emmanuelle, Dracula, and of course James Bond. In this rabid free-for-all, we have the most absurd ideas put to test on film and the result is gut-busting. I can't imagine a dubbing so perfect for the ridiculous mood. If I had to use one word to describe this film, It would border the term of being insane. Nothing is against the rules in this cash in to a death that was foreseen due to a curse on the Lee family. Watch as a royal guard uses an abacus to count the Devil King's heart rate as he has sex only to switch to a digital calculator after the sex gets crazier and more rough.

I was taken aback once I saw the action scenes. For a film of low virtue such as itself, the action scenes were impeccable and stand to me what the classics once did. The sound effects were painstakingly raw and reminiscent to the wonderful works of Wu-Tang and co. Each fight scene (Oh and there any numerous) features a "signature move" from the departed as he "Fist of Fury's" his way out of a tight spot.

The Dragon Lives Again is a callous attempt at cashing in at a stars death. but for these reasons, It remains one of the greatest accidental spoofs ever committed to film. There is no way in hell I couldn't recommend this film anymore. It is worth every dollar and I promise you, you will laugh. Mark my words.

-mAQ

THE FIRE WITHIN
THE FIRE WITHIN

Leanne Whitney (2002)

In certain contexts, I have a certain amount of respect for people that decide take the most irreparable of actions by committing suicide, as it demonstrates the power of man's singular consciousness, sense of autonomy, and will power, hence why certain groups of lower intelligences (i.e. black women) are much less likely to do it despite their sorry lots in life while some of the most intelligent and creative individuals in human history have. Indeed, how many times have you heard of a welfare negress or a starving African committing suicide?! In fact, despite all the starving Negroes and third world Asians in the world, virtually all of the countries with the highest suicide rates are white or East Asian. Of course, different people commit self-slaughter for different reasons. While people like to make the libelous claim that many Nazi leaders and their followers committed suicide because they feared revenge from the Allied powers, it probably had more to do with the fact that the utopia they knew and grew accustomed to had been totally destroyed and thus they had no reason to go on living, but people in the contemporary Occident would not understand this because they believe in nothing. Naturally, most people commit suicide because, for whatever reason, they cannot bear to keep on living. Maybe it is because a family friend unexpectedly committed the act not too long ago or because I have recently watched a number of cinematic works surrounding the theme, but I have noticed some of the most potent films that I have ever seen are suicide-themed pieces, even though you know what is going to happen at the end. Indeed, it is nearly impossible for me to empathize with men that chop their cocks off and pretend to be women but *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978) is arguably Fassbinder's greatest and most original work. Additionally, underrated Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst, whose first feature *Paranoia* (1967) concludes with the antihero jumping out of a window and who committed self-slaughter himself by drowning himself in the Scheldt river, concluded his singular and largely overlooked career with his magnum opus *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness* which ends in a bittersweet fashion with a rather romantic mother-son suicide pact. Despite his reputation as a master of micro-budget celluloid necrophilia, Aryan artsploitation Jörg Buttgerit was surely at his most creative and seemingly personal with *Der Todesking* (1990), which features a brutal suicide (and/or murder) for each day of the week. As someone who has never found French filmmaker Louis Malle (*Lacombe Lucien*, *My Dinner with Andre*) to be a particularly intriguing director as a man who, not unlike like his kraut pal and protégé Volker Schlöndorff, mostly directed literary adaptations that reflected his safe and banal bourgeois background, I was quite surprised to discover that he directed a particularly potent work on the subject of suicide that I would argue is the greatest film the man ever assembled. Indeed, *Le feu follet* (1963) aka *The Fire Within* aka *Will O' the Wisp* aka *A*

Time to Live and a Time to Die—a work adapted from French dandy turned literary fascist Pierre Drieu La Rochelle’s 1931 novel of the same French name (known as *Will O’ the Wisp* in English) that was inspired by the 1929 suicide of the writer’s opium-addled surrealist poet friend Jacques Rigaut—depicts the last 24 hours or so of a recovering alcoholic writer who has decided to kill himself and spends the next day reuniting with disconnected friends of various stripes who ultimately reaffirm his seemingly unshakeable will to self-slaughter.

Like many high-profile self-loathing bourgeois left-wingers, Malle was born into a wealthy family and seemed to resent that fact despite the fact that his opulent background helped to jumpstart his filmmaking career. Before he was even 30 years old, the filmmaker had already directed a number of successful films, especially *Les Amants* (1958) aka *The Lovers* starring Jeanne Moreau in a role that would make her an international star, yet he was apparently hating life at the time and wanted to direct a more personalized ‘auteur’ work that reflected his own mind and worldview which he ultimately found upon being lent a copy of Drieu’s novel *Le feu follet*, which the filmmaker had actually previously read in his youth. Much like how Fassbinder became obsessed with the character of ex-convict Franz Biberkopf of Alfred Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) which he adapted into his 1980 15½ hour magnum opus of the same name, Malle found himself thoroughly identifying with the protagonist Alain Leroy of Drieu’s novel. In fact, also like Fassbinder with his work, Malle found himself tormenting the lead actor of his film adaptation, Maurice Ronet (who previously starred in Malle’s *Ascenseur pour l’échafaud* (1958) aka *Elevator to the Gallows*), out of jealousy because he felt such a personal identification with the protagonist and even wanted to play the role himself (though, as Malle eventually realized, he did not have the acting talent). As Malle would reveal in a September 1994 interview with journalist Angelika Wittlich for German television a little over a year before he died, he was not necessarily suicidal like the character of his film but could relate to his dismay with life, incapacity to love, and personal crisis in regard to not wanting to confront adulthood, stating of the work that: “It was very simply a way to exorcise my desire to commit suicide.” Updating the story from the late-1920s to the early-1960s and changing the protagonist’s drug of choice from opium to alcohol, *The Fire Within* is a darkly touching and unrepentant “nocturnal poem” (this is how Malle once described the film) that is much more empathetic to its perturbed protagonist than Drieu’s source novel as a work that penetrates the viewer’s heart in a fiercely unflinching fashion comparable to when lead character finally decides to end it all by unloading a bullet in his chest with a German Luger.

Washed-up French writer Alain Leroy (Maurice Ronet) is such a hopeless alcoholic that his estranged American wife Dorothy, who never appears in the film (aside from in photo form), had to pay for him to stay at an expensive Versailles clinic where he could undergo alcohol detoxification in relative comfort. In fact,

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Alain is so fed up with life that, despite being 'cured' of alcohol addiction and reaching equilibrium in terms of his physical health, he does not want to leave the clinic as it allows him escape from the pain and responsibility of real-life and being a man. Indeed, Alain is more or less a lost and morbidly depressed man-child who is afraid of becoming an adult and leading a normal life. Despite being a born lady's man, Alain is an exceedingly emasculated fellow who has spent his entire life living off woman, who he seems to inspire an almost instinctive maternal nurturing quality in due to his innate helplessness, as if he is a cute little puppy dog that has been abandoned. While Alain has no problem attracting women, he has a complete and utter incapacity to love or be loved, thus all his romances always end in abject failure, thus reinforcing his undying sense of loneliness and instability. As for his parents, Alain simply describes them as being "very old" and even depresses an old woman at clinic when she asks about them and he less than emotionally responds, "I don't see them anymore." The Fire Within begins with Alain lying in bed with his old friend/ex-lover Lydia (Léna Skerla) after having what seems to be banal and passionless coitus. Indeed, while Alain is a sort of dapperly dressed Don Juan who can pretty much charm any woman, his seductive persona, like his clothing, is merely a strategically placed mask that disguises a self-admitted poor lover, or as he later states in the film, "I'm awkward, inept. The sensitivity was in my heart, not my hands." While Lydia begs, "Let me see you smile," Alain is incapable of even giving her so much as a contrived smirk. Lydia wants to marry Alain and tells him that his yank wife is no good because "You need a woman who won't let you out of her sight," but as he tells her before saying goodbye to her for the last time regarding the futility of marriage, "You'd be unhappy...Another Dorothy. Anyway, you can't help me. It's too late." Indeed, it is too late because Alain has a date with a bullet that will penetrate his heart like no woman ever could. Of course, also unlike with women, Alain's affair with the lead love letter will last forever, thereupon offering him the sense of permanence that he has always been seeking but could never find.

Alain has turned his room at the clinic into a morbid hermetic fantasy realm that more resembles the unrefined habitat of a rebellious child than that of a grown man. Aside from photographs, toys, and odd trinkets, Alain has adorned his room with newspaper clippings about death, including a 5-year-old boy that accidentally hanged himself with a curtain cord while attempting to fly. When Alain's personal doctor Dr. La Barbinais (Jean-Paul Moulinot) comes into his room under the pretense of playing chess to tell him he is 'cured' and that he should prepare to move out and move on with his life, he reacts by acting like a drama queen and proclaims that, despite being sober, he still suffers from "a single feeling of constant anxiety" that makes living a normal life impossible for him. The doctor gives Alain various recommendations as to what he can do with his life, including opening a store, but he disregards them all and complains of

being ridden with debt. Before leaving his room, Dr. La Barbinais says “Life is good” and Alain cynically replies, “good for what, Doctor?” and says to himself “tomorrow” in regard to his intention to kill himself the next day. Before going to sleep, Alain tells himself that he is going to commit suicide. Against his doctor’s orders, Alain heads to decadent Paris—the city that devoured his soul—the next day after hitching a ride from two sloppy proles who assume he is a rich man due to how he dresses. Upon arriving in Paris, Alain cashes two large checks that have been given to him by Lydia and his wife Dorothy, but being off the booze, he does not have much to spend it on.

The first person Alain reunites with in Paris is, somewhat ironically, his old bartender friend Charlie (René Dupuy), who is shocked when his favorite alcoholic turns down a free drink. At the bar, Alain becomes rather dejected when he bumps into a young man named Michel ‘Milou’ Boistel (Bernard Tiphaine) who reminds him of his younger self, as he cannot live with the fact that he mispent his entire life on beers and boobs and has nothing of intrinsic value to show for it. Next, Alain stops by the apartment of his old pal Dubourg (Bernard Noël) who is now a bourgeois family man and academic of Egyptology who is quite comfortable with his new life as a father, scholar, and respectable tax-paying and law-abiding French citizen. Alain tries to mock Dubourg by sarcastically asking him “playing daddy now?,” but he sees it as no laughing matter. When Alain tells of his intention to end his life, Dubourg attempts in vain to talk him out of it by stating, “Life still has things to offer. You must have a sense of your life. That sense can’t perish,” but it is no hope. Needless to say, Dubourg’s words are lost on Alain when he proudly remarks, “Don’t judge by appearances. You see me as a resigned bourgeois...But my life’s more intense now than when I drank and slept around.” As Alain tells Dubourg, “It’s hard to be a man. You have to want it,” as the last thing he wants to be is a man as that would require him to take responsibility for his life. Before parting ways with Dubourg, Alain confides in him, “I wanted you to help me die. That’s all,” but his friend still tries to talk him out of it by offering him the opportunity to stay at his flat where he and his family lives an “ordered life.” Of course, Alain is deathly allergic to order of any sort.

Alain seems to have the most in common with his painter friend Eva (Jeanne Moreau) as she is similarly miserable and pessimistic, calling his wife Dorothy an “American witch” and Dubourg “deadbeat Dubourg,” but he cannot tolerate hanging out with her for long as she lives with an art collective of pathetically pretentious and zombified dope fiends who make fun of him for going to rehab. Repulsed by their lifeless inebriated stupors, Alain remarks to the thoroughly narcotized art fags, “Drugs are life. Boring, like life” and sarcastically adds, “some addicts live until 70.” Alain is especially repulsed by an effete hook-nosed poet named Urcel (Alain Mottet) who describes him as a jealous failure

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when he leaves, but Eva rebukes him and states, "He's a very sweet guy and deeply unhappy...and I should have let him go." Surely out of all the women that Alain interacts with during the film, Eva seems like the only one that understands him and may have been able to save him, but she lacks the strength to take action. Alain also decides it is not much fun hanging out with his pals François (François Gragnon) and Jérôme Minville (Romain Bouteille) because they are self-professed "stubborn" members of the dissident far-right paramilitary organization OAS (aka "Organisation de l'armée secrète") who keep getting thrown in prison for fighting against Algerian independence. While sitting outside of a café while all by his lonesome, Alain decides to break his sobriety by drinking a glass of wine and naturally gets rather sick as a result. While Alain is walking around sick in a restaurant, an old queen states to another fag about him, "See that face? Alcohol. He's done for. A shame. He was good-looking. Richard was in love with him." Indeed, you have certainly hit a low point in life when you have a couple of snide little faggots gossiping about your decline right in front of your face.

Ultimately, Alain decides to sleep off his alcohol-induced sickness in the lavish home of his opulent old flame Solange (played by Canadian actress Alexandra Stewart, who director Malle later had a daughter with) and her wealthy cuckold of a husband Cyrille Lavaud (Jacques Sereys) where he makes a huge ass of himself after a fancy dinner that his arch-enemy Brancion (Tony Taffin) attends. Like at a lunch he attends at the beginning film with his co-patients at the clinic, Alain seems completely detached at the dinner and barely even reacts when he is directly spoken to. When Cyrille makes the mistake of giving Alain drinks after the dinner, the protagonist gets so erratically drunk that he smashes a glass, cuts his hand, and embarrasses himself in front of all his friends and enemies, especially Solange, who he begins groveling in front, stating things like, "You're life itself. Yes, life." While Solange clearly cares for Alain, she is a married woman with a stinking wealthy hubby and must reject her ex-lover's drunken romantic advances. After deciding he has suffered "enough humiliation," Alain leaves the party and, unbeknownst to them, says goodbye to his friends forever. Before going back to the clinic, Alain gives some quasi-fatherly advice to the young man Milou who reminds of his younger self while the two get drunk and discuss the enigma of the opposite sex. As Alain remarked to his friend Dubourg earlier in the film regarding women, "I have no power over them. I was handsome at 20. They still find me fun and nice. But it's not enough. I have no hold on them. And yet, it's only through women that I've felt some hold on life" and it certainly seems that young playboy Milou will be resigned to a similarly lonely fate, though he does not seem to realize it yet. After waking up in his room at the clinic with a champagne bottle in his bed the next morning, Alain takes a couple more chugs of alcohol, pays a maid money to not visit his room for the next couple hours, locks his door, packs all his photos and money into a suitcase,

shaves his face, has a small chat with Solange on the phone where he lies about agreeing to meet her and her friends for lunch (he gets jealous when she calls his enemy Brancion a “force of nature”), finishes reads F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, and shoot himself in the heart with a Luger. As for his suicide note, Alain writes: “I’m killing myself because you didn’t love me, because I didn’t love you. Because our ties were loose, I’m killing myself to tighten them. I leave you with an indelible stain.”

As Dutch auteur Adriaan Dittvoorst once wrote, “Pasolini said suicide was the only freedom given to man” and in *The Fire Within*, the protagonist demonstrates this ‘god given’ freedom in a most perturbingly potent and morbidly fitting way to officially conclude an already aborted life. As Pasolini also wrote, “Death does determine life” and “Once life is finished it acquires a sense; up to that point it has not got a sense; its sense is suspended and therefore ambiguous.” Indeed, not until protagonist Alain Leroy actually kills himself does his degenerate life of aimless dipsomania and depression derive any meaning, as he, like so many drug addicts and alcoholics, was someone who had already long given up on life and his profession and no longer believed any of the will-o’-the-wisps he built up for himself, thus taking the only rational course of action for someone in his beyond forlorn situation of no return. Although none of Alain’s writings are ever revealed during the film aside from his short but sweet and brazenly biting suicide letter, one can almost certainly guarantee without reading them that his self-slaughter only added to their meaning and literary prowess just as Austrian Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger’s suicide was more or less the natural course of action to take after penning his ideas on Jews, gender, and even suicide in his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*. More importantly, Alain realized he would never be able to truly love or be loved, hence his state of perennial loneliness despite the fact that so many beautiful women adored and even financially supported him, as a sort of tragic frog Don Juan. Although *The Fire Within* can certainly be described as a dark and gloomy work, Alain’s exceedingly pessimistic *weltanschauung* and eventual suicide will probably only scare or disturb those that can relate to his personality and predicament in life, but then again, people that far gone are more typically afraid of life than death, hence why they commit self-slaughter in the first place. Auteur Louis Malle could certainly relate to the character, confessing: “It was such a personal film...that I thought, ‘If possible, I’d be glad if it were never released.’ I made it for myself. I might show it to some friends, but I really didn’t want it to be released. I thought it was such a personal film. It’s not entertainment. It’s the first film I made that is in no way ‘entertainment.’” Maybe if Malle was not so afraid of making personal films, he would have become a much better director and had created other works of a similar artistic integrity to *The Fire Within*, but aside from a couple exceptions like his somewhat anomalous dystopian work *Black Moon* (1975), he mostly went back to directing ‘safe’ entertainment and

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literary adaptations, hence why he was later able to have a fairly successful career working in Hollywood during the last two decades or so of his life.

Featuring a lead actor that seemed to be born to play the part in what would ultimately be the greatest performance of his life and a striking use of French self-described 'gymnopaedist' Erik Satie's classic minimalistic composition *Gymnopédies* that immaculately accentuates the perturbed protagonist's lingering state of impenetrable melancholia, *The Fire Within* is one of those oh-so rare films that seems perfect in its entirety, which is certainly not something that can be said of most of Malle's other largely pansy ass works. It should certainly be noted that Malle was not just obsessed with the source novel *Le feu follet*, but also the real-life poet that inspired the story, as well as the man that wrote it. Indeed, if one watches the 1994 German television interview with journalist Angelika Wittlich featured on the Criterion Collection release of *The Fire Within*, Malle describes his longstanding fascination with Pierre Drieu La Rochelle who, despite being his political opposite as a fascist and Vichy collaborator, intrigued the filmmaker due to his lifelong obsession with suicide. Of course, unlike the character of Malle's film, Drieu did not commit suicide until he was 52 while in hiding after the 'liberation of Paris' in 1944 (Malle had to go to Drieu's friend, novelist and Gaullist resistance fighter turned French Minister for Cultural Affairs André Malraux, who protected his fascist writer friend before he committed suicide, to get the rights to the novel). Interestingly, Malle's colleague François Truffaut (who was half Jewish, though he did not find out this until later in his life) stated regarding the political beliefs of Drieu and his compatriot Robert Brasillach (who was actually executed for 'thought crimes' as a collaborationist) that, "views that earn their advocates the death penalty are bound to be worthy of esteem." Despite Malle's left-wing idealism (as especially epitomized by the characters of the Minville brothers), somehow I suspect that Drieu would have more appreciated *The Fire Within* than anything that Truffaut ever directed. Notably, Drieu's novel was somewhat recently adapted by Norwegian auteur Joachim Trier (a distant relative of Lars von Trier) under the title *Oslo, 31. august* (2011) aka *Oslo, August 31st* and though it is an excellent modernist reworking that works quite well in its somber Nordic setting, it is not quite as good as *The Fire Within* and I say that as someone who prefers Germanic languages over French and who has always thought of Malle as a sort of obscenely overrated arthouse hack.

-Ty E

STORY OF A JUNKIE

Lech Kowalski (1985)

“It’s like a good love affair...It’s nice when it starts...then it becomes fucked” or so says North American Aryan junky punk skate rat “Gringo” (John Spaceley) regarding his wild and wayward relationship with heroin in the pseudo-documentary drama *Story of a Junkie* (1987) aka *Gringo* directed by Polish-American documentarian auteur Lech Kowalski (*Hey! Is Dee Dee Home?*, *On Hitler’s Highway*). Featuring real-life heroin addicts really shooting up in 1980s East Village NYC, *Story of a Junkie* is more of a candid documentary than a drama/docudrama in its wretched and raunchy rawness as a portrait of a drug-addled ‘anti-hero’ who was born to lose, even if he knows how to score a couple bags of smack each day so as to appease his haunted soul. A bleach blond dope fiend sporting an iconic eye patch, Gringo is a scavenging and sidewalk-surfing opium-pirate who is just looking to find another fix so as to temporarily dissolve his pain while carelessly cruising the superlatively seedy streets of New York City. Opening with newspaper headlines of various white-collar figures who got busted or overdosed on heroin and/or cocaine, *Story of a Junkie* briefly highlights these high-profile individuals’ influence on society as a whole and the countless unknown addicts they have helped spawn. *Story of a Junkie* does not feature the fag fantasy opium den of trust fund junkie William S. Burroughs’ novels nor the phantasmagorical dream realms of French poet/filmmaker Jean Cocteau, but a matter-of-fact depiction of the physical and moral degeneration that is heated and hellish H addiction. Featuring authentic footage of jaded junkies shooting up, dubious drug dealers sharing their insights on the tricks of the trade, and the overall sterile yet ‘unconventional’ loser life that is opium addiction where no scam is too small and where no form of self-degradation is too devastating for one to get their next hit, Gringo sums up the diamorphine maniac life as follows, “heroin is a cruel mistress...a brutal overseer, man...it wakes you up early in the morning and takes you and makes you do things you would never do...and, uh, you just don’t have time to worry about other things, things that you maybe should be worrying about...facing reality sometimes is a hard thing to do.” A sad and sarcastic slave of the dealers (who are many times slaves of their own addictions), Gringo must show off his many track marks to prove his genuine ‘junk status,’ which he is rewarded with a bag of dope and the super sound piece of advice, “don’t OD now” by an outstanding businessmen. Psychopathic semites and a couple amphetamine-addled Anglos may run Wall Street, but in junkie-land nefarious Negroes and hopped-up Hispanic homeboys run the seemingly derelict drug trade, thus making “Gringo” (a named bestowed upon him by his curious and oftentimes callous colored friends) – a man who has no problem sporting a Benito Mussolini t-shirt – a special target in *Story of a Junkie*; a severely sordid cinematic tale about the trials and tribulations of

STORY OF A JUNKIE

selling one's soul for a temporary fix.

Lone junkie punk ranger Gringo (Spaceley) has come a long way since his more youthful years as a momma's boy and a teenage hippie degenerate. A self-described "anarchist" who has "never filed income tax," Gringo is a fierce fuck-up without a cause except heroin. Gringo may be all about the three terribly tempting counter-culture sins of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, but heroin is indubitably his one true love, albeit an exceedingly erratic one that oftentimes forces the junky punk to beg for money from his mom, stalk the streets for naive individuals who he can hustle a couple bucks from, and fight with fellow dope fiends. Shooting up and fucking up make for one ominous and overwhelming odyssey where death is around every corner and every friend is a potential – both literal and figurative – backstabber. Dope sick sex is the nearest thing to romance for a junky in love, but as Gringo the Great discovered, being horny on heroin can eventually result in bloody miscarriages and mini postmortem fetuses, but luckily he does not live too far from a dumpster so as to dispose of such unwanted progeny. Gringo may not have a job, but he still wears a uniform of post-adolescent punk rock conformity. When jaded on junk, gainful employment is not an option because looking for a new fix is a career in itself that comes with its own benefit package, including (but surely not limited to) STDs, track marks, liver damage, a short life expectancy, vagrancy, prostitution, quasi-narcolepsy and a complete heroin chic physical makeover. When not getting his skateboard stolen by small and ancient teddy-bear-like negroes, Gringo is hanging out with a junky chick that looks and sounds like "Buffalo Bill" from *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) who has a funny fetish for hoarding peculiar packs of pets, including rabbits, rats, mice, and tarantulas. As Gringo explains throughout *Story of a Junkie*, his lethally lecherous lifestyle consists of one bloody beat down after another, including a blinding incident with an anally retentive drag queen who brought deleterious destruction to the junkie's eye, hence his trademark eye-patch. Gringo may be a pathetic fighter and an impotent lover, but he has the strut of an elderly jigaboo on crack as a crazy character with the sort of unconventional charisma that can only come from a contrived chemical high. As depicted quite soothingly and scenically at the conclusion of *Story of a Junkie*, especially in comparison to the rest of the film, when it really comes down to it, Gringo truly lived by an ethos of "skate or die." Unfortunately, like most of the real-life junkies featured in *Story of a Junkie*, John Spaceley ultimately perished doing what he did best.

John Spaceley was far from a seasoned street fighter, even if he was battle-scarred and spent a good portion of his life in the gutter, but, at the very least, he could kick the shit out of fellow NYC junkie Johnny Thunders – rocker of the New York Dolls and The Heartbreakers – as depicted in *Story of a Junkie* director Lech Kowalski's subsequent documentary *Born To Lose: The Last Rock and Roll Movie* (1999). The documentary also features Spaceley, who no longer

has his bleached blond hair, dying in a hospital bed in 1992 from AIDS that he contracted via junkie business. Apparently, as mentioned by *Story of a Junkie* producer Ann S. Barish, Spaceley got clean for a number of years (even rejecting caffeine and wine), got an acting agent, and even attempted a career in acting, including an uncredited (but quite memorable) cameo appearance in Martin Scorsese's *After Hours* (1985) and as a Chelsea hotel resident in Alex Cox's *Sid and Nancy* (1987), but would inevitably get back on the junk as a 'true' gutter punk. As starkly and unsentimentally depicted in *Story of a Junkie*, director Lech Kowalski is not some sort of moralist, even once stating in an interview, "I think that it's good to try and destroy yourself because that's what life is all about...trying to destroy yourself to find out who the real person is." Judging by Kowalski's philosophy, John Spaceley was a self-destructive fellow who was totally incapable of living anything resembling a normal life as a man who could only find solace in skateboarding and heroin. Needless to say, the latter killed him, but at least he left *Story of a Junkie* as his legacy of lechery as a decidedly daunting document infinitely more potent than any D.A.R.E program or miserably melodramatic after-school special in its less than glamorous portrayal of a dumpster-diving drug addict's non-life. Forget opium romanticizing big-budget cinematic works like *Trainspotting* (1996) and *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), *Story of a Junkie* – a work distributed (but not produced) by Troma of all film companies – is the real junky deal; a disgusting, degenerate, despoiling, and devastating gritty celluloid affair.

-Ty E

ON HITLER'S HIGHWAY
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Lech Kowalski (2002)

I typically derive an ample amount of ardor and pleasurable self-indulgence from road trip flicks, especially those featuring anxiety-driven murders like Pasquale Festa Campanile's *Hitch-Hike* (1977), Robert Harmon's *The Hitcher* (1986), and Victor Salva's *The Nature of the Beast* (1985), but that was before I saw punk documentarian Lech Kowalski's video diary *On Hitler's Highway* (2002), an entry in the Polish-American filmmaker's 'The Fabulous Art of Surviving' documentary trilogy. As an auteur best known for capturing the erratically spiraling lives of sub-rock-stars and their compulsive soul-destroying addictions in films like *D.O.A.* (1980) and *Born To Lose: The Last Rock and Roll Movie* (1999), I expected a certain gritty realism to Kowalski's *On Hitler's Highway*, but little did I know the documentary would be a dauntless modern day testimony to apocalyptic philosopher Oswald Spengler's foreboding prophecies. Being a son of Poland himself, *On Hitler's Highway* is ultimately a highly personal documentary for Kowalski as expressed by his oversensitive, if strangely laid back, approach to the documentary and its unspectacular yet tragic subjects. In the film, Kowalski somewhat aimlessly (but quite auspiciously in terms of material) cruises Poland's oldest highway; a road constructed under the orders of Adolf Hitler himself, where, apparently, under the asphalt (according to local folklore) lie the bodies of many Polish slave workers who had fallen building it. The highway was built in a historically relevant area of Poland where Napoleon invaded Russia, Muslims invaded Europe and attempted to convert Europeans to Islam via bloodthirsty Jihad, and what was once an eastward extension of the Third Reich, yet one would not expect such a grand history while viewing Kowalski's personal journey through this most Western Slavic nation. On his humble and mostly humorless journey, Kowalski encounters aesthetically-displeasing Muslim prostitutes, jubilant ghetto-dwelling gypsies, and poor indigenous Poles who dream of Uncle Adolf's revengeful return and Poland's complete destruction so as to forever relieve their daily pain. As far as video ethnographies go, *On Hitler's Highway* is a tolerably amateurish pseudo-anthropological work, but it is also an authentically humanistic piece that surely drives home the collective hopelessness of the post-communist Polish plight like never before.

Apparently, in Poland, teens and young adults care a whole lot more about trendy discos, partying in abandoned underground bunkers, and playing jokes at the expense of elders than the ill-famed domestic history of Auschwitz concentration camp, as expressed by various youth in *On Hitler's Highway*. Naturally, the Turkish, Bulgarian, and Polish prostitutes featured in the documentary care more about how many customers will give them the old 'in-and-out' than Hitler's infamous legacy. The only truly holocaust-obsessed individual featured in *On Hitler's Highway* is a disgruntled and scornful elderly survivor with a refined

disfaſte for sauerkraut who righteouſly claims that concentration camp victims were, “ſuffocated, NOT GASSED.” Considering that moſt of the individuals featured in the documentary have a hard time providing food for their children, let alone themſelves, the Holocaust is of little, if any, relevance to their lives. In fact, it becomes quite apparent in *On Hitler’s Highway* that, ironically, Uncle Dolph’s vintage superhighway is one of the very few things theſe Poles have to look forward to and be proud of as many of theſe individuals, who live in an indefinite ſtate of ſtark ſqualor, call rapidly dilapidating ghettos their damned homes. Without big H’s freeway, many of theſe individuals would have no place to peddle their middle-finger flaunting lawn gnomes, nor their long expired and thoroughly abused fleſh as theſe unoffical and unſtable trades provide them with their only means for an income and a ‘livelihood.’ Needless to ſay, it ſeems the Polish populouſ of *On Hitler’s Highway* has yet to recover from about a half a century of communiſt repression and emotional debaſement, thus Hitler’s partial dismantling of Poland is nothing ſhort of irrelevant to theſe thoroughly disenfranchiſed folk. As ſomeone who perſonally lives in an area flooded with young, ex-communiſt Slavic ‘ſtudents’ and ‘queſt workers’, I can perſonally vouch for the complete and utter deſperation of theſe leſs than bleſſed individuals. Many of theſe Slavs uncomplainingly accept being illegally underpaid (as they are alſo illegally employed) and taken advantage of juſt ſo they can continuously ſtay and marginally proſper in the United States. The ſaddeſt part is that aſide from paying for the neceſſities of food and board, many of theſe Slavic immigrants blow their ſlavishly earned caſh on trendy American consumer products like iPhones and Michael Jackson cds, and have no qualms about abandoning their ancient identities. I remember one particularly comical incident when a young Russian man (who fit the ideal National Socialist physique of being tall, muscular, blond, and having blue eyes) matter-of-factly proclaimed to me that Michael Jackson was the King of Pop as if I was totally ignorant of ſuch a popular American ſentiment. Compared to the men and women featured in *On Hitler’s Highway*, the young Slavs I know – who are apparently comprised of the ‘cream of crop’ (e.g. ſons and daughters of businessmen and military leaders) from their proſpective nations – live like virtual prince and princesses in the United States.

Forget about irreſponsible junky AIDS victim Gringo from Kowalski’s infamous Troma-diſtributed work *Story of a Junkie* (1987), the real-life caſt of *On Hitler’s Highway* is infinitely more forſaken and forlorn as their circumſtances are mainly the reſult of an unfortunate birthright and not of their own making. In fact, many of the nearly ſtarving and ſomewhat emaciated individuals featured in the documentary are eaſtern immigrants who moved to Poland in the hope of making a better life for their families and themſelves, but ſuch crucial ambitions ſeem to have acquired nil reſults for theſe cursed loſt ſouls. *On Hitler’s Highway* is the ſort of film that ſhould be ſcreened at various American univerſities as it deſtroys the totally mythical illuſions of collective ‘white privilege’ and other

ON HITLER'S HIGHWAY

wretched liberal abstractions assembled by sneering ethnomasochistic members of the truly privileged white bourgeois, as the poorest of American Negroes live in less dire and much plusher, warmer, and most importantly, more stylin' living conditions than most of the individuals featured in the documentary. On Hitler's Highway is anything but a pleasurable cinematic affair, but to say it is a work without cultural nor socio-political merit would be gross neglect. Both aesthetically and thematically repellent, On Hitler's Highway is an undeniably potent work with a humbling power that does not rely on petty and contrived sentimentalism like a typical Hollywood production, but upon the mere words and images of uncharismatic and impoverished individuals whose most imperative concerns are finding clean enough water to drink and enough food to eat just so they can survive another day. Indeed, On Hitler's Highway is a fine testament to the fabulous art of surviving, but you will probably want to take a shower in bleach and watch a totally fantasy driven work like Tim Burton's Pee-wee's Big Adventure (1985) in an attempt to clean away the 'metaphysical grime' that this eerie and aweless testimony of human tribulation permeates. Still, whether intentional or not (and it is not), On Hitler's Highway does have its moments of genuine humorous human absurdity as few screenwriters could dream up a real-life scene of illegally squatting Ukrainian homeless men serving tea to seemingly unscrupulous Polish cops at a deserted Nuclear airbase. On Hitler's Highway is the sort of film fellow eccentric realist filmmaker Werner Herzog would have made during his more zealous youth as it is a totally selfless work that could have only been made by an individual without an inkling of monetary gain nor critical acclaim in mind. On Hitler's Highway may feature one of the most dismal virtual road trips that one will have the grand displeasure of taking, but you will positively never forgotten it.

-Ty E

PRECIOUS

Lee Daniels° (2009)

If the decidedly grim Brothers Grimm were born in post civil rights/third world population explosion-America and had lived and written their characteristically macabre stories today, the resulting works may have bore a striking, equally discomfiting resemblance to *Precious*: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire aka Precious (2009), a less than supernatural but far bleaker modern ghetto fairy tale that even the imaginative Grimm brothers couldn't conjure up. Directed by thoroughly self-obsessed black queer Lee Daniels, and based on the original, largely autobiographical novel "Push" by aberrosexual negress Ramona Lofton using the Afro-typically ostentatious moniker, "Sapphire", *Precious* is a starkly realistic, and at times horrifying slice of life work about the turbulent and thoroughly disturbing adolescent years of a morbidly obese, fried chicken lovin,' 16 year old mother of two, that delivers to the audience not only a brutally candid depiction of "traditional" (post-1960s) inner city American Negro life in 1987 (which remains unquestionably about the same, if not worse, today), but also renders a scathing, inadvertently incriminating portrayal of black culture, indeed reminiscent of similarly crafted "victim" genre films which seek to elicit pity and compel empathy from the viewer but ultimately serve to only further alienate and disgust the audience (in much the same way that certain films by queer auteur Rosa von Praunheim, specifically *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society In Which He lives* (1971), sought the same sort of effect in offering a sympathetic, yet ultimately ruinous representation of hot-blooded homos). Indeed, with its rampantly chilling depictions of keepin' it in the family incest (namely father-on-daughter rape resulting in pregnancy and daughter-on-mother assisted masturbation), flagrant welfare abuse, sickening scenes of family violence, fried chicken thievery and grotesque gorging of soul-sucking soul food (attention all ebony expansion porn/feeder enthusiasts—this is the film for you!), and a general sense of hopelessness that might render anyone suicidal, not least of all the racially-conscious white viewers largely funding debauched lifestyles like those depicted in the film only on a much grander scale, *Precious*, while classified as a drama, is wholly deserving of a slot in the top ten horror flicks of the last decade.

Sixteen-year old Claireece "Precious" Jones (played by Gabourey "Gabby" Sidibe, of half-Senegalese extraction, who resembles a rather less malnourished rendition of the prehistoric hominids one might expect to see at the politically correct *Man's Ancient Ancestors* exhibit at the Smithsonian) is decidedly down on her luck. A seemingly resigned and unusually docile, yet typically plump ebony lady growing up on the mean streets of Harlem in 1987, long after the "renaissance" ended, and pregnant with her second child—the father of which is, quite shockingly, her very own father who repeatedly rapes her as graphically

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depicted in the film—(her first little one, a chromosomally-aberrant toddler lovingly dubbed “Mongo,” was also conceived via Precious’ own daddy, is currently being raised by its great-grandmother, and is largely utilized as a cash cow for welfare checks for Precious’ mother) Precious indubitably spends much of her spare time engaged in escapist polarized fantasies and daydreams—either about being white (she often stares into her bedroom mirror and sees the visage of a pretty, thin blond teen gazing back at her and daydreams about moving into a suburban neighborhood with her uncharacteristically attractive Aryan, presumably liberal, do-gooder math teacher) or, on the contrary, being some sort of fag-fetishized illustrious Aretha Franklin-like ultra black diva of soul singer who rides off into the sunset on a motorcycle with her divinely mulatto “light-skinned boyfriend.” But reality hits Precious hard and fast, often quite literally in the form of her ironically named mother Mary (played by much loved black actress Mo’Nique in perhaps her most epic and dramatic role to date) beating her upside the head with a frying pan or remote, or whatever other object is readily available at the moment within the confines of their section 8 high-rise apartment (that is—when she isn’t forcing Precious to prepare some of the most disgustingly decadent soul food ever seen in a film—collared greens seemingly sautéed in lard, deep fried chicken, etc., which her mother subsequently forces her to gorge upon as they sit and watch TV each night as a means of ensuring her daughter becomes fatter and fatter). Indeed, upon finding out that Precious is pregnant for the second time, Precious’ stereotypically Jewish New Yorker school principal shows up at her apartment and implores her to begin enrollment at an “alternative” school—seeing that her pregnancy places her in danger of failing—to which malicious mother Mary flagrantly responds that Precious should just drop out, that she thinks she is “too good for the welfare,” and she’s basically a triflin’ ass ho for letting some white (Jewish) bitch stop by their apartment (as this is perceived as a threat to Mary’s incoming welfare checks). In spite of her mother’s vicious words, and the fact that her life is basically totally fucked up beyond repair not even 30 minutes into the film, Precious somehow maintains some semblance of hope and optimism (aided perhaps by her vivid imagination and escapist fantasies, which the director very amply unveils to the viewer throughout the film) and decides to enroll in the alternative school.

After brazenly walking off with a large bucket of fried chicken from a local “chicken and trout” style shop (her mother won’t give her any money, not even after she is presumably forced to assist her in masturbating in one particularly nauseating, yet thankfully unseen scene wherein she sickeningly summons her daughter to “come help mama out”) in order to feed both herself and the growing appetite of her gestating brother/child, poor, penniless Precious voraciously consumes its contents on her way to the alternative school where she becomes acquainted with her new teacher (incidentally, right as she is regurgitating all of the half-digested fried chicken into the school bathroom’s trashcan), a lipstick

lesbian of mixed race origin who calls herself “Blu Rain,” along with a motley crew of contrasting yet equally ghettofied American and Islander negroes and Hispanic females that one comes to expect in today’s inner city America—among them a hardened black butch (perhaps the most feral and menacing of all the lesbian subtypes imaginable), a petulant Puerto Rican or Dominican who instigates fights (and is subsequently thrashed and throttled for her transgressions by a suddenly and surprisingly pissed off Precious after calling her fat), a Jamaican negress who is hardly intelligible, and a prissy and popular black chick who likes to be in the spotlight at all times. As Precious continues her studies at the school, she slowly but surely learns how to read and write, albeit still at an elementary level, and in spending a significant amount of her time with “Mizz Rain” and her new ghetto girlfriends, Precious’ self-esteem is greatly elevated and she starts to feel hopeful that her life will truly change for the better. At the behest of school administrators, Precious meets with a social worker of ambiguous racial origin, Ms. Weiss (played by the annoyingly orgasmic singer Mariah Carey of black/Venezuelan/Irish origins who, quite interestingly, replaced Helen Mirren who was originally sought for the part) to discuss the horrific physical and incestuous abuse she has suffered at the hands of her mother (and the repeated rapes by her very own father by whom she is currently pregnant). Shocked by such arrant allegations, Ms. Weiss and Blu Rain strongly suggest to Precious that she consider relinquishing her son to an adoption agency immediately upon birth, such that both he and she can go on to lead relatively normal lives. In characteristically Negro fashion, Precious vehemently refuses, even though she knows that her son’s impending birth will very adversely affect any positive prospects for her future.

Following the birth of her son, whom she bestows with a rather Afrotaastic name, Abdul Jamal Lewis Jones (and who was lovingly attended to at birth by assumed homosexual, “Nurse John,” played by Lenny Kravitz, another individual of mixed origin being both half black, half Jewish—suggesting something of a theme to the film), Precious brings the baby home with her, only to experience perhaps one of the most epic scenes of violence and abuse in the film in which mother Mary flagrantly drops the newborn infant to the ground (after kindly asking Precious if she can hold him), and upon Precious’ stealthy exit from the debauched home with her screaming, presumably injured little brother/son, Mary exacts further damage by trying to drop a TV on Precious’ head from within the stairwell of their high-rise section 8 tenement. Just narrowly avoiding the heavy projectile with baby Abdul in tow, Precious finally vows to herself to never speak to her mother again and winds up living in a halfway house. Following this highly traumatic incident, Precious makes a vain attempt to move on with her life by continuing her education and trying to raise her son in as nourishing and loving of an environment as an unwed, teenaged black mother raising her own brother/son possibly can, but inevitably, mother Mary re-enters Precious’ life

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to deliver perhaps the most foreboding, despairing news that she could possibly hear—that her father, a black brother presumably of the depraved “down-low” persuasion, had contracted the HIV virus and subsequently died from complications of AIDS (and probably quite quickly, as was the case in the early days of “gay cancer”). Either immediately choosing to deny the implications of her father’s death or altogether failing to connect the dots, Precious implores her mother to be tested. Precious is finally punctuated with further abject misery and horror with the discovery that Precious is indeed HIV-positive (baby Abdul, quite miraculously, is not). The tragic ghetto tale ends on a terribly bitter-sweet note with Precious continuing to attempt to improve her condition, but the shocked audience is certainly left to wonder: who could reasonably go on with their languishing life in any plausible way being essentially illiterate and morbidly obese, after having birthed two children by her own father, and winding up HIV-positive? Perhaps I am looking at the film strictly through the lens of my own mind and existence as an individual of an entirely different racial constitution, but surely by now, I would have taken my own life years prior seeing the bleak hopelessness of the situation, but this of course suggests the inherent, quite obvious differences between blacks and whites.

Admittedly, I find most Hollywood-made, modern horror films to be rather contrived and clichéd, and while Precious is by no means a true horror film, the fact that it very accurately portrays such debauched and disgusting lifestyles, which are encroaching ever and ever closer upon the lives of those that very painstakingly seek to avoid blacks at all costs (via mass white flight, sending one’s children to expensive private schools, and living in bedroom communities, all of which have risen quite staggeringly in recent decades), does qualify it as a horror film in that will certainly stir the primal fears and render nauseated the few remaining racially conscious whites in America (for the remainder of whites who are thoroughly deracinated, the film will have achieved its goal, in that it will likely make them all the more sympathetic to the plight of their hapless, helpless negro neighbors and darker hued soon-to-be son-in-laws). Furthermore, another interesting aspect of the film that the director did not really touch upon in the audio commentary was the ongoing theme throughout Precious of mixed race individuals, namely Blu Rain, Nurse John, and Ms. Weiss, being perceived as “guardian angels” or “knights in shining armor,” whereas the darker blacks are depicted as either the most depraved, sadistic and cruel, or altogether helpless, if not stupid and totally incapable of managing their lives or registering the future consequences of their present actions. One cannot help but walk away from the film pondering if this was some subconsciously directed effort on the part of its creators, seeing that if they were to be frankly asked about it, they would likely deny any such characterization of the film’s decidedly darker complexioned cast. And what’s all the more frightening to ponder about Precious is the fact that while a large subset of the white population continues to distance itself in every

way that it can from the burgeoning multiracial dystopia that grows insidiously within America's bounds (and within Europa as well), the very powerful influence of a certain minority of "cultural distorters," continues to pervert and twist the natural inclinations toward monogamy, marriage, and motherhood such that more and more younger whites find the lewd and lascivious lifestyles as depicted in *Precious* to be decadent, glamorous and at least in the present moment, intensely pleasurable, such that the contrived and tiresome tunes of Lil' Wayne and Kanye West can induce just about any Kim Kardashian idolizing teenage girl in the Midwest to go weak in the knees at the prospect of being impregnated by the nearest black buck only to have the resulting unfortunate offspring raised by her aloof and misguided parents (and who any typical white man will never touch again, with the exception of the occasional wigger cuckold). Indeed, only in a mixed up (both racially and figuratively) and warped world such as we see today in America, and along with the the countless nations the country has hijacked and subsequently culturally colonized, where the meaning of words, as well as morals, have been totally reversed, could a film as conspicuously crude and grotesque as Lee Daniels' coming-of-age flick be titled "Precious," as the protagonist is not even a girl an incestuous bisexual welfare queen mother could love, let alone an ostensibly homosexual mulatto on a motorcycle.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

3 A.M.

3 A.M.

Lee Davis (2001)

While he did splice a couple single-frame erect cocks in the iconic montages featured in his 'modernist horror' masterpiece *Persona* (1966), and had somewhat of a talent for erotic tension when need be, Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman never directed a porn flick. Unquestionably, the next best thing to a Bergman blue movie, however, is the erotic melodrama *3 A.M.* (1975) aka *3 a.m.: The Time of Sexuality* directed by Gary Graver (*Garage Girls*, *Indecent Exposure*) under the pseudonym 'Robert McCallum.' It should be noted that the film was not directed by just any hack pornographer, but a protégé of none other than Orson 'Citizen Kane' Welles. Indeed, on top of starting his filmmaking career by working on the unfinished Welles feature *The Other Side of the Wind*, Graver appeared in and did still photography for *F For Fake* (1973) and the cinematography for *Filming Othello* (1978). In fact, Welles felt so indebted to Graver for working on *The Other Side of the Wind* that he gave him his 1941 Oscar which he had won as the co-writer of *Citizen Kane*. On top of working with Welles, Graver was the second unit camera operator for Curtis Harrington's underrated Oedipal serial killer flick *The Killing Kind* (1973), camera operator for John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence* (1973), director of photography for Paul Bartel's Renoir reworking *Eating Raoul* (1982), and countless other cult classic, exploitation flicks, and even Disney films. While best known as a cinematographer that worked with everyone from Roger Corman to Ron Howard, he would truly master directing pornography, with *3 A.M.* being arguably his greatest and most mature work. Indeed, if it were not for the graphic sex scenes and pseudo-Anglo American accents, the film would easily be mistaken for a European high drama. Featuring arguably the most lavish and exquisitely lit 'shadowy gold' cinematography that I have ever seen in a fuck flick and set mostly in a beach house in an unnervingly beautiful yet melancholy location that looks like it could have been shot on the other side of the island featured in Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *3 A.M.* is certainly a lecherous yet equally lavish 'posh porno' that makes the oftentimes pretentious works of Radley Metzger seem like pseudo-aristocratic phony twaddle by comparison. Indeed, if there is a fuck flick that will offend the vulgar and philistine sentiments of the Lumpenproletariat, it is Graver's elegantly titillating assault on the ultra-urbane American upper-middleclass, as well as an amorous depiction of bourgeois angst.

Kate (genuinely talented actress Georgina Spelvin of Gerard Damiano's 1973 crossover hit *Devil in Miss Jones* fame) is an old spinster with graying hair, but she is certainly not a sexless virgin as she has been carrying on a hot and heavy love affair with her brother-in-law Mark (Frank Mauro) who, with his curly black hair and overall swarthy Semite appearance, looks sort of like a more

masculine and muscular version of Hebraic would-be-ladykiller Norman Mailer. As Kate intimately narrates at the beginning of 3 A.M. while she can hear her brother-in-law and sister Elaine (Rhonda Gellard) have sex: "My name is Kate and I live in this house. This is my sister Elaine and her husband Mark...and this is their home. I have lived with them for a longtime...long enough to help raise their son, Ronnie...long enough to help raise their daughter, Stacey. This is me, Kate...and I have lived here long enough for Mark and I to have been having a love affair for 15 years. I knew loneliness...I didn't want to hurt Elaine, but I desperately need Mark's love to help me fill this void. I used my loneliness to justify many sins. I knew the love of other women...even Stacey, my own niece...but this night was to inalterably change the lives of each of us...and the end began at 3 a.m...." Indeed, after having passionate (and secretly recorded) sex with Elaine that concludes with him accusing his wife of being a "half woman" and declaring to her, "what I want to do is be as far away from you as I possibly can...for the rest of my FUCKING LIFE. That's what I want," Mark heads to his boat where he meets and has carnal fun with his mistress Kate, but things get ugly from there. After Mark declares, "I left her [Elaine] and I'm leaving you and I'm finding me!," like some over-the-hill beatnik suffering from a midlife crisis, Kate hysterically declares, "You're not going to leave me! I want you!," and proceeds to hit her secret lover over the head with a large bottle, thus leading to his death via drowning after he falls unconscious and falls overboard.

Flash forward "Several Days Later," and the bourgeois family of 3 A.M. is suffering a crisis due to the tragic and rather dubious death of patriarch Mark; indeed, so much so that the circumstances will erupt into an orgy of melancholy incestuous sex. Not surprising considering the unexpected death of her great, beloved husband after the two had a nasty fight that they never had the opportunity to resolve, Elaine is a self-destructive suicidal mess, declaring "I want to die" and downing some pills with liquor as a chaser, which pisses her sister Kate off so much that she calls her a "silly bitch" and forces her vomit in a sink. While all by her lonesome and thinking about past sex with Mark, Kate declares regarding her sister, "How could you know...you've never known love," and proceeds to hump her pillow. Of course, Kate "swings both ways" as demonstrated by the fact that she gets in a heated carpet-munching session in a shower with some random hippie bull-dyke who randomly shows up at the beach house. Somewhat wantonly warped, Kate is also carrying on a lurid lady-licker love affair with her fire-crotched teenage niece Stacey (played by porn star/exploitation actress Clair Dia, who starred in the strange 1972 experimental porn anthology flick *Ramäge* (Mobility Cathexis)).

Meanwhile, Widow Elaine is a total mess due to her loneliness and inability to mourn her husband's death, so she ends fornicating with some dorky hippie dude who wants to buy her late hubby's boat. In fact, despite her sorrow over the death of her beloved, Elaine bangs the guy on the very same boat that her

3 A.M.

husband was in before he drowned. Despite having sex with her, the hippie beach boy more or less tells Elaine that having sex with random men won't help her find what she is looking for and that, "The peace will come...when you learn to accept you loneliness." After his sister Stacey attempts to seduce them after a beachside horse ride, teenage bourgeois bitch boy Ronnie (played by Charles Hooper, whose sole other film credit is Graver's 1979 fuck flick *Tangerine*) starts an affair with an ex-model named Vicki (Sharon Thorpe), who tells Elaine that she saw a woman with Mark on the boat the night he drowned. Needless to say, lovelorn Kate eventually becomes so plagued by guilt and sadness due to her accidentally killing of her great love Mark that she records a confession on a tape, which her nephew Ronnie walks in on her doing. From there, Kate leaves the beach house, strips off her robe, and commits suicide by walking into the sea, but her nephew Ronnie makes no real effort to save her, even stopping his sister Stacey from helping. While Elaine and Stacey scream for Kate to comeback, Ronnie gets the cassette his aunt recorded and throws it into the ocean with her, thus forever burying the truth behind the tragedy that led to his father and aunt's deaths.

While clearly specially tailored for a more cultivated audience that expects more out of their fuck films, *3 A.M.* is easily the greatest pornographic condemnation of the bourgeois that I have ever seen, even making Cecil Howard's classic works like *The Final Sin* (1977) and *The Scoundrels* (1982) seem rather redundant by comparison. Indeed, in its depiction of the cowardice of the bourgeoisie, especially when it comes to perennially living a lie and not confronting open secrets that ultimately result in easily preventable tragedies and heartbreak, Graver's work certainly recalls Bergman, though, aesthetically speaking, it also resembles the early pre-Hollywood works of Roman Polanski. Arguably, the most telling scene of the film is when protagonist Kate's teenage nephew complains, "Nothing's ever different," as a young man who's already come to realize that, due to his class background, he is plagued with a life of softness and domestic banality. Undoubtedly, *3 A.M.* also has a somewhat vague 'counter-culture' vibe about it as is especially apparent in a "spirit of '69" scene wherein siblings Ronnie and Stacey mutually exchange oral sex 69 style to the less than soothing sounds of generic psychedelic rock. Unquestionably, it is easy to believe that the film was assembled by a protégé of Orson Welles who mainly worked as cinematographer. Indeed, the warmly lit cinematography of *3 A.M.* is immaculate and, pornographically speaking, the storytelling is fairly fluid, though I can certainly see why Graver found his niche in the pornographic realm as the film's greatest weaknesses lie in its acting performances (though Georgina Spelvin is characteristically great as the somber spinster) and structuring. If you ever wonder if wantonness and *Weltschmerz* can be seamlessly blended together for a curious celluloid combo that is more bitter than sweet but wholly sensual, Graver's porn chic era blue movie masterpiece of upper-middleclass decadence

is probably your best bet. Indeed, if the hallmark of a great hardcore flick is that you forget it is a hardcore flick while watching it, 3 A.M. indubitably one of the best porn pieces ever assembled.

-Ty E

LIVE FREE OR DIE HARD
LIVE FREE OR DIE HARD

Len Wiseman (2007) In today's society, it seems to be a social competition to sport the most patriotism on your vehicle. Whether it is POW MIA stickers representing the veterans we have long forgotten and so has our government or SUPPORT OUR TROOPS magnets that do nothing but fill the pockets of false charities. John McClane is the ultimate American. It seems that they kept this in mind when they directed the new Die Hard film. In ways, Live Free or Die Hard is the ultimate American propaganda film. This includes music by Creedence Clearwater Revival including "Red, White, & Blue" and long drawn out shots of panicked citizens and the American flag.

All Die Hard films except for the third, cause it wanted to build on racial aggression, start out on Christmas day. Why else? The day where you can sit trouble free in the comfort of your family and watch pure joy wash over their button faces. John is an average man who has marriage problems and suffers with them. He visits his family on Christmas like any divorced/separated couple should. To further the effect of the nature, they set the timeline back to the 4th of July. Independence Day to be exact. The very country we live in fought for its freedom this very day, and the average American man will have to fight for it again. Blasting his way through French people, acrobats, homosexuals, and Asian hooker bitches. What an eventful evening. Live Free or Die Hard's terrorist content is not new. In fact, since 9/11, most films push to have a post-9/11 theme, which includes one of the following. Airplanes, Terrorists, Foreign Powers growing, or Bombings. This film is the daddy of all. It doesn't show a horrible attack on buildings. It's a direct attack on the system. Or as John would put it. A country. A country with living people. Within the film Independence Day, there is a scene that shows the White house being obliterated by an alien beam. Needless to say, this scene terrified American audiences. The same thing can be said about the destruction of Congress in LFODH. What is the best way to build a rivalry? A fight including two of the same faction or group. In one scene, Gabriel uses go codes to send an American jet after McClane while commandeering a big rig truck. Many explosions later, we tire of hearing McClane scream at this recently proclaimed enemy. After the citizen overpowers the jet, what does he do? He rides on top of it leaving the bastard to eject out. Timothy Olyphant is the antagonist in this film by the name Thomas Gabriel. It seems hilarious to me that they have filled the role of Gabriel with a homosexual. Earlier claims represent that he was "crucified". Not only is this said once, in the generic context, it is said again with the same tone. Only he makes it bolder to say crucified. Seeing as Hollywood is composed of homophobes and greedy bastards who will stop at nothing to make an extra buck, even if it means selling the rights to another remake of a classic. What is scarier than American being taken over and dropped on its knees? Being taken over by the most controversial

thing to hit the US since marijuana legalization. Homosexuality. The film's release sparked an outcry amongst fans with the rating of PG-13. That's right. No "Yippee Ki Yay Motherfucker", and no random "Fuck's". While this was disappointing, they did announce an UNRATED release with digitally added in scenes with the signature swearing and CGI blood. This calmed down fans a miniature bit but still left a lot to ponder. This of course, is an annoying marketing technique to get you to shelve your original copy or spend 5 more dollars on a different edition. Clearly a Zionist scheme, this is seen with every new film release in major retailers. The title was originally worked out to be DIE HARD: RESET, but obviously the director Len Wiseman loves his Freedom Fries and decided to spice up the title with American themes. It is clear he wanted the film to be reflective of the past so he filled it with various themes and scenes that connect with the younger John McClane. I.E. In the first Die Hard, we meet 2 FBI agents. One being a naive, ignorant Negro named Agent Johnson and the pompous ass hole who flashes back to Saigon named Agent Johnson. No Relation. In this film, he meets up with another FBI Agent named Johnson and looks real funny when he hears that. I indeed did laugh when I caught that. It almost is too stupid. Another reflective scene is his "insane rambling scene". Every Die Hard film has one. Just when you think Detective McClane has enough, he goes insane which leads to a self loathing monologue and ends with him doing an incredible stunt, "Killing a helicopter with a car".

Attention to the media has become increasingly more powerful and harmful over the years. People are beginning to realize that it controlled by the big wigs and it is there to be the most effective form of advertising. In one scene, Everyone's favorite comedian, Justin Long, is incessantly rambling about how fucked the news is, when he gets silenced quickly by a truck. I view this as a metaphor for everyone who has dared to oppose it. Live Free or Die Hard made me proud to be an American but at the same time, express my disgust to these bold tactics. All in all, it is an incredibly enjoyable movie with epic undertones spread throughout it. I said it before and I will say it again. The ultimate propaganda film. Leave it to the German to play the perfect American.

-Maq

THE MAGIC GARDEN OF STANLEY SWEETHEART
THE MAGIC GARDEN OF STANLEY SWEETHEART

Leonard Horn (1970)

Believe it or not, before he was one of the biggest laughing stocks of Hollywood, the butt of cheap jokes among philistines, and the object of forbidden desire among closeted redneck homos, Don Johnson was an underground gay icon of sorts, mainly because he played the lead in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) star Sal Mineo's original gay-themed 1967 play about prison rape, *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, which was later adapted into a film of the same name in 1971 (although, Johnson did not appear in it). In fact, Johnson's first role in a film was as the eponymous lead of the largely forgotten counter-culture cult flick *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* (1970) starring alongside flagrantly flaming *Fortune and Men's Eyes* star Michael Greer (*The Gay Deceivers*, *Messiah of Evil*)—a man so gay that he recorded an album entitled 'Tallulah in Heaven' where he mimics the voice of queer icon Tallulah Bankhead—and not only does the film include gay undertones, but it also features the *Miami Vice* star oftentimes naked and even masturbating in a bathtub while reading a disturbing letter written by his mother. Based on the semi-autobiographical 1970 novel of the same name written by Robert T. Westbrook—the son of English-born Jewish gossip columnist Sheila Graham Westbrook, who is probably best known for writing about Golden Age Hollywood and being the lover of F. Scott Fitzgerald (in fact, she immortalized her relationship with the writer with the book *Beloved Infidel*, which was adapted into a film in 1959 starring Gregory Peck)—*The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* was, among other things, lauded by Andy Warhol of all people as being the film featuring the most accurate depiction of its hyper-hedonistic era, referring to the work as, "the quintessential, most truthful studio-made film about the '60s counterculture." In fact, Warhol (who was supposed to appear as a 'freak-out psychiatrist') and his superstars Ultra Violet, Candy Darling, and Gerard Malanga were actually originally cast in the film, which was advertised in newspapers, but for whatever reason they never actually appeared in the work. While Warhol and his speed-addled superstars did not shoot a single scene for the film, alpha-superstar Joe Dallesandro (*Flesh, Blood for Dracula*) was hired for one of the lead roles but was fired after the first day after butting heads with the entire film crew, with the stoic sex icon apparently remarking to the assistant director of the film before permanently walking off the set, "I don't want to give you that kind of pleasure, but you make me feel bad because this is the first job I've been fired from. And yet, it makes me feel happy because this is the stupidest film I've ever worked on!" Indeed, with its incessant nudity and voyeuristic camera angles, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* actually seems like a Paul Morrissey flick had it been produced by Hollywood as opposed to penny-pincher Warhol. Of course, unlike Morrissey's works, the film also takes a less farcical approach to depicting the counter-culture generation and

all its drugged-out degeneracy. Directed by a forgotten TV hack who worked on television series like *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1959-1962) and *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1971), *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is like the more lurid little brother film to *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), albeit more immature but also more melodramatically tragic. The sordid story of a young would-be-filmmaker and all-around mentally weak loser who is addicted to masturbation and nihilism who falls in with a 'sexually liberated' counter-culture crowd, only to become all the more perverted and nihilistic, not to mention drug addicted, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is less a cautionary tale than a portrait of a 'wasted' generation that unwittingly sold its soul to rock n roll.

As a young man who hated growing up in sunny California and seeing all the fancy Cadillacs driving around, college junior Stanley Sweetheart (Don Johnson) long ago decided to enter a fantasy world of his own mind comprised of compulsive masturbation and daydreaming, as well as amateur exploitation filmmaking. Indeed, Stanley is sort of like a younger and less crazed Anglo version of anti-hero Rupert Pupkin from Martin Scorsese's *The King of Comedy* (1983), as he constantly fantasizes about how he wishes things were as opposed to how they actually turnout. At the beginning of *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart*, Stan the underman daydreams of walking up to a hot girl and impressing her so much with pretentious lines like "It is very difficult to adjust to the technocratic age" that she instantly swoons and starts making out with him in front of dozens of other college students. Instead, the girl, Cathy (Dianne Hull, whose credits include *The Onion Field* (1979) and *Christmas Evil* (1980)), walks up to Stanley and ends up hitting on him, thus demonstrating his passive and somewhat effeminate character. After class, Stan looks at some porno mags and then jerks-off in his archaic bathtub while reading a strange letter from his mother, who writes that she hopes that she dies in a plane crash so that he can get the insurance money as she is afraid her son is incapable of ever supporting himself. To impress Cathy, Stan shows her a short black-and-white film he directed entitled 'Head Less' where he is bombarded by a couple of naughty naked nurses on a stretcher, only to become disappointed in the end because he gets sex instead of the new head he so deeply desired. Being from a somewhat traditional background, Cathy is shocked by the film but she is infatuated with Stanley so she pretends to like it and the two make out. When Stan goes out to a diner later that night, a middle-aged creep named Jim begins to brag about how much 'pussy' he used to get and then offers him \$10 for his ass, thus causing the college boy to runaway in abject fear. Frustrated he has yet to get real sex, Stan tells Cathy she is "not a real woman" for refusing to put out, thus talking her into losing her virginity in the process by pathetic manipulative means (indeed, Stan's main talents are lying and manipulation). Of course, Stan soon loses interest in Cathy when he gets what he wants and when he discovers that her roommate Fran (Holly Near) is a loose lady who will put out for any man, he conspires to

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coerce his girlfriend into asking her best friend if she wants to star in one of his little movies in the hope that he will get some tail. Of course, Fran obliges but she is also rather fat but that does not stop softcore sex addict Stan from trying to get in her rather large panties. Indeed, Stan does direct Fran in a somewhat autobiographical short entitled 'Masturbation' but he also plies her with alcohol while they are shooting and eventually takes advantage of her when she is drunk. Naturally, after Stan screws fat Fran, he finds that the less than gorgeous gal is obsessed with him and routinely goes by his apartment for sex, which he always gives into, even though he finds the girl to be somewhat repugnant.

One night while sleeping with his girlfriend Cathy, who has no idea her charming boy toy is banging her best of a best friend, Stan is woken up by his ambiguously gay musician friend Danny (Michael Greer) with a knock at the door. Danny ultimately starts a little party at Stan's apartment and when Cathy discovers the party boy has weed, which she has never tried, she talks him into giving her some. Ultimately, Danny seduces Cathy with his hippie charms while they are stoned and she becomes infatuated with him, even though he has next to nil interest in her and has more of an interest in her boyfriend. Of course, Cathy breaks up with Stan and when he tries to tell her he loves her, she responds, "You're such a liar. It's one of your most endearing qualities. You know you're just saying those things. You live in a dream world...you just need someone along to take care of you and give you a daily ration of sex." Stan also attempts to have sex with Cathy after the bitter breakup, but she pushes him off and he gets so infuriated that he slaps her across the face and violently throws her out of his apartment. With his self-esteem destroyed, Stan dresses up like a gay hustler and goes to his lesbian friend Shayne/Barbara's (Linda Gillin) apartment under the pretense of buying dope and attempts to pull a pathetic Marlon Brando act on his homegirl's Asian girlfriend Andrea (Victoria Racimo). Needless to say, Stan begins a ménage a trios with Shayne and Andrea that involves drug-fueled paint orgies (indeed, they like to get naked, paint their bodies with kaleidoscopic colors, and engage in group sex). Stan also begins to look like a disheveled hippie bum and when his ex-girlfriend Cathy spots him at a concert, she barely recognizes him and seems rather disturbed by the fact that he brags about being on steady doses of speed, weed, and acid. While watching Danny perform with his band at one of his hippie gigs (Greer actually composed songs for the film's soundtrack, which sounds like a rip-off of The Doors), a group of stoned degenerates begin cutting a girl's arm against her will and smearing blood all over each other (Danny especially gets a kick out of this). Possibly due to the fact he is a repressed homosexual (which is hinted at in a couple scenes) and/or because he fried his brain on too much acid, Danny opts for committing suicide in front of his bourgeois mother by putting a shotgun in his mouth as if he is giving it a blowjob and pulling the trigger. Of course, Stan sees this unexpected event as a total bummer and complains to his fuck-buddy

Andrea that he has “lost all sense of time.” In the end, Stan stands in front of a railing in a symbolic scene where he looks like he is in a prison cell and then walks away from the once-merry ménage à trois with his head looking down at the ground as if he has a major case of melancholia.

Ultimately, the rather simple yet effective message of *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is that one becomes more enslaved to sex, drugs, and rock n roll than any sort of strict middleclass background, with protagonist Stanley going from being a goofy college student with a minor masturbation problem to being a sex and drug addicted spiritual slave and college dropout with a horrendous hobo-like wardrobe who is only respected by lecherous lesbians. Indeed, while Stan initially aspires to be at least a filmmaker, has a real girlfriend, and attends college, by the end he literally has nothing (not even his messy studio apartment) except a screwed up brain, a debilitating case of depression, and a dead friend. Notably, the protagonist decides to fully devote his life to debauchery after alpha-degenerate Danny, who cynically describes himself as having a “washed up life and a great bod,” gives him the following words of ostensible wisdom: “Why don’t you just do what you want to do? [...] Just be. Well, accept everything. If your balling your chick’s best friend, well, why not? You don’t have to be a student, you don’t have to be a filmmaker. Just be.” Of course, Danny’s ‘laidback’ existence of ‘just being’, which is really just a passive form of nihilism that is practiced by someone who has totally given up on life and does not give a shit about anything, ultimately leads to his irrevocable mental derangement and rather messy suicide via shotgun in the mouth. Undoubtedly, in many ways, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is a confused work that is part exploitation (the voyeuristic camera always manages to catch flesh, especially Don Johnson and his Johnson), part sex comedy, part romantic comedy, part erotic Afterschool Special, part psychotic psychedelic psychodrama, and part coming of age flick, with a subtext about the negative effects of sexual repression thrown in for good measure. As for Don Johnson, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is the sole film I can think of that the actor starred in where he gives a believable and memorable performance, as his patently pathetic character radiates naivety, neuroticism, sexual frustration, and youth stupidity in a naturalistic fashion that is even more convincing than Jon Voight was in *Midnight Cowboy*. For whatever reason (I assume it has to do with music copyrights), the film has never been released on VHS or DVD (I found a copy someone taped off TV), hence one of the reasons for its undeserved obscurity. Indeed, a work perfect for mainstream filmgoers that cannot bother to see aimless scenes of Little Joe suffering from perennial impotence in Warhol produced ‘Paul Morrissey Trilogy’ (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*), *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is the one Hollywood film where the counter-culture movement is portrayed as it really was as a self-destructive road of nihilistic hedonism and false values that leads to nowhere except nowhere. A sometimes titillating and constantly entertain-

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ing time capsule about the most decidedly degenerate generation in American history that is thankfully now finally dying out, *The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart* is certainly the film to show someone if they want to understand the real (non)Weltanschauung that the hippies and their equally misguided descendants mindlessly espoused.

-Ty E

THE KILLING OF AMERICA

Leonard Schrader (1981)

Despite being made over thirty years ago and being as American as apple pie in terms of its carnage-filled content, the death-filled documentary *The Killing of America* (1982) aka *Violence U.S.A.*—an anti-gun agitprop that chronicles the most infamous murders, assassinations, race riots, and serial killer/mass murderers since the death of JFK leading up to the early 1980s—has yet to be officially released in any format in the United States, which is not surprising, at least at the time of its initial release, as it is undoubtedly one of the most unflattering depictions of the USA ever made as a sort of cinematic rap sheet of American barbarism. A pseudo-intellectual mondo mix-tape of Americana murder and mayhem that strives for enlightening the viewer but thrives on sensationalism of the bloody and ultra-violent sort, *The Killing of America* is not a work that will entertain sadists and masochists (or a combination of the two) but also cinephiles as it was co-written and co-directed by screenwriter Leonard Schrader (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Naked Tango*), the elder brother of writer/director Paul Schrader (*Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, *The Comfort of Strangers*). Describing America as the “land of a million murders and one hundred million guns” and a place with a homicide rate comparable to Third World shithole countries like Cambodia and Nicaragua during a civil war, *The Killing of America* wastes no time in portraying the United States as a fallen place of dramatic social, cultural, and moral decline, yet it ultimately has no serious answers as to why, as if the directors (Schrader co-directed it with relatively unknown documentarian Sheldon Renan) and writers (Schrader’s Japanese wife Chieko Schrader also contributed to the script) were too politically correct and fixated on their rather redundant anti-gun idealism to give it much thought, though they ‘dare’ to hint that the assassination of president JFK was a conspiracy. Featuring real-life stock footage of negroes being killed by white pig cops and race riots, as well as interviews with infamous criminals, including (but not limited to) anti-Zionist assassin Sirhan Sirhan, serial killers John Wayne Gacy and Ted Bundy, and mass murdering cult messiah Jim Jones, *The Killing of America* works best as an uncensored history of post-WWII American true crime, which makes more sense when one considers it was originally made for the Japanese market, who must have laughed their scrawny East Asian asses off after realizing how screwed up the nation that defeated and nuked them during the Second World War really is. A mundanely narrated archival document of American decline, *The Killing of America* inadvertently depicts a nation that, after embracing civil rights, multiculturalism, counter-culture movements, and liberalism, degenerated into a nihilistic negro-crime-filled real-life nightmare, so it is only fitting that the documentary concludes with the barely tragic assassination of alpha-hippie scum John Lennon.

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According to *The Killing of America*, Japan, England and West Germany have a combined population (at least, at the same of the docs release) equal to that of the United States, yet while the former three countries have around 6,000 murders a year, the U.S.A. has about 27,000, thus demonstrating that the krauts and Japs should have probably won the Second World War and England should have sided with their Germanic brothers as America—the stillborn cultural and racial mongrel—is a misbegotten bastard from hell. According to the narrator Chuck Riley of *The Killing of America*, President John F. Kennedy was a “symbol of his handsome young country” (one must ask what Barack Obama is a symbol of!) and his dubious assassination more or less sparked America’s decided degeneration and assassins, snipers, political terrorists, cult charlatans, serial killers, and ‘mad saviors’ starting popping up all around America as if the country’s population starting worshipping death and destruction. In reference to blacks starting race riots and burning down America’s cities one by one in the name of ‘equality,’ the narrator states that the “government fought a war with its own people,” as if the burning down of cities and assaults against whites should have been simply tolerated. On top of that, the unpopularity of the Vietnam War lead spoiled bourgeois whites to rebel against the government, thereupon leading to a lot of the garbage counter-culture and Frankfurt School/New Left ideas that have become quite mainstream today, albeit in a degenerate form. As *The Killing of America* reveals, most snipers, assassins, and especially serial killers, are white males from middleclass backgrounds with genius IQs, which is depicted in endearing interviews with real-life man-hunters Ted Bundy and Ed Kemper. In terms of murderous nonwhites, one gets to hear a heartwarming interview with Senator Robert F. Kennedy assassin Sirhan Sirhan, a Palestinian-American Christian whose greatest wish is that, “there should be peace in the Middle East.” One is also introduced to the whitey-hating crimes of Mark Essex, a negro spree killer who killed 9 people, including 5 police officers, and wounded 13 others in New Orleans in late-1972/early-1973 simply because they were white. Of course, aside from Essex and a black sniper who is featured being gunned down the police in broad daylight, *The Killing of America* totally underplays black criminality. In an aesthetically foul yet fitting (especially considering the film’s leftist anti-gun angle) conclusion, the assassination of John Lennon is discussed while the Brit hippie messiah’s hit shit single “Imagine” plays in the background.

Like a Michael Moore pseudo-documentary minus the Irish-American slob’s infantile sneering humor and actually featuring a number of deaths in real time, *The Killing of America* is undoubtedly a work by a carelessly cliché leftwing ideologue who does not have the balls nor the common sense to discuss why the United States is turning into a multicultural Third World full of crime and corruption and lacking in even the most rudimentary of culture. Being a perennial peasant nation comprised of Europe’s rabble and ex-slaves whose ancestors

were brought here unwillingly from Africa, not to mention an absurdly large and growing Third World population who have no interest in assimilating (not that I blame them, nor that most of them actually could if they tried), the United States is a monstrous mongrel of the untermensch sort, so it is only natural that criminality and cultural chaos reign here and one can certainly expect more of the same in the future as demonstrated by the latest news headlines. *The Killing of America* essentially depicts a country that, ever since winning the Second World War, has lost its moral compass and racial identity and thrives on fear and terror, as if these things are substitutes for real cultural ingredients, like classical music and arthouse cinema. With the assassination of communist-pawn charlatan Martin Luther King, Jr. resulting in race riots in no less than 125 cities as mentioned in *The Killing of America*, one can only wonder the sort of chaos that would erupt if some mental midget decided to assassinate the metrosexual mulatto messiah that is now, quite absurdly yet symbolically, the President of the United States.

As someone whose grandfather moved to the United States out of necessity when his own nation was destroyed during the Second World War and ultimately regretted obtaining citizenship in the so-called "New World", I also think that *The Killing of America* overrates America as a nation before the assassination of JFK as America's prosperity after WWII is almost solely the result of Europa's destruction and the raping/pillaging/occupying of the Occident by the Americans. Culturally speaking, at its height, America was, at best, an over glorified European colony, but with the arrival of Jews and every other non-European race, it has thrived completely and totally on formlessness of the racial and cultural variety, where personal material gain is the sole collective 'Weltanschauung' that 'unites' the people in any sense. Personally, considering how things have deteriorated in every regard since its release, I found *The Killing of America* to be a bit 'lighthearted', especially considering we now live in a deranged pseudo-culture that respects serial killers (*Seven*, *Dexter*) and criminals (*Sopranos*, *Sons of Anarchy*), thus the documentary would probably appeal most to serial killer fetishists and those with an interest in true crime, though those who have already read a book or two on the subject while learning nothing new, even if it features an iconic assassination or two. Undoubtedly, even the title of *The Killing of America* is outmoded as the United States is not being killed, but is already dead as a berserk zombie corpse with a Hebrew brain that is determined to infect the world with its deadly disease. Written by the older brother of the man who penned *Taxi Driver* (1976)—a film featuring an anti-hero eerily reminiscent in his thinking to various serial killers and assassins featured in the documentary—*The Killing of America* is ultimately a symptom of the forsaken society it condemns, but also a half-interesting, forgotten celluloid piece of American cinema history that strangely makes for a great double-feature with Martin Scorsese's underrated documentary *American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince* (1978), a

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celluloid cultural artifact that provides a somewhat concise depiction of when and where (but not why) America lost its innocence, or at least its semblance of it.

-Ty E

NAKED TANGO

Leonard Schrader (1991)

While Paul Schrader is, at least to some extent, a failed filmmaker in the sense that very few of his films have been monetarily successful and, more importantly, he oftentimes fails when it comes to translating his screenplays into fully realized films (indeed, it is no coincidence that he is best known for his screenplay for Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*), his older and lesser known brother Leonard, who only managed to direct a single feature during his somewhat sad life, is indubitably an artistic failure that was never able to reach anywhere near his full artistic potential. Although surely no masterpiece, Leonard's sole feature *Naked Tango* (1990) is undoubtedly a intriguing film worthy of reexamination and a cinematic work that reveals that the auteur had the potential to be just as subversive and innovative of a filmmaker as his much better known younger brother. Probably best remembered among cinephiles and film historians for penning the Academy Award nominated screenplay for the poor prison flick *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985) directed by Argentine-born Brazilian Jew Héctor Babenco and based on a novel by Argentine novelist Manuel Puig (whose work played a crucial influence on *Naked Tango*), Leonard—a draft-dodger that spent most of his life living and working in Japan after fleeing there in a successful attempt to avoid the Vietnam War—is undoubtedly a depressing example of misspent intellect and artistic talent. To anyone that is familiar with the somewhat sleazy but highly entertaining book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'N Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (1998) by Peter Biskind, it is easy to understand why the elder Schrader, who died under dubious circumstances in 2006, is all but forgotten yet his younger brother Paul has managed to direct a new film every year or two ever since his debut feature *Blue Collar* (1978) about forty years ago. Indeed, as Paul, who managed to snag the sole credit for their first Hollywood collaboration—the screenplay for Sydney Pollack's somewhat uneven *The Yakuza* (1974)—confessed in the book, "I had always treated Leonard badly. Taking sole screenwriting credit on *THE YAKUZA* wasn't very nice. Treating him as an employee wasn't very nice. Throughout all that, he had one thing that I didn't have, which was Japan. And then came *MISHIMA*, and I stole Japan from him." Apparently, *The Yakuza* credit and Japan were not the only things that Paul stole from his brother, or as Biskind somewhat questionably argued, "Ironically, his best film as a director was his first, *BLUE COLLAR*, which he more or less disavowed. Says Leonard, 'My brother finds *BLUE COLLAR* embarrassing. One reason is, he hadn't yet developed his polish-jewel *CAT PEOPLE* style. The other is, he didn't write it.' Meaning, of course, that Leonard wrote it." Of course, the brothers, who both spent their younger years fetishizing the virtues of suicide and even had a number of paternal uncles and cousins commit suicide, have a number of things in common, namely their obses-

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sion with sex and death and especially a seemingly seamless combination of the two. Notably, nearly a decade before directing his first feature, Schrader acted as co-director of the unintentionally entertaining and unquestionably exploitative leftist agitprop doc *The Killing of America* (1982) co-directed by Sheldon Renan. More or less a glorified snuff film featuring various pieces of classic true crime stock-footage, the somewhat deluded documentary now seems like a sick piece of leftist moral posturing when compare to the director's uniquely unhinged sadomasochistic melodrama *Naked Tango*. Like many of his brother's cinematic works, Leonard's film wallows in sex and death, but also dance, which is ultimately depicted as the height of orgasmic embrace and an activity that is driven largely by sheer sexual magnetism.

Featuring suicide, rape, murder, prostitution, homosexuality, Jewish organized crime, flapper fetishism, abattoirs, oedipal gangsters, and a delightfully dichotomous combination of high and low kultur that manages to combine the Symbolist paintings of Teutonic maestro Frank von Stuck with the gritty film noir sleaze of Howard Hawks' pre-Code guido gangster classic *Scarface* (1932), *Naked Tango* is undoubtedly an ambitious failure of sorts, but it is also a preternaturally engulfing failure and arguably one of the most elegant 'bad movies' ever made. An unintentional experiment in high-camp excess that attempts to juggle elements of film noir and classic melodrama and pays homage to both the short career of Latin heartthrob Rudolph Valentino and the surreal sadomasochism of late era Luis Buñuel (indeed, Fernando Rey does not star in the film as a cuckolded judge for no reason), Schrader's film certainly deserves comparisons to a number of subversive arthouse 'mad love' themed films, including Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's swansong *Querelle* (1982), and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Wild at Heart* (1990). In terms of its mongrelized cultural pedigree and dubious execution, the film also has much in common with the similarly flawed yet nonetheless underrated Orphic Belgian-Dutch-French co-production *Mascara* (1987) directed by Patrick Conrad and starring Charlotte Rampling and Michael Sarrazin. Undoubtedly, like *Mascara*, *Naked Tango* is what Manny Farber would have described as 'termite art' as a cinematic work that, for better or worse, attempts to exterminate pre-existing boundaries, exhibits undeniable artistic audaciousness, and wallows in economy of expression, among other things. In terms of being a somewhat arthouse-ish psychosexual thriller set in a culturally confused Buenos Aires, Argentina that makes various overt cinephiliac references to classic Hollywood movies, Schrader's film also has some somewhat superficial similarities with the homoerotic Argentine-British film *Apartment Zero* (1988) starring Colin Firth and Hart Bochner. Despite its somewhat glaring artsy fartsy qualities, Schrader's flick might be best summed up as a carefully culturally marinated combination of G. W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), and Sergio Leone's

Once Upon a Time in America (1984), albeit sans any sort of tangible commercial appeal.

Aside from an extremely rare out-of-print VHS, *Naked Tango* has, somewhat curiously, never been released in the United States in any other home media format. Although just speculation, I can only assume that the film was at least partially buried by its mainstream Hollywood distributor due to its less than flattering depiction of Jews and Jewish history. Indeed, the film is based on the real-life Jewish organized group Zwi Migdal and their international trafficking of young Jewesses from the shtetls of Eastern Europe for sexual slavery during a relatively long period that began in the 1860s and did not end until 1939 after an ex-prostitute named Raquel Liberman started a campaign that ultimately led to their downfall. Somewhat shockingly, the film does not feature a single redeemable Judaic character and instead is full of grotesque Jewish caricatures, namely a cowardly and craven young pimp with an obscene Oedipus complex and his similarly malevolent money-grubbing madam mommy. Incidentally, the film was produced by Jewish producer David Weisman—a protégé of Otto Preminger—who previously produced Paul Morrissey less than philo-semitic mafia satire *Spike of Bensonhurst* (1988). Notably, Schrader and Weisman previously had a quite monetarily and critically fruitful collaboration with *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, which seems to be a little bit too polished when compared to the visceral elegance of *Naked Tango*. Of course, Schrader only acted as a screenwriter on the previous film, but it seems that Weisman somehow expected the first-time-auteur to recapture the same success, albeit with a less than semantically sensitive twist. Naturally, a film about Jewish sex slavery would not be complete without a voluptuous seductive Jewess like Mathilda May of Tobe Hooper's *Lifeforce* (1985) fame and her supple Khazar milkers (while I typically find Jewesses to be innately grotesque, May is a half-breed and it seems her Swedish genes have done her well in both the titty and derriere department). It should also be noted that various mainstream film critics criticized *Naked Tango* when it was released due to its less than philo-semitic approach to depicting history. For example, assumed chosenite Ralph Novak complained in his September 16, 1991 review for *People* magazine that, "Great emphasis is placed on Morales's Jewishness, for no clear reason." Of course, Novak is either being willingly ignorant and/or he did not do his homework, as the film is based on a well-known real-life kosher crime syndicate. Additionally, the Jewish pimp played by Esai Morales hardly seems like a Jewish caricature in terms of physical appearance and certainly does not resemble a cunning gremlin like infamous real-life mobster Meyer Lansky. In short, *Naked Tango* is probably too aesthetically flattering when it comes to depicting Judaic pimps and gangsters. It seems that film specialists and academics are also unaware that it exists, as it does not get a single reference in Russell Campbell's book *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in the Cinema* (2006), which has been marketed as

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being the definitive text on the representation of female prostitution in cinema history. Incidentally, the book, which covers everything from New German Cinema to retro Swedish pornography, does dedicate a number of pages to *Taxi Driver*, which of course Schrader's brother Paul is famous for penning.

Admittedly, while I don't know shit about any form of dancing or ballet, I do have a certain inexplicable fondness for a number of idiosyncratic dance and ballet flicks, including (but certainly not limited to), Max Reichmann's experimental *Das Blumenwunder* (1926) aka *Miracle of Flowers*, Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's debut feature *Heute nacht oder nie* (1972) aka *Tonight or Never*, Ingmar Bergman's somewhat obscure avant-garde short *De fördömda kvinnornas dans* (1976) aka *The Condemned Women Dance*, the sod serial killer oriented *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* (1989) and other Physical Theatre Company DV8 production related films, Rosa von Praunheim's bizarre neo-Expressionist Anita Berber biopic *Anita: Tänze des Lasters* (1987) aka *Anita: Dances of Vice*, and even total senseless trash like Lucio Fulci's dance-giallo *Murder Rock* (1984) aka *Slashdance* and mercurial guido auteur Peter Del Monte's abortive arthouse neo-fairytale *Etoile* (1988) aka *Ballet* starring a rather young and nubile Jennifer Connelly. Indeed, I also regard the 'danse macabre' scene in Belgian master auteur André Delvaux's *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... A Train* as being among one of the most startlingly haunting scenes in cinema history. While I personally find tango music to be rather aesthetically disagreeable, it is an innate and imperative ingredient in what is ultimately a mostly delectable, yet sometimes bittersweet, cinematic cuisine that manages to combine an eclectic collection of ingredients, including Jewish gangsters, cabaret, proto-fascist aesthetics, Expressionism, Franz von Stuck, Rudolph Valentino worship, flapper sluts, and the perils of elegant excess, among other things. An erotic arthouse flick disguised as a trashy quasi-musical with a somewhat hermetic period setting, *Naked Tango* is arguably a grand artistic failure but it also indubitably the dead serious expression of a sick failed artist's wounded soul, thereupon making it a quite apt first (and last) feature for Schrader. Indeed, while Schrader may have only been able to direct one feature film during his life, he at least has never directed anything as hopelessly embarrassing as the incoherent shabbos goy tier shoah shit show *Adam Resurrected* (2008) or the totally worthless Nicholas Cage vehicle *The Dying of the Light* (2014) like his younger brother. Additionally, Mathilda May makes for a much more appealing prostitute than Richard Gere in Schrader's somewhat uneven Bressonian crime-romance *American Gigolo* (1980).

While the film's young and beautiful heroine Stephanie (Mathilda May) might be quite easy on the eyes, it is somewhat hard to sympathize with her plight as she is, quite simply, a spoiled little bitch that dares to wallow in self-pity because she made the obvious mistake of marrying an old fart simply because he was a rich and respected judge. Indeed, Stephanie socially cuckolds her

husband Juez Torres (Fernando Rey)—a man that seems to genuinely care for his wife despite having nothing in common with her—at the beginning of the film while they are vacationing on a cruise by dancing with a handsome young waiter, who initially mistakes her spouse for her father. While her husband purports to be a legendary tango dancer and she herself loves to tango, Stephanie is clearly disgusted at the thought of any sort of physical contact with Juez; be it sexual or otherwise. When Juez dares to berate her for her rather obnoxious quasi-slutty public behavior by declaring, “Stop making a scene. You’re acting worse than a whore,” she throws a rather childish fit, storms out of the dance hall and then heads to the deck of a ship where she is somewhat shocked to witness a beautiful nubile young girl stripping off all of her clothes and then committing suicide by jumping overboard. Clearly not the sort of person to miss the opportunity to exploit a good tragedy, Stephanie immediately decides to fake her own death and trades places with the mysterious dead girl by stealing her clothes and then leaving her own items at the scene of the glorious suicidal plunge. Upon discovering the dead girl’s journal, Stephanie discovers that the deceased was a Jewish mail-order bride from Poland and that she is traveling to Buenos Aires to wed a kosher chap. Unfortunately for Stephanie, her mysterious husband-to-be is actually a sly pimp and gangster named Zico Borenstein (Esai Morales) that runs a stylish whorehouse with his obscenely overbearing and equally morally bankrupt mother (Cipe Lincovsky). In short, Stephanie unwittingly goes from riches-to-rags, though she ultimately also goes from being a dishonest whore that married for money to becoming an honest enslaved pussy-peddler that does not even get to keep the money that her she actually earned via whoredom.

Upon arriving in Buenos Aires, Zico—a fairly young man whose counterfeit suaveness is only rivaled by his well hidden cowardice—acts like quite the prim and pristine gentleman and even provides Stephanie with a very expensive diamond ring. Although he intends to turn her into a servile sex slave that makes him cash with her gash, Zico also talks up the local neighborhood, even bragging in regard to his corrupt little ghetto, “You’re going to be very happy here. It’s so much better than the old country. We are very proud of our Jewish community. Before we go back, I’ll introduce you to our kosher butcher, the grocer, the banker, the doctor . . . everyone with money. I mean, everyone important. You’ll be surprised at how fast they make you feel at home.” Notably, Stephanie makes no attempt to pretend she is Jewish and Zico does not seem to suspect that she is a duplicitous shiksa that has her own dubious agenda, thus somewhat ironically making them the perfect couple as far as deceptive behavior and morally bankruptcy are concerned. Also, somewhat ironically, it is ultimately a man that initially displays nil interest in fucking her that makes her feel the most comfortable in her own pearly pale skin. Of course, as woman that married an old fart that she has no physical or emotional chemistry with, Stephanie certainly sees it as beneath her to peddle her pussy at the behest of a kosher *nostra* gangster

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for a mere couple of shekels that she will not even be able to keep herself. Luckily, Stephanie will at least finally meet a mensch that eventually falls head over heels in love with her in his own preternatural yet highly flattering fashion, thus naturally reaffirming her regret in regard to getting stuck in a loveless marriage. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, *Naked Tango*—a film where two somewhat unhinged weirdos with sadomasochistic tendencies discover the ecstatic highs and crushing lows of visceral mad love—does not have a happy ending, at least not in the conventional sense. In short, the (anti)heroine discovers that raw passion always has a hefty price, even when you're a busty little bitch that could have virtually any man you want.

When Stephanie first meets her great love 'Cholo' (Vincent D'Onofrio)—a pathologically cryptic yet hyper hip tango maestro that is high on his own idiosyncratic brand of swag—she is wielding two knives and is fully prepared to defend herself, as she has just stabbed her (pseudo)husband Zico and a grotesquely obese jeweler named Bertoni (played by famous Yiddish actor Zero Mostel's fairly unknown son Josh Mostel). Indeed, on their wedding night, Zico attempted to consummate the marriage by forcing a completely unwitting Stephanie to smoke the lard ass jeweler's seemingly ungodly awful choad. Of course, Stephanie, who had no idea that her husband was a pernicious pimp, naturally resisted and thus was forced to stab both Zico and Bertoni in the process. Proving to be the only man that can control Stephanie, Cholo literally grabs her by the pussy and the lifts her up in the air, though he is in for somewhat of a shock when he immediately develops a completely electric erotic attraction while she is attempting to stab him, as if he can immediately sense, like an ancient vampire, a fellow unhinged tango fanatic. Although practically worshiped by virtually every single woman (and even some men) in the area, Cholo loathes sex and seems to see tango dancing as a substitute that is much purer and authentic than actual coitus. Indeed, as a flaming fag hairdresser named Gastón (Patricio Bisso) states in regard to Cholo's preternatural proclivities, "We'd all give our long lost cherries to sleep with him but he sleeps with horses. He's never given any girl a second look." With Stephanie, Cholo gives her a whole lot more than a second look and he ultimately pays the greatest price for it. While Zico attempts to coerce Cholo into killing Stephanie since she is a witness-cum-perpetrator in the murder of the mafia-connected jeweler Bertoni and thus can get them in trouble with a ruthless outfit of Italian gangsters known as the 'Black Hand,' he cannot break his almost immediately self-destructive obsession with her and instead immediately proceeds to focus on transforming her into a sort of designer whore of his dreams. Indeed, after forcing her to get a dark black Louise Brooks-esque flapper hairdo and to take the exotic whore name 'Alba,' Cholo—a suave and romantic yet seemingly sociopathic sicko that commits violence and murder with a certain unrivaled finesse that is comparable to his tango moves—cannot stop his rather deleterious obsession with making love with Stephanie via tango. On

top of refusing to shove his almost mythical member in her clearly warm and ready snatch, Cholo also curiously forces Stephanie to wear a blindfold while they dance. In fact, Cholo is such an obsessive lunatic that he also has his own personal three-person tango band that he also forces to wear blindfolds, as if these almost phantom-like elderly musicians, who act as a sort of Greek chorus for the film, are too lowly and aesthetically handicapped to appreciate his perversely penetrating phantasmagoric dance moves.

As a result of her role in the death of mob-connected lardo jeweler Bertoni, Stephanie's life is threatened by both yid pimp Zico and the Black Hand mobsters, so it is a good thing that Cholo becomes absolutely infatuated with her. Indeed, while best buds with Zico and an associate of sorts with the goombah gangsters of the Black Hand, Cholo does not have to think twice about going to war with both just to defend Stephanie. In fact, after saving her from some somewhat intellectually disadvantaged guido gangsters, Cholo declares to Stephanie, who he has personally rechristened 'Alba,' in an almost sinisterly sensual fashion, "I'm sorry. This won't happen again. Don't worry, Alba. I'd never let anyone else kill you." Instead of killing Stephanie, Cholo forces her to do the tango blindfolded sans clothing. While Stephanie is also a tango fanatic of sorts, she much rather have Cholo's cock and practically begs him for it repeatedly but, unfortunately for her, he sees sex as sickening. A somewhat paradoxical chap that radiates a certain alluring degree of machismo and androgyny, Cholo is clearly the man of Stephanie's dreams, at least as far as sheer sex appeal is concerned. When Stephanie cries to Cholo while lying naked in pimp Zico's bed, "I don't know what sex with you is," he replies, "Yes, you do. All sex is the same. It just leaves you more sad. The beauty you're born with does not count. The only thing that counts is the beauty you make." If Cholo was an intellectual, one can certainly imagine him saying something in the vein of Georges Bataille like, "Nudity is only death, and the most tender kisses have the after-taste of the rat." Incidentally, Stephanie's eventual premature death while involve her nudity. As Stephanie learns, real beauty to Cholo is doing the tango in a blood-drenched abattoir while sticking a dagger under your lover's throat. Of course, Stephanie never gives up on attempting to coerce Cholo into jumping her bones, which he eventually does after murdering some pathetic wop gangster. Needless to say, Cholo does not shy away from pounding Stephanie's puss while her buxom bare ass is sitting on broken glass. In short, the fact that Jewish and guido gangsters are trying to kill them only adds more passion to Stephanie and Cholo's quite literally lethally lurid love affair. Unfortunately, being a woman, Stephanie still has strong survival instincts and an insatiable thirst for material things, so she eventually betrays Cholo and goes back to her wealthy judge husband, but not before burning a building down and quite selfishly risking the lives of many innocent people in the process, thus underscoring her sense of quasi-sociopathic greed and self-worship. Naturally, Cholo refuses to let Stephanie go and she

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cannot deny her undying love for the twisted tango maestro, so it is not long before they are reunited. Needless to say, the lovers are doomed.

In the spirit of classic European ‘impossible love’ myths like Tristan and Iseult and Orpheus and Eurydice and film reworkings of such perennial stories like the Jean Cocteau-penned Vichy era classic *L’Éternel retour* (1943) aka *The Eternal Return* directed Jean Delannoy, *Naked Tango* naturally concludes in a tragically romantic fashion with the leads being completely destroyed because of their quite impossible forbidden love. Indeed, when Stephanie decides to once again betray her husband and choose Cholo over him, he finally loses his patience and opts to kill her in what can only be described as a crime of cuckold passion. Of course, when the judge shoots Stephanie, Cholo immediately retaliates and does so by suavely and quite effortlessly throwing a knife through the old fart’s swarthy decrepit Latin neck. In the end, the judge’s henchman—corrupt local Prussianesque cops that shoot first and ask questions later—unleash a storm of bullets on Cholo and Stephanie as they quite literally take their last dance together. As a symbolic act of both true love and heroic defiance, Cholo uses his last couple moments alive to raise Stephanie lifeless body in the air as if he is trying to vain to send her off to heaven while his feet are just beginning to feel the warmth of the pits of hell. As individuals that were clearly not built for marriage or kids that indubitably reached the zenith of their love for another, Stephanie and Cholo could not have left this world together in a more appropriate fashion. Luckily, Cholo manages to execute Zico as revenge for his betrayal shortly before his own death. Quite symbolically considering the neurotic maternal spirit of Ashkenazi Jewry, Zico’s mother seems to be the only one that survives the blood bath and now she can keep all of the whorehouse money for herself instead of splitting it with her pimp son.

As history certainly demonstrates from Samson’s harlot of Gaza to Heidi ‘Hollywood Madam’ Fleiss, Jews and prostitution go together like peas and carrots, yet *Naked Tango* is probably the only film that dares to take a fearless and less than politically incorrect approach to the subject. Notably, in her book *Luftmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* (1995), Maria Tatar noted in regard to the literary tradition of Jews and prostitution, “Jews came to be linked not only with the perpetrators of sexual murder, but with the victims as well. Like the prostitute, the Jew is seen to represent a serious threat to the moral, fiscal, and sexual economy of the social body. As Sander Gilman has pointed out, both prostitutes and Jews have been liked by what is seen to be a sexualized relation to capital—they have ‘but one interest, the conversion of sex into money or money into sex.’ Unable to find value in transcendent spiritual matters, their interests remain fixed on the material and financial. More important, prostitutes and Jews, because of their spiritual corruption, are considered carriers of sexually transmitted diseases, a view clearly articulated in Hitler’s *MEIN KAMPF*.” Ironically and somewhat cynically, the protagonists of the film, especially female

lead Stephanie, are ultimately destroyed as a result of abandoning material consumption for visceral true love. Interestingly, the leads are ultimately victims of greed and treachery of a Jewish pimp in a film that, quite unintentionally, lends authority to Uncle Adolf's words, "Particularly with regard to syphilis, the attitude of those who guide the nation and the state can only be described as total capitulation [...] The cause lies primarily in the prostitution of love [...] This Jewification of the spiritual life and mammonization of the mating instinct will sooner or later destroy all of our descendants." Of course, the protagonists die before they can even produce descendants despite their eventual abandoning of both literal and spiritual prostitution. Indeed, were it not such a debauched film, Schrader's debut feature could be mistaken as an homage to the classic high-camp melodramas of National Socialist auteur Veit Harlan. Naturally, the fact that it was directed by a lifelong leftist and draft-dodger that previously directed liberal anti-American agitprop makes *Naked Tango* seem like an all the more inexplicable cinematic work, so it is really no big surprise that has been tragically consigned to the celluloid dustbin of history.

While *Naked Tango* certainly seems a little bit culturally mongrelized due to its glaring international cast and mostly pleasantly preternatural period setting that oftentimes more resembles Weimar Berlin than Buenos Aires in terms of aesthetic spirit, the film is indubitably deeply rooted in both cultural and social history and reflects Schrader's sagely understanding of art, cinema, and literature as indicated by the film's use aesthetic influences ranging from Manuel Puig to German Expressionism. Indeed, aside from being inspired by the real-life Jewish sex slavery outfit Zwi Migdal, the film follows in the tradition of certain forgotten Jewish art, or as explained at the Jewish Virtual Library, "Yiddish literature of the early 20th century contains a number of powerful portrayals of the social and personal costs of widespread prostitution including Sholem Asch's *GOD OF VENGEANCE* and Perets Hirschbein's *MIRIAM*. A 1908 performance of the latter in Buenos Aires led to a bloody public riot." Of course, the almost gothic-like Jewish ghetto setting seems to be largely window dressing for Schrader's eclectic aesthetic obsessions. After all, I doubt many Hebraic whorehouses have stained glass windows modeled after some of Franz von Stuck's greatest paintings, including *Die Sünde* (1893) aka *The Sin and Sphinx* (1904). Somewhat ironically considering the film's degenerate Jewish setting, von Stuck was apparently apparently Adolf Hitler's favorite painter. Notably, when Aryan Christ Jung wrote in his book *Symbols of Transformation* (1956) in regard to von Stuck's paintings, "The mixture of anxiety and lust is perfectly expressed in the sultry atmosphere of these pictures," he certainly could have also been describing Schrader's film. In a January 07, 1990 interview with John M. Wilson at the *Los Angeles Times* in regard to the production of the film, Schrader demonstrated he was personally obsessed with romance, arguing, "For me, the essence of romance, for all its high-octane fuel, is for romance to burn

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itself out. In the ashes of romance can grow a more mature, a different kind of love. The more chance you have to take romance all the way to the end, the more chance you have to be ready for the next phase. Most of us only have the courage to take it halfway.” Of course, the lovers in the film go all the way in terms of their love and pay the ultimate price for it, but as Schrader stated in the same interview, “Most romances keep the element of death hidden under the table. I wanted to put it square in the middle of the table.”

It seems that Schrader, who apparently liked the emotional of security of knowing that he was always sleeping with a loaded weapon under his pillow and thus could kill himself at any time, was a somewhat tragic self-destructive individual who was a slave of the *Todestrieb*. While putting together *Naked Tango* in the editing room, Schrader even expressed a certain irrational excitement in regard to the artistic uncertainty of his film, stating, “This is why I love it—every choice, every step, every moment is crucial. I love to be in that position, where I can win or lose, because it means that what I’m doing counts.” Judging simply by his statement, it makes one wonder whether or not Schrader was attempting to sabotage his own career by making a film about rather unsavory Jewish pimps and gangsters while working in the hyper Hebraic realm of Hollywood. Of course, despite his brother Paul ultimately directing the film, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985)—a somewhat experimental biopic of the great Japanese novelist and neo-fascist Yukio Mishima—was ultimately Schrader’s brainchild and an expression of his own romantic and self-destructive tendencies. Knowing this, I can only assume that Leonard was the more subversive and intelligent of the two brothers, but sadly it seems he was an underachiever that was too antisocial and just plain mentally ill to establish a filmmaking career that was extensive as his own little bro. It seems that Schrader was also somewhat lazy, as he spent the majority of his life as ‘script doctor’ which, to quote the failed auteur, allowed him to obtain, “big money for a short amount of work.” Unfortunately, *Naked Tango* was ultimately such a huge failure that it is all but totally unknown in Schrader’s own homeland and currently unavailable in any home media format, though it seems to have developed some minor success in Europe and Argentina. Still, I doubt that Schrader would have ever been capable of developing any sort of big mainstream success. Indeed, as a strange introverted intellectual that seemed to suffer posttraumatic success as a result of strict and totally movie-less Dutch Calvinist upbringing, the failed auteur probably did not relate to most people. Additionally, I am not surprised that the man that directed *Naked Tango* also once candidly confessed, “I would be sitting alone in some room at three o’clock in the morning with a loaded gun, thinking about blowing my brains out. It was not, ‘I’m having a bad day, I wanted to kill myself’; no, the desire, the need, felt as real as a fucking table. I want to do this, and I never want to do this. I’m three seconds away from it, and I’m three million years away from it. I felt the fever of two things inside me fighting. I was breaking

out in a sweat, my temperature was going up from the intensity of it. Sometimes I would just stare at the wall, trying to quiet the heat down, but sometimes the heat kept building, and that's when I was looking for the gun. Triggered by something physical, like I couldn't sleep. I found out that if I stuck the barrel in my mouth, like some infant's pacifier, I could fall asleep. It worked for two or three weeks, and all of a sudden, it didn't work. I'd been sucking on an empty gun. I knew if I loaded the sonofabitch, I was gonna sleep tonight." While Schrader was apparently not a fag since he was married to a Jap chick, somehow it seems fitting that his real-life, as demonstrated by the above quote, sometimes resembled a scene out of Jean Genet's sole film *Un chant d'amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*.

-Ty E

BAD BLOOD
BAD BLOOD

Leos Carax (1986)

If there ever was a true diva of the pornographic realm, it was Georgina Spelvin who, at 36-years-old, was nearly middle-aged when she became famous by playing the lead role in Gerard Damiano's wickedly lecherous porn chic classic *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973) where she played an old sexless spinster who commits suicide but later gets a sexual chance at unholy sensuality after ending up in purgatory and begging an angel to allow her to earn her rightful place in hell via rampant lechery. Already over-the-hill by fuck film standards and not exactly the most beautiful nor busty babe in the world, Spelvin's popularity relied heavily on her sassy attitude, genuine acting talents, and eccentric erotic charms, as a sort of diva of debauchery whose maturity of age more than hinted at well developed carnal knowledge. If one questions Spelvin's acting talents, they simply need to check out her mostly unclad silent style slapstick comedic performance as an obscenely undersexed Bathsheba in Wakefield Poole's underrated erotic arthouse biblical epic *Bible!* (1974), or her haunting Bergman-esque performance in Orson Welles' protégé Gary Graver's arthouse blue movie *3 A.M.* (1975) where she portrays a lonely yet lecherous spinster who tragically accidentally kills her brother-in-law who she has been carrying on a long affair with and is thus forced to live with her undying guilt over her deep dark secret while living in the largely incestuous company of her pill-popping widowed sister, nephew, and bisexual niece. Of course, like many genuinely talented porn thespians of the porn chic era, Spelvin would also make an attempt at a more 'respectable' acting career by appearing in a couple of non-pornographic films, including small and less than dignified roles as a hooker in both *Police Academy* (1984) and *Police Academy 3: Back in Training* (1986), but she did not really get a chance to fully display her true acting talents until pornographic auteur Chuck Vincent (*Roommates*, *Jack 'n Jill*) gave her the opportunity to star in his wonderfully warped Gothic psychological horror-thriller *Bad Blood* (1989) aka *A Woman Obsessed* aka *A Woman's Obsession* aka *Blutige Liebe* as a whacked-out widowed rich bitch of the madly murderous sort who uses her alluring opulence and psychopathic charms to lure in and sexually enslave her long lost son who she schizophrenically mistakes for her long dead husband. A sort of hyper histrionic Reagan era neo-hagsploitation flick where the old homicidal hag is thankfully at least marginally attractive, Vincent's unsurprisingly underrated psychosexual psychodrama, like the director's similarly underrated *Repulsion*-esque chamber piece *Deranged* (1987), is an extremely morbid, tastefully twisted, and borderline 'misogynistic' little movie that depicts female mental illness in its most unsettling form. Like the old school psycho-biddy bitch spirits of classics like *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) haunting the same unhinged celluloid universe as *Misery* (1990) in a work that seems like it

was directed by the bastard brood of Alfred Hitchcock and Swiss arthouse auteur Daniel Schmid (*La Paloma*, *Schatten der Engel* aka *Shadow of Angels*), *Bad Blood* is killer cultivated kitsch with high-camp elements that demonstrates in a horrifyingly hysterical and sometimes darkly humorous fashion that Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, especially if she is a stinking rich spoiled bitch with a rather unconventional daddy issue who hasn't gotten over her less than faithful hubby's grizzly death from a couple decades ago.

Ted Barnes (second-rate porn star Randy Spears under the pseudonym 'Gregory Patrick') is a seemingly soulless preppie lawyer and proud mindless workaholic who would probably suck Ronald Reagan's cock if asked to and who literally wastes no time doing banal preppie things, even jogging while in his office to get exercise. One day, while jogging in downtown Manhattan, a sneering fag queen named Bobby (Frank Stewart of Gorman Bechar'd's *Psychos in Love* (1987) and Vincent's *Cleo/Leo* (1989)) approaches him and literally drags him into his art gallery to show Ted a portrait painting that looks exactly like him to prove to himself that he is "not hallucinating" since the drugs he has been taking recently are "not that good." Indeed, the man in the painting is the spitting image of Ted and as the gallery queen Bobby explains to him, it was painted by "some dilettante from Long Island" that "thinks she can paint." As the bitchy cocksucker gallery owner also explains, the ostensible artist behind the painting rented the gallery for an entire month just to display her work and when Ted asks him for her name and address, he explains that she refuses to give it out, as if she has something to hide. Unquestionably, the strangest thing of all is that the painting was done in 1964 when Ted would have been just a newborn baby and surely not the generically handsome proud preppie prima donna he is today. Interested to find out who was responsible for the painting, Ted goes with his revoltingly sassy know-it-all wife Evie (child actress turned exploitation diva Linda Blair of *The Exorcist* (1973) and Tom DeSimone's *Hell Night* (1981)) to the official gallery showing where they are soon aggressively approached by the artist, Arlene Bellings (Georgina Spelvin under the pseudonym 'Ruth Raymond'), who declares that she is "the creator of these masterpieces" and invites the married couple to dinner, thus somewhat strangely leaving in the middle of her own show, as if she just set it up as a way to lure in the two strangers. Needless to say, Ted is in for quite the shock when Arlene proclaims that their meeting was an act of fate and that she is his mother, he is her long lost son, and the man in the painting is her husband/his father. After revealing that she created the painting in 1964 just after her husband Joe stole him when he was just a wee baby and disappeared into New York City, materialistic turd Ted freaks out and threatens to sue Arlene for "everything" she has, "including the kitchen sink." Of course, Ted's initial instincts are right, as Arlene is a bat-shit crazy bitch, though it will take a dead wife and falling victim to a savage mother-on-son rape for him to completely figure this out, as he is a man who has got his eyes on the money and

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his long lost mother has got tons of it.

When Ted goes to his mother Wanda (Carolyn Van Bellinghen of Vincent's two 1989 films *Bedroom Eyes II* and *Enrapture*) about Arlene's claims, she breaks down and confesses that she 'stole' him out of the fear that her husband Jack (Troy Donahue of Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1959) and John Waters *Cry-Baby* (1990)) would leave her since she was infertile. Apparently a man offered Wanda a baby boy if she screwed him and that baby was Ted, who she visited frequently while contemplating whether or not she should cheat on her husband so that they both could have a son. One day, Wanda went to see the man and the baby, only to find the latter by itself with the man nowhere in sight, so she stole the infant and the rest was history. Of course, the man with the baby was Ted's biological father Joe. Upon receiving the confirmation from Wanda that Arlene is indeed his biological mother, he decides to take a trip with his wife to his long lost progenitor's darkly glamorous Gothic home in Long Island. When Ted and his wife arrive at the huge ancient and somewhat ominous estate, there is a huge fancy party and the protagonist is told by Arlene that it is his "welcome home" celebration. While hanging out at the party, Ted is approached by an old drunk dude named Jasper (Harvey Siegel of Vincent's *Deranged* and *Bedroom Eyes II*) who states, "Your Dad and I were in the navy together...enlisted the same day. We had a girl in every port, you know?! Joe had two, sometimes three." When Ted asks if he has heard from his father recently, Jasper reveals that his biological mother's wealthy father blew poor Joe's brains out. That night, Arlene explains her father's hatred towards his deceased father 'Joe Jenkins', stating, "Daddy said you could tell by the name how 'common' he was and insisted I continue using my maiden name even after Joe and I were married...couldn't have a daughter of his named Jenkins, oh no. But Joe didn't care, he just laughed. Of course, Joe didn't care much about anything. See, Daddy was convinced that Joe was a bum who was only after my money. It was true of course, but I didn't care. I loved him. I loved him more than I ever loved anything. You probably find it hard to believe...Joe brought the first true happiness I ever knew in my life. He made me feel alive...like a real person, instead of daddy's little windup doll and he loved me too, I know he did." Arlene then goes on to tell Ted how his father began cheating on her when she became pregnant because, "nine months of sexual abstinence was simply not in Joe's nature." Ultimately, Arlene's father blew Joe's brains out after he asked for a divorced and subsequently kidnapped baby Ted and tried to blackmail the distraught mother with it. Indeed, it seems Ted has accursed blood with a deep irreparable taint.

Ted begins suspecting his biological mother might have a screw loose after catching her ripping up a bouquet of flowers on her father's tombstone while hysterically screaming, "Joe has come back just like I thought he would and you will never be able to keep us apart again. Joe and I will have everything and you will rot in hell." When Ted goes inside, he becomes quite startled after bump-

ing into the sexy yet appallingly dumb and annoyingly talkative maid Crystal (Christina Veronica of scifi-horror-comedy *They Bite* (1996)), who attempts to seduce him while sucking on a carrot like it is a cock, even opening her robe so he can checkout her carnal goods, but the discernibly intimidated lawyer turns her down. At the end of the scene, it is revealed that Arlene has been listening to the entire conversation between Ted and Crystal on the other side of the wall. When it is revealed that Crystal has disappeared the next day, it becomes quite apparent who is responsible. Meanwhile, Ted wife's Evie becomes so sick that she becomes bedridden and a doc soon reveals that she is suffering from "good old fashioned food poisoning," with Arlene's hors d'oeuvres being the culprit for her illness. Naturally, when Arlene gives Ted his father's prestigious purple heart and promises him that he will inherit everything she owns, the lost son finds it easier to overlook his mother's bizarre possessive behavior and various other idiosyncrasies. When Ted and his wife finally decide to leave Arlene's home due to the latter's poor health, they end up unwittingly running over Crystal's corpse, which a cop reveals had already been dead 12-14 hours before they ran over it as a result of being brutally beaten to death. Due to the tragic roadkill incident, as well as because of Evie's declining health, the two decide to stay at Arlene's for a little longer in what ultimately proves to be the biggest mistake of their entire lives. Despite the fact that her maid has been mysteriously brutally murdered, Arlene is in a rather excited mood and forces her son to dance with her while repeatedly 'accidentally' calling him Joe. Meanwhile, after feeding some of her food to Arlene's kitty cat Twinkie that results in the feline's subsequent death, Evie realizes she has been poisoned and attempts to crawl down stairs to tell Ted, who has been drugged himself and begins losing consciousness while dancing with his decidedly deranged progenitor. When Evie finally manages to crawl downstairs and spots her semi-conscious husband being sexually taken advantage of, Arlene grabs a large butcher knife, chases her around, and ultimately slits her throat in front of a roaring fire while poor Teddy boy watches helplessly as his messed up mommy maliciously murders his beloved wife.

When Ted finally awakes, he finds his arms and legs bound to a bed and his mental case mommy calling him 'Joe.' Indeed, with Evie and maid Crystal out of the picture, Arlene can finally fully live out her terribly twisted schizophrenic fantasy that her son is her long dead husband. Of course, Arlene eventually rapes her son by mounting him while he is tied to the bed and stating, "oh Joe, I've waited so long" in a rather waywardly wanton scene that is easily the most overtly 'erotic' scene in the entire film. Arlene also reveals that it was not her father but she who actually murdered Ted's father Joe after threatening her son with the following words, "I'll get daddy's 22 and blow your brains out just like I did before." Hoping to renew her vows with the long dead hubby that she personally murdered, Arlene begins planning a large lavish wedding at her home where Ted will be the groom. Meanwhile, Ted's adoptive parents come by Ar-

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lene's house asking for him and when the crazed cunt makes the dubious claim that their son and Evie "went antiquing," they know it is complete and utter bullshit because, as Wanda states, "Those two wouldn't know an antique from a piece of junk." Of course, Ted suffers much torture under Arlene's watch, including the slow breaking of his toes while his mad incestuous mommy sings the nursery rhyme "This Little Piggy" in what one might describe as a warped way for an estranged mother to catch up on her maternal duties. During the day of the big wedding, Ted's adoptive mother walks in on Arlene giving Ted a shave while he is tied to a chair and a somewhat darkly humorous cat fight soon ensues. Brutalized and beaten to the point of complete physical and psychological incapacitation, Ted watches helplessly as Arlene drowns Wanda in a bathtub. When Ted's adoptive father Jack catches Arlene with his badly beaten son, another brawl breaks out that results in the old man falling on his back from a floor or two after being push over a railing and assumedly dying. After that, Wanda, who miraculously survived the drowning, once again attempts to save her son, so Arlene chases her around with a straight razor. Like some retarded slasher killer like Jason Voorhees or Michael Myers, Arlene is seemingly repeatedly killed, but she keeps coming back. Eventually, father Jack puts a couple bullets in Arlene just before she attempts to slit his wife's throat. Ironically, while succumbing to her injuries, Arlene manages to walk down the aisle of her wedding, albeit without her mensch, thus making for one of the most distinctly pathetic embarrassments a woman could ever suffer. While Ted and his two adoptive parents survive the ugly ordeal, he is plagued by ominous Oedipal nightmares involving his belated biological mother Arlene, who haunts her prodigal son's dreams like a sort of femme fatale Freddy Krueger.

Except maybe when I was a naive little kid, I have never believed the stereotype that women are more romantic and sentimental than men. Yeah, a lot of chicks can be conned into being fucked if you feed their egos with kind words, sweet gestures, and worthless gifts, but women are for the most part more practical about life and will dump a man they genuinely love for a man that repels them if he has enough money and other forms of security to provide her with, so the idea of a rich woman not getting over her long dead, deadbeat lumpenprole hubby after around three decades seems somewhat preposterous, but then again, that is one of the reasons that Georgina Spelvin's character is oh-so damn creepy in *Bad Blood*, though I cannot say that I would not be strangely flattered if some girl loved me so much that she still loved me three decades after blowing my brains out with a .22 rifle. Unquestionably, Spelvin embodies the hyper hysterical emotionally wounded woman in the film to the point of seeming like a female Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde with a perennial case of PMS. Indeed, she might forever best be remembered for her performance in *The Devil in Miss Jones*, but Spelvin gives her greatest, most captivating and penetrating performance in *Bad Blood* to the point where she makes her co-star Linda 'The Exorcist' Blair look

like an outstandingly annoying and insufferable little plodding twat and more of a distracting dork than the dignified exploitation diva that she has a reputation for being. In fact, it's impossible to imagine Vincent's film without Spelvin, as she is certainly to the film what Gloria Swanson was to *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and what Vivien Leigh was to *Gone with the Wind* (1939). In its debasing depiction of a foredoomed family plagued by inter-generational incest and violent coldblooded murder, as well as its delightfully daunting depiction of homicidally hysterical lovelorn females, *Bad Blood* is like an Andy Milligan film on steroids, albeit with the use of some minor avant-garde techniques, including split-screen and an unforgettable slow-motion 'dance of death' sequence concluding with Spelvin's character romantically kissing her son as his wife watches on in horror.

The ultimate anti-Oedipal horror show and odious celluloid orgy of incestuous blood, *Bad Blood* could have only been dreamed up by homos with a Tennessee Williams-esque contempt for straight men and aberrant admiration for strong and sadistic older women. Indeed, aside from Vincent directing the film, the work was penned by queer screenwriter Craig Horrall (who also wrote Vincent's *Deranged* and *Slammer Girls*), who incidentally succumbed to AIDS the same year as the director, whose films he also worked on as a casting director, actor, and even assistant director, among various other capacities. Notably, while depicting women as homicidal hysterics, *Bad Blood* also portrays hotshot heterosexual lawyers as weak ass helpless wusses who need their mothers to fight their fights for them. In short, one of the greatest aspects of Vincent's film, like much of the director's other work, is its wickedly warped yet strikingly nuanced depiction of sexual relations. Indeed, in its fag style misogyny, *Bad Blood* depicts the unsettling traits of certain women that no heterosexual man is either able to fathom and/or is willing to accept, hence the true source of the film's horror.

-Ty E

WERNER HERZOG EATS HIS SHOE
WERNER HERZOG EATS HIS SHOE

Les Blank (1980)

The title is pretty self-explanatory. Acclaimed eccentric director Werner Herzog once made a promise to his friend Errol Morris that if he finished his film *Gates of Heaven*, he would eat his shoes. Mixed with footage from old Charlie Chaplin scenes and interviews from the director in his almost-youth, *Les Blank* creates a documentary that not shows Herzog eating his cooked shoes, but also discussing problems with society.

This is a curio that is highly sought after although being a special feature on the Criterion release of *Burden of Dreams*. The scenes of Herzog dictating his beliefs on Capitalism and such are increasingly engaging and only adds to the enigma that is Herzog. As shown in his acting role in *Julien Donkey-Boy*, Werner is an accomplished anything but that will soon be put to the test as the release date of his *Bad Lieutenant* remake starring Nicholas Cage looms closer. Werner Herzog is a bold director and humanitarian. His visions on film have shocked thousands and moved millions. It's no surprise that watching him eat his own shoe would be of an entertaining essence, but it is a greater surprise that he is so charismatic about the whole deal and continues to view life with such a wide-eye; similar to his camera methods.

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SCHALCKEN THE PAINTER

Leslie Megahey (1979)

Forget the various hokey Hammer Horror films based on the works and characters of the Irish Gothic novelist Sheridan Le Fanu, like Roy Ward Baker's *The Vampire Lovers* (1970) starring Ingrid Pitt, Jimmy Sangster's *Lust for a Vampire* (1971) and John Hough's *Twins of Evil* (1971) starring Peter Cushing, *Schalcken the Painter* (1979) directed by Leslie Megahey (Duke Bluebeard's Castle, *The Advocate* aka *The Hour of the Pig*) is not only hands down the greatest and most cultivated Sheridan Le Fanu reworking from the 1970s, despite being based on one of the writer's lesser known works, but also, aside from Carl Th. Dreyer's masterwork *Vampyr* (1931), the best, most ambitious, and singular film based on a work by the Victorian era Dark Romanticist ever made. Indeed, I do not like to throw around the word 'masterpiece,' but with its tight and claustrophobic direction, decadent yet dignified tableaux and mise-en-scène, cool and collected yet foreboding atmosphere, ostensibly docudrama-like yet classical approach to storytelling, and truly striking and idiosyncratic all-around flavor, Megahey's 68-minute piece of phantasmagorical Gothic horror is certainly a work that seems to be free of all flaws, or at least hides them well. Adapted from Le Fanu's 1839 short story *A Strange Event in the Life of Schalcken the Painter*—a work aesthetically inspired by the ghostly atmospheric candlelit paintings of 17th-century Dutch Golden Age painter Godfried Schalcken, who also happens to be the lead character of the story—*Schalcken the Painter* is a darkly (anti)romantic doom-and-gloom-addled ghost story about a young and cowardly yet nonetheless talented Flemish painter who finds himself forsaking love and happiness for artistic ambition after letting his beloved fall into the hands of a grotesque elderly 'demonic lover.' As the head of BBC's arts documentary program *Omnibus*, auteur Megahey cleverly sold the story as a 'documentary' and was ultimately able to assemble what amounts to an experimental Gothic horror flick, which was also screened as part of the BBC's annual broadcast 'A Ghost Story for Christmas' on December 23, 1979.

Like a Gothic horror film as directed by the rampantly heterosexual twin of Teutonic dandy auteur Werner Schroeter, albeit minus the camp elements and featuring a relatively straightforward storyline, with a mise-en-scène inspired by paintings by both the eponymous subject and his more bourgeois Baroque fellow countryman Johannes Vermeer, *Schalcken the Painter* is like a virtual living Dutch Golden Age art museum set in some sort of perennially pernicious Calvinist purgatory where all love is lost and has been replaced with lust and where sin, especially greed, reigns. Inspired by the paintings of an artist that is probably best known for his unrivaled mastery in reproducing the effect of candlelight, Megahey's celluloid chiaroscuro might seem like it was inspired by Stanley Kubrick's underrated epic European period piece *Barry Lyndon* (1975),

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but the director has credited its inspiration to the more obscure tragic medieval love story *Blanche* (1972) directed by Polish painter turned animator turned cinematic auteur Walerian Borowczyk. A multilayered subtextual work that is simultaneously a morality tale about the haunting dread that accompanies fame and fortune over true love, an anti-capitalist fable that depicts money as the root of all 'evil,' a scathing crypto-feminist critique of the so-called institution of marriage, an experimental art history (pseudo)documentary that analyzes the life and work of Schalcken, and a foreboding abstract re-working of arthouse folk horror, *Schalcken the Painter* is a film that does many things and somehow manages to do them rather well, thus making it seem like auteur Megahey, who is far from a household name, made some sort of Faustian pact that gave him the artistry but not the fame and fortune.

Opening with an off-screen Godfried Schalken (Jeremy Clyde of the British TV series *William Tell aka Crossbow* (1987-1989) and *The Iron Lady* (2011) starring Meryl Streep) telling a beautiful classical Nordic model to, "Turn from the light. Your breast bare. Look into the dark," *Schalcken the Painter* then sends the viewer into literal and figurative darkness where the viewer is greeted by an unseen narrator (fittingly provided by Charles Gray of *The Devil Rides Out* (1968) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) in a role considered for Vincent Price and offered to Peter Cushing) who describes how his great-grandfather knew the Flemish painter well and states regarding a painting featured in the scene: "To my mind, there are some paintings that impress one with a conviction that they represent not merely the imagined shapes and characters conceived in the mind of the artist, but scenes or faces or situations that have actually existed. There is in one strange picture that intangible something which stamps it as just such a representation of reality. It's a remarkable work by the Dutch painter Schalcken." The painting in question features a beautiful young woman in the foreground holding a large candle while a young man is drawing a sword in the background as if afraid of the seemingly harmless lady, with the rest of the painting being total abyss-like blackness. By the end of the film, the viewer will know what inspired this painting, and that the antihero Schalcken, through weakness and self-absorption, unwittingly sired a demon that haunted him until his lonely death. Schalcken's story begins in 1665 at the Leiden-based studio of his teacher Gerrit Dou (Maurice Denham of *John Schlesinger's Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971) and *The Day of the Jackal* (1973)), who was the student of the great Rembrandt van Rijn and earned great fame due to his "exquisitely detailed and minutely executed paintings," but by age 30, had gone progressively blind and thus became a teacher. While Schalcken will receive a "traditionally formal and academic education" from Dou, his later and greater work "seems to have its roots in some private world of dreams, perhaps never otherwise expressed." The gatekeeper of this "private world of dreams" is Dou's stunning young niece Rose Velderkaust (British TV actress Cheryl Kennedy), who "had all the charm of the

fair light-skinned Flemish maidens,” hence why Schalcken will fall in love with her at virtual first sight “as much as a Dutchman can” (unquestionably, the film has a less than favorable view of the national character of the Dutch), but he will ultimately prove not man enough to be worthy of her love.

Behind goofy old fart Dou’s back, Schalcken and Rose start a seemingly harmless love affair mostly comprised of sensual glances and romantic whispers, but their love is soon tested when an elderly ghoul of a fellow named ‘Minjheer Vanderhausen of Rotterdam’ (a rather ghastly and corpse-like John Justin of *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940)) with a chest full of gold jewelry demands that Dou sign away his niece to him immediately in exchange for the small fortune he has brought. Somewhat reluctantly, Dou gives into his greed and sells his niece to the tall and seemingly rotting ghoul despite Rose’s plea, “Oh Uncle, what a terrible creature. I could never look on that face again for all the wealth of the states.” Rose also reveals that she remembers seeing Vanderhausen, who she describes as an “old wooden figure,” staring creepily at her at a Rotterdam church when she was just a little girl, but her uncle couldn’t care less because, as the film’s narrator states, “Marriages were matters of traffic and calculation. The unfortunate girl was simply the object of a contract.” While Rose attempts to convince Schalcken to run away with her, the painter refuses and states, “I will work, Rose. In the future, I will buy back the contract. I will buy it back double.” Of course, he never has the opportunity to buy her back and as the narrator states regarding the rest of the film, “I have no sentimental scenes to describe, no exquisite details of the cruelty of a guardian, no agonies or transports of lovers. The record I have to make is one of heartlessness, nothing more. The contract was signed, and settlements made even more splendid than Dou ever dreamed of.” Naturally, Rose and Vanderhausen wed but, after the ceremony, both bride and groom disappear without a trace, as if pulled into the bowels of hell to consummate their unholy marriage. When Dou does not hear from his niece or her new husband after weeks, he sends Schalcken to Rotterdam to look for them so as “to satisfy himself as to the comfort and safety of Rose,” but “no one had ever heard of the rich Minjheer Vanderhausen.”

While one might suspect that Schalcken would fall into a deep van Gogh-esque depression after losing his beloved, “bit by bit, the impulse of love gave way to that of ambition” and the painter satisfied his sexual longings by regularly meeting with a prostitute named Hendrije (Helena Clayton of exploitation trash like *The Brick Dollhouse* (1967) and *The Rebel Rousers* (1970)) to satisfy his carnal lust in between devoting virtually all of his time to his blossoming painting career, whose work the narrator describes as seeming “to draw upon elements of a peculiarly personal nature, and yet with no apparent foundation in what we know of the life of the painter. In all the paintings I have seen, I have remarked a strange distance in the relationship of the human figures therein. Contacts made only perhaps by the expected conventions and courtesies of po-

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lite society, or by commercial transaction. Sensuality without warmth, without passion. Trappings that are ornate and lovely, and yet set in a darkness that the faltering lamplight or candle flame never seems capable of penetrating." As for Dou, he suffered great grief over the disappearance of his niece Rose because "he felt most strongly that he had been defrauded, and he did not know why. In order to dispel his loneliness, for he could no longer work, he continued to keep close company with his now famous pupil." One day while Dou is hanging out with his "now famous pupil," Rose randomly shows up at the house and demands wine and food, which she scoffs down like a starving Congolese toddler. After eating, Rose states hysterically, "Find me a minister of god. I'm not safe until he comes. Send for him quickly!" and demands that she "must never be left alone. I'm lost forever if you leave me. The dead and the living can never be one. It is forbidden. The dead and the living can never be one." Schalcken takes Rose to a back bedroom to rest where she complains, "This is the darkness. The darkness is unsafe. Give me light," so the painter yells to Dou to bring her light, but when the old fart takes too long, he decides to get it himself, only to hear his beloved scream in terror just seconds after walking out of the room. When Schalcken returns to the bedroom, he discovers that Rose is gone and that she may have fallen to her death in a dam via an open window.

After his beloved disappears once again, Schalcken hires a dirty prole girl to be his model and begins painting portraits of mythical figures like Pandora, Ceres, and Lesbia instead of the biblical figures to which he had been accustomed. The painter also ditches his regular whore Hendrijke when the whorehouse he regularly visits gets a new girl named 'Rose of Rotterdam', who looks more or less like an evil and lecherous version of his beloved virgin-like Rose. While in his late-30s, Schalcken marries a girl from a rich merchant's family named Françoise van Dimen de Breda (Amanda Carlson), who is a bitch of a broad that is "several years his junior" but is "adequately trained in the household arts." Meanwhile, Schalcken demonstrates he is just as big of a whore as his teacher because while he refuses to do commissioned portraits, he caves in when a rich fellow offers him a chest of riches just as Dou caved in when Vanderhausen offered him great wealth for his nubile niece's hand in marriage. As the narrator describes, "Gerrit Dou later faded into obscurity under his much more famous pupil" and when he died in 1675, Schalcken attended his funeral, only to come home in a seemingly haunted state and started painting immediately in his studio without saying a word to anyone, not even his wife. As depicted in an exceedingly macabre scene of necro sex, Schalcken felt a presence luring him to a vault at the church where Dou's funeral took place and upon entering the room, he found Rose—or some sinister apparition that resembled her—who took him to a bed where she strips, mounts, and screws her undead husband Minjheer Vanderhausen right in front of the positively petrified painter, who subsequently faints after witnessing the ghastly sight. After waking up, Schalcken finds the tomb of Rose and Vander-

hausen, thus making him realize that he has just witnessed two ghosts copulating. Indeed, the painting presented at the beginning (and end) of the film was inspired by that horrifying night when Schalcken witnessed the ghost of his one great love humping her horrifying haunted hubby and as the narrator states at the beginning of the film: “To his dying day, Schalcken was convinced of the reality of the vision he had witnessed, and he left behind this picture as testimony to it. But look more closely, and remember his last terrible meeting with Rose Velderkauf. If you recall, the painter had fainted dead away at whatever apparition she had presented to him. Here he has painted the observer, himself, in the act of drawing his sword as if to defend himself against the powers that were threatening him. A self-portrait, perhaps? Perhaps also a little self-deception?”

Somewhat notably, when the real Godfried Schalcken visited England between 1692–1697, his seemingly archetypal Dutch rudeness and all around lack of manners made him a sort of unofficial persona non grata, so it is only fitting that Leslie Megahey’s Schalcken the Painter portrays the painter in a most unflattering light. In fact, I cannot think of another film that portrays the Dutch in such an unwaveringly negative fashion and that includes everything from the arthouse works of Paul Verhoeven to the dark comedies of Alex van Warmerdam. Indeed, it certainly says something about a people when the British—arguably the most ruthless and cutthroat capitalists aside from the Jews—depict you as soulless materialists who always choose the lucrative over love and professional success over perennial sensuality, but such is the result of Calvinism, which is something that source writer Le Fanu was all too familiar with as a man whose father was such a strict protestant that he raised the family in an “almost Calvinist tradition.” As a sort of dilettante fan of Flemish Renaissance painters like Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Hieronymus Bosch and the Dutch master painters like those depicted in the film, as well as a man of Dutch extraction whose great-uncle was a degenerate modernist artist of some note, I especially enjoyed Megahey’s film, which not only introduced me to the work of Schalcken, but proved to be one of the most singular, chilling, and unforgettable Gothic horror flicks I have ever seen and not just because it is a rare work of celluloid spectrophilia that features arguably the most haunting ghost sex scene in all of cinema history. Indeed, while Dreyer’s *Vampyr* is certainly up there among my favorite horror films, I have to confess that Schalcken is now probably my favorite Sheridan Le Fanu adaptation.

Not surprisingly, the film was advertised as “one of the most frequently requested programmes in the BBC archive” when it was released on DVD/Blu-ray by the British Film Institute’s excellent BFI Flipside label. Notably, also included with the BFI Flipside set is the rare experimental British Edgar Allan Poe adaptation *The Pit* (1962) assistant directed by Peter Collinson (who would go on to direct the popular British caper *The Italian Job* (1969) starring Michael Caine and Noël Coward), as well as a 39-minute interview with auteur Leslie

SCHALCKEN THE PAINTER

Megahey and cinematographer John Hooper about the making of the film. Notably, Megahey would once again team up with cinematographer Hooper and narrator Charles Gray for another film about a painter, *Cariani and the Courtesans* (1987), for the BBC series *Screenplay*. In the film's deconstruction of Schalcken's work and experimental approach to depicting an arrogant young artist, Megahey's work owes comparisons to Peter Greenaway's Rembrandt 'biopic' *Nightwatching* (2007) and masterpiece *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982). With its scathing depiction of the devilish relationship between art and commerce, Baroque period setting, and harpsichord score, *Schalcken the Painter* certainly deserves comparisons with Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub's *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968) aka *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach*, though Megahey's film is seemingly infinitely more enthralling and aesthetically intriguing, as a rare experimental period piece that has great replay value. Indeed, for an old Grinch like myself, *Schalcken the Painter* will most certainly be a new holiday season tradition for me.

-Ty E

ENCHANTED FOREST

Lew Landers (1945)

I am not one who enjoys watching poor VHS transfers of films, even if it might satisfy some sort of nostalgic urge. In fact, I purged my fairly large VHS collection a decade or so ago but sometimes I have no choice but to watch a film that has been neglected an appropriate DVD release. I recently viewed a poor (and probably tenth generation) VHS transfer of the Völsch Nationalist Socialist film *Enchanted Forest* aka *Ewiger Wald* (1936) directed by Hanns Springer and Rolf von Sonjevski-Jamrowski; a work that churned out an odd mix of mystical awe and a sense of cinematic tragedy upon my fairly cold and mostly impenetrable soul. I have to admit that I was noticeably enthralled by the film due to its pagan spiritualism but was also discouraged by the realization that the film will most likely never receive anything resembling a proper and respectful release that it undoubtedly deserves. Despite having to endure the poor quality of the copy of the *Enchanted Forest* I viewed, I can't think of another film like it that made me romanticize over the lives of my ancient Germanic ancestors. Sure, it must have sucked to live in a time when death was a very probable possibility in everyday life and food was scarce but people during those times were totally at the humbling helm of the organic and they did not have to endure the abstractness of our modern technocratic world. As a child, I had a deep respect for nature, wild animals, the wilderness, and I truly believed that these things were a gift bestowed upon on the world by an all mighty god. In fact, nothing felt more comforting to me than allowing myself to be swallowed deeply in the pines of local forests that I would frequent in a religious manner. Of course, I still enjoy the outdoors but naturally (or unnaturally), it is virtually impossible for one to live realistically among the leaves and by sleeping under the stars in our deranged day in age. It just so happened that I was reading a book on neopaganism (*Summoning The Gods* by Collin Cleary) around the time I first saw *Enchanted Forest*. One of Cleary's major points with his book is that, unlike their ancient ancestors, contemporary Westerners have completely lost contact with the very land that they once held sacred. I found it quite interesting that *Enchanted Forest*, a film and product of somewhat recent technology, was able to duplicate my long dormant love for nature. I certainly did not feel a touch of nature in James Cameron's epic digital blue turd *Avatar* (2009); a wholly (but unintentionally) risible pseudo-environmentalist romp into ultra-Hollywood alien-savage-worshipping purgatory. Say what you will about the Third Reich, but at least their state commissioned filmmakers had no difficulty assembling films that depicted absolute beauty in its most organically magical yet orthodox form.

The Nazis themselves proclaimed blood and soil as their ideology and quasi-religion but also led the world in technological advancement and I see *Enchanted Forest* itself as one of truest expressions of their brief anachronistic empire of

ENCHANTED FOREST

healthy blood and monolithic industrial progress. If I wanted to illustrate to an illiterate what the spiritual essence of National Socialist Germany was, I would show them *Enchanted Forest*. Sure, Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) exquisitely documented the aesthetic properties and cheerful folk of Nazi Germany yet the film fails to dream up (not that it really intended to) the true Nazi spirit of ancestor worship. In our modern materialistic world, humans look at all things (both living and not) as objects to be manipulated or utilized to their advantage as opposed to appreciating and humbly respecting the "being" (as German philosopher Martin Heidegger would say) of a particular thing. The Nazis may not have respected certain groups of people but they surely respected their land and their Volk simply for "being." One of the reasons the National Socialists despised the Jews so much is due to their deracinated anti-nature-nature and their collective cosmopolitan homelessness, thus it should be no surprise that the Nazis originally (early on during World War II) paid for Jews to immigrate to Palestine to establish Israel (their first homeland in thousands of years). Naturally, Hollywood films have always lacked a certain authenticity in regard to portraying different cultures, nations, and peoples as they lack respect in regard to rootedness and anything of an organic nature, and for this reason, their films have always suffered from a sickening artificiality, hence why they tend to produce so many deplorable neo-vaudevillian comedies (a subject they know oh so well) full of infantile sexuality and repellant scat humor. Despite having unlimited funds and state-of-the-art technology, most of the filmmakers working in Hollywood lack the instincts to produce a film so close to nature as *Enchanted Forest* because the work permeates emotions that are totally alien to the culture-blind boys of Tinseltown. Believe it or not, money can't buy everything, especially when it comes to something that is passed down through blood.

It would probably baffle a lot of Hollywood green activists actors and Americans in general, to know that National Socialist Germany was arguably the first country to endorse environmentalist policies but this will be no surprise to anyone that has seen *Enchanted Forest* as the film treats the majestic allure of nature in a most elegant and enriching manner. Of course, the film will be of interest to any serious lover of uncultivated beauty despite whatever political persuasion they may hold. After all, man may have lost faith in god due to technology but few can deny the irreplaceable creations of Mother Nature and her supreme omnipotence and wholly plentiful pulchritude. *Enchanted Forest* begins in pagan Europe and concludes in Christianized Europe, and as the times change, war only becomes more sophisticated and deadly beneath the alien cross of Christ. The irony of technology is that man has only managed to speed up the death of his fellow man with his "advancement." For me, the greatest message (whether it was the filmmaker's intention or not) of *Enchanted Forest* is that the farther away man falls from nature, the closer he is to his own miserable demise. Man,

most specifically Faustian man, has proven to be the only living organism that has had the gall to wage war against nature, but, of course, he is no match for his all-power enemy and will inevitably fail. As German philosopher Oswald Spengler explained in his 1931 work *Man and Technics*, technology has only sped up the death of the Occident and given his enemies weapons to use against him, thus, it is only a matter of time before the ultimate showdown begins. On a lighter note, I would be lying if I did not admit that *Enchanted Forest* gave me nostalgia for a time that I have never experienced but hopelessly yearn for in a most instinctive manner. I am sure that there are others that will also feel an atavistic awakening while watching the film. *Enchanted Forest* is like a painting by Fidus come to life, only more masculine and domineering and without super-skinny-proto-hippie-nudists. By the conclusion of *Enchanted Forest*, you may not be worshipping the black sun but you will have taken a virtual mini-epic journey through the ages of Europe on land, water, and forgotten battlefields where one's ancestors use to earn their livelihood from. That being said, maybe it is time for me to learn the secrets of the runes.

-Ty E

CHRISTMAS EVIL
CHRISTMAS EVIL

Lewis Jackson (1980)

If there is any Christmas-themed slasher flick that would inspire Santa to put steamy reindeer turds in stockings of all crew members involved with film, it is most certainly the superlatively sleazy low-camp anti-Christ-mass classic *Christmas Evil* (1980) aka *You Better Watch Out* aka *Terror in Toyland*; a rather wretched full-fledged assault on Christmas of grand aesthetic futility that the “pope of trash” John Waters claims to be “hopefully its #1 fan” and was praised in the Balti-moron’s book *Crackpot: The Obsessions of John Waters* (1987), thereupon adding to its ‘cult credibility’ in the long run. On the surface, *Christmas Evil* seems more like a hokey Chanukah honoring flick considering its notably anti-nostalgic take on old Saint Nick and the countless Hebraic folks (names like Pressman, Rubinstein, Levine, etc.) that were involved in creating the sneeringly festive film. *Christmas Evil* is ultimately more of an idiotic half-attempt at invalidating Christmas spirit with a tacked on “Pro-Claus” message than a serious malicious attack on those who wish you a merry Christmas, thus making it the celluloid equivalent of a store-bought gingerbread man; cheap and tasteless, but undeniably palatable. Akin to the patently perverse cult porn flick *Water Power* (1977) directed by Shaun Costello in the seriousness or lack thereof in its depiction of an aberrant anti-hero whose all-consuming holiday season pathologies are too penetrating to keep under control when certain triggers arise (in this case, Christmas lights, delinquent prepubescent children, and mistletoe), *Christmas Evil* is best looked at as a crappy yet charming crude camp black comedy with nil serious artistic merit, despite the fact that would-be-auteur Lewis Jackson, the man who directed this bittersweet celluloid candy-cane claims the film was heavily inspired by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (thus influencing him to paint all the set walls “institutional green”), as well as the German New Wave auteur filmmaker’s hero Douglas Sirk, of all possible directors! In reality, *Christmas Evil* is the sort of Xmas film Herschell Gordon Lewis (the smut-peddling Semite did direct a film shot on a high school stage entitled *The Magic Land of Mother Goose* (1967) to which he later added random excerpts of Santa and re-titled it *Santa Visits the Magic Land of Mother Goose*) might have assembled had he had a slight interest in somewhat discernible technical competency, sensible narrative construction, and character development as opposed to mere less than sexy sexploitation scenes and grating gore galore that bores. Jackson said that he got the initial idea for *Christmas Evil* in the 1970s while smoking a joint, henceforth causing him to visualize a random image of sadistic Santa holding a knife in his hand and built the film’s killer kitsch Claus script around this supremely stupid image. Centering around a particularly perverted psychopathic Santa-phile that probably wet dreams of a white Christmas and reams and ravages red-rectum reindeer, *Christmas Evil* – not unlike Paul Morrissey’s

depiction of Dr. Frankenstein Flesh for Frankenstein (1973) and Dracula in Blood for Dracula (1974), but to a more severely unsophisticated degree – will, for better or worse, make you never look at Santa Clause the same way.

After seeing Santa Claus (which, in reality, is really his father in a Santa outfit) paw his mother's legs with his jolly Christmas claws during one fateful Christmas Eve in 1947 in some stereotypical suburban neighborhood in New Jersey, hardheaded Harry Stadling (Brandon Maggart) is never quite the same again and grows up to be a marvelously mundane maniac man-child who has dedicated his life to meticulously checking his list as to whether the kids in his neighborhood have been naughty or nice with a special emphasis on punishing those who have been extra naughty. Like Saint Nicholas, hysterical Harry – a most extreme judge of character with a peculiar proclivity towards perverse power trips – has a most meticulous moral compass that never fails, albeit a decidedly deranged and discordant one, that works without fail; degenerates and perverts who have forgot the meaning of Christmas are mangled, mutilated, and murdered and good little Santa-saluting boys and girls are treated to his obsessively assembled handmade toys. Despite his aversion to all forms of sexual perversion, Harry – who talks to and stalks (via Rear Window-style with binoculars) little children like a seasoned saint of unsavory scopophilia – seems like a latent pedophile and a man after Michael Jackson's own heart in his particularly perturbing Peter Pan syndrome, as he keeps personal photographs of neighborhood elementary school children at his desk and sees them as "spiritual" equals of sorts. Described as an "emotional cripple" by his own brother Phil (Jeffrey DeMunn) and treated with tormenting scorn, contempt and/or disrespect by everyone he knows, Harry strives for an intangible youthful innocence that only grows stronger as it is trampled on by his fellow adults who he cannot relate to in the slightest, which eventually causes him to see red, and not just the color of his much beloved Santa Claus outfit, as many unfortunate people end up dead as a result of their sacrilegious Santa-shunning indiscretions. Essentially living a double life as a result of a split personality, Harry, now Thirty-three years older since that debauched XXXmas night in 1947 that forever changed him, has "a lousy position" as a manager at a toy factory where he reluctantly rules over a group of blue-collar workers who constantly besmirch his Christmas toy fetishism. Of course, Christmas Eve is Harry's night; a time where the loony loser takes on the self-appointed role of both Saint Nicholas and Black Peter (even putting mud on his face at one point in an act of ritualistic blackface where he marks one bad boy's house for carnage in the tradition of nefarious Negro Pete) and he certainly knows who has been naughty and who has been nice.

Claiming to be more influenced by the shadows of German expressionism than the colorful lights of any cinematic Christmas classics, Lewis Jackson ultimately managed to assemble one of the most darkly comedic, yet rather retardedly so, X-mas flicks ever made, thereupon making it seem less dated in retro-

CHRISTMAS EVIL

spect compared with the similarly themed Chris Killer flick *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984) that spawned an ungodly number of needless sequels. Along with *Silent Night*, *Bloody Night* (1972) and *Black Christmas* (1974), *Christmas Evil* offers some of the best nostalgia for negativity as the sort of sardonic holiday season film one watches for therapeutic reasons after having to meet up with relatives and family friends one would never see under any circumstance, especially on Christmas. Concluding on an absurdly 'positive' happy note not all that dissimilar from Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) and Alex Cox's *Repo Man* (1984), *Christmas Evil*, despite its many scenes of nonsensical depravity and satirical violence, ultimately has a positive message against the cheap commercialization of Christmas (even if the movie itself is a product of such monetary motivated phenomenon) and promotes a message of remembering the true meaning of Christmas, even if the morally dubious maniac promoting such a once-sacred message is far from a role model Santa Claus. Of course, most people watch *Christmas Evil* because they want to see a seasonal slasher flick with Santa as a blood-soaked sadist slicing up red ribbons of human flesh. Personally, I would prefer a satirical *Black Peter* splatter flick, but you can't always get everything you want for Christmas.

-Ty E

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Lewis Milestone (1930)

All Quiet on the Western Front (a film directed by Lewis Milestone aka Lev Milstein) is as close to an American antiwar film that I have ever seen. The interesting element of the film that its from the perspective of Germans as opposed to Americans. It is a film based on the book of the same name written by Erich Paul Remark who was either of ethnically French descent or ethnically Jewish descent. It has also been questioned whether Erich Paul Remark actually saw battle.

Although All Quiet on the Western Front sympathizes with and humanizes the German enemy, it also blames Germans for the war due to blind patriotism. This is obvious in the beginning of the film where a professor convinces his pupils to fight for The Fatherland and they oblige blindly and enthusiastically. To a German this could be quite condescending and offensive. After Germany was ripped apart and humiliated with the Treaty of Versailles which ultimately lead to World War II, All Quiet on the Western Front would be the last thing a German would want to see. I felt that it was at least a step-up from the dehumanizing of Germans in the majority of World War I and later World War II films.

At no point in All Quiet on the Western Front did the director glamorize war, which is virtually impossible with the war film. When viewers see combat battle footage and men in the trenches, its usually going to be very exciting. The films soundtrack and sound design added a feeling that you could be shot at any second. Although thrilling, fear was the main emotion that these sounds of bombs and bullets provoked.

Scenes that took place in the trenches showed the hell of the war. Hungry and injured soldiers waiting for their next deadly battles in the trench both emotionally and physically exhausted, exhibited faces with a loss of hope. The war was something they didn't expect it to be. Once on the battlefield, the soldiers are soon to forget what they are fighting for. When battle actually starts, the soldiers quickly realize they want to go home.

The money men, global bankers, and war profiteers are the only people that benefit from war. War is the biggest moneymaking business in history. The common man is only used as an object for the elite. World War I led to the destruction of four empires: Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary Empire, German Empire, and the Russian empire. The war resulted in the deaths of over 20 million people. The last thing a German wants to think about is through being naïve and blindly patriotic, he was a contributor in this mayhem. I seriously doubt that any German would appreciate All Quiet on the Western Front as a motivator and inspirational film. On the contrary, I think the film and book would further their depressed and lost state. A state that would have eventually lead the success of the German Nationalist Socialist party and not far after

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

World War II.
-Ty E

A WALK IN THE SUN

Lewis Milestone (1945)

After viewing *A Walk in the Sun* (directed by Lewis Milestone) I felt as if I hadn't seen anything new. It just seemed like the shell of a movie directed by Steven Spielberg known as *Saving Private Ryan*. Samuel Fuller's analysis of *A Walk in the Sun* is dead on its remarks. Samuel Fuller was a filmmaker that liked to expose the dark nature and weakness of our society (I.e. *Pickup on South Street*, *Naked Kiss*). Like his films, Fuller's analysis of *A Walk in the Sun* is brutally honest and has a complete disregard for sentiment. The generic characters in *A Walk in the Sun* fell into the combat film convention of representing the American melting pot (or partially). The film acknowledged the Italian American as part of the melting pot while presenting shame to real Italians. The two Italian soldiers seen in *A Walk in the Sun* are recognized as cowardly opportunists who sold their soul to the devil (Germany), but lack the mental capacity to understand this. I don't think the scene was trying to represent any type of symbolic redemption. It was more of, you got what you asked for. Fuller's criticism of "melodramatic bickering" was also dead on. This convention of the combat film is completely pointless and one of its biggest flaws. Steven Spielberg also utilized this convention in *Saving Private Ryan*. I have always felt these scenes were highly contrived and left little for people to analyze for themselves. "Melodramatic bickering" has as little value to the war film as it would a horror film. Fuller's letter fully incriminates Lewis Milestone as a propagandist and a man that has no understanding of war. Fuller points out that a colonel's screen credit for technical authenticity is worthless. He felt that a Colonel's technical advice on what happens to a platoon was absurd. It is obvious that Milestone had no interest in creating a realistic film, but an already cliché propaganda war combat flick. It amazes me that directors like Spielberg still use this boring 40 years ago conventions today. It symbolizes the sheer lack of innovation in regards to American cinema over the past century. The only difference is that films (like the War film) have advanced in special effects and showmanship. Fuller's praising of *All Quiet on the Western Front* worked excellently in discrediting *A Walk in the Sun*. This makes me contemplate the motives behind *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It is that obvious that Milestone was neglectful of human feeling in his later films. *All Quiet on the Western Front* had to have been made for an ulterior motive than just being an anti-war film. Either way, it is a much better film than *A Walk in the Sun*. Samuel Fuller is one of the most qualified to analyze the war film. Being a World War II Veteran, writer, and film director gave him the holistic viewpoint. Fuller later provided his take on World War II combat with *The Big Red One*. Saving a "Kraut" at the end of the film showed Fuller's human view of the enemy and the universal qualities of all sides during war. *A Walk in the Sun* didn't even show the German enemies face. I always

A WALK IN THE SUN

find filmmakers analyzing films to be the most enlightening. With film critics like Roger Ebert, it always feels like something is missing. Samuel Fuller was a rebel in the film industry when they didn't even exist. Confronting controversial issues with boldness, innovativeness, and honesty, Fuller was his own man.

-Ty E

PUNISHER: WAR ZONE

Lexi Alexander (2008)

In 2004, a Punisher film was released starring such A-list star power as Thomas Jane and John Travolta. Leeching onto the realization that the film sucks, a sequel was never produced. Flash forward to the year 2008, someone had a great idea of doing a reboot of a reboot. Just how "communism looks perfect on paper", the idea shouldn't have worked to such a marvelous degree. Boy, I love surprises. When I first encountered both the trailers to Max Payne and Punisher: War Zone, I found the early opinionated advantage in favor of Max Payne > Punisher: War Zone. When the time came for both to have seen the light of day, the result shockingly became vice versa. Punisher: War Zone perfectly captured the comic art direction and sealed The Punisher as a bad ass vigilante and not some priss with his shirt tucked in. My familiarization with the Punisher character was a journey through various War Journals and film adaptations, ranging from decent to pugnacious. The Punisher was outfitted as a clown but is back with a vengeance. This film should carry surnames as "This Time it's Personal" or "The Revenge". The appeasement of the audience by way of promotional trailers was most unsavory. A man with slick hair and a Kevlar turtleneck with many slow motion shots condensed in a 2 minute trailer can only do so much without making the whole concept seem as an esoteric shout out to some Hollywood buds. Ever so fitting to your needs, War Zone accommodates the Punisher fan in you, and if you're not a fan of the Punisher, then the violence will suit you just fine. The depicted brutality rivals the latest Rambo installment on terms of decapitations, explosions, and visceral close-up shotgun fatalities. The comic thematics are insinuated in the last 20 minutes giving the anti-freedom fighter sufficiently more space to maneuver in. Ray Stevenson perfects the film as the remorseless serial murdering vigilante. Stevenson's performance is the icing on the cake, so to speak. With his actions come a layer of unspoken sorrow and incendiary black humor. The device of his departed family isn't abstrusely forced into some whiny flashback. Rather, we collect our thoughts on his daughter's old musical box. There's no scenes of Stevenson asking the villains to "put the bunny down" or any of that nonsense. On terms of bloodshed, Punisher: War Zone is nearly unmatched by any Hollywood production. This is near as sadistic as action cinema comes. At least until Rambo 5 is released. If Frank Castle indulged a single craving, it would most certainly be the over-the-top, yet excessive deaths of degenerate filth. We witness the fruitful executions of parkour-wannabe gangsta thugs getting shot in the head and exploded with miniature propelled rockets, senile mothers with their head blown in half, and sleazy Gino's biting the dust. All this, backed with throbbing humor and intense fluorescents. This is just one of few films that can sport a heavy metal soundtrack just right. It doesn't choose to go into the exploitation zone near as much as the overkill explored in Feast

PUNISHER: WAR ZONE

II: Sloppy Seconds (Which featured midget wrestlers with foot-long dicks), but just enough to leave a visual impression rather than heaving felt as you witnessed a sideshow. Perhaps one of the greatest looking films of the year, Punisher: War Zone was made for the theater viewing experience. This film cannot come any more recommended.

-mAQ

THE YEAR OF THE CANNIBALS

Liliana Cavani° (1970)

Out of all the female filmmakers who have ever lived, probably none has displayed a greater propensity for concocted curious celluloid works that transcend the usually fine line between cultivated art cinema and tasteless and sensationalized celluloid trash than Italian auteur Liliana Cavani (*The Berlin Affair* aka *Interno berlinese*, *Ripley's Game*) with her first international hit *Il portiere di notte* (1974) aka *The Night Porter*—a somber S&M-flavored proto-Nazi-ploitation flick of sorts—probably being the best example of this. Undoubtedly, out of all of Cavani's cinematic works, *The Night Porter* has left the deepest impact, even if it is a fundamentally flawed work that wallows just as much in now-cliche fetishism as it does artistic pretentiousness. Of course, sexual subversion and artsy fartsy-ness are not the only things that have influenced her films because, like many, if not most, European filmmakers of her generation, Cavani was seduced by the gospel of Marx and his anti-Occidental philosophical disciples. Apparently raised in a working-class household, Cavani had stern antifascists for parents (though she ironically attended “Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia” film school, which was inaugurated by Benito Mussolini) and was fed Engels, Marx and Bakunin via her maternal grandfather. Starting out making political documentaries for RAI like *Storia del III Reich* aka *History of the Third Reich* (1962–1963), Cavani eventually made what is arguably her most blatantly socio-politically conscious work, *The Year of the Cannibals* (1970) aka *I cannibali* aka *The Cannibals*, which confirmed her solidarity with the far-left student movements that infected Europa like cancer during the late-1960s. A work only rather marginally influenced by the Greek tragedy *Antigone* by Sophocles in that it stars a chick named Antigone who wants to bury her brother and ultimately faces a tragic end, *The Year of the Cannibals* is a quasi-pop-art-inspired dystopian drama and political allegory set in a nefarious neo-fascist state where it is illegal to both pickup and bury corpses, thus the streets are littered with corpses that, for whatever reason, will not decompose. Starring pleasingly petite Swedish actress Britt Ekland (*The Wicker Man*, *Beverly Hills Vamp*) in the lead role as Antigone and superlatively swarthy and scrawny French arthouse star Pierre Clémenti (*Belle de jour*, *Steppenwolf*) as a seemingly half-retarded Christ-like prophet named Tiresias, *The Year of the Cannibals* is outmoded ‘pop revolutionary’ cinema with an admittedly catchy soundtrack from Italian maestro Ennio Morricone that reminds the viewer why the hippie movement died as quickly as it was misbegotten. Described by various critics upon its original release as “Catholic from the left” (a label that both director Cavani and co-writer Italo Moscati rejected), *The Year of the Cannibals* does, indeed, have a rather repellent essence that could probably be described as pseudo-Pasolini-esque ‘comie Catholicism’ as a revolution-raging work of the positively pussycore persua-

THE YEAR OF THE CANNIBALS

sion that quite blatantly pleads for acts of sissy subversion against a super sadistic state that sics SS-like German Shepherd dogs on beautiful Swedish chicks and even tortures the son of the prime minister for petty acts of rebellion. Like a philistine take on *Anti-Clock* (1979) directed by Jane Arden and Jack Bond meets George Lucas' *THX 1138* (1971) as reworked as a commie CliffsNotes take on Sophocles, *Antigone* is just one of many reasons why so many European arthouse flicks on the late-1960s/early-1970s are long forgotten, as radically repellent far-left politics and poppy aesthetics make for bizarrely bland bedfellows.

A gang of young grad school children spot a young Christ-like figure laying on the beach and being young kids, they fiddle with the corpse, thus resulting in their rather abrupt deaths via machine gun by neo-gestapo goons lurking in the bushes. Indeed, in the world of *The Year of the Cannibals*, it is illegal to fiddle with the dead, let alone bury corpses, yet the mysterious figure on the beach, Tiresias (Pierre Clémenti), is not actually dead (though he moves in a rather zombie-like manner), thus the killer cops had ultimately shot too soon, killing a bunch of tiny tots for no reason, thus setting the anti-authoritarian tone of Cavani's film. Meanwhile, nice yet naïve chick Antigone (Britt Ekland) wants to bury the body of her fallen brother, but it is illegal, so she goes to her boyfriend Emone (Tomas Milian)—the son of the Prime Minister (Francesco Leonetti) of the neo-fascist state—for help, but he is not much help, so she goes on her less than merry way. Luckily, while eating at a fantasy sub-futuristic restaurant, Antigone runs into strange stranger Tiresias who, being all Christ-like and anti-usury and whatnot, steals a piece of fish, which rather alarms the waiter. Thanks to Antigone, Tiresias' tab is paid and the two develop a strong sense of solidarity despite the fact that the mumbling messiah only speaks indecipherable gibberish. Ultimately, Tiresias helps Antigone lay to rest her belated brother, but it does not stop there as the act of subversion leads to the two burying more bodies. Of course, Tiresias and Antigone inevitably become fugitives for their acts of criminal kindness, which eventually leads them to running naked in the streets and being chased by a bloodthirsty Alsatian Wolf Dog. Eventually, the two unclad rebels find sanctuary in a Catholic church and absurdly go incognito by wearing priest outfits (indeed, Ekland has a tough time pulling off the whole pedophile priest thing), even visiting a mental institution where pseudo-priestess Antigone tells a patient, "they're castrating you." Of course, eventually Tiresias and Antigone are caught, incarcerated, tortured, experimented on, and paraded on television as radicalized enemies of the state. On TV, Tiresias is described as, "like a type of 'Mowgli,' Rudyard Kipling's hero... The legendary child who was raised by animals in the jungle." The prick newscaster also tells the audience, "Memorize this face. It is the face of a man... who steals corpses from the state." Indeed, as much as one would want to, it is hard to forget the supremely swarthy frog face of Pierre Clémenti. When Antigone's preppy boyfriend Emone discovers his lover has been brutalized, he confides in his Prime Minister father, but he

proves to be no help, ultimately writing off his son's girlfriend as a fugitive criminal. In an act of desperation and pussy protest, Emone attempts to pick up a corpse and is subsequently arrested, thus fueling his belief that his rebellious behavior is righteous and whatnot. When Emone's father asks his son what is the meaning of his seemingly nonsensical actions, Tiresias responds while standing imprisoned in a jail cell, "Their corpses serve as examples to avoid others. They shouldn't be touched," and adds, "I want to turn into an animal... Anarchic. Eccentric. Rebellious. Antisocial. Delinquent. Atheist. Homosexual. They're all words from your catalogue. All of them." Meanwhile, Tiresias is let out of prison and a visibly bruised and abused Antigone is paraded through the streets by militant soldiers. When Tiresias attempts to embrace Antigone, she is riddled with bullets and the hippie messiah reacts impotently by attacking a politician, thus resulting in his death as well by machine gun. Of course, as director Liliana Cavani wants the viewer to know, Antigone and Tiresias' actions were not in vain as *The Year of the Cannibals* concludes with hordes of dirty and unkempt hippies picking up and burying corpses, thus demonstrating the revolutionary spirit is in the air and the neo-fascist state's days are numbered.

Riddled with quasi-commie cliché upon quasi-commie cliché upon quasi-commie cliché, *The Year of the Cannibals* is nothing if not culturally corrosive counter-culture cinema of the thankfully outmoded sort that demonstrates that even with her early films, director Liliana Cavani had a knack for making the most deracinated Italian films of her era, even with all of its conspicuously 'Catholic' themes and all. Mildly entertaining in part due to the lackluster yet paradoxically iconic performances from leads Britt Ekland and Pierre Clémenti, as well due to its strangely poppy soundtrack by Ennio Morricone (notably, the catchy song "The Cannibals"), *The Year of the Cannibals*—when watched from a contemporary perspective—is ultimately a testament to the fact the hippies failed and eventually became like the soulless authoritarian establishment they hated so dearly, which can also be said of Cavani, whose curiously gimmicky combination of subversive sex and allusions to classical literature have become a mainstay of Hollywood, hence why she would later go on to direct a work as conspicuously contrived as *Ripley's Game* (2002) starring John Malkovich. Of course, *The Year of the Cannibals* also failed to predict the real legacy of the student movement, presenting them as righteous and morally pristine peaceful protestors, when, in fact, it really degenerated into coldblooded murder and senseless terrorism as personified by the Red Army Faction in West Germany, not to mention the Years of Lead period in Italy during the late-1960s through early-1980s when a series of terrorist bombings, political assassinations, kidnappings, and other crimes were committed by the lunatic left-wing autonomist movement, almost plunging Guidoland into a civil war. In its seemingly pathological depiction of Britt Ekland being emotionally and physically brutalized by caricatured neo-gestapo agents (one calls her a "beautiful slut") in extremely

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stylized scenarios that are essentially like choreographed dance sequences, *The Year of the Cannibals* expresses the sort of (sado)masochism that would become an innate ingredient of Cavani's aberrant auteur signature, which is probably her greatest strength as a filmmaker. Indeed, inspiring exceedingly effete mainstream liberal Roger Ebert to describe her film *The Night Porter* as, "naïty as it is lubricious, a despicable attempt to titillate us by exploiting memories of persecution and suffering," means that Cavani has to be doing something right. Of course, *The Year of the Cannibals* is certainly no *The Night Porter*, nor even a *Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) aka *Al di là del bene e del male*, but instead, a positively passé celluloid artifact from a time when a youthful collective of conforming anti-conformists absurdly believed a utopia was awaiting them as soon they carried out Marx, Trotsky, Marcuse or some other Judaic pseudo-messiah's shabbos goy game plan.

-Ty E

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

Liliana Cavani° (1977)

I hate to admit it, but now after watching Liliana Cavani's *Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) aka *Al di là del bene e del male* aka *Seeds of Evil*, I think I can understand why certain bleeding heart film critics, most notably Roger Ebert – who described the following film as, "as nasty as it is lubricious, a despicable attempt to titillate us by exploiting memories of persecution and suffering" – were offended by the Italian auteuress' sordid tale of SS sadomasochism, *The Night Porter* (1974) aka *Il Portiere di notte*. Centering around an imaginary sexual ménage à trios between German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, his Jewish-German author/philosopher friend Paul Réé and Russian-born psychoanalyst Lou Andreas-Salomé – the woman that both men (and later Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke) fell in love with – *Beyond Good and Evil* is an innately superficial softcore arthouse melodrama that, at best, uses the last days of sanity of the twentieth century's most influential thinker as a pretext for depicting debauched sex, pseudo-poetic nudity, and the foreboding presence of antisemitism and National Socialism. Featuring sordid incest fantasies, unhinged drunkenness and dope fiending, gay gang rape orgies, whorehouse wantonness and STDs, and all-around cartoonish carnal buffoonery, *Beyond Good and Evil* is such a radically ridiculous take on the last days of Nietzsche that it portrays him as an extroverted libertine party animal with a proclivity for sexually servicing both gents and ladies. In short, if the real-life Friedrich Nietzsche philosophed with a hammer, Cavani must have directed with a cheap pink dildo. The second film in Liliana Cavani's so-called "The German Trilogy" (the first being *The Night Porter* and the final *The Berlin Affair*; an interracial lesbian Nazi tale), *Beyond Good and Evil* – a curiously cosmopolitan work that was neither filmed in German language nor features a single kraut actor – is about as faithful to historical reality as popular Hollywood biopics like Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) and Miloš Forman's cinematic adaptation of Peter Shaffer's stage-play *Amadeus* (1984), minus the sleekly stylized direction and lavish production values. Indeed, the only thing remotely authentic about *Beyond Good and Evil* is the title, which is neither gratifying in an aesthetic, thematic, historical nor philosophical sense, nor is it perverted, erotic, nor demoralizing enough to be regarded as a fine piece of subversive cinematic art, hence its relative obscurity when compared to Cavani's infinitely more interesting and indulging, albeit flawed, work *The Night Porter*.

Although it is true that Paul Réé was romantically involved with Lou Andreas-Salomé and Friedrich Nietzsche fell in delusional love with her as depicted in *Beyond Good and Evil*, which inevitably resulted in the break-up of the platonic threesome, there was never an ongoing orgy between the three thinkers (as long ago proven by Rudolph Binion's *Frau Lou: Nietzsche's Wayward Disciple*). In

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fact, there is no evidence that Nietzsche ever shared carnal knowledge with anyone and he may as well have died a deranged virgin. As mentioned in his mostly fictional autobiography *Ecce Homo* (1888), "All women all like me. But that's an old story: except of course the abortive ones, the emancipated ones who are simply not up to having children," and such is the case in *Beyond Good and Evil*; a work where the German philosopher's break into madness is partly the result of his undying love for proto-feminist Lou Andreas-Salomé – a woman that has no interest in being tied down by any man, even if she admires his deteriorating mind. Although Nietzsche did propose marriage to Lou Salomé in a most shameful and relationship severing manner, the German philosopher remained a lifelong bachelor whose one true love was morphine. Although his mental breakdown was originally diagnosed as the result of tertiary syphilis – which many believe he received via a prostitute at a brothel in Cologne or Leipzig – contemporary scholars believe his illness was the result of a number of hereditary taints (Nietzsche's father died from a brain ailment in 1849). Additionally, contemporary Nietzschean scholar Joachim Köhler believes that the German philosopher was a homosexual who may have acquired syphilis in a male brothel in Genoa and was the goy-boy-toy of Paul Rée. Whatever the true manner of Nietzsche's sexual orientation and descent into a insane, infantile state, Cavani's *Beyond Good and Evil* has nil interest in the truth nor the book by Fritz that the film is named after. Equipped with a score by Mozart instead of Wagner, including cliché, one-dimensional tirades against his former mentor by Cavani's Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* is a bastardized Nietzsche For Dummies in celluloid form by a matriarchal Mediterranean matron with no love nor intrinsic understanding of the fatherland.

The Friedrich Nietzsche (played by Swede Erland Josephson) seems like a mere bourgeois boob who uses his contrived pseudo-philosophical chant "chastity is a crime against nature" as means for justifying his untamed sybaritism and innate intemperance. Naturally, Nietzsche's mom and sister (the infamous proto-Nazi Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche) are portrayed as prying prudes and anti-Semitic agitators who attempt to stop the "filthy Jewess" Lou Salomé (who in reality was of French Huguenot and Northern German Nordic racial stock) from pursuing a relationship with the then-virtually-unknown German philosopher. The self-declared, "son and grandson of Luther pastors...son of a pious woman, the nephew of two god-fearing aunts" who brought him up to be, "good, respectable" and thereupon "stifling" his "finest instincts," the fictional Nietzsche of *Beyond Good and Evil* declares, "I deliberately chose a sweet demon to free me from my honorable education and I received a gift called syphilis" to the dismay of his puritanical female kin. In the end, Nietzsche is a babbling retard, Paul Rée is anally raped and rubbed out by a gang of barbarian Aryan sodomites, and Lou Salomé (played by the awfully dainty and unconvincing French actress Dominique Sanda) gets away rather unscathed, henceforth proving she – a loose

woman with an affinity for leading men on, especially those with commanding intellects – is the only true blue Übermensch of *Beyond Good and Evil*; a quasi-pornographic yet ultimately unerotic and pseudo-feminist putterer piece of filmmaking that offers a fundamentally fabricated retelling of the last days of the Anti-Christ's sanity, and brings new meaning to the philosopher's writing, "In revenge and in love woman is more barbarous than man" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter 4, Maxims and Interludes, Friedrich Nietzsche); possibly the only quote that director Liliana Cavani understood. Unfortunately, Dominique Sanda as a white Russian femme fatale of great intellectual aptitude is about as convincing as Woody Allen would have made as a war-torn, wild Wehrmacht warrior in Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (2004) aka *Der Untergang*.

At best, *Beyond Good and Evil* is neither historically accurate nor even the slightest bit amorous, as a feeble and flat feminist cinematic abortion of the most senseless and self-congratulatory kind from a female filmmaker whose sense of female empowerment is derived from directing images of muscular man prancing around during scenes of hallucinatory ballet (which we recycle from *The Night Porter*) and by way of gay gang bangs, brutal forced buggery and involuntary bung-hole bottling. In short, *Beyond Good and Evil* is no more historically accurate than the fiercely philo-semitic historical fiction work *When Nietzsche Wept* (2007) directed by Pinchas Perry and notably less erotic than the low-budget Brazilian cinematographic essay *Days of Nietzsche in Turin* (2001) aka *Dias de Nietzsche em Turim*. If you loathe Nietzsche or have no interest in getting to know the life and work of the tragic philosopher and are especially fond of lackluster, superficial European arthouse erotica in the tradition of *Tinto Brass à la Salon Kitty* (1976), then *Beyond Good and Evil* might be the film for you. The reality is that German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, like many intellectuals and scholars, lived a rather uninteresting and even pathetic life, so pretty much any cinematic adaptation of his life is doomed to be patently banal or an exploitative exaggeration (Cavani's film does both of these things), although I am sure Ingmar Bergman could have pulled it off – with his cold and brooding Scandinavian melodramas – as a man who also stared into the abyss. With all the miserable and misleading misreadings of Nietzsche's writings about his life and especially his works in written form, I should not have expected much from Liliana Cavani's *Beyond Good and Evil*, but at least French surrealist author Georges Bataille's morbid, if misguided and megamaniacal reading – via his *Acéphale* writings and book *Sur Nietzsche* (1945) aka *On Nietzsche* – of the antagonistic Anti-Christ is engrossing. When Nietzsche wrote in his autobiography, "I know my fate. One day there will be associated with my name the recollection of something frightful," little did he realize that one of these things would be a debauched and decidedly deluded depiction of his life named after one of his most famous books by an emancipated Italian woman no more impressed with his manhood than the unattainable object of his affection, Lou

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Andreas-Salomé.
-Ty E

THE BERLIN AFFAIR

Liliana Cavani° (1985)

It seems that with each chapter in the so-called “The Germany Trilogy,” of once-controversial female Italian auteur Liliana Cavani (*The Year of the Cannibals* aka *I Cannibali*, *Ripley’s Game*), the films not only became less ‘Teutonic’ in theme, but even more unbearably slow and meandering to watch, with the final film, *The Berlin Affair* (1985) aka *Interno Berlinese* aka *Leidenschaften* being nearly impossible to sit through in a single viewing without dosing off or without my attention gravitating somewhere else. Indeed, while am I fan of the first chapter in Cavani’s aberrant-garde Aryan trilogy, *The Night Porter* (1974) aka *Il portiere di notte*, and found the second film, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) aka *Al di là del bene e del male*, to be sometimes provocative, if not ridiculously so (indeed, Nietzsche fans should probably avoid the film), *The Berlin Affair* proved to be a seemingly endless exercise in pseudo-subversive plastic eroticism that features quite possibly the most mind-numbingly banal bizarre love triangle in cinema history. An Italian-West German coproduction set ostensibly during the Third Reich right before the Anschluss of Austria and starring German New Cinema lead actress Gudrun Landgrebe, who looks more Italian than German, of *A Woman in Flames* (1983) and *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) playing the typecast role of a bored and sexually frustrated German bourgeois housewife who finds true love in the form of a deleterious Japanese femme fatale who is much more pernicious and slutty than she looks, *The Berlin Affair* has the unrefined distinction of being produced by Israelis Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus for Cannon Films, thus adding to its crud cred as a sub-softcore pseudo-arthouse period piece in the spirit of *Mata Hari* (1985) directed by Curtis Harrington (who revealed in his autobiography that Golan and his crew forced him to add pointless sex scenes for his pseudo-biopic about the Dutch spy). A pseudo-Germanic film noir flick equipped with would-be-lurid lackluster fetishism and tedious transgressive romantic relationships, *The Berlin Affair* is the sort of superlatively superficial and aesthetically/thematically vacant Euro-sleaze flick that gives European art cinema a bad name and thus acts as the perfect target from Cavani’s many detractors. As culturally mongrelized and historically absurd as any hack directed period piece released by Hollywood except minus the lavish wardrobes and annoying British accents, *The Berlin Affair* is a would-be-hot-and-heavy Guido-kraut multicultural lipstick lesbian love story that proves that Japanese women make for the most sinister and shifty of lovers, but not exactly sexy ones. Loosely based on the Jap novel *Quicksand* (1930) aka *Manj* written by Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, *The Berlin Affair* once and for all proves that Liliana Cavani is an unrivaled master of cinematically butchering source material, especially when it comes to the foreign non-Italian sort. In fact, Cavani even once confessed she did not even understand her lead protagonist, stating, “I re-

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ally do not know how to interpret Louise's survival. Even after reading the book I kept asking myself this very question: whether you love the person you leave behind or the one who remains with you." Personally, by the end of *The Berlin Affair*, I couldn't care less about Louise and her lunatic lovers and I suspect most viewers will feel the same way after watching Cavani's spiritless softcore flick.

Opening with the seemingly poorly translated quote from German pessimist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, "As the philosophy of professors exclaims, there is design and unity in universal history, but in the life of every individual," *The Berlin Affair* soon cuts to a certain Louise von Hollendorf (Gudrun Landgrebe) confiding with her professor (Spaghetti Western star William Berger) about the tragic bizarre love triangle she was involved with in with her hubby Heinz von Hollendorf (English actor Kevin McNally), a German senior diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a Japanese woman named Mitsuko Matsugae (Jap singer/actress Mio Takaki), the young and lecherous daughter of a Japanese ambassador. The year is 1938 and Louise is taking a university drawing class, but instead of drawing the unclad archetypal blonde Aryan beauty used as a model in the class, she opts for drawing another student, Jap chick Mitsuko. Louise finally gets the gall to ask Mitsuko to allow her to draw her and the two inevitably make love, with the sexually aggressive German chick eventually madly falling in love with the little Jap princess. Meanwhile, Louise's husband becomes suspicious of his wifey's relationship with Mitsuko because, on top of being jealous in regard to his significant other's extramarital deceit, it might ruin the German diplomat's career were it revealed that his bourgeois beloved is a lecherous lily-licker. Meanwhile, Mitsuko betrays Louise by getting engaged to the two ladies' half-guido drawing instructor, Joseph Benno (Andrea Prodan), a man who is apparently half-gay and sexually impotent. Exceedingly emotionally wounded, Louise breaks off her aberrant affair with Mitsuko and decides to completely dedicate herself to her cuckolded husband, even revealing her brief lesbo relationship with him. Meanwhile, Heinz's high-ranking Gestapo agent cousin Wolf von Hollendorf (Hanns Zischler) forces Louise and Heinz both to be involved in a plot to ruin the career of a gay German general named Werner von Heiden (Massimo Girotti) as homosexuality is illegal in Deutschland under Article 175 of the Penal Code, which proves to be successful. Faking being pregnant and ill, Mitsuko manages to convince Louise to rekindle their romantic relationship, which the Jap's hubby-to-be Benno allows, but he ultimately makes the mistake of attempting to blackmail Heinz, which ultimately gets him deported back to Guidoland. Of course, Heinz naturally becomes enraged after learning his wife is getting wanton with a cracked and wacked carpet-munching Jap chick, but he also develops a decadent taste for lily yellow lesbo flesh, thus siring a ménage à trios between the kraut married couple and the Asian goddess. Although both parties become increasingly jealous of one another, Mitsuko ultimately holds the most power, ultimately sadistically

playing the wife and husband against each other. After Benno publishes an account abroad about the curious miscegenation-based case of Mitsuko and her married kraut couple lovers, Heinz is forced to resign from his prestigious position. In the end, the three opt for poisoning one another during a ceremonial rite as opposed to leaving one another (after all, the Japs believe suicide is “not cowardice but victory”), but Louise survives and awakes, ultimately realizing she was given a sedative instead of the poisons and that she was betrayed by both of her lovers, thus allowing to live on as the writer of a sleazy race-mixing romantic novel.

In its melodramatic depiction of lesbianism and cross-racial/cross-cultural romance, *The Berlin Affair* is much like a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film, albeit directed by a keenly cynical lezzy Italian robot that lacks a flare for storytelling and melodrama. Indeed, *The Berlin Affair* is the rare sort of film that will probably only appeal to bourgeois latent lesbians, exceedingly emasculated workaholic male cuckolds who have spent one-too-many late nights working in the office, and novice xenophiles with an appetite for yellow meat, yet I doubt even members of these marginal groups will be left anymore than semi-satisfied by Cavani's cinematic work, as a film that teases and wallows in foreplay, but never reaches any sort of real memorable climax, but merely fizzles out like an old hustler suffering from speed-induced erectile dysfunction. Essentially a flaccid film noir flick with pretensions of being a ‘socially progressive’ and conspicuously controversial arthouse period piece, *The Berlin Affair* might as well have been set in modern day Rome (in fact, a good portion of the film was shot Rome at Paolis Studios) as the film is even less interested in historical facts (let alone realistic architecture, wardrobes, etc. during the Third Reich era) than something directed by a vengeful Hollywood Hebrew like Spielberg. Admittedly, I wanted to like *The Berlin Affair* and after three or four attempts at watching the film, my opinion has yet to change. Lacking the quasi-oniric operatic etherealness, dark romanticism, and perverse poetry of *The Night Porter*, *The Berlin Affair* almost seems like a cynical parody of a Liliana Cavani flick, as if producers Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus got a hold of the film and butchered it so that it could be digested by the most dimwitted philistines. As for director Cavani, she stated of her objective with *The Berlin Affair*, “For me, a dictatorship is the most irreligious moment in history, because its leader and the hierarchies in power take the place of a divinity, while instead they are a caricature. As a consequence, they cause imagination to become scandalous and impossible, and also religion that feeds on fantasy...With their religious passion that has nothing in common with dictatorship, my characters are not anti-Nazi; however, they become “other” than Nazism, which they oppose, even if it is not overtly expressed in the film.” Keeping Cavani's quote in mind, I can respect *The Berlin Affair* for one thing in that it portrays bisexual race-mixers who have betrayed the Third Reich as sadists, liars, and degenerates who will screw anyone over for a bit of carnal

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knowledge.
-Ty E

LOVE TO KILL

Lindsay Shonteff (1979)

There are numerous entries in the CAT III library. Each having their own story, if not resembling most, but they offer extreme sex and violence. This one however, is different. It takes the subject matter which of course lends it the label CAT III but extends beyond that into a masterful thriller with a dash of humor along with this ingenious recipe of sick fun. The director's name is Billy Chung who some of us know from the film "THE NEW DR. LAMB" Anthony Wong, who we all know from The Untold Story and Ebola Syndrome, plays, well, Sam Wong. For some reason, he carries the same last name. He has a smart son named Keung and a gorgeous wife named Jade. They live a textbook life. The father pays the bills, works at a big firm. Their son goes to a proper school and the wife is unemployed given the natural (or so it seems) duty of maintaining the house which is presented in many forms of dialogue which will leave the seasoned feminist boiling. This is where the conflict picks up heavily. It seems that Mr. Wong is in fact an insane, sadistic alcoholic who loves to sodomize his wife with a bottle of beer. After escaping from this horrible ordeal, she stumbles out into the street getting beaten on. That is, until loose cannon Fire-Ball Hung of the local police department kicks the shit out of him and charges him with abuse. Danny Lee as Hung was an amazing choice. His role could have made the film or numbed it down. Thankfully, he is here in all his hilarious glory. As we watch her let her husband go testifying they were experimenting, Hung gets down right pissed off. He already put Mr. Wong in the hospital and won't mind doing it again. I have no idea about the system of law in past or present Hong Kong but if it is anything like how this film describes, I can imagine it to be a sewer. There is no "self-defense". If you kill someone, the dead person can "sue" you. I don't get it. Hopefully the subs were mistranslated. After this ordeal, the cop takes her and Keung in his huge house. Well, it is actually his insane girlfriend who is a model and is arriving back home soon. After Jade gets a make over, Hung begins to lust over this degraded diva and lose all interest in Jenny. He even goes as far as to try to give her away but the film picks up when Mr. Wong finds her whereabouts and kidnaps her mother. This film started with a watchable beginning that turned from standard into very entertaining and captivating. Near the end, it morphs into a whole other kind of gritty film that reminds me of when suspense movies actually used to be good. Granted, the CAT III label means it shouldn't be taken easily and you must make sure you are at least desensitized in the slightest for this film. While it doesn't feature an insane amount of blood and gore, it does show a misogynistic lifestyle that frequently promotes the beating of your wife, attempting to smother your mother, and stabbing someone in the ass with a fork. Anthony Wong, of course, is a genius when it comes to playing the villain. Mr. Wong's character is not just

LOVE TO KILL

some cruel man who has no reason for his actions, but thanks to the flashbacks given, we can see the hell he endured and a clue to the horrible chain reaction that can explode in any family. Love To Kill is a often rough, gritty, and lightly humorous film that shows that in the end, the only person you can count on in yourself. Amazing performances outlined with compelling characters, the film surely is worth it after the end. If you can find a copy, i recommend it. Love To Kill is the ultimate Lifetime movie.

-Maq

RACE D'EP

Lionel Soukaz (1979)

If Franco Prospero and Gualtiero Jacopetti of *Mondo Cane* (1962) fame directed a documentary about male homosexuality on a much smaller budget than they used while working on their epically exploitative cinematic vacations, it would have probably resembled *Race d'Ep: un siècle d'images de l'homosexualité* (1979) aka *The Homosexual Century*; a militant celluloid salute to subversive sodomy and a semi-educational tribute to one century of homo history (spanning from the 1880s to 1980s) directed and co-written by Lionel Soukaz (Ixe, Maman que man) and co-penned (and, in part, co-directed) by French commie queer theorist Guy Hocquenghem. With the second word of the original *Frog* title being a play on the word for "pédé," a French slur for gay men, *Race d'Ep* reveals on merely a superficial level that it is a renegade agitprop work on the so-called 'fag race' and indeed it is. A man who believed 'white supremacy' and 'racism' could be annihilated via fanatical fudge-packing, Hocquenghem, who is clearly behind the majority of ideas featured in the aesthetically and thematically hostile work *The Homosexual Century*, would, like his homophile hero Michel Foucault, die prematurely via AIDS at the age of 42, yet would earn the title, "the father of queer theory" among his faggy fanboys. Still, Hocquenghem, like director Lionel Soukaz and their cinematic collaboration *The Homosexual Century*, would fail to earn an international reputation of any notably degree, thus the documentary makes for a rather distinct depiction of what the "gay agenda" was like before it was neutered by mainstreamer fag fascists who sought to homogenize their fellow homos and demand that heteros acknowledge the supposed normality of spitting semen into another man's brown-eye or face the bitter wrath of hysterical homosexualist ad hominem attacks that ruin careers and give petty power to self-glorifying queers. Indeed, during *The Homosexual Century*, there is no talk of gays wanting to adopt children or joining the military (in fact, anti-fagdom and militarism are treated as one in the same as deplorable traits of hostile "heteronormative" folks), but pro-pederasty is most certainly one of the major themes, as is mass male orgies and the belief that gayness is the result of being biologically different and not just another form of normality. As devilishly expressed in the narrated message towards the third part of the documentary that the, "best thing for an Occidental democracy was a blond and white, liberated, young" aka a sexually aberrant Aryan Marxist who wears women's clothing and sucks men's cocks, *The Homosexual Century* makes for a decidedly degenerate documentary that argues that the last century – the one that saw Europe lose all of its empires, colonies and status in the world, as well as seeing the dissolution of art and kultur and the rise of feminism, communism, globalism, multiculturalism and other collectivist cancers that appeal to mundane majorities – was a fairly great one for guys who like guys.

RACE D'EP

Essentially four different short films (or at least the version I watched was) that span from the 1880s to the 1980s that make up a feature-length documentary that starts with a curiously campy and queerly carnal pornographic docudrama about German pederast/photographer Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden and concludes with a pseudo-cinéma vérité 'arthouse' melodrama about a closet-case family man and his sleazy encounter with a dirty Frenchman whilst cruising Paris, *The Homosexual Century* is a relatively eclectic (as far as filmmaking techniques are concerned), if not thematically erratic, work that cannot decide whether it wants to be a piece of poofery erotica or a serious work of pole-smoking propaganda. Unsurprisingly, shot in gay guerilla-style during the height of mass demonstrations for "homo liberation" in fall of 1979 in France and elsewhere in the Occident, part one of *The Homosexual Century*, "Le temps de la pose" (23 mins), depicts late 19th-century cock-sucking kraut photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden as a princely pervert who started a virtual one-man-revolution with his proto-pornographic photographs of underage boys who he took a special liking due to their perceived exotic and 'Arab' appearances. In between goofy footage of von Gloeden getting his groove on as the master of getting disrobed Guido twinks to strike gay Greek poses, the segment also features sordid and salacious scenic sodomy from consenting young men that ultimately seems more silly than "sexy" as one can only assume the director intended it to be. According to one of the boys, the Baron, "made us princes of art," which must undoubtedly be true as high-profile pederast Oscar Wilde was a fan of von Gloeden's Uranian photos. Naturally, von Gloeden and his cousin Guglielmo Plüschow are important in gay history because they made it somewhat acceptable to eroticize young men, but it seems quite ridiculous that this story would take up about a quarter of *The Homosexual Century*. It would probably have been better spent discussing Uranian poets like Lord Alfred Douglas (Wilde's treacherous butt boy), John Addington Symonds, John Moray Stuart-Young, Montague Summers, and the eccentric Frederick Rolfe aka "Baron Corvo," but I guess images have always been more popular than actual literature, even among the cultivated cock-sucking sort.

The second segment of *The Homosexual Century*, "Le troisième sexe ou Des années folles à l'extermination" (25 mins), is indubitably the most interesting and insightful part of the documentary as it depicts the various opposing and philosophically rivaling homosexual groups in Weimar Republic, Germany during the the 1920s and 1930s, which queer British novelist Christopher Isherwood apparently called the "Golden Age of Homosexuality." Essentially divided into three rival yet somewhat overlapping groups – effete supporters of gay German-Jewish sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld; a man who believed homosexuals were a third sex (gay men being biological men with "female" souls), Adolf Brand; an anarchistic völkisch writer influenced by kraut egotist/atheistic anarchist philosopher Max Stirner who published the gay journal *Der Eigene* (aka *The Own*) that promoted

neo-paganism and promoted the belief that homosexuals were more masculine than heterosexual men, and the “Confederation of Specials” (which is probably a bad translation of the real name); a group that promoted cultured cocktail aestheticism and anarchism – The Homosexual Century makes it quite clear there was actually a time when queers did not have a superficial pseudo-culture like they do today in the U.S. Like Adolf Brand, Hans Blüher (who later became a National Socialist for a time) supported the Wandervogel and German Youth Movement; proto-hippie back-to-nature groups that promoted neo-paganism, nudism, organic foods, eugenics, etc. that were partly inspired by the völkisch symbolist art of Fidus (Hugo Reinhold Karl Johann Höppener) – whose artistic works are featured in *The Homosexual Century* – and would later inspire the Hitler Youth. Ironically, Magnus Hirschfeld, who was called the “Einstein of Sex” by the *New York Times* (and later by Rosa von Praunheim), would develop a large body of research that was later used by the Nazis as scientific evidence of homosexual genetic degeneracy as depicted in *The Homosexual Century* in a most unflattering and quasi-pornographic manner in a debauched docudrama sequence featuring nude twinks and muscle fags dressed in black trench-coats with Nazi armbands. The documentary also goes on to describe how the Nazis trashed Hirschfeld’s research center, but made the mistake of featuring a picture of gay SA brownshirt Edmund Heines, who had his own mini-concentration camp where he tortured enemies as depicted in Rosa von Praunheim’s documentary *Men Heroes and Gay Nazis* (2005) and was the deputy of Sturmabteilung leader Ernst Röhm (who introduced his boyish compatriot to sodomy, among other things); both of whom would be sacrificed in Hitler’s fratricidal purge, the Night of the Long Knives, under the dubious pretense (Hitler, who was one of Röhm’s best friends, long knew about his loyal cock-sucking commando’s ‘vice’) of their poorer perversity. To the credit of the makers of *The Homosexual Century*, while it is mentioned that the Nazis had a popular quote, “suppress the Jews, for Marxism to disappear,” it is also mentioned that Soviet writer Maxim Gorky once wrote, “suppress the homosexuals, for fascists to disappear,” thus revealing homosexuality was not uncommon among early leaders of the National Socialist Party. Judging by the political climate today in the Occident in regard to gay special interest groups, Gorky may have been on to something. Somewhat surprisingly, ‘conservative revolutionary’ poet Stefan George (who most modern academics write-off as a proto-Nazi poet of sorts) and his obsessions with getting his members of his literary circle to dress in ancient, homoerotic style Greek clothing is mentioned in a relatively positive light.

Undoubtedly, the final two parts of *The Homosexual Century* are most certainly the weakest despite the fact that they depict relatively ‘homosexually liberated’ periods in history. While the third part, “Sweet Sixteen in the Sixties” (10 mins), is nothing more than a Soviet montage-inspired agitprop piece of perverse poo-packing pornography filled with erect members, flower power fags fro-

RACE D'EP

icking around rather gayly, pretty boy orgies featuring buff bods and blowjobs, redundant rock 'n' roll/psychedelic music and aesthetics, and a celebration of how sodomy finally became sanctified in the Occident due to the emergence of counter-culture groups, Cultural Marxism/Frankfurt school ideas, and popular unisex clothing (which is described as a being more revolutionary and important than any other from of group protest), the final segment of the documentary, "Royal Opéra" (co-directed with Guy Hocquenghem, 25 mins), which was also released separately as an individual short film the same year (1979), is a minimalistic, melodramatic and would-be-erotic condemnation of homos in the closet as well as a demystification of public pissoir in the golden age of cruising that shares a striking resemblance to the French film *Johan – Mon été 75* (1976) directed by the openly gay filmmaker Philippe Vallois (who also directed *We Were One Man* (1979) aka *Nous étions un seul homme* starring Piotr Stanislas, who plays one of the leads in *Royal Opéra*). About as interesting as *Royal Opéra* gets is when the characters decide to urinate in unison on a city sidewalk in broad daylight, as well as a scene where a racially insensitive remark is made by the dirty Frenchman regarding an urban abyss of sorts, where he states quite sardonically, "Moreover, this tunnel was as dark as a Negro's asshole in the depth of a mine." Needless to say, not a single segment of *The Homosexual Century* is LGBT-sensitive enough to make the curious contemporary plea for gay marriage to seem even remotely reasonable as most of the proto-twinks, queens, and leather-fags featured in this radically pro-decadence documentary are 'bad to the boner' and love living the wayward way.

Ultimately, *The Homosexual Century* is an uneven yet unintentionally eventful work of fierce fag agitprop from a bygone era when boy-on-boy buggery was still somewhat of a taboo in the Occidental world and that to some extent acts as counter-propaganda to the poofer political correctness that has infectiously engulfed Western European and Northern American society today. As with many works of its kind (and queer cinema in general), the documentary is also an incriminating and wildly wanton work that makes dudes that likes dudes seem like the most depraved and debauched deviants in the world, which is not helped by the the fact that co-writer/co-director Guy Hocquenghem was a vehement victim of his own political puffery, dying of "gay cancer," which was probably caused by one too many anonymous trips to the tearoom. In terms of educational merit, *The Homosexual Century*, especially the second segment, is proof gay kultur was not always about retarded haircuts and a radically repugnant fashion sense, talking with a contrived lisp, glorifying dastardly drag queens and bitchy old hags and feminist fag hags, so-called LGBT's collective war against heterosexuality (there was actually a time when fags hated dykes and vice versa), pill popping, and promoting a slave-morality-driven victim-based mentality. It might be a stretch, but I would not be surprised if the contemporary cock-sucker cry for "gay marriage" is a result of a lack of persecution among

gays in the Western world because, after all, masochism and man-on-man love go hand-in-hand. In the past gays could proudly say they had Stefan George, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Jean Cocteau, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, etc., – individuals who actually suffered to some extent during their time – but who do they have now; Ellen Degenerate, Ogre O'Donnell, and pedomorphic pansy Neil Patrick Harris!? If the last century was the “Homosexual Century,” then this zeitgeist should certainly be concluded with an abberosexual apocalypse of sorts. After all, while the paintings of Caravaggio and the cinematic works of F.W. Murnau will always be treasured, no one is going to miss hearing about the much publicized tearoom exploits of drug-addled fag singers like George Michael and his less masculine compatriot, fairy fag Boy George.

-Ty E

POULTRYGEIST
POULTRYGEIST

Lloyd Kaufman* (2006)

"Night of the Chicken Dead" Troma really has come along way since *The Toxic Avenger*. Films from Troma have been lacking in originality lately (Not the creative umph! but rather the flawed execution), and seems like the company hasn't aged a year since it's beginning in 1974. Troma, if you don't know, is an independent film company centered on fart jokes, lesbians, and cheap gore effects. So the plot is about a balding goof ball named Arbie (Get it? Fast Food) who is in love with a woman who went to college and became an artfag liberal lesbian and in order to go against her ways, he accepts a job at a chicken shack ran by a black militant. I imagine that Kaufman has a team of Jewish writers to come up with this kitsch. This Indian burial ground that is below the restaurant creates chicken zombies that ultimately make Michael Herz skinny, which is highly unlikely. Denny, the black store manager, instantly becomes a trembling "slave" in front of the general - Yet another example of the horrible undertones of the film. This is not a bad thing at all. Propaganda is a must at times. What would society be without it? Another hilarious scene is in which the militant states that blaming the Jews is the first thing to do, which in most cases of *Chicken Zombies* would be appropriate. What *Poultrygeist* does best is mock many races and countercultures which most films dare not to intimidate due to the amount of population conformation. Artfags surrounding in a lesbian protest suddenly pause from their protesting of something they know nothing about other than the fad (This includes Gay Rights parades), to slurp on a smooth latte from their very favorite - Starbucks. There is also a similar scene to the parody in *Wayne's World*. An old, crooning man who had wasted his life working a part-time job recalls of a time when he was young and had youth. I wonder what would have happened to Lloyd without his film making career? I can see him being a disgruntled office worker which he happens to half-way become later in the film. Lloyd is the kind of Jew that I can appreciate, one who is aware of his own religion and can mock it openly, rather than pretending to be a lawyer or an intellectual. *Family Guy* can make fun of black but not Jews? Lloyd basically says fuck it, and proceeds without caution. So besides the gore and implants of racial tension and slut chickens, how does this film hold up? To put it simply, *Poultrygeist* is the most ambitious film created by Troma and puts Lloyd on top of his campy goodness game. Besides being a wonderful musical and a social commentary on fast food and racism, it manages to uphold as the best of Troma. *Poultrygeist* is perhaps even better than *The Toxic Avenger* and *Terror Firmer*. The soundtrack is amazing while breathing recklessness and amazing direction in the cast. Troma made up for the "you either love it or hate it" abomination *Cannibal the Musical*, although I still respect Parker & Stone. In terms of flat out splatter, *Poultrygeist* reigns supreme. The slaughter scene in which all the

Chick-zombies go on a mad hunt for flesh is one of the most inventive massacres I have seen in recent years. It's impossible to write down the utter enjoyment I had for this film. I can no longer go to Chick-Fil-A due to the cows stating, "Eat more chikin." The gore is top-notch and is only set down by its amazing effects in the creation of the chicken zombies. Such a raunchy tale of "fowl" play can only be undermined by its ridiculousness. Scenes are parodying Jaws, Poltergeist, and many other classic horror films. Tromaville sure is a funky place, with satire and exploding faces and NES cartridges, I'd only like to imagine the headlines. Not since prohibition has there been so much death and despair.

-mAQ

JESUS IS A PALESTINIAN
JESUS IS A PALESTINIAN

Lodewijk Crijns (1999)

While I typically find Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens fan-boys to be even more hateful and annoying than the philistine Evangelical Christians that they love to hate, nothing is more patently pathetic and ludicrously laughable than the sort of spiritually and racially retarded whites who adopt alien religions and find themselves worshiping some turd-skinned charlatan with a special craving for female Europid meat. Indeed, I am talking about people like David Lynch who subscribe to phoney bullshit religious cults like the neo-Hindu Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement, which is backed by rich white Americans and Europeans who somehow found themselves brainwashed by an elderly Indian hedonist who tells his members to refrain from sex while he secretly defiles all of his white female followers and flies around the world in fancy jets. Unfortunately, aside from a handful of examples like George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), which hilariously symbolically features white Hare Krishna zombies, there are not too many films that mock this rather retarded phenomenon that reached its peak during the counterculture era yet still unfortunately lives on today. Luckily, there is a little known Dutch film, *Jezus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus Is a Palestinian* directed by Lodewijk Crijns (*Met grote blijdschap* aka *With Great Joy, Loverboy*), that not only makes a major mockery out of mindless white pseudo-Hindus but retarded religious cults led by third world charlatans in general that promote a sort of slave-morality oriented weltanschauung. In fact, on top of parodying trendy religious cults, the film also assaults various other forms of odious Occidental decay that are especially prevalent in Western European nations like the Netherlands, including self-mutilation (ranging from stupid piercings and other forms of so-called body modification to 'cutting'), mindless post-sexual liberation hedonism, so-called multiculturalism, rampant sexual and romantic dysfunction, and even incest, among other things. In a more anachronistic sense, the film also parodies millennialism and the religious retardation that accompanied that, with an obscenely ugly and swarthy Arab prophesying a counterfeit towelhead Palestinian Christ that of course never actually appears in the end. The film is notable for being partly set in the Amsterdam multicultural slum of Bijlmermeer (colloquially known as 'Bijlmer') which is famous for the Bijlmerdijk (aka "Bijlmer disaster") when the state-owned Israeli airline cargo aircraft El Al Flight 1862 crashed into some ghetto apartment buildings on 4 October 1992 in what is notable for not only being the deadliest aviation incident to ever occur in the Netherlands, but also because no one really knows how many people died in the crash because there were so many undocumented third world alien negroes from places like Ghana and Suriname that were squatting there at the time. In an almost sadistically sardonic scenario that the Hebraic gatekeepers of Hollywood would never

dare touch, Crijns actually mocks the Bijlmer crash and the fact that the area is more or less a multicultural human garbage dump that is inhabited by people with prehistoric mindsets. Indeed, *Jesus Is a Palestinian* is an almost pathologically politically incorrect work where the only people that belong to religious cults are white mental and/or physical cripples and ignorant and superstitious barbarians and savages of dubious racial origin from the third world. Featuring quasi-pornographic imagery of unsimulated sex and mirthfully misanthropic humor that unwittingly exposes the sheer and utter lack of testicular fortitude that is involved in the crappy kosher comedies of hymie would-be-humorists like Judd Apatow, Seth Rogen, Jonah Hill, Feldstein, and other creators of philo-Semitic twaddle, Crijns' film is an admirable debut feature from a Dutch filmmaker that would ultimately beat Hollywood at their own goofy con game. If you're looking for low-class celluloid trash of the comically crazed sort that genuinely makes a mockery of certain Occidental taboos, you probably cannot do better than *Jesus Is a Palestinian*.

After beginning with a megalomaniacal quote from self-described messiah David Koresh, *Jesus Is a Palestinian* introduces pathetic protagonist 'Ramses' (played by popular Dutch comedian Hans Teeuwen, who was responsible for the idea for Theo van Gogh's *Interview* (2003) starring Katja Schuurman) as his cult member comrade describes how the members of the American branch of their neo-Hindu cult are involved in drilling holes in their legs where "esoteric smoke" is blown which apparently "goes straight to your bone marrow" and "creates an immediate expansion of consciousness." Indeed, aside from wearing retarded monk-like robes, the members of the cult are covered with various grotesque body piercings that they absurdly believe give them special spiritual powers. By the end of the film, every member of the cult that Ramses belongs to will have holes drilled into their legs with a power drill at the demand of their elderly lunatic Indian leader 'Guru Adi Da Kahn' (Anis de Jong), but before then the protagonist will temporarily leave his Limburg-based farm commune and take a 'spiritual journey' of sorts in his hometown in Amsterdam where he temporarily discovers sex and independent thinking, among other things that any healthy and normal person could not live without. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, Ramses' long estranged sister Natasja (actress and screenwriter Kim van Kooten of Robert Jan Westdijk's *Zusje* (1995) aka *Little Sister*) shows up at the Limburg commune and demands to see her brother, but the group's creepily pedantic white cuckold sect leader (Pieter Bouwman) attempts to stop that. Luckily for Ramses, his sister Natasja is an exceedingly arrogant and aggressive bitch who does whatever she wants and she certainly has no problem pushing the neo-Hare Krishna automatons out of the way to get to her brother, who is in the process of decapitating a chicken when she finally finds him. An ex-cutter and glue sniffer who "sniffed so much glue that his nasal septum started to disappear," 25-year-old Ramses was eventually 'rescued' by the Hindu cult about

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8 years ago and is somewhat taken aback when his sister approaches him and demands that he come back with her to Amsterdam to see their dying father who apparently wants to see him one last time before he kicks the bucket.

While Ramses is eventually granted permission by the guru to leave the commune to see his dying father, he is told by his sect leader that he must come back before the “bone marrow experiment” which “has to take place before Iriion shifts out of the Aquarius zenith.” Ramses is also forced to take an oath and, as he states, “I’ll be cast out and my future will be grim,” if he breaks it. Before leaving, Ramses has a sort of mini ‘crown of thorns’ painfully pierced to his penis head by the Guru so that he cannot enter the “forbidden zone” (aka fuck). Unbeknownst to virgin Ramses, his big sister Natasja lives with a busty, if not conspicuously chubby and moronic, blonde sub-babe named Lonneke (Dijn Blom) and he will soon find himself wanting to pound her completely shaved puss. Since the little beast is his best friend, Ramses also smuggles his black baby pig ‘Muštafa’ out of the commune and brings it with him to Amsterdam without his sister’s knowledge. Upon arriving in Amsterdam, Ramses is quite annoyed to learn that his sister has not only lied to him about his father (Peer Mascini) wanting to talk to him since he has apparently been comatose for about four months, but also that Natasja is also involved in a conspiracy with the evil head doctor to have the old man euthanized, which the protagonist ultimately refuses to allow. Eventually, Ramses discovers that his father is faking being unconscious because, to quote the old man, “If people don’t take me seriously, I don’t take them seriously.” Ultimately, Ramses’ father wants him to “take me to the messiah.” Indeed, a Palestinian Christian charlatan named Rashid (Moroccan comedian Najib Amhali) is peddling a scam that the messiah will come back in Palestinian form and will arrive on the roof of a Bijlmer ghetto apartment. Indeed, Ramses even buys some ‘holy’ Christ grade palm cream, which is regularly used by limbless residents of Bijlmer to put on their nubs, from Rashid and puts it on his father. Ramses’ father acknowledges that he was a terrible parent and judging by the fact that both of his children are major fuck-ups with serious mental illnesses, the viewer does not doubt this, so no he naturally seeks to be redeemed for his sins and Rashid claims to have exactly what he is looking for.

As hinted by the fact that they take showers together, Natasja and her roommate Lonneke are involved in a quasi-lesbian relationship where the latter has devoted herself to being dominated by the former. Despite the fact that she is an aggressive slut who seems to fuck a different guy every single night, Natasja has completely cuckolded Lonneke and brainwashed her into rejecting romantic relationships and into thinking all men are scumbags who only want to get into her panties, yet she soon begins to fall in love for Ramses and the two eventually get involved a doomed and rather pathetic love affair. Indeed, after Natasja kicks him out of her apartment when he accidentally exposes her having sex with some

random guy named Bob at party and he moves into his hospitalized father's old apartment, Ramses begins developing what might be described as a personality of his own. Of all people, Ramses decides to confide in overzealous Christian conman Rashid about romantic advice regarding Lonneke and before he knows it, he is cutting off his retarded Hindu haircut and wearing relatively normal clothes. Meanwhile, the Guru and his cult members begin stalking Ramses and when they randomly show up at his apartment and attempt to drill a hole into his leg with an electric power-drill, he actually manages to stand up for himself, escapes from the Hindu automatons, and seeks shelter with Lonneke, who later helps him take the ghastly 'cross of thorns' lock off his virginal penis. Of course, as an overweight cutter whose back is covered with scars as a result of self-mutilation, Lonneke is not quite right in the head and weeps and freaks out anytime Ramses attempts to have sex with her. As someone that is brain-washed by a dumb bitch and slut like Natasja, Lonneke is, not unlike Ramses, a weak-willed follower who cannot stand on her own two feet, thus her and the protagonist's romance is doomed to fail even though the two seem to be made for one another.

While Ramses manages to eventually have sex with Lonneke after various failed attempts to insert his ramrod into her shaved gash (which my girlfriend notably described as resembling chicken skin), she sobs the entire time like a pathetic child and then proceeds to mutilate herself afterwards while mega-bitch Natasja pretends to comfort her in an attempt to emotionally manipulate her. Meanwhile, the Guru and his followers accidentally run over poor piglet Mustafa with their commune van and break his back, so Ramses is forced to put the animal out of its misery. Killing the pig ultimately comes in handy, as Ramses is later forced to do the same to his father after Rashid pseudo-redeems him of his sins before dropping dead himself upon falsely mistaking a wayward jet for the second coming of the Palestinian messiah. Indeed, when his father says "Lord, deliver me," Ramses crushes his head with a cement block to end his suffering and then he and his sister symbolically put their dead daddy's corpse inside a cave. In the end, Ramses proves that he is a perennial follower by going back to the commune in Limburg and Adi Da Kahn aka 'Kangaroo' (as people oftentimes mistakenly call him) reluctantly agrees to allow him to stay. While Lonneke is waiting for Ramses when he gets back to the commune, there is no happy ending as the lovers agree to go their separate ways. While Lonneke has decided that she wants to learn to be independent and demonstrates it by rejecting a ride back to Amsterdam from Natasja, Ramses accepts the fact that he is a weak and meek follower who has no problem taking orders from an eccentric old Indian fart who demands that he mutilated his body. In the end, Guru Kahn and all of his followers, including Ramses, get high by collectively smoking a hookah that is connected to all of them via the holes that have been drilled through their legs.

Undoubtedly, one of my biggest complaints regarding Jesus Is a Palestinian

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is that, for all of its religion mocking, it never once parodies Judaism and its obscenely outmoded traditions like brit milah circumcision ceremonies where a so-called 'mohel' circumcises a baby boy and then sucks blood from the child's penis (!). Indeed, for all the mocking that Jewish comedians, filmmakers, and newscasters do of Christianity, their own all the more absurdly outmoded religion provides a goldmine worth of comedic gold material to work with. Luckily, although he never really attacked Judaism as a religion, Lodewijk Crijns would later satire the hypocritical behavior of liberal Jews in his most popular and successful film *Alleen maar nette mensen* (2012) aka *Only Decent People*, which depicts the hilarity that ensues when a young Hebrew decides he wants to find himself a black beauty with a ghetto booty and ultimately finds himself ostracized from his oh-so-proper kosher community. Notably, *Jesus Is a Palestinian* star Kim van Kooten would later collaborate with Crijns on his second feature *Met grote blijdschap* (2001) aka *With Great Joy*, which she co-penned the screenplay for. Out of all of the filmmaker's work, *With Great Joy* is notable for being Crijns' sole dark and serious drama, so it should be no surprise that the absurdist auteur has described it as his least favorite film. Undoubtedly, while watching a scene at the beginning of *Jesus Is a Palestinian* where the protagonist's sister shows up at the cult commune and the mindless follows stare at her as if she is the weirdo, I felt as if I was watching a sort of anti-*The Wicker Man* (1973), as the group certainly completely lacks the mystique, aesthetic potency, and sensuality that made the pagans of Robin Hardy's film seem so intriguing and strangely likeable. Indeed, if for nothing else, Crijns' film is important in that it takes a rather incendiary and even iconoclastic approach to satirizing weak and spiritually retarded xenophiliac white people who adopt increasingly trendy religions from the third world, as if mindlessly following elderly brown egomaniacs will result in them obtaining some sort of secret knowledge that will enable them to experience serenity and nirvana or something. As someone that regards *Siddhartha* (1922) as Hermann Hesse's most obscenely overrated book and considers David Lynch's increasing obsession with Transcendental Meditation to be at least partially responsible for the decline of his talent as a filmmaker, I could not help but delight in Crijns' film, even if it is more or less the cinematic equivalent of *Mad* magazine, albeit thankfully much more graphic and subversive. Indeed, it is not every day that you see a film where a pornographic joke is made of an ex-glue-sniffer turned neo-Hindu moron repeatedly failing to properly insert his cock into a cunt hole. Indeed, *Jesus Is a Palestinian* ultimately feels the result of what might happen if Teutonic aesthetic terrorist Christoph Schlingensiefel had attempted to direct a Hollywood comedy, as it ultimately makes *Superbad* (2007) and *The Hangover* (2009) seem like Disney movies that were specially tailored for autistic schoolchildren.

-Ty E

WITH GREAT JOY

Lodewijk Crijns (2001)

When Paul Verhoeven left the Netherlands for Hollywood, he left a perennial void in Dutch cinema that no other filmmaker would ever come close to filling in terms of success or output, though some have certainly tried with varying results. Indeed, Ate de Jong's career stagnated after both of his Hollywood films *Drop Dead Fred* (1991) and *Highway to Hell* (1991) failed miserably (though both films would ironically go on to become cult classics of sorts), Theo van Gogh only got international recognition after he was assassinated in 2004 and Hollywood actors like Steve Buscemi and Stanley Tucci remade two of his films in tribute, Dick Maas has been making highly accessible Hollywood-esque films his entire career but has failed to make it to the real deal, George Sluizer always remained a one-hit-wonder of sorts, and Americans are probably not brainwashed enough by feminism yet to fully embrace the unintentionally zany gynocentric weltanschauung of Marleen Gorris. In terms of younger filmmakers, Martin Koolhoven has proved himself 'multicultural-friendly' enough with ethno-masochistic cuckold garbage like *Het schnitzelparadijs* (2005) aka *Schnitzel Paradise* and *'n Beetje Verliefd* (2006) aka *Happy Family* and profitable enough with his fairly generic WWII flick *Oorlogswinter* (2008) aka *Winter in Wartime*, so we will just have to see if his upcoming effort *Brimstone* (2016) starring big names like Robert Pattinson, Guy Pearce, and Carice van Houten will turn him into the next Verhoeven. As for other young contenders, Lodewijk Crijns probably has what it takes to have a rather successful career churning out raunchy trash comedies as demonstrated by works like *Jezus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus Is a Palestinian* and *Alleen maar nette mensen* (2012) aka *Only Decent People*, which are not only more artful and sophisticated than the cheap and senseless crap kosher comedies that Hollywood regularly defecates out, but also more raunchy and genuinely politically incorrect. Indeed, in its depiction of the phoniness, pomposity, and cryptic racism of Amsterdam's posh liberal Jewish community, as well as its uncompromising and shockingly unflattering depiction of the Dutch negro population, *Only Decent People* is surely far too radical for the rabid Zionist clowns of Tinseltown, who prefer portraying white (translation: non-Jewish men of Europid extraction) as moronic beta bitches and beautiful white women as jungle fever crazed whores, as well as incessantly mocking, degrading, and falsely stereotyping America's white majority in general. While best known for his iconoclastic comedies, Crijns, who somewhat physically resembles a *Game of Thrones* character, has somewhat of arthouse roots as reflected in his genre-defying medium-length debut *Lap Rouge* (1997), which is a sort of quasi-mockumentary about two exceedingly eccentric Dutch brothers of the reasonably socially autistic sort whose odiously overbearing mother moved them to a remote village in southern France in 1959

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to spare them the 'prison' of bourgeois life, thus leading to their abject alienation. Although completely unknown outside of the Netherlands like virtually all of the director's works, Crijns' second feature-length film *Met grote blijdschap* (2001) aka *With Great Joy* starring Verhoeven diva Renée Soutendijk (Spetters, *De vierde man* aka *The 4th Man*) and rather rotund Dutch arthouse star Jack Wouterse (*De noorderlingen* aka *The Northerners*, *Suzy Q*) is nothing short of a modern classic and indubitably the auteur's darkest and most mature work, as a sort of cult film without a cult that is practically begging for an international following (of course, like most great Dutch films, it seems that the film's distributor has nil interest in exporting the work).

While fitting no specific genre, *With Great Joy* can probably be best described as a 'dark family mystery' with decidedly dark comedic overtones that also features conventions of horror, thriller, and melodrama. Quasi-Lynchian in terms of its intricate ominous and foreboding sound landscape, dark and shadowy cinematography, and unraveling of less than flattering family truths, Crijns's film, which was co-penned by actress and screenwriter Kim van Kooten (who also co-wrote Theo van Gogh's *Blind Date* (1996)), is a work with many shocking twists and turns that depicts the familial misery that ensues when a fairly conventional middleclass middle-aged Dutchman discovers the whereabouts of his estranged loser brother who he has not seen or heard from in 15 years and takes his pregnant girlfriend to Wallonia, only to be confronted with a series of unsettling and shameful secrets from his past that he was certainly better off not knowing about. Indeed, to write a full plot summary of the film would undoubtedly ruin the film's impact on people who have not seen the work, but I think it is safe to say that *With Great Joy* is a decided downer with an almost wickedly ironic title that will surely provoke anger in certain more sensitive viewers. Undoubtedly, in its cynical and borderline misanthropic depiction of humanity, it is certainly the sort of work that could have only been made in the Netherlands. Set in a wooded region of Belgium where the protagonist's brother has been secretly living with his common law wife for the past decade and a half, the film has a superficial *Brothers Grimm*-esque fairytale feel to it that seems to intentionally betray its very adult issues, thus underscoring the subtly unsettling general tone of the film in a work that ultimately defies all audience expectations.

With Great Joy begins with a fat and extremely unkempt Dutchman named Ad Sipkes (Jack Wouterse) being spotted from a car by a couple as he walks down a remote road in a wooded mountain region of Ardennes, Belgium. Ad is the estranged brother of banally middleclass protagonist Luc Sipkes (Jaap Spijkers of Karim Traïdia's *De Poolse bruid* (1998) aka *The Polish Bride* and Alex van Warmerdam's *Ober* (2006) aka *Waiter*), who receives a telephone call from a friend named Jose while he is spooning his thoroughly pregnant much younger wife Mieke (Camilla Siegertsz) that his long lost brother has been spotted roaming around a rural road in Belgium. Needless to say, Luc and his wife Mieke

soon head to Belgium and after talking with Belgian authorities, the protagonist figures out where his brother is residing under an assumed name. When Luc and his wife arrive at the house, they find Ad, who is clearly completely alienated from mainstream society as reflected by his unkempt appearance and peculiar behavior, lurking among the shadows of his home and acting rather antisocial and skittish, as if he is trying to hide some deep dark secret. After questioning Luc about their parents and discovering that their mother is dead, Ad eventually breaks down crying and pushes his brother away when he later attempts to give him a hug. Ultimately after various failed attempts to appeal to his brother, Luc and his wife decide to leave, but while sitting in his car the protagonist is startled to see someone from his past walk by, thus inspiring him to immediately exit the vehicle and approach the woman. The woman's name is Els Groenendijk (Renée Soutendijk) and, as the viewer will eventually find out, she used to be Luc's lover but now she is Ad's old lady. Of course, Luc refuses to tell his wife about his romantic past with Els and instead tells Mieke that he knows her from "youth orchestra." Clearly thrilled to see her ex-beau, Els invites Luc and his wife inside and naturally Ad is annoyed so he goes and hides when they come back inside, but he somewhat loosens up over time, especially after having a couple drinks. That night, Els cooks dinner and everyone gets good and drunk on some organic wine. Of course, while drunk, Luc asks his brother why he disappeared and never attempted to contact him and Ad half-joking replies, "No news...is good news" after bitching how he has always felt like the black sheep in their family. Indeed, it is quite apparent that Ad is a sort of resentful fat loser who has always lived in the shadow of his more handsome and better liked brother, hence one of the reasons he decided to disappear and live off the grid. Meanwhile, Luc's wifey Mieke is not exactly humored by Ad's odd sense of humor and she is especially annoyed with Els, who she suspects of having a thing for her hubby. As the viewer will eventually learn, Luc and Els' past is much deeper and more complicated than Mieke suspects.

That night after everyone goes to bed, Luc is woken up by what sounds like a vicious animal in the barn next to the house. The next morning before anyone else wakes up, Luc, who wants to uncover what Ad and Els are clearly hiding from him, decides to sabotage some wires in his car so that he can stay longer and satisfy his undying curiosity while also attempting to create a stronger bond with his misfit brother. Although Luc confesses to his wife that he intentionally sabotaged his car so that he could stay longer, Mieke absolutely refuses to stay and is mad that he is staying because she thinks that Els is an "incredible bitch" and does not trust her with her husband. After Mieke takes a train back to the Netherlands, Luc decides to investigate why there were sounds coming from his brother's barn the night before and soon discovers there is some sort of wild beast lurking inside. When Luc senselessly puts his keys under the barn door to see how the creature inside reacts, the beast almost instantly grabs them in a rather

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violent fashion. That night, Els reveals her deep longing and desire for Luc by passionately stating to him, "I'd really appreciate it if you can...stay a few days more." After putting Ad to bed with a vodka bottle (indeed, Ad goes to sleep while embracing said vodka bottle, as he is a dipsomaniac who regularly attempts to drown his sorrow and resentment with cheap alcohol), Els tells Luc that she refuses to sleep in the same bed with her beau because "Ad stinks" and then informs him in a rather suggestive fashion that she will be sleeping in the same room and bed as him. Of course, Els attempts to seduce Luc and he naturally turns her down since he is a married man with a pregnant young wife, thus causing her to sob hysterically in an attempt to manipulate him into giving her a sympathy fuck. When Luc decides to leave after becoming uncomfortable with his ex-lover's rather aggressive sexual advances and tells Els that his keys are inside the locked barn, she manipulatively informs him where the key is to open said barn even though she knows that he will ultimately receive the shock of a lifetime upon entering the building. Naturally, Luc is petrified to find what is imprisoned inside the dilapidated old barn, but his curiosity gets the best of him and he decides to go in, thus resulting in him being attacked by a violent retarded child wearing a helmet. Indeed, while the retarded child is attached to his back and clawing at his body like a rabid cat, Luc runs out of the barn and screams to his brother for help.

As it turns out, Luc and Els have been hiding out in Belgium because they are ashamed of their rather vicious and completely unpredictable retarded son Thomas, who is kept in the mattress-padded barn at all times because he is dangerous to both himself and everyone that he comes in contact with. After sarcastically stating, "Are you happy now?" to his brother after locking Thomas back in his room, Ad warns Luc to never go near the barn again, but of course the protagonist refuses to abide and becomes obsessed with the feral boy, who acts and is treated like a wild animal. The next morning, Luc spies on Els singing "happy birthday" to Thomas, who has a balloon attached to his helmet, while Ad stares with a face of disgust and contempt and complains regarding the pointlessness of singing to the obscenely retarded lad, "He doesn't understand it anyway." When Luc eventually reveals himself by singing along with Els, Ad yells "sod off" and shuts the barn door. At this point, Luc agrees to leave but tells Ad that Thomas has his keys, which the child likes to jingle as a sort of infantile toy. In the process of attempting to get the keys from his son, Ad is bitten and Thomas manages to flee the barn, so the three adults split up and go looking for the feral boy. Ultimately, Luc finds Thomas and Ad eventually catches up with the two. When Luc bitches to Ad that he should not hit Thomas because he thinks that the boy "has the right to respect," his brother accuses him of being typically arrogant and tells him he has no idea what he is talking about and then reveals that the only way that the feral boy can be calmed down is by being hit, which he readily demonstrates. After going on a rant about how Els' parents are

worthless trash, Ad reveals to his brother that Thomas is mentally defective as a result of being born prematurely and that the nurse recommended that he be institutionalized at birth. Hoping that Els would stay with a sloppy and obscenely overweight slob of a beta bitch like himself, perennial cuckold Ad agreed to devote his life to raising Thomas in secrecy. After Ad yells at him, "Sod off. Fuck off, get lost" and "I never want to see you again," Luc finally decides to leave but while driving back he soon has a change of heart and turns around. As the film will soon reveal, Luc should have taken Ad's advice and left permanently, as he has yet to learn the worst family secret of all.

It should be noted that *With Great Joy* was made as a part of the 2001 'No More Heroes' series produced by the production company Motel Films where five different talented young Dutch novice filmmakers were given the opportunity to direct a feature-length film depicting "individuals who consciously turn their backs on society." Aside from Lodewijk Crijns' film, the other cinematic works that were produced as part of the series are mostly similarly high quality dark and foreboding films and include Martin Koolhoven's *Amnesia* (2001), Nanouk Leopold's *Îles flottantes* (2001), Michiel van Jaarsveld's *Drift* (2001), and Norbert ter Hall's *Monte Carlo* (2001). Notably, like Koolhoven with *Amnesia*, *With Great Joy* is unequivocally Crijns' darkest and most idiosyncratic work and certainly a true black sheep in his otherwise hopelessly modern and overly sleekly stylized oeuvre (indeed, even Crijns' ostensibly darkly themed made-for-TV movie *Loverboy* (2003), which deals with the fairly serious topic of Arab men tricking underage white Dutch girls into prostitution, is not all that serious and is plagued by sensational pop culture garbage), thus leading me to suspect that the limitations that are forced upon a filmmaker that is involved with a theme based film series can sometimes have fairly positive results. Somewhat curiously but not completely surprisingly considering the rest of his work, Crijns is apparently not that big of a fan of *With Great Joy*, as he prefers making comedies. It should also be noted that the film was shot by Jooſt van Gelder, who acted as the cinematographer of a number of early Aryan Kaganof masterpieces, including *Kyodai Makes the Big Time* (1992), *The Mozart Bird* (1993), *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers* (1994), *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* (1996), and *Naar de klote!* (1996) aka *Wasted!*, as well as van Jaarsveld's *Drift* and Erik de Bruyn's Dutch cult classic *Wilde mossels* (2000) aka *Wild Mussels*. Considering that the filmmaker's most popular works *Jesus Is a Palestinian* and *Only Decent People* have extremely artificial aesthetics that seem like they were made for people with ADD and scream MTV, one must certainly credit cinematographer van Gelder for the decidedly dark and dreary look of *With Great Joy*, which certainly does not resemble any of Crijns' other films.

Not surprisingly considering its strange, unsettling, and oftentimes genuinely unpredictable storyline, *With Great Joy* would earn Crijns and his co-writer

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Kim van Kooten a Golden Calf—the Dutch equivalent of an Oscar—for best screenplay (the film was also nominated for ‘Best Film’ and the ‘Dutch Film Critics Award’). Ultimately, Crijns’ film is a distinctly dejecting tale of shame and guilt that indubitably features one of the most patently pathetic characters in film history as almost immaculately personified by Jack Wouterse as the less than jolly fat man Ad, who bears the shame of self-cuckoldry, among other things that I will not mention because they will surely spoil the film for those that have yet to see it. Of course, as a beautiful yet dysgenic woman with trashy worthless parents and a meta-retarded son, Els is also a rather rare but important film character that offers a sort of warning to men that marrying and/or reproducing with a white trash woman can come at a particularly high price that could haunt you for the rest of your life. Indeed, I know of a kind old man of Irish stock who made the genetically tragic mistake of mating with a woman with tainted genetics and siring a half-retarded son of the deleteriously sexually promiscuous sort who while working as a truck driver produced about thirty different bastard brood around the country. Of course, not only was this proud Irish-American man’s entire bloodline irrevocably ruined, but his degenerate descendants also spread like cancer as is typical of unintelligent untermenschen who have no problem breeding children they cannot feed. Luckily, it is dubious at best that a wild child like the one featured in *With Great Joy* would ever get the opportunity to reproduce. With its unique combination of dark and tragic family melodrama and unconventional arthouse approach to horror and thriller genres, Crijns’ film is like a seemingly unlikely aesthetic marriage of Douglas Sirk and Rainer Werner Fassbinder with David Lynch and David Cronenberg, albeit with a hint of Walloon master auteur André Delvaux (*Un Soir, un Train* aka *One Night... a Train, Belle*) thrown in for good measure. If you’re looking to see a rare film that, in stark contrast to sentimental Hollywood movies like *Nell* (1994) and independent films like *Mockingbird Don’t Sing* (2001), depicts a retarded feral person in a no bullshit and genuinely horrifying way, you will probably not find a film as provocative as *With Great Joy* which, unlike even Werner Herzog’s *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* (1974) aka *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* and especially François Truffaut’s *L’Enfant sauvage* (1970) aka *The Wild Child*, does not leave the viewer with even the faintest sense of solace in the end.

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Lodewijk Crijns (2003)

While few people, especially the culture-distorting parasites that run the mainstream media and governments, are willing to recognize it in any meaningful way (after all, they are some of the foremost proponents of the dissolution of true white manhood), white Nordic Western European men have become so patently pathetic and emasculated that they allow hip-hop-loving and Muhammadan-idolizing illegal aliens from the third world to not only rape and sexually abuse, but also prostitute and enslave their underage daughters and sisters when they should be hanging these swarthy animals from lampposts in the streets. Notably, one of the main reasons the innately impotent Greater Manchester Police failed to swiftly arrest and prosecute the inbred Paki pedophiles that were involved in the gang-raping, drugging, and sexual enslavement of poor white British teens during the so-called 'Rochdale sex trafficking gang' scandal despite knowing about it for years was because these cowardly cuckold cops were deathly afraid that they would be labeled "racist" if they brought these rat-like cousin-copulating thugs to justice. Of course, as the made-for-TV Dutch film *Loverboy* (2003) directed by Lodewijk Crijns (*Lap rouge, Met grote blijdschap* aka *With Great Joy*) and penned by arthouse screenwriter turned TV hack Jacqueline Epskamp (who most notably wrote the script for *Drift* (2001) aka *Adrift* directed by Michiel van Jaarsveld) demonstrates in a somewhat curious and almost shockingly sanitized way that totally downplays the severity of the situation, scheming Islamo-pimps that con white proletarian girls into becoming servile sex slaves are not just a menace to not-so-jolly England. Featuring decidedly debasing rap and histrionic R&B noise, mind numbingly vulgar MTV-esque pop kitsch aesthetics and editing, superlatively soulless soap opera style romance and melodrama, and an eclectic collection of miscegenation-celebrating lumpenproles from various (and oftentimes indiscernible) racial backgrounds, this conspicuously cheap and equally tasteless film is something I would typically not touch with a ten foot pole, but I appreciate much of director Crijns' work and wanted to see how he would approach such a taboo multicultural issue. Indeed, in his innately iconoclastic debut feature *Jezus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus Is a Palestinian*, Crijns made a marvelous mockery of spiritually retarded white xenophiles that become enslaved to trendy Asian religions, as well as other pathetic contemporary European trends like government-sanctioned euthanasia, neo-primitivism, and post-counter-cultural sexual degeneracy. Additionally, in his most commercially successful feature *Alleen maar nette mensen* (2012) aka *Only Decent People*, the auteur revealed the spectacular hypocrisy and closeted racism of Amsterdam's Jewish liberal bourgeoisie community, as well as the social and sexual chaos of the Dutch city's blossoming government-subsidized negro population. In *Loverboy*, Crijns demonstrates in a culturally cringe-inducing fashion how

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poor white girls that live in so-called 'multicultural' ghettos are very susceptible to the perniciously predatory tactics of maliciously misogynistic camel jockeys, who see European women as nothing more than cheap whores who deserve to be used and abused yet at the same time remind them of their own inferiority and racial schizophrenia (indeed, not unlike red-black-and-green 'back to Africa' negroes, these Arab untermenschen hate Europeans and European kultur and everything it stands for, yet cannot help but lust after blond women).

17-year-old blonde high school girl Denise (Monique van der Werff) is like a lot of poor white girls her age in that she is a fatherless bastard who lives in a virtually totally non-white ghetto in the South Holland capital city of the Hague where the only men are coffee-colored deadbeats and criminals and where many of the girls around her wear towels on their head because their Muslim men seem to have an irrational fear of women and sex. Not surprisingly, every single one of Denise's friends is either a negro, Arab, or some sort of racially dubious 'mystery meat,' but like the protagonist, they are all brainwashed by the whore pop (pseudo)culture that is propagated by the American Hebrew gatekeepers of Hollywood and MTV. Naturally, the group's virtual theme song is "Bootylicious" by the yank jigaboo trio Destiny's Child, though it seems Denise has a special affinity for blonde white sluts with assumedly crusty crotches like Madonna, Britney Spears, and vaguely busty pseudo-Latina Christina Aguilera. As demonstrated by the fact that she regularly stares at music videos featuring generically handsome pop singers embracing seemingly lecherous ladies like an erotically entranced automaton, Denise dreams of finding a tall, dark, and handsome mensch that will swing her off her feet and make her swoon with romantic joy of the rather raunchy negrified sort yet such ostensibly magical men only seem to exist in the fictional music video realm, but luckily fate has serious plans for the protagonist that involve the sort of man that seems like the kind of guy she has always dreamed of. Unbeknownst to Denise, a so-called 'loverboy'—a superficially and psychopathically charming pimp that tricks unwitting teens into thinking that he is their boyfriend so as to groom them into becoming prostitutes—that looks somewhat like a backup dancer from some sort of deplorable mainstream music video has been fanatically stalking her and keeping track of her every move and he knows exactly what to say to her to lure her in and eventually make her his pussy-peddling infidel slave.

Like all loverboys, Michael (played by Dragan Bakema, who is actually of Serbian extraction) is an audaciously arrogant Muslim Arab of Moroccan extraction whose smooth charm betrays his superlatively swarthy appearance and scumbag hip-hop style. When Denise and her collection of multicultural friends get in trouble at a fancy department store for trying on various pieces of clothing that they have no real intention of buying, Michael magically saves the day by appearing out of nowhere, pretending to be the protagonist's boyfriend by kissing her on the lips and calling her "honey," and even buying her an expensive dress that

she previously would have never dreamed of owning. Needless to say, Denise, who is obsessed with finding a romantic boyfriend that attends to her every need without even having to be asked, is immediately hooked and wastes no time calling Michael immediately after he gives her his phone number under the pretense of being able to reach him if she wants to return the dress that he has bought her. As Denise proudly tells her pregnant sister regarding Michael, "When I saw him, I knew everything would change." Of course, everything will indeed change for the exceedingly naive protagonist, though she has no clue that it will involve routinely peddling her puss to effeminate middle-aged Arab businessmen and unkempt lowlife slobs that look like they crawled out of a sewer in New Delhi. As an ostensibly flashy dresser that drives a Mercedes Cabrio convertible and can easily gain her entry into fancy high-class parties and movie premieres that are attended by the sort of rich and famous white people that the decidedly dumb blonde would typically never dream of encounter in real-life, Michael initially seems like nothing short of a true dream lover to Denise. In fact, when Michael takes Denise on a romantic houseboat and she asks him, "Have you got anything? I don't have any condoms," he acts like quite the sensitive gentleman and pretends he is not just merely interested in her ass, less than sincerely replying, "Such a hurry. A present that's wrapped so beautifully. I think I should leave it wrapped a bit longer." Of course, by the next morning, Michael has pounded Denise's pussy in the houseboat. Naturally, Michael's next move after defiling her is to turn into a full blown pussy-peddler, but first he makes sure to give her the misleading gift of a cellphone with a new number so that he can always keep track of her.

Although he has only known her for a day or two, Michael begins immediately serenading Denise with bullshit lines like, "Nobody can love someone as much as I love you," which the protagonist believes because she is brainwashed by the antics of pseudo-blonde whores like Madonna and thinks that merely fucking a man will cause him to fall in love with her. After all, according to MTV and countless Hebraic specialists, love and sex are interchangeable, thus it is no surprise that Denise suffers from such a pathetic delusion, which is only transcended by her anti-reality belief that Arab men make great lovers and that interracial relationships have high success rates. Ultimately, Michael uses the excuse that he owes 5,000 Euros to a friend and that he might have to leave the country if Denise does not help him by fucking his comrade. Indeed, apparently Michael's towelhead homey Aziz (Walid Benmbarek) is willing to defer payment for three weeks if Denise allows herself to be debased by him. While Denise initially becomes angry with her loverboy's extra dubious request, she gives in by the next day after Michael shows up to her school and surprises her with a tacky fake gold necklace that he probably stole from one of his street whores. When Denise arrives at Aziz's apartment, he turns on ugly Arab noise and begins sweet talking her in Arabic. Notably, after Denise somewhat bitchily

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informs him that she does not speak Arabic, Aziz absurdly replies, "A shame, it's the language of love" and then equally absurdly adds, "I respect you a lot." To add insult to injury, Michael tells Denise he loves her even more than the day just after his best brown bud Aziz buggers her while she is washing the venomous Arab sex juices off her perennially defiled body. From there, Michael brings Denise to fancy movie premieres where she briefly gets to meet Dutch leading man Tygo Gernandt of Aryan Kaganof's *Naar de klote!* (1996) aka *Wasted!* and Pieter Kuijpers' *Van God Los* (2003) aka *Godforsaken!* and naturally the young white lumpenprole falls in love with the glamorous lifestyle, so she becomes less hesitant about selling her relatively fresh teenage gash for cash. Indeed, when Denise makes a couple hundred Euros from an Arab man by simply undressing him, she also falls in love with the easy money, but the glamour and, in turn, interracial pseudo-romance, does not last long when the reality of the rather unsavory situations finally becomes apparent to the protagonist.

Despite his fancy fast car and suave 'thug chic' clothing, Michael is a dead-beat bum that squats in a small dilapidated apartment in a dirty ghetto with his brother, though he promises Denise that he will soon buy her a lavish apartment in Amsterdam that they both will supposedly live in together. Meanwhile, Denise's mother attempts to get her to move back home after discovering that her daughter is 'dating' a greasy smooth-talking Arab, but Denise hates having to babysit her retarded aunt and is jealous of her pregnant sister, so she would rather live the life of a hooker than return to her worrying family. While Denise initially offers her sensual services to high dollar johns, she soon becomes a low-level gutter streetwalker who learns the tricks of the trade from a negress named Naomi (Monita Mac Intosh). Of course, as a street hooker, Denise is involved in a number of degrading situations, including being bugged by a bearded middle-aged dirtbag in his car while the john's large dog watches on from the backseat of the car. Meanwhile, in an absurdly improbable plot twist that demonstrates that both the director and screenwriter are fairly naive when it comes to Arab sexual slave-drivers, psychopath Michael somehow genuinely falls in love with Denise and, to the chagrin of his all the more thuggish towelhead buddies, begins becoming fairly overprotective of her, especially when it comes to the kind of guys she sells her body to. Towards the end of the film, Michael's pernicious pimp pal Lorenzo (Bulgarian-born actor Philip Rachid) even has to put a knife to his face after he dares to get in a heated argument with him over Denise's safety. It is only when Michael's scorned ex-prostitute/ex-slave (Tara Elders of Theo van Gogh's *06/05* (2004) aka *May 6th*) randomly shows up out of the blue and completely exposes the Moroccan pimp for who he really is while Denise is selling her adolescent ass that the protagonist finally comes to fully realize that her shit-skinned beau tricked her into degenerating into a gutter gold-digger and that all of his romantic gestures were no more authentic as his supposed identity as a 'Dutchman.' After talking to Julia, Denise learns that Michael promised

her all the same things as he did to her, including buying her an apartment in Amsterdam. In the end, Denise goes back to live with her family, but Michael will not let her forget him, as he has a friend slice open her face with a razor upon unexpectedly driving by her apartment complex shortly after she leaves him. While Denise is left with a large scar on her face that she will probably have for the rest of her life, at least she does not get acid thrown in her face like so many stupid white European girls that date Arabs and other swarthy untermenschen like naive Brit Katie Piper, who fell victim to a uniquely ugly ex-lover with a dubious racial background, only to get with another shit-skinned fellow and even eventually having a Café au lait colored mongrel baby with him not long after getting a series of reconstructive surgeries. Of course, one can only assume the protagonist of *Loverboy* did not learn her lesson and will continue to date mongrel miscreants, but then again, no self-respecting white man would ever have any interest in her due to her less than respectable personal history.

While *Loverboy* was somewhat popular in its native land of the Netherlands, it is very doubtful that the film will ever be elsewhere, as it unfortunately features tons of mainstream pop music and clips from music videos that would make the work impossible to release in other countries due to how expensive the music rights would be. Notably, the film features a decidedly aesthetically deplorable montage where the protagonist and her pimp are horsing around in a jacuzzi full of bubbles inter-spliced with scenes from the official music video directed by Swedish director-cum-drummer Jonas Åkerlund (Spun, Horsemen) for the 2000 Madonna song "Music." Indubitably, despite its virtually unendurable audio-visual vulgarity, this seemingly retarded montage is fairly successful in articulating the sort of moral and psychological damage that is caused to a young girl who was weaned on a steady diet of MTV and kitschy mainstream pop music. Of course, the sad and pathetic reality of the protagonist's life is in stark contrast to Madonna's video, which depicts the guido whore as a sort of 'queen of the night' and opulent Dionysian diva that wildly parties with friends in a limousine, which is fittingly driven by kosher neo-vaudevillian comedian Sacha Baron Cohen while portraying his rather repugnant wigger rapper alter-ego, Ali G. Aside from the fact that the culture-distorting international tribe that Cohen belongs to is almost solely responsible for defecating out the sort of shockingly mediocre pop music and miscegenation-promoting anti-mores that the protagonist of Crijns' film mindlessly adopts, the female lead of *Loverboy* more or less parrots everything that Madonna, who is arguably the most powerful and successful prostitute in all of human history, does in the music video, yet she ultimately leads a tragically debasing life of prostitution where her only reward is mindless hedonism. In a cleverly and darkly cynical way that brings new meaning to the putrid pop singer's words, the protagonist and her pimp's relationship is pretty much summed up in Madonna's song where she almost sinisterly sings, "Music makes the people come together...Music mix the bour-

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geoisie and the rebel” (of course, the latter part of the lyrics should be changed to “Music mix the white woman and Arab pimp”). If anything, Crijns’ film downplays the loverboy phenomenon so as to presumably make it more accessible to brain dead teenage girls that want to see a love story and vicariously experience the deranged fantasy of being fucked by a primitive Arab thug. Perhaps most shockingly, *Loverboy* dares to make the brown slave master seem somewhat sympathetic by portraying him as a victim of his own backward culture and religion. While watching the film, I was certainly reminded of French Nouvelle Droite theorist Guillaume Faye’s remark in his book *Sexe et Dévoiement* (2011) aka *Sex and Deviance*, “Among certain Muslim men one notices a strange mixture of prudishness and sexual obsession which is typical of schizophrenic neurosis. This pathology is even more marked among them than among the Christian Puritans. Statistics on the ethnic origin of rapists and sex criminals in the broad sense would speak for themselves—if they were published honestly.”

Unfortunately, *Loverboy* does not dare to depict the more depraved behavior that these pseudo-macho savage pimps engage in like brutal gang rapes (though it is alluded to that Michael’s friends will “break in” the protagonist if he does not turn her into a whore fast enough), drugging (which includes getting girls hooked on heroin so that they become perennial slaves to their Muslim masters), and even murder, among countless other deplorable things that have absolutely no place in the Occidental world. As also mentioned in Faye’s book, “Women [...] are legally and socially more ill-treated today in North Africa and the Middle East than under European colonialism,” yet the medieval savagery of the Arab world is now being imported to Western Europe via the ‘soft genocide’ known as multiculturalism, which, as the steadily dying indigenous populations and insidiously expanding melanin-privileged populations, clearly demonstrates, can only end in racial and cultural chaos as most modern Western cities reveal. Of course, MTV and related Zionist propaganda entities will continue to plop out morally bankrupt xenophilic vomit to guarantee that incoming generations of Europid youth will be too hopelessly jaded, debased, culturally and spiritually retarded, and illiterate to resist their globalist master plan. While important in the sense that it is one of only a handful of films that deals with the tragic and seemingly unfathomable multicultural plague of the sexual enslavement of teenage girls by Arab parasites, *Loverboy* ultimately reveals one of many very sickening side effects of a much more malefic problem that has to do with the intentional third worldization of Europa by anti-European globalists and their white traitor politician whores. In its somewhat cleverly ironical use of MTV aesthetics and spastic editing, Crijns’ work is ultimately not too different from the prosaic pop (pseudo)culture dribble that it negatively portrays, thus its greatest strength is ultimately also its greatest weakness as a work that wallows in the same sort of reckless wantonness and vapid style(lessness) it unwaveringly mocks. Of course, if *Loverboy* saved just one single white Dutch girl from

falling prey to a misogynistic Moroccan parasite with a serious inferiority complex and racially schizophrenic mindset, it is already infinitely culturally more important than all of the Hollywood films released in 2003 combined, even if it is by no means a decent film. After all, I doubt anyone could make any sort of legitimate argument that contemporary Hollywood has contributed anything of sincere value to the Occident.

-Ty E

ONLY DECENT PEOPLE
ONLY DECENT PEOPLE

Lodewijk Crijns (2012)

I am not exactly sure of his exact cultural or ethnic background, but Dutch filmmaker Lodewijk Crijns (*Met grote blijdschap* aka *With Great Joy*, *Kankerlijers* aka *YOLO: You Only Live Once*) certainly stands out in the Netherlands for making rather racially-charged works of the somewhat dubious and uniquely artistically unmerited sort that are quite accessible to mainstream audiences, as if the filmmaker was trained at the same scatological Semitic film school as the Weitz brothers of *American Pie* fame. Indeed, with his first feature *Jesus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus Is a Palestinian*, Crijns not only made a mockery of trendy cults run by megalomaniacs but also the absurdly 'multicultural' nature of the contemporary Netherlands, which is beginning to resemble a third world sewer in various urban parts. In his made-for-TV movie *Loverboy* (2003), Crijns dared to portray the taboo subject of Moroccan 'loverboys,' who seduce young and naive white Dutch girls and force them into sex slavery. Undoubtedly, the director's most controversial yet commercially successful work to date is *Alleen maar nette mensen* (2012) aka *Only Decent People*, which is based on the 2009 best-selling novel of the same name by negrophiliac Dutch Israelite Robert Vuijsje (who notably received death threats due to his novel) and which was the second most popular film in the Netherlands in 2012 as a work that won the coveted 'Gouden Film' (a dubious award that more or less reduces the value of a film to its commercial success as opposed to artistic merit). Were the film not based on a book written by a Hebrew who is married to a negress, it is quite doubtful it would have ever been made, as it is an innately scathing cinematic work that wallows in rather raunchy racial stereotypes, especially of the Jew and negro oriented sort, with the latter group being depicted in such an unflattering, if not oftentimes realistic, way that one might as well describe *Only Decent People* as a sort of post-Jolson neo-minstrel show. It should be noted that Jew-Negro 'solidarity' is nothing new in the Netherlands as demonstrated by the fact that Sephardic Jewish filmmaker Pim de la Parra directed the first Surinamese film, *Wan Pipel* (1976) aka *One People*, which depicts a bizarre love triangle between a Afro-Surinamese man, Dutch dame, and Hindi chick. As mentioned in passing in *Only Decent People*, most of the blacks that live in the Netherlands today are Afro-Surinamese since the South American nation of Suriname used to be a Dutch colony and many of these blacks speak Dutch and feel that the Netherlands owes them something since their ancestors were slaves. What makes Crijns' film vaguely intriguing is that it is about Black-Jew relations as opposed to the stereotypical Black-White relations, thus depicting a somewhat absurdist scenario where two different groups with their own very different sets of victim mentalities express their undying hostility for one another, but also their mutual resentment for the white Aryan Dutch.

As a work about a super swarthy and short young bourgeois Dutch Jew from the upper-middleclass section of Amsterdam who dumps his longtime bitchy Jewess of a girlfriend so that he can realize his dubious dream of procuring a 'ghetto fabulous' negress with a big ass, equally big tits, gold teeth, and the cultural sophistication of the typical Detroit welfare queen, Crijns' film has naturally caused much controversy in and outside of the Netherlands, with everyone from militant black nationalists to mainstream neo-liberal pansies to Zionist Jews condemning the film, as if such a retarded work were worthy of such eclectic attention. Indeed, *Only Decent People* is the height of aesthetic asininity and pre-packaged Hebraic Hollywood-esque humor, but at least it dares to depict Jews and negroes as something other than the imaginary morally superior virtual angels that they are oftentimes portrayed as in mainstream movies and television shows in the United States. Indeed, Crijns' film depicts a world where all people are the same in the sense that they all consider themselves superior to other groups, with the Dutch Jews thinking they are superior to all other peoples, including the real white Dutch, and the Afro-Surinamese thinking they are superior to other types of blacks like Antillean and Ghanaian negroes. Somewhat fitting for a conspicuously contrived work that lacks even the slightest inkling of artistic merit and was funded by various Jewish sources (including the Abraham Tuschinski Fund), *Only Decent People* features next to nil actual indigenous white Dutch people and is instead set in a sort of absurdist hyperrealist 'allochtoon' nightmare realm where all the less than flattering stereotypes about negroes and Jews that whites hope to ignore are cinematically projectile vomited into their face in what is ultimately a true celluloid disgrace that demonstrates that the Dutch are now paying dearly for their colonial roots and contemporary liberal approach to so-called multiculturalism, among other things. With the film's gratuitous sex scenes featuring so-called 'thick' (translation: overweight) ghetto negresses and special emphasis on the fiercely fetishistic miscegenation-based fantasies of a philistine Jew that looks more like a Mexican Mestizo than a member of the same kosher cosmopolitan tribe as Trotsky and Spielberg, *Only Decent People* ultimately offers a more eclectically repugnant experience than any of the films of Russian artsploitation filmmakers like Andrey Iskanov and Svetlana Baskova, albeit with none of the marginal artistic merit.

Like the author of the book of the same name that the film is based on, *Only Decent People* protagonist David Samuels (played by Geza Weisz, who is the son of Dutch Jewish filmmaker Frans Weisz of *Naakt over de schutting* (1973) aka *Naked Over the Fence* fame) is a bourgeois Hebrew with a soft spot for big black ghetto booties who narcissistically sport gold necklaces with their names on them. David lives in the nice respectable area of Amsterdam Old South which his overweight mother Judith (played by auteur Alex van Warmerdam's wife Annet Malherbe) describes as a place where "only decent people" live, hence the ironical title of the film. Due to being fairly short and swarthy (not to mention

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the fact he dresses like a would-be-thug), David is oftentimes mistaken for being a Moroccan and thus always wears a Star of David necklace, or as he complains upon being mistaken for an Arab shoplifter by a super Aryan-looking blond male store clerk, "The Dutch can't tell a Jew apart from a Moroccan. Or a Turk from a Moroccan. In the eyes of Dutch people, they're all foreigners." While David has had a happy relationship with his Jewish girlfriend Naomi (Sigrid ten Napel) for over seven years, his voracious thirst for fatty dark meat is beginning to become uncontrollable and he does not care if he brings great shame to his fellow Jews by starting a raunchy romance with a ghetto negress with multiple bastard kids. As the son of a half-Jewish father named Bram (played by real-life half-Jew Jeroen Krabbé) who is the proud "editor-in-chief of the only decent current affairs show on national TV" and who looks down on lesser sophisticated "textile Jews" like the protagonist's girlfriend's family, David ultimately brings the ultimate shame to his hyper hypocritical neo-liberal Hebrew community. Luckily for the protagonist, his oh-so-proper family members are too weak and phony to take any real action against his sexually aberrant tendencies, at least at first.

After offending his girlfriend Naomi by faking an orgasm because he is no longer aroused by her small kosher derriere, David abruptly decides to break things off with his beloved and begins hunting for a sizable dark diva, though she must be a spade sista' who has never been with a non-negro before as he wants to be the first Hebrew to hump her. In his search for a spade babe, David calls the sole negro he knows, Reginaldo, and tells him regarding what kind of woman he is looking for, "For me, she has to be as dark as possible. The darker she is, the closer she'll be to nature." Rather absurdly, David's black buddy is repulsed by dark dames and only dates blonde babes, stating of black women, "They've got hard, rough faces." Ultimately, David finds a stereotypical black beastess named Rowanda (Imanuelle Grives) at a club and hits on her by proclaiming that you "can't trust the Dutch," as the protagonist rightly believes that he will find common ground with her in their assumed mutual hatred of white blond Aryans. Not unlike the majority of black people living in the Netherlands, Rowanda is Afro-Surinamese and like of her relatives, she resents Jews as is especially apparent with her mother Janine (Urmie Plein), who states to the protagonist, "In Suriname, there are also Jews who think they're the boss [...] The Dutch owe a lot to Afro-Surinamese black people because of slavery." As David remarks via narration regarding the similar victim mentality that both blacks and Jews have, "Negroes think of slavery every day. Besides negroes, nobody thinks of slavery. Jews think of World War II every day. Besides Jews, nobody thinks of World War II." In a rather bizarre scene that demonstrates David's delusional arrogance, the protagonist infuriates Janine by arguing that the holocaust was worse than centuries of black enslavement, as if some of the most heinous merchants during the African slave trades, not to mention top mass murderers of the 20th-century, were not Jewish. Somewhat absurdly, Rowanda's younger

brother blames the fact that he, his sister, and most other Afro-Surinamese negroes have bastard kids on the fact that, "...my ancestors were separated from their families during slavery." While Rowanda and her relatives trash talk on Jews and virtually every other race and culture, David mostly takes it like a little bitch aside from on the one occasion where he attempts to deflect Jewish guilt for the African slave trades by arguing that the holocaust was worse than slavery. Indeed, like most miscegenators, David is willing to go to great masochistic extremes to be with his 'African queen,' but he soon learns that, as a pampered Israelite from Amsterdam's most posh neighborhood, he is not quite fit to live the ghetto negro lifestyle.

Rowanda incessantly tells David she doesn't like "stingy men," which really means that she expects any man that is screwing her to buy her whatever she wants. When David does not last long the first time they 'make love,' Rowanda complains, "You don't last long. You're stingy," but the protagonist does not mind as he ridiculously believes that he is in love and even tells his parents such. Indeed, David describes having sex with a black woman as being like "another sport" in comparison to spoiled Jewish girls who, as the protagonist's ex-girlfriend demonstrates at the beginning of the film, just lay dead during coitus as if they are a corpse. When Rowanda comes to his mother's conspicuously kosher birthday party, things end badly after the protagonist's father Bram asks the black gal what her father does for a living. Like most members of the global African community, Rowanda is a fatherless bastard and she is so offended by Bram's seemingly banal everyday question that she pathetically attempts to criticize him for owning and reading so many books, thus revealing her inferiority complex in the presence of an ostensibly sophisticated Jewish intellectual. Ultimately, David's romance with Rowanda goes sour when he begins hanging out with her 'pimp' cousin Ryan (played by a rapper named 'Negativ'), who mocks the Jewboy for partaking in cunnilingus ("Men don't do that. We do not do oral sex. It's humiliating") and monogamy. Needless to say, when Ryan hooks David up with a low-class Antillean negress named Alessandra and Rowanda catches her kosher beau dancing with the dark dame at a club, all hell breaks loose. After assaulting Alessandra in a slapstick-oriented ghetto booty brawl, Rowanda slaps the shit out of David and screams at him, "You're the opposite of a bounty, a white man who hangs out with blacks too much. You copy all their bad habits. At least, you know what to expect from a negro. You're much more dangerous. I thought you had respect for me." Naturally, Rowanda tells David to go fuck himself and Ryan assures him that he will help him to find more big black butts. Of course, as fairly gentle Jew-boy David soon learns, his pathetic kosher libido is no match for Ryan's mandingo negro sexual virility.

When David comes home after his fight with Rowanda, he is surprised to find his father and his friends in the company of a young well groomed negress named Rita (Belinda van der Stoep) who apparently has an internship at Bram's

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network and is studying Eastern European immigration to the Netherlands. As a hardcore fan of ghetto fabulous negresses, David is rather offended by what he sees as Rita flushing her culture down his father's kosher toilet and more or less accuses her of being a sell-out 'Uncle Tom.' David also rightly describes Bram and his Jewish friends' conversation as being nothing more than "neo-liberal, armchair socialist talk" after listening to the old liberal Jews regurgitate rubbish about Israel that they probably heard Jonathan Stuart Leibowitz (aka 'Jon Stewart') pontificate about on The Daily Show. In fact, David gets so agitated by the entire scenario that he accuses his father of being a phony half-Jew and then declares in a manner that makes him sound like some sort of militant post-Irgun Zio-gangster suffering from a bad case of wishful thinking, "Dutch Jews think Israelis are barbarians who treat the Palestinians in a brutal manner. But the Israelis think Dutch Jews are sissies. If they had lived in Germany during World War II...they would have taught those Germans a lesson. They would have turned the entire Germany into one barren field. The holocaust would have never happened. Amsterdam would have been crawling with Jews at the moment. And the embalmed body of Adolf Hitler would have been a trophy in the Jewish Historic Museum with queues as long as for the Anne Frank House." As David later tells his father, he is offended that he treated Rowanda like untermensch scum while fawning over Rita just because she is a negress who can speak and dress properly. Of course, little does David realize that Rita is the perfect negress for him.

While hanging out with Rowanda's cousin Ryan, David gets into all sorts of degeneracy, including getting in a threesome in a storage closet with a random fat black single mother with fake blonde hair while the revoltingly wanton woman's young son looks on while licking a lollipop in his stroller (notably, the protagonist receives a blow job from the black broad). After deciding to opt out of a quasi-homoerotic orgy involving one ratchet-faced black anti-beauty, Ryan, a sleazy scrawny wigger, a towering black dude with large bitch-tits, and a violent gangster thug that seems to be suffering a perennial temper tantrum, David attempts to catch a taxi and is robbed and beaten by the gypsy driver and his equally swarthy friend for refusing to pay an absurdly inflated rate to get back to Old South. When David's ex-girlfriend's friend Esther spots the protagonist talking to black teenage mothers at a local hospital where she works as a nurse, news get around the Jewish community that he is a depraved degenerate surreptitiously spreading his semitic seed among Amsterdam's underage Afro-Surinamese rabble. Ultimately, David's father tells him enough is enough, kicks him out of the house, and tells him he cannot move back until he registers for college. Indeed, David is such a loser that all he has to do to avoid sleeping in a gutter is to register for college classes that his parents will gladly pay for, but he is just too damn stupid and lazy to accomplish such a simple feat. After attempting to get back with Rowanda and nearly having his cock cut off by her

and her two brothers in what would have surely been a less than kosher second circumcision, David becomes desperate and attempts to get back with his Jewish princess Naomi, but when he walks in her room he finds his Jewish best friend performing cunnilingus on her kosher cunt, thus confirming Ryan's belief that eating pussy is for bitches. After hitting rock bottom, David is forced to take a lowly job at KFC which he rather enjoys since he constantly gets to see big black booties since it is a fried chicken fast-food joint and all. While working one day, David bumps into his dad's black intern Rita and the protagonist is shocked to see that she is dressed just like Rowanda and even sports a similar gold necklace with the name "Sherida" on it. As the young black professional explains, Sherida is her real name and "Rita" is her "Dutch" name that she used to help land her a job. When Rita leaves, David is quite enthralled to find that the dark diva has written her phone number on a napkin for him. In the end, negrophiliac Jew David gets both brains and booty, thus confirming that sometimes 'love conquers all,' even when between a tiny Israelite and a negress twice his size.

Ironically, despite the almost unanimous agreement among the Dutch media that the film was racist, *Only Decent People* was not only a huge hit in the Netherlands, but also in Suriname where it was completely sold out the first week after its premiere, thus indicating that the average lumpenprole negro probably prefers seeing their race presented as a bunch of pimps and hoers rather than in the sort of phony way Hollywood depicts blacks, as if every negro child has the potential to be a Nobel Peace Prize winner or rocket scientist. Personally, I found the film to be an exceedingly grotesque experience that transcended the average Japanese Pinku eiga in terms of vulgarity and human depravity, as a sort of all-too-flashy Dutch equivalent to a Todd Solondz movie, albeit nowhere near as cleverly and brilliantly depraved in the sort of idiosyncratic autistic-neurotic Hebraic way that the *Welcome to the Dollhouse* (1995) director is best known for. Indeed, had director Lodewijk Crijns exercised the sort of debauched 'subtly' that Solondz has demonstrated with his works, he probably would not have received such a public outcry from *Only Decent People*, but then again the film probably would not have been such a great commercial success as the scandal it caused certainly lured the lemmings to the theaters. Certainly, I have no doubt in my mind that Crijns' film would be a huge hit in the United States if it were remade in English, as it is not only tasteless enough to appease the American filmgoer, but also features a more honest look at race that most yanks would love to see but are denied by Hebraic agitpropandists in Hollywood who thrive on mocking whites whilst basking in their own Jewishness (after all, who has ever seen a Seth Rogen or Jonah Hill flick were they don't incessantly allude to their horrid Hebraicness?!). While I respect the fact that Crijns' film unequivocally demonstrates that foreigners, including rich Jews that have been there for hundreds of years, have no true loyalty to the Netherlands and resent indigenous

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white Dutch people, *Only Decent People* reeks of MTV anti-aesthetic retardation of the ADD oriented sort and thus should be watched with caution lest the viewer contract spiritual syphilis. Ultimately, the film is a sort of satirical take on the age-old phrase 'Once you go black, you never go back,' which, depending on the viewer, obviously can be interpreted in many different ways. Indeed, my girlfriend and I interpreted *Only Decent People* as a sort of warped cautionary tale, though I would be lying if I did not admit that I find the idea of a romance between a turd-sized Jew-boy and gigantic ghetto fabulous negress to be an innately hilarious prospect that would surely sire superlatively racially schizophrenic progeny as the life of black-Jewish white nationalist terrorist Leo Felton attests to.

-Ty E

CLEAN, SHAVEN

Lodge Kerrigan (1993)

After viewing *Clean, Shaven*, the 1993 film directed by Lodge Kerrigan, I found myself concluding a psychological experience of abstraction. Like Harmony Korine's *Julien Donkey-boy*, *Clean, Shaven* realizes a more honest view of schizophrenia. Hollywood has given us soft and friendly views via Ronald Howard's *A Beautiful Mind*. *Clean, Shaven* pertains to viewers interested in a film that doesn't distance the viewer from the pain of the schizophrenic. This lack of distancing from the viewer and the general subject of schizophrenia, accomplishes more in film and viewer interaction.

Kerrigan unquestionably took cues from David Lynch with his utilization of ambient sound and its interaction with image. Sound plays a very significant part in the film's success of creating a world of delusion, confusion and paranoia. Many scenes rely on auditory dissonance with a combination of noir style lighting and small town decay. These three things set the emotional atmosphere for the film.

Instead of relying on quick-cuts often found in most contemporary films to create emotion, *Clean, Shaven's* obsession of the shot creates a world of unrelenting experience. The viewer is forced and driven into mandatory pain. By not giving into quick-cuts, the film traps the viewer in the moment. Quick-cuts allow the viewers to be aware of what they are supposed to feel emotionally but fall short of doing it naturally.

For fans of gore and body counts, *Clean, Shaven* also takes the unconventional route. The film contains such scenes as the body of a naked, rotted little girl and fingernail amputation. Both scenes are presented to the audience in precise detail and virtual authenticity. Even the most seasoned exploitation fans might find themselves unable to deal with these realistic scenarios of depravation.

No task of the schizophrenic protagonist seems to be simple in *Clean, Shaven*. As the viewer, you also find yourself subject to these mental inconsistencies. Nothing ever seems to be in place and every moment seems to be unpredictable. Although the film has a consistent plot, the real reward lies in the experience. You won't find yourself much different in the end.

I believe *Clean, Shaven* to be a worthy experience for anyone interested in looking into the mind of a schizophrenic. At the end of the film you will be more engrossed than entertained. Good films do that for us. *Clean, Shaven* is evidence that you don't have to settle for a happy schizophrenic. They aren't fun anyways.

-Ty E

CLAIRE DOLAN
CLAIRE DOLAN

Lodge Kerrigan (1998)

While it might sound like a crock of shit to most men (and women), I can say unequivocally that I would never under any circumstances voluntarily fuck a prostitute and there is a number of reasons for this, though it is mainly because I find few things less arousing than the prospect of penetrating an internally necrotic mess that has literally set a specific price to smash her overly used and abused gash. Additionally, when it comes to vaginas, there is no fun in being able to open a lock that can be unlocked with any key. On the other hand, I have developed a certain unexpected and misplaced (and probably delusional) empathy for these forsaken women, mainly due to my chronic cinephilia and affinity for filmmakers that have bravely tackled the subject in various ways, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Paul Morrissey, Paul Verhoeven, Walerian Borowczyk, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Federico Fellini, Andy Milligan, and Frank Henenlotter, among countless other examples. In fact, when it comes to streetwalkers in cinema, I think I have a pretty eclectic understanding of the subject and do not feel like I am being even remotely hyperbolic when I declare that Claire Dolan (1998) directed by underrated American auteur Lodge Kerrigan (Clean, Shaven, Keane) is indubitably one of the most intimately brutal, nuanced, and tightly constructed of these taboo-driven studies in carnal (self)degradation. In short, while the film might depict various sex acts and nudity, it is about as sexy as the prospect of masturbating with sandpaper or reusing a used semen-and-menstrual-blood-soaked condom, as Kerrigan's film is an unconventionally humanistic neo-Bressonian experiment in the slow-burning despoilment of the soul as a strangely foreboding cinematic work where the viewer is forced to confront the fact that being a whore is more of a metaphysical affliction than a simple urban black market trade. As far as I am concerned, fucking a pussy-peddler is something akin to spiritual necrophilia, or so one might assume if they are fully willing to embrace Kerrigan's keenly cold yet somehow strikingly empathetic and understated quasi-realist celluloid nightmare.

Undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing aspects of Claire Dolan is that the titular anti-heroine makes the valiant attempt to transform herself into her archetypal opposite by going from being a prostitute to a mother. As he detailed in his classic text *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*, suicidally self-loathing Viennese chosenite Otto Weininger regarded the dichotomous psychological extremes of femininity as being divided between the mother and the prostitute types, or as he wrote, "The fact that motherhood and prostitution are polar opposites can probably be gleaned from the simple observation that good housewives and mothers have more children, while the cocotte never has more than a few, and the streetwalker is mostly sterile. It must be noted that the type of the prostitute includes not only women who sell themselves,

but also many so-called nice girls and married women, some of whom never commit adultery not because the circumstances are not favorable, but because they themselves do not allow things to reach that point. Therefore no exception should be taken to my using the term 'prostitute,' which is yet to be analyzed, in a much broader sense than that of women who sell themselves. The streetwalker is distinguished from the more prestigious cocotte and the more genteel hetaera only by an absolute lack of differentiation and a total absence of memory, which makes her live from one hour to the next or one minute to the next, without the slightest connection between one day and another. Moreover, the prostitute type could manifest itself even if there were only one man and one woman in the world, because it expresses itself in a specific kind of behavior toward a male individual." In short, despite her aspirations towards motherhood, the film's lead is and will always be a sort of spiritual prostitute, thus her rather ambitious efforts at rehabilitation are ultimately in vain, or so her baby-daddy concludes just before kicking her to the curb while she is still pregnant. Indeed, while the pussy-peddler does in fact manage to fill her womb with cum that leads to life, the mensch that plants the seeds ultimately decides to leave her after coming to terms with the harsh reality that she is a whore and will always be a whore whether she is peddling her meat curtain or pretending to be a proper housewife. In that sense, Claire Dolan is not the sort of film that would be deeply appreciated by the sapless sort of people that use pc terms like "sex workers" as it is a rather harsh and emotionally brutal film that unequivocally demonstrates that prostitutes are by no means typical women, but tragically damaged goods that no man—no matter how kind or well meaning—can ever hope to 'save.' For better or worse, the film follows Bresson's cinematic dictum, "Neither beautify nor uglify. Do not denature," though it gets pretty organically ugly.

Claire Dolan (English mischling Jewess Katrin Cartlidge, who previously worked with Mike Leigh and Lars von Trier, in what is indubitably the greatest performance of her fairly respectable career, which was tragically cut short when she died in 2002 at the premature age of 41) is a slightly swarthy Dublin-bred whore that is wise enough to peddle her puss to white collar corporate types instead of negro dope dealers, but she seems to loathe everything about her rather lonely life. Throughout the film, the viewer discovers bits and pieces about Claire's dubious past, but it seems her sole reason for existing now is to pay off a hefty debt that she owes to a pimp named Roland Cain (Colm Meaney)—a stereotypical red-faced, curly-red-haired, and alcohol-addled mick bastard—who was 'kind' enough to pay for her dying mother's expensive nursing home and medical bills. Not surprisingly, Claire decides to quit her trade when her mother drops dead and ultimately decides to betray her employer by running away and starting a new life in Newark, New Jersey as a lowly hairstylist. Needless to say, mad mick Roland hunts Claire down and forces her back into selling her gash for cash again during what proves to be a somewhat inauspicious point in her life.

CLAIRE DOLAN

While Claire initially meekly abides and slavishly gets back into the loose-coat game, things become complicated when she meets and ultimately falls in love with a sloppy and somewhat neurotic taxi-driver named Elton Garrett (Vincent D'Onofrio in one of the many underrated and largely unseen performances of his rather singular acting career) who treats her a whole lot better than a blowup doll. In fact, not long after meeting, Elton reveals his keen sensitivity and strong altruistic sense of intimacy by performing cunnilingus on Claire, so naturally she is somewhat freaked out when a john attempts the same thing a couple days later and thus further compounds her rather schizophrenic sense of sexuality. As demonstrated by a scene where she angrily kicks out a man that she had a soulless one-night-stand with, Claire has a lot of pent of (self)hatred, confusion, and anxiety when it comes to sex, yet Elton manages to completely change that, at least momentarily. Undoubtedly an emotionally battered beta-male of sorts that seems to have a pathological compulsion to try to save forsaken women, Elton even opts to stay with Claire after discovering that she is a prostitute and is on prescription drugs to treat STDs, though he is certainly painfully self-conscious about the situation like any half-sane self-respecting man would be. Of course, to settle for such a damaged woman who literally cucks him for cash, Elton has to be an extremely wounded individual himself, which is probably, at least partially, the result of being a divorced father that only gets to see his adolescent daughter every once in a while. Indeed, if Claire and Elton have anything in common, it is that they are both decidedly debased and degraded virtual human-punching-bags that have mostly lived their lives serving others while failing to take of themselves in the process. Naturally, you cannot help people that do not want to help themselves, but Elton tries and almost immediately begins giving Claire money to pay off her debt to Roland. When Claire stoically declares to Elton on a rooftop, "I want to have a child" and he simply replies, "Are you sure?," she demonstrates her seriousness by responding with the utmost stoicism, "Yes. We can make it work." Naturally, as a relationship involving two terribly emotionally damaged individuals, it does not work, but Claire at least gets the baby, which was obviously her main motivation. Indeed, while she loses her mother at the beginning of the film, Claire still manages to continue the so-called 'circle of life' by creating a (bastard) child of her own.

Right from the get-go of the film when we are first introduced to Claire as she attempts to flirt with a nameless/faceless john on a payphone, it is immediately apparent that, on top of selling both her sex and soul, she lies for a living. Indeed, aside from pretending to enjoy having sex with strange men and dressing in a slutty way that she clearly does not enjoy, Claire spends her free time telling potential johns over the phone with a monotone dispassionate voice things like, "I wanna be with you. I can be at your hotel in ten minutes [...] I want you to fuck me." In fact, Claire has such a decidedly degraded and depressing essence that it is a surprise that any man would want to fuck her lest they succumb to the

emasculating shame of erectile dysfunction. In fact, Claire looks like she is more aroused at the prospect at castrating men than engaging in coitus with them. Of course, Claire is also not a particularly pulchritudinous pussy-peddler as she looks like she could be the emo big sister of Anne Frank and not like the sort of overtly lecherous chick that has a talent for downing Brobdingnagian dicks or engaging in the art of double penetration, but of course that is why she might appeal to certain strange men. In fact, Claire is sometimes stalked by sadists and degenerates that seem attracted to the special brand of degradation that she practically radiates. Luckily, Claire has managed to project a rough exterior. For example, when a young ugly hood approaches her at a diner and reveals his intent to sexually defile her, Claire emasculates the man by audaciously replying that she would prefer banging his friend because he is "better looking." Of course, Claire's 'tough bitch' routine is nothing but a carefully crafted act and she is just like everyone else in the sense that she desires to be loved, hence her attraction to the inordinate sensitivity of Elton. While Claire certainly gets to exploit her talent for extra wanton female wiles, she is also incapable of using classic feminine weapons, including the exploitation of the stereotype of female weakness, or as Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "The Strength of the Weak.—Women are all skillful in exaggerating their weaknesses, indeed they are inventive in weaknesses, so as to seem quite fragile ornaments to which even a grain of dust does harm; their existence is meant to bring home to man's mind his coarseness, and to appeal to his conscience. They thus defend themselves against the strong and all 'rights of might.'" Not only does Claire work in a deleterious trade of the flesh that involves her customers, who technically engage in a crime or two just to procure her services, leaving their consciences at home, but she also cannot afford to show weakness as it could get her raped or even killed, or so the film hints in its rather unflattering depiction of everyday bipedal sidewalk scum.

Undoubtedly, out of the three main characters of the film, mick pimp Roland—a man that unquestionably personifies everything that I find repugnant about the stereotypical Irish phenotype—is, in many ways, the most magnetic yet understatedly monstrous. While the viewer does not learn much about Roland aside from the fact that he is a proud traditional family man and that he uses a bourgeois bar as a sort of front/hang-out for his prestigious slut-slinging enterprise, the viewer is exposed to the imperative little detail that he has actually known Claire every since she was just a wee little girl, thus making his relationship with her seem all the more sick and morbid. As hinted by a random photograph that appears in the film, Claire's mother seems to have been friends with Roland and was probably also one of his whores in the past, hence why he was probably helping to foot her hospital bills. Despite their deep-rooted history together, Claire seems to both deeply hate and fear Roland, hence her rather sneaky failed initial attempt to escape his wrath. Needless to say, Roland can be pretty emotionally brutal to the anti-heroine as demonstrated by rather rude remarks to her like,

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“You’re looking worn, Claire. How many years do you think you got left? Two, maybe three? What are you going to do when you start falling apart? Push your pussy on the street for 20 bucks a pop? You’re not a new girl.” Still, at the same time, Roland is a completely practical man that willing to honor a deal and freely releases Claire from her bondage when she finally manages to pay off her hefty debt. Needless to say, Roland has very little faith that Claire could excel at anything aside from peddling heir puss, but she is fanatically determined to prove him otherwise. While Roland certainly gives Claire some tough lessons about life, he ultimately provides poor hopeless sap Elton with the greatest lesson and gives some harsh yet true insights about life that seem to completely change his worldview, at least on the highly personalized level. Indeed, when Elton randomly approaches him in an aggressive fashion at his bar, Roland hits him in the family jewels and then angrily states whilst grabbing him in a rather painful position, “I don’t like to repeat myself, so listen carefully. She may have paid me off, but she’ll never quit. I’ve known Claire since she was 12-years-old and I knew then what I know now—that deep inside, she’s a whore. She was born a whore . . . she’ll die a whore.” After kicking his ass and doing his nice little perennial whore spiel, Roland, who is not an unreasonable man, proceeds to act friendly toward Elton by giving him some whisky and leaving him with the following thought, “I know it’s hard, but try to accept what I told you. You’ll have a happier life and be a better person for it. It’s time you started looking after yourself. You’re not a little boy anymore.” Undoubtedly, had Roland not kicked his ass, Elton might have been made the biggest mistake of his life and settled down with a woman that seems to have a different STD every other week.

While Roland clearly knows next to nothing about Elton, he, like any good pimp, is a highly intuitive individual and can clearly sense that he’s a broken emotional cripple that has the unfortunate self-destructive compulsion to want to help other broken emotional cripples, hence his dubious love for a godforsaken second-hand Sue like Claire. While it is immediately apparent after he discovers that Claire is a prostitute that he is extremely bothered by her curious choice of trade and that he should not be involved in such a decidedly deleterious and clearly foredoomed relationship, Elton is clearly a victim of his own low self-esteem and misplaced empathy. In short, getting the shit beat out him by a pimp was probably the best thing that ever happened to Elton as he probably would have lacked the testicular fortitude to break up with Claire otherwise. At the very end of the film, it is revealed that Elton ultimately made the right choice as he ended up with a much cleaner and ladylike woman. Indeed, in the very last sequence of the film, Elton is depicted a couple years later randomly running into Roland while he is with his new extremely nice pregnant blonde wife Madeline. Notably, Roland states to Elton in regard to kids, “It’s the best thing that’ll ever happen to you. It changes everything. You can’t stop with one! You gotta keep on having them.” When Elton’s wife asks how he knows her husband, Roland

somewhat humorously states, "We knew each other years ago in another life. It's funny how time passes." Of course, it is doubtful that Elton's wife knows that he has a bastard son with Claire. Of course, as the bastard son of a whore, Claire and Roland's son probably has a good chance of growing up to be a rent boy, tranny freak, druggie, and/or some other sort of irredeemable urban concrete-pounding degenerate. Additionally, even if Elton had not left Claire, their love affair would have undoubtedly been doomed to failure as it was built on extreme doubt and lies. After all, as Weininger once wrote when describing the mother and prostitute archetypes, "Whether a woman will meet a man who can make her the mother of his child through his mere presence is a matter of chance. To that extent it is imaginable that the destinies of many mothers and prostitutes could have turned out the opposite of what they have actually become. On the other hand, there are not only countless examples of women remaining true to the type of the mother even without such a man, but there are also doubtless cases in which this man does present himself and even his presence fails to prevent the woman from finally and irrevocably turning to prostitution." In a sense, Elton acts as a sort of 'emotional prostitute' to Claire to the point of providing her with what she wants most but cannot seem to acquire: a child. Of course, Elton completely lacked the strength and sense to transform Claire into a real 'mother,' but then again even sub-literate rappers and gang-bangers know that you cannot turn a whore into a housewife.

As a sort of unintentional connoisseur of call-girl cinema of all sorts and someone with an interest in perversity and abnormal psychology in general, among other things, I do not feel I am committing puffery when I say that Claire Dolan is unequivocally one of the greatest and most effortlessly emotionally grueling depictions of a pussy-peddler ever committed to celluloid. Indeed, while there are a number of films ranging from Federico Fellini's early classic *The Nights of Cabiria* (1957) to Andy Milligan's gritty classic exploitation piece *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973) to Ken Russell's weirdly high-camp *Crimes of Passion* (1984) to Mike Figgis' endearingly pathetic *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) that depict the seeming incapacity of prostitutes to find real lasting love or even simple emotional connections, Kerrigan's underrated film is arguably more effective than any other cinematic work of the same sort in that it manages to intimately communicate the almost intolerably grating emotions associated with such abject romantic forsakenness. In that sense, the film is quite comparable to Kerrigan's equally potent debut feature *Clean, Shaven* (1994) in terms of its gratingly viscerally authentic approach to the virtually never good, very bad, and uniquely ugly reality of living with a sort of metaphysical affliction. Also, like the director's debut, Claire Dolan mostly shies away from any overt political subtexts aside from a mostly superficial critique of the evils of capitalism, though it could arguably be interpreted as left-wing or right-wing. Undoubtedly, the film's fairly obvious theme of capitalistic degradation is pretty much summed up when a random

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John acts inordinately empathetic towards Claire and makes the heartfelt speech just before, rather ironically, defiling her frail body, "It's ok. I understand. I used to do a lot of things for money. Things that I hated. Things that got inside me and tore me up, but I learned to push it away and seal it off. The worst part—the thing that I kept coming back to—was that I couldn't completely understand how I got into those positions. I couldn't figure out what it was inside me that allowed me to accept those things. For years, I thought I was different from everybody—in a bad way. I had no one to turn to, to get myself straight. It took me years to realize that I wasn't a freak. There are a lot of people out there that do things that tear them up—that they hate. Do you understand what I mean? Just try not to think about it." Like Iranian auteur Sohrab Shahid Saless' hard ghetto West German epic *Utopia* (1983)—a similarly painfully raw and gritty yet slightly less intimate portrait of pussy-peddling—the film cuts sharply into the soul with an acidic pathos-laced knife as wielded by the most forlorn of female fuck machines; or, tears of (anti)eros.

In the eyes of left-wing Nietzschean Georges Bataille, virtually all women have the capacity to be capitalists of the cunt that see their pussy as always having a very specific price, or as the degenerate frog once wrote, "Not every woman is a potential prostitute, but prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude. In so far as she is attractive, a woman is a prey to men's desire. Unless she refuses completely because she is determined to remain chaste, the question is at what price and under what circumstances will she yield. But if the conditions are fulfilled she always offers herself as an object. Prostitution proper only brings in a commercial element. By the care she lavishes on her toilet, by the concern she has for her beauty set off by her adornment, a woman regards herself as an object always trying to attract men's attention. Similarly if she strips naked she reveals the object of a man's desire, an individual and particular object to be prized." Of course, the great irony of Claire Dolan is that it is only through the very same prostitution that led to her personal debasement that the titular twat acquires her freedom and capacity for motherhood. Indeed, in a sick semitic sort of way, Claire owes her sense of personal sovereignty to selling her cunt to be used as a virtual all-purpose public porta-potty. On the other hand, Bataille believed that "Prostitution seems to have been simply a complement to marriage in the first place." Still, Bataille—an unhinged mensch that married a Jewess at a time when it was less than vogue who seemed to fetish things simply because they were sick and repellent, including eggs-in-pussies and human sacrifice, among other things—might as well have been summing up the metaphysical employment resume of Claire when he wrote, "The lowest kind of prostitute has fallen as far as she can go. She might be no less indifferent to the taboo than animals are except that because what she knows about taboos is that others observe them, she cannot attain an absolute indifference; not only has she fallen but she knows she has. She knows she is a human being. Even

if she is not ashamed of it, she does know that she lives like a pig.” After all, she does not seem all that terribly shocked when her special savior Elton eventually leaves her, but she probably first and foremost wanted him to knock her up, thus he arguably becomes the exploited whore in the end yet he still greatly pays for it, at least both emotionally and monetarily speaking. In short, Claire Dolan contains the relatively simple but extremely imperative message that one should not dip their dick in a dirty dasher dame’s dearest bodily part lest they seek cuckoldry and extreme emasculation, among other obscenely odious things.

According to Weininger, “The prostitute is very different. She at least lives her own life fully, even if—in extreme cases—she is punished for this by being excluded from society. Rather than being brave as the mother is, she is a coward through and through, but she always possesses the correlative of cowardice, which is impudence, and thus she is at least brazenly shameless.” Of course, the same could be said of artists, especially good ones. In fact, somewhat ironically, Weininger argues that prostitutes share much in common with great men/leaders of history—another obsession of artists—arguing, “The unique phenomenon of the great man of action has always had a powerful attraction for artists in particular (but also for philosophical writers). The surprising unanimity displayed in this respect will perhaps make it easier to approach the phenomenon by means of conceptual analysis. Mark Antony (Caesar) and Cleopatra are not altogether unlike each other. Initially, most people will probably regard this parallel as quite fanciful, and yet the existence of a close analogy seems to me to be beyond any doubt, however different the two persons may at first sight appear. The ‘great man of action’ renounces any inner life in order to express himself (the term is appropriate here) fully in the external world, and to suffer the fate of everything that expires, rather than achieving the permanence of everything that is internalized. He tosses his whole value behind him and keeps it at arm’s length with all his might. Similarly, the great prostitute flings the value that she would be able to obtain from being a mother into the face of society, not in order to take stock of herself and to embark on life of contemplation, but in order to give completely free rein to her sensual urges. Both the great prostitute and the great tribune are like firebrands which, when lit, illuminate vast expanses, pile corpses on corpses as they pass, and fade out like meteors, without contributing anything worthwhile and meaningful to human wisdom, without leaving anything permanent behind, without any sign of eternity—while the mother and the genius quietly work for the future. Both the prostitute and the tribune, therefore, are perceived as ‘scourges of God,’ as anti-moral phenomena.” Of course, this would explain why prostitutes, not unlike great men, are among the most intriguing and intricate female characters of cinema history, just as archetypal mothers tend to be the most banal and one-dimensional. Certainly, Peter O’Toole’s performance as a great man in David Lean’s *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) has something particularly whorish and wonderfully immoral about it. By dedicating himself to

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the melancholy and even morose life and times of a walking and talking sex object, auteur Kerrigan, despite his modernist art fag cred and his fairly young age at the time of directing the film, reveals himself to be a timeless artist with a knack for depicting ancient perennial archetypes in a relatively idiosyncratic fashion. Needless to say, I think I would rather enjoy seeing Kerrigan directing a film about a historical great man, though I think he is probably more fit for making a film about Nietzsche or even SS-Oberführer Oskar Dirlewanger.

It is undoubtedly fitting and even somewhat ironic that one of Kerrigan's greatest cinematic achievements is a film about the metaphysical perils of prostitution as he has, rather unfortunately, been forced to spend the greater portion of his somewhat uneven filmmaking career prostituting himself out to projects that are surely beneath him. Indeed, aside from the singularly artistically tragic bad luck he suffered when his fully finished feature *In God's Hands* starring Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard was scrapped in 2002 due to what the director described as "technical issues with the negative" as a result of some insipid retard destroying it in a lab, Kerrigan has spent most of the 2010s directing episodes for lame and/or generic TV series like *Homeland* (2012, Episode: "State of Independence"), *Longmire* (2013, Episode: "Carcasses"), *Bates Motel* (2014; Episode: "Caleb"), and Starz' patently pointless TV adaptation of Steven Soderbergh's pretentious turd *The Girlfriend Experience* (2009), among various other examples. On the other hand, it does make some sense that the auteur would tackle *The Girlfriend Experience* (2016-current), which was just renewed for a second season and which he is once again co-writing and co-directing in collaboration with vaguely attractive Mumblecore veteran Amy Seimetz. Aside from his TV work, Kerrigan also directed the French-American co-production *Rebecca H. (Return to the Dogs)* (2010)—a French-language flick about a crazy frog bitch that supposedly wants to be Jefferson Airplane singer Grace Slick—though the film seems to be impossible to find (as far as I know, it has never been released in any home media format) and it has received mostly terrible views, which is no surprise considering it contains a particularly preposterous premise that seems inconsistent with the director's previous cinematic efforts. Still, Kerrigan's first three features—*Clean*, *Shaven*, *Claire Dolan*, and *Keane*—are good enough to secure Kerrigan's place in cinema history as one of the most underrated and uncompromising American auteurs that has ever lived. As Ingmar Bergman revealed with his covertly spiritually autobiographical film *Ansiktet* (1958) aka *The Magician*, the life of an artist can sometimes be more degrading than a whore. In his fairly favorable 3.5 out of 4 star review of *Claire Dolan*, Roger Ebert concludes with the following somewhat humorous sentences, "I think Claire Dolan will make a good mother. I think she can make it work. Not with Elton, but by herself, which is the only way she can live and not have to lie." Of course, as the film subtly hints, Claire's mother was probably a whore too that was responsible for turning her daughter onto prostitution so she's prob-

ably somewhat ill-equipped to be a mother, not to mention the fact that being fatherless is one of the biggest prerequisites for failure and criminality in life (as a childless celebrity that settled on an overweight and unattractive, I sincerely doubt that Ebert knew much about women). Indeed, I can only feel sorry for the kid but then I am reminded of Nietzsche's quote, "Where are thy greatest dangers?—in pity." Speaking of Nietzsche, who may have owed his break with sanity to syphilis that he obtained from a whore, he was certainly onto something when he wrote, "Praise in Choice.—The artist chooses his subjects; that is his mode of praising," though I think in Kerrigan's case it is more about empathy. Undoubtedly an acutely sensitive empath, Kerrigan has revealed an inordinate love and affection for the trash and rabble of society that is almost Christly in character. In that sense, Claire Dolan is Kerrigan's tribute to Mary Magdalene, but of course the auteur does not have any use for the Virgin Mary.

-Ty E

THE INCREDIBLE HULK
THE INCREDIBLE HULK

Louis Leterrier* (2008)

Regardless of what other reviewers have to say, that is entirely their opinion and I respect that, but after seeing this film, I must say that most of their gripes are wrong. After seeing Iron Man in theaters, I must admit I was blown away. The sheer gimmicky comic feel it had was enough to have me jumping in my seat. Hell, the local homeless man bought a \$500 dollar gift card (True Story) just so he could return to every showing. There is no doubt that Marvel Studios had created something beautiful which could have been disastrous. When the dust settled from the release of Oscar-winner Ang Lee's visioning of the comic, people realized how much that movie sucked. Some of us were a little late on that train, but in the end, no one was happy with it. 5 years later, Marvel is back with a reenactment of a visioning. This time, It stars Edward Norton, and that was all you had to say. Women flock to the actor. Hell, he even made skinheads sexy. So how does this fare after reading several horrible reviews? It kicked hard ass. The idea opens up with a collage of images showing the incident, his escape, and his pain. This sequence saves us from what could have been a 30 - 40 minute plot point scene. Already on the right track. The Incredible Hulk is one of those purely action-packed films where I can't and won't give rid of the surprises that await for any comic book fan. Familiar faces and names such as Tony Stark, Nick Fury, Lou Ferrigno, and Samuel Stern appear, paving way for a beautiful sequel which we all know will be amazing. Louis Leterrier is a director that some of us can appreciate. He has given us The Transporter (Which was great) and a shoddy sequel to The Transporter as well as a useless kung-fu crime film (Unleashed) This is a return to his action roots. The final battle might be the most satisfying clashing of titans ever to grace to big screen. The said films with titles such as VS. (Alien VS. Predator / Freddy VS. Jason) do not deserve such a title. This film is all about humiliation and revenge on Blonsky's part. Expect some somber scenes with Norton which explains his anguish and lack of human companionship. The acting as a whole is partially amazing. In the trailer, It showed Blonsky getting kicked and flying back in an incredibly fake way. I guess the director browses iMDB forums and updated this with an incredibly hilarious approach to breaking every bone in his body. I can imagine nit-picking on CGI, but not in this film. Everything looks stunning and fleshy. The Incredible Hulk is a reboot that works in a big way. As Ty E put it himself, It's a commercial for another commercial. As in, a sequel machine that churns out comic film after film with tie-in's and cameo's galore! But isn't that what us comic book fans want? An Incredible film that captures destruction well with signature moves from the hit game The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction. You shouldn't be disappointed.

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LACOMBE, LUCIEN

Louis Malle (1974)

With my recent viewing and somewhat surprised enjoyment of his soothingly somber suicide masterpiece *Le feu follet* (1963) aka *The Fire Within*, I decided checkout some more works directed by famed frog filmmaker Louis Malle (*Les Amants* aka *The Lovers*, *My Dinner with Andre*), whose works I find to be either hit or miss, not to mention oftentimes obscenely overrated, thus leading me to the admittedly quite masterful French-West German-Italian co-production *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974). Notable for being one of the first French films to deal with the subject of collaboration with the Gestapo during the Second World War in a fairly serious and reasonably objective non-partisan fashion, Malle's nearly 140-minute wartime epic depicts the fast rise and equally swift fall of a seemingly half-retarded 17-year-old peasant boy as played by a real-life peasant boy who joins the *Milice française*—a blackshirted paramilitary force created on January 30, 1943 by the Vichy regime that fought and hunted down members of the resistance—after he is rejected by the resistance, only to fall hopelessly in love with a conspicuously cultivated blonde-haired and blue-eyed Parisian Jewess that is hiding out in a decrepit apartment with her wealthy yet wimpy tailor father and sassy non-French-speaking grandma. Co-penned by half-Hebraic Nobel Prize winning novelist Patrick Modiano—a man whose Sephardic Jewish father curiously regularly hung around with the Gestapo during the Vichy era after most Parisian Jews had already been sent to concentration camps—and directed by an avowed left-wing filmmaker and philo-Semite who went out of his way to mock the dissident far-right paramilitary organization OAS in his masterpiece *The Fire Within*, *Lacombe, Lucien* is, relatively speaking, a fairly objective work for its kind as a film that never would or could be made today in ultra-philo-Semitic frogland and that, somewhat shockingly, hardly ever succumbs to vomit-worthy sermonizing, hence why the film was considered controversial and even offensive by some, including Judaic agitpropagandist Marcel Ophüls (who apparently bitched about the film to Malle's brother), upon its release. Originally entitled *Le faucon* aka *The Falcon* and set in present-day Mexico, Malle's work might not be the classic it is today were it not for the fact that the filmmaker was unable to film in Mexico, as the director and his kosher co-writer were forced to rethink and rework the entire film as a result, ultimately making it infinitely more provocative by setting it in one of France's most infamously disgraceful periods in history as a once great empire that found themselves to be the groveling cuckold of their perennial enemy, the Teutons. Featuring an ambiguous antihero who despite his rather low IQ and brazenly boorish behavior is fairly unpredictable and morally anomalous, *Lacombe, Lucien* stars a "real-life Provençal farm boy" named Pierre-Marc Blaise who originally worked as a woodcutter and was chosen over 1,000 other prospective actors despite the fact that he had never acted in

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his entire life. As the son of a rich industrialist, Malle certainly demonstrates in the film his seeming love-hate intrigue for anti-intellectual peasants who are one with the earth and nature and always rely on their instincts over their intellect, as the eponymous lead (the title is in reference to the bureaucratic 'fascist' way the protagonist introduces himself) is a sort of half-man/half-beast who is in his element in the wild but becomes a coldblooded killer and borderline psychopath when given power over other people by the Gestapo.

It is June 1944 Vichy France and Lucien Lacombe (Pierre Blaise) is a black-haired 17-year-old boy from the small southwestern French village of Souleillac who lives a remarkably mundane life involving mopping floors at a Catholic retirement home in between senselessly killing cute songbirds with his slingshot, shooting wild game, and plucking chicken, which he kills with a karate chop to the neck. While Lucien's father is in a POW camp, his mother takes it upon herself to start an affair with her boss and rents their family home out to a rather dirty sub-peasant family with a dozen or so small half-clothed children, so the protagonist decides he wants to join the resistance and brings the local leader, a seemingly pompous school teacher named Robert Peyssac (Jean Bousquet) that is known as 'Lieutenant Voltaire' by his comrades, a dead rabbit as a gift in the hopes of letting him join, but he is told that he is "too young" and that "the underground is not like poaching." While riding his bike back to the old folk's home late one night, Lucien spots a fancy hotel called 'Hotel Des Grottes' where a wild party is raging on and before he knows it, the protagonist is busted for snooping around the place and taken inside. Hotel Des Grottes is local headquarters for the so-called 'German police' aka Milice française and Lucien is accused of spying and roaming around outside after Nazi-ordained curfew, but when he recognizes and compliments the bartender Henri Aubert (Pierre Decazes)—a somewhat effete ex-professional cyclist with a beer belly who he saw win a race in 1939 in Caussade—the French collaborators decide he is harmless and begin plying him with alcohol to see if he knows anything about the local resistance. Before he knows it, Lucien is thoroughly intoxicated and ratting out Monsieur Peyssac aka 'Lieutenant Voltaire'—the mensch who rejected the protagonist's plea to join the resistance—to the frog Gestapo. Lucien is so ignorant about politics, that he tells the German police that Peyssac is purportedly a Freemason and then asks them, "What's a Freemason?," which causes them all to chuckle. After Lucien runs his mouth, Peyssac is arrested and tortured, but that protagonist does not seem too concerned, as the German police give him a job and he ultimately becomes their youngest, and certainly one of their most ruthless, members.

Before he knows it, Lucien becomes a stoic soldier and coldblooded killer who is willing to do any and everything he is told, as he finds most of the work to be fun, even hunting rabbits while engaging in gun battles with members of the resistance, and seems to have no idea of the moral or political magnitude of

his actions. Indeed, the protagonist loves his job as it gives him power over members of the upper-classes and the job pays fairly well, not to mention the fact that it features a fairly generous benefit package that includes, among other things, “war loot” (valuables taken from enemies) and a unending flow of expensive hard liquor and aged wine. Indeed, Lucien has no idea how good and cultivated the wine he is drinking, but his comrades let him know. Lucien is taken under the wing of a charming yet seemingly psychopathic opportunistic aristocrat named Jean-Bernard de Voisins (Stéphane Bouy) who owns a gentle giant of a cow-colored Great Dane and who dates a slutty redhead hack actress named Betty Beaulieu (Loumi Iacobesco). Among other things, Betty gets a narcissistic sense of joy out of giving Lucien an autographed photo of herself and loves running her mouth about the most pointless and shallow things, even openly remarking in front of her blueblood beau and his comrades how she thinks British Jewish actor Leslie Howard, himself an anti-Nazi propagandist who died under dubious circumstances in 1943, is more attractive than Frenchmen. Jean-Bernard is all in it for the money and power as demonstrated by the fact that he sells forged papers to a disgraced wealthy Jewish tailor of the Yiddish-speaking sort named Albert Horn (Austrian-Swedish Bergman actor Holger Löwenadler)—a disillusioned fellow that has broken by the war and spends most of his time lying around in a fancy robe—who lives with his elderly non-French-speaking mother (German Jewish actress Therese Giehse, who Malle dedicated his 1975 work *Black Moon* to) and a beautiful Paris-born blonde daughter symbolically named ‘France’ (Aurore Clément of Wim Wenders’ *Paris, Texas* (1984)). While Lucien initially begins a romantic relationship with a peasant girl with a lazy eye named Marie that works as a maid at German police headquarters, he more or less falls in love with France at first sight. Needless to say, cultivated Jew Albert Horn is not happy when a borderline retarded low-class fascist goy cop begins regularly hounding his dainty daughter, who is a piano prodigy of sorts who blew her chance at going to a conservatory because she had fallen in love with a boy. Indeed, commie killer by day, Lucien soon finds himself in an inexplicable situation at night while attempting to vie for the attention and affection of a Jewess by bringing her and her family various gifts, including flowers, expensive wine, jewelry (or what the protagonist calls “war loot”), cash and other scarce items that they could not get otherwise. Due to his lack of manners, poor and oftentimes strange manner of speech (France is perplexed by the fact that Lucien constantly calls her “my dear” despite the fact he does not even know her), and overall lack of sophistication, France oftentimes finds herself laughing at Lucien, but he will ultimately have the last laugh after managing to get in her kosher panties.

Aside from a staunch and insanely idealistic Hitlerite named Faure (René Bouloc)—a bitter and less than educated fellow who believes Jews breed like rats (any self-respecting anti-Semite knows that the Jewish population rarely

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grows)—virtually none of the members of the German police really believe in the National Socialist cause, with a smooth-talking negro bartender named Hippolyte (Pierre Saintons) even being among their ranks. While the boss of the group, Inspector Tonin (Jean Rougerie), became a member of the German police after being fired from the regular French police in 1936 for being an “undesirable,” Jean-Bernard joined up because he is an unscrupulous opportunist who is willing to do whatever it takes to maintain his distinguished life of aristocratic luxury. Protagonist Lucien more or less unwittingly joined up, but it does not take him long to realize he enjoyed the power and privilege it afforded him as a lowly peasant who got to humiliate and persecute the bourgeois class that he felt humiliated and persecuted him (rather revealingly, Lucien oftentimes says to his enemies, “I don’t like people talking down to me”). Using his easy-to-abuse power as a kraut-backed cop, Lucien somewhat absurdly threatens to take Monsieur Horn to the Gestapo if he refuses to allow him to take his daughter France to a dance party at fascist headquarters, stating, “If France does not come, I’ll take you to my friends...and some of my friends are not too fond of Jews.” To protect her father, France goes against his wishes and goes with Lucien to the decadent Gestapo dance, but problems arise when the protagonist’s date dances with other men because he does not know how to dance. After his comrade Jean-Bernard reveals that he is leaving for Spain and remarks in reference to France, “Some Jewish girls are so very beautiful...They make other women look like old hags. I had a Jewish fiancée once. Incredibly stacked and very rich,” Lucien gets extremely enraged and manhandles his friend Aubert for dancing with his date. After Lucien forces her out of the dance hall in a rough fashion and breaks the heel of one of her shoes in the process, France plays peacemaker and says to him, “It’s a shame you can’t dance...I’ll teach you” and begins slow-dancing with him, but their would-be-romantic moment does not last long because the protagonist’s exceedingly jealous hotheaded maid girlfriend Marie sees them, yells, “Filthy Jew! They all have syphilis,” and threatens to tell the Germans about the Jewess. While Marie is being restrained, France runs upstairs and hides in a bathroom where she sobs hysterically in the dark. Of course, Lucien eventually finds her there and comforts her by rubbing her hair. After crying “I’m tired of being a Jew,” the two begin kissing and ultimately make love. Indeed, a cultivated Jewess finds herself engaged in coitus with a borderline retarded farm-boy, but such are the strange and seemingly unlikely acts of desperation that wars spawn.

Needless to say when dapperly dressed Hebrew Monsieur Horn discovers that his pretty progeny has slept with a dimwitted peasant collaborator who has been routinely taunting his family with his aggressive and boorish behavior, he blows a gasket and calls France a “whore,” so Lucien threatens to give him a “thrashing.” Of course, the entire situation pushes Horn over the edge and he finally gets the gall to stroll around in public in a fancy suit like he did before

the war instead of sitting inside all day in a robe like he usually does, stating that, "I feel like my old self." Horn wants Lucien to help him and his daughter France escape to Spain, but when he asks him about talking to him "man to man" about the issue, the protagonist blows him off. In a rather drastic attempt to get Lucien's attention, Monsieur Horn absurdly goes to Gestapo headquarters and is caught by rabid anti-Semite Faure, who predictably sends him on a train to Toulouse. When Lucien informs France of what happened to her father and says "it was his own fault," she freaks out and starts hitting him, so he calms her down by raping her. Things are not going too well with the 'German police' either as virtually every single one of them, including the black bartender, are killed one night while Lucien was guarding a prisoner upstairs. With all his comrades dead, Lucien decides to betray his masters by killing an SS SD man when he comes to round up France and her granny. After that, Lucien drives France and granny south, though their car breaks down on the way, so they are forced to take refuge in abandoned old shack. While living in the countryside, Lucien reverts back to his old and more simple farm-boy ways, which comes in handy, as he is able to provide France and her grandmother was tons of freshly killed meat. Aside from being rather repulsed by armies of ants climbing up her leg, cosmopolitan Parisian Jewess France seems to adapt well to the country and even seems to fall in love with Lucien to some degree (though there is one ambiguous scene where she holds a rock over his head as if she wants to kill Lucien). Indeed, everything seems idyllic until an inter-tile juxtaposed with a shot of Lucien lying in a relaxed fashion in a meadow reveals that the protagonist was arrested on October, 12 1944, given a show trial by the Resistance, and swiftly executed via firing squad.

Tragically, Lacombe, Lucien lead Pierre Blaise died less than two years after the release of the film while driving a car, a Renault 17 Gordini, he had bought with the money he earned for the handful of films he had starred in, thereupon somewhat ironically facing a deplorable fate that was not all that unlike the eponymous character he played in Malle's film in that he perished before ever getting to develop into a full man and experiencing everything that life has to offer. In the book *Malle on Malle* (1993) edited by Philip French, Malle stated regarding Blaise: "...he was very much of a rebel, and somewhat of a social outcast, although he came from a great family. I still see his parents. He died in a car accident two years after the film. I loved him dearly. He had no conventional culture whatever: he had never seen a film in his life, had never been to a cinema. Not only had he never seen a camera, but he's never been to a movie! And never read a book." Indeed, a sub-literate farm-boy who had never seen a single film in his entire life managed to give one of the most idiosyncratically memorable acting performances of post-WWII French cinema. When it came to karate-chopping the heads of chickens or chugging liquor, Malle relied on Blaise's experience as a rural lumpenprole to give a certain authenticity to his film, or as the director stated: "One of the difficulties from me with LACOMBE,

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LUCIEN was that I knew very little about the character since he was someone whose social background was the opposite of mine [...] Pierre Blaise was helpful. And I always followed his instinct. I would watch him very carefully and I could see when he was uncomfortable with a line or situation.” One of the major themes of the film is Hannah Arendt’s idea of the ‘Banality of Evil’ yet Blaise brought intrigue and mystique to this so-called ‘evil’ which Malle summed up as follows: “In a way, you could look at him as the ultimate villain, but at the same time he was incredibly moving, as he was discovering power and money and how you can humiliate people who have been humiliating you for years. Pierre Blaise was so good, he got me into trouble. A lot of people saw the film almost as an apology for a collaborator because Blaise was so moving and disturbing that you could not completely hate him.”

Arguably the director’s most Bressonian effort as a work where the lead was “subconsciously” (as Malle once described it) inspired by the teenage collaborator François Joist played by Charles Le Clainche in *Un condamné à mort s’est échappé* ou *Le vent souffle où il veut* (1956) aka *A Man Escaped*, as well as a strangely tender celluloid affair that features a serene pastoral naturalism that recalls *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966), *Lacombe, Lucien* is surely Malle at his best, even if it is not as immaculate as *The Fire Within*, but of course one expects a certain amount of imperfection for such an ambitious film. While featuring a certain amount of realism and naturalism in terms of its use of non-actors and depiction of real animal killings, the film also has a certain oneiric quality that makes it feel like it is set in a sort of alternate reality even though it was inspired by much historical research. The only other French Vichy era film I can think that has a similar quality is Michel Mardore’s *The Savior* (1971) aka *Le sauveur* starring as Horst Buchholz as a German officer who pretends to be an English paratrooper and uses his psychopathic charms to seduce a cutesy yet busty 14-year-old blonde played by Muriel Catalá so that he can eradicate every single person in her village. Of course, *Lacombe, Lucien* is a much more intricate and morally ambiguous work, hence the public outcry various intellectuals and film critics, or as Malle stated regarding the response to the film: “People who had lived through that period knew that this film was completely true and honest about what actually happened. And people who were not French took it for what it was: a reflection on the nature of evil. The controversy was between French intellectuals and politicians. Those who attacked the film did it on the grounds that it was fiction; we had invented and put on the screen a character who was complex and ambiguous to the point where his behavior was acceptable. For them, it justified collaboration – which certainly is not what I was trying to do.” Not surprisingly, French Jewish documentarian Marcel Ophüls was apparently “shocked” by the film’s ambiguity, but of course unlike *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969) aka *Le Chagrin et la pitié*—a work that even Jewish French minister Simone Veil, herself a Auschwitz survivor, felt was too biased and played a ma-

major role in having the doc banned from French television until 1981—and *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* (1988), Malle's work depicts the intricacies regarding French collaborators and does not proselytize about the evils of collaborators and Nazi and the supreme righteousness about the resistance. To Ophüls' minor credit, I found the eponymous hero of Malle's work to be more likeable than any of the resistance fighters in the film. Of course, as people seem to hate to admit, both the resistance and the collaborators were comprised of gangs of ruthless killers and had the Second World War ended differently, the former group would now be regarded as bloodthirsty butchers and the latter would be regarded as European heroes instead of the other way around. Indeed, I'm sure the French resistance had its fair share of Luciens, as well as Dirlewangers, but no contemporary French filmmaker has the testicular fortitude to depict such a figure, so Lacombe, Lucien acts as the next best thing.

-Ty E

BLACK MOON
BLACK MOON

Louis Malle (1975)

Admittedly, when I first saw Louis Malle's postmodern post-apocalyptic fairytale *Black Moon* (1975), it somewhat irked me – not least of all due to its deep-seated narrative incoherence and seemingly mindless anti-erotic imagery – yet the film never left my mind, thereupon I consequently decided to give it another chance, which undoubtedly proved to be the wise decision. After watching an interview with Malle in regard to the film, I am quite sure that he also had no clue as to what *Black Moon* is about, at least in any concrete sense, but if one thing is for sure, it is that the surreal spastic celluloid work is an excellent escapist window into the French auteur filmmaker's seemingly aberrant subconscious. Inspired by the timeless fairytales of Lewis Carroll and the director's mixed feelings on the fermenting feminist Women's Movement of the 1970s, *Black Moon* is a curious pomo celluloid concoction that blurs the often fine-line between delightful dream and nefarious nightmare. Filmed on location of Malle's own 200-year-old manor house at Le Coual in the Causses region of southwest France, *Black Moon* – although an intrinsically disquieting work of wonder and mystique – has a certain newfangled yet compelling welcoming warmth to it that few other cinematic works can boast. With its many scenes of the scenically surreal, it should be no surprise that pioneering Spanish alpha-auteur Luis Buñuel's daughter-in-law Joyce acted as a co-writer for the screenplay of *Black Moon*; a cinematic work that both transcends and acts as a translucent tribute to the early twentieth century art movement. Gorgeously photographed by Bergman's main cinematographer Sven Nykvist (*Persona*, *Fanny and Alexander*), *Black Moon*, despite its lack of narrative coherence, is indubitably a preternatural panoramic feast for the eyes with its marvelous yet macabre mix of gloomy grays and beautiful blood. Aside from lapsed Warhol Superstar Joe Dallesandro (*Trash*, *Blood for Dracula*), most of the actors featured in *Black Moon* were relatively unknown. Cathryn Harrison, the granddaughter of legendary British actor Sir Rex Harrison (*My Fair Lady*, *Doctor Dolittle*) who began her acting career in a secondary role in Robert Altman's British-American genre-crossing psychological thriller *Images* (1972), would never play in another role as prestigious as the protagonist she played at the mere age of 15 for *Black Moon*, which is not a surprise when considering she probably typecasted herself after allowing an elderly wench supple on her nipples in the film as such a conspicuously grotesque and perturbing scenario is not soon forgot. Needless to say, aside from the avant-garde porn flick *Through The Looking Glass* (1975) directed by Jonas Middleton, *Black Moon* is probably the most perverse Lewis Carroll-esque work ever dreamed up by a filmmaker.

Black Moon begins abruptly when the film's female protagonist Lily (Cathryn Harrison) sows roadkill after running over a furry creature with her automo-

bile. Dressed like a tomboy to hide her lack of protruding genitals, lil white Lily fights for her life to escape the man-hating mayhem of a gender-based civil war where female guerillas wearing ghastly gas-masks delight in torturing male captives and men merely lineup members of the fairer sex to be communally executed. Eventually abandoning the mobile manmade machine that murdered one of mother nature's creatures, Lily is soon engulfed in an area full of crawling insects, assorted fuzzy friends, and naked feral children running around with a similarly colored giant pig. Soon after, she discovers a cozy mansion full of animals and a fatherless family that seems to have regressed into some sort of atavistic state. The human animals of the house comprise of a bed-ridden old lady (Jewish-German actress Therese Giehse in her final acting role) and her two sexually androgynous and seemingly incestuous children, both of which are also named "Lily" (Joe Dallesandro, Alexandra Stewart) like the film's protagonist. Displaying symptoms of dementia and with a keen proclivity towards regurgitating gibberish and conversing with animals, the old lady lures Lily into her madness which ranges from infantile temper tantrums to something of a more sinister slant. Depending on her daughter Lily for nourishment, the old lady drinks from her peculiar progeny's teat; a particularly perverse practice that the lead character Lily will later be coerced into in what is one of the most drastically debauched scenarios ever captured for non-pornographic cinema, but I guess Malle couldn't have contrived a better surrealist portrait for the frightening and visceral period of a girl reaching biological womanhood. Having trouble communicating with the homo sapien members of the household, Lily eventually finds her greatest conversationalist in the form of a degenerate black unicorn with a small yet bloated build. Agitated with Lily's unkind words regarding her un-unicorn-like appearance, the seemingly impure symbol of purity states, "The most beautiful things in the world are the most useless. Peacocks and lilies, for instance." Of course, the unicorn's snide remarks perfectly highlight the marvelous misanthropy of Louis Malle's lurid celluloid fairytale where the looking glass is decidedly shattered and where genitals act as one's combat uniform.

Beyond question, one of the most exquisite and bewitching moments of *Black Moon* is when Lily plays "Liebestod" – the final aria of Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* – on piano while the Lily siblings soulfully sing along. Not long after, brother Lily beheads a giant hawk that flies into the maniac mansion, thus symbolically spark the dissolution of the rapturous fantasy world as the siblings begin to frantically destroy each other and machinegun bullets and bomb blasts soon bombard the area. By the conclusion of *Black Moon*, Lily is left all by her lonesome, aside from armies of animals surrounding the house as if she is in control of them via some sort of black magic. With the old lady gone, the unicorn – who has the demeanor of an antagonistic lily-licker – is the only lady left to suck on Lily's blossoming bosoms, thus acting as a symbolic declaration of her newfound and fully developed femininity. Needless to say, *Black Moon*

BLACK MOON

poses more questions than it answers, but this is also one of its greatest attributes as a work about a strange soul in a strange land that demands one to embrace its diacritic dream logic. As such, Black Moon requires multiple re-watchings for all of its exceedingly erratic and eccentric themes and determinedly discordant storyline to properly sink in. Described by Louis Malle as, “the most intimate of my films, I see it as a strange voyage to the limits of the medium, or maybe my own limits,” Black Moon – although by means an immaculate work – is also his most extraordinary and experimental cinematic effort. Not unsurprisingly, the film also acted as a bold and blatant bridge between his French period and American period. That being said, if you loath the cheap talk of *My Dinner with Andre* (1981), you might love the terribly tongue-tied realm of Black Moon.

-Ty E

JOY RIDE 2: DEAD AHEAD

Louis Morneau (2008) I wasn't unethical towards the original Joy Ride film, and by original, I mean that annoying road-slasher film with Paul Walker and Steve Zahn. I really couldn't bring myself to hate that movie cause it brings something that isn't overkill to a dying genre. Although road terror isn't an untapped market, it had only a few successful endeavors. To aid in the recent plague of direct to DVD sequels, Joy Ride too will enjoy a second helping with the return of Rusty Nail. Some undesirables meet up discussing the wild antics of meeting people on Myspace. They plan on wasting a merry weekend in Las Vegas where the sun never rises. Of course, a detour is in order and when their car breaks down in front of a pleasant looking house, they decide to borrow a car not knowing it belongs to Rusty Nail. An hour long game of cat and mouse then ensues. Joy Ride 2 is a film that lacks any form of essence. It is a generic marmalade churned out with the sole existence to sell stock to the fans of the original. I don't look at this film in any professional manner other than an excuse to attempt to create a horrifying figure out of the mysterious Ted Levine voiced highway killer. With that said, Rusty Nail has a lot more menace about him than Death Proof's Stuntman Mike ever had going for him. Joy Ride had characters that were irritating and mousy looking, but they each had principles. This is something that allows the viewer to spark a connection with them. Joy Ride 2 has none of this and features characters that will do nothing short of annoying the absolute piss out of you. Characters like Nick who wax poetic about The Crow and stopping nothing short of defining a counterculture. Stereotypes and labels cluster fuck into an inane roster of victims that will leave you with cottonmouth and the only absolution is their death. Joy Ride 2: Dead Ahead is the same bargain bin blunder you'd expect from a 2008 title that ends with 2. See also: Rest Stop 2, The Lost Boys 2, Feast II, The Hills Have Eyes II, and Wrong Turn 2. With the exception of Wrong Turn 2, all of these films have a decided fate to burn on peoples shelves only to be traded in to a local GameStop months later. Have you no shame for purchasing a film like this? Joy Ride 2 is a pathetic film in every aspect. This is foreseeable knowing that the director also directed The Hitcher II: I've Been Waiting.

-mAQ

LÉON: THE PROFESSIONAL
LÉON: THE PROFESSIONAL

Luc Besson (1994)

Making a sensitive film on a serious subject can be a fickle thing. Many problems can occur within the film and cause it to crumble, despite its greatness. Léon is perhaps the most perfect action film and the perfect Hitman film. As Leon puts it, he is a "cleaner" He is the local assassin who is the best. He keeps his money with local mafia member named Tony. Morose enigmatic Frenchman Léon (Jean Reno) lives his life day by day. His hobbies include drinking milk, exercising, watering his best friend, and the occasional kill. Léon is a man of many mysteries and many quirks. Then we meets a woman. As you can guess, bad goes to worse and he recruits this feisty rascal as a fellow assassin to get pay-back on Oldman. Léon is largely a film that bathes in its own emotions. Rather than relaying gunfight after gunfight, or even soaking in its explosions like the bulk of the genre tends to do, it sorts out all the characters, lays them out on the table, and begins to build on them with the utmost accuracy. Luc Besson captured the feel of a cramped apartment rather splendidly. Gary Oldman makes a shocking appearance as one of the most sadistic characters portrayed in film. His melodic outbursts rival Léon's sadness effortlessly. Eric Serra creates a score that feels like a tribute to Morricone's early days with First Blood except with an Eric Clapton dose. Beyond the orchestral and the original hit songs, there lies a deeper side of The Professional. When Léon: The Professional was released in America, 27 minutes were trimmed off. Why? Well, Americans has in intolerance for pedophilia. Not to say I have a tolerance, but for it's usage in this film, it's quite poetic. The Professional is a completely different film and is missing several tones with most of it's narrative cut off, but still manages to be an epic savage tale of revenge. What is any action film or any contemporary drama without a Bollywood remake? Yet again, they have ruined or even worse, tainted a masterpiece with a stagnant piece of shit. This time, the Indian word for shit is Bichhoo. The difference between the two (Despite it being a shitty Third-world country feature) is the lack of charisma and amazing cinematography. Much props go out to the wide angle lenses that Besson uses. As much as I'd love to rant about the pure love I have towards Reno, the show partly belongs to Gary Oldman. Stansfield's character even rivals Blue Velvet's Frank. Little Israel-born Natalie Portman as Mathilda happens to be in love with the tall burly French assassin. When you watch this film, the chemistry is uncompromising. The characters are all unique in each ways and this very combination fits Léon as one of my favorite films of all time. As much as I wish to divulge this films secrets and splash new perspectives on this film, I cannot. Besides its muddled cultural confusion, It's far from a normal film but with its shocking love story to its unprovoked violence, Léon: The Professional is the definitive tale of violence and the related struggle of love.

-mAQ

ANGEL-A
ANGEL-A

Luc Besson (2005)

Luc Besson is a director that is somehow able to take an artistic approach to films with fairly Hollywood like conventions. Films like *The Professional*, *The Fifth Element*, and *La Femme Nikita* wowed audiences with their combination of ultra stylized cinematography and enticing action. Little is known about the unflattering looking director (who was once married to Milla Jovovich). I would be interested to know Besson's film influences. Besson's *Angel-A* is another extravagant and fantastic film from the French director. The film has a Neo-Noir atmosphere set in the subversive underground of France. *Angel-A* seems to take some influences from Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* and Wim Wender's *Wings of Desire*. The angel featured in *Angel-A* is quite unconventional. She is a six foot tall platinum blonde (played by Danish model, actress, and director Rie Rasmussen) that knows how to use here ASSets. She has come to earth to save the life of an cowardly Algerian Arab (with American green card Citizenship) named Andre from his life of debt and nothingness. He is a mentally and physically weak man in which the angel Angela topples over of. Angela inspires Andre to assert himself in life and to utilize honesty for his own benefit. *Angel-A* features very little in the way of action (especially in comparison to Besson's other films). The film acts more as an inspirational to those lacking purpose in life. Angela is the opposite of the femme fatale featured in Film Noirs. She is the physical and mental embodiment of personal inspiration (claiming she is the femme part of Andre). Terry Gilliam stated that his inner child is a little girl (in reference to his recent masterpiece *Tideland*). Would that make Besson's inner adult a gorgeous six foot tall model? I think that would be a little bit of an exaggeration (of course film is an outlet for such dreams and fantasies). Angel Angela is a much better angel to look at than Clarence from *It's a Wonderful Life*. *Angel-A* is Luc Besson's most mature effort to date (I guess that happens with age). It is a solidly constructed and beautiful rarity in today's cesspool of passable films. Luc Besson seems to have many more years of capable filmmaking under his belt (and such a grandiose belt it is). I will be sure to follow the fantastic frogs future efforts (I still need to see *Arthur and the Minimoys*).

-Ty E

GHOULIES

Luca Bercovici (1985)

There's no rest for the wicked. Especially the naive. Young Jonathan inherits a decrepit Hollywood manor. Following traditional horror sub lines, said young adult dabbles in magic and the occult with the aid of a mystic book. This event leads to the inception of a malevolent spirit that begins to slice off digits from the population. We've seen it all before. Sometimes with more gore, with more comedy, but still, we've never seen it quite like this. *Ghoulies* has *Gremlins* to thank for the 32 million dollar box office reception. *Critters* has *Ghoulies* to blame for the horrible critical reception. It's an awkward Hollywood train of monster deceit. An interesting note to add, the character of Donna was played by Mariska Hargitay. Her mother, Jayne Mansfield died in a car accident after a Satanic curse was cast on Sam Brody, her boyfriend at the time. The "culprit" of this incident, you might know as a man known as Anton Szandor LaVey - the leader of the Church of Satan. With scent of the brief history behind the satanic roots of *Ghoulies*, it also manages to serve as a slightly entertaining and reactionary story of miniature creatures of hell with very accurate inscriptions of black magic led with many Latin translations. The real stars of *Ghoulies* are the "ghoulies" themselves. Without the tiny monster cast, it's sad to say that this film would be absolutely nowhere. Thanks to these creatures, many sequels were produced including one with a surname of "Ghoulies go to College". With a generous ad campaign, *Ghoulies* soared to phenomenal cult success. The infamous image of a suspender adorned slimy monster propped inside of a toilet has been laser engraved into the back of most horror fans eyelids. This image brings to mind many fears and at times makes me look twice when using the bathroom. With the "toilet humor" intact, *Ghoulies* certainly makes going back into the water indeed a scary thing to do. Perhaps the most generous contribution *Ghoulies* returns is not the over-the-top stoner persona's but the heavy dosage of mysticism and occultism. *Ghoulies* also delivers in the department of PG-13 titillation. Hints of a role perfect by Jack "Don't Call Me Eraserhead" Nance are periodically strewn about through the film of *Ghoulies*. His unexplored role as *deus ex machina* exists solely to attribute to a happy ending and a believable (and cameo induced) resolution to the story of *Ghoulies*. In a dazzling scene that makes *Lord of the Rings* look like a campfire tale, Nance grapples a decaying Rutger Hauer lookalike while wardrobe in a purple glittery garb. Gandalf himself would be rolling in his grave at the sight of this marvelous display of wizard virility. Please note that the last two sentences are examples of the occasional weakness of writing and the glories of sarcasm. The "Ghoulies" in question are a rather mischievous bunch of demonic misfits. They all are displayed physically as a slimy, hairy lot of devils, many of which seem to fit the bill of microscopic relatives of select "wild things" from Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things*

GHOULIES

Are. Despite the fact that the Ghoulies appear lovable, the bunch quickly puts the smiles to an end and decides to face-attack every party goer to be pawns in a satanic ritual. You might eventually mix up several for one another due to a poor character design flaw. But yet, the biggest surprise is the uber-creepy life size clown doll that moves but mere inches and still manages to terrify me after 20 years.

Ghoulies is a rather amusing B-grade horror film that managed to pull through and make marvelous revenue at the box office. Call it the little horror film that could if you must. Either way, Ghoulies is recognizable for rental fodder sequels and the marvelous campaign of toilets conquered by slimy creatures with serrated teeth. Many venomous things can be said about Ghoulies but no one can deny the entertainment factor that is visible to all beings. Even a jaded cynic such as myself could find much to love about this film. Ghoulies lies dormant on most bargain bin shelves just waiting for recognition. Pick this film up and give it a chance but don't forget about the infinitely better Critters.

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SUSPIRIA

Luca Guadagnino° (2018)

When I first learned that guido giallo maestro Dario Argento's arguable magnum opus *Suspiria* (1977) was being remade, I was not all that surprised considering even the most innately idiotic and fiercely forgettable horror films are receiving remakes nowadays as indicated by the existence of such excremental cinema as Andreas Schnaas' *Anthropophagous* 2000 (1999) and Eli Roth's *Knock Knock* (2015), at least until I realized that queer Italian auteur Luca Guadagnino—a seemingly constantly evolving arthouse auteur that has never dabbled in horror—of all people would be helming the production. Best known for directing the overrated cocksucking coming-of-age flick *Call Me by Your Name* (2017) that depicts a lurid love affair between a dorky Jewish teenage (ersatz)twink and a slightly older and more masculine Hebrew in a scenario that is vaguely (but notably enough) similar to underrated artsploitation Italian auteur Salvatore Samperi's poofter period melodrama *Ernesto* (1979), Guadagnino seemed a bit ill-equipped to remake a phantasmagorically kaleidoscopic horror classic that was originally directed by a rampantly heterosexual misogynist, yet somehow he didn't let me down, even if he created a completely different sort of monster that would probably defile the souls of most hardcore Argentophiles. In fact, I would go so far as saying that, in terms of sheer cinematic art that tests the bounds of the medium, *Suspiria* (2018)—an elegantly eccentric estrogen-drenched arthouse epic poorly disguised as bitchy and witchy horror trash—is superior to Argento's film, though to compare the two is, to borrow an odd Serbian idiom, like comparing grandmothers and toads. Indeed, whereas the original film was a 98-minute orgasm of neo-gothic terror that basks in incoherence and esoteric intrigue and is arguably best remembered for its potent palette exaggerated neon colors, Guadagnino's 153-minute epic in eerie aesthetic eccentricity with multilayered stories and a number of strong themes that is literally dark and lacking in even the use of primary colors. In short, the remake is a sort of almost overtly ambitious anti-*Suspiria*, as if Guadagnino totally hated the original film and decided to completely deconstruct and reinvent it to his liking without even the slightest consideration for diehard fans of the original. Notably, the auteur apparently does not hate the film, but actually has wanted to remake it ever since he was a little kid, albeit as a so-called “cover version” as opposed to a sort shot-for-shot remake à la *Psycho* (1998) directed by Gus Van Sant.

Undoubtedly its eclectic collection of divas both young and old, fierce and frenetic feminine energy, over-the-top aesthetic decadence and sometimes high-camp tableaux, and lesbianic subtext more than hint at the innate queer character of Guadagnino's shockingly rapturous remake, which is rather fitting considering the film's time period and setting. Indeed, the film, which is set in

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1977—arguably the height of the New German Cinema movement that began in the late-1960s and fizzled out in the early-1980s—was clearly influenced by cocksucking kraut auteur filmmakers, especially Rainer Werner Fassbinder and his dandy-like art fag compatriot Werner Schroeter. In fact, the film's co-screenwriter David Kajganich once even confessed that, “one of the great wells of inspiration for this film: the work of Rainer Fassbinder. Some of the most potent women on film came out of the crucible of his collaborations with his actresses—including the great Ingrid Caven—and I did my best to construct [Tilda Swinton's character's] way of using words and occupying scenes in a Fassbinderian way.” In short, Algerian-blooded guido Guadagnino and his screenwriter were clearly not trying to appease the mostly lowbrow erotophonophilic tastes of Argento and Fulci fans when they conceived of the film. Aside from the obvious decadent Teutonic aesthetic influences, the film also virtually pays tribute to the entire New German Cinema movement as a whole—or at least the political spirit of it—via its 1977 German Autumn setting and its (rather unfortunate and clumsily executed) *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* theme. In its apparent influence of films ranging from the omnibus piece *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978) aka *Germany In Autumn* and classic high-camp Werner Schroeter flicks like *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* (which, notably, stars *Suspiria* star Ingrid Caven), the film virtually covers both the aesthetic and political extremes of New German Cinema, as if Guadagnino simply used the fact that Argento's original film was set in Berlin, Germany to pay tribute to a beloved Germanic cinema movement. In its arguably pretentious division into a number of narrative acts that conclude with a somewhat surreal climatic epilogue, the film also vaguely recalls Fassbinder's magnum opus *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), which itself is a period piece that is a ‘remake’ of sorts that also covers a rather traumatic period in the Fatherland's past (the Alfred Döblin novel it is based on was previously adapted by commie-turned-Nazi auteur Phil Jutzi in 1931). In fact, as a huge fan of New German Cinema, I cannot imagine someone fully appreciating Guadagnino's *Suspiria* without being at least somewhat familiar with the movement. While New German Cinema only produced a handful of horror flicks, these rather dark and somber cinematic works—which include the Fassbinder-produced sod serial killer flick *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) directed by Ulli Lommel, Niklaus Schilling's singularly haunting *Heimat* horror piece *Nightshade* (1972) aka *Nachtschatten*, and Hans W. Geissendörfer's allegorical vampire flick *Jonathan* (1970)—could have certainly influenced the film due their ominous (and oftentimes cryptic) references to Germany's past and totally twisted takes on the timeless tradition of German gothic horror. In fact, despite the majority of these films being fairly unknown, it cannot be ignored that they are certainly more ‘artsy’ than Argento's *Suspiria* and thus more up Guadagnino's alley.

As for the film's brutally baroque *Tanz Dance Academy* setting, it resem-

bles something in between a somberly lit version of the fascist palace depicted in Pier Paolo Pasolini's sexually apocalyptic swansong *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) and a lavish château in some obscure Jesús Franco flick like *Sinfonía erótica* (1980). Of course, despite their more glaring differences, Pasolini, Franco, and Fassbinder certainly had one important thing in common and that was their lifelong dedication to shameless diva-worship, which is certainly strong in *Suspiria*. Aside from old classic divas like Ingrid Caven—Fassbinder's one-time wife and criminally-underrated Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's main diva that demonstrated an unrivaled talent for morosely melancholic performance in such sickeningly underrated films as *Tonight or Never* (1972) and *La Paloma* (1974)—and Paul Verhoeven's greatest Dutch era diva Renée Soutendijk (Spetters, *The Fourth Man*), the film features some of the more notable young divas of the modern era, including Chloë Grace Moretz, Mia Goth and—most importantly—Dakota Johnson as the lead. While Argento's original film certainly features beautiful women, most of these characters seem largely forgettable compared to those in Guadagnino's remake. Naturally, as an extremely operatic film, this somewhat daunting diva-centrism is imperative as the diva was originally the creation of opera and not cinema. While Argento has never been big on character development—diva oriented or otherwise—the remake does pay tribute to the giallo maestro's legacy by featuring *Suspiria* heroine Jessica Harper in a somewhat brief yet imperative role that arguably symbolizes, in a somewhat lame way, German post-WWII guilt over the holocaust. In short, in Guadagnino's film, there is not a single filler character as every single actor makes some sort of impression, whether it be the exceedingly ectomorphic alien-like South Sudanese negress model Alek Wek in a mostly mute role as a low-level witch or German-Hungarian auteur-cum-cinematographer Fred Kelemen (*Frost, Abendland*)—probably the last filmmaker you would expect to randomly pop up in a horror remake—in a cameo role as a policeman that literally comes under the spell of the witches.

In its seemingly intuitive depiction of the dark side of femininity, it is hard for me to imagine anyone aside from a gay man directing such a film and this is arguably what most distinguishes it from Argento's original movie, which is hopelessly heterosexual in terms of its very straight scopophilic approach to the female form; or, in short, it has a glaringly gay gaze as opposed to the stereotypical (heterosexual) male gaze. In fact, aside from a couple exceptions, Argento's female characters are not much more than aesthetically pleasing ciphers meant to be dispatched in a most marvelously macabre fashion as if the auteur sees the purest poetry in the death of a young dame in her physical prime, hence the (arguably dubious) claim made by certain film critics that he is a misogynist. To the contrary, aside from depicting rather hot young actresses in rather physically and psychologically grotesque ways that will guaranteed to prevent any hetero audience member's cock from getting hard, the remake features a much more un-

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flattering, if not disturbingly intuitive, depiction of womankind than anything Argento ever directed, as Guadagnino, not unlike many great queer filmmakers including Fassbinder and Schroeter, seems to have an instinctual understanding of the more loathsome and monstrous traits associated with the so-called fairer sex, which could not be any less unfair and uniquely insufferable in the film. Indeed, not unlike popular crypto-cucksucker TV creations like *Sex and the City* and *American Horror Story* where the warts-and-all approach to femininity is absurdly glorified and undoubtedly a major selling point, *Suspiria* is expression of a gay man and thus arguably must be read as an unflattering covert depiction of gay men that—by using statuesque twats as stand-ins for sassy sods—ultimately makes women seem more sophisticated than they actually are, hence the disturbing popularity of such ultimately quite sexually deleterious shows among (largely heterosexual) women. In that regard, I am surely not surprised that Argento has complained that the remake, “betrayed the spirit of the original film.” Rather revealingly, despite being a film that technically does not feature a single gay male character, Guadagnino apparently regards the remake as his most personal to date, which is somewhat ironic considering the auteur originally optioned the film in 2007 with the intention of having David Gordon Green (who, incidentally, also directed his lackluster *Halloween* remake in 2018) direct it instead of himself.

Whereas Argento’s film takes a largely esoteric approach and basks in the unexplained and mysterious, Guadagnino’s film is considerably more exoteric (despite being no less esoteric) and provides the viewer with various hints as to how to read the (sub)text. Arguably, most fundamentally, *Suspiria* is an unconventional tale of historically-charged post-holocaust Jungian individuation where a young and naïve yet talented budding dancer named Susanna ‘Susie’ Bannion (Dakota Johnson)—an American from a strict Ohio Mennonite background that, rather inexplicably, feels like she has been virtually summoned to Berlin to dance shortly after the death of her mother—eventually discovers that she is, in a striking twist, the sort of bodily reincarnation of supreme alpha-witch ‘Mater Suspiriorum, Our Lady of Sighs.’ While Argento’s film was also partially based on opium-addled English essayist Thomas De Quincey’s text *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) aka *Sighs from the Depths*, this source was undoubtedly a much more crucial influence on Guadagnino’s undeniably more intricate film. Unlike the heroine in Argento’s film, Susie is no mere stupid innocent American with simple dreams of stardom, although she initially seems as such, and the only real good guy is an elderly psychiatrist named Dr. Josef Klemperer (Tilda Swinton in old fart drag as ‘Lutz Ebersdorf’) who is not even in the original film. In a morbidly matriarchal cinematic work consumed with sinister (and arguably Sapphic) feminine energy, it is only fitting that the (arguable true) protagonist is a patriarchal character that provides fatherly help to young dancers in trouble, even if he is rather weak and ineffectual and ultimately provides very little help

to the girls he attempts to save. Of course, the good doctor's guilt and weakness are no coincidence as they are surely symbolic of the spiritually castrated state of post-WWII Deutschland. After all, as Guadagnino has stated himself, a main theme of the film is, "the uncompromising force of motherhood," so it is no surprise that patriarchy would be allegorically personified in the patently pathetic form of a nearly mummified childless intellectual that still hasn't gotten over the fact that he lacked the strength to keep his wife alive over thirty years ago. As can be expected in such a film, Dr. Klemperer finds it somewhat questionable when some of his patients, including Patricia Hingle (Chloë Grace Moretz) and Sara Simms (Mia Goth), begin complaining about the witchy tendencies of their teachers at the Tanz Dance Academy, so naturally he gets deeply involved when the girls eventually disappear under dubious circumstances. Undoubtedly, Dr. Klemperer's failure and inadequacy when it comes to saving both his Jewish wife Anke Meier (Jessica Harper) during WWII and his female patients can be seen as symbolic of the hopelessly emasculated and guilt-ridden state of post-WWII Europa. Just like his Jewish wife and her warnings of the Nazis, the good doctor fails to act soon enough when his patients warn of the very imminent danger that waits them. Even though Dr. Klemperer is the only character that manages to uncover the secret witch coven operating at the dance studio, he lacks the strength and youthful exuberance and will-to-power to even truly challenge such fiercely feminine and malevolently matriarchal evil, just as German authorities were not prepared for the untamed nihilistic terrorism of the largely estrogen-driven Red Army Faction (RAF) whose aberrant actions fittingly act as a hauntingly ethno-masochistic backdrop to the film. In short, Dr. Klemperer is both literally and figuratively the sick old man of Europe and he and his Jungian theories seem like an absurd anachronism in a decadent West German world that is being terrorized by hyper hedonistic neo-Marxist would-be-rock-stars that want to castrate the cock of the Fatherland. Needless to say, it is not by sheer coincidence that Mater Suspiriorum makes her great reappearance during this weak and decadent point in Germany history.

In a world of virtual demonic divas where there is not a single male dancer and a system of covert unspoken misandry reigns, masculinity is naturally undermined the handful of times it makes an appearance at the academy. For example, when a couple police detectives show up at Tanz Dance Academy to investigate the disappearance of one of the girls, the witches amuse themselves by engaging in termagant terror as they put the two men under some sort of spell, force one of them to strip off his pants and underwear, and then collectively mock the unconscious cop's cock by playfully pointing at it, laughing, and calling it "kitty" as if it is a 'pussy' of some sort. At the end of the film, they use a similar form of sexual humiliation against Dr. Klemperer—an elderly man that seems especially debased by such experiences, as if he is a concentration camp prisoner that is about to be gassed by the all-the-more-sinister sister of Satan himself—by

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stripping him completely naked while he is somewhat incapacitated and forcing him to endure their big finale ritual since they need a ‘witness’ while he lies on the ground in a fetal position and babbles hysterically about his innocence during the National Socialist era (which, of course, he was also a sort of pathetic passive ‘witness’ to, hence his seemingly perennial guilt). Of course, these witches have certain Sapphic tendencies, as Madame Blanc (also Tilda Swinton)—arguably the fairest and least insufferable of the two head (competing) witches, which also includes a grotesque rotting beastess named ‘Mother Helena Markos’ that literally lurks in the dark for most of the movie—clearly has an almost immediate deep affection for her young blonde nubile American protégé Susie Bannion (whereas Markos simply sees the little lady as a body she can use as her new earthly vessel). The sadomasochistic lesbian nature of the dance academy is also hinted at when Patricia Hingle states at the beginning of the film with a strange combination of fear and fascination in regard to the carpet-muncher coven that she so hysterically fears, “They’ll hollow me out and have my cunt on a plate.” All of this adds up to a totally twisted realm of staunch gynocentrism that is so innately irrationally destructive and cannibalistic that it eventually leads to the deaths of about half the witches; or, more specifically, a superlatively sick and sanguinely Sapphic Götterdämmerung of sorts. In the end, the power struggle between Madame Blanc and Mother Markos ultimately leads to both women being destroyed and the extermination of the latter’s followers, which one could certainly argue is symbolic of the ‘spiritual’ war between Germans (and Germanic people in general) and World Jewry during WWII.

Undoubtedly, it is quite fitting that a film about a power struggle between pernicious witches is set in 1970s Germany as it depicts an era reflecting the first generations of krauts, who inherited the supposed sins of their Nazi parents and grandparents, to collectively embrace feminism, which was arguably most glaringly and idiotically represented by the psychotic cunts of the Baader-Meinhof Gang like Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin. The same era also produced the first generation of prominent German feminist and/or lesbian filmmakers, including Margarethe von Trotta, Ulrike Ottinger, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Doris Dörrie, Helke Sander, and Elfi Mikesch (who is best known for shooting the films of Werner Schroeter and probably the greatest female cinematographer of all-time), among various others. One should also probably mention Austrian performance artist turned auteur Valie Export who, as her more aberrant-garde films like *Unsichtbare Gegner* (1977) aka *Invisible Adversaries* demonstrate, would have been perfectly at home at the witch dance coven. To watch films by some of these female filmmakers, one might assume they were either witches or demonically possessed as they feature sympathetic portrayals of the Baader-Meinhof Gang and tend to depict largely soulless (pseudo)intellectual women that lack any sort of maternal instincts and see men as either an oppressive pestilence and/or insufferably arrogant fuck-toys. Indubitably, Chancellor

of Germany of Angela Merkel—a childless (ex)communist that, in terms of feminine prowess, is about as dainty as a Dobermann—is surely symbolic of this generation (despite being from Eastern Germany) and I do not think that it is any coincidence that she has single-handedly caused more long-term damage to the Father(less)land than any American or British firebombers caused during WWII by opening the flood gates to a virtually apocalyptic deluge of innately hostile phony refugees from the global south. Not unlike many modern European politicians, Merkel has no children and thus has no need to take heed of Germany’s rather dubious future. At least figuratively speaking, Merkel is the kraut witch par excellence, but I digress.

Of course, *Suspiria* is a film that obsesses over mothers—both biological and symbolic—albeit in a largely sinister, ungodly, and hardly totally literal fashion. I don’t think it is a coincidence that Mother *Suspiorum* is a sort of goddess of death and that she randomly appears in 1970s West Germany as it is a country that has since been plagued with a suicidal drop in the birth rate of the indigenous white population as at least partly inspired by (the at-least-partly-Hollywood-induced sham of) *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which undoubtedly gave birth to metaphysically sick miscreations like the feminist movement and self-destructive commie movements like the RAF. Mother *Suspiorum* is hardly the sort of mother that enjoys pregnancy and breastfeeding, but instead the witch equivalent of a wicked whacked-out bitch that engages in Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSBP). In fact, *Suspiorum* demonstrates her maternal qualities by literally summoning death to kill her enemies and reveals her idea of mercy by allowing the undead corpse-like victims of Markos to finally kick the bucket. In short, she takes a little bit too much pride in providing mercy to the singularly suffering. In fact, most of the motherly displays by the witches is glaringly phony aside from how Madame Blanc closely mentors Susie—though she is clearly her ‘favorite’ (which mother’s aren’t supposed to have)—and, of course, is, not coincidentally, ultimately revealed to be the great Mother *Suspiorum*. It is notable that, in a flashback scene, Susie’s mother—notably a strict Mennonite and thus someone of German descent—complains, “My daughter. My last one. She’s my sin. She’s what I smeared on the world.” Indeed, it is surely fitting that Susie compulsively travels to Berlin after the death of her mother as if being compelled by some ominous unseen force where she is reborn as the ‘Mother of Sighs,’ as post-WWII Germany and especially New German Cinema has enough sighs and mothers to go around as Odin and his imperative influence are nowhere to be found in contemporary krautland. As films ranging from Sanders-Brahms’s *Deutschland bleiche Mutter* (1980) aka *Germany, Pale Mother* to Edgar Reitz’s *Heimat* (1984) reveal, the mother is the (rather desperate) backbone of post-WWII Germany and the father is either physically or emotionally completely absent. Undoubtedly, Thomas De Quincey could have been speaking of the titular heroines of Schroter’s *The Death of Maria Malibran*

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(1972), Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978), and Ottinger's *Freak Orlando* (1981) when he once wrote in regard to *Mother Suspiriorum*, "Her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium." In short, much of New German Cinema reveals a largely male-less world full of damaged dames and *Suspiria* also depicts an unhinged world where damaged dames also dominate society. Of course, as virtually all of European history demonstrates, a gynocentric Europe is no Europe at all; or, to be more precise, there is no 'Fatherland' without a father.

Out of all the filmmakers associated with New German Cinema, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg—an auteur that dared to combine the aesthetic theories of proto-NS Romantic composer Richard Wagner with the audience-alienating dramaturgy of bolshevik bastard Bertolt Brecht—was pretty much the only one that did not fetishize and/or sympathize with leftist terrorist groups like the RAF. In fact, Syberberg who probably not coincidentally, spent his youth in East Germany before eventually moving to Bavaria in the early-1950s, was really the only filmmaker to seriously acknowledge and critique the culturally apocalyptic Americanization of German culture and uprooting of great German traditions that naturally occurred in West Germany. I would also argue that, to a somewhat lesser extent, *Suspiria* attempts to aesthetically do what Syberberg did with his films in terms of being one of the closet examples of a horror film attempting to be a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (aka 'total work of art') in terms of its utilization of a number of artistic mediums (e.g. dance, opera, performance art, literature/mythology, etc.), but of course it would be a sort of political liability for Guadagnino to even mention the cinematic neo-Wagnerian as he is more or less unofficially blacklisted in his homeland due to some of his less than kosher political statements in regards to Jews and left-wingers. Among other things, Syberberg was one of the few filmmakers to actually attempt to not only acknowledge, but also honestly diagnose the spiritual sickness and metaphysical malaise that plagues post-WWII Germany, thus making his cinematic work worth seeing for anyone that wants a deeper understanding of some of the more implicitly Teutonic themes touched on in *Suspiria*. Indeed, whereas Fassbinder and most of the other directors associated with New German Cinema were part of said sickness, Syberberg at least attempted to combat it in terms of both art and deeds while criticizing his contemporaries, hence his lack of popularity among his peers despite being revered by celebrated cineastes ranging from Henri Langlois to Susan Sontag.

Notably, not long after the release of an omnibus film co-directed by Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff, Edgar Reitz, and various other filmmakers, Syberberg once wrote in regard to what he perceived as the post-shoah cultural cuckoldry and innate cluelessness of his leftist peers, "Now a film was made on this topic, entitled *GERMANY IN AUTUMN*, by filmmakers of

my generation, about the guilt that went back to a different generation. But how are we to depict guilt without a concept? Without aesthetic, metaphysical control and responsibility? I heard from them about anxiety fits—surely small ones compared with mine—in the face of our generation's representation-compulsion thirty years ago. But without this labor, cinema as a genre will surrender its possibilities. Too many things so far remain unreflected upon, tied to reality, action, goal-oriented, a part of the entertainment and propaganda industry. A profound impotence of means strikes us before the question of how to depict all this—namely, just why all this? This terror, this eruption? Is it not something like the explosion of repressed German irrationalism? The dull, unconscious shriek of a diseased nation without an identity? So much suppression of its own tradition and its nature was bound to evoke aggressions, in the German manner, radical and fanatic. But the decay of methods is dismal. An entire generation in Germany was simply not trained to understand and manipulate the things lying beyond the rational. . . ." Of course, Syberberg rightly considered irrationalism to be an innate and imperative ingredient of Teutonic kultur ranging from fairytales to Wagner and one could certainly argue that *Suspiria* represents a sinister, albeit bastardized, example of this Teutonic tradition that is so ingrained in the Aryan collective unconscious that it is most strongly unleashed in an American Mennonite girl, who becomes what can be seen as being like a sort of spiritually deathly dyke sister of the old German pagan deity and 'All-Father' Odin. In fact, considering both the physical and cultural colonization of West Germany following the capitulation of the Third Reich, it is only natural that Susie is American.

If there is one individual that is a sort of link between old school German irrationalism and New German Cinema, it is the late great auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel who, on top of proclaiming to be a maternal relative of Joseph Goebbels, once dared to remake National Socialist auteur Veit Harlan's morbid melodrama *Opfergang* (1944) as a savagely sardonic satire. Aside from his obsession with (mostly recent) German history, Schlingensiefel has a small connection of sorts to *Suspiria* in that he and Tilda Swinton were once lovers and she even played the heroine of his obscenely underrated film *Egomania - Insel ohne Hoffnung* (1986) aka *Egomania: Island Without Hope* (which, incidentally, also stars Udo Kier who also starred in Argento's original film). Despite its use of unnerving dark humor, including Kier as a demonic baron in drag, *Egomania*, in many ways, feels like a bad dream about German history of the past century or so, as if it is a depiction of one of the worst nightmares from one of the older witches from *Suspiria*, but I digress. All of these things got me thinking how that, despite its mischling Italian director and international cast, Guadagnino's film feels more like a piece of German cinema history than anything else, which says a lot considering the same cannot be said of the films of most contemporary German directors.

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In its various overt (e.g. shots of books) and subtextual references to Jung, *Suspiria* naturally hints at the collective unconscious and it can be argued that heroine's Susie's climatic transformation into *Mater Suspiriorum* is simply a phantasmagoric depiction of Jungian Individuation, which involves the personal and collective unconscious being brought into the consciousness and ultimately assimilated into the whole personality. In fact, just as Jung indicated, Susie finally achieves this transformation via dreams, artistic expression, and free association, among other things, but I would argue that the arrival of the fiercely feminine *Mater Suspiriorum* is also symbolic of the demise of the masculine Wotan (aka Odin) archetype that Jung once notably wrote about in reference to Hitler and the Third Reich. Indeed, in his controversial 1936 essay *Wotan*, Jung argued, "We are always convinced that the modern world is a reasonable world, basing our opinion on economic, political, and psychological factors. But if we may forget for a moment that we are living in the year of Our Lord 1936, and, laying aside our well-meaning, all-too human reasonableness, may burden God or the gods with the responsibility for contemporary events instead of man, we would find Wotan quite suitable as a causal hypothesis. In fact, I venture the heretical suggestion that the unfathomable depths of Wotan's character explain more of National Socialism than all three reasonable factors put together. There is no doubt that each of these factors explains an important aspect of what is going on in Germany, but Wotan explains yet more. He is particularly enlightening in regard to a general phenomenon, which is so strange to anybody not a German that it remains incomprehensible, even after the deepest reflection." While *Mater Suspiriorum* might be a fictional invention of Guadagnino and, in turn, Argento and De Quincey, she is certainly is an archetype that symbolizes something very real as personified in a quite suicidal Germany that refuses to reproduce, allows itself to be colonized by ancient perennial alien invaders, and cares not for what arguably matters most—its ancient art, culture, and traditions. In short, without the return of Wotan and demise of what *Mater Suspiriorum* really represents, Germany might disappear from history just like the ancient Romans that the Germanic tribes once conquered after the people became too decadent and averse to reproduction, among other things. Of course, luckily for the Romans, they were at least conquered by a fellow European race and not hyper hostile groups that turned places like Sicily, Spain, and Greece into racial/cultural wastelands. Of course, like tons of films and TV shows created by gay men ranging from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961) to *American Horror Story*, *Suspiria* is arguably first and foremost the expression of a literal art fag projecting his own group's arcane homosocial tendencies onto a group of women, thereupon making women seem more sophisticated and cleverly vicious than they actually are (not that women aren't known for being particularly vicious) while giving the auteur the opportunity to live vicariously through stylish and exotic female characters. After all, despite the themes of the ostensibly clas-

sic lesbian-themed film *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931), the oppressive hierarchical structure depicted in the film is more typical of gay men than woman, or as Camille Paglia once noted in her magnum opus *Sexual Personae* (1990), “I notice that the Wildean-style homosexual still speaks of race and class with the same breezy daring. Oppressed groups tend to oppress other subgroups. But lesbians do not talk this way. On the contrary, lesbians, in my experience, are relentlessly populist—possibly a function of their repressed maternalism. Male homosexuals have an instinct for hierarchy unparalleled in contemporary culture, outside of Roman Catholicism. Hierarchism explains their cult of the Hollywood star, in whom so many are dazzlingly learned.” Notably, the film’s major cinematic influence, Fassbinder, accomplished something similar in his early classic chamber piece *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* (1972) aka *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* where Margit Carstensen and Hanna Schygulla act as stand-ins in terms of depicting the disastrous one-sided romance of the filmmaker and his black Bavarian ex-lover Günther Kaufmann. Notably, Werner Schroeter, who I would argue had an even bigger aesthetic influence on *Suspiria* than Fassbinder, went even further and had Isabelle Huppert act as his stand-in in the curious form of identical twin sisters(!) in his insanely nonlinear autobiographical penultimate film *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*. In fact, out of all the films I can think of, Schroeter’s *Tag der Idioten* (1981) aka *Day of the Idiots*—a film starring model and one-time Bond Carole Bouquet that is set in a mental hospital that is plagued by Sapphic surrealism and the obscenely gorgeously grotesque (including a uniquely unhinged urolagnia scenario)—is the one that most reminds me of Guadagnino’s film. Needless to say, I don’t think it is a coincidence that Ingrid Caven appears in both films, just as I don’t think it is a coincidence that there is very little difference between the dance academy and mental hospital as both surely represent the insanely incendiary irrationalism and deep black bottomless abyss that is the feminine psyche, especially one that has been left unchecked and completely neglected to be penetrated by a true patriarchal influence. *Suspiria* may be an Italian remake of an Italian film directed by an Italian director, but it owes its broken black heart and deathly despondent soul to the degenerate generation of kraut filmmakers that beat the *La Nouvelle Vague* at their own game in terms of unbridled iconoclasm and reinventing the cinematic language. In that sense, Guadagnino is inordinately cinematically literate and demonstrates a grand eclecticism in his virtually celestial synchronization of Italian horror and New German Cinema that puts pathologically posturing pop cineastes like Tarantino and Nicolas Winding Refn to abject shame. Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s 1791 opera *The Magic Flute* (and especially Ingmar Bergman’s 1975 cinematic adaptation *Trollflöjten*) such a joyous experience in the end is that it depicts a honorable patriarchy destroying a malefic matriarchal force. Needless to say, horror makes a suitable genre for depicting the triumphing of the matriarchal spirit, hence

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the true visceral power of a film like *Suspiria* where one learns the real reason as to why certain women—usually the worst sort of women—were suspected of being witches in the past. Of course, the film also teaches us that it takes a gay man—or, more specifically, a guido cocksucker with a feminine spirit—to teach heterosexual men the true nuances of misogyny, henceforth confirming that Guadagnino's hero Fassbinder taught him well.

-Ty E

CONVERSATION PIECE

Luchino Visconti (1974)

Undoubtedly Italian maestro auteur Luchino Visconti's most modern work, *Conversation Piece* (1974) aka *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, is one of a few European films that brilliantly looks at the striking difference between the filmmaker's own outmoded zeitgeist and that of the post-WWII generation, most specifically the ultimately failed generation associated with the leftist 1968 student movement. Centering around a retired professor of the extremely introverted and solitary sort whose world is turned upside down when a perverse post-modern 'family' comprised of a brazenly bitchy Italian marchesa and her crude yet charismatic 'kept man'/lover, daughter and her boyfriend barge in and take over the aged academic's house and life, *Conversation Piece* illustrates the absurdity that follows when refined classical and traditional Europe confronts the decidedly decadent and vulgar post-WWII Europe of the new, which sought to revamp the continent but only sped up its damning demise as the living and breathing multicultural cadaver it is today. Starring Visconti's much younger (by nearly four decades) lover Helmut Berger in the role of a debauched quasi-commie revolutionary who has morally fallen to the point where he pawns his wayward Wienerschnitzel to a contemptible capitalist rich bitch of the superficially right-wing sort, *Conversation Piece* was a very personal work for director Visconti in that it acted as the filmmaker's thoughts on the 1968 student movement (which, not like Pasolini, he withheld up until that point), as well as his romantic relationship with the film's Austrian star, with the character of the retired professor acting as a stand-in for the Guido maestro, and thus his final message to a world that has ultimately passed him by. Additionally, *Conversation Piece* is also recognized as a thinly veiled criticism of the sort of spoiled and salacious jetsetters like the sordid and superficial sort featured in Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960), who Visconti does not seem to have a grain of sympathy for, while his sympathy, if not confusedly so, for the 1986-ers is quite unmistakable. Suffering from a cerebral hemorrhage in July 1972 that left his left-side paralyzed and his entire body ultimately confined to a wheelchair, *Conversation Piece*, which takes place in a handful yet lavishly and intricately stylized rooms, is a celluloid cabinet piece that was clearly setup so the crippled auteur could manage direct the film in relative comfort and practicability. Produced by Rusconi Film, which was owned by a well known right-wing publisher, *Conversation Piece* caused Visconti to catch a lot of criticism by quasi-Marxist types, yet it is surely not a 'rightist' film in the slightest and as his great fan Rainer Werner Fassbinder recognized in an interview, "they gave him more leeway than the leftists." If anything, *Conversation Piece* portrays a world where both leftist and rightist have turned into terrorists of a similar stripe and both ends of the political spectrum are mutually enslaved by the mixed up mores of the so-called

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sexual revolution, as well as a country and continent facing complete and utter uncertainty due to suffering a certain sociopolitical schizophrenia as caused by two opposing and vastly different generations sharing strikingly different values in every regard, be it taste in art or women.

Retired American professor (Burt Lancaster), a Yankee-born yet Roman-bred man with an Italian mother who hid commies and Jews in the home he now lives in during the Second World War, lives a rather solitary and even antisocial life where his only friends are old books and fine art of the rather expensive sort. While now living a lonely existence of merely waiting for his inevitable death, the professor has lived a full life as a man who has traveled the world, fought in the Second World War, and was even once married, but for whatever reason, at some point, he decided he was no longer interested in a social life and escaped in his post-professional studies and collecting of expensive art, even spending a wealth of his time staring at details of paintings via a magnifying glass. Of course, that all changes when emotionally grotesque yet physically beautiful Italian marchesa, Marquise Bianca Brumonti (great Italian diva Silvana Mangano), the wanton wife of a rich right-wing industrialist, shows up to his large house and cons the professor into renting an upstairs apartment to the bitchy broad and her unconventional family. The apartment is mainly for Bianca's German 'boyfriend' Konrad Huebel (Helmut Berger) or what she describes as "my kept boy...paid lover," an ex-member of the commie Baader-Meinhof Group who still flirts with far-left politics, even if he screws rich right-wing women, who also happens to be married to a 'fascist' industrialist. Also staying at the apartment are Bianca's daughter Lietta Brumonti (Claudia Marsani) and her boyfriend Stefano (Stefano Patrizi), also the son of a rich right-wing industrialist. The professor is repulsed by the odd family due to their pushy and vulgar persuasions, open bisexuality, and vehement hatred toward one another, yet he cannot help but feel intrigued by their company and rather 'unconventional' ways. As Konrad tells the professor, his lover's family is "cheap, cheap inside," but, of course, he has no problem selling his flesh to them at a rather high monetary price, funding his lavish and lecherous lifestyle. Despite being repelled by their behavior, the professor somehow becomes a father figure for the 'modern family,' even symbolically 'adopting' Konrad as a son, who like himself, has an interest in fine art and Mozart and even studied at the university before his life-destroying transformation into a criminal revolutionary. As Konrad tells the professor when asked why he quit studying art history, he states, "Those were the times...68...I threw myself into the student movement...deeper than most...got in trouble and had to run...god knows how I ended up in the world I am now." Despite his terrorist proclivities, Konrad ultimately proves to be the only decent member of the 'family,' although Bianca's daughter Lietta does show some minor sympathy, even if she is a spoiled brat who always gets whatever she wants. In the end, a crude yet strangely kind kraut commie dies under dubious circumstances and leaves

the professor emotionally and physically ill and his apartment in pieces. Ultimately, the professor was right to suspect that personal relationships would lead to misery and heartbreak.

While his penultimate work, *Conversation Piece* might as well be considered Visconti's final film and 'filmic farewell' because it is clearly the work of an elderly man who no longer understands the people of his homeland, but could not leave this world without giving his opinion how things have changed in Italy and Europe in general. Although the character of the professor was based on the real-life Italian literary critic Mario Praz (who ironically faced a similar disruption of his peace and quiet a few months after the film was released), the character is clearly a stand-in for director Visconti, so it is no surprise that his lover Helmut Berger played the role of the son figure/political radical. Visconti, a man who expressed his inherent masochism in films like *Death in Venice* (1971), was known to be publicly criticized and insulted by his much younger boy toy Helmut Berger and this dysfunctional relationship certainly radiates vividly throughout *Conversation Piece*, a film directed by an old maestro, who unlike most people his age, does not besmirch and degrade the younger generation, even if they are portrayed as dandy degenerates of the vivacious vulgarian sort. Undoubtedly an idiosyncratic work among Visconti's cinematic oeuvre, in part due to the director's crippling health, *Conversation Piece* is quite different from the auteur's later aristocratic period pieces that escape in the past in that it confronts a perturbing present. Were Visconti alive today, one can only wonder what he would think of the contemporary generations of Italians who seem to have little interest in arts and revolutionary politics, let alone actively getting involved in either. Featuring unbecoming bitches who will, as Konrad states, "break your balls," *Conversation Piece* portrays an Italy where the rich are just as debauched as the leftist hippies and the revolutionary left has been crushed by the very same sort of terrorism itself employed. In an interview with gossip columnist/journalist Boze Hadleigh, Visconti stated quite stoically when the interviewer remarked "the world is your oyster" that, "No. (shakes head, smiling.) Not now. Not in a wheelchair. But soon. When this picture is completed, I will watch it. And like everyone else, I will forget there is a wheelchair." And, indeed, one almost forgets that an elderly and crippled gay aristocrat directed *Conversation Piece*, one of only a handful of both Italian and European films that manages to act as a bridge between classic European cinema and that of the counter-culture generation and if anyone could do it, it was Luchino Visconti, the old man that managed to bone a very young Helmut Berger.

-Ty E

REGOREGITATED SACRIFICE
REGOREGITATED SACRIFICE

Lucifer Valentine (2010)

The second in his self-proclaimed "Vomit Gore" trilogy, Lucifer Valentine brings us exactly what he promises with his convention breaking genre. Descending from the final moments of *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* is where *ReGOREgitated Sacrifice* (Don't mind the pun) begins. Armed with a plot that rivals *What is it?* and a visual effects department that would be able to re-create the most disgusting crime on earth, Kingdom of Hell Productions proudly brings you *ReGOREgitated Sacrifice*. *ReGOREgitated Sacrifice* is a non-linear structured film (that can be told by viewing the trailer) which features a plot that could be best explained by Lucifer Valentine himself. Guided by identical twin demon spirits, the black angels of hell, we see the diabolical depiction of the alternate-parallel dimension of the simultaneous suicide deaths of Kurt Cobain and bulimic porn star Angela Aberdeen; as seen through the mental activity of Angela's journey toward brain death as a result of her self-inflicted death by drowning. Valentine's editing is a bad taste to a lot of fans and critics alike. Andrey Iskanov on speed comes to mind, but nonetheless, the care and time put forth in splicing frame by frame to various audio clips of distorted screams and guttural grunts presents a love for one's own craft that transcends boundaries. The scenes are either a fleeting confessional before brain death or a splurching form of violence constringing stringy flesh and feeble brain matter. The one thing more notorious about the film is the director's promoting methods. If you frequent a horror-themed message board, I'm sure you've seen him posting a thread about his latest film and how it's available for free on *ReGOREgitatedSacrifice.com*, besides the point, His films have been bashed repeatedly by people who haven't viewed the film, or people who criticize Valentine's lack of caring about Grammar whose respect of the English language. The film's strength is essentially derived from the beautiful posthumous scenes of debauchery and vivid back drops. If the scene starts with a brightly lit white empty space, you can be sure that it's going to be tainted with all sorts of bodily fluids and excess matter for that fact. I also happen to like picking up visual metaphors in his shots. I.E. Whore vomiting ingested piss creating splash effects on the lens distorting her already tortured face. The extreme scenes of symbolism that have been derived from Kabalistic teachings can be described as a formerly diluted Matthew Barney. The run time is split up into fractions of certain types of scenes. Lucifer Valentine plays it by the book and continues using Hooker Scene/ Vomit Scene/ Hooker Vomit /Hooker Gore/ Confession/ Home Video, then repeats the process. This surprisingly doesn't get as old as it sounds. At being a sliver over an hour, it's hard for anything to get old. A scene that comes to mind that breaks from this snare is the scene of Pregnant Ameara being idolized by two prostitutes. The Hooker scenes feature amazing styles of camera work which range

from tepid "stand in the corner and shoot" angles to breathtaking techniques of which I've never seen executed. The following results in penetrating voyeurism. Much of the anguish in this film seems to be of a personal exorcism routine exercised by fellow film maker Rozz Williams. If this film lacked "Vomit Gore", this trilogy might have ended up being porno for smart sociopaths. The Satan shtick grows tiresome after a while. I don't really care about forms of religion enough in a sense to bother myself about what they talk about. It also seems that Mr. Valentine might have seen a J-AV in his time. The get up for blank spaces being home for violation, degradation, extreme rape, and other-worldly forms of vaginal torture seem oddly reminiscent of various MASD's or GEN's. Suddenly, the film halts when you see something unheard of in a Gore film. A negro woman appears. Even goes as far as being a racial border-basher as she is vomited all over. Two clean shaved white women beat, smash, degrade, and rape (with fluids) a young Negro whore. Scenes like these make me chuckle while imagining that the reason Valentine films these upwards shots beneath vomit is due to him being an emetophile. Suicide Girls don't have shit on this ragtag group of ladies. ReGOREgitated Sacrifice (and the lot) are in essence a psycho-surreal Odyssey idolizing Kurt Cobain. I don't happen to like Nirvana for that matter, so I might have missed something here or there. Regardless of what you think about his previous films, or his forum trolling habits, ReGOREgitated Sacrifice is a fine independent film with several high points. Hell, even if I down right hated these films, I'd still be proud of the intensely creepy crayon art he produces.

-mAQ

LA BOUCHE DE JEAN-PIERRE
LA BOUCHE DE JEAN-PIERRE

Lucile Hadzihalilovic (1996)

A film to do with the strictest imitation from mother to child, *La Bouche de Jean-Pierre* is a film directed by Lucile Hadzihalilovic, the wife of Gaspar Noe. Early on, I pointed out the directorial inspirations of *La Bouche de Jean-Pierre* to be that of French psychodrama, *I Stand Alone*. After discovering that Gaspar Noe was not only the cinematographer but charitable husband to the lady director, let's just say that some pieces finally fit into place. Opening this 52 minute short is the introduction of an unstable woman first forcing a man out of her house only to decide that she really wants him to stay. A female prioritizing is domestic suicide, so it seems. What originally tempted him to leave is unknown. Perhaps the mental fragility of his once little whore. Upon his exculpation of what was likely a terrible and domineering relationship, the mother, the woman with sole responsibility of her daughter, decides to swallow a mouthful of prescription medication. Like the average youngster in cinema, the little girl observes, unknowingly, as her mom attempts to take her own life. As most of these (generally) young adult tales begin, Mimi is sent to live with her callous aunt in a small apartment.

Smart idea, slut.

Once the adorable little girl settles into the closet of this squalid flat, no sooner is she introduced to the namesake of the film, Jean-Pierre. Her innocence catches the eye of Jean-Pierre and upon his instincts catching onto the vestiges of what was once a "normal" young girl, his eyes flicker into a predatory state. After the exposure of the pitiless Solange sinks in, the emotions that are already mutilated begin to bleed again. Being forced out into the hallway, young Mimi is greeted by a group of friendly teenage musicians. Housing in their apartment while Solange ignorantly vacuums, the silent, vulnerable girl smiles, for the first time in ages, while these boys strum on their guitars. After Mimi is scolded by this pseudo-father figure, Jean-Pierre storms to the next door, threatening grievous bodily harm on the boy. Most likely because he feels his territory was impeded on. This leads to the next pivotal scene, arguably the most discomfiting, in which Jean-Pierre attempts to force himself on the impressionable girl. Touting Gaspar Noe's name was the logical thing to do in case of releasing a French experiment in continued nihilism. While the look and camera-work compliments the aesthetic of Noe's, the tone is inexplicably lighter, as Noe would never feign from displaying the cruelties of life. Lucile Hadzihalilovic dips her foot into the pool of madness in which her husband occupies but the horrors within must have frightened her as she quickly withdraws. *La Bouche de Jean-Pierre* is an unwillingly doubt of female directors and their optimistic escapism. Rarely has a female director been brazen enough to tap into a primal discourse in which men find so natural.

Begging for a kiss, hence the title (which roughly translates into Jean-Pierre's Mouth), Jean-Pierre fondles the girl as her pupils reflect only an emptiness, an emptiness that even as soulless as she currently is, could never mask just how glazed over and miles away she is. The performances within are incredible. The young female lead must have familiarity with sexual abuse as her passive resistance seemed to be such a fluid reaction to the advances of men, and Jean-Pierre dominates as one of the slimiest men in cinema. Although the pieces are all present, much of the sympathy doesn't seem directed properly. While the ending was mildly heart-breaking, it's noticed that the handling of this "doll" wasn't delivered to full effect causing much impact to wander about and audience interests aloof. Seeing such a sweet girl sunken to trauma so swiftly shouldn't be enjoyed by anyone and as usual, the women are blind to the abuse as it doesn't involve heirlooms or hairbrushes. *La Bouche de Jean-Pierre* is nowhere near a marvel but adjacent to *Sodomites*, concludes what is an excellent campaign towards the aberrant nature of sex in the hands of the weak.

-mAQ

DON'T TORTURE A DUCKLING
DON'T TORTURE A DUCKLING

Lucio Fulci (1972)

Unquestionably, *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) aka *Non si sevizia un paperino* is one of my top three favorite Lucio Fulci films and not without good reason as the Italian filmmaker, who himself regarded it as his own personal favorite among all the films he had directed, finally found his nefarious niche with the wonderfully wicked work, ultimately eventually earning himself the much deserved title of "Godfather of Gore." Indeed, a sort of vaguely Pasolini-esque Giallo flick set in a small Southern Italian village revolving around the mysterious death of young prepubescent Catholic boys by a deranged psychopath, *Don't Torture a Duckling* was the film where the Guido master of the cinematically grotesque demonstrated his subversive eye for gorgeous gore and unhinged ultra-violence. A pre-flesheater flick created before Fulci became an international horror icon for directing *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie*, *Don't Torture a Duckling* stands out strikingly among the filmmaker's oeuvre in that it is an innately linear and plot-driven work that lacks the sort of Artaud-inspired oniric essence of his later masterpieces of the macabre like *The Beyond* (1981) aka *L'aldilà* and *The House by the Cemetery* (1981) aka *Quella villa accanto al cimitero*. Also quite unlike Fulci's later flicks, *Don't Torture a Duckling* does not hopelessly pretend to be an American production, but is, in fact, aside from possibly his pre-horror goofy goombah comedies, the director's most intrinsically and flagrantly Italian work that wallows in the angelic beauty of the Southern Italian countryside and features the sort of 'anti-Catholic Catholicism' that only Catholic-indoctrinated Guido filmmakers can pull off. In fact, despite being an imperative and groundbreaking work in Fulci's career, *Don't Torture a Duckling* was immediately blacklisted and only received a limited theatrical release (it was not even released in the United States in any format until 2000) due to its uniquely unflattering depiction of the Catholic church and portrayal of Italian peasants as hotheaded hicks with murderously superstitious minds. As far as I am concerned, *Don't Torture a Duckling* is one of the strangest, greatest, and most artfully assembled Giallo flicks ever made as a work that deserves a place alongside Giulio Questi's *Death Laid an Egg* (1968) aka *La morte ha fatto l'uovo* and Silvio Narizzano's *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* aka *The Sky Is Falling* as a wonderfully wayward work that takes the Guido murder mystery genre into more delightfully deranged territory. A work that unquestionably proves that Fulci was not a no-talent horror hack who merely used buckets of blood and phantasmagoric imagery to hide the fact he was incapable of telling a story with character development and complex plots, *Don't Torture a Duckling* is a 'whodunit' flick with equal doses of scathing style and substance that leaves the viewers guessing until the very end, thus concluding in an ungodly manner that makes one question whether or not the director was the victim of a sexually

repressed priest when he was a child.

Bruno, Michele, and Tonino are a troublesome trio of boys who live in the small and isolated Southern Italian village of Accendura and not one of the boys will live long enough to reach puberty and deflower their first girl as a mysterious mad man with an unhealthy obsession with little lads will ultimately brutally murder each one of them. When bad boy Bruno goes missing, the remote village of Accendura has the rare distinction of reaching the national spotlight as a media frenzy occurs that brings the sharp and satirical liberal journalist Andrea Martelli (Tomas Milian) to the area to investigate. Initially, the local village idiot and peeping tom Giuseppe Barra (Vito Passeri) is implicated in the crime after he is found lurking around the body where Bruno is buried. Indeed, while Barra was one the first ones to discover the corpse of Bruno, he did not kill the boy but merely phoned his parents in a patently pathetic attempt to extract an absurdly small ransom. Of course, when the drowned corpse of Bruno's friend Tonino is found while Barra is imprisoned, it becomes quite obvious that the retarded peeping tom did not commit the killing. When the last of the three boys, Michele, is killed via strangulation after he makes the fatal mistake of sneaking out of his home at night, the townspeople begin to look for a scapegoat for the murders. Of course, the villagers suspect the sexually promiscuous beauty Patrizia (German-American actress Barbara Bouchet)—a scantily clad counter-culture chick from Milan who is laying low after being involved in a drug scandal and who gets off to displaying her unclad tanned body to prepubescent boys, including one of the ones who was killed—as a young local priest, Don Alberto Avallone (Marc Porel), even hints to journalist Martelli that the murders only started to occur after she arrived and defiled the village with her voluptuous presence. Priest Don Alberto also confides in Martelli that he firmly believes loose morals are to blame for the tragic deaths and that he has managed to censor liberal/counter-culture material appearing in the village, stating, “Then something bad happens, and everyone wonders why! So they look for a culprit...and nobody understand that it's our tolerance that's to blame...I'm friends with the news vendor, and he won't sell certain magazines...They don't even arrive here.” The priest runs a youth group at the church and cons the boys into going to become more involved with god and the church by playing soccer with them. While twink-ish priest Don Alberto is unanimously loved and respected by all the villagers, his reclusive mother Aurelia (Irene Papas) is a strange and mysterious woman who, as Martelli is told by one villager, is essentially “only tolerated because she is the priest's mother.” Another suspect in the murders is a beautiful yet decidedly dirty black magic witch named La Magiara (Florinda Bolkan) who has a peculiar proclivity for digging up infant skeletons and fiddling with voodoo dolls, including driving pins through three dolls that are ostensibly symbols of the three little lads that were killed.

Eventually, proletarian witch Magiara is arrested for the murders and when

DON'T TORTURE A DUCKLING

she is brought to the police station, she proudly proclaims she is responsible for killing the three boys as she seems to assume her voodoo doll excursions were successful. While Magiara is cleared of the charges after a police officer provides her with an alibi, she ultimately meets a grizzly end when a group of superstitious villagers decide to take matters into their own hands and brutally beat the would-be-witch an inch away from her life after spotting her in the local graveyard. While succumbing to her wounds, Magiara attempts to flag down passing cars but is ignored as if she is mere rodent road kill, ultimately dying on the side of the road. The next day, another boy is killed via drowning and posh druggo princess Patrizia's fancy gold-plated cigarette lighter is found at the scene, thus implicating her in the crime, but luckily she has an alibi as she was buying some dope at the time of the murder. Naturally, Martelli and Patrizia, being the most cosmopolitan and 'progressive' people investigating the boy murders, decide to team up and solve the mystery themselves. After learning that priest Don Alberto has a retarded six-year-old sister with a perverse, peculiar proclivity for dismembering her dolls, including Donald Duck dolls (hence, the title *Don't Torture a Duckling*), Martelli comes to the conclusion that the girl has witnessed the murders and is merely imitating what she saw. Ultimately, Martelli and Patrizia conclude that either Don Alberto or his mother is responsible for the murders. Although Don Alberto's sister and mother disappear, Martelli and Patrizia later track down the mother, who is semi-conscious after taking a beat from her unholy holy son, in a medieval shack. Don Alberto begs Martelli to stop her perturbed priest from killing her daughter. Luckily, Martelli catches Don Alberto right before he throws his sister off a cliff. Martelli and Don Alberto get in a small brawl and the wussy journalist manages to trip up the pussy priest, who falls off the cliff head first, and ultimately smashes his skulls against the rocks as he plunges to his violent yet fitting death as a fallen disciple of Christ. As to why he committed the crazed killings of the young boys that he proclaimed to love so much and devoted his life to, Martelli states, "They grow up...They feel the stirrings of the flesh. They fall into the arms of sin. We must stop them. Sin that God easily forgives, yes...But what of tomorrow? What sordid acts will they commit? What sins will they enact when they no longer come to confession? Then they will be really dead. Dead forever." Indeed, maybe if Patrizia had not gotten busted for snorting coke in Milan and sought exile in the small Sicilian village, then all the senseless deaths could have been prevented.

Described by Lucio Fulci's contemporary and Giallo maestro Dario Argento as, "One of Lucio Fulci's best films and a superb Giallo!" *Don't Torture a Duckling* certainly managed to bring new lunatic lifeblood to a fiercely formulaic genre as a work that manages to reconcile the celluloid blasphemy of Alberto Cavallone (indeed, it is a great incidental irony that the killer priest's name is "Alberto Avallone") with the thrilling crime-drama of Fernando Di Leo and the atmospheric Guido Giallo greatness of Argento. A socially scathing work

that depicts Sicily as a quasi-medieval shithole populated by superstitious lynch mobs, pernicious priests of the homicidal (and possibly pedophilic) sort, and a rather large population of retards, *Don't Torture a Duckling* is ultimately no less hateful, if not more personally so, in its depiction of rural Southern rednecks than the anti-Heimat films of German New Cinema and popular Hollywood movies like John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972), thereupon also making it one of Fulci's most socio-politically penetrating works. Personally, I am glad that Fulci eventually dropped the socialpolitical pretenses yet, admittedly, it does not reach intolerable nor obnoxious extremes in *Don't Torture a Duckling*, in part due to the fact that 'progressive' Patrizia is portrayed as a county cocktease who gets off to pseudo-seducing preteen boys and does not do much aside from drugs and sunbathing. Also, unlike the degenerates in Hollywood, who merely make crude and preposterous caricatures of rednecks and other people they are afraid of, Fulci's hatred is clearly personal and thus more authentic. Featuring an unflattering portrait of a Catholic village that could have most certainly inspired Cavallone's absurdist masterpiece *Man, Woman and Beast* (1977) aka *L'uomo, la donna e la bestia - Spell* (*Dolce mattatoio*) and easily one of the creepiest and most bizarre portrayals of a priest in cinema history, *Don't Torture a Duckling* is certainly a masterpiece of its genre that also, like the greatest works of the genre, transcends said genre. Including a totally complimentary score from Riz Ortolani (*Goodbye Uncle Tom* aka *Addio Zio Tom*, *Cannibal Holocaust*) and alluring landscape scenes of the Sicilian countryside that recall the films of Pasolini, *Don't Torture a Duckling* is, in my less than humble opinion, the ultimate Guido Giallo film as a curious cinematic cocktail of what dagoes do best cinematically: sex, death, crime, politics, and religion. Although a pure assumption, I think it is safe to say after watching *Don't Torture a Duckling* and *The House by the Cemetery* that maestro Fulci had an unhappy childhood, but thank god he did or otherwise the world would otherwise not have what is probably the greatest killer priest movie ever made.

-Ty E

ZOMBI 2
ZOMBI 2

Lucio Fulci (1979)

The very first Italian film I ever saw—be it exploitation or otherwise—was *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie* aka *Zombie Flesh Eaters* aka *Woodoo* directed by Guido “Godfather of Gore” (fuck hokey Hebrew Herschell!) Lucio Fulci (*A Lizard in a Woman’s Skin*, *City of the Living Dead*). Before actually watching it, I had almost mystical expectations for *Zombi 2*, especially after hearing about the iconic scene where an aquatic flesheater battles a shark, so naturally I was a little bit let down when I actually saw the film for the first time some 15+ years ago and realized how poorly directed and nonsensical it was, but since then it has grown on me like an old battle scar such that I have developed a strange sort of sentimentality for it as the years have passed. One of a number of films that proved that Italians are the only people in the world that can make cinematic rip-offs that are better than the originals, *Zombi 2*, which was titled simply as ‘Zombie’ in the United States, was released as an ostensible sequel to George A. Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), which was known as *Zombi* in Italy. Apparently lifting scenes and dialogue straight from *Dawn of the Dead*, *Zombi 2*, despite being a work titled to cash in on another film, is especially interesting in that it deconstructs what Romero revolutionized with *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) in its reintroduction of the black voodoo angle which was quite typical of pre-Romero flesheater flicks like the first feature-length zombie film ever made, *White Zombie* (1932) directed by Victor Halperin and starring Béla Lugosi. A pleasantly putrid postcolonial celluloid guts-and-gore-fest featuring worm-infested zombie Spanish Conquistadors and pale black flesheaters descended from the African slave trades (although, despite being set on a mostly black island, most of the zombies are actually white!), *Zombi 2* is a vaguely intertextual zombie flick that derives a great amount of its fright factor if looked at as a depiction of negro spiritual revenge for slavery and forcing civilization on the uncivilized (the fact that one of the main characters, Dr. Menard, is irked that he cannot figure out a scientific reason for zombification is symbolic of this ‘revolt against civilization’). Indeed, in its great cliffhanger ending (*Zombi 2* would work better as a prequel to *Dawn of the Dead*) where the zombies begin invading New York City—a place that prides itself in taking in rabble from the darkest and most primitive spheres of the earth—*Zombi 2* has aged surprisingly quite well since its release over four decades ago, as not only has America been drastically degenerated into a third world shithole, especially where urban areas are concerned, but the American populous itself has turned more and more zombie-like, hence the popularity of flesheaters nowadays as a sort of biting reflection of humanity as a whole. Like *Night of the Living Dead* set on a tropical island with slight influence from H. G. Wells’ *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *White Zombie*, *Zombi 2*, which was written by Fulci’s longtime collabora-

tor Dardano Sacchetti (1990: *The Bronx Warriors*, *Manhattan Baby*) and his wife Elisa Briganti, is a work that features almost intolerable histrionic acting, a shockingly juvenile and oftentimes nonsensical script, glaringly bad dubbing and a conspicuously culturally mongrelized cast comprised of people who could not even communicate with one another in real-life, yet it is also an undeniable masterpiece of quasi-exploitation zombie scenes with some of the most classic and iconic gore, makeup, music, death scenes and—most importantly—zombies in film history as a work that truly proves that Italians do it better, especially when it comes to agreeable cinematic trash of the superlatively sleazy sort. The film that made director Lucio Fulci a maestro of the macabre and an international superstar auteur of sleazy schlock cinema that was followed by important works like *City of the Living Dead* (1980), *The Beyond* (1981), *The House by the Cemetery* (1981), *The Black Cat* (1981), *The New York Ripper* (1982) and *Manhattan Baby* (1982), *Zombi 2* is and will always be, if nothing else, a rite of passage for any serious and self-respecting horror fan.

An abandoned yacht of the seemingly yuppie sort is floating around a New York City harbor, so two Harbor Patrol officers board the ship to investigate and one of them is in for a surprise when a bloated zombie that resembles a sort of rotting Fat Albert bites the flesh out of the officer's neck thereupon instantly killing the man in blue, so the remaining cop shoots the undead being and the grotesque bulky beast falls in the ocean and simply disappears. Not long after, a beautiful babe named Anne Bowles (Tisa Farrow), whose doctor father owned the phantom yacht and apparently left town to do some research on a tropical island, is questioned by the police regarding her daddy, who is nowhere to be found, thus inspiring her to do her own investigation. Meanwhile, semi-sleazy English newspaper reporter Peter West (Ian McCulloch), who for whatever reason thinks he has the refined wit of Oscar Wilde, is asked by his editor (played by Fulci in a cameo role) to investigate the bourgeois ghost ship and when he does, he bumps into Anne, who he admits he has been stalking for some time at the behest of his boss. While getting to know one another on the boat in what will ultimately evolve into an aborted romance, Anne and Peter discover a note written by the girl's father stating he is on the island of Matool (Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands) and that he contracted some strange undiagnosed disease, so the two strangers decide to head there. Upon arriving in the tropics, Anne and Peter bump into two sexy seafaring strangers, Bryan Curt (Al Cliver aka Pier Luigi Conti) and Susan Barrett (Auretta Gay) and the two join them on a pseudo-erotic exotic adventure that recalls Ruggero Deodato's *Waves of Lust* (1975), which Mr. blond Nordic Guido Al Cliver also starred in. Unbeknownst to the four beautiful yet one-dimensional characters whose existences are ultimately trivial when it comes to the sleazy cinematic majesty that is *Zombi 2*, Matool is a perturbingly primitive island ridden with disease and death, especially of the walking dead sort, which has been assumedly cursed by voodoo

ZOMBI 2

slave magic. An atheistic physician at the local Christian mission, Dr. David Menard (Richard Johnson), is determined to figure out why the negro natives, as well as partners, are dropping like flies and becoming reanimated into cannibalistic creatures, but his boldly bitchy yet nonetheless beautiful young wife Paola (Olga Karlatos) is determined to leave for obvious reasons. On their way to Matool, Susan decides to go topless scuba diving while wearing nothing but a thong of the ass-flossing sort and while under water she is approached by a shark, but luckily a predatory zombie, who can swim faster than most undead ghouls can walk, appears from nowhere and battles the sea beast, ironically saving the little lass' life in the process in what is easily one of the most iconic and irritatingly absurd scenes of *Zombi 2*.

Rather unfortunately, Mernard's seemingly sexually repressed wife Paola is not so lucky because after a zombie plays peeping tom on her while she is in the shower, she is soon attacked and has her eye pierced when a zombie pulls her head into a large splintered piece of wood. The next day, aside from losing his much younger wife to cannibalistic corpses (which he has yet to discover), Mernard has the luxury of shooting his friend Matthias (Franco Fantasia) in the head after he turns into a zombie. Eventually Anne and her new friends arrive at Matool and she tells Mernard about her sob story regarding her father. When the group heads to Mernard's cozy mansion, they discover the body of Paolo being dined on by a motley crew of reanimated corpses, but luckily they make a hasty escape, only to crash their jeep on the way out, which causes Peter to injure his leg. While resting in the jungle, Anne examines Peter's leg and the two eventually begin to finally makeout after flirting for the entire film, but they make the unwitting mistake of getting down and dirty over the graves of Spanish Conquistadors, whose gorgeously grotesque corpses rise from the earth and immediately start feeding on human meat. While Anne merely has her hair pulled and Peter has his leg grabbed by the antiquated corpses, Susan is not as lucky as she becomes petrified at the sight of the zombies and essentially does not put a fight with the Conquistador corpse, ultimately being ripped to shreds in the process. Eventually, Matool becomes totally overrun by wobbling corpses, so the survivors barricade themselves in Mernard's backwards mission hospital in a *Night of the Living Dead*-esque fashion. Naturally, the zombies bombard the hospital and break in, killing Mernard while he is looking for bullets. Stunned at seeing his girlfriend Susan in postmortem yet mobile zombie form, Bryan fails to fight back against his undead girlfriend and is bitten, thus contracting the cursed contagion. Anne, Peter, and infected Bryan manage to escape Matool via their yacht, but little do they realize what awaits them back at civilization. Of course, Bryan eventually turns into a zombie and Peter decides against Anne's wishes to keep him locked in a secure boat room to prove to people back home about the zombie nemesis, but the journalist's efforts prove to be in vain as NYC is already crawling with zombies as the ungodly epidemic has reached global proportions,

thus basically superficially concluding where Dawn of the Dead begins.

Featuring pretty morons who go on romantic rendezvous in graveyards despite zombie epidemics, zombies who can barely walk but make great swimmers and underwater shark hunters, and centuries old Spanish Conquistadors that are still somehow rotting and fresh with worms, among various other absurd and nonsensical moments that transcend simple 'movie magic,' Zombi 2 is undoubtedly celluloid trash of the sickeningly stupid sort, yet it is suavely stylized trash with charisma and 'class' that indisputably proves that sometimes style and sensationalism can reign over substance as a work that ultimately belongs to the best that the zombie horror subgenre has to offer. Featuring more (meat)balls than brains and more guts than sagaciousness, Zombi 2 is half-ass exploitation horror cinema done right as the sort of cinematic equivalent to going on a haunted house amusement park ride with a high-talian hooker. Thankfully, missing the moronically simple leftwing social commentary that plagues George A. Romero's films, Zombi 2 even goes so far as being politically incorrect, portraying a corner's black assistant named James as a bungling buffoon, black islanders as supernatural beings of sorts who can sense evil as if they have some special animal sense, and women as hopelessly helpless and hysterical perennial victims who do not even have the sense to run when a zombie is slowly approaching them. Once described by its Scottish star Ian McCulloch in an interview as being, "a very silly and horrible film," Zombi 2 was ultimately more successful at the box office than the film it ripped off, Dawn of the Dead, even spawning four unrelated and ultimately worthless sequels (only of one these, Zombi 3 (1988) aka Zombie Flesh Eaters 2, was an 'official' sequel and was directed by Fulci, who got sick and could not finish the film), though director Lucio Fulci would go on to be arguably the greatest Italian filmmaker of celluloid horror splatter who has ever lived. Featuring the greatest eye gouging scene since Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog* and zombies that are superior to any ever created by George A. Romero, Zombi 2 is, indeed, the ultimate flesheater flick as a work of hypnotic (and never hokey!) zombie horror that refuses to die and rightfully so!

-Ty E

CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD
CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD

Lucio Fulci (1980)

In my opinion (as well as many other people's), the first film in Guido 'Godfather of Gore' Lucio Fulci's unofficial pseudo-American Gothic 'Gates of Hell' trilogy, *City of the Living Dead* (1980) aka *Paura nella città dei morti viventi* aka *The Gates of Hell* aka *Twilight of the Dead* aka *Fear in the City of the Living Dead*, is also the worst and most intrinsically incoherent chapter in the maestro of the macabre's flesheater triptych, as if the director took a bunch of bad LSD and jumbled together a bunch of horrifically half-baked yet sometimes hypnotic horror clichés, ranging from Lovecraft to Romero, and threw in some admittedly grotesque and even gorgeous gore, thinking it would be enough ingredients to make for a filmable feature-length film. Indeed, *City of the Living Dead* is in many ways, Fulci at his most compulsively cliché and culturally mongrelized as the perfect work for the director's detractors to criticize as a film that, not unlike *Zombie* (1979) aka *Zombi 2*, was shamelessly marketed to capitalize off of *Dawn of the Dead* (1979) Guido-style, so much so that United Film Distribution Company filed a cease and desist order against Motion Picture Marketing due to the film's title (which was originally 'Twilight of the Dead' until legal problems changed that) and posters with a striking resemblance to the Romero flick, hence why the work was later re-titled *The Gates of Hell* for its release. Somewhat following in the thematic tradition of the director's subversive Giallo *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) aka *Non si sevizia un paperino*, *City of the Living Dead* is a Catholic-themed work where pseudo-metaphysical movie madness is ushered in after a mentally perturbed priest commits suicide in a Gothic New England graveyard, thus unwittingly opening the gates of hell in the process, which includes an invasion from Übermensch zombies of supernatural strength that seem more powerful than Jesus Christ himself. Featuring people vomit out their innards in a manner that seems to be a mockery of the bleeding orifices associated with stigmata of traditional Roman Catholic iconography, *City of the Living Dead* is clearly the work of a hostilely heretical man who is the closest thing to a genuine anti-pope of the horror genre, as a man reared in Catholicism who utilized the religion's most stereotypical traditions against itself, assumedly reserving a spot in hell for himself in the process, or at least one would hope. Featuring endless bucket loads of creepy crawling maggots and gushing guts, more fog and frights than John Carpenter's *The Fog* (1980), all-powerful and positively pernicious zombies that make Romero's zombies seem like retarded road kill, and enough misogyny to act as the nemesis of Romero's 'female power' pseudo-feminist flesheater flick *Day of the Dead* (1985), *City of the Living Dead*, even in all its nonsensical glory is still, when everything is said and done, a must-see flick for zombiephiles as one of Fulci's more interesting and flagrantly fucked celluloid abortions.

A Catholic priest named Father William Thomas (Fabrizio Jovine), whose name should probably be Padre Guido as he looks like a super Sicilian wop, makes the horribly heretical mistake of committing suicide by hanging himself in a foreboding and fog-covered graveyard in the Lovecraft-inspired area of Dunwich, New England, as the holy man's act of unholy self-slaughter somehow causes the gates of hell to open up thus causing all hell to break loose, including the rising of undead, perpetually rotting corpses. Meanwhile, a pretty New York psychic named Mary Woodhouse (Catriona MacColl) ostensibly dies of fright during a multicultural séance (one of the psychics is a black drug dealer) after having a vision of Father Thomas' untimely suicide, or so everyone assumes. Luckily, a less than handsome and hardly youthful investigative reporter named Peter Bell (Christopher George) gets nosy and happens to go by Mary's grave as she screams right before she is buried six feet under (the undertakers are too lazy to completely bury her that day!) and he saves her from suffocating to death in just the nick of time, ironically almost killing her in the process while breaking the coffin open. Naturally, Peter and Mary unite and eventually realize that everything that has happened was prophesied in the Book of Enoch. No longer holy nor human but super sinisterly Svengali-like in his decidedly demonic and deadly wickedness, Father Thomas is now a sort of all-powerful zombie Führer who can make hot girls barf out their guts and compel cruddy corpses to turn into supernatural flesheaters with quasi-cosmic powers that transcend both time and space. Meanwhile, a young and seemingly normal chick named Emily Robbins (Antonella Interlenghi) goes to hang out with a young degenerate named Bob (Giovanni Lombardo Radice)—a fiercely fucked fellow who has a peculiar propensity for fondling and fucking anatomically correct blowup dolls—but she is soon attacked and killed by zombie overlord Father Thomas, who also kills a young couple on a date shortly after, causing a little lady to barf out her intestines and rip her boyfriend brains out in a manner that makes the back of his head seem like it had a date with a shotgun instead of his girlfriend. Not long after, in what is arguably the most infamous scene of *City of the Living Dead*, burnout blowup-doll-fucker Bob has his brain drilled in from temple-to-temple by a girl's father he was screwing around with who has decided to take matters in his own hands and has quite wrongly assumed the pathetic pervert is responsible for all the recent deaths in Dunwich. Eventually, Mary and Peter hook up with another couple, psychiatrist Jerry (Carlo De Mejo) and his patient Sandra (Janet Agren), as the would-be-fierce but ultimately feeble foursome hopes to close the portal to Hell before All Saints Day, or else the world will plunge into total darkness and Satanic supernatural flesheaters will consume the earth. In the end, only Gerry and Mary survive and *City of the Living Dead* concludes in a ridiculous manner after a young boy named John-John Robbins (Luca Venantini)—the prepubescent little brother of Father Thomas' victim Emily Robbins—runs to the survivors, only for the image of the boy to pause and shatter. Apparently,

CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD

John-John turns into a zombie, or at least that is what director Fulci said, stating of the ambiguous ending, which was originally supposed to be happy (with the little boy merely reuniting with the two adult heroes), that it was the film editor's idea. Anyway, whoever's idea it was, it was a half ass one that screams 'hatchet job.'

Indeed, compared to the ominously otherworldly conclusions of the other two films in Fulci's Gates of Hell trilogy—*The Beyond* (1981) and *The House by the Cemetery* (1981)—*City of the Living Dead* seems like it ends in a manner where funding for the film ran out and the director was just forced to tack something on the end in a decidedly desperate attempt to get it released. Indubitably, the weakest and most lackluster chapter of the Gates of Hell trilogy, *City of the Living Dead* is only saved from being a total filmic failure due to its superlatively sadistic gore and unhinged ultra-violence, oftentimes foreboding atmosphere, and nonchalant misogyny. Indeed, aside from depicting most women as empty ciphers, *City of the Living Dead* also features great pseudo-Freudian dialogue like, "You're only nurturing a pet neurosis... Like 70% of the female population of this country!" which, it should be noted, is stated by one woman to another as if that is actually how members of the fairer sex speak to one another! Ultimately, *City of the Living Dead* is a compulsively confused and innately incoherent work where certain individual parts—mainly the grotesque gore scenes—are greater than the whole, thus making it comparable to two nice tits and an ass without a head. Alluding to two of America's greatest and darkest minds of horror literature, Edgar Allan Poe and especially H.P. Lovecraft, *City of the Living Dead*, not unlike the other two chapters of the Gates of Hell trilogy, is a curiously conspicuous celluloid cultural mongrel that almost seems to go out of its way to reveal its grand goombah origins as a work intrinsically ill-equipped with superlatively swarthy actors, brazenly bad dubbing, reckless wop Catholic themes and imagery, and American cultural clichés, including random references to the Salem witch trials. Still, like any Fulci flick from the 1970s and early 1980s, *City of the Living Dead* still belongs to the celluloid aristocracy of both Guido exploitation cinema and zombie cinema in general. Intrinsically irrational to its corpse-ridden core due to its erratic editing, nonsensical storyline, totally superficial and shallow characters, and castrated conclusion, *City of the Living Dead* only stands out today as a somewhat singular work mainly due to its aesthetic pleasing hatred for the human body via its venomously extravagant depictions of violent deaths as a cinematic work that makes aberrant art out of a woman literally regurgitating her intestines out. Apparently, inspiring a young kraut to hang himself after it was released in Deutschland under the title of 'A Zombie Hanged on a Bell Rope' (the film has since been banned in Germany for over 20 years), *City of the Living Dead* is macabre movie misanthropy at its most visceral and philistine, which is something I can respect more than than feminist flesheater-killers à la Romero's *Day of the Dead*.

-Ty E

THE BEYOND
THE BEYOND

Lucio Fulci (1981)

I consider myself a fan of one of the Italian auteurs of shock and blood; Fulci being one and Argento being the other. I've chewed through films so fast in the last several years that I constantly jump from genre to genre and never fully expunge the classics and must-see's out of my queue. Finally, I halted the procrastination and have given more attention to the ones that deserve it. *The Beyond* (*Seven Doors of Death*) is Fulci's most critically acclaimed work and it's not hard to see why. It's an intelligent horror film with that dreary oneiric dust that shimmers across the screen. It's visually tempting and an exercise in master lighting and sound progression, but I found myself wanting substance to the body of the film. I did appreciate Fulci's "two cents" on Neurobiology and the attack on the "thought process" by constantly denouncing the hallucinogenic experiences that were occurring all around. *The Beyond* is composed of three different sections. Much like most Italian horror, the opening is a flashback to a time of a severely disenchanting land where butchery and crucifixion were carried out. The middle of the film is the "Hey, let's shove a lot of nonsensical gore into a tight space". The body count was entertaining but otherwise useless. I found the "Gate of Hell killing you for finding out its secret" factor quite bothersome after the 3rd random killing. The ending is a full fledged attack on "happy endings" as it isn't neither a sad or a grand outcome. The result leaves you mystified and in awe. It's part of a void that engulfs everything; a lingering plane of dimension also known as hell. I fancy the way Fulci designed this purgatory. It's barren and littered with mummified bodies (Who are actually hobo's that Fulci bribed with alcohol). I even sniffed out a trace of the same aesthetic used by Lamberto Bava in *Demons*. *The Beyond* is definitely one of his best. It took several attempts for him to create a "masterful" supernatural film with the undead using correct lighting and color filters. The setting is eerie and the gore is in place. The stand alone scenes include a dog ripping out a jugular and a head explosion that has become quite iconic in the gorehound culture. This film was an absolute blast and I think I favor this over *Suspiria*, albeit the soundtrack was infinitely better.

-mAQ

THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY

Lucio Fulci (1981)

When I first saw *The House by the Cemetery* (1981) aka *Quella villa accanto al cimitero*—the concluding chapter of Italian maestro of mayhem Lucio Fulci's unofficial abyss-staring 'Gates of Hell' trilogy, following *City of the Living Dead* (1980) aka *Paura nella città dei morti viventi* and *The Beyond* (1981) aka *L'aldilà*—some fifteen or so years ago, I thought it was one of the most shamelessly derivative, conspicuously culturally confused and mongrelized, and nauseatingly nonsensical films I had ever seen and although my opinion has not changed much regarding most these ultimately irrelevant complains, like many of the films directed by the the great goombah "Godfather of Gore," the cross-subgenre horror flick has grown on me quite considerably, as a sort of Guido exploitation horror equivalent to European arthouse cinema that wallows in stunning schlock and shock. Directed by a man who was highly influenced by crazed French playwright Antonin Artaud's idea of 'cruel' imagery to shock the audience members into action and reaction and who once stated during a general discussion of his works *The Beyond* and *The House by the Cemetery*, "my idea was to make an absolute film...there's no logic to it, just a succession of images," *The House by the Cemetery*, like most of Fulci's films, will seem totally incomprehensible to the average American filmgoer and even horror fan, as a work that focuses on audacious aestheticism of the aberrantly atmospheric sort over plot and storyline, thus being a work of 'pure horror' in the truest, at least if one can look past the rather ridiculous dubbing. Of course, considering its flagrant thematic and aesthetic similarities with *Frankenstein* (1931) directed by James Whale, *The Amityville Horror* (1979), and *The Shining* (1980) directed by Stanley Kubrick, as well as Fulci's admitted influence from the classic British gothic horror flick *The Innocents* (1961) directed by Jack Clayton, *The House by the Cemetery* is certainly a film with a plot and storyline, if not a hopelessly holey and haphazard one featuring a sort of degenerate dego dream logic that acts as an innate and ultimately intriguing ingredient of the film that—when everything is said and done—makes it stand strangely apart from the films it so shamelessly rips off. Like most of Fulci's filmic nightmares, *The House by the Cemetery* is an undeniably Italian flick with an all Italian cast that pretends to be American, as a Guido gothic horror flick ostensibly set in New England, but feels like it takes place in some ominous otherworldly metaphysical hell of the culturally mongrelized sort. Borrowing conventions from horror subgenres including (but not limited to) psychological horror, haunted house flicks, zombie flicks, teen slasher movies, Poe-esque Gothic/Victorian horror, and Fulci's own classic celluloid splatter and unhinged ultra-violence, *The House by the Cemetery* is, if nothing else, a fierce fever dream of the divinely derivative sort that derangedly defecates out virtually every classic convention and cliché of cellu-

THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY

loid horror, thus acting as a sort of cinematic link between classic silent horror and senseless splatter cinema.

Opening with a topless young babe (Daniela Doria) calling out for her boyfriend, only to receive a knife to the back of her skull that exits through her mouth shortly after discovering her man's mangled body, *The House by the Cemetery* begins like a pseudo-sexy slasher flick, but soon switches to more traditional horror, albeit with gore galore thrown in between. Little blond boy Bob Boyle (Giovanni Frezzi) has a lot in common with Danny Torrance of *The Shining* as he can talk to dead people, most specifically a redhaired little girl named Mae Freudstein (Silvia Collatina) who looks like a young Lindsay Lohan and who the little boy first notices in a vintage photograph of an old New England house. Bob's father Norman (Paolo Malco) is taking his son and wife Lucy (Catriona MacColl) and moving the family from NYC to Boston to the New England house in the photograph, which was previously occupied by his ex-colleague, Dr. Peterson, who went mad whilst living at the home and slaughtered his mistress and subsequently committed suicide, thus making it a rather eerie and senseless place to move, especially for a young family. Upon arriving in New Whitby, Boston, Bob sees his phantom friend Mae across the street and she warns him that both him and his parents are in danger and should have never moved to the curiously quaint and antiquated New England home; when Bob's parents go searching for him, instead of seeing him speaking with Mae, they find him holding a creepy old Hans Bellmer-esque doll, which looks a lot like Mae, and ultimately creeps out the boy's mother Lucy. Indeed, Norman and wife Lucy suspect something is amiss about the house when the realtor Mrs. Gittelson (Dagmar Lassander) gets offended when one of her fellow employees describes the house as "the Freudstein" as opposed to her preferred name, "Oak Mansion." Upon arriving at so-called "Oak Mansion," the Boyles discover the place is in rather poor shape, as if it had not been occupied in decades or even a century, not to mention the fact that the cellar door is nailed/locked shut for whatever reason. In order to uncover more about the history of Oak Mansion, Norman Boyle goes to the local library the next day and learns from the assistant librarian, Daniel Douglas (Giampaolo Saccarola), that his former colleague Peterson conducted dubious research on Oak Mansion, as well as related local disappearances and related demographic materials. Meanwhile, Mae shows Bob the ancient tombstone of her mother Mary Freudstein, claiming that she is not really dead nor buried there. Most disturbingly, mother Lucy discovers the tomb of a certain "Jacob Tess Freudstein" built into the floor of Oak Mansion and her husband Norman tries to calm her fears by correctly claiming that it was not uncommon for people to be buried inside of their homes as the cold New England winters made it possible for people to be buried in the ground. Of course, Norman's own nerves are shocked when he finally is able to open the cellar door, where he is brutally bitten by a rather fake looking vampire bat, so the family tries to

move to a home elsewhere, but are told that it will be another couple days before they can be rehoused. Not long afterwards, real estate agent Mrs. Gittelsohn goes by Oak Mansion to tell the Boyles she has found them a new home, but the family is not there as Norman is being treated at the hospital for the bat bite, so she makes the fatal mistake of letting herself in, where she stands on the Freudstein tombstone, which cracks apart and pins her ankle and not long after, the grotesque being appears and drives a firepoker through her neck, subsequently dragging her lifeless body to the cellar.

Naturally, Lucy is rather disturbed to find the new family babysitter, Ann (Ania Pieroni), who bears a striking resemblance to Brooke Shields and rather bizarrely is the one who was responsible for unlocking the cellar door, cleaning blood off the kitchen floor, ultimately evading all questions asked about the mysterious hemoglobin stain. Not long after, Norman tells Lucy that he has learned that Jacob Tess Freudstein was a vile Victorian surgeon who conducted inhuman illegal experiments. On his way to New York City to conduct research on the Freudstein home, Norman drops by the library and finds a cassette tape of his ex-colleague Peterson discussing how Dr. Freudstein committed familicide, ultimately killing his entire family. When babysitter Ann goes in the cellar to look for Bob, she has her throat slit and head decapitated by the monster Freudstein, which the little boy witnesses the end of, but cannot convince his mother Lucy that it really happened. Determined to take matters into his own hands, little Bob returns to the cellar from hell to look for his babysitter Ann and in no time, his mother Lucy hears the boy crying with terror from the basement. Although Lucy cannot seem to get the cellar door open, Norman inevitably comes home and takes an axe to the basement door. When Norman finally enters the cellar, he finds corpse-like monster-mummy-zombie Freudstein (Giovanni De Nava), who is over 150-years-old and uses his victims' body parts to regenerate his rapidly degenerate blood cells, grabbing Bob by the face, so he cuts off the ghastly ghoul's arm and the undead being scampers away like a hobo cripple. After Norman once again attempts to attack Freudstein with the axe, the reanimated corpse manages to take the weapon away and before Mr. Boyle knows it, his throat is ripped out. Lucy and Bob attempt to make a getaway via a ladder leading to Freudstein's tomb upstairs, but the hysterical mother does not have enough strength to move the gravestone and she ultimately dies when Dr. Zombie rams her down on each step as her corpse falls to the cellar floor. Magically, Bob manages to escape when he is randomly yanked from the ladder to the upstairs floor where he is greeted by his little girlfriend Mae. Mae's mother Mary Freudstein urges the two children to leave and Bob enters 'the beyond,' thus become an adopted member of the prestigious Freudstein family as an inhabitant of a nefarious netherworld of melancholy, mayhem, and misanthropic phantasms.

While the setting is all wrong (post-WWII Vienna would be the ideal place),

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The House by the Cemetery is especially interesting, at least to an anti-Freudian like myself, due to its inclusion of a grotesque zombie doctor known for a murderous sort of malpractice as the archfiend villain, as if he is an undead Sigmund Freud who has set to destroy children and families with his debauched alien ideas. Considering the lack of political correctness in his films, I do not think it would be going too far to suggest that Fulci and his co-writers, Giorgio Mariuzzo and Dardano Sacchetti, intentionally sought out to use the name of Freud as a symbol of derangement and depravity because, like the theories of the hostile Hebraic psychoanalyst, Freudstein undermines traditional culture as a pernicious parasite who lives off the health of normal families. Of course, Sigmund Freud's theories have gone on to become parts of mainstream culture and vocabulary, with stereotypical Freudian sexual innuendos even appearing in children's films like *Shrek* (2001) and subconscious psychoanalytic techniques being used in advertising and 'public opinion forming' (aka propaganda) since his nephew Edward Bernays began working for President Woodrow Wilson during World War I. Interestingly, Bernays died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is just north of where *The House by the Cemetery* was set, thus one could argue that it is the very first anti-psychoanalytic horror flick. Ironically, like what Bernays did when implementing his propaganda (i.e. manipulating the goys), *The House by the Cemetery*, not unlike virtually all horror films, albeit to a more audacious extent, is a work that exploits the innate irrationality and 'herd instincts' of the viewer, as a work that ultimately stirs man's most archaic emotions. A totally tasteless yet sleekly stylized work that wallows in spectacle and negates narrative, *The House by the Cemetery*—in its mystification of monsters and morbid metaphysical horror—is essentially psychoanalysis in reverse. In describing the ending of the film, Fulci offered the followings insights, "...what is to me the most tragic thing in *The House by the Cemetery* is not the people who die, but that little girl who opens for her young friend the gates to the world of the dead, and saves him from normality (i.e. from the monster who killed the boy's parents), but also plunged him into the Beyond." And, indeed, *The House by the Cemetery* concludes much like *The Beyond*, where the lead protagonists are not brutally butchered like their dismembered compatriots, but suffer a much more sinister and soul-stirring fate where they are plunged into a sort of pandemonium of nothingness and necromancy in what amounts to hell everlasting. Not unlike his early atypical giallo *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) aka *Non si sevizia un paperino*, *The House by the Cemetery* is a children's horror flick made for adults, so it should be no surprise the film concludes with the Henry James quote, "no one will ever know whether children are monsters or monsters are children." Ultimately, *The House by the Cemetery* is a film about the loss of childhood innocence, which considering the director's Catholic upbringing and seemingly contradictory cinematic output, demonstrates that Lucio Fulci was a hopeless romantic who sought tirelessly to once again obtain something he lost long ago.

As somewhat farcically depicted in his rather reflexive work *A Cat in the Brain* (1990) aka *Un gatto nel cervello*, it seems that no one was more horrified by the films of Lucio Fulci than Lucio Fulci, a filmmaker who started making copies but ultimately ended up churning out some of the most grotesque horror films ever made, thereupon epitomizing the overused Nietzsche aphorism, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you."

-Ty E

THE NEW YORK RIPPER
THE NEW YORK RIPPER

Lucio Fulci (1982)

Ready to dance with the absurd, I began watching Lucio Fulci's *The New York Ripper* with promises of extreme misogyny and a duck voiced serial killer. Let me tell you, I was not disappointed. In 1982, Lucio Fulci directed what is known to be his most controversial and shocking film. Its basis for a killer was derived from his prior film *Don't Torture a Duckling*. A Jack the Ripper is roaming the streets on New York by night, stalking young women and mutilating their genitals in crazy ways as police scramble to find the one responsible before more women are claimed. Their only lead? The killer quacks like a duck. This simple plot mechanism takes the film a lot farther than expected as a serial killer profiler torpidly narrates the killers would-be psyche. The film in question is heralded for its realistic violence. This is understandable to a degree as we see eyeballs and nipples sliced open with a straight razor. The result is extremely graphic and unnerving to even the most jaded cinephile. Besides this point, the violence is almost ridiculous. Extended lacerations are caused with little reaction and exaggerated blood spurting. I find women to be easier to kill and maim on screen due to an intimacy between the form of a female and a camera, but maybe that is just me. *The New York Ripper* is more than just an average giallo/exploitation film. It takes the formulaic approach to a serial killer and adds a twist, but the difference in this outing is that the twists birth more twists which intelligently flop around leaving you confused and attempting to solve the film before it is over. The ending cuts off at a genius frame due to a misprint in the DVD authoring stages which gives the film an extra layer. It's as if Fulci planned out several scenes with the knowledge of what would happen to the print. *The New York Ripper* is a fine slasher film that presents New York in its grimmest limelight with disgusting Greek perverts polluting the city. Many appalling citizens are on display as we forget the central story and dedicate our brief time affirming our own morals with the side-stories at hand. Each character has a soul and Fulci made damn sure that once we were done analyzing dysfunctions, more extreme violence would occur.

-mAQ

MURDER-ROCK: DANCING DEATH

Lucio Fulci (1984)

Scrawny negro breakdancers with butt tight jeans and gaily leaping multicultural dancers in unflattering black leotards and grey sweatpants are probably the last things you would associate with the gloriously grotesque giallos of Guido 'Godfather of Gore' Lucio Fulci (*Don't Torture a Duckling*, *Zombi 2* aka *Zombie*), but near the mid 1980s the director made one of his most shameless attempts at commercial success by attempting to jump on the Flashdance (1983) bandwagon with his shockingly kitschy Americanized retrograde giallo-musical hybrid *Murder-Rock: Dancing Death* (1984) aka *Murderock - Uccide a passo di danza* aka *Giallo a disco* aka *The Demon Is Loose*, which was sometimes released under the alternate title 'Slashdance' for no reason. One of Fulci's first films following his arguably career-crashing split with his longtime collaborator, screenwriter Dardano Sacchetti (who was rather resentful that Fulci failed to let him in on the would-be-lucrative deal of working on the failed 1983 'sword and sandal' Conan the Barbarian rip-off *Conquest*), *Murder Rock* was apparently forced on the director by the monetary-motivated producer, hence its absolutely horrendous score by English keyboardist Keith Emerson of the dreaded pro-rock 'supergroup' Emerson, Lake & Palmer (ELP). Unquestionably, Fulci's somewhat misanthropic musical (virtually all the characters are bitter scumbags, including the ostensible 'good guys') is, upon a superficial glance, the sort of the film that you would think would appeal to preteen girls with big dreams of becoming dancers, as well as the most uncultivated of proletarian cocksuckers who like saying silly and sassy things like, "you go girl!" and other forms of lisp-addled linguistic savagery but, ultimately, the film will only probably appeal to Fulci completists, nihilistic aesthetes, and decidedly demented dudes who have a special fetish for 1980s girls with big stupid poufy hair, leotards, and spandex. Out of all of Fulci's films, *Murder Rock* is probably the only one that would more appeal to fans of camp than Fulciphiles and gorehounds. Indeed, the film has more dancing than death and less blood than an old school Universal Horror flick, but that does not mean it is not a stereotypical dirty 1980s dago affair that seems to slightly channel the seething hatred and moral retardation of gutter auteur Andy Milligan, albeit in a flashy and rampantly heterosexual Mediterranean sort of way (who knows, maybe being in NYC 'touched' Fulci the same way it did to mad sadomasochist Milligan).

Penned by semi-distinguished goombah screenwriter Gianfranco Clerici (*Cannibal Holocaust*, Fulci's *The New York Ripper*), *Murder Rock* is a glaringly uneven piece of deadly Dancesploitation that is easily one of the most visually pleasing films ever made as a work with ethereal dream-sequences and armies of scantily clad young blonde beauties, yet it is drastically despoiled by its audience-degrading score and lack of Fulci-esque gore. Indeed, to think that Fulci hailed

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from the land of Italo-disco and could have probably easily included tracks like "Faces" by Clio and countless Cyber People songs instead of Emerson's enraging audio excrement makes the film all the more of a cinematic tragedy, as it could have just as easily been an idiosyncratic masterpiece of murderous Italo-excess. The would-be wild-and-whimsical 'whodunit?' tale of a mysterious mad man (or in this case, woman) who begins randomly killing off the best dancers of a prestigious dance school with the rather ironic name "Arts For Living Center," *Murder Rock* is an inexplicable abortion of a movie that somehow manages to be reasonably entertaining due to its undying kitsch character, understated performance by Anglo-Guido leading man Ray Lovelock (*Plagio, Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*) and marvelously misogynistic conclusion that puts the movie misogyny of Dario Argento to shame. Arguably Fulci's very last ambitious film as a work created right after his relationship with screenwriter Sacchetti concluded somewhat bitterly and just before the director developed critical health issues (right after finishing the film, Fulci was hospitalized in NYC after become critically ill from hepatitis, only to become hospitalized again the same year for cirrhosis and spend most of 1985 recuperating at home, only to become plagued by diabetes-based illnesses in 1986), *Murder Rock* gives you a good idea where the goombah goremeister might have headed artistically had he not spent the rest of his career churning out pathetically directed low-budget celluloid bile like *Il fantasma di Sodoma* (1988) aka *Sodoma's Ghost* and *Demonia* (1990) aka *Liza*.

Opening with a flashy scene of little negroes breakdancing in a jubilant fashion juxtaposed with shots of NYC as if to absurdly insinuate that the rotten Big Apple is such a nice and happy place that people just dance around all the time due to a pleasant plague of perennial happiness that has engulfed the superlatively shitty city, *Murder Rock* then cuts to a show of a group of girl dancers entering a high-tech building called the "Arts For Living Center" where they soon dance their asses off for their bitchy buxom brunette overseer Candice Norman (Greek actress Olga Karlatos of Fulci's *Zombie*, as well as more mainstream works like the 1984 Prince musical *Purple Rain* and Sergio Leone's 1984 Jewish gangster epic *Once Upon a Time in America*) and their negress choreographer Margie (Geretta Marie Fields aka Geretta Geretta of Lamberto Bava's 1985 hit *Demons* aka *Dèmoni*). When the dancers stop dancing cunt Candice bitches them out and tells them their routine "needs perfecting." Indeed, unbeknownst to the dancers, the academy director Dick Gibson (Claudio Cassinelli of Massimo Dallamano's highbrow giallo *What Have They Done to Your Daughters?* (1974) aka *La polizia chiede aiuto*), who is also banging Candice and probably some of the dancers, is in talks with two TV producers, some assumed Hebrew named Steiner and his shabbos goy bud, about hiring the three best dancers to be on an upcoming TV show. Of course, Candice is jealous of these dancers' talents just as she is jealous that her sleazy bastard beau Dick might be putting

his dick in one or two of them. The students also hate Candice, with one of the few male dancers, Willy Stark (Christian Borromeo of Ruggero Deodato's 1980 classic *House on the Edge of the Park*), stating of her to his dancing comrades, "You think it would kill her to be happy just once." Of course, little does Willy realize that Candice is a much bigger bitch than he ever could imagine.

One night, little Willy stays behind with his fuck buddy/fellow dancer, busty blonde Susan (A. Lemerman), after the dance academy closes so they can have some carnal fun together, but the fun ends before it even begins when someone violently attacks the little lady while she is in the shower, knocks her out with the old (and scientifically unsound) movie cliché of a rag covered with Chloroform, and drives a large needle into one of her tender wet tits, thus killing her. Needless to say, it seems that the high-tech security system at the dance academy is worthless, or else it is someone with access to it that is the one responsible for the killing. A majorly misanthropic and callously cynical NYPD Lieutenant named Borges (Cosimo Cinieri of Fulci's two 1982 NYC-based flicks *The New York Ripper* and *Manhattan Baby*), as well as a police profiler and psychotherapy professor named Dr. Davis (Giuseppe Mannajuolo of the 1988 pseudo-Nosferatu the *Vampyre* (1979) sequel *Vampire in Venice* starring Klaus Kinski) are brought in to solve the murder and they soon conclude that the killer is someone at the dance academy. When a second dancer, Janice (played by Carla Buzzanca, whose sole other film credit was Michelangelo Antonioni's obscure failed 1980 Cocteau adaptation *The Mystery of Oberwald* aka *Il mistero di Oberwald*), who moonlights as a degenerate dancer at an exotic erotic bar, is killed, Lt. Borges and Dr. Davis decide to interview some of the dancers and the former finds them so revolting in character that he states to the prissy little dancing prima donnas, "have you considered the possibility of some paranoid among you who hates dancers and has decided to do you all in? You know, I'll tell you all something.... He'd have my heartfelt approval." Dr. Davis is slightly more sympathetic to the degenerate dancing troupe and uses his cultivated background as a criminologist to label the dance academy a "viper's nest" as opposed to boorish cynic Borges, who describes it in a more frank manner by calling it a "school full of sons of bitches." When one of the male dancers, a blond bitch boy named Bert (Robert Gligorov of Michele Soavi's devilishly delightful debut feature *StageFright: Aquarius* (1987) aka *Deliria*), leaves an anonymous message for Dr. Davis calling him a "first class nerd" and threatening to kill again, Borges uses a voice analyst to identify him. When they bring in Bert for questioning, he acts like a sniveling little pompous shit and claims he killed Janice because, "She was a lousy Puerto Rican and I don't like spicks." Although Borges concludes that Bert is not the killer, he locks him up anyway so that he can be raped by swarthy untermenschen because the little shit pissed him off, stating, "You're not going to like spicks for a long time...you shouldn't have provoked me." What actually happens to Bert is anyone's guess, as he never reappears in the film.

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Meanwhile, Candice has a nightmare about an unnaturally pretty blond beauty (Ray Lovelock) coming after her with the same needle that killed the girl dancers. Not long after the ominous nightmare, Candice spots the same man, who turns out to be an ex-actor turned model named George Webb, on a giant billboard. After doing some research, she tracks down George's apartment and sneaks in after paying off a sleazy front desk attendant, but she is in for quite a surprise for the dipsomaniac model arrives and yells in a boorish manner, "Relax, lady...haven't you ever seen a drunk before?" so the startled dance teacher runs away and leaves her purse behind by accident. After meeting up with George to get her purse back, Candice confesses to him that she looked him up because she had a nightmare about him killing her. Needless to say, the two soon start a lurid love affair and jealous academy director Dick Gibson attempts to convince Borges and Dr. Davis that pretty boy George is the killer. As their love affair progresses, Candice reveals to George that her dancing career was ruined by a hit-n-run accident, explaining to him, "there I was ready to take on Broadway when some idiot on a motorcycle slams into me and ended my career before it even started." Naturally, things get a bit complicated when an elderly Chinaman with traditional chink garb and large chopsticks does a fortuneteller reading of George at a Chinese restaurant at Candice's insistence and accuses him of being a "muda-erer." Of course, things only get worse when Candice gets a call from a talent agent named Phil (played by director Lucio Fulci in a cute cameo role) who she had do a background on her new boyfriend and he reveals that George was the suspect in the murder of an underage girl that he was defiling.

As the film progresses, more dancers are killed and George seems more and more like the culpable suspect. At one point, black choreographer Margie also goes to kill Candice and frame the mysterious killer, out of jealousy, but she does not have the gall to execute the execution and director Dick eventually walks in on her. Director Dick also becomes a suspect after they find him with the corpse of one of the dancers, Jill, that he was banging and deeply in love with. Of course, Candice is no victim. In the end, Candice confronts George in the manager's room at the dance studio while he is watching footage of all the dead dancers and confesses that she is the killer and she has known all along that he is the motorcyclist that committed the hit-and-run that ruined her budding career. Jealous of all the young dancers and their very promising careers, Candice could not help killing the best of the best dancers and frame George for it. Since she already blames him for her figurative death and wants him to suffer the lifelong guilt of being a murderer, Candice begs George to kill her because he "has to pay," but he refuses to do it. Considering herself more or less 'metaphysically dead' ever since the hit-and-run accident ruined her career, Candice kills herself right in front of George with the needle hoping that he will be charged with the murder as she considers him a murderer. Luckily for George, Borges and Dr. Davis have already come to the conclusion that Candice is the killer. In the

end, George is riddled with the guilt for ‘murdering’ Candice by destroying all her “hopes and ambitions.” In the end, the film closes with the following quote from the classic John Huston film noir flick *Asphalt Jungle* (1950): “Often crime is a distorted form of human endeavor.”

I might be the only one in the world that would have the balls to admit this, but I found *Murder Rock* to be one of Lucio Fulci’s most fun, unbelievable, and wildest films, even if it is a piece of blatant cheesy celluloid crapola with one of the most patently preposterous premises in film history. An excellent example of Fulci’s undying dedication to whoring himself out to producers for financial gain, it is only fitting that the work features a scene where the cynical lieutenant Borges—an arguable stand-in for the director himself—states as to the reason why one of the dancers, Bert, would falsely take credit for the murder, “Because he’s an artist. He’d sit on his mother’s head for a laugh. It’s like a disease, he’s a born liar [...] he’s an asshole [...] the kid’s an idiot, just another punk.” Indeed, in *Murder Rock*, Fulci—a perennial artisan who seems to never have had an interest in being a real cinematic artist—declares his hatred for the ‘artiste.’ Of course, Fulci is not just critical of ‘serious’ artists, as the film also blatantly attacks Bernaysian advertising and the sinister power of the ads and commercials to manipulate the psyche and plant ideas in a person’s subconscious (for example, the man of killer Candice’s nightmares first appears in the physical world in the form of a billboard). Ironically, unlike Dario Argento, who famously told the ballerinas starring in his masterpiece *Suspiria* (1977) that he couldn’t care less about their ballet talents, Fulci made full use of the talents of the performers with the help of choreographer Nadia Chiatti. Indeed, *Murder Rock* is certainly the Flashdance of giallos and is completely deserving of its alternate title *Slashdance*, as a decadent and Dancesploitation flick of strangely erotic deaths that perfectly epitomizes the nihilistic excess of the Reaganite 1980s. If you’re looking to contaminate someone’s Halloween spirit this year, show them Fulci’s misbegotten filmic freakshow and have them bask in the unintentionally schlocky splendor of sweaty 1980s spandex and hairsprayed to hell hair, as well as some of the most sickeningly banal and malevolently (anti)melodic synth sounds imaginable. Pseudo-Borgesian in its depiction of dark coincidences spawned from chaos, chaotic labyrinthine visuals and plot structure, and rabid cynicism (after all, one of the characters is named ‘Borges’), *Murder Rock* is a work that, although clearly made to appeal to the lowest common denominator (e.g. teenage breakdancers and braindead teenyboppers), will probably be more appreciated by misanthropic cinephiles, softcore cultural pessimists, and cultivated culture junkies. *Murder Rock* is also a great film to show to your lady friend because, aside from being rather misogynistic in its depiction of a crazed cunt who kills young blonde beauties out of jealousy, it also features some of the most titillating yet tit-terrorizing scenes in cinema history. Indeed, I know because I showed my girlfriend, who is rather ample in the bosom department, and she

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was absolutely scared stiff and discernibly unnerved by the scenes of the needle entering the forlorn dancer's big bare boobs. As for me, I was more petrified by the busty bosomed victim's big goofy legwarmers. As Murder Rock vulgarly demonstrates, if you want to take away attention from a voluptuous young blonde girl's dangerously curvy body, have her wear a pair of Flashdance-esque legwarmers.

-Ty E

SODOMA'S GHOST

Lucio Fulci (1988)

Sodoma's Ghost or The Ghosts of Sodom is a rare Fulci film made in 1988 that has done nothing but collect dust. The story opens up inside a villa that was under Nazi power located in the middle of France. There were several Nazi's snorting cocaine and were involved in an orgy. Willie, played by Robert Egon, was walking around the room filming it going on. A drunken officer was playing pool with a passed out woman on the table. You can only imagine how that one goes. Right as he hits the middle pocket, we see stock footage of an air raid and with that whim, the building is destroyed. We then cut to 5 college students studying in France. After getting lost, they wind up at the Villa. After coming to the conclusion that it is isolated, they go around back and find a key under a conveniently placed door mat. Upon entering, they view a vividly red chamber with a fireplace, exquisite paintings, and a wine cellar that would make a grown man cry. They party it up then head to bed. At this time, one of the women has a dream that Willy appeared to them and seduced her in a masochistic manner. They wake up and attempt to leave, but no matter where they turn, they always end up back at the villa and because he has no lights, they cannot drive at night. They recede back into the villa only to find they are locked in and normal windows are unbreakable. They begin to start envisioning the ghosts of Nazi soldiers and whores one by one. Lucio Fulci is considered worldwide to be "The Godfather of Gore". With such a boasting title, he doesn't disappoint in this film. There is a rather violent scene in which a body melts and the rib cage begins to violently extrude. Robert Egon plays a wonderful role in this film and balances all elements of the film. He plays the pretty boy Nazi with sparkling eyes and blonde hair. He appears to be the ringleader ghost. Not only featuring a little bit of gore and bad acting, we are treated to a very tense and well set up Russian Roulette scene involving Willy and one of the students. For being a Fulci film, it deserves some credit. Several characters make scenes of this become hilarious. Meanwhile, the film does a impeccable job at drawing you in. It also features a lot of that esteemed nudity and a scene of lesbianism. You can actually feel Fulci behind the camera of this one. So far, I have only seen an all region version of this on xploitedcinema.com. I would say it was worth the price to pay. The only thing anybody should really have anything to complain about is the lack of gore and the ending. It is one of those endings that is extremely hokey and no one really wants to talk about. Sometimes I find myself denying that film even had an ending. An overall decent Fulci movie that exploits the natures of Nazi's and the skin of women.

-mAQ

A CAT IN THE BRAIN
A CAT IN THE BRAIN

Lucio Fulci (1990)

Although he directed a couple more films before his dubious death at the age 68 in early 1996 from complications relating to diabetes (some suspect he may have committed a sort of passive suicide by refraining from taking his medication), Guido 'Godfather of Gore' Lucio Fulci's late era effort *A Cat in the Brain* (1990) aka *Nightmare Concert* aka *Nightmare Concert (A Cat in the Brain)* aka *Un gatto nel cervello* is certainly his last decent work and acts as a sort of fitting conclusion to the director's roller-coaster-like career in celluloid carnage. A sort of highly reflexive yet rather ridiculous 'metafilm' in the autobiographical spirit of Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971), François Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973), Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979), Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories* (1980), Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (1994), and Tom DiCillo's *Living in Oblivion* (1995), *A Cat in the Brain* is a work starring director Lucio Fulci as himself as a fallen old filmmaker that is having trouble differentiating between the unhinged ultra-violence scenes in his films and real-life, which some viewers might take as an admittance of guilt from the director in regard to making a moviemaking career out of the cinematically morbid and grotesque. Wallowing in wonderfully wicked Grand Guignol-esque dark humor, *A Cat in the Brain*, like the totally unwatchable *Demonia* (1990), was meant as a comeback film of sorts for Fulci, but highly disappointed his fans and was almost never actually released, yet since the over two decades since its initial release, the film has gone on to become regarded as a classic and even minor masterpiece among fans, hence its lavish release on DVD in 2009 by Bob Murawski and Sage Stallone's Grindhouse Releasing (a sort of 'Criterion Collection for horror flicks'). Arguably Fulci's most experimental yet simultaneously half-assed and gimmicky work, *A Cat in the Brain* has the curious quasi-conman distinction of being mostly assembled in post-production as a work largely comprised of clips from not only the filmmaker's previous (and largely inferior) works, including *Il fantasma di Sodoma* (1988) aka *The Ghosts of Sodom* aka *Sodoma's Ghost*, *Touch of Death* (1988) aka *Quando Alice ruppe lo specchio*, and *Hansel e Gretel* (1990), as well as music from the director's magnum opus *The Beyond* (1981) aka *...E tu vivrai nel terrore! L'aldilà*, but also films directed by other Italian horror filmmakers. Indeed, on top of featuring clips from films Fulci directed, *A Cat in the Brain* also, quite absurdly, features excerpts from films that the filmmaker worked on in some other capacity (presenter, special effects, etc.) including Andrea Bianchi's *Massacre* (1989) aka *La morte della medium*, Mario Bianchi's *Non aver paura della zia Marta* (1988) aka *Don't Be Afraid of Aunt Martha*, and Leandro Lucchetti's *Bloody Psycho* (1989). In part shot at Rome's Cinecittà Studios—the studio of Italian master auteur Federico Fellini—*A Cat in the Brain* is a sort of 'Fulci's worst hits'

that manages to combine some of the best segments from the director's greatest and most embarrassing cinematic failures, thus saving fans of the 'Godfather of Gore' the trouble of having to watch these absolutely horrendous horror hatchet jobs in their seemingly endless entirety. A totally trashy yet equally charming self-denigrating work where Lucio Fulci—a man who started out as a director of comedies and who tackled virtually every film genre, but only found success in gore and guts drenched giallo and zombie horror flicks—comes to terms with the fact that he made a minor monetary killing off celluloid killings and thus must live with that fact, but also someone who has been pigeonholed as a director of horror/gore/giallo and has been condemned to a genre ghetto.

Dr. Lucio Fulci (Fulci as essentially himself, or at least as how his fans see him) is an ex-medical doctor (Fulci indeed studied medicine in college, before becoming an art critic and eventually a filmmaker) who has just wrapped up the day's shooting for his latest half-ass horror flick *Touch of Death* (1988) starring Brett Halsey at Cinecittà Studios and he is rather hungry for steak as an Italian man of refined tastes, but when he goes to eat at his favorite restaurant, he has a traumatic flashback from a grizzly cannibal scene he shot earlier that day, so he leaves the eatery on an empty stomach. The next day is no different as Fulci loses his cool on his movie set upon examining the special effects, forcing a film technician to remove a plate of gazing animal eyeballs out of his decidedly distorted sight. After coming home from an exhausting day of work and attempting to sleep, Fulci is rudely awakened by a funny fellow sawing wood with a chainsaw, thus causing the filmmaker to have flashbacks about his latest conspicuously craven cinematic chainsaw craziness. In a fit of rage, Fulci pseudo-sinisterly storms outside and smashes a bunch of paint cans with an axe, thus causing red paint to pour out that reminds him of his metaphysically macabre masterpiece *The Beyond* (1981). Luckily, Fulci discovers that his neighbor, Professor Egon Swartz (David L. Thompson), is a Jewish psychoanalyst that bears a strikingly resemblance to Sigmund Freud (as Fulci revealed in an interview, he thought Freud was a charlatan who stole his idea of 'confession' from the Catholics) who takes on the filmmaker as a patient, recommending that he begin, "breaking down the barrier, the boundary between what you film and what's real" as a means of eradicating his perturbing celluloid-induced psychosis. Of course, Fulci's problems are compounded by the fact that he is directing two films at the same time, *Il fantasma di Sodoma* (1988) aka *The Ghosts of Sodom* and *Touch of Death* (1988), and that his prick producer Filippo (Shilet Angel) wants him to pick up the pace, even at the sacrifice of artistic integrity. In preparation for a scene for his negligently assembled Nazisploitation flick *The Ghosts of Sodom*, Fulci tells the young actor playing a SS officer, Robert Egon (who looks a lot like Justin Bieber!), that he is "a symbol of death...And you've also the whole horror of the Nazis," but the scene he shoots comes off looking about as sinister as a Jess Franco flick and the filmmaker mutters to himself, "Sadism,

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Nazism; is there any point any more?," thus demonstrating his disillusionment with degenerate exploitation sleaze that was already done before and better by Liliana Cavani with *The Night Porter* (1974) and Tinto Brass with *Salon Kitty* (1976). After spotting a tall German Aryaness reporter (notably, during the mid 1970s, Fulci was engaged to a German woman who eventually ran off and stole all his money, leaving him nearly bankrupt), Fulci has a nasty vision from *The Ghosts of Sodom* and flips out, ultimately running amok and smashing the TV crew's camera and even attempting to rip the Teutonic babe's clothes off. Of course, Fulci's worst problems have yet to begin.

Naturally, Fulci goes back to Professor Swharz, who in the meantime has viewed all of his patient's films and who puts the filmmaker under hypnosis and states, "You'll do everything I tell you when you hear this sound. Your mind will make you live scenes you think are real. You will slowly be possessed by madness. You'll think you've committed terrible crimes," thus revealing that he is not a saintly soul-doctor, but a Svengali-like psychopathic sadist with a lurid lust for blood who is an even bigger crackpot than Wilhelm Reich. Somehow via hypnosis-activating remote control buzzer device, Swharz is now able to transmit his thoughts to Fulci and plans to frame the filmmaker for a serial killing spree he has planned out. Fulci fails to remember what happened during his session with the deadly doc, but Swharz certainly does and subsequently kills a prostitute, for which the filmmaker wrongly thinks he is responsible upon arriving at the scene of the crime. Meanwhile, Fulci's car breaks down on the way to a film shoot and when he finally gets there, he finds that his producer Filippo and assistant director have already started without him, thus taking over his power as auteur without his consent. Naturally, after having such horrendous and horror-cliché-ridden visions, Fulci goes home to relax, but is once again plagued by scenes from his creepy celluloid past. Of course, Swharz continues to kill, which includes a young couple and a poor groundskeeper who witness the killing, and after Fulci arrives at the scene of the crimes, he takes the blame while the prof hides in the background. On his way back home, Fulci hallucinates he runs over a hitchhiker in a hallucination of a scene from *Touch of Death*, which puts him over the edge to the point where when he gets home, the director attempts to make a 'full confession' to the police, but luckily a certain Inspector Gabrielli (Jeffrey Kennedy) is on vacation. After failing to get real psychological help from Swharz, Fulci goes by Inspector Gabrielli's home, where he witnesses the good cop's family being brutally butchered and dismembered, but it is just another horror flick inspired hallucination caused by the professor. Eventually, Swharz strangles his nagging wife, who is arguably the source of his homicidal proclivities, to death with a piano wire, nearly decapitating her in the process. Afterward, Swharz once again follows Fulci and causes him to have nightmarish visions, eventually causing the filmmaker to faint in an open field. The next day, Fulci learns that Inspector Gabrielli's men caught Swharz redhanded and shot

him dead, thus vindicating the filmmaker of the heinous crimes. Flash forward several months later, Fulci is shooting his latest film 'Nightmare Concert' and in the end he sails off with his leading lady (whose body parts were shown previously in a basket, with her dismembered fingers hanging from fishing hooks), but not before bidding a farewell to not only his film crew, but also to fans in what is his last 'great' film.

Described by the director's daughter Antonella Fulci as being her "best beloved enemy" aka filmmaker father's cinematic realization of "his juvenile dream of being Peter Lorre in Fritz Lang's "M" for 20 seconds over the flute of Grieg's "Peer Gynt"," A Cat in the Brain is not only in many ways the Godfather of Gore's most personal work, but also his funniest and most eccentrically entertaining as a sort of fittingly superficial autobiography from a once serious filmic artist who ironically became famous directing some of the most exploitative and gratuitous gore flicks ever made, only to have his career and success degenerate just as quickly as it had risen, sort of like one of the zombies from his films. As someone who considers myself a softcore Fulci fan whose longstanding yet undoubtedly wavering interest in Italian horror and exploitation fan is largely nostalgic, A Cat in the Brain is sort of 'fanboy' (I hate to use this word!) guilty pleasure that reminds me why I started loving artistically meritless Guido gore flicks in the first place. The fact that Fulci was able to haphazardly churn out one more masterpiece, A Cat in the Brain, on a meager budget of around \$100,000 using recycled celluloid sleaze from the lowest point in his career just goes to show that he was no mindless moron who was totally unconscious of his lot in life, but a keenly conscious fellow who had a nasty knack for using his weaknesses to his advantage, hence how he eventually found his niche as a 'thee gore godfather' in the first place as an eclectic filmmaker who failed in virtually every other film genre he worked in. A work where Fulci cannibalized his own films and those of lesser filmmakers to bring new life to cinema conventions he not only pioneered, but also helped to kill by 'beating to death' one-too-many times, A Cat in the Brain is ultimately a sort of undead celluloid epitaph that offers more laughs than screams and tears. Indeed, concluding with Fulci sailing away on a yacht named "Perversion" (a reference to the filmmaker's proto-Basic Instinct erotic giallo Perversion Story (1969) aka Una sull'altra), A Cat in the Brain is undoubtedly the best way for his fans to remember him, as a swarthy old little man whose humble appearance acted in stark contrast to his mastery of the cinematically grotesque and bedding much younger ladies. Of course, if nothing else, A Cat in the Brain is the film where Fulci demonstrates once and for all that, at least to some degree, he really was an artist and not merely a mindless artisan with a curious craft, and for that reason alone, the film is mandatory viewing for anyone that loves the art of filmmaking, degenerate or otherwise.

-Ty E

HALLUCINATION STRIP
HALLUCINATION STRIP

Lucio Marcaccini (1975)

Maybe it's because I am not an old hippie or young hipster, but I have always found Bud Cort (Brewster McCloud, *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou*) and his one-note adult-baby quirkiness to be an intolerable bore and his role in Hal Ashby's *Harold and Maude* (1971) is one of the most overrated in all of cinema history, though I must give the actor some credit for being rather adventurous in terms of choosing the roles he played, ranging from the eponymous protagonist in the never-released Hitlerite comedy *Son of Hitler* (1978) to portraying a low-camp Freud alongside Klaus Kinski in *The Secret Diary of Sigmund Freud* (1984) to the voice of a talking computer in *Electric Dream* (1984). Undoubtedly, one of the most bizarre and absurdly against-type roles ever played by Cort was as an antique-thieving and drug-dealing far-left student revolutionary in the somewhat obscure and rather idiosyncratic Italian *poliziottesco*-psychedelic hybrid *Roma drogata: la polizia non può intervenire* (1975) aka *Hallucination Strip* aka *Allucinating Trip* directed by and co-written by one-time auteur Lucio Marcaccini (whose only other film work involved working as an assistant director on a couple films, most notably Vittorio De Sica's Academy Award winning work *Il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini* (1970) aka *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*) and co-penned by Fulci collaborator Vincenzo Mannino (*The New York Ripper*, *Murder-Rock: Dancing Death*). A considerably convoluted work that manages to be simultaneously artsy and trashy, anti-bourgeois and anti-communist, and anti-drug and LSD-ridden, *Hallucination Strip* is a peculiar piece of oftentimes kaleidoscopic celluloid counter-culture chaos featuring a rich pansy momma's boy receiving a bath from his momma and maid, perennial baby-face dork Bud Cort pretending to be a ballsy neo-bolshevik bad ass, bourgeois communist scum protesting about the bourgeois and having to read salacious works by Gabriele D'Annunzio in high school, and a swarthy middle-aged Sicilian as the biggest and most ruthless dope-pusher in Rome. Featuring a shockingly well done and over-extended LSD dream-sequence of the orgasmic Oedipal sort that climaxes with an exceedingly effete young nobleman leaping to his death prematurely after having a rather bad yet beautiful trip that would make Freud's panties wet, *Hallucination Strip* is sleekly surreal style over substance that reminds one why—for better or worse—LSD creator Albert Hofmann probably had the greatest unintentional influence on cinema and literature. A philistine equivalent to Liliana Cavani's *I Cannibali* (1970) aka *The Year of the Cannibals* and Luchino Visconti's *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (1974) aka *Conversation Piece* as directed by the half-braindead bastard son of Fernando Di Leo and Carmelo Bene, *Hallucination Strip* is surely the sort of aesthetically whimsical artsploitation that could have only been made in 1970s Italy.

Petite man-boy Massimo Monaldi (But Cort) is a would-be-cool-guy with

a fast motorcycle who thinks having Trotsky-esque facial hair makes him some sort of chic revolutionary when in reality he is nothing more than a petty high school criminal whose most audacious form of political activism is complaining to the teachers at his high school about having to read the decadent prose of D'Annunzio and the poor conditions of hospitals. Due to his self-stylized counter-culture rock-star-commie persona, Massimo is hated by his friend's exceedingly wealthy parents, which is no surprise since he is an immoral thief who steals from his comrades' families, not to mention the fact he feeds his pals drugs. Indeed, in an absurd plan to ostensibly fund a trip for both himself and his yagdigging friends to go to the 'fabulous Orient,' Massimo steals a 17th century French antique snuffbox from the rich prick father of his girlfriend Cinzia Roldi (Annarita Grapputo). Needless to say, Cinzia's father calls the cops as the snuffbox is apparently worth millions and soon Massimo finds himself being watched by a semi-Serpico-like cop (he supports 'free joint') named De Stefani (played by Marcel Bozzuffi, who is probably best known for playing Pierre Nicoli in *The French Connection*). Massimo has a pansy would-be-poet mama's boy friend named Rudy (Settimio Segnatelli whose only other film role was starring alongside lapsed Warhol star Joe Dallesandro in *Il tempo degli assassini* (1975) aka *Season for Assassins*) who is a bit of an eccentric fellow as both his Madre (Eva Czemerys) and maid give him baths as if he were a helpless newborn baby. Indeed, Rudy is the kind of socially retarded dude who cannot so much as walk without looking absurdly autistic. Massimo attempts to sell the snuffbox to Rudy, but he is saving his money for a 'liberation rite' aka party where he and a bunch of friends will have a drug orgy of sorts. Of course, Rudy wants Massimo to procure the dope and LSD.

While Massimo is initially skeptical about getting Rudy dope for his hip 'happening,' he finally gives in after his friend makes the following rather melodramatic and even hysterical plea, "This party isn't a whim at all. It can bring a magical moment in my life. In closing an absurd existence I'll begin to live at last. The thing is all the time now I'm obsessed with a doubt. It's insidious like an illness... That is I'll never be able to live my own life. I'll have to stop this absurd existence or I might as well jump off the top floor." Ironically, it will ultimately be the drugs that inspire Rudy to jump out of his window. To get drugs for Rudy, Massimo gets involved with an unsavory and equally swarthy fellow who goes by the name 'The Sicilian' (Maurizio Arena), who has a hitman (Leopoldo Trieste, who appeared in small roles in big films like *Don't Look Now* (1973) and *The Godfather: Part II* (1974)) that is leaving bodies around Rome. Though Massimo manages to get rid of the snuffbox and get the drugs in what seems like a win-win transaction in his deals with the Sicilian, little does he realize this tradeoff will ultimately create an intricate web of death and conspiracy. Needless to say, when Rudy gets high on LSD, dreams of lizard people and having sex with his mother, and inevitably jumps to his death from his balcony,

HALLUCINATION STRIP

Massimo faces trouble from both 'good cop' De Stefani and the Sicilian, not to mention the fact that his girlfriend is institutionalized. Indeed, De Stefani, who goes against his commander's orders in terms of investigating the dope-dealing business, uses Massimo to get to the Sicilian. To De Stefani's chagrin, he finds the Sicilian dead, as he hopes to use the dealer to get to the mob. De Stefani also learns that the mob wants to kill Massimo, but things may be too late.

While *Hallucination Strip* is unquestionably a celluloid mess it sorts, it is also a relatively entertaining and aesthetically pleasing mess that is certainly worthy repeat viewings. In a recent interview with the film editor Giulio Berruti (who is best known as the director of *Suor Omicidi* (1979) aka *Killer Nun* starring Anita Ekberg and Joe Dallesandro), he revealed that *Hallucination Strip* director Lucio Marcaccini was a sort of indecisive 'anti-auteur' who had no idea what he was doing and essentially allowed everyone else on the film crew to help guide him to directing the film. Indeed, as Berruti explained regarding Marcaccini, "He was rather short, with a kind of Charlie Chaplin moustache. He was very thin and had very meek eyes. But he didn't seem to be the director of the movie. He seemed he just happened to be there by chance. There were the gaffer, the assistant director, the lead actor, the extras, the secretary; all of them were telling him how he should work. And he tried to follow everyone's advice before starting shooting a scene." *Hallucination Strip* star Patrizia Gori was so unaffected by working with Marcaccini that she did not even remember being directed by him (!), or as she stated herself, "Honestly, I don't remember the director because he was a newcomer, and I don't think he did other things later." Regardless, someone was responsible for directing a number of fantastic dream-sequences in *Hallucination Strip* that rival some of the best surrealist scenarios ever directed by the likes of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Carmelo Bene. In its use of psychedelic body paint on slender statuesque bodies, *Hallucination Strip* also reminded me of melancholy arthouse effort Veruschka: *Poetry of a Woman* (1971) starring German supermodel Veruschka von Lehndorff and Lucio Fulci's psychedelic psychosexual giallo *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin* (1971), but such aesthetics were characteristic of that drug-addled period of heightened consciousness. Of course, narcotic-inspired Marxist politics were also in fashion in that time, but luckily *Hallucination Strip* portrays the student activists as misguided hypocrites who, despite being rich and pampered, complain the world is an unfair place full of big mean fascists who keep the working man down. In the end, virtually all of the main hippie degenerates are either dead or have ruined their lives, thus making *Hallucination Strip* a sort of pseudo-moralistic cautionary tale that criticizes the very people the film was made for, thus making it an archetypical work of Guido celluloid sleaze. Featuring a mostly highly complementary score by marginal Italian composer Alberto Verrecchia (who, like many people in the film, also worked on *Il tempo degli assassini* aka *Season for Assassins* that is unfortunately degraded by a token hippie gospel song entitled "We

Got a Lord”, Hallucination Strip is undoubtedly a work of its zeitgeist, which is thankfully long gone.

-Ty E

DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND
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Lucy Walker (2002)

I happened to catch Peter Weir's *Witness* the other night starring Harrison Ford, who is easily one of the most overrated and emotionally dead of actors ever to walk the candy ass halls of the Hollywood studio system. *Witness* got me thinking about the Amish and their commitment to a life of banality where pride is sinful and where collective conformity is a must. In *Witness*, director Peter Weir makes the Amish seem like a bunch of pacifistic yet noble folk who have no time for lollygagging. Unlike the rest of the German-Americans (who make up the largest ethnic group in the USA) that immigrated to the United States, the Amish have retained their native German tongue, at least for church and other special occasions. When I saw the *Devil's Playground*, a 2002 documentary about the Amish rite of passage Rumspringa (where the Amish leave their homes at age 16 to decide whether they want to be baptized in the Amish church), sitting on a public library shelf not long after seeing *Witness*, I felt that cinematic fate caught me in a way. Despite featuring an Amish girl smoking a cigarette on the cover, little did I realize I would be watching a film about 16 year Amish teens dealing and doing crystal meth on top of banging ugly "English" chicks with greasy zit-covered pizzafaces. Despite the somewhat poor production values of the documentary, *Devil's Playground* would turn out to be a revelation of sorts. I guess growing up in the United States and watching trash cable TV just like everyone else, I did not realize how criminally dangerous the material was. Of course, I noticed a good percentage of the kids I knew growing up would watch untermensch Rap videos and decide (sub)consciously to adopt the linguistic styles of ill-literate Negroes. It was also obvious that pseudo-rebellious idealistic teens would become pro-gay marriage and pro-illegal immigration because they would be told they were evil racists (gotta love wearing that "Good Guy Badge") if they thought otherwise. To put it simply, it was very obvious to me in my younger years that TV was poison and that it turned people into slaves with their own personal mental-gulag, more so than any fascist or communist government ever could. Not until I saw *Devil's Playground* did I realize how fast the virus of TV and "pop culture" could spread to a TV-Virgin, someone naïve and unfamiliar with the degenerate ways of the internationalist "American" media. Faron is the main subject of *Devil's Playground* and it did not take him long to get hooked on Crystal Meth after leaving his Amish life for Rumspringa. Although he may be as skinny as a Holodomor survivor, Faron is one of the top teenagers in his Amish community. His father is an Amish preacher and Faron knows how to quote from the good book better than anyone he knows. When he leaves for the world of the "English" (the non-Amish world), he starts quoting Tupac and speaking with a Negroid speech impediment. All of his fellow Amish buds idolize Faron and also start parroting his new MTV-inspired

ill-literate-lingo. Faron is no doubt completely naïve to the complete and utter degradation of American society. Like a person of honor and virtue, he probably expected those things of popularity, like in his own Amish community, to be of the most highest moral standards. Due to his life of being “sheltered” by discipline and morality, he has no defense against the decay of the “west.” In our mixed-up and backwards American world, the person that would come out on top in the Amish world, ends up being the most criminal of all, selling Crystal Meth just to support his \$100.00 a day habit while strutting around in his much beloved Wal-Mart baggy threads.

Fortunately for the Amish, there is about a 90% retention rate of those young people that decide to stay in the community. Personally, I would never want to be Amish but I can certainly say that the Amish people are better off in their small world of family and serious commitment. Modern America is full of vices that are constantly put in people’s faces via Television with the intent of enslaving the individual. I can’t count the times I have had to hear every moron I know verbally regurgitate the same stupid Hollywood comedy line over and over again yet never realize their Hollywood induced psychosis. Devil’s Playground is almost a religious documentary in the sense that it truly shows the hellish world America has become even if one were to step into American “culture” and “society” just for a second. The mark of the cultural Marxist beast is libel to be ingrained forever.

-Ty E

SS HELL CAMP
SS HELL CAMP

Luigi Batzella (1977)

Soiled Sinema is no stranger to the concept of Nazi exploitation, or also "Nazisploitation". In these films we find solace in gratuitous sexual violence and inexplicable tortures. In theory, they're the equivalent of your average exploitation film or cult horror. It's in the political vein that the film loses the label of your average trash piece. SS Hell Camp or rather, The Beast in Heat is one of the original video nasties directed by Italian Luigi Batzella. When directing a film, one injects his own influences and voices his/her opinions. Directing is among the most artistically pleasing careers (or hobbies) with many directions to branch. As Jan Svankmajer calmly explained, art is all but dead. I'd have to agree with this assumption for the most part. There's no reason to indicate an artistic movement of the new millennium and there's only reasons to look back. With SS Hell Camp, Batzella pursued her own ethnic goals and decided to cast an all Italian cast complete with Nazi uniforms that don't fit. We're all familiar with the gross exaggerations of World War II. The theory of an Aryan "superman" is attempted in this film by our lead villain, Dr. Ellen "Not Ilsa" Kratsch. In her failed evil Nazi experimentation, a synthetic pink goo is injected into a man to create a rabid Neanderthal rapist whose own instincts are fuck & kill, mostly like man, but a bit more primitive. Even for an idea to up the ante of sexual violence, this disastrous addition is considered the main obstacle, but only appears for a total of 6 minutes screen time (estimated). Now down to the only real highlights this film has; violence. To be a special effects wiz, now there's an achievement. Many can get by but few can master the art of practical effects. For every horror film, there are three more videos on how to create your own personal blend of fake blood, mostly by using Karo syrup and food coloring. SS Hell Camp has some of the progressively worse special effects I've ever seen. Close shots to obviously fake nails being plucked off, not out. On terms of spectacle, SS Hell Camp has none. Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS has castration, heavy themes of feminism, and hatred for men all going for it. The film is the icon of Nazisploitation for a reason. It's one thing to be a valid attempt at creating sleaze, but when the sleaze itself is not the film contents, but the film making? That's a true problem. This is a laughable and cowardly attempt at creating something offensive.

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WITCHCRAFT '70

Luigi Scattini (1970)

Witchcraft '70 is a "documentary" in the tradition of the Mondo Cane films on the evil stuff like witchcraft and Satanism. The documentary claims to capture real blasphemous rituals for the entertainment of the audience. Unsurprisingly, the documentary is full of beaten to death moral commentary and a variety of ad hominem attacks against the terrible heretics. The height of Witchcraft '70's appeal is an appearance by Church of Satan founder Satan LaVey. Evil stuff here! Witchcraft '70 features interviews with a cop about young people involved with Satanism and its effects on his jurisdiction. The well-mannered officer tells of ritualistic animal killings and Satanists on LSD. I got the feeling from the cop's commentary that he just wanted to tie the Satanists to the animal killings. The cop also seemed to think dirty hippies and Satanists are one in the same. Apparently he has not read the writing of Anton LaVey. As can be expected, Witchcraft '70 features many scenes of nude satanic ritual. The documentary justifies the appearance of exploitative nudity in the film by showing that the participants are "openly evil." I especially liked how the Witchcraft '70 narrator seemed to really have it out for the British devil worshipers. The narrator surely has no respect for those individuals that want to fall in the footsteps of Aleister Crowley. The lowest part in the documentary is when a group of naked Negroes become seriously engaged in evil rituals. These individuals seem to be the most believing bunch featured in Witchcraft '70. Aside from a few drugged-out visual effects and its unintentionally comical, blatantly exploitative nature, Witchcraft '70 doesn't offer much. It was even a somewhat painful experience. During the documentary's conclusion, a group of stoned hippies listen to shitty rock music and start molesting a girl. Although this may sound hilarious, it was actually quite boring. The narrator attempts to liven the mood of the content of Witchcraft '70 but fails embarrassingly throughout.

-Ty E

UN CHIEN ANDALOU
UN CHIEN ANDALOU

Luis Buñuel (1929)

Unquestionably, seeing the Spanish surrealist short *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog* during an intro to film course over a decade ago was a life changing experience for me, not least of all because it proved to me that cinema had always been a subversive art with seemingly unlimited aesthetic and thematic potential, which was in total contrast to everything I expected from cinema up until that point. Indeed, as someone who grew up like virtually all Americans watching the absurdly priced and mechanically manufactured celluloid products of Hollywood, *Un Chien Andalou* made me realize that, in a way, cinema had died in its infancy because if such nonlinear and iconoclastic work was created over $\frac{3}{4}$ a century ago, one could only imagine how cinema would have advanced if America and its culture-distorting cuckolded allies were not defecating artless swill around the world in an imperialist manner. Directed and co-written by Spanish surrealist master auteur Luis Buñuel (*The Exterminating Angel*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*) and co-written by Salvador Dalí before he 'sold out' and earned the nickname "Avida Dollars" (an anagram of the alpha-surrealist name that translates to "eager for dollars"), *Un Chien Andalou*, despite being a short film under 20 minutes with an intentionally incoherent and nonsensical plot, stands today as one of the most influential, important, and revolutionary celluloid works ever made as a work that not only predates the poetic celluloid surrealism of Jean Cocteau and acted as the prototype for every film Alejandro Jodorowsky would direct, but also a work the manages to offend, shock, and disgust after all of these years. Opening with a scene of a flapper-like chick having her eye slit open with a straight razor thus causing gooey vitreous humour to drain out of her severed peeper (Buñuel would later confess he used a real dead calf's eye), *Un Chien Andalou* lets the viewer know straight from the get go that it is a film meant to attack the viewer both viscerally and spiritually, with auteur Buñuel later writing regarding the film, "Nothing, in the film symbolizes anything. The only method of investigation of the symbols would be, perhaps, psychoanalysis." A high-class piece of delightful celluloid degeneracy with a decidedly unrelenting dream logic, *Un Chien Andalou* was cleverly concocted by Dalí and Buñuel as an aesthetic assault against the young wine-sniffing bourgeoisie, with the latter later confessing regarding the film's place in history, "Historically, this film represents a violent reaction against what at that time was called 'avantgarde cine,' which was directed exclusively to the artistic sensibility and to the reason of the spectator." Unfortunately, Buñuel underestimated the decadence and nihilism of the cultivated French middle class as they loved *Un Chien Andalou*, which the director had mixed feelings about, stating, "What can I do about the people who adore all that is new, even when it goes against their deepest convictions, or about the insincere, corrupt press, and the inane

herd that saw beauty or poetry in something which was basically no more than a desperate impassioned call for murder?" A work that inspired surrealist movement leader André Breton to invite both Dalí and Buñuel to become members of the iconoclastic art movement thereupon making them the first filmmakers officially welcomed to the ranks of surrealism, *Un Chien Andalou* was, more importantly, the arrival of a new cinematic language and universe that declared Europa had lost its sanity and art had lost its meaning as a nasty and nonsensical celluloid work that uses Richard Wagner's "Prelude and Liebestod" from the opera *Tristan und Isolde* as a sick joke.

Opening with the title card "Once Upon a Time," *Un Chien Andalou* then cuts to a man with slicked back hair played by Luis Buñuel sharpening a razor and then slitting the eye of a young woman (Simone Mareuil) with said razor appearing as a cloud glides by the moon in a similar manner. After the eyeball releases more than just tears, a title card appears reading "Eight Years Later," and a young man (Pierre Batcheff) in semi-drag nun garb, peddles down the city street, but falls over on a curb, which is witnessed by the same woman who had her eye slit (her eye is magically still in place), who rushes to his aid and attempts to revive him by sweetly kissing the stranger. For whatever reason, the helpful young woman arranges the young man's nun clothing on the bed in her apartment. Apparently, the bike accident was rather brutal as the young man has ants crawling out of a hole in his hand ("ants in the palms" is a French phrase meaning "itching to kill"). Meanwhile, an androgynous drag king with a dyke cut pokes at a decapitated hand with a stick outside as police and a growing crowd circle around her. A gentlemanly police officer picks up the hand and puts it into a box for the boyish broad, but she gets so happy that she forgets that she is standing in oncoming traffic and is killed instantly after being ran over by a car. The whole event seems to rather excite the bike boy as he begins fondling the bosoms and buttocks of the young lady that previously came to his aid. Unfortunately, the young man is cockblocked after he picks up two ropes and is forced to pull two grand pianos containing dead and rotting jackass corpses, stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments, and two discernibly perturbed priests (played by Jaime Miravilles and Salvador Dalí), all of which are somehow attached to the ropes in the small apartment, and the young woman subsequently escapes after trapping the lad's hand, which is once again covered with ants, in a door. After leaving the apartment, the young woman finds the young man, who is once again sporting nun drag, sleeping in a bed like a baby. After another title card appears reading "Around Three In the Morning," another young man appears (also played by Pierre Batcheff) and heckles the young man laying in the bed for sporting nun drag garb, so after another title card appears reading "Sixteen Years Before," the lunatic lover of holy female clothing shoots and kills his heckler. Somehow the second young man is transported to a scenic meadow, where he drops dead on the unclad Venus-like body of a young lady

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that also magically appears out of nowhere. After the second young man's corpse is carried away by a group of men, the young lady reappears in her apartment and spots a sinister The Silence of the Lambs-esque Death's-head Hawkmoth on the wall and the first young man sneers at her and subsequently wipes his mouth away with his hand, thus making it disappear. In her defense, the young lady puts some lipstick on and the young man responds by magically transporting her bushy armpit hair to where his mouth once was. Irked by the young man's nasty armpit hair fetish, the young woman exits the apartment while sticking her tongue out at her would-be-suitor and finds herself inexplicably walking on a beach instead of the street where she meets a third young man who courts her by walking arm-in-arm with her. Whilst strolling on the beach, the two new lovers find the torn nun garb and the couple lives happily ever after, or so one would hope. Instead, a final title card appears reading "In Spring..." and Un Chien Andalou concludes rather abruptly and cynically with the lovers buried to their waste in sand and assumedly dead.

Featuring pansy priests being pulled by nooses, murderous molester men dressed in nun outfits, and various scenarios of sexual sadism and bloodlust, Un Chien Andalou may not make any sense, but it is certainly a certifiably sacrilegious celluloid work that wickedly (if not playfully so!) wallows in the sort of aggressive yet absurdist atheism that auteur Luis Buñuel would become revered for. Ultimately, Un Chien Andalou had many notable admirers, including the French aristocratic couple Viscount Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles, who offered to finance a sequel to the film that would inevitably be released as *L'Age d'or* (1930) aka *The Golden Age*. Originally titled *La Bête andalouse* and set to be the same length as Un Chien Andalou, *L'Age d'or* ultimately had a 63 minute running time (as opposed to the less than 20 minute running time of the previous film) and was mainly the result of Buñuel's efforts as he had a famous falling out with Dalí and finally took it upon himself to develop a cinematic technique as opposed to relying on mere Dadaist diletantism. Ultimately, *L'Age d'or* was withdrawn (which lasted over 40 years) by the Noailles family after being banned by the Paris Prefect of Police and being described in a Spanish right-wing newspaper as, "...the most repulsive corruption of our age ... the new poison which Judaism, Masonry, and rabid, revolutionary sectarianism want to use in order to corrupt the people." Undoubtedly, both Un Chien Andalou and *L'Age d'or* are decidedly degenerate works that are quite symptomatic of the cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual decline of the Occident as works in league with Freudian psychoanalysis, bolshevism, antagonistic anti-Christian atheism, and anti-classicalism, yet the aesthetic potency of these works transcends the political sentiments of their creators as these pioneering works of cinema history have gone on to influence everyone from Kenneth Anger to Lucio Fulci (compare the eye-slicing scene of Un Chien Andalou with the eye-piercing scene of *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie*) to Wes Craven to David Lynch. Described by Jewish-Austrian-

American cineaste Amos Vogel in his revolutionary book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974) as “the most famous avant-garde film ever made” and designed by Buñuel “to change our consciousness,” *Un Chien Andalou* ultimately set the standard for all subsequent iconoclastic auteur filmmakers to come. Thankfully, Buñuel eventually managed to combine his surrealist imagery with nuanced and allegorical storytelling, thus *Un Chien Andalou* makes for an immaculate introduction to the Spanish filmmaker’s eclectic oeuvre. A darkly humorous nightmare dreamed up by two of Spain’s most prodigal sons, *Un Chien Andalou* is sadistic celluloid surrealism without a cause that ultimately changed the course of cinema history and is thus mandatory viewing for anyone that has even the remotest respect for cinema.

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Luis Buñuel (1930)

A number of years ago, I had a somewhat peculiar experience after getting a blowjob on a large coastal island-cum-park. As my then-girlfriend and I were walking back to her car, a wild Spanish pony appeared out of nowhere on the path and scared the shit out of my lady friend due to the loud noise it made as it galloped by us. In fact, her fear was so frenetically intense that it initially scared the shit out of me too, as if I had to immediately prepare to take on a homicidal killer with nil notice. Upon getting back to my girlfriend's car, I discovered between twenty and thirty tiny deer ticks crawling up my foot and sock, which were surely the consequence of the partly wooded beachside BJ. Needless to say, when my girlfriend and I finally got home, we administered full-body cavity searches on each other shortly after sharing a long warm shower. While we did not find any ticks, my girlfriend felt something on her head a couple hours later after we were lying in bed together and I soon found myself using tweezers to carefully pull off the parasitic bloodsucker. Naturally, the gf was positively pissed and took her revenge by repeatedly brutally stabbing the less than sentient Ixodidae to death in what was a genuinely sadistic rage that I will never forget. While everything I said above really happened, I cannot help but think the story is somehow allegorical, at least after recently watching the surrealist masterpiece *L'Age d'Or* (1930) aka *The Golden Age* directed by Spanish master auteur Luis Buñuel (*The Exterminating Angel*, *Belle de Jour*) and somehow saw it as a depicting something akin to my own failed love affairs. While most people might find the film to be indistinguishable from bad gibberish of the arcanelly archaic sort, I somehow found a kindred spirit lurking inside the film, as if I—a proud conservative libertine and born-again post-Yockeyite—found my soul in sync with a nearly ancient film that once caused right-wing riots against commie scum.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine liking a film directed by a filmmaker that was then-flirting-with-communism and that was produced by the part-Jewish mischling descendant of the great Marquis de Sade, but a lot has changed in the Occident in the nearly-90-years since the film was first released and even some leftists back then actually had balls (also, while the film's co-writer Salvador Dalí was literally obsessed with Hitler's testicles, Buñuel would eventually realize that commies and other related rabble are retarded). Oftentimes feeling like a romance film created by a lovelorn schizophrenic lunatic that dreams of engaging in orgies in hell with the mangled corpse of Pasolini and de Sade in the vain hope that he will finally get over his forsaken perennial lovesickness, *L'Age d'Or* is unequivocally a rare piece of technically-quite-antiquated celluloid iconoclasm that still has the power to offend and disturb today. A radical piece of gleefully scathing cynical romanticism where the seemingly foredoomed cultural

history of the Occident is blamed for the innate impossibility of love conquering all in the spiritually moribund modern age, the film is also anti-Christian in the best sort of way by depicting Christ as a two-faced Sadean killer of hot young nubile girls and, in turn, worshiper of death and female defilement. Indeed, in the film, the protagonist is more or less cockblocked by civilization, which is indubitably one of the most audaciously absurd premises in cinema history and something that makes Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) seem like the patently prosaic expression of a posturing prole philistine, but I digress.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons I loathe leftists, especially leftist activists, so much as the majority of them tend to be self-loathing hypocrites and the nadir of the very bourgeois they loathe (indeed, Judaic background aside, Marx was also a failed bourgeois, not to mention the fact that he never worked a single day in his entire life). While one could accuse Buñuel—a Spaniard from a distinguished background that, as recounted in his memoir, looked down on the poor as a youth—of such glaring hypocrisies, he never really tried to hide his roots and as he eloquently explained in his short-but-sweet memoir *My Last Sigh* (1982), “Like the señoritos I knew in Madrid, most surrealists came from good families; as in my case, they were bourgeois revolting against the bourgeoisie. But we all felt a certain destructive impulse, a feeling that for me has been even stronger than the creative urge. The idea of burning down a museum, for instance, has always seemed more enticing than opening of a cultural center or the inauguration of a new hospital.” While this might seem like harsh words, especially considering Buñuel, who was initially influenced by Italian Futurists like Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, was already fairly old when he wrote them, *L'Age d'Or* is so intoxicatingly iconoclastic and awe-inspiringly aberrantly absurd in its essence that one cannot help respect the great passion of the auteur, especially since he manages to seamlessly express such savage surrealist sentiments alongside a strangely endearing (ill-fated) love story as the bourgeoisie—and its retarded rules and customs—becomes the ultimate callous murderer of love. Indeed, as Buñuel also wrote in his memoir, “Although Dalí compared it to American films (undoubtedly from a technical point of view), he later wrote that his intentions ‘in writing the screenplay’ were to expose the shameful mechanisms of contemporary society. For me, it was a film about passion, *l’amour fou*, the irresistible force that thrusts two people together, and about the impossibility of their ever become one.” Speaking of love, Buñuel and Dalí, who previously demonstrated to be great collaborators on *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), had a major falling out after the former choked the latter's new whore muse-cum-future-wife Gala, thus the film is mainly the brainchild of its director (according to Buñuel, only one scene, which involves a guy walking around with a rock on his head, was written by Dalí). In fact, even more than his debut film *Un Chien Andalou*, *L'Age d'Or* is like a virtual artistic manifesto where Buñuel outlines the themes, obsessions, fetishes, and visuals that would come to dominate his truly singular filmmaking

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career. In short, it is an imperative (albeit technically formative) work from one of the greatest and most important filmmakers of cinema history.

L'Age d'Or begins in a fashion that is considerably less fairytale-like than *Un Chien Andalou* as it is comprised of primitive vintage orthochromatic footage of scorpions doing evil scorpion things and related creature qualities that are ultimately compared to humans, including toxic aggression, ungodly survival instincts, and tendency towards the most evil forms of treachery against its own species, among other things. Just as the scorpion has “five prismatic joints” and a “sixth vesicular joint,” the film has five main segments and a savagely subversive Sadean concluding segment. As British surrealist scholar Robert L. Short noted in regard to the possible esoteric meaning of this literally quite gritty documentary opening, “The scorpion is the zodiac sign that governs the genitals and the anus. As such, it’s the symbol of sex, excrement, and death. Thus, this opening sequence introduces the ambivalent dynamic that powers our impulses of attraction and repulsion alike and officiates at the alchemical marriage of shit and gold.” Needless to say, *L'Age d'Or* is a film with an intrinsically ironical title as a tragicomic romance trapped inside of a purgatorial absurdist cinematic nightmare where nothing goes right and evil, especially of the nasty Nazarene sort, triumphs in the end. In short, aberrant avant-garde cinematic alchemy where human shit is elevated to artistic gold.

After the scorpion doc that opens the film, a group of ornamentally dressed Catholic bishops, who certainly look more glamorous than the average meth-addled drag-queen, practically wash up onto some rocks where they soon turn into ornamentally dressed skeletons yet their dubious ‘sacrifice’ seems to be totally triumphant as they leave an indelible mark on the land as demonstrated by the fact that their martyrdom (or whatever) is soon followed by a ‘golden age’ as a large colonial entourage subsequently arrives that includes priests, military men, government whores, etc. and it is soon declared, “Upon this rock I shall build my church.” Naturally, the group of humorless bureaucrats becomes exceedingly angry when a sort of religious ceremony that they’re performing is interrupted by the great ecstasy of two lovers (Gaston Modot and Lya Lys) engaged in exceedingly orgasmic mud-wrestling. At this point, the lovers—the film’s main protagonists—are separated for the first time and the rest of the main section of the film involves the man played by Modot’s strange quest to be reunited with his beautiful beloved. As the film eventually reveals via spasmodic flashback, Modot is a special agent of the so-called ‘International Goodwill Society’ and is ostensibly on a “goodwill mission” that, as described by his ‘Minister of Interior,’ is based, “On your spirit of self-sacrifice and proven valor depend many lives. Children, women, old men. The honor of our Fatherland rests on the outcome of this noble enterprise.” Needless to say, lovesick Modot completely ignores his audaciously altruistic mission as he has much more important things to think about than the lives of children, namely being reunited with his lover.

Hardly a humanist or lover of animals, Modot is not beneath kicking little dogs like soccer balls, senselessly stomping on beetles, and assaulting blind men, yet one finds it hard to fault such a passionate lover. Suffering from a sort of Freudianism in reverse, immediately visualizes women masturbating when encountering advertising (or as British film theorist Raymond Durgnat described, Modot “sees through” the impersonal, commercialized eroticism of the posters to his anima”). As for Modot’s lover Lys, she has her own problems, including suffering the banality of her bourgeois parents, large cows invading her bed, and a magic mirror with racing clouds that seem to express her lovesick erotic longing. Of course, the two lovers are soon reunited but, like most great romances, the love affair does not last and ultimately concludes on a quite chaotic, if not downright cataclysmic, note that inspires apocalyptic dreams.

Using a special certificate that proves his on a certified “goodwill mission” to supposedly save millions of children and elderly people, Modot is able to finally escape from two cops that are senselessly parading him around the absurd decaying civilization “Imperial Rome”—a modern metropolis that looks nice from a bird’s-eye view yet is quite brittle and decayed as revealed by the fact that buildings randomly collapse—so that he can make his way back to his lover. While never made totally clear, Modot may have once been a true idealist and humanistic do-gooder like so many naive and/or otherwise idiotic young people, but now he simply has a monomaniacal obsession with lady Lys. After his odious odyssey, Modot eventually makes his way to a large party at Lys’ family chateau where many absurd things occur, including a maid being blasted with a roaring flame and a pesky Mongoloid child being shot after daring to annoy a man while he was rolling a cigarette. Clearly infatuated with Modot and his masculine majesty, Lys can only look on in delight when the hero slaps her mother in the face for the crime of spilling a drop of wine on his rather stylish suit. Plagued by the spiritually moribund etiquette and the callously contrived civility of the ball-less bourgeoisie, Modot finds it seemingly impossible to get to Lys at the party as he is constantly approached by pestering guests attempting to make small talk with him. In what is arguably one of the most shamelessly yet touchingly romantic scenarios in all of cinema history, Modot and Lys’ eyes remain ecstatically glued to one another while being hassled by party guests as if they are the only two people in the entire world, at least in their own minds. Unfortunately, fate has different plans for the ill-fated lovers and it does not even involve full-on fucking.

It is only when the party guests begin congregating at a garden in preparation for a sort of makeshift Wagnerian concert that the lovers are able to finally reunite outside with some privacy near a male statue. Rather unfortunately, the reunion is only momentarily happy and very much abstractly resembles the most absurd of botched orgasms. Indeed, not long after the two begin smooching, Modot is forced to take an emergency phone call where he is berated by his boss,

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who subsequently commits suicide, for causing the deaths of men, women, and especially children due to his negligence. Undoubtedly, in his eager willingness to sacrifice the lives of millions of innocent children for the sake of a love that isn't even guaranteed, Modot's behavior symbolizes the ugly emotional extremes of romantic obsession. Meanwhile, Lys, who is clearly quite horny, begins fellating the toe of the statue as if she cannot wait to mouth Modot's member. When Modot finally gets off the phone and reunites with Lys after a two minute ordeal that feels like a decade in terms of abject anticipation, the two seem incapable of properly channeling their repressed passion for one another as if their love has become necrotic. For example, Modot hallucinates that Lys is an elderly grey-haired woman and the two become very sleepy. While the couple continues to kiss as if trying to chase a bliss that just doesn't exist, they are soon rudely interrupted by a seemingly demented conductor that walks over to them with his hands gripping head like a neurotic somnambulist on acid, as if his performance of Richard Wagner's "Liebestod"—a splendid piece of music that reveals Buñuel's own monomaniacal tendencies, which are almost always characteristic of all great men, in that he used the same exact work in his previous film *Un Chien Andalou*—has caused him to suffer a complete mental breakdown. Immediately inexplicably spellbound by the unhinged old fart as if she suffers from serious daddy issues, Lys leaves Modot and then proceeds to embrace and French kiss the cracked conductor with a certain girlish gusto. After his love affair comes to a swift and brutally bizarre end, Modot gets his revenge against his (ex)lover by immediately going to her room where he proceeds to tears up some pillows like a tyrannical toddler and then begins hurling stuff out of the window, including a wooden plough, bishop, bishop's staff, burning Christmas tree, and giraffe statue, among other phallic items that arguably hint at a sort of spiritual castration. At this point, Modot is probably done with love and ready embrace de Sade.

While the film's love affair ends on a rather erratically brutal note where the protagonist suffers soul-crushing defeat in the romance department in the most preposterously pathetic of ways, the quasi-epilogue—a virtual homage to the Marquis de Sade's posthumously published *The 120 Days of Sodom*, or the *School of Libertinage* (1785/1904)—is a sort of allegorical final nail in the coffin of Western Civilization that begins with a long scrolling inter-title that reads: "Just as these feathers fell but a long way away...the survivors from the Château de Selliny...emerged to return to Paris. 120 days earlier, four godless and unprincipled scoundrels had, driven by their depravity, shut themselves away...to indulge in the most bestial of orgies. To them, the life of a woman mattered no more than that of a fly. They took with them eight lovely adolescent girls...to serve as victims for their criminal desires...plus four women well versed in debauchery...whose narrative skills would serve to stimulate...their already jaded appetites...whenever interest flagged." After the pseudo-moralistic inter-title, a

bearded Jesus/Duc de Blangis figure—a character that may or may not be a ‘liberated’ post-love Modot—emerges from an ominous (yet somehow goofy) gothic castle where he is followed by a couple similarly tired and debauched-looking aristocrats. When a wounded young woman, who may or may not be Modot’s ex-lover Lys, emerges from the castle, Jesus takes her back inside and assumedly murders her. In the end, Jesus loses his beard and a couple female scalps are depicted hanging from a large Christian cross as snow falls from a sky in a scenario that arguably allegorically symbolizes the twilight of romance in (post)Christian Western Civilization.

While Buñuel bemoaned the tragic character of love and the impossibility of two lovers becoming one, *L’Age d’Or* is, somewhat ironically, the artistic consequence of the auteur’s one-time collaborator-cum-friend Salvador Dalí finding his great love-cum-muse Gala and thus only playing a minor role in the film. Of course, despite his anarchic spirit, Buñuel was rather bourgeois in his romantic dealings as he courted his future wife, Jeanne Rucar Lefebvre, in a formal Aragonese manner—complete with a chaperone—and stayed together with her for nearly half-a-century for what was the rest of his life after marrying her in 1934. As noted by Hermann Hesse in *Steppenwolf* (1927), the artist is one of the few things that redeems the bourgeoisie and Buñuel was certainly one of the greatest masters of this form of critique, especially in regard to the modern post-religious bourgeoisie. After all, it is no coincidence that the auteur wrote in his memoir, “I’m lucky to have spent my childhood in the Middle Ages, or, as Huysmans described it, that ‘painful and exquisite’ epoch—painful in terms of its material aspects perhaps, but exquisite in its spiritual life. What a contrast to the world of today!” A man of the past that created art of the future, Buñuel was, in the sense described by Uncle Adolf’s #1 fan-girl Savitri Devi in her magnum opus *The Lightning and the Sun* (1958), a ‘Man Against Time’ that ultimately used a destructive aesthetic power for life-affirming purposes, thereupon performing a sort of aesthetic alchemy by turning the shit that is modernity into artistic gold. Considering that *L’Age d’Or* caused reactionary riots and was banned from public exhibition in late-1930 after the Prefect of Police of Paris arranged to have it banned, one could certainly say that Hesse was right when he wrote that, “The bourgeois today burns as heretics and hangs as criminals those to whom he erects monuments tomorrow.” On the other hand, Buñuel—a man once associated with communist cunts and other degenerates—is now attacked by ‘bobo’ (bourgeois bohemian) leftists—undoubtedly the nadir of the slave-morality-ridden priest types that Nietzsche condemned for destroying Europa—with ad hominem oriented buzzwords like ‘misogynistic,’ ‘xenophobic,’ ‘homophobic,’ and other completely meaningless modern vile, thus confirming that his fears about the future of the Occident were not in vain as things have only gotten ten times worse in terms of their surreal stupidity and inanity.

Undoubtedly, after recently re-watching *L’Age d’Or* and doing research on

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Buñuel, I could not help but reminded of the following excerpt from Steppenwolf: "Every age, every culture, every custom and tradition has its own character, its own weakness and its own strength, its beauties and ugliness; accepts certain sufferings as matters of course, puts up patiently with certain evils. Human life is reduced to real suffering, real hell, only when two ages, two cultures and religions overlap. A man of the Classical Age who had to live in medieval times would suffocate miserably just as a savage does in the midst of our civilization. Now there are times when a whole generation is caught in this way between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standard, no security, no simple acquiescence. Naturally, everyone does not feel this equally strongly. A nature such as Nietzsche's had to suffer our present ills more than a generation in advance. What he had to go through alone and misunderstood, thousands suffer today." When I watch Buñuel's films, especially *L'Age d'Or*, I fell as if I am being confronted by the excremental excesses of the Occidental collective unconscious in an eccentrically esoteric form; or, the prophetic cinematic daydreams of a very real future nightmare from a mensch with the keen artistic sensitivity to foresee that which should not be seen, at least by those that still value their sanity. In that sense, it is only fitting that the film was funded by the direct descendant of de Sade who, in all his savagely sadistic degeneracy, still expressed something very real about the 'liberal' future to come (as a far-left degenerate aristocratic revolutionary that was an elected delegate to the National Convention during the French Revolution, de Sade also actively created that forsaken future). After all, child drag-queens, the chemical castration of children, sex changes, wiggerism, and fat rights activists are modern phenomenons that are more surreally disturbing and/or absurd than anything that you might find in a Buñuel flick.

Recently, I discovered that the 'great love' of a childhood friend of mine was recently tragically killed after a police cruiser ran her over. Notably, this girl brought great misery to my friend and everyone around them when they were together (for example, she would sneak into my parent's home to get to my friend while they both had restraining order against each other), yet I could not help but feel a certain degree of sadness for my old comrade, as if the final lingering sense ecstasy of his *l'amour fou* had been finally fully extinguished for all of eternity via absurd tragedy. Even today, I cannot help but be reminded of bittersweet memories from a love affair that began nearly a decade ago, or feel an irrevocable sense of loss for a fairly recent all-too-brief romance that happened that—for better or worse—reminded me what *l'amour fou* feels like. If you want to experience what it feels like to be in heartsick hell and back in a film that somehow manages to unintentionally reconcile the miserably melodic lovelorn lyrical pathos of John Maus and pre-apocalyptic Occidental despair of Oswald Spengler with a certain Dirlewangerian depravity thrown in for good measure, *L'Age d'Or* is certainly the film to see. As to why the average spiritually neutered bourgeois would find

both *l'amour fou* and a film like Buñuel's quite disagreeable, Hesse summed it up quite well with the words, "The bourgeois treasures nothing more highly than the self... And so at the cost of intensity he achieves his own preservation and security. His harvest is a quiet mind which he prefers to being possessed by God, as he prefers comfort to pleasure, convenience to liberty, and a pleasant temperature to that deathly inner consuming fire."

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LAND WITHOUT BREAD
LAND WITHOUT BREAD

Luis Buñuel (1933)

As a virtual lifelong loather of the sort of debasing deluded dreams that Hollywood so sickingly sells like a pimp attempting to pass off a seasoned slack-jawed STD-ridden streetwalker as a prized virgin beauty, I have naturally always been more attracted to a sort of realism that borders on the surreal; whether it be Bavarian sensation Werner Herzog's morosely morbid depiction of infamous necrophile Ed Gein's hometown in *Stroszek* (1977), the somehow mystifying yet simultaneously demystifying avant-garde docs of Dutch auteur Henri Plaat (*Fragments of Decay*, *El cardenal*), or the hypnotically darkly humorous aesthetically nihilistic excesses of Harmony Korine's delightfully deranging debut feature *Gummo* (1997). Needless to say, as both a cinephile and longtime Luis Buñuel fan, I should have probably watched the Spanish auteur's third film and sole documentary contribution, *Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan* (1933) aka *Land Without Bread* aka *Unpromised Land*, a very long time ago, yet I just recently endured it for the first time after being inspired by the animated feature Buñuel in the *Labyrinth of the Turtles* (2018) aka *Buñuel en el laberinto de las Tortugas* directed Salvador Simó. While I am not a huge fan Simó's of film—a somewhat superficial and even hagiographic semi-fictional tribute to Buñuel's personal *mein kampf* while making *Land Without Bread* that, at least partly, feels inspired by the troubled Walt Disney-Salvador Dalí collaboration *Destino* (1945/2008)—it certainly did its job in terms of inspiring me to finally watch the documentary, especially after I watched the extra features included on the Shout Factory blu-ray and discovered the Dutch documentary Buñuel's *Prisoners* (2000) aka *De gevangenen van Buñuel* where modern-day descendants of the Spanish region depicted in the doc express both great hatred and loving respect for the Spanish auteur. Indeed, Buñuel's 28-minute doc—a pioneering cinematic work that is described as both a 'pseudo-documentary' and 'Ethnofiction' on Wikipedia yet anticipates cinema-vérité and is surely both more intriguing and subversive than anything Jean Rouch has ever directed—has ultimately proved to be such an influential film that it has inspired multiple documentaries and a virtual children's animated feature, yet it seems that no one can actually agree on what the film actually is or the auteur's intent in what is arguably a playfully morally dubious experiment in understated cinematic savagery of the delectably distastefully tragicomic sort where the misery of man is ruthlessly rubbed into the viewer's face with an almost demonic dispassion. Depicting the everyday destitution and surely surreal poverty of the Las Hurdes region of Spain, the short does the seemingly impossible and equally nonsensical by being a true 'Surrealist documentary' that makes a mockery out of the sort of nauseatingly naive proto-Rouch-esque ethnographic racial fetishism associated with frog surrealists like Michel Leiris. In short, in *Land Without Bread*, the

viewer is shocked to discover that even parts of Europe exhibit the same sort of perturbing sub-Lumpenproletariat impoverishment and almost transcendental backwardness that is typically associated with the Dark Continent.

As a cinematic work that was directed by one of the greatest filmmakers of all-time, funded by the lottery winnings of an anarcho-syndicalist sculptor-cum-painter named Ramón Acín that was murdered by supposed fascists during the first year of the Spanish Civil War (which, ironically, the film supports the start of!), and co-written by a commie Surrealist named Pierre Unik who died in a concentration camp in 1945, *Land Without Bread* is undeniably an important piece of both cinema and (meta)political history where the loony leftist idealism of its creators now seems genuinely absurd on retrospect. In that sense, the film seems even more innately surreal today than when it was first released in what is ultimately a great example of an artist (or, in this case, artists) becoming a victim of his own youthful political naïveté (not surprisingly, Buñuel's political views, or lack thereof, would only become more nuanced and cynical as he aged). Taking its title from a reference by Russian anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin about how every social and political problem can supposedly be cured with mere bread, the film would seem relatively political ambiguous if Buñuel had not later added a sort of patently preposterous postscript that reads: "The generals' rebellion aided by Hitler and Mussolini would restore together with the privileges of the owners, the peasant workforces. But the workers and peasants of Spain will defeat Franco and his accomplices. With the help of anti-fascists all over the world, tranquility and happiness will make way for civil war and forever eradicate the pockets of misery this film has shown you." Of course, as everything from intentional Soviet famines like Holodomor to the current starvation plaguing much of Venezuela today, commies are not very good at feeding people—whether it be moldy Bolshevik bread or otherwise. Idiotic youthful idealism aside, the doc was a valiant act of cinematic rebellion and a film that apparently could have gotten Buñuel killed, or as the auteur explained in his memoir *My Last Sigh* (1982), "When the Republican troops, backed by Durutti's anarchist column, occupied Quinto, my friend Mantecon, the governor of Aragón, found a dossier with my name on it in the files of the civil guard. In it, I was described as notoriously debauched, a morphine addict, and the author of that heinous film, that crime against the state, *LAS HURDES*. If I could be found, the note said, I was to be turned over immediately to the Falange, where I would receive my just deserts." Of course, Buñuel collaborators Acín and Unik were not so lucky, but such was the spirit of the age as artists were purged from both sides of the political spectrum. For example, upon France's so-called liberation during WWII, French filmmaker Jean Mamy—a one-time leftist that acted as the editor of Jean Renoir's *Baby's Laxative* (1931) aka *On purge bébé*—was executed in part for directing the Vichy anti-Freemasonry propaganda film *Occult Forces* (1943) aka *Forces occultes* (in fact, the film's writer Jean Marquès-Rivière and producer Robert Muzard were

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also sentenced to death, but they both managed to ultimately survive).

Notably, despite only covering a couple pages of Buñuel's excellent book, you arguably learn more about the history of Las Hurdes, which the auteur was initially inspired to make a film about after reading the anthropological study *Las Jurdes: étude de géographie humaine* (1927) by Maurice Legendre, by reading the auteur's autobiography. As Buñuel explains in *My Last Sigh*, "Once upon a time, the high plateaus of Las Hurdes were settled by bandits, and by Jews who'd fled the Inquisition," though one surely would not know that after watching the film as Jews and banditos seem like otherworldly *Übermenschen* compared to the fiercely forlorn modern-day inhabitants of the region. In *Land Without Bread*, the viewer discovers a seemingly endless arid wasteland that is described as follows by narrator Abel Jacquin, "Throughout this labyrinth of mountains...the 52 villages that make up Las Hurdes are scattered...with a total population of 8,000 people. Ahead, we must descend a steep slope...and cross the splendid valley, Las Batuecas...currently inhabited by an old monk who lives here...surrounded by a few servants." Apparently, for four centuries, the valley was inhabited by monks, the Carmelites, who preached Christianity in the main villages of Las Hurdes, but now the monasteries are completely deserted aside from a sole monk and his handful of loyal servants. Despite the decline of spiritual leaders in Las Hurdes, the nicest buildings in the area are all churches, which surely reminds its lowly inhabitants of their ultimate value in the face of god almighty. In fact, it seems that the only thing these pitiful peasants have is religion as that don't even really have a folk culture, or as Buñuel explained in his memoir, "As for folk dances, those trite expressions of misplaced nationalism, Las Hurdes didn't have any." Indeed, instead of pesky fascist folk dances, the area is plagued by roaming packs of rock-throwing inbred mutants, or so one discovers while watching Buñuel's oftentimes organically grotesque yet hardly garish film.

Due to poverty, malnutrition, poor hygiene and inbreeding, among other things, genetic degeneration in Las Hurdes is a serious problem to the point where the area is plagued with dwarfs and violent mental retards that tend to throw rocks and attack people, including Buñuel's small film crew. Indeed, while the auteur's intent is certainly dubious, there is no denying the nightmarish reality of the genetically forsaken sub-troglodytes featured in the film. Naturally, senseless death is also an everyday occurrence in the area, as Buñuel encounters a small little girl lying on the ground that, as the narrator reveals, apparently died only a couple days later after the footage was shot. At one point, the viewer encounters a seemingly elderly woman breast-feeding a baby with her completely deflated bean-bag boobs, only to be told by the narrator that she is actually only 32-years-old (admittedly, I found this claim to be more than a little bit improbable). Most people in the area only have the choice of potatoes and beans as food (with the slightly richer inhabitants occasionally partaking in pork), though, ev-

ery so often, goat meat becomes available when said livestock accidentally falls off a cliff (for the film, Buñuel did not have time to wait for such an accident so he shot a goat off a cliff himself!). Dysentery is also a big problem in the area as the locals tend to eat unripe cherries out of sheer desperation. Even death is not easy in the region, as corpses have to be carried many miles as most of the villages lack cemeteries (for these admittedly rather realistic scenes, Buñuel had an infant 'play dead' and somehow the fly-plagued babe does a good job acting!). While the primary food industry in the area is beekeeping, the locals do not actually own the bees, thus making it all the more absurd that goats, mules, and people are oftentimes killed by said bees. In short, death seems to be the main concern for the locals of Las Hurdes and, as an old woman says at the very end of the doc, "Nothing keeps you more awake than to think always of the dead. Recite an Ave Maria for the peace of their souls." Of course, considering Buñuel's own staunchly cynical stance on his ancestral faith, the inclusion of the poor wretched old woman's words seems all the more bleak yet simultaneously playfully nihilistic.

At the end of the film, the narrator less than passionately declares, "After a two-month stay in Las Hurdes...we leave the country," but, as referenced in the documentary *The Journey of a Surrealist*, Buñuel later remarked, "Once you've been to hell, how do you get out?" Cynical exaggeration or not, the doc makes its case with very little effort that Las Hurdes is a miserable virtual pre-medieval hellhole and, as the auteur intended, the idiotic sort of European xenophiles that fetishize African poverty merely need to travel a couple miles to find the ugly extreme of abject human suffering, just as the white liberal and Judaic intellectuals of today pretend to weep for the melanin-privileged people of the world without batting an eye for the poor whites of Appalachia (who, in their disgustingly deluded slave-morality-ridden minds, believe that these poor whites deserve it due to imaginary privilege being part of their magical racial birthright). Rather ironically, despite the film's contrived commie postscript, Buñuel was later forced to concede to Mexican actor and screen writer Tomás Pérez Turrent that Francisco Franco enriched Las Hurdes, confessing, "Yes, some years ago I went to Las Hurdes. It had changed somewhat because it had become part of Franco's favorite region. There was electricity in some towns and they made bread everywhere." In short, ostensible fascist Franco brought bread to the land without bread. Political intent aside, Buñuel felt the doc was part of the same personal Surrealist *Weltanschauung* as his previous two films *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930), noting, "It's in the same line. The first two are imaginative, the other is taken from reality, but I feel it shares the same outlook." Still, the film was distinct to the auteur in at least one way as he stated to José de la Colina, "Nothing is gratuitous in *LAND WITHOUT BREAD*. It is perhaps the least gratuitous film I have made."

In the worthwhile compilation *The Cinema of Cruelty: From Buñuel to*

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Hitchcock (1975), André Bazin noted, “With *LAS HURDES (LAND WITHOUT BREAD)*, a ‘documentary’ on the poverty-stricken population of the Las Hurdes region, Buñuel did not reject *UN CHIEN ANDALOU*; on the contrary, the objectivity, the soberness of the documentary surpassed the horror and the forcefulness of the fantasy. In the former, the donkey devoured by bees attained the nobility of a barbaric and Mediterranean myth which is certainly equal to the glamour of the dead donkey on the piano. Thus Buñuel stands out as one of the great names of the cinema at the end of the silent screen and the beginning of sound—one with which only that of Vigo bears comparison—in spite of the sparseness of his output.” Indeed, while *Land Without Bread* does not quite transcend the singular shock of an eye being slit like in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), it manages to defile the soul in a striking fashion to the point where death feels like it can be virtually touched and the smell of decay is not too far away, which was surely the auteur’s intent in depicting his homeland as a place of deathly destitution and dystopian delirium where the crucifix is a symbol of death and the legacy of Catholicism is one of starved disease-ridden corpses and perennially smirking retards. While Bazin would also argue in regard to the film, “The documentary on Las Hurdes was tinged with a certain cynicism, a self-satisfaction in its objectivity; the rejection of pity took on the color of an aesthetic provocation,” I personally deeply respect Buñuel—a bourgeois boy that had no real innate personal understanding of the human misery he encountered—for not succumbing to conspicuously contrived bleeding-heart buffoonery by taking the easy gutmensch route and pretending to weep for people that need everything but misspent tears.

Notably, at one point in *Land Without Bread*, Buñuel plays virtual art critic in a scene featuring morbid midgets and mental defectives juxtaposed with the deadly serious narration, “The realism even of a Zurbarán or of a Ribera falls far short of such a reality. The degeneration of this race is primarily due to hunger, lack of hygiene, poverty and incest.” While some might find such sentiments to be as cold as an unclad Icelandic female corpse, I am also reminded of the auteur’s words, “I’ve always believed that the imagination is a spiritual quality that, like memory, can be trained and developed.” After all, only Buñuel could arrive to such a charmingly twisted yet aesthetically truthful conclusion after being confronted with such miserable misbegotten *untersmenschen* that have no time or taste for the bourgeois luxury of fine art. Thankfully, Buñuel did not pull a Forough Farrokhzad who, after finishing her sole film *The House Is Black* (1963)—a 22-minute doc depicting the horribly disfigured individuals of an Iranian leper colony—decided it would be wise to adopt two leprotic children due to her haunting experiences while working on the film (notably, she died only four years later in a car wreck, thus assumedly leaving those kids orphans once again). The last thing the world needs, especially the cinematic world, is another documentary where we are supposed to feel sorry for poor brown people

and thus it comes as a great relief that one of cinema's greatest and most singular artists created a classic documentary that is the total opposite of the Michael Moore school of ludicrously lame liberal agitprop of the unwittingly shamelessly grotesque sort. In short, Buñuel was a pinko-leftist the same way German Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn was a National Socialist. Literal documentary or not, it is hard to imagine Werner Herzog's underrated second feature *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) without the existence of Buñuel's short doc due to certain striking aesthetic similarities, especially when it comes to the 'ecstatic truth.' Although Buñuel would never again direct a documentary, he apparently edited together an abridged version of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) featuring elements of Luftwaffe auteur Hans Bertram's *Feuertaufe* (1940) aka *Baptism of Fire* for the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), but it unfortunately has never been released. While Buñuel would even demonstrate an apparent antifascist stance in later works like *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1964), I somehow doubt his MoMA edit of *Naziland* is as unflattering as his depiction of *Las Hurdes in Land Without Bread*. After all, as certain wise people sometimes say, you cannot polish a turd but you can certainly polish a Stahlhelm. Either way, I think it is safe to say that no modern-day leftist would believe the film was made by one of their brethren. As for the poor people of *Las Hurdes*, thank god that Franco could do what Buñuel's (or, more literally, André Gide's and Jean Cocteau's boy toy Marc Allégret's) camera could not. Admittedly, while *Land Without Bread* is one of the Buñuel films that I am least likely to revisit anytime soon, if I am feeling in enough of a masochistic mood to experience very vintage human suffering, I will certainly choose it over French master auteur Alain Resnais' obscenely overrated shoah showcase *Night and Fog* (1956) aka *Nuit et brouillard*. In describing one of his later masterpieces, Manny Farber—the virtual Sam Fuller of film critics—argued in regard to Buñuel, "His glee in life is a movie of raped virgins and fallen saints, conceived by a literary old-world director detached from his actors but infatuated with his cock-eyed primitive cynicism. It's this combination of detachment and the infatuated-with-bitterness viewpoint, added to a flat-footed technique, that produces the piercingly cold images of *THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL*." Of course, the same could also be said of *Land Without Bread* but it is exactly Buñuel's so-called "cock-eyed primitive cynicism" that allows us to face the harsh truth of the dreadfully primitive in a wonderfully wicked way that reminds one of the classic Spanish phrase: "¡Viva la Muerte!"

-Ty E

THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY
THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTY

Luis Buñuel (1974)

Luis Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty* completely destroys linear film plot structure and replaces it with a compilation of random scenarios. Once again Buñuel utilizes satirical surrealism offering the viewer a look into the irrationality of humans. No character in *The Phantom of Liberty* is likeable or contemptible. The characters just merely exist as tools to keep the film going. Like most communists, Luis Buñuel was undeniably a pervert. He used film as an outlet for his fantasies and desired pleasures. Family excrement bonding, incestuous piano playing, and sadomasochism keep *The Phantom of Liberty* interesting from beginning to end. A sniper also makes an appearance and kills random people in a French city. This scene is very comedic in its absurdity. I like to think that the snipping scene was also one of Buñuel's many fantasies. Buñuel also attacks the lack of reason involved with bureaucratic governments and institutions. A family meets with a police commissioner to set-up a search for their missing little girl (who is in the room with them). The sniper is found guilty in court and is treated like a hero signing autographs. Scenes like these take a refreshing approach to film making. Buñuel deserved his title as "auteur." Very few directors would take the chances that Buñuel took. I guess that would make him a film "revolutionary." *The Phantom of Liberty* has no progressive hurdles to jump over in the way of viewer anxiety. The film is very mellow and free flowing in its entire construction. As the viewer, you have no real expectation for what may come next. Without characters to care about or a plot to follow, *The Phantom of Liberty* still keeps viewers attention throughout the films entirety. Luis Buñuel's later films may be his best. That *Object of Desire* (Buñuel's last film) and *The Phantom of Liberty* go great when watching both back to back. The title *The Phantom of Liberty* is an homage to philosophical terrorist Karl Marx. What a great title.

-Ty E

THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE

Luis Buñuel (1977)

Out of all the great cinematic auteur filmmakers, Spanish surrealist Luis Buñuel (*Los Olvidados*, *Belle de Jour*)—a virtual one-man-cinematic-revolution—was probably the greatest in terms of sheer longevity, eclecticism, and artistic consistency as a succulently scathingly sardonic morcillismo humorist with an intrinsic flair for the intoxicatingly (yet elegantly) iconoclastic, sensually absurd, playfully pessimistic, and merrily misanthropic. Indeed, whether it be the uniquely unforgettable eye-slicing and juxtaposition of surreal sexual sadism with Richard Wagner’s “Liebestod” from his opera *Tristan und Isolde* in his debut *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), proto-Aguirre, the Wrath of God action-adventure jungle allegory of *Death in the Garden* (1956), preternatural depictions of race-hate in the unconventionally humanistic southern gothic *The Young One* (1960), simultaneously psychotic yet erotic religious allegory of *Simon of the Desert* (1965), or the plot-free aesthetic anarchy of his perfect penultimate film *The Phantom of Liberty* (1974), Buñuel—with his big brown bull-sized balls—always produced something strikingly singular that defied classification, expectation, and impressed his contemporaries, including respected figures ranging from a Hemingway-esque Hollywood maverick like John Huston to a melancholic Nordic master like Ingmar Bergman. As far as I am concerned, only Robert Bresson is comparable in terms of being able to manage to churn out subversive modernist masterpieces in the late-period of his career when he was technically already an old fart. In that sense, it was probably not a simple cope when Buñuel once declared, “Age is something that doesn’t matter, unless you are a cheese.” In fact, I would argue that Buñuel’s swansong *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) aka *Cet obscur objet du désir*—a film that is truly like no other aside from sharing some aesthetic/thematic similarities with other Buñuel flicks—is unequivocally one of his greatest masterpieces, which is somewhat ironic when one considers it also one of his most linear and, in turn, accessible. Admittedly, unlike with a lot of Buñuel’s films, I found myself especially enthralled for somewhat personal reasons upon a recent re-watching of this singular cinematic masterpiece for the first in well over a decade, thus confirming to me that the auteur’s films only improve for viewers with age and experience.

Undoubtedly, watching a man put pussy on a pedestal is a putrid thing to witness and surely something that revolts both men and women alike, albeit for somewhat different reasons. While both sexes are appalled by the emasculation that comes with such groveling behavior, women are especially disgusted by it as it spells desperation and—arguably, worst of all—a sure-thing as ladies like a chase and are bored by a pathetic bastard that is ready to commit to the figurative monogamial ball and chain. In *That Obscure Object of Desire*, the viewer watches with oftentimes *Fremdscham*-inducing delight as an old mus-

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tached frog of the rather wealthy sort as portrayed by Spanish leading man Fernando Rey disposes of all self-respect and becomes an emotional wreck over a hot twat Spanish flamenco dancer as portrayed by two different actresses (Carole Bouquet and Angela Molina). Concluding in a virtually apocalyptic manner with the violent deaths of both the lovesick hero and his fiercely frigid would-be-beloved in a film set in a world plagued by an increasingly-tedious terrorist insurgency, the film also manages to express Buñuel's lifelong obsession with linking sex and death, or as the auteur once expressed in his memoir *My Last Sigh* (1982), "And although I'm not sure why, I also have always felt a secret but constant link between the sexual act and death. I've tried to translate this inexplicable feeling into images, as in *UN CHIEN ANDALOU* when the man caresses the woman's bare breasts as his face slowly changes into a death mask." War oftentimes results in death and, as they say, love is a battlefield, but Buñuel does not depict the pangs of lovesickness in a fruity fashion as *That Obscure Object of Desire* presents it as the most obscenely odious of irrational obsessions; or, the most pleasantly painful path to senseless self-destruction.

By mere coincidence, I recently watched *That Obscure Object of Desire* back-to-back with Marcel L'Herbier's singularly striking silent avant-garde feature *L'Inhumaine* (1924) aka *The Inhuman Woman*—a film that somehow manages to reconcile Expressionism with Art Deco—and could not help but notice the stark contrast between handling the central theme of a lovelorn gent going to great extremes to warm the cold cunt of a seemingly impenetrable ice queen. In L'Herbier's aesthetic hypnotic flick, a young playboy-cum-Dr. Frankenstein not only fakes his own death to 'impress' his rather evil Gorgon-like opera singer love interest, but he also manages to use his pioneering techno-wizardry to bring her back from the dead in what is ultimately a rather unconventionally happy ending that almost (seemingly unintentionally) manages to mock the absurdity that comes with romantic pursuit. Not surprisingly considering the auteur behind it, *That Obscure Object of Desire* is nowhere near as classically romantic or heart-wrenching in terms of its depiction of the perils of all-consuming love as it is a virtual anti-garde anti-love story where the viewer begins to eventually feel contempt for both the frog protagonist and Spanish cocktease that has completely contaminated his psyche. Indeed, quite unlike *L'Inhumaine*, the film not only does not provide any sort of solace in the end, sort of like a ruined orgasm during self-immolation, but it is rarely, if ever, romantic, as if one of Buñuel's main objectives with the film was to completely demystify the majesty of love and romantic conquest altogether. Undoubtedly, if that was his goal, he certainly succeeded as *That Obscure Object of Desire* is a virtual *contra Casablanca* (1942) and brazenly brilliant because of it.

Notably, *That Obscure Object of Desire* is based on French lesbo-lover Pierre Louÿs's novel *La Femme et le pantin* (1898) aka *The Woman and the Puppet*, which was previously adapted no less than four times, with Josef von Sternberg's

The Devil is a Woman (1935) starring Marlene Dietrich undoubtedly being the greatest and best known of these earlier adaptations (filmmakers Reginald Barker, Jacques de Baroncelli, and Julien Duvivier also adapted the novel). Of course, it goes without saying that Buñuel's version is easily the most subversive and anarchistic of these adaptations. It should also be noted that the auteur apparently previously made a failed attempt at tackling the source novel, henceforth revealing his strong commitment to the project. When asked by actor and screenwriter Tomás Pérez Turrent what interested him about Louÿs's novel, Buñuel replied, "The idea of a man who wants to sleep with a woman and never manages to. In the book, of course, the man ends up sleeping with her. Then she tells him, 'If you want to see me sleep with another man, come to my house tomorrow.' The next day he went, and there she was with another man. But I was more interested in the story of an obsession that can never become a reality." Ultimately, the film is a morbidly merry tale of male masochism and the female sadism the propels it, or as Buñuel explained in regard to what motivates the (anti)heroine's heinous behavior, "A sadistic feeling. She takes advantage of him, she knows it's in her best interest to keep him happy, but at the same time she hates him to death, she enjoys tormenting him." In that sense, the film is a reminder as to why it is never a good idea to let a woman know how you really feel about them, lest you become a pathetic pawn in a grotesque gynocentric game where no gash will be smashed and all hope will be lost. Better yet, the film is also a reminder to all men that, in regard to women, one must: "abandon hope, all ye who enter here."

Obsessing over any one woman, especially those that you're not even sure you can obtain, is never good and oftentimes a glaring sign of beta-boy bitch behavior yet, as someone that finds very few women attractive, including those that are technically physically attractive (yet have the personalities of gnats), I have personally fallen into this pathetic trap. For example, I somewhat recently started a 'romance' with a girl that, despite all the obvious red flags and qualities that I would usually consider major 'deal-breakers,' I could not help but be inordinately infatuated with her to the point where I felt as in control as a negro on PCP in a titty bar. Needless to say, as my intellect informed me it would probably be from the very beginning, this erotic excursion was rather brief and cost much more (especially emotionally) than it was ultimately worth, but such is the tragedy of a tyrannical testicular trance. Still, I can thankfully say that, as someone that does not physically resemble a sort of decrepit old Super Mario like the film's protagonist, I have never been in a position that was as sexless or patently pathetic as that of the rich old fart in *That Obscure Object of Desire* who dedicates his life and tons of his money and energy to attempting to defile a dumb dame that repays him with nothing but sadism, indifference, and heartbreak. Personally, I wanted to slap the shit out of the protagonist, as his superlatively self-deluded campaign for cream of the crop cooch is absolutely

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sickening to watch in a film that deserves credit for featuring the most irksome depiction of a dude thinking with his dick in cinema history in what is ultimately one frivolous farce of a dis-romance. In short, *That Obscure Object of Desire* is the renegade anti-romantic-comedy par excellence and a prophetic expression of avant-garde anti-thottery.

That Obscure Object of Desire 'hero' Mathieu (Fernando Rey)—a wealthy middle-aged widow that is hardly handsome yet seems to think his wealth makes him worthy of a real-life Venus de Milo—demonstrates a special sort of hatred for a young woman at the beginning of the film when he sadistically dumps a bucket of water over her head as she attempts to board the same train he is taking from Seville, Spain to Paris, France. The woman in question is the protagonist's young (ex)girlfriend Conchita (as portrayed by both Carole Bouquet and Angela Molina) and the viewer soon discovers how Mathieu got to hate her so much in a series of flashbacks that are told to a small group of fellow travelers, including a midget psychology professor, in the same train car as him after they bear witness to his water bucket belligerence. As one can expect from an old fart attempting to cultivate a clearly one-sided romance with a much younger woman that is way out of his league, Mathieu is at least partly responsible for putting himself in the pathetic position he is in as he was dumb enough to almost immediately offer virtually the entire world to Conchita soon after they initially met at a house where she was working as a friend's maid. Of course, Mathieu probably also felt it would not be too hard for a rich prick like himself to obtain a mere maid, but he could not have been more wrong. Undoubtedly, Conchita's behavior almost immediately raises a number of glaring red flags, including her patently preposterous claim that she is an 18-year-old virgin despite looking at least decade older and her naturally slutty behavior (among other things, she's a stripper with a loyal following of male friends). Additionally, aside from the fact that her father committed suicide under seemingly dubious circumstances, Conchita's mother (María Asquerino), who Mathieu almost immediately begins financially supporting, is a somewhat nutty old bitch who, owing to being once-rich, refuses to work, bragging, "I'd rather kiss church steps than sweep doorsteps. My daughter helps me but I don't want her to work. Because of the bad influences." Notably, Conchita is similarly worthless as a woman as revealed by the fact that she proudly boasts after admitting she refuses to give her dubious virginity to Mathieu, "I don't like sewing. I can't cook." On top of everything else, Conchita is friends with a group of handsome young twink criminals that rob Mathieu, yet the protagonist seems completely blind to the profound dubiousness of this. In short, aside from being bloated with all sort of personal and emotional baggage, Conchita has nothing to offer aside from her statuesque beauty yet Mathieu just cannot get over her despite not being able to get a little carnal taste of said beauty in a sad scenario that is akin to being friend-zoned by a Maenad.

As the film progresses, Mathieu's patience is increasingly tested as he chases after Conchita while trying in vain to penetrate her main vein as a terrorist insurgency brings chaos to Europe in a backdrop that somewhat parallels the protagonist's seemingly perennial failed (anti)romance. Although Conchita eventually allows Mathieu to touch her titties, she adamantly refuses to give up her much prized virginity as if it is the only thing she really has to offer (it is!). Eventually, Mathieu gets so fed up with Conchita's callous cockteasing that he attempts to penetrate her by force, but ultimately fails after spending no less than 15 minutes attempting to takeoff a canvas corset that acts as a virtual chastity belt. On top of everything else, Conchita derives a sort of sadistic glee by cuckolding Mathieu, including sneaking young handsome males into her room, dancing naked for Japanese tourists, and even forcing the protagonist to watch as she fucks a male friend (though she later tries to play off such behavior as a 'joke' and claims the male friend was actually a homosexual). Needless to say, Mathieu completely loses it after being so ruthlessly cucked and beats her to a bloody pulp, thus inspiring the heroine to questionably proclaim as blood drips from her face, "Now I know you love me. Mateo, I'm still a virgin." In the end, after telling his entire savagely sordid story to his rather attentive traveling companions, Mathieu still cannot help but desire Conchita despite the fact she pays him back by dumping a bucket of water onto his head. Luckily, the rancid romance comes to a swift explosive end when the two are killed in a terrorist explosion at a mall shortly after mutually admiring a seamstress that is symbolically mending a bloody nightgown.

Although a virtual cipher of a character, the titular twat of *That Obscure Object of Desire* also happens to be one of the most intensely intriguing love interests of cinema history as a sort of archetypical Madonna-whore creature that embodies qualities of both the naïve virgin and savage slut in the most insufferable ways (hence the incidental brilliance of utilizing two actresses to play one character), as if it was Buñuel's goal to create the greatest she-beast—a cravenly cruel character-without-character (like so many women) that basks in inducing male anxieties and lovelorn lunacy, sort of like a young child slowly killing a fly—in cinema history. In that sense, it almost comes as a great cathartic relief when the protagonist and his love object are blown up in the end, as if the tension created by their emotionally terrorist disharmonious romance could only conjure up such a cataclysmic scenario. Despite the glaring pulchritude of the two lead female actresses, their beauty is almost completely extinguished in the viewer's mind by the end of the film, as the character embodies some of the most repugnant negative female stereotypes, including jealousy, pettiness, sadism, shallowness, narcissism, histrionics, stupidity, hypocrisy, projection, unreliability, flakiness, and deceptiveness, among other things. While an absurdist masterpiece of cinema that is packed with plenty of playful dark humor, the film's heroine is ultimately scarier than the greatest of female villains of both

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cinema and television history, including Elsa ‘Rosalie’ Bannister of *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947), Nurse Ratched of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975), Catherine Tramell of *Basic Instinct* (1992), Alexandra of *Alexandra’s Project* (2003), and Cersei Lannister of *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), among countless other examples. Undoubtedly, only fellow Mediterranean Marco Ferreri (*The Seed of Man*, *Dillinger Is Dead*) has come anywhere near to Buñuel in terms of exquisitely yet brutally depicting the unflattering character of European women in the age of Occidental decline.

Rather humorously, despite being a wealthy widow that should be worldlier when it comes to the wayward ways of women, the film’s protagonist Mathieu seems like a pussy-novice compared to his lowly servant Martin (André Weber) who declares when asked by his boss about the so-called fairer sex, “I have a friend who loves women very much, but he claims they’re sacks of excrement.” In a humorous misquote of Nietzsche, Martin also declares after examining the room where Mathieu has just brutalized Conchita, “If you go with women, carry a big stick.” In fact, the Nietzsche quote in question is from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883) and actually reads: “You go to women? Do not forget the whip!” Rather revealingly, it is only when Mathieu uses his figurative whip and beats Conchita does she express any sort of love to the protagonist in what can certainly be read as a classic display of female masochism (though one certainly doubts the sincerity of her rather conveniently timed declaration of love). Either way, there is no doubt that Mathieu was too ‘terminally nice’ to Conchita to the point where the viewer could not help but feel a certain deep-seated disgust for him, especially after multiple viewings of the film. Going back to Nietzsche, he also once wrote, “Ah, women. They make the highs higher and the lows more frequent.” Of course, the tragedy of Mathieu’s character is that, not unlike Nietzsche with his supposed great love Lou Andreas-Salomé, he does not really even get to experience any sort of high and thus comes off as the lowest of men despite his wealth and social prestige, thereupon revealing the true innate chaotic destructive power of women.

While Nietzsche is probably not the best guy to seek for advice on women, he probably had a point when he wrote, “Everything in woman is a riddle, and everything in woman has one solution – namely, pregnancy,” hence the proliferation of uniquely unhappy and prematurely-aged spinsters and wine aunts of the sexually used-up sort that now pollute the Occidental world and promote such socially deleterious things as intersectional feminism, xenophilia and third world alien ‘refugees,’ child drag-queens, government-subsidized abortion-on-demand, Holocaustianity, general neo-commie horseshit, and Marvel movies, among various other forms of garbage that appeals to infertile resentment-ridden broads that are in total denial that they wasted their lives on the false song of sexual liberation. While one could utilize Freudian psychobabble to argue that Conchita is a symbol of the male libidinal drive and the continual

frustration of said drive naturally causes the explosion in the end, *That Obscure Object of Desire* proves to be a more enriching experience when viewed today as a cautionary tale about putting modern-day post-feminist pussy on a pedestal. Despite the film's rather unflattering depiction of women, it apparently offended the sensitive sensibilities of gay terrorist extremists in a rare instance of 'life-imitating-art,' or as Buñuel—a man that, incidentally, practiced fag-bashing in his youth—explained in his autobiography, "Ironically, a bomb exploded on October 16, 1977, in the Ridge Theatre in San Francisco, where the movie was being shown; and during the confusion that followed, four reels were stolen and the walls covered with graffiti like, 'This time you've gone too far!' There was some evidence to suggest that the attack was engineered by a group of homosexuals, and although those of this persuasion didn't much like the film, I've never been able to figure out why."

Interestingly, despite concluding his career with a film as radically anti-romantic as *That Obscure Object of Desire*, Buñuel—a proud lapsed Catholic atheist and iconoclast that seemed to believe in nothing aside from the power of biting humor aimed at all form of authority (including the commies he once sided with in his youth)—was apparently a strong believer in not only love, but sacrificial love, as indicated by his words, "I would willingly sacrifice my liberty to love. I have already done so . . . I would sacrifice a cause to love, but each situation would have to be considered separately." Indeed, as British film critic Raymond Durnat noted in his book *Luis Buñuel (1968)*, "He declared that he would renounce being the person he could be, if that were the cost of being sure of his love. He would think highly of a man who, to please the woman he loved, was willing to betray his principles." While Buñuel also replied "I don't know" when asked if he believed in love's victory over the sordidness of life (or vice versa), he would also state, "I should still ask him not to betray his principles—in fact, I'd insist on it" in regard to the sacrifice of self for love. Of course, Buñuel's belief in love can be seen in his depiction of *l'amour fou* in his rarely-seen Emily Brontë adaptation *Abismos de pasión (1954)* aka *Wuthering Heights*. While it has certainly did little good in the long run for my life, I also believe in the power of love, including 'mad love,' which is also why I find the one-sided lovesickness of the protagonist of *That Obscure Object of Desire* to be so completely infuriating as it is a waste of pure diabolic energy on an unloving dumb dud of a dame that is probably lame in bed and really has nothing to offer outside the aesthetic appeal of a carefully manicured mannequin, hence the 'object' of the film's title. After all, at least from my experience, love tends to be a carefully cultivated post-coital phenomenon that requires a certain degree of mutually expressed emotional and physical intimacy (and anything less seems to be simple beta-boy infatuation conjured from too much fantasizing about the totally intangible). After recently re-watching *That Obscure Object of Desire*, I can safely say that Buñuel was onto something when he wrote, "Sometimes, watching a movie

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is a bit like being raped.” And, while I find the idea of a woman being able to rape a man somewhat equivocal (and I say that from experience!), Buñuel’s film demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that a woman—even an insufferably stupid woman—can certainly completely ravage a man’s soul and turn him into a pathetic shell of his former self.

-Ty E

DER VERLORENE SOHN

Luis Trenker (1934)

If any National Socialist 'propaganda' succeeded in expressing the völkisch metaphysical feeling that permeated throughout various parts of the German-speaking world during the early 20th century, it is most certainly *Der Verlorene Sohn* (1934) aka *The Prodigal Son* written, directed, and starring South Tyrolean (Austrian-Italian) adventurist auteur Luis Trenker (*The Mountain Calls* aka *Der Berg Ruft*, *Love Letters from the Engadine* aka *Liebesbriefe aus dem Engadin*), yet the filmmaker was by no means a full-fledged fascist, let alone a Hitlerite as some might expect. While *The Prodigal Son* was exploited by the National Socialists as a work expounding the Faustian gospel of blood and honor in its dichotomous portrayal of the city as an unhealthy human zoo that spawns unnatural corruption, thievery, and starvation, and the country as a magical and majestic place of purity and bloody mysticism where one's soul is rooted in the soil, Luis Trenker – a genuine man's man and trained architect who not only directed films on dangerous mountain tops, but also performed his own stunts, including height altitude mountain-climbing and skiing – decided to move to Rome so as to avoid artistic subversion by the Nazi government. Incidentally, Trenker's *The Prodigal Son* would act as a forerunner to Italian neorealism, as the film had a major influence on Italian auteur Roberto Rossellini (*Europa '51*, *Journey to Italy*) and would ironically direct arguably the most important post-WWII Italian film trilogy (*Rome, Open City* (1945), *Paisà* (1946), *Germany, Year Zero* (1948)); three anti-fascist war films utilizing the real ruins of war torn Europa. Although Trenker got his start in filmmaking in 1921 by working on Mountain films with the pioneer of the distinctly Germanic film genre Arnold Fanck (*The Holy Mountain*, *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*) and Leni Riefenstahl (*The Blue Light*, *Triumph of the Will*), the 'German Guido' – a filmmaker while mostly Germanic culturally, but also displaying a certain Italian sentimentalism – would eventually become a filmic Renaissance man in his own right with *The Prodigal Son* being his most unique and standout auteur piece. As film historian William K. Everson once wrote, "The mountain film was to Germany what the Western was to America, and Trenker, as its leading practitioner, was in a sense Germany's John Wayne and John Ford rolled into one." Doing his own death-defying stunts on the snowy Alps, traveling to the United States and directing scenes illegally guerrilla-style without permission in Great Depression era New York City, displaying a deeply religious faith in an idiosyncratic yet totally organic form of Germanic Pagan-Catholicism not unlike the sort of 'positive Christianity' espoused by Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg (although firmly anti-Catholic himself) in his tome *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930), and expressing a genuine oneness with his nation and kultur, Luis Trenker single-handedly proved real honorable and masculine

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men could apply the same sort of dedication and integrity that one would invest in commanding an army or building a skyscraper.

As a sort of Stroszek (1977) of its time, albeit by no means nihilistic and pessimistic in its concluding message, *The Prodigal Son* centers around protagonist Tonio Feuersinger (Luis Trenker), an adventurous Tyrolean logger and mountaineer who travels to the United States to climb the American Rockies, but he never quite gets there as the merry mountain-man's innate romanticism is so overwhelming for his own good and causes him to have a delusional vision of the supposed land of the free and home of the brave. While also inspired by the idiom "he who never leaves never returns," to the dismay of his faithful lady friend Barbl Gudauner (Maria Andergast), Tonio also has his Tyrolean Teutonic eye on wealthy American beauty Lillian Williams (Marian Marsh) – a cosmopolitan lady more Aryan in appearance than his Tyrolean sweetheart – thus making for a secondary reason for leaving his small village. Far from the sort of negrophiliac barbarian typical of modern Hollywood action heroes with no sense of comradeship, Tonio is an old school male who takes pride in his hard work, even while working on Saturdays and singing the verse, "The merriest folks are the wood-cutting folks," while jollily busting his ass with his logger compatriots, as well as playing a fair good game of roughhousing with his friends. Tonio also puts family first above all else, finishing the work of his father (Eduard Köck) so as to help the old man with work that is getting harder and harder to do as he ages. A dual sun-worshipper and spiritual son of a Freyja-like Virgin Mary, Tonio has no idea that he is going to land on a virtual hell on earth full of beggars, degenerates, and racial mongrels of the superlatively American 'melting pot' sort. While dreaming of traveling to America and New York City, Tonio speaks too soon when he states, "God, I imagine living in a city must be a hundred times more beautiful than here," as he feels like a "caged fox" and claims he does not, "like the mountains anymore," but then again, as a son of the sun and blood and soil, the especially enthusiastic Aryan adventurer has yet to experience the distinctly inorganic manmade realms of crime-ridden cement metropolises of misery, which contain no natural beauty, free natural resources, or earthly adventure, but are instead teeming with distinctly human social abstraction and alienation, poverty and starvation, and rampant yet outlawed vagrancy; the sort of story that can turn a healthy farm boy into an HIV-positive tranny in no time.

When Tonio arrives in NYC, his senses are overwhelmed as he is bombarded with a curious cosmopolitan cocktail of pollution, claustrophobic atmosphere, stylistically sterile skyscrapers that block his view of the sky, unemployed Negroes and other racial groups he has never seen before, pawn and cigar shops, and the endless lines of cars in traffic, which is in stark contrast to the relatively quiet and wide-open area of his mountain village where one need not worry about having too little personal space. Although he intended to meet up with the wealthy benefactor Mr. Williams (F.W. Schröder-Schrom) – a man who funded the

prizes for a local ski competition in his hometown and would have provided the young man with financial security had his resources run dry – Tonio soon learns that the man is away for the winter, thus he must fend for himself without a dime to his name in a foreign city that eats people and spits them out in no time. Out of desperation, Tonio pawns all his belongings for a mere \$1.50 and resorts to sleeping on park benches, where he is hassled by local police. Eventually, the Germanic immigrant finds work at dangerous job doing welding on a skyscraper in scenes that have a startling resemblance to the iconic photographs of American sociologist/photographer Lewis Hine, and, needless to say, Tonio is soon daydreaming about taking a boat back to his hometown. Despite working hard for virtually nothing, Tonio begins to resemble a degenerate drunken hobo of sorrowful sorts and even resorts to the previously seemingly unthinkable by stealing food and standing in foodlines, which a local police officers catches him for, but lets him go out of compassion for the immigrant’s decidedly destitute state. Tonio ends up making one mere friend, Jimmy (Jimmie Fox) – an off-white Italian/Jewish type funnyman, not unlike a character from an early Fellini film like *I Vitelloni* (1953) – who is constantly in trouble with the law, but someone with whom down-and-out Tonio can identify due to his equally degraded and despairing position in American society. Eventually, by happenstance while interfering with a boxing match, Tonio becomes a successful prize-fighter and hooks up with wealthy Mr. Williams finally, even making his friend Jimmy successful in the process, but Tonio ultimately longs for the place of his birth and having experienced everything America has to offer, decides to go back home, where he is crowned the “Rauhnacht King” during the ancient Germanic pagan celebration of Rauhnacht where all the spirits rise from the earth (meadows, fields, fire, wind, etc.), in the from of the locals dressed in eerie and phantasmagorical costumes and masks, to worship the Sun-God, whereupon he is given the opportunity to choose between 12 Raunhnacht girls wearing masks to be his wife.

Ironically, immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War, *The Prodigal Son* was banned in both Western and Eastern Germany, because whereas the American military occupying forces believed the film was innately anti-American in sentiment, the Soviets felt the film was an advertisement for Americanism and the American way of life. Indeed, the film is certainly not nearly as American as one would expect because while *The Prodigal Son* portrays NYC in a most unflattering light, it also depicts the cultureless country as a place where one can truly go from rags to riches virtually overnight with a little good luck and, of course, if one is willing to work hard enough, which is indubitably one of America’s ‘noble’ attributes, if not a mostly unrealistic one for most people. With its partial quasi-Mediterranean sentimentalism for the importance of friends and family, as well as its concluding setting during the holiday Rauhnacht celebration – an event that usually takes place during the 12 days of Christmas – *The Prodigal Son* is somewhat surprisingly in good company with Frank Capra’s Christmas classic

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It's a Wonderful Life (1946); a work also featuring a man who has to go on a spiritual journey of sorts, only to realize the intrinsic and irreplaceable value of friends and family in a small community and life itself, is infinitely more important to material gain. Unlike most films of its epoch, *The Prodigal Son* holds up quite well after all the years, so much so that I was rather surprised by how fast it went by in its immaculate editing, striking action sequences, and surprisingly 'modern' direction, so much so that that I can see myself watching it next Christmas season, but I cannot say the same about *It's a Wonderful Life*; a work I can tolerate viewing every decade or so. Combining some of the best elements of the German Mountain film genre with proto-Italian neo-realist/Cinéma vérité imagery that depicts the bowels of the Great Depression era big rotten apple in an audaciously authentic manner like never seen before, as well as featuring Germanic Pagan and Aryanized Catholic imagery and costumes that would chill the most coldhearted of atheist's souls, *The Prodigal Son* is both an important piece of cinema and cultural history that makes one question who were the real barbarians during the Second World War. Personally, I would rather celebrate Rauhnacht during a cold winter night than rage at an ecstasy-addled rave, but maybe I am just old fashioned.

-Ty E

THE NEW DAUGHTER

Luiso Berdejo (2009)

It hit me with the combined force of a thundering stampede, this Kevin Costner desire. As a pregnant woman would awaken in the middle of the night yearning various sweets, I, too, experienced an all too similar craving for junk food which I discovered the films of Kevin Costner. Realistically, it had been years since I have sat down and paid mind to his various methods of acting - whether it be of an assertive and bold villainous mold (3000 Miles to Graceland) or an all-American Joe (A Perfect World), albeit confrontational and quick-to-kill as the human genome would have it. I had ran into The New Daughter multiple times since its release but have passed it off as marquee fodder. Big name actors mixed with hurried horror never seem to go the way of quality but after eventually collecting a large mass of Costner titles and indulging in The New Daughter I must now redefine my standards of acceptance. Obviously heading the cast, Kevin Costner plays single father (John James) to an insecure daughter all too well. There's the son too, but not much focus is given to him as his role in the family is young mediator to a detached teenage girl. Moving into a house located in a rural area, things quickly shift from tolerable to dreadful as his daughter becomes more and more disheveled and distant, which may or may not have to do with a large mound of earth located directly on the property.

Now I must admit, another factor in my deciding against The New Daughter were select reviews opposing the film in its entirety. Some even went as far as suggesting it be among the ranks of SyFy films while crucifying the poor film for not being "cool" or "exciting". To be fair, these notions are true for the most part, there are no stunning car chases to be found in The New Daughter, nor are there any choreographed scenes of combat. But to its credit, The New Daughter drips with dread and conceals itself in a dense and murky atmosphere. The woodland deities that crawl through the forest produce some of the most unnerving howls in recent creature cinema memory. Luiso Berdejo (writer of [Rec]) has expertly crafted a spooky thriller in which Costner is given free reign to adapt to survive. Also in tune with the feminine abscess is the soundtrack consisting of drone and slight distortions - almost like ripples through the terror. Another great quality of The New Daughter is how understanding the film is of its earthen aesthetic. Brush, twigs, soil, and branches play a large part of morphing a backyard into an embryonic tomb home to strange "mound-walkers" - nocturnal creatures that prowl, searching for a queen to ensure continuity of their species. And it is thus that makes The New Daughter such an eerie coming-of-age tale, one woven from fascination of barrows and ancient civilizations.

But the fascination comes at a steep price. Most Western efforts of fantasy covering such native ruins tend to skip from the wondrous reach of a (past)traditional

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way of life to cold, hard terror of the unknown. It is the act of demonizing things unknown or peculiar to us that make for such excellent horror fodder. Now most complaints tend to adhere to the minimalism that is employed (very effectively, mind you) or the lack of parenting skills on Costner's behalf. Both arguments are ludicrous as both tend to the characters of the film rather than the finished product. If Costner's character John made an error in judgment then that can be directly attributed to a character flaw. The New Daughter is striking, brooding, violent when it needs to be, and quite tragic. It also happens to be one of the finest direct to video horror films I have seen yet. With ambiguity clouding the ending for all, The New Daughter is sure to alienate viewers. Take a second to loosen restraint on strict judgment and give The New Daughter a whirl. Whether or not you enjoy it, it is more consistent in quality than a vast majority of cinematic practices out there. Have you a penchant for realized night terrors, the otherworldly mound-walkers might be enough to rattle your bones. If not the sight than surely the bone-rattling shrieks and stammers of such a dying breed. I can hear them purring away nightmare fuel as I type.

-mAQ

THE DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE

Lutz Becker (1973)

The Double Headed Eagle is a unique documentary chronicling Hitler and the National Socialist Party's humble beginning to their assumption of power in 1933. The documentary merely relies on stock footage after Germany's defeat in "The Great War" to the book burnings of works from "exaggerated Jewish intellectualism." There is no commentary featured in the documentary and it is up to the viewer to analyze the Nazi Party's rise. Director Lutz Becker concludes The Double Headed Eagle with a spiteful out of context quote by German Jewish romantic poet Heinrich Heine. From the beginning of The Double Headed Eagle you get the feeling there was something hidden behind the Nazi Party. At first the Nazi rallies are community sized featuring local peasants interacting with Adolf Hitler and his right hand men. The Nazi Party was a hit with peasants because the "blood" was the one thing that united them with the rest of Germany. As the years pass, the Nazi Party rallies get bigger and more extravagant. The rise of the Nazi Party parallels with the increased degeneracy of the failed democratic Weimer Republic. The Weimer Republic seemed to have a similar cancer that plagues the "democracy" of the United States today. Throughout The Double Headed Eagle Nazi SA street fighters battle limp wrist communists through the streets of Deutschland. The leaders of the SA were aggressive and masculine beer gulping homosexuals that sought to destroy what they saw as the "Jewish" plague of communism. Of course, many of these communists were Jewish but most German Jews were not communists. The SA would have it's meeting in a local German gay bar. In the book The Pink Swastika, the Zionist Judeo-Christian propagandists authors make up the absurd theory that German Nazism was the result of a long history of German homosexual war societies. The reality is that the SA was the only truly "gay" faction of the Nazi party and it lost most of it's power after Hitler seized the German state. Shortly after Adolf Hitler gained power he had gay SA leader Ernst Röhm killed in the famous "Knight of the Long Knives." A very interesting speech found in The Double Headed Eagle is when Adolf Hitler states that he will have all political parties banned. Most holocaust "historians" will tell you this did in fact happen. There was, however, one party that was not banned. The Jewish Zionist party was allowed to continue publishing newspapers, flying their flag, and promoting the Jews to emigrate to Palestine (which in 1948 would be declared the official Jewish state of Israel). The Zionist party also collaborated with rounding up "dissent" assimilated anti-Zionist Jews from concentration camps among other "forgotten" and "unspeakable" things. Even today in Israel, the race laws on "who is Jewish" is similar to that of the Nuremberg laws. After viewing The Double Headed Eagle, the "effect" for the viewer is that the "evil" Nazi party came to power due to the irrational desperation of the people. Unemployment is at an all time high,

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democracy failed (although Adolf Hitler was elected in Democratically), and the Jews control all of the banks. The documentary forgets to enlighten the viewer on one crucial element though. Without Adolf Hitler's Wall Street bankers, he could have never risen to power. Furthermore, without his bankers Hitler could not have prolonged the second World War and his suicide for so many years. It is also interesting to note that Germany's industry and factories were disassembled after the war only to be sent to the Soviet Union (among other countries). The firebombing of Germany only executed with the intentions of killing civilians (mainly women and children) and destroying German culture. After all, very few soldiers were killed and military complexes destroyed in these bombings (I.e. Dresden). The Double Headed Eagle is the best documentary of it's kind. The footage featured in the film seems to be neglected by most because it lacks dead corpses. The Nazi leaders make a couple threats to Jews that seemed a bit contrived. The Double Headed Eagle is essentially a must view for anyone that has even a slight interest in it's subject matter.

-Ty E

HOMMAGE À 'LA SARRAZ'

Lutz Dammbeck (1981)

Rather ironically, as their various strong national movements and general intolerance towards Hollywoodism/Americanism demonstrates, it seems that the eastern half of Europe that was under virtual slavery to the Soviet Union for about half a century is less deracinated, decadent, and 'liberal' than the western half that lived under the softcore dictatorship up Uncle Sam, Ronald McDonald, and the Rothschild Army Faction. In fact, American neo-Spenglerian philosopher/revolutionary Francis Parker Yockey was so convinced that America and the rest of the American-colonized West was such a lost cause and that the Soviet Union was less taunted that by late 1952 he argued that Yank and European nationalist groups should align themselves with the Russians to cut the tentacles of Americanization once and for all, but I digress. Undoubtedly, post-WWII German cinema is a good place to study in regard to discerning the different effects of Americanization and Soviet communism, as while virtually all of the West German filmmakers associated with German New Cinema were hardcore leftists, feminists, and neo-Marxists, Eastern Germany at least produced a couple of filmmakers that had not succumbed to the various spiritual ailments (i.e. ethno-masochism) that were quite common in the American-colonized segment of the Fatherland. Indeed, although associated with German New Cinema, Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King*, *Hitler: A Film from Germany*), who would go on to become one of the most hated filmmakers in Germany due to his political persuasion and scandalous public statements about certain 'protected groups' (i.e. Jews, communists) and dared to mix kraut commie Bertolt Brecht's doctrine of epic theatre with romantic Wagnerian opera aesthetics, was associated with GNC, he actually grew up in Eastern Germany. Additionally, painter, filmmaker, and multi-media artist Lutz Dammbeck (*Herakles Höhle* aka *The Cave of Hercules*, *Dürers Erben* aka *Dürer's Heirs*), who has spent a good portion of his career focusing on the history of National Socialist aesthetics and Teutonic art in general, is from the commie GDR, but that did not stop him from utilizing NS aesthetics, including Arno Breker statues, for his early art instillations during the 1980s. Indeed, although best known for his documentary *The Net* (2003) aka *Das Netz*—an experimental work about technology and its relation to Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, LSD, the CIA, and the counter-culture movement—the seeming majority of the director's work has had to do with National Socialism in some shape or form, with his early 12-minute experimental collage short *Hommage à 'La Sarraz'* (1981) be a rather striking, if not aesthetically corrosive, example of this.

Featuring a radio recording of National Socialist propagandist Fritz Hippler of *Der Ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew* infamy, excerpts from the völkisch quasi-avant-garde Nazi flick *Enchanted Forest* (1936) aka *Ewiger Wald*

HOMMAGE À 'LA SARRAZ'

directed by Hanns Springer and Rolf von Sonjevski-Jamrowski, the romantic musical *Wunschkonzert* (1940) aka *Request Concert*, and audio recordings of Austrian-German singer Marika Röck and Dutch actor Johannes Heesters, as well as clips from various 1930s UFA newsreels, contemporary news clips, and various other forms of recycled footage, *Hommage à 'La Sarraz'* was made with quite different intentions than its subversive ingredients might indicate as it takes its name from and pays tribute to a meeting that took place in 1929 among members of the European/Soviet film avant-garde at La Sarraz castle in Switzerland where a number of important auteur filmmakers made a manifesto condemning two specific things: "The commercialization of film and its subservience to ideology." Of course, as a meeting attended by the likes of bolshevik auteur Sergei Eisenstein, whose whole career was based on subservience to an ideology (even if he did find himself in trouble at different points in his career), as well as Walter Ruttmann, who later became an assistant to Leni Riefenstahl on *Triumph of the Will* (1935), it is quite dubious as to whether or not these men stuck to their pledge, but that is ultimately irrelevant as Dammbeck's film was intended as a tribute to that spirit of the avant-garde, or as the director wrote himself, "And the result was my own experimental 'La Sarraz' revival studio, where we adapted the idea to the present day in an attempt to carry on in the 'La Sarraz' tradition." Originally part of a multi-media project created by the director called the 'Hercules Media Collage' that combined performance art, painting, dance (Fine Kwiatkowski), film ('La Sarraz'), and photography, *Hommage à 'La Sarraz'* is not exactly something you would expect to have been assembled by a GDR artist (in fact, the director submitted a script for an experimental film that was 'unalterably rejected' by the 'Dresdener Studio für Trickfilm' aka Dresden Cartoon Studio in 1984), as a sort of innately anarchistic postmodern 'neo-Heimat' celluloid poem of sorts.

Teutonic art faggotry at its finest where autistic animation, home movie footage (including a humorous scene where Dammbeck and his friends are introduced as (in)famous Nazi filmmakers), about half a century's worth of eclectic German film/news footage, and a truly throbbing 'music' track by noise group *Throbbing Gristle*, *Hommage à 'La Sarraz'* feels more or less like the chaos of the *Volksgeist* of a Volk without a true Heimat, or as Syberberg once wrote, Germany is, "spiritually disinherited and dispossessed... a country without a homeland, without 'Heimat.'" Indeed, during one especially interesting scene, Dammbeck juxtaposed footage of an ugly post-industrial highway with the following narration from the film *Enchanted Forest*: "From the forest we came, like the forests we live, from the forest we crave out Heimat and space. Like the forests our souls expand, full of life, lust, and need. Full of questions. God, please tell us, what is the hidden meaning of death?" Of course, there are no forests in the film, as the technocratic plague has bulldozed them down, with East Germany being blessed with the ungodly Soviet aesthetic. In another standout scene, a

guy being interviewed for a contemporary news show remarks: "For Goebbels it was always important to provide good entertainment [...] they [people] don't want to watch anything where at the end of the film they say: "We might as well hang ourselves, there's no sense in living!" No: People want to be entertained!" Of course, *Hommage à 'La Sarraz'* was not created to entertain, as it is a sort of playful aesthetically terroristic wake-up call about a divided nation that only has an undigested past and thus no future, hence the Burroughs-esque 'cut-up' technique style use of vintage footage and audio recordings. Undoubtedly, while watching the short, it is clear that the director has a genuine interest in understanding his nation's history and his subsequent works, especially his for 4-documentary "Kunst & Macht" project certainly demonstrates that. Of course, only when Germans have properly 'accepted' their past will they be able to go on with the future and once again create truly groundbreaking cinematic art. Naturally, the same can be said about the rest of Europe, hence the all but total evaporation of not only national cinema movements, but art and culture in general.

-Ty E

AGE OF THE GODS
AGE OF THE GODS

Lutz Dammbeck (1992)

While the Allies, especially the Americans, have gone to great pains to present themselves as flawless angel-like heroes who saved the world from the Great Satan Adolf Hitler and his demonic armies of kosher-baby-eating killer krauts, they also committed their fair share of crime and atrocities against humanity, especially of the aesthetic sort, as while the Nazis are constantly criticized for looting art, the Yanks and Brits intentionally destroyed ancient cities, cultural landmarks, and especially contemporary neo-classical statues like true jealous and opportunistic barbarians who finally got to achieve their depraved dream to wipe out the great cultural legacy that their own philistine nations lacked. Indeed, aside from the firebombing of Dresden, which was the brainchild of bloated alcoholic Winston Churchill and done with the quite questionable intention of merely spreading terror and chaos in already war-ravaged Germany, destroying an ancient city (which, being old, was largely made of wood and thus easy to incinerate), and senselessly killing mostly innocent civilians, the Allies perpetrated countless other crimes that are not that well known, including the destruction of over 90% of German sculptor Arno Breker's public works. As a man whose ancient Greek inspired neo-classical sculptures reflected the strength, beauty, and godlike essence that was officially endorsed by National Socialism, Breker naturally found his work to be the target of Allied resentment yet, somewhat surprisingly, he was partly rehabilitated after the Second World War and in 1946 was even offered a commission by Joseph Stalin of all people. Of course, as a personal friend of Jean Cocteau who created busts of people ranging from Jewish poet Heinrich Heine to alpha-surrealist Salvador Dalí, Breker was not exactly a true believer in the Nazi cause and in the artsy fartsy documentary *Zeit der Götter* (1992) aka *Age of the Gods* director Lutz Dammbeck attempted to find out what made the sculptor transform into a budding modernist/avant-gardist into one of the most powerful artists in the world as the "official state sculptor" of the Third Reich who was commissioned in 1938 to redesign Berlin as the "World Capital GERMANIA." Part of Dammbeck's rather idiosyncratic four-part "Kunst & Macht" art documentary series which is, in turn, part of the director's Heiner Müller-inspired "Herakles-Konzept" (aka "Hercules Concept")—a highly personalized multi-media theory that began in 1982 and utilizes paintings, collages, installations, films and other artistic mediums—*Age of the Gods* is an exceedingly ambitious (and thus somewhat convoluted) work that largely uses the life and work of Breker as a pretext to discuss the modernist influence of National Socialist art, the corruption of an artist by the prospect of power, and the strange occult influences that gave birth to both the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* and aesthetic. Directed by a seemingly apolitical auteur from the communist GDR who seems more interested in provocative mysteries from

German art history than pedantically preaching about how innately evil Breker's Uncle Adolf approved statues are, *Age of the Gods* is a work of art in and of itself that demonstrates that Teutonic art history is not exactly as transparent as whiny left-wing art historians would have you believe.

Age of the Gods begins with the story of an unnamed kraut sculptor from an old town in Prague who became the Minister of Fine Arts for the GDR after the Second World War and was commissioned to create the largest Stalin sculpture in the world, only to later kill himself after coming to the realization that he, "betrayed his youthful artistic ideals to this power" and failed to become an heir to "all the sculptors in his country's history" (of course he failed, as he was a cuckold of communism and thus a traitor to himself and his country's history). Of course, this unnamed sculptor's tragic story somewhat superficially parallels that of Arno Breker who was seduced by Adolf Hitler when the Führer apparently said to the sculptor in 1936, "Young man, from now on you will only work for me." Of course, as the doc reveals, Breker always had an interest in both romantic and völkisch Teutonic ideals as demonstrated by the fact that he was a member of the Wandervogel and was once heavily inspired by listening to Teutonic philosopher Ludwig Klages—a member of the Stefan George circle who was certainly no friend of the Jews—read from his work *Man and Earth*, in which is described by Dammebeck as, "an appeal to revolt against Nihilism...an invocation of the Germanic and pagan gods which progress, capitalism, and Christianity work to defeat." As Dammebeck describes, Breker ultimately broke with a played-out 200 year artistic tradition that started with the French Revolution that attempted to depict the so-called "equality of the people" via statues, as the National Socialist sculptor apparently had, "another vision, something more ancient, more powerful rooted far back in history...not always visible, but always present."

Ironically, according to Breker's main model Gustav Stührk, it was Breker's Greek wife Mimina who convinced the sculptor in 1935 to begin creating neo-classical works and get involved with the "national wave in Germany," as so-called "Gothic Expressionism" had been labelled a degenerate art. In no time, Uncle Adolf discovered Breker's art and had Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels look around Berlin for the mysterious young man whose sculptures he greatly admired. As Dammebeck subjectively narrates, by 1938, "Breker, now a Nazi party member, is on his way to the top but he has no theme anymore. He and his art are now part of a mighty machine, attempting to redesign the whole world, in conjunction with the vision of the return of the gods." Indeed, Breker's transformation into an artistic god is most apparent in an infamously iconic photo from June 23, 1940 of Breker posing with Hitler and architect Albert Speer in conquered Paris, which Demmebeck describes as follows: "Before a suggestive backdrop, Hitler, Speer, and Breker imitate a scene from antiquity: Hitler as the successful general, Pericles. Left: Albert Speer as building

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master Iktenus. Right: the sculptor Arno Breker as his new Phidias...from now on sworn to the future ruler of the world.” As the documentary makes quite clear, Breker seemed more interested in hanging out with his fellow artists than conquering the world, as he befriended frog sculptors Charles Despiau and Aristide Maillol and started an enduring friendship with poet/filmmaker Jean Cocteau during his stay in Paris in 1942. Cocteau and Breker also went to a private screening of *Carmen* (1944) starring the former’s rather Aryan-looking boyfriend Jean Marais, whose life was saved by the German sculptor. Indeed, as Marais himself describes in the documentary, he was arrested after beating up a Nazi-collaborator journalist who worked for the Gestapo and if it were not for Breker’s influence, he might have met a grizzly end at the hands of the Gestapo. Interestingly, Marais, who had a rather Aryan appearance, starred in the Vichy era Cocteau adaptation *L’éternel retour* (1943) aka *The Eternal Return*, which is a modernist take on *Tristan und Isolde* that some viewers felt had Nazi undertones.

Undoubtedly, one of the more interesting segments of *Age of the Gods* is an interview with German Conservative Revolutionary novelist Ernst Jünger who, on top of being almost a centenarian at the age of 97 at the time he was interviewed, is featured sporting a goofy Japanese button-up shirt featuring dragon designs that is quite in contrast to his dubious reputation as an elitist ‘nazi artistocrat.’ Ultimately, the novelist sums up Breker better than anyone else in the doc by remarking, “The political doesn’t interest me in an artist...only the artistic. What political bend he has...is absolutely secondary in comparison. I don’t agree with everything Breker did, especially not the very large things, but I’ve always felt that he’s very capable.” Jünger, who once sat for 8 days for the sculptor for a bust that was made of him, also compliments Breker’s sensitivity as an artist by stating, “I suppose, the bust he did of me is good. I have to rely on my wife there. She said, he’d captured elements which were only familiar to her. One has to extract the best of a person. I tried to with Breker too. I’ve always had a heart for persecuted persons.” Jünger also concludes that Breker was naïve about the war and National Socialism, remarking that if the sculptor had realized Germany was involved in a ‘Weltbürgerkrieg’ (global civil war) as opposed to a national war during the Second World War that, “he may’ve made figures like Harmodios and Aristogeiton, that is the Greek figure, where two heroes kill a tyrant.”

Despite revolving around the life and work of Arno Breker, *Ages of the Gods* is ultimately a work that is more about whether one can separate the aesthetic from the political, especially in regard to a disgraced/blacklisted artist, as well work about the timeless dichotomy of opportunism versus autonomy among artists, than a traditional biographical documentary. Additionally, auteur Lutz Dambeck also uses the documentary to propose various theories and speculation, including that Uncle Adolf may have had gay love for the sculptor. Indeed,

during one scene in the doc, the following 1942 diary entry by Jean Cocteau is read by the director: "When Hindenburg worked with Hitler, he became totally attached to him. When Hitler went to Munich, Hindenburg never slept until he had a call from Hitler. So is was with Hitler and Breker: He asks him to drive carefully. He loves him. He is his adoptive son, like Jeannot for me." The documentary also reveals that in 1990 Breker helped found a seemingly homoerotic neo-Männerbünde group called the 'Alexander Order' with frog fag novelist/diplomat Roger Peyrefitte and Austrian Jewish painter Ernst Fuchs that was dedicated to the "glory of male genius and beauty in the spirit of eternal antiquity." The documentary also goes on a number of bizarre and seemingly random tangents about proto-Nazi occult groups and occultists like the Thule Society and Lanz von Liebenfels. Interestingly, the doc features rare footage of an SS expedition to Tibet and other Ahnenerbe expeditions, as well as random references to SS man Otto Rahn's failed attempts to locate the Holy Grail in Southern France. Unfortunately, Dammbeck also attempts to associate Conservative Revolutionaries Ernst Jünger and German poet Stefan George with the same anti-humanistic aesthetic trend that led to National Socialism, as if they are also culpable for the holocaust despite the fact that both men rejected the Third Reich. In fact, towards the end of the documentary, the director interviews fairly unknown and rather eccentric contemporary German völkisch poet Rolf Schilling, who collaborated with Breker on a poetry book, in a fashion that seems like a rather pathetic way to discredit the sculptor. Quite ironically, both Jünger and a typically boorish Soviet officer agree that Breker's art totally transcends its political connotations.

At the conclusion of *Age of the Gods*, director Dammbeck narrates the following words in a pseudo-sinister fashion as if to warn Germans about some imaginary Luciferian National Socialist uprising: "The attempt to realize the vision of the return of the gods failed politically in 1945. The artist Arno Breker, who had served this vision, also failed. The building blocks of this vision remained, to be reconstituted at will. 'Giants and Titans grow first in the dawn' says Ernst Jünger. Are the old gods returning today, after an interim period?" Interestingly, the last couple of minutes of the documentary features grainy footage of one of Breker's lost sculptures that was trashed by the Allies after the Second World War being salvaged from a lake in a somewhat silly scene that insinuates that the old Germanic gods are rising from the abyss for the first time since 1945. Naturally, one must take into consideration that the doc was made around the time of the German reunification, so many Teutons had fears regarding the future of Deutschland that ultimately proved to have no basis in reality. Of course, Germany has only become all the more socially and culturally degenerate since *Age of the Gods* was first released over two decades ago, so it is rather unlikely that the nation will produce another Hitler or Breker anytime soon. Describing his "Herakles-Konzept" as an attempt to present, "a cyber-

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netic concept, an endless loop made up of guilt, and violence, and attempted disintegration,” Dammbeck certainly proves with the documentary that he has the sort of nihilistic and self-flagellating psychology that is quite typical of post-WWII Germans, albeit to a lesser degree (indeed, it seems Western Germans are much more screwed up in that regard), so the Breker flick must be viewed as a collection of wrongly assembled yet nonetheless provocative puzzle pieces that were put together by a figurative blind man. Indeed, maybe if contemporary Germans looked to the aesthetics of masters like Breker, Jünger, and George instead of celebrating the senseless extermination of their grandparents in firebombings like the distinctly degenerate and exceedingly ethno-masochistic pro-Zionist ‘Antideutsch’ movement does, then the Teutonic people might survive to see the next century. Undoubtedly, for those individuals with even the slightest interest in German art history and/or the Third Reich, Age of the Gods, as well as the other three documentaries in Dammbeck’s Kunst & Macht series, makes for mandatory viewing. After all, what other documentary can boast featuring an elderly Ernst Jünger speaking kind words regarding Breker while sporting an eccentric Jap shirt?!

-Ty E

THE VILLAGE

M. Night Shyamalan (2004)

Recently I decided to watch M. Night Shyamalan's *The Village* just for the hell it. Or maybe it was because I wanted to see the would-be cool hip-hop Hebrew Adrian Brody play a retard among pleasant Aryan kinfolk. Maybe it was also because I also wanted to further my respect for Shyamalan being one of the most shameless cinema plagiarists out there, showing his unrelenting knack for reproducing worn out shock endings and highly predictable climaxes. Another reason was probably due to a silly article I read calling Indian-American M. Night Shyamalan the "last white nationalist" filmmaker, a statement that shows the utter desperation of white nationalist types attempting to reveal any type of "pro-white" sentiment in pop culture. After all, Shyamalan has a fairly brown complexion. M. Night Shyamalan had the luxury of growing up in one of the most white states in the country; Pennsylvania. It is no doubt a given that Mr. Shyamalan encountered some Amish and Mennonites folk whilst growing up but he also probably encountered the human zoo desperation of Philadelphia, one of America's various third world refugee disaster sites. Despite his own third world ancestry, M. Night Shyamalan seems most cinematically concerned with the dispossessed majority aka America's white population. Unlike most of the cynical artless filth that comes out of Hollywood, M. Night Shyamalan seems to respect white American traditionalism even if he acknowledges it as a rusting antique hardly capable of refurbishing itself. In *The Village*, M. Night Shyamalan looks into a vacuum of the old white world, although the world really is not old but a creation of a group of elders who decide having a contrived atavistic re-awakening is the best way to go about rejecting the urban degeneracy of parasitical postmodernism located in the city. Although most whites do not know it, the third world has been awaiting for the collapse of the Occidental world for sometime. The historical masterpieces *The Rising Tide of Color* by Lothrop Stoddard and *Hour of Decision* by Oswald Spengler reveal how even the most backwards gutter-dwellers of the world's numerous ghettos have long realized that the white man is losing his power. In fact, this has been going on for over a century (or more like a couple) now, for that is exactly why the former slave has lost respect for his master. After all, the former slave had more respect for his master when he was a slave, not now where the former master is a slave morality-filled coward who goes out of his way to seek atonement from the formerly dominated. What could be more pathetic? Of course, *The Village* does not deal with white slave-owner types, but instead the more respectable attributes of traditional white culture. The tight-knit community in *The Village* is morally sound, hardworking, honest, god fearing (or monster fearing), and friendly amongst one another. There is even room for the town retard (played by Adrian Brody) to be justly treated (and not as someone that should be ba-

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bied like in modern American victim "culture"). After all, welfare is a Nordic invention that has no doubt been exploited by America's finest conspiring types. When retard-Brody falls to his death whilst pretending to be a monster (he never needed the mask with that beak on his face), the town uses the death of the intellectually challenged man as something positive, a young man martyred to the evil monsters of the woods. Like the renegade Jew Jesus Christ, it does not matter whether the man was a sinful saint or a dandy delinquent, what matter is that his death symbolizes something more powerful and higher than themselves, something that can make others feel more humble. Like in all the other M. Night Shyamalan films I have seen (and I can't say I care to see all of them), the white family/families finally come to terms with their hardship and go on. Maybe this is M. Night Shyamalan's hope for America's future, for the immigrants from India generally seem to realize that they can do quite well in white America, unlike many of the other third world diaspora groups who are simply destroying it/feeding off it's fruits. With the intellectual bankruptcy of modern American academia it is no surprise that another Indian S. T. Joshi has taken over the work of two of America's last great writers: H.L. Mencken and H.P. Lovecraft. Surely, the average white American is unfamiliar with the work of these two great literary sages, but at least someone has enough respect for them to keep their legacies going. M. Night Shyamalan, for better or for worse, is one of the few American filmmakers whose films uphold any type of traditional values. I might not think much of *The Village* or any of his other films, but I can respect he has given the general public a voice of reason, something that seems to be on it's way out in the West. One thing I do like about M. Night Shyamalan is his Hitchcockian cameos, for he surely is an outsider looking in.

-Ty E

THE HAPPENING

M. Night Shyamalan (2008)

For me, It appears that M. Night. Shyamalan is the most under appreciated director of our time. He has given us an incredible "comic book" film starring Bruce Willis and the dastardly devil Samuel L. Jackson titled Unbreakable. He has given us a film that has managed to truly shock and deeply terrify; Signs, and the original massive twist ending that lies within The Sixth Sense. After a recent slump in directing, doesn't it seem like the perfect time for a comeback?

Truth is, you're wrong. We're wrong. The Happening fails as a serious film all together. Shyamalan has managed to film horrific Playstation 2 product placements with horrible jokes scattered throughout a mess of film that only attempts providing "Hitchcockian" thrills and jolts. The scene which foreshadowed the lack of seriousness is in which Wahlberg tries to make peace with a plastic Plant. Such antiquities such as comedy never had such a serious backlash.

All right, so you've seen the trailers and experienced the "spoiler trauma" Due to the early script title, The Green Effect, there should be no doubt what the film's enemy is. Right now, this might be considered a spoiler, but it really isn't. Plant's are the baddies. They react to human stimulants which cause them to breathe a toxin out that forces us to commit suicide. This whole process has it's own flaws and which brings the question of "How do you create a suicidal being out of someone that has no comprehension of death? AKA a child"

This seems to be a plot hole which is unexplained. We've all seen Wahlberg in The Departed. An amazing performance, if I do say so myself. Wahlberg has shown the ability to act and Zooey Deschanel has proven her beauty. Once again, Hollywood betrays us leaving Wahlberg as bad of an actor as Keanu Reeves gets credit for and leaving Deschanel ugly as all hell and accented her age.

Near the end of the film, It switches gears just as 28 Days Later did. It turns face presenting a cruel side depicting rural Americans exploiting much hatred for city folk. This leads to a scene including the murder of children, one being of African descent which only leads to laughter. This laughter of course is sparked by the common theory of the "Black man" always dying first. An old woman plays the creepy card for half of the film, despite only being in it for little over 10 minutes. She later begins the disturbing cycle of suicide which creates the only real suspense in the film.

Now what really held the film together; what was the glue to the wood, was the acting performance of a certain Mr. John Leguizamo. After seeing most of his films, such as Spawn, Cronicas, The Pest, and King of the Jungle, I have come to a decision that Mr. Leguizamo has a special acting aura around him. See, I believe that in The Departed, Wahlberg was playing a familiar role. That would explain why he did so great. Leguizamo adapts to each role he plays, whether it be the ever-so-popular Hollywood retard, to the pedophile demon clown.

THE HAPPENING

The instant I saw the red band trailer for this film, I had a certain idea that this film would be great. Boy, was I wrong. This film was bad, but it had elements of good. The suicide scenes were very bare bones. What you saw in the trailer is what you saw in the film. The camera still shys away from suicide. It seems Shyamalan has not matured much as a director. A scared director is a feeble director, incapable of creating tension in the act of suicide such as other directors have.

Much of the special effects were bad. The idea of a female Lioness being able to rip off a Mexican cleaner's arm off with as much velocity as presented onscreen is definitely fictitious. Now if he had coerced the Lioness, perhaps by taunting it, that would have been much more effective. Overall, Plot holes surround the film, snaring the storyline and dumbing it down. Not even God has this much forgiveness for A-List celebrities.

The Happening is like a jawbreaker of a Hollywood horror film; sometimes sweet, sometimes sour. This film has acting so atrocious, you cannot help but to laugh. I wouldn't be lying when I said that John Leguizamo's performance was by far the best throughout the film. A handful of decently filmed suicides doesn't make a film great. Percentages do make people feel better. I got a percentage for you. 73% of decent film viewers will realize the stupidity of this film and feel close to the same that I do.

P.S. Sacrebleu!

-mAQ

VENUS IN FURS

Maartje Seyferth (1995)

Due to the fact that it has crossed my path countless times in my life, I recently decided it was about time that I read Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's most famous novella *Venus im Pelz* (1870) aka *Venus in Furs*, even though I am not a masochistic mensch who enjoys being whipped or generally mistreated by women in absurdly expensive fur coats. Originally a part of a rather ambitious epic six volume cycle (with each volume featuring six novellas) envisioned by the author entitled *Das Vermächtnis Kains* aka *Legacy of Cain* that was ultimately never completed (Sacher-Masoch only completed two of the six projected novellas), the work ultimately inspired psychiatrist turned sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing to coin the word 'masochism' in tribute to the book's perverted flagellation-fetishizing author and would go on to influence everyone from the Velvet Underground (who included a single entitled "Venus in Furs" with their debut album) to kraut carpet-muncher filmmaker Monika Treut (who directed a modernist lesbian reworking of the novella under the title *Verführung: Die Grausame Frau* (1985) aka *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*). In fact, von Sacher-Masoch's novella has been adapted by a number of other filmmakers, including exploitation hack Joe Marzano, slightly underrated Italian giallo maestro Massimo Dallamano, and most recently Roman Polanski, but none of these works are more faithful to the original work than a little known and considerably underrated black-and-white Dutch adaptation. Indeed, *Venus in Furs* (1994) aka *Venus im Pelz* was the stunning directorial debut of real-life lovers Maartje Seyferth and Victor Nieuwenhuijs, who are easily two of the most underrated filmmakers working in the Netherlands and have created a half dozen or so highly idiosyncratic and rather dark yet aesthetically resplendent features, including *Lulu* (2005), *Crepuscule* (2009), and *Vlees* (2010) aka *Meat*. Originally co-written by South African auteur Aryan Kaganof (whose contributions to the work were apparently mostly unused for whatever reason, though he is credited in the film under his birth name Ian Kerkhof in the film), the film is unquestionably one of the most elegant and seemingly visually immaculate and exceedingly exquisite S&M/BDSM-themed films ever made, as a work that makes being beaten and humiliated by a bitchy and superlatively shrewd woman seem almost pleasurable and ultimately makes *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015) seem like a tasteless and equally soulless piece of senseless pseudo-erotic softcore swill on big budget Hollywood steroids. Aesthetically speaking, *Venus in Furs* is a positively penetrating piece of pure and unadulterated cinema of the rather refined risqué sort that oftentimes resembles a chiaroscuro and owes much of its absolutely entrancing majesty to German Expressionism, film noir, Dutch avant-garde auteur Frans Zwartjes (who was once Nieuwenhuijs' teacher), and the black-and-white works of Ingmar Bergman and Mai Zetterling. In short, Seyferth and

VENUS IN FURS

Nieuwenhuijs' film features a sort of aberrant yet arousing aristocratic elegance and dignified decadence that is completely absent from contemporary cinema, be it European arthouse or otherwise. Indeed, if you're looking for a cheap and sleazy masturbation aid featuring used-up sluts with silicone tits and spastic editing, *Venus in Furs* is surely not for you.

Based on a cryptically autobiographical novel inspired by author von Sacher-Masoch's experience of voluntarily making himself the slave of a novice novelist named Fanny Pištor (who used the Slavic noble alias 'Baroness Bogdanoff') who carried out the writer's fantasy to be regularly whipped by a cruel and wickedly demanding ice queen wearing nothing but a fancy fur coat, *Venus in Furs* depicts the doomed BDSM roleplay-based (anti)romance of an effeminate dark-haired aristocratic writer/artist and self-described 'suprasensual man' named Severin von Kusiemski (André Arend van Noord) who coerces his buxty blonde lover Wanda von Dunajew (Anne van der Ven) into becoming his cruel master and even draws up a contract to make sure she will carry out their aberrant arrangement, which surely no sane man would ever think of, let alone obsessively desire. Told in a partly nonlinear yet seamlessly constructed fashion, Seyferth and Nieuwenhuijs' superlatively sadomasochistic piece of intricately stylized celluloid will certainly be much more accessible to those that have read von Sacher-Masoch's novel (in fact, I highly recommend reading the book before daring to watching the film). Near the beginning of the film in a strangely soothing yet foreboding scene where the two lead characters are lying on the ground after sex, prospective femme fatale Wanda mentions to her beau that she wants to go on a journey, so protagonist Severin asks her if she will sign a contract that he has written to make him her slave, cuckold, personal gardener, and all-around personal bitch boy so long as she agrees to become his 'Venus in Furs' and regularly whip him while wearing nothing but a fur coat. Notably, as written in the source novel: "Venus in this abstract North, in this icy Christian world, has to creep into huge black furs so as not to catch cold." Of course, Christ's presence is totally absent from the film and Wanda ultimately becomes Severin's dark goddess in a hermetic sadomasochistic world somewhere between heaven and hell, though most viewers will certainly see it as more of the latter.

Although Wanda is initially reluctant to go along with Severin's warped fetish-based fantasy, she ultimately gives in and eventually comes to love the power she holds over her increasingly weak and meek (non)lover, who she soon naturally begins to lose all empathy for, as no sane woman can genuinely respect a feeble man who takes orders from a member of the fairer sex. As Wanda's slave and servant, Severin is forced to drop his aristocratic title and take on the common servant name 'Gregor,' which he is proud to be called to the point where he gets rather mad when his malevolent mistress mistakenly calls him by his real noble name. As Severin explains via narration, he developed his rather idiosyncratic tendencies when he was a young man after a distant aunt of his tied him up

and whipped him until he begged for her forgiveness and kissed her feet in a life-changing experience that, to quote the protagonist, made him realize, "A fierce passion was awakened in me and ever since my aunt has been the most attractive woman in the whole world." As Severin also explains, "At the age of ten, I laid my hands on a copy of THE LEGENDS OF THE GREAT MARTYRS. I read it with a revulsion bordering on voracious ecstasy." While a handsome nobleman, Severin has dedicated his life to drawing sadomasochistic images and he is not even very good at that, or as he describes, "I live as I paint and write. I progress no further than an intention. A plan...A first act...A first line. Such people just happen to exist...People that start all kinds of things, but never finish anything. I am someone like that...A dilettante." Unquestionably, as his undying dedication to being debased by a devilish dame demonstrates, Severin is only truly motivated by being brutally whipped by a beautiful babe wearing a fancy fur coat. In fact, Severin is so dedicated to his contract with Wanda that he makes a mockery of his noble bearing by carrying out proletarian jobs that include serving drinks to his master and giving her baths, mopping floors, and tending to a garden, among various other dull and tedious forms of unskilled labor. While in public, Wanda walks Severin around like a dog on a leash that is hooked to his nipples. While it seems like Severin will accept any and every form of degradation from waywardly wanton wench Wanda, the protagonist ultimately learns that every man has his limits when it comes to receiving abuse from a brutish blonde beastess.

While Severin is so severely and unwaveringly masochistic that he allows a trio of topless negroes to hunt him down and hook him to a cart like he is a horse so that he can give them a ride, the protagonist begins to feel some real internal torture when Wanda forces him to track down a marginally handsome and masculine Greek aristocrat (Raymond Thiry) that she has become infatuated with so that she can go on a date with him. Ultimately, Severin becomes extremely angry when he realizes that Wanda is simultaneously afraid of and infatuated with the Greek, who is depicted as a Byronic hero in the novel and who gives her the sort of martial masculinity that she hopelessly craves and the protagonist completely lacks. When Severin calls Wanda out on her infatuation with the other man and she responds by stating, "I will torment you until you hate me," the protagonist becomes so irked that he falls out of his 'Gregor' character, grabs his 'master' by the throat, and forces her to get on her knees, thus momentarily obtaining the little lady's respect again for the first time since the two began their master-slave relationship. That night, Severin suffers a nightmare that foretells his brutal fate and pathetically complains to Wanda that, "I dreamt you betrayed me." The next day, Wanda ties Severin to a large pillar and asks him, "Do you still love me?" to which the protagonist replies in a groveling manner, "Insanely. You're divine." After a period of time of leaving Severin tied to the pillar by himself, Wanda returns, though she brings two friends that

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include a Sapphic lover and the stoic Greek. Needless to say, Severin feels betrayed and demands that he be released as he refuses to be beaten by anyone else aside from his mistress, so his master's lesbo lover reads the protagonist's contract that gives Wanda the full right to do with him whatever she sees fit, including allowing him to be brutalized by a rival male. Despite begging "not him," Wanda gives the Greek the whip and the stoic fellow subsequently begins violently beating the protagonist. After Wanda and her carpet-muncher friend drop their fur coats and walk out of the torture room completely naked, the Greek brands the protagonist in a conclusion that is more delightfully dark than von Sacher-Masoch's novel.

Notably, the real-life collaborative filmmaking relationship between *Venus in Furs* co-directors Maartje Seyferth and Victor Nieuwenhuijs does not seem all that different from the lead characters in the film, as while the former is responsible for 'dictating' to the actors what to do and penning most of their scripts (aka creating the oftentimes fetishistic filmic 'fantasies'), the latter is somewhat the 'servant' and certainly the laborer as the man responsible for most of the technical aspects of the work, including the cinematography (in fact, Nieuwenhuijs is responsible for shooting every single one of their films). Of course, whatever the dynamics of their romantic relationship, I think it is rather revealing that Seyferth and Nieuwenhuijs would opt to adapt von Sacher-Masoch's novella as their first feature film, as most men would probably be too embarrassed to co-direct a film with their partner where the male protagonist is a macabre masochistic cuckold who is violently whipped and branded by his lover's new ultra-masculine male fuck-buddy. In terms of its pleasantly preternatural structure, refreshing faithfulness to its source material, consistently oneiric essence, and erotic yet dark and forlorn aesthetic prowess, *Venus in Furs* is quite arguably Seyferth and Nieuwenhuijs' most immaculate work to date. It should also be noted that the film is faithful to the message of von Sacher-Masoch's source novel in regard to the perennial war between the sexes as reflected in protagonist Severin's words, "That woman, as nature has created her, and man at present is educating her, is man's enemy. She can only be his slave or his despot, but never his companion. This she can become only when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work." Of course, history has proven that von Sacher-Masoch was wrong in regard to his belief that both sexes can become companions when women are "equal in education and work," as modern career-obsessed Occidental woman more or less acts as if she no longer needs man and even resents him, hence the increasing proliferation of S&M/BDSM and cuckold porn. Undoubtedly, it was to my great surprise that the novel features almost Weininger-esque criticisms of the fairer sex like "Woman's character is characterlessness," which are mostly expressed in a subtle and somewhat esoteric visual fashion in the film. As someone that finds cuckolds to be the height of emasculation and spiritual castration, I certainly could not relate to the pathetic

figure of Severin, yet Venus in Furs ultimately proved to be an exquisitely erotic celluloid experience that brings a sort of moribund and decaying spirit to classical Occidental pulchritude, as a work that seems like it was directed by the sadomasochistic deathrock-obsessed bastard brood of Teutonic sculptor Arno Breker and true cinematic avant-gardist Frans Zwartjes.

-Ty E

LULU
LULU

Maartje Seyferth (2005)

The Dutch married filmmaking team Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth (*Crepuscule*, *Vlees* aka *Meat*) demonstrated early on in their iconoclastic careers a special fondness for old decadent German-language literary works as indicated by their darkly erotic black-and-white directorial debut *Venus in Furs* (1995), which was naturally an adaptation of the 1870 S&M/BDSM-themed novella of the same name by Austrian mischling writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose surname was where the word “masochism” was derived. Apparently, the Netherlands’ then most subversive filmmaker, South African-born auteur Aryan Kaganof, co-wrote the screenplay for *Venus in Furs*, but Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth decided to drop most of his ideas and created what is regarded as the most cinematically faithful adaptation of von Sacher-Masoch’s (in)famous novel. For their second feature, *Lulu* (2005), the couple decided to adapt proto-expressionist Frank Wedekind’s *Lulu* plays, but unlike with *Venus in Furs*, they decided to take a more ‘loose’ approach to their source material that also takes influence from French decadent poet Charles Baudelaire, among various other influences. Needless to say, aside from being a much darker and subversive take on Wedekind’s play than G.W. Pabst’s German Expressionist silent work *Pandora’s Box* (1929) starring Louise Brooks, the only thing that both works have in common is that the eponymous femme fatale is a seemingly soulless and satanically seductive siren and both films are set in ‘evil’ and deadly decadent worlds where love is mistaken for desire and obsession and where a person’s value is based solely on their material wealth and/or physical attractiveness. The ‘neo-Gothic’ *Lulu* of Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth is easily one of the most fierce femme fatales of cinema history as a nefarious force of both conscious and unconscious (self)destruction that sinisterly uses her overt sensuality to destroy any person that crosses her particularly pernicious path, but especially the lead character in the film. Indeed, the film mainly revolves around a mysterious dinner set up by a rich coke-addled publisher of the somewhat overweight sort that has fallen under *Lulu*’s ultimately lethal spell. As the viewer soon learns, the titular character *Lulu* has figuratively fucked over the protagonist by seducing and/or literally fucking virtually everyone of his friends and family members, including his painter son and priest brother. More of an intentionally exaggerated archetype and walking and talking ‘Penis Flytrap’ than an actual character, *Lulu* is the living embodiment of erratic and violent feminine sexuality, as a sort of lethally lecherous gypsy lady that puts all the various big bosomed femme fatales of Brian De Palma’s Hitchcock ‘homages’ to abject shame in terms of carnal cruelty, calculating destruction, and nihilistically decadent self-destruction.

A majorly melancholic work where love is all but an illusion and sex is no more meaningful than a trip to the bathroom, *Lulu* is surely one of the greatest cin-

ematic love(less) romances ever made and a work that unwittingly captures the spirit of an entire age. Lulu begins with the protagonist Leon Mortier (played by Titus Muizelaar, who has starred in most of Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth's works) dragging Lulu (Vlatka Simac), who is sporting a red kimono with nothing else underneath, down the stairs of his fancy mansion and then putting a gun to the little lady's head, but he stops when she uses her almost supernatural erotic powers to stop him and the two begin to kiss. While Leon and Lulu kiss, a gun goes off and the viewer will not find out who was actually shot until the climatic end of the film. Featuring a somewhat nonlinear fashion comprised of random flashbacks, one learns that Leon randomly met Lulu while driving down a wooded road. Without saying anything, Lulu entered the passenger side of Leon's car while baring her thigh, as if to advertise the reward the driver would get for picking her up. Literally as soon as Leon started driving again, he runs over an old gypsy who he also takes back to his mansion with him. As the viewer eventually finds out, the old gypsy is Lulu's violin-playing father and the two have set Leon up to leech off his wealth and life of hedonistic luxury. While comprised of many flashbacks, the film is mainly set during an extravagant dinner that Leon has strategically set up so that he can confront all of his friends and family members regarding their various romantic rendezvous with Lulu, who the protagonist has deeply fallen in love with, or so he thinks. While she rarely talks, Lulu easily emotionally manipulates Leon in a variety of strange psychopathic ways, including 'attempting' suicide by nonsensically trying to drown herself in the protagonist's fountain. Of course, everything she does seems to be for the benefit of her fat, bald, and repugnantly swarthy untermensch gypsy father who she seems to be having an incestuous relationship with as demonstrated by the fact that the old man has no problem stroking his daughter's completely bare body in front of Leon, as if to demonstrate that she is his property, as well as sole true love.

If all the characters in Lulu have something in common, it is that they are miserable weltenschmerz-racked individuals living in a sort of metaphysical hell who engage in any act of hedonism they can, no matter what the consequences, in a vain attempt to bring some temporary solace to their seemingly impenetrable melancholy and forlornness. Leon suffers the delusion that he has somehow transcended this bout of malignant melancholia due to his dubious love for Lulu, but he is really just deluding himself, as he does not really know her and she couldn't care less if he dropped dead as demonstrated by the cold and cruel yet completely fitting conclusion of the film. While Lulu is fondling her unclad body in bed with a small dagger, Leon confesses to her "you don't know what you stir in me" and then tells her "I don't like these games" regarding to the little lady's sadomasochistic blade fetish, so she replies by stating that he is "scared of everything. Of love, of death, of pain." As the guests arrive at varying times for the dinner, Leon approaches each one of them and warns them to stay away from

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Lulu, especially his much more handsome son Alec (played by Hugo Metsers, who is co-director Seyferth's son from a previous marriage) who is a painter that screwed the femme fatale while using her as one of his subjects while his middle-aged female manager masturbated while voyeuristically watching from afar. A swarthy scumbag named Franco (André Arend van de Noord) also got the opportunity to share carnal knowledge with Lulu because Leon owed him money. Needless to say, Leon does not want Franco fucking Lulu anymore, so he pays him the the rest of the money that he owes him at the dubious get-together and the dirtbag leaves before dinner is even served, even leaving behind his dimwitted bimbo date Zita (Georgina Verbaan), who later makes a failed attempt at getting into Alec's pants. Most bizarrely, Leon's priest brother Maurits (Maiko Kemper) manhandled Lulu when she was praying in desperation, but it seems the unholy holy man failed to seal the deal as far as coitus is concerned. Clearly, Leon is either a man plagued with pernicious family members or there is just something about Lulu that turns people into sleazy traitors. If one thing is for sure, Leon's mansion is more morally bankrupt than the red light district in Amsterdam. Somewhat strangely (or not so considering the innate irrationality of femininity), Lulu seems to have no reason to play the craven carnal games that she does aside from possibly wanting to help her repugnant father as reflected in one seemingly unimportant yet ultimately rather revealing scene where the femme fatale decides to pour out a bag containing a large quantity of cocaine she has stolen from Leon while she is riding on a ferris wheel, thus reflecting her innately nihilistic character and seeming love of senseless destruction.

After various failed attempts at dinner are interrupted by the main character who brought everyone together, Leon finally announces to his increasingly agitated guests, "see this dinner as a metaphor...As a reflection of your attitude towards me. I once cherished your friendship...But it has become painful to me. Your only motivation to be here tonight is Lulu." Of course, most of the guests are rather offended and those that haven't already left begin to do so then. Before Leon's rather rude announcement, it is revealed that the violinist playing the horrendous weepy gypsy music is Lulu's father—the same man the protagonist ran over—and he threatens Leon with the remark, "you fuck my girl and I make problems," so, like Franco, he is also paid off. Not exactly a religious man, Leon reads the following line from Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857) aka *The Flowers of Evil*, "Once our heart has gathered the grapes from its vineyard, living is an evil. That's a secret known to all," at the beginning of the film and by the end the viewer knows these words ring true. Meanwhile, Lulu complains, "I only feel melancholic. There's nothing left here...Nothing that holds me here" and describes how she feels like she is being stabbed in the stomach, so she attempts suicide by stripping off all her clothes and absurdly drowning herself by lying face first in Leon's outdoor fountain. When Leon runs out and saves Lulu from drowning, she merely gives a sinister smirk, as if she just did to upset her

pseudo-lover/sugar daddy. Ultimately, Leon decides enough is enough when he sees his son Alec and Lulu having sex on one of the various surveillance cameras he has hidden in his home and pulls a gun on the two love birds in a rather awkward situation of coitus interruptus. After telling Lulu how she has ruined his life and destroyed all of his personal relationships, Leon drags her out of the room, down the stairs, and puts his revolver to her head like he plans to blow her brains out, but she uses her sinister powers of allurements to stop him from pulling the trigger and the two begin to passionately kiss. Needless to say, Lulu turns the gun on Leon while they're kissing and kills him, which is witnessed by Alec. While Alec is in shock and comforting his dead daddy, Lulu's bloated rodent-like father comes downstairs, puts a trench coat on his daughter, and the two leave the house without incident. Of course, Lulu and her father probably plan to scam another rich overweight cuckold.

A work featuring uniquely unsavory gypsies as the ultimate Svengali-like swindlers and cold killers and a femme fatale that epitomizes the subtly sinister nature of the more evil members of the fairer sex, Lulu is shockingly politically incorrect for a contemporary Dutch flick, thus putting it in welcome company with the work of avant-garde auteur Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*) and Aryan Kaganof (*Kyodai Makes the Big Time*, *The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man*). Not surprisingly, co-directors Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth are hardly even known in their homeland of the Netherlands despite the fact that the latter's father was famous Dutch painter/sculptor Constant Nieuwenhuijs (in fact, Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth directed a short entitled *New Babylon de Constant* (2005) depicting the artist's architecture models of the futuristic utopian anti-capitalist city 'New Babylon'), thus reflecting the conformist nature of contemporary Dutch cinema which, aside from Edwin 'The Dutch Fassbinder' Brienen (*Terrorama!*, *Last Performance*), is mostly sterile and reflects the historically artistically revolutionary nation's cultural decline. The fact that Lulu was directed by a married couple makes it all the more baffling, especially considering the film's distinctly unflattering depiction of both genders, but especially females as reflected in the eponymous lead, who makes the Lulu played by alpha-flapper Louise Brooks in Pabst's *Pandora's Box* seem like a sensitive sweetheart by comparison. Indeed, while I can think of a couple examples of husband and wife directors, like *Messiah of Evil* (1973) aka *Dead People* co-directed by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz and the oeuvre of commie frogs Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (*The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, *Moses and Aaron*), that managed to successfully direct films with each other, none seem to have such a discernible and iconoclastic 'auteur' signature than that of Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth, whose works unequivocally prove that spouses can do more together than just make babies and have nasty divorces as so many people seem to do nowadays. Apparently, not unlike Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg with their counterculture masterpiece *Performance*

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(1970), the couple shares their directing duties by Seyferth largely working with the actors while Nieuwenhuijs deals with the camera and more technical aspects of filmmaking, thus making for singular cinematic works that feature nuanced understandings and insights into both genders, especially in regard to sexuality, (anti)romance, mental illness, and decadence, among other timeless themes. Surely it says a lot about the directors' own relationship when the male lead of a film is a weak, decadent, sloppy and overweight jealous cuckold and the female lead is portrayed as a sadomasochistic schemer of the decidedly deadly sort who lives to figuratively and literally kill men as depicted in *Lulu*. Needless to say, I was not surprised to learn that Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth are apparently notorious for getting in huge fights and screaming matches on the set of their films. Of course, considering that their films feature long scenes of naked nubile girls, I can kind of see what Seyferth might get mad about while working on the film sets with her hubby.

-Ty E

JCVD

Mabrouk El Mechri (2008)

The hype is a mean mustered force, The man is an international legend, and the film is a stunning character revelation. JCVD shattered my thoughts when I read about a film expressing the life and perils of a failing actor. Bruce Campbell demanded respect with his novel *If Chins Could Kill*, now Jean-Claude Van Damme demands your attention in what might be the single greatest action-turned-melodrama film of the century. Jean-Claude Van Damme walks into a post office. Before you think this is the intro to a dirty joke, be wary of the creeping events soon to follow. With nothing to lose, the robbers decide to fashion Van Damme as the perpetrator of the heist. The sadness that permeates from Van Damme's emotions is at least disturbing. The tribulations he faces are more so than the average citizen can account for. Pieced from a satire, and rudimentary in nature, JCVD marks the rebirth of an action star into something more. A film of this magnitude is a fly trap for harsh criticism. While many choose to defy a film to "rebel" against popular vote, the lure of this film could prove to be a powerful magnet. Festival favorite *Let the Right One In* contains a similar amount of hype. On my first (and only) attempt to view it, I found the 2 hour+ run time intimidating at 3 am. That, and the film bored me beyond death. The lack of visual entertainment actually brought about a craving of anything - even an Olaf Ittenbach film. JCVD is tear-inducing and visually brilliant, using a popular grain look to accentuate his homeland of Belgium. Many stabs are made at John Woo throughout the film, particularly on *Hard Target* although *Face/Off* is brought up. Steven Segal/Jean-Claude Van Damme rivalries are brought up in a humorous spectacle of a hint of the muscle-bound rat race to scripts involving combat. I'm just glad he "agreed to cut the ponytail". Excellent cinematography grants the film wings. This, and the amazing *Vantage Point* perspectives put to work in order to explain the entire happenings. JCVD is an earnest tale of a hypothetical breakdown of an actor that has never been analyzed as important, but he definitely is. He not only brought John Woo to Hollywood but gave his hometown people something to be proud of. An icon and a hero; JCVD is more important than you'd give the chance to believe. For a truly exceptional scene, his monologue epiphany left me absolutely speechless. Inspirational to the core, I couldn't have been more satisfied with this film.

-mAQ

MOON CHILD
MOON CHILD

Mahfuzah Issy (1972)

I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that Spanish auteur Agustí Villaronga (*In a Glass Cage* aka *Tras el cristal*, *Black Bread* aka *Pa negre*) is the most proficient director of bleak coming-of-age films. Out of all of Villaronga's films, *Moon Child* (1989) aka *El niño de la luna* – an exotic and sometimes erotic esoteric Adventure-Fantasy work worthy of any adult's time – is easily the Spanish filmmaker's most optimistic effort, yet the film is far from a feel-good-flick that one would watch with the entire family, let alone with small children. In the film, a 12-year old orphan boy named David discovers the prophecy of an ancient African tribe that foretells the random appearance of a white child (the "moon child") that will become their god: The Son of the Moon. Overtime, David begins to believe that he is, indeed, the soon-to-be-all-powerful Moon Child. Due to his budding extrasensory perception, David is adopted by an odd Occult institution with unsavory intentions that is sort of like a dystopian X-men academy, that experiments and does research on idiosyncratic Übermensch children. Unfortunately, for God-in-the-making David, the academy has plans to make their own Moon Child by channeling the energy of the moon into an unborn child. To an extent, the plans of the occult group somewhat resembles that of the conspiring white magicians featured in British alpha-occultist Aleister Crowley's novel *Moonchild* (1917). During his dangerous journey, David befriends a blonde girl named Georgina (played by Lisa Gerrard of the ethereal neoclassical music group *Dead Can Dance* in her only acting role) who becomes a mother figure for the boy and whose slender body becomes a vessel for the evil occult group's man-made Moon Child. Davey also fancies an older woman with split loyalties named Victoria who struggles over her allegiances to the all-power Occult organization she is an unflinching member of and the lost boy that needs her love. On his precarious journey, David encounters everything from institutional lunar sex (featuring Lisa Gerrard totally nude) to the totally devastating and debilitating heat of African deserts. Needless to say, David and his struggles make that of the children in *The Goonies* (1985) seem like those of young peons on a slightly perturbing playdate.

Like Villaronga's previous film *In a Glass Cage* (1987), *Moon Child* is an aesthetically-splendid work that, despite its stark story, brings solace to the eyes and harmony to the ears. For fans of *Dead Can Dance*, *Moon Child* is also quite the rare treat as the ineffable score composed by the music duo was done specifically for the film, thus, the only way to hear it is by watching this unfortunately scarce and mostly magical motion picture. *Moon Child* is certainly the best and most fitting marriage between avant-garde filmmaker and musical group since the collaboration between Derek Jarman and post-industrial group *Coil* for *The Angelic Conversation* (1985). Like the music of *Dead Can Dance*, *Moon Child*

transports the viewer to various mysterious and nonexistent thaumaturgic lands and sparks emotions that range from delightful dread to indescribable splendor. Thankfully, the storyline of *Moon Child* is for the most part in tune with the aesthetic qualities of the film. Although, the plot of *Moon Child* may seem rather incoherent at times, this seemingly glaring flaw inevitably adds to the already persuasive mystique and intrigue of the film. Needless to say, *Moon Child* becomes more potent upon subsequent viewings. If any cinematic work manages to mix thematic and aesthetic elements of Nicholas Roeg's *Walkabout* (1971) and *The Witches* (1990) and Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Moon Child* is surely that seemingly unreal and otherworldly film. All of the actors featured in *Moon Child*, including the one who played David, also deserve praise for their talents. I must admit that I find most child actors nothing short of deplorable and ultimately unbelievable, but Enrique Saldana (the boy who plays David) is certainly convincing as a daunted yet daring child who is totally devoted to fulfilling a metaphysical mission that he has trouble verbally articulating. Despite her lack of acting experience, lovely Lisa Gerrard – who is indubitably a modern Renaissance woman – brings a strong performance to *Moon Child* that is an imperative to the believability of the film. In what is probably the most memorable scene in the film, Ms. Gerrard goes from being in a state of bewilderment as she lays naked on a cold, sterile metal ritual bed; to a mood of total ecstasy as she makes love with her seedman; to a position of total terror as a couple occult members takeaway her lover and surgically pick at her freshly soiled vagina in a most crude and calculating quasi-scientific fashion.

John Waters' once remarked regarding Villaronga's *In a Glass Cage*, "(it) is a great film, but I'm too scared to show it to my friends." *Moon Child* is not a film one should fear showing to one's friends, but it most certainly has the capacity to stupefy both small children and Quentin Tarantino fans alike. If you're one of those many individuals who found themselves slightly disturbed by films like Wolfgang Peterson's *The NeverEnding Story* (1984) and Jim Henson's *The Labyrinth* (1986) as a young and naive child, *Moon Child* is probably one of a handful of films that can potentially help you recapture those youthful emotions of partially petrified nostalgia. Like *In a Glass Cage*, *Moon Child* is a film that neglects to follow the gospel of the Hollywood studio system, as it is a work that is certainly not cognizant of the taboos of political correctness. I am sure that had *Moon Child* been produced within the strict, authoritarian socio-political confines of a typical Hollywood studio production, the *Moon Child* would have been a starving and saintly Ethiopian boy who is on a journey to central Europe (with the help of a good liberal white couple, nonetheless) to fulfill an ancient Germanic prophecy for peaceful world unity. Politically incorrect or not, *Moon Child* is certainly a rare work of 'World-Class Cinema', as the film manages to swimmingly cross both cultural and country barriers (whether they be real or not as none of the locations, aside from the continents, are mentioned in the

MOON CHILD

film). Of course, most important of all, Moon Child is a flavorsome flick that manages to activate the imagination of the most bitter, skeptical, and misanthropic of viewers (myself included), and for that reason alone, it is a must-see film.

-Ty E

NATTLEK

Mai Zetterling (1966)

If there is one female auteur that has yet to get her due, it is Swedish filmmaker/actress Mai Zetterling, a controversial member of the so called ‘Hollywood Left’ and a purported communist and fierce feminist who is strangely all but forgotten in our modern day Occidental world of gender neutrality and forced equality. Acting in cinematic work from all around the world during her nearly 1/2 century long career in film, ranging from acting alongside Dirk Bogarde in the British anthology film *Quartet* (1948) to the Roald Dahl film adaptation *The Witches* (1990) directed by Nicholas Roeg (*Don’t Look Now, Bad Timing*), Zetterling ultimately made her greatest contribution to the history of film with her experimentally adventuresome auteur-pieces. After first stumbling upon her work after randomly viewing her British female prison flick *Scrubbers* (1983) – a work inspired by the success of Alan Clarke’s similarly bleak yet captivating work *Scum* (1979) – I did some research and discovered that Zetterling originally directed extremely controversial and experimental arthouse flicks in her homeland during the 1960s. With her first feature-length film *Älskande par* (1964) aka *Loving Couples*, Zetterling not only managed to get the film banned at the Cannes Film Festival due to its explicit erotic persuasion, but also had her femininity brought into question by certain film critics. Indeed, after watching some of her early works, I must agree with the pompous film critic that soundly yet sardonically stated, “Mai Zetterling directs like a man.” Deeply and irrevocably affected by the critic’s remarks like a heartbroken teenager who had been dumped by her first true love, Zetterling acted in a reactionary manner by attempting to explore unfeminine feminist themes in her subsequent works. Although her late-period work *Scrubbers* no doubt has the distinct feel of a femi-commie rant, Zetterling’s second feature-length film *Nattlek* (1966) aka *Night Games* is a work I would have never thought could be directed by a woman, nonetheless a fierce feminist, if I didn’t know otherwise. Just as defiantly salacious and morally ambiguous as her previous work *Älskande par*, Zetterling’s *Nattlek* would earn the distinction of being banned from the Venice Film Festival, thus securing the feisty female auteur reputation with Leni Riefenstahl as one of the most controversial and artistically ambitious lady filmmakers who ever lived.

Although not unwarranted, most of Zetterling’s detractors have criticized the filmmaker’s works as highly derivative and – even worse – works of plagiarism. Admittedly, Zetterling’s minor masterpiece of Swedish cinema *Nattlek* is a work that is quite thematically and aesthetically similar to Swedish alpha-auteur Ingmar Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries* (1957). Additionally, a number of scenes featured in *Nattlek*, especially the carnivalesque party sequences featuring flamboyant and flaming fag characters, recall Federico Fellini’s *La Dolce*

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Vita (1960). Still, with that being said, *Nattlek* is an original film in of itself and a movingly and mortally melancholy one at that. Having the visual and emotional essence of a Bergman film from a decade earlier like *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955) minus the charming comedy, *The Seventh Seal* (1957), but especially the aforementioned *Wild Strawberries* (1957), *Nattlek* features the rich and ravishing black-and-white cinematography associated with the work of the greatest Swedish filmmaker to ever live, yet with an exceedingly bleaker and more artistically belligerent artistic flare. Featuring Bergman stars Ingrid Thulin (*Wild Strawberries*, *The Magician*, *Winter Light*) and child actor Jörgen Lindström (*The Silence*, *Persona*) in two of the leading roles, *Nattlek*, much like *Wild Strawberries* follows a protagonist as he comes to terms with less than fond memories of his past. Shot almost entirely in a medieval Swedish castle, *Nattlek* centers around Jan (Keve Hjelm) – a sexually and emotionally sterile man-child – as he comes to terms with his materially comfortable, yet emotionally debilitating childhood. Psychologically castrated by his cold, calculating, sadistic, self-centered mother Irene (Ingrid Thulin) at an early age – which reaches its peak when she scolds and humiliates the boy for masturbating – Jan has trouble sexually satisfying his fiancée/wife Mariana (Lena Brundin). When things take a turn for the worst in regard to his companion's health, Jan – who describes himself as already 'dead' – must decide whether he wants to live his life in the past as an emotional cripple or to give his wife the fresh, new life she deserves. Seamlessly weaving scenes from the past and present, *Nattlek* is a work that highlights how familiar places and objects can open old wounds.

Despite its intrinsically crestfallen and disheartening persuasion, *Nattlek* – not unlike *Wild Strawberries* – concludes on a rather rosy and transcendent note, even if it partially echoes the conclusion of Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death*. Unlike your typical (and atypical) contemporary feminist, Mai Zetterling did not shy away from the mostly unmentioned topic of mother-on-son/woman-on-boy sexual and psychological abuse, which is uniquely and uncompromisingly portrayed in *Nattlek*; a cerebral yet sometimes grotesque cinematic work that still has the power to make viewer's stomachs turn. Inadvertently causing the death of her second born by her narcissistic negligence by insisting that she rather have a carnivalesque bedside party than proper access to hospital medical facilities during childbirth despite her wealth and turning her son into an impotent, emotional cripple by the way of incestuous child abuse and sexual humiliation, only to die before her son reaches his teenage years, high-class whore Irene makes one of the most deplorable and dastardly yet physically delectable high-class whores to ever grotesquely grace the silver-screen. If one learns anything from watching *Nattlek*, it is that behind every male faggot, warped transvestite, and impotent man with Peter Pan syndrome is a sadistic vainglorious cunt with too much time on her hands. As the countess of a castle full of conspiring fairies, whorish Jazz singers (Swedish

singer Monica Zetterlund has a small role in the film), and debauched aristocrats, mother Irene of Nattlek makes for an aberrant type of femme fatale of the overzealous micro-dictator sort in a role that makes the royals of the popular HBO television series *Game of Thrones* seem like unsophisticated peasants with base taste. If you're looking to see a film with a decisively feminine yet gnarly touch, you won't find a better example than Zetterling's wonderfully exploitative and undeservedly forgotten minor masterpiece of Swedish arthouse cinema *Nattlek*.

-Ty E

STORM
STORM

Måns Mårland (2005)

It is quite a challenge to make a film work in many different genres. (For a good example, See; Save The Green Planet!) Storm starts off with a nifty scene involving a fiery vixen running through the streets holding a cube of unknown origin and contents. All they know is that it must not get in the wrong hands. The plot kicks off with a Matrix type of feel. We meet Donny AKA "DD", he is a perverted, alcoholic who bathes in his success and spoiled existence, ergo, the average citizen. His life is suddenly shattered when this warrior woman crashes into his life quite literally. From this point on, Donny is sent through time travel, comic-book adaptations in the style of a classic Goosebumps story (Attack Of The Mutant anyone?), and finally into personal territory. While the plot is confusing as all hell, it eventually falls into place. It appears to be a grand scheme, a puzzle, even. Prepare for a lot of textures to this film. While not being a homage, it has similar scenes to great films, such as Oldboy, The Matrix, and even The Butterfly Effect. While not being personally directed, this film stands with the greats on terms of a psychological head-screw. As for the action goes, it amazes and keeps you on your feet. Many scenes are well choreographed and frenetic. This film picks up where Night Watch failed. Horrible foreign action/horror/thriller's were not welcomed. Storm gladly blows my expectations down and presents a film that could have went awry but didn't. Whether the reasons be the acting, scenery, wonderful score, or the sci-fi toss around. Eric Ericson does an amazing job as the confused Donny. Disoriented and constantly bleeding from various scraps with the silent, bald henchmen. The main villain's (Or is he?) presence reminds me of Robert Patrick's Kogo Shuko in Double Dragon, except a lot more effective. Many scenes of humor are present and features wonderful narration. What i felt was the most important aspect of the film was the end. Instead of wrapping everything up in a neat package, we deal with more conflict. This goes without saying there is never an end to conflict. I felt this was a very humane approach that kept the film in reality. Freshens the viewer up after the roller-coaster ride through dimensions and conspiracies. Storm is the cyberpunk film for the new generation. Loaded with gritty violence and philosophical views on our existence, it never ceases to amaze. Somethings can be forgotten, this film can't. Expect a forecast from TLA Releasing for more information on its release.

-Maq

MARIE FROM THE BAY OF ANGELS

Manuel Pradal (1997)

Undoubtedly, Frogs like making films about sensual underage girls and ugly swarthy dudes with guns (or, as Jean-Luc Godard once famously stated, "All you need for a movie is a gun and a girl."), but few French films take this approach more literally and obsessively than *Marie from the Bay of Angels* (1997) aka *Marie Baie des Anges* aka *Angel Sharks* directed by quasi-auteur Manuel Pradal (*The Blonde with Bare Breasts*, *A Crime*). A coming-of-age tale for eager ephedophiles and unhinged urchins alike, Pradal's pathologically playful piece of montage-ridden sensual cinema follows a classless teenage crook of the racially dubious sort and his would-be-touching but ultimately senselessly tragic love affair with a 15-year-old prostitute who routinely leads on moronic American sailors so she can steal their money. Filled with partially bare youthful flesh and incessant teen philistine delinquency, *Marie from the Bay of Angels* is like a frog *The Blue Lagoon* (1980) meets *Larry Clark's Kids* (1995) and *Bully* (2001) as directed by a young filmmaker that wishes he was the next François Truffaut yet got too hung up on Sergei Eisenstein's theory of montage to tell a coherent story. Still, Pradal's rather wanton work is an endlessly enthralling celluloid poem of sorts that, although somewhat like one long music video in structure, undoubtedly makes the Mediterranean seem genuinely beautiful, romantic, and even mystifying, even if it is crawling with deadly teenage delinquents that look like they crawled out of some of the most decrepit shacks from the South of France. Described by Stephen Holden of the *New York Times* as a, "dizzying paganistic ode to Eros," *Marie from the Bay of Angels* indeed features pagan pageantry in the form of festive parade, as well as no moral compass, at least not a Christian one, as a low-class libertine work featuring prepubescent boys attempting to buy guns and getting wasted on vodka while crashing bumper cars, obscenely stupid American sailors acting like typical stupid ass Americans as rather repellant individuals lacking individuality that think the world is a gigantic whorehouse and treat native women as such, packs of adolescent frog morons attempting to steal cash and gash from whoever has the misfortune of crossing their rather wickedly wayward path, and a young girl that is just getting to know the power of her pussy but does not use it wisely because she just wants to have fun and gets bored banging old farts. A rather idiosyncratic flick with a somewhat timeless quality about it (indeed, at first I was not sure whether it was set in the present or the 1950s, but I guess that is the point as a work depicting the world in the age of Americanization) set in *Promenade des Anglais* along the Mediterranean at Nice, France, Pradal's decidedly decadent work is more of a cocktease than an explosive climax, though the film could not end more nihilistically with the death of a child or two and the total moral degeneration of the male antihero, who has a seemingly inbred face that only a white trash streetwalker could love.

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Orso (played by non-actor Frédéric Malgras, a Russian gypsy, hence his 'peculiar' appearance) is not even an adult, but he is already a degenerate piece of untermensch trash who spends his days robbing beautiful bourgeois babes and naïve vacationers in the French Riviera when he is not riding around aimlessly on trains, catching a bumpy ride on his equally criminally-inclined friend's motorbike, or posing like a true moron with his beloved handgun, as if he is some sort of iconic filmic bad ass. Marie (played by 'contemporary Brigitte Bardot' Vahina Giocante in her very first film role) is a 15-year-old hooker who is a rather big bitch, especially when it comes to men who want to tear off her panties, but since she is underage, she has no problem luring in philistine American sailors who are just trying to get laid while abroad. Although more or less homeless, Marie's pussy-peddling allows her the luxury of staying in a lavish suite in a fancy hotel, though a life of sub-high-class existence does not seem to do much to comfort her seemingly sullen soul. When Marie first meets antisocial Orso, she thinks he is a major asshole, but after she sees him attempt to rob two large American sailors, who ultimately kick his scrawny little Romani ass, and commit various other petty yet oftentimes dangerous crimes, she becomes rather intrigued by him and begins to reconsider her dead-end life as a Lolita-like gold-digger. Although Marie takes advantage of being routinely wined and dined by pathetically pigheaded American soldiers, who think they are god's gift to women yet do not even have the skills to impress an ignorant 15-year-old girl, she eventually realizes her heart yearns for the ugly teenage hood. When Marie ends up hitching a ride on a motorbike with Orso and his comrade, and the junior thief begins to feel up and down her thigh and nibbles on her neck, she falls in love and assumedly gets rather wet between the legs. Eventually, Orso and Marie decide to head to a secluded island where they declare their love for one another via words and acts. Of course, scheming con Orso is well aware that his lover is a libidinous little whore and uses her as such, even getting her to dance provocatively on a pier to distract an old man and his son so that he can steal the old horn-dog's boat. In an act of warped and reckless love, Marie also robs a handgun from one of her pussy patrons and gives it to Orso, who is more than a little bit delighted as he previously failed at attempting to procure a weapon after his blonde prepubescent middleman friend was robbed. Of course, as a born thief and 'heterosexual Jean Genet' of sorts (indeed, not only is he a small-time criminal, but his face is no less repugnant than that of the queer toad novelist), Orso cannot help but use his prized new weapon for pernicious purposes and eventually has the bright idea to rob a sweet middle-aged married couple that owns a bar. Of course, things go wrong and a struggle occurs between Orso and the bar owners that results in Marie accidentally receiving a fatal gunshot wound that ultimately brings the pubescent lover's touchingly romantic love affair to a totally avoidable premature end. After taking Marie's corpse to the scenic villa of a beautiful young woman (Amira Casar) he previously robbed and shooting

up all the televisions and surveillance cameras in the home while watching the Monaco Grand Prix race, Orso goes completely berserk and nonsensically kills his blonde prepubescent friend who, rather ironically, was supposed to help him find a gun (of course, had the boy found the gun before Marie did, she might still be alive, thus one can only assume that, in his warped logic, Orso blames his friend for his girlfriend's death). Indeed, in the end, what little hope that existed before has been irrevocably lost, with Marie dead and Orso becoming a coldblooded killer who wasted one of his friends in the most craven and pointless of fashions.

Featuring footage of the 1995 Monaco Grand Prix, riot-ridden patriotic soccer games that resemble fascist rallies, and fiercely festive carnivals with people dressed as pagan gods, *Marie from the Bay of Angels* is certainly like a cinematic vacation to one of the most addictively scenic and strangely romantic spots in the Mediterranean. With its blatantly and not so blatant nods to François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, and Eric Rohmer, among various others, Pradal's film is also like a lurid love letter to the *La Nouvelle Vague*, albeit with an exceedingly fast-spaced editing style that the filmmaker (or his editor) seemed to have learned from watching one-too-many American TV commercials. A morally dubious celebration of juvenile delinquency and debauchery, *Marie from the Bay of Angels* is, not unlike Francis Ford Coppola's *Rumble Fish* (1983) and the films of Larry Clark, a rare arthouse flick for the sort of teenager that does not dare admit that they like poetic art films, as it probably features enough salaciousness and visceral violence to keep most ADHD-addled adolescents happy. Undoubtedly, one of the more hilarious aspects of the film (and probably the only aspect of the film that acts as comic relief) is its less than flattering depiction of American sailors who, although dress in a classic fashion like the brutal semen demons from Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) and the sadomasochistic sodomites of Fassbinder's *Querelle* (1982), are really just a bunch of arrogant and loudmouthed pansies who can barely scare off a gang of teenage boys and who do not have the balls to assert themselves onto young ladies (indeed, during one scene, a sailor awkwardly and disingenuously tells Maria that he loves her just so he can get in her pants). In one especially humorous scene, one of the sailors arrogantly proclaims, "It's like purgatory here man...Every single woman is after my body," while Marie looks bored to death while eating an expensive meal that the Yankee gentleman bought for her. When the American sailors eventually realize that Marie has no interest in them, they kick her out of their lives and treat her like total trash, telling her she "stinks" and whatnot, as if they are afraid of vaginas and need an excuse for not consummating coitus with her. While featuring next to nil nudity (aside from a pair of tits or two from a couple older women), *Marie from the Bay of Angels* certainly radiates raw youthful eroticism in a rather nicely nuanced fashion that even puts the uncensored 'kiddy arthouse' flick *Maladolescenza* (1977) starring Eva Ionesco to shame in terms of perverse

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adolescent poetry. For those that were hoping to enjoy Catherine Breillat's 36 fillette (1988), but found the little lady lead to be a bit homely and the overall film to be plagued by banality and a rather foul feminist subtext, Marie from the Bay of Angels offers a delightfully debasing rollercoaster ride over the soothing surf and turf of the French Riviera that may be somewhat incoherent (the time frame of the film is nearly impossible to discern) and emphasizes style over substance, but it certainly never bores or wallows in pseudo-erotic/pseudo-intellectual pretense like most of the films that are halfheartedly churned out of frogland nowadays. Indeed, unlike The Blue Lagoon, there is an element of delectable danger to Pradal's film that is quite rare to find in cinema nowadays. Like a cultivated Kids with an uncommon respect for indigenous kultur and a complete disrespect for the plague that is American intervention, Marie from the Bay of Angels is like a The 400 Blows (1959) for the lost post-national generation that has nothing to believe in or live for, hence the nihilistic non-existences of the true Les Enfants Terribles of Pradal's rather bleak yet bewitching and epodic film.

-Ty E

BRUSSELS BY NIGHT

Marc Didden (1983)

If Western Europe ever had its own sort of equivalent to William Friedkin during the 1980s, it was almost certainly Flemish auteur Marc Didden (*Sailors Don't Cry*, *Mannen maken plannen* aka *A Man Needs a Plan*), who made the eponymous metropolis featured in his debut feature *Brussels by Night* (1983) seem like a deathly dreary dystopian hellhole where beautiful blondes are either miscegenating whores or sullen spinsters, married Arab fathers cannot keep their hands off said miscegenating blonde whores, predatory barmaids throw themselves at broken men, and musicians sing melancholy covers of crappy American pop songs in broken English, among other things. Based on a script that was co-written by Belgian cult auteur Dominique Deruddere who went on to direct the Bukowskian masterpiece *Crazy Love* (1987) aka *Love Is a Dog from Hell* (which Didden co-penned), the film might be best described as the all the darker and more nihilistic Belgian answer to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) as a gritty and visceral piece of unhinged urban cinema where social alienation, pathological paranoia, anhedonia, race hate, senseless acts of violence, death fixations, and self-loathing are just some of the problems that plague the hopelessly angst-ridden antihero, who was portrayed by one of the greatest and most eclectic Flemish actors of his era. Indeed, as a man that got his start starring in the early films of Belgian master auteur André Delvaux, including portraying the happy-go-lucky young man 'Val' in *Un soir, un train* (1968) aka *One Night... a Train*, and who later appeared in the great contemporary cult flick *Ex Drummer* (2007) directed by Koen Mortier, François Beukelaers can certainly be considered a sort of Brando or Pacino of Belgian cinema and his performance in *Brussels by Night* offers ample reason as he portrays one of the most unsettlingly emotionally constipated characters I have ever seen as a uniquely repugnant yet sometimes strangely charming chap that is fed up with life and the world who you just cannot help but somewhat empathize with, at least for about the first hour or so of the film. While Belgium has a grand tradition of dark and dreary cinema as indicated by everything from Delvaux's morbidly phantasmagorical debut masterpiece *De man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* (1966) aka *The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short* to anarchic art-shockers like Roland Lethem's *La fée sanguinaire* (1969) aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy* to Thierry Zéno's fiercely fucked feces-filled arthouse affair *Vase de nocces* (1974) aka *Wedding Through* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie* to sardonic dystopian cult trash like Rob Van Eyck's *The Afterman* (1985), Didden's film took the malignant melancholy and dejecting despair to a new and more serious extreme, albeit in a surprisingly accessible way as if the film was made distinctly to depress as many as people as possible as opposed to just merely appealing to Bergman and Antonioni fans.

Directed by a young ex-journalist who was heavily influenced by the "no fu-

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ture” attitude of punk, the existentialist novels of Italian-Jewish writer Alberto Moravia (whose works have been adapted by Vittorio de Sica, Jean-Luc Godard, Bernardo Bertolucci, etc.), and especially the largely forgotten French flick *Extérieur, nuit* (1980) aka *Exterior Night* directed by Jacques Bral, *Brussels by Night* is a film that ultimately makes it seem quite fitting that Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis cheated on his wife with a Belgian music journalist not long before he killed himself. Notably, the only filmmaking experience that Didden had before directing the film was as a sailor extra in Harry Kümel’s misunderstood fantastique genre masterpiece *Malpertuis* (1971) and collaborating on the fairly unknown Belgian punk documentary *Gisteren zal ik pogo dansen* (1978) aka *Yesterday I’ll Pogo*. Incidentally, Didden would later take a screenwriting course that was taught Kümel which would act as the genesis for *Brussels by Night* as the filmmaker would write the film’s screenplay for the class, which won a national prize for ‘best screenplay’ in 1980 and ultimately led the way for him to get the opportunity to direct the film. Of course, being a novice filmmaker, Didden naturally needed guidance and ultimately hired Dominique Deruddere to act as a sort of assistant auteur (in fact, Deruddere would state in the documentary *The Brussels by Night Archives* regarding his contribution to the film, “Here I was responsible for a large part of the visuality because Marc was very inexperienced. He knew what he wanted but did not how to do it technically. While I knew more about how to do it. But not everything. I still don’t.”). A piece of rather unpleasant ‘nihilist noir’ that combines the nocturnal urban entertainment value of Scorsese’s *After Hours* (1985) with the glacial emotions and physical violence of a Michael Haneke flick, Didden’s flick is notable for being a rare cinematic work that manages to make misanthropy, cultural cynicism, collective alienation, and self-destruction palatable to the sort of pop culture philistine that thinks that Quentin Tarantino is one of the greatest filmmakers that has ever lived. The increasingly foreboding story of a middle-aged married Flemish truck driver who considers committing suicide but instead abruptly decides to travel to Brussels where he runs into an old retired friend and randomly starts a troubled quasi-romance with a hot yet slutty blonde bartender who is also banging a racially sensitive Arab that the protagonist naturally grows to deeply loathe and resent, *Brussels by Night* is, if nothing else, one of the best ‘feel-bad’ flicks I have ever seen, even if I cannot really call it a masterpiece.

At the very beginning of the film, the viewer gets more than just a mere hint that there is something not quite right about antihero Max (François Beuke-laers) because he is initially portrayed playing a rather heated game of one-man Russian roulette where he seems both simultaneously heavily relieved and considerably depressed when a bullet does not go through his brain after he intensely pulls the trigger of a gun that he has shoved in his mouth. Instead of offing himself, Max ultimately decides to use his decision to give up on life as an excuse to catch a train to Brussels where a fat old bourgeois bitch questions the fact that

he is riding in the first class section, as if he is a stupid lowly prole who does not deserve to be among the rich and rather rotund. Upon arriving at the Brussels trains station, Max demonstrates his short temper and propensity for violence by kicking and ultimately smashing the glass display case of a cigarette vending machine in front of various strangers after the machine steals his money. Upon getting a taxi that is driven by a sarcastic slob, Max disobeys the cabbie by smoking and then eventually randomly jumping out of the car in the middle of a busy tunnel. From there, Max heads to a mall where he runs up an escalator that is going in the opposite direction and then attempts to call his wife on a public payphone. Indeed, throughout the film, Max tries in vain to get in touch with his beloved wifey, but not until the end of the film does the viewer realize why she will not pick up. Like most things in his personal life, Max is fairly evasive when it comes to discussing his somewhat mysterious spouse, so it is only fitting that he eventually hooks up with a slutty chick who has no qualms about sleeping with strange married men. Unfortunately, starting lurid love affairs with lecherous ladies oftentimes causes hostility between the various men that dare to fuck such women, or so Max learns after falling for a Flemish ice queen who seems to get a sick kick out of pitting men against one another.

While randomly walking the streets of Brussels, Max's old short and pudgy friend Louie (Michiel Mentens) spots him, yells his name, and then somewhat insults him by stating, "What are you doing here? I didn't know you knew how to get to Brussels." As he explains to Max, Louie is now retired and lives with his beautiful blonde spinster daughter Josephine (Nellie Rosiers), who apparently cannot find a single decent marriageable man in the entire city. Naturally, Max follows Louie back to his flat where the two shoot the shit. When Max explains the he and his wife do not have any children, Louie asks him, "You have been married for six years and you still haven't talked to your wife about children. Max, are you sure you are right in the head?," to which the protagonist somewhat absurdly replies in a humorously unwitting quasi-autistic fashion, "We haven't discussed it yet," as if having children is a banal business transaction that is about as important as deciding on a restaurant to eat at. After half-jokingly asking Max "Are you sure you are right in the head?," Louie expresses his sadness in regard to the fact that no man wants to marry his nearly middle-aged barren daughter, complaining, "A good girl but can't find a husband. Actually, her name is Josephine-Charlotte, like the princess." Indeed, it seems the most of the women in the film have a hard time finding decent men, but then again most of them are portrayed as lecherous whores that believe they will eventually become a famous actress and will fuck a guy for a beer. Before taking a brief nap at Louie's apartment, Max stares at his friend's daughter Josephine-Charlotte as if he has a deep desire to defile her seemingly virginal body, though he controls himself and does not actually act on his instincts.

After going to a bar with Louie and getting terribly annoyed with a hot yet

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whorish barmaid who attempts to get him to buy her a beer, Max states to the classless chick, "I'll give you a new mug, if you like" and then goes to another taproom that is completely empty where he drinks by himself while the fairly attractive female bartender reads a book. Although initially somewhat rude and emotionally apathetic towards the bartender, Alice (Ingrid De Vos of Chantal Akerman's *Toute une nuit* (1982) and Hans Herbots' *De Behandeling* (2014) aka *The Treatment*), Max warms up to her when she states to him, "And don't drink too much. I can see you are sad," as if he appreciates the fact that someone has finally taken notice and interest in his glaring misery. When an effeminate Moroccan Arab named Abdel (Amid Chakir of Didden's *Istanbul* (1985) and *Crazy Love* (1987)) eventually shows up at the bar, he less than sincerely states to Alice regarding the protagonist, "...if he's your friend he's my friend, too." As becomes quite apparent as the film progresses, brown boy Abdel is in love with Alice and Max will soon be waging a very personal war against him for the bartender's heart in what might be best described as a hate-based bizarre love triangle of the increasingly racially-charged sort. When Max temporarily leaves the bar to once again try to call his wife, Alice reveals her somewhat morbid mindset by stating to Abdel regarding the protagonist, "I like him. I like unhappy people. They make me happy. I like drama." While Alice agrees to close the bar early so that the three virtual strangers can hangout at a more hip bar, Max ruins their plans by attempting to attack a doorman, so they all head back to Abdel's apartment and eat Moroccan food. When Abdel tries to be superficially friendly with the protagonist by asking him where he is from, Max firmly states "nowhere" in a somewhat agitated fashion and then abruptly decides to leave when he gets annoyed after the over curious Arab asks him too many stupid questions, though he demands that Alice come with him. As one expects, Max and Alice proceed to have sex, with the former forcing the latter to foot the bill at a sleazy old hotel that is run by a sleazy gay old man. While the carnal session turns out ideal, Alice jokingly complains that Max should not have said "A double, please" in French while cuming inside of her. Although the two share a fairly happy and intimate orgasmic night together, this is ultimately the closest Max will ever get to Alice, as the antihero's deteriorating sanity and paranoia only becomes all the more debilitating as the film progresses.

A sort of bargain bin femme fatale who exploits the vulnerabilities and emotions of men for seemingly no reason at all aside from possibly as a means to pass the boredom, Alice ultimately begins playing Max and Abdel against one another in a classically female passive-aggressive fashion as if she is not even completely in control of her emotionally manipulative behavior. Indeed, shortly after Max leaves her apartment, Abdel shows up and rightly accuses her of fucking the protagonist. While Alice does not deny it, she complains to Abdel that she "doesn't like jealous men" and then attempts to comfort the jealous Arab by stating to him, "I like him...But I like you more." Meanwhile, Max meets up

with his friend/co-employee Jules (Fred Van Kuyk) at a café and the two discuss their problems with work and women. After berating Max for abruptly quitting his driving job by simply abandoning the position, Jules tells him he is not cut out for such employment, stating, “You think too much. You’re not suitable for the work we do.” When Jules confesses that his wife is having an affair with “cheesemonger” and Max tells him that he should not allow himself to be cuckolded, his friend brags that he is currently carrying on an affair with a pair of perky twins. Rather revealingly, Max also hints at his growing hatred for Abdel by randomly asking Jules if his wife is fucking a Moroccan, as if Brussels was already flooded with as many third world aliens as it is today. Later that night, Max and Jules meet up with Abdel and Alice at the latter’s sister’s 21st birthday party where racial tensions ultimately reach a boiling point. Indeed, when a somewhat dorky four-eyed blonde sits beside Abdel and reveals that she is the typical naive liberal-brainwashed white moron by stating to him in Dutch, “I don’t think us white people should feel superior to you. I think there are far too many prejudices. People like you are first and foremost people. With the same faults and feelings, etc.,” Max jovially lies to the French-speaking Arab and says, “She’d like to give you a blow job.” When Max gets the DJ at the party to play “La Mamba” and then proceeds to passionately kiss Alice while dancing with her, Abdel gets extremely jealous, grabs the dorky white girl with glasses, and begins aggressively kissing her, thus predictably resulting in the ostensibly liberal-minded girl pushing him away and a random party guest punching the Arab in the face for daring to defile a shy Aryan chick. After agreeing to leave Jules behind as a “souvenir,” the three head to a café where Max yells at Abdel for stupidly kissing a random white girl in a room full of white people. Playing the pathetic victim, Abdel irrationally takes out his shame and feelings of rejection on Alice by stating to her, “You’re as big a slut as the rest” and then running out of the building like an upset little girl. Of course, Alice chases Abdel and Max slowly follows behind, only to be disheartened when he sees his love interest curiously sharing an extra intimate moment with the super sensitive camel jockey who just called her a slut. While they all agree to take a day trip to Ronquières Inclined Plane in central Belgium the next day, it is quite obvious that it is only a matter of time before Max and Abdel violently butt heads.

Upon doing some personal research by questioning random people around the city, Max discovers that his nemesis Abdel is a married father and decides to confront Abdel about this fact, stating, “I’ve been asking around. You’ve got a wife and child in Morocco yet you’re living it up here... With Alice. You and Alice, I don’t think much of that.” Needless to say, Abdel is not too happy when Max reminds him of the fact he has a family back home, as he is now living the ultimate third world dream of living a first world lifestyle that involves premium Eurapid pussy. On top of that, Max begins openly referring to Abdel as “wog” and “Muṣṣafa,” so naturally the Arab decides to give up on pretend-

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ing to befriend the protagonist and instead begins acting all moody and broody. Ultimately, Max picks up Alice, Abdel, and Louie in a Jaguar that he has just stolen and they head to Ronquières Inclined Plane in the Walloon municipality of Ittre for a scenic day trip where everything goes wrong and them some as the protagonist's pathological jealousy, rage, and paranoia reaches murderous proportions. Demonstrating some slight schizophrenic qualities that are quite fitting in a nation that is divided by both language and culture, Max is depicted at one point in the film complaining to Alice in regard to people in general, "I want them all to leave me alone. To stop staring at me on the street and to shut up on the radio. So that I can be myself." While she curiously only adds to his rage by leading him on and fueling his jealousy, Alice is absolutely convinced that Max will eventually explode as indicated by her remark to Abdel in regard to the protagonist, "I think he's very unhappy. His problem is that he doesn't say anything. One day it'll come out and then we'll be surprised." Upon arriving in Ittre, Max gets so enraged while taking a photo of Alice and Abdel that he smashes Louie's prized camera and then runs away. Not long after, Max emotionally manipulates Alice by pretending he is dead just because he wants to see her reaction. When the four head to a tourist site, a tour guide asks their nationality and Max responds, "Three Flemings and an Arab," though he jokes that he is "...the Arab." Of course, the fleeting moments of comic relief pretty much ends there.

At one point during their day trip, Max forces Alice to get into his car so they can "talk" and then demands that she tells him whether or not she believes in capital punishment. Needless to say, Max is fairly agitated by Alice's stubborn apathy when it comes to answering his questions, though he eventually gets her to state regarding capital punishment that she believes, "In some circumstances, yes. If it happened in cold blood, yes." When Max asks her what she thinks, "If a madman murdered a madwoman. Or another madman," Alice naturally begins to become somewhat unsettled as she realize that the protagonist is trying to hint to something her. Meanwhile, Abdel becomes increasingly agitated and states to Louie regarding Max, "I should've punched him in the face right away. He's going too far. They deal with it differently in Morocco." Clearly, Abdel is quite jealous of Max as he does not want him stealing his precious white whore from him. When Alice subsequently gets out of Max's car and tells Abdel that she is no longer interested in being the concubine of a gutter sheik, the lovelorn towelhead becomes enraged and states to her, "It's because of Max you don't want me anymore." Not surprisingly, when Abdel demands that Alice tell him what Max had said about him earlier that day and she states, "He said he wasn't jealous [of] a wog," the angry Arab slaps her so hard that she falls to the ground. Naturally, Max is not going to tolerate some swarthy wog hitting the woman he is starting to fall in love with, so he gets out of his Jaguar and starts effortlessly beating the shit out of Abdel while Louie holds Alice back. Of course, being

a man with a less than sound of mind that is involved in a heated brawl with his untermensch romantic rival, Max ultimately opts to brutally murder Abdel by simply picking him up and swiftly throwing him over the railing from what is no less than a three-story drop. While Louie attempts to get Alice to lie to the cops about Max's actions by stating, "Wipe your eyes before you see the commissioner [...] It was an accident. He didn't mean it. He wasn't himself," she is an erratic woman that feels guilty about her coffee-colored fuckboy's violent death and decides to tell the police everything, stating to a detective in regard to Max, "No, it wasn't an accident. I am sure of that. I know him too well for that. I know what he is capable of." When the cop questions how she can know Max so well if she only just met him a couple days before, Alice defends her position by stating, "A lot has happened since Thursday. And I've talked to him a lot. About everything. About life...About death...About everything." Ultimately it is revealed that Abdel is not the first person that Max killed, hence what incited him to attempt suicide at the beginning of the film.

After *Brussels by Night* became a cult hit that somewhat revolutionized Belgian cinema in terms of its brutal content and fairly nihilistic 'message' (or lack thereof), auteur Marc Didden subsequently had the opportunity to direct what was his closest thing to a mainstream international film production. Indeed, *Istanbul* (1985) is notable for starring eccentric Hollywood actor Brad Dourif (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Dune*) as a deranged pedophile drifter who accidentally ends up in Belgium where he hooks up with a cynical loser portrayed by *Crazy Love* director Dominique Deruddere and ultimately goes on a road trip that involves attempting to get enough money to travel the titular Turkish city by agreeing to kidnap the fairly young daughter of a distraught father played François Beukelaers whose wife left him for a shady young Italian restaurant owner. While Didden's second feature is certainly worth checking out, it unfortunately oftentimes feels rather contrived, overly goofy, and quite Hollywood-esque, and of course ultimately lacks the uncompromisingly visceral and nihilistic essence of his decidedly dejecting yet nonetheless endlessly enthralling debut. Aside from *Istanbul*, Didden also worked on a freeform stage adaptation of Jean-Luc Goard's *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) entitled *Re-Make/Re-Model* (1983) that was directed by *Brussels by Night* lead François Beukelaers, thus reflecting the somewhat unconventional working relationship between the auteur and actor. Of course, Beukelaers is just as much responsible for the film's potency as Didden, whose performance is just as an imperative ingredient to *Brussels by Night* as that of Marlon Brando in László Benedek's *The Wild One* (1953), Robert De Niro in Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980), and Christoph Waltz in Tarantino's *Inglourious Bastards* (2009), among countless other examples. It should be noted that idiosyncratic artistic collaborations are somewhat of a tradition in Belgian cinema as is perfectly demonstrated by a classic flick like *Meeuwen sterven in de haven* (1955) aka *Seagulls Die in the Harbour*, which was co-written and

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co-directed by a film critic (Roland Verhavert), a writer (Ivo Michiels) and an amateur filmmaker (Rik Kuypers) and which is sort of like a 1950s Brussels by Night as a bilingual Flemish flick of the fiercely forlorn noir-ish sort about a lonely fellow in a trench-coat who finds temporary solace in the form of misfits and equally internally wounded women.

A work that somehow manages to combine the haunting the nightlife paintings of Belgian surrealist Paul Delvaux and films of his namesake André Delvaux with a (post)punk spirit that is comparable to the cinematic works of No Wave filmmakers like Amos Poe and Vivienne Dick while also attempting to be accessible to mainstream viewers, Brussels by Night was fittingly dedicated to two famous figures that died under dubious deaths, including French-speaking pop journalist Bert Bertrand (who committed suicide in 1983 while staying in NYC) and tragic Hollywood star Natalie Wood (whose two-time husband Robert Wagner was suspected of playing a role in her somewhat bizarre drowning). Not surprisingly, in the doc *The Brussels by Night Archives*, Didden's ex-boss Guy Mortier, who was the editor-in-chief of HUMO magazine, would describe the antihero of the film being somewhat like the filmmaker, stating, "People have speculated about to what extent the main character Max is Marc Didden. It's certainly an aspect of Marc. The Marc Didden who wants to hit all those he detests and who wants to destroy everything. But there is also a very different Marc Didden. Someone who also wants to hit everyone and destroy everything." Featuring grating Belgian covers of popular American pop songs like "Piece of My Heart" and a malignantly somber Brussels where beautiful blondes become sullen spinsters and miscegenation and familicide seem more common than genuine love and affection, Brussels by Night ultimately reveals a spiritually necrotic Belgium that seems to be on the verge of collective suicide, so it should be no surprise that the indigenous population birth rate of the country has been in steady decline for decades while the Muslim Arab populations has been growing at a absolutely revolting rate (while around 23% of the nation's population is of non-Belgian origin, around 70% of Brussels is of non-Belgian origin, with about 36% being Muslim Arabs and negroes). Although completely different types of films, Brussels by Night makes a great double feature with *Ex Drummer* as it demonstrates that the lowland nation has only become all the more degenerate and nihilistic over the past two decades. In terms of brutal yet stylish European flicks with teeth and a fiercely foreboding atmosphere, Didden's flick also makes for an excellent double feature with the Austrian serial killer flick *Angst* (1983) aka *Fear* directed by Gerald Kargl. Indeed, if you want to see a rare 1980s European flick with testicular fortitude that does not wallow in pretentious art faggotry and makes most of Scorsese's post-Taxi Driver films seem like goofy big budget Guidosploitation pieces and virtually all of Tarantino's films seem like autistic exercises in superficially stylized fanboy masturbation, Brussels by Night makes for a somewhat surprisingly worthwhile cinematic work

that demonstrates that anti-romantic race-hate in a noir-ish form can make for an endearing experience if senseless death and destruction is involved.

-Ty E

HÔTEL TERMINUS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KLAUS BARBIE
HÔTEL TERMINUS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KLAUS BARBIE

Marcel Ophüls (1988)

When most people hear the word Barbie they think of a plastic blond doll with all the right curves. Unfortunately, most people do not ordinarily know the name of Klaus Barbie, the infamous “Butcher of Lyon,” one of the Gestapo’s top men in France. Klaus Barbie originally intended to study theology and became a teacher but fate sprung him and instead his name has permanently entered the history books as the personification of evil, at least according to Jewish filmmakers like Marcel Ophüls. Ophüls, being a French Jew, must have felt a special calling when he decided to make the documentary *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, an over 4-hour long documentary about Barbie. Marcel Ophüls is probably best known from Woody Allen’s *Annie Hall*, where Woody makes reference of the French-Jewish director’s documentary *The Sorrow and The Pity*.

It is clear from the get-go that director Marcel Ophüls is dedicated in his documentary *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* to present Barbie, as well as most Europeans, in a light of the most despicable and depraved evil. Those that are not evil are just portrayed as ignorant barbarians with the incapacity for any type of intellectual or abstract thought. For example, when questioning a German farmer about the young Klaus Barbie, Ophüls questions whether or not Barbie was the much liked and loved little boy as portrayed by childhood neighbors. Ophüls writes-off the peoples love of the young Sonny (Barbie’s childhood nickname) as the result of his Father being a local and well respected teacher. In fact, throughout the documentary, aside from Jews and French “Resistance”(aka Communists) fighters, most people have kind words to say about the young and old Klaus Barbie. It becomes apparent though the documentary that Ophüls is extremely annoyed by this occurrence, but what really sets him off is how many Europeans bring up the fact that Barbie’s “crimes against humanity” were committed over 40 years ago. Obviously, these silly goy Europeans do not understand the Jewish tradition of an “eye for an eye (or two)” bloodthirsty vengeance.

Apparently, while the Germans and Italians stayed in Germany during World War II, they were known for being great tippers (or at least they were at *Hôtel Terminus*). This makes one wonder whether or not a Frenchman could spot whether one was a Jew or not by their generosity in regards to gratuity. It has been said that Klaus Barbie was fairly generous with his whip but I digress and now have to ask the question, was Klaus Barbie really the monster Marcel Ophüls portrays him as? Knowing Klaus Barbie had a very important job as a SS- Hauptsturmführer, one just comes to expect a little bit of blood, death, and torture. When one also compares Klaus Barbie to his Communist enemies,

whether it be in France or Soviet Eastern Europe, he seems like a fairly reasonable killer. How many Americans know about Jewish mass murderers like Béla Kun, Lazar Kaganovich, Genrikh Yagoda or Yakov Sverdlov, individuals responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of white Russians and Eastern European people. We never hear a word about these dubious ghetto characters yet people like Klaus Barbie are put on a kosher pedestal of pure evil.

Although not mentioned in *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, it is been recently noted in the Kevin Macdonald documentary *My Enemies Enemy* that Barbie may have helped the American CIA capture and execute corporate Marxist-icon Che Guevara and for that alone, Klaus Barbie should at least get some recognition as a fighter for the Occidental and destroyer of Marxist culture-distorting scum. After all, it would be much nicer to see teenagers wearing t-shirts with Klaus Barbie's infamous Gestapo picture on it as opposed to the swarthy face of Che Guevara. Throughout *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, Marcel Ophüls makes a special point of portraying the United States Government, CIA and other U.S. departments as "men with their hands dirty" for putting evil Nazis like Klaus Barbie on the payroll. Personally, I think the most disgraceful thing the United States ever did was align itself with the Soviet Union during the second World War and the late great General Patton felt the same way, dying tragically in an automobile accident shortly after making his opinion on the barbarism of the Soviets and dubious character of the Judaic known.

One SS man, a German hero that was awarded The Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, lets it be known in *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* that there is no way Klaus Barbie can be an evil man because his pet Dachshund dogs showed great love towards Barbie. I must admit that I also have a soft spot for dog lovers but not so much for Philo-Semites. Klaus Barbie maybe was not a Philo-Semite but apparently he did not have an irrational hatred of Jews like most individuals would suspect knowing his Gestapo background. While living in Bolivia, Mr. Barbie had no problem doing business with Jews and even harboring them as associates. Like Hans Landa in *Inglorious Bastards*, Klaus Barbie was competent at hunting Jews and Communists in France but he was not a fanatic Jew-hater. When it comes down to it, Barbie's only crime was that Germany lost the war because if the Krauts won the war, such modern inventions as "war criminals" would not exist. Going back to General Patton, he believed that the Nuremberg trials were anti-Christian and blatantly Judaic, certainly not part of the noble tradition of European war. The Soviet Union and the Allies no doubt had their fair share of mass murdering "war criminals," yet they will never be "brought to justice" like those damn evil NATZIS!

In *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, Herr Barbie makes it clear that there is no such things as "Nazis." By this, Barbie is addressing the fact that the word "Nazi" is a derogatory slang term invented by the enemies of

HÔTEL TERMINUS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KLAUS BARBIE

National Socialism. Certainly, the average American is unaware of this as the media, Hollywood, and American public schools use the term “Nazi” when describing The National Socialists. If one cannot not even address a well known political party without resorting to childish slang in an academic setting, it is quite apparent that the bias against that group is so immense that one is going to have to dig very deeply for an objective view of history. Hollywood mainstream comedy trash cinema like the *Rat Race*, starring the grotesquely Jewish Jon Lovitz, is a great example of the Jewish obsession with denigrating ones enemies into oblivion (it is no coincidence that all Jewish holidays are celebrations of destroying the enemy of the Jews and self-worship). In the film, Lovitz and his obscenely unpleasant and overweight family accidentally stroll into a Nazi museum thinking it is a Barbie doll museum. Unsurprisingly, this short scene does more to shit on the legacy of Klaus Barbie, especially when considering the average American movie-going philistine, than the whole over 4-hour long *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* documentary. *Hôtel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* is a documentary I can recommend to anyone interested in The Third Reich, for Marcel Ophüls certainly failed in regards to his documented smear campaign.

-Ty E

DEADGIRL

Marcel Sarmiento, Gadi Harel (2008)

Fucking a decomposing corpse has never seriously crossed my mind, not even a freshly preserved one. Of course, I seem to like at least a couple films featuring the good ol' "in and out" between living humans and cold corpses. German director Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* films come to mind as does the 1987 Belgian film *Crazy Love* as romantic movies for those that lust for corpse fucking art. In fact, these European Necro-films are quite aesthetically pleasing pieces of spoiled human meat. Due to my undying love of certain films containing Necrophilia, I felt it necessary to watch the 2008 film *Deadgirl*, a less artistic motion picture featuring the schlock art of postmortem arousal. *Deadgirl* was written by Trent Haaga, a man best known (or not) for his work as an actor and writer for Troma Entertainment. Fortunately for this sick flick, it does not share the garage sale aesthetics and production values of your typical Troma Scheiße-fest, for *Deadgirl* is the kind of film Lloyd Kaufman wishes he had made (and cashed in on).

Whilst watching *Deadgirl*, I wondered to myself whether or not the film was supposed to have some type of deep subtext. After all, it is kind of hard to look past a bunch of loser high school dingle berries fornicating with an animated corpse to find any type of deeper meaning. One thing I do know is that certain girls who get sexually abused (especially in their prepubescent years) tend to become emotionally dead, just like the undead corpse gal in *Deadgirl*. A lot of the sexually promiscuous women in the Adult entertainment industry many times admit to be molested as do many leading Feminists and Lesbians. Like the not-so-rotten corpse in *Deadgirl*, the girl who has unfortunate sexual encounters at a young age turns into a vicious and sex-craved monster; the prostitute archetype. After all, the dead girl may enjoy getting gang raped by a bunch of high school degenerates but one wrong move and she will literally tear your guts out.

I am weary in regards to classifying *Deadgirl* as a Zombie film as that would be misleading to those that have yet to see the film. It is very apparent to me that most modern Zombie films are formulaic dead-weight lacking even enough entertainment for the average American Zombie filmgoer. *Deadgirl* is not a film that will re-animate the already postmortem Zombie genre, although a surplus of banal Zombie films will no doubt continue to appear from the gates of Hollywood Hell as well as the backyards of beer guzzling baboons (in many ways, digital video has become a Voodoo curse). Like most semi-decent films, *Deadgirl* defies fitting into any particular genre. Of course, the film does have its flaws, the most obvious being the petty melodrama between the loser protagonist, his love interest and pathetic friends. After all, the real star of *Deadgirl* is the dead girl. Not since *Zombie-Punk Suicide* from *The Return of the Living Dead* has there been such an erotic Zombi-babe as featured in *Deadgirl*. Who does not

DEADGIRL

love a beautiful naked and rabid animated corpse running around, ripping out throats and scrotes?

-Ty E

FISTS IN THE POCKET

Marco Bellocchio (1965)

After first seeing him play the character based on Bavarian auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder in

Beware of a Holy Whore (1971), Lou Castel (The Scarlet Letter, The American Friend)—a Colombian born actor of 1/2 Swedish racial stock who got his start in film acting playing as an uncredited extra in Luchino Visconti's The Leopard (1963) and who starred in important arthouse works by everyone from Pier Paolo Pasolini to Philippe Garrel, as well as sleazy Guido nunsploitation flicks like Killer Nun (1978)—has always rubbed me the wrong way, which is certainly a good thing when playing creepy twerp characters like the actor did. Indeed, for his breakout role in the Italian film Fists in the Pocket (1965) aka *I pugni in tasca* directed by Marco Bellocchio (Slap the Monster on Page One aka *Sbatti il mostro in prima pagina, Vincere*) he portrayed a bourgeois epileptic who absurdly commits matricide and fratricide in an ostensible attempt to liberate his sole 'normal' brother from a life of virtual enslavement to a family of invalids who rely on his generosity. A work that predates the far-left student movements that almost plunged Italy and various other European nations into civil wars, Bellocchio's film is completely anti-bourgeois to the quasi-commie core that demonstrates why the auteur trashed his co-commie cinematic compatriot in the winter 1967-68 issue of *Sight & Sound* when he stated, "...the sad thing about Visconti is that today he is part of the bourgeois life that he really could analyze and criticize ten years ago. His recent films are trivial and unimportant." Directed by Bellocchio when he was only 26, *Fists in the Pocket* is undoubtedly an exceedingly idiosyncratic work that, like Bernardo Bertolucci's second feature *Before the Revolution* (1964) aka *Prima della rivoluzione*, helped take Italian cinema out of the neorealist era and start a new and highly experimental period in Guido cinema. Still delightfully deranged after all these years, originally being released nearly half a century ago, the film was so controversial upon its release that it was attacked by two of auteur Bellocchio's greatest heroes, Luis Buñuel and Michelangelo Antonioni. Part Guido Gothic horror, part anti-Visconti family melodrama, part libertine black comedy, and part sadistic keenly class conscious quasi-Marxist satire, Bellocchio's brazen directorial debut is nothing short of a berserk black-and-white celluloid monster that sinisterly devours and dementedly regurgitates film genre conventions, Catholicism, and bourgeois traditions in a rather refined iconoclastic fashion that does not resemble the mental masturbation of a pedantic film nerd/Marxist ideologue with too much time on their hands. Starring Castel as a sort of bonkers Brando figure (indeed, a photograph of Brando from *The Wild One* (1953) is featured prominently towards the end of the film), *Fists in the Pocket* is ultimately a rare work of 'revolutionary cinema' that has aged quite gracefully that does not only still feature subversiveness,

FISTS IN THE POCKET

but acts as an example of what Pasolini once described as a “cinema of prose” (as opposed to a “cinema of poetry,” which the auteur used to describe Bertolucci’s French New Wave inspired works).

Alessandro aka Ale aka Sandrino (Lou Castel) is the black sheep of a once-well-to-do bourgeois family that no longer has a patriarch (what happened to the father is never mentioned), so the eldest son Augusto (Marino Masé) has reluctantly taken over and now financially supports his blind mother and epileptic siblings. Indeed, his Mother (Liliana Gerace) costs him 3 million lire alone. Ostensibly to help his brother become free from financial and familial slavery, blonde beast Alessandro—a young epileptic degenerate who seems to be suffering from a high-functioning form of autism and stares at people at parties as if he wants to murder every single one of them—decides that he will kill his mother and siblings. Indeed, after failing to execute a plan where he hoped to kill himself and his entire family sans Augusto during a periodic trip to a cemetery (he even writes his brother a suicide letter discussing how he would like to be cremated), Alessandro exterminates his blind Madre by pushing her off a cliff and states, “Blessed mother, pray for her,” right afterward. For whatever reason, Alessandro decides to tell his sister Giulia (Paola Pitagora) that he was responsible for their mother’s death. Indeed, Alessandro also complains of his brother’s seeming lack of gratitude, as well as his jealousy of his big bro’s fiancé Lucia (Jeannie McNeil), stating, “I killed her [their mother]...with these hands despite my fears. I risked life imprisonment for the family’s benefit, while he, like a thief suddenly becomes “big brother.” He brings in Lucia and has her serve coffee, and he’ll walk off with the fortune I made! This little brain of mine...that you didn’t trust an inch...planned the whole thing.” Naturally, Alessandro and his sister destroy their mother’s things in an attempt to erase her memory. Of course, Alessandro is not quite finished after offing his mother, as he has a rather retarded brother named Leone (Pier Luigi Troglia), who also must die. After his mother’s somewhat eerie funeral where the prodigal son leaps over his passed progenitor’s coffin, Alessandro opts for giving him an overdose of drugs while he is taking a bath, which causes his sister Giulia to have such a bad seizure that the doctor tells him that, “She could live or die or end up paralyzed.” Despite being much closer to Giulia than his other siblings, Alessandro considers smothering her with a pillow, but pussies out. In the end, Alessandro, who tells himself, “everything’s working out for the better,” seems to finally succumb to his familial guilt after singing opera in a Werner Schroeter-esque scene and seems to die after a panic attack.

Featuring a rather unconventional Ennio Morricone score, bizarre Marlon Brando worship, and Lou Castel in what is undoubtedly his most loony role to date as a decidedly Dostoevsky-esque character in a rather idiosyncratic work that is equally as stark as it is sardonic, *Fists in the Pocket* is certainly the sort of audience-dividing work that people will either love or love to hate. While au-

teur Marco Bellocchio joined a Marxist–Leninist group called the ‘Communist Union’ three years after the release of his debut film, the work seems more like the product of a naughty nihilistic member of the bourgeois who has fantasies about killing his relatives and thus used cinema as an outlet to carry out said sick fantasy. In fact, the auteur came from a very similar family to that featured in the film, with Bellocchio once stating in an interview conducted by Danish filmmaker Christian Braad Thomsen featured in the winter 1967–68 issue of *Sight & Sound*: “The film is not autobiographical in the sense that I recognize myself in a particular sequence or a particular character. I have tried to avoid that. On the other hand, I was raised in a bourgeois family, in the same sort of provincial milieu as that described in the film. This is all part of my own experience, and my life has been a strong reaction to my bourgeois and Catholic adolescence.” Indeed, in terms of fucked families, Bellocchio’s puts all of Fassbinder’s films to shame and even makes Pasolini’s *Teorema* (1968) seem somewhat boobeiose by comparison. As I assumed while watching the film, Bellocchio has described the antihero played by Lou Castel featured his debut film as a quasi-fascist of sorts, remarking: “The boy in *FISTS IN THE POCKET* is destroyed because he will not accept reality. His attempt to escape reveals not only decadent but semi-fascists traits. I was brought up in a large family that was founded in the Fascist period in Italy, and though my father was not a member of the Fascist Party, I suppose he was emotionally linked to its policy.” Indeed, not unlike the films associated with German New Cinema, Bellocchio’s work demonstrates a certain incapacity with dealing with his nation’s past, with post-WWII ‘fascism’ taking a rather aberrant and sinister form of the somewhat ironic family-extermimating sort. Unfortunately, as his later works like *Vincere* (2009) demonstrate, Bellocchio eventually became soft with age, with *Fists in the Pocket* easily being the most audacious, unconventional, and curious film he has made to date. Unquestionably, if it were not for Bellocchio, Italy would have never produced directors as uniquely and unsettlingly subversive as Albert Cavallone (*Spell – Dolce matatoio*, *Man, Woman & Beast*, *Blue Movie*), who also assembled a singular oeuvre of truly modernist apocalyptic horror. Indeed, not just a movie, Bellocchio’s *Fists in the Pocket* is a celluloid symptom of the death of the Occident and its accompanying spiritual sickness.

-Ty E

DEMOLITION MAN
DEMOLITION MAN

Marco Brambilla (1993)

One cannot assess the amount of ludicrous fun that *Demolition Man* serves up with a steady stream of off-the-wall costumes and set designs. The titular showdown depicted on the poster is the basis of plot development. A deranged police officer played by Stallone in an eerily foreshadowing of Judge Dredd fashion, squares against a bleach blond Wesley Snipes who borrows a Joker-esque attitude and exchanges fashion tips with the Super Mario Bros. This explosive dystopian film echoes the greatest aesthetics of 90s science fiction action and manages to provide some great satire that, as depressing as it is, wasn't created with a light-hearted sentiment. Rather, *Demolition Man* is a goofy film that takes the insolence of an amateur and creates a new breed of schlock entertainment. In my time observing the "cult" effects of 90s cinema, I've become overwrought with the lack of recognition picked up by *Demolition Man*. For being a purveyor of cheese, explosions, and utopia-shattering multicultural mayhem, *Demolition Man* has raked none of the profits and has even been reduced beyond bargain bin fodder as a copy of this auspicious masterpiece is relatively scarce in both supply and demand. The older this film gets, the more realized the science fiction aspects become. Far from eventual reality, of course, but nonetheless something that could come to be expectant of a future of tomorrow seeing as how this society has orphaned anything considered hazardous to any extent. Also, I think we can all agree that Taco Bell winning the franchise wars is easily one of the most insightful and resourceful prophecies to every have been preached on celluloid. Thought it is a shame that this scene was removed from most foreign releases of the 1993 classic and replaced with Pizza Hut. At least we still have the one-liners in place. Those quips are the jewelry that adorn this diamond-encrusted crown. Every film should have a special assignment and I don't use the term "assignment" with utmost authority. *Demolition Man* takes a special mission of ridiculing social commentary as a whole and the experience for me, third time around, resulted in my inebriated self howling with patriotic excitement when all-American John Spartan commented on a delicious looking rat burger. Playing the lead of the "Scraps," Denis Leary turns a role as a vagrant by the name of Edgar Friendly, whom Simon Phoenix (Snipes) has been defrosted to exterminate by a corrupt cleric who runs the megatopia of what used to be Los Angeles and co. In this society where free will has been silenced along with swearing, sodium, and sex, John Spartan is resurrected to battle Simon Phoenix who has rocked the city to the core as the last incident of violence was many years before. In a humorous turn of events, you discover that the cops aren't equipped to handle insubordination and Spartan's nickname of "Demolition Man" is soon elaborated on many shells later. For me, action film has three faces: Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, and Mickey Rourke. Without any

of these American role models, my childhood would have been sheltered and dreary without that certain propagandized market for cable television viewers. It's films like Die Hard, Rambo: First Blood Part II, Harley Davidson & The Marlboro Man, Judge Dredd, and Demolition Man that made running home off the bus in time to catch the ending to one of these great flicks so worth it. It's pure, collected nostalgia in form of dated special effects backed with amazing performances so washed up in their own 90s visage that it's damn near impossible to appreciate such roles as Wesley Snipes' chaos adoring Phoenix who must have been inspiration for Heath Ledger's Joker character. The two names Spartan and Phoenix is a clever clashing of the old school and the new school. We got the warrior who mates and kills and that's the only code in his nature whereas Phoenix is reborn from his metaphorical ashes in hopes to create chaos. With technology and limitless product and combat knowledge, it's a classic example of brute force pitted against an evil of the tactical kind. Demolition Man is easily one of the last great true-blue "versus" films that revolves around man against foe, regardless of which way the alignment compass faces. Maybe I'm putting too much thought in it - or maybe you're too blind to absorb top-notch entertainment at the expense of nothing but your own naivety. Who couldn't enjoy such a charming blockbuster as this. That's a rhetorical question so there is no need to answer it. Simon says, "Enjoy."

-mAQ

DILLINGER IS DEAD
DILLINGER IS DEAD

Marco Ferreri (1969)

Italian auteur Marco Ferreri (*La Grande Bouffe*, *Bye Bye Monkey*) was undoubtedly one of the most hardcore, nihilistic, and eloquently hateful European filmmakers of his generation, with a number of his films seeming like, on retrospect, nothing more than sick celluloid novelties that were made specifically to terrorize the bourgeoisie and to totally destroy the filmgoing experience for people altogether. In fact, in a 1977 interview, Ferreri made the following declaration: “The values that once existed no longer exist [...] The family, the bourgeoisie—I’m talking about values, morals, economic relationships. They no longer serve a purpose. My films are reactions translated into images.” In what some might describe as his masterpiece, *Dillinger Is Dead* (1969) aka *Dillinger è morto*, Ferreri depicted a day in the life of one bourgeois man who gets a little bit of testicular fortitude after discovering German-American gangster John Dillinger’s handgun wrapped inside a newspaper in a closet and decides to run a one-man revolution of sorts by murdering his pill-popper Aryan Barbie doll wife in cold blood, defiling his braindead pop-star-worshipping maid with honey, and disposing of his previous life altogether by jumping into the sea, boarding a luxury ship to Tahiti, and becoming the virtual cuckold of a beautiful virtual goddess, serving her chocolate mousse and what not, with the film concluding with the entire screen being tinted blood red. More of an iconoclastic experiment in social, cultural, and cinematic deconstruction than anything resembling a traditional film with a linear narrative, *Dillinger Is Dead* features a virtual cipher for a protagonist, next to no dialogue, a misleadingly simple storyline, and an otherworldly ending that is located somewhere between heaven and hell. Directed by a man who once described himself as being, “50 percent misogynist and 50 percent feminist,” Ferreri’s film unquestionably features a damning depiction of women as autoerotic automatons that are addicted to effeminate pop stars, prescription drugs, and domestic leisure, yet *Dillinger Is Dead* is an innately incendiary work where no facet of boobeise buffoonery is left unscathed and thankfully the film does not wallow in a traditionally idealistic left-wing mode of critique, but instead opts for an aggressively anarchistic approach to the decided destruction of aesthetic, cultural, and socio-political norms. A work said by some to be heavily influenced by *Theatre of the Absurd*, *Dillinger Is Dead* indeed defies logic and does indulge in absurdism, with auteur Ferreri once describing the film as “entirely ambiguous” in a 1969 interview, thereupon making for an innately impenetrable film that does offer some critiques and messages, but is ultimately a curious celluloid creature that refuses to be accurately analyzed and classified and thus offers seemingly infinite replay value as a particularly paradoxical work that both infuriates and intrigues like virtually any worthwhile piece of art.

Glauco (veteran French actor Michel Piccoli, who worked with everyone from Jean Renoir to Alfred Hitchcock to Jacques Rivette) is a relatively successful industrial designer who designs seemingly apocalyptic gasmasks for a living and is getting rather bored with his job. At the beginning of *Dillinger Is Dead*, Glauco is given a demonstration of his latest gasmask in action by an employee and asks his loyal underling to read some notes he has written, which are as follows: "Isolation in a chamber that must be sealed off from the outside world because it's full of deadly gas...a chamber in which...one must wear a mask to survive...strongly evokes the conditions under which modern man lives. One cannot reflect on this mythical one-dimensional man without analyzing all the characteristics of our industrial society. Nevertheless, a well-drawn metaphor could be very informative and shed light on certain far-reaching consequences that are never explicitly addressed. For example, doesn't knowing that one must wear a mask create a sense of anxiety? Internalizing these obsessive, hallucinatory needs leads not to an adaptation to reality but to mimicry and standardization, the elimination of individuality. The individual transfers the outside world to the interior. There is an immediate identification among individuals in society as a single entity. One's needs for physical survival are met by industrial production, which, in addition, sets forth as equally necessary, the need to relax, to enjoy oneself...to behave and consume according to advertising models that render in explicit detail desires anyone may experience. Film, radio, television, the press, advertising and all other facets of industrial production are no longer directed at different goals." The scenes where Glauco's notes are read aloud comprise of probably 95% of the dialogue in the entire film, as a work that features incessant monotone talking for the first couple minutes or so and is virtually totally silent for the next 90 minutes or so thereon after. While listening to his own written words, Glauco comes to the natural conclusion that he no longer wants to design gasmasks. Glauco's assistant confesses he does not understand the final part of his boss' notes, but he reads them anyway, which are as follows: "Under these conditions of uniformity, the old sense of alienation is no longer possible. When individuals identify with a life-style imposed from without and through it experience gratification and satisfaction, their alienation is subsumed by their own alienated existence." After getting done at work, Glauco's assistant hands him a couple reels of film, which contain footage from a vacation, and then the industrial designer heads home and does what he assumedly does every day by basking in his own alienation, but things ultimately change later that day when he discovers a dirty revolver wrapped up in an old newspaper that may or may not have been owned by alpha-gangster John Dillinger.

Upon arriving home, Glauco takes a drag on a cigarette and goes to see his trophy wife Ginette (Anita Pallenberg), who complains about having a headache and refuses to join him for dinner. Glauco goes downstairs and discovers that dinner has already been prepared for him, but he seems to find it inadequate as

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he puts the food away and begins making his own fancy dinner after referencing a cookbook. After watching a talk show about young teen sluts bragging about wearing makeup in rebellion against their parents, Glauco goes looking inside a closet full of magazines and discovers something wrapped inside an old newspaper, which later turns out to be an old and rather dirty revolver. After unwrapping the newspapers, which features headlines like "Dillinger Is Dead" and "Public Enemy No. 1 Gunned Down Outside Movie Theater" (with real stock footage of Dillinger, including his bullet-ridden corpse, being juxtaposed with the scene), Glauco discovers a black revolver that seems to spark a reawakening in his seemingly impenetrable bourgeois soul. Glauco goes back to work preparing his extravagant feast and his cute pixie-like maid/mistress Sabine (Annie Girardot) arrives at the house. While preparing his food, Glauco begins to literally deconstruct his gun and painstakingly clean every crevice of the weapon with the utmost care, as if it is his baby. Quite notably, the gasmask artisan looks exceedingly emasculate while wearing an apron that undoubtedly demonstrates that the culturally cuckolded character has been domesticated and spiritually neutered by his banal bourgeois existence. While eating, Glauco watches a documentary in tribute to legendary Guido cyclist Fausto Coppi, as well as a documentary on a 'satellite' filmmaker of the Godardian sort who uses 70mm film stock and creates so-called "cinemato-physiological" processes. Of course, Glauco is not so hopelessly emasculated that he would go so far as cleaning up his own messes, so he gets his maid Sabine to do it for him, though he decides to eat a second meal while watching a pretentious black-and-white experimental film featuring dirty hippies, including an anorexic black woman that looks more masculine than the white boys featured in it.

After finishing multiple dinners, Glauco finally gets around to watching the home movies that were given to him by his co-worker, which include a bullfight and his scenic vacation to the beach with his wife. While watching the footage, Glauco stands in front of the screen and begins to interact with the images in a seemingly mocking fashion. By the time all the home movies have been completed, Glauco has finished cleaning his revolver and puts it in his mouth as if he has a death wish, even mockingly pretending to blow his brains out. By this time, the industrial designer seems to have fallen completely in love with his gun and decides to personalize it by painting it blood red with white polka dots. After painting his revolver, Glauco attempts to go to bed, but finds himself mildly torturing his sleeping wife (who he previously gave sleeping pills and a douche before she went to bed) by recording her snoring and fiddling with a toy snake over her slightly twitching body. Since his wife does not want to play, Glauco decides to wake up his maid/mistress (who he previously caught kissing a poster of her favorite singer, 'Dino') and begins spoon-feeding her watermelon. Instead of having normal sex, Glauco decides to lick honey off of Sabine's spine while she takes swigs of the sweet stuff from the honey jar. After his strange sexual

rendezvous with Sabine, Glauco decides to tryout his new improved revolver by shooting his sleeping wife in the head three times, but not before turning on loud music and covering his beloved's head with a couple of pillows. By the time Glauco is finished committing uxoricide, it is already daytime, so the novice wife killer gets dressed, rips up the latest designs he has created for work, picks up his suitcase, drives to the seaside, and dives into the water, but not before stripping off most his clothes and putting on a rather effeminate gold necklace. While in the water, Glauco spots a ship whose crew has just dropped the corpse of their cook into the sea. Glauco boards the ship and tells the blond Nordic captain that "The sea's always been my dream" and begs to replace the cook. Glauco is told by the owner of the ship, a beautiful young woman, to go make her some chocolate mousse and then she takes his golden necklace and wears it. Glauco learns that the ship is headed to Tahiti and seems more excited than ever.

When describing the seemingly (and absurdly) happy ending of *Dillinger Is Dead* in a 1969 interview, auteur Marco Ferreri offered the following insights: "I certainly wanted the end to give a positive spin to the film as a whole. But this sort of ambiguity strikes me as less vivid and provocative than the ambiguity of my other films. It is essential to *Dillinger*, though, for it gives meaning to the whole. It is the film's reason for being, in fact. The film, incidentally, is entirely ambiguous." Personally, I interpreted the ending as the delusional childish fantasy of a deranged man who has lost all touch with reality and the fact that the film concludes with the entire screen turning blood red makes this seem all the more true. With *Dillinger Is Dead*, Ferreri more or less cinematically murdered the essence of the bourgeoisie in a work that depicts a respectable inventor who lives a lavish lifestyle, which includes a live-in mistress, yet throws everything away after 'inheriting' the gun and spirit of a proletarian gangster/killer like John Dillinger. The same year *Dillinger Is Dead* was released, underrated Italian auteur Salvatore Samperi (Nenè, Ernesto) directed a somewhat similarly themed yet more accessible work entitled *Mother's Heart* (1969) aka *Cuore di mamma* where a mute bourgeois mother decides to throw her life away by plotting with far-left terrorists to blow-up her ex-husband's factory. Additionally, a number of years before Ferreri's film was released, Romano Scavolini directed the hidden gem of a film *A mosca cieca* (1966) aka *The Blind Fly* aka *Ricordati di Haron*—a work described by celebrated Italian fascist/futurist poet Giuseppe Ungaretti as a "masterpiece"—which follows a completely alienated young gentleman who discovers a revolver and decides to shoot a bunch of strangers, but not before pushing his girlfriend out of his life and contemplating suicide by shoving the gun in his mouth in a fashion that is not all that unlike the protagonist of *Dillinger Is Dead*. Indeed, while Ferreri's film is often revered for being a revolutionary work that was created during a critical socio-political political climate, it certainly was not the first film to express such aesthetic and thematic idiosyncrasies, though it did do it in a manner that was nothing short

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of masterful and ultimately reached the mainstream, thus changing the way people perceived cinema during an imperative moment in history. In an interview, Ferreri would describe his film as virtually introducing the theme of “cinema as an anti-alienation weapon,” yet rather ironically, *Dillinger Is Dead* is one of the most notorious audience-alienating works of all time. An awkwardly foreboding work that falls in somewhere between cultivated celluloid torture, hermetic socio-politico-culture cinematic revolution, and entrancing absurdist black comedy, *Dillinger Is Dead* is a rare example of late-1960s experimental cinema that does not seem as worthless and outmoded as the “bobo” far-left politics that accompanied it. Set in a bourgeois world where images ranging from Italian Futurist paintings to photos of the Universal Horror icon *The Wolf Man* (which the antihero points his gun at) cover the wall, *Dillinger Is Dead* is a work that renounces both fascism and American capitalism as outmoded cultures, yet Ferreri would also demonstrate with his later films like *The Future Is Woman* (1984) aka *Il futuro è donna* that the politics of the new left had also degenerated into an outmoded memory. Indeed, *Dillinger Is Dead* reminded me how hopelessly the left failed in attempting to dream up a new and wonderful world but then again, Ferreri’s film ends in a manner that seems to reflect hell with its blood red tint.

-Ty E

THE SEED OF MAN

Marco Ferreri (1969)

While I generally have a hard time getting into virtually any sort of fantasy film, especially if it involves supernatural crap like fairies and elves, I take great delight in dystopian flicks as they provides me with the sort of escapism that, quite unlike bombastic cinematic bullshit like *The Lord of the Rings* or *Star Wars*, seems somewhat tangible, thus giving me some hope that someday the modern liberal globalized multicultural world, as well as the people that run and/or support it, will be relegated to the perpetually flushing toilet that is history for eternity. Indeed, whether it be the sometimes hokey flesh-eating horrors of George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) or the dangerously hedonistic post-apocalyptic counterculture chaos of Jim McBride's *Glen and Randa* (1971) or the crippling metaphysical melancholia of Nikos Nikolaidis' *Proini Peripolos* (1987) aka *Morning Patrol*, there is indubitably something quite exciting and inspiring about the idea of a lawless world where all forms of bourgeois phoniness, civility, and 'tolerance' have become totally obsolete and true 'equality'—nature and her indiscriminate ruthlessness—reigns supreme. Personally, I have a special affinity for apocalyptic arthouse films as they oftentimes manage to undermine the expectations of both the sci-fi subgenre and art cinema, not to mention the fact that these films tend do be more thoughtful than obscenely overrated works like *Soylent Green* (1973) and especially Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* (2006), which are both hopelessly tainted with phony and shallow liberal humanist messages that would make any person with any common sense feel like they are on the verge of projectile vomiting. While he certainly leaned to the far-left in some regards, great Milanese auteur Marco Ferreri (*La Donna scimmia* aka *The Ape Woman*, *La Grande Bouffe*) was also one of the most scathingly culturally cynical and preternaturally politically incorrect filmmakers that ever lived, thus it is only fitting that he played around with apocalyptic cinema, with *Il seme dell'uomo* (1969) aka *The Seed of Man* being his most overt contribution to the subgenre. A somewhat ironically titled work, the film depicts how a young and intelligent beta-boy tries in vain to coerce his fiercely frigid girlfriend into getting pregnant in a post-apocalyptic world where most of humanity has been wiped out in some sort of unidentified Cronenbergian plague. A sort of admirable warm-up to Ferreri's somewhat superior and all the more absurd NYC-based flick *Bye Bye Monkey* (1978) aka *Ciao maschio* starring Gérard Depardieu and Marcello Mastroianni, *The Seed of Man*, like many of the auteur's films, is actually really a film about the forsaken nature of modern sex and relationships and merely uses genre conventions as window-dressing to communicate the culturally apocalyptic nature of love affairs between contemporary men and women as a result of being totally tainted by feminism, so-called sexual liberation, and consumerism, among other things. Indeed, in Ferreri's

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flick the sexual roles are largely reversed as the chick hunts and kills animals (and people) while the man tends to his garden, thus reflecting the gross inversion of sexual polarities in the Occident. After all, most normal women would probably have a hard time getting wet for a man whose ass that they could kick.

Featuring Varangian blueblood beauty Anne Wiazemsky in a role in stark contrast to her legendary debut performance as a tragic virginal beauty in Robert Bresson's pastoral black-and-white masterpiece *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966), Ferreri's film features arguably the most frustrating yet simultaneously absurdly farcical depiction of female frigidity in cinema history as a work that depicts a stunning and seemingly highly fertile little lady who refuses to fuck, let alone reproduce, despite the fact that the world needs to be repopulated due to the fact that most of humanity has been wiped out in the plague of all plagues. While one would assume that some wild barbarian would stop by and impregnate Wiazemsky's character simply by raping her into oblivion, virtually all of the men featured in the film have about as martial prowess as a Vietnamese toddler with Down syndrome, with the most masculine and stoic men being ambiguously gay (indeed, a couple of actors that almost resemble women portray black-clad bandits that proclaim to be the new government of the post-apocalyptic world). Of course, in a world where many (mis)educated Western women consider having children and starting a family to be anachronistic, suffocating, and downright shameful and tend to believe it is an act of 'liberation' to live a life of recreational fucking where pregnancy is a curse that can easily be remedied with a quick pill or relatively painless abortion where their unborn spawn is vacuumed out of their vagina while they are sleep, *The Seed of Man* is naturally more relevant today than when it was first released as indicated by Europe's collectively suicidal behavior, especially in regard to their dwindling birth rates. Of course, Ferreri's film does not just focus on the plague of spiritually comatose barren women and their candy ass male partners, but also the great pains a woman will go to destroy the competition and take down a woman that is attempting to steal her man, even if she does not really care for said man. Indeed, in *The Seed of Man*, the male protagonist is quite excited when a woman who, quite unlike his lover, wants to have children comes into his life, but of course his perennially barren spouse does not go down without a fairly brutal and ultimately venomously vindictive fight. Indubitably one of Ferreri's most shamelessly aesthetically pleasing features as a cinematic work where the camera is practically magnetized to Wiazemsky's largely vacant but oftentimes subtly forlorn stare and the haunting organic pulchritude of a desolate beach that is eventually cursed with the corpse of a gigantic whale, *The Seed of Man* is questionably one of the most soothing and serene yet simultaneously cynical dystopian flicks ever made as a fairly idiosyncratic cinematic work that sometimes feels like an attempt at reconciling the films of George A. Romero with that of Pier Paolo Pasolini, albeit with a slight lowbrow 'proletarian' influence that is typical of latter's sole protégé Ser-

gio Citti. Of course, in the end, the film can only be adequately classified as a Marco Ferreri flick, as the anarchic auteur invented his own readily identifiable brand of cinema just as virtually all great filmmakers do.

The *Seed of Man* begins with a medium shot of a fairly attractive guido gal holding a somewhat creepy homemade human-size blonde doll and stating directly to the viewer in a somewhat contrived fashion, "If you see signs of this color, it means that area is infected. Yellow means plague. But can we be sure that we shall never see these signs? We'll be right back." The little lady warning about the precarious nature of the color yellow is ultimately revealed to be a TV announcer that the film's protagonists, young couple Cino (Marzio Margine of Fernando Di Leo's *I ragazzi del massacre* (1969) aka *Naked Violence*) and Dora (Anne Wiazemsky of her then-husband Godard's *La chinoise* (1967) and Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968)), are somewhat apathetically watching on a large television screen while they enjoy a fancy meal at a diner. When Cino remarks while eating, "If we leave now, we'll be back home by tonight," the two decide to abruptly leave the diner and head home in their atrociously goofy orange jeep, but little do the protagonists realize that they will never reach their desired destination, as a pernicious unidentified biological plague will ultimately irreparably change the course of their lives in just a couple of brief moments. While sitting in their singularly aesthetically revolting automobile, Cino notices a phallic-shaped plane in the sky and pedantically remarks to Dora, "Look, that's a Sikorsky '61, old model. It's got 12 seats. They don't manufacture them anymore. In the new models, the style has been completely changed," thus revealing the male protagonist's affinity for historical preservation and technology, which will be the focus of his life later in the film. As Dora demonstrates while barely paying attention to Cino, she could care less about his interests, which will only become more obvious as the film progresses. In other words, Cino and Dora make for a rather shitty couple, which only becomes all the more apparent when they are forced to totally rely on one another as a result of an apocalyptic scenario.

In a somewhat eerie scene that is arguably symbolic of the precarious nature of civilization and how it can disappear with the blink of an eye, the couple drives through a tunnel and by the time they reach the other side, their car radio has cut out and most of the country side is covered in corpses. Indeed, when the two pass a school bus that is curiously sitting in the middle of a highway, they decide to investigate and are startled to discover that driver and all the children inside the vehicle are dead. Not long after passing the bus, an emergency helicopter forces Cino's car off the road and the couple are examined by doctors at a checkpoint where piles of bloody of corpses, including a fairly bloody little boy, are being burnt with blowtorches. Ultimately, the head doctor checks the two for diseases (he seems especially interested in learning about Dora's sexual habits, or seemingly lack thereof), gives them a pill that is supposedly "a concentrate against leprosy, cholera, typhus, and plague," and then tells them to find

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a new home in the local area. Before they leave, the doctor gives them a shot and remarks, "Remember that the plague that killed one-third of the Europeans in the second half of the 14th century was insignificant compared to what we are experiencing now." As a rather indulgent young woman with a pathological sweet tooth as demonstrated by the fact that she has dozens of lollipops wrapped around her neck and is depicted for a good portion of the beginning of the film sucking on a sucker, Dora naturally opts to spend her remaining change at a bubblegum vending that is strangely located at the checkpoint. Unfortunately for the protagonists, their car and precious bottles of whiskey are confiscated by the military men at the checkpoint, thus they are forced to walk during their search for their new home and must accept a future where dipsomania is just not a realistic option.

While roaming the beach in pursuit of a new place to call home, Cino and Dora get lucky and discover a fairly large and startlingly scenic two-story beach house that seems like it is located at the edge of the end of the world. Somewhat humorously, they find the lifeless corpse of the house owner (as fittingly portrayed by auteur Marco Ferreri) sitting in a chair outside the front door, as if the man was admiring the natural beauty of the ocean when he succumbed to the plague. As indicated by the large library of books, various taxidermied animals, and assortment of scientific instruments that are discovered by the couple in the house, the previous owner was a reclusive intellectual of sorts. Needless to say, Dora is quite happy when she discovers a cabinet full of fancy dresses in the house and thus dresses accordingly, though, as the film progresses, vulgar rubber military fatigue style overalls seem to become one of her favorite wardrobes. During the first night at the house, Cino and Dora watch a TV broadcast that reveals that all of London is on fire and where the announcer somewhat melodramatically states, "This footage speaks for itself. A whole civilization destroyed. We'll have to start over again." Somewhat humorously, there is also footage of the Pope repenting to god while dying, stating while seeming terribly guilty about the life that he has lived, "I rather die than offend you." Of course, compared to the rest of the world, it seems that Cino and Dora have lucked out in many regards as they have a splendorous house full of various fancy trinkets and knickknacks, but, as one can expect from a Ferreri flick, nature and especially human nature, will ultimately get the best of them in the end.

When Dora notices a gigantic object floating in the sky while looking through an antique telescope, she and Cino wrongly believe that it a plane that has come to rescue them, so naturally they are quite disheartened when they eventually realize that their ostensible savior is actually a gigantic blimp in the shape of a Pepsi-Cola bottle that reads "Merry Christmas." In a scene that seems to epitomize Dora's sort of passive nihilism and overall seemingly nonsensical attitude towards life, she states when the large blimp begins to float away, "The bottle is floating away. What a pity, it was pretty." As for Cino, he, quite unlike vapid

philiſtine Dora, has a more practical and even sometimes romantic view of life and really cherishes European man's singular contributions to technology and civilization as indicated by his obsessional reading of books on rocket science and space travel. Indeed, as demonstrated by the fact that he wears the dead man's clothes and even grows the same sort of medieval facial hair, Cino begins to adopt the identity of the previous owner of the house, thus indicating in a somewhat symbolic way that he, quite unlike Dora, is a staunch traditionalist that sees culture and history as something that is linear and is inherited. Using the previous owner's books, Cino starts a garden and even manages to cure Dora with medical herbs that he has grown when she becomes sick. For his efforts, Dora pays Cino a backhanded compliment about how she is surprised that he was able to harvest such herbs and then coldly ignores him after he sensitively states to her, "I want a child." Indeed, for reasons that are never made totally clear, Dora refuses to have children, though one suspects that it is the result of her being a thoroughly spoiled and self-centered modern woman who just can't bother to suffer through childbirth or make the effort to be a loving mother. While Cino will clearly do anything for her, Dora refuses to budge when it comes to her stern antinatalism, as if she considers reproduction to be the gravest of mortal sins.

One sunny day while beating a wild black hog to death, Dora is startled to see a group of masked horsemen dressed in all-black approach her property. Rather pathetically, both Cino and Dora immediately submit to the somewhat enigmatic horsemen by passively raising their hands in the air as if they expect to be executed, though luckily the worries are ultimately revealed to be in vain. Led by a strangely effete, slender and pale man with dark curly hair named Major Devotis who curiously carries the bright red revolver with white bold polka dots from Ferreri's previous film *Dillinger è Morto* (1969) aka *Dillinger Is Dead* and later also featured in the auteur's anti-western *Don't Touch The White Woman!* (1974), the sort of 'Horsemen of the Post-Apocalypse,' who all seem like gay repressed holy men types, are revealed to be the new leaders of the government (or as Devotis stoically states, "We are the State Administrative Service"). Not surprisingly, Major Devotis' right-hand man is an older but similarly effeminate priest that has a giant crucifix symbol on the front of his black robe. As men with strikingly sullen feminine faces, they are the sort of rare men that could pass as women if they dressed in drag and one can only speculate that Ferreri decided to use these uniquely unforgettable actors to insinuate that government and religion are oftentimes ruled over by gay men that have no interest in women or children. After the priest berates Cino because Dora is not pregnant, Devotis declares, "The world needs new inhabitants. All women must be fertilized. That's an order." After the couple is forced to enter their names and provide a bloody fingerprint in a giant three-foot-long leather-bound black book with a lock, Cino proudly declares, "I haven't had children yet...But at least I had an

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idea that I think everybody will find interesting” and then shows the horsemen how he has taken upon himself to transform his home into a sort of makeshift museum, with items like a portable TV, refrigerator, gold watch, piece of Parmesan cheese, etc. being on display as historical remnants of the pre-apocalyptic world. While his fairly flat affect gives no indication of his true emotions, Major Devotis seems fairly impressed with Cino’s work and not only gives the protagonist a “memento of Florence” to add to his collection in the form of an ancient painting of a stoic blonde woman, but also appoints him as the “Museum Curator” of the new post-apocalyptic world. Cino is so happy with his new title that he informs Major Devotis that he will be putting up a sign in his museum that reads, “Major Devotis Foundation.” After pulling his red revolver on a beautiful blonde whore that is traveling with his group who attempts to steal a gold watch that is on display in a scenario that further hints at the character’s latent homosexuality, Major Devotis and his men leave just as abruptly as they once came, though the priest warns Cino before getting on his horse, “Dear young man, there is darkness, there is lightning, and you two are alone, but remember, a child. You need to have a child.” Naturally, as a man that clearly respects law and order, Cino’s plans to abide with the priest’s fairly reasonable request.

Not long after the horsemen ride away into the sunset, the protagonists discover a large whale corpse on their beach that makes Cino quite happy but completely petrifies poor dunce Dora, who complains to her beau in regard to the rotting sea beast that “It will only bring us misfortune!” and then pleads to her lover, “Let’s lock ourselves in the house. It’s cold. I’m scared.” When Cino asks Dora after joyously climbing on top of the whale corpse, “Why aren’t you happy? It’s the white whale. It’s Moby Dick. It’s Pinocchio’s whale,” she replies in a fairly bitchy but ultimately quite prophetic fashion, “Soon, because of the beast, we won’t be able to live here anymore.” Not surprisingly, Dora’s perturbing premonitions seem to be not unfounded, as a strange foreign woman (Annie Girardot of Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) and Haneke’s *The Piano Teacher* (2001)) soon randomly shows up on the beach while Cino is painting a sketch of the dead whale and then proceeds to seduce the assumedly hopelessly horny young male protagonist. Naturally, when Dora comes home after spending the day hunting a rabbit and overhears the foreign woman state, “It’s an absolutely charming shelter. And what about these clothes? But maybe it’s a dream,” she has good reason to be concerned as she knows that she is now in competition for Cino. In fact, the foreign woman actually has the gall to brag that she is a “thief” that “emptied three stores” while taking a bubble bath in front of both Dora and Cino in a scene that reveals that the post-apocalyptic femme fatale is quite confident with her body and has no qualms about exploiting it in her quest to steal the male protagonist from his frigid girlfriend. At one point, Cino even goes so far as to hint that he is interested in the foreign woman and her womb after stating to her after she asks him to take a picture of her and Dora,

“No. I only have two pictures left. And I’ll keep them for my child.” After all, at this point, Cino is desperate for a child and Dora is just too pigheaded to give him one, so the male protagonist has to keep his options open, not realizing that his beloved will literally kill for him if she is forced to.

Notably, the foreigner woman symbolically helps herself to a wig and fancy dress that she finds in the house in a rather cunning attempt to make her seem like a classy broad that is fit to be a mother, thus representing how women tend to wear a sort of figurative costume when attempting to appeal to males, who are always dumb enough to fall for such disguises (indeed, as Esther Vilar once wrote, “A woman [...] is the author of her own transformation and produces femininity by means of cosmetics, hair style, and different components: emphasis on secondary sexual characteristics and distancing herself by means of masks. Woman makes use of various types of masks in order to make the difference between herself and a given man as conspicuous as possible. The first component serves to make her desirable to man, the second to make her mysterious to him. She herself thus creates the equivocal, unknown ‘opposite sex,’ making it easier for him to accept his enslavement. Thanks to the wide range of possible transformations each woman can offer a man [...] she keeps him in a state of constant bewilderment. While he is still trying to find yesterday’s woman in today’s, she gains time to achieve her own ends. She will maneuver the man into an untenable position, all the time skillfully distracting his attention from the stench of rotting mind beneath the pleasing mask.”). Of course, the foreign woman is far from the elegant and cultivated bourgeois wife type that she attempts to disguise herself as, yet book-smart beta-boy Cino seems entirely oblivious to her fairly glaring aesthetic deceptions. Indeed, one night while the protagonists are asleep, the foreign woman knocks on their bedroom door and manages to make her way into their bed after crying in a less than believable fashion, “Can I come in? I’m so scared. I’m all alone downstairs.” While lying in bed with the couple, the foreign woman strategically massages Dora until she falls asleep and then fucks Cino in the hope she will be impregnated with his seed. The next day while Cino is working in his study, the foreign woman successfully hints that she would be a better wife than Dora by showing genuine interest in his studies. On top of that, the foreign woman declares, “I’ve been thinking about last night” and then gives Cino a present in the form of a pacifier, thereupon letting the protagonist know that she is fully committed to having his child. Unbeknownst to the foreign woman, Dora was only pretending to be asleep when she dared to fuck Cino while lying next to her and thus fully realizes the cunning homewrecker’s unsavory intentions. Indeed, when the foreign woman eventually attempts to beat Dora to death with a stick, Dora is ready to fight back and not only manages to strangle her nemesis to death, but also goes to the effort of dismembering her body with an axe. In a sort of sick celebration of her defeat over the foreign woman in a scene that wickedly demonstrates that Hell hath no fury like

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a woman scorned, Dora cooks her corpse for dinner and then serves it to Cino, who remarks while unwittingly savoring his quasi-mistress' flesh, "This is good meat. It is very sweet."

Towards the end of the film, Cino gets so desperate to have a child that he builds a naked woman with sand and then simulates copulation with it. While Dora witnesses the particularly pathetic sight of Cino's sand sensuality, she lets him know that she still refuses to have a child and then forces him to take sanctuary with her at a nearby building this is full of dummies since she is afraid that the beach house will continue to give them bad luck due to the dead whale. In fact, Dora tells Cino that she does not even care if he stays with her. When a virtual army of bloodthirsty vultures transforms the dead whale into nothing more than a sort of abstract skeleton formation, Dora eventually agrees to move back into the beach house because she is finally convinced the curse has been lifted. Using the dozens upon dozens of dummies that he found in the nearby building that they temporarily lived in, Cino creates what Dora describes as a "dummy cemetery" by laying the somewhat creepy mannequins on the beach in parallel rows outside of their home, as if he hopes they will somehow come alive and provide him with company. Finally completely fed up with Dora's pathological frigidness, Cino comes up with a pathetic rape strategy and decides to drug his lover's wine and ricotta cheese and then insert his semen inside her while she is knocked out cold. Indeed, before penetrating her assumedly less than wet main vein, Cino writes in a journal, "Today I'm going to sow, I hope, the seed of man" and then proceeds to quasi-ritualistically remove the clothes from Dora's lifeless body. When Dora complains a couple days later that her stomach hurts and that she is hungry, Cino smiles and eventually brags, "You're pregnant. I sowed you." Needless to say, Dora is not happy with her involuntary pregnancy and starts chasing after Cino while yelling "We didn't have the right," but the male protagonist is just too damn happy to care and instead proudly chants, "The seed of man has sprouted." Considerably upset, Dora proceeds to lie on the beach in a somewhat fetal position while holding her womb while Cino jumps around her in a jubilant fashion and proudly shouts, "The seed of man has sprouted! All the children! The children of the children! I sowed the seed! I sowed the seed! The seed of man has sprouted." Ultimately, in the end, Cino looks like a pathetic braggart who was too quick to celebrate, as both he and Dora are both killed when at least one of them inexplicably spontaneously explodes.

In many ways, *The Seed of Man* is one of the most patently pessimistic and culturally cynical dystopian films ever made, as a work that not only makes human existence after an Armageddon-like scenario seem patently pointless and completely undesirable, but also dares to make a scathingly sardonic mockery of such reproductive ambitions, as if human existence is nothing more than a cycle of nihilistic progress that is built upon nothingness upon nothingness without end. Indeed, while watching the film, I certainly got the image in my mind of

auteur Marco Ferreri as a sort of guido Joker who laughs and daintily sips wine while watching the entire world burn. In his depiction of a woman that refuses to fuck and make babies in a post-apocalyptic realm where repopulation is an unquestionable necessity, Ferreri hints that the world, and especially the Occident, ended long before the plague even happened as a result of some sort of malignant metaphysical affliction that had completely consumed both the Faustian spirit and collective unconscious, with the surviving humans being mere hollow shells of their former selves. Indeed, one could certainly argue that, in a sense, the characters are not unlike the relics from the museum displays that male protagonist Cino collects, as they are mere anachronistic remnants of a decidedly dead civilization that only exists today in a purely material post-decadent corpse-like form. Interestingly, in his later work *Bye Bye Monkey*, which almost feels like a pseudo-Warholian reworking of *The Seed of Man* (notably, the lead character played by Gérard Depardieu resembles Joe Dallesandro) and even features the beach-ridden corpse of King Kong in place of a dead whale, Ferreri would do somewhat of a 180 in terms of the sexes and pretty much solely blame man as opposed to woman for being too weak and ill-equipped to sire children. Of course, then again, one could argue that Wiazemsky's character did not want to have children because her boy toy was too big of a bourgeois pussy, hence why she is depicted hunting while he is sitting around the house reading books. If one thing is for sure, it is that the female protagonist, who is somewhat like a frog female equivalent to Melville's Bartleby in terms of her somewhat deleterious campaign of passive resistance against pregnancy, is symbolic of the fact that, at least on a primitive level, it is ultimately the choice of womankind where the fate of humanity leads, as she holds the biological keys to the future (after all, it is no mere coincidence that Ferreri would later direct a film entitled *Il futuro è donna* (1984) aka *The Future Is Woman*). Indeed, as the anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vilar once wrote in her classic text *The Manipulated Man* (1971) aka *Der Dressierte Mann*, "The basis of any economy is a system of barter. Therefore, someone demanding a service must be able to offer of equal value in exchange for it. But as a man must fulfill his sexual desires and, since he tends to want to possess exclusive rights over one vagina, the prices have risen to an extortionate level. This has made it possible for women to follow a system of exploitation which puts the most exploitative robber barons to shame. And no man remains exempt. The concept of femininity is essentially sociological, not biological. Even a homosexual is unlikely to escape without paying his dues. The partner whose sexual drive is less developed quickly discovers the weak points of the other, whose drive is more intense and manipulates him accordingly. It will always be the woman, or the 'female' partner in any homosexual relationship, who exploits the man: for to be a female means to be undersexed."

Of course, what makes Wiazemsky's character so disturbing and even horrifying than the sort of archetypal female described by Vilar is that she is so superbly

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stingy that she won't give up her pussy for any price to the point where she brutally murders another woman just so that she can maintain her largely platonic 'romance' with her hapless boyfriend. Judging by the breeding habits of contemporary European women, one can only come to the conclusion after watching the insanely ironically titled work *The Seed of Man* that the apocalypse has already happened and most Europeans just do not realize it yet, or as Francis Parker Yockey once foresaw in his book *The Enemy of Europe* (1953), "The Europe of 2050 will be essentially the same as that of 1950, viz. a museum to be looted by barbarians, a historical curiosity for sightseers from the colonies; an odd assortment of operetta-states; a reservoir of human material standing at the disposal of Washington and Moscow; a loan market for New York financiers; a great beggars' colony, bowing and scraping before the American tourists." Undoubtedly, the fact that Ferreri was able to make such a cute and sweet dame like Wiazemsky seem like such an insufferable cunt to the point that you would not even want to fuck her just goes to show the director's genius as a filmmaker. Indeed, I certainly cannot even guess how many beautiful blondes I have met that only provoked contempt and hostility in me due to their post-feminist mentalities and complete and utter lack of feminine virtues, hence why so many contemporary American and European males have given up and have begun settling on women from Eastern Europe and the third world. Of course, the fact that the male protagonist of the film passively tolerates such an attitude indicates that males are just as hopelessly despoiled as their female counterparts. Indubitably more relevant today than when it was first released, *The Seed of Man* demonstrates in a darkly humorous absurdist fashion that Europa and the rest of the West is inhabited by revoltingly entitled and frigid navel-gazing cunts that lack even the most fundamental motherly nurturing qualities yet expect handsome princes and pathological passive pushovers and cuckolds that would probably just stand around and do nothing if they saw their girlfriend being raped. In that sense, I can see why Ferreri would be cynical about the prospect of surviving humans attempting to rebuild after an apocalyptic scenario. After all, it is horrifying to imagine a futuristic museum where the displays include a pink iPhone, Eminem CD, Schindler's List Blu-ray, three-foot-long rubber dildo, a bottle of Viagra, and Afro-Sheen, among other worthless consumer objects that epitomize the innate soullessness of the modern world. Post-apocalyptic considerations aside, if there is anything that can be learned from *The Seed of Man*, it is that one should not bother with any woman that does not support your goals and interests and/or fails to provide a special wet place for you seed as she is probably a parasite and psychic vampire that will drain you of everything yet give nothing back in return aside from the occasional phony smile.

-Ty E

THE LAST WOMAN

Marco Ferreri (1976)

Although I cannot remember my exact age at the time (I assume that I was no older than 12) nor even the name of the film (it seemed he had an erotic interest in his daughter), I remember distinctly the first time I saw the fat froggy bastard Gérard Depardieu in a movie and I was completely astounded by his bloated pomposity and patent pretentiousness despite his rather rotund frame and flabby physique, but had I known about his long career prior to that role maybe I would have understood his overblown (and by then blown) ego. Of course, although always terribly tumescent and at least partially plump, there actually was a time when the name Gérard Depardieu was not totally the source of ridicule and disdain as notably demonstrated with his strikingly macho and marvelously misogynistic performance in the X-rated Italian-French flick *La Dernière femme* (1976) aka *The Last Woman* aka *L'ultima donna* directed by Italian auteur Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead* aka *Dillinger è morto*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*) – a filmmaker known for his oftentimes mirthful yet misanthropic and mordant films – being one of the best examples. Maybe it was the fact that I watched a version of the film dubbed in German, but in *La Dernière femme* Depardieu seems all MAN (at least until the last couple of minutes) and brazenly and unabashedly so. In short, seemingly non-French, which is quite the feat for a crouton actor unless you're Eddie Constantine (who being born Edward Constantinowsky to a Russian father and Polish mother was not actually a true blue butterfingers). Of course, being a sexually potent mensch in his prime in spiritually-castrated post-war Europa, especially France of all places, the crude yet charming character Depardieu plays in *La Dernière femme* – directed by a clownish cine-magician of misery – is decisively doomed to fail, thus the real question when watching the film is how, when, and why. The single father of a blond baby boy, Gerard (Gérard Depardieu) quite literally has his hands full in between working to provide for his son and changing the little lad's reeking diapers, so he does not have a lot of time to search for a woman and possible pseudo-mother, so (un)luckily, one very beautiful lady named Valerie (played by buxom brunette Italian actress Ornella Muti; a woman with a Neapolitan father and Estonian mother) practically falls into his lap, but little does he realize that things are about to get much harder than dealing with the delight of infant droppings on a day-to-day basis.

Vaguely Cavallone-esque in nature, especially in spirit and most certainly during the last couple minutes of the film, *La Dernière femme* might be named *Man, Woman, and Baby* (not that title 'The Last Woman' does not do the job), if for the sake of its sardonic mundanity, but certainly no title could possibly articulate the complete and utter psychological degeneration of protagonist Gerard at the whim of what he sees as nothing more than a pathologically addicting

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walking-and-talking biological flesh wound. Opening with a straining sourpuss score at the site of a somber and sterile industrial plant that the 'every-man' engineer hero happens to work at, we are immediately introduced to gutsy and gracious Gerard who – due to his exaggeratedly extroverted personality and belligerently boastful behavior – is in stark contrast to his spiritless surroundings. Seemingly a man who refuses to take shit nor gruff off of anyone, Gerard soon confronts one of the bigwigs at his work site – threatening him to “get out of here or I’ll kick your ass” – despite not even knowing the man nor whether he could be fired because of his bold yet bellicose actions. Little does Gerard know that soon-to-be-inamorata Valerie has already assumed the role of surrogate mother to his infant son. When he comes to the daycare center where his little boy stays during the daytime, he finds the babe crying as Valerie somewhat curiously attempts to get the little lad to sup on her remarkably ample teat. Initially scared of Gerard and his devilish yet philistine charm, Valerie finds him to be a natural protector when he comforts her after a large German shepherd randomly claws at a window. Gerard gives Valerie a ride at her request and on the way back they run into the luscious lady’s lover – a 50+-year-old man of wealth. In front of the elder yet more elegant man, Gerard has the gall to say to Valerie: “Choose – Tunisia, or home with me.” Of course, she chooses her gallant blond knight in shining armor on a motorcycle and the rest is history. Before he even knows her name, Gerard has invited Valerie into his apartment, undresses her (in front of his infant son, no less), mounts her like a champ, and his damning addiction to the precariously carnal is in full swing. Needless to say, for the remainder of *La Dernière femme*, Valerie – assuming the role of both mother and wife as a sort of mousy femme fatale who has the 'nefarious' plan of wanting a family as opposed to material wealth thus breaking completely with convention in regard to the timeless female archetype – never leaves the apartment, at least for any lengthy period of time, thereupon eventually draining – quite literally and figuratively – Gerard of his formerly virile and vehement manhood.

It should be noted that Gérard Depardieu gives the 'performance' of a lifetime in *La Dernière femme* that more than exceedingly eclipses his role as the sexually potent commie lead in Bernardo Bertolucci's less than epic sociopolitical saga *1900* (1976) aka *Novecento*. Totally disrobed for an abounding portion of the film despite his already somewhat flabby physique, even in the presence of at least three beautiful women at once – Depardieu even flaunts a full and genuine erection in a couple scenes, thereupon making the unpredictable (but nonetheless foreshadowed) conclusion of *La Dernière femme* all the more perniciously potent and penetrating, if not positively paralyzing. That being said, it should be no surprise to viewers of the film that *La Dernière femme* was banned virtually everywhere outside of debauched post-war Europe, including the U.S., upon its initial release and remains virtually impossible to find today in any official format despite the fact that Depardieu was nominated for best actor for his performance

in the film at the César Award ceremony in 1977 (which he later won for his roles in Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and François Truffaut's *The Last Metro*). I am sure that many people went to see *La Dernière femme* expecting to get some sort of perverse masturbation aid, thus making director Marco Ferreri's capricious choice ending for the film all the more provocative in retrospect. If any auteur filmmaker had the intrinsic ability to make his audience members simultaneously laugh, cry, get-off, and become sick to their stomach, it was indubitably ferocious yet funny Ferreri; the delightful 'Duce Supremo' of deranged yet debonair exercises in celluloid cynicism.

-Ty E

BYE BYE MONKEY
BYE BYE MONKEY

Marco Ferreri (1978)

Alpha-frog actor Gérard Depardieu must have had a deep sense of respect for the great Guido auteur Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*) as he not only waved around his erect member and even simulated self-castrating himself in the director's devastatingly depressing French-Italian co-production *The Last Woman* (1976) aka *La Dernière femme* aka *L'ultima donna*, but he would also later play a cuckolded male rape victim with a monkey-based maternal instinct in the filmmaker's NYC-based Italian-French co-production *Bye Bye Monkey* (1978) aka *Ciao maschio* aka *Rêve de singe*. Indeed, filmed in English and set in New York City yet never actually released in the degeneration nation it so scathingly depicts, Ferreri's flick is an absurdist dystopian piece about the decline of both Western Civilization and masculinity where Depardieu attempts in vain to do his best Joe Dallesandro impression (in fact, Dallesandro's one-time goombah girlfriend Stefania Casini even plays a feminist rapist in the film). Described for various contemporary reviewers as Ferreri's most nonsensical, incoherent, and poorly outmoded work, *Bye Bye Monkey*, which won the coveted Grand Prize of the Jury at the 1978 Cannes Film Festival (notably, Polish auteur Jerzy Skolimowski's metaphysical horror flick *The Shout* also received the prize as both film's tied for the Grand Prize), is actually a relatively accessible, if not audaciously absurd and offbeat, satire of the Western world in the post-counter-culture/post-feminist age where all morals, heroes, culture, and history have been disposed of in a Trotskyite-approved Uncle Sam brand trashcan, hence why the film would probably not make much sense to neo-Marxist film critics and academics who root for the destruction of the very things (i.e. civilization, masculinity, heterosexuality, etc.) that the film decries. Indeed, although directed by a man that was arguably of the left (though it would be unfair to pigeonhole someone with such an idiosyncratic *Weltanschauung*), Ferreri's work more or less espouses same ideas as Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger and Teutonic philosopher of decline Oswald Spengler as a film set in a dying world where the Occident is taking its last gasp, virtually all men—be they young or old—are spiritually castrated, and where young women have started deranged feminist cults that see rape and getting collectively pregnant as forms of 'progressive' and 'liberating' behavior. Set in a post-industrial NYC wasteland where the corpse of King Kong lies on a beach while an elderly sexually repressed women sings "Rock-a-bye Baby" with her elderly black beau as the World Trade Center twin towers stand clearly in the background, *Bye Bye Monkey* is a work that wallows in esoteric eccentricity that has, in some ways, become all the more relevant in the post-9/11 age. Undoubtedly, the corpse of King Kong—arguably the greatest and most blatant cinematic symbol of rampant male heterosexuality—is symbolic of the death of males and

masculinity. Featuring Depardieu as a cuckolded young man who becomes the adoptive father-mother-figure to King Kong's bastard child, rampantly heterosexual Italian stud and leading man Marcello Mastroianni as a weak and senile old fart of an art fag whose masculinity has withered away long ago, an exceedingly effete and putridly pretentious museum owner played by Italian-American actor James Coco as an unfit preserver of Western Civilization, and American porn star Abigail Clayton aka Gail Lawrence (Dixie, Alex de Renzy's Femmes de Sade) as a feminist rapist who tries to be a born-again woman/mother, *Bye Bye Monkey* (a work that's Italian title 'Ciao maschio' translates to something along the lines of "Goodbye to Manliness") is a severely sardonic satire about the fact that Europa has lost its balls and has been turned into the cheap whore of the culture-less and cannibalistic mongrel beast that is the United States of America.

In Ferreri's fierce vision of America, New York City is a pre-apocalyptic hell-hole that is policed by neo-Gestapo soldiers in gasmasks carrying machineguns and plagued by armies of hungry rats and degenerate European immigrants who have a hard time penetrating young American pussy, as all the young women are brainwashed feminists who have no morals and whose maternal instincts are next to nil. Goofy frog Gerard Lafayette (Gérard Depardieu) is a masters of electronics/jack-of-all trades handyman who lives in a shitty rat-infested basement and he works for a variety of eccentric clients, including the arrogant owner of an Ancient Rome-themed wax museum named Andreas Flaxman (James Coco) who rightfully believes, "Civilizations fade away...but the rats remain. The future belongs to the rats!" as well as collective of hot yet crazed feminist actresses who perform pretentious twaddle for no one aside from themselves and their French handyman/passive sex slave. Lafayette is also friends with a nearly elderly Italian artist/sculptor named Luigi Nocello (played by acting maestro Marcello Mastroianni in a totally against-type role), who is well past his prime and has a serious problem attracting women, be they young or old, as the so-called fairer sex has lost all respect in men. When a feminist goes on the following rant, "Women are violent. Why do we always have to show women as victims or helpless...and why whitewash the fact that women are just as capable of violence as men are?" and Lafayette remarks, "Go ahead, shoot up your mouth! I shoot up my load!" the handyman is hit over the head with a glass Coca-Cola bottle by a fucked feminist actress and is subsequently raped by another feminist named Angelica (Abigail Clayton), who ironically falls in love with her victim during mid-rape, thus ushering in the beginning of a misbegotten romantic relationship in a zeitgeist where the war of the sexes has reached its zenith. After Lafayette and his friends happen upon the bloated corpse of cinematic super simian King Kong (apparently, this was a prop borrowed from the 1976 Dino De Laurentiis produced King Kong remake) on a NYC beach, Luigi finds the dead beast's son which the young Frenchman decides to adopt despite

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Flaxman's prophetic warning, "your freedom will be dead and gone forever." Indeed, Lafayette, who later idiotically states, "I don't give a fuck about race" like so many modern self-righteous brainwashed Europids, is symbolic of Western man's suicidal altruism, as a man who cares more for a hairy baby beast than in his kind. Of course, as the film will ultimately demonstrate, Lafayette's nihilistic altruism will lead to his demise just as the white world's nonsensical altruism to mostly ungrateful and largely hostile nonwhite world is leading to its progressive demise (in that regard, Ferreri's film has only become all the more relevant). Indeed, there is certainly something sick about a group of people who see adopting African savage children as the height of moral righteousness while at the same time not having biological children of their own. Of course, like many American celebrities and moronic adoptees, Lafayette is petrified of spreading his seed and having children of his own, even though a beautiful blonde who has the body of a voluptuous teenage girl wants to jump his bones.

Despite being a crazed chick who has suffered a full feminist lobotomy, Angelica decides to move in with Lafayette on a whim without permission from him even though she will not have sex with the blonde frog because, as she seemingly absurdly states, she loves him. Indeed, Lafayette, Angelica, and the monkey turn into a sort of dystopian nuclear family, though the fun does not last forever. Meanwhile, Flaxman is visited by a Svengali-like government bureaucrat from something called the "State Foundation of Psychological Research" who demands that the wax museum owner, who is working against American interests because he "supports the advance of civilized man," change the faces of the wax figures of great Roman leader into American presidents in a scene symbolic of mongrel America's post-WWII colonization of Europe and disgusting distortion of the history of Western Civilization. Threatening Flaxman with typical bogus bureaucratic "safety violations" if he does not comply, Flaxman is forced to change the face of Julius Caesar into JFK and Nero into Nixon, as if 20th century American presidents have any right to be compared to great Roman leaders. After being rejected by various women, including an old lady named Mrs. Toland (played by Geraldine Fitzgerald, who has had the distinguished honor of portraying both Laurence Olivier's wife and Rodney Dangerfield's mother-in-law) who digs dark meat (she has a portrait of a near-nude negro on her wall, which has caused her son to refuse to speak to her), as well as the group of feminist actresses, Luigi becomes seriously depressed and feels hopeless not just about his own future, but western civilization in general. Indeed, after failing to swoon a feminist rapist by remarking how his generation invented the pill so that young women could be more sexually and sexually free, Luigi comes to the conclusion, "Nobody wants to listen to us [men] anymore," and subsequently tells Flaxman, "You're the worst [...] you're trying to preserve something that does not exist anymore. It's time to destroy that image of a man!" Indeed, while Flaxman believes he is doing something righteous by preserving Occidental history in his own

small way by running a wax museum dedicated to the greatness of the Roman Empire, he is really just a coward who is unwilling to accept the fact that all has been lost. Not surprisingly, Luigi opts for committing suicide via hanging and he leaves most of his possessions to Lafayette hoping that his family will blossom. Unfortunately, despite all of his pessimism, Luigi was a little too optimistic in regard to young Lafayette's future.

When Angelica tells Lafayette that she is pregnant, everything comes crashing down for simian-loving frog bastard. Indeed, after Angelica tells him that she is knocked up in a serious and loving fashion while the two are sitting on the beach, Lafayette—a self-centered man-boy who is certainly lacking in maturity—complains to his girlfriend, “what is going to become of me?,” to which she soundly replies, “What is going to become of you?! What is going to become of us?” Needless to say, Angelic is pissed and runs away, but not before stating to Lafayette, “You and your damn monkey. I hope you'll be happy together.” After making a half-hearted attempt to chase down Angelica and predictably failing, Lafayette comes home to his basement apartment, only to see that his beloved monkey has been killed and is being eaten by rabid rats. With nowhere to go, Lafayette goes to visit Flaxman, who is acting out a scene from Act 3, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* all by himself and becomes rather annoyed by the young Frenchman's unexpected arrival. When Lafayette cries about his dead monkey, Flaxman spits in his face and states in a scornful fashion, “All this grief over a monkey...A civilization disappears. You disgust me.” Ultimately, Flaxman attempts to get Lafayette to kill him, but he does not have the testicular fortitude, so the wax museum owner kills himself instead and accidentally sets his business on fire in the process. In a rather allegorical scene, Lafayette stares like a moron as a small model reconstruction of ancient Rome burns while a degenerate humanoid-like ape (aka man of the future, or a late stage version of what Nietzsche described as the 'Last Man') stands in foreground. Having no reason to live, Lafayette also lets himself burn up in the wax museum. Notably, the final scene of the film features Angelica naked on a beach with Lafayette's child. As the conclusion of *Bye Bye Monkey* demonstrates, it is no surprise that Ferreri would later direct a film entitled *The Future Is Woman* (1984) aka *Il futuro è donna*.

Notably, auteur Marco Ferreri once stated, “The values that once existed no longer exist. The family, the bourgeoisie—I'm talking about values, morals, economic relationships. They no longer serve a purpose. My films are reactions translated into images.” Indubitably, Ferreri took this personal philosophy to cinema one more step further with *Bye Bye Monkey*, which is not just a critique of the death of the bourgeoisie, but an absurdist allegorical depiction of the death of the West in its entirety, as well as the decidedly deleterious anti-culture/anti-European effects of American hegemony. Indeed, Ferreri's film translates into sardonic cinematic form the sort of apocalyptic pessimism that lapsed fascist

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philosopher Emil M. Cioran—a man sometimes regarded as the last great European philosopher—spent his entire life brooding over. Unquestionably, despite the film's overriding satirical tone, there is a somber feeling throughout, thus indicating that Ferreri was not celebrating that death of the Occident like so many of his cinematic compatriots were, but instead, cynically mourning it. Interestingly, in the highly worthwhile documentary *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future* (2007), the director states that he is "50% feminist and 50% misogynist," and in none of the filmmaker's other works is this more clear than in *Bye Bye Monkey*, as a work where women have become morally retarded rapists yet where men have also become emasculated boys and senile old men who do not have what it takes to properly tame or satisfy the female species. While featuring incessant full-body nudity and even female-on-male rape, Ferreri's flick is hardly arousing, as a post-counter-culture piece that depicts influence of so-called sexual liberation as being largely corrosive, hence why the character Angelica says she will not have sex with protagonist Lafayette because she actually loves him, as sex has become meaningless to such a despoiled woman. In terms of cinema history, I cannot think of a film that more hilariously depicts what German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche described as the 'last man,' which as a passive pansy that takes no chances and wallows in creature comforts, is the antithesis the Übermensch. While Nietzsche believed that the last man is the final goal of what western civilization supposedly sought out to achieve, in Ferreri's film, the last man is a production of Americanization and late capitalism, with America being the culturally and spiritually void bastard son of Europe that, like all resentful people(s) that lack culture and civilization, seeks to destroy anything that reminds it of its' own innate inferiority, hence why the wax museum owner is forced to replace the faces of great Roman leaders with those of American presidents. Indeed, there is certainly something wrong with a nation where a rampantly heterosexual beast like King Kong even succumbs to death in an undignified fashion on a beach where he should have been raping countless chicks.

-Ty E

TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS

Marco Ferreri (1981)

With all the novelists and philosophers that have claimed to be speaking for the loser masses known as the Lumpenproletariat, Amero-Kraut dipsomaniac Charles Bukowski (*Factotum*, *Notes of a Dirty Old Man*) was probably the only one who was not full of shit, as a virtual real-life bum and self-destructive addict that, not unlike the millions of alcohol-addled American men that look and act just like him, would have probably dropped dead in a gutter completely unknown and unloved were it not for his unconventionally charming writings. Italian auteur Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *La Grande Bouffe*)—a man who also liked to call out bullshit when he saw it, especially regarding the decadent bourgeois, albeit in sardonic celluloid form—seemed to have taken notice of Bukowski's lack of bullshit, as indicated by his rather underrated work *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1981) aka *Storie di ordinaria follia* starring American Guido Ben Gazzara (*The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*, *Buffalo '66*), great Guido goddess Ornella Muti (*Flash Gordon*, *Once Upon a Crime*), and exceedingly eccentric cult diva Susan Tyrrell (*Andy Warhol's Bad*, *Forbidden Zone*). Adapted from stories featured in the 1972 Bukowski collection *Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions, and General Tales of Ordinary Madness*, including the short story *The Most Beautiful Woman in Town*, Ferreri's rather elegant yet exceedingly fucked film features a rare booze-and-boobs-addled "no bullshit" depiction of America, namely Los Angeles, that reminds the viewer why America has never and will never be the land of kings and queens, but instead, a gigantic anti-cultural world toilet of the anti-organic sort swimming with decidedly desperate and depraved untermenschen who live for the bread and circus (or, should I say, cheap beer and crusty cunts) and nothing more. As a native goombah, Ferreri opted for transforming Bukowski from an ugly kraut with an ugly Polack surname into an ugly old wop with an ugly Anglo surname. Featuring the sort of lavish and meticulous set-design and *Mise-en-scène* you would expect from Italian maestro Luchino Visconti, albeit set in a proletarian pandemonium form full of intentionally aesthetically vulgar mustard greens, vomit yellows, feces brown, and dried up blood reds, *Tales of Ordinary Madness* is fitting is an (anti)tribute to a nation full of forlorn physical and psychological cripples, criminals, bastards, mongrels, addicts, and other miserable sub-subhuman serfs whose ancestors had been flushed out of Europe. Focusing on a wanton wino writer antihero who stoically states, "I didn't want to go home, I didn't want to see anybody. I just wanted to be invisible for a few days. To get down in the dirt and lose myself with all the others...the defeated, the demented, and the damned. They're the real people of this world and I was proud to be in their company," while watching a group of multicultural bums fight, Ferreri's Bukowski flick is a rare 1980s Reagan era film that depicts America as it really was, as a culturally vacant

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(sub)human sewer as seen through the blurry eyes of a true blue American prole philosopher-poet.

Opening with poet-philosopher antihero Charles Serking (Ben Gazzara) doing a spoken word performance at a mostly empty opera house while drinking a bottle of liquor wrapped in a brown paper bag and proudly proclaiming, "Style is the answer to everything... a fresh way to approach a dull or dangerous thing. To do a dull thing with style is preferable to doing a dangerous thing without style. To do a dangerous thing with style is what I call art. Bullfighting can be an art. Boxing can be an art. Loving can be an art. Opening a can of sardines can be an art. Not many have style. Not many can keep style. I have seen dogs with more style than men - though not many dogs have style. Cats have it in abundance. When Hemingway put his brains to a wall with a shotgun, that was style," *Tales of Ordinary Madness* immediately establishes an offbeat libertine tone that has disposed of all conventional morals and pretense in a vomit-covered trashcan. After getting bored with a banal folksinger that performs after him, Serking wanders around the opera house and finds a busty blonde teenage runaway who claims that she is only 12-years-old, but that does not stop the proudly perverted poet from attempting to get in her middle school panties. Determined to find out her true age, Serking grabs the runaway's tits and after feeling them for a couple seconds declares, "Your tits are too big...their at least 8 years old apiece. It adds up to 18. You're a liar." Undoubtedly, when it comes to the ladies, the gutter philosopher does not discriminate, as he loves all ages, shapes, sizes, and persuasions of women, so long as they have a nice warm wet hole that he can enter. As Serking narrates, he has "come to the conclusion that the touring poet act was a mistake, but then again, my life's been one big one, so I am told," so he decides to head back to the Los Angeles hellhole of an apartment that his ex-wife Vicky (Tanya Lopert) rather reluctantly retains for him. When Vicky throws a can of Serking's beer out of a window to protest the fact that he has rather poor health as a result of decades of drunkenness, the Poet becomes so enraged that he begins to strangle his ex while shouting, "You owe me for that beer, bitch! Cough it up!" like a wounded animal. Needless to say, Serking has to get away from Vicky, whose voice is quite grating, so he heads to the beach and soon spots a hot middle-aged blond named Vera (Susan Tyrrell) and declares that he has, "hit the jackpot when I spotted this blonde number. She was that rare kind that gives you an instant hard-on. All sexual sleaze with the ass of a wild animal...my kind of game. She was radiating heat, putting out signals and I was hooked." Needless to say, Serking stalks Vera all the way to her apartment and quasi-rapes her. After they have 'passionate' coitus, the Poet asks her how she liked it and Vera responds, "Yes, I liked being raped," though she later decides to call the police and accuses Serking of "carnal violence" in the form of forced oral sex.

Undoubtedly, Serking's life takes a rare temporary turn for the better when he

meets a girl he describes as “devastating” and “the most beautiful girl in town.” Although a pussy-peddler by trade, Cass (Ornella Muti) claims to have previously been a member of a Catholic convent. She is also a suicidal sadomasochist who even freaks an old drunk degenerate like Serking out when she randomly drives a giant safety pin from one side of her mouth to the other, as if attempting to prevent herself from speaking. Serking tells Cass that her self-destructive behavior hurts him and his uncommon sensitivity ultimately touches the metaphysically wounded hooker, so the two head back to the poet’s apartment, only to see that his ex-wife has locked him out of his room. When Serking eventually gets Vicky to unlock the door to his apartment, he decides to write instead of fuck, which impresses Cass, who states of the Poet, “You’re the only man I’ve ever known who wasn’t in a rush.” Indeed, the two do not screw until the next morning, but when they do it is quite passionate, as Serking porks Cass from behind while grunting the word, “love.” Naturally, Cass comes by to see Serking the next day, only to walk in on him receiving a foot massage from a quasi-cross-dressing Mansonite-like bull-dyke with a shaved head who has the words, “Love, He Said” written in red on her forehead. Cass demands that Serking get rid of the dyke and then passionately proclaims, “I want to be fucked and have nothing left for the others. Nothing.” Ironically, Serking absurdly demands that the hot Hooker pay him for sex despite the fact that he is a physically repellant human-booger and she is a great Guido goddess, which she, quite inexplicably, gladly does. After choking Cass and prophetically declaring, “I’ll kill you, you understand,” the two make love on the floor in front of the bald bull-dyke and the hooker states, “give it to me...take my soul with your cock.” When Serking bails Cass out of jail a couple days later for hustling, the prostitute proudly declares, “you’re my man forever,” which seems to somewhat annoy the Poet as he subsequently decides to pay a morbidly obese single mother for sex. While shoving his head up the morbidly obese single mother’s cave of a cunt, the fat woman sings, “It’s ok, it’s ok,” thus causing the Poet to subsequently cry like a little baby. Indeed, it seems like Serking would like nothing more than to crawl back into his mother’s womb.

Fed up with his day-to-day life as a dipsomaniac poet, Serking decides to enter the wino underworld and stays at a homeless shelter for a couple days where he bears witness to bum fights and the unconventional wisdom of hobo philosophers. When the Poet gets so drunk one night that he ends up sleeping in a car at a used car dealership, he awakens to the owner and his preteen son double-teaming him with baseball bats. While the used car salesman would like nothing more than to see his son beat Serking to death, he eventually tells his son to stop pulverizing the Poet because he fears a lawsuit. Bored with his sabbatical at the hobo shelter, Serking goes back to his apartment and learns that his ex-wife, who now has a new wop boyfriend, is engaged. Vera also proudly states regarding her new and seemingly gay goombah boy toy, “You won’t believe

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how he eats my pussy.” When Serking finally goes back to his lady love Cass, he breaks down and smashes a bottle after noticing that she has attempted suicide by slitting her own throat with a broken beer bottle. Determined to cheer his quasi-girlfriend up and strengthen their somewhat dubious relationship, Serking takes Cass on vacation to a scenic beach house where he used to live before becoming famous. While making love on the beach, Serking asks Cass to marry him, but she says nothing. After sex, the Poet falls asleep, only to learn upon waking up that his lady love has abandoned him without leaving so much as a note. When Serking goes back to his apartment, he finds Cass laying on his bed holding a letter from a publishing company. After reading the letter and learning that he has been accepted by a major NYC publisher to come to the superlatively shitty cultural void of a city to write, Serking also receives some bad news after discovering that Cass is bleeding from her gash, even though it is not that time of the month. Indeed, Cass has driven an earring through her vagina because, as she states, “I’ve closed it, for you and for everybody...forever.” Needless to say, Serking’s career in NYC does not last long, as his new boss eventually tells him that he needs a doctor and not a publisher, thus bringing him back to square zero. Upon arriving back in LA, Serking is horrified to receive the news that Cass has finally successfully committed suicide, so he goes to her traditional Catholic viewing where she is dressed in nun garb and causes a major scene by opening her casket and fiddling with her cold corpse. Completely dejected by the senseless death of the “most beautiful woman in town,” Serking hits rock bottom and crawls into a cheap liquor bottle. It is only when an underage girl agrees to get naked for him (he just asks to see her tits, but she bares her bush as well) that he finds the strength and inspiration to compose poetry again.

Undoubtedly, when it comes to the insanely idiosyncratic oeuvre of Marco Ferreri, one cannot receive a better and more accessible introduction to his work than *Tales of Ordinary Madness*, which is also, at least in my less than humble opinion, the greatest Bukowski film ever made and I say that as someone who also enjoyed Barbet Schroeder’s *Barfly* (1987) starring Mickey Rourke. Interestingly, aside from Ferreri and Schroeder’s films, the Bukowski adaptations Dominique Deruddere’s *Crazy Love* (1987) and Bent Hamer’s *Factotum* (2005) were also directed by Europeans, thus demonstrating what little Americans think of their handful of true artists. It should also be noted that Hollywood heart-throb turned would-be-arthouse-auteur James Franco has just completed a film entitled *Bukowski* (2014) about the poet’s early years. Indeed, not unlike works as varied as Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point* (1970), Werner Herzog’s *Stroszek* (1977), Peter Lilienthal’s *Dear Mr. Wonderful* (1982) aka *Ruby’s Dream*, and Wim Wenders’ *Paris, Texas* (1984), *Tales of Ordinary Madness* is an audacious outsider’s portrait of the United States that depicts the the land of the culture-free and home of the depraved in a no bullshit fashion that is more revealing, authentic, and poetic than any Hollywood film ever could be.

While star Ben Gazzara's appearance and demeanor scream Sicilian-American, his performance in Ferreri's film is, in my opinion, among the most understated and underrated in film history, especially when it comes to films about novelists. American's closest thing to a Louis-Ferdinand Céline, albeit of the ugly drunkard Yankee kraut variety, Bukowski proved that, not unlike auteur Ferreri, great pulchritude can be found in human ugliness and vulgarity, hence why *Tales of Ordinary Madness* is such an effective, if not marginally flawed, film. As someone who has never understood the appeal of drunk sex and alcohol in general, I have to say that Ferreri's flick is probably the only film I have ever seen where I managed to empathize with a self-destructive drunkard. Indeed, being stuck in a small and slimy dilapidated apartment covered with beer cans, vomit, and a nagging ex-wife is the last place I would want to be, but somehow Ferreri managed to find primitive beauty in all of this, thus providing evidence that it may, in fact, be possible to polish a turd. While I think Bukowski was a pathetic lazy bum who just happened to write some interesting and insightful things, *Tales of Ordinary Madness* reminded me that he had good reasons to be the way he was, with the following remark made by Gazzara's character being an excellent insight into why one might want to live the degenerate life of a ditch-dwelling dipsomaniac: "As long as you don't believe in god, you got nothing to sweat [...] Death isn't good and death isn't bad, it's just the Joker in the deck. There's worse things anyways, like living with someone you don't like or working 8 hours on a job you hate. Now, that's definitely worse than death."

-Ty E

THE STORY OF PIERA
THE STORY OF PIERA

Marco Ferreri (1983)

Upon the death of her master/mentor Rainer Werner Fassbinder, blonde Teutonic diva Hanna Schygulla (Effi Briest, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*) tried in vain to find a new master by working with various eclectic filmmakers from all around the world, ranging from Polish auteur Andrzej Wajda to second-rate Israeli's like Amos Kollek and Amos Gitai to modern masters from ex-communist nations like Béla Tarr and Alexander Sokurov. Of course, the actress never reached the level of glamour, beauty, and charisma that she did while working with Fassbinder, who essentially turned her into the Marilyn Monroe of post-WWII German cinema. Indeed, like the tragic *Some Like It Hot* (1959) star, Schygulla is not exactly the most gifted of actresses but, not unlike Billy Wilder with Norman Jean, Fassbinder was fully aware of his muse's strengths and weakness and knew how to figuratively and literally cast her in the right light when directing her, as he essentially molded her into the actress she is today. While no other director could touch Fassbinder's iconic celluloid achievements with the voluptuous little blonde, Italian auteur Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *La Grande Bouffe*) certainly attempted to inspire Schygulla to transcend her meager acting abilities, while also making her bare her skin in various scandalous fashions. In fact, for her role in Ferreri's strikingly sleazy yet strangely charming celluloid abortion *The Story of Piera* (1983) aka *Storia di Piera*, the actress won the award for "Best Actress" at the 1983 Cannes Film Festival. While I would not have exactly described her performance in the film as the greatest of her career, it is certainly her 'bravest,' as she plays the negligent nymphomaniac mother of sensual frog Jewess Isabelle Huppert in a work with a legendary sexually unhinged ending where the two European diva actresses get totally naked and embrace in a meta-erotic fashion that demonstrates why Ferreri was the most idiosyncratic Guido pervert filmmaker to have ever lived, which is certainly no small achievement. Indeed, starring Marcello Mastroianni and Schygulla as disharmonious husband and wife, as well as Huppert as their equally sexually perverted teenager daughter, *The Story of Piera* certainly has the cast of what one would assume to be a marvelous masterpiece, yet the film is a miserable mess of a movie that has little to offer aside from subversive sex of the unintentionally absurdist sort. Based on the tell-all autobiography of Italian stage (and sometimes cinema) actress Piera Degli Esposti (*Ghosts – Italian Style*, *The Tenth One in Hiding*), albeit focusing more on the mother than the actress, *The Story of Piera* is not much more than salacious yet suavely stylized arthouse smut that allows certain cinephiles to see some of their greatest sexual fantasies come to life. In short, the film is arguably Ferreri's most daring attempt at making a fantasy fuck flick (though the film is not as graphic as the director's 1977 work *The Last Woman* aka *La Dernière femme*, which features Gérard Depardieu walking

around with an unstimulated erection). Indeed, like the average porn movie, *The Story of Piera* is full of frivolous filler, plagued by incoherence, and only really gets good during the sporadic sex scenes, though one must give credit to Ferreri for cinematically spitting in goombah neo-bolshevik Bernardo Bertolucci's face by depicting a Marxist true believer as being more or less sexually impotent. Lacking Ferreri's signature sardonic and quite cartoonish comedy, the film ultimately seems like a sexy celluloid skeleton without any real meat, even if it exposes Schygulla and Huppert's meat.

While giving birth to her daughter Piera at the end of the Second World War, debauched dago dame Eugenia (Hanna Schygulla) laughs as if being defiant at god, for she seems to derive ecstasy from having a little human coming out of her little hole. While still just a prepubescent girl, Piera (as depicted by Bettina Grün during the preteen years) accompanies her mother while she has sex with numerous strange and usually physically repulsive men. Indeed, due to the fact that her commie professor husband Lorenzo (Marcello Mastroianni) cannot sensually satisfy her, Eugenia regularly swaps fluids with swarthy strangers and her daughter Piera soon learns to be a shameless whore as well by setting up lines where she makes out with countless boys and rates their kissing talents in a rather harsh fashion, thus demonstrating her early resentment towards men of all shapes and sizes. Piera's social problems are not just in the sexual realm, as she confesses to her father that she is deathly afraid of "other people" and that she rather kill herself than go to school. Eugenia is such a neglectful mother that she allows a completely naked and horrendously hairy middle-age man to sensually touch her daughter, as if she wants the man to deflower her little girl. Eventually, Eugenia is locked up in a mental institution and the head psychiatrist tells Piera that her mad mommy, "needs shock therapy to get well," though he also remarks to the girl that she has "nice little tits." After being institutionalized and berated by her husband for incessantly whoring around town, Eugenia yells at Piera for not defending her debauchery, stating, "Stand up for me, you idiot," as if it is a daughter's ordained duty to defend her messed up mother's slutty behavior. Of course, Eugenia does attempt to teach her daughter a couple of important things, like how to French kiss, but in the long run, the little girl would ultimately look at her mother as her nemesis and born rival.

Naturally, when Piera (Isabelle Huppert) comes of age and becomes a fully developed teenager, she begins all sorts of unhinged sexual relationships. Indeed, father Lorenzo describes her as "my masterpiece" whilst hitting on his little girl Piera and touching her nubile titties. Being from an overtly incestuous family, Piera wants daddy dearest all to herself and even attempts to convince Lorenzo to break up with Eugenia, but the old pinko is too pussy-whipped to give up on his wildly wanton wife. Meanwhile, Piera begins a lesbian relationship with a slightly overweight Sicilian-like woman named Arianna who is about the same age as her mother. After Piera, who is now an actress, collapses on stage, Ari-

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anna has her suckle on her nipple as if she is her daughter, thus demonstrating the theory that lesbianism is sometimes the result of a girl having a horrible relationship with her mother and desiring a new mother figure. When Lorenzo asks his daughter to show him her legs, he complains they are not as good as Eugenia's, so Piera whips out her bushy pussy and rhetorically asks, "My mother's is better too?" While gently caressing her pubic fur, Lorenzo confesses to his daughter regarding his troubled relationship with her mother Eugenia, "I made love to her for hours. And I could never satisfy her." Indeed, Lorenzo is a broken would-be-bolshevik who complains regarding his two self-professed loves, the red flag and Eugenia, "Now the red flag has retired me. And Eugenia is destroying my life." Perennially determined to one-up her mother in terms of sex appeal, Piera steals one of Eugenia's young boyfriends and asks the man how she makes love. According to the young man, Eugenia makes for a good lover because she is, "Very tender. Clean. She has a scent." After playing the eponymous lead in a stage performance of Medea, Piera begins to find purpose and stability in her life, though her mother is as crazy as ever and is ultimately institutionalized again, while her father is placed in a separate mental institution. In the end, Piera picks up her mother from the nuthouse and the two go to a beach where they get naked and embrace, as if they are about to make love. I guess one might describe this as a 'happy' ending.

Needless to say, since the film incessantly depicts incestuous situations but never depicts all-out carpet-munching, *The Story of Piera* concludes rather anticlimactically. After *The Story of Piera*, Hanna Schygulla would once again work with Marco Ferreri on the film *Il futuro è donna* (1984) aka *The Future Is Woman*, which also stars Guido goddess Ornella Muti. Like *The Story of Piera*, *The Future Is Woman* is a dead serious work lacking the director's signature sardonicism and absurdism and featuring weak communist men who cannot handle the strong and hyper horny women in their lives. Indeed, it seems the older he got, the more Ferreri seemed to believe that Italian men, especially of the Marxist sort, developed a deleterious degree of emasculation from which they could never recover. During *The Story of Piera*, Eugenia more or less unwittingly reveals the source of her nymphomania by crying, "nobody loves me the way I want." Of course, Eugenia's hubby was too busy wanking off to Trotsky and writers from the Frankfurt School to sexually satisfy his sexually voracious beloved. As the title of *The Future Is Woman* quite clearly demonstrates, it seems Ferreri believed that men were headed for a decidedly dystopian future of all-encompassing cuckoldry and total social and sexual submission. Indeed, it certainly takes a major lack of total testicular fortitude for him to allow his wife to screw other men while their prepubescent daughter watches intently as depicted in *The Story of Piera*. If one ever needs evidence that debunks the myth of Italian male sexual prowess, they can just check out Marco Ferreri's oeuvre.

-Ty E

THE FUTURE IS WOMAN

Marco Ferreri (1984)

As a man who once directed a film, *The Last Woman* (1976) aka *La Dernière femme* aka *L'ultima donna*, where a sexually potent proletarian castrates his meaty member because he cannot handle the sexual power that a young little bodacious bitch with nice tits has over him, Italian auteur Marco Ferreri (*La Grande Bouffe*, *Bye Bye Monkey*) was probably the most likely filmmaker to come up with a self-cuckolding film title like *The Future Is Woman* (1984) aka *Il futuro è donna*. Indeed, while the title of Ferreri's film refers to the fact that women literally are the future of humanity in that they reproduce and carry on mankind, it is also a figurative remark regarding the dominant position that women will take in the future in all regards, or so one would assume after watching a film where the male protagonist, a bourgeois communist male of the mentally and physically weak sort, dies pathetically after being trampled by a bunch of goofy goombah music fans while protecting his wife, who only becomes all the more stronger after her husband's grizzly premature death. Ferreri's second and final collaboration with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's main muse Hanna Schygulla, who previously starred in the director's somewhat inferior work *The Story of Piera* (1983) aka *Storia di Piera*, *The Future Is Woman* is more or less a morbid and sometimes even grotesque quasi-melodrama that depicts how the ostensible 'revolutionaries' of the Marxist far-left student movement of the late-1960s, as well as the Italian bourgeoisie (of course, most of these armchair revolutionaries came from middleclass backgrounds), have gotten weak and passive and, quite thankfully, will die out soon as they are too spiritually and physically impotent to produce progeny. Depicting a troubled ménage à trios between Schygulla, Guido Goddess Ornella Muti (who previously starred in Ferreri's *The Last Woman* and *Tales of Ordinary Madness*), and goofy ½ Danish frog Niels Arestrup (*The Beat That My Heart Skipped*, *A Prophet*), Ferreri's work is surely a rare quasi-feminist flick that is not banal as hell, though it might make the viewer question whether or not auteur Ferreri was seriously considering becoming an eunuch at the time he made the film, as a somewhat matriarchal work where virtually all of the male characters are weak, meek, and passive. Featuring an upbeat Italo-disco soundtrack with numerous highly addictive songs like "Banana" by Jane Chiquita, Hanna Schygulla dancing around ecstatically in a crowded club while sporting quite unbecoming black 1980s spandex pants, a rather therapeutic scene where a wussy guy who likes wearing Che Guevara t-shirts gets his skull crushed, and seedy skinheads picking on hot pregnant goombah gals by threatening to punch them in the stomach, Ferreri's film is certainly a curious celluloid oddity of sorts, even if for the most part it lacks the director's signature sardonic humor. The partly tragic but ultimately 'uplifting' (especially for a Ferreri flick!) tale of a steadily aging married middle-aged couple of the

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new left sort who refuse to have children of their own, only to have their views tested upon providing shelter and sex to a young pregnant chick who describes herself as a “warrior.” *The Future Is Woman* is a rare cinematic marriage between 1980s aesthetic Euro-cheese and avant-garde arthouse pretense that has aged quite gracefully over the years.

While hanging out at an ostensibly ‘hip’ and ‘happening’ Italo-disco club called Marabu Music Hall, a failed leftist revolutionary/tree-mover named Gordon (Niels Arestrup) manages to successfully find his wife Anna (Hanna Schygulla) among all the people in the big building while blindfolded. As his friends remark, Gordon will do anything for Anna and he has no problem tracking her merely by tracking out her particular scent. After playing the game, Anna, who symbolically refuses to reverse roles and play the blindfolded game, spots a pregnant young woman named Malvina (Ornella Muti) crying for help as she is being roughed up by a couple young Guido guys, including a skinhead, so she comes to the rescue. Despite being married, Anna agrees to “fuck” the men if they leave Malvina alone, though she never actually carries out her half of the deal. Unbeknownst to Anna, Malvina, who is five or six months pregnant (she is not actually sure), has chosen her to become the adoptive mother of her unborn child. A bourgeois commie of sorts who has become a passive whore of capitalism as an ‘artist’/designer who works in the cultural department of a megastore, Anna has a bizarre obsession with projecting stock footage of dead children from Hiroshima and other historical atrocities over photos of Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich while hanging out in her office. In fact, Anna has giant busts of Garbo and Dietrich—two highly independent and individualistic women who, not unlike the protagonist, attempted to act like men and lacked many traditional female traits—commissioned for her store, though the customers are ultimately repelled by the gigantic diva sculptures. Unquestionably, as his friends recognize, Gordon worships Anna but she treats her somewhat effeminate hubby like the slavish ½ man that he is. Of course, it only becomes a matter of time before Anna becomes quite irked by the fact that her groveling husband begins to give some of his attention to a young salacious chick like Malvina, who has the gall to complain, “what about me?,” while watching the married couple have fetish-fueled sex. Indeed, in no time, a juicy ménage à trois blossoms between the three but it ends just as quickly as it began.

Naturally, when Malvina moves in with the somewhat unconventional married couple, Anna almost instantly becomes jealous of her young rival and soon attempts to throw the knocked up homeless girl out of her humble abode. Indeed, Anna not only accuses Malvina of stealing her life and home, but the unborn baby as well. Rather absurdly, Malvina attempts to appeal to Gordon’s discernibly fragile ego by telling him that he looks like Marlon Brando (even though he looks more like Klaus Kinski had his head been squashed) and naturally the middle-aged man is quite flattered by the young lady’s attention. Of

course, as a man that digs his teeth into his wife's derriere on command like a little dog, Gordon is a slave of Anna who, although somewhat of a jealous bitch, at least temporarily allows her hubby the opportunity of a lifetime of partaking in a threesome with a young pregnant girl. While a domineering and somewhat masculinized alpha-chick (undoubtedly, her dyke-like haircut accentuates her 'manliness') who carries around her spouse's tiny testicles in her purse, Anna eventually becomes an unwitting slave of sorts to Malvina, demanding nice meals (especially chicken) and other sorts of things for the benefit of her unborn baby. When Anna's jealousy of Malvina becomes too unbearable after she catches the pregnant babe modelling one of her fancy dresses for Gordon, she kicks the young lady out of her home and makes a pathetic failed attempt at suicide. Of course, Anna later has second thoughts and Malvina once again reenters her and her husband's life just as if nothing has happened. Although a patent pansy and pathetic pervert who says sick stuff like, "If I were a father, I'd like to make love to my daughter...And not get my nose and ears cut off as punishment," and is reduced to tears merely because his wife is late getting home one night, Gordon is certainly an uncompromising protector of both Anna and Malvina and when a riot breaks out at a large concert after a bunch of music fans storm the arena after being denied entry, he even dies protecting the two special ladies in his life after someone steps on his skull. After having Gordon cremated at what looks like some sort of futuristic concentration camp, Anna develops a deeper bond with Malvina that resembles a sort of warped mother-daughter relationship. One night while hanging out at an isolated beach in the country, Anna tells Malvina to expose her stomach to the moon, which induces labor in the little lady. In the end, Malvina's 'maternal mission' is accomplished, as she gives Anna her baby so she can continue living her life as a wanton wandering young woman who has no problem accidentally getting pregnant and pawing off her children to other people.

Unquestionably, one of the most potent and memorable things about *The Future Is Woman* is its rather singular depiction of the superficially 'zany' yet reactionary (indeed, during one scene, Gordon is harassed and searched by the cops merely because he is playing soccer late at night) zeitgeist in which it was made. Indeed, depicting a time when one's fashion sense was more important than their personality and personal integrity, far-left politics had grown even more stale and vapid, cocaine was consumed as much as Coca-Cola (in one rather grotesque scene, Anna finds the pale corpse of an Italo-Disco fan who snorted one-too-many lines), and new and more 'inhuman' forms of authoritarian technocracy began to consume the Occidental world, Ferreri's film ultimately demonstrated that Wop-land was not much different from America at that time, though those gregarious Guidos certainly had greater music and a more refined fashion sense, not to mention more exotically erotic women. In its depiction of a deracinated 'modern' post-feminist woman of the rather bitchy sort who has complete con-

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trol over her husband and who ultimately becomes the (pseudo)mother of a child sired from a classically feminine woman that probably flunked one of those absurdly easy feminist indoctrination courses they have in college, *The Future Is Woman* seems to, quite absurdly, argue that the children of the future must be reared and educated by frigid self-centered single mothers. In that sense, Ferreri seems like a postmodern prophet, as single-mothers with bastard children have become quite the growing phenomenon in the western world, especially in the United States where a woman, especially a so-called 'woman of color,' can jumpstart a workless career merely by allowing herself to get knocked up by the most degenerate of criminal thugs, thus securing herself a nice big welfare check that only grows larger with each extra bastard baby spawned. Of course, Schygulla's character is depicted as the height of female sophistication and cultivation and not as a morbidly obese sub-literate welfare queen. Indeed, as a sort of spiritual daughter of bisexual Aryan bitches Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich (notably, the latter of whom died single and childless), protagonist Anna fits in with what Viennese Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger described as the 'prostitute' type (as opposed to 'mother' type) of woman who, although highly intelligent and completely emancipated from man, more or less lacks all the necessary maternal qualities one needs to be a decent mother yet Ferreri absurdly makes her a mommy in the end. While I found the film to have a somewhat incoherent and rather dubious message, *The Future Is Woman* is most certainly one of Ferreri's most underrated and overlooked yet strangely accessible works, as a film that, in terms of style, is like a *Guido* *Liquid Sky* (1982) minus the satirical sci-fi element with a tinge of late period Buñuel as directed by a lapsed Marxist feminist cuckold whose greatest dream is to sacrifice himself for his bitchy significant other by dying in a brutal fashion. Indeed, like many Mediterranean men, especially of the Italian persuasion, Ferreri seemed to accept his position as a member of the ostensibly inferior sex.

-Ty E

I LOVE YOU

Marco Ferreri (1986)

There has never been a film directed by Marco Ferreri (*La Grande Bouffe*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*) that I have seen that I did not like and I say that as someone that mostly loathes sex-comedies and rom-coms, especially the sort that is regularly vomited and defecated out by the cheap and uncultivated weed-and-wiener-obsessed kosher clowns of Hollywood. Of course, though largely forgotten today, Ferreri was completely in a league of his own as a man that made savagely sardonic (anti)romantic-comedies that arguably make the cinematic works of the great Luis Buñuel seem like meaningless Dadaist diarrhea by comparison in terms of greater cultural and metapolitical significance. If Woody Allen depicted what it was like to be a physically feeble and rather repulsive neurotic Jewish intellectual that somehow managed to bang hot shiksa sluts for good goy families, Ferreri viewed things from a distinctly European lens and focused on far more important things like cultural decay and the death of love, sex, and romance in the Occident, especially in regard to the bourgeoisie (or at least what used to be called the bourgeoisie). Luckily, Ferreri was not a politically correct pansy, as he had no problem gleefully reaming both sexes into oblivion as a man that once proudly described himself as “50% misogynist and 50% feminist.” Indeed, while the women of his films are oftentimes depicted as carnally carnivorous beastesses that know how to exploit their bodies and can turn a sexually virile alpha-male into a self-castrating beta-cuck pussy like Ornella Muti did to Gérard Depardieu’s happy-go-lucky lumpenprole character in *La Dernière femme* (1976) aka *The Last Woman* aka *L’ultima donna*, the men are oftentimes depicted as weak and ineffectual sexual cripples who are so patently pathetic that they can manage to die at far-left peace protests like Niels Arestrup’s insufferable character does in the rather fittingly titled film *Il futuro è donna* (1984) aka *The Future Is Woman* starring Fassbinder diva Hanna Schygulla as a woman that ultimately realizes that she needs neither men nor sex to become a mother and start her own sort of (post)modern family. Certainly if I were to credit Ferreri for any singular accomplishment as a filmmaker, it is being the foremost satirizer of the European sexual apocalypse, with his lesser known films from the 1980s and early 1990s demonstrating that the auteur only got all the more pessimistic about Eurupid sexuality as the decades passed. As demonstrated by the fact that his own homeland of Italy was declared a “dying country” in early 2015 by Italian Health Minister Beatrice Lorenzin due to the fact that it has the second smallest birth rate in all of Europe and that there are more elderly people than babies (which says a lot considering the fact the indigenous populations are dying out in virtually every single European nation due to the fact that people refuse to have children), Ferreri has ultimately proven that his films are more relevant today than when they were first released, so it

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is somewhat of a cinematic tragedy that the majority of his oeuvre is largely unknown outside of Europe and especially the United States, even among serious cinephiles and cineastes. Over the past couple years, I have been slowly but surely acquainting myself with all of Ferreri's flicks and my most recent discovery is the Italian-French absurdist (anti)rom-com *I Love You* (1986) starring American-born French actor Christopher Lambert in his first acting role after his legendary performance as the eponymous lead in *Highlander* (1986).

While Lambert is not exactly known for his acting talents (notably, he once stated himself, "It may be a mistake to say this, but I know my limitations as an actor and I know what I can and can not do. Robert De Niro can do everything. I can't. [...] I would love to do a RAIN MAN, but I think ultimately this is my thing."), his lack of acting prowess comes in handy in Ferreri's film where he essentially plays a male bimbo and meta-vain walking and talking vassal who epitomizes the modern day equivalent to the 'alpha-male,' as a male subject that has no problem procuring plenty of high-grade pussy yet is completely lacking in every other regard in his life, especially when it comes to having truly meaningful relationships with women that produce children. In the documentary *Marco Ferreri: Il regista che venne dal futuro* (2007) aka *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future*, Ferreri even admits in regard to why he decided to cast the actor, "I chose Christopher Lambert because, to use a fashionable phrase, he's a 'hard man.' He has tempos, expressions, movements, ways of moving his body and hands that he's not aware of but that are harmonic. They're determining." Of course, by casting a fairly handsome organic alpha-male type, Ferreri, who was once rightly labelled by the press as "The specialist of the modern couple," was better able to emphasize than effeminization and degeneration of European males than if he had hired some wimpy and unattractive looking actor like Dustin Hoffman. In fact, Lambert's (post)modern alpha character is so ludicrously shallow and emotionally stunted that he falls deeply in love with a talking keychain in the shape of a beautiful female face that says "I love you" anytime he whistles, even though he has a virtual army of gorgeous chicks that regularly through themselves at him. Quite like the lead character portrayed by Depardieu in Ferreri's dystopian cult classic *Bye Bye Monkey* (1978) aka *Ciao maschio*, Lambert's character is a sort of hopelessly directionless man-child that seems afraid of having children and starting a serious relationship with a woman. Also like *Bye Bye Monkey*, the lead's best friend is a thoroughly emasculated quasi-paternal figure who is fed up with his sorry lot in life, thus indicating that the degeneration of European males is intergenerational and nothing new. Somewhat fittingly, *I Love You* stars Marxist turned antifeminist/anti-Zionist sociologist Alain Soral's cutesy blonde sister Agnès Soral as a dumb dame that Lambert's character rebuffs so that he can remain faithful to his beloved waif-like keychain. Set in a cryptically dystopian world where TV commercials are more erotic than real-life, the only children are Chinese and black, middle-aged

men live with their mothers, androgynous negroes do degenerate stripteases on TV, and not a single man or woman is in a stable relationship, Ferreri's rarely seen flick, which is more or less an absurdist reworking of the ancient Greek Pygmalion myth, might not be one of the director's masterpieces but it is surely an undeniably singular and highly worthwhile cinematic work that provides much farcical food-for-thought. A sort of long lost son film to Ferreri's arguable magnum opus *Dillinger è morto* (1969) aka *Dillinger Is Dead, I Love You* is notable for a number of things but probably most strangely for featuring the most aesthetically pleasing and eroticized shots of a keychain in all of cinema history, thereupon underscoring magical illusionary powers of cinema, which the auteur would notably later pay tribute to with his swansong *Nitrato d'argento* (1996) aka *Nitrate Base*.

Michel (Christopher Lambert) is a sort of perennial bachelor whose sole friend is an eternally unemployed pathetic old fart named Yves (rocker turned actor Eddy Mitchell) who loathes himself because he cannot find a job and who hilariously complains at the very beginning of the film regarding a nameless young dark-skinned Chinese boy (Hua Krung) that the two hang out with, "He wanted the comic book on credit! The 'yellow peril' exists. That Chinese boy always screws me up." A sort of modern post-counter culture family as characters that seem to have no real blood relatives, Michel, Yves, and the Chinese boy like doing things together like feeding a black piglet with a baby bottle. As the viewer soon discovers, Michel is afraid of having a real child of his own and thus acts as if the Chinaboy and pig are his surrogate sons, just as Depardieu's character preferred adopting King Kong's son over having his own child in *Bye Bye Monkey*. Indeed, at the beginning of the film, Michel is visited by his (ex)girlfriend Barbara (played by 'Anémone,' who adopted her stage name from the obscure 1968 TV-movie of the same name directed by Philippe Garrel) so that they can have farewell sex. When Barbara shows up at Michel's flat, she immediately declares, "We have time to make love, then you'll take me to the airport" and the two proceed to have sex, but not before the protagonist plays around with a giant tribal mask like a rambunctious child while making goofy animal noises. After they fuck for the final time, Michel takes Barbara to an airport where she attempts to have a serious talk with him and semi-somberly declares, "Had you asked me, maybe I would have stayed. Perhaps. No, I would have left anyway. You don't want this baby and I want it too much. I don't know if I will miss you. Of course I will miss you! You didn't want to give me a son, but I have good memories." In a demonstration of his apathy towards her and their stagnant dead-end relationship, Michel rudely walks away while Barbara is talking so that he can talk to some guys about his motorcycle. Before Barbara boards her plane, Michel unwittingly mocks her and her dream of having a child by handing her a naked baby doll and declaring, "At night it lights up, and it's washable." Needless to say, baby-obsessed barren woman Barbara is not happy

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with Michel's juvenile antics, so she hits the protagonist over the head with the baby doll.

While young, beautiful, and fertile women are incessantly practically rubbing their wet pussies in his face, Michel seems thoroughly disinterested in most members of the opposite sex and it is not because he is a homo but because he is an innately immature chap with a dubious IQ whose sole interest seems to be his motorcycle. Undoubtedly, Michel is a true rebel-without-a-cause in the most redundant and literal sense. While hanging out a fairly strange and colorful New Wave club located in an abandoned warehouse, a blonde chick named Isabelle (Laura Manszky of the celluloid turd *Sweet Lies* (1987) directed by Alain Delon's onetime wife Nathalie Delon) complains to Michel, "What is it you don't like about me? My name? You're right. Isabelle sucks. I'm going to change it then. My name's Camelia now: like it?," to which the protagonist somewhat apathetically replies, "Camelia is cute." While Michel proceeds to kiss 'Camelia,' he soon roughly pushes her away and abruptly leaves, as if he gets off to leading women on and then callously pushing them away. An overtly slutty pseudo-blonde prostitute (played by Bob Geldof's current wife Jeanne Marine) who provocatively sucks on a banana like it is a cock also offers Michel her body free of charge, but he tells her that he would rather pay for her puss and then blows her off. Luckily, after scaring away two lovers that are having sex in a car and then declaring his hatred of relationships by stating "Lovers! Jerks!," Michel manages to find his true love in the form of a talking keychain that he finds out of happenstance after randomly whistling to himself and hearing the inanimate object reply, "I love you." Indeed, it is love at first sight with keychain as far as Michel is concerned, as the small plastic piece of junk has big beautiful blue eyes and large and full dick-sucking lips, not to mention the fact that it says "I love you" whenever he wants it to. When a beautiful young blonde named H el ene (Agn es Soral) shows up at the travel agency where Michel works (indeed, like many modern men, the protagonist has been reduced to doing what is probably best described as women's work), she cries upon hearing the protagonist's keychain say "I love you" and declares, "I can't afford going around the world, but at least I'd like one of those," thus reflecting her desperate desire to feel loved and appreciated. While Michel goes on a date with H el ene and even agrees to give her his beloved keychain, he ultimately reneges and chooses his keychain over the dumb blonde, even though she goes as far as dumping her boyfriend for him. In an absurd scene that epitomizes the protagonist's delusional infatuation with a totally worthless piece of plastic, Michel stares lovingly at the keychain while H el ene bangs on the front door of his flat and demands to be let in. Of course, Michel does not let H el ene in, as the pseudo-affection he receives from the keychain is a sure thing while a romance with a real living and breathing woman is prone to end badly and cause much internal pain and misery, among other things.

When Yves begins dating a sassy guidette singer named Maria (Flora Barilaro) who has no qualms about speaking her mind, especially when it comes to the negative qualities of modern men, Michel faces criticism for the first time in regard to being in an ostensibly hot and steamy love affair with a keychain, but he is so deeply enamored with the pretty piece of plastic that he does not even care and barely notices the little lady's harsh remarks. Indeed, when Maria notices that Michel is more interested in whistling to his keychain than staring at her tits, she becomes infuriated, bitches at him, "You'd like a girl like that, wouldn't you? You whistle and she... 'I love you! I love you!' Wouldn't you like that? That's what you'd want to have. A submissive girl, always ready. That's your ideal woman. An object at your service!" and then slaps him in the face. Later that same night, Michel notices that a porn flick is playing on his TV, so he decides to place his keychain lover on the television screen and then proceeds to masturbate while staring intensely at the particularly odd object of his desire in a bizarre quasi-avant-garde scene that is not atypical of auteur Ferreri's films from the 1980s. The next morning, Michel sentimentally states to his keychain regarding the 'sex' that they had the night before, "It was nice yesterday. The first time is not always good. It went fine last night. Don't get all worked up just because you made it. You are a keyholder and you must hold the keys," thus indicating the patently preposterous state of the protagonist's psyche. When a dorky Jewish guy named Pierre (Marc Berman) comes by Michel's work and demands a train ticket to Japan (!), the protagonist is surprised to discover that he is not the only man in town that is love with a talking keychain. Indeed, Michel and Pierre bond over their mutual love of their almost identical keychains, with the two drinking champagne and declaring a toast, "To our dreams." Of course, Pierre becomes jealous of Michel when he whistles at his keychain too many times. Later in the film, Michel goes by Pierre's house and not only discovers that his middle-aged friend still lives with his mother, who absurdly describes the keychain as "my son's girlfriend," but also that he has a painting of his plastic lover hanging on the wall of his home. Rather ridiculously, the only thing that bothers Michel in regard to Pierre's keychain painting is that the imaginary woman in the portrait has slightly different colored eyes from his own keychain.

Ultimately, everything goes downhill for Michel when he makes the mistake of fucking a blindfolded babe who randomly shows up on his balcony and opens her coat to reveal she is not wearing any panties (notably, the woman has a shaved nether-region, which was not that common at the time the film was made). While mounting the almost hysterically horny mystery dame, Michel predictably attempts to whistle at his keychain lover, but is disheartened when he does not receive a reply. In fact, not matter how many times Michel whistles at the keychain after that, he cannot get a single, "I love you," thus ultimately pushing the protagonist over the edge. Indeed, lovelorn keychain lover Michel becomes so upset that he becomes nihilistically self-destructive and nonsensi-

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cally decides to drive his motorcycle through a warehouse wall covered with a giant degenerate painting of Jesus Christ in a scene that surely highlights the protagonist's gross emotional immaturity and complete and utter lack of self-control. Somewhat ironically, after crashing through the Christ wall, Michel fractures a premolar, thus causing him to lose his ability to whistle and, in turn, totally destroying any possibility that he will get another "I love you" from his keychain. Desperate for the imagined affection that he used to could count on receiving from his plastic lover, Michel convinces the slutty pseudo-blonde prostitute that offered him free sex at the beginning of the film to act as a sort of pseudo-keychain and has her say "I love you" when he whistles. Of course, a living and breathing wanton woman is no match for the mechanical love of the keychain in Michel's eyes. Luckily, a miracle of sorts occurs when the keychain eventually begins saying "I love you" again, but the happiness is short-lived because Yves, who was dumped by Maria and denied a job that he was initially promised, subsequently attempts suicide by drinking poison. Somewhat hilariously, a young black boy ultimately finds and saves Yves before he can croak from the poison, yet the creepy colored kid later expresses regret to Michel over saving the old man, stating "He drank the poison, but he's out of danger now. Too bad! I have never seen anyone die. It would have been interesting," thus arguably emphasizing the lack of empathy that non-whites have for Europeans. While hanging out with Yves while he is recovering from his botched suicide, Michel becomes rather upset when the keychain says "I love you" after hearing Maria, who is now a superstar diva of sorts, sing on television. Indeed, after realizing that he is nothing special since the keychain will say "I love you" to anyone, Michel declares in regard to his cheap manmade lover, "They are all the same, a bunch of witches." After Yves agrees with Michel and calls the keychain "a whore," the two decide to take turns smashing the plastic lady to bits with a hammer. Luckily, after destroying the keychain, *Dillinger Is Dead* randomly appears on TV and inspires Michel to drive to the beach on his motorcycle so that he can join the crew of a yacht ruled over by a hot dream babe just like Michel Piccoli's character did at the conclusion of the classic 1969 Ferreri flick. Rather inexplicably, the luxury yacht is indeed sailing the sea when Michel arrives at the beach, so the protagonist decides to ride his motorcycle into the ocean and then begins swimming to the ship. Unfortunately, the yacht is long gone before Michel has any real chance to board the ship. Notably, before attempting to swim to the ship, Michel uses binoculars that he randomly finds on the beach to look at the diva on the yacht and he is quite satisfied to discover that she has the same exact full lips as the keychain, thus highlighting the fact that the protagonist's dream lover is indeed nothing but a delusional fantasy which he seems to have unconsciously created in his mind after watching one-too-many movies and TV commercials. Undoubtedly, one of the morals of the wayward story that is *I Love You* is that, like protagonist Michel, modern young men are al-

ways liable to face disappointment when it comes to love because no real-life woman can possibly compare to the idealized imaginary immaculate woman that has been planted in their mind via television.

If there is anything to learn from *I Love You* and its importance in the context of the director's entire oeuvre, it is that auteur Marco Ferreri felt that society had become all the more irreparably screwed up since the counterculture era, hence why he probably decided to incorporate excerpts from both *Dillinger Is Dead* and vintage erotic commercials featuring nude women into the film. While the true meaning behind the somewhat bizarre, ostensibly happy conclusion of *Dillinger Is Dead* is disputable (though it seems to insinuate that the bourgeois protagonist played by Piccoli has gone completely insane and has embraced a sort of Utopian fantasy realm was inspired by TV commercials), *I Love You* ends in an unequivocally unhappy fashion that makes it quite clear that Ferreri thought that even the escapist fantasy realm was no longer a possibility for disillusioned men due to the glaringly culturally apocalyptic reality of Europa during that time. Of course, it is only fitting that the film takes place in France, which is the land of decadence par excellence, especially where social and sexual matters are concerned. After all, despite being a handsome chick-magnet with an Adonis-like physique, the lead protagonist of *I Love You* is completely lacking in even the most rudimentary virtues of masculinity, not to mention the fact that he is an arrogant dolt and virtual walking hard-on whose delusional love for a keychain is probably the direct result of his infantile narcissism as a mensch that becomes stupidly happy as a result of being told "I love you" at anytime of the day simply by whistling and not as a result of certain desirable character traits that he might display. I also do not think it is a coincidence that Lambert's character loathes the idea of having a child of his own and instead shows quasi-fatherly affection to both a seemingly autistic Chinese boy and black piglet, as such behavior epitomizes the sort of cultural cuckoldry, ethno-masochistic altruism, and hysterical animals rights activism that has become synonymous with contemporary neo-liberal Europe, especially France, over the past couple of decades. After all, a healthy race of people strives to procreate and sire new generations of all the more strong progeny to take their place so that their legacy can continue and would never dare dream of wasting their time and resources on hostile alien races, yet France, like much of Europe, has senselessly become the adoptive parent for the world's most unlovable untermenschen and now it is finally beginning to really bite them in the ass, hence the escalating towelhead terrorist attacks that have occurred in 2015.

It should be noted that in the documentary *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future*, Ferreri prophesies the Islamic Arab-negro menace in an interview where he states in regard to the pathological naivety and arrogance of white liberal Europeans, "We think we know everything thanks to the airplane. Instead, we don't know...We don't know anything. We think we know it all.

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We arrive by plane somewhere with lovely hotels and we think we've known that place. Now we're entering a period of religious wars. The Muslim Brotherhood and Islam are coming to the fore. It's a more political voice than Catholicism." Notably, in the same doc, Ferreri would also prophetically state, "Geographically, Europe is very small. It's a fortress that thinks it's invincible, but it isn't. It's surrounded and under siege by peoples who are less technologically advanced but more motivated than we are." Needless to say, Ferreri would have probably been the most fit director to cinematically adapt the racially-charged and oftentimes satirical dystopian novel *The Camp of the Saints* (1973) aka *Le Camp des Saints* by French novelist Jean Raspail which depicts an eerily probable near-future where France and the rest of Western Civilization are destroyed as a result of political impotence and left-wing support of the flooding of Europe with (sub)human rabble from the third world. In his little seen flick *Ya bon les blancs* (1988) aka *How Good the Whites Are* where a couple of hopelessly naive European do-gooder 'activist' types are eaten by a tribe of cannibalistic sand negroes who could care less about the supposedly humanistic ways of the white man, Ferreri would ultimately foretell the sort of mayhem that would ensue as a result of so-called multiculturalism, globalization, and liberal altruism, among other socially suicidal metaphysical afflictions that have only gotten all the more worse since the film was originally released over a quarter of a century ago.

Of course, the overall massive decline of Europe is a direct consequence of the progressive emasculation and moral degeneration of European man as is depicted in *I Love You*. While Ferreri oftentimes rightly described himself as an anarchist, he certainly subscribed to a sort of quasi-Spenglerian *Weltanschauung* where he obsessed over the progressive rotting of the Occident, especially when it came to the worsening disharmony being the sexes and the disintegration of traditional European mores and customs, hence why the filmmaker once matter-of-factly stated regarding his own work, "The values that once existed no longer exist. The family, the bourgeoisie – I'm talking about values, morals, economic relationships. They no longer serve a purpose. My films are reactions translated into images." Of course, as a man that made a film about a fellow who falls in love with an artificially beautiful keychain, Ferreri would probably not be surprised to know that we now live in an era where people are so vain and artificial that it is not common for girls get their labias chopped off or receive ass implants and lip injections. Certainly, one cannot also forget the rise in popularity of porn, sex toys, and sex robots, among other dubious pseudo-erotic inventions that indicate that people are becoming increasingly sensually autistic. Despite being totally forgotten today, *I Love You* ultimately predates Spike Jonze's obscenely overrated film *Her* (2013) by almost three decades in terms of its depiction of a spiritually castrated virtual automaton who pathetically falls in love with a piece of manmade technology and thus it is begging to be reexamined by contemporary cinephiles, even if it is one of Ferreri's lesser works. In an

intrinsically culturally and socially suicidal era where it is trendy for Hollywood celebrities to adopt black African spawn as personal accessories and Europeans are refusing to get married and have kids while their criminal socialist governments tax them to death so that they can subsidize the bastard brood of hostile illegal immigrants of the mostly Islamic Arab and negro sort who breed like rats and transform cities into crime-ridden no-go-zones where rape, especially of white women, is considered a virtual god-given right, Ferreri's films are more important than ever but unfortunately, as Spengler once wrote in regard to the fragile nature of art, "One day the last portrait of Rembrandt and the last bar of Mozart will have ceased to be — though possibly a colored canvas and a sheet of notes will remain — because the last eye and the last ear accessible to their message will have gone."

-Ty E

HOW GOOD THE WHITES ARE
HOW GOOD THE WHITES ARE

Marco Ferreri (1988)

Maybe it is because of the unfortunate admixture of Sub-Saharan African blood among certain southern Goombahs or that they are unlike Nords and are less timid about saying what they think and expressing how they feel, but out of all the great European peoples, the Italians have had the most testicular fortitude when it comes to cinematically depicting the than less than good, almost always bad, and the uniquely ugly in regard to the Dark Continent. Indeed, from Mondo maestros Jacopetti and Prosperi's singularly scathing post-colonialism-themed schlockumentary *Africa addio* (1966) to the nasty apocalyptic artsploitation nihilism of Alberto Cavallone's *Afrika* (1973), Guido filmmakers have always been at the forefront of depicting post-colonial Africa as a virtual hell-on-earth that is plagued poverty, war, starvation, rape, disease and—arguably the most ugly thing of all—European altruism. Of course, it should be no surprise that Milanese auteur Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *La Grande Bouffe*) would make a movie mocking those hopelessly neurotic and decidedly deracinated white degenerates who make it their big business to save wild starving negroes in negroland. Indeed, the Spanish-Italian-French co-production *Ya bon les blancs* (1988) aka *How Good the Whites Are* aka *Come sono buoni i bianchi* depicts a fiercely farcical fable-like vision from Ferreri's typically ruthless perspective where naïve white liberals attempt to give starving African spaghetti and tomato sauce as aid, ugly Italians attempt boning bloated black native broads, a Catholic priest is gang-raped while he eats Russian chicken and stares at the starved corpse of a preteen negro boy, a deranged jigaboo wearing a white mask claims to whites that he is a real white man and that they are imposters that must leave, and a group of cannibalistic negroid nomads who eat two crackers that dare to sully their magical waterhole. Shot in Morocco, the film is clearly one of the most aesthetically flaccid and least thought out works in Ferreri's rather striking oeuvre, yet it is still a consistently hilarious little romp that completely reams the figurative rectums of ethno-masochistic whites who feel spiritually lost on their own continents and thus feel the need to put their noses in poor Africans' business. Indeed, from French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud to great miscegenation-obsessed English explorer Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton, restless Europeans have always journeyed to distant lands like Africa in a desperate attempt to find solace from their forsaken souls, yet the whites of *How Good the Whites Are* are soft bourgeois wankers, misguided lily liberals, and miscegenation-celebrating cranks who think living in a third world country is as simple as riding in an airplane and who ultimately finds themselves to be victims of their own naivety in regard to the truly archaic way of predatorial pickaninnies who do not buy into decadent white man scams like liberalism and multiculturalism. Undoubtedly, if you're the kind of person that derives Schadenfreude

from seeing white wimps getting their just deserts from patronizingly groveling to sand savages, Ferreri's grotesque little piece of celluloid cultural sensitivity training is just for you.

The crackers of *How Good the Whites Are* are not really good at anything, not even when it comes to simply transferring food to starving sand spades via large trucks, or so one quickly learns while watching Ferreri's fiercely facetious film. Although initially rather idealistic about the prospect of deriving self-satisfaction from feeding dying illiterate jigaboos in North Africa's Sahel region, the ethnically eclectic group of white do-gooders of 'Operation Blue Angel' (they described themselves as, "the women and children of Bergamo, Italy, Ropesa, Spain, Villeneuve, France") will be asking themselves: "Why didn't we stay in Europe?," by the end of the film. Led by a particularly pompous pansy Spaniard named Diego Ramirez (Juan Diego) who acts like an anally retentive French fairy and does not like getting his hands dirty yet thinks it will be a good idea to travel through unpredictable African war-zones to deliver spaghetti, tomato sauce, and powdered milk to negroes in need, *Operation Blue Angel* is unquestionably made up of the European bourgeois' most weak and neurotic rabble, with every member suffering some sort of repellant quirk that is even instantly spotted by the sand negroes. Almost immediately upon arriving in Africa, the group is swindled out of most of their foreign aid by a goofy black brother named Vincent Dupont de Protocol (Ben Taleb Moha) who, among other things, likes showing off his European language skills and hustling naive crackers. Indeed, Vincent takes the group to a fancy motel where his entire family has been staying and gives the white suckers the bill (which Diego hilariously describes as being "barbaric") as he knows the white altruists are big enough bitches that they will pay it, but they don't have any money so they have to give up a large fraction of their spaghetti to pay off the dubious debt. Of course, this incident of Afro-hustling is nothing compared to the true savagery the group will ultimately face at the hands black tribesmen who do not take too kindly to white devils in their sacred savage lands. As one of the characters remarks regarding the murder trends in Africa, "Last year almost 10,000 [died]. Africa is dangerous."

While featuring a dozen or so characters, the film many revolves around a decidedly dumb Dutch single mother named Nadia (Maruschka Detmers) and a sleazy middle-aged Guido named Michel (Michele Placido) who immediately attempts to get in young girl's pants by discussing how he would like to get involved in a "good intellectual rapport" with her. Pseudo-macho horn-dog Michel also has a thing for dark meat and does not mind getting inside the toga of an overweight negress tribeswoman every once in a while. Although the Blue Angels decide to hire an adventurer that sort of looks like a chubby version of Adolf Eichmann named Peter (Jean-François Stévenin) to help guide them to Sahel, he ultimately takes them through war-zones occupied by less than

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gregarious guerillas who he is friends with. At one of these particular guerilla camps, the group meets a French priest who has lost the faith and meekly states, "I am Father Jean-Marie. I don't want to save anyone. I'm going back to Europe. Please give me permission to spend the night here." As Father Jean-Marie has concluded regarding black Africans, "They prefer the Koran to the Gospel. And they are not completely wrong." During one of the most hilarious scenes of the film the Priest is gang-raped by some militia men while eating Russian chicken and staring at the corpse of a negro boy. Despite being in the middle of nowhere and only running into archaic hunter-gatherer tribes, Nadia runs into a black chick named 'Katuscia' she once met in Paris who is now the Princess of a tribe and who Michel assumedly bones. Of course, the interactions between the deracinated whites and the deeply rooted blacks only get more hostile and absurd as the film progresses.

In one of the more jovial scenes of the film, the group bumps into a tribe of severely spastic spades who wear poorly made 'whiteface' masks and vintage colonial adventurer hats and hostilely declare to the Europeans, "no whites" because "the whites are us!" Indeed, somehow these poor Africans believe that the Europeans are imposters and that they are the true Europids. Of course, on the way, the Europeans have various things stolen from them from the more violent tribes, including barrels of oil. By the end of the film, all of the whites are ready to give up, but a watering hole that initially seems like a mirage gives them enough hope to tread on. When Nadia and Michel decide to stay at the scenic water hole, they find themselves to be the prey of a group of pissed tribesmen with voracious appetites. Indeed, when the tribe arrives there, a seemingly nice French-speaking tribesman—a smiley sort of guy who lived in France for a while but eventually got fired from his job and had to go back to his humble tribe—approaches the two bourgeois crackers and asks them, "The chief wants to know why you have polluted the water?" Needless to say, Nadia and Michel never make it back to Europa. Indeed, when Operation Blue Angel leader Diego and adventurer Peter fly back to the watering hole to pick up Nadia and Michel, the only thing they find is a camcorder and some burnt bones. As the two learn while playing back footage from the camcorder, Nadia and Michel were eaten by the tribesman during a fireside cannibal ritual. Of course, if these obnoxiously altruistic crackers had minded their own business and never left Europe, they would have never been the dinner and, in turn, excrement of some starving Africans. Ironically, as victims of cannibalism, Nadia and Michel did manage to accomplish their original mission of providing starving negroes with some pure white meat from Europe.

Undoubtedly, the final scene of *How Good the Whites Are* featuring camcorder footage of two of the characters being eaten certainly resembles Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), as if Ferreri was attempting to lampoon the unkosher cannibal classic. While far from Ferreri's greatest work, the film

certainly has a great message: Europeans need to stay the hell out of Africa! Indeed, despite their ostensibly good intentions, the characters in Ferreri's film only bring cultural contamination, unconscious arrogance, resentment, and superlatively shitty food to the Dark Continent. Aside from making a major mockery of would-be-well-meaning white altruists, the film also depicts the glaring absurdity of multiculturalism and globalization in a variety of ways, with a cannibal who once worked in France being one of the more obvious examples. As the timeless European colonialist saying goes: "You can take the Negro out of the jungle, but you can't take the jungle out of the Negro." Indeed, *How Good the Whites Are* is a work that wallows in sardonic culture shock and demonstrates that virtually all European xenophiles are degenerates, neurotics, and/or perverts who fail to fit in their own society, hence their dubious fetishism for dark meat. Ironically, it is only when the characters in Ferreri's film are fully exposed to the 'other' that they began to appreciate their own indigenous culture and develop a sense of national identity. Indeed, while loony leftist believes that the best way to solve the race problem is by absurdly mixing people into a so-called 'melting pot,' race hate is really a direct result of multiculturalism and that the melting pot will never melt (not that it would be a good thing if it did, as demonstrated by the mystery meat that make up the populous of Brazil!). In the documentary *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future* (2007), Ferreri prophesied that there would be a great showdown between the Occident and the the third world, remarking: "We think we know everything thanks to the airplane. Instead we don't know... We don't know anything. We think we know it all. We arrive by plane somewhere with lovely hotels...and we think we've know that place. Now we're entering a period of religious wars. The Muslim Brotherhood and Islam...are coming to the fore. It's a more political voice than Catholicism." Most importantly, Ferreri revealed that Europa is on its way to a cultural apocalypse of sorts, stating regarding the continent's precarious future: "Geographically, Europe is very small. It's a fortress that thinks it's...It thinks it's invincible, but it isn't. It's surrounded and under siege by peoples who are less technologically advanced but more motivated than we are." I don't know 'How Good the Whites Are' nowadays, but if they think it is a good idea to leave their abstract bourgeois world of Starbucks and Barnes & Nobles to feed hostile savages then they deserve to be eaten. Of course, since the barbarians are already inside the gates thanks to American hegemony and globalization, whites no longer need to leave their countries to become victims of 'cultural enrichment.'

-Ty E

THE FLESH
THE FLESH

Marco Ferreri (1991)

Despite the introduction of birth control, the success of the so-called sexual liberation movement, seemingly unending proliferation of pornography of every degenerate sort, and mainstream acceptance of even the most deleterious and dysfunctional sexual proclivities, people are apparently having less sex on average than their supposedly more puritanical ancestors. Of course, there are a variety of reasons for this, but one of the most obvious reasons is the institutionalized inversion of sexual polarities and feminization of political and social values and institutions via authoritarian style feminism, which has been spread like cancer throughout the West and has led to the divirilization of males and masculinization of females. The sexes are not 'equal' but complimentary just as a cock is complimentary of a cunt, so when the natural sexual order is artificially subverted by feminist and cultural Marxist social engineering, it inspires things like erotic dysfunction and impotence, among other things that seem increasingly common today, hence the rise and popularity of prick-powering drugs like Sildenafil (aka Viagra). Personally, I think that taking Viagra is innately emasculating and that using the drug is just as a fraudulent approach to fucking as if one were to use a strap-on dildo, but I digress. In the largely forgotten Italian absurdist romantic-comedy *La carne* (1991) aka *The Flesh* directed by Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger è morto* aka *Dillinger Is Dead*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*), the film not only unwittingly foretells the philosophical dilemmas involved with dubious drugs like Viagra, but also the various complicated problems that arise when a less than handsome downtrodden divorcee who has experienced much pain as a result of past loves begins an obviously one-sided relationship with an almost supernaturally stunning and seductive diva with DD tits. Apparently partly inspired by the curious case of Jap cannibal Issei Sagawa, the film also depicts the problems that arise with Priapism, especially when you are a swarthy little man that becomes the virtual sex slave of an obscenely beautiful babe with an unquenchably voracious sexual appetite. Indeed, if there ever was a film that demonstrates why it can be particularly precarious to put pussy on a pedestal, it is Ferreri's flick, which depicts in an oftentimes allegorical and sometimes convoluted fashion what happens when a man decides to give up everything, including his job and friends/family, for a physically and erotically immaculate woman who clearly has some serious emotional problems and lacks virtually all the ingredients that make for a good wife and companion. Indeed, the story of a middle-aged lounge pianist who randomly meets a big bosomed bombshell and decides to abruptly abandon his job, friends, and family and live a sort of perennial vacation of his vice with a quasi-femme fatale in his secluded beach house, *The Flesh* is a quite fittingly titled work that demonstrates in a sometimes aberrant way that some women are nothing more than an addictive carnal indulgence,

even if they radiate a sort of goddess essence due to their sexual powers.

While a seemingly commercial effort due to starring then-popular Italian model Francesca Dellerà (who was later set to star in Fellini's *Pinocchio* adaptation) and a soundtrack featuring pop songs by Queen and Kate Bush, *The Flesh* is an oftentimes esoteric flick that makes various references to Dante Alighieri's classic 14th-century epic poem *Divine Comedy* as well as obscure Catholic saints. In fact, it is arguably Ferreri's most innately Italian work and not just where history and culture are concern, as the film is a virtual *Guidosploitation* piece in terms of its uniquely unflattering depiction of sex relations in Goombah-land. Indeed, whereas the lead of Luis Buñuel's swansong *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) becomes a victim of perennial cock-blocking, the poor pathetic sap in Ferreri's flick is drenched in so much premium guidette pussy juice that it eventually becomes quite painful for him to the point where he begs his lecherous lady friend to stop mounting his member. While female lead Dellerà certainly cannot act, she is unequivocally a domineering diva that radiates so much wild and erratic erotic energy that she ultimately steals the show, hence why Ferreri hired her for the role in the first place. In fact, in the documentary *Marco Ferreri: Il regista che venne dal futuro* (2007) aka *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future*, Ferreri stated regarding Dellerà's sexual powers, "Every period, every two or three generations, a new type of woman appears. A woman is also a type because she constructs a way of speaking and acting. Once upon a time there was Muti, now there's Dellerà. I chose her because she went to the motor show in Bologna. She put herself on a stand in the street. Eight thousand people went to see her. She doesn't dance, jump or recite poetry. This must mean something!" Indeed, Dellerà is such a singularly stunning woman that it should be no surprise to anyone that has seen *The Flesh* that the model turned actress never needed to cultivate any sort of talent or skill to become famous, as her ass alone, among her other womanly parts, was an impressive enough asset to get her career going.

The Flesh begins in an almost curiously and seemingly intentionally misleading Spielberg-esque fashion with protagonist Paolo (Sergio Castellitto of Giuseppe Tornatore's *L'uomo delle stèle* (1995) aka *The Star Maker* and Sergio Castellitto's *Non ti muovere* (2004) aka *Don't Move*) hanging out with his children at a museum with various animatronic dinosaurs. Paolo's grade school son is upset because his self-absorbed atheist mother will not let him take part in his Catholic First Holy Communion, which rather infuriates the protagonist because he not only hates his ex-wife, who he regularly calls "the hyena," but also because he firmly believes that "No one should be denied the First Communion." Indeed, even though his father was the head of the local commie organization when he was a boy, Paolo was able to have First Communion because his beloved mother stood up to her Marxist hubby and even received a black eye as a result. Paolo is fed up with women and romance for a number of reasons, as his ex-wife

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not only has custody of both of their kids, but also got his dog Giovanni, who the protagonist seems to value even more than his own kids. The only support that Paolo has is his shady sleazebag carny friends Nicola (Philippe Léotard of John Frankenheimer's *French Connection II* (1975) and Aldo (Farid Chopel), who he works with at a local nightclub where he plays the piano. One night while at the nightclub, Paolo meets the woman of the dreams in the form of busty babe with big tits and lips named Francesca (Francesca Dellera of Tinto Brass' *Capriccio* (1987) and Jacques Deray's *L'Ours en peluche* (1994) aka The Teddy Bear), who is a friend of the protagonist's pal Nicola's mistress Giovanna (Petra Reinhardt). Immediately upon talking to Paolo, Francesca says a number of things that raise a couple red flags about her character, including that she had an abortion fifteen days ago and that she was impregnated by her 22-year-old Tantric guru 'Saynanda.' With no home of her own, Francesca less than reluctantly agrees to accept a ride from Paolo and the two head to the beach. Of course, as a less than handsome fellow with a somewhat puny frame, Paolo feels like he has hit the jackpot as a result of coercing Francesca into coming with him, but little does he suspect the savage sexual servitude that he will have to endure at the hands of a carnally carnivorous woman who never takes no for an answer.

Upon arriving on the coast where the protagonist has a quaint two-floor beach house, Paolo becomes hysterical and makes the major beta-cuck pussy mistake of literally getting on the ground and kissing Francesca's feet while sporting Hindu drag (!) and declaring in an insufferably meek fashion, "You are God" and "A moment like this should last an eternity." Indeed, Paolo's first major mistaking is putting pussy on a pedestal and groveling for Francesca, which is something that no normal woman respects, especially not a stunning dame who can have any dick that she wants. Despite Paolo's declarations that she is god, Francesca seems totally unimpressed with his rather grandiose compliments and complains that she is hungry, so the two go by a food stand that is run by a boy with Down syndrome named Giuseppe and his bitchy mother, who acts as if the female protagonist is a wicked witch. Additionally, an old man at the stand warns Paolo to keep Francesca away from him and even calls her a "devil," which ultimately proves to be true, at least in a sense. When they eventually go inside the protagonist's beach house for the first time, Paolo has so much anxiety about having sex with a woman as gorgeous as Francesca that the little lady more or less forces him down on the bed and fucks him into submission. After the seemingly underwhelming fucking, Francesca shows her true face by degrading and emasculating Paolo by stating to him while maintaining an almost gleefully sinister smirk, "Now when I see you well you look like a monster [...] You even have a beer belly. And, I, who have been with handsome men only." Paolo is so upset with by Francesca's cold and callous remarks that he runs to the ocean like an upset little girl and slits both of his wrists. Assumedly because she realizes the ridiculous power she wields over him, Francesca is visibly aroused by Paolo's hilariously

histrionic suicide attempt and even sensually licks up the blood that is dripping from his wounds and then proceeds to fuck him on the beach in a scene that demonstrates that, at the very least, the female protagonist is a psychic vampire of sorts who feeds off the energy of men.

It is obvious right from the very beginning that Francesca wears the pants in the relationship and, despite her exaggerated and extra curvy female figure, is quite masculine in her behavior. Indeed, aside from insulting Paolo's appearance and lack of carnal talents, Francesca drives the protagonist's car, applies mascara to his eyes, and courts him around in public like he is her girlfriend. It seems that Francesca has adopted male qualities because she is more or less a failed female who lacks what it takes to be both a wife and mother yet is, at the same time, every man's dream (or what Otto Weininger described as the prostitute type). Aside from aborting her child and being the personal whore of some sleazy shit-skinned guru, Francesca has a pathological obsession with the idea of the motherhood as expressed in the fact that she has a stork tattoo on her back. At one point in the film, Francesca happens upon a mother that is happily breast-feeding twins. When the mother allows Francesca to breastfeed one of her babies, it is quite obvious that it gives her great joy as she seems more genuinely happy and satisfied during this scene than at any other time in the film. Of course, beta-pussy Paolo is completely oblivious to Francesca's internal wounds and true needs, thus their lurid love affair is predictably destined to fail miserably.

When Paolo's pecker goes soft right before they are about to have, Francesca uses Tantric mumbo jumbo to help the protagonist rise to the occasion, but instead of obtaining a simple erection he not only develops Priapism, but also becomes completely paralyzed and is thus left perpetually bedridden. Indeed, as a completely physically incapacitated man with a unwavering hard-on, Paolo more or less becomes Francesca's 24 hour sexual slave as she is free to mount his mighty member anytime she wants without his permission, even when he cries like a little bitch and begs her to stop. After initially causing Paolo's Priapism, Francesca declares while staring at his extra stiff tubesteak, "Your body is a condenser of energy now. It's huge now. It's almost frightening. Well done" and then the two proceed to have sex ten times in a row. When Paolo vainly boasts of his extraordinary potency and how he managed to bust ten loads in a row, Francesca berates him by stating to him while simultaneously riding his ramrod, "If you have counted them, then, we didn't make love. You only fucked me...With this phony thing. It was only a mechanical erection. The soul can also make a cock hard. If there's no soul..." Indeed, as the title of the film indicates, Francesca is not much more than premium grade meat to Paolo and there is no real genuine love or affection between the two characters, as they are both emotional cripples that are not much more than glorified blowup dolls to one another, though the male protagonist is certainly the more soulless of the two.

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In fact, at one point in the film, Paolo points at Francesca's derriere and various other body parts and asks a butcher at a grocery store what each part would be called if it were a cut of meat. Ultimately, Paolo's carnal obsession with Francesca takes a more sinister and even carnivorous turn in the end in what is ultimately a reversal of roles where predator becomes prey and vice versa.

After getting fed up with the extra hard work that comes with Priapism, Paolo begs Francesca to rid him of the "curse," though the little lady naturally takes her time and waits a day or two before she releases him from his sensual serfdom. Not long after being cured of his super boner, Paolo is visited by two obnoxious cops who inform him that they have been sent by his employer since he has not been to work in three months and five days. While Paolo self-righteously declares he needs a "rest period" since he is supposedly plagued by "nervous depression," the protagonist totally breaks down when one of the cops reads him a letter from his ex-wife informing him that his canine comrade Giovanni just died of an apparent broken heart since he has not visited him in such a longtime. In an allegorical scene that seems to reflect Paolo's status when it comes to romantic relationships, especially his current one, Paolo pays tribute to his canine companion by fucking Francesca doggy style in the dead doggy's flamboyantly colored doghouse. Of course, jovial guido Paolo's mourning does not last long, as he has a big party when all of his friends randomly come to stay at his beach house, though the protagonist spends most of his time with Francesca and his pal Nicola's mistress Giovanna. Indeed, since Nicola dumped Giovanna, Paolo and Francesca decide to cheer her up by engaging in a short-lived ménage à trios with her, with the three even having a threesome on the beach at sunset. Of course, all good things must come to an end and shortly after Giovanna leaves, Francesca decides she wants to leave Paolo as well.

When Francesca spots a stork flying through the sky, she sees it is a sign that she must leave Paolo for good, not realizing he is an over-possessive maniac who refuses to give her up. In a scene that indicates that Francesca is upset that Paolo does not really understand her, she completely infuriates the protagonist when she hands him a vintage baby doll with a missing eye and somberly states, "She needs affection just like me." Naturally, the last thing that Paolo would ever consider is that Francesca might be something more than flavorsome female flesh, let alone that she might desire genuine love and affection. In a scene that truly demonstrates Paolo's lack of empathy for Francesca, the protagonist violently throws the baby doll at a window and then proceeds to scream at her, "You should end up like Count Ugolino." Of course, Count Ugolino was a real-life 13th-century Italian nobleman, politician, and naval commander of Germanic origins that was depicted in Dante's Divine Comedy and was the subject of many other great works of art who was convicted of treason by an Archbishop and who, with his sons and grandson, was locked in a tower and starved to death. Ultimately, Francesca suffers a fate that is as barbarically me-

dieval as Count Ugolino at the hands of Paolo, who initially seems like a pathetic yet relatively harmless loser but in the end comes out looking like a uniquely unsympathetic momma's boy from hell who treats women like shit because, in his deluded dago mind, no chick can compare to the overweight woman who gave birth to him and risked her life so that he could receive First Communion.

If Marco Ferreri remade Spanish auteur Jesús Franco's classic *La comtesse noire* (1975) aka *Female Vampire* as a highly hermetic black rom-com with absurd commercial pretenses, that might begin describe the insanely idiosyncratic essence of *The Flesh*, which is surely the sort of film that could have only been directed by the man by such mirthfully mad cinematic masterpieces as *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) and *Ciao maschio* (1978) aka *Bye Bye Monkey*. Indeed, even a couple scenes from the film, especially when heroine Francesca's face is covered in blood after feeding on protagonist Paolo's self-inflicted wounds, seem like they were taken from *Female Vampire*. Of course, what Ferreri and Franco had in common aside from being distinctly unattractive men that somehow managed to surround themselves around beautiful women was that they seemed to both respect and fear the enigmatic 'vampiric' powers that certain beautiful (and not so beautiful) women have, but what makes the former different is that he was more sensitive to the pain and overall forsaken nature of such fatally forlorn feminine creatures, as if he saw them as victims of their own pulchritude. Despite unquestionably being one of Ferreri's lesser works, *The Flesh* still gives more than a couple hints of the filmmaker's singular genius, especially in regard to how the flick goes from initially making the male protagonist more empathetic than the female protagonist to the total opposite in the end, thereupon making the viewer conscious of their own misguided assumptions when it comes to certain beautiful yet bitchy women. Also, in arguably no other film does Ferreri better demonstrate why he once confessed that he was "50% misogynist and 50% feminist" than in his cannibal comedy, which is a rare film that dares to show great empathy to a female monster while also depicting the true inner depravity of an unimpressive and rather pathetic fellow. Aside from the fact that you can tell that the auteur absolutely worships Francesca Delleria due to the way his camera practically fondles her every curve throughout the film, Ferreri also demonstrates his inordinate sense of sympathy for the tragic real-life femme fatale, as if the entire movie was modeled after the model turned actress' own personal internal pain. In fact, in the doc, *Marco Ferreri: The Director Who Came from the Future*, lead actress Delleria describes how Ferreri took a special interest in her psychology, stating, "He often came to my house. We spoke about all sorts of things. He tried to get to know my character better. In the end he outlined the personality of the character he was creating." Ultimately, it seems that Ferreri discovered a tragic little girl inside the body of a singularly mature female adult body.

As far as darkly comedic cinematic works the link the carnal and culinary and

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depict a bizarrely dark and ultimately decidedly doomed romance between an attractive young woman and a hardly handsome older man, the quasi-Lynchian Dutch flick *Vlees* (2010) aka *Meat* directed by Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth makes for a great double feature with *The Flesh*. Undoubtedly, both films demonstrate that you're what you eat when it comes to relationships. Indeed, if you suck the cock or eat the cunt of a shithead, you probably are a shithead. While feminist brainwashing and white knight faggotry misleads people into thinking otherwise, women that are in relationships with abusive men are typically attracted to abusive men and vice versa, hence why it is not uncommon for a woman to start attacking a cop who is arresting her husband only minutes after she has called 911 on her beloved because he smacked her around a little bit. Additionally, the female lead of *The Flesh* knows that she is a nice piece of flesh and she lets the protagonist treat her as such as they are both shallow and emotionally damaged individuals that have nothing in common aside from said vanity and emotional damage. Somewhat intriguingly, I suspect that auteur Ferreri was projecting his own feelings toward Francesca Dellera onto the male protagonist, which is supported by the fact that the actress stated regarding the filmmaker and his somewhat unconventional approach to directing the film, "He wrote this script for me. He wrote it thinking about the way I exist. He's a very clever person. When he works, he's always changing things. He doesn't follow the script." Judging by his portly physique, lifelong obsession with culinary motifs, and unwavering obsession with unbelievably stunning screen sluts, one gets that Ferreri would have loved nothing more than gorging on Dellera, as there is only so much you can do to a woman with your trouser mauser and tongue. While *The Flesh* features a rather extreme example of the overused metaphorical phrase "don't judge a book by its cover," even the most sensible and restrained of men would surely find it impossible to ignore a woman like Dellera. Of course, what's even worse is actually falling in love with such a woman, as she will slowly but surely cannibalize your soul without even giving it a second thought.

-Ty E

THE COLLECTOR

Marcus Dunstan (2009)

When presented with this over-stylized piece of shit, I thought to myself "Do I deserve this ungovernable martyrdom by way of film?" and the answer turned to be a solid "Yes." I groaned throughout the music video-esque credits and held my face through my palm as the font seized its way across the screen in quick-cut shots along with over-contrasted shots of simplicity. I found out however, this was nothing compared to the introduction to our "anti-hero" as he moped his way across the screen with a general air of unpleasantness to him. Consider me shocked when the end credits rolled and I discovered that the film was actually a decent romp in what is stupidly referred to these days as "torture porn." To get to the digestible portions of this film, your resolve will be tested. Watching Josh Stewart creep around screen with his character's issues on his sleeve while avoiding the eye of a reclusive killer will turn you off if not handled with delicate eyes. The thinly veiled plot of *The Collector* is as follows: Ex-con needs money so he attempts to bungle a house only to find that a serial killer has imprisoned the tenants in the basement and ulterior motives might be at stake. Not too shabby for something that could be brainstormed by a lower level primate. It's not just the story that propels this film into watchable territory, it's the Collector himself. Juan Fernández doesn't do much on screen but it's in this cold, stoic killer that evil protrudes, especially through the highly effective mask created for the villain. Hands down, one of the greater motive driven maniacs in recent low budget horror. To reiterate my shock at finding this film not just tolerable but actually enjoyable and clever, I will again announce my limitless dislike for Marcus Dunstan. He, as a collective, co-wrote and created the *Feast* trilogy. While the first *Feast* was a no-rules splatter film with the likes of Henry Rollins as he facetiously graced the screen, the other two sequels shriveled up into a flaccid shadow of what it once was. I blame Dunstan solely for the two train wrecks and to be fair in every regard, he was responsible partly for some of the worst horror series' known to the film community e.g. *Saw* and *Feast*. So without a steady track record, who am I to lay my trust on this wavering line yet again? Well, that is in the past. I had and I was assured a comfortable horror experience while also being unnerved at the looming monster lurking through the halls decorated with some wildly over-the-top traps while still being tangibly believable. When the grand finale was afoot and there was only one place to go but hell, *The Collector* remained a tact thriller with gratuitous violence and nudity in all the right places. The delivery was calculated and intense with an ending that will have you rewinding your film to the beginning and searching for something, anything to calm this clambering curiosity. I expected this film to be nothing more than an exercise in rebellion against quality and focused more on the gore sake of horror but I was pleasantly reassured that this film only has one

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place to go and it moves steadily in that right direction. I honestly can't wait for the sequel in hopes for a bit more light to be shed on this "Collector" character. I'd be lying if I said he didn't make the film.

-mAQ

100 TEARS

Marcus Koch* (2007) I refuse to loosen my cynical slack on indie horror. If they want my respect, they've got to earn it. Any jerk off can pick up a camera and create a concoction of Karo syrup and other ingredients, ultimately resulting in a DIY horror film. It takes real talent to do so effectively. 100 Tears is an attempt that dared to try, but gained mileage too quick. Take any contemporary serial killer film and dissect it slowly. What is the end result? Surely I'd place my money on a duo "investigating" the killer who stumble upon him or her eventually. Directors don't seem to like change. Two douche bag tabloid reporters decide grudgingly on investigating the Teardrop killer. This remorseless inhuman clown has been slaughtering people for 20 years? Doesn't add a whole lot of sense to the equation, but I'll bite. The few things that have going for 100 Tears is the enjoyable (and overused) freak show back story lingering behind the myth of Gurdy the Clown, and the over-the-fucking-top violence that is exhibited for all to see. It doesn't seem to matter why this clown with a GIANT cleaver just shows up at random places and kills people. It doesn't worry you and you eventually forget how ridiculous the entire plot is. 100 Tears tries to throw small twists in there, and suffers a similar fate of most films by including incompetent cops who cannot find a mass-fucking-murderer. The idea of a clown slicing his way through a huge population for over 20 years is almost as retarded as saying Jeepers Creepers was based on a true story. I also get this feeling that Koch wanted a Devil's Rejects feel to his film. Trust me, that's not a very good inspiration. The direction of the film is led by Marcus Koch. He might be a simple exhibitionist, assumed by his insatiable appetite for inane violence and extremely brutal tortures committed on pulchritudinous women (Which heightens the suspense and overall shock value of the production). 100 Tears really aspires to be an indie classic but fails due to a horrible and amateurish ending, and the lack of delivering any memorability. The only memorable thing I can recall is the damned annoying techno track that would loop whenever the killer strikes. 100 Tears is just another bland & tasteless horror film. The only striking difference is that this is shot on HD.

-mAQ

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Marcus Nispel (2003)

It has been a couple years since the release of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre remake. This piece of blasphemous garbage helped carry the torch for the Horror remake trend (among other trash). The first people need to realize is that the "remake" is just a moneymaker. When you remake a well known film it's guaranteed that people are going to watch it. Michael Bay (the cinematic antichrist) knows this as he was the producer of the film (and a handful of other Horror remakes). Texas Chainsaw Massacre is also a propaganda film. The film is used as a tool to scare city folks into being afraid of rural areas. This Long Island invention has been long and running in Horror films for over thirty years (and probably longer). The same people that condemn what they call "Xenophobia (which is just a Marxist agitator tool)" promote the hatred of "rednecks." I think its pretty fair to say that if you walk around in a city you are more likely to get killed. Hollywood hates people from rural areas and the South. They fear "rednecks" as these "horror" films reflect. The remake of TCM takes away all the magic that was found in the original. The original TCM is a masterpiece because of it's realist feel. One could even say that the original TCM borders cinéma-vérité. The remake of TCM is just a cheap piece of gratuitous trash leaving out all the great elements of the original. Having 7th Heaven star Jessica Biel play the role of a strong female character in TCM should make any horror film cringe. The only positive aspect of TCM is R. Lee Ermey plays the role of the local sheriff. Ermey is a hilarious fellow and a great comedian. His performance in Full Metal Jacket alone is enough to confirm his place in acting history (a true method actor?). Lee Ermey does a great job scaring the shit out of hippies and that is to his credit in TCM. His performance in the horrible TCM prequel (Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning) was even worth seeing. Most of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre related films are complete shit (with the exception of the original and second). Furthermore, most remakes are complete shit. If people stopped watching them, they wouldn't get made. Cannibal Holocaust and Last House on the Left are expected to get remade sometime in the near future. The people involved in these projects should be burned at the stake.

-Ty E

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Marcus Nispel (2003)

Judging from personal experience, the best way to view Tobe Hooper's 1974 masterpiece *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is on a local television station as a morose eight year old boy next to a sleeping grandmother and with no idea what you are about to watch is a horror film. The "based on a true story" preamble was all it took to set me off guard, and over sixteen years later I'm still reeling from the stale sweat nightmare that befell a group of five youths, in particular Sally Hardesty and her invalid brother, Franklin. Much has been written about *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*- how despite its title and grisly reputation, there is very little on-screen violence and almost no gore. The brilliance of the jarringly dissonant soundtrack and the incredible set design of the Sawyer family residence- akin to a house decorated by Hermann Nitsch and then left to mummify over the course of a searing Texan summer. Leatherface, Ed Gein influence, the diminishing returns of the sequels and remake and prequel to the remake. Influence on punk culture, what with the hippie killing, *The Ramones' "Chainsaw"*, Spanish post-punkers Paralisis Permanente's immortal "Un Dia En Texas", and Leatherface buttflaps blowing in the wind of many a shopping mall parking lot.

To this, I have admittedly little to add, aside from some personal reminiscence perhaps. For years, I have longed to relive the experience of going into a movie completely blind to what it is about (if anything, considering the opening narration and the lurid title, I was expecting a 'true crime' story a la *Helter Skelter* or *In Cold Blood* and not a horror film, despite Halloween being a week away) (never one for deductive reasoning at that age, or now for that matter) and being so completely bowled over. For my money, there is no scene more gutwrenching in the annals of cinema than the scene where the hippie youth, en route to a concert, decide to accrue some good karma and pick up a hitchhiker. In the cramped confines of their van, the hitchhiker, played to sun-damaged perfection by Edwin Neal, succeeds in sufficiently unnerving the kids first with his overpowering slaughterhouse stench and then with his incredibly stunted and awkward attempts at conversation, nervously giggling and stammering through descriptions of slaughterhouse techniques and headcheese recipes from behind some very authentically filthy locks. The hippies' disgust is palpable, and the scene verges on the unbearable as you develop a sort of sympathy for the brain damaged Manson family castoff with the smudge of facial birthmark and pitiful, twitching leer trying to connect with the "normies" while simultaneously empathizing with the infinitely more relatable plight of the hippies whose initial regret about picking the guy up quickly descends into all-too-real horror.

By the time this scene came to its close, with the hitchhiker ejected from the van and smearing blood on it's door while hollering and blowing raspberries at the shrieking longhairs, I was as good as meathooked, my heart in my throat,

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my breath shallow, and not even a slew of commercials able to rouse me from my wide-eyed reverie. As Hooper and cinematographer Daniel Pearl took the film from the subtle menace of the roadside mirages, dead armadillos and desecrated gravesides of the opening scenes to the full blown bad trip surrealism of the dinner scene that closes the film my life was forever changed. Freddy and Jason were out and I learned to see terror not in superhuman boogeymen and dark stormy nights but in all-too-human aberration and the overbearing presence of the unforgiving summer sun. To this day I fear nothing more than a wavering horizon line, dry grass, and desolate stretches of desert, entirely a result of stumbling upon *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* that night in October, 1994. And furthermore, to this day, there hasn't been a single film as harrowing, both for the unique circumstances aforementioned and because it is a singularly terrifying film- the best display of pure nightmare logic I've seen outside of maybe that scene behind the diner in Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (another uniquely scarring viewing experience as I'd dozed off during watching the beginning of that particular film at two in the morning following an intense bout of studying for finals and woke up just at the beginning of the scene in question--FUCK). It never for a second lets up in terms of intensity and doesn't bother explaining itself too much but lets us experience the nightmare firsthand along with the flared pantsed human cattle (I think about the only time it lets up aside from some brief 'comic relief' concerning Grandpa's executioner skills towards the end is when Franklin bites the dust...that irritating invalid is the sole smudge on this flawless flick, and when he meets the chainsaw it's impossible not to sigh a breath of relief).

Hooper stated in interviews that the spark of inspiration for the film was childhood imaginings of vague passed along stories of necrophile/amateur taxidermist Ed Gein, and this really carries through into the final product, as it feels at times less a traditional horror film than childhood fever dreams brought to revving, gasoline-soaked life. It certainly permeated my childhood nightmares, and looking up Gein after researching the film as a kid was quite the disappointment- the banality of evil versus the sheer mindfuck Vietnam-brought-home dementia of Hooper's sole great film (the rest of his oeuvre ranging from the competent to the beguiling and terrible to the directed by Steven Spielberg)- and oh yeah, cannibalism. People eating people and stuff. That's what this one is about, I guess. Reading over what I wrote so far I realize I kinda left that out. Then again, I'm preaching to the choir, right? Surely you've seen this movie. And if you haven't, what the fuck?! It's your duty as an American, way more vital to being an American than voting, selective service, or even citizenship. This movie IS America, or something. Fuck the pledge of allegiance, pledge to show this movie to the children in your life. I pity the kid who stumbles upon one of the remakes or sequels in lieu of the real thing and thinks they have seen the stitched-together, fly-ridden face of horror. They have no idea. If you have younger siblings or

impressionable youth around the house- do them a favor and give them a taste of the real thing. Tell them that it IS based on a true story and force them to sit through at least the scene in the van, at which point they should be riveted and you can retreat from the room. Then enjoy the next couple months of being woken by their cold sweat screams every time a dirtbike cruises down the block and the look of supreme unease during that family trip to the Grand Canyon.

-Jon-Christian

FRIDAY THE 13TH
FRIDAY THE 13TH

Marcus Nispel (2009)

Jason is undoubtedly the greatest horror movie icon ever created. Some may argue Michael Myers, some may scream Freddy Krueger, some may even mutter Chucky's name under their breath, but the fact of the matter remains that Jason Voorhees is the scariest (if any were scary), meanest, and toughest villain of all time. When a Friday the 13th re-imagining was announced, many were speculating the success of the film, both monetarily and within the allotted fan base. Seeing as how the original films were trashy body count sprees, the expectations for this film could only rise above 90s cheese. Friday the 13th begins with a "Kill first, ask questions later" paraphrasing. You will encounter a group of teenagers searching for weed growth in order to harvest and become rich. This classic "Drugs and sex" vantage is necessary to start the tale off on a right foot. Early during the credits, we're given a flashback to the scene of the death of Pamela Voorhees. This alludes to the plot that will be slowly, but surely, fleshed out to your prying eyes. I must admit for a sense of needless anticipation for this film. While scoping out the theatrical trailer, I noticed something elusive to the older Jason films - style and lighting. Marcus Nispel took something ugly and made it beautiful. In a similar tactic that Rob Zombie used to horrible effect in Halloween, Friday the 13th, for the first time, is tenderly beautiful to look at. On the matter of gore/violent deaths, it doesn't disappoint. Normally and frequently, I tend to stray from the topic of violence as it never really adds anything true to a film but Friday the 13th features some barbaric scenes that flash back to the heydays of classic Friday the 13th films. One amazing scene in instance is the stringing of a slutty teen in a sleeping bag that is tied to a tree. Oh yeah, she's suspended over a fire and is slowly being burnt to a crisp. Much humor is carefully intersected into each scene. With a multicultural cast including a Black and Asian male, Friday the 13th takes very little time to build up a body count. But be wary of other pre-release reviewers. They have laid claims that this movie is as ultraviolent as it gets and as much as I'd like to agree, the majority of death scenes are simple impalements with the occasional elaborate murder. It's absurd, the effect of violence on horror fans that is. As many teenagers as we see die, we'll never quite get the feel of a loss. Maybe the slasher genre is to blame. Many strokes of genius can be discovered within the confines of a shallow slice n' dice film. For example, within the opening scene, a male requests for a can of Heineken. The all-American man exclaims "Fuck that Euro shit!" and holds up a can of the great Pabst Blue Ribbon. Now for those in the know, you will quickly discover that this is a reference to David Lynch's Blue Velvet. Not bad, Marcus Nispel. Just like with many Jason films, there will be questions, albeit small, that will never be answered. As in, why in the sex scene are they listening to M.I.A. whilst fucking? Not so much the choice of music but why, with

the minutes later cut-back, is the same song playing? Sure, repeat is an option but the song wasn't playing during the foreplay. Another is the very concept of a "retard" living in the forest, built like a train, gallivanting around, decapitating teenagers and local folks, and never having to use deodorant. Prescribed deaths always equalize into a jump out scene of Papa Voorhees but if someone was creeping behind me that didn't bathe in 20+ years, I'm pretty sure I could smell him from miles away. The tale is short but sweet. Friday the 13th has been given the reboot it deserves with style, grace, and an all-star teen cast of teenage heart throbs. My only real complaint is the choice of survivors. Many can agree with me concerning the invention of a "Choose your own" adventure-like method to filming a slasher film. I'm tired of seeing nice people die the cruelest. Of all the trash featured, why when the innocent dies, is there such a lingering suspense and disbelief. Now that's proper horror movie magic. I can imagine many people complaining but the expectations were low. Jason Voorhees has been successfully reborn and I'm not sweating it. The legend of his terror breaks into a new millennium (not counting Freddy vs. Jason) and he's given motive, reason, and a fervid dislike for anything with a lifeforce. Welcome to 2009.

-mAQ

LESS THAN ZERO
LESS THAN ZERO

Marek Kaniévka (1987)

Although I think Bret Easton Ellis (*American Psycho*, *Glamorama*) is a mostly untalented, uninteresting, and exceedingly overrated writer who pollutes people's brains with his frivolous degeneracy, I like, to some an extent or another, virtually all of the films based on his novels, if not for all the wrong reasons. Indeed, it seems that even with an incompetent director, Ellis' signature emotionless satirical attacks on the members of his decidedly decadent and seemingly psychopathic white collar upper-class background seem to translate better on screen, with music and actors accentuating the 'hip' flatness of his scribblings. Unquestionably, one of the worst, if not the worst, film based on Ellis' work is *Less Than Zero* (1987), which is loosely based on the writer's debut 1985 best-selling novel of the same name. Of course, as a film featuring real-life cockhead Robert John Downey, Jr. playing a fictional cockhead who peddles his ass and mouth to men for blow, the film is not all bad, as a soulless and largely aesthetically worthless cinematic venture that more or less perfectly expresses the essence of the spiritually and culturally vacant zeitgeist that it depicts. Directed by Polish-British TV director turned mainstream auteur Marek Kaniévka, who previously directed *Another Country* (1984) starring real-life butt-darting Brit Rupert Everett as a butt-darting school boy turned commie true believer who defects to the Soviet Union because he believes the English class system persecutes cocksuckers and that the reds will accept his cocksucking with open arms, *Less Than Zero* is certainly no less critical of capitalism and the upper-class, as it depicts Los Angeles as a plastic radio rock Sodom inhabited by dapper drug zombies and Barbie doll debutantes where wimpy pseudo-suavely dressed WASP psychopaths sell their coke-addled friends into sex slavery, young models cannot get enough cock and cocaine, and every night is one big stupid party plagued by vulgar flashy fashion statements, putrid pop rock and rap, and mind-numbingly boring small-talk and business talk. Centering around a weak dork played by perennial weak dork Andrew McCarthy (*Mannequin*, *Pretty in Pink*) who comes back to his hometown in Los Angeles for Christmas break after his first six months in college, only to discover his best friend and (ex)girlfriend have degenerated into erratic cocaine addicts who think life is one big party, *Less Than Zero* is ultimately an emotionally vacant film about emotionally vacant people who suffer senseless self-induced personal tragedy, thereupon making it vaguely humorous in a sick unintentional sort of way. Indeed, a sort of half-entertaining antidote to the sentimentalist pseudo-angst of John Hughes flicks where one of the 'heroes' drops dead in the end due to his own mindless self-indulgence, Kaniévka's badly bastardized Ellis adaptation is ultimately a reminder of how worthless the 1980s were, with the west coast upper-class reflecting everything that is repugnant about white America. Featuring arguably

the most airheaded Jewess ever depicted in cinema history as played by Jami Gertz and the always annoyingly arrogant WASP wuss James Spader as a dope-dealing preppie villain, *Less Than Zero* is like a melodrama for Abercrombie & Fitch automatons who need a guide towards expressing actual human emotions.

It is 1987 and three over-privileged L.A. friends graduate with “money and happiness” on their mind, yet they will ultimately have a hard time obtaining both, especially the latter, hence why 2 of the 3 rich kids become preppie dope fiends. As a graduation present from his exceedingly wealthy father, an extroverted cokehead goofball named Julian Wells (Robert Downey, Jr.) is given enough money to start a record label, so he opts out of getting a higher education, though his friends, lovers Clay Easton (Andrew McCarthy) and Blair (Jamie Gertz), are planning to move away to college. In six months, the friends are no longer the best of friends anymore, as sex, drugs, and rock n roll come into play. An aspiring model that is afraid to move away and has more boobs than brains, Blair ultimately decides to stay behind at the last minute and eventually starts a love affair with her boy toy Clay’s best bro Julian, who eventually loses all of his money after his rather naive record deal scheme falls through. As someone who cannot handle failure, small-time cokehead Julian turns into a full-blown blow addict to relieve his inner pain, which ultimately only further compounds his problems. During Christmas break, Clay heads back to Los Angeles, though he is not interested in seeing his friends who literally and figuratively screwed him over, but they need his help, so he really does not have a choice and eventually gets lost in the narcotic-fueled nightmare that is his decidedly degenerated comrade’s lives. Indeed, Julian is so in love with gutter glitter that he owes \$50,000 to a suave and pathologically cynical psychopath named Rip (James Spader) who, on top of being a white collar drug dealer that mainly supplies the rich man’s candy, is a preppie pimp who has a rather lucrative business prostituting out his more desperate buyers to rich Hollywood homos. To his credit, Rip is a proud prick who has no problem exploiting people as demonstrated by his remark to Clay during a party, “These people are assholes. You know, who gives a fuck about these people?” Of course, even though Julian fucked his girlfriend, Clay cares about his blow-addled friend, so naturally he and Rip are going to have a wuss war of sorts involving passive-aggressive behavior and the sort of sassy remarks that candy ass rich boys from California make.

Being a rich kid, Julian does not understand the concept of work and thinks that by borrowing enough money to start up a nightclub, he will be able to get out of the perennially growing hole he is in, but he of course screws that scheme up and continues to obtain large quantities of coke from Rip. Of course, passive predator Rip does not give him the drugs for free, as he coerces him into sucking the cocks of rich queers to pay off his tab. Meanwhile, Clay rekindles his seemingly soulless relationship with braindead brunette bimbo Blair, who also snorts a lot of blow, though she is not as bad off as Julian as she does not

LESS THAN ZERO

need to blow men to support her rather expensive habit. Somewhat reluctantly, Clay attempts to help Julian with his hellish addiction, even being by his friend's side when he goes through drug withdrawal, but his friend's sobriety only lasts a day or so. Indeed, when Rip has one of his henchmen whip out a crackpipe and wave it in Julian's face, the cokehead turned crackhead begins smoking the blue-veined Havana once again. When Clay goes looking for Julian at a fancy hotel that Rip has rented out for his cultivated cocksucker clients, he finds his friend blowing some wealthy blonde guy. Though Clay manages to get Julian out of the hotel, he later has a PBF (pretty boy fag) fight with Rip and one of his henchmen, with Blair jumping in to help her weakling boyfriend. In the end, Clay, Blair, and Julian drive through the desert late at night so the latter can reach sobriety, but the teenage cokehead ultimately ends up dying of heart failure at sunset. Of course, with their friend dead, Blair agrees to go back to college with Clay, so at least some good came out of Julian's premature death.

Not surprisingly, Bret Easton Ellis absolutely hated *Less Than Zero* when it was released as he felt all the characters were miscast aside from Downey and Spader's, though he has slightly warmed up to the film over the years. Ellis would later state regarding why he thought the film was a failure: "Well, who was happy with it? I don't know anyone who was happy with it. The director wasn't happy with it, and it was this compromised movie for many, many reasons. I don't think it began that way - I think that Scott Rudin and Barry Diller, who were the ones who brought it to 20th Century Fox, had a very different movie in mind. I think when there was the regime change at the studio with Leonard Goldberg taking over, who was a family man who had kids, it became a different beast. I grew up around Hollywood, and I had no real desire to see the book made into a movie. I thought, 'Well, we'll take the money, and 98% of all books optioned never make it to the screen, so...'" Of course, there are countless differences between the film and novel. For instance, while protagonist Clay is a banal tight ass in Kanievsk's flick, he is a bisexual hedonist of the one-night-stand-oriented and coke-snorting sort in Ellis' source novel. Additionally, the novel features, among other things, an appearance from a 12-year-old female sex slave who villain Rip keeps drugged in his bedroom and who is apparently raped by a character named Trent that is barely even featured in the film. In a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, Ellis would mention the film in his sequel to *Less Than Zero*, *Imperial Bedrooms* (2010). Additionally, Ellis would make reference to *Less Than Zero* star Jami Gertz in his novel *American Psycho* (1991), with the serial killer antihero Patrick Bateman asking about the actress at a video store and zoning out while fantasizing about fucking the actress after a video store clerk remarks that he does not know who she is (indeed, aside from people who have seen superlatively shitty 1980s teen movies, no one knows who Gertz is nowadays). While *Less Than Zero* is rather weak in terms of wantonness and nihilism in comparison to the source novel, director Marek Kanievsk is not

totally to blame as he apparently shot a raunchier and more debasing work than the pansy cut that exists today, but 20th Century Fox studio took the film away from the director during post-production and edited out all the more provocative and depressing scenes. Of course, one also cannot leave out the fact that Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Michael Cristofer wrote the original screenplay for the film, which was more faithful to the book, but it was ultimately rejected for being too degenerate and depressing, as the people at Fox were probably hoping to make some sort of monetarily successful *Breakfast Club* (1985) rip-off (ironically, the film was still a commercial failure).

Undoubtedly, out of all of the Ellis related films, including *The Informers* (2008) and *The Canyons* (2013), *Less Than Zero* is easily the weakest, least provocative, and most contrived, as a sort of coke-fueled West Coast *St. Elmo's Fire* (1985), minus anything resembling character development and nuance. As the quasi-documentary *This Is Not an Exit: The Fictional World of Bret Easton Ellis* (1999), which features no-budget adaptations of segments from the novelist's various works (including *Less Than Zero* and *American Psycho*), reveals, *Less Than Zero* could have been an even bigger disaster than it already is, as Kaniewska's mise-en-scène is easily the most potent thing about the film. Unquestionably, as the novelist himself agrees (he once stated of the work, "I think the movie itself is the one movie that captured my sensibility in a visual and cinematic language"), Roger Avary's 2002 *The Rules of Attraction* adaptation is an Ellis flick done right, as a film that is easily superior to the novel. As I mentioned before, *Less Than Zero* is mainly of interest because of its portrayal of real-life coke addict Robert Downey Jr. as more or less playing himself, with the added bonus of the Hebraic actor smoking cocks for crack rocks, thus making it a mildly entertaining example of pseudo-art imitating life and vice versa. Unquestionably, the film also features some of the most innately vapid and unsympathetic characters in film history, even for a 1980s flick, as a film that should probably be buried in a time capsule. Indeed, when people of the future ask why rich whites became culture-less whores of Zion who helped lead American to abject ruin, they can simply watch *Less Than Zero* and see how that zeitgeist (and everyone after it) had the spiritual and moral prowess of an elderly French hooker. But then again, one cannot completely loathe a film featuring Slayer's cover "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" and Glenn Danzig singing a crappy ballad featuring negresses doing backup vocals.

-Ty E

THE ORDER OF MYTHS THE ORDER OF MYTHS

Margaret Brown (2008) Why have documentaries become the pseudo-intellectual's stock answer to the question, "So, what kind of movies do you like?". Well, I guess that question kind of answers itself. Pseudo-intellectuals are, by definition, deficient in original, independent thought. Like seventh graders, they follow fashions fairly well, and lately, the "cool" answer to give when someone inquires about your taste in film is, "Oh, well I mainly just watch documentaries". This answer is typically coated in a snooty syntax that is immediately intended to put the pseudo-intellectual in a position of artistic and cultural superiority versus someone who may have just seen *Bedtime Stories*.

It may sound as if I'm being unfair to the documentary genre, as if I place a low-quality on the "non-fiction" films simply because I despise a certain, specific sub-class of people who like them. Not so. I think documentary = lazy cinema. Not lazy in the physical sense, as if to imply that the makers of these types of films aren't ambitious hard workers. But lazy in that no matter what style the documentary takes (talking heads, verite "on the scene" accounts, narrated passages of found footage) it is inherently less visually interesting than a narrative film. I watch films to see production design, acting, lighting, framing, composition, color, camera trickery. That is cinema. There are exceptions, yes, but I feel that 98% of documentaries are always inferior to the artistry involved in the making of a narrative film.

Still, documentaries can be entertaining, and my fierce stance against them as a credible art form has led me to watch quite a few in order to keep my argument fresh. Just like a news story on 20/20 can be fun, or a bullsh*t piece on PBS can introduce me to an unknown topic, this genre of film is not without value... don't misunderstand me. High art, it ain't, but a cute and casual time kill? Sure.

A couple of days ago, I watched *The Order of Myths*. The film is your typical guilty liberal puff-piece where race-hustling is used to garner instant critical acclaim. Check the way director Margaret Brown juxtaposes a scene where a town elder in Mobile, Alabama talks about the importance of trees to his community in a totally holistic way, with a scene talking about past lynchings and hangings in Alabama. Without conscience, she just labeled this man a racist. Same goes for the way she traces the roots of one of her young subject's family back to the time of the slave trade, implying that this 21st century young woman has the instincts of hate in her heart. Documentarians can be passive-aggressive scum at times.

But Brown redeems herself a tad in the film's final third (perhaps she realized she was unfairly painting an innocent girl with a very broad brush). The major focus of the film surrounds Mobile, Alabama's annual celebration of Mardi Gras, and it questions why the community still has one parade for whites and one

parade for blacks. Though from the (few) explanations that Brown allows the locals - both white and black - to give, tradition seems to have a lot to do with it. I don't doubt that some of the participants of both parades suffer from serious feelings of bigotry, but I get the feeling that it's a small percentage. Yet hate sells, so Brown plays that angle up... until the end.

Finally, as if feeling a disservice to the people of Mobile (who are all genuine and warm to Ms. Brown) was starting to take shape, *The Order of Myths* shows the united fronts of both white and black parades coming together in a sharing celebration, proving once and for all that the separation of the two parades wasn't based on prejudice at all, but simply tradition and cultural differences. The last shot of the film has Brown revealing to the audience that one of the men she frequently interviews throughout the film is her grandfather. This moment gives Brown credibility, motivation for why she decided to enter this small town and try to stir up a controversy. Her own ties to the community explains that she may have been hungry to understand her past and heritage on an honest level, and it urges you to let the director off the hook for a second... but just for a second.

-The Man With No Name

HANNAH ARENDT
HANNAH ARENDT

Margarethe von Trotta (2012)

Popular German New Cinema auteur Margarethe von Trotta (*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, *Rosenstrasse*) has always had a peculiar proclivity for taking beautiful blonde Aryan actresses and making them seem as sexually unappealing, frigid, and soulless as possible, turning Fassbinder's leading lady Hanna Schygulla (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Lili Marleen*) into a pedantic feminist literature professor in her film *Sheer Madness* (1983) aka *Heller Wahn* and statuesque beauty Barbara Sukowa (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *M. Butterfly*) into the most horrendous of Hebrew hag communists in *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986) aka *Die Geduld der Rosa Luxemburg*, the latter of which she received the German Film Award (*Bundesfilmpreis*) in 1986 for her bizarre philo-Semitic efforts, so it should be no surprise she did the same for her latest flick *Hannah Arendt* (2012), albeit with more interesting and surprising results. Once again featuring Barbara Sukowa in the lead aesthetically degrading role of a historically controversial butch Jewess, *Hannah Arendt* is a Hollywood-like biopic that depicts the controversy regarding German-Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt's groundbreaking book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), a work written for *The New Yorker* that not only offended world Jewry due to its depiction of National Socialist SS-Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant colonel) Adolf Eichmann—a naughty Nazi who fled Germany after the Second World War and was dubiously captured by members of the Israeli Mossad and ultimately executed in 1962 via hanging after being found guilty of 'crimes against humanity' and 'war crimes' at an Israeli show trial that was a major media event—as a boring bureaucrat who did not genuinely hate Jews and was merely 'following orders' in his deportation of Jews to concentration camps as if he was the manager at a fast food restaurant like McDonalds, but also because she revealed the imperative role that Jewish leaders, especially Zionist Jewish leaders (who wanted Jews out of Germany just as much as the Nazis and sent to Palestine), had in voluntarily collaborating with the Nazis during the holocaust. To add to the hostility felt by her fellow Hebrews, Arendt was also the protégé and mistress of German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP) on May 1, 1933 and never expressed an inkling of regret nor remorse for being arguably the greatest 'National Socialist' thinker who has ever lived. A sort of real-life 'Romeo and Juliet' story among philosophers, Arendt kept in contact with Heidegger for the rest of her life, even after he became a Nazi and she spent a brief period of time in Camp Gurs concentration camp in Vichy, France before escaping to America, and her relationship with the Aryan philosopher sparked her famous concept about "the banality of evil" where evil acts are not typically carried out by psychopaths and sadists, but ordinary people who are brainwashed by the state and consider actions they carry out for the government—no matter how

deplorable—as normal. A German-Luxembourgian-French coproduction ironically released by a production company called “Heimatfilm”, Hannah Arendt is a fiercely formulaic flick that looks like it could have been directed by a sorry shabbos goy Hollywood hack like George Clooney, yet considering its unflattering portrayal of Israel and its hypocritical Hitlerite-esque tactics, von Trotta’s film could have never been made in Hollywood despite it depicting arguably the greatest female Jewish philosopher of all time.

Hannah Arendt (Barbara Sukowa) smokes like a chimney but when she takes the job of reporting on the war crimes of Adolf Eichmann for *The New Yorker*, cigarettes become practically her only real friends as she learns that criticism of the Jews in any context, even if you’re a holocaust survivor, is nothing short of Hebraic heresy. Being named the first female lecturer at Princeton University in 1959, Arendt is a prestigious philosopher who is also happily married to a kraut cuckold communist poet/philosopher named Heinrich Blücher (Axel Milberg), but her life was not always so grand as she was forced to flee her birth nation of Deutschland in 1933 for Paris to escape from Uncle Adolf and she even stayed in a Vichy, France concentration camp as an “enemy alien” after Germany took over frogland, but she eventually escaped with her hubby and mother to New York City in 1941, where she became actively involved with the German-Jewish community and after the Second World War even became involved with the Zionist organization Youth Aliyah. As depicted in von Trotta’s *Hannah Arendt*, Arendt, an uncompromising individualist with no need for a superficial collective identity, got over her reactionary flirtation with Zionism and had no problem with factually implicating many bigwig Jewish leaders in collaborating in the holocaust while covering the Eichmann trial. While at Eichmann’s trial in Jerusalem, Arendt notices that the big bad SS man “doesn’t scare me at all. He is insignificant” and he “speaks in horrible administrative jargon,” thus being far from the sinister Satanic SS man that threw Jewish babies off moving trains like the mainstream American and Israeli media portrayed him to be. While Arendt confides in her Israeli friend Kurt Blumenfeld (Michael Degen)—the the secretary general of the World Zionist Organization from 1911 to 1914—that “Israel must ensure that it doesn’t become a show trial,” she is more than a little bit let down by her people’s exploitation of Eichmann as a sort of scapegoat for Jewish/Zionist (in)action in regard to the holocaust.

After releasing her article for *The New Yorker*, Arendt faces hatred and hostility from all sides and angles, including many of her lifelong friends. Only her husband and her friend Mary McCarthy (Janet McTeer)—an anti-Zionist/anti-Stalinist Trotskyite of partial Jewish ancestry—backs her up against her hateful, largely Hebraic, detractors. Arendt even receives a visit from a Zionist fanatic/Mossad member sent by the Israeli government who comes all the way to the United States to threaten her not to publish her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, which she sharply retorts to with the remark, “You forbid books, and you speak

HANNAH ARENDT

of decency!,” thus alluding to the Nazi-esque tactics of Israelis in criminalizing thought. Naturally, reading hate mail from anonymous holocaust survivors that reads, “DAMN YOU TO HELL - DU NAZIHURE” (aka Nazi Whore) rather depresses Arendt, but as a true uncompromising philosopher and intellectual, she does not let the “banality of evil” Zionist-brainwashed public opinion defeat her as it only fuels her belief in the validity of her claims. In a very telling scene featuring Arendt comforting her dying Israeli friend Kurt, who is saddened by his belief that she has turned her back on the Jewish people, the Hebraic Heidegger protégé confesses she does not love the Jewish people, stating, “Kurt, you know me though. I have never loved a people. Why should I love the Jews? I only love my friends. This is the only love I am capable of.” Arendt ultimately faces her worst criticism from her lifelong friend Hans Jonas (ironically played by Ulrich Noethen, who has planned Heinrich Himmler in at least two German films, including in *Downfall* (2004) aka *Der Untergang*)—a German Jewish philosopher who also studied under Heidegger who took it quite personally when his professor joined the Nazi Party in 1933—who vehemently attacks her after she gives a heated lecture to her students defending her report on Eichmann, stating quite scornfully, “You’re acting like a German intellectual quibbling who despises Jews. And you try to make us accomplices of the Holocaust!...You never accepted that the Germans have shamefully betrayed you. They have expelled you, and they’d have killed you if they had the chance! Your friend Eichmann was responsible for Gurs transportation. If you didn’t get the chance to escape in time, you would have suffered the same fate as the other women!” In the end, Arendt says to her husband Heinrich while looking outside her apartment bedroom, “the whole world is trying to prove that I’m wrong. And no one sees my real mistake. Evil can not be both ordinary and radical. Evil is always extreme. Never radical. Good is always deep and radical,” thus essentially associating her own radical thought with the Eichmann trial as “good” and those of her extreme yet mindless detractors as “evil.”

While certainly no masterpiece, Hannah Arendt is easily one of the best biopics I have ever seen on an intellectual figure, even if it is a bit aesthetically banal, as it demonstrates that Hannah Arendt was a rare German-Jewish thinker of courage who, despite being technically a ‘holocaust survivor’ and having the potential to milk her Jewishness to further her career, stoically sought philosophical truth, proving that not all men that do monstrous things are monsters and, indeed, the cowardliness and/or greed of Jewish leaders played a imperative role in Jewish suffering during the Second World War. As someone who has read *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), it is quite clear to me why Hollywood has never directed an Arendt biopic as the book basically discredits a good portion of the ‘holocaust narrative’ as depicted in films like *Schindler’s List* (1993), where the Nazis are virtually portrayed as demonic disciples of the devil himself and all Jews are portrayed as morally immaculate angels in kosher form. While I cannot say

I have ever had much respect for Margarethe von Trotta or her films, I must admit Germany's foremost female auteur surprised me with Hannah Arendt as she demonstrated that she is not just an ethno-masochistic and philo-Semitic feminist as demonstrated by works like *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986) and *Rosenstrasse* (2003), but also a rare modern day Teutonic filmmaker who has the gall to portray not only mainstream leftist academia, but especially the Hebraic nation of Israel, as being true blue hypocrites who just as slavishly follow orders as Mr. Banality of Evil himself, Adolf Eichmann. Additionally, von Trotta also refrained from portraying Martin Heidegger as an evil Nazi, but instead as a wise and loving man who was not exactly the greatest genius when it came to politics. While it is probably unlikely, I would not mind seeing Ms. von Trotta direct a biopic about Leni Riefenstahl as it might be rewarding to see how the most famous contemporary female German filmmaker depicts easily the most (in)famous female filmmaker—be it German or otherwise—who has ever lived.

-Ty E

THE ANGEL'S MELANCHOLIA
THE ANGEL'S MELANCHOLIA

Marian Dora (2009)

Admittedly, German auteur Marian Dora's arthouse exploitation flick *Cannibal* (2006) – a deadly serious reconstructed depiction of the intimate cock-chomping antics of real-life gay cannibal Armin Meiwes and his willing lover/dinner – left a notably profound impression on me. Opening with images of miscegenating cannibalistic serial-killer Jeffrey Dahmer and the Third Reich and featuring some of the most audaciously aberrant 'love' scenes ever captured on digital video (and that includes hardcore pornography), *Cannibal* is a delightfully deranged tribute to the wild and wonderful cryptic world of homo-cidal sadomasochism. Needless to say, I was quite excited when I learned about Marian Dora's second feature-length film *The Angel's Melancholia* (2009) aka *Melancholie Der Engel*; a 165 minute neo-pagan cinematic *nachtmahr* of dreamy Dionysian depravity that features a bombastic blitzkrieg of expressive and sometimes strikingly therapeutic portrayals of coprophilia, urolagnia (aka watersports), genital mutilation, animal cruelty, and melodramatic left-wing hero worship. Including music by swarthy American-born Israelite David A. Hess of *The Last House on the Left* (1972) infamy and featuring lonely scenic walks through Auschwitz concentration camp by the film's two lead anti-heroes, *The Angel's Melancholia* is a vehemently visceral window into the post-WWII German psyche and the death-drive-afflicted mania and scatological perversity that such ethno-masochistic self-loathing entails. Following in the aesthetic and thematic footsteps of his fellow countrymen Jörg Buttgerit (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*) and Andreas Bethmann (*Der Todesengel* aka *Angel of Death: Fuck or Die*), as well as Italian auteur Ruggero Deodato (*Waves of Lust*, *Cannibal Holocaust*), *The Angel's Melancholia* is an unflinching work of noisome and loathsome yet lavishly assembled cinematic artistry that wholly transcends its influences, thus sailing subversive sicko cinema to a new uncharted sea of sadistic and satyric extremity. Forget Siegfried Kracauer's neo-Marxist psychobabble on the German expressionist films of the Weimar Republic, *The Angel's Melancholia* is a truly sordid spectacle of a spiritually devitalized, emotionally demoralized, and self-flagellating people that worships death and strives unceasingly for self-annihilation; or at least one would be led to believe that is the case after watching such an innately intemperate and inimical post-völkisch work.

During the beginning of *The Angel's Melancholia*, we are introduced to two loving yet loony friends: Katze; a slightly overweight Nordic degenerate with a keen fondness for warm urine and Brauth; a seemingly Semitic Christ-like/Satan-like messianic figure who initially gives off the impression of being the more dominant of the two fiendish confidantes. These two bodacious bros of brutality haven't seen each other in years, but they are eternally united due to their past communal excursions in debauched perversity. On their way to

achieving abyssal Arcadia, the two cunning comrades pick-up three girls who have nil inkling as to what sort of vicious licentiousness the mysterious men will force them to partake in. Katze and Brauth initially cruise an amusement park to find potential female concubines. I found this segment of *The Angel's Melancholia* to be especially effective in setting the tone for the rest of the film. Echoing the foreboding phantasmagoric atmosphere of Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962), but especially Curtis Harrington's cult masterpiece *Night Tide* (1961), the early carnival segment of *The Angel's Melancholia* lets the viewer know that they are about to go on a riveting ride with Brauth acting as a overly extroverted and mesmerizing lead carny/magician of sorts who guides the show and with Katze as his introverted crony who helps carry things along behind the scenes. The deranged dynamic duo is later turned into a threesome when an older but equally demented artist named Heinrich joins the group. The clique eventually settles in an old dilapidated house where they commence their quasi-spiritual journey that includes physical and metaphysical pandemonium, hedonistic degradation, ritualistic torture of a sexually swinish nature, and heathenish animal sacrifices. When not smearing his feces on vaginas, Katze seeks to obtain final transcendence through the defilement, mutilation, and – eventually – the total disintegration of his earthly body, thus becoming – or so it would seem – the much idealized 'Melancholy Angel.'

What makes *The Angel's Melancholia* particularly enthralling and singular, especially for Germanophiles and Germanophobes alike, is the consciously and distinctly Teutonic nature of the film, most specifically within a post-Nazi era context. During his often erratic exploration of mind and body, Katze reflects somberly while visiting the graveside of leftist German New Wave alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the memorial burial ground of Red Army Faction members Jan-Carl Raspe, Gudrun Ensslin, and Andreas Baader; individuals whose piercing hatred of the National Socialist era Germany – the epoch of their parents and grandparents – played a cardinal role in ultimately leading to their total self-destruction. In one notably symbolic scene in *The Angel's Melancholia*, Katze's corpse can be seen firmly gasping a copy of controversial German novelist Wolfgang Koeppen's last major work *Der Tod in Rom* (1954) aka *Death in Rome*; a novel that sparked nationwide controversy upon its release in Germany due to its uncomplimentary and uniquely critical portrayal of a German family set only a couple years after the Nazi era that does not shy away from holding the entire Fatherland accountable for the sins of its fathers. Katze and Brauth also take a hallucinatory pilgrimage to Auschwitz as if it is some sort of Holy site in a brief but pivotal allegorical scene that symbolizes the internal reasoning behind the characters' deleterious compulsions and self-debasement: the burgeoning burden of guilt of a people that has yet to come to terms with its unscrupulous history and debilitating defeat. While certain Judaic psychoanalysts absurdly described the archetypal National Socialist as an individual that

THE ANGEL'S MELANCHOLIA

was compelled by the death drive ("Todestrieb"), one can certainly argue that is the case for many German citizens of the post-WWII era as exemplified by popular historical figures like Fassbinder and Bader, thus *The Angel's Melancholia* acts as an extremely lucid, veracious, and uncompromising expression of a nation on the brink of collective suicide. This phenomenon becomes especially obvious when one examines modern Germany's steadily declining birth rate and the sort of sadomasochistic (and, in turn, innately antinatalist) pornography that is popular there nowadays. I do not think it is any coincidence that many of the scenic nature scenes featured in *The Angel's Melancholia* come off as some sort of grotesque parody of illustrations created by the prestigious völkisch scientist Ernst Haeckel. Needless to say, *The Angel's Melancholia* brings new meaning to the National Socialist phrase *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil).

I think it is safe to say that *The Angel's Melancholia* is a film that is not for everyone and that even includes certain individuals from the already marginal subculture of thoroughly desensitized gorehounds due to its artsy fartsy portrayal of fetishistic bloodlust and hermetic view of German history. The film can be best described as a glimpse into the German collective unconscious that illustrates a Ragnarök within the Germanic soul, but it is quite dubious as to whether or not the two lead characters reach any sort authentic rebirth, therefore *The Angel's Melancholia* also acts as a sort of metaphoric tombstone for the Fatherland, henceforth giving meaning to the Goethe inspired narration (featured near the conclusion of the film), "All evanescent is but a parable....here, it's done. The eternal feminine pulls us down." Despite featuring some of the most ridiculously repugnant scenes ever concocted in celluloid history, *The Angel's Melancholia* – in its overwhelming and often odious entirety – is a work about the liberation of mind and soul through self-sacrifice of the body, therefore it would not be absurd to describe the film as a intrinsically spiritual effort, even if it is of an exceedingly nihilistic persuasion. Christ, Crowley, Nietzsche and Wotan may be long dead, but their historical influence lives on in *The Angel's Melancholia* as exhibited in many scenes featured throughout the film. After all, only with death can Katze truly rid himself of the necrotic spiritual syphilis that has corroded his sin-ridden soul. One can only speculate in regard to Marian Dora's personal motivations for directing such a fiercely idiosyncratic work, but I think most people will concede that *The Angel's Melancholia* is – for better or for worse – one of the most exceedingly emotionally enervating films ever made. Indeed, in terms of aesthetic malignity, the film indisputably eclipses the cinematic works of Pasolini, Buttgereit, Hussain, Cerdà, and Spasojević. Whether or not *The Angel's Melancholia* has as much artistic merit as the films of these compatriot auteur filmmakers of the carnal and callous is quite debatable, but I unequivocally found it to be worthwhile as it is a work that I will never consign to oblivion, especially when comparing it to overly stylized and superficial modern German films like *Run Lola Run* (1998) and *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003).

At worst, *The Angel's Melancholia* is a potent work of incandescent decadence and barbarous yet beautiful bliss that offers a crude but uncommonly charming cinematic experience that one might expect to see at a concentration camp in purgatory.

-Ty E

REISE NACH AGATIS
REISE NACH AGATIS

Marian Dora (2010)

Indubitably transcending his fellow kraut countryman Jörg Buttgeriet of *Nekromantik* (1987) fame in terms of carefully concocting the most unwaveringly subversive and extreme German arthouse horror flicks ever made, Marian Dora (*Cannibal, Melancholie der Engel* aka *The Angel's Melancholia*)—a mysterious man who has consistently cinematically depicted real-life animal killings, the most foully fetishistic sex, and unrelenting artsy fartsy and atmospheric drama to the point of receiving threats against his life—is also undoubtedly one of the most, if not the most, extreme and esoteric 'horror' filmmakers in the world and one of his most recent releases, the rather brief yet brutally beautiful *Reise nach Agatis* (2010) aka *Voyage to Agatis*, is certainly no exception in terms of its extremity. Described by Dora himself as a "not so personal" work in comparison to his vulgarian 'völkisch' epic *Melancholie der Engel* (2009) aka *The Angel's Melancholia*—a fiercely fetishistic, virtual cinematic 'wild hunt' of the foreboding and apocalyptic expression of the Teutonic soul featuring tributes to German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the suicidal far-left terrorists of the Baader-Meinhof Group, as well as angelic pilgrimages to Auschwitz concentration camp—*Reise nach Agatis* is a much simpler piece of digital video derangement which seems to be a loose take on the director's hero Ruggero Deodato's early work *Waves of Lust* (1975), which itself is a take on Roman Polanski's first feature-length film *Knife in the Water* (1962), meets *The Most Dangerous Game*. Shot on a beggar's budget of an estimated €10,000 (around \$14,900) in Croatia over May 27-29, 2008, *Reise nach Agatis* builds on what director Dora experimented with in his rather uneventful experimental short *Caribbean Sunrise*, an aesthetically pleasing depiction of a voluptuous naked corpse of a woman laying on a beach during an ethereal sunup. A simultaneously *cinéma vérité*-like work with an oftentimes transcendental dreamlike quality, *Reise nach Agatis* brazenly blurs the line between natural beauty and the distinctive brutality and sexual sadism of man. Featuring shaved pussies and shriveled cocks, Hans Bellmer-esque dolls, the malicious mutilation of sea cucumbers, a malevolent *Ménage à trois* and one of the most boorish and innately sleazy alcohol-addled kraut characters to be featured in a film since the release of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), *Reise nach Agatis* is an uncompromising celluloid vacation where bloodlusting vivisection of the manhunter sort proves to be the most potent antidote for a superlatively sadomasochistic couple whose relationship is on the rocks, both literally and figuratively.

During the first couple minutes of *Reise nach Agatis* we witness from the perspective of an unseen killer a somewhat pretty yet also somewhat homely and swarthy young woman going from being a lonely tourist to a naked piece of hysterical human prey who is slaughtered on the beach as her blood poeti-

cally dissolves in waves with the tide. Clearly dead as a day old Negro, the film cuts to solacing scenes of grotesque baby dolls submerged in the ocean set to the score of slightly somber jewelry box-like music. From there, the film takes an almost home-video-like feel when it introduces the two anti-heroes, lunatic lovers Rafael (Thomas Goersch) and Isabell (Tatjana Mueller), who are taking a much needed holiday trip to the beach. It is quite clear from the get go that the two middle-aged lovebirds are having relationship problems as Rafael drinks liquor like a McKraut fish and Isabell does not waste any time bitching to her bad-mannered dipsomaniac beau about his seemingly vicious vice during a scenic drive through the country. Rafael and Isabell eventually reach a bourgeoisie café around nighttime and run into a pedomorphic Slavic chick named Lisa (Janna Lisa Dombrowsky), whose sheer lack of pubic hair on her un-bearded clam, which is featured bare throughout *Reise nach Agatis*, falls in line with the paradoxical virgin-whore doll and 'destruction of purity' themes that run throughout the film. After attempting to 'sell' his woman to men at the café, Rafael pseudo-suavely confronts Lisa and tells her how Isabell is "a bit complicated" but "fucks good." Sleazy swine Rafael must have something going on for him in terms of charisma, as Lisa agrees to join him and Isabell on a sailing trip on their yacht. In a reversal of gender roles from Polanski's *Knife in the Water*, Lisa and Isabell ultimately vie for the sexual attention of the seemingly psychopathic pig Rafael, a megalomaniac of a mensch who sports an undecorated German officer's uniform to distinguish himself as the captain of his rather small ship.

While Rafael tells little blonde babe Lisa that her "decision was just the right one" in terms of sailing with the couple, little does she realize that the captain is a deleteriously domineering sadist who will not take "no" for an answer, especially when it comes to a woman and the sanctity of her own body. Of course, as someone who incessantly flaunts her nubile young body at a homicidal horndog of a man and his discernibly jealous romantic partner, she is just asking for trouble and, indeed, trouble she receives. With the discovery of a corpse-like baby doll in the sea and foretelling of a terrible fate via tarot cards, including the "Five of Cups," which typically reflects perennial melancholy over past events (while not appreciating what one still has), and the Devil tarot, which typically reflects being shackled to an unhealthy addiction to earthly desires, *Reise nach Agatis* goes from being a bargain bin Duran Duran video to an ominous oceanic bottomless pit of torture and sadism. After a horrible dinner that results in Rafael throwing wine in the bitchy babe's face and Isabell physically assaulting Lisa, the tables are turned for the cutesy cocktease, who is not only physically forced to strip by the crazy captain, but also thrown overboard with all of her belongings—purse, panties, and all—which are inevitably lost at sea. Not merely content with brutally assaulting Lisa and throwing away all of her belongings, Rafael ties her au naturel body to his boat and rapes her shortly after, but not before spitting the blood and guts of a sea cucumber he had just caught and dismembered into the

REISE NACH AGATIS

sad Slavic girl's mouth. More horny and hysterical than the honeymoon killers, Rafael and Isabell receive mutual sexual ecstasy while torturing Lisa, especially when the man in the relationship does the involuntary manhandling while his lunatic old lady watches. Ultimately, Rafael is a hunter and Isabell is a voyeur, so when the two decide to let Lisa go on an island, it is the man who takes care of business in the form of knife-to-vagina mutilation that results in the young girl's bloody and fecal-following disembowelment.

During a couple scenes throughout *Reise nach Agatis*, a vintage black-and-white portrait picture of the unnamed dark-haired girl that was brutally butchered on a beach at the beginning of the film is glanced at by maniac murderer Rafael with love and affection, thus hinting that she was his daughter/lover and that his lust for youthful female flesh and blood is the result of not getting over the girl's death as a victim turned victimizer. With the film's reference to the Devil Tarot card, a symbol of self-bondage to an unhealthy idea and/or fixation that prevents one from living a healthy life, which Rafael certainly does as an alcoholic murderer who still longs for a dead girl, *Reise nach Agatis* is ultimately a film about a wayward sort of 'redemption' via genital mutilation and murder. Rather ridiculously, after Rafael guts Lisa like a pig, he and his lover Isabell, who only have resentful disdain for one another throughout most of the film (Rafael even gives Lisa the opportunity to kill Isabell), lovingly embrace and seem to settle the differences and start a new beginning at the conclusion of *Reise nach Agatis*, thus one could argue the film concludes on a rather happy and positive note, heavenly and angelic sky and all, at least as far as a Marion Dora film is concerned. Although easily his 'most accessible' and least unwaveringly grotesque effort to date, *Reise nach Agatis* is still pure and unadulterated Marian Dora in short but sadistically sweet form. A literally gut-wrenching work with a discernibly discordant moral compass, *Reise nach Agatis* is so-called 'torture porn' with a brain in Dogme 95 style that portrays decidedly deranged individuals who no longer have the same mental processes as the rest of humanity as hopelessly tainted individuals whose only source of solace is from the suffering of others so as to dull their own suffering. A filmmaker who has referenced great Teutonic romantic poets and thinkers like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Georg Büchner, and Eduard Mörike, as well as great modern kraut cultural creators like Wolfgang Koeppen and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Reise nach Agatis* is undoubtedly a work that aspires to be a reflection, if not a rather unflattering one, of the German collective unconscious just as it strives to be one of the most aesthetically pernicious yet poetic horror flicks ever made. And, indeed, while it is somewhat dubious whether Dora achieves what he sets out to accomplish (I certainly feel it does, at least to some notable yet nauseating degree), it is nothing short of indisputable that *Reise nach Agatis* is a piece of erratic emotional excess and audacious anti-entertainment of the Hollywood-free variety that initially sets up the viewer for a lovely scenic sail that transforms into an aesthetically entrancing psychodrama

of inhumanity wherein the viewer becomes a metaphysical accomplice to murderous misogyny, which will certainly be no small cinematic task for the typical Spielberg-lobotomized filmgoer, but it is undoubtedly a rewarding one.

-Ty E

Mariano Peralta (2007)

Snuff 102 is what happens when your film strays from source material. Argentinian born Mariano Peralta, decided to make a faux-snuff film, but instead made a bastardizing mess mixing "footage" with long and contrived shots of a young reporter in her loft, drinking coffee and eating apples. These quiet shots of suburbia are only intended for our false securities and just an example of the scenes which are out of place.

The plot (I didn't know there was supposed to be one) is about a reporter who is interviewing a film critic about violence in film. At the same time, three women are being tied up and getting tortured in cruel, inhumane ways. For some stupid reason, these two stories intertwine. It's funny when you watch two characters interact and you can clearly notice that the lines of which they read spout intelligence that the actor or actress is incapable of comprehending. This is the case in this film. Many pseudo-philosophers in film have one method of being pretentious, for example. Woman: "Don't you agree that violence is wrong?" Man: "What is violence? What are morals?" It's these kind of rhetorical questions that drive me insane; as if these characters knew anything about that of which they speak. The main actress (I'll be damned to look up her name) might be the most idiotic actress that has ever graced the screen. I'll give her the respect for being able to scream and cry real well, but whenever she says a big word, I can see her face contort as if she doesn't even know what it means. For trying to be a snuff film, even in its "snuffish" parts, It seems to be wallowing in its own mess. Cracks on the screen are fixed and edited in, sort of like Grindhouse, but at least they made it believable. A droning soundtrack compliments the "reality" of it all and the long shots focusing on a camera are supposed to be taken seriously. In one scene, when the reporter was researching Snuff Fantasy, we just have a 5 minute shot of over-edited shock videos collaged together with her facepalming during the intermission. The one thing I must applaud this film for, is its use of brutality. When the killer punches the pregnant lady, it looks very believable. Let's just be thankful that they can fake a punch rather than the pathetic example shown in the original August Underground. While being of a faux-snuff film, It really has nothing in common with any other film, besides shitty Hollywood serial killer films. I doubt they even have DVD's in Argentina (Sarcasm), let alone a copy of August Underground. Another tasteless point of the film, is its chronic use of shock footage. The film even opens up with a pig's throat being stabbed. Gaspar Noe can pull this off because the man can film and find beauty in depravity while still being a realist. Peralta should be slung up from his ankles and sodomized for making this sad excuse of a film. All the controversy surrounding its premiere, with the director getting attacked and all, It comes as no surprise. Snuff 102 is a boring fucking film.

-mAQ

ALIAS
ALIAS

Marina de Van (1999)

Alias is a short directed by Marina de Van and is on the present DVD of her magnum opus, *In My Skin*. This short clocks in at about 12 minutes long and is a relatively slow moving short. In order to fully understand what happens in this film, you need a layout of the story. "On the day of her birthday, Juliette feels particularly unhappy. However, in her despair she doesn't notice the eerie behavior of her cleaner who is copying everything she does and mimicking her dress sense..." We begin the short with a crying female named Juliette. Post-feminism has never been so bold as to maintain a beautiful shot of an aging woman smoking naked on her bed crying. It is apparent that it her her esteemed birthday party, complete with memories tacked onto a slide show projector. She is in a form of depression and judging by her appearance, it might even be mid-life crisis related. Through-out the party, she is binging herself on wine and eventually throws up. When the cleaner comes up, it is a very horrifying shot, with intense music and creepy-ass vibes coming off of her. Her mascara is applied with no direction towards beauty and her earrings are inspired by Juliette's. A film that definitely requires multiple viewings. It won't be hard to dedicate another 12 minutes of your time to this short. The film might be a piece on Identity crisis (as the late film *LOST HIGHWAY* did) or could be a dark tale of obsession. No one really pays attention to the people you are used to having around. People such as the cleaner who might, for all we know, could be the eventual demise of Juliette's family. Oh how she appears to dislike her mother. This film made me want to pay attention to detail at all costs.

-Maq

PSY-SHOW

Marina de Van (1999)

Psy-Show is a near perfect short film from Marina de Van, the director of the recently reviewed ALIAS and IN MY SKIN. Psy-Show might be a perfect short. It is just the right length at 19 minutes, has a tremendous tone to it, features impeccable performance, and features an amazing song by Tom Waits at the end credits. This short follows a very different style of filming. You know only certain details about the characters. One is a depressed male who's age is semi-apparent due to his balding scalp and the other is the psychoanalyst who's intentions are mysterious and he has a lunatic feel. A similar character is the Marquis off of Svankmajer's Lunacy. So what indeed happens, is that this fragile man becomes a pawn in this analyst's everyday routine. He has equipped his chair with a motor and a joystick hidden in the arm of his chair that allows him to move his chair around without the victim viewing, in order to create true hysteria. Seems a bit barbaric to me. His methods may be uncivil but could be determined as effective to say the least. Throughout this short, the man becomes unnerved and irritable. Getting more hollow as the time goes by. The analyst just smiles this devilish look and tells him it is all in his head. For being such a almost hopeless short, it is quite humorous and has an immense amount of French charm. Highly recommended with it's divine lighting and mood, In My Skin is a DVD you must get. Three great films for the price of one.

-Maq

PENTIMENTO
PENTIMENTO

Mario Costa (1952)

With 20% of its landmass and 21% of its population located below sea level, and 50% of its land lying less than one metre above sea level, the Netherlands is a tiny nation that has been historically ravaged time and time again, so it is only natural that its inhabitants would have an atavistic aversion to water and the sea; or at least that seems to be the case with Dutch avant-garde filmmaker Frans Zwartjes as vividly depicted in his feature-length film *Pentimento* (1979); a quasi-erotic and pseudo-exploitative 'horror' film where cold oceanic blues dominate the film's aesthetic, and an assortment of Adam's ale, sweat, urine, blood, and vaginal lubrication become characters unto themselves. Of course, Zwartjes – a rather eccentric fellow whose morbid, proto-goth/death rock film aesthetic was largely influenced by his experience working in mental institutions – is no doubt not afraid of all forms of water as he is a fervent nudist who enjoys voyeuristically gazing at beautiful women's bearded clams on the seaside as he explained quite adamantly in the documentary *De grote tovenaer* (2006) aka *The Great Magician* directed by Ruud Monster, but *Pentimento* is certainly no day at the beach with its severely salacious portrayals of sexual violence and sadism. Featuring a feverish and foreboding musical score that tingles one's spine and takes prisoner of one's soul, and set to a globalist post-industrial wasteland where beautiful Nordic women are nefariously encroached, experimented on, and eventually disposed of like common trash by Japanese scientists with a positively prurient poise, *Pentimento* is probably the closest thing to an 'Actionist Thriller' and the sort of film jaded Jap cannibal Issei Sagawa – who became a minor celebrity in his homeland after murdering, molesting, and munching on a female Dutch student – would yank his yellow yoo-hoo too.

Although a country well known for its painters and artists, especially of a magnificently morbid and metaphysical sort, The Netherlands has produced few filmmakers of notoriety aside from Paul Verhoeven (*Turkish Delight*, *Robocop*) and possibly Rene Daalder (*Massacre at Central High*, *Population: 1*), but both of these directors would emigrate to the United States and, at least to some extent, Americanize their aesthetic, so Frans Zwartjes makes for a notable exception. As a musician (playing viola for the Dutch opera), draughtsman, violin maker, painter, sculptor, academic professor and all around creative renaissance man of sorts, it was only natural for Zwartjes to be one of the first Dutchmen to embrace film as a serious and legitimate artistic medium (although initially using it to document performances) and he would ultimately approach filmmaking as a Dutch Master painter would with a certain meticulousness of the *mise-en-scène* of misery that entrances the viewer in a manner like they have never endured before. After completing a series of delightfully daunting and seemingly plot-less, bodacious and bleak black-and-white shorts oftentimes starring his young stu-

dent wife Trix Zwartjes (who he met while teaching “Non-Applied Design” at Eindhoven Academy), including *Birds* (1968), *Anamnesis* (1969), and *Visual Training* (1969) – audacious awe-inspiring works that would ultimately inspire me to become enamored with the avant-garde auteur – Zwartjes would eventually experiment with color in the short with the chilling, aesthetically and thematically frigorific, bluish gray-toned short *Living* (1971); an unwelcoming yet weirdly wanton depiction of the biting barrenness of bourgeois life. Although still experimenting with black-and-white film stock (*Audition*, *Bedsitters*), *Living* would hereafter act as a rudimentary model for what would be Zwartjes most accomplished effort, *Pentimento*; a feature-length work with a discernible, if discordant, narrative set in a terribly technocratic building of emotional sterility where sadomasochistic Japanese scientists perform seemingly preposterous and patently perverted procedures on Dutch girls.

Featuring authentic scenes of unflattering female masturbation and a variety of other fecund unfriendly scenarios of noticeably feeble ladies in exceedingly perilous and lethally lecherous situations, *Pentimento* eventually caught the attention of The Netherlands’ more militant, sexually-repressed, and intrinsically lesbian feminist population (unfortunately for the Dutch, daftly dyke Andrea Dworkin decided to move to Amsterdam in the early 1970s), thereupon condemning the film for perceived misogyny and whatnot and bitchily bombarding a Rotterdam screening of the film. As the son of a nun that had fallen from grace who helped her boy survive starvation through the Second World War and a masculine father (an amateur boxing champ) who died while his scion was just a schoolboy, Zwartjes most certainly had an unconventional childhood where the feminine touch was the prevailing force of family, so, if anything, the prolific filmmaker probably had a special empathy and esteem for the fairer sex, even if in an erratically visceral, vicarious, and vehemently veiled manner as depicted in *Pentimento*; a certainly clandestine cinematic work with a seemingly effortlessly effete command. Using mere glances and symbolism to tell a sibylline story of female servitude and slavery carried out by tiny yellow men with serious cases of small man’s complex who commit ungodly acts of surgical and sexual sadism, Zwartjes demonstrates innate sensitivity towards the sanctity and sensuality of the female gender, albeit from an inordinately opaque outsider’s perspective.

With its audacious audience-antagonistic artistry, vague allusions to the Japanese experimentation Unit 731 – a place infamous for carrying out some of the most depraved war crimes committed during the Second World War – and the sexual sadism of Sagawa, *Pentimento* is not the sort of film that many Hollywood-spooned, multiculturally-enriched filmgoers will be able to stomach, but of course Zwartjes’ goal with the film was obviously not to yield to vulgarian viewers. Resembling Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone’s *Blue Movie* (1978) and *Blow Job* (1980) in its arcane approach to expressing the more labyrinthine motivations behind human licentiousness and callousness and excessive impenetrable essence

PENTIMENTO

of works like *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) and *Day of the Idiots* (1981) by German auteur Werner Schroeter but to a more flagrant degree, *Pentimento* – of which the title literally means the alteration of an artist work, evidenced by traces of previous work – is ultimately a work about the progressive terrorizing and mutilation of the female body by a Japanese doctor with an unhealthy obsession with designer high-heel shoes. When it comes down to it, only Frans Zwartjes can truly understand the artistic intent behind *Pentimento*, but if there is one thing we can be sure of it is the filmmaker's determinedly indefatigable artistic forthrightness in turning personal fantasy and nightmare into cinematic reality.

-Ty E

SWEET SAVAGE

Mario Morra (1983)

Sweet Savage is a vast tale of the grand frontier...and Indian titties. This drama has been disguised as an XXX feature, or the other way around. I really couldn't tell what I was watching at various points of this racially charged porno film. I had picked it up with the premise of slimy whites raping an Indian only to have slimy Indians rape a white only to explode into a full-scale racial war. Sounds awesome, no? I always feel awkward reviewing a pseudo-porn, but the truth is far from. Sweet Savage is just plain fucking ridiculous. There's nothing really to work with other than the XXX scenes. This film doesn't know whether it wants to be an ole' time rape-revenge flick or a standard missionary pornographic film. This clutters any sort of story this film has, but I must applaud its feverish attempt at forcing a story here. Most films of this caliber use a story as a mere side dish, whereas Sweet Savage embraces its roots and rolls with it. The Indians are casted as dark skinned hippies and the Whites are casted as old rednecks who are in it to sodomize young Native American women. I can imagine there being a lot of tension on the set due to the proflic Western civilization disaster that was in the process of being filmed. With that said, there's really nothing much to see here. Just American trash in the purest sense. It isn't really worth a watch and the rape scenes (We all know that's why you want to watch this) are horribly acted.

-mAQ

FAREWELL TO AUTUMN
FAREWELL TO AUTUMN

Mariusz Treliński (1990)

Admittedly, making fun of Polish people (or, more specifically, American Polacks) is an old favorite family pastime for me, so, in a sense it is kind of hard for me to take anything Polish seriously yet I cannot deny that the perennially changing Slavic nation has produced a couple obscure geniuses like novelist and poet Stanisław Feliks Przybyszewski, who was associated with both the decadent naturalistic school and Symbolism movement and who sired the classic occult text *Die Synagoge des Satan* (1897) aka *The Synagogue of Satan*. A comrade of Teutonic Satanic Renaissance man Hanns Heinz Ewers, who apparently moved around in the same occult circles, Przybyszewski mainly wrote in German since Poland was still part of Prussia at the time and he was certainly one of the most decadent literary figures of his time, but his literary perversity and innate 'Polishness' pales in comparison to the great Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (aka 'Witkacy'), who was indubitably the most important artistic Renaissance man of his nation during the first half of the 20th-century and whose death via suicide upon the Soviet invasion was quite symbolic of the death of both aesthetic and individualistic freedom as a result of communist takeover. Although a decidedly debauched libertine dandy who loved devouring drugs and genitals from members of both sexes (though some scholars doubt his homoerotic excursions), Witkacy was a pan-Slavic nationalist and cultural pessimist of the quasi-Spenglerian sort who wisely feared that Mongol hordes would invade and colonize the Occident and turn it into a cultural wasteland plagued by collective slavery and aesthetic sterility. Indeed, such was the central theme of his third and arguably best novel, *Insatiability* (1930) aka *Nienasylenie*, which was adapted into the rather disappointing 2003 dystopian film of the same name directed by Wiktor Grodecki. Directed by a dubious dude who has dedicated his entire filmmaking career to creating hyper homoerotic films about underage teenage male prostitutes like *Not Angels But Angels* (1994) and *Mandragora* (1997), Grodecki's pathetically politically correct *Insatiability* completely sanitizes Witkacy's work by turning Mongol hordes into Aryan hordes and focusing almost entirely on the perverse sexual themes of the source novel despite the fact that they are more or less only incidental to the story. Luckily, at least one of Witkacy's novels, *Pozegnanie jesieni* (1927) aka *Farewell to Autumn*, was adapted into one fairly worthwhile film (notably, some of his plays were also adapted into worthwhile works, including the bizarre arthouse horror flick *W starym dworku czyli niepodleglosc trójkątów* (1984) aka *In an Old Manor House* or *The Independence of Triangles* directed by Andrzej Kotkowski). Made not long after the long awaited death of communism, *Pozegnanie jesieni* (1990) aka *Farewell to Autumn* directed by Polish auteur and opera director Mariusz Trelinski (*Lagodna* aka *A Gentle Woman*, *Egoisci* aka *The Egoists*) is an insanely tragicomic and innately iconoclas-

tic indictment of the Polack aristocracy and the Catholic Church that depicts sexual degeneracy of the hetero and homo sort, drug addiction and alcoholism, racial and cultural deracination, and scheming seductive Jewesses, among other things, as the sort of vices that plagued the upper-classes and caused them to be destroyed with next to nil effort by the bolsheviks during the revolution. A delectably dystopian piece of culturally pessimistic philosophical celluloid disguised as a raunchy black comedy, Trelinski's film is probably the most decidedly degenerate and aberrantly action-packed anti-communist flick ever made, thus making for a true enigma of celluloid history and a truly respectable tribute to Witkacy.

Opening with a tribute to its source writer Witkacy, which describes him as a "Philosopher and erotomaniac...Extravagant dandy, painter and writer" whose "works were compared to lunatic dreams," Farewell to Autumn immediately sets a tone of absurdism that will ultimately help the viewer be able to more easily swallow all the senseless tragedy, misery, sexual dysfunction, cultural decay, nihilistic excess, and patent pessimism that will follow. As the film proudly reveals in regard to its firmly anti-commie stance, "It is a tongue-in-cheek analysis of society on the verge of destruction. It is the story about the chaos which brought to us 100 million inhabitants of Central Europe...the fate of being slaves of only one and "rightful" idea: The communism." The lead protagonist of the film is a debauched bisexual aristocrat of sorts named Atanazy Bazakbal aka 'Tazio' (Jan Frycz) and he is torn between marrying a beautiful blonde Jewess who certainly does not look like a Jewess named Hela Bertz (Maria Pakulnis) and a somewhat banal blonde named Zofia Oslabedzka (Grazyna Trela). More than anything, Tazio seems to resent Zofia as reflected in his remarks to her, "...I hate you with pure, beautiful hate...And because of only that I want to marry you," thus reflecting the protagonist's bizarre and seemingly sadomasochistic psyche. When Tazio goes to visit Hela at her yarmulke-sporting father's large mansion, he finds her in bed with a candy-ass Persian prince named PrepuRech (Leszek Abrahamowicz), so he kicks the effeminate blueblood out and begins pounding at what is left of the Hebraic girl's hymen (she claims to be a virgin, but that is dubious to say the least). During the middle of sex, Tazio randomly stops, complains "I can't read Proust," and then reveals to Hela that he is engaged to Zofia even though he is already engaged to her. After revealing his love for Zofia, Tazio grabs Hela's pussy and passionately says to her that she is a "A rich, coarse, Jewish she-boor" and she absurdly replies "I am a virgin" even though she just screwed two different men in one night. Meanwhile, high-strung pansy Prince PrepuRech watches the two having sex outside while standing in the rain and screams at Tazio, "I will kill with no regrets. Like a dog, I will kill you." Indeed, the next day, the two decadent aristocrats will duel for Hela's hand in marriage. Meanwhile, Hela decides that she is going to convert to Catholicism, though she also considers converting to communism after Tazio leaves her sexu-

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ally frustrated after failing to give her an orgasm, thus hinting that, contrary to what whack-jobs like Wilhelm Reich and useful idiots like Bernardo Bertolucci think, Marxism is born out of sexual discontent.

Undoubtedly, Hela's rich father Belzebub Bertz (Henryk Bišta) is a classic penny-pinching and morally vacant Jew à la Jud Süß who wants to auction off his baby girl to the highest bidder. When Daddy Bertz finds his daughter in bed with Prepudrech and she reveals her intention to marry the pussy Persian Prince, the old Talmud scholar gets angry and tells her he has chosen "two great marquises...Italian fascists" for her to marry (contrary to popular opinion, many Jews were originally involved with Italian fascism). After telling her father that she plans to convert to Catholicism and marry Prepudrech if he is not killed in the duel, Hela also attempts to coerce her father into converting, hilariously arguing, "Papa should do the same if only for business." In a scene symbolic of how effeminate the aristocracy had become, both Tazio and Prince Prepudrech are incapable of properly using their firearms, with the latter even pathetically fainting like a little girl during the fairly absurd duel. Ultimately, the Prince gets lucky and shoots his comrade in the neck, though he survives. Naturally, Prepudrech and Hela and Tazio and Zofia marry in a large double wedding that is raided by overtly moronic and cartoonish communist revolutionaries who are eventually pacified after a charlatan priest comes out and waves a crucifix at them like they are vampires and they immediately cower like the collectivist-minded slaves that they are. As Papa Bertz accurately prophesizes during the wedding regarding his daughter and her three friends, "A terrible fate awaits those four." After the wedding, a huge Dionysian party occurs where men openly perform cunnilingus on women right in front of everyone, debauched dames dance around naked while having champagne poured on their unclad bodies, and the two brides dance with one another in a highly eroticized lesbo fashion while simultaneously making threats to kill one another due to their mutual love for Tazio. As a piano player states in a melancholy fashion during all the debauchery, "We've reached the endpoint of bourgeois culture, which didn't produce anything but doubt...in everything."

Undoubtedly, Tazio is in doubt as to whether or not he married the right woman, as he clearly loves fierce femme fatale Hela, who tells him that he will have to fight for her if he truly wants her. Just like with the wedding, the party is raided by bands of indiscriminately murderous bolsheviks, but things get way more violent than before, with people being burned alive, shot, and run over with cars, among other things, though this does not ruin the protagonist's big day. Luckily, Tazio manages to make a great escape with the help of a friend on a motorcycle that is ultimately killed after getting his friends to safety. Instead of consummating his marriage with some honeymoon sex, Tazio pulls a Fassbinder and has sex with his middle-aged queer bud Jedrek instead of his wife on his wedding night. Before engaging in cross-generational sodomy, Tazio

and Jedrek make reference to Nietzsche, most notably *Beyond Good and Evil*, which the two believe they are engaging in. Since the Bolsheviks have taken over, all the young aristocrats are forced into exile and decide to take a train to Switzerland, but Tazio is a no show at the train station because of his hard hedonistic homo night of cocaine, cognac, and cocks. Naturally, old queen Jedrek acts quite melodramatic about Tazio leaving and complains to him, "Tazio, I have only you and even this you want to take away from me," to which the protagonist equally melodramatically replies, "Jedrek, don't make a demoniac woman out of me." Ultimately, Jedrek refuses to follow to Tazio to Switzerland, but later has a change of heart at the last minute. Upon arriving at the station, a self-righteous commie officer attempts to stop Tazio and Jedrek from getting on the train and ultimately the latter is gunned down like a dog by some rabid red comrades, thus leaving the protagonist irreparably shattered. Naturally, things only get worse from there.

Upon arriving in the snowy Swiss Alps, Tazio becomes so completely and utterly disillusioned that he absurdly remarks, "Maybe Jedrek's one minute of life after five grams of coke had more meaning than my whole life." To make matters worse, Hebraic whore Hela starts a fling with a Nordic ski instructor named Erick Tvardstrup (Waldemar Kownacki), who has no respect for pessimistic artists and describes the protagonist as being sick in both the mind and body. On top of the fact that Erick is screwing his beloved kosher cock-tease, Tazio absolutely hates sportsman and hatefully states to the Swiss ski champ during a heated argument that he firmly believes that sports are ruining the entire world, adding, "Your records are blocking the place in the newspapers for the serious art critics...In the literary journals and others." During the same conversation, Tazio also reveals his hatred for both communism and democracy, wisely stating, "I'm am getting furious with the lies of contemporary democracy. Equal start for everyone...What moronic idea is this? Justice based on equality, hierarchy is the foundation of sound social life [...] What is coming – it is a grey end with unpredictable consequences. A wave is engulfing us which will destroy all our values." Of course, the protagonist is in denial that everything is lost, including the entire way of life he once knew, or as Hela states to Tazio, "What values? Don't make me laugh! Do you still pretend to believe that we still have anything left?" Since he is full of rage and hatred as a result of his new sorry lot in life as a wealthy aristocratic artist turned homeless/jobless writer, Tazio has no problem brutally murdering Erick after challenging him to a duel by driving a sword straight through his thick sportsman neck. Of course, Tazio and Hela eventually begin having sex again and Zofia loses her mind as a result of her new husband's flagrant unfaithfulness. After catching Hela riding Tazio's cock during an almost satanically salacious scene where the Jewess truly resembles an evil and lecherous demoness, Zofia drops a lantern while waving a pistol and sets the hotel they are staying at on fire. Completely heartbroken, Zofia runs away into

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the snow and Tazio attempts to chase her down while sadistically teasing her by begging her to shoot him. Instead of shooting her unfaithful lover though, Zofia turns the gun on herself, thus blowing off the side of her face and killing her instantly. Of course, Zofia probably opted to kill herself right in front of her husband to spite him, as well as to leave him with an undying sense of guilt for the rest of his already miserable life. When Tazio goes to see his wife's corpse in the morgue, he is so shocked by Zofia's mangled corpse that he collapses.

Now a totally broke widower and persona non grata in Switzerland as a result of the dubious circumstances regarding his wife's death, Tazio hits rock bottom and is forced to go back to his now new and hardly improved 'proletarianized' Polack homeland where he attempts to whore himself out to a communist government official, who ultimately offers him a less than glamorous job as an official government snitch. After breaking down to the communist official by pathetically stating, "The Future is yours and I accept that," Tazio is told by the Bolshevik bureaucrat, "So, you accept that we use you and then throw you away? So, you agree to be fertilizer? I am speaking with you that way as you're intelligent." Ultimately, Tazio refuses to be a bolshevik bitch and turns down the less than dignified snitch job. Meanwhile, Tazio begins a short-lived love affair with a 26-year-old girl that looks exactly like his dead wife Zofia, albeit with brunette hair. When his new girlfriend begs him to take her away from Poland, Tazio must admit to both her and himself that he is now a broke bum with no future, somberly stating, "But I have nothing anymore. I have no place to go. I have nothing." In the end, Tazio does some drunken hiking while foolishly attempting to cross the Polish border, but he is ultimately caught by some faceless commie comrades that are hiding in the woods and is forced to quote poetry by Russian octoroon negro Alexander Pushkin to prove his devotion to the oh-so precious proletariat. After botching Pushkin, Tazio is reduced to groveling like the most pathetic of slaves and declares that he is, "only shit, I am not a man anymore. Do you understand?" and the Bolsheviks respond to him by putting a bullet in his brain and disposing of his corpse in a river. The film concludes with the following narration, "September 18th, 1939 when Poland was invaded by German and Soviet armies, Witkiewicz committed suicide. For sure, he had been aware that his prophecy was fulfilling. The witnesses testified that his face was calm and relieved."

Undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing aspects of *Farewell to Autumn* is that, unlike the source novel, it depicts Poland under the anti-human hell of Marxist slavery, with protagonist Tazio's experience acting as a sort of "what if" scenario of what Witkacy might have faced had he not killed himself during the Soviet invasion. Ultimately, the message of the film is that you're better off killing yourself than living under communism, with Tazio dying in an uniquely undignified fashion and Witkacy's suicide being glorified as a heroic act committed by a man who would rather be a rotting corpse than a living

Slav(e). As a pan-Slavic nationalist who served as an officer in the Imperial army of the Russian Empire during World War I and lived through the so-called Russian Revolution in Russia and was eventually elected political commissar of his regiment, Witkacy experienced the rotten genocidal fruits of bolshevism firsthand and knew exactly what was awaiting his beloved Poland if the Soviets took over. As Harold B. Segel wrote in his essay *Polish Romantic Drama in Perspective* regarding the ultimate importance and validity Witkacy's pessimistic worldview, "Witkiewicz's Bleak prophesies of the future, unrelieved by the promise of messianic deliverance or the hope of an East-West, Catholic-Orthodox, Russian-Polish pan-Slavic symbiosis as advocated by Miciński, were fulfilled beyond even his darkest imagination by the events of World War II and its aftermath in Poland. The reality of totalitarian power in the postwar period from the consolidation of a Soviet-backed communist regime in the last 1940s down to the suppression in December 1981 of the most recent expression of the Polish desire for true independence and democratic freedoms – the Solidarity movement – provided a new impetus to the continuation of the debate over the Romantic past." By Hebraic Hollywood standards, *Farewell to Autumn* could certainly be described as 'anti-Semitic' as the superlatively seductive Jewess character Hela is the most predatory of femme fatales and she has no loyalty to no one or nothing, as a pathological social-climber without roots or traditions who switches religions like wardrobes and who gets a kick out of getting her two lovers to try to kill one another. Of course, Hela's father is no less flattering of a Jewish caricature as a seemingly incestuous miser who is willing to whore his daughter out to an Italian fascist count because he feels that it would be a great monetary investment for his family. Ironically, despite featuring subject matter and themes that would never be tolerated in Hollywood, *Farewell to Autumn* is easily the most accessible Polish film I have ever seen as a work that routinely mocks Hollywood genre conventions and classic works by Hitchcock (e.g. *Vertigo*). Indeed, despite its innate (meta)political overtones and quasi-philosophical essence, the film can also be enjoyed on a more superficial philistine level due to its incessant debauchery and dark humor. Not surprisingly, director Mariusz Trelinski won a number of awards for *Farewell to Autumn*, including the Andrzej Munk Prize and the Award of the Minister of Culture and Art of the Republic of Poland for best debut of the year. Undoubtedly, Trelinski's film is unequivocally evidence that cutting edge, artful, and downright unhinged nationalistic films can be made that make the neo-vaudevillian comedies of Hollywood seem like infantile Freudian filmic feces. Indeed, as the work of not only Witkacy and H.H. Ewers, but also Gottfried Benn, Stefan George, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Ernst Jünger, Gabriele D'Annunzio, George Sylvester Viereck, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Fidus, and Yukio Mishima, among countless others, certainly demonstrates, the so-called "right-wing" used to always be at the forefront of all things delectably decadent and *Farewell to Autumn* is certainly a revival of this

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timeless tradition.

-Ty E

THE THAW

Mark A. Lewis (2009)

The Thaw is a very recent entry in those Ghost House Underground DVD releases that showcase mediocre horror material borrowed from many classic ideas in an attempt to lure consumers in with flashy and mindless cover art that hints to frights and confusion to as why it was made, with the exception of Last House in the Woods. What The Thaw has going for it are two things - top billing for Val Kilmer, whose career is as dead as the potential characters in this film of choice, and actual suspense built with a fear of parasitic hosts. This fear isn't even limited to just these prehistoric creatures. If you haven't heard of a Human bot fly, I recommend you keep it that way and not let your morbid curiosity search for it. The Thaw opens with a potentially disturbing scene of a blonde woman adorning an open sore on her forehead. Many chattering people are in the background of this shaky-cam film opener and the heightened sense of urgency is on each of their tones. Behind the woman's crying figure is a blowtorch heating up a needle. Carefully positioning her sobbing face still, the hot needle is applied to the wound. A few stunning seconds pass and a tiny larvae protrudes from her creamy-complexioned flesh. At first I was overcome with a premature form of disgust but then the effects of terrible CGI took hold and my muscles relaxed once more. This scene in particular is what happened endlessly throughout the entirety of The Thaw - some suspenseful build up with an incredibly lackluster pay off on every end. Soon after the opening credits of the film, we (the audience) are force fed one of the most appalling, mind-numbing trends in horror films these days - global warming propaganda and ecoterrorism. Hints that later flourish in an impatient stab to sideswipe with a twist one can see coming from the first time Aaron Ashmore opens his mouth. I hate to say it but the only reason worth watching The Thaw is for the maybe 5 minutes of especially graphic footage wrapping up with the parasitic consumption of multicultural flesh. With the line up in this film, you'd be surprised that this wasn't a high school reunion of the original cast of Saban's Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers. Let's see, you got the chink, the negro, the two lead white couples with a minor bit of sexual tension between the both and that one white guy whose only noticeable effort in the film is making a grab for a gun cause he "inconveniently" has a terrible phobia of insects. Personally, global warming isn't a very good cinematic mantle piece nor an effective plot device. To move me with terror requires the extraordinary, not dime-a-dozen morality inducing monologues about the stinginess of humanity. I get it, we're shit to our planet that has so graciously given us food, shelter, and all the necessities of life, but I will be damned if some remake of The Last Winter will preach to me what is apparent as the directors with their flashy gas-guzzling cars and spacious condos try to shove their "social commentaries" in my face. Nor do I like it when they shove Val Kilmer's post-mortem "acting"

THE THAW

in my face - to which I would more or less credit as a cameo. You'll find hype for this film as I surprisingly uncovered many "10 star" blessings. I guess I just don't "get it." A film with 10 minutes (give or take) of mediocre cinematography and a few key scenes of gross out body horror combined with 80 minutes of coma inducing dialogue and terrible CGI worthy of Lorenzo Lamas' mug shot is enough to make it credible enough to horror fans to rave about. Now I now know why Dreamcatcher is so reviled. While I appreciate the prehistoric reinvention of the Bot fly, I'd rather spend my personal time in purgatory watching reruns of Raptor Island than ever watch this dismal piece of shit again. The only thing I could even mutter as the credits ran was a sternly deserving "eh..."

-mAQ

SPAWN

Mark A.Z. Dippé (1997)

The impact wasn't that noticeable to me while I was a child. When I first read Spawn (comic), I had no idea what was happening on these inked pages. I noticed from the blood and swear words that this was intended for mature audiences but it was too much of a perfect relic of the modern comic book era. Then the film stormed in on a golden horse. The idea of a Spawn film just makes my knees shake, but the film was an utter disappointment. Roger Ebert generously gave the film three and a half stars calling it "unforgettable". Spawn is the same train wreck that is Nicholas Cage's Ghost Rider. Same deus ex machina's, same horrible dated CGI, and same pillaging of a classic comic series although I was much more saddened at the death of Spawn than Ghost Rider. Alan B. McElroy, the scribe of Spawn, has written some of the most atrocious scripts for films including The Marine and Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever. The only thing he can warrant as a success would be Wrong Turn 2, but that lies entirely in the hands of Henry Rollins. For those who've been trapped under a rock for 10+ years, Spawn concerns a black guy getting betrayed, winding up in hell, making a deal with the devil Malebolgia to exact revenge, and along the way encountering demons and deceit all with the help of his incredibly awesome super necroplasmic powers. Sure, it sounds hokey but for a comic depicting murder, pedophilia, and other scourges of humanity, Spawn kicked righteous ass. Whoever decided that an actor in Toxic Avenger II could play Spawn should have his family burned alive. The only thing right that Spawn achieved was the monumental casting of John Leguizamo as Clown/Violator. Truth is, I loathe director Mark Dippé for his work in directing Spawn. Thankfully, he seems to have been blacklisted from Hollywood after that bomb seeing as how his only real work after Spawn was creating Garfield releases. What a furious case of karma. With a crew of retards and a cast of inexperienced tough guys sans John Leguizamo, Spawn really was doomed from the start. It's a shame that such potential wasn't exploited. Neil Gaiman was created for helming a Spawn film, too bad it will never happen. For its time, it might have had substantial CGI but the effects of Malebolgia looked god awful. Tron predated this film by decades and served as a bigger visual treat than this under-produced hell. If hell is anything like watching Spawn for its laughable effects or entertainment, count me as a saint. This is one of those films you regret loving as you grow older. Roger Ebert would be rolling in his grave had he died already. I don't remember debates concerning ratings back when film was processed meat like this waste of 35mm film. Nowadays, anyone with a brain will scream and shout about the newest Die Hard or Max Payne film being PG-13. The studios want that accessibility and the fans want source material to be prudent. It seems the studio's raped franchises as early as 97'. How we've been deceived. Please stop

SPAWN

me before I begin to shred apart Spawn's practical effects depicting his "burnt" face. How did they go so wrong? If you want to watch a "black" man with a pink cork face prance around barely using any of the amazing powers he's been given, go for it. Sure, Jason was made into a white character to try and shoo away urban audiences but Spawn's the kind of film that ignorant masses want, although I doubt anyone wants it anymore. Spawn received the shit end of the stick with its inability to age well. The only thing this film's good for anymore is a prop to stop your short-legged table from wobbling.

-mAQ

ISLE OF THE DAMNED

Mark Colegrove (2008)

In Hollywood and elsewhere, the parody has become a standard in entertainment. In our present but somehow “postmodern” world, the parody tackles cultural items of yesteryear to make the masses giggle in delight. Unsurprisingly, many things parodied in television and film aren’t worth the recognition of special treatment. Leave it to swell guy and funny man Mark Colegrove (aka Antonello Giallo) to parody the infamous Italian exploitation cannibal films. What old sub-genre is more ripe for such treatment? It is a shame that the general American audience is not usually aware of the cannibal genre. That did not stop Mr. Colegrove from creating *Isle of the Damned*, a film full of flesh eating hilarity that even manages to break open the longtime taboo of incestuous sodomy. *Isle of the Damned* recognizes and pays tribute to the best of the cannibal films. I don’t think it would be too careless to say that *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Cannibal Ferox* are easily the best Italian cannibal films to ever appear from the sub-genre and Mark Colegrove gives appropriate tribute to these old school low budget masterpieces. With the cannibal film, one can expect rape, torture, ritual killing, real animal killings, deranged anthropologists and awful post-production dubbing. In *Isle of the Damned*, Mark Colegrove brings back all these lovely things for future generations of horror fans. To be fair, *Isle of the Damned* does not feature any real animal killings which isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Instead, the film features a very cute and fake looking spider which is stepped on resulting in an exaggerated amount of arachnid guts flying everywhere. *Isle of the Damned* also features gore, bodily dismemberment, and “savage cruelty” that easily beats the best of the Italian cannibal films. One of the most memorable scenes features a cannibal cutting off a sizable flaccid penis and shoving the member of the now castrated man up his daughter’s gash. I guess the cannibals believe that if “civilized” folks aren’t going to practice incest then they are going to be forced into it. Also, unlike the cannibals featured in earlier Italian cannibal films, those featured in *Isle of the Damned* enjoy playing butt darts. Overall, the cannibals in this splendid film have much more character than those featured in the Italian cannibal films. In fact, they even are more discriminate in who they eat. One lardo and criminally minded pedophile is rejected by the cannibals and is instead ass reamed by a gang of homosexual savages. I couldn’t help but think of John Boorman’s American outdoor classic *Deliverance* while watching this scene of a man being porked like a pig. Although private investigator Jack Steele is the main character of *Isle of the Damned*, his adopted son Billy is my favorite character of the film. Director Mark Colegrove did a ridiculously hilarious job voicing the traumatized young man’s overly neurotic voice. Poor Billy was the victim of a fatherly fuckfest which drove him to homicide. Unlike most cannibal films, *Isle of the Damned* features various subplots and flashbacks

ISLE OF THE DAMNED

that do not waste a second of footage in the film. The film features a colorful and distinct cast of characters that I had no problem getting into. I consider myself to be a fairly discriminating cinemaphile, but *Isle of the Damned* really leaves nothing to be desired. Maybe big budget degenerate "postmodern" filmmakers Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer (*Date Movie*, *Epic Movie*, and *Meet the Spartans*) should take notes from low budget parody filmmaker Mark Colegrove. Unlike Friedberg and Seltzer, who make me want to put a bullet in my head with their cinematic abominations, Mark Colegrove's *Isle of the Damned* put me in a humored state from beginning to end. But then again, Colegrove is a filmmaker that seems to care about the comedic quality of his films whereas Friedberg and Seltzer are catering to the lowest common denominator. *Isle of the Damned* is a mandatory viewing for cannibal fans, horror fans, parody fans, and individuals that hate cultural anthropology. With *Isle of the Damned*, Mark Colegrove beats to death the token moral message "we are the real savages (civilized folk)" featured in *Cannibal Holocaust* and other cannibal classics. That being said, *Isle of the Damned* is the greatest tribute one could have created for the Italian exploitation cannibal film. Mark Colegrave knows his stuff and did his research. The least an eclectic fan of cinema can do is watch his film *Isle of the Damned*. Not to mention, Ty E makes an appearance in the film as a cannibal. Find out more about *Isle of the Damned*

-Ty E

THE PUNISHER

Mark Goldblatt (1989)

After watching *Punisher: War Zone*, I decided to first write about the two entries before this second reboot. I appreciate the casting selection of Dolph Lundgren. His jawline is cut in such a way that it brings the fearsome devil that lurks behind his pupils out. With only the expectations from the horrid 2004 film starring Thomas Jane and the 2008 adaptation, I had no idea what to expect from this film other than a Punisher without his emblazoned trademark logo. But after seeing the shameful scene of Thomas Jane's Punisher being granted his infamous "shirt", I found the sacrifice to be for a cause. The Punisher is among the runts of the Marvel film flock. Before Marvel acquired their own studio, they just relinquished the creative control over to underlings, in this case, New World Pictures. Though New World Pictures was an independent film company, it produced some of the greatest retro sci-fi and horror films of several decades. In order to get the most from their films is to be a child of time. While I thoroughly enjoyed Dolph Lundgren's Punisher film, I found it to be cleverly underwhelming in a way that didn't spoil the film experience. Rather than featuring a "super villain", The Punisher battles against the general idea of a crime syndicate. Many personal details of Frank Castle's past were changed and an almost-homo erotic partnership has been added in. The receiver is played by none other than Louis Gossett Jr. Personally, his face is most memorable from his role in *Jaws 3 (3D)*. Without this disappointing sequel, I might not have recognized Gossett Jr.'s ability to overact any role into perfection. Regardless of his performance, I still felt a love sustaining almost if chronic. The traits of the Punisher linger in the aftermath of this film. Whereas in the 2004 film, The Punisher hasn't reached his violent roots yet, same with this stillbirth. The Punisher should lack compassion or any other discernible euphoric trait. This Punisher wouldn't mind hijacking a bus to save a handful of kids. In a humorously illustrated scene, we watch Dolph Lundgren kick ass for children in the same vain that Stuart Devenie kicked ass for the lord in Peter Jackson's *Braindead*. Mark Goldblatt serves as the director. He has edited amazing films together such as *Predator 2* and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, but I fear that his qualification for being a director can be represented by the fact that he directed an episode of *Eerie Indiana*. The Punisher is a film that was just created without the discipline and helping hand of Marvel. This Punisher, while more masculine than Thomas Jane's pretentious rendition, was still a man without a logo or a cause. Watching Dolph Lundgren slaughtered many Asians proves to be an entertaining cause to continue but the overall product is devoid of meaning, cause, and a celluloid soul. I enjoyed *The Punisher* for what it provides and that is a character that is sympathetic yet repugnant. Dolph Lundgren couldn't provide the depth of Castle but instead served a full dish of the Punisher "look". This leads

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to many scenes that quick-cut to Lundgren's face in a timely void stare that eats up a surprising amount of run time. The Punisher features eccentric weapons, a disturbing ending featuring Lundgren meditating in the nude, gratuitous violence towards women, and an extremely violent environment in comparison to the 2004 Punisher reboot. Recommended only to the fans of what the 80s provides.

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WHITE MADNESS

Mark L. Lester (1975)

When I think about it, there seems to be very few truly decent, distinct, and memorable films about complex relationships between mothers and sons, especially in terms of works depicting troubled relationships between a matriarch and her male progeny. While I found Russian Aleksandr Sokurov's *Mother and Son* (1997) relatively touching in its own Slavic overly spiritual way, I also found it a tad bit too 'sentimental' for my tastes. Indeed, I like my films to be a little bit darker and more complicated, hence my appreciation of Teutonic dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's *The Rose King* (1986) aka *Der Rosenkönig*, but the problem with that film is that it is about a mother that is jealous of her son's male lover/sex slave, which is certainly not something I can relate to. Luckily, I recently discovered the truly criminally neglected work *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness* directed by Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst (Flanagan, Paranoia), which is a film I can better relate to as a particularly perturbing yet rather romantic piece of culturally cynical celluloid of the unwaveringly decadent sort about a misanthropic junky nihilist who lives completely off the grid in a large abandoned factory building and has been estranged from his mother from over a decade, only to reunite with his melancholy mommy after she is hit by a car and badly paralyzed. While I have never shot junk in my arm and it has not been a decade since I last saw my mother, I can certainly relate to the film's less than Oedipal but certainly obscene essence and foreboding tone in a somewhat inexplicable way. Lauded by such heavyweight European arthouse filmmakers as Jean-Luc Godard, Bernardo Bertolucci and Pier Paolo Pasolini for his 22-minute experimental directorial debut *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra* as the greatest talent to emerge from the Netherlands during the mid-1960s, Ditvoorst was an auteur purist who believed that film was a mixture of poetry and painting and never had an interest in appeasing the tastes of the masses, hence why virtually all of his works were commercial failures, including *White Madness*, which was the last film the diehard avant-gardist directed before committing suicide at the premature age of 47 in late 1987 by walking into the Scheldt river near his childhood hometown of Bergen op Zoom. Well over a decade before his suicide, the filmmaker began drastically deteriorating and living the life of a cynical misanthropic hermit after his most conventional and mainstream-oriented work, the crime-drama *Flanagan* (1975) based on the novel of the same name by popular Dutch novelist Tim Krabbé (*The Vanishing*), also turned out to be a commercial flop despite it being the director's first (and ultimately last) serious attempt at appealing to the masses. Unemployed and living as a drug-addled alcoholic recluse in an attic near Vondelpark in Amsterdam, Ditvoorst hated daylight, only came outside during the night to go to his favor bar, and by the early-1980s began hanging out and doing drugs with

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socially alienated hobos, punks, and skinheads who would ultimately inspire his swansong and magnum opus *White Madness*, which was also a flop (only attracting about 1860s filmgoers at theaters) and baffled both viewers and critics alike upon its release, though it is now considered an unrivaled masterpiece of sorts of Dutch cinema. Like *Day of the Idiots* (1981) era Werner Schroeter meets the satiric dark proto-surrealism of Comte de Lautréamont (whose poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror* is featured prominently in Dittvoorst's film) meets a decidedly Dutch take on 'magical realism,' Dittvoorst's masterpiece of moribund melancholia is simultaneously a poetic suicide letter, reluctant nod to maternity and the eternal feminine, and transcendental tribute to personal freedom and the perennial solace of death.

Like virtually all the protagonists of Dittvoorst's films, Lazlo (Thom Hoffman of Paul Verhoeven's *The 4th Man* (1983) and Rudolf van den Berg's *De avond* (1989)) is an antisocial loner who abhors all forms of authority and rejects society in its entirety, as a solemn and sullen mensch who incessantly paints murals of strikingly stoic eagles, which symbolize freedom to him. The aristocratic junky son of an eccentric ex-actress (veteran Belgian actress Pim Lambeau) who lives in a similarly reclusive life surrounded by books and debris, Lazlo lives in an abandoned ruined factory that is symbolically named "De Adelaar" (aka *The Eagle*) that he shares with an eccentric old man known simply as 'Portier' (Hans Croiset of Dittvoorst's *Flanagan*, who is not coincidentally the brother of the actor that plays Lazlo's much hated father) who has been working on an invention for four decades that he hopes will "bring forth a sound that will destroy the echo of the Big Bang with a deviant speed" and thus bring forth eternal silence as a result of the destruction of the entire world. Aside from Portier, Lazlo's only other friends are a dope-dealing Chinaman named Fuji (Joe Hennes) and his much taller white girlfriend Lili (Hilde Van Mieghem of Steven Soderbergh's *Kafka* (1991)) who live on a rusty old battleship. Lazlo rarely talks, but when he does it is usually in a no bullshit fashion that completely shies away from any verbal frivolousness (which can also be said of Dittvoorst's film, which is almost a purely visual experience, as a work that only has about 280 lines of dialogue). With his friend Fuji, Lazlo also likes talking about dreams while the two are both high on heroin and whatever other narcotics they have lying around. Lazlo has not seen his mother in twelve years and has nil desire to do so, but a tragic event will change that and plunge the antihero out of his hermetic glacial void and into an uncomfortable state of vulnerability where he must confront his repressed feeling as a born prodigal son who does not want to accept the fact that he loves his mother dearly.

Lazlo's mother cannot let a single minute go by without thinking or dreaming about her estranged son and what might become of him. Indeed, during the beginning of *White Madness*, she suffers a nightmarish hallucination after seeing TV footage of a baby seal being clubbed to death and then imagining the

furry white pup is actually her son. Mother's only source of solace is the music of Mozart and her favorite play *The Cherry Orchard* (notably, director Divoorst planned to cinematically adapt the play, but his screenplay was rejected, so he directed *White Darkness* instead) by Anton Chekhov, who she states of, "That Chekhov...he knew about the ladies." Mother also has a tendency to talk to furniture, including chairs and cabinets, when she is not pretending to drink coffee spiked with liquor with her son. Fed up with life and quite literally dying to get her son's attention, Mother decides to throw herself in front a car and suffers a variety of injuries and afflictions as a result, including paralyzed legs and random seizures. After her accident, Mother sends her half-sister Tante (Louise Ruys of Dick Maas' *Amsterdamned* (1988)) by Lazlo's squat to tell him about the bad news, but the protagonist responds rather rudely by throwing a carton of strawberry milk at her and walking away without saying a single word. Ultimately, Tante decides to track down Lazlo's prostitute friend Jasja (Gusje van Tilborgh), who more or less resembles a younger version of the antihero's mother, as she is convinced that the whore will be able to help. When Jasja goes by Lazlo's pad to attempt to talk some sense into him regarding comforting his hospitalized mother, he responds by stating, "My mother...She is a lifeless garden...a fossil from the Balkan." When Jasja states "your mother is suffering," Lazlo responds in a sadistically sarcastic fashion by stating "finally." When Jasja states regarding his mother "you love her," Lazlo cannot deny it and finally agrees to accompany the prostitute to the hospital. While taking a taxi ride to the hospital, the driver abruptly pulls over and attempts to kick Lazlo and Jasja out of the cab after the former refuses to stop smoking in his car. When Lazlo gets out of the car, he drops the cash on the ground and steals the cab while the taxi-driver is scrambling to pick-up the money. Jasja finds the whole ordeal highly hilarious, but Lazlo doesn't and throws the hooker out of the cab when she laughs too loudly. Indeed, Lazlo cannot stand anyone, including hot carpet-munching hookers he used to fuck.

When Lazlo gets to the hospital, he finds his mother bedridden, covered in bandages and casts, and only semi-conscious yet she still manages to still give her son the warmest and most loving of smiles. After the mother gently hands her son an envelope with his name on it in a discreet and almost conspiratorial manner, Tante destroys the beautiful moment by barging into the hospital room and unleashing a storm of accusatory verbal swill, so Lazlo grabs her and throws her out by force, thus causing her to land on an injured man on a stretcher. After seeing mommy dearest for the first time in twelve years, Lazlo goes by Fuji's place to buy a month's supply of heroin but the Chinaman does not have that much dope to spare so the antihero must meet with a suavely dressed bartender who is their main supplier. Just before Lazlo arrives for the drug deal, a lard ass junky (played by Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh in a highly memorable and mirthful role) that is fiending for a fix kills the bartender by stabbing him in the

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gut with a knife after the dealer refuses to sell him so dope. When Lazlo finds the murdered man, he only seems concerned about whether or not he will get his drugs. After digging through the dead dealer's pockets for cash and dope, Lazlo feels sympathy for the murderous fat junky and places a large bag of dope into his mouth. In fact, Lazlo subsequently has an epiphany and decides to give the rest of the drugs to Fuji as he plans to quit drugs altogether, stating regarding the junky lifestyle, "It's the same everywhere...A sad bunch of pathetic losers." Of course, Lazlo really wants to get clean because he plans to live with his mother and wants to have a literally and figuratively clean start with her. After telling Portier that he will be spending the next couple weeks in the top story of the factory and that he does not want to see anyone during that time, Lazlo suffers the lonely metaphysical hell of drug withdrawal and, in turn, incessant diarrhea.

When Lazlo reaches equilibrium and emerges from drug withdrawal, he says farewell to Portier, who remarks "you're leaving. I can hardly believe it," and makes his way to mommy's manor, but not before taking a shower at a clinic where an old woman voyeuristic gazes at his unclad body and briefly encountering the bloody feeble corpse of his childhood self. When Lazlo finally arrives at his mother's dilapidated mansion, he finds himself literally standing in debris, dust, and shambles of his childhood. Indeed, the large family manor is mostly in ruins and art supplies, various types of taxidermied and decayed animals (especially snakes and iguanas, but also birds), and mountains of books are lying all over the thoroughly cluttered house. While waiting for his mother to arrive home from the hospital, Lazlo hears ghosts from his childhood, including that of his abusive deceased father, who is rarely mentioned in the film but whose ominous presence is deeply felt. When Mother finally arrives, she is wheeled into the house in a wheelchair by her half-sister Tante and she happily remarks "Hello Boy, I'm glad you're here" after Lazlo warmly greets her in a romantic fashion with a single red rose. Before long, Lazlo and Mother decide to symbolically throw all of their favorite possessions out of a window, including the latter's favorite play *The Cherry Orchard*, the telephone, and about a hundred or so books, though the protagonist spends a fairly long time brooding over de Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror* in between working on a new eagle mural before deciding to rid himself of his worldly material possessions. Unfortunately, Lazlo also soon begins using various types of drugs again, including weed (which he sits next to his lavish illustrated copy of *Les Chants de Maldoror*) and angel dust. Mother also reminds Lazlo about how his father used to regularly say hateful things to him like "Junior, out of my way...You smell like chicken shit" and "one day, I'll beat the light out of your eyes." At one point, Lazlo suffers a hallucination where his father forces him to blind his own eyes with cherries (which is surely reference to *The Cherry Orchard*) while his mother suffers a surreal seizure while dressed like a cheap hooker. Indeed, it soon becomes quite apparent why Lazlo decided to stay away

from his childhood home for twelve years, as the familiarity of the family manor throws the protagonist into an existential pandemonium where repressed memories mutate into living and highly lucid nightmares.

After getting in a petty argument with his prideful progenitor, Lazlo storms out of the manor while his mother yells, “Runaway...That’s what you always do.” Unfortunately, Lazlo soon discovers that virtually all of his friends are dead and thus he has nothing left to go back to. Indeed, on top of Fuji overdosing on heroin, Lazlo discovers the snail-covered corpse of Portier at the factory. Next to the Portier’s corpse is a sign telling Lazlo to tryout the dead man’s big experiment—the world-destroying sound machine that is supposed to be louder than the Big Bang—but when the protagonist turns the ambitious invention on, it malfunctions because a rat has eaten through one of the electrical wires. Needless to say, loser’s loser Lazlo realizes that all is lost and predictably goes back to mommy, who he is distressed to find lying unconscious at the bottom of the manor stairs. That night, Lazlo imagines himself strangling to death the man that ran over his mother—a virtual doppelgänger of the protagonist’s father (symbolically played by Hans Croiset, who also played Portier and is the brother of the actor that played Lazlo’s father)—while the chap pleads, “Prince, there goes your King. Stop dreaming, Junior.” Although dead, Portier also comes by the manor and informs Lazlo, who is adamant about not letting his undead friend in his house, that his mother’s accident was “The Big Bang.” After buying some pills from an Arab drug dealer and symbolically destroying his latest eagle mural by tossing a bucket of blood red paint on it, Lazlo is prepared to carry out his Mother’s wishes in regard to her upcoming birthday. Indeed, on the day of his Mother’s birthday, Lazlo carries her to a lavish room full of splendid pageantry, including 3,000 candles and roses, that resembles a high-camp funeral procession à la Daniel Schmid’s *La Paloma* (1974). After slow dancing with his mother, Lazlo gently lays her on a bed, pours a glass of champagne for her and himself, and puts two of the four pulls that he bought from the Arab dope dealer in her mouth with a truly deadly kiss. As it turns out, the letter that Mother handed Lazlo at the hospital towards the beginning of the film included specific instructions for a mother-son suicide pact reading, “Champagne and Mozart on my birthday. I love you too much. Your mother.” In the end, mother and son die beside one another in bed.

Notably, before he killed himself in late 1987 by taking pills just like those taken by the antihero of *White Madness* and walking into the waters of the Scheldt, Adriaan Ditvoorst had not spoken to his mother or family members in two decades. Like the Portier character of his film who attempted to build a machine louder than the Big Bang that would ultimately destroy all sound and ultimately the world, Ditvoorst was apparently looking for a sort of perennial silence as reflected in the suicide letter he mailed out his family members and friends reading: “When you read this, I will have entrusted my body to

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the waves. All is silence. There is nothing else.” Notably, a half a decade after Ditvoorst entrusted his body to the waves, *White Madness* star Thom Hoffman directed the quasi-avant-garde documentary *De domeinen Ditvoorst* (1992) aka *The Ditvoorst Domains* about the filmmaker and his rather troubled life as an uncompromising avant-garde auteur purist and born-anarchist who spent his entire life at odds with both the Dutch film world and society in general. The doc is highly insightful in that it makes it perfectly clear that *White Madness* was Ditvoorst’s final testament and the culmination of his life’s work and singularly cynical and pessimistic weltanschauung. Indeed, while Ditvoorst apparently opted to commit suicide partly because he could not find funding for his films, it is hard to imagine that the auteur would have been able to top his final work, which practically bleeds the director’s hopelessly forlorn soul and is certainly the crowning achievement and swansong of an artist that had decided to throw in the towel on life. Indeed, next to Ditvoorst, fellow ‘starving artist’ and world famous Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh (whose great-grandnephew Theo van Gogh incidentally appears in *White Madness* as a somnambulist-like junky) almost seems like a happy-go-lucky sort of guy. In my less than humble opinion, Ditvoorst is one of the few true artist heirs to van Gogh, just as Fassbinder once described his friend Werner Schroeter as a sort of heir to Comte de Lautréamont, albeit of the cinematic as opposed to literary realm. As once-controversial Dutch filmmaker Wim Verstappen (*Blue Movie*) remarks in *The Ditvoorst Domains* regarding Ditvoorst and the tragic failure of his singular filmmaking career: “If you do something well in Holland, you don’t get any credit.” Of course, it is hard to imagine that Ditvoorst would not commit suicide after watching a film as malignantly melancholy and idiosyncratically and elegantly morbid as *White Madness*. With the rather shocking recent suicide of a rather kind, caring, and seemingly always happy family friend who did not seem the least bit suicidal, I can only assume that a person that was so overtly miserable and forlorn as Ditvoorst was dying to die, with filmmaking being the only thing that gave him a reason to live, hence his remarks regarding *White Madness*: “Well, if things go wrong, I’ll be gone. I hate quarreling and nagging...But I never felt as happy with a film before. I feel like someone climbing a descending fire ladder...who keeps climbing, but never reaches the fire.” One can only hope that with his suicide, Ditvoorst was finally able to reach the fire.

-Ty E

CLASS OF 1984

Mark L. Lester (1982)

I love exploitation films that discredit their token moral code. Class of 1984 is an exploitation film that takes a 1980's look at the deterioration of public schools and the degeneracy so commonly practiced today. Class of 1984 is more relative today, but who cares about that? I enjoy the film for its extreme and offensive showmanship. I really hate the whole serious "empowering teacher" genre. Class of 1984 features a gang of criminals led by high school fuehrer Stegman. The gang runs drugs, hit jobs, and prostitution at the school. The gang meets their match in the form of a new good guy music teacher. This fellow can't handle seeing crime and subversion in the sacred grounds of a multicultural public school. Actor (who plays Stegman) Timothy van Patten went on to direct episodes of Sopranos (among other HBO shows). Michael J. Fox plays the role of a turd like music student (and ally of the music teacher). I was disappointed that Stegman's gang didn't finish off Fox's impotent character. Instead, one of Fox's friend takes drugs, climbs a flag pole, and finally falls to his death. Class of 1984 is a film that is no doubt fun for the whole family. Unfortunately for Troma, Class of 1984 puts Class of Nuke 'Em High to shame. It also makes me wonder if Lloyd Kaufman may have borrowed a couple ideas from the Class of 1984. The film is one of most impressive (if that is saying much) and well crafted exploitation to ever grace the screen of a downtown cum filled movie theater. I don't even want to think about what Lloyd Kaufman does when the lights go down in a public theater (or bathroom). Class of 1984 succeeds in making murder, rape, death, and drug use hilarious. I would much rather see that than some garbage intercity shit-fest centering around the dangers and problems regarding public schools. Public schools are only destined to further failure in the future. Why not laugh about it?

-Ty E

CLASS OF 1999
CLASS OF 1999

Mark L. Lester (1990)

Class of 1999 is the surprisingly excellent sequel to Mark L. Lester's exploitation masterpiece Class of 1984. The film is set in a time where American public schools are more of detention centers than places for teenagers to take in knowledge that will help them in life. That being said, Class of 1999 does reflect contemporary American schools to a certain degree. This time around, gangs aren't the biggest threat in school. A small group of three killer robots have now taken jobs at this public school wasteland. Both gangs featured in Class of 1999 wear outfits that put today's philo-homosexual Emo and Wigger play thugs to shame. Writer and director Mark L. Lester makes it known that subversive types of people reflect that their brains and sexual equipment are more than a little scattered through their choice of clothing. The film's hero and protagonist Cody Culp has just gotten out of jail and is ready to straighten his life out. That becomes a bit difficult for Cody when gang members try to rape his love interest and beat up his turd of a brother (played by Joshua John Miller). You know the world is a dangerous place when Malcom McDowell is the principle of a high school. The school is apparently titled Kennedy after the two Irish American brothers that offered promises for a new America, but just ended up getting assassinated. Ideological dreams of peaceful (and peace in general) diversity, collective harmony, and a world without crime have been confirmed fantasies in Class of 1999. This has also no doubt been proven the reality of contemporary America as the country has gone from global world power to the inevitable third world sewer that so-called liberals continue fighting like little girls for. The three killer robot teacher in Class of 1999 come in three forms: a stoic old white man, a middle aged bitchy black woman (played by Blaxploitation icon Pam Grier), and an asshole white jock. These three human engineered psychos have decided that any interruption to their orderly teaching must be dealt with via extermination. They can snap a neck faster than turning a page in a book. Eventually the students realize who their true enemy is and take action. If only kids in real public schools could put two and two together. Class of 1999 is an underrated work of exploitation filmmaking. In all honestly, I found Class of 1999 to be much more entertaining than any three films in the Terminator trilogy. The politically incorrect film is also one of the few more recent exploitation films that has any redeeming qualities (and it has a lot). I don't think that it would be an exaggeration to call Mark L. Lester a genius of exploitation filmmaking. Very few individuals can live up to such a title.

-Ty E

CANE TOADS: AN UNNATURAL HISTORY

Mark Lewis (1988)

This little ditty is a 47 minute short documentary of a bizarre nature. Directed in 1988 by Mark Lewis, this film has undoubtedly traveled a long way by word of mouth through classrooms of all kinds and featuring unforgettable interviewee's and many toad-vision moments (An attempted first person toad viewpoint) Rather than opening up with an introduction elaborating on the disposition of the Cane Toad, it opens up with a segment explaining the faults of man and the depth of a human idiocy that knows no end. It seems that during an outbreak of Cane Beetles (Bugs + Crops = Bad), some genius decided to import a hundred or so Cane Toads from their native land of Hawaii to Northern Queensland (Australia) As expected, his mathematical equations proved to be void when the fat toads couldn't reach the flying insects, and the once brilliant man became a staple in the ever-so present category of faulty pseudo-intellectuals who fucked shit up. See also: The Terminator Series. So these toads began massively breeding and began over taking the entire culture of Northern Queensland. This documentary features interviewee's who grew up through the Toad Revolution and what they think about this sore subject. We meet men who have an enormous stuttering problem. Actually, we just stay acquainted with him. It takes him about damn near 5 minutes to say a single goddamn sentence. We meet a guy who seems to act just like Hooper off of Jaws and explains a passionate story about his favorite cat biting one of these toads and dying. This man went into the woods with a pick axe and piked the hell out of it, causing it's poison discharge to strike him in the eye, thus blinding him for 6+ hours. We then meet a pedal-happy son-of-a-bitch who demonstrates one of his favorite hobbies by swerving all over the road, keeping a high score of how many of these blessed toads he can squish. We then take a fleeting look into people who actually love God's creatures. This one select old man begins to tear up and choke on his words talking about how much he loves to pet them, and feel them squish in his hands, and dress them up. Things certainly get weird in the down under. The male toads all share one thing; being a horny mother fucker. These toads practice an act that is called amplexus in the science circle. The male toads jump on top of the female toad, gripping his muscly toad arms in her side, forming a piggy-back ride sex position while she hops around and he ejaculates in the entire pond. I seriously lack the initiative to ever wade through a pond again. This documentary should be rated R for scenes of graphic toad sex and necrophilia. Yes, necrophilia. The camera caught sight of a very bizarre act - a cane toad fucking a dead cane toad. This toad was squashed in the middle of the road, and the horny bastard was going away at it like Will Smith on summer vacation. The documentary is split into a neutral viewpoint, allowing people to side with, or against the plague-like creatures. Cane Toads: An Unnatural History is a true

CANE TOADS: AN UNNATURAL HISTORY

to life "When Animals Attack!" film. If being a documentary on sex-crazed toad maniacs wasn't enough, this documentary also happens to give way for the most horrendous acts of singing on film, even showing a naked fat hairy man in the shower singing a folk song dedicated to these lazy creatures. Toads then break in through his window. A funny thing about this film, is that the wild-life footage is so seamlessly spliced in, that it gives the Cane Toads a significant boost in intelligence. I doubt these creatures could storm a house. The highlight of the film? A fucking toad ate a fucking mouse. I almost choked. These toads are not to be screwed with. Whether they poison your ass, or eat it, Australia is screwed. Let's hope these new ultraviolet and gene screwery works. Cane Toads: An Unnatural History is a fun documentary that doesn't stray away from the true story of bat-shit locals and old myths.

-mAQ

CRANK: HIGH VOLTAGE

Mark Neveldine, Brian Taylor (2009)

We've seen this sort of competition before; genres duke it out all the time but never has a competitor been as fierce and unprovoked as *Crank: High Voltage*. Anticipating much, the sequel to the action bonanza *Crank*, which featured sex, guns, and sex, exploded instantly with an 8-bit letter to my heart depicting the final events of the first film in glorious old-school NES graphics which really grips a reign on the absurdist trophy this film extends its reach towards. I thought I had seen it all including the death of this so-called "absurdo-cinema" wave that was extinguished with the excruciating entries of both *Feast 2: Sloppy Seconds* and *Feast 3: The Happy Finish*. What a finisher it had been, momentarily not happy at all. With these film theories, evolution certainly takes place while initiating a free fall course of change. In *Feast*, the humor got too over its own head and slowly suffered and drowned until the egotistical director decided to lampoon his own lampooning. Complex this, complex that; the eventual ending of *Crank* left a brand on all who have seen it. These dire images of a helpless quest forces us to ask ourselves if his revenge tale was at all in vain. Of course after finding out the hint of a continuation, we allow the lore of Chev Chelios to be dissected rather prudishly with various flashbacks and an idea of his "Superman" status and the extents this raging man will go to secure his future sex life. *Crank: High Voltage* is a film I had been craving since my first fix back when the original piece was released to DVD. A simple image of Statham wielding a gun to a psychotropic washout explosion of reddish colors was my bargaining chip but upon further inspection, this piece of "intellectual" film based on lucid entertainment broadened my horizons in a major way. Entering with absolutely no expectations other than a seemingly *Escape from New York* plot progression ripoff, I was absolutely hammered with images of extreme chaos, nerve-shattering chase sequences, and endearing amounts of public display of genital affection. It should come as no surprise to any that have heard of the sequel that our main "hero," Chev Chelios, died (or so we thought) at the grand finale of this revolutionary wake-up call to action cinema. Within the marketing advertisements for the sequel, we discover that our friend is not dead but has been taken captive - again. This time, his heart is removed and in place is an electric heart. I'll skip the schematics and the scientific assets but in a nut shell, Chev Chelios needs electricity to survive in order to acquire his heart for correctional surgery. When *Crank: High Voltage* was given authentic life; a red-band trailer, a few images, and a teaser poster, I was blessed with dream-like images of Kaiju Chelios, hardcore vein-extraction in a family friendly habitat for ritualistic cinema indulgence, and an amount of profanities to build a fucking bomb shelter out of. Judging from these few samples of what was to come, I knew that the duo directing team behind the masterful original had been hard at work

CRANK: HIGH VOLTAGE

with a film that will surpass even their own limited expectations. Armed with 10 \$1,000 HD mini-cams, this team worked with passive digression and a destructive vision of action cinema to create the holy grail of entertainment. I dub thee, Crank: High Voltage, the honor of being one of the most enormously engaging films of the past century and one of the few films that made me sick, not because of the outrageous moments of lenticular extremes, but the vulgar amount of obscenity transferred into any possible object containable with kinetic energy. Crank: High Voltage isn't just a "must see film," It's a goddamn infection that must be spread to every little boy or girl whether they be naughty or nice. Where do I begin on the aspect of the score that also serves as an sound effect board. The directing team decided to hire General Mike Patton for work on the score of Crank: High Voltage. If you can expect anything from the godfather of modern spazz-avant-garde, It is a damn remarkable score that keeps you enthralled while doing the past duty of the previous film by keeping your heart rate constantly accelerating with primitive beats and screeching whistles from he who can only be deemed as a musical genius. If it wasn't for this man's genius rendition of what a contemporary "Dogme 95" action film should sound like, I couldn't even imagine how dreary this flick would have sounded with the aid of a studio faucet like Hans Zimmer. Mike Patton is indeed welcome to any and all forms of gracious praise to cleverly aid this tongue-in-cheek hitman film to an era of films based on hired killers that doesn't center itself around a loathsome creature that is just Another Lonely Hitman. To boost the man's ego even more, I could consider the Crank: High Voltage score to be one of the more memorable ones. Watch in delight as Chelios breaks the "third wall" when he begins to whistle along Patton's score. Such delights have never before been captured on film. Crank: High Voltage feels like a breakthrough experiment in filmic "Cryptozoology": Something so rare that you'd never thought you would encounter in your natural life. It's not easy accepting the idea of Crank: High Voltage. Look at me, out of fear that our local theater wouldn't receive the film (which it didn't,) I began to have strenuous nightmares about the idea of never seeing a follow up to the original ending that needed more depth excavated into the instantly cult lore of top assassin Chev Chelios. To put it gingerly, Crank: High Voltage is a masterpiece of auteur action cinema destined for the gutter with regards to the modern sensibilities of most folks poisoned by "sexual repression." To make a film with no conditions of political-correctiveness and in turn reap the rewards of having the freedom to film whatever-the-fuck-you-want proved to ultimately be the resuscitation that the dying body of Chelios needed. After this riotous, raunchy film, I demanded more Crank. I need more to keep my own "Strawberry Tart" going. This is something I personally need to see through to it's bittersweet completion. Whether you're looking for lunch box/Kevin Costner jokes or simply to watch a mulatto receive a shotgun, greased up in oil, shoved up his ass with intentions to fire, Crank: High Voltage is an action film that will never backfire on you,

only upset whatever vulnerabilities you might not be acquainted with. Out of all the films to need discretion warnings, Crank: High Voltage is the only one that matters. God only knows the strange impulses I've experienced after watching this cardiac arrest of cinema academia.

-mAQ

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

Mark Pellington (2002)

Terror is an intimate subject. Many things can horrify someone; It's all dependent on one's personal fears and experiences. As i walk past the theater where Prom Night is being shown and hear the chorus of pre-teen girls screaming, I question modern horrors respect for the very feeling that gave birth to the genre. The Mothman Prophecies is a film that stands on it's own. While it is a modern work that slightly butchers the source material (John Keel; The Mothman Prophecies) I find this film to be in a league of its own. It was strong 10 years ago, and its still strong now. In fact, the film hasn't lost any of it's emotional impact. When i first saw this film, I was horrified. The levels of sound and the depth of the perception that is in every frame is astounding. If anything, this film should be hailed as a masterpiece of sound editing. After my initial viewing, i scoured the Internet searching for the stories that this film was based on. After finding a site, I began to read hundreds of case files, making notes of everything of interest. As i began to de-socialize from the real world, I Myself, became lost into this myth of a moth creature. The stories scared me more than the film because for once, I believed. After this, I went into a Cryptzoology stint. In West Virginia during the 60's, a Moth creature terrified the local populace. Many people began to create conspiracy theories and dig up of Indian curses put on the town. The fact is that these hard-working church-going people saw something otherworldly. It was also seen on the Silver Bridge during its collapse. Several scenes will terrify you, no matter who you are. The several with the enigma Indrid Cold and the camera trick mirror scene are just a few of the more memorable ones. The music is a mixture of ambiance and weird clicks & whistles synced with orchestral music. The boldest move of this film, is to not show the Mothman in the flesh. Due to various reports, nobody can have a true depiction of the creature. Science may debunk the creature, but things aren't always that simple. This film manages to embrace every thought of the unknown in such an abstract way that it presents itself as unsurpassed. The Mothman Prophecies is like an amazingly terrifying episode of The X-Files, but without the character development and sexual tension. After seeing this film, I desired nothing more than to visit Point Pleasant for myself and hope for a sighting. I for one, believe in the Mothman, more than i believe in most things.

-mAQ

I MELT WITH YOU

Mark Pellington (2011)

As far as I am concerned, one of the most repugnant contemporary trends in Hollywood is the so called “bromance” film, especially of the lowbrow pseudo-libertine comedic variety. The portmanteau term ‘bromance’ itself was apparently coined by Dave Carnie; the former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct and onetime-Larry Flynt publications-owned risqué skateboarding magazine *Big Brother*. Unsurprisingly, many of the quasi-carny Jackasses from the MTV show *Jackass*, including alpha-Jackass Johnny Knoxville himself, got their start exposing their genitals to live electrical currents via *Big Brother*. Like Johnny Knoxville and his erratic, angel-dust-fueled untermensch entourage, the seemingly homoerotic undertones of mock-male bromance, in the form of low-camp Hollywood party propaganda films, would eventually occupy the mostly vapid minds of the mainstream and further contribute to the full-fledged senseless and nihilistic hedonism that has now become a pronounced and never-ending rite-of-passage for desperate and horny teenage boys and middle-aged man-children alike. Indeed, bromance films seem to reflect and pathetically glorify a totally degenerate ‘eternal coming-of-age’ that is now undoubtedly typical of modern cosmopolitan Western (and especially American) man where traditional male ideals like physical and mental strength, stoicism, and spirituality are seen as a joy-killing ‘bummer’ and where an endless buffet of nugatory sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll are the highest of ideals. Thankfully, I have only viewed a handful of these maniacally-conceived movie monstrosities, yet they have unfortunately left a deep enough impression on me to the degree where I unconsciously cringe in literal physical disgust at hearing the mere word ‘bromance.’ Last week, I had the opportunity to watch the film *I Melt with You* (2011) directed by Mark Pellington (*The Mothman Prophecies*); an anti-bromance film of sorts that ultimately delightfully demystifies, marvelously mutilates, and befittingly murders the retarded romance of the dreaded bromance.

In *I Melt with You*, a middle-aged foursome (played by Thomas Jane, Rob Lowe, Christian McKay, and Jeremy Piven) of former college friends/party boys reunite at a mansion in Big Sur, California and hopelessly attempt to relive their misspent youthful lifestyle of forgotten sex, numbing drugs, and redundant Rock ‘n’ Roll. From the beginning of the film, it is most apparent that these four men have become totally disenchanting with their youthful ideals and that their life-long bromance has significantly soured as a result. Most of these men also have a hard time relating to their former pals and can only seem to find collective solidarity in their commitment to rampant intoxication-based escapism, and overall bitterness and disappointment with life. To evade the glaring reality of their age, the miserable four even go as far as partying with a group of 20-somethings (one of which is played by porn-whore-turned-legit-hollywood-whore Sasha Grey)

I MELT WITH YOU

in a pathetic attempt to rekindle the spirit of their youth. Instead of forgetting about their undesirable physical maturity and failed lives, their disillusionment with their miserable existences is all the more highlighted and disastrously confirmed. The night after their unexpectedly insightful inter-age orgy, the ugliest member of fab four commits suicide not long after passively engaging in a bisexual threesome with two menacing youths, thus forcing the three remaining self-loathing neo-yuppies to weigh in the pros and cons of suicide. As you find out *I Melt with You*, the fabulous four made a suicide pact during their college years stating that if they failed in their idealistic, unrealistic life ambitions, they would all settle for mortal sin of suicide instead. After languishing through deplorable bromance fantasy-comedies like Todd Phillips' *The Hangover* (2008) and Steve Pink's *Hot Tub Time Machine* (2010), I came to the blatant conclusion that men who act so hedonistically as the characters featured in these films could only be as miserable as a homeless orthodox Jew accepting food charity from a Mormon temple. As far as I know, *I Melt with You* is the only film that realistically portrays the emasculated void that is the totally shallow, infinitely worthless, and intrinsically self-destructive, faux-male-comradie bromance. On top of honestly portraying the banal brotherly pseudo-love of bromance in loathing detail, *I Melt with You* is totally free of a typically compromised, happy holy-wood ending. To say anything more about the film would be an injustice to prospective viewers.

In one particularly telling scene early on in *I Melt with You*, an old interview with Johnny Rotten of *The Sex Pistols* is voiced over images of domestic mundanity. Mr. Rotten quite matter-of-factly and unsentimentally admits that his goal with *The Sex Pistols* was to destroy Rock 'n' Roll, as he essentially feels that it has worn out its welcome and is nothing more than a repulsive anachronism. Of course, the formerly idealistic man-children of *I Melt with You* are indubitably Rock 'n' Roll casualties who fell prey to the golden calf of distorted electric guitars, free love and STDs, and the pseudo-transcendence of mind-altering controlled substances. The real tragedy of the four protagonists in *I Melt with You* is that it took them their entire adulthood to realize the utter bankruptcy and worthlessness of their fundamentally deleterious, self-obsessed ideals. Of course, mind-numbingly moronic, potty humor movies like *The Hangover* portray such barren lifestyles as something akin to magical mystery tours, but I guess that it is one such should expect from an era that likens redundant rock lyrics to the holy writ. Artistically, *I Melt with You* is far from exceptional, but it is a rare Hollywood film with a legitimate moral message that is not too preachy nor horribly contrived, but is told with a somewhat unique, therapeutic flair. *I Melt with You* also features a sometimes enjoyable, complimentary soundtrack with songs from Bauhaus, Adam & The Ants, *The Sex Pistols*, Pixies, *The Jesus and Mary Chain*, and, unsurprisingly, *Modern English* (doing a bastardized 2011 re-working of the hit 1982 song the film was named after) among others. If

you're looking for a film that is a true "party crasher" and that is guaranteed to ruin everyone's buzz, pop I Melt with You into your dvd player and grin as you watch the smiles melt.

-Ty E

MARAUDERS
MARAUDERS

Mark Savage (1986)

On March 4th of the year 2009, I had commented on a pseudo-obituary posted by favorite blogger Phantom of Pulp in which he described his first encounter with a man named James, who they later became great friends and shared film thoughts under a pseudonym. I don't wish to repost his sentiments as they are strong in their own environment and context but I was moved by what Mark Savage had to say about his dearly departed friend. I wanted to offer something, words of encouragement, maybe telling him that everything is alright and that James went on to a better place but I couldn't bring these ideas to fruition and instead left a comment promising him I'd return later with a response. Two years later and I still haven't done that. But I have, however, viewed one of the main topics of his post, Mark Savage's debut feature *Marauders* (1986). Opening with snapshots of the several actors in what could be interpreted as a slideshow presentation of the "Golden Years", *Marauders* unfolds rather quickly with the casually intertwined mornings of two sociopaths. J.D. gets his early morning nutrients by killing his mother for getting the police involved with a shady deal and Emilio murders his girlfriend over a simple misunderstanding. Played wonderfully by Zero Montana and Colin Savage (brother to Mark), these two punks represent the dark-seed of society, a lot that Mark Savage admitted to have mingled with. Can you blame him? As *Marauders* will later indicate, violence is surely an infectious act that will dissolve morality quicker than sugar in coffee.

Now, one thing to understand are the budgetary restraints on *Marauders*. To quote Mark Savage - "made for a bag of peanuts". For this reason, *Marauders* is visually unstimulated and would be aptly remembered as a punk rock soap opera. These aren't huge concerns of mine as the storytelling remains solid and the roughness, in the end, grants *Marauders* with such nihilistic charm that it has pass over minimal complaints. After the initial bouts of violence, J.D. waits on the street corner for Emilio to pick him up in his green automobile. Meanwhile, a bloke named David is on the move to pick up a girl he has convinced he loves in order to rape her at his father's cabin. Their paths cross in a most unfortunate manner as J.D. moves to cross the street and gets clipped by the fast-moving red vehicle which, in turn, creates one of the greatest amateur stunts in an independent production seen yet. Modesty cannot mask this remarkable feat. Actor Zero Montana's implied injury had to have been real as the bumper makes direct contact with the side of his legs, sending him spiraling to the ground, shattering a bottle in his hand. Call it stunt-work or youthful ignorance, Zero Montana could not have possibly walked away from that scene unscathed. Following the hit-and-run is what eventually boils into the exploitation meat of *Marauders*, the consequential forming of a lynch mob to take down these boys who know no innocence.

The reign of terror committed by these teenagers includes such irrationality as thieving (which my youth succumbed to) and deceiving women with intent towards molestation. Playing David's hopeful mistress for the weekend, Becky, is Megan Napier. Becky's character seems to be chastity personified, even going as far as gushing sweet nothings into David's ear via phone while he's in bed with two other women. This marks a definite sadness as Becky is just a little girl existing in a world of twitching members. Her virginal sanctitude has an expiration date but it hopefully isn't today. For a truly humorous and cheap thrill, rival her performance of high school sweetheart with her short role in *Beyond the Pale* in which she swallows the load of a character beaten and burned unconscious. I always found Mark Savage to be a brother in regards to fetish and film and this scene, no, these shorts, cement this notion. Sadly, *Marauders* seems to suffer a drought from his trademark eroticism, albeit containing handgun irrumatio and a brief scene of rape. What really compliments these scenes of teenage hysteria is the performance of Colin Savage as Emilio. Zero Montana as J.D. represents the "beautiful" side of carnage, with what, his pretty-boy looks. Colin Savage's rude and lavish conservative punk demeanor plays off perfectly the vile side of the original marauders. Emilio is, for certain, the alpha dog of the duo and proves this during a scrappy test of friendship with the obligatory "loveyou" blows.

Marauders is certainly a calculated film. Opening with high-class and thought behind each shot, the result of careful calculation, *Marauders* soon boils into hectic tracking through an Australian forest as the film culminates into a violent explosion baring a high body count. In a sentence, *Marauders* can be summarized as a tale of two boys, far from home, angering the locals to the point of inciting citizenry into the titular "marauders". This unsurmisable hatred stems from the appearance of J.D., Emilio, and David onto these townsfolk's stomping grounds. This line of aggression is cast once these embers of oppression roar to life. It isn't just the naivety of J.D. or Emilio. No, David is also guilty of stealing a car and with intent to victimize a young girl. David will unwillingly become martyred by the script of *Marauders* and during the short solidarity of these three young adults, show you that J.D. and Emilio are, without facade, scared teenagers in a world that has finally to bite back. If justice existed in the world and finances were as they are uncommonly considered - scraps of paper - then perhaps this perfect world would give Mark Savage carte blanche as for his erotic grandeur be told the world over. *Marauders* is a labor of love; a work that can be attested to stemming from early shorts of Mark Savage's - particularly one titled *The Violent Years* - though that short contains Colin Savage in a similarly "savage" role, thematically it is worlds apart. The films of Mark Savage are rough diamonds to behold and his early short films are "Kern" without Kern influence. With *Marauders* in tow and the death of James heavy on my mind, it is no surprise as to why James admired *Marauders* so and with my long-standing promise of returning sentiments towards the unfair collection of a fellow cinephile, I present

MARAUDERS

my review of Marauders - dedicated to James and the legacy of fertilecelluloid.
-mAQ

DEFENCELESS: A BLOOD SYMPHONY

Mark Savage (2004)

Usually, I refrain from watching any horror film that was created via digital video. In my less than humble opinion, digital video has unfortunately given a voice to people who have nothing to say. In the past, filmmaking was a labor extensive procedure even in regard to low-budget filmmaking, thus precluding less serious individuals from attempting to make films. Of course, there are obviously positive aspects to digital video, as some genuine artists have successfully created fantastic works out of the seemingly schlocky format. For instance, Russian auteur Andrey Iskanov has already created an admirable body of innovative work during his relatively short filmmaking career, taking digital video into dark realms that I would have never imagined possible considering the home-video-like aesthetic generally associated with the format. Recently, I had the pleasure of watching Mark Savage's *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* (2004) - a delectable digital video work that successfully combines macabre moments of vengeance inspired castration and blissfully serene family beach scenes. As advertised in the title, *Defenceless* is indeed a bloody symphony - featuring no dialogue, but instead - a strictly classical music based soundtrack that highlights every memorable movement made by the characters in the film. In fact, it seems like the film's female protagonist is conducting the cinematic symphony as she gracefully, yet violently waves a knife at her former tormentors.

Like *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978) and *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* (1973) before it, *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* is a revenge film about a broken, bruised, and ultimately brutalized (yet beautiful) woman who takes warranted vengeance against a trio of men that had previously sadistically ravaged her - unflinchingly killing them off one-by-one during the final act of this extravagant exercise in cinematic violence. Unlike most female protagonists in revenge films before it, the luscious lady that stars in *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* brings a certain authenticity and realism to the her role that is quite rare for such a work. In fact, "the woman" (played by the beautiful and talented novice actress Susanne Hausschmid) resembles a barbaric Viking broad expressing blood-lust during an unfulfilling and ultimately unfruitful mating season. *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* is a film that brings poetry to murderous scenarios that are seemingly unpoetical - no small feat successfully accomplished by Aussie auteur Mark Savage. Indeed, Mr. Savage was blessed with a fitting surname - as *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* portrays humans at their most depraved - where the distinctly human characteristic of rationality is obsolete. The classical musical contained throughout *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* brings a certain irony to the film that is comparable to Stanley Kubrick's use of Ludwig Van Beethoven in *A Clockwork Orange*. Despite the fact that Europe gave the world the most complicated musical compositions and the greatest genius composers; the same

DEFENCELESS: A BLOOD SYMPHONY

continent also gave the world its most deadly wars. In *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony*, the most culturally refined aspects of European culture are met with the most destructively archaic. For this reason - like the films of Jörg Buttgerit - *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* will most likely offend pretentious Art House film fans and bore braindead gorehounds - as it is an ambitious work taking influence from both high-class cinema and the most violent of exploitation flicks.

After having read Mark Savage's excellent cinema-obsessed blog (*Phantom of Pulp*) over the years and finally seeing his film *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony*, it is apparent to me that he is a filmmaker's filmmaker and an eclectic cinephile (in the truest sense of the word). In my opinion, cinema is primarily a visual art as proven by the still powerful (yet nearly a century old) silent works of F.W. Murnau and Carl Th. Dreyer. Thus, despite lacking dialogue, *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* is a truly cinematic (albeit, in the digital video format) work that never wallows in banality nor languishes in repetitive gore. On top of featuring impeccable camerawork and top notch direction, every second of *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* is perfectly accentuated by the film's classical music score. Unfortunately, you won't likely find *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* in the horror section of your local video store nor playing at an independent movie theater in the big city, for the film is only appealing to an elite type of cinephile; the oh-so rare cine-maniac - who likes to indulge in an almost nonexistent breed of film - the sadistic Art House flick - an unrecognized non-genre where few filmgoers have gone before. If you're one of those rare individuals that can find beauty in blood and comfort in a cinematic galore of gore, *Defenceless: A Blood Symphony* is a film that will fulfill your discerning cinematic appetite like never afore.

-Ty E

DIE REISE

Markus Imhoof (1986)

From the anarcho-mystic heimat flicks of Werner Herzog to the nasty melodramas of Rainer Werner Fassbinder to the fierce feminist flicks of Helma Sanders-Brahms, German New Cinema was littered with melancholy films about a father-less nation that could not forgive the fathers of the Fatherland for siding with Aryan fascism. Despite being technically a Swiss flick, *Die Reise* (1986) aka *The Journey* directed by Markus Imhoof (*Das Boot ist voll* AKA *The Boat Is Full*, *More Than Honey*) is easily one of the most heavy hitting and no nonsense portrayals about how the lost children of the National Socialist generation grew up to be anti-patriarchal/anti-authoritarian far-leftists who went so far as getting involved with murderous terrorism and guerilla warfare and even almost plunging economically prosperous West Germany into a civil war. Based on German student movement activist Bernward Vesper's popular autobiographical 1977 novel of the same name, which has been described in Deutschland as "inheritance of a whole generation," *Die Reise* is a devastating tale about a young man practically born foredoomed as the son of an infamous Nazi poet and would ultimately grow up to be his father's personal and ideological enemy, thereupon symbolizing Germany's sort of collective Oedipus complex during the late-1960s/early-1970s as a nation full of prodigal sons and feminist daughters. The girlfriend/baby-daddy of lady terrorist and Red Army Faction co-founder Gudrun Ensslin, Bernward Vesper ultimately lost his loony leftist lady love when she met her partner-in-crime Andreas Baader and in *Die Reise* one watches as the son-of-a-nazi-poet steals his son from his terrorist ex-girlfriend and goes on an anti-nostalgic road trip around Europa that makes Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) seem like the retarded ramblings of a hipster reject. Although portraying neither Vesper nor members of the RAF as heroes, *Die Reise*—a work directed by a man known for directing an ethno-masochistic holocaust flick entitled *The Boat is Full* implicating his fellow Swiss countrymen as crypto-Nazis and Jew-baiters—takes more than a couple artistic liberties when depicting history, portraying the protagonist father, Will Vesper, as a heinous Hitlerite tyrant who disowned his own son when he started dating Gudrun Ensslin. In reality, both Bernward Vesper and his girlfriend tried in vain to get a collection of the senior Vesper's works published. While adopting his father's ardent anti-Americanism and talent for literature, Vesper resented the fact his father went from being a popular Nazi poet and literary critic to a 'respectable' mainstream conservative and supporter of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, hence his adoption of radical leftwing causes as a member of the 68er-Bewegung (aka German student movement). Although not depicting said suicide (he committed suicide in 1971 via sleeping pills after being sent to a mental institution), *Die Reise* essentially portrays the slow burning self-destructive and inevitable self-slaughter of a man

DIE REISE

that had the grand misfortune of being the forsaken son of a völkisch literary 'war criminal.'

Being a miserable melancholy man whose father has totally disowned him and whose terrorist fiancé left him for a criminally-inclined terrorist hunk, German student activist Bertram Voss (Markus Boysen)—a character based on Bernward Vesper—has nothing to lose except his son Florian (Alexander Mehner), so he kidnaps said son from a Sicilian beach where his terrorist girlfriend Dagmar (Corinna Kirchhoff), who is a character based on Gudrun Ensslin, is plotting the next act of idiotic guerilla warfare with her RAF buddies. Considering the last time they spoke, Bertram's father (Will Quadflieg) stated, "I no longer have a son" and forbid him from attending his funeral, he wants to develop a strong and loving relationship with his kid Florian, even if he has to kidnap him to do so. As revealed through a series of unsettling flashbacks, Bertram's life essentially took a turn for the worse while he was still a young lad when the Third Reich was defeated and his luxurious family home was taken over by a multicultural platoon of barbaric American GIs. To battle the degenerate jazz and swing music of the occupiers, Father Voss teaches his son to respect German classical music, using, "Our last weapon. Our culture" as a means to drown out American negro music. While just a wee lad in school, Bertram's schoolteacher ordered the entire class to rip out pages from a book featuring his father's poetry due to his nationalistic tone, thus embarrassing the boy in front of his entire class and forcing him to publicly disgrace his dear daddy. Apparently, the teacher could not stomach Vater Voss' völkisch words, "We are all related through blood and earth. We all plough the same land. We fight with the same sword for our soil, home and hearth!," so he also forces Bertram to put the pages of his pa's poetry in the school bathroom to literally be used as toilet paper. When Voss senior discovers that his poetry has been ripped out of Bertram's schoolbook, he bans the entire Voss family from speaking to the already emotionally brutalized boy. When father Voss does eventually speak to Bertram, he condemns his son for secretly owning a pet cat, absurdly stating regarding the antisocial behavior of felines, "Cats cannot be trained or integrated into a community. They are an unpredictable, oriental race. Semitic animals," so naturally the pet kitty is slaughtered in a less than kosher fashion. When Bertram grows up to become a promising student of German studies and sociology, he impregnates his girlfriend Dagmar—the left-leaning daughter of a pastor who is not too keen on the writings and ideas of Voss senior—and the two decide to not abort the baby and when the child is actually born, they prove to be responsible parents by taking their infant son to violent protests. When Bertram eventually brings his girlfriend to his family's home to meet his parents, a heated argument breaks out regarding the Vietnam War and the holocaust. Of course, Vater Voss does not believe in the holocaust and couldn't care less how many gooks have been slaughtered, which rather upsets lady Dagmar. Not surprisingly, Bertram breaks all contact with his father,

stating to his papa, “I never had a father” as his father states, “I no longer have a son.” Unfortunately, in between criminal anti-Vietnam protests, Dagmar falls in love at first sight with a young revolutionary named Schröder (Claude-Oliver Rudolph)—a character based on counter-cultural criminal and rock star terrorist Andreas Baader—and drops Bertram like a bad Bolshevik. While driving across country and attempting to evade authorities, Bertram tells his son Florian about his less than ideal child, but the young father and young son manage to bond like a true father-son relationship should be. In the end, Bertram takes Florian to the house where he grew up and in the end, Gestapo-like cops capture the fugitive father, thus inspiring his son to bite the hand of cop in a symbolic gesture of generational rebellion against the capitalist state.

Rather paradoxically (or not so considering the context) while watching *Die Reise*, one comes to the conclusion that the protagonist did not merely adopt a far-left political persuasion to spite his father as a sort of archetypal prodigal son, but to also carry on his legacy as a stern anti-American who refuses to recognize barbarian Uncle Sam as his lord and savior, thus denying America's self-proclaimed role as 'liberators' of Germany during the Second World War. In terms of the tragic circumstances surrounding his youth and dubious relationship with his father, Bernward Vesper was a sort of Teutonic William S. Burroughs, Jr. who could not keep up with his father's literary output and infamy, thus opting for self-destruction instead, which ironically helped to popularize his novel *Die Reise* and mystify his legacy as a kraut counter-culture figure. While not exactly the most innovative and aesthetically pleasing film ever made, *Die Reise* is certainly one of the best and most insightful cinematic depictions of how the Nazi generation spawned seemingly politically schizophrenic children who absurdly adopted kosher forms of class warfare, ultimately waging both figurative and literal war against the father and the Fatherland and sending West Germany into social chaos not seen since the days of street fights between communists and brownshirts during the Weimar Republic. Unlike Uli Edel's *The Baader Meinhof Complex* (2008), which portrays the members of the RAF as romantic rock stars who were too cool for school, Imhoof's *Die Reise* portrays Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader as sort of idealistic idiots who had no business raising children, let alone running a revolution and creating a commie 'utopia,' thus making Bernward Vesper seem like an alright father in retrospect, even if he kidnapped his own son and committed suicide in the end, making his son a bastard in the process. Of course, it is rather ridiculous that Vesper ever became a role model for anyone, but at least his book *Die Reise* was able to express what an entire generation of Germans would not and could not say. In a country that produced Thomas Harlan (Torre Bela, *Wundkanal*)—the son of National Socialist auteur Veit Harlan, who directed such melodramatic high-camp masterpieces as *Jud Süß* (1940) and *Opfergang* (1944)—a mixed-up Marxist fool and friend

DIE REISE

of Klaus Kinski (the two friends once made a pilgrimage to Israel) who spent his entire lackluster filmmaking career denigrating the legacy of both his father and fatherland as depicted in the documentary *Harlan: In the Shadow of Jew Süss* (2008), it should be no surprise that it took a Swiss auteur filmmaker to create a film so revealing as *Die Reise*, a cinematic work that is contrary to everything that Hebraic Hollywood has taught us about both fatherhood and the fatherland.

-Ty E

MICHAEL

Markus Schleinzer (2011)

There are few members of the human race as worthy of contempt as the pedophile, and no I'm not going to go on a rant about the well-documented effect childhood sexual abuse has on the individual or society as a whole. Rather, I disagree with pedophilia on grounds of (a) it is arrested development taken to its most pathetic extreme and (b) why would ANYONE want to fuck a kid? Pedophilia to me is the most extreme form of social retardation, in which a delusional man-child who has not spent enough time with actual children to realize that however intermittently amusing they may be from time to time, kids are iron-willed little shits with terrible hygiene, awful taste, and precious little life experience (duh), or who has spent plenty of time with kids and finds the above qualities boner-inducing. Sure, there are plenty of why's, often pointing to abuse in the pedo's own childhood, but do we weep in sympathy when we see a thirty year old man decked out in Spiderman PJ's playing Xbox in his parent's basement? A pedophile is essentially that guy, only instead of trying to grasp onto childhood via video games or buying seasons of beloved Saturday morning Hanna-Barbera shitfests on Blu-Ray, he tries to re-live the sexual excitement of playing "house" for the first time.

You see, most of us at some point or another, have better, wetter, and altogether more satisfying sexual experiences when we "put away the childish things" and make our way through high school and into the early years of adulthood. This is when the human being of either sex is both at peak physical form AND often blissfully unaware of the power they wield over interested parties, thus enabling schlubs like us to experience the divinity of silky smooth skin, taut firm breasts, rock-hard boners and abs, and the incomparable beauty of age-appropriate braces. This is why "teen" is probably the most popular category of pornography, at least in terms of search results. Pedophiles, I'd say, tend to be those who missed out on some of those pivotal experiences and continued to fixate on the only sexual experiences they've had, be it playing house with their sister or showering with pops. Of course, I'm sure some pedophiles are such without rhyme and reason, and that wanting to fuck someone who in a year or two will be of no interest to them sexually (sounds like most relationships, though, but I digress) is an "orientation", though only in as far as a rapist could claim that donning a ski mask is a part of his "orientation", and something to take pride in. However fringe, there are groups like Nambla (Ginsberg dug 'em) and "activists" like Lindsay Ashford who attempt to put a "human face" on the affliction- a pasty, doesn't-get-out-much, relies on checks from mom, collects Star Wars memorabilia face, but a face nonetheless. Guys who take great care in stressing that somehow being a "girl lover" or someday-diddler of boys doesn't

MICHAEL

translate into being a "molester", and that often feel isolated from society at large, ostracized for their "beliefs", and as a result, are often suicidal. On the flip side are parents groups, the media, and politicians, who use the fear of these failures to rally the public into all kinds of hysterics. Just look at all of the "ritual abuse" at daycares in the eighties, in which prosecutors, law enforcement, and bewildered kids worked themselves into a frenzy and used the mere spectre of childhood sexual abuse to send countless innocent people to prison, people who no doubt could not understand what the fuck was going on. Who would want to "schtup" one of those little snottoses anyways?

Which brings us to Michael, an Austrian film that neither weeps for the titular pedo nor works itself into hysterics over its subject matter- five months in the life of man who keeps a young boy locked in his basement as a sex slave. Michael is in many ways the textbook pedophile- a fairly immature man-child, isolated from society because of his compulsions, but still managing to shuck and jive his way through an office job, some strained "surface level" friendships, and keeping the family at bay with tales of a long-distance girlfriend. Michael Fuith, with his shy, nerdy countenance, male pattern hair loss, and pale "doesn't get out much" complexion, is dead-on in the title role. Where Michael differs from many pedophiles is that, rather than simply beating off to Tiger Beats in view of playgrounds or offering to babysit his sister's kids, Michael has himself his very own Wolfgang (a heartbreaking performance by David Rauchenberger), a ten-year old boy kept locked in the basement of his state-of-the-art flat. The film is an extreme exercise, not in terms of the specifics of what is shown onscreen (in fact, there is not a single scene of molestation in the entire film, and the only questionable moment- of Michael exposing a non-plussed Wolfgang to his flaccid penis- was achieved via split screen), but in restraint, giving us only enough details to figure out what Michael is foisting on the young boy (seeing Michael, in an earlier scene, wash said cock in the sink after leaving Wolfgang's lodgings is the first overt reference to what precisely is going on). Director Markus Schleizer, a long-time casting director for Michael Haneke, takes the cold, clinical ambiance of his mentor's best films to new heights, refusing to cut the audience any slack through lazy moralizing. Nor does he attempt to instill outrage by assaulting our senses with any over-the-top imagery whatsoever, instead cultivating a thick blanket of unease via static camera non-movement and letting subtly unsettling moments linger uncomfortably throughout and letting our own imaginations add the necessary pathos and horror to Wolfgang's situation.

As the film wears on, a surprising amount of jet-black humor enters the fray. Rather than view Michael as an 'stache-twiddling super villain, we are treated to the site of a pathetic sociopath whose life outside of his fuck slave is one sad encounter after another, whether it be painful attempts to connect with other men on a ski trip, a particularly humiliating go at having sex with an adult woman, or having to dodge the advances of a smitten co-worker. As his exterior life con-

tinues to be awkward and ungratifying, Wolfgang begins to fight back, first by attacking Michael's idealized view of their relationship (such as giving Michael a crayon drawing of a mommy and daddy for Christmas), and then by physically attempting to put up a resistance to Michael's advances and planning his escape. Michael, with no idea of how to treat a child aside from as a sexual object, meets these road-bumps with physical aggression, condescension, and eventually, in a scene that rides the creepy/comedy divide expertly, by attempting to kidnap Wolfgang a companion to assuage the boy's loneliness (and no doubt replace Wolfgang, as in one chilling scene of misdirection we see Michael clearing a spot in the woods when Wolfgang exhibits a high fever that Michael, understandably, can't seek medical attention for). The film also skirts the thin line between tragedy and hilarity in a scene resulting from Wolfgang's fever, when Michael, walking to a pharmacy, is struck by a vehicle. The absurdity of the situation is drawn to almost painful suspense as we witness Michael's extended hospital stay, all the while wondering what is becoming of the ill Wolfgang, hanging on to life in the basement.

Michael is as bold an achievement as I've seen in the cinemas all year. The effect it has on the viewer is not unlike that of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* in the way it respects us, the audience, enough to show the realities of a resolutely unsympathetic, destructive main character without having to beat us over the head with how evil and disgusting he is. And unlike a comparatively "Hollywood" flick like *The Woodsman*, there isn't some underlying message about "kidfuckers are people, too." What we're given is a reality that is experienced by unlucky nephews, altar boys, and Thai pre-teen "sex workers" on a daily basis, from a purely objective standpoint. Sure, we see the terrible effect this has on the defeated Wolfgang, whose tears mean next-to-nothing to his bulge-stroking captor, but Schleizer trusts us to draw our own revulsion from his plight without having to rely on any showy speeches or risqué imagery, and when the boy does strike out and become insolent, I for the only time in my adult life found myself rooting for a kid to be as annoying and "difficult" as possible. As the film nears its end, unexpected occurrences foreshadowed earlier on ratchet up the tension considerably, creating a true-to-life horror film with none of the familiar trappings of the genre. Watching it with an audience was definitely an experience, as groans and often showy "need to convince others around me of how horrible I find this" gasps gave way to nervous chuckles, then outright laughter, then further groans, and in the ending scenes, a tension-enhancing hush that made it all the harder to bear. All in all, a masterpiece that I won't be revisiting any time soon, and one of the only films to examine this particular subject matter with honesty and candor.

-Jon-Christian

SUGAR BREAD AND WHIP
SUGAR BREAD AND WHIP

Marran Gosov (1968)

It must suck to be an enterprising young auteur filmmaker with a seemingly bright future who rejects a young man's application for becoming your meager assistant director, only for that young man to later not only become more popular than you, but also the most popular, successful, and important filmmaker of your zeitgeist. Indeed, that is exactly what happened to German auteur Marran Gosov (*Angel Baby*, *Wonnekloß*), who probably had no idea that the young whippersnapper that wanted to be his AD, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, would go on to become the most important filmmaker of the post-WWII era and that his career would more or less fall apart during the early 1970s. The progeny of a Bulgarian father and a German mother (his birth name is "Tzvetan Marangosoff") who originally wanted to be a painter but discovered that he enjoyed writing even more after penning a novel in prison after clashing with the commie Bulgarian government, Gosov relocated to West Germany in April 1960, in part due to his loathing of Soviet style Marxist authoritarianism, and eventually settled in Munich in 1964 where he directed the first of no less than 27 short films which he would make between 1964 and 1978. While most revered in the filmmaking world for his shorts (none of which are currently available anywhere, even in Germany, and can only be seen when they are occasionally shown in large German cities), Gosov also made an initially fruitful attempt at commercial filmmaking, ultimately directing five feature films, beginning with *Engelchen - oder die Jungfrau von Bamberg* (1968) aka *Angel Baby*, which was an extended reworking of the director's short *Sabine 18* (1967) about a little lady who wants to lose her virginity in a desperate attempt to win back her ex-boyfriend(!) and was a surprise hit, and concluding with *Wonnekloß* (1972) aka *Spiel mit Bulle*, which was a huge flop that the auteur made the mistake of funding mostly with his own private savings. Thanks to a certain Nuremberg-based cinephile, who also provided what little info I was able to find on the filmmaker, I was recently able to see Gosov's second feature *Zuckerbrot und Peitsche* (1968) aka *Sugar Bread and Whip* aka *Gangster Love* which, like the director's first feature *Angel Baby* and the third feature *The Sex Adventures of a Single Man* (1968) aka *Bengelchen liebt kreuz und quer*, was produced by prolific Dutch producer Rob Houwer, who is probably best known for producing the pre-Hollywood arthouse works of Paul Verhoeven like *Turkish Delight* (1973), *Soldier of Orange* (1977), and *The Fourth Man* (1983), and who also produced important New German Cinema works like Peter Fleischmann's anti-Heimat flick *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* and Mike Verhoeven's undeniably amateurish yet gritty anti-Vietnam War artsploitation flick *O.K.* (1970) featuring Fassbinder superstar Eva Mattes portraying a raped and murdered gook gal.

Like his comrade Klaus Lemke (who appeared in *Sabine 18* and whose screen-

play Gosov reworked for his fourth feature *Der Kerl liebt mich - und das soll ich glauben?*), Gosov belonged to the largely forgotten 'New Munich Group', which was eventually eclipsed by New German Cinema, even though the former would influence filmmakers involved with the latter (especially Fassbinder, whose debut 1969 feature *Love Is Colder Than Death* is blatantly influenced by the NMG genre-warping style), with *Sugar Bread and Whip* being 'typical' of the movement as an overtly offbeat genre-defiling (anti)gangster flick set in a late-1960s 'Swinging Munich' backdrop of jaded jet-set degeneracy, darkly humorous libertine criminality, and doomful absurdist (anti)romance. Starring actor and fellow New Munich Group auteur Roger Fritz (*Mädchen, Mädchen* aka *Girls, Girls, Mädchen... nur mit Gewalt* aka *The Brutes*)—a handsome fellow that once resembled a sort of Teutonic Joe Dallesandro, except much taller, who is probably best known to American filmgoers for playing the treacherous mustached crypto-cocksucker traitor Lieutenant Triebig in Sam Peckinpah's *The Cross of Iron* (1977)—and the star's then real-life wife Helga Anders (Vojtech Jasný's 1976 Heinrich Böll adaptation *Ansichten eines Clowns* aka *Clowns*), *Sugar Bread and Whip* is the darkly mirthful and audaciously absurd yet melancholic and Weltschmerz-rattled tale of a disillusioned cigarette ad model turned amateur drug dealer and murderous jewelry store robber who has a doomed fleeting romance with a young rich bitch of a fiercely frigid femme fatale with a reluctantly self-cuckolded husband who gets off to the idea of his much younger wife blowing other men, though he would never actually admit it. A film that will appeal to gangster film lovers and haters alike (personally, I couldn't care less about the subgenre), Gosov's film is a potent reminder of how a bunch of relatively unknown Bavarian quasi-avant-gardists beat commie frog fanboy Jean-Luc Godard at his own game in terms of defiling and molesting Hollywood genre conventions.

Opening with a "pop art" montage of the antihero Roger Klaus (Roger Fritz) shooting his machinegun and then succumbing to imaginary bullets in an intentionally superficial and satirical advertisement-like scenario where the character's robotic body movements resemble that of a mannequin in stop-motion, *Sugar Bread and Whip* immediately establishes an absurdist anti-realist tone that disguises a sort of foreboding melancholia that is just beneath the surface. The opening credit montage concludes with the revelation that "Even dead men smoke." Indeed, Roger is a super suave but equally somber iconic model of a popular cigarette brand called "Top Ten," though he personally likes to roll his own cigs, which he does before committing robberies. Roger became a robber after becoming fed up with the fact that he is featured in ads with fancy cars and villas yet he does not actually own these status symbols in real-life, thus he has taken it upon himself to obtain his own Bavarian version of the American dream. As a hashish abuser, Roger may have also had the idea to start strong-arming jewelry stores and banks after suffering some sort of drug psychosis. At the beginning of the film, Roger enters a jewelry store while sporting a trench

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coat and ski mask, smashes all the glass display cases, steals all the best jewelry, and then shoots the store clerk when he makes the mistake of attempting to press the emergency alarm. The robbery is witnessed by a spoiled and sexually frigid pixie-like broad named Helga Arnold (Helga Anders), who lies to the police and tells them that the robber hit her while withholding the fact that said robber dropped a small musical instrument, which she decides to keep as a souvenir. Helga is married to a stinking rich art dealer/gallery owner named Robert Arnold (actor and sometimes TV director Harald Leipnitz of the 1965 Kraut-Yugoslav western *The Oil Prince* aka *Der Ölprinz* and exploitation trash like Franz Antel's "Sexy Susan" series), with whom she bore a young lederhosen-adorned son that she rarely acknowledges aside from when she is giving violent puppet shows inspired by Roger's robberies. Since hubby Robert, who seems more interested in seeing his spouse being defiled by other men than doing the job himself, will not have sex with her, Helga derives most of her pleasure from playing with her beloved tortoise Markus, whose shell she likes petting while she is lying naked on a fancy fur rug. It does not take Helga long to realize that she also derives pleasure from seeing Roger commit blood-splattered bank robberies.

When not shooting cigarette advertisements where he declares "Love the French way, smoke the English way" and avoiding two gangster brothers, scar-faced sadiſt Jörg (Jörg Jung of Roland Klick's brutal 1968 cult classic *Bübchen* and Hans W. Geissendörfer's 1970 'anti-Heimat' *Dracula* reworking Jonathan) and big buffoon Helmut (Helmut Hanke), Roger is attempting to bang Helga, who is aroused by his criminality but is too much of a spoiled ice queen to let the model turned coldblooded murderer penetrate her posh pussy. Meanwhile, Helga's husband Robert seems to be taking as much interest in his wife's non-romance with Roger as she does. The closest Roger even comes to sharing carnal knowledge with Helga is slapping her on the face and feeling up her tits while she 'attends' his various robberies, where the model/murderer senselessly kills at least one person because he knows it turns on his would-be ladylove. Meanwhile, Roger literally and figuratively dodges the bullets of the two gangster brothers who want revenge against the cigarette model for killing their third brother. Apparently, the gangster family began stalking Roger after he confronted the men because they owed him money for 50,000 marks worth of hashish he fronted to them and killed one of the brothers after brother Jörg began shooting at him. As a result of 'scarface' Jörg's erratic behavior, Roger also ends up killing brother Helmut in a parking garage shootout after the brother makes the mistake of shooting at the model while he has a gun pointed at the fat bro's head. Notably, two young cap-gun-wielding preteen brothers witness the shootout in a scenario that seems to highlight the fact that gangsters live in a perpetual state of childhood.

Eventually, Roger gets tired of Helga's perennial cockteasing, calls her a "little

bitch,” and tells her to fuck off. Of course, that does not stop Helga’s husband Robert from hounding Roger after seeing his wife getting all hot and bothered while watching the murderous model mug one man and shoot another. Just to fuck with Robert, Roger lies and tells him that he has been screwing Helga when he asks, which ultimately turns the art dealer on so much that he goes home and screws his wife while asking her for details about her nonexistent extramarital affair. Although too seemingly borderline retarded to be a successful femme fatale (her hubby does not call her a “bird brain” for nothing), Helga comes up with a plan to get away from her husband and run away with Roger. After attempting to make up with Roger by telling him “I like you,” Helga reveals that her husband is having a big gallery showing that will be attended by various wealthy politicians and industrialists and their wives. While proclaiming to Helga that he has quit the armed robbery trade and is planning to move to England where he will make a living continuing to model, Roger shows up to the art show in his trademark ski mask, robs all the patrons, and shoots Robert dead when he makes a pathetic and rather anticlimactic attempt to stop him. Before being blown away with a machine-gun, Robert demonstrates ‘Entartete Kunst’ is once again vogue in Germany by giving a speech on the so-called “art of the fantastic” and and Swiss-German painter Paul Klee (whose use of dry humor seems to have influenced auteur Gosov). Upon getting in his getaway car after the robbery, Roger finds Helga sitting in the passenger seat and while the two are almost gunned down by surviving gangster brother Jörg, the two go home and finally commence coitus in what should be a happy ending. Of course, since Roger has yet to obtain passports to get him and his ladylove out of the country, the two still have plenty of time for their budding love affair to be destroyed by the last remaining gangster, Jörg. After proclaiming their “like” for one another, Helga leaves Roger’s flat and discovers a newspaper about her husband’s death in the art gallery, so she decides to screw over her lover by calling the police, but just before she does, Jörg catches her and takes her hostage. Ultimately, Roger is killed in his Aubrey Beardsley painting adorned flat after Jörg shoots him in the eye after he looks through the peephole of his front door upon Helga showing the gangster where her boy toy lives. In the end, Helga, like all femme fatales and most women in general, is left unscathed and goes back to her deceased husband’s fancy mansion.

Unquestionably, what virtually all the filmmakers associated with the New Munich Group of the late-1960s/early-1970s had in common was that they tended to direct laidback yet nihilistic and quasi-avant-garde counterculture-tinged (anti)gangster/film noir flicks that seemed to have just as much contempt as respect for the Hollywood films that they sardonically mimicked. Out of these films, which include such mostly forgotten kraut cult classics as Rudolf Thome’s *Detektive* (1969) and *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun* and Klaus Lemke’s *48 Stunden bis Acapulco* (1967) aka *48 Hours to Acapulco*, Gosov’s *Sugar Bread*

SUGAR BREAD AND WHIP

and Whip is clearly the most innately anarchistic, culturally cynical, and melancholy, which is probably at least partially due to the director's real-life dystopian roots as a bastard Bulgarian-German son of Soviet-led bolshevism who seemed no less disillusioned by the American style capitalism that he encountered in West Germany as his films hint at. Indeed, aside from Thomas Schamoni's sole feature *Ein großer graublauer Vogel* (1971) aka *A Big Grey-Blue Bird*, Gosov's film is certainly the most idiosyncratic, decidedly dope-addled, and obscenely offbeat gangster film of the New Munich Group. After his fifth and final feature *Wonnekloß* flopped, Gosov went back to directing shorts and worked in television before becoming solely a musician who created musical scores for largely queer films, including the Rosa von Praunheim flicks *Horror Vacui* (1984), *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1986), and *Affengeil* (1990), as well as Sapphic filmmakers Elfi Mikesch and Monika Treut's sadomasochistic arthouse effort *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (1985) aka *Verführung: Die grausame Frau*. The fact that Gosov would go on to write music for New German Cinema/New Queer Cinema filmmakers certainly acts as a metaphor for how Fassbinder and his NGC comrades would more or less erase the New Munich Group from cinema history. Notably, *Sugar Bread and Whip* star Roger Fritz would go on to star in a couple Fassbinder flicks, including *Despair* (1978), *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), *Lili Marleen* (1981), and *Querelle* (1982). As for Gosov, I bet he regrets not giving Fassbinder that assistant director job.

-Ty E

LE GRAND DÉPART

Martial Raysse (1972)

Apparently (and not surprisingly) considered a 'lost film' until its release in late 2008 on DVD by a French company, *Le grand départ* (1972) aka *The Big Departure* aka *The Great Departure* also has the dubious distinction of being the first and sole feature-length film directed by French Nouveau réalisme artist/painter Martial Raysse, a fellow who had the honor of having some of his paintings exhibited with Jean Cocteau in 1958 when he was just still a young man. Rather unfortunately, *Le grand départ*, although an experimental feature-length work utilizing some minor (but rather dominant) special-effects, is not exactly up to par with the cinematic masterpieces of Cocteau, but is instead an innately incoherent and plot-less counter-culture-inspired work featuring merry morons in animal masks frolicking around gayly, pedo-worthy scenes of little girls naked, and other forms of would-be-hip hippie hijinx and hedonism in a positively passé flick that would probably be described as celluloid beatnik feces. Indeed, fittingly titled 'The Great Departure' in English, *Le grand départ* is an ostensibly avant-garde work that seems to reject most conventions of cinema history as a nauseatingly nonlinear piece of whimsical yet seemingly lethargically-assembled cinematic pseudo-libertinism of the putridly pretentious and plodding sort that reminds the viewer that art and drugs do not always mix well. A member of the French Nouveau réalisme (New realism) movement—a sort of frog equivalent of the Warhol-dominated Pop Art movement in New York that was in part inspired by Dadaism/Marcel Duchamp and placed special emphasis on collage and assemblage (incorporating real objects directly into their artwork)—auteur Martial Raysse certainly assembled a flashy piece of celluloid postmodern posturing with *Le grand départ*, a sort of whimsical celluloid wreck that says very little in its overly long 70 minutes or so of hallucinatory hippie hysterics. Almost entirely shot in kaleidoscopic negative exposure that was done via reversed color (negative) developing process, *Le grand départ* looks like a living painting directed by German völkisch symbolist artist Fidus where he an autistic hippie with an obsession with psychotropic drugs. Marginally enjoyable for a minute or two in a sort of 'outsider artist' sort of way, *Le grand départ* is virtual, archetypically failed 1970s counter-culture cinema from beatnik froggy hell that makes Franco Brocani's equally obscure work *Necropolis* (1970) seem like an unsung masterpiece.

Starting with images of a seeming tropical island paradise, *Le grand départ* soon demystifies the viewer by revealing that the images were merely that of a flabby fellow's Hawaiian shirt who is sitting beside his rather bitchy wife watching the news on television. From there, the Hawaiian shirt man and his wife are rudely greeted by a menacing yet strangely merry man who is wearing a creepy cat-mask and is riding a cheap motorbike. The cat-man is a criminal trickster

LE GRAND DÉPART

and delinquent of sorts and most certainly a degenerate who, when not mugging people and stealing their cars, hangs out with a totally unclad prepubescent girl who he promises to take to “heaven” and sort of does so by allowing the little lady to ride in one of his pinched automobiles. The cat-man also has a rather strange knack for rescuing people, which he totally discredits by raping multiple women. The cat-man is also a Grim Reaper of sorts who represents ‘death’ as demonstrated by the fact that virtually all of the people he runs into end up dying, many of whom he personally kills, or as some burnt out hippie broad states, “This cat brings death.” Meanwhile, a group of mask-wearing hippies hang out in the forest and dream of some sort of intangible utopia of sorts just like all drug-addled flower child bastards. Eventually, the cat-man hooks up with a charlatan hippie guru named “M. Nature” (American commie/leading man Sterling Hayden) and his dirty and delinquent mask-wearing followers. Mr. Nature, on ‘the advice of the almighty,’ has built a raft that is retardedly named “raft of freedom,” that will supposedly take his followers and the cat-man around the world in what is apparently the ‘ultimate voyage’ to a ‘land of peace’ or something. As if part of the LSD division of NASA’s Apollo program, M. Nature and his crew are counted off for lift off and soon enter a psychedelic trip of sorts via the raft of freedom. In the end, the negative exposure film finally reverts back to normal colors and the cat-man’s naked preteen friend appears once again, thus concluding what is essentially a short film that has been painfully stretched out to feature-length.

For anyone who has seen Clive Barker’s self-described ‘home videos’ (aka early no-budget avant-garde shorts) *Salomé* (1973) and *The Forbidden* (1978), especially the latter film, Martial Raysse’s *Le grand départ* seems rather redundant and absurdly over-long by comparison. Indeed, *Le grand départ*, like Barker’s *The Forbidden* was shot in negative exposure, but whereas in the horror short it makes aesthetic and metaphysical sense as a piece of morbid psychosexuality, Raysse’s film feels like an obnoxious celluloid gimmick of the pseudo-liberating sort that has long worn out its welcome in just the first ten minutes! Undoubtedly, if any film personifies the aesthetic puffery and counterfeit rebellion of the counter-culture generation, it is surely *Le grand départ* as a work that pretends to be cinematically subversive simply due to the fact it was shot in negative exposure (making the majority of the film have a neon pink/purple tint!), has nil plot and preteen tits, and features a ‘cool cat’ of the rapist sort as its (anti)hero. Naturally, *Le grand départ* also reminded me of E. Elias Merhige’s *Begotten* (1990) and *Din of Celestial Birds* (2006) due to its negative exposure imagery, but also due to its pseudo-Biblical themes. Of course, while *Begotten* is a flawed and overly long work (the first 15 minutes are immaculate, but the rest seems like a ‘nightmarish mess’), it left me nothing short of entranced in multiple parts, which I certainly cannot say of Raysse’s *Le grand départ*, even if I found it to be slightly more provocative and interesting than, say, the latest Hollywood block-

buſter. Described as “A Martial Raysse fable” during the opening credit scenes and featuring a bunch of hippie hedoniſts frolicking around the woods, *Le grand départ* is like a *The Wicker Man* for braindead acidfreaks (and that is giving it too much credit!) For experimental/rare film completiſts only who like Hebraic Beat poet Ira Cohen’s totally intolerable avant-fart short *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968) , skip *Le grand départ*, drop some acid, and re-watch Kenneth Anger’s *Lucifer Rising* (1972) inſtead.

-Ty E

APARTMENT ZERO
APARTMENT ZERO

Martin Donovan (1989)

While well known and praised for his sophisticated yet lethally lovelorn suicidal sodomite professor in *A Single Man* (2009) in a role that would earn him the first Academy Award nomination of his acting career, stereotypically English actor Colin Firth (*Girl with a Pearl Earring*, *The King's Speech*) gave a much more interesting and radical performance over two decades before as a hysterical homo cinephile in the UK-Argentinean production *Apartment Zero* (1988) directed and co-written by Martin Donovan (*State of Wonder*, *Somebody is Waiting*) and shockingly co-written by Hollywood hack screenwriter/sometimes-director David Koepp (*Jurassic Park*, *Panic Room*). A penetrating and sometimes strangely campy psychosexual-thriller of the meta-cinematic sort that was practically specially tailored for cinephiles who like films with infinite replay-value, *Apartment Zero* is a celluloid ride drowning in intentional filmic clichés that manages to pay perverse tribute to everything from the films of Hitchcock to hagsploitation to Fassbinder to Lynch that ultimately reminds the viewer why they love the silverscreen. An aberrant anti-love story about an absurdly anally retentive closest-homosexual who essentially hates everyone aside from imaginary characters in movies and who ultimately falls in love with a charming yet extremely psychopathic terrorist turned serial killer but is too socially retarded and seemingly sexually sterile to properly pursue the relationship romantically, *Apartment Zero* is like the more charming, humorous, and stylish bastard Latin American brother of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Created by the two minds responsible for penning the much more popular but innately inferior work *Death Becomes Her* (1992), *Apartment Zero* is a marvelously morally repugnant and oftentimes misanthropic movie with essentially nil redeemable characters that concludes on a uniquely unhinged note that is more in the spirit of Curtis Harrington meets Jörg Buttgereit than something you would expect from a monetary-motivated hack responsible for penning such blockbuster swill like *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997) and *War of the Worlds* (2005).

Adrian LeDuc (Colin Firth) is the proud owner of a fancy rival house movie theater named 'Cine York' in Buenos Aires who has no real friends (though he superficially converses with fellow cinephiles) who lives in an imaginary world of dead Hollywood movie stars and directors, with portraits of James Dean, Montgomery Clift, Orson Welles, Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, and various other icons adorning his immaculately decorated apartment. Indeed, a character with zero character who escapes in movies to fill the void of his non-life, Adrian automatically rejects most people because they simply do not know as much about movies as he does. Having spent 16 years in England due to the fact his now-deceased father was a cultural attaché, Adrian only really socializes with his mother as he is a crypto-homo mamma's boy of the Norman Bates-esque variety,

but unfortunately she has late stage Alzheimer's disease and no longer recognizes her son. Considering he owns a movie theater that only plays old classics and arthouse flicks, Adrian begins to lose money and is forced to rent out a room in his apartment, but luckily a tall, dark and handsome American stranger named Jack Carney (Hart Bochner) inquires about the room and the two ultimately become an ominous 'odd couple.' To the chagrin of his jealous queen roommate Adrian, Jack instantly makes friends with the other tenants of the apartment building, which include two elderly busybody Anglophiles, a manly tranny, and a beautiful young lady he begins copulating with. Meanwhile, various beautiful women and effeminate gay men start getting killed around the city and not a single person has any idea who is responsible for the deaths. Indeed, death seems to be in fashion in Buenos Aires as the ticket seller at Adrian's theater, Claudia (Francesca d'Aloja), begins setting up screenings of documentaries about death squads and political mercenaries for a far-left committee she belongs to.

Perturbed by the fact Jack oftentimes does not come home at night and is often late, Adrian begins investigating his roommate's background and discovers that he does not really work at the computer company he claimed to work for. While snooping around his roommate's room, Adrian also finds old photos of Jack in paramilitary garb. Needless to say, Jack is an ex-mercenary who has developed an unquenchable bloodlust, thus he has decided to pick up the dead serious hobby of serial killing. At one of Claudia's leftist documentary screenings, Adrian spots Jack on the screen while Jack is standing right behind him and realizes that his would-be-lover is a callous killer. Of course, Jack has no fear that Adrian will go to the cops as he knows his roommate is unwaveringly in love with him, but he decides to flee to America anyway. Stealing and falsifying Adrian's passport, which he does not realize is expired, Jack is ultimately denied flight, so he cruises for a fag, kills said fag, and steals his passport. When the neighbors of the apartment watch a news program about the recent killings and wonder why Jack has disappeared, they all confront secretive weirdo Adrian, who is almost killed during the altercation by accident. Luckily, Jack shows up just in time to dissolve the apartment tenants' fears and to attend to Adrian's wounds. Meanwhile, Adrian's mother drops dead and Claudia spots Jack in a photograph of a death squad and learns that his real name is 'Michael Weller.' Unfortunately for her, Claudia makes the mistake of confronting Jack and he murders her, which Adrian later walks in on. Instead of calling the police, Adrian volunteers to help Jack dispose of his employee's bloody corpse. After dumping the chick's corpse, Jack tells Adrian that he is flying back to California in the morning and the latter volunteers to go with him. Of course, antisocial bitch boy Adrian later changes his mind as there is no way he cannot leave the escapist sanctuary that is his apartment, so he decides to pull a gun on Jack. After a scuffle with the weapon, Adrian ultimately kills Jack and keeps his rotting corpse as his daily companion. In the end, Adrian's rival theater is turned into a sleazy porn

APARTMENT ZERO

theater (as demonstrated by a poster of the post-apocalyptic avant-garde *Café Flesh* (1982) directed by Stephen Sayadian hanging outside the theater), which the proprietor walks out of after a midnight screening dressed exactly like Jack, thus assuming his non-lover's identity.

Following in the fine fucked tradition of Robert Altman's *3 Women* (1973), Fassbinder's *Despair* (1978), and Philippe Vallois' *Nous étions un seul homme* (1979) aka *We Were One Man*, *Apartment Zero* is a film about a weak antihero without a real identity who decides taking on the identity of someone else is the only way to develop some testicular fortitude and a real-life. Indeed, while looking vaguely similar, Adrian—a beta-male weakling of the socially awkward sort—and Jack—a manly man who both men and women swoon for—are total opposites whose personalities 'complement' one another as a sort of wayward and pathology-ridden yin and yang. Indeed, while the film's title is in reference to the fact that Adrian's apartment lacks a door name, it is also a reference to the fact that the character himself is a man without personality who is nothing more than a venomous void who is willing to go to the ungodly extreme of murder and assumedly necrophilia to become a 'full' person. Undoubtedly, I must admit that Adrian made a much wiser decision than Norman Bates, as the last thing the world needs to see is Colin Firth dressed in hag drag. Making references to films including (but certainly not limited to) *Compulsion* (1959), *David and Lisa* (1962), *Catch-22* (1970), *The Godfather* (1972), *The Conversation* (1974), *Eyes of Laura Mars* (1978), *Café Flesh* (1982), and *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Apartment Zero* certainly makes no lie of its equally idiosyncratic celluloid influences. Of course, as auteur Martin Donovan confesses in the audio commentary for the Anchor Bay DVD release of the film, "I'm just as obsessed with movies as Adrian is," though the filmmaker seems to have a much warmer personality than that of the protagonist of his film. As Donovan also confesses regarding his homeland in the commentary, "You know what they say about Argentina, don't you? It is a country of Spanish-speaking Italians who live in French houses and they are very British." And, indeed, one of the reasons for the aesthetic success of *Apartment Zero* is due to its truly striking and ethereally atmospheric quasi-European-like setting. Indeed, made in a truly 'multicultural' country with a conflicted and seemingly schizophrenic identity featuring characters with mostly split-personalities/identities (i.e. multiple trannies, Argentinians who pretend to be British, young men pretending to be old housewives, etc.), *Apartment Zero* ultimately unwittingly makes a great cause against globalization, as well as cultural and sexual hegemony, which is just one of the many reasons why the film is a criminally underrated, especially compared to trash like *Death Becomes Her*.

-Ty E

SUZY Q

Martin Koolhoven (1999)

With such a moronically cutesy and philistine chic girly title, one would think that the fairly celebrated and multiple-award-winning made-for-TV film *Suzy Q* (1999) directed by prolific Dutch auteur Martin Koolhoven (*Amnesia*, *Oorlogswinter* aka *Winter in Wartime*) was the Dutch equivalent of *Amélie* (2001) or some other superlatively silly feel-good celluloid bullshit that makes hot young women seem like gigantic toddlers and brings credence to Schopenhauer's remark that members of the fairer sex suffer from being, "big children their whole life long." While the film does feature a cute eponymous girl played by Dutch diva Carice van Houten in a breakout role that would ultimately earn her a Golden Calf (the Dutch equivalent of an Oscar) and jumpstart her fairly successful career, Koolhoven's coming-of-age-cum-(anti)family-sitcom is about as feel-good as a drunken colonoscopy or receiving a herpes-ridden blowjob from a buck-toothed negro tranny. Deriving its title from both the name of the teenage protagonist and her mindless fan-girl love of Mick Jagger (The Rolling Stones recorded a version of the song "Susie Q" written by Dale Hawkins which appears in the film), *Suzy Q* tells the decidedly dejecting, if not delightfully darkly comedic, tale of an eclectically dysfunctional family led by an incestuous undersexed lard ass patriarch of the perennially unemployed and exceedingly emasculated sort who uses his family members as both emotional and physical punchbags to derive an artificial sense of power and authority because his wife won't put out and he feels like a loser because he cannot even obtain an unskilled labor job moping bathroom floors. Set in 1967 Amsterdam when the counterculture movement began to eradicate what little was left of traditional European values, culture, and religion, Koolhoven's 80-minutish tragicomic family dysfunction micro-epic is a thematically ugly and cynical work that's pop-art aesthetic betrays its tone and ultimately seems like it was made simply to shit on all of American television history, which is certainly something I can respect, but at the same time, I found the work somewhat slightly distressing for more personal reasons. Indeed, as the American grandson of a Dutchman who left the Netherlands after the Second World War due to the miserable place his homeland had become, *Suzy Q* made me confront the patently pathetic place that the Kingdom of the Netherlands—a tiny yet once powerful ex-empire that had colonized parts of virtually every continent but is now best known for its 'liberal' (translation: apathetic) approach to drugs, abortion, prostitution, euthanasia, and third world immigration—became after the Americanization and Hollywoodization of Europa. If all the characters in the film have anything in common, it is that their sole source of solace in life is in the form of American and British mass (pseudo)culture. For example, when not attempting to fuck or beat his daughter, the father featured in Koolhoven's film sits on his big boorish ass and watches

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Rawhide will sporting a goofy cowboy hat as an artificial way to reaffirm his broken masculinity as an unemployed lard ass ex-soldier who is so pathetically fat that he cannot even button up his much cherished old army tunic. Additionally, to escape from thoughts of her bastard father and loony loser brother attempting to defile her virginal body, the eponymous teenage protagonist makes scrapbooks filled with pictures of Mick Jagger and other weak and effeminate drug-addled rockers. If you ever wondered what Federico Fellini's *Amarcord* (1973) or Bob Clark's *A Christmas Story* (1983) would be like if they were reworked by a culturally pessimistic Dutch nihilist who wisely decided he need to have a protagonist that would provide an excess of nubile virgin eye-candy, Suzy Q is surely your best bet.

The year is 1967 and rather rotund jobless patriarch Ko (Jack Wouterse of Alex van Warmerdam's *The Northerners* (1992) and Theo van Gogh's *06/05* (2004)) is excited because he has found a box full of old canned WWII rations, thus giving him nostalgia for a time in his life that actually meaning and was not full of aimless banality and personal impotence. Ko is such a fat and pathetic beer-binging slob that his own wife Ruth (Linda van Dyck) won't even fuck him, so lately he has been scheming to pop his little girl's tight teenage cherry. Aside from the minor taboo of father-daughter incest, Suzy (Carice van Houten) does not want to fornicate with her father because she thinks he is such a pathetic loser that she literally wishes he would die. Suzy's deranged brother Zwier (Roeland Fernhout of van Gogh's *Baby Blue* (2001) and Cyrus Frisch's *Blackwater Fever* (2008)) recently starting going steady with the neighborhood whore, 'horny Betty' (Ricky Koole), but after getting in a bloody knife-fight in a movie theater with his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend, the relationship falls apart. When Betty complains about Zwier's violent behavior, he hatefully remarks, "What?! I did this for you bitch." Clearly agitated that he did not get to pound Betty's beaver, Zwier sneaks into Suzy's bed, puts a knife to her throat, and demands that she strip, but unfortunately the involuntary brother-sister erotic excursion is cut short when drunken fat fuck Ko gets home after handing out WWII rations to hookers. The next day, Ko wakes up in pain as a result of a major hangover and his wife makes him blow chunks by teasingly offering him a scrumptious breakfast that includes, "Chocolate cake with cream...mixed with sausages...in a cat poop dressing." Since her father is in the bathroom crying like a little bitch in between unloading loose stool and vomit from his grotesque fleshy orifices, Suzy is forced to piss in a bucket because she has to urinate so bad that she begins grabbing her genitals in an awkward fashion. The only semi-sane member of the family is brother Palmer (Michiel Huisman) and he wisely tries to avoid his kinfolk at all costs by regularly smoking dope in his friend's Volkswagen hippie van and playing gigs where he performs painfully bad Jimi Hendrix and Rolling Stones covers. As Suzy says to Palmer while comparing him to their mutual hero Mick Jagger, "You're never going to look like him. Mick just has it and you don't." Although Suzy does

not it know it yet, Jagger will soon touch her jailbait main vein in a superlatively sleazy fashion that even puts her father Ko to shame, but of course considering that the rocker is her dream crush, she wallows in the sensual attention.

Rather preposterously, Suzy manages to get in the plush pleasure-dome of golden-haired counterculture diva Marianne Faithfull (Miranda Raison) after getting the singer's phone number from her friend and convincing her that she is the friend of her personal designer. Of course, Suzy, who uses the English alias 'Suzy Queen' (hence the title of the film) and contrives a terribly phony British accent, only wants to meet Ms. Faithfull so that she can get to her much-publicized-lover Mick Jagger (played by Andrew Richard in a role that was originally supposed to be played by the rocker's real-life nephew Demetri Jagger, who apparently backed out of the film so as not to potentially offend his uncle). When Suzy arrives at the singer's luxury suite, Faithfull answers the door without any clothes, but the protagonist does not seem to notice because she instantly spots Jagger lying on a bed and begins immediately focusing all of her attention on him in a meek and hopelessly shy fashion. Before she knows it, the rock star is making out with her and grabbing her naughty bits, though he soon gets uncomfortable after feeling a bulge in her nether-region because she had to wear a pair of gym shorts since she ran out of clean underwear. Undoubtedly, the scene where Suzy meets Mick and Marianne has a strange and almost dream-like quality about, thus hinting that it is merely a figment of the considerably eccentric protagonist's imagination. As Suzy Q makes quite apparent from the very beginning of the film, the titillating teenage titular character largely lives in an extravagant fantasy world full of big dreams that are in sharp contrast to her unfortunate reality as the much lusted over female progeny of a despicable dipsomaniac deadbeat and potential daughter-defiler.

Although Suzy only gets to hang out with Mick and Marianne for what seems like only a couple minutes, these couple of moments seem to be the best and most magical of her life and she immediately begins obnoxiously bragging to everyone she knows in a fairly unwittingly cute fashion about how she got the blood in Mick's prick going, or as she states to her mother, "His dick got hard...And he smelled like old tea. He fell in love with me straight away." While Suzy's mother attempts to tell to warn her, "sex and love are not the same, dear, especially for men," she does not care as she genuinely believes that magical Mick loves her. After all, considering her own father and brother express overt and somewhat predatory sensual feelings to her, Suzy naturally confuses lust with love like so many other young debutantes do. Naturally, Suzy's jealous father has a much worse reaction to her infatuation with Mick which is only further compounded when he breaks into her diary little a sneaky little girl and reads, "I feel sorry for my dad. He should die as soon as possible. My dad without a job is like a chair with no seat." Indeed, while getting drunk and watching Rawhide in a silly cowboy hat, Ko accuses his daughter of being a

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money-grubbing whore and being attracted to “golden dicks” and then proceeds to rip her Jagger scrapbook into shreds like a jealous toddler, so Suzy hilariously calls him a “living room cowboy” and he responds by brutally slapping her around and dragging out of his flat by her hair. When Suzy’s mother hears her daughter’s horrific screams, she pathetically decides to ignore it by burying her head into a pillow.

Not surprisingly, Suzy does not want to go to school the next day because her body is completely covered in bruises, especially her neck, which is so discolored that it looks someone tried to strangle her to death. Meanwhile, Ruth finally gets the gall to confront her husband regarding his regular abuse of their children, stating, “One more time and I’ll divorce you.” Meanwhile, Zwier’s fragile mind begins to further deteriorate and after he discovers his pet rat ‘Victor’ dead in a mousetrap, he decides to cut off the head of the family tortoise with his beloved pocketknife—a weapon that he always carries around and seems to have a psychosexual fetish for à la Reverend Harry Powell in Charles Laughton’s 1955 masterpiece *The Night of the Hunter* (which, not surprisingly, director Koolhoven has described as one of his favorite films)—in a grizzly and seemingly unsimulated scene of reptile decapitation and then makes turtle soup out of the poor pet which he serves to his unwitting family. After everyone has taken a bite, Zwier whips out the turtle shell and smirks in a sadistic fashion upon revealing to his entire family that they have just delighted in devouring the family pet. Needless to say, Zwier is not happy when he does not get the desired attention that he was seeking, with his brother Palmer even complimenting him on the soup while continuing to eat it in a completely unphased fashion. When everything is said and done, Zwier just ends up looking more pathetic than ever in his ridiculous juvenile attempt to receive attention from his unimpressed family, who clearly think he is a troubled loser. Ultimately, Ko and Ruth go for a stroll in a park where they reconcile their differences regarding their seemingly irreparably broken marriage while their Zwier slits his wrists in a bathtub. Unfortunately, poor Suzy Q suffers the shock of a lifetime after she is the one who finds Zwier’s naked corpse floating in the blood-soaked tub. Although the viewer never learns what becomes of the somewhat strangely sweet teenage girl, my guess is that she eventually wound up working in the Red Light District, which would be a somewhat ironic fate considering it is her father’s favorite place.

Although paid for with Dutch government funding, Suzy Q is currently not allowed to be legally screened or sold in any form and has been more or less held hostage by music rights scumbags because the music licensing for the film ran out. To auteur Martin Koolhoven’s great credit, he has decided to fight back by urging pirates to upload the film onto the (in)famous BitTorrent site The Pirate Bay. On top of the pirates responding to Koolhoven’s plea, he also uploaded the film himself onto YouTube, though it is currently predictably blocked in the United

States due to copyright issues. Koolhoven told the website torrentfreak.com that he felt obligated to promote the film through less than legal means because, "To me, it felt like the movie had died." In fact, Koolhoven went so far as to state, "Everyone can go to The Pirate Bay and grab a copy. People are actually not supposed to, but they have my permission to download SUZY Q." Obviously, films are meant to be seen and not deteriorate in some old forgotten vault, so I consider Koolhoven's efforts to make his own cult classic available as evidence that he is a virtuous auteur and serious artist who, quite unlike the kosher capitalists in Hollywood, loves cinema more than money. Indeed, it does seem a bit absurd that the most awarded Dutch film of 1999 and a work that is considered a cult classic of sorts in the Netherlands has been made completely unavailable because of a couple shitty play-out songs by Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones, but that just goes to show how meaningless, vapid, and hypocritical classic rock stars are as delusion drunkards and drug addicts who spoke of utopia yet helped usher in a culturally homogenizing dystopia where art is merely a commodity and not the expression of an artist's lifeblood. Of course, Mick Jagger did not star in the fittingly titled work *Performance* (1970) where the protagonist notably says to the rocker's 'character,' "You're a comical little geezer. You'll look funny when you're fifty," for nothing.

Admittedly the classic songs used in *Suzy Q* are somewhat important to the film in the sense that they give the viewer a good idea as to the sort of deleterious world famous losers that 'everyday' proles like the protagonist latched onto as heroes as a result of the tragic Hollywoodization of Europe. Indeed, instead of confiding in an imaginative but in some ways helpful figure like Christ, they put all of their faith and worship into eccentric dressing negroid junkies and Brit libertines with faggy lips who would have probably been janitors or bums had they not become successful with their musical careers. Indeed, the eponymous teenage protagonist of *Suzy Q* is so obsessed with the shallow goal of obtaining a celebrity status that she goes outside on her balcony at night and loudly reads from Dutch counterculture degenerate Jan Cremer's writings as if she is onstage and talking to a large audience so that she can 'practice' for when she gets famous (of course, as the daughter of a deadbeat dead who tells her that, "the only thing that suits you is a job in a raincoat factory," Suzy has her reasons for having such outlandish yet comforting dreams). On the other hand, if people like Suzy did not have their dreams than they would almost certainly have nothing to live for, but at least Christianity offers the metaphysical insurance policy of eternal life in an ostensibly immaculate utopia in the sky and whereas false heroes like Mick Jagger can only offer limp dicks, shitty blues guitar licks, STDs, and drug overdoses. Like the films of Todd Solondz, albeit centering around Amsterdam(ned) lumpenproles instead of the American east coast Jewish bourgeois and mostly lacking the irony that offers the viewer temporary relief from the domestic horror show they are watching, *Suzy Q* is surely a landmark work of true

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Dutch proletarian cinema that demands to be illegally downloaded. Indeed, if you're a serious cinephile and/or cultural pessimistic, you certainly owe it to auteur Martin Koolhoven, who is himself a product of the working-class as the son of a prison guard who briefly followed in his father's trade before his filmmaking career took off, to steal *Suzy Q* and screw the Rolling Stones and their record label out of royalties. While the film gives the impression that Koolhoven would eventually become a sort of Dutch Oskar Roehler, his first theatrical feature *AmnesiA* (2001), which also stars Carice van Houten, was certainly a change of pace artistically and made it seem like he might become the Dutch bastard son of David Lynch and Roman Polanski, thus demonstrating the filmmaker's talent as a truly chameleon-like auteur whose potential seems endless, at least as far as quasi-mainstream cinema is concerned.

-Ty E

AMNESIA

Martin Koolhoven (2001)

If any contemporary Dutch filmmaker has the talent and versatility to pull a Paul Verhoeven by leaving the Netherlands and creating well crafted big budget mainstream movies in Hollywood, it is big boorish bear auteur Martin Koolhoven (Suzy Q, De Grot aka The Cave) whose most recent effort, the World War II flick *Oorlogswinter* (2008) aka *Winter in Wartime*, was so popular in Holland that it managed to out-gross big blockbusters like *Twilight* (2008) and Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008). Indeed, considering Verhoeven also first got Hollywood's attention with a film about the Dutch resistance and the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange* (though the filmmaker made a couple more Dutch films before leaving), it almost seems like Koolhoven is following in the footsteps of his filmic father-figure. In fact, Koolhoven is currently working on an English-language 'gothic western' set for a 2015 release entitled *Brimstone* starring popular Australian-born Hollywood actress Mia Wasikowska and English-born Australian leading man and sex icon Guy Pearce. While Koolhoven certainly has a talent for making films that appeal to large eclectic audiences, his first 'official' feature (he had previously directed a couple reasonably successful TV movies) *Amnesia* (2001) is a somewhat esoteric, oneiric, enigmatic, and quasi-Lynchian fever dream that would certainly not fare well with most American mainstream audiences, though somewhat ironically, it is the only one of the Dutch director's films to have received any sort of theatrical release in the United States. In fact, if I knew nothing about the director and watched *Amnesia*, I would assume Koolhoven was attempting to be the opposite of the next Verhoeven by following in the tragic and disastrous footsteps of the Netherlands' most unruly and antisocial auteur, Adriaan Ditvoorst. Indeed, *Amnesia* feels like a sort of 'son' film to Ditvoorst's magnum opus *De Witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*, albeit more overtly and shamelessly Oedipal and a bit less arcane. Indeed, like *White Madness*, Koolhoven's film follows a perturbed artistically-inclined protagonist of the largely silent sort with greasy black hair who reunites with his estranged widowed mother at her dilapidated nightmarish home after a number of years of nil contact, but unlike in Ditvoorst's marvelously morbid masterpiece, the protagonist has an evil identical twin brother who he is eternally united with in a deep dark abyss of sin and unspeakable family secrets revolving around their parents. Whereas *White Madness* is largely an abstract work full of symbolic and oftentimes absurd imagery and cultivated literary allusions, *Amnesia* is an arthouse murder mystery with a reasonably coherent story the unravels in front of the viewer in a fiercely foreboding and sometimes shocking yet equally darkly mirthful fashion, thus making it a much more accessible work that demonstrates Koolhoven's special knack for meticulously woven cinematic storytelling. In other words, Koolhoven's quite

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literally titled work begins as a hypnotic phantasmagoric haze and concludes in complete transcendental elucidation.

Alex (Fedja van Huêt of Mike van Diem's *Karakter* (1997) aka *Character* and Erik de Bruyn's *Wilde mossels* (2000) aka *Wild Mussels*) is a professional photographer of the highly introverted sort who is incapable of taking photos of people, especially women, because of something that happened to him while he was snapping pictures when he was just a teenager. A majorly melancholy mensch with a seemingly permanent scowl on his face that more than hints that he is irreparably internally wounded, Alex is more or less a meekly walking and barely talking lost soul that is still incapable of coping with a tragedy from his youth that he played a major role in. When Alex gets a phone call from his identical twin brother Aram (also played by van Huêt) who he has not seen or talked to in many years, his immediate reaction is to hang up as if he has just been contacted by a ghost, but his exceeding extroverted twin, who is not the sort of guy that takes "no" for an answer, immediately calls back and informs him that their mother (Sacha Bulthuis) is sick and is coughing up blood. Ultimately, their mother's sickness is a pretense for Alex and Aram to reunite so that they can come to terms with something unsettling from their youth that they both played an integral part in that inevitably decided the very different courses that their respective lives would take. While Alex is a passive and even pathetic shell of a man who would probably refrain from fighting back if someone began violently raping him in the ass with a rusty machete, Aram is a cold, calculating, and charismatic psychopathic career criminal of the suavely-dressed deranged dandy sort who at the beginning of the film is involved in a semi-successful robbery that results in him and his depraved goofball partner-in-crime Wouter (Theo Maassen of Verhoeven's *Zwartboek* (2006) aka *Black Book*) being wounded. In fact, Wouter spends the rest of the film succumbing to a stomach wound while hanging out Alex and Aram's mother's house and getting increasingly drunk to ease his plaguing death pangs.

After receiving the phone call from his twin about their mother's ailing health late one night, Alex immediately begins driving to his family home and even falls asleep at the wheel on the way but luckily and somewhat inexplicably a strange busty black-haired beauty that has been inconspicuously hiding out in his backseat wakes him up before he crashes. Indeed, the girl's name is Sandra (popular Dutch actress Carice van Houten of Verhoeven's *Black Book* and Bryan Singer's *Valkyrie* (2008)) and when she demands that Alex ask her why she is in her car, she absurdly responds, "It's none of your business." Although they know absolutely nothing about one other, Alex and Sandra can tell that they are both lost souls and immediately become passionate lovers despite the fact that the protagonist is fairly lifeless otherwise. In fact, when the first two have sex, Sandra has an otherworldly orgasm that brings a fiery spirit to her mostly spiritless body, thus reflecting that the two dead souls seem to be soul-mates. As

the viewer later learns, both Alex and Sandra are responsible for bringing misery to their fathers as a result of their actions. When Alex finally arrives at his mother's home, it is revealed that it is an old junkyard called 'Amnesia' with a large old falling down house that resembles a smaller but certainly more ominous version of the estate from *Nothing But Trouble* (1991). As Alex tells Sandra upon arriving home, he cannot remember the last time he saw his mother. Alex's mother is an eccentric and seemingly half-senile hypochondriac who is afraid that she will die of a heart attack because her mother and grandmother died that way and incessantly drinks wine as a result because, as she states, "it's good for your heart." While Alex is more or less gentle with his mother, Aram acts like a rabid animal to her, screaming at her, "Excuses! A good housewife always has beer for visitors" because she does not have fancy Chinese beer to offer him and his dying friend Wouter. Although Aram lives with her, Alex's mother seems in complete denial of the fact that her nasty little psychopath of a son makes his living as a ruthlessly dedicated member of the criminal underworld. In fact, Aram's mother does not even bother to ask her son why his friend is dying on her kitchen floor, as if it is a normal everyday occurrence. During his first day there, Alex manages to avoid his brother but he cannot put off the auspicious reunion forever.

When Alex randomly meets Wouter, his brother's friend remarks that he must be Aram's brother and when he asks how he knows, he responds, "Right description: identical, but with a loser's look on his face." Of course, Alex takes Wouter's insult like a little bitch. When Wouter asks Alex, "Which is the odd one out: Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha or Bhishma?" and the protagonist correctly responds Bhishma, Aram's friend accuses him of guessing but the protagonist proves he is no moron by remarking, "Bhishma was invincible and could decide when he would die." Indeed, like Aram, Alex is a rather clever and sophisticated fellow, but unlike his tyrannical twin, he is deleteriously oversensitive. Later that day, Alex accuses Aram of using a 'pleonasm,' so his evil twin makes him come up with a series of self-denigrating pleonasm about himself like "boring Alex" and "cowardly Alex." Indeed, aside from acting somewhat passive-aggressive, Alex tolerates virtually all of his 'big brother's' (Aram was apparently born a half an hour before Alex and thus absurdly considers himself to be the oldest brother, which he constantly brings up as a characteristically petty and frivolous means to maintain dominance over his twin) insults. Despite their differences, Alex and Aram are also remarkably similar in many ways, or as the latter remarks to Sandra, "We don't meet for years and then have about the same haircut." As the film will ultimately reveal, both brothers instinctively knew that their disharmonious reunion was more or less foretold.

While living at his mother's house, Alex bizarrely begins taking on the role of his dead mechanic father Theo and, to the chagrin of his twin and to the delight of his mother, begins working on totaled automobiles even though he

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knows nothing about cars. As the story unfolds, it becomes quite clear that Alex has a lot of repressed guilt regarding his father's mysterious death. One night, Aram gives Sandra an envelope full of vintage black-and-white photographs of the twins' father and a somewhat masculine black-haired female doctor (Carly Wijs) that were taken by Alex when he was a teenager. Apparently, Alex's father was cheating on his mother with the female doctor and the twins decided to come up with a plan to stop the affair that ultimately resulted in the deaths of both the doctor and their father, which is something that the protagonist still cannot cope with after all these years. While unequivocally evil, it is quite apparent the events also had a life-changing effect on Aram who might have become a lawyer or banker instead of taking on a more dangerous psychopathic trade had he not committed such heinous acts in his youth. Meanwhile, Wouter finally succumbs to his wounds after looking like Christ during a dinner prayer and no longer after Aram's boss Eugene (top Dutch character actor Cas Enklaar) and his fat muse Esther (Eva van der Gucht) show up at the house. As punishment for Wouter being fatally wounded during their robbery, Eugene has Esther urinate on the dead con's grave as an example to Aram. After Esther literally pisses on Wouter's grave, Eugene decides they should celebrate by having a barbecue which concludes in a game of hide-and-go-seek that Alex does not play because he has to attend to his sick mother who he has just learned is terminally ill with cancer. When Aram was busy acting like an asshole, Alex took his mother to a doctor to get tested and when he got the test results back from the lab, the protagonist decided not to tell his progenitor as he wants her to die in peace.

While everyone else is playing a heated game of hide-and-go-seek that results in Esther getting stuck in a chimney after preposterously deciding to hide in one despite her rather impressive girth, Alex's mother mistakes him for her dead hubby Theo and begins making out with him in bed and the protagonist does virtually nothing to stop her. Needless to say, Aram and Sandra walk in on this disturbing display of motherly affection and the latter is so disturbed by it that she suffers a seizure due to the fact that she is epileptic. Aram volunteers to 'revive' her with CPR that ultimately evolves into a PDA between Sandra and the evil twin that is witnessed by Alex, who does nothing to stop it, thus demonstrating that he has no problem being cuckolded by his own brother. In fact, Alex wakes up the next morning in bed with Aram and Sandra, with the former embracing the latter's unclad body in a somewhat sinister fashion. Disturbed by the fact that her boyfriend does not seem to care that his twin brother fucked her, Sandra confronts Alex, who finally admits that he cannot cope with anything as a result of past traumas. Although Sandra convinces Alex to leave his mother's home ASAP, Aram coerces him to stay by stating, "We aren't finished, Alex. You know it as well as I do." Ultimately, Alex and Aram have a long-time coming climatic showdown of sorts where both twins reconcile with their shared tragic pasts and come to terms with their strikingly different but completely inter-

twined fates. Needless to say, only one man can survive. Somewhat strangely, Aram seems somewhat more sympathetic in the end. Like with the tragedy from their teenage years, Aram is ultimately the one that makes the ultimate sacrifice in the end while Alex mostly stands back passively.

Judging by interviews I have watched with the director, Martin Koolhoven seems to be a somewhat arrogant and annoying bloated blabbermouth with a banal and considerably cliched film school fanboy view of cinema and I find it to be almost shocking that he is the same mind that was responsible for creating *Amnesia*, as if the auteur was guided by an unknown force to create a minor masterpiece full of happy accidents that even he does not even fully comprehend. Indeed, despite having a cleverly constructed story, the film is full of various ancient archetypes and symbolism that give it a sort of metaphysical potency that I doubt even the director was fully cognizant of when he directed the film, which is much more spiritually-oriented than his other works. Not unlike the characters in *Amnesia* who seem to walk through life like somnambulists being led by Dr. Caligari, I felt like I was able to understand the more important aspects of the work on a subconscious gut-level and I think that is one of the film's greatest strengths, with the murder mystery subplot being of secondary importance, at least in my less than humble opinion. Notably, Koolhoven credits Roman Polanski's *Cul-de-sac* (1966) and Harold Pinter's play *The Birthday Party* (1957), which was once adapted by pre-*The Exorcist* William Friedkin in 1968, as the two main influences for his film as if it has no Dutch influences, which I certainly find to be somewhat dubious. Aside from Ditvoorst's *White Madness*, Koolhoven's film also seems to be influenced by the pre-Hollywood work of George Sluizer (*Spoorloos* aka *The Vanishing*, *Dark Blood*) who, aside from Dick Maas, seems to be the least intrinsically 'Dutch' of the post-WWII filmmakers from the Netherlands. Interestingly, in a September 2013 interview with *BelleOog*, Koolhoven said that he plans to put a Dutch spin on spaghetti westerns for his upcoming work *Brimstone* and criticizes Quentin Tarantino for making plastic 'homages' to the Guido western subgenre instead of making genuine works with a more personalized influence, thus hinting that the Dutch filmmaker might not go the route of his countryman Paul Verhoeven by making schlocky big budget blockbusters that are more or less the cinematic equivalent of junk food.

In its provocative take on the timeless myths about identical twins and shadowy doppelgängers, *Amnesia* is somewhat open to interpretation in the sense that one could easily argue that the film should not be taken literally and that the brothers are not two different individuals but two dichotomous extreme sides of the same person. Indeed, one could certainly argue that emotionally erratic Aram is actually Alex's Jungian shadow—the unconscious aspect of the personality which the conscious ego does not dare identify in itself lest the psyche crumbles—especially considering the protagonist spends a good portion of

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the film attempting to avoid his brother. When the protagonist does finally confront his brother in the end, he achieves what Jung described as ‘individuation’—a process of psychological transformation whereby the personal and collective unconscious merge and are brought into consciousness to be assimilated into the whole personality—hence why he is finally able to leave his past behind and move on with life. Unquestionably, whether intentional on Koolhoven’s part or not (personally, I don’t think it really matters either way), *Amnesia* certainly features one of the most effective portrayals of the shadow aspect and individuation in cinema history, as it is certainly more accessible and fluid than Fred Haines’ consciously Jungian Hermann Hesse adaptation *Steppenwolf* (1974) starring Max von Sydow. Jungian psychobabble aside, Koolhoven’s film is a compulsively darkly comedic work that does the seemingly impossible by managing to juggle humor, angst, and melancholy in an addictively foreboding fashion that few other films can boast. Ultimately, *Amnesia* is like an unpretentious art-house film that is carefully crafted in a way that even the most art-intolerant of filmgoers can understand it, though I think it’s brilliance would be lost on the average American viewer, but of course that is not exactly a bad thing.

-Ty E

SOUTH

Martin Koolhoven (2004)

I don't typically have mixed opinions regarding filmmakers, especially auteur filmmakers, but relatively young Dutch film director Martin Koolhoven (*Duister licht* aka *Dark Light*, *De Grot* aka *The Cave*) certainly infuriates me in many regards because he indubitably has the talent to make fairly dark, idiosyncratic, and atmospheric works as demonstrated by his phantasmagorical cult flick *Amnesia* (2001) yet he chooses to make intolerably kitschy pro-multicultural miscegenation schlock like *Het schnitzelparadijs* (2005) aka *Kitchen Paradise* and *Happy Family* (2006) aka *'n Beetje Verliefd*, as well as cliché formulaic war films like *Winter in Wartime* (2008) aka *Oorlogswinter*, as if to demonstrate to the culture-distorting globalists of Hollywood that he is a good little goy who is culturally cuckolded and ethno-masochistic enough to have what it takes to be a shabbos goy protégé of some Hebraic gatekeeper like Steven Spielberg or Michael Bay. Undoubtedly, what all of Koolhoven's cinematic works have in common—be it his delectably darkly comedic incest-themed made-for-TV anti-sitcom *Suzy Q* (1999) or his rather merry yet undeniably unconventional family film *Bonkers* (2005) aka *Knetter*—is that they are highly stylized and meticulously crafted pieces that were clearly directed by someone who loves directing films, so I would argue that the fairly minimalistic flick *Het zuiden* (2004) aka *South* is the sort of 'black sheep' of the director's somewhat eclectic oeuvre. A work produced by Els Vandevorst (*Dancer in the Dark*, *Dogville*) and co-produced by Danish auteur Lars von Trier and his partner Peter Aalbæk Jensen for their production company Zentropa, Koolhoven's work was originally intended as the first Dutch Dogme 95 effort, but the auteur ultimately found the rules of the avant-garde filmmaking movement to be somewhat preposterous, stating in a September 2013 interview with *BelleOog* regarding his decision to opt out of following the rules: "...the only reason you would do it is to ride that wave or something and I didn't believe that wave was necessarily going to bring me anywhere because there we already a couple of them made and I could hear people say, 'Holland comes five years later with a Dogma movie'...so there was no benefit in terms of content." Instead, Koolhoven ultimately made a work that "followed the spirit" of Dogme 95 in terms of its realist minimalist approach, emphasis on acting, and lack of special effects, but thankfully lacks the amateurish homemade aesthetic that plagues most works associated with the film movement. Penned by female screenwriter Mieke de Jong who the auteur would later collaborate with on *Bonkers* and *Winter in Wartime*, *South* is indubitably Koolhoven's most dejecting and upsetting work and certainly not something one would expect from the big hairy boorish bear of a director that directed a film as mindlessly retarded as *Het schnitzelparadijs*, which depicts a radically repellant Romero and Juliet story between a swarthy Moroccan and blonde Dutch beauty as something to

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celebrate and feel good about. Indeed, the story of a severely socially awkward laundry service manager that has serious problems in the romance department due to having only one breast as a result of a mastectomy and who ultimately decides to imprison her latest slob of a love interest in a boiler room while pathetically fantasizing about having an imaginary family that includes her bloated prisoner and the unwanted bastard baby boy of a young Russian illegal alien played by Oksana Akinshina of *Lilya 4-Ever* (2002), *South* is ultimately a piece of rather devastating Dutch style kitchen sink realist horror that reminds the viewer of the sort of malicious morally defective behavior women can get involved in when they are part of a close-knit collective group, as well as the very particular forms of cognitive dissonance that only members of the fairer sex seem to suffer. Featuring an angst-ridden anti-heroine who is absolutely beloved by her mostly uniquely unattractive third world employees because she makes their lives easy and provides them with a sense of security that they have never known before, Koolhoven's decidedly disturbing pseudo-Dogme piece of horrifying and hapless celluloid female hysteria will certainly strike fear and disgust in any rampantly heterosexual man in its distressing depiction of female group think and feminine mental derangement as a sort of modern Dutch lumpenprole equivalent to Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965), albeit minus a beauteous blonde lead and scenes of surrealist horror.

While protagonist Martje Portegies (Monic Hendrickx) is a master at ruling over the laundry service business that she manages and is well loved by her colorful assortment of third world female employees, her personal life is virtually nonexistent as she has found it hard to reintegrate into the dating world ever since she had one of her breasts removed as the assumed result of breast cancer. Of course, as an unmarried barren woman approaching middle-age whose maternal clock is ticking, Martje was certainly more affected by the mastectomy than a married woman that has already had children and one can certainly look at her missing breast as being symbolic of the protagonist's failed womanhood as a lonely lady with a figuratively decaying womb. One day after being rudely denied a seat at a diner and being forced to eat her lunch outside while standing up and leaning against her car, Martje meets a friendly, if not fat and sloppy, truck driver named Loe de Koning (Frank Lammers) who is also eating his lunch outside and who seems romantically interested in her, but when the marginally charming chap goes inside the restaurant to get the protagonist some coffee, she pathetically panics and uses the opportunity to drive away, as she is horribly afraid of rejection and will do just about anything to avoid it. To Martje's delight, Loe later shows up at her work by happenstance to apply for a truck driving job, so the two immediately flirting with one another and the protagonist's employees even attempt to coerce her into getting romantically involved with the less than handsome truck driver. While Loe is used to driving south to hellholes like Morocco and Algeria, he impresses Martje by telling her he wants

to stay local and ultimately gets the job under the assumed pretense that he will begin a love affair with the laundry joint manager. Unfortunately for shameless horndog Loe, who is actually married, he has no clue that Martje is somewhat unhinged and is looking for something more than just a simple fuckbuddy.

While Martje initially denies Loe's rather forward romantic advances, the protagonist eventually decides to give in after the trucker incessantly reassures her that she can trust him. Of course, Martje makes the major mistake of failing to inform Loe that she is missing a breast, so when the trucker takes a peak under her shirt and finds a prosthetic boob inside her bra, he is so startled that he literally jumps back and remarks, "Jesus, I got a fright." Needless to say, Martje is left in tears, which her Russian friend/employee Galina (Olga Louzgina) misinterprets as being the result of Loe sexually assaulting her. With Galina at the lead, Martje's multicultural army of female employees decide to avenge their beloved boss' honor by ganging up on Loe and locking him in a boiler room where a fat and out-of-shape fellow like him will surely have a hard time breathing. At the end of the day, Martje absurdly accuses Loe of assaulting her and decides to leave him locked in the boiler room after he offends her by comparing their disastrous failed sexual encounter to a story about how a friend of his once unwittingly brought home a tranny with a cock thinking it was a real biological woman. The next day, Martje lies to her employees by telling them that Loe is gone for good because their "action gave him a good fright" and then persuades them never to speak of the matter again. Of course, it does not take Galina long to realize that Loe is still locked in the boiler room, but she naturally decides to keep quiet about the matter.

When Martje notices a young blonde Russian named Zoya (Oksana Akinshina) randomly working at her laundry business that she has never seen or talked to before, let alone hired, she naturally becomes quite angry as the girl is an illegal immigrant without papers who has brought her newborn baby to work, but the irrationally empathetic protagonist ultimately lets her stay when the destitute Slav babe begs, "You're a good boss. I need a good boss. Please." When Martje learns that Zoya has not named her baby son and merely absurdly calls him "The Baby," she becomes rather irritated and demands that the negligent young mother give her child a name, but the rebellious ruski chick refuses and tells the protagonist to name him instead. In fact, Zoya tells Martje, who envies the young mother simply because she has a child, that she would trade her baby for a mere bicycle and then tells her that she can have her son, who the protagonist ultimately names 'Jan' and treats as if it is her own biological child, even attempting to breastfeed the babe with her surviving tit. Unfortunately for Loe, Martje's new obsession with the baby only compounds her penetrating psychosis and she begins believing that she now has her own family, with the imprisoned trucker being her hubby and the bastard Slav infant being her son. Needless to say, Martje is completely infuriated when she learns that Loe has a wife after the

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unlucky woman, a somewhat homely blonde dame named Dorien (Ina Geerts), shows up at her work looking for her missing husband. That night, Martje decides to berate Loe, who is by now slowly but surely dying, by proclaiming that she and his wife Dorien are victims of his lecherous male chauvinist pig behavior, but the crudely charming trucker manages to fall back in her favor after pleading to her that she is the only one that matters to him and then proposes, "Let's take the truck and go away together." Of course, hopelessly naive Martje likes Loe's rather romantic idea and decides the two will go "somewhere south." Unfortunately for Loe, whose time is certainly running out, Martje wants to pick up a new wardrobe and a new realistic prosthetic breast before the trip so that she can look her best for her would-be-beau, which ultimately proves to be a death sentence for the forsaken trucker. Meanwhile, Zoya figures out that Loe is locked in the boiler room and although she could care less if the ostensible rapist trucker croaks, she is worried that she might lose her job if Martje gets busted by the cops. Unfortunately for everyone involved, Martje's behavior becomes increasingly unpredictable to the point where Zoya has to confront her while she is having a sort of necrophiliac candlelight dinner with loverboy Loe.

Notably, Dutch filmic femme fatale Renée Soutendijk of Paul Verhoeven's *Spetters* (1980) and *De vierde man* (1983) aka *The 4th Man* was originally supposed to play the lead role in *South*, but director Martin Koolhoven wisely decided at the last minute that she was not right for the part and subsequently gave the role to Monic Hendrickx, who ultimately earned the Golden Calf—the Dutch equivalent to an Oscar/Academy Award—for her singularly perturbing yet pathetic performance as crazed breast cancer survivor Martje. I must admit that Hendrickx certainly deserved the award as she brought a sort of seemingly authentic unnerving creepiness to the role that a more beautiful actress probably would not have been able to pull off. Certainly, in terms of tone, themes, and aesthetics, *South* rarely feels like a Koolhoven flick, which is something that the director himself would probably agree with as hinted by remarks he has made in interviews regarding the film. In fact, in his September 2013 interview with *BelleOog*, the filmmaker would reveal regarding the film: "I think of all my movies...it is the one that I least rewrote...or had the least influence on the script, because I read it and though it was, I don't know, 80 or 90% ready...and we talked and we changed things, but not that much," thus indicating that screenwriter Mieke de Jong was probably just as much the 'auteur' of the film as Koolhoven. Of course, I doubt many heterosexual males have an interest in watching, let alone directing, films about distressingly socially awkward breast cancer survivors, so I do not think it would be a stretch to describe *South* as Koolhoven's most blatant 'for hire' artisan work, even if it is a penetrating arthouse piece that will most certainly leave a beyond bitter taste of abject discomfort in most viewers' mouths. As Koolhoven described in his interview with *BelleOog*, he did not like the fact that the film earned him a reputation as a

dark and gloomy filmmaker, so he demanded that his screenwriter de Jong allow him to take a more 'fun' and 'jovial' approach to his next work Bonkers which, despite featuring a tragic death and a manic-depressive character, is ultimately a 'feel good' family flick. Like a Lifetime movie from a hysterical pre-menopausal lady lumpenprole hell that is as unflattering to certain members of the fairer sex as it is strangely empathetic, South is ultimately a film the most viewers might not necessarily 'enjoy' but is certainly something they will never forget. Indeed, it is hard to think of another film where a killer is depicted in a more favorable light than the male victim she pointlessly kills. While not Koolhoven's greatest work (in my opinion, he will probably never top AmnesiA), it is most certainly his most serious, understated, and least pageantry-plagued piece. Also, I have to admit that I respect Koolhoven for telling Lars von Trier to fuck-off and not succumbing to the cinematic golden calf of Dogme 95.

-Ty E

WINTER IN WARTIME
WINTER IN WARTIME

Martin Koolhoven (2008)

When Dutch arthouse auteur turned Hollywood blockbuster filmmaker Paul Verhoeven (*Turkish Delight*, *Robocop*) returned to the Netherlands to make his first Dutch film in over two decades, *Zwartboek* (2006) aka *Black Book* starring Nordic blonde beauty Carice van Houten with a bad dye job in the patently absurd role of a Jewess in the Dutch resistance who infiltrates the SS SD and seduces a *Hauptsturmführer*, I was terribly disappointed as it demonstrated the aesthetically and socio-politically deleterious effect that his twenty years in Tinseltown had had on his film making. Indeed, Verhoeven is responsible for directing one of the greatest and most critically revered Dutch war films ever made, *Soldaat van Oranje* (1977) aka *Soldier of Orange*, which featured none of the absolutely odious Zionist-pandering or soullessly sleek film making that plagued the obscenely overrated *Black Book*. Despite the fact that he has yet to make it to Hollywood, relatively young and popular Dutch auteur Martin Koolhoven (*De grot* aka *The Cave*, *Het zuiden* aka *South*) has already demonstrated that he has been poisoned by the conspicuously clichéd, contrived, and sentimental Spielberg brand of WWII filmmaking with his most recent work *Winter in Wartime* (2008) aka *Oorlogswinter* based on the popular best-selling 1972 novel of the same name by Dutch politician and scientist Jan Terlouw. The story of a 14-year-old Dutch boy who gets involved with the resistance after finding an injured British RAF airman in the woods and naively sees it as a sort of heroic adventure to help the Brit avoid being captured by the Germans, source writer Terlouw, who was 8-years-old during the German occupation of the Netherlands, said his intent with the novel was, “to make it clear to readers that they shouldn’t think, after finishing the book, that the war had somehow been a glorious period; the second was to provide—in a moderate manner—a human face for the Germans...,” yet the Teutonic invaders hardly have a human face in Koolhoven’s film, which depicts the Huns as boorish automatons who are just too plain dumb and slavishly subservient to notice the evilness of their atrocious actions. Strategically utilizing some of the ugliest untermensch-esque actors they could find to play Germans (e.g. Dan van Husen) and shot from the perspective of a 14-year-old that looks and acts more like a 10-year-old who thinks girls have cooties, especially when considering the time period in which the film takes place, *Winter in Wartime* features an extravagantly stylized cardboard tale of morality that attempts to disguise its dichotomous grade school level view of good and evil with pseudo-poetic melodramatic slow-motion scenes that beg for profoundness but scream of accidental kitsch and vulgar asininity. Indeed, the film is like the Dutch equivalent of Elem Klimov’s *Come and See* (1985) minus the Soviet propaganda and as made for Hollywood-lobotomized toddlers and American tourists. A work that barely scratches the surface of what

the Dutch really suffered during the end of the Second World War, *Winter in Wartime* might as well have been directed by any Hollywood hack as one could probably learn just as much about the Dutch wartime experience had a proud protege of Michael Bay assembled the film. Curiously set during the end of WWII in the winter time yet making no reference to the 'Hongerwinter' famine of 1944-1945 in which as many as 22,000 Dutch people starved to death and could not be buried because the ground was frozen solid, Koolhoven's film ultimately makes the war seem like a minor annoyance that caused a couple mischievous people some slight discomfort when in reality it devastated the entire country, destroyed what was left of the Dutch empire, and arguably irreparably destroyed the spirit of the Dutch people. Indeed, the Netherlands did not go from being best known by foreigners for windmills and wooden clogs to legal weed and hookers for nothing.

Michiel van Beusekom (Martijn Lakemeier) is a slightly rebellious 14-year-old Dutch boy who thinks his father Johan (Raymond Thiry) is a pansy pushover because he is the mayor of his town yet is keeping the peace with the daftardly German occupiers, who have been arresting and killing members of the shadowy resistance. Michiel practically worships his uncle Ben (Yorick van Wageningen) even though he is a deadbeat because he is apparently a member of the resistance and is fighting the Germans in his own personal way, or so the terribly naive protagonist believes. It is obvious that Ben is a loser as he constantly hangs out with his nephew as though they were brothers, despite being a middle-aged man, while his brother is a successful family man and respected mayor of an entire town. When Michiel's friend Dirk (Mees Peijnenburg), a member of the resistance, gives him a message just before he is arrested to give to a blacksmith named Bertus van Gelder (Tygo Gernandt) who is ultimately killed by a kraut, the protagonist decides to read the letter and ultimately finds the coordinates to the wooded hideout of a British airman named Jack (played by less than masculine *Twilight* star Jamie Campbell Bower) whose plane crash landed in the Netherlands. Despite the fact that Jack is kind of an arrogant and seemingly ungrateful scrawny little twat who seems to have no qualms about putting a underage kid's life in great danger, Michiel fetishizes the resistance so much that he is more than happy to risk his young life and get the Brit to the nearby town of Zwolle, but a problem arises when the airmen is unable to walk due to an infected leg injury, so the protagonist gets his somewhat Jewish-looking nurse sister Erica (Melody Zoë Klaver) to help clean-up the wounds. Needless to say, Jack and Erica fall in love and Michiel becomes exceedingly jealous, but he is soon going to have more serious and potentially deadly things to worry about involving virtually everyone in the protagonist's rather sheltered bourgeois family.

When the Germans find the corpse of one of their comrades who was killed by Jack shortly after his plane crashed in the Netherlands, Michiel's mayor father is arrested and subsequently publicly executed with two other men as an

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example to the Dutch to not mess with the almighty occupier. In an unintentionally absurdist piece of Spielberg-esque agitprop, two German soldiers laugh in a stupidly sinister fashion while holding Michiel back while his father is being executed via firing squad. Of course, had the protagonist turned Jack in instead of helping him, his father would have never been killed in the first place. During Johan's funeral a group of coldhearted Gestapo agents break into Michiel's family home and wreck the place, including smashing the protagonist's grieving mother's fancy dishware. Despite the fact that Jack's leg seemed like it was going to rot off only a couple days before, he and Michiel soon make an attempt to travel to the town of Zwolle but their plan is foiled by a unit of Germans that were hiding by a riverbed and thus they must make a great escape while the Nazis are chasing them through a forest on machine gun-blasting motorcycles. During the chase scene, Jack proves he is not only an airman, but a rare British daredevil rodeo master who makes the stupid krauts eat his dust. Unfortunately, while Michiel and Jack manage to outwit and ultimately outrun the Germans despite the fact they were in motorcycles and jeeps, the former's beloved horse Caesar sustains a fractured leg in the process and must be euthanized but since the boyish protagonist cannot get the courage to do it himself, the RAF puts the beast to sleep. Since Jack is no longer safe in the woods, Michiel decides to bring him home where he introduces him to his uncle Ben, who agrees to help the Brit get to Zwolle using phony German documents. Shortly after Jack, Ben, and Erica leave to go to Zwolle, Michiel realizes that his uncle mentioned something about his resistance fighter friend Dirk that he could not have possibly known because he never told him about it and thus suspects his beloved Oom might be doing the incomprehensible by collaborating with the Germans. Upon inspecting Uncle Ben's suitcase, Michiel finds Nazi documents and realizes that his uncle is not a member of the resistance but a double-agent that works for the Germans. Indeed, because of his actions, Uncle Ben is responsible for the deaths of various neighbors and family friends. Luckily, Michiel manages to chase down the threesome just before they arrive at the bridge and pulls a gun on Uncle Ben and exposes his treachery to Jack and his sister.

Ultimately, while Michiel guards Uncle Ben, Erica walks across the bridge while Jack absurdly climbs along underneath it as if he has superhuman strength. Demonstrating that he is a stern anticommunist who thinks that Europe will soon be taken over by the Soviets, Uncle Ben complains to Michiel, "The Russians will be here soon. Then we'll see who's occupier and who's liberator." Uncle Ben also reveals to Michiel that, due to his German connections, he managed to secure his father's release but the mayor wanted to be a martyr and refused to allow another citizen to take his place as was the stipulation for sparing his life, thus now the protagonist can rest easy knowing that his father was not the pussy that he always thought he was. Of course, Michiel was quite wrong about Ben as well. When Ben manages to escape and Michiel soon catches him, he realizes

he must kill his uncle or otherwise his sister and Jack will be shot dead. After Ben pleads, “Think about it, Michiel. I’m a bastard but I’m also your uncle. I’ve always protected you” and a unit of German soldiers appear nearby, Michiel acts if he has changed his mind about killing his uncle, but just as Ben begins to walk away from him, the protagonist symbolically shoots him in the back. Indeed, although not having the gall to euthanize his suffering horse, Michiel manages to kill his favorite uncle in cold blood. After the war has ended, everyone in the Netherlands celebrates with a huge parade and various parties, but Michiel has a malignant case of melancholia and cannot find it in himself to celebrate, so he merely sits at his dead dad’s desk as if trying in vain to take his place, though his friend Theo eventually manages to get him to crack a smile.

To my complete and utter shock, director Martin Koolhoven stated in a September 2013 interview with BelleOog, “WINTER IN WARTIME is the first film since AMNESIA where...the first idea was completely mine. I said I wanted to do this. I already said I wanted to do this before I was doing SOUTH. I said it to that producer Els Vandevorst [...] that was the movie that was ‘me.’ And I had a much higher ambition on an artistic level. Funny enough, it was the big success.” Of course, anyone that knows anything about Dutch film history realizes that WWII flicks tend to be the most profitable and all around successful works in the Netherlands as Paul Rotha’s *The Silent Raid* (1962) aka *De Overval*, Verhoeven’s *Soldier of Orange* and *Black Book*, Fons Rademakers’ *The Dark Room of Damocles* (1963) aka *Als twee druppels water* and *The Assault* (1986) aka *De aanslag*, Roeland Kerbosch’s *For a Lost Soldier* (1992) aka *Voor een verloren soldaat*, and Ben Sombogaart’s *Twin Sisters* (2002) aka *De tweeling*, among various other works, clearly demonstrate, so Koolhoven should not have been too surprised that *Winter in Wartime* was such a big hit in the Netherlands as it seems like it was practically specially tailored to be a celluloid cash-cow that would win all the awards and make him a household name. For Koolhoven to say that *Winter in Wartime* is his most personal ‘auteurist’ work since his debut feature *Amnesia*—a darkly comedic and oftentimes surreal work that seems to combine elements of works by Andrei Tarkovsky, Adriaan Ditvoorst, and David Lynch—seems nothing short of patently preposterous to the point of abject absurdity. Not only is the film seen from the perspective of a boy, but it is also a work that will appeal to mostly young boys as a sort of ‘teen arthouse’ flick that does for the Second World War what Francis Ford Coppola’s *Rumble Fish* (1983) did for teenage rebel flicks. Additionally, the Dutch are easily one of the least sentimental, unemotional, and ‘no bullshit’ type of people in the world, so for Koolhoven to take such a superlatively sentimentalist approach to World War II is nothing short of disgraceful and totally unrepresentative of his countrymen and how the war affected them. I’m not Dutch, but my grandfather was and he was a messenger in the resistance who was shot in the head by a German soldier (the bullet only grazed his skull) and whose family hid a Jewish girl in

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their house, yet he never mentioned any of these things to my mother during his entire life (it was only at the end his life when my aunt coerced him into talking about his experiences during WWII that he ever revealed any of this) and sure as hell did not tell sentimental stories about his wartime escapades which, as far as I could tell, totally destroyed his entire life, hence why he immigrated to an uncultivated nation like the United States. Ultimately, *Winter in Wartime* is a fanciful borderline-fever-dream depiction of the Second World War from a Dutch filmmaker who, unlike Verhoeven, did not personally experience the German occupation and thus romanticizes it in a pseudo-poetic fashion that oftentimes looks ‘pretty’ and ‘elegant’ (not surprisingly, Koolhoven has described spaghetti westerns like Sergio Corbucci’s *The Great Silence* (1968) and Sergio Martino’s *A Man Called Blade* (1977) as having an influence on the film), but is ultimately about as profound as an exploding cyst. Indeed, even the obscenely overrated and sickeningly sentimental pro-pederaŝt flick *For a Lost Soldier*—a film based on the autobiographical novel of the same name written by gay ballet dancer and choreographer Rudi van Dantzig, who managed to die of male breast cancer (combined with lymphoma)—features a more insightful depiction of the effects that WWII had on the Netherlands in its unintentionally allegorical depiction of a Canadian soldier in his early-20s seducing and bugging a vulnerable and highly impressionable 12-year-old Dutch boy.

-Ty E

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Martin Koolhoven (2016)

While the western is as distinctly American as a Robert E. Lee statue or a phillandering Baptist negro preacher, many enterprising foreign auteur filmmakers have tackled and, in some cases, even improved on the fairly formulaic genre. Indeed, whether it be Luis Trenker's surprisingly good Nazi era western *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien* (1936) aka *The Emperor of California*, Italian auteur Sergio Leone elevating the genre to virtual high art with his 'Dollars Trilogy,' underrated guido anarchist Giulio Questi incorporating gothic horror and gay fascist blackshirts in *Django Kill... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967), Hebraic Chilean Alejandro Jodorowsky's hyper hermetic Mexican midnight movie *El Topo* (1970), Swedish auteur Jan Troell's rather modest yet original *Zandy's Bride* (1974), iconoclastic Brit Alex Cox 'punking' the cowboy cinema with *Straight to Hell* (1987) and *Walker* (1987), Teutonic enfant terrible Rainer Werner Fassbinder making his own distinctly debauched take on the spaghetti western with *Whity* (1971), the various lame commie 'Ostern' (aka 'Red Western) flicks of the Soviet Eastern Bloc, South African auteur Aryan Kaganof's ghostly genocide-laden avant-garde short *Western 4.33* (2002), or Argentine auteur Lisandro Alonso's Danish flavored Viggo Mortensen vehicle *Jauja* (2014), the western—a genre Clint Eastwood once quite rightly stated of, "I have always felt that the Western movie is one of the few art forms that Americans can lay claim to. Next to jazz"—has certainly been reshaped, raped, and molested by filmmakers from virtually every first world nation in the world aside from the Netherlands, at least until relatively recently with the release of the somewhat underrated, if not flawed, epic *Brimstone* (2016) directed by rather rotund Dutch auteur Martin Koolhoven (Suzy Q, *Oorlogswinter* aka *Winter in Wartime*). Billed by some, including Koolhoven himself, as "the very first Dutch Western," the film is technically a Dutch-French-German-Belgian-Swedish-British-American coproduction and features a largely international cast with mostly English speaking roles, yet it is also the film that probably comes closest to capturing the apocalyptic Calvinistic spirit of Dutch Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder paintings like *The Triumph of Death* (1562). In short, the film could not have been directed by a Hollywood filmmaker, which might seem far-fetched to some considering it stars baby diva Dakota Fanning, Australian action heartthrob Guy Pearce, and *Game of Thrones* stars Kit Harington and Carice van Houten, among various other non-arthouse oriented celebrities. In short, the film is far too idiosyncratic, subversive, and just plain 'feel bad' to have been directed by some Hollywood hack or produced by some money-grubbing Tinseltown pimp producer.

Undoubtedly, Koolhoven—a relatively young auteur that has clearly suffered a certain degree of Americanization as far as cultural and cinematic influences are concerned—is a filmmaker that I certainly have somewhat mixed feelings about.

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Although he began his filmmaking career on an inordinately strong note with the sweetly sick suburban melodrama-cum-satire *Suzy Q* (1999) and the decidedly dark, cruelly comedic and quasi-Lynchian oneiric arthouse thriller *Amnesia* (2001) starring a delectably young and nubile Carice van Houten and Fedja van Huêt in a dual-role as twins and he would go on to direct admirable flicks like the rather grim quasi-Dogme 95 project *Het Zuiden* (2004) aka *South*, Koolhoven has also done his fair share of superlatively cringe-worthy hack work. In fact, Koolhoven demonstrated with infantile mainstream comedies like *Het Schnitzelparadijs* (2005) aka *Schnitzel Paradise*—a degenerate Rome and Juliet story about a brown Muslim's quest to defile a blonde Dutch Aryanness that apparently made a lot of money in the Netherlands—and 'n *Beetje Verliefd* (2006) aka *Happy Family* that he is a shameless cuckold that has no problem disposing his artistic integrity to make insipid pro-miscegenation twaddle for stupid and naïve adolescent girls that might be dumb enough to believe that Moroccans make for cool boyfriends. Unfortunately, *Brimstone* also suffers from a slight yet unmistakable rancid Cultural Marxist stench, but luckily the film is so misanthropic and just plain fucked up that any left-wing message it contains is virtually neutralized. Vaguely feminist in the sense that it features an absurdly rough and tough dame portrayed by lapsed child star Dakota Fanning, the film is a sort of grotesque neo-revisionist western where the Wild West is portrayed as a virtual hell-on-earth where going to church and whorehouses are the most popular recreational activities and where Calvinist virgins can be turned into seasoned whores virtually overnight. In short, Koolhoven does not seem to believe in heroes and practically views the Old West as one big gigantic plantation where a couple evil cowboys and religious men treat the rest of humanity like slaves and cattle.

While I was initially dubious of *Brimstone* due to Koolhoven's uniquely uneven oeuvre and the fact that it is the Dutch director's first English language film, I knew I had to watch it after reading a couple reviews from clearly offended mainstream American film critics. Indeed, seeing the film as a sort of "endurance test," many of these lamestream critics seem to just lack the testicular fortitude (or, in many cases, testicles in general) to consume any sort of cinema that transcends sort of sociopathic Tarantinoesque pop violence, but I must admit that even I was somewhat taken aback when I read Glenn Kenny's review at rogerebert.com where he reveals that he was so hopelessly offended and triggered by the film that he states regarding director Koolhoven, "I wonder if President Trump can extend that travel ban to The Netherlands." While *Brimstone* features a heroine that could almost be described as an 'all-competent ingénue' were it not for her final fate, it seems the film's propensity for girl power posturing is not enough to satiate the dry vags of the feeble feminists and limp dick cucks that just cannot bear to see a girl treated as anything less than an immaculate jewel that needs to be daintily polished and displayed in the most

flattering of fashions. Another excellent example of the hysteria against the film is a review from some emotionally bloated bitch boy named Zach Budgor at pastemagazine.com who goes so far as complaining in regard to *Brimstone* that, “Calling it ‘problematic’ seems colossally inadequate” and then bitches, “Beneath all the pretensions, this is just a movie about Guy Pearce desperately wanting to fuck his daughter.” Of course, Calvinist predatory father-daughter incest is a subject that, for better or worse, has more substance and intrigue than anything that Tarantino has ever touched. Notably, this is not Koolhoven’s first film that deals with father-daughter incest, as the Dutch auteur’s aberrant made-for-TV cult flick *Suzy Q* also features a perverted patriarch with serious daughter issues, albeit depicted in a considerably less sensational fashion.

Although oftentimes overlooked due to America’s dominant Anglo-Saxon roots, the Dutch played a pivotal role in influencing the cultural and political climate of early America. For example, a 1657 religious clash between Peter Stuyvesant—the last Dutch director-general of the colony of New Netherland from 1647 until it was ceded provisionally to the English in 1664 and renamed New York—and Quakers led by John Bowne resulted in the Flushing Remonstrance, which ultimately served as the basis for religious freedom in America. While it is somewhat hard for me to imagine Dutch cowboys (incidentally, auteur Sam Peckinpah’s paternal family, which was involved with the Old West, originated from the Frisian Islands), the covert influence of Calvinism on the western genre is unmistakable and certainly put to intriguing use in Koolhoven’s *Brimstone* where a singularly wicked Dutch Reformed Church reverend acts as a sort of symbolic devil of sorts in the still untamed land of the great American frontier. As depicted in the film, the Dutch immigrants have come to the U.S. because they believe that their motherland has become fair too spiritually degenerate and they truly believed that their new homeland is the literal ‘Promised Land.’ Scorning his fiercely frigid wife due to the fact that their daughter still prays in Dutch, the Reverend, like so many of his contemporary kinsmen, is rather serious about ridding himself of his Dutch identity (incidentally, many of the original Dutch-Americans maintained their native tongue as demonstrated by the eighth President of the United States Martin van Buren who, despite being a sixth generation American, spoke Dutch as his first language). In that sense, the film reveals the American tendency toward deracination and eventual cultural retardation. Indeed, the good Reverend aggressively advocates the eradication of his first language in both his church and household, yet he and his flock are easily the most literate and cultivated people in the film, thus demonstrating the innate absurdity of the so-called melting pot.

Undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing aspects of *Brimstone* is that Koolhoven was able to incorporate the Calvinist angle in a surprisingly cinematic fashion, or as he explained in an interview with creativescreenwriting.com, “There is an idea of predetermination in Calvinism, and I wanted to hint in the movie

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that things are in a way predetermined. Just as an example, if a character gets shot in the head, at some previous point in the movie that character will touch their head. If somebody gets knifed in the stomach, they'll touch their stomach earlier in the film." Of course, the idea of predetermination becomes rather perverse when one considers the film features incestuous father-daughter rape, patricide, suicide, white child sex slavery, infanticide, unjustified whore lynchings, archaic glossectomies, etc. Needless to say, the film does not exactly feature a positive portrayal of Calvinism, but I doubt Koolhoven is any sort of religious scholar despite his religious upbringing as his film features the same sort of one-dimensional critique of Christianity that one would expect from the average Hollywood Hebraic hack. Luckily, Koolhoven is not as arrogant as the average Tinseltown Christ-killer and his anti-Calvinist tendencies do not seem to be motivated by mere atavistic hatred or resentment like the average chosenite. Notably, underrated Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst did a much better job criticizing Christianity with his sardonic anti-Biblical epic *De mantel der Liefde* (1978) aka *The Mantle of Love*, but I digress. Personally, I think Koolhoven has repressed spiritual longings and *Brimstone* feels like a warped expression of that. Unfortunately, Koolhoven lacks the nuance of a fellow lapsed Calvinist like Paul Schrader, who at least lends a certain humanity to the Dutch-American religious community depicted in his rather visceral flick *Hardcore* (1979).

An undeniably ambitious and meticulously constructed 148-minute epic with a surprisingly provocative non-linear narrative that is divided into four Biblical chapters, *Brimstone* tells the somber yet sordid and sadomasochistic tale of a tongueless young mother named 'Liz' (Dakota Fanning in arguably the greatest and most mature role of her entire career) and why the mere voice of a false prophet Calvinist reverend (Guy Pearce) that randomly reappears in her completely consumes her soul with dread and disgust. Indeed, it is only long after he has committed a couple grisly killings and two of the four chapters of the film have passed that the viewer finally discovers the Reverend's true connection to Liz and why he is so ruthlessly and wickedly determined to abduct the heroine and make her pay for her supposed sins so that he can ostensibly redeem himself from his own pathetic purgatorial existence. At the beginning of the film when she is first introduced, Liz seems to be somewhat happy, albeit mute, as she works as a midwife with her little daughter Sam—a virtual 'mini-me' that practically worships her vocally-challenged mother in the sweetest sort of way—who she uses sign language with when communicating to women in labor. Although her 14-year-old stepson Matthew (Jack Hollington) somewhat resents her since she has replaced his own deceased mother, Liz has a loving, if not somewhat naive and somewhat weak, husband named Eli (William Houston). Despite her seemingly happy home life, Liz has a somewhat vague haunted expression, as if she is doing everything she can to hide the internal pain that plagues her soul. As the viewer learns as the film progresses, Liz is a survivor in

the truest sense, though, rather unfortunately, everyone she seems to love and care about is killed in quite horrendous ways by the all-jealous and all-vengeance Reverend. Surely accused yet completely undeserving of her seemingly perennially nightmarish plight, the heroine is indubitably a virtual symbolic punching bag in terms of the brutality and lack of fairness and justice in the world.

Unfortunately, Liz's life of relative normalcy almost immediately becomes a nefarious nightmare when the good Reverend unexpectedly arrives at her local church and begins his cryptically self-denigrating 'fire and brimstone' homiletics routine about the perils of false prophets. Indeed, literally the same day that the Reverend—a well groomed authoritarian type with a fairly large and intimidating scar on his face—shows up at church, a pregnant woman goes into labor inside of said church and Liz must make a horrific choice in regard to the pregnancy and ultimately takes upon herself to kill the baby by crushing its skull so that the mother does not die in childbirth. While Liz immediately accuses the Reverend of somehow orchestrating the tragedy, her husband Eli simply cannot believe that the (un)holy man has the assumedly supernatural means or harsh amorality to carry out such a depraved act. Not long after the tragic incident, the dead baby's heartbroken father, Nathan (Bill Tangradi), shows up late at night at the family's farm while drunk on whisky, sets a wagon on fire, and then begins shooting at Liz's house in a desperate attempt to kill her. Ultimately, the Reverend shows up and acts the part of a noble hero by coercing Nathan into going home. While Eli believes the Reverend is a hero, Liz certainly knows better. Against Liz's wishes, Eli invites the Reverend into his home to thank him while the heroine hides in another room with a petrified expression on her almost ghostly, porcelain-like face. When Eli temporarily leaves the room, the Reverend, who can sense the heroine's presence, reveals his true feelings for Liz by stating as she lurks behind a wall, "I know you're there, and I know you can hear me. You may have no tongue, but there is nothing wrong with your ears. Why do doubts rise in your heart? Why are you troubled? How do you sleep at night? How does it feel to be a murderess? Do you know why I am here? I'm here to punish you. Do you love this family? I've looked at your daughter. She's almost a young woman already." Needless to say, the Reverend's words positively petrify Liz, but it is not until much later in the film that the viewer comes to understand why the heroine is so abjectly afraid of the menacing man of god. On top of quite symbolically slaughtering the family's flock of sheep to such a savage degree that he rips an unborn lamb out of one of the beasts' wombs, the Reverend eventually disembowels Eli and then makes him suffer in hellish agony by wrapping his intestines around his neck like a noose. Before his son Matthew puts him out of his misery by blowing him away with a shotgun, Eli tells Liz to take the kids and flee to his father's home in the mountains. Of course, the Reverend follows, but the viewer has to watch two flashback chapters before the film picks up where it began in the first chapter.

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As the film progresses, the viewer eventually discovers that Liz is actually the extra estranged daughter of the Reverend and that she is living under a fake identity that she borrowed from a dead friend. In fact, Liz, whose real name is 'Joanna,' was so adamant about changing her identity and starting a completely new life for herself that she dared to personally cut out her own tongue so that she could assume the identity of her tongueless prostitute pal 'Elizabeth Brundy' (Carla Juri), who had her tongue dismembered by the girls' mutual ultra sleazy cowboy pimp Frank (Paul Anderson). Although born into a devout Calvinist family, Joanna aka 'Liz' eventually ran away from home and was forced into prostitution after a series of tragic and just downright disgusting and depraved events, including the violent suicide of her meek mother Anna (Carice van Houten), the coldblooded murder of her outlaw would-be-lover Samuel (Kit Harington), and incestuous rape at the hand of her own depraved daddy, among other things. Notably, all of these horrible things happened to Liz when she was practically still a little girl shortly after her period in a scenario that brings sick irony to the Reverend sermon, "The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate. And then the Lord God said to the woman: 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'" As if he could instinctively smell the scent of her first drop of menstrual blood, the Reverend became completely sexually enamored with Liz after she had her first period and soon came to the conclusion that he should marry and procreate with his daughter. Unfortunately for the Rev, Liz is a fighter that learned from the pathological passivity of her mother to never submit to the depraved desires of an overbearing brute. While the suicide of her mother gave the Reverend the perfect opportunity to make her his wife, Liz ultimately decided to runaway from home and take the risk of fending for herself in the quite dangerous and morally bankrupt realm of cowboy country, hence her first occupation as a prostitute. Spending her best teenage years as a pussy-peddler at a cathouse with the fitting name 'The Inferno,' Liz encounters some of the most unsavory, brutal, pervert, and just plain degenerate men in the Old West, but none of these foul fellows are quite as cruel as her own distinctly fucked up father. As someone that was deflowered by her own daddy, Liz is naturally able to tolerate a couple cruddy cowpokes creaming in her cunt. In fact, she is depicted as being quite bored by sex with johns.

Using the words of Paul the Apostle "If any man thinks that he is behaving himself unseemly toward his virgin daughter, if she pass the flower of her age, and if need so requires, let him do what he will; he is not sinning; let them marry" as a rather creepy and desperate yet nonetheless seemingly biblically sound ratio-

nalization, the Reverend intended to make his daughter Joanna/Liz as his wife, but he was only able to rape her once before she managed to get away and thus was never able to consummate the incestuous marriage. On top of raping her, the Reverend murdered Liz's first true love Samuel—a kindhearted convict and killer that she secretly hid in her family's barn for a number of days, if not weeks—after he dared to attempt to stop the (un)holy man from ritualistically raping his daughter on a church altar. Needless to say, becoming a prostitute was a small price for Liz to pay after being raped by her preposterously prideful progenitor. Of course, it was while Liz was working at 'The Inferno' whorehouse that her father was finally able to catch up with her after a number of years of looking for her in the hope of finally consummating their marriage. Needless to say, Liz was not exactly interested in becoming her father's lawful fucktoy. Indeed, instead of being defiled by her daddy a second time, Liz, who has turned into quite the bad bitch after a number of years of commercial sexual debasement, opts to slit his throat and set him on fire, hence her almost otherworldly dread and fear when he somehow returns many years later as depicted at the beginning of the film in an assumedly all-powerful undead form. On top of being a spiritually schizophrenic puritanical zombie of sorts, the Reverend is all the more murderous, displays a supernatural level of strength, and is seemingly immortal, or at least until he dares to fuck with Liz's tiny blonde daughter Sam. While the Rev manages to demonstrate he is a master sniper by shooting and killing Liz's stepson from a great distance in the middle of a blizzard, he is not exactly as efficient when it comes to dealing with his own severely emotionally damaged daughter.

Near the very end of the film, the Reverend poetically declares whilst in literal flames just before his daughter delivers what may or may not be a fatal blow via gunshot, "People think it's the flames that make hell unbearable. It's not. It's the absence of love." This quote and a couple other quotes from the film reveal that the Reverend is not simply a perniciously perverted monster, but a grotesquely tragic figure who, despite his many glaring flaws, is a hopeless romantic at heart who is forsaken with falling in love with his own teenage daughter. In fact, the film's portrayal of the Rev inspired film critic Glenn Kenny to reveal his lack of testicular fortitude and moan, "In any event, by the finale, it is entirely clear that the Reverend is the character with whom Koolhoven actually identifies. Gross. I wonder if President Trump can extend that travel ban to The Netherlands." Personally, I can only hope that Koolhoven most closely identifies with the Rev as it would be rather pathetic, impotent, and emasculating if he felt close to the heroine, but I sincerely doubt it as the character is far too contrived to be an expression of the auteur's somewhat dubious soul. Indeed, while Liz unquestionably takes up most of the screen time, the Reverend is ultimately the most nuanced and unforgettable character in the entire film, as a ludicrously lovelorn figure comparable to Vincent Price's eponymous character in Robert Fuest's *The*

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Abominable Dr. Phibes (1971), albeit way more fucked up. While Koolhoven has stated in various interviews that he wanted to do something new with the western genre by depicting the supposed inordinate misery that women suffered in the American West in comparison to their male counterparts, I somehow doubt that he, like many so many other male feminists, really gives a serious shit about female suffering, especially since certain scenes in *Brimstone* border on torture porn and they oftentimes have a fetishistic S&M/BDSM quality that would certainly get some women wet and some men hard, but I digress. Naturally, it is only fitting that the heroine of Koolhoven's film is an (ex)prostitute because, as Georges Bataille once wrote, "With prostitution, the prostitute was dedicated to a life of transgression. The sacred or forbidden aspect of sexual activity remained apparent in her, for her whole life was dedicated to violating the taboo." Somewhat ironically, the prostitute is a revered figure in classic westerns as indicated by the timeless whore-with-a-heart-of-gold archetype, so it is somewhat curious that Koolhoven would portray pussy-peddlers as a much loathed figures that are frequently mutilated and hanged by overly eager bloodthirsty hicks. In Koolhoven's mind, women only become prostitutes as a result of some form of male abuse, as if women completely lack agency. Of course, it is no coincidence that *Brimstone*—a film that prides itself on breaking taboos—was directed by a lapsed Calvinist, as it is symbolic of the very real spiritual degeneracy of the Netherlands as a whole and how the nation went from Puritanism to legal pot and prostitution virtually over night, just as the equally degenerate Germans went from attempting to ridding themselves of racial aliens during the Third Reich to attempting to commit virtual collective suicide via low birth rates and mass immigration. Indeed, for or better or worse, there is no question that the film was directed by a spiritually sick man with a busted moral compass and no amount of insincere feminist posturing is going to change that. Undoubtedly, it might be better to describe *Brimstone* as the 'first anti-Calvinist western' instead of the 'first Dutch western,' as the film is first and foremost as rather resentful work of contra Calvinism that just features too many cowboys to feel even remotely Dutch.

Somewhat unfortunately, in his rather revealing interview with creativescreenwriting.com, Koolhoven expressed a special affinity for proudly pozzed pop filmmaker Quentin Tarantino and his intricately cuckolded negrophile anti-westerns, or as the Dutch auteur himself explained, "DJANGO UNCHAINED looks at that period through different eyes, showing the black experience, and my movie looks at the era through female eyes. They're both movies that look at history in a different way. It's not something that I really thought about as I was writing BRIMSTONE, but at some point I realized that even though I made a movie that is completely different from DJANGO UNCHAINED, I think they are in some ways spiritually connected." Of course, in a certain sense, Koolhoven is right as his film, not unlike Tarantino's celluloid cow turd, is a product of

its particular pathetic zeitgeist and thus an unwittingly damning expression of the spiritual degeneracy, gross emasculation, moral retardation, and senseless nihilism of the contemporary Dutch male. Undoubtedly, it is the ultimate disgrace to the genre that a perverted part-injun podophile and proud ethno-masochist like Tarantino would direct a Western—a style created by proud white Americans that reflects, quite literally, true and virtuous white supremacy of the classic nation-building sort—as he personally lacks any of the qualities of the traditional western hero, hence his nasty knack for nappy-headed degeneration and groveling feet fetishism. Naturally, as the bastard broad of a sexually promiscuous single mother that would expose her son to various black boyfriends during a time when only the most irredeemable white trash proles engaged in such dysgenic behavior, Tarantino would grow up to be the virtual spiritual nemesis of western genre maestro John Ford. While *Django Unchained* (2012)—a film that is a grotesque insult to the classic Sergio Corbucci spaghetti western *Django* (1966) that it borrows its name from—is indubitably vapidly buffoonish neo-blaxploitation porn for anti-white bloodsucking negroes and racially schizophrenic white liberals and wiggers—Tarantino would completely outdo himself in terms of self-flagellating faggotry with his follow-up ‘neo-western’ *The Hateful Eight* (2015), which is notable for featuring loudmouth alpha-spade Samuel L. Jackson forcing a Confederate soldier to suck his STD-ridden prick just before killing him in a scenario that can only be described as negro power style sod sadism. Undoubtedly, for reviewers to complain about the supposed ‘twisted brutality’ of *Brimstone* yet not so much as make a peep about the truly otherworldly masochistic cuckolded fantasies featured in celebrated shabbos goy Tarantino’s melanin-marinated westerns just goes to show the sort of collective moral insanity and racial retardation that plagues the conspicuously kosher mainstream. Additionally, while Koolhoven’s flick might have been directed by a degenerate man that clearly has hang-ups in regard to both his own gender and ancestral faith, the film never succumbs to the cartoonish gynocentrism of Tarantino’s two volume foot fetish fantasy *Kill Bill* (2003). Indeed, Koolhoven’s film might feature various examples of female strength that border on the patently absurd, it also features a lot of female weakness and concludes on a bittersweet note that reminds that viewer that, quite unlike the Hebrew-helmed *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), even female heroines are not invincible and that this planet has always been and will always be a man’s world.

Although Koolhoven clearly intended to direct his own equivalent to Erich von Stroheim’s *Greed* (1924) in terms of sheer cinematic grandeur and misanthropic magnitude, *Brimstone* is ultimately a flawed cinematic curiosity that is, in my humble opinion, slightly inferior to the director’s rather ambitious early feature *AmnesiA*. In terms of epic flawed westerns directed by assumed megalomaniacs that people either seem to love or love to hate, the film certainly deserves to be compared to Michael Cimino’s *Heaven’s Gate* (1980). Don’t get me wrong,

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I think the film is considerably overlooked in the United States where it barely played in theaters and received scathing reviews from a number of mainstream film critics, but it might be a little bit of puffery to compare it to a genuine masterpiece like Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955), even if it shares superficial similarities, as it is simply not a film of the same artistic caliber. Indeed, aside from being somewhat flawed in the narrative sense and featuring rather awkward dialogue and delivery of lines (it should be noted that Koolhoven, who speaks fairly good English, originally wrote the script in Dutch and then later had it translated into English), the film suffers the virtually artistically fatal flaw of lame leftist virtue signaling, namely of the innately inane quasi-feminist sort. As an anti-Marxist Pasolini fan, I can certainly overlook the politics of a flick if it is artistically genuine, but the anti-Christian and feminist posturing of *Brimstone* just does not feel completely authentic, as if the director included such repugnant elements in the hope of receiving praise from the right film critics. While a totally preposterous piece of prosaic pussy juice, Kelly Reichardt's *Meek's Cutoff* (2010), quite unlike Koolhoven's film, at least has a certain undeniable authenticity about it as far as feminists westerns are concerned. Not unlike Tarantino, albeit to a less critical degree, Koolhoven seems to be a moral savage that has drunk the cultural Marxist Kool-Aid and feels it necessary to emasculate himself in a less than sincere fashion by creating a world where all powerful men are evil and virtually all women of victims of said men, as if the West was not won mostly via the blood, sweat, and tears of courageous men that were quite literally willing to risk their lives to make a better life for their wives and children. Naturally, it is a sad irony that is a seemingly spiritually castrated man would tackle a genre that is notorious for being fueled by pure and unadulterated testosterone, but then again *Brimstone* still has its odd virtues and can certainly be celebrated for, if nothing else, its decidedly darkly romantic tone. In a sense, the film is an artistic tragedy of sorts as it is so close to being a great film, thus making its flaws all the more unbearable to accept. In terms of its anti-Calvinist angle and somewhat frivolous and phony feminist subtext, *Brimstone* can certainly be compared to Robert Eggers' somewhat more immaculate horror flick *The Witch* (2015). Unfortunately, both films were clearly created by spiritually castrated 'nu-males' that somehow see it as a necessity to use their genre films as a means to criticize the patriarchy while depicting teenage girls as the most enlightened of beings. Personally, I just think these beta boys worship the nice and fresh cunts of hot teenage girls. Either way, nothing screams beta-male more than directing a film where strong and masculine males are depicted in an excessively negative light, as only a resentful wuss would be compelled to do such a thing.

Although Irish poet William Butler Yeats once insightfully wrote, "Sex and death are the only things that can interest a serious mind," one has to wonder if death is more arousing to Koolhoven than sex as *Brimstone* is indubitably at

its most erotically-charged during its death and torture scenes. Indeed, whether it be a man being strangled by his own intestines or some sadistic hick almost choking to death a whore during a session of capitalist coitus, the film takes both a fetishistic and ritualistic approach to death while at the same time portraying sex oftentimes in an oftentimes grotesque and uniquely unpleasant fashion, thus revealing the director's somewhat warped latent Calvinist tendencies. In short, as *Brimstone* and some of his other films demonstrate, Koolhoven seems to be compelled by a 'Todestrieb,' as if his films are the visceral expression of atavistic impulses associated with being descended from a long line of anti-sex Calvinists. In that sense, Koolhoven's film can certainly be compared to Dutch auteur Jos Stelling's excellent directorial debut *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (1974) *Mariken from Nieumeghen*. Undoubtedly, the following words from Nietzschean anarchist Georges Bataille seem to offer some insight into the overly sensual murders of Koolhoven's film, "Erotic activity, by dissolving the separate beings that participate in it, reveals their fundamental continuity, like the waves of a stormy sea. In sacrifice, the victim is divested not only of clothes but of life (or is destroyed in some way if it is an inanimate object). The victim dies and the spectators share in what his death reveals. This is what religious historians call the element of sacredness. This sacredness is the revelation of continuity through the death of a discontinuous being to those who watch it as a solemn rite. A violent death disrupts the creature's discontinuity; what remains, what the tense onlookers experience in the succeeding silence, is the continuity of all existence with which the victim is now one. Only a spectacular killing, carried out as the solemn and collective nature of religion dictates, has the power to reveal what normally escapes notice [...] Everything leads us to the conclusion that in essence the sacramental quality of primitive sacrifices is analogous to the comparable element in contemporary religions." Although just speculation, I have a feeling that the rather visceral and sacrifice-like murders depicted in the film are a degenerate subconscious attempt by Koolhoven—an atheist that had a religious upbringing—to express certain latent spiritual tendencies. Needless to say, Koolhoven would probably benefit from readopting his Calvinist faith and laying off too much exploitation trash lest he devolve into a spiritually deformed creature that is as hopelessly morally and aesthetically bankrupt as Tarantino.

While *Brimstone* would have the viewer believe that the Old West was a virtual hell-on-earth for all women, the fact remains that, even during that time, Western women were the freest and most privileged women in the entire world. Indeed, it is no coincidence that a long dead kraut fart like Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) would complain of "...our old French notions of gallantry and our preposterous system of reverence – that highest product of Teutonic-Christian stupidity." After all, only the metaphysical affliction of feminism and its related comorbid spiritual diseases could inspire the esoteric white knighting depicted *Brimstone*. In fact, the thing I found most disturbing about the film is that it

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was produced by a male mind, even if it is not all that strange for a male mind to create scenarios where a very young and nubile dame like Dakota Fanning is forced into sexually compromising positions (though she is never actually depicted nude). As far as westerns are concerned, Hollywood golden age maverick John Ford would have probably deeply loathed the film, or so one would assume from his less than pretentious remark, "I like, as a director and a spectator, simple, direct, frank films. Nothing disgusts me more than snobbism, mannerism, technical gratuity... and, most of all, intellectualism." Speaking of Ford, he practically perfectly described the Reverend's curse and a central theme of the film when he once stated, "Love is the tyrant of the heart; it darkens reason, confounds discretion; deaf to Counsel it runs a headlong course to desperate madness." Plagued by perennial aimless peregrinations in a metaphysical purgatory of the heart, the Reverend is nothing if not the most hopeless of hopeless romantics and a character that reveals that auteur Koolhoven is a passionate man that makes passionate films, even when they are tragically tainted with lame leftist posturing. Despite its flaws, *Brimstone* is indubitably unforgettable and a cinematic work that merits subsequent viewing. Undoubtedly, were Koolhoven to be 'red-pilled' and receive so much needed lessons from the writings of Nietzsche, Spengler, Evola, and Weininger, he could probably become a great auteur, but for known he seems to be plagued by tactical nihilist tendencies that compel him to subvert primordial archetypes, hence his weakness as an artist. After all, there seems to be an innately repellent quality in the artistic creations of someone that seems to be ashamed of their own genitals, just as there is something quite loathsome about someone that goes to great pains to besmirch and defile their own ancestral faith and culture. If one learns anything by watching *Brimstone*, it is that Koolhoven seems petrified by the concept of the Old West and he, quite unlike so many generations of American males, really does not have an innate understanding of the romantic quality of being a cowboy and gunning down redskins.

-Ty E

THE PLAGUE DOGS

Martin Rosen (1982) From since i remember, films directed towards children with animals, namely canines, have been produced with various family film production companies. Homeward Bound, Oliver & Company, and Old Yeller are the likelier ones to remember. It's a shame this film has been unknown for so long. This film deserves the term "classic" just as much as the less-worthy films did. See also "Watership Down" The plot features 2 dogs who are differing in size greatly being captive in a laboratory designed for cruel animal experiments. This one is likely to anger PETA officials everywhere. They escape one night after the local idiot guard leaves the latch unlocked. These dogs who have been tortured in the most horrific ways including a brain surgery and endurance testing. After their impromptu escape through the tense-as-hell incinerator, they roam the country side trying to adapt to this cruel world that has denied them the right to live properly. They kill a sheep in an embarrassing spectacle that proves these two dogs need each other. Being as one is small and the other is of a decent size, they play almost a "See No Evil, Hear No Evil; Richard Pryor" sort of relationship. They eventually wind up in huge trouble from the local enforcement for the deaths. Meanwhile, the lab denies all claims of dogs escaping but shit hits the fan when rumors spread that they are infected with the bubonic plague. Not only is this the ultimate anti-children family film ever made, it is also increasingly violent. Gored sheep and dead, rotting things are drawn in a glorious manner. I can imagine this to be traumatizing on little Johnny or Susie. Not recommended for kids. While these things could drive you away from watching this, you must know how much of an impact this film has. This is the Requiem For A Dream of animated films. The content in this animated classic belongs with Heavy Metal for straying away from the thought to be course of the genre. Greatest animated film ever? It is up in the top list. Watch this then go play fetch with your dog, attempting to isolate the horrible feelings you have.

-Maq

THE BIG SHAVE
THE BIG SHAVE

Martin Scorsese (1967)

This short opens with a golden Saxophone score, triumphing as it outlines the pristine porcelain bathroom. Everything is normal in this American home. The knobs are clean and the faucet is leaking. An American man walks up and begins to shave. This seemingly normal exercise of masculinity is interrupted as soon as he doesn't stop. Scorsese asks for six minutes of your time, and in doing so, he cuts a swath of ideas you may have housed in your head towards any sort of political affairs. In a scene that should have inspired Cutting Moments or Cabin Fever, he begins to peel his own skin off. The charming melodic oldie's makes this short visually horrifying and even more so, this beautiful American sink is stained with the blood of it's own forefathers. This all being said as this short was a Vietnam piece. Symbolism in hand, Scorsese maintains the same nihilistic atmosphere as trademarked in all of his films. Long after Bunny Berigan's "I Can't Get Started" is done, the blood doesn't cease dripping. The suggested political involvement is made noticeable from it's previous name "Viet '67" The Big Shave is a metaphorical massacre; a gut punch in most student films. Scorsese had talents at a young age and proved his worth. This generation just houses cheap rockers making shitty no-budget zombie films.

-mAQ

WHO'S THAT KNOCKING AT MY DOOR

Martin Scorsese (1967)

With the unexpected huge commercial success and critical prestige of counterculture flicks like *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) directed by Arthur Penn and *Easy Rider* (1969) directed by Dennis Hopper, a fairly unexpected artistic renaissance began in Tinseltown that would eventually be dubbed 'New Hollywood' (aka 'American New Wave') where the 'auteur' (as opposed to the producer or studio head) was respected and given real artistic freedom for the first time in mainstream American cinema history. Indeed, even George Lucas—a man that has probably done more than anyone else to retard and infantilize cinema—originally stylized himself as an experimental auteur and celluloid poet who was proudly influenced by American avant-garde filmmakers like Jordan Belson, Stan Brakhage and Bruce Conner as well as European arthouse filmmakers like Federico Fellini and Jean-Luc Godard, which is evident in his early and rarely-seen 'pure cinema' shorts like *Look at Life* (1965), *Herbie* (1966), *1:42.08* (1966), *The Emperor* (1967), and *Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town* (1967). Of course, not unlike many filmmakers of his generation, Lucas decided to give up on any artistic pretenses that he previously had after the abject critical and commercial of his debut feature *THX 1138* (1971). Additionally, while he originally intended to establish himself as a highly personal auteur, Francis Ford Coppola ironically became famous after directing *The Godfather* (1972), which is a film that he initially refused to direct and would ultimately prove to be a mixed blessing for the filmmaker, who never actually became the great European style 'artiste' he dreamed of being (notably, when Coppola was at the height of his megalomania while working on post-production for *Apocalypse Now* (1979), he temporarily decided he wanted to be a sort of American Syberberg and declared that he planned to direct a ten-hour 3-D adaptation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's third novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809) aka *Elective Affinities*). Whereas some of the filmmakers of New Hollywood never had any sort of success like Henry Jaglom and others simply burned out after a series of cataclysmic commercial failures like Peter Bogdanovich and William Friedkin, a handful of filmmakers actually managed to survive, especially Martin Scorsese, though his perseverance ultimately came at the decided detriment of his art. While Scorsese's most recent feature *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) makes him seem like not much more than a sort of morally bankrupt celluloid DJ who simply constructs degenerate pseudo-Dionysian montages to go along with terribly played-out pop songs that have been featured in dozens (if not hundreds) of other films, there was actually a time when he hoped to be an American equivalent to Roberto Rossellini (after all, it is no coincidence that he married the maestro's daughter Isabella Rossellini).

Undoubtedly, out of all of his films, Scorsese's somewhat forgotten debut

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feature *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967) is unequivocally the much beloved filmmaker's most innately personal, experimental, and artsy fartsy work to date, even if it is a sort of warm-up for his somewhat superior work *Mean Streets* (1973). In fact, when proto-indie auteur John Cassavetes, who later became a sort of mentor and father figure to Scorsese, saw the film, he was so impressed that he stated, "This movie is as good as *CITIZEN KANE*. No, it's better than *CITIZEN KANE*, it's got more heart." Additionally, Roger Ebert was so deeply affected upon seeing the film at the 1967 Chicago International Film Festival that he penned a rave review where he stated that it was, "a work that is absolutely genuine, artistically satisfying and technically comparable to the best films being made anywhere. I have no reservations in describing it as a great moment in American movies." Originally intended as Scorsese's graduate film at NYU (in fact, the director's Armenian-American professor Haig Manoogian co-produced it) and the second part of a projected trilogy about growing up in Little Italy (the third part, which was originally titled *Season of the Witch*, would later evolve into *Mean Streets*), *Who's That Knocking at My Door* had various names and lengths before becoming the film it is today, including a 65-minute cut entitled *Bring on the Dancing Girls*, which was poorly received on its debut. Ultimately, Scorsese managed to save the film by adding a romantic subplot featuring Zina Bethune, as well as an erotic dream-sequence that was shot in Amsterdam (Scorsese would also contribute dialogue to Wim Verstappen's script for Surinamese-Dutch-Jewish filmmaker Pim de la Parra's Dutch-German pseudo-Hitchcockian homage to Republic Pictures, *Obsessions* (1969) aka *Bezeten, Het Gat in de Muur* aka *Besessen - Das Loch in der Wand*). Somewhat ironically, Scorsese only shot the amorous dream-sequence because sexploitation producer Joseph Brenner offered to buy and distribute *Who's That Knocking at My Door* if he added the smutty scene, which ultimately proved to be one of the most artful and memorable aspects of the entire film.

Proudly described by Scorsese himself in *Scorsese on Scorsese* (2003) as, "...the first film to show what Italian-Americans really were like and that was what was good about it," *Who's That Knocking at My Door* might be best described as the filmmaker's cruder and all the grittier equivalent to Federico Fellini's *I Vitelloni* (1953) as a film that features a fairly sentimental yet less than flattering depiction of a group of young urban guidos from Little Italy that seem to live in a state of perpetual childhood and have yet to start families or serious careers. Indeed, comparing both films, one might assume that the Italians of the mother country are doing slightly better than their somewhat deracinated American counterparts, but I digress. A somewhat dated work in our peak degenerate Jersey Shore age in the sense that the young wops depicted in the film are so still cuckolded enough by Catholicism that they are actually afraid to have sex before marriage, Scorsese's film truly feels like an important historical artifact nowadays as it depicts a forgotten bygone era before every young NYC goom-

bah was a pill-popping aspiring rapper. The somewhat somber, bittersweet, and pathetic yet strangely heartfelt tale of a truly ignorant and proudly boorish unemployed young Sicilian-American who falls for a nameless college-educated blonde WASP of the considerably more cultivated sort and must inevitably confront the fact that Catholicism has turned him into a sort of sexual and social autistic of sorts upon losing his Aryan lady love after he treats her like a piece of despoiled trash when she puts her heart on the line and confesses to him that she was once raped, *Who's That Knocking at My Door* ultimately tells a simple story in a raw and energetic yet elegant fashion that would later come to epitomize the director's greatest works.

To give the film a sort of true Little Italy vibe that highlights the sort of tradition oriented closed community that the protagonist and his comrades come from, *Who's That Knocking at My Door* begins with a sentimental quasi-neorealist scene featuring a fat grey-haired guido grandmother making and baking a Stromboli (or possibly a calzone) and then serving it to her five grandchildren, with one of the children assumedly being the male lead. After this fairly wholesome scene and a brief title sequence, Scorsese abruptly slaps the viewer across the face with a violent fight scene where two rival guido gangs beat the shit out of each other with clubs for seemingly no reason like brain-dead barbarians who need a therapeutic outlet for their instinctual desire to rape and pillage. hilariously, a guido sporting a white headband kisses a large crucifix he is wearing around his neck before the fight, only to get his ass immediately beat with a club to the face, thus revealing that Jesus does not answer everyone's prayers. Luckily for protagonist J.R. (Harvey Keitel), his little gang wins the brawl and he celebrates by playfully hitting his best friend Joey (Lennard Kuras), who is a somewhat annoying little twat that incessantly talks out of his ass but is clearly the more domineering of the two in the friendship. Indeed, as demonstrated by the fact that he smacks that shit of his philistine friend Sally Gaga (Michael Scala)—a fellow that is so hopelessly sleazy that he steals \$40.00 out of his girlfriend's purse while making out with her—after catching him gambling at their local bar with cash that he stole from him, Joey is the dictator of the group, at least in his own mind. A somewhat more stoic fellow, J.R. seems to ignore a lot of Joey's moronic behavior because he seems completely oblivious to how stupid and crude his friend is acting. While the guys like playing practical jokes on one another like aiming loaded weapons at each other while drunk, there is not much pointless drama that goes on in the group aside from a scene where Joey temporarily throws J.R. out of his car after the get in a pointless argument. Of course, J.R.'s animosity towards Joey was largely inspired by an outside source. Indeed, virtually all of the drama depicted in *Who's That Knocking at My Door* takes place in the film's somewhat crudely constructed romantic subplot, which depicts the absurdity that ensues when a terribly naïve and seemingly virginal Catholic momma's boy from a closed community begins a somewhat unlikely

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hot and heavy romance with an Anglo-Saxon beauty of the fairly cultivated and literate sort.

While waiting at a ferry station and looking all moody and broody, gentleman J.R. becomes absolutely enamored with the fact that a publicity shot of John Wayne from John Ford's classic Western *The Searchers* (1956) is featured in a French magazine that a young blonde 'Girl' (Zina Bethune) that is sitting beside him is reading. Since J.R. keeps looking at her magazine in a somewhat obnoxious fashion, the Girl decides to break the tension and asks him if he wants to look at it, but he says no and then awkwardly remarks, "Yeah, but that isn't an American magazine. . .and it just seemed funny to me. You know what I mean?" Of course, the Girl, who seems like the sort of upper-class gal that would have attended some fancy prep school, has no clue what J.R. means, but she seems somewhat entranced by the shy young Sicilian and his strange ways, as if he is a potential forbidden pleasure for her. From there, J.R. goes on a pointless spiel about how great *The Searchers* is and when the Girl remarks, "Well, I'm not used to admitting I like Westerns," he replies in a playful pseudo-offended manner, "Oh, yeah, Why not, huh? Everybody should like Westerns. Solve everybody's problems if they liked Westerns." At this point, the Girl laughs in a flirtatious fashion and remarks, "Okay, I like Westerns!," thus demonstrating that she is interested enough in J.R. to listen to and agree with his truly childish discussions about Westerns. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to the Girl, J.R. is so badly brainwashed by his spiritually castrating Catholic upbringing that he will not share carnal knowledge with her, let alone be able to handle the fact that she was once violently raped. Indeed, in J.R.'s eyes, it does not matter if a girl was physically forced to have sex by a violent rapist, as she has already been fucked and thus is not respectable marriage material.

As J.R. explains to the Girl after a screening of Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo* (1959) regarding the difference between 'girls' and 'broad,' "You know what a – a broad isn't exactly a virgin, you know what I mean? You play around with them, you don't... You don't marry a broad." Indeed, according to J.R., Angie Dickinson's character in *Rio Bravo* is a 'broad,' as she is as loose as a goose and thus too irrevocably despoiled to be any self-respecting man's spouse. Of course, the Girl seems somewhat offended by what J.R. says and she even asks him if he is serious, but she, like many young women that are just starting a new relationship with a man that they are infatuated with, attempts to shrug it off just like she shrugs off most of the moronic things he says. Needless to say, when the Girl reveals to him her big secret about being traumatically sexually ravaged, J.R. will also begin thinking of her as a 'broad,' even if he does not want to, as it is an impulsive reaction to his strict religious upbringing. When the two make-out with one another and things get a little bit too heated, J.R. practically acts like a petrified middle schoolboy and stops before either of them even has the chance to take their shirt off. Additionally, J.R. acts exceedingly

anally retentive about his mother's Catholic religious decorations. Indeed, when the Girl admires a statue of the Mother Mary while they are kissing, J.R. freaks out and yells, "Don't touch it. Anything happens to that, my mother will pass out." Of course, J.R.'s remark reveals that he has serious Oedipal issues and that probably no woman could ever live up to his mother, especially not some blonde Protestant chick who does not know how to cook decent pasta. When J.R. abruptly aborts one of their make-out sessions while the two are on the verge of engaging in steamy session of the four-legged frolic, he tries in vain to articulate to the Girl why he will not go all the way and fuck her like a man and while stumbling on his words he less than eloquently states, "Listen, I . . . I love you. I love you, but [...] Well, now I feel...I feel silly saying this. What I mean is...If you love me, you'll understand what I mean. Just not now." While the Girl caters to J.R. glaring sensitives, she cannot seem to figure out what is wrong with him, especially since he has a sort of pseudo-stoic tough guy attitude where he attempts to hide and ignore any of vulnerabilities. Naturally, when the Girl reveals her big secret, J.R. has more than a little bit of trouble masking his irrational rage.

While his fairly mundane aborted make-out sessions with the Girl make him seem like an evasive eunuch who is trying to hide the fact that his cock does not work, J.R.'s personal dreams reveal that his true sexual instincts are much more primal and fetishistic. Indeed, in an extended erotic dream-sequence juxtaposed with the classic psychedelic rock song "The End" by The Doors, J.R. finds himself naked and tied to a bed in an ethereal S&M scene where it is quite obvious that actor Harvey Keitel has aged somewhat since the other parts of the film were shot. During these scenes, J.R. encounters no less than three different prostitutes with varying tit sizes, with one of them fittingly being portrayed by stunning frog beauty Anne Collette, who is probably best known for starring in Godard's pre-Breathless shorts *Charlotte et Véronique, ou Tous les garçons s'appellent Patrick* (1959) aka *All the Boys Are Called Patrick* and *Charlotte et son Jules* (1960) aka *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend*. Rather revealingly, during the dream-sequence, the viewer is exposed to Jim Morrison's overtly Oedipal spoken word lyrics, "The killer awoke before dawn...He put his boots on...He took a face from the ancient gallery...And he walked on down the hall...He went to the room where his sister lived...And then he paid a visit to his brother...And then he walked on down the hall...And he came to a door...And he looked inside...'Father'...'Yes, son?'...'I want to kill you'...'Mother I want to...'," thus underscoring J.R.'s pathological obsession with both his mother and Jesus' mommy. Undoubtedly, it becomes apparent to the viewer while watching this debauched yet surprisingly aesthetically delicious dream-sequence that the protagonist is a masochist of sorts who, despite his worship of macho Western figures like John Wayne, gets off to being in a submissive position with women. In that sense, it is no surprise that his relationship with the Girl fails because she is far too passive

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and restrained to make an adequate lover for the protagonist. Indeed, what J.R. seems to need is the stereotypical incessant nagging guidette with jet-black hair who beats him over head with a broom if he gets too out of line.

If any segment of the film truly reveals how sheltered J.R. and his friends are from the world as a whole as individuals that live in a closed urban community, it is when they take a road trip to the rural area of Copake, New York and find themselves totally out of their element, especially Joey, who bitches the entire time like a prissy preteen with PMS. While Hollywood tells us that it is small town rural folk and rednecks who are close-minded bigots that hate anyone that is not like them, in Scorsese's film it is the NYC wops that do all the shit-talking, as they see the rural WASPs as dumb hicks, even though they somewhat resemble the sort of cowboys in John Ford flicks that the protagonist and his friends admire. Of course, to J.R. and his pals' credit, the Copake locals are fairly petty, with a couple of them getting in a petty drunken argument about the pronunciation of the town's name, stating it's "Not Copake, but Copiague" (as someone that grew up in a rural area, I can attest that it is not uncommon for small town yokels to get offended if outsiders do not pronounce the name of their town in the same idiosyncratic fashion). After hanging out at the bar, the boys climb up a small mountain, though Joey complains the entire way and almost gives up as he seems afraid of treading through leaves and sticks, as if it is too much of a culture shock for him to walk on anything aside from flat NYC asphalt. When they finally reach the top of the mountain, J.R. admires the scenic view while Joey bitches to himself, "Three, four hours I spend climbing a mountain. For what? To come up here. So, what's up here? Big deal. I don't understand."

While J.R. and the Girl seem genuinely in love with one another in a sort of hopelessly infatuated naive high school kid sort of way, the protagonist cannot help berate his girlfriend for the most petty of reasons to the point where he acts like she is a retarded child, even though she is clearly much smarter and more articulate than he is. Indeed, when the Girl attempts to be kind and thoughtful by lighting a candle and putting it on his kitchen table, J.R. immediately complains that she is not supposed to put a "holy candle" on a kitchen table. After the holy candle incident, the Girl drops a bomb on J.R. by stating, "I have to tell you something [...] I love you, and I do want it to last" and then reveals a traumatic life-changing incident from a couple years ago when she was driven to a quiet country road during night by a seemingly nice male suitor and violently raped when she refused to put out. While the Girl merely wants J.R.'s sympathy and acceptance and confesses in a somewhat embarrassed fashion, "I felt dirty. I felt I wasn't as good as anyone else. I felt ashamed. I couldn't even talk. I didn't talk. I love you. And I don't wanna lose you. With you it'll be the first time," the protagonist is only angered and more or less blames her for what happened, stating to her in a somewhat hostile fashion, "How could I believe you? Well, how could I believe you? How can I believe that story? It just doesn't make any

sense.” In fact, at one point, J.R. yells at the girl “Look at me” and then interrogates her in an invasive fashion by stating, “you go out with a guy and don’t even know what he’s like? You let him take you out on some goddamn road and you don’t mind it. It just... It doesn’t... It just doesn’t seem real, does it? It just doesn’t make any sense.” Naturally quite upset that her lover would dare to question the authenticity of what is probably the most traumatic experience of her entire life, the Girl eventually cries “It’s true!” and then storms out of J.R.’s apartment after he continues to hostilely question her.

After spending a night getting drunk with friends and savagely teasing two fairly unintelligent Jewesses that Sally Gaga brings by (among other things, the boys scare the Hebrewesses by putting fish in their drinks), J.R. still cannot get over his bitter last meeting with the Girl and thus decides to pay her an unexpected early morning visit at her apartment. Like the almost completely unconsciously self-absorbed man-child that he is, J.R. obnoxiously bangs on the Girl’s front-door for an extended period of time until she eventually responds and when she asks “Who is it?,” he hilariously replies like a dump wop “It’s me” instead of saying his name, hence the title of the film (which is also a reference to the song “Who’s That Knocking?” by the Genies, which is played near the end of the flick). Despite J.R.’s rather rude early morning knocking, the Girl is quite thrilled to see him. While J.R. has come to apologize to the Girl for how harshly he treated her after she revealed to him her rape story, it is ultimately not an apology that any self-respecting person would accept. Indeed, after making a generic general apology while the two are making out, J.R. states to the girl “I understand now, and I forgive you,” as if it is her fault that she got raped. At this point, the Girl gets noticeably annoyed and asks, “Forgive me?,” to which unwitting moron J.R. replies, “Yes. I forgive you, and I’m gonna marry you anyway,” as if he is a particularly prized piece of man meat that is doing her a big favor. When the Girl asks if her rape story bothers him, J.R. replies in a somewhat angry fashion, “Well, yeah, it bothers me, damn it. But I love you, and I’ll marry you anyway,” so she responds, “No, I can’t. I mean, I won’t marry you on that basis.” Of course, J.R. is so hopelessly deluded by his Catholic upbringing that he actually believes he is doing the Girl a favor by offering to marry her even though she is ostensibly damaged goods. While the only the the Girl wants from him is his sympathy, J.R. just cannot seem to figure this out. Totally incapable of wrapping his head around the fact that someone as supposedly despoiled and unholy as the Girl would refuse to marry him, J.R. goes berserk and proceeds to make all sorts of absurd accusations, stating to her while she is clearly upset and turned in the opposite direction, “Who do you think you are, the Virgin Mary or something? Leading me on like that, letting me in here this hour of the morning. Leading me on like that, letting me in here this hour of the morning. Come off it, will you? What kind of broad does that make you? And tell me something else. Who else is gonna marry you? Tell me that, you

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whore. Because that's what you are, if you don't know it by now, you whore." While J.R. eventually becomes aware of how harsh and irrational he is acting and apologizes, the damage has already been done and the naturally Girl asks him to leave.

After J.R.'s failed final meeting with the Girl, the film segues into an unforgettable montage that features the protagonist walking into a Catholic confessional booth intercut with shots of the Girl's rape, statues of Christ on the cross and the Virgin Mary, and excerpts from the amorous dream-sequence in an intricately edited segment that pretty much sum up most of the central themes of the film. At one point in the montage, J.R. sensually kisses a crucifix in what is a somewhat unsettling shot that really highlights how Catholicism has warped the character's sexuality. Undoubtedly, the eloquently shots of the Catholic Church and iconography recall the films of Spanish documentary auteur José Val del Omar, especially his trilogy *Tríptico Elemental de España* (1953-1960) aka *Elementary Tryptich of Spain*. Notably, the very final shot of the film is a night scene where J.R. states to his best bud Joey, "OK, I'll talk to you tomorrow" and then the two head their separate ways to go home to sleep in preparation another mundane day of stupid nothingness upon stupid nothingness, thereupon underscoring the sterility and stagnation of their decidedly dead-end lives as uneducated and unemployed young goombah bums that have no chance of making it in the real world. Certainly, had Scorsese not become a filmmaker, there is probably a good chance that he would have turned out a lot like J.R. and his friends.

While *Who's That Knocking at My Door* was obviously influenced by a number of European arthouse filmmakers that were popular at the time it was made like Ingmar Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard, and Pier Paolo Pasolini, its imperative American influences cannot be ignored. Indeed, aside from Scorsese's acknowledged influence from Kenneth Anger (who influenced his now signature use of pop music) and John Cassavetes (who arguably had a greater influence on him than any other filmmaker, at least during his early pre-fame years), the film seems to have been influenced by somewhat more obscure avant-gardists like John E. Schmitz and Gregory J. Markopoulos, especially in regard to the auteurs' somewhat ritualistic and even metaphysical approach to repressed sexuality. Schmitz, who was a buddy of Anger, is probably best known for his phantasmagoric black-and-white short *The Voices* (1953), which, not unlike *Who's That Knocking at My Door*, is almost homoerotic in its depiction of a rather repressed and frustrated young man that is both literally and figuratively haunted by chicks and crucifixes, among other things. In its depiction of an 'ethnic' momma's boy whose sexuality almost seems completely cursed by his mother's influence, as well as heavy use of fragmented editing, Scorsese's debut feature has much in common with Markopoulos' films, especially works like *Christmas U.S.A.* (1949) and *Twice a Man* (1964). Of course, despite his cultivated cinematic influences, it

is even apparent in his first feature that Scorsese still wants to entertain the sort of crude crouch-grabbing lumpenproles that he grew up with, hence why the film opens up with a nice and trashy brawl. Indeed, as Scorsese once said in the book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998) by Peter Biskind in regard to his target viewers, "After NEW YORK, NEW YORK, I thought, I'll never have the audience of Spielberg, not even of Francis [Ford Coppola]. My audience is the guys I grew up around, wiseguys, guys from Queens, truck drivers, guys loading furniture. If they think it's good, I'm fine. Maybe I'm crazy." Unfortunately, it seems Scorsese's most recent films appeal to drunken frat-boys and zany Zionist psychopaths.

Rather unfortunately, as most of his post-*The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) films demonstrates, Scorsese has unfortunately totally given up on being any sort of serious auteur with a strong personal vision. Indeed, as Scorsese also stated in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* in regard to his decision to reinvent himself during the late-1980s after the commercial failure of some of his best works, including *Raging Bull* (1980) and *The King of Comedy* (1982), "I had to make up my mind whether I really wanted to continue making films. There was such negativity that you might as well stop. So what do you do? Stay down dead? No. I realized then, you can't let the system crush your spirit. I really did want to continue making pictures [...] I'm going to try to be a pro and start all over again." Notably, Scorsese's mentor Cassavetes attempted to warn him early in his career to never degrade himself and accept hack work (indeed, when he made the *Bonnie and Clyde* rip-off *Boxcar Bertha* (1972) for Roger Corman, Cassavetes apparently stated to him, "Nice work, but don't fucking ever do something like this again. Why don't you make a movie about something you really care about."), but unfortunately he did not listen to this advice and instead traded in his artistic integrity for the shallow American dream of fame and fortune. Of course, Scorsese would go on to make tons of money, but he would also besmirch his legacy by directing pointless remakes (e.g. *Cape Fear* (1991)) and fairly lame sequels to classic Hollywood films (e.g. *The Color of Money* (1986)). With bombastic CGI-ridden big budget Leonardo DiCaprio vehicles like *Shutter Island* (2010), which makes absurd references to Dachau concentration camp, and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), which glorifies a real-life psychopathic kosher conman, Scorsese would also reveal that he is an unequivocal Shabbos goy, which of course is mandatory if you plan to be successful in Hollywood as indicated by the fall of Mel Gibson. Of course, then again, Scorsese's arguable magnum opus, *Taxi Driver* (1976), was penned by Paul Schrader, thus hinting that he was always more of a talented craftsman than a distinctive auteur. In fact, it could be argued that most of the great filmmakers of New Hollywood, including Francis Ford Coppola, Brian De Palma, William Friedkin, Bob Rafelson, and Hal Ashby, were not true auteurs because they did not write their own original material and instead mainly adapted other people's nov-

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els. As Biskind wrote, "The ugly truth is that some directors never had much to say in the first place. Their own self-estimation to the contrary, most of them were not auteurs, not in the sense that Woody Allen is an auteur. Few directed movies from their own scripts; they were hostage to the material they were given. Says Coppola, 'Even the great directors are not all great screenwriters. Scorsese is not the kind of guy who's going to sit in a room alone and just write about something. He needs that perfect book.'" While it is just mere speculation on my part, I am going to have to assume that Scorsese already said all he had to say with *Who's That Knocking at My Door* and *Mean Streets*, as there are only so many personal stories you can tell if you're a sickly film nerd that grew up hanging around philistine low-lives in Little Italy.

While probably nowhere near his greatest film, *Who's That Knocking at My Door* is more intriguing to me than most of Scorsese's movies because there is an undeniable visceral authenticity to it that is just plain nonexistent in his later works. Indeed, while *The Age of Innocence* (1993), *Kundun* (1997), and *Gangs of New York* (2002) might be quite different in terms of genre and setting, they are all star-driven works that seem like they could have been directed by virtually any highly technically proficient Hollywood Golden Age studio hack. In other words, I think one could learn more about Scorsese the man by watching one of his early shorts like *It's Not Just You, Murray!* (1964) and *The Big Shave* (1967) or his somewhat obscure documentaries like *Italianamerican* (1974) and *American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince* (1978) than by watching all the films that he has directed in over the past twenty-five years combined. Of course, most great European auteur filmmakers like Bergman, Pasolini, Fellini, Fassbinder, and Antonioni directed personal auteur films until they dropped dead, thus underscoring the difference between America and Europa when it comes to cinema and culture in general. While I might not be too fond of much of his work, I can at least respect Godard for never giving up in terms of staying so dedicated to making highly personal auteur films that hardly anyone cares about any of the films that he has made over the past couple decades because he has completely alienated most audiences due to the increasingly arcane *Verfremdungseffekt*-oriented nature of his work. On the other hand, Scorsese has never pretended to be anything that he isn't and I think he eventually came to the realization that he had more in common with a fellow American like John Ford than one of his European cinematic heroes like Fellini and Rossellini, as a filmmaker that just loves directing films, even if they are not too personal. As *Who's That Knocking at My Door* reveals in a fairly blatant fashion, Ford has always been one of Scorsese's greatest cinematic heroes and that is just one of the many reasons why the film is a crucial work in the filmmaker's somewhat uneven oeuvre. If Scorsese's film has any historical value, it is immortalizing NYC's Little Italy before it got taken over by various forms of mystery meat from the third world. Somewhat symbolically, one of film's actors, Michael Scala, had a son that went on to be-

come a rapper named 'Pizan,' thus reflecting the abject cultural degeneration of Italian-Americans, who now pathetically imitate the very people they used to collectively hate (indeed, as Scorsese's longtime buddy/collaborator Robert De Niro's directorial debut *A Bronx Tale* (1993) reveals, guidos used to have no love for the 'Moulinyan'). Made at a time when many Catholic girls would only let guys fuck them in the ass because they felt it was a reasonable means of hanging onto their virginity, *Who's That Knocking at My Door* is also an insightful psycho-dramatic remainder about how Catholicism perpetuates sexual psychosis. Indeed, as someone that once started a relationship with a 21-year-old Catholic virgin who ultimately demonstrated that she had more pussy prowess than many women with a decade of carnal experience under their belt, I firmly believe that, at least in some cases, Catholicism can act as a sort of perpetual aphrodisiac.

-Ty E

TAXI DRIVER
TAXI DRIVER

Martin Scorsese (1976)

If there is a director that American cinephiles and film students all unanimously have a hard-on for, it is NYC “sometimes” auteur Martin Scorsese. Martin Scorsese has had a long and, for the most part, consistent career for over four decades. Fans of Scorsese have to admit that they love early artsy fartsy films like *Who’s That Knocking at My Door* just like they enjoy fun mafia wopfest *Goodfellas*. Without a doubt, *Taxi Driver* is one of Scorsese’s most popular and critically acclaimed films. I personally believe *Taxi Driver* to be both Scorsese’s greatest and most important film. Martin Scorsese maybe a NYC WOP, but that doesn’t mean the films he directed about the mafia are his greatest. With *Taxi Driver*, Martin Scorsese was able to achieve creating a film that was a cinematic attack to viewer’s eyes and ears. Although I have never been a fan (and never will be) of degenerate Jazz, the score in *Taxi Driver* by Bernard Herrmann is one of the best musical accompaniment to a film in cinema history. Herrmann is also known for providing the scores to Alfred Hitchcock’s greatest films such as *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *North By Northwest*, and a variety of others. Despite creating a score for a completely different type of film, Bernard Herrmann was able to resonate the dreary tone of *Taxi Driver* and anti-hero Travis Bickle’s undeniably pathetic life. Martin Scorsese is now often known for using pop music (which he borrowed from Kenneth Anger) in his films, but with *Taxi Driver* I believe he was most successful in creating a cinematic assault of both sight and sound. Despite the film’s simple title, *Taxi Driver* is quite the fitting title. The film’s anti-hero Travis Bickle, is pathetic as they come. Despite being pretty much a loser, he works nights 60 hours or so a week and is assumed to be a Vietnam veteran. For someone who has fought for his country, Travis has yet to receive any real thanks for heroics. Instead, he drives around the DARK urban jungle streets like at a city that looks like it’s on the verge of an apocalypse. Travis Bickle has odd relationships with other human beings and has no friends. I must admit that *Taxi Driver* successfully captures loneliness and an anti-social existence better than any other film I have yet to see. The emotions and themes found in *Taxi Driver* are very rare for an American film, especially a mainstream film. One could say that *Taxi Driver* is one of the few truly American films that has a genuinely anti-Hollywood feel to it. For that alone, Martin Scorsese should be commended. In *Taxi Driver*, Travis Bickle decides to take the law in his own hands. Bickle’s actions in the film, although virtuous and righteous, seem to be more a form of venting than merely to “do the right thing.” Bickle does the right thing when he decides to target the pathetic pimp Matthew (aka sport). Pimps are easily one of the most lowly scum and parasitical creatures out there. The real man is supposed to provide and take care of a woman. The pimp does the opposite and lives off women by putting their lives in danger merely for

financial gain. In contemporary society, “pimp” has turned into a word associated with a “cool” and “badass” dude. With an assortment of self-loathing white Wiggers and criminally inclined blacks, tons of impotent American males want to be thought of as the truly anti-manly “pimp.” Travis Bickle, by confronting a pimp and saving a 12 year olds life, shows what a real (although unconventional) man is. The only flaw with the Taxi Driver is that the film should have ended after Travis Bickle’s “shootout session.” The high angle shot in slow motion featuring Travis bloody on the couch with police breaking in should have been where the film ended. What happened to Travis after his trigger happy mission is irrelevant. I feel that Martin Scorsese settled for a more “Hollywood” ending so that the typical infantile minded American viewer doesn’t get confused or felt “cheated.” I almost felt that “happy” ending added on to be a little silly and in conflict with the overall film. Chronic insomnia, porn addiction, irrational urges, and alienation are symptoms of our contemporary apocalyptic world. Travis Bickle was a man that went the next step and attempted to transcend the world for something more real. In a world that seems to be only getting worse as the years pass, America needs more films about people like Travis Bickle and the dystopian nightmare before him that he constantly contemplates about. Films like Taxi Driver are rare in the mainstream, and the opposite of what Hollywood wants to present. Hollywood wants to train preteen girls to be sluts, train white boys to want to be black criminals, and influence black men to sell crack. The real question is, why hasn’t a Travis Bickle type taken a trip to Sunset Boulevard?

-Ty E

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET
THE WOLF OF WALL STREET

Martin Scorsese (2013)

The older I get, the more I realize that darling American Guido film director Martin Scorsese is not an artist but a mere pumped up artisan and that British auteur Peter Greenaway was right when he said of the director that he is still “making the same films that D.W. Griffith was making early last century” and that a video artist Bill Viola is “worth 10 Martin Scorseses.” Indeed, it seems Scorsese has been making the same film since *Goodfellas* (1990) and that his masterpiece, *Taxi Driver* (1976), is largely the result of Paul Schrader’s writing. Undoubtedly, with his latest flashy one-note epic *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013)—a virtual three-hour-long music video celebrating psychopathic Judaic white collar criminals—Scorsese has really outdone himself, not only demonstrating that he must have fried his brain from all the excessive cocaine use over the years, but that he is also a Sicilian-American Shabbos goy who is willing to go to any extreme to please his masters. Although only referenced in cryptic ways (i.e. Yiddish slang, derogative references to WASPs), *The Wolf of Wall Street* is a work that essentially pays totally tasteless and puffery-plagued tribute to the fact that a real-life Semitic stockbroker named Jordan R. Belfort swindled countless rich (and poor) WASPs out of their money as a pseudo-Robin Hood of the highly Hebraic sort. Adapted from the memoirs of Belfort—who ultimately spent a mere 22 months in prison after stealing \$200 million dollars and being convicted of fraud relating to stock market manipulation and running a penny stock boiler room (the ‘pump and dump’ method)—by writer/producer Terence Winter (*The Sopranos*, *Boardwalk Empire*), *The Wolf of Wall Street* is nothing if not a piece of patently pompous and bombastic psychopathic celluloid of the superlatively soulless sort the manages to combine the criminal-worship of *Goodfellas* with senseless Hebraic hyper-hedonism and juvenile Judaic scat humor of *Superbad* (2007), which is certainly an aesthetically corrosive kosher combo that only the most decidedly debased of degenerates will enjoy swallowing. Starring good goy Aryan actor Leonardo DiCaprio as a drug-addled degenerate Heeb with an unquenchable thirst for theft, hookers, Quaaludes who made millions upon millions ruining countless lives and was punished with less than two years in a country club prison, *The Wolf of Wall Street* is ultimately a depiction of the American dream in the post-WASP-rule age of kosher con men like Bernie Madoff. Starring singularly repugnant lard ass Jonah Hill (real name Jonah Feldstein) as the Wolf’s best friend/coconspirator (based on real-life Belfort co-conspirator/Israelite Danny Porush), *The Wolf of Wall Street* also demonstrates that you can be ugly both on the inside and outside in America and still be richer than the devil himself. Featuring the real Jordan Belfort in a cameo role at the very conclusion of film, *The Wolf of Wall Street* is ultimately a true and trying testament to the fact that Martin Scorsese’s morals are just as

cheap and tasteless as his absurdly overrated 'artistry.'

The year is 1987 and young budding psychopath Jordan Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio) manages to land a job with the Rothschilds (aka the most evil Jewish banking family in all of human history, which has been essentially responsible for funding both sides of every European/American war for the past couple centuries) on Wall Street. Baby Belfort becomes the protégé of his decidedly debauched boss Mark Hanna (Matthew McConaughey), who recommends that his employee literally masturbate to the thought of money, fuel himself via cocaine, and see streetwalkers regularly. Belfort has no problem following his boss' odious orders and eventually passes his Series 7 Exam and earns his broker's license, but he loses his job not long after because of 'Black Monday' (October 19, 1987) when the stock markets around the world crashed. With the help of his supportive wop wife Teresa Petrillo (Cristin Milioti), Belfort manages to find a job with an undignified Long Island-based 'boiler room' outfit which deals in dubious 'penny stocks', thus allowing him to become a big fish in a small pond as a man who had real experience on Wall Street. With his aggressively charismatic and psychopathic sales pitches, Belfort manages to profit handsomely by scamming poor schmucks out of their hard earned bucks. Not long after, Belfort meets a fellow Hebraic brother named Donnie Azoff (played by Jonah Hill in a role based on Belfort's real-life criminal partner Danny Porush) who, on top of being married to his cousin, wears nerdy glasses so people think he is a WASP. Belfort and Azoff star their own firm, Stratton Oakmont, and they hire a bunch of the latter's dope-dealing friends to peddle scam stocks for them. Belfort also hires his parents and despite being Jewish, he lovingly describes his father "Mad" Max (Rob Reiner) as his own personal Gestapo.

The firm eventually evolves into a billion-dollar entity and they move into a huge building and one of the employees (who later blows his brains out) christens the office by receiving a blow job from a secretary in the elevator. Before long, the office turns into a 24 hour orgy where employees snort coke and screw prostitutes in the bathroom. Meanwhile, Belfort cheats on his wife and hooks up with a hot blond bimbo named Naomi Lapaglia (Margot Robbie) who he ultimately divorces his Guido wifey for. Before marrying high dollar whore Naomi, Belfort blows \$2 million on an overextended bachelor's party that includes a luxury plane ride with fifty prostitutes and a pharmacy full of drugs, as well as another fifty prostitutes for when they land. After they marry, Belfort and Naomi have a daughter, but the husband continues seeing prostitutes, including a dominatrix who he allows to shove candles up his less than kosher, kosher ass. Addicted to coke, ludes, morphine, alcohol, and loose prostitute pussy, Belfort is probably in the wrong state of mind to deal with the FBI, but after attempting to bribe a morally pristine agent named Patrick Denham (Kyle Chandler), he begins to become routinely hounded by the Feds and thus begins laundering money to a Swiss bank account with the help of a Swiss degenerate named Jean-Jacques

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET

Saurel (Jean Dujardin). Among other things, Belfort manages to destroy a yacht that used to be owned by Coco Chanel after he idiotically orders the captain of his ship to sail in a storm while his family is on board, thus demonstrating both his psychopathic and self-destructive tendencies. After seeing a plane that was supposed to pick him up explode in mid air, egomaniac Belfort believes it is a sign from god to sober up, but not long after ending his lechery he is picked up by the FBI while filming a sleazy infomercial. It is revealed that Belfort's Swiss partner Saurel was arrested and squealed to the cops, thus incriminating everyone at Stratton. Of course, Belfort bitches out, complies with the FBI, and agrees to wear a wire. On top of that, Belfort's wife asks for a divorce, so he beats her up, gets high, attempts to kidnap his own daughter, and crashes his car in his driveway with said daughter in the passenger seat. In the end, Belfort naturally pussies out and tells the cops everything, thus leading to a raid of Stratton and the destruction of his entire life's work. Sentenced to three years in prison, Belfort has a plush stay at a country club-like minimum security prison where he can play tennis and pretend to be a WASP. After getting out of prison after a mere 22 months, Belfort becomes a 'motivational speaker' and teaches individuals how to con people just like he conned some many people before.

A couple days ago, Joel M. Cohen, a former federal prosecutor who prosecuted Jordan Belfort when he an assistant United States attorney, wrote an article entitled 'The Real Belfort Story Missing From 'Wolf' Movie' that totally demystifies Scorsese's film and exposes that the white collar antihero continues to con people to this day with his lie-ridden self-flattering memoirs. Aside from the fact that Cohen reveals that Belfort was never really called 'the Wolf of Wall Street' but merely created the catchy narcissistic name to sell his books, the ex-prosecutor revealed that the man he prosecuted was a true blue coward, stating, "His now-defunct firm, Stratton Oakmont, wasn't representative of the typical Wall Street brokerage firm. When their days of reckoning came, Mr. Belfort and Mr. Porush didn't stand up against law enforcement, but rather caved, quickly agreeing to cooperate against virtually everyone close to them." Of course, Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street* portrays Belfort as a valiant fighter with the utmost personal dignity who fought to the bitter end. Aside from also revealing that, despite gaining a killing in regard to his book royalties, Belfort has paid virtually nothing to his victims as was court ordered, Cohen ultimately concludes regarding Scorsese's film, "'The Wolf of Wall Street' creators can possibly justify excluding victims from their story, but not while they literally give the final scene to the real Jordan Belfort. That might be art, but it's wrong." Of course, Cohen was being mighty generous when he described the film as 'art' as nothing could be further from the truth because, like virtually all of the films Scorsese has directed since *Taxi Driver*, *The Wolf of Wall Street* takes nil artistic risks and meekly caters to the same corrupt kosher crowd that any sniveling hack in Hollywood would kiss up to further their career.

With its nonstop use of generic pop music (a technique Scorsese openly admits he stole from Kenneth Anger), never-ending debauched Spring Breakers-esque orgy party scenes, and ironically narrated storyline, *The Wolf of Wall Street* is like one long flashy car commercial that has about as much as artistic merit to it as, well, a car commercial. Indeed, just like Belfort's boiler room stocks, *The Wolf of Wall Street* is a fulsome celluloid con meant to appeal to man's most base instincts. Undoubtedly, what I found most patently absurd and indicative of how degenerate our times are in regard to *The Wolf of Wall Street* is that the psychopathic Hebrew antihero of the film is more disgusting, criminally-inclined, and irredeemable than the eponymous Jewish villain of Veit Harlan's infamous National Socialist melodrama *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß* and yet he is glorified for it. Undoubtedly, that a would-be-wanton work like *The Wolf of Wall Street* could be made for the American mainstream public, let alone warmly received and respected by said American public, just goes to show that a good portion of the American public is also both irredeemable and destined for a rather bitter end. Of course, I never doubted Martin Scorsese's degeneracy as he made that quite clear long ago when he made the documentary *American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince* (1978), which is about a gay Jewish junky criminal friend of the director who had a cameo role as a fast-talking criminal weapons dealer in *Taxi Driver*, yet *The Wolf of Wall Street* is truly an all-time low for not only the filmmaker, but for Hollywood in general. Featuring Leonardo DiCaprio taking a lit candle in the ass, wild gay orgies, horrendous Heeb Jonah 'The Whale' Hill masturbating at a party in front of hundreds of people, and the real Jordan Belfort wallowing in his egomania at the conclusion of the film, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, ultimately reminds me why I have not stepped in a movie theater for a good half a decade or so and why I will probably never do so again.

-Ty E

KILLER CONDOM
KILLER CONDOM

Martin Walz (1996)

Long before I understood the usage of contraceptives, *Killer Condom* taunted me from afar. How could it not? Troma specializes in creating vivid and often ridiculous sleeve art for its many films. Bold and brilliant like a *Trapper Keeper* but fundamentally banal and childlike in design. *Killer Condom* struck me as a film I'd have to eventually watch, possibly upon maturity cause Heaven knows when mother would allow me to rent such a distinguished "exploitation" picture. Like few other children, I suffered from a rapidly declining and accelerating method of childhood restrictions which led to Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* one minute, then on to strict reruns of *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story*. From this essence of relinquished motherhood authority is from where my standards of film constantly rise and fall. I approach every film, every movie, with intentions of giving my regards to the absurd, the serious, and the stoic with nary a spiritual interruption.

Flash forward 13 years later and I've finally gotten my hands on a copy of *Killer Condom* for honest consumption expecting not much from a film that backbone structures around "creative consulting" of H.R. Giger's and the special effects of art-horror master Jörg Buttgerit. Whenever I encounter a specimen of filmmaking that relies on girth from foreign names and titles, it tends to alert me of an otherwise incompetent film and gladly, *Killer Condom* is not the case. Of the imperfectible horror/comedy genre, *Killer Condom* stands as the only one I've seen that has demonstrated courageous and biting satire while keeping the horror and absurd elements apart, careful not to spoil the mix. It can be argued that this film's (few) shortcomings overpower the strong arm of *Killer Condom* but I dare you to find a more suitable paradigm of light appearing amongst darkness. Better yet, up the ante. Find me another murderous prophylactic film and we'll depart with even ends. Encounter gay detective Luigi Mackeroni and experience his seedy, colorful world in New York City. But unlike most vantages of the Big Apple, this one is entirely Teutonic and representative of a cleaner scum that stalks the alleyways. To call his world perfect would be a homosexually charged lie but to call it safer would be a correct and logical assumption of a modern day world turned less ethnic. After all, the death of the west is upon us. Soon into the tale, we witness a key Hotel becoming home to a species of sentient condoms that sever a male's favorite appendage. As later uncovered, this manmade species requires no sleep, no food, and lives only to carry out orders from a strung-out religious sect also seen in *Crimson Rivers II: Angels of the Apocalypse*. Soon into *Killer Condom*, it's revealed that the clockwork foundation of this film mainly mocks three things: homosexuals (while at the same time redeeming them), Sicilians, and least importantly, Christians. As every film before it in some way mocks Christ loving ways, the main humor is derived

from making Wops look silly and culture crazed from something evidenced by the nonexistent. Entertainment at its finest. When Killer Condom's not lampooning goombahs it's focusing its targets on the homosexual, transsexual, and biasing out the heterosexual as being a balanced creature. All this and more makes Killer Condom a very dizzying experiment in politically incorrect humor that shines down some truth in the midst of a hypersexual drive that will leave room for many messy castrations and disgusting creatures that crave cock - and I'm not referring to the "killer condoms." What has been created is a film that has reached the maximum height of memorability. People from all walks of life will discover this film in some way and always be tainted with its presence. Killer Condom is a film whose grasp you can never really escape from. It is performance art based in crude, vile, and vulgar entertainment. Whether or not you can manage to dismiss this film as trash, the theory of low quality cinema stands triumphant with a title - no, an image, that will never leave your mind. Be it years later when you're bedding down a local broad and that contraceptive on the tabletop casts a smug grin on your face when you recall a specific time when such low brow entertainment ignited a bonding effort on behalf of two people, Killer Condom is exactly what I go to the movies for. I want to laugh, I want to squirm, I want to feel. Being human isn't such a request and Killer Condom kindly fulfilled my wishes. One of the few classics that the Troma library has to offer. Don't miss Killer Condom.

-mAQ

IN THE MIRROR OF MAYA DEREN
IN THE MIRROR OF MAYA DEREN

Martina Kudláček (2002)

In the *Mirror of Maya Deren* is a fairly straight forward and soothing introduction to the life of Maya Deren. Deren is best known for her avant-garde short films which were filmed in everywhere from the over glamorized streets of Hollywood to the natural landscapes of Haiti. Deren was a Russian Jewess who made her way from Russia to the United States a few years after the so called "Russian" Revolution of 1917. Her shorts have an untamed feeling of a rootless human wandering through the most mystic areas of the world.

In the *Mirror of Maya Deren* features a variety of interviews with closest friends of the unconventional filmmakers and filmmakers that she inspired. Experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage pays his tribute to Maya Deren as the man should. Film as a Subversive Art author Amos Vogel talks respectively of Deren. With all the people interviewed in the documentary, it's as if not one of these individuals seemed to truly know Maya Deren. She was an individual as ambiguous as her films. Deren's films are probably the closest window into who the woman really was.

Maya Deren surely utilized her 16mm Bolex camera to its fullest potential. Many filmmakers learned their art and technique on the camera. Maya Deren created her masterpieces on the Bolex and proved that it is more of who is behind the equipment than the quality of the equipment itself. Hollywood, a place that Deren always despised, always has the best technology yet truly is lacking in regards to cinematic masterpieces. I believe that attempting to create art in Hollywood would have been too financially risky for the bigwig pigs in Hollywood. They certainly let F.W. Murnau know that art wasn't wanted in Hollywood. After the German director finished the monetarily unsuccessful film *Sunrise*, a film that is at the center of cinematic artistry, Hollywood restricted Murnau's artistic freedom until his early death.

As can be expected, *In The Mirror of Maya Deren* features a variety of clips from the director's very short career. The documentary also features early and later photographs of Deren. You even get to see her at a Communist rally in the United States. Her first husband was of a culture despising Bolshevik. If one hasn't even seen a clip of Deren's work, *In The Mirror of Maya Deren* is still highly recommended. The documentary is sure to entice anyone into Deren's work that even has a remote interest in avant-garde films.

-Ty E

GOOD LUCK, MISS WYCKOFF

Marvin J. Chomsky (1979)

Maybe it is just me, but when I see a scene from a film with the words "Miss Wyckoff Fucks Niggers," I have to check it out, if only for novelty reasons. Indeed, within about the first 30 seconds or so of the exceedingly exploitative melodrama *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* (1979) aka *Secret Yearnings* aka *The Sin* aka *The Shaming* directed by Marvin J. Chomsky (Evel Knievel, *The Deliberate Stranger*), one sees such 'politically incorrect' words written in chalk on a sidewalk in regard to the eponymous female protagonist, who ultimately learns how unhealthy dark meat can be for a white woman. A work set in 1954 in suburban Kansas, Chomsky's film may seem like a reworking (or rip-off) of Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and/or Fassbinder's remake *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) upon a superficial glance due to its depiction of an elder woman starting a 'forbidden romance' with a much younger man in an unforgiving 'puritanical' town, but it is really a piece of pathetically assembled agitprop trash masquerading around as keenly socially conscious high drama, thus making for an unintentionally hilarious film that depicts the extremes that some semi-Asiatic left-wing filmmakers were willing to go in terms of their semi-hermetic hate campaign against America's white majority. Indeed, directed by Hebraic hack Chomsky and adapted by Jewess Polly Platt (whose father presided over the Dachau Trials and who was once the wife of fellow chosenite Peter Bogdanovich) from the 1970 novel of the same title by gay Pulitzer Prize winner William Inge, *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* has aspirations towards being a more subversive *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), but it was both a critical and commercial failure and it is really just a superlatively sleazy exploitation flick on steroids featuring a couple forgotten Hollywood stars. The patently pathetic story of a virginal 35-year-old high-school teacher who is suffering premenopausal symptoms and is inspired to start a random sexual relationship after being conned into doing so by a Jewish psychiatrist, only to find herself a rape victim and the quasi-sex-slave of a young psychopathic negro janitor (!), Chomsky's film seems to have been made with the sole intention of offending and shocking white middle America and is thus a one-note-celluloid-wonder of sorts, albeit a sometimes entertaining one-note-celluloid-wonder that demonstrates the Semitic Sunset Boulevard truly has no shame. Of course, it should be no surprise that the film was somewhat recently released on DVD/Blu-Ray by the porn/exploitation distribution company Vinegar Syndrome, as it is more or less a 'crackersploitation' with Blaxploitation overtones that depicts most whites from the 1950s as dimwitted true believers of the so-called 'Red Scare' who mindlessly hated negroes and ostracized anyone who even remotely acted in a socially transgressive fashion. Directed a crypto-propagandist hack who directed episodes of the cultural Marxist favorite *Roots* (1977), the majorly moronic and

GOOD LUCK, MISS WYCKOFF

totally tasteless TV miniseries *Holocaust* (1978), and the terrible TV movie *Inside the Third Reich* (1982), *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* is nothing short of left-wing porn twaddle made for those hopelessly impressionable individuals who consider Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980) to be the definitive book on American history.

Opening in Freedom, Kansas in 1954 with old maid protagonist Evelyn Wyckoff (played Anne Heywood, who was 48 when she starred in the role) walking home and spotting the words "Miss Wyckoff Fucks Niggers" written on a road near her house, *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* then goes back a couple months to reveal how the main character went from being a sexless spinster to earning the deplorable reputation of being a, "nigger fucker." Miss Wyckoff is 35-year-old high-school Latin teacher and she is suffering from debilitating depression due to the fact that she is almost middle-aged yet she has never had her hymen broken. Indeed, after suffering hysterical panic attacks and committing random acts of irrational violence (among other things, she smashes a mirror with her fists in front of her equally sexually prudish friends), less than wanton Wyckoff needs a serious change of pace and her almost creepily stoic gynecologist Dr. Neal (Robert Vaughn) is ultimately the man that is going to be the who unwittingly leads her on a deplorable path of no return. Indeed, after Dr. Neal gives Miss Wyckoff a rather awkward gynecological exam and realizes that she is showing some perturbing pre-menopausal signs, he recommends that she begin having sex, stating, "Nature wants us to use our bodies...if we don't, they dry out and function poorly." Dr. Neal also recommends that she see his Jewish psychiatrist colleague Dr. Steiner (Donald Pleasence of the Halloween franchise fame), who, using Freudian hocus pocus, eventually gets Miss Wyckoff to admit that the source of her sexual hang-ups is the result of a traumatic childhood experience where her mother more or less told her that she would grow up to be a slut. A somewhat impenetrable man with dubious motives, Dr. Neal recommends to Miss Wyckoff that start an affair with a married bus driver, but when the teach finally gets the gall to jump the bones of the proletarian philanderer, he has already moved away, thus leaving her with very little options where losing her virginity is concerned. Luckily, a young psychopathic negro named Rafe Collins (John Lafayette) begins working as a janitor at Wyckoff's high school and he is going to make the frigid teach learn a lesson or two about carnal knowledge, whether she likes it or not.

A nastily narcissistic negro that is in his mid-20s and who is stereotypically on a football scholarship at a less than prestigious community college, Rafe has rape on his mind, especially when it comes to naïve liberal white women, and he is not going to let any white woman tell him, "no," as it only makes him all the more horny. One day, Rafe walks into Miss Wyckoff's classroom and states, "I wonder how many of you white people really mean it when you pretend to care about us negroes" while beginning to pull out his poisonous black snake. While

Miss Wyckoff manages to convince Rafe to leave immediately, the next time he shows up will result in the teacher involuntarily losing her virginity. Indeed, the next time Rafe comes to Miss Wyckoff's classroom, he takes her hand and forces it down his pants. When Wyckoff resists and bites the naughty negro's hand, Rafe slaps the teacher like a pimp slaps his whores. After locking Miss Wyckoff in her classroom and threatening her by stating, "I'm warning you...not one sound," Rafe takes off his clothes, forces the petrified teacher onto her desk, and rapes her while she cries hysterically and pleads for him to stop. When Miss Wyckoff shows up to her classroom the next day and discovers the negro-style sentence, "you be here this afternoon," written on her chalkboard, she decides to sneak out of the school before Rafe can find her, but on the following day she is not so lucky. When Rafe rapes Wyckoff the next day, she begins to rather enjoy it, which the narcissistic negro immediately notices and uses to his advantage. Indeed, the next day Rafe sexually degrades Miss Wyckoff by forcing her to get on her knees and crawl to him while begging for his very potentially diseased colored cock.

After talking to another black janitor on the football team, Miss Wyckoff learns that Rafe is not a boy, but a 24-year-old ex-hustler who was "discovered" by the school football coach. Indeed, it seems that white Americans will do anything for their beloved philistine game of football, including supporting criminally-inclined nig-nogs. In that sense, Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff reveals that not much has changed in America, at least where stupid mainstream sports are concerned. When Miss Wyckoff's best friend/fellow teacher Beth (played by Carolyn Jones, who is probably best known for her role as Morticia Frump Addams on the original TV series *The Addams Family* from the mid-1960s) remarks regarding Rafe, "He's the kind that makes everyone hate niggers. That's what he is...an uppity negro," the race-mixing educator responds hysterically by absurdly stating, "Racial prejudice is one of man's most difficult problems to solve during his time here on earth...perhaps god intended it to be that way. And if we don't solve it, Beth, we're all going to be destroyed," thus making it seem like xenophilia is a major mental disorder. Of course, rumors begin to spread around the high school due to the fact that Miss Wyckoff spends way too much hanging out with a jigaboo janitor in her classroom. When two young white male janitors who suspect Miss Wyckoff is a "nigger fucker" hear the teacher screaming out in pain, they swiftly run to her classroom, only to find her completely naked and being bent over a hot heater by Rafe, who has intentionally burnt her breasts while viciously bugging her from behind. While one of the white men calls Rafe a "rotten bastard," neither of them attempts to rescue Miss Wyckoff, who more or less got what she deserved. Of course, with the cat out of the bag, Miss Wyckoff is ostracized by everyone in the small Kansas town, including her best friend Beth and a cowardly communist-sympathizing dork teacher named Chester Rollins (J. Patrick McNamara), who she had previously

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defended when he was about to be fired from his teaching job due to his commie views. In the end, Miss Wyckoff briefly contemplates suicide, but ultimately opts to leave town after being given a letter of recommendation from the school's principal. Indeed, as they say, once you go black, you never go back.

While clearly a carelessly convoluted cultural Marxist-oriented work that was probably made with the sole objective of antagonizing white America by making it seem like the secret desire of every moral and cultured white woman is to be forcibly bent over by a half-braindead black buck with a primitive talent for savage sexual pillaging and throwing pigskins, *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* is also rather incriminating in many respects, namely due to the fact that all the ostensibly progressive leftist characters, including the eponymous protagonist, are weak and socially defective individuals whose championing of negro causes is due to the fact that they can 'relate' to the negro due to their own dubious place in society as weaklings and emotional cripples. As revealed in the film, Miss Wyckoff was partially responsible for the desegregation of her high school. Although mere speculation, one can only assume that if she had been a normal happy woman with a husband and kids and not a sex-starved childless spinster, she probably would not have time to waste on negro rights and promoting the reading of Karl Marx. It should also be noted that it is two non-Europids—a Jewish psychiatrist and a young negro—that are ultimately responsible for Miss Wyckoff's moral decline. Of course, Israelites also played a large role in the Civil Rights movement, as it enabled them to weaken their greatest enemy—the white majority. Indeed, like the lead protagonist in Robert Redford's revoltingly sappy and superficial piece of obscenely overrated celluloid twaddle *Ordinary People* (1980), Miss Wyckoff ultimately finds herself even more screwed up after going to regular sessions with a Judaic psychiatrist. I also found it interesting how psychopathic spade Rafe has virtually the same sociopathic attitude that is popular among black American 'youths,' rappers, and football players nowadays, thus making *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* a somewhat prophetic work, if not unintentionally so. Undoubtedly, despite being a somewhat nonsensical piece of trash exploitation, I would be lying if I did not admit that the film reminded me how much America has gone down the morally vacant multicultural drain since the film's release some 35 years ago. Indeed, we now live in a such racially, culturally, socially, and morally defective era that it is not uncommon for white sluts to be impregnated negros and then pass on their misbegotten mulatto spawn to be raised by its cuckolded white grandparents. Of course, maybe if contemporary whites were more like those depicted in kosher agitator Chomsky's agitprop piece then America would not be the ugly dying mongrelized bastard beast that it is today. A Semitic-sired quasi-Blaxploitation/melodrama hybrid that surely reminds one what Hebraic Hollywood really thinks of the white majority, *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* is certainly absurdly asinine celluloid excrement yet, like the high school teacher protagonist of the film, the viewer learns a very valuable

lesson: "once you go black, you never go back, as no self-respecting white man wants you back."

-Ty E

GODZILLA vs. MEGAGUIRUS
GODZILLA vs. MEGAGUIRUS

Masaaki Tezuka (2000)

To celebrate Godzilla's recent millennium makeover, *Godzilla vs. Megaguirus* represents the very aesthetics of the new and improved Godzilla series. Hints of what's to come are placed meticulously in the scenes featuring suit re-do's and character mannerism explorations. Much of the run time of this Showa series flashback rests on the very irritating cocky Asian hacker characters that prove that a character can be as stubborn as the writer is. Megaguirus is almost as uninteresting as Godzilla's son was on terms of characters within the Godzilla universe. The encompassing attraction of the Godzilla franchise is the slambang monster madness and Megaguirus doesn't satisfy, that is, until the last 5 - 10 minutes of the film where in a cop out twist, Megaguirus reaches his final form. Note to Toho: This isn't *Dragonball Z*. The origins of Megaguirus revolve around an insect that was featured in *Rodan* called the Meganulon. The evolution/radiation clock ticks and little by little these creatures grow while posing a more discernible threat. A clashing romance begins between the street-smart hacker/engineer and the stern feminazi named Kiriko. These two characters obviously fancy each other for reasons oblivious to me but I brave the romance plot line for as long as it takes for the disappointing action to build up. To intervene, the Godzilla story this time around is far more unrealistic than I'd expect a giant lizard film to go. The preferred method of getting rid of Godzilla is a space gun that shoots mini-black holes that reminds me of the alternate ship battles in *Skies of Arcadia*. When the "vs." finally takes effect, the Meganula finally evolves into Megaguirus. A fossilized dragonfly dinosaur hovers above Tokyo taunting our scaly anti-hero. In a disappointing battle, the only true applaudable effort is the effect for the Megaguirus. In a surprising turn of events, Godzilla's methods of dispatching the villain proves to be irrevocably bad ass. *Godzilla vs. Megaguirus* doesn't fare well compared to some of the above-average entries. You can thank the clear storytelling that would rather focus on embarrassing characters instead of the implied title.

-mAQ

LOST PARADISE

Masami Akita (1990)

You may know the name Masami Akita or you may not. He happens to be behind Merzbow, the amazing noise project. Not many people know of this, but he actually directed a film in the "seppuku" series. Even fewer know that he did the droneful score which creepily makes the viewing experience even more tense. Lost Paradise (#3) is the best out of all of them. The film opens up with a very stiff woman in military garb walking into a room. She formally begins to undress and begins to take off her shirt. She is sitting there, bare breasted, and begins to take a ritualistic knife and wraps it with a form of paper/ribbon around the blade and builds up the courage to drive it deep within her belly. She absorbs the fact that she is now fated and decides to venture on through her hellish decision. She drives it through her belly until the pressure from the intestines gushes out and furthers the rip. She is sitting there moaning, her beautiful pearl white clothes are now a deep shade of red and she eventually collapses and you have the pleasure of watching the life seep from her eyes. I don't fancy harakiri films. I love the idea, but face it, It's a dead idea to make a film on. Their is no honor in doing so and it happens too fast or looks stunningly fake. Lost Paradise does not fit in with this. To top it off, it has an ultra disturbing score which consists of various hums and feverish drones. When you add extreme realism and efficient effects, you got the mother of all harakiri films. Granted, if you don't enjoy gore or the philosophy of death, this might not appeal to you at all. While there are no subs, the only time you would need them is at the end, when there is a monologue between a man who commits suicide. Watching this woman die was a powerful experience for me. As this once proud figure has been reduced to a gored nobody, you realize that no matter what rank you are, or what achievements you have accomplished, in death, you are nothing. One hell of a 33 minute ride. One that chugs by of course.

-Maq

TAMPON TANGO
TAMPON TANGO

Masashi Yamamoto (1984)

From the realms of absurdity and from the magmatic hatred of Chakan: The Forever Man comes perhaps the most bizarre, narcissistic attempt at making a porno. Hell, film for that matter. I could attempt to dissect the contents before your eyes in hopes that you too could see the batty mind behind this film. This is the exact reason why I will begin to illustrate the events for you, visually. Take heed that this might be the most visually venomous theme of pornography ever brainstormed upon. With the Japanese believing they are the sole proprietor and pioneers of high art, the director also has an egotistical vision of a film separate from American cinema. This might explain why the first scene is the director howling "To hell with the US! To hell with Herpes!" in a megaphone. Only from this pivotal scene of craziness could the subversive elements float to the surface. Tampon Tango was definitely an experiment in a personal vision, in way, this vision might be TOO personal. In no way could the director have made this film for the fans of obscure cinema of today. There really is no logical reason for a film of this degree to be produced. The scenes continue to stack with a followed shot of Japanese couples "necking" and dry-humping on a public sidewalk. We are soon introduced to a rag-tag Japanese "Real World" crew. After discussing their intention to practice fornication in a van, they rest at a beach so two of the lady companions can deodorize their soapy vagina's in brackish waters. During this quest of femininity, Defcon 5 is triggered with a meteorite warning indicator flashing on screen. A space rock lands on one of the females craniums issuing a bloody nose. The loony, impassioned director begins screaming for more tampons at this point. Cut to two naked Japanese men running over sand dunes with a plethora of tampons tied to their dicks while hollering a war cry. As a member of the audience, you really don't know what to do. You can either brave through the rest of these unnatural occurrences or get out while the getting is good. To become of an accomplished genre, sex scenes are inimitably placed in a verbose manner. To call this portion of the film difficult would be an understatement. To film the human body as an intimate instrument is an achievement. The director has done the exact opposite and composed shots of intercourse as to appear grotesque and deformed. Greasy Chink flesh flapping and squishing together in a non-rhythmic performance in horribly edited loops makes up most of the running time. Had the antics been stretched more, Tampon Tango would have fit within its boundaries perfectly. However, the slack stretches over the line thanks to sex scenes that will leave you gasping for breath. Eat your heart out, Bat Pussy. To pick up for any inconveniences, we're treated to a slam-bang finale including and not limited to a three-piece marching band in ironed skirts, an enormous paper-mâché tampon, a giant meteorite crashing through the ceiling, punk guys initiating a bi-family orgy of confetti, streamers,

and festive screaming. Tampon Tango acknowledges what it is and perfects the formula other than the sex. It is equal parts insanity and unflattering sex scenes. Had the potency of the intercourse been toned down, Tampon Tango would appear more honed and polished. One of the most illustrious and talented shots of the film is a mid-edited scene of a man doing a back handspring and during the middle of his flip his clothes are removed resulting in a flawless frame rate -- Thus cementing a true piece of cinemagic, although tasteless. Of course through out this "anti-American film" piece, we have many true-to-life stereotypes being played out by those of the mocked nationality. Women remark disgustedly at the size of their partner's fuzzy penis before performing putrid fellatio upon him. The only aspect that I could deem erotic is the project itself. There's something arousing about a film as goofy as this. Call it whatever you will but it's more of an aesthetic appreciation. Tampon Tango is the most obscure and bizarre film I've ever had the pleasure to see. As it may be, I took this film far too seriously upon my preliminary viewing but I can tell you this; I look forward to introducing my fellow town residents to this mock up of the porn industry. I'm just not sure how many of these chosen will retain their sanity. I sure as hell know I didn't.

-mAQ

HUNGRY DEVIL SPIRIT
HUNGRY DEVIL SPIRIT

Masayoshi Sukita (1985)

This Japanese shocker follows the technical formula of many 70s and 80s Chinese horror films. High in color contrast and low on lighting, Hungry Devil Spirit aka Gakidama is simply a stunning 55 minute horror film. It's a shame that Masayoshi Sukita had such a short life span in directing seeing as how his film Hungry Devil Spirit remains an unknown creative force in miniature terrors. After a ghost-hunting duo photograph a will-o-wisp looking entity on a mountain, one of the two is struck ill with possession from the traveling spirit. An enormous appetite erupts from his senses which drives his wife into a state of panic as he snores comatose pregnant with a demon (unknown to her). After it "hatches" and explodes his chin in the process, a mysterious man enters and captures the demon only to fall victim to its tricks and allows it to escape. From here, many side plots are fleshed out not limited to a bizarre cult of Gakidama consumers who've become addicted to eating the "Tastiest Flesh". The story has many notable quirks to it creating a dense and foggy atmosphere. The film's protagonist is feminized as he is impregnated with the embryo of a ghoul. His wife who is unable to birth a child, takes this as a godsend for their non-existent family. The nuclear family is pissed on as their child is a hungry demon who ravages the human body in an attempt to feast. This is a wonderful examination on the family without a uterus. The Gakidama itself is a fleshy abomination that is about 12 inches tall. Its attacking pattern is very similar to that of the Totem from Puppet Master 4 & 5. Its vocal chords rasp out a stark gurgling sound that is incredibly terrifying and disgusting. These assets make for a silly looking albeit horrifying creature that now lies in the deepest recesses of my fears. Chestburster's are one thing, but a creature being born from my throat is a completely different story. Hungry Devil Spirit is a marvel of a short film. While it can be a tedious chore, the special effects and the cunning plot devices are enough to push this film past moderate territory into the limelight of supernatural creature horror that was famously churned out by the Chinese. If you enjoyed Centipede Horror, Gakidama comes highly recommended for all fans of horror, obsession, and the mystique.

Hungry Devil Spirit on DVD exclusively at wtfdvds.com

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THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY

Massimo Dallamano (1970)

If any post-WWII European actor was born to play the role of Dorian Gray, it was Austrian Helmut Berger – the positively peculiarly pretty, passionate and pompous camp prince of arthouse Euro-sleaze – as no other actor has been able to pull off a believably narcissistic pedophilic Nazi fag in drag nor a homo Bavarian Wagnerite king with an affinity for romantic art over his own people the way this brazenly bisexual star of self-worship and seduction did. For whatever reason, the trans-European (Britain/Italy/Germany) production *The Secret of Dorian Gray* (1970) aka *Dorian Gray* directed by Italian auteur Massimo Dallamano (who previously worked as a cinematographer for Sergio Leone) and co-produced by the infamous exploitation producer Harry Alan Towers (who worked with Jess Franco and Ken Russell) – Berger's next acting job after his groundbreaking performance in his older aristocratic Italian lover Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei* – was a film that never really got its due in terms of gaining a cult following as it so incontestably deserves. In fact, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* quickly disappeared after its initial scant appearance in theaters and until its rather recent release on DVD (RaroVideo), it was never released for the home market aside from an obscure bastardized English-language version for certain foreign markets, which was solely the result of the lackluster promotion and distribution from the company that produced it. Indeed, to call the film a 'lost masterpiece' would be a bit of patent puffery, unless you happen to be an exploitation/Euro-Sleaze junky, but I would be lying if I did not admit that aside from possibly Ulrike Ottinger's *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* – an innately ambitious total deconstruction and revolutionary reinvention of the tale – *The Secret of Dorian Gray* is one of my favorite takes on debauched dandy Oscar Wilde's sole and surprisingly incriminating novel as a sort of clever and thinly disguised condemnation of his own life. Set in the perfect postmodern atmosphere of ill-flavored fag-end 1960s of Swinging London, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* follows dainty yet decidedly domineering Dorian's deluge into salacious self-destructive debauchery as the city around him parallels his decisive degeneration into nihilistic sex, brain-damaging drugs, and reckless rock 'n' roll. In short, the film feels like the sort of adaptation the belated beatnik auteur Donald Cammell (*Demon Seed*, *White of the Eye*) would have assembled, albeit a bit less thematically and aesthetically erudite than a cinematic work by the suicidal Scotsman, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* oftentimes feels like it was produced by a fan of *Performance* (1970), although both films were released the same year (despite *Performance* being produced two years earlier). That being said, I have no doubt in my mind that Mick Jagger would have concurred with Dorian Gray's declaration, "I would give my soul to stay like that" in regard to

THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY

the prospective of eternal beautiful youth, as both men certainly had sympathy for the devil, but that did stop them from degenerating into ghastly and ghoulish elderly lesbians of sorts.

Starring real-life Dorian Gray Helmut Berger in an iconic, if rarely seen, performance that is at least as memorable as the actor's roles in Visconti's *Ludwig* (1972) and Tinto Brass' *Salon Kitty* (1976), *The Secret of Dorian Gray* – a work that shows the lurid and lascivious libertinism that is oftentimes implied, but never gratuitously depicted in Oscar Wilde's novel, including bisexuality (and – in this case – of the biracial black buggerer sort), needless nihilistic drug excess, and hip unhinged sexual promiscuity – opens in a backdrop that displays an inkling of the kind of blatant signs of post-war debauchery that would consume London and rest of the discordant Occident from about the mid-1960s on. After less than enthusiastically watching a tranny cabaret show (echoing Berger's Dietrich-esque performance in *The Damned*) with his friends, Dorian Gray (Berger) meets the love of his life by mere happenstance – a self-proclaimed starving would-be actress and feisty virgin (at least until Mr. Gray has his gentlemanly way with her) named Sybil Vane (Marie Liljedahl) – but ultimately a painting of himself by his painter friend Basil Hallward (Richard Todd) proves to be his true “soul mate”; as he symbolically sells his soul to the devil in order to retain the boyish beauty that is expressed in the sexually androgynous portrait. Describing the inspiration behind the portrait, Basil states, “I did it because the subject is exceptional. An extraordinary combination of pure beauty and male virility. Incredibly sensual...timeless,” but little does the artist realize that sometimes beauty kills. Of course, it is not only the painting that propels Dorian into a life of self-debasement, flesh usury, and drug use as a fated life-changing meeting with a fashion chic and cultivated homosexual gallery owner named Henry Wotton (Herbert Lom) who haphazardly parrots Mr. Wilde with the words “What is vice anyways? Simply pleasure without shame” and his loose and salacious yet imbecilic socialite wife Gwendolyn (Margret Lee) – both of whom want to fondle and fuck the lad – also help to groom the young man into a debauched daredevil of decadence who seeks soulless pleasures to make up for the emotional void in his personal life. Although Dorian is already on the road to degeneration and overwhelming narcissism before her untimely death, it is ultimately his sweet ladylove Sybil's tragic death via self-slaughter after the two have a heated lover's spat that the decadent dandy fully embraces his tormenting thirst for eternal youth and unquenchable excess. As the portrait painting of himself deteriorates into a grotesque caricature of himself that parallels his positively perverse personal life of terribly trendy and solely superficial sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. In the end, Dorian Gray is, at best, a poor man's Ronnie Kray and a shameless and opportunistic whore with a faggy fashion sense who will fuck anything and anyone, including elderly women, to reap materialistic earthly rewards and, at worst, a gaudy and grotesque living and breathing monstrosity of

the mischievous molesting and murdering McFagger-wanna-be sort.

“Lying on the floor was a dead man with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the ring that they recognized who it was,” or so concludes *The Secret of Dorian Gray* with the words from Oscar Wilde’s source novel. Admittedly, I would not call myself a fan of many films adapted from classic novels, nor am I generally fan of many traditionally critically revered ‘classic’ novels themselves, but *The Secret of Dorian Gray* does make for a notable exception, not least of all because it one of the very few cases where the degenerate cinematic art at that time complimented the theme of the literary work itself as a magical marriage between softcore Fin de siècle Europa and semen-drenched Swinging London. Starting in a rather traditional and quasi-Victorian London and concluding in a nefarious Negrophiliac bongo-drum-blasting, curiously corrupt, gender-bending, drug-devouring, back-stabbing, player-hating and miscegenating nation of lost souls, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* effortlessly excels in managing to execute a clear-cut depiction of London of the old and the overzealous Zeitgeist of the new and needlessly narcissistic as a work that ironically wallows in the same sort of degeneracy it commends; no doubt an idiosyncratic Italian specialty on director Massimo Dallamano’s part. Naturally, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* is a must-see film for Helmut Berger fans as the marvelously manic and crazily camp Austrian actor proves once again why he is one of Europe’s greatest queens of the sophisticatedly seedy and satanically suave silver screen. Indeed, the thought of Berger staying perennially pretty and pernicious is a particularly palatable and prepossessing prospect, but as one can readily see from his steadily declining acting career and current physically flaccid and fatigued appearance, such an idea is nothing short of being a preposterous pipe dream, thereupon making *The Secret of Dorian Gray* seem like the next best thing. Indeed, few things in life make more sense than Helmut Berger *Gone Wilde*.

-Ty E

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOUR DAUGHTERS?
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOUR DAUGHTERS?

Massimo Dallamano (1974)

What Have They Done to Your Daughters? is a notable giallo film made in 1973 depicting politically incorrect themes of child prostitution rings. The fact that this film depicted societal figures high in power being corrupt throughout an illegal ring is a ballsy move for Massimo Dallamano. This is the same director of such iconic genre films as the idealistic sequel What Have They Done to Solange? and Venus in Furs. If the stylistic approach to this gialli seems familiar, note that Dallamano also was the cinematographer to Sergio Leone's For A Few Dollars More. As with most Italian crime thrillers, the music leads the film while serenading your ears with eerie synth and prog-rock aversions. A black mysterious Wraith-figure is constantly escaping the crime scenes armed with a cleaver. This eventually leads into the most magnificent scene of a cop with idle hands getting it chopped off which leads into a color explosion of filters and a stream of blood. The sound effects are purely a tour de force. What Have They Done to Your Daughters? is a work in giallo that is clearly a film made for entertainment and a PSA to missing children. The film takes an exciting Bikesploitation turn as we are assaulted with many-a chase scenes on a flashy classic Italian motorcycle. This film works as a powerful drama, murder mystery, and a detective story. It does more with three genres than a film with one can muster. It takes the child prostitution sub line and adds a really creepy vibe. Whenever I view Lifetime films of the sort about human trafficking, I just cannot help but laugh at the dramatic reenactments reeking of post-industry trauma. In an overview of this marvelous piece of work, It really is hard to label this film in my endearing retrospect. If you're a fan of crime cinema in general, this film should find a home snugly within your confines of tastes. In a world populated with horrid uninspired films chronicling events that are dismayed upon, What Have They Done to Your Daughters? hits the spot on terms of pure sleaze. If I had a daughter, watching this film would sure tweak my nerves.

-mAQ

L'IMMORALITA

Massimo Pirri (1978)

It certainly seems to help reviewers pad their writings of "cult rarities" by dubbing any European film sleaze, no matter the content within. By pushing the bounds of propriety and/or expressing something considered "obscene" or vile, these daring directors are thrown to the sharks along with what is perceived as a snub to good taste. *L'immoralita* is a film considered as such. Featuring a scene of sexual activity between an 11 year old girl and a child-killer, *L'immoralita* has been crucified due to this and labeled as an example in sleaze, which it is not. To further put into perspective, it would appear Luc Besson took several cues from this French romance to intersperse throughout *Leon*. Opening with a wide-ended shot of our fugitive, Federico, holding a young girl's corpse, *L'immoralita* begins without a hitch in slowly establishing our character, anti-hero, if you will. He swears by his innocence yet retains the same absolute hypnotic effect when a young girl's body is presented.

Fleeing from the police, wounded, Federico stumbles upon a young girl, Simona, and charms her into hiding out in the garden villa. Their relationship at first is budding and teasing to what will result in freak outs, death threats, and a bizarre love triangle including Simona's promiscuous mother, Vera. Once the village slut discovers her daughter's secret, Vera pulls her god-given veins of manipulation to ensnare and blackmail Federico in a boiling plot to off her wheelchair-bound husband. To cite comparisons, *L'immoralita* looks and feels exactly the way that *Maladolescenza* did, and not even for the nudity of the youth. Both were shot with an unequivocal eye for playground romance and shedding of desires. The averse sexuality that is included seems almost natural, the way spying on her oversexed mother leads to the almost-hereditary skill of laying down and humbling men into domination. This is what Simona has known her whole childhood. While young, she understands fully how to control these men, how to feed and fuel them and this is what makes her so deadly.

To stitch together scenes, Morricone's score is applied gracefully but at times creates outlandish and side-showy results. That's not to say that, by its lonesome, it's not an excellent composition to a peaceful setting with no interruptions. The "poisonous" Simona takes condescension with her absence of innocence, including the hunky-dory symbolic bird aviary revisited after the metamorphosis from girl to woman is complete. Seems all a female has to do to gain rite of passage is commit large and great acts of deceit and betrayal. Fascinated and dense, Federico certainly underestimated the tiny terror which leads him directly into a web from which he can't escape. Voyeurism has always been an unhealthy fetish of the great taboos. Direct links are consistently met with vulgar tendencies and strange and frightful urges unearthed. *L'immoralita* is simply a turn based system of sexual hypnosis. The dizzying rate of which lovers quarrel and

L'IMMORALITA

alliances are severed comes as a shock to me from a film I hadn't heard of until recently. Even the ever-slow implosion of the bourgeois family is a manageable task for this French oddity. Even the rarely visited reclusive father figure, with his escapist tendencies to dwell on weaponry and target practice, becomes a sympathetic character of which pity is felt for. L'immoralita is a film that brings up critical points to "sexual repression" and provides insight into the notion that some children don't possess innocence. As for Vera's maternal manipulation, I'd like to believe the cervix doesn't nullify the honor system, in which case, Federico is screwed in more ways than one.

-mAQ

LA HAINE

Mathieu Kassovitz* (1995)

Needless to say, *La Haine* is a mesmerizing film. One of utmost importance and leaves a shimmering brand upon your first viewing. Watching this film for the first time is equivalent to your first car or your first relationship - Something that you will never forget. Mathieu Kassovitz has since moved on to acting in decent films and directing horrible thrillers starring Halle Berry (*Gothika*) On a personal note, I remember the first time i saw it. Before i had any cinematic standards, this film managed to hold on to me complete attention while supplying my mind with enough thought to give attention to every word or gesture. I was interrupted about an hour and a half in, only to resume it in another room on an old VHS tape deck. The instant the climax reached the film, brainfire occurred. *La Haine* is about a group of young friends, all from different walks of life and ethnicity's, coping through an era of riots and political uprising. All the drama leads to one of their own being in critical condition after an episode of police brutality. This brings Daniel Day-Lewis's epic role in the film *In The Name of the Father* to mind. Without the soundtrack, most of it's intensity and look on rebels would be lost. Featuring great booming tracks from the best of French rap groups, both mainstream and underground, It delivers an amazing feeling to witness the blossoming of a hateful society. The film starts the careers of Vincent Cassel, Saïd Taghmaoui, and Hubert Koundé. Cassel has an amazing career and an impressive filmography, Saïd has been in many films; many being a mixed bag and is scheduled for the new *G.I. Joe* film, and Hubert did *The Constant Gardener* and now mainly does television. The film has changed many lives and even caught closet-lesbian Jodie Foster's attention. Kassovitz hides his inspirations clearly in his work. One influence i noticed, was how Vinz was modeled partly after Travis Bickle from *Taxi Driver*. Its message is of the most important kind. It chronicles the downfall of youthful patience and holstered emotions. After Vinz discovers a gun left from a pig in a riot, he decides he wants to make a change around the banlieue (Suburbs.) *La Haine* must be seen to be believed. It is the highlight of Kassovitz's career and is a must see for anyone who is interested in politics, youth, urban decay, and French cinema. There is no doubt in my mind that *La Haine* changed the face of France, and even French cinema.

-Maq

BABYLON A.D.
BABYLON A.D.

Mathieu Kassovitz* (2008)

What is the easiest way to make a film appear to be a saddening and thoughtful film? Put Clint Mansell's *Lux Aeterna* as the backdrop for the trailer and you immediately have a spicy preview that leaves no hint of odor and creates an entirely fictional theme for the film. Had you seen the trailer, the vibes would echo heavily of a supernatural *Children of Men* with just a hint of *xXx*, which may or may not had been a bad thing. The film escalates quickly into shitty territory when our anti-hero smuggler Toorop who is hired by a typecast Russian to export a girl who is host to an organism used for a seedy religious cloning process. Along the way, Vin Diesel one-liners will be thrown out rapid-fire; almost as fast as he'd like the action scenes to be. This film is one of the most bland action films this year, second only to *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*. The film features another outing of the overused Michelle Yeoh who likes to force down our throats the idea of every Asian knowing martial arts. It's really pathetic. I cringed when I heard her declare that she knew how to defend herself. I'd love nothing more than to punch her square in the face while she was asleep. Other than Diesel, another star is attempted to be introduced to American audiences, and that white dwarf's name is Mélanie Thierry. I understand that it was within her character role to play the furious pacifist that Aurora is, but she plays it off so well that she becomes the solid entity of pure frustration. Every time anyone died, she'd go off screaming for at least several minutes. It almost makes me wish Diesel had the Tak Sakaguchi (*Versus* star) tactic of knocking her the fuck out so the scenes wouldn't be as torturing. It seems that Mathieu Kassovitz has what I like to call *The Romero Syndrome*. He creates a film that generates a lot of buzz amongst the media circuit, and as the screening date looms closer, he realizes how horrible the film actually is. Cue the rage targeting the studio system for screwing up "The Director's Vision." This has not been the only film to directly blame Fox for vandalism. It seems Fox has been under fire for attempting to screw up *Wolverine* and *Watchmen*. *Babylon A.D.* wasn't too bad, that is until the second half. The first half is like a really generic sci-fi action film that has awkward fore-shadowing and situations and styles that try to give Kassovitz's films that edgy French feel. That is, with all the attempted parkour going on and graffiti. Then there's the case of incredibly embarrassing product placement as in the almost-apocalyptic future, we're still stuck on *Coke Zero* and *Playstation*. Point is, the fatality performed on *Babylon A.D.* was the last half of the film. The beginning created the illusion of a moderate or at least enjoyable major motion picture, but the film has dug its own grave. R.I.P. *Babylon A.D.* and Mathieu Kassovitz's career. You may have created *The Crimson Rivers* and *La Haine*, but damn if you fucking suck at creating entertainment.

-mAQ

FRITT VILT II

Mats Stenberg (2008)

Allow a bit of superficial distant relativity for but a minute. The world of music has been captivating me recently after viewing *Fritt Vilt* and the sequel counterpart. It seems that verses bring about strict flashbacks to these films and the story of the "snowman." From *Rapider than Horsepower* to *Wu-Tang Clan*, simple rhymes reciprocate with theories and in turn elevate the experience of *Fritt Vilt II* even further than imagined. I've beckoned the idea of a sympathetic character system since the birth of horror but only recently has my request has been answered - no thanks to disposable trash destined to perish as formulaic and contrived studio-funded contraptions shallower than playing a game of *Mouse Trap* with someone with down-syndrome. Picking up where the last film left up (Spoilers for "virgins"), we find ourselves viewing a close-knit community with the main focus on a hospital and police station prior to their inception of a certain traumatized Jannicke [Note to self: pronounced almost like Hanukkah.] After explaining to the police what happened to her friends and the killer, they discover the frozen corpses and bring them back into the morgue along with the killer. We soon discover that her hectic nightmare is not over and has been jump started into life once more with seasoned experience in resurrection all in part from his stillbirth as a fetus. As for the respectful precognitive ideal that all sequels are utterly incompetent, *Fritt Vilt II* awards many more enjoyable factors accounted for than the first film but doesn't build as much of a claustrophobic environment with the dark halls of a hospital. The tension is there but it isn't exactly as potent in the second. Consider this with the likes of *28 Weeks Later* which took a similar formula and immersed the audience into a much more detailed and enjoyable environment of prosthetic gore being exercised freely and often over indulgently. The character of the Snowman isn't explored as feverishly as the previous but shallow water is merely rippled into by the fist of an omniscient scribe that further spreads his evil legacy. He's simply someone who was born into unhappiness and murder. While I can't blame his parents, I can't exactly blame him either. The normal innocence is devoured by a merciless soul destined to perish. I wouldn't say the Snowman is entirely unreachable but luck be towards you tapping into his lucid persona. He murders without remorse and there is scarcely any sight of vacant emotion. For fan boys still groping up onto Kane Hodder, a new hulking figure of horror has emerged from the wintry hills of Norway. His eyes aren't hollow but resonate with indestructible fear and invoke a cold color aided by the divine whites of the backdrop. For a certain unproposed reason, I feel myself drawn into this narrow void of a alternate reality lead by Ingrid Bolsø Berdal. Her defined features strike up beauty in what is known as a feminine movement in cinema. Over all the Jane Austen adaptations, a single figure slowly erects in a plague-filled wasteland feebly wielding a shot-

FRITT VILT II

gun. A woman of power some might say, a simple light of a to-be sex symbol others might claim. Either or, I believe she has a prominent and bright future ahead of her; hopefully not as bleak as the ones she partakes in. Fritt Vilt II is a masterwork on terms of hand-me-down reimagining on part of the cinematic horror medium. I'd second guess this film to metaphysical oblivion had I not seen something dim and special in the first film. The decision to not continue this series past the second is a brave and audacious move on part of Ingrid Bolsø Berdal. Her commitment to a solid quasi-franchise is a sign of blessing on behalf of "selling out" successes. Conceding upon this sequel will leave you in tattered shambles. With all cinema, continuity errors can be uncovered and motives can be strongly doubted. Fritt Vilt II is a force to be reckoned with. It will shock you, leave you in awe, and build on an already strong running series starter. This short horror catalog comes highly certified as one of the few Norwegian classics.

-mAQ

THE WITCH WHO CAME FROM THE SEA

Matt Cimber (1976)

If Andy Warhol's failed assassin Valerie Solanas—the bull-dyke author of the infamously moronic SCUM Manifesto (“Society for Cutting Up Men”) and would-be-filmmaker (indeed, one of the reasons she shot the pop-con-artist is because she believe he stole her script)—had been a fan of ‘fun in the sun’ and made an exploitation film before she died a deranged bum, it would probably resemble the vaguely artsy fartsy and hysterically melodramatic video nasty *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* (1976). Directed by Jayne Mansfield's Judaic one-time-husband/baby daddy Matt Cimber—a filmmaker who, among other things, dabbled in racially insensitive porn via *Africanus Sexualis* (*Black Is Beautiful*) (1970) and once directed both Orson Welles and Stacy Keach in the work *Butterfly* (1982)—penned by semi-talented Roger Corman screenwriter Robert Thom (*Bloody Mama*, *Death Race 2000*), and shot by Halloween (1978) cinematographer Dean Cundey (who would go on to shoot various other John Carpenter flicks like *Escape From New York*, as well as blockbusters like the *Back to the Future* trilogy), this rather curious piece of celluloid trash assuredly transcends the brazen banality of typical exploitation cinema, as a sometimes genuinely creepy tale about a crazed cunt with decidedly debilitating daddy issues who gets a kick out of castrating the cocks of unsuspecting musclemen and related alpha types. Featuring a pretentious reference to Early Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli's iconic 1486 painting *The Birth of Venus*, heavy-handed symbolism, half-decent acting performances, and rather lacking in gratuitous sex and violence, *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* is certainly not the kind of work that will act as a quick fix to the sort of gorehound cinophile who gets a hard-on from seeing buckets of blood and guts Guido exploitation flicks, as it is a psychologically castrating flick where graphic murder and mayhem take a backseat to fierce female mental illness. Indeed, like what you might expect if Fassbinder suffered brain damage after snorting too much coke and penned a script that he had the slightly more talented heterosexual brother of Andy Milligan direct, Cimber's conspicuously crappy yet strangely captivating work is like a feminist flick for white trash female serial killers who have watched one too many soap operas (indeed, I can certainly see Aileen Wuornos masturbating to the film). Featuring an aberrant anti-heroine of the severely scatter-brained sort who literally and figuratively cuts men down to size (in fact, the film's tagline is: “Molly really knows how to cut men down to size!”), *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* is certainly not the seaside supernatural horror flick that one would probably assume it is due to its totally misleading title and absurdly sensational, if not somewhat aesthetically pleasing, poster art. Mixing elements of hagsploitation, the old school Hollywood ‘woman's film’ genre, bargain bin psychedelia, and pseudo-Hitchcockian thrills and chills, *The Witch Who Came from the Sea*

THE WITCH WHO CAME FROM THE SEA

might be one of the most grotesque dramas ever made, but it certainly seems like a Max Ophüls flick when compared to similarly themed filmic filth like *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978).

30-something-year-old unmarried waitress Molly (played Millie Perkins, who is probably best known for playing the eponymous star of George Stevens' classic 1959 holy-caust propaganda flick *The Diary of Anne Frank*) loves telling her young nephews romantic stories about her sea captain father who she absurdly believes became lost at sea because, "He was perfect...too good to live on land," but there is more to her stories than she would care to admit. Molly's overweight and seemingly perennially disgruntled sister Cathy (Vanessa Brown) has slightly less nostalgic memories regarding their long dead father, as she describes him as a "drunk bum" and "evil bastard," among other not-so-nice things. As it turns out, Molly was routinely raped by her father when she was just a preteen child and she developed the whole fantastic 'sea captain' story to save herself from going completely insane. Of course, as a woman who fantasizes about the grizzly deaths of beefy body builders while having a nice day on the beach with her nephews, Molly is a ticking time bomb of murderous misandry and if there is anything she hates more than men, it is men's members. Indeed, Molly hates man-meat so much that after seducing two professional football players—a negro and equally braindead honky—and beginning a miscegenation-based ménage à trios involving weed and bondage, she slices off both of the unlucky athletes' dongs and gongs, thereupon resulting in their emasculating deaths. Of course, being a crazed little creature who unconsciously utilizes delusion and denial as a means of self-preservation, Molly does not remember fatally castrating the two football players, though a heavy burden seems to be weighing down on her forsaken soul. Due to her reasonably attractive appearance and petite body, Molly is told by her sister Cathy that she should become a stripper, but the batshit crazy broad refuses to because, as she aggressively states, "I'm not going to show my ass and tits for the sake of a tip." A fuck-up at virtually everything she does aside from castrating cocks and lying to herself and everyone around her, Molly is always late for work, but her swarthy old fart boss—a fellow with the quite fitting name 'Long John' (played by Lonny Chapman, who appeared in various old Hollywood classics, including Elia Kazan's 1956 Tennessee Williams adaptation *Baby Doll* and Hitchcock's *The Birds*)—is also her fuckbuddy/father-figure, so she gets away with it. Despite taking advantage of a clearly mentally perturbed not-so-young woman, Long John unquestionably cares very much for Molly and does what he can to deter her further derangement, but of course, as anyone knows who has ever had to deal with mentally perturbed people regularly, there is only so much he can do to keep the murderess at bay (after all, Molly is an ocean kind of girl).

When Molly somehow manages to crash a party inhabited by a bunch of pompous and superficial Hollywood snobs, she happens upon a reproduction

painting of Botticelli's Birth of Venus, which she becomes completely entranced by. Molly is told by the man throwing the party regarding the image of Venus, "She's a witch...come out of the sea [...] Venus was born in the sea. Her father was a god...they cut off his balls...his sperm dropped into the ocean. The sea was knocked up. Venus was the kid." Of course, as someone who loves cutting off balls, Molly states to the party host regarding the Venus painting, "She's not a witch, she's beautiful." Naturally, before she knows it, Molly is trying to bite off the party host's boner. Surprisingly, the host manages to get away with his accoutrements intact, but the partygoers accuse him of attempting to attack Molly, as he had to smack her around a little bit while attempting to get away from her, thus slightly injuring her in the process. After Molly is injured, a dashing TV commercial actor comes to her rescue and pretends that he is some sort of hero. Of course, as someone who largely lives in a fantasy world of television, Molly becomes obsessed with the actor, especially when she sees him in a shaving razor commercial and schizophrenically believes she hears him say, "Why don't you shave me you hot sweet little bitch," as he begins to slit his own throat. Of course, Molly eventually kills the actor, but not before hacking off his naughty bits. Naturally, when Long John wakes up next to Molly and sees that she is covered in blood, he becomes more than a little bit suspicious of her dubious behavior. After being questioned regarding her actions, Molly eventually confesses to committing the killings, ridiculously stating regarding the belated hack TV actor, "I guess I did kill him. Why did I do that? He was so beautiful. I think, I don't know...Did he love me? He did...a little bit." As depicted in a flashback scene, Molly's father not only repeatedly raped her, but he also died on top of her at the end of coitus after suffering an orgasm-induced heart attack, thus ultimately causing the loony lady to equate sex with death. It is also revealed that Molly's father had the same topless mermaid tattoo as she does (which she gets about midway through the film from a creepy gypsy pirate dude whose face is covered in terrible tats). During the last scene of the film, Molly envisions herself being pulled out to sea in a wooden raft in an allegorical scenario reflecting her isolation from reality. Indeed, in the end, Molly's transformation from sullen sea bitch to schizophrenic sea witch is complete.

More psycho-whore-horror than mere mindless bargain bin exploitation, *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* is ultimately more offensive due to its low-budget kitschy handling of rather serious topics like incest, child abuse, post-traumatic stress, and mental illness than due to its depiction of a crazed cunt who gets her rocks off by cutting off cocks. Of course, it is also probably in poor taste that an actress best known for her debut childhood role as Anne Frank in the Academy Award winning film *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959) is featured portraying a man-hating murderess of the cock-chopping sort who gets involved in threesomes with alpha-buck negroes (apparently, Millie Perkins agreed to star in the film to support her screenwriter husband Robert Thom), but that is

THE WITCH WHO CAME FROM THE SEA

also one of the film's greatest charms, as an exploitation film on steroids featuring Hollywood royalty. To add to the singular sleaziness, the film's casting director, George "Buck" Flower (who also plays a detective in the film), cast his own preteen daughter Verkina Flower to portray anti-heroine Molly as a child during the father-daughter rape scenes. Of course, as a film directed by Matt Cimber—a man whose greatest claim to fame is probably being responsible for directing the first American hardcore porn flick, *He & She* (1970), to receive national distribution—*The Witch Who Came from the Sea* was never destined to be a work of high celluloid art. Despite its decidedly dreary and disconcerting subject matter, the film also features a couple of moments of genuinely humorous comic relief, especially during a scene where a busybody white trash (non)babe remarks, "All football players are faggots... Closet queens." An aberrant (anti)Electra Complex piece that maliciously molests Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) and semi-cleverly cannibalizes the culturally confused Mishima adaptation *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea* (1976) starring Kris Kristoferson, Cimber's trash-with-class 'masterpiece' is indubitably a provocative and reasonably original celluloid work lost in a cinematic sea of mostly forgettable exploitation and celluloid sleaze. Undoubtedly, if there is an exploitation film that can make you feel guilty about liking exploitation films, it is most certainly *The Witch Who Came from the Sea*. Indeed, for better or worse, Cimber's largely forgotten film is certainly a cream of the crop piece of work when it comes to video nasties, as a certifiably sick flick that will have lesser men grabbing their gonads in pain.

-Ty E

PUTRID SEX OBJECT

Matt McKay (2006) If at all, you've seen this as a shock site that your friends have linked you to. Funny, cause that's how I stumbled across it. Thistle Harlequin is a professional body piercer and the feverish star of a little known short film entitled Putrid Sex Object. This title doesn't skip around or toy with metaphors. It is exactly what it is. A lonely transvestite crawls around an abandoned house in search of something unknown. Instead, What he/she finds is a horse's head ripe from being skinned. The events that unfold are not for anyones eyes. He proceeds to skull fuck the poor animals head while covered in blood and pieces of decaying flesh. He begins to furiously masturbate using the goo from the decapitated head as lubrication for his forbidden pleasures. Meanwhile, we all stare at the screen in extreme disgust. The film itself is eerily close to that of Nekro; a film in which a woman is dragged through a lonely house only to be at the mercy of a serial killer. I feel that Putrid Sex Object is the superior vision with both films in mind. Nekro used the score and sound effects to an incredibly noisy and annoying use but PSO used heavy frequencies to pound our ears and leave us vulnerable for what was to come next. Depending on what this film is attempting to do, It either fails or becomes a landmark in extreme cinema. Putrid Sex Object could never be art for it is too audacious, but as a sexual piece of pseudo-anthro deterrent towards any form as sexuality, it works. Thistle H. has huge balls and a bear trap stomach for performing these lewd sexual acts on film. I honestly don't know whether I should congratulate him or fear him. Putrid Sex Object is an extreme exercise in unbridled filth. In other words; a must see. Interview with Thistle Harlequin

-mAQ

CLOVERFIELD
CLOVERFIELD

Matt Reeves (2008)

Cloverfield is a film in disguise. It is primarily known for the story, which is a creature ripping the living shit out of Manhattan, but it is much more than that. It is a beautiful love story. This is the part where i tell you not to judge it before you see it. Such an event would only create mass hysteria and that is exactly what we are treated to. Friendships will be challenged and normal socialites will be thrown into the middle of a chaotic environment with 0% survival rate.

This film is shown through first person. Rob is a douche bag. We know this. He is a pompous ass living in New York in his flat. He is a recently appointed Vice President of a company and is being sent to Japan. We meet such characters as his best friend Hud, who is a bit slow and brings a lot of humor to the film. Kind of charming actually. Hud is in love with Marlena and to be honest, so am i. Such a sweet pretty girl. I sympathize for her the most. What starts off as a going away party quickly turns into a nightmarish situation which had me on the edge of my seat. It would be an understatement to say that Cloverfield completely revived the monster genre. First there was King Kong and Godzilla, then there was The Host, and now we are presented with Cloverfield. This film is so far from any normal monster film. We have The Host which was almost similar due to its original creature design but did bring something new. Family dysfunction. Like this, Cloverfield brings paranoia, love, tragedy, and fear and blends it into a horrific smoothie of a horrifying nature. Going into the theater today, i didn't know what to expect. Hype definitely is a killer. It cause Snakes on a Plane to bomb and did so also with the American Godzilla. This film delivers all that is promised and more. Chances are that if you do not like the trailers, you won't like the film. You shouldn't even bother. Now being a film about an unstoppable love filmed with an American Eagle cast, we have the second obstacle. The Cloverfield monster. Well, it is truly a sight to behold. I refuse to give it away. Such fear can only be described in comparison of when we first see the killer shark in JAWS. It is big. It is bad. It has teeth. It has multiple appendages and it bites. Little creatures fall off of its back that resemble the Arachnids in Starship Troopers. Of course, no monster film is complete without its roar. This one's is ear shattering. Many reviews i have read claimed that it was too noisy or it was just a stupid film. I look at it this way. If you are going to watch a film about a monster destroying a city with military counter-attacks, you'll be sadly mistaken if you think it's going to be a "hush hush" film. Surrounding the viral marketing, there is two things at hand. One, J.J. Abrams is fucking with us, leading the masses of ignorant people into believing it is Voltron, Cthulu, Dodo, or a Slusho shirt that was a nod to his hit television show "ALIAS". Not many people realize this and they assume too much. Cloverfield is the most over analyzed film since Eraserhead. This film also touches down on political issues,

such as all the great monster films of the silver screen and beyond do. So, we have a blossoming love story surrounded by a sugar coating that is unstoppable and he an incredible appetite for destruction. What can go wrong? Not much. This film's final moments are deeply heartbreaking and past that we hear horrifying news and a subliminal scene in the background that might hint where the monster comes from. What's even more horrifying? The fact that creatures like this could exist in the darkest depths of the sea. Cloverfield is a near perfect film. Think of it as the first Dogme 95 monster film. Lars Von Triers would be proud.

-Maq

CLOVERFIELD
CLOVERFIELD

Matt Reeves (2008)

WARNING: THIS IS INTENDED ONLY FOR VIEWERS OF THE FILM ALREADY. MASSIVE SPOILER ALERTCloverfield is a very different sort of movie. Monsters grace the screen all the time and never leave such an impact, let alone one that can be viewed so extensively. This film is known for its viral marketing campaign and its feverish fan base spreading rumors about shit they heard from their cousin who works with Paramount. Spreading from the amount of letters in the title, Slusho, Cthulu, Dodo, or simply Voltron, there is no limit to how silly these seem. The one I immediately dismissed due to the nature of these claims turns out to fit like a mocking piece of a puzzle. Slusho, the faux-slurpee company based in Japan, was on Abram's hit show ALIAS. Being seen on Jason's shirt in the teaser, everyone went frantic. Claiming it was a lion or slurpee crazy beast going rampant in NY. I honestly couldn't figure out which was more exaggerated, the fact of a monster attacking NY or the rabid fan base. Many things struck me about the film. It opens with a DHARMA symbol. For those of you who don't know what that is, it is a symbol used with Abrams' other hit show LOST. This show has to do with unexplainable things happening to the crew of a downed ship. Could this be a link to the disturbance in NY with the creature? Another thing I noticed was the idea that there could be two monsters in NY. When Hud is filming the TV, we see the monster at the same time in different looking places, one having a fin-like back and the other having a slender tail. It would also explain the noticeable distance the creature traveled in such a small amount of time. Being in Midtown and destroying a bridge at the same time would even make The Flash exhausted. Due to the fact its body lice wasn't falling off everywhere and its many different limbs, one can come to the conclusion that there are more than one, or it is evolving fast. Adapting to oxygen must be a bitch. On the official flash site of Cloverfield here <http://www.1-18-08.com/>, we are given many pictures with hidden meanings. The newest additions show a fishing boat and dead beached whales, gored and mutilated. If you look at the time stamp, this would have happened near the morning. Leaving a new coming monster unnoticed while the government prepares the attack. Another thing I noticed was how you sometimes see claws and in other scenes you see its suction cup like fingers. Notice the claw marks in the Statue of Liberty. Weird, much. Reeves stated in an interview regarding the monster this. "The key to it is that the monster was a baby. The monster was suffering from separation anxiety and was absolutely disoriented and pissed, "where's mommy?" and terrified. That was the most important aspect of the creature. Not only was he furious and in a rage but he was scared, because to me there's nothing scarier than something huge that's spooked. If you're at the circus and the elephants are going nuts you don't want to be near them. We talked

with Neville about the idea of how when a horse gets spooked you see the whites under the bottom of its eye. He fleshed out those sorts of details. We talked about wanting the monster to be different in that it was white. All these different aspects, which were important to us. It developed in many different ways and it came down to what Neville was doing which was amazing.” This could explain many things. It could explain there being two monsters (I.E: Mother and Son/Daughter). Separation anxiety. That sort of thing. It can easily be disproven but I love to imagine that during all the commotion, another creature could easily sneak around. The other topic is Slusho and the mysterious falling craft at the end of the film. Well, Rob works for a company in Japan (Hence his going away party) and it is obvious he works for the company responsible for Slusho. Enter Tagruato <http://tagruato.jp/>, the Japanese company responsible for the drilling of the deep-sea nectar used in the popular drink. This could mean a couple things. One view of this means that Rob knew about the creature’s existence. Sort of far fetched, but if you are the Vice President of a company, you would have a high enough pay grade for such information. Another link to that is the new four part manga series only been released in Japan now. At the end of the first volume, we are given this haunting last still. A Tagruato ship dragging something.... with eyes. I’ll be the first to admit that Rob seemed a little bit unphased by the appearance of a monster. The fact that the story of a baby being disturbed by a deep sea drilling operation fits the monster genre perfectly. We got the politics. Dueling companies Tagruato and the anti-terror Tidowave Company. <http://tidowave.com/Wow>, danger to our environment. Seems to all be coming together. Way to get raped by Mother Nature though. Tidowave’s last entry before being shut down was on 01-17-08 Coincidence? Next thing is the falling object in the background near the end. Many people claim it is the creature, coming from space. This is theoretically impossible. Something of it’s size would create massive tidal waves all across the Atlantic ocean and result in the immediate expedition to discover what it was, leaving preemptive time to evacuate once noticing meteor containing the hell beast. Tagruato’s website stated their satellite was destroyed and crashed to earth, thus filling more of the gap in this viral timeline. “Did you see the thing in the last shot? In the final shot there’s a little something, and I don’t wanna say what it is. The final shot before the titles. The stuff at Coney Island, there’s a little something there and I don’t want to give it away ’cause the fun is sort of to find it, but I will say this: there’s a funny thing, you look at the shot and until you see it you don’t see it and you really don’t see it and obviously you don’t ’cause none of you have seen it, but once you see it you’ll never stop seeing it.” At the end credits, if you reverse the recorded message, you hear someone barely get out the words “It’s Still Alive”. So the creature did not die. Many people are probably wondering why the hell it won’t die. Well, if I was housed in a deep-sea crevice and withstood thousands of pounds of pressure, I could imagine being able to withstand a beating. I’m

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starting to actually feel bad for this creature. So there you have it. Two murder beasts and all. This is just my way of looking at this. You can easily tell there is more than meets the eye. Ending Voice: <http://boomp3.com/m/bd034dfca370>

-Maq

JOHNNY SUNSHINE: MAXIMUM VIOLENCE

Matt Yeager (2008) Ah, what do you know? A surprise Brain Damage film. When I read the plot and saw the cover art, I felt some sort of promise wash over my body. Half way into hating the film, I discovered that it is a Brain Damage film so my disappointment is instantly explained. It doesn't make me want to cry anymore. Rather than having an interesting vision, the director tries to fuse elements from Carlton Mellick III novellas and The Running Man. Johnny Sunshine is a female snuff performer and zombie killer who entertains her boss Max, with snuff films . The city was walled up three years after a zombie epidemic and the scum is on the outside of the walls. After filming a couple of horrible implausible torture scenes, the tables turn when her boss conspires to put an end to Johnny for the ultimate snuff film. Johnny Sunshine opens up very stylishly with animated caricatures that litter the screen. If they were aiming for a comic book feel to the opening, they succeeded, but that's all that really works other than the occasional brutal effect and the wonderful scarce nudity. I think this is the first Brain Damage film I've seen that has nudity. For a company specializing in "UNRATED" films, you'd think they'd exercise that freedom a tad bit more. My main problem, other than the horrible cinematography, is the main character Johnny. The dialogue is forced to sound like a neo-noir dame from hell and fails miserably. I don't mind the occasional female warrior, but I'd like the essence of stage presence, let alone a decent actress. Johnny Sunshine could have been better played by Will Ferrel in drag. At least then the character would fit the retarded spasms of generation X techno. I chose not to finish this film for several reasons. The very idea of life existing outside a shelled in city is hard enough to believe, but for them to have working power and a very nice desktop in which they frequently smoke and enjoy many other luxuries is beyond me. Now I know, "You can't expect a film to be realistic. Especially when it has to do with zombies!" You're right. But I hated 10,000 B.C. for the same reasons and look how better off I am. Johnny Sunshine: Maximum Violence is a failure as a bizarro film in general. It is bacteria in a cesspool, converging other ideas into some scum fuck film project that probably could be directed by a 12 year old with a taste for Friday the 13th films. Other than the random breast shot, this film is completely worthless and a waste of time. I went past my tolerance at the 45 minute mark. I for one fear that you will beat my high score. Avoid this film like the plague.

-mAQ

KICK-ASS
KICK-ASS

Matthew Vaughn (2010)

I have never understood the fascination with comic books and superheroes, especially with people over the age of 10. One must be very desperate for complete and utter escapism if they fantasize about being some flying ubermensch that sports homoerotic tights. After all, if one is truly looking for escapism, why not fantasize about a dream that could actually come true, like being the next Vincent Gallo or Klaus Barbie. In the recent film *Kick-Ass*, a four-eyed virgin weasel named Dave decides to make his superhero dream come true by wearing an aesthetically repulsive costume (to match his equally repulsive body) and fighting a bunch of criminals that end up deservedly kicking his self-righteous fanboy fanny. Despite being a limp-wristed pussy, a bystander records Dave aka “Kick-Ass” in a moment of dubious heroism that helps make him an internet phenomenon and local superhero.

Potential Sodomy Victims

Hollywood is very big on promoting philistine escapism and *Kick-Ass* certainly delivers in that regard. Like most Hollywood films, *Kick-Ass* manages to combine the petty problems that Americans have (in this case, a virgin who always gets his ass kicked) with wacky and absurd solutions to these problems. For example, whilst being beaten by a large Negro, a little white girl (*Hit-Girl*) magically saves dilettante superturd *Kick-Ass* from certain death. Also, like many Hollywood films (a legacy that ultimately began with Shirley Temple), *Kick-Ass* sexualizes the prepubescent *Hit-Girl*. Not only can *Hit-Girl* single-handedly beat up a room of barbaric Negro criminals but she can also seduce grown men with her mini-skirt. *Hit-Girl's* Father *Big-Daddy* (I am sure this name is supposed to have a typically Hollywood Freudian connotation) has no doubt trained her well.

This little girl has grown a deadly phallus

Kick-Ass is certainly another sick and clever attempt by the degenerate perverts at Hollywood to demoralize children at a very young age. Despite most young children being punished by their parents for even reciting the title of the film, *Kick-Ass* is no doubt a film geared towards the youngest of viewers. The *Shrek* films are full of somewhat subtle sexual innuendos but *Kick-Ass* goes all the way with a little girl yelling “Cunt” and literal Kleenex-filled masturbatory fantasies. Perversion aside, why would anyone want to see a little girl and a high school weakling as superheroes in the first place? I have fond memories of watching Tim Burton's *Batman* in elementary school as I saw *Batman* as an admirable superhero that as a child I could look up to. Do contemporary grade school children really look up to little girls and high school nerds as real heroes with strong moral principles? I guess it would be considered ageism and sexism for young boys and girls to look up to a large muscular man as a superhero.

On the Left: The Ugliest Villain in Film History

When it comes down to it, Kick-Ass is an expensive pile of cinematic garbage expertly concocted and executed by the culture-distorting globalists that manufacture films in Hollywood. The message of the film is that criminals are bad but even a little girl and a teenage loser (who pathetically pretends he is gay as a way to get close to a girl) can defeat them if they have a strong enough will to moral power. Personally, I found Kick-Ass ultimately lacking in fulfillment as the sickly-looking Israelite from Superbad, who plays the Villain Red Mist, did not die a miserable death via gassing or being burned alive (this death was reserved for everyone's favorite Hollywood psycho: Nicholas Cage). Instead, one can expect another chapter in the phantasmagorical-schlock Kick-Ass franchise.

-Ty E

THE FREE WILL
THE FREE WILL

Matthias Glasner (2006)

I have certainly seen more fucked flicks in my relatively short lifetime than in the combined lives of everyone in an extended Catholic Mexican family, so I do not feel like I am exaggerating when I state that the contemporary German film *Der Freie Wille* (2006) aka *The Free Will* directed by Hamburg-bred auteur Matthias Glasner (*This Is Love*, *Gnade* aka *Mercy*) is easily one of the most, if not the most, authentically dejecting, disturbing, and emotionally displeasing films ever made. While the masters of German New Cinema like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog, and Peter Handke revolutionized post-WWII Teutonic cinema by directing decidedly dark, depressing, pessimistic, and oftentimes cynical works with uniquely unhappy endings that would probably influence less stronger viewers to commit suicide, Glasner has done the unthinkable by taking cinematic *weltschmerz*, melancholia, angst, and hatred to even more forbidden and forlorn realms that make one think that contemporary Germans have to be the most uniquely unhappy and emotionally disturbed people in the world. Thankfully, unlike the self-satisfied cinematic horror shows of Austrian director Michael Haneke, *The Free Will* has a certain empathy and ‘humanity’ to it that reminds the viewer that it was not directed by some sneering megalomaniac auteur who merely uses cinema as a platform to express his bourgeoisie-bred sense of superiority and misanthropy, as well as cold and detached cynicism. A nearly 3-hour-long art-house rape epic shot mostly from the perspective of a misogynistic serial rapist (what Germans call a ‘*Triebtäter*’) who attempts to reintegrate into society after spending over 9 long years institutionalized in a psychiatric rehabilitation center, Glasner’s work dares not only to force the viewer to empathize with one of the most hated sorts of human monsters, but also makes them take a deep and darker look at themselves. Shot in a voyeuristic realist fashion (many of the ‘extras’ are actual real people) on digital video yet at the same time considerably ‘cinematic’ in terms of its essence and rhythm, the somewhat ironically titled work demonstrates through random everyday circumstances and situations that one’s free will can only go so far when internal demons and pernicious pathological impulses prove to be much stronger. A tragic dark romance starring (as well as co-written and co-produced by) popular mainstream kraut actor Jürgen Vogel—a proud proletarian with rather fucked up teeth who, like his buddy Glasner, started on in the independent cinema world and has gone on to star in ethno-masochistic Hollywood-like agitprop pieces like Margarethe von Trotta’s *Rosenstraße* (2003) and the big celluloid turd *Die Welle* (2008) aka *The Wave*—*The Free Will* is a potent reminder that Germany can still produce dark masterpieces, even with big stars playing the lead role, as a work that makes the urban sexual savagery of Gaspar Noé’s *Irréversible* (2002) seem hopelessly contrived by comparison. The

unnerving and ultimately exhausting story of a 'reformed' sexual predator who hates women that starts a steamy love affair with an assumed victim of sexual abuse who hates men, Glasner's film demonstrates that even the most fucked up of perverts can find a 'soul mate' of sorts, as the victimized are oftentimes looking for new victimizers.

Theo Stoer (Jürgen Vogel) is a perennially pissed off and slightly overweight young man who has very little tolerance for 'laidback' people and after he is called back inside to work while taking a cigarette break at the beachside restaurant that he works out and notices that his coworkers are doing nothing but screwing around and talking about frivolous bullshit, he flies into a violent rage, physically assaults a young comrade, smashes a bunch of glasses, and storms out of the building while hatefully saying to himself regarding co-employees, "butt-fuckers." While driving away from his work in his old car, Theo notices a young lady (Anna Brass) in body-accentuating spandex riding her bike, so he passes her, parks his car, and waits for her so he can release all of his anger by sexually pillaging her. Indeed, upon catching up to her, Theo violently knocks the woman off her bike, gives her a couple brutal blows to her face, ties her hands and legs together, strips off her clothes, rapes her violently while calling her a "cunt," gives her a couple more blows to the face, and continues to rape her all the more violently until he reaches the sexual and psychological relief that he was looking for. Ironically, it is Theo's concern for the young lady when she attempts to escape and hurts herself that gets him caught because, after going to get a first aid kit to attend to her wounds, the rape victim is rescued by a good sanitarian. Unable to escape after the police discover his car, Theo hides out in the woods that night like a scared animal being hunted, but he is eventually caught and beaten by the cops. Of course, being in liberal Germany, Theo is not sent to prison to get his rectum reamed, but to a psychiatric rehabilitation center. Of course, as *The Free Will* ultimately demonstrates, there is no such thing as true sexual rehabilitation.

Flash forward 9 years and 4 months later and a much thinner and older Theo is standing before a parole board who he successfully convinces that he is 'rehabilitated' enough to be given back his freedom and to be reintegrated back into mainstream society. Although freed, Theo is forced to live under probation in the Mülheim-based apartment of a lanky and somewhat 'used-up' looking guy named Sascha (André Hennicke), who ultimately becomes the only friend and mentor of the 'lapsed' rapist. Naturally, Sascha warns Theo right from the get go, "This is gonna be fucking hard for you. So prepare yourself." When not going to the mall to buy really uncool clothing, Theo attempts to suppress his warped sexual urges by regularly practicing strict exercise regiments, as well as getting involved with karate with Sascha at a local gym where he eventually finds himself in a awkward situation while sitting naked in a sauna with an equally unclad chick with big bosoms (who was apparently played by a sound assistant

THE FREE WILL

of the film). Eventually, Theo goes job hunting and despite revealing to his prospective employer, Claus Engelbrecht (Manfred Zapatka), that he has spent over 9 years in psychiatric detention for committing “rape in conjunction with grievous bodily” on three different occasions, he is hired to work at a printing warehouse. Of course, if Claus realized that his new employee would eventually be starting a romantic relationship with his beloved daughter Netti (Swiss actress Sabine Timoteo), he probably never would have hired him in the first place. In the meantime, Theo becomes dangerously obsessed with a waitress at a pizzeria, confessing to Sascha, “The problem is, I think something’s brewing. It isn’t so strong, but...” and “Sure, I like her [the waitress], but somehow I don’t like her either. Understand?”

Meanwhile, it is revealed that Theo’s employer Claus has a rather dubious relationship with his daughter Netti, with incest being hinted at more than once during the film. Naturally, Claus becomes rather upset when Netti, who does bookkeeping for her father’s company, moves out of his home and into a new apartment. Just having broken up with her boyfriend and living on her own for the first time, Netti has just started a new stage in her life and her creepy father Claus cannot handle it, as he weeps like a little girl upon his little girl’s decision to fly the coop for good (in fact, she eventually breaks off all contact with him). As for Theo, he finds himself in trouble when his only friend Sascha decides to quit his job to move to Berlin, as he loses the sole psychological support that he so desperately needs. One day, Netti approaches Theo, who she once met at her father’s printing factory, at a grocery store to borrow some money to buy some corn, thus beginning their rather strange relationship. Indeed, that same night, Theo meets Netti at a café to get paid back the money he lent her and she immediately confesses to him, “I don’t like men. I don’t want anything to do with ‘em.” Needless to say, Netti is taken aback when Theo responds to her bitchy remark by saying, “That’s convenient. I’m not very fond of women either.” While Netti accuses Theo of using tricks on her, she realizes he is not joking when he tells her it is no joke, zips up his jacket, and walks away without saying anything else to her. A somewhat strange girl of the innately introverted sort, Netti hunts down Theo’s phone number and gives him a call even asking him, “Am I disturbing you?” after admitting she searched information for his phone number. For their first ‘official’ date together, Theo and Netti go to see a movie together, but their relationship takes a more ‘passionate’ turn when the little lady intensely beats the rapist while he gives her a karate lesson, as you can tell she has a lot of pent up hatred and really gets off to hurting men. After the karate lesson, Netti confesses that she is “going away for a while” to seaside Belgium to do an internship at a “terrific chocolate factory,” thus putting their not quite blossomed relationship in indefinite limbo.

When Theo stalks a sales assistant all the way back to her apartment and nearly rapes her as she sleeps, he decides it will probably be a good idea to go

to Belgium to visit Netti, who is overjoyed by his arrival, though she has a hard time showing it. While it does not take long for them to have sex and begin bonding, Netti is disturbed by Theo's overwhelming loneliness and detachment to the point where she breaks down and starts crying hysterically. After going to a big empty church and hearing a random woman singing "Ava Marie," Theo and Netti more or less fall in love and begin doing banal things that people in love do like shopping at Ikea and eating breakfast together, but all good things must come to an ugly end. When Netti calls Theo one night while she is drunk and says that she will not be home until late because she is hanging out with a male co-employee, the lapsed rapist becomes enraged and eventually ends up violently raping a young chick, who dared to honk her horn at him while he was minding his own business, in her parking garage. Needless to say, things between Theo and Netti take a turn for the worst after that, even though the rapist initially attempts to hide his crime by washing off his dick and pretending everything is normal. Eventually, Theo decides to come clean and tells Netti that "It won't work" and "it's over" because he is a serial rapist. Indeed, after telling her, "I don't love you. You don't know anything. You don't know a single thing!" Theo reveals to Netti that he was locked up for 9 years because, as he states himself, "I raped 3 women. First I beat 'em up, and then I fucked 'em." Needless to say, Netti does not take it well, especially after Theo says, "I don't love you. I hate you!" so she physically attacks her rapist bastard beau while screaming like a wounded wild animal, but he merely kicks her away and heads back to Deutschland.

For the final 30 minutes or so of *The Free Will*, the film takes a different course and the viewer sees everything from the perspective of Netti, who dedicates her time to lurking around and stalking Theo just as he once stalked his victims. After temporarily going back to her father (who she originally cut off all contact to) and sleeping with him in his bed(!), Netti comes up with the absurd idea to meet one of Theo's victims, a discernibly deranged blonde named Anja Schattschneider (Judith Engel). While Anja initially refuses to talk to Netti, she eventually agrees to go with her to a restaurant because she assumes that she is also one of Theo's victims. When Netti absurdly confesses that she is a "friend" of Theo, the conspicuously crazed bitch rape victim follows her into the bathroom, brutally attacks and beats her, pulls down her pants, and sexually assaults her by violently shoving the handle of a toilet bowl brush in her vagina in what is ironically the most disturbing scene of the entire film in a surely sickening scenario where a rape victim becomes the most visceral source of untamed hatred (notably, Glasner has claimed that during his research for the film, he learned that such behavior is not atypical of rape victims, as they develop a lot of pent up hatred as a result of their experiences that they have no outlet for). Of course, being raped with a toilet brush by a meta-bitchy blonde beastess of a rape victim does not stop Netti on her quest to find her rapist lover. Upon learning that

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Theo is living in Berlin with Sascha, Netti heads to the German metropolis and stalks her lover around the city, even sleep outside the door of his apartment building and eventually breaking into his apartment when he is not there. At one point Netti picks up a pair of scissors as if she intends to stab Theo, but her intentions could not be more different. In the end, Netti finds Theo sitting on a beach and tries in vain to stop him from slitting his own wrists, but of course he succeeds and dies in her company as she cries hysterically to the point where snot is gushing out of her nose. Though Theo is dead, Netti stays and holds his corpse as the sun rises, as if her love will bring him back. Of course, in the end, Netti was Theo's last victim, even if he did not actually rape her.

A work with a somewhat ironic yet surely fitting title, *The Free Will* depicts a forsaken yet contemptible man suffering from truly intolerable inner turmoil and plaguing pathologies who knows that his actions are completely sick and perversely preternatural yet lacks the psychological strength and self-control to prevent such savage and unhinged behavior, hence why he opts for suicide, which becomes the one instance where he demonstrates true "free will." Needless to say, Glasner's film is not a naïve piece of liberal swill that expresses that there may indeed be hope for rapists and other sexual perverts, but a flick that takes an uniquely unflattering look at humanity and demonstrates that, although free will might exist, it is, at best, rather limited. Notably, in the audio commentary for the Benten Films DVD release of *The Free Will*, auteur Glasner stated regarding the film: "We felt that we had to make this film. It's not a film you want to make...it's a film you have to make. And you hope that you're rid of it then. We often asked ourselves why we were doing this. Why us? Sometimes I think we [Glasner and Vogel] met so we could make this film." Indeed, Glasner and Vogel had already been working together for a well over a decade before making the *The Free Will*, with the dark no-budget Theo van Gogh-esque crime comedy *Sexy Sadie* (1996) aka *Komm zurück, sexy Sadie* showing no evidence that both men would ever be capable of creating such a uncommonly brutal yet strikingly mature work of drastically dark and devastating cinema. Unquestionably, Vogel was just as much of an 'auteur' of the film as Glasner, as his singular acting performance and co-writing certainly guided the story to the point where the idea of another actor playing the lead role seems totally unthinkable, as his performance is just an innate ingredient of the film as Kurt Raab's was in *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*. In fact, Vogel was so deeply wrapped up in the dark and depraved world of rapist Theo that he forced Glasner, who did not want the character to die at the end, to conclude the film with the character's suicide, stating in the Benten Films DVD audio commentary, "I had to let Theo die because I couldn't stay with him any longer. I had to get him out of my life. It was the right thing to do [...] I won't forget this movie for the rest of my life." Indeed, a piece of malignantly melancholy realist romance-horror that puts the sick post-Auschwitz sadomasochistic love affair between an ex-SS

officer and his ex-victim featured in Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974) to shame is terms of its decidedly disconcerting depiction of lunatic love, *The Free Will* ultimately proves that even the most damaged, detached, and deranged of people can find true love, though whether it ends positively or not is a completely different story. With the original cut apparently running at about 6 hours in length (the director originally hoped that the German TV channel WDR would screen the rape epic in four parts for the mainstream general public!), Glasner's work is certainly a sort of Berlin Alexanderplatz of rape films. While Glasner may not be the next Fassbinder, Herzog, or even Hauff, he certainly made a contemporary masterpiece with *The Free Will* that proves that true Teutonic cinema did not completely die with the capitulation of German New Cinema in 1982 as a result of Rainer Werner's premature death. Of course, unfortunately, Glasner's film also demonstrates that the German collective unconscious is no less foreboding than it was 25 years before, as *The Free Will* is clearly the expression of an absolutely accursed Volksgeist that still feels the physical and psychological rape of the Fatherland by the Red Army in 1945.

-Ty E

THE DESIGNATED VICTIM
THE DESIGNATED VICTIM

Maurizio Lucidi (1971)

As an always easy-to-recognize fellow that starred in groundbreaking cinematic works by such top Occidental arthouse filmmakers as Luchino Visconti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Liliana Cavani, Franco Brocani, Adriaan Dittvoorst, Philippe Garrel, Peter Fleischmann, Étienne O'Leary, Costa-Gavras, Dusan Makavejev, Miklós Jancsó, and Bernardo Bertolucci, French-Corsican actor and sometimes-experimental-filmmaker Pierre Clémenti (*The Leopard*, *Belle de Jour*) was certainly one of the most important and prolific European actors of the mid-1960s through early-1980s (though his career did not stop there) whose resume few other actors could touch in terms of starring in such an eclectic collection of distinguished arthouse masterpieces, so it seems somewhat strange that he would bother to star in a stereotypically sleazy yet stylish Italian Hitchcock rip-off at the height of his career, but he did and naturally I could not help but watch it. Indeed, *The Designated Victim* (1971) aka *La vittima designata* aka *Slam Out* aka *Murder by Design* is a decidedly decadent yet paradoxically thematically 'reactionary' and less than ambiguously gay Guido molestation of Hitchcock's Patricia Highsmith adaptation *Strangers on a Train* (1950) starring Clémenti as an eccentrically effete psychopathic aristocrat that makes Oscar Wilde seem butch in terms of refined effeminacy who attempts to coerce Cuban-American leading man Tomas Milian into "swapping murders." Directed by a relatively unknown and undignified genre hack named Maurizio Lucidi that sometimes used the Hebraic-sounding pseudonym 'Mark Lender' who got his start working as an assistant director on Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964) and who went on to direct the senseless Django clone *Halleluja for Django* (1967) and even a Hebrew-language Italo-Israeli Zionist agitprop piece entitled *Hamisha Yamim B'Sinai* (1969) aka *Five Days in Sinai*, the film is basically *Strangers on a Souped-Up Gondola in Venice* as a work that attempts to combine *Strangers on a Train* and Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971) in a almost completely bloodless yet sometimes visually stunning quasi-giallo form. An inately uneven and sometimes poorly paced work that glaringly drags at the end but ultimately concludes with a provocative twist-ending that even Hitchcock might have admired (though I doubt it), *The Designated Victim* is a tale of sexual and psychological schizophrenia where Clémenti completely steals the entire show as the corrupting killer Count and ultimately makes Mr. Milian seem like a witless hack with nil acting chops by comparison. In fact, aside from the aesthetically soothing scenes of Venice and melodic yet melancholic score by Luis Bacalov, Lucidi's work is ultimately only worth seeing for Monsieur Clémenti's fiercely flamboyant performance as quite possibly the most devastatingly decadent and depraved aristocrat in all of cinema history as a character that makes Helmut Berger's Mad King Ludwig II in Visconti's *Ludwig* (1972) seem rather

restrained. Indeed, in spite of hopeless hack Lucidi's superlatively sophomoric direction and the fact that most of the other characters in the film are not much more than pretty yet plastic ciphers, *The Designated Victim* carries a sort of curious charisma that borders between the unintentionally humorous to the patently pathetic in the form of Clémenti, who completely carries the film as a young cultivated blueblood queen who has a totally preposterous and intangible dream that he ultimately charms and blackmails a weak beta-male designer into carrying out for him. While both the male characters in the film have lady friends, the film ultimately depicts a dark and dysfunctional romance between two very different goombah guys who are both missing something vital in terms of their masculinity (or lack thereof).

Stefano Argenti (Tomas Milian) is an unhappily married workaholic advertising designer from Milan who long ago made the mistake of marrying a woman that he did not love simply because she was rich. Naturally, since he has made a fairly successful career for himself, Stefano no longer needs his fiercely frigid heiress wife, who rather resents her husband's self-earned success. Indeed, Luisa Argenti (Marisa Bartoli) is a soulless rich bitch and she no longer loves her hubby because he is now an increasingly enterprising designer who plans to make millions by starting up his own business. A rather cold and seemingly latently Sapphic Ice Queen, Luisa is different from most women in that she seems to get off on men that are submissive and completely dependent on her and she can't seem to handle being with any fellow that is in the least bit competitive with her. Unfortunately, to start his dream business in Venezuela, Stefano needs to cash shares that he owns, but they are all in his wicked wifey's name and she won't let him cash them, as she wants to keep him a weak and meek cuckold. On top of everything else, Stefano is carrying on a hot and heavy love affair with a much younger French babe with a delectable derriere and equally enticing tits named Fabienne Béranger (Katia Christine). Stefano oftentimes takes his mistress Fabienne on lavish vacations so that they can be completely alone together without the threat of Luisa catching them and during a trip to Venice, the protagonist randomly meets an eccentric longhaired young aristocrat named Count Matteo Tiepolo (Pierre Clémenti) who is as shockingly thin as an anorexic coke-addled French runaway model and who is sporting a creepily colorful weirdo wardrobe that would give Rothschild pawn Russell Brand (who seems like a retarded version of Clémenti's character) a hard-on that includes a purple silk scarf, grey gloves, red beanie, and various pieces of girly jewelry that makes him look like he was given a makeover by a colorblind gypsy tranny. Count Matteo is with a seemingly mute blackhaired babe with a completely blank stare that superficially resembles Morticia A. Addams who looks like she suffered a LSD-induced lobotomy and she is more or less the aristocrat's sex slave, though he has little, if any, real sexual interest in her, especially after Stefano comes into his cockeyed gaze.

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While Stefano soon says goodbye to the Count upon initially meeting him after the two both find themselves eying the same piece of jewelry sold by a Venetian street vendor, the protagonist finds himself bumping into Matteo again a couple more times that day, as if he and his mentally vacant Morticia-esque muse are following him. Upon the third time of bumping into one another, the Count invites Stefano and his mistress on his boat, though he makes Fabienne sit inside the watercraft with his girlfriend so that he can talk privately with the protagonist. Like many unhinged queens, Matteo soon reveals that he is a superficially witty yet also mentally feeble and rather superstitious man that believes in numerology who is addicted to trying new perverse things just for the kick since he is rich and spoiled and thus terribly bored with life. For example, Matteo describes to Stefano how he loaned out his slave “girlfriend” to another man for fun, though it ultimately proved to be just a “passing fancy” that he did “just for the experience.” As the decidedly debauched and superlatively spoiled Count explains in a sassy fashion, “I’m one of those who likes to try everything...for pleasure, for enjoyment” and when Stefano quips, “perhaps the only pleasure you got left is murdering someone,” Matteo gets an idea that will evolve into a murderous obsession. When Matteo learns about Stefano’s problems with his wench of a wife, he offers to kill her in exchange for the protagonist killing his abusive brother. As Matteo explains, his brother thinks he is a “worm” and that “there is only one purpose in his life...preventing me from living mine. He wants to destroy me,” or so he says. While Stefano seems somewhat attracted to Matteo’s proposal, he is too much of a beta-bitch pussy to actually go through with the plan, so the Count begins regularly stalking him around Milan and incessantly brings up his plan. When Stefano still will not budge, the rather pushy Count decides it is time to use more perniciously persuasive means that ultimately turn the protagonist into a semi-reluctant widow who is suspected of coldblooded uxoricide, among other things.

While he has his own personal servile female sex slave, Count Matteo is indubitably a wide receiver on the pink team and his obsession with Stefano clearly has a somewhat overt psycho-sexual dimension that causes the aberrant aristocrat to act in completely desperate and pathetic ways that are typical of lovelorn teenage girls. For example, like a scheming girly girl who wants to have some handsome man come to her ‘rescue’ and flatter her with attention, Matteo comes to Stefano while in a state of anguish and cries about scratch marks on his chest that were apparently caused by his mysterious evil brother, so the overly empathetic protagonist finds himself cleaning his bizarre blueblood bud’s wounds like a husband comforting his wife. Of course, Matteo is merely carrying out a well thought out charade and he has big plans for unwitting pawn Stefano, who clearly underestimates the unhinged Count. Since his wife refuses to cash her shares, Stefano decides to forge her signature so he and his mistress can make their getaway to exotic Venezuela so that they can start a new life together.

While the protagonist does not tell the Count of his intentions, Matteo figures it out on his own and decides to inform Stefano's wife Luisa about her conspiring husband's escape plans and secret mistress. When Luisa confronts Stefano about his mistress and forging her signature she makes sure to rub it into her husband's face that he is a coward who always does things in 'half-measures' (to his credit, Stefano decides to leave his wife some of the money he has stolen, which is evidence to her that he is a weak man) and that if she actually still loved him she would have him arrested. Indeed, unlike a woman and or an exceedingly effeminate faggot like Matteo, Stefano suffers from a 'moral dilemma' regarding murder and that is the main reason why he refuses to "swap murders" with Matteo. At one point in the film, Luisa even gives Stefano the opportunity to kill her but he predictably pussies out. Ultimately, Matteo takes it upon himself to strangle Stefano's wife Luisa to death and then blackmails the protagonist into having to kill his brother by framing him for the crime. To make sure that Stefano has no reasonable alibi for the time when Luisa is murdered, Matteo hires a young German whore named Christina Müller (Alessandra Cardini) to seduce the protagonist and keep him busy for a while. Of course, Matteo has Stefano exactly where he wants him to be, especially after a police inspector named Finzi (Luigi Casellato) becomes convinced that the protagonist is the culprit in the death of Luisa due to the nature of the murder, as well as due to the fact that he had forged his wife's signature so that he could runaway with his mistress to Venezuela.

Undoubtedly, the last half an hour or so of *The Designated Victim* is fairly banal and largely revolves around the mostly unsympathetic protagonist Stefano attempting to find various ways to prove his innocence in regard to his belated wife's death. Ultimately, Matteo, who is largely absent for the last thirty minutes of the film, tells Stefano that he will give him the evidence he needs to clear himself of the killing if he assassinates his brother from an ancient church balcony. Somewhat symbolically in a scene that blatantly contrasts the morality of old school Catholicism with the decadence of the modern aristocracy, Matteo wants Stefano to play sniper from an ancient Venetian Church and shoot his brother while he is standing next to a window in his luxurious art-adorned palace. Of course, Stefano does not want to carry out of the assassination, so he decides to pull a gun on Matteo instead, but as the Count demonstrates by stating, "I adore melodrama...but I detest comic opera," he is not afraid of a petty threat from such a weak man. In the end, Stefano finally gives in and decides to kill Matteo's brother just as the police are arriving via boat to stop him. In a fairly intriguing, if not poorly executed twist, it is revealed that it was not Matteo's evil brother that was murdered, but the Count himself. As it turns out, the Count never had an abusive brother, but instead an internal 'evil twin' that he wanted to kill in himself.

In its somewhat histrionic depiction of a crazed crypto-colon-choker Count

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from Venice who is so morally degenerate that his psyche has split and he has ultimately developed an evil alter-ego, it almost seems like *The Designated Victim* is a thinly-veiled attack against maestro Luchino Visconti who, aside from being a gay Italian aristocrat, released his pederast-themed masterpiece *Death in Venice* the same year as Lucidi's film. What makes Lucidi's film all the more provocative is that the protagonist assassinates the decadent aristocrat from a Church in what is ultimately a rather allegorical scene where the posh pervert is righteously stricken down from the house of God. Interestingly, the boy-obsessed pederastic protagonist of *Death in Venice* also perishes as an inadvertent consequence of his repressed yet increasingly uncontrollable homosexual vice after deciding to stay in cholera-ridden Venice because he becomes infatuated with a preteen boy who is ultimately the last person he sees before he succumbs to his illness. Ultimately, in the end, Clémenti's character goes from seeming like a hyper-hedonistic homo psychopath to seeming like a terribly tragic figure that was a victim of his own privilege and is ultimately more sympathetic than the protagonist, who is not much more than a failed opportunist. Indubitably, another tragic aspect to *The Designated Victim* is that it had the potential to be a rare cult-worthy giallo-arthouse hybrid that transcended the line between high and low Guido celluloid art. The fact that they cast Clémenti—a man who starred in works by some of the most revered Italian arthouse filmmakers of that time, with Visconti not being the least notable of these directors—for the most imperative role of the film tells me that the makers of *The Designated Victim* were certainly shooting for something more than just another cheap throwaway Hitchcock-flavored giallo. In terms of other Visconti connections, the film was shot by cinematographer Aldo Toni who not only shot the blueblooded Milanese maestro's directorial debut *Ossessione* (1943)—a work regarded by some as the very first Italian neo-realist film—but also Roberto Rossellini's *Amore* (1948) and *Europe '51* (1952), Federico Fellini's early masterpiece *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957) aka *The Nights of Cabiria*, Marco Ferreri's early work *La donna scimmia* (1964) aka *The Ape Woman*, and John Huston's underrated *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967) starring Marlon Brando as a repressed gay U.S. Army officer, among various other notable works. It should also be noted that both the production design and costume design was done by Enrico Sabbatini, who previously worked on goombah cult classics like Piero Schivazappa's seductively stylish psychedelic softcore flick *The Laughing Woman* (1969) aka *Femina ridens* and Mario Bava's beautifully brutal proto-slasher flick *Reazione a catena* (1971) aka *A Bay of Blood* aka *Twitch of the Death Nerve* and would go on to work on Hollywood works like Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997) starring Brad Pitt. It is just a guess on my part, but I am going to have to assume that Sabbatini and cinematographer Toni were more responsible for the film's reasonable aesthetic pleasantness than director Lucidi, who seems to be the true Achilles heel of the work. There are many things that can be said about *The Designated Victim*, but

I think the most important is that, despite its glaring flaws, the film is nothing short of mandatory viewing for Clémenti fans, as the Corsican bohemian dandy most certainly gives one of the most flamingly flamboyant, internally tormented, suavely goofy and just plain gay performances of his rather fruitful acting career.

-Ty E

A WOMAN IN BERLIN
A WOMAN IN BERLIN

Max Färberböck (2008)

In America, atrocities that were committed against Germans during World War II are virtually unknown. After all, Americans are very fond of the simple dichotomy of “Good” and Evil.” Hollywood has done their job well in convincing Americans that Germans during the Nazi era personify the complete and utter epitome of evil. For the average American to recognize that some (let alone millions) Germans were victims during World War II might put them into a stupefied state and could possibly shatter their Hollywood produced moral compass, a potential tragedy, no doubt. Of course, in the creative world, some of the atrocities have seen the light of day, even with the Hollywood blinders so carefully covering American eyes. German-American author Kurt Vonnegut’s science-fiction novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* semi-autobiographically tells the author’s experiences as an American POW during the Anglo-American firebombing of the city of Dresden, an act of government executed terrorism with the sole agenda of killing civilians. Naturally, with around ¾ of the German military occupying the eastern front during World War II, the Germans committed most of their atrocities against the Soviet Union, something the Red Army would payback with blood covered interest when the course of the war changed and German defeat became inevitable. In the German film *A Woman in Berlin* directed by Max Färberböck, the viewer is exposed to the true story of one woman’s account as a victim of the mass raping of German women during the occupation of Eastern Germany by the Red Army.

At the conclusion of World War II, the mass raping of German women had practically turned into Soviet war policy. The Soviet Jewish propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg boasted to the advancing Red Army troops, “that blonde hag is in for a bad time.” With sadistic Judaic vengeance, Ehrenburg also wrote in a leaflet addressed to Soviet soldiers “...the Germans are not human beings...nothing gives us so much joy as German corpses.” Unfortunately for Ehrenburg, he did not get to witness firsthand the mass rapes that he would help promote. Unlike the holy holocaust number of six million, the exact number of German women raped during the initial Soviet occupation has yet to be exactly quantified, ranging between tens of thousands to two million. In the film *A Woman in Berlin*, we see through the eyes of one woman and her friends the repeated raping of individual women (each victim was raped as many as 70 times). Apparently, the Soviets were so rape-crazy that they also raped Soviet and Jewish women, surely an expression of the Marxist commitment to diversity. *A Woman in Berlin* is set from 20 April to 22 June 1945 in a Germany that laid in ruins. The film’s protagonist Marta Hillers (played by the beautiful Nina Hoss) goes from idealistic bourgeois Nazi to a woman using her body as a plaything for Soviet soldiers (in an desperate attempt at survival) in just a matter of a couple of months.

Like starving children locked in a candy store, the Red Army soldiers featured in *A Woman in Berlin* rape German women with a guiltless thirst and pride immediately after occupying Berlin. With certainly no pun intended, the German women don't know what hit them as they are raped by barbarian-like Soviet troops. After being raped a couple times, Marta Hillers soon realizes that if she is going to be raped, it is going to be a man of her choosing. Despite being victims of rape, the German women featured in *A Woman in Berlin* are not portrayed in the most angelic of lights. Being the most beautiful woman in her area, Hillers soon has a Soviet officer wining and dining her and a group of her friends. To save her exquisite German body, Hillers goes from bedding a Nazi officer to a Soviet officer without a second thought, eventually falling dubiously in love with her Russian gentleman. For the best argument against feminism, one just has to look at the position of women during war as the truest argument against gender equality. Like freshly cut meat and German cigarettes, the woman of *A Woman in Berlin* become property (albeit, conspiring property) used by the victorious the Red Army for whatever they see fit.

Marta Hillers must have been very happy that she was born beautiful as her Russian rapist is quite the romantic and falls in love with the enemy. To the credit of women, Hillers is able to manipulate her Russian officer into even siding with her over his own people. Of course, the Russian officer's romantic allegiance to a German woman soon leads to his deluge; truly an expression of the power one woman can have over a man's life. Ultimately, *A Woman in Berlin* is a film about the absurdity of humanity. The Red Army starts out raping and pillaging in the film but by the end display kindness and friendship with their German enemies. It must have been a sight to see a bunch of intoxicated (with Vodka, the holy water of Russia) Russian soldiers and German women dancing together at a party in a bombed out German home as shown in *A Woman in Berlin*. The film is like a less melodramatic and less artsy version of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. Like the lead lady of Fassbinder's film, the female protagonist is determined to restore her dignity, even if involves ruining the lives of a couple men in the process.

-Ty E

MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON
MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON

Maya Deren (1943)

Early art house filmmaker Maya Deren came to the United States after a series of “anti-Semitic” (translation = Anti-Bolshevik) pogroms in Russia. Deren’s “intellectual” father was a fan of Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky who was a man responsible for deaths of millions of people mainly due to their social class. Apparently Deren’s greatest film *Meshes of the Afternoon* was made to get the attention of her father. I guess Daddy didn’t give daughter Maya enough love. *Meshes of the Afternoon* is about as “auteur” as American films get. Maya was influenced by the early short works of Luis Buñuel and one can only assume Jean Cocteau’s *The Blood of a Poet*. Although Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl is without a doubt the greatest female filmmaker of all time, Maya Deren certainly carried her own weight. *Meshes of the Afternoon* is a surrealist journey into the subconscious mind and its dirty hidden secrets. Who says that all early American films are embarrassingly formulaic? Maya Deren stars in *Meshes of the Afternoon* as a woman always reflecting on herself. She sees another woman many times throughout the short with a mirror on her face staring back at her. No matter how hard Deren chases the mysterious woman, she can never catch up. After all, no one can truly confront their past. Maya Deren has given up her subconscious soul for those to interpret through the art of cinema. The impossibility of catching up with one’s true “reflection” already lets the viewer know that *Meshes of the Afternoon* can never be truly complete. Towards the end of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, Maya appears wearing futuristic looking sphere spectacles and carrying a dangerous looking knife. This predates and is much more “scary” than any subsequent cold war sci-fi film ever would be. Deren also steps from beach to swamp to concrete within seconds. She has been on a journey into a dark past that has left a lot of questions open. At the end of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, Maya’s assumed lover becomes a horrible mess. Maya is dead and pieces of a mirror surround her. I guess Maya didn’t have such a wonderful past.

-Ty E

I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE

Meir Zarchi* (1978)

I Spit On Your Grave is a feminist exploitation film directed by perverted Israeli Meir Zarchi. The film follows a young female novelist as she attempts to write her first masterpiece in a secluded cabin in the woods. Little does the young novelist realize that a group of young rednecks want to rape and ravage her just for kicks. Unrealistically, the emotionally deranged young woman plots a killing spree of the Hebrew looking rednecks. *I Spit On Your Grave* is a film of female empowerment.

City folk really like to throw around the word “xenophobe” when referring to whites from rural areas. I guess that’s what happens when you are afraid someone who can kick your ass. Israeli director Meir Zarchi made sure to present the rednecks of *I Spit On Your Grave* as evil scheming rapists. If Zarchi actually knew anything about rednecks and saw *Deliverance*, he would know that rednecks rape men. After all, Women are much easier to physically dominate and put up a pathetic fight. What better way to emasculate a city fag than by showing rural love? The vaudevillian fellows that play the rednecks in *I Spit On Your Grave* aren’t believable for a second. With their Woody Allen accents and Asiatic features, they could only fool a couple of disillusioned lesbian feminists. In real life, I can only assume that the young woman in the film could beat up all of these Long Islander types at the same time. When all of the rednecks finally meet their untimely death, I can imagine a group of angry feminists rejoicing. I personally found the killings entertaining.

The young woman kills a few of her rapists in a sexual manner. One man loses his genitals in a bubble bath that turns red. Another redneck is hung in a tree as his genitals hang. These scenes offer gratuitous pleasure to those looking a little more in the way of deranged cinema. They also happened to discredit *I Spit On Your Grave*’s feminist agenda which I am sure most sane people can appreciate.

I Spit On Your Grave is a masterpiece of the American exploitation genre. Like *Thriller - A Cruel Picture*, *I Spit On Your Grave* is an “eventful” female revenge film that makes Quentin Tarantino’s *Kill Bill* look weak in comparison. Revenge films are meant to be gritty and crude. Tarantino’s style seems more influenced by Honda commercials. I hope that *I Spit On Your Grave* makes its way to appear in women’s studies college classes.

-Ty E

SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG
SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG

Melvin Van Peebles (1971)

I would call Melvin Van Peebles Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song the Citizen Kane of blaxploitation films if I actually thought that it was an exploitation film. The truth is SSBS is a serious and culturally important film. The black panthers even promoted the film fiercely as a revolutionary picture. SSBS was the first film in which black Americans became rowdy and stuck it to "the white man." The only people exploited in SSBS are the white cops that are looking to do Sweetback in. Of course, SSBS features a variety of sex, nudity, and violence. But these things aren't in the film for exploitation. Melvin Van Peebles just wanted to make a film to stick it to the white man. Following the unexpected monetary success of SSBS, Hollywood decided it was their turn to cash on the blacks that they so consciously denied (or parodied) in the past. Some were also used as propaganda pieces to agitate blue collar whites around the United States. Larry Cohen's Bone is an especially hateful Sigmund Freud style attack on Bourgeoisie honkies. SSBS is a serious film as it takes a realistic look at racial issues that affect(ed) the black community and presents them in an unsentimental (yet undeniably entertaining) manner. I recall having a discussion course with a group of "open minded" white liberals a few years ago about SSBS and they were unanimously appalled by the film (keep in mind these people are pussies). It was obvious that they felt the film was an assault on their aspirations of universally collective racial pacifism. White liberals have a fear that black people will gain power and strength on their own. They prefer blacks being socialized to the point of being physical and mental slaves of the state. Sweetback won't have any of that weak ass cracker shit. The opening of SSBS has a scene that borders on child pornography. Melvin Van Peebles had his pre-teen son Mario simulate nude sexual acts with an older woman. This middle aged virginity thief gave him the name "sweetback." Sweetback's sexual potency made his career choice easy. He became a jive ass cop killing hustler. SSBS also features a variety of other awkward and bizarre scenes. I especially liked the scene where Sweetback's goofy friend takes a shit walk talking to him. The structure of SSBS is very odd. The editing is spliced together in an almost soviet propaganda montage style. Many of the catchy and unforgettable theme songs appear out of nowhere. SSBS even features acid colored shots to appeal to acid dropping hippies of that time period (one of which being Van Peebles best friend Bill who was involved in the film). It is a shame that SSBS hasn't been studied as much as revolutionary films of it's kind. I can only assume that white liberals are so offended by it that they wouldn't even consider writing a scholarly book on the film. SSBS deserves a contemporary movie theater revival campaign. Films featuring probably "the worst role model in world history" 50 cent, just disgust me (not that I have actually seen any of them).

-Ty E

VROOOM VROOM VROOOOM
VROOOM VROOM VROOOOM

Melvin Van Peebles (1995) The very same director that created a genre with his films Sweet Sweetback's Baadaassss Song and Watermelon Man brings you a short (1994) included in a pack of 6 short erotic films with a genre twist to them. It's obvious that Melvin is getting senile in his old age with the release of the cantankerous short film that has me holding my gut in shame for watching this fermented filth. A down-on-his-luck hillbilly acne-plagued Black boy named Leroy is surrounded by not white trash, but black trash. Disgusting locals who slop their tongues around screaming about barbeque's while Leroy pines for attention. His pop constantly pokes fun at his sons lack of girl communication or "getting some" The virility is often challenged by the duo of father and son which leads to uncompromisingly awkward bonding scenes. Fueled by a southern bluegrass and Jazz soundtrack, it adds to that Kentucky Fried Chicken feel that is present along with every other Black stereotype. He soon saves the life of a witch who dresses like a Tusken Raider from Tatooine. The befuddled Leroy believes in magic; not voodoo which could be canon to the Negro folklore, but we're treated to a bullshit Genie approach. He wishes for two things - a motorcycle and a woman. In the vein of Goosebumps and the classic phrase "Be careful what you wish for!" his wish turns into a motorcycle-morphing woman who is sweatier than a professional wrestler. Toad. This short tale is not thrilling but disgusting and goofy. The sex scenes are PG-13 at best and feature some of the most disgusting situations, faces, and sexual advances I have ever witnessed. I rather found myself to be permanently turned off from sex as a whole. Eventually, when the film begins to slow down, the ending is one of those "Broke the early warning" endings. I can't relate to these characters who get a wish only to void it. Vrooom Vroom Vrooom is a very amateur sketch for a seasoned director. This idea doesn't even look good on paper. Someone with the taste of black culture should be ashamed to direct a film that regards itself as using "state-of-the-art morphing technology." You sir, Melvin Van Peebles, might burn in hell for creating this disgusting piece of trash from which I couldn't muster the ability to harvest any "cinematic nutrients" from.

-mAQ

OVER THE TOP

Menahem Golan (1987)

This is a film of undecidable cult status. When you view this film, you are almost exorcised of most Hollywood standards and are completely baffled. After the success of Rambo and Rocky, Stallone attacked the "extreme sports" genre of the 80's and created Over the Top. Instead of racing, football, snowboarding, or mountain-climbing, he tackles the illustrious subject of arm wrestling.

As outrageous as this sounds, does it work? I must admit, the film gave me a run for my money. While having an incredible cheesy and incredibly queer side-story of getting his estranged son to love him and an evil family member trying to prevent this at all costs. Big explosions were eradicated from the script due to the formulaic plot of "arm wrestling" so instead, they just had several car crashes and called it even. Lincoln Hawk is a bad enough dude. He arm wrestles at dirty rural bars and drives trucks. This lifestyle is known for being rough and tough and is even presented this way in children's cartoons (Spongebob Squarepants) After enduring gripping workouts using a sophisticated weight set in the middle of this "cockpit", he has become the "best of the best" Only way to prove this is by entering the world tournament. Over the Top is the name and it stays pretty close to that. Whether he turns his hat like a similar Ash Ketchum from Pokemon or gets his whiny son into arm wrestling young punks hanging out in an arcade, Stallone goes along with the ride. This Italian Stallion refuses to be put down and in turn, has churned out some damn ridiculous movies in his lifetime, and for that, I thank him. (Somehow, this action play set does not excite the inner child in me) American rock music decorates this melodramatic silly little film. I couldn't find anything to distinguish this from the piles of cult trash that Stallone acts in. Some refuse to like Stallone, but for that matter, I refuse to enjoy Bruce Campbell's on screen presence. The same can be said about both men. Both are way past their prime, but at least Stallone is still kicking ass and not writing books dictating his love for Richard Gere. Over the Top isn't by any means a classic, but if you feel like watching a film that screams Steppenwolf's Born to be Wild, then you will never go wrong with this choice. I'll say it once and I will say it again; Stallone is like a foreign delicacy. I will guarantee a climax that isn't really worth mentioning any time soon. It's film like this where I wish the adults would man up and punch their children in the face.

-mAQ

TWISTER
TWISTER

Michael Almereyda (1989)

It seems rather unlikely that an outstandingly vapid no-talent douche like Dylan McDermott would have ever appeared in an underrated cult classic about a dysfunctional Kansas-based family featuring Crispin Glover, Harry Dean Stanton, and junk-ridden literary outlaw William S. Burroughs, but such is the superlatively strange case of *Twister* (1989) directed by seemingly pseudonymous auteur Michael Almereyda (Nadja, Hamlet). Not to be confused with the famously moronic 1996 film of the same name directed by Dutch cinematographer turned Hollywood hack director Jan de Bont and starring Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton, Almereyda's debut feature is based on the 1981 novel *Oh!* written by minimalist writer Mary Robison and shot by none other than Swiss cinematographer Renato Berta, who not only shot important works for noted European arthouse auteur filmmakers like Louis Malle, Jean-Marie Straub/Danièle Huillet and Alain Tanner, but was the lifelong cameraman of Swiss high-camp auteur Daniel Schmid and was responsible for filming virtually every single one of his films, including *Heute nacht oder nie* (1972) aka *Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma* (1974), and the Fassbinder-penned *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel*, among various other neglected masterpieces. Indeed, it is only fitting that Berta shot *Twister*, as if auteur Almereyda—a man who seems to have adopted his name from the pseudonym of the father of French poetic realist filmmaker Jean Vigo (whose Spanish/Catalan militant anarchist padre adopted the name 'Miguel Almereyda' because it is an anagram for "y' a la merde," which translates as "there's the shit")—knew that the film would be, at least commercially speaking, an abject failure that, not unlike the work of Schmid, would only appeal to a special select yet loyal few. A dark comedy in the most idiosyncratic sense that, despite its PG-13 rating, makes most of Wes Anderson's oeuvre seem like the cinephiliac posturing of an autistic poser who has seen one too many French New Wave flicks, *Twister* is quirky in a completely uncompromising and preternatural sort of way that, unlike superficially similar works, did not give me the impression that it was directed by some sort of bleeding heart humanist hipster that I could only find funny if they were hit by a handicap bus or gang-raped by a South African tennis team. A rather whimsical and largely plot-less work with a rural Kansas setting that brings new meaning to the regional phrase "There's no place like home," *Twister* depicts in a playfully pernicious fashion the rotting degenerate adult broad of a wealthy yet fairly dejected patriarch who made the mistake of marrying and impregnating a self-centered Irish-American bitch who passed on her dysgenic genetics to both of their marvelously misbegotten children. Featuring Suzy Amis as a violently frigid dipsomaniac anti-diva with a young grade school daughter who is more mature than her, Crispin Glover as a 'tragically misunderstood' proto-Goth dandy and high kultur dilettante who

seems to suffer from Asperger syndrome and thus pronounces words in a strange rhythmic fashion, and Harry Dean Stanton as the former's long-suffering millionaire capitalist cowboy father who is just not cut out to deal with the peculiar problems of his two grownup children even though he has enough money support a small shitty South American country, *Twister* is somewhat typical of most of Almereyda's work in the sense that it centers around a decidedly dysfunctional family with a glaring genetic taint yet at the same time it is in many ways the director's most 'accessible' and least 'esoteric' film as a sort a scathingly sardonic and singular celluloid sitcom from posh post-frontier Midwestern pandemonium.

When a reasonably well-meaning, if not somewhat unintelligent, young man named Chris (Dylan McDermott in one of the most sympathetic roles of his career) wearing a goofy t-shirt reading "Big Blue Butt-Kicker" comes back from a six-month pilgrimage to Canada in the hope of 'saving' his estranged common-law (ex)wife Maureen (played by Suzy Amis, who later starred in Almereyda's David Lynch-produced postmodern experimental vampire flick *Nadja* (1994)) and their young daughter Violet (Lindsay Christman) from their exceedingly wealthy yet wayward family, he ultimately has a greater life-changing effect on the family than a town-devastating tornado that hits their home around the same time. Despite the fact that his ex is fairly ugly on both the inside and outside, Chris is willing to do anything to get her back, including regularly suffering Maureen's malevolent misanthropic alcoholic wrath. Maureen is a somewhat demented, uniquely unpleasant, and sub-homely dipsomaniac bitch and self-described "24-year-old failure" who is such a superlatively shitty self-absorbed mother that she complains to her young daughter, "It's tiring and exasperating to watch someone littler than you" and even attempts to convince her little girl that she has no father. Maureen's brother Howdy (Crispin Glover in arguably the most underrated performance of his career)—a serious 'artiste' that writes mundanely melancholy dirge-like songs with insufferably self-pitying lyrics like "daddy was mean"—may show more self-restraint in terms of not having to rely on narcotics to get through the day, but he is no less unhinged as a perennially 'misunderstood' would-be-dandy with goofy longhair who resents his family, especially his father, due to their lack of cultivation and absurdly believes that he is going to marry a hot blonde lumpenprole babe named Stephanie (Jenny Wright of Kathryn Bigelow's *Near Dark* (1987)) who does not even like him and whose father works as a gardener for his family's company. Indeed, both of his kids may be cracked losers that suffer from hopeless cases of arrested emotional development despite having genius 150+ IQs, but Eugene Cleveland (Harry Dean Stanton in a fairly understated performance) is a self-made multimillionaire who got rich off of soda pop and mini-golf courses. Unquestionably, the only mistake Eugene ever made in his rather simple yet eventful life was marrying and impregnating a crazy McBitch who ultimately sired two crazy bastard broods that inherited their mother's mental instability and debilitating sense of self-destructive

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narcissism. When Howdy was only three and Maureen was six, their crazed mother abandoned them and their father Eugene for good and never attempted to get in contact with them ever again. Unfortunately for Eugene, neither of his immature adult children have any intention of ever growing up, starting a career, or leaving home for good, thus he must forever face their wrath, unless someone else has what it takes to take his place.

As Chris states regarding his ex Maureen to her unsympathetic brother Howdy in regard to what he apparently did to fall out of favor with his bat-shit crazy beloved, "I'll tell you what I did, I did nothing. Your sister was just so god damn spooked all the time, I mean, she imagines that I've done something. I don't know, she assumes it." Indeed, aside from being a pathetic drunk and pathological pill-popper, Maureen is a neurotic nutcase who never has anything nice to say and cannot accept a single damn compliment from her beau, who really tries his best to be there for his deranged ex and poor daughter. Maureen is so mentally incapacitated that she describes her greatest fear in life as follows, "You know one thing that would be deadly right now? For me to lay down. I think if I laid down I'd just be lost forever. It's a problem my mother had all the time...And I have to lookout for it." As Chris stoically tells patriarch Eugene upon seeing him for the first time in about six months since he originally left for Canada, "I came to save Violet and Maureen from this loony bin." Unfortunately for Chris, while Eugene is well aware that his daughter is deranged and would love nothing more than to see her move out, Maureen (or 'Mo' as he lovingly calls her) is more than just a little bit afraid of leaving the loony bin. When Maureen absurdly accuses Chris of being the source of all her recent misfortune by complaining, "I believe in my heart of hearts that you're the cause of everything," he retorts in an insightful fashion, "You know what I believe...what's going on with you? And I'm talking about your whole life...is that you don't want to grow-up. You know, you want to be like a little kid." The only person Eugene even remotely respects is his young negress maid 'Lola' (Charlayne Woodard of Louis Malle's considerably crappy Big Deal on Madonna Street remake Crackers (1984)), who clearly resents spoiled bitch Maureen and her brazenly bitchy bourgeois behavior. Unlike Maureen, Lola busts her ass working full-time while going to college, but as she complains regarding her dubious academic career, "... I don't have time to do all the reading, you know, and all last week Professor Riley jumped all over me for being black."

When the titular tornado finally hits Kansas and ultimately kills no less than fifteen people in the surrounding area, less than proud patriarch Eugene is so dejected that he manages to sleep like a baby through the entire ordeal, as if he was subconsciously hoping that the twister would wipe-out his entire family while he was asleep. To the chagrin of his queen bitch daughter Maureen, Eugene is engaged to get married to his puritanical and pathologically positive

girlfriend Virginia (played by fashion model turned Bond girl and Creepshow 2 (1987) star Lois Chiles), who is the host of a kitschy Evangelical Christian children's TV program called 'Wonderbox' where she dresses and acts like an unintentionally campy over-the-hill Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz. Needless to say, Virginia is far too pure and optimistic for the Cleveland family and the special engagement eventually falls apart. Indeed, after Virginia tells Eugene that his entire family has "lost the habit of thinking" and then insults his soda-pop/mini-golf empire, he hatefully remarks, "Well that sure as hell beats running around dressed up like a gingerbread girl on a goddamn TV box on a Sunday morning when nobody is watching except the mentally bankrupt." After packing her bags and leaving the maniac mansion for good, Virginia tells Eugene that she will pray for him and his children, so he sarcastically responds, "That's just what I need." Naturally, Maureen has no problem telling her father that she thinks Virginia is a "bitch" and that she is glad that the engagement fell through.

After Howdy's relationship with his ostensible fiancée Stephanie falls apart after her rowdy redneck (ex)boyfriend Jeff (played by Tim Robbins in arguably the most 'butch' role of his entire career) beats him up and kicks his ass and Maureen becomes so annoyed with Chris' incessant pleas to marry him, the Cleveland kids put all their hopes into attempting to hunt down and reunite with their estranged Irish-American mother who vaguely resembles Amelia Earhart in both appearance and character (as Howdy remarks, "she just vanished"). After Howdy finds an old letter with his mother's address, he writes her a letter but she never writes him back, so he, his sister Maureen, and Violet visit the country home where they believe she might be living at. Upon talking to an old fart engaged in a hardcore game of target practice played by alpha-Beat junky William S. Burroughs, the Cleveland kids learn that their mother moved away nine years ago and was apparently planning to relocate to Ireland, so the two siblings decide to visit the homeland of their ancestors. After a nasty dinner fight where Howdy goes on a rant about leaving with Maureen and Violet to go live with their mother in Ireland after their father pours out their bowls of gazpacho soup in disgust, Eugene finally reveals that their mother died years ago in a mental institution after suffering from a fatal case of stomach cancer that was compounded by "not being right in the head." When Maureen asks her father why he didn't inform her and Howdy about their mother's death, he responds regarding their belated progenitor, "She was a vain and selfless woman and she was just never a factor in your lives is all. And if you had gone to see her after they took her away, she would have just asked for a Pepsi or Hershey bar is all. Those were the things she cared about and not either of you." Needless to say, what little hope the Cleveland children had before is completely destroyed after their father completely demystifies their idiotically idealized view of their negligent mother.

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In the end after realizing that there is no hope for his kin, Eugene Cleveland decides "I'm out of it" and immediately gives Chris complete control and responsibility over his house and family, stating, "You have to take care of them now, my family. You're in charge now." Although Chris flipped out earlier that same day and burned down a tool-shed after concluding that he will never be able to get back with Maureen and start a normal nuclear family, he does not think twice about accepting Eugene's less than generous offer to become the new patriarch of the crazed Cleveland family. Unlike Eugene, Chris is at least motivated enough to bring love and order to the fiercely fucked family. Not long after Eugene relinquishes his control of his kin and hands them over to Chris, mad Maureen asks the new patriarch to marry her and the two make love for the first time in the entire film, thus hinting that they plan to have more kids. Without even saying goodbye to his kids, Eugene abandons his family and somewhat strangely leaves with his negro maid Lola to an undisclosed location. Whether or not Eugene plans to carry on a romantic affair with Lola remains to be seen, but he does double her pay and vacation time and even gives her three hundred shares of his company's stocks. During the final couple minutes of the film, the entire family sans Eugene and maid Lola mindlessly watch trashy TV images involving negress gospel singers, mullet-adorned WWF wrestlers, and stun guns, among other things, in a fiercely farcical scene depicting the absurdly sick joke that is the modern American family.

While *Twister* was an unequivocal commercial failure due to the fact that the film's distributor, Vestron Pictures, went out of business only a couple weeks before it was scheduled to be released in movie theaters, it is doubtful at best that such an insanely idiosyncratic filmic family feud would have ever been popular with the masses, who would probably not appreciate a film that goes to great pains to satirize their highly domesticated TV-and-beer-narcotized way of life. After all, none of director Almereyda's later films, including his *Hamlet* (2000) adaptation starring Ethan Hawke, were particularly popular with the mainstream, so it is almost a miracle that the filmmaker is still able to get films made. Of course, *Twister* did have its proponents, including *Midnight Movies* (1983) co-author Jonathan Rosenbaum and *The New York Times* star critic Vincent Canby, who managed to see the work when it was given a "second lease on life" (to quote Rosenbaum) after the New York's Anthology Film Archives gave it an extended run in early 1990. In its screen-stealing role by Crispin Glover, who notably also provided his own quasi-darkwave song to the score (which, unlike the music by Hans Zimmer, goes perfect with the work), as an outstandingly autistic weirdo who says even the most mundane words and phrases in the most bizarre and uncomfortably entrancing ways, Almereyda's debut is the sort of film that needs to be actually seen to be even remotely properly understood or appreciated. As a work where the eponymous cyclone is never even depicted and where virtually none of the characters are in any way empathetic, *Twister* is

surely as audience-antagonistic as borderline mainstream American films come as an anti-family affair that ultimately does for late-1980s Kansas what Alex van Warmerdam's *The Northerners* (1992) aka *De noorderlinge* did for 1960s small-town Holland. In terms of its depiction of two siblings that have a romanticized view of the cold and cunty estranged mother that abandoned them when they were just small children, the film is like a Midwestern take on *East of Eden*, albeit more evil and humorous and minus any sort of redemption (ultimately Almercyda's film concludes with a farcical false 'happy ending' where the forlorn family is united by a TV). Notably, Almercyda would later utilize the theme of Irish inter-generational dipsomania and mental derangement in his similarly underrated druid witch/mummy themed 'arthouse horror' flick *Trance* (1998) aka *The Eternal: Kiss of the Mummy* aka Michael Almercyda's *The Mummy*. In its pathological idiosyncrasy, *Twister* might be marginally comparable to a handful of works of its time like Alex Cox's *Repo Man* (1984), music video director Mark Romanek's *Static* (1985), and Keith Gordon's Robert Cormier adaptation *The Chocolate War* (1988) but ultimately it is a one-off work with no contemporaries that could have only been directed by Michael Almercyda who is, for better or worse, one of America's only real true auteur filmmakers.

-Ty E

NADJA
NADJA

Michael Almereyda (1994)

After many years of passively searching, I have finally discovered an experimental postmodern vampire flick that does not compel me to fantasize about breaking the jaws and eye-sockets of bearded hipster fags with pseudo-sophisticated black-rimmed poindexter glasses. Executive produced and presented by David Lynch (who also appears in the film in a cameo role as a morgue receptionist), *Nadja* (1994) is a work that many falsely believe was ghost-directed by no other than the Eraserhead auteur himself. With its excessive phantasmagorical imagery and sometimes schlocky experimental camera work (pre-dating *Inland Empire* by over a decade), it is not hard to fathom why one would assume *Nadja* was directed by tastefully loony Lynch, but for anyone who has seen Michael Almereyda's previous efforts *Twister* (1989) and *Another Girl Another Planet* (1992), it should be plain to see that the underrated American auteur filmmaker's metaphysical fingerprints are all over this wildly idiosyncratic vampire flick. Beginning his career in film as a screenwriter, Almereyda wrote a screenplays for the post-apocalyptic Scifi cult flick *Cherry 2000* (1987), Wim Wenders' Scifi epic *Until the End of the World* (1991) and an unreleased David Lynch project before ever having the supreme dictatorial honor of sitting in the director's chair. Starring the beautiful Romanian Jewess Elina Löwensohn (the sole Hebrewess that I would bequeath such an unbecoming compliment to) in the starring vamp role and WASP wimp Martin Donovan as a beta-male boxer with female trouble, *Nadja* also has the situational semblance of a Hal Hartley film, had the Henry Fool (1997) director digested an equal amount of Bram Stoker and George Sylvester Viereck (*The House of the Vampire* certainly comes to mind) with his readings of Jean-Paul Sartre as a young man. Shot on rich black-and-white neo-noir-ish celluloid for scenes of melodrama and traditional horror, and a children's toy Fisher-Price Pixelvision camera for segments of inter-species lesbian sex and blotchy bloody murder, *Nadja* is surely a neo-gothic trip of sorts that offers an onliest sensory overload without the aesthetic advantage of an Argento-esque kaleidoscope of killer colors. Indeed, most people associate blood with the color red, yet the absence-of-color hemoglobin featured in *Nadja* is more than suitably potent as it takes on a fetishistic ejaculatory quality that acts as the main part and parcel for determining the dichotomous struggle between lust and love, impotency and vitality, and – ultimately – life and death.

Admittedly, I had to watch *Nadja* three or four times before I could soak up the integral plangency of the film's storyline and various subplots. Like the films of Guy Maddin, *Nadja* features a weird and wayward thunderstorm of aesthetic and thematic wankery that is indubitably reflective of the filmmaker's encyclopedic understanding of vampire film history, but unlike most films by the goofy Nordic Canadian director – when one examines the quality and flow of the work

as a whole – it is quite apparent that Michael Almereyda is largely successful with his lucid and luscious cinematic love letter to the vampire subgenre. *Nadja* focuses on a wealthy yet patently dysfunctional bi-species vampire family (the human matriarch of the family died long ago after giving birth to her two mongrel children) from Romania that is currently living a life of cosmopolitan and hedonistic degeneracy abroad in modern day New York City. As she explains during the beginning of the film, *Nadja* adores NYC because it offers a vibrant nightlife that is nonexistent in most European metropolitan areas. After Dr. Van Helsing (played by Peter Fonda) kills the patriarch (also played by Fonda) of the already decomposing Dracula family, two fraternal twins squabble over the dubious fate of their family's mostly infamous legacy. *Nadja*, being an uncompromising and ferocious femme fatale of the entrancing bloodsucking kind, would like to see the family reinvent itself, but her passive brother Edgar (played by Jared Harris) – who is barely a vampire (he feeds off of exotic shark embryos instead of human blood) and is in love with a mere mortal – rather see the irrevocable extinction of the more-than-human half of his peculiar pedigree. After his girlfriend Lucy (played by Galaxy Craze) is put under the all-consuming spell of undead lesbo *Nadja*, archetypical beta-male Jim and his notably nimble Uncle Dr. Van Helsing chase the virulent vampiress half-way around the world with the central goal of driving a wooden stake through her exceedingly cold-heart, thus freeing the souls of the she-beast's victims. Naturally, Van Helsing and his cowardly nephew prove to be a pathetic match for cunning creature *Nadja*'s nefarious supernatural powers, but fortuitously for them, she is a true blue quasi-suicidal Goth girl at heart with an impenetrable desire for tragic transcendence and total rebirth. If you think the average premenstrual female is hopelessly erratic and wholly intolerable, you have yet to see blood-addict *Nadja* after she has been drained of her vital bodily fluids.

I must admit that I never expected to see a vampire film containing songs by Irish alpha-shoegaze group My Bloody Valentine, but *Nadja* does indeed offer such a delectable and unrestrained diacritic aesthetic mix. A scene of Bela Lugosi from Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (1932) also appears in the film as a nostalgic flashback of young Dracula during his prime. A number of scenes also pay blatant tribute to the ruined Eastern European castles of F.W. Murnau's vampire masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922). These sorts of anachronistic ingredients contribute to a film that, although shamelessly postmodern and ardently artsy, is not the least bit pretentious, but it is surely a work for those individuals that are obscenely vampire-film-literate. Of course, *Nadja* is not the sort of film I would recommend to people who masturbate to ultra-sleazy softcore lesbian vampire flicks, even if it does feature an intensely pulchritudinous, carpet-munching cold-cunt bloodsucker. *Nadja* is also ultimately a work that poses sensible questions about life and death in a steadily deteriorating post-industrial and pre-apocalyptic world, but not in the superlatively mundane

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and emotionally barren my-name-is-Sofia-Coppola-and-my-bourgeois-life-is-unchallenging-and-I-want-to-die sort of way. After all, who would make a more suitable existentialist philosopher than a singularly worldly, ancient aristocratic vampire? Forget manic-depressive Maddin's uneven (yet admittedly ambitious) undead-Chinaman-ballet *Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary* (2002) and instead bask in the beautiful beaming bright white light of Elina Löwensohn's immaculate pale skin in *Nadja*. *Nadja* gets more pussy than pretty boy Edward Cullen, yet only puts forth about 1/100th of the effort to do so, which is beyond a shadow of a doubt the hallmark of a truly hip yet classic strigoi creature.

-Ty E

THE ETERNAL: KISS OF THE MUMMY

Michael Almereyda (1998)

After radically reinventing the vampire film with *Nadja* (1994), auteur Michael Almereyda subsequently attempted to do the same thing with the mummy movie via *The Eternal: Kiss of the Mummy* (1998) aka *Trance* with almost equally favorable results. Further declaring his unwavering assiduity towards deconstructing a classic horror subgenre and rebuilding it with new and often improved ingredients (while disposing of others), *The Eternal* features a mummy that also happens to be an ancient shape-shifting druid witch. Instead of being the typical pimped-out and gold-chain-sporting materialistic mummified Egyptian royal, the mummy of *The Eternal* is a “bog-women”; a freshly preserved corpse unearthed from the sphagnum bogs of Northern Europa. Of course, like most monster movies, the mummy of *The Eternal* is not the protagonist, but a hostile sphinxlike force with cryptic intentions and a mostly ferocious disposition comparable to the mummified succubus beauty of Curtis Harrington’s worthwhile Thelema-esque TV-movie *The Cat Creature* (1973). Instead, an Irish-born American woman named Nora (played by Alison Elliott) acts as the film’s lead protagonist/semi-anti-hero. After falling down the stairs (in an admittedly hilarious and hairbrained manner) during a belligerent night of drinking with her equally unstable co-alcoholic husband Jim (Jared Harris), the terrible twosome decides that it will be in their best interest if they (with their nerdy young son Jim Jr.) move to Ireland; the great land of exceedingly poor and destitute drunkards. Of course, it turns out to be a catastrophic mistake on their part, but not for the typical blackout-drunk-in-the-gutter reasons. Upon reaching Ireland, Nora decides that the family should visit her grandmother’s secluded Gothic mansion. Little does Nora know that her crank professor Uncle Bill (played by a very Brooklyn-accented Christopher Walken) has the mummified remains of a distant ancestor stored in the basement of the maniac mansion and he is quite adamant about re-animating the charming little corpse. Upon her reawakening, the menacing mummy-witch takes an instant liking to Nora, so much so that she attempts to steal her body, soul, and identity. Naturally, such sinister supernatural happenings prove to be indomitably stressful for Alison, a woman that is already suffering from acute alcohol withdraw and eerie head-injury-related hallucinations. Needless to say, I doubt *The Eternal* is a work that one would want to screen at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for motivational/inspirational purposes, but it does seem to capture the miserable soul-disintegrating metaphysics of alcoholism. To add to the Celtic pagan allure that is *The Eternal*, the film is narrated by a Delphian little Irish girl that seems to hold a seemingly unfathomable degree of hermetic knowledge.

Like *Nadja* and the majority of Michael Almereyda’s work, *The Eternal* features various scenes of fluctuant experimental filmmaking and deathly dry humor

THE ETERNAL: KISS OF THE MUMMY

that is bound to thoroughly turn-off the majority of everyday filmgoers and mainstream horror fanatics. Unlike *Nadja*, *The Eternal* was shot in color and does not feature the peculiar pixilation of the Fisher-Price PXL2000 camera, thus the film is slightly more accessible than Almereyda's earlier vampire flick, at least in the aesthetic sense. Ultimately, *The Eternal* is a vastly vague and strikingly spiritual work that is quite in contrast with the all-but-hopeless aristocratic nihilism of *Nadja*. Admittedly, I know next to nothing about ancient Celtic paganism yet *The Eternal* seems to more than aptly ascertain and resonate the essence of these arcane spiritual themes in a way that, like the mummy herself (as well as most other characters in the film), transcends the Christian view of good and evil. Admittedly, as long as I can remember, I have always been repulsed by nearabout anything and everything that is regarded as Irish, at least in a modern day context, especially in respect to their cult of victim-hood (the Irish may be the only European diaspora whose history parallels that of nonwhites) and cultural influences in American (from country music to the western film genre), yet Almereyda's *The Eternal* brings some much needed culture and class to the eternally unlucky northwestern Celts, as the film echoes the early works of Irish occult poet W. B. Yeats in terms of both potent possessing poetry and esoteric meanderings. On top of featuring the ethnic stereotype of the Irish as unrepentant alcoholics, *The Eternal* features the perennial cliché of the absent Irish father. Aside from American Jim-Beam-loving Jim and nutty Uncle Bill, not a single male elder (be it father or grandfather) is featured in the film. Unsurprisingly, most of the young male adults featured in *The Eternal* are (seemingly) symbolically killed off in fairly absurd scenarios by the wicked wench as if the the whole male gender of Ireland was eternally accursed due to one immortal woman's ancient failed love affair and subsequent seething scorn, henceforth lending evidence that the title of the film is an unintentionally humorous and saucy double-entendre of sorts. Incidentally, an middle-aged Irish-American women (whose entire family was Irish/Irish-American) once told me that Irish men were essentially ignoble drunkards (referring to her own father as such) as depicted in Alan Parker's *Angela's Ashes* (1999) and it was up to the mother to raise the children and continue the legacy of the family. *The Eternal* certainly portrays such a scenario of amaranthine generational family dysfunction where it is altogether up to the matriarch to lead the battle and shield her family's compromised future. Fundamentally, *The Eternal* is a fantastically demanding celluloid work where magical and mystical primeval Ireland-before-alcoholism-and-English-persecution meets the innately imbibed and culturally-comatose Ireland of today, except disguised as an ostensibly incoherent B-grade mummy horror movie.

I cannot think of a single mummy-related film that I have ever fancied to any notable degree, so I guess it is only natural that I would appreciate the intrinsically abstract and acroamatic anti-mummy film essence of *The Eternal*; a

work that brings life to a seemingly postmortem horror subgenre. Leave it to Michael Almercyda to be the person to do it, but, of course, like most of his films, *The Eternal* is not for everyone, especially those individuals that found themselves especially enthralled by Stephen Sommers' emotionally and aesthetically barren CGI-corpse *The Mummy* (1999) starring Brendan Fraser. Like most of Almercyda's work, *The Eternal* demands at least more than one viewing, but works best with incessant re-visitings. Not unlike *Nadja and Happy Here and Now* (2002), *The Eternal* is an inordinately hip flick with a modern avant-garde soundtrack and intense inaugural imagery that is bound to satisfy most exploratory cinephiles to some noteworthy degree, yet leave most archetypical horror fans flustered and possibly homicidal. Admittedly, many of the actors and actresses featured in *The Eternal* are less than sexually alluring in appearance and character (unless you have a fetish for drunk girls falling down the stairs), as the film certainly does not feature the sort of kitschy pseudo-eroticism that the cover-art of the American dvd release misleadingly advertises, but then again, when I think of Ireland, I generally think of homely (and often short like a leprechaun) white ladies with hard-as-nails, contra dainty constitutions. Of course, the presence of delightfully dorky Brit Jared Harris does not help this predicament, but despite the film's lack of pulchritudinous lead actors, *The Eternal* is, in consummation, an elegant work in of itself that can only be understood by fully experiencing it, as a mere inactive superficial glance at the film will not suffice. One can only hope that Michael Almercyda will give the werewolf and Frankenstein that same thorough and idiosyncratic treatment that he has so vivaciously bequeathed upon Dracula and the mummy, but judging by the commercial and critical failure of *The Eternal*, it is quite implausible that we will see the emergence of such clamorous horror works. Regardless of where Almercyda's filmmaking career might lead, we still have *The Eternal*, the only film where a plastered American beta-male smashes a wine bottle over a equally drunk druid alpha-mummy-witch's head.

-Ty E

CYMBELINE
CYMBELINE

Michael Almereyda (2014)

I do not generally like to say that I have guilty pleasures because I do not really feel guilty or ashamed about any of my interests, but I do somewhat uneasy about confessing that I have watched every single episode of both FX's *Sons of Anarchy* (2008-2014) and HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011-present), so naturally I was somewhat intrigued when I discovered that an auteur filmmaker that I somewhat appreciate had just released a quai-arthouse work starring a bunch of popular Hollywood stars that was cleverly advertised as a 'mashup' of both TV shows. Indeed, *Cymbeline* (2014) aka *Anarchy* directed by semi-mainstream auteur and sometimes documentarian Michael Almereyda (Twister, Experimenter) is a modernized adaptation of the somewhat obscure late period tragicomic play of the same name by William Shakespeare and as the various amateur and professional film reviews I have read on it clearly reveal, it seems that most *Sons of Anarchy* and *Game of Thrones* fans absolutely hated it, which certainly does not surprise me (after all, I do not think I have ever met anyone that appreciates Almereyda's films). Directed by a rare contemporary idiosyncratic auteur who has, among other things, adapted D.H. Lawrence using a children's Fisher-Price Pixelvision camera for his short *The Rocking Horse Winner* (1997) and got David Lynch to produce and appear in his shoegaze-driven semi-Sapphic black-and-white postmodern vampire flick *Nadja* (1994) featuring Romanian-born Jewess Elina Löwensohn as Dracula's dyke daughter and Hollywood counterculture burnout Peter Fonda as Van Helsing, Almereyda's film is certainly a work that would probably offend and/or annoy fans of both the Bard of Avon and trash TV as an unintentionally absurd anti-American Shakespearean melodrama of the tragicomic sort that features dope-dealing leather-clad bikers speaking in Elizabethan English, a murderously jealous emo fag skater that cries hysterically because some unscrupulous conman tricked him into think he sexually defiled his angelic wife, and super stoic blond Aryan brothers who cannot seem to figure out that their noble negro father is actually a banished warrior who stole them from their monarch father when they were just wee lads, among other captivatingly bizarre and completely culturally mongrelized scenarios that highlight the degeneracy and cultural retardation in the context of Shakespeare's non-classic work. A proudly rude and raunchy redneck soap opera that was obviously heavily influenced by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—a work that Almereyda also previously adapted (in fact, *Hamlet* (2000) starring Ethan Hawke is easily the filmmaker's most popular and well known work)—*Sons of Anarchy* is indubitably openly yet strangely respectfully mocked in *Cymbeline*, which replaces the Harley-riding hick histrionics and gratuitous Whiskey-drenched sex and violence of the TV show with provocative preternatural tableaux, understated art-trash poetics, and esoteric (socio)political subtexts in a sort of post-industrial

crypto(anti)western that is set in a decidedly decadent and morally and culturally decayed post-empire America that acts as a somewhat fitting substitute to the historical pre-Roman England of the somewhat maligned source play.

Featuring a NY-based biker drug kingpin that is in control of an east coast organized crime operation called Britons Motorcycle Club instead of an early Celtic British King that is control of Ancient Britain like in Shakespeare's play as the eponymous ruler, *Cymbeline* is undoubtedly one of the most elegant and labyrinthine (anti)biker flicks ever made, which probably does not say much but it does more or less confirm that most biker film fans will absolutely hate it, which certainly seems to be the case as reflected by the user reviews at imdb.com. Like its source material, the film features a number of recycled Shakespearean themes and motifs (e.g. deceptive cross-dressing, a drug cocktail that makes people appear dead, a young hero that talks to the ghost of his dead father, a young romance that is violently rejected by family members, etc.), yet strangely it is the very first film adaptation of Shakespeare's original play (though British Hebrew Elijah Moshinsky directed a lackluster version for BBC Television Shakespeare in 1983 that was somewhat visually inspired by Rembrandt and various other Dutch Golden Age painters), thereupon making for a fairly fresh and rarely derivative flick that does not seem like another insufferably modern adaptation of the bard's work like Baz Luhrmann's flashy piece of botched big budget bile *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and Michael Hoffman's fairly tacky *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999), among countless other examples. In other words, Almereyda's *Cymbeline* is, not unlike Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* (1948) and Derek Jarman's *The Tempest* (1979), one of the rare cinematic adaptations that actually made me feel more interested in the work of Shakespeare. Indeed, Almereyda's film somewhat feels like what might happen if the bastard brood of Fassbinder and Cocteau attempted to direct a misanthropic anti-American melodrama disguised as a mainstream biker-themed crime-drama-thriller. Intentionally set during Halloween as a somewhat subtle way to connect the present with England's death-obsessed pagan past, as well as to underscore the increasingly paganistic essence of American pop culture (or so Almereyda described in an interview), *Cymbeline* also demonstrates in a crude yet strangely simultaneously cultivated fashion that, in a strange and decidedly degenerate way, dope-dealing bikers are carrying on the torch of their Germanic viking ancestors in a post-Christian pre-apocalyptic multicultural age where the Occident seems like it is on the brink of complete capitulation.

Opening with the film's fairly catchy yet kitschy theme song, which initially strangely sounds somewhat like Fabio Frizzi's classic main theme in Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie*, juxtaposed with introductory shots of all the main characters as well as the imperative prologue, "For years *Cymbeline*, King of the Briton Motorcycle Club, has maintained an uneasy peace with the Roman Police Force. The Queen, *Cymbeline's* second wife, has her own agenda. But

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she's losing hope that her son will pair up with the King's only daughter, Imogen. Without consulting her royal parents, Imogen decides to marry Posthumus, Cymbeline's penniless protégé. The marriage triggers the King's rage, setting in motion a series of disastrous events. But fortune brings in some boats that are not steered..." Cymbeline will almost immediately leave most viewers lost and confused if they have not bothered to at least read the general synopsis of Shakespeare's play. Additionally, the viewer would most certainly benefit from watching the film with subtitles (luckily, unlike the bare bones Miramax Lionsgate DVD for Almercyda's Hamlet, Lions Gate's DVD/Blu-ray release of Cymbeline thankfully includes optional English subtitles). A film where all the death, destruction, and bodily dismemberment happens as a direct result of the two main male characters' inability (or, more like willful naivety and ignorance) to see their female counterparts for who they truly are, Almercyda's truly timeless tragicomedy ultimately demonstrates why it is never ever a wise idea to put pussy on a pedestal, especially if said pussy seems a little bit too infatuated with her own pussy. Indeed, titular King Cymbeline (Ed Harris) is so deludedly enamored with the chiseled pulchritude of his second/current wife, 'The Queen' (Milla Jovovich), that he has no idea that she is a crazy conspiring cunt who actually loathes him and only married him for his power as she hopes that her no less demented son from a previous marriage, Cloten (Anton Yelchin)—a sado-masochistic spoiled rich kid who hopes to wed his stepsister Imogen (Dakota Johnson) despite the fact that he absolutely repels her—will eventually become the new ruler of the illustrious Britons Motorcycle Club. Likewise, Posthumus (Penn Badgley)—a young man whose name derives from the fact that his father, the King's comrade Sicilius Leonatus, died before he was born—looks at his new bride in a fairly vain and idealistic fashion to the point where he trusts the dubious word of a ruthless Roman rival over what he should know is true about his beloved Imogen, thus leading to completely avoidable consequences of the rather cataclysmic sort.

At the beginning of the film in a scene fittingly featuring whacked-out homo anarchist avant-garde composer John Cage's 1948 composition "Dreams," recently secretly wed lovers Posthumus and Imogen meet at night at the site of empty bleachers where they embrace and exchange symbolic wedding gifts, with the young husband giving his bride a bracelet and the young wife giving her hubby a diamond ring that she inherited from her deceased mother. When the King encounters the lovers embracing, he almost becomes murderously enraged, less than delicately declares, "Thou basest thing, avoid hence, from my sight," and then proceeds to grab Posthumus by his broken cast-covered arm and declare while shoving a gun under the petrified young man's chin in an exceedingly threatening fashion, "If after this command thou fraught the court with thy unworthiness... thou diest. Thou art poison to my blood." From there, Posthumus hightails it of town on his skateboard while the King tells his less than trustwor-

thy wife the Queen to imprison Imogen in her room so that she cannot see her beloved husband. Despite the fact that he is his virtual adopted son, Cymbeline refuses to accept a poor sap with peasant blood like Posthumus as the husband of his sole daughter. When the King describes Posthumus as a, “beggar wouldst have made my throne a seat of baseness,” Imogen rightly retorts, “It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus. You bred him as my playfellow.” Unfortunately for Imogen, Posthumus is not the “eagle” that she believes him to be and Cymbeline does have good reason to believe that he would make for a less than ideal husband.

Posthumus is if nothing if not a pathetic posturing little bitch whose insufferably glaring pride is just an ill fitting mask for his biting insecurities, which have their origins in being a literal poor bastard who was raised by a wealthy ruler of pure noble stock who he could never dream of living up to as far as masculinity and leadership qualities are concerned. Seeing as Posthumus’ insecurities are blatant to anyone with working eyes, it is only a matter of time before an unscrupulous schemer exploits them for his own greedy personal gain. Shortly after being banished from town and crashing on the couch of his swarthy ‘Roman’ friend Philario (played by James Ransone, who is arguably best remembered for his unsimulated autoerotic asphyxiation scene in Larry Clark’s *Ken Park* (2002)), Posthumus encounters a proudly sleazy and uniquely unsavory older rival named Iachimo (Ethan Hawke in his second Shakespeare collaboration with *Almercyda*) who mocks the lovelorn skater for bragging about his young wife’s purity with arrogant remarks like, “Even if you buy ladies’ flesh at a million a dram...you cannot prevent it from tainting.” A sort of megalomaniacal Machiavellian opportunist who would never dare to spoil an opportunity at destroying a young Brit’s pride for profit with the added bonus of potential unspoiled teenage flesh, Iachimo makes a wager with Posthumus to prove that he has the killer charm and sex appeal to fuck such a virtuous young wife as Imogen. With his pride seeming to be more important to him than his beloved wife, Posthumus offers Iachimo that truly priceless diamond ring that his spouse has just given to him as a prize if the Roman conman can provide sufficient evidence that he “enjoyed the dearest bodily part” of Imogen. If Iachimo fails to despoil Imogen, he must pay \$10,000, or as the young husband more eloquently states, “If you make your voyage upon her...and give to me directly you have prevailed...I am no further your enemy. She is not worth the debate. If she remains unseduced, for your ill opinion...and the assault you have made to her chastity...You will answer my sword.” After the two men sign a contract that Posthumus written up a contract on a notebook paper and then proceed solidify their wager by shaking hands, Iachimo somewhat absurdly grabs and shacks one of Philario’s breasts and then exits the room, as if he is snidely demonstrating to his rival what he plans to do to his wife.

Under the pretense of being a refined Roman gentleman who has befriended

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Posthumus, Iachimo shows up at the King's large manor (but hardly a castle) where Imogen is imprisoned and proceeds to woo the lovelorn princess with shallow and flowery compliments that highlight his innate phoniness and deceptiveness. After handing Imogen a package containing a print of a woodcut created by Posthumus featuring her and her husband as a skeleton with the somewhat ironical inscription, "Fear No More," Iachimo then proceeds to bombard the princess with lies about how her hubby is an insatiable party animal that has been nicknamed "The Reveler" due to his ostensibly exceedingly extroverted ways. When Imogen remarks regarding Posthumus, "When he was here he did incline to sadness...and oftentimes not knowing why," Iachimo seems somewhat offended and replies, "I never saw him sad." From there, Iachimo shows Imogen various dubious staged photos of Posthumus, proceeds to accuse her husband of being a Don Juan of sorts, and then attempts to convince her to seek revenge, arguing, "Diseased ventures...and such boiled stuff as might well poison. Be revenged or she that bore you was no queen...and you recoil from your great stock." Ultimately, Iachimo less than smoothly attempts to coerce into Imogen into fucking him so that she can be "revenged" against her supposedly unfaithful husband by stating in a disgustingly groveling fashion, "I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure. More noble than that renegade from your bed. And will continue fast to your affection still close as sure. Let me my service tender...on your lips," but of course the princess is of true noble stock and refuses to be a cheap whore who allows her main vein to be stabbed by dubious foreign strangers. In fact, Imogen is so offended by Iachimo's salacious proposal that she proceeds to whip out her cellphone and threatens to call her father the King so that he can serve royal punishment to the Roman sleazebag. Since she is a remorseful princess who is quite modest in terms of executing her power, Imogen decides to pardon Iachimo when he desperately begs for forgiveness, but unfortunately she makes the mistake of agreeing to store a large chest in her house at the request of the Roman. Imogen should not have agree to store the chest because Iachimo emerges from it when she is asleep and then proceeds to take photos of her when she is scantily dressed in bed as proof that he managed to debase her. In fact, Iachimo goes so far as to lift Iachimo shirt and take a photo of her tit, though he has some guilt over what he does and even thinks to himself during a fleeting moment of personal insight, "No more. I have enough. I live in fear. Though this a heavenly angel...hell is here." Upon noticing a "mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops I' the bottom of a cowslip" on Imogen's left breast, Iachimo naturally feels he has enough evidence to prove to Posthumus that he fondled the flesh of the princess.

When Iachimo brings back the somewhat questionable proof that he has fornicated with his wife and declares like a grotesque braggart, "Your ring is won. Your lady being so easy," pathetic pussy Posthumus totally believes it and completely breaks down to the point where he is crying hysterically like a little girl,

even though if he truly knew his wife and understood what she was capable of he would never believe such a thing. In fact, Posthumus is so upset about Imogen's supposed sexual deceit that he decides to immediately travel back home to kill her, declaring, "Oh, that I had her here...to tear her limbmeal. I will go there...then do it in the court before her father." Although Posthumus commands his loyal servant Pisanio (John Leguizamo) to slaughter Imogen with a buck knife, the saintly servant refuses to kill the princess and instead decides to help her fake her death by sending her husband one of her shirts soaked with her blood. Pisanio also convinces Imogen to disguise herself by demanding that she cut off most of her hair, dress in drag, and adopt the identity of a young boy. Naturally, Pisanio also convinces Imogen to leave town by herself, which is not exactly easy for a pampered princess who has no idea how to fend for herself. Meanwhile, at the influence of his scheming wife and her equally unsavory son Cloten, King Cymbeline provokes a war between Britain and Rome by refusing to pay tribute to Augustus Caesar. Indeed, when Roman ambassador Caius Lucius (portrayed by black Hollywood hack filmmaker Vondie Curtis-Hall, who is responsible for directing such truly grotesque flashy Afro-kitsch as *Glitter* (2001) starring Mariah Carey)—a stoic middle-aged black cop—shows up at the King's house to pick up the "tribute money," Cloten goes to great pains to insult him by obnoxiously pouring a bag full of hundreds of Hershey kisses onto a table instead of the money that they usually pay and then self-righteously declares, "Why should we pay tribute? If Caesar can hide the sun from us with a blanket...or put the moon in his pocket...we will pay him tribute for light. Else, sir, no more tribute." Although Caius respects the King and vice versa, he must declare to Cymbeline, "I am sorry, Cymbeline, that I am to pronounce...Augustus Caesar thine enemy." Of course, if were not for the Queen, who plans to kill the Imogen via poison, Cymbeline would have never even considered provoking such a pointless war, but such are the senselessly tragic things that can happen when you're a powerful man with a covertly wicked wife who uses her cunt as tool of manipulation.

Unbeknownst to Cymbeline, his two long lost sons that were kidnapped from him when they were just babies are alive and well and have been brought up to be stoic fighters of high moral fiber by a negro warrior named Belarius (Delroy Lindo), who stole boys as revenge against the King after being banished from Britain for a crime that he was apparently framed for, or as he states states to himself in a quite moody fashion, "Villains, whose false oaths prevailed...before my perfect honor...swore to Cymbeline I was confederate with the Romans. O Cymbeline, heaven and my conscience knows...thou didst unjustly banish me...whereon, at three and two years old, I stole these boys. And this twenty years this rock has been my world...where I have lived at honest freedom...paid more pious debts to heaven...than in all the fore-end of my time. These boys know little they are sons to the king...nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.

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They think they are mine; and though trained up thus meanly... Their thoughts do hit the roofs of palaces." Indeed, despite being blonde Nordic men, Cymbeline's sons Guiderius (Spencer Treat Clark) and Arviragus (Harley Ware) believe that black brother Belarius is their father and have adopted his revolutionary attitude and disdain for the mainstream America and corporations, hence why they all live off the grid as recluses in a secluded cabin in the middle of the woods (in Shakespeare play, Belarius lives in a cave). Additionally, poor would-be-lumpenprole Guiderius, who has no idea that he is of royal stock, proudly sports a Che Guevara t-shirt. By happenstance, Imogen wanders into Belarius' cabin while looking for food and is unwittingly reunited with her long lost brothers. When Guiderius and the boys catch Imogen in their cabin, she tells them her name is 'Fidel' after looking at Guiderius' Che t-shirt and thinking of Cuba (in the play, Imogen adopts the name 'Fidele'). Needless to say, Guiderius and Arviragus have no idea that Imogen is not only actually a woman, but also their little sister, so they fail to see the relevance when Cluton, who is dressed as Posthumus (who he plans to slay in an absurd attempt to win his stepsister's heart), randomly shows up near their cabin. Ultimately, without even knowing it, Guiderius manages to protect his sister by swiftly dispatching Cluton, who is such a sadistic sexual degenerate that he masturbates while fantasizing about killing Posthumus. As Cluton states in regard to his patently preposterous plan to win the heart of his stepsister, "With the suit upon my back I will ravish her. First, kill Posthumus...and in her eyes...There shall she see my valor...which will then be a torment...to her contempt."

After Guiderius gets in a fairly brief brawl with Cloten that concludes with the real future king decapitating the would-be-king with his own sword, Belarius and the boys go back to the cabin and assume Imogen is dead as a result of the fact she will not wake up due to the fact she has drank a potion that Pisanio supplied her with at the behest of the Queen, who wants the Princess dead. While the potion was intended to kill the Princess, the dope chemist that supplied it, Dr. Cornelius (Peter Gerety), assumed that the Queen had unsavory intentions and designed the drug so that it would only induce the temporary appearance of death in the drinker. Thinking that Imogen is dead, Belarius and the boys bury both her and her stepbrother Cluton side-by-side under some rocks. Naturally, when Imogen eventually awakes, digs herself out of the rocks, and discovers a headless corpse next to her that is wearing the same clothes as her beloved Posthumus, she assumes the worst and mentally breaks down. Meanwhile, Posthumus, who has reached such an all-time low as a result of wrongly believing that he killed Imogen that he has befriended his enemy Iachimo, goes crazy and goes on a nihilistic suicide mission where he shoots and kills the King's right-hand man during a car chase and then turns himself into Cymbeline's men while declaring with his arms raised, "Is it enough I am sorry? For Imogen's dear life, take mine." Meanwhile, at the request of his 'adopted' sons Guiderius

and Arviragus, Belarius decide to join Cymbeline as warriors in his fight against Rome, thus killing a virtual army of cops and helping the motorcycle monarch win the war in the process. While the final battle between Britain and Rome is being waged in the streets, Posthumus, who is strapped to an embalming table, is visited by the ghost of his dead father Sicilius Leonatus (Bill Pullman) who more or less apologizes to him for ruining his life as a result of dying before he was born. When Posthumus is asked by one of Cymbeline's bikers, "ready for death?" he confidently replies "I am merrier to die than you are to live." Of course, life will be worth living again for Posthumus when he discovers that his precious Imogen is alive and well, even if she has a dyke haircut.

Despite all the senselessly tragic death and destruction in the film, Cymbeline could not conclude in a more absurdly ideal fashion. Indeed, aside from the fact that Cymbeline obliterates Rome and all the bad guys die, both sons and fathers and husbands and wives are reunited in the end. Indeed, right after the King wins the war and declares to his men, including Belarius and his sons, "Stand by my side...you whom the gods have made preservers of my throne. Knights of the battle...I create you companions to our person...and fit you with dignities befitting your estates," Dr. Cornelius abruptly arrives in an ambulance with the royal maids and Queen's corpse and informs Cymbeline that his wife has committed suicide as a result of the intolerable grief she had suffered upon learning about her son's grisly death. When Cymbeline asks the good doctor about the circumstances surrounding his wife's death, Dr. Cornelius replies in a regretful fashion, "With horror, madly dying...like her life, which, being cruel to the world...concluded most cruel to herself [...] First, she confessed she never loved you...only affected greatness got by you, not you...married your royalty, wife to your place...abhorred your person." At this point, Cymbeline finally comes to realize that his whacked out wifey saw him as nothing more than a mere means to an end and is ultimately the true source of all the death and destruction that has plagued his empire. After talking to the doctor, Cymbeline proceeds to prepare to liquidate his surviving enemies and in the process notices that Iachimo, who was captured with Posthumus, is wearing his daughter's ring and asks him how he got it. At this point, Iachimo decides to repent for his sins and confesses, "I returned with proof enough...to make the noble Posthumus mad." Naturally, Posthumus is quite upset upon hearing this as he finally realizes that he was duped and that he had underestimated his loyal wife. At this point, Imogen emerges and runs to her husband to embrace him, but Posthumus does not realize that it is his wife since she is disguised as a boy so he elbows her in the face and knocks her out (somewhat humorously, Pisanio remarks after Posthumus knocks Imogen unconscious, "You never killed Imogen...until now"). Of course, Posthumus finally realizes it is Imogen and they kiss and embrace after she regains consciousness while Cymbeline watches on without even the slightest hint of hatred, even though he knows that his stepson tried to kill his daughter. In

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a second twist happy ending, Belarius comes forward, declares his true identity to the King, and then reveals that Guiderius and Arviragus, who have no idea about their true paternity, are his long sons. Luckily, Cymbeline is so happy with the good news that he not only pardons all of his surviving enemies, including Iachimo and Belarius, but also tells Caius Lucius that even though he has won the war, he will once again pay tribute to Rome. As a sort of bittersweet viking-esque farewell to his treacherous wife, Cymbeline has the Queen's corpse set on fire while it is sitting on a stretcher in a body-bag. In a quasi-gynocentric conclusion that hints that Almereyda does not wear the pants in his relationships with women, Posthumus and Imogen leave together on a crotch-rocket, with the princess driving the motorcycle while her emo fag hubby meekly holds onto her back.

As I discovered in one of the few positive reviews I have read on Cymbeline, Irish playwright and eugenicist George Bernard Shaw apparently once described Shakespeare's original play as, "stagey trash of the lowest melodramatic order" (though he later changed his mind about most of the play aside from the ending, which inspired him to write the play-fragment *Cymbeline Refinished* (1937)), which is also a pretty way to describe *Sons of Anarchy*. While Almereyda's film might feature John Leguizamo naked and locked in a dog cage, Ethan Hawke taking selfies of himself with a sleeping young girl who he wants people to believe that he fucked, Milla Jovovich singing a sorrowful Bob Dylan song about a hooker to a room full of drunken bikers with huge beer guts, pube-headed Jew-boy Anton Yelchin delectately fondling himself like budding a preteen who has just discovered her clit, perennial wuss Bill Pullman portraying the ghost of a tough dead biker who recites an Emily Dickinson poem to his pansy uxoricidal son, and *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015) star Dakota Johnson getting high off of the fumes of her banished boy toy's lucky red sweater, among other rather ridiculous scenarios, it would probably be better described as, "stagey artsy fartsy stuff of the most ludicrously understated order," as a carefully calculated work with a sometimes almost hieroglyphic style approach to storytelling where love, sex, and death are treated in a strikingly stylized, as opposed to sensational, fashion, hence why the film seems almost unanimously hated among both regular filmgoers and film critics alike. Somewhat ironically, despite taking a similar subversive approach to adapting Shakespeare, Almereyda's film is the total opposite of British arthouse auteur Derek Jarman's high-camp late era Shakespeare adaptation *The Tempest* (1979) as a cinematic work that is about as playful and campy as a Michael Haneke flick, thus highlighting the versatility when it comes to cinematically adapting the bard's plays. If *Sons of Anarchy* exploited the timeless tale of Hamlet to make a biker TV show seem like something more than a degenerate hodgepodge of boobs-bikes-boots-blood-beer-and-barf, Cymbeline ultimately returns the favor by exploiting the popularity of *Sons of Anarchy* to celebrate one of Shakespeare's least loved plays (notably, the film was even originally

entitled 'Anarchy' until Almereyda thankfully put a stop to it). If Almereyda has proved anything with both his Shakespeare adaptation and his experimental (post)modernist monster movies like *Nadja* (1994) and *Trance* (1998) aka *The Eternal*, it is that he has a very distinctive and quasi-sagely talent for bringing new lifeblood to ancient archetypes, genre conventions, and themes.

In its depiction of a decidedly decadent and corrupt world where a 'virtuous' druglord with a discernible moral code is able to freely run his drug empire by paying off the police, *Cymbeline* ultimately manages to make an interesting connection between the pagan Britons and their somewhat mongrelized and less spiritual American descendants. Personally, I have always seen bikers as sort of modern day Vikings, just as I see black street-gangs like the Bloods and Crips and Latino international gangs like Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) as examples of non-Europid races reverting back to primalism and atavistically returning to their pre-Christian tribal ways, albeit in a highly degenerate and largely materialistic way that would probably disgrace their forebears. Indeed, the eponymous lead played by Ed Harris is more or less the Führer of a degenerate modern-day Männerbünde empire, though what is somewhat curious is that many of his various biker underling are Mestizos, which can be seen as a sign of the feminization of white males and rise of Hispanic machismo culture in America (as is depicted on *Sons of Anarchy* and is true with most real-life biker gangs like the Hells Angels, outlaw motorcycle groups tend towards racial segregation though, over the past couple decades, white gangs have been more accepting of Mestizos). While I doubt it was Almereyda's intention, the fact that *Cymbeline's* very Aryan-looking sons were kidnapped by a negro and brainwashed to the point where they hate the Occident so much that they sport t-shirts featuring an image of commie third world icon Che Guevara (who, as his book *The Motorcycle Diaries* demonstrates, was no fan of negroes) can be seen as symbolic of the pathetic deracinated state of younger generations of white Americans who, brainwashed with everything from cultural Marxist style public school indoctrination to illiterate honky-hating rappers on MTV to a race-hustling double-bastard mulatto president, have become hopelessly lost orphans to both their own race and kultur. Of course, the mass marketing of Che's readily identifiable swarthy image speaks for itself in terms of the triumph of capitalism over communism (considering Almereyda's name seems to be a pseudonym that he borrowed from the anarchist turned communist militant father of French auteur Jean Vigo, one can only guess what the filmmaker's intent with the use of the Che shirt), so it is fitting that literally cutthroat capitalist *Cymbeline's* long lost sons completely embrace him in the end.

Like Shakespeare being lovingly sodomized by Jean-Pierre Melville, Michael Mann, and the lead bike boy of Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964), *Cymbeline* is ultimately a notable yet far from immaculate experiment in cinematic dramaturgy by a rare talented contemporary American auteur who unfortunately

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seems to have suffered spiritual castration as a result of attending one-too-many college courses on feminism and deconstructionism, among other things. Indeed, had Almereyda attended more viewings of works by Fassbinder and Peckinpah instead of Godard and Akerman, he would have surely assembled something with more meat and less pomo pedantry, though the film admittedly does have some memorable and even poetic, albeit all too brief, murder and torture scenes (after all, who can forget a scene featuring the extra dark corpse of a burnt dead black cop sitting in the passenger seat of a patrol car while Dakota Johnson is dressed in drag in the backseat?!). Additionally, disgustingly sulky heartthrob Penn Badgley is intolerably irritating in the role of Posthumus, as he comes off seeming like a sort of culturally and socially confused crybaby preppy-emo-skater-fag hybrid who was raised by a slutty single mother, but then again that makes the character somewhat typical of contemporary heterosexual males, who oftentimes seem no different from their homo counterparts. While Dakota Johnson certainly pulls off the somewhat unbelievable role of a completely morally pristine and faithful virginal beauty (considering that she is the daughter of a Botox-ridden screen bimbo like Melanie Griffith, this makes her angelic performance seem all the more incredible), she is considerably less effective when portraying a boy as she is just too damn innately feminine and delicate to ever make for a halfway believable fag (in fact, when I first saw a shot of her from the film with short hair, I had no clue she was in drag). While clearly directed by a beta-boy who has no problem letting people know that he thinks less of men than women, Cymbeline ultimately an important reminder that no knight should take his shieldmaiden for granted, as she might be a psychopathic Salome in disguise.

-Ty E

THUNDERHEART

Michael Apted (1992)

Thunderheart is a fairly corny American crime film about a self-loathing half-caste Native American FBI agent named Ray, who is forced into investigating a murder on a Native American reservation. Upon arriving on the reservation, Ray is disgusted and offended by the way of life of the defeated Native Americans. He makes to stay as faraway to a close relationship with the Native Americans as possible. The tribal police officer of the reservation, Walter Crow Horse, is equally disgusted (but showing it in a more comical way) by Ray. Thunderheart is your typical Hollywood liberal propaganda portraying the Native American as still a "victim" of white oppression. Despite being on a reservation, whites continue to exploit the unlucky and somber Indians. Over time Ray begins to pickup on this "oppression" and sides with the Native Americans. It seems that "cool" ray is finally feeling the Native American blood flowing through his veins. Ray even has a "vision" of being chased down by a group of old time redneck cowboys.

Thunderheart also has another agenda that I found a tad laughable. The film has an "empowering" message to Native Americans to start becoming militant and to take back land. With the recent wave of illegal immigration in American, Indians from the America's have been flooding into the country. Myth driven groups like the Mexican Movement demand that all whites be expelled from the America's to make way for their new Indian "Empire." Thunderheart would make for a great motivator and recruit film for prospective members of the Mexican Movement. Val Kilmer plays the role of Ray and does a fairly good job playing a pseudo suave FBI agent. Ray doesn't like Native Americans because his father was the stereotypical Native American alcoholic. It seems that Ray's father had lost his "Indian spirit" which unfortunately led to his demise. Thunderheart can also be seen as an anti-alcohol film for Native Americans as well. Hollywood really does tell heartwarming and positive stories.

Genius Propaganda by the "Mexica Movement"

Sadly Ray doesn't get even close to "hooking up" with his Native American love interest. Due to the sadist behavior of the scheming white man, Ray's chance at love is forever gone. Thunderheart has a rebellious message to both Native Americans and other "minorities" to adopt a false sense of pride. When Ray realizes his Native American soul, he develops a horrible attitude. Maybe Hollywood wants minorities to fail?

-Ty E

THE IMAGE
THE IMAGE

Michael Armstrong (1967)

While I am typically rather repulsed by people that mourn dead celebrities that they never knew, I have encountered David Bowie some many times as a result of my cinephilia that I could not help but be somewhat startled by his death, at least to the extent that I know I will never again see a bizarre cameo performance from him in some random future cult film. Indeed, it would have been nice to have seen Bowie appear in a Nicolas Winding Refn or Edwin Brien flick, but I guess fate had different plans. While Bowie only seemed semi-serious about his film career since it was clearly secondary to his work as a musician, he still managed to appear in more notable films than most full-time Hollywood actors do in a lifetime, hence my somewhat unlikely sense of respect for him (admittedly, I also have respect for him for collaborating with artists like Steve Strange and Klaus Nomi, but that is a different subject). After all, only Bowie could have written a song in tribute to Andy Warhol (which, in my opinion, is one of his darkest and most underrated tunes), only to later portray his quasi-autistic contemporary in a quite memorable way a quarter century later in degenerate Hebraic (con)artist Julian Schnabel's debut feature *Basquiat* (1996). Additionally, only Bowie could pull off both Pontius Pilate (as he did in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988)) and an aristocratic Egyptian deathrock chic vampire (as he did in Tony Scott's debut feature *The Hunger* (1983)). I also admit that I do not think I have ever dated a girl that did not admit that she had the hots for Bowie as a little girl as a result of seeing him in Jim Henson's *Labyrinth* (1986), which is somewhat curious since he is also the man that managed to connect Eastern and Western queers together via his strangely iconic performance as a self-sacrificing kiwi sod soldier in Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983). Indeed, if there ever was a mensch that had an eclectic talent for seducing and molesting all sort of filmgoers—whether it be old Jap fags or little white girls—with his mere presence, it was Mr. Bowie, so it is only fitting that his very first acting role was as a handsome young ghost-like figure that literally haunts an artist who may or may not be suffering from with LGBT propagandists describe as 'internalized homophobia.' Shot over the course of a mere three days in the winter of 1967 only a couple months after the belated international superstar rechristened himself 'David Bowie' in tribute to 19th-century American frontiersman Jim Bowie (as well as the knife that the knife-fighting yank frontiersman popularized) and released his less than successful eponymous debut album, *The Image* (1967) directed by Michael Armstrong (*Horror House* aka *The Haunted House of Horror*, *Mark of the Devil*) is a little known but considerably worthwhile black-and-white avant-garde horror short that features the then-unknown rock legend when he was only 20-years-old portraying a sort phantom twink who haunts an assumed self-loathing closet

queen (played by Michael Byrne of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) and Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1995) in one of his very first film roles) that is curiously painting a portrait of said phantom twink.

Notable for being one of only a handful of British shorts films to ever receive a certified 'X' Rating, *The Image* might be a sensual and sensitively constructed work with a striking oneiric quality, but it also features David Bowie being brutally murdered no less than five times by a deranged young lapsed twink who seems to embody the line from Oscar Wilde's poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves." Not officially released until around two years after it had been completed, the short was somewhat bizarrely advertised alongside the Hollywood propaganda flick *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) directed by Lewis Milestone, which had recently been acquired by Border Films (which had also produced Armstrong's film), and screened sandwiched in between foreign sex films after eventually opening at the Jacey Cinema in Piccadilly Circus in 1969. According to auteur Armstrong, before ever collaborating together on *The Image*, he approached Bowie about writing the songs and score for an ultimately never-realized film comedy based on Greek mythology entitled *A Floral Tale* that would also feature the then-relatively-unknown-rocker in the role of Thracian singer Orpheus. As much as I would enjoy seeing Bowie portraying Orpheus, I think I prefer artsy fartsy horror to silly British comedic takes on ancient Grecian mythology. While Bowie had yet to have any experience doing any film acting, he did have experience studying avant-garde theatre and mime under queer actor Lindsay Kemp, whose 1967 theatrical production *Pierrot in Turquoise* he appeared in. Clearly his mime training with cocksucker Kemp (who notably later appeared in Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* (1973), as well as a number of films by Ken Russell and Derek Jarman) paid off, as Bowie more or less portrays a sort of phantasmagoric gay hustler-cum-schoolboy specter of unrequited sod sensuality who never speaks but instead merely displays a sad and tragic yet sensual and seductive facial expression that reeks of hopelessly melancholic sexual desperation. Described by auteur Armstrong as, "a study of the illusionary reality world within the schizophrenic mind of the artist at his point of creativity," *The Image* is like an abstract homage to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as directed by a filmmaker that seems like he was obsessed with pre-Stonewall American queer avant-garde cinema, especially works like John E. Schmitz's *The Voices* (1953) and Gregory J. Markopoulos' *Twice a Man* (1964), thereupon making it all the more poignant that it stars iconic gender-bender Bowie, who probably did more than any man of his generation to popularize and legitimize queer culture and male androgyny, even if he was arguably not actually on the pink team himself. Sort of like the *Un Chien Andalou* of late-1960s British horror, Armstrong's short is nothing if not a welcome exception to the outmoded formulaic banality of Hammer Films horror.

THE IMAGE

It is fairly apparent before the nameless blond Artist is even introduced that he is not quite right in the head, as his dilapidated house is covered with so much trash that it seems like a homeless guy is camping on his floor. After all, the Artist is a handsome and carefully groomed man with a toned physique who hardly looks like a lazy slob. When we first encounter the Artist, we see he is turned around from a distance in a seemingly symbolic scene that makes it seem as if he is a deeply alienated individual that is lost in his own sad and lonely introverted world. Upon seeing a close-up shot of the Artist, the viewer realizes that he is painting a portrait on a canvas of a handsome young man with his arms raised as if he is inviting someone's warm embrace, thus hinting that the painter longs for the warmth and touch of a healthy young twink. It is raining outside and when the Artist thinks he sees someone walking outside of his house, he naturally becomes somewhat alarmed and does not even notice when he accidentally gets paint on his sweater. Needless to say, when the Artist sees the very same young man from his painting pressing his face against his window, he becomes quite petrified, drops his paintbrush, and runs upstairs, only to find the same exact twink staring at him in an upstairs window. Of course, the Artist immediately runs back downstairs, only to get the shock of a lifetime when he sees the young man standing next to his painting and making the same exact inviting pose as the figure on the canvas. At this point, the Artist attempts to flee from his house, but the door is chained shut and he soon finds himself being cornered by the young man, who clearly wants his love and is willing to do just about anything to get it, including dying a number of violent deaths. With little time to think, the Artist picks up a small bronze bust that he has conveniently lying on his quite messy trash-covered floor and violently bashes the omniscient twink over the head with it, thereupon killing him instantly. Of course, the poor phantom is far from dead, at least in the Artist's clearly troubled mind.

After kicking the young man's lifeless body to see if he is still alive, the Artist drops the bust and slowly walks up the steps where he enters a small and claustrophobic upstairs bathroom and proceeds to wash his hands, as if making a vain attempt to wash away the figurative blood from his hands. Of course, the Artist is quite startled when the young man randomly begins caressing his neck while he is washing his face in the sink. Matching ostensible like with like, the Artist opts to use his hands to strangle his ghostly caresser to death, only for the young man to subsequently awake from his slumber and once again proceed to approach his petrified 'victim.' Luckily for the Artist, he has a knife in his pants pocket, which he uses to stab the young man in the gut. After the Artist stabs the young man, the wounded specter falls forward and leans against his stabber in a manner that almost makes it seem as if the two men are sharing an intimate loving moment with one another, which Armstrong underscores with close-up still shots of the faggy fellows' slightly touching faces and waists. Of course, there are also sexual overtones to the stabbings, as the Artist penetrates the young man's flesh

with a fierce yet fetishistic degree of savage sensuality, as if passionately buggering him with the blade. Eventually, the Artist begins slowly walking down the steps backwards while waving his knife at the young man, who still has his arms wide open as if expecting the painter to finally accept his embrace, even though he is covered in blood and is suffering from seemingly fatal stab wounds. When the young man finally gets the gall to come down the stairs, the Artist wastes no time in brutally stabbing multiple times, most notably and symbolically in the back, until the twink completely collapses and does not get back up. At this point, the Artist completely mentally deteriorates and unleashes his remaining strength on his painting, which he wrestles to the ground. While lying on his painting, the Artist puts his hands over his head and sobs like a toddler suffering from a temper tantrum. Somewhat intriguingly, the film concludes with a shot of a framed photograph of the young man as a schoolboy, thus hinting that he is someone that the Artist used to know and is an unrequited love and/or someone he ultimately betrayed.

While David Bowie obviously had a singularly successful career after *The Image*, the film's relatively unknown auteur Michael Armstrong was not so successful and spent the majority of his fairly uneven filmmaking career involved with horror and exploitation oriented hack work, though with some slight notable exceptions. Indeed, while the filmmaker had some minor commercial success with his proto-slasher *The Dark* (1969) aka *The Haunted House Of Horror* aka *Horror House* starring gregarious guido teen idol Frankie Avalon and even more successful with the West German production *Hexen bis aufs Blut gequält* (1970) aka *Mark of the Devil* starring Udo Kier and Herbert Lom, both of these films were taken away from him and completely butchered (in fact, some argue that the producer, Austrian Heimatfilm star turned Fassbinder superstar Adrian Hoven, was the true auteur of the latter film, as he more or less treated Armstrong the same way Francis Ford Coppola treated Wim Wenders on *Hammett* (1982) by reshooting scenes and excising others). Aside from penning and appearing in trashy sex comedies like *The Sex Thief* (1973) and *Eskimo Nell* (1975) and writing Pete Walker's horror-comedy *House of the Long Shadows* (1983) starring horror legends Vincent Price and Christopher Lee, Armstrong also did some uncredited writing on Tobe Hooper's somewhat underrated Colin Wilson adaptation *Lifeforce* (1985). Arguably, most notably, at least as far as his screenwriting credits are concerned, Armstrong also penned Ian Merrick's much reviled and maligned arthouse-ish crime-thriller *The Black Panther* (1977), which, despite being a delightfully dark film, was essentially consigned to the celluloid dustbin of history upon its release because it was ruthlessly attacked by the British media due to featuring a fairly historically accurate depiction of the kidnapping and murder of heiress Lesley Whittle by deranged armed robber Donald Neilson. Judging by the fact that virtually all of his projects were either butchered and/or abject commercial failures, one might argue that Armstrong was the single most

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accursed British auteur of his era, especially when once considers that he actually seemed to have talent as is quite apparent in *The Image*, which is seemingly immaculate in its stunning simplicity. Somewhat strangely but not surprisingly, Quentin Tarantino is apparently such a huge fan of Armstrong's badly butchered feature *The Haunted House of Horror* that he screened his own personal print of the film in 1997 at the first semi-annual Quentin Tarantino Film Festival (aka 'QT-Fest') in Austin, Texas as an example of a movie that had an imperative influence on his own work.

Somewhat ironically, Armstrong's first film was also his most pure, unadulterated, and auteur oriented as his only cinematic work where his own personal vision was more or less left completely untainted by scheming producers and monetary-motivated studios. Indeed, despite the fact that Armstrong only got the opportunity to shoot "barely half" of his script for *The Image* because the producers refused to fund further shooting time (in fact, the production company, Border Films, even briefly took the project away from Armstrong and had an in-house hack editor assemble a botched 7 ½ minute cut of the film, only to beg the filmmaker to come back when they realized they had a problem), the filmmaker still managed to construct a striking work that was wholly his own, hence the relatively idiosyncratic essence of the film, which I would compare to the pre-*Night Tide* (1961) avant-garde shorts of Curtis Harrington (who, incidentally, also had many of his features butchered by studios and producers when he began directing semi-mainstream horror films). Notably, due to the fact that he was unable to shoot his entire screenplay, Armstrong had to get extra creative with the editing and, in the end, he ultimately "expanded the thematic line of the film even further than had existed in the original screenplay," thus resulting in what probably turned out to be a more potent and immaculate work that feels like the cinematic equivalent of being briefly molested by death. Personally, I was quite shocked when I put two and two together and realized that *The Image* and *Mark of the Devil* were directed by the same man, as the latter is essentially folk-horror exploitation trash that was made to capitalize on the success of *Witchfinder General* (1968) aka *The Conqueror Worm*, which was especially successful in Deutschland. Although Armstrong would jokingly refer to the short as his "art film," I would also say that it is unequivocally his greatest and most provocative film. I also think that it was the perfect cinematic debut for David Bowie, as a short and almost sadistically bittersweet slice of foreboding psychosexual celluloid that demonstrates that Ziggy Stardust was already oozing charisma and androgynous sex appeal long before he ever became Ziggy Stardust. Of course, it is only fitting that a man that portrayed himself as gay and bisexual for decades before 'coming out of the closet as heterosexual' would make his filmic debut as the most ambiguously faggy yet nonetheless seductive of phantoms. Surely, Bowie's performance in *The Image* also makes a nice counterpoint to his bizarre cameo in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992)

as a long-lost FBI Agent.

While he certainly had dubious taste in women (to say the least) and, in my opinion, wrote more shitty songs than good ones, Bowie unquestionably had a strikingly singular career as an actor, which might be the result of being a man that had more charm, charisma, tenacity, and lust for life than artistic prowess. Indeed, from portraying a melancholic dipsomaniac extraterrestrial in Nicholas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) to playing himself in the kraut teen junky cult flick *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) to his somewhat fitting performance as the eponymous rebel poet in Alan Clarke's Brecht adaptation *Baal* (1982) to his quirky performance as the great Serbian-American inventor Nikola Tesla in Christopher Nolan's otherwise banal feature *The Prestige* (2006), Bowie has certainly secured his place as the most eclectic part-time actor in cinema history, which is not too bad for a petite Brit with stereotypical bad teeth who got his start playing a gay ghost in an obscure avant-garde short that was only seen by a handful of people (unfortunately, aside from the fact that Armstrong's film was only briefly in British theaters, it has never been released on VHS or DVD). Undoubtedly, watching *The Image* now, it is almost more hard to believe that the handsome and exceedingly youthful chap in the film is now dead than the fact that he would go on to become one of the most famous and readily identifiable figures in the entire world. In that sense, Armstrong's film is probably more haunting today than when it was released nearly half a century ago, thus making it mandatory viewing for both cinephiles and/or anyone that is even vaguely interested in Bowie. I also have to admit that *The Image* was a rather refreshing experience for me in that was it was like seeing Bowie totally stripped, as the viewer gets to see him without the makeup or one of his carefully contrived personas, which is arguably the most evocative aspect of the short, thus underscoring the completely unintended and unpredictable ways that a film can evolve over time in terms of both meaning and potency.

-Ty E

YEAR OF THE DRAGON
YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Michael Cimino (1985)

Imagine a crime thriller starring the young, angelic face of Mickey Rourke and add a touch of a belligerent dose of terrible violence. Not the accustomed violence we're given through modern media in that pampering and stylized manner that we're subjected to on a daily basis. No smoke and mirrors here, *Year of the Dragon* features a stark and in-your-face style of dealing with death and injury. Close-up shots of fatal wounds and selfish tragedy are given by Michael Cimino using his sleight of hand acquired from the Oscar-winning *Deer Hunter* and such adds the illusion of a neon-lit gangster epic set in Chinatown. With epic as the term I use to describe this film, know that the running time and the pacing conjures the thought of this being an epic and not what consists of the actual underlayings for the film. From my hiatus of writing was born a love of the way classic films were created and in this, and not to play devil's advocate, I find the classic aesthetic of crime capers to be consistently more fulfilling than the bravest structured contemporary film around. Mickey Rourke, as per usual, grabs the attention of all who view this film. There is no supporting cast or honorable mentions, there is only . Your gaze will be transfixed on a 30 year old Rourke playing a 50-something year old Vietnam vet. Analyze this, Harley Davidson & the Marlboro Man without Mickey Rourke would be as caring for a child that isn't your biological spawn. Sure, the instinct for parental nurturing would still exist as would the film *Harley Davidson* but the passion and excitement from the adventures of a former A-list actor would be void. Face it, it would harness the credibility of a recent Dolph Lundgren Straight-to-DVD title (*Sorry, Dolph.*) For a film of its nature, you'd think that press, no, even cult film lovers could approach this film open-armed but it appears that *Year of the Dragon* has been shunned into obscurity because of "an offending portrait of Chinese-Americans." Never mind the blurb at the opening of the film disregarding all "stereotypes" portrayed in this film. Since then, *Year of the Dragon* has never sat well with the chinks and please, disregard their portrayal of the "white demon." For once I wish I could write something as loud and angry as Cimino's *Year of the Dragon*. Rather, Rourke's *Year of the Dragon*.

Audience discrepancies will linger after the foul approach of showing the Chinese-Americans as being the soulless parasites they are. Moving over to our country and adopting their thousand year old traditions in a place of law and justice. This doesn't sit well with Captain Stanley White as he endangers his own life and the life of all who care for him as *Year of the Dragon* explodes into a rip wave of unexplainable bloodshed and shocking climaxes at every turn. Captain Stanley White is the most bizarre of protagonists. Layered plentifully, the more we learn about his character, the more solace we garner and the more trust we put in his judgment. Then when the proverbial shit hits the fan, we find

ourselves reaching out to silence his continuing mistakes and realize that he isn't the great guy we thought he was, over and over again. And that is just one of the reasons that I feel Year of the Dragon is a marvelous film for what it is - an effervescently chaotic scripture of backwards racism and the perfect amount of needed misogyny. I occasionally dine at Chinese/Japanese buffets and sit baffled wondering where in context could the harmonic, yet infuriating, mandarin music could be properly squeezed into its soothing and proper effect. Year of the Dragon sporadically incorporates these similar sounds while perusing through the extensive Chinese crime families while heavy percussion accompany most of the Polack-American scenes of brutal detective work. A gripe comes to mind when assessing the Chinese half of the film, it's not so much as a gripe with Year of the Dragon but my own inability to maintain memories on which Lee-Hung family belongs to which Triad while Johnny Cho is out with Walter Wang. Since Tremors debuted some time ago and devastated the rental market, I've found myself lampooning the similarly named Chinamen. As I stated, my problem but my personal fulfillment as well. Ariane's performance didn't help my intolerable Oriental condition either, with her performance as wooden as my love for Legally Blonde spinoffs. (Pictured left to right, Lone, Woo, Chin, Wong, Wang....or something) In conclusion, Year of the Dragon is a rousing and voracious view into stereotyped crime syndicates. So much may be true while the rest lingers upon notations hidden in books long forgotten but that's the problem with adaptations and their "contemporary redesignings," so you'll see little complaint from me. To call Year of the Dragon "racist" is to say Tom Hanks has too much screen time in Cast Away. These media vultures love digging for subversion and uprooting it into some big fiasco. Attention whores, all of them! Year of the Dragon isn't an intelligent film per say, but an emotional one for sure. Many times throughout this gem I found myself appraising Captain Stanley White for being such a cool cat while the other times I felt as if a similar tragedy were shared psychically. That right there is one of the many definitions of movie magic.

-mAQ

JACK FROST 2: REVENGE OF THE MUTANT KILLER SNOWMAN
JACK FROST 2: REVENGE OF THE MUTANT KILLER SNOWMAN

Michael Cooney (2000)

Jack Frost is an incredibly cheesy and ridiculous horror film concerning the ensuing massacre created by mutant snowman killer aptly named Jack Frost. The first film acted as a horribly flawed horror film but none-the-less provided an hour and a half of entertainment thanks to a wise-cracking snowman that predated the exploits of the Gingerdead Man by five years. I'd pick Gary Busey over Scott MacDonald any day. I've heard through the grapevine that this film was awful but I mysteriously found myself loving it. As a sequel to the already insane Jack Frost, It ups the kill count, evolves the humor, and adds some really cute elements of baby killer snowmen. If anything, Jack Frost II is the perfect sequel. Much as Gingerdead Man 2 was infinitely better than it's predecessor. Jack Frost II features illustrious killing methods such as an ice anvil, tiny snowmen - same idea in Tremors II: Aftershocks, and relentless one-liners and incredibly funny cinematography. The characters are intensely memorable, namely Captain Fun!, who steals the show as the Ritalin-infused vacation counselor of sorts. Jack Frost needed to skimp on the implied violence and stick to the humor aspect more seeing as how ridiculous the film is. Jack Frost II makes up for the originals shortcomings and strengthens the film evenly. Sure, It's a horrible horror film and a better comedy, but that's no reason to not watch this film. If I were to watch this film as a child, I might have hated it. But watching it with my present mindset, I find this outing in frozen terror to be more of a frozen treat. The deaths are radical and the plot is loony, and I couldn't have found more fun in this film had it been a film sticking to the original formula of trying to scare and humor simultaneously. Jack Frost II is just what the holidays ordered - corny humor and those great practical effects we all love. It's only brutal irony that actor Christopher Allport died in January 08 of an avalanche. It seems that Jack Frost finally got the best of him.

-mAQ

RUNAWAY

Michael Crichton (1984)

It was set in stone. Runaway was going to be the smash sci-fi hit of the 80s, that is, until James Cameron's *The Terminator* devastated the market for "cyberpunk" action films. Runaway is a film that is very bizarre in concept. Imagine a script with the some of the virtues of *I, Robot* but set in the 80s with an incredibly aged look that makes you stick your tongue out in disgust. Tom Selleck leads the late Michael Crichton scripted & directed film, with an exuberant Gene Simmons (of *KISS* fame) as the villain equipped with DNA seeking missiles. I could be a genre whore and dub this a cyberpunk film but alas, there is no punk aspect of Runaway. Perhaps *Cybergeriatric* is a far more fitting tag for Runaway. Tom Selleck is a flawed character. Revel in that for several seconds because that's what the entire film is going to barrage you with. Early on, you learn that Selleck has a fear of heights, so for the next 60 or so minutes, you will see Selleck expressing his immediate distaste for heights and his hatred for rogue robots. While a semi-similar film *Demolition Man* created a new Utopian playground and clever electronics, you will stare confoundedly at the same acid spitting spiders and bleeping cardboard boxes for quite some time. Since the passing of Michael Crichton, the literary world will forever be shadowed by the titanic impact he made, on both mediums of film and literature. His novel *Jurassic Park* was adapted into one of the largest groundbreaking blockbusters of all time. His film *Westworld* was wacky, thrilling, and genius. With Crichton gone, I'd like to see his novel *Prey* faithfully adapted into what we can mindlessly label "nanopunk." Runaway was just one of Crichton's films that has spoiled from exposure. All is not lost though, there is chemistry between the two partners and the script isn't that bad. It's a precise clone of what made the 80s so eighty's. Runaway is entirely watchable. If you can manage to look past its many flaws; there is even charm hidden under the clam shell of my VHS case. With an erratic soundtrack scored by Jerry Goldsmith, Runaway is almost memorable, but falls short of being a definitive classic of entertainment.

-mAQ

L.I.E.
L.I.E.

Michael Cuesta (2001)

L.I.E is a disturbing film following a fifteen year old boy named Howie Blitzer and his relationship with a pederast named 'big John.' Young Howie lost his mother on the Long Island Expressway and it seems to have confused his emotions. He is friends with a group of young criminals that take pride in robbing homes for kicks. Howie and his friend Gary also seem to be a little bit too close. A kid named Kevin also brags about how he has sex with his own sister. Howie gets in trouble when he decides to rob the house of 'big John' with his friend Gary. Big John manages to snatch Howie's jean pocket. Howie is eventually confronted by a cunning 'big John.' The old pedophile seems more interested in Howie's body than receiving his stolen guns back. Instead of molesting him, big John ends up being a surrogate father of sorts for Howie. What a heartwarming film. Howie Blitzer is played by a young and unknown Paul Dano. Dano recently wowed audiences with his powerful performance as the false prophet Eli Sunday in *There Will Be Blood*. Despite it being one of his first roles, Dano's performance as Howie Blitzer is nothing short of amazing. Dano has no trouble playing a confused kid with a constant aura of melancholy surrounding him. Paul Dano will no doubt be one of the greatest actors of his time. Donovan's song "Hurdy Gurdy Man" adds a haunting feel to L.I.E. Seeing a pederast driving around with children running around outside is as realistically dark as films can get. *Hurdy Gurdy Man* touches a similar nerve as the chilling scenes found in L.I.E. The odd distorted colors of the film also add to the its overall feel. L.I.E. is maybe the only film that features a "likeable" pedophile. Due to the loss of his Mother and the jailing of his asshole Zionist father, Howie is alone in the world. An old pervert by the name of 'big John' is the only one that can truly comfort Howie. Howie thought he could trust his friend Gary but he soon finds out he is wrong. L.I.E. is a distressing film not because it features an evil pederast, but a pederast that has deep emotions and cares for a young man. I think director Michael Cuesta is the only director to perform such an unsettling feat.

-Ty E

12 AND HOLDING

Michael Cuesta (2006)

I can only imagine that youth nowadays have a hard time finding a decent coming-of-age film. Hollywood seems most interested in sexualizing youngsters as well as indoctrinating them with a slave morality where the weak is looked at as good (especially poor, modernly mythical ghetto Jews and disenfranchised Negroes) and the strong as evil (and don't forget usually "racist") rather than providing them with quality entertainment. No longer will there be films like *Monster Squad* where kids call other kids "faggots" for such words are borderline hate speech. Also, one should not expect many kids movies with strong Nordic heroes wiping out dark and slimy scum. If one wants to see a quality coming-of-age films nowadays, it is going to have to be subversive and borderline morally bankrupt, the kind of film that kids probably should not see. *12 and Holding*, directed by Michael Cuesta, is such a film; a sin-filled and not-so-sunny motion picture featuring kids killing other kids. Cuesta is probably best known for his hurdy-gurdy masterpiece *L.I.E.*, a film featuring a young teen who takes on a Pedo named Big John as a father figure. With *12 and Holding*, Cuesta once again proves he is proficient at directing films about juveniles that no parent would want to see nor think about.

The children in *12 and Holding* are a group of young and upcoming degenerates. Jacob has a disgusting birthmark on his face and a recently deceased twin brother who his parents loved more, Leonard is an obese lump of turd, and Carla is a 1/2 Asian girl who has a thing for adult men. It seems all these 12 year old kids are united by their early disdain for life and most of humanity. All of these preteens also suffer some type of existential crisis with some of the children more conscious of their problems than others. All the children also take extreme measures in attempting to correct their problems. For example, young Carla thinks that breaking into an adult male friend's apartment and surprising him in the nude would be the best way to correct her father-less void. Lardo Leonard thinks by locking his disgustingly obese mother in the basement and forcing her to eat fruit/vegetables that he will force Miss Piggy to lose some weight. I guess children sometimes have ridiculous solutions to their problems, but one must respect them for their passionate audacity.

12 and Holding was shot on Super 16mm film which certainly adds to the film's realism. The scenarios featured in the film may sometimes seem exaggerated and unheard of, but I am sure similar situations play out more often in American society than one would want to admit. I believe a lot of kids in the city start pushing crack around age 12 and the girls start shooting out worthless eaters around the same age too. The somewhat prudish preteens of *12 and Holding* are not yet keen on the same recreations as their fellow city youth but they certainly have their own poison of abuse. Chances are if you're 12 years or

12 AND HOLDING

younger the film will likely give your nightmares but then again, so will Anne Frank and Barney.

-Ty E

THE BET

Michael Dunn (2007) Going into *The Bet*, i didn't know what to expect. I was thinking of something along the lines of a avid gambler gets chased by a bunch of mafia guys looking to lop off some fingers, but what i got was a film that started off enigmatic and slowly metamorphosed into something abstract and beautiful. This poster horrifies me. To explain the plot would only limit the overall effect of the film. All i can say, is it is about a game between two people; the stakes being your life. When it started out i was confused, also annoyed. Not annoyed because of the directing, sound, or cinematography. I just wanted to know exactly what was going on. Things that we cannot understand are always the most sought after pieces of information. Cryptzoology is proof of this. *The Bet* unfolds like a magnificent eclipse of the cinematic kind. Wonderful and abrasive, Director Michael Dunn ensures that you will be entertained and be thinking in a wider manner. If you are looking for a headscrew of a short film, look no further. *The Bet* does in its under 20 minute runtime, what "art-house" film makers have been trying to do for decades. The film is an entirely open film, perfect for discussion and analysis. To call *The Bet* "Lynchian" would be like supporting Post-Modernism and if this true, then the world might be dead. While the film has the atmospheric tone to it and the imagery to kick, this doesn't show it's influences easily. Perhaps on another layer. *The Bet* is a great short if i have ever seen one, and i will surely be looking forward to Michael Dunn's future projects. Hopefully he keeps his inspirations in place and doesn't become another Mathieu Kassovitz.

-Maq

KILL DADDY GOOD NIGHT
KILL DADDY GOOD NIGHT

Michael Glawogger (2009)

Last year, three days after Uncle Adolf's birthday on April, 23, 2014, Austria lost one of its few great contemporary auteur filmmakers, who tragically succumbed to an unexpected illness while he was doing what he loved best in a most hostile and disease-ridden land. Indeed, while working on his latest film in the real-life hellhole known as Liberia, Michael Glawogger (*Workingman's Death*, *Slumming*) was incorrectly diagnosed with typhus and ultimately died of malaria four days later, thus bringing a tragic premature end to a singular filmmaking career that arguably had yet to reach its peak in terms of artistry. Although Glawogger worked as a cinematographer for fellow Austrian 'gritty realist' filmmaker Ulrich Seidl on works like *Tierische Liebe* (1996) aka *Animal Love* and the somewhat bizarre anti-Haider agitprop piece *State of the Nation: Austria in Six Chapters* (2002) aka *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln*, he had been directing his own films since the mid-1980s. Somewhat strangely schooled at the San Francisco Art Institute before finishing the rest of his academic education in his hometown of Vienna, Glawogger learned at an early age to appreciate the experimental filmmaking of avant-gardists like Stan Brakhage and his fellow countryman Peter Kubelka, whose influence would be apparent throughout his career, albeit in a subtle and inconspicuous way so as not to annoy people that are not interested in experimental cinema. While ultimately becoming best known as a sort of 'wandering documentarian' (or as he called himself, a "traveling filmmaker") in the spirit of Werner Herzog who was willing to live in and document the world's worst third world metropolises and their decidedly degraded inhabitants as demonstrated in notable works like *Megacities* (1998), *Workingman's Death* (2005), and *Whores' Glory* (2011), Glawogger also directed a number of fictional features, including raunchy yet culturally and socio-politically astute regional comedies like *Nacktschnecken* (2004) aka *Slugs*, *Slumming* (2009), and *Contact High: The Good, the Bad and the Bag* (2009), as well as a couple more serious works. Arguably, Glawogger's most serious, mature, and ambitious feature is *Kill Daddy Good Night* (2009) aka *Das Vaterspiel*, which is based on the 2000 novel of the same name by Austrian writer Josef Haslinger. The somewhat strange story of a swarthy patricidal Viennese beta-male nerd who has dedicated his life to fine-tuning a videogame that he has created about killing his political minister father that ultimately finds himself renovating the Long Island basement apartment of an elderly Lithuanian Nazi war criminal after receiving a random phone-call from his hairless Alopecia-plagued college crush, Glawogger's pathologically eccentric yet melancholic anti-daddy drama is quite possibly the most strange, quirky, and, quite thankfully, least sentimental holocaust-themed film ever made. In its stoic cynicism and complete and utter lack of sapless sentimentality, *Kill Daddy Good Night* ultimately lets the viewer

now more about the reality of the holocaust than blockbuster 'shoah classics' like Schindler's List (1993) ever could despite the fact that it does not depict a single atrocity scene, but more importantly the film is a story about the cultural plague of the death of masculinity and the resentment of fathers in the Occident, especially in the German-speaking world. Set on two different continents and telling two different yet ultimately inter-twinned stories that merge together in the end, Glawogger's work ultimately demonstrates how fathers and grandfathers can sometimes unwittingly seal the fates of their kids and grandkids in a most cataclysmic fashion that in no way can be foreseen.

The reasonably swarthy and unkempt computer nerd protagonist of Kill Daddy Good Night has the nickname 'Ratz' (played by director Helmut Köpping, who also starred in Glawogger's Slugs and Contact High) because he looks and sometimes acts like a rat, or so he reveals in a self-denigrating absurdist dream-sequence where he starts gnawing like a rabid rodent. Although he never really gives a good reason why, Ratz has more or less dedicated his life to hating his politician father 'Kramer' (comedian Christian Tramitz in a rare serious role) and has been assembling a videogame for some time that centers around killing his daddy in a rather violent gore-filled fashion. In fact, Ratz is so obsessed with his game and his hatred for his father that he oftentimes imagines his daddy in videogame form following around, especially anytime he attempts to leave Vienna, as if to demonstrate that the protagonist may be able to physically runaway from his progenitor, but he will never escape his mind and influence. As a less than handsome and rather socially awkward beta-male with a rather repellant attitude who spends most of his time on his computer 'virtually killing' his daddy, Ratz is not exactly a lady's man, hence why he became the cuckold of a girl named Mimi (Sabine Timoteo of Matthias Glasner's modern classic Der freie Wille (2006) aka The Free Will) when he was in college. A girl of Lithuanian stock who was born in Helsinki and eventually landed in Vienna after living in various different places, Mimi is a true cosmopolitan chameleon and like any good deracinated citizen of the world, she has a completely artificial personality and is not much more than an attractive cipher with a character that is not that much more intricate than that of one of the characters from Ratz's videogame. Since she suffers from Alopecia, which she later fully reveals to Ratz in a flashback scene where she gets completely naked and reveals that she has no fur on her beaver, Mimi likes to wear a different wig every single day, which can be seen as symbolic of her vapid existence as a constantly changing rootless cosmopolitan. Indeed, in the modern world where no one has any true sense of individuality, physical appearance becomes a means to a sort of pseudo-individuality and Mimi's wigs probably make her feel like a bonafide individualist. When she first met Ratz in college, Mimi managed to convince him to paint an entire large room for her even though they were not dating, thus making her realize that she could trust the pathetic protagonist to do anything for her. Flash forward to November

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1999, Mimi calls Ratz out of the blue after having not talked to him for years and asks him to immediately fly to New York City to refurbish her grandmother's basement apartment. Unbeknownst to Ratz, Mimi's Nazi war criminal grandfather is living in the basement and the protagonist is the only one she trusts to not let the cat out of the bag in regard to his big family secret.

Flash back to Ludwigsburg, Mai 1959, a Lithuanian-born Jew named Jonas Shtrom (Ulrich Tukur) that works as a journalist for the Chicago Tribune is giving recorded testimony regarding the extermination of his father and tons of other Jews by an ex-classmate named Algis Munkaitis who went to the same German language high school as him in a town the German-speaking majority called Memel. While Algis was apparently originally a Lithuanian nationalist who respected Jews, Jonas eventually lost contact with him after he changed schools and did not see him again until he came to his apartment years later and rounded up his father and various other Jews to be exterminated. Jonas himself was later rounded up and put in a ghetto where he would see Algis again machine-gunning Jews down during the so-called 'Grossaktion.' As the viewer eventually discovers, Algis is Mimi's grandfather and he has been going by the name Lucas (Itzhak Finzi) ever since fleeing Europe after World War II and moving to the United States where he started a fairly successful fishing business. Unfortunately for 'Lucas,' Jonas spotted him on a TV special about successful Chicago immigrants who had contributed much to their communities and has been trying to get him arrested ever since. Needless to say, Lucas has been hiding ever since Jonas revealed his true identity.

Due to the fact that all the flights from Vienna to NYC are full, Ratz must drive to Munich to catch a flight at a different airport, but before he does, he drops off his cat Alexander—a feline named in tribute to Lenin's Czar-executed bolshevik revolutionary brother—at his alcoholic mother's home. Clearly, one of the reasons Ratz hates his father so much is because he divorced his mother, who turned to dipsomania as a result, and married a vapid whore. Ratz also seems to hate his father because he is jealous that his slutty sister (Franziska Weisz) cares more about their dad than him. As revealed in various repellent scenes, Ratz has deep incestuous feelings for his sister as demonstrated by the fact that he proposes having sex with her and even makes out with her, which she allows for a couple minutes before get thoroughly disgusted. Ironically, despite the fact his grandfather is a Dachau survivor, Ratz will ultimately find a father figure in the form of Nazi war criminal Lucas who, unlike his real father, is not a lying politician, but a man who fully confesses to personally liquidating about a thousand Jews and shows not the least bit of remorse about it.

When Ratz eventually arrives in NYC, he initially refuses to refurbish Mimi's grandfather's room after learning that the man he is supposed to help is a Nazi fugitive and all, but he eventually agrees when his ex(pseudo)girlfriend promises to use her influence to sell his "Kill Daddy, Good Night" videogame. Unfor-

tunately, when Ratz meets with the prospective buyer of the game, the guys reject it and gives the protagonist the rather insulting but oh-so true advice: "I know your generation, you grow up with dross and all that shit...programming all night, smoking weed and cracking code...lonesome cowboys. Get yourself a second life!" adding, "You bring me a game about genocide. A nice fabulous wonderful game about genocide with blood and gore [...] I can package it up all nice and pretty and sell the shit out of it. But your father, come on." Ultimately, a sleazy porn-addicted Hebrew that works at the company that rejected Ratz's game digs a demo copy of "Kill Daddy, Good Night" out of the trash at his work and gives the protagonist a call. Somewhat reluctantly, Ratz agrees to release his game on the guy's website where it soon becomes a hit.

When Ratz first arrives at Mimi's grandparent's house in Long Island, Lucas refuses to talk but once he grows accustomed to the protagonist, he begins chatting him up. By the time Ratz finally finishes renovating the room, the protagonist and Lucas are good friends. Unfortunately, Mimi is not happy with this friendship and reveals to Ratz that she hates her grandfather and then hands him a thick dossier that includes a transcription of Jonas' testimonial regarding Lucas' war crimes. After reading through it and learning his pal apparently killed tons of poor innocent Israelites, Ratz confronts Lucas, who has no problem coming to terms with his past. After stoically confessing that he personally gunned down about a thousand Yids, Lucas proudly states, "I did it of my own free will" and "I believed our extermination of the Jews was part of our struggle for survival...That was my conviction. I wanted to take responsibility for my convictions." When Ratz asks Lucas if he still believes in the National Socialist worldview, he replies, "Yes...but history has decided against us. History has no remorse." After making his confession, Lucas asks Ratz to do him the favor of finding his old Anton Diabelli record and playing it for him since it is Christmas time and he believes the Austrian Romantic composer was responsible for creating the most beautiful Christmas music of all the time. Unfortunately, Ratz soon has to fly back to Vienna because his much hated father has committed suicide. From his stepmother, Ratz learns that his father rarely talked about his emotions but that he once broke down and cried, "I've lost my son." Needless to say, Lucas becomes ashamed of the fact that he is making tons of money off a videogame about killing his father, but being a pansy man-child, he does not even have the testicular fortitude to tell his slimy NYC business partner to take the game offline. In the end, it is obvious that Ratz did not resent his father simply because he was his father but because he was not 'fatherly' enough in that he was a weak and vain man that made a living bullshitting as opposed to living by real masculine principles and ideals that he actually believed in. Apparently, part of the reason Ratz's father killed himself was because he was in so much debt despite giving off the appearance of being filthy rich, thus revealing he was a lying fraud. During the last scene of the film, Ratz changes his "Kill Daddy,

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Good Night” game into a “Kill Ratz, Good Night” game and then proceeds to virtually kill himself.

Unquestionably, *Kill Daddy Good Night* is an important and intriguing cinematic work in the sense that it is only one of a handful of films that attempts to explain why the progeny of so-called Generation X and subsequent generation are such weak and pathetic slackers that never quite seem to reach true adulthood. Rather revealingly, the protagonist of the film respects his grandfather and the Nazi war criminal because, unlike his father and himself, they are real men who live by their word and have strong ideals. Although it might not have been the director’s intention, the film depicts the death of masculinity of Europe, especially in the German-speaking world, as a direct result of the defeat of the Third Reich, which is especially made clear in a scene where Nazi war criminal Lucas states, “History has decided against us. History has no remorse.” Notably, the film also makes light of the fact that Jew Jonas lied about some important facts, with the most obvious being that his father was executed from being a Bolshevik and that it was only later that they started killing the rest of the Jews, thus reflecting how world Jewry has reinvented history to fit their own narrative of what is ‘good’ and ‘evil.’ Surely, had Germany won the war, so-called war criminals like Lucas would be considered heroes and certainly no one would care about who Anne Frank was. After all, one man’s genocide is another man’s fight for survival, as reflected in the Israeli’s belief that their ethnic cleansing of Palestinians is a wholly righteous act and that they are the true victims of towel-head terrorism. Ultimately, Jew Jonas is symbolic of not just of how history always manages to catch up with someone, but also the persistent manner in which world Jewry hunts down its enemies until they are destroyed and their ancestor’s are so disgraced to the point of committing suicide or living a loser lifestyle. Indeed, the protagonist of *Kill Daddy Good Night* might not know it, but his rather misguided ‘quirky’ tendency to name his cats in tribute to Judeo-Bolshevik mass murderer Lenin and his pathological patricidal feelings are the direct result of an anti-European system that seeks to induce such feelings, just as Nazi War criminal Lucas never thought about the people he killed until people started accusing him of being a mass murderer. As indicated in the scene in the film where the videogame company representative tells the protagonist that games about genocide are hot and games about patricide are not, both morality and history are relative and *Kill Daddy Good Night* is ultimately a rare work that has the glorious gall to highlight that fact. After all, if Uncle Adolf had won the war, it is dubious as to whether the Grand Theft Auto series would exist and that large legions of exceedingly emasculated Occidental men would be lurking in their parents’ basements while wasting sixty hours or more a week playing such morally retarded videogames.

-Ty E

THE SEVENTH CONTINENT

Michael Haneke (1989)

As the years pass, I grow even more disillusioned with the films of Austrian auteur Michael Haneke (*Funny Games*, *Amour*) and cannot decide whether or not I hate his work more than I enjoy it, but, at the very least, his cinematic works—for better or worse—act as an ominous and foreboding expression of the (dead) Germanic soul and collective unconscious, which was already quite apparent in the filmmaker's debut feature-length film *The Seventh Continent* (1989) aka *Der siebente Kontinent*. To be fair, Haneke already had worked in theatre and made a number of TV movies before his theatrical debut, yet one must admit that *The Seventh Continent* is a rare example of a novice filmmaker who had already developed a cinematic *Weltanschauung* for all his films to follow in his decided disdain for bourgeois life, condemnation of the Hollywoodization of Europe, acknowledgement of the existential crisis of the Faustian soul, and uniquely unsentimental and uncompromising depiction regarding the cultural, religious, and social stagnation of the world. Whereas the scatological subversives of Viennese Actionism made it their innately iconoclastic goal to destroy all traditional mores, culture, and religion of Austrian society, Michael Haneke's works act as sort of minimalistic and materialistic postmodern postmortem celluloid autopsies of Austrian society, thus it is only fitting that the filmmaker's first feature *The Seventh Continent* stagnantly chronicles the slow and grating suicide of a middle-class Austrian family. Taking its title from Australia—the seemingly luxurious and magical continent the ill-fated Austrian family lies about moving to in a letter (they opt for suicide instead)—*The Seventh Continent* is based on a true story that director Michael Haneke read about in the newspaper. An alarmingly audience-antagonistic film from its intentionally banal beginning to its quasi-anti-climatic climax, *The Seventh Continent* is essentially a paradoxically penetrating yet prosaic piece of anti-bourgeois aesthetic terrorism created by a self-loathing member of the bourgeois that was carefully crafted to infect the viewer with the same sort of metaphysical misery that eats away the film's characters and, quite arguably, the director himself. A fundamentally anti-Hollywood work that acts as a sort of anti-escapism to the celluloid escapism of capitalistic culture-distorters like Steven Spielberg and even Quentin Tarantino, *The Seventh Continent* is essentially semi-abstract celluloid preaching without words that somewhat sadistically slaps the viewer across the face with the more than bitter and never sweet taste of reality, but never offers answers for the crisis of the modern Occidental world. The first chapter in Michael Haneke's "Glaciation Trilogy" (which was followed with *Benny's Video* (1992) and *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance* (1994)), *The Seventh Continent* is nothing less than the first big statement by the filmmaker on the Austrian apocalypse, which was essentially prophesized by Austrian commie-feminist Jewess novelist/playwright El-

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friede Jelinek and followed by associated filmmakers Franz Novotny (*Exit... But No Panic*, *Die Ausgesperrten* aka *The Excluded*), Paulus Manker (*Schmutz* aka *Dirt*, *Weiningers Nacht* aka *Weininger's Last Night*), Ulrich Seidl (*Dog Days* aka *Hundstage*, *Import/Export*), and Michael Glawogger (*Slumming*, *Whores' Glory*).

Divided into three chronological parts (1987, 1988, 1989), *The Seventh Continent* follows the slow burning and marvelously monotonous self-destruction of the Austrian middle-class Schober family from Linz comprised of a husband Georg (Dieter Berner), wife Anna (Birgit Doll) and young grade school daughter Evi (Leni Tanzer). By the end of the film, the entire family will be dead after the parents decide to kill their daughter—a brunette Heather O'Rourke-look-alike—and subsequently themselves after existence becomes unbearable for these individuals suffering from sort of ungodly and all-consuming existential hell of no return. They may hate their lives but the Schobers are certainly not losers but an upstanding and seemingly normal middle-class family, as George is an engineer and Anna is an optician who co-owns an eye doctor business with her brother. Like most Haneke films, *The Seventh Continent* begins with a slow start where the viewer rarely gets a glance of the characters face for about the first 30 minutes of the film, only focusing on the banality and robotic-like nature of their devastatingly ordinary day-to-day lives, including riding through car washes (the very first scene in the film), brushing their teeth, making/eating breakfasting, doing homework and other daily rituals. The signs of familial meltdown are illustrated in minor moments of melodrama, including mother/wife Anna having an emotional breakdown while riding in a car through a carwash and daughter Evi lying to her teacher that she has randomly turned blind in what is undoubtedly a cry out for help to her optometrist mother that ultimately ends in further distancing and coldness between mother and daughter. After Anna learns about Evi's lie, she confronts her daughter, asking her, "Look at me. Come on, tell me, did you pretend to be blind? Come on, tell me. I just want to know the truth. Come on. Don't be afraid, I won't hurt you. Is it true? Did you pretend to be blind?" but when the little lady admits the truth, her mother maliciously smacks her in the face, thus further dividing the two. In another telling family moment, Anna's brother Alexander (Udo Samel), who has previously stayed at a mental institution due to his debilitating depression, eats dinner with the family and, for seemingly no reason, begins to cry in what seems to be, aside from a cry out for help, an impotent expression of a man who knows something is not quite right with his sister's family and feels totally powerless to help. Undoubtedly, powerlessness, impotency, and soullessness in the face of a contrived and seemingly pointless bourgeois existence ultimately seem the biggest contributing factors for the characters' inevitable self-designated date with death.

In the third segment of *The Seventh Continent*, which is set in 1989 and

comprises the largest segment of the film, the Schober family leaves husband Georg's parents' house and proceeds with the narration of a rather strange letter written by Georg the next day regarding him and his wife's whimsical decision to quit their jobs, empty their bank accounts, sell their cars, and to ostensibly head to Australia to live a life of luxury. Of course, the letter is really a suicide letter and instead of going to Australia, the family eats a rather large feast in possible tribute to Marco Ferreri's *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) and proceeds to destroy everything they have worked their entire lives to earn, including shredding all their records/LPs, smashing a large fish tank and killing the fish in the process, and flushing all their money down the toilet (including pocket change), thus demonstrating how all these material possessions were ultimately meaningless to them in the long run and that they could never fill the spiritual/emotional void that is a comfortable bourgeois life. Since daughter Evi admits to her parents that she is not afraid, the parents decide to end her life as well (although she does not take the killing of the family fish well), with Georg writing to his father in the suicide letter, "There's only our little Eva left and we wondered for a long time if we'd take her with us or if it was better to leave her with you. As you can imagine, Mom, and certainly you too, dear Dad, our decision caused us both heartache and headaches because even though we're sure of what's best for us, it's something else entirely to decide the fate of the one we love above all else..." While (symbolically?) watching a concert performance of Amero-Kraut-Jew Jennifer Rush's "The Power of Love," Evi's parents feed her poison in a cup and the poor little girl states, "Dear Jesus, let me be a good girl so I can go to heaven" before she dies in a fashion not unlike that of the Goebbels children. After that, Anna kills herself the same way (ultimately going out with a death rattle) and fallen family man George follows, but scrawls on the wall names, date, and time of death of all three family members before he seals the deal on the family's freakish collective self-slaughter. *The Seventh Continent* concludes with the following 'post-game wrap up': "The S. [Schober] family was found on January 17, 1989. Subsequent to a request from the wife's worried brother, the door of the apartment was knocked down. On February 20, the family was buried. In spite of the letter left for the parents, they refused to believe it was a suicide and filed a murder complaint against Parties Unknown. The police investigation following up on this suspicion was without results. The matter was filed as an unsolved case."

In describing *The Seventh Continent* and his rationale for creating it, director Michael Haneke stated the following, "Every day we read stories about family tragedies. Every day families take pleasure in their alienation, contenting themselves with information and a life on the cheap. Every day they have less to decide about and hate themselves for their fear. Every day they suffer more from their lives. Every day many of them wear themselves out fighting this fact. Every day they speak less and laugh louder. Every day they become more perfect."

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Every day the gap widens between human beings. Every day they feel they need to make a decision in order to be able to breathe. This film is a chronicle, an account of these decisions. It does not intend to bear any judgment. It knows no answers. It questions the causes.” Indeed, luckily Haneke does not have any sort of outmoded Marxist answer, even if the ‘causes’ were probably similar to those that inspired West German students to rebel in 1968 and terrorism to become vogue not long after. Personally, I do not think Haneke is willing to accept why Austria, like much of Europe, has become such a culturally vapid and soulless place that inspires people to commit suicide because it would force the director accept the fact that Germanic national kultur, customs, and religion essentially ended in 1945. In the filmmaker’s later anti-Heimatfilm *The White Ribbon* (2009), Haneke stereotypically portrays a traditional religious Germanic upbringing as exceedingly evil, but such cultural ingredients were the things that made things worth living for people in the past. Like the Hollywood films and bourgeois culture Haneke cinematically condemns, the director’s films, not least of all *The Seventh Continent*, are lacking in soul and spirituality, thus making them every bit a symptom of the same degenerate cultural malaise, albeit minus the entertainment value.

It is very telling regarding a filmmaker and his outlook on his native middle-class when his characters only become interesting and remarkable when they opt for committing suicide, as if only in their tragic deaths do the Schober family of *The Seventh Continent* derive meaning from their pitiful lives, but I guess that is Haneke’s message (or lack thereof). Featuring a number of (intentionally) unbearably long scenes, including a still shot of the Schobers flushing their money down the toilet (sorry Haneke, but I did not find the scene to be taboo/terrifying, but just banal), *The Seventh Continent* is essentially Haneke’s would-be-ingenious way of letting everyone know that he has more insights about the capitalist west than any Hollywood director as a morally superior nihilist prophet who surely knows how to criticize in an exceedingly smug manner, but ultimately has no answers as he has stated himself in his quote, “My films are intended as polemical statements against the American ‘barrel down’ cinema and its dis-empowerment of the spectator. They are an appeal for a cinema of insistent questions instead of false (because too quick) answers, for clarifying distance in place of violating closeness, for provocation and dialogue instead of consumption and consensus.” Of course, Rainer Werner Fassbinder did not have many answers either, but he had many insights and certainly knew how to entertain, even when driving a figurative stack into the viewer’s heart, which I certainly cannot say the same about Haneke. Compare *The Seventh Continent* to the similarly themed *Der Kopf des Mohren* (1995) aka *The Moor’s Head* (which Haneke wrote the screenplay for and was originally supposed to direct) and one gets a good idea of Haneke’s innate soullessness as a heckling yet paradoxically pedantic auteur who thinks he knows the truth, but probably knows less about

life and human nature than the average cop, serial killer, or failed Austrian artist turned politician.

-Ty E

THE PIANO TEACHER
THE PIANO TEACHER

Michael Haneke (2001)

Over the years, while my appreciation for Austrian auteur Michael Haneke (*Funny Games*, *Amour*) has waned, my respect for Isabelle Huppert has steadily increased to a degree I would have though unimaginable before, so I decided the other day that there was no time better than now to re-watch *La Pianiste* (2001) aka *The Piano Teacher*, which I had somewhat mixed feelings towards when I first watched the film about a decade ago or so. After re-watching the film just the other day, I now realize that I did not originally like Huppert because she is so believable in her portrayal as a fiercely frigid bourgeois bitch that it actually made me develop a dislike for her as a person (which is certainly a good indication of how talented she is as an actress), but after seeing her in a variety of eclectic roles in films directed by master filmmakers like Marco Ferreri's *Storia di Piera* (1983) aka *The Story of Piera*, Werner Schroeter's *Malina* (1991) and *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*, Benoît Jacquot's Yukio Mishima adaptation *L'École de la chair* (1998) aka *The School of Flesh*, and Claire Denis' *White Material* (2009), among various other different works, my opinion has changed drastically. As for Elfriede Jelinek—a Viennese mischling playwright and novelist whose work *Die Klavierspielerin* (1983) Haneke's film is adapted from—I find her to be an insufferable bitch whose life and work would surely make for a great case study in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's classic text *Psychopathia Sexualis*, thus it is intriguing to see Huppert more or less channel her in *The Piano Teacher*. Indeed, Jelinek, who is a commie feminist that once petitioned for the release of misogynistic Austrian serial killer/Ulli Lommel lookalike Jack Unterweger (who was released and subsequently went on a murdering spree), based her novel on her own personal experiences as a failed pianist with a deranged mother who pushed her to become a musical wunderkind of sorts. Undoubtedly, after watching *The Piano Teacher*, which is apparently much tamer than the novel, I can certainly see why Jelinek is so screwed up that when she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2004, she refused to accept the prize in person due to suffering from agoraphobia, social phobia, and related anxiety issues. Additionally, Jelinek has been married for over thirty years yet strangely she is childless and has never lived with her husband (who lives in Munich). For better or worse, Haneke's film features one of the creepiest and most grotesque mother-daughter relationships in cinema history, not to mention the fact that Ms. Huppert has never looked so brazenly bitchy yet simultaneously disturbingly pathetic. While oftentimes described as an 'erotic thriller' or 'dark romance,' *The Piano Teacher* is anything but arousing, unless you get off to botched orgasms, middle-aged momma girls mutilating their labia and barfing during blowjobs, and sadomasochistic mother-daughter incest, among various other forms of sad and debasing sexual dysfunction. I have to confess that after my recent viewing of the film, I have more pity

than hatred for its source writer because if the film is even marginally accurate in its depiction of Jelinek's life and psyche then one would be just plain cruel to hate her, even if she has retarded political beliefs and uses her influence as a literary figure to taint her homeland's reputation on an international level.

The Piano Teacher begins with the eponymous quasi-anti-heroine Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert)—a failed piano virtuoso who teaches at the Vienna Conservatory—coming home from a night out and having her exceedingly invasive mother (Annie Girardot of Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) and Marco Ferreri's *Dillinger Is Dead* (1969)) grab her bag and self-righteously declare "Magnificent... Exactly as I thought" upon finding a new dress inside. In no time, a bourgeois bitch fight that involves the pulling of hair ensues after Erika's mother senselessly tears her much cherish new piece of clothing. Practically a minute or two after the fight has ended, things go back to normal for the two discernibly co-dependent dames and they act as if there was never was a fight, with Erika's mother proclaiming, "That's how it is... We're are hot-blooded family," as if their mutually abusive behavior is normal and completely justifiable. As hinted throughout the film, Erika's mother, like many women who have lost their husband, has completely taken over her daughter's life, turned her into a sort of surrogate spouse, and uses her as both an emotional punch-bag and security blanket. Despite the fact she has her own private room, Erika sleeps in her mother's bed as if she is her lover/husband, thus hinting at an incestuous lesbian relationship that seems all the more confirmed by the fact that neither woman has a lover. A whacked out woman who practically carries around her daughter's pussy around in her purse, Erika's mother forced her to devote her entire life to becoming a great pianist and still suffers the delusion that her not-so-little-girl will become famous one day even though she is already in her late-30s and makes her living teaching and performing at lame parities for annoyingly banal wine-sniffers and other upper-middleclass rabble who both women clearly loathe. Indeed, because of her mother's lifelong control over her, Erika has no life of her own as a barren and assumedly virginal middle-age woman of the rather sexually repressed sort who has nil friends or romantic partners. Needless to say, when a handsome young man comes into her life and will not take no for an answer after her incessant rebuffing of his romantic gestures, Erika's begins to feel deep passion for one of the first times in her life, but of course things eventually take a nasty turn for the worst in the end that confirm that the protagonist is condemned to a loser life of perennial loneliness and cuckoldry to her similarly miserable mommy.

When Erika performs at a party for a pedantic musical instrument collector named Dr. George Blonskij (Udo Samel of Haneke's *The Seventh Continent* (1989) and Martin Walz's Ralf König adaptation *Killer Condom* (1996)), she finds herself to be the object of unwanted adoration from the host's handsome 17-year-old nephew Walter Klemmer (Benoît Magimel of Mathieu Kassovitz's *La*

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Haine (1995) and Claude Chabrol's *The Flower of Evil* (2003)), who is a rather talented dilettante pianist who rather respects the protagonist's talents, even if he also has a compulsion to get in her panties. After Erika performs, Walter immediately approaches her and asks, "I hope it's not too forward of me to kiss the hand that plays such Bach," but his lips barely touch her skin before she pulls her hand away and asks him in a rather bitchy fashion, "You can stop now. Where do you get such unfashionable enthusiasm?," to which he enthusiastically replies, "I'm delighted the tradition of recitals lives on. It was practically extinct. The masters die, then their music. People today only ever listen to pop or rock." Aside from Franz Schubert, Erika's favorite composer is Robert Schumann who, like her father, ended up in a mental institution. When Erika brings up a quote by kosher commie Adorno about Schumann's descent into madness and Walter replies, "You talk about things as if they were yours. It's rare... And I think you know it," the protagonist defensively replies, "Schubert and Schumann are my favorites, that's all. Since my father died completely mad in Steinhof asylum, I can talk easily about the twilight of the mind, can't I?" Unfortunately for both of them, Walter does not take the hint from Erika's remark that she is not exactly quite right in the head and instead decides he will stop at nothing to sexually ravage her. As a handsome and highly extroverted young mensch of the tall and blond-haired sort, Walter is not used to getting rebuffed and seems to enjoy the challenge of attempting to swoon a woman as frigid, passive-aggressive, and seemingly soulless as Erika, but he really has no clue what he is getting into.

While Erika might not have anything resembling a real sex life, she gets manages to get her carnal kicks in a variety of radically repellant and even sometimes horrific ways that include sniffing cum-covered tissues while watching four-screen porno flicks in peepshow booths, mutilating her vagina with a straight razor, and performing particularly perverse exhibitionistic acts like squatting down and urinating while watching young couples have sex in their cars at drive-in movie theaters (notably, a young man catches her doing this while he is making love to his girlfriend and attempts to chase her down while screaming, "Stay there, you cunt"). Of course, Erika's foul fetishes indicate that it is less than likely that she will be sexually compatible with a suave gentleman like Walter, who will inevitably discover that his crush is a carnal creep who repels him. Ultimately, Walter decides to put off his studies as an engineer major to try out for the exam for the piano master-class that Erika teaches. While her words and facial expressions certainly say otherwise, it becomes apparent that Erika begins falling for Walter during his exam performance, as his talent and charm arouse her, though she is somewhat turned off by his arrogance. While every single one of her colleagues is impressed with Walter's performance during the exam and vote for his acceptance into the program, Erika complains, "...frankly, I find his histrionics suspicious or even unpleasant" and shocks her co-worker by voting against him. Of course, Walter is accepted into the master-class and during his

first private lesson with Erika he confesses that he had no interest in the program and only tried out because he is in love with her, stating to her, "I fought to win your attention. Give me a chance. I know you're not as indifferent as you pretend." While Erika threatens to end their session if he does not stop attempting to vie for her affection, the protagonist literally stalks Walter after class and watches him as he plays hockey with a team he belongs to. Indeed, it seems that, as far as sex and romance are concerned, Erika is completely autistic and a hopeless case, as she obviously yearns for love and affection but lacks the capacity to accept and embrace these things. Indeed, as the daughter of a decidedly deranged and institutionalized daddy and a hateful and highly abusive unhinged monster, Erika only knows emotional negligence and torment and surely has a hard time accepting the fact that a handsome and charming fellow who is young enough to be her son wants to jump her bones.

In a subplot that was not in the source novel that is meant to emphasize the sick relationship between the protagonist and her mother, Erika teaches a young dorky/Jew-y teenage girl named Anna Schober (Anna Sigalevitch) who clearly reminds her of herself when she was younger and even has a mom that is just as ruthless as her own in her pursuit to make her daughter a musical wunderkind. While Erika initially seems somewhat empathetic to Anna's pathetic plight due to their shared love of Schubert and mutual slavery to their malicious megalomaniac mothers, that all completely changes when the protagonist becomes jealous of the sub-homely teen when Walter dares to display kindness to the ugly duckling and comforts her during a rehearsal where she suffers an emotional breakdown due to a bad case of diarrhea. As punishment for wallowing in Walter's attention, Erika smashes a glass cup and then places the broken pieces in Anna's coat pocket, thus causing the rather neurotic teen to cut her hand up so bad that she has to temporarily give up playing piano. Ultimately, Walter realizes what Erika has done and why and instead of being disgusted with her behavior, it turns him on as it demonstrates to him that she has affection for him, so he follows her into a women's bathroom and then forces her to kiss him after putting his head over the bathroom stall. While Erika reciprocates Walter's passionate kisses, she soon demands that she be in control of the situation by not allowing him to touch her while she jerks him off while making demands like, "Look at me, not your penis." Needless to say, sexually aroused extrovert Walter finds the entire situation totally intolerable, especially after Erika tells him that she will write him letter describing what she wants him to do to her instead of allowing him to plow her puss right then and there during the heat of the moment. After giving him some less than pleasurable seeming head, Erika refuses to allow Walter to relieve himself by masturbating and instead treats him like a bad little boy. Still, Walter is glad knowing that he will finally get the opportunity to defile Erika and he celebrates by skipping up and down out upon exiting the women's bathroom like a happy school boy.

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The next time Walter comes to his lesson, Erika acts as if their recent botched make-out session never happened and spends a good portion of their time berating his piano schools while resentfully mocking his good looks and piano-playing, sadiſtically ſtating, “Schubert’s dynamics range from scream to whisper not loud to ſoft. Anarchy hardly ſeems your forte. Why not ſtick to Clementi? Schubert was quite ugly. Did you know? With your looks, nothing can ever hurt you.” When Walter attempts to kiſs her, Erika ſuffers ſome ſort of terrible psychosomatic cough and then hands her ‘beau’ a letter containing the ſexual acts ſhe wants him to perform on her. After claſs, Walter follows Erika back home like a loſt puppy and lets her know that he will not take no for an answer, ſo the protagonist reluctantly brings him in her apartment while her busybody bitch of a mother complains and attempts to aſk a bunch of invasive queſtions. After entering her room and blocking her door with a piece of furniture ſo that he mother cannot get it, Erika demands that Walter read her letter, which is many pages long, after he attempts to fuck her. Needless to ſay, when Walter reads the letter and diſcovers that Erika wants him to, “gag me with ſome ſtockings I will have ready. Stuff them in ſo hard that I’m incapable of making any ſound. Next, take off the blindfold, pleaſe, and ſit down on my face and punch me in the ſtomach to force me to thruſt my tongue in your behind,” he iſ left ſpeechleſs and finally aſks her, “Iſ this ſuppoſed to be ſerious? You’re juſt making fun of me, aren’t you?” Erika replies by ſimply pulling out a ſmall box from under her bed and pulling out objects from it, including a maſk and rope, that more or leſs amount to a rape kit. Erika iſ ſo clueleſs about the dubious nature of her perversity that ſhe thinks Walter iſ more concerned with the literary quality of her letter than her ſexual derangement, ultimately defending herſelf in a ſomewhat aſurd manner by ſtating, “I am a pianist, not a poet. After all, love iſ built on banal things.” At this point, Erika becomes deſperately pathetic, telling Walter that ſhe iſ willing to be his ſlave by ſtating, “For now on, you give the orders,” but the only thing he can ſay iſ, “You’re ſick. You need treatment.” When Erika requeſts that Walter hit her, he hatefully reſponds, “No one would touch your ſort, even with gloves on,” throws her letter on the floor, and then adds, “I ſwear I loved you. You don’t even know what it iſ. Right now, you repulſe me.” After that, Walter ſays “fuck it” like ſome lowlife wigger and leaves the apartment.

After Walter leaves, Erika reaches an all-time low in terms of her ſexual inſanity and beſtially attempts to ‘rape’ her own mother that ſame night while they are in bed together, aſ if ſhe has deluded herſelf into believing that her mommy iſ the only one that will poſſibly fuck her ſince ſhe was turned down earlier that night. Like with Walter, Erika fills her mother with ſenſe of revulſion and diſguſt. Of course, the miſerable old woman fails to realize that her daughter’s ſexual derangement iſ largely the reſult of the way ſhe raised her through her hatred towards men (eſpecially Erika’s father) and physical and emotional abuſe. Although it ſeems ſomewhat aſurd that Erika deſperately ſeeks the attention of

her sadistic mother after being rejected by Walter, the protagonist's deep desire to receive love and affection from her abusive progenitor is actually quite typical of socially dysfunctional individuals with romance problems as they oftentimes go back to the parents that are directly responsible for their self-destructive behavior and relationship problems. After her failed attempt to get in her mother's panties, Erika disturbingly brags like a toddler, "I saw the hairs on your sex," thus reflecting her infantile sexuality. The next day, Erika creeps Walter out by showing up at one of his hockey matches unannounced and embarrassing him in front of his friends. No longer the perennially callous cunt that everyone knows her as, Erika becomes pathetically desperate and repeatedly declares her love to Walter while trying in vain to get him to screw her in a locker-room closet but he is disgusted by her. Eventually, Walter gives and inserts his cock in her mouth and fucks it like it is a pussy, but Erika cannot handle it for some reason (maybe she is allergic to dick?) and proceeds to vomit all over the place, thus inspiring the teen to tell her, "You know, you really stink? Sorry, you stink so much, no one will ever come close to you. You'd better leave town until you don't stink so bad. Rinse your mouth more often, not just when my cock makes you puke." Needless to say, at this point Erika decides to flee the hockey rink and even humorously runs across the ice to get out as soon as she can.

Just as she requested in the letter, Walter decides to come by Erika's apartment late that night to rape her, but the piano teacher ultimately proves she was all talk and too much of a coward to embrace her masochistic tendencies. Indeed, after locking Erika's blabbering mother in a room, Walter proceeds to slap his lunatic 'lover' around while quoting from her letter to reassure her that he is doing everything that she asked him to. Instead of enjoying the slaps and kicks that she so obsessively fantasized, Erika immediately cries and begs Walter to stop, which only infuriates the teen as he cannot understand what he is doing wrong. Ultimately, Walter slowly 'deflowers' (the viewer assumes she is still a virgin) Erika while she lies on the floor like she is dead. While Walter even attempts to be gentle, sensitive, and caring with Erika while they 'make love,' she maintains a face of abject horror as if she is in a quasi-comatose state as a result of a traumatic experience, like being gang-raped by a group of outlaws bikers. When Walter finally finishes what is quite possibly the most awkward and anti-erotic sex scene in all of cinema history, he borderline threatens Erika to tell anyone about the quasi-rape session by stating, "I'd appreciate it if you tell no one. Anyhow, it's for your own good. You can't humiliate a man that way and...it's not possible." The next day, Erika sees Walter with his family and friends at a concert hall where she is scheduled to play and he acts as if nothing has happened between them, stating to her while smiling in an exceedingly enthusiastic fashion, "My respects, Professor. I can't wait to hear you play." In a darkly hilarious scenario that seems to reflect the protagonist's pathological protective need to hurt herself before anyone else can hurt her worse, Erika reacts

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to Walter's remark by making a goofy face of abject disgust and then stabbing herself in the shoulder with a butcher knife when no one is around. Instead of performing, Erika leaves the concert hall alone while blood is seeping through her shirt.

As far as I am concerned, Isabelle Huppert and her young co-star Benoît Magimel deserve most of the credit for the potency and intensity of *The Piano Teacher*, which stands in stark contrast to Michael Haneke's mostly banal directing techniques, lackluster pacing, sterile shot composition, and overall 'antimise-en-scène' approach to filmmaking. In fact, I would go so far as to say that Haneke's 'glacial' direction helped to underscore the quality of the acting, which is totally unrivaled as far as repression-based female neurosis is concerned. One can only assume that Haneke belongs to the Jean-Marie Straub school of filmmaking where he considers anything even remotely entertaining to be supposedly 'fascistic' (which is the way Straub absurdly described Fassbinder's later films). Undoubtedly, *The Piano Teacher* is just one of Haneke's many films where he demonstrates his undying hatred for his own social class in a sort of self-righteous sneering fashion that intentionally seeks to discomfort and disturb the viewer, hence the implementation of humor during rather dark and disgusting scenes. Of course, somewhat ironically considering the nature of her character, it is only through Huppert and some of the actors' performances does the film have any degree of humanity. Admittedly, I once knew a girl with serious 'mommy issues' and she, not unlike Huppert's character in the film, had such extreme fantasies that she was pen pals with various incarcerated rapist serial killers and even once coerced her boyfriend to break into her house at a random time, beat the shit out of her, and 'rape' her. Whether she enjoyed this 'mock rape' or not, I am not sure but it was clear to me that this friend's self-destructive perversity was the direct result of a cold and negligent mother who warped her sense of sexuality at a young age. Any way, I bring up this friend to illustrate that, at least as far as I am concerned, *The Piano Teacher* is fairly authentic in terms of its uniquely ugly depiction of the long-term fruits of matriarchal abuse on a woman.

It should be noted that *The Piano Teacher* is not the first (and probably not the last) Elfriede Jelinek cinematic adaptation. In fact, I would argue that the rarely-seen made-for-TV work *Die Ausgesperrten* (1982) aka *The Excluded* directed Austrian cult auteur Franz Novotny (*Exit... But No Panic, Exit II - Transfigured Night*), which is not only based on Jelinek's novel *Die Ausgesperrten* (1980) aka *Wonderful, Wonderful Times* but also features the novelist in a somewhat humorous cameo role as a school teacher in what would ultimately be her first and last screen performance, is more faithful to the book than Haneke's film. On top of that, Jelinek penned the script for Werner Schroeter's Ingeborg Bachmann adaptation *Malina* (1991) starring Isabelle Huppert. Of course, I am sure that both Jelinek and Haneke had Huppert in mind for *The Piano Teacher*

after watching Schroeter's film, which also deal with female neurosis and sexual dysfunction, albeit this time depicted from the perspective of a woman with deleterious daddy issues instead of mommy issues. Any way, I have to confess that I now regard *The Piano Teacher* as one of Haneke's greatest accomplishments and I say that as someone that is disgusted by the idea of a German-language novel being adapted into a French-language film, which was ultimately a small price to pay to have Huppert play the eponymous lead in what is arguably the crowning role of her entire career.

-Ty E

FUNNY GAMES
FUNNY GAMES

Michael Haneke (2008)

I usually get disgusted when I find out that a foreign director had decided to remake his own film so that illiterate Americans can watch a film without the difficulty of having to read subtitles. Usually the product is a cheap imitation of the director's original work that loses most of its original artistic integrity. Michael Haneke's remake of *Funny Games* is an exception to the rule. The 2008 version of *Funny Games* is a shot-for-shot remake of Haneke's 1997 Austrian film. What makes the remake of *Funny Games* interesting is the new cast for the film. *Funny Games* opens up with a cliché and stale upper middle class family driving on their way to what one can assume to be an outdoors vacation. This scene looks like some sort of car commercial to convince some bourgeois that to have the ideal life they need the ideal car. The family in the car looks content, clean, and without worry. The family lives a life that is ultimately contrived. Despite their happiness, something seems not quite right with the family. Finally, the title "Funny Games" appears on the screen and very deranged music plays. It becomes obvious that this family is about to have their ideal life taken off course. Anyone that has seen the original Austrian version of *Funny Games* will obviously know what to expect with the remake. However, the acting performances in the remake were much more effective for me. Unlike a lot of people, I am not put off or offended by the German language. The fact that the original *Funny Games* was an Austrian (Uncle Adolf's homeland) production and in German might scare some. I found the less aggressive American English accents to be more effective with *Funny Games*. What better killers than two young soft-spoken men such as Michael Pitt and Brady Corbet. Pitt and Corbet were possibly the best choice as the two charming killers featured in *Funny Games*. I found the lead killer in the Austrian version of *Funny Games* to be a believable killer. He has a certain ugly look about him that made me believe that he could have been some type of guard at a Bolshevik Gulag. Michael Pitt and Brady Corbet, on the other hand, look like they should be teaching grade school children at some summer bible camp. The fact that these seemingly harmless and weak young men could easily play with and kill a sheltered bourgeois family can be very unsettling for most people. Michael Haneke demonstrates that in their soulless lives, the ideal "American" family doesn't even have the ability to put up a fight against two weak and mild mannered young men. With the *Funny Games* remake, Michael Haneke was able to do some fine tuning with a change of actors. Every fellow American I have talked with about *Funny Games* showed an irrational hatred of the film. Although they cannot articulate why they hate the film, they show their hatred by waving their fists and yelling obscenities. I feel that *Funny Games* is a good film for America and one that should be studied by the bourgeois. After all, Tyrone and Jose aren't nearly as nice as Michael Pitt

and Brady Cornet.
-Ty E

THE WHITE RIBBON
THE WHITE RIBBON

Michael Haneke (2009)

After what seemed to be endless postponement, I finally grabbed the devil by the horns and watched Michael Haneke's black and white masterpiece *The White Ribbon*. Indeed, only 5 minutes after watching the film, I can say without doubt that *The White Ribbon* is Haneke's cinematic masterwork. For once, an undeniable masterpiece has also been critically acclaimed on an international level. *The White Ribbon* won the *Palme d'Or* at the 2009 Cannes film festival, on top of winning the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2010 67th Golden Globe Awards. Michael Haneke had been working on *The White Ribbon* for over a decade, originally intending to produce the project as an Austrian television mini-series. Thankfully, Michael Haneke decided to direct *The White Ribbon* as a feature-length film, especially when you consider the bold and traditionally European aesthetic it ingeniously radiates, which would have probably been lost in a made-for-television format. One of my main issues with Haneke's earlier work is that most of these films are aesthetically dull. After all, I love both *Funny Games* films because of the psychological warfare Haneke stuns you with, as well as the brilliant acting performances; not because they are beautiful (far from it) films. In *The White Ribbon*, Michael Haneke once again returns to violence, but this time with a classic and charming twist.

Kiss the hand that beats you.

The White Ribbon cinematographer Christian Berger was nominated for Best Cinematographer at the Academy Awards. Although Berger did not receive an Academy Award for the rich and breathtaking cinematography that he painstakingly contributed to *The White Ribbon*, the Austrian cinematographer would later receive the award from the American Society of Cinematographers. It was no revelation for me to find out that Christian Berger carefully studied the work of Ingmar Bergman's greatest cinematographer Sven Nykvist in preparation for shooting *The White Ribbon*. Shot in time-honored black and white 35mm film, *The White Ribbon* permeates the keen kind of artistic integrity that is commonly associated with the European masterpieces of yesteryear; without feeling like another failed postmodern period piece. Taking cues from Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*, various scenes in *The White Ribbon* were shot merely using oil lamps and candles. *The White Ribbon*, being a film full of brooding intrigue and a dark metaphysical underbelly that lurks throughout, touches you in a way comparable to the devil evoking a tingling in your soul. My only complaint with the film is that it should have concluded with a title card featuring both the director and cinematographer of the film, the two true artists of this grand cinematic achievement. After all, the artistic partnership of director Orson Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland was candidly recognized at the conclusion of *Citizen Kane*.

The White Ribbon is set in a fictional protestant Northern German village named Eichwald, right before the first World War. From the onset of the film, one realizes there is something of a Luciferian character hiding amongst the shadows of this seemingly pleasant village. The White Ribbon is narrated by an unnamed elderly tailor who reluctantly recollects his memories as an idealistic young school teacher that taught the children of Eichwald. The unquestionable dictators of Eichwald are three men: The baron, the pastor, and the doctor. After all, Germany is the Fatherland and these three men are symbolic of how the Germany empire was run. Of course, the three leaders of Eichwald are tyrannical authoritarians that reject all forms of criticism and severely punish disobedient offenders. Being a post-World War II Austrian filmmaker, Michael Haneke follows in the typical contemporary fashion of negatively portraying the father figure, as well as brandishing the violent nature of male supremacy. I recently read German sociologist Klaus Theweleit's two volume *Magnus Opus Male Fantasies*, a psychoanalytic assault on the position and traditions of German men. Just like Theweleit purports in *Male Fantasies*, the German alpha-males featured in *The White Ribbon* treat their women as objects used only for reproduction and pleasure. For example, during a very symbolic scene in *The White Ribbon*, a baroness expresses her desire to leave her husband. After expressing her love for another man, the Baron simply asks his wife if they have had sex, completely ignoring the Baroness's wholehearted admittance of venerating someone else. The small village in *The White Ribbon* is like Nazi Germany in a vacuum; symbolically foreshadowing the supreme dictator that will one day rule Germany - the "father of fathers" - Adolf Hitler. Like the people of Nazi Germany, the villagers featured in *The White Ribbon* are willing to look the other way in regards to murder and brutality, as long as the father (Uncle Adolf) impetrates such demands.

The White Ribbon has another quality that is quite rare in any movie; brilliant acting performances by talented intuitive children. Not since I first saw *The Night of the Hunter*, have I been exposed to a group of children that exhibit such depth and range in their acting performances as the kids featured in *The White Ribbon*. I especially enjoyed a heartwarming scene in the film where an inquisitive 4 year old boy asks his sister about death and what it means. This same happy 4 year old later blazingly expresses his sadness when he realizes his perverted father is abusing his sister. Throughout *The White Ribbon*, the behavioral influences of the father is shown in the cruel behavior of their children. The bestial punishment given by a puritanical pastor is later passed on in another form by his deranged progeny. The cold stares and vindictive attributes of the pastor's children put Macaulay Culkin's ridiculous performance in *The Good Son* to shame. In *Benny's Video*, Michael Haneke banally captured the absurdist homicidal ramifications that can occur after being desensitized via a pig slaughtering home video; certainly something that I did not buy, hence why

THE WHITE RIBBON

I felt the film was a failure. With *The White Ribbon*, Michael Haneke was finally able to capture the very real and tenable origin of violence in most young children; authoritarian corporal punishment. After all, those children needed to be hardened during their critical years so they could eventually fight in both World Wars. Nowadays, the Israelis and Arab terrorists teach their children from virtual infancy to love battle and highly regard war. Who knows, maybe the collective passivity that now reigns in the Occident is a direct result of contemporary European parents abstaining from domestic corporal punishment. The parent inflicted violence featured in *The White Ribbon* may be pastiche, but it was also the traditional order that held Germany families together, even before the days of Tacitus's Germania. At the most fundamental level, *The White Ribbon* reveals that the good old days were not exactly the apt of days, but at least they delineated some kind ordnung.

-Ty E

ELEVATOR GIRLS IN BONDAGE

Michael Kalmen (1972)

The exceedingly putrid psychedelic drag queen troupe The Cockettes are indubitably one of the most aesthetically displeasing collectives of quasi-humans in humanoid history, but members of the culturally malicious group did manage to star in a couple worthwhile flicks, including the spoof *Tricia's Wedding* (1971), which spoofed Richard Nixon's daughter's wedding ceremony by adding LSD and flagrant fags to the mix, as well as the Kenneth Anger-esque arthouse flick *Luminous Procuree* (1971) directed by Steven Arnold (*The Liberation of Man-nique Mechanique, Messages, Messages*), yet *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972) directed by Michael Kalmen is indubitably their most accessible cinematic work, even if it is not their greatest. An absurdly amateurish celluloid work that wallows in its own cinematic incompetency as part of the 'big joke' that is its celluloid low-campiness, *Elevator Girls in Bondage*, as one would probably infer from the rather ridiculously risqué Meyer-esque title, is an exploitation work that actually transcends to the level of stupid surrealist pornography, featuring a number of ambiguous genitals in various states of arousal, including swarthy cocks busting loads on famous paintings. An aesthetically abhorrent tranny Marxist spoof of capitalism and heterosexuality, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972) is also the virtual cinematic adversary to *Women In Revolt* (1971) directed by Paul Morrissey and produced Andy Warhol, and as members of the Cockettes admitted in the somewhat recent documentary *The Cockettes* (2002) directed by Bill Weber and David Weissman, the West Coast weirdoes in drag were not exactly too keen on the Factory trannies as they found their attitudes to be a bit too prissy, pompous, and less than positive. With its curiously crude commie cock-sucking and cast of radically retarded Trotskyite trannies, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* is thankfully a celluloid work so lecherous and ludicrous in its poofter political persuasion that it manages to marvelously discredit any sort of scathing sociopolitical message it autistically attempts to make, but not in such a penetrating fashion as self-described 'right-winger' Paul Morrissey's intentionally anti-leftist work *Women In Revolt*, a farcical film where "leftist liberation" ends in scatological self-sacrifice of the excess-ridden enslaving sort. Like the ungodly hippie homo celluloid hate-child of Andy Milligan and John Waters, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* is campy celluloid excess on anti-orgasmic overload that reminds the viewer how truly ugly and vulgar certain members of humanity really are on both the inside and outside. Featuring countless hairy beavers, skinny unshaven asses, and tiny titties, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* is a rather odd and semi-straight flick for a campy celluloid work featuring the Cockettes in that it features more cunts than cocks, but they are just as intrinsically unappetizing all the same.

The boney, boner-loving girls of *Elevator Girls in Bondage* are feeling rather oppressed living during the so-called "depression 1972" as sub-erotic 'elevator

ELEVATOR GIRLS IN BONDAGE

girls' who spend all day and night going "up and down" for the low-paying customers of a superlatively seedy, semen-soaked hotel. When not working or hardly working, the elevator girls powder their pussies and take unglamorous bubble baths together as they are lascivious lesbos of the ultra unglamorous sort. Of course, when one of the girls, Trish (played by Johnny McGowan, a female fellow that was described as "The prettiest one" of the ugly drag troupe) is hogtied and 'bound for pleasure' by one of the pernicious patrons of the hotel and the fascist Divine-esque owner of the hotel, bald-headed Sally (Kreemah Ritz) refuses to get the 'pigs' involved, the elevator girls begin to reconsider their jobs and ultimately agree that revolutionary pussy politics is the answer. While one of the girls, Rita La Rantz (Reid Larrance), decides to quit and work at a 'soy sauce factory,' the feisty Führer of the oppressed elevator girls, Maxine (played by Rumi Missabu, an alpha-Cockette), decides to form a campy comic club to trample persecution as persecuted proletarian perverts. Luckily, a seemingly autistic blond-haired revolutionary named Bun E. Hug (played by director Michael Kalmen), a faggy flowerchild Maxine describes as follows, "He's brilliant. He knows all about Karl Marx and The Grapes of Wrath... a stunning weirdo," schools the sassy gay gals in political and social subversion and they form a maniac Marxist union, "The Pussy Protection Club." Before the girls know it, they have an iconic portrait of the Marxist messiah himself, Karl Marx—the famous photo where he looks like a Talmudic negro, like a more bloated version of slave-turned-sage Frederick Douglass—hanging on the hotel wall and begin singing crude and campy renditions of commie propaganda songs like "Bread and Roses – Dump the Bosses Off Your Back." Not long after, the elevator girls are maliciously manhandled and anally probed via a phallogocentric gun for being pinko poofs by a corrupt cop. Additionally, the perverted policeman tears up the elevator girls' beloved Karl Marx poster and when the girls complain about their property being destroyed the officer of the law makes the extremely valid point of rhetorically stating, "since when do you believe in private property?!" Realizing they make cruddy commie intellectuals, the elevator girls get their revenge by gang rapping the fellow who hogtied Trish and the guy busts an ample amount of saucy semen on the 1871 oil-on-canvas (and now cum) painting "Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1" aka "Whistler's Mother" by American-born painter James Abbott "art for art's sake" McNeill Whistler, thus 'battling bourgeois art' in the process. Maxine is ultimately arrested for her misguided Marxist shenanigans and the rest of the elevator girls threaten to strike as members of the disenfranchised rank-n-file who have "the right to strike." In the end, the elevator girls plan to buy the hotel and pay for Maxine's bail, but a couple gigantic iguanas wearing tophats nonsensically appear and thankfully destroy San Francisco and all the putrid people in it, including the evil capitalist bitch Bald-headed Sally, who is devoured by one of the radical reptiles.

A pure and unadulterated piece of impure celluloid psychedelic-exploitation

retardation, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* provides a better case for staying away from drugs than any after-school special and a more mocking attack of Marxism than any National Socialist propaganda movie, which was certainly not the intent of the commie cocksuckers of the Cockettes, thus making the work all the more unintentionally enjoyable in an ironic sort of way. With the terrorist trannies of the film interpreting Marxists maxim like “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need” as “you can do whatever what you want when you get what you need,” it is easy to see why the dildos dudes of the Cockettes subscribed to a hippie form of communism, even though Soviet icons like Maxim Gorky made such scathing anti-sodomite remarks as “Destroy the homosexuals—Fascism will disappear.” Of course, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* is certainly a somewhat accurate, albeit decidedly degenerate, depiction of the sort of slave-morality-driven debauchees that claim to subscribe to ‘the gospel according to Karl Marx’ today in the homophilic USA. A patently perverse piece of innately intentional celluloid trash that has as much artistic merit as a Polaroid of a turd taken by a toddler with Down syndrome that was directed by a feeble filmmaker with less skills than the average drunken frat-boy film school student, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* still manages to be a constantly entertaining exercise in campy cinematic excess, which probably is in part due to the fact that the film only has a 56-minute running time, as well as its all-morally-retarded cast. In fact, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* is more captivating than virtually anything ever directed by commie frog Jean-Luc Godard, but it is undoubtedly second to *Luminous Procuress* (1971) in terms of Cockettes cinema. A magnificently mediocre piece of Marxist moronism, *Elevator Girls in Bondage* has hopelessly saved at least one young man or woman, from adopting a worthless Weltanschauung like communism and/or trannyism. If you’re too much a victim of left-wing vice to understand Morrissey’s *Women in Revolt*, give *Elevator Girls in Bondage* a try and it might save you from contracting AIDS, wearing a \$20.00 Che Guevara t-shirt, and/or going to a gay pride protest.

-Ty E

OSTKREUZ
OSTKREUZ

Michael Klier (1991)

I have certainly seen more kraut flicks than the typical uncultivated American slob and I can say without hesitation that Wolfgang Becker's *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003) is one of the most revoltingly contrived, sickeningly sentimental, and just plain intolerably kitschy and phony German films that I have ever seen, as if it was made specifically for American high school cheerleaders so as to trick them into learning about the reunification while they wet their panties for swarthy Teutonic mutt Daniel Brühl. I may not be German, but I do like an unhealthy number of malignantly melancholy *Deutscher* flicks and I can happily report that there are more than a couple of films about the German reunification (aka 'Die Wende') that, unlike Becker's conspicuously crappy kraut blockbuster, wallow in *Weltschmerz* and bleed bleakness. Indeed, in the late great Christoph Schlingensief's art-trash splatter flick *The German Chainsaw Massacre* (1990) aka *Das deutsche Kettensägen Massaker*, a cannibalistic family of West German kraut redneck capitalist Nazis kill, cook, and eat newly arrived krauts from the east. Additionally, in Aryan degenerate Oskar Roehler's quasi-neo-expressionistic flick *No Place to Go* (2000) aka *Die Unberührbare*—a work based on the director's own mother's final days—a Leninist novelist from the West finally realizes her dream of a commie utopia is nothing more than an absurd fantasy after the fall of the Berlin Wall, so she opts for killing herself by jumping out of a window, but not before buying an exceedingly expensive Christian Dior coat, attempting to buy speed from her son, and being institutionalized. Sapphic auteur Ulrike Ottinger's minimalistic yet nonetheless epic documentary *Countdown* (1990)—a work shot on both sides of the wall chronicling the weeks leading up to the reunification, hence the title—makes both sides of Berlin seem like one gigantic post-industrial cultural graveyards inhabited by scheming gypsies and haunted by the ghosts of German Jewry. Undoubtedly, the Teutonic neo-neorealist work *Ostkreuz* (1991) aka *Westkreuz* directed by Michael Klier (*The Grass Is Greener Everywhere Else*, *Farland*) also follows in the less than timeless tradition of decidedly dejecting reunification flicks. Sort of like a *Germany Year Zero 2.0*, albeit following a firecrotch teenage girl as opposed to a adolescent blond boy, Klier's film—a work advertised by its German distributor Filmgalerie 451 as telling, "the episodic story of 15-year-old Elfie, who literally and metaphorically inhabits a no-man's-land between the two Germanys during the Wende"—is just as much about the loss of 'Heimat' in Germany in general as it is about the oftentimes overlooked negative effects of the reunification. Directed by a Sudeten German that was born in 1943 whose family was expelled from Eastern Europe, landed in East Germany in 1947, and eventually fled to the West in 1961, *Ostkreuz* certainly depicts depressed and destitute Germans, but also features even more patently pathetic Slavs, especially Polacks, as

if Berlin turned into a human toilet for the Slavic lands. Featuring great naturalistic performances from actors who have starred in works ranging from Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* (1987) to Krzysztof Kieslowski's *A Short Film About Killing* (1988) to Tom Tykwer's obscenely overrated Teutonic celluloid turd *Run Lola Run* (1998), *Ostkreuz* is an undeniably potent and important work, but it is also gratingly sad and culturally pessimistic flick that, although in color, could not feature a more colorless and expressionless world.

Elfie (Laura Tonke) is a 15-year-old redheaded teenage girl who lives the undignified existence of sleeping in a 'containerlager' (a sort of large metal storage container) with her single mother (Suzanne von Borsody) in Potsdamer Platz. Of course, they would like to live in an actual apartment but they need at least need 3000 marks for a security deposit, so Elfie tries to do various odd jobs to obtain the money, including cleaning storefront windows for 10 marks a job and selling assumedly stolen Jap car radios to people that live in the same containerlager ghetto as she does. Of course, Elfie becomes all the more inclined to want to raise the money when she notices that her mother is screwing a scumbag slob of a neighbor named Henry (Henry Marcinkowski). As for Elfie's father, he is never mentioned. One day, Elfie spots a blond Polack thief named Darius (Mirosław Baka) getting in a scuffle with a store owner and she snags the con's wallet when it falls out of his pocket. Of course, Darius catches up with Elfie and takes his money back, but their less than ideal meeting also sires a parasitic relationship between the two very desperate people. Needless to say, before she knows it, Elfie is peddling counterfeit cash for Darius (who strategically has the teen do his dirty work because she is underage and cannot get in serious trouble like an adult) and she is almost instantly caught, but she does not squeal to the pigs. Upon talking to Darius' rather bitchy (ex)girlfriend Karla (Beatrice Manowski of Buttgerit's *Nekromantik*), Elfie is warned, "you better be careful with Darius." Indeed, Darius is such a degenerate and morally vacant dude that he has no problem exploiting desperate women, even if it comes at the cost of their safety. Elfie is also told by Karla's younger brother Edmund (Stefan Cammann) that his sister and Darius were previously in Bulgaria but something went wrong after they committed some sort of crime, so they both landed in prison as a result.

At home, things are no better for Elfie, as she overhears her mom's boyfriend Henry talking about kicking her out. When Elfie's mom remarks that Henry plans to buy them a bigger container to live in, the angst-ridden teen snidely remarks, "So he can fuck you without being disturbed," thus resulting in the mouthy little lady being slapped in the face. Meanwhile, Darius proposes a dubious black market meat scheme to Elfie with a supposed markup of 1000%. When the meat finally arrives from Poland, Darius only receives a semi-rotting pig corpse which he is too lazy to carry, so he drops the beast carcass, kicks it like a weak pansy with a bad attitude problem, and walks away like the perennial loser

that he is. Naturally, Elfie becomes rather disgusted when the pathetic prole Pole degenerate attempts to make out with her in a rather aggressive fashion. Ultimately, Elfie takes advantage of Darius' innate laziness and manages to sell the pig on her own after finding an ancient wooden cart and hauling it to a prospective buyer. Of course, Elfie's mom is somewhat creeped out when Darius shows up at her home and asks to wait for her daughter. Despite Darius' clearly questionable intentions, Elfie's rather negligent mother lets the Pole stay. When Elfie finally arrives home to the 'containerlager' find delinquent Darius in her room, she is more than just a little bit irked, but he hands her a fat wad of cash and coerces her into riding all the way to the bottom of Siberia with him and his sleazy middle-aged Polack comrade Guřtaw (Guřtaw Barwicki) to sell a shitty old beat-up used car. Since Elfie knows Russian, Darius plans to use her as translator when they talk to the car buyers, which include a Mongol and some sleazy Turkish-looking fellow. When the buyers arrive, they notice that Darius has not brought the car he advertised and a fight breaks out, with the Mongol even threatening Elfie with a gun. Though Elfie manages to escape, weak cowards Darius and his Guřtaw leave her behind, thus she must fend for herself and travel all the way back to Germany on her own, which proves to be an extra miserable experience as she has a wounded arm.

When Elfie arrives back at home, she becomes so agitated upon hearing her mother fucking Henry in the other room that she decides to runoff to her trashy taxi-driver grandfather's apartment. Rather pathetically, Elfie's grandfather is admired by the family because he at least has a job as a taxi-driver. Not exactly the most ideal granddaughter, Elfie decides to steal her opa's entire Meiřen porcelain plate set and abruptly leaves without saying so much as a goodbye. While walking around Alexanderplatz station, Elfie inevitably bumps into Darius, who absurdly remarks after noticing her valuable porcelain collection, "You'll always be cheated if you're alone," as if he has not cheated her a number of times already. Deciding that she does not want to get screwed over again, Elfie calls the cops on Darius and he is soon hauled away. After selling the Meiřen collection, Elfie has enough money to pay for the deposit for an apartment, but things do not exactly workout as perfectly as she planned. When Elfie shows her mother the money, she acts ungrateful and threatens to get rid of her if she continues to start quarrels. When they finally get a new apartment, Elfie decides to stay behind at the last minute, as she wants nothing to do with her mother's boyfriend and their seemingly parasitic relationship. Ultimately, Elfie hooks up with Karla's little brother Edmund and even buys the lad a large meal and beer at a fancy restaurant, though they are initially denied entry by the waiter due to their rather disheveled appearances. After Elfie waves around cash to prove she can pay, the waiter sets up a table for the two teens to sit at that is away from the regular customers, so as not to offend the other patron's sensitive bourgeois sensibilities. In the end, Elfie's future looks rather bleak, but at least she now

has a (boy)friend and has developed a new sense of independence.

Out of all the German filmmakers that have dealt with gritty proletarian realism, Michael Klier is probably the most pessimistic and anti-aesthetically-inclined. Indeed, the works of (Roland Klick (*Bübchen*, *Supermarkt*), Uwe Schrader (*Kanakerbraut* aka *White Trash*, *Sierra Leone*), Uwe Frießner (*Das Ende des Regenbogens* aka *The End of the Rainbow*, *Baby*), East German documentarian Jürgen Böttcher (*Jahrgang '45* aka *Born in '45*, *Martha*), Canadian-born Austrian auteur John Cook (*Schwitzkasten*, *Artischocke*), and Klaus Lemke (*Rocker*, *Paul*) seem almost 'upbeat' and 'optimistic' compared to the seeming pathological filmic forlornness of *Ostkreuz*, which makes the future of post-Wende Germany seem even more hopelessly horrid than most works belonging to the post-WWII Trümmerfilm genre. Indeed, while she may not be hooked on junk or peddling her gash for cash, the protagonist of Klier's film makes the eponymous anti-heroine of *Christiane F. – We Children from Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) seem like a decadent countess by comparison, as the thought of happiness has been totally extinguished from her forsaken soul. Needless to say, *Ostkreuz* is not exactly the sort of film that has great replay value unless you're the sort of person that has a thing for semi-homely teenage train wrecks who seem somewhat asexual. Unquestionably, one of the most entertaining aspects of the film for me was seeing pathetic Polack Darius—a sort of failed male femme fatale (or 'l'homme fatal') who is just too plain dumb and ugly to be successful with his calculating and conniving behavior—exploit protagonist Elfie in a somewhat 'psychopathic' fashion. Of course, Darius is just too decidedly dumb to be an actual psychopath. Indeed, Darius fulfills any Polish stereotype a person can think of and then some, as a majorly moronic small-time conman whose rather repellant exterior is only transcended by his craven character. A work deriving its name from an S-Bahn station in East Berlin linking the north, south, east and west, *Ostkreuz* ultimately makes it seem like there is no future in Germany no matter what route you take, but then again, the film also reveals that no matter how bad a German's life gets, it will always be better than that of a Pole, thus demonstrating that history has a way of repeating itself, even after nearly half of a century's worth of Soviet style repression and slavery.

-Ty E

HEINRICH HIMMLER: ANATOMY OF A MASS MURDERER
HEINRICH HIMMLER: ANATOMY OF A MASS MURDERER

Michael Kloft (2010)

I have always been disappointed by the unimpressive appearance and equally banal character of Heinrich Himmler. For a man that ran the SS, a virtual private empire within the Third Reich, one would expect a stunning genius with a matching body of Teutonic steel. Instead, Himmler was a physically weak bureaucrat and former chicken farmer who resembled a half-caste Mongolian tax auditor. In the documentary *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer*, the viewer is briefly introduced to Himmler's unimpressive character and career as Hitler's #1 paper-shuffling killer. In Hannah Arendt's classic work of philosophy *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the female German-Jewish philosopher devised the phrase "the banality of evil" regarding the desk-murderer career of Herr Eichmann. That being said, I think the phrase "the banality of a homicidal inferiority complex" would best sum up Himmler's life story. As revealed in the documentary *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer*, despite being a sickly child with the martial prowess of a pussycat, Himmler was always a strict German nationalist who romanticized war. Himmler grew up in a Roman Catholic household with a strict authoritarian father who demanded unwavering discipline from his sons. As described in the documentary, in his childhood, Himmler developed the ruthless cold psyche that would help him to efficiently run the SS in a most unsentimental manner.

Unsurprisingly, it is revealed in *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer* that Himmler truly believed in the National Socialist ideology and was completely obedient to Adolf Hitler. As the documentary briefly explains, Himmler attempted to create an anti-Christian neo-pagan order out of the SS, but ultimately failed. Although not revealed in the documentary, Himmler hired former mental institution patient Karl Maria Wiligut to be his virtual "Occult priest" at his castle Wewelsburg (which Himmler hoped would one day be the allegorical "center of the world"). Despite the fact that only a small fraction of Germans during the Nazi era were of pure Nordic Aryan stock (most were Alpine types), Himmler hoped to racially purify Germany and restore it to the racial character described in Tacitus' *Germania*. Interestingly enough, various Himmler biographers have stated that the SS Reichsführer might have had Mongolian and Jewish ancestry. Either way, I think most people will agree that Himmler certainly lacked the ideal Nordic profile he so stringently demanded in his SS men. Although *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer* does not go into much depth regarding Himmler's dubious ancestry, the documentary features the SS leader's great-niece Katrin Himmler, who is ironically married to an Israeli and only has contempt for her great-uncle. According to Katrin, in an attempt to hide their shame, the Himmler family went on to describe Heinrich as a "black sheep" after the second World War. As briefly mentioned in *Heinrich*

Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer, Himmler's daughter Gudrun Burwitz would go on to be a Neo-Nazi sympathizer of sorts and still holds much love for her deceased father.

Despite having total control over the SS, Heinrich Himmler was unable to efficiently run it on his own. Reinhard Heydrich, who was described by the Nazis as the "ideal National Socialist," is known to have run the more crucial departments of the SS, especially those sectors responsible for the liquidation of Jews. I would have liked for *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer* to have gone in better depth regarding Himmler's relationship with Heydrich, but instead, the documentary only succinctly mentions it. At best, the documentary is an "okay" introduction to the life and killing times of Heinrich Himmler. *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer* is comparable to the kind of documentary you would find on the History Channel, as the film barely delves into the more interesting elements regarding Himmler and the SS. In the end, Himmler ended up killing millions of people for nothing, eventually betraying Adolf Hitler by attempting to make a deal with the allies in early 1945. Himmler met a very bitter and lonely end, having all his ranks stripped from him and eventually committing suicide the same way Hitler did. For those already familiar with Himmler, *Heinrich Himmler: Anatomy of a Mass Murderer* will offer you no new insights. For more info on the documentary, visit [First Run Features](#).

-Ty E

BABYSITTER WANTED
BABYSITTER WANTED

Michael Manasseri, Jonas Barnes (2008)

Forgive me, father, for I have sinned. Matching strings with this Pro-Christian horror film wasn't easy. My curse has been laid upon for not finishing this film. I didn't even try. The burdening guilt weighed me down until the idea of successfully administering this film to myself made my mind dry heave. As evidenced by the previous sentence, I've turned into a selfish creature caring only for my prime self-being - sniveling and devoid of inner light. Maybe that was Babysitter Wanted's cause in life; to create chaos and upset this already diminishing balance between good and evil. I'll lay the plot on thick. Bourgeoisie Jesus baby Angie leaves her small town religious mother to go to the city and pursue college. Oh, the joys of city life and socialites. Upon discovering her roommate to be a lesbian "goth" who smokes pot and walks around in Fruit of the Loom panties, she brushes aside contraband and sets up a candle and rosary to pray to her official "God." Already this film sounds a lot like House (2009) and if you remember correctly, those Christian elements that are one-and-the-same in Babysitter Wanted was its benevolent [I use this word loosely] downfall from the beginning. Adored by slasher fanatics, I can't see what they say in this low-budget horror film. Talk about a one way mirror; the reflection is stale, absurd, and plain retarded. And people praise this twist for originality. *scoff* Hmm... I had first heard of this film on a P2P tracker. Looking at the plot and the DVD cover art, I decided to nab the film for a much later viewing. No way I was pushing back my schedule for cannon fodder begging to be viewed like a slut begging for another fix. While talking to my dear loved one, she told me she had just seen the worst film of her life. Curious, I inquired as to what it was. The bad taste was exchanged mouth-to-mouth as the title "Babysitter Wanted" slowly crept from her lips. A bomb dropped somewhere inside and I began mentally laughing more fervidly than Chuck Rock back in his hey days of 16-bit entertainment. I'd like to personally thank her for alerting me of this atrocity but at the same time condemn her to a lifetime of the sweetest tortures for piquing my interest further. The spoiler that she told me sounded exactly like a bittersweet rewrite of French ringleader Sheitan. But with no Vincent Cassel, how could this hold up? Upon putting it on, I realized that she was right. This film was as bad as described to me that fateful day. To prevent you, our readers, from purgatory, I will explicitly detail the plot including the spoilers. Well, as far as I watched. I eventually turned this film off, disgusted, and put in Robert Downey Sr.'s magnificent Chafed Elbows which is probably the greatest achievement in American underground cinema so my suffering wasn't extensive and I only received 2nd degree burns. Christian girl goes to city and looks for a job. Discovers babysitter job in the boonies. Goes to the country and gets stalked by a mysterious figure. Upon fighting and killing the stranger, you discover that he

is a priest and in an accident, the girl knocks the Cowboy hat wore by the child she's sitting. Surprise devil horns. The kid's Satan. Watching this plot complexity unfold was like being audience to Haley Joel Osment hitting puberty with enhanced shutter speed. This "nubile women meet their doom" shtick is getting moldy. To wrap it up, I was too swayed by the effects of Babysitter Wanted to continue. Maybe this is the purpose of new horror; to "horrify" you to continue further. With that in mind, I guess Babysitter Wanted is exactly what horror films need now to continue a legacy that has slowly been dwindling over the years. Call me jaded but if you enjoyed Babysitter Wanted, don't talk to me. I don't really care how "well-acted" this film is or if you think that this is "low budget horror done right." Your opinions are as limp as this film's dedication to originality is. I will now take this moment to thank Devon for warning me of this obscene atrocity that I spite with every gram of my metaphysical being. If it weren't for her, I might have made the fatal mistake of going into Babysitter Wanted with expectations.

-mAQ

THIEF
THIEF

Michael Mann (1981)

Probably largely the result of the fact that I grew up regularly hearing firsthand crime stories that were more intriguing and disturbing than those featured in movies, I have never really given that big of a shit about noir-ish crime-thrillers, especially those regularly vomited out of Hollywood, so there is no doubt in my mind when I see one and come to the conclusion it is a masterpiece. To me, a good crime-thriller has nil 'filler' and puts just as much emphasis on every shot and scene as Bergman or Lynch would put into one of their films, albeit in a fashion that can be just as easily be digested by proles and philistines as pretentious art fags and cineastes. Although probably not completely immaculate, William Friedkin's *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985) is what I consider to be the ideal crime-thriller as a cinematic work that more or less completely reinvents the (sub)genre and which I would regard as a piece of carefully constructed cinematic art that defines both the philosophy and aesthetic 'integrity' (or lack thereof) of its particular zeitgeist. If there is any film from the same decade that is on the same level as Friedkin's film, it is indubitably Michael Mann's debut feature *Thief* (1981) aka *Violent Streets* aka *The Cracker: Midnight Outlaw*, which I recently re-watched and came to the conclusion that it was a near perfect piece of cinema, at least as far as its genre is concerned. Not surprisingly, like Friedkin, Mann was the son of working-class Jews from Chicago and, also like his kosher kinsman, he is a rare example of a truly masculine-minded Jewish filmmaker. Additionally, *Thief* stars James Caan who, aside from also being from a Hebraic prole background (his father was a butcher), is arguably the most innately tough and manly Jewish actor of his generation and possibly in all of cinema history. Indeed, if there is any Jew that debunks Weininger's theory that Jewishness and femininity are one and the same and would make for a great Zionist propaganda symbol as the Judaic Übermensch, it is Caan. Like Friedkin with his first big hit *The French Connection* (1971), *Thief* is a gritty yet carefully stylized cinematic work where the auteur opted to incorporate an inordinate and arguably borderline dangerous degree of realism, including hiring real cops and croaks as actors, as well as hiring real professional thieves as technical advisors. A quite cynical and nihilistic cinematic work, Mann's film is also Friedkin-esque in its depiction of cops and cons as different sides of the same coin and absolute refusal to make any superficial moral judgements. Indeed, Mann hired real-life guido jewel thief John Santucci (who ironically portrays a sleazy police sergeant) to create real robbery tools and train lead Caan how to use them. In fact, the main heist featured in the film, which involves the use of a thermal lance (aka 'oxy-lance') to cut through a vault door, was modeled after a real robbery that Santucci carried out. Additionally, the film was loosely based on the novel *The Home Invaders: Confessions of a Cat Burglar* by pseudonymous author Frank

Hohimer (real name John Seybold), who was also a real-life jewel thief that was apparently serving a prison sentence at the time of the film's production.

Of course, technical authenticity is only one of the many ingredients that make Mann's film so positively potent from beginning to end. Indeed, aside from also featuring an absolutely imperative soundtrack by German electronic group Tangerine Dream and mostly aesthetically pleasing nocturnal urban cinematography, *Thief* features one of the most unforgettable antiheroes of crime cinema history. Although he is not exactly a gay serial rapist and killer, the titular lead of the film is, at least philosophically speaking, like the Carl Panzram of movie thieves, as a sort of sociopathic criminal *Übermensch* who does not give a shit about anything and does not care about or listen to anyone. Like Panzram (who was gang raped by a group of hobos in a train car at the age of 14 after running away from home), the lead developed his uncompromising antisocial philosophy as a result of going through the life-changing ordeal of encountering humanity's most craven and depraved individuals, or to use Friedrich Nietzsche's overused quote to describe the tragic psychological state of the character, "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you." The closest thing I have ever seen to a Hollywood equivalent to the spirit of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's magnum opus *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) in terms of its gritty and totally unromantic yet at the same time strangely 'humanistic' view of crime and criminals, *Thief* is ultimately a sad yet stoic, 'no bullshit' reminder as to the sort of foredoomed and forlorn individuals that become 'successful' career criminals. Of course, like real-life master criminals, the antihero of Mann's film might fulfill some of his rather ambitious dreams, but they are ultimately shattered and taken away from him in the end. Notably, what makes Mann's film different from most of its genre persuasion is that the lead consciously decides to literally destroy his own version of the American dream as a means to preserve his *Weltanschauung* and keep his personal sovereignty. As a man that lost over a decade of his life in prison, the antihero is determined to quite literally contrive a full life in a very short period of time that includes a bourgeois family and home, but he ultimately gets himself entangled in a very precarious criminal web in the process and must choose between everything he has recently built for himself or maintaining his personal freedom. Additionally, the eponymous lead of the film might be a 'thief,' but he is a man's man in the truest sense as an innately individualistic fellow who lives on his own terms and plays by his own rules, hence his truly epic and carefully calculated self-ordained downfall.

In a sort of 'neon neo-noir' opening scene full of beautiful shimmering city lights and almost celestial rainfall that does not feature one single line of dialogue, antihero Frank (James Caan) more or less effortlessly carries out a perfect diamond heist during a misty night in Chicago with his partner Barry (James

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Belushi in his first film role). After drilling through a safe with a custom-made power-drill that an elderly friend created for him, Frank goes through the drawers of said safe and only bothers to steal envelopes full of uncut diamonds, which is the only item he deals in because it is, relatively speaking, 'clean' and 'low-risk' compared to other stolen goods. As a front for his criminal enterprise, Frank owns a used car dealership and a bar. Frank's 'fence' is a grotesquely fat and effeminate fellow of the overtly Judaic sort named Joe Gags (Hal Frank) who, unbeknownst to the antihero, has been stealing money from a local bigwig mob boss. When Gags is killed after being pushed out of a 12th-story window as punishment for skimming off the top of mob collection money, Frank discovers that the owner of a plating company, Mr. Attaglia (Tom Signorelli), was responsible for the killing. On top of killing his fence, Attaglia pocketed Frank's \$185,000 of the score money, which Gags had on him at the time of his death. Needless to say, Frank soon pays a visit to Attaglia under the false pretense of having a problem with a plating shipment and demands his money back. When Attaglia pretends to not know what he is talking about, Frank angrily remarks, "I come here to discuss a piece of business with you. And what are you gonna do? You gonna tell me fairy tales?" thus angering the plating company owner to the point where he demands that he get out of his office. At this point, Frank whips out a handgun, points it at Attaglia's face, and fiercely states, "I am the last guy in the world. . . that you want to fuck with. You found my money on Gags. Let us pretend you don't know whose money it is." Ultimately, Frank sets up a meeting for Attaglia that night to get his \$185,000 back, but instead of the plating company executive, the antihero encounters a fat old four-eyed polack named Leo (Robert Prosky), who is as charming as the devil despite his fairly repugnant appearance. Unbeknownst to Frank, Leo wants to make a Faustian pact that will ultimately lead to his downfall, or at least temporary downfall.

As Leo explains to Frank, he is a high-level fence and mafia boss who is in charge of over half of the crime in Chicago and he has been admiring the antihero's work from afar for some time. Naturally, Frank is somewhat taken aback by Leo's disclosure, as if he had been under the impression that he was a criminal phantom of sorts that no one was aware of. Leo also makes it quite clear to Frank that if he had not stepped in, Attaglia would have retaliated against him. While Frank attempts to immediately leave after he is handed the \$185,000 and tells Leo he has no interest in working for him, stating, "I am self-employed. I am doin' fine. I don't deal with egos. I am Joe the boss of my own body, so what the fuck do I have to work for you for?" the rather rotund mob boss will not take no for an answer and begins making the antihero an offer he cannot refuse, even bragging to him like a virtual carny huckster, "I'll make you a millionaire in four months." According to Leo, he can give Frank all the resources he needs to carry out the perfect big score, including the best locations and whatever equipment and phony documents that he would require to get the job done. While

Frank agrees to give Leo a call about a possible temporary ‘no strings attached’ partnership for two or three heists, the lead does not seem too interested in the offer, at least until fate steps in and makes it seem like the antihero has the perfect opportunity to catch up on the time that he lost in prison. After all, Frank could be set for life if he does a couple heists with Leo, thus giving him the opportunity to soon completely retire from crime and devote his life to being a bourgeois family man, or so he thinks. Indeed, after his talk with Leo, Frank goes to a local club to meet up with his love interest Jessie (Tuesday Weld)—a woman that he intends to marry, even though he barely knows her and has yet to have sex with her—but when he gets there she immediately begins berating him for being two hours later, stating in a brazenly bitchy fashion, “What the hell are you doing here? [...] I do not need to be humiliated.” Determined to prove he had a valid reason for being late and that he has a serious interest in beginning a “big romance” with her, Frank more or less physically drags Jessie out of the club against her will and then shoves her inside his car. Although Frank owns a used car dealership and a bar as ‘legitimate’ front for his criminal operation, during the car ride he decides to reveal to Jessie his true background, stating to her like a painfully honest low-class braggart, “I wear \$150 slacks! I wear silk shirts! I wear \$800 suits! I wear a gold watch! I wear a perfect D flawless, three-carat ring! I change cars like other guys change their fuckin’ shoes! I’m a thief. I’ve been in prison.” While Jessie continues to yell and bitch at Frank, she begins to settle down when they arrive at a diner and have a more intimate talk. It is at the diner that Frank reveals to Jessie his most unflattering vulnerabilities and his virtual blueprint for his life, which he wants to make her an imperative part of.

As she describes to Frank during a long and intimate conversation in the diner, Jessie used to have a cocaine dealer boyfriend who got himself killed under dubious circumstances in South America, thus leaving her to fend for herself on the streets of Bogotá, Colombia (while she does not say it outright, the viewer assumes she did a little third world style pussy-peddling to survive). As a result of her less than glamorous experiences, Jessie is wholly content with her current banal job as a lowly restaurant cashier and makes it quite clear to Frank that she does not want to get her sucked back into the uncertainty of the criminal lifestyle again. Not surprisingly, Frank mocks her attitude while, at the same time, assuring her that he eventually plans to quit thieving and is only doing it now to make up for lost time. At this point, Frank describes to her his general nihilistic worldview and how he became the impenetrable hyper-individualistic criminal that he is today. After being imprisoned at the age of 20 for stealing a mere \$40, Frank ultimately found himself spending eleven years in jail as a result of receiving a “manslaughter beef” after brutally beating some bad guys that, as he describes, “tried to turn me out.” Indeed, after brutally beating up a group of prison guards and criminals with a pipe that attempted to gang rape him, Frank was subsequently severely beaten and hospitalized himself, though

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he managed to beat the leader of the group, a certain 300-pound slob named 'Captain Morphis,' so badly that he died two years later as a result of his injuries. Of course, the entire experience left Frank with an extremely tough mindset and considerably nihilistic worldview where he learned to not care about anything, most notably himself. As Frank tells Jessie, "...I don't mean nothin' to myself. I don't care about me. I don't care about... nothin', you know? And then I know from that day that I survive...because I achieved that mental attitude." At this point, Frank whips out a somewhat childish collage that he made in prison that he describes as "my life," which features images of children, a beautiful woman, and his criminal mentor/paternal figure 'Okla' aka David (Willie Nelson). Okla is the only man that Frank seems to truly respect and he was the one that convinced the antihero to be upfront about his criminal background (as the viewer discovers during a conversation between Frank and Okla, the lead's previous wife divorced him after discovering he was lying to her). Frank points at the woman in his 'life collage' and tells Jessie that it is her. Of course, Frank wants Jessie to be his wife and he promises that he will go 'straight' and quit thieving after obtaining enough money to 'catch up' for the eleven years of life that he lost in prison, stating to her, "Look, I have run out of time. I have lost it all. And so I can't work fast enough to catch up...and I can't run fast enough to catch up...and the only thing that catches me up...is doin' my magic act. But it ends, you know? It will end." While Jessie seems to find Frank's plan to be somewhat questionable, especially since she is infertile and cannot give him the children he wants, he reassures her by telling her that they can adopt a child. Needless to say, the prospect of a large home, wealth, a husband, and a child seems quite enticing to the infertile spinster, so Jessie demonstrates that she has accepted Frank's somewhat strange, almost business-like proposal by holding his hand in what is probably the only truly tender moment in the entire film.

As a result of becoming excited that Jessie has agreed on his somewhat unconventional offer to be his wife and part of his big life plan, Frank decides to call Leo to let him know that he is interested in their partnership, even though it is something he would probably not do under normal circumstances as a lone-wolf that has a hard time running with a pack. Meanwhile, Frank pays a repulsively shady Jewish lawyer \$10,000 to bribe a corrupt judge to get his mentor Okla out of prison. Okla has angina and heart disease and made it quite clear to Frank that he did not want to die in prison. While Frank manages to get his friend out of prison, Okla crooks soon after. Notably, after a negro doctor informs him of Okla's death, Frank petrifies the physician by maintaining a creepy dead stare and saying literally nothing, thus underscoring the antihero's incapacity to deal with emotions. In tribute to Okla, Frank decides to name his adopted son after him. Indeed, as a result of the fact that he is turned down by an adoption agency due to his criminal record, Frank manages to procure a baby boy on the black market via Leo, who only went to the effort of getting the child as a means

to lure the antihero into his operation. While Leo stylizes himself as a sort of benign paternal figure that does whatever he can to make his underlings happy, he is actually a ruthless megalomaniac that wants to make Frank his virtual slave. Of course, Frank immediately demonstrates that he will be a hard man to control because, unlike Leo and the other mob leaders, he refuses to pay off the local corrupt cops and, as a result, is brutally beaten by about half a dozen cops and has both his house and car bugged. Luckily for Frank, he is far more intelligent than the corrupt cops that are trying to bust him.

With the help of his jolly and somewhat buffoonish partner Barry and a couple crew members, Frank is completely successful at executing a large-scale San Diego diamond heist that Leo has organized for him. While Leo compliments Frank on the score and calls him “Dr. Wizard,” he fails to give the antihero the amount of cash he had agreed upon. Although Frank was promised \$830,000 of the \$4 million that were made from wholesale of the unmounted stones that he stole during the heist, Leo has the gall to hand him a folder that contains no more than \$90,000 and then attempts to play off his shady business tactics in what is surely a Harvey Weinstein-esque moment. When Frank asks him where the rest of the money is, Leo states that it is just the “cash part” and that he supposedly invested the rest of the money, stating like a true bullshitting swindler, “That’s because I put you into the Jacksonville, Fort Worth. . .and Davenport shopping centers with the rest. I take care of my people. You can ask these guys. Papers are at your house. It’s set up as a limited partnership. The general partner is a subchapter S corporation. You’ve got equity with me in that.” Needless to say, when Leo brings up a “major score in Palm Beach” that he boldly assumes the antihero will execute for him in six weeks, Frank becomes extremely agitated and tells him, “This is payday. It is over.” When Leo remarks, “I give you houses. I give you a car. You’re family. I thought you’d come around. What the hell is this? What – Where is gratitude? You can’t see day for night,” Frank reveals he is carrying a gun and then threatens the crime boss, stating in a quite ballsy fashion, “My money in 24 hours, or you will wear your ass for a hat.” Of course, a rich and powerful crime boss like Leo refuses to tolerate a threat from such an ostensible small fry like Frank. Unfortunately for Leo and his associates, they ultimately underestimate Frank’s uncompromising ruthlessness and seemingly psychopathic will power.

When Frank goes by his car dealership and cannot find Barry, he soon finds himself ambushed by Leo’s goons. As a result of attempting to warn Frank that it is a trap, Barry is gunned down by Leo’s boys while he has hands tied behind his back. When Frank wakes up, he finds himself lying next to his buddy Barry’s corpse while Leo is standing over him in an intimidating fashion. While lying on the floor with a completely blank stare on his face like a virtual vegetable, Frank quietly stares at Leo as he states to him in a great speech where he reveals his true devilish self, “Look what happened to your friend ‘cause you gotta go

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against the way things go down. You treat what I tried to do for you like shit. You don't want to work for me. What's wrong with you? And then you carry a piece in my house. You one of those burned-out, demolished wackos in the joint? You're scary, because you don't give a fuck. But don't come on to me now with your jailhouse bullshit. . .because you are not that guy. Don't you get it, you prick? You got a home, car, businesses, family. . .and I own the paper on your whole fuckin' life. I'll put your cunt wife on the street to be fucked in the ass by niggers and Puerto Ricans. Your kid's mine because I bought it. You got him on loan. He is leased. You are renting him. I'll whack out your whole family. People'll be eating 'em for lunch tomorrow in their Wimpy burgers and not know it. You get paid what I say. You do what I say. I run you. There is no discussion. I want, you work. Until you are burned out. . .you are busted, or you're dead. You get it? You got responsibilities. Tighten up and do it [...] Back to work, Frank." As anyone that has been carefully watching the film up until this point rightly assumes, there is no way that an impenetrable lone wolf like Frank would not only tolerate his best friend's coldblooded murder, but also such an intricate threat against both himself and his family. At this point, Frank must think quick and act lest he be a perennial bitch-boy to a soft four-eyed prick who looks like a public transit bus driver.

As a man that values self-ownership above all us, Frank naturally refuses to be Leo's permanent groveling diamond heist bitch and comes to the conclusion that he is willing to sacrifice literally everything he values, including his wife and son, to remain a free and sovereign individual. Indeed, during the middle of the night while she is sleeping, Frank abruptly wakes up Jessie and coldly and firmly informs her that it is "over" and he is throwing her out, which she naturally has a hard time understanding. While Frank hands her \$410,000.00 and tells her that he will have an associate take care of her and the baby, Jessie loves him, cannot understand why he is acting in such a callous fashion, and refuses to leave, complaining, "Wait. We just – We just disassemble it and put it back in a box. . .like an Erector set you just send back to a store? I love you. I'm not going anywhere [...] I'm your woman. You're my man. Frank, Frank. I made a commitment." With a completely cold and glacial stare, Frank replies to Jessie by stating, "To hell with me, with you. . .with everything. I'm throwing you out. Get out" and then hatefully yells to her to get out of his house. In a sort of both literal and symbolic annihilation of his entire life, Frank then proceeds to not only blow up his home, but also his car dealership and bar, thus proving he is not the sort of fellow that does things halfway. Indeed, by blowing up everything in his life, Frank not only wipes away his entire identity, but also makes sure that he can have no second thoughts in terms of going back to his previous life. Of course, Frank then proceeds to pay Leo a surprise visit where he knocks Attaglia out cold in the kitchen and then hunts the mob boss in his own home in a scenario where the powerful crime boss comes off looking like

the physically weak and soft coward that he is. After shooting Leo dead upon finding him hiding behind a piece of furniture like a scared animal in one of the rooms in his house, Frank murders the mob boss' henchman Carl and Attaglia after exiting the house, though he is shot a couple of times in the process (luckily, Frank had enough common sense to wear a bulletproof vest and thus comes out of the shootout fairly unscathed). In the end, Frank walks into the night by himself, as if taking the first steps of his new life journey, which will indubitably be alone. Indeed, at this point, Frank has probably accepted that he is doomed to be alone forever and will never be able to be the bourgeois family man that he originally dreamed of.

After my recent re-watching of *Thief*, I know realize that it and Walter Hill's *The Driver* (1978) were Nicolas Winding Refn's two main models for *Drive* (2011). In fact, after watching Mann's film, I have to admit that I have a lot less respect for Refn, as he now reminds me of a sort of European Tarantino, albeit with better taste cinema and a more covert and less self-congratulatory approach to paying 'homage' to his crucial influences. Out of all these three films, *Thief* is the only one where I found myself entranced by the sight of misty rain drops, flying sparks, and slow-motion explosions, as if Mann was inspired by Stan Brakhage's sort of organic lyricism. Of course, the film owes a good portion of its hypnotic power to its Tangerine Dream score (notably, Mann originally considered using degenerate jazz for the film, but luckily he made the right decision in the end). While I enjoy Mann's subsequent Nazi horror-fantasy *The Keep* (1983), which also features a Tangerine Dream score, for largely novelty reason, it is the complete opposite of *Thief* in that it feels so glaringly contrived and phony, as if the Jewish auteur wanted to make the most one-dimensional anti-Nazi film ever assembled in what is ultimately a moronically morally dichotomous neo-fairytale where virtually all Germans are depicted as pure evil despite the fact a group of krauts provided the music for the film (to Mann's credit, Paramount Pictures totally butchered the film and more or less cut it in half, though Mann intended to shoot a 'Aryan holocaust' scene at the end where every single German soldier is brutally murdered by a virtual golem). Indeed, despite being meticulously stylized, *Thief* has a certain unwavering authenticity to it in terms of its depiction of a psychosis-ridden career criminal that has learned to become internally dead as a means to cope with the traumas he has endured. Of course, like many talented individuals, the antihero of the film at least partly owes his Übermensch qualities to his mental defects. Notably, actor James Caan has described *Thief* as his second favorite of his own films, with the long diner monologue being the scene he is most proud of in all of his entire acting career. As demonstrated by his roles in Mann's film, Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972), and *The Gambler* (1974), as well as tendency to do crazy things in real-life like pulling guns on negro rappers and befriending and publicly supporting real-life mafia bosses, Caan certainly seems to at least

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partially personally embody the erratic quasi-psychopathic characters that he is best known for playing, but of course only the toughest people from working-class backgrounds make it to the top, so that should be no surprise. After all, no one would know who Caan, Mann, or Friedkin was today if they were meek pussies who did not grab life by the balls and make something of themselves by any means possible. Of course, this is also what makes these three men different from most of the Hebrews in Hollywood, who oftentimes owe their celebrity to nepotism and ethnic networking and not genuine talent.

While I respect the fact his third feature *Manhunter* (1986) is easily the most underrated Hannibal Lecter film and that he was actually able to get an intriguing performance out of Tom Cruise as a psychopathic killer in *Collateral* (2004), I do not think I could ever call myself even a softcore Michael Mann fan. After all, no real serious auteur could have directed films as lame and phony as *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) and *Ali* (2001). Indeed, the only Mann flick that I like in its entirety is *Thief*, which I consider to be the filmmaker's closest thing to a true auteur piece, thus making it all the more of a shame that it is probably his least appreciated and most overlooked work. Like Friedkin, I think the real Mann is someone that could have just as easily become a Jewish gangster had his life taken a slightly different course and I believe his debut demonstrates this in its genuine obsession with the criminal mind and lifestyle. Even with his big budget Johnny Depp vehicle *Public Enemies* (2009), Mann would demonstrate a preternatural obsession with criminal authenticity in terms of historical accuracy in depicting the infamous life and times of German-American gangster John Dillinger and his gang. Of course, what separates *Thief* from most of Mann's other films and crime-thrillers in general is that it is the real dirty deal and features none of the sort of frivolous tough guy posturing that appeals to the sort of borderline retarded illiterate thugs, dime-bag-peddling ghetto negroes, and spiritually castrated wiggers that masturbate to *Scarface* (1983) and *Carlito's Way* (1993) and would probably suck Robert De Niro's cock in a desperate attempt to try in vain to live vicariously through the man that starred in *Goodfellas* (1990) and some many other ginney-dago-wop-fests. While his stoicism and will power is admirable, there is nothing genuinely romantic about the absurdly asocial antihero of Mann's debut, hence why aspiring rappers, crack dealers, and other crime-fetishizing degenerates would probably have a hard time embracing the film (of course, the Tangerine Dream score would also deter any of these preposterously pathetic peons, but I digress). In short, *Thief* is a portrait of progressive criminal madness in a quasi-poetic form that deserves to be compared to the more intriguingly morally dubious cinematic works of Fritz Lang. In terms of its uniquely unflattering depiction of Chicago as a sort of post-industrial hellhole where criminals run both the streets and courts, Mann's film probably features the most unforgettable aesthetic assault against the spiritual core of an American city since David Lynch's quasi-Expressionistic depiction of Philadelphia in

Eraserhead (1977), albeit in an exceedingly less esoteric fashion. Arguably most interestingly, it is not often that one gets to see a film where a man is pushed completely to the edge and decides to literally blow up his entire life in a blaze of nihilistic glory. It also not often one gets to see a film that is almost orgasmically metallurgical in its essence, as if some of the ideas of Oswald Spengler's *Man and Technology: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1931) were used by Mann as a sort of aesthetic theory for *Thief*, which finds almost perverse pulchritude in post-industrial decay and the synthesis of man and machine. After all, if there is a sort of quasi-realist equivalent to the titular cyborg assassin of *The Terminator* (1984), it is the eponymous antihero of Mann's film.

-Ty E

THE KEEP
THE KEEP

Michael Mann (1983)

Undoubtedly, a Gothic horror World War II flick set in war torn Romania featuring a soundtrack by electronic krautrockers Tangerine Dream sounds like a rather delectable prospect, but somebody made a major mistake when they granted Hollywood Hebraic hack Michael Mann (Thief, The Last of the Mohicans) the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to direct such an innately ambitious and easy-to-botch cinematic work. Indeed, *The Keep* (1983)—a film based on the 1981 novel of the same name, which was the first volume in a series of six novels known as *The Adversary Cycle* written by American sci-fi novelist F. Paul Wilson—is a work that had all the potential of a ‘blockbuster masterpiece’ (an oxymoron if there ever was one!) and would eventually earn cult status among loyal fans, but director Michael Mann ultimately disowned the film and even prevented its release on dvd, which is certainly no surprise as it is an aesthetically pleasing mess of the innately incoherent and horribly uneven sort, not to mention a perfect example of how Hollywood butchers films. Although a little over 90 minutes in its present form, Michael Mann’s original cut of *The Keep* was a whopping 3 ½ hours in length, which is certainly why the film is an epic abortion with a jumbled and disjointed storyline. A sort of extremely loose reworking of the Golem story from Jewish folklore meets *Castle Keep* (1969) directed by Sydney Pollack minus the humor, *The Keep* childishly wallows in Spielberg-esque anti-Nazi clichés and emphasizes heavily stylized action sequences and then-state-of-the-art special effects over character development and sensible linear storytelling. In fact, director Mann once described the film as, “A fairy story for grownups. Fairy tales have the power of dreams - from the outside. I decided to stylize the art direction and photography extensively but use realistic characterization and dialogue,” yet *The Keep* has a moronic moral compass that seems like it was created by the bastard Judaic half-brother of the Brothers Grimm and certainly does not seem like it was created with grown adults in mind. Indeed, a supernatural and pseudo-spiritual ‘scary’ Shoah flick for a degenerate generation of effeminate braindead fanboys who see Luke Skywalker as their Christ and see any cinematic depiction of Hitler as Satan and German soldiers as demons, *The Keep* is certainly the most philistine extreme of hapless holocaust propaganda and the soundtrack by Teutonic musical geniuses Tangerine Dream makes it seem all the more bizarre. Indeed, I would be lying if I did not admit *The Keep* is my favorite Israelite-directed anti-Nazi propaganda flick as it may be an absurdly muddled movie with Streicher-esque caricatures of German soldiers, but it is also an endlessly entertaining ‘popcorn flick’ that acts as a sort of cinematic equivalent to a hokey haunted holocaust museum.

Set in 1941 following the commencement of Operation Barbarossa at the Dinu Mountain Pass of the Carpathian Alps in rural Romania, *The Keep* begins

with the arrival of a German Wehrmacht unit led by ‘nice Nazi’ Captain Klaus Woermann (Jürgen Prochnow). After two of Woermann’s more criminally-inclined kraut soldiers attempt to steal a glowing cross icon they mistake for silver in an uninhabited citadel (aka “The Keep”), they unwittingly unleash an evil Golem-like entity named Radu Molasar that had been imprisoned in the ancient keep. Naturally, metaphysical monster Molasar begins killing off kraut soldiers faster than the snow in Stalingrad, which raises the suspicion of the German army. Eventually, a genocidal SS Einsatzkommando unit led by a nefarious Nazi named SD Sturmbannführer Eric Kaempffer (Gabriel Byrne) is called in to investigate the mysterious murders and restore order in the medieval-like Romanian village. Of course, the first thing Kaempffer has his killer kraut commandos do upon arriving in the town is have a group of wholesome Romanian men executed in retaliation for the deaths of murdered Wehrmacht soldiers, but also to prevent any other murders. A callous National Socialist ‘true believer,’ Kaempffer firmly believes the deaths are the result of communist partisans. At the recommendation of a lying Romanian priest named Father Mihail Fonescu (Robert Prosky), the Germans have a Romanian Jewish historian named Professor Theodore Cuza (Ian McKellen) and his daughter Eva (Alberta Watson) fetched from a concentration camp to help solve the mystery murders as both of them somehow have special esoteric knowledge regarding the Keep. Professor Cuza manages to translate a dead language similar to Romanian written on the wall of the citadel and not long after two SS men attempt to rape his daughter, but she is ultimately saved by Jewish monster Molasar. Gracious for Molasar’s seemingly selfless heroism, Cuza ultimately befriends and makes a Faustian pact with the monster, who also cures the Professor of his debilitating case of scleroderma and gives him eternal youth. Meanwhile, a man with supernatural powers named Glaeken Trismegestus (Scott Glenn) senses something evil is stirring in the Keep and begins to travel all the way from his hometown in Greece to the Romanian village. Of course, Kaempffer continues to kill Romanian peasants and eventually kills Klaus Woermann for his anti-Nazi rhetoric and insubordinate behavior, but anti-anti-Semite Molasar eventually kills the sadistic SS man. Additionally, not unlike Frank Cotton from Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser* (1987), Molasar begins to take a more human form the more powerful he becomes. When gallant hero Glaeken eventually arrives in the Romanian village to stop Molasar, Professor Cuza attempts to have him killed. In the end, Professor Cuza finally comes to the realization that Molasar is not a saint and Glaeken battles the Golem-like creature, ultimately using his body to once again imprison the all-evil creature in the citadel.

Director Michael Mann essentially summed up the ‘message’ of *The Keep* when he stated regarding the Second World War, “There is a moment in time when the unconscious is externalized. In the case of the 20th Century, this time was the fall of 1941. What Hitler promised in the beer gardens had actually

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come true. The greater German Reich was at its apogee: it controlled all Europe. And the dark psychotic appeal underlying the slogans and rationalizations was making itself manifest.” With its unintentionally strange and rather superficial scenes of old Jewish intellectuals lounging in death camps in style, suavely dressed SS of the sadistic megalomaniac sort going on deranged anti-communist diatribes, absurdly childish and cheesy caricature-driven portrayal of good and evil, unflatteringly romanticized depiction of Romanian peasants, and innate irrationalism, *The Keep* ultimately seems like a warped post-Auschwitz religious parable directed by an atheistic Jew for consumption by feeble minded goy Christians of the pathetically superstitious sort. That being said, *The Keep* still manages to be a captivating work, as if it was directed by the ½ Hebraic son that H.P. Lovecraft never had with his short-lived Jewish wife Sonia Greene. In a sense, *The Keep* is a cinematic tragedy of sorts as it has so many strong and strikingly aesthetic and even thematic elements, but is ultimately plagued by its own equally glaring aesthetic and thematic weaknesses. Indeed, with conspicuously contrived and ludicrous quotes from evil antagonist Sturmbannführer Kaempfer like, “The people that go to these resettlement camps... There are only two doors... One in and one out... The one out is a chimney,” *The Keep* is undoubtedly a work that is also tastelessly cheapened by the director’s personal political/religious bias. Indeed, you know there is a problem with a World War II film when the evil Nazi antagonist is so artificial and anti-human in persuasion that he makes Ralph Fiennes’ portrayal of Amon Goeth in Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993) seem to possess as much depth as a character from an Ingmar Bergman film. Rather repellently, *The Keep* also makes absurd Marxist revisionist references to the Spanish Civil War by making it seem as if the ‘good guys’ (aka communists) tragically lost against Satan’s fascist army. Indeed, featuring a hopelessly redundant hodgepodge of softcore Marxist clichés and ludicrous leftist mysticism, decidedly dumbed down dichotomies between good and evil, demonization of German soldiers as killer kraut Ken dolls, and tasteless glorification of communist/Jewish partisans and Jewish intellectuals, *The Keep* is ultimately an awe-inspiring film as cinema history’s most ambitious agitprop neo-fairytale and an epic celluloid abortion that reminds the viewer that the so-called ‘holocaust’ is not a historical event but a religion with its own belief system, with Uncle Adolf being the devil incarnate. That being said, forget Claude Lanzmann’s epic snooze-fest *Shoah* (1985), *The Keep* is a real and honest holocaust flick of DeMille-esque proportions.

-Ty E

MADNESS

Michael Nankin (1980)

As far I am concerned, there is no such thing as a bad Joe Dallesandro film aside from possibly Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club* (1984) and a couple of his later works where he only has cameo roles, so naturally I will watch just about anything featuring the lapsed Warhol superstar. Of course, I jumped at the chance to see little Joe play a psychopathic fugitive killer in the Guido crime-thriller *Madness* (1980) aka *Vacanze per un massacre* aka *Vacation for a Massacre* directed by mafia movie maestro Fernando Di Leo (*The Italian Connection*, *Rulers of the City*). Personally, when it comes to the films of dirty dago director Di Leo, I prefer his more obscure and unconventional works like *Avere vent'anni* (1978) aka *To Be Twenty* to his much more popular *Cosa Nostra*-themed flicks, so *Madness* instantly grabbed my attention when I first discovered it, even if it seemed like a stereotypically sleazy exploitation flick with softcore sex scenes. Indeed, *Madness* is essentially like *The Last House on the Left* (1972) Italian style, albeit with Joe Dallesandro and a curiously cynical anti-bourgeois message where the 'victims' of killer Joe are almost less sympathetic than the killer himself. A wicked and biting celluloid work featuring misanthropy and misogyny that depicts young jet-set middle-class Hightalians as the most unscrupulous of money and cock-grubbing whores, *Madness* is certainly far from the 'victim power'/rightful revenge' message of Craven's *The Last House on the Left*, which is certainly one of the reasons the film is still provocative and outrageous today. Largely taking place in a country home decorated with posters of strangely creepy Hollywood icons like Marlon Brando, James Dean, and John Travolta, *Madness* portrays a decidedly degenerate and proudly decadent goombah bourgeois brain-washed by American trash culture and dedicated to then-vogue post-WWII politics like feminism and sexual liberation of the quasi-incestuous. Featuring a totally tasteless bizarre love triangle between a wop preppy, his girlfriend, and her sister, *Madness* indeed wallows in 'madness,' albeit more of the Cultural Marxist variety. Although director Di Leo suffered hostility from his fans and monetary failure for branching out to the urban crime-thriller ghetto with *To Be Twenty*, he had the great gall to follow it with *Madness*, a superlatively sleazy genre-less hybrid featuring elements of action, horror, thriller, mediocre melodrama, and good old exploitation excess. Like *To Be Twenty*, *Madness* was also a commercial failure that did not even receive an American distributor (thankfully RaroVideo released a dvd of it in 2012) and thus is virtually totally unknown, even amongst Dallesandro fans. Not exactly up to par with his performances in prestigious European arthouse works like Louis Malle's *Black Moon* (1975), Serge Gainsbourg's *I Love You, I Don't* (1976) aka *Je t'aime moi non plus*, Walerian Borowczyk's *The Streetwalker* (1976) aka *La marge* nor Jacques Rivette's *Merry-Go-Round* (1981), *Madness* is still mandatory viewing for Dallesandro

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fans, even if the Italian-American actor's blue-collar Brooklyn accent has been slaughtered via classically absurd Guido dubbing.

Joe Brezzi (Little Joe D) has just escaped prison and to celebrate, he kills two farmers, steals their car, and makes his way to a quaint cottage in the Italian countryside to dig up the 300 million lire that he hid in a fireplace hearth five years ago before he was locked up. Unfortunately, Joe B runs into a seemingly minor problem when he discovers that a lecherous good-for-nothing middle-class 'family' is staying there, thus thwarting his chances of swiftly collecting his well earned cash and making his way to some sort of paradise. From there, *Madness* evolves into a mildly idiosyncratic and totally tasteless and classless chamber piece where four completely calculating and corrupt degenerates do their damndest to survive, or at least die trying. While snooping around at night around the country home, Joe learns that its occupants are cheaters and liars unworthy of sympathy, let alone mercy, so he has a pretty good idea how to deal with these debauched folks. The 'man' of the house is a would-be-macho preppy outdoors-man named Sergio (Gianni Macchia) who is married to Liliana (Patrizia Behn), but is screwing her pseudo-feminist sister Paola (Lorraine De Selle) under the same roof! Of course, Paola, who seduces her sister's husband Sergio, is the true femme fatale of the humble abode and naturally she puts up the greatest fight when the mayhem begins. If any character is even remotely redeemable, it is Liliana as she at least genuinely loves her hubby, though she is too weak and vapid of a character to have any real sympathy for. After spying on them at night, Joe makes his first move the next morning and savagely seduces Paola whilst she is all by her lonesome. A born whore that knows all the tricks of the trade when it comes to seduction, Paola does everything she can to make Joe think she genuinely wants his cock, even flashing her furry bush at him while sitting in an unlady manner in a chair. Paola eventually attempts a great escape while totally unclad, but Joe soon catches her and no long after he also captures Sergio and Liliana. For his own sadistic enjoyment, but also to demonstrate to poor Liliana that her sister and husband are having an affair, Joe forces Sergio and Paola to have sex at gunpoint, which they do with the utmost gusto and sensuality despite hostile onlookers watching them in a viciously voyeuristic manner. After Joe demonstrates that he is the undisputed alpha-male of the home, but also to spite her sister and husband, Liliana has sex with the violent psychopathic fugitive. Meanwhile, Paola plots to steal Joe's small fortune. In the end, everyone dies except one bitter bitch who has been screwed over by everyone she loves (minus a murderous madman, who she screws over!)

Featuring a psychedelic soundtrack that sounds like Jimi Hendrix farting in a Whammy pedal created by maestro Luis Bacalov (*Django*, *City of Women*) and typically radically repellant 1970s wardrobes and home décor, *Madness* is not exactly an unsung masterpiece of Italian celluloid art but it is certainly a suave and sleazy way to waste 90 minutes or so. Probably best compared to *Hitch-Hike*

(1977) aka *Autoſtop rosso sangue* ſtarring Franco Nero and David Hess in terms of its glittery Guido grade psychosexual tensions and culture cringe in regard to trendy counter-culture/sexual liberation politics of the time, *Madness* is certainly naſty and naughty cinematic nihilism at its moſt unwavering yet prepoſterouſly wanton. Although a couple more of his European era films, including *Merry-Go-Round*, were released after the Fernando Di Leo flick, *Madness* was apparently the laſt film Joe Dallesandro worked on in the old continent and I would not be ſurprised if he felt the experience was a negative one, thus leading to his return to the United States, yet his underſtated and naturaliſtic performance in the film is indubitably one of the moſt ſtrikingly ſtoic and macho of his ſingular career. Of course, out of all the actors featured in *Madness*, Patrizia Behn, who only ſtarred in a total of three films during her marginal acting career, would only appear in one more film, the hardcore porn flick *La gemella erotica* (1980) directed by great Guido sleaze-surrealiſt Alberto Cavallone (whose career had also declined and was forced to make porn flicks out of financial neceſſity, so he made rather unſavory and unhinged fuck flicks that would turn virtually no one on!) and later apparently completed by Luigi Cozzi. Director Fernando Di Leo's anteultimate feature film before his filmmaking career ended in 1985 (despite the fact he did not die until 2003) with *Killer vs Killers*, *Madness*, not unlike *To Be Twenty*, demonſtrates the filmmaker was getting much more angry and aeſthetically malicious as the years passed, as if he could foreſee his own downfall. A tragic yet trashy celluloid work offering nil redemption for its characters nor ſolace to its viewers, *Madness* is how all exploitation films ſhould be as a work that, unlike the films of Wes Craven, never reaches the cheap and intolerable level of espouſing humaniſtic ideals, liberal lunacy, or moral relativism. In other words, *Madness* is not an exploitation flick for brainwashed p.c. pussies, frigid feminiſts, mainſtream film critics, nor moſt Quentin Tarantino fans.

-Ty E

THIS WORLD, THEN THE FIREWORKS
THIS WORLD, THEN THE FIREWORKS

Michael Oblowitz (1997)

As far as neo-noir is considered, you probably cannot get more gorgeously grotesque and, in turn, debasingly aesthetically indelible than Michael Oblowitz's fairly unknown Jim Thompson adaptation *This World, Then the Fireworks* (1997) starring virtual walking-and-talking-human-genitals Billy Zane, Gina Gershon, and Sheryl Lee. In fact, I have no qualms about confessing that I believe that it is easily the greatest Thompson adaptation ever made and I say that as someone that is a fan of both Bertrand Tavernier's *Coup de Torchon* (1981) and James Foley's *After Dark, My Sweet* (1990). Both a hyper histrionic homage and misanthropically deconstructive mutation of classic film noir, the film takes a surprisingly refreshingly heavy-handed approach to depicting fraternal twin incest, *la mort d'amour* and accidental necrophilia, matricide, Mexican back-alley abortions, opium addiction, prostitution, posttraumatic stress, and a variety of other mostly salacious subjects that auteur Oblowitz—a South African Jew that was once loosely associated with the largely artistically bankrupt No Wave Cinema scene—clearly loves wallowing in. In short, the film is an innately immoral cinematic work directed by an innately immoral filmmaker who, not surprisingly, worked as a cinematographer on a number of Rosa von Praunheim films, including aberrosexual agitprop like *Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts* (1979) and fiercely retarded feminist drivel like *Rote Liebe* (1982) aka *Red Love*. While I can only assume Oblowitz is heterosexual, he must have learned a thing or two from the corrosive kraut queen as his Thompson adaptation features more than one fat naked dude and a preteen boy getting the shit beat out of him while wearing nothing but tighty whities. While depriving the viewer of full bush, the film does thankfully features some nicely styled nudes of Gershon and Lee, though one gets the sense that the auteur sees sex as being about as special as a bonafide bowel movement. Indeed, instead of presenting coitus as something intimate or possibly even spiritual, Oblowitz depicts it as a sort of base demonic energy that can be used as either a weapon or form of currency, though it has very little true intrinsic value otherwise. In fact, in the film—a dark noir romance featuring an incest-fueled bizarre love triangle—sex is depicted as the true root of all evil, especially as far as the forsaken male protagonist and his similarly vulgarly tragic twin sister are concerned. Undoubtedly, if there is anything else that rivals carnality in terms of sheer weaponized nefariousness in the film, it is family, as familial matters are the direct source of the main characters' untamable malevolence and crippling metaphysical and psycho-emotional maladies. As the son of a purported holocaust survivor, Oblowitz—an auteur that is obsessed with style and form but seems a little handicapped as far as deep human emotions are concerned—indubitably takes a curious approach to interfamilial trauma, but I digress.

Apparently, the genesis for the film dates all the way back to 1982 after Oblowitz first read a bootlegged Xeroxed copy of Jim Thompson's pulp classic *The Killer Inside Me* (1952) and became completely obsessed with directing a cinematic adaptation of the novel. After failing to acquire the rights to the novel and a couple failed attempts at adapting other Thompson novels, Oblowitz thankfully finally settled on the author's posthumously released short story *This World, Then the Fireworks*, though he would get fellow Judaic Larry Gross—a fairly unknown writer that is probably best remembered in the Hollywood realm for doing last minute (and oftentimes uncredited) polishes and rewrites of high-profile scripts, most notably Walter Hill's fairly successful buddy cop flick *48 Hrs.* (1982)—to pen the project. Not surprisingly, both Oblowitz and Gross reveal in featurettes on the 2017 Kino Lorber blu-ray release of the film that they regard it as among their greatest artistic accomplishments. While Oblowitz originally gained notoriety for his gritty No Wave flicks *Minus Zero* (1979) and *King Blank* (1983)—the latter of which had the honor of playing on a double bill as a midnight movie with David Lynch's masterful debut feature *Eraserhead*—he subsequently artistically degenerated into a for-hire music video hack and is probably best known nowadays for directing such rather unrefined direct-to-video Steven Seagal action-schlock as *Out for a Kill* (2003) and *The Foreigner* (2003), among other similarly embarrassing efforts. In short, there is no question that *This World, Then the Fireworks* is Oblowitz's crowning achievement as a filmmaker, though only a malevolently morally bankrupt man could sire such a gleefully unhinged, intoxicatingly nihilistic, and lunatically libertine magnum opus. Of course, it goes without saying that the film has one of the coolest and misleadingly poetic titles in cinema history, hence my initial (admittedly largely superficial) interest in seeing it. Luckily, the film lives up to its preternaturally poesy title.

While Oblowitz shares next to nil similarities with Robert Bresson, I think he would appreciate the French master auteur's cinematic aphorism, "Master precision. Be a precision instrument myself." Indeed, *This World, Then the Fireworks* is by no means an immaculate film yet nearly every single scene feels perfectly constructed with the fanatical meticulousness of an OCD-addled locksmith, thus underscoring the director's obsession with extensive storyboarding and longtime experience as a music video director that was obligated to construct very precise and calculated tableaux. For better or worse, many of the scenes manage to leave an indelible mark on the viewer; whether it be a cockeyed low-angle shot of a bloody yet beautiful post-abortion corpse lying on a dirty metal slab in some Mexican hellhole or a big gob of blood splattering across the smiling face of a seemingly innocent 4-year-old child. In fact, the lack of empathy or any other emotion in these scenes leads me to conclude that Oblowitz is either an unabashed sociopath or at a Tarantino-esque level of emotional retardation, but luckily the film somehow manages to be both darkly humorous and even

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somewhat romantic. In short, it is anything but banal. If I didn't know better, I would assume that the film was a romantic-comedy for killer couples like Bonnie and Clyde and Shirley Stoler and Tony Lo Bianco, but of course that is one of the things that makes it so strangely intriguing, if not largely psychologically and emotionally deleterious. Personally, as a somewhat antisocial individual that has always been in relationships with relatively asocial chicks, I am always a sucker for a certain sort of mad love and *This World, Then the Fireworks* certainly delivers in that regard, even though I am not into incest or brutal coldblooded murder, among other things. To put it simply, Oblowitz's flick is the sort of cinematic work Georges Bataille might have directed had he been a psychotic redblooded stud instead of a wimpy degenerate intellectual. On the other hand, I would not exactly call the murderous male antihero featured in the film an alpha-male, as he is a mentally cracked chap that is practically led around by the scent of the cunt of the twin sister that he loves, at least until he falls under the spell of another scenty snatch, albeit of the non-sibling sort.

Notably, in his classic philosophical novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, Teutonic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche—a fellow that was not exactly that successful when it came to the so-called fairer sex—wrote, “Man is for woman a means; the purpose is always the child, But what is woman for man? The true man wants two different things: danger and diversion. He therefore wants woman, as the most dangerous plaything. Man must be trained for war, and woman for the relaxation of the warrior; all else is folly. Two sweet fruits – these the warrior does not like. He therefore likes women – even the sweetest woman is bitter.” While woman is indubitably “the most dangerous plaything” in *This World, Then the Fireworks*, the male antihero is certainly no warrior, at least not in any conventional sense. Additionally, the two main female characters, who are beyond bitter, are only interested in the monetary and material and hardly the maternal, as they unequivocally embody the ‘prostitute archetype,’ at least in the Weiningerian sense. In fact, the male antihero played by Billy Zane is too much of an emotionally erratic pretty boy ponce to even compare to the lean and mean hardboiled stoicism of a great film noir star like Humphrey Bogart. Additionally, the film features two very different femme fatales, including a fiery Mediterranean-like literal whore of the sensually unhinged sort and a cryptically killer lady-cop of the naggy Nordic ice queen variety. In fact, it could be argued that these lethal ladies are symbolic dichotomous reflections of the quasi-schizophrenic antihero's considerably conflicted personality. Undoubtedly, Oblowitz's loves these fatally frisky femme fatales as much as he loathes the white picket fence morals and wholesome WASP cultural supremacy that defined the 1950s, but one should not expect anything less from a man that directs holocaust-themed vampire flicks like *The Breed* (2001) that feature the nasty (and uniquely improbable) novelty of a negro-chink miscegenation (if that wasn't distasteful enough, the film also features a literal Judaic vampire that ac-

cuses the same negro of being a 'racist' because he is immune to his Hebraic bloodsucking charms). Indeed, *This World, Then the Fireworks* is not so much a 'neo-noir' as a sociopathically sardonic tribute to the fact that film noir did the most, at least cinematically speaking, to demystify the American dream and piss on the white Christian majority population that greatly valued said dream. Undoubtedly, Oblowitz's film is as nostalgically American as anthrax-laced (kosher) apple pie. In short, Oblowitz's film does for 1950s America what Harmony Korine's directorial debut *Gummo* (1997) did for poor contemporary crackers in terms of its aesthetically Talmudic approach to tearing at the moral fabric of the white American goyim until there is nothing but a single weak thread.

As shamelessly incestuous siblings that have practically been attached at the genitals since birth and seem to sometimes share the same mind in terms of their particularly perverse thoughts and carnal (and killer) desires, Marty Lakewood (Billy Zane) and his sister Carol (Gina Gershon) are virtual 'psychosexual Siamese twins.' Aside from sharing the same rotten white trash womb, the fraternal twins were also victims of the same traumatic childhood event that occurred on their fourth birthday in July 4th 1926, which involved their mindless mother abruptly aborting their b-day party to drag them over to a house across the street just in time to witness their completely naked fat fuck father, who was rudely interrupted while fucking his mistress, blowing out the brains of the angry armed fellow that he had just so brazenly cuckolded, or as Marty nostalgically narrates in regard to the impact of the event on his life, "It was funny. It was funnier than Charlie Chaplin or Krazy Kat. The man on the floor didn't have hardly any head at all. And dad and the women – they were naked. Dad went to the electric chair and the women committed suicide. Mom was scarred for life but . . . they were naked and it was funny. It was so funny, I remember. I remember that night well." A sort of bargain bin nihilist philosopher that might have read Mencken but never Nietzsche and who absolutely loves living dangerously as a perversely invasive yellow journalist, Marty lives by the personal *Weltanschauung*, "Nothing really happens for a reason, it just happens," as if it was the only logical conclusion that he could come to after witnessing his papa commit coldblooded post-coital murder when he was just a wee lad. While it is now 1956 and three decades have passed since his deadly daddy destroyed the psychological and emotional integrity of his entire family, Marty, his sister Carol, and mother Mrs. Lakewood (Rue McClanahan of *The Golden Girls* fame) have clearly never recovered and have instead degenerated into psychological grotesque human monsters with great sex appeal. Needless to say, when Marty moves back in with his beloved sis and mental mommy after being forced to flee Chicago, old wounds are opened up and old incestuous desires are acted upon, though a bizarre love triangle eventually threatens the sanctity of the extra special brother-sister relationship.

Despite always loving one another, the twins made a rather revealing child-

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hood pact to both marry unlovable losers, or as Marty narrates, “Carol and I did what we said we were going to do back when we were kids. We chose to marry someone that no one else wanted. Someone scorned and shamed and cast aside.” Indeed, while Carol married some rich abusive loser that later dropped dead and resulted in her less than prestigious career as a lowly street hooker, Marty married and even sired a son with a big bloated 400-pound beastess that, in terms of sheer physical attractiveness, is not even worthy of lapping up his rancid excrement. Not surprisingly, when Marty is forced to flee Chicago after his junky pal ‘Joe’ (Richard Edson)—a doped up ex-journalist that provides the dirt on dirty cops in exchange for morphine—is killed by a group of corrupt cops and he becomes the next target due to the incriminating info he has on local law enforcement, he does not think twice about completely abandoning his wife and similarly obscenely overweight son. Of course, considering his rather ambivalent attitude cops and undying love his twin sister, Marty probably never suspected that moving to California to be with his family would eventually lead to himself falling in love with a cop, albeit one with a rather wicked blonde cunt. As Marty proudly narrates in regard to his homecoming, “It did not matter being broke. Carol and I were together again. After three long years—the longest we had been separated. Nothing else seemed to matter.” Rather unfortunately, Carol—a beauteous yet irreparably broken babe that makes her living as a pussy-peddler that seems to specialize in using her womb to suck up the semen of violent rape-obsessed sailors—is somewhat of an emotional wreck. Of course, the same can be certainly said of fairly deranged Marty’s drug-addled mother, who cannot live with the fact that her darling children are lifelong lovers. Rather unfortunately but not surprisingly, Marty will be the only one that is still alive at the end of the film, as Carol and their mother seem to be too ill-equipped to confront past traumas and move on with their lives. As for Marty, he gets involved with some somewhat sinister stuff, but he also discovers a true love—or something resembling it—that does not share the same tainted blood.

Not long after moving back home with his sister and mother, Marty manages to snag a position at the biggest newspaper in town and becomes such a good journalist that he compels his co-employees to live in constant fear and even succumb to alcoholism due to not being able to compete with his inordinate diligence and singular workaholic ethos. Although devilishly clever and a rather ruthless employee, Marty is also plagued with a certain vehement irrationalism that inspires him to quit his job after he has virtually risen to the top of the ladder of the local daily rag. Indeed, Marty might be a virtual moron when it comes to morals, but he lacks the sort of sociopathic careerism that defined the reporter played by Kirk Douglas in Billy Wilder’s desert noir *Ace in the Hole* (1951) aka *The Big Carnival*. Indeed, when his prick boss—a cynical scumbag that seems to be able to develop a hard-on at the mere thought of debasing his employees—dares to offer him a nice new position after firing a co-worker, Marty becomes

completely deranged and both physically and verbally assaults his considerably shocked employer because he is paranoid that the man has figured out his wants and motivations, which makes perfect sense when one considers that he is a mensch that carries around the deep dark secret that he is in love with his own twin sister and has dedicated virtually his entire life to serving and protecting her. In fact, the film features a childhood flashback scene where a preteen Marty brutally beats a couple young boys with a large stick that dare to attempt to gang-rape his sister in a bittersweet scenario that concludes with an inordinately tender shot of the incestuous twins holding one another during the twilight of the blue hour. As Marty candidly states in regard to his relationship with Carol, “We felt each other’s feelings. We thought each other’s thoughts. We didn’t care what anyone thought of us and that was unforgivable. For that, we had to be punished.” Somewhat ironically, it is only when Marty begins to love someone else just as much as his sister that he is truly punished for his carnal crimes.

In what ultimately proves to be almost too conveniently auspicious of circumstances, Marty almost immediately spots the wanton woman that, for better or worse, will completely change his life shortly after quitting his job. Indeed, upon first seeing delectable dame Lois Archer (Sheryl Lee)—a busty blonde bombshell of the law that is as socially awkward as she is sexy—Marty gets a little bit too excited and quite literally manhandles her in broad daylight right outside of a semi-busy public courthouse. While initially awkwardly defensive to the point where she acts like she is going to arrest him, it soon becomes rather apparent that lusty Lois is desperate to jump Marty’s bones and that she is quite smitten with the proudly aberrant antihero’s Lothario-like brand of lunacy. While Marty asks her rather sleazy personal questions like, “Are you blonde all over or just where it shows?,” Lois soon comes to the conclusion that she wants to engage in a little bip-bam-thank-you-ma’am with him and rather firmly demands, “I want you to come home with me right now.” Notably, not only does Marty go to Lois’ house and engage in heated carnal session with her, but he also soon becomes obsessed with her and her humble abode, which is a scenic beachfront property. While Marty seems to genuinely like Lois, he also immediately begins plotting to swindle her out of her beach house, which is worth a whopping \$30,000 (keep in mind, this is the 1950s) and is unfortunately co-owned by her estranged soldier brother. Indeed, as he soon tells his sister, Marty hopes to kill Lois’ brother and own the house within a mere month. Rather unfortunately, Marty might be a sick sociopath of sorts, but he also soon finds himself falling in love with luscious Lois, who seems to almost immediately dominate him in the bedroom as demonstrated by the fact that she is almost always laying on top of him during their intimate post-coital discussions in a manner that makes it seem like she just finished ravishing his rectum him with a sizable strap-on dildo. Undoubtedly, Lois’ sexual dominance is ultimately a form of fetishistic foreshadowing.

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As demonstrated by the fact that he gleefully murders a grotesquely morbidly obese 'private dick' named Jake Krutz (William Hootkins) that dares to keep tabs on his sister, Marty can certainly be described as a sadistic sociopath yet he, like so many of his psychologically defective kind, is so damn undeniably likeable. Of course, Marty wears a rather handsome mask of sanity that hides a scared little boy that more or less regresses to an infantile state anytime his hyper hysterical mommy says mean things to him. In fact, he does not even try to deny it when his sister says to him, "I know you like to play the big old rough, tough guy, but deep down you're just a sentimental slob." When Marty suffers a mental meltdown after his mother accuses him and his sister of engaging in incest and then states hateful things to them like, "You both should have been strangled at birth," Carol opts to kill her by personally feeding her an intentional overdose of her favorite bedtime drug in a twisted scene of morbidly ironic matricide where a grown daughter feeds her borderline elderly mother in a mock maternal fashion. While Marty is an unrepentant murderer and debauched degenerate of the quite consciously remorseless sort, his sister Carol, who seems to be largely driven by a certain fierce feral-like instinct, is even more ruthless as a decidedly deranged dame that nonchalantly brags about fatally poisoning men, though her cuntlet seems to be her most killer weapon as demonstrated by the fact that manages to unwittingly fuck a man to death. Indeed, when Carol becomes so electrically aroused upon remembering the tragic event from her 4th birthday, she causes an insurance salesman named Barnett Gibbons (Larry Clarks) to become a victim of 'dying in the saddle' as she violently rides his cock whilst in a seemingly demonic state. Somewhat surprisingly, Carol, who is not one to cry about dead johns, acts as if she is completely traumatized as a result of committing unintentional necrophilia, but that does not stop her bro from crudely quipping, "I've got to hand it to you, dear. You're probably the first hooker in recorded history to induce seizures and cerebral hemorrhage." Clearly emotionally troubled, Carol acts as if she is on the path of orgasmic self-obliteration. Luckily, Marty now has Lois to take Carol's place.

While Marty still intends to rob Lois and her brother of their cute little beach house, he cannot seem to stop himself from falling hopelessly in love with his self-described "copulating cop." Needless to say, sister-fucker Marty also expresses guilt and confusion at his love for Lois, as if he cannot even bear the thought of emotionally devote himself to any other woman aside from his twin. Aside from incessantly fucking her, Marty also enjoys engaging in non-sexual recreational activities with Lois like shooting framed family photos on the beach. In fact, the rather senseless shooting of the photos foreshadows the end of both Marty and Lois' little families. Eventually, Marty even finds himself unable to confront Lois about selling the house because he is "afraid of spoiling that sweet wildness" of their hot and heavy romance, thus hinting that the antihero might not have the spirit of a psychotic gigolo after all. Of course, like every single woman

that seems to be too good to be true, Lois eventually becomes rather bitchy and attempts to emotionally manipulate Marty by strategically stating to him, "I only love you. I love you more than anyone else in the whole world and I want to hear the exact same thing back from you." Not surprisingly, when Marty fails to give Lois her desired response, she becomes exceedingly enraged and accuses him of engaging in incest, screaming at him in regard to Carol, "I think you're fucking her! I think you're fucking that little tramp!" Naturally, Marty finds the seemingly phony drama queen to be fairly insufferable and he soon finds himself emotionally and physically abusing Lois, though she seems to enjoy it. Although clearly somewhat masochistic, Lois, like most masochists, is clearly the one that is in control of the relationship. Of course, as an ice cold femme fatale with a nice warm pussy, Lois has ulterior motives and is ultimately playing Marty like a pawn. Indeed, unbeknownst to Marty, Lois' so-called brother is really her estranged husband and she actually wants the antihero to murder him. Meanwhile, a local cop named Detective Harris (Seymour Cassel)—a rather ruthless asshole that knows a scumbag when he sees one—brings Marty to the local police station for questioning and informs him that he is looking for Carol as he believes that she is responsible for the death of both the private detective Jake Krutz and insurance salesman Barnett Gibbons.

Somewhat ironically, most of Marty's problems are solved after Carol dies under grisly circumstances as a result of a botched morphine-fueled back-alley abortion in Mexico. Not surprisingly, Marty, who seems to be still slightly grieving over the death of his mother, does not take the quite unexpected news of Carol's death too well. Indeed, when the Mexican abortionist, who acts rather remorseful, calls him on the phone to inform him of his sister's death, Marty is initially in denial and proceeds to scream in regard to Carol's corpse, "Throw it in the ocean. Throw in a garbage dump. Throw it in an alley so the little dogs can piss on it." When Lois tries to comfort him about his sister's death, mad Marty gives her a swift punch to her pretty little face and then screams with the visceral rage of a dozen AIDS-ridden queens, "Don't EVER feel sorry for me. Ever! Ever!" In the end, Marty's seems to soon get over Carol's death and his big criminal plans also workout, as he kills Lois' 'brother' and gets her to sell the beach house. As it turns out, Lois more or less had the same exact plan as Marty in regard to cashing in on the beach house and the two ultimately revealed to have used each other. Of course, the great irony is that Marty was an unwitting pawn and that Lois used him to execute the murder so that she could liquidate her unwanted husband and sell the house. Now a completely emasculated 'kept man,' Marty is symbolically told to "move over" in a rather bitchy fashion at the very end of the film as the two get in a car and leave town for good to start a new life together. Indeed, now relegated to the passenger seat, Marty is no longer in control of his entire life. On top of everything else, Marty is met with disdain when he warmly tells Lois "I love you," but at least he no longer seems perenni-

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ally trapped in the same grotesque figurative womb as his belated twin sister and thus can quite worrying about the possibility of siring an inbred demon seed. In that sense, it is only fitting that sister Carol dropped dead while in the middle of receiving a third world grade abortion.

While *This World, Then the Fireworks*—a cinematic where, at least thematically speaking, madness is the method—is not exactly a ‘message movie’ and it has very little to offer in regard to the stereotypical Hollywood-esque realm of the ostensibly morally redeeming, it does provide male viewers with an insight or two in regard to the mystique of the so-called fairer sex. Indeed, the film’s antihero Marty learns the hard way that, no matter how angelically beautiful and seemingly passive and faithful a woman may seem, women are innately manipulative subspecies and a woman will always reveal her true ugly self and ulterior motive(s) over time when she finally achieves what she secretly wants. As innately fucked up as it is, antihero Marty’s twin sister Carol was the only person that selflessly and organically loved him for who he actually was while his platinum blonde cop girlfriend Lois—a vamp tramp with a venomous vag and crooked badge that makes Rita Hayworth’s character in Orson Welles’ *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947) seem rather sweet and sensitive by comparison—is a chillingly cold cunt that will probably have him killed one day under dubious circumstances. In fact, despite spending a good portion of the film sweaty and unclad, actress Sheryl Lee does such an excellent job portraying a cunning cunt and all around loathsomely insufferable bitch that even the most die hard of *Twin Peaks* fans might find themselves losing empathy for her famous TV character Laura Palmer after watching Oblowitz’s film (on the other hand, no heterosexual men wouldn’t want to sexually ravage this busty blonde bitch). Of course, despite being a violent killer with a propensity for completely pointless gleeful sadism, Marty—an oftentimes hysterical and irrational pen-pusher that is prettier than most women—does not exactly embody any sort of great masculine ideal. Undoubtedly, when I think of mad mensch Marty and his covertly feminine attributes, I cannot help but be reminded of the great self-loathing Viennese Hebrew Otto Weininger’s wise words, “The meaning of women is to be meaningless. She represents negation, the opposite pole from the Godhead, the other possibility of humanity. And so nothing is so despicable as a man become female, and such a person will be regarded as the supreme criminal even by himself. And so also is to be explained the deepest fear of man; the fear of the woman, which is the fear of unconsciousness, the alluring abyss of annihilation.” Indeed, Marty is hardly your typical film noir (anti)hero, but instead the sort of violently emotionally erratic and wickedly narcissistic virtual male gigolo that could easily be the son of some sociopathic femme fatale that waited too long to get an abortion. Despite his fiercely fatal flaws, Marty is certainly portrayed in a more positive light than the film’s authority figures, thus underscoring semitic auteur Oblowitz and fellow chosenite Gross’ deep-seated hatred for authority,

or, more specifically and importantly, WASP American pie authority. Needless to say, I do not think it is a stretch to assume that Oblowitz sees swarthy Marty as a sort of crypto-Jew (of course, one also cannot forget that the character's sister Carol is played by seductive Jewess Gina Gershon).

As the uniquely uneven oeuvre of suicidal (anti)auteur Tony Scott (and, to a lesser extent, his brother Ridley) demonstrates, starting a filmmaking career as a music video director can be an aesthetically deleterious thing as it can cause a filmmaker to become more obsessed with style, form, and especially editing than narrative constructive, among other things, yet Oblowitz's pre-Hollywood background certainly seems to have been to his benefit for at least his magnum opus. Indeed, *This World, Then the Fireworks* certainly echoes the dark fragmented mind of its demented dipsomaniac source writer Jim Thompson, as it is a gleefully nihilistic film that could have only been spawned from the mind of an individual (or individuals) that has surrendered their morality and self-esteem to the figurative hell of addiction. Notably, in the featurette *The Straight Dope* (2017), Oblowitz happily describes previous affinity for cocaine and how it fueled his filmmaking. In the same short doc, Oblowitz also makes the somewhat lofty claim that pulp auteur Samuel Fuller's widow Christa Lang, who was personal friends with the *The Killer Inside Me* writer, once confided to him that Thompson regarded his film as the best of the cinematic adaptations of his stories (notably, Oblowitz is not the first chosenite to adapt the pulp writer's work, as Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956), which Thompson co-penned, and Jewess Maggie Greenwald's *The Kill-Off* (1990) both predate Oblowitz's film). According to Robert Polito in his biography *Savage Art: A Biography of Jim Thompson* (1995), Mr. Fuller was so obsessed with adapting Thompson's novel *The Getaway* that he once half-jokingly stated that he would be fully willing to use the novel as the shooting script (unfortunately for Fuller, it was Sam Peckinpah that ultimately adapted the novel, though it is, rather unfortunately, much tamer than its source material). Speaking of Fuller, even his darkest and grittiest films seem like works of cerebral optimism compared to Oblowitz's semi-oneiric odyssey in white picket fence obscenity. Indeed, while Fuller was obsessed with crime and criminals, Oblowitz's film is virtual criminality in cinematic form as a feverishly fucked flick that demonstrates a certain innate and strangely organic lawless spirit as if it was directed by a serial killer that wanted to boast about all the crimes he committed but was too morally bankrupt and narcissistically unaware to see how unflattering of a portrait that he painted of himself. In short, it is no surprise that *This World, Then the Fireworks* was directed by a man that was so obsessed with intimate 'first-person serial killer narrative' structure of *The Killer Inside Me* that he waited about 15 years just to have the opportunity to adapt one of Thompson's novels.

As a thematically dark and grim film that has about as much organic pathos and pangs as an erratically shot homemovie of a pink poodle vomiting, *This*

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World, Then the Fireworks is certainly from the Norman Mailer School of aesthetically autistic neo-noir filmmaking. Indeed, aside from Mailer's swansong *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1987), the only other 'neo-noir' film that I can really compare it to in terms of sheer moral bankruptcy, vulgar dark humor, counterfeit pseudo-Lynchian posturing, spasmodic storytelling, and Southern Gothic influence (although set in California, Oblowitz's film was actually shot in North Carolina) is Dennis Hopper's clearly flawed but somewhat underrated Don Johnson vehicle *The Hot Spot* (1990). Surely, what all of these films have in common aside from being deeply flawed yet equally enthralling is that they seem to have all been helmed by genuine sickos and sociopaths, though one can certainly argue that Hopper's moral retardation and offbeat megalomania was the natural result of decades of alcohol and drug consumption and wild orgies (notably, *The Hot Spot* features a surprisingly tasteful rear-view pussyspot of a very young and nubile Jennifer Connelly in a sensitive Sapphic flashback scene). As for Oblowitz and Mailer (the latter of whom once made a rather violent attempt at murdering his second wife, Hispanic painter Adele Morales, by stabbing her with a penknife and was subsequently deemed "both homicidal and suicidal" by a judge after an involuntary stay in a mental institution), I think it is safe to say that their films are the product of unfiltered narcissistic pathology in sexually steamy yet sardonic anti-shiksa cinematic form. Despite all the endless Hebraic Hollywood films that attempt to portray whites, especially poor white lumpenproles, as being inbred hicks, incest is indubitably a perennial Judaic obsession. Indeed, from Freud (who popularized pseudo-scientific mumbo jumbo about Oedipal mommy-fucking) to Einstein (who married his maternal first cousin/paternal second cousin Elsa Löwenthal) to the eponymous family of Andrew Jarecki's dubiously sympathetic *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) to Oblowitz, incest is undoubtedly an obsession, if not practiced behavior, among many prominent Jews throughout history. Collectively speaking, Ashkenazim are among the most inbred people in the entire world and carry a number of distinct genetic and mental disorders, but I think that Oblowitz's obsession with incest probably has more to do with the (meta)political than the sexual. As Georges Bataille noted in his work *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, Hebraic frog anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that the banning of incest by society is, ". . . the primary step thanks to which, through which, and especially in which, the transition from Nature to Culture is made." Needless to say, *This World, Then the Fireworks* is an assault against culture, namely white America culture, hence the importance of hot and steamy incest. Notably, Oblowitz's Judaic ethnocentrism becomes rather obvious in interviews, including one where he remarked that when comparing working with goyish South African novelist J.M. Coetzee and Hebraic lawyer turned novelist Thane Rosenbaum, "It was the difference between dealing with an Afrikaner and a New York Jew." It is also somewhat curious that a man that would take a rather a gleeful approach to cinematically depicting

the horrific childhood trauma of 4-year-old twins witnessing their naked father blowing out another man's brains with a shotgun in *This World, Then the Fireworks* to state that his own father's personal shoah stories were responsible for leaving, "a tattoo from the Holocaust engraved on my heart." To Oblowitz's credit, his vampire flick *The Breed*, which was actually shot in real WWII era Jewish ghettos, does not exactly take a respectful approach to paying tribute to the holocaust. In a sense, Oblowitz's film is a sort of anti-Blue Velvet as anti-hero Marty Lakewood is like a younger version of archetypal Lynchian villain Frank Booth. Of course, whereas Booth epitomizes pure and innate evil, Marty is depicted by Oblowitz—a kosher culture-distorter with a clear hatred for the small suburban town of Lynch's youth—as an audacious antidote to the cultural sterility and sexual repression of 1950s American suburbia. Judging simply by his unequivocal magnum opus, I can only come to the conclusion that Oblowitz sees fraternal twin incest as being highly preferable to the typical WASP nuclear family, but I digress.

For all its decided degeneracy and seemingly anti-Europid meanderings, I think I could accept the prospect of endearing *This World, Then the Fireworks* for eternity were I to be so irrevocably forsaken as to fall out of favor with god and his Jewish bastard son and be cast into hell. While I am not a merry murder of the incestuous sort that delights in giving my twin sister bubble bathes like antihero Marty, I can certainly relate to the antihero's grotesque outlaw romanticism and lack of empathy for the greater part of humanity, not to mention his self-destructive affinity for bat-shit-crazy (and beach-friendly) blondes and fiercely frisky Mediterranean bitches. As a sort of unconventional aesthete that prefers my pulchritude to have a sort of dark yet passionate perversity, I also appreciate the film for being the virtual cinematic equivalent to a debauched dream prom date with Karla Homolka that concludes with an orgy with the more attractive of the Manson Family sluts. In that sense, *This World, Then the Fireworks*—a film that basks in the recklessly hedonistic—is an evil erotic fantasy set somewhere between heaven and hell. Undoubtedly, the spirit of the film can probably be summed up by Judaic Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey's somewhat reasonable words, "There is a beast in man that should be exercised, not exorcised."

-Ty E

AYN RAND: A SENSE OF LIFE
AYN RAND: A SENSE OF LIFE

Michael Paxton (1998)

Ayn Rand is one of the few intellectuals and philosophers of the past century that is worth noting. I say that she is one of “few” because she led an unofficial campaign to reveal the intellectual dishonesty of most so-called “intellectuals” that were attempting to (and did) propagate collectivism, cultural Marxism, altruism, and other related cancers that have infiltrated American “culture.” Ayn Rand was originally from Soviet Russia and knew all too well the inhumanity that “altruistic” collectivism caused. *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* is an illuminating documentary on the novelist, screenwriter, philosopher, intellectual, and overall humanitarian. Many New York types have ignorantly labeled Ayn Rand a white Russian due to her hatred of Bolshevism and other related Marxist garbage. This assumption is wrong as Rand (born Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum) grew up in a secular cosmopolitan Jewish family, a group that was often pro-Bolshevik in nature as they deemed the Czar and Russian empire as “anti-Semitic.” Rand, a life-long proponent of individualism, was completely disgusted by Bolshevik collectivism and made her way to “the land of the free,” the United States. *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* follows Rand’s love for foreign Western cultures and her desire to leave Russia, a place she always had contempt for. Ayn Rand first had aspirations of being a film screenwriter and made her way for Hollywood. By chance she ended up meeting Cecil B. DeMille. Impressed by Rand and her big penetrating eyes, DeMille invited Rand to play an extra in his biblical epic *King of Kings*. DeMille, an ethnic Jew, was notorious for his homoerotic undertones in his biblical films. Many have questioned whether Cecil B. DeMille was an artist or not, but his knack for cryptic themes leads me to believe that he deserves more credit than film critics have given him. On the film set, Rand would also meet her lifelong husband Frank O’Connor. The marriage between Ayn Rand and Frank O’Connor is one much more interesting than you would find in any Hollywood film. Both husband and wife had a deep respect for one another and dedicated a lifetime to inspiring one another. At one point in their marriage, Rand would cheat on O’Connor but surprisingly it did not affect their marriage. Rand’s detractors have even gone as far as comparing marriage to “the holocaust” and “slavery.” Once again, Rand was able to prove by action and life experience that her beliefs were more than just rational. Irrationality is what Rand considered to be the biggest destroyer of Western civilization and humanity in general. Her philosophy Objectivism firmly promote objective rationality and reason, things that are today shunned by mainstream intellectuals who promote slanderously irrational cultural Marxism. In Rand’s masterpiece *The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution*, she exposes the source of modern day academia idiocy. Rand warns college students, “reason and morality are the only weapons that determine the course of history. The collectivists dropped them

because they had no right to carry them up. Pick them up: you have.” If anyone wants to now why America is resembling the degeneracy that made the Roman empire dissolve, *The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* is a mandatory reading. Ayn Rand was also one of the courageous few that confronted the communist humanity traitors that were running Hollywood. In 1947, she voluntarily testified before the United States Un-American Activities Committee regarding the Bolshevik propaganda filth peddlers in Hollywood and her own childhood experience in the Soviet Union. Rand also had the courage to analytically dissect the lies in the pro-communist Hollywood film *Song of Russia* (1944). Hollywood still makes pro-communist films to this day (*Enemy at the Gates* and *Good Night, and Good Luck*) and no one seems to care after up to 100 million deaths in the Soviet Union alone. Virtually every other movie that comes out of Hollywood has some type of fantasy cultural Marxist angle. Ayn Rand is probably most famous for her novels *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. Like Rand’s philosophy of Objectivism, the two novels stress the importance of individualism and personal integrity. In an interview during Rand’s later years, she admits that she had the same philosophy towards life since the age of 2 ½. From this, one can gather that Ayn Rand has had an independent mind since the beginning. In a world where all children are indoctrinated during their most vital years to not care about themselves and tolerate degeneracy, Rand’s dreams of reason and rationality for all have been all but destroyed. Thankfully, Rand has left the world with a wealth of important books, and *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life* is an interesting synopsis of her incredible life.

-Ty E

PEEPING TOM
PEEPING TOM

Michael Powell (1960)

Maybe it is because I do not give a shit if anyone knows that Hitchcock is nowhere near one of my all-time favorite directors, but I do not have to think twice about saying that I am more a Peeping Tom (1960) kind of guy than a Psycho (1960) kind of guy. While I cannot remember the first time I saw Hitchcock's Psycho or how many times I have seen it total, I have only seen Peeping Tom twice, with my first time being about a decade ago and my second time being a day ago. While I still think Hitchcock's proto-slasher flick is a groundbreaking masterpiece in its own right, even if it did have a strong influence on the mostly aesthetically worthless slasher sub-genre, there is just something about a crazed kraut would-be-auteur murdering dumb bimbos with his tripod whilst filming their reactions as they die that is slightly more captivating than seeing a weirdo bourgeois fag like Anthony Perkins roaming around in an outmoded grandma dress. The once-infamous film that more or less ruined the career of highly respected English auteur Michael Powell (Black Narcissus, The Tales of Hoffmann) and introduced sex to celluloid for the perennially frigid British public (the work is noted for being the first mainstream British film to feature nudity), Peeping Tom is, among other things, arguably the greatest film ever made on the subject of scopophilia (which is actually mentioned in the film and described by a rather Jew-y psychiatrist character featured in the movie as, "The morbid urge to gaze"), as a work that seems just as critical of the viewer as it is self-critical on the director's part as a perniciously playful work where an aspiring filmmaker quite literally kills, including himself, for his art. The story of a terribly deranged and equally lonely young dude who treats his movie camera like it is his cock and refuses to go anywhere without it, Peeping Tom is a work with many layers as a result of both intentional and seemingly unintentional idiosyncrasies. Indeed, one of these more blatant idiosyncrasies is Austrian-German actor Karlheinz Böhm aka Carl Boehm—an actor that became famous in his native country starring in wholesome Heimat films and alongside Romy Schneider in the historical period piece Sissi (1955)—whose Germanic accent is quite clear in the film and must have added an extra subtextual creepiness to the British who had yet to (and arguably still have yet to) get over the Second World War and blamed the krauts for destroying their glorious empire (indeed, the Brits may have eventually defeated Germany in WWII, but politically speaking, it was a total loss for them). A work created in the collapsing empire that also created the dreaded Hammer Horror films and later waged a war against the entire genre in the early 1980s via the Video Nasty phenomenon, Powell's somewhat eccentric semi-self-reflexive excursion in voyeurism is indisputable proof that our more prudish brothers over the pond can indeed produce masterful horror films, yet Peeping Tom is more than just as masterful proto-slasher flick, as a

sometimes strangely touching work featuring a somewhat obscured tragic love story. Indeed, the story of a seemingly ½ autistic aspiring filmmaker who falls for a seemingly ¼ autistic aspiring novelist and vice versa, Powell's work features what is quite arguably one of the most sad and awkward romantic subplots in film history. Undoubtedly, what sets Böhm's character apart from pathetic 'human' killers like Norman Bates and Peter Lorre's character in *M* (1931) is that the all-too-human serial killer of Powell's film is oh-so close to being normal that his self-prophesized death via celluloid becomes all the more 'touching.' It should also be noted that the character's affliction is a direct result of having a camera shoved in his face during his entire childhood. A sort of masterful admittance of guilt on Powell's part as a filmmaker who had thrived for many decades on stealing the souls of other people via celluloid, *Peeping Tom* is arguably the most charming condemnation of cinema ever made for which the filmmaker himself would ultimately be wrongly condemned.

Beginning with a scene from the perspective of a camera viewfinder of a faceless man with blue-eyes secretly filming and ultimately killing a trashy blonde prostitute who only charges two quid for her sensual services, *Peeping Tom* immediately forces the viewer to become conscious of the fact that they are getting a cheap thrill from seeing a seedy snuff flick. The killer cameraman in question is a seemingly benign blond beast by the name of Mark Lewis (Karlheinz Böhm) who, on top of being a camera man's assistant who moonlights as a quasi-pornographer who takes salacious softcore pin-up snapshots for a shop owner who secretly sells the images to informed patrons as part of an underground black market business he has going, is the forsaken progeny of a brilliant yet seeming psychopathic scientist named Professor A.N. Lewis (quite fittingly played by director Michael Powell himself) who used his sole son as a guinea pig for various psychological experiments on the reaction of the nervous system to fear. Indeed, during his childhood, Mark had cameras in his face during his most humiliating and horrifying moments, including when he paid respects to his prematurely deceased mother's corpse, as his mad scientist father would intentionally strike fear and dread in his son to further his 'scientific research.' Naturally, Mark's rather unconventional childhood completely screwed him up and turned him into the deranged dude he is today, as a young and handsome man who is approached by various beautiful women yet seems to be only able to achieve orgasm by watching the fear in a woman's eyes as she dies in front of his movie camera. Indeed, Mark has a blade (or what he calls a "spike") at the end of the tripod of his camera and he drives it into his victim's body in an erotic way whilst filming their death. On top of that, Mark has a distorted mirror attached to the end of his camera so that his victim's become witnesses to their own deaths, thus making their reaction all the more horrified (Scottish auteur Donald Cammell would later incorporate this theme into his somewhat artsy fartsy 1987 serial killer flick *White of the Eye*). Of course, complications

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come into Mark's life when he meets a young and somewhat dorky female writer named Helen Stephens (Anna Massey), who seems rather attracted to the pathetic killer's glaring peculiarities. Indeed, Mark is both an occupant and the landlord of a home he inherited from his scientist father and Helen and her blind mother are his new tenants. When Mark informs Helen that he is her landlord, she is rather shocked, remarking you, "walk around as if you haven't paid the rent." Of course, little does Helen realize that, every night, Mark is editing and screening snuff films while she is asleep in the room below his.

When Mark makes the amateur mistake of killing a stand-in, Vivian (Moirá Shearer), on the film he is working as a camera assistant on, he finds police officers, including a certain Chief Inspector Gregg (Jack Watson), hanging around the movie set. Of course, being a deranged dude and all, Mark is more intrigued than petrified by the presence of the police, as it gives him the rare opportunity to document their criminal investigation (in fact, Mark also goes back to the site where he killed the prostitute, even capturing the moment when the hooker's corpse was put in the back of a hearse). Meanwhile, Mark begins to develop an almost normal romantic relationship with Helen, though he is rather ill-equipped when it comes to properly courting a young lady, but he at least attempts to make a serious effort to make her happy. Indeed, while Mark refuses to go anywhere without his camera (his entire life is like an unending documentary as shot from his singular cockeyed perspective) as if it is his cock, Helen actually convinces him to leave it behind during their first date and though he suffers from minor 'camera withdrawal,' by the end of the night, he seems more interested in his quasi-lover than his camera. Although she has no idea what he means, Mark tells Helen that he will never film her, lest he gets overexcited by her fear and kills her as well. Ironically, it is Helen's blind mother Mrs. Stephens (Maxine Audley) who becomes almost instantaneously aware that there is something not quite right about Mark and warns him to stay away from her daughter and that he needs to get some serious help. Of course, Mark becomes quite excited upon learning that Helen is about to have her first novel, which is about a 'magic camera,' published, as she offers him the opportunity to shoot photographs for the book, which he gladly agrees to do for free.

When a German Jewish psychoanalysis aka "sneezer geezer" named Dr. Rosan (played by real-life Austrian Jew Martin Miller, who became famous for his on-stage parodies of Adolf Hitler) is brought on the set by the police to determine if there are any glaring peculiarities among the crew members, Mark foolishly does not think twice about approaching the soul doctor to ask him about his affliction, thus learning that he suffers from a bad case of scopophilia which, according to the discernibly dubious Herr Döktor, can be easily uprooted over time via regular psychoanalysis sessions. Of course, Mark's conversation with Dr. Rosan alarms Inspector Gregg, who has his men follow the assistant cameraman around town. Of course, that does not stop Mark from killing a pin-up model

named Milly (English glamour model Pamela Green)—a decidedly ditzzy super slut who explains earlier on in the film that she has bruises on her face because, “I went out with my boyfriend. Getting married next month. Trouble was my fiancé saw us”—while police officers are lurking around the building. Needless to say, when Helen wanders into Mark’s room when he is not there and becomes curious enough to run his projector to see what kind of films he makes, she is in for quite the surprise. Of course, Mark walks in on her while she is watching the murder footage and when Helen asks regarding the footage, “it’s just a film. Isn’t it?” the snuff auteur, who is honest to a fault like so many other basketcases, stoically states, “No. I killed them.” In his own weird way, Mark proclaims his love to Helen by confessing regarding the murders, “I made them watch their own deaths. I made them see their own terror as the spike went in. And if death has a face, they saw that too. But not you. I promised I’d never photograph you.” After the police discover Milly’s corpse, they naturally realize Mark is the killer and head to his home. Realizing there is no turning back, Mark decides to direct the ultimate climax to his life’s film by filming his own death, stating to Helen right before he drives his tripod blade into his throat, “Helen, I’m afraid. And I’m glad I’m afraid.” Of course, one must respect a man who is willing to die for his art.

In a clip featured in the documentary *A Very British Psycho* (1997), director Michael Powell states regarding his marvelously macabre yet unnervingly touching masterpiece *Peeping Tom*, “The film was full of compassion...for a diabolical murderer...but then for me, he was not a diabolical murderer, he was a cameraman.” Indeed, while Powell implicates both the viewer and the filmmaker (i.e. himself) with his film, his remark from *A Very British Psycho* makes it quite clear that he did not have a guilty conscience about it at all. Of course, as demonstrated by the fact that the film was unanimously trashed by critics upon its release and ultimately destroyed Powell’s career, *Peeping Tom* unquestionably induced a deep sense of guilt in filmgoers upon its release as it made them not only realize that they had an unhealthy addiction to voyeurism, but also that they got a sadistic kick from filmic murder and mayhem. It should be noted that the film was penned by British Jewish cryptographer turned screenwriter Leo Marks, who became interested in cryptography after his father introduced him to Edgar Allan Poe’s story *The Gold-Bug* (1843) as a child, used ‘coded poems’ while working for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the Second World War while waging an occult war against Uncle Adolf, and later would provide the voice of Satan in Martin Scorsese’s *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988). Anyway, what many film critics seem to ignore regarding *Peeping Tom* is Marks’ depiction of psychoanalysis as a sort of esoteric devil’s art that had the capacity to transform a perfectly normal little boy into a deranged killer. Ironically, the film also depicts psychoanalysis as the only true potential cure for Mark’s affliction. Going back to Scorsese, the great Guido American filmmaker would

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once insightfully remark regarding Powell's meta-slasher flick, "I have always felt that PEEPING TOM and 8½ say everything that can be said about film-making, about the process of dealing with film, the objectivity and subjectivity of it and the confusion between the two. 8½ captures the glamour and enjoyment of film-making, while PEEPING TOM shows the aggression of it, how the camera violates... From studying them you can discover everything about people who make films, or at least people who express themselves through films." To his credit, Powell would use the failure of Peeping Tom to further embrace his lifelong obsession with scopophilia, as he would later direct a rather young, voluptuous, and ultimately underage Helen Mirren in the Australian film *Age of Consent* (1969) where an old artist played by James Mason eventually finds the inspiration to paint once again after coming into contact with a busty unclad teenage girl. As for Karlheinz Böhm, he would demonstrate that he was just as good at playing unsympathetic, if not rather charismatic, deranged bourgeois dudes in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's underrated darkly comedic Sirkian thriller *Martha* (1974). A wonderfully wicked cinematic work where a crazed aspiring filmmaker (he even has his own director's chair) catches crusty cunt street rabble in the crosshairs of his camera and subsequently penetrates them with his tripod in what can only be described as the ultimate cinematic climax, Peeping Tom is ultimately a reminder that it feels good to wallow in fear, murder, and death, so long as, to quote Wes Craven's singularly classless and tasteless 1972 Bergman (non)remake *The Last House on the Left*, you remind yourself that, "It's only a movie."

-Ty E

THE FOURTH MAN

Michael Ray Rhodes (1985)

The Fourth Man is a very odd film from Paul Verhoeven. It is by far his darkest and most artistic. The Fourth Man would also be Verhoeven's last Dutch film (until the recent Black Book). After viewing all of Verhoeven's earlier films, it is easy to see his progression as a director. Although I am a huge fan of RoboCop I wonder where his directing career would have went if he had stayed in his own country. In the beginning of the film (after a montage of a spider taking the life of a fly on a crucifix), we meet the film's protagonist who forgets to wear his pants. He is a gay alcoholic writer with a distaste for most things. For some reason he ends up sleeping with a Dutch Femme Fatale and freeloads off of her for a while. In one odd scene, the writer covers his lover's breasts and pretends she's a little boy. The writer eventually becomes obsessed with the woman's German boyfriend (in which he has only seen pictures of). This is truly a bizarre love triangle. I have never thought of Paul Verhoeven as someone that had an interest in surrealism. Inspired by the film's Catholic themes, the writer often hallucinates death and other scenes of misery. The Fourth Man even features a scene in which he dreams his penis gets cut off with scissors. These constant visions add a whole other element to the film (and to the writer's religious schizophrenia). The Fourth Man also succeeds in capturing the loneliness and depressive isolation of man. The writer doesn't seem like he can do anything. Constantly hallucinating, committing acts of sin, and conspiring. At the very least he has fallen out of the loop of life. Paul Verhoeven always gives off the vibe of a very jolly fellow. I suspect he may be acting. Verhoeven has stated the violence in the film was inspired by the German and American occupation of Holland during World War 2. I doubt he had a happy childhood. I hate the genre and genre title "psychological thriller." It is a title that was invented to make certain Hollywood films sound legit in regards to intellectual merit. The Fourth Man is actually deserving of the title "psychological thriller." The film offers the viewer something to think about at the end. It isn't wrapped up in a neat little package at the end like Joel Schumacher's The Number 23 or plagiarist M. Night Shyamalan's The Sixth Sense. Basic Instinct is a very LOOSE remake of The Fourth Man. It is amazing how a director can take a European art film and turn it into an American sleaze (Basic Instinct is still a decent flick). Americans couldn't handle the gay element of The Fourth Man so Basic Instinct had to replace it with lipstick lesbians. Michael Douglas shouldn't be filmed in any sexual situation.

-Ty E

WITCHFINDER GENERAL
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Michael Reeves (1968)

If the premature death of Teutonic auteur F.W. Murnau (*Nosferatu*, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*) was the greatest tragedy of the late-silent/early-sound era, the greatest tragedy of post-WWII British horror cinema was certainly the patently pointless death of young English auteur Michael Reeves at the age of 25 from an accidental alcohol and barbiturate overdose in early 1969. Indeed, before dying in a less the glamorous but somewhat strangely fitting fashion, Reeves changed the face of British and, in turn, European horror cinema with his third feature and sole masterpiece *Witchfinder General* (1968) aka *The Conqueror Worm*, which I recently had the beautifully bittersweet pleasure of re-watching. While Reeves pretty much exclusively worked in the horror genre (though he did work as an assistant director on the Anglo-Yugoslav adventure film *The Long Ships* (1964) directed by master cinematographer turned hack filmmaker Jack Cardiff), all of his three features, which also include the goofily sardonic vampire flick *The She-Beast* (1966) aka *La Sorella di Satana* aka *Revenge of the Blood Beast* and psychedelic (anti)youth flick *The Sorcerers* (1967), manage to transcend the genre and feature rather intricate themes of the rather cynical and oftentimes even misanthropic sort. In short, it is no surprise that these films were directed by a self-destructive nihilist of sorts that dropped dead for rather stupid reasons before he could evolve into a world-class cinematic artist. After all, there are not many films like *The Sorcerers* where an elderly hag lives quite literally vicariously through a young man and uses his handsome body as a means to lure in and kill beautiful debutantes that she clearly has much resentment towards due to her rather withered appearance. Additionally, in a Reeves film, even minor characters stick out in terms of their unintentionally humorous repulsiveness as demonstrated by a character that is simply credited as "The Jewish Baker" in *The Sorcerers* who is rather aggressive when it comes to peddling pickles and lox and who has no qualms about throwing out any customer that dares not to buy something from his rather quaint kosher establishment. Like any great auteur (and quite unlike many horror filmmakers), Reeves clearly abhorred filler and had an obsessive eye when it came to even the most seemingly mundane of details. Undoubtedly, what makes *Witchfinder General* superior to Reeves' previous feature is its sheer pastoral pulchritude and idyllic rural rap-turous, which is in stark contrast to its savagely brutal S&M-flavored imagery and misanthropic and pessimistic themes. In fact, the film's cinematography impressed Hollywood maverick Sam Peckinpah so much that he hired its Dutch cinematographer John Coquillon to shoot his UK feature *Straw Dogs* (1971) and later *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1973), *Cross of Iron* (1977), and *The Osterman Weekend* (1983). Speaking of Peckinpah, Reeves' film has much in common with the western genre in terms of plot and imagery, albeit it is set

in 17th-century East Anglia, England instead of the American frontier. Additionally, not unlike Peckinpah, Reeves clearly had a low opinion of humanity as demonstrated by his cinematic magnum opus, which depicts the sheer and utter (in)human depravity that ensues when a good young man acquires a pathological thirst for revenge and more or less destroys his enemies and himself in the process.

Starring Vincent Price as the eponymous villain in a performance that is quite a bit meaner and leaner than his typical eccentrically effete and cultivated camp queen routine, *Witchfinder General* is indubitably a great example of an auteur abusing his actor(s) to get at perfect performance out of them. Indeed, in the hope that Price would give a much colder and crueler performance than usual and rather irked that his original choice for the role, Donald Pleasence, was replaced (notably, Reeves and his co-writer Tom Baker specially tailored the screenplay for him), Reeves treated the iconic horror star, who was old enough to be his grandfather, rather horribly during the production. In fact, when Price was injured as a result of falling off of his horse during the first day of shooting, Reeves refused to even see him because he wanted the actor to despise him, so naturally the two had a somewhat troubled relationship from the very start of the production of the film. Of course, in the end, the film was a great success and Price even later wrote Reeves a kind letter, which the filmmaker apparently proudly kept in his wallet, with the heartwarming words, "I was physically and mentally indisposed at that particular moment in my life (public and private). I do think you have made a very fine picture." Notably, Price was later quoted in the June 1992 issue of *Classic Images* that working with Reeves was, "a very sad experience . . . He was very unstable . . . difficult but brilliant." By virtually all accounts, Reeves was a troubled young man with a dark mind that also happened to love cinema and all of these qualities are apparent in his handful of films. Demonstrating a virtual Asperger-like obsession with cinema since he was a young child, wayward wunderkind Reeves ultimately got his first start in filmmaking by randomly showing up on the doorstep of his cinematic hero Don Siegel (*Riot in Cell Block 11*, *The Killers*), who generously offered him a job as his assistant and the rest his history. If someone were to ask me the central theme of *Witchfinder General*, I would probably refer to the overly quoted aphorism from Friedrich Nietzsche's classic text *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you." Indeed, in the film, a seemingly morally pristine, sincerely altruistic, heroic, loving and both internally and externally beautiful mensch degenerates into a bloodthirsty beast that derives great pangs of pleasure in chopping up a bitchy queen with an axe. Likewise, a voluptuous beauty succumbs to total madness, but not before betraying her beloved fiancé by whoring herself out to a dirty old man in the hope that said dirty old man will spare the life of her beloved uncle. As

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Reeves once confessed in a *Penthouse* interview, “I’m interested in the depths of human degradation. Just how far you and I can sink.” In short, in Reeves’s rather ruthless little flick, there is no true happy ending, even though the bad guys technically get their just deserts. As his second feature *The Sorcerers*—a film that provides a certain cathartic murderous mayhem to the insipid hedonism of *Swinging London*—demonstrates in a fashion that almost borders on ‘acid fascism,’ Reeves was no mindless leftist automaton. Indeed, in its delightfully deranged deconstruction of the degenerate limey hippie scum pseudo-culture, Reeves’ film is a sort of horror-sci-fi equivalent to Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow-Up* (1966), albeit all the more effortlessly nihilistic. Undoubtedly, Reeves certainly did not suffer from the same metapolitical affliction as many counterculture cucks of his era as demonstrated by the following remark from *Witchfinder General* co-writer Tom Baker, “One of the perennial arguments Mike and I had was about altruism vs. selfishness. Mike said, ‘All human behavior is self-interested.’ And I, as a general sort of liberal student-type, would say, ‘No, no, no, people are more than that, people can do things altruistically. People can help each other.’ But Mike was insistent—and I think he may be right—that all behavior was initially motivated by self-interest. If you believe that, perhaps you do get a bit down.” Although just speculation, I suspect that Reeves would agree with American horror maestro H.P. Lovecraft’s words, “Democracy is just a false idol — a mere catchword and illusion of inferior classes, visionaries and dying civilizations.” While *Witchfinder General* is certainly anti-authority to an extent, it feels more like the expression of a misanthropic right-wing iconoclast than some deluded college-lobotomized do-gooder type that believes that communism or anarchism will somehow lead to a magical utopia. Indeed, the film was certainly not directed by someone that is foolish, politically retarded, or socially naive enough to even dream that humans are capable of any sort of utopia. In fact, if one learns anything from a surprisingly fresh period piece like Reeves’ Vincent Price vehicle, it is that people will always be the same and that certain people in positions of power will always exploit said power to the most underhandedly sinister degree.

Although highly fictionalized to the point of being almost unbelievable as the average Spielberg-helmed historical drama, *Witchfinder General*—a film that might be best described as an exceedingly English western-cum-folk-horror-cum-romance that would make for a great tourist advert for East Anglia if it did not feature so much human savagery and an overall uniquely unflattering depiction of English history—is actually based on the mass murdering escapades of infamous yet somewhat enigmatic 17th-century English lawyer-cum-witch-hunter Matthew Hopkins (c. 1620 – 12 August 1647) and his ‘witch pricker’ associate John Stearne (c. 1610–1670). Although very little is known about the real Hopkins, the book *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, & Pagans* (1980) Jeffrey Burton Russell notes in regard to the historical record,

“The height of the witch-craze in England occurred in the 1640s, when the Civil War produced unusual anxieties and insecurities, and particularly in Essex, a county where war tensions and a strong previous tradition of witchcraft came together. Into this opportune situation stepped an unsuccessful lawyer named Matthew Hopkins, who was to cause more people to be hanged in two years than had been hanged in the previous century. Hopkins, a Puritan, was able to play on the war anxieties of the Puritan population of Essex and convince them that a legion of witches was active among them. At a distance it is difficult to judge Hopkins’ motivation. A man who had failed, he seems to have welcomed a chance for fame and success no matter how achieved; he may have relished the power; and he obtained a good deal of money for his efforts. He may even have believed in what he was doing: he relied heavily throughout his career on King James’ DAEMONOLOGIE. Whatever Hopkins’ own purpose, his ministrations were well received. Making a name for himself first in 1644-5 in Chelmsford, a target for witch accusations since 1566, he then moved throughout southeastern England, appointing searchers to help him in his work. Hopkins’ methods were thorough and merciless. He stripped suspects to search for witches’ marks, and used starvation, sleep deprivation, swimming, and other tests and torments. The confessions he elicited show his acceptance of the continental tradition: the witches were members of a sect of worshiping the Devil; they met at night; held initiations; had sexual relations with the devil; and sacrificed to him. Nor did Hopkins neglect English tradition: his witches kept familiars in the shape of dogs, cats, mice, moles, squirrels, and with names such as Prick-ears, Flo, and Bess. Hopkins and his assistant swore in court that they had seen such imps themselves. The witches allegedly performed a variety of maleficia: an elderly pastor of Brandeston, John Lowes, was condemned for sinking a ship from Ipswich by magic. Russell Hope Robbins observes that the judges were so credulous under the influence of Hopkins’ persuasion that they made no effort even to ‘check whether any ship had foundered that day.’ But Hopkins had gone too far too fast. By 1646 considerable opposition to him was already surfacing; later that year he was forced to retire, and the following year he died in some disgrace. In the short space of two years he had earned for himself the informal title of witchfinder-general of England and the contempt of future generations.” While the Hopkins depicted in Reeves’ film is just as absurdly murderous as the real-life one recounted by Russell, there is no doubt that the fictional cinematic version is a dreadfully suave sociopathic opportunistic that, like a *Der Stürmer*-esque caricature of a money-grubbing Israelite, has an unflinching willingness to commit the most ungodly acts for sheer monetary and carnal gain, though he conveniently gets his insipidly stupid and savagely sadistic underling Stearne, who takes great pleasure out of torturing anything with a heartbeat, to do most of his dirty work. Indeed, the Hopkins portrayed by Price is certainly no lovable uncle type.

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Considering that the film was a coproduction between Judaic Brit Tony Tenser's Tigon British Film Productions and fellow schlock-peddling chosenite Samuel Z. Arkoff's American International Pictures (AIP), there is no doubt that *Witchfinder General* was intended as tasteless exploitation trash that would have the capacity to get a morbid psychopathic bitch like Myra Hindley panty's wet. Not unlike the 1966 novel of the same name by Ronald Bassett that it is somewhat loosely adapted from, the film also contains a heavily fictionalized depiction of the daftly deeds of witch-hunter Matthew Hopkins, including a nearly 60-year-old Vincent Price portraying a man that was only about 25-years-old when the real events took place. Still, despite the film's rather liberal approach to the historical facts and various depictions of relatively graphic sadistic torture and ultra-violence, I would not be so insufferably pretentious or anally retentive as to describe the film as exploitation as it is, in many ways, quite the opposite as a cinematic work that offers the viewer next to nil cheap sensual thrills, let alone any notable degree of cheap popcorn entertainment or philistine-gear'd catharsis. Indeed, despite featuring brutal torture scenes that might inspire deep thoughts of murderous misanthropy in certain viewers, the greatest and most ravishing scenes pay tribute to the organic splendor of Mother Nature and oftentimes have a Bergman-esque quality about them that really underscore auteur Reeves' keen cinematic sense and unrivaled talent for meticulously polishing a pseudo-Poe-esque genre turd. Of course, one should not expect anything less from a serious auteur that was not really a fan of horror and instead was motivated to work within the genre simply because he wanted to prove that he could make a great film on a laughable sub-Corman-esque budget. In fact, Reeves funded his first 'official' feature *The She-Beast* with his own money (notably, he was the rebellious fatherless scion of a prestigious paint-manufacturing family), though he also believed that he would be nothing more than a mere dilettante if he were to continue to fund his own films.

As far as biopics in a horror genre form are concerned, I can think of few that would be more sickly intriguing than one based off of sadistic pervert and SS-Oberführer Oskar Dirlewanger, who is one of the few Third Reich era German military officers that actually lives up to the exaggerated cartoon evil depicted in a stereotypical Hebraic Hollywood movie. While I sincerely doubt that the world will ever see a Dirlewanger biopic, Vincent Price's sophisticatedly sadistic and elegantly evil character in *Witchfinder General* is surely the next best thing. Aside from the superficial physical resemblance, Price's Matthew Hopkins is, not unlike Dirlewanger, a well-educated dirty old pervert that recklessly employs sadistic killers and exploits his political power and the chaos of war as a means to sexually and materially profit from the suffering of others. In short, Price is not the relatively charismatic and strangely lovable yet unintentionally goofy ghoul that he is best remembered from in classic films like André De Toth's *House of Wax* (1953) and William Castle's *House on Haunted Hill*

(1959) but instead a mean-spirited misanthrope, obscene opportunist, and cold crypto-miser that cynically uses the anarchy of the English Civil War (1642–1651) as a murderous means to profit from the social and spiritual fears of the poor country peasants that absurdly admire him due to their misguided belief that he will somehow erase all of the evil in the world with his homicidal brand of pseudo-Christian hocus pocus. A coldly calculating yet ultimately quite craven charlatan that is plagued with a pernicious degree of pomposity and arrogance that ultimately leads to his much deserved ultra-violent demise via battle axe, Hopkins is in many ways the ultimate human monster and a fiercely fucked figure that makes slasher icons like Michael Myers, Jason Voorhees, and Freddy Krueger seem like lovable cartoon characters by comparison. Personally, I see Hopkins as symbolically embodying perennial political evil, as he is merely the Leon Trotsky or George Soros of his age, albeit executing his sinister aims in a more primitive and thus overtly odious fashion. Indeed, if there was ever a filmic villain that could be compared to both Nazi pedo-butcher Dirlewanger and Judeo-Bolshevik Trotsky, it is indubitably Price's Herr Hopkins.

While Hopkins represents man at his most suavely sinister as a callously corrupt cynic that prides himself on exploiting the weak and disenfranchised, Witchfinder General protagonist Richard Marshall (Reeves' childhood friend and man muse Ian Ogilvy, who starred in all three of his friend's features)—a Roundhead soldier that supports the Parliament of England and is at war with Charles I of England and his supporters (the Cavaliers aka Royalists)—represents young naïve good, unspoiled hope, and great purity of spirit. Unfortunately for the wiser and more wicked Hopkins, Marshall ultimately manages to make up for his lack of wisdom and viciousness through sheer energy and tenacity after discovering an unquenchable thirst for revenge. After receiving a military promotion in rank upon saving his much respected military commander Captain Gordon (Michael Beint) by killing an enemy sniper and subsequently becoming engaged to his beloved girlfriend Sara (Hilary Dwyer) after being granted permission from her village priest uncle John Lowes (Rupert Davies), Marshall—a rather dashing handsome dude that is quite proud to express his love and affection for his beloved—seems to be on top of the world, but that all changes when witch-hunter Hopkins and his proudly sadistic underling John Stearne (Robert Russell) turn his life into a virtual living hell. Indeed, upon being treated as a scapegoat a result of being a Catholic priest in a protestant village, Sara's uncle John soon finds himself the victim of a literal witch-hunt and Hopkins is called into Brandeston, Suffolk to 'prove' that the innocent old man is a dedicated disciple of the devil. Stabbed in the back with a large needle to prove that he bears the so-called "Devil's Mark" and forced to endure various other forms of nonsensical torture by Hopkins' right-hand man Stearne, Lowes is almost certainly destined to receive a brutal demise, so his niece Sara intervenes and decides to make the ultimate sensual sacrifice. Unfortunately, all of this

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might have been prevented had Marshall had another day or two of leave from the army and been around to stop Hopkins before he made Lowes his spiritual prisoner, but such is the dark absurdity of fate in the rather ruthless Reevesian realm.

Despite her love and devotion for her fiancé, Sara quite selflessly, though somewhat dubiously, decides to offer her nice and nubile carnal goods to Hopkins under the condition that he spare her uncle John from a grisly death. Indeed, Hopkins—a phlegmatic player with the spirit of a sadistic pimp and a special predilection for fresh and adequately fleshy pieces of golden-haired ass—makes it quite clear to Sara what he wants from her when he states in regard to the precarious situation of her uncle when they first meet, “In private talk, we may shed some light on his innocence. Yes, away from the distraction of the crowd. Perhaps in the quiet of your room tonight, you might be able to help me prove him guiltless.” Despite Sara sexually betraying her beloved Marshall, her inordinately altruistic efforts ultimately prove to be in vain after Hopkins changes his mind as a result of Stearne brutally raping her in a field during a nice sunny day. Too dignified of a gentleman to accept sloppy seconds from his buffoonish knuckle-dragging underling, Hopkins—a calmly malevolent mensch that seems to pride himself on his refined sartorial fastidiousness—seems to become disgusted with Sara after the savage sexual pillaging and quite callously reneges on his despicable deal, thereupon leading to the further debasement of the heroine and the public hanging of her uncle. Needless to say, when Marshall discovers what happens, he somewhat rightly decides that a virtual scorched-earth policy is apt when it comes to taking revenge against his uniquely ungodly enemies. Indeed, after symbolically ‘marrying’ Sara in the virtual ruins of her uncle’s home and then having her travel to the nearby village of Lavenham for sanctuary, Marshall immediately begins plotting his revenge. In fact, Marshall becomes so completely and utterly consumed with bloodthirsty vengeance that he rather riskily and irresponsibly decides to postpone an extremely important special military mission from his boss Oliver Cromwell (Patrick Wymark) to kidnap the King because he is naturally more keen on hunting down Hopkins and Stearne with the help of some of his soldier comrades. In fact, Marshall even dares to risk execution as punishment for desertion, which his boss previously reprimanded him for after he absconded from his military upon hearing about Hopkins’ reign of terror in Brandeston. Indeed, just before he goes on his revenge campaign, the Captain rebukes Marshall for deserting his post and then warns him, “However, in this case, there are two factors which will stay me from subjecting you to a full court-martial. One, we are grouped here at Naseby in preparation for a major assault on the Royalist armies. We need every man we can get. And you’re a pretty good soldier, most of the time. Secondly, I would sleep ill if I had to send to the gallows a man who saved my life. But, Cornet, remember this. If you should leave your command again, I will have no alternative

but to throw the whole weight of military law against you.” Although Marshall’s soldier buddies manage to find Hopkins and Stearne while they are traveling in the countryside, the two villains manage to getaway and they even kill some of the protagonist’s buddies in the process. In what ultimately proves to be another absurdly hapless scenario, Hopkins ends up in the same village of Lavenham by happenstance as Sara. While Marshall finally manages to reach the village and reunite with Sara, their happy reunion is short-lived as Hopkins has the two arrested under trumped up witchcraft charges and then sent to a torture dungeon. Needless to say, Hopkins takes great delight in having Stearne savagely torture Sara by jabbing large needles in her back while a bound and tied Marshall helplessly watches with a mixed expression of gruesome terror and seething murderous rage. While Marshall eventually manages to kill Hopkins and stomp out one of Stearne’s eyes, he morally degenerates into a bloodlusting killer in the process, thus leading to his beloved Sara literally losing her mind in the process as she watches the man she loves derive savagely sadistic glee as he hacks away at the alpha-witch-hunter with a nice big battle axe in what is ultimately a more bitter than sweet ending. Indeed, after escaping while bound to a wall in the deep dark depths of the torture chamber, Marshall knocks Stearne on his ass and drives his foot into his eye and then grabs an axe and immediately begins chopping up Hopkins with a certain non compos mentis gusto. When Marshall’s friend Robert walks in on him taking great delight in continuing to swing his axe at the heavily mutilated body of a barely living Hopkins, he is so sickened by the grisly sight that he swiftly shoots the witch-hunter to put him out of his misery. Needless to say, Marshall takes offense to his friend’s mercy killing and proceeds to repeatedly violently scream at Robert, “You took him away from me.” Rather unfortunately but not surprisingly, Marshall degenerated into the sort of “monster” that Nietzsche warned of, though it is hard to blame him.

In its depiction of corrupt Christian authorities using their powers for pernicious, if not downright satanic, means to falsely accuse people of being witches and heretics and then having them tortured and murdered in the most malevolent of fashions, *Witchfinder General*—surely a singular cinematic work when it was first released—indubitably influenced a number of films from high-camp masterpieces like Ken Russell’s *The Devils* (1971) to exploitative ‘folk horror’ like Piers Haggard’s *The Blood on Satan’s Claw* (1970) to German-produced sleaze like *Mark of the Devil* (1970) aka *Hexen bis aufs Blut gequält* directed by Michael Armstrong to similarly crypto-Teutonic Jesús Franco trash like *The Bloody Judge* (1970) starring Christopher Lee to Ulli Lommel’s feminist Salem Witch Trials oriented *The Devonville Terror* (1983), among various other less notable examples. Of course, aside from possibly *The Devils* (incidentally, Russell apparently hated Reeves’ film), Reeves’ film is unquestionably the most thematically rich, aesthetically rapturous, and organically (as opposed to exploitatively) brutal of these films, especially as far as the somewhat mercurial villain

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is concerned. While England is not exactly plagued with murderously greedy witch-hunters nowadays, it certainly has a wealth of corrupt politicians and public servants that are, in their own sort of post-religious neoliberal way, witch-hunters that have no qualms about severely punishing any ostensible heretic that dares not to toe the party line. Indeed, in jolly olde England, playing a relatively harmless prank like leaving a bacon sandwich outside at mosque can be a virtual death sentence, or so poor Kevin Crehan learned after mysteriously dying in prison while halfway through a one-year sentence for committing the ungodly crime of donating free breaded pork products to impoverished Muslims. In short, the evil heretics nowadays are the so-called ‘racists’ and ‘bigots’ that succumb to the insanely inhuman idea that the UK should not degenerate into a caliphate and that England should stay English (of course, the recent racially retarded casting of middle-aged Jewish negress Sophie Okonedo as Queen Margaret of Anjou in the BBC TV series *The Hollow Crown* by hack director Dominic Cooke reveals that even besmirching medieval British history via blatant blackwashing of a historic Aryan beauty is a suitable means to promote the globalist multicultural agenda). In fact, the English are so desperately afraid of being labeled modern-day heretics that a number of police officers and politicians intentionally looked the other way during the Rotherham child sexual slavery scandal—the “biggest child protection scandal in UK history” and an unbelievably sick and twisted tragedy that involved the sexual enslavement of at least 1,400 white British children, most whom were between 11 and 15 years old, between 1997 and 2013—lest they suffer the horrific fate of being called “racists” for bringing these Paki pimps and their similarly inbred underlings to justice. Of course, in modern England, mocking the native religion of Christianity can gain one social capital in certain contexts but insulting the prophet Mohammad and his black and brown disciplines can lead to all sorts of punishment in both legal bureaucratic and less than legal terroristic fashions. Luckily for modern-day Brits, they get to contend with the radically random dangers of being plowed down by an Allah-approved ‘truck of peace’ or being blown up with a ‘bomb of peace’ instead of deal with dastardly dudes of their own faith and race from a number of centuries ago like Mr. Matthew Hopkins.

I think that there is a certain irony in that the protagonist of *Witchfinder General* is fighting for Oliver Cromwell, who is (in)famous for allowing the resettlement of the Jews in England during the mid-1650s after having been banned for over 300 years since 1290 when King Edward I of England had issued an edict expelling all Israelites from the Kingdom of England. While that was certainly a very longtime ago, its repercussions are felt very clearly today; whether it be the dubious legacy of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, parasitic colonial tentacles of the Rothschild banking dynasty, Sassoon Family and the Opium Wars, the Balfour Declaration, fratricidal philo-semitism of Winston Churchill, degenerate art of pervert Lucian Freud, or anti-English Zio-globalism of the Miliband

brothers and Luciana Berger, among countless other similarly unflattering examples. Needless to say, it is no surprise that a violent anti-Christian film like Reeves would be produced by a Hebraic chap like Tony Tenser who, on top of being one of the UK's most important and revolutionary celluloid smut-peddlers, was responsible for producing early films directed by fellow Judaic Roman Polanski like *Repulsion* (1965) and *Cul-de-Sac* (1966). While torturing and lynching supposed witches is no longer vogue among English politicians and public servants, the UK government is still doing its fair share of witch-hunting against pernicious politically incorrect heretics, as one merely needs to make naughty comments about a member of G-d's chosen tribe online and they can expect a police visit and possibly even jail time as many of Luciana Berger's critics have discovered. Undoubtedly, it is quite fitting that Vincent Price's Matthews Hopkins has a certain Svengali-esque quality in terms of both character and appearance. As someone that has managed to get a number of young men imprisoned for years for simply hurting her feelings over the internet, Berger is undoubtedly one of the many Matthews Hopkins that persecute poor peasants in England today. While I am not exactly religious, I would not be surprised if the UK was now ruled over by the devil himself, as it is spiritually sick nation where alien anti-Christian religions are protected to the fullest extent of the law and Jesus has been virtually regulated to a rancid sewer next to a Rotherham graveyard.

As a promising young European auteur that was only able to direct a handful of memorable films before dying before he was 30, Michael Reeves is certainly the Jean Vigo of horror cinema. Aside from dying tragically prematurely and having a relatively small oeuvre, Reeves is also comparable to Vigo in the sense that he was a somewhat anarchistic individual who suffered the misfortune of losing his father at a very young age, as if both men were victims of some intergenerational family curse. In that sense, it is only fitting that the male protagonist played by Reeves' buddy Ian Ogilvy dies horrendously while under the spell of two old farts after terrorizing Swinging London in *The Sorcerers*, as the auteur seemed to be a victim of both his zeitgeist and heritage (aside from his unfortunate family history, Reeves was apparently also both haunted and helped by a fairly nice inheritance). Notably, after finishing *Witchfinder General*, the young auteur was preparing to direct the Edgar Allan Poe adaptation *The Oblong Box* (1969) starring Vincent Price, but he was fired a week before shooting because he overdosed on a similar cocktail of alcohol and barbiturate to the sort that would ultimately kill him. Such senseless nihilistic self-destruction seems to have been common during that time among creative types as Reeves' musician comrade Paul Ferris, who created the musical score for *Witchfinder General* and even appears in a small but notable role in the film as a young husband that attempts to assassinate Hopkins after he burns his wife alive, attempted to kill himself around the same time (Ferris was eventually successful in 1995 when it committed self-slaughter via drug overdose at the age of 54). Apparently, while

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visiting Ferris in the hospital after a failed suicide attempt, the two friends morbidly joked about who would be the first to successfully carry out the deed.

Aside from *The Oblong Box* and another Price vehicle entitled *Scream and Scream Again* (1970), Reeves was actively planning to get out of the horror ghetto (though, he did make an attempt to buy the rights to Daphne du Maurier's short story *Don't Look Now*, which was ultimately adapted by fellow Brit Nicholas Roeg in 1973). Indeed, aside from the Tenser-produced IRA-themed and Bonnie and Clyde-inspired crime flick *O'Hooligan's Mob*, Reeves was also apparently considered for directing what would ultimately be the most famous counterculture film of all-time, or as cinematographer John Coquillon remarked to American horror director Jeff Burr, who directed Price in the horror anthology *From a Whisper to a Scream* (1987) aka *The Offspring*, in a 1983 letter, "One day he called me full of excitement. He'd found the story. We were going to ride around the US, shoot in 16mm and shoot every which way, into the sun and out of the sun - on motorcycles. The actor was to be a long-time LA buddy - a completely unknown son of an actor - name of Peter Fonda. The film was to be called *Easy Rider*. It was while planning this movie that Michael Reeves died. I still mourn the man and miss him. Always will. One doesn't get to meet many people like him." In fact, as recounted by Reeves' friend and perennial leading man Ian Ogilvy in John B. Murray's informative book *The Remarkable Michael Reeves: His Short and Tragic Life* (2002) in regard to the auteur's lack of enthusiasm for the horror genre, "Mike only made horror movies because they were more likely to see an easy profit—thereby giving him, the director, a reputation with producers for making sure-fire successes. He had no great affection for the genre and looked forward to the day when he could make a different kind of film. He said once that we were making crap, but it was going to be the best-made crap in the world. I like to think there are a few moments in the three films we made together where we came quite close to making the best-made crap in the world." Surely, Reeves transcended celluloid shit and proved to be an alchemist of sorts with his swansong *Witchfinder General*, as it is an almost disturbingly raw and visceral cinematic work from a clearly foredoomed soul that was able to sire what is an organic gold-tier equivalent to what is now described as 'torture porn' and a film that is, almost literally, worthy of Jean Cocteau's quote, "Beauty makes one lose one's head. Poetry is born of this decapitation." Notably, in a interview with *Penthouse*, Reeves remarked, "I think violence and murder (in film) are quite justifiable. All you have to do is bring it down to an acceptable level. Then you can make points about the aggressiveness inherent in everybody." Although I extremely loathe rap music and generally feel a sense of disgust when I encounter people obsessing over the death of a celebrity, I was somewhat disturbed to learn about the rather recent premature demise of tragic dope-addled 21-year-old rapper 'Lil Peep' (real name Gustav Åhr) who, not unlike forsaken auteur Reeves, dropped dead as a result of a seemingly accidental

drug overdose just as he was gaining some inkling of fame and evolving as an artist. Not unlike Reeves, Åhr—an unintentionally goofy chap with degenerate face tats who proudly sported pink Hello Kitty beanies and was famous for creating a rap hybrid that including elements of emo and pseudo-goth—was somewhat of a pretty boy, thus making the thought of his young decaying body, which once graced European fashion runways, seem all the more disturbing. Also, like Reeves, Åhr was consumed with an innate fiery passion that seemed to be the root of both his quick success and even quicker demise. Totally unpretentious and a virtual James Dean of auteur horror filmmaking, Reeves, also not unlike Åhr, is a perfect example of the semi-subconsciously self-annihilating *poète maudit* par excellence as a troubled chap that could not even be bothered to live as long as Fassbinder and assemble the sort of extensive and/or eclectic oeuvre that would have guaranteed his place in cinema history as one of the greats (or, at least, somewhat great), but such is oftentimes the fate of an intemperately passionate, proverbial Nietzschean ‘Dancing Star.’ Indeed, as Reeves’ friend Paul Ferris once noted, “No, he was no great intellectual. But, does that matter, you see, for the truth of things? Twenty-four years old, movie mad, but what he did have in him was he wanted to make good stuff to the best of his ability. Movie mad, as we all were, so in that he’s a bit like Hitchcock. I don’t think Hitchcock went to university first and then thought, ‘Right, I’ll do some movies now.’ He was movie mad. It’s the wrong way round. It tends to be a bit tried if you come at it literally the other way around—no passion. Mike was passion, passion, passion, movies, movies, movies.” As both a lifelong horror fan and pretentious cinephile, I can certainly attest to Reeves’ singular cinematic passion.

-Ty E

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Michael Sarne (1968)

We certainly live in ugly times where ugliness is worshiped and lauded in the most patently of absurd ways as reflected in everything from TV commercials to sporting events. Indeed, in no other era was it considered normal and even 'romantic' to see two obese ogre-like bull-dykes with shaved heads getting married, for mainstream music to be comprised of largely sub-literate race-baiting neo-minstrel 'singers' who do not even know how to read a single note of music and ramble on about they or their 'bitch's' putrid STD-ridden snatches, and for movies to be polluted by physically and mentally grotesque lard ass Heebs that constantly tell the same two or three scat jokes while swooning over some half-braindead shiksa with pseudo-blonde hair, yet I almost think our contemporary times pale in comparison to the complete and utter abject aesthetic vulgarity of the so-called 'Swinging Sixties,' especially in regard to 'Swinging London' as depicted in the Brit cult flick *Joanna* (1968) directed by Czech-Saxon actor and pop singer turned filmmaker Michael Sarne. Probably best known for banging busty blonde bombshell Brigitte Bardot and directing the X-rated box-office bomb *Myra Breckinridge* (1970) featuring Raquel Welch as a tranny, Sarne started his distinctly uneven directing career with the 31-minute 'anti-travelogue' *Road to Saint Tropez* (1966) starring kraut queer Udo Kier as a gigolo-like boy toy who escorts a horny old MILF around a scenic resort spot in what would be the German character actor's debut film role. With *Joanna*, Sarne would prove that he was just as good at whoring out dumb blonde females as he was at charming kraut cocksuckers like Herr Kier. Indeed, the star of the film, South African model Geneviève Waïte, was apparently declared persona non grata in her own then-still-white-ruled nation after appearing in Sarne's first feature-length film due to bringing shame to the fatherland by portraying a spoiled rich bitch that has a love affair with a criminally-inclined woman-beating negro from Sierra Leone. Originally supposed to feature Sarne's somewhat more beautiful and surely more tolerable then-girlfriend Gabriella Licudi (*Herostratus*, *The Last Safari*) as the eponymous lead, *Joanna* is notable for featuring arguably the single most annoying female protagonist in all of cinema history, which is certainly no surprise when one considers that lead actress Waïte has just as high and squeaky a voice as her similarly loud and lecherous daughter Bijou Phillips (*James Toback's Black and White*, *Larry Clark's Bully*). Sold by Sarne to the studios as a female *Alfie* (1966) and based on a real-life nymphomaniac/kleptomaniac that the director personally buggered, the film is a sort of satire of *Swinging London* where an anti-bourgeois *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) is royally fucked by Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) in a work that reminds the viewer why a good portion of the degeneracy that exists today in the Occident is a direct result of the counterculture era. I certainly dare someone to watch *Joanna* and

not come to the conclusion that the two-headed monster of women's liberation and sexual revolution were not two of the most decidedly deleterious plagues to hit the West during the post-WWII era.

17-year-old Joanna Sorrin (Geneviève Waïte in her first and thankfully and not surprisingly last lead film role) is the superlatively spoiled daughter of a loving magistrate and she hates her well meaning father despite all the pointless expensive gifts he buys her, so she moves from her home in the country to Swinging London where she can better put to use her twin talents of thievery and lechery under the preposterous pretense of becoming an artist. As soon as the viewer sees Joanna jubilantly jump off her train like a Tourette-addled toddler on a sugar rush upon landing in London, you know she is going to be an insufferable little bratty bitch who makes the titular pixie frog princess woman-child of Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Amélie* (2001) seem semi-tolerable by comparison. Joanna has such a repugnant character that she even annoys her grandmother, who throws her out of her apartment not long after her arrival after getting tired of her whoring, thievery, and incessant rudeness. When grandmother Sorrin asks Joanna about how her father is doing, she sickly fantasizes about daddy dearest as a corpse with his throat slit. Like so many trust fund brats, Joanna is an aspiring artist and she is taking lessons from a blond Nordic teacher named Hendrik 'Cas' Casson (German actor Christian Doermer of Georg Tressler's *Teenage Wolfpack* (1956) aka *Die Halbstarcken* and Herbert Vesely's *The Bread of Those Early Years* (1962) aka *Das Brot der frühen Jahre*) who, like virtually all the men the protagonist meets, she inevitably screws. Despite proclaiming, "I just loathe married men. My father's married," Joanne's first boy toy in London is a married man with a fancy sportscar named Bruce (Anthony Ainley of *The Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971)), who she soon catches with a more beautiful and sophisticated blonde babe named Angela (Jane Bradbury), so she ditches him for 'artiste' Cas, who is also banging a negress with a similarly nauseating high-pitched voice named Beryl (Glenna Forster-Jones). To his credit, Cas is well aware that he is taking advantage of poor young dumb sluts and seems somewhat guilty about it as reflected by his remark, "I get terribly sad sometimes. These girls, they sleep around, going nowhere, meaning nothing. One gets the feeling that all women have achieved by emancipation is the privilege of being laid," but he has a sort of 'feminine essence' about him being an 'artiste' and all, thus he provides Joanna with emotional support, even after the two stop being fuck buddies.

Probably seeing her as no real threat since she is black and despite the fact that they both end up sharing the same man, Joanna sparks up a friendship with Beryl, whose black buck big brother Gordon French (Calvin Lockhart of John Landis' *Coming to America* (1988) and David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990)) is a successful yet criminally-inclined long-legged mack daddy that will ultimately become the protagonist's main love interest after her various rendezvous with

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wimpy white boys gets old. After becoming somewhat irked when Cas confesses that Beryl is better in bed because “she talks less” and that he screws 3-4 different girls a week, Joanna hooks up with a broke ass bro of the hopelessly banal sort named Dominic Endersley (played by the director’s brother David Scheuer of Stuart Cooper’s *Overlord* (1975)), but that does not last long since she cannot keep her panties on and soon finds herself in bed with a married man whose wife and kids catch them in the act. Luckily, unlike most men in the film, Dominic has enough sense to give Joanna a good slap across the face upon learning of her sexual indiscretions. Meanwhile, through Beryl, Joanna meets an exceedingly effete terminally ill aristocrat named Lord Peter Sanderson (Donald Sutherland), who buggers the black bird and becomes a father figure of sorts to the protagonist, even taking her and her friends on a luxurious vacation to Morocco where he teaches them how to eat couscous and teaches them about the finer things in life. To show her appreciation for his truly aristocratic generosity, Joanna steals Lord Sanderson a compass and a box of cigars. Ultimately, Lord Sanderson reveals to no one else but Joanna that he only has about a year to live because he hopes that it will help her find some meaning in her “uncommitted” and “pointless” life. When Lord Sanderson sponsors an art gallery showing for Cas, whose style is like Jean Cocteau meets counterculture crud, the art teacher ultimately becomes rich and famous. Unfortunately, Lord Sanderson croaks soon after the gallery showing.

When Lord Sanderson eventually dies, Joanna, who has already done her fair share of whoring in a very short period of time, decides she will attempt to start a new life by becoming monogamous with a relatively successful man, but unfortunately she picks a negro with a violent temper and mob connections. Indeed, Joanna hooks up with Beryl’s brother Gordon, who she absurdly declares her love to by stating, “I wish you were white...because I think I’m falling in love with you [...] you frighten me just a bit. Does that make sense? I think you’re going to die or something...And I don’t want to lose you.” Joanna might be a major moron who does not know her ass from her elbow, but her premonitions regarding her love affair with Gordon are more or less spot on. Gordon owns a night club as a result of Lord Sanderson’s patronage, but since the wealthy aristocrat is dead, he now has to receive his funding from more unsavory sources. Needless to say, Joanna immediately moves into Gordon’s flat and the two have fun by engaging in miscegenation and shouting “nigger” at scared old white people. Unfortunately, Gordon has various criminal connections and when a nosy neighbor reports him to the police after seeing him beat up a gangster in their apartment, they receive trouble from the cops, who do not take kindly to seeing an uppity opulent negro with a pretty white girl. When a young white cop comes by the apartment to ask Gordon about the brawl, Gordon rudely refuses to cooperate and even slaps the officer in the face, thus resulting in an entire police squad arriving at the flat to question him about his less than civil behavior.

Gordon resents cops, especially white ones, and demands that they address him as “sir” since, as he states in a ridiculously contrived fashion, he has been living and paying taxes in London for eight years. Luckily, since Joanna’s father is a respected Magistrate, Gordon manages to get off without any charges even though he assaulted an officer. Of course, Gordon’s belligerent criminal behavior does not end there.

After Gordon is brutally beaten by about half a dozen mob goons, he self-righteously declares, “I’ll get those bastards. I’ll get them one-by-one” and plots his senseless revenge while not considering how it may affect him and his girlfriend’s future. Of course, Gordon does not keep his savagery isolated to middle-aged male thugs, as he also beats Joanna for hanging out with Cas, even though he knows they did not have sex. When Joanna asks Gordon why he beat her despite the fact that he knew very well that she did share carnal knowledge with Cas, he replies, “Cause I am a black bastard and I know what’s best for you,” which ultimately turns the warped white girl on. Shortly after learning that she is pregnant with a mongrel baby, Joanna is approached by two police detectives who say they want to speak with Gordon regarding a murder. Indeed, Gordon got his revenge and crushed one of the crackers who beat him up and now he is a wanted fugitive. After managing to evade the police, Joanna meets with Gordon at a secluded beach house where he sweet talks her like a pimp and tells her things that he knows she wants to hear like how he and she will start a family together in New York City, ultimately reassuring her with the bullshit Snoop Dogg-esque words, “It’s all gonna happen baby, it’s all gonna happen.” Of course, Gordon is soon nabbed by the cops while hiding out in one of Lord Sanderson’s estates in Dublin, Ireland and he is ultimately sentenced to ten years in prison for murder. In the end, Joanna takes a train back to her family home in the country just as she once arrived in a scene that cuts back to an ironic flashback of her father warning her, “Don’t overdo it in London.” To add insult to injury in terms of aesthetic vulgarity, Joanna concludes with a musical number of all the characters in the entire film singing the title song “Joanna” written by American poet turned singer-songwriter Rod McKuen.

Notably, in a 2010 interview featured with the BFI Flipside release of *Joanna*, director Michael Sarne reveals that, no surprisingly, the real-life girl that he used to ‘date’ that inspired the film met a much darker end than the fictional one in the film. Sarne also reveals in the interview that he intended for the film to be much more ironical than it turned out and that he was hardly attempting to glorify Swinging London with the work, though he hoped the film would act as a sort of celluloid time-capsule of its particular era. Notably, Sarne’s film seems to have inspired a sort of ugly anti-utopian trend of now-obscenely-outmoded Swinging Sixties films about nubile blonde beauties eagerly hooking up with black bucks, as demonstrated by the somewhat bizarre avant-garde black power short *Death May Be Your Santa Claus* (1969) directed by British Black Pan-

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ther member Frankie Dymon Jr. (who also opted to use a white South African model for the female lead), as well as the agitprop avant-garde collage piece *nEROSubianco* (1968) aka *Attraction* aka *The Artful Penetration of Barbara* aka *Black on White* directed by Italian auteur Tinto Brass during his early pre-pornography years. For better or worse, out of all the movies about madly miscegenating 1960s London, Joanna certainly features the most eclectically and eccentrically damning depiction regarding the nihilistic excesses of its ostensibly zany zeitgeist. Unquestionably, for me, watching Sarne's film was like the cinematic equivalent of suffering the flu or some other illness, as I felt like I was trapped in some sort of disorienting metaphysical hell that totally transcended the physical realm where all my senses were bombarded with a sort of impenetrable feeling of spiritual vulgarity and grotesquery that felt like it would never end, at least until the film had finally concluded. Despite whatever point(s) Sarne might have been trying to make in the film in regard to race relations and the counterculture movement, the only thing I could come away with from the film was that Geneviève Waïte is the most annoying woman in the world and that I feel absolutely blessed that I have only dated mostly reserved and intelligent girls who don't treat their vaginas like toilets or garbage dumps. Indeed, hidden somewhere in its over-conscious Fellini and French New Wave homage sequences, barf-worthy blue-eyed ballads, pathological fourth wall breaking, and soulless sex and skin scenes is some sort of poignant message about the price of sexual liberation, but it seems to have taken a backseat to the director's curious obsession with the pseudo-cutesy lead, who one might describe as the ultimate anti-diva and braindead debutante.

-Ty E

HOMEBOY

Michael Seresin (1988)

Contrary to what might be taken from the title, this is not bi-racial film about struggles within Harlem to fend off illegal immigrants that moved in a couple blocks down. Rather, this film is Mickey Rourke's precursor to his extremely-coveted film *The Wrestler*. Bound by the ring, both Johnny Walker and Randy Robinson are past their prime and down-on-their-luck guys who hit the bottle and pine over someone that seems unreachable. They are also prescribed death by their doctors and warned not to fight again. Scribed by Mickey Rourke under the pseudonym Sir Eddie Cook, *Homeboy* predates *The Wrestler* by 20 years but the emotional depth in *Homeboy* I find to be much more resounding and heartfelt. In short, *Homeboy* is an underrated classic of character portraits. The prior incarnation of Randy Robinson is a cowboy who moonlights as a boxer who picked up the sport a bit past his prime. This burdening shadow will never let him live down the idea that he could have been great. Besides being an ever-vigilante fighter, he's also somewhat of a hot head. In one of my favorite scenes where a trio of Afro-American "slumdogs" approach Johnny Walker spouting some dialect that seems to be Public Enemy lyrics, Johnny looks up under the brim of his hat, hesitates, and spits phlegm and chewing tobacco on one's fresh white sneakers. This southerner vs. Urbanite mental match is one of *Homeboy's* finer moments. Not limited to this, *Homeboy* is also home to some incredibly filmed scenes of outlooks on race relations. In a checkers match with a boxing trainer, a senile boxing hand repeatedly asks the white man what color he is. He then explains how he is red so he is black, by process of elimination. The words "you're black" are presented in such an omnipotent manner that it cracks the screen while setting fire to the topic of race. Soon after, the black man forgets his color again and prompts for another racial lecture. Mickey Rourke's performance in *Homeboy* is utterly astounding and threatening. At first, this almost mute character will chime in his two-cents with a high-pitched southern drawl that will most likely catch you off guard but fear not, the voice is but an accurate projection of his inner woes. After seeing and hearing his thoughts and stature, Johnny Walker is an enigma worth understanding. He almost seems like a previous experiment in developing the future role of Harley Davidson in *Harley Davidson & The Marlboro Man*. Aiding the tenor of *Homeboy* is a joint score composition by masters Michael Kamen and Eric Clapton. Sporadic twangs of strings safely echo in moments of heated aggression or personality immersion. The overall feel of *Homeboy* seems more of a big-budget auteur piece that has a heart of gold. Michael Seresin took big risks for his first and only directing experience. For being a speech on point of character, *Homeboy* spotlights the most intense and riveting boxing sequences ever put to film. I found myself shadowboxing outside of the television screen, beckoning one-two

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punch combos and the likes of a right hook. The ferocity of what happens in the ring is captured perfectly thanks to the cinematography experience picked up by Michael Seresin. Note that this man is the one and only who captured the feel of Alfonso Cuarón's Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. Behind the events of Johnny Walker's two-note existence is the sleazy promoter played by a "beautiful" Christopher Walken. He learns early enough of Walker's fractured temple but neglects to inform the dead man walking. Instead, he'd rather Walker help him steal a batch of diamonds from Jews. The same motif of ticking time bomb that plagued Johnny Walker was applied to The Wrestler's Randy Robinson."Mickey Rourke and I were in Heavens Gate together; he had this tiny part and I was playing whatsisname. We were sitting up there in the mountains talking about...dinosaurs. And I told him about this thing I had read in some science magazine, that there's a theory that dinosaurs really never disappeared at all. That in fact all they did was get smaller and smaller, their scales turned into feathers and they flew away-and that in fact dinosaurs are still with us, they're just birds. And Mickey said, 'That's interesting,' and he started telling me about this movie that he was going to do someday about a boxer and it was called Homeboy. You know, I remember also he told me at the time, 'There's this guy, the fighters manager, and your gonna play this part.' I said, 'Okay Mickey, lets go.' So almost ten years went by and there we were making it. And I said to him, 'Why don't I tell that story about the birds and dinosaurs?' He said, 'Right.' And there is that scene at the beach with all the seagulls, talking about dinosaurs. It's completely disconnected from anything going on in the movie, but I think it's one of the things in the movie...It's real. Here are these two guys who are really kind of victims, talking about the origin and destiny of dinosaurs." -- Christopher Walken, Film Comment, August 1992. When juxtaposed together, I believe I enjoyed Homeboy more regarding both filmic qualities and scene construction. The Wrestler boasts more bang for your buck on account of the newer facade of a sport but behind boxing there's something furious that lurks past the shell. Both films preach melancholy attitudes towards gutter life, both country and city-wise, but Homeboy has more beauty than brawn. Homeboy is the greatest artistic exercise in boxing created by man for man. It's just a damn shame this film didn't receive buzz like The Wrestler has been lamented with. It dawned on me finally that maybe, just maybe, Homeboy was created just a bit too early. The populace simply wasn't ready for such a marvel.

-mAQ

PRINCE IN HELL

Michael Stock° (1993)

Undoubtedly, the quite quaint German queer flick *Prinz in Hölleland* (1993) aka *Prince in Hell* directed by Michael Stock (*Fucking Different*, *Postcard to Daddy*) is not only one of the most miserable, misanthropic, nihilistic, dispiriting, and revolting yet strikingly frolicsome and joyful films of the pomo homo sort, but all of the films I have seen in general. More sexually despicable than the rarely seen Brit flick *Duffer* (1971) directed by Joseph Despins and William Dumaesque, less flattering to rainbow-flag-waving fags than William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) and Todd Verow's *Frisk* (1995), more ridiculously repulsive than Rosa von Praunheim's *City of Lost Souls* (1983) and *Your Heart in My Head* (2005), and more melodramatically menacing than Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) and *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), *Prince in Hell* is a potent powerhouse of perversity, pathetic passion and promiscuity, and penetrating portending predestination of the most punishing, piercing, and paralyzing kind. Like a collection of reasonably coherent William S. Burroughs' stories come to life set in a neo-medieval XXX-Berg, Berlin ghetto with crude yet sometimes strangely charming carnivalesque characters that are somewhere in between those featured in early Gregg Araki (*The Living End*, *Nowhere*) films, *Mephisto* (1981) directed by István Szabó, *Harlequin* (1980) directed by Simon Wincer, Larry Clark's *Kids* (1995), and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Prince in Hell* is a decidedly dreary depiction of wild boys on their last savage and intemperate ride in the final lane. Set in the bleak backdrop of post-reunification Berlin, the film follows a beyond bizarre love triangle between three hysterical homos and a pants-less, jaunty and quasi-pedophilic jester who puts on a grotesque gay puppet show that parallels the film's storyline, *Prince in Hell* – with its bestial buggery, guileless and godawful depictions of drug abuse, and merry männerbünde of mishap and misery – is nothing short of a minor masterpiece of raw, reckless, rancid homophile cinema, but I wouldn't recommend recommending this film to a gay friend nor gay studies professor, as it is the sort of uncompromising and damning piece of cinematic debauchery that reminds one why so many fags have short shelf lives.

The poverty-stricken princes of *Prince in Hell* – although 'legally' unemployed and one-step away from being homeless homos – have relatively memorable lives as their daily activities include such soundly sordid pastimes as random threesomes with militant leather-fags (including simultaneous gloryhole blowjobs and bootboy buggery, hanging flyers for heroin dealers, humping dirty old men for heroin, getting beaten by East German neo-nazi skinheads, practicing public nudity and sodomy in plain view of grade school children, and discussing the instinctive racism of all Germans, not to untermensch Eastern ones. If I were to hazard a guess judging by their mere appearance and metaphysical melan-

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choly, I would assume that the refined gentlemen of *Prince in Hell* were the grandbastards of terrorized Teutonic women who had been raped and ravaged by Soviet Slavs, Mongols, and pseudo-Semites during and after the Battle of Berlin at the conclusion of the Second World War. The film mainly follows Stefan (Stefan Laarmann, who also co-wrote the script) who is a lapsed member of the bourgeois and sort of moral 'mom' of the group as he gets quite hung-strung when seeing his homo homeboys shoot heroin, East German junkie punk Jockel (played by writer/director Michael Stock) who is undoubtedly the most decadent and self-destructive of the degenerates, and bisexual father Micha (Andreas Stadler); the man that the two other fellows are fighting over. Despite being a father with a child that is not older than 8 or 9, Micha mostly spends the majority of his time manhandling other men, thereupon leaving his juvenile son Sascha (Nils Leeve-Schmidt) to fall prey to the seemingly unsavory antics of a former mental institution patient and puppet-mastering jester named 'Firlefan' (Wolfram Haack who also acted as a co-writer for the film) with seemingly mischievous (the film hints that he is a molester and he spends most of his time with Sascha, eventually leading to his earthly demise) yet infantile intentions. The more heroin-inclined boys also seek drugs from a boorish and blunt middle-aged homosexual neo-Nazi drug dealer named Ingolf (played by Fassbinder graduate Harry Baer) who incessantly replays Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1934) on his television to the utter dismay of his young butt buddies. Needless to say, *Prince in Hell* is like a lurid Lifetime movie from homo Hades as directed by Ulrike Ottinger had she born a man-loving mensch as opposed to a Sapphic surrealist.

Infinitely more unsettling and realistic than the gay serial killer flick *Frisk* (1955) directed by Todd Verow – the film that mainstream gays love to hate, which incidentally stars director Michael Stock as a feeble-brained German prostitute – *Prince in Hell* is undeniably one of the most doleful yet abnormally charming and aesthetically and thematically grating queer flicks that I have ever seen, so it was not a surprise to learn that the film's auteur has a disquieting past that is not that out of line with some of the characters in his film. Although *Prince in Hell* director Michael Stock would not direct another film until his contribution of the segment "Sternenstaub verloren ..." to the cross-gay film anthology *Fucking Different* (2005), he recently released the startlingly personal documentary *Postcard to Daddy* (2005); a highly and some-would-say embarrassingly intimate work where the filmmaker confronts and seeks to forgive his father some 25-years-later for sexually abusing him as a child. Naturally, knowing this terrible tidbit from Stock's personal life makes *Prince in Hell* all the more of a patently perturbing piece of emotional celluloid carnage of the soul-consuming sort. Although any reviewers of the film have stated to the contrary, *Prince in Hell* also does a splendid job of portraying the urban street squalor and youthful nihilism of early 1990s post-reunification Berlin in a manner that is

in sheer antithesis to the popular mainstream German flick *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) directed by Wolfgang Becker. As someone who has read East German ex-neo-nazi Ingo Hasselbach's book *Führer Ex: Memoirs of a Former Neo-Nazi* (which was adapted into the 2002 film *Führer Ex* directed by Winfried Bonengel), *Prince in Hell* certainly seems to accurately portray the anarchic essence of the street gangs (punks, communists, anarchists, neo-nazis, etc.) that battled for the inglorious idiotic glory of being the kings of Berlin's post-industrial wastelands with the gentlemen of Stock's scrupulous film being the lowest men on the Teuton warrior totem pole. Ironically, one of the characters in *Prince in Hell* justifies his heroin abuse to his friend by remarking that the depiction of opium-obsession gone awry in the German cult flick *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) directed by Uli Edel is romantic and ridiculous fiction, which is an absolute absurdity when one considers that at least the junkies in the older film had enough sense not to inject strychnine in their veins and allow a fag queen jester whose exposed dong is constantly hanging out watch their small children. Indeed, *Prince in Hell* is like *Christiane F.* for the 1990s post-Stasi era, albeit more disheartening, debasing and antagonistically nihilistic. That being said, it is only natural that the film concludes with little bad boy Sascha committing an act that is more gruesome and disconcerting than anything ever done by his father, as he is the future of the slums of the Fatherland; where fathers suck cock and shoot dope and puppeteers parade around their penises and put on puppet-shows about sodomy for preteens.

-Ty E

POSTCARD TO DADDY
POSTCARD TO DADDY

Michael Stock° (2010)

With the undeniably bad influence of Berlin-based kraut queer queen agitator Rosa von Praunheim (*A Virus Knows no Morals, I Am My Own Woman*) as his support, novice filmmaker Michael Stock, who in my humble opinion had what it takes to help kickstart the rebirth of a truly uncompromising German cinema free of Hollywood influences, directed the celluloid cocksucking-urban-nightmare-to-end-all-cocksucking-urban-nightmares, *Prinz in Hölleland* (1993) aka *Prince in Hell*, at the ripe age of 26 and then rather unfortunately disappeared just as abruptly as he had once appeared. A fiercely faggoty punk neo-fairy-tale set in melancholy post-Cold War Berlin that is part fantasy-like and part *cinéma vérité*-like in aesthetic yet decidedly deranging and debasing all around, *Prince in Hell* follows three junky queer squatters (with Stock playing one of them) of the exceedingly self-destructive and needlessly nihilistic sort as they race towards subconsciously killing themselves in a cinematic climax that, for better or worse, is one of the most singularly shocking endings in all of cinema history. While Stock went on to play a goofy German hustler named 'Uhrs' in American auteur Todd Verow's sodomite serial killer flick *Frisk* (1995) and would direct a short segment for the Teutonic omnibus film *Fucking Different* (2005), his planned second feature—an assumedly dark autobiographical work entitled *Aussöhnung* aka *Reconciliation* about a young man who attempts to come to terms with the fact that his own father molested him—never went past the post-production stage as the German television channel that planned to fund the film cancelled the project after two years of being in limbo due to its considerably controversial material (as Stock said himself regarding the decision, "the editor-in-chief finally decided that the process of reconciliation in the script to "Aussöhnung" (Reconciliation) was even more unsavoury than the rape itself, and the project died."). Instead, Stock decided to direct a 'family' documentary on the same highly personal subject about how he was routinely molested by his father for about 8 years of his tragic life. Quite ironically, while his mentor Rosa von Praunheim who was unquestionably a born pervert who attempted to seduce his own father (!) as a wee bratwurst as he confessed to Todd Verow in an episode of the Arte show *Into the Night with...* (2002-current), Stock was sinisterly seduced by his sick father as depicted in the filmmaker's surprisingly hopeful yet nonetheless stomach-churning documentary *Postcard to Daddy* (2010). Contracting HIV and Hepatitis C during his early twenties and more recently suffering a couple of debilitating strokes, the Michael Stock of *Postcard to Daddy* looks like a morbidly depressed zombie compared to the virile vice-saluting junk-addled street punk of *Prince in Hell* yet somewhat paradoxically he seems quite happy and positive in the documentary in the end, as if he has finally come to terms with the damage his despicable daddy has done.

It all started when Michael Stock's mother Margret Bartholomé met a swarthy fellow named Roland Stock who she found herself being rather attracted due to what she perceived as his foreign-like 'South American' looks. When Margret got pregnant, she and Roland got married, which ultimately sired three children: Michael Stock and his older brother Christian and sister Anja Stock-Hüttl. Margret loved her husband's adventurous and hedonistic character, but Roland was also a hopeless dipsomaniac and for whatever reason he began molesting his prepubescent son Michael. When Michael revealed to his mother Margret—a humanist involved in various social and political causes, including an Amnesty International group—at the age of 19 that his father routinely molested him for about 8 years, it totally destroyed the entire family, with everyone aside from eldest son Christian completely cutting off ties with the incestuous pedophile patriarch. Roland senior never molested any of his other children, which might partially have to do with the fact that, for instance, his daughter Anja actively avoided him, "because he was so repulsive physically, I didn't want any contact with him. I didn't want to be close to him. Just his bad odor! When you drink in the evening, you smell the next day. And I felt repulsed. I really wanted to keep as much distance as possible." After nearly 8 years of being molested, it took Michael another decade "to deal with it or simply to survive," which he partly achieved by making his story public on German television and even attempting to direct a feature film on the unsavory subject.

Considerably sexually warped due to his experiences, Michael recalls how he fell in love at age 12 with a neighbor girl and when he confided in his father about his feelings, the debauched daddy used it as a perverse pretense to fingers his anus so as to ostensibly demonstrate to his son how to pleasure a girl's clitoris. Naturally, Michael grew up to develop of sick and twisted sense of sexuality and actively sought predatory victimizers for sexual partners, but eventually found his first real boyfriend around the time he directed *Prince in Hell* and learned to enjoy carnal pleasures in a more reciprocal way. Regarding his self-destructive sexual behavior, Michael confesses, "I was very promiscuous and had no self-respect. As a consequence, I was infected with HIV in my early twenties; and later with Hepatitis C, too. Of course I knew about the consequences of unsafe sex. But I felt that possible death through AIDS would be the ultimate jewel in my drama queen crown. Drowning in self-pity I would have loved to blame it all on my father. But it is not his fault. I have to bare the consequences of my actions and simply have to live with them. And yes, I wonder how my father lives with the consequences of what he did." Eventually, Michael met his second partner, a French architect who wanted to be a filmmaker named Rémi Kaltenbach, but his beau also suffered from 'daddy issues', albeit of a less unhinged variety, and he ultimately developed a psychosis that turned him to religion and self-loathing. Convinced he would never be able to reconcile with his father, Rémi killed himself. At the time, Michael had reconciled with his

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father, but when degenerate daddy made an insensitive remark regarding Rémi's suicide, the sick father-son 'bond' was once again severed. Ultimately, Michael decided to dedicate *Postcard to Daddy* to Rémi.

Originally intended to be titled "Mommy's Boys" and centered around mother-son relationships, *Postcard to Daddy* spends a good portion of its time focusing on Stock's mother, who later became a sex abuse counselor after finding out her husband molested her son. After Michael suffered a stroke, his mother Margret decided to take him on a vacation (or what the director calls a "recuperation trip") to Thailand where the two discuss the filmmaker's abuse at the hand of his fucked father. As Michael Stock wrote in a 'Director's Statement' for *Postcard to Daddy* regarding the trip, "Unlike my mother, my father has contributed nothing to the process of coming to terms with this trauma. My mother on the other hand, since the day I confided in her at the age of 19, has played a key role in working through this family drama, so it made sense that our relationship would be the focus during this trip." Not merely a cute and catchy sentimentalist title, *Postcard to Daddy* concludes with a brief interview with Michael's pernicious son-sodomizing monster father Roland Stock, who the filmmaker screens a rough cut of the documentary. While the viewer does not get to see Roland's reaction to the doc, that is besides the point as it was made for the filmmaker's own personal therapy and not as a means to denigrate the castration-worthy kiddy fucker.

Undoubtedly, *Postcard to Daddy* is one of the most unflatteringly confessional documentaries ever made as demonstrated by the fact that director Michael Stock admits, among other things, that at one point during his nightmarish childhood he began seducing his father (!), thus demonstrating how debased his mind had become. One of the reasons that the German TV channel refused Stock's initial script for his never-made second feature *Aussöhnung* was because they felt it would demonstrate there was a link between homosexuality and child molestation. Of course, after watching *Postcard to Daddy*, the viewer cannot deny that it is quite obvious that Stock's self-destructive fagdom is a direct result of being molested, hence why he would seek victimizers as partners and got off to being sexually degraded by strangers and whatnot. Coming close to death and working the unflattering occupation of a dishwasher as a middle-aged man, Stock had his life ruined before he even had a serious chance in life by the very same man who should have been his greatest protector and the consequences of these truly devilish deeds weigh oppressively throughout *Postcard to Daddy*. In its innate essence, the documentary is a daunting deconstruction of Prince in Hell as it solves the source of the film's seemingly maleficent mystique and startlingly morally dubious and even macabre character. Indeed, due the film's allusions to child molestation and rape flashback scenes, I initially assumed that Prince in Hell might have been written/directed by a victim of sex abuse, but I would have never seriously considered that an authentic victim of father-son in-

cest in fact directed it. Once a 'punk' in more than one sense of the word with an unrivaled tenacity and a knack for post-industrial aesthetic terrorism as demonstrated by his acting and directing of Prince in Hell, Stock sadly seems like a prematurely aged old timer/terminal twink in Postcard to Daddy who needed to make just one more film before leaving this earth. Indeed, considering his film-making career never took off as it should have, Postcard to Daddy ultimately acts as the final word and micro-autobiography on the troubled life and wasted talent of Herr Michael Stock.

-Ty E

BLIND SPOT
BLIND SPOT

Michael Toshiyuki Uno (1993)

Long before his rather brief stint in Hollywood during the early 1990s when he directed both *Drop Dead Fred* (1991) and *Highway to Hell* (1991), which were both massive critical and commercial failures that ironically went on to earn cult followings, Dutch auteur Ate de Jong (*Het Bombardement*, *Brandende liefde* aka *Burning Love*) created somewhat low-budget and minimalistic art-house oriented works in his homeland of the Netherlands. Indeed, a year after contributing a segment to the four episode tragicomedy *Alle dagen feest* (1976) aka *Every Day a Party*, de Jong completed his somewhat gritty dark romantic-comedy *Blindgangers* (1977) aka *Blind Spot* starring tall, dark, and handsome Dutch leading man Derek de Lint (*Soldaat van Oranje* aka *Soldier of Orange*, *De aanslag* aka *The Assault*) in his very first major role. Although oftentimes humorous, de Jong's film is a largely dejecting work that depicts the slow and increasingly painful breakup of a young couple living in a white ghetto in post-counterculture era Holland. Admittedly, I hate virtually all rom-coms and romance flicks in general as I cannot relate to them in any way and find the humor to be about as funny as a corporate PSA, but then again I am not a physically weak and ugly neurotic Jew-boy who finds himself in the seemingly unlikely situation of attempting to vie for the attention of a beautiful shiksa who would never dream of dating some scrawny heeb in any sane world. Despite being nearly four decades old, *Blind Spot* is still relevant to modern couples in that it depicts the seeming impossibility of relationships lasting more than a couple year in an era when women give pussy away for free and no longer require men to marry or have children with them. The film is also notable for going into anti-feminist and borderline misogynistic territory and daring to depict the lack of decisiveness, irrationality, and flagrant bitchiness that plagues a woman when she finds herself doubting her relationship, but of course the flick is no more flattering in its depiction of its male protagonist, who is portrayed as jovially foolish, obscenely oblivious, and innately moronic yet somehow absurdly arrogant. Indeed, *Blind Spot* is not the tale of *Tristan and Isolde* or *Romeo and Juliet*, but a portrayal of a love affair that is patently pathetic, prosaic, and, in turn, realistic. Like the lovers in the film, the viewer does not want the couples' relationship to end but at the same time cannot deny the fact that it is ultimately inevitable that the two lovers will part ways. Set in dilapidated apartment buildings, sleazy dimly lit bars, and dirty laundry mats to the bombastic and oftentimes goofy sounds of degenerate Dutch jazz as composed by notable jazz bandleader, composer, and Kurt Weill authority Willem Breuker (*Jos Stelling's De illusionist* aka *The Illusionist*, George Sluizer's *Twee vrouwen* aka *Twice a Woman*), de Jong's work is thankfully not as Brechtian as it sounds as it is an honest-to-goodness flick fueled by lovelorn lifeblood of the all-too-human sort.

For whatever reason, young male protagonist Mark Jonkman (Derek de Lint) has decided to attend a screening of an ancient black-and-white English-language film where a man self-righteously declares “I will not kill a woman!” upon refusing to take part of the killing of a discernibly lecherous flapper chick who is subsequently gunned down by a robotic firing squad. Not unlike Mark, a young beautiful blonde in her early-20s named Danielle Sandberg (Ansje Beentjes of Roland Verhavert’s 1974 Hendrik Conscience adaptation *De loteling* aka *The Conscript*) watches the film as if oddly entranced by the banality of the old-fashioned flick. After the curious vintage film concludes, Mark is approached by cutesy blonde Danielle in the movie theater lobby who offers him a cigarette that he rejects and then attempts to make small talk with him by asking if he goes to the movies often, to which he semi-pretentiously replies, “I go to plays more often.” While Danielle attempts to get Mark to go on a date with her and he acts disinterested and tells her that he has no money, the male protagonist eventually gives in and agrees to go to the young lady’s house since her parents are not there. Since her parents are rather wealthy professionals, Danielle lives in a large and lavishly furnished home, which Mark will later come to resent as he is the son of a modest bicycle shop owner who he rarely sees. Since he is superficially charming and exceedingly extroverted, Danielle successfully guesses that Mark is an acting student. In scene that foreshadow the problems they will have in their relationship, Mark arrogantly assumes that Danielle is an antique store owner when, in fact, she is a student of Slavic Languages and Literature, especially Russian and Serbo-Croatian (which are, notably, the languages of the now non-existent nation of Yugoslavia, which the female protagonist will later consider traveling to after her romance begins to fall apart). Ultimately, Danielle uses the excuse of there being imaginary rats in her attic so that she can get Mark to go up so that she can seduce him. Flash forward two weeks later, the two protagonists have fallen deeply in love with one another and Mark brings Danielle a present in the form of a small box of mint tea that has a key hidden inside. Of course, the key is Mark’s way of asking Danielle to move in with him, which she immediately does. While fixing up their new apartment, Danielle reluctantly admits to Mark that she hopes they will “always be together” and he responds somewhat insensitively by saying, “‘Always’ is a big word.” As Danielle will eventually learn, nothing lasts forever.

At a little bit before the ten minute mark of *Blind Spot*, the film has flashed forward two years and skipped over what the viewer assumes was the greatest moments in the Mark and Danielle’s once hot-and-heavy relationship. Danielle is depicted looking more than a little bit melancholy while sitting at a bar where she is soon met by Mark’s conspiring beta bitch friend Paul (Jim Berghout) who, being the socially inept and impotent science nerd that he is, pretends to deeply empathize with the female protagonist so that he can get into her precious pink panties. Danielle is pregnant and she is considering dumping Mark because he

BLIND SPOT

has a sort of hippie attitude to romance and is not serious about getting married or having kids. After going back to Paul's apartment, Danielle informs him that she is pregnant and is probably going to get an abortion. Meanwhile, Mark finds Danielle's birth control pills and realizes she has not been taking them regularly, thus leading him to assume that she is pregnant. When Mark comes to pick up Danielle from Paul's place and she acts like a cold and callous bitch to him, it only reinforces his suspicion that she is pregnant, yet he does not have the balls to ask her if she is knocked up. Of course, considering that he has a pathetic boyish crush on Danielle, Paul neglects to tell Mark that his girlfriend is pregnant. As girls tend to do while they are irritated at their lovers, Danielle proceeds to bitch to Mark about a bunch of frivolous things like how the milkman had too many zits when he is driving her home. In fact, Danielle decides to randomly get out of Mark's car and continues her bitching campaign while walking down the street while her boyfriend tries in vain to talk some sense into her. In fact, Danielle goes so far as far as attempting to make her beau jealous by stating, "...Paul was nice. I could hardly resist him," but Mark eventually manages to get back in the car.

When the couple finally gets back to their apartment, Mark attempts to get Danielle to open up to him about her feelings, asking her, "Why do you act so strange? You've been acting like a stranger for weeks. When I want to help, you don't talk me," but the only thing she can do is complain about being terribly tired and her head hurting. When Danielle complains "my head hurts" when he attempts to type up an article for work on his typewriter while she is attempting to sleep, the protagonist decides to roam the streets and call his father on a payphone that his girlfriend might be pregnant as if he is actually happy about the prospect of becoming a daddy. The next morning, Mark attempts to have sex with Danielle, but she acts fiercely frigid and callously complains, "You don't have to use your body to prove you love me. You have done that for years." In an attempt to gauge how serious Mark is about the future of their relationship, Danielle asks him where he thinks they will be in five years and he states in an idealistic fashion they will because split up because, "All relationships that last longer than two years, go wrong." After rightly describing Mark's response as a "pseudo-artistic performance" (indeed, it is quite obvious that Mark thinks he is some sort of enlightened post-counterculture progressive who rejects the outmoded morals of the dreaded bourgeoisie), Danielle decides to go against her beau's wishes and plans a trip to Yugoslavia, but when she goes to her rich parents for money, she discovers they are out of town. Before even going on the trip, Danielle writes Mark a letter saying that she will be away for three weeks that ends with, "I won't come back to you." Upon meeting an elderly blind man that she finds sleeping inside a photobooth who she ultimately takes a series of photos with and who describes how he is still very much in love with his dead wife of 20 years, Danielle realizes there really is no future with Mark as she could never imagine him having the same feelings about her as the old widow does of

his deceased spouse.

Needless to say, when Mark comes up with the rather absurd plan to save his relationship with Danielle by surprising her by bringing home two middle-aged swingers, Fons (Ben Hulsman) and Joke (Lettie Oosthoek), she becomes exceedingly enraged, especially after the male partner-swapper, who is old enough to be her father, slaps her on the ass in a sassy fashion. Somewhat absurdly, Mark attempts to rationalize his actions by remarking, "That's the future of all relationships. Partner-swapping, cheating, separate holidays, divorce. Everybody we know had one of those problems. And it's the children who suffer." Ultimately, Danielle rebuffs Mark for being so presumptuous as to inform his father of her pregnancy and invite swingers over without asking her about it first, complaining, "By never asking me, you've changed my feelings towards you." Without even admitting she is pregnant, Danielle decides to get an abortion while her boyfriend is busy washing clothes at a laundry mat where he begins playfully flirting with a frigid four-eyed feminist named Anette Urk (Maroesja Lacunes), who is less than impressed with his boastful behavior and gets especially annoyed when he asks her, "Why are activist women always so unfriendly? "You think every man's your enemy, but they can be your friend too. Or do you prefer women?" After proudly declaring, "I've never been cheated on by a woman," Anette moves to the other side of the laundry mat and Mark follows her after noticing she has left a pair of her panties in a washing machine. After acting vaguely suave and blaming his rudeness and "bad mood" on an imaginary car crash, Mark actually manages to get Anette to come back to his apartment with him. Indeed, unbeknownst to Mark, he is attempting to cheat on his girlfriend at the very same time said girlfriend is getting a secret abortion, thus underscoring the innately deceitful behavior of both lovers. Somewhat predictably, Danielle catches Mark messing around with Anette in their attic. While Mark stops making out with Anette due to feeling guilty before things go too far, the damage is already done. Ironically, Anette goes from being a female-power-pontificating prude to a desperate horny woman when Mark rejects her to the point where she pathetically asks him "Am I not pretty enough?" like a little girl with low self-esteem. Ultimately, Mark makes the sexually frustrated feminist leave via a roof window despite the fact she is afraid of heights.

When Danielle tells Mark that they need to talk and says, "The decision has been made, but there are no words to talk about it," it becomes quite obvious that their wrecked relationship is over, though the female protagonist is too afraid to actually execute her decision and leave for good. After telling Mark, "I don't love you anymore," Danielle runs to a nearby sleazy bar and her lovelorn beau naturally follows her like a scared puppy dog. After arriving at the bar, Mark goes to the bathroom to take a leak and is disturbed to find a decidedly deranged Dutch soldier waving a knife at him. After convinced the demented soldier not to stab him he stabs some pipes in the bathroom, Mark unexpectedly learns

BLIND SPOT

something about love from the fucked fellow when he hands him a photo of his ex-girlfriend and says, "Once a woman has taken that decision, that's it." After a later incident where Mark attempts to force himself on Anette at the same time pussy Paul pathetically attempts to get into Danielle's panties, the couple temporarily makes up and has make-up sex, but the happiness does not last long. After they share carnal knowledge, Mark expresses his regret about Danielle getting an abortion, stating to her, "As long as that abortion won't haunt us forever," as if he knows their relationship cannot last due to their traumatizing experiences. When Danielle falls asleep, Mark absurdly decides to go out in public while wearing nothing but a coat and is ultimately arrested. Of course, the police give Danielle a call and when she arrives at the police station, the cop on duty asks her if she loves Mark and she responds yes. Upon releasing Mark from his prison cell, the cop states to Mark, "You're lucky with such a nice girlfriend. Hurry, before she changes her mind." Unfortunately, in the end, Danielle does change her mind and decides to go on the trip to Yugoslavia in what is a symbolic end to their relationship.

Not unlike Dick Maas, Ate de Jong is responsible for some of the most conspicuously contrived and Hollywoodesque Dutch films ever made, so *Blind Spot* makes for an especially interesting film in the filmmaker's oeuvre as much of its potency comes from its grittiness and rawness as a work that certainly does not look like it was directed by a mensch who beats his meat to George Lucas flicks. Indeed, I cannot think of another film where the creaking of floorboards as a result of characters walking around in a dilapidated apartment is so blatant. Of course, more importantly, the film dares to take a relatively realistic approach to dwelling on the more disconcerting aspects of romantic relationships to the point where, like in real-life, there is no happy ending or ideal resolution, thus leaving the viewer with a rare sense of bittersweet sincerity in the end that reminds the filmgoer that fairytales and Hollywood films have nothing to do with real life. Luckily, the film never falls into sappy sentimentalism like *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), which although lauded for taking a more realistic approach to relationships and breaking up, ultimately ends on a hopeful note that feels like a cheap cope out. In terms of setting and tone, I think *Blind Spot* is best comparable to gay gutter auteur Andy Milligan's once-lost X-rated masterpiece *Nightbirds* (1970), which is a considerably darker and more nihilistic work but takes a similarly tragic look at young love in the post-counterculture/post-feminist age. Aesthetically speaking, de Jong's film is like Paul Morrissey's *Flesh* (1968) meets Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977) sans the Hebraic neuroticism and pseudo-eccentric intellectual masturbation. Aside from possibly his role in Guido Pieters' Jan Wolkers adaptation *Kort Amerikaans* (1977) aka *Crew Cut*, Derek de Lint gives arguably his most energetic and angsty performance of his fairly admirable acting career in *Blind Spot*, which is a rare film that somewhat benefits from its slightly amateurish and minimalistic direction because it in-

tensifies its overall raw and visceral tone. While I cannot be totally sure, I get the feeling that de Jong's film is more realistic in its depiction of young love in 1970s Holland than Paul Verhoeven's classic masterpiece *Turks fruit* (1973) aka *Turkish Delight*. De Jong's film is also notable for being a rare flick that hints that feminism is not the result of members of the so-called fairer sex desiring equality, but quite the opposite. Indeed, as the feminist character Anette reflects in her hypocritical attraction to exploitative and emotionally abuse men as opposed to stoic gentlemen of the morally righteous sort, feminism is a reaction by women to the emasculation and moral degeneration of men and not because women all of a sudden decided that they wanted to pretend that they have cocks and balls. Of course, feminism and its promotion of abortion have helped to lead to the death of lifelong relationships in the West. Indeed, as depicted in *Blind Spot*, an hour-long trip to the abortion clinic can save both men and women from the responsibility of being a parent, but then again any woman that would pay money to have her unborn child vacuumed out of her vagina while she is fully conscious probably should not have children in the first place. Either way, de Jong's unexpectedly powerful and memorable little directorial debut is a reminder why divorce has become the norm in the Occident and why certain groups of men like those involved in the so-called 'MGTOW' movement have given up on women altogether.

-Ty E

O.K.

O.K.

Michael Verhoeven (1970)

While war films with anti-war sentiments are no less than a dime a dozen, be it produced by Hollywood or otherwise, I cannot think of such a work as innately idiosyncratic yet politically insipid as German auteur Michael Verhoeven's low-budget far-leftist agitprop film *O.K.* (1970), a work ostensibly set in the jungles of Vietnam about American GIs yet actually filmed in the forests of Bavaria with an all-kraut hippie/commie cast. Utilizing philo-Semitic kraut commie playwright Bertolt Brecht's so-called 'distancing effect,' *O.K.* begins rather pretentiously and pedantically with the actors in the film, including writer/director/actor Verhoeven, stating their names, religious affiliations, marital status, and in some cases their sexual experience (actor Wolfgang Fischer proudly states he is 28-year-old unmarried virgin). Despite its absurdly amateurish direction and equally bush-league and eccentrically exaggerated acting, *O.K.* somehow managed to be chosen as West Germany's official submission to the 43rd Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film (though it would not receive a nomination). While also entered into the 20th Berlin International Film Festival, *O.K.* proved to be so controversial that the film festival was cancelled simply because of the dubious content of the film after old school Hollywood propagandist George Stevens (Shane, Giant) demanded the ostensibly anti-American film to be removed, which in turn caused the festival director to resign and the entire event to fall apart completely. Like the Hollywood film *Casualties of War* (1989) directed by Brian De Palma and starring Michael J. Fox and Sean Penn, *O.K.* is based on the true story of the incident on Hill 192 in 1966 during the Vietnam War when a group of GIs kidnapped, gang raped, and murdered a 20-year-old Vietnamese girl named Phan Thi Mao. Despite not featuring leftist Israelite Sean Penn in the absurd role of a evil redneck rapist like *Casualties of War*, *O.K.* is all the more radically ridiculous and patently propagandistic in its perverse portrayal of leftist German rednecks (aka Bavarians) as super sadistic and sexually depraved, American and Confederate-flag-waving, anti-communist U.S. soldiers with an irrational hatred yet peculiar fetishism for young yellow girls. Despite featuring nil nudity and almost slapstick-like violence, *O.K.* ultimately plays out like some sick sex fantasy on director Michael Verhoeven's part, whose dubious fetish for pedamorphic girls is quite obvious as demonstrated by his casting of the prepubescent-like actress Lena Stolze in his most popular films *Die weiße Rose* (1982) aka *The White Rose* and *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (1990) aka *The Naasty Girl*, as if the filmmaker is projecting his raunchy rape fantasies on half-retarded American rednecks. Sort of like a softcore avant-garde 'torture porn' flick ridden with quasi-commie anti-American clichés typical of members of the 1968 German student movement, *O.K.* is, at best, a marginally and accidentally entertaining, outmoded celluloid fossil directed by an ethno-

masochistic mensch who is clearly trying to aesthetically repent for the fact that his father Paul Verhoeven was a naughty National Socialist filmmaker as demonstrated by his lifelong fixation with anti-anti-communism, blaming his parents/grandparents for the so-called holocaust, and his unhealthy hatred of all-things Third Reich. Luckily, with O.K., Verhoeven at least at some point in his filmmaking career had testicular fortitude and not a mere obsession with blaming the German collective for Nazism as his anti-Vietnam war flick at least makes for a marginally enthralling and exceedingly eccentric exploitation flick.

After the actors of O.K. introduce themselves and their backgrounds in a manner that shows how deeply Bertolt Brecht's theatre theories have deleteriously infected post-WWII German Cinema, one is introduced to the pseudo-American soldiers in their 'natural' habitat. The motley crew of Amerikkkan GIs is lead by a megamaniacal redneck and all-around mad man named Sergeant Tony Meserve (ironically, played by blueblood Friedrich von Thun), a highly decorated soldier who proudly sports an anachronistic Confederate flag on his uniform. Mr. Me-Serve does not like hippies with beards, calling them "communist beards" and stating that a "beard is effeminate," so he gets his dimwitted underlings Corporal Ralph Clarke (Hartmut Becker) and soldier Diaz (Ewald Precht) to hold down a certain pussy pacifist named Rafe (Wolfgang Fischer), so they can give him a nice shave with a large blade, which ultimately only results in half of his mustache being cut off. Seeming to suffer from Tourette's syndrome, the soldiers often randomly spout off weird things that a leftist Bavarian filmmaker like Michael Verhoeven might assume American hick soldiers might say like "immigrant stays immigrant" so as to demonstrate their disdain for darkies immigrating to their homeland despite their fighting in a foreign Third World nation's civil war. When a 15-year-old Vietnamese girl of the Catholic faith named Phan Ti Mao (played by the seemingly Asiatic Eva Mattes, who more resembles a Mongol than a true blue gook) makes the mistake of riding by the American GIs on her bike, they menacingly interrogate her and accuse her of being an atheistic commie spy. After one of the GIs, a nice fellow named Sven Eriksson (not unsurprisingly played by 'noble' leftist director Michael Verhoeven) makes an honorable attempt to stop the humiliating harassment of Ms. Mao, Meserve has Rafe rape the teenage girl. After Meserve declares, "Equal rights for everybody; we're a democratic country," the rest of the soldiers take a turn at physically pillaging Mao, except gentleman Sven, who valiantly refuses to commit the act, although his commanders attempt to force him. Not unsurprisingly, Miss Mao is eventually stabbed by Clarke and eventually maliciously murdered by the sadistic American soldiers via machine guns and soldier saint Sven makes his getaway on the dead gook gal's bike so he can tattle on his corrupt comrades. When it comes to dumping Mao's mutilated corpse, the soldiers agree it is a "matter of honor" and that "everything is o.k." Of course, Sven thinks otherwise and tells his commanding officers about the malicious murder/rape and

O.K.

they tell him to keep his mouth shut because, after all, Sergeant Meserve is an honorable man who has received five medals, including the bronze star, and was even part of the inaugural sermon for President Johnson. Sven is also told by an apathetic commanding officer the following advice, "And remember something else please: this murder did not happen in the United States but outside of civilization. Namely, on the battlefield." Of course, all of the soldiers (with the exception of Sven, of course) eventually received a court-martial and (reduced) prison sentences.

While a piece of absurdly amateurish leftist agitprop that uses Brechtian theatre techniques in a rather blatant attempt to mask its lack of production values and any sort of realism, O.K.—for better or worse—still makes for one of Michael Verhoeven's most interesting and experimental works, as it ultimately seems like an accidental exploitation flick parading around as an audacious antiwar flick, which for its time, it most certainly was. Of course, with mainstream anti-Vietnam war Hollywood flicks like De Palma's *Casualties of War* (1989), which is essentially a lavish sentimentalist remake of Verhoeven's flick, as well as superior works like *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Platoon* (1986), O.K. is nothing if not absurdly outmoded and socio-politically and aesthetically redundant, hence the film's almost total obscurity today. Aside from an apparently accidentally created 'sound loop' from a Moog synthesizer, O.K. also has the distinction of lacking a soundtrack, which would go on to inspire rape and revenge exploitation flicks like Israeli degenerate Meir Zarchi's *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), which is also an aesthetically retarded work that wallows in radical redneck-bashing and senselessly long rape scenes. Clearly the creation of a man with a needlessly wanton wackjob weltanschauung of the ethno-masochistic quasi-commie/anti-Amerikkkan sort, O.K. is probably one of the most blatant examples of the intellectual and aesthetic bankruptcy of the far-left and today the film only works as a sort of Marxist-sploitation black comedy, but not much more. One must also give minor props to Verhoeven for opening O.K. with a quote from anti-Semite Semite journalist Karl Kraus, but for some reason I doubt the great Austrian satirist would have approved of the Bavarian filmmaker's use of the quote, which is "Humanity had the bullet go in on ear and out the other." Apparently, it seems to have never crossed auteur Michael Verhoeven's mind that the historical record proves that Marxists have committed much greater crimes against humanity than the German National Socialists and Italian fascists ever did, but as O.K. proves, leftists have never let historical reality get in the way of a seemingly psychopathic interpretation of history.

-Ty E

THE NASTY GIRL

Michael Verhoeven (1990)

Unless focusing on totally deranged, perversely politically incorrect, and superlatively scatological subjects like the late great kraut avant-garde carnny Christoph Schlingensief (The German Chainsaw-Massacre, Terror 2000) or farcical fascism/lunatic leftism of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's psychopathic slapstick flick Satan's Brew (1976) aka Satansbraten, German filmmakers should stay away from cinematically depicting comedy, especially of the cliché far-leftist and philo-Semitic Brechtian sort, which is exactly why Bavarian bitchboy Michael Verhoeven's *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (1990) aka *The Nasty Girl* is one of the most intrinsically irritating and aesthetically agonizing films I have ever seen. Based on the true story of a bitchy Bavarian broad named Anna Rosmus who started digging into her hometown of Passau's unflattering Nazi past after being spurred by a nationwide essay contest, *The Nasty Girl* follows an indubitably nasty busybody girl who digs deep into her town's history, despite having her flat bombed and personal relationships destroyed in the process, only to become an ungrateful cunt after the town honors her by having a bust placed in the town hall in the form of her likeness despite her malicious research. A couple years ago, I had the misfortune of attending a public screening of *The Nasty Girl* in a room full of Jews, white liberals, and a hodgepodge of multicultural folks of varying racial shades. To my complete and utter surprise, a middle-aged Jewish man popped up immediately during a post-screening conversation regarding *The Nasty Girl* and rhetorically asked when the Germans will finally refrain from continuing to apologize to the Jews and paying hefty reparations to the not-so-tolerant Jewish ethno-nationalist state of Israel. Of course, the anti-zionist Jew was more keen than most viewers regarding picking up the sickening slave-morality-driven nature of the film, as *The Nasty Girl* is one of those ostensibly cutesy and comical works that makes it easier for less discerning viewers to swallow its ethno-masochistic, feminist message due to its deranged depiction of a pedomorphic 'little princess' depicted by the ever-so-annoying Lena Stolze, who previously depicted 'anti-nazi martyr' Sophie Scholl in Verhoeven's *Die Weiße Rose* (1982) aka *The White Rose*, as the protagonist displaying her sassy Svengali-like 'girl power' by digging into her town's past and proving that many of its esteemed leaders are ex-nazis and kike-killers. The son of National Socialist auteur Paul Verhoeven (no, not the Dutch one!), director Michael Verhoeven seems to have used *The Nasty Girl* as a way to dig up dirt on his daddy, but he thankfully had enough foresight to obscure his personally pernicious agenda by having a little girl stand in for himself, which is further supported by the director's statement at the beginning of the film, "The story my film tells is at once fiction and truth. I am not interested in the history of a specific town in Germany, but rather in the truth of all towns in our country. My film is set in Bavaria because I live

THE NASTY GIRL

here. Characters and actions are fictional.” Utilizing Syberberg-esque tableaux, including back-projected streets and buildings, and a total blitzkrieging of the Fourth Wall, *The Nasty Girl* is aesthetic asininity and absurdity that made even holocaust-worshipper Roger Ebert nearly lose his lunch, writing regarding Verhoeven’s flick, “It’s the film’s style that I object to. The story itself is fascinating, but the style seems to add another tone, a level of irony that is somehow confusing: Does Verhoeven see this as quite the cheery romp he pretends, or is there a sly edge to his method? As a rule I welcome stylistic experiments - most movies are much too straightforward - but this time I’m not sure the movie’s odd tone adds anything. Realism might have worked better.” Unfortunately, politics aside, Ebert could not have said it better as *The Nasty Girl* has the aesthetic integrity of a Geico commercial.

If *The Nasty Girl* ‘protagonist’ Sonja (Lena Stolze) is good at anything, it is prying into other people’s business, especially when said people kindly and, eventually, not so kindly, tell her to fuck off and to mind her own damn business. After winning a high school essay contest that wins her a trip to Paris, which further lobotomizes her already liberal mind, Sonja is more than confident about entering another essay contest that involves researching her town of Pfilzing’s relationship to the Third Reich, but after hitting a number of dead-ends and roadblocks, largely put up by highly secretive townspeople, especially those people in places of power, she must accept that the essay contest’s deadline has expired, which makes her cuckold teacher boyfriend Martin (Robert Giggenbach) rather happy and the two leftist lovebirds inevitably wed. Of course, the always prying Sonja treats her failure to enter the essay contest as a minor setback and after a bunch of naughty Nazis throw a rock through the rear window of her car after her wedding ceremony, she is more than determined to seek her hysterical revenge against the crypto-Nazi townspeople. In fact, throughout various points in *The Nasty Girl*, the town of Pfilzing is depicted as a Catholic crypto-Nazi epicenter where drunk and boorish krauts sing old school National Socialist songs secretly in the night like sinister demons. When Sonja discovers a certain Jewish conman, who apparently met his death after being sent to a concentration camp, swindled two Pfilzing priests out of 100 pairs of underwear during the Third Reich, she becomes determined to unmask the unholy anti-Semitic holymen. On top of the nameless and faceless masked neo-nazis in the night, Sonja faces scorn from her professor Juckenack (Hans-Reinhard Müller), who, using Gestapo-esque tactics, secretly bars the girl from researching microfilms in a local city archive. To get to the dubious documents, Sonja decides to sue Pfilzing, which causes countless death threats against the little lady and her extended family, but she ultimately wins the lawsuit, although the so-called ‘Zumtobel documents’ that she is looking for are nowhere to be found and she is given a number of questionable reasons why as to their disappearance. Putting the search for the Zumtobel documents before her baby daughter and jealous

cuck of a man-woman husband, her personal life takes a dive for the worst, but hey, she eventually gets the docs and proves her 'girl power' or whatever and literally yodels in celebration. After learning her professor Juckenack was one of the Nazi priests responsible for putting the Jewish conman in a concentration camp and the local pharmacist was involved with experimenting on Jews, Sonja has the distinguished luxury of having her family home bombed by some nefarious Nazi scum. Sonja publishes a paper on her findings, titled "My Hometown in the Third Reich," and is even given an honorary degree from the University of Vienna because of her "brave accounting of the recent history," and is subsequently awarded a doctorate from the Swedish Royal Academy in Uppsala, among various other prizes. After revealing that she is writing a book on the "Jews of Pflzing," Sonja reveals to the town that professor Juckenack, as well as a certain Father Brummel, the man that christened her as a child, were the two priests that got the Jew put in the concentration camp. Meanwhile, Sonja's husband leaves her for Munich, her progressive and sexually promiscuous brother starts screwing girls, and professor Juckenack sues her for defamation. With the help of an old school communist who was persecuted during the Third Reich, Sonja wins the trial and "Juckenack is dropped like a hot potato." Although the townspeople ultimately side with Sonja and pay tribute to her with a bust of her head in tribute, she proves intolerable to the end, stating to the entire town, "I won't let you turn me into a bust and stick me in the town hall. I am a living human being...I'm not falling for this. Just because you're scared shitless, because you're afraid of what I might still find out...I won't be quiet. That is exactly what they want," and promptly smacks her mother and grandmother, thus proving to a hysterical and bitter bitch to the very end.

At the anticlimactic, albeit fitting, conclusion of *The Nasty Girl*, perennially prying protagonist Sonja climbs up and hides in a tree like a scared little girl who has not only pushed away immediate family and even her neighbors, but who has also become a self-righteous and prissy pixie bitch whose nearly megalomaniacal goals seem to be dragging everyone she knows to a sort of nihilistic and ethno-masochistic netherworld, which can also be said of director Michael Verhoeven and his idiotically idealistic films. In a somewhat recent documentary he directed, *Der unbekannte Soldat* (2006) aka *The Unknown Soldier*, Verhoeven proved he saw a kindred spirit/alter-ego in the form of his protagonist from *The Nasty Girl* by depicting the entire Wehrmacht (German army) as genocidal kike killers, thus making him a man after Teutonophobe S. Spielberg's Hebraic heart. Aside from being an aesthetically appalling piece of failed kraut comedy, *The Nasty Girl* is a somewhat hateful work that attempts to disguise its deranged message of 'most Germans were and are anti-Semitic Nazis' with a smile by using humor as the ultimate merry and malicious manipulator of the viewer as a wretched work that is intended to inspire self-hatred, guilt, and a sackless slave-morality in German viewers and Hollywood-like Germanophobic hysteria in

THE NASTY GIRL

Americans and other non-krauts. More embarrassing and aesthetically revolting than the most patently prosaic of Wim Wenders' pseudo-existentialist celluloid meanderings and less humorous and more irritating than the latest Judd Apatow stoner 'Jew crew' comedy, *The Nasty Girl* is as noxious and nettling as cinematic works come, even in the context of ethno-masochistic cinema. Aside from those interested in seeing girlish and agonizingly annoying lead actress Lena Stolze's stark-naked body or baboonish beer-chugging Bavarian acting which is no less retarded than the average on field antics of an American Negro professional football player, *The Nasty Girl* is a film to be avoided at all costs, though certain masochists, especially of the cuckold persuasion, might find Verhoeven's film to be one of the greatest 'softcore commie comedies' ever made.

-Ty E

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Michael Verhoeven (2006)

Undoubtedly, you have to wonder about a man who has not only dedicated his career to attacking his people and country, but also his own father, which has certainly been the masochistic thematic mainstay of far-leftist Bavarian auteur Michael Verhoeven (*Die weiße Rose* aka *The White Rose*, *Das schreckliche Mädchen* aka *The Nasty Girl*). While one of his least aesthetically ambitious works, Verhoeven decidedly deluded documentary *Der unbekannte Soldat* (2006) aka *The Unknown Soldier: What did you do in war, Dad?*—a pseudo-intellectual and Philo-Semitic agitprop piece of the superficially sentimental variety that libelously attempts to collectively condemn the entire German Wehrmacht (army) as war criminals that were no less evil than members of the *Einsatzgruppen* SS death squads—is essentially the thematic summation of an exceedingly ethno-masochistic filmmaker who seems to have dedicated his entire career to atone for the fact that his father Paul Verhoeven (of no relation to the Dutch Robocop director of the same name) was a National Socialist filmmaker. The fact *The Unknown Soldier* opens with the ridiculous inter-title “What did you do in war, Dad?” only goes to show Verhoeven’s vindictive and venomous lifelong Oedipus complex. Inspired by public controversy surrounding the 1997 release at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research of the so-called “Wehrmachtsausstellung” (German Army exhibition)—a largely fiction-based exhibition supposedly focusing on War crimes of the Wehrmacht committed on the East Front from 1941 to 1944 that was set up by German ‘antifascist’ communist historian Hannes Heer, who managed to acquire a rather lengthy criminal wrap-sheet during the 1970s as a left-wing agitator/softcore terrorist—*The Unknown Soldier* is a brazenly biased work that for the most part only focuses on showing images of kosher corpses and interviewing communist/far-left academics/intellectuals and Zionist Jews regarding the supposed crimes against humanity allegedly committed by the Wehrmacht. While barely touched on in *The Unknown Soldier*, the *Wehrmachtsausstellung* exhibit was taken down in 1999 due to the fact that, among other things, only ten percent of all the 800 photos of alleged war crimes were actually Wehrmacht crimes (most were those committed by the Red Army and other commie Slavs) as recognized by Hungarian historian Krisztián Ungváry. Like any red ‘true believer’, Hannes Heer, who refused to acknowledge criticism of the exhibit and his failure as a historian (and very possibly academic fraud), was fired from his position as the director of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (where the original exhibition was setup) and excluded from being involved in a revision of the exhibition released from 2001-2004 and with *The Unknown Soldier*, director Verhoeven goes to great lengths to portray the commie shoah showman and falsifier of history as an honorable humanitarian and intellectual sage. Opening with stock-footage of a sign

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

on the Eastern Front that reads “These Jews stirred up hatred against the German Wehrmacht” and proceeding to show a line of lynched Israelites with star of David badges hanging from a pole, The Unknown Soldier wastes no time in imposing absurdly sensationalized psychological warfare on the viewer, attempting to associate the common German soldier with genocide and the holocaust as if the entire Wehrmacht was led by Wotan.

Towards the beginning of The Unknown Soldier, a female newscaster from a news report dated Feb. 24, 1997 states that “The exhibit “War of Extermination – Crimes of German Armed Forces 1941-44” is opening at this very minute after a 4-year battle,” thus demonstrating that, despite being over half a century since the conclusion of the Second World War that the public promotion of suicidal ethno-masochism and self-flagellation has reached a totally new all time low in American-occupied and culturally homogenized Teutoland. Before the viewer knows it, they are introduced to discernibly dubious creator of the Wehrmachtsausstellung exhibit, Hannes Heer—a swarthy, gully, and rather all-around repellant girly man with a pompous ponytail and prissy demeanor who proceeds to go on a self-righteous diatribe about how all Germans were brainwashed to kill and had an innate kike-killing Weltanschauung inspired by Uncle Adolf’s infamous tome Mein Kampf that made the common kraut take a Terminator-esque approach to battle. Outside a Munich-based protest of the exhibit, various elderly proletarian Germans, many of whom fought in the Second World War, discuss their abject disgust and disdain for the misleadingly titled German Army exhibition. One German man makes the insightful remark regarding the exhibit, “Foreigners are running around here, plenty of them, look over there. They’re laughing about the Germans. They’re saying, “Those Germans are crazy,”” and, indeed, the German (leftist) mainstream does seem to have a special affinity for self-flagellation because, after all, since when has a Mongol felt bad about the legacy of Genghis Kahn, a Jew apologized for the genocidal class warfare of Leon Trotsky, or a towelhead apologized for the actions of Osama Bin Laden?! Of course, Michael Verhoeven managed to find as much as footage possible of seemingly nefarious neo-nazi skinheads and National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) members acting like buffoons while listening to militant neofolk music at outdoor concerts, which then segues into an interview with a ‘holocaust survivor’ (she never actually stayed in a concentration camp) Charlotte Knobloch who, on top being one of the most influential Jews in Munich and being the President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland), is also Vice President of the European Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress. Journalist Ralph Giordano—another holocaust survivor who never stayed in a concentration camp and later went on to become a communist after the Second World War and dedicating his life to writing propaganda against neo-nazis and Islamo-fascists—also weighs in on the wretched wrath of the Wehrmacht, even declaring that the average WWII-era German had the

capacity to be a killer of women and children. All in all, most of the subjects featured in *The Unknown Soldier* seem to be reading from the same Trotskyite playbook of propaganda, though Christian Worch, an important neo-nazi who, unlike the typical Amerikkkan nutzi, seems rather rational in his opinion. In fact, before looking Worch up online, I assumed he was merely another cultural Marxist historian, albeit one with a much more objective understanding of history. Of course, like in most contemporary European countries, any individual that displays even the slightest pro-nationalist sentiments is looked upon as a potential nazi and homicidal Heeb exterminator.

As historian Jörg Friedrich—an ex-Trotskyite best known for his publication *Der Brand* (2002) aka *The Fire*, which details the Anglo-American Allied bombing campaign that was largely carried out to simply eradicate large percentages of the German populous, especially women and children—states near the conclusion of *The Unknown Soldier*, “No army will ever function if every subordinate first checks each order to verify its validity and legitimacy. If that were the case, the army would be lost already.” And, indeed, Friedrich’s remark seems to be something virtually every of the pencil-pushing far-left intellectuals in *The Unknown Soldier* cannot seem to realize the job of a soldier and chain of command, as if every single German soldier (no matter how low-ranking) was responsible for the comfort of every Jew and Red Army soldier. As an elderly man protesting the Germany army exhibit states, “It’s natural that people were captured who were partisans or had been, and that they were shot. That is the inalienable right of the Germans.” Ultimately, the *Wehrmachtsausstellung* exhibit is just another way for communists, vengeful Hebrews, feminists, and American globalists, and other enemies of the German people to shame Germans into guilt and to accept that their nation is turning into a multicultural sewer. Until Germans and other Europeans tell Zionist Jews, leftist intellectuals (aka Frankfurt School fetishists aka ethno-masochistic Philo-Semites), and Americans to fuck off and stop whining about the so-called holocaust, they are facing a very likely suicide as a people and nation as recognized by everyone from Pat Buchanan to French-German ‘New Right’ theorist Pierre Krebs. As director Michael Verhoeven admitted in an interview with *indiewire.com*, he was largely inspired to direct *The Unknown Soldier* in retaliation for nationalistic protest against the German Army exhibition, stating “You have to imagine that I am not a documentarian. All films I had made before were purely fictional. But on the 1st of March, 1997, a demonstration of 5,000 neo-nazis took place in the heart of Munich, at the St.Jakobs-Platz, where the Jewish Community Center is established. The neo-nazis came from all over Germany to protest against the exhibition about the crimes of the German “Wehrmacht.” I spontaneously called camera teams to hurry to the St.Jakobs-Platz and decided to confront the neo-nazis with questions. This was the beginning of my work on that documentary, which started before I even had watched the exhibition. It was not only opposed by the right-

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wing of German society but as well by people of all levels and groups,” thus the documentary should not be approached as anything less than a senselessly sensationalized agitprop piece that gives Deutschland’s most prestigious and vainglorious academic commies a platform to spew their fossilized anti-fascist rhetoric, a good percentage of which is inspired by Soviet propaganda (ironically, a large percentage of the photos from the original Germany Army exhibit were taken from Soviet propaganda files, including atrocities committed by the Red Army, but later falsely attributed to Germans).

For whatever reason, the imdb.com page for *The Unknown Soldier* does not list a single person interviewed for the documentary, nor does the documentary itself reveal these individuals’ relatively extremist political affiliations, but virtually every one of them, including Hannes Heer, Oskar Negt (a Marxist theorist and friend of Alexander Kluge), Dieter Pohl, Charlotte Knobloch, and Ralph Giordano is a communist and/or Zionist Jew with a political agenda that does not promote peace as one would expect from the film’s anti-war tone, but rather class warfare and genocide instead. While focusing on Jewish suffering at the hands of the average German, *The Unknown Soldier* fails to acknowledge that, aside from the fact that there were over 5,318,000 German military casualties in WWII (as recognized by German historian Rüdiger Overmans’ extensive study titled *German Military Casualties in the Second World War*), more Germans were killed in World War II than Jews, not to mention the upwards of two million Germans that were exterminated after the war during the Flight and Expulsion of Germans (1944–50) by the Soviets, who people like Wehrmacht-sausstellung exhibition creator Hannes Heer support in spirit as commies who are traitors to their own people and nation. As stated by former German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in April 6th, 1951, as presented towards the beginning of *The Unknown Soldier* regarding Wehrmacht criminals, “The percentage of those who are truly guilty is so insignificant and so exceptionally small that, I would like to say in this context, that they do not tarnish the honor of the former German Armed Forces.” Featuring incessant collage footage of evil Nazis goose-stepping and the same exact played out footage/photographs that are used in virtually every holocaust museum/documentary of starved Jewish corpses and lynch Judeo-Bolsheviks, *The Unknown Soldier* is just another one of the many examples of how the absurdly outmoded agitpropagandists of the far-left are starved for material in their one-dimensional propaganda war. A virtual porn flick for antifa activists and pedantic cultural Marxist academics/intellecutuals, *The Unknown Soldier* is ultimately more revealing about how modern day Germany is run by traitors, cowards, and armchair commies than any sort of serious and intellectual stimulating discuss of German soldiers during the Second World War. Rather ironically, director Verhoeven admitted in an interview with the site indiewire.com regarding *The Unknown Soldier* that he largely learned his craft as a filmmaker from his National Socialist auteur father, stating, “I preferred

the more psychological way of directing, which I had experienced with directors like my father and Kautner.” Of course, *The Unknown Soldier* is nowhere near as entertaining as a Nazi propaganda flick like *Der ewige Jude* (1940) aka *The Eternal Jew* directed by Fritz Hippler (who was of partial Jewish ancestry himself), but what else can one expect from a filmmaker who combined the aesthetically banal theories of Philo-Semitic kraut commie Bertolt Brecht with Hebraic vaudevillian style humor for his most popular film *The Nasty Girl* (1990).

-Ty E

THE KILLER INSIDE ME
THE KILLER INSIDE ME

Michael Winterbottom (2010)

I did not have much expectation when going into *The Killer Inside Me* as I assumed the film would be the typical absurdly romantic portrayal of psychopathic killer that Hollywood is so fond of. The film is based on a fairly popular pulp crime novel of the same name that was written by Jim Thompson (who worked with Stanley Kubrick on his script for *The Killing*) and published in 1952. One writer nicknamed author Thompson "Dimestore Dostoevsky" and with the author's dark psychological insights into human nature (set in backwards rural southwestern United States), I consider that a fair title for the author of *The Killer Inside Me*. *The Killer Inside Me* is a fun little film, featuring a hot twat prostitute, the banality of small town socio-political living, and what happens when a group of town folk come to realize one of their own sons is a saint of sadism.

The lead of *The Killer Inside Me* is played by Casey Affleck, the younger and less impressive (yet less annoying) brother of hack Hollywood star Ben Affleck. Casey Affleck plays Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford, a man who loves platitudes and seems to be a competent yet somewhat mentally slow officer of the law. Underneath the seemingly normal and typical exterior, Lou Ford is a depraved sociopath who seems most alive whilst punching beautiful women in the face. I almost would have liked to have seen Ben Affleck play the role of Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford but his brother Casey does a good enough job. Casey's Texan twang combined with his soft-spoken monotone voice make for a disturbingly effective auditory signature for a sociopath killer.

One has to wonder whether or not sociopaths can love/find love and if so, with who? Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford seems to find love in a hot tamale prostitute played extra erotically by Jessica Alba. Apparently, Alba is one of those annoying Feminists in real-life but in *The Killer Inside Me* she does a superb job enjoying being beaten during sex, especially in a super sensual scene involving her bare ass and Lou Ford's belt. Alba's prostitute character acts like a super big cunt when Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford warns her to leave town due to her illegal prostitution, so the officer makes sure to give her a little corporal punishment in response to her disorderly behavior, a kind of chastening that eventually results in a deranged sort of true love. If only Jessica Alba's character in the hatchet-job spickploitation film *Machete* were to have also received the same kind of punishment from a white man of the law. According to mestizo comedian George Lopez, a DNA test showed Alba to be 87% European and 13% Injun. One can only assume that her beauty in general is the result of her European ancestry but the Amerindian genetics helped to add a little extra meat to her delectable derriere.

The Killer Inside Me is certainly no motion picture masterpiece but a worthy way to waste about two hours. After all, Hollywood films about killers are gen-

erally highly repulsive and full of more platitudes than Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford could ramble off after an all-nighter drinking Southern Comfort. The Killer Inside Me is a film about the struggle it takes when dealing with the nonstop addiction of sadism. Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford is a somewhat interesting anti-hero that challenges ones thoughts in regards to going beyond good and evil. He may lack the charm of Alex from A Clockwork Orange and charisma of Ted Bundy but one cannot help but find him likable, at least to some degree. After all, Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford was able to drive Jessica Alba to “the congress of a cow.”

-Ty E

FALCONHEAD PART II: THE MANEATERS
FALCONHEAD PART II: THE MANEATERS

Michael Zen (1984)

If any old school American semi-mainstream poofster porn flick adequately depicts what homo Hades might be like for all the S&M leather-fags who succumbed to AIDS in the 1980s, it is most certainly *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters* (1984) directed by Michael Zen (*The Filthy Rich: A 24 K-Dirty Movie*, *The Naked Fugitive*). Indeed, while most sequels suck shit-marinated mothballs, especially in regard to porn sequels, *The Maneaters* is nothing short of infinitely superior to Zen's first film, *Falconhead* (1976), which I found to be an abject disappointment that, although carefully coated in Cocteau-esque mirrors and man-loving mysticism of the nude and nefarious sort, is essentially nothing more than a bunch of pseudo-butch dudes with conspicuously contrived beards and mustaches engaging in rather repellant buggery and whatnot. Of course, *The Maneaters* features its fare share of male masturbators and shadowy sodomy, but the film is more interested in audacious neo-Gothic aestheticism and a foreboding atmosphere than anything else, as if it was directed by a man who wanted to become a serious arthouse director but lacked the money and morality to do so. Rather nightmarishly nonlinear in structure, *The Maneaters* is essentially a curious and sometimes creepy collection of patently 'perverse' (in more than one sense of the word!) petite vignettes that resemble the fragmentary structure of early Werner Schroeter operatic celluloid epics like *Eika Katappa* (1969) and *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*, albeit with an ominous and onieric visuals that lie somewhere in between Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog*, Steven Arnold's *Luminous Procureess* (1971), Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987). The shuddersome sodomite tale of a muscle-bound being with a falcon head and a human body named the 'Falconhead' who captures young narcissistic Nancy boys with his magical masturbatory mirror in a sort of poof purgatory until they learn to become sexually altruistic and selflessly satisfy the needs of other young and not so young men, *The Maneaters* is an aberrantly allegorical tale that probably sent the wrong sort of message when it was released in the mid-1980s during the Dark Age of AIDS, thus further adding to the wanton and wayward work's dark and sinister appeal. A rare fag fuck flick that addresses the innate narcissism associated with male homosexuality and the tendency for PBFs (pretty boy fags) to be attracted to men that look exactly like them, *The Maneaters*—a film that carries an unintentionally hilarious message that is the innate literal inverse of "go fuck yourself"—is also a work that will seem extra horrific to the authoritarian LGBT crowd.

Beginning with the *Falconhead* (Paul Barressi)—a humanoid-like being with a falcon head and human male body—stroking himself in the forest, *The Maneaters*

then introduces a semi-mature blond twink with a British accent named Barry (Rick Taylor) who is haunted by dreams of brutal bird-like creature, but he soon gets over these nightmares and begins to stroke himself in the shower after recalling a discrete encounter he had with a young blond buck that he recently defiled in a local park. Barry is a proud self-absorbed narcissist who only cares about pleasuring himself, though he is willing to fuck other men so long as they look almost exactly like him. One dark night, a seemingly demonic, Svengali-like leather-fag in full gay Gestapo regalia shows up at Barry's home and tells him "Tonight... You will find the Falcon mirror." A true jerk-off asshole, Barry mocks the mystery man and asks him "who the fuck are you?" in a not so nice manner, so said mystery man angrily tells him, "You listen... Falconhead is a creature that captures young narcissistic men... through the mirror... and keeps them imprisoned until they are capable of fluffing someone else besides themselves. Falconhead lives in the reflection of every narcissist." Apparently, the Falconhead's weapon of choice is "a man-eating mirror where lovers of self-reflection become their own reflection" and the bitchy blond Brit Barry has a date with said mirror. That same night Barry attends a somber and surreal queer masquerade ball (which he calls "hardly a party") that is full of all the 'usual creatures,' including queens, fag hags, hustlers and—most importantly—the young narcissists, among other things, but they are all wearing bizarre costumes reminiscent of Luminous Procuress. Luckily, *The Maneaters* lacks the hippie homoeroticism of *Luminous Procuress* and prefers to wallow in more wickedly wanton worlds.

True to self-flattering fag form, Barry becomes enamored with two blond twinks who look like him and purportedly have the 'same cocks,' so he watches them engage in literally and figuratively steamy sodomy. From there, *The Maneaters* enters the naughty nightmarish realm of the pernicious magician Falconhead's 'poof pandemonium' mirror. In one rather startlingly angelic Mishima-esque scene contained within a completely white and otherworldly room in what seems to be homo heaven, a young blond dude masturbates himself using a red rose with thorns, thus drawing the blood of the young poet. Following the lurid lead of an over-the-hill homo sporting a white wedding dress who somewhat resembles Sean Connery in John Boorman's *Zardoz* (1974), Barry listens and watches as perverts imprisoned in the Falconhead's mirror tell their sexually psychopathic stories in an ultimately feeble attempt to seduce the bratty blond Brit. In a scene that falls somewhere between the 'subliminal' homoeroticism of Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and the all-out motorcycle-molesting degeneracy of Fred Halsted's *The Sex Garage* (1972), Barry watches as two biker boys wearing nothing but jockstraps bugger one another. Barry also voyeuristically gazes at a self-described "cockfreak" who could "eat cock and ass for hours" and "gets off to natural smells" as he sucks off an alpha-cop with a 'cock-shaped helmet.' In the end, Barry manages to 'deny all' the sinister seductions of the demonic

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perverts in the Falconhead's mirror, including a Medusa-like MILF who seems rather out of place in homo Hades, thus he is trapped in pansy purgatory indefinitely. Naturally, Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters (1984) concludes with the eponymous 'villain' busting a load in the forest and devilishly declaring to the viewer, "You have reawaken from a dream and found yourself soaked with your own cum." Unfortunately for Mr. Falconhead, I did not spill a single seed while watching the film, though I did drop some greasy Chinese rice on my pants.

A sort of celluloid micro-saga of the pseudo-Ancient Greek sort featuring a synth-driven soundtrack in the delightfully dreamy and diabolical spirit of Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972), Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters is nothing short of a mystical arthouse flick with horror and fantasy elements that has been aesthetically defiled by hardcore pornography, sort of like Jean Genet's sole film *A Song of Love* (1950) aka *Un chant d'amour*, albeit more pornographic. Indeed, *The Maneaters* also recalls the films of Polish auteur Walerian Borowczyk (*The Beast* aka *La bête*, *The Streetwalker* aka *La marge*) due to its artfully fetishistic combination of phantasmagoric imagery and naked naughty bits. In that sense, *The Maneaters* almost seems like an aesthetic tragedy as a work that has virtually all of the ingredients of an arthouse cult flick, but is ultimately hardly known outside the sad semen-stained world of forgotten vintage gay porn. Probably more than anything else, *The Maneaters* feels like an extra-gay arthouse take on Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (I honestly would be no surprised if Barker, who is gay, saw Zen's flick and got influenced by it) due to its foreboding feel and tendency for characters to enter forbidden realms of unnerving darkness and decadence, though Michael Zen's flick is nowhere as stringently S&M-themed, even if it an authentic fag fuck flick. For whatever reason, auteur Zen went the same dubious route as aberrant-garde kraut auteur Jörg Buttgerit did with his *Nekromantik* series as he refrained from directing a third Falconhead and thus failing to making it the trilogy it should be. Of course, considering Zen currently directs shot-on-video trash fuck flicks with titles like *Young, Hung and Horny* (2002) and *WMB: Weapons of Masturbation* (2003), as well as straight porn videos like *Jenna Loves Diamonds* (2008) starring Jenna Jameson, I think he gave up on making arthful blue movies long ago, as he probably did not want to lead a loser life plagued by poverty. After all, the last thing Americans want to see is poetic porn flicks with allegorical imagery and esoteric storylines and I am sure *The Maneaters* proved to be an anti-masturbatory experience for the majority of perverts who saw it when it was originally release nearly three decades ago. A rare 1980s gay porn flick that blurs the typically fine line of not only art and pornography, but horror and homoeroticism as well, *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters* is ripe for rediscovery for the adventurous sort of libertine cinephile who thinks Marian Dora is a real artist and who falls asleep at the thought of having to watch another plodding Godard agitprop flick.

-Ty E

BE KIND REWIND
BE KIND REWIND

Michel Gondry (2008)

Be Kind Rewind is the latest artsy “American” comedy from French writer/director Michel Gondry. Gondry is highly revered by the cosmopolitan Starbucks crowd for his unconventional and “quirky” postmodern comedies that toy with the way the audience is supposed to interpret (or force to look at) the scene. Be Kind Rewind is no exception to Gondry’s obsession with *mise en scène* masturbation. Like fellow Frenchman Jean-Luc Godard, Gondry can’t help but use his intellect in a way that completely destroys the true magic of the cinema. Be Kind Rewind stars banal slob comedian Jack Black and psycho black Muslim Mos Def. I must admit that I was slightly turned off to find these two clowns as performers in another artsy fartsy Michel Gondry feature length experiment. Woody Allen’s sex slave Mia Farrow and The Color Purple star Danny Glover are featured in Be Kind Rewind in senior citizen roles. The film also features a variety of other unappealing actors that you would expect in a film low in quality and head high in bullshit. The two lead clowns in Be Kind Rewind decide they should make their own films since the films on the VHS tapes at the video store they work at have been erased. They remake everything from Ghostbusters to 2001: A Space Odyssey, to delight the residents of the intercity hellhole that the video store is located in. Eventually the whole “multicultural” neighborhood is involved in the making of these cardboard set films resulting in a “we are the world” type message. I found this beat-to-death message to be the only thing remotely funny in the pretentious load of frog excrement that is Be Kind Rewind. Be Kind Rewind lacks any type of element that would make a film enjoyable or even remotely interesting to watch. The film presents the failure that is the American intercity as a place of defensive yet sensitive individuals that engage in crime in a “cute” scenario away. Hollywood has always pulled the blinds over the American audience’s eyes in regards to reality that is the urban zoo. Michel Gondry will never be one of the great directors or even notable directors. Like most highly regarded contemporary directors, Gondry only sticks out because of the lack of innovative filmmakers. In a period where M. Night Shyamalan and Quentin Tarantino are considered some of the greatest filmmakers of our time, it is no surprise that Michel Gondry is considered one of the foremost directors of artistic filmmaking.

-Ty E

THE SAVIOR

Michel Mardore (1971)

Undoubtedly, if I ever took away wisdom away as a teenager while observing naive nubile young girls of the same age, it is they tended to consciously overlook the unflattering (and, oftentimes, downright immoral and/or repugnant) attributes of an older and more experienced fellow who had caught their fancy, even going to ungodly and oftentimes self-destructive extremes (i.e. using hard drugs, peddling their puss away for nothing, attempting to pantomime that behavior of blacks, etc.) to catch the attention of their potential male suitors, yet unfortunately far too few films have tackled this subject, at least in a truly perversely poignant sort of fashion, though the French used to seem to have a knack for it. In fact, two semi-obscure frog flicks from the 1970s, Michel Mardore's *Le sauveur* (1971) aka *The Savior* and Joel Seria's *Marie-poupée* (1976) aka *Marie, the doll*, stand out in my mind as the best and ultimately most orgasmically ominous films dealing with the subject of poor little unwitting Lolitas succumbing to sinister men with uniquely unhinged ulterior motives. Undoubtedly, what makes *The Savior* especially interesting, if not somewhat convoluted, is that it is an allegorical war flick set in rural Vichy France during the Second World War and features then-washed-up bisexual actor Horst 'The German James Dean' Buchholz (*The Magnificent Seven*, *One, Two, Three*)—a seemingly tiny Teuton that more resembles a Mestizo soccer player than a member of the master race—in the Svengali-like role of a psychopathic SS officer pretending to be an injured English paratrooper who exploits the sexual, maternal, and romantic longings of a virginal 14-year-old French farm girl so as to find imperative inside information and ultimately squash members of the frog commie resistance. The debut feature film of a man that is better known for being one of the most important French filmmakers of his time (among other things, Mardore has the distinction of being the first person to interview Cinémathèque Française cofounder Henri Langlois) and who would only direct two films during his short-lived filmmaking career (with the seemingly impossible-to-find lesbian-themed flick *Le Mariage à la mode* (1973) aka *Marriage a la Mode* being his only other film), *The Savior* is what some might describe as an 'Artsploitation' flick as a work that somewhat successfully manages to synthesize elements of arthouse cinema and the war film and spy film genres with that of softcore erotica and even Nazisploitation. Admittedly, if it could not be easily verified online, one might assume the lead actress of *The Savior*, Muriel Catalá (*Faustine et le bel été* aka *Faustine and the Beautiful Summer*, *First Time with Feeling*), was not much older than Eva Ionesco when she appeared in the erotic coming-of-age flick *Maladolescenza* (1977) penned by Fassbinder/Herzog collaborator Peter Berling. By the conclusion of *The Savior*, the female protagonist will be played by the most pernicious of psychopathic players, thus making for a strangely 'penetrating' antifascist pro-

THE SAVIOR

paganda piece that uses the emotional destruction of a voluptuous teenage girl as a nasty and arguably sleazy means to influence the viewer to hate SS men more than Satan himself.

It is summer of 1943 during the middle of the Second World War in the relatively quiet French countryside and one day while walking around a small stream not far from the family farm, pretty 14-year-old peasant girl Nanette (Muriel Catalá) spots a handsome and charismatic, if not small and swarthy, gentleman named Claude (Horst Buchholz) with minor injuries who claims to be a English soldier looking to hookup with some good resistance fighters and thus has a pathological hatred of krauts. When nymph Nanette remarks that she likes how Germans are “tall and blond” and how she has “known Germans that are nice,” Claude matter-of-factly states, “It was the Germans that wanted the war” as if he were the most snobby self-satisfied Brit in the entire world. While it is dubious whether or not that it was indeed the Germans that were the only ones that wanted the war, there is no question that hyper horny teen Nanette wants to blitzkrieg Claude’s bones and she is willing to go to great lengths to hide the supposed English man on her parent’s property to achieve that goal. In a rather juvenile attempt to get Claude in her panties, Nanette offers to ‘play doctor’ with the mysterious soldier, but he is much too old to play such games and thus the all-hot-and-bothered teen takes a more forward approach by totally stripping off all her clothes and getting into bed with him. Of course, Nanette eventually gets what she wants in terms of carnal knowledge and the two subsequently frolic around gaily in the nude in a stream like two hippie love birds, but when the teen temptress tells Claude she loves him, he does not reciprocate her proclamation of love. In reciprocation for sex, Nanette gives Claude information about local French resistance fighters. Of course, little does Nanette realize that Claude is more interested in members of the resistance than their cross-generational non-romantic affair.

Eventually, Nanette has the moronic and ultimately deleterious idea to tell her father (Roger Lumont) about Claude’s presence, which results in her mensch ultimately being taken away from her as he is forced to do manual labor to earn his keep. Pathologically pissed and lovelorn her man has been taken away, naughty Nanette decides to have Claude killed (after all, if she can’t have him, no one will!) by going to a local fascist collaborator named Monsieur Monnery (Michel Delahaye), whose sons (who look rather swarthy, if not Hebraic!) are both in the French volunteer Charlemagne division of the SS, and tell him about the ostensible English soldier. Lying like a seasoned female psychopath at the mere age of 14 in a feeble attempt to appease her heartbroken female fury, Nanette pleads to Monnery with a perfect puppy dog pout, “he [Claude] forced me...he made me...you know...Monsieur Monnery...I want you to find him...and kill him.” Unfortunately, Nanette’s plans fall through and she is soon captured by a SS man, who takes her to her man Claude, who is, rather curiously, now sport-

ing an elegant SS uniform. In a quite prideful meta-megalomaniac manner (at one point, he proudly proclaims, "GOD? I AM God."), Claude lets Nanette she was merely a pretty pawn in the game, stating, "I know you hate yourself because you've committed two unpardonable crimes. Paradoxical crimes. You denounced a hero...and you sheltered a traitor. Your feeling of guilt will follow you all your life. It will stick to your skin. You'll be gay as usual then without warning, then when you least expect it you'll go back and relive those early days. You'll be...A living ghost." Of course, Nanette, being a stupid young girl still loves her mass murderer of a man Claude, even after he kills Monsieur Monnery and some of her relatives. As she watches emotionally paralyzed from Claude's souped up Aryan automobile, all the women and children of her village around rounded up in a building while men are killing via firing squad. Indeed, Claude wastes no time in liquidating every single personal in the village, even Nanette's parents, declaring of the sadistic spectacle to the 14-year-old dame, "The terrorists have been wiped out. Only you and I will know the truth. That's...our marriage...our link...our indissoluble bond. Even though we may never see each other again." Needless to say, being the only surviving member of her village, Nanette develops something that is soul-destroying that transcends simple survivor's guilt. Flash forward to the present and Claude is now a capitalist living under the alias of 'Monsieur Müller' and he comes to visit Nanette, who is now an overweight housewife with a number of rugrats, at her village, which has been totally rebuilt, thus more than hinting that The Savior was inspired by the Oradour-sur-Glane and Maillé Massacres committed by the SS in the summer 1944, which resulted in the destruction of two French villages (which were later rebuilt) and its inhabitants. Clearly haunted by the past and no longer a dumb little girl, Nanette takes her revenge, shouting "For you, Englishman!" before annihilating her first great love in front of her husband and young children.

In its daunting, if not decidedly decadent and carelessly crude, depiction of a lecherous French lass who goes from being a resistance-fighter-bashing collaborator to a staunch anti-Nazi of the rather bloodthirsty yet maternal sort, The Savior is indubitably a piece of aesthetically pleasing leftist agitprop that manages to even outdo Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List (1993) in terms of depicting SS men as one-dimensional demons (indeed, Spielberg's depiction of Amon Goeth is even more nuanced and sympathetic!) and thus the film fails to be serious celluloid art, yet it certainly is a must-see work as a sort of counter work to Liliana Cavani's The Night Porter (1974), albeit much less pretentious. Additionally, The Savior is also a sort of heterosexual celluloid equivalent to Philippe Vallois' Nous étions un seul homme (1979) aka We Were One Man—a queer World War II flick depicting an unlikely sexual relationship between a wounded German soldier and a half-autistic French farmboy—as a work that manages to aberrantly yet artfully depict wayward love during wartime in the rural froglands. Indeed, like the underrated Italian flick One Woman's Lover (1974) aka Donna è bello

THE SAVIOR

directed by Sergio Bazzini and starring lapsed Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro as a fascist terrorist who seduces the sexually repressed wife of a sexless commie ideologue, *The Savior* is a little slice of sleazy celluloid divinity that manages to possess a seemingly immaculate combination of artiness, exploitation trash, gratuitous violence, and quasi-tasteful to totally tasteless eroticism. Undoubtedly, as someone who almost vomits at the prospect of having to watch another formulaic World War II film and as an oftentimes unappeasable individual who finds himself increasingly equally uninterested in watching the splatter swill of Herschell Gordon Lewis and the aimless 'Avant-gardism' of Jean-Marie Straub, I found *The Savior* to be almost like a charmingly cynical gift from the cinematically eclectic cinephile gods, who wallow in cinematic kitsch just as much as cultivated celluloid. Indeed, unlike Godard, *Monsieur Mardore* proved that French film critics can churn something other than pedantic postmodern twaddle, as *The Savior* ultimately seems like an arthouse flick made for lumpenproles with a fetishism for John Wayne propaganda war flicks, which is certainly no small achievement.

-Ty E

I'M DANGEROUS WITH LOVE

Michel Negroponte (2009)

Having read most of iconic Beat Generation writer William S. Burrough's novels, I have known about the hallucinogenic drug ibogaine for a couple years now, yet I never knew it had properties that could cure drug addiction (after all, it is a psychedelic drug). Apparently, ibogaine has the organic power to instantly cure opiate addiction, as well as stop drug withdraw; the most painful and unbearable aspect when attempting to quit opiates cold turkey. Despite the fact that there has been a lot of scientific research done proving ibogaine's effectiveness in curing opium addiction, ibogaine is still illegal in the United States. In the documentary *I'm Dangerous with Love* (2009), filmmaker Michel Negroponte follows an ibogaine advocate named Dimitri Mugianis as he illegally helps junkies from various parts of the United States quit heroin addiction with ibogaine treatment. Director Michel Negroponte also tries ibogaine himself in an attempt to see if the hallucinogenic drug will cure his addiction to nicotine. As one would expect from a documentary about drug addiction, *I'm Dangerous with Love* is a dark and gritty, yet revolutionary work - documenting what could be a miracle drug for junkies; ibogaine. Even if a person has no interest in learning about ibogaine, *I'm Dangerous with Love* works as an excellent anti-opiate public service announcement.

As you learn during the beginning of *I'm Dangerous with Love*, Dimitri Mugianis is a musician (vocalist for the band "Leisure Class") and ex-junkie who found a cure for his addiction via ibogaine. During his tragic drug addicted life, Dimitri lost best friends and even his girlfriend to heroin, yet none of these horrible events would effectively convince Dimitri to finally quit his opiate-addicted road to a very possible premature death. Dimitri had been addicted to heroin for 20 years, but a single dose of ibogaine cured his life-threatening vice instantly. After kicking his addiction with ibogaine, Dimitri would later dedicate his life to helping other addicts. Despite the illegality of Dimitri's underground ibogaine cure campaign, the former addict rather enjoys his work as he so earnestly expresses in *I'm Dangerous with Love*. In the documentary, director Michel Negroponte documents Dimitri's administration of ibogaine on various lifelong addicts during a 3 year period. By the end of the documentary, it is revealed that the various subjects who had been administered ibogaine treatment were either completely cured of addiction or were on methadone treatment and no longer wandering the streets in search of heroin. Although I have yet to see the documentary, director Michel Negroponte previously directed *Methadonia*; a work documenting the substitute addiction of methadone, a synthetic-opiate drug (created in Germany for injured soldiers at the end of World War II when opiates ran out) even more addictive than heroin. After watching *I'm Dangerous with Love*, it is quite apparent that a single dosing of ibogaine is a much

I'M DANGEROUS WITH LOVE

safer alternative to a lifelong addiction to methadone. None of the participants in ibogaine treatment featured in *I'm Dangerous with Love* seem to have "bad trips" while high on the drug - certainly no worse than the painful withdraw they would have had quitting heroin cold turkey without the hallucinogenic drug.

Towards the end of *I'm Dangerous with Love*, director Michel Negroponte and Dimitri travel to Western Africa to participate in an ancient Shamanic ritual using ibogaine with native tribesmen. Although this segment of the film is interesting from an anthropological perspective, I doubt it helps to further the cause of legalizing ibogaine for lawmakers. After all, the reason ibogaine is illegal is due to its hallucinogenic properties, as the trip has been described as having the ability to metaphorically "break open the head." When Negroponte tries ibogaine, he has various flashbacks - including being in his mother's womb. Apparently, scientists are currently working on creating a derivative of ibogaine that lacks the substance's hallucinogenic properties, thus making it very possible that the drug will soon be a legal alternative for kicking opiate addiction. That being said, I believe that Michel Negroponte has done a very noble act by creating *I'm Dangerous with Love*, as the documentary is an in-depth and easy to understand introduction to ibogaine; a wonder drug for desperate opiate addicts. Also, I would be lying if I did not admit that the documentary made me sick to my stomach. Forget William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), *I'm Dangerous with Love* is a real-life documentation of opiate-possessed individuals who have their demons organically exorcised. If you thought Danny Boyle's Scottish junky flick *Trainspotting* (1996) was disturbing, you have yet to see *I'm Dangerous with Love*. For more information on this groundbreaking documentary, check out First Run Features.

-Ty E

ZABRISKIE POINT

Michelangelo Antonioni (1970)

While many Americans seem to conjure up images in their mind of peace, love, and a virtual utopian world when they think of late-1960s and naked dirty hippie bastards prancing around in pastel-colored body-paint, I can only think of race wars, smug subversive semites with rebbe-esque beards, STDs, primitive communes ruled by psychopathic megalomaniacs that fuck children, and the general senseless cultural and social subversion that has led to the malefic pre-apocalyptic anarcho-tyranny that we have today in the United States, thus I could not help but delight in the quite literally explosive conclusion of great Italian maestro Michelangelo Antonioni's exceedingly underrated Hollywood production *Zabriskie Point* (1970), which is probably the only mainstream film featuring hippies fucking and smoking dope that does not come off as retarded twaddle. Indeed, while directed by an innately introverted and melancholic northern guido that was almost sixty at the time he created it and thus naturally had no real intimate personal experience with the people and culture it depicts, I think it is arguably the greatest and most darkly romantic American counterculture film ever made, as the sort of U.S. equivalent to the UK cult classic *Performance* (1970) co-directed by Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg in terms of defining the zeitgeist and offering the final cinematic word on the counterculture question. A sort of modernist hippie Romeo and Juliet story where there are no feuding families and instead a warring nation where the youth and negroes are determined to rip the moral and cultural fabric of the nation into shreds, the film tells the senselessly tragic tale of a fugitive activist of the rebel-without-a-cause oriented sort who somewhat absurdly steals a small private plane after assuming that he is a fugitive as a result a cop-killing he did not actually commit and flies it to the otherworldly landscapes of Manson Country U.S.A. (aka Death Valley) where he meets and starts a brief yet almost perfectly passionate love affair with a busty brunette stoner secretary, only to absurdly fly the stolen aircraft back to the airport where he got from and thus meets a most pointlessly horrific fate when he is ambushed by a bunch of trigger-happy cops who are fed up with the violent hippie scumbags and black nationalist revolutionaries that have been tearing up local universities, the film notably takes a deceptively simple nuanced approach to rationalizing the collective irrationality that defined the era, hence why so many people have found the flick to be quite inexplicable. A piece of cinematic art impersonating life and vice versa, Antonioni's aesthetically whimsical yet carefully constructed cinematic counterculture assault notably stars two real-life hippie non-actors in the lead roles, with male lead Mark Frechette—an aggressively nihilistic and hateful young man from a poor background that was discovered by the film's casting director while he was engaging in a violent shouting match at a Boston bus-stop—ultimately joining the glorious '27

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Club' in 1975 after being sentenced to six to fifteen years in prison for taking part in a botched bank robbery and dying via suffocation while incarcerated in a minimum security state prison in Norfolk, Massachusetts during a seeming dubious weightlifting accident that involved a 150-pound barbell falling on his neck. Additionally, Frechette and his co-star Daria Halprin—the daughter of a prominent San Francisco landscape architect named Lawrence “Pops” Halprin and his wife, postmodern dance pioneer Anna Halprin, who Antonioni discovered and decided to cast after seeing her perform preposterously bad poetry in the nude in Jack O’Connell’s largely forgotten doc *Revolution* (1968)—were real-life lovers and were referenced by the media as ‘first counterculture couple’ by the media. Of course, Halprin is probably best remembered today as being one of the many ex-wives of Dennis Hopper.

While best known for his ‘trilogy on modernity and its discontents’—*L’Avventura* (1960) aka *The Adventure*, *La Notte* (1961) aka *The Night*, and *L’Eclisse* (1962) aka *Eclipse*—where morosely melancholic upper-middleclass individuals are portrayed as virtual walking but rarely talking corpses of the forsakenly emotionally glacial and spiritually impoverished sort that suffer from the incapacity to communicate and express love and affection, *Zabriskie Point* depicts late-1960s America as suffering from a different yet no less perturbing social phenomenon that demonstrates that Europe and the United States are at slightly different stages of decline, with Americans still maintaining some of the barbarian genes that helped their ballsy ancestors conquer and tame the land. Indeed, where Antonioni’s post-WWII Italy is a place where young people are seemingly metaphysically comatose and are completely crippled by *Weltschmerz* and ennui, the director’s America is a seemingly socially and culturally schizophrenic open frontier on the brink of civil war where the old are nothing more than the anachronistic remnants of a dead people and culture, the middle-aged are almost psychopathically materialistic and hopelessly deracinated lemmings that live to make money and buy pointless shit that they do not need, and the young are angry and decidedly disillusioned misfits and rebels who have rejected the American dream and who are all too eager to trash the traditions and customs of their ancestors while, at the same time, pretending to care about and understand the plight of the poor disenfranchised negro. Undoubtedly, the two leads of the film are symbolic of the two anti-intellectual extremes associated with the counterculture movement, with Frechette portraying a perpetually antagonistic hate-filled nihilist with a seeming death wish whose sole political interest is destruction for destruction’s sake and Halprin playing an almost obnoxiously happy-go-luck hedonistic pothead with a high tolerance for belligerent assholes and next to nil serious political ambitions aside from the right to be ostensibly ‘free’ and to use her pussy whenever and wherever she wants to. Of course, what these two virtual opposites do have in common is that they seem to be in a state of perennial childhood, but I guess that is what someone expect from a generation of people that

bought into the big lie of the zeitgeist and rejected the traditions and values of their people without having anything to replace them with, hence why many of these extremely lost individuals later embraced yuppiedom, which combines the worst and most deleterious vices of both the hippies and capitalist as reflected in the stereotypical Hollywood image of some bearded bro or slutty blonde snorting a line of cocaine off of a hundred dollar bill. Indeed, in a somewhat unwitting way, *Zabriskie Point* depicts all the ingredients and circumstances that would lead to the cultureless and deracinated neo-liberal multicultural void that America is today, even if Antonioni was clearly more sympathetic towards the hippies than their parents and grandparents.

Inspired by a true story that the auteur read in a newspaper while in the United States for the 1966 premiere of *Blowup* (1966) about a young man that stole a plane and was ultimately killed after making the somewhat absurd mistake of attempting to return it to its rightful owner in Phoenix, Arizona, *Zabriskie Point* was shot from a screenplay penned by Antonioni that was ultimately reworked by no less than three other people, including Sam Shepard, poet-cum-screenwriter Tonino Guerra, and Bernardo Bertolucci's future wife Clare Peploe. Of course, considering the somewhat glaring aesthetic and thematic similarities between Antonioni and Wenders' films, especially in terms of its expansive landscape cinematography, it should be no surprise that Shepard later went on to pen *Paris, Texas* (1984). Of course, as opposed to Wender's film where the Southwestern landscapes are symbolic of existential despair and nothingness upon nothingness, Antonioni's flick brings a somewhat unexpected sense of utopian purity to the deserts, as if they are the one last place in America that has not been totally tainted by consumerism, materialism, and greed, hence the protagonists' almost otherworldly fuck session, which evolves into a sort of celestial orgy where sand and semen become virtually one. In fact, in *Zabriskie Point* the real sinister undercurrent of society is not Hades-like landscapes or rock formations but TV commercials, billboards, and manmade communities created by companies that exploit these natural places and environments and have created a perturbing pseudo-culture of innate artificiality that corrupts the soul and spirit. Indeed, in virtually every scene that is set in Los Angeles or in the lavish home of a wealthy individual, the viewer is exposed to a grotesque manmade parody of nature and natural landscapes, with the female protagonist not coincidentally being the secretary and assumed mistress of a covertly sleazy and proudly materialistic real estate executive whose company is responsible for creating a TV commercial for a new resort-like real estate development in the desert that eerily stars a mannequin family as opposed to real living and breathing people, thus underscoring the innate artificiality of what would come to personify post-WWII 'Americanism.' While Antonioni was a leftist intellectual of sorts (for example, Judaic film scholar Virginia Wright Wexman once describe the auteur's cinematic worldview as that of a "postreligious Marxist and existentialist intellectual") and his

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film production was even considered so anti-American at the time it was being made that it was monitored by the FBI (in fact, the U.S. Attorney's office in Sacramento opened a grand jury investigations into both the film's supposed 'anti-Americanism' and possible violations of the Mann Act, which is a anti-prostitution law that was created in 1910 that prohibits the transportation of women across state lines "for immoral conduct, prostitution or debauchery"), *Zabriskie Point* is not much more flattering in its depiction of hippies and far-leftist student activists and was even criticized by members of the counterculture movement as being a supposed "sellout" film. In short, the film depicts an eclectically irrational and materialistic America that seems to be on the verge of some sort of collectively cataclysmic cultural and social apocalypse where father and son figuratively fight to the death and where the mother has become a materialistic whore and the daughter a literal whore who works for and sleeps with the very same capitalist vampire that epitomizes that system that kills her figurative Romero. Like most great films about the United States directed from a European outsider's perspective, the film tells you more about the real America than any Spielberg and Michael Bay film ever could, but of course both of those Hebraic Hollywood blockbuster anti-auteur propagandists are responsible promoting the very sort of asininely artificial corporate 'Americanism' that Antonioni so elegantly mocks.

In a sometimes annoying scene that reminds viewers why hippies deserved to get their asses kicked by the cops where Antonioni seems to go back to his early roots as a neorealist filmmaker that directed semi-documentary shorts during the late-1940s through early-1950s like *L'amorosa menzogna* (1949) aka *Lies of Love* and *Superstizione* (1949) aka *Superstition*, *Zabriskie Point* begins with a somewhat racially-charged documentary-like scene where white student activists and negro revolutionaries argue in regard to the former's sincerity (or lack thereof) and overall importance in terms of the so-called revolution. Indeed, after berating his white 'comrades' for not taking part in a strike and then advocating violence when a white girl brings up a ROTC building by responding, "All you have to do is go down to the ROTC building. . .take a bottle, fill it full of gasoline. Plug it with a rag," an angry black revolutionary accuses the whites of being more or less posh posers who do not even understand what a real struggle is since they have never had to struggle in their entire lives. Indeed, when a swarthy and seemingly Jewish radical complains, "Yeah, man, but what if you wanna end sociology?," the rather nasty yet refreshingly honest negro rightly replies, "Listen, man, a Molotov cocktail is a mixture of gasoline and kerosene. A white radical is a mixture of bullshit and jive." When an assumed Jewess with a grating voice then proceeds to complain that she does not have to "prove" her "revolutionary credentials" to anyone, especially not some dumb ghetto negro, another black revolutionary hilariously replies, "You get busted for grass and that makes you a revolutionary." Of course, when a blond male activist

gets the gall to ask the Afro chic revolutionary, "Are you willing to die?," he responds by angrily alluding to slavery and his ancestors, stating like a stereotypical race-hustling black Baptist charlatan preacher, "Black people are dying. A lot of black people have died in this country. Black people have earned this leadership in blood. We're not gonna give it up." At this point, the film's protagonist Mark (Mark Frechette) abruptly stands up from his chair and stoically declares in front of all of the activists, "Well, I'm willing to die too. But not of boredom" and then walks out of the meeting, thus causing both the white and black activist to agree on something for the first time and discuss how you cannot be truly 'revolutionary' unless you are willing to go to meetings and work with other people. After all, it takes a certain amount of good old-fashioned collectivist brainwashing for a group of people to be stupid enough to throwaway their lives for some futile cause.

Quite humorously, when Mark walks out of the college commie meeting, the afro-adorned black revolutionary declares that someone should read to him excerpts from Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung and "That bourgeois individualism that he's indulging in is gonna get him killed," thereupon unwittingly revealing his sheer and utter contempt for traditional Anglo-Saxon values as if it is negative to be a free-thinking individualist as opposed to a collectivist-minded automaton like so many non-European peoples in the world. Somewhat ironically, Mark's so-called "bourgeois individualism" does ultimately get him killed, but what the negro does not understand is that the protagonist is not interested in jerking off to the collected works of Wilhelm Reich or becoming comrades with a bunch of wealthy atheistic Hebrews in some pseudo-intellectual Trotskyite think-tank, as he is a hateful and antisocial individual with a sort of degenerated Faustian spirit that is only interested in destruction and wasting pigs. Indeed, as Mark later confesses to the female protagonist, he absolutely loathes the strict rules, masturbatory discussions, and conformist attitudes that plague the far-left groups that he has associated with in the past. Considering his unwavering individualism and cynicism towards just about anything, Mark seems to have more in common with a right-wing anarchist like Louis-Ferdinand Céline than some vapid dork that would embrace the anti-gospel of the Frankfurt School. When Mark is briefly arrested at the beginning of the film for causing trouble at a police station after repeatedly asking when he can bail out his roommate Monty (Bill Garaway) and then defying cops by obnoxiously yelling support to incarcerated activists, he humorously lies to a completely humorless police clerk and uses the anti-lord's name by saying that his name is "Karl Marx" (somewhat humorously, the less than politically astute cop believes him and types "Carl Marx"). Not long after being released from prison, Mark and a friend manage to buy weapons on the spot without getting the required permits after the protagonist lies to salesman and alludes to naughty negroes destroying his neighborhood by stating, "See, we live in a neighborhood that's,

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you know, borderline. You know what I mean? We gotta protect our women." Not only is Mark able to buy a gun, but he is also given important advice, with one salesman telling him that he should not get anything "smaller than .38" and another stating just before he and his friend leave, "Say, boys. One other thing about the law, it says you can protect your house. So if you shoot them in the backyard, drag them inside."

Unbeknownst to Mark, who seems totally disinterested in sex and women, a beautiful brunette pothead with a voluptuous body and sassy attitude named Daria (Daria Halprin) will practically fall into his lap in the literal middle of nowhere after he gets into a series of very precarious predicaments as a result of some absurdly self-destruction decisions that he so thoughtlessly makes. Indeed, a possible victim of watching both *The Wild One* (1953) starring Marlon Brando and Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) starring James Dean one-too-many times during his childhood, Mark makes the moronic decision to stuff his new revolver into one of his boots and heads to a local university after hearing on the news about a campus bloodbath involving 200 armed cops that resulted in the arrest of 25 students and 3 teachers. Indeed, as a shameless thriller-seeker, Mark seems to see the campus confrontation as the perfect opportunity to waste a pig. When Mark arrives at the university, he discovers that a gang of armed negro revolutionaries have taken over the campus library. Upon witnessing a cop shooting one of the negroes after they are gassed out of the library, Mark impulsively reaches for his revolver but someone unseen individual beats him to the chase and shoots one of the policemen dead, thus inspiring the protagonist to flee the university and take a city bus to its final stop at the suburban Hawthorne area where he calls his roommate Monty at a proletarian delicatessen and discovers that he has been featured on a news report and is possibly suspected of committing the cop-killing. After failing to beg the particularly portly delicatessen owner to give him a sub on credit (as the prole businessman tells the young commie, "It's not that I don't trust you personally. . .but if I trusted you, I'd have to trust everybody in the whole world"), Mark begins walking down a sidewalk where he sees an aircraft fly over his head, which inspires him to head Hawthorne Municipal Airport where he makes himself quite comfortable inside a small pink named 'Lilly 17' that he impulsively decides to steal. When an airplane mechanic inquires about what he is doing, Mark has the gall to offer him a ride. While he manages to getaway in the airplane, Mark's rather ballsy thievery is unfortunately almost instantly discovered by workers at the airport as he makes the mistake of taking off in the opposite direction.

While Mark is having a great fun flying the plane across the desert and admiring the scenic landscapes, his future love interest Daria is in the middle of driving in her grey 1950s Buick from L.A. to Phoenix, Arizona to meet with her real estate executive boss Lee Allen (Rod Taylor), though she decides to make a

pit stop on the way to meet with some hippie guru type named James Patterson that she apparently wants to learn meditation from. Although never explicitly stated, it is hinted that Daria is carrying on a fair with her rather repugnant married middle-aged boss Lee and during her road trip she decides to give him a call at a secluded bar called the 'Rumpus Room' where she states, "I'm in some ghost town. I just called to say I may be a little late in Phoenix." As an assumed result of her incessant dope-smoking, Daria is such a ditzzy dame that she cannot even remember the name of the town that she wants to visit, which she simply describes to her boss as a, "fantastic place for meditation." When Lee asks what you do during meditation, she replies in all seriousness in a fashion that demonstrates she cannot be too serious about it, "You think about things." Ultimately, after briefly talking to the proud owner of the Rumpus Room, who immediately realizes by mere her appearance that she is a good-for-nothing hippie numbskull that has come to see the beatnik bastard that is destroying his community, Daria discovers that she is actually already in the town where her pal Patterson lives. When Daria reveals that she has come to visit Patterson, the bar owner gets noticeably agitated and complains in regard to the seemingly enigmatic guru (who the viewer never actually sees), "Well, you can tell him for me he's gonna be the death of this town. He's gonna ruin a piece of American history [...] On account of being a do-gooder, he brought these kids out here from Los Angeles. Said they were sick. Emotionally sick. You know what that means? But if Los Angeles don't want them, why should we want them?" Indeed, literally seconds after the bar owner discusses his great disgust with Patterson and the bad mentally ill boys that he has plagued the town with, one of the bastard broods throws a rock through a window in his bar.

Before Daria exits the bar and faces the dangers of the wild boys that lurk around the desert, an extremely elderly and seemingly borderline senile bar patron asks her, "Do you remember Johnny Wilson?" and when she replies "No," he proudly replies, "That's me. I was middleweight champion of the world in 1920." While Daria is quite nice to the old man and enthusiastically tells him "That's great," she clearly has no clue what he is talking about. Undoubtedly, the self-described 1920 middleweight champion and the other drunk bar patrons, who are notably all extremely old white man sporting cowboys hats, are symbolic of the old and authentic America before Hollywood contrived a pseudo-culture when real frontiersman, outlaws, and farmers were still civilizing the land and wasting injuns. Undoubtedly, it seems Mark was born into the wrong time period, as he has more in common with the old cowboys of the past that battled red-skinned savages and hunted herds of buffalo than the wimpy armchair intellectuals that enjoy sitting around cafes and discussing the dubious theories of some anti-Occidental Jewish intellectual quack. As for Daria, almost immediately after leaving the Rumpus Room, she soon finds herself being taunted by a pack of wild white and mestizo prepubescent boys who initially hide from her

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but then consider gang-raping her. Indeed, after following the boys around the almost ominous desert while trying to ask them where their guardian Patterson is, the boys eventually aggressively form a circle around her like a pack of feral dogs and then their assumed leader asks, "Can we have a piece of ass?" While Daria tries to find humor in the borderline surreal situation and replies, "Are you sure you'd know what to do with it?," she immediately decides to flee the town in her car without even meeting up with Patterson after the boys begin to collectively paw at her panties and pussy. With their hippie guardian Patterson being nowhere to be found while the half-crazed pack-minded kids destroy property and attempt to gang-rape grown woman at a rather premature age before their balls have even dropped, one might assume that these hippie-raised misfits are symbolic of the first generation of social defectives that were brought up after all of America's customs, traditions, and morals were being bulldozed by the spoiled buffoons of the baby boomer generation.

While making her way to Phoenix after being nearly vaginally pillaged by a gang of playfully pernicious preteen savages, Daria receives a delightful surprise that causes her to gleefully shriek like she is on the verge of an orgasm when Mark proceeds to dangerously fly over the hood of her car and almost crash into in the process. Indeed, Mark initially noticed Daria's delectable figure while she was parked on the side of the road and adding water to her car radiator, so he decided to do a little bit of aggressive flirting with her via airplane. When Daria decides to park and get out of her car so that she can get a closer look at the anarchistic aviation action, she has to duck and lie down on the desert sand so that Mark does not crash the plane into her. While Daria is somewhat irked by Mark's reckless and potentially quite deadly behavior, she is filled with joy when he throws her a red nightie from the plane window. When Daria eventually gets back in her car and begins driving again, she is delighted to see that Mark has parked his plane and is waiting for her at a shack owned by an eccentric old man who seems to have taken a liking to the male protagonist. Indeed, Daria had no clue that the seemingly half-deranged aviator of the plane was a handsome devil, so her panties probably become completely soaked when she first sees him as indicated by her rather flirtatious behavior and somewhat salacious 'please-fuck-me' smile. After smirking at him like she wants to jump pussy-first onto his cock while warmly thanking him for the nightie but reluctantly informing him that she cannot wear it since it is for the "wrong sex," Mark takes advantage of the situation by telling her that he is in a "little bit of trouble" and then asks her for a ride so that he can get gas for his plane. While Mark confesses to stealing the plane because, to quote the protagonist, he "needed to get off the ground," Daria does not seem to care too much that he is a fugitive (in fact, it seems to turn her on) and gladly gives him a ride, though they naturally take a temporary detour so that they can get to know each other a little more. Indeed, after driving for a little bit, the two stop at Zabriskie Point—"an area of ancient lake bed deposited

5 to 10 million years ago”—where they ultimately go to wander aimlessly around the geological formations and flirt with one another. After revealing to her that he was a forklift driver as of yesterday and was kicked out of college after breaking into the dean’s office and reprogramming the computer so that he “made all the engineers take art courses,” Daria informs him that she heard on the radio that a student activist killed a cop. When Daria reveals that “the guy who killed the cop was white,” Mark attempts to shrug it off by replying “Oh, white man taking up arms for the blacks, huh? Just like old John Brown,” thus reflecting his playfully sardonic sense of humor. Needless to say, Daria is quite enamored with Mark’s crude charm and seems to have only stopped at Zabriskie Point so that he can fuck her there.

When Daria offers Mark a joint, the protagonist reacts somewhat unexpectedly by complaining about how one of the commie groups that he associated with attempted to force him to quite dope-smoking and then remarks, “I wasn’t really in the group. I just couldn’t stand their bullshit talk. Really bored the hell out of me. But when it gets down to it, you’d have to choose one side or the other.” While Daria seems as dumb as dames come, she exposes the inconsistency in Mark’s logic by replying, “There’s a thousand sides, not just heroes and villains,” to which he less than confidently retorts like a child that knows it is wrong but will not admit it, “Point is, if you don’t see them as villains, you can’t get rid of them.” Of course, it is quite obvious at this point that, like many people of his generation, Mark is just a hopelessly confused young man that is into destruction for destruction’s sake and he has no real argument as to why he wants to destroy the system aside from vague pseudo-moralistic sermonizing. Indeed, Mark is filled with a lot of hate and rage, but he does not quite seem to know why, but he does know that acting like a criminal gives him some minor relief from his suffering. Naturally, even a happy-go-lucky pothead like Daria can only endure so much of Mark’s pathological negativity and cynicism and proceeds to mock him by proposing that they play a “Death Game” involving attempting to kill as many animals as possible and eventually each other after he hurts her feelings by describing the desert as being like “death.” At this point, Mark seems to slightly shed his abrasive tough guy exterior and contrarian attitude and begins focusing on aggressively flirting with Daria, who naturally laps up the much-desired attention. Indeed, it does not take long after he begins touching her fairly tanned thigh and unbuttoning her blouse that Mark manages to delicately defile Daria in the desert in what ultimately evolves into a surrealist orgy where a number of hippies involved in twosomes and bisexual threesomes surround the protagonists. Notably, this somewhat haunting dust orgy was performed by the experimental theatre group The Open Theater, hence why the film production was investigated for supposedly violating the Mann Act, even though it is clearly simulated sex that resembles really preposterous performance art (though it should be noted that a member of the group, playwright Jean-Claude van Itallie, who is best

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known for the satirical counterculture play *America Hurrah*, went on to direct the homo hardcore flick *American Cream* (1972) under the pseudonym 'Rob Simple'). Ultimately, the inconveniently sandy lovemaking session gets so passionate that Daria finishes virtual stranger Mark off with a very loving blowjob that makes it quite clear that the female protagonist loves sucking cock. After they finish making love and get dressed, Mark peacefully states to Daria, "I always knew it would be like this" and when she asks "Us?," he replies "The desert," thus contradicting what he said earlier about the area. Unfortunately for the female protagonist, Mark's seemingly orgasmically otherworldly sand sex with Daria is not enough for him to reconsider executing his seemingly suicidal mission.

While heading back to Daria's car, Mark is forced to hide behind a red portapotty when a police officer shows up and begins questioning the female protagonist. Although Mark prepares to shoot the cop while hiding behind the portable toilet with his revolver in his hand, the police officer luckily leaves, though Daria subsequently realizes that he is the supposed fugitive cop-killer after she notices his gun. Although he admits he is innocent even though he actually wanted to waste the pig, Mark refuses to listen to reason and flee the state with Daria, who has good reason to keep him by her side since she now seems to be quite infatuated with him and surely cannot handle the thought of never being able to feel his throbbing rump-splitter inside her fleshy wet orifice(s) again. Of course, Mark remains firm in his desire to take the possibly deadly "risk" of flying the plane back to its rightful owner, even joking, "Sure. You don't borrow someone's private plane. . . take it for a joyride, and never come back to express your thanks." Before heading back, Mark has Daria and the old hermit with the shack help him paint the plane with conspicuously crude psychedelic imagery, including tits on the wings and silly stereotypical hippie slogans on the side like "SUCK BUCKS" and "NO WARS." Not surprisingly, Mark is quite self-satisfied in regard to his preposterous paint job, stating that some people might think that it is not a plane but instead a, "Strange prehistoric bird spotted over the Mojave Desert with its genitals out." When Mark finally flies away in the plane, Daria waves goodbye in what is, unbeknownst to her, her last farewell to the hateful hippie hunk that managed to make her get wet in the most driest and most arid of regions. Meanwhile at the airport, tons of cops, media whores, and spectators have crowded around the area, though they have no clue that the villain plans to come back. When Mark finally arrives at the airport and prepares to land his rather obnoxious looking plane, he is bombarded by no less than four police cruisers. When Mark rams his plane into one of the patrol cars while attempting to drive in the grass so that he can escape, he is shot and killed instantly by a trigger-happy cop in what is arguably the most fittingly anticlimatic conclusion to arguably the briefest and most anticlimatic chase scene in cinema history. Indeed, Mark dies in a quite impotent fashion for a no less impotent 'political'

cause.

When Daria eventually hears about Mark's death on her car radio while parked on the side of the road in a region inhabited by gigantic cañti, she develops a forlornly haunted expression on her face, rocks her body back and forth for a little bit while she is staring at the ground, and then abruptly jumps inside her car and drives away as if there is some kind of emergency. Despite everything that has happened, Daria still decides to honor her boss Lee's wishes and drives to his luxury desert home in Phoenix. In what is indubitably another absurd stereotypical leftist attempt to link American capitalism with National Socialism, Lee's desert home bears a striking resemblance to Hitler's home Berghof in the Obersalzberg of the Bavarian Alps near Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, Germany. When Dara finally arrives at Lee's lavish pad, she is disgusted to see three opulent middle-aged whores chatting and sunbathing by a pool and proceeds to put her head under a small manmade waterfall and cry, as if she hopes the water will obscure her tears. After briefly grieving for her handsome prince, Daria watches from an outside window while maintaining an expression of complete and utter contempt as Lee and a half a dozen other business men in suits negotiate about a big real estate deal involving the building of a suburban development in the middle of the desert. When Daria goes inside the house and Lee finally notices her, the superficially charming capitalist approaches her and informs her where her bedroom is while completely ignoring the forlorn expression on her face. While Daria proceeds to walk to her room, she barely even looks inside and instead decides to abruptly leave the house without even saying a word to anyone after a young American Indian maid smiles at her. While Daria begins to drive away, she soon decides to park her car and exit the vehicle so that she can stare at the quite scenic American Berghof. After getting back in the car again and then touching the red nightie that Mark gave her, Daria once again exits the automobile and stares at the Lee's home while seething with rage and hatred until the building completely explodes in a symbolic scene where all the female protagonist's negative emotions as a result of her desert lover's senseless death are channeled into the quite aesthetically pleasing obliteration of corporate crusader Lee's home. Indeed, as demonstrated by the fact that the house is shown exploding multiple times from various different angles, this segment is clearly not a depiction of reality but a mere figment of Daria's rather irate imagination. In a five minute montage sequence that is juxtaposed with Pink Floyd's "Come In Number 51, Your Time Is Up," racks full of clothing, grills and other cookout equipment, refrigerators full of food, and large shelves full of books, among other things, are depicted exploding in slow-motion in what is indubitably a metaphorical fantasy depiction of both Daria and Antonioni's longing for the violent annihilation of the American dream. Of course, it should be noted that Uncle Adolf's Berghof was reduced to ruins by both retreating SS troops that set it on fire and Allied troops that subsequently looted it. After

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the explosion dream-sequence, Daria smiles and then drives away just as the sun begins to set while Roy Orbison sings "So Young" in what ultimately proves to be a strangely fitting, bittersweet conclusion to a quite brutal yet nonetheless extremely beautiful film. While one can only speculate as to what happens to Daria's character, it would probably not be a surprise if she became politically fanatical as a result of Mark's tragic death. After all, it is said that it was only after his equally grotesque looking brother Aleksandr 'Sasha' Ulyanov was executed as punishment for attempting to assassinate Russian Czar Alexander III that Lenin become completely politically radicalized.

Notably, in his January 1, 1970 review of the film where he gave it a pathetic two out of four stars, lifelong committed leftist Roger Ebert complained in regard to what he saw as the major flaw of *Zabriskie Point*, "The fact is, Antonioni has no feeling for young people. In his European films, he allowed his characters to behave mostly as adults. But in "Zabriskie Point" we get kids who fall in love and act like kids (running up and down sand dunes, etc.) and the sight is even more depressing than adults doing it. He has tried to make a serious movie and hasn't even achieved a beach-party level of insight." As far as I can tell, it seems that Ebert was either not completely paying attention to the film and/or refused to accept the damning insights Antonioni clearly offers because, aside from depicting an inordinately naturalistic and sensual desert romance between two individuals that clearly have great organic sexual chemistry, the film hints more than just a couple times that these young hippies are nothing more than extremely confused overgrown child who do not seem to understand, let alone care enough to understand, as to why they do the glaringly stupid things that they do. Indeed, while the protagonist is depicted as a rightfully angry and confused young man who has some much pent up hatred and rage that he does not care where or how he channels to the point where he is completely willing to throw his life for something that is so meaningless (hence his absurd rationalizations like, "Point is, if you don't see them as villains, you can't get rid of them"), the female protagonist is a sort of perennial teenybopper and shamelessly self-indulgent pothead princess who takes nothing seriously and simply lives to perpetuate her desire for perpetual pleasure (notably, at one point when she is asked if she does secretary work, she replies while sounding stoned retarded, "Well, it's not something I really dig to do. I just work when I need the bread"). In that sense, despite being complete opposites in terms of personalities, it is no surprise that the protagonists seem like practical soul mates during their rather erotically eventful date in the desert as they are both intrinsically impulsive individuals that take a visceral approach to life, though it is surely fitting that their relationship was as brief and fleeting as it was. While the protagonists more or less seem to literally fall in love at first sight, they are both far too damaged, immature, and whimsical to sustain anything resembling a healthy long-term monogamous relationship, which was quite typical of that zeitgeist,

despite whatever romantic bullshit that a hippie sympathizer like Ebert wants to believe. Indeed, the counterculture movement just gave naturally impulsive and self-destructive individuals an excuse to kill themselves faster as the short life of Frechette and countless other famous and non-famous individuals of that exceedingly excremental era readily reveals.

Undoubtedly, despite his rather short-lived acting career, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that Mark Frechette—a man that was about ten times more attractive and subversive than Jack Nicholson (who, incidentally, starred in Antonioni's subsequent English-language feature *The Passenger* (1975)), even if the latter is obviously a much more talented actor—was to the hippie generation what Marlon Brando and James Dean were to their eras, so it is only fitting that he croaked at age 27 after a most pathetic downfall that even rivals that of Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones. In fact, Antonioni was so impressed with Frechette that he once stated, "He has the elegance of an aristocrat, though from a poor family. There is something mystical about him." Frechette's aristocratic essence was certainly put to good use as WWI era Italian military officer in the extremely underrated Italian (anti)war film *Uomini contro* (1970) aka *Many Wars Ago* directed by Francesco Rosi. Indeed, in terms of Hollywood actors of that time (if he can even be considered one), Frechette was probably the closest living embodiment of the 'Lucifer' type that queer avant-garde auteur Kenneth Anger always speaks of as a sort of slightly less demonic Hollywood Bobby Beausoleil and criminally-inclined counterculture Don Juan who was doomed to crash and burn, especially after foolishly becoming a follower of sexually predatory folk musician turned charlatan cult leader Mel Lyman (in fact, Frechette insanely gave the \$60,000 he was paid on Antonioni's film to Lyman). While some people believe that the actor got involved in the bank robbery that ruined his life to fund Lyman and his commune, Hungarian filmmaker Dezső Magyar (*Büntetőexpedíció* aka *Punitive Expedition*, *Agitátorok* aka *The Agitators*) claimed in an interview featured in *Filmkultura* magazine that he did it to fund a film, or as the auteur stated himself: "[M]y first friend was Mark Frechette, protagonist of the film *ZABRISKIE POINT*. We wanted to make a film, to adapt a part of *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT* because we felt that America was like a Dostoyevsky-type world. Mark said that he would get the money in Boston. He phoned me every second day and always assured me that he almost had the money. One day he called me and said that he would bring the 5 million dollars the next day. Great! I was watching TV in the evening when it was announced that ... Mark Frechette attempted to rob a bank at gunpoint ... and was arrested." Of course, Antonioni had to have great big balls to have the gall to cast non-actors Frechette and Halprin in his first relatively big budget American Hollywood movie, yet he ultimately made the right decision as I could not imagine big superstars of the time like Warren Beatty and Jane Fonda in the lead roles as they would totally taint the film's sense of authenticity. A

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perturbingly beautiful product of Antonioni taking a celluloid canvas and managing to simultaneously paint his love of the landscape and contempt for most of the people and their intrinsically worthless pseudo-cultures, *Zabriskie Point* makes counterculture era America seem like a gigantic loony bin made up of the decidedly degenerate lapsed cowboys and frontiersmen who, as a result of no longer having any land or injuns to conquer, have succumbed to subconscious suicide as a result of being largely dominated by two equally deleterious rivaling groups: the soulless corporate materialists that want to turn the country into a gigantic parking lot (notably, in one scene in the film, a tourist states to his wife in all seriousness upon arriving at the titular location, "They oughta build a drive-in here. They'd make a mint") and ethno-masochistic white activists that are seemingly so bored as a result of being the most spoiled generation in human history that they have nothing left to do but mindlessly destroy their country, pretend to empathize with the plight of poor ghetto negroes that hate their guts, and dispose of centuries upon centuries of family and cultural traditions because it is the 'cool' and 'hip' thing to do.

Admittedly, although I 'dig' some genuine counterculture cinema that was created by people that were actually associated with the movement that includes works ranging from James Broughton's *The Bed* (1968) and *Dreamwood* (1972) to Dennis Hopper's *The Last Movie* (1971) to Pierre Clémenti's *Visa de censure n° X* (1967) and *New Old* (1979) to Albie Thoms' *Rita and Dundi* (1966) and *Marinetti* (1969), I typically cannot stand Hollywood movies about hippies as they more often than not romanticize the era as some sort of virtual Golden Age where a true utopia was almost fully realized by a group of deluded drug addicts that somehow thought it would be a bright idea to transform the Euro-American bourgeoisie into xenophilic noble savages. Luckily, Charles Manson and his harem of deranged LSD-ridden whores came along and proved that 'free love,' primitive communal living, and recreational drug use oftentimes comes at a high price. Of course, one of the things that makes *Zabriskie Point* so potent is that it more or less predicted that things would probably end very badly for the flower children and the United States in general. Rather unfortunately, lead Frechette's death-by-barbell was a slightly less glamorous way to go out than his cinematic death, though I think it is safe to say his real-life downfall only adds to the dark mystique of Antonioni's film, which is, at the very least, a near masterpiece that has yet to get its due and probably never will since it is an arthouse film that is probably most sought out by the wrong people, including brain-dead Jerry Garcia fans and deluded wimps that want to see a film that validates their belief that the hippies were anything more than useful idiots that had succumbed to their baser instincts and more or less gave a good chunk of the country away to a certain race that calls itself a religion. On a more personal level, *Zabriskie Point* is the only film I have ever seen where I found myself somewhat identifying with hippie protagonist. Indeed, during my high school and college years,

I was full with the sort of irrational hatred, rage, and nihilistic self-destructive behavior that epitomizes the male protagonist, thus I probably found the character's death to be more senselessly tragic than most viewers would. After all, had the protagonist had attempted to do some research into why he hated the world instead of simply acting off impulse, as well as focused more on pussy than the police, chances are he would have mellowed out to some extent and realized that he was being manipulated by the very same sort of people he had foolishly sided with. Also, I am sure the character would have been less inclined to risk his life were he to realize that the movement was largely led by insincere racial aliens with ulterior motives who would ultimately be largely responsible for the sort of thought-policing that has plagued virtually aspects of contemporary American life, especially in universities. As an innately rebellious individual, I am sure that Frechette would have found the age of political correctness and thought crimes to be infinitely more insufferable his own era. While a self-described super-fascist, it can certainly be argued that Italian philosopher Julius Evola shared a similar view to his fellow countryman Antonioni in regard intellectual and spiritual bankruptcy of the counterculture movement. Indeed, while Antonioni hints in *Zabriskie Point* that the student activists were just as deluded and decadent as the capitalists and bourgeois 'oppressors' that they hated, Evola wrote in his book *Cavalcare la Tigre* (1961) aka *Ride the Tiger: A Survival Manual for the Aristocrats of the Soul* in regard to the Marxist scam and how it is just as much a cultural and spiritual affliction as capitalism: "Humanity's existential lesion is generally explained [by leftists] as an effect of material, economic organization in a society such as the capitalist one. The true remedy, the start of a "new and authentic humanism," a human integrity and a "happiness never known before," would then be furnished by the setting up of a different socioeconomic system, by the abolition of capitalism, and by the institution of a communist society of workers, such as is taking place in the Soviet area. Karl Marx had already praised in communism "the real appropriation of the human essence on the part of man and for the sake of man, the return of man to himself as a social being, thus as a human man," seeing in it the equivalent of a perfect naturalism and even a true humanism. In its radical forms, wherever this myth is affirmed through the control of movements, organizations, and people, it is linked to a corresponding education, a sort of psychic lobotomy intended methodically to neutralize and infantilize any form of higher sensibility and interest, every way of thought that is not in terms of the economy and socioeconomic processes. Behind the myth is the most terrible void, which acts as the worst opiate yet administered to a rootless humanity. Yet this deception is no different from the myth of prosperity, especially in the form it has taken in the West. Oblivious of the fact that they are living on a volcano, materially, politically, and in relation to the struggle for world domination, Westerners enjoy a technological euphoria, encouraged by the prospects of the "second industrial revolution" of the atomic age. At all

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events, the error and the illusion are the same in both socioeconomic ideologies, namely the serious assumption that existential misery can be reduced to suffering in one way or another from material want, and to impoverishment due to a given socioeconomic system." Aside from its cultural importance as arguably the only honest and artistically merited Hollywood counterculture film, *Zabriskie Point* also seems like a superficial aesthetic outline for much of David Lynch's post-*Blue Velvet* cinematic output, especially in regard to *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Lost Highway* (1997), and even *The Straight Story* (1999). Indeed, while I still have yet to see all of Antonioni's films, his tragic Death Valley romance seems to be the only one that has bizarre 'Lynchian' movements. Somewhat interestingly, *Wild at Heart* star Grace Zabriskie is actually descended from the same exact opulent Polish-American family as the wealthy businessman that *Zabriskie Point* is named after. Of course, while Lynch's films have seemingly infinite idiosyncratic moments, Antonioni certainly beat him to the punch with a number of things, arguably most notably the 'home appliance holocaust' at the conclusion of *Zabriskie Point*, which indubitably proves that you do not have to be a commie to enjoy the pseudo-apocalyptic destruction of expensive consumer goods.

-Ty E

STAGE FRIGHT

Michele Soavi (1987)

Michele Soavi is without a doubt the most promising director of Italian slasher films, or giallo, out there. His recycling of common themes while replacing parts not with synthetic, but organic instances of artistry is overwhelming. His most successful film and with good reason is Cemetery Man, also known as Dellamorte Dellamore. His first brainchild was known as Deliria in Italy but throughout the globe is known as Bloody Bird, Aquarius, and most notably in part to DVD labels and posters, Stage Fright. Stage Fright may come with its flaws but besides from the shoestring ending, proves to be a hard-hearted entry of slasher films, while not compromising its quality for innovative deaths, which has many. After working carefully on many of the Demoni saga, I'd like to presume that Soavi enjoyed the "horror amongst a cinematic medium" theme pretty well so he wrote a script for a film adapting the same concept but with a Phantom of the Opera twist bringing the terror into one of the archaic forms of performance art. A struggling group of theater actors work together to bring a piece called The Night Owl. After an incident in which one of the leading ladies of the play unknowingly harbors an escaped lunatic known for slaughtering a group of theatrical denizens back to their building, a night of nocturnal terror is unleashed with blame laid on the maniacal director who succumbs to the madness of creating art. After the killer steals an Owl mask from a flamboyantly gay Giovanni Lombardo Radice, the inhabitants of the stage are sent running for their life. On terms of slashers and masks, Stage Fright keeps a unkempt underdog aspect with the shocking framing and displays of the killer. The Kikuyu of Kenya see the owl as the harbinger of death so the placement of this creature in a slasher flick is more than acceptable. Like their beliefs, when one sees the owl, someone will die. Athena herself would be proud of this film. The owl costume brings a similar aesthetic that the mask in Last House on Dead End Street brought about. While Stage Fright might be weighed down under the scornful of the average slasher fan that drools at the sight of Jason Voorhees' with another bag of preteen sluts, Stage Fright remains one of the most inquisitive, thoughtful slasher films of all time. The greatest aspect of Stage Fright isn't the many ways he dispatches his victims. I could go into detail with this though, enunciating the idea of him using a power drill through a door to kill a male protecting the females in the safe room. I could argue with the misplaced idea that Stage Fright has the greatest chainsaw murdering context over ever The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, which immortalized the weapon within horror. I could even point the beauty out of the stabbing of Corrine as she doesn't realize the "killer" isn't the lovably homosexual Brett but a raving lunatic. But no, all of this proves to be entertainment leading up to a true work of pseudo-chauvinism. The real highlight is the over-incredible soundtrack. Borrowing a classical in-film score of music originally used in Sergei

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M. Eisenstein's *Strike* and using a soft theme consisting a cherubic hums, *Stage Fright* goes above and beyond the works and instances of *Goblin* thanks to Simon Boswell. *Stage Fright* marks the near debut of Michele Soavi and for a starting film, remains practically flawless despite the "hammy" ending. Pay special attention to the perfect scene of the madman's inspirational script rewrite using the actors (or what's left of them) in various poses with feathers strewn about. This signals the modern birth of giallo hybrids. Poetic and coarse, Soavi morphs murder into prose with *Stage Fright*.

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CEMETERY MAN

Michele Soavi (1994)

I don't know about other people, but to me, Rupert Everett—a man who first gained critical and commercial acclaim by portraying a British cocksucking commie spy traitor who defected to the Soviet Union in the film *Another Country* (1984)—positively personifies the pathetically pompous and all-too-proper English poof, even if he looks like a Roman soldier, so I have always found it quite intriguing that he gave one of his greatest performances as a somewhat suave and rampantly heterosexual Guido cemetery caretaker. Indeed, for what is arguably the greatest and most original 'zombie comedy' ever made, *Cemetery Man* (1994) aka *Dellamorte Dellamore* aka *Of Death, of Love* aka *Zombie Graveyard* aka *Demons '95* aka *Of Death and Love* directed by Italian horror auteur Michele Soavi (*Stage Fright*, *The Church*), Everett unequivocally proved he could pull off a quasi-illiterate graveyard philosopher with a more bitter than sweet view of romance and a nasty knack for fornicating in graveyards with busty goombah babes and putting more bullets than semen in said women's bodies. A deathly dark (anti)romance of the rather nihilistic sort disguised as a quirky horror comedy, Soavi's masterpiece of the mirthfully macabre is based on the 1991 novel *Dellamorte Dellamore* by comic artist/writer Tiziano Sclavi, yet there is no doubt that the director has made the source material his own. Featuring brain-splattering Fulci-esque zombie kill scenes, oneiric surrealism and misogyny in the spirit of Argento (albeit more playful!), a cynical portrait of Italian society that rivals that of unsung artsploitation auteur Alberto Cavallone, and old school gothic aesthetics that recall the best of Mario Bava (in fact, Soavi opted for using an authentic ancient ossuary for the film), *Cemetery Man* is unquestionably a highly addictive celluloid treat for anyone with even the most marginal interest in great Guido horror cinema, even if it offers more unhinged laughs than petrified screams, as a work that is, philosophically speaking, sort of like a comedy for antinatalists, as well as a romance flick for lapsed necrophiles. A film that is truly done a great disservice when it is described simply as a "horror comedy," "zombie comedy," or anything like that, Soavi's considerably misanthropic masterpiece may deserve some comparison with works ranging from Federico Fellini's *Toby Dammit* (1968) to Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead II* (1987) to James M. Muro's *Street Trash* (1987), but when it comes down to it, there is really no other film quite like it. Indeed, if you're looking for a philistine zombie flick with a sorry 'socially redeeming' message like those directed by George A. Romero, *Cemetery Man* will certainly prove to be an outstanding disappointment, but if you're looking for what is a seemingly seamlessly assembled arthouse-horror-comedy hybrid the visually quotes Belgian surrealist artist René Magritte and makes vengeful mass murder seem strangely merry, you can probably find no better work than Soavi's lavishly loony neo-gothic celluloid nightmare-within-a-nightmare.

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Francesco Dellamorte (Rupert Everett) is a cynical yet serious cemetery caretaker that rather reluctantly calls a small Italian town named Buffalora his home and he lives in a decrepit old ramshackle at the ancient graveyard with his severely retarded and morbidly obese childlike sidekick/assistant Gnaghi (François Hadji-Lazaro), who can only one (non)word: “nyah.” Working at a graveyard where the front gate has the Latin inscription RESVRRECTVRIS (“They will resurrect”) engraved on it, it should be no surprise that Dellamorte has a semi-serious zombie problem, though he prefers to call these rotten flesheaters “returners.” Indeed, for whatever reason (although never mentioned in the film, director Soavi credited Mandragola roots in the cemetery as being responsible for reanimating the dead), most of the corpses come back to life seven days after the caretaker and his invalid comrade bury them, thus it is Dellamorte’s and his strangely cute and cuddly sidekick Gnaghi’s job to kill them by putting a bullet in their brain, as it is the only way to make the undead dead. A perennial loner who is believed to be impotent by the locals due to false rumors spread by young goombah punks and who is more or less illiterate despite the fact he is an incessantly pondering gravedigger philosopher of sorts, Dellamorte is not exactly the sort of man you would expect to be looking for love, but it eventually comes to him in the voluptuous form of a widow known as “She” (played by Finnish-Italian model turned actress Anna Falchi, who was discovered by maestro Federico Fellini), who comes to the graveyard to grieve over her recently deceased elderly husband. A beautiful yet seemingly warped woman of the rather whimsical sort, “She” only becomes interested in Dellamorte after he shows her his ossuary. While Dellamorte and “She” soon fall in love, their relationship is killed off as abruptly as it starts when the latter is killed after her belated husband rises from the grave and bites her while she is consummating coitus with the sexually virile graveyard caretaker. When “She” later rises from the dead, Dellamorte shoots her in the head, though, as the devastated caretaker will soon learn, she might not have been dead after all. Meanwhile, Gnaghi starts a morbid yet mostly harmless sexless romance with the reanimated head of the local mayor’s prematurely deceased daughter Valentina Scanarotti (Fabiana Formica), who was decapitated in a gruesome motorcycle accident. Of course, Dellamorte’s beloved “She” also returns as a zombie, thereupon causing the caretaker to realize that he was indeed responsible for her death and thus throwing him into a deep hallucinatory depression that inspires him to kill seven of the young Guido punks who spread the rumors of his completely fictional sexual impotence. Indeed, as demonstrated by his one-sided talk with a dictatorial Grim Reaper, who ultimately convinces him to kill the living instead of the dead, poor depressed Dellamorte might not have the most sound of minds, though he is certainly more rational and sane than anybody else from his quaint small town. Of course, Dellamorte kills “She” too after she tries to take a big blood-gushing bite out of his flesh. The Caretaker also has to kill Gnaghi’s zombie lover Valentina after she kills her

mayor father (Stefano Masciarelli), who was more interested in his own political campaign than his town's zombie problem and the tragic death of his teenage daughter.

Undoubtedly, things get rather strange and 'soul-stirring' for Dellamorte when two women (also played by Anna Falchi) that look exactly like his beloved 'She' enter his life and ostensibly fall in mutual love with him at first sight. Indeed, the first is the secretary of the town's new mayor Civardi (Pietro Genardi), who instantly falls in love with the cemetery man and even agrees to marry him. Rather unfortunately, the Secretary is afraid of cocks and cannot stand the thought of a big purple-headed love truncheon deflowering her nubile naughty bits, so Dellamorte confirms to her the false rumors of his impotence and goes to a local doctor so he can be castrated (!), but luckily the physician refuses to do the procedure and instead injects his member with a painful substance that will supposedly guarantee that he will fail to "rise to the occasion" for at least the next month. Unfortunately, while Dellamorte is recuperating from taking a gigantic needle to the dick, the sensual Secretary is raped by mayor Civardi and she enjoys it so much that she drops the seemingly perennially forsaken cemetery man and cancels their planned marriage. Rather enraged after losing his second lady love, Dellamorte drives around town while looking for a prostitute and is ultimately approached by two young female college students, including a lady that also bears a striking resemblance to "She" named Laura (Anna Falchi), who he instantly falls in love with and vice versa. Indeed, despite the cock-blocking injection that he received to his dago dong, Dellamorte is so aroused by Laura that he manages to sexually service the carnal college student three times in row, but when he subsequently finds out that she is a high price prostitute, he kills her and two of her friends by setting fire to their apartment. When Dellamorte finds out from the local police investigator Marshall Straniero (played by American actor Mickey Knox)—a malignantly moronic man of law who humorously blames everyone except the cemetery man for the crimes that the cemetery man did indeed commit—that his friend Franco (Anton Alexander) took credit for burning up the college girls, he visits his less than sane comrade in the hospital to find out why he "stole his murders." While talking to Franco, who is in a semi-comatose state, Dellamorte casually puts a bullet in the brain of a nun, a nurse, and a doctor. While leaving the hospital, Dellamorte once again bumps into Marshall Straniero and confesses to the murders, but the automaton-like cop does not pay him any attention. Fed up with life, love, and killing as man who states, "I'd give my life to be dead," Dellamorte decides to leave Buffalora for good, so he tells Gnaghi to pack up his things, including an ancient coffin, and the two leave town. After leaving Buffalora and heading towards a mountain road, Dellamorte abruptly slams on the breaks, which causes Gnaghi to severely injure his rather thick head. After coming to the conclusion, "The rest of the world does not exist," and becoming all the more upset by the fact that his only

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friend is dying in a rather ridiculous fashion, Dellamorte decides to kill himself and his comrade, but Gnaghi stops him at the last second. Indeed, somehow smashing his head was to Gnaghi's benefit as he can now talk and asks Dellamorte, "take me home...please," to which the graveyard caretaker eloquently replies, "Nyah." Indeed, while life might suck, especially when you're a mass murderer that is responsible for killing your own lover(s), Dellamorte seems to more or less finally come to terms with that fact in the end.

Apparently, the American fanboy horror magazine Fangoria revealed in January 2011 that Michele Soavi was planning to direct a sequel to Cemetery Man that the director described as being more brutal and shocking than the original, though there seems to be no evidence that the film has ever went past the pre-production stage. Personally, I doubt that even Soavi himself could top the original film, but I have to admit that I would not mind seeing him try, even with an older and even gayer Rupert Everett as the lead. Additionally, in the late-1990s Everett approached Soavi about creating an American remake of the film but the project never went anywhere, which is probably for the better, as demonstrated by the countless horrendous Hollywood remakes of successful European films. Indeed, American filmgoers would have certainly been dumbfounded by an unclassifiable flick with the beautifully brutal flesheater-extermimating of Fulci's *Zombi 2* (1979) aka *Zombie* yet the elegant in-your-face surrealism of Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), hence why the *Cemetery Man* was a total flop when it was released in United States. Like the criminally overlooked Spanish arthouse-horror flick *A Bell from Hell* (1973) aka *La campana del inferno* directed by mysterious auteur Claudio Guerin, Soavi's meta-offbeat zombie flick was certainly not specially tailored for the masses, as it is a true auteur piece directed by a born cinematic artist who just happens to work in the horror genre. Indeed, when it comes to Italian horror, Soavi is the only mensch that deserves to be credited as following directly in the footsteps of great cinematic artists like Mario Bava and Dario Argento, though *Cemetery Man* certainly demonstrates that he is a more eclectic filmmaker than his celluloid progenitors, as neither of these men were able to juggle comedy, horror, and surrealism in such a seamless fashion. A bad dream-within-a-dream-within-a-dream that does for the zombie genre what Luis Buñuel did for European arthouse cinema, Soavi's film is like the *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) of horror, albeit more figuratively and literally biting, as a feverishly fucked flesheater fever dream of the fiercely farcical sort where the rotting undead are certainly no more repugnant than the living. Indeed, if you're looking for a flesheater flick that more accurately captures the essence of our degenerated and disillusioned zeitgeist and do not mind a little art and pathologically politically incorrect humor mixed with your zombie guts, forget the retrograde undead filmic feces of George A. Romero's post-*Day of the Dead* oeuvre and bite on *Cemetery Man*.

-Ty E

DRIFT

Michiel van Jaarsveld (2001)

When I was in middle school and high school, I would oftentimes have these obscenely overweight and disgruntled middle-aged woman teachers with butch bull-dyke haircuts who, probably owing to the fact that they probably hadn't been fucked in years, if not decades, and seemed quite resentful towards males in general, would brag with a sense of sadistic glee that girls apparently matured at a younger age than boys anytime a male student annoyed them or did something they did not like in class. Of course, negro children and dogs mature earlier than white kids too, but I digress. To a certain degree, I agree with these fiercely frigid lard ass teachers, as I certainly noticed all throughout high school that girls tended to get into sex and drugs at an earlier age than boys, but of course it is much easier for them to get sex than it is for a young man, who usually has to have something of value, be it social or material, to give to a girl before she will agree to allow him to play stink-finger with her. Indeed, at the same age young men are just attempting to get a little piece of pussy for themselves, young girls are already learning to use their main vein as a weapon against older men, or at least such is the case in the fairly dark drama *Drift* (2001) aka *Adrift* aka *100 paarden* directed by Dutch filmmaker Michiel van Jaarsveld (Marrakech, Papa's Tango) and penned by Jacqueline Epskamp, which depicts how a semi-homely 15-year-old teenage dame of the rather white trash sort manages to manipulate and destroy the lives of virtually every man she knows, including her extra loving big brother and best friend's father. Aside from say Dick Maas' goofy and fairly unserious classic comedy *Flodder* (1986) and its sequels, van Jaarsveld's particularly potent and fairly unsettling feature-length debut has to feature what is arguably the most dysfunctional white trash family in Dutch cinema history. A rare coming-of-age flick from the perspective of a fairly pernicious little wench who acts like a whore because she is starving for male attention yet at the same time cannot stand the fact that her brother-cum-guardian is always giving her his undivided attention and is quite overprotective of her to the point of being puritanical even though he himself is more or less a lowlife criminal with a somewhat busted moral compass, *Drift* was made as a part of the highly worthwhile 2001 'No More Heroes' series produced by the production company Motel Films where five different talented young Dutch novice filmmakers were given the opportunity to direct a feature-length film depicting "individuals who consciously turn their backs on society." As someone who had already watched and thoroughly enjoyed two of the films in the series, including Martin Koolhoven's *AmnesiA* (2001) and Lodewijk Crijns' *Met grote blijdschap* (2001) aka *With Great Joy*, I could not help but see van Jaarsveld's cinematic effort, which proved to be no less bleak and dejecting, even though it is quite aesthetically different from the other two films, as it takes a more realistic and almost cinéma vérité-like

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approach to its material. Set in a sort of Dutch sub-suburban ghetto where the locals look more like degenerate white Americans from the inner-city than Western Europeans and are constantly smoking a joint with one hand while chugging a can of beer with the other, *Drift* is somewhat like a Larry Clark flick sans the flagrant fetishism for scrawny skater boys and other forms of gratuitous degeneracy. Featuring a malicious teenage whore-in-training anti-heroine whose adult brother acts as her legal guardian and supports the family by bootlegging rancid meat and selling it to sketchy food vendors, van Jaarsveld's film is ultimately an uniquely unhealthy reminder of the deleterious effects of Americanization on Western European culture, as well as a rare film that depicts how truly dangerous teenage girls can be in terms of their innately conspiratorial and sadistically self-serving ways, especially when they have been brought up in a broken home without a real male role model.

Samantha aka 'Sammy' (Christel Oomen of Ineke Houtman's *Stille Nacht* (2004) in her first acting role) is a 15-year-old girl who is experiencing a sexual awakening of sorts, but her big brother Jakob (played by Dragan Bakema, who is so swarthy due to his Serbian ancestry that he managed to pass as an Arab pimp thug in Lodewijk Crijns' *Loverboy* (2003)) is quite overbearing and refuses to allow her to have a beau, as he cannot stomach the thought of another male touching his beloved little sister. Since their estranged mother disappeared long ago and their deranged dipsomaniac father Don (Bert Luppés of Dick Maas' *Sint* (2010) aka *Saint*) is in a mental hospital, Jakob has been Sammy's sole legal guardian for five years and he makes ends meet by buying large quantities of rancid meat from a local factory and selling it to local street vendors at a slightly inflated rate, thus reflecting the warped moral lows he will go to make sure that his little sister is provided for. Each morning before she rides to her high school on a moped, Sammy's brother puts her hair into a ponytail and makes her a sandwich for lunch, but she throws away said sandwich on the way there, thus reflecting what little she thinks of the sacrifice Jakob has made for her. Sammy's best friend is a catty and gossipy little blonde bourgeois bitch named Liz (Maud Dolsma) whose mother is a borderline catatonic pill-popping housewife and whose superficially charismatic father Nevill (Hans Hoes) is a somewhat successful and educated fellow who owns a print shop and rents out trailers to vacationing krauts during the summertime. While Sammy has a crush on a dorky poser punk kid named Thijs (Tim Zweije) who wears the same exact t-shirt of the anarcho-punk band Crass every single day, her friend Liz mocks her because of this, so the protagonist decides to keep her romantic options open.

Sammy is so starved for any sort of male attention that she gets a big kick out of regularly flashing her terribly tiny mosquito bite-like tits at the exceedingly elderly wheelchair-bound neighbor next door. Naturally, when Sammy's friend Liz's sex-starved father Nevill, whose demented wife probably hasn't put out in years, begins showing her affection and even treats her like an adult, she cannot

help but wallow in the dubious attention. One night after driving her home after Liz breaks her moped, Nevill offers Sammy the keys to one of the various trailers that he rents out to German tourists after she complains that her brother gives her no privacy. Of course, Nevill ends up showing up at the mobile-home the same exact night that Sammy first goes there to check things out and the two drink wine together in what ultimately proves to be a pseudo-romantic night of sorts where the middle-aged man hits on the protagonist by telling her that, unlike his ditzy daughter Liz, she acts like an adult. After Nevill complains about his whacked-out wife and discusses how he would like to close his print shop and start a publishing company that prints works by decadent French poets like Baudelaire and Rimbaud, Sammy attempts to seize the opportunity to seduce the older man but, to her major chagrin, he turns her down and tells her she is as beautiful as the “mermaid of Copenhagen” when she asks if he will not screw her because she is ugly. Needless to say, Sammy is in quite for the shock when her big bro Jakob chases her down on his motorcycle while she is riding home on her moped in the middle of the night after leaving the trailer. It is obvious that Jakob is in love with his little sister and, as far as he is concerned, he is the only one that is allowed to pound her puss. When Jakob hears from Liz that Sammy might have been hanging out with Thijs, he decides to go by the high school the next day and beat the shit out of the unsuspecting teenage boy, who receives a rather unflattering black eye as a result of the beating. Naturally, Thijs is afraid to talk to Sammy after that, thus forcing the protagonist to focus more on banging her BFF’s dad. Of course, it is only a matter of time before Jakob realizes that his little sister is carrying on an affair with a reasonably cultivated mensch that is old enough to be their father. Additionally, like so many woman, be they young or old, Sammy never seems to think twice about the possible repercussions of her actions. In other words, the anti-heroine never seems to contemplate the fact that she is on the brink of ruining the lives of everyone that she is close to simply because she has daddy issues and is starved of a little bit of male attention.

While Sammy invites Thijs to show up at the trailer one night for a ‘date’ where she assumedly plans to fuck his brains out, he does not show up due to his assumed fear of Jakob and Nevill predictably ends up swinging by unannounced instead and brings the protagonist a gift in the form of expensive French perfume that his wife also wears, thus hinting that the unhappily married father is desperate for young cuntlet because his crazed cunt of a spouse will no longer attend to her simple wifely duties. While Nevill was afraid to pop Sammy’s cherry the first night they were together in the trailer, he cannot help himself by the second night and wastes no time in diving deep into the teen’s twat and breaking nature’s privy seal. Indeed, Nevill deflowers Sammy in a sad sex session that lasts about five seconds. Afterwards, Nevill attempts to delude himself into believing that he was not a pathetic lay by asking Sammy if it hurt and she replies, “No, I felt nothing” adding, “I’m used to it,” thus reflecting the seemingly impenetra-

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ble sense of soullessness that she feels. When Sammy's brother partially loses the use of his legs after crashing his motorcycle while racing after smoking dope and drinking beer with his burned out buddies, the protagonist seems to blame herself, so she calls Nevill and tells him, "I can't call you anymore," which the old man does not take well as he has only had a tiny little taste of the teen's cockchafer and is naturally hungry for more. While Sammy attempts to take care of her brother by cooking food for him and keeping his rotten meat scheme going, she pretty much fails at both things as she is rather lazy and has a superlatively shitty loser attitude. Indeed, when Sammy ends up burning fish in a frying pan, she decides to throw another pack of frozen fish that is still in the box into the microwave and subsequently serves it to her big bro, who refuses to eat the food upon inspecting it. When Sammy tries to get Jakob to drink wine instead of beer in the hope of creating a 'romantic atmosphere' between her and her brother, he does not take the hint that his little sis wants to seduce him and demands that she fetch him his usual cans of piss poor piss-water. When Thijs finally gets the testicular fortitude to talk to Sammy again and decides to follow her around when she is peddling her brother's rotten meat and finally realizes what she is doing, he complains, "Don't be stupid. ALL that rancid meat is antisocial," so the protagonist responds by rudely telling him to leave her sight and calling him a "queer."

With her brother incapacitated due to his leg injury, Sammy decides to seize the opportunity to fulfill Jakob's greatest sexual fantasy and seduce him, even telling him before they kiss, "You're the only one." Apparently, despite being a loser in his 20s that hangs around even bigger losers, Jakob is still a virgin, which seems to be the result of him being in love with his sister. To demonstrate her ostensible perennial devotion to her brother, Sammy gets the same trashy homemade eagle tattoo that Jakob has. Meanwhile, Liza's father Nevill begins stalking Sammy to the point where he shows up at her house unannounced and constantly calls her at all times of the day even though she never picks up. When Nevill shows up to Sammy's house to supposedly pickup his daughter Liz, Jakob begins to realize that his sister and the middle-aged man have something going on, especially after the latter mockingly states to him, "break a leg" in reference to his motorcycle injury. When Sammy decides to show up at the trailer one day, she finds Nevill waiting there for her and he wastes no time in accusing her of having an incestuous relationship with her brother, which she does not deny. When Sammy remarks to Nevill that he is not half as good in bed as her brother, the middle-aged man responds by manhandling her and then quasi-raping her from behind in a cruel carnal act that lasts no longer than a split second. After being bent over and vaginally pillaged by her best friend's father, Sammy decides to visit her own daddy Don in the mental institution and is quite dismayed when he grabs her ass and kisses her upon mistaking her for his estranged wife. Ultimately, Sammy decides to play along by pretending to

be her mother and sadistically lies to her father by telling him that Jakob is in a raunchy relationship with a poor negress who is one of a twelve kids. After telling her father regarding Jakob and his imaginary black girlfriend, "They stuff their faces all day. Jacob is getting very fat...But she doesn't mind. Love handles," daddy Don somewhat humorously replies, "As long as she is nice to the children." When her father stares at a beer advertisement on the wall of his hospital room that features a photo of a sort of otherworldly castle in Tighnabruach, Scotland, Sammy cruelly says to him, "You won't be going there." Ultimately, Sammy is right as her father dies only a day or so later. Of course, it is vaguely hinted at that Sammy's father died as a result of her giving him a broken heart.

When Liz realizes that Sammy is wearing the same expensive French perfume that her mother wears, she naturally becomes suspicious that her friend is carrying on a lurid affair with her father, so she gets a group of equally prissy little girls to attack the protagonist and hold her down while mocking the home-made redneck tattoo that she has on her back. Instead of denying what she has done, Sammy tells Liz regarding her daddy, "Your father can't keep his hands off me. Tell him I'm going to the police if he doesn't leave me alone" and then the two best friends proceed to brawl like wild animals. When Sammy decides to cook some of the rotten meat that her brother sells on the black market for dinner as a vindictive way to rub his curious choice of trade in his face, Jakob becomes enraged and the two have a monstrous verbal fight. After Jakob tells her that he has wasted his life having to take care of her and that he would have left long ago for America or Australia if it was not for her, Sammy decides to call the government food inspection agency and tip them off about her big brother's less than savory bootlegging operation. Meanwhile, Jakob learns about Sammy's affair with Nevill, so he shows up at the middle-aged man's trailer with his two Neanderthal-like goon friends and more or less beats him to death. When Sammy later shows up at the trailer and finds Jakob's friend pathetically stealing items off of Nevill's bloody corpse, she is told, "Never mind. He's gone." In the end, Jakob finally decides to leave on his motorcycle and start a new life somewhere else, thus leaving Sammy to fend for herself. Of course, Sammy has learned that her naughty bits can help her to get what she wants in life, so it probably will not be long until she finds a nice and weak beta-male cuckold to live off of, or if worst comes to worst, she can get knocked up by a negro from Suriname and live off the Dutch government for at least the next 18 years.

If there ever was a film that savagely demystifies the sexual intrigue of virginal teenage girls and might convince a prospective ephebophile to think twice about getting involved with a busty teen, it is indubitably the borderline emotionally grotesque drama *Drift*, which features one of the most, if not the most, unflattering depictions of a sexually budding adolescent girl in cinema history. Indeed, aside from possibly Catherine Breillat's *À ma soeur!* (2001) aka *Fat Girl* and to a lesser extent both Stanley Kubrick and Adrian Lyne's *Lolita* adaptations, I can-

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not think of a more unsettling depiction of a cunt little girl who is beginning to realize the power of her cunt as a god given weapon that gives her the power to destroy men over twice her age with relative ease. It certainly does not surprise me that, like *Fat Girl*, *Drift* was penned by a woman, as men oftentimes romanticize women and especially young girls and do not seem to realize that females operate from a totally different moral system (or lack thereof) where men are seen as a means to an end and nothing more. In comparison to other films in the 'No More Heroes' series, *Drift* is notable in that, unlike Koolhoven's *Amnesia* and Crijns' *With Great Joy*, it takes a visceral realist approach to depicting people that have turned their back on society while still technically living in said society whereas the other films take a highly stylized and sometimes surreal approach to portraying people that have physically relocated to strange wooded regions on the outskirts of civilization. Of course, when the protagonist's brother leaves for good at the end of van Jaarsveld's film, he physically turns his back on society as well. Despite his first feature *Drift* being a nearly immaculate work that transcends Paul Morrissey's early Warhol-produced Trilogy (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) in terms of its seemingly authentic approach to depicting dejecting cultural decay and social dysfunction, van Jaarsveld (who was only 31 when the film was released) has only had the opportunity to direct shorts, TV movies, and TV episodes since then and has never directed another single feature, thus reflecting the curious nature of the Dutch film industry and the way it treats its most promising artists. Indeed, *Drift* feels like the result of combining the best attributes of Ken Loach and Larry Clark, albeit set in a Dutch lower-middleclass setting, thereupon making for a highly accessible work that deals with decidedly dark themes yet never degrades the viewer with cheap sensationalism or pathetic poverty porn, even though it deals with perverse themes like incest and cross-generational rape. Aside from its artistic merits, van Jaarsveld's film is also a fairly insightful work that should be shown to all young male virgins lest they have their lives ruined by an emotionally erratic little slut who turns virtually everything she touches into shit. Of course, as *Drift* also seemingly unwittingly reveals, it seems that most men, including middle-aged married fathers who should know better, seem to suffer a sort of temporary lobotomy when the prospect of a fresh and untapped underage pussy pops into their mind.

-Ty E

THREADS

Mick Jackson (1984)

It has become alarming so that British cinema has developed a greater portion of masterpieces than one would care to admit. Take *Scum* for example, either production, or the recently released *Eden Lake*, a bold contender for a tangible terror. These marvelous works of various degrees in genre fiction amass a cinema, new, fresh, and raw. It's no wonder *Threads* has been hailed as being the most disturbing films of all time and after experiencing it, I can't find myself to argue against that. Released in 1984 on BBC One, then BBC Two, *Threads* quickly disappeared from local television channels with no mystery as to why. Airing this was one of those risqué but necessary steps to discipline tube-tied youth, the same as how one might recommend *Requiem for a Dream* to be shown to a Health class. Explained in a docudrama mock-"What if?" format, *Threads* counts down till fallout and examines the middle class and their struggles while war is alluded to on the background television sets. The oblivious nature of the citizenry is one of the lasting images of *Threads*. Societal structure past, you'd hark back to the days of drinking an ale in your local tavern. But there's nothing of that to be found anymore.

The style alone in which *Threads* details teleprompters and theatrical reenactments gives an authentic backdrop for the warfare. To be honest, I wasn't quite sure of which direction the conflict would torpedo towards. Given the cheery disposition and expecting nature of the family, I was anticipating a subtle melodrama, strict and concise on point but fair and lax to our soon-to-be family. But that was me holding a flame of hope in vain. Soon thereafter, the nuclear holocaust that we had known was forthcoming suddenly dawned and set afire to the entire establishment of Sheffield which highlights an affordable yet heart-stopping rendition of a nuclear explosion. First the mushroom cloud appears over the horizon only to follow in its wake a searing flash and total meltdown of societal construct, obliterating all in its path. Screenwriter Barry Hines paid close attention to his characters as to not develop a bond with them - charming yet expendable. *Threads* is a beast, plain and simple. It built it up just to break it back down. The most valuable component of *Threads* isn't in its consequential look on political affairs or environmental buggery but the scorched imagery it so heavily relies on. The point's passed with excellent marks. I've never respected a made-for-TV film this handsomely, well, not including *Bad Ronald*.

For the physical part of *Threads*, much subtlety is employed to the effects of decomposition. Similar to an effect utilized in *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, a time lapsed object is shown deteriorating quickly. This effect is brief but sweet. Not once to my recollection has a scene of nuclear attack been so stark and daring. Struggling against convention, the attack isn't filtered through digital animation but instead created on the basis of a blinding and incendiary flash that devastates

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all in its path. In other words, it's not Emmerich eye candy or anything like *The Sum of All Fears*. The narrative of *Threads* is also peculiar, switching from informative title cards to branching stories of two families connected by young and struggling lovers. From this aspect is where much misery comes into play. You see, *Threads* doesn't detail an afternoon or a week but decades after fallout. This decision highlights not just the fateful attack but the incineration of a major city and the unrecoverable effects of war. At this point a hierarchy of stranded emergency officials struggle to ration food trapped below rubble while strange, bandaged soldiers and officers enforce martial law. Just in these two instances alone makes *Threads* far from ordinary. Especially for the standards previously set for this film, *Threads* severs and defies all connections - which serves as an ultimate irony considering the opening analysis of the thread-like structure of civilized life.

It's brave filmmaking like this that makes me realize how important British cinema is. You'd think that during filming, Mick Jackson would have been worried that *Threads* would be too good. It marks one of the few films that truly scares me, not out of monsters, ghouls, or otherworldly demons but a non-artificial fear. Similar to the feeling tainted on me by *Orozco the Embalmer*, *Threads* soured my daily view of life. I don't believe the images within will ever fully evaporate from my mind. I don't mean to bestow *Threads* with any "film of the year" award. That isn't my intention. However, no matter how flawed, dated, or cheap the production may have been, *Threads* is a sizzling portrait of a cataclysm that is virtually untouched with barely any competition. Perhaps the most poignant post-apocalyptic film out there.

-mAQ

I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS

Miguel Ángel Vivas (2003)

When you decide, if and what, to evolve an idea you see so clearly in your head, the project might be similar to that of *I'll See You in My Dreams*. What *I'll See You in My Dreams* has going for it is the fact that is the first Portuguese zombie film and that it heavily evokes a lifeforce similar to that of *Dellamorte Dellamore*; which is a dry wit zombie film that burdens its Italian-based sassy sensibilities with reflections of art & death while showcasing metaphysical transformation and romance. What impresses me so much about this zombie short is the effective use of lighting, editing, and the natural environments of Portugal to create such a dirty and dust-ridden landscape (Dystopia themed?) of trees and fog that lay habitat to foul-stenched cannibals, along with some natives precariously named after "godfathers" of horror; Sam (Raimi), Dario (Argento), and Lucio (Fulci).

Lucio is a lone warrior stuck at a specific point of his life in which he has become local legend for slaughtering hordes of the undead which have inexplicably invaded his hometown. Not without motivation, Lucio does this not for the safety of his neighbors but in an act of vengeance for the zombies "turning" his once beautiful wife into a flesh eater. But this of course is poor Lucio's fault for catching his wife demonstrating a cemented stereotype of most, if not all women, being cheating whores. In this time of depression, Lucio stands as a lone figure that stands against these monsters and spends most of his screen time in a shoddy pub that is home to some very fascinating characters. *I'll See You in My Dreams* is a masterful film that also happens to cater to a very specific composition of art, cleverly returning to its main point and opening scene in stylistic deviance. What's surprising to me the most is that this film also happens to be a subtle romance, better than the almost unwatchable *Zombie Honeymoon*.

Lucio is a character that many will pity and more will follow with arms in the air. Taking the best traits horror legends have to offer, Lucio has been crafted into the ultimate badass and one without desperate one-liners, unresourceful sidekicks, or imitative choreography resulting in bland action and colorless set designs. Never has Lucio expected your attention and he certainly isn't the kind to trade humility for combat skills. For being a low budget feature, this is one film that will not sell out to being an "homage to *Evil Dead*" or any other degree of comparable taglines I see glued to horror film, regardless of how many bring this exact claim up time after time. I bring up this very true statement as this down right irritates the ever-living fuck out of me and seems to preemptively plague every other straight-to-DVD horror release that has been seen over the years. *I'll See You in My Dreams* takes premium specimens of iconoclastic film theory and defies conventions of "imaginative" filmmaking with stellar directing and plenty of recycled imagery that has been polished. This from Portugal, none

I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS

the less. The only reinvention of the undead I could imagine that hasn't been done, hasn't been butchered by some gorehound with a itchy camera-trigger is zombies with jetpacks. Now, prove me wrong but I haven't heard of such an "interesting" idea given the moving image treatment. *I'll See You in My Dreams* is bar none one of the more systematically riveting zombie films I've seen in quite some time. Distinguished muck and body wounds make for brilliant zombies that take steady advantage of the color spectrum the biology of flesh has to offer. This doesn't have the creative mindset of a young auteur but does consist of high quality gloss coating a sweet, sweet horror core. Everything you get from this film will no doubt be positive unless zombie films just don't "do it" for you. Which in that case you are defined as a soulless being. Don't expect to leave *I'll See You in My Dreams* without experiencing any symptoms of spiritedness or a foreign infection of spiritual terror tomfoolery.

-mAQ

CHUCK /& BUCK

Miguel Arteta (2000)

Virtually everyone has had a friend or two during childhood who grew up to be something they never expected. Indeed, I had friends as a kid who went on to become felons (i.e. armed robbery, kidnappings), the proud progenitors of bastard mulatto children, green berets, suicide and overdose cases, and dope dealers, among other things. In the decidedly deranged 'dramedy' *Chuck & Buck* (2000) directed by Miguel Arteta (Youth in Revolt, Cedar Rapids), a somewhat successful yet rather vapid yuppie record company executive in his late-20s is in for quite a surprise when his now gay and quasi-autistic childhood best friend reappears in his life and turns his and his fiancée's sterile little world of bourgeois creature comfort's into a living hell of sorts with his considerably creepy and obscenely obsessive behavior. While advertised as a sort of quirky offbeat comedy that hipsters might assume is some sort of mundane mumblecore garbage, *Chuck & Buck* is actually a genuinely unnerving and even unhinged work that will almost certainly induce discomfort in all viewers to varying degrees, except maybe NAMBLA members. Undoubtedly, what makes the film even stranger is that it stars the Hollywood Hebraic hack director/producer Chris Weitz (co-producer/co-director of *American Pie* and *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, among other soulless celluloid swill) in his debut acting role and gay actor/writer Mike White (who, on top of writing for *Dawson's Creek*, is the son of gay 'reverend doctor' Mel White, who used to ghostwrite for Jerry Falwell). Indeed, *Chuck & Buck* could not have more radically repellent leads whose personal backgrounds represent everything that is appalling about America, which only all the more accents the aberrosexual essence of the film. Undoubtedly, it is not a film that I can say I like by any means, yet it is also undeniably unforgettable, sort of like being flashed by an old homeless man or seeing a lone turd laying in the middle of a public bathroom floor. In fact, I would go so far as saying that *Chuck & Buck* is a work of spiritual molestation that utilizes comedy as a means to make the depravity of it all easier to swallow, just like how *American Pie* uses infantile humor to make it seem somewhat tolerable for the viewer to see some effete Jewish dork having sex with a Nordic chick. Seeming like it was directed by a poor man's Todd Solondz (or a homo Terry Zwigoff) and written by a perverted man-child who got molested as a child and enjoyed it, the film, if nothing else, seems like an endurance test to see how much degeneracy American filmgoers are willing to tolerate if quirky humor is involved. An unflatteringly unique tale about ugly people doing ugly things, as well as a look at the more odious side of obsession, *Chuck & Buck* is like the autobiographical film Spielberg always wanted to make but lacked the gall and sense of humor to do so, as a manchild that many believe has Asperger syndrome who incessantly makes films about children featuring an intolerably childlike sentimentality and

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a number disturbing gratuitous shots of little boys.

Opening with a scene of grotesque 27-year-old man-child Buck O'Brien (played by Mike White, who looks at least a decade older than his character, even if he does somewhat resemble a fetus) sitting in his room, which is full of Charms Blow Pops and his childhood toys, *Chuck & Buck* immediately establishes an aesthetically autistic tone as a film about a spastic and quasi-autistic dork who has an unhealthy obsession with his childhood best friend. When Buck's terminally ill mother (Pamela Gordon) kicks the bucket, it proves to be quite an exciting experience for him as his childhood best friend who he has not seen since he was 11, Chuck (Chris Weitz), is attending the funeral. Upon meeting Buck for the first time in some 16 years, Chuck, who is now a somewhat successful record company executive who lives in LA and drives a BMW, remarks how he has not changed at all, which is certainly an understatement. Before Chuck knows it, Buck intentionally walks in on him while he is in the bathroom and grabs his ass. Needless to say, Chuck takes his fiancée Beth (Carlyn Carlson) and heads back to LA immediately. Of course, Buck decides to plan to go visit Chuck, but when he gets blown off, he opts for going all the way for his great love and moves to LA after taking out \$10,000 of his assumed inheritance. Immediately upon arriving in LA, Buck begins stalking Chuck, even pretending to be a delivery man so he can sneak into his friend's office. Chuck reluctantly humors Buck's bizarre obsessive behavior for a while, but when the weasel-like weirdo arrives at his house one night unexpectedly and says he wants to play a game that they used to play together as kids, stating, "like one of those games where you stick your dick in my mouth and I stick mine in yours. 'Chuck & Buck, Suck & Fuck,'" the record executive naturally throws him out for good. Meanwhile, Buck begins working on an autobiographical fairytale play inspired by *The Wizard of Oz* entitled 'Frank and Hank' in the hope that if Chuck sees it, he will realize how much he loves him and ditch his fiancée. Buck pays a theater manager named Beverly Franco (Lupe Ontiveros), whose obesity is only transcended by her bitchiness, to help him cast and direct the play, which she describes as being "a homoerotic misogynistic play," telling its writer, "I don't think this is a child's play...Its way out there. I think you have something weird about women. I think you have something weird about men." Being a complete social retard, Buck does not understand why Beverly describes his play as homoerotic. Against Beverly's better judgment, Buck decides to cast a goofy Guido of the sexually dubious sort from New Jersey named Sam (played by Paul Weitz, the older brother of Chris) because he has the hots for the guy since he looks a little like Chuck, but also has a warped mentality that the playwright can relate to (indeed, in one scene, Sam remarks to Buck regarding old bitch Beverly, "I think she wishes she had a cock [...] I wonder what her twat looks like. You ever wonder that? It's like sometimes she'll be talking to me and all I can think is, 'What does your twat look like? Why don't you show me you

fucking bitch.' Yeah, I'm twisted. I got problems. I know I do."). Ultimately, after much stalking and whatnot from Buck, Chuck and his fiancée decide to go to the play. Needless to say, both Chuck and Beth (who is portrayed in the play as a witch) are disgusted with the play, with the latter finally realizing her hubby-to-be used to hump Buck when he was a kid. Of course, Buck continues to annoy Chuck, so when the former offers the latter to get out of his life for good if he agrees to 'sleep with him' for one night, he absurdly agrees. Indeed, Chuck fucks Buck in what is easily one of the creepiest scenarios in film history, even though it is mainly only implied. In the end, Buck finally accepts rejection and ultimately finds solace in hanging out with dumbass dago Sam (whose prick he tries to grab at one point) and being a semi-professional playwright. In an ending that is just as ridiculous as the rest of the film, Chuck and Beth invite Buck to their wedding, which he gladly attends and even manages not to get jealous when he sees his lifelong love kiss the bride.

One element of Chuck & Buck that seemed rather on point is that it portrays molestation victims as people that never seem to grow up, at least beyond the age when they were molested, as if they are still stuck in the same period when they were defiled and cannot progress past that point. Indeed, throughout the film, Buck makes accusations against Chuck like "You put that curse on me," thus highlighting the fact that even he feels that his childhood friend is to blame for his debilitating mental and sexual immaturity. Of course, the film also seems like a limp-wristed assault against heterosexual men, making it seem as if all boys experiment with blowing other boys as some sort of natural rite of passage and are in denial of it when they get older in life. In the end, I found both characters to be innately irritating and totally unsympathetic as two different extremes of American middleclass life: the infantile manchild that never grows up and the psychopathic office boss whose main concerns are appearances, especially regarding what car he drives and what kind of suit he plans to wear to work. When it comes down to it, both characters are emotionally retarded, with Buck being a hysterical neurotic with the social skills of a toddler and Chuck being a fraud who is all about appearances and has no real friends, with his fiancée Beth even seeming like an investment of sorts. Of course, Beth is nothing but a phony bourgeois whore herself who, like her friends, merely projects an image, but has no real personality, convictions, or beliefs. In one especially telling scene, someone compliments Beth on the West Indian decorations she has around her house and she responds by stating, "Thank you! God, I was afraid people were going to think they were racist...my decorator pushed me into it," thus demonstrating her obsession with superficial images and appearances, not to mention her complete and utter lack of individuality/personality to the point where she actually pays someone to design the look of her house. Featuring a childlike song by Gwendolyn Sanford entitled "Freedom of the Heart" that really highlights the quasi-pedo persuasion of the film (Buck may not molest a kid, but

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it certainly seems like his next logical step in life, especially considering at one point in the film he even allows a kid to lick his used saliva-drenched Blow Pop) and minimalistic 'indy' aesthetic that would make hipsters wet their panties were the film not so creepy, Chuck & Buck is arguably one of the most subtle pieces of celluloid aesthetic terrorism ever made, as the sort of film one might expect to have been directed by Woody Allen's long lost bastard son.

-Ty E

MAGO

Miguel M. Delgado (1949)

Much like how I'd like to open this review up to a blitzing world view on violence in the media, Mago greets you with the same sentiment although infinitely more visceral. Enter a dark street road. The camera slowly pans down until you hear a cacophony of chirps and ribbits. You see thousands of frogs littering the road in a very condensed formation. Human feet begin slowly approaching. Had you heard about the descriptive notoriety and flak this film has been hit with, you can predict what happens next. Feet begin stepping through and on our amphibian friends resulting in a sickening squishing sound. Next come the bicycles, then to the cars, then to the tank treads. The evolution of technology directly attributes to the increasing danger of the possibility of an environmental genocide. You will watch in shock & awe as frogs are slaughtered for the sake of "art" and a "message" to society. The same hypocritical effect could be done if Al Gore decided to slash a polar bears throat and claim Global Warming was the villain. Thankfully, they saved the worst for first so for the faint of heart, tread carefully. Mago is the title of the film and the elusive goddess hinted at towards the incoherent plot, but is also based upon a character in many Oriental religions, mainly Taoism. The film takes the creationist theory and adds a feminine and more divine touch to it, embodying all aspects of Gaia into 12 female spirits, who tend to become suicidal she-bitches after we humans are done with their forsaken planet. You will watch muddy Korean women sobbing in a wasteland of pollution holding dying birds to her bosom. It's quite a depressive feat seeing as how the "Water Spirit" eventually dies in the very pollution that kills her brethren. The average chauvinist might take immediate disgust to this film upon baring some of the fleshed mythos of Mago. Instead of the "weaker female" succumbing to the heart of temptation, the male is the one who steals the forbidden red grapes. As a resulting action, all the males turn primal, raping, killing, beating, and screaming to their hearts consent. Mago fits the religious context of the bible as much as it would had Ann Coulter authored the Old Testament stuffed with Betty Crocker recipes and endless Sally Fields re-runs. Mago presents human realization synchronizing with the heartbeat of nature fluidly at best. The film is a message to all technology enthusiasts. I can imagine the director filming this stock on certified recycled 35mm film stock. "Give up your primitive bodies and disperse your soul into information." is the basic message of one of the more esteemed chapters showing a bald unnamed Korean male drowning in the static screen of his computer monitor. After seeing stock footage of bombs going off, this film is certainly made with post-Hiroshima in mind. The environmental apocalypse is nigh! What novelties make Mago a bit too much to swallow? Perhaps it's the wacky J-Pop musical cues that use death as choreography that blister on the scenes. Listening to the Korean equivalent to Kylie Minogue during a

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scene of pigs getting brutally massacred is not on my list of to-do's. One such reviewer went as far as to call Mago a "low budget art film", then began claiming how this "Art film" totally sucks because the film doesn't have a Hollywood look to it. I began to become intrigued with critical reception to Mago. Much to my dismay, I found that everyone claims that Mago is a film that had no impact whatsoever on them. It's safe to say that they perhaps had nightmares from this film. I'd personally rather a low budget art production made with callow soul and furious sexuality as opposed to huge budget Hollywood "quirk-fests". I'm looking at you Wes Anderson and Diablo Cody. Mago might have broken a record with the staggering amount of nude actors/actresses appearing in the film. The total tally rounds up to about 825 people appearing fabric-less in this huge Korean production. This truly is "an allegorical poem of environmental destruction." The word "pretentious" is whored and handed out constantly. Before I get a chance to appreciate wonderful visual poetry, from left field comes the inability to fully understand one's personal work. Know that Mago has more deep-seated meaning and philosophy than such over-heralded films such as *Be-gotten*. The rebirth of the female sexuality has never been as stunningly filmed as demonstrated here. The sacrifice of thousands of wildlife souls is done in vain. While the conveyed message is brutal and nerve-wracking, the animal cruelty is needless. They might as well have directed a sequel to *Godzilla vs. Hedorah*. I'm sure that charts & graphs wouldn't have the same effect, but I cannot stop suffering for those poor frog creatures in the opening scene. Mago is definitely recommended for people of tolerance, but comes with fore-warning.

-mAQ

Mikael Häfström (2007)

Having a successful film in Hollywood always comes with its hazards. Being an intellectual film is one, apparently. Enter the 2000's where an original horror story is slim to none. Remakes are popping up everywhere, regardless if the original film could even be deemed popular. What happens when you take 2 talented actors, mix them with a hellish entity based on a Stephen King short, and throw in the Carpenters? Well, you'd get 1408. Mike Enslin (Cusack) is a bastard author who travels cross-country, visiting "Haunted" houses, hotels, mansions, and even Lighthouses, to churn out book after book on the subject. His reasons are buried and will not be revealed until later in the film (The wait is worth it). He is not a popular author and is shadowed by his former life. Writing bargain bin novels is no easy choice, which must be why he succumbs to the elusive author stereotype of alcohol and cigarettes. His life is going plainly dull without any real specters until he receives a postcard from the Dolphin Hotel urging "Do not enter 1408" As any ghost hunter would do, he decides to be a hardass and charge in headfirst into this experience of which he might not escape. Since the films release, I have heard horrible reviews and then extremely positive reviews. Any film is open to criticism but few deserve such harsh criticism, especially when such extravagant effort is shown. 1408 is an original ghost story that does what the genre admitted was dead, to scare. 1408 has its moments of claustrophobia, acrophobia, and the all-out jump-out tactics. Also note the familiar use of the Carpenters hit single "We've only just begun" used to a similar effect as in Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness*. Backed with an impressive script and charismatic actors being charismatic, it's no wonder the film has it's good reviews armed with bad. Most of my personal experiences with complaints has been from people who enjoy the horror market as it is, and as we all know, the chances of horror coming out alive is about the same chance we have of a decent *Alien vs. Predator* movie coming out. It just won't happen. 1408 is one of the few films that are worth seeing from the hacks at The Weinstein Company. They do not care about the future of film. Apart from sporting both black humor and terror, 1408 (The Theatrical Version) has one of the most touchy-feely endings in a long time. This is not a bad thing, no. Many times, the ending will catch me off guard and produce a tear or two. Expect one of the most epic last lines from Samuel L. Jackson ever. 1408 is a newcomer to horror and acts upon what it came for; to entertain and try to bring something new. It does this and more. Do not expect much, for it does not have expectations, but due to its subject matter, it is a disproportional looks on religion and the close-mindedness of humanity.

-mAQ

RUNAWAY NIGHTMARE
RUNAWAY NIGHTMARE

Mike Cartel (1982)

I am not really a believer in the whole 'so bad, it's good' designation when it comes to films as I find most Troma films to be completely worthless celluloid turds and I do not exactly have a hard-on for the more or less wholly worthless cinematic work of cross-dressing anti-auteur Ed wood, yet I would be lying if I did not admit there were certain gutter grade works, like the virtual entire oeuvre of Andy Milligan, the stop-motion-animation-based Lovecraftian horror of *Equinox* (1970), and John Wintergate's *Boardinghouse* (1982), that demonstrates that celluloid art can sometimes come in even the most lowly and technically inept of forms. For example, I recently happened upon a little known genre-molesting cult item entitled *Runaway Nightmare* (1982) directed by Mike Cartel that I expected to be a typical highly disposable trash film dud, but it ultimately proved to be a sort of unsung masterpiece of aesthetically autistic lo-fi celluloid of the superlatively satirical yet equally phantasmagorical kind. Like any respectable cult film, Cartel's flick has a background history as ludicrously labyrinthine as the film itself as a work that was expected to be shot over a three week period but was ultimately stretched to three years, only to be released without the director's knowledge in an incomplete form on VHS as one of the first 'straight-to-video' films after the distributor subcontracted it to another distributor called All Seasons Video. To add insult to injury and then some, the distributor not only released the work without Cartel's knowledge, but also spliced in random shot-on-VHS nude scenes in an absurdly conspicuous way worthy of alpha-smut-peddler Lloyd Kaufman. Luckily, in 2014 the original 35mm camera negative received 4K restoration and was released on DVD/Blu-ray by Vinegar Syndrome with the pointless titty scenes thankfully excised (though the scenes were included with the release as an extra feature). Shot under the Jean Harlow-esque working title *Platinum Bombshell*, *Runaway Nightmare* tells the marvelously moronic yet uniquely unpredictable tale of two dullard 'worm farmers' living in Death Valley (though the film was actually shot in the Mojave desert) who discover a buried alive blonde bombshell near their farm and then are subsequently kidnapped by a dope-and-occult-addled misandristic feminist cult, only to join said feminist cult and become involved in a total war against the mafia for a suitcase containing precious platinum. Like Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955) and Paul Schrader's *Patty Hearst* (1988) meets Werner Schroeter's Manson-inspired masterpiece *Willow Springs* (1973) and Rudolf Thome's kraut counterculture classic *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun* as set in an unhinged cinema universe not all that different from the one featured in Alex Cox's *Repo Man* (1984) where understated absurdist irony has a sort of highly addictive narcotizing effect on the viewer, Cartel's undeniably singular piece of strangely charismatic celluloid quirk is one of those oh-so rare films that reminds

me why I fell in love with cinema in the first place. Featuring a dopey duo that are like Abbott and Costello lost in time and high on tainted acid, *Runaway Nightmare* is a work that should fail hard in every way yet ultimately succeeds on so many bizarre and oftentimes subtextual levels that it makes one question whether auteur Cartel just had a number of happy artistic accidents while directing the film or if he is some sort of filmmaking genius who never made it past his formative years.

Opening with a 180-degree pan of the desert juxtaposed with a discordant yet bizarrely soothing minimalistic synthesizer-driven score, *Runaway Nightmare* then features a shot of a sign reading “Death Valley Insect Ranch” and then introduces the two main characters. While proud worm farmer Ralph (director Mike Cartel)—an unwittingly goofy fellow who, somewhat unfortunately, sounds like a cross between Jimmy Stewart and Nicholas Cage, albeit more autistic—loves desert life and is fully content engaging in mindless target practice all day, his business partner and best friend Jason (Al Valletta) is growing tired of the farm and the arid setting, complaining to his comrade, “Jesus, all I’m thinking about is getting away from all these insects. I wanna see some human faces again.” Rather magically, after complaining, “I’d like a little adventure...some excitement. I just wish something would happen, anything,” Jason gets exactly what he is looking for after he and Ralph spot some dubious dudes burying a coffin in the desert. Upon digging upon the fairly cheap looking coffin, Ralph and Jason are startled to find a living and breathing yet totally unconscious buxom blonde that bears a striking resemblance to *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) era Jennifer Jason Leigh inside with the rather fitting name ‘Fate’ (played by Amsterdam-born Dutch-Indonesian model Seeska Vandenberg) who they decide to bring back to their house. Before the truly odd couple can call the cops and tell them of the curious case of the mystery girl that they dug up in the desert, Ralph and Jason’s ranch home is invaded by an all-female cult of ‘pussy power’ professing beauties with mostly big boobies who do not take too kindly to men, especially those that they believe have kidnapped one of their sisters. While Ralph and Jason insist on their innocence, the girls demand at gunpoint that they come with them, with one aggressively stating, “Move out or get carried out.” Naturally, Ralph and Jason reluctantly oblige the cunty girls of cult while petrified that they may get their balls blown off, or worse.

When Ralph and Jason arrive at the feminist cult’s dimly lit yet strangely cozy desert compound, they continue to proclaim their innocence and are informed regarding their fate, “Hesperia will decide.” Indeed, the all-girl occult gang is lead by a big butch bitch named Hesperia (Cindy Donlan) and Ralph and Jason are finally introduced to her after the former unwittingly threatens her by stating, “get out of the way unless you want to be hurt” upon attempting to sneak out the front door to ostensibly “water the worms.” Ultimately, the two

RUNAWAY NIGHTMARE

male prisoners are locked in a cellar when they are not being tortured by the blood-lusting she-bitches of the cult who rather enjoy threatening their much maligned male victims by waving knives at them while saying unintentionally hilarious things like, "I'm into bondage...and discipline" and "You're gonna go through beautiful screams of pain and passion. You have no idea what you're going to feel." Luckily for Ralph and Jason, they are saved from being branded by a sadistic bitch with the fitting name Sadie (Debbie Poropat) by Hesperia who proclaims, "You broke the agreement. We live by the laws." After defending her actions by absurdly stating "the voice told me to kill" like a convict attempting to dodge murder charges by pleading insanity, Sadie declares to her leader Hesperia, "I want to settle up with a duel!" and the two deranged dames proceed to settle their dispute old west style in what is quite possibly the most impotent gun duel in cinema history. While "Sadie is apparently "the best there is with guns," Hesperia gives her a "trick gun" that causes her head to get blown off during the duel. With queen bitch Sadie dead, things get a little less hectic at the feminist cathouse, with Jason even eventually developing Stockholm syndrome and remarking, "You know, I think I'm really beginning to get used to this place," but Ralph does not agree, arguing, "You know it's hard for me to get aroused when I keep seeing my life pass in front of me. Besides, some of those women have some pretty rugged girlfriends." As the viewer soon finds out, while Jason is a semi-suave lady's man with a voracious sexual appetite, Ralph is more or less a spiritual eunuch who would probably be a leader in the so-called men's right movement were he living in contemporary times.

While imprisoned in the cellar of the cathouse, Ralph and Jason are informed by the cult's token fat girl Clio (Ina Rose Fortman) that, despite the fact that most members of the group have a visceral hatred of men, they have been selected as candidates for membership in the all-girl gang. Indeed, Hesperia and her lethal ladies decided after fiddling with tarot cards that the two weaselly worm farmers might have what it takes to become lowly underlings in her chick cult. While Jason describes the entire ordeal as "one large wet dream" where they have found themselves "involved with a group of sex starved women," Ralph continues to complain little a beta-bitch, as he refuses to succumb to capture-bonding. Before being made official members of the cult, the two men are forced to take a couple endurance tests, including being sexually defiled by two hyper horny bestial babes who clearly have not felt a purple-head monster inside their venerable monosyllables in a very, very long time. Of course, Ralph and Jason pass the less than trying tests and are told by Hesperia that "you will be with us in body and soul" and that they will receive all the "sacrifices and privileges" of membership. While the two must give all their personal possessions to the group, they will "get a share of all communal profits." Indeed, aside from being a cult, the group is also involved in organized crime, including arms dealing and weapon transporting, and they want Ralph and Jason to help them exact revenge

against a malevolent mafia group called the Syndicate that apparently double-crossed them by stealing a suitcase full of platinum from Fate and burying her in the desert. Of course, things are much stranger than they seem.

As members of the gang Ralph and Jason are forced to do pointless things like move crates from one place to another for no reason like concentration camp prisoners following the orders of SS-Sturmbannführer Paul Otto Radomski, but it does not take long for the latter to receive carnal benefits, including being involved in various threesomes with different girls from around the house. Indeed, like any semi-serious cult, so-called 'free love' and drugs are a regular occurrence at the cathouse. Unfortunately, Ralph is not so lucky as the fat girl Clio incessantly mocks him by randomly yelling "bug farmers" and laughing obnoxiously to rub his curious choice of profession in his face, not to mention the fact that a butch bull dyke constantly threatens him by stating things to him like, "I'm gonna waste you" and "I'm gonna cut you up." Indubitably, the most curious girl around the house is a pale-faced and black-haired Gothic babe named Vampiria (Alexis Alexander) who sometimes acts as a 'living portrait' when she is not attempting to scare Ralph by saying threatening things to him like, "Every man I've touched has died a violent death." When a bodaciously bitchy butch babe named Pepper (Cheryl Gamson) attempts to get in Ralph's pants by staring him directly in the eyes and declaring, "Hey, I'm trying to communicate. I'm into sunshine, awareness, good karma, vibes, and witchcraft. I'd like to mix our blood" and he tells her to go away because he is watching a show on a clearly broken black-and-white TV (!), she becomes so exceedingly enraged that she takes an axe and smashes the television to bits. While Ralph would love nothing more than to escape from the cult and go back to watering his worms, he still proves he is loyal to the girls by getting in a slapstick style brawl at a bar with New Romanticist style pinball machines after Jason saves one of the more big bosomed members of the gang from being harassed by a super sleazy Meštizo-like fellow. Although Ralph has not touched a single member of the gang, that does not stop latent lesbo Pepper from stating to him, "If you don't stop molesting these girls I'll see that you suffer before you die." Indeed, when it comes to women, Ralph is completely and utterly hopeless as demonstrated by the fact that a seductive dame named Torchy (Jody Lee Olhav) licks a large chess piece during a game of chess like it's a cock and says to him "It's your move. You can take me," but he does nothing but stare at her with a somewhat scared expression on his face, as if he has Castration anxiety and is afraid that she might suffer vagina dentata. In fact, Torchy makes another attempt to get Ralph to demonstrate his manhood while she is showering with a couple other girls, but all those gorgeous naked women somehow don't get the protagonist's blood going.

The only girl that Ralph demonstrates even the slightest affection towards is Fate, who reveals to him that Hesperia is really a spoiled rich girl and trust fund brat whose followers are nothing but a bunch of badly brainwashed fanatics that

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she easily manipulates for her own financial gain while pretending to be a spiritual guru of sorts. When Fate asks Ralph to runaway with her after they get revenge against the Syndicate, the protagonist seems somewhat interested but little does he realize that she is a two-faced bitch and psychopathic femme fatale with ugly ulterior motives that involve mass murder and treachery of the most heinous sort. When it finally comes time for the cult to seek revenge against the Syndicate so that they can get their priceless suitcase of platinum back, Hesperia assigns Ralph and Jason the job of being decoys. Ultimately, the cult successfully raids the Syndicate's warehouse and gets the platinum even though Ralph causes an alarm to go off after botching breaking a window, but it does not take long for the mafia to strike back and attack the girl gang's headquarters. When the Syndicate raids the cult's home, a number of girls, including super chubby chick Clio, are killed in a gun battle, but most of the girls manage to escape via helicopter. Since they apparently cannot fit everyone on the helicopter, Jason and Ralph are left behind, with the former evading capture by hiding in a chimney and the latter soon being caught by the guido gangsters.

While in captivity at the Syndicates headquarters, Ralph conveniently finds a time-bomb lying around the building that he sets to go off when he goes under interrogation. When interrogated by the Syndicate's leader Mr. X (played by the film's art director J. Christopher Senter), Ralph is informed, "You're already dead...The question is, how early do you want to die?," so the protagonist stalls until the time-bomb goes off by asking why they double-crossed the cult and he is somewhat startled to hear that it was actually Fate who double-crossed both groups and attempted to flee town by herself with the platinum. Right after Ralph cries "Oh, God" after wrongly assuming the time-bomb failed to detonate on time and Mr. X responds to him by saying, "There is no god. Nothing can save you now," the explosive goes off and magically the protagonist is the only one that survives the blast. After becoming all discombobulated as a result of the large explosion, Ralph decides to call his prospective ladylove Fate and she informs him that most of the gang members are dead and that she needs to speak to him in private. Ultimately, Fate picks up Ralph in his own van and brags that she has double-crossed "everyone" and that she has "lost count" of how many people she has killed. While Fate predictably shoots Ralph with a powerful weapon that causes him to fly out of the van, he manages to survive because he is wearing a bulletproof vest that Hesperia had given him when the Syndicate raided the cult's compound. Meanwhile, Fate attempts to open the suitcase full of platinum and is blown up in an extravagant explosion. As it turns out in a cute twist that seems to express the stupidity and lack of literacy of both organized crime groups, the suitcase was actually full of plutonium and not platinum.

When Ralph meets up with Jason and the surviving girls, he is quite happy to learn that his worms are as now as big as hamsters. On top of that, the girls declare him, Mr. Beta Bitch, their new leader, with one of them stating,

seductively, “We’ll do anything you tell us to.” Of course, instead of demanding hot sex, Ralph merely has the girls do odd jobs like getting him cold cans of Coke when he is engaging in target practice outside. Notably, Ralph also reveals how resentful he is by psychologically torturing the girls that used to torture him by shooting bullets only a couple inches away from their heads. In the end, *Runaway Nightmare* seems to come full-circle, with Ralph shooting his rifle from the same rock formation as he did at the beginning of the film, albeit this time he has the added bonus of ruling over a collective of sexy and big bosomed broads who slavishly do whatever he says, but the fun does not last long. Indeed, after Ralph and Jason find two dudes (one of which is played by director Cartel’s father, who also acted as the film’s main financier under the pseudonym Eldon Short) dumping a barrel with a label reading “Danger – Nuclear Waste” at the very same place where Fate was buried at the beginning of the film, the film cuts to an epilogue that reveals regarding the characters’ fate: “Hesperia lives in Marin County where she publishes a feminist news magazine. Members of a female desert cult were exposed to radiation and had to be quarantined. Side effects of all women included increased sexual appetite. Jason survived and was confined in the same room with the other females. Ralph developed a unique genetic disorder.” In a second twist ending of sorts that surely demonstrates director Cartel’s obsession with screwing with the viewer’s expectations, Ralph is depicted transforming into a vampire and breaking free from a straitjacket while being held at a place somewhere in Nevada called the U.S. Government Radiological Research Facility. Of course, one can only hope that Ralph is more of a lady’s man in vampire form as he surely would make for an awfully pathetic bloodsucker if he sucks at seducing ladies.

Of course, it would probably interest certain cinephiles to know that *Runaway Nightmare* director Mike Cartel comes from a family of carnies and that the famous midway that his father owned, *Crafts 20 Big Shows*, was featured at the end of Alfred Hitchcock’s *Strangers On A Train* (1951), as well as the Godard favorite *Some Came Running* (1958) starring Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin and the Elvis Presley vehicle *Roustabout* (1964). While Cartel has never directed another film, he is apparently currently working on a documentary on carnivals. Aside from working as a film director, screenwriter, and actor, Cartel has also done stints as a soldier (he’s a Vietnam war veteran who who engaged in combat), reserve officer in the Los Angeles Police Department, owner and editor of a weekly newspaper (*The Valley Vantage*), and Los Angeles Unified School District teacher, thus making him not only the creator of one of the most patently preternatural motion pictures ever made, but also a filmmaker with one of the strangest and most eclectic employment histories. While Cartel once jokingly complained regarding *Runaway Nightmare*, “I’m still desperately fighting to make sure that this will not be the film I am remembered for,” it will indubitably be the single thing he will be best remembered for, which is certainly

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more than most people can say about their lives. As demonstrated by the fact that he set up a website for the film, it seems that Cartel is finally able to appreciate and enjoy the fruits of his labor some 30+ years after he created the film, thus confirming the old truism that it is 'better late than never.'

While I sincerely doubt that auteur Cartel was attempting to create anything resembling an experimental or avant-garde film, *Runaway Nightmare* is—for better or worse—an innately wayward cinematic work that is in a category that is all of its own as a sort of seductively satirical absurdist fever dream that surely makes the most of the deadly delirium that is associated with *Death Valley*. Undoubtedly, one of the most alluring aspects of the film is its heavy use of chiaroscuro, thus giving the work an absolutely alluring aesthetic that falls somewhere in between classic German expressionist cinema, Werner Schroeter's early high-camp masterpiece *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*, Leslie Megahey's Sheridan Le Fanu adaptation *Schalcken the Painter* (1979), and Richard Elfman's neo-vaudevillian cult classic *Forbidden Zone* (1980). It should also be noted that *Runaway Nightmare* is probably one of the most amazingly anti-climatic films ever made, as a cinematic work where anytime the viewer expects to see a salacious sex scene or grisly murder it abruptly cuts to another scene, hence why it was only to the detriment of the flick when it was released on VHS in the 1980s with random added shot-on-video nude scenes. Indeed, it might not make sense to modern viewers who are used to a cocktail of cheap and tasteless sex and violence, but one of the things that keeps the viewer on the edge of their seat during Cartel's film is their ultimately unfulfilled anticipation for unclad mammary glands, visceral mayhem, and ultra bloody murder. Certainly, *Runaway Nightmare* is one of those rather rare films where it has a totally original atmosphere and tone that can only be properly articulated to a person by actually watching it. In short, Cartel's micro-budget high-kitsch masterpiece is a film that makes the viewer really contemplate about what the filmmaker was thinking when he was dreaming up such a superlatively strange celluloid beast. After all, Cartel could not look and seem more ordinary and banal if he tried, so one can only wonder how such an inexplicable work sprung from such a seemingly everyday type of fellow. Of course, in its depiction of a cult of killer chicks with big tits who take two goofy guys hostage, *Runaway Nightmare* seems like it was directed by a kindred spirit of Russ Meyer, albeit with more self-control and imagination. After all, there would not be much 'meat' left in a Meyer flick if all the unclad jumbo jugs were taken out, yet one of the greatest strengths of Cartel's film is that it does not show a single bare nipple.

Of course, one also cannot forget that *Runaway Nightmare* is probably the best satire on the rotten fruits of feminism and the so-called women's liberation movement since Paul Morrissey's *Women in Revolt* (1971). Indeed, while absurdly goofy and seemingly hardly serious, the film casts the fairer sex in a

distinctly dichotomous light where they are both feared yet fetishized, evil yet erotic, brutal yet beautiful, homicidal yet horny, cunning yet careless, and sadistic yet sweet, with protagonist Ralph symbolizing one extreme male perspective on women and his pal Jason symbolizing another. Naturally, it is probably no coincidence that Jason becomes a total moron after he gives into his carnal cravings while Ralph manages to figure out that the woman who portrayed herself as the biggest victim is ultimately the most evil and predatory of femme fatales as a woman who slaughters her own sisters for financial gain. In his pathological use of cinematic cock-teasing where he sets up a sexual scenario but never delivers the disrobed naughty bits, director Cartel manages to highlight the tricks of the trade when it comes to hypnotizing and, in turn, cuckolding men in a film that one might best describe as the ultimate work of 'anti-exploitation' disguised as pure exploitation trash. If you're looking for the best of psychotronic cinema, you probably cannot do better than Runaway Nightmare, which ultimately alleviates cinematic wackiness to a carefully cultivated art form that people seem to either love or love to hate (I fall into the former group).

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Mike Figgis (1991)

For me, one of the greatest perennial cinematic tragedies is a film that almost achieves true greatness, but somehow falls short in one way or another. Indeed, whether it be the extremely poor choice of sexual encounters in a Radley Metzger fuck flick (e.g. the boner-breaking pegging climax in *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (1976)) or the phony emasculating feminism injected into Dutch auteur Martin Koolhoven's apocalyptic western *Brimstone* (2016), cinema history is littered with begrudgingly admirable art that is oftentimes simultaneously intriguing and infuriating, which is certainly the way I would describe much of the oeuvre of mick-blooded English auteur Mike Figgis (*Internal Affairs*, *Cold Creek Manor*). While I have in some way or another enjoyed most of films that I have seen by Figgis, including a small chamber piece like his Strindberg adaptation *Miss Julie* (1999), every single one of them seems to suffer from some sort of glaring defect that makes me wonder whether or not the auteur was more suited for his original career as a musician. For example, *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995)—the somewhat overrated cinematic work that the auteur is best known for—is by no means a bad film yet it is oftentimes extremely unintentionally humorous in its depiction of a Nicholas Cage as a hyper histrionic suicidal dipsomaniac, which makes me assume that Figgis is, to some degree, emotionally tone deaf. Undoubtedly, my favorite Figgis flick is *Liebestraum* (1991), yet it also follows the Figgisian trend of being innately flawed and, in turn, sometimes annoying. Although a pure auteurist work in terms of being written, directed, and even scored by Figgis, the film also feels frustratingly derivative to some extent, as if the director was attempting to beat David Lynch at his own absurdist game by making his own more intellectual yet similarly esoteric equivalent to *Blue Velvet* (1986) in terms of presenting a semi-surreal psychosexual depiction of a degenerate white bread small town. Indeed, in terms of its handsome and well-dressed but semi-autistic protagonist, eccentric and oftentimes downright weirdo characters, sex-fueled mystery and intrigue, and unflattering depiction of the dark underbelly of a small American town, Figgis' flick is the sort of cinematic work that you would expect from a talented artist that was hopelessly naïve enough to believe that anyone aside from David Lynch was capable of being truly Lynchian. Still, *Liebestraum*—a film that naturally borrows its name from the Franz Liszt piano piece of the same name (somewhat unfortunately, the film features a degenerate jazz cover of the song by American negro jazz alto saxophonist Earl Bostic)—is dripping with enough flavorsome idiosyncrasy and oneiric intrigue to appeal to the more discerning cinephile. Marinated in hermetic misogyny, ominous laconic mumblings, and tastefully lurid eros, Figgis' esoteric erotic-mystery-thriller is a celluloid puzzle fueled by warm fresh pussy juice that manages to reward any filmgoer that does not like things completely

spelled out for them. While I can understand why people are critical of the film, I truly do not understand how *Liebestraum* was so ruthlessly savaged by most professional film critics when it was initially released, especially when it was made during a time that was not exactly great for movies. For example, while his semitic frenemy Siskel had mostly favorable things to say about it, Roger Ebert clearly demonstrated he did not understand Figgis and his intent with the film when he wrote, “Figgis, who shows once again that he is a visual master, is guilty of a screenplay that is all twists and no substance,” as the flick was clearly made with a special emphasis put on style and atmospheric over narrative construction. In fact, it seems that not many critics understood or appreciated the film though in *Rough Guide to Film: An A-Z of Directors and Their Movies* (2007) the film is somewhat given its due with the brief line, “Tolling dangerously between memory, dream and a baleful present, this modern film noir caught something of the regret that permeates the best examples of the genre.” Quite unlike classic film noir, the protagonist is not some cynical hard ass, but a hopeless romantic that is looking for love and manages to find it with a girl that can hardly be described as a *femme fatale*. Indeed, the two leads seem like the only decent people left in the world, thus underscoring the importance and singularity of their love in a world full of prostitutes and property developers.

Not exactly a study in intense method acting, *Liebestraum* is set in a vaguely oneiric and hesitatingly orgasmic world of somewhat ominous mystery and intrigue where the characters, especially the moody and broody male protagonist, seem to wander through life like somnambulists in some sort of absurdist purgatory where love is god’s only reward. In that sense, the film owes much to the silent acting of German Expressionism. Indeed, male protagonist Nick Kaminisky (Kevin Anderson of *Charlotte’s Web* (2006) fame in probably the greatest performance of his career)—a hunky yet somewhat pedomorphic and seemingly perennially sullen architecture professor—seems to be plagued with a serious case of *Saudade*, though for who and/or what does not seem apparent to him or the viewer, at least at first, though it feels as if some unseen force is pulling him in the direction of what might fill his internal void. In fact, Nick’s essence somewhat brings to mind the P.G. Wodehouse quote, “A melancholy-looking man, he had the appearance of one who has searched for the leak in life’s gas-pipe with a lighted candle,” so it should be no surprise that he is oftentimes both literally and figuratively in the dark. An adopted bastard that comes to a small Illinois town to be with his biological mother, who he has never actually known, during her last dying games, Nick is ultimately forced to confront a secret dark family history that will lead him to incest, albeit of a somewhat bittersweet sort. A film noir-ish gothic romance about sex, murder, and death that plays around with Nietzsche’s idea of the ‘eternal return’ in its preternatural depiction of cross-generation romantic betrayal and forbidden love, *Liebestraum* manages to straddle a surprisingly healthy medium between nightmare and erotic fan-

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tasy. Speaking of Nietzsche, the film also brings to mind his wonderful words, "Woman was God's second mistake," though man does not fair much better in the film. Indeed, judging simply by the flick, I would assume that Figgis is some sort of misanthrope as virtually all of the characters are loathsome aside from the socially awkward protagonist and his love interest.

Whether plagued by transgenerational epigenetic inheritance or a curse, the film's hapless hero Nick and his unhappily married love interest find themselves more or less unwittingly reenacting the same exact behavior as the ill-fated parents that they never knew. By the end of the film, the viewer discovers that sometimes good sex can result in an intergenerational curse that involves the grand delight of forbidden love. Still, despite the film's dark themes and somewhat ominous overall tone, Figgis sees the film as having an overall positive message, or as he once explained in an interview featured in the Faber and Faber screenplay, "I think LIEBERSTRAUM is important for me, in that it's a growing up script in the sense that only by the two of them getting together do they give themselves the potential to carry on and go somewhere else – not keep returning to the house, not keep returning to that mother/father situation." Indeed, in the erotic esoteric filmic realm of Figgis, unholy extramarital excursions can have positive life-changing outcomes, yet that is not how I initially interpreted the end, even though I rather enjoyed it. While the film concludes with a literal climax of the exceedingly erotically-charged sort, the ending somehow feels about as happy and complete as that of Lynch's *Loſt Highway* (1997). In that sense, the film is a curious artistic failure where Figgis seems to have done something that is arguably superior to his intent by bringing the ominous to the orgasmic in a somewhat grotesque climatic collage that combines sex and death in an inexplicably bittersweet fashion where the past literally takes its last gasp in the form of the protagonist's mother while said protagonist passionately blows his load in his new lover-cum-sister.

Not surprisingly considering the director, the average lemming filmgoer will probably learn more about the storyline of *Liebestraum* from watching the trailer than by watching the entire film. For starters, the film depicts two different extramarital affairs that take place thirty year apart, though the second affair could not have happened without the first. As depicted at the very beginning of the film, the first affair ended with the two lovers being gunned down in cold blood by a jealous unseen lover that is not revealed until towards the end of the flick. Not unlike the viewer, as the film progresses, protagonist Nick Kaminsky will eventually discover that his father, who he never knew, was one of the young lovers killed that night yet that does not stop him from putting himself in the same exact sort of situation that got his papa killed. Although now bearing the aesthetically displeasing polack surname of his adoptive parents, Nick is assumedly of Swedish racial stock as his mother is named Lillian Anderssen (Kim Novak in a rather unflattering but strangely fitting role) and he will eventually learn that his ill-fated

padre carried the surname 'Munnsen.' At the beginning of the film, a rather dejected-looking Nick arrives to the glaringly symbolically named town of Elderstown via train so that he can provide comfort to the mother he never knew while she succumbs to cancer in a local hospital that is staffed by 'grotesquely beautiful' nurses that moonlight as prostitutes (or so one discovers in an imperative bar/brothel scene that was cut from some versions of the film). When Nick first visits his morbidly sick progenitor, she is completely unconscious and almost resembles a cadaver, but he will eventually discover on subsequent visits that she is a hateful guilt-ridden bitch that suffers from a sort of all-consuming spiritual (love)sickness that has been fermenting for thirty years. While Nick will make a notable attempt to love his mother, he soon discovers that most of his emotional energy will be dispensed on a delectable dame that decided to symbolically chop all her hair off and get a dyke cut after her hotshot real estate developer husband cheated on her.

In what ultimately proves to be a strangely auspicious insistence of happenstance that takes place near the beginning of the film, Nick bumps into an old college friend named Paul Kessler (Bill Pullman in a fitting role as a somewhat unlikable cuck)—an arrogant real estate developer—while the former is preparing demolition on a beautiful gothic "cast-iron" building that he was admiring. Since Nick more or less saves his life by pushing him out of the way just in the nick of time after some debris falls off the roof of the building in what is ultimately an odd bit of foreshadowing, Paul is naturally quite happy to see his old buddy who now has a career teaching "architectural post-doctoral, pre-sexual-type thing" in upstate NY. As Paul somewhat jealously explains to Nick, his wife Jane (Pamela Gidley) read and apparently even liked some of his pre-tentious, or as he awkwardly explains, "I read your books. Well, I didn't read them, exactly, but I bought them. My wife read them. She really enjoyed them, she said. But then, you can never believe a woman." Indeed, before they even physically meet, Nick and Jane are revealed to have a connection which is much deeper than the two or anyone else would have ever guessed. Naturally, despite the protagonist's friendship with Paul, Nick and Jane will become lovers, but such forbidden love is a family tradition, or so the viewer eventually learns. As for being unable to trust women, Paul is certainly right, or so he eventually learns in a rather brutal way.

Not unlike *Blue Velvet*, *Liebestraum* is set in a degenerate quiet town where the center of the apple pie seems to be somewhat rancid, though in Figgis' flick it seems that the most upstanding members of society also happen to be the most flagrantly degenerate as if there is a direct correlation between social prestige and perversity. Indeed, upon attending one of his pal Paul's famous local parties, Nick discovers that his mother's respected physician Dr. Parker (Thomas Kopache) is a sort of pathetic pervert that does not seem all that bothered that he is cuckolded by his slutty blonde wife Mary (Catherine Hicks of *7th Heaven*

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fame in an unintentionally hilariously sinful role). At the same party, Nick also first meets Jane, who immediately says to him upon meeting him, "I recognize you. From the photograph in that book. Yeah. You're Nick." Notably, Nick also presents Jane with a bouquet of red roses that look just like ones that he previously gave to his mother while first visiting her in the hospital. While Nick apologizes for the roses being a "little sad," Jane demonstrates her sort of (unconscious) symbolic interest in him by remarking, "I can fix sad roses." In fact, Jane will ultimately fix Nick, at least romantically and sexually speaking, but not before a couple awkward encounters, including an incident at the party where she unwittingly begins to get dressed while the protagonist is curiously lurking around her room.

In what ultimately proves to be a very highly potentially deleterious yet nonetheless insightful incident that really reveals some of the underlying vulnerabilities of the protagonist, Nick somewhat foolishly decides to accept a ride home from Paul's party from an extremely drunk and belligerent cop named Sheriff Peter Ricker (Graham Beckel), who drives like a gleefully self-destructive sociopath and who makes the protagonist all the more uncomfortable by aggressively baiting him with rather rude questions like: "Do you like pussy?" Clearly troubled by the boorish cracked cop questioning his sexuality, Nick emotionally yells that he does love "pussy," but he is not the sort of uncultivated mensch that is fond of just any old flowery cleft of flesh. Although cut from the American MGM dvd release of the film (luckily, the scene is at least included as a special feature), in an imperative 7+-minute scene that really underscores the central themes and aesthetic tone of the film, Sheriff Peter reveals that he is not only a corrupt cop but that he also moonlights as a pimp by bringing him to a local seedy bar that doubles as a brothel. In this inordinately intense scene, an almost insufferably bitchy yet nonetheless beautiful prostitute named Cindy rather assertively attempts to tempt Nick with various pussy-peddlers, including a slut named Michelle that's "reputation is built around her mouth. It's big. It's perfect" and a "bad girl" named Barbara that apparently takes brutal corporal punishment like a champ. In between advertising the carnal merchandise, Cindy bitches out a blind prostitute named Annie for "depressing the fuck out of everyone" by playing Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata.' When Cindy asks Nick "Do you like to eat?" and he gives a less than impassioned response "yes," she proceeds to stick her finger in Barbara's meat curtain and then applies the fresh gash gravy on said finger onto the protagonist's lips like it is lip gloss. While Nick shyly licks the cunt juice off his lips in a gingerly fashion, it is clear that he is intimidated by these dames and that he is probably only interested in Jane who has a similarly cerebral and introverted personality. Indeed, naturally as someone that was abandoned as a baby by his biological mother, Nick clearly has problems with women so it is only natural that he ultimately falls for a similarly wounded soul. Clearly a hopeless romantic as demonstrated by his way with red roses, Nick's

raison d'être seems to be true love and with Jane he will inevitably find it, thus curing his romantic Sehnsucht. Notably, Nick is haunted in his dreams by an aggressive little girl with red hair that seems to taunt the child version of himself. At the very end of the film as the credits role, the same little girl is playing Liszt's titular 'Liebestraum' on piano in what is a fitting conclusion to this true cinematic love dream.

Under the pretense of collaborating together on an article on the cast-iron building that is being demolished, Nick and Jane begin spending much of their time together and it is immediately obvious that their is an almost otherworldly chemistry between the two. Since her hubby Paul previously cheated on her, Jane has all the reason(s) she needs to cheat on him, but it is ultimately her love-at-first-sight feelings for Nick that cause her to cave and embrace the forbidden romance, though she is somewhat reluctant at first. Notably, before leaving for a trip to Seattle, Paul gets pathetically drunk and warns Nick not to fuck his wife by grabbing him in a less than friendly fashion and stating with a certain piss drunk passive-aggressive elegance, "This cast-iron building—you can come and go as you please, just don't come in Jane." Of course, Nick does eventually cum inside Jane and Paul even bears witness to the aftermath of their hot and heavy romance, which fittingly reaches its climax in the ruins of the cast-iron building. Before then, Nick must learn about his curious genetic inheritance and how sex and death have haunted his family before he was even born. Upon discovering that the cast-iron has been hated for a long time due to a scandalous murder-suicide incident that brought great shame to the area, Nick is naturally somewhat perturbed to discover that his father was one of the people killed in the incident. Indeed, supposedly Nick father's father, Mr. Munnsen, was porking the hot blonde wife of his boss Barnard Ralston III. While it was assumed that Ralston shot Munnsen and his wife, who survived but suffered brain damage, before turning the gun on himself, it is eventually revealed via flashback that Nick's mother shot them all while she was pregnant with him. Seeming to die from a cancer that was sown in lovesick hatred and jealous, Nick's terminally ill mother is the seeming (barely) living antithesis of his romantic ideal. Although only really hinted at, it is also revealed that Jane is actually the sort of ungodly bastard love child of Nick's father and Mrs. Ralston, thus making her and the protagonist biological half-siblings. Unbeknownst to Jane, who was adopted, she is also the bastard half-sibling of the surviving Ralston heir Barnard Ralston IV (Zach Grenier), who is also the one that ordered the cast-iron to be demolished. Notably, Barnard IV is a creepy little turd that creeps out Nick out so much while he is lurking among vintage mannequins inside the cast-iron that the protagonist manages to accidentally smash his head into a wall and get knocked out just from the sheer sight of the little fellow. Indeed, seeming like the bastard progeny of Peter Lorre and a deformed gargoyle, Barnard IV virtually haunts both Nick and Jane, which is no surprise considering their accursed

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heritage.

A sort of metaphysical melodrama where virtually every single character seems to be guided by some dubious foreboding fate, *Liebestraum* is undoubtedly most successful when it is at its most confidently ambiguous. For example, while waiting for Nick at the hospital where his mother is on her death bed, Jane attempts to help an elderly wheelchair-bound woman and gets the shock of a lifetime when she looks at the woman's face and discovers that she is not only a brain-dead cripple with a large scar on her forehead where she was shot three decades before, but that she has the same exact eyes as her. While Jane has never seen this old woman in her entire life, it is obvious that she immediately realizes that this barely living creature is actually her biological mother. Needless to say, when Jane runs into Nick's mother's hospital room, the odious old bat freaks out and screams in an excruciatingly shrill fashion, "Oh, I've seen you. I've seen you with your legs spread!" as she thinks that she is the same Ralston that she shot in the head 30 years before during a moment of lethally lovelorn rage and jealousy. In fact, Nick's mother Lillian is still haunted by her dead husband's extramarital excursion and acts if it just happened yesterday, as she complains to her son in regard to the moment that she realized her spouse was cheating on her, "I began to kiss the fingers, one by one, and I could smell cunt on them." Notably, Nick's mother also later smells his hands and complains, "I can smell her on you," as if she has mistaken her for her dead husband. Naturally, it is only fitting that Lillian dies at the same exact time that Nick and Jane are making love inside the cast-iron building. While Lillian dies and the building is assumedly subsequently demolished, Nick and Jane have built a hot and steamy romance, albeit of the unwittingly incestuous sort. While Jane's husband arrives at the cast-iron with a loaded weapon and discovers that his wife and Nick have just made love, he simply sheds a tear instead of killing them. Indeed, unlike Nick's murderously jealous mommy, Paul seems to mournfully accept the gravity of the situation as if he understands the authenticity of their love, thus bringing an end to the sick cycle of sex-and-death that has haunted the town. As to the importance of the climatic sex-death scene, auteur Figgis himself stated, "The link between sex and death is a very strong and fascinating one to explore. When people close to us die, the sexual urge becomes very strong as an affirmation of being alive. In *LIEBESTRAUM*, the character Nick finds himself in a situation where he is visiting his mother, a mother he's never met before, a mother who is obsessed with sexual guilt and jealousy for her husband/son. So, he finds himself in a situation where he's presented with the chance to be promiscuous: he doesn't really know why, but it's a fascinating world to be drawn into. So, what I tried to do in the film is not to play it in a particularly sexual way, but to try and charge the atmosphere."

While *Liebestraum* technically has a happy ending of otherworldly orgasmic proportions, it somehow seems more bitter than sweet, unless you have no

qualms about incestuous or extramarital affairs, but then again, as auteur Figgis once stated in regard to the film, "There is also the fatalistic aspect of sex. People are fated to get together and it's not necessarily to do with a kind of 1960s idea of sex being good, clean fun. The cleaner and more wholesome you make sex, the less interesting it becomes. It also demeans it as the strongest and most basic instinct we have, and separates it into a containable compartment – which American film has done." Indeed, in many ways, Figgis' film is like an anti-Brief Encounter (1945) as a cinematic work were the protagonist arrives via train and does not bother repressing his sexuality like the poor little lady of the David Lean flick but instead exercises his demons and delicately defiles a dame that he seems like he was practically born to love. Personally, I find it practically impossible to relate to any sort of romance flick, but Liebestraum practically had me wishing I had some singularly beautiful unknown bastard half-sister that I could fuck. Apparently, certain pansy American viewers found the original uncut version of the film to be so perverse that Figgis was actually convinced to excise the infamous whorehouse scene, or as the auteur stated himself, "The scene in the whore-house, as scripted – although it functions, in a sense, like a one-act play and can be lifted, as it has been, completely out of the film – had an enormously important role to play psychologically, for the leading character, with the smell of women, the taste of women, and the establishing of his character in terms of how he behaved in the situation – was not at all like something out of TOM JONES. In other words, it was not a rollicking yarn where a 'real man' would go in and roger those prostitutes and come out and say: I managed to fuck then of them, how did you do? Nick was very submissive and intimidated by these strong women, who also confronted him with the flip-side of the coin of how men would like women to behave, which is as demure rape victims. No, these were women who came forward and said: What would you like? They were very aggressive. And I thought it set a tone in the film which was sort of outrageous, from which the character then had to live through the rest of the film, and go through a sort of romance, and deal with his mother, and ultimately come to terms with an image which had already occurred in that scene. But at the preview the audience were horrified by the scene. They were so offended and uncomfortable, and made so hostile by having to watch this scene, that it was impossible to watch the rest of the film. It turned into a completely circus, with people shouting and leaving. There was this incredible aggression coming from the audience."

While Figgis made the rather absurd and virtually anti-artistic decision to cut out an imperative and highly unforgettable scene from Liebestraum, he was curiously way less tolerant of the idea of artistic compromise when it came to incorporating a quasi-pornographic interracial Adam and Eve scenario in his later experimental feature *The Loss of Sexual Innocence* (1999). Indeed, As Figgis stated himself in regard to his own personal cuckkampf, "At one point it almost

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got as far as pre-production in L.A. It was a 'sure thing.' They 'loved it.' We had lunch to celebrate and during the dessert the producers brought up a small point, something small they wished to change, something they were sure would not trouble me at all because it was so damn trivial. I was intrigued by what this tiny detail could be. They wanted Adam to be white and Eve to be black. What it boiled down to was the head of distribution was a white South African and he felt that the world was not ready to see a white woman being rogered by a black man. The script was more radical than the film turned out to be. Over coffee I refused to change the script and they regretfully said that the issue was a deal breaker and that was the end of that. The success of *LEAVING LAS VEGAS* (1955) is what [finally] made it possible to raise the money for *THE LOSS OF SEXUAL INNOCENCE*. Their money was raised by pre-selling the film all over the world." In short, for his cinematic dream project, Figgis—a mick-blooded Englishman that spent his early childhood living in Nairobi, Kenya—was unable to back down on his mission of cultural cuckoldry in the form of a film-destroying anti-fascist Adam and Eve miscegenation scenario that is sure to sicken any white man that has not already been spiritually castrated. In fact, Figgis even had his then-girlfriend Saffron Burrows—a fairly beautiful yet seemingly bat-shit-crazy chick that now lives as a carpet-muncher that is married to another woman—portray Eve and thus had the majorly masochistic and emasculating opportunity of directing his lover having sex with a pitch black sambo (incidentally, the sambo question is not exactly well endowed and seems like a burnt little rodent when in the company of the pale porcelain yet simultaneously fiery fire-crotched beauty of Burrows).

Were it not for its rather repugnant interracial Adam and Eve sequences and various other examples of ethno-masochism and preposterous pretentiousness, *The Loss of Sexual Innocence* might have been Figgis' magnum opus, but I personally believe that both Liebestraum and his debut feature *Stormy Monday* (1988) are superior. An audaciously anti-American jazz-driven neo-noir starring Sting and an unbelievably young and fresh Sean Bean, Figgis' first feature is certainly underrated and a great example of his prowess as a multi-media artist (on top of directing and penning the film, he also created the soundtrack), but Liebestraum is indubitably a more intricate, aesthetically potent, and unforgettable work. In fact, I recently had a sort of Figgis marathon and I can only come to the conclusion that the auteur has only gotten shockingly worse and worse as the decades have passed, as if he has gotten superlatively lazy and increasingly committed himself to approaching filmmaking as something akin to jazz improvisation. A huge proponent of using digital video as opposed to film, Figgis has spent the greater portion of the last two decades directing mostly worthless trash that can, at best, be described as bloody messy DV abortions. For example, I found his pseudo-Dogme 95 experiment in sapless self-indulgence *Hotel* (2001)—a badly botched piece of megalomaniacal meta(pseudo)cinema—to be

so painful in terms of its sheer aesthetic insipidity and overall general incoherence that I could not even bring myself to finish watching it. On the other hand, Figgis' most famous and successful film, *Leaving Las Vegas*, is by no means a masterpiece and certainly far too generic and just plain phony when compared to his greatest films like *Stormy Monday*, *Liebestraum*, and *The Loss of Sexual Innocence*. In terms of his mainstream hack work like the Henry Bean penned *Internal Affairs* (1990) and *The Browning Version* (1994) remake, they are still far more enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing than Figgis' recent digital video twaddle. Sadly, I simply cannot see Figgis ever directing a film that can be described as an unmitigated masterpiece. For me, *Liebestraum* is ultimately a sort of arthouse equivalent to junk food, as a fun and highly re-watchable cinematic work that demonstrates that failed art is not necessarily bad art and that artistic pretense is not always painful and/or *fremdschämen*-inducing. Notably, when the film was originally released, it was oftentimes (unfavorably) compared to the superficially similarly themed *Dead Again* (1991) directed by Kenneth Branagh, which is somewhat unfortunate since it is like comparing Luis Buñuel to Mel Brooks. In other words, Figgis' flick is the work of an aesthetically-inclined artist and Branagh's film is the product of a talented yet tone deaf artisan that lacks the innate poetic flair that is typical of Figgis' more accomplished cinematic works. Indeed, there is no doubt that Figgis is a talented artist, yet his own innate degeneracy seems to have prevented him from evolving into a great artist that is capable of creating great works in the same league as a Bergman, Antonioni, Lynch or even a Cronenberg. Of course, Figgis is unequivocally a true auteur with his own original vision, as most of his films, especially the pre-digital ones, seem to inhabit the same fucked (and idiosyncratically sexually-charged) Figgisian universe. In other words, in terms of British filmmakers, Figgis is more of an artist than a Christopher Nolan or a Tom Hooper, but of course art does not sell as the uniquely underrated filmmaking career of Philip Ridley (*The Reflecting Skin*, *The Passion of Darkly Noon*) surely demonstrates.

While *Liebestraum* received a number of negative reviews when it was originally released, it is also, somewhat ironically, one of, if not Figgis' most personal film, or as the auteur explained himself in an interview when asked by Walter Donohue, "I think it is. There are things in *LIEBESTRAUM* that when I came to write certain scenes I thought: Oh no, I can't really put that in. It's a little bit too – not only personal – but a little bit too intimate. It was quite a barrier to cross to actually write the film. But then, having written the film, it's fine. There's no problem about it any more. The interesting thing about filmmaking is that you do work these things out. And only by making these things as films, do you move on from them and, in a sense, become richer. You look at other people's work, like Bergman. He's worked through all kinds of strange emotional statement that he's put on film and then gone on to something else." Rather unfortunately, Figgis is no Bergman, but he does go slightly further than the

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Swedish cinematic sage in terms of sensual subversion, albeit in a curious cunt cream fashion. Judging by the glaring cultural cuckoldry in *The Loss of Sexual Innocence* and the preternatural passivity of the protagonist of *Liebestraum*, it seems that Figgis is the emasculated auteur par excellence. Still, one must give the filmmaker credit for his honesty in terms of exposing said emasculation. One also must give him credit for clearly both loving and exploiting film the conventions of film noir. After all, as Nietzsche once wrote, "The good men of every age are those who go to the roots of the old thoughts and bear fruit with them, the agriculturalists of the spirit. But every soil becomes finally exhausted, and the ploughshare of evil must always come once more." Unfortunately, it seems that Figgis' own soil has succumb to hardscrabble. As to the central message one takes from a romance as raw and raunchy yet perversely passionate and authentically darkly romantic as *Liebestraum*, Nietzsche certainly had it right when he wrote, "That which is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil."

-Ty E

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Mike Figgis (1999)

Female coming-of-age flicks, especially of the actually female-directed sort, are not exactly common, but it seems the emasculated French pump out the best and most patently perverse films from this niche subgenre, with Catherine Breillat's *Fat Girl* (2001) aka *À ma soeur!* certainly being a notable and rather nasty example. Undoubtedly, the most innately idiosyncratic and downright bizarre girly coming-of-age flick I have ever seen is *Innocence* (2004) directed by Argentinean-born auteur Gaspar Noé's Bosnian-French wife Lucile Hadžihalilović (*La bouche de Jean-Pierre*, *Good Boys Use Condoms*). Rather loosely based on a novella by degenerate Teutonic playwright Frank Wedekind entitled *Mine-Haha*, or *On the Bodily Education of Young Girls* (1903) aka *Mine-Haha oder Über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen*—a work that was rather unfortunately lauded by Judeo-Marxists Leon Trotsky and Theodor W. Adorno, as well as mischling diva Marianne Faithfull—*Innocence* is certainly no less controversial than the sordid and gritty cinematic works of Hadžihalilović's hubby Noé (to whom she dedicated the film), though for entirely different reasons. Indeed, with its various scenes of fully naked preteen girls frolicking around lakes and whatnot, *Innocence* is certainly the sort of work that would attract the larger male pedophile population were the film not so pathologically plodding and steeped in atmosphere-driven ambiguity. Like her blatant filmic influence David Lynch, Hadžihalilović has stated in various interviews that it is up to the viewer to find their own meaning while watching *Innocence*, for which I certainly respect the filmmaker as the film features nil of the far-left novelty intellectualism that oftentimes plagues frog cinema. Like *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) directed by Peter Weir meets *A Day with the Boys* (1969) directed by Clu Gulager meets *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973) directed by Víctor Erice meets Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) in keen color and written from the perspective of a little girl, *Innocence* is a visceral yet esoteric work where ritual and routine drive the film's seemingly nonsensical storyline. A somewhat ironically titled work, *Innocence* is a film about the loss of innocence every member of the fairer sex must face when evolving from a prepubescent girl into a physical and mental woman who longs for a man. Set in a bizarre French boarding school for girls where new students arrive naked in tiny coffins and are inevitably molded quasi-militaristically into women if they are successful with their secret studies, *Innocence* is an ominous, oneiric, and foreboding flick that even manages to transcend Terry Gilliam's *Tideland* (2005) in terms of its bewildering portrayal of the complete and utter confusion that is female childhood. Undoubtedly an innately flawed film that I found to have various glaring annoyances that were clearly executed by someone with a soft, if not artistically strong, female touch, *Innocence* is certainly a work that will more appeal to women and probably also

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effeminate gay men, but will certainly provoke a response in all viewers, namely due to its various scenes of nude little girls, obsessive hermetic symbolism, and nonlinear storyline.

One thing that my girlfriend, who ultimately hated the film, and I found particularly annoying about *Innocence* is that the prepubescent protagonist, Iris (Zoé Auclair), is an Asian of unmentioned origin who sticks out like a sore yellow thumb in an exclusively white and seemingly 'classical' French boarding school, as if auteur Hadžihalilović wanted to make sure her film was 'multicultural' enough for the average French cultural Marxist cinephile. Like all the new students at the institution, Iris inexplicably arrives naked in a coffin, as if she has been reborn a baby vampire. Instead of being greeted by the school's teachers/adults, Iris is welcomed and shown the ropes of the all girls school by the little girls that attend it. The pupils at the school are differentiated by age with colored ribbons that they wear in their hair, with the youngest student wearing red (Iris' color) and the oldest wearing violet. Almost immediately upon arriving at the school, Iris becomes infatuated with an older girl named Bianca (Bérangère Haubruge), who the newcomer looks up to as a mentor and seems to have almost lesbian feelings for. Iris has no clue how she arrived at the school and complains about missing her brother, but her pleas are only met with the reassurance that she is now at 'home.' Despite lacking control of the students in many regards, the teachers are rather authoritarian and seem like frigid dykes who want to break little girls just as they were once broken long ago. When one of the little girls, Laura (Olga Peytavi-Müller), attempts to escape from the school on a leaking rowboat, she ultimately drowns and her corpse is burned up in the coffin she arrived in a ritualistic manner in front of the entire population of the institution as if a warning to all other girls at the school to not attempt to escape. Indeed, fear is the foremost tool used to keep the girls in check. When a rather homely girl that looks like Anne Frank, Alice (Lea Bridarolli), lashes out due to the fact she was not picked to 'graduate' from the school, she later runs away and disappears and the teachers tell the rest of the girls to forget she ever existed. A lady named Mademoiselle Eva (Marion Cotillard), who teaches the girls ballet and the finer points of being a fair lady, does the honor of setting the coffins of dead girls on fire, while a cunty cripple with a cane named Mademoiselle Edith (Hélène de Fougerolles) acts as a sort of adversarial character. Notably, Iris is told that if she breaks the rules at the school (i.e. attempts to escape), she will be punished with being forced to stay there forever like the female teachers, who never developed into real woman as sexless spinsters who have dedicated their lives to teaching little girls (after all, those that cannot do teach!) In the end, Iris' best bud Bianca graduates from the school and almost immediately finds a 'man' upon entering the real world in a symbolic scene clearly indicating she has finally reached womanhood.

In an interview, auteur Lucile Hadžihalilović stated regarding *Innocence* and

her expectations regarding how certain audiences will respond to the film: “I think the audience’s reaction will vary between men and women. Naturally, I think it’s easier for women to identify with the young girls. They’ll understand it more quickly and directly. Their own lives will be evoked. It’s a bit more complicated for men since there are no male characters in the film. So I think their own view of the young girls will be evoked.” Indeed, I would be lying if I did not admit that I could not completely lose myself in the film as *Innocence* was clearly made by a woman with a ‘nostalgic’ sense of childhood, which Hadžihalilović confirmed in an interview when she confessed: “Someone told me that they think my film portrays what it is to be a normal girl, in a normal school who conjures up that world in their imagination to recount their experience. In that sense, yes, my film is completely autobiographical.” Somewhat peculiarly, *Innocence* is also rather heavy on “nature-worship” and reminded me of a Lynchian take on völkisch National Socialist propaganda flicks like *Enchanted Forest* (1936) aka *Ewiger Wald*. In fact, auteur Hadžihalilović confessed regarding her interest in adapting *Mine-Haha*, or *On the Bodily Education of Young Girls*, “One of the elements that I really liked in Wedekind’s story was its pantheism. Maybe it’s personal and related to my childhood, but I have the impression that children live in nature.” Undoubtedly, if one learns anything while watching *Innocence*, it is one cannot stop the power of nature and that nature knows no morals.

Indeed, if there was anything I could relate to in *Innocence*, it is the film’s mystical depiction of nature and its organic majesty because as a child I loved nothing more than getting lost in the woods and feeling like I was one with the animals, trees, and water. Of course, as symbolically depicted at the conclusion of *Innocence* when Bianca graduates and heads to the city, most people seem to lose their affinity and respect for nature when they become adults. Notably, *Innocence* is not the only film based on Wedekind’s *Mine-Haha*, or *On the Bodily Education of Young Girls*, as director John Irvin made an inferior yet much darker lesbo-themed adaptation of the novella entitled *The Fine Art of Love: Mine Ha-Ha* (2005) starring Jacqueline Bisset. A film that will probably only ironically appeal to dubious individuals into arthouse child porn like *Maladolescenza* (1977) as well as female cinephiles looking to get in touch with their inner child, *Innocence* ultimately proves Lucile Hadžihalilović is a true female talent who has yet to make her masterpiece and who does not need to rely on cliché feminist/left-wing politics to attract praise from critics like most female filmmakers do. Make no mistake about it, *Innocence* is a slow and oftentimes plodding arthouse work, but Hadžihalilović is clearly an uncompromising and intuitive artist in the Herzogian sense who takes cinema very seriously as an artistic medium and who is not afraid to alienate the majority of filmgoers, which is certainly something I can respect. Indeed, while I know next to nothing about Hadžihalilović, it is quite clear to me that Gaspar Noé has found his soul mate

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and she clearly lost her innocence long ago, but like her film demonstrates, innocence is something one does not truly understand until it is lost forever.

-Ty E

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Mike Kuchar (1964)

Maybe because I have not seen that many decent films about deadly undead Egyptian aristocrats wrapped in ancient bandages, but I have never really had a strong interest in mummy movies, so I can appreciate it when a filmmaker dares to rape and defile the conventions and mythology of the classic horror subgenre, especially if you have to be a half-crazed and remarkably socially awkward camp-oriented genre-molester like Mike Kuchar (*Sins of the Fleshapoids*, *The Secret of Wendel Samson*). Indeed, forget the Ed Wood penned pseudo-erotic celluloid turd *Orgy of the Dead* (1965), the bandaged corpse host of Antony Balch's suave counterculture sexploitation flick *Secrets of Sex* (1970) aka *Bizarre*, Anthony Hickox's self-referential porno horror-comedy *Waxwork* (1988), and even the curious cult item Don Coscarelli's *Bubba Ho-Tep* (2002), Kuchar's 24-minute silent horror-melodrama-sci-fi experiment in avant-garde camp *Born of the Wind* (1961) is certainly one of the most wildly idiosyncratic, morally vacant, and uniquely unpredictable mummy movies ever made, even if it is more or less a glorified home-movie that was directed by someone that one might assume is a benign mental patient who could one day become like Mickey Rooney's titular character in Yabo Yablonsky's *The Manipulator* (1971) aka *B.J. Lang Presents*. Shot on the much maligned consume grade medium of 8mm, Kuchar's waywardly enthralling flick not only abruptly switches between various movie genres in a ridiculously refreshing way, but also features various forms of archaic animation as a work that makes the special effects of the homegrown semi-Lovecraftian cult classic *Equinox* (1970) seem comparable to that of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). One of the few Kuchar Twins flicks that has been professionally restored and is available in DVD form (it was somewhat fittingly released as part of the 2008 DVD compilation *Experiments in Terror 3* alongside shorts by Guy Maddin and imaginary filmmaker J. X. Williams), *Born of the Wind* has a sort of very distinct and unforgettable DIY Gothic neo-Expressionist aesthetic about it that accentuates the films refreshingly amoral tone where the most heinous of monsters are depicted in a strangely empathetic light that might make the average Hollywood spoon-fed American filmgoer vomit in abject confusion. A mad-scientist-meets-vampiric-mummy tale that evolves into a hysterically tragic bizarre love triangle involving pernicious space invaders and cat burglars that becomes completely aesthetically and thematically anarchistic in the end to the point where the filmgoer will be questioning whether what they just saw really happened or not, Kuchar's flick is nothing short of campy romantic pessimism at its most flagrantly freaky and pleasantly psychotronic. Seeming like it was directed by the bastard idiot savant stepson of James Whale and Curtis Harrington, the short features a sort of melodically melancholic spirit that you might expect to bleed from Douglas

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Sirk's mind had the master of melodrama become a horror fan upon developing Alzheimer's disease. Somewhat underwhelming described by co-star George Kuchar as, "A tender and realistic story of a scientist who falls in love with a mummy he has restored to life... 2,000 years as a mummy couldn't quench her thirst for love!" *Born of the Wind* is nothing short of the height of celluloid outsider art as a work that tests the bounds of artistic tastefulness.

After opening with a sort of pseudo-psychedelic title screen, *Born of the Wind* features a partially incorrectly spelled handpainted inter-title reading, "It's been three weeks since the disappearance of the mummy from the city museum. At Koshki Castle, Dr. Morris D. Koshki works feverishly to decode an old Egyptian scroll. The scroll says it can bring life and youth back to the mummified princess who died at an early age, thousands of years ago." Indeed, Dr. Koshki (Kuchar regular Bob Cowan of *The Secret of Wendel Samson* (1966) and *The Devil's Cleavage* (1975)) is an extra mad scientist with a slight sensitive side who seems rather lonely and hopelessly sexually repressed as he has dedicated all of his time to reanimating an ancient aristocrat Egyptian corpse that was born before Jesus Christ and no task or crime is too big for him to accomplish this seemingly ludicrous task of quasi-necrophiliac forbidden love. After berating his annoyingly meek maid (Janice Jones) for knocking over something while he is studying arcane Egyptian scrolls at his desk, Dr. Koshki finally realizes that he will need to procure human blood if he wants to perfect a magical potion that will give life to his rotten would-be-lover, so he naturally raids a blood bank that is designated with a poorly handwritten sign on the front door at a place called Shalimar Hospital and steals a couple jars full of fresh vital fluids. Upon getting home with the jars of stolen blood, Dr. Koshki is so excited about the prospect of bringing the mummy to life that he spills the stolen sanguine fluids all over the place while creating his special reanimating potion. Somewhat anticlimactically, the Mummy (Kuchar regular Donna Kerness of *The Naked and the Nude* (1957) and *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965)) instantly comes to life and transform into a somewhat beautiful busy babe after Dr. Koshski applies his special serum to her initially thoroughly decayed skull. Somewhat preposterously, the mummy princess immediately embraces Koshski upon becoming reanimated and naturally the good doctor laps up all of the attention like a middle-aged virgin who has never had a girlfriend before. Of course, being an autistically scientifically minded social misfit with probably nil social skills, especially when it comes to the opposite sex, Koshski never seems to consider that his special mummy chick might not feel the same way about him as he feels about her, or so he will eventually learn the hard way as the film progresses.

Not unlike a typical bloodsucking vampire, the mummy needs blood to survive as she begins to rot if she does not have a steady plasma supply. When Dr. Koshki's cat knocks over the last remaining jar of blood while he is playing a piano ballad and he is forced to leave the castle to go steal some more red stuff

from the local hospital, the fiending mummy, who cannot wait for her undead dope, takes it upon herself to rejuvenate her busty body by slitting the throat of the dorky castle maid and gorging on her seemingly half-stale vital fluids. While Dr. Koshki is naturally shocked to see the awkwardly contorted bloody corpse of his buffoonish maid when he gets home, he does not really give his poor loyal employee's brutal death a second thought because he has more important things on his mind, or as an inter-title reveals, "Enslaved by his desires for the Princess the murder was soon forgotten, washed away in her tender, all consuming embrace, and in her promises of eternal love." Unfortunately for the dandy-like mad scientist, his sphinxlike undead princess' feelings for him are not exactly as strong as his are for her. Indeed, one night while sleeping in bed alongside Dr. Koshski, the busty mummy awakes to the sound of two incompetent cat burglars stealing utensils from the castle kitchen, so she absurdly threatens them with a hammer but before she knows it her anger and fear turn into ecstasy when the men get physical with her. Indeed, when one of the burglars (Spencer Lee Todd) grabs the blood-addicted princess and gets a little rough with her, she begins to enjoy it, strips off some of her clothes, and then proceeds to ballroom dance with the low-life criminal. While the mummy finds her dance partner to be fairly fun, she more or less falls in love at first sight upon seeing the face of his somewhat more handsome comrade (George Kuchar), who immediately reciprocates her feelings. Needless to say, this bizarre love triangle gets all the more bizarre when Dr. Koshki, who is busy sleeping like a baby, discovers that his beloved has committed the unpardonable act of emotionally betraying him like some cheap floozy.

Before leaving the castle with his criminal compatriot, Kuchar tells his new mummy mistress, "I'll be waiting out there for you," instead of just taking her with him then and there, which would have been the more sensible thing to do, or so he will soon learn as Dr. Koshki will ultimately discover his undead lover's treachery before she can attempt to escape from his revengeful wrath. Of course, like any normal girl that likes a boy and wants to impress him, the mummy princess decides to get all dolled up before she joins her lover, so she puts on a slutty skirt and some streetwalker-esque make-up. As revealed in an inter-title in regard to the mummy's love for Kuchar's character, "As if born again for a third time, the Princess prepares herself for her new love." Before meeting Kuchar outside, the princess makes the silly mistake of looking at Dr. Koshki one more last time while he is sleeping and in the process unwittingly wakes him from his slumber. As the sun causes a light to magically beam through a forest in a fashion that makes it resembles a sort of fiery star, the princess and Kuchar play and frolic gaily in the snow with one another right outside of the castle while Dr. Koshki stares angrily at them through an upstairs window while hysterically cursing at his treacherous beloved. When the princess makes the mistake of walking back inside the castle, Dr. Koshki is naturally waiting for her and he immediately

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begins violently slapping her in the face. Deriving a sort of vengeful sadistic glee from his violence against the woman that broke his heart, the good doctor can only laugh hysterically and point his finger at the princess like she is a freak when he notices that her face is beginning to rot. When Dr. Koshki then proceeds to laugh even more maniacally upon revealing that he has emptied all of the jars of blood in the castle, the perpetually deteriorating princess becomes enraged and begins savagely stabbing him with a large knife so that she can rejuvenate herself with his blood, but it curiously does not harm him and nil vital fluids are drawn. Indeed, in a bizarre plot twist that could happen in a Mike Kuchar flick, Dr. Koshki strips his clothes to the point where he is only wearing goofy red long underwear and then transforms into a sort of silly lycanthrope-like beast with white whiskers. Of course, things only get stranger from there, as the beast begins floating across the floor in a robotic fashion, puts on a metal helmet and is eventually beamed up to a flying saucer that is conveniently hovering above the castle in what is indubitably one of the most wonderfully implausible scenarios in Gothic horror cinema history. Indeed, as it turns out, Dr. Koshki is not just a misunderstood melancholic Gothic dandy cuckold or even a wussy werewolf, but an evil extraterrestrial with a perverse fetish for ancient undead earthling pussy. As Dr. Koshki flies into outer space in his spaceship, Kuchar helplessly watches in abject horror as his beloved deteriorates rather rapidly and eventually dies, with the only thing remaining of her once-voluptuous body being her skeleton, a lone eyeball, and some rotten gray flesh.

Sort of like a stylishly schlocky *Tristan und Isolde* of the 1960s NYC underground as directed by an eccentric fellow who thought he could beat Douglas Sirk at his own game in terms of assembling aesthetically melodic yet misanthropic melodramas, *Born of the Wind* ultimately packs an unbelievably potent psychotronic punch that demonstrates that Kuchar could fill more passion and intrigue in 20 minutes than some imitator like Nick Zedd could in one of his features like his somewhat comparable 74-minute monster movie *Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain* (1983). Undoubtedly what separates the films of Kuchar and his brother from the filmmakers they influenced like Zedd and John Waters is that there is genuine beauty and human emotions in their films while their celluloid disciples just rely on heavy-handed scatological humor, cheap witticisms, and a bottom-of-the-barrel trash aesthetic. Simply put, *Born of the Wind* is arguably the greatest and most lavish 8mm film ever made as a marvelous monstrosity of a monster melodrama that manages to reconcile Tod Browning and Ed Wood with Sirk and Josef von Sternberg, among other things. In terms of idiosyncratic mummy movies, Kuchar's film is up there with Herbert Achternbusch's absurdist arthouse comedy *I Know the Way to the Hofbrauhaus* (1991) and Michael Almereyda's postmodern Celtic pagan piece *The Eternal* (1998) aka *Trance*, though it is naturally a lot more accessible than the other two films as a short and wickedly bittersweet celluloid

treat that seems to have infinite replay value. Of course, with its lavish low-budget high-camp decadence, pseudo-arcane mystical themes, and all-star underground cast that includes Bob Cowan, Donna Kerness, and George Kuchar in the lead roles, Kuchar's short is unequivocally a worthy predecessor to the director's magnum opus *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965). An endlessly entralling lo-fi micro-epic packed with an elegant aesthetic decadence that is comparable to any early Werner Schroeter flick and with a refined sense of cinema literacy that makes the films of Quentin Tarantino seem like the autistic postmodern ramblings of a negrophilic preteen megalomaniac that is addicted to Ritalin, *Born of the Wind* certainly deserves a special place in cinema history in some dark and wet corner, not least of all because it proves that you can make a timeless genre-schizophrenic Gothic horror-romance in your stern Ukrainian mother's cramped apartment.

-Ty E

SINS OF THE FLESHAPOIDS
SINS OF THE FLESHAPOIDS

Mike Kuchar (1965)

If a young Werner Schroeter got possessed by the ghost of Douglas Sirk's dead Nazi son and attempted to direct a lo-fi loose mutated reworking of both Ridley Scott's classic Philip K. Dick adaptation *Blade Runner* (1982) and Fellini *Satyricon* (1969) into a single film on a budget of a mere thousand dollars and starring a motley crew of most homely and swarthy Hebrews, it might begin to describe Mike Kuchar's legendary kaleidoscopic underground magnum opus *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), which features a curious hodgepodge of neo-classical, pop art, Marvel comic, and kitsch aesthetics as a truly modern science fiction flick that managed to unwittingly reinvent the genre in a fashion that would make it seem quite hip and chic as opposed to an escapist fantasy realm for autistic virginal fanboys. Apparently strangely largely influenced by the director's then-obsession with Hollywood Hercules and Tarzan movies (which is apparent in Kuchar's casting of a couple muscular and not-so-muscular men sporting loincloths and excess body hair) but also avant-garde works like Kenneth Anger's classic Crowleyite flick *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), Kuchar's film was amazingly made without the benefit of a script and partially shot in the director's bedroom, which he transferred into a sort of neo-Grecian pleasure-pad one evening after eating dinner. Indeed, probably the most absurdly aesthetically decadent high-camp flick film that was ever shot in a NYC apartment aside from possibly queer photographer James Bidgood's pseudonymously directed cocksucker cult classic *Pink Narcissus* (1971), the semi-tragic sci-fi-melodrama hybrid was 'co-penned' by the director's somewhat more prolific twin brother George Kuchar, who incidentally directed his own masterpiece *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) around the same time period not long after brother Mike had quit their final collaboration *Corruption of the Damned* (1965) in the middle of production. After quitting *Corruption of the Damned* (which he credits his brother for directing 80% of), Kuchar's first solo film after ending his co-directing collaboration with his brother George was the darkly romantic and equally decadent 8mm horror-sci-fi-melodrama hybrid *Born Of The Wind* (1964), which feels like a fairly admirable warm-up for what would ultimately be regarded by most people, including the director himself, as his masterpiece. Notably, John 'The Pope of Trash' Waters once stated regarding the influence of the Kuchar brothers' two masterpieces, "George and Mike Kuchar's films were my first inspiration. George's *HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED*, Mike's *SINS OF THE FLESHAPOIDS* – these were the pivotal films of my youth, bigger influences than Warhol, Kenneth Anger, and even *THE WIZARD OF OZ*." While I am not sure that I agree that *Hold Me While I'm Naked* is George's greatest work, *Sins of the Fleshapoids* is certainly Mike at his most maniacally masterful, as a bizarrely beauteous celluloid orgasm that fea-

tures barrage of post-bohemian Bacchanalian bathos and that was directed by a perennial 'amateur' auteur when he was at the height of his artistic powers.

Undoubtedly what I found more intriguing about Kuchar's sci-fi micro-epic in comparison to the pre-Polyester (1981) films of John Waters is that it is not drenched in a tidal wave of pathologically witty irony or a proudly tasteless 'trash for trash's sake' spirit, thus making for what I say as a innately more honest and authentic cinematic work that dares to attempt to achieve cinematic beauty on a mere beggar's budget (it should be noted that Kuchar was largely against writing a script because he was interested in examining his own subconscious). Certainly while watching *Sins of the Fleshapoids*, I got the sense that Kuchar is a crypto-misanthrope who sees his own fellow homos as unscrupulous conman and whores, women as conniving cunts who will marry a man they do not love for his money while keeping a more sexually preferable lover on the side, and romance as a deadly dangerous delusion that compels people to lie, cheat, steal and kill, among other things unsavory things that are quite timeless among human beings. In other words, Kuchar's film can be seen as a sort of anti-Terminator in terms of both spirit and aesthetics, as a campy genre-molesting avant-garde piece where machine is morally superior to man that ultimately manages to do the seemingly impossible by siring great cinematic pulchritude and intrigue out of cynicism and decadence. Set a million years in the future in a dystopian world after a nuclear holocaust that was responsible for wiping out most humans and civilization where eponymous humanoid-like robots that were created by scientists as human servants have developed genuine human emotions like love and hate as well as purer and more innocent form of love and affection than real humans, who have degenerated to a decidedly decadent Satyricon-esque state as lazy and pacifistic hedonists who live simply to eat and fuck and lack the testicular fortitude for war, Kuchar's pleasantly ridiculous robot romance features both a physical and spiritual robo-rebellion where love conquers all in the end, just not for humans, who are so hopelessly forsaken that it would be nothing short of an act of gracious mercy to exterminate them all from the entire planet so that the androids can prosper and create a more magical world.

Both narrated by and starring Kuchar superstar Bob Cowan (who also created the bizarre musical score and who probably could be described as the film's sort of secondary auteur due to his crucial artistic contribution to the project) in the lead role as a tragically spastic android named 'Xar'—a hardly handsome and somewhat heavyset male machine that sports a André the Giant-esque toga and a goofy plastic helmet that resembles the fairly aesthetically displeasing ones worn by the Soviet Red Army during the Second World War—*Sins of the Fleshapoids* begins with a series of fairly memorable hand drawn credits that were created by the director with crayons and scrapbook paper, thus giving the viewer the impression that they are about to endure a film that is as insanelly idiosyncratic as it is shamelessly minimalistic. After declaring, "The time...is a million

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years in the future” in a somewhat histrionic fashion (somewhat humorously, Cowan later felt embarrassed by his narration, or as he states in the doc *It Came from Kuchar* (2009), “Well I was supposed to be a robot and then of course I did the narration, which makes me wince a bit when I hear it now. It’s over-the-top.”), the narrator describes Xar’s artificially engineered race, stating in a sort of pleasantly putrid pseudo-poetic fashion, “The Fleshapoids are mechanical men. They are servants of the human race who obeys the human’s every demand. These robots are called ‘Fleshapoids’ because their shells resemble human flesh. The synthetic flesh developed by the top scientists of the world who devoted their lives to the creation of these perfect mechanical slaves.” Xar is the personal property of a less than beautiful middle-aged broad (played by Kuchar superstar Gina Zuckerman, who had apparently had a fetish-based stipulation that any film she appeared in had to have a scene where a man ripped her clothes off) of the grotesquely self-absorbed and decadent sort who sits around all day eating fruit in a lackluster fashion and undressing in front of her two Fleshapoids, as if she gets an exhibitionistic kick out of displaying her nearly ancient flesh for manmade machines that do not seem to have cocks (as revealed later in the film, the robots have sex by shooting electricity into one another’s fingertips). While it is somewhat hard to tell since he almost always has a robotic expression on his perennially glacial face, Xar certainly seems less than impressed when his owner disrobes and is nothing less than horrified when she later attempts to seduce him.

Whilst an android that moves around in a ridiculously robotic fashion as if he was the victim of being routinely gang-raped by a band of Mexican dipsomaniac bikers, Xar is somewhat sensitive and does have strong humanlike emotions that he is having an increasingly hard time controlling, or as the narrator hypermelodramatically narrates regarding the strange evolutionary condition that has plagued the tin souls of the protagonist’s robot kind, “The Fleshapoids have now been in existence for 20,000 years. If all the humans had been destroyed by the Great War, they would have been the only creatures left on earth. The earth would have been inhabited by mechanical replicas of the humans who built them. In those few thousands of years when the earth was rebuilding itself and the human race had not yet begun to re-multiply after the Great War, the Fleshapoids were completely alone in the wild of the natural world. In that time, a strange thing happened. Some of them developed senses. They began to react to evolution and environment just as the minute organisms did a billion years ago. Xar was one of these Fleshapoids who had become a victim of these changes. Xar no longer wanted to obey the humans; not when he himself had tasted the world of emotions; not when he too had experienced the one force that makes men emperors of the universe: love. For today will be the day that the Fleshapoids sinned.” Indeed, while admiring himself in a mirror like the tragic figure of Narcissus from ancient Greek mythology, Xar’s owner embarrasses him by walking

in on him, thus causing the robotic protagonist to run away from his master and turn in the opposite direction in shame. When his owner sternly states “Turn and face me” (which, like all the dialogue in the film, is absurdly expressed in comic-book-like cartoon bubbles) as if she plans to fuck him and Xar refuses to comply out of shame and disgust, things take an ugly turn for the worse. At this point, Xar’s owners whips out a pot of water and aggressively declares, “Obey me, or I’ll wet you and make you rust!!,” thus inspiring the protagonist to defend himself in a most extreme fashion. After grabbing the pot from her hand and tearing off her dress, Xar is forced to murder his owner by thrashing her to the ground with his mighty mechanical fist after she once again dares to attempt to rust him via H₂O. Naturally, after killing his master and being successful in his one-android robot rebellion, Xar is free to do what he likes and lucky he has a beloved damsel in distress of sorts to save.

Not unlike Xar, ravishing robo-girl Melenka (German diva Maren Thomas of *The Secret of Wendel Samson* (1966) and *Color Me Shameless* (1967), who apparently would sometimes suffer mental breakdowns on Kuchar’s film sets and was once a *Playboy* bunny) is an emotionally evolved Fleshapoid that has developed the ability to feel human emotions and she loves the protagonist, but unfortunately she is the personal slave of an evil and ambiguously gay aristocrat named Prince Gianbeno (George Kuchar). Luckily, Prince Gianbeno’s futuristic castle is fairly close to Xar’s dead owner’s less than humble abode, so it does not take long for the protagonist to get to his beloved, though he does not have any clue of the histrionic horrors that await him inside the decadent royal estate. Of course, as can be expected, Prince Gianbeno has problems of his own, as he might be a wickedly depraved blueblood bastard who smacks food out of Melenka’s arm and kicks her to the ground from the luxury of his throne after she meekly attempts to serve him dinner, but he is also married to a lecherous lady with a very voluptuous body named Princess Vivianna (Kuchar superstar Donna Kerness of *Born of the Wind* (1964) and *The Craven Sluck* (1967)) who has cuckolded him by starting a lurid love affair with a swarthy beefcake boy named Ernie (ex-Marine Julius Middleman). As the narrator declares regarding the big bosomed Princess, “Living off her husband’s money and hospitality, she now had everything. For Vivianna had, too, found love. Together with Ernie, they vowed to share eternity together,” but little does she realize that her beefy beau is a conspiring crypto-cocksucker of sorts who, not unlike Montgomery Cliff’s rather dapper character in William Wyler’s classic melodrama *The Heiress* (1949), thinks like an evil woman and is really just after her riches. Indeed, whereas the Fleshapoids only know true love and affection, the humans are compulsively cunning creatures that use love as a tool of treacherous deceit, with hairy beefcake Ernie being a far from earnest lover.

While Princess Vivianna loves admiring herself in a portable mirror while wearing nothing aside from sunflower flower petals over her nipples and a fig

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leaf over her pussy, her misleadingly muscular loverboy Ernie enjoys eating Wise brand potato chips and candy bars while receiving back massages from super faggy twink-like Fleshapoids servants, among various other strange activities that would make most sane straight men cringe in abject disgust. When they are lying together in bed, Vivianna vies for Ernie's attention and affection by giving him pieces of gold jewelry that were given to her by her horrendous hubby. As Xar begins breaking into the castle, Vivianna and Ernie are in the middle of foreplay, but the carnal session is abruptly aborted before the real fun begins when the Princess realizes that she has to meet her sinisterly effete husband downstairs for dinner. Before going downstairs, Vivianna curiously orders two Fleshapoids to service Ernie by bathing and feeding him like a baby, thus revealing that she might be aware that her lover is an aberrosexual of sorts who prefers hard cocks to warm cunts. Meanwhile, Xar lurks through Gianbeno's distinctly decadently decorated castle and eventually finds his lover Melenka sitting on the Prince's throne where he declares to her, "We are Robots...yet we are in love." Melenka must be extra flattered in regard to the sacrifice Xar has made for her by killing his master and coming to see her because says to him, "Let us now make love" and then the two proceed to make love by mutually zapping electricity into one another's hands via their fingertips. As Xar and Melenka continue to passionately penetrate one another with erotic electricity while Ernie receives an extra sensual massage from two male Fleshapoids in the upstairs wing of the castle, Vivianna eats sauerkraut with Prince Gianbeno and attempts to keep up the preposterous charade that she actually loves him and is not harboring and humping a man behind his back in his own home, but things get somewhat awkward when the routinely clumsy Princess accidentally spills a glass of water on her husband after he requests that she put out a candle.

When the Prince asks Vivianna where her gold necklace is and she mundanely replies that she left it upstairs, Gianbeno insists on fetching it for her and begins making his way up the steps even though his wife pleads that she can get it herself. Rather revealingly, the debauched aristocrat has a sadistic smile on his face as he treads up the stairs, thus revealing that he is well aware that his wifey has cuckolded him and that he cannot wait to rub it in her face that he knows about her extramarital treachery. Determined to be with her boy toy for eternity, Vivianna chases after Gianbeno and pushes him down the stairs, thus knocking the Prince unconscious. Hoping to flee the castle with her beau before her husband awakes from his slumber, Vivianna immediately runs back to Ernie and yells to him, "We must run away, my husband knows about us!," but the seemingly half-brain-dead male whore does not exactly act like he is hard pressed for time and even has aristocratic sugar-momma dress him as if it is too much of a hassle for him to clothe himself. Indeed, after dressing Ernie in a traditional American football uniform (!), including pads, Vivianna puts a crown of flowers on top of her beau's NFL helmet and the two begin heading out of the castle. Of course,

being a third rate Don Juan with a dubious sexual persuasion, Ernie has his mind on money and tells Vivianna "Take your jewels" but she accidentally drops the jewelry box while attempting to grab it, thus causing priceless gold to fly all over the place. While Vivianna acts like it is no big deal and attempts to get Ernie to leave immediately with her without the gold because they clearly do not have time to fiddle around with petty material objects when their lives and love affair are at stake, the greedy crypto-gay beefcake boy wastes no time scooping up the jewels, thereupon causing the Princess to finally come to the realization that her beau has always been after her riches and that he probably does not even love her. At this point, Vivianna decides to ask Ernie, "Who do you love?,...me or my jewels?" and naturally she is startled when he moronically replies, "BOTH!" Although they have no time to waste, Vivianna becomes hysterical and attempts to fuck Ernie right then and there while he is gathering the jewels and is not too happy when her lover violently pushes her to the ground like a worthless piece of trash. Completely heartbroken, the Princess runs to a corner of the room, pulls out a dagger that she has hidden in her bra, points the blade of the weapon at her heart, and then declares to Ernie, "If you leave me...I'll kill myself," but he is not at all impressed and merely rhetorically asks "Is that a promise?" and then walks away. Clearly feeling like she has been stabbed in the heart, Vivianna charges Ernie from behind and quite fittingly literally stabs him in the back with the dagger, thus killing him instantly. Although not depicted, one can only assume Vivianna has no choice but to subsequently kill herself as a desperate woman that has lost her great love and probably her great fortune.

Upon finally regaining consciousness, Prince Gianbeno goes looking around the house for Vivianna but instead finds his Fleshapoid servant Melenka making electric love with Xar, which he finds quite unsettling. Indeed, as the narrator states regarding the Prince's shock, "It was incredible for Gianbeno to understand how two robots could feel affection for one another. 'It's against nature,' he screamed. 'Against the laws of the universe...That bodies made out of nuts and bolts could feel the pangs of love in their aluminum hearts. This would upset the very foundation of life itself. What would become of the human race if these two lifeforces meet? War? Slavery? This time, the human being the slave. An unknown hideous force thus as this must be removed from the face of the earth in shame. Gianbeno must disconnect them.'" From there, Gianbeno proceeds to 'disconnect' Melenka by opening her dress and fiddling with a device near her robo-boob that causes her entire body to instantly shutdown. Not willing to tolerate a pansy prince who has messed with his lover's mechanical mammary glands, Xar violently slams Gianbeno to the ground and then proceeds to turn Melenka back on. After the narrator pseudo-moralistically declares, "Man has created this new race of creatures. Now he must pay the punishment and vengeance they set upon him," Xar grabs Gianbeno's hand and declares "I'm negative" while Melenka grabs his other hand and declares "I'm

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positive.” From there, the two android lovers prove that opposites truly attract by simultaneously frying the Prince to death with red rays of electricity that is so powerfully electrifying that the only thing left of Gianbeno when they are done is his charred skull. While the two robots prove that love conquers all in their seemingly effortless liquidation of the Prince, Melenka subsequently cries “S-S-Something is wrong” while staring at Gianbeno’s skull and then proceeds to fall to the floor while moaning hysterically with pain. While initially seeming like the film might end on an unhappy note, things become what auteur Kuchar once described as “so preposterously cute” when a cuddly baby robot emerges from between Melenka’s legs, thus ushering in what is probably the world’s first android baby birth.

While financed solely with money Mike Kuchar earned while working as a photo retoucher, *Sins of the Fleshapoids* was such a relatively big success for an underground movie upon its release that the director earned enough in royalties that he was able to pursue his dream of not having to work a ‘real’ nine-to-five job for about six years (though it should be noted that, like his twin brother, Kuchar lived fairly modestly). With Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey’s *Chelsea Girls* (1966), Kuchar’s magnum opus is regarded as one of the three most influential American underground films of the 1960s and it was even argued by avant-garde gatekeeper Jonas Mekas that Slavic-blooded frog skirt-chaser Roger Vadim ripped off the film with his mainstream sci-fi sexploitation flick *Barbarella* (1968) starring neo-bolshevik bimbo Jane Fonda due to both films featuring a scene where characters have sex via their hands. Notably, when asked by Jack Stevenson about the purported influence of his film on Vadim’s flick, Kuchar dismissively replied in a somewhat humorous fashion, “You’re referring to the smoking fingertips in *BARBARELLA*, when the actors hands touch in mock lovemaking, but I had sparks of lightning shooting out of the fingers – not smoke – when the robots make love in *SINS*. If Vadim’s screenwriters did lift ideas from my film, I can’t understand why they would pass up on the idea of using comic book “thought bubbles” floating above the actors when they are required to think.” Thankfully, in the same interview, Kuchar reveals denies the idea of insufferable dyke Hebrewess Susan Sontag’s obscenely overrated 1964 essay *Notes on Camp* influencing his work, remarking, “I have never read ‘Notes on Camp’. My own definition of the word is this: You pitch your tent (camera and crew) in an established theme park. In the case of *SINS OF THE FLESHAPOIDS*, we pitched our tent on sci-fi comic book territory and the Hollywood style of moviemaking. Then you go on holiday with the established form, consciously accentuating the artificiality inherent in the styles and techniques they used to manipulate the audience. Thus the soundtrack music becomes loud and obvious, make-up is over-applied or blatantly misapplied, and the actors are obviously ‘acting’, or even better, they can’t act at all!...It’s a sort of vandalism, a form of good natured sabotage.” Indeed,

the difference between Kuchar's films and the completely forgotten cinematic works of Sontag is that the former were the expression of a rich and eccentric soul who made films because he loved making films while the latter were the product of a soulless wench with an affinity prosaic and pedantic intellectual masturbation, hence what differentiates the Sins of the Fleshapoids director and his brother from most of the Structural filmmakers that were associated with the 1960s American underground.

Personally, I see 'camp' as a form of 'good natured rape,' with Sins of the Fleshapoids feeling like the natural result of Aubrey Beardsley pillaging every single wet orifice of Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960). Indeed, I would be lying if I did not admit that the scorching warm colors of Kuchar's made me feel in the mood for lurid electric love, albeit not the sort involving sparks of lightning shooting out of fingers. While some might refer to Kuchar's magnum opus as keenly kitschy trash cinema, there is undoubtedly a strange quasi-aristocratic spirit to Sins of the Fleshapoids, even if it is a debauched one, so it should be no surprise that Kuchar also stated in his interview with Stevenson regarding his influences, "Gregory Markopoulos... he was an inspiration. If there is such a notion as "Gay Pride" – he was it! You don't need to flaunt it when you've got the regal poise and golden ideals of this guy. He was memorable, an impeccable aristocrat who dined at the Automat (an inexpensive, now extinct, cafeteria where you put nickels into a slot to receive plates of hot food from behind glass doors). Had he lived in another age, Gregory would have been perfectly at home in a powdered wig and buckled shoes." While Kuchar never directed a film as elegant and meticulously constructed as Markopoulos' avant-garde masterpiece *Twice a Man* (1964), Sins of the Fleshapoids unequivocally proves that he is a celluloid alchemist as a rare filmmaker that could turn shit into gold. Indeed, maybe it is because I associate such Hollywood sci-fi flicks with fat ugly dorks that suffer from Asperger syndrome, but I would much rather re-watch Kuchar's film over *Planet of the Apes* (1968), any of the Star War films, David Lynch's *Dune* (1984), or virtually any other big budget science fiction flick any day. Of course, Sins of the Fleshapoids has about as much to do with science fiction cinema as Anger's *Scorpio Rising* has to do with teen rebel biker flicks and John Waters' *Desperate Living* (1977) has to do with classic Disney fairytale movies, hence its uniquely undying charm as classic piece of American camp that has never and can never be properly imitated or duplicated, even by queer filmmakers like Rosa von Praunheim (who considered the Kuchar brothers to be one of his main influences and even hired Mike to be the cinematographer for a couple of his films). If you're a happy-go-lucky misanthrope like me and can fathom a world where androids are more morally sound than the majority of humanity, you will probably not find a film that is more delectably decadent and kitschy yet cultivated than Sins of the Fleshapoids which, in its unflattering depiction of a pathologically cosmopolitan dystopian society that is plagued by perverse

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hedonism and is too impotent for far, is the 1960s underground's equivalent to John Boorman's cult classic *Zardoz* (1974), albeit all the more otherworldly and patently preternatural.

-Ty E

THE SECRET OF WENDEL SAMSON

Mike Kuchar (1966)

Back in the good old days before being gay turned into a sort of highly coveted “good guy badge,” it was not uncommon for queer filmmakers to direct at least one highly personal film about homo neuroticism and coming out of the closet. Indeed, from Curtis Harrington’s *Fragment of Seeking* (1946) to Kenneth Anger’s *Fireworks* (1947) to Gregory J. Markopoulos’s *Twice a Man* (1964) to Andy Milligan’s *Vapors* (1965) to David Blyth’s *Circadian Rhythms* (1976) to Werner Schroeter’s *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* to William E. Jones’ *Massillon* (1991) to Todd Verow’s *Anonymous* (2004), there is no shortage of highly idiosyncratic and largely hermetic self-loathing fag flicks that demonstrate that gay men are among the most perennially lonely, pathologically paranoid, and intricately neurotic people around, but few of these films are as bafflingly bizarre and unnervingly dejecting as the 33-minute featurette *The Secret of Wendel Samson* (1966) directed by Mike Kuchar (Born of the Wind, Sins of the Fleshapoids) who, despite later making a living creating homoerotic illustrations and paintings of the somewhat Tom of Finland style sort, typically refrained from including overtly homophile content in his early pre-video films (though his later shot-on-video efforts, like *Statue In The Park* (1993) starring underground cartoonist Mike Diana, are very, very gay). Out of the half a dozen or so Kuchar films I have seen, none is more grueling, discombobulating, paranoia-inducing, and overtly avant-garde than his self-loathing sod flick, so it should be no surprise that the director credits Orson Welles’ *Franz Kafka* adaptation *The Trial* (1962) aka *Le procès* starring Anthony Perkins for inspiration. Just like Perkins’ classic character in Welles’ masterpiece, the protagonist of Kuchar’s film is a terribly tortured lost soul with a crippling persecution complex that feels he is incessantly being followed and lives in a perpetual metaphysical nightmare without end. Starring somewhat popular redheaded pop artist Red Grooms (who himself directed a couple of films around the same time, including *Shoot the Moon* (1962) and *Fat Feet* (1966)) as the eponymous lead as a mentally perturbed poof painter who regularly engages in sex with anonymous strangers because he is afraid of being in a committed gay relationship and who is terribly guilt-ridden because his female friend has fallen in love with him and wants to jump his bones, *The Secret of Wendel Samson* is a semi-surreal work that is not all that aesthetically different from various artsy fartsy porno and sexploitation films from around the same time, including the Amero brothers’ psychedelic fuck flick *Bacchanale* (1971) and Chuck Vincent’s *Voices of Desire* (1972), as an ominously oneiric psychosexual psychodrama of the hallucinatory sort that manages to do the seemingly impossible by making NYC seem like one big foreboding ghost town where only pathetic perverts and phantoms dwell. A film that unequivocally demonstrates that, at least for some people, there is noth-

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ing 'gay' about being gay, Kuchar's exceedingly embarrassing work in paranoiac poof excess ultimately demonstrates that he was not less haunted by his homosexuality than his twin brother George Kuchar, whose early masterpieces like *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) and *Eclipse of the Sun Virgin* (1967) have earned him the reputation of being the more hopelessly self-loathing and neurotic of the two very strange Slavic-American sodomite siblings.

As referenced in the book *Desperate Visions: The Films of John Waters & the Kuchar Brothers* (1996) by Jack Stevenson, Kuchar once stated regarding the titular character of his film, "Wendel Samson is a Universe in himself, but perhaps even more complex. The cosmic bubble is governed by the forces of electrical magnetic inertia. He is governed by a need Unstable. A hunger to understand the impossible. Himself maybe. A quest to find the equation to happiness in a cosmic structure where happiness is not a physical property. He is a star in a cluster of stars. A solar speck in the speckled nebula of souls. A silent phantom radiating in the heavens of shining phantoms. Floating on the islands within islands, in a bubble, fifty million light years curved." Hilariously, Kuchar would later state of the quote in an audio commentary track that it was something he wrote as a "flamboyant youngster. It's certainly flowery... That's certainly a mouthful of flowery stuff." Judging merely by the film, I can only assume that hallucinogenic substances most have compounded his paranoia and propensity for poetry, as *The Secret of Wendel Samson* ultimately feels like a 'head film' for homos, albeit a timeless one that manages to make the internal torment associated with being a closeted homosexual accessible to even the most flagrant of fag-bashers, so long as they appreciate trippy art films where the 'bad trip' is merely a state of mind. The genesis of the film is a result of star Red Grooms approaching Kuchar and offering to star in one of his movies. Beginning with the idea of an allegorical scene featuring Grooms stuck in a gigantic spiderweb, Kuchar later decided to create a film about a protagonist that is literally "tangled up in psychological problems" and ultimately assembled what is indubitably his most incriminating, pathetic, and psychoautobiographical work to date.

Beginning with a close-up shot of the dejected, melancholy face of protagonist Wendel Samson (Red Grooms) and then a credit scene sequence where the inter-titles are superimposed over a dilapidated brick wall, the film then captivates the viewer with an abrupt dream-sequence of the character tangled in a gigantic spiderweb, which is notably also wrapped around his genitals. From there, we see a shot of Wendel meekly standing behind a woman who is facing the opposite direction and is discernibly distressed. The woman's name is Margret (played by Mimi Gross, who is the daughter of fairly famous Zionist sculptor Chaim Gross, whose apartment acted as one of the sets for the film and who Kuchar and his brother apparently found to be quite detestable) and she is in love with wimp Wendel, who does not reciprocate her feelings because he's

a full-blown shit-stabber and he feels terribly guilty about this fact. After what Kuchar once described as the film's "pictorial overture," the viewer is exposed to various bizarre aspects of Wendel's particularly pathetic life, including the fact that he is being constantly followed by two very strange men (played by George Kuchar and Bob Cowan, with the latter of whom being responsible for the film's highly complimentary paranoid beatnik noise score) and that he enjoys having random sex with strange men that he finds on the street. Despite being a wide receiver on the pink team, Wendel also seems to loathe his fellow fags as hinted in a scene where he dumps his queen-ish gay lover because he cannot bear listening to him to talk incessantly about gossip, redecorating, and fancy vacations to exotic places where they can presumably pay to have sex with young Asian or Latino boys. Indeed, when Wendel's boyfriend, who is an ultra cultivated cocksucker who has primitive African tribal art hanging over his apartment walls, proceeds to bitch and moan about things like having to find someone to watch their cat when they are on vacation in Liberia (?!), the protagonist dumps him by simply walking out the front door while he's still talking. Of course, Wendel is no less socially inept when it comes to his female friend Margret, who has an undying craving for cock but somehow does not realize that her fire-crotched male BFF is a full-fledged nancy boy who cannot bother to swing both ways.

As a gay man that is trying to avoid the awkward situation of being seduced by a sexually starved straight woman of the fairly homely looking sort, Wendel is always trying to find ways to avoid hanging out with Margret and even manages to get out of going to a party with her by stating, "I promised myself I was going to put in new shutters in the kitchen." Unfortunately for Wendel, Margret decides to show up at his apartment unannounced on the night of the party and rubs his lies in his face by remarking, "I see you haven't put up the new shutters in the kitchen yet," to which he meekly replies after pausing for a moment, "Oh, you know how easy it is to not do anything." At this point, Wendel thinks to himself regarding Margret, "Something tells me she's here for more than a chitchat visit," and then proceeds to spy on his female friend via a keyhole while she is in the bathroom. As is quite apparent to both Wendel and the viewer, Margret has come to the protagonist's apartment to both declare her love for him and to seduce him but of course she ultimately fails to get what she wants. While awkwardly sitting next to one another on a bed, Margret asks Wendel about his sex life and remarks, "I wonder how you make as a lover," but of course the protagonist is too petrified to reveal to her his sexual persuasion and instead has an absurd daydream where he imagines himself romantically wining and dining a somewhat hot babe and then begins making love to her on a leopard print rug. After Wendel stops daydreaming, he begins eating food like a slob on his bed and is eventually given an ultimatum from Margret, who is desperate for the protagonist's fiery dick. After declaring her to love him and begging him to fuck her after he does all he can to sit as far as he can away from

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her in his tiny bedroom, Margret states to Wendel, "Wendel, tell me you love me...or kick me out...but make up your mind NOW. Wendel, I can't stand this anymore." Of course, Wendel lacks the testicular fortitude to answer Margret directly, but thankfully he eventually gets his feelings across.

Instead of answering Margret, the scene cuts to Wendel being woken up in his bed by the two strange men that have been following him. At this point, Wendel must embrace his inner homosexual Übermensch or continue to live a pathetic life of guilt and paranoia. Indeed, the two strange men force Wendel to go with them like they are some sort of gay-bashing ghosts who have been assigned by a super holy heterosexual god to convert him to heterosexuality and ultimately bring the protagonist to a building where he is confronted by ten very different people, including a young sailor, a homely nurse, and a middle-aged blonde bombshell (Floraine Connors of Kuchar's *The Craven Sluck* (1967) and *Tales of the Bronx* (1970)), the latter of which pulls out a sort of futuristic laser gun on him and demands that he have sex with her. When Wendel refuses to fuck the old blonde boot and instead begins brutally slapping and beating her, the two strange men make him stand facing the wall and then everyone takes out a pistol and proceeds to execute the protagonist with a storm of bullets comparable to the ending of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) where the eponymous outlaw lovers are ambushed by the cops. Miraculously, despite being shot countless times, Wendel is not only unharmed by the execution but also manages to transform into a sort of sod Superman (indeed, sound clips and quotes from Superman are juxtaposed with this scene) and then makes a swift escape, but not before laughing manically in the faces of his tormentors in an allegorical scene that is surely symbolic of the protagonist's unwavering acceptance of his own homosexuality. In the end, Wendel and Margret finally say their goodbyes to one another, with the latter finally accepting the fact that her beloved redheaded friend is a flaming fag who has no use for needy Jewish American princesses.

Surely infinitely more brave, convincing, and intriguing than Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), Tom Ford's *A Single Man* (2009) and just about any other Hollywood film that attempts to portray poof pathos and pangs, *The Secret of Wendel Samson* is really an enlightening aesthetic example as to why it is truly offensive when contemporary propagandists and special interests groups have the gall to complain about persecution and inequality, not to mention the fact that the film unwittingly reveals that so-called 'gay marriage' is a somewhat oxymoronic concept that ignores that homosexuality is largely a 'fetish' and compulsion that is solely based on sex and especially not lifelong commitment or reproduction, which is after all the point of matrimony. Of course, the film also unwittingly reveals that, at least as far as instincts are concerned, homosexuality is certainly not a choice that any sane person would make, but a sort of carnal curse that marginalizes the gay individual from the rest of society, hence why an eclectic group of people of all ages and both genders are involved in the fir-

ing squad style (pseudo)execution of the titular character as they are symbolic of the general public as a whole. Notably, in the end, the protagonist resolves his situation by saying farewell to his female friend in a scenario where the character finally acknowledges that he is all on his own and will never be a truly accepted member of normal heterosexual society in any meaningful way, hence the abject absurdity of the fallacy based concept of so-called 'sexual equality,' for the homo will always be an outsider no matter what MTV or the double bastard mulatto political pimp President of the United States tells us. Indeed, certainly no one could watch *The Secret of Wendel Samson* without coming to the natural conclusion that being a sod seriously sucks, even if you are one of those very rare individuals that has the special benefit of having a fellow fag twin like Kuchar. While certainly a genre-defying work that is easily Kuchar's most overtly avant-garde oriented effort to date, I think the film would be best described as a hallucinatory piece of experimental homo horror that is like the *Carnival of Souls* of the American queer avant-garde underground as a vaguely quasi-Cocteauian psychodrama that depicts the struggle of being a shit-stabber without being pedantic, patronizing, pretentious, and/or preposterous like so many other similarly themed works. Notably, the director's brother George Kuchar also directed a film about a woman that falls in love with a fag entitled *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970), which plays out very differently from *The Secret of Wendel Samson* in that the gay male lead actually manages to have sex with a woman but the film ends tragicomedically when the protagonist vomits as a result of his heterosexual experience and his lover subsequently slips on the barf and dies. A somewhat less personal and more genre-obsessed filmmaker than his brother, Kuchar may have had his greatest achievement with his brilliantly ludicrous lo-fi sci-fi anti-epic *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), but *The Secret of Wendel Samson* is certainly the film to see if you want to discover the curious misfit of a man behind the camera.

-Ty E

THE CRAVEN SLUCK
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Mike Kuchar (1967)

Naturally, as a result of my recently acquired obsession with the films of George Kuchar, I decided it was about time that I dig through the somewhat less impressive oeuvre of the filmmaker's less prolific but seemingly all the more gay twin brother Mike Kuchar, whose 20-minute darkly comedic sci-fi-melodrama hybrid *The Craven Sluck* (1967) aka *Madonna* seemed like a worthy introduction to his films, especially since it stars his pathologically dorky sibling in the outstandingly against-type role of an abusive womanizer who exploits the undying loneliness of an over-the-hill blonde bombshell who is suicidal due to the fact that her less than handsome workaholic hubby no longer wants to acknowledge her existence, let alone hump her the way she needs to be humped. What I have immediately discovered upon watching a couple of Mike Kuchar's films is that he is a somewhat more genre conscious and slightly less personal filmmaker than his twin, whose largely autobiographical auteurist works oftentimes reek of sardonic self-loathing and self-destructive obsession. While the brothers initially co-directed amorously appealingly titled works like *I Was a Teenage Rumpot* (1960) and *Pussy on a Hot Tin Roof* (1961) together as teens and were soon lovingly described as "the Mozarts of 8mm Cinema" (in fact, avant-garde gatekeeper Jonas Mekas once described their work in *The Village Voice* as, "Pop Cinema at its best pop"), the two eventually began directing their own individual auteur pieces when they graduated from using consumer grade 8mm to 16mm film stock after Mike bought a 16mm camera, or as George states in the documentary *It Came From Kuchar* (2009) directed by Jennifer M. Kroot in regard to their failed collaboration on *Corruption of the Damned* (1965) and their subsequent parting of ways as a twin directing team, "He [Mike] bought a Bolex and we launched our career[s]. The first picture was *CORRUPTION OF THE DAMNED*. That was a big 16mm movie. Then Mike abandoned that because he was more interested in Hercules type movies and I was left with the *CORRUPTION OF THE DAMNED* and I finished that. And that was our first 16mm film." Incidentally, the first films that both brothers created after going their separate ways as filmmakers were also the films that would be regarded as their greatest masterpieces, with George directing the semi-autobiographical self-reflexive experimental melodrama *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) and Mike directing the ultra lo-fi sci-fi micro-epic *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965). Despite directing their own individual films, George would continue to be an important ingredient in Mike's cinematic works as the main leading man of most of his brother's films. Undoubtedly, what is somewhat ingenious about *The Craven Sluck* is that Mike managed to get his brother George—a hopelessly neurotic homo who had about as masculine charm and charisma as a plastic pink flamingo lawn ornament—to pull off the seemingly unlikely role of a portraying a charis-

matic lowlife beatnik alpha-male that manages to con various strange beautiful (and not-so-beautiful women) into falling madly in love with him despite the fact that he is married to a manly pill-popping cripple. A playfully degenerate piece of eccentric extramarital excess where a big bosomed blonde that looks somewhat like a poor man's cross Jayne Mansfield and Anita Ekberg learns the hard way that carnal crimes do not pay, especially when cheating on your husband with a debauched beatnik bastard with a Beatles-esque mop-top, Kuchar's little film ultimately makes a major mockery out of the once-timeless institution of marriage, heterosexual monogamy, and romance in a fashion that can be appreciated by any man, be they are hetero or homo, who has ever had to deal with the problems associated with lovelorn female hysteria. In other words, Kuchar seems to have made *The Craven Sluck* as a means to brag about the fact that he, as a proud poof, does not have to deal with the problems that bored and/or whimsical dames cause.

Instead of opening with proper credits that involve inter-titles appearing on the screen (apparently, Kuchar assembled the film in a hasty fashion so that he could finish it in time so that it could play at a gay film festival), *The Craven Sluck* begins with salacious publicity shots of female lead/'glamour puss' Floraine Connors juxtaposed with an off-screen narrator (Bob Cowan, who also portrays two of the characters) orally reciting the credits in a goofy fashion (for example, a pin-up photo of the female lead is juxtaposed with the narrator stating, "Also starring the extremely lovely and talented Bob Cowan, not pictured here"). Protagonist Adele (Floraine Connors) has been married to her sub-average-looking husband Brunswick (Bob Cowan) for seven years and their once apparently steamy love affair has stagnated so drastically that the latter is more interested in reading *The Wall Street Journal* than looking at his wanton wifey's rather large tits, which are fairly hard to not notice. As Adele somewhat hysterically thinks to herself while her hubby ignores her as the two sit at their kitchen table, "He makes me ashamed of my torso and ignores my womanly charms. If this is how our marriage has turned out after all these years, I want no part of it. When he leaves for work, I'm going to kill myself." Indeed, while still strangely wearing her bra and skirt (I guess Kuchar could not convince Connors to lose her clothing and completely expose her bare bazoombas), Adele gets in her bathtub and absurdly attempts to drown herself by merely lying down and holding her head under the water, but she is ultimately saved just in the nick of time when her husband unexpectedly comes home after forgetting to bring his beloved fountain pen with him to work. Somewhat humorously, Brunswick pays such little attention to Adele and her brazen behavior that he does not even realize that she was trying to kill herself and instead berates her by complaining, "For heaven's sake, Adele! You could have at least fed the dog before you took your bath!" and then thinks to himself, "When will that peroxidized woman face up to the responsibilities of being a wife?!" Of course, Adele is the sort of wayward woman that should have

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become a pin-up model or go-go dancer instead of a housewife, which is a 'job' that is innately at odds with her psychology as an exhibitionist with a seemingly potent sex drive who cannot stand sitting around an apartment all day while there are tons of hot men roaming the streets that she would love to show off her giant udders to. With seemingly nil interest in having children, Adele certainly personifies what Otto Weininger described as the 'prostitute archetype.'

Luckily for her, at least initially, Adele's dog (played by the Kuchars' real-life pet 'Bocko,' who played the eponymous lead of George's classic short *The Mongreloid* (1978)) will both literally and figuratively lead her to a new and much more exciting path in life, or so it seems at first. Indeed, when Bocko runs away while Adele is walking around a park, a vaguely handsome young man named Morton (George Kuchar) whose ostensibly good-looks she has been admiring comes to the rescue and helps her to catch the renegade canine. An effete dressed young bargain bin beatnik who is sporting a pair of extra queer cowboy boots, black leather-pants, and unbecoming suit jacket, Morton gives off the impression to Adele that he is a chic and sexually potent young gentleman of the sensually adventurous sort who makes her husband seem like an insufferable rotting old fart by comparison, so naturally the protagonist more or less instantaneously falls for him without really thinking twice about the consequences. While sitting at a park bench and sharing food with Morton, Adele thinks to herself, "Oh, I'm having such a wonderful time...its been years since I've had someone to talk intelligently to. I think I'll tell him what I've always wanted to be: A movie actress...desired by a million men." Somewhat revealingly, while fantasizing about being a famous actress, the film cuts to a sort of fetishistic dream-sequence featuring Adele doing burlesque oriented glamour poses where she shakes and flashes around her extra fleshy jumbo jugs, thus highlighting the character's rather moronic sense of vanity. Of course, Adele is rather saddened when she has to eventually part ways with Morton, but she never stops to think that her new loverboy is an abusive degenerate who likes roughing up his crippled wife, or as the narrator states, "Little does Adele know about Morton's private life. Florence, Morton's wife, suffers from severe headaches due to a serious bicycle accident in which Morton was at fault." Before parting ways, Adele and Morton kiss in a sickly goofy scatological montage that inter-cuts shots of dog Bocko defecating and that wickedly lampoons a famous kissing scene from Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1959).

Indeed, when Morton gets home from his amorous play-date with Adele, he reveals a very different side of himself by doing all he can to ignore his ugly crippled wife Florence (also Bob Cowan, albeit this time in Divine-esque drag), who is popping pills while hilariously reading the latest chic leftist literary vomit in *The New Yorker*. When Florence dares to annoy him while he is watching an episode of the sci-fi adventure TV series *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1964-1968), Morton roughs her up by pushing her on the ground and then

shoving her onto a sofa. Obviously someone that encourages his wife's seemingly highly deleterious drug addiction, Morton also gives Florence some pills and has her swallow them with a coffee mug full of toilet water before going out again to hunt for some more sexy street cunt. Naturally, when Morton happens upon a young blonde babe named Marilyn Marmoset (Donna Kerness of George Kuchar's masterpiece *Hold Me While I'm Naked*)—a character who, as the narrator notes at the beginning of the film, has a surname that is curiously the, "same spelling as the African tree monkey"—while prowling the streets and stalks her all the way back to her apartment (in fact, Ms. Marmoset even unlocks her door so that he can walk right in), he decides break off his planned rendezvous with Adele, who he lies to by telling her that he has to attend to a sick uncle who has supposedly, "been stricken with a severe case of gassy stomach and is in considerable pain." Unfortunately for her, Adele learns the truth when Morton's wife grabs the telephone from him and reveals to the protagonist that her dashing love interest is a deceitful scumbag who is banging various other dumb broads. To make matters ten times worse, a UFO invasion hits NYC only seconds after Adele gets off the phone with the dime-store Don Juan, thus the protagonist has to put her lovelorn despair on hold. While Adele declares, "Good Lord, we're being attacked by flying saucers from another planet. I must flee to safety!" and immediately begins attempting to find sanctuary around the city, she is soon zapped by a UFO ray and completely vaporized shortly after leaving her apartment, thereupon conveniently abruptly concluding the heroine's story and, in turn, the problems associated with her domestic despair. In the end, the narrator snidely states regarding the ostensible moral of the story, "So, as we near the closing of our story and see how the little pieces of life fall into their true meaningful places, we can't help but think to ourselves: God really...uhuh...came...uhuh...knew what he was doin...uhuh."

Apparently, auteur Mike Kuchar was so embarrassed by *The Craven Sluck* after completing it that he initially refused to screen it, or as the filmmaker once stated in an audio commentary track for the film, "I developed a complex...I thought maybe this might be the sloppiest picture ever made. And I started to repress it, like for years...And I never really put it into many shows after it had its release." It was not until the film was warmly received when it was screened at retrospectives in both Germany and England that Kuchar actually began to finally embrace and respect his own film, thereupon leading him to conclude that he is not exactly the best judge of his own work. Of course, as a campy work featuring both a fat fellow in drag portraying an abused housewife and an unloved wife who attempts to off herself in a bathtub, *The Craven Sluck* has almost certainly influenced the infamous *Manhattan Love Suicides* (1985) segment *Thrust in Me* (1985) co-directed by Richard Kern and Nick Zedd where the latter filmmaker dresses in drag and portrays a girl her kills herself in her bathtub, only for her corpse to be mouth-fucked by her emotionally negligent

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beau (also portrayed by Zedd in a scenario that seems to pay homage to the scene in John Waters' *Female Trouble* (1974) where Divine literally fucks herself by portraying both a male and female character during a rape scene), who interprets her act of self-slaughter as an attempt at emotional blackmail and reacts accordingly by deriving pleasure from her death. While Kuchar's film might not be as graphic as *Thrust in Me*, it is certainly a cleverer and more competently directed work that demonstrates Zedd is merely a poor heterosexual imitator who lacks the charm, cinematic literacy, and class of his filmic forebear. Certainly one of the most tastelessly charming titled works ever made (although the word has multiple meanings, 'sluck' is typically seen as another word for 'slut' and is a portmanteau of 'slut' and 'fuck'), Kuchar's film is ultimately a mockery of heterosexual romantic love and marriage that is both sardonic and even scatological in its satirizing of high Hollywood melodramas like Sirk's *Imitation of Life*, as a work that not only dares to feature a UFO appear out of nowhere during the last minute or so and zapping the female heroine to death but also features a dog defecating in a seemingly painful fashion while the female lead and her new extramarital beau kiss, thus underscoring the pettiness of both romance and personal problems in the context of the world at large. After all, what would seem more frivolous to a gay man than the romantic qualms of a big boobed blonde bimbo with the IQ of a gnat. In the end, *The Craven Sluck* ultimately proves to be a highly therapeutic experience in that it gives the viewer the opportunity to witness the singular novelty of seeing some annoying airheaded female lead randomly killed under rather absurd circumstances, which is a fantasy I have always had ever since I was a kid as a result of those rare occasions where I was forced to watch a Hollywood romantic-comedy or kitschy big budget melodrama. Indeed, call me a cynic, misanthrope, and/or sadist, but I would be delighted to see *Casablanca* (1942) conclude with a Nazi UFO appearing out of nowhere at the end and vaporizing both Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid while they are saying goodbye to one another during the all-too-famous airport scene.

-Ty E

NAKED

Mike Leigh (1993)

Johnny's a dead man walking. You wouldn't guess that he's the ripe, young age of 27 at first glance. Hell, even I thought 40 was a generous guess. Similar to the philosophy of *Into the Wild*, only deliriously intellectualized, the carefree and often risqué charisma of Johnny is a savage tool for him to abuse most females he encounters, but no, Johnny's not a misogynist. Like most of us, he's a misanthropist. Unlike most of us, the complexity of which his mind unravels allows us for the perfect specimen for documentation of sorts. His form of sincere narcissism is one that is most unexplored. He doesn't represent himself as a human being in most aspects, that is, unless he just got the hell kicked out of him. He wanders around the scenes quoting philosophers, raping women, chain-smoking, and discussing high society values in an establishment that is crumbling underneath of him. The character of Johnny has reached a demigod level thanks to Mike Leigh's British masterpiece. There are many adjectives that can be used to accentuate the thoughts this film provokes. Searing is an audacious example that springs to mind. I'd owed it to Derek to watch this film for little over a year now. Collecting dust on my shelf; Had I known this film would have been so invasive of my every thought, I would have picked this up a lot sooner. I had always jested about viewing this film under the sole condition that I, in fact, would be *Naked* as the film puts it. But be as it would, *Naked* is a metaphor for humanity slowly unsheathing itself after a precisely paced film has just burned its many images into your retinas. Soon after the climactic opening in which our anti-human lead is having passionate sex, the moans of delight turn into a forceful scream. We realize that like most women, the very thought of a domineering male can prove to be the ultimate fantasy and the most accessible fetish. Escaping Manchester as to not get beaten up by the family of the rape victim, Johnny pops in on his ex-girlfriend at her flat, which leads to many awkward situations and raw characteristics clashing, almost flammable to the touch. "Well, basically, there was this little dot, right? And the dot went bang and the bang expanded. Energy formed into matter, matter cooled, matter lived, the amoeba to fish, to fish to fowl, to fowl to frog, to frog to mammal, the mammal to monkey, to monkey to man, amo amas amat, quid pro quo, memento mori, ad infinitum, sprinkle on a little bit of grated cheese and leave under the grill till Doomsday." Enter Jeffrey, a bourgeois playboy who has it all but continues to take more. This archetype is one to loathe and Jeffrey (or Sebastien) creates such an intimidating and daunting character that you realize that Johnny is just a drifter who looks good by comparison with a true sort of evil. With the film slowly reeling forwards, one must make the connection that these two characters would meet but who knew when? Their long awaited encounter explodes into what might be the first example of making an anti-climax into art. Never has

NAKED

a film had such raw monologues that prove the unscripted genius of that which is a lost form of theater known as improvisation. The mark of the beast is near us all. Naked is a bold sexual politic in a long list of cinema masterpieces. While not being entirely linear around a set plot point, this allows Mike Leigh to focus on much more important matters at hand. Each interaction is priceless. Naked is a film that is so cleverly cultured that it baffles me still, days after viewing.

-mAQ

THE WRAITH

Mike Marvin (1986)

The Wraith: a film that has been following my shadowed memories since I began indulging in cinema at an incredibly early age. Upon my initial obscured viewing of The Wraith, traces of this film stuck like tacks to my every film experience. The black figure reminded me of Robocop and in turn the revenge plot took me right back to The Wraith. The lone enigma provoked thoughts of Grease 2 and that 80s byproduct of hairspray and motorcycles refreshed my memory of the spunk that The Wraith accounted for. It wasn't very long until I realized that every route in my cerebral channel will inadvertently wind back to the original slave & master relationship that The Wraith created and damaged with its vicious familiarity attack on my senses. In short: fuck my life. This is simply one of those films that are relishable to those who appreciate the era. Mocking the harmless, self-contained 80s cheese is that of complaining about the over-abundance of black and white pictures in the 50s. For a sci-fi revenge film, The Wraith isn't grossly disappointing. When it comes down for the retribution, you'll find a lot of irritating cats being iced by methods of a kamikaze parked car in which they crash into at full speed, only to have the car reassemble itself and drive off. For the impact solely based on The Wraith's universe, it's a bit on the ridiculous side. Having an anti-hero to root for is always a welcome tidging but to have a completely indestructible being that jumps from one greaser to the next is just an inevitable countdown that you are now apart of, willingly or not. In this top billing role, Charlie Sheen shares about 10 minutes screen time tops while the prototype Dodge "Turbo Interceptor" steals the shows and the applause with a futuristic look that, still to this day, creates a forcefield of timeless antiquity. At its core though, The Wraith is nothing but vehicular fetishism. It's what The Wizard did for Nintendo and at times, the product placement of this blisteringly "cybernetic" automobile seems gratuitous and unresourceful with the many changes that the script could have used. What's worse is the implementing of an "innocent young woman." Most women in revenge fare involve betrayal, deceit, or a slew of virtue-smashing pseudo-dyke whores, for the most part. To see a woman beat to the ground and haven't cracked yet is Hollywood fabrication at its best. Along with the mocking of the feminine spirit, it seems that The Wraith also indulges in several scenes that follow a contradictory homosexual/homophobic script writing trend with young males, fast cars, and enough euphemisms to temporarily stuff fill the crater that is Jennifer Garner's slutty face - nonsensical at best. To be true to my own developed senses, yes, The Wraith is an absolute travesty on film. But alas, somewhere in the visioning of this masturbatory 80s explosion exhibitionism lies charm, not your normal everyday charm but a festering pocket of immense joy that can only be delivered by a ghost/robot Charlie Sheen. The Wraith isn't scared of making mistakes,

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rather it chooses to deliver smash bang entertainment with an awkward Lego warrior and an extremely fast car that delivers an enigmatic atmosphere with a droning engine noise that blazes down the roads with such neglect that could only be filmed by a teenager himself.

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AMICUS MORTIS

Mike Stoffels (2007)

Amicus Mortis is a neat little short made by the fine people over at VET-TV productions. Amicus Mortis loosely translates into "Death of a Friend". The film takes place somewhere in the Netherlands and is a great example of a zero-budget film gone right. The plot revolves around two friends and plays in reverse chronological order. One friend is captured and devoured by a Dutch cannibal and by a technicality, is set free. The lonesome friend does not like this one bit, so he decides to seek revenge.

Yeah, we have heard this plot before, but that isn't at fault here. It is a refreshing take on the revenge scene because of a few things including the savagery of the crimes and the few minutes we spent with his friend. They seemed close but we do not know the length of their relationship. All we do know is that his friend is worth killing for. The acting was not great but it is expected. Some movements seemed more forceful and less fluent. Besides having an entertaining movie, the film boasts an incredible soundtrack. I swear, I have been listening to the song on the main menu for over half an hour. Besides that, we have orchestral, and very tense ambiance which fits very nicely with the mood of the film. Besides from a good story, we get great gore which includes a chainsawed ankle, sledgehammer to the groin (That hurt guys), and a tongue cut off. What I greatly appreciate about the violence is that they prove in the modern era, you don't need close-ups of shocking gore to make the audience squirm. Each scene is intertwined with a hyper-slide show of pain which holds it together like celluloid glue. It reminds me of the glory days of ultraviolence. The film could have been a slight bit longer, and they could have added in some more bonding between the family to greater the impact of his untimely death. The only scene that really bothered me was the Bar scene. I had no idea what any of it meant if anything at all except it involved a drunken ex-convict, and the glass breaking over his head looked too fake. All that aside, it was the scene that really showed what it is like to have someone looking out for you. Another thing I noticed is that when the cannibal cooked him, he used a garlic spice. In fact, it was the same spice that the German cannibal Armin Meiwes used. Coincidence? or a shout out to the notorious man? The same crew are making a new film which I am also really looking forward to reviewing. The working title is Goatriders: The Last Silver. Amicus Mortis is a good, entertaining, and yet shocking film about what it is like to lose someone you greatly love. If you appreciate hard work in cinema then there is no doubt that this will please you.

-Maq

CHARACTER
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Mike van Diem (1997)

Undoubtedly, aside from possibly Fons Rademakers' epic Harry Mulisch adaptation *The Assault* (1986) aka *De Aanslag* and Marleen Gorris' insufferable 'feminist fairytale' *Antonia's Line* (1995), *Karakter* (1997) aka *Character* co-written and directed by Mike van Diem is probably the most successful, critically revered, and well known Dutch film in the United States. Indeed, like Rademakers and Gorris' films, van Diem's debut feature won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards and is one of the few Dutch films that is not a pain in the ass to find in the U.S. on DVD. Of course, considering the sort of obscenely overrated European films (e.g. Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* (1998), that seem to get a lot of attention in the United States, I was somewhat hesitant to watch *Character* but considering I have recently seen a number of worthwhile films starring leading man Fedja van Huêt, including Erik de Bruyn's *Wilde Mossels* (2000) aka *Wild Mussels* and Martin Koolhoven's *AmnesiA* (2001), I ultimately gave in and decided to give it a watch. Based on both the best-selling 1938 novel of the same name and short story *Dreverhaven en Katadreuffe* (1981) by Dutch writer Ferdinand Bordewijk—a modernist writer whose style mixed elements of the 'New Objectivity' movement and magic realism—the film has an aesthetic clearly influenced by German expressionism and had a fairly large budget (7 million Dutch guilders) and shooting period (it was shot over a 71 day period between the summer and fall of 1996). As can be expected for such a big Dutch production, *Character* was produced by the 'commercial' Dutch studio *First Floor Features* co-owned by Dick Maas, whose hit films *Flodder* (1986) and *Amsterdamned* (1988) were also produced by the studio. Of course, *First Floor Features* is also responsible for producing 'arthouse' works, most notably Alex van Warmerdam's first two features *Abel* (1986) and *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners*, so it is not much of a surprise that they would also be responsible for van Diem's film. What is a big surprise about *Character* is that such an expensive production, which was also partly co-produced by the Belgian production company *Kladaradatsch!*, was given to a director, cinematographer, and lead actor that were more or less novices who had yet to tackle such an ambitious production. Indeed, while director van Diem had won the Dutch 'Golden Calf' for best short film and the Student Academy Award for best foreign student film for his short *Alaska* (1989), he had nil experience directing an actual feature-length with a large film crew. Similarly, while lead actor van Huêt had appeared in small roles in Theo van Gogh's *Jan Wolkers* adaptation *Terug naar Oegstgeest* (1987) aka *Return to Oegstgeest*, Gerrit van Elst's *Advocaat van de Hanen* (1996) aka *Punk Lawyer*, and a couple TV shows, he was far from a well leading man that could lure in audiences with his reputation. Despite being such a mainstream big bud-

get effort, *Character* is a decidedly Dutch tale about the poor bastard son of an 'evil' powerful bailiff who torments the progeny he has never had a relationship with as a curious means to make sure he grows up to be a strong and successful fellow who can stand on his two feet. A somewhat crushing tale about a young man that is so obsessed with spiting his seemingly all-powerful father that he misses out on everything else in life that actually makes life worth living like sex and love, among other things, van Huêt's film ultimately captures the emotionally glacial character of many of the Dutch people, especially in relation to their families. Indeed, whether intentional or not on the director and co-writers part (aside from director van Diem, the film was also co-written by producer Laurens Geels and Ruud van Megen), *Character* is more about the Dutch national character than anything.

The place and time is the Dutch city of Rotterdam during the early 1930s (although not really revealed in the film, the novel is set between the protagonist's birth in 1903 and 1931 when he graduates as a lawyer) and young protagonist Jacob Willem Katadreuffe (van Huêt) visits the office of his much hated father Dreverhaven (Belgian actor Jan Declair) to spitefully say to the man, "I've come to tell you...today I have been sworn in as a lawyer. I'm sure you regret this, but I've succeeded...and this is my very last visit to you." To Katadreuffe's surprise, Dreverhaven congratulates him and asks to shake his hand, but the protagonist responds rather hatefully by stating, "I cannot shake the hand of someone who's worked against me my entire life." That same day, Dreverhaven is murdered and Katadreuffe, whose clothes are covered in blood, is arrested as he seems like the culprit, especially after a number of people noticed the protagonist leaving the scene of the crime in a hasty fashion. For the rest of *Character*, Katadreuffe tells his dejecting life story about how he came to spitefully hate the man that fathered him despite never really knowing him. Although all evidence seems to point elsewhere, Katadreuffe rather vocally maintains his innocence. First, the protagonist states of his father, "Dreverhaven...the law without compassion...the curse of the poor" and proceeds to describe how the man is infamous for literally throwing impoverished people into the street as a pernicious bailiff who makes the monstrously miserly money men of a Charles Dickens novel seem somewhat benign by comparison. Katadreuffe's mother Joba aka 'Joba' (Betty Schuurman) was in the service of Dreverhaven as a servant for about one year when the bailiff decided to initiate a "once-only affair" that resulted in the peasant woman's impregnation. About six weeks after conception, Joba broke the silence and told Dreverhaven, "I'm expecting. I'm leaving," and ultimately left for good, thus ushering in the beginning of a lifelong feud of sorts.

As protagonist Katadreuffe explains to the police inspector, both his mother Joba and father Dreverhaven were fairly quiet people who rarely ever talked, thus underscoring their fairly similar personalities as rather cold and introverted individuals who seem to have a complete and utter incapacity to express their feelings.

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With the help of his assistant, Dreverhaven tracked down Joba's whereabouts after she had given birth to protagonist Katadreuffe and sent a letter merely reading, "When is our wedding?" along with a money order for a suitable sum, but the proud and pigheaded peasant woman rejected the letter and it was sent back to the sender. In what protagonist Katadreuffe describes as a "duel" that "lasted more than a year," Dreverhaven attempted to send the same letter to Joba month after month until he eventually received a response that read, "Will Always Be Refused." Meanwhile, Katadreuffe is now a young grade school boy that is taunted at school by other boys with notes reading "bastard" and verbal reminders that his "mother is a whore." Anytime Katadreuffe attempted to ask his mother about the identity of his father, she would reply "We need nothing of him." After Katadreuffe nearly chokes another boy to death after he attacks him and calls his mother a whore, the protagonist's family is forced to move to another area of Rotterdam closer to Dreverhaven. One day while with his mother at a port, Katadreuffe sees his father for the first time and becomes obsessed with getting to know him. After the protagonist is arrested after unwittingly getting involved with a gang of poor boys stealing bread, he decides to tell the police guard that his father is Katadreuffe, but when the bailiff shows up at the police station, he denies knowing the boy and Katadreuffe narrowly escapes being raped by a gay pedophile prison guard, thus inspiring him to say to his mother regarding his father, "we need nothing of him." Indeed, Katadreuffe ultimately realizes that it is probably not a good idea to get in contact with a negligent father who is so cold and callous in terms of his character that he allows his completely vulnerable son to become the prisoner of a sadistic child molester.

Determined to make something of his life and make the most of his seemingly unwavering intellectual potential and thirst for knowledge, Katadreuffe begins religiously reading a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica that he has acquired even though the set of books only goes up to the letter "T." One of the reasons the protagonist decides to escape into an introverted world of books and ideas is that his mother completely refuses to talk to him. When Katadreuffe reaches his early adult years, he decides to work as much as possible so that he can leave his mother's home because he feels unwanted there. Around the same time, a young communist 'true believer' named Jan Maan (Hans Keating) rents a room at Joba's home and the new tenant and protagonist soon become good friends despite their very different world views. Ultimately, Katadreuffe comes up with the idea to buy a cigar shop as a means to develop his independence and to get away from his mother, but the protagonist falls into bankruptcy when the business he buys is a scam (instead of cigars, he receives boxes of hay) and he is unable to pay back the creditors. Luckily, since the value of his assets is less than the court costs, Katadreuffe is told by an eccentric lawyer named De Gankelaar (Victor Löw) at the law firm representing him that they have decided to cancel the bankruptcy. After making an audacious attempt at impressing some clients

at the law firm with his command of English, Katadreuffe manages to convince De Gankelaar to hire him. As time progresses, De Gankelaar—a somewhat goofy dude with a bushy mustache and almost grotesque underbite that makes it seem as if he constantly has something in his mouth—becomes his mentor, guardian, and quasi-father-figure.

As a result of his new job and source of income, Katadreuffe is once again hit with the threat of bankruptcy and in the process soon learns that his father is the one responsible for filing it against him. Katadreuffe also learns that Dreverhaven also came by his mother's house and attempted to once again 'propose' to her marriage, but of course Joba turns it down. Needless to say, Katadreuffe decides to confront his seemingly sadistic estranged daddy and soon learns what kind of man he is after he watches Dreverhaven suicidally enter a neighborhood that has been taken over by armed commie thugs and risks his life attempting to evict the murderous Marxist tenants, thus resulting in him being grazed with a bullet after a young revolutionary shoots him in the face. Ultimately, Katadreuffe is ordered to repay his father over "18 months of misery" with his job earnings, but when the protagonist is finally free of debt and no longer the monetary slave of his father, he feels unfulfilled and decides to ask his progenitor for another chance so he can obtain an education. As the protagonist explains regarding his decision to be once again indebted to his sadistic father, "I wanted to challenge him...and win." Unfortunately, when the protagonist becomes the office manager of his law office after the old manager Rentenstein (Lou Landré)—an ambiguously Hebraic henchman of Dreverhaven—leaves, his father demands the money back and he is once again forced back to court for bankruptcy. With the extremely altruistic help of his mentor De Gankelaar, Katadreuffe manages to get out of legal trouble, though it is partly the result of Dreverhaven deciding to cease his reign of terror, which makes the protagonist realize regarding his father, "He just wanted to show me who was boss."

In an important subplot that reflects the way the protagonist's unconventional upbringing has affected his outlook on life, Katadreuffe manages to badly botch what could of been a great love affair with a co-worker named Lorna Te George (Tamar van den Dop). Both Katadreuffe and Lorna are fairly introverted and emotionally unavailable individuals that have a hard time expressing themselves. When the protagonist graduates college, he is given a surprise party by his co-workers where they also present him with a complete 24-volume set of the latest edition of Encyclopedia Britannica. While it is obvious that Lorna wants to talk to Katadreuffe about their mutual feelings for one another, the protagonist ultimately makes it seem like there is no room for a woman in his life after he announces that he is going to law school and then proceeds to give the following speech to his co-employees: "Everyone has certain talents. Each of us has to discover them...and then develop them...so as to make progress. And I'm sure each of us will make that progress...no matter where he's from. As long as he

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focuses on one single goal...and is willing to sacrifice everything else. He'll overcome all setbacks and resistance. As long as that one goal prevails...and he won't be distracted...and will put everything else aside. That is my true conviction." Naturally, Lorna is heartbroken and thus quits her job and moves away, with the protagonist only bumping into her years later and discovering that she is now a married mother. Ironically, Katadreuffe's mother berates him by calling him as stupid as an owl for screwing up his relationship with Lorna despite the fact she is largely to blame for causing his incapacity to form relationships and express love. Indeed, in terms of his adult 'character,' Katadreuffe is just as much the son of his mother as the son of his father as both parents were more or less than same in terms of their (non)emotional brutality.

Of course, Character concludes just as it starts with Katadreuffe's confrontation with his evil and manipulative miser father Dreverhaven who, somewhat curiously, congratulates his son after he reveals that he is now officially a lawyer. Naturally, the protagonist refuses to shake his estranged father's hand, with his reason being that his progenitor had worked "against him" during his fairly miserable life, but Dreverhaven denies this and proclaims that he has worked "for him." Indeed, as Dreverhaven states earlier in the film to Joba in regard to his reason for being so hard on their son, "...I'll strangle him for nine tenths and the last tenth will make him strong." Of course, considering that Katadreuffe was largely determined to become successful in life as means to spite his father, Dreverhaven is not all that out of line to say that he worked "for him," as it is doubtful that the protagonist would have made it to where he did had he been given a steady dose of love and affection during his impoverished upbringing. In what is ultimately the closest the father and son will ever get to one another in the entire film, Katadreuffe decides to initiate a fight by leaping over a desk and attacking Dreverhaven, but the elder man ultimately beats up his son. Unfortunately for him, Dreverhaven makes the mistake of embracing his seemingly unconscious son after beating up, so Katadreuffe uses the opportunity to sink his teeth into his father's nose, break a chair over his head, and eventually throw an entire bookshelf on top of him. From there, Katadreuffe pulls out a knife that his father previously gave to him and acts if he is going to stab and ultimately murder Dreverhaven, but when the old man begs his son to kill him (notably, throughout the film, the father attempts to coerce his bastard son into killing him with the same exact knife), the protagonist opts out and leaves. As it turns it, Dreverhaven died as a result of a suicide that involved himself stabbing himself in the gut and then subsequently breaking his own neck by leaping from the top floor of his building. Indeed, not only is Katadreuffe cleared of the murder charge, but he also becomes a very rich man (or as his resentful commie comrade Jan states, a "damned capitalist") after he inherits all of Dreverhaven's properties and wealth, which the old man willed to the protagonist just before committing suicide. Of course, the biggest surprise for Katadreuffe is that Dreverhaven signed the will

with inscription “Father,” thus confirming that the evil old man has finally truly accepted the protagonist as his son. Despite his unwaveringly love for his fiercely frigid mother, Katadreuffe ironically receives his greatest ‘gifts’—both in terms of ‘character’ and material possessions—from the evil estranged father that he only knew from a deep dark distance.

Notably, as a result of the fact that the Dutch metropolis of Rotterdam has very little of its original pre-WWII buildings and architecture due to being bombed into oblivion by the Germans during the so-called Rotterdam Blitz on May 14, 1940 that resulted in almost the complete destruction of the entire historic city centre, Character was mainly shot in Wrocław, Poland, thus adding to the film’s already Kafkaesque essence. Of course, it is also ironic that the protagonist of the film would have to go through such a struggle to become rich and successful, only for all the property he inherited to have most likely been destroyed about a decade later during the Second World War (in fact, Rotterdam was so thoroughly disseminated by Teutonic bombing that Belarusian-Jewish artist Ossip Zadkine created a sculptor entitled ‘De Verwoeste Stad’ aka ‘The Destroyed City’ in tribute to the metropolis), thus underscoring the meaninglessness of material wealth in the long run, especially when it comes at the price of love and personal relationships. On top of following in the tradition of works like Paul Verhoeven’s *Katie Tippel* (1975) aka Keetje Tippel and Guido Pieters’ *Ciske the Rat* (1984) aka Ciske de Rat in terms of its devastating depiction of the sort of Dickensian horrors that most everyday urban Dutch people faced before the modern era, Character is important in that it reveals the worst of the decidedly ‘Dutch character,’ as a work that is as unflattering as the films of Michael Haneke are to Austrians and Germans in terms of how it depicts the people of the Netherlands. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the first multinational corporation and first company to issue stock was the Dutch East India Company, just as it is no coincidence that the Netherlands has always produced some of the world’s darkest and most pessimistic artists and writers, with Pieter the Elder Bruegel, Hieronymus Bosch, Jooſt van den Vondel, Godfried Schalcken, Vincent van Gogh, Gerard Reve, Adriaan Ditvoorſt, Willem Frederik Hermans, and Alex van Warmerdam just being a couple examples of the sort of unsettlingly penetrating Dutch cultural creators that have flourished in the tiny Germanic Low Land over the past half a millennium or so. Admittedly, for a notable Dutch film, Character is certainly a shockingly contrived and easy-to-follow work that seems like it was specially tailored for American general audiences, thus making it a worthy work for novices of cinema of the Netherlands, but not something I would describe as a great masterpiece of any sort. Unfortunately, the film is also plagued by a somewhat cliched reductionist quasi-Marxist interpretation of history where capitalism is depicted as the source of all evil and the police are depicted as proto-fascist thugs and child molesters who brutally beat and killing poor young commie revolutionaries. Ironically, despite creating

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a critically and monetarily successful Academy Award winning work for his first feature, director Mike van Diem would go on to focus on directing TV commercials and did not get another opportunity to direct another feature film until rather recently, with his upcoming work *De Surprise* (2015) aka *The Surprise* starring Character star Jan Decleir and Georgina Verbaan, which is currently in post-production, being the filmmaker's first feature in almost two decades. Ultimately, van Diem's debut is the kind of work that gives you a good idea of the difference between mainstream European cinema and that of Hollywood, as it may not be up to par with contemporary Dutch arthouse masterpieces like Adriaan Dittvoorst's *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*, Theo van Gogh's *Loos* (1989), Alex van Warmerdam's *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners*, Aryan Kaganof's *Kyodai Makes The Big Time* (1992), and Maartje Seyferth and Victor Nieuwenhuijs' *Venus in Furs* (1994), but it certainly demonstrates that even the most contrived and formulaic of big budget European movies tend to have more artistic merit, aesthetic eloquence, and cultivation than the most widely critically revered of American blockbusters.

-Ty E

ARCADE ATTACK

Mike Wallington (1982) I found a VHSrip of this eighties documentary movie and was pleasantly surprised. I know have the pleasure to review this hybrid film and i have to say, it is the most original idea i have seen in a while. Only carrying a short runtime of 23 minutes, this film starts off as an interesting look at arcade machines and pinball machines.

When the film starts is says "SILVERball Heroes VS. Video Invaders in ARCADE ATTACK". We see shots of a huge arcade center in a busy city and we are then led inside where we have the british narrator explaining the importance of pinball machines. He is explaining about the companies that produce them and going through their specific features and what makes the game fun. We then have someone talking about the importance of arcade games especially Defender. He even goes as far as to say "You need to become the ship." while spouting philosophies claiming you aren't playing a game, you are exercising human nature. We then see a neu-wave punk playing his favorite pinball machine. He loves it so much he even has a tattoo of it spanning his entire back. Then the camera focuses on someones love for Space Invaders, claiming everything else in inferior. While the narrator is explaining the color characters on the pinball machines, you start to notice animations. What happens next is where it steps up a notch. The Space Invaders climb out of his TV screen "Ringu" style and begin to launch a full scale attack on Pinball and Pinball fans, annihilating the punk and leaving nothing but his shoes on fire. We then see the various pinball machines break open to see their respected characters forming a defense against the invaders. Heroes fall, Evil prevails. When attack wave three comes around, the city is in ruins and few stand. With documentary style editing, its hard to see what this film is aiming for. When you pull it back and take a look, it seems Pinball lovers are crying out. This was around the time when arcades destroyed all pinball games in competition. Its a video commentary when watched in this generation, you really start to miss the good days where it wasn't about graphics or killing the most creatures. Each side is fighting for their own preference and have their own ideological views and explain their side. I need to go play a pinball game now.

-Maq

THE RED AND THE WHITE
THE RED AND THE WHITE

Miklós Jancsó (1967)

I have the horrible misfortune of generally holding Marxist films as the most important. Russian-Hungarian co-production *The Red and the White* directed by Miklós Jancsó is a fine example. Over the years, I have come to hate most War Films (especially American War films). I especially have no respect for so-called antiwar films like *Platoon* (Oliver Stone trying to prove he's a man) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (good old Lewis Milestone AKA Lev Milstein). Milestone later went on to make pro-war American propaganda films such as *A Walk in the Sun* and *Halls of Montezuma*.

The Red and the White is not like the typical American war film (or War film in general). The film takes place during the Civil War of 1918 in central Russia at the height of Bolshevik barbarianism. The film takes a realist approach which ends up becoming surreal. The gathering of human cattle to be shot becomes especially interesting when decisions are made on who gets it first. The killings are repetitive but never boring. *The Red and the White* holds shots longer than even most Italian Neo-Realist films would. I always enjoy when I can actually get into a scene before almost having a seizure from a Vertov-Style split second shot.

One interesting and unconventional element of the film is its presentation of war as both absurd and redundant. Generally, most propaganda films (especially Bolshevik) have a completely one side view on hand. *The Red and the White* features a midget would-be rapist Bolshevik violating a young white Russian girl (she is stripped and then washed for Stalin's other Bloody Dwarf). The white army ends up blasting this Trotskyite away with a variety of bullets. Truly refreshing for both sides.

The White Army's elitism is not match for the global proletarian barbarians. In all honesty, it's hard for me to decide who I like more. The Bolshevik obsession with fighting by any means necessary gets quite interesting. Some of the White Army POWs even end up converting to the Red Army. I guess that could be considered an all time low.

The conspiring of a woman with her diversion of the White Army via her naked body would be deemed misogynist by self loathing Emma Goldman would-be's. These type fighting techniques are very rarely seen from any type of war film. Its odd form of voyeurism becomes especially erotic.

I doubt "E.T. hands" Spielberg watched *The Red and the White* in preparation for his gore fest/sentimentalist Zio-fantasy *Saving Private Ryan*. It may have inspired thought on his part which could have ended in Jurassic chaos. After all, he is the master of fantasy and showmanship.

-Ty E

EXECUTIVE KOALA

Minoru Kawasaki (2006)

When I look back at my life and ponder upon my larger regrets, never would I propose that I deserve this form of punishment. Naturally, cinema is one of my greatest passions, second only to sodomy. What cruel mistress would be foul enough in her arts to subject me to comeuppance in the form of cancerous film-making? Enter the films of Minoru Kawasaki, a Japanese director who panders around the very essence of Japanese culture perceived by Westerners - Namely, really cutesy "kawaii" plush furies and starry-eyed kaiju homages with an IV-drip of anime inspired machinations. Jumping in head-first, I honestly didn't want to know what a film starring a larger Japanese man in a Koala mask would entertain me with - the word entertain used very loosely. It just so happens that Executive Koala goes the way of dark comedy as we straggle behind a divorced salarykoala who begins to have bizarre flashbacks and memory lapses which lead him to conclude he is a sleepwalking murderer. Following the disappearance of his wife some odd years ago and now his girlfriend's bloody corpse, a detective trails behind Tamura, koala, and feebly attempts to find incriminating evidence. All the while Tamura creeps closer to cementing in a new, mysterious Korean client for his business firm.

Making a film like Executive Koala would be relatively simple, had you the willpower to capture motion video of less-than-savvy acting abilities and the awful motor-skills of a hybrid man-marsupial. It takes a true hack to twist the absurd into the unwatchable. Certain Japanese films, as tawdry as the may be, have the elements of train-wreck mixed with such unclassifiable material that it literally is damn near impossible to peel your eyes from the screen. Executive Koala certainly does not have this effect. Personally, I found myself in a room, wanting to be distracted by anything - a fly buzzing about the room, a phone call from someone I didn't want to talk with, even the mad rumblings of displeased bowels would have been welcome as opposed to forcing myself to be transfixed on what might be the worst film I have ever sat through, and to be honest, if I had known Executive Koala would end the way it did, I might have turned it off just to shatter the disc, to jab it straight into the jugular of the one who gave it to me. Minoru Kawasaki has created films similar to this, such as Calamari Wrestler and Crab Goalkeeper, in which he cuts and pastes a hybrid creature "seamlessly" into a world compromised of humanity. This makes for a silly marketing ploy to sell tickets. Executive Koala opens with a crudely animated introduction highlighting the cast of characters with a cheery song. Once the murder mystery actually takes place, you are immediately evidenced guilty as to Tamura being the killer. Certain kill scenes are composed of the victim facing a corner of the room while Tamura, facing the camera in grotesque close-up,

EXECUTIVE KOALA

strafes past the camera with inconsistently glowing eyes, obviously the results of a buggy animatronic koala head or the unmentioned fact that he is a cyborg. Do I even need to mention Tamura's inconceivable ability to teleport across the room on a whim? Never mind reality, Executive Koala is too insipid to waste your time defending it.

Few if any scenes within Executive Koala stand with purpose. Much of the runtime is dedicated to proving that Tamura is a skilled worker with an excellent ethic, yet demonizes his sanity and memory loss with instances of murder, only for the murders to have not actually taken place. Coincidentally a film is being shot of the same condition but it is never mentioned again after this initial scene. After the detective visits Tamura's village of birth, Executive Koala infuriates further with an amateur sing-and-dance number that includes getting final judgment from a fiery deity that I can only assume to be a dark lord. Executive Koala is many things - embarrassing, boring, entirely without charm - not to mention whenever a character is involved in physical combat, Minoru Kawasaki edits the character out and replaces it with a stuffed mannequin to get thrown and twisted to hearts content. Quirky and eccentric, somewhat, but that doesn't cover up the fact that Executive Koala is rookie garbage. No facet can be found enjoyable within the film and certainly not the physically harmful ending in which, after a daftly cover-up, Tamura gets the girl, the detective forgets the crimes altogether, and they all stare at the sun in an equally disgusting pose - filled with inspiration and direction. I hate Executive Koala and so should you. If not for the incredibly stupid lack of "Koreagraphy" during the final fight than for the rest of the film, compromised of digital piss and shit, the likes of which entice me to punch my eyes out with a thin, blunt object.

-mAQ

SEDUCTION: THE CRUEL WOMAN

Monika Treut (1985)

A personal friend of German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter and his cinematographer Elfi Mikesch, one would think that kraut lesbian auteur Monika Treut (*Female Misbehavior*, *Warrior of Light*) would be a great and original filmmaker whose sacrilegious Sapphic cinema would be next to none, but that just is not the case, at least as far as I am concerned. Admittedly one of her films, *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (1985) aka *Verführung: Die Grausame Frau* – a debut feature-length work she co-directed with Miss Mikesch – does have some highly commendable aesthetic merit comparable to Schroeter's *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* (a work Mikesch also shot), if not due to her collaborator's previous experience working on her own films and those of Rosa von Praunheim, including the standout neo-German expressionist work *Horror Vacui* (1984). A literature and philosophy major in college who wrote her doctoral thesis on the role of women in the works of Marquis de Sade's *Juliette* (1797) and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (1870) – Treut was certainly intellectually prepared to direct *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*; a strikingly seedy but sleekly stylized cinematic work about a decidedly debauched, seemingly deranged, and determinedly deranged dominatrix who owns a hellish torture gallery where she keeps a number of loyal and sometimes disloyal slaves who sport haute couture when not getting manhandled by their maniacal mistress; a mostly malicious and somewhat monetary-inclined master of misanthropy, misandry, and bestial butch mayhem. Inspired and loosely based on Sacher-Masoch's novella *Venus in Furs*, *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* features a highly modern yet urbane 'lesbian fascist' aesthetic where leather, pleather, high heels, skulls, studded dildos, torture chamber bathrooms and psychopath chic dominate the imagery in an oftentimes oneiric realm where nihilistic flesh and fantasy make for an atmosphere not all that different from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987), albeit more rigidly refined without a supernatural element or over-the-top horror flick special effects. Since directing *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*, Treut has yet to direct another film that even remotely resembles the cultivated risqué atmosphere she, at least in part, conjured up with her first feature, so I can only assume that, like with Bruce LaBruce and his most immaculately directed cinematic work *Hustler White* (1996), the Sappho auteur owes much of the look of her standout work to her co-director. One could also say the same about fellow butch Teutonic auteuress Ulrike Ottinger, whose early works *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* (1978) and *Ticket of No Return* (1979) seem to have seriously influenced the aesthetic and themes of *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*, because after the severance of her personal and creative partnership with Tabea Blumenschein, the look (a distinctly postmodern Germanic one with shehe S&M imagery) of her films dramatically changed for the worse. Although

SEDUCTION: THE CRUEL WOMAN

Mikesch would continue to operate the camera on subsequent works directed by Treut, none of these films, mostly being of a quirky lesbian flavor that is probably decisively distasteful to anyone that isn't a lily-licker or so-called trans-man, have the penetrating if perturbing power of *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*.

If I can credit Monika Treut and her cunt-licking compatriot Elfi Mikesch with anything, it is – for better or worse – demanding that viewers of *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* participate to some degree; whether they like or not. Indeed for masochists, the film might be something approaching celluloid masturbation of sorts, and to the sadist, one might want to decapitate the lead anti-heroess for daring to be such a demanding and over domineering bitch on a high horse of hateful hedonism. A wanton and wacked witch with wild ideas that she has turned into a highly profitable and perverse full-time profession and odious obsession, lead Wanda (Mechthild Grossmann) seems like a particularly pulchritudinous woman upon superficial glance, but when she opens her cunt-biting and cock-chopping mouth, it is quite apparent that she has far from a ladylike soul, but certainly a spiteful proclivity towards sexual sadism of the distinctly Sapphic man-loathing kind. Although she has a number of lovers/admirers/employees/slaves from both respective genders, including Gregor (Udo Kier); a rather romantic dreamer who thinks he can convert a dyke to dick due to their past romantic relationship, Justine (Sheila McLaughlin); a foreign femme and torture 'trainee' who has yet to realize that seduction is an illusion, and Herr Maehrsch (Peter Weibel); a jerk-off journalist who discovers that he enjoys being a human toilet after falling under the mistress' spell while interviewing her for an article. Friederike – the so called "lady prime minister," and friend and servant as Wanda calls her – is in charge of "propaganda and protocol" at the phantasmagorical S&M gallery of fascism of the flesh where both pain and pleasure are transcended for something more pathological. If all of the patently perverse players of *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* have something in common, it is that they are all looking to fill some sort of inner void, with their feverish fetishism being the means from which they try to appease this metaphysical hunger. Despite taking the role of fetish Führer in her temple of torture, wretched wench Wanda is indubitably the most 'spiritually' and emotionally vacuous of the bondage bunch as she is all but disturbingly dead inside, hence her nefarious need to dominate and destroy others, or at least what little is left of their innate humanity, goodness, and innocence. An admitted and positively proud "mysterious tyrant," Wanda tells journalist Maehrsch (before he realizes his dream of having dykes defecate in his mouth) that, "sexuality in that way no longer interests me," meaning she no longer has interest in natural sexual intercourse and human affection, but instead a need to dominate and, in some cases, destroy those weaker than herself for monetary profit. Of course, Wanda is not always able to maintain her sadistic stoicism, as she has a bodacious bitch attack every week (or so says her dissatisfied lover) when overwhelmed by

what is left of her 'previous self' and having to deal with the daily needs of her attention-starved servants. Although Wanda is able to hold up her domineering front most of the time, some of her underlings are less stable, thus resulting in a violent backlash at the considerably anti-climatic conclusion of *Seduction: The Cruel Woman*.

Described as, "like a sexier version of Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*," in *Images in the Dark: An Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1996) by an author displaying a bit of a proclivity towards puffery, I would still argue *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* is one of the best lesbian films I have ever seen (and actually sat through in its entirety) and probably the only one I have watched more than once, but I guess that does not say much as a student of Weininger and Mencken. Unlike Fassbinder's *Die Bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* aka *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* – a work featuring some of the most marvelously miserable melodrama ever brought to the silver screen, *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* features a whole lot more style than substance, which is undoubtedly the film's most glaring flaw. The film originally had its world premiere at the 1985 Berlin Film Festival, to which Monika Treut remarked regarding the audience response, "That opening was like a riot. It's still a nightmare to me, which makes it hard to recall. It was packed, sold out three days beforehand...we didn't know what going to happen...the audience got so mad. They attacked us. Only people who hated the film talked. That was only men. They just went crazy." Of course, I can see why most men and probably also the majority of women would hate the film, as the lead Wanda embodies every repellant, repugnant, and reprehensible trait a biological 'woman' could have, as the ultimate 'anti-woman' who, aside from being stunningly beautiful in appearance, does not feature a single trait the men looked for in the opposite sex like being humble, passive, dainty, empathetic, and sweet, thereupon making her the ultimate cinematic bull-dyke fantasy as the archetype for the intangible Über-dyke; a physical lipstick lesbo, but also with the menacing might of a cultivated carpet-muncher who is manlier than most men and has women flocking to her bed. That being said, Wanda seems like the extreme of a mad matron with a macabre case of penis envy, hence her perennial and impenetrable bitter dissatisfaction to the very end. Needless to say, it is no coincidence that Treut would go on to direct a number of films featuring female-to-male transsexuals.

-Ty E

MY FATHER IS COMING
MY FATHER IS COMING

Monika Treut (1991)

Ever wondered what would happen if a boorish, beer-bloated Bavarian kraut comes to Jew York City to visit his daughter and discovers that his little girl is a mixed-up, carpet-munching and miscegenating lesbo that no longer has love for the Fatherland?! Well, such is the sexually and culturally confused world of Sapphic German auteur Monika Treut's cunt-loving Amero-kraut cult comedy *My Father is Coming* (1991) aka *My Father is coming - Ein Bayer in New York*, a radically ridiculous and raunchy dyke-fest of the sometimes sentimental but always vulgar sort where a proud German mensch learns to become 'progressive' via peversion by having a grotesque Jewish porn star/performance artist by the name of Annie Sprinkle endow him with some much needed kosher carnal knowledge. If Weimar Berlin of the 1920s and early 1930s was the world capital of sexual debauchery and gender derangement before Uncle Adolf kicked all the Jews and their shabbos goy friends out, New York City must have inherited all that degeneracy when all the Hebrews immigrated there, or at least one would assume so after watching *My Father is Coming*, a film that rightfully associates homosexuality and other sexual aberrations with cosmopolitanism, but also nationalism, especially of the Teutonic persuasion, as outmoded and even socially odious. Clearly influenced by German New Cinema alpha-fag Rosa von Praunheim's flauntingly decadent documentary *Überleben in New York* (1989)—a sickening celebration of retarded race-mixing, lurid and loony lesbianism, and cultural deracination that follows three modern German women as their lives change drastically after moving to the big rotten apple—*My Father is Coming* is a culturally cynical and vaguely campy tale about pussy power and why lesbianism trumps both the father and the Fatherland, at least in sadomasochistic lady-lover Monika Treut's gal-gazing eyes. Like Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) as depicted from the sardonic pseudo-intellectual Sapphic perspective, *My Father is Coming* is a film that reminds heterosexual men why lesbians—and not the pseudo-lezzy sort featured in silicon-soaked porn flicks—are the greatest enemy of mankind.

Vicky (Shelley Kästner)—a semi-out-of-the-closet lesbian of the German immigrant persuasion, who looks like a cross between Gillian Anderson and anti-feminist feminist Camille Paglia—is quite worried about the fact that her proudly German father Hans (German New Cinema cult actor Alfred Edel, who died two years after the film's release) is coming to visit her in NYC and does not know that she likes licking lilies and lives with a rampantly homosexual homo with an unhealthy fetish for muscular Latinos. A struggling actress who cannot even land a role acting as a German character despite her ostensibly Aryan blood (she looks more Italian/Jewish than anything), Vicky spends most of her time waiting tables and conversing with her Puerto Rican lesbian co-worker Lisa

(Mary Lou Grailau) and she has very little time to spend with her father. When boorish Bavarian Hans does arrive to NYC, he comes armed with “real Bavarian sausage” that he smuggled through customs and happens to run into his daughter’s anti-German Hungarian neighbor, who makes some rather snide remarks about how “the fuehrer was a vegetarian” and how she apparently had a German boyfriend once, but dumped him because he brought over potato salad with a swastika drawn with mayo in the middle of dish. After realizing the less than homely Hungarian broad is a lesbo with a jealous estrogen-free lover, Hans leaves and finally runs into his daughter, who pretends her blatantly flamboyantly gay roommate Ben (David Bronstein) is her husband. After being surprised to learn from his daughter that “lots of Russian Jews live here and they hate Germans” when he is denied Jew food at a kosher deli, Hans agrees to go to Vicky’s next acting audition, which happens to be with dildo diva Annie Sprinkle, who is casting for her upcoming erotic film Pornutopia. While Vicky fails to entice and get the part in the porn flick, Hans gets a part in an American TV commercial by happenstance after randomly meeting a casting director, but the burly kraut also starts a relationship with jaded Jewess Annie Sprinkle after she vulgarly urinates in front of him. Feeling a bit of melancholy and jealous that she did not get the role but her non-actor father did, Vicky randomly runs into a James Dean-wannabe female-to-male transvestite named Joe (played by Michael Masee, the man who accidentally killed Brandon Lee during the film of *The Crow* (1994)), who offers to give her a ride to work, thus beginning an erotically fruitless relationship. While starting a harmless, seemingly one-sided relationship with Joe, Vicky starts an even more steamy affair with her co-worker Lisa. Needless to say, Hans is a little irked when he walks in on his daughter fondling a swarthy Puerto Rican gal, but he eventually comes around after cumming (indeed, the title *My Father Is Coming* seems to have a dual and quasi-incestuous meaning) and becomes accepting of his little girl’s vice after Annie Sprinkle gives him a rather racy and repugnant rub down, thus committing the unholy sin of racial defilement. In the end, proud kraut Hans is semi-Americanized and leaves NYC wearing looking like lard ass liberal slob Michael Moore in a goofy baseball cap and accepting the fact that his daughter is a deracinated and ethno-masochistic tuna-face dyke.

When discussing why post-WWII Germany is so accepting of gaydom, director Monika Treut theorized, “that after the Third Reich, and with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, people have become very sensitive—have had to be very sensitive—when defining others as outcasts,” thus explaining why queers arguably dominated German New Cinema. Indeed, rather remarkably, in terms of persecution, it is Germans and not gays, transvestites, and lesbos that are the greatest target of scorn, hatred, and ridicule in *My Father Is Coming*. For example, when protagonist Vicky tries out for an acting role as a German character, the casting director states “think of the Nazis” in terms

MY FATHER IS COMING

of the stereotypically robotic Teutonic performance she is looking for, thus illustrating the sort of endless and tedious Teutonophobia that has dominated in Hollywood, mainstream media, and brainwashed American minds ever since the Second World War. Additionally, Hans is taunted by strangers a number of times due to his glaring Germanness, including two dykes insinuating he is a Hitlerite, a German-Jew questioning about what he did “during the war” (He was just a boy and his father was killed), and being denied authentic kosher food. Of course, with *My Father Is Coming*, auteur Monika Treut symbolically broke with her German identity as virtually all of her subsequent works where shot abroad and she gained her largest audience with American lesbians, thus transcending the blood she herself feels is tainted, so much so that even being a bean-flicking bull-dyke is more socially acceptable. In fact, one could argue that she traded her Aryan identity for an abberosexual one as most of her subsequent works, including *Female Misbehavior* (1992), *Gendernauts: A Journey Through Shifting Identities* (1999), and *Lesbian Nation* (2009), expressed an identity as being one’s (lesbian) sexuality and not the blood and soul of one’s birth. Of course, as exemplified in lezzy Lisa’s remark “no one ever believes me when I tell them I’m Puerto Rican” in *My Father Is Coming*, Monika Treut seems to think of lesbianism as a multicultural pseudo-race without physical borders and social restraints, while also advocating race-mixing via Hans and Annie Sprinkle as the poisonous antidote to national and racial pride among heterosexuals. That being said, *My Father is Coming* is essentially a degenerate völkisch propaganda flicks for chicks that do not like dicks, henceforth, it goes without saying that Treut film(s) are the aesthetic/cinematic equivalent of a temporary STD to anyone that is not a clit-hopper. Indeed, Herzog’s *Stroszek* might have ended in terrible tragedy and misery, but I found it far less stomach-churning than the sickeningly sentimental conclusion of *My Father Is Coming*, a fucked flick where a Fräulein surprises her father with the fact that she fingers other gals and expects him to accept it and he does so only after a Jewess fingers him. It might be a stretch, but I doubt Uncle Adolf would have been impressed with tranny-like Annie Sprinkle’s unflatteringly large Jewess jugs but Alfred Edel is a different story, thereupon illustrating the major difference between the Teutons of today and yesteryear.

-Ty E

MASD-004

Morita Hisashi (???)

WARNING: IF YOU ARE EASILY OFFENDED AND PRONE TO SICKNESS, DO NOT PROCEED

I went into this film with every expectation to vomit. Seeing as how many people have not finished this, i made it a personal challenge to watch it. Indeed, it is celluloid hell, but the hype outlives the dream. This is a near impossible to get, Japanese scat/filth/fetish porn that is only circulated through traders and such. It opens up with very normal looking Japanese women skipping around in white with umbrellas and looking very cutesy. Whereas there are no subs, so i do not what they are saying, nor do i really want to know. Next, a woman is in an all white room and there is a raised platform. She squats upon it and begins to defecate. This happens after discharge sprays everywhere. I can easily imagine the look on our readers face as they are reading this. After this, she then performs foreplay on the pile of feces, dipping her tongue in it, letting saliva collect on it. After this viral playtime, she decides to slurp it up and gargle with it. After this, we are treated to a monologue of sorts with VICTIM #2. We then see a woman tied to a wall. Surrounding her are six giggly Japanese women who then defecate and urinate on a plate each and walk up and throw it in her face. After they let it soak in a little bit, they then walk up and smear it in her face. The only time i felt a little nauseous was when the woman was before a bowl of cooked noodles. They then inserted a baster filled with milk in her ass only to be shot out back in the bowl. She then eats it all then performs forced fellatio on the butler until she vomits it out mixed with semen back in the bowl, only to have it tipped into her mouth. Repeat this cycle a couple of times. Woman after woman steps up to the plate (No pun intended) and in the course of this we encounter Milk enema's, semen covered vomit noodles, a woman dipped in a vat of shit and discharge, a woman's mouth crammed with shit and then closed in with a lengthy piece of duct tape only to have her head covered in a plastic bag which they then use a blow dryer to seal the air out until she passes out. With all these in this shit filled concoction, this is easily the most vile disgusting video out and might be the ultimate party film. One can only imagine how many drinking games can be played with this. While the humility grows, so does the time. This feature clocks in at 2 hours and 13 minutes. This is the most extreme film I have ever seen but still not enough to make me lose my dinner. I would not recommend this to anyone but when i get time i will check out TERRIBLE MEAL. Due to the shocking nature of this film, no pictures could be uploaded. After all is said and done, we are treated to trailers (I think) of normal pornography. I need to take a shower.

-mAQ

GAYNIGGERS FROM OUTER SPACE
GAYNIGGERS FROM OUTER SPACE

Morten Lindberg (1992)

Created by internet trolling group GNAA, this film is the first of its kind. A homosexual romp which greatly resembles any old science fiction film. It is a shitty, monotonous, misogynist film displaying the exploits of Gay Crusaders filmed in glorious Black & White with a running time of a horribly paced 24 minutes.

The storyline involves Captain B. Dick and his crew with such names as "THE GAY AMBASSADOR" and "SGT. SHAVED BALLS". They recently found out there are disgusting "FEMALES" on our wonderful planet and vow to free us men from the "FEMALES". Their computer copiously produces spelling inaccuracies which brings up the question if Gayniggers can spell at all. When they find women in various countries, the master computer which talks in a Speak-N-Spell mannerism, gives them information on said country with racial themes attached. They travel to China, in which the women speak in a wonderfully racist dialect formed with "ching chong ching kings" and such. When they laser the women away, the man hugs the GAYNIGGER and looks so happy. The Chinese man's voice is obviously someone speaking into a recorder than played backwards. Along the way, married men turn instantly homosexual and blow kisses. The soundtrack is composed of the all-to-familiar funk/blaxploitation theme. It seems to steal most of its cues from Isaac Hayes's work on Shaft. I don't think i can ever see a Negro with a Mohawk and not laugh again. The set design is just all aluminum foil. It's quite interesting due to all the reflections and the light tricks it plays. At the end of this film, when all women have been assimilated, you seem a collage of men in a pool deep-throating banana's and singing about being homosexual is the way to go. A bit of queer propaganda has never hurt anyone. The only thing i can really say about this film is it is funny, but for all the wrong reasons.

-Maq

COLD FISH

Morten Lindberg (2001) Following hot on the trail of *Love Exposure* is Sion Sono's newest film, *Cold Fish*. This odd horror film is quite a departure from his previous works because unlike most directors, Sion Sono embodies his own work with diligence and depravity. *Cold Fish* isn't very aesthetically similar to *Love Exposure* as it is more focused and budgeted on a single strand of narrative as opposed to the labyrinthine construct of Sono's absurd romance epic. Undoubtedly situated with tension, one glance at the poster should inflict mental side-effects akin to a bad omen. I could probably sit here and gush at the mere mention of Sion Sono and how spoiled and content I feel after viewing his films one after another but I will fight the affliction at its source while attempting to keep my composure. It would also become apparent that Sion Sono has gotten a handle on his cinematic deviance, even going as far as to be comic in nature. Now I pray you'll excuse the pun but *Cold Fish*, at its very core, profits with a morbid take on a "fish out of water" tale and like several of his films, is based on a true story. This story, in particular, being the case of Gen Sekine, a 59 year old dog breeder who conspired and poisoned four people.

Cold Fish opens up on with a very go-getting display of bright pastel colors and a delicate piano tune spliced with an ominous pounding. You can compare the introduction of *Cold Fish* to Gaspar Noe's *Enter the Void* as they both feature a very similar iconographic vortex, alike to being siphoned for every ounce of attention. We are then guests in the home of Shamoto and we watch their daily duties which include vomiting from nervousness. It is then when a chord is rung that highlights an estrangement so bizarre for being that close in proximity. Shamoto is the timid husband and proprietor of the squalid tropical fish shop they live out of, Taeko is the caretaker of the fish, and Mitsuko is the obligatory rebellious teenage girl. The events of *Cold Fish* pick up rather swiftly as Shamoto receives a phone call from a supermarket; the manager asking for his presence as his daughter was caught shoplifting. After some humility is passed evenly to the fragmented family, the situation is diffused when a Mr. Murata makes his presence known and talks the manager down from police intervention. After revealing that he, too, is a fish trader, Shamoto and Murata quickly bond over a stretch of peculiar and intrusive methods that leave Murata's true intentions masked. Here in lies the magic of *Cold Fish*, as per Sion Sono's evolution of character, this film is no exception to dizzying violence and absurd and utterly uncomfortable moments from the start to the twisted end. Shamato; shrewd and laden with cowardice. Murata; kind man whose costume is shed to reveal a sinister side - not one with the remove of, say, a greater evil. No, Murata's sickness lends much more to the promise of financial gain.

To properly describe *Cold Fish*, you'd have to step back and analyze each character and their behaviors. Sion Sono has learned much throughout his ca-

COLD FISH

reer. Breaking into the mainstream with J-Splatter success *Suicide Club* then tip-toeing through with films like *Hazard*, *Strange Circus*, and the Soiled Sinema favorite *Love Exposure*, *Cold Fish* demonstrates perfectly well the talent and mutability of his direction. The confidence that permeates on screen appeals so broadly to me. I feel as if I am invincible heading into a film of his, knowing full well that I will not be disappointed. Some might argue the fact of Noriko's Dinner Table being stale and mundane but I will refrain from commenting until I can devote my absolute full attention to it. To break down what I mentioned earlier, take the character of Taeko for example. Shown in the beginning rampaging through a grocery store, frolicking amidst the isles, gathering the necessary ingredients for a traditional Japanese supper, Sono then time-lapses through the process of preparation only to rival the exertion on her behalf with a scene of silence. Later on that evening, once Mistuko is rid from their domicile, Shamoto sits nervously with Taeko while watching a romantic late-night programme on the television. Obviously inspired by the affection, Shamato decides to make a move on Taeko only to be sternly rejected wielding the "she might come back soon" line. This catapults the common case of an unfulfilled marriage into sadistic grounds, spanning murder and infidelity. One could argue the cause but then again, Shamato never seemed to have luck on his side and this one chance meeting was enough to derail all fates featured within.

Throughout the entirety of *Cold Fish*, I was teased and satisfied with Sono's wonderful handling of the oft-unappreciated eccentricity of the Japanese. This ranges from extreme bouts of enthusiasm and the more commonly recognized over-emphasis of their words. This soon trickles dry, though, when *Cold Fish* switches the safety off half-way and turns into a dark and brooding horror film. I was unsure of how *Cold Fish* could end. No, how it would end. Immediately upon starting the film, you can never be sure of how it will close and upon seeing it and coming forward for another round, you simply cannot believe the curveball it is so prepared to hurl at you. I will refrain from mentioning a thing concerning the finale of *Cold Fish* other than this; it will terrify you, move you, shock you, and appall you. The violence featured in *Cold Fish* is something I had taken for granted. I did not realize I could still be shocked by something as novelty as "blood and guts" but alas, I found myself mortified, staring blankly at the screen. In retrospect, what I experienced was very similar to my first initiation to, say, the Guinea Pig series - namely, *Flowers of Flesh and Blood*. It was simply a spark that no words could recreate for a third-party member. To summarize all these conflicting emotions I can only muster a gasp, exhausted and drained in part of Sono's rape of character - *Cold Fish* is a flawless depiction of a soul dying. Sion Sono also happens to be a musical genius. He may not be so hands-on as to create his own melodies but as far as juxtaposing images to a classical score, there is no competition. Now as I ruminate on this ghastly thriller, I humbly request that you wait patiently and look forward to the R2 release from

the prodigious Third Window Films and if you haven't, acquire a copy of Love Exposure through them.

-mAQ

DECODER
DECODER

Muscha (1984)

While viewing the pessimistic, yet poetic German dystopian avant-garde science fiction film *Decoder* (1984) - directed by Muscha and written/produced by Klaus Maeck - one gets to experience the greatest work of aesthetic terrorism ever committed to low-grade celluloid. The film was heavily inspired by the subversive meta-political cut-up theories of William S. Burroughs, so it is fitting that *Decoder* writer Klaus Maeck would once again pay tribute to the Beat guru by directing the spoken word collage documentary *William S. Burroughs: Commissioner of Sewers* (1991). Taking inspiration from his best friend Brion Gysin, Burroughs began experimenting with cut-ups, henceforth cutting-up and re-structuring everything from his writing to tape-recorded audio tapes (comprised of everything from authoritarian voices to noises in the street) while living at the Beat Hotel in 1960. The excessively pessimistic and anarchically individualistic Burroughs once stated about Gysin, "Brion Gysin was the only man I ever respected," so it is no surprise that the Beat writer would take his friend's odd experiments very seriously. Both Burroughs and Gysin were assisted by mathematician and scientist Ian Sommerville. Burroughs would later pay tribute to Sommerville for his efforts by creating a character modeled after the Beat technician named "Subliminal Kid" that is featured in the cut-up novels *Nova Express* and *The Ticket That Exploded*. Burroughs' cut-up experiments were also inspired by unconventional quasi-scientific instruments, including wacky Marxist psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich's Orgone Accumulator and The Church of Scientology's E-Meter. With his tape-recorded cut-up experiments, Burroughs felt he had the power to use auditory aesthetic terrorism as a weapon to counter government propaganda, and even cause anti-government riots. In Klaus Maeck's ingenious experimental work *Decoder*, a young "noise-freak" named F.M. experiments with anti-Muzak in an attempt to destroy corporate (brainwashing) muzak that is played at an imperial and Americanized fast food chain called H. Burgers. H. Burgers advertises that they "serve 100% German beef" and they have an employee army of fascistic H-Burger Youth. F.M. is disturbed by the fact that the Muzak played at H-Burger hypnotizes customers, thus turning them into loyal consuming automatons. Of course, in *Decoder* - muzak (mood altering music) is better than music - but muzak of the corporate persuasion is ultimately dehumanizing and downright evil.

In an interview featured in the book *Naked Lens: Beat Cinema* written by Jack Sargeant, *Decoder* writer Klaus Maeck stated the following regarding William S. Burroughs in an interview conducted by the author, "Be aware that for Germans it is not always easy to understand his American accent, even if you do speak English. And so many people here do not understand his humor, which

is what makes him so funny and lovable.” Of course, your typical American would also be at a loss to understand the absurdist humor and non-linear writings of William S. Burroughs. Naturally, Burroughs’ greatest admirers are fellow artists who found much inspiration and insight in the Beat writer’s vast collection of works. In *Decoder*, the cast of actors (most being non-actors) is made up of various artists who were inspired by the Beat guru in one way or another. The main protagonist of *Decoder*, F.M., is played by F.M. Einheit (also known as Mufti) - the real-life musician best known for contributing his percussion talents to the German post-industrial group Einstürzende Neubauten. F.M.’s beautiful girlfriend Christiana is played by Christiane F. - the real-life best-selling author and ex-junkie/ex-prostitute who wrote the gritty autobiographical book “Christiane F. - Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo (1981)” - which was later adapted into a notable film of the same name. Also, Genesis P-Orridge - the pioneering industrial/post-industrial frontman (Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV) and real-life friend of William S. Burroughs - plays (during his pre-tranny days) an occult muzak High Priest in *Decoder*. The only “real” actor featured in *Decoder* is William Rice - who plays Jager - a hit man sent out by an evil Muzak corporation to kill E.M.. Although an eclectic and influential avant-garde artist who contributed much to the art scene in East Village, NYC during a number of decades, Bill Rice is probably best known in the cinema world for playing himself in the segment “Champagne” featured in Jim Jarmusch’s *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003). Last but certainly not least, William S. Burroughs plays a phantom shopkeeper in *Decoder* who gives E.M. a dismantled machine during one of his psychedelic lucid dreams. To say the least, *Decoder* features an all-star cast of real-life aesthetic terrorists that also happen to be the artistic heirs of William S. Burroughs.

Like Slava Tsukerman’s *Liquid Sky* (1982) and Agustí Villaronga’s *In a Glass Cage* (1987), *Decoder* is a totally audacious libertine art house film with an uncompromisingly distinct aesthetic that could have only been conceived during the ultra-materialistic dystopian nightmare era of the 1980s. Also like both *Liquid Sky* and *In a Glass Cage* - *Decoder* is a work of cinematic poetry - where the aesthetic integrity of the film is more important than the plot. Not to say that the plot of *Decoder* is irrelevant (it was inspired by the mind of William S. Burroughs after all!), but that the film’s plot is secondary to the alluring and mood-altering imagery of the film. Like a novel by William S. Burroughs, specific scenes of *Decoder* will leave a deeper impression on the viewer than the fairly uninvolved (yet meta-politically inspirational) plot. In fact, after initially watching *Decoder*, most people will have a difficult time articulating the plot of the film, but, of course, certain scenes in the film will indubitably stick out in their minds; whether the viewer likes it or not. Despite being a film about the power of magical sounds and spellbinding muzak; *Decoder* - a virtual cinematic kaleidoscope - is ultimately a visual affair that transports the viewer to an

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aesthetically pleasing Teutonic post-industrial wasteland - where colors speak louder than words and where a person's physical appearance reveals the most about a person's character. In the world of Decoder, German children dress up in Wehrmacht uniforms while playing their favorite arcade war games and new wave technocratic stormtroopers militantly roam the nuclear-rainbow-colored streets. Instead of embracing the Blood and Soil ideology of the Third Reich, the thoroughly Americanized post-WW2 German populous featured in the film robotically live for microchips and desolate sidewalk strips. For those individuals who have always wondered what a William S. Burroughs-inspired punk rock nightmare would be like, Decoder is probably the only film that offers such a delectable absurdist, albeit fanciful, cinematic affair. While watching Decoder, I couldn't help but wonder what the film would be like under the influence of a dreamachine (which makes an appearance in the film); a stroboscopic device that produces visual-stimuli (a "drug-less" psychedelic high) for the viewer through its hypnotic flicker, which was invented by Brion Gysin, William S. Burroughs, and Ian Sommerville; the three men that also inspired Decoder.

Aesthetically, Decoder owes some credit to the mostly forgotten no-budget "para-punk/no wave" films that were made in New York City during the late 1970s. The cinematographer behind Decoder, Johanna Heer, worked on the para-punk film *Subway Riders* (also featuring Bill Rice) directed by Amos Poe. In comparison to the extremely amateurish and often times improvised para-punk films, Decoder received much better funding (most of which came from West German government subsidies including "Hamburg's Film Funds" and "Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film") and consequently grandeur production values. It should also be noted that the recently deceased industrial/post-industrial musician Peter 'Sleazy' Christopherson (Throbbing Gristle, Coil) played an imperative part in the production of Decoder by operating a video camera that was used to capture the cameos performances given by Genesis P-Orridge and William S. Burroughs in the film. Although P-Orridge's and Burroughs' appearances are brief in Decoder, they add a certain celebrity and character to the work that is vital to the film's artistic credibility. As one can expect from a film featuring pioneering industrial muzak-makers, Decoder is equipped with a complimentary soundtrack featuring tracks from such notable muzak groups as Soft Cell and Psychic TV. Indeed, Decoder is a wonderful work that travels through the meta-political heaven and hell (and everywhere in between) of the muzak world - a magickal and marvelous apocalyptic microcosmos where dream and reality are virtually one in the same - thus it is no surprise that the film is arguably the greatest phantasmagorical dystopian cinematic dream ever created. When it comes to the sub-genre of sci-fi-cyber-punk cinema, Decoder is certainly the greatest and most original of its kind (sorry Japan!). It is certainly not a coincidence that Germany and Japan - the two axis nations that were defeated in the second world war; literally the most tragic and deadly military conflict in human

history - have been at the forefront of creating the most gloomy, pessimistic, and perverted films that the world has ever known.

William S. Burroughs, "Anyone with a tape recorder controlling the soundtrack can influence and create events." (*The Invisible Generation*, 1966)

Occult Muzak High Priest (Genesis P-orrige) in *Decoder*, "Information is like a bank, our job is to rob that bank."

Out of all the characters featured in *Decoder*, sexy Christiane F. is easily the most peculiar. What makes Christiane so different from the rest of the characters in the film is that she mostly lives in her own escapist world of the organic - where technology is disdained and frogs are godly. Apparently, the real-life Christiane F. is also an introverted lady who finds happiness and comfort in the company of her loyal pet frogs. Of course, Christiane F. is incapable of manipulating modern reality like her noise-freak boyfriend due to her uncompromising aversion to technology. When bickering with E.M., Christiane quips after mentioning the unoriginality of his noise-terrorist activities, "Even the Gestapo used music to make people shit to death." On top of being a linguistically eloquent lady, Christiane F. is also the most beautiful person featured in *Decoder*, despite her ridiculous punk rock wardrobe, cyber-punk hairdo, and atrocious personality. By ignoring technology, Christiane F. has only confirmed the victory of globalist corporations, therefore, she hates technology in vain; whether she acknowledges it or not. Although Christiane's anti-technocratic sentiments are admirable, she offers nothing in the way of practical solutions (aside from effortlessly cock-teasing hit man Jager) for correcting her grievances, but, instead, verbally assaults her boyfriend; a proactive man who selflessly risks his life for the good of his technologically-enslaved nation. Thus, Christiane - an armchair revolutionary of the worst kind, with a unflattering passive slave-morality to boot - is an excellent example as to how one should not react (escapism and mere negative criticism) when battling corporate terror. E.M., on the other hand - has the right idea - as he has made an effort to learn the corporate enemy's subliminal techniques and cryptic-strategies, henceforth somewhat successfully battling corporate muzak with his subversive anti-muzak.

Decoder Soundtrack featuring songs from *EinStürzende Neubauten*, *Soft Cell*, *E.M.*, and *Psychic TV* The cut-up novels of William S. Burroughs and the revolutionary anti-technocratic film *Decoder* were certainly ahead of their respective times, as both ambitious experiments are more relevant today than when they were originally released. It is no mistake that scenes from Fritz Lang's futuristic dystopian sci-fi film *Metropolis* (1927) appear in *Decoder*, as both German films foretold the progressive enslavement and collective homogenization of man via technology and international capitalist monopolies. Man may have created the machine in a feeble attempt to become god, but now the machine controls man and man is left with a godless spiritual void that will most likely never be organically fulfilled. It should be noted that most of the key points

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predicted by German philosopher Oswald Spengler (whose works were a major influence on William S. Burroughs' worldview) in his work *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of life* (1931) – a short, but insightful book that poetically illustrates man's technological deracination from nature and inevitable dependence on manmade machines – have unfortunately come true. Although *Decoder* was released over a quarter-century ago during the Orwellian year of 1984, war fought through abstract and subliminal technology has only become even more relevant and inorganically sophisticated - as one can engage in cyberwars on the internet from the comfort of a personal home computer. Now the layman can cheaply operate his own international digital television channel via YouTube, as well as manage a worldwide digital newspaper via a blog/website (like this one!). For the more criminally-minded, one can attack government computers, steal a person's identity, and illegally appropriate money as an on-line hacker from any place in the world. If you think William S. Burroughs was merely a degenerate junkie-queer writer, it is about time you open your eyes and unplug your ears, and watch *Decoder*; a film that clearly demonstrates as to why the Beat writer lived by Hassan I Sabbah's supposed last words, "Nothing is true – Everything is Permitted."

-Ty E

MAD MUTILATOR

N.G. Mount (1983)

Now this is what I'm talking about. *Mad Mutilator*, no, *Ogroff the Mad Mutilator* (1983), is a film that brings me harking back to my heydays in the course of splatter cinema. An age in which most cinephiles discover and explore, leading them to extended bathing in celluloid excrement. *Mad Mutilator* is something I had been meaning to check out and a recommendation from a dear friend put *Ogroff's* mutilation onto the fast track of necessary viewing. Having time off during work surely befitted the experience of *Mad Mutilator*; that pounding pressure in the frontal lobe that needed to be exorcised with a crudely fashioned axe. Just what was I getting myself into? *Mad Mutilator* opens on a note of sheer esoterica with a car stopping and a bouncing, bubbly boy skipping into the forest. Like any radically redesigned filmmaker, N.G. Mount decides to begin his crude French slasher with our pivotal mutilator shedding the boy of mortal coil. For being a steaming heap of film dung, *Mad Mutilator* sure shelters something enjoyable under its hood, even if I can't quite put my finger on it. So what *Mad Mutilator* is, is a low-fidelity French splatter film whose crude upbringing really fosters a Violent Shit anti-aesthetic. It is a classic example of film degraded to the point of an untranslatable condition.

Other than offering the maiming of a child, *Ogroff's* daily duties of thinning out the French population offer many surprises, especially when the film turns over halfway. After dramatic chase effects and the slaying of teenagers playing chess in the plains, *Ogroff* heads to his cabin to gawk at a pin up whose literally pinned up with darts. After this, his post-edited grunts strike off a scene in which *Ogroff's* *Axe* becomes his personal phallic extension and proceeds to masturbate and fondle his own instrument of terror. Actually, *Ogroff* loves tasking his *Axe* with the nubile flesh of women. So much soft skin to be flayed, so little time. In fact, had he kill with sexual discrimination, meaning only women, a fetishistic satisfaction could be argued - his utilizing of the blade. This proves to be too much thought put into such a shallow pool of aggressive ideas, though. Another of *Ogroff's* hobbies isn't so much cannibalism as feeding his pets, namely a dog and several zombies under the rubble of his hut. Shown in brief scenes throwing ground beef under a steel trapdoor, this is later heavily emphasized when these zombies escape, turning a tale of a masked murderer into the making of a tragic anti-hero. Boy, *Ogroff* sure is a strange creature, one who fights for the lives of his victims. So much so that by films end, the term happy refuses to apply with our mutilator's fate.

Perhaps my favorite expression of *Mad Mutilator's* is the all-synth soundtrack whose inspirations spouts therein influence and ethereal screams from past dimension X (must be). It is purely the soundtrack whose preeminence creates the shifting soiled tone of the film that sparks hints of atmosphere. Compiled

MAD MUTILATOR

with fluctuating bubbles, pops, and whistles, Mad Mutilator's soundtrack sounds as if it were concocted in an all-too literal "beat laboratory". Without the soundtrack of synth-science, Mad Mutilator would benefit from nothing. It would be the cinematic equivalent of a black hole. Already is there scare dialog but paired with the abscessed special effects (if you can call them that) you'd get a life-killing incident of slasher footage. Ogroff's visage depends entirely on his leather-sex-mask. His character is thankfully gifted with some remove of a psychopath but plays bumbling in several scenes, specifically when he gives up chase with the mother of the slain child only to turn around to witness the car pass her, thus preempting him to return with chase. In this and many other regards, it is possible to connect Ogroff with some form of autism, giving him leagues more depth. For certain reasons, Mad Mutilator's only real contribution to film is the wacky events that later give way to early elements of fan fiction and the fact that it is a French antique. One that can be cherished if quality isn't a token concern and Axe-havings benefit whatever sour mood you may be in. Mad Mutilator also predates the brutality that the cowardly French would later adopt as the crown of their influx of neo-horror films.

Even the story is ridden with faults. Mad Mutilator contains itself within the span of an afternoon or so it seems. Ogroff trails the roads, finding victim after victim. If math is given consent then his body count alone for a week would trim a large portion of rural France's population. Ogroff is the very personification of genocide - a cold, burly machine capable of unstoppable madness. This changes with the inclusion of the undead, however, as Ogroff is besmirched by his own pets and by films end, unknowingly becomes a shambling toxic creation of his own doing. Mad Mutilator doesn't stop there though. Near the final minutes of Ogroff do we find one of Ogroff's maidens being given a ride by a humble holy man who turns out to be of vampiric origins. The forest in which Ogroff resides must be of cursed soil. How else would so many myths, legends, and monsters thrive off what seems to be barren in regards to resources or wildlife? Don't mistake my tooting of Mad Mutilator's horn to hint achievement. No, Mad Mutilator compromises the very notion of tedium and even manages to make a chainsaw fight echo mundane. Past the inclusion of some strange figures, Mad Mutilator Béla Tarr instead decided to focus his long tracking shots on rookie dreams of cheap gore and Axe murders. Repetition, when employed passively, can benefit your acquisition of knowledge in many cases, even furthering dramatic effect. In Mad Mutilator, repetition will be your undoing. Many scenes prove to be expendable. In fact, an abridged version could only benefit the film. Although I am fairly partial to the ending, an ending in which Ogroff's morality can be questioned. Perhaps Ogroff "madly mutilates" to keep the zombies destructive appetites curbed. Maybe his daily duties of murder are but for the greater good, less these creatures of the night destroy the very fabric of society. But really, who cares if Ogroff is too stupid to distinguish life from zombie?

If proven to do anything, Mad Mutilator's only ability is to force me to spend an awfully long time contemplating a film that I will inevitably hate, but with appreciation.

-mAQ

AFTERMATH
AFTERMATH

Nacho Cerdà (1994)

With Nacho Cerdà's extremely literal necrophiliac short *Aftermath* (1994), what you see in terms of visuals is what you get and nothing more. So, what do you see in *Aftermath*? In the short, you see a degenerate mortician fornicate with the recently deceased body of a Spanish woman. As can be expected from a woman from Spain; the female corpse is swarthy, but exotic, yet unfortunately (but unsurprisingly) on the way to being exceedingly rotted and surely less than erotic. The mortician in *Aftermath* - who undoubtedly gives off the vibe of a creep merely from the cold stare of his dark eyes - has a little foreplay with the female cadaver, running his knife (which he initially uses as a substitute phallic) up and down the corpse's cold body. In most studies concerning real-life necrophilia, over half of the corpse-humpers admit their sexual interest in the dead is due to the fact that an animated body makes for an unresisting and 100% rejection-free sex partner, thus one can assume that aside from being mentally deranged; the majority of necrophiliacs are also pathetic losers (at least in terms of obtaining consensual sex with the opposite sex). The necrophiliac mortician of *Aftermath* not only likes to slip his pecker into an extra cold meat curtain, but he also enjoys taking pornographic pictures of his necro-sex-escapades. At best, *Aftermath* is a decently shot piece of Necrophilia-cinema, yet thematically it is fairly shallow - offering nothing more to the viewer than sensational mortuary copulation. For those that get their jollies by merely watching the sickest images they can find taken at face value; *Aftermath* will be a work of high-class splatter art. For those looking for a deeper subtext (as featured in Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* films) contained within a necrophiliac work; *Aftermath* will surely be disturbing and sickening entertainment, and nothing more.

Nekromantik director Jörg Buttgerit has already paid his respects (as featured on the *Unearthed Films* release of *Aftermath*) to Nacho Cerdà and his necrophiliac work *Aftermath*. I can imagine Cerdà couldn't have received a greater compliment for *Aftermath* - as Buttgerit is indubitably the greatest artistic innovator behind necro-ophile cinema. Having already seen Buttgerit's feature-length works prior to *Aftermath*; I felt nothing groundbreaking nor cinematically spectacular was accomplished with the Spanish director's subversive short. After all, Spaniards Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí produced something much darker - both in imagery and theme - with *Un Chien Andalou* (1929); a Spanish surrealist short that was created over 3/4 of a century ago. *Aftermath* does provide strong evidence that Nacho Cerdà may one day develop into an accomplished and innovative auteur, but it is also obvious that he has yet to mature in the realm of complex themes. After all, *Aftermath* is probably the most expertly crafted (from a technical perspective) film featuring necrophilia ever made, yet the film is undeniably lacking in substance. I also found Cerdà's feature-length film *The*

Abandoned (2006) to be decently made horror work, but that film - like Aftermath - lacks substance and originality. Aftermath is actually the second film in a trilogy by Nacho Cerdà. The final film in the trilogy; Genesis - a work about re-birth - is probably Cerdà's most original film to date. Despite its weaknesses, Aftermath is still a notable film that I can recommend - as I do not doubt that Spanish director Nacho Cerdà will one day make a name for himself as one of the greatest artists of "horror" cinema.

Due to Aftermath's aesthetic and thematic similarities with the infamous "The Roswell Alien Autopsy" footage, various people mistakenly think that Cerdà directed the pseudo-documentary footage. To Cerdà's credit, Aftermath does have a certain authentic look that makes it seem more disturbing than it actually is. Still, I found myself laughing when the mortician initially mounts the female corpse in the short. Unlike the corpse fucking in Nekomantik; Aftermath lacks the kind of artistic beauty that is so often associated with Buttgerit's films. Whereas Buttgerit presents necrophilia in a most easily digestible manner; Nacho Cerdà's presents it in a cold and sterile real-life mortuary kind of way. Of course, Cerdà was obviously trying to offend in hopes that he would "burn a hole into the soul of the viewer" with Aftermath, thus giving the title of the film a double-meaning (whether that was Cerdà's intention or not). At the emotional aftermath of watching Aftermath, you will certainly never think of corpses and morticians in the same way. Also, a warning to dog lovers: Aftermath will most likely cause you to be very pissed, not to mention disgusted (even more so than the film's corpse fucking!).

-Ty E

TIMECRIMES
TIMECRIMES

Nacho Vigalondo (2007)

The leering cover art is what initially grasped me by the collar; a bandaged messianic figure with a haggard trench coat wielding scissors with malicious intent. Sounds almost like a film based on the Clock Tower video game series, doesn't it? Rather than attempting horror, Timecrimes takes the jet-set path to science fiction bludgeoning 12 Monkeys and Timecop into the same hypothesis. While this may sound like a convoluted mess that's hard to distinguish the thematic moral of the story; save the lady or save the world, Hector is the star of an easy to understand time travel movie. A better way to put it is that Timecrimes is an intelligent and engaging film equipped with training wheels. It's a nice departure from being primo mindfuck as I like to mix-match the intellectual trials with the devious entertainment so Timecrimes came as a surprise to me, one that does become slightly frustrating as we watch Hector 3 or 2 replay the same scene from a different vantage.

After I received this film from America's favorite courier service, Netflix, I procrastinated immensely with this film as I didn't see myself fit to sit and stare at a television screen perplexed in what I would consider the most stressful week of my hardly progressed life. I tried over and over to become absorbed in the film and ended up just putting it on pause at an estimated 9 minutes in. The one day I found time to sit and watch this film uninterrupted I discovered that once you reach 10 minutes in, the film ejects itself from the prepositioning phase into a wild world of an unexplainable nude woman and a mysterious bandaged man who loves to stab incarnations of himself which presents itself as the most painful distraction to be presented in time travel cinema. Poor Hector, who knows how long he's been living in this Groundhog Day hell on earth. Not to bring any spoilers upon you, the nude woman is perhaps one of the better scenes in the film. Not for continuity or presentation, but for the actress's incredible body. Every time she appeared on screen, which was often, I got shivers down my spine. I had no idea that a Spanish dame could be so attractive. Timecrimes gets points for both having someone fill the once empty "useless chick" role but also turning that position into something that becomes a martyr for the murderous instincts lurking deep within one of Hector's personalities . . . or all of them. The bandaged saint and his laboratory accomplice reincarnate themselves as leading roles instead of supporting characters which enhances the swift kick into the genitals that occurs nearing the finale of this never-ending cycle of epochal torture. Timecrimes is a film that is innocently simple enough for the childlike film goer whose expectations match explosions and swiftly thrown curse words. This momentous occasion in which a film revolving about an intricate plot and repeating consequence that is simple enough for a toddler to understand is why Timecrimes should be essential viewing for those who haven't been implemented

the teachings of finer cinema. Not much to say about this film other than it's required viewing of the impartial genre that is composed of the underdeveloped and under-appreciated niche entitled Spanish cinema e.g. Killing Words. Time-crimes is a textbook science-fiction thriller that does just about everything right and in the end, it's simplicity manages to kill the arthouse feel but resuscitates that acclaimed ongoing personal melancholy with its vibrant and lush wooded setting. An environmental surprise that reeks of talent and misery, Timecrimes did not disappoint me for even a minute. Just goes to show that even the most civil of men house a "dark passenger."

-mAQ

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. LAWRENCE
MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. LAWRENCE

Nagisa Ōshima (1983)

David Bowie has played various film roles during his career where he has magical and supernatural powers, probably because he is known for being a space oddity of sorts. That being said, I do not think he has ever seemed more powerful than he does in the film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* directed by Japanese auteur Nagisa Oshima. David Bowie has been an ambiguously queer fellow his whole life (I think he fancies black women now), no doubt the British heir of Oscar Wilde's dandy boy legacy. In *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* Bowie's Ziggy Stardust powers reach their full potency in a film that Yukio Mishima would have probably (secretly) described as his favorite romance movie had he not committed ritual suicide via Seppuku before the film was released. Despite the film being fairly aesthetically normal (or many times, even boring), *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* is a certainly film like no other, a demented forbidden romance between Anglo male and Japanese male, a song of subversive ultranationalistic Samurai sexuality.

Colonel John Lawrence is a charming British fellow, a man that looks after his fellow British POW comrades and attempts to form a somewhat positive relationship with his Japanese captors. Lawrence has no tolerance for Japs giving his fellow Brits slaps (on top of much worse physical punishment), thus resulting in being beaten many times whilst coming to his comrades rescue. Like the cultured Brit that he is, Mr. Lawrence also prefers chatting (as opposed to physical barbarism) with his Japanese captors in a respectful manner, attempting to instill reason into a group of Japanese men who still live by a strict and many times irrational spiritual Japanese Samurai code. One Japanese chap asks Mr. Lawrence, "Is it true that all English men are Homosexuals?" I consider that a fair question as I wondered the same thing for the longest time but then I realized I was just used to American-style barbarian manners and a less refined (and bastardized) form of the English language. Mr. Lawrence is no doubt offended by the Japanese man's question regarding Anglo sexuality and assures the silly Jap that wartime is just a time for extra special male bonding. Somewhat shockingly (to me), the Japanese man states, "You all fear homosexuality, a Samurai doesn't fear it." The great Japanese Samurai writer Yukio Mishima probably feared it (or at least was ashamed of it), but that may have also led him to be the last famous figure in Japan to commit Seppuku, a poetic honor like no other, a feat that truly proves that the sword is mightier than the pen.

Aesthetically, aside from the films wonderful (if not somewhat dated) soundtrack, *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* is not exactly the most innovative film. The power of the film lies between the chemistry of the actors, most notably David Bowie (who plays Jack Celliers) and Ryuichi Sakamoto (who plays Captain Yonoi). Captain Yonoi is an uptight authoritarian figure who seems to fol-

low a strict Samurai code; that is until he first sees Jack Celliers. Any fellow Jap that attempts to harm Celliers, Captain Yonoi punishes in an almost reflex-like manner. Immediately, Mr. Lawrence becomes perplexed by Yonoi's obsession with Jack Celliers but soon realizes it is of a homoerotic nature. In fact, it becomes fairly blatant to everyone at the POW camp that Captain Yonoi has a homoerotic obsession with Celliers, so obvious that Yonoi's ADC attempts to kill Jack in hopes that it will free Yonoi-boy from his gay love. David Bowie's flower-eating super-homo powers are far too powerful for Yonoi, so compelling that Mr. Stardust prevents the execution of a man by kissing the Captain and causing him to lose all of his sexually repressed Samurai discipline. This simple kiss scene is possibly the gayest scene I ever seen in a film despite how seemingly innocent it may seem. In Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence David Bowie's life-long crusade of extra spacey ambiguously gay power finally reaches its full peak with a mere peck on the cheek.

Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence is a film that caught me by surprise for I expected another boring American POW World War II film and received a rainbow roller-coaster through sexually-repressed Samurai hell. No tour through Stalingrad or South Africa could prepare a viewer for a film like Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence nor could a Rainer Werner Fassbinder cinema marathon. I fear that the blond rebel beast David Bowie will now haunt my dreams, staring at me with his heterochromia eyes, chewing on his flowers for what would feel like hours. Near the conclusion of the film Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence Jack Celliers suffers a tragic end buried from the neck down in a Japanese torture garden. Still, by the end of the film one feels content knowing Captain Yonoi salutes his comrade one last time.

-Ty E

TURKISH I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE
TURKISH I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE

Naki Yurter (1979)

I really don't know how else to put it. If I labeled this review *Intikam Kadini*, It would probably lose interest and not draw eyes as this alternative title does and seeing as there already is a Turkish film called *Kadini Intikam* directed in 1968, I don't want to risk the chance of the Internet buzz indicator spoiling my credibility. So, as the cinema industry would have it, our good friends in Turkey have decided to remake a film that never really had any substantial elements to it to begin with. I can foresee the day some third world country decides to remake *Reptilicus*. And such is the origins of the spawn of nightmares and how "it" comes into existence. *I Spit On Your Grave* is a classic of rape/revenge films merely because it is one of few that actually attempted to supersede violence, both sexually and primordial, and form a film with both of these key assets in mind. Now, in most rape/revenge films, It's the same formula over and over again that somehow only gets increasingly worse as the idea stays out to dry longer. You'd think with the Hollywood reinvention of contemporary cinema, some chump would attempt to reinvent the genre. Oh wait, there was an attempt that slipped under most radars. While *Death Sentence* was an amazing attempt to create a post-modern version of *Death Wish* but with less Bronson and more Bacon, the result was a film that lacked rape and thus, lacked nutrition. To start out, allow me to state this obvious. This Turkish rendition of a "rape classic" is absolutely disgusting and vile and not in the exhibitionist aspect. Almost every segment of this film is annoying, contrived, anti-cultured, and to put it plainly; lame. But the real "sauce" that flavors this film is, hilariously enough, the transfer of the print. Remember when *Grindhouse* was released and the audience soon noticed the scratches and grain on screen. Well this move also helped out booth operators worldwide as they didn't have to risk scratching a print and having their manager scold them. The Turkish *I Spit On Your Grave* is one of the worst negatives I've ever witness and ironically enough, this by itself is enough to turn the film into soluble material and even a degraded form of art. For more on the subject of decaying film as an art, check out an interesting piece called *Decasia - The State of Decay*. So what one would expect, thankfully, is still intact. A group of rough travelers stop by what appears to be a farm plot run by a peasant girl and a mild-mannered farm hand that meets his fate at the hands of the disgruntled male. To continue the tradition, hormones fluctuate and this "poor" female is sodomized by 3 to 4 men. I've seen dramatic interpretations of rape here and there but none have touched the level of unbelievable and cheesy as this film accomplishes within a swift 10 minutes. After she was raped and noticed her *deus ex machina* was slaughtered off screen by a Turkish Bob Hoskins, she packs her bags (She has none. She recovered from the trauma rather quickly) and sets off to the city to become that of a social chameleon with plans to seduce

and destroy and she does just this but in really anti-climatic ways that takes the subject of implied violence and attaches weights to the very idea. What the final product equates to is an acid-washed film print of an unauthorized remake lacking subtitles. The experience is wholly psychedelic and whiny at times but I enjoyed myself thoroughly watching this film. If this film were to ever find release, the transfer better be just as bad if not worse. I'd never thought I'd see the day where a shitty transfer can actually amplify the effects of a film, let alone redeem it for the very sin that it creates. For some great pseudo-Muslim softcore pornography, this title is a very arousing piece of third world debauchery composed of archaic cinematography and the likes. In other words, come ready with gifts of alcohol as this film isn't as wacky as the other Turkish atrocities. And by that I mean this is disappointing compared to Turkish Star Wars. Sucking at sucking must suck.

-mAQ

EAT THE SCHOOLGIRL
EAT THE SCHOOLGIRL

Naoyuki Tomomatsu (1997)

This title is severely misleading. There are no scenes of cannibalism or any real schoolgirls for that matter. This film has taboo's on the mind and does not stop until you are convinced it can't get any worse. This is just another notch in the book of extreme Asian cinema. It's a shame that other countries don't have an extensive list of violent and depraved films like Japan does. The plot is very jumpy and is mostly incoherent. The film opens up with a woman having phone sex with a young blond haired guy. It is only obvious what he is doing. This scene is way too drawn out and lasts an embarrassingly long 3-4 minutes. If you live with anyone who knows not of your estranged cinema taste, your best bet would be to turn the volume down, as we know Jap orgasms are painfully loud and over-acted. After this, there are several scenes depicting a man dressing as a schoolgirl slaughtering people and immediately ejaculating on their face. Mid-coitus has never been so disgustingly fun. Along the way, we have beautifully drawn crayon murals, angelic figures being promiscuous, forced enema's, and a throat fucking-vomit inducing rape scene turned consensual. Apart from being extremely sadistic, the film has some beautiful imagery and clashing color schemes that blend together to strangely make this film work. The film is at a barely recognizable running time of 60 minutes. Too long to be a short, Naoyuki Tomomatsu knows how to beat the system. I will have to hand it to Eat the Schoolgirl for not sticking to one genre. We have a thriller with touches of surrealism laced with a gangster side story and many hints of love around every bloody corner. It's mainly about rubbing one out in the faces of death which should be at the top of everyones priority list. While being confusing and an overall mess, Eat the Schoolgirl is a decent art house/exploitation film from the director of that horrible film we cant help but love "STACY". There is enough rape and gore to satisfy the biggest pervert and enough symbolism to keep the run-of-the-mill cult cinema watcher endowed with a headache. It comes recommended.

-Maq

VERMILION EYES

Nathan Schiff (1990) A piece of self-destructive writing; how beautiful. I was watching this film when I humbly dozed off in a beautiful land of still-images that were currently happening. Just over an hour satisfied me deeply; this carnivorous decaying film of stillborn images of the deepest sexual gratification and hidden pleasures. In many ways, this film suits me, not only in my current mood, but in my current stance. Soundtrack of the now: Sanchez is driven by demons. Ambiance embeds me into my current seat. If there were only two things on my mind right now, it'd be a fine piece of cinema and the casual mind-fuck woman. Not to get too "off-topic", the film picks up instantly with an over-weight Mexican looking man. Not much is known about him other than the present discovery of his fetish donning a haz-mat suit near dead bodies and satisfying his deepest voyeuristic fetishes. What a world we live in! Balance reigns supreme. I noticed a wonderful spider blocking my wooded route today. It was asleep; perfectly in the center. A bulls eye consisting of a wonderful insect. Such symbolism today is reminding me of Nathan Schiff's lost film. A dreary work of art. One which many can't relate to. I sometimes wonder if the directors have personal motifs. Our central (again; balance) character is a blend of a cavalier spirit and also blurring personalities, left only with excess characterization. He dreams and films dead women. Just like the modern sociopath before him, he is fascinated with death in the most intimate form. Other than that, he dresses up in air proof clothing to establish the disconnection betwixt him and the dearly departed. A whores sarcastic grin taunts his ego. For this, he must backlash. But it was all a dream? For this man, Love is the only escape from his inner psyche. But when bad goes to worse, and worse becomes women, the only thing to really do is to embrace your falling. Much like I've learned to do over the years. Vermilion Eyes is a contemporary Peeping Tom. You see, when I first viewed Peeping Tom, I hated the film. Sure, it had "the angles and the budget", but it was as bland as they come. Criterion isn't a label that automatically makes a film they release "amazing" and "a work of art." A more proper term for a Criterion release would be "Jesus fuck, not another Kurosawa film." One of many things Peeping Tom lacks, is intimacy. The film feels dry and distasteful. Vermilion Eyes catches up the slack felt behind and promotes a superfluous film articulated with a grainy backdrop and a modern depression with a scar of a killer. On the down side, the acting is pretty horrific at times. In fact, "the woman" walked in as I was viewing this. Let's just say she walked in at an unfortunate time, and I looked like a fool watching a Lifetime film 12 times recorded. That's the only downside I can establish grounds with. The sound effects are top-notch and even more so their cues. Every scene would be nothing if not aided with a harsh screeching of an alone instrument. I've read forums (Not much information exists on the film) and all I've read are portraits of how "gory" the film is. This is not as brutal as

VERMILION EYES

it is "piercing." Vermilion Eyes is definitely it's own experience. It lulled me to a silent slumber as well as shook me until I was wide awake. I've got to hand it to Nathan Schiff. He successfully captures the feel of Nekromantik, yet being an American film. "One man's trash is another man's treasure" This quote strikes a great blow to the viewing nature of the film. So far, the only copy is this film is a beyond horrific VHS rip floating around on the world wide web. Normally, I'd rather a DVD rip or a remastered version so I can contain every detail, but for a bizarre reason, the grain, sound cut-offs, and tracking error's complete the film. It's all in place to combine a low-budget puzzle of a scintillated kind.

Like Caligula before it, Vermilion Eyes features an explicit "babydeath" scene as a crudely-animated drunk driver takes the life of a family on the road. This, I can imagine, would be enough to enrage any form of censorship committee. The character touches the dead infant with tragedy in his touch. One to which I can relate wholly to. He promptly wraps the infant up and stores it. As surrealist as it gets, Vermilion Eyes never gets too unrealistic. A step above other low budget productions; behind these eyes lies a great vision, a vision of horrors committed to bodies being captured on celluloid; much like we would be viewing now. Schiff knows how to embrace the fleshy details of a woman's form, creating from this vessel, a beautiful canvas that we can all enjoy watching burn. Schiff has discovered the ecstasy behind death; for which he created, Vermilion Eyes.

A very whole-hearted thanks to Pete Cann for this film.

-mAQ

THE CRYING GAME

Neil Jordan (1992)

The Crying Game, upon initial viewing, is an unsettling experience. Neil Jordan was able to direct a film with unconventional characters in situations you generally would never expect. In doing, Jordan demonstrates the power of cinema as an emotional persuader. Even the most offensive and disturbing of situations come out as normal and everyday feelings. The Crying Game is a "Game" of emotions created by the director (and a well acted cast) against the audience.

Forest Whitaker stars as a British soldier named Jody who is captured by the Irish terrorist group the IRA. Jody strikes up an ambiguous relationship with an IRA Irishman by the name of Fergus. After an unfortunate and violent accident of sorts, Fergus seeks to find Jody's true love. For reasons not apparent at first, Fergus is compelled to see someone he really knows nothing about. All too soon, Fergus realizes that there was more to Jody than met the eye.

Throughout The Crying Game, Fergus has visions of Jody playing bat mitzen enthusiastically. I found these scenes to be unintentionally comical yet help to "glue" the film together. Fergus seems trapped between his past life in the IRA (which comes back to haunt him) and the "new life" he has yet to realize consciously. Everything Fergus faces in life is some type of hurdle. Fergus hunts down Jody's "girl" Dil, and immediately becomes obsessed. Fergus gives Dil "the look" and a bond starts to develop. A bond of the unholy sort that I dare not mention. The Crying Game features a clashing and connection between various subcultures of Great Britain. Neil Jordan was able to take a simply directed film and through its story, make it unforgettable. Also, Neil Jordan might hate women.

-Ty E

THE WICKER MAN
THE WICKER MAN

Neil LaBute (2006)

The Wicker Man (1973) is one of the best horror films ever made. The film is truly an eerie experience of Neo-Pagan horror. When I found out that a remake had been made starring Nicholas Cage, I was more than skeptical. The horror remake is inevitable for most of the "classic" films. The update of The Wicker Man is further evidence that no film is too sacred in the eyes of money worshipers. The location of Summersisle has changed from an Island in Scotland to the coasts of Washington state, USA. This change already takes away crucial atmospheric elements found in the original film. The inhabitants of Summersisle USA still have their Celtic roots (in the form of blonde hair and lame clothes). Nickie Cage cannot understand their backwards and unprogressive ways.

The new and unimproved The Wicker Man features an anti-feminist (or feminist) slant. These Summersisle folks are ruled by one sexually frustrated female. The men are pathetic second class citizens who are in complete servitude to their busting bosom counterparts. One could look at these evil bitches as heroes (Emma Goldman fans) or heretics. I felt enormous pleasure in seeing a large bull dyke take a blow to the face via Nicholas Cage's fist.

The Wicker Man is another one of those films that feature an evil white child on the front cover (although the little girl never has evil eyes in the film). Hollywood really gets off to portraying the juvenile white devil as a literal one. I would not mind seeing Spielberg's children sporting a pair of devil horns and a tail in his next epic fantasy.

I could go on as to why The Wicker Man is just another bad remake but that is unnecessary. The remake of The Wicker Man is an entertaining look into the destruction of important aspects of film in hopes to receive a lowest common denominator financial success. Nicholas Cage deserves an Oscar for the beatings he gave at Feminist island. Someone needs to drop off some Nazi SS Zombies (like those found in Shock Waves) at Summersisle.

-Ty E

LAKEVIEW TERRACE

Neil LaBute (2008) I absolutely loathe Samuel L. Jackson. For some reason, when I see him on a TV screen I just wish that his head would explode (kind of like in Cronenberg's *Scanners*) during one of those moments where he acts "uppity." I have also never found Mr. Jackson to be "cool" nor have I ever felt that most of those "cool" films that he has starred in have been of any quality. I once explained to a burnt out hippie type why I felt that *Black Snake Moan* was easily one of the most degenerate stylized pieces of cancerous filth that I had ever seen. Naturally, the hippie fuck was baffled and just continued to talk about why he thought Samuel L. Jackson was so "bad assss." There is one performance featuring Samuel L. Jackson that I do appreciate and it happens to be in the universally hated film *Lakeview Terrace*. Of course, *Lakeview Terrace* is your typical Hollywood high quality (as in high priced) dung, but it features SLJ in a new type of role. Jackson plays a racist cop that hates race mixing and "progressive" types. When an interracial couple moves next door to this black racist cop, things start to get excitingly politically incorrect. Not only does SLJ hate race mixing, but he also hates wiggers that spend their wasted days loitering parking lots.

From my personal experience, I have encountered two types of black cops: lovable uncle toms (like Sgt. Al Powell in *Die Hard*) and angry racist black cops. SLJ does a superb job playing the latter type of cop and he also demonstrates a valuable point. The masses love Samuel L. Jackson when he's a belligerent criminal unloading bullets into people, yet they hate him when he's a belligerent criminal cop unloading bullets into other criminals. Are blacks only cool to the masses when they are criminals (or "messiahs")? Why is a black criminal cop something to be despised yet many times black gangsta crack dealers are considered cool?

Hollywood loves to romanticize over "minority" criminals and the masses love these imaginary criminals even more in return. In *Lakeview Terrace*, a black man holds a decent job and supports his family (as a single father) but is made out to be the ultimate villain. Of course, Hollywood is run by "men" that lack more than a little testosterone and hate to see a man that actually is responsible for his family. After all, isn't it fascist and misogynistic for a man to run a household nowadays? According to *Lakeview Terrace*, "being a man" might even lead you to trying to kill interracial couples. Hollywood certainly knew how to channel Samuel L. Jackson's "cool" uppity behavior and utilize it to demonstrate the PURE EVIL of a Negro dats gotta job!

-Ty E

DOG SOLDIERS
DOG SOLDIERS

Neil Marshall (2002)

Unfortunately for the horror fan, a quality werewolf film is hard to come by. The Howling is still an okay film that has obviously aged ungracefully over time. John Landis' An American Werewolf in London is not a bad film either but is far from a serious werewolf film. It is a shame that horror "directors" aren't obsessed with directing films about lycanthropes as they are with lame zombie flicks. The directly-to-video werewolf film Dog Soldiers is proof that you don't need a lot of artistic talent and money to make a quality film about bloodthirsty furry beasts. Dog Soldiers is a film set in the highlands of Scotland (although actually filmed in Luxembourg). The rural area in the film would alone scare most city dwellers as the wild is obviously dominant over man in Dog Soldiers. The film follows six British soldiers that have been dropped off in the highlands of Scotland. These chaps, to their horror, find the remains of a special forces unit. The only member left of this savagely slaughtered unit is a weirdo that goes by the name of Captain Ryan. A blond beast named Cooper is in charge of the "dog soldiers." He had a prior problem with the mysterious and arrogant Captain Ryan. Cooper seems to love dogs and refused to shoot one on the request of Captain Ryan as part of special forces training. Cooper makes it clear early in the film that he only fights those that desire to be punished. Captain Ryan, on the other hand, has a sort of sadistic persona that repulses Cooper. The hate between these natural enemies reaches an intense climax during the conclusion of Dog Soldiers. When I first started watching Dog Soldiers, I expected your typical cheap and forgettable horror film. The production values seemed low and the artistry nonexistent. As the film progressed, I found Dog Soldiers to be possibly the most well paced and action packed (in a good way) werewolf film that I have ever seen. Dog Soldiers also features a few twists and turns successfully making the film even more entertaining. The lead protagonist of the film Cooper is a real man that you can admire unlike most heroes found in your typical contemporary American horror or action film. The lycanthropes featured in Dog Soldiers are tall and lanky man beasts worthy of being in a werewolf film. These werewolves don't look like the universal wolfman but more like wolves of gigantic proportions. The fact these werewolves are less human than your typical werewolf only makes them more horrifying. I must admit that I approved very much so when the soldiers started killing these man beasts. The soldiers that fight these werewolves seem to have a homoerotic bond of comradeship. Dog Soldiers director Neil Marshall would also visit a "girl power" lesbian theme in his later film The Descent.

-Ty E

THE TELEPHONE BOOK

Nelson Lyon (1971)

While I certainly consider myself to be someone that has a more libertine oriented sense of humor than most people and consider virtually no subject to be too taboo, I have always found most so-called 'sex comedies' to be particularly retarded and just an excuse for a filmmaker to assemble a highly profitable masturbation aid for lonely losers that cannot get pussy on their own. Of course, a handful of great Guido arthouse auteur filmmakers like Pier Paolo Pasolini (*The Decameron*, *Teorema*) and Marco Ferreri (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*) made some notable films that might be loosely described as sex comedies, but I cannot think of any other films from the ostensibly carnal comedy subgenre that don't make sex seem hopelessly banal, at least until I recently saw the somewhat obscure X-rated counterculture cult piece *The Telephone Book* (1971) directed by one-time auteur Nelson Lyon, who somewhat fittingly later produced Paul Morrissey's *Spike of Bensonhurst* (1988). While a man that is notable for working for Andy Warhol (apparently, he gave Warhol the idea for the cover artwork that he designed for the 1971 Rolling Stones album *Sticky Fingers*), acting as a writer for *Saturday Night Live*, and producing spoken word albums for both William S. Burroughs and Terry Southern (whose writings, especially his novel *Candy* (1958) co-penned by Israelite Mason Hoffenberg, were an obvious strong influence on Lyon's film), Lyon is unquestionably best remembered today as the man who was blamed by the entertainment industry for the death of Jim Belushi (the two injected a heroin-cocaine cocktail called a 'speedball' together after a boy's night out), which is somewhat fitting considering the decidedly debauched nature of his sole feature, which more or less feels like the deranged fantasy of a wayward kosher creep that lusts after defiling pedomorphic shiksa girls. Indeed, the story of a terribly stupid childlike 18-year-old dame that looks and acts more like a 12-year-old who becomes infatuated with a smooth talking obscene phone caller and goes on an vaguely orgasmic odyssey to try to find him that ultimately results in her encountering various other perverts, *The Telephone Book* is a sleekly directed piece of proudly obnoxious art-trash that seems to delight in acknowledging the fact that the United States degenerated into a Hebraic hell hole of senseless and nihilistic hedonism as a result of culture-distorting movements like so-called women's liberation, the sexual revolution, and other metaphysically malignant countercultural crud that the baby boomers bought into that was mostly imported to the U.S. by resentful German-Jews who wanted to get back at the evil Aryan Goyim. Somewhat seeming like it was created by the bastard stepson of Dušan Makavejev and Robert Downey Sr. and penned by the neo-Freudian head of the Frankfurt School psychoanalysis department, the film is notable for featuring a couple Warhol superstars (e.g. *Ondine* and *Ultra Violent*) and concluding with a 'climatic' piece of surreal

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animated pornography, but I think it is most important in that it indubitably demonstrates that when Uncle Adolf kicked the heebs out of Germany, they set up shop in NYC and ultimately assembled Weimar 2.0 (of course, it should be no surprise that the film was produced by a fellow with the name Merv Bloch). So decidedly debauched that it was even hated by to left-wing Jewish critics like Judith Crist and Pauline Kael, *The Telephone Book* is arguably the most elegantly and artfully sleazy film ever made as a sort of sickening mix between the Marx Brothers and Marcuse, albeit somehow actually sometimes funny.

Alice (Sarah Kennedy of Stephanie Rothman's *The Working Girls* (1974)) is a petite 18-year-old hippie ditz that describes herself as "rather beautiful," looks and acts like a poor man's Goldie Hawn (of course, unlike Hawn, Kennedy is a real goy gal), and lives in a small specially decorated flat that is covered with Warhol-esque nudes as wallpaper, so naturally it should be no surprise that she regularly masturbates with a special large pink vibrator and only seems to think about fucking, though she has rather refined erotic tastes that not just any dirty hippie bastard could fulfill. Luckily, by a miracle of pure stupid luck Alice 'hears' the man of her dreams, Mr. John Smith (veteran radio announcer and soap opera actor Normal "The Voice of God" Rose of *One Life to Live* and *All My Children*), when he randomly makes an obscene phone call to her from a public telephone where he talks "very seriously" about her tits and other naughty things, thus resulting in the pretty philistine protagonist diddling herself under her sheets while she is talking to the unconventionally charming mystery caller. Rather excited about the fact that she encountered a man with such a sensually seductive voice that his mere voice managed to cause her to wet her panties, Alice calls her bitchy gal pal 'Eyemask' (Jill Clayburgh of Paul Mazursky's *An Unmarried Woman* (1978) and Alan J. Pakula's *Starting Over* (1979)) about the great news, but her supremely self-absorbed friend, who spends virtually all of her time lying in bed, is more interested in receiving cunnilingus from a grotesque sounding fellow and listening to audio recordings of Hitler than concerning herself with the unconventionally lurid love life of her cutesy comrade. Indeed, while Alice manages to brag regarding Mr. Smith's call, "It was only a phone call but it was a work of art. You had to hear it. It was no dime-store amateur," exceedingly egotistical cunt Eyemask hangs up on her soon thereafter. At this point, Alice seems to realize that she can only count on the mysterious Mr. Smith, who soon reveals his real name to her and tells her to look him up in the telephone book, but unfortunately it is an absurdly common name, so the desperate protagonist decides to call every single person with the same exact name until she finds her mysterious lover.

When Alice calls a man named 'John Smith' and asks him if he is the man that made dirty phone calls to her and he says yes, she soon somewhat hilariously finds herself involved in the shooting of an orgy scene in a pretentious porn flick directed by an egomaniacal old pornographer named 'Har Poon' (Barry Morse

of Roy Ward Baker's *Asylum* (1972) and Peter Medak's *The Changeling* (1980)), who has an entire harem of young women at his disposal. Indeed, 'Har Poon' is the pseudonym of a stag director named John Smith, who sports Groucho Marx glasses while he fucks and absurdly thinks he is the Orson Welles of pornographers and who would probably not make an obscene phone call unless someone paid him handsomely for it. Although Alice is certainly no genius, she begins to suspect that he is an 'impostor' and not the real John Smith, but that does not stop her from being coerced into taking all her clothes off and joining a group of equally unclad female porn stars and a dirty old man in an scenario that seems like a sensual anarchic take on the old Hasbro game *Twister*. Indeed, while the preposterously pedantic pornographer, who seems more like a cynical old grandfather than an old school maestro of blue movies, manages to get Alice to take off all her clothes and get in a large orgy scene with him and about ten other stupid sexy girls, the real John Smith luckily magically calls while they are shooting and thus the protagonist finally manages to put two and two together and subsequently exists the shoot, thus leaving the fuck film director somewhat baffled. Of course, Har Poon is not the last debauched degenerate that she encounters before finding her enigmatic soul mate.

After briefly calling Eyemask in what proves to be another uneventful phone conversation that involves the protagonist's friend curiously listening to an audio recording of an Adolf Hitler speech while loading a pistol (while it might seem like Eyemask is about to commit suicide like Uncle Adolf, the character makes another appearance later on in the film), Alice encounters a mustachioed creep on a subway who flashes his member at her in a grotesquely goofy fashion, but instead of being grossed out the protagonist decides to fight fire with fire by unbuttoning her clothing and flashing her own naked body at the rather foul flasher, thus petrifying the pervert to the point where he runs for his dear life. In the desperate hope that the subway pervert might possibly her dear Mr. Smith due to his degenerate behavior, Alice decides to chase him down and discovers that he is actually a quack psychoanalyst (Roger C. Carmel) who likes to brag about how much money he makes even though his office is in a local ghetto. After getting over his shameful behavior and realizing that he might have the opportunity to exploit the strange situation, the pervert decides that Alice has a "beautiful pussy" and is a "nice piece of cunt" and decides to chase her down when she begins to leave. Ultimately the psychoanalyst offers Alice all the change in the world to make phone calls if she agrees to undergo some psychoanalysis experiments in a local sleazy restaurant. Using an archaic change dispenser that is fittingly attached near his genitals, the psychoanalysis gives the dame dimes to disclose her life, but being that she is rather dumb and inarticulate, she begins to enrage the debauched pseudo-scientist, especially after he draws a childish picture of a penis and she describes it as resembling the state of Maryland when it is obviously a sketch of a cock and balls. When the psychoanalyst asks Alice to

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describe her most pleasurable sexual experience, Alice details the story a gawky and sleazy Jewish ex-banker (William Hickey of John Huston's *Prizzi's Honor* (1985) and Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1986)) that suffered from the pesky curse of priapism. Needless to say, the story turns the psychoanalyst on so much that he begins dispensing dimes all over the place as if he is about to ejaculate in his pants, but Alice abruptly leaves before finishing the story, thus assumedly giving the quack doctor an intolerable case of blue balls. Naturally, when Alice is robbed in a phone booth by a particularly perverted looking prick that has the audacity to also tell her that she is "very strange" while shoving a gun in her face, things begin looking rather bleak for the seemingly perennially peppy protagonist and she gets so desperate that she decides to follow home a middle-aged dyke with a prop baby stroller who defiles her with two vibrators. Luckily, Mr. Smith somehow manages to know to call Alice while she is at the dyke's house and tells her to go back to the apartment where he will finally meet her.

While sucking on a banana like it is a cock while sitting in the dark in her apartment while she is all by her lonesome, Mr. Smith eventually shows up while sporting a suit and pig mask that only covers the top portion of his face. Indeed, almost the entire second half of the film is dedicated to Mr. Smith's background story and eventually his predictable erotic rendezvous with Alice, but I guess that is what one should expect from an oftentimes illogical film with an extra thin plot about a dumb dame who falls in love with a mystery man who gets off to saying dirty things to strange people over the telephone. When Mr. Smith arrives at Alice's apartment, he explains in defense of his pig mask, "I have a little difficulty communicating with people eye to eye," and then proceeds to brag about his preternatural seduction talents as an eloquently spoken obscene phone caller who has dedicated his life to molesting the ears of unsuspecting strangers with his velvety baritone voice. Indeed, as Mr. Smith coolly and calmly brags to Alice, "I make obscene telephone calls. The best calls... The calls that no one can resist. I have perfected this highly specialized art to the point where, if I wanted to, I could seduce the President of the United States, his wife, his children, his grandparents, but I have no political ambitions." As Smith also explains, he makes about a thousand obscene telephone calls a year (or four calls every day for five days a week), though naturally he was not always the world's most cultivated obscene caller as hinted by the fact that he is a suavely dressed WASP professional type. Indeed, while giving her an extra sensitive bubble bath where he demonstrates his deep gentlemanly affection for her, Mr. Smith explains how he went from becoming a decorated war hero and astronaut as well as family man to becoming the shadowy master of exhibitionistic unsolicited ear-fucking phone calls.

During the Vietnam War, Smith was a Captain in the army who had special propensity for slaughtering the oriental enemy and being loved by his men, or as

he states himself that he, “Fought the yellow reds...killed them left and right. I get medals and promises. I looked lovely. Not faggy, just lovely. I had a good, no nonsense face.” Apparently, Smith would calm his fellow soldiers by punching them in the gut and kissing them, albeit, “Not like a fag but like the way one man kisses another man.” Happily married with a son and little dog, Smith eventually became even more famous when two men approached him while he was cutting his yard with a special ‘Gravely’ lawnmower and asked him, “Hey, wanna be an astronaut?” or so he tells Alice while talking into her cunt and derriere like it is a gigantic phone receiver. Needless to say, being a stereotypical Nordic WASP with a strong stoic demeanor, Smith accepted the offer and joined NASA as an astronaut. Unfortunately, while in a weightless chamber where he saluted NASA officials upside down, Mr. Smith dared to declare to the men when they asked him what he wanted before takeoff, “A big. . . beautiful. . . red-nippled. . . giant. . . TIT!” As a result of his big bad dirty mouth, Mr. Smith was examined by NASA psychiatrists who concluded that the weightless chamber fried his brain and that he was too, “psychologically unfit to represent this country in orbit.” At this point, Mr. Smith’s life goes completely downhill as he becomes sexually impotent and no longer enjoys cutting the grass like he used to. In fact, when the family dog began nipping at Mr. Smith’s feet while he was cutting the grass one day, he got so agitated that he almost killed the creature by kicking it some 30 feet across the yard. Upon calling the vet about his injured dog, Mr. Smith accidentally called the wrong number and in the process used the opportunity to make his first obscene telephone call, thus leading to a deep, dark undying obsession that ultimately resulted in his public disgrace and the loss of his family, though he did not mind and instead fully embraced his new linguistically lurid lifestyle by moving from suburbia to NYC where he could really test his seductive talents on the nation’s most debauched and depraved citizenry.

Needless to say, it does not take long before Alice is throwing herself at Mr. Smith and begs him “Please fuck me,” but as he firmly states, he “can’t do it,” at least not in the good old fashioned way. As Smith explains, “There’s only one way,” which naturally involves the two getting in two separate adjacent public phone booths and engaging in full-blown phone sex of the otherworldly orgasmic sort. Ultimately, Mr. Smith and Alice’s phone-fucking session is depicted in the form of a grotesquely obscene piece of animated pornography that was not surprisingly created by a Hebrew named Len Glasser (who is probably best known for being a storyboard artist on the animated TV series Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog (1993-1996)) that seems like Ralph Bakshi’s Robert Crumb adaptation Fritz the Cat (1972) meets the caricatures of kraut commie Dadaist George Grosz, albeit more graphic than one might expect. Indeed, in animated form, Alice transforms into a headless being with four legs, two cunts, and seven tits while Mr. Smith’s head is replaced with a gigantic tentacle-like

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tongue which he uses to perform cunnilingus on the female protagonist. In between having her snatch defiled by Mr. Smith's gigantic tongue, Alice mounts the tops of buildings in a scenario comparable to Mara Mattuschka's experimental avant-garde short *S.O.S. Extraterrestria* (1994) where the filmmaker uses the Eiffel Tower as a sort of makeshift dildo in a sardonically silly scene that satirizes Godzilla. Of course, in the end, Mr. Smith finishes Alice off by shoving his terribly talented gigantic tongue up her twat and invading every crevice of her seemingly oversensitive body. After Alice climaxes, Mr. Smith, who is not into monogamy or physical sex, exits the telephone booth while Alice remains in her's while attempting to recover from her truly sexually cataclysmic climax, which seems to be the thing that she was searching for all along as a decadent dingbat that could not find that right dude to scratch her sexual itch. Indeed, if Mr. Smith can be credited as a hero in anyway, it is for managing to get Alice to finally shut up her distinctly grating Betty Bop voice. In that sense, the conclusion of *The Telephone Book* is exceedingly satisfying.

According to Judaic producer Merv Bloch in the audio commentary track featured on the *Vinegar Syndrome* release of the DVD/Blu-ray of the film, *The Telephone Book* director Nelson Lyon was apparently nicknamed 'Captain Smut' due to the fact that his mind was just as sexually depraved as his sole film indicates. Indeed, Lyon's film is ultimately quite irritating as it seems like the cinematic equivalent of one of those grotesque Jewish caricatures from Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* of a vulgar Hebrew with a sinister smirk on his face defiling a blonde Aryaness, albeit unlike the Nazi tabloid, the film takes delight in such depravity. Of course, *The Telephone Book* is not the first film with a similarly spiritually sick Semitic spirit that involves the celebration of the defilement of strikingly stupid blonde Aryan girls, as Jewish British auteur Michael Sarne's similarly meticulously stylized counterculture flick *Joanna* (1968) also features a dumb, 'sexually liberated' blonde cunt with an exceedingly annoying voice who gets involved with all sorts of good clean debauchery, albeit the difference is that she ultimately hooks up with a physically abusive negro thug criminal instead of a disgraced WASP with a fetish for making obscene phone calls. In fact, *Joanna* star Geneviève Waïte was originally supposed to play Sarah Kennedy's role, but her then husband, the Mamas & The Papas singer-songwriter John Phillips, made her drop out of the production because he wisely thought it would be a bad career move. I somewhat hate to admit it but I found the film's various nods to the films of Warhol, especially *Chelsea Girls* (1966), to be one of its most intriguing aspects, with queer superstar Ondine's pointless role as a hyper hypocritical narrator who fondles the ass of a random naked dude that is lying on his desk and French-born superstar Ultra Violet's role as a leather-bound porn star that wields a whip surely being two of the greatest highlights of Lyon's flick. Notably, the film originally featured an intentionally monotonous intermission scene where Warhol eats popcorn for about thirty seconds or so, but apparently

the footage is now lost. Somewhat surprisingly, despite being soon forgotten after its disastrous release, *The Telephone Book* apparently influenced at least one very popular film. Indeed, apparently the scene near the end of the film where Mr. Smith gives Alice a bath would later inspire a similar scene between Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider in Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972).

While there is certainly much to hate about *The Telephone Book* and the dubious people that were responsible for making it, one of the things I most appreciate about it is that it seems to mock pseudo-arthouse European skin flicks like *I Am Curious (Yellow)* (1967) and *I Am Curious (Blue)* (1968) directed by Swedish auteur Vilgot Sjöman, thereupon seeming to make a farce of its own all-too-overt artistic pretenses. Of course, with its mocking of the white Christian mainstream and WASP establishment as well as obsession with the defiling of barely-legal shiksa girls, the film finds itself in solidarity with untalented Judaic Warhol-wannabes of the same era like William Klein (*Who Are You, Polly Magoo?*, *Mr. Freedom*) and Norman Mailer (*Wild 90*, *Maidstone*), with the latter once (in)famously writing regarding the 1969 Apollo 11 moonlanding, "the real mission of the WASP in history was not, say, to create capitalism, or to disseminate Christianity into backward countries...It was to get the U.S. to the moon." Surely Mailer's anti-Spenglerian writings had an influence on the anti-NASA flavor of *The Telephone Book*, which does not feature a sexually impotent anti-commie war hero turned astronaut of the archetypal Nordish sort as an obscene phone caller for nothing. Padded with various filler scenes of Ondine as a hypocritical homo moralist narrator and pseudo-documentary testimonial scenes of reformed 'obscene callers' discussing their fetishes (in one admittedly quite hilarious scene, a housewife states, "...I take a [beep] banana and then I shove it up my cunt and kind of squish it around so my hole gets all juiced up...then I roll around a while with it in me until I'm chewing the rug and purring"), Lyon's film is certainly no masterpiece but it is undoubtedly the closest thing to a truly artsy fartsy American sex comedy as a sort of *Citizen Kane* of the subgenre. Somewhat ironically considering the film's distinctly Hebraic approach to humor, the film owes its fairly recent rebirth as a sort of lost cult classic as a result of a couple degenerate German guys who contacted producer Bloch after finding his contact info on the internet and managing to get it rereleased on DVD and played at various prestigious film festivals on Europe, thus demonstrating that about 70 years of Frankfurt School inspired Cultural Marxist propaganda has certainly left a lasting impact on the hearts and minds of the citizens of Europe. Indeed, after recently listening to a Hebraic porn mogul brag about the fact that he is the godson of mob-connected Jewish Orthodox smut-peddler Reuben Sturman and that it is the ultimate fantasy of every Judaic boy to despoil a good Catholic girl (as the mogul notes, most of the original male porn stars were Jewish and most of the female porn stars were Catholic), I think that *The Telephone Book*

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has even more historical value than its proponents give it, as a film that makes Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* (*But Were Afraid to Ask)* (1972) seem like an episode of Mickey Mouse and more or less validates everything thing that Julius Streicher—a scapegoat of the Nuremberg Show Trials that was hanged by the Allies for simply for exposing what is easy to see nowadays just by watching the average Hollywood comedy—reported in his Nazi tabloid newspaper. In fact, I would argue that *The Telephone Book* is the sort of anti-*Der Stürmer* of sex comedies, which is certainly no accomplishment considering the scatological neo-Vaudevillian smut that Hollywood regularly excretes on the world, thus making it mandatory viewing for anyone that still believes that American is still run by puritanical Christians and not a somewhat small cabal of semi-Asiatic culture-distorters who hate everything that America originally stood for.

-Ty E

THE GODDESS BUNNY

Nick Bougas (1994)

When the iconoclastically iconic Pre-Code horror flick *Freaks* (1932) was released, the eponymous real-life misbegotten humans featured in the film offended the sensibilities of the average filmgoer so much that the film ultimately ruined the careers of its popular director Tod Browning, who only the year before had gained great success with *Dracula* (1931) starring Bela Lugosi. Additionally, when Bavarian wild man auteur Werner Herzog released his second feature film *Auch Zwerge haben klein angefangen* (1970) aka *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, the film was so universally controversial that both neo-Nazis (who apparently sent death threats to the filmmaker) and the far-left denounced the film and the work was ultimately banned for a period of time shortly after its premiere. Undoubtedly, all of the freaks in both of these films combined pale in comparison to a certain underground disabled tranny superstar featured in the no-budget camcorder documentary *The Goddess Bunny* (1998) directed by subversive underground artist, documentarian, and legendary racist cartoonist Nick Bougas aka A. Wyatt Mann (*Death Scenes*, *When the Applause Died*). While Bougas had the distinguished honor of making a candid documentary about Church of Satan founder and High Priest Anton LaVey entitled *Speak of the Devil* (1995), the infamous filmmaker would have his greatest triumph in terms of documenting the culturally apocalyptic with his unfortunately rather unsung magnum opus *The Goddess Bunny*. A true cult 'superstar' that aesthetic nihilist auteur/archivist John Aes-Nihil (*Manson Family Movies*, *The Ma Barker Story*) describes at the beginning of the documentary as "the only truly glamorous star left in Hollywood," *The Goddess Bunny* (aka Sandy Crisp aka Johnnie Baima) had the grand misfortune of being born 2 ½ months premature to a mother with infectious polio in her uterus and would thus grow up horribly disfigured and with an 18 inch steel pole in her spine, not to mention the fact s/he spent a good portion of her childhood in hellish foster homes where s/he was routinely sexually molested from age 9 to 13. Getting his big break in film after punk filmmaker Penelope Spheeris (*Suburbia*, *Wayne's World*) spotted him walking down the streets of L.A. and decided to cast him in her gritty exploitation flick *Hollywood Vice Squad* (1986), the Goddess Bunny would ultimately become the main and most revered star of auteur John Aes-Nihil as the leading lady in *The Drift* (1989), *The Goddess Bunny Channels Shakespeare* (1989), and *The Ma Barker Story* (1990) and would also have a small role in the filmmaker's campy Tennessee Williams adaptation *Suddenly Last Summer* (2008) starring large and in charge chocolate drag queen Vaginal Davis. In terms of getting to the badly broken heart of the Goddess Bunny—a Jack(ie) of all trades who has worked as a hustler, tap dancer, drug addict, welfare queen, and avant-garde cabaret dancer—you will find no document more decidedly debasing and insanely intriguing than Bougas' totally

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anti-bogus document of delightful depravity, *The Goddess Bunny*.

Introduced by sub-underground filmmaker John Aes-Nihil with the single sentence, "We are going to delve into the life of the only truly glamorous star left in Hollywood," *The Goddess Bunny* wastes no time in candidly exposing the patently provocative personality that is the one, the only, the Goddess Bunny! Flung into a terribly tragic life plagued by emotional and physical brutality, the Goddess ultimately spit in the face of normality, morality, and classical beauty and decided to reach for nothing short of true godhood. Of course, being a great goddess is no simple task, thus the Bunny faced his fair share of pain as the victim of a gang rape committed by a Mexican and his degenerate gringo friend. Asked about the sexual pillaging by a rather intrusive East Asian woman as to why he thinks he was the victim of the rape, the Goddess replies rather narcissistically yet exceedingly eloquently by stating, "I guess because I look so real compared to all the six-foot-two drag queens out there," while standing next to a picture of kosher commie killer Leon Trotsky. As a Goddess, the Bunny also has venomous archenemies, most notably a Latino with a beak of a hook-nose that goes by the out-of-this-world title, 'The Cosmic Danielle.' During a special event in tribute to the Goddess Bunny, the disabled diva fails to show up (apparently, he oftentimes gets lost on the way to events), the Cosmic Danielle uses it as an opportunity to steal the spotlight and bitterly besmirch her rival, stating, "that Bunny Goddess creature—she's got more nerve than someone with a real normal body, I'll tell you. I'll tell you that's not gossip, that's real life." Of course, the Bunny gets her just revenge and mentions how the Cosmic Danielle and his boyfriend savagely butt-raped some poor fellow and also mentions how it is a shock that the spick shemale does not have the clap. As a pre-op transman who proudly states, "one of my favorites is Joan Rivers," the Goddess never backs down from an ugly fight, even amongst fellow trannies and has no problem admitting, "For those people that know me, living with a transsexual isn't one of my normalcy's because of the fact that a lot of them have emotional problems and they go through emotional swings to where the female and male hormones are fighting amongst themselves..." As for her dreams for the future, the Goddess Bunny states, "I hope in the future that handicaps can be used in film and television on a more frequent basis and that maybe tomorrow we will be the next Don Johnson or Meryl Streep and that we won't have to depend on government financing." Of course, not all dreams come true, even if cultural Marxist Hollywood has attempted to depict more trannies and cripples in a rather contrived manner for insincere political reasons.

Towards the end of *The Goddess Bunny*, the eponymous superstar states regarding her acting career, "So I figure it this way...if Hollywood won't take me, I'll deal with the underground. We've now got our own fan club going on. I've done a photo with Joel-Peter Witkin which happens to have sold for fourteen grand," yet unfortunately he has not done much in terms of film act-

ing since the release of Bougas' documentary, though auteur Aes-Nihil sells a dozen or so extremely rare DVDs on his website featuring the leading lady-lad with charming titles like *Lick My AIDS Sores*, *Mondo Bruce-s B-Day*, *Wedding of the Goddess Bunny to Rocky*, and *Goddess on the Love Channel*. If nothing else, the Goddess Bunny is a superstar among superstars who makes the drug-addled dude-divas of Paul Morrissey's anti-feminist satire *Women in Revolt* (1971) seem like superficially slutty Lindsay Lohan and Britney Spears look-alikes. While undoubtedly a depressing documentary about a forsaken individual who most filmgoers will find rather hard not to pity, *The Goddess Bunny* is also a sort of vice-ridden piece of venereal video art that makes one feel like they had just spent an entire night sleeping in a South American tuberculosis ward. Indeed, as someone who considers Jörg Buttgerit's arthouse-splatter flick *NEKRomantik* (1987) a work of celluloid pulchritude and eagerly anticipate the latest film by Marian Dora (*Cannibal, Melancholie der Engel* aka *The Angels' Melancholy*), I must admit that *The Goddess Bunny* caused my stomach to churn in abject disgust on more than one occasion during my initial viewing of the film. Of course, in its portrayal of the Goddess Bunny as an 'AIDS terrorist,' lover of deformed Negro cocks, welfare system exploiter, drug addicted ex-hustler, and craven sex addict, *The Goddess Bunny* is bound to burn a hole in the paperbag-covered souls of do-gooder leftist lambs and loony LGBT true believer types. Indeed, while the Goddess goes so far as bemoaning the fact that Lassie the dog has been honored with the Hollywood Walk of Fame yet not a single horribly disabled person like himself has received this honor, the superstar clearly seeks no pity and would probably laugh if some politically correct poofter tried to blame the lack of cripples in cinema on an anti-cripple/anti-tranny conspiracy. In a degenerate weakness-worshiping and morally inverted age where every slave-morality-ridden emotional cripple (i.e. ghetto blacks, rich Jews, bourgeois sexual degenerates) attempts to wear their deluded 'victim status' as a badge of honor, the Goddess Bunny proves the will to power can go a long way, even if you're a paraplegic cock-and-crack-addicted tranny.

-Ty E

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

Nick Bougas (1995)

After reading a few books by Church of Satan founder and High Priest Anton LaVey, I felt I needed to see the documentary *Speak of the Devil*. Aside from LaVey's biographies, *Speak of the Devil* is probably the most personal document you will ever find on LaVey. Although I am not a Satanist, I find Anton LaVey to be an interesting character, who said and wrote things that most people cannot even handle hearing without reacting in hysterics. A true follower of the left-hand path, Anton LaVey was a carny with brains and devilish insight, truly one of the last of his kind. Although obviously having low production values and sometimes tedious, *Speak of the Devil* is a documentary I plan to watch again anytime I have the urge to see a dark one man carnival. It is now surprising that Anton LaVey was able to give the horrific Tod Browning film *Freaks* (1932) new life after the film had been nearly buried via past public outrage and banning upon its initial release. *Speak of the Devil* follows Anton LaVey in his home which looks like it could have been in an 1940s Gothic horror film. LaVey has a personal library with a sign that threatens bodily harm for those that might have the curiosity of picking up one of his rare books. Anton LaVey also has a room full of androids as he had come to prefer to be in the company of virtual humans instead of your typical boring real-life humans. LaVey was friends and influenced by a man named Cecil Ex. Nixon, who happened to have built a brilliant automaton by the name of Isis. In *Speak of the Devil*, Anton LaVey goes into discussion about how he both hates people yet loves to study them. I found this discussion to be one of LaVey's most insightful to who he really is in the documentary. Anton LaVey also was once the proud owner of a Nubian lion named Togare. *Speak of the Devil* features stock footage of the LaVey family and Togare on a children's television show. Anton LaVey is sporting hair on this show as this was before he shaved his head and started the Church of Satan. LaVey's daughter Zeena can be seen as a child in this footage. She later would go on to denounce her father and claim she was responsible for his death via ritual curse. *Speak of the Devil* also features Anton LaVey playing the calliope in true carny fashion. During his eerie carnival-like performances, footage of the carnival and vaudeville appear giving the documentary its most powerful moments. As stated before, *Speak of the Devil* does suffer from low quality production as it has the bad video quality so prevalent during the early 1990s. I would have preferred the documentary to have had a sort of German expressionist or film noir aesthetic but one can only dream. For those somewhat interested in carnivals, the occult, and the left-hand path, *Speak of the Devil* is a must see. The documentary goes as a great companion piece to Blanche Barton's *The Secret Life of a Satanist* which is also endorsed by author Barton in *Speak of the Devil*. One also cannot pass up a film featuring Boyd Rice bowling.

-Ty E

ALPHA DOG
ALPHA DOG

Nick Cassavetes (2006)

Alpha Dog is contemporary crime drama (more like a comedy) directed by son of legendary independent filmmaker John Cassavetes, Nick Cassavetes. Mr. Nick lacks the innovation of his father as Alpha Dog is “stylized” in a similar way of many films of its kind. Alpha Dog is centered around possibly the worst subculture in America; Upper Middle Class wigger drug dealers who think they are “gangsta’s.” The film is based on a real-life crime carried out by play thugs that obviously got in way over their head. Alpha Dog features an array of actors ranging from baby faced pop singer Justin Timberlake to almost bald action stuntman Bruce Willis. Emile Hirsch, the heartthrob of many teenager American girls, stars as the lame ass drug dealer Johnny Truelove. Truelove and his friend Jake Mazursky (played by Ben Foster) have a falling out which leads to a kidnapping. Jake is a deranged Jewish drug addict who sports an Nazi SS tattoo on his neck which can be seen when he beats a party of people up (including a black woman). Johnny Truelove has no problem calling his friend Jake a “kike” more than once in Alpha Dog.

I find the title Alpha Dog to be comical as none of the “men” in the film are masculine. I have seen bull dyke lesbians that make better “alpha males” than the drug dealing clowns in the film. I found the strongest aspect of Alpha Dog to be the comedic elements which I still don’t know whether they were intentional or not. Unlike the disgusting rich wigger fest Havoc (2005), Alpha Dog has it’s merits in displaying the characters of film as laughably clownish bitches. Sadly, I can see the average teenage white American thinking that the characters featured in Alpha Dog are “bad ass.” Alpha Dog is far from a serious film that offers two hours of unpretentious entertainment. Like Larry Clark’s Bully, the film presents a “based on a true story” look at the sad specimens MTV “culture” has produced in America. The acting performances are full of character (not the kind you want to emulate) and are consistent throughout. The real Johnny Truelove was the youngest criminal ever featured on America’s Most Wanted. I wonder if he is as big of a turd as the Alpha Dog character version of Johnny Truelove.

-Ty E

THE JUNKY'S CHRISTMAS

Nick Donkin (1993)

Who better than old man junky William S. Burroughs to tell Christmas stories to young children around the Christmas tree? In the miserable Christmas claymation short *The Junky's Christmas*, elderly WSB narrates that opiate-withdrawing tale he originally wrote for his book *Interzone*. Despite being recently released from prison, the junk sick animated anti-hero (Danny) of the short film is determined to bring joy to his veins with a shot of opium. Indeed, *The Junky's Christmas* at first may seem like an ode to opiates but it also contains the special Christmas theme that it is better to give than to receive. Danny may spend all of the film trying to score junk in the most absurd and pathetic ways but by the end of *The Junky's Christmas* he has celebrated the true meaning of Christmas.

As a child, I especially enjoyed watching vintage stop motion animation Christmas specials like *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Now older and much more pessimistic, I find it very hard to feel the Christmas spirit no matter how many old Christmas films I try to watch for nostalgia's sake. Instead of Santa Clause, I was hoping that I could at least meet St. Nicholas's evil comrade Krampus this year. It was not until I watched *The Junky's Christmas* last night that I even remotely felt in the mood for Christmas. After all, the short film features the animation I loved as a child without the fantastically optimistic messages that most Christmas films contain. I may not be able to relate to Danny's homelessness or Junk sickness but I can certainly relate to his nihilistic winter solstice.

After running a bunch of pathetic scams in hopes of getting the opiate kick he needs, Danny finally obtains a small amount of morphine by faking face Neuralgia to a kindly but suspicious doctor. Not only does Danny finally have the junk he needs for the Christmas Nacht but he also has a couple bucks to spend on a hotel room. Distracted by the sounds of a young man in pain from kidney stones in a room nearby, Danny visits the pain and bedridden unhappy Christmas boy. Feeling sympathy for the boy and being in the junk sicken Christmas spirit, Danny kindly plays doctor and gives the boy his only opiate pain reliever for the night, thus doing his good X-Mas deed of giving instead of receiving. No doubt an Angel was watching over Danny as the junky receives an immaculate fix from the heavens above. For a story written by William S. Burroughs, *The Junky's Christmas* is surely one of the most optimistic pieces that Beat Sage had ever written. At the conclusion of the short, William S. Burroughs joins his family which even put me in the Christmas spirit.

-Ty E

“CRIMINALLY INSANE”
“CRIMINALLY INSANE”

Nick Millard (1975)

Screw deluded fat acceptance morons, it has been my personal experience that the most cunt, ruthless, hateful, and just plain evil women I have ever met were also lard asses that no normal man would touch with a ten foot pole, thus I consider a loudmouthed female ogre to be an infinitely more horrifying villain than a beauteous femme fatale who manipulates men for her own personal gain. After all, at least the predatory femme fatale gives her male victims a good blowjob or two before throwing him under the bus. Undoubtedly, as demonstrated by the fact that Kathy Bates won both the Academy Award for Best Actress and a Golden Globe for her career-jumpstarting role as a psychopathic plus-size she-bitch in *Misery* (1990) demonstrates, I do not think I am the only person that finds extra chubby chicks to be extra creepy villains. When I was about ten or eleven, I could not help but rent a VHS tape with the overtly sensational title *Crazy Fat Ethel* featuring a morbidly obese killer on the cover, not realizing the film was actually an innately inferior sequel/remake of a superlatively sleazy piece of work entitled “*Criminally Insane*” (1975) directed by pornographer turned offbeat genre ‘auteur’ Nick Millard (Fräulein Leather, *Satan’s Black Wedding*) under the pseudonym ‘Nick Philips.’ Directed by a man who managed the career of his own octogenarian porn star mother Frances ‘the oldest living porn actress’ Millard (who incidentally acted as the producer of the film and many of Millard’s other works and is probably best known for starring in gerontophilic fuck flicks with titles like *The Ultimate Granny Gang Bang* (2000) and *92 and Still Banging* (2000)), “*Criminally Insane*” is indubitably pure and unadulterated unmitigated trash with sass and a scrumptious sicko sense of humor that reminds trash cinophiles why they watch celluloid sleaze in the first place. Set in a sort of alternate post-counterculture white trash universe where less than pretty pussy-peddlers, elderly senile Johns, effeminate pimp would-be-actors, delinquent foul-mouthed delivery boys, cynical cops, and morbidly obese mass murderesses reign, Millard’s shockingly penetrating gutter grade low-camp photoplay feels like it was directed by a genuine dirtbag and pimp who lives off the suffering of others. Indeed, the lead anti-heroine is a grotesquely fat unhinged bitch who certainly looks the part she plays, but somewhat ironically the character somehow makes deranged obese dames seem vaguely likeable, at least in a sort of novelty sense that makes you forget that ‘fativism’ clowns exist. Featuring special effects that make the mostly worthless works of Hebraic exploitation hack Herschell Gordon Lewis almost seem Hollywood-esque and unexpected ‘artistic’ pretense, including a bizarrely entrancing psychedelic dream-sequence that could have only dreamed up by a decidedly deluded film director who has somehow convinced himself that he is an authentic ‘artiste’ following in the poetically macabre footsteps of F.W. Murnau (indeed, maestro Millard has credited Nos-

feratu (1922) as being one of the biggest influences on his horror films), “Criminally Insane” is unequivocally one of the few true ‘masterpieces’ of authentic exploitation cinema, as a marvelously morally retarded work that is nearly immaculate in its innate ineptness and gritty celluloid scumminess. Of course, one must also not forget that Millard’s film is probably the only film of its conspicuously kitschy kind that features a Hebrew-hating killer who trusts her Jewish doctor even less than an elderly Israeli lawyer trusts Herr Doktor Josef Mengele, thereupon making for a rare ‘horror-comedy’ that lacks a kosher flavor while still managing to be completely and utterly morally bankrupt.

As Jewish mental hospital head Dr. Gerard (Cliff McDonald) tells worried white trash polack grandmother Mrs. Janowski (Jane Lambert of Brian De Palma’s *The Fury* (1978)) regarding his concerns about releasing her morbidly obese whack-job granddaughter, “Your granddaughter’s case is a very strange one, Mrs. Janowski. Severe paranoid manifestations, long periods of depression, violent outbursts. Quite frankly, it’s against my better judgment that she is being released.” Indeed, lard ass lunatic Ethel Janowski (Millard regular Priscilla Alden) has received electric shock therapy and has spent much time isolated in a padded cell with a straitjacket, yet her main complaint regarding her stint in the mental hospital is that they are not giving her enough food, or as she later complains to her granny like a true paranoiac, “Did you know they tried to kill me? That goddamn Jew doctor gave them orders not to give me enough to eat. Two lousy boiled eggs and a piece of dry toast for breakfast. They were trying to save money and starve me while they were at it.” After Fat Ethel is released under the condition that she comes to four weekly appointments for electric shock therapy, her grandmother expresses her moronic sense of optimism by stating, “Everything is going to be fine again, I know it will.” When Ethel gets home and immediately fries an entire package of bacon and about a dozen eggs to celebrate her untimely release from the loony bin and her grandmother comes downstairs and remarks, “A person is never too old to watch her figure,” it becomes quite clear that the two wacky women will eventually bump heads and one of them might even literally lose their head. When her grandmother remarks that she needs to lose some weight because being fat is unhealthy for her heart, Ethel quasi-poetically replies, “My heart is just fine as long as my stomachs not empty.”

Not surprisingly, things take a considerably nasty turn for the worst in the Janowski home when Ethel comes downstairs in the middle of the night to get a midnight snack and discovers that there is no food in the refrigerator and all of the food has been locked inside a cabinet by her grandma. When her grandmother wakes up and comes downstairs to find her granddaughter attempting to open the lock on the cabinet by stabbing it with a butcher knife in a quite ferocious fashion, she asks her what she is doing and Fat Ethel cries, “What’s the idea of locking up all the food?” Needless to say, when her granny firmly de-

“CRIMINALLY INSANE”

clares, “We’ll have no fresh meat or milk until you learn to curb your appetite,” Ethel becomes exceedingly enraged, chases Mrs. Janowski from behind while yelling, “You and that heeb are trying to starve me again. Well, you’re not going to do it,” and literally stabs her in the back with the butcher knife. Although dead, the key to the cupboard is locked in Mrs. Janowski’s hand via a death grip, so Ethel proceeds to frantically stab her dead grandma’s hand while repeatedly shouting “I want that key” like a disgruntled child throwing a temper tantrum. After managing to free the key from her granny’s cold dead hand, Fat Ethel naturally proceeds to gorge on junk food and even leaves her grandparents corpse in the same spot in a pool of blood until the next day. Indeed, aside from being a rather rotund and equally intemperate wench with the self-discipline of a rabid autistic toddler, Ethel is lazy as hell, which will ultimately lead to her inevitable downfall.

Since both she and her dead granny have no source of income aside from meager unemployment benefits, Ethel finds herself in serious trouble when it comes to procuring food, so when she places a huge order over the phone with a local grocery store that she owes money to and the delivery boy arrives with the goods and refuses to give them to her since she only has \$4.50 for an order that is \$80, she hilariously hits the teen over the head with a liquor bottle and then proceeds to stab him to death with the now broken bottle. Literally right after killing the ill-fated delivery boy, Ethel’s sub-homely hooker sister Rosalie (Lisa Farros) randomly shows up at the house and asks if she can crash there for the next couple of days. Being a drug-addled degenerate that peddles her pussy for a living to dirty old men and dates an abusive fellow that regularly beats her, Rosalie is naturally not the least bit concerned when she notices a pool of blood on the floor of the house, not to mention the fact she does not ask her super big sis for much information about her MIA grandmother’s whereabouts. Ethel clearly has no sense of solidarity with her family as demonstrated by the fact that she seems completely disinterested when Rosalie states to her, “I guess she’s better off sleeping with that little brown man than being drunk all the time,” in regard to the fact that their mother is living with a dubious Filipino man. Additionally, when Rosalie begins bringing back Johns to the house in the middle of the night who fondle her breasts in plain view, Ethel merely finds the situation to be mildly humorous.

Despite the fact that she warned Ethel to tell him that she never wants to see him again if he ever showed up at the house, Rosalie soon brings her low-life would-be-actor/pimp beau John (Michael Flood) to live at the house. As is quite apparent by her senseless behavior, Rosalie is more concerned over the fact that John previously left her for an older woman than the fact he routinely beats her. As John explains to Rosalie before they have ‘makeup sex’ as to why he beats her, “Rosalie, I’m gonna tell you the truth for once, okay? You need a good beating every once in a while. All women do. And you especially.” Mean-

while, Dr. Gerard decides to pay Fat Ethel an unexpected visit since she has been ignoring his calls and has missed her electric shock therapy sessions, so the anti-heroine naturally murders him and then locks his corpse in her grandmother's room where she has placed all the other corpses. When Rosalie laughs at John while watching him put on makeup and remarks, "I'm sorry...I've seen a lot of things but never a man putting on makeup," the petty gutter grade pimp becomes enraged and smacks the shit out of her while calling her a "stupid whore." Of course, as demonstrated by the fact that they are depicted jovially snorting cocaine together in the next scene of the film, the two zany lovebirds do not stay mad at each other for long. As Rosalie explains to her sister regarding her and her beau's nose candy, "It's a nasal medicine the doctor prescribed. Both John and I have sinuses." Somewhat fittingly, it is ultimately their noses that lands Rosalie and John into serious trouble.

The same night a police officer named Detective McDonough (George 'Buck' Flower of *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* (1975) and John Carpenter's *They Live* (1988)) comes by the house asking questions about the delivery boy that Ethel had murdered for \$80 worth of food, Rosalie and John find that they are unable to sleep due to the putrid stench of rotting corpses emanating from Grandma Janowski's room, so they make the unwitting mistake of complaining to the whacked out woman responsible for the odious odors. Naturally, Ethel thinks that John is getting a little bit too nosy for his own good, so she brutally slaughters him with a hatchet while he is asleep, thus causing Rosalie to wake up and scream in abject terror in the process. Of course, Fat Ethel is forced to liquidate her sister as well, though that does not stop her from continuing to talk to her after she is dead and say sassy things to her corpse like, "I know you want to be alone. Sometimes I can hear you. I know what you were doing with John, Rosalie." In a scene that hints at necrophilia, Ethel is featured laughing hysterically while lying next to John's corpse in bed in a scenario that eventually turns into a strange pseudo-artsy dream-sequence that features psychedelic murder scenes (including scenes of Ethel hacking away at what is clearly a cheap mannequin sans wig), shots of a graveyard, and the deranged anti-heroine dressed like a glamorous diva in a pink dress. While Fat Ethel finally gets enough common sense and motivation to dispose of her corpses by dismembering them, putting them in trash bags, and driving them to an oceanside cliff where she plans drop them off, a group of pesky tourist taking photographs ruin her plans and she is forced to bring the body parts back home. While tirelessly hauling the bags of body parts back into her dilapidated home, Ethel carelessly leaves some of the parts in her unlocked truck and it does not take long for a busybody neighbor to discover a dismembered hand upon examining the car. Of course, Detective McDonough soon comes to arrest Ethel, but he is in for quite a surprise when he finds his suspect gnawing on a dismembered arm, thus causing him to cry out, "My god."

“CRIMINALLY INSANE”

As a shot-on-video piece of patently pointless trash where no less than ¼ of the film seems to be comprised of footage from the previous film, the “Criminally Insane” sequel *Criminally Insane 2* (1987) aka *Crazy Fat Ethel 2* is nothing but a sad joke that is not even worthy of being described as a cheap novelty by fans of the original film. In fact, anti-auteur Nick Millard would reuse the credits and kill scenes from his magnum opus in a number of his subsequent shot-on-video sub-schlock works, including such singularly worthless efforts as *Death Nurse* (1987), *Death Nurse 2* (1988), and *Doctor Bloodbath* (1987). Naturally, Millard would also continue working with the same actors, including “Criminally Insane” star Priscilla Alden and when the director was asked in an interview with the curiously named horror film review site *The Liberal Dead* why he chose to do this, he gave the startlingly pretentious reply, “So I like using the same people. Again and again. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, the German director, did the same thing...” As can be expected from any cult horror film that even has the most pathetically marginal of followings, a remake entitled *Crazy Fat Ethel* (2015) directed by a fellow named Brian Dorton (*Trashology*, *Theatre of the Deranged*) is set to be released sometime this year, though it is an indisputable fact that no film can recapture the distinct putrid post-counterculture trash essence of Millard’s original film. Indeed, “Criminally Insane” is like a Warhol era Paul Morrissey flick as directed by an apolitical smut-peddler who still unwittingly manages to demonstrate how degenerate America has become since so-called women’s liberation and counterculture movements helped the Baby boomers further rationalize their pseudo-individualism and nihilistic hedonism. Indeed, 250 pound beastess Ethel is just another hopeless moron inspired by the hippie weltanschauung that, if it feels good you should do it, albeit she just takes her self-absorption a step or two further. Of course, considering her flagrant anti-Semitism, one would think that Fat Ethel would know better and not embrace a Reichian/Marcusian approach to eating, but not everyone is perfect. In terms of films about resentful tubs of quasi-female lard, you certainly cannot do better than “Criminally Insane”, but considering that over half of Americans are ‘overweight’ (aka fat asses), I suspect that subsequent generations will find the film less funny and easy to relate to. After all, the Occident is so decadent nowadays that it now has a growing collective of politically active social justice lard asses known as the so-called ‘fat acceptance movement’ who actively promote unhealthy physiques and lifestyles in a pathetic attempt to rationalize their aversion to exercising and sensible eating. Somewhat tragically, if not surprisingly, “Criminally Insane” star Priscilla Alden—a true outsider actress whose performance in Millard’s film makes Shirley Stoler’s character in *The Honeymoon Killers* (1969) seem rather lightweight and who would have indubitably made a great John Waters superstar as the more demented daughter of Edith Massey—died of complications from diabetes at the age of 68 on 24 August 2007. Obviously, her performances in Millard’s films did not scare Alden

straight about her weight and inspire her to take a more healthy approach to life, but at least she has been immortalized as the most deranged plus-size dime store diva of cinema history.

-Ty E

MURDER-SET-PIECES
MURDER-SET-PIECES

Nick Palumbo (2004) Nick Palumbo's Murder-Set-Pieces is a refreshing new take on the slasher film. So refreshing that I forgot that it was a slasher film. Director Palumbo was able to simultaneously piss off veteran horror fans and Jews. This is an accomplishment in itself. Last House on a Dead End Street director Roger Watkins(RIP) has championed the film. Murder-Set-Pieces obviously did something right.

The film's serial killer is a German prince and descendent of a high ranking Nazi officer. His mother was a whore and he has complete contempt for women. This Teutonic psycho killer energetically kills Las Vegas whores when he's not driving around in his muscle car. Henry Lee Lucas wishes that he had this much style.

Chocolate candyman Tony Todd gives an amazing performance as a sex shop clerk. I have on more than one occasion rewinded and rewatched this ACTION PACKED scene. Belligerent and fat Fred Vogel of August Underground fame also appears in the scene as a robber. In fact, the entire Toe Tag Pictures team is featured(they also did the special FX for Murder-Set-Pieces). I much prefer Murder-Set-Pieces to any of films in the Toe Tag library. Murder-Set-Pieces is complimented by its soundtrack. Stupid metal makes you want to join in on the killing. Most Hollywood horror films feature music of this nature but Murder-Set-Pieces utilizes it properly. The film also contains a speech by the fuehrer himself(from Triumph of the Will) while the Aryan killer does some sit-ups. What a great way to workout.

Shock poetry is the best way to describe Murder-Set-Pieces. For all its stupidity, it has much more character and routine playability than the majority of "underground" horror films. Nick Palumbo has potential as a director. Stock footage of the 9/11 world trader center attack was his boldest move. The only thing missing is a thumbs up from Steven Spielberg.

-Ty E

THEY EAT SCUM

Nick Zedd (1979)

Maybe because I have not fried my brain on speed or acid, don't have a fetish for pale chubby chicks with shitty attitudes and equally obnoxious black hair dye jobs, have not been obsessed with punk rock since I was a teenager, like a tad bit of substance and technique from my trash cinema, loathe highly derivative cinematic works that purport to be subversive and iconoclastic, and/or cannot tolerate filmmakers who have yet to learn how to properly use a simple tripod after decades of filmmaking experience, but I have to admit that I have always found the so-called Cinema of Transgression movement to be fairly worthless and irrelevant and I cannot for the life of me understand why it was ever regarded as any sort of cutting edge avant-garde movement. More or less the second wave of New York City filmmakers associated with the similarly overrated but somewhat more idiosyncratic No Wave Cinema scene, the movement emphasized philistine shock value and pointless sex and violence and lacked the fairly more eclectic approach of their predecessors (for example, the No Wave filmmakers made war films, sword-and-sandal epics, sci-fi flicks, musicals, etc.) and, despite the fact that the group's tiny 438-word official manifesto declares that, "all film schools be blown up and all boring films never be made again," virtually all of the so-called transgressive filmmakers associated with it subscribed to a sort of unofficial collective conformity involving low-camp 'lo-fi' post-Kucharian degeneracy and both literal and figurative juvenile masturbation that involved heroin, shitty third rate punk rock, ugly and out-of-shape girls with guns and physically and mentally weak men that like taking it in the ass, and all-things sexual dysfunction. Over the past decade, I have made various valiant attempts to get through a single film directed by the pretty boy messiah of the movement, Nick Zedd (*The Wild World of Lydia Lunch*, *War Is Menstrual Envy*), but I failed every single time as I found each of these works to be so hopelessly banal, intolerably technically inept, absurdly adolescent, and shockingly unoriginal that I just could not bring myself to suffer such superlatively stupid celluloid silliness in its entirety. Indeed, I could not even bother to finish watching Zedd's early 11-minute short *The Bogus Man* (1980) as it only took me a couple minutes to get tired of the plodding punk rock posturing and rather retarded visuals, so naturally I never thought that I could ever endure an entire feature-length film directed by the would-be 'Prince of Puke' (indeed, it seems Zedd was striving to be the next John Waters) yet I shocked myself the other day after managing to endure all 73-minutes of his directorial debut *They Eat Scum* (1979) and somehow I even found parts of the crud-covered celluloid work to be quite funny and memorable, even if in a magnificently witless quasi-Troma-esque sort of way (in fact, Zedd is so avant-garde and/or desperate for work that he appeared in alpha-smut-speddler Lloyd Kaufman's *Terror Firmer* (1999)).

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Somewhat seeming like it was directed by the piss poor Asperger-addled punk anti-lovechild of John Waters, Jack Smith, and Sid Vicious, the dimestore dystopian flick *They Eat Scum* tells a moronically labyrinthine and superbly spastic tale of hopelessly American apocalyptic cultural autism that features, among other things, albino negroid nerds, tranny poodle-penetrators, self-castrating eunuchs and skanky groupies with sewed up twats, cannibalistic negro-eating punk automatons, third rate fascistic heroin-addicted female punk rock vocalists, and various other forms of patently pointless sub-subhuman trash that only a unrefined nihilist hipster man-child like Mr. Zedd would bother to cinematically dream up. Indeed, watching a Nick Zedd film is like encountering a schizophrenic hobo masturbating with the aid of his own feces as lubrication while discussing the failed state of the democratic two-party system. Very much a fetishistic fantasy scenario for the filmmaker, the film was partly inspired by how the mainstream media portrayed the punk subculture as a serious societal threat and depicts the mirthful mayhem that ensues when a female junky punk rock singer from an ostensibly Evangelical Christian family incites her followers to engage in mass cannibalism and cause a nuclear meltdown so that she can takeover NYC and become the first cannibalistic Nazi-punk cunt queen of the super shitty city. While the title may be in reference to a group of thoroughly brainwashed punk automatons that cannibalize normal folk, *They Eat Scum* certainly can also be seen as reference to the viewer, who is forced-fed incessant primitive images by the sneering alpha-scumbag autistic-garde auteur. After watching the film, I could not help but think that Zedd is the kind of guy who enjoys regularly getting his ass kicked so that he can brag about it to his equally infantile lowlife buddies, but then again one could not expect anything less for a NYC underground untermensch that would be masochistic enough to fuck a swarthy slag like Lydia Lunch. Needless to say, *They Eat Scum* stars a Lydia look-alike she-Führer who naturally lacks the elegance, charm, and good-breeding of the eponymous blonde beastess of *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* (1975).

If you need irrefutable evidence of the fact that the culture-distorters in Tinseltown have been more successful than any other group in human history in terms of demonizing a people when it comes to their unwavering smear campaign against the National Socialists and Germanic people in general, just watch *They Eat Scum* and see how many times underground mental midget Zedd incorporates the swastika as a conspicuously childish form of shock value that could only be effective on the average American or any other viewer that has had a Hollywood lobotomy. In fact, when asked in an interview featured in the book *Art That Kills: A Panoramic Portrait of Aesthetic Terrorism 1984-2001* (2011) about his fetish for the almighty Hakenkreuz, Zedd proudly confessed, "Yeah, Swastikas are always a good way to get a knee-jerk reaction, to piss people off. A timeless symbol. Anything to shock and offend or confront a complacent audience, and anything to be anti-art." Rather unfortunately, Zedd gives the

swastika the potency and depth of the McDonald's golden arches logo, which is to some extent fitting as the film is the avant-garde cinema equivalent of fast food, as it is cheap, digests poorly, and is prepackaged with the sort of expertise that one would expect from a ghetto-dwelling petty criminal who will do anything to avoid having to learn a real trade. Luckily, Zedd's film also attacks the Jews and their spiritually and culturally cuckolded Zionist Christian allies. Unlike his mostly negrophiliac predecessors in the No Wave movement, Zedd is also no more kosher what it comes to poor colored folk, as he even had the gall to exploit the absolutely accursed genetics of a Woody Allen-esque bug-eyed albino negro who seems to suffer from a terrible case of ADHD. Zedd's zanier than sick obsessions also include Romero-esque flesh-eating, self-castration, mass infantilism, live punk rock shows at popular clubs like CBGBs and Max's Kansas City, the dysgenic and genetically mutated, retards and freaks, Mr. Rogers, kitschy religious icons, and other things that make the director seem like a quasi-heterosexual John Waters wannabe who whored out his scrawny pimple-ridden ass to the Kuchar brothers. Centering around a suburban motherless family with an evangelical Christian father, loser transvestite son with a precarious poodle fetish and murderously misanthropic identical sisters who both attempt to takeover NYC and turn it into the most genocidal and chaotic place since Haiti, *They Eat Scum* is ultimately a 'feel-good' film for fiercely fucked people who like their lowbrow humor to be completely devoid of morality and good taste, among other things. In other words, the film is not a bad way to waste 70 minutes or so, especially if you're itching for some punk-tinged toilet humor that somehow paradoxically reminds the viewer that American culture was slightly less shitty a couple decades ago.

For whatever reason that is probably only known to dooper Zedd himself, *They Eat Scum* opens with a sickeningly spastic and exceedingly retarded four-eyed cripple mutant sporting 'whiteface' being spoon-fed what looks like liquid diarrhea, which is ultimately what the anti-auteur plans to figuratively do to the viewer with his darkly jovial and aesthetically nihilistic film. Notably, the over-extended introductory sped-feeding scene is juxtaposed with a disturbingly sappy Mr. Rogers song that somewhat fittingly concludes with the line regarding the benefits of being a child as opposed to being an adult, "You can do many things that grownups can't do anymore. For one thing, you can pretend you're all grown up." Of course, Zedd does not even pretend to want to be an adult and the film ultimately seems like an intricately frivolous and ultimately incoherent argument as to why growing up sucks and should be avoided at all costs. After the insanely inane intro, the viewer is transported to Brooklyn, NYC where eccentric fat old Evangelical whackjob Mr. John Wesley Stain and two of his three distinctly mentally disturbed children (the third 'kid' is not revealed until much later in the film). Demonstrating that he is a good little Christian cuckold-servative, patriarch Stain loudly recites to his ugly tranny son Jimmy aka 'Jim'

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and junky punk daughter Suzi Putrid (Zedd's then-girlfriend Donna Death of Rachid Kerdouche's *Final Reward* (1978) and Zedd's Geek Maggot Bingo or The Freak from *Suckweasel Mountain* (1983)) during a seemingly improvised dinnertime prayer, "Blessed be our neighbors [undecipherable] hapless Jewish immigrants, and mighty lord Abraxas, Menachem Bagel, pray...bless us and..." After the somewhat botched prayer, Daddy Stain informs his daughter that he has set her up with a scientist's mechanic named Herman Barbell and he wants her to give him an "extra special welcome," but little bitch Suzi immediately becomes extremely agitated and moans in an insufferable fashion, "Shit, not another nerd, Pap. I'm getting tired of all those nerds you keep sending over." Jimmy is also not too happy with his papa's sleazy matchmaking scheme as he is jealous of his sister's regular gentlemen callers and complains in an obnoxiously whiny fashion, "What about me and Polio, Pap? Me and Polio never get any visitors." Of course, as a less than charming chap that has less testicular fortitude than his own sister and resembles a tranny serial killer à la Buffalo Bob of *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), Jimmy boy does not have much to be happy about. Since he is a sexually confused "blasphemer" and unrepentant zoophile that is literally in love with his pet poodle Polio, Jimmy is simply told by his father after complaining about his lack of male visitors, "My son...I pray for you. A day doesn't go by where I don't pray for you. Someday, the good lord will answer my prayer...I hope." Luckily, the entire family will soon be put out of its misery as a result of the cunning conspiratorial schemes of the dead matriarch's particularly perverted and no less demented crypto-cross-dresser brother.

When Jimmy makes the foolish mistake of leaving a used condom sitting around the house, his father, who points at his son while curiously wearing the semen-soaked rubber on a couple of his fingers, accuses him of being a "smut-peddler" and harshly punishes him by taking away his beloved pooch Polio and locking him in the bathroom for a week. Unfortunately for Jimmy, Mr. Stain puts poor Polio in Suzi's sadistic hands. Meanwhile, Suzi's gentleman caller Herman shows up and completely disgusts the young lady because he is an autistic albino negro nerd whose eyes are virtually popping out of his head and who attempts to compliment the punk princess' black books by comparing them to a West African black fly, which he gleefully describes as being able to deposit worms under your skin while they suck your blood. In fact, Herman is so autistic and ADHD-addled that he does not even notice when Suzi walks out of the room will he continues to express an almost amorous delight in discussing the pernicious essence of the black fly. Just like his daughter Suzi, Mr. Stain is mentally enslaved to his dead wife's distinctly debauched brother Mr. Wizard (aka 'Little Simon') and even follows his order to put 100% his will in his name. A sicko sadist that killed his sister so that he could steal her prized dark green dress and ultimately assume her identity, Mr. Wizard is in love with a tranny blow-up doll, which he romantically whispers to, "It doesn't matter that

you have a rubber brain. When it comes to lust, they're all the same." As a man on a rather ambitious malefic mission, Mr. Wizard got his niece Suzi addicted to heroin so he could brainwash her into brainwashing the fans of her popular 'deathrock' group Suzy Putrid and the Mental Deficients, which also acts as a quasi-mystical cult that inspires its braindead fans to indiscriminately murder people for sport. Indeed, while performing on stage with her punk band at CBGBS, Suzi demands that her mindless fans become abstinent mass murderers, arguing that they should kill everyone, be they, "Black or white...Young or Old...If it moves, kill it." As for sex, Suzi seems to hate it even more than she loathes dressing like a female, proselytizing to her adorning fans, "Remember, fucking is for animals. There will be no sex. If you can't control yourselves, cut off your cock...sew up your cunts...or better yet, let me do it, for I am your god." Naturally, as starstruck automatons that are even dumber and more deleterious than GG Allin's groupies, Suzi's fans immediately oblige her and soon begin murdering and cannibalizing random people on the streets of Brooklyn, including negro gangsters, Hasidic Jews, and other forms of rather repellant ethnic rabble that once acted as the inspiration for the anthropomorphic monsters in the horror stories of H.P. Lovecraft.

Now in control of her brother's beloved doggy Polio due to his week-long banishment to the family bathroom, Suzi decides to bring the poor pup to a decrepit doggy whorehouse that gentleman Jim frequents and blackmails the drag queen madam named Mrs. Wanger into giving the dog rabies with the threat that she will tell the dreaded SPCA about her "sordid business." Naturally, as a successful business owner that charges \$100 per her hour for prospective clients to get more than platonic with man's best friend, Mrs. Wanger follows Suzi's deranged demand. Meanwhile, Father Stain regularly taunts his son Jimmy by standing outside the bathroom door that he is imprisoned inside and incessantly repeating, "You're an underachiever, Jimmy." After complimenting her performance backstage at CBGBs by telling her that she has a talent for "asserting a vice-like grip on the crowd" while she shoots junk into her arm right next to him, Mr. Wizard recommends to Suzi that she kill her entire family and she replies, "Mr. Wizard, you have all the answers." Of course, Suzi gets all the more pumped up for familicide after learning from a terribly pedantic Uncle Tom newscaster on TV while simultaneously reading a "Penis Enlargement Techniques" magazine whilst lying panty-less in bed that her band Suzy Putrid and the Mental Deficients inspired a number of local violent crimes, including acts of vampirism. Indeed, some of Suzi's fans gorge on some street negroes while a four-eyed white dork intentionally has himself run over by a car while "Good Vibrations" by the Beach Boys is humorously blasted in the background. Like many punks (and probably Nick Zedd), Suzi's fans are resentful failed members of the bourgeois who have decided to wage war against the society that rejected them, so they like saying silly and unintentionally hilarious things like, "Everyone's trying to

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be middleclass, even the Puerto Ricans.” To demonstrate their hatred of their middleclass, Suzi and her gang of punk rock goons kidnap a scantily dressed young girl, tear off all of her clothes, shove a rat down her throat like it is a giant cock, and then dismember her body, especially her tits, with an electric saw and then collectively devour her limbs and organs in a ritual act of Romero-esque punk rock paganism. When Jimmy kicks the bucket after releasing rabid pup Polio in the family home, Father Stain decides enough is enough and is not only provoked to kill the family dog by blowing it away with a shotgun but also his beloved daughter who he hoped that he could one day pimp out to a wealthy gentleman caller. In fact, Mr. Stain is so bloodthirsty that he actually commits the blasphemous act of entering the unholy demonic grounds of Max’s Kansas City and then slits his daughter’s throat in front of all of her adoring fans. Needless to say, Suzi’s fans respond to Mr. Stain’s uniquely unpardonable sin of punk rock decide by ripping the old man to shreds, or so the viewer assumes (his death is not depicted onscreen, but instead simply reported by the Uncle Tom news anchor, thus hinting that Mr. Zedd probably ran out of special effects money at some point during the film’s production).

In an assumed mockery of Jesus Christ’s resurrection, Suzi is subsequently featured in a coma at a mental institution after her death via paternal filicide as if she somehow managed to come back to life, though it ultimately proves not to be her but her estranged identical twin sister ‘Poxy’ who fell into a deep eight year sleep after being brutally raped by her unhinged uncle Mr. Wizard. Although initially seeming both saner and tamer than her dead twin upon miraculously awaking from her coma as a result of Mr. Wizard apparently electrocuting her body, Poxy becomes completely bat-shit crazy upon being reunited with her unhinged uncle, who not only raped her as a little girl but also killed her mom by causing her to get impaled by the horns of a bovine named ‘Bessie the Cow’ after pushing her out of a barn window. Confusing Poxy for her sister, Suzi’s fans rescue her from the mental institution and take Mr. Wizard hostage. Almost immediately after being rescued, Poxy becomes a bigger mass-murdering megalomaniac than her dead sister and even proudly declares upon being shown two fans that mutilated their genitals in tribute to her, “These are not fans. These are loyal subjects...slaves who surrendered their entire universe to my authority.” When Mr. Wizard attempts to coerce Poxy into telling her fans to let him go, the deathrock diva vehemently screams in his face while displaying an overwhelming thirst for bloody vengeance, “You, Mr. Wizard, are the lowest form of human life...You spineless, perverted parasite! You killed my mother...you raped me when I was 8...you turned my sister into a heroin addict and my whole family into a row of corpses. You, Mr. Wizard, are an obscenity on the face of this earth. The viciousness of your crimes can only be avenged in one way: On the surface of my super-deluxe-outer-space turntable.” As punishment for his crimes, Mr. Wizard is decapitated after Poxy straps him to a gigantic record

player. As reflected in her decided delusions of grandeur and ludicrously lofty ambitions, not to mention her unquenchable lust for blood and castration, Poxy seems to have ironically inherited the same genetic taint as the uncle that she loves to hate, thus it is only a matter of time before she botches her plans and is murdered in a fashion that is no less disgraceful than that of Mr. Wizard and her many victims.

After liquidating Mr. Wizard, Poxy murders the Uncle Tom newscaster on live television and then stares into the camera and self-righteously declares to the populous of the city, "My name is Suzy Putrid and you, New York, are the scum of the earth. All you listen to is disco...you deserve to die and before this broadcast ends, you'll begin to feel effects of a disease for which there is no cure." Indeed, Poxy has her fans cause a core meltdown at a nuclear power-plant in New Jersey that is only 24-miles north NYC, thus causing 100,000 people to die instantly and many more to succumb to slow and painful deaths as a result of radiation poisoning. After radiating a good portion of the city's population, Poxy declares herself the ruler and 'Death Queen' of the multicultural metropolis, secedes from the union, and fittingly renames the area 'Necropolis.' Of course, like most big plans, Poxy's radiation epidemic has some less than ideal unintended consequences that involve the birth of a race of monstrous anthropomorphic mutants who ultimately do not take too kindly to her reign of terror. Flash forward 20 years later and murderous mutant rebels are revolting against the Death Queen and her nihilistic neo-Nazi dictatorship. Ultimately, Poxy dies a dishonorable death via giant mutant cockroach after refusing to listen to her queen-ish queer adviser. As the mutants raid Poxy's headquarters, "YMCA" by the Village People plays triumphantly in the background (it should be noted that Poxy's adviser describes the classic cocksucker song as "the sound of revolution" and "mutant disco"). Ultimately, the film concludes with a narrator rhetorically asking questions like: "Will the normal cockroach outlive man?" and "Is man a disease?" In a potential nod to the conclusion of *They Eat Scum*, Mexican-born Cinema of Transgression figure turned academic Manuel De Landa might have been inspired to direct the short *Judgement Day* (1983) aka *Massive Annihilation of Fetuses*, which features a number of real-life cockroaches being tortured to death and was described by the director as, "...my tribute to the real master race that will soon inherit the planet [...] Cockroaches have not only invaded the flip side of my house (i.e., the back of my kitchen, the other side of my walls, etc.) but they have also taken over some areas of my unconscious....Since I started the film the structure of my nightmares has changed, almost as if I had violated their laws and they were getting ready for revenge."

Notably, in his *The Cinema of Transgression Manifesto* that was printed in a 1985 issue of the fanzine *The Underground Film Bulletin* under the unsurprisingly moronic pseudonym Orion Jeriko, Nick Zedd wrote regarding his self-stylized celluloid pseudo-religion, "All values must be challenged. Nothing

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is sacred. Everything must be questioned and reassessed in order to free our minds from the faith of tradition. Intellectual growth demands that risks be taken and changes occur in political, sexual and aesthetic alignments no matter who disapproves. We propose to go beyond all limits set or prescribed by taste, morality or any other traditional value system shackling the minds of men. We pass beyond and go over boundaries of millimeters, screens and projectors to a state of expanded cinema,” yet *They Eat Scum*, like many films associated with the movement, fails to slaughter a single sacred cinematic cow, lacks any seriously subversive or sensible political messages, is innately derivative (notably, Zedd once even went so far as to steal images from German auteur Ulrike Ottinger’s avant-garde epic *Freak Orlando* (1981) for an ad for his film *Whoregasm* (1988)), and is almost completely devoid of the sort of graphic sexuality that such similar works are (in)famous for. Indeed, if you want to see a truly anarchistic and strikingly strange film associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement, checkout Manuel De Landa’s distinctly directed and decidedly discombobulating anti-noir micro-epic *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980). At best, Zedd’s film is like the NYC underground equivalent to a Hollywood stoner comedy like *Half Baked* (1998) and it certainly seems superlatively softcore compared to the doc *Hated: GG Allin & the Murder Junkies* (1993) directed by Hebraic Hollywood hack Todd Phillips (Starsky & Hutch, *The Hangover* franchise). In a world where Hollywood openly backs pedophiles like Roman Polanski and Woody Allen yet blacklists bad goyim like Mel Gibson simply for saying something less than positive about god’s chosen tribe or expressing a religious objection to two sexually promiscuous fairies pretending to be husband and wife, *They Eat Scum* now feels like a playful diversion that was directed by the hipster equivalent of an inebriated fratboy who gets a cheap narcissistic thrill out of lighting his farts on fire while in the company of his frat comrades. Indeed, mainstream America has become far too debauched, eclectically moral bankrupt, and spiritual retarded for Zedd to be relevant nowadays, not to mention the fact that fellow Baltimore-born filmmaker John Waters did much more subversive things in the same vein many years before with works like *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and *Desperate Living* (1977). Luckily for Zedd, Waters is a fan of his debut feature, or as he stated in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, “I like the whole idea of the movie...I mean, *THEY EAT SCUM*, which is still maybe one of my favorite titles in the history of titles.”

In *Blank City*, Zedd more or less revealed his dubious objective as a filmmaker when he stated regarding *They Eat Scum*, “The front-page of *The Wall Street Journal* called it, ‘the vilest and most revolting performance I have ever seen...Please do something to stop it.’ And I was quite elated to get this kind of attention...and this kind of outrage.” As his comment transparently demonstrates, Zedd is not a serious artist by a carny dilettante and punk rock prankster with a cheap Super-8 camera who pointlessly seeks attention for attention’s sake

and does not have much more to offer. Indeed, it oftentimes crossed my mind while watching his debut feature that Zedd is internally imprisoned in a perpetual state of adolescence where he is trying in vain to receive the attention—be it positive or negative—that his parents assumedly denied him as a child. Although one of the more humorous running jokes of the film, I could not help but think that when the evangelical Christian father John Wesley Stain says to his son, “You’re an underachiever... Jimmy,” Zedd was depicting his own father and the way he treated him. In a great example of Zedd’s own delusional and megalomaniacal overestimation of his own films, the filmmaker actually had the audacity to argue in the documentary *Lik Your Idols* (2007) directed by Angélique Bosio as a defense for why no one gives a shit about his work, “The more hidden and marginalized something is, the more subversive and revolutionary... and, in the future, more and more people will become aware of what I’ve done. It’s just that now I’m sort of buried alive.” Of course, history has proven the opposite, as Zedd has become less and less revered among cinephiles as the decades have passed while fellow subversive avant-garde filmmakers that also utilized cheap Super-8 cameras like Teutonic aberrant-garde blond beast Jörg Buttgerreit and especially Nordic Canadian auteur Guy Maddin are becoming more and more popular, even though the former more or less abandoned filmmaking for about two decades. Notably, in *Lik Your Idols*, Zedd’s comrade Richard Kern demonstrates that he is more humble and sensible in regard to his place in cinema history when he states, “As a filmmaker with *The Cinema of Transgression*, it was just an involvement based around getting high and making movies... and having fun. I didn’t think anything would come of it.” Ultimately, *They Eat Scum* works best as a punk prank at the expense of bratty man-child hipster Zedd and the NYC underground as a whole, as it is a work that strives for artistic greatness but ultimately features the artistic integrity of one of Jack Smith’s cum-covered AIDS-ridden farts. Still, a constantly comical piece of filmic feces that has the gall to mock a uniquely ugly and rodent-like Israeli terrorist like Menachem Begin by having a half-crazed Christian cuck refer to him as ‘Menachem Bagel’ cannot be all bad. Indeed, Zedd may subscribe to the politics and aesthetics of punk rock puke, but at least he is not a politically correct pansy or self-loathing negrophile like the majority of people that have ever been historically described as New York City avant-garde filmmakers. In fact, if I were to credit Zedd with any notable accomplishment, it would be helping to put the final nail in the coffin of NYC avant-garde with his innately derivative celluloid senselessness and absurdly infantile approach to anarchy and nihilism. Certainly with *They Eat Scum*, cinematically vomited on every underground NYC auteur that came before him by reducing their motifs and beliefs to unintentional parodies, thus it is a work that should be seen by any serious self-disrespecting cinephile or lapsed hipster hobo.

-Ty E

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Nick Zedd (1980)

If there has ever been a sort of NYC underground equivalent to Edward D. Wood Jr., it is unequivocally trash auteur Nick Zedd (*They Eat Scum*, *War is Menstrual Envy*), though I would argue that the (in)famous *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959) director made more genuine and passionate work that more reflected his intention to fully express himself and his curious affinity for sporting women's panties than to merely offend people with overtly juvenile punk diletantism. Indeed, there is probably more internal pain and embarrassing self-reflection in Wood's semi-autobiographic quasi-docudrama *Glen or Glenda* (1953) than in Zedd's entire oeuvre, though his ironically titled work *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* (1983) is admittedly quite pathetic as a work where an audio breakup letter read by the eponymous gutter skank makes the *Cinema of Transgression* anti-messiah seem like a sad little cuck who is desperate to make a quick buck off his ex-girlfriend's disposing of him. While I have been familiar with Zedd for no less than over a decade, I could never bring myself to watch one of his films in its entirety until somewhat recently as I could not stomach even watch ten minutes of his second feature *Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain* (1983) when I attempted to watch it about ten years ago, yet I have been feeling rather masochistic recently and decided to delve into the filmmaker's entire oeuvre, thus leading me to consider that the 11-minute short *The Bogus Man* (1980) is indubitably the filmmaker's most immaculate, idiosyncratic, and sophisticated work to date. A sort of intentionally grotesque allegorical agitprop piece involving kitschy bodily dismemberment, cheap Jimmy Carter masks, pulsating vagina chairs, eccentric Dr. Strangelove-esque German-Jewish mad scientists, and morbidly obese unclad monster ladies with bald heads, Zedd's short is, at best, a thankfully short and more bitter than sweet exercise in intricately bad taste that delights in debasing the viewer with its ostensibly insane imagery and asinine anarchistic politics. Like *Geek Maggot Bingo*, I originally attempted to watch *The Bogus Man* a number of years ago and found myself terribly bored to death by it and turned it off after only a couple minutes, but I decided to brave through the entire short somewhat recently upon watching a VHS tape of *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* that featured it as a sort of bonus film to remind what kind of filmmaker Zedd really is (indeed, Zedd's 'experimental' Lunch doc seems like a rip-off of a Vivienne Dick flick, which is somewhat ironic considering the filmmaker once stated in an interview featured in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, "The reason I made that was because I had seen films that Lydia was in, by Vivienne Dick, which were horrible – they were just so boring and stupid and they had received these glowing reviews [from] the film critics at the Village Voice. And I knew I could do something better than that."). I guess I should have prob-

ably watched more than a couple minutes of Zedd's short when I first attempted to view it about a decade ago, as I recently discovered that I missed out on the crazy cunt chair and grotesquely obese unclad female monster doing a distinctly debasing striptease, among other forms of gutter grade celluloid (anti)poetry of the perniciously playfully psychotronic sort that epitomize *The Bogus Man*.

Like the sadomasochistic para-punk (meta)politics of Beth B and Scott B (the former of whom Zedd used to bang after she divorced the latter, or so Richard Kern reveals in the doc *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier) meets the viscerally grotesque post-holocaust psychosexual special effects of Jörg Buttgerit, Zedd's obnoxiously obscene short is notable for being one of the few films by the anti-auteur that does not seem outrageously outmoded nowadays in an age where senseless trash like so-called 'torture porn' has become mainstream, not to mention the fact that *The Bogus Man* seems far too slick and 'professional' to have been directed by the perennial punk poser. Of course, as a work that wallows in ugliness and insipid shock value for shock value's shake, the short is undoubtedly pure Zedd in the most positive and 'complimentary' sort of way, thus making it a great introductory work for novices. Whereas Zedd's first and arguably greatest feature *They Eat Scum* (1979) resembles a sort of hysterical punk sci-fi home movie and his second feature *Geek Maggot Bingo* seems like what happened if a more misanthropic Mike Kuchar attempted to direct an epic Ed Wood homage while high on both speed and acid, *The Bogus Man* actually has something resembling a carefully and tightly constructed avant-garde *mise-en-scène* as a sometimes foreboding yet equally campy chiaroscuro piece that is probably the director's least politically infantile yet simultaneously most experimental work to date. In short, the film is Zedd at his most overtly 'cinematic.' Part cynical parody of spy movies, part excessive exploitation trash, and part malicious criticism of both pussy President Carter and the American political system in general, the film depicts a world where the U.S. commander-in-chief has been replaced by various eponymous clones. Of course, the real appeal of *The Bogus Man* is that it is a nihilistically nightmarish piece of celluloid that demonstrates that, not unlike the title and some of the content of *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992), Zedd seems to have a sexually schizophrenic belief that the pussy is mightier than the penis, among other things.

The Bogus Man opens mysteriously enough in a nearly pitch black room where a mystery man sporting a ski-mask states, while sounding like a sort of perverted newscaster, "No, I am not a terrorist. I am an undercover agent for the Central Intelligence Agency. My identity must remain a secret, for I am about to reveal to you for the first time privileged information concerning the most diabolical scheme ever hatched: To subvert our democratic system, C.I.A. complicity in the government's plot to clone the President of the United States. This will be the first in a series of reports in which I shall present hard evidence in the form of filmed interviews with witnesses and participants in the govern-

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ment's project, which resulted in the successful replacement of our President by several clone duplicates. In these reports, I shall establish beyond any shadow of doubt the validity of my assertion that our President is not, in fact, the man you voted for, but is, in reality, the Bogus Man." From there, the dead serious yet ultimately unwittingly quite silly masked man in the shadows describes certain footage that was "forwarded to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency for his consideration" and how "When the director amassed enough evidence from our reports, the agency blackmailed the government into increasing their own power. America is now in danger of becoming a police state." The footage in question features an interview with a certain Teutonic tongued mad scientist (American photographer David McDermott of *James Nares Rome '78* (1978) and Anders Grafström's *The Long Island Four* (1980)) with missing teeth who conducted, "the original cloning deception in the winter of '76." Upon the secret footage being shown, the scientist declares with a heavy German accent, "The Bogus Man wants to be elected. You must not vote for him" and then declares "I am in terrible danger. I can say no more." Unfortunately for the German-speaking scientist, his sinisterly brilliant mind has been taken over by the same supposed "sinister forces" that coerced him into cloning cuckold President Jimmy Carter. When asked if he feels guilty for his role in the cloning, the scientist becomes vaguely enraged and replies in an agitated fashion, "Guilty? Guilty? We have created a myth. It is a myth of passion...A reality of virtue of being a spore...A source of courage. Our myth is the nation. The greatness of the nation...This grandeur, we subordinate all the rest." When the scientist is revealed to have literal blood on his hands and then asked if he feels guilt for his involvement in the murder of Mr. Carter, he panics, babbles about a bunch of bullshit in German, and then nonsensically blows his brains out with a handgun in a somewhat tragicomic scene that is quite typical of the morally dubious humor that is oftentimes associated with the films of the Cinema of Transgression movement.

When the nameless/faceless CIA agent with the ski mask appears again, he sullenly declares regarding the footage of the exceedingly eccentric German scientist, "I know how you feel. When I first saw this footage, all I could say to myself was: 'Why did my eyes have to see this? Why?' You're probably asking yourself the same question...right now." From there, poorly shot footage of a morbidly naked unclad she-beast (portrayed by tragic tranny artist Greer Lankton in a genuinely disturbing fat-suit that s/he created herself) dancing next to the American flag is juxtaposed with what the man in the ski mask just said. Indeed, when the man says "Why did my eyes have to see this? Why?," it is also clear that he speaking for the filmgoer while they are watching the fiercely fat naked quasi-female freak, which is apparently one of the "Bogus Man" clones. As the CIA agent with the ski mask also reveals, each finger of Jimmy Carter, who is now quarantined as a result of contracting leprosy, was used to create

clones and “one of the clone presidents is now running our country and he is a Bogus Man.” Apparently, a group called the SLA was involved in a series of successful assassination attempts against Bogus Man clones, but each time they were killed they were immediately replaced with another imposter and no one knows about this because, “The media has imposed a blackout on any of these events.” As the man in the masked CIA agent proudly states regarding himself and the SLA, they have been “patriotically attempting to destroy all clones in order to snuff this hideously diabolical scheme to undermine the sanctity of our executive office. Nick Zodiac and I have risked grave hazards in order to bring these frightening facts to your attention. Now that you know this, it is your patriotic duty to do everything in your power to see to it that this man is not reelected president.” In the end, the ‘real’ Jimmy Carter (aka a man in a fairly cheap Carter mask) is portrayed having his fingers hacked off while he is tied to a pulsating vagina chair. In the very the last scene, the mensch with the ski mask is depicted merely smoking a cigarette in the shadows, as if telling the Bogus Man story gave him a mighty orgasm or something.

Notably, in his article *Notes on the Work of Nick Zedd*, legendary Lithuanian-American avant-garde filmmaker and underground gatekeeper Jonas Mekas wrote, “I discern a great sadness in Zedd’s work. Frustration and sadness. All those penises, shaking breasts, all those sad, bedraggled protagonists, the dregs or the glories of that world which populate his films, they all exude sadness. There is no ecstasy in those shaking breasts and penises, no joy. Nothing but frustration, sadness. Yes, I would even go as far as to say that they exude a longing for love, compassion: Longing for a lost paradise. A pretty hopeless passion, I presume, the world being as it is.” Of course, it seems Zedd sees things quite differently, or as the filmmaker once stated himself, “Genocide is brutal. In comparison, my movies are not at all brutal. They’re entertaining,” thus revealing that the auteur sees himself as a sort of harmless exploitation director. While I certainly agree with Mekas in that Zedd’s films are plagued with a certain fierce juvenile frustration, I think the filmmaker is more disgruntled than melancholic and is simply an uncultivated nihilist of the sexually dysfunctional sort who worships ugliness and actually genuinely believes that his films contain idiosyncratic fantasy utopias where people like himself feel free and at peace. As the sort of anti-messiah of 1980s America’s most prominent underground film movement who grew up in the relatively safe bourgeois realm of suburban Maryland, Zedd ultimately reflects the aesthetic and intellectual impoverishment of American culture in general, not to mention the fact that he is a true prodigal son of the American dream and thus dwells in a sort of nefarious nightmare of his own self-prideful making, which is arguably apparent in *The Bogus Man* via the mere visuals alone. Indeed, I would argue that Zedd is the true bogus man, as a sort of jovial executioner of art and beauty who has taken on the role of being an uncompromising ‘artiste,’ yet has done everything in his power to defile the fullest

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and most eclectic of all artistic mediums: cinema. As reflected in his remark, “I think everything is politics, life is politics, I see my films as entertainment not political tracts....I don’t know, it’s such a loaded term, ‘politics,’” Zedd also represents the nadir of cinematic agitprop as a man that is too hopelessly stupid and passive-aggressive to have any real message aside from advocating for destruction for destruction’s sake and nothing more. Still, I cannot completely loathe a filmmaker who apparently had a major influence on Christoph Schlingensief (in fact, during a Schlingensief retrospect at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC, three of Zedd’s films were also screened, demonstrating his imperative influence on the truly iconoclastic Teutonic auteur). Of course, as much as I think that Zedd is a pathetically perennially posturing dork, I can respect The Bogus Man and the filmmaker’s sentiments regarding the film that it is, “about how all the presidents of the U.S. have been puppets of the military-industrial complex. . . . it’s about how all these public figures who we’re supposed to admire are really clones of dead ideas which should be obliterated.”

-Ty E

THE WILD WORLD OF LYDIA LUNCH

Nick Zedd (1983)

Out of all the filmmakers in cinema history, very few probably can compare to Rainer Werner Fassbinder when it came to his personal love life being closely intertwined with the films he made and the people he cast in them. Indeed, Fassbinder largely made his quasi-psychedelic avant-garde anti-western *Whity* (1971) in the futile hope of vying for the attention of his married black Bavarian boy toy Günther Kaufmann by unsuccessfully attempting to turn him into a film star (the film was never even distributed theatrically and was rarely seen until relatively recently when it was released on DVD). Apparently, when Kaufmann fell out of favor at a certain point, Fassbinder decided to fire him from the lead role of *Der amerikanische Soldat* (1970) aka *The American Soldier* and replaced him with Karl Scheydt (though Kaufmann sung the film's theme song "So Much Tenderness"). Ultimately, Fassbinder would immortalize his rather rocky and one-sided doomed romance with his mulatto beau with his early masterpiece *Die bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant* (1971) aka *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, though he would obscure reality by transsexualizing himself and his ex-lover in Sapphic high-camp form. While Fassbinder's films and their background histories expose a seemingly romantically accursed man who could be both a venomous sadist and pathetically meek masochist, none of it quite compares to the patently pathetic and just plain repugnant lengths that the Cinema of Transgression anti-messiah Nick Zedd (*They Eat Scum*, *Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain*) went through to direct the superlatively shitty celluloid anti-love-letter *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* (1983). While I certainly try to stay away from any film that features anti-Renaissance woman Lydia Lunch, my curiosity got the best of me after watching the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier and learning that Zedd made the film to document the proudly cuntly eponymous subject breaking up with him. Certainly an (unintentionally?) ironically titled work that makes Lunch seem like a disgruntled toddler who made a seriously botched attempt at giving herself a haircut while high on Ritalin and makes Zedd seem like a obnoxiously self-pitying little poser punk cuck who probably enjoys it when fat women step directly on his testicles with high-heels, *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* is a truly cringe-worthy and *Fremdsham*-inducing example of phony yet pathetic art imitating phony yet pathetic life. As Lunch stated regarding the film in *Blank City*, "it's a homemovie of me walking around with a 'fuck off, leave me alone' cassette I sent him in the mail as a soundtrack. I was not happy with this." Despite being particularly pointless and of absolutely no interest to anyone aside from the 'artiste' and maybe the star, Zedd apparently felt it needed to be made, stating in Danhier's doc, "I wanted to put something on film that would capture that moment in time," thus revealing that he must be a morbidly masochistic

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mangina who seems proud of the fact that he was dumped by a decidedly dirty dame that has more testicular fortitude than him. Of course, the question is why would any self-respecting man want to make a film in tribute to his girlfriend breaking up with him featuring said girlfriend walking around aimlessly juxtaposed with an intricately bitchy audio breakup letter?! Apparently, the same sort of man that would somewhat ironically write like a teenage megalomaniac in a (micro)manifesto, "We violate the command and law that we bore audiences to death in rituals of circumlocution and propose to break all the taboos of our age by sinning as much as possible. There will be blood, shame, pain and ecstasy, the likes of which no one has yet imagined. None shall emerge unscathed. Since there is no afterlife, the only hell is the hell of praying, obeying laws, and debasing yourself before authority figures, the only heaven is the heaven of sin, being rebellious, having fun, fucking, learning new things and breaking as many rules as you can. This act of courage is known as transgression. We propose transformation through transgression - to convert, transfigure and transmute into a higher plane of existence in order to approach freedom in a world full of unknowing slaves." Indeed, quite tough words for a man that makes such mundane art, as the only subversive thing about *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* is that celluloid sped Zedd would actually try to pass off such a patently pathetic Super-8 turd as a real film.

Shot in Ireland and England in the summer of 1983 while Lunch was there with the intention of starring in some film directed by Irish experimental filmmaker Vivienne Dick (*She Had Her Gun All Ready*, *Guerillere Talks*), *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* ultimately seems like it was made so that Zedd could capitalize off of his (ex)girlfriend's marginal fame as a slutty punk anti-princess and so-called 'spoken word artist.' Indeed, as someone that made the dreadful mistake of reading Lunch's almost psychopathically written whore memoir *Paradoxia: A Predator's Diary* (1997) where she blames her degenerate vacuum-cleaner-peddling father and the fact that he supposedly molested her as the reason for her legs being perennially spread (or as she wrote herself in the book, "So twisted by men, a man, my father, that I became like one"), I immediately recognized her gratingly and distinctly emotionally vacant prose being vomited in the film. It is no surprise to most people that many artists tend to suffer from certain narcissism related personality disorders, but Lunch is a real unsavory crusty cunt with psychotic tendencies that is in a league of her own and Zedd's abortive 23-minute doc reveals why she somehow absurdly believes that she is god's gift to men and that the world revolves around her unflatteringly fat ass. Indeed, even the greatest of *menschen* are willing to suffer a certain amount of ceaseless bitching, self-absorption, and irrationality from the so-called fairer sex, but any man that would dare to date the less than lushly lecherous spunk-soaked (un)lady Lunch is a major masochist and sub-beta-bitch, among other things. After watching a mere two minutes or so of the shockingly plodding

pseudo-experimental doc, I was hoping that at least a dozen members of a biker gang would emerge from a dark alley and senselessly sexually ravage Lunch so that she would shut the hell up (but then again, she would probably enjoy it and I can only imagine the hideous hog sounds she makes during sex).

Undoubtedly, probably the only marginally entertaining aspect of *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* is that a large part of Lunch's rant involves bitching about whether or not the film is actually going to get made and that Zedd will have to fend for himself if he dares to take a trip over the pond to the UK. In fact, after listening to Lunch's seemingly lethal pathological bitching, the viewer is left shocked that it was, rather unfortunately, actually completed. Of course, the film was probably assembled in a couple hours while the 'actress' and 'auteur' were stoned as a result of sniffing glue, so that would probably explain why the film is so piss poor even by Zedd's standards (notably, when the film was originally released on VHS, the tape also included Zedd's short *The Bogus Man* (1980) as if to remind the viewer what kind of director he really is). In what is ultimately the most disgruntled pity party ever featured in cinema history, Lunch narrates via her self-described "a fuck-off-and-leave-me-alone recording" at the very beginning of the film, "Nick, nothing is working out as planned. I am in total despair...disrepair [...] I have had some of the grisliest days of my life wondering what to say or what to do to you." Of course, Lunch deceptively starts out the audio break-up letter in such a melodramatic way to portray herself as a damsel in distress so that she can kill Zedd softly and elicit phony sympathy for him while kicking him to the curb. In what might be considered borderline anti-Semitism by Hollywood standards, Lunch proceeds to bitch how her Hebraic manager Robert Singerman screwed her out of money and now she cannot pay for Zedd's trip as she apparently originally intended to. In a shot featuring Lunch lurking in a dark stairwell like a poser Goth dyke, we hear the pseudo-spooky slag complain, "I feel like fucking off in the distance for a six month disappearance. After I have been believed for dead, maybe my high hopes, ignorance, and trouble-making will be forgiven and forgotten. Maybe I will be dead. I am in a permanent state of morbidity." Somehow I doubt that, despite her pseudo-sullen bitch stares and Siouxsie Sioux haircut, Lunch is as morbid and hopelessly desperate as she portrays herself as, but I do not doubt that she is lying when she claims that she is comforted by, "the most morbid man the world has left alone" because, to quote her, "he is undoubtedly worse off than me," as she is clearly a sadistic bitch who creams her festering stained panties every time she experiences *schadenfreude*

If the doc has any comedic value whatsoever, it is when Lunch spews pseudo-poetic barf like, "I'm at a loss of everything. I can barely move. I do not want to think or do anything...lethargy and apathy have placed their print at the base of my brain. My heart ran away with the moon and I'm left ugly and lonely. Although I tried to pursue, I don't want to be left with the burden of finding

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us support.” Indeed, if there is anything more infectious than her daddy-defiled downy-bit, it is the acidic word viruses that she regularly excretes from her odious facial orifice. If Lunch has anything that can even remotely be described as an admirable attribute, it is that she actually admits that she is a nasty little narcissistic bitch, narrating in her anti-love-letter to avant-garde sped Zedd, “I am, due to necessity, becoming more self-concerned [...] do not misinterpret this for anything other than self-preservation.” As for her comatose romance with Zedd, Lunch finally gets to the point when she cynically states regarding their shattered love affair, “What once was is never again. How sad...but not really.” Somehow, I doubt someone like Lunch has the capacity to love, hence why she uses her gash to make cash. Apparently, Zedd is no more optimistic about their love affair, as Lunch complains, “Your last letter depressed me irreversibly...so callous yet so true.” Alluding to the fact that she is NYC’s most routinely used cum-dump, Lunch also complains, “Anyway, I really need some fucking time off, I feel like a goddamn rag that’s been used to wipe up after one man from the next. You may or may not understand this condition.” Of course, as a seemingly masochistic man who tends to date bargain bin anti-babes and derelict divas that have less than effeminate faces than he does, Zedd probably can understand Lunch’s curious condition in some strange way.

As to why Lunch is breaking up with Zedd, she states in a considerably cold and callous tone, “I guess I just want to be relieved of any and all responsibility for and of your emotional, physical, and financial well-being. I do not want the hideous suffocation of any sort so capable of being readily reproduced with any relationship, even ours. My selfishness exceeds itself at this point, but if it doesn’t I would simply be forced to wither and die away at the fatal hands of repetition.” Like so many little girls who dump their little beaus, Lunch claims that she still wants to be friends with Zedd, even declaring during a superficially misanthropic pseudo punk rant that surely screams of juvenile posturing and gross insincerity, “...above all, I hope you’re my true friend. My cohort...in this unending and ugly garbage bin—the world—where self-denial and self-suppression is the key taught since day one. We go against this grain and we live for truth. The ugly fucking truth.” Of course, Lunch would not know the “ugly fucking truth” if an AIDS-ridden Detroit negro-beast bit her on her saggy semen-soaked ass. At about the halfway point of the doc, Zedd himself makes an appearance and cuckishly admires Lunch as if he is completely infatuated with her essence while she chews on a piece of grass while looking at the filmmaker as if he is a sad and pathetic nuisance who does not have what it takes to truly pound her putrid puss. After Lunch self-righteously declares to Zedd, “I need a vacation from all the fucking hassle I’ve gone through to make some stupid dreams come true and I have been try...I am racked [...] You speak of the ruination of your life as you knew it; I speak of the death of mine,” the audio breakup letter has finally concluded and the rest of the film the viewer watches the eponymous gutter

grade femme fatale doing pointless things like aimlessly walking around and standing on street corners while locals look at her as if someone has flung a steaming pile of feces across her face.

In a vaguely intentionally humorous segment of the doc that clearly demonstrates that she lacks even the slightest inkling of maternal qualities, Lunch pushes a happy little boy on a swing while maintaining her signature disgruntled bitch facial expression. While the film does not feature the sort of nudity and lechery one would expect from a film titled *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* (indeed, I bet Zedd came up the title strategically in the hope that more people would buy it on VHS as a result of assuming it was a Kern-esque blue movie) and starring a street slut that has no problem sucking cock on film, the viewer can see Lunch's baloney nipples in a couple scenes where she is wearing a white dress that is far too elegant for such a rather unrefined gutter wench. In one of the few scenes where she actually seems genuinely happy and excited, Lunch plays catch with a dog who cutely sees her off when she rides away on a motorcycle with some random leather-clad lowlife. In what is indubitably the most pretentious scene in the film, Lunch smashes a small mirror that she is staring into, as if she hates being the female Narcissus of the Cinema of Transgression movement. In the end in a mellow yet vaguely Gothic pastoral scene that seems borrowed from Jean Rollin, Lunch enters a gated path, shuts said gate, and then disappears from the frame, thus assumedly signifying the end of her romance with Zedd. Notably, the doc concludes with the inter-title "Film Stolen by Nick Zedd," thus making it seem like that the film was actually indeed shot by Vivienne Dick (for anyone that has seen any of her short films with Lunch, the aesthetic similarities are unmistakable) and that Zedd stole the footage and merely edited it together. Either way, *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* is not the sort of film that any self-respecting auteur would want to claim as their own.

As someone that probably would not even have fucked Lydia Lunch when she was at her prime (sorry, but short and pudgy girls with shitty haircuts and attitudes really just do not do it for me), *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* proved to be nothing short of an abject aesthetic torture test of the odiously obnoxious sort and, in that sense, it may be the most obscenely offensive thing that Nick Zedd—a less than sophisticated would-be-agitator and failed enfant terrible who thinks it is edgy to film burn victims licking titties and ugly fat chicks displaying their damaged goods—has ever directed. Naturally, when an obnoxious and emotionally stunted hipster brat like Zedd actually attempts to direct a film with a semi-serious and even emotional tone as he did with his Lunch doc, it has uniquely ugly consequences, but I never expected what probably can be best described as a singularly pathetically incriminating and self-denigrating vanity piece (of course, it is impossible to gauge whose vanity piece it really is). As a fan of Kenneth Anger's *Eaux d'artifice* (1953) and early Werner Schroeter flicks like *Eika Katappa* (1969) and *Argila* (1969), I certainly have no problem with

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plot-less films featuring melancholy girls doing nothing but posing and walking around, but Zedd's film is about as aesthetically delectable as pus-covered potato chips. Apparently, Zedd has claimed that he made the film as a means to get revenge against Lunch for dumping him by making money off of her, yet the eponymous subject has mostly good things to say about the film and filmmaker, starting regarding the auteur and his debasing doc, "That he was bold enough to come and track me down anyway is a testament to his stubborn dedication to his art." Personally, I think the film is more of a testament to how lazy, pathetic, uncreative, parasitic, and stupid Zedd is as an artist, but I actually have respect for Lunch for agreeing to allow her bitchiness to be exploited in such a shamelessly sleazy fashion that demonstrates that the filmmaker probably could have had a serious career in reality TV. Indeed, if Zedd should be awarded any sort of honor for *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch*, it is that he has probably directed what is the most embarrassing film ever made and I cannot even blame an insufferable cunt like Lunch for dumping his weak ass. As can be expected, Zedd has only become all the more emasculated over the decades, as he is now a stay-at-home dad who spends his days doing laundry for his Mestizo son and assumedly taking orders from his much more masculine Mexican baby-momma. While I am sincerely happy for Zedd that he has now settled down and has his own family, I pray that he does not make a homemovie in tribute to them in the vein of *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch*. As for Lydia Lunch, thank god she has never reproduced.

-Ty E

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Nick Zedd (1985)

While most people would probably agree that suicide is no laughing matter, I think that it can be successfully made the butt of a joke if dope sick NYC hipsters, homo hustlers, and deformed drug dealers are involved, or so I learned while watching the seedy and sleazy yet equally silly and schlocky Super-8 celluloid quadriptych *Manhattan Love Suicides* (1985) directed by underground punk (anti)pornographer and prominent Cinema of Transgression figure Richard Kern (*You Killed Me First, Fingered*). A sort of absurdly tragicomic epic short film that is made up of four different separately shot yet thematically connected works, including *I Hate You Now* (1985), *Stray Dogs* (1985), *Thrust in Me* (1985), and *Woman at the Wheel* (1985), Kern's grotesquely goofy flick might be best described as the filmmaker's sort of neo-bohemian bargain bin equivalent to Pasolini's *The Decameron* (1971) as a perversely and sometimes perniciously playful piece made up of loosely connected petite vignettes that work as sort of nihilistic fables of the oftentimes savagely slapstick sort. In many regards a sort of who's who of the Cinema of Transgression movement as a work that features wayward acting performances from many of the main filmmakers of the scene, including Nick Zedd (*They Eat Scum, War is Menstrual Envy*), David Wojnarowicz (*Where Evil Dwells, A Fire in My Belly*), and Tommy Turner (*Simonland, Rat Trap*), and seems to almost parody the more pretentious works of the NYC underground scene, Kern's flick is literally and figuratively masturbatory celluloid trash that seems like it was directed by a brain-damaged teenage tweaker who stole his grandma's Super-8 camera, yet at the same time it is also a distinctly fun and shockingly memorable movie that reminds the viewer that even morally retarded perverts can create marginally notable lowbrow (anti)art. While it probably seems like a strange puffery-plagued bullshit comparison to make, *Manhattan Love Suicides* somewhat reminded me of David Lynch's masterful debut *Eraserhead* (1977) in a very particular way in that the film practically bleeds the foreboding essence of the specific zeitgeist and post-industrial hellhole that it so unflattering depicts while also focusing on the tragic young love in the big city and ultimately turning the morbid into the merry in the process. Indeed, I could not watch one second of Kern's film without fantasizing about NYC being nuked into oblivion lest the world be contaminated by its anti-culture of rampant rudeness and infantile narcissism, as the flick makes the rotten Big Apple seem like a third world metropolis for poser poets and third generation punks who spend all day walking around and doing literally nothing but trying to give off the impression of being hopelessly hip and angsty, among various other emotional contrivances that are most typically obsessed over by hormone-imbalanced teenage girls. Despite the film's superficially sensational porno-esque title, *Manhattan Love Suicides* is innately anti-erotic in tone, even

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though it features various unclad genitals from both genders, and contains a highly alienating post-counterculture Sodom where love is, at best, an intangible fantasy and adolescent delusion and, at worse, an all-consuming sickness that leads one to kill themselves in an incredibly stupid way that is hardly romantic. Of course, in Kern's film it is impossible to feel empathy for a single one of the characters who have committed suicide as the depictions of self-slaughter are so absurdly amateurish and over-the-top that one can only see it as morbidly mirthful in the most keenly kitschy sort of way. In other words, Kern's film makes Jörg Buttgerit's similarly themed work *Der Todesking* (1990) seem like a late era Bernardo Bertolucci flick by comparison.

The first and arguably the best chapter of the film is *Stray Dogs*, which depicts a tall young street hustler who literally falls apart at the seams because a particularly pompous middle-aged artist rebuffs his love to the point of sadistically mocking him for it. At the beginning of the segment, the insufferably pretentious-looking 'artiste' (played by real-life artist Bill Rice of countless cult flicks, including *Decoder* (1984) directed by Muscha and Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes* (2003)) is depicted walking around with a vaguely attractive woman with a dyke haircut, as if he hopes to obscure the fact that he has a fetish for young yet grizzled prick-peddlers (as revealed later in the film, the artist has an obsession with taking portraits of hustlers and painting hard cocks). When the woman points out a poster for a moronic looking Hollywood film and asks him, "Isn't this that movie about a guy that marries two pregnant women at the same time?," the revoltingly smug artist acts like a vainglorious queen and retorts, "I'm surprised at you" and then remarks regarding the lead actor of the movie, "He's a fat pig." After walking by a dog grooming place where the artist mundanely remarks, "I've got a dog like that" and his lady friend replies, "I do too," the two seeming mismatched love birds soon part ways. Unbeknownst to the artist, a side-piping 'stray dog' (artist and sometimes actor/auteur David Wojnarowicz) has been following him like a lost puppy and wants him to take him home and let him sleep in his bed, which he rather reluctantly does after the lanky hustler, who walks and moves in a strange robotic fashion like a sort of autistic fag Frankenstein monster, encircles him at an ATM and puts his arm on his shoulder in a considerably awkward fashion that gives the viewer the impression that he wants to bash his brains in. On the way back to the apartment, a sort of debauched junky skinhead licks his lips at the artist, which naturally causes the hysterical lovelorn hustler to get extremely jealous to the point where he violently pushes the young baldheaded bastard out of the way. When they finally get back to the apartment, the hustler's nose curiously begins bleeding after the artist rejects one of his various failed romantic advances. When the artist decides to work on a painting and fails to acknowledge that the stray streetwalker is still in his presence, the young man cries whilst staring out of a window and then proceeds to sit on a couch and masturbate like some cheap stripper slut.

Somewhat humorously, when the artist notices the hustler choking his chicken, he merely looks disgusted like he is watching a slimy homeless man defecating on his new carpet. After another failed romantic advance, the hustler begins to lose it, starts bleeding out his neck, and then collapses, which the seemingly sadistic artist finds rather funny. Upon finding a stack of portraits with a portrait of himself located at the top of the stack, the hustler becomes momentarily happy but that soon ends when he looks at the rest of the photos and discovers images of various other young male prostitutes, thus causing him to become so distressed that his arm inexplicably falls off. Although initially shocked upon seeing the hustler lying in a pool of blood on his floor, the artist decides to stop working on his painting and begins drawing a picture of the armless prostitute while he is dying, thus his death via heartbreak is not completely in vain. After all, countless great works of art are the product of lovelornness and romantic despair, even if *Stray Dogs* is not one of them.

The second segment of the film, *Woman at the Wheel*, is arguably the weakest of the four parts and is largely the brainchild of female lead Adrienne Altenhaus and depicts how some women might be driven to suicide if they incessantly date superficially 'misogynistic' assholes who insist on driving their cars, especially if they are automobiles that they bought with their own money. Indeed, when Altenhaus shows up at her lover's pad and proudly declares while sounding like a doped up 15-year-old regarding her new automobile, "Hey, man, checkout my new car. Like it? Let's go for a drive," she is forced to get in the passenger seat because her bastard neo-bohemian beau (Nick Zedd sporting a singularly retarded large hat that unequivocally proves that he is one of the greatest fashion victims to have ever graced the streets of NYC) insists on driving. While driving the car, the bitchy boyfriend mocks Altenhaus' earrings and shouts naughty things at her like "Fucking bitch...Fuck off! I'll drive the way I want to," so the female heroine eventually gets so enraged that she repeatedly calls her gutter-hipster lover a "fuckhead" and then subsequently throws him out of her car while giving him the middle finger emoji and joyfully telling him to shove it up his ass. When Altenhaus decides to get an upgrade in terms of a boyfriend and hooks up with a generic Wall Street preppie type who looks like he regularly blows men in urine-drenched public bathrooms, the pseudo-suave gentleman proves to be just as adamant driving her car and treating her like a worthless piece of trash as Zedd's character. Of course, Altenhaus is even more vicious with her preppie beau due to her past experiences with dysfunctional romance and even has the gall to say to him, "I don't even know why I hang around with you, you prick. You've got a little prick, too, you asshole," thus revealing that the female protagonist is probably a little bit sexually repressed and would benefit from a cock being rammed down her throat. Needless to say, Altenhaus is not too happy when her boyfriend frankly says to her, "Your fucking attitude stinks [...] I don't wanna hear this fucking shit anymore about your car. I'm driving it. It's my car

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when I'm driving it, so quit talking about it." When the preppie later attempts to drive her car, Altenhaus decides to whack him on the head and leaves him for good. At this point, Altenhaus becomes so fed up with men that she begins dressing like a nun, so naturally when a gang of belligerent young men approach her car and shout obscenely crass things like "Hey baby, suck my dick" and "I got a dick to suck" she becomes murderously unhinged and decides to run them over during a moment of PMS style road rage. While one of the men is lying lifeless on her windshield, Altenhaus suffers a sort of ominous Carnival of Souls-esque orgasmic hallucination where she imagines herself in an orgy with the chaps she has just killed, suffers a sort of psychosexual panic attack, and then crashes her car into a wall. While one can only speculate, maybe if Altenhaus had found the right cock for her cracked cunt, she would have not met such a patently pathetic end.

The third segment of the film, *Thrust in Me*, is notable for being not only co-written and co-directed by the Cinema of Transgression's self-appointed Führer Nick Zedd, but also featuring the trash auteur in dual acting roles, which include a too-cool-for-school hipster deadbeat and his morbidly depressed girlfriend. Although I was not particularly surprised since he looks like a sort lesbo fangirl for the New York Dolls, it should be noted that Zedd seems to have a natural affinity for gender-bending. Seemingly disillusioned about her relationship with her hotheaded hobo-like hipster boyfriend, Zedd-in-drag decides to read a book entitled *How to be Your Own Best Friend: A Conversation with Two Psychoanalysts* (1971) by Mildred Newman, but that soon proves to be too banal for the dejected young lady, so she tosses the book aside and decides to do some less light reading and begins flipping through Hebraic frog Émile Durkheim's classic text *Le Suicide* (1897). Of course, the woman opts to commit suicide, but her boyfriend has no idea as he is too busy assaulting redneck pimps and attempting to look oh-so rebellious and edgy by kicking around trash in the streets to be around to stop her. Indeed, after tearing off the cover of a kitschy looking book entitled *Collection of Selected Prayers* (1975) by Allan Kardec featuring an image of Jesus Christ and then taping it onto her bathroom wall, the woman undresses, gets in her bathtub, and kills herself by slitting her wrists. When the boyfriend gets back home after aimlessly strolling the streets of Manhattan like some would-be street celebrity who is a legend solely in his own mind, he immediately decides to take a shit and while doing so is completely oblivious to the fact that his girlfriend is lying dead in the bathtub right next to him. After defecating and subsequently failing to find toilet paper, the man looks around and does not think twice about wiping his ass with the Jesus book cover that his loony lover taped to the wall. Of course, upon locating the book cover, the man soon notices his dead girlfriend and is quite startled by what he sees, though his subsequent response to seeing the corpse of his beloved is hardly predictable. In fact, the man is so excited by what he sees that he whips out his already erect

member and begins mouth-fucking the cold wet corpse. After ejaculating what seems to be enough cum to fill a two liter milk carton, the man seems way more happy and fulfilled than before his girlfriend killed himself. In the end, the man stands on the roof of his apartment building while the corpse of his girlfriend lies on the ground in a black plastic bag next to him. Notably, when *Thrust in Me* was screened at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, it was condemned as being misogynistic by various cunt carpet-munching feminist groups, so Zedd responded by writing a relatively admirable defense to his detractors entitled *Dear Feminists* where he argued that, by committing necrophilia with the corpse of his drama queen girlfriend (who was certainly attempting to commit emotional blackmail with her suicide), the character in his film had broken “the shackles of self-deceit which constitute the sentimentality of romantic love.” Indeed, as described in *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, in his decision to take pleasure in his girlfriend’s death as opposed to enduring internal pain, Zedd’s character was able to remain, “mental[ly] independent.”

The fourth and final segment of the film, *I Hate You Now*, is notable for featuring real-life lovers, junky filmmaker Tommy Turner and his wife Amy Turner, as a degenerate dope-peddling pair that seems to have a wild sex life as demonstrated by the fierce fucking that the two do at the beginning of the piece. Notably, it is only revealed a couple minutes into the segment that the nameless boyfriend is not your typical gutter-level drug dealer, as half of his face is terribly deformed. Possibly due to the fact that he probably has a serious inferiority complex as a result of being teased during his entire life for having a fucked up face, the boyfriend acts somewhat cold to his girlfriend, even though she does everything for him, including cooking him fried eggs and helping him to roll joints that he sells to lowlifes on the street. When not peddling cheap weed or penetrating his girlfriend’s blonde gristle-gripper, the boyfriend practices bench-pressing an incredibly low amount of weight that could not be more than a mere 30 or 40 pounds. When her boyfriend goes out to sell some dope to some random street scavenger, the girlfriend gets depressed upon looking at a photo of her beau, thinks about what she can do to get him to show her more love and affection, and then comes up with the less than bright idea to burn her face with a iron so that she and her lover will somehow be closer due to being mutually disfigured. Of course, being largely visual beings who consider physical attractiveness to be one of, if not the most, important attribute a woman can have, it is doubtful that the boyfriend will be pleased with his beloved’s thoughtful sacrifice. Unfortunately, when the boyfriend gets home and sees that his girlfriend’s face is almost as revoltingly warped looking as his own, he pushes her and then screams in her face, “What have you done to yourself? Oh no, what the fuck!?” thus demonstrating his decided dissatisfaction with her rather hasty and insanely irrational decision. Upon doing a couple seconds of deep thinking, the man decides to kill himself by loading his barbell with all the weights he owns

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and then dropping it on his neck. Needless to say, the woman is not too happy when her boyfriend kills himself, especially after the sacrifice she has made for him, so she somehow manages to burn herself alive by lighting a small frying pan on fire and then standing over it. Certainly, in its own morally repugnant and innately illogical way, *I Hate You Now* is surely the most overtly 'romantic' segment of the entire film.

Notably, when interviewed by *The Quietus* in 2010 and told by interviewer John-Paul Pryor that, "I find *STRAY DOGS* the most bizarre of all your films," Richard Kern replied in an insightful manner where he proved that there was actually a point to the degeneracy of his film, stating, "That was one of the *MANHATTAN LOVE SUICIDE* series, which were all about getting so hung up on your relationships that you just couldn't do anything else. When you're young you are so overwhelmed with all these emotions that are centered on your relationship – your life at that age is not about what you are doing but about who you are going out with. All the movies in that series were about people who just get so hung up on it all that they kill themselves. When you are older, it seems like the stupidest thing to be suffering so much: to feel that you have to die for love." While I would argue that most of the segments of the film are about deleteriously deranged infatuation as opposed to actual genuine love that demonstrate the tendency of romantic relationships to be unequal and one-sided, the anti-erotic omnibus flick is arguably Kern's most mature, sensible, and thematically eclectic cinematic work to date as a playful piece of ludicrously lo-fi slapstick cynicism that might be described as the ultimate celluloid punk (anti)romance. Indeed, the film features a message about young mad love that is not all that different from Alex Cox's *Sid and Nancy* (1986), albeit directed in a strikingly technically inept way that is comparable to Sid Vicious' bass-playing or Darby Crash's howling and growling (speaking of the suicidal Spenglerian sod, a poster of Penelope Spheeris' classic doc *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981) is featured prominently in the *I Hate You Now* segment). In the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Céline Danhier, musician J.G. Thirlwell, who composed most of the music for the film, stated regarding *Manhattan Love Suicides*, "The no-budget part of it provides the humor, but also all of the emotions that are portrayed in those films are so exaggerated and so over-the-top it's almost Dadaist." Indeed, in terms of its idiosyncratic and sometimes idiotic use of largely silent humor, Kern's film is probably the closest thing to a punk *L'Age d'or* (1930), albeit with fittingly piss poor direction and nil production values.

As a man that would oftentimes let other people, especially Lydia Lunch, takeover his films and do more or less whatever they wanted to, Kern may be the ultimate 'anti-auteur' as far as subversive underground filmmakers go and this is especially apparent in *Manhattan Love Suicides*. In fact, in the doc *Blank City*, Zedd acts as if the *Thrust in Me* part is completely his creation, stating like a true elementary school iconoclast, "I thought I would make this film *THRUST*

IN ME in which I play a female as well as a male. I thought it might offend people. When I put up posters for it with pictures of myself in drag, they were defaced and I thought that's great. That's exactly the response I want. I want to piss off the homophobes." Somewhat ironically, the acting performances of filmmakers like Zedd, Turner, and Wojnarowicz are actually more entertaining and unforgettable than the majority of the films they themselves directed, thus hinting that Kern's greatest talent might be in locating the specific strengths and talents of his collaborators and getting them to expose them on film (as he has oftentimes revealed on his VBS.TV show Shot By Kern, Kern uses a similar technique when he photographs unclad girls, who he encourages to expose their true characters and emotions while exposing their tits and pussies). Indeed, Kern must certainly have some special talent if he managed to accomplish the seemingly impossible task of causing a decidedly deplorable anti-diva like Ms. Lunch to shine on the seedy silver screen, which is especially apparent in *Fingered* (1986) where the perennial whore does what she does best by getting fucked by an abhorrent asshole and acting like a classless cunt who is about to blow a fuse because she has not gotten her hourly heroin fix.

While he would later steal his art-trash-porn aesthetic for his own films and even give the Cinema of Transgression auteur a cameo role in his somewhat disappointing second feature *Super 8½* (1994), Bruce LaBruce wrote an article in 1990 for the Canadian 'cappuccino communist' film magazine *CineACTION!* entitled *Right Wing Chic: Adam Parfrey and R. Kern Fingered!!* under his supposed real name Bryan Bruce where he accuses Kern (as well as subversive Jewish publisher Adam Parfrey of Feral House fame) of being a 'fascist' of sorts, as if fascists make films about loose ladies like Lunch being violently finger-fucked and a beta-male bitch being fucked both anally and orally by two chicks wearing strap-on dildos in an exceedingly emasculating threesome, among other things, but I digress. The only marginal praise that LaBruce gives to Kern in the article is for *Manhattan Love Suicides*, which he describes as his "best film," but not without including the snarky little pink Gestapo remark that, "...we can't ask for too much. We are well prepared for his later forays into misogynist and homophobic territory." Notably, LaBruce begins his article with a pseudo-sensational quote by Kern from *Film Threat* where he sensibly stated, "If you have a black guy in a movie and he does something stupid you run the risk of being called a racist. . .Due to the feminist movement any reflection on, of, or about woman is going to be judged more critically than the same reflection about men. It's purely a matter of hypersensitivity. For example you would think everyone at the Village Voice was a black, gay, Jewish woman – such is their degree of hypersensitivity to certain subjects." Indeed, one of Kern's most blatant and admirable rare true strengths as a filmmaker is that he not only dares to depict the hard truth, but also portrays it in a preposterously exaggerated way, hence why *Manhattan Love Suicides* features a young homo hustler (as portrayed by a real-life ex-hustler!)

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who is looking for a 'daddy' figure and lethally lusts after a middle-aged man, as well as depicts a woman using suicide as a form of ruthless emotional blackmail against her beau, among other things that expose Manhattan for the socially malignant human zoo that it is. Of course, one should not expect anything less from a man who was almost as pathetically debauched as the people he cinematically depicted, or as he once stated regarding his films, "There were sexual elements, there were drug elements. For some movies I paid people. I offered them \$15 cash or \$15 worth of drugs. A lot of people would do the drugs and then we'd shoot the movie. During the shooting of the movie, I was so wasted on smack and ecstasy all the time." Most importantly, *Manhattan Love Suicides* is an unequivocal piece of true trash art because it makes no lie about the fact that NYC is a degenerate cultural wasteland where cheap heroin, diseased and festering cunts, and visceral ultra-violence are the only form of solace from living in such a uniquely ugly and culturally retarded urban sewer.

-Ty E

POLICE STATE

Nick Zedd (1987)

While I have certainly met cops that were insufferable dickheads and megalomaniacal control-freaks, I find few things more innately impotent and pathetic than people that have a pathological hatred of police officers, especially when these morons sprinkle their irrational hatred with pseudo-moralistic self-righteousness while being degenerates themselves who almost seem jealous of the largely imagined power and control that they believe the men in blue have, not to mention the fact that these people are usually candy ass pussies who lack both the testicular fortitude and self-discipline that it takes to be a cop, especially in some urban multicultural sewer like NYC. As demonstrated by the recent collective hysteria of the mainstream media and the useful idiots that are always more than willing to believe every absurd specially tailored lie that is spoon-fed to them by said media as a result of a handful of negro thugs that were killed after making a series of superlatively stupid choices when dealing with the police, cops have become a sort of easy and highly trendy scapegoat for rampant 'urban' criminality and a drastically declining nation that is on the verge of becoming a third world anarcho-tyranny of the racially chaotic sort. Indeed, only in America can a seemingly half-retarded black thug who sold drugs to his own people and lived a completely parasitic existence become a sort of saint because he died under dubious circumstances upon being taken into custody by a multicultural black-white group of cops, but I digress. Aside from rappers, the most moronic and anti-intellectual cop hatred probably comes from the various outmoded punk movements that sprung up over the decades, so naturally it should be no surprise that para-punk trash filmmaker Nick Zedd (*Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain, Totem of the Depraved*)—a man that depicted a dystopian world where a group of braindead punk rock fans cause a nuclear meltdown and turn NYC into a punk rock (or "Death Rock" as it is labeled in the film) dictatorship via his debut feature *They Eat Scum* (1979)—would ultimately sire what is perhaps the most silly and senseless anti-cop film ever made.

Indeed, Zedd's 18-minute black-and-white short *Police State* (1987) is a fiercely philistine anti-police piece that attempts to be ten times as hardcore as *Cool Hand Luke* (1967) yet ultimately feels like the *Cinema of Transgression's* answer to *Police Academy* (1984), with the rambling auteur portraying arguably the most unsympathetic 'victim' of police brutality in cinema history as an arrogant posturing punk who ultimately gets castrated after unwisely running his mouth to every corrupt cop that he encounters at a police station upon getting arrested for mocking a fat ass polack pig. Of course, as someone that would much rather see Zedd being beaten to a bloody pulp by a gang of corrupt cops than any of his actual films, the short acts as the next best thing, not to mention the fact

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that it features the 'subversive' left-wing trash auteur uttering the word "nigger" against a negro cop despite being an ostensibly 'anti-racist' film that pays tribute to chocolate police brutality victim Michael Stewart. While there is certainly more potent and visceral anti-cop hatred in Raymond Pettibon's "Police Story" artwork for his brother's punk/hardcore band Black Flag than Zedd's film in its entirety, *Police State* benefits from being a fairly humorous, if not oftentimes unintentionally so, black comedy that begs to be taken seriously (as Zedd once stated of his film, he hoped it would "show people what cops are really like"). What the film really shows people is the sort of senseless passive-aggressive behavior that might lead someone to get their ass kicked by a pissed off cop who has had a bad day and hardly wants to deal with the rude and belligerent behavior of a smartass little twit who thinks being uncooperative with an officer of the law is some sort of serious political statement.

Partly inspired by the Operation Pressure Point gentrifying program that took place in Alphabet City in 1986, the film's genesis was described by Zedd as follows in the doc *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, "In order to, supposedly, clear the neighborhood of drug dealers and other unwanted elements, the mayor of New York instituted the policy to make it more desirable for up-scale members of the community to move in. The government sent in police officers and subjected us to harassment. I decided to satirize their behavior in the movie *POLICE STATE*." Not just one of the many schlocky celluloid examples that proves Zedd suffers from Persönlichkeitsentwicklungsstörung, the film also demonstrates that the garbage auteur is a proud masochist with a pathetic victim mentality, which is arguably the most entertaining thing about him and his films as *Police State* readily demonstrates. Among other things, the film is also notable for being a rare example where Zedd actually attempted to make a movie with something resembling a cohesive narrative that features a discernible beginning, middle, and ending that even concludes with a fun twist of sorts. Of course, there is not one single second of the film where Zedd does not seem like a posturing, overly self-conscious, and insufferable twat who wallows in negative attention and certainly deserves the beating he gets from a couple corrupt cops who cannot tolerate being around some smug young bum who is even more arrogant and self-righteous than they are. As *Police State* unwittingly reveals, cops and criminals are oftentimes two sides of the same coin.

After an opening title sequence where some degenerate (apparently, Zedd himself) spraypaints "State" under a "Police" decal on a squad car, Nick Zedd is harassed by a stereotypical big dumb stupid polack policeman named Sergeant Wojynski (Willoughby Sharp of Zedd's *Whoregasm* (1988) and *I Was a Quality of Life Violation* (2004)) when he dubiously walks down a ghetto alley for seemingly no reason at all. Not surprisingly considering the goofy way the punk speaks and walks, the cop thinks Zedd is a junky and demands to see his arms, so the protagonist shows his arms and says to Wojynski after revealing he has

no track marks in a smartass fashion, "See. I'm not a liar...you are." When the cop asks to see his ID, Zedd stupidly replies in a fashion that makes him sound like a 13-year-old girl who has just discovered the Sex Pistols, "I don't got any ID, but if I did, it would be fake." Of course, when the cop asks Zedd his name, he lies and says his name is "Frank Serpico." Zedd also gives the fake names "Michael Stewart" and "Fred Flintstone," so the cop asks him in all sincerity if he is a "fucking faggot." When Zedd foolishly calls Wojynski a "Motherfucker," Wojynski hilariously knocks him on his ass and angrily states to him, "Look up here! You wanna fuck with me? I'll fuck with you. You hear me, asshole? Now, where do you live?," to which the protagonist pathetically replies in a fashion that makes him sound like one of the eponymous teens from *Beavis and Butt-Head*, "86 Fuck You Street." At this point, Wojynski informs Zedd, "Ok, you got yourself a trip to the station, smart ass," and proceeds to brutally beat up the protagonist to let him know who's boss. Since Zedd proceeds to egg on the violent cop despite the brutal beating he has taken from him as a result of running his big mouth, one can only assume that he is a masochist who rather enjoys getting stomped on by a boorish polack pig like a discarded cigarette butt. When a young negress asks Wojynski, "What are you hitting him for?," the cop calls her a "stupid nigger" and threatens to take her back to the station while she describes him as a "fucking pig" under her breath. As Zedd will soon discover, black cops can be even more corrupt than their white comrades

When Sgt. Wojynski takes Zedd back to the station, he gives his superior, a nameless bald negro Lieutenant (Flip Crowley), a police report stating that the protagonist has been arrested for, "assaulting police officer, suspicious conduct, creating a disturbance, inciting a riot, resisting arrest, malicious mischievous, and being a faggot." Wojynski also falsely accuses Zedd of being a racist and calling someone a "nigger," which offends the spade to the point where he asks his stupid Slavic underling, "You enjoy saying that word, don't you?" and "Tell me, did he call you a dumb polack?" When Wojynski eventually convinces the Lieutenant that Zedd supposedly called someone a nigger, the Uncle Tom cop becomes exceedingly enraged, screams in the face of the protagonist, "Alright, you slimy little motherfucker... You're gonna wish you had never been born," and beats him to a bloody pulp. Although the negro lieutenant forces Zedd to sit in a chair, a morbidly obese toothless guido detective (played by junky degenerate Rockets Redglare of *Jim Jarmusch's Stranger Than Paradise* (1984) and *Down by Law* (1986)) soon walks into the holding room and demands that he get on a table. When the detective says to Zedd, "You're a faggot, you know that?," the protagonist retardedly retorts like a bullied toddler, "takes one to know one, fat boy," thus resulting in him getting his ass beat by a somewhat effete lard ass thug with a disgustingly nasally NYC accent. Ultimately, the detective puts a cigarette in Zedd's ear after pretending to be nice to him to by giving a quick drag of said cig. Unfortunately for Mr. Zedd, the detective is just too smart

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and sadistic for him.

After the detective leaves, the goofy jigaboo lieutenant comes back and yells at Zedd, "Get down off that table, faggot!" and then once again forces the pathetic punk back into the chair. Of course, when the debauched detective returns, he demands that Zedd get back on the table and screams, "Tell me where that dope is or you're one dead little girl." Naturally, Zedd refuses to comply since he does not have any dope, so the detective informs him, "you had your chance and blew it" and once again leaves. When the negro lieutenant comes back and yells at Zedd for standing on the table again, Zedd gets the gall to sarcastically ask the unintentionally silly shinebone cop, "Why do they call you nigger?," which does not sit too well with the racially sensitive black pig. Indeed, instead of forcing Zedd to sit in the chair like before, the lieutenant breaks it over his head. Determined to beat Zedd's ass during a 'fair' fight, the lieutenant even takes the young punk's handcuffs off and begs him to hit him, but the pussy protagonist decides to do nothing aside from spitting in the colored cop's face (certainly, one must give credit to Zedd for daring to spit in a spade's face in a film). When the detective comes back, he brings a revolver with him and informs Zedd that by the end of their meeting, he will get the protagonist to blow his own brains out with the weapon. Somewhat curiously, the detective also demands that Zedd pull down his pants and expose his genitals (thankfully, Zedd does not show hismmm. Under the serious threat of castration, Zedd still refuses to tell where the drugs are and has his cock chopped off as a result. While the detective hands him the gun in the hope that he will blow his brains out as a result of being a man that no longer has his manhood, Zedd ultimately uses the weapon on the cop by shooting him in the head and then subsequently manages to escape, or so the viewer assumes. In the end, the film closes with a shot of a "missing" flyer with a pic of Zedd and an advertisement of a cash award of \$50,000 for anyone that manages to locate him. As for Zedd, he is now both literally and figuratively ball-less as opposed to just the latter.

Undoubtedly, the 'brilliance' of *Police State* lies in its seeming 'realism.' Indeed, I can certainly imagine some fat stupid polack or negro cop calling Zed a "fag" or "faggot" and treating him like the obnoxious narcissistic little cunt that he is. Not surprisingly, Zedd has bragged about spray painting not one but two cop cars for his film (apparently, his cinematographer botched filming him vandalizing a patrol car the first time he did it, so they had to do it again), or as he stated in an interview in *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant while sounding like some over-the-hill Dennis the Menace wannabe, "So there are two cop cars driving around with 'Police State' on the back. That was good advertising for the film. I felt good doing it, it was like the feeling you get when you shoplift an expensive department store and you're not sure if you're gonna get caught or not." Notably, South African auteur Aryan Kaganof would later sample the graffiti scene for his experimental documentary

Night Is Coming: Threnody for the Victims of Marikana (2014), which could not be any more different from Zedd's film, even if it does have an overt anti-cop message. It seems the film has an extra close place in Zedd's heart, as he cites it as inspiring him to not to off himself by putting a bullet in his brain, or as he stated in his Deathtripping interview, "When I did POLICE STATE I thought I'd get it done in six months and instead it took me two years. For two years it was really bothering me, because I felt this need for it to come out, but in a way it was good because it kept me from killing myself. I mean, I was so depressed during that time that if I hadn't shot POLICE STATE I might have killed myself. I wanted to do something great before I died. I wanted to finish it and have it out to prove I could do a film like that, so it kept me alive – the same thing now with this novel I'm writing – it keeps me from giving up, knowing I have something to complete." Indeed, for better or worse, it certainly seems that Zedd literally lives to make films, even if they are not exactly good or thoughtful ones.

If we can believe him, according to Zedd, *Police State* is banned in degenerate liberalized Aryan countries like Sweden where hardcore porn has been perfectly legal for many decades (I guess those culturally cuckolded Swedes cannot bear to watch a film where the classic colloquial racial slur "nigger" is used multiple times). As Zedd bragged in *Deathtripping* regarding the film's infamy, "It makes people uncomfortable, especially in Germany for some reason. [laughs] I think the cops didn't like it too much in Sweden – the police raided the apartment I was living in and took me to the station with all the movies and they told me I might be facing four years in prison." While I find Zedd's story to be a tad bit dubious, I certainly do not doubt his resentful hatred towards cops, so it should be no surprise that he followed in the same slave-morality oriented path as Spike Lee in *Do the Right Thing* (1989) by paying tribute to ghetto negro martyr Michael Stewart. Admittedly, I have to give Zedd credit for saying of Lee, "Spike Lee I think is a pint-sized racist [...] He's really lucky to get so much money to make bigoted films. He can get away with it because he's black." Additionally, *Police State* demonstrates that Zedd has a better knack for cinematic comedy than Lee who, despite his incessant crying about Hollywood using racial stereotypes, has directed a number of films that feel like neo-minstrel shows, not to mention his incessant utilization of flagrant anti-guido sentiments as reflected in his various wopsploitation flicks like *Jungle Fever* (1991) and especially *Summer of Sam* (1999) despite the fact that he has largely stolen his aesthetic from proud Sicilian-American filmmaker Martin Scorsese. Indeed, an example of comedic genius in *Police State* is the casting of demented junky/dope-dealer turned actor/comedian Rockets Redglare—a morbidly obese guido slob who was born addicted to heroin (his mother was a junky and his father was a small-time mafia career criminal) and who some believe was Sid Vicious' Jewess girlfriend Nancy Spungen's real killer (Redglare was the infamous punk rock couple's drug

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dealer)—in the role of a savagely sadistic police detective who gets a thrill out of castrating young punks. Of course, any film featuring polack jokes also cannot be all that bad. Naturally, the real weakness of *Police State* is Zedd's prosaic would-be-sassy anti-cop sentiment, which is about as subtle and sophisticated as a coat-hanger abortion, but such juvenile antics are certainly to be expected from the little mensch that brought the world such intolerably kitschy trash anti-classics as *Tom Thumb in the Land of the Giants* (1999) and *Lord of the Cockrings* (2001). For all Zedd's anti-police hatred, I find it particularly strange that he would relocate to Mexico City, which is famous for its conspicuously corrupt Meŕtizo cops, but I guess he hopes to be a big fish in a very small and dirty garbage-covered pond.

-Ty E

WHOREGASM

Nick Zedd (1988)

Somewhat hilariously, while Cinema of Transgression anti-messiah Nick Zedd (*They Eat Scum*, *Electra Elf*) went of his way to attack certain famous American avant-garde filmmakers, most specifically Structural filmmakers associated with Jonas Mekas' inner-circle, in his not-quite-infamous piece of aesthetic agitprop *The Cinema of Transgression Manifesto* (1985) by denouncing the supposed "laziness known as structuralism" and "profoundly undeserving non-talents like Brakhage, Snow, Frampton, Gehr, Breer, etc," he would later eventually attempt to create his own experimental work in a fairly similar vein to the films of some of these filmmakers. Indeed, Zedd's 12-minute piece of explicitly childish (anti)pornographic collage *Whoregasm* (1988) resembles the sort of cinematic work experimental film maestro Stan Brakhage (*Dog Star Man* series, *Mothlight*) might have assembled had he suffered severe brain damage in a car wreck, became obsessed with collecting badly damaged vintage stag films, and tried in vain to reinvent himself as the most insipidly iconoclastic filmmaker in cinema history. Comprised of vintage erotic found footage, scenes of the director having unsimulated sex with his girlfriend, outtakes from the proudly obnoxious art-trash filmmaker's surprisingly narratively conventional black-and-white anti-cop short *Police State* (1987), and a fairly complimentary art-rock noise score by Sonic Youth, the film might be Zedd's most overtly experimental, abstract, and visually and structurally anarchistic cinematic effort to date, but it also exposes the fact that the aberrant auteur is a one-note celluloid transgressor who merely makes films to offend, as if there is any great merit to merely offending for offending's sake. *Whoregasm* is also notable for being one of a couple of films where Zedd appears in drag, though instead of attempting to suck a limp dick like he did in Richard Kern's wholly horrendous 5-minute short *King of Sex* (1986), the filmmaker uses his mouth to molest the lips, tits, and twat of his dead-eyed junky then-girlfriend Susan Manson, who returns the favor while her beau is sporting a tacky cheap dress that probably no real-life crack-addled drag-queen would ever be caught dead in.

Following in the filmic footsteps of a couple of the shorts featured on the 'legendary' *The Cinema of Transgression Vol. 1* (1986) VHS tape, including *Mutable Fire* (1984) directed by Bradley Eros (aka 'Erotic Psyche') and *Shithaus* (1985) directed by rocker Jon Spencer (of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion), *Whoregasm* demonstrates that Zedd must have been desperate for film ideas (and of course money and fresh film stock), as he might have gone so far as founding a certain somewhat mythologized film movement, but it was not long before he was parroting the ideas of others filmmakers associated with said movement. Shamelessly advertised upon its release with a flyer with the sensational quote, "Banned in 13 countries!!! Banned forever in Canada!!! Seized by Mon-

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treal Customs!!! The film *The Voice* won't dare review!!! The most obscene film ever made," and an image of naked painted dwarf and matching Dalmatian dog that was stolen from German-Jewish dyke Ulrike Ottinger's aberrosexual epic *Freak Orlando* (1981), the short might be Zedd's most innately experimental work to date but it is also certainly one of his most derivative as a mess of an anti-movie that looks like it was hastily assembled over an afternoon while the director was high on speed because he wanted to meet a deadline for an upcoming film festival. A rather fittingly titled work in that sense that it is probably Zedd's most obvious and desperate attempt to both literally and figuratively whore himself out for his proudly obnoxious (anti)art, *Whoregasm* is ultimately a pseudo-sleazy botched celluloid orgasm directed by a man whose idea of sexual pleasure is downing drag-queen dongs and being defecated on by dirty diseased dames with tasteless tit tattoos like the one that appears in the film.

Beginning with a drawing of a brown eyeball that looks like it might have been smeared with feces, *Whoregasm* seems to immediately warn the viewer that that a tidalwave of sloppy steaming celluloid shit is about to be rudely excreted onto their eyes. As is standard procedure for a Nick Zedd flick, the film wastes no time flashing swastikas for no apparent reason, albeit this time the glorious Hakenkreuz is connected to a crucifix as if to insinuate Christianity is 'fascistic' or some other absurd asinine bullshit belief that is typically spouted by sub-literate left-wing lemmings that worship at the golden calf of passive nihilism and/or see Jello Biafra as a sort of Christ-like figure. Not surprisingly, an imagine in the spirit of the degenerate art of kraut commie John Heartfield (born Helmut Herzfeld) featuring Adolf Hitler with a skull-like face subsequently appears. From there, things get extra degenerate with an image of a tranny proudly showing off their cock as well as footage of Susan Mason pulling a bloody tampon out of her seemingly festering cunt (notably, later in the film, you can see blood oozing out from between her legs, but that does not stop Zedd from chowing down on her meat-curtain). In a demonstration of Zedd's assumed approval of racial cuckoldry and miscegenation, vintage footage of a white whore sucking a darkie dong is intercut with pseudo-psychedelic footage of a guy riding a horse. Arguably the most infamous part of the film is of an assumedly doctored photograph featuring a masculine man with an erection standing behind a little boy who has his pants pulled down and his bum right in front of the muscular homo's member as if he is about to violently deflower the tiny tot. After various gay and NAMBLA-approved images of aroused naked man, scenes of a used up old whore showing off her somewhat large tits and similarly sized derriere are juxtaposed with color outtakes from Zedd's *Police State*, including the filmmaker being arrested. Of course not film set in NYC would be complete without a random appearance from a panhandling negro hobo, who is holding a sign that curiously reads, "Except for the grace of god there stand I. I'm blind. Please buy a pencil." I certainly hope some bought the poor superstitious spook a nice pen-

cil, as I doubt he would want to be associated with such a film, especially without getting paid for his efforts.

Although segments of the footage are featured inter-spliced throughout the entire film, almost the second entire half of *Whoregasm* is dedicated to a fairly static and largely anti-erotic 'sex tape' featuring Zedd and his then-lover Ms. Manson. Judging by the footage, one can only assume that Zedd enjoys every single sex act aside from actual standard fucking. Indeed, dressed in full-drag with blood red lipstick and a flamboyant dress, Zedd seems like he is attempting to duplicate Manson's appearance to the point where they seem like they inspired deranged British tranny Genesis Breyer P-Orridge's Pandrogeny Project where the seriously sexually confused musician attempted to become a single entity with his lover Lady Jaye by mirroring her physical appearance (while P-Orridge went so far as getting serious cosmetic surgery done, the results were quite dubious to say the least). Due to the fact that he never asserts himself by actually penetrating her pussy with his prick and dedicates virtually all of his mostly frivolous fucking to meek and passive acts like showing Manson's foot in his mouth and performing cunnilingus on her, Zedd seems more like a lesbian than a heterosexual man, at least as far as his oralcentric approach to carnal knowledge is concerned. In a shot that is probably symbolic of Zedd's somewhat preternatural sexuality, Manson gives him a blowjob while he has his dress hiked up. Towards the end of the film, shots of Manson fellating Zedd are intercut with a shaking hand holding a revolver in an erratic montage sequence that seems to demonstrate Zedd's clichéd affinity sex with death. In the end, the film comes full circle by concluding with a shot of the same eyeball that appeared at the very beginning of the short, albeit this time drenched in red as if to compliment Zedd's fetish for menstrual blood.

It is probably worth noting that *Whoregasm* 'heroine' Susan Manson dumped Zedd after starting a lurid love affair with a lesbian and moving to Los Angeles to pursue a career in pornography. Seeing as Zedd has never paid any of his gutter superstars to star in his films, one can only assume Manson eventually came to the important epiphany that, if she was going to bear the shame of sucking cock and exposing her beaver on film, she might as well get paid for it. While I cannot be sure, I can only assume that *Whoregasm* is not unlike Zedd's mind-numbingly banal pseudo-experimental documentary *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch* (1983) in that the film was made as a sort of revenge against his ex-girlfriend for dumping in. Not surprisingly, Zedd was involved in much more disgusting sex with Manson than the fairly tame fucking that is depicted in his film, or as the auteur hilariously wrote in his book *Totem of the Depraved* (1996) in regard to the last night he 'made love' with his sweetheart before she left his sorry ass for good, "When it came time for me to take a piss, she opened her mouth and a hot stream splashed down her throat. She inhaled lines of dope as I crouched over her and allowed my bowels to empty a load of shit onto her

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back. I then smeared the soft brown excrement over and around and onto her two big breasts as she pulled me down onto my back and straddled my head with her legs. A shower of shit blasted out of her rectum onto my face as I opened my mouth to taste the warm oozing substance. I then violently vomited onto her face and licked the puke and shit up in order to gag and vomit again. I felt totally clean. My sides were empty and covering the woman I loved. We rolled around and covered ourselves in vomit and shit and continued to lick each other's assholes until our tongues were sore. I snorted two bags of coke and puked all over a copy of the Good News Bible before passing out. When I awoke the next morning, the color TV and both VCRs were gone. Sue left a note saying she wouldn't be coming back." It is only speculation, but I am going to have to assume that Miss Susie Poo decided that Zedd's flagrant fecal fetish was the last straw as far as their relationship was concerned. In *Totem of the Depraved*, Zedd also notes that Manson found vaginal sex painful due to psychological issues, which is certainly an important insight to have when watching a film that is so exceedingly anti-erotic as *Whoregasm* where it seems like the dope-addled autistic American grandson of Georges Bataille decided to make a home-movie of his weekend excursion with a punk hooker and then edit together the footage as final project for some preposterous postmodern art class.

Apparently, a ten-minute segment of *Whoregasm* featuring Ms. Manson masturbating with money was lost forever when a shipment of Zedd's films was seized by the Canadian government in the spring of 1988 just before the filmmaker arrived to put on a showing of his work in Montreal. Additionally, like his subsequent sci-fi schlock-art epic *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992), the short is meant to be screened via two-screen double project, yet the VHS and DVD versions only feature a single screen. While British-born Zedd proponent Jack Sargeant wrote in his book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008), "Zedd still screens *WHOREGASM* as a two screen double project, and one video edit of this exists under the spurious title *FUCK YOU (ASSHOLE VERSION)*. A single projection version of *WHOREGASM* has also been released on video. Neither of these versions are particularly satisfactory, illustrating the major problem with video when film goes beyond its traditionally prescribed limits," I certainly cannot imagine the dual screen version of the film being much of an improvement and I say that as someone that appreciates works like Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966), Werner Schroeter's *Argila* (1969), and even Brian De Palma's *Dionysus in '69* (1970). Of course, double project is only one of the many outmoded cinematic gimmicks that Zedd has in his figurative auteur toolbox, with avant-garde collage films featuring pornographic imagery not exactly being something new or innovative and with *Whoregasm* oftentimes feeling like a poor punk's take on the 'avant-garde home-videos' of French actor and sometimes experimental auteur Pierre Clémenti, especially his magnum opus *New Old: Chronicles of the Present Times* (1979). Of course, Zedd's film seems

like bratty child's play and truly masturbatory juvenilia compared to the celluloid homo Hades conjured up by Luther Price in his experimental work *Sodom* (1989), which utilizes gay pornography in a sort of metaphysically diseased fashion.

Ironically, despite trashing the Structural filmmakers in his 1985 *Cinema of Transgression* manifesto, Zedd has acknowledged that one of his greatest influences is the Viennese Aktionism and the movement's main filmmaker, Austrian-Jewish Structuralist auteur Kurt Kren, films embody a true cinema of transgression and do not resort to the uniquely unrefined post-Kuchar grade school shock values that the Lord of the Cockrings (2002) director is infamous for. Personally, as far as his more experimental cinematic works go, I think that it is safe to say that Zedd's most original and idiosyncratic film is his early short *The Bogus Man* (1980). Additionally, aside from being fairly derivative and unoriginal, *Whoregasm* suffers from lacking the energetic spirit of Zedd's early works like *They Eat Scum* (1979) and *Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain* (1983), but then again he was addicted to 'Cocteau's kick' when he was making it, hence his particularly unprolific output during that time. After feces-flinging punk rock messiah G.G. Allin's somewhat anticlimatic death, Zedd wrote about his quasi-compatriot, "G.G. went out of his way to be hated. He spread hatred and stupidity everywhere he could. One theory advanced for his psychopathology was a childhood of sexual abuse. Who knows? Furthermore, who cares? I consider it a joke that I'm even writing about him. His minimal talents were focused on a crude form of infantile self-promotion manifested in public filthiness." Somehow after watching *Whoregasm*, I get the impression that Zedd was merely projecting his own anti-qualities onto Mr. Allin.

-Ty E

WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY
WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY

Nick Zedd (1992)

After a number of years of total inactivity, Cinema of Transgression anti-messiah Nick Zedd (*The Bogus Man*, *The Wild World of Lydia Lunch*) attempted to make a comeback of sorts with his first feature-length film in almost a decade. Indeed, the moronically titled cinematic work *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992) aka *War Is Menstrual Envy: Parts I, II, and III* is undoubtedly Zedd's own sort of equivalent to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972) as a sometimes oneiric flick that is not only special effects heavy, but also the director's most epically artistically ambitious work to date. Indeed, one can certainly tell while watching the film that Zedd intended it to be his magnum opus, as well as a work that would demonstrate his maturity as both an artist and filmmaker. Of course, Zedd's film is no masterpiece like *2001: A Space Odyssey* or *Lucifer Rising* as it is basically a convoluted collection of autistic-garde petite vignettes of the intentionally obscenely obnoxious sort that are only loosely connected by an ostensible 'antiwar' theme, thus demonstrating that the auteur might have suffered some serious brain damage due to decades of drug abuse (as he described in his book *Totem of the Depraved* (1996), Zedd was addicted heroin around the time he made his last film *Whoregasm* (1988)). Once described by Zedd himself as set, "In November 2092, following the death by radiation poisoning of 9/10ths of the human race. A cult of sea worshipers appears led by a human deity known as Shiva Scythe. Forming a telepathic alliance with the world dolphin population, they bring about the destruction of Christianity and Islam" (notice Zedd does not have the testicular fortitude and/or intelligence to mention Judaism, even though it is an antiwar film and Zionism is directly responsible for a good percentage of the war and chaos that has plagued the Middle East since at least since the end of the Second World War), *War Is Menstrual Envy* features a uniquely ugly mutant chick with a shaved pussy and bright orange skin who fucks a giant octopus, a large Jew pretending to be a barbaric redneck biker having his head blown off with a shotgun by a female bartender, an apocalyptic soldier sporting a gas mask who drives a bayonet into the chest of a naked baby boy, and porn history's most infamous Jewess porn star making love to and licking the heavily scarred skin of a real-life burn victim, among other things that demonstrate why the filmmaker is and has always been a one-note wonder who lives to attempt to shock and disgust and not much more. Once apparently described by banker turned onetime Warhol superstar Taylor Mead (*The Nude Restaurant*, *Lonesome Cowboys*) as, "The greatest underground film ever made," the aberrantly kaleidoscopic 16mm celluloid work is notable for being a rare truly 'cinematic' Zedd flick in that it has a strong sense of *mise-en-scène*, which is in stark contrast to the auteur's absurdly amateurishly directed early features like *They Eat*

Scum (1979) and Geek Maggot Bingo or The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain (1983). Indeed, almost completely devoid of both plot and dialogue, *War Is Menstrual Envy* is comprised of would-be-iconoclastic themes and imagery that seem like the creation of a perniciously petulant child who masturbates to the thought of his cinematic miscreations giving his bourgeois parents a heart attack. Seeming somewhat like the result of the Viennese Aktionists attempting to direct a bargain bin antiwar film for Disney starring the descendants of the cast of Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), Zedd's film is about as intellectually stimulating as Brazilian tranny porn, albeit with more cheap makeup and smaller penises (Zedd's included!). In other words, *War Is Menstrual Envy* oftentimes feels like the patently preposterous result of some trash auteur like John Waters or Andy Milligan developing delusions of grandeur and attempting to reinvent themselves as a real serious 'artiste.'

While only 77 minutes long, *War Is Menstrual Envy* could have easily been cut by two-thirds of its running time and still have the same impact on the viewer, thus providing strong evidence that spending most of his (non)career making short films really has warped Zedd's view of nuance when it comes to the art of feature filmmaking (notably, the film was shot in three different segments, which were later combined into one fairly fragmented feeling film). Indeed, it takes about seven minutes before the title screen appears, as the film begins with a sort of pseudo-existentialist epilogue that seems to attempt to abstractly communicate internal pain and sexual dysfunction (Zedd's Cinema of Transgression frenemy Richard Kern aka 'Nazi Dick' once described the film as being, "set in the future, where there's no water, women are sluts, and men are fucked up sexually"). Beginning with a shot of two heavily bandaged individuals that resemble mummies lying in awkward positions on a sterile looking floor and quivering in seeming abject pain in an all-white room that is almost painful to look at juxtaposed with discordant noise, the film immediately gives the viewer the impression that the filmmaker is an emotionally and sexually wounded cripple of sorts, or at least he seems to be (sub)consciously communicating as such in a fairly heavy-handed way. Eventually one of the mummies begins twitching rapidly and then attempts to kiss and hump the other one, though he eventually opens his mouth and spews a bunch of blood out of his mouth as if he has just drained his comrade dry of their precious vital fluids. After spitting out the blood, the mummy (played by a young twink-ish Guido named Steven Oddo, who Zedd once mundanely stated of that, "He likes to mutilate himself in public. I don't know why...His body is covered with scars...") is featured completely unwrapped (Zedd makes sure to get a close-up of his flaccid member) and then proceeds to slowly and anticlimactically carve "WAR" into his chest in tribute to the first word of the film's title. After the mummy epilogue, a sort of second title sequence begins featuring quasi-apocalyptic soldiers wearing gas masks and riding horses while attacking some unseen enemy in a sunny desert. In a seeming

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self-tribute to the director's ostensible iconoclastic powers as a filmmaker, the title sequence concludes with "Directed By Nick Zedd" superimposed over an atomic mushroom cloud. Unfortunately, things get a little bit less impressive from there, though the film does have its undeniable unforgettable moments.

If *War Is Menstrual Envy* has something resembling a lead heroine, it is indubitably Cinema of Transgression anti-diva, performance artist, and sometimes filmmaker Kembra Pfahler (a strange lady that is probably best known as being the lead singer of the cult glam-punk-shock-rock band *The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black*), who is completely naked for almost the entire film aside from generically vulgar and intentionally unflattering body-paint that would probably appeal to fans of *Gwar*. In what is indubitably the most tedious, tasteless, and just plain stupid section of the film, Pfahler is featured 'swimming' in an aesthetically grating 'green screen' (chroma key) scenario where her completely hairless body is superimposed over deep sea stock footage that was seemingly stolen from some sort of National Geographic documentary. Sporting nothing but black thigh-high vinyl boots and a cheap neon yellow wig, Pfahler stands (and sometimes lies) in place while barely pretending to swim by motioning her arms and legs in a goofy lackluster fashion. Clearly Zedd must have been on a minuscule budget that forced him to use all of the footage he shot because the scene features moments where Pfahler unwitting breaks down the fourth wall by staring straight into the camera and then proceeding to blatantly talk to someone (probably Zedd) off-screen. Despite being about twenty minutes long, the segment is comprised solely of the 'surreal swimming,' with the climax of the scene being Pfahler pretending to fuck a gigantic octopus (it should be noted that she was once married to a Japanese fellow, so that might explain her octopus fetish). Indeed, at one point Pfahler has one octopus tentacle inside her freshly shaved pussy while another one is penetrating her mouth, thus demonstrating that she is probably a fairly sexually versatile woman who lets none of her wet fleshy orifices go unused. Of course, the raunchy orange-skinned lady also grinds her shaved main vein against one of the tentacles, which is depicted in a close-up scene of playfully orgasmic octopussy perversity. Needless to say, none of this is even remotely erotic unless you are someone that gets off to associating vaginas with seafood or are into women that look like they were run over with an ice cream truck that was driven by members of the *Cockettes*, though the segment is certainly as contrived and tedious as the average porn flick.

In the only segment of the film that vaguely resembles any sort of traditional movie in the sense that it involves human-beings interacting in their own typical social habitats, Jewish artist and sometimes filmmaker Ari M. Roussimoff (who directed *Shadows in the City* (1991), which Zedd appears in and was the last film to star NYC underground filmmaker Jack Smith of *Flaming Creatures* (1963) fame) absurdly portrays a violently intolerant GG Allin-esque biker-like redneck brute who sports black 'tough guy' sunglasses and a denim vest with a

confederate flag patch and proceeds to hassle every single person he encounters while getting drunk at a seedy dive bar for sexually deprived (sub)human misfits. Indeed, when a cheaply tattooed fellow named 'Tattoo Mike Wilson' stares down the baldheaded biker due to his obnoxious behavior, Roussimoff rudely throws a bottle cap at his face. While Roussimoff pushes around both men and women, he decides to flirt with a sickly looking tranny (Ron Knice) that is dressed like a slutty 1920s flapper and looks like he is about to die from AIDS. Of course, the big butch bro has not clue that the pseudo-chick actually has a dick, so when the flagrantly faggy flapper randomly whips out a big black strap-on dildo (!) and then proudly waves it around like it is an impressive weapon of sorts, Roussimoff naturally goes completely berserk and begins choking the seemingly physically and mentally sick shemale creep. Clearly highly intolerant of violent rowdy meatheads causing trouble in her sleazy taproom, a dyke-like barmaid whips out a shotgun and blows Roussimoff's head off in what is easily one of the most hopelessly schlocky head-exploding scenes of cinema history. After the Hebraic GG Allin gets his head blown off, a blonde female dwarf appears out of nowhere and begins destroying everything in sight while standing next to his corpse in a scene that is almost entirely in aesthetically odious color negative film. Eventually a sort of male sex slave sporting nothing but a gimp mask appears and attempts to clean up the menacing she-midget's mess, so the extra little lady responds by proceeding to hurl pieces of garbage, including broken violins and smashed records, at her assumed sensual servant. During this segment, scenes from Zedd's previous experimental film *Whoregasm* are randomly spliced in, including a shot of the filmmaker in drag sucking on his onetime-girlfriend Susan Manson's extra bloody used tampon.

After a collage of sorts that was clearly stolen from a nature documentary that features time-lapse footage of decaying animal corpses and dying flowers (it should be noted that Zedd has an affection for neo-Marxist French Situationist filmmakers like René Viénet and Guy Debord because they utilized the postmodern technique of *détournement* and made films by simply reworking other people's footage to give them new meaning while simultaneously destroying their original cultural contexts), the viewer is exposed to sentimental footage of a happy baby boy, who is soon senselessly murdered by an ominous soldier sporting a gas mask who carefully impales the little lad with a bayonet. From there, the soldier walks around post-apocalyptic ruins whilst admiring the dead baby on his bayonet as a flag with a swastika-like symbol waves in the background (of course, this symbol is featured prominently throughout the film). After the sort of pseudo-spiritual soldier scene, the viewer is bombarded with a series of vintage stock still photographs of men whose faces were horribly disfigured in war, as well as footage of deformed fetuses in jars full of embalming fluid. Not surprisingly, things only get uglier from there as the next scene begins with a color negative close-up of Zedd's unimpressive cock. Completely naked aside

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from a whorish leopard print fur coat and blue body-paint, Zedd resembles a sort of radically repellent drag queen from 1950s B-movie sci-fi purgatory in a scene that is juxtaposed with some long-winded negro preacher proselytizing about the supposed greatness of Martin Luther King, Jr., among other mostly mundane things. In an assumed juvenile attempt to make this largely senseless scene as aesthetically unpleasing as possible, Zedd opted to have the camera incessantly zoom in and out during the entire segment, thus making it quite the relief when it finally ends. During this scene, anti-diva Kembra Pfahler and some other equally grotesque beings covered in body paint dance around Zedd as if they are having some sort of LSD-inspired Cinema of Transgression pow-wow. Somehow, I got the impression while watching this segment that Zedd secretly longs to be a decadently glamorous coke-fueled runway model (as the auteur bragged in *Totem of the Depraved*, Annie Sprinkle once landed Zedd the less than dignified job of posing for a couple porno mags).

In what is indubitably one of the best segments film, Kembra Pfahler and singularly grotesque porn star Jewess Annie Sprinkle attempt to sexually seduce an extra frigid middle-aged commie officer in a scenario that seems like what might have happened if Hebraic exploitation hack Herschell Gordon Lewis attempted to remake Dušan Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971). Like with the bar scene, Zedd decided to ruin this segment by juxtaposing it with outmoded rap music that makes the filmmaker come off as a dorky teenage negrophile fraud who is trying to annoy his parents. Set in a room in the spirit of Ulrike Ottinger's sardonic postmodern dystopian flick *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *The Image of Dorian Gray in the Yellow Press* aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* where the walls are covered with newspaper wallpaper that has a SS Siegrune symbol spray-painted on it, the segment depicts the stoic Stalinist officer trying in vain to keep his composure while Ms. Sprinkle shoves both her cow-like mammary glands and a strap-on dildo in his face while Pfahler simultaneously acts like a ADHD-ridden grade school student that is on the verge of suffering a major epileptic fit. After the girls get done rubbing their largely nasty naughty bits in the poor commie comrade's face, the film cuts to a shot of a bronze statue of Hindu Tantric deity Shiva that is sitting on top of a table that is right next to a completely motionless man that is completely covered in bandages and is reclining in a sort of campy throne. After the establishing shot, Pfahler appears out of nowhere in a blasphemous nun outfit that exposes her fairly firm boobs and then begins carefully taking off the bandages on the man in an almost ritualistic fashion, thus eventually revealing that he is a burn victim (played by a real-life burn victim who was simply credited as 'Ray'). Of course, in his largely moronic dedication to shocking the viewer, Zedd made sure to zoom in on the poor fellow's heavily scared skin, so it should be no surprise that things naturally get more revolting from there. Indeed, after Pfahler sloppily dresses the burn victim in a poor fitting military uniform,

Sprinkle abruptly appears and begins undressing Ray (who she apparently was dating in real-life at the time because she wanted to experience sex with all different kinds of people, including burn victims). In a fairly stupidly disgusting yet strangely tender scene that indubitably demonstrates that she wallows in even the most grotesque of flesh, Sprinkle proceeds to lick Ray's scars and eventually rub her titties in his face while he delicately kisses all over her body with a certain degree of sensitivity that betrays his fairly horrific appearance. As if to brag that he has thoroughly despoiled the eyes of the viewer by the end of the film, *War Is Menstrual Envy* concludes with a couple images of red bloody eyes, with the credits scene featuring graphic medical footage of a badly damaged blue eye being repaired during surgery.

Quite hilariously, when I mentioned the title of *War Is Menstrual Envy* to a certain less than liberal lady friend of mine, she remarked that Zedd must be a faggot because no sane woman likes having periods and that it is a patent absurdity that any man would pretend to glorify such a thing. Of course, considering the film features a clip where Zedd sucks on a bloody tampon as well as another clip of Susan Manson's blood-stained ass crack and genitals, one can only assume that the seemingly sexually autistic auteur has a menstrual blood fetish that he is absurdly attempting to project onto both the viewer and his supposed enemies (aka masculine males), hence its senselessly sensational title. Undoubtedly, the best thing I can say about Zedd's flick is that it is probably the most intricately infantile cinematic work that I have ever seen, as if it was directed by the sexually abused bastard brood of Mayan Deren and Russ Meyer, albeit nowhere near as important as either of those two filmmakers' contributions to cinema history. Personally, I see *War Is Menstrual Envy* as the last major work of the Cinema of Transgression movement (though Tessa Hughes-Freeland's rarely seen experimental Georges Bataille adaptation *Dirty* (1993) is also a similarly important work from the later period of the movement). It should also be mentioned that Zedd was really into the writings of kosher commie crackpot Wilhelm Reich at the time he made the film, thus exposing the sort of senseless pathological sexual degeneracy that the psychoanalyst's pseudo-scientific writings attempts to validate in their promotion of a completely unrealistic pan-sexual utopia. Indeed, the only thing one really learns by watching the film is that Zedd is unequivocally a sexual cripple and anti-artistic miscreant who gets a kick out of making his own personal fetishes seem as radically repellent as possible. It might interest viewers of the film to know that despite the fact Zedd hoped that he would be able to sexually defile his two main lecherous leading ladies during the production of the film, both of them apparently turned him down, or as the filmmaker complained himself in his book *Totem of the Depraved*, "I thought if I made a movie where everyone was naked I might get laid. The film, entitled **WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY**, would deal directly with the misdirection of my sexual energy. Two of the actresses on the project might have wanted to fuck me but for

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some reason didn't feel right about it. I thought if I played an octopus, I might be able to rape Annie Sprinkle but Kembra Squalor insisted on doing the scene instead and would only allow her husband to rape her. I thought up another scene where I'd play a mummy and have sex with an old girlfriend, but she had band practice the night we were supposed to do it so I had to give the scene to two other actors. I pray I will find some way to get laid before this film is done since it is costing my investor so much money." Of course, had Zedd invested more time and effort into creating a more cohesively constructed cinematic work than trying to get into the seemingly rancid panties of his raunchy female stars, he might have made a film that elevated celluloid trash to something worthy of being described as art.

In *Totem of the Depraved*, Zedd demonstrates his sheer and utter cultural retardation by making the boldly moronic blanket statement, "European 'culture' is all second hand, and occasionally people with money there pay people like me to bring them the real thing from America so they can decided what next to imitate," as if *War Is Menstrual Envy* was not a sort of failed culturally mongrelized attempt to make 'Viennese Aktionism for Dummies.' Of course, in general, Zedd is hopelessly American to the core, as a culturally and spiritually vacant artistic defiler and proud philistine who considers rap (which plagues his film) to be a legitimate form of art and whose sole goal as an artist seems to be creating the ugliest and most abhorrent films imaginable. Indeed, while it might be a extremely low-budget Super-8 film about corpse-fucking that features a guy sucking on an eyeball in a sensual fashion, not to mention a graphic unsimulated scene where a farmer kills and skins a cute bunny rabbit, a film like Jörg Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* (1987) at least has a certain provocative poetic beauty to it that is nowhere to be found in any of Zedd's films. What makes *Nekromantik* such an intriguing and somewhat singularly provocatively poetic work is that it manages to make the revolting and grotesque aesthetically pleasing while *War Is Menstrual Envy* manages to accomplish the total opposite by making pussies and titties seem like highly deleterious mutant animal parts. After watching Zedd's film, I can truly see why the filmmaker has at various times referenced wanting to commit suicide, as only a hopelessly lost, passive-aggressive nihilist who lives to figuratively shit on the world with his one-dimensional celluloid ugliness could have sired such a superficially sick flick.

Somewhat absurdly, Zedd apparently believes that *War Is Menstrual Envy* has influenced various popular Hollywood cult films, including Abel Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant* (1992) and Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994), with the filmmaker once even complaining like a resentful social justice warrior, "I wish that I was making more money, I mean, it's annoying when these people take my ideas and make money off them. Meanwhile I'm still trying to scrape together enough money to make another movie. It's kinda unjust, you know." Indeed, Zedd believes that his film influenced *Bad Lieutenant* because both flicks feature

the same Schooly-D song, but Ferrara had already used music by the rapper for his previous film *King of New York* (1990), which was released two years before *War Is Menstrual Envy*. While Zedd once starred in and assistant directed a short entitled *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (2001) based on the classic philosophical novel of the same name written by Friedrich Nietzsche, it is quite evident from the filmmaker's statements and artistic sentiments that he not only suffers from the sort of slave-morality that the Teutonic philosopher ruthlessly condemned, but that he is also plagued by a sort of soul-decaying passive nihilism, or as avant-garde gatekeeper Jonas Mekas once wrote in his essay *Notes on the Work of Nick Zedd* in regard to the totally tactless trash auteur, "I discern a great sadness in Zedd's work. Frustration and sadness. All those penises, shaking breasts, all those sad, bedraggled protagonists, the dregs or glories of that world which populated his films, they all exude sadness. There is no ecstasy in those shaking breasts and penises, no joy. Nothing but frustration, sadness." Indeed, Zedd epitomizes the worst attributes of the archetypal anarchistic rebel that Nietzsche venomously criticized in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883-1891) and in no where is this more apparent than in *War Is Menstrual Envy*. Of course, I would rather re-watch Zedd's film over the latest Hollywood blockbuster any day, but that is because I found it fleetingly humorous in a fashion not unlike encountering a schizophrenic black bum verbally assaulting petrified white liberals on a city sidewalk or a morbidly obese retarded man attempting to hit on a pretty yet prissy chick who is trying her darnedest not to reveal her sheer and utter revulsion at the fact that such an unwitting romantically forward fellow would dare to even think he was capable of getting with her. If there ever was a film that unintentionally exposes the importance of seemingly unrelated things like masculinity, spirituality, and artistic self-restraint, it is undoubtedly *War Is Menstrual Envy*, which was not coincidentally directed by a passive-aggressive girly man who has been known to engage in cross-dressing and banging drag queens, among other rather unflattering things that might lead one to suffer the grand disillusion that human warfare is the natural result of manly men wishing that they had the capacity to hemorrhage from their genitals for a couple days each month without dying of blood loss.

-Ty E

ECSTASY IN ENTROPY
ECSTASY IN ENTROPY

Nick Zedd (1999)

Not long before he ruined his entire cinematic aesthetic and dedicated himself to digital diarrhea and created the unbelievably embarrassing public access TV series *The Adventures of Electra Elf* (2005–2010) with his obscenely obnoxious and anything-but-sexy then-girlfriend/co-conspirator Reverend Jen Miller, Cinema of Transgression would-be-demigod Nick Zedd (*The Bogus Man*, *Whoregasm*) provided fairly good evidence that he might have actually grown up and seriously matured as a filmmaker, at least aesthetically speaking. Indeed, with his proudly degenerate experimental dystopian epic *War Is Menstrual Envy* (1992), Zedd demonstrated that he had finally developed some serious sense of mise-en-scène and tableaux construction and disposed of the intentionally absurdly stupid storylines that were typical of his early features like *They Eat Scum* (1979) and *Geek Maggot Bingo* or *The Freak from Suckweasel Mountain* (1983) so that he could put most of his emphasis on siring a singular aesthetic. Unfortunately, the film also demonstrated that Zedd's taste in politics and music had become all the more innately infantile and just plain downright repugnant, thus hinting that all of his drug intake during the late-1980s rotted at least part of his brain. In his final film that was actually shot on real film as opposed to digital video, *Ecstasy in Entropy* (1999), Zedd ultimately managed to prove that you can unequivocally be simultaneously cinematically refined yet totally and unbelievably politically and morally retarded. Somewhat misleadingly described by Zedd himself as being about, "a group of intellectual warrior lap dancers struggling to overthrow the authoritarian structures of corporate state capitalism," the 17-minute short was shot on black-and-white 16mm film stock (though a couple scenes at the very end are in color) and is notable for being the filmmaker's sole work that was funded with a grant (Zedd was awarded a Chicago Underground Film Festival Completion Grant, though apparently the flick, not unlike a lot of Jim Van Beber's films, still remains a perennial 'work-in-progress'). Unquestionably one of Zedd's more ambitious and artistically accomplished cinematic works to date, *Ecstasy in Entropy* is probably the most strange and idiosyncratic stripper flick since Stephen Dwoskin's haunting feature-length avant-garde masterpiece *Dyn Amo* (1972). Additionally, the film is probably the first (and last) 'avant-garde fat acceptance' flick as a work inhabited by beefy busted up meta-buxom old bitches who are well past their expiration date in terms of sex appeal, though I did not doubt that they are at their peak in terms of their carnal technique as chicks that give off the impression that they have sucked thousands upon thousands of dicks. If you ever wondered what porn star Jewess Annie Sprinkle might look like pregnant, Zedd's film is probably the next best thing as the veteran fuck flick heroine has a massive protruding gut that is almost as large and saggy as her legendary cantilever bust.

A piece of vaguely cultivated celluloid kitsch with semi-serious yet ultimately horribly failed agitprop ambitions, *Ecstasy in Entropy* is like an unholy aesthetically autistic marriage between old school film noir, the 1960s pseudo-Bergmanesque proto-pornographic exploitation flicks of Joseph W. Sarno (who incidentally ghost-directed *Sprinkle* in her arguable most famous film *Deep Inside Annie Sprinkle* (1981)), the slapstick titty titillation of Federico Fellini, and the primitive pre-Morrissey works of Andy Warhol, especially the screen tests (notably, Zedd also payed 'tribute' to Warhol with his previous short *Screen Test 98* (1998) aka *Why Do You Exist?*). Featuring a decidedly debasing soundtrack that includes tedious tunes by old school degenerate jazz, Burt Bacharach, and hip-hop producer Chilly Chill, the film was made in the spirit of Zedd's filmmaking approach *The Theory of Xenomorphosis* (1998) and the auteur's Mexican baby-momma Monica Casanova gave a good idea of the film's inner logic (or lack thereof) when she stated, "Through the vehicle of innovative movies like his two-screen *WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY* and low budget 16mm gems like *ECSTASY IN ENTROPY*, Zedd employs shock value in the service of xenomorphosis, a term he coined to describe what happens when the 'domain wall of an alternate universe smashes your reality tunnel and neurological re-engineering occurs.' In these films a 'union of opposites' provokes cognitive dissonance or atavism causing viewers and participants to change from within." Of course, the only real change that the film will inspire in someone is a boner if they happen to have a fetish for fat beat up babes with big saggy butts and bomsoms that resemble ancient mutant cow udders. Indeed, a flagrantly seedy yet extremely silly cinematic work that thankfully manages to unwittingly undermine any political message it might have due to the sheer stupidity of its sometimes cringe-inducing content, *Ecstasy in Entropy* is another rude celluloid remainder as to why Zedd's lack of taste in women is only transcended by his lack of wisdom and insight when it comes to serious socio-political matters. A sort of *A Gun for Jennifer* (1997) for art fags on acid, the short is, not unlike the unclad trashcan divas that it stars, the sort of thing you might be embarrassed to let your friends know that you indulged in, even though you might find yourself revisiting it at some point.

Beginning with a credit sequence that is in the form of raunchy publicity shots that were taken by Cinema of Transgression filmmaker Tessa Hughes-Freeland (*Baby Doll, Dirty*), the film then cuts to a shot of lapsed Warhol superstar Taylor Mead (*The Flower Thief, Lonesome Cowboys*) lurking in a dark, seedy, and somewhat claustrophobic strip joint where infamous porn star Hebrewess and self-described "post-porn modernist" Annie Sprinkle (who previously appeared in *War Is Menstrual Envy*) is attempting ply the money out his hands by fondling and exposing her super saggy jumbo jugs, which are notable for having rather large baloney nipples. Even though exceeding effete man-child Mead seems about as straight as a circle, he is so hopelessly enticed by Sprinkle's carny-like

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bargain bin burlesque routine that he begins harassing her saggy flesh with his trusty cane. When Sprinkle begins inserting her finger inside her mouth in a provocative fashion as if she is sucking a tiny cock, Mead naturally puts money in her oral orifice. At a certain point, Mead almost even seems strangely petrified by Sprinkle's extra fleshy funbags. As a lifelong whore who sells her gash for cash and who is largely infamous for her Public Cervix Announcement routine where she invited audience members to ostensibly "celebrate the female body" by viewing her fleshy pink void with a speculum and flashlight, Sprinkle also notably symbolically kisses a \$100 bill as if it were he one true love. Somewhat humorously, Sprinkle also shoves her borderline grotesque gazongas in the face of a hopelessly entranced East Asian chap. Since she is the only woman in the room that is receiving both money and male attention, Sprinkle is eventually ganged up on and attacked by all of the other discernibly used-up, aesthetically devitalized, and mostly fat bar sluts, who also moonlight as self-stylized anti-capitalist commie revolutionaries of the rather raunchy sort. Indeed, after one of the strippers begins to strangle Sprinkle with her own beaded necklace, the bordello of unflatteringly busty 'big boned' strippers begin a sort of unhinged carnal civil war while a poor lone Chihuahua named 'Pinky' sniffs their assumedly rancid feet. At one point, the mostly unclad wayward woman seem to be playing Sapphic leapfrog, with one of the women's backs being plagued with seemingly dozens of grotesque zits. Of course, one can only imagine what the room smelled like when these gleefully seedy 'slapstick slut' scenes were shot.

In what might be described as a sort of playfully pornographic intermission segment, a playful Jewish hook-nosed whore named Darryl Goldsmith performs an unsimulated blowjob on a guy the bears a striking resemblance to the main frog fag in French thief turned novelist Jean Genet's sole directorial effort *Un chant d'amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*. Eventually, the real cock is replaced with what is obviously a plastic prick which repeatedly squirts the stripper slut in the face with seemingly gallons upon gallons of extra milky pseudo-semen. While the loads upon loads splash in her face, the stripper maintains a goofy smile on her face as if her greatest fantasy has cum true. After the rather explosive cumshot scene concludes, the viewer is bombarded with what is undoubtedly one of the most odiously obnoxious scenes in cinema history, which involves Warhol-esque screen tests featuring various strippers engaged in sensual poses juxtaposed with off-screen narration of different strippers spewing pro-commie idiocy in an exaggerated pseudo-seductive fashion, thus reflecting Zedd's innately autistic incapacity for separating his 'art' with his glaringly incongruent and patently preposterous political views. Indeed, as Ms. Sprinkle pretends to look all fancy while smoking a cig that is attached to a flapper-esque cigarette holder, some strung-out-sounding Bitch mundanely moans, "Of course...The bolsheviks used to the term 'socialist' to describe their system to critically exploit its moral prestige while the West uses it to insult libertarian ideals by associating it with a

communist prison state, thus undermining the popular perception that there could be progress towards a more just world.” Thankfully, these unintentionally ‘zany’ juxtapositions of beefy burlesque bitches and prosaic neo-bolshevik twaddle unintentionally makes Zedd’s rather ridiculous attempts at communist cheerleading seem all the more intrinsically moronic. After all, Zedd seems to forget that so-called ‘sex work’ is the sort of timeless trade that Marxist fanboys like to bring up when they are decrying the dehumanizing tendencies of capitalism.

While Zedd veteran Brenda Bergman (*Geek Maggot Bingo* and *Why Do You Exist?*) inserts a gun in her big mouth as if it is a cock, some dumb bitch moans, “Landlords are the enemy...the police are the enemy...the police are the servants of the ruling class, protecting their property from their rightful owners: the people that occupy and maintain their buildings and factories.” In a scene that almost unwittingly mocks the tens of millions of chinks and gooks killed under communism, a topless East Asian chick with perky average-sized tits dances while some neo-bolshevik spouts classically contrived commie and anarchist cheerleading slogans like “Property is theft” and “Anarchy is shared self-interest, not irresponsibility.” Needless to say, when some stupid chick says, “you cannot be free until you renounce violence as a method of solving problems,” it is more repulsive and vomit-worthy than the canine coitus and cannibal scenes in Zedd’s debut *They Eat Scum*. In another equally absurd scenario, a haggard hag prepares to shoot junk into her arm as some dumb bitch quotes Marxist mass murderer Mao and states, “All reactionaries are paper tigers.” Of course, with socialist anti-values now being part of the thankfully rapidly dying American mainstream as reflected in everything from academia to MTV, leftist revolutionaries are nowadays nothing more than dried up old fecal matter that is about to be blown away in a tornado of uncompromising Europid fury.

In the final segment of *Ecstasy in Entropy*, neo-burlesque whore and famed fag hag, *World Famous *BoB** (Zedd’s *Lord of the Cockrings* (2002) and John Cameron Mitchell’s *Shortbus* (2006))—a woman that could easily afford to lose about eighty pounds or so—is depicted reading a copy of *Newsweek* with the pseudo-Nietzschean headline “IS GOD DEAD?,” at least until she is rudely interrupted by a sneaky and sexually ambiguous Judex-esque quasi-ninja in high-heels. Indeed, the gender-confused ninja climbs down a ladder and starts strangling *BoB* for seemingly no reason, ultimately not realizing that the less than little lady has deadly funbags that make for fierce Fellini-approved wanton weapons. While the distinctly busty broad puts up a rather valiant fight, the naughty ninja manages to swiftly strip her completely naked, which proves to be not very hard since the cellulite-ridden chick is not wearing any underwear. In a scenario that was almost certainly influenced by the bare breasted brutality of generously endowed exploitation cinema Jewess Chesty Morgan in such conspicuously crude Doris Wishman anti-classics as *Deadly Weapons* (1974) and *Double Agent 73*

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(1974), *BoB* knocks the ninja out cold with her fearsome fuck udders. Demonstrating that she is probably at least twice as strong Zedd, *BoB* even manages to lift the ninja's lifeless body over her head like she is wanton wife of King Kong. Of course, the film concludes just as abruptly as it begins.

Notably, on the DVD *Abnormal: The Sinema of Nick Zedd* released by Rubric Records, there is some behind-the-scenes footage of *Ecstasy in Entropy*, which is almost more entertaining than the film itself and which demonstrates that Annie Sprinkles never seems to break her (pseudo)seductive porn star persona, especially when shamelessly attempting to flatter her directors. Indeed, at one point during the footage, Sprinkle can be seen kissing Zedd's ass and stating to the director in an overtly salacious fashion, "Nick, you're adorable. You're SO adorable. I'm a big fan. I'm very...proud to be here," to which he replies in an unintentionally hilariously meek and unimpressed fashion, "The feeling is mutual." As Zedd proudly revealed in his book *Totem of the Depraved* (1996), Sprinkle helped to secure him temporary employment in the porn world, or as the filmmaker wrote himself, "I started making money writing porno stories and got a job acting in Kembra Squalor's super-8 movie *TRILOGY OF TERI* with Annie Sprinkle. In this film, I was required to wear a dress, lipstick and makeup, and I did a scene where I pissed on a girl's legs. Before doing the scene, I was given a pill that turned my piss fluorescent orange. I then modeled in the nude for Annie's camera and appeared in *ADAM AND ALL MALE* magazine in leather pants with a naked girl. It was the first time I'd ever been paid to jerk off." Of course, *Ecstasy in Entropy* can also be described as a form of masturbation where Zedd demonstrates that he is probably the only person in the world that gets a hard-on from flabby busted up old harlots quoting chink mass murderer Chairman Mao.

Despite his flagrant left-wing sympathies and innately infantile attacks against so-called "fascists" (aka any successful person with self-discipline and/or individual that he is resentful towards, like his ex-comrade Richard Kern, who he began referring to as "Nazi Dick"), Zedd once had the gall to state, "I am politically an anarchist and sexually a fascist—I don't think there is anything wrong with that." Personally, I do not see anything "fascistic" about fucking fat chicks and drag queens and sucking on used blood-soaked tampons as Zedd has been known to do, but I digress. I think Jonas Mekas probably best summed up Zedd's sexual degeneracy and its intrinsic relation to his special brand of cinema when he wrote in his article *Notes on the Work of Nick Zedd*, "I have always felt and I still do that Nick Zedd has swapped spirituality for flesh, love for hate and anger [...]" It was I think Amy Taubin who described Nick Zedd's work as the *Cinema of Transgression*. Whereas I have always thought that a more correct description of it would be *Cinema of Genitalia* – since the *Transgression* of that cinema seldom, or ever go any further." Indeed, Zedd's idea of celluloid subversion is flaunting his debauched sexual fetishes, sort of like a baby proudly showing

off their feces. As for his politics, Zedd, who grew up in suburbia and whose “father was a conservative person who lived a quiet existence as a lawyer and a bureaucrat for the US Postal Service,” could not be more conformist and mainstream, hence his vocal support of borderline wealthy kosher conman Bernie Sanders for President of the United States. Like commie messiah Karl Marx and most self-stylized work-shy commie types, Zedd is not actually a member of the Lumpenproletariat but a failed bourgeois who cannot compete in the free market and thus naturally believes that the government has the right to rob successful people and give their money to parasites and resentful losers like himself. Of course, what pro-socialist types like Zedd do not realize is that communism and capitalism are not all that different and are really two different sides of the same kosher coin in terms of their materialist Weltanschauung and mutual desire to destroy and ultimately enslave Europe and the rest of the world, hence why Hebraic Wall Street banker Jacob Schiff of Kuhn Loeb and Co. was the primary financier of the judeo-bolshevik revolutionaries that murdered tens of millions of white Christian Russians during the so-called Russian Revolution, just like how nowadays kosher capitalists like George Soros provide the funding for anti-white groups like Black Lives Matter and the flooding of Europe with highly hostile third world savages. Indeed, as Russian revolutionary anarchist Mikhail Bakunin once wrote in 1871 in regard to complimentary relationship between Jewish capitalist and communists, “Himself a Jew, Marx has around him, in London and France, but especially in Germany, a multitude of more or less clever, intriguing, mobile, speculating Jews, such as Jews are every where: commercial or banking agents, writers, politicians, correspondents for newspapers of all shades, with one foot in the bank, the other in the socialist movement, and with their behinds sitting on the German daily press — they have taken possession of all the newspapers — and you can imagine what kind of sickening literature they produce. Now, this entire Jewish world, which forms a single profiteering sect, a people of bloodsuckers, a single gluttonous parasite, closely and intimately united not only across national borders but across all differences of political opinion — this Jewish world today stands for the most part at the disposal of Marx and at the same time at the disposal of Rothschild. I am certain that Rothschild for his part greatly values the merits of Marx, and that Marx for his part feels instinctive attraction and great respect for Rothschild. This may seem strange. What can there be in common between Communism and the large banks? Oh! The Communism of Marx seeks enormous centralization in the state, and where such exists, there must inevitably be a central state bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation, which speculates on the work of the people, will always find a way to prevail ...” Of course, like some many white shabbos goy clowns before him, Zedd is just another useful idiot who thinks he is being edgy and rebellious but is just really unwittingly supporting the same cause as that of the heeb degenerates in Hollywood, albeit

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at a more pathetic level.

Undoubtedly, were it not for Zedd's obsession with obnoxiously flaunting his proud political philistinism, his films would be much easier to swallow and would probably leave not such a bad aftertaste, which is especially apparent in *Ecstasy in Entropy* as a kitschy cinematic work that seems like the degenerate result of the mongrel quasi-heterosexual brood of George Kuchar and Doris Wishman attempting to make what they believe is a bold and subversive political statement yet falling flat on their face. Additionally, despite being apparently mostly straight, Zedd ironically has even worse taste in women than homos like Andy Warhol, Andy Milligan, and the Kuchar brothers. Indeed, while I certainly appreciate a woman with a nice hourglass shape, big tits, and especially a large but firm derriere, there is hardly anything erotic about the big burly Amazonian beastess of Zedd's little flick. While Zedd described himself as being "sexually a fascist," his obsession with loud, large, and over-domineering women, not to mention the fact that he seems to have a special affinity for cross-dressing (in fact, in Richard Kern's short *King of Sex* (1986), he even sucks a guy's limp dick while in drag), demonstrates that he is the sexual equivalent of a neurotic and majorly masochistic French social justice warrior. After all, real fascists, who fuck with their cocks, do not fetishize corpulent kosher cunts or washed-up old fag Warhol superstars, among other (sub)human rabble. Still, *Ecstasy in Entropy* is seemingly infinitely more interesting than the average Russ Meyer flick, plus, at a mere 17-minutes, it never drags too much, even if the chicks in the film have tits that practically drag on the ground.

-Ty E

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Nico B. (2008)

Until relatively recently, I do not think there has ever been an occasion in my life where I felt a certain overwhelming nostalgia for a film that I had never actually seen, but such is certainly the case with the apparently long ago completed but only just released cinematic work *Sin* (2005-2008) directed by Dutch-born auteur Nico Bruinsma. I first heard about the film in 2008 but did not become obsessed with seeing it until early 2013 after interviewing director Nico B, whose latest film *1334* (2012) became somewhat of a personal obsession of mine. At the time, my lady friend had become extremely sick with some mysterious illness and joked that she was ill with “1334,” thus the film name became a brief but nonetheless memorable inside joke of sorts between of us (given that both of us are also longtime fans of Christian Death/Rozz Williams, the dark origin of the name was not lost on us). In short, early 2013 was a very happy period in my life and I cannot help but associate the enigmatic film *Sin* with it, so naturally I have been dying to actually see the film in all its sexually sacrilegious splendor, especially considering that I eventually began to suspect that it might not ever be released. A partially pornographic, silent black-and-white avant-garde triptych with an innate timeless quality starring both literally and figuratively dark dames with deadly and thankfully wholly organic fleshy curves that should remind any sensible heterosexual man why fake tits are aesthetically repugnant and nothing short of the erotic equivalent of fool’s gold, Nico’s rather refined 30-minute celluloid experiment in stylishly sinister eroticism is arguably his most personal and, in turn, auteur oriented, film to date. For those familiar with dark-haired Dutchman, it is no secret that Nico B is arguably better known as a film distributor and owner of the great company Cult Epics than as a filmmaker, hence his fairly small yet nonetheless notable oeuvre. Of course, Nico pretty much always intended to be both an entrepreneur and auteur as he saw it as a practical means to not succumbing to the starving artist cliché that has more or less become synonymous with his famous countryman Vincent van Gogh. In fact, as the filmmaker stated in an interview with proud belligerent dipsomaniac Gene Gregorits in regard to his one-time film professor and mentor Babeth Mondini’s absolutely imperative early influence on his career, “She took me to school every day, because we both lived in Amsterdam. After one month, she said, ‘Okay, I like what you’re doing but the films you want to make are not going to make any money.’ Or, ‘No one’s going to invest money in these films.’ I thought, Well, I’ll make money first, and then I’ll do films. She gave me the best advice of my life.” Ultimately, Nico would return the favor by releasing Babeth’s feature *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* (1990) starring Lydia Lunch and Henry Rollins under his Cult Epics label.

Not unlike his one-time friend, legendary experimental filmmaker Kenneth

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Anger, Nico B is an auteur that might not direct many films, but when he does they tend to be seemingly immaculate in their esoterically erotic 'evil' splendor as singular celluloid works that surely transcend time in terms of both cinematic technique and subject matter. Also, like his one-time professor, Dutch experimental master Frans Zwartjes (*Living*, *Pentimento*), Nico seems to have nil interest in appealing to any sort of audience as a perennially underground filmmaker that rarely makes full-length features and is only concerned with exploring his own distinct personal obsessions, especially of the carnal sort. In that sense, *Sin* is, in many ways, the quintessential Nico B film as a sort of instant cult classic that will only be truly appreciated by those select loyal few that have the will and good instincts to find it. Somewhat ironically, despite being rampantly heterosexual as demonstrated by his virtually lifelong obsession Bettie Page and the promotion of her bondage films, Nico's best known film is the homo serial killer meditation *Pig*, which was co-written and co-directed by legendary deathrock prince(ss) Rozz Williams and thus less geared towards the Dutchman's own sexual proclivities (for starters, the film not only features no unclad female bodies, but not female characters at all). As his early Super-8 student film *Slime* (1990) rather blatantly reveals, Nico has been long obsessed with many of the same themes, especially in regard to the so-called fairer sex, sacrilege, and the sometimes strangely complimentary relationship between sex, death, and religion. In many ways, *Sin*, much like Rozz William's art, is a deceptively spiritual cinematic work in that sense that it feels like it was created by a heretical believer who subscribes to an inverted form of Christianity where sin and human misery are worshiped, as if Nico lost the faith due as a result of living in such a dark, dispiriting, and dystopian realm that he could only bring himself to believe in hell and sinfulness. Indeed, not unlike much of Zwartjes' films, *Sin* feels like an aesthetically pleasing expression of hell on earth, thereupon making it all the more notable that the director hails from a literally puritanical Calvinist nation where telling jokes was even considered subversive only a couple of generations ago.

Notably, nearly a decade ago in 2008, Nico B confessed in an interview in regard to the cryptically semi-autobiographically nature of his film, "My new film *SIN* is a collection of 3 stories told from my own personal experiences with women I have been with. I put the protagonist of each film in a different time and changed their professional ambitions. All three I shot on Super 8 to get that early century artistic feeling. All three are also very surreal and erotic (and of course controversial). In one story a nun gives an on camera blow job to a priest. I believe this is the first art film to show this on screen. The scene is a tribute to Rozz of Christian Death (both of us being brought up with Christian beliefs). Also, the religious ending of *BETTIE PAGE: DARK ANGEL* is also a reference to the scene in *SIN*." As Nico's own words more or less express, his film is a sort of amorously abstract three-part cinematic anti-love letter to seemingly mostly

dangerous and mentally unstable ex-lovers from his past. In a second interview that I conducted with Nico in 2013, he demonstrated an almost ambivalent attitude to the act of filmmaking by stating, "I never intend to ever make any film, unless I see no way out," thus underscoring the internal pain, sorrow, and despair that is at the very core of the film. Of course, judging by the fact that virtually all of the male characters in the film meet a grisly or tragic end, it is easy to see what Nico means as *Sin* is a fairly forebodingly forsaken cinematic work that, despite featuring unclad busty babes flaunting their entrancing flesh, is clearly the agonized express of a haunted and internally wounded individual that sees sex as an oftentimes deadly affair, at least spiritually speaking. An elegantly gritty three-part Super-8 tone poem fueled by pathos of perversity and full of big and highly suckable milky white tits and nicely trimmed beavers, Nico B's strikingly beautiful dark romantic cinematic confession thrives on unabashedly laurelling the lethally lustful and sexually neurotic in such an effortlessly confident and reassured fashion that most filmgoers, including thoroughly desensitized gorehounds, will be simply stunned and dumbfounded by what they see to the point where they will only remember the big bosoms and cross-in-the-cunt. Far too moodily aesthetically exquisite to be confused with actual pornography and too politically incorrect and just plain incendiary to be accepted by the more spiritually castrated members of the Criterion Collection crowd, *Sin* is cinema for the decidedly romantically damned.

A modern day mythopoeic silent flick featuring a musical score made up entirely of Impressionist compositions by Claude Debussy that thankfully does not seem masturbatorily cinephiliac in a Guy Maddin-esque fashion nor obnoxiously anachronistic like the sickeningly silly shot-on-video neo-vintage Lovecraft adaptation *The Call of Cthulhu* (2005) directed by Andrew Leman, *Sin* begins in a striking fashion that seems like what might happen if someone attempted to reconcile the classic Golden Age Hollywood biblical epics of Cecil B. DeMille with Kenneth Anger's classic psychedelic Thelemite micro-epic *Lucifer Rising* (1972). After beginning with an ancient Egyptian princess having her throat slit by some random Egyptian gentleman, the following inter-title appears, "In ancient Egyptian mythology the panther Bastet is the God of pleasure, dancing and music, also known as . . . LADY OF THE EAST." Literally roaming with black panthers as a child, the Lady of the East grows up to be a sort of archaic stripper and while she is doing one of her exotic dance routines she is 'bought' by a wealthy American (Pipo) who brings her back to the United States where she becomes the headliner in a Chicago burlesque cabaret act called "Dance of the Pharaohs" where she exploits her exotic ancestral roots in a fittingly kitschy fashion. Leading a lurid life of potentially deadly vice, the Lady of the East has a traumatic childhood flashback in regard to the murder of her father whilst in an opium haze and subsequently shoots her man dead with a handgun after he gets the gall to attempt to steal her precious whoring money.

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As the 'Lady of the East' segment seemingly unintentionally reveals, America has the power to even debase tough third world whores. Of course, the segment also reveals that it is never a good idea to get involved with a girl that has daddy issues, especially if said daddy issues began at an early age before any sort of emotional maturity could have been reached.

In what is arguably the most intricate and indubitably the most controversial segment of the film, 'Le Modèle,' one watches with erotic intrigue as porn star Caroline Pierce—a seemingly forsaken woman that now regularly appears in extremely amateurish 'mandingo' porn—portrays a dual role as both a Catholic nun and a lecherous model in a provocative performance that features a devilishly dichotomous look a female sexuality and spirituality. Undoubtedly, one could argue that the model is the nun's sort of Jungian shadow and vice versa, as both characters seem to reflect the other's unconscious longings and compulsions. Despite being total opposites in virtually every single way (for instance, the nun is followed by a white cat while the model is followed by a black one), they are merely inversions of one another, with one suffering from sexual repression and the other spiritual repression. Of course, as Nico B more than hints in the segment, the sexual is oftentimes intertwined with the spiritual and vice versa, with a crucifix being arguably the ultimate figurative (and, in the film's case, literal) dildo and/or phallic symbol. While 'Le Modèle' oftentimes feels like a hypnotic hodgepodge of Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet* (1930), Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), and John E. Schmitz's *The Voices* (1953), it also owes a little to the Catholic carnality of Walerian Borowczyk's classic Nunsplotation flick *Interno di un convento* (1978) aka *Behind Convent Walls*. While the nun sucks the cock of a swarthy Jesus-esque priest with great grace, the model seductively stabs her cunt with a wooden crucifix, which she eventually mutilates herself with after adding a crown of thorns to the makeshift holy dildo. After their sexual experiences, both women become somewhat haunted in their own ways, with the nun being obsessed with destroying a statue modeled after the model and the model being preoccupied with the horrors of being seen naked in public by finger-wagging nuns and priests. In the end, the nun stabs the statue in the heart and causes to magically bleed and the model strips her clothes and enters a large church, which immediately becomes consumed with flames of passion. As to whether either woman achieves salvation or eternal damnation, one can only assume, but considering the model seems to worship herself and her own body (hence why she is a model) instead of Christ like the nun, it is probably safe to say that she will become one of Satan's sluts.

Undoubtedly, the third and final segment of *Sin*, 'The Maid,' is the most understated and enigmatic as a sullen and quite literally pathetic story that centers on a vaguely handsome and independently wealthy legless dope fiend (Mark Lee) that hires an inordinately busty broad (Dahlia Dark) to supposedly clean

his humble abode. Indeed, the eponymous cleaner has what might be sensitively described as 'jumbo jugs' and she certainly knows how to use them as indicated by the fact that her crippled employer is regularly voyeuristically gazing at her fine fleshy goods. In fact, the perverted cripple even finds himself masturbating with one of his stubs whilst admiring the maid's absolutely mesmerizing carnal meat, as if her ample sized body parts are all the more of a turn-on for him since he is missing some of his own appendages (whether or not he has a cock remains to be seen). A man that seems to have come to the conclusion that he is nothing and that no healthy sane woman would ever be genuinely interested in him as a romantic partner, the visibly lonely legless wonder seems determined to degrade himself and does so by kissing and gently placing high-heels on his rarely clothed employee's feet. The relationship between the man and his maid is innately infantile and almost seem like that of a mother and son as demonstrated by his tendency to crawl around his house like a baby and stare at his employee's fine fuck-udders like he is desperately thirsty for mother's milk. As an individual that seems to have lived a seemingly unbearable life of pain and discomfort as hinted in haunting childhood flashbacks where he receives large injections from a doctor while being watched by a little girl that may or may not be his sister, it is certainly no surprise that the man is a morbidly morose and melancholic masochist that lives solely to further his own self-debasement despite the fact that he is wealthy. In a bittersweet conclusion that really sums up many of the themes of the entire film, the well endowed maid gives the man an injection that provides him a most permanent form of solace that could not be more ideal considering his extra precarious predicament in life. As all three of the chapters of *Sin* make quite clear, sex and death are the only things that make life truly worth living, especially if you are a whore, cripple, or nun.

In the introduction of his text *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, French Nietzschean Georges Bataille wrote, "Eroticism, it may be said, is assenting to life up to the point of death. Strictly speaking, this is not a definition, but I think the formula gives the meaning of eroticism better than any other. If a precise definition were called for, the starting point would certainly have to be sexual reproductive activity, of which eroticism is a special form. Sexual reproductive activity is common to sexual animals and men, but only men appear to have turned their sexual activity into erotic activity. Eroticism, unlike simple sexual activity, is a psychological quest independent of the natural goal: reproduction and the desire of children. From this elementary definition let us now return to the formula I proposed in the first place: eroticism is assenting to life even in death. Indeed, although erotic activity is in the first place an exuberance of life, the object of this psychological quest, independent as I say of any concern to reproduce life, is not alien to death." Undoubtedly, Bataille's words in regard to erotic passion, as opposed to sexual reproduction, having to be imagined by the individual are indubitably relevant to the entire essence of a film like *Sin* where sex takes a truly

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transcendental and otherworldly form that entirely eclipses bodily functions, so it is only fitting that the frog anarchist concludes his introduction to Erotism with the remark: "Poetry leads to the same place as all forms of eroticism—to the blending and fusion of separate objects. It leads us to eternity, it leads us to death, and through death to continuity. Poetry is eternity; the sun matched with the sea." Of course, in a way, cinema is also eternity, thus making it all the more fitting that Nico B's film has an innate timeless quality as a cinematic work that even transcends the truly bygone era(s) that it recreates, hence its similarities to the films of Cocteau (who Nico paid tribute to with his 'travel film' *Ville Jean Cocteau* (2003), which is included with the BD/DVD combo of *Sin* released by Cult Epics).

Sometimes feeling like an avant-garde porn-snuff flick documenting three real-life cases that were excised from Kenneth Anger's classic piece of highbrow toilet reading *Hollywood Babylon* (1953), *Sin* is nothing short of an orgasmically oneiric celluloid gem that was made for the sort of dark seeker cinephile that looks at hunting down rare and arcane films as a sort of spiritual quest. As a successful film distributor and cinematic poet that clearly only makes films for himself, Nico B is like both Vincent van Gogh and his brother Theo van Gogh combined. Certainly, I cannot think of another mensch that I respect as both an artist and businessmen that releases obscure European arthouse films that no one else would dare to release. While set in an idealized past that seems like a schizophrenic universe as dreamed up by the black sheep stepson of Judaic pornographer Irving Klaw and surrealist poet Cocteau, *Sin* is certainly most potent if viewed from the perspective of a cryptically autobiographical film that is based on three events from Nico B's life, hence why the filmmaker seemed so reluctant to release it. Of course, as a film with a strangely erotic crucifix masturbation scene that makes the infamous unholy preteen Onanist scenario in *The Exorcist* (1973) seem like outmoded child's play, one can only speculate how literal the film is in terms of its autobiographical depiction of the auteur's sexual life, though one can pretty much assume that Nico B has had his fair share of unhinged girlfriends with humongous hooters. Naturally, as art history has unequivocally demonstrated, crazy cunts with addictively delectable carnal-traps and devilish curves always make for a great source for artistic inspiration, even if one would rather forget the mind games and violently neurotic tendencies that tend to plague many members of the so-called fairer sex. Undoubtedly, after watching Nico's film, I could not help but be reminded of Friedrich Nietzsche's poetic words, "The true man wants two different things: danger and diversion. He therefore wants woman, as the most dangerous plaything . . . Man must be trained for war, and woman for the relaxation of the warrior: all else is folly . . . Too sweet fruits — these the warrior does not like. He therefore likes woman — even the sweetest woman is bitter [...] Thou goest to women? Do not forget thy whip!"

In his 1963 article 'The Camera As A God,' film theorist and experimental filmmaker Charles Boultenhouse (Handwritten, Dionysus) provocatively wrote, "The good film-maker is he who is engaged (consciously or unconsciously) in preserving and perfecting the demon in the camera; the very best film-maker is he who is engaged in transforming the demon into the god. I am sure you will see that an idea so theological as this will probably make out experimental film to be positively sacred in character and commercial film rather blasphemous. You will be right.." In the same article, Boultenhouse also states, "Hollywood is the tease of all time [...] The teenagers of all ages who worship its fetishes will never be satisfied; nor will the Demon of the Camera, bored almost cross-eyed by the miles of Nothing passing before it into Oblivion." Of course, whereas Hollywood gives you nothing more than the a wholly artificial pseudo-blonde silicone-fueled tease that has plagued vulnerable American youth with a sort of collective metaphysical disease that has caused them to confuse love with lust and eroticism with animalistic bodily function, Sin—a delectably demonic film where, in the Nietzschean sense, god is long dead and has been replaced by a sort of Dionysian goddess of erratic eroticism—is a three course orgy that reminds the viewer that sometimes the sight of a certain pussy evokes serious pathos. As someone that counts virtually all of the great loves of my life as voluptuous women with killer curves and delectable derrieres, I can certainly understand the misery, melancholy, and lovelorn lunacy that the unclad female form can provoke in men, hence my admittedly somewhat perverse personal obsession with a film like Nico B's where a woman's best assets are elevated to the level of spectral archetypes that stir the collective unconscious and penetrate the psyche like a pulsating love truncheon plowing into a fresh hymen-intact prick-purse. In short, Sin is the sort of romance film that you hope to see from a friend of Rozz Williams and ex-student of Frans Zwartjes.

-Ty E

Nico B. (2012)

On April Fools' Day 1998, Rozz Williams (born Roger Alan Painter) – the virtual crowned king of American Deathrock (otherwise known as 'Goth' music) and the charmingly creepy and charismatic man behind such musical groups as Christian Death, Shadow Project, Premature Ejaculation, and Daucus Karota, among various others – committed suicide via hanging in his West Hollywood apartment at the mere age of 34. One of the last artistic projects Mr. Williams worked on before his untimely death was the audaciously aberrant avant-garde arthouse short *Pig* (1999), which he co-wrote/co-directed with Dutch auteur filmmaker Nico B. (Hollywood Babylon, *Bettie Page: Dark Angel*). Originally intending to make a totally plot-less 10-minute short shot on Super 8 with a procrastinating friend named Iggy, Rozz eventually turned to experienced filmmaker Nico B. for direction with his idea for a sadomasochistic serial killer piece featuring frantically fetishistic themes and imagery, where, in turn, the Dutch auteur proposed they shoot the cinematic work on 16mm, add a discernible storyline (if not a sharply and sadistically surreal one), and make it a featurette at 25 minutes. Throughout the month of December 1996, Nico and Rozz collaborated on notes for a film at a bar-restaurant that the filmmaker would later develop into script pages and storyboards, thereupon conceiving the sublimely salacious story that would be told in the succulently seedy and spiritually sinister cinematic form via the feverishly foreboding film *Pig*. Hiring the towering yet lanky fellow James "cowboy" Holland to played Rozz's cock-pierced celluloid victim, the two cultivated cinematic collaborators shot the film in a mere two months utilizing an abandoned house in a desert, Williams' apartment and basement, and some random dungeon as the setting for the film. Rozz's collage book "Why God Permits Evil" – a hand-designed work featuring images of a skull, snake, swastika, and dollar bill signs on the cover – was also utilized in *Pig* at the recommendation of Nico (who quite intrigued by Rozz's unholy tome) as a fetishistic guide for the fantasies that the sadistic surrealist killer would carryout cinematically. While Nico immediately went to work on editing the film after principle photography was finished, Rozz had a hard time delivering the ultimately delightfully dispiriting industrial soundtrack that he promised he would assemble for *Pig* and would only finish recording it a mere week before his tragic death, but he never found the time to fine tune these tracks. With Rozz dead, it was up to Nico to find someone to mix the haunting sound recordings, which was inevitably done by Chuck Collison (Rozz's collaborator from *Premature Ejaculation*). After battling with a number of film labs who were ostensibly offended by the film's stark S&M imagery and authentic body mutiliation, Nico was eventually able to convince FotoKem located in Burbank, CA to print the first cut of *Pig* and the film inevitably premiered on January 3, 1999 at Coven

13 in Los Angeles at the El Rey Theatre and soon after played to a sold-out audience at the American Cinematheque in LA, but the Dutch filmmaker was far from finished with his collaboration with the deceased Deathrocker. Over a decade later, Nico began work on a quasi-sequel to *Pig* entitled *1334* (2012); an uniquely unpropitious and unsettling, as well as intensely intimate, featurette ghost story centering around a very real phantasm from the filmmaker's past.

As Nico B. quite candidly mentioned in an interview *Soiled Sinema* conducted with him way back in 2008 regarding his collaboration with *Rozz Williams* and *Pig*, the dolorous *Deathrocker* had developed a hopeless romantic infatuation with the married heterosexual Dutch filmmaker during their cinematic collaboration. As Nico explained in the *SS* interview, "At the end of his life, *Rozz* told me that he was in love with me. Of course, the sexual part I could not do much with which I had to tell him. I think it hurt him as we were very close in the last year of his life. I know he wanted somebody to love him and have a relationship with, especially a man. He felt guilty about something that happened when he was a teenager and he never really got over it. I think that and the lack of love made him kill himself." Clearly, Nico was also unable to get over his experience with *Rozz* and his suicide, thereupon resulting in *1334*; a silent yet sinfully seductive black-and-white ghost story about the fiendish forewarning future and the penetrating yet perturbing past that was inspired by calamitous true events, but dramatically and expressionistically fictionalized. Opening with spectral Super 8 film footage Nico shot at *Rozz's* actual apartment in 1997 (featuring a sketched portrait of *Jeffrey Dahmer* and a swastika flag hanging on the wall), thus linking it with the prophetic celluloid past of *Pig*, *1334* continues thereafter with a startlingly morbid phantasmagorical reconstruction of the Goth icon's self-slaughter via hanging 12 years earlier (Nico technically finished principal photography for the film over a 7 day period during June 2010) in the very same perverse penthouse. Most of *1334* was shot in Nico's Los Feliz-based house where the strikingly strange occurrences that pestered the filmmaker really happened. Featuring inter-spliced images of tarot cards, including the "wheel of fortune" and "death" cards, *1334* has an erratic esoteric essence to it that is quite in tune with *Pig*, albeit with a somewhat less *Williams*-esque flavor. Of course, considering it features original music (including three unreleased electronic tracks) and art by *Rozz Williams*, *1334* most certainly carries a post-Christian Death lifeblood to it that is most unmistakable, which becomes all the more terribly tenebrous for those acquainted with the background story behind the film. That being said, I think it is no exaggeration for me to say that *1334* is easily one of the most exquisitely eerie films that I have ever seen, despite the fact that it features none of the real-life body mutilation that pleasantly plagued its suavely swinish predecessor *Pig*.

Also utilizing some of the greatest and most ominous landscape paintings ever evoked by Flemish Renaissance painter *Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, including

my personal favorite “The Triumph of Death,” Nico B. pays perversely playful postmodern tribute to the Dutch master of aesthetic destruction that came before him. Utilizing a green-screen, the filmmaker gives new life to Bruegel’s paintings in a most apocalyptic manner, thus eloquently eliciting the wonderfully woebegone world in flames that Rozz Williams would never live to see; the literal and figurative augural incineration of the American dream. It also should be noted that the year “1334” – a number Rozz Williams was most pathologically obsessed with due to its association with the year the Black Death emerged from China and eventually killed 30–60 percent of Europe’s population – was also the time frame which Bruegel’s paintings were set. Ironically, featuring actor Bill Oberst Jr. (Abraham Lincoln vs. Zombies, Excision) – a serious and unabashed Christian true believer (it is worth noting that Rozz was raised in a strict Southern Baptist household and his father was an eccentric minister/dilettante artist of sorts) of German descent (also like Rozz) who typically plays murderous lunatics, including a Nazi zombie – depicting Rozz Williams, I am sure the Deathrocker who committed suicide on All Fools’ Day would have appreciated his friend Nico’s soundly sardonic casting decision. American rocker Dante White-Aliano aka Dante Adrian Whit (frontman of the L.A.-based band Dante Vs Zombies) plays the lead role in 1334 as a presumable stand-in for Nico B. as the man who must deal with the unsettling, unholy wraith of Rozz Williams’ lost and downcast soul. The film also features three uncredited female actresses of similar Bettie Page-like (Nico B. directed a biopic based on the famous 1950s pin-up model entitled Bettie Page: Dark Angel in 2004) appearances, one of which apparently acting out a bizarre experience that happened to her a number of years ago. Needless to say, 1334 is far from a sentimental tribute to the decisively damned Deathrocker, but a miserably mournful and misanthropic art-house memorial for a melancholy musical genius whose self-initiated earthly demise had lead his former collaborator to create an exceedingly esoteric work that is literally at a loss for words.

Shot in the understatedly underground filmmaking spirit of Pig (both films cost roughly \$5,000.00 to produce), 1334 – with its heart-piercingly sharp yet soundly gritty b/w film stock, positively penetrant post-deathrock aesthetic, delightfully discordant electronic score, nihilistic negative shots, and heavily hypnotic hopelessness – is indubitably a sensitive yet unsentimental sequel to the enrapturing transgressive film it so closely spawned, sort of like an aborted fetus who has sired an equally sick yet more sophisticated son. Like Jean Cocteau’s Blood of a Poet (1930) aka Le Sang d’un Poète meets the early shorts of Frans Zwartjes (Visual Training, Pentimento) meets the films of Richard Kern (Submit to Me, Fingered) minus the technical incompetency and cheap titillation, 1334 is an innately inordinate and ominously oneiric piece of celluloid obscurity conjured up by an unwholesomely obsessive auteur filmmaker who is more proficient at dwelling on the mystique of death than most filmmakers are at depict-

ing life, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a film director whose filmic depiction of a mutilated corpse was described by Crowleyite cinemagickian Kenneth Anger as being, “the most convincing dead body in a movie of all time” (in reference to *Pig*). An abhorrently alluring atrocity exhibition with Rozz Williams’ rather emotionally-ravaged unseen ghost as the virtual metaphysical grim-reaper of the approaching apocalypse, *1334* is a soothingly sacrilegious cinematic work that reminds one why a figurative Hades is all the more penetrating than a horrendously humble Hollywood heaven. As a lifelong lover of Rozz Williams’ music that regards the first Christian Death album *Only Theatre of Pain* (1982) as one of my favorite musical records of all time, I feel that *1334* makes for a most merry of celluloid maladies.

Luckily, Nico B. made the wise decision in releasing both *Pig* and *1334* as a set in the form of a BD/DVD via his distribution company Cult Epics. For more info on *Pig/1334*, checkout <http://cultepics.com>

-Ty E

ANIMAL LOVER
ANIMAL LOVER

Nico Maſtorakis (1912)

On a long list of filthy films that I had to view, *Animal Lover* and *A Summer's Day* were near the top of my list. It was a much needed change to my average review quota of inane horror films exercising extreme brutality that has captivated the Western audience by storm and leaving no room for a decadent change in routine. Alex de Renzy - creator of *Femmes DeSade* and *Long Jeanne Silver* - has created a documentary "documenting" the absurd sexual rite of copulating with animals. He opens quite tediously explaining how it used to be a fad and furthers his trial and error by explaining quite boldly that it's more compliant in women. He more or less calls women inter-species whores which really gave me a chuckle here and there. This monotone dialogue goes on for what seems to be countless hours until he gets on to interviewing a lone girl who is in the shadows. Her identity has been concealed and de Renzy swears that she has an interesting story to tell. The woman begins a story about how she was a youth living in the US who decides to visit Morocco (I believe) for cheap hash. She explains how she is picked up by a group of Arabs and brought back to a warehouse and forced to repeatedly screw up to 4 guys at a time. She sobbingly exclaims she switched numerous warehouses and was in circulation for 18 months. The narrator shows no remorse for this girl and presses horrifying questions forcing her to talk about how she had to fellate upon dogs in order to get her freedom. With no money in Morocco, she had to become a prostitute to contact the United States Embassy. While the authenticity of this claim can be argued, it still is indeed monstrous to view a crying girl tell while the narrator pressures her asking very violating questions. What just was presented was the introduction. The second half of the forty-minute long feature is footage of Bodil "The Boar Girl" Joensen explaining her love for animals and then demonstrating this by, slowly, making love to her domesticated canine. Never in my life have I been as sickened as by what I just saw. I fast-forwarded through this scene in complete disgust. I have no right to judge a soul but honestly, What the fuck!? *Animal Lover* has only been shown once in the states. It was shown in seedy cinema's in San Francisco. This of course resulted in a 5 month jail sentence for the theater manager (Or so I'm told). *Animal Lover* begins with aspirations to be a wealthy documentary, rich with knowledge, but quickly descends into being pure exploitation filth. This is easily passable and outrageously sickening. For a more artful production, *A Summer's Day* is recommendable, but only if the subject interests you.

-mAQ

ISLAND OF DEATH

Nico Mastorakis (1976)

A perverse exploitation masterpiece loaded with so much violence and sex it seems unreal. This film is directed by Nico Mastorakis and shatters just about every taboo. We have incest, bestiality, rape, and of course murder. This film was recently released with cover art that grabs just about any gorehounds eyes. Words like BANNED or UNCENSORED are plastered all over the blood red front. The synopsis is about two lovers that escaped to a small island in Greece. They were being chased by a negro detective named Foster. Of course, he sports a 70's afro. They seem like a normal couple at first but you soon realize they are actually brother and sister. While first arriving, they seem to be a normal couple. The next morning, he wakes up and wants sex. She says no so what does any normal man do? Certainly not go outside and rape a goat and kill it no less. What starts of as a trip into a macabre vacation soon turns much worse. The brother seems to be out of control. Spiting perversion and delving into an unknown layer of hypocrisy. Once killing a few of the sinful residents, the heat begins to build up. This film in few ways reminds me of Frailty. Christopher sees himself as the carrier of gods swift justice. The angel of death in some ways. The key point of this film is to address violence as crude as possible. One of the best scenes in this film is the bulldozer decapitation. This film depicts sex in such a calm manner but with such perverse angles. This film wouldn't have been so great if it wasn't lead by such great acting performances. My favorite character was the painter. He really brought character to his role. This film has more artistic merit than most movies portraying a similar subject matter. Rape is seen as a civil instinct and a primal action, leaving the viewer questioning ethics. This film, while not being made for anyone, is a film for everyone. It is a mix of every major genre. This film is not as disturbing as it is advertised but it is definitely unsettling. Sporting an amazing soundtrack that roots back to the era when exploitation was great, it uses weird reverberations and key sound effects through out the film. With an ending that is as original as they come, Island of Death should not be missed.

-Maq

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANCE

Nicholas Roeg (1970)

For better or worse, if any film reflects the distinct and decidedly decadent zeitgeist of its time, especially in regard to art, kultur, and social trends, it is *Performance* directed by Donald Cammell (*White of the Eye*, *Wild Side*) and Nicholas Roeg (*Don't Look Now*, *Track 29*). Admittedly, the first time I attempted to watch this stylish yet sleazy cult film, I felt it was nothing more than sleekly directed, photographed, and edited hippie excess and celluloid debris directed by two decadent and delirious drug-addled counter-culture filmmakers whose idea of an artistic statement was seeing how much superficial and stereotypical sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll they could fit into about 2 hours and thus use these pseudo-shocking ingredients as a means to make up for a convoluted, nonsensical story of the sensory-overloading sort. After all, what better gimmick for the "ultimate cinematic trip" than featuring Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones in one of the lead roles in his debut screen appearance, not to mention the bold and beautiful German-Italian model/actress Anita Pallenberg (*Dillinger Is Dead*, *Michael Kohlhaas - Der Rebell*) – girlfriend of Brian Jones and later Keith Richards – as the sexy and sassy female lead. On that basis alone, *Performance* – a film where gangster-meets-rocker – was destined to be a 'cult classic' no matter how incompetently it was directed, but as I learned during my second-viewing of the cinematic work, it is more than just an expensive proto-music video. The film was directed by two first-time directors: Nicholas Roeg who previously worked as a cinematographer for films like *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), and Donald Cammell who was a child prodigy and society portrait painter who inevitably gave up the medium to become a filmmaker.

In regard to questions as to who was the real 'auteur' behind *Performance*, Cammell thought the question was "just silly," but did admit to the authors of *Donald Cammell: A Life on the Wild Side* by Rebecca Umland and Sam Umland (2006) while speaking quite narcissistically and characteristically in the third-person that "In truth Nic has been extremely embarrassed by all the attention he's received for *Performance* over the years, but the fact is, Donald and Nic worked together, and *Performance* was the result of the special mixture of them both. It's simply impossible to sort it all out." Considering that Cammell's film career never really took off (he only directed three more feature-length works before his suicide in 1996 after he did not get final-cut for his swansong *Wild Side*) after *Performance*, most film critics and theorists contend that it is essentially a Nicholas Roeg film due to his relatively illustrious and successful career as an idiosyncratic auteur filmmaker, but as Anita Pallenberg in Cammell's biography and crew members featured in the documentary *Influence and Controversy: Making 'Performance'* (2007) also vouch, the directing responsibilities were for

the most part divided this way: one filmmaker dealing with the actors and the other with the technical aspects. On top of acting as the cinematographer, Roeg was in charge of the technical responsibilities while Cammell – who also wrote the script – dealt with the actors and the innumerable cultural references (literature, painting, filmmaking, etc.). If it says anything, Donald Cammell acted like a pompous dictator on the set of *Performance* despite being a novice filmmaker, as Anita Pallenberg remarked that the tragic auteur was “being very much a prima donna for a director who had no previous experience. He was a very difficult director to work with” and “There was lots of banging and slamming doors, that sort of thing. Sometimes he would get mad at the technical crew. He thought they were working too slowly or something like that.” Whatever the true nature of the motley crew’s work habits, it would take two years before *Performance* was to be released after its completion in 1968, in part due to Warner Bros dissatisfaction with the film. Cammell’s friend and longtime collaborator Frank Mazzola re-edited the film in 1970 (by then, Roeg gave up on the film and went to Australia to direct *Walkabout*), henceforth giving the film the fluid and fierce feel it has today and finally making it releasable in the studio’s eye.

Featuring a corrupt cocktail of gay gangsters, tripping hitmen, reclusive rock stars, androgynous men and women, and an all-around semi-psychedelic essence of decadence, *Performance* – much like Kenneth Anger’s *Lucifer Rising* (1972), which incidentally features director Donald Cammell in the role of Osiris ‘the lord of death’ – is one of few cinematic works from its time to portray its era with more than the pathetic pretense of peace and love, but also with chaos, destruction, and dissolution of all things that once were, thus signaling Aleister Crowley’s (who was like a surrogate uncle to Cammell as a young lad) prophecy of the Aeon of Horus. Essentially a film that is divided into two acts, *Performance* begins with the introduction of the character of Chas (James Fox) – a gangster ‘soldier’ in an East London gang modeled after the infamous real-life Kray twins led by a physically repugnant and exceedingly eccentric homosexual (Ronald “Ronnie” Kray was openly bisexual) named Harry Flowers (Johnny Shannon) – who intimidates people via violence and destruction so as to collect pay-offs for his boss. An archetypal man’s man of the stoic and unsentimental sort, Chas fancies his trade, most notably bringing absolute fear to his enemy’s souls. Naturally, things take a turn for the worst when Chas decides to disobey his boss Mr. Flowers’s order not to get involved with Joey Maddocks (Anthony Valentine) – an archenemy of the somewhat sadistic paid street fighter sort whose business his boss plans to takeover – and he fails to follow orders. Not only does Chas throw his muscle against Maddocks, but he also ends up killing him. Needless to say, Flowers and his officers decide Chas is bad for their “terrific democratic organization” which knows not to mix business and personal vendettas, so they decide they must rid themselves of the “ignorant boy...out-of-date boy.”

PERFORMANCE

Now a dual fugitive of the law and organized crime, Chas goes underground and into hiding and decides living with a wash-up rock star will be the last place his enemies would look to find him. Now calling himself "Johnny Dean" with the contrived 'artistic' occupation of being a "juggler," Chas eventually finds himself at the basement apartment which is owned by an effete, degenerate rock star Turner (Mick Jagger) who has "lost his demon," thus essentially signaling the second and final chapter of Performance. At first, Chas only meets Turner's lover Pherber (Anita Pallenberg) who gets every dime out of the crypto-gangster she can swindle, which – being a dead man walking - he is more than willing to pay. Despite paying an absurd amount for rent, Turner – who has an agile animosity for Chas – attempts to give the money back to the new tenant. Chas isn't exactly impressed with his landlord and his friends either, describing his new residence as "a right pisshole" filled with "long hair...beatniks...druggers...free love...foreigners...you name it." Despite his initial repulsion toward the renegade rock star and his lurid and lecherous lifestyle, before he knows it, Chas is quite literally penetrating Pherber and eventually comes to feel a sort of odd metaphysical and even homoerotic connection to Turner. To quickly 'cure' the fag-bashing gangster of his manly 'homophobic' tendencies, Pherber and Turner drug Chas by tricking him into eating hallucinogenic mushrooms and digging deep into his seemingly impenetrable psyche, thus unleashing his inner femme. By way of dirty drugging, uninhibited and increasingly indulgent partaking of carnal knowledge and the overall narcotizing influence of his sin-sanctifying hippie landlord's influence, Chas is physically and mentally transformed thus thrusting him into a state somewhere in between hell and nirvana and hereafter inspiring him to sleep with a boyish French girl named Lucy (Michele Breton) – who happens to be the third person in Pherber and Turner's pan-sexual ménage à trios – that he describes as a "bit underdeveloped...like a little boy" and becoming physically androgynous himself like Turner; both men eventually becoming one another's alter-egos.

Ultimately, Performance is about transformation and the unity of two individuals into one; Chas being the archetype for pure masculinity and Turner being a man in touch with both genders or as Pherber states, "man-and-female man," as a dichotomy of sexual extremes. Unlike if the film were directed today, Chas' testosterone-draining transformation is not portrayed as a purely positive thing as it inevitably leads to his assumed ruin because due to becoming more 'in touch' with his feminine side, he is drained of his masculine instincts thus rendering him inhibited and vulnerable in matters that would not have fazed him previously. Using a hardened gangster as the audacious anti-hero of Performance makes the trans-gender transfiguration all the more compelling. Written by Cammell, who despite being a lecherous ladies man who dated teenage girls while a middle-aged man, apparently dabbled in homosexuality (according to rumor, including with Mick Jagger during the making of the film), homosexu-

ality is certainly a theme that runs throughout the entirety of *Performance* in various forms and guises; both subtle and self-evident. Aside from the obvious influences of Jorge Borges (especially in regard to identity crisis), the film also makes a number of references to beat queer junkie icon William S. Burroughs (*Naked Lunch*, *The Wild Boys*), including Turner's remark that, "nothing is true, everything is permitted" in reference to the novelist's mythical attribution to Nizārī Muslim Hassan-i Sabbāh and fictional hashish-taking warriors. Indeed, in *Performance*, "everything is permitted," but for a price most people are not willing to pay. Both Chas and Turner pay that price only for it to lead to their untimely descent. Donald Cammel also extended his hand to Lucifer for a life of debauchery and (self)destruction, thereupon leading to his death via self-sacrifice in a manner not all that different than the character he wrote and directed for *Performance*; no doubt the forsaken artist's finest pursuance as a filmmaker.

-Ty E

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH
THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

Nicolas Roeg (1976)

An innately idiosyncratic freak-out film that people tend to either love or hate but usually nothing in between, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) directed by British auteur Nicholas Roeg (*Don't Look Now*, *Track 29*) is a decidedly discordant and decadent dystopian counter-culture science fiction epic undoubtedly plagued with seemingly endless plot-holes and nauseating nonsensicalness, yet it has two things that stick out distinctly—post-Ziggy Stardust David Bowie in his first starring role during the prime of his lifetime and surrealist sci-fi special-effects that seem to fall somewhere in between the poetic body fascism of Leni Riefenstahl and a proto-cyberpunk aesthetic—thus the undeniably uneven celluloid work still has managed to gain a loyal cult following since its release. Roeg's virtual celluloid equivalent to *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and all the more pessimistic in its depiction of the seemingly forsaken future of man and technology than Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi masterpiece, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*—in its incessant depiction of modern dandy Bowie drinking gin and juice and watching multiple boobtubes (while displaying little or no actual interest in real boobs)—is also probably the only science fiction work that can help inspire alcoholics and television lemmings to kick their pathetic habits as a sharply scathing indictment of the many of vices that plague modern man. Featuring not a single character who does not have some sort of physical and/or metaphysical affliction, including pathological materialism, workaholism, miscegenation, homosexuality, mindless hedonism, and virtually every other incapacitating excess imaginable, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* features an androgynous alien who slowly but surely learns America has everything, everything aside from a organic kultur and a soul. Somewhat loosely based on the 1963 sci-fi Walter Tevis of the same name and featuring a protagonist somewhat reminiscent of the anti-hero of Oscar Wilde's sole novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) in that, despite his hyper hedonism and moral decay, he never physically ages, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* is a film that quite blatantly, if not beautifully, drives home the allegorical message that in America, even wealthy space aliens suffer from the distinct alienation and inner feeling of worthlessness that Americanism sows.

Both an illegal alien and a space alien, sensory sensitive extraterrestrial humanoid Thomas Jerome Newton (David Bowie), although having a passport and accent that make him seem to be of the British persuasion, has just landed on earth from the faraway planet Anthea in the hope of obtaining water as his arid desert home planet is suffering from a terrible drought that is threatening the lives of his family, which includes a wife and two kids. Mr. Newton's first act of original sin is pawning his wedding ring for a mere \$20, thus soon realizing that everything in America has a price, no matter how intrinsically or sentimentally valuable to the individual. Of course, with that shiny new bill with Andrew Jack-

son on it, Newton will sire his technocratic empire using normal technology from his own plant, but like many things about *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, this is never really aptly explained or depicted. Before the viewer knows it, Newton has started his own bureaucratically titled technology company "World Enterprises Corporation" and is talking to a middle-aged nerd with monstrous bifocals, a leading patent attorney named Oliver V. Farnsworth (Buck Henry), who he offers \$1000.00 an hour to work for him. Before Farnsworth knows it, he reinvents his life and embraces sodomy, buying himself a live-in muscleman and, when not working hard for Newton, dedicating his life to senseless and unfulfilling hedonism like every great and successful (and not so successful) modern American. Newton has started the company so he can build a special spaceship that will enable him to ship water to his own home planet, but a number of things get in the way, including pathological hedonism and materialism, as well as enemy corporations and weirdoes working for the U.S. government. Although a happily married man to a fellow space alien, Newton starts a rather mis-matched sub-romantic relationship with a lonely and ditzy yet empathetic housemaid named Mary-Lou (played by Candy Clark, who Roeg was romantically involved with at the time). Although literally causing her to piss her panties on first revealing to her that he is really a bald extraterrestrial with reptilian eyes, Newton barely has to put any effort into making Mary-Lou fall in love with him because, after all, he is stinking rich and is equally socially retarded as she is, but he ends up leaving her anyway. Newton also hires a lecherous college professor named Dr. Nathan Bryce (Rip Torn), who has a proclivity for banging tons of his 18-year-old freshmen female students with Electra complexes, as a fuel technician and soon he becomes the alien technology mogul's right-hand man.

Unfortunately, Dr. Bryce figures out Newton is a sneaky spaceman and tells the U.S. government, so right before the extraterrestrial is about to fly his finished spaceship to his home planet, his game plan and inter-galactic voyage is thwarted. Farnsworth and his bulky boy toy are killed after being thrown out their apartment and Newton is imprisoned in a lavish apartment hidden deep inside the bowels of a dilapidated apartment building. Meanwhile, Mary-Lou and Bryce, who have aged dramatically due to alcoholism and whatnot, are now a couple. During his vice-ridden imprisonment, government doctors subject Newton to a number of painful experiments in a feeble yet well funded attempt to find out if Newton is really an alien, but the stoic spaceman, who despite being given steady doses of alcohol refuses to loosen his lips, never reveals his secret. Somehow, Mary-Lou, who has gone from looking like semi-pretty virginal Christian girl to a dipsomaniac hag of the hysterical and Hebraic-like sort in the spirit of Joan Rivers, visits Newton while he is imprisoned and they have rough, nihilistic sex and the alien waves his cock and gun and they both drink like Irish fish, but both ultimately realize they do not love one another. Rather inexplicably, one day Newton realizes he can escape from his decadent apartment cell and

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merely walks out, thus hinting that his imprisonment was partially self-inflicted due to acute alcoholism and weakness for television. In the end, he records a rock album for his wife, who like his children, is assumedly dead. Filthy rich but suffering from perennial melancholy and drunkenness, Newton falls in a drunken stupor in his chair during a nice and sunny day as an alien victim of the American dream.

Regarding the Apollo 11 moon landing, scatological Jewish novelist, aesthetically-retarded Renaissance man, and attempted wife-murderer Norman Mailer, who was incidentally beaten to a bloody pulp by The Man Who Fell to Earth star Rip Torn in his own Warhol-wannabe film *Maidstone* (1970), wrote, "the real mission of the Wasp in history was not, say, to create capitalism, or to disseminate Christianity into backward countries...It was to get the U.S. to the moon." Additionally, Mailer wrote regarding his hatred of the Nordic race and his assumed jealousy that it was not members of his tribe that enabled man to reach outer space and the moon, but nefarious National Socialist SS technology, "To wit, he can project himself 'extraordinary distances through a narrow path. He's disciplined, stoical, able to become the instrument of his own will, has extraordinary boldness and daring together with a resolute lack of imagination. He's profoundly nihilistic. And this nihilism found its perfect expression in the odyssey to the moon—because we went there without knowing why we went." Indeed, Mailer's words certainly describe the Aryan alien played by David Bowie in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* in a sci-fi work that abstractly and seemingly schizophrenically portrays the American dream and space race as the drainer of all vital lifeblood. If Newton's original plan was to save his family from very probable death, his only reason for living by the intentionally anti-climatic conclusion of *The Man Who Fell to Earth* was to drink another fancy alcoholic cocktail, thus radically reflecting the height of sorrow and soul-destroying internal sickness that American materialism sires. A culture-less country with an intrinsic dog-eat-dog business philosophy since its inception, America is a place where idealistic dreams devolve into banal bureaucratic nightmares or so Newton learns as he yearns for something deeper and more real that money cannot buy. In fact, Newton has all the money in the world and after watching Japanese Kabuki theatre he becomes immersed in Japanophilia, even wearing the traditional Jap garb and designing his house in a similar orientalist fashion because, like the typical low-class wigger, adderall-addled autistic anime fan, and xenophiliac limp-wrist bourgeois white leftist that are quite prominent in today's America, he finds nothing of intrinsic cultural value (i.e. art, literature, and clothing) in the gloriously culturally-retarded USA and is incessantly searching for something to fill the void, including sex, drugs, rock n roll, dated films, and the fruits of ancient foreign cultures, but, of course, he learns that nothing can replace the real-thing, especially when it comes to something as organic as kultur, which American consumerism and cosmopolitanism have replaced.

As Mary-Lou states to Newton in a feeble attempt to get him to stay on planet earth, "This country is rich...we have everything," yet the sulky space-man, despite his infinite wealth, only finds endless misery after endless misery until he has totally given up on his virtuous campaign to save his family and planet, thereupon making *The Man Who Fell to Earth* what is very possibly the most esoterically, if not oftentimes asininely so, one of the most anti-American science fiction flicks ever made. Featuring scenes of alien Newton, who is able to live simultaneously in different time zones, seeing dirty and barbaric white settlers from America's colonial past past, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* even goes as far as portraying the roots of America as being sown in sin and savagery. Quite ironically, the film features a number of poetic montages of human and alien bodies in flight that were unquestionably modeled after National Socialist auteuress Leni Riefenstahl's two-part epic documentary in beauteous body worship *Olympia* (1940). Of course, curious cuckold auteur Nicholas Roeg, who has always shown an undying commitment to ethno-masochism and xenophilia as expressed in flirting and naked swimming sessions of a white teenage Australian girl and a black Aboriginal "noble savage" in his early work *Walkabout* (1971), displays a similar merry fetishism towards miscegenation in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* in a scene featuring a muscular and naked Negro buck man-handling his white wife, who the Sambo Übermensch has mongrel children with. Undoubtedly, if there is any true American tradition, it is the nation's history of deracinating people and destroying their culture and mixing their blood and *The Man Who Fell to Earth* certainly depicts such a truly postmodern scenario, where an eccentric extraterrestrial with a firm commitment to family and nation planet morphs into a alcohol-addled, TV-addicted, hyper hedonist who ultimately barely has enough energy to do much more than slouching in a desk. While *The Man Who Fell to Earth* might be the first and only film to fully expose David Bowie's emaciated holocaust survivor-esque body and shriveled Starman member, it doubt the film will be exciting to all those women who dreamed of the glam rocker's cock after seeing him in kitschy tight in *The Labyrinth* (1986) as young girls, but it an aesthetically hypnotic and out-of-this-world celluloid work that provides much rotten food for apocalyptic thought. As the great German philosopher Oswald Spengler wrote in his short work *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1931)—one of the first critiques ever written on technology that prophesizes Occidental civilization will be destroyed by materialism and technocratic wars with opposing nations—regarding the effects of technology and the industrial revolution on European man: "As once the microcosm Man against Nature, so now the microcosm Machine is revolting against Nordic Man. The lord of the world is becoming the slave of the Machine. Their strength is bound up with the existence of coal." While I doubt Nicholas Roeg is a fan of and/or has ever written anything written by Spengler, I think the filmmaker would agree with the Teutonic thinker's thought on technology

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

as expressed in *The Man Who Fell to Earth*—a patently pessimistic celluloid work where a wealthy Nordic spaceman becomes a slave to virtually every vice known to man as a result of his super sophisticated understanding of technology yet sheer and utter lack of culture, family, and a moral compass. If there is anything to be learned from watching *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, it is once an individual has navigated their way to the USA, it is nearly impossible for one to find their way back, at least on a spiritual level.

-Ty E

BAD TIMING

Nicolas Roeg (1980)

As far as I am concerned, anytime one happens to run into an image or deplorably mundane piece of music from a little hideous creature and Hebraic hippie like Art Garfunkel, it is most certainly a moment of “bad timing,” especially where the eyes and ears are concerned, yet to my complete and utter surprise, he actually played an interesting lead role in a striking cinematic work that is quite suited for his repugnant character. Playing the role of an American psychoanalyst who happens to be teaching young Aryans the value of subversive Jewish intellectualism in Uncle Adolf’s homeland and develops a deranged infatuation a bodacious blonde beastess, Art Garfunkel proved to a more than an apt pretentious creep in British auteur Nicholas Roeg’s sordid cinematic tale of sicko seduction *Bad Timing* (1980) aka *Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession*. Described by an executive from its U.K. distributor Rank as “a sick film made by sick people for sick people,” *Bad Timing* is most certainly a brazenly bawdy and decidedly disgusting piece of celluloid about a physically and psychologically sick poindexter of the anti-Teutonic sort whose revolting airs of intellectual superiority are only matched by his seemingly psychopathic jealousy and unhealthy sexual fixation with a beauteous, if not bat-shit crazy, blonde babe who happens to be married to a Slavic slob three decades her senior. Told in the archetypically Roegian style of discordant and deconstructed nonlinear narrative via jaded jump-cuts and mesmerizing mosaic montages, *Bad Timing* unfolds what led a woman to commit suicide and land in a hospital after intentionally overdosing on drugs and the more bitter than sweet romance with a possessive and perturbed psychoanalyst that led to such deleterious behavior. Set in emotionally and culturally sterile Cold War era Vienna, Austria—a post-Nazi nightmare where Sigmund Freud museums stand and the ‘soul doctor’ pseudo-science of psychoanalysis is very much alive nearly a century after its blasphemous birth—*Bad Timing* portrays a dying Europa where the *Fin de siècle* of the last century as described by degeneration pioneer Max Nordau seems rather tame when compared to that of the twentieth century, where extra-European powers like the United States of America and the Soviet Union have turned Faustian man’s land into a mundane museum and vice-ridden vacation spot to be raped and pillaged, sort of like how the ‘anti-hero’ of Roeg’s film treats his fair lady.

Dr. Alex Linden (Art Garfunkel) of *Bad Timing* is certainly one of the most unlikable and emotionally vacant characters of film history as a pedantic yet perverse psychoanalyst/professor who respects no one and nothing aside from his own bloated ego and sterile intellect. Why a lovely yet lecherous blonde lady in her mid-20s named Milena Flaherty (Theresa Russell) sees anything attractive in Linden is quite the inexplicable mystery, but the fact she is married to an ugly, overweight Czech man named Stefan Vognic (Denholm Elliott) certainly proves

BAD TIMING

she has never been a woman of refined taste in men, especially considering her affair with an arrogant American psychoanalyst will lead to a brutal near death experience after being driven to a serious suicide attempt involving the swallowing of a number of nasty narcotics. As a woman who has no problem stating such salacious things as “it’s burning my pussy,” Milena certainly sparks a certain amount of seemingly intangible life in a soulless sophisticate like Alex Linden. While the patent prick of a psychoanalyst initially finds Milena’s free-spirited behavior and sassy and aggressive sensuality to be quite liberating, it does not take Linden long to develop a uniquely unhealthy obsession with Milena, including spying on her and digging up every dirty document (he produces psychoanalytic profiles for his own personal use via American military intelligence data supplied by army psychiatrists) he can find out about her Slavic hubby, a curious cuckold if there ever was one. After a dubious night with Milena that ends in the little lady’s hospitalization after a senseless attempt at self-slaughter via drug overdose, Linden finds himself the sole suspect of foul play by an American police investigator named Netusil (Harvey Keitel), who can read through the psychoanalyst’s preposterous pretentiousness. Apparently, while suicide is not a big thing in Austria, “ravishment” aka rape is and investigator Netusil knows when and where vaginal swabs must be performed, but he finds out that getting a confession from a pernicious psychoanalyst—a man who has made a living at raping other men’s souls—proves to be a most complicated feat.

What makes *Bad Timing* especially interesting is the political and cultural context the film is set in. Indeed, I do not think it is a coincidence that the film takes place in Adolf Hitler’s homeland, where instead of featuring museums to the Führer and the reign of the Übermensch, museums exist dedicated to anti-Aryan Freud and degenerate artists like Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele and untermensch Americans, Slavs, and Jews populate Vienna just as prophesized by the National Socialists. With American Hebrew Art Garfunkel—a stereotypical Jew with a Jew-fro who looks like a slightly less swarthy version of auteur Alejandro Jodorowsky—as a psychoanalyst of all who things whose trade, as demonstrated by American evolutionary psychologist Kevin MacDonald, was formed, not unlike Boasian cultural anthropology and Marxism, as a subversive Semitic intellectual movement against Western morals and Occidental civilization, in the lead role of *Bad Timing*, I think it is safe to say that director Nicholas Roeg was making a statement about who ultimately triumphed after the Second World War. Of course, as a man who demonstrates his curious xenophilia in *Walkabout* (1971), Negrophiliac race-mixing in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), cultural-cuckold Kabbalah fetishism in *Eureka* (1983), and his softspot for Yiddish geniuses in *Insignificance* (1985), I think it is clear that Mr. Roeg was quite satisfied with the outcome of World War II. In one especially telling scene in *Bad Timing*, Garfunkel’s character makes the snarky remark, “The Germans have always been very good at archives,” thus alluding to the holocaust

in a cynical, self-satisfied fashion and his glaring visceral hatred of krauts. Garfunkel's character also has a couple stare downs with an Austrian Aryan doctor, who he refuses free cigarettes from (yet accepts the redneck Marlboro red cigs of an American). As the National Socialists carried out the virtuous act of expelling psychoanalytic messiah Sigmund Freud from Austria, it is not by mere chance that Garfunkel is peddling the same tawdry pseudo-science in the same place it was born and later banned. Indubitably, the most penetrating and allegorical scene in *Bad Timing* is when the less than homely Hebrew Garfunkel psychologically terrorizes and eventually maliciously rapes a buxom blonde beauty. After all, what could be worse timing and circumstances for an Aryan woman than to be in the hands of a psychotic Judaic stalker in Hitler's homeland after the Second World War. Indeed, holocaust saint Elie Wiesel did not include the sentence "fargvaldikh dayshe shikses" ("rape German shikses" aka "rape racially impure non-Jewish kraut women") in regard to how some of his concentration camp buddies sexually ravaged some kraut women in the original Jews-only Yiddish edition (which, of course, was taken out of the goy translations) of his novel *Night* (1955) for nothing.

A virtual realist fantasy flick in the spirit of Philip Roth and Herbert Marcuse for Jews and shabbos goys in its perverse portrayal of a lustful sexual savagery between a Jew psychoanalyst and Shiksa goy gal and/or a malicious psychosexual horror melodramas for bad goys and gals, *Bad Timing* is a positively perturbing and pessimistic anti-love story for the technocratic and bureaucratic post-national cosmopolitan age, where the decidedly degenerate art (paintings by Klimt are featured in the opening credits) and pseudo-sciences of yesteryear have, quite absurdly, been elevated to the level of the best that the West has to offer. Undoubtedly, the female lead Milena's words "Why don't you just fuck me death?" toward the end of *Bad Timing* certainly have more than a literal context as the Vienna portrayed in the film is inhabited by hostile rapist Jewish psychoanalysts, philistine Slavs, and exploitative Americans, which is something akin to a deadly outbreak of spiritual syphilis. With a scuzzy Semite as a leading 'man' and vomit-worthy multicultural noise from proto-hipster monkeyman Tom Waits, power poof pop group the Who, and degenerate Jazz Negress Billie Holiday in the land of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Bad Timing* portrays an absurdly apocalyptic zeitgeist in European history that is as disgusting, unnatural, miscegenated, and ultimately suicidal as the romantic relationship that is perversely portrayed in the film. If there ever was an allegorical love story for the decided death of the West, *Bad Timing* is it.

-Ty E

EUREKA
EUREKA

Nicolas Roeg (1983)

Maybe it's because I am sometimes somewhat of a contrarian, but I have to admit that I think *Eureka* (1983)—an epic cinematic work that takes its name from the Edgar Allan Poe essay of the same name that was shelved for two years and would only receive sporadic theatric distribution in a handful of cities upon its release in 1985—is not only the most underrated and unjustly scorned film by British auteur Nicholas Roeg (*Walkabout*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*), but also a masterwork and arguably the filmmaker's celluloid magnum opus that demonstrates the auteur almost achieved what so few other filmmakers have: a celluloid *Gesamtkunstwerk*. As analyzed by Roeg himself, "I was initially interested in a character who wanted to satisfy an all-consuming desire...that's what I want'...but when he gets it, what happens after his brief ecstatic moment? Nothing more than left over life to kill," *Eureka* is loosely based on the still unsolved murder of American-born British Canadian gold miner, entrepreneur, investor, and philanthropist Sir Harry Oakes, 1st Baronet, who was brutally battered and burned to death in 1943 in his lavish Bahamas-based mansion. As depicted in *Eureka*, many different people are suspected of wanting Oakes dead, including his son-in-law, longtime business partner, and Jewish mobster Meyer Lansky (who did not like the fact that the rich man resisted his attempts to build casinos on the Bahamas islands). As critics have noted, *Eureka* is essentially Roeg's thematic equivalent to Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) as a work depicting a stinking rich quasi-antihero who has all the money in the world yet cannot seem to find happiness and ultimately becomes a rather bitter and lonely fellow instead. A totally unclassifiable work that star Gene Hackman stated of, "It's not an adventure story, although it has all the elements; it's not a straight mystery, although it has a lot of mystery involved in it; it's not a drama of a family, and yet it has that too. It also has a variety of locations - everything it takes to make a really interesting movie," *Eureka* is part action-thriller, part gangster flick/film noir, part psychoanalytic horror story, part erotically-charged forbidden romance, and part anti-murder-mystery, but most importantly, it is an allegorical odyssey about greed and its innate relation to (mis)fortune, as well as a daunting depiction of shared 'souls' between parents and progeny. Adapted by Roeg's sometimes collaborator Paul Mayersberg (*The Man Who Fell to Earth*, *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*) from the book *King's X* (1972) aka *Who Killed Sir Harry Oakes?* by American lawyer/FBI agent Marshall Houts, *Eureka* is a seemingly nihilistic film that concludes with the protagonist's death in what Harlan Kennedy of *American Cinema Papers* described in 1983 as a "bizarre Walpurgisnacht," yet quite ironically the murdered protagonist ultimately gets everything he wants in the end, thus demonstrating the director's talent for deconstructing the most complex of human souls.

The first 30 minutes or so of *Eureka* could stand alone as its own individual film. The year is 1925 and American gold digger Jack McCann (Gene Hackman) has spent no less than 15 years searching for gold in a miserable and deadly environment that has driven weaker men to suicide (Jack watches stoically as a man literally blows his brains out). After ditching his “spawn of a Danish whore” explorer partner, Jack finds a nice little translucent rock, which he later shows to his pagan-like mistress Frieda (Helena Kallianiotis), who prophesizes regarding the rock, “this stone found you. It has your name on it. Not outside, but inside. It’s your destiny. But everybody pays. Everybody pays!” and, indeed, pay he does. A man who lives by the admirable, if not self-righteous, maxim, “I’ve never earned a nickel from another man’s sweat!” Jack ultimately falls into a mountain of gold but his mistress Frieda symbolically dies when he comes to deliver the good news. As a man who believes “gold smells stronger than a woman” and whose girlfriend states of him “with you, the gold is everything,” Jack decided long ago that material gain was more important to him than anything else, so when he obtains all the wealth in the world, he no longer has anything to truly live for as a Faustian man who was born to climb mountains but whose wealth causes him to live an uncomfortably comfortable lifestyle of laziness and luxury. Flash forward two decades later and Jack is now a married father who is essentially the unofficial king of the Bahamas. For such a rich man, Jack seems quite bitter as demonstrated by his remark “Once I had it all. Now I only have everything,” but considering his British wife Helen (Jane Lapotaire) is a ditzy dipsomaniac and his daughter Tracy (Theresa Russell) is married to a degenerate dandy named Claude Maillot Von Horn (Rutger Hauer), he has a rather hectic life where everything he loves is also the source of his stress and disillusionment with life. On top that, Jack’s business partner Charles Perkins (Ed Lauter) and two mafia bosses, Jew Mayakofsky (Joe Pesci) and Italian-American Aurelio D’Amato (Mickey Rourke), are scheming to get rid of the old ‘dinosaur’ as they have grandiose greed-driven dreams for the Bahamas that the lapsed gold digger does not agree with. Undoubtedly, Jack has the most contempt for his pretty playboy son-in-law Claude as he has not only stolen his daughter but he also wants his soul. A perennial dilettante who, despite looking more Nordic than an Arno Breker statue, dabbles in the kabbalah like some moronic Hollywood celebrity, Claude is a mirror-admiring narcissist and self-admitted coward who is morbidly envious of Jack to the point where he attempts to belittle the man and his achievements at his own dinner table, stating in front of a number of guests, “You didn’t earn the gold, Jack; you took it from nature. You raped the earth.” In the same scene, Claude demonstrates his true corrosive character by swallowing a piece of Jack’s gold, thus performing an act of reverse alchemy by turning gold into shit.

A hopeless cynic, Jack states in the company of his guests Claude, Charles Perkins, Mayakofsky, and D’Amato, “Business... Thieves among thieves... pirates

EUREKA

stealing from each other,” thereupon figuratively digging his own grave with the sort of stoic confidence of a man who is not afraid to die. After various hostile confrontations with his adversaries, Jack is battered, blowtorched, and covered in feathers in what is undoubtedly a singularly brutal death yet quite ironically he gets what he wants in the end. With his much desired death after two decades of being incapacitated by wealth and luxury, Jack can also rest in peace knowing the wop-yid mafia has left to go somewhere to peddle their goods, his wife Helen has stopped drinking like a fish, and that Claude has been banned from the island and has left Tracy’s life forever. Indeed, while initially charged with Jack’s death, Claude is cleared of charges after his wife Tracy reveals he is too much of an indecisive coward to go to such drastic lengths as killing someone. Indeed, Tracy and her father Jack are ‘kindred spirits’ as if she is his Jungian anima and he is her animus and thus the legacy of the gold king will live on through his little girl. Naturally, Claude was too weak of a man for daddy’s girl Tracy, hence the dissolution of their relationship in the end. While Tracy loved her hubby with her whole heart just as her father put his whole heart into unearthing gold after 15 years of trying, Claude is an emotional wreck and a forsaken lost soul who will never find solace in anything, hence his pathological dilettantish dabbling in racially alien occult religious practices like kabbalah and voodoo (he takes two women, neither of whom are his wife, to a Negro voodoo orgy) and preference for nonwhites to his own people (in fact, in one scene, Jack asks Claude if the natives like him, to which he replies, “Yes. That’s true. It’s the whites who don’t like me.”). In the end, Eureka concludes somewhat euphorically with a flashback to Jack’s adventurer days, where he narrates the following words: “There’s gold, and it’s haunting and haunting. It’s luring me on as of old...and it isn’t the gold that I’m wanting...so much as just finding the gold. It’s the great big, broad land way up yonder. It’s the forest where silence has lease. It’s the beauty that thrills me with wonder. It’s the stillness that fills me with peace.”

Interestingly, Eureka concludes at the end of the Second World War, thus demonstrating a new era of multicultural American hegemony has reared its ugly mongrel face in the world. Indeed, at one point in the film, Hebraic mob boss Mayakofsky, which is a character based on real-life Judaic organized criminal Meyer Lansky, states, “So who’s not an American? Everyone is an American now. The Germans? They’re Americans. In Chicago, there’s many Germans. The Japanese... Believe me, one day, they’ll all be Americans, also. Languages. That’s all the difference. This war, what is it? It’s a war between Americans who all speak different languages, so how can we lose?,” as if he knows the days of racially homogenous nation-states are over. Of course, what Mayakofsky really means by ‘American’ is a cultureless and deracinated individual who has given up all the things that really have intrinsic value in life (i.e. art, kultur, love, tradition) for the dubious prospect of soulless material gain and nothing more epitomizes what it means to be American in the post-WWII era than the wandering

Jew, who gave up his roots long ago. Somewhat bizarrely when considering his flagrant promotion of counter-culture degeneracy with *Performance* (1970), noble savage worship and WASP-smashing in *Walkabout* (1971), black-on-white miscegenation in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), and philo-Semitism and psychoanalysis fetishism in *Bad Timing* (1980), Roeg claims he was accused of anti-Semitism due to a scene in *Eureka* in which protagonist Jack asks his son-in-law Claude if he is “a yid.” In an interview with *American Cinema Papers*, Roeg responded to these claims with the following: “At the dinner early in the film, Claude is wearing this shirt with cabalistic signs on it, flaunting this rather cleverer-than-thou image. And at one point, after they’ve talked about the five points of wisdom in the Cabala, McCann says ‘And the sixth is bullshit.’ And he goes on, ‘There’s only one Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The rest is conversation.’ Well, people have come up to me and said ‘Oh, anti-Semitic!’ and this, that, and the other. Well, when Jack says that he’s actually quoting straight from the center of the Talmud: ‘There’s only one Golden Rule’ the Talmud says: ‘Do unto others,’ and then it ends, ‘The rest is commentary.’” thus demonstrating the filmmaker’s somewhat obfuscated solidarity with god’s chosen tribe.

In the same interview with *American Cinema Papers*, Roeg remarked, “One reason the film isn’t a murder thriller...is that McCann doesn’t die. That’s to say, what he is, what he represents is absolutely continued in Tracy.” Undoubtedly, what makes this especially interesting is that the character of Jack lives on through a daughter and not a son, as it is symbolic of white WASP male decline and the rise of feminism, not to mention multiculturalism (as represented by the Sicilian and Jewish mafia bosses). Indeed, the character of Jack, who literally climbed mountains to achieve his nihilistic dream yet is not happy upon achieving it, epitomizes European ‘Faustian’ man to an almost a stereotypical degree and thus can be seen as a symbol of the so-called ‘old dead white man’ aka the original American (and world) elite. Of course, the character of dandy Claude—a proto-counter-culture type who suffers from xenophilia and senseless hedonism, not to mention lack of true identity, purpose, and testicular fortitude—is symbolic of the postmodern ‘progressive’ pussy white man. Undoubtedly, judging solely by the themes of his films alone, I think auteur Nicholas Roeg has the most in common with the character Claude, although his adventurous filmmaking career certainly demonstrates he has much in common with Faustian man Jack. After all, only a true son of Europe (not to mention a man who used to work as a cinematographer for old school celluloid epic maestro David Lean) could have assembled a film so laboriously ambitious as *Eureka* and I am not the least bit surprised that the money-grubbing studio bosses at MGM/UA found the film too esoteric for the masses.

-Ty E

INSIGNIFICANCE
INSIGNIFICANCE

Nicholas Roeg (1985)

In a sense, virtually all of English counter-culture auteur Nicholas Roeg's films are 'failures,' but, at the very least, most of them make interesting failures due to the director's propensity for taking risks and experimenting with narrative structures, complex themes, morality, etc. Unfortunately, Roeg is not simply a rogue filmmaker, but also an unrepentant leftist, cinematic deconstructionist and cubist, and dubious weirdo who had an obsession with seeing his then-wife Theresa Russell cinematically murdered, molested (by a horrid Heeb like Art Garfunkel no less!) and/or mutilated on the silver screen and who has displayed a nauseating knack for xenophilia and 'noble savage' fetishism as depicted in *Walkabout* (1971), a perturbing admiration for Freudian psychoanalysis and ardent Philo-Semitism in *Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession* (1980), and a seething hatred for American/Southern whites in *Track 29* (1988), thus making the director the product of a degenerate and largely ethno-masochistic zeitgeist. Of course, I was not surprised to learn that Roeg hates Joseph McCarthy, loves and empathizes with Albert Einstein, and has a sort of feminist revisionist opinion of the more tragic and sad than titillating and sexy Marilyn Monroe as depicted in his work *Insignificance* (1985). Of course, seeing as the film was based on a screenplay/play written by British dramatist Terry Johnson, who was inspired to write the play after learning that an autograph of Albert Einstein was among Marilyn Monroe's possessions at the time of her premature death, one cannot simply give Roeg all the credit for the incendiary ideas/scenes featured in his film *Insignificance*, set in New York City in 1954, dramatizing a fictional interaction between American icons Marilyn Monroe, Joseph McCarthy, Joe DiMaggio, and Albert Einstein, who are never mentioned by name but are simply called The Actress, The Senator, The Ballplayer, and The Professor as their uncontested popularity makes even mentioning their names rather insignificant as their popular public personas as icons have transcended them as sort of American archetypes that were born in a cultureless nation following the prosperity of the nation as a result of victory during the Second World War. A sort of sardonic yet ultimately apocalyptic black comedy that shows what happens when culturally and politically diametrical American cultural bigwigs bump heads, *Insignificance* is an innately iconoclastic yet ultimately 'politically correct' work that attempts to connect the past to the present by presenting the 1950s, like the 1980s when the film was made, as a 'reactionary' time fueled by materialism, philistine celebrity worship, mass-mindedness, and anti-communist 'witch hunts.' As someone who considers Marilyn Monroe nothing more than 'Hebrew Hollywood's greatest whore' and superstar Shiksa who did more to ruin the reputation of blonde women (despite being a natural redhead) than Nazi propaganda would, considers Einstein a cousin-copulating racist zionist who convinced FDR to work on the atom bomb

so Germany could be wiped out and whose contributions to mankind were ultimately more negative than positive, and that Joseph McCarthy was right, if not ineffective, I found *Insignificance* to be a sometimes interesting cinematic experiment riddled with left-wing clichés, obnoxious overacting, and artistic pretensions, but nonetheless an interesting experiment in celluloid quasi-esoterism.

It is 1954 and tons of horny men have gathered outside to see the naughty bits of an actress (Theresa Russell), presumably Marilyn Monroe, in what will prove to be the iconic scene from Billy Wilder's aesthetically deplorable and insanely overrated Freudian farce *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) where the seemingly half-retarded female protagonist's dress is blown up in a manner that seems nothing less than absurdly orgasmic. Naturally, the Actress' husband, The Ballplayer (Gary Busey), who is clearly modeled after Joe DiMaggio, is irked by the fact that virtually every man in American will be able to see the same unclad legs that are supposed to be his and his only. Meanwhile, a nauseatingly neurotic yet equally narcissistic Jewish scientist that goes by 'The Professor' (Michael Emil), who is clearly modeled after Albert Einstein—horrendous Heeb-fro and all—is minding his own business solving math problems when an absolutely heinous and barbaric fellow that goes by the name 'The Senator' (Tony Curtis, who starred along side the real Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959)), who is clearly a conspicuously crude caricature of Joseph McCarthy, shows up and demands that the poor and innocent Hebraic sage go before a committee to investigate his very probable communist-related activities. Of course, The Professor turns The Senator down and not long later the Semitic scholar receives a visit from the ostensibly Aryan Actress. To his shock, The Actress is no shit-for-brains Shiksa but a startlingly smart seductress who is able to give an almost vaudevillian demonstration of the Theory of Relativity via toy cars, soldier figurines, flashlights, and balloons. Despite being married to a belligerent Guido, The Actress is apparently a sapiosexual and admits to The Professor in an amorous manner that he is at the top of the list of people that she would like to share carnal knowledge with. While The Professor is eventually convinced to have sex with The Actress, he is completely cockblocked when The Ballplayer, who wants to talk to his wife about their marriage, shows up. Of course, The Professor realizes that he is no match for the martial prowess, so he changes rooms and meets an 'Uncle Tom' Cherokee Indian Elevator man (played by Will Sampson of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) fame) who claims he is no longer a Cherokee because he watches too much television, but that the scientist is because his Theory of Relativity is similar to some ancient and arcane Indian belief. While The Actress and The Ballplayer discuss their dubious marriage, the baseball maverick has already fallen asleep when his wife tells him that she thinks she is pregnant. The next morning, The Senator, who is revealed to be sexually impotent in the typically Hollywood Freudian fashion, arrives to The Professor's hotel room, only to discover The Actress laying stark naked in a daze

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in the bed. Being an evil reactionary anti-communist, The Senator threatens to expose The Professor and The Actress, who he mistakes for a hooker, and even punches the little lady in the stomach, thus causing the superstar to have a miscarriage. Eventually, The Professor arrives and sees The Senator stealing his papers. Instead of allowing the Senator to have them, The Professor throws all his research out of the window and the politician finally accepts defeat and leaves. After discussing her marital problems with The Professor, The Ballplayer learns from his wife that their marriage is over. Of course, The Professor has worse things to worry about than The Ballplayer as he knows he is indirectly responsible for a bunch of Japs getting nuked during the Second World War, hence his constant looking at his broken watch, which is stopped at 8:15 a.m. (the time when the Americans dropped the nuke "Little Boy" on Hiroshima), and being h by hallucinations of Nazis and scorched Japs throughout *Insignificance*. Sensing his glaring guilt, The Actress finally bitches enough at The Professor for him to admit his feeling of responsibility for the nuking of Germany. At 8:15 a.m., he has a vision of a nuke covering The Actress and the hotel room in flames. In the end, the personal problems, as well as the iconic legacies, of The Actress, The Senator, The Ballplayer, and The Professor seem rather petty and insignificant.

While most of the characters featured in *Insignificance* seem like crude caricatures, director Nicholas Roeg and writer Terry Johnson did their damndest to deconstruct these world famous 1950s American icons and portray them as individuals plagued with pestering personal problems just like everyone else, thus demystifying them in the process yet paradoxically adding to their 'mythos.' Of course, despite being a consistently experimental filmmaker, Roeg follows in the grand Hebraic Hollywood tradition of cinematically canonizing Albert Einstein and odiously obliterating Joseph McCarthy as if these softcore commie cinematic clichés were not infectious enough. Personally, I have always had nil interest in the American cultural icons featured in *Insignificance* and find baseball, Hollywood pseudo-divas and Playboy models, democratic politicians, and 'eccentric' Jewish scientists to be exceedingly dull symptoms of the contrived and ultimately worthless non-culture of America and that, as an ex-colony, the United States of America, never nor will ever have the great artists, divas, statesmen, philosophers, and poets Europa once had. If one were to rate America's history, especially within the past century, in context, within world history, it would barely even warrant a footnote. Of course, America's sole claim to fame is the atom bomb, which was largely the creation of German-Jewish minds who were kicked out of the Fatherland, which *Insignificance* alludes to when The Professor's sailboat is destroyed by a bunch of naughty Nazi brownshirts. Like Italian maestro Luchino Visconti's penultimate work *Conversation Piece* (1974) aka *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, *Insignificance* is undoubtedly a rather idiosyncratic and underrated chamber piece among the filmmaker's larger cinema oeuvre. Of course, like virtually all of Roeg's films, *Insignificance* suffers from its

outmoded and now anachronistic leftist 'revolutionary' pretensions, as if some jaded Judaic jackass like Bill Maher or Jon Stewart shit in the director's brain. Still, to see abortion-addict Norma Jean's dress in flames and bosom covered in blood, as well as Einstein's pathological guilt over being largely responsible for contributing to one of the most deleterious inventions in human history, makes Insignificance worthy of the admission price, even if the film itself is largely insignificant in itself in its overall influence on cinema history.

-Ty E

TRACK 29
TRACK 29

Nicholas Roeg (1988)

Out of all of his many experimental and distinctive auteur works, Nicholas Roeg's drama-fantasy-horror hybrid *Track 29* (1988) is very possibly the English filmmaker's most singular, inscrutable, and artistically ambiguous work, even if it is his least technically innovative. Co-produced by George Harrison of The Beatles fame and penned by English screenwriter Dennis Potter, *Track 29* takes an outsider (aka liberal Brit) look at a small American Southern town in a most contemptuous and unflattering way. Starring Roeg's cat-eyed ex-wife Theresa Russell (Eureka, Insignificance) in the lead role, *Track 29* is a work centering around a mentally-unstable and under-sexed alcoholic housewife named Linda Henry who receives a surprising visit from a young eccentric British hitchhiker named Martin (played by Gary Oldman) who purports to be the son she reluctantly put up for adoption as a scared teenager. Fed up with her pretentious yet eccentric philandering surgeon husband Henry (played by Christopher Lloyd) – who has a peculiar duel fetish for masochistic spankings and model trains – Linda begins to embrace the loony leprechaun of a man that is apparently her long lost sole progeny, but unfortunately for her, he may be only a figure of her distorted imagination. While her hubby Henry is off getting routine spankings at work from his beak-nosed mistress nurse Stein (played by a young yet still considerably repulsive Sandra Bernhard), Linda enters the mysterious world of incestuous family bonding with her man-child son; a hyperactive and high-strung lad who feels that being a coddled grown-up toddler is an ideal career move. Noticeably scarred by his abandonment as a child, Martin inevitably has a terrible temper-tantrum and takes out his pent up rage on Henry and his extravagant model train set in this extremely loose reworking of *Oedipus Rex*.

It should be apparent to most viewers of *Track 29* that Nicholas Roeg is not exactly sympathetic towards the inhabitants of the small Southern town that he depicts in the film. In fact, not a single character in the entirety of *Track 29* is remotely likable. One can only assume that Roeg was pompously sneering at the fictional degenerate confederate Anglo-Americans characters that he so brazenly concocted throughout the production of *Track 29*. Many of the characters and scenarios played out in the *Track 29* would be at home in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that *Track 29* is a work that is probably more of interest to Lynch lovers than fans of Roeg's previous work. Although missing Roeg's signature choppy deconstructed narrative montages, *Track 29* does feature a couple Lynchian flashbacks that scream rustic surrealism and oddball clodhopper perversity, which is undoubtedly the English filmmaker's prejudiced vision of the American South. Right from the get go of *Track 29*, it is most apparent that Linda is the no longer desired trophy wife of her intellectually superior husband Henry; a man whose sense of superiority over

his spouse is quite glaring to the point where he barely sees the need to conceal his preference for toy trains and his less than homely Hebraic mistress. Linda, being of a more conventional sexuality, fantasies about her Daddy but eventually settles for her overly sensitive son; a fellow who is quite conscious and equally vocal about his overwhelming Oedipus complex. Only through her son (whether he be real or imaginary) can Linda expel the "inner demons" of her fragile mind and rid herself of a soulless man who sees her as nothing more than blatantly inferior aesthetically-pleasing white trash. Despite the mostly obnoxious and otherwise loathsome nature of the main characters in the film, I was reasonably impressed with all of the lead performances featured in Track 29. I tend to think of Theresa Russell as a savvy and sophisticated seductress so it was nice to see her play against character as a psychosis-ridden philistine with a self-destructive drinking problem. Additionally, I have always found Christopher Lloyd's iconic character roles in the Back to the Future trilogy and The Addams Family films to be patently exasperating, so I certainly welcomed the unwavering chutzpah and gross infidelity of his character in Track 29. Of course, out of all the performances featured in the film, Gary Oldman deserves the most praises for his willingness to hop on Christopher Lloyd whilst au naturel, on top of acting like an all-around retarded rug rat throughout Track 29.

At the conclusion of Track 29, many questions are left unresolved; hence the general mixed feelings towards the film among Nicholas Roeg fans and general viewers alike. For me, Track 29 is an abominable portrait of Americana that keeps on giving with subsequent viewings due to its lack of resolve and overall incoherence. Whether Track 29 is a dream-within-a-dream, a series of alcohol-induced illusions, and/or a semi-surreal depiction of reality is up for speculation, but I certainly consider the overwhelming ambiguity of the film's storyline to be one of its finest assets. After all, being that Track 29 is an intemperate celluloid psychodrama of sorts that depicts the lifelong trauma a woman suffers from after being brutally deflowered by a bestial carnay, one can only expect a certain amount of rationality for such a work. It should be noted that Martin himself takes on the appearance (even featuring the same trashy Mother tattoo sprawled across his chest) and wardrobe of his hillbilly father, who he actually meets while hitchhiking during the beginning of Track 29. For Linda, Martin is a dichotomous symbol for her greatest dreams and worst nightmares; the son of the man who would not stop when she said "no" during sex, but also the man that gave her carnal pleasure and her only child. It is only when she comes to terms with these conflicting emotions via Martin that she can move on with her life. Needless to say, I think that rape victims should approach Track 29 with the utmost caution.

-Ty E

FEAR X
FEAR X

Nicolas Winding Refn (2003)

I have a strong belief that for every person, there is that "one" film. One to define your personality and you understand thoroughly that this film is indeed a visualization of your characteristics. Sort of like soul mates, except not as homosexual. For me, that film is Fear X. Don't let the title deceive you like it has hundreds of thousands of people. Fear X to me, is pure ripened sadness, billowing from every molecule existing on each frame.

John Turturro plays a lonely security guard who is past the point of insanity. After his loving wife is killed in a random incident, Turturro pours over surveillance tapes trying to piece together the events. The striking determination is enough to get under your skin and grasp your arteries. While mainly being a film about redemption, it has a potent mixture of hyper-voyeurism. Nicolas Winding Refn is a Danish director who filmed Fear X after writing some ideas for television shows and directing gangster films. Fear X is the box office flop that was beat out by the latest Scary Movie spoof. Due to the huge failure of getting any revenue, Refn's company Jang Go Star went bankrupt, killing all chances for another decent film. Fear X is prone to negative remarks from critics but it is all up to you. Perhaps in another life, I might even mock this film. On a personal note, I might add that Fear X had a bizarre effect on me. When I first found the film, it was at a video store, lying in a box for unloved DVD's without cases. I promptly took it home to leave it sit in a binder until I finally decided to watch it due to a friend's recommendation. Within the first 15 minutes I was sobbing hysterically. Unbeknownst to me, this desperate feeling of paranoia would only increase, granting the film Fear X the title of a personal emotional roller coaster. David Lynch's biggest success, Blue Velvet, is known for its keen and vibrant uses of the color Blue and how it manages to cause the normally "cool" color to leave a stain on you. Fear X has a very similar effect, but with the color Red. While red normally has a warm feeling, even being related to blood, it lacks all these happy sensations. Refn's use of red causes your eyes to glaze over leaving you with the utmost urgency to finish this film and "get the hell out of there" Several features of the film really make it stand out. One being that the film was shot in chronological order, as in, the beginning was shot first and the ending was filmed last, and two being the ending. Rather than having an ending that features a plausible outcome, the director decides to go with an entirely open ending, allowing whatever your mind has built up to create a whole world involving the situations and characters. Fear X isn't perfect, nor is it an auteur's work, but it is a masterpiece of blistering emotions. What else would you expect from a screenplay penned by Hubert Selby Jr.?

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BRONSON

Nicolas Winding Refn (2008)

In Charlie Bronson's world, pain does not exist as either a hindrance nor pleasure. It exists as madness, pure and concentrate. Nicolas Winding Refn's latest film is a hybrid of a surreal arthouse piece combined with a biopic that is as short-lived as Bronson's time out of the bird. Long since have I seen Refn's previous effort titled *Fear X* and had you read my review of the film, you'd recall that film forcing tears from my face at a mere 15 minutes in. But the rumors of his company's bankruptcy made me feel as if it were the end of his short-lived yet illustrious filmmaking career. After I heard the title *Bronson* being circulated through the gossip mill, I thought to myself "Who'd want to see a film about Charles Bronson?" Not to knock his acting credentials or anything but the man seems hardly fitting for anything I'd love to experience through a visual third-person art piece. The term art is also applied very loosely, gentlemen. After reading who the director was, my heart skipped a beat and I soon endeavored into a film other than *Die Hard* that made me want to walk outside, inhale a deep breath of fresh, free air and punch someone in their fucking face. Welcome, folks, to the demoniac composure of Bronson. Bronson follows an infamous prisoner named Mickey Peterson who, after robbing a post office and initially receiving 7 years in prison, blows his short time behind bars into an overwhelming 34 years locked away, eventually becoming a victim of his own aggravated insanity. This berserk powerhouse of insane glee has given way for the near perfect portrait of creative liberties with an identity and a stunning and successful enactment to get inside of the mind of an unstable, hyper-violent machine. Buzz on the street even leads to a potential Academy nod for Tom Hardy's breakout performance. From *RocknRolla*'s queer to Bronson's machismo statue, Hardy's turnover as our troublemaker at least deserves him some critical status and to be completely fair, it would seem much of Hardy's influence on mannerisms is a mix of the real Charlie Bronson and Daniel Plainfield's character in *There Will Be Blood*. Note the scene in which he responds to an attempted hostage negotiation with "What have you got?!" The similar demeanor, head shudder, and tone bring Daniel Day-Lewis' character specifically to mind, although I could be mistaken. A notion recently brought to mind, most "bloggers" don't really understand the nature of the film they're viewing nor do they grasp the fact that this film is presented through the mind of someone who is not all "together" up there. A *Current.TV* film review chronicles the scattered thoughts of video bloggers and manipulated women alike. Such thoughts as "not a complete biopic" and "bad pacing" were some of but the few complaints against this film. Granted, every film is magnetic towards harsh criticism but if anything, only the male nudity could be lashed at as seen by the opening weekend pour out of *Watchmen* reviews. The pacing in *Bronson* was set at a remarkably fast and efficient speed

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that, by the end of the scene, you're left wanting more. Remember kids, Bronson isn't a godforsaken miniseries. It's a two-hour feature length presentation without the desire to bore with more than bargained for. Another waived the fact that the picture is "indie" and expressed a contempt for the operatic violence while referencing the notion that Refn "must have seen A Clockwork Orange!" Wow, bitch, way to read back Damien McSorely's quote directly from the theatrical trailer. Vile and spiteful cynicism aside, the film contains nothing akin of Kubrick's "best," as there is nary a scene of rehabilitation in sight nor is there any morals dictated other than madness rules all in it's own kingdom. Visually, Bronson is an arresting feat in starched and rusted masculinity with a raw contemptuous anger for authority. Refn must have a deep chip on the shoulder for creating such a maniacal fit of renegade filmmaking that even only begins to humanize such a monster. and in the meantime making him one of recent cinema's most beloved starring character. It's generally safe to say that tight and taut editing and brilliant palettes of blood and bruises make Bronson the only quintessential biopic but not only within the characters deeds, the entire tale is weaved masterfully. Whether to thank the fantastic storytelling or the ability to create an unofficial Problem Child 3: Goes to Prison is beyond me. If anything, I congratulate Refn for creating an icon purely consisting of utter destruction - a masculine tornado of whose virility is untouched in any way, shape or form. It doesn't even matter which badge you carry. Finally, a villain of which you can safely root for. Armed with a violent nature one can appreciate, Bronson maims the competition as being fiercely watchable. In fact, I haven't been able to re-watch a film in some time but Bronson has me viewing this film over & over again as I introduce new people of Refn's more accessible masterpieces. Bronson certainly didn't leave me sobbing like Fear X did, but Bronson is more of an intimate film. That's surprising to even my self. I haven't seen the lauded Pusher trilogy but knowing my past with his works and how deeply they've touched me in many-a-clever emotion, I'm sure I can find something personal to adore about it (them.) Bronson is the "indie" classic to end all classics. Now I'm sure I won't think this when another gem comes along but as it stands, Bronson is one of the only films that make potential homicide look thrilling and admissible as an everyday activity in physical vulgarity. A hay maker for critics, this is one motion picture that won't leave my head for sometime.

-mAQ

VALHALLA RISING

Nicolas Winding Refn (2009)

I do not think it would be an exaggeration for me to say that *Valhalla Rising* (2009), directed by Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn, is the greatest Odiniſt film that has ever been made. Unlike the multicultural-sensitive and blasphemously cartoonish Marvel Comics movie *Thor* (2011), *Valhalla Rising* is an anti-pacifiſt masterpiece that is lavishly ſteeped in the old Nordic Odinic religion. The protagonist of the film is One-Eye, who like the Germanic God Odin, is missing an eye. Also like Odin, One-Eye displays a keen affinity for war, battle, victory and death as his life revolves around these things, even as he tragically meets his untimely but prophetic demise. *Valhalla Rising* can also be seen as a metaphorical portrayal of the birth of Chriſtianity and the death of Odin in ancient Europa. After escaping and killing a group of men who forced him to fight-to-the-death other captured men, Odin meets up with a degenerate *Männerbund* of hopelessly holy Chriſtian Crusaders who are sailing for the homeland of their alien Chriſt; Jerusalem, but inſtead they land in the New World; the Americas. It is immediately apparent upon their initial meeting that, despite being members of the same race, One-Eye and the Crusaders are of a wholly different nature as the band of Chriſtians display nothing short of weary and wimpy behavior when around the unpredictable Heathen Cyclops One-Eye; a man who may have one unflinching eye but seems to have ten more in the back of his all-ſeeing head. As *Valhalla Rising* progresses, it is all too apparent that Chriſtianity has severely pacified the blond beaſt Crusaders of the film. Whereas One-Eye is a beſtial barbarian whose inſtinſts are fully intact, the Crusaders display a sort of incertitude and deracination that is moſt certainly the result of adopting an alien religion that is at odds with their forefather's religion of battle and war. Although Odin apparently ſacrificed himſelf for himſelf, Jeſus Chriſt (as mentioned by a Crusader in the film) ſacrificed himſelf for all of humanity. In *Valhalla Rising*, the Crusaders sheepiſhly become the victims of Amerindians yet One-Eye proves to hold his own, until ſomething changes his mind and he takes an unexpected path.....

In many regards, *Valhalla Rising* is an anti-action-adventure flick as it is a work that is recognized for its breaking of redundant genre conventions, moſt notably due to its artful and atmospheric prowess and its ſtatic yet ſtrangely unpedantic pacing. Simply put, *Valhalla Rising* is an oh-so unfortunately rare thinking man's action-adventure film, thus it will moſt likely leave your typical alcoholic American football fan in an even more drunken ſtupor of hopeless bewilderment and reſtleſs agitation. Although the film may not include as many battles and bloody corpses as Zach Snyder's abſurdly overrated work *300* (2007), *Valhalla Rising* is ultimately a more visceral and brutal work that – like the ancient Germanic barbarians – takes no prisoners. Also, unlike *300*, *Valhalla Ris-*

VALHALLA RISING

ing – despite its various bloodstained dream sequences – has a truly organic feel that makes it stand eminent over its superfluous CGI-stylized contemporaries. The themes featured in *Valhalla Rising* are more in tune with nature and the “law of the claw,” thus the film makes for a truly unique cinematic experience that the world has not seen since the films of the Third Reich. In *Valhalla Rising*, the Crusaders who follow anti-organic Christian laws fall prey to their theological pacifism while One-Eye – a man who still “feels” the Odiniist paganism of his ancestors – seems to be invincible. One-Eye can even be seen in *Valhalla Rising* staring at a Crusader-made crucifix with a smirk. To One-Eye, the cross is nothing more than a false idol that has no more intrinsic value to him than an opera by Richard Wagner has to a crack-smoking and 40 oz.-chugging rapper.

The conclusion of *Valhalla Rising* – not unlike Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (1960) – can be seen as a symbolic metaphor for the death of Odinic German paganism in Europe. When One-Eye – like Jesus Christ – sacrifices himself for someone other than himself, he also takes the religion of his ancestors with him into oblivion. After all, Gods and religions only die when the adherent of these beliefs are no more but it has also been stated reputable psychologists that these religions are passed on (albeit dormant) through the blood of ancestors. In Swiss psychoanalyst C.G. Jung's essay *Wotan* (aka *Odin*), he theorized that the spirit of Odin continues to slumber in the collective unconscious of all Germanic peoples, stating of Germans during the first half of the twentieth century, “But what is more than curious -- indeed, piquant to a degree -- is that an ancient god of storm and frenzy, the long quiescent Wotan, should awake, like an extinct volcano, to new activity, in a civilized country that had long been supposed to have outgrown the Middle Ages. We have seen him come to life in the German Youth Movement, and right at the beginning the blood of several sheep was shed in honour of his resurrection. Armed with rucksack and lute, blond youths, and sometimes girls as well, were to be seen as restless wanderers on every road from the North Cape to Sicily, faithful votaries of the roving god.” Jung believed that the National Socialist revolution in Germany was an atavistic awakening of Wotan in the German populous and that every so often, the rouse of the old pagan gods was only nature, adding “If we apply are admittedly peculiar point of view consistently, we are driven to conclude that Wotan must, in time, reveal not only the restless, violent, stormy side of his character, but, also, his ecstatic and mantic qualities -- a very different aspect of his nature. If this conclusion is correct, National Socialism would not be the last word. Things must be concealed in the background which we cannot imagine at present, but we may expect them to appear in the course of the next few years or decades. Wotan's reawakening is a stepping back into the past; the stream was dammed up and has broken into its old channel.” Although One-Eye sacrifices himself for the life of another, he does so in an honorable manner by allowing himself to be killed in battle, thus securing a position in Valhalla; the heavenly “hall

of the slain” that Odin reigns over. To the ancient Germanic peoples, sins (in the Christian sense) like rape, pillaging, and murder were considered nothing short of honorable. Throughout *Valhalla Rising*, One-Eye sneers at the Christian Crusaders in a most sinister but deserving manner. In his mind, by killing these passive Christians, he is altruistically giving them a sense of honor that they are indubitably undeserving of.

Recently, a class action lawsuit was taken against FilmDistrict, the distributor of the film *Drive* (2011), by a soulless and philistine wench due to her exceedingly petty and pathetic belief that the film’s trailer is misleading, the film features very little driving/chase scenes, and that it promotes violence against Jewish people. I am sure that this disgruntled money-siphoning she-bitch would be even more angered if she were to watch *Drive* director Nicholas Winding Refn’s previous film *Valhalla Rising*; a work that pisses on the scrolls of the Hebraic Judeo-Christian religions and the very weak and meek kind of society that she is symbolic of. Needless to say, such class action lawsuits would be nothing short of an absurdity in a world where Odin reigns. With the transvaluation of all values and destruction of a master morality that formed in Europe via the slave-morality of Christianity came a lamentable “taming of the blond beast.” Although disguised as a mere Viking action-adventure film, *Valhalla Rising* portrays this suicidal change in a somewhat subtle manner. Through Christianity eventually came the liberal humanism that is now common in the Occident today. If modern Germanic peoples continue to uphold these deracinating and apocalyptic self-destructive trends, they can expect to meet a similar fate to that of One-Eye when he passively offers himself to hostile Amerindians. Aside from being an exquisite work of bloody martial art, *Valhalla Rising* features an important Odinic philosophy of the warrior spirit that can only bring strength to the post-Christianized Europoid. Set to a score of ambient noise, *Valhalla Rising*, like a religious ceremony, is first and foremost, a work that is meant to be felt and wholly embraced by the viewer. If any film can inspire a person or a collective to go on the Wild Hunt, it is *Valhalla Rising*.

-Ty E

THE WOODSMAN
THE WOODSMAN

Nicole Kassell (2004)

I have been waiting for a while to see Hollywood release a film empathetic towards pedophiles and similar ilk. Unless I am mistaken and they have done it before, it seems that *The Woodsman* is a new all-time low for the Freudians of Sunset Boulevard. Unsurprisingly, the star Pedo of the film is Kevin Bacon, a role he has played before in *Sleepers*, although this time he seems he enjoys little girls instead of little boys. Not since Patrick Swayze's role in *Donnie Darko* has there been a actor better suited for the role of scum of the earth. A film like *The Woodsman* just makes me wonder what Hollywood's ultimate goal is with their undermining of traditional values and Western social norms. They have already brainwashed most American's into thinking flooding America with uneducated savages as the height of humanistic altruism. They have already convinced white women it's best to abort their own child because nothing is better and more important than a career. Most importantly, Hollywood has taught us to always use animalistic empathy and sentimentalism instead of the intellect. After all, how else could any thinking person swallow the crock of cultural Marxist scheid that Hollywood is selling? With *The Woodsman*, Hollywood wants you to know that not all child molesters are bad guys. Of course, *The Woodsman* was directed by a female director, Nicole Kassell, who probably felt the film to be an exercise in female empowerment. The lead anti-hero (or whatever he is supposed to be) Walter, played Kevin Bacon, is a pathetic man who gives the appearance of being a victim more than being a victimizer. Right from the beginning, director Kassell wants us to sympathize with this kiddo-phile ex-con. After all, he was probably a victim of more than one experiences of prison sodomy. Walter's only friend (Carlos) when he gets out of prison is a Latino, a member of a group especially known for their enjoyment of their own daughters (or at least according to a Cop I know in a certain Latino infested area). Carlos also happens to be married to Walter's sister. Walter was the only person in his family to promote his sister partaking in miscegenation with his beaner best friend and for that Carlos owes him one. Walter's own sister won't see him, but the Mexican banging his sister (who shot out Mestizo half-castes) like a piñata, does. Talk about family matters. A Member of the Concerned Black Men of America Who are the are the heroes of the urban wilderness of *The Woodsman*? Try a noble a Negro and Negress, who have a special knack for protecting the world from white pedophiles. Rappers Mos Def and Eve play the roles of the most concerned individuals in the fight against Walter and his knew found freedom. Mos Def plays a cop, who despite his flimsy build, likes to make threats at the even flimsier Walter. Eve plays a co-worker/secretary who has a super Negro spiritual ability of sniffing out stinking pedos. Hollywood truly is a place of dreams and fantasy where upside down casting is begotten just right. But then again, a morally dubious mulatto mes-

siah is supposed to save the world in real-life. I guess “art” really does imitate life, but I think in the case of Hollywood it’s the other way around. Hollywood defecates out an image and expects the naïve public to accept those destructive ways as normal, desirable, and ideal. If the Hollywood studio system was wiped out and replaced with something of value, the Western world would no doubt start healing instantaneously. The Woodsman in the Woods catching Wood By the end of the film, Walter becomes a “hero” of sorts. Due to his child molester psychology, he is able to sniff out others like himself. Walter decides that it is one thing to molest little girls, but molesting little boys is just going too far. Mos Def makes it known subtly that he approves of Walter’s criminal justice and by the end of The Woodsman, the world is a better place. Looking around online, it is apparent the majority of critics see The Woodsman as a spectacular piece of groundbreaking social cinema. Of course, it is obvious the reason for the great reviews is that The Woodsman offered the public an emotional rollercoaster of triumph in the name of “prejudice” and a promise of hope. Surely, not many people that viewed the film actually took the time to think analytically about what they just watched and what message it gives. The American public would rather stay in the childish woods of sentiment and fantasy.

-Ty E

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Nigel Wingrove (1989)

With the Halloween season in full swing (or at least it was when I first started writing this review), it is naturally time for countless grown women who dream of purchasing silicone tits to celebrate by dressing in slutty nun costumes, which is something I do not quite understand, at least as far as the uniquely unsexy religious sister garb is concerned. Indeed, maybe it is because I did not have the blessing of being raised in the Catholic faith but I have never had an innate understanding of the fetishistic obsession with nuns and the eroticization of Catholic iconography in general, especially since virtually all of the nuns that I have encountered in real-life looked quite homely and seemed like latent lesbians, asexual, or childish. Of course, judging by the cinematic works of various auteur filmmakers ranging from Luis Buñuel to Jesús Franco to Walerian Borowczyk to George Kuchar to Werner Schroeter, there is no denying that Catholicism seems to sexually warp certain people that are brought up in the faith (after all, when an adult, especially an authority figure, tells a child not to do something, it just makes the kid want to do it even more). From personal experience, I can say without hesitation that one of the most sexually voracious girls that I have ever dated was a chick from such a strict traditional Catholic background that her parents forbid her from watching PG-rated movies. Somewhat curiously, despite being brought up as an atheist by his seemingly extremely liberal-minded parents, British auteur, underground media mogul, and quasi-pornographer Nigel Wingrove (*Sacred Flesh*, *Satanic Sluts* series) developed a lifelong fetish for naughty nude nuns that is quite apparent from the films he directs as well as the Euro-sleaze classics that he distributes via his film distribution company Redemption Films (which was founded in 1993 and later relaunched in 2012 in association with Kino Lorber of all companies). In fact, when Wingrove had the opportunity to see 17th-century Italian Baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini's masterwork *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*—a statue depicting Roman Catholic saint Teresa of Ávila that is generally considered to be one of the true sculptural masterpieces of High Roman Baroque—while staying in Rome, he was so inspired by the work that he decided to direct a film influenced by it. Unfortunately, the film in question, *Visions of Ecstasy* (1989), would not only ultimately result in Wingrove going from being a home-owning art director to homelessness, but would also make him an infamous public figure that was hated by both British politicians and everyday people alike due to the media controversy it caused. While a mere short film with a 17-minute running time that was shot over a three day period in April 1989 with 'glamour models' who had just got done touring as cage-dancers for the Beastie Boys, Wingrove's film is quite notable for being the only film in all of British cinema to be banned in the UK for blasphemy, with the cinematic work remaining outlawed for over

two decades until 2008 when the outmoded blasphemy law was finally abolished (and unfortunately replaced with a more heinous law called the Racial and Religious Hate Act, which criminalized the mocking of untermensch religions like Islam and Judaism, among every other absurdly archaic non-European religions, thus reflecting the sort of authoritarian cultural cuckolding that is quite vogue in jolly old post-empire Great Britain).

A sort of non-linear experimental neo-Nunsploitation flick that attempts to be both cultivated and poetic in its meticulously stylized sensual sacrilege, *Visions of Ecstasy* is ultimately not much more sexually graphic than Danish auteur Benjamin Christensen's silent era masterpiece *Häxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages* (1922), which will probably be a shock to those viewers that know of its long and complicated history as a government certified piece of celluloid blasphemy. In fact, aesthetically speaking, the film owes more aesthetically to the films of German Expressionism and German dandy Werner Schroeter's blasphemous high-camp Oskar Panizza adaptation *Liebeskonzil* (1982) aka *Council of Love* than the Nunsploitation trash that auteur Wingrove so deeply cherishes, thereupon making for a somewhat unclassifiable cinematic work that will probably disappoint both exploitation fans and pretentious art fags alike. As a perversely phantasmagoric nonlinear work with nil dialogue and a somewhat fetishistic emphasis on *mise-en-scène*, Wingrove's short particularly reminded me of the films of Canadian artsploitation auteur Karim Hussain, especially his proudly heretical directorial debut *Subconscious Cruelty* (2000). In terms of films belonging to the Nunsploitation subgenre, *Visions of Ecstasy* probably owes the most to Polish master of erotica Walerian Borowczyk's *Behind Convent Walls* (1978) aka *Interno di un convento* as a solacing piece of rather refined sleaze that emphasizes understated sensuality over heavy-handed horn-dog style crudeness (in fact, as a work that features nuns shoving wooden dildos up their naughty bits, Borowczyk's flick is ultimately much more graphic than Wingrove's short, which only goes so far as showing bushy beavers). Of course, it should also be mentioned that director Wingrove himself credits *School of the Holy Beast* (1974) aka *Convent of the Sacred Beast* directed by Norifumi Suzuki and *The Other Hell* (1980) aka *L'altro inferno* aka *Guardian of Hell* directed by Bruno Mattei as the Nunsploitation flicks that influenced *Visions of Ecstasy*. Featuring an original synthesizer-driven celestial musical score by Steven Severin (who also composed the score for Wingrove's short *Faustine* (1990) starring the director's then-girlfriend Eileen Daly) of the classic English Gothic/post-punk band Siouxsie and the Banshees, Wingrove's film feels like the cinematic equivalent of making out with a voluptuous Gothic chick for the first time but only being able to get so far as sticking your finger inside of her, as it is a literally and figuratively masturbatory flick that is all foreplay and ultimately does not seal the deal in terms of cumming to full heretical climax. Indeed, sexually speaking, the film will probably only arouse young boys and perennial virgins who still have weekly

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wet dreams because they have yet to find a girl that will let them fuck them.

According to Wingrove, his intent with *Visions of Ecstasy* in regard to central subject Teresa of Ávila was to, “visually interpret a section of the writings of St Teresa and through those images convey some of the sensual eroticism that I felt emanated from her words.” Judging by his film, one has to wonder how Wingrove came to the conclusion that Ms. Saint Teresa of Jesus was a bisexual sadomasochist of sorts simply by reading her religious texts, but then again she was the granddaughter of a heretical Marrano Hebrew who was persecuted during the Spanish Inquisition for allegedly readopting the Judaic faith of his ancestors, so she certainly had ungodly genes (incidentally, sadistic Grand Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada, who was infamous for persecuting crypto-Jews, was also of crypto-Jewish stock himself). Indeed, during the film, the Spanish mystic and Roman Catholic Saint meekly mounts Jesus and grinds her gash against the postmortem son of god’s cock while he is nailed to the cross and is even sexually serviced by a Sapphic slave (which is apparently her own psyche) while in bondage. Aside from the introduction, the film is really only comprised of two softcore petite vignettes where the only penetration depicted is in the form of Saint Teresa driving a nail into her own hand like she is attempting to perpetuate some sort of sordid stigmata hoax (of course, she is really just embracing her Christ-like masochism). A celluloid chiaroscuro of the amorously oneiric sort that is just too damn tame and sensitively constructed to be considered truly obscene by today’s standards, the film somewhat curiously opens with a credit sequence featuring a graceful butterfly flying in slow-motion. After the soothing opening credits scene, the viewer follows the camera as it hovers over a wild quasi-Expressionistic landscape covered with plants, leaves, and dirt until it catches up with the butterfly, which is sitting near a trail of blood. The trail of vital fluids ultimately leads to drops of blood dripping onto a rock. It seems that Teresa of Ávila (Beastie Boy dancer Louise Downie) gets wet at the thought of Jesus sacrificing himself on the cross, as she is portrayed hammering a nail into her hand in a fashion that seems like a cock penetrating some sort of wet fleshy female orifice, hence the blood-splattered rock. Undoubtedly, Teresa is a girl that likes it dirty as reflected by the fact that she knocks over a chalice full of blood and then proceeds to lick the red stuff off of the ground like a pathological lily-licker who gets extra hungry for poontang when her girlfriend is on her period. Considering Teresa seems to be in a sort of perpetual orgasmic state of immaculate ecstasy as reflected in her violently spastic movements as she becomes more and more despoiled with biological substances, it almost seems that she is fantasizing that her own blood is the crucified’s cum (after all, according to some of the Manson girls, Jesus died with a hard-on), hence why she rubs the vital fluids all over her body, especially her tender tits. Of course, Teresa is only warming up for her big date with the son of god, as well as her own sexually sick psyche.

While the first segment of *Visions of Ecstasy* is certainly surreal, the second and final segment of the film is wholly psychosexual in a purely visual way. Indeed, one could argue that the second segment is merely what was going on in Teresa's mind while she was masochistically masturbating with a holy nail during the first part of the film. A fairly simple montage sequence featuring two alternating tableaux, the segment switches back and forth between Teresa copulating with Christ on the cross and another slightly more abstract scenario where the female protagonist is sexually serviced by a female slave while her hands are bound in bondage. Credited as the 'psyche of St. Teresa' (Elisha Scott), the blue-eyed and dark-blond-haired Sapphic servant slowly crawls on all fours to Teresa, who is dangling from her hands from a rope like she is engaged in a sort of mock crucifixion. As the protagonist's psyche begins making her way up her body, the montage features parallel shots of Teresa licking the gory wounds and fondling the pale skin of Jesus Christ's seemingly cold corpse as it is nailed to the cross. Indeed, if there is something that Teresa unequivocally has a fetish for, it is Christ's Five Holy Wounds, especially the giant lance wound in his side, which almost resembles a mutilated pussy in the film. As for Teresa's carpet-munching Psyche, she seems to be infatuated with the protagonist's breasts and especially her nipples, which she delicately tongues like a pussycat licking milk out of a bowl. At the very end of the film, Teresa holds Jesus' nailed hands and 'Psyche' eventually collapses from all the excitement.

Somewhat humorously considering it is easily his most well known and discussed cinematic work, director Nigel Wingrove does not think much of his infamous short, or as he wrote in his fairly insightful 36-page essay *Finding Ecstasy on the Road to Redemption* (2012), "I have not actually watched *VISIONS OF ECSTASY* for maybe fifteen years. In fact, barring a few moments, images, or sounds I don't particularly like it anymore, and were I to have my time over again I would make it very differently. But in a sense that was what *VISIONS* was all about; it wasn't a masterpiece, or even a feature, it was just an 18 minute short film, self funded, to be self-released, a stepping-stone up the greasy ladder to success, or oblivion." In fact, Wingrove is so shockingly unsentimental and frank about the more glaring flaws of his film that he rightly noted in the same essay that, "the result of this stampede into film making was that I was essentially creating a series of still images rather than a series of moving images that worked as a whole for the twenty minutes duration of the film. The other problem was, had it been edited in a way that would have made the images work as I had envisaged it would have meant that *VISIONS OF ECSTASY* should have been about five minutes long or less. I really had not understood or even grasped at that time how fast screen time uses up imagery or how critically important it was to carefully plan and work out scenes. Of course, this wouldn't have mattered if *VISIONS OF ECSTASY* hadn't been about to be subjected to such intense scrutiny." Indeed, the film may be shamelessly artsy fartsy in its direction, but

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it oftentimes drags like the average cheap porn flick yet without the benefit of full-on hardcore pornographic action. After watching most of the director's oeuvre, I have to say that my favorite Wingrove flick is his very first cinematic effort *Axel* (1988), which features a fairly similar aesthetic to *Visions of Ecstasy*, albeit without the heavy-handed and largely outmoded sacrilegious imagery. Notably, like his pseudo-metaphysical *Teresa of Ávila* anti-biopic, the short but sinfully sweet 6-minute film was influenced by another artist's art. Indeed, it should not surprise anyone that has seen the paintings that *Axel* is a filmic interpretation of Teutonic Dadaist Max Ernst's classic paintings *THE ROBIN OF THE BRIDE* (1940) and *THE ANTIPOPE* (1942). Unfortunately, Wingrove has mostly stuck to directing neo-Nunsploitation flicks ever since the (non)release of *Visions of Ecstasy*, including the intolerably kitschy 72-minute feature *Sacred Flesh* (2000), which feels like the patently pathetic result of a virginal *Game of Thrones* fan attempting to direct a softcore barebones remake of Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971) on a \$500 budget using a bunch of used up coked-addled strippers. While *Sacred Flesh* might feature quasi-pornographic imagery that includes a close-up shot of nun diddling her freshly shaved pussy, the fetish-driven feature is completely devoid of the sort of celestially sensual essence that makes *Visions of Ecstasy* worth seeing.

After watching *Visions of Ecstasy* a couple times, it is still hard for me to wrap my head around the fact that the film was officially banned for blasphemy in the UK for over two decades, especially considering that British auteur Derek Jarman's experimental feature *The Garden* (1990) is not only just about as sexually graphic and certainly more perverse (it features fully naked men and leather-fags in bondage, among other things), but it is also more intricately blasphemous as a work that dares to overtly homosexualize various classical biblical themes and stories, including Mary Magdalene being portrayed as a vulgar drag queen and two gay lovers suffering from Christ-like persecution at the hands of the Christian church (incidentally, Jarman was one of a handful of celebrities that also included writers Salman Rushdie and Fay Weldon who vocally supported Wingrove after his film was banned). Of course, various Ken Russell flicks, including *The Devils* (which Jarman notably contributed his singular production design skills to) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1988) are also more blasphemous than Wingrove's flick, but I digress. Despite the film's somewhat dubiously sleazy interpretation of the writings of *Teresa of Ávila*, I got the sense while watching it that Wingrove has a sort of closeted appreciation for Christianity, especially in terms of Christian art and rituals, as if the film was an unconscious attempt by an atheist filmmaker to create something spiritual (interestingly, in the documentary *Hail Mary! A Brief Peek at Nunsploitation* (2009), Wingrove states that his psychotherapist told him that his religious fetish was the result of "want[ing] to be noticed" due to this atheist parents divorcing). If one thing is for sure, it is that Wingrove has enough good sense to realize that the current leftwing mul-

ticulturalist law that protects the religions of alien races of people is ultimately more repressive and dangerous than the ancient blasphemy law that resulted in *Visions of Ecstasy* being banned, or as the filmmaker once wrote himself in regard to a celebrity lunch he attended where a bunch of media bigwigs and mainstream artists, including meta-queen Ian McKellen, made “crass remarks” about God and Jesus that it was, “All jolly good fun I suppose but I could see nothing to celebrate, the jokes were all safe, after all attacking Christianity is fairly easy and its followers rarely hijack planes and fly them into buildings or hack journalists’ heads off or mutilate women’s genitalia. Likewise being such an enlightened bunch they wouldn’t dream of criticizing the religions of other races so presumably they are all happy with the Government’s new catch-all multi-faith laws which are anything but a dead letter [...] the Racial and Religious Hate Act became law in 2006 with little real opposition. The new law ensures in all probability that religion will never again be the subject of humorous attack or controversial interpretation or anything other than what its most devout followers dictate and for that we must thank the lawyers who devised it.” Indeed, as his words indicate, Wingrove might be a blasphemous smut-peddler who has made a name for himself by creating and distributing films that the Devil might diddle his dinky to, but he understands the appallingly absurd double standards that exist among the mainstream media when it comes to criticizing religions, with hypocritical and seemingly culturally retarded neo-liberal politicians and celebrities endorsing Islamization of the UK while at the same time promoting things that are diametrically opposed to Islam like fag rights, feminism, pluralism, and pornography, among other culturally corrosive ingredients that are typical of a dying civilization.

Indeed, there is probably nothing more impotent, patently pathetic, and pseudo-subversive than an artist, comedian, or celebrity attempting to mock Christianity, yet these same sort of mainstream leftists will be the first to cry racism if a person dares to say anything but positive things about some backward religion that is practiced by shit-skinned colonizers from the third world who do not suffer from the sort of spiritual retardation and ethno-masochism that plagues many Europeans and thus naturally exploit Occidental man’s suicidal decadence, hence the EU-backed alien invasion scam known as the so-called ‘migrant crisis.’ After all, there are few things more barbaric than cutting a little girl’s clit off like certain Muslims do or an elderly man sucking the cock of a baby boy that has just been circumcised like in Judaism, yet Hollywood and the mainstream media never tires of bringing up certain evil things that Christians supposedly did many centuries ago. While I still not understand the whole appeal behind Nunsploitation cinema and the eroticization of nuns in general, I do have to admit that there is certainly no way in hell that anyone could ever successfully make anything relating to Judaism or Islam even remotely sexually appealing. The fact that there are numerous traditionally Catholic nations like Italy and French where the women

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are exotically beautiful and busty is probably what is most responsible for the relative success and popularity of Nunsplotation, with Guidoland not being the most prolific producer of these films for no reason. Of course, Europeans created beautiful and sometimes erotic Christian art in spite of Christianity and not because of it, so one should not expect that the races of people that subscribe to the other two sand religions would ever bring any sort of pulchritude to their respective faiths (after all, judging simply by the traditional clothing and haircuts, not to mention bizarre rituals, of Hasidic Jews, it seems that Judaism actively promotes ugliness).

As a man that would go on to distribute works ranging from Clive Barker's early low-budget black-and-white experimental shorts *Salome* (1973) and *The Forbidden* (1978) to classic surrealist flicks like Alain Robbe-Grillet flicks like *Trans-Europ-Express* (1966) and *Glissements progressifs du plaisir* (1974) aka *Successive Slidings of Pleasure* to classic retro Euro-sleaze like Jesús Franco's *Paroxysmus* (1969) aka *Venus in Furs* and *La comtesse noire* (1975) aka *Female Vampire* and Jean Rollins' *La rose de fer* (1973) aka *The Iron Rose* and *Fascination* (1979), among various other masterpieces and anti-masterpieces of both the arthouse and exploitation realms via his label Redemption Films (somewhat fittingly, the mainstream media outlet *The Guardian* coined the phrase, "Redemption – House of the Writhing Nun" in anti-tribute to the company after they released the old video nasty *Killer Nun* (1978) aka *Suor Omicida* directed by Giulio Berruti), Nigel Wingrove has, for better or worse, probably done more than any modern day Englishman in terms of promoting fetishistic horror and the sensually Fantastique. In fact, Wingrove named Redemption Films in tribute to his campaign for both personal and professional redemption after *Visions of Ecstasy* more or less completely destroyed his entire life. Aside from his essay *Finding Ecstasy on the Road to Redemption*, Wingrove also co-wrote a book entitled *The Art of the Nasty* (2009) published by FAB Press about his personal struggles against censorship. While certainly not a late-1980s equivalent to Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* (1947), *Visions of Ecstasy* is a nice little allegorical tribute to one of the more eccentric and seemingly spiritually schizophrenic exploitation subgenres, even if it comes nowhere near to living up to its singularly infamous reputation. With Nunsplotation now receiving mainstream respectability as demonstrated by Hollywood films like Robert Rodriguez's anti-white garbage *Machete* (2010) where fire-crotched celebrity slag Lindsay Lohan wields a weapon while sporting a nun's habit, the subgenre has been beaten-to-death and virtually totally extinguished of its vitality and potential, thus Wingrove's film is ultimately a remainder that there was actually a time when it took a certain amount of testicular fortitude to create such a salaciously sacrilegious work. Indeed, you know you have done something right when Derek Jarman—a man that was made a 'gay saint' by the ultra blasphemous sod activist group Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (SPI)—advocates for

your Nunsplotation flick.
-Ty E

DADDY

DADDY

Niki de Saint Phalle (1973)

Despite my general disdain of virtually any and everything relating to feminism, sexual 'liberation', and gender politics, every once in a while I find myself exceedingly – if mostly unintentionally – amused by pretentious works of art of this thoroughly deplorable persuasion. Most recently, I had the distinct (dis)pleasure of viewing the man-hating quasi-Freudian film *Daddy* (1973) directed by Franco-American feminist sculptor Niki de Saint Phalle and British documentarian Peter Whitehead (*Charlie is My Darling*, *Benefit of the Doubt*); a work of degenerate-art-gone-awry yet somehow done somewhat accidentally right, but for all the wrong reasons. Although co-directed by Whitehead – a filmmaker best known for documenting the London and NYC counterculture scenes of the late 1960 and creating proto-music-videos for groups like Pink Floyd and The Rolling Stones – *Daddy* is essentially an embarrassingly intimate and incestuous, as well as contemptuous and sadomasochistic (un)love letter to Saint Phalle's unfortunate father. Whitehead originally intended to create a documentary about Phalle and her artistic works, but this idea later dissolved into what is one of the most glaringly grandiloquent and inadvertently ludicrous films ever made. Best known for her mostly aesthetically displeasing sculptures (including a horrid blob-like Golem statue located in Kiryat Hayovel, Israel) and paintings, *Daddy* features many of Niki de Saint Phalle's childlike artistic creations in various forms, which do a splendid job accentuating the would-be-audacious auteur essence of her discombobulated mind and schizophrenic Electra complex. From the very beginning of *Daddy*, it is most apparent that Saint Phalle both adores and abhors her dear dad and his pesky philandering phallus. As a daughter of a French banker, Saint Phalle created a rare work that expresses the downright petty personal problems of a spoiled bourgeois debutante whose starvation for attention is played out in such an absurdly hyperbolic and hysterical manner that one would think assume she survived a famine; or at least an overextended third world mass gang raping. In short, *Daddy* is a patently pathetic and erratic exposition of what it means to have never struggled in one's life and the rare neurosis such a lavish yet unnatural la-di-da upbringing sows.

Featuring giant cocks in coffins, buckets of blood and naked voluptuous beauties on altars, and elderly pseudo-aristocrats in pancake makeup and drag, *Daddy* is a decadent daydream for the more debauched members of the blasé bourgeois. Of course, if one can look past the putrid pettiness of Saint Phalle's next-to-nonexistent personal problems, *Daddy* makes for an engaging and curiously worthwhile cinematic effort. Divided into chapters by Phalle's toddler-esque color drawings, *Daddy* feels like a Victorian Gothic kitsch piece directed by posh preschoolers, except ridden with mostly distasteful fetishistic sex scenarios that would probably only interest demoralized bluebloods and novice swingers. In

fact, I would argue that *Daddy* is like an Alberto Cavallone (*Zelda, Blow Job*) film had the Italian director taken himself too seriously, and lost his technique and sense of humor, but I guess that is what one would expect from an ostensibly discordant collaboration between a feminist erotomaniac and an uninspired hippie documentary filmmaker. Lacking any true daughterly affections for her cold, collected, and cunning father, Saint Phalle channeled these eternally desired but never consummated suppressed emotions into an unhealthy and pathological sexual form, thus enabling her to identify with the unloving fornicator and misogynist whose semen she was spawned from on some level; no matter how utterly base, socially taboo, and exceedingly revolting. To appease the bestial appetite of the man whose attention she hopelessly sought, the woman even offers her dandy-like daddy a virginal vixen in between sexually degrading him in a variety of perversely infantile and unequivocally vulgar ways. Needless to say, *Daddy* is the sort film Sigmund Freud would have lauded as it plays out like one of his fantasy-inspired theories; or would have at least provided him with a masturbation aid. Narrated in an incautiously contrived and ridiculously wooden manner and performed by a cast of incompetent non-actors, *Daddy* is a work that even Camille Paglia couldn't have sit through without smirking snidely, yet these flagrant flaws also act as some of the film's greatest and most idiosyncratic attributes.

Although Saint Phalle attempted to reject the conservative values of her family, even causing her kinfolk to decry and shun her art in the process, she inevitably ended up marrying and becoming a mother at a relatively young age, thus turning into her own worst enemy and eventually suffering from a nervous breakdown of sorts. After watching *Daddy*, I was not the least bit surprised to learn of Saint Phalle's seemingly hypocritical destiny as her love-hate relationship with her family – most specifically her father – seems so deeply enrooted in her being and artistic creations as expressed so vividly in *Daddy* that deracinating herself from it could have only resulted in a much more extreme and detrimental psychological break. Whatever I may think of the quality and beauty (or lack thereof) of her art, I do believe that *Daddy* is a true and genuine artistic expression of the artist, even if created by a somewhat soulless woman (or an emotional retard if you will) who was probably given more pet ponies than hugs as a child. If there is a film that boldly yet disastrously expresses the stereotype that feminists are often inspired to adopt their ideology due to having weak and decidedly detached fathers, it is incontestably *Daddy*.

-Ty E

DER BUNKER
DER BUNKER

Nikias Chryssos (2015)

Aside from a couple major exceptions like the late great kraut Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief and underground arthouse-splatter auteur Jörg Buttgerit, Teutonic film has mostly been a dreary wasteland since the death of Rainer Werner Fassbinder in 1982 and, in turn, New German Cinema with it. Indeed, the films of the so-called 'Berliner Schule' (aka Berlin School) are mostly a sad, pretentious, and plodding joke that seem to reflect the worst clichés of the arthouse world, or as Oskar Roehler—a decidedly degenerate director that has at least directed a couple of somewhat worthwhile films, including *Agnes und seine Brüder* (2004) aka *Agnes and His Brothers* and *Atomised* (2006) aka *The Elementary Particles*—once rightly said regarding the largely anti-cinematic and equally soulless cinematic works associated with the mundane film movement, "they are always slow, always depressing, nothing is ever really said in them." Luckily, things have been changing somewhat in the German cinema world as reflected in genuinely entertaining, original, and highly re-watchable films like Katrin Gebbe's *Tore tanzt* (2013) aka *Nothing Bad Can Happen* and Till Kleinert's bizarre killer tranny genre-bender *Der Samurai* (2014). Undoubtedly, one of the most bold and entertaining contemporary Aryan actors is Kleinert regular Pit Bukowski who, despite being quite apt at playing waywardly eccentric characters as demonstrated by his uniquely unflattering performance as the eponymous character of *Der Samurai*, revealed in Greek-German auteur Nikias Chryssos' unclassifiable art-trash chamber romp *Der Bunker* (2015) that he can also play lame and annoyingly passive-aggressive college students. A film with a title that humorously inspires images of Uncle Adolf contemplating his final days in the infamous Führerbunker, Chryssos' debut feature is as immaculate and idiosyncratic as first films come. Featuring highly memorable moments of absurdist family awkwardness and obscenely outmoded sets that rival David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), grotesque characters that might be best described as crusty kraut equivalents to the mad Baltimorons of John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* (1972), and unhinged quasi-incestuous eroticism and dementedly humorous family affairs that might fit somewhere in the same universe as Nikos Nikolaidis' *Singapore Sling* (1990), the film is somewhat paradoxical in the sense that it is so patently preternatural yet also a rare contemporary German flick that could be enjoyed by American philistines that are allergic to reading subtitles or not used to watching films that do not feature token cardboard negro and/or arab characters. Like a Teutonic apocalyptic *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) set in a creepily quaint dystopian fairytale land where a sort of metaphysical autism pollutes the atmosphere, *Der Bunker* is a film that somehow manages to simultaneously chill, bewilder, agitate, titillate, disgust, and humor, among other things. Part narcotizing nightmare and part foul fantasy, Chryssos' debut is also probably the only

film that manages to reconcile the semitic slapstick of the Marx brothers with the low-camp homo humor of Herr Waters.

If it were not for underrated New German Cinema filmmaker Hans W. Geißendörfer (Jonathan, *Der Zauberberg* aka *The Magic Mountain*)—a largely unknown auteur that had the distinguished honor of directing tragic white liberal Jean Seberg in her very last feature—and his daughter Hana acting as the film's co-producers, it is very doubtful that *Der Bunker* would have ever been made. As a man that made his debut as a filmmaker with a darkly comedic anti-fascist vampire flick featuring real-life animal-killings and beautiful gothic pastoral scenes that resemble Caspar David Friedrich paintings at a time when his Aryan contemporaries were creating banal commie docs and static quasi-Godardian twaddle, old mensch Geißendörfer could probably appreciate Chryssos' determination to make an insanely idiosyncratic film with a soul in an era where soulless Berlin School bullshit is all the rage among Deutschland's spiritually sterilized and emotionally glacial cultural elite. Indeed, *Der Bunker* certainly was not directed by someone that jerks off to Sartre novels or seriously considers Marxist mischling agitpropagandist Harun Farocki to be a wise old cinematic elder. Despite being an audaciously bizarre piece of cinema that was co-produced by an old auteur that has directed films featuring hardcore incest and interfamilial fecal matters (e.g. Schneeland (2005)), Chryssos has credited a number of Hollywood and/or otherwise fairly mainstream movies as influencing the film. For example, the film features an emasculated father that wears a woman's apron whilst doing woman's work that was inspired by Jim Backus' insufferably pathetic character in Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Likewise, a strangely intense scene featuring a 'boy' cheating on a country capital verbal quiz was inspired by a famous showdown from Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966). Undoubtedly, in his striking talent for paying homage in a uniquely unpredictable yet fairly seamless way to classic Hollywood films, Chryssos follows in the postmodern post-Hellenic tradition of Nikos Nikolaidis. It should also be noted that Chryssos has expressed in various interviews an appreciation for more impenetrable arthouse works ranging from Spanish junky auteur Iván Zulueta's cult masterpiece *Arrebato* (1980) to the classic Jap doc *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987) to Belgian auteur Fabrice Du Welz's hellish anti-Heimat horror show *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal* to Aleksey German's celluloid swansong *Trudno byti bogom* (2013) aka *Hard to be a God*.

Sort of like a delightfully demented dystopian update of a Brothers Grimm fairytale as assembled for a decidedly deracinated generation of Germans that sees their own rich culture and history as an intangible and outmoded novelty that is no longer applicable to the hopelessly Americanized Aryans of today (notably, the film makes references to great German thinkers ranging from Nietzsche to Heidegger in a variety of less than respectable ways, including kitschy busts and ridiculous philosophical lectures), *Der Bunker* is more or less like a

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short trip to a dark corner of postmodern Occidental purgatory in a insanely zany celluloid form. A cinematic work that works as both a trashy yet artsy exploitation flick and an esoteric art-trash parable that features a somewhat erratic emotional range the falls somewhere in between the darkly humorous anti-bourgeois absurdism of Luis Buñuel, the grade school Hollywood sentimentalism of *The Goonies* (1985), and the mirthfully grotesque eroticism of great polack pervert Walerian Borowczyk, *Chryssos'* debut is a seemingly immaculate film that is, for better or worse, completely unforgettable. The bizarrely bittersweet story of a young college student that rents a room in what ultimately proves to be a WWII era forest bunker in the hope of getting the peace and quiet he needs to commence work on some arcane cross-field scientific theory, only to find himself being coerced into becoming the professor of a supposedly 8-year-old boy whose incredibly demented and equally delusional helicopter parents are grooming him to be the president of the United States despite the fact that he is a mentally disabled German retard that somehow resembles a misbegotten cartoon character from some forgotten Nickelodeon TV series from the early 1990s, *Der Bunker* is, at the most fundamental level, an anti-authoritarian film that was written and directed by a chap that is clearly glad he did not have a traditional Prussian education. Set in an surreally anachronistic maniac microcosm that is ruled over by a mentally unhinged matriarch who uses both her perky lactating tits and a demonic being that may or may not actually exist named 'Heinrich' as a means to control and manipulated everyone in her fairly small household, the film also critiques cults and cult-like families and how the heads of such groups will oftentimes use religion and/or some mythical 'higher being' as a justification for their dirty deeds. Thankfully, quite unlike many films that critique religion and discipline, *Der Bunker* is not obnoxious, condescending, or heavy-handed in its execution. Of course, in its depiction of a deranged cold cunt as the dictator of the household, the film also makes for an apt tribute to Angela Merkel era Germany.

Der Bunker begins with an unhinged wuss of beta-bitch father (David Scheller) absurdly talking about the "life-affirming" quality of a fried egg while eating breakfast with his wife and son in the kitchen of the titular home in a scene juxtaposed with Chopin's Nocturne Opus 9, Number 2. The nameless 'Father' is a patently pathetic eccentric with a goofy outmoded mustache who is more or less the servile bitch of his strangely sexy yet creepily psychotic wife (Oona von Maydell) who does nothing around the house aside from dictating orders via a supposedly supernatural open wound on her calf. In terms of mentally unsound mommies that engage in sexually dubious activities with their sons, the Mother of the film cannot really be compared to any other character in cinema history aside from possibly porn star Georgina Spelvin's character in Chuck Vincent's underrated non-pornographic horror-thriller-drama hybrid *Bad Blood* (1989) aka *A Woman Obsessed*. While she does not engage in S&M style rape with her

son like Spelvin's character in Vincent's film, the matriarch in Chryssos' flick does seem to derive great sexual satisfaction from breastfeeding her overgrown son. The decidedly dysfunctional married couple of Der Bunker has big plans for their seemingly half-retarded, oversized 8-year-old son 'Klaus' (Daniel Fripan), who they are ruthlessly preparing to one day become the president of the United States despite the fact that he is a quasi-autistic kraut gnome with a fiercely flat affect who cannot even memorize the capitals of neighboring European nations. Indeed, despite the fact that homeschooling is strictly illegal in post-Hitler Deutschland, little Kraus is being groomed by his pseudo-intellectual father—an eccentric dilettante that dresses like a hobo who wants to give off the impression that he is actually a misunderstood genius—to be the leader of the world's foremost military and economic power. As a uniquely ugly little boy with a marvelously mediocre personality, horrible temperament, and low IQ that physically resembles the mutant hate child of Andy Warhol and Angela Merkel, Klaus has very little going for him but his mother suffers the grand delusion that he is exceptionally 'gifted.' As the film reveals as it progress, the nameless mother is under the 'spiritual guidance' of a nasty wound on her leg that is supposedly from another galaxy named 'Heinrich' who tells her how to run her family. When a nameless student (Pit Bukowski) makes the major life-changing mistake of renting a room in the eponymous home of the distinctly dysfunctional family in the hope of getting some much needed peace and quiet while he works on developing a groundbreaking cross-field scientific theory that involves Higgs boson, he soon finds himself being coerced into being both Klaus' professor and the family's all-purpose domestic bitch, yet somehow by the end of the film things fall into place for all those involved in what is ultimately one feverishly fucked family farce.

While the Student was expecting to have a nice quaint room with a lake view, he is somewhat disappointed to learn upon arriving at the bunker that he will be living in a cold and damp unfinished room with a low ceiling that looks like it would be a great place to store a bunch of naked emaciated Jewish corpses in some shitty Hollywood holocaust movie. Immediately upon arriving at the house, the Student also begins acquiring an ever growing debt due to not having enough for the rent advance, though the scheming Father, who clearly has unsavory ulterior motives, tells him it is no big deal since he can "help around the house" and then gives him a nice quasi-homoerotic foot bath. Unbeknownst to the Student, the Father, who is more miserly than an elderly widowed Jewess, immediately begins keeping careful tabs on his debt, including whenever he uses a napkin or eats a dumpling during a family dinner. Ultimately, the Father uses the Student's debt as a means to guilt trip him into teaching his son. Indeed, after confiding in 'Heinrich,' the Mother, who seems to believe that the open wound in her leg is some sort of all-knowing god, demands that the Student become Klaus' new instructor despite the Father's feeble protests. Despite the Student's

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refusal to teach Klaus when initially asked by the Father, the Mother manages to manipulate the protagonist into doing her bidding by shedding phony tears and less than subtly hinting at potential sexual favors. Undoubtedly, judging simply by her appearance and especially actions, the Mother is the sort of woman that would have been burned at the stake during medieval times under the suspicion of being a wicked witch. After all, it is not often you meet a woman that is compelled to abuse her husband and child because she is demonically possessed by a wound in her leg. Indeed, in a somewhat strange way, the Mother is a hot bitch that is begging to be buggered, yet she is ultimately creepier than any of the devilish she-bitch hags featured in Robert Eggers' *The Witch* (2015). A lazy erotomaniac that mostly lounges around the house while her eerily emasculated spouse incessantly cleans the place, the Mother's sexual depravity seems to go hand-in-hand with her Führer-esque need for total control as a woman who seems like she has a super clit that puts her pathetic husband's cock to shame in terms of sheer size.

While Klaus' schoolroom is adorned with kitschy busts of Shakespeare and Nietzsche, his parents are hardly interested in having him receive an eclectic Occidental education. Indeed, while the Student tries in vain to teach Klaus about the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and the history of the U.S. Federal Reserve, his parents are mainly concerned with having their son memorize the capitals of countries since they believe it will provide him with the knowledge that he needs to become the president of the United States. Of course, it does not take the Student long to realize that Klaus might have some serious learning disabilities and thus acts accordingly by helping the creepy little lad cheat on a quiz. Indeed, after the Student writes the names and capitals of various nations on his hand, Klaus manages to trick his parents into thinking he has finally learned something. As a reward for demonstrating that he is ostensibly capable of mindless memorization, Klaus' parents proudly treat him and the Student to the timeless family ritual of 'Joke Night,' which involves the Father dressing up like a sexually disturbed clown and reciting horrendously hokey jokes from a seemingly ancient joke book. When it is eventually discovered that Klaus cheated, the Father beats both him and the Student over the ass with a wooden cane as punishment in a hilarious scene that really highlights how passive and pathetic the supposedly intellectually gifted protagonist is. Completely fed up with Klaus' complete and utter hopelessness as a pupil, the Student (or, as Klaus calls him, 'Mr. Student') also begins using corporal punishment and even actually manages to get the grotesque 8-year-old to memorize the capitals of various countries by brutally hitting him in the hand with the wooden cane every single time he gets an answer wrong. While Klaus' hands and fingers are left completely bloody and brutalized as a result of the tough lesson, the little lad is so happy that he actually learned something that he is completely joyous as a result of the experience and proudly boasts to his parents about his new skill. As a reward for achieving the

seemingly impossible by teaching her son to memorize the capitals of a number of fairly obscure countries, the Mother pays a special visit in a foxy fur coat to the Student late that night and then proceeds to fuck his brains out in what seems to be a rather long and eclectic sensual session that proves to be both sexually and intellectually exhilarating. Indeed, aside from allowing him to drink milk from her tits just like Klaus, the Mother's sexual powers prove to be so inspirational to the Student that he manages to get tons of science work down while he is in the middle of fucking her. Notably, before having sex with the Mother, the Student had made nil progress on his work, but after being given a special sort of carnal knowledge from the seemingly insane woman the protagonist gets fairly close to completing all of his work. Unfortunately for the Student, fate has different plans for him that has more to do with women's work like vacuuming carpet than elementary particles.

Of course, all good things must come to an end, or so the Student learns after making the unwitting mistake of teaching Klaus how to play. Indeed, as the unfortunate child of an almost sinisterly stringent pervert matriarch who dictates a whole set of bizarre rituals for the entire family, Klaus never had the opportunity to live like a normal child and play, hence his innate joylessness and overall lack of personality. When the Student takes the effort to play with him in a variety of goofy childish ways that includes piggyback rides and sword fighting, Klaus develops a sense of individuality and eventually begins rebelling against the strict rules of his family, thus throwing the entire social structure of the house out of equilibrium. Needless to say, the Mother immediately becomes alarmed by her son's newfound love of playing, so she naturally confides in Heinrich and is told to kick out the student lest she risk losing her little boy Klaus. On Klaus' birthday, the Father awards the Student a phony diploma declaring that he is retired and thus no longer needed by the family. Of course, Klaus' entire birthday is ruined when he learns that his parents are kicking out his new best friend, who is so angered by the entire situation he calls the father a "sick fool" and then proceeds to physically assault him in what proves to be a rather impotent fight between two very different yet nonetheless similarly weak and ineffectual men. While the Student and Father are fighting, Klaus collapses and becomes extremely ill as a result of his mother's abusive attempts at forcing him to dance by spinning him around in circles in what ultimately proves to be a sick way to celebrate the poor socially retard boy's birthday.

Not surprisingly, the Student becomes the scapegoat for all the family's problems and the parents demand that he leave the house that night after Klaus collapses during his ill-fated birthday part. Unfortunately for the Student, he has developed an almost brotherly affection for Klaus and decides to rescue him from his family by kidnapping him. Of course, the Mother, who demonstrates pseudo-supernatural powers of awareness that make her seem like a cross between the vampire of Noseratu and one of the voluptuous vampire sluts in a

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Jean Rollins flicks, manages to awake just before the Student can escape and ultimately uses her sexual powers to virtually hypnotize the young scholar, who she severely wounds by stabbing in the gut just before he attempts to kiss her on the lips. With the Student left bedridden and, in turn, completely dependent on the family, as a result of his injuries, Klaus, who has finally developed a personality of his own, seizes the opportunity to leave his home for good, though not before kicking his mother in her 'Heinrich' and making her cry like a little bitch. In the end, the Student seems to be happy to be the new family slave, as he takes over the Father's housework duties and acts as a sort of more useful replacement for Klaus, thus leading him to not having to worry about stressful things like discovering breakthrough scientific theories. Not unlike with the death of the eponymous protagonist of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* (1972) aka *The Merchant of Four Seasons*, Klaus' abandoning of the family proves to be to the overall benefit of the family as a whole as the Student makes for a most apt replacement and the Mother and Father seem to now have a normal loving marriage. Indeed, instead of acting like dickless dictator, the Mother begins wearing makeup and flirting with her husband in an overtly loving fashion that seemed totally improbable before Klaus left.

As a work of aberrant absurdist comedy, *Der Bunker* is seemingly perfect, but I have to wonder about what sort of message Chryssos is trying to make. Don't get me wrong, I consider helicopter parents to be a wholly corrosive social pestilence that has contributed to a generation of socially and sexually autistic cripples that cannot even tie their own shoes or find a clitoris, but the film also seems to have a dubious slacker message about the supposed need for one to not strive for greatness or reach their peak in terms of personal accomplishment or intellectual prowess. Indeed, in the film's depiction of a protagonist that initially strives for intellectual brilliance but ultimately gives up and becomes a meek man-slave as a sort of relief from the stress and hard work that comes with acquiring said intellectual greatness, one suspects that Chryssos has somewhat of a loser defeatist attitude that is contra to the sort of innate *Übermensch* philosophy that once made Germans great in the past, thus making it somewhat fitting that the film references both Nietzsche and Heidegger. Of course, one can only assume that Chryssos associates Nietzsche and Heidegger, who were both innately anti-liberal and philosophically revolutionary thinkers, with National Socialism, hence why he and many modern Germans would misguidedly subscribe to a slacker *Weltanschauung*. Notably, while researching the film, I discovered that, quite unfortunately, Chryssos is an enthusiastic leftist ethno-masochist of sorts that regularly tweets and retweets on Twitter about imaginary anti-Semitism and anti-towelhead sentiment in contemporary Deutschland, as if he is totally oblivious to the fact that his nation has been completely colonized by hostile Islamic hordes, but I digress. Also, one almost gets the sense while watching *Der Bunker* that the director is brainwashed by the typical German

leftist narrative and believes that homeschooling is an evil, as if public schools do a better job rearing kids (obviously I have never attended a German public school, but any American can tell you that public schools are all about indoctrination and mindless memorization, hence why girls tend to do better in school and so many Americans graduate from high school despite being illiterate or sub-literate). After all, homeschooling is illegal in Germany because the government is afraid of supposed “parallel societies” that abstain from the quasi-commie public school objective of so-called “lived tolerance.” Of course, the great irony is that anti-homeschooling law is Nazi-esque legislation that was created specifically for the prevention of parents raising their kids to be National Socialists, just as so-called hate speech laws in Germany are an overtly fascist means of attempting to prevent fascist sentiment. To Chryssos’ credit, he does hint at the joke that is modern education in his depiction of Klaus being forced to do mindless memorizing, which any monkey can do and proves nothing about an individual’s true intellectual prowess. Of course, if modern public schools actually taught students how to think for themselves instead of what to think, they might begin to question classic oxymoronic liberal slogans like “diversity is our strength.”

Judging simply by his depiction of homeschooling in his debut feature, one can only assume that Chryssos is the stereotypical kraut leftist lemming who naively believes in the same Judaic Allied Powers propaganda that has been fed to Germans since 1945. Somewhat ironically, despite being a fairly subversive genre-bending comedy, *Der Bunker* demonstrates in its grotesque depiction of outsiders that live off the grid the same sort of conformist mentality and naivety that is stereotypically German and ultimately led to the collective support of the Third Reich. Indeed, to make a truly subversive and socially insightful Teutonic comedy that reveals what is truly sick and unnatural about the Fatherland, one would have to make a film featuring an emasculated pink-haired German boy that sports an Israel t-shirt who gladly accepts being sodomized on a playground by a gang of Somalian negroes because he was taught in public schools that whites are evil exploiters and rapists that must atone for the sins of their ancestors by dedicating their lives to the perpetual comfort and coddling of angry and ostensibly oppressed brown-eyed and black-haired peoples from the Global South. Indeed, only in contemporary Germany will you find a political movement like ‘Antideutsch’ (aka ‘anti-Germans’)—an innately anti-Teutonic social disease that is heavily influenced by kosher commie theorists like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer—that hold protests where they celebrate the killing of German civilians and firebombing of German citizens by holding banners featuring an image of RAF commander Arthur ‘Butcher’ Harris that read “NO TEARS FOR KRAUTS.” Naturally, I was not surprised to discover a photo from the set of the *Der Bunker* shoot featuring an Antifaschistische Aktion (aka Antifa) flag in the background, thus indicating that Chryssos is probably a proponent of

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fascistic antifascism. Of course, only Chryssos knows what is going inside his head, but it amazes me that a man that could make such an uncompromisingly wayward flick could be such a stereotypical conformist bitch when it comes to politics, but then again, as the career of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg sadly demonstrates, you cannot be taken too seriously or respected as a filmmaker in Germany unless you subscribe to something that is at least as left-wing as the mainstream (neo)liberal narrative. After all, even a miscegenating homo anarchist like Fassbinder was accused of being racist, misogynistic, and antisemitic during the 1970s. That being said, Chryssos deserves credit for managing to make a German film that features an all-German cast and not a single Turk or negro, even if the Teutons are portrayed in a less than flattering fashion that recalls the grotesque anti-German caricatures of super smug kraut commie George Grosz.

Notably, in his article *A Note On Comedy In Experimental Film* featured in the summer 1963 edition of *Film Culture* magazine, avant-garde artist and filmmaker Sidney Peterson (*The Petrified Dog*, Mr. Frenhofer and the Mino-taur) wrote, "Given the activist approach, the tendency to exploit the intrinsic and often misleading comical-diabolical attributes of the medium is almost overwhelming. Thus, we get film-makers' films in which the basic elements are as ill-matched as Boehme's flesh and the devil. And because they are ill-matched, the consequences are inevitable. New and perhaps unintended subjects emerge [...] Perhaps 90 per cent of all experimental [film] work is, from this point of view, in its very nature, comical. It is unnecessary to mention particular works. Some are funny, some funnier. It is partly a question of when. Inconsequence has a way of becoming consequential, and the most illogical sequences may lose their irrationality by merely becoming familiar. Thus, new unintentional emerge from an original lack of intent, and the process may continue indefinitely, with the same eyes never regarding the same film." Undoubtedly, the 'genius' of *Der Bunker*, which is more of an experimental comedy than an 'experimental film,' is that the viewer oftentimes finds themselves questioning the director's true intent, as it is a film that simultaneously makes laughing feel awkward and awkwardness laughable. In other words, the film derives its greatest strength from its extreme open-endedness and unwavering ambiguity of intent, though it should be noted that the director once confessed in an interview with *Lola* magazine, "I want to use humor as a means of anarchy." Indeed, in stark contrast to the director's conformist cultural Marxist political persuasion, *Der Bunker* is the closest thing to a kraut arthouse equivalent to a Million Dollar Extreme (MDE) movie. Like the anti-liberal anti-comedic skits of the MDE boys, Chryssos' film depicts an innately sick and dysfunctional world that is only made even remotely tolerable through the most absurd approach to humor. In fact, I suspect that autistic mass murders like Adam Lanza, Elliot Rodger, James Holmes, and Chris Harper-Mercer might have been less apt to snap had they been exposed to movies like Chryssos,' which would have probably been solacing to their distinct mental

wiring. I also think that Todd Solondz would find *Der Bunker* to be a great masturbation aid.

Easily the greatest film ever released by Artsploitation Films aside from possibly Kleinert's *Der Samurai*, *Der Bunker* hopefully represents a sign of a new renaissance in Teutonic cinema, though my cynicism leads me to think otherwise. More recently director Nikias Chryssos directed a short 10-minute doc entitled *The Double Feeling* about a Las Vegas fleshlight factory, thus underscoring his somewhat refreshing lack of seriousness as a filmmaker (of course, considering his politics, it is probably for the better). If Chryssos continues making warped aesthetically autistic dark comedies, he might have the potential to evolve into an evil Greco-Aryan Mel Brooks. After all, the last thing that the Fatherland needs is another ethno-masochist twat that directs serious 'experimental films' about culturally schizophrenic Turkish feminists and children with Down syndrome. Indeed, I might be the only one that holds this opinion, but arguably the greatest and most singular accomplishment of *Der Bunker* is that it proves that someone that is totally brainwashed by the leftist narrative, the false faith of Holocaustianity, and the multicultural myth can still make a seemingly immaculately constructed and somewhat politically incorrect film that is not totally tainted by bogus blue-pill bullshit. Surely, one cannot go wrong with a film that seems like it was directed by the strangely Americanized heterosexual brood of Werner Schroeter and Ulrike Ottinger, as *Der Bunker* is like an aesthetically decadent arthouse film for exploitation fans that hate arthouse films, which is certainly no small accomplish, especially in a nation where the hyper humorless and humdrum films of the Berlin School are considered the height of cinematic cultivation. While Germany will probably never produce another Nietzsche or even a Fassbinder, it certainly has room for a Mel Brooks or a John Waters, though hopefully Chryssos will evolve into something more enigmatic yet red-pilled.

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NIGHTSHADE
NIGHTSHADE

Niklaus Schilling (1972)

While the New German Cinema movement of the late-1960s through early-1980s was responsible for producing a wide range of great cinematic masterpieces ranging from Werner Schroeter's *Eika Katappa* (1969) to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) to Edgar Reitz's *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) to Ulrike Ottinger's *Freak Orlando* (1981) to Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977), the movement was only responsible for a handful of horror films, though thankfully they are mostly rather notable and original. Arguably, the most well known of these films is Werner Herzog's classic F.W. Murnau remake *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* (1979) aka *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) starring Klaus Kinski as the eponymous blooduscking ghoul. Not unlike Herzog's flick, the Fassbinder produced serial killer flick *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *Tenderness of the Wolves* directed by Ulli Lommel and penned by and starring Kurt Raab was also heavily influenced by German Expressionism. While not exactly influenced by Expressionism, *Nachtschatten* (1972) aka *Nightshade* directed by Niklaus Schilling (*Rheingold, Die Vertreibung aus dem Paradies* aka *The Expulsion from Paradise*) was heavily inspired by a once-popular film genre of yesterday and is indubitably one of the most idiosyncratic, refreshingly apolitical, and 'counterrevolutionary' films of New German Cinema. Indeed, a sort of pleasantly morbid Gothic neo-Heimat horror flick that was heavily aesthetically influenced by the rather wholesome and sentimental Heimatfilm genre that that was popular in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria from the late 1940s to the early 1970s yet fairly unknown outside of the German-speaking world, cinematographer turned filmmaker Schilling's exquisite debut is as shamelessly Teutonic as films come in terms of its themes, motifs, and overall aesthetic, at least during the 1970s when ethno-masochism and politically-charged leftist horseshit was vogue among German filmmakers. Somewhat interestingly, fellow Swiss-German Philip W. Sauber made an intriguing black-and-white student 'horror' film entitled *Der einsame Wanderer* (1968) aka *The Lonesome Wanderer* a couple years before Schilling that also features heavy influence from German Romanticism and even the Heimat genre. Unfortunately, Sauber's political tastes were less cultivated than his aesthetic ones, as he died during a shootout with police in Cologne after killing a cop in 1975 while he was a member of the German far-left anarchistic terrorist group '2 June Movement' (aka 'Bewegung 2. Jun'), thus he never had the opportunity to make a film of the caliber of Schilling's debut. Underrated German auteur Hans W. Geisendörfer's visually striking debut *Jonathan* (1970) also predates Schilling's film in terms of Gothic Heimat horror, but it is somewhat plagued by a lame antifascist subtext that involves vampires being depicted as sort of perennial fascists that feed off the blood of hardworking proles. In short, *Nightshade* is simply

the best of the handful of New German Cinema Gothic Heimat flicks.

While technically a member of New German Cinema movement, Schilling was somewhat of a critic of his contemporaries and had an aesthetic that some might erroneously describe as 'fascistic.' Indeed, the pastoral scenes in *Nightshade* seem like something out of a landscape painting by 19th-century German Romantic landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich. Notably, in his 1977 article 'Cinema, Melodrama, and the World of Emotion,' Schilling argued in regard to his distinct philosophy to filmmaking, "One can say that the special qualities of German film are its countryside, its regions, the soil, and perhaps its people in general. And likewise its myths. A 'German world of feelings' if you will, which can be an almost ideal cinematic subject. In this sense, the German films of the thirties, forties, and fifties have more to do with cinema than the films of the sixties and seventies. And our surroundings have lost nothing of their mythologies at all; and these are of interest to me." Undoubtedly, it would not surprise me if Schilling was attacked as a 'Wandervogel romanticizing' and 'bourgeois Blut und Boden backing' crypto-Nazi for having the testicular fortitude to make such an audacious claim in an age when the Baader-Meinhof Gang was celebrated by certain fairly popular German filmmakers. Somewhat ironically, before becoming an auteur in his own right, Schilling was responsible for acting as a cinematographer on some of the hippest kraut counterculture flicks and arthouse flicks of the late-1960s, including Klaus Lemke's *48 Stunden bis Acapulco* (1967) aka *48 Hours to Acapulco*, Jean-Marie Straub's Fassbinder collaboration *Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter* (1968) aka *The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp* (1968), and Rudolf Thome's *Detektive* (1969) starring fashion model turned commie groupie Uschi Obermaier. Notably, *Detektive* also starred platinum blonde bombshell Elke Haltaufderheide, who would eventually become Schilling's wife, muse, producer, and regular leading lady, including in *Nightshade* where she practically glows with tragic and haunted lovelorn pulchritude.

A singular work of uncompromising cinematic 'Liebestod' where a certain fatally foreboding lovesickness constantly contaminates the air to the point of virtual asphyxiation, *Nightshade* is a film with virtually nil plot and similarly little action. In short, it is a film of intense yet delicately constructed slow-burning atmosphere and morbidly morose pathos that resembles the most breathtaking of darkly erotic nightmares and ultimately provides the viewer with a hauntingly stirring cinematic orgasm in the end that—for better or worse—is completely unforgettable, even if it is somewhat predictable. Had Dutch avant-garde auteur Frans Zwartjes attempted to direct a Heimat flick with something resembling at least a shell of a narrative, it might resemble Schilling's film. In its darkly romantic oneiric depiction of mud and murder in the remote countryside, the film also deserves comparisons to the cinematic works of underrated Belgian auteur André Delvaux (*Rendez-vous à Bray, Belle*). Needless to say, in terms

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of construction and setting, especially in regard to the beginning, the film owes much to credit to Danish master auteur Carl Theodor Dreyer's masterful vampire film *Vampyr* (1932). In terms of its horror approach to the Heimat genre and quasi-mystical depiction of moors and the outdoors in general, the film also seems to have been influenced by the fairly forgotten West German pastoral Gothic *Rape on the Moor* (1952) aka *Rosen blühen auf dem Heidegrab* directed by Hans H. König. On a less obvious but no less crucial level, Schilling's debut also owes credit to the films of Italian maestro Michelangelo Antonioni in terms of attempting to reinvent the concept of narrative cinema and being a sexually tense mood piece that features a short doomed love affair between two alienated strangers.

Right from the beginning of the film, it is apparent that protagonist Jan Eckmann (popular Dutch actor John Van Dreelen) is a stranger in a strangeland and that it can only end badly for him. Shot around the Lüneburg Heath region (the German equivalent of Dartmoor moorland in southern Devon, England) of Lower Saxony in northern Germany, the film is set in sparsely populated rural village where the people seem emotionally comatose and walk around like melancholic somnambulists, as if they are the ghosts of an ancient region of the Fatherland that was completely annihilated in World War II. As an unabashed workaholic that works in the music publishing industry, Jan plans to leave as soon as possible since he has only traveled the region to look at a house that he is thinking about purchasing. Based in Hamburg, Jan never really mentions why he wants to buy a quaint old house in the countryside, but he seems to suffer from some unconscious form of Fernweh as if he was compelled to come to the region by some unseen sinister force. A successful yet childless single man of the mostly materialistic bourgeois sort, Jan also gives off the vibe that it has been a longtime since he felt both the emotional and physical warmth of a hotblooded woman, hence probably why he eventually falls prey to the patently preternatural flirting qualities of the seemingly unhinged female lead. Like so many films of cinema history, *Nightshade* reveals the sort of bizarre and irrational behavior that a man will put up with just for a little piece of premium grade pussy. To Jan's credit, the female lead has some indescribable and seemingly intangible quality about her that absolutely entrances both the viewer and protagonist. Since he has only come to the village to simply inspect a house that he might purchase, Jan naturally assumes it will not be a long stay, but he does not anticipate that the homeowner, Elena Berg (Elke Haltaufderheide), is a rather disturbed dame with a glaring case of lebensmüde that will do anything to avoid even discussing a price for the house. Indeed, when Jan knocks on the front door of the house and gets no response, he looks through a side window and is somewhat startled to discover sullen blonde beauty named Elena—a middle-aged woman that is clearly past her prime, yet still absolutely stunning—burning papers and other items in her fireplace. Since Elena seems oblivious to her surroundings, Jan lets

himself inside the house and introduces himself as a potential buyer, yet she simply refuses to discuss a price. While Elena has a somewhat frigid affect that hints that some sort of tragedy has chilled her soul and turned her into not much more than a walking and talking corpse, she does seem intent on having Jan stay and tries to ply him with some Vermouth, which he throws in the fireplace when she is not looking. While Jan makes it quite obvious that he wants to know the price for the house and then leave, Elena still manages to coerce him into spending the night in a guest room in the upstairs of the house. As demonstrated by the fact that he is chain-smoking in the dark while he should be sleeping, Jan certainly seems somewhat uneasy by the situation and the mysterious sexy spinster that owns the house, yet he is also undeniably attracted to Elena, hence why he opts to stay the night despite his instincts telling him to leave immediately.

When Jan wakes up after his first night at the house, he is somewhat startled to be greeted by a large lavish breakfast and a note from Elena letting him know that she is at church. A workaholic that hates eggs and rarely eats breakfast unless it is in his office, Jan is not all that impressed with the nice gesture and remains adamant that he plans to leave ASAP after finding Elena at a small eerie church, but the beautiful woman suffers from a terrible case of Erklärungsnot and proceeds to use strange and manipulative feminine tactics to keep him around. For example, Elena sobs when Jan tells her he has to leave, but she pushes him away and runs into another room when he dares to attempt to kiss her. In fact, Elena even seems to haunt the protagonist's dreams, as Jan has a petrifying yet nonetheless aesthetically alluring nightmare where he sees her lovingly placing red flowers on his gravestone. Somewhat curiously, the gravestone has an inscription of three years before on 27th of July 1968 as Jan's death date. Notably, while Jan is having this stunningly morbid nightmare, Elena is kissing his lifeless lips as if she is attempting to breathe death into him. Unbeknownst to Jan, Elena's belated husband, who the protagonist bears a striking resemblance to, died under mysterious circumstances on 27th of July 1968. During that same night, Jan is also startled to discover Elena attempting to start her dead hubby's Mercedes while in a somnambulist-like state. While Jan manages to kiss her lips and neck and fondle her breasts while she is still sitting in the car, Elena eventually pushes him away. Unfortunately for Jan, Elena is still deeply in love with her dead husband, but luckily he bears an eerily striking resemblance to the seemingly ill-fated dead man.

Naturally, one of the things that most annoys Jan about Elena is the fact that she is so impenetrably secretive in a passive feminine sort of way yet, at the same time, this seems to allure him (of course, it does not hurt that she is a nice piece of Aryan ass). For insistence, there is a locked room next to Elena's that she will not let Jan see inside, though she will not give any good reason for attempting to hide it from him. Eventually, Jan becomes so hopelessly infuriated with Elena's pathological evasiveness and unsettling secrecy that he loses his cool and demand

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answers, yelling at her as if she is his delinquent daughter, “I went along with it. But now you’re done. What are you simulating? What do you want from me? Why do you want to sell the house? What’s the matter with the room? Why don’t you want to show me the room? You want to sell, but you don’t want to talk about the price. What about the car. Why did you want to drive off? You were inside my room! What are you doing at night? Say something! I don’t want the house. Nobody is going to buy it! Never! I don’t even want it as a present.” At this point, Elena gives in and hands the key to the locked room to Jan in a slow and almost ritualistic fashion as if the male protagonist is about to open Pandora’s Box. Needless to say, Jan gets somewhat of a shock when he opens the door and discovers a virtual shrine to Elena’s dead husband in the form of an almost unsettlingly mundane and minimalistically decorated work office. On top of discovering a daily calendar with the date 27th of July 1968—the same exact day that the male protagonist saw inscribed on his gravestone during his nightmare—Jan sees a 1960 wedding photo of Elena and her dead husband, who is his virtual doppelgänger, albeit slightly balder and less attractive. Before Jan knows it, Elena is inside the room, but when he attempts to talk she softly covers his lips and guides him to her husband’s bed where they proceed to make love. Of course, by entering the locked room, Jan has symbolically accepted the role of Elena’s dead hubby and thus is repaid with morbidly melancholic poontang.

Considering that Elena is obviously attracted to Jan because he looks just like her dead husband, it is safe to say that she engaging in a sort of emotional spectrophilia with the male protagonist when she begins a sexual relationship with him. Not surprisingly, the next morning after they have sex for the first time, Elena transforms into a completely different person and sheds her hypnotically sullen forlornness for a sort of bubbly girlishness, as if she is a teenage girl that has just fallen in love for the first time. Indeed, Elena immediately begins acting as if Jan is her dead spouse and begins decorating the house as if they are newlyweds that have just moved into their first home. In short, Elena resembles the happy girl from the 1960 wedding photo of her and her dead husband. Elena also becomes obsessed with having Jan take photographs of her outside, but every time he does so her face is curiously obscured in the photo as if she has some sort of curse weighing down on her and/or she has a black mark on her soul. Of course, Jan becomes somewhat worried when he checks Elena’s mailbox against her wishes and discovers an August 1969 newspaper with the ominous headline, “Mysterious Death in the Pine Moor Remains Unsolved.” To make matters more unnerving, Elena completely collapses when the two begin walking towards the local moor. Naturally, Jan is forced to carry Elena back home, but the protagonist becomes somewhat startled when she remains bedridden and states while in a state of haunted delirium, “Stay! Please stay! I want... I want you, Werner. Come on! Let’s go back. No, let’s not take the car. We’ll walk! A

couple of flowers for you. The rain will cover the tracks. Hold me tight. Help me, Werner! Careful! The dress! It's getting wet. It's deep." As Jan soon discovers, 'Werner' is the name of Elena's dead husband. Naturally, Jan only becomes more and more obsessed with learning about the dead man and his dubious fate.

When Elena falls completely asleep after spending most of the day bedridden in a semi-conscious state, Jan uses the opportunity to do what he has been meaning to do for days and goes to a local inn to call his work. Of course, Jan gets quite the shock when the rather rotund innkeeper states to him, "You're well preserved . . . after three years in the moor" and accuses him of being the mysterious "Werner Berg." After a little bit of morbid confusion, the innkeeper pulls out an old newspaper with an article about Werner's death that reads, "Elena Berg has been found not guilty on all accounts. The verdict in this sensational trial has been expected. The court had no other choice. But a shadow remains on Elena Berg. A discharge due to lack of proof is inevitable. The defendant left the court in cold blood." Notably, the article features a court photo of Elena where she looks like the most glacial of femme fatales and certainly not the same woman that the viewer has encountered at any other moment in the film. Chilled to the bone by what he has encountered that night after discovering that he may have made love to a mad mariticide that literally got away with murder, Jan refuses to sleep with Elena, who is too weak to complain, and instead lurks around the house that night while chain-smoking and looking like he has seen a ghost. The next morning, Elena looks even worse and seems to be suffering from some Camille-like wasting disease, yet she gets the strength to tell Jan everything that he has been dying to know. As Elena explains, Werner had been separated from her for a year on the day he died in 1969. When Werner decided to pay her a visit after a year of separation, lovesick Elena, who felt she could not live without him, tried in vain to convince her husband to come back to her, but he "got angry," and replied, "It's right the way it is now." As Elena also explains to Jan, "The years we spent together were a living hell to him. He would never change his opinion," thus indicating they had a very one-sided marriage that was doomed to oblivion. Realizing that Werner would never come back to her, Elena decided to fail to warn him about a dangerous moor when he attempted to take a shortcut in the countryside. Indeed, Elena watched passively as her husband was swallowed alive by the moor. As for her reasoning, Elena confesses to Jan, "He couldn't leave anymore. I loved him. Now I possessed him. Forever. That's what I wanted to tell you . . . so that . . . I give you the house for free. You just need to open the letter. Forgive me! But . . . Forgive me!" Only seconds after telling her story, Elena dies in her bed. Upon examining a desk next to Elena's bed, Jan discovers a bottle of Pentobarbital-Natrium and realizes that she has killed herself.

While I can imagine many fecund-free feminists deriding the film for being ostensibly misogynistic due to its inordinately dreamy depiction of a half-

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crazed cunt causing the death of her husband because she cannot bear to lose him, *Nightshade* is, at least in my less than humble opinion, somewhat flattering in its depiction of womankind, especially in regard to love. After all, even when a woman is dumped by a man that she is genuinely in love with, it usually does not take her long to rebound and devote herself to another dick. Indeed, it usually seems that women get more upset at the prospect of their lover finding another (superior) partner than simply losing said lover, hence the tendency of women to get jealous over the new girlfriend of an ex-boyfriend despite the fact that they no longer have any sort emotional attachment to said ex-boyfriend. Of course, as a childless middle-aged woman that has a much harder time snagging a mensch than a 20-year-old twat with a firm ass and tits, the female lead in Schilling's film has other reasons to be mad about her husband leaving her as she probably has a perennial case of *Torschlusspanik* (after all, the great irony of the sexual market place is that, while a man's value tendency to increase as he ages, a woman's simply decreases as her value is based almost solely on her looks and fertility). In that sense, the fact that the film was produced and stars the director's wifey makes it all the more intriguing, as if lead Elke Haltaufderheide was threatening to kill Schilling if he ever dared to leave her (also, on a more pathetic level, Schilling might have wanted to believe that Haltaufderheide loved him so much that he fantasized that she would kill him if he ever made the mistake of leaving her). Either way, *Nightshade* is a perversely yet elegantly darkly romantic film that demonstrates in a uniquely unnervingly entrancing fashion that a lost love can be a fate worse than death that can lead to the lovelorn loser to becoming a haunted mess that is imprisoned in an increasingly suffocating pandemonium of the past.

Considering it is a two-character film with next to nil plot or storyline, seemingly no studio sets, sparse dialogue, and rather simple camerawork, *Nightshade* could have easily been a major disaster and abortive cinematic *Kuddelmuddel* yet it ultimately makes for a shockingly atmospheric and singular cinematic work, especially for an a first-time auteur who originally worked as a cinematographer on rather different and largely black-and-white flicks that have mostly not aged quite as gracefully. Indeed, unlike many of the cinematic works of New German Cinema, which were oftentimes politically-charged and very much typical of their particular *zeitgeist*, Schilling's film has a timeless quality not unlike the great works of German Expressionism. As for Schilling's rather distinct cinematic *Weltanschauung*, he made his intentions rather clear when he once wrote, "It is really quite simple: cinema should involve the senses. I think of 'cinema as an experiential realm,' as an experiential form, something that makes it—or should make it—different from television. Seen in this light, film is by no stretch of the imagination merely to be equated with cinema. If there is anything I bemoan it is surely the increasing impoverishment of cinema, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, where it actually has become a form more and more

like television and connected to it.” Somewhat ironically, the virtual heart of New German Cinema, Rainer Werner Fassbinder—a man that made a good portion of his films for television—was a fan of Schilling’s films. Of course, the two filmmakers share one major thing in common and that is their almost pathological love of melodrama (notably, Schilling’s wife Elke Haltaufderheide would also star in Fassbinder’s magnum opus *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) in what would ultimately prove to be her penultimate acting role). In fact, as Schilling once wrote, “Melodrama—what a strange concept; another cubbyhole in which one places scenes with crying men, childless, rich women, passionate love-hatreds, and setting suns. It also is used as a disapproving and disdainful response to a precisely choreographed attack on the world of emotions, something a cinematic film can do if it takes itself seriously. I take it seriously and no doubt use these forms taken from the melodrama, because these forms likewise contain something that is specifically cinematic: an optical narrative structure which does not explain and edify—a way of dealing with emotions.”

Interestingly, fellow Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid (*Heute nacht oder nie* aka *Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma*)—a friend and collaborator of Fassbinder—was also obsessed with melodrama, despised leftist agitprop and the counterculture decadence of his own zeitgeist, and was considered ‘counterrevolutionary’ by both fellow filmmakers and film critics. Also, Elke Haltaufderheide is certainly to Schilling’s films what Ingrid Caven was to Schmid’s early cinematic works in terms of being a terminally tragic diva that slowly but surely disintegrates on screen as a result of a deadly love that dare not be named. Undoubtedly, both Haltaufderheide and Caven are so spiritually forsaken, internally wounded, Todessehnsucht-obsessed, and just plain physically pale in these films that they seem like they would turn into dust if one were to attempt to caress them. Of course, the major difference between Schilling and his contemporaries Fassbinder and Schmid is that he was heterosexual, which probably explains why his films are more erotic and ‘sympathetic’ to the perils of the female lead. Undoubtedly, in a somewhat preternatural way, one can sense Schilling’s love for Haltaufderheide and her emotional and physical nuances simply by watching his films, especially *Nightshade* and his arguable magnum opus *Rheingold*. Likewise, Schilling’s love of classic German landscapes is also fairly apparent, which is indubitably one of the reasons why he is the most innately Teutonic filmmakers of his era. In terms of its hopeless and fatalistic doom and gloom Gothic Heimat melodrama, nyctophilic dream-sequences, bold and luscious colors, and decadently romantic spirit, *Nightshade* is like New German Cinema’s adequately pessimistic equivalent to Veit Harlan’s National Socialist melodrama *Opfergang* (1944) aka *The Great Sacrifice*. Of course, unlike with the female protagonist in Harlan’s film, there is no transcendence for the forlorn female lead of Schilling’s flick unless you count lovesick suicide. In terms of sheer otherworldly aesthetics, eerie tone, and phantasmagoric imagery, *Nightshade* certainly has more in com-

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mon with Frank Wisbar's underrated Nazi era horror flick *Fährmann Maria* (1936) starring tragic dark-haired beauty Sybille Schmitz (who, incidentally, also starred in Dreyer's *Vampyr* and was the inspiration for the tragic eponymous junky ex-actress of Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss*).

As someone with an uniquely unhealthy affinity for morbidly depressed and unnervingly introverted natural blondes of the Teutonic-blooded sort, *Nightshade* proved to be a bittersweetly beautiful affair, even if I found the female lead's guilt-ridden lovesick suicide to be slightly improbable. Of course, my complaint seems pointless when I remember that Schilling's film is a Gothic cinematic tone poem that is best left to the soul than the intellect. Either way, the film bleeds feminine melancholy in a way that rivals the best of Ingmar Bergman and for that reason alone makes it worth viewing. A cinematic work that manages to strip down cinema and bring it back to its basics while at the same time reinventing the concept of narrative cinema, *Nightshade* also provides a refreshingly experience that recalls times that were simpler, especially when one considers the mostly worthless films that are created in Germany nowadays. Indeed, after watching Schilling's film, I could not help but recall a recent interview with French blonde bombshell Brigitte Bardot where she was asked if she watches contemporary French films and she boldly replied, "Never. But what is it with all these actors and actresses? We only see scrofulous, sick, twisted and ugly people. The heroes today, they are people in crutches or paralysed in a wheelchair or old and in a coma. Where are the heroes? Where are the personalities that make us dream, the Gabins, the Brasseurs? I think of Alain Delon. Who replaced him? Now it's just beards [She uses the word "barbus" which literally means beards but is also slang for Muslims] and actresses with oily hair who get raped in corners then find excuses for their attackers. You only have to look at the César Ceremony [French Oscars equivalent] where nice zombies thank Mum and Dad, their concierge and their taxi driver, while making the compulsory call for human fraternity and antiracism." While it was most certainly not Schilling's intention, *Nightshade* is also a reminder that one middle-aged blonde beauty is indubitably worth more than six million 19-year-old Turk twats.

-Ty E

CHARLES MANSON SUPERSTAR

Nikolas Schreck (1989)

Charles Manson Superstar is a documentary about American icon Charles Manson and his legacy that was established by the media that martyred the would be Christ. Director Nikolas Schreck visited Manson in 1989 at San Quentin prison in Death Valley to do the hypnotically insightful yet hilarious documentary. Charles Manson, a man that was essentially raised in prison, became the drug messiah of a bunch of rich kids turned pseudo-Occultists who murdered some Hollywood types (including Roman Polanski's pregnant wife Sharon Tate), resulting in a media money making frenzy. In the documentary, Schreck attempts to decipher the real Charles Manson through serious analytically established evidence (against myths) and words from the little Manson's mouth. Manson declares that "Christ was a little guy" and with that, it is easy to see the man's own self established megalomania that inspires weak willed teenagers to this very day. At best, Manson is an illiterate intellectual poet that has become a messiah of his own prison cell. Charlie Manson has managed to survive basically his whole life and for that he should be commended. In former jail mates book Manson in his Own Words Manson explains his pathetic life without any real sentiment. Charlie Manson makes it clear that from the very beginning it has only been about survival. Charles Manson Superstar also features Manson talking about many of his own personal philosophies. Manson considers himself essentially a white nationalist and anti-feminist. These are things that media Zio-Clown's like Geraldo Rivera jump on Manson for immediately. Having a swastika engraved in your forehead also doesn't really help. With "the family" Manson also had plans of starting his own "Afrikakorps" inspired by German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (who was supposedly involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler). Charles Manson expected a race war to erupt and an apocalyptic scenario to take place. We will just have to wait and see if the Race War and Apocalypse happens. Rommel and his Men Charles Manson has inspired a variety of diverse groups with his acts. The lame terrorist hippie "Weather Underground" and various Nazi groups were inspired by Manson. To these groups of disenfranchised individuals, Manson attacked the system and won. Charles Manson laughs at both groups. Charlie also makes claims that the outside world steals it's culture from the prison world. Manson even acknowledges his deep respect for Adolf Hitler as Manson describes Hitler as someone "trying to put order back in the world." Charles Manson Superstar also notes a variety of a books and films influenced by Manson. I Drink Your Blood, Helter Skelter, and Manson Family Videos are just a few films about the "hippie killer." Charles Manson Superstar is probably one of the most enlightening films on Manson as the other films are for the most part merely mythical presentations of the lonely man. In the documentary, Charles Manson's behavior ranges from nonsensical to intim-

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idating (he starts baiting the camera man), to pathetic. I recommend Charles Manson Superstar to anyone that is looking for a good unconventional laugh and a more realistic view of the most "dangerous man" of the late 1960s.

-Ty E

EURIDICE BA 2037

Nikos Nikolaidis (1975)

For whatever reason, I have to respect a filmmaker who, despite directing various highly idiosyncratic feature films over the course of three decades (not to mention the fact that he spent over another decade directing shorts and working as an assistant director), felt that his very first full-length cinematic work was also his very best. Indeed, Greek auteur Nikos Nikolaidis (*Glykia symmoria* aka *Sweet Bunch*, *Singapore Sling*) considered his first feature *Evridiki BA 2037* (1975) aka *Euridice BA 2037*—a superlatively subversive and uniquely uncompromising black-and-white avant-garde molestation of the classic Greek tragedy *Orpheus and Eurydice* that seems like it was made just in time for the Occidental apocalypse—to be the most solid and structured film of his totally singular filmmaking career. While I am not sure if I would describe it as Nikolaidis' single greatest work, it is surely one of the best and most impressive debut features I have ever seen from a director as a work comparable to Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou* (1929) aka *An Andalusian Dog*, Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (1959) aka *The 400 Blows*, and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), among various others. While I have not seen every single cinematic reworking of the Greek tragedy, I have no doubt in my mind that Nikolaidis' film is the most aesthetically and thematically anarchistic, culturally pessimistic, darkly erotic and eclectically unhinged adaptation of *Orpheus and Eurydice* ever made as a work that makes Jean Cocteau's masterpiece *Orphée* (1950) aka *Orpheus* seem like a dopey Disney variation and Sidney Lumet's *The Fugitive Kind* (1960) resemble a hokey exploitation piece. Of course, what better than a real genuine Greek fellow to adapt the classic tragedy of his ancient ancestors and demonstrate how so utterly depraved and hopelessly lost the Occident is today. I must admit that the more films I see by Nikolaidis, the more I realize that he is the most important and underrated post-WWII Greek auteur, but of course Greece has always been generally lacking when it comes to filmmaking, even in comparison to small countries like Belgium and the Netherlands, with many important directors from the country like Nikos Papatakis (*Les abysses*, *Les Équilibristes* aka *Walking a Tightrope*) and Costa-Gavras (*Z*, *Amen.*) spending most of their careers working abroad. What immediately stands out about Nikolaidis' adaptation in comparison to all the other versions, aside from the fact that it is a demented dystopian chamber piece that relies heavily on dream logic, is that it focuses primarily on Eurydice (or 'Euridice') and her nightmarish psychological demise while waiting idly in the most banal of hells. Indeed, unlike the original story which depicts the Arcadian romance of the hero and heroine before the latter ends up in the depths of Hades and the former subsequently enters the dark otherworldly abyss to try and ultimately fail at saving her, *Euridice BA 2037* takes place entirely in a sort

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of metaphorical pandemonium where the eponymous ‘protagonist’ (or more like ‘anti-heroine’) Eurydice, who does not remember Orpheus, waits in vain while going insane to be released after she has already served her time. Indeed, Nikolaidis’ film is a histrionic psychodrama of the most haunting sort that demands much from the viewer and gives absolutely nothing away aside from nice shots of Russian-German star Vera Tschecowa’s generous mammary glands.

Notably, star Vera Tschecowa appeared in what is oftentimes described as the very first New German Cinema feature, *The Bread of Those Early Years* (1962) aka *Das Brot der frühen Jahre* directed by Herbert Vesely, which is interesting considering that *Euridice BA 2037* is one of the first works of the so-called ‘New Greek Cinema’ movement as a work that completely revolutionized the medium in Greece and opened up cinematic possibilities that largely went unrealized. Indeed, despite being forty years old, the work is still as shocking, singular, and unclassifiable as film’s come as a clear expression of the artist’s obviously troubled and seemingly haunted psyche. In Nikolaidis’ film, love is dead and the protagonist is more or less a dead soul with amnesia who is simply referred to as “BA2037” by the people that have imprisoned her in a metaphoric hell that, not unintentionally, resembles a typical humdrum bourgeois apartment. Set to the soothing, if not sometimes saddening, sounds of Chopin, Vivaldi, and Dinah Shore, *Euridice BA 2037* is a piece of schizo-cinema that somehow manages to be morbidly melancholic yet sometimes playfully humorous and jovial. The film begins with sounds of live ammunition and warfare juxtaposed with the credits sequence and then cuts to a small group of bratty young men and women tormenting protagonist Eurydice while she sleeps by dropping dirt and whatnot on her head from a window over her bed. Probably not coincidentally, these young delinquents resemble far-left student protestors or ‘bobos’ (aka bourgeois bohemians) of that time period. After fighting her youthful attackers with a makeshift pitchfork of sorts, Eurydice stares in a melancholic fashion at a bouquet of dead flowers wrapped in an old newspaper, which can be interpreted as being symbolic of the fact that love and romance are old news in the decidedly dead dystopian world of Nikolaidis’ film. After standing around and looking all moody and broody, Eurydice approaches a mustached man that is lying on her bed and goes to touch him but it seems like some unspeakable force is holding her back. Although never directly stated, the man is her lover Orpheus (British actor John Moore) and Eurydice has fragmented flashbacks of making love to him. Like virtually all the people that come to see Eurydice, it is dubious as to whether Orpheus is really in the apartment or merely a figment of the obviously mentally perturbed protagonist’s seemingly loony and labyrinthine ‘imagination.’ Indeed, it could be argued that nothing in the film is real and is, instead, merely the product of the clearly crazed heroine’s discernibly damaged mind. At one point, Orpheus attempts to apologize to Eurydice for something that is never made completely clear, but she stops him, changes the subject, and complains

that she should have been freed from the apartment five days ago when her sentence ended, but then strangely remarks, "Who knows... Maybe I have already left," as if she is speculating that she might have lost her mind. Naturally, at the end of the film, Eurydice will have a long-awaited romantic 'showdown' of sorts with Orpheus that will seal both his and her fate for eternity.

When a random stranger calls Eurydice on the telephone and says that he is trying to contact his lover who he has not seen or talked to in five years, the protagonist remarks, "It's weird" as if she cannot fathom the idea of a man still being in love with a woman after such a long period of time without any contact. Eurydice tells the man that she does not know him or remember any of the stories or names he mentions, but she tells him that she would like to meet him and invites him to come to her apartment later that night. Of course, it is later revealed that the man on the phone is Orpheus. In between moving piles of junk around her house in a rather tedious and ultimately fruitless fashion as if she is trying in vain to live the life of a domestic housewife and failing miserably, Eurydice daydreams of bizarre things like discovering two naked corpses wrapped in plastic in a Lynchian fashion. Eurydice also calls the people that have imprisoned her and complains that she should have been released five days ago, so the man on the other line promises to send by a truck before noon to pick her up so she can be transferred but of course it never happens. After staring at the static on her TV screen like an autistic automaton for a couple minutes, Eurydice takes a shower and when she finishes she becomes rather alarmed and eventually completely petrified when a man in a military uniform rings her doorbell and then attempts to shove an envelope under the door, which the protagonist aggressively fights to push back under the door while completely naked (during all the commotion, Eurydice loses her towel and her mind), as if the piece of mail contains a bomb or anthrax and she is afraid for her life. Not long after the incident with the mailman, a beautiful young woman (Niki Triantafyllidi) in a black plastic coat appears in the apartment out of nowhere and it is quite clear that she recently tried to commit suicide as indicated by the cut marks on both of her wrists, so Eurydice attempts to clean her wounds but the strange exotic young lady stops her. Out of all the people that Eurydice encounters during the film, she is the most empathetic and kind to the mysterious woman, who is probably not a real person but instead a possible alter-ego or younger version of the protagonist (who might be in hell because she killed herself). As the strange young woman says regarding her suicide attempt, "He will think I did it because of him. Why would I do it? I don't love him anyway... but I think he knows it. He figured it out." Undoubtedly, the young lady's sentiments of resentment for her beau seem to mirror how Eurydice feels about Orpheus, who will ultimately go to great lengths to attempt to get the protagonist to remember the love they once had for one another. Whether Eurydice has genuinely forgotten Orpheus and her former love for him or she is just pretending to as women oftentimes

do is quite questionable. When the strange woman randomly disappears just as abruptly as she once appeared, Eurydice becomes completely petrified and begins slowly and carefully looking for her around her apartment, but the only thing she finds is herself in the bathroom (!) showering just like she did only moments earlier just before the mailman came by and scared the shit out of her.

Like a scared child, Eurydice eventually decides to hide under the sheets on her bed where she is initially petrified but eventually begins masturbating and experiencing a series of extra ecstatic orgasms. When a silhouette of a man's hand appears over the sheet, Eurydice becomes all the more turned on and has some more orgasms, but when the curious hand begins caressing her she eventually suffers a sort of spasmodic panic attack where her large breasts giggle wildly. After her rather bizarre phantasmagoric masturbation session in the bed, Eurydice decides to play with talking baby-dolls and gets them to have 'sex.' Indeed, after one of the babydolls says, "Come, let's do something naughty," Eurydice takes the clothes of the dolls and forces them to engage in a rather childish game of coitus that more than hints at the protagonist's warped sexuality. As indicated by the fact that the male doll has an erect member, the toys are 'anatomically correct' and Eurydice seems to have another orgasm while playing with the toys, but eventually gets agitated for some reason and decides to viscerally bite the penis off of the male one, thus reflecting her undeniably hostile feelings towards the opposite gender. When Orpheus calls again, Eurydice, who has the baby-doll penis in between her teeth like a toothpick, once again reiterates how she has no idea who he is or what he is talking about. Orpheus brings up a mutual friend named Vera who was apparently killed at an amusement park while they were hanging out there, but Eurydice describes the story as "improbable." Meanwhile, Eurydice falls further into a lapse of sanity as demonstrated by her violent mutilation of baby-dolls and visions of decapitated goat heads, among other things that only seem to make sense in her own mixed-up mind.

Eventually, a strange man randomly shows up at Eurydice's flat while it is storming heavily outside and offers to trade her two sardines that he has carefully wrapped in a piece of cloth for some jewelry, but the protagonist turns him down. The man apparently works for the hellish bureaucracy that has imprisoned Eurydice and he tells her that she has not been "transferred" yet simply because his employers are "just lazy." Of course, like the mysterious young woman, the man disappears just as abruptly as he once appeared. After attempting to hunt down some imaginary figure with a butcher knife while sporting nothing but a turtleneck sweater and panties, as well as subsequently using fingernail polish to paint the wrists of the mysterious young suicidal woman that randomly showed up earlier in the film, Eurydice is eventually visited by the mysterious man that has been calling her on the telephone who naturally turns out to be Orpheus. When Orpheus walks in the apartment with a bouquet of flowers while sporting a military uniform and hardhat with a light on it, Eurydice acts less than friendly

to him and demands that he turn the light off, which he gladly does. After Orpheus shows his concern that he hopes his uniform does not scare her and says that he can probably arrange to have her released from the apartment, Eurydice remarks that he is very nice and even strangely offers him a bath as if she is on intimate terms with him and/or wants to jump his bones.

After some small talk, the two lovers turned strangers sit at a kitchen table and Orpheus shows Eurydice old photographs and tells her a story about how he, her, and a woman named 'Vera' once went to an amusement park together and the latter suffered broken ribs when a ride malfunctioned and ultimately died on the way back after her already broken ribs were split open in a car wreck. While looking at Orpheus' old photos, Eurydice notes that Vera looks remarkably like her and then remarks, "See what funny clothes we used to wear?" as if she somehow now remembers the past. Of course, there probably was never a 'Vera' (which is notably and probably not coincidentally the real-life first name of the actress that plays Eurydice), as the dead woman that Orpheus is speaking of is probably actually Eurydice and the only reason he is telling her the story is in the hope that his beloved will somehow remember. Undoubtedly, the scene where Orpheus attempts to get Eurydice to remember him is borderline heartbreaking and accented by the song "Till" by Dinah Shore. After an initially romantic flashback scene of Orpheus and Eurydice kissing in a lake in pouring down rain that ultimately erupts into violence, the protagonist is featured murdering her lover and subsequently running down the hallway of her apartment in a creepily jubilant fashion while carrying her murdered beau's internal organs in a triumphant fashion. The film concludes the same exact way it began with a group of young people attacking Eurydice from a window above her bed while she sleeps. Indeed, Eurydice is trapped in a perennial metaphysical prison where she is forced to relive the same events over and over again every single day for eternity like she is trapped in some grotesque Gothic Greek version of Harold Ramis' *Groundhog Day* (1993). Of course, unlike Bill Murray's character in the Ramis flick, Eurydice seems unconscious of the fact that she is reliving the same day over and over again and thus acts the same exact way every single time.

Although completed in 1975, *Euridice BA 2037* did not play in Greek theaters until six years later just after a major earthquake devastated the country, thus most likely adding to the assumedly already shaken audience's viewing experience. To demonstrate director Nikos Nikolaidis' lack of pretentiousness, especially in regard to his own work, it should be noted that the filmmaker once stated regarding his directorial debut, "Certain intellectual Italian critics asserted that "*Euridice BA 2037*" applies and finally proves Lyotard's cinematographic theories as well as the solution to many of the problems which puzzled Pasolini's for years. I am embarrassed because I didn't know then and I still don't know anything about Lyotard's theories or Pasolini's problems." Like much of his work, it is also apparent while watching the film that the auteur is surely lacking when it

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comes to pomposity as demonstrated by the fact that Euridice BA 2037 opens with a shot of a photograph of early classical Hollywood comedic philistine double act Laurel and Hardy. Not surprisingly considering its dually off-putting combination of perversity and incessant discombobulating ambiguity, the wayward Orpheus and Eurydice (anti)adaptation, despite winning various coveted awards, was apparently severely criticized by both audiences and film critics alike when it debuted at Thessaloniki Film Festival, with those few individuals that actually enjoyed the film being a supposed “reckless” bunch, or as Nikolaidis stated himself, “I realized that the audience this film appealed to was a “reckless” one, made up of people who willingly huddled into the basement of the movie theater “Alkyonida”. Driven cinephiles, which ignored the published critics (disregarding both good and bad reviews, because – we all know how the critics system works by now).” Of course, the film most certainly has the same audience today.

On top of describing it as his personal favorite of all his cinematic works, Nikolaidis rightly recognized his debut feature was too much for audiences when it was released as expressed in a remark he made while discussing his later dystopian masterpiece *Morning Patrol* (1987), “I believe that it is a film ahead of its time just like “Euridice BA 2037” was.” Notably, *Euridice BA 2037* and *Morning Patrol* are the first two chapters of Nikolaidis’ post-apocalyptic ‘The Shape of the Coming Nightmare’ trilogy, which concluded with the filmmaker’s most fiercely impenetrable and perniciously perverted yet paradoxically humorous cinematic effort *The Zero Years* (2005), which was ultimately the last film the Greek auteur ever directed. What all three of these films have in common is they demonstrate a sort of great disconnect between the sexes that reflects a sort of death wish for the Occident where reproduction and family do not even enter the equation. Certainly Greece’s closest equivalent to Ingmar Bergman’s masterpiece *Persona* (1966), *Euridice BA 2037* depicts a kind of erotically apocalyptic frigidness of the fairer sex via its hyper hysterical (anti)heroine, who not coincidentally kills her beloved Orpheus in an allegorical gesture that can be interpreted as the meta-physical hell of perennial loneliness and sexual deracination that has replaced love and romance in Europa. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Eurydice has amnesia in regard to her past love affair with Orpheus, for love has become, at best, a faded memory that seems completely intangible in the present late-stage of Occidental decay. I am certainly not exaggerating when I say that Nikolaidis’ film is easily one of the greatest adaptations of a classic work as it completely deconstructs, defiles, and reassembles Orpheus and Eurydice for contemporary times, not to mention the fact that it was directed by a filmmaker from the same devastatingly degenerated nation where the tale was originally sired. Ironically, aside from Roman Polanski’s *Repulsion* (1965), Ingmar Bergman’s *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) aka *Såsom i en spegel*, and to a lesser extent John Cassavetes’ *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), the only other film I can truly compare

Euridice BA 2037 to is the R-rated psychodramatic chamber thriller *Deranged* (1987) directed by pornographic auteur Chuck Vincent. Aside from taking place almost entirely in a messy apartment and centering around a mad woman who is suffering a major mental breakdown, both films manage to be simultaneously unflattering to the so-called fairer sex yet at the same time demonstrate an inordinate compassion to people with vaginas that no actual woman would dare express. The *Eurydice* of Nikolaidis' film is not the all too delicate and perfect wood nymph of the original ancient Greek tragedy, but the rotting yet pulsating womb of the west that worships death and is allergic to all-things-love. Undoubtedly, to say one has to suffer from a certain amount of hopelessness in regard to love and the future of the Occident and humanity to fully appreciate *Euridice BA 2037* would be a major understatement. In other words, it was probably no fun being Nikos Nikolaidis, hence probably why the man seemed to love old mindless outmoded Hollywood classics that are nothing like the films he actually directed as they probably provided him with much needed escapism and, in turn, relief from his existential misery.

-Ty E

MORNING PATROL
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Nikos Nikolaidis (1987)

Nearly a decade ago, I saw a totally unclassifiable Greek cult film entitled *Singapore Sling* (1990) of the completely and utterly depraved yet darkly humorous and equally erotic sort that pays bizarre homage to Otto Preminger's classic film noir *Laura* (1944) and that one might describe as the most idiosyncratic 'arthouse horror' flick ever made. Admittedly, I was somewhat caught off guard by the film because it was released on DVD by Synapse Films, which typically releases less than artistically merited cult horror flicks, and I certainly was not expecting such a stylishly sleazy cinematic work that managed to be so decidedly demented yet inordinately aesthetically dignified. For whatever reason, I did not think to look into some of *Singapore Sling* director Nikos Nikolaidis' other films until rather recently after researching films on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and discovering that his debut feature, *Euridice BA 2037* (1975) aka *Evridiki BA 2037*, was a disturbing black-and-white mutation of the classic Ancient Greek tragic love story. While barely known outside of Greece aside from his magnum opus *Singapore Sling*, Nikolaidis—a modern Renaissance man of sorts who also worked as a record producer, theater director, and prolific TV commercial director, among other things—might be, at least in my less than humble opinion, the world's greatest director of dystopian arthouse works. A man with a patently pessimistic view of the world and where it was heading, Nikolaidis described his swansong *The Zero Years* (2005)—a film set in a dystopian S&M brothel where four prostitutes that were forcibly sterilized allow themselves to be devilishly defiled while running low on food and other supplies—as not depicting some less than ideal foreseeable future, but as depicting the pernicious present. Set in a necrotizing post-apocalyptic Europa where amnesia and mysterious fevers are rampant, death squads roam the streets and countryside, absurd booby-traps await you around every corner, and where any person that you come into contact with will more than likely attempt to kill you, *Proini peripolos* (1987) aka *Morning Patrol* is arguably Nikolaidis' greatest contribution to the dystopian subgenre as a work that is so malignantly melancholic in its essence that it makes Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) seem like a relatively conventional Hollywood fantasy film and Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985) seem like a bombastic live-action cartoon directed by an autistic fanboy. Set in a neo-noir nightmare realm where the main city is completely unpopulated yet classic Golden Age Hollywood film noir flicks from the 1940s and 1950s are perennially playing on TV screens and in movie theaters, Nikolaidis' virtual anti-sci-fi flick features nil special effects and a sort of post-European Europe where the only memories of past times come in the form of old school works from the Hebraic dream-makers of Tinseltown. Somewhat paradoxically, *Morning Patrol* is arguably Nikolaidis' most hopeful and romantic work, as a sort of apocalyptic romance where two strangers that ini-

tially attempt to hate one another yet ultimately unite and bond on mutual faded memories and try to find hope in a world that is beyond hopeless. Featuring a deceptively intricate and philosophical script, the film is notable for featuring excerpts from the writings of novelists like Raymond Chandler, Philip K. Dick, Daphne Du Maurier, and Herman Raucher for the scenes where the two lead characters narrate their thoughts on living in a dying world plagued by death, pain, murder and not much more.

Morning Patrol begins with the nameless female protagonist (Michele Valley of Singapore Sling and Yorgos Lanthimos' *Kynodontas* (2009) aka Dogtooth) roaming the countryside and attempting to remember her former life in a place in the East called 'Mandele' that no longer exists. The female protagonist is afraid that if she refrains from talking that she might die and that if she attempts to sleep she will be caught by a death squad called the 'Morning Patrol.' Undoubtedly, the protagonist has a rather pessimistic worldview as indicated by her remark, "The most stupid question once can ask on this earth is, 'Where the hell did everybody else go?'" but she has perfectly good reason to think the way she does as virtually all of her fellow surviving humans want to kill her just so that they can steal her mostly worthless belongings. Indeed, the only people left in the world are coldblooded killers and the protagonist is reluctantly one of them, as she lives in a 'dog eat dog' world where passivity means a very certain grisly death. As the protagonist says regarding other people, "Sometimes I see them in the distance... sliding down the hills, heading West... They kill each other over a drop of water... or they get killed by Patrols." Although she has no evidence that there is something waiting for her on the other side, the protagonist is also heading west to a dubious place called 'The Sea,' but first she must pass through a nearby city that is even more deadly than the countryside. Since she, like all the survivors of whatever apocalyptic event led to the dystopian world that now exists, suffers from amnesia and can't quite remember anything clearly about her former life, the protagonist speculates that she used to have a boyfriend and lived with her parents. After finding a crouching corpse that she initially mistakes for a living man, the woman is able to bandage her wounded arm while she tries in vain to remember how she injured it.

As demonstrated by the fact that she brutally slaughters a man with a knife after mistaking him for a corpse and stealing his watch, the female protagonist is a fierce murderess who is well prepared to fight to the death, especially when it comes to malicious men. After all, as the woman pessimistically narrates, "What does it matter where you are, if you're dead. In the murky waters, or high up in a marble tower, what does it matter. You're dead, and you don't care about anything anymore," thus reflecting the fact that she has a little bit of life left in her and she is determined to get to a nearby city where she will have food, water, and shelter. Of course, the city is occupied by members of the Morning Patrol and when the protagonist arrives there, she does not waste any time in murdering

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one of the guards and stealing his gasmask. Upon entering an abandoned luxury apartment, the woman finds food still on the dinner table as if the family that originally lived there had just vanished into thin air while eating. While at the apartment, the woman watches vintage junky classic *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955) directed by Otto Preminger and starring Frank Sinatra and Kim Novak, but her viewing is interrupted when she notices a remote control toy car in the building and abruptly leaves.

When the woman enters another apartment, she finds various James Dean and Natalie Wood posters hanging on the wall and begins watching *The Big Combo* (1955) directed by Joseph H. Lewis and starring Cornel Wilde and Richard Conte, but she does not stay there for long. After leaving the second apartment, the woman heads to a completely empty movie theater that is curiously screening Charles Vidor's *Gilda* (1946) starring Rita Hayworth and Glenn Ford, even though there is clearly no one there running the film projector. While attempting to enjoy the movie, a unisex gang of four men and women that are dressed somewhat like post-apocalyptic punk hobos begin approaching her in a rather bizarre manner that makes it seem as if they are performing ballet with the theater seats. Ultimately, all four of the gang members surprise attack the female protagonist at once and a female member knocks her out by putting her head between her thighs in a somewhat fetishistic fashion. When the protagonist wakes up, she finds herself tangled in reels of film and soon notices that all four of her attackers have been mysteriously murdered and thus she is able to get back all the gear and supplies that they stole from her. As the protagonist will soon discover, she has a guardian angel of sorts that has been watching over her ever since she arrived at the city.

After leaving the movie theater, the protagonist finds a loaded shotgun in a large junk pile and heads to another abandoned apartment to watch some more old school Hollywood film noir. While staring at the television like an automaton, a man sneaks up on her and points the shotgun she just found at her face. Upon revealing his face to her and moving the shotgun away from her head, the man (Takis Spiridakis of Nikolaidis' *Glykia symmoria* (1983) aka *Sweet Bunch*) reveals to the woman that he is a guard in the *Morning Patrol* and that he has been watching over her ever since she arrived in the city. The guard also warns the woman that it is his job to kill if she is still alive and in the city after three days, but he also demonstrates his genuine concern for her by warning her to stay away from, "Cinemas, food stores, phone booths... They're all traps. Nighttime is the best time for running." While the woman more or less admits to killing one of his *Morning Patrol* comrades and stealing his gas mask, the man decides not to turn her in and instead begins to leave, but on the way out he collapses. Indeed, the guard suffers from a mysterious and seemingly incurable illness that causes fevers and his bones to ache. When the man wakes up, he finds himself lying in bed with the woman who is once again watching an old film noir. Ultimately,

the woman blackmails the man into helping her to make it out of the city so that she can make it to the seemingly mythical place in the west called 'The Sea' by stealing the pills that he uses to treat the mysterious illness that he suffers from. While the man probably could easily beat up the woman and take his pills back, he seems to genuinely want to help her and has obviously become disillusioned with working for the Morning Patrol, so he goes along with her plan to travel to the Sea, even though he knows that no one who has ever traveled there has ever come back to confirm that it actually exists, thereupon more or less guaranteeing a very certain death for both of them.

It is quite apparent that, despite their initially resentful attitudes towards one another, the woman and man have a strong attraction and connection towards one another that only becomes all the more apparent the longer they are around one another. Indeed, the two might have even known one another in a previous life, as the woman asks the man at one point, "Are you sure we have never met before?" and then says, "You had a house on the hill. I used to watch you from afar," but the guard cannot remember anything. Needless to say, it does not take long for the man's comrades at the Morning Patrol to realize he has gone AWOL and they immediately begin attempting to hunt him and the woman down. Meanwhile, a second guard (Panos Thanassoulis of *Singapore Sling* and Dimitris Athanitis' *Kamia sympatheia gia ton Diavolo* (1997) aka *No Sympathy for the Devil*) on a motorcycle keeps a lookout for the two protagonists and even talks to the man via telephone and warns him to not go west because the death squad has already setup a roadblock there. At one point, a group of Morning Patrol members attempt to murder the man and woman at what looks like a post-industrial junkyard, but the two protagonists kill them and then steal their bus and begin heading towards the outskirts of the city. Naturally, the man begins succumbing to his illness over time and the woman begins acting vaguely more intimate with him. When the two enter a swamp one night, the man collapses and narrates, "I could already hear the patrol approaching us. Don't think that I quit. I know this is my last chance. And if they're going to get me back, they won't get me alive. There are so many stories about us. They say that after the river, down at the valley of death, when the moon is gone, seven angels pray for those who leave the city...And when the battle is over, and the smoke dissolves, we get to the sea...alive or dead, it doesn't matter. Don't think I quit." The woman picks up the man and attempts to carry him through swamp but he ultimately dies in her arms. After the man dies, the woman passionately embraces him and kisses him on the lips for the first time. The last thing the man says before dying is, "Do you have a name?" which is a question that the woman refused to answer when the two first met.

Notably, director Nikos Nikolaidis would later state regarding his masterpiece *Morning Patrol*, "This is a movie that still scares me and I avoid watching it... I believe that it is a film ahead of its time just like "Euridice BA 2037" was." In-

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deed, while it is not nearly as graphic or grotesque as *Singapore Sling*, *The Zero Years*, or many of Nikolaidis' other works (in fact, the only nudity it features is a rather brief nipple slip from Michele Valley), the film is completely soaked with a positively penetrating sense of dread, hopeless, despair, and emotional deadness that consumes the viewer's soul from the very beginning to almost the very end. It is only until the final couple minutes and especially the last couple of second of the film where Nikolaidis dares to express any degree of love and compassion in the very final scene when the female protagonist is finally able to let down her guard and express her affection for another human being, but it is ultimately too late as the male protagonist has already dropped dead. Of course, one could interpret the final scene of the film as a message to viewers that, no matter how shitty and degenerate the world is, one must never hold back on love because you might miss it entirely if you do not act upon it immediately as there is no telling one a lover might perish or when the world might end. Undoubtedly in its complete and utter lack of special effects and utilization of real location of strikingly exotic post-industrial ruin, *Morning Patrol* strangely reminded me of the somewhat strongly forgotten hippie-ish dystopian flick *Glen and Randa* (1971) directed by McJew Jim McBride (David Holzman's *Diary, Breathless*), but of course Nikolaidis' film is a remarkably more entrancing, atmospheric, and culturally pessimistic work that, in terms of its construction as a slow-burning post-apocalyptic celluloid nightmare, seems nearly immaculate. Indeed, aside from its superficial similarities with *Glen and Randa*, the only other film I can think of comparing Nikolaidis' work to is Andrei Tarkovsky's masterpiece *Stalker* (1979), which certainly shares some aesthetic similarities as both works manage to make the dystopian and the dejecting so delectable. It should be noted that *Morning Patrol* is the second film in the director's post-apocalyptic 'The Shape of the Coming Nightmare' trilogy, with Nikolaidis' first feature *Euridice BA 2037* being the first chapter and his cinematic swansong *The Zero Years* being the third and final installment, thus making the triptych seem like the foundation of the auteur's entire celluloid oeuvre. While *Morning Patrol* is unequivocally the least sexually explicit and most 'conventional' chapter in the trilogy, it also happens to be the most immaculate as a disturbingly aesthetically pleasing work that is oppressively foreboding and practically bleeds *weltschmerz* in a particularly preternatural fashion that no other Mediterranean filmmaker ever seemed capable of. Indeed, if Nikolaidis had a specialized talent, it was making the end of the world seem so innately pernicious yet paradoxically beautiful.

-Ty E

SINGAPORE SLING

Nikos Nikolaidis (1990)

Singapore Sling is a nice perverted Greek film that taps into what the average person might call taboo sexuality. Many men might feel as if they are in the right set of hands after being wounded if two beautiful woman watch over him. It also might be a fantasy of many men to be in the company of an incestuous mother/daughter duo that only has sex on the mind. But these two women also have murder on their mind which has become more interesting than any sexual domination game that they could ever play. The so called emancipated woman can become a dangerous thing. A woman not dominated by a strongman is a wild storm of nothingness. Like the sex obsessed ladies of Singapore Sling, there is a void in their life that no novelty form of sexual/physical domination will ever fulfill. Only when the sharp phallic knife of a man enters that woman's most intimate spot in a savage way does she feel content. Not only is she now at ease but she can die happy as does a certain lady in Singapore Sling. Singapore Sling has a certain sleek film noir aesthetic that penetrates ones emotions immediately. Things are always rainy and gloomy in the film, even during moments of hopeful sexual enjoyment. The younger woman featured in Singapore Sling speaks poetically of her assumed dead father taking her virginity at a young age. The woman recites her past sexual activities as she rapes a wounded man that has just been found on her front doorstep. Her Mother is jealous of her daughters private moments as most mothers/women are. The man the women call "Singapore Sling" is trapped in a large house with two women that have yet to be tamed. Lacking the proper man to fulfill their deranged sexual needs, the mother and daughter enjoy playing a little game of "secretary." The mother forces the daughter to perform fellatio on her artificial member and the girl does so with glee. She can't get enough of the feeling of being under the control of a pseudo-male. But these perverted psychological prostitutes never fulfill their womanly needs as no woman can take the place of a man. I dare someone to find a happy "emancipated" woman that isn't a full-fledged and gender deranged lesbian. Despite murdering a young lady, "Singapore Sling" has become the woman's savior. The woman cannot be blamed for her desire to murder him as she is ultimately amoral. Her perversity has lead her to a life of hedonistic nihilism which has morphed into insanity. The young woman sexually pleasures herself with fruit in a furious manner but is incapable of producing her own fruits. She is a void of a woman and only death will release her from her living nightmare.

-Ty E

THE ZERO YEARS
THE ZERO YEARS

Nikos Nikolaidis (2005)

While David Lynch has long been one of my favorite American filmmakers as the man behind singular masterpieces like *Eraserhead* (1977) and *Blue Velvet* (1986), among other notable works, I felt his most recent feature *Inland Empire* (2006) was not much more than a conspicuously convoluted mess of steaming digital diarrhea that seems like a perversely prosaic parody of the director's own signature 'Lynchian' brand of filmmaking, albeit shot on a bargain bin budget using the hopeless artificial anti-art medium of MiniDV. Needless to say, after learning that Lynch decided that he would never shoot on real film again because of how much 'artistic freedom' he felt that digital video gave him while shooting *Inland Empire* due to its cheapness, I ultimately came to the conclusion that the auteur filmmaker had fried his brain on too much Transcendental Meditation (indeed, the doc *David Wants to Fly* (2010) directed by David Sieveking makes it quite clear that Mr. Lynch has become a virtual slave of the Hindu cult). When I discovered absurdly underrated Greek auteur Nikos Nikolaidis (Proini Peripolos aka *Morning Patrol*, Glykia Symmoria aka *Sweet Bunch*) had shot his most recent feature *The Zero Years* (2005) was shot on digital video (and later transferred to 35mm) and the director publicly revealed after its release that he was giving up on filmmaking altogether because the work failed to achieve the same success as his earlier work *Singapore Sling* (1990), I naturally assumed the worst. Notably, not only is the film Nikolaidis' celluloid swansong, but also the final chapter in the director's glorious three-decade-spanning 'The Shape of the Coming Nightmare' trilogy (preceding the director's two masterpieces *Evrydiki BA 2037* (1975) and *Morning Patrol*). While not reaching the self-defiling extremes of *Inland Empire* in terms of a great auteur anti-cinematically shitting on his own oeuvre via digitized labyrinthine lunacy, *The Zero Years* is most certainly Nikolaidis' most overtly kitschy and aesthetically flaccid work, thus indicating that digital video can make the work of a seasoned master seem like that of a broke ass amateur with more ambition than artistic prowess. A sort of compulsively claustrophobic dystopian chamber piece set entirely in a government-run S&M brothel that is occupied by four madly melancholy pussy-peddlers of the regrettably sterilized sort, the work was described by Nikolaidis as having an intentionally shitty 'realist' aesthetic as it is not supposed to be depicting some ungodly future but the pernicious present, or as the director stated himself, "It would be a mistake to interpret this as a futuristic story. No matter how harsh it may appear this movie is about the shape of things that are already here and established, along with the set of things that are just starting to be applied, while we already feel their consequences. Therefore, the attitudes of the actors, the camera frame, decoupage in general as well as the light, must all provide for the particular atmosphere of the movie, yet they must move within entirely realistic

levels.” Indeed, I would be lying if I did not admit that *The Zero Years*, not unlike Nikolaidis’ greatest works, induces a sort of malignant metaphysical sickness in the viewer that falls in somewhere between melancholia and *weltschmerz*, which should not be a surprise considering it was directed by a man whose first film was titled *Lacrimae Rerum* (1962). Set in a world where forcibly sterilized prostitutes hopelessly dream in vain about having children to the point where they practice changing diapers yet they live their lives in an innately anti-sexual way where their bodies are used for just about everything and anything besides reproduction, *The Zero Years* is ultimately an allegory for the death of the Occident as a work that depicts Greece as a post-industrial toilet inhabited by spiritual and sexual cripples.

After a less than narcotizing and fairly anti-erotic opening montage featuring women fiercely masturbating and people locked in cages, *The Zero Years* introduces the decidedly dejected quasi-protagonist Vicky (Vicky Harris, who previously starred in Nikolaidis’ *See You in Hell, My Darling* (1999)), who has “come all the way from hell” and has just arrived at her new home-cum-workplace at a government-run whorehouse that is rarely frequented by patrons, who are mostly shadowy government figures with serious sexual problems. In fact, things are so bad in terms of business that the girls that live there only sometimes have water and lack a steady supply of food. Upon arriving at the rather dark and ugly dystopian brothel, Vicky first meets Christina (Eftyhia Yakoumi), who is surely the most crazed and hopelessly neurotic of the girls as demonstrated by the fact that she pathologically quasi-‘masturbates’ with one of her breasts while looking outside with binoculars at people she seemingly schizophrenically believes are stalking her. The leader of the bordello is the eldest member of the group and she goes simply by the name ‘The Leader’ (Jenny Kitseli of Nikolaidis’ *The Loser Takes All* (2002)). The leader is unquestionably the most forlorn of the group as demonstrated by various suicide attempts which include slitting her wrists with a straight razor in a bathtub. The youngest and most naively hopeful of the girls is ‘Maro the Whip’ (Arhontissa Mavrakaki) who incessantly fantasizes about having a baby, even though she is well aware that she, like all of the brothel babes, is sterile. Undoubtedly, Maro’s delusions of motherhood are partially induced by the fact that her water regularly breaks and she suffers ‘projectile miscarriages.’ To fund money for the child she will never have, Maro regularly steals money from the group that she stashes away. Maro cannot have orgasms, but she is proud of the fact that every dirty man that she comes into contact with wants to defile her. In terms of her personality and behavior, Maro seems like the ugly extreme of contemporary toxic femininity as an insanely impulsive chick that probably suffers from a nasty case of borderline personality disorder that is only compounded by her comorbid nymphomania. Ironically, despite her glaring psychological problems, Maro is indubitably the sweetest of the girls, though when one of her chick comrades dares to draw a mustache on her icon of Mother

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Mary, she is thrown into an angry and violent rage. Unlike virtually all of the other women at the brothel, Maro is hardly cynical and has yet to completely lose faith and hope, but the viewer assumes it is only a matter of time before she becomes just as metaphysically dead as her friends.

Notably, the brothel has a sort of bureaucratic 'Supervisor' (fittingly played by Michele Valley, who played the eponymous lead of *Evrydiki BA 2037*) who makes sure the girls are turning enough tricks and bringing in enough dough. When the Supervisor mentions the fact that Christina did not service a single customer during the entire month, the Leader covers for her by claiming she engages in threesomes involving Maro (of course, considering that Christina seems like a crazed cunt of the carpet-munching sort, the Leader's explanation seems totally plausible). To give her a sort of therapeutic release, the Leader regularly smashes raw eggs on Christina's rather small bare breasts. As assumed punishment for her half-ass work habits, an invisible entity with a foul smell that is assumedly unleashed by the government violently rapes Christina in front of the other three women in an unsettling scenario in the quasi-supernaturally sleazy spirit of Sidney J. Furie's *The Entity* (1982). When these bizarre incidents of phantom sexual pillaging occur, the women calmly and somberly state, "The children are here again," as if they are totally used to witnessing and/or experiencing such bizarre and inexplicable phantasmagoric rape scenarios. When the Leader gets extra violent with a customer sporting a gimp mask and business suit while stating poetically sadistic things to him like, "[You] might as well forget your God down here. God is me, and this. Got it worm? I'm gonna put you in my infected juices... Empty cocoons are all you produce," the fellow is knocked unconscious and nearly dies, so the girls decide to lock him up in a cage and make him their slave. Ultimately, Maro makes the slave her own personal pet and feeds him mush while talking to him about how she is going to have his baby. Needless to say, the authorities eventually come to the brothel looking for the girls but they are far too loyal to one another to say anything.

Unlike the rest of the women in the film, protagonist Vicky once gave birth to a healthy baby girl, as well as a mutant baby no with fingers and nails growing out of its knuckles that was eventually taken by the authorities. In fact, *The Zero Years* features incessant black-and-white flashback scenes of little girls walking through a post-apocalyptic wasteland that seem to hint at Vicky's past life as a mother. Vicky plans to leave the whorehouse as soon as possible and tells the other three girls that they should all reunite at a seemingly imaginary ethereal beach called 'The Sea' (which was also the dream destination of the protagonist of *Morning Patrol*). In fact, Vicky oftentimes daydreams about her and her three new friends living a wonderful life of ultimately intangible happiness and ecstasy at the Sea. When Vicky eventually receives a letter with some important news from one of her friends, she leaves the brothel and says her goodbyes to her discernibly sullen sadomasochistic sisters, but it does not take long for her to

come crawling back because, as she somberly, states, "I'm back because...I looked around for old friends out there but there are none. They're scattered, lost or in hiding...So I didn't get very far." In the end, all four girls and Maro's pet gimp have a sentimental family dinner with one another and while sharing a toast, the Leader happily declares, "I was just thinking how beautiful it is...that we're all back together again." Indeed, simply judging by the bittersweet conclusion of *The Zero Years*, one might assume that the director is a crypto-feminist of sorts of that loves nothing more than the thought of a group of gals bonding as a sort of hermetic sisterhood where stereotypical negative female behavior like jealousy, deceit, and vanity are nonexistent.

A culturally apocalyptic celluloid slumber party from hell set in a Greek diva whorehouse equivalent to the home featured in Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *The Zero Years* ultimately feels like a tribute from auteur Nikos Nikolaidis to the countless barren women and old maids in contemporary Greece and the rest of the Europe. While Nikolaidis was certainly not a right-winger, his patently pessimistic views regarding the death of sexuality and motherhood in Europe are not all that different from those espoused by French New Right figure Guillaume Faye in his work *Sexe et Dévoisement* (2011) aka *Sex and Deviance*. Indeed, for a variety of reasons that range from insane taxes (which absurdly partially go to the funding of the children of large and mostly Islamic illegal immigrant families) to feminist-inspired careerism to the seemingly perennial war among the sexes, women are no longer having children in Europa and the indigenous populations are steadily dying out (the Mediterranean has arguably been the region that has been the most deeply impacted by this perturbing phenomenon, with Greece and Italy having especially low birth rates that signify a suicidal people with no future), but of course the death of motherhood is only one of the major themes of Nikolaidis' film. As the director insightfully revealed regarding the film's importance in terms of his 'The Shape of the Coming Nightmare' trilogy, "In terms of chronological order, this script was conceptualized before both *Euridice BA 2037* and *Morning Patrol*. We are at the decadence of the New World Order. Silence, chemical suppression, state fascism, broken communication, fear and apathy have all been installed for good. That's why the surveillance cameras are not in use anymore... they are no longer needed. Everything is settled." Aside from his misguided statement regarding "fascism" (do any contemporary leftists even know what the word means?!), Nikolaidis' remark certainly does justice to *The Zero Years*, which depicts a society that is so sick that people are fully complacent with their slavery, which is covert and takes both psychological and metaphysical forms yet is nonetheless unmistakable.

Indeed, the characters of *The Zero Years* are the ugly extreme of Nietzsche's prophecy of the anti-Faustian 'last man,' albeit much worse. While the 'last man' is at least comfortable in his pathetic passivity, the women of Nikolaidis' film

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live in virtual sexual servitude yet are still too pathetically passive to fight back in any meaningful way with their enslavement of their customers arguably just being an extension of their eccentric erotic dysfunction as melancholic madams of sadomasochism. After watching the film, I could not help but think that Greece certainly needs political parties like Golden Dawn lest the ancient nation completely succumb to its own suicidal decadence. After all, the dying Greece of today is not the result of some imaginary "fascism" as described by Nikolaidis, but the sort of neo-liberal nihilism that has been eating away at the soul of Europe after the Second World War. While nowhere near as artful and intricate as the first two films in Nikolaidis' dystopian trilogy, *The Zero Years* was certainly a fitting way to conclude his strikingly singular filmmaking career as it takes the director's love of female characters to the extreme and demands that the viewer share their misery, thus making for a film that is not only S&M-themed but also demands that the viewer engage in a little bit of sadomasochism, at least on the spiritual level. In terms of the film's highly intimate and even claustrophobic chamber piece oriented approach to female bonding, Nikolaidis' swansong is like a Greek dystopian take on Fassbinder's early masterpiece *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), albeit in a totally idiosyncratic form that manages to create an aesthetically aberrant marriage between the women-in-prison film (WiP) exploitation subgenre and the strange realm of artsy fartsy sci-fi. Indeed, it is not often that one happens upon a fairly recent film that seems like it was directed by a man who loves Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Pasolini's *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975) just as much as Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* (1968) and *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown* (1989), hence why *The Zero Years*, like most of Nikolaidis' oeuvre, will remain a celluloid oddity that is only appreciated by those cinephiles with a special love for cinema where the typically fine line between celluloid trash and high art has been ruthlessly ripped to shreds. While Nikolaidis did not conclude his filmmaking career in the most glorious of fashions (how many filmmakers do?!), he at least stayed true to his highly personalized weltanschauung and aesthetic vision and never succumbed to the influence of dubious gurus or corporations, which can hardly be said of David Lynch, who thrives on the reputation of films he created decades ago and who uses his celebrity as a means to whore himself out to one of the most preposterous pseudo-religions since Scientology.

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Nikos Papatakis (1963)

For whatever reason, the French have always had a deep and undying fetishism for criminals, with sadomasochist sodomite philosopher Michel Foucault, who was himself an undetected criminal of sorts (he intentionally infected other men with AIDS without their knowledge), once describing the crimes of 19th century poet/murderer Pierre François Lacenaire (who was depicted in Marcel Carné's 1945 classic *Les enfants du paradis* aka *Children of Paradise* and was later portrayed as the eponymous subject of Francis Girod's 1990 biopic *Lacenaire* aka *The Elegant Criminal*) as a figure who was responsible for giving birth to a new kind of lionized outlaw (as opposed to the traditional 'folk hero'). In describing the particular archetypal spirits of different European races, German philosopher Oswald Spengler would describe the English as Vikings, the Germans as Knights, and the French as Anarchists, remarking regarding Frogland, "The classical site of Western European revolutions is France. The resounding of momentous phrases, streams of blood in the streets, la sainte guillotine, terrifying nights of conflagration, heroic death at the barricades, orgies of the crazed masses—all these things point up the sadistic mentality of this race." Indeed, as the country that gave birth to the Marquis de Sade and *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*, the French put the Krauts and Brits to shame in terms of aesthetic sadism, so it should be no surprise that many artists, writers, and intellectuals in France became obsessed with two murderous maid sisters, Christine and Léa Papin, who became outlaw heroes of sorts after they brutally killed their employer's wife and daughter in Le Mans, France, on 2 February 1933. Indeed, commie surrealists, filmmakers, philosophers, and literary figures saw the Papin bitches as proto-communist revolutionaries of sorts who were the spiritual mothers of future revolution, with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Lacan, Jean Genet, Claude Chabrol, and even Jean Cocteau, among countless others, paying tribute to the homicidal maidservants in one form or another. One of the most famous works based on the Papin girls is the Genet play *The Maids* (1947) aka *Les Bonnes*, with the novelist's Greek friend Nikos Papatakis—a nightclub owner turned filmmaker who funded and produced the literary outlaw's first (and ultimately last) film *A Song of Love* (1950) aka *Un chant d'amour*—also more or less adapting the story for his first feature *Les abysses* (1963) aka *The Depths*. A shockingly enthralling work about two hysterical homicidal maids of the rather misleadingly cutesy, if not equally crazed, sort who brutally kill their two female masters, *Les abysses* enjoyed 'Succès de scandale' upon its release and even almost caused a full-blown riot at the Cannes Film Festival. A naked melodrama with hyper histrionic acting, Papatakis's film is like a modernist take on Greek tragedy meets Fassbinder on steroids, albeit with a lesbian as opposed to homoerotic subtext. Penned by now-forgotten French avant-garde playwright Jean

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Vauthier in what would be his sole film credit, *Les abysses* is a scornful little film where virtually none of the characters have any redeeming qualities that was clearly designed to strike fear and terror into the hearts of the French bourgeois, so it should be no surprise that spiteful little commie frog Jean-Paul Sartre paid the work a grand compliment with the following words, "The cinema has given us its foremost tragedy." Staring two real-life sisters in the lead roles as lethal ladies whose cuteness is only transcended by their lust for criminality, *Les abysses* is a thrilling, chilling, and subtlety titillating sister act from prole purgatory where the poor kill the rich and are more or less treated as revolutionary saints as a result.

Michelle (Francine Bergé, who starred in Georges Franju's *Judex* (1963) and Joseph Losey's *Mr. Klein* (1976)) and her little sister Marie-Louise (Colette Bergé, who later had a small role in *The Day of the Jackal* (1973)) are maidservants yet they have not been paid for their work in about 3 years and the family that they work for are away and have left them to their own devices, so they have decided to bring senseless destruction to the home. The two sisters are afraid that their bosses are planning to their sell chateau, which will leave them homeless, so they take it upon themselves to make the rather quaint home unsellable by ripping the wallpaper off the wall, putting holes in other walls, making a variety of extravagant messes, hacking up chairs with knives, and putting holes in wine barrels, thus flooding the basement and wasting one million Francs worth of wine. When their bosses end up showing up early and unexpectedly, the girls accuse them of doing it on purpose so as to sneak up on them while committing unholy acts of destruction (indeed, despite their psychopathic behavior, these girls are guilty). Monsieur Andre Lapeyre (Paul Bonifas of *Fanny* (1961) and *Charade*) and his second wife Madame Lapeyre (Colette Régis of Jean Renoir's *La Bête Humaine* (1938) arrive with the former's adult daughter Elizabeth (Pascale de Boysson of Roman Polanski's *Tess* (1979))—a Bressonian figure of sorts that is arguably the most complex character in the entire film—who has separated from her husband Philippe (Jean-Louis Le Goff). Indeed, as her flagrant flirtatious behavior with Marie-Louise demonstrates, Elizabeth is a closest lesbian who has no interest in men. When the Lapeyre family arrives, the two maidservants demand their back wages and food, but they have no money to give, hence why they are planning to sell their chateau in the first place. Due to her undying love for Marie-Louise and her delusional liberal mentality, Elizabeth even attempts to beg her father and stepmother not to sell their house, but her efforts are in vain.

After Madame Lapeyre tells the girls to clean the house, they do the opposite by wrecking it and throwing fish at Elizabeth, with Michelle even shouting that she hates her whilst spitefully tossing the slimy aquatic creatures at her boss' mostly kindhearted daughter. Meanwhile, the Madame attempts to convince her husband to fire the girls, but he can't because, as he remarks, "How can I

fire them if I can't pay them? We owe them 3 years' wage," though he does decide to plot his revenge against the maids after realizing that they have ruined all of his wine, which the prospective buyers of his home house were planning to pay him good money for. After little Marie-Louise collapses while doing 'work' (aka wrecking the house), her sister Michelle accuses Madame Lapeyre of being inhuman and trying to kill her sister. Eventually, Michelle makes the following threat to her bosses (though she only says it to herself): "This is the last straw. To you, I'm just a maid. I wasn't born to empty garbage cans...I don't enjoy soiling myself in your filth...stepping in your muck...or emptying Monsieur's spittoon. You cannot forget we are maids...but...you'll see, strange things will happen." Indeed, being the elder of the two sisters, Michelle is the dominant one and does not think twice about smacking her little sis across the face for the most minor of infractions (i.e. giggling). When Madame Lapeyre once again attempts to get the girls to do some work, Michelle refuses and makes the rather absurd claim, "This is our property! We are no longer your servants. Bitch! You Bitch! Get out of here! You owe us 3 years' pay [...] We are here legally as co-owners." Of course, as a bitter old bitch, Madame Lapeyre makes for the perfect nemesis to Michelle, retorting to the malefic girl with the rather snide remark, "You're trying to ruin us. You damaged everything on purpose...You unplugged the wine. You cost us a million francs...You deprived animals. I don't dare say what I really think." Desperate to get the maids off her back, the Madame attempts to reconcile with the girls and offers them enough money to buy a 'chicken home' on the Lapeyre estate, but the girls are greedy and they want everything, so Michelle rejects the offer. When Elizabeth flirts with Marie-Louise at the dinner by caressing and complimenting her "artistic fingers," Michelle becomes severely agitated, so to appease her sister she spits her food in the Lapeyre girl's pretty little face. After dinner, Marie-Louise and Michelle stalk Elizabeth outside and the former accuses her of being a lesbian, hatefully stating, "It's the Holy communion you're after...That's what you want, you pervert!" After calling her a dyke, Michelle holds Elizabeth and forces Marie-Louise to violently beat her, which she does with gusto. Despite the emotional and physical brutality she has just received at the hands of the two maids, Elizabeth attempts to kill Michelle with kindness by remarking, "Michelle, I think you're only wicked on the surface" and offering to split the house with the two girls if her father dies (since Madame Lapeyre is not her real mother and she signed a prenuptial agreement, Liz inherits everything if her father dies) because, as she sentimentality states, "That way we could always be together." Of course, their relationship is not even going to last the night, as Michelle has murder on her mind.

When Madame Lapeyre discovers her stepdaughter Elizabeth's plan to split her inheritance with the two maids, she accuses the trio of plotting her hubby's death. After hearing of his daughter's dubious plans, Monsieur Lepeyre decides to smack his daughter Liz around. Towards the end of the film, Elizabeth's ex-

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husband Philippe, who is a swarthy fat cuckold of a candy ass toad, arrives with the couple that plan to buy the Lapeyre home and Michelle and Marie-Louise immediately begin attempting to sabotage the sale, telling the prospective buyers the home is infested with termites and that the owners are evil slave-drivers. When the two 'unconventionally sexy' sisters decide to put on their maid outfits for the first time in the film, the buyer's laugh their asses off in a rather cruel fashion, as the girls have expressions on their faces that scream of meekness and abject degradation. While the girls attempt to serve the hosts, they fail miserably as they cannot even successfully fill up cups with coffee without spilling it on everyone. The last straw for Michelle comes when Elizabeth touches Marie-Louise's skirt, as the crazed cutie does not take too kindly to girls touching her little sister's leg, so she attacks the Lapeyre girl from behind like a rabid monkey, cannibalistically bites her on the throat, and begins stabbing her repeatedly in the gut with a butcher knife in a scene that, in terms of pure visceral violence, puts the iconic shower scene in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) to shame. While Michelle savagely slaughters Elizabeth, perennial follower Marie-Louise picks up an iron and brutally beats Madame Lapeyre to death with it. After finding the two women's corpses, the prospective buyers and Elizabeth's ex-husband Philippe accuse Monsieur Lapeyre of causing the deaths. While Philippe hatefully berates Monsieur Andre by calling him a vile and weak coward, the buyer says to him, "Your stupidity caused their deaths. You are the real murderer. You poor fool." In the final scene of the film, Monsieur Lapeyre, Philippe, and the buyer and his wife stare directly into the camera rather intently. The film closes with the following epilogue: "In late fall, 1933, in the town of Le Mans, France, the Sisters Papin were tried in the court of Assises. They were adjudged guilty of murder and sentenced...The elder sister to death, the younger to imprisonment. Yes...The record shows that the court itself raised the question: "Who Is Truly Guilty Here?"

While *Les abysses* attempts to portray the two murderesses as victims who were provoked to kill due to the exploitation they experienced at the hands of their employer, the film ultimately made me go so far as to reconsider slavery, as the maidservants were so innately idiotic, dangerously compulsive, and insanely irrational in their nonsensical and ultimately nihilistic actions that there is no way that they could run their own lives and are thus better off if someone else, even if a family of banal boobeoise bastards does it for them. Indeed, the film also unwittingly demonstrates that slaves are typically more brutal, needlessly cruel, and callous than their masters and it is not simply due to their deep-seated desire for revenge, but also because they have no experience with power and thus abuse it, hence why they go all the way and kill their bosses in a fit of homicidal fury. While I cannot say that I have studied the crimes of Christine and Léa Papin closely, judging solely by *Les abysses*, I think it is nothing short of patently pathetic that anyone would consider the two sisters heroes, be they

working-class or otherwise. The 'Les abysses' of the film is in the Nietzschean sense and is taken from a reference made by Elizabeth Lapeyre to Michelle, with the following obscenely overused 146 aphorism from the German philosopher's work *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) more or less describing the two murderers' predicament: "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you." Undoubtedly, *Les abysses* has had some influence on French culture, as Joël Séria's excellent artsploitation flick *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971) aka *Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal*—a work very loosely based on the Parker–Hulme murder case (which also inspired Peter Jackson's 1994 film *Heavenly Creatures*) with lesbian undertones—seems to be a modernist reworking of Papatakis' film. In some ways, Czech auteur Věra Chytilová's classic *Daisies* (1966) aka *Sedmikrásky*—a work about two exceedingly moronic counter-culture-brainwashed chicks that have an affinity for wasting food and destroying other peoples' homes—seems like a parody of *Les abysses*, albeit with the two anti-heroines rightfully dying in the end. Of course, Jean Genet's take on the Papin sisters story would be cinematically adapted by the British director Christopher Miles in 1975 under the title of *The Maids* in a film starring Glenda Jackson and Susannah York, but this work seems quite tediously tame when compared to Papatakis' pernicious little psychodrama, though it is certainly worth checking out. Rather startlingly enthralling and morally dubious for a work of its time, *Les abysses* is a rare piece of 'revolutionary melodrama' that goes all way and is rarely plagued by the commie con of moral self-righteousness, as Papatakis may have attempted to paint the two deadly dames as victims, but there is also no question that both girls are quite deranged. Predating the May 1968 events in France where a series of Trotskyite student protests sparked the striking of 11,000,000 workers (more than 22% of the total population of France) and almost caused the collapse of French President Charles de Gaulle's government by half a decade, *Les abysses* ultimately makes the working-class struggle seem a lot more romantic than pedantic pinkos like Jean-Luc Godard would later portray it. Indeed, *Les abysses* is sort of a wonderfully aberrant missing link between classic French Quality Cinema and the French New Wave and is thus of interest as both a piece of French cinema history and as a heretical study in class relations and fucked female psychology.

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GLORIA MUNDI

Nikos Papatakis (1976)

Despite their professed love of freedom, humanism, equality, and liberation, it oftentimes seemed that far-left European filmmakers, especially of the Mediterranean persuasion, of the late-1960s/1970s had a special affinity for perversion, sadomasochism, hatred, and vulgarity, with Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) representing arguably the apex of such highly (pseudo)intellectualized aesthetic savagery, though Bernardo Bertolucci, Liliana Cavani, and Marco Ferreri, among countless other auteurs, did their part as well to turn cinema into a form of terrorism. Of course, for every Pasolini or Ferreri flick, there were also films by somewhat lesser known but no less subversive auteur filmmakers like Alberto Cavallone (*Spell – Dolce mattatoio* aka *Man, Woman and Beast*, *Blue Movie*), Salvatore Samperi (*Cuore di mamma* aka *Mother's Heart*, *Uccidete il vitello grasso e arrostitelo* aka *Kill the Fatted Calf and Roast It*), Giulio Questi (*Django Kill*, *Death Laid an Egg*), and Elio Petri (*A Quiet Place in the Country*, *Todo modo*), among countless others, that tested the bounds of celluloid decency, with Greek-French filmmaker Nikos Papatakis (*Les abysses*, *Thanos and Despina*) being a particularly interesting case of leftist artsploitation filmmaking that would certainly baffle today's much softer leftist ideologues. Born in Ethiopia in 1918 where he would eventually join the army of Haile Selassie (a man that later became the supposed 'messiah' of the Rastafari movement) as a teenager in 1935 to fight Mussolini's invasion, Papatakis relocated to Paris in 1939 and soon established himself as a film extra, with his first major film credit being the producer of queer criminal novelist Jean Genet's sole film, *A Song of Love* (1950) aka *Un chant d'amour*. Indeed, homo Genet became infatuated with the handsome hetero, even dedicating his poem 'La Galère' ('The Galley') to "Nico, the Greco-Ethiopian god." Among other things, the filmmaker eventually married French Jewish Fellini actress and possible ancestor of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, Anouk Aimée (*La Dolce Vita*, 8 1/2), in 1951 and acted as a co-producer on John Cassavetes' first feature *Shadows* (1959) after temporarily seeking exile in NYC during the early 1950s due to his disgust with the colonialist practices of the French during the Algerian War of Independence. For his audacious directing debut *Les Abysses* (1963), Papatakis loosely adapted Genet's popular play *Les Bonnes*, which went on to achieve 'Succès de scandale,' so it should be no surprise that the auteur decided to up the ante in terms of aesthetic subversion with his subsequent works, with his film *Gloria mundi* (1976) aka *In Hell* aka *Tortura*—a sort of aesthetically terroristic anti-colonialist piece of meta-cinema that almost totally ruined the filmmaker's career—being easily his most hateful and subversive work to date. Indeed, a film-within-a-film about a considerably crazed neo-bolshevik babe who has been so terribly brainwashed by the (un)holy writ of anti-Saint Marx and his devout dis-

ciples by her communist revolutionary/filmmaker boyfriend that she is willing to literally torture herself and carry bombs around Paris for the commie cause, *In Hell* is also a work that is quite unintentionally incriminating in terms of making far-left filmmakers seem like sicko sadists, as a majorly misanthropic film of the innately sadomasochistic sort that seeks to throw the viewer into an aberrant void of visual and emotional perniciousness and daunting displeasure. A soul-stabbing piece of quasi-art-porn agitprop steeped in nihilism, emotional and political hysteria, and incessant anti-erotic nudity, the film features women intentionally burning their breasts with cigarettes in what is sort of a warped form of method acting, a French officer shoving a glass bottle into the naughty bits of an Algerian 'freedom fighter' (aka terrorist), and an Algerian belly dancer who can pick up and open bottles with her Islamic cooch. A damning depiction of an unseen filmmaker who coerces his actress/girlfriend/baby mama/slave/disciple into literally torturing herself while rehearsing for a film in limbo that will probably never be finished about the torture of Algerian terrorists by purported frog fascist imperialists, *In Hell* is a work that ironically portrays the filmmaker as a torturer, terrorist, misogynist and demented debaser who demonstrates his cowardice by using women to carry out his dirty work, as well as a film that portrays communists as bourgeois posers with too much time on their hands, thus making it seem quite inexplicable that it was directed by a staunch left-winger like Nikos Papatakis. Featuring Papatakis' then-wife Olga Karlatos in the lead role as a lovelorn actress who electrocutes her own genitals to appease her degenerate boy toy, *In Hell* is undoubtedly one of the most troubling cases of life imitating celluloid art and vice versa ever made.

Algerian-born actress Galai (played by Olga Karlatos, who appeared in work ranging from Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* aka *Zombie* to Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* to the musical *Purple Rain* starring Prince) is a fanatical woman with an unhealthy affinity for revolutionary politics and acting, but her biggest and most deleterious obsession is her filmmaker/revolutionary boyfriend Hamdias, who, although hiding out in some undisclosed location, still manages to keep his girlfriend/actress under his complete and callous control via audio recordings and phone calls. Galai incessantly studies audio tapes given to her by Hamdias that she uses as a guide for acting and terrorist activity, as she wants her boyfriend to recognize her sacrifice as both a lover and freedom fighter and she is willing to do just about anything to obtain his respect and acceptance. During the first couple minutes of *In Hell*, Galai practices screaming while suffering inexplicable torture by giving herself real electric shocks to her nipples and genitals while sitting in a bathtub. She is also not shy about putting out cigarettes on her breasts, which are covered with a number of nasty burn marks and scars. Galai's hope is that by successfully doing whatever Hamdias demands, she will be united with him and their lovechild. When Hamdias becomes disappointed with Galai's completely genuine screams of pain and berates her over the phone

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with the following words, “Shut up! A real terrorist doesn’t scream as you do! You scream like a slut who likes it! This is not a brothel! This is France! You behave like the scum that you are, you and the race you come from!” the little lady naturally has a bit of a freakout of sorts and complains to her boyfriend, “I almost stripped my own flesh to rehearse your scenes. Look what you’ve reduced me to! I’m full of blisters. You’ll end this film Hamdias... You’ll end it, one day.” Indeed, Galai takes method acting to new extremes and she has the unflattering battle scars to prove it. When Galai meets up with a prick of a producer named Raftal (Roland Bertin) about funding the rest of the film she and Hamdias are working on, the money man tells her that her boyfriend is a negligent father and “madman” who absurdly puts his energy into politics when he does not even have food to eat.

Indeed, Hamdias is working on an arthouse work set over a two decade period about the torture of Algerian female terrorists and he is proud to admit that his film has no story, nudity (although it does feature nudity, albeit of the anti-erotic sort), nor myths, hence why Raftal will not produce the work as it will not make him any money. Raftal convinces Galai to show him her tits by tricking her into thinking he might give her an acting role in an upcoming film, but instead, the only thing he gives her is a cigar burn on one of her breasts. Clearly deranged and a seasoned master of masochism, Galai merely laughs when Raftal burns her as she is far too desensitized as a result of Hamdias’ incessant abuse to give a damn about such an insignificant injury from such an insignificant man. Later that day, an exceedingly paranoid guy with long hippy hair named Torres, who is a member of the same terrorist cell as her boyfriend, comes by Galai’s apartment briefly and gives her money, but he also accuses her and Hamdias of working for the CIA. Indeed, Torres is pissed that Galai has a bomb that she is carrying around in her purse and speculates that she and her boyfriend are part of an elaborate CIA plot to bring down the communist group and he even threatens to ‘neutralize’ Hamdias. Later on, Galai receives a letter from Torres’ terrorist cell claiming that she has jeopardized the entire group with her erratic behavior and that she will be ‘eliminated’ if she does not get rid of her explosives in two hours. Hopelessly devoted to her lunatic lover, Galai opts for keeping the explosives and ditching her apartment. When Galai visits her boyfriend’s cinematographer, he demands that Hamdias must choose between being either a filmmaker or international terrorist, but the revolutionary auteur does not see any difference between the professions. Galai eventually gets the bright idea to hide the bomb at a Catholic Church, but when she asks the priest, he violently kicks her out and condemns her for making a “provocation under God’s roof.” Under Hamdias advice, Galai tries to seek shelter with her boyfriend’s sculptor/terrorist friend Naki (Mehmet Ulusoy), but he knocks her out and tries to rape her but vomits instead because he is so repulsed by the cigarette burns on her bosoms. After shoving some cash down her panties, Naki gives the following

rant against his ex-buddy Hamdias: “he wants blood, violence, armed fighting. In May ’68, he had the dance in the streets, the dance of death. Revolution! Let’s take on the immigrant workers. The only ones who can get mobilized by despair! He is not only imbued with utopias, he’s also a fool! We need to be coherent, he said, if you’re a revolutionary of art then you must be in politics too!” After bashing Galai’s beloved Hamdias and refusing to hold her bomb, Naki is of course snidely berated by angst-addled actress, who states, “Sometime communist, sometime anarchist [...] How do you justify your cowardice?” Indeed, there is no question about it, Galai is the toughest character in the entire film, even if she is an emotional train-wreck, as she has the power of (un)love on her side.

After bitching out Naki, Galai goes on her merry way and heads to a private screening of the footage from the unfinished film she and Hamdias are attempting to find funding for, but little does she realize that a bourgeois bitch named Marsanne (Christiane Tissot) has hatched an elaborate trap and is planning to kill the filmmaker there. Indeed, Marsanne is a disgruntled lover of Hamdias who is brainwashed by feminism and wants to get even with her ex-lover, who she accuses of treachery, even though she is apparently still in love with him. When she arrives at the screening, which takes place at a fancy mansion inhabited by rather wealthy left-wing ideologues, Galai is given some elegant clothing to wear by Marsanne in an act of seemingly unlikely kindness. Of course, Marsanne is merely wearing a mask of pseudo-civility, as she soon begins showing her true self by talking trash about Hamdias, even describing him as a “phallocentric Pygmalion” who pretends to be motivated by his desire for “freeing colonized people” yet is against the so-called “de-colonization of the woman.” Naturally, at this point, Galai becomes quite agitated by the negative remarks made about her boyfriend/torturer and begins to quote Hamdias’ revolutionary writings word-for-word as if she is some sort of commie automaton on overdrive, so Marsanne calls her an “under-educated revolutionary,” among various other not so nice things. When another guest at the screening remarks about “the clitoris’ submission to the penis,” Marsanne responds with the following venomous and vulgar words, “We live in an age where an irresistible movement towards community happiness has come to life. Well, I’ll reassure you, little reactionary parrot: a cunt receiving dick or a dick faring her well, once they’re washed they’re like new!” At this point, Galai has lost all semblance of sanity and yells to Marsanne and her friends, “We can’t stand proletarian pseudo-bourgeois any longer! End with civilization. We are ill with dogmas and dogmatisms plagued by liberating pseudo-libidos leprous with ideological colonization, liberalism, imperialism, and Stalinism...infected with neo-Christianism and neo-spiritualism and eaten away by Freud’s disease and the cancer Fascism and social bourgeoisie! You’re all syphilitic! Consumptive! Rotten,” and then proceeds to smash a TV screen. After all of the drama begins to cool down, Galai, Marsanne, and the rest of the

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guests finally get around to seeing the footage from Hamdias' unfinished film, which is about a French soldier who has a forbidden romance with an Algerian belly dancer (played by Galai) who can pickup and open bottles with her vagina. Flash forward two decades later, the French soldier is now an officer who tortures his former belly dancer girlfriend's terrorist daughter (who was a baby in the scenes from two decades before), even shoving a bottle up her vagina to the point where she bleeds profusely from her gash and then loses all consciousness. After the screening, a perverted psychiatrist comes up to Galai and remarks how the film is fascinating because of its supposed "obsession with maternal vagina." Eventually, the psychiatrist loses it after Galai says he resembles Hamdais and attempts to shove a bottle up the actress' snatch, but she has no problem beating up the intellectual weakling. From there, Galai attempts to kill everyone at the screening with her bomb, but it is soon exposed that the bomb in question is not real, so the guests then proceed to gang up on the actress and verbally and physically assault her. In the end, Marsanne and her co-conspirators attempt to get Galai to call Hamdais on the phone, as they have attached a bomb to the phone line that will detonate if the filmmaker picks up, but naturally his long suffering girlfriend refuses to do so. Of course, when Galai arrives at Hamdais' apartment, he is already dead.

Featuring a woman that seems more demonically possessed than Linda Blair in William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) and is like the virtual prototype for Isabelle Adjani's character in Andrzej Zulawski's *Possession* (1981), *In Hell* is certainly not a film you should see if you suffer from a hysterical girlfriend with erratic behavior, as the work might push you over the edge of sanity due to its positively perturbing and unnerving portrayal of a woman under the influence of semi-insanity and lovesickness. Considering auteur Nikos Papatakis was married twice and he clearly subjected his second wife Olga Karlatos to torture while shooting *In Hell*, one can only speculate how autobiographical the film is. Indeed, while watching the work, all I could think about was how it felt like an unintentional parody of filmmakers like Albert Cavallone, who essentially ruined his life and career due to his uncompromising vision as a subversive filmmaker who refused to play by the rules, but it seems that Papatakis was to some degree attacking himself, which is a commendable act for any artist. Featuring references to Luis Buñuel (a *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972) poster is featured prominently during the beginning of the film) and advertised with a quote by Friedrich Nietzsche, *In Hell* is certainly not the exploitation trash that certain DVD companies and gorehounds try to pass it off as nowadays, but of course, like Pasolini's *Salò*, the infamy of the work's aesthetic brutality will always transcend its artistic merit. As far as I am concerned, *In Hell* is more or less the cinematic confession of a uniquely unhinged auteur/revolutionary that may feature a prominent, it not superlatively shallow, anti-colonialist message of sorts, but is really a character study about master and slave relationships (i.e.

auteur and actress + boyfriend and girlfriend) and sadism and masochism.

Unflinchingly anti-bourgeois and extremely critical of far-left revolutionaries and neo-commie terrorists (in the film, the bourgeois and far-left revolutionaries are essentially one in the same), *In Hell* is ultimately in the idiosyncratic 'anti-leftist leftist' tradition of Dušan Makavejev (*WR: Mysteries of the Organism*, *The Coca-Cola Kid*) as a scathing and quasi-scatological critique of the far-left from the far-left, thus making it a work that will probably appeal more to right-wing anarchists/libertines than contemporary pansy leftists, who tend to be rather intolerant people that get offended by mere words (i.e. 'tranny', 'nigger', 'bitch') and certainly could not bear to see a commie comrade have a bottle shoved up her cunt. Of course, more than anything, the film is a work of unflinching celluloid misanthropy that attacks everyone, not least of all 'bobos' (bourgeois bohemians). Of course, *In Hell* did not just offend certain members of the left upon its release; as the film was apparently withdrawn from distribution upon its release because some rightwingers threatened to plant bombs in any theater that dared to screen the film and thus the work would not be screened in a Paris theater again until 2005. I must admit that *In Hell* is my first introduction to Papatakis and at the very least, it has enticed me enough to want to dig up the auteur filmmaker's entire oeuvre. Papatakis may have fought against Mussolini's Guido heroes and professed to be a leftist, but like the fictional filmmaker Hamdias of *In Hell*, he was most certainly a demented dictator of sorts who used and abused people, including his wife, for his art, which is certainly something any serious cinephile can appreciate, whether they want to admit it or not.

-Ty E

PREDATORS
PREDATORS

Nimród Antal (2010)

The substantial realization that we might never get a decent Predator nor Alien revival has been becoming more and more of a cold reality. After the death of Stan Winston, it just appeared that all hope had vaporized along with any honor that might have still been beating in the Predators ruthless hearts. With word of Robert Rodriguez spearheading a continuation/reboot/remake, I began to feel a little more calm towards the concept. After all, it could never be as bad as either of those Alien vs. Predator films, right? Soon word was handed that Rodriguez jumped from the director's chair to producer and passed the project onto Nimród Antal, the director known for directing *Armored*, that mediocre bowel movement only saved by Jean Reno. With a credible "experiment" in showcasing African-American poverty and the trials & tribulations of an honest black worker, could Nimród Antal create a film that is fluent with the mythology and the technology of the Predator mythos? Better yet, can anyone sit through the credits of the film without giggling? *Predators* opens up blindingly fast with a shot of Adrien Brody's face rippling in the wind as he plummets towards "Earth" at what I'd guess to be 125 miles per hour. After regaining consciousness and swearing rather loudly, he begins frantically beating at this alien device on his chest until the chute deploys at nearly 1000 feet before ground leaving him free-falling through the trees and hitting the ground with a wincing crunch. The screen switches to black and the *Predators* title block appears. The opening is not only one of the greatest set ups in action/horror history but shocks the participating audience as well. All three times I've seen this film, after the feature presentation snipe plays, the audience is murmuring and gossiping only to be interrupted by the crude sound of wind resistance and flapping cheeks. Everyone redirects their focus to the screen and remains silent for most of the film, only letting out a hearty chuckle at the comedic relief's more important lines e.g. "Fuck you, space faggot!!" As soon as the cast becomes acquainted with much chagrin, they form an unlikely fellowship and the film hits a very familiar and welcome chord with the paranoia and fear of the unknown that was so arresting in the science-fiction containment odyssey *Cube*. *Predators* in fine-print is the rawest nature of *Cube* injected with *Predators* only the setting is randomly generated by what could have been a similar engine used in *SimCity*. This not only creates a new experience from any Predator film we've seen but ultimately makes *Predators* its own film, not borrowing many likenesses from the sequel and only consisting of nods to the original John McTiernan's action juggernaut and winks to the comics. While the film suffers from the pick-and-kill method of eliminating characters as if they were host to a mundane form of roulette, *Predators* still features enough surprises to keep your mind vastly entertained. It really doesn't matter if you enjoyed the machismo-ill nature of the original

Predator or the street-smart Urban temper tantrum that is Predator 2. If your instinct and taste leads you to either of these two cult favorites then you're in the clear to enjoy the tactful extravaganza that is Predators. If you happen to be a fan of Alien vs. Predator and have no desire to see "boring jungle movies" then you can kindly hit ALT + F4 and do us all a favor. What you and I doubted about Adrien Brody has been proved to be incorrect. As we'd love to doubt his ability in a science fiction action film, Brody assumes the macho hero role as if he'd been built from the ground up with it. Sure, the body mass in Predator can never be superseded by the cast of Predators but our questionably tasting ethnic marinade is created with Danny Trejo as a monster Mexican degenerate, Topher Grace as a weaselly doctor, and several "can't point my finger on it's" as they pickpocket similar roles or unfamiliar, as if there was an alternative. The way Predators is constructed is quite simple; Antal and Rodriguez takes a formula known to work and installs a nature of gusto into this reprisal as to excite the static youth into admiring something that isn't comparable to Modern Warfare or energy drinks by bringing the war and the energy. It's been an exciting year for Adrien Brody. This Oscar-winning actor has had 3 different ranges of characters to cover from Predators de facto miniature ass-kicker to Splice's wimpy deviant and finally to The Experiment's struggling musician/activist who gets himself knees deep in Forest Whitaker's shit. Predators is one of those films that struggles to keep the fans happy while sacrificing some of their dignity in the process. There is no doubt in my mind that this may be second or third to Scott Pilgrim vs. the World for pure, unadulterated fun but Predators will be too much for some die hard fans to chew, especially after learning of extraterrestrial boar-beasts being unleashed on our survivors. Predators is its own solemn entity and I appraise its finesse in bringing a new spin on the tale.

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DE PALMA
DE PALMA

Noah Baumbach* (2016)

Unlike superlatively soulless anti-poets-cum-pop-artists like Quentin Tarantino and prosaically pretentious pseudo-arthouse posers like Darren Aronofsky, who I will always loathe with an unrivaled passion, Brian De Palma (*Dressed to Kill*, *Scarface*)—a virtual deracinated wop Hitchcock, albeit even more materialistic and pathologically-inclined—is a filmmaker that I used to really, really hate but have somewhat warmed up to over the years, in part because I look at him and his oeuvre from a quite different perspective than when I initially judged his work. Indeed, when comparing De Palma to great cinematic artists like Ingmar Bergman and Carl Theodor Dreyer or truly subversive auteurs like Fassbinder and Pasolini, his films seem like shallow exercises in masturbatory technical aptitude and excess-ridden escapism, but when one looks at him like his hero Alfred Hitchcock (who, not surprisingly, came from an engineering background that involved, “mechanics, electricity, acoustics, and navigation”) as a sort of hyper-rational scientific and mathematical-minded nerd of sorts as opposed to an intuitive artist or poet (in fact, De Palma first studied Physics, Math, and Russian in college), his films can be appreciated as sort of insanely immaculately stylized sleaze and the masterful expressions of a corpse-cold megalomaniacal mind; or, in short, the diseased Faustian male mind of modernity. In short, De Palma is a sort of ‘tyrannical technical auteur’ with the virtual mind of an Asperger surgeon (which was his much resented father’s trade) that somewhat curiously got involved in the art of cinema, yet an auteur nonetheless as his entire body of work is riddled with the same obsessive themes/tropes (e.g. perverted voyeurs, slutty/bitchy blondes, antisocial antiheroes, political conspiracy/corruption, etc.) that one would expect from an artist with his own distinct *Weltanschauung*.

While De Palma still makes films, he is clearly well past his prime and has now become, not unlike his American New Wave/New Hollywood buddies like Peter Bogdanovich and especially Martin Scorsese, a sort of prematurely enshrined cinematic hero and legend among young filmmakers that fetishize that era (without question, out of all the modern young filmmakers that are obsessed with this period, Paul Thomas Anderson, who is like the cinematic broad of Hal Ashby and Robert Altman, has been the most successful in terms of capturing its spirit). Undoubtedly, probably the greatest example of this new De Palma hero worship is the hardly-popular documentary *De Palma* (2015) co-directed by fellow mischling filmmakers Noah Baumbach and Jake Paltrow where the eponymous auteur gets in virtual VH1 *Behind the Music* mode and summarizes his entire career in a fairly candid and vaguely personalized fashion that emphasizes his professional highs and lows (yet mostly ignores his failed marriages, children, etc.). Just as Bogdanovich once did the same by promoting the work of older cinematic heroes like Orson Welles and John Ford, Baum-

bach followed in this tradition by not only producing the De Palma doc but also co-producing (with fellow exceedingly emasculated hipster humorist Wes Anderson) the mostly mediocre screwball comedy *She's Funny That Way* (2014). Rather unfortunately, quite unlike Bogdanovich, who certainly paid his dues in terms of cinematic research, these younger hipster filmmakers seem to be way less literate and cultivated than their filmic forefathers so instead of getting something like the classic film text *Hitchcock/Truffaut* (1966) by François Truffaut (which, incidentally, acted as the subject of a 2015 documentary of the same name directed by Kent Jones), we get a sort of less involved documentary equivalent where the filmmaker is never seriously challenged but instead offers a mostly chronological summary of his failures and successes while (rightly) condemning the corrupt industry that oftentimes failed him as a filmmaker. Indeed, as De Palma states in the doc, "The Hollywood system we work in, it does nothing but destroy you. There's nothing good about it in terms of creativity. So, you're battling a very difficult system, and all the values of that system are the opposite of to what goes into making original, good movies." Starting in the underground as someone influenced by everything from static Warhol trash to Michelangelo Antonioni's existential (anti)melodramas and learning the trade by making propaganda for the NAACP and amateur shorts for underground film festivals, De Palma's life has certainly been one long strange cinematic journey so it is not surprising that Baumbach and Paltrow's 107-minute doc feels like the CliffsNotes version of his career.

Aside from a couple exceptions, including *Get to Know Your Rabbit* (1972) and the apparently-uneven commercial sci-fi-horror-thriller *The Fury* (1978), I am very familiar with De Palma's oeuvre and even went to the effort of watching his endearingly crude experimental cinephiliac short *Woton's Wake* (1962), formative meta-horror feature *Murder à la Mod* (1968), and 'avant-garde' split-screen doc *Dionysus in '69* (1970), so I am very well aware that the auteur has a big veiny pulsating hard-on for Hitchcock and, to a lesser extent, Jean-Luc Godard. In fact, De Palma's glaring flaunting of these influences is one of the reasons that I initially found his films to be so outstandingly annoying, as I may be a cinephile but it is hard for me to respect a filmmaker that knows a lot about cinema but very little bit about real-life (not to mention, culture, philosophy, etc.). Yet, as the documentary, which rather fittingly begins with footage from *Vertigo*, reveals, De Palma's personality is indubitably intertwined in his work as he is, not unlike a character from one of his many films, a voyeuristic pervert of sorts that not only played peeping tom on his philandering father, but also broke into his padre's office to get photographic evidence of these traumatic extramarital excursions (not surprisingly, as he alludes to in the doc, De Palma is a mommy's boy). While he does not say it outright, De Palma recognizes he is an exceedingly emotionless prick that, due to circumstances, was forced by circumstance to develop a fighting spirit, or as he explains in a relatively cold and

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collected fashion, “I lived in a family full of these incredible egotists who seemed to be very insensitive about the kind of damage they were doing to each other and my middle brother is very sensitive. I don’t feel that he was powerful enough to stand up to these forces. I used to protect him all the time. He doesn’t have the kind of combativeness that I have. So, it would be like this little kid trying to say, ‘Stop shouting, it’s not his fault.’ And nobody would pay any attention to me and I was basically ineffective, and I became very tough because of that.” Indeed, while De Palma did not get the opportunity to cut up human flesh like his father, he got to cinematically simulate it many times in a highly sensationalized fashion and ultimately project such unsavory fantasies to millions of people from around the world via his fucked films. In short, De Palma’s films, which are big on a certain unnerving soullessness and artifice, are the natural, albeit patently perverted, consequence of the innate soullessness and artifice of suburbia.

In the doc, De Palma makes it quite clear that he was big on babes from an early age and was prone to do stupid things to impress them, including quite characteristically secretly filming an all-female sex ed class. Naturally, the auteur would eventually use his success as a filmmaker to become a would-be pussy-magnet of sorts and this led to three curiously short-lived failed marriages, including his first (and longest) marriage to *Dressed to Kill* (1980) and *Blow Out* (1981) star Nancy Allen (who undoubtedly owes the best roles of her career to De Palma). Not exactly the handsomest or most kindhearted of bourgeois goombah chaps, it is not easy to see why it might be somewhat hard for De Palma—a reasonably educated fellow from a well-off yet dysfunctional upper-middleclass family—to keep a dame, but there seems to be more complicated reasons, namely his obscenely obsessive workaholic loner mentality. Indeed, as the filmmaker proudly boasts in the doc, “That’s the upside of being a loner, for the most part, you can suddenly say, ‘This isn’t working.’” Somewhat surprisingly considering his dorky exterior, De Palma also reveals an alpha-male-mentality when it comes to women and work, even boasting in the doc, “People in your life can be threatened by your intense concentration, your complete immersion in what you’re doing. My true wife is my movie, not you.” Of course, this also explains De Palma’s sheer and utter lack of a knack for the truly romantic despite his flagrant obsession for fine (unclad) female flesh. In that sense, De Palma’s films are about as sexually mature as the sort of slasher trash that he wonderfully parodies in a Psycho-esque fashion at the beginning of *Blow Out*. Undoubtedly, it is also fitting that De Palma’s failed Nicholas Cage vehicle *Snake Eyes* (1998)—a morally confused political-thriller that begins with a bang but fizzles out like lame sex—concludes on a question mark as far as the semi-sleazy antihero Rick Santoro’s romantic interests are concerned. While De Palma might be a sometimes obnoxiously formulaic filmmaker, he’s also somewhat of a realist and cynic that knows nothing in life is guaranteed, especially where love is concerned.

As his incredibly uneven Godardian comedy *Greetings* (1968)—a film even

more insufferably dated than Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967) and *La Chinoise* (1967)—reveals in a rather obnoxious fashion, De Palma is a proud draft-dodger and he even goes so far as to detail his experiences in a shamelessly self-satisfied manner in the doc, remarking with a certain sickening degree of bourgeois chutzpah, "I mean, if you wanted to stay out of the war, and you were a middle-class kid, you could figure out a way to do it. I finally had to go in and I had a letter from a doctor. I took everything to make me allergic, so I could hardly breathe. I was up all night and I was running around, wheezing. They took me right to the psychiatrist. I had to dead stare right at his forehead and talked about my homosexual feelings. I was a communist. I was a homosexual. I was crazy. And I think with my letter from my doctor, that got me out." While I can certainly see why someone would not want to fight in the Vietnam War, De Palma—a rather soft guy that seems like he's never even been in a fistfight—would go on to cinematically heap insult on injury to the young vets of his generation by directing the trying antiwar turd *Casualties of War* (1989) where he uses his privileged position as a famous filmmaker to depict GIs as sociopathic rapist killers of the inordinately ravenous redneck sort (and, of course, it is urban half-Hebrew Sean Penn of all putrid people portraying such a preposterous caricature). Aside from working with rather redundant material on a case that had already been covered almost two decades earlier in a more intriguing and subversive fashion by German auteur Michael Verhoeven's *O.K.* (1970)—a film so controversial that it literally caused the end of the 1970 Berlin International Film Festival after the jury president, overrated Hollywood maverick George Stevens, demanded that the flick be removed, thereupon resulting in the resignations of the festival directors—De Palma's Vietnam War flick is pure sensationalized shit; or, more specifically, grotesquely emotionally manipulative celluloid manure as directed by a shameless draft-dodger that actually dares to shit on men that were considerably less fortunate than him. After all, De Palma's Scarface collaborator Oliver Stone might have some rather retarded political beliefs, but he at least served bravely in the Vietnam War (where he was injured twice in combat) and thus earned the right to direct a film like *Platoon* (1986), which is naturally totally superior to *Casualties of War*. Notably, De Palma would do almost the same exact thing with his all-the-more-insufferable digital diarrhea pseudo-doc *Redacted* (2007). Aside from being audaciously aberrant agitprop of the lowest order, this positively putrid abortion demonstrates De Palma's desperation in terms of attempting to be relevant as a filmmaker as it is found-footage-feces—a popular cheap gimmick at the time it was made—where the auteur discards what he does best in terms of technical prowess. Needless to say, Palma's war films have about as much sincerity and credibility as a serious dramatic film about child sexual abuse as directed by Roman Polanski or Woody Allen.

Admittedly, another reason I used to have a much lower opinion of De

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Palma is because he is responsible for directing the favorite films of wiggers, rappers, and gutter-dwelling gangsters, including *Scarface* (1983) and *Carlito's Way* (1993), henceforth making him responsible for at least inspiring some of the most savage untermenschen criminality of the past couple decades. Indeed, I can remember being in middle school during the late-1990s and noticing that seemingly every single male negro and wigger that I encountered was sporting a *Scarface* t-shirt that was two or three sizes too big with matching saggy pants. In fact, it took me well over another decade to ever to gain the open-mindedness to actually watch the film as I naturally associated it with the worst sort of retarded rabble. Luckily, in the documentary, the viewer discovers that De Palma—a distinguished dork that has virtually nil in common with the ghetto lumpenproletariat that the film inspired—is seemingly disgusted by this phenomenon and refused to endorse it despite the potential for monetary reward, or as he explains in regard to the ultimate legacy of *Scarface*, “A decade or so later, it found its audience with the hip-hop generation. Well, since I’m not a big fan of hip-hop, I knew nothing about it until people basically told me about it. Universal came to me and asked if I would approve a hip-hop soundtrack to *SCARFACE*, and I said absolutely not.” Still, it is rather curious that a sheltered bourgeois boy like De Palma would inspire such insipid savage delinquency, as it reveals a certain sense of primitive sociopathy and emotional retardation. In that sense, it is no surprise that De Palma always fails miserably when it comes to depicting drama. Despite his seemingly lifelong covert philo-semitism (aside from once being married to Jewess Gale Anne Hurd and having a daughter with her, De Palma’s virtual autobiographical stand-in in *Greetings and its 1970 sequel Hi, Mom!* is a swarthy anti-white degenerate would-be-pornographer named ‘Jon Rubin’), De Palma has mostly shied away from PC bullshit as demonstrated by the rabid anti-wop rhetoric of Sean Connery’s heroic mick cop character Jimmy Malone in *The Untouchables* (1987) and the various unflattering racial caricatures featured in *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1990), including an evil Hebraic district attorney that opportunistically uses an interracial hit-and-run case to help further his re-election. Of course, it also goes without saying that De Palma has also deeply offended various LGBT authoritarian types over the decades with his depictions of trannys and lesbians in films like *Dressed to Kill* and *Passion* (2012). One also cannot forget that De Palma has mostly been an equal-opportunity-hater when it comes to the so-called fairer sex, as you arguably won’t find a film with a more unflattering depiction of horny high school girls than his classic Stephen King adaptation *Carrie* (1976). Even in his later failures like *Femme Fatale* (2002) and *The Black Dahlia* (2006), De Palma manages to seamlessly create an association between feminine beauty and unbridled sociopathy, as if femininity itself—or at least femininity in its most physically fine and statuesque form—is innately deadly and destructive, but I digress.

Interestingly, in an interview with Joseph Gelmis featured in the book *The*

Film Director as Superstar (1970) conducted when De Palma was a virtual unknown, the then-young-filmmaker would confess, "Godard's a terrific influence, of course. If I could be the American Godard, that would be great." Of course, De Palma, who is not even in the same universe as Godard in terms of artistic and cultural literacy (in fact, I would argue that there is more references to high kultur in an obscure Godard flick like *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (1991) than in De Palma's entire oeuvre), would inevitably take the virtual opposite route, which he foretold at the very end of the same interview when he stated in regard to his next film, "It's probably going to be a Hitchcockian suspense movie, which I think will be good for us. I'd like to try a change of pace and concentrate on a technical, stylistic exercise. I'm interested in things like split-screen and 3-D. I'd like to work in a different form for a while. I wouldn't mind doing something like *PSYCHO* the next time, something that reprieves me from the political and moral dilemmas of our society for a while." Needless to say, I do not think it is a coincidence that mechanical-minded De Palma ended up a successful Hollywood filmmaker and the rather mercurial Godard would eventually isolate himself into increasing esotericism that undoubtedly reached its zenith with the 8-part avant-garde video project *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998). After all, while Hitchcock—a fairly literal-minded perfectionist that was rarely genuinely poetic—merely continued to master his craft throughout his career as if he was simply focused on directing a different version of the same exact film, Godard has never stopped evolving as an artist to the point where it has had a dubious impact on his career and left him completely isolated. Of course, De Palma's evolution (or lack thereof) as a filmmaker could not be more different from Godard's, thereupon making the French auteur's early influence on the Hollywood filmmaker seem almost absurd on retrospect.

While there are many criticisms that can be made against De Palma and his films, I think it is safe to say that he is Hitchcock's greatest and most ambitious heir, as he has cleverly utilized some of Big H's greatest tools and techniques and taken them to their natural degenerate conclusion, at least in his greatest films like *Dressed to Kill*. Compared to Hitchcock's Australian disciple Richard Franklin (*Patrick*, *Psycho II*), who undoubtedly made some entertaining films despite being somewhat of a hack, De Palma seems like a great master. While one could certainly argue that François Truffaut was the superior filmmaker, I think it is safe to say to De Palma even manages to show a greater innate affinity with his uneven *Vertigo*-esque Schrader-penned feature *Obsession* (1976) to Hitch than the French auteur did with flagrantly Hitchcock-esque *The Bride Wore Black* (1968). Likewise, *Sisters* (1973) might be an obscenely onanistic hodgepodge of hyper Hitchcockian cinematic debauchery that can be accurately described as a glorified slasher, but it still works. Thankfully, De Palma has always given credit where credit is due and has never obscured his influences, even if he probably should have had more eclectic influences. Of course, if you're

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a very literal-minded math/science nerd type that does not understand poetry or art in general, Hitchcock—a virtual cinematic engineer—is probably the most apt filmmaker to steal from as his films were practically created in pre-production and storyboarded to death to the point where the English auteur apparently found the actual directing of the films to be the most boring part. Naturally, in the doc, De Palma constantly references Hitchcock, though the most revealing moment comes when he remarks, “People talk about Hitchcock all the time, you know, being so influential. I’ve never found too many people that followed after the Hitchcock school except for me. Here’s a guy that developed those incredible visual storytelling vocabulary, and it’s sort of going to die with him. And I was like, the one practitioner that took up the things that he pioneered and built them into different forms in a style that I was evolving. It’s like a whole modern form that he created. Having studied a lot of directors and having lived now to practically being 70, you see that your creative periods are in—most directors are in—in their 30s, their 40s, and their 50s. They, and obviously, they can go on and make another 20 movies or 10 movies, but you’ll probably only be talking about those movies they made in their 30s, their 40s, and their 50s. You know, and I’ve always thought Hitchcock was a great example, because, you know, after *VERTIGO* and *PSYCHO*, and you can talk about *THE BIRDS* all you want and all the movies he made after that and then of course, the critical establishment finally caught up with him and started to write about what a genius he was. Except those movies aren’t as good as the ones he made in his 30s, his 40s, and his 50s.”

While I have to disagree with De Palma’s assessment of Hitchcock’s oeuvre (Undoubtedly, I think *Vertigo* and *Psycho* are assuredly his greatest films), the Italian-American auteur seems to have personally found a parallel with his hero in terms of the trajectories of their filmmaking careers. In my opinion, De Palma has not directed a truly great film in well over three decades. Indeed, aside from *Body Double* (1984) being what I would describe as the last great truly De Palmian film, I would argue that the filmmaker’s underrated genre/gender-bending horror-musical *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974) is also superior to anything he has done in the past three decades. Additionally, at best, I see films like *The Untouchables* and *Mission: Impossible* (1996) as not much more than expertly-crafted hack work and De Palma even more or less admits in the doc that he was chasing fame and fortune when he chose these specific highly commercial projects. While De Palma has somewhat gone back to his roots in recent years, including depicting deadly dykes in *Passion* and rather cynical ultra-violence and political corruption in his latest *Domino* (2019), he seems incapable of matching his contemporary William Friedkin with a film as insanely and intoxicatingly idiosyncratic as *Bug* (2006) or as freshly fucked as *Killer Joe* (2011). In that sense, the documentary De Palma feels more like a sort of autobiographical obituary of a filmmaker than a mere career-spanning tribute. Either way,

I hope I don't live to see the day when such a film is made in honor of Noah Baumbach or his shabbos goy compatriot Wes Anderson (indeed, it is no exaggeration for me to say that De Palma is easily Baumbach's most entertaining and least insufferable film). Compared to documentaries on European arthouse auteurs like Daniel Schmid - *Le chat qui pense* (2010), *Mondo Lux : The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* (2011), Roland Klick: *The Heart Is a Hungry Hunter* (2013), and Fassbinder: *To Love Without Demands* (2015), the documentary certainly feels more superficial and less arty and intimate, yet that also seems somewhat fitting considering the almost clinical filmmaking method and demeanor of its titular subject. In that sense, we should be extremely grateful that Jem Cohen did not direct the doc. I also found it rather fitting that De Palma is a one-man-show and not plagued with the sort of prosaic puffery or pedantic pontificating that typically plagues film docs featuring actors and film historians. I am not sure about De Palma's philosophical influences, but *Thus Spoke De Palma* would have certainly been a more appealing name for a doc about such a cinematically monomaniacal man.

Say you will about deathly dry and deracinated dago De Palma—a weird wop that attended a Quaker school as opposed to a Catholic one—but he has earned his place in cinema history by creating some of the most exciting Hollywood films during the most exciting time in Hollywood history when he could have just as easily degenerated into an autistic basement-dwelling dweeb like actor-turned-auteur Keith Gordon's character in *Dressed to Kill* and today be an elderly virgin that collects action figures as inspired by film franchises created by his more money-grubbing-inclined buddies George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. One must also respect De Palma's lifelong use of split-screen and putting the technique to better use than Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey did in their playfully plodding experimental anti-epic *Chelsea Girls* (1966). As to what makes a real 'auteur,' De Palma provides a simple yet fairly concise answer at the end of the doc when he states, "You make a certain kind of movie because that's the way you see things. And these images keep reoccurring again and again in your movies. And that's what makes you who you are." As to the meaning of an uprooted guido Quaker of the spiritually vacant sort being one of the more interesting mainstream Hollywood filmmakers of his generation, Spengler certainly foresaw the future of art when he wrote, "Two centuries after Puritanism the mechanistic conception of the world stands at its zenith. It is the effective religion of the time. Even those who still thought themselves to be religious in the old sense, to be 'believers in God,' were only mistaking the world in which their waking-consciousness was mirroring itself. Culture is ever synonymous with religious creativeness. Every great Culture begins with a mighty theme that rises out of the pre-urban countryside, is carried through in the cities of art and intellect and closes with a finale of materialism in the world-cities." Undoubtedly, with his hopelessly urban fetishistic post-Christian voyeuristic gaze,

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De Palma has—whether he knows it or not—artistically embraced the twilight of the Occident.

Undoubtedly, De Palma's films represent—in their nonchalantly nihilistic depiction of sex and death and sheer and utter lack of authentic pathos despite constant depictions of extreme human suffering—this decidedly detached modern materialism where the figurative Nietzschean 'Death of God' has inevitably lead to such pathetic things as spastic scopophilic killers and bourgeois-endorsed performance art that involves negroes raping white women (e.g. the 'Be Black, Baby' segment from *Hi, Mom!*), among other things. Of course, I would argue that *Mission: Impossible* is the sickest of De Palma's films as its popularity reflects the collective cultural, artistic, and spiritual bankruptcy of the majority population (whereas, despite its degeneracy, a dreary De Palma flick like *Blow Out* at least recognizes an innate spiritual sickness of sorts that ripples throughout society). Likewise, *Vertigo* feels like a deeply spiritual film when compared to the metaphysically barren landscapes associated with virtually all of De Palma's films. While the documentary does not make the case for De Palma being a sort of hopelessly spiritually despoiled M. C. Escher of genre filmmaking (which is how I see him), it does (largely unwittingly) demonstrate that the auteur—an anti-authority type that, somewhat paradoxically, has done quite well for himself working within the system—is a sad symptom of his era and his films are a symptomatic of his own sicknesses, or as the filmmaker states himself, "Most of my movies are about megalomania and guys that live in the insulated universes and the crazy things that happen within those insulated universes, which is something that continues to fascinate me." In the age of technics, De Palma—a cold and almost creepily calculating character that seems to interpret every aspect of life as some sort of scientific experiment or technical problem to be rationally solved—is the auteur we deserve but probably don't need, as no one, no matter how hopelessly cratter-brained or fiercely philistine, deserves the ungodly horror of living in a morally and spiritually inverted world full of ebonics-literate troglodytes sporting size-XXXL Scarface t-shirts. Still, there's no denying that *Dressed to Kill* is one of the most shamelessly stylish films ever made, not to mention a nice escapist aesthetic antidote to the tyrannical tranny terror that has recently plagued the Occident.

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THE MACHINE GIRL

Noboru Iguchi (2009)

The producers (or whatever) of Meatball Machine and Death Trance, have teamed up again to make another Japanese splatterpiece in order to rocket their names into the greats of cult cinema. Well, they just might have made their mark. The Machine Girl's trailer debuted on the Internet and instantly fans began to gobble it up. Fans of Tsukumoto will indeed see some clever depictions of his creative ideas. Ami is a popular high-school basketball star who is raising her younger brother by herself. When his brother is a casualty of bullying, she takes revenge to the next level and dons a machine gun attachment ala Ash from Evil Dead. Throughout the casual hour-an-a-half run time, Noboru Iguchi does pull out all the stops and steals the limelight from other absurd bizzaro Japanese films. The film follows the rough-and-tough paper thin stereotype of having a stronger sister. Her brother is a kind-hearted wimp who bows down to the average feminist. This in turn, leads to his pitiful death and her family's name squashed even more. The current Japanese cinema loves to portray their citizens as crazed perverts who all overact to the point of slow retardation. This being the only real problem i had with the film. With that in mind, that is the only concrete problem i have with Asian cinema. In example, that really annoying "HWWWWWUUUUHHH" noise they make whenever they are surprised before death. This is evident in Battlefield Baseball, Versus, Meatball Machine, Death Trance, etc. etc. This sound effect is demonstrated many time in The Machine Girl. The effects in this film, as you might have seen in the trailer, are crazy, out-dated, and juicy. Various assortments of weapons are displayed including arm-chainsaw, machine gun, cyber shurikens, poles, rods, and the bland katana. Needless to say, the film owes much of its charm to its incredible cast of crazy characters. A team of high-school ninjas resemble the Power Rangers in the movie. The social commentary is a bit annoying and is about as redundant as was presented in this years Rambo. Preening school girls and socially inept parents declare their pacifism and are later seen attempting to slice and dice our poor anti-hero. Indeed, she is a murderer, but she is a damn sexy one at that. A word of advice; Don't get attached to any certain limb in this film. I mean, you can express your adoration for a leg, but don't let it get too sincere. I promise you, that specific body part will be ripped or cut off in some crude way. The Machine Girl is the most fun i have had with a film in a long while. A messy biopsy couldn't be this much fun.

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RAPE /& DEATH OF A HOUSEWIFE
RAPE /& DEATH OF A HOUSEWIFE

Noboru Tanaka (1978) Most films that have to do with rape take the subject on a more visceral approach, adding violence, often revenge, and over-the-top antics. Many of these films are deemed as “exploitation” films. When you have a film like R&DOAH, it seems very genre bending in order to classify it. Its age, quality, and subject matter adhere to the policy of being an “exploitation” film but it is of a new breed. When you hear the title, you think nothing but it being a sensationalistic film using rape as a factor for erotic means or even shock, but Noboru Tanaka’s film is much more than that. The plot follows three young kids and young adults, who have had their brief run-ins with the law but remain to be “good kids”. They are social misfits and are the kids who have had 12 jobs in 2 years time. They frequently try to squirm sex out of hapless females and drink a lot. Sound familiar? It seems some things don’t change. The title alone gives away the ending for the most part. It still must be seen. This film simply was way ahead of its time. This film deserves to be more known for that matter. It was released at the right place at the wrong time. R&DOAH is best described as a mix between Korean gangster film Friend and Clark’s Kids. It’s a foreboding film. You hear the title and while watching, you just wait for the situation to finally unfold. While you forget about it, you soon regain that knowledge and you experience bouts of anxiousness. Getting it over with earlier would be too easy for the viewer. The acting is pretty damn good, the star being Taiko and Emiko. The ill fated couple whose loving stereotypical relationship is one of epic proportions. Scenes will remind you of Blind Beast and then switch to Buio Omega. This film would best be described as a psycho-sexual tale of three friends whose passions are alcohol, women, and the never ending quenching of hormones. The only way to acquire this film is through a website or various traders/torrents. So far, Soiled Sinema is the only website to review this. My thanks go out to Pete Cann for bringing me this film. I only hope that more people take it upon themselves to go see this. This is not “exploitation”. This is life. These are things you feel and exploits you encounter. Sometimes you go to far and sometimes you under appreciate the natural human effort. Watch out for a truly heartbreaking ending/twist near the end credits. What sets this one apart is that this is not about vengeance, nor is it about redemption or forgiveness. There is no deep meaning to be taught other than time heals all things.

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HAUSU

Nobuhiko Obayashi (1977)

Concerning Supernatural horror, my hard exterior has indeed softened up with the viewing of the Asian classics. Hausu is a dreamlike theatrical horror film ripe with goofy humor and marvelous set pieces. Hausu's plot line involves a stuck-up daughter of a successful father. Due to her mother's death, she has clung to her father and has not grown up on her own. When he brings news of his plans to re-marry, she goes in a fit and calls up her Aunt in hopes for their class trip to take place at her house. When she gets a letter back, she rounds up her friends to go, but on the way, the teacher is prevented from going there and must await for the next day. During the stay, these naive girls who fit the mold of an Asian Mystery Inc. begin to notice weird unnatural events occurring and the mystery behind an eerie cat and a timeless melody. Hausu has been compared to the likes of Argento and while I support this claim, I personally believe that Nobuhiko Obayashi succeeded more on a personal level. While *Suspria* was an effective Giallo thriller, it lacked many aspects enough to make it a masterpiece. Hausu takes the dreamy visuals and vivid primary colors and expands on the idea of a theatrical horror film. With painted skies, Hausu might be the most beautiful film I have ever seen. It's obvious that Miike's *Sukiyaki Western Django* got the idea of the beginning from a viewing of Hausu. What makes Hausu so different from any other film is the varying styles of experimentation in it. Several scenes are Green-screened over a creepy painting or a tiled texture. We have tie-dye murder scenes, hungry pianos, and a psychotic cat. In this instance, the cat isn't black, it's white, which is a very clever change. A cat endowed with white hair will bring about the downfall of all Oriental women's futures. Many kaleidoscopic effects are used to manipulate your cornea's into hallucinating yourself. If there is such thing as a film being a psychotropic drug, this is it. Scenes are spliced over top each other and some are even played back that results in a hilarious cacophony of "remixes" (Oddly reminds me of a Chipendale illustration) The undertones in the film are fit for women only. There are only a couple males in the film and they are played by mutton-chopped apes and goofy retards. The emphasis on "Death to any woman who isn't married" is played out very well and is satisfying to see the genre characters die off. There's the Kung-Fu star, the glutton, the vain fashionista, the brainless photographer, and several others. The others had no memorable quirks other than doing the dishes and cleaning the floors (Misogyny?). Hausu is the most original film I ever seen and deserves the title of "Phantasmagoric" over any other film that is relatable. Despite its stern approach towards the roles of women, It is a remarkable portrait of a post-WWII Japan with fiery skies. A war-torn canvas has never been so wacky and elegant; Truly a marvelous mix.

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ROLLERBALL
ROLLERBALL

Norman Jewison (1975)

Rollerball is what I consider to be a classic. Not a classic in the vain of such films as Citizen Kane or 2001: A Space Odyssey, but a film entirely on it's own. The "extreme sport" subject might be an incredibly familiar subject in pro and con exploitation films but Rollerball produces an entirely organic spin on the subject. Norman Jewison brought to film what could be the cutting-edge sport of the future, not some trivial game that uses the hybrid of flesh and machine. In this personal future, society isn't glitz & glamour. There's no flying cars or voice-activated refrigerators. Simple fabrics and uniforms breathe life in a game that very well could be with its thought out rule system and view on extreme violence in the media. Rollerball isn't that futuristic game of death to boost ratings - this game is to create a view of futility in individual effort. That is, until Jonathan E. becomes the first man since the halt of the corporate wars to spiral in popularity. Jonathan E.'s character deals with some trials & tribulations and the theme of this film is his rebellion to an evil corporation. His defiance is not one of the explosive types where he - a single man - barges into HQ armed to the teeth with weapons. He has a gentle defiance to him. His unsatisfied smirk the entire movie reads "You're really an asshole...". He is just a man who has lost it all and chooses to fight back with the only way he knows how to. Rollerball is a brave visioning of a new world based on a short story. It's regards towards the future and censorship feels awfully similar to that of Fahrenheit 451. Don't let the year 2018 fool you, this future could be highly possible. In a utopia where nobles are referred to as "Executives", this science-fiction monarchy phases me as being unsettling. I don't think I'd sacrifice much for endless luxury. One scene of drug-addled women taking a gun armed with explosives and destroying the last remnants of nature strikes me in too many senses. This masquerade of humanity is far too disquieting, even for my eyes. Rhetorical female conversations sit upon this film's masterpiece. When women aren't being used as spies or moles, they are viewed as lying and cheating whores. E.'s own wife got taken by an Executive but all the reasons for this personal tragedy do not make it acceptable. Females are often viewed in this film destroying beautiful things with a deranged look of sheer madness. Rollerball is a testament to that myth that women love "bad boys" as they themselves have a stark interest in violence. Rollerball is a classic that fits within it's own confines. It is violent and unflinching and it is the anti-exploitation film to counter the likes of Death Race 2000. I miss the times when social commentary was the film and not a condiment on the side. James Caan plays an amazing performance as his restlessness and inner rage break through his calm exterior. Rollerball is a must-see dystopian piece of 70's cinema.

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MAIDSTONE

Norman Mailer (1971)

Although not exactly common knowledge, by proving that you can get away with and even earn critical and commercial success from creating absurdly amateurish and plot-less films with no editing and starring uniquely untalented drug-addled and appallingly narcissistic non-actors with next to nil talent or charisma, pop (con)artist Andy Warhol—a man whose greatest talent as an underground filmmaker was turning the camera on and off and who took credit for films he did not even direct—inspired a couple popular Jewish intellectuals and literary figures to try their own lot at becoming avant-garde filmmakers. While the films of sapphic Semite writer and feminist cultural critic Susan Sontag (*Duet for Cannibals*, *Brother Carl*)—a loony far-leftist lady-licker who despite once proclaiming, “The white race is the cancer of human history,” directed every single one of her films in the white home continent of Europa, as if the rich cultural legacy would somehow rub-off on her work—are all but totally forgotten, the films of novelist Norman ‘White Negro’ Mailer are slightly better known today, with the Criterion Collection releasing a two-disc box-set of his early films under their sister line Eclipse in 2012 under the title *Eclipse Series 35: Maidstone and Other Films by Norman Mailer*. As one might suspect from the name of the Eclipse box-set, *Maidstone* (1970) is considered Mailer’s ‘masterpiece,’ though it is far from a masterpiece of any sort, though it has at least one thing going for it. Indeed, the film is worth seeing for one reason alone and that is seeing Mailer being beaten up by mainstream actor Rip Torn (*Men in Black*, *Marie Antoinette*) with a hammer in front of his wife and young children in a totally real and unsimulated scene where the actor got mad at the would-be-auteur’s superlatively shitty ‘realist’ directing style. Mailer’s penultimate cinematic work and third feature following the rather poorly directed and largely incoherent works *Wild 90* (1968) and *Beyond the Law* (1968), *Maidstone* is a somewhat autobiographical film where the novelist turned director plays a popular auteur filmmaker who is running for president during a dangerous time when most of the normal politicians have been assassinated. A more ‘bad bad’ than ‘good bad’ work of micro-movie megalomania where Mailer invented an cinematic alter ego that seems to fulfill his own failed political (he made a failed attempt at running for mayor of NYC in 1969 at the urging of feminist Jewess Gloria Steinem), masculine (he boxes and fights in the film) and filmmaking (the character’s filmmaking talents are absurdly compared to Fellini, Dreyer, Antonioni, and Buñuel) fantasies and dreams. Indeed, *Maidstone* is an ‘auteur’ work in the worst sense of the world.

The film opens with a British TV host named Jeanne Cardigan (Jean Campbell) telling Brit viewers how she is going to travel to the United States to follow the seemingly laughable presidential campaign of egomaniacal filmmaker Nor-

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man T. Kingsley (Norman Mailer). To add a sorry sense of substance to an inately incoherent and aimless film, *Maidstone* features various numbered titles to denote chapters, with the first chapter being titled "A Meeting of High Officials." The 'High Officials' sit together in a luxury manor and discuss whether or not Mr. Kingsley is "ripe for assassination." A human 'melting pot' that was spawned from a Russian-born father and a mother of largely Welsh descent with rumored gypsy, Irish, Jewish, and negro blood, Kingsley is as American as a rancid apple pie. Although Kingsley graduated from Princeton with a degree in architecture after receiving a scholarship, somehow he magically became a filmmaker. The High Officials also believe that he is gay (or what they describe as "Greek love"), which one might assume due to the fact he is a swarthy and considerably overweight middleaged man that walks around in leather-fag apparel, including a fascistic leather cap and a matching black leather vest, which he wears with nothing underneath. A filmmaker in the spirit of his Hebraic racial comrade Henry Jaglom, Kingsley/Mailer is a local misogynist who stylizes himself as a feminist, despite the fact that he is prone to viciously attacking women for seemingly no reason at all. While proclaiming to his actresses regarding his films, "I can't believe in making sexploitation films, as they are called. I'm really a very squeamish man, as you'll come to discover. I'm interested in sexuality...rampant and respondent, but also in some taste. I can't bare bad taste. I'll use each and every one of you in any way I can. I will never ask to do anything that will completely violate you. On the other hand, I may push several of you to find yourself in emotional and, dare I say, anatomical situations..." Kingsley is indeed making a sexploitation film of sorts and he is willing to break a woman's self-esteem just for the mere dignified pleasure.

When interviewing a negress for a role, the director states to her in a voice that sounds like it's somewhere in between a black preacher and a frog, "I believe that good acting comes out of tyranny...out of a sense of slavery, you understand? You'll be enslaved if you want to be a good actor." Of course, Kingsley is no less brutal with the blonde Aryan Shiksa babes. On top of telling one Nordic blonde she needs to get rid of her wrinkles, he calls another one a "dumbo" and "a big strong eager peasant" who is only fit to play a "cook for the whorehouse" in his film. After getting another Aryan bimbo to admit she would like to screw a negro and a mestizo, degenerate creep Kingsley gets rather aroused and begins defiling the little lady, even attempting to pull down her panties after randomly starting to makeout with her in an exceedingly repugnant fashion. Of course, Kingsley does not stop there, as he gets French-born Warhol superstar 'Ultra Violent' to fuck a pitch black negro. On top of that, Mailer hangs around black nationalists that hate his guts because he wants to seem 'cool' and 'liberated,' not to mention the fact that he wants their vote. Of course, Kingsley is proud of the fact that he is a scumbag and even goes so far as bragging, "I'm the male equivalent of a whorehouse madame" during a truly stomach-turning Jaglom-esque moment.

When asked by British newscaster Jeanne Cardigan if he is running for president just to please his already inflated ego, the 'messianic auteur' proudly declares, "I am a narcissist by definition. I'm an actor...a director...I'm fascinated with exposing myself to multitudes."

At about the one hour mark of the film, the work degenerates into ludicrously laughable failed celluloid art experiment featuring a variety of spastic yet somehow marvelously mundane montages that Mailer probably thought were moments of pure cinematic genius. During one of these superlatively sorry scenes, newscaster Cardigan falls into what seems to be a rabid state while her tits hang-out her dress and declares her hatred for Kingsley while playing with a bloody baby doll. In what is arguably one of the most mindnumbingly mundane and moronic scenes in celluloid history, footage of people slowly walking in a field like zombies is juxtaposed with audio of a woman moaning during sex. During one of the few highlights of the film a micro race riot breaks out at a ball in a segment misleadingly titled, "The Grand Assassination Ball" featuring Kingsley and his comrades sporting aesthetically vulgar gray suits with matching tophats. After a negro seems to suffer a seizure after attacking a cracker, the ball degenerates into a hippie 'happening' involving the ritualistic burning of American money, braindead beatnik bastards dancing like zombies on PCP to generic psychedelic music, and some dumb drugged out bitch talking about "freedom" and asking people if they are "black or white." In a rather incriminating scene involving his significant other, Kingsley hatefully berates his wife Chula Mae (played by Mailer's real-life wife Beverly Bentley) for ruining his fun (she insults his goofy tophat) and proclaims that it is the first time in 15 years of marriage to her that he has felt freedom.

Of course, Mailer saves the best for last in a segment entitled "The Silences of an Afternoon" that features the (in)famous scene where Rip Torn (playing the role of Mailer's character's brother 'Raoul Rey O'Houlihan') attacks Kingsley/Mailer with a hammer. After hitting Mailer in the head with a hammer, Torn comes out of character and declares, "I don't want to kill Mailer, but I must kill Kingsley in this picture." Indeed, in a film as torturously tedious as *Maidstone* where the actor/director wallows in his own egomaniacal excrement, it is a true, transcendent act of spiritual liberation. Clearly high on some sort of chemical substance, Torn is still cognizant enough to know his actions were warranted, stating to Mailer after giving him a much deserved beating, "I had to do that, you know that" and "The picture doesn't make sense without this, you know." In an absolutely horrendous scenario of unhinged female hysteria, Mailer's wife declares, "I'll kill you" and attacks Torn in a patently pathetic fashion. Of course, Torn probably best sums up Mailer and his cinematic persona when he rhetorically asks the novelist turned director, "You're just a fraud, aren't you?!"

About at the halfway point of *Maidstone*, Rip Torn declares in a jolly face,

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"The acts of the man make the man." By using Torn's logic to analyze the director, one easily comes to the conclusion that director Normal Mailer is a misogynistic megalomaniac who attempts to style himself as what he is not. Indeed, while Mailer portrays himself in the film as a rampantly heterosexual macho stud of the considerably charming and charismatic sort and exceedingly eclectically talented Renaissance man, he comes off in the film as a small effeminate dork and alpha-male of the artistically vacant sort who gets a kick out of venomously berating impressionable young women and filming negro bucks carnally defiling desperate Aryan broads. Mailer's equivalent to Dennis Hopper's epic experimental failure *The Last Movie* (1971), *Maidstone* is aimless semi-autobiographical metacinema at its most sickeningly self-indulgent and I say that as someone whose favorite directors are typically described as "self-indulgent." A mostly pointless film with somewhat of a pay-off in the end, Mailer's film is like the cinematic equivalent of an impotent elderly cripple with diabetes masturbating for about two hours and somehow climaxing in the end in a rather sloppy, self-degrading mess. While I think Mailer is a candy ass kosher pansy who thought he was an alpha-male because he took cheap shots at effeminate rich faggots (e.g. Gore Vidal) and beat and even attempted to kill women (in 1954, the novelist got drunk and stabbed his then-wife Adele Morales twice, puncturing her pericardium, thus resulting in emergency surgery), I will give him credit for including the rather unflattering scene of himself getting beat up by Rip Torn, who was certainly no fine muscular physical specimen, at the end of *Maidstone*.

Interestingly, in a candid interview featured in the book *Film Director As Superstar* (1970) by Joseph Gelmis, Mailer confessed that one of his main interests in film was that it was an artistic medium that could not be conquered by his ostensibly genius Hebraic intellect, or as the writer/director most notably stated himself: "The greatest intellectual pleasure I have is carrying an experience I can't dominate with my mind. Because I come out of a tradition of people who are born to dominate life with their minds. The Jews are the greatest intellectual machines of any species of man on earth. I think that's really the reason, beyond any other, why the Jews are next to universally detested by people who don't understand their fine, war, tender, loving, and forgiving sides. The reason why every farmer alive, why every redneck, instinctively distrusts the Jew is because the Jews are intellectual machines. And they are, you know, more than anyone else. I grew up in that tradition." Indeed, not unlike his equally anti-Occidental racial kinsmen Marx, Freud, Trotsky, Adorno, and Sontag, who all dedicated their careers to undermining the white Christian world, the self-proclaimed "intellectual machine" used his ostensible Judaic genius to defile the white goyim with the Eurypid-pioneered art of cinema as his tool via *Maidstone*, which is nothing but an infantile celluloid jerk-off piece where the aberrant 'auteur' tried in vain to defile everything that white Anglo-Saxon America holds sacred, yet failed miserably as demonstrated by its lack of true cult status as a piece of preten-

tious twaddle that even Mailer fanboys despise. Indeed, when Mailer absurdly described the work as “a revolutionary film,” he meant in the Trotskyite anti-Aryan-goy sense, hence its stereotypical Hebraic hodgepodge of blonde-Shiksa-defiling by vulgar Heeb and negroes, black nationalism fetishism, pornographic imagery thinly disguised as female liberation, loveless sex depicted as ‘free love,’ and kosher cognitive dissonance presented as avant-garde art. Still, I am glad that Maidstone was made, as Mailer’s pathetic beat down during a pansy girly fight has been forever immortalized, which is certainly the next best thing to seeing Trotsky taking a Stalinist icepick to the back of the skull.

-Ty E

TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE
TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE

Norman Mailer (1987)

If a morally retarded wife-beating Hebrew with a fierce fetish for opulent fags, cuckolds, and sinisterly slutty blonde shiksas was given a couple million dollars by his schlock-slinging kosher kinsmen Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus at Cannon Films to make an esoteric anti-Reaganite themed rip-off of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), except set in the homo-friendly Northern WASP historic resort area of Provincetown, Massachusetts in Cape Cod instead of a quaint Southern suburb in Lumberton, North Carolina, it might begin to describe a film as pleasantly preternatural, superlatively silly, preposterously poorly acted, obscenely overwritten, and inexplicably entertaining as the abject commercial and critical bomb that is *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1987) directed by novelist, playwright, and self-described 'White Negro' Norman Mailer. Indeed, somewhat seeming like the noir-ish Northern 1980s equivalent to the Southern Gothic genre as directed by an over-the-hill hipster that had the balls and arrogance to create his own sort of distinct and oftentimes quite obnoxious and pretentious yet nonetheless hilarious Yankee-confederate hybrid slang lingo for the film, Mailer's fourth and final feature has a number of quite glaring similarities to Lynch's masterpiece, not least of all the prestigious presence of half-breed guidette goddess Isabella Rossellini as an unconventional female lead and a melodic original musical score by Angelo Badalamenti, yet the film is actually based on the director's 1984 Dashiell Hammett and Mickey Spillane inspired noir-thriller/murder mystery novel of the same name. Somewhat curiously, despite being one of the rare movies in film history where a novelist actually cinematically adapted his own novel for the silver screen, Mailer had fellow sleazy Judaic Robert Towne (real name Robert Bertram Schwartz)—a screenwriter turned hack filmmaker best known for being Warren Beatty's long-time bitch and for penning Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974) and its mostly mediocre 'WASP versus Jew' themed sequel *The Two Jakes* (1990) directed by Jack Nicholson—touch-up, polish, and revise the film's screenplay, as if the lifelong writer turned cinematic auteur could not master the nuances of his own distinct dialogue and wayward storyline. Although a somewhat thematically subversive cinematic work that demonstrates that untermensch Mailer is unequivocally more degenerate and sexually depraved than the grotesque Judaic caricatures featured in National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's infamous tabloid newspaper *Der Stürmer*, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is undoubtedly the director's most 'accessible' and commercially oriented motion picture. Unlike his three previous features *Beyond the Law* (1968), *Wild 90* (1968), and *Maidstone* (1970), the film is not a preposterously plodding masturbatory pseudo-Warholian vanity piece that seems like it was directed by the auteur over a single weekend while he was tripping on acid and attempting to date rape as many platinum blonde

goy gals as possible, but instead the film is a genre-defiling cinematic abortion of unintentionally absurdist thematic and artistic pretense. While probably not even worthy of being described as a putrid piece of stinking and steaming celluloid excrement, somehow, against all odds, I absolutely loved it. Although featuring none of the insane moments of improvisation of his early films like *Maidstone* where Mailer suffered the grand shame of getting his kosher ass kicked by Rip Torn in front of his entire family, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is indubitably the only film that the auteur has directed that does not have a single dull moment, even though it oftentimes feels like it has the aesthetic integrity of a third rate preppy cocaine equivalent to trashy soap operas like *As the World Turns* and *Dallas*. Indeed, while I absolutely loathe Mailer and everything he stands for and consider distinctly untalented McJew Ryan O'Neal to be easily the biggest flaw of Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975), I cannot help but embrace the film as what I would argue is the greatest "so-bad-it's-good" and "oh-my-God-I-can't-believe-this-exists" film ever made as an autistically directed piece of self-satisfied celluloid sleaze that is so endlessly enthralling due to its startlingly poorly executed acting, ludicrously labyrinthine plot, innately insane and sometimes daunting dialogue, and patently preposterous pathological perversity that it absolutely has to be seen to be believed.

While obviously a sardonic and less than shadowy neo-noir with a hard-on for Hammett and other hardboiled literary trash where the director demonstrates his decidedly schizophrenic some-love-but-mostly-hate relationship with both America and the country's white Anglo-Saxon Christian majority, Mailer somewhat curiously insisted that *Tough Guys Don't Dance* was first and foremost a horror movie. Indeed, as Mailer stated in the featurette *Norman Mailer in Provincetown* (2003): "TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE is a horror film. It's special because it's done in the style of a tough guy murder mystery. It's built on a number of premises that are basic to horror: offbeat characters, a brooding landscape, a kind of edgy humor, and a considerable amount of violence that's loose in a town. I think those elements can build terror as effectively as special effects. I would even go so far as to say that, if a strange and sinister fever is loose in the pleasure-loving classes of America, this film is ambitious enough to look to be the embodiment of that fever." Of course, by "pleasure-loving classes of America," Mailer means tall, blond(e), and slender Aryans goyim, which he cinematically portrays as intricately stupid, hyper hypocritical, idiotically impulsive, and crude charming objects of confounded fetishistic worship, as if the auteur is infatuated with Nordic Americans the same way some majorly misguided degenerate whites are infatuated with the inflated self-esteem, delusions of grandeur, and complete and utter lack of self-consciousness of famous negroes like Kanye West and Snoop Dogg. Though, make no mistake about it, the film is certainly Mailer's own anti-Aryan kosher celluloid equivalent to *Jud Süß*, as a film where Mailer attempts to less than subtly blame America's descent into collective psy-

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chopath consumerist greed on a curse brought over by European settlers. More specifically, Mailer depicts 'Hell Town' (aka Cape Cod) as a cryptically evil ex-outlaw colony that is still haunted by the legacy of the murderous pirates and whores that once governed the region.

Forget the sort of masters of usury and corporate raiders like Dennis Levine, Ivan Boesky, Carl Icahn, Asher Edelman, Michael Ovitz, and Michael Milken that inspired Hebraic banker Gordon Gekko of Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* (1987), Mailer seems to think that the real unhinged psychopaths that reflect the supposedly forsaken spirit of the United States are busty blonde shiksa sluts and rogue cops (incidentally, Mailer's youngest son, writer and sometimes actor John Buffalo Mailer, portrayed the best friend of Shia LaBeouf's character Jake Moore in Oliver Stone's lackluster sequel *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010)). Set in a patently paranoid cocaine-fueled world of clandestine Kafkaesque conspiracy that inhabited by proudly whorish yet nonetheless highly superstitious white trash femme fatales, wealthy crypto-cocksucker cuckolds that gladly take orders from their (ex)wives, a psychopathic comorbid schizophrenic corrupt cop with an unquenchable thirst for thoroughly debased pseudo-blonde whore cunt, an all-wise yet uneducated Mafioso-like cancer patient patriarch who has always been afraid that his sole son might be a faggot, and a ex-con/ex-bartender turned would-be-writer protagonist who cannot remember if he decapitated two blonde bimbos or not, among various other quite colorful, tastelessly charming, and inordinately eloquently spoken characters as portrayed by both talented and untalented actors in what is undoubtedly the most wonderfully awful performances of their careers, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is as memorable and as re-watchable as any great cinematic masterpiece, albeit because it has a shockingly convoluted plot and virtually every scene features some gratingly obvious flaw or idiosyncrasy that is so unforgettable that it burns a hole into the viewer's brain, thus confirming that Pulitzer Prize winning writers do not exactly make for even semi-competent filmmakers, even when adapting their own work on a fairly decent budget with relative creative freedom. While best remembered today for vomiting out some of the worst musical, action, adventure, sci-fi and fantasy films during the 1980s, including Golan's outstandingly baffling anti-opus *The Apple* (1980), John Derek's pseudo-erotic vanity piece *Bolero* (1984) starring his own wife Bo Derek, and Hebraic hack Sidney J. Furie's infamously horrendous franchise-killer *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (1987), Cannon Films also arguably deserves credit for producing the most absurdly bad arthouse of the era, including Jean-Luc Godard's anti-Shakespeare adaptation *King Lear* (1987), which incidentally also stars Mr. Mailer. Whether Godard's flick and *Tough Guys Don't Dance* are just examples of senseless Judaic nepotism gone terribly awry remains to be seen, but I can certainly safely say that I would prefer it if Golan and Globus were in charge of the Hollywood studios instead of the sterile Semites in suits that run them nowadays.

Directed by a man that once stated, "Moviemaking is like sex. You start doing it, and then you get interested in getting better at it," yet never managed to cultivate a distinct cinematic style after directing four features and who incessantly cinematically depicts coitus as something that is always vulgar, grotesquely ugly and exceedingly abusive, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* probably features the most confusing and inexplicable film noir style storyline since Howard Hawks' *The Big Sleep* (1946) and has even been described as a parody of the Raymond Chandler style by some critics, though, arguably most importantly, it is a seemingly unintentionally oneiric piece of totally uncensored Judaic depravity in an unintentionally campy horror-noir form that exposes to the viewers what one of America's most prominent socio-politically conscious Jewish writers and intellectuals of the second half of the twentieth-century really felt about the nation's white majority. Indeed, whether it be focusing on the sexual prowess of a demented cop as memorably portrayed by Teutonic-blooded B-movie actor and sometimes director Wings Hauser, a hyper hypocritical Southern Baptist preacher with "the longest prick in Christendom" as ironically portrayed by a pre-lard-ass Penn Jillette, or the pernicious pussy-powered criminal schemes of two cock-and-coke-loving middle-aged blondes who both married opulent fags for their money and who ultimately get killed and decapitated, Mailer demonstrates that he had a more keenly naturalistic understanding of human sexuality than Freud and Reich and seems to subscribe to both of the quack kosher psychoanalysts' theory that all human behavior is solely and fundamentally sexually driven (of course, as C.G. Jung revealed after his break with Freud due to the latter's firm rejection of spiritual influences, this is a very Jewish perspective). The multi-layered but hardly subtle tale of a middle-aged dipsomaniacal ex-con/ex-bartender turned would-be-writer/kept man who, about a month after his harlot southern belle from hell wife leaves him, goes on a two-week bender full of blackouts where he has trouble recalling as to whether or not the blood he finds in his Jeep and the blonde-haired decapitated head he finds in his marijuana stash are the result of a murder or two that he might have committed whilst well under the influence, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* undoubtedly features one of the most patently pathetic and annoyingly passive (anti)heroes in cinema history as strangely fittingly personified by failed leading man O'Neal in one of the most unforgettably horrendously histrionic performances of the eclectically phony 1980s. Of course, whereas somewhat spiritually-minded Aryan weirdo Lynch demonstrates a sort of haunting fear of becoming like the villains in *Blue Velvet*, crude sex-obsessed materialist Mailer makes it seem as if he wants to be mind-fucked by every single one of his uniquely unsavory creations, as if he lives for self-perpetuated degradation, thus underscoring the stark contrast between the two artists. Indeed, no one can finish *Tough Guys Don't Dance* without coming to the natural conclusion that Mailer is, not unlike the film's protagonist, a posturing pseudo-masculine masochist who believes being macho means

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being a raging cynic that says pseudo-esoteric things like, "Just want to tickle my stick?" and attempts to fuck anything that happens to catch his cockeyed glance. Naturally, the film is a crude and obscenely onanistic example of Mailer tediously tickling his own stick, but one cannot deny that he is a master masturbator whose less than graceful shameless self-love can be quite rewarding for those individuals that are in the mood for a retarded celluloid rhapsody of rather rude and cravenly crude raunchiness and zany scatological lyricism.

After opening with hopelessly passive protagonist Tim Madden (Ryan O'Neal)—a sort of failed alpha-man and perennial alcoholic loser who has more or less realized his dream job of becoming a writer, yet finds himself incapable of actually writing—randomly narrating in an almost joyous fashion, "I keep saying to myself, 'Death is a celebration,'" *Tough Guys Don't Dance* then continues with an open credits sequence that features various scenic coastal shots of Provincetown, Massachusetts that seems like it could be an advertisement for tourists (notably, just as depicted in the film, the area is a haven for homos and other aberrosexuals). While certainly not a fag, Tim seems to be a magnet for strange self-loathing queers and has a self-destructive tendency towards falling in love with sexually insatiable harlots who he lacks both the sexual and monetary prowess to fully satisfy. At the beginning of the film, Tim wakes up hungover as per usual and prepares to bash someone in the head with a crowbar when he hears some unknown individual fiddling around in the downstairs kitchen area of his fairly lavish bourgeois beach house. Luckily, Timmy does not have to terrorize anyone, as he does not discover a hostile intruder lurking in his home but instead his much more masculine father Dougy (Lawrence Tierney). Completely bald as a result of chemotherapy and considerably overweight in an old tough guy sort of way, as if his muscles have turned to mush due to age, Dougy probably does not have long to live as a result of having cancer and wants to establish a strong bond with his son before he dies, or as he states to Tim while drinking some liquor, "Six months ago, they told me to stop [drinking] or I was dead. I stopped. Now the spirits circle around my bed and they tell me to dance. I tell them, 'Tough guys don't dance.' They answer me, 'Keep on dancing.' You know, son, my illness makes me think you're all I got. I don't want to die without you knowing my regard for you." Luckily for Tim, Dougy has decided a rather auspicious time to reappear in his life, as he needs help since he has two female decapitated heads in his cellar and he is not sure if he was responsible for the women's deaths or not. On top of everything else, it seems that everyone Tim knows want to murder him or frame him for murder. Thankfully, daddy Dougy is not afraid of decapitated dame domes and will ultimately provide his somewhat squeamish son with much needed unlawful support.

Clearly a extremely street smart individual with big brass balls, Dougy can immediately tell something is wrong with his son as he looks extremely worried and dejected, but he absolutely refuses to allow his sole progeny to succumb to

self-pity or failure. Indeed, when Tim bitches about the fact that his wife Patty Lareine (Debra Stipe aka Debra Sandlund in her first film role in a truly unforgettable performance that earned her a nomination for both "Worst Actress" and "Worst New Star" at the 8th Golden Raspberry Awards) left him 28 days ago with a negro chauffeur and he has not heard from her since, Dougy rightly replies to his repugnantly melancholic son, "Quit feeling sorry for yourself. Any guy that marries a rich dame deserves everything he gets [...] You married the wrong girl, that's all. Should have married the other one. The Italian girl, what was her name? Yeah, that's the one you should have married." As Dougy wisely states, Tim did indeed marry the wrong woman as he is still hopelessly in love with a spunky yet seemingly semi-autistic Italian model named Madeleine Falco (Isabella Rossellini), but he ruined that hot and heavy romance when he fell victim to the Hebraic vice of Mailer's kosher comrade Al Goldstein's SCREW magazine where he used the personal section to setup an ultimately life-changing orgy with a Li'l Abner-esque white Christian couple from the Deep South named Patty and Big Stoop (Penn Jillette of Penn & Teller). While Tim should have known that the group sex experiment would go bad when he showed Madeleine a photo of the couple and she excitedly stated in regard to Big Stoop, "He must have the longest prick in Christendom. There's no other explanation for him," he foolishly decided to go on with the orgy since he was at a sort of crossroad in his relationship with his gorgeous guidette girlfriend, or as he tells Dougy, "I didn't really know if I was in love or trapped by love. We were in the season when one marries or one parts." Needless to say, the orgy resulted in catastrophic consequences for all parties involved, especially Tim, who was forced to confront the rather unfortunate fact that Big Stoop's Christly liver-lifter proved to be much mightier than his own. Likewise, Patty fell 'in love' Tim while he was performing cunnilingus on her and told him he was "sweet" because he is "mean and nasty-minded, and so pleasurable." In fact, Patty Lareine was so impressed with Tim's crude wit and pussy-eating talents that she confessed to the protagonist "You marked me for life" and promised to dump Big Stoop, marry and divorce a rich man for his money, and then marry him and use her alimony to support his lifelong dream of becoming a writer. Unfortunately, Tim had no clue that cunning cunt Patty would eventually go and marry his crypto-cocksucker comrade from college and then use him against his schoolmate during the divorce trial. Of course, when Tim accidentally causes Madeleine to become infertile as a result of damaging her womb in a car crash after watching one of Big Stoop's church sermons and then is subsequently arrested and sentenced to a three year prison sentence after getting busted for dealing coke, he naturally accepts Patty Lareine's sort of Faustian femme fatale pact to marry her when he gets out of jail. Naturally, had Tim never wasted his money on a copy of SCREW magazine or even questioned his love for Madeleine, all of these disastrous things could have been easily avoided. Not only did Tim ruin the womb of the woman

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he loved and thus guaranteed that he would never be able to produce progeny with his beloved, but he also married an unlovable social-climbing skank who would ultimately make his life a living hell of the most intricately insidious sort.

The majority of *Tough Guys Don't Dance*—an innately incoherent and convoluted cinematic work that demands that the viewer watch it multiple times if they want to truly understand the entire storyline—is told in flashbacks where Tim describes to his father how he eventually arrived at the nightmarish situation where he woke up one morning to find Madeleine's name and a heart tattooed on his arm and little recollection of what had happened to him the last night. Of course, Tim is somewhat reluctant to tell his father how he came to be the proud owner of two blonde female heads that he refuses to clearly look at and identify, as if he is afraid that one of them might belong to his estranged wifey Patty Lareine. As Tim explains to his father Dougy, it all started this past "crazy summer, idiotic summer" when his wife Patty Lareine had one of her many famous Dionysian coke-and-caviar parties and a dubious cop named Alvin Luther Regency (Wings Hauser) randomly showed up and proudly introduced himself as Provincetown's new 'Acting Chief of Police.' At the party, Regency revealed he was a renegade cop of sorts that did not mind drinking and smoking dope on the job. Naturally, it was only a matter of time before fellow wildly debauched extroverts Patty Lareine and Regency fell in love with one another, or so Tim eventually discovers in a most macabre fashion. As a result of becoming increasingly obsessed with two dead whores that were murdered a hundred years ago in the nearby area of Hell Town where pirates and prostitutes once ruled and regularly plundered ships and murdered sailors, Patty Lareine demanded to Tim that they hold a séance where she ultimately had a horrific premonition of her own decapitated corpse. As a result of her unsettling experiences during the séance where she was confronted in her own grisly demise, Patty Lareine decided to leave Tim for good and ever since then the protagonist's life has been one hazy yet gruesome existential nightmare full of blackouts and sleazy sexual encounters. As Tim explains to his father in regard to his resentment towards his wife, "How I hated Patty Lareine's all-superior fuck-you face. She had been the largest addiction in my life, pure love, pure hate, all squashed up together." In fact, Tim was so angry when Patty left him that, as depicted in a flashback scene, he went to the trouble to cut a photo of her in half in a manner that makes it seem as if she was decapitated, thus foreshadowing her grisly demise. Upon hearing this story about Patty Lareine's bitter departure, Dougy remarks to Tim, "Something bad's about to happen. Strange things fall into place," so his son reluctantly informs him that "Last week two people were murdered" and that "parts of the bodies" are in his cellar. As Tim states in his defense to Dougy, "I didn't do it. I don't think I did. But my head's been peculiar lately, I have blackouts. I hallucinate. It's been a bad five days." As he explains to his father, he suspects virtually everyone he knows of the murders, especially

corrupt cop Regency, Patty Lareine, and an extremely wealthy ex-schoolmate named Wardley's Meeks III (John Bedford Lloyd). Naturally, it comes as a great surprise to Tim when he eventually discovers that one of the heads in his cellar belongs to an ex-porn star that he randomly fucked one evening right in front of her cuckold husband on the very same night she was murdered.

As Tim explains to Dougy in a borderline histrionic fashion, things got really ugly five days ago when he met a middle-aged couple named Jessica Pond (Frances Fisher) and Lonnie Pangborn (R. Patrick Sullivan) while getting drunk at a local restaurant called the Widow's Walk. It is immediately apparent that Jessica is a stuck-up slut, as she proudly boasts of being a popular ex-porn star, but then bitches that the Provincetown is full of shacks, so Tim attempts to impress her by telling her the legend of 'Hell Town' and how some of the so-called shacks were ferried in from there, or as the protagonist states to her in an almost gleefully sadistic fashion, "150 years ago, out there, across the harbor, a mile. Whores, whalers, pirates. On a moonless night, they'd build a beach fire. Incoming boat would mistake it for the lighthouse and run aground. And these pirates would plunder it. Orgies of plunder. In certain houses you can still hear the cries of slaughtered sailors." Instead of scaring Jessica, Tim's sordid story seems to cause her to wet her panties. After taking the seemingly mismatched couple back to his house to snort some coke, Tim gets a little agitated with his company when Jessica states "You look like one of those method actors that plays the killer," so he threatens to kill them both in a semi-joking fashion and then proudly boasts to Lonnie, "I feel demented tonight. I could fuck your woman right in front of you." From there, Tim whips out his cock and has Jessica, who is probably a master of fellatio due to her porn star background, give him head while her pansy cuckold hubby watches on. The morning after aggressively fucking Jessica in an empty parking lot right in front of her crying cuckold hubby, Tim cannot seem remember anything from the previous night aside from loser Lonnie sobbing like a bitch and is thus quite startled to find both the Madeleine tat on his arm and that the passenger seat of his Jeep is soaked in blood. On top of that, Regency gives Tim a call telling him to come by the local police station where he tells him to, "Move your stash." While a police officer, Regency is also a shameless pothead and absurdly remarks to Tim regarding his dope, "I like your homegrown, it puts feathers on my ass. Godly stuff." When Tim goes to the wooded region of Truro woods to move his marijuana stash, he virtually suffers a total mental breakdown when he discovers a black plastic bag containing a decapitated blonde female head instead of his homegrown dope. After that, Tim suffers nightmares were he routinely hears a creepy female voice asking him, "Whose head is it?" To make matters worse, the owner of the Widow's Walk comes by Tim's house and informs him that Jessica and Lonnie's car is still parked in the restaurant parking lot, thus hinting that something horrific might have happened to them. Meanwhile, Tim discovers that Regency's white trash

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dope-dealing informers—two ugly, stupid, and sleazy greaser-like degenerates named Spider (John Snyder) and Stoodie (Stephan Morrow)—were the ones responsible for giving him the tat. Of course, Tim becomes even more startled when Spider accuses him of being involved in some major cocaine deal he knows absolutely nothing about.

Not long after his somewhat rude encounter with Spider and Stoodie, Regency has Tim come by the police station and reveals that he found the corpse of Lonnie Pangborn inside the trunk of his own car and that he believes the cuckold committed suicide. When Regency asks Tim whether or not he thinks Lonnie might have been a faggot and the protagonist replies, “He might wash his hands after making love but, no, I wouldn’t call him a swish,” the corrupt dope-smoking cop proudly replies with a hint of gleeful arrogance, “I don’t have a high opinion of your acumen. You read Pangborn wrong, he was a flaming faggot” and then reveals that he discovered a letter “hot from the dead man’s pocket” that proves he was a candy ass pansy poofster bastard. Somewhat curiously, Lonnie’s letter was written to Tim’s extremely wealthy self-loathing gay ex-schoolmate Wardley’s Meeks III, who also happens to be Patty Lareine’s ex-husband. Although former friends that were both expelled from Exeter together, Tim betrayed Wardley by lying about him in court during his divorce trial with Patty Lareine. During the trial, Tim backed up the little lady’s dubious accusation that wimp Wardley was an abusive husband who regularly referred to her as a “cheap redneck” and beat her if she dared not do drugs with him. If Tim’s troubles could not get any worse, Regency gives him the surprise of a lifetime by bragging to the hapless protagonist that he is married to his beloved Madeleine and that they have two sons, even though she is apparently infertile. Of course, it seems like an awfully big coincidence that Provincetown’s new Chief of Police just happens to be married to the love of Tim’s life.

As a result of the fact that he is still deeply in love with her and cannot get over the fact that she married a seemingly deranged renegade cop like Regency, Tim decides to pay Madeleine a surprise visit where he confesses “I’m still in love” and expresses his dissatisfaction with Patty and his failed writing career, but she angrily replies, “You chose Patty Lareine. I hope you’re happy, because I am. Mr. Regency and I make out five times a night. That’s what I call him, Mr. Five.” After calming down a little bit after a little bit of the sort of back and forth bickering that is not atypical of ex-lovers, Madeleine hands Tim a letter and curiously calls him “Mr. Six,” but tells him “not to coming running back” anytime soon. For whatever reason, Tim opts to drive to a beach to examine the letter where he is startled to read Madeleine’s words, “My husband is having an affair with your wife. I don’t think we should talk about it...unless you’re prepared to kill them.” In what is indubitably the most infamous and unintentionally hilarious scene in the entire film, Tim responds to the shocking letter by screaming the following in an absurdly contrived and unrealistic histrionic fash-

ion, "Oh man! Oh God! Oh man! Oh God! Oh man! Oh God! Oh man! Oh God! Oh man! Oh God!" That night, Tim admits to Regency that he had sex with Jessica on the same night that her husband died, so the crazed cop warns him in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion, "You better hope and pray Jessica doesn't surface as a corpse, because if she does, that little nosebleed on the seat of your Jeep is gonna look like THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE" (of course, it should be noted that Cannon Films produced and distributed Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986) the year before they released Mailer's film). After becoming somewhat startled as a result of his strange conversation with the Chief of Police, Tim decides to go back to the woods where he keeps his pot stash and is startled to find that there are now two blonde-haired heads there instead of just the one that he found previously. Upon reluctantly grabbing the heads and preparing to leave the woods, sleazy hillbilly psychos Spider and Stoodie emerge from a white vintage Rolls-Royce owned by Wardley and attempt to slaughter the protagonist with mere knives, but luckily the protagonist's dog attacks the wild white trash assailants. In what is arguably the most ridiculously bad and just plain stupid scene in the entire film, Spider stabs and kills what is clearly a stuffed toy dog while Tim knocks out Stoodie. While Tim opts to show mercy to his would-be-killers and does not finish off the two swarthy low-life drug dealers, he does smash up his pal Wardley's prized vintage Rolls-Royce. Indeed, while Tim angrily complains to Spider while sounding like a stoned stupid surfer dude, "Your knife is in my dog," he just cannot gather the anger and rage to kill the sleaze-bag after he meekly pleads, "Have a heart, man. I need medical attention. I'm sorry, man. I got nothing against your dog." When Tim wakes up the next morning, the chronology of *Tough Guys Don't Dance* finally catches up with the beginning of the film where Tim is startled to find his father downstairs and then begins telling him his bizarre story about how he ended up with two decapitated heads in his cellar.

As eventually becomes quite clear after the protagonist finishes telling his father everything that has happened up until the point when he discovered two decapitated blonde heads in his pot stash and decided to hide them in his cellar, it seems that everyone that Tim knows with the exception of his daddy Dougy could potentially be in a plot to frame him for murder and/or kill him. Since Tim does not have the testicular fortitude to do it himself, Dougy agrees to examine the decapitated female heads in the hope of figuring out their identities and exact causes of death. As his father eventually reveals to him after conducting what is probably a mafia style amateur autopsy, the heads belong to Patty Lareine and Jessica and both women were not decapitated until after they were killed. Quite fittingly considering since she has used, abused, and exploited virtually every man in her life, Patty Lareine died as a result of a bullet to the heart. While his father takes a boat out to the ocean to "deep six the heads" since he is too much of a pussy to do it himself, Tim receives a hysterical phone call from

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Madeleine where she complains in regard to her hubby Regency, "I'm terrified. He's wearing his Green Beret uniform. And he keeps his machete in the police car. He's mutilated my photograph, the one in the living room." After telling Madeleine to immediately flee her house and drive to his place, Tim decides to swing by the local police station to steal a machete out of Regency's trunk so that he has evidence against the corrupt cop. Indeed, Tim assumes that the machete Madeleine spoke of while they were on the phone was used by Regency to decapitate both Jessica and Patty Lareine, though he ultimately discovers that he was only half right. While Tim manages to grab Regency's machete and is thrilled to discover that it can be used as evidence against the corrupt narc cop since the weapon is still covered with blood, he is subsequently kidnapped at gunpoint by gay boy Wardley, who forces him to walk to a beach where he reveals how he not only killed Spider and Stoodie, but also his ex-wife Patty Lareine, who he was hoping to remarry. Indeed, perennial wuss Wardley went completely berserk and opted to shoot Patty Lareine in the heart after she proudly confessed to him that he stole \$2 million from him for a bogus drug deal, mocked him in regard to his dubious master plan to become a powerful coke dealer that would be "equal to a Renaissance prince," and then attempted to blackmail him for \$10 million. Wardley also describes to Tim how Regency was screwing both Jessica and Patty Lareine, but the former was shot and killed by the latter out of jealousy during a cat fight and then was subsequently decapitated by the crazed cop, who personally placed the head in Tim's drug stash. During that night, Regency proudly proclaimed to Patty Lareine, "I love you and I'll walk through hell with you." During the same night, Patty Lareine hinted to Regency that she felt she was possessed by the spirits of two dead whores by shouting while in a seemingly demonic state, "The bed in my house used to belong to two whores killed in Hell Town one hundred years ago. And they floated the bed across on the water. Invite those whores into you and me." Of course, after hearing Wardley's confession, Tim finally realizes that it was Regency and Patty Lareine that attempted to frame him for the murders. While Regency was screwing both Jessica and Patty Lareine, he only actually loved the latter and was only using the former as a means to help him with the drug deal. After deliberating as to whether or not he should kill Tim for betraying him and ruining his marriage, Wardley considers forcing the protagonist to give him a blowjob, stating to him, "What if I were to say, 'Madden, take it in your mouth or die'? Would you take my pride and joy into your mouth?" but he is convinced not to when the lead calmly replies, "Wardley. You don't care anymore about that." Ultimately, Wardley forces Tim to sit beside him and then kills himself by putting a bullet in his heart just like he did with his ex-wife Patty Lareine.

When Tim gets home from his demented little two-man nocturnal beach party with suicidal sod Wardley, he is happy to discover that Madeleine has arrived at just the same time. Unfortunately, when Tim goes inside his house, he

discovers a drunken and belligerent Regency shooting the shit with his father. When Tim gets the gall to accuse Regency of being involved in the murders and attempting to frame him by covering the front seat of his Jeep with blood and placing Jessica's decapitated head in his pot stash, the lunatic law man rationalizes his actions by stating to Dougy, "Your son put her [Madeleine] up in orgies and your son cracked her up in a car and destroyed the womb. That's the woman I inherited. So let's get it straight – I hate your son." Indeed, apparently Regency has always hated Tim and wanted to destroy him for making his wife infertile and thus denying him the opportunity of having children. In fact, Regency even proudly states to Tim, "I hate your guts [...] I wanted to see you die in your own shit. I wanted to make you crazy." When Tim brings up the fact that he is a crazed lunatic that decapitates people, Regency replies, "I wanted to get her [Jessica] face out of my system. I wanted total fidelity with Patty." Indeed, while undoubtedly a terribly deranged nut-job that seems like he could be the ex-jock preppie cousin of Leatherface, Regency's professed love for Patty Lareine seems totally genuine, so naturally he does not take it too well when Tim reveals to him that she is dead and that she was murdered by her fag ex-husband Wardley. In fact, Regency is left so shocked and heartbroken when Tim reveals to him that Patty Lareine has died that he immediately suffers a major stroke that leaves him partially paralyzed. While papa Dougy agrees to put Regency out of his misery, Madeleine unexpectedly does the job for him after the cracked cop dares to disrespect the gorgeous guido gal. Indeed, when Regency shouts while drooling heavily out of the side of his partly paralyzed face, "Patty Lareine – She was big time. Ooh la la. I thought you were big time but you turned out to be small potatoes," Madeleine shoots him dead, thus inspiring Dougy to joke, "I could have told him: never call an Italian small potatoes." In the end in what ultimately proves to be a sort of bittersweet false happy ending that is apparently less disturbing than the one featured in Mailer's source novel, Madeleine surprises Tim by buying him a luxurious \$2 million mini-mansion that she paid for via the dirty money Regency and Patty Lareine scammed out of poor Wardley. Notably, during this scene, both Tim and Madeleine are dressed like vulgar 1980s yuppie clothing, as if they are the sort of couple that fucks while listening to Huey Lewis and the News and watching Reagan speeches. Somewhat interestingly, the film concludes in a somewhat inexplicable and ambiguously ominous fashion, with a shot of Tim shutting the door of his fancy new house juxtaposed with a seeming she-bitch laughing manically, as if the protagonist has now been condemned to a sort of preppie Reaganite purgatory as a result of the blood money and tainted and infertile lover he has so mindlessly embraced. Indeed, while Madeleine is undoubtedly Tim's great love, she is also a murderess with a seemingly unquenchable sexual appetite that, not unlike whore-from-hell Patty Lareine, attempted to talk him into killing her husband.

Notably, at the end of the original movie trailer for *Tough Guys Don't Dance*,

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declares with almost playfully sadistic tongue-in-cheek glee, "The Devil made this picture." At least figuratively speaking, I think Mailer is correct, as his inately morally bankrupt film reveals a real visceral yet nuanced hatred and contempt for WASPs, whether they be Yankees or Confederates and/or rich faggots or poor redneck whores, as well as a sort of firmly ecstatic affinity for every and any form of sinful moral depravity. Indeed, unlike most of the heebs in Hollywood, Mailer is not even trying to obfuscate his keen Christ-killer tendencies, but instead proudly wallows them, thus underscoring his 'integrity' as an artist. While featuring an intricately loathsome and even grotesque portrayal of Anglo-Saxons from all class backgrounds, I got the sense from watching the flick that it is a sort of projection in filmic horror-noir form of Mailer's fetishistic fantasy view of Aryan American goyim, as if he would love to regularly hang out with these extra crude and rude losers, lowlifes, and emotional cripples, especially the two blonde whores (of course, it is no coincidence the film features countless blonde-shaming moments, including a scene where Patty Lareine states after the protagonist accuses her of being a fake blonde, "My pussy hair was bright gold in high school. Until I went out and scorched it with the football team"). In fact, at the beginning of the film, the main femme fatale Patty Lareine boasts, "I am a witch. Good blondes are," thus underscoring Mailer's sort of pathological post-holocaust hatred of the Nordic race. After all, one can only imagine the hysterical Hollywood and mainstream media outcry if someone directed a film where some obnoxious Hebrewess like Barbra Streisand declared, "I am a witch. Good Jewesses are." In Mailer's ideal white American Christian fantasy world, all the women are conniving whorish cunts, about half the men are self-loathing faggots whose slut wives carry around their testicles in their purses, and the only person with both wisdom and common sense is a terminally ill gangster-like exbartender who always feared that his sole son was a flaming fruit. While it is unquestionable that Mahler is quite intrigued by his characters, you can also certainly sense his quite unwarranted feeling of superiority over them, but I guess that is what one should expect from a man that once stated in an interview with Joseph Gelmis featured in the book *The Film Director As Superstar* (1971), "I come out of a tradition of people who are born to dominate life with their minds. The Jews are the greatest intellectual machines of any species of man of earth. I think that's really the reason, beyond any other, why the Jews are next to universally detested by people who don't understand their fine, warm, tender, loving, and forgiving sides. The reason why every farmer alive, why every redneck, instinctively distrusts the Jew is because the Jews are intellectual machines." Of course, aside from the fact that Jews tend to have mediocre visual-spatial intelligence and are hardly forgiving as their religious holidays and countless Hollywood holocaust movies clearly reveal, cosmopolitan city boy Mailer is totally off in his wishful diagnosis of hillbilly antisemitism, but that should be no surprise considering the piss poor yet admittedly quite amusing redneck caricatures

featured in *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. As a rare Hebraic intellectual of his age that pretended to be tough and advocated machismo mentality, it should have been readily apparent to Mailer that rednecks cannot stomach physically weak, passive-aggressive, and/or neurotic individuals that talk too much, do not work with their hands and/or do not know how to change a tire, but I digress.

Somewhat curiously, despite his lack of glaring talent as a filmmaker, Mahler apparently preferred filmmaking to writing, or as he states in *Norman Mailer in Provincetown*, "It has to be understood that I always loved film and loved directing. When I made my three underground films, I had a ball. I mean, I had more fun in terms of work than I ever had before in my life. Writing a novel is not fun. Writing a novel is dreary [...] The day-to-day work is tough. It is like being a coal miner. You go in everyday to the office [...] It ends up being a small prison and you've gotta deliver. When you direct, it's a little bit more like being the general of an army, but a most wonderful army where there's almost no blood and where all sorts of exciting things happen. Things changing all the time. It's like this marvelous war that is more circus than a war [...] I love directing. People said to me, 'Well, if you love directing that much, but you speak of the novel as being the highest art form you know, would you have deserted the novel?' I said, 'Yes. In exactly the way that very often a man that is happily married for many years will run off with a floozy. Sure.' Although, films weren't my floozy, they were my bread." Notably, at the very end of the same doc, Mailer takes full responsibility for the singular mediocrity of *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, stating, "The only place I can get critical here is on myself as the director. But I had the materials to make a very good movie and I had a pretty good script. And, for some reason, some people like the movie, only a few people love it, a good many people don't like it. I will take the blame for that. The actors delivered. The photography was splendid. The music was very good. I still have a feeling—cause this is natural for every director that's had, let us say, a semi-failure—what's crucial to it is exactly that I believe this film was yet gonna have its day, so I'm delighted that we're having it on DVD." While anyone that is not blind can plainly see that Mailer's film is a bloody vulgar celluloid abortion, I have to confess that I firmly believe that it is one of the most bafflingly enthralling and unforgettable American films of the 1980s, as a nasty little cinematic spectacle that is comparable to the bloody aftermath of a terrorist bombing in a high class strip club that is full of coke-addled yuppies, Baptist Christians dressed in their Sunday best, and leather-clad extras from *The Wild One*.

Seeming like a hypnotically histrionic half-baked hodgepodge of *Hamlet*, *The Big Sleep*, *The Fugitive Kind*, *Night Moves*, and *Blue Velvet* as directed by the spiritually vacant, sadomasochistic, and cinematically handicapped anti-love child of Flannery O'Connor and Paul Schrader, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is a film that is truly in a league of his own as a sort of cinematic equivalent to

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a STD that was contracted during a great yet shameful night of sex with the world's most physically alluring yet emotionally insufferable whore. In other words, the film leaves an indelible impression on the viewer that falls somewhat between debasement, deflection, Fremdscham, and complete and utter dumb-foundedness. While a semi-cryptically anti-Reaganite work (notably, at one point in the film not long after the character decapitates the corpse of his dead lover, morally challenged cop villain Regency expresses his desire to become president of the United States), the film more intriguingly manages to simultaneously capture the essence of the quite cosmopolitan zeitgeist while contradicting the innate artificiality of the Reaganite 80s with its strong regional setting (in fact, Mailer based both his novel and film on locations that he was already very familiar with in Provincetown, where he lived for a good portion of his last couple decades alive). Indeed, I hate to reference both films in the same sentence, but Mailer virtually does for Cape Cod in *Tough Guys Don't Dance* what Fritz Lang did for Weimar era Berlin in *M* (1931) in terms of capturing the almost otherworldly foreboding and demonic spirit and atmosphere of its seemingly forsaken setting. Personally, I have always detested New England and the sort of backwards and terribly naive white liberal peasants that live there, but Mailer's film inspired me to fantasize about the prospect of encountering such ungodly weirdos and mentally defective criminals in Cape Cod. In a sense, Mailer's film is arguably the ultimate anti-Lovecraftian flick, as Yankee WASP master of horror H.P. Lovecraft's stories are completely devoid of any erotic or romantic content aside from rather arcane and unflattering references to sexual reproduction, yet *Tough Guys Don't Dance* dares to depict a nefarious post-Puritan New England where sexual depravity is the norm and where a pussy is a woman's sole key to unlocking the so-called American Dream, not to mention the fact that it takes place in a racially homogeneous and literally 100% white Anglo-Saxon world where racial miscegenation is not even an issue (of course, a good portion of Lovecraft's stories were inspired by the author's horror and terror at the thought of race-mixing and racial mongrelization as reflected by the part-beast humanoid monsters that oftentimes inhabit his quite prophetic Spenglerian literary realms). Admittedly, there is one major similarity between Lovecraft's stories and the film, as they both depict a world that is guided by the ancient pre-Christian philosophical law of Eternal Return where time and history are cyclical as opposed to linear, which is made especially apparent in Mailer's movie when the two sinisterly slutty femme fatales Patty Lareine and Jessica suffer the same exact forsaken fate as the two Cape Cod whores that were murdered a century before.

A virtual celluloid treasure trove of wickedly wayward and amoral thematic idiosyncrasies, Talmudic toilet humor, Hebraic sexual and racial pathology, and unintentionally avant-garde anti-Anglo-Saxon/anti-goyim wackiness, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* is a film that I would indubitably label the greatest celluloid anti-

masterpiece among celluloid anti-masterpieces, as a fierce flick that totally delivers in terms of its debauched Judaic anti-goy delirium of insanely inept and obscenely overwritten degenerate hipster heeb filmmaking. Somewhat fittingly, in the first chapter of his literary swansong *White Power*, World War II hero and magazine publisher turned American Nazi Party founder and inordinately satirical pro-white propagandist George Lincoln Rockwell—a fairly humorous and charismatic mensch whose father was, somewhat curiously, a popular vaudeville performer named George Lovejoy “Doc” Rockwell that was friends with a number of prominent and influential Jews of the era, including Benny Goodman, Walter Winchell, Jack Benny, and Groucho Marx—attacks Mailer for his scatological sins against the America public, stating, “TIME magazine reports on September 2, 1966, that one of America’s top writers, Norman Mailer (‘The Naked and the Dead’), now concentrates on the bowel. ‘Man’s nature,’ says this Jewish playwright, ‘can be divined by the color, the shape, the size of the movement of his bowel contents.’ This ‘artist’ regularly appears on national TV and has his books published. No outraged protest.” Undoubtedly, if I can pay Mailer anything resembling a great compliment, it is that—in terms of his eccentricity, troubled romantic relationships (though, unlike Mailer, Rockwell never stabbed or attempted to kill one of his wives), subversive approach to humor and satire, racial chauvinism, and affinity for conspiracy theories (for example, in his bio *Marilyn: A Biography* (1973), Mailer made the claim that Marilyn Monroe was assassinated by members of the CIA and FBI because they resented the fact that she defiled JFK)—he is like the Rockwell of Jews, albeit nowhere near as handsome or stoic (incidentally, in a April 8, 1963 letter to The Washington Post publisher and co-owner Philip L. Graham, drug-addled gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson wrote, “Politics: opposed to Nixon, Norman Mailer & George Lincoln Rockwell”). Of course, only a country like America could produce such divergent yet similarly incendiary public figures as G.L. Rockwell, who repackaged National Socialism in a super gimmicky carny huckster fashion to make it more palatable to the United State’s rather large culturally and spiritually retarded white prole population, or Mailer, who partly became famous for writing the proto-essay “The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster” where he fetishizes the first generation of deracinated and disillusioned European degenerates that succumbed to the distinctly debasing metaphysical plague of Afrophilia. When it comes down to it, *Tough Guys Don’t Dance* is most fundamentally about the seemingly forsakenly deadly and deranged roots, stranger-the-fiction legacy, and overall eclectically eccentric essence of the United States, or to quote the film’s tragic crypto-cocksucker character Wardley Meeks III, “Only a country as mad as ours could be such a roaring success.”

-Ty E

SKOONHEID
SKOONHEID

Oliver Hermanus° (2011)

With my recent viewing and reviewing of Aryan Kaganof's wonderfully wayward rape musical *Nice to Meet You, Please Don't Rape Me!* (1996), I felt it was about time that I checkout another, albeit somewhat less controversial, South African film about sexual pillaging, *Beauty* (2011) aka *Skoonheid* aka *Purity* directed by relatively young Capetonian auteur Oliver Hermanus (Shirley Adams). As I learned after talking to a white South African cinephile, apparently there is no way in hell that a film like *Skoonheid* would have been allowed to see the light of day during the apartheid. Indeed, aside from featuring a brutally disgusting and stomach-churning scene towards the end of the film that puts the strangely iconic 'squeal like a pig' scene from John Boorman's Appalachian classic *Deliverance* (1972) to shame in terms of its random rectum-reaming gruesomeness, the film also features a less than thinly disguised attack on the values of the white Afrikaner communist, especially the old school bourgeois that came of age during the apartheid era and now must face the natural repercussions of being white during a new era black rule. A somewhat nasty reworking of Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice* (1912) set mostly in Cape Town that was directed in a glaringly Haneke-esque style (indeed, Hermanus has cited *The Piano Teacher* (2001) as being one of his favorite films), *Skoonheid* centers around a successful married Afrikaans businessman who leads a second secret life as an alpha-homo (he is a 'top') and becomes obsessed with (and ultimately begins stalking) his old best friend's handsome collegiate son. In the film's depiction of an older and rather introverted sexually repressed man brought up under a strict authoritarian system that does not look too kindly on homos who develops a dangerously fanatical and ultimately violent infatuation with a young heterosexual man, Hermanus' film also owes a heavy thematic debt to John Huston's *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967) starring Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor, as well as *The Sergeant* (1968) starring Rod Steiger. As director Hermanus—a man of mixed racial origin (aka 'mystery meat')—revealed in an interview with the major Marxist website *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) as to why he decided to set the film in Bloemfontein: "I chose it because I assumed it was the sort of South African city where I'd never want to spend my life. It's a bastion of Afrikaanderdom and very segregated. It was the capital of the Orange Free State in the first republic of South Africa and was where the British first established concentration camps to lock up Afrikaners during the Boer War." Indeed, in terms of its glaring 'new left'/Reichian style critique of the white Afrikaner community, *Skoonheid* utilizes similar libelous clichés that one would expect from a heavy-handed filmmaker like Spielberg (i.e. the complete fabrication in *Schindler's List* that Yid-killer Amon Goeth was secretly in love with a Jewess). Still, Hermanus manages to bring a degree of nuance to the central character in that, al-

though he is a conservative cracker who loathes coloreds and eventually rapes a young man as a result of being sexually repressed, he is still a sympathetic character to the audience, at least to some extent, yet Skoonheid ultimately blames white-ruled South Africa for the protagonist's sexual savagery and it thus pathetically predictable in that regard, as if the director wanted to kiss the mainstream left's already bloated bunghole. Aesthetically, the film straddles a healthy median between arthouse and Hollywood and is thus a sort of South African equivalent to Tom Ford's *A Single Man* (2009) as a dark and tragic fag flick that most people can relate to, yet due to its single scene of sadistic forced sodomy towards the end, Skoonheid also features a tiny tinge of exploitation that might appease the appetites of jade gorehound and ex-convicts.

Middle-aged business owner and family man Francois van Heerden (Deon Lotz) is at his eldest daughter's wedding party, but he is not celebrating his little girl's big day as his discernibly lonely eyes are magnetized to a young law student and advert actor named Christian Roodt (Charlie Keegan), who is the son of the protagonist's old friend Willem (Albert Maritz). Francois has not seen Christian, who calls him 'uncle Francois' out of habit, in 7 years and he is determined not to wait another 7 years to seem again, yet he lives in a conservative suburban Bloemfontein and the young man lives in 'liberal' multicultural Cape Town. To make matters worse, Francois' young statuesque blonde daughter Anika (Roeline Daneel) and Christian have just started a romance of sorts, thus evolving into a truly bizarre love triangle that only the protagonist is aware of. In fact, Francois resents his two daughters and bitchy wife Elena (Michelle Scott) because, as a closet homo, he hates women, especially the sort that incessantly nag at him. Indeed, Francois is part of a secret group of suburban Afrikaner sodomites that all randomly meet at one of the members' house and engage in discrete micro-orgies of sorts. When one of the members of the sod collective attempts to bring an effeminate negro to the orgy, he is told "no crazies...no coloreds" and that he is "no longer welcomed" and thrown out of the house in a somewhat physically aggressive manner, thus demonstrating there is an unspoken apartheid of sorts among Afrikaner South African suburban sodomites. Naturally, Francois begins stalking Christian, who is always hanging out with Anika. Due to his undying infatuation with Christian's charming twink beauty, Francois begins to suffer acute anxiety and irritably and even goes to a doctor to address what are ultimately psychosomatic symptoms. Indeed, Francois is god's loneliness gay man, but he self-deludes himself into coming up with an absurd plan to make Christian his boy toy.

Ultimately, Francois plans a fake business trip to Cape Town so he has an excuse to spend time with Christian. When Francois arrives at the Roodt home, he cannot keep his eyes off Christian and when the young man complains he wants an iPod, the business man goes out and buys one for him as a present. Upon hearing that Christian has headed to a place called Clifton Beach, Fran-

SKOONHEID

cois lies to his friend Willem so he can get the young man's phone number, but when he arrives at the beach to surprise his crush with the iPod, he sees that the boy is with his daughter Anika. Enraged his much resented daughter is with the mensch he loves, Francois calls the cops on his progeny for ostensibly stealing his car (she drove his BMW to get to Cape Town), thus ruining her date at the beach just as she had unwittingly ruined his. After his failed attempt to surprise Christian at the beach, Francois goes to a gay bar, tells an effeminate negro to "buzz off" when he attempts to hit on him, and barfs after drinking to many beers and getting turned on by a young Adonis-like fag. That same night, Francois manages to meet up with Christian and confesses to him, "Sometimes I still feel like becoming a pilot and flying way and leaving everything...everyone," thus demonstrating his disillusionment with life. Christian is well aware of his charm as a handsome and likeable young man and clearly realizes Francois 'likes' him, so he offers his 'uncle' a ride because he wants to ask him to fund a business he hopes to start. When Francois and Christian go to the former's hotel room, the latter asks his secret admirer for money for his potential business prospect. Francois attempts to kiss Christian, but the young man suavely rebuffs his advances and continues to talk about the money he would like to borrow. When Francois finally comes to the realization that Christian only wants to use him for his money, his loses his cool, goes completely beserk, and begins to beat and bugger the young man in a fierce fit of rage that leaves the law student completely emotionally and anally ravaged. A number of times during savagely sodomizing Christian, who cries like a little girl and does very little to fight back, Francois loses his erection. When everything is said and done, Francois' sadistic sexual conquest seems like somewhat of a disappointment. As for Christian, one never knows what becomes of him, but he certainly never calls the cops on Francois and stops seeing his rapist's daughter Anika. In the end, Francois goes back to business as usual, though he continues to admire young handsome homos from afar at restaurants and whatnot.

Ultimately, *Skoonheid* is a film about the inability of people to change once they have been brought up a certain way. In that regard, it seems director Oliver Hermanus thinks there is little hope from white Afrikaans who grew up in apartheid era South African. Indeed, all the white suburbanites of the film agree that "The country is going to hell" and that, in regard to the actions of the black-run ANC government, "They are forcing us to be racist." As auteur Hermanus revealed in an interview with WSWS regarding why he had the white characters make these remarks: "These are very common sentiments amongst conservative white South Africans. In their private lives Francois and the milieu he's from often discuss amongst themselves whether or not the apartheid system was better, safer for them. They may appreciate some of the new political changes, but at the end of the day they would choose the old system because it guaranteed them economic strength and security." As Hermanus would also reveal in an interview

with the UK website Idol Magazine regarding how the Afrikaner community has responded to the film: “The very conservative community was definitely scared, outraged, shocked. The younger community was very excited, but the general consensus was that the story wasn’t far-fetched, everyone felt they had an uncle or a brother who behaves in a similar way – emotionally distant, and you can sense that there is an underlying feeling of repression.” Indeed, more than its odd pro-gay liberationist message (to Hermanus’ credit, he did not want people to view his film as a ‘queer’ work, though it would ultimately win the coveted ‘Queer Palm’ at the Cannes Film Festival), *Skoonheid* is a film about the bitter end of white South Africa and the traditional white bourgeois Afrikaans community in general. Indeed, with the death of Francois’ generation while come a culture ‘gone with the wind,’ so to speak, and black South Africa will certainly express a sigh of relief when that day comes. Of course, when the day comes when whiteness is gone, it is quite dubious whether or not films like *Skoonheid* will still be allowed to be made, especially in a backward nation where ‘corrective rape’ (aka raping lesbians in an ostensible attempt to convert them to heterosexuality) is quite vogue. Out of all the potential rape scenarios that happen in real-life South Africa on a daily basis, *Skoonheid* manages to depict the most unlikely, thus more than clearly indicating where the brown filmmaker’s sympathies lie. Indeed, while *Skoonheid* seems subversive on the surface, its message is undoubtedly as mainstream as they come, thereupon making it a work that is as equally disappointing as it is engaging. On the other hand, the film has incited some irrational hatred in LGBT-lobotomized homos comparable to William Friedkin’s *Cruising* (1980) due to its less than flattering depiction of a crypto-cocksucker so, in that regard, *Skoonheid* certainly rises above the majority of sod celluloid swill of Hollywood and ultimately makes a great counterpoint to the shamelessly superficial sentimentality of *Brokeback Mountain* (2006).

-Ty E

SEIZURE!
SEIZURE!

Oliver Stone* (1974)

While mainstream far-leftist 'auteur' Oliver Stone (Platoon, Wall Street) has directed countless pieces of big budget agitprop trash, one might never suspect that he actually once directed a quasi-exploitation horror-thriller starring suicidal Filipino midgets and lapsed Warhol superstars, as such eccentric cinematic ingredients seem far too curious for a man who assembled a film as pathetically pandering and disgustingly pseudo-sentimental as *World Trade Center* (2006). Indeed, long before making a name for himself by penning screenplays for relatively successful Hollywood films like *Midnight Express* (1978), *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), and *Scarface* (1983) and developing the reputation he would need to direct imbecilic softcore commie celluloid polemics, Stone directed a goofy and even somewhat campy little known horror flick entitled *Seizure!* (1974) aka *Queen of Evil* aka *Tango Macabre* starring Jonathan 'Barnabas Collins' Frid of *Dark Shadows* (1967-1971) fame, Hervé 'Tattoo' Villechaize (who was apparently the director's roommate at the time) of *Fantasy Island* (1977-1983), and Mary Woronov of Warhol's/Morrissey's *Chelsea Girls* (1966) and Paul Bartel's *Eating Raoul* (1982). An American-Canadian coproduction that was partly produced by Greek-American Mafioso Michael Thevis (a marvelously murderous man nicknamed the "Scarface of Porn" who once owned half of the hardcore porn industry), who used the film as a means to launder money due to the fact he was under investigation by the FBI, Stone's debut feature is a discernibly amateurishly directed work of the totally tasteless and superlatively sloppy sort that could have been assembled by any random exploitation hack, yet it is still certainly more interesting than probably the majority of the director's later films. Interestingly, Stone is so embarrassed by his first feature that he later bought the copyright for the work so it could never ever again be released (though, it is rather easy to obtain a bootleg DVD of the film). Stone probably also wants to forget the film as it proved to be a nightmarish production for the Hebraic frog filmmaker, or as Greg Merritt revealed in his work *Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film* (2000): "Long before *PLATOON* or *JFK*, a cab driver and unsuccessful screenwriter named Oliver Stone co wrote and directed *SEIZURE* (1974), the disjointed tale of a horror novelist whose nightmares come to life. Stone had virtually no previous production experience; the movie had no money. In an effort to get paid, the crew mutinied, dwarf actor Hervé Villechaize threatened Stone with a knife, and the cinematographer held the film negative for ransom. *SEIZURE* played in only one theater." Shot on a majorly meager budget of \$150,000 using mostly uniquely untalented soap opera actors, *Seizure* somewhat follows in the cinematically sacrilegious tradition of Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972), which is a non-remake of *The Virgin Spring* (1960), in that it is more or less an exceedingly loose bas-

tardization of Ingmar Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf* (1968) aka *Vargtimmen*. Unlike Bergman's film, which follows the mental derangement of a painter, Stone's quasi-metacinematic work revolves around a high-strung horror novelist, who incessantly dreams of a malefic multicultural trio of crazed bloodlusting freak characters in his mind, only for said malefic multicultural trio of crazed bloodlusting freaks to come to life and torture and slaughter the protagonist's innately insufferable friends and family.

Hack horror novelist Edmund Blackstone (Jonathan Frid) is at a weekend getaway with his wife Nicole (Christina Pickles) and 10-year-old son Jackson (Timothy Ousey) and he is horribly stressed because he cannot think of an adequate ending for his upcoming novel. Luckily, a wicked weirdo threesome will ultimately provide him with the real-life experience he needs to create an authentically horrifying horror novel, though it is dubious as to whether or not he will live to read said novel. Indeed, Blackstone keeps having recurring dreams about a triad of nasty and noxious freaks, including a swarthy dwarf with a rather repugnant leather-fag mustache named 'The Spider' (Hervé Villechaize), an axe-wielding muscle-bound Mandingo-like negro named 'Jackal' (Henry Judd Baker), and a Goddess Kali/Vampira wannabe named 'Queen' aka 'Queen of Evil' (Martine Beswick). Despite seeming to have premonitions that these fatal freaks will soon appear at his home and wreck havoc upon his loved ones, Blackstone decides to invite a number of his friends to his country home for a vacation, including a manically materialistic businessman of the somewhat psychopathic sort named Charlie Hughes (Joseph Sirolian) and his butch bitch wife with nil tits named Mikki (Mary Woronov), as well as an exceedingly effete 'European' aristocrat named Count Serge Kahn (Roger De Koven) and his very vain trophy wife Eunice (Anne Meacham). Before arriving and taking Blackstone and his friends/family hostage, the nightmarish creatures lynch the family dog and leave it for the novelist to find. Meanwhile, Blackstone creates exact sketches of the three quasi-human murderers that will soon insidiously invade his quaint countryside crash pad. Noticeably shaken and agitated as demonstrated by his erratic and highly irritable behavior, Blackstone is asked by his sensitive son Jason what is bothering him, to which the novelist revealingly replies, "I'm scared of something inside me." Indeed, as super sophisticated Semite Serge will eventually reveal after being taken hostage, the Spider, Jackal, and the Queen of Evil are all archetypal characters from ancient folklore, with the latter, who is the leader of the triumvirate of terror, being the Hindu Goddess Kali. The ancient archetypes of evil are inside Blackstone's mind and ultimately his loved one's will pay after he lets them out to play.

When the murderously mischievous 'monsters' arrive, Blackstone and his buds soon learn that they will be playing a deranged Darwinian game of survival of the fittest that only one of the house guests will survive. At this point, the large and in charge Queen of Evil declares, "We are without beginning and without

SEIZURE!

end” and “Our purpose...our only purpose...is death.” While some characters are murdered after losing silly contrived games played against their comrades, others are talked into committing suicide during scenarios that ultimately reveal each character’s foremost weaknesses. For example, Serge’s wife Eunice opts for self-slaughter after malevolent midget Spider besmirches her beauty and makes her look like the bastard sister of Freddy Krueger. Of course, when these characters are pit against each other by the tyrannical trio, they demonstrate their true ugly and oftentimes predatory characters. For example, the Queen of Evil offers to spare Mikki if she kills Blackstone. Of course, Blackstone defeats Mikki, though he refuses to finish her off, so the Queen does it for him. When Blackstone does the unthinkable by denying the Queen’s carnal advances, he is given two hours to be alone with his wife Nicole before she does. During their last moments together, Nicole stoically states to her cuckold of a husband, “You’re a coward, Edmund...I realized that tonight.” Meanwhile, old Count Serge has accepted his forsaken fate like a man and before being decapitated by big black buck Jackal, he confesses to Blackstone, “I’ve come to believe that god is both good and evil. Sometimes he speaks to us with terror...like Yahweh or Mithras...or Kali. I’ve learned something tonight... I lived through the Russian Revolution...The Nazi occupation of Europe, but tonight...tonight, I’m old. I’m like a little baby in the arms of a new world. I think death, true death, is a companion...not an enemy...to life.” After Serge dies, the Queen offers to spare Blackstone’s life if he tells her where his son is hiding. Rather pathetically, Blackstone, who ultimately proves to be a sickeningly self-centered psychopath of sorts (much like most of his friends), opts for sacrificing his own son and he rationalizes this decision by stating to himself, “I can start again, after all it was all a dream, my life, always...books, ideas, illusions...even the people around me—Nicole, my friends, Jason—my love for them was only an author’s love for his own creations, but he can create others...more and more. An artist is without end. He never dies. He is not allowed to die.” In the end, after a twist ending or two (or three), it is revealed that horror novelist Edmund Blackstone perished at the age of 47 via heart attack. Luckily, no one else will have to bear the misfortune of reading another one of his phony horror novels.

While a witless and largely prosaic pseudo-philosophical/pseudo-metaphysical work that flirts with going beyond good and evil yet ultimately cops out in the end, *Seizure* is nonetheless most certainly one of Oliver Stone’s most original, thoughtful, and shockingly idiosyncratic films to date, as a sort of misbegotten cinematic marriage between Tod Browning’s *Freaks* (1932), Bergman’s *Hour of the Wolf*, and Nicholas Ray’s *Bigger Than Life* (1956), albeit minus the drug element. While Stone intended to, “use the horror genre to treat serious psychological and cultural idea,” the film ultimately falls as both exploitation horror and as a piece of intellectual wankery. Indeed, it is quite obvious while watching the film that Stone has little interest or understanding of the genre and only made

a horror film as they tend to make for the best financial gambles for first time directors. In fact, the director more or less admitted such in 1991 when he stated regarding the film, "You have to stretch to like it. It wasn't great. I felt back then the same as I do now, that I always wanted to direct, and the horror genre was easier to break in with." The director would follow up *Seizure* with an even more forgettable quasi-horror flick entitled *The Hand* (1981) starring Michael Caine before directing his first big success *Platoon* (1986) and dedicating the rest of his filmmaking career to creating shamelessly cliché bourgeois liberal bollocks. In the book *Oliver Stone's USA: Film, History, and Controversy* (2000), which only mentions *Seizure* a single time in all of its 340 pages, Robert Brent Toplin wrote regarding Stone's pre-fame days: "By mid-1976, he had written eleven scripts and even directed one, *SEIZURE*, on a shoestring budget in Canada but failed to attract much critical or popular attention. It seemed he was going nowhere at a frantic pace. His marriage fell apart, he quit one job after another, and success continued to elude him. As America celebrated its bicentennial, Oliver Stone was a marginally employed twenty-five-year-old living in a cheap apartment in New York City. Had Stone been a movie character, he would have been *TAXI DRIVER*'s Travis Bickle." Personally, I see more artistic integrity in the Travis Bickle that directed *Seizure* than in the philistine commie conspiracy theorist that directed such ludicrously long agitprop pieces as *JFK* (1991), *Nixon* (1995) and *W.* (2008) that remind the viewer why American mainstream left-wingers make for the most shallow, soulless, and just plain stupid of filmmakers in all of cinema history.

-Ty E

THE HAND
THE HAND

Oliver Stone* (1981) If British had it's own language, Michael Caine would be British for Suave. In the wake of the death of Creature/Animatronic autuer Stan Winston, I decided to revisit some of his lesser known works. The Hand is a 1981 horror film centering on a comic strip author whose hand is dismembered in a freak car accident. Upon the disappearance of his severed hand, people who provoke his rage meet a demise similar to The Brood. If I had to compare The Hand to two films, It would be Magic meets The Brood. Michael Caine's performance sadly doesn't rival Sir Anthony Hopkins, but provides for a tasty full course meal throughout this psychological horror film. This might be the only Oliver Stone film I can say I really enjoy. Spring loaded with a twist ending that will reverse the ways of your emotions, The Hand could easily dominate most other films of it's kind if marketed correctly. The Hand is one of those films I respect for it's clever use of animatronics. While not as breakthrough as the hand in the Addam's Family, this one is increasingly morbid as it decays and rots. Michael Caine is a frizzy haired recluse who shelters his pain through alcohol. While being a tired cliché, it's the most relatable for pain. Alcohol is tough love in can form. When bodies begin dropping, the almost young Caine doesn't even notice. A modern age Tell-Tale Heart with a bigger body count, The Hand was recently released as apart of the Twisted Terror's collection making this worthy gem available to the most sheltered cinema goer. The soundtrack marks a spooky entry in confined horror orchestra and several of the white-out editing effects used to style up his severe fury. Michael Caine's character is one we could all end up like. Albeit, we probably won't have any detached limbs chasing around, doing our handiwork. Love doesn't nearly have as big of a message as hatred and violence does. In this small rural community, Caine sets out to teach a lesson about country hospitality. A cautious tale from Oliver Stone, too bad he decided to make flimsy propaganda and shitty patriotic films.

-mAQ

WALL STREET

Oliver Stone* (1987)

Oliver Stone loves communism, money, and agitating. All three things seem to go together hand in hand (revolutions cost money and Wall Street bankers have always funded them). Stone's father was a stockbroker on wall street and that's what influenced him to direct the film Wall Street. The film illustrates a realistic look at the international free market and the goons that are parasites of it. Wall Street is based on the real life insider trading criminal Ivan Boesky (in the film he is named Gordon Gekko). Gordon Gekko is a monetary obsessed sociopath bent on acquiring as much as possible. He is a quick talker and constantly conspiring. He loves to leave the working man jobless as he collects a couple extra dollars for his efforts. Gekko hasn't done a days work in his entire life. He is more interesting in living off others by buying and selling. Gekko sums up his outlook on life with the following quote: "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. Greed, in all of its forms, greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge has marked the upward surge of mankind." I honestly believe that Oliver Stone has a deep and passionate respect for Gordon Gekko. Stone hides his true respect by making the films protagonist Bud Fox a "good" guy at the end of Wall Street. Mr. Stone doesn't want to incriminate himself too much. Oliver Stone is a firm believer in GREED IS GOOD! Gordon Gekko shows his hatred for white Europeans with the following quote: "That's the thing about WASPs, they love animals, can't stand people." I respect his honesty. Oliver Stone is also a hater of Western civilization. Stone and his surly heroes are about as deranged as scumbag Abbie Hoffman at his hippie propagandist peak. It is a shame that Stone didn't direct the shitfest Steal This Movie. Wall Street is one of Stone's best films. He allows the masses to get at peak at their money masters. Wall Street would have made a great Nazi propaganda film if it had only been made 50 years before. Emil Jannings could have played Gordon Gekko. Janning's performance in F.W. Murnau's German expressionist masterpiece The Last Laugh confirms this. Oliver Stone could be considered an auteur of sorts. He has his own over stylized style and signature traits (lying about history, cocaine induced editing, etc). Apparently Stone likes to get stoned as his arrest history shows. Maybe he'll direct a film on the Sassoon family and their opium wars. I am sure he idolizes them too.

-Ty E

THE DOORS
THE DOORS

Oliver Stone* (1991)

I would be lying if I didn't admit that I am a fan of Oliver Stone's *The Doors*. Being a fan of *The Doors* I couldn't help but become interested in the film. The film's soundtrack for the most part is music from the band. The myth of Jim Morrison's Shaman persona is shattered with Stone's emphasis on the lead singer's self destruction. For once, Oliver Stone attempts to be semi-honest with a film. Val Kilmer surprisingly pulls off the charismatic Jim Morrison. This includes both acting and singing like Morrison. I generally hate any type of biopic or period piece film. Hollywood tends to make a mockery of interesting people and times. Oliver Stone essentially makes a brief synopsis of Jim Morrison and *The Doors* history. I like to think of the film as one fancy montage music video of *The Doors*. Nothing wrong with fancy images and good tunes. Oliver Stone used to listen to *The Doors* and take LSD. Now he snorts cocaine and misquotes Adolf Hitler. Stone also likes to propagate insane conspiracies that fit his Neo-Marxist fantasies. I wonder if he killed any of his comrades in the Vietnam War. One could only imagine Oliver Stone firing a machine gun while screaming the lyrics to "Break on Through." *The Doors* features cameos from many interesting personalities. Crispin Glover and Billy Idol were my favorites. Glover did a great job portraying Andy Warhol as a silly boy. Oliver Stone made a point on insulting Warhol's pictures in *The Doors*. Too Bad Warhol factory director Paul Morrissey has given more to film than Oliver Stone ever will. I also very much enjoyed the Native American Shaman that appeared randomly throughout *The Doors*. He seemed very excited when in full drag at a Warhol factory party. I hope he didn't take a bath with Morrison at the end of the film. Naked medicine men give lethal dosages of opiates.

-Ty E

WORLD TRADE CENTER

Oliver Stone* (2006)

I was not at all surprised when I learned that Oliver Stone had decided to capitalize off the 9/11 terrorist attacks with his film *World Trade Center*. Stone's deep respect for subversive and morally unconventional money making was confirmed in his 1987 film *Wall Street*. *World Trade Center* also acts as a propaganda film of sorts catering to the mindset of traitorous capitalist internationalists and their corporate backers. As any good propaganda should be, *World Trade Center* hides behind a completely idealized view of the American blue collar patriotic spirit. *World Trade Center* focuses on two New York City police officers that have been trapped in the rumble of a building in ruin. Both men are the everyday hero that risk their lives to ensure the safety of the United States from criminal elements (or at least Stone wants us to believe this). These characters were based on the real life New York City Port Authority policemen who were trapped in a virtual hell on earth. Oliver Stone is able to exploit the hearts of true American sentimentalists by focusing on the suffering and personal problems both suffer. Oliver Stone confirms his commitment to the state of Israel clear with one random and out of place quote from a Jewish cop in the film. He says exactly, "Israel? It's Gone. It's Nuked" and follows with "The whole freaking world is coming to an end today, Willy." For those who don't know, the middle eastern countries hate the United States due to our complete and 100% support of the state of Israel. We provide Israel with all the weapons and funding necessary to "fight" the enemy states surrounding Israel. The entire world knows this yet, the average American seems to have no idea.

The quote from the Jewish police officer has another bold yet sick meaning. The world will cease to exist before the state of Israel is wiped out. Israeli military historian and theorist Martin van Creveld stated the following about the unrelenting preservation of Israel, "We possess several hundred atomic warheads and rockets and can launch them at targets in all directions, perhaps even at Rome. Most European capitals are targets for our air force.... We have the capability to take the world down with us. And I can assure you that that will happen before Israel goes under." Although van Creveld obviously lacks empathy for humanity as a whole and is clearly a sociopath, his assertions are most likely true. I am sure Oliver Stone is more than aware of this. Oliver Stone brings up another pro neo con element to *World Trade Center*. Policeman Will Jimeno (one of the officers trapped in the WTC rubble) is a Colombian American who has done quite well for himself in the United States. He has a beautiful white wife (who he describes as a feisty woman of Italian and German extraction), a home, and a little girl he loves (with one on the way). In the beginning of *World Trade Center*, officer Jimeno drives to work in a redneck diesel truck listening to generic country music. Jimeno acts a symbolic replacement of the blue collar

WORLD TRADE CENTER

western European worker for the Latino immigrant outsider. He has taken the European American's women, job, truck, and even music. The Latino American has become the new American hero (replacing the John Wayne and Bruce Willis types) to compliment the neo con agenda of a globalized and "universal" America.

The real Will Jimeno

Another odd element of World Trade Center is the devout Christian marine Dave Karnes. Karnes believes that the 9/11 attacks were an act against god and he seeks vengeance against what he sees as enemies of Christ. Oliver Stone portrays this character as both hero and Christian psycho extremist. Karnes acts symbolically as evangelical Christianities war on evil Muslim extremists. In reality, "the war on terror" is used as a way to insure Israel's security in the middle east. I can only imagine Oliver Stone laughing behind the scenes, thinking about how brainwashed Judeo-Christians are fighting Israel's war for them. Oliver Stone also doesn't miss the opportunity to use blasphemy against Jesus Christ. Officer Will Jimeno envisions Jesus carrying a water bottle (trapped Jimeno is quite thirsty). These slight dreamlike silhouette images appear in World Trade Center a couple times. Oliver Stone has turned Jesus Christ into an absurd fantasy cult leader that guides Christian gentiles lives magically from one tragedy to another. Christ has become a tool of neo cons in their goal of international control and collectivism. World Trade Center may not feature the insane conspiracy theories that drive other Oliver Stone films, but it is obviously propaganda. Reading and seeing interviews with Oliver Stone incriminate the director as a self serving and sociopath disinformation man bent on confusing the ignorant even more. Like the bloated and unfunny disinformation propagandist Michael Moore, Oliver Stone is really working for the money man. These directors pretend to be freedom fighters, but in reality are the biggest promoters of authoritarianism and loss of freedom. May they one day be exposed publicly as the corporate backed liars they truly are.

-Ty E

CANNIBAL TERROR

Olivier Mathot (1980)

I've seen some bad films in my time. I've researched the film *Cannibal Terror* and it's said to be the worst. Now, I don't think any of these people have seen *Carnivore* or *Razortooth*, but I will simultaneously forgive them and thank them. *Cannibal Terror* is indeed bad, but it's not as awful as some of the other trash I've seen. *Cannibal Terror* consists of a couple bumbling criminals who hook up with a prostitute to kidnap a business tycoon's daughter for ransom. Things get complicated when they are caught and the escape to an island via ferry. Little do they know that this island is home to Cannibals with afro's and mutton chops. That right there is the sole amusement of the film; watching white people in face paint dancing around looking awkwardly at their neighbor wondering to themselves "What the fuck did I get myself into?" Among the Video Nasties that have had the ban removed, *Cannibal Terror* is the weakest link of the bunch, the others being *The Evil Dead* and *Inferno*. My problem with cannibal films is that they're all the same formulaic approach. Some guy gets in trouble, heads into the jungle. Rape. Gore. Oh no, message at the end. What was the moral of the story? These films don't speak to me in any way, shape, or form. The only cannibal film that had a message that I paid attention to was our favorite, *Cannibal Holocaust*. All these victims normally begin their mistake with the rape of some key female figure. Instead of films mocking the broad horror genre, someone should spoof a cannibal film. That would be easy, but it's easier if you pretend *Cannibal Terror* is a spoof. Soon after this rape scene, more white cannibals come thanks to a spiteful husband of the woman they raped. In the end, everything settles to a simmering happiness and everyone gets what they want. Except me. This film was bad. I expected something salvageable out of the *Cannibal Terror* experience. All I got was scraps. If you like your rape schlocky and your gore dubbed over with mayonnaise produced sounds, you might enjoy this film. I think it is at least worth to skip through, if not for the gore then for the mutton chop cannibal who strangely resembles Elvis. Conspiracy theorists, beware. Your king has gone into hiding acting in shitty Z grade EuroTrash.

-mAQ

ADORATION
ADORATION

Olivier Smolders (1987)

What inspires a man to kill? Is it a right of passage? Does it make a "man" of a man to kill a man? What about killing a woman? Why kill something beautiful and innocent? Why kill something you swoon over? Japanese cannibal Issei Sagawa killed and ate a young woman that he was obsessed with. While studying in France, he met a young Dutch girl. The short and Asian Issei Sagawa had a questionable obsession with this tall Aryan woman. Apparently, Sagawa has described himself as a "weak, ugly and small man." It is obvious that a man that would describe himself in such a manner lacks the confidence to obtain a beautiful European woman. Instead, Issei decided that killing and eating the object of his lustful desire would be the only way of obtaining an intimate moment with the unfortunate lady. The Body of Sagawa's victim Belgian experimental director Olivier Smolders directed a powerful short film about Issei Sagawa and his victim. The beautiful 1987 short *Adoration* features scenes of black and white brutality worthy of a certain degree of "adoration." Director Olivier Smolders added a couple fictional elements to give the short a more "poetic" feel. The young women featured in *Adoration* is even shot during the reciting of poetry. Sagawa wastes no time disassembling the young woman's limbs and putting them to his mouth so that he can "absorb her energy." With *Adoration*, Olivier Smolders accomplished creating a film that combines both depravity and an unsettling calmness. *Adoration* is not a glamorized look at murder and sexual gratification, but a view into the life of a pathetically perverted individual. Issei Sagawa fainted after cowardly shooting his victim in the back of the neck. After regaining consciousness, Issei raped her dead body and then proceeded to eat the flesh off of the victim's hips. Nowadays, Issei Sagawa is living the life of a "minor celebrity" in Tokyo, Japan. He writes restaurant reviews, acts in films, and is a published author.

-Ty E

BLACK NIGHT

Olivier Smolders (2005)

Black Night (Nuit Noire) is the debut feature length film from the surrealist director Olivier Smolders. The film follows a Natural Sciences Museum conservator, Oscar, who has a perverse insect fetish that eventually turns completely sexual. One day, he comes home to find a naked pregnant African woman occupying his bed. He is immediately both disgusted and disturbed by the woman's occupation of his domestic habitat. She is sweating and dying of an unmentioned disease.

Since Black Night is "weird," "dark," and "surreal," the film has been compared to the works of American auteur David Lynch. I don't really find much in common with Black Night and films by David Lynch. People really need to stop comparing every film conflicting with linear film cohesion to David Lynch. Surrealist directors have existed since the birth of cinema. Olivier Smolders has a more concrete vision in mind than David Lynch (especially when comparing the film to *Inland Empire* or *Mulholland Dr.*). Black Night has also been compared to the writing of novelist Franz Kafka (I assume especially the *Metamorphosis*) which is more a reasonable assertion.

I can already hear Spike Lee calling Black Night a racist surrealist film. The African woman featured in Black Night dies and Oscar starts constructing a cocoon out of her body. When the cocoon finally hatches, something "whiter" appears. I doubt it was the director's intention to involve race in the film, but with contemporary America and "academia's" cultural Marxist (whether they know it or not) obsession with such matters, it is inevitable.

Black Night also features footage of pre-colonial Africa (not real stock footage of course). Two white Europeans (man and child) in expedition clothes and two Africans (Woman and child) in native garb smile for the camera peacefully. Knowing how Africa fell into complete shambles after colonization, this scene invokes irony at an unintentionally (or I assume) absurd level. Black Night seems to be a fusion of an artist's subconscious and his own personal obsession. Two elements that have always made for powerful and sincere art.

Director Olivier Smolders is someone to look out for in the future. He has a pellucid vision as all great artists should. The surrealist images found in Black Night carry a resonance that will stay with you long after the film is over. Identical Nordic elderly men, mutilated little girls, and alien-like insects all come together to construct a film of aesthetically dynamic radiance.

-Ty E

DONKEY PUNCH
DONKEY PUNCH

Olly Blackburn (2008)

Wow. What a provocative and sensational title. When a film encompasses its roots as well as Olly Blackburn's does, it's sure to be a surefire hit, am I right? Donkey Punch follows the extracurricular activities of "chavs doing chavvy things". This plot summary was blissfully composed and surprisingly summarizes the film perfectly. Don't expect a scandalous thriller compromising the lives of British youngsters, instead you will find a film that borrows elements from Mean Creek and an intense kill ala Haute Tension. For those of you who are unaware of what a Donkey Punch is - Urban Dictionary. I'd recommend this website for the jolly fuck that wrote this film as well. The Donkey Punch manoeuvre is when you punch the back of the head, not generally the neck, but perhaps that fed towards the plausibility of the stupid slut dying during copulation. At first I expected an I Know What You Did Last Summer approach but found myself bored as these feisty tweens constantly contradicted themselves and flipping every which alignment in a befuddled mess that smelled worse than the ocean they were sailing. The blows are interchanged on the dot, leaving much to wonder. What you are given is a sub-par blow-by-blow revenge film that isn't "Crazysexycool" or anything in between. While Donkey Punch isn't entirely horrible, I wouldn't actually recommend it save for 2 of the death scenes. While 4/5 of the males are "right wankers", the lot all have their gleaming moments which allow you to redefine their characteristics. This might be the biggest anticipation for Sundance, but it is also the biggest let-down. Taking a stride from the average film concerning the perils of the nuclear family, Donkey Punch doesn't know where it stands on the issue of sexism. It bloats its way through each scenario making each sex look stupider and stupider as time wears thin. First, the women whore themselves out to strangers, consume narcotics, and get beaten silly only to end up dead, then the male becomes the abusive Neanderthal lugging around a guilty conscience. Things even out slightly as the end justifies the means. The biggest poisonous blow was the script. The beginning is a full-fledged cerebral assault on the average "yank". The cockney slang is whipped out encore style with no mercy. You'll be begging to hear some proper English in a matter of minutes. Nigel Thornberry comes to mind. Suddenly, I can hear "Smashing!" being repeated endlessly. Donkey Punch wants nothing more than to be a chaotic neutral friend to the battle of the sexes. 'Tis a pity, O' adolescence.

-mAQ

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Ondi Timoner (1994)

Judeocentric cultural Marxist moral bankruptcy is quite obvious in many ways in Tinseltown, but in no way is it more apparent than the fact that pedophilic rapists and sex criminals have no problem continuing to work in the industry yet people that say slightly naughty things about Hebrews, homos, and/or leftists are oftentimes blacklisted and viciously attacked by the yellow press. Indeed, Judaic auteurs like Roman Polanski and Woody Allen did not allow certain rather unsavory sex scandals result in them serving prison sentences, let alone ruin their careers. Likewise, mainstream leftist journalists and film critics are shockingly sympathetic when it comes to writing about these degenerates, as if their Hebraicness gives them a perennial pass (of course, Polanski's shoah survivor status does not hurt). Maybe it is due to the fact that he was a wily wop instead of a member of god's chosen tribe, but gay guido Victor Salva found himself serving 15 months of a three year sentence after he got busted boning the 12-year-old star Nathan Forrest Winters of his debut feature *Clownhouse* (1989). In fact, aside from molesting Winters over a four year period that started when the young boy appeared in the softspoken sexual predator's Spielberg-esque debut horror short *Something in the Basement* (1986), Salva was arrogant enough in terms of his craven carnality that he actually dared to film himself engaging with mutual oral molestation with the little lad, thus giving the authorities all the evidence they needed to certify his guilt (apparently, the cops also discovered that Salva had a massive collection of child porn). Of course, Salva's affinity for little boy buggery did not stop him from eventually continuing his career in Hollywood, as his fellow Sicilian-American filmmaker buddy Francis Ford Coppola was eventually able to help him relaunch his filmmaking career and he would go on to direct relatively mainstream turds like the Disney distributed celluloid self-pity party *Powder* (1995) starring Jeff Goldblum and the rather commercially successful horror franchise flicks *Jeepers Creepers* (2001) and *Jeepers Creepers II* (2003). As revealed in the article *Can Victor Salva Move On?* by Glenn Lovell, Salva once even bragged in regard to his relatively disturbing ability to work and flourish in Hollywood despite being a convinced child molester, "I'm not sure people are comfortable being seen with me.... But I think [studio execs] saying, 'He'll never work again' was all for show. My God, if they were to take the [arrest] records of every filmmaker or actor, they'd have to shut this town down . . . Let's face it [hollow laugh] anybody can work here who makes money." Indeed, as Salva, Allen, and Polanski have confirmed, you can commit the most ungodly of crimes against children and continue to work in Hollywood, so long as you're not suspected of blaming Jews for decide or starting eternal wars in the Middle East.

Despite making fairly lame mainstream movies for the most part, Salva, un-

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like Polanski and Allen, has somewhat utilized his prison experience and dubious reputation as a sexual predator to his artistic advantage, at least when it comes to two of his lesser known films, including *The Nature of the Beast* (1995) aka *Bad Company* aka *Hatchet Man* and *Rites of Passage* (1999). In fact, Salva wrote the scripts for both of these films while he was still in prison and *Rites of Passage* is actually a semi-autobiographical movie that was inspired by the fact that the filmmaker's abusive alcoholic stepfather disowned him for being a faggot long before he was ever busted for molesting the child star of his debut feature *Clownhouse*. Not unlike American arthouse auteur Jon Jošt—a pacifistic white liberal who spent over two years in prison for draft-dodging—with his arguable magnum opus *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* (1977), Salva utilized his personal experience interacting with dangerous criminals in the slammer as crucial inspiration in terms of constructing characters for these two very morally ambiguous yet nonetheless strangely insightful and unforgettable films that test the bounds of social and cinematic acceptability. Unlike Jošt's film(s), Salva's movies naturally focus on rough and tough homos and criminally-inclined perverts. While Salva might have been busted for preying on preteen boys, these two films clearly indicate that the filmmaker also has a fetish for butch alpha-male types and anti-social rebels. Somewhat ironically but not surprisingly considering the auteur's somewhat laughable talent when it comes to directing serious melodrama, the least overtly gay yet most sexually-charged of these two films, *The Nature of the Beast*, is also the superior cinematic effort and arguably the filmmaker's greatest film yet. In short, you can really sense while watching the film that Salva has spent a lot of time thinking about the sort of guys that would love nothing more than to rape, rob, and/or beat him to death. Not unsurprisingly, the film utilizes the classic LGBT canard of hinting that the source of a serial killer character's homicidal tendencies are sexual repression and self-internalized homophobia, which is somewhat ironic considering that Salva exercised his own personal sexual demons by molesting a boy.

A horror-thriller-slasher-drama-mystery road flick that involves a sort of covertly gay disharmonious romance between a middle-aged alcoholic bourgeois serial killer and a somewhat younger junky ex-con crook-cum-hitchhiker, *The Nature of the Beast* is a film that is nearly impossible to discuss and analyze without revealing crucial spoilers (in fact, I recommend watching the film first before reading this if you don't want it ruined for you). Arguably one of the most innately fucked up and depraved depictions of 'opposites attracting' in quasi-mainstream American cinema history, Salva's film is like a more overtly homoerotic take on *The Hitcher* (1986) and Spielberg's made-for-TV thriller *Duel* (1971) with elements of road movies as diverse as Monte Hellman's *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971), Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973), and Rainer Erler's kraut cult horror flick *Fleisch* (1979) aka *Spare Parts*, albeit sans any sort of genuine artistic value. In terms of its homoerotic subtext and psychopathic character(s), Salva's film can

also certainly be compared to Pasquale Festa Campanile's beautifully brutal anti-bourgeois cross-country chiller *AutoStop rosso sangue* (1977) aka *Hitch-Hike* starring Franco Nero and David Hess. Additionally, I don't doubt that Salva, who apparently adores golden age Hollywood, is a fan of Ida Lupino's film noir classic *The Hitch-Hiker* (1953). Undoubtedly, one of the most, if not the most, potent aspect of the film is the rather intense chemistry between perennial boy bimbo Eric Roberts and unrivaled Übermensch of silver screen stoicism Lance Henriksen in what is indubitably one of the most superlatively sick unrequited love stories ever committed to celluloid. Indeed, when it really comes down to it, *The Nature of the Beast* is the sad and pathetic story of an ostensibly rough and tough lost gay boy and the murderously repressed suburban family man that is too uptight and impenetrable to embrace the lonely lad and engage in In flagrante delicto with him. In its depiction of a bad boy from the wrong side of the tracks with serious pathological daddy issues, the film follows in the pleasantly politically incorrect tradition of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), which is notable for pissing off mainstream gay authoritarian groups due to its rather unflattering depiction of a sod serial killer with a sort of gay Oedipus complex who incessantly writes letters to his long dead father. In terms of depicting a gay lumpenprole rebel that tries in vain to be loved and respected by an anally retentive bourgeois prick, the film somewhat strangely shares similar themes to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Fox and His Friends* (1975) aka *Faustrecht der Freiheit*. As demonstrated by the fact that virtually none of the murders are depicted onscreen and the overall film is relatively bloodless, I think that it is fairly safe to say that Salva merely uses generic genre conventions as a means to trick straight viewers into watching a patently perverse poof (anti)love story. Still, despite being a crypto-cocksucker film that was never released in theaters, the film proved to be New Line Cinema's biggest direct-to-video title of 1995. Undoubtedly, leads Henriksen and Roberts certainly deserve credit for molding an otherwise mostly banally constructed film into bizarrely delectable piece of raw psychosexual intensity where bloodlust replaces love and murder acts as a substitute for sex.

As a virtual lifelong fan of *The X-Files*, I am also naturally a fan of Chris Carter's somewhat more esoteric and occult oriented Fox television series *Millennium* (1996-1999) starring Lance Henriksen as a terminally sullen ex-FBI agent named Frank Black that has a keen talent for catching serial killer by using a special genetic gift that allows him to be able to 'empathize' with the criminally perverted and see the world through their warped eyes. In *Millennium*, Henriksen—a man who, in terms of appearance and demeanor, is not surprisingly the son of a Norwegian sailor-cum-boxer with the nickname 'Icewater'—plays a stoically melancholic man who seems like he has all the pain and misery of all of humanity bearing down on his supremely forlorn soul. Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *The Nature of the Beast* so intensely intriguing is that

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Henriksen portrays a decidedly depraved dude that his character Frank Black would have obsessively hunted on *Millennium*. As for Eric Roberts, he portrays a rawer yet somewhat deconstructed version of the rebel-without-a-cause archetype as exemplified by legends like Marlon Brando and James Dean, as well as real-life copycats like American teenaged spree killer Charles Starkweather. Naturally, as a homo with a softspot for cute and charming conmen that are probably desperate enough and/or morally bankrupt to do gay-for-pay even if they aren't actually faggots, Salva clearly empathizes with Roberts' character while attacking Henriksen's character for his supposed sexual repression. In fact, it can certainly be argued that *The Nature of the Beast* goes as far as to portray Roberts' hustler-like character as a victim of sort uptight bourgeois gay self-loathing, with the film somewhat hinting that if Henriksen's embraced his inner-homo by sucking cocks and reaming rectums, he might not be a hyper hypocritical homicidal maniac that enjoys cutting people into little pieces. Needless to say, the film also has an extra hidden layer of truly unnerving psychosexual horror when one considers that it is a cinematic that critiques sexual repression yet was directed by a perverted fellow with a pederastic predilection. Indeed, one of the things that makes *The Nature of the Beast* so awfully engulfing is that watching the film has more or less the same appeal as witnessing a uniquely unsavory crime that has to be seen to be believed. In other words, it is indubitably the sort of film that you would hope to see from a real-life sex criminal, even if Salva demonstrates the legitimacy of Heidegger's Jewess mistress Hannah Arendt's 'the banality of evil' theory as far as genuine artistry is concerned (indeed, like his hero Spielberg, Salva is not an artist but an artisan).

Like virtually all of Salva's films, *The Nature of the Beast* is, in terms of sheer direction and construction, hopelessly contrived and screams of mechanically constructed pre-processed celluloid product (in this sense, one can certainly see why Spielberg is one of the director's biggest influences), but thankfully Mr. Henriksen and Mr. Roberts and their borderline shockingly believable savage homoerotic chemistry make this film worth viewing, even if you have nil interest in smoking poles or pursuing the exotic art of bugchasing. Indeed, it seems that in every single scene in the entire film, a tumbleweed conspicuously passes by, including the opening scene where a faceless serial killer known as the 'Hatchet Man' emerges from the backseat of a vintage Chrysler and kills a poor fat wop in a desolate motel desert parking lot in the middle of the night. The next day, protagonist Jack Powell (Henriksen)—an extremely uptight looking businessman with a family who seems like he is hiding some deep dark secret—drives by the crime scene and is told by a cop, "Keep going, straight through. At least until you get to the interstate. Don't stop to make any new friends" due to a "homicide." Jack seems somewhat surprised when he sees tiny pieces of body parts being removed from the trunk of the Chrysler. Before driving away, Jack sees 'Hatchet Man' written in blood on the trunk of the car. As the viewer will soon learn, Jack

has much more important things to worry about than a deranged serial killer that enjoys turning people into mincemeat. While driving on the highway, Jack spots an inordinately handsome hitchhiker (Roberts) with a cool strut who he seems to want to pick up, but decides to pass. Unfortunately for Jack, he opts to stop at a pink diner called 'Cadillac Jacks' where, upon entering the bathroom, he is soon intimidated by the boorishly charismatic hitcher, who says to him while peeing in a urinal, "You're not too neighborly, are you?... You got a kink about watching people fry in the desert?" From there, Jack makes the mistake of apologizing and offers to buy the hitchhiker, who introduces himself as Adrian aka 'Dusty,' lunch. One of the first things Adrian does to shock and provoke Jack is to ask him, "Are you a fag? I don't mean any offense if you are. I mean, if it weren't for homos... none of us fellas would ever get a ride. I've thumbed enough miles to know that." Somewhat strangely, Jack does not even bother to deny he's a homo and one gets the sense that Adrian is no novice when it comes to the timeless art of hustling, as he seems like he could be the meth-addled redneck half-brother of Joe Dallesandro. A sort of sleazily suave bisexual take on the 'Hawksian woman' archetype, Adrian might be a total piece of self-destructive human excrement, but he is undeniably likeable. Of course, Jack is even more disturbed when Adrian states to him while figuratively peering into his soul, "You know, Jack, I can usually tell in about two minutes... all I need to know about a person." When a less than sophisticated waitress named Patsy (Roberts' real-life wife Eliza Roberts) comes to the table, it becomes obvious why Jack is terrified, as she casually mentions how over \$1 million was stolen from a local casino. As hinted by a snazzy suitcase he is constantly carrying around, the viewer assumes that Jack stole the money, hence his anxiety. Before the day is over, Patsy is dead and Adrian, who the viewer assumes has managed to use his hustler charms to seduce her, was one of the last people to see her alive. While the viewer suspects that Jack is a thief, one also assumes that Adrian is the mysterious killer, but by the end of the film the filmgoer will learn that first impressions can be seriously misleading and that you never really know what is going on in people's heads.

For virtually the entire film, Jack makes every desperate attempt he can to flee Adrian's aggressively charming company, but the too-cool-for-school hitchhiker blackmails the lame old bourgeois businessman and constantly reaffirms his intent to place an anonymous call to the local cops with his license plate number if he dares to attempt to abandon him in the scorching deserts of Southern California. Adrian is certainly the sort of shameless charmer that never takes no for an answer and he is totally determined to establish a bizarre close relationship with Jack. When it comes down to it, Adrian just wants to simply have some good honest dangerous fun with the old man and earn his respect, but Jack is too hopelessly repressed and finds the young stud's dirty little heroin addiction to be quite disgusting as revealed by rather self-righteous things he says to him like, "That stuff is disgusting. You put enough of that in you and you're going

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to goddamn fall apart.” Of course, as an angry dipsomaniac that incessantly has Jack Daniels pumping through his veins and who seems to bask in stewing in his own deeply hidden angry and hatred, Jack is no less of an addict than Adrian is and he is in complete denial about that fact. In fact, Adrian attempts to callout Jack on his flagrant hypocrisy by stating, “You know all about it, don’t you, Jack? Yeah, people scream evil like a motherfucker...unless it’s their own—then it’s cool.” Naturally, Adrian also hints that he is interested in more things than just drugs and that he desires Jack sexually by stating somewhat ambiguous things like, “Repression is a deadly thing. It’s deadly.” Unfortunately for poor Adrian, his words will prove to be quite literally true, but before he kicks the bucket in a seriously savage fashion he gets to go on a strange road trip with the world’s angriest suburban family man.

Since Jack is too much of an anally retentive pussy to fuck him (or get fucked by him), Adrian gets focused on a dope-dealing hippie couple named Gerald (Sasha Jenson) and Dahlia (Ana Gabriel) from Boston that are driving across country in a van full of drugs in the stereotypical hope to, “check out the rainforest before they cut it all down.” Needless to say, Jack is not happy to see the two hippies and forces Adrian to abandon his new friends only a couple minutes after meeting them at a secluded gas station. Of course, Adrian is at least partly interested in these hapless braindead hippie morons because he so desperately wants to make Jack jealous. In fact, Jack gets so jealous of Adrian’s new friends that he flips out, pulls over the car, and yells, “We don’t look right together, get it? Everyone within a hundred miles...knows about the Hatchet Man and the goddamn money. Do you understand? What, do you think I’m some dumb ass old man...that you can drag around on your psycho circle jerk?” To Jack’s credit, Gerald and Dahlia did question whether or not he and Adrian were lovers, as they certainly make for quite the striking odd couples. Unfortunately, for Jack, insatiable dope fiend Adrian is “looking to do a little business” since Gerald and Dahlia have a magical “traveling pharmacy” and he needs some of Cocteau’s kick lest he suffer from a seriously hellish bout of junk withdrawal in the desert. While Jack gets a little bit unhinged at this point and repeatedly screams, “get out of my car” like a violent tyrannical toddler that does not want to share his toys, he finally cools down and gives Adrian the following ultimatum: “If we’re gonna do this, we’re gonna do this my way.” Needless to say, Adrian refuses to play nice and subsequently petrifies Jack by dropping a highly poisonous Gila Monster in his lap that he bought from a mischievous guido midget named Harliss at a bizarre pet store called Creepy Crawly Zoo. While Jack is growing increasingly hysterical about the reptile in his crotch, Adrian more or less confesses his dark and twisted lust for him by boldly declaring, “Don’t play me, Jack. You know what I am, and I know what you are. That’s ain’t never gonna change. Now get us out of here before you kill the both of us.” Of course, when the two anti-buddies pull into a campground and discover Gerald and Dahlia are already there, Jack

cannot stop Adrian from hanging out with the hippies.

Undoubtedly, during the campground segment of the film Jack's true repressed gay feelings for Adrian are revealed in a couple of strange yet not all too surprising ways. Indeed, almost immediately, Jack decides to go pout by himself in the woods like a little crybaby because he is jealous of Adrian's new friends, even though he has spent the last couple days desperately attempting to get away from the young punk. When Dahlia makes the misguided mistake of attempting to talk to Jack by telling him some hippie pseudo-metaphysical bullshit about how he has a "purple aura" and that he "has some kind of terrible trouble," he gets somewhat physically aggressive, warns her, "You take Gerald, and you get the hell away," and ultimately scares her away so badly that she attempts to talk her beau into fleeing the park for good. After Dahlia runs away, Adrian confronts Jack and more or less declares his love for him by passionately state, "You think this is coincidence, our paths crossing like this? We attracted each other. We were like magnets, Jack. The two of us colliding in time...bound together by our little secrets." Indeed, Adrian seems to think Jack is his special soul mate, but the nearly emotionally impenetrable old fart does not want to believe it, as he is a man of immense hatred and glacial impenetrability who just does not know how to let himself be emotionally vulnerable. After accusing him of being "afraid of partying" because he "might like it," Adrian also makes a point of mocking Jack's hypocrisy by stating, "You think you know right from wrong? You think you know what that is? You got as much right to moralize as Jack the fucking Ripper." Rather revealing, it is only when Adrian catches Jack engaged in ménage à trois of sorts with Gerald and Dahlia that he completely loses it and goes completely berserk in what amounts to a pathetic emotional breakdown of sorts. Even more revealingly, before actually catching them engaging in drug-fueled carnal indulgences, Jack bangs on the van while Adrian is inside and pathetically pleads to him during a rare moment of tactless vulnerability, "Adrian, don't do this" and "we need to talk," as if he wants to declare his love and affection for him, but is just too plain socially and sexually ill-equipped to do so. After getting done fucking and doing dope with the hippies, Adrian comes back to the hotel room to find Jack lying in bed and looking quite morbidly depressed, as if his lover cheated on him with cheap white trash. In short, Jack looks like a completely broke man and hustler Adrian naturally decides to take advantage of the situation. In the hope of cheering Jack up, Adrian encourages him to pay Gerald and Dahlia a special unannounced visit, stating in a mischievous fashion, "Why don't you go to the van? You know you want to," which he does. At this point, it becomes fairly obvious that it might be Jack and not Adrian that is the Hatchet Man, as the serial killer's bloody signature is inscribed on the hippie van the next day. One could also certainly argue that, as a present and gesture of love and affection to his new comrade, Adrian lured in the two hippies so that Jack could have a little fun with them.

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In the final and arguably most melodramatic act of the film, Jack follows his original plan before meeting Adrian by driving the two to a secluded forest cabin that he inherited. In the first scene where the stolen casino money is actually revealed to the viewer, dumb ass 'Dusty' carelessly loses \$250,000 during a drunken game of poker, so he quite predictably decides to cheer herself up by shooting some junk into this arm, thus predictably disgusting Jack, who bitches, "Oh, you're just a slow-motion suicide. If you want to kill yourself...why don't you just get it over with instead of waiting for somebody else to do it?" When Jack further remarks, "Well, you don't look like a junkie," as if to pay him a mild compliment in a backhanded sort of way, Adrian suavely retorts, "You could look like a prince and still be white trash" and then goes on a nihilistic rant about how everyone has "a hole" that "can't be filled," life is filled with "nothingness," and how every self-destructive impulse is "just the nature of the beast." When Adrian dares to call him out on his flagrant hypocrisy and knocks a glass of liquor out of his hand, Jack decides to sneak up to him from behind and knock him out unconscious by repeatedly beating him over the head and body with his metal briefcase in what is ultimately a quite cowardly act that really highlights the mean bourgeois bastard's inner volcanic hostility and overall lack of humanity. Indeed, Jack decides that hardhearted homicide is the most adequate antidote to Adrian's rather reasonable complaints of hypocrisy. After firmly taping him to a chair, Jack gives Adrian a self-described "lesson in life" by declaring "The monkey doesn't shit where the crocodile sleeps. You're the one with the needle in his arm looking for a new daddy, right? What's he supposed to come along and do? Finish what the first one started? Well, here he is. Father knows best." While creating a seemingly deadly cocktail that includes a bunch of heroin and Jack Daniels, Jack gets on his high horse and remarks, "He goes by many names—crank, crack, croak. I bet you there's not even a name for this. But you can think of one on your last trip to Never Never Land. Maybe, by rights, you should end up in little pieces. Maybe that's all you really want. I don't know. I'm not a shrink. But this is exactly how you should go out." Before injecting the deadly dope in his compatriot's neck, Jack sadistically states, "It's just a shot, little boy," thus causing Adrian to lose his cool for the first time in the entire movie and meekly beg while on the verge of tears, "Please don't kill me, Jack." Of course, gentleman Jack is hardly a forgiving man and even seems to derive sadistic glee from seeing Adrian squirm. Indeed, after shooting the bad batch into Adrian's rather red neck, Jack declares, "Off to see the wizard." Needless to say, Jack watches intently from only a couple feet away as Adrian jerks and convulses in an erratic fashion as he succumbs to a drug overdose.

While Jack is sure Adrian is dead and buries his corpse before it gets dark, things get a little strange later that night when the ostensibly dead hitchhiker begins to rise from the grave during a less than auspicious moment involving local law enforcement. Indeed, shortly after Jack's old cop pal Sheriff Gordon (Brion

James) and his young partner 'Little David' (Tom Tarantini) randomly arrive at the cabin to warn the psychopathic businessman of possible crooks and criminals in the area, Adrian slowly but surely digs himself out of his relatively shallow grave whilst his would-be-killer looks on in terror that he might be caught and ultimately recognized for the murderous monster that he really is. Luckily for Jack, Sheriff Gordon and his partner leave abruptly due to a call regarding a domestic disturbance, so Jack only has to worry about just finishing off Adrian for once and all instead of going to jail. Needless to say, Adrian decides to taunt Jack after unearthing himself and does so by writing "Hatchet Man" on his car. As for Jack, he whips out a shotgun and immediately attempts to gun down Adrian while he lurks in the shadows. When Adrian eventually reveals himself, he does so in a super suave fashion by lighting a match, coolly declaring, "You can't kill the devil, Jack. You ought to know that," and then kicking Jack his suitcase in what ultimately proves to be a poetically suicidal act. Terminally heartbroken after being rebuffed by the brutal old man, Adrian reasonably complains to Jack, "You know, you really are a sick man, Jack. Here I am...the one single body...on the face of this shit-eating planet...who would accept you...for what you really are. And you try to kill...and bury me." Ultimately, Adrian seems so emotionally wounded as a result of being so ruthlessly rejected that he more or less allows Jack to finish him off. As for Jack, he finally expresses his truly twisted psycho killer Weltanschauung by coldly yet confidently declaring, "People spend their whole lives thinking that someone is going to come along and take away all their misery. For a precious few, I am that someone" and then reveals a large hatchet that he had stored in his beloved suitcase, thus confirming beyond any doubt that he is indeed the infamous "Hatchet Man" serial killer, which Adrian clearly knew all along. With his last bit of gall, Adrian asks Jack, "Why do you cut them up into little pieces," and the suburban serial killer replies with a notable hint of visceral hatred "For the fuck of it" and then proceeds to kill the poor lovelorn junky off-screen. In the end, Jack goes back to his bourgeois family in the suburbs where he greets a paperboy and states in a phony jolly fashion "say, hey, Billy." Before the final credits appear, the following Jeremiah 17:9 appears: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?"

As far as homoerotic thrillers are concerned, *The Nature of the Beast* is, in terms of sheer sexual and emotional tension, the ultimate bloody and badly botched anti-orgasm as the two male leads never put aside their differences and fuck like the sick Sturmabteilung-esque sods that they are, but then again one could argue that the real sexual climax is when Jack murders Adrian in what ultimately proves to be an amazingly aberrant act of perverse poofster poetry in a film where a queer filmmaker reveals in a somewhat covert fashion the darker side of fagdom à la Armin Meiwes and John Wayne Gacy. Undoubtedly, the film is also notable for featuring a potent example of a failed *Folie à deux*, as Adrian so desperately

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

desires to be on the same wavelength as Jack in terms of perverse pathology, but really the two men are total opposites, even if they are both fairly morally bankrupt in their own ways. Of course, it is ultimately bourgeois businessman Jack that is the sickest of the two as a sociopathic serial killer of the innately impenetrable sort who has his head so far up his own ass that he cannot even accept the inordinately tender Kameradschaft of a charming junky crook, even though he actually accepts him for who he is a sadistic killer with a fiercely foul fetish for savagely dismembering strangers. Of course, the film seems to be a pathetic projection of auteur Salva's own feelings of rejection, as if he had a crush on some big mean murderer in prison, but the guy rejected him and/or found it impossible to respect him because he is a soft and weak pedo. After all, *The Nature of the Beast* was adapted from one of the five scripts that he wrote while in prison where he had a lot of time to personally confront and think about the criminal mind. Apparently, prison was, not surprisingly, a nightmarish experience for Salva, or as he told Glenn Lovell in an interview, "I was never more scared or closer to death than I was in prison. I received no therapy there. Prisons are not places for rehabilitation or learning to understand yourself or your actions. They're monster factories." Not unlike many gay men, Salva seems to be a major masochist, as he certainly delights in sexualizing the criminals and killers in his films. Of course, like many child molesters, Salva was very quite possibly the victim of child molestation himself, so it is only natural that he would depict the worst sort of human predator as a sort of perennially intangible sex object that is devoid of empathy and compassion. Thankfully, Salva simply subtly proposes questions and refuses to offer answers.

Not unlike Moors murderer Ian Brady's book *The Gates of Janus: Serial Killing and Its Analysis by the Moors Murderer Ian Brady* (2001) published by the fine folks at Feral House, *The Nature of the Beast* might be best described as an obscenely odious piece of criminal outsider art where the creator's own criminal passions and experiences are an intrinsic ingredient of the work. Don't get me wrong, Sicilian sod Salva is far from a great cinematic auteur, but his films, especially *The Nature of the Beast* (1995) and *Rites of Passage*, open a window into the mind of a degenerate criminal that, at the very least, seems to be hardly ridden of his despicable desires and has no problem expressing them cinematically, even if in a semi-hermetic fashion. Surely, I would file most of Salva's films under the 'true crime' section despite being fictional features, as they say just as much about the filmmaker as the paintings of frog cannibal Nicolas Claux reveal about him. Indeed, even in his ostensibly non-gay films like *Powder* and the *Jeepers Creepers* franchise, Salva could not help but include barley-legal shirtless twinks and seemingly subconscious gay subtexts that are nothing if not incriminating. Once describing his arrest and imprisonment for molesting a 12-year-old boy as nothing more than a mere "little hiatus," Salva hardly seems sincere when he makes generic anti-pedo declarations to journalists like, "I do

not advocate inappropriate sexual behavior with children.” In short, Salva says one thing but his films certainly say another. Certainly, one cannot get through watching *The Nature of the Beast* or *Rites of Passage* without coming to the conclusion that the writer/director is a conscious sexual outlaw that looks down on men that repress their sexual perversions. After all, Salva more than hints that Henriksen character’s hateful murderous impulses are the direct result of sexual repression. Of course, one could argue that making bloody horror is Salva’s only outlet for his pedo tendencies and that if he was not making such sickly salacious films he might have become a re-offender and/or cheerleader for NAMBLA. Either way, there is no denying the captivating carnal criminal perversity of a film like *The Nature of the Beast* where the viewer is forced to sympathize with the sick and sexually depraved. As a marvelous male bimbo with certain glaring white trash qualities (e.g. wife-beating), Eric Roberts hardly seems like he is easy to offend, yet apparently he deeply regrets appearing in *The Nature of the Beast*. Indeed, in an interview featured in the February 6, 1996 issue of the mainstream gay magazine *The Advocate*, Roberts remarked, “I made a movie with Victor just before *POWDER* called *THE NATURE OF THE BEAST* [...] I’ll say that had I known Victor was a pedophile, I would not have made that movie. Victor didn’t lie, but he lied by omission [...] If a man is going to videotape his sex life with a boy, it makes me nauseous. It makes me feel very vulnerable, and I’m not a vulnerable guy.” Of course, Salva is the real monster of his films and a perfect case study when it comes to proving the auteur theory, but I doubt he was born that way. Abandoned by his biological father and abuse and gay-bashed by the alcoholic stepfather that raised him, Salva undoubtedly longs for a “daddy” just like Adrian in *The Nature of the Beast*, so I think it is only fitting to conclude this review with Mr. Roberts’ eloquent words from his *Advocate* interview, “The behavior that is abusive comes out of a child in us that feels frightened or scared. But the problem is, it doesn’t translate: A big grown man, when he’s in that child state, is a big grown man doing it; he’s not a hurt child. I realized I was hurting myself. You don’t mean to abuse anybody around you. But as you hurt yourself, you hurt other people.” If there is anything that the viewer truly learns while watching the film, it is that Salva truly believes that he, like most people, is a victim of the nature of the beast and that the act of boy-bugging reveals an extra advanced degree of this spiritually necrotizing eponymous affliction.

-Ty E

SKATEISTAN: TO LIVE AND SKATE KABUL
SKATEISTAN: TO LIVE AND SKATE KABUL

Orlando von Einsiedel (2011)

As a teenager, I was in awe when I found out that the small rural county I called home was planning to build a skatepark. After all, skateboarding was far from being the most popular recreational activity (hunting is without question, infinitely more popular) in my area and there were only about ten skaters at my high school. Nowadays, it seems like every town has a skatepark or two, including war torn Kabul, Afghanistan. In the short documentary *Skateistan: To Live and Skate Kabul* directed by Orlando von Einsiedel, the viewer is briefly exposed to the culture shock world of Afghan guerilla skateboarding. In the documentary, young Arabs skaters cruise through monumental rubble, weaving through gnarly animal heads and debris-ridden battle zones. One young Afghan skater mentions that not many of his countrymen understand the world of skateboarding, thinking that the young skaters feet are attached to their skateboard by some type of magnetic field. The 2001 American blitzkrieg-style 'Operation Enduring Freedom' invasion may have not given the people of Afghanistan the freedom that the United States of America had promised but at least they now have an indoor skatepark.

Play

In *Skateistan: To Live and Skate Kabul*, a 17 year old skater named Murza discusses his turbulent and violent upbringing in Kabul, Afghanistan. Although Murza was not exactly happy with Taliban-occupied Afghanistan, he still prefers it to the American occupation, as he feels that his country had much more stability when it was run by the infamous Islamist militia. The popular sk8 phrase "Skate or Die" has a more literal meaning for Murza when you consider the intemperate and chaotic world the youthful Afghan boy skates in. Murza originally had a job slavishly washing cars in the wintertime, which often resulted in frozen and cracked hands, surely not an admirable trade even in Afghanistan. Muhammad must be watching over Murza during holy Jihad, as the Afghan boy now has a dream job teaching skateboarding at Kabul skatepark. Like most skateboarders around the world, Murza describes skateboarding as an addiction that causes symptoms of withdrawal when one is unable to push wood. I never thought I would find skateboarding inspiration in Afghanistan but *Skateistan: To Live and Skate Kabul* is undoubtedly an attestation to the universal appeal of sidewalk surfing.

The most glaring flaw of *Skateistan: To Live and Skate Kabul* is the length (around 9 minutes in length), as you only get a taste of the Afghan skateboarding in this original micro-documentary. I would really enjoy watching a documentary that follows a group of Afghan skaters over a period of a year, to find out if they are caught in a skate session that turns into sniper battle or terrorist bombing. Thankfully, a feature-length documentary on Kabul skatepark, *Skateistan:*

Four Wheels and a Board in Kabul, is being released sometime in 2011. I sincerely hope that the Kabul skate park is not destroyed by a suicide bomber or American troops, especially when you consider that it is one of the few things that these children without childhoods have to look forward to. I doubt any skateboard teams will be touring through Afghanistan anytime soon, so it is up to the first generation of Afghan skaters to produce their own local skateboarding heroes. With their own national culture being annihilated right before their adolescent eyes, at least these kids are able build their own subculture in the slightly less dangerous atmosphere of Kabul skate park.

-Ty E

THE TRIAL
THE TRIAL

Orson Welles (1962)

Orson Welles' film adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* is one of cinematic expression. I would even argue that the film is Welles' most expressive. I found myself more engulfed by the set design than the film's unconventional plot. Anthony Perkins stars as the victim protagonist of *The Trial*. A man that is guilty of a crime he hasn't committed. No one will tell the man what crime he is guilty of. One theory of Kafka's intent with the book was that of Jewish identity. As a Jew, Kafka felt the victim of constant judgment and social abstraction. *The Trial* most certainly gives off that that feeling. Anthony Perkins' character is always on the defense and paranoid to his judgmental accusers. To such an extreme degree that he literally explodes. To make *The Trial* even more eerie and haunting, it was filmed in post world war II Europe (Paris mainly). Producing the film after second world war makes the film more appropriate than when it first was published 40 years before. It is interesting to consider whether or not Kafka had predicted the future. Nonetheless, the film was time appropriately released. *The Trial* was one of few films that Orson Welles had full control over (aside from *Citizen Kane*). I think this is quite obvious watching the film as it does not cater to the lowest common denominator. The set design and dark aesthetics of *The Trial* are very overwhelming to say the least. A court room full of hundreds of vocal accusers, aggressive police at every hidden corner, and the unknown lurking in every shadow effectively traps the viewer. Orson Welles knew what he wanted to do with the film. *The Trial* is a film that requires and deserves multiple viewings. It is condensed with many of Orson Welles' signature cinematic techniques. It is a shame that Orson Welles was unable to acquire funds to that would have enable him to keep continuing his auteur vision. *The Trial* is a must view for serious fans of film. "Say what you will, but *The Trial* is the best film I have ever made." — Orson Welles

-Ty E

GOLGO 13

Osamu Dezaki (1983)

Second Sonny Chiba night in a row. This time I focused my time on a film solely featuring the Dragon eyed Chiba. In this role, he plays the incredibly popular manga hitman Golgo 13. This is technically a sequel to an earlier Golgo 13 film, in which Bullet Train co-star played the assassin lead. It's now increasingly rare for me to see an interesting assassin story. As much as psych development might be handy, it's heavily an overplayed asset. One thing I respect about Shinichi Chiba: In most of his more popular films, he leaves a reference towards him being a Japanese/Chinese mix. One might speculate as to why but the reason seems to bridge the gap between both cultures and cinema. If you intend to see Chiba with a perm, then you picked the right motion picture. When I first viewed Sonny Chiba in a thrift store tape in *The Street Fighter*, I was amazed at his hectic skills in *The Street Fighter*, but was disappointed at the thought of there being no more Terry Tsurugi style martial arts. Well, I for one have been proved wrong. Once Duke Togo (Golgo 13) gets surrounded by a bunch of punks, he goes out of his way to inflict massive bodily harm leaving many bodies in his wake. The action level of this film is off the charts. We're either treated to a silent assassin moody-brooding everywhere or we get that same hitman doing stage dives shooting people right in between the eyes. Let the squibs fly. It's a recurring theme in the legend's films to have him pull off a job and get betrayed, which usually leads to more action, violence, and the seduction of women. The character of Golgo 13 surprisingly needs preparation. You can't pull a Nicholas Cage and just pick up a sniper rifle, utter a couple noir-ish monologues, and have an enjoyable anti-hero. Chiba's fluid movements assembling his rifle were dually noted. The rifle was an extension of him as he traced the skyline with the barrel. If this film should be noted for anything, it's Chiba's stunning performance. I enjoyed Golgo 13 to the fullest extent that I'd ever imagine I could. The theme song to the film gets drilled into your head. Expect to be humming it after the film is over. Another plus is that you just feel so damn cool while watching this. Detective Smithy was played by a great actor; too bad that was the only film he'd been in. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go play this game on my NES.

-mAQ

SILVESTER COUNTDOWN
SILVESTER COUNTDOWN

Oskar Roehler (1997)

I have never really cared for celebrating New Year's Eve aside from when I was like 5-years-old because it was the only time my parents would let me stay up past midnight, but for some reason, I decided that I wanted to see if I could dig up one single film revolving around the bullshit holiday that was semi-decent, which ultimately rather predictably proved to be a hopelessly frivolous and tasking non-goal of the ultra banal sort with next to nil pay-off. I considered watching the second-rate slasher flick *New Year's Evil* (1980) directed by Emmett Alston (who, incidentally, was the cinematographer behind the meta-physical pseudo-arthouse abortion *Moonchild* (1974) directed by Alan Gadney) but then I realized that I was not in enough of a masochistic mood to watch such pointless celluloid dreck. I also thought about watching the short Arthur Schnitzler adaptation *Silvesternacht - Ein Dialog* (1978) aka *New Year's Eve* co-directed by Douglas Sirk and Hajo Gies and starring Fassbinder diva Hanna Schygulla and Hebraic-blooded perennial screen Nazi Christian Berkel, but I was not in the mood for some heavy Sirkian melodrama, even in such a small dose, so I opted to watch some immature 1990s kraut quasi-arthouse trash instead. Indeed, I ultimately decided to watch *Silvester Countdown* (1997) aka *In With the New* directed by Teutonic enfant turd Oskar Roehler (*Agnes und seine Brüder* aka *Agnes and His Brothers*, *Atomised* aka *Elementary Particles*) as I felt in the mood for a combination of failed celluloid art and sleazy nihilistic trash. Although *No Place to Go* (2000) aka *Die Unberührbare*—a quasi-expressionistic work depicting the director's Marxist novelist mother Gisela Elsner's suicide as partly inspired by the German reunification and the death of her dream of a commie Krautland—is oftentimes described as Roehler's debut feature, he directed a couple of mostly forgotten mid-length and feature-length films before that. Somewhat notably, Roehler's directorial debut was the rather politically incorrect 60-minute work *Gentleman* (1995) starring the somewhat obscure German cult figure Konradin Markus Leiner aka QRT aka "Fascho-Kurt"—a sort of 'postmodern' fascist junky philosopher and neo-dandy who overdosed on heroin not long after the film was released, but not before penning a 500-page tome called *Drachensaat* aka *Dragon's Seed: The Way to the Nihilist Hero* influenced by everyone from Ernst Jünger and Otto Weininger to alpha-Beat William S. Burroughs—engaging in unsimulated drug use (i.e. shooting up heroin) and killing unclad sluts. Roehler also directed hedonistic trash like the grotesque feature-length work *Gierig* (1999), as well as the TV movie *Latin Lover* (1999) co-penned by bank robber turned novelist/actor Burkhard Driest (*Stroszek*, *Cross of Iron*, *Querelle*), yet *Silvester Countdown* still seems like the work of a formative auteur who has yet to fully develop his true style. Like Gregg Araki hetero-kraut style on speed meets would-be-titillating

MTV-approved Euro-techno trash, Roehler's darkly comedic *New Year's Eve* nightmare is a plot-less and obscenely aesthetically outmoded jerk-off piece of the plodding yet sometimes playful sort that depicts the troubled relationship of two young Berlin-based lovers who fuck like rabbits, but spend most of the rest of the time fighting and emotionally tormenting one another over the most trivial of things.

The somewhat ironically named 'Romeo' (portrayed by actor/director/producer Rolf Peter Kahl of artsploitation trash like *Angel Express* (1998) and *Bedways* (2010)) and 'Julia' (Marie Zielcke of Christian Zübert's *Lammbock* (2001) and Doris Dörrie's *Am I Beautiful?* (1998)) are two erratic lovers that live in a mostly vacant and unfurnished apartment in Berlin that resembles a sterile doctor's office. Julia likes to dress in vulgar costumes mostly involving unnaturally colored wigs, a pleather trench-coat, neon underwear and goofy glasses to surprise Romeo, who seems to rather enjoy such seemingly silly role-playing as demonstrated by the impassioned sex sessions that ensue, but after the fucking all hell breaks loose, as the two foredoomed love birds do not seem to get along otherwise and tend to rebuke one another over the most moronic of (non)infractions and (pseudo)problems. Probably to reflect their infantile mentalities, the couple's apartment is adorned with children's toys like tricycles and superhero paraphernalia, as if the two are living in a perennial state of childhood and would find it to be much too bourgeois to decorate their living space with family photographs, antique furniture, and proper home appliances. While Romeo is some sort of degenerate photographer that takes trashy pinup photos of generic-looking models, Julia is a less than serious college student who flies into rages anytime her beau demonstrates his care and concern for her by reminding her to go to class or study. Julia is so emotionally volatile that she even flies into a violent rage after Romeo eats something off her plate to the point where she throws the dish of food at her boyfriend and threatens to leave him. In fact, Julia does a lot of threatening to leave, but she does not dare to actually follow through with her threats as it would probably be detrimental to her hedonistic lifestyle of lecherous loser living. Unquestionably, the couple are spontaneous and thrill-seeking, but this seems to be more the result of their lack of self-control and maturity than any sort of true virtue. When Romero's old buddy Franz (Robert Viktor Minich of Hans Weingartner's *Free Rainer* (2007)) invites him and Julia to hangout with him after hearing about his pal's new hot girlfriend, the two lovers take an ultimately disastrous trip to Poland that demonstrates how truly toxic and ultimately terminal their relationship really is.

On the train ride to Polackland, Julia expresses to Romeo her concern that he always ruins her mood and then explains how he once mocked a postcard of two lovers on a platform at Vištula valley in Poland and how she is only partly excited about going there now as a result of his negative attitude. Ultimately, the two end up hanging out with Franz and his very Aryan-looking Polish drug addict

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girlfriend Jessica (Juliane Werner) at Vištula valley and Romeo ends up bitching the entire time because he has a hard time treading through the snow and is jealous of the fact that his old buddy is shamelessly flirting with his girlfriend, who seems to lap up all the attention juřt because she knows that it pisses her overly jealous boy toy off. When Julia spends too much time flirting and smoking hash with Franz, Romeo gets all moody and broody and leaves abruptly, but not before bitching out his friend after he does nothing to help out his girlfriend Jessica after she passes out after she swallows one too many pills. While in public, Romeo seems jealous of every man that looks at Julia and even goes on a bizarre irrational rant about how he would love to shave off one guy's muřtache and glue onto a woman's pussy after suspecting the guy has checked out his girlfriend. After their failed rendezvous with Franz and Jessica, the couple decides to head to Warsaw where they have spontaneous sex in dark alleyways in between bickering and bitching to one another. When the two go to a sleazy peepshow joint, Romeo demonstrates his complete and utter moral bankruptcy by remarking regarding one of the strippers, "Look at the eyes. Totally dead! What a turn-on" and then makes the dubious decision to encourage his girlfriend to strip in one of the peepshow booths. Of course, Romeo ultimately gets exceedingly pissed after seeing Julia strip, especially after the swarthy Slavic scumbag manager of the eřtablishment remarks regarding his girlfriend, "German girls are really firřt class and she's a #1 dancer." To make Julia feel like a cheap slut, Romeo tries to talk her into screwing the manager of the peepshow joint, which enrages her so much that she runs out of the building and almořt gets hit by a car in the process. After that, the two attempt taking various cab rides back to their hotel, but due to their pathologically antagoniřtic and highly irritable personalities, it ends each time with them having to be driven back to where they originally řtarted, which is symbolic of the hopeless vicious circle nature of their relationship and lives in general.

When Romeo and Julia finally get back to Germany after five grueling days of tragic-comedic hell, their contempt for one another has only grown all the řtronger, with the fights only becoming all the more hateful and frequent and sex becoming virtually nonexistent. Indeed, Romeo begins failing to assert himself sexually and towards the end of their rather ridiculous relationship, he mařturbates in bed while lying next to Julia shortly after they have a fight in what is easily one of the mořt pathetic 'sex' scenes in all of cinema hiřtory. While more or less a řtupid little girl who has no idea what she wants in life, Julia finally wises up to the fact that her catastrophic relationship with Romeo is irreparably broken, with sex—the one thing that kept them together—no longer even working. The chaos of their bitter romance is reflected in the fact that their flat becomes covered in tons of trash, dirty clothes, and various other forms of cluttered junk, with Julia beginning to physically and mentally resemble a rambling drunken hobo who looks like she might explode at any minute. Of course, Julia

eventually leaves for good, thus forcing Romero to suffer alone while wasting away in his trash-covered apartment, which has turned into a virtual fortress of proto-hipster loserdom. At the end of the film, Romero absurdly jerks off to a nude photograph of Julia while standing in front of a mirror in a scene symbolic of the character's corrosive and self-destructive masturbatory narcissism. As for Julia, one can only assume that she discovered the error of her ways and found a less than attractive but monetarily successful older man who she could become a stay-at-home wife to.

Notably, auteur Oskar Roehler once remarked regarding the two unloving lovers of *Silvester Countdown* that, "Neither of them are mature enough for love and maybe never will be," thus highlighting the fact that the director is in no way sympathetic to the deplorable couple in his film, though I am sure that he can at least relate to their plight as a fellow from the very same 'lost' generation and aimless subculture that the film depicts in such a deplorably decadent fashion. As the unwanted progeny of two self-absorbed card-carrying commie novelists who was pawned off to his grandparents and never knew a normal family upbringing, Roehler grew up a broken individual and many of his largely autobiographical films like *No Place to Go* (2000), *Atomised* (2006), *Lulu and Jimi* (2009), and *Sources of Life* (2013) aka *Quellen des Lebens* reflect his considerably dysfunctional and screwed up background (which he discussed in some deal on the German TV channel DW), with the latter film being based on an autobiographical novel entitled *Herkunft* spanning three generations of the director's own trouble family. Ironically, while *Sources of Life* portrays Roehler's far-leftist 'progressive' parents as horribly narcissistic and abusive individuals, the director's ex-Nazi grandfather—a one-time supporter of Strasserism, the 'left-wing' branch of National Socialism that was promoted by Hitler's rivals Gregor and Otto Strasser—is depicted in a rather sympathetic light. Undoubtedly, *Silvester Countdown* depicts the sort of screwed up individuals that Roehler's parents and the later 68er-Bewegung generation produced as a result of their ostensibly liberal, far-left anti-bourgeois weltanschauungs. While Roehler may not be a Fassbinder or even a Herzog, his films are important for the simple fact that they offer a window into the sort of decidedly deleterious effect that far-leftist brainwashing and non-parenting had on an entire generation of Germans. As the director has explained in interviews, he had the opportunity to experience the mentalities of both the pre-WWII and post-WWII generations as someone who was shuffled between his father (his mother was completely out of the picture) and both sets of grandparents during his erratic childhood. *Silvester Countdown* was clearly made at a point in Roehler's life when he was still a young man and had probably failed to develop any sort of meaningful romantic relationship that actually transcended sex. I can certainly relate to a relationship with great sex but plagued fighting, but my personal problems certainly seem completely insignificant compared to those of the couple in Roehler's film whose incessant

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bickering literally brought nausea to my stomach, which was only further accentuated by the film's bombastic and terribly plastic pseudo-hip soundtrack, which sounds like what you might expect to hear in a gay night club in hell. Indeed, if I had eaten the normal New Year's Eve junk food while listening to the grotesque song "Shut Up (And Sleep With Me)" by Sin with Sebastian (fronted by obnoxiously vulgar quasi-tranny kosher cocksucker Sebastian Roth), I would have probably projectile vomited on my computer screen. In terms of sights, sounds, and general essence, *Silvester Countdown* would probably be best described as an anti-nostalgic celluloid fever dream that vividly demonstrates why the 1990s were such an aesthetically aberrant and culturally vacant zeitgeist that surely reflected the curious collective unconscious of the people of that time. Of course, considering this is the New Year and all, I have to conclude that, judging by *Silvester Countdown*, people are not sticking to whatever bullshit resolutions they have been making each year, as people have only grown more vapid, hedonistic, immature, and autistic since the film was released nearly two decades ago.

-Ty E

NO PLACE TO GO

Oskar Roehler (2000)

Unfortunately for him, German auteur Oskar Roehler (*Agnes and His Brothers*, *The Elementary Particles*) was born to egomaniacal communist writers who wanted nothing to do with him, so he was essentially brought up by his grandparents. While Roehler's father was a novelist and literary editor who edited works by important West German literary figures like Günter Grass, his mother Gisela Elsner was a somewhat popular novelist who has been described as 'Jelinek's older sister' and was a member of the once-prestigious leftist post-WWII literary group Gruppe 47, to which Grass, Heinrich Böll, Ingeborg Bachmann, and various other German authors belonged. Among other things, Elsner, who was born into a wealthy family like so many other leftist literary types of her pedigree, is known for endorsing the destruction of bourgeois sexuality via group sex and orgies with her novel *Berührungsverbot* (1970). Depressed with the death of the GDR, falling of the Berlin Wall, and the realization that her materialist messiah Lenin's dream would never be realized, Elsner committed suicide in 1992. With his first feature-length film *Die Unberührbare* (2000) aka *No Place to Go* aka *The Unforgiven* aka *Hanna Flanders*, Roehler did what probably no other filmmaker has done in history by depicting the last days leading up to his mother Elsner's suicide. Shot in a black-and-white noir-ish style reminiscent of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's penultimate film *Veronika Voss* (1982) and, to a lesser extent, David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), *No Place to Go* makes for a sort of celluloid obituary/suicide letter for the 68er-Bewegung generation and counter-culture movement in general. In its moody and melancholy depiction of the glorious fall of the so-called 'Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart', *No Place to Go* also makes for a much needed celluloid counterpoint to Wolfgang Becker's sentimentalist swill *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003), which essentially took a hopelessly goofy Hollywood approach to the dissolving of the GDR. As can be expected from a man whose mother abandoned him at the age of three, Roehler did not take a sentimental approach to depicting his mother in *No Place to Go*, but instead portrays her as a walking and talking anachronism and hopeless hypocrite whose Leninist political persuasion was in stark contrast to her affinity for expensive Christian Dior coats and aesthetically repugnant wigs. The atmospheric and intentionally aimless story of an over-the-hill leftist dame that becomes suicidal after coming to the realization that, regarding the German people and reunification, "They're not fighting for truth in the spirit of Lenin, they're fighting for candy bars," *No Place to Go* is, if nothing else, one of the most intimately unflattering depictions of a communist intellectual.

As a once popular West German far-left writer who once dreamed of emigrating to East Germany but has just witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the almost unanimous joy among both West and East Germans, Hanna Flan-

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ders (Hannelore Elsner)—a sort of would-be-literary-diva and retarded femme fatale who fails at conning men but unquestionably dresses the part—has certainly seen better days and is contemplating suicide. After all, the GDR was the only place still publishing her pretentious bolshy novels, so she has also lost her sole source of income. Since she is considering offing herself, Hanna decides to relocate from her apartment in Munich to post-communist East Berlin where she plans to stay with her East Berlin mentor Joachim (Michael Gwisdek), who always promised her a place to stay if she ever arrived in the city. Before meeting with her dear marxist mentor in East Berlin, Hanna Flanders goes to West Berlin to visit her ex-speed-addict writer son Viktor (Lars Rudolph) who she has not seen in over three years and who used to provide her with drugs in the past. Ultimately, the reunion proves to be a pathetic disaster, with the mother unsuccessfully attempting to buy speed from her son who is withdrawing from drugs and does not take kindly to hearing his mother asking to do so such an unsavory thing. Of course, Hanna's encounter with Joachim is no less disappointing, as he not only decides to not let her stay with him, but is also celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall and who tells his old 'true believer' student that, "times have changed dramatically," which is a rather bitter pill for the novelist to swallow. Luckily, Hanna manages to secure a dilapidated old commie style apartment from an admirer. When Hanna goes to a local bar, she bumps into a drunken stranger named Dieter (Bernd Stempel), who states, "I've read all of your books. I liked your last one the best. The one about your sister committing suicide and how that happened...it was a really moving portrait of how barbaric interpersonal relationships can be." Dieter also reveals that he is a teacher who teaches, "German and history...A fateful combo," and taught some of her novels in school, which she takes as a great compliment. Of course, when the drunken Dieter begins groping Hanna, she freaks out, so the teacher verbally berates her like she is old trash, yelling, "Hey, you're a real bitch, you know? You should be happy that anyone even wants to touch you anymore! Look at you, you old bag!...You, with those sagging tits. Hanna Flanders...wrote nothing but shit in the last 20 years!" which naturally rather depresses the novelist. After failing to fall asleep and stating to herself, "What a nightmare! A nightmare. Now I can't even fall asleep," while walking around her Lynchian apartment like the bride of Frankenstein, Hanna wanders around East Berlin and runs into a happy young lady, who invites her to stay with her family, which she does. Of course, the family Hanna is staying with is celebrating the death of the GDR and when she remarks to them regarding her admiration of the dissolved nation, "For me, your communism here in the East was the perfect world. I had a lot of trouble with life in the West, since returning from England. And I often thought of moving to East Berlin...Now it's all collapsed and it's as if I too have fallen apart," she is looked at as if she is a deluded moron. Indeed, Hanna finally has to admit regarding her disconcerting meeting with the happy East German family, "They're

completely different people. I have no relation to them. I don't stand a chance there."

More desperate than ever, Hanna decides to visit her elderly bourgeois parents to 'borrow' some money so she can get back to Munich. While Hanna's mother is a cold bitch, her father is a cowardly cuckold, but he at least gives her some money to get back to Munich. Determined to get her old apartment back, Hanna attempts to return her designer Christian Dior coat back to the store she bought it from for only half the price, but the employees of the store look at her like she is a common bum and refuse to buy back the item. Luckily, Hanna ends up randomly bumping into her ex-husband Bruno (Vadim Glowna), who is still in love with her and is more than willing to give her a place to stay. That night, it seems that both Hanna and Bruno are transported back to the magic of the late-1960s, but when the two attempt to make love, the ex-husband is too drunk and depressed to consummate coitus. The next day, Hanna wakes to find that Bruno is even more drunk and babbling about events from decades past if they were only yesterday, stating, "Hanna, what are you doing here? I thought you'd fallen asleep. I'm so furious. It's so fucked. So fucked. I'm so angry, I could cut off my hand. Gudrun, Ingeborg, Rita, Ulrike...I can understand these girls so well. They knew what was going on. You have no idea how much I loved Gudrun. I loved that girl so much." Indeed, Bruno's extra flabby appearance and rampant alcoholism clearly indicate he has not gotten over the moronic death of Ingeborg Bachmann nor the dubious suicides of the Baader-Meinhof babes, but most importantly, he has not gotten over Hanna, who has her head so firmly inserted in her ass that she never was able to devote herself to him. Needless to say, Miss Monomaniac Hanna leaves Bruno for good after his drunken debauchery. Before long, Hanna finds herself randomly waking up in a hospital where she is told she overdosed on barbiturates. To top off everything else, the Doctor reveals to Hanna that due to her proclivity towards chain-smoking, she has developed vascular disease in her leg and that if she does not quit ASAP, she will most certainly lose her leg. Ultimately, Hanna agrees to go to rehab and quit smoking cold turkey, but considering the already fragile state of her mind, it proves to be a most grueling experience. Fed up with life and realizing her dreams of a commie utopia are gone forever, Hanna takes one final drag from a cigarette and falls to her death from a hospital window. Indeed, it seems that the only thing that kept Hanna going in the first place was her dream of a Leninist utopia, so when all chances of that ever happening were dashed with the destruction of the Berlin Wall, she truly had nothing to live for and nothing to keep her going. Ironically, in the end, she was no different from the many die hard National Socialists who committed self-slaughter during the mass suicides in 1945 Nazi Germany.

Interestingly, despite the film's already unflattering depiction of its lead, *No Place to Go* would later be described by auteur Oskar Roehler as a 'romanti-

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cized' view of his mother. Indeed, in a 2012 interview with the Deutsche Welle (DW) cultural magazine Arts.21, Roehler stated, "My mother really was a bad person who dreamed up a bunch of evil schemes" and "I felt as if I was being stabbed by needles again and again...The way my mother continued to judge me...my birth, my existence, and so on." Ultimately, Roehler would later "exact revenge" against his mother by writing the autobiographical novel *Herkunft* (2012), which spans three generations of the director's family (starting in the post-WWII era and concluding in the 1980s) and which the auteur later adapted into the epic 174-minute film *Quellen des Lebens* (2013) aka *Sources of Life*. While far from perfect and in many way a formative work, *No Place to Go* is certainly one of the more interesting and worthwhile German films of its mostly cinematically vacant zeitgeist. Indeed, a work that manages to cross Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966) with Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss* with a little bit of *Eraserhead* (indeed, aside from featuring an eccentric protagonist with an even more eccentric head of hair, Roehler depicts post-Cold War Berlin in a similarly foreboding manner to Lynch's cult masterpiece) and campy hagsploitation (one can see Hanna Flanders as a sort of kraut commie equivalent to 'Mommy Dearest' meets Norma Desmond of Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), albeit with a more intellectual, flat affect) thrown in for good measure, *No Place to Go* is one of the few German films of the 2000s that I would recommend to fellow cinephiles, especially those with an affinity for German New Cinema. A rare film where the viewer actually wishes for the protagonist's suicide knowing that she wants nothing more than to disappear from the world, *No Place to Go*—for better or worse—is probably the most honest depiction of the disgruntled 68er-Bewegung mindset in an age where the fall of the Berlin Wall declared that dreams of a communist utopia were deadlier than Angela Merkel's sex drive and no better person could have been better suited for directing the film than Oskar Roehler, the forsaken progeny of a commie ideologue who cared more about dead Judaic-Mongol mongrel marxist monster Lenin than her own son. That being said, I was almost surprised that *No Place to Go* did not conclude with the song "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead" from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), as it is a work that was directed by a man who confessed on German TV that he cried with joy upon learning that his mother died. An arthouse dramedy that destroys the commie celluloid mythos of Kluge and Straub, *No Place to Go* is a sort of nihilistic attempt at healing after generations of leftist lunacy in the Fatherland. Of course, as Roehler demonstrated with his mundane mainstream effort *Jew Suss: Rise and Fall* (2010), he lacks the testicular fortitude to approach the Third Reich era without any sort of the same self-loathing typical of the original left-wing cultural-cuckold kraut, thus demonstrating that he was truly his marxist parents' son.

-Ty E

AGNES AND HIS BROTHERS

Oskar Roehler (2004)

In contemporary Germany, it seems there are two types of filmmakers: Those culturally retarded and deracinated dilettantes that merely copy off of Hollywood and become money-grubbing artisan hacks like Tom Tykwer, and the oh-so few filmmakers who attempt to revive the auteurism of German New Cinema. Undoubtedly, Oskar Roehler (*Suck My Dick*, *Jew Suss: Rise and Fall*) is (or was) part of the second category as a filmmaker who was inspired by Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1972) and *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) at a young age, once stating regarding these films, "I was about 12 or 13, and after seeing those films, I would just walk through the park and think about them." While I have not seen every single one of the director's films (most of them do not have English subtitles), I think *Agnes and His Brothers* (2004) aka *Agnes und seine Brüder* is Roehler's greatest and most ambitious work to date, though it is certainly no masterpiece. Unquestionably a not so inconspicuous take on Fassbinder's avant-garde masterpiece *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978), *Agnes and His Brothers* also centers around a melancholy tranny who did the unthinkable and cuts his penis off to appease a powerful and less than loving lover (this time instead of using a Jewish slumlord like in Fassbinder's film, Roehler opted for an American Negro fashion designer). In fact, *In A Year of 13 Moons* star Volker Spengler was originally supposed to play the father of the lead character(s). Of course, Roehler's film is not a remake of *In a Year of 13 Moons* and is quite different in parts, namely in that it also focuses on the equally screwed up lives of the eponymous tranny's two elder brothers. Additionally, *Agnes and His Brothers* displays its Hollywood influences due to its unwavering sentimentalism, use of played out pop rock music, and copout (semi)happy ending. The German answer to *American Beauty* (1999), albeit all the more morbid and scatological in its critique of the bourgeois, *Agnes and His Brothers* depicts a universally sexually debauched upper-middleclass where hatred, sexual perversion, and unhappiness are givens and where fathers are even more patently perverted than Woody Allen. Unquestionably, one of the most interesting and surprising aspects of *Agnes and His Brothers* is that it depicts the emotionally and sexually ruined middle-aged children of the counter-culture era, thus making a rare film that dares to laugh at the tragic, if not inevitable, results of far-leftist parents who refused to parent and thus sired individuals that are so screwed up that they have scat fetishes and have paid money to have their genitals chopped off. Stating his intent with the film as follows, "What interested me most was to show what things look like now in this country. I wanted to convey a mood, a basic feeling with a number of facets that can't be pinned down solely to one single relationship between two people," auteur Roehler ultimately assembled a black post-counter-culture comedy nightmare with *Agnes and His Brothers* that offers

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good enough reason as to why the indigenous population of Germany is committing demographic suicide and how Teutonic auteur cinema itself is merely a platform for members of the bourgeois to bash themselves.

Agnes Tschirner (Martin Weiß) is a depressed tranny who never knew nor has even seen a picture of his/her mother, a purported member of the Baader-Meinhof Gang who apparently took a fire extinguisher to the head while in Stammheim prison and allegedly later committed suicide after becoming peniless. The only thing Agnes knows about his/her long deceased mother is what was told to her by her burnout degenerate hippie father Günther (Vadim Glowna) while he was inebriated. Agnes has two brothers that are just as screwed up as her, if not more so, including Hans-Jörg (Moritz Bleibtreu) and Werner (Herbert Knaup), but neither of them have done anything so drastic as have their dicks chopped off. Hans-Jörg is a sex-addicted librarian and pathetic peeping tom who sneaks into female bathroom stalls at his work and masturbates while watching women defecate via a gloryhole. When it comes to women, Hans-Jörg is a pathetic joke who is constantly laughed at by the fairer sex, so he spends much of his free time attending sex addict anonymous meetings where he listens to people's stories about having love affairs with their dogs and whatnot. Undoubtedly, Werner, who is married and has two teenage sons, is the most strong and successful of the Tschirner brothers, but he is no less screwed up and his relative success seems compensate for his broken family life. Married to a blonde cougar named Signe (Katja Riemann) that no longer loves him and the father of an ambiguously gay amateur filmmaker son named Ralf (Tom Schilling) who his wife dedicates all his attention to, Werner has devoted himself to his career as a Herr Doktor and leader of the Green Party. Undoubtedly, the source of the Tschirner brothers' pathologies lies with their rich but seemingly half-retarded father Günther, who Hans-Jörg believes molested little brother Agnes. As indicated by a melancholy man named Heinz (Ralph Ferforth) that cries at the sight of the Tschirner brothers and slavishly does house work at the lapsed braindead hippie's house, Günther is also probably gay, thus hinting that he may have in fact molested the son, or at the very least resented his children.

When Agnes is called "the scum of the earth" and kicked out of her apartment by her asshole workaholic boyfriend Rudi (Oliver Korittke), s/he moves in with her old and lonely fag hag friend Roxy (played by Fassbinder superstar Margit Carstensen) and soon learns from a receptionist at a hospital that there is something very wrong with her lab results, but s/he is too afraid to stay to talk with the doctor and find out exactly what the problem is. Meanwhile, Hans-Jörg, who has just been rebuffed by a chick he screwed who played him like a true cuckold pawn and talked him into painting her apartment, goes by his father's homestead and mistakenly believes he sees his brother Agnes giving papa Günther blowjob. As for Werner, his son filmed him defecating on his piece of paper in his home office and his wife thinks it is quite hilarious. In terms of their

dead sex life, wife Signe complains to her scat-fiend spouse, “Where is the casual relationship between your earnings and your toilet behavior? How can you even assume that I’d feel the ghost of eroticism, if I have to witness, if I have to witness you pressing out your secretions everyday?” not to mention the fact she believes that her hubby is a schizophrenic. Eventually, Werner loses his cool and decides to destroy his wife’s bushes and son Ralf’s pot plants with a chainsaw. Needless to say, Signe leaves Werner and brings their sons with her. Meanwhile, Agnes learns that her great love Henry Preminger (played by Lee Daniels, the producer of *Monster’s Ball* (2001) and director of *Precious: Based on the Novel “Push”* by Sapphire (2009))—a famous gay American Negro fashion designer—is coming to town. After revisiting his ex-wife and children (!), Agnes borrows his dead mother’s wedding dress for his reunion with Henry. As the viewer discovers, Agnes cut off her cock for Henry, but this only repelled him. When Agnes runs into his ex-love and his entourage on the red carpet of a show, Henry pretends not to remember him, but agrees to come by his apartment for ‘German coffee’ after finally vaguely pretending to remember the tragic tranny. While Henry eventually reveals his undying life for Agnes when they are alone together, it is revealed that he cared more about his career than his relationship, hence why their relationship ultimately dissolved. Although Henry achieved the fame and fortune he always dreamed of, he more or less confesses he is unhappy to Agnes. Meanwhile, Hans-Jörg blows his father Günther’s brains away with a shotgun and proceeds to star in a porn flick after being offered the job from a dude named Manni Moneto (Martin Semmelrogge) from his sex addicts anonymous group. To his shock, H.J. falls in love with a porn star named Desiree (Suzan Anbeh), who consoles him after he has a freakout while filming a porn scene. Luckily for Werner, his son Ralf runs away, so Signe comes back home for his support. In the end, Agnes dies of the dubious illness (in one scene, blood seeps from her crotch, thus hinting its related to his/her sex change) she refused to ask the doctor about while remembering a rare happy moment when she was a little boy, patricidal fugitive Hans-Jörg heads eastward with his new lover Desiree, and Signe gets his wife back.

A Hollywood molested take on Fassbinder’s masterpiece *In A Year of 13 Moons* made for a socially dysfunctional, degenerate generation of Germans reared on MTV and Adam Sandler flicks and post-cultural liberal capitalism, *Agnes and His Brothers* has about as much aesthetic value as a car commercial, yet its scathing scat humor and callous critique of the post-Baader-Meinhof bourgeois ultimately makes it one of the most interesting and, dare I say, greatest Teutonic films of its zeitgeist. Featuring an ironic use of pop rock songs like “Happy Together” by The Turtles, *Agnes and His Brothers*, not unlike more recent Martin Scorsese flicks like *Goodfellas* (1990) and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), is afraid to rise above the tragicomic despite its rather somber subject matter, as if the incapacity to mourn as has only grown worse in Germany since the

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end of the Second World War. To auteur Oskar Roehler's credit, his intent was not to make *Agnes and His Brothers* too Bergman-esque in tone so as to appeal to Hollywood-lobotomized philistines, or as the director stated himself in an interview, "I didn't want to take the whole thing too seriously, however; I wanted to make it rather light and playful, so that it would be fun to watch. I used to be all too quick in making moralistic points, but unfortunately I always noticed this too late." Roehler would follow up the film with the similarly themed but somewhat inferior work *The Elementary Particles* (2006) aka *Atomised* based on the French novel *Les Particules élémentaires* (1998) by Michel Houellebecq, but his work has only become all the more mainstream and, in turn, superficial, as time has passed. Like a Teutonic equivalent to what Todd Solondz has accomplished in terms of sardonically satirizing the culturally and sexually confused American Hebrews of New Jersey suburbia, *Agnes and His Brothers* is a patently pessimistic piece of hysterically humorous celluloid psychotherapy created in an age when the only thing one can do in the face of overwhelming social dysfunction is laugh it off. A postmodern mutation of *Oedipus Rex* set in German suburbia made in a time where a kosher culture-distorter like Sigmund Freud and his Frankfurt School disciples' ideas have defiled every aspect of bourgeois life (indeed, if the Hebraic psychoanalysts had any goal, it was that) and where neo-vaudevillian humor has even taken over a traditionally humorless nation like Germany, *Agnes and His Brothers* is ultimately an unhinged reminder where American (non)kultur has probably had a more deleterious effect on Germany than firebombs did in WWII. Undoubtedly, Roehler is no Fassbinder and not even a Schlingensiefel, but there is more truth in 5 minutes of *Agnes and His Brothers* than all the films of a deracinated Teutonic hack like Tom Tykwer combined.

-Ty E

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Oskar Roehler (2006)

As a so-called 'reactionary' with an unfashionable proclivity towards anti-liberal iconoclasm, cultural pessimism, 'right-wing' libertinism, and racial/religious hatred, French novelist Michel Houellebecq is undoubtedly a sort of literary grandson to French pariah Louis-Ferdinand Céline. That being said, it is doubtful that any contemporary filmmaker could do justice in terms of cinematically adapting Houellebecq's work (hence why he probably started adapting his own novels), as it is much harder to get away with politically incorrect material in film, which is probably the artistic medium that has been most debased and exploited by gatekeepers of commie culture-distorting, than it is with books. As the proudly prodigal son of irresponsible 'bobos' (aka bourgeois bohemians) who even went so far as to depict the last couple days leading up to his Leninist mother's suicide in *Die Unberühmbare* (2000) aka *No Place to Go*, German auteur Oskar Roehler (*Jew Suss: Rise and Fall*, *Sources of Life* aka *Quellen des Lebens*) was more or less the best suited mensch to adapt Houellebecq's novel *Les Particules élémentaires* (1998) aka *The Elementary Particles* aka *Atomised*, as a work depicting two sexually and socially degenerate ½ brothers whose dysfunctional behavior is a direct result of their whorish hippie mother's lack of parenting (indeed, like the characters in the book, Roehler was mostly brought up by his grandparents). *Atomised* (2006) aka *Elementarteilchen* aka *The Elementary Particles*, which Houellebecq apparently originally planned to direct himself, is the socially scathing result of Roehler working on a screenplay for 3 years and belated kraut alpha-producer Bernd Eichinger's talent at producing reasonably decent mainstream films. Like Roehler's previous (and, in my opinion, superior) work *Agnes and His Brothers* (2004) aka *Agnes und seine Brüder*, *Atomised* seems like it was directed by a Hollywoodized heterosexual Fassbinder. A less than merry mix of existential crisis and impenetrable depression, sexual looseness and impotence, paraplegic suicide and lithium-inspired hallucinations, anti-Oedipal complexes and tragic abortions, and all around social sickness, *Atomised* unfortunately lacks a lot of the nasty unrepentant nihilism that acted as the driving force of Houellebecq's source novel yet the film still manages to capture the essence of Occidental decline in a fashion that can be appreciated by the most attention-span-deprived of philistine viewers. Indeed, directed by a man whose own emotional development was clearly stunted by his parents' lack of love and nurturing, *Atomised*—with its cheap sex scenes, somewhat contrived direction, and strategic use of played-out pop rock songs—is every bit a product of the cultural and emotional retardation that it so unflatteringly depicts. The salacious yet saddening tale of two ½ brothers that act as a sort of dichotomy for the two extremes of western man—with one brother being deracinated, introverted, asexual, unemotional, logical and the other being emotional, highly sexual, extroverted, artistic,

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and irrational—Atomised is ultimately a rare mainstream German film that actually has something to say, even if it goes about saying it in a fashion that would probably give a Hebraic arthouse hack like Terry Zwigoff (*Ghost World*, *Bad Santa*) a hard-on.

Beginning with the contrived Albert Einstein quote, “One does not have to understand the world, one only has to find one’s way in it,” Atomised immediately introduces protagonist Michael Djerzinski (Christian Ulmen), who abruptly decides to quit his great job as a scientific researcher at a biotechnology institute because, as he writes himself, “I have to go back to the origin of my interest, to that innermost force, which binds the world together. Back to the elementary. I have to resume the research that I interrupted in Ireland 3 years ago. The artificial reproduction of organisms without sexual contact. Is it desirable...? It is desirable for a scientist to ascertain this feasibility. Truth is like an elementary particle. It can’t be split into smaller parts.” Indeed, Michael is a 30+-year-old virgin dork who, as described in the source novel, uses his “cock to piss, nothing more” and turns down a reasonably hot blonde chick at his work that hits on him in the most flattering of ways. After his hot co-worker compliments him by stating, “It is a pity you’re leaving. To me you were always like a Niels Bohr or a Heisenberg: a person of exception intellectual ability, someone with a totally unique way of thinking,” Michael merely admires his own intelligence and not the blonde babe’s voluptuous body. When Michael’s parakeet randomly drops dead, he merely takes the bird out of its cage and drops it into the trash can as if it were no more valuable than a used condom. Meanwhile, Michael’s half-brother Bruno Klement (Moritz Bleibtreu), who is a high school literature teacher, is giving a lecture on the poetry of Baudelaire, but he gets a little bit distracted by his 17-year-old student Johanna Rehmann (Jennifer Ulrich), whose photo he routinely masturbates to. Needless to say, when Johanna remarks, “I think eroticism was a driving force for Baudelaire’s creativity, but that it made him lonely at the same time. I’d say these lines reveal the classic, tragic core of male fate,” Bruno gets all hot and bothered. Although a teacher, Bruno, who spikes his baby’s baby formula with sedatives when he is working so as to have complete silence, really dreams of becoming a revered novelist, but he tends to write rather politically unfashionable prose, as demonstrated by the following words: “We envy and admire the Negroes for we want to become like them: animals with a long cock and a tiny reptilian brain... The Negroes are still in the Stone Age. They can’t acquire our knowledge, they have no clue about hygiene and they also spread AIDS.” When Bruno meets with his publisher about having this racially charged text published, he is turned and told that he is a, “true racist. You’re full of it. That is good. The stuff about Negroes is great. Its strong, crazy, and daring. You’re talented [...] My good man, what were you thinking? The Third Reich is history,” though his publisher also compliments him by stating, “You’re a reactionary. All great writers were reactionaries... Benn,

Goethe, Thomas Mann, Dostoyevsky.” Needless to say, after failing to get his work published and pathetically botching an audacious attempt to seduce his student Johanna, Bruno loses it and goes to a mental institution where he is prescribed lithium and less than fondly reminisces about his shattered childhood.

As *Atomised* progresses, it is revealed that Michael and Bruno’s hippie whore of a mother Jane (Nina Hoss) did not even bother to tell her sons that they had half-brothers until the two were both teenagers. While at the nut house, Bruno tells a female doctor named Dr. Schäfer (Corinna Harfouch) about how his mother abandoned him for “hippy shit” and left for Poona. Ultimately, Bruno was raised by his grandparents until he was 13, but was put in a boarding school after both of his grandparents died (rather absurdly, his grandmother died in a tragic kitchen accident involving boiling soup). Bruno also tells Dr. Schäfer about how he had quasi-incestuous feelings for his mother as a teenager, confessing, “I jerked off on my mother.” While Bruno desired affection from his mother, Michael would not even let his mother hug him, thus highlighting the stark contrast between the two bastard bros. Now well into their 30s, the two half-bros occasionally meet at a bar and discuss their miserable lives, where on one occasion Bruno complains regarding his wife, “She’s a lousy cocksucker, I felt her teeth – and she’s got cellulite.” When the two brothers go to see their mother, who just recently converted to Islam after being fed ‘Sufi mystic bull-shit’, on her death bed at some hippie commune she is staying at, Michael makes the threat to his unconscious progenitor that he plans to cremate her body and put her ashes in a trash bag. After a night of screaming hateful obscenities at mommy dearest, Bruno eventually reaches solace after his mother finally drops dead, though brother Michael seems entirely indifferent to the experience. After reuniting with his high school sweet heart Annabelle (Franka Potente), Michael finally manages to show some minor love and empathy for the first time in his entire life and even manages to lose his virginity in the process, yet after learning all the scientific calculations he made regarding cloning have proven to be 100% correct, he decides to go to Ireland to continue his research and thus leaves his little lady in the lurch. Meanwhile, Bruno decides to go to a hippie nudist camp in a desperate attempt to find a prospective lover. After offending a hippie feminist bitch by describing African music as “too primitive,” Bruno gets in a hot tub to cool off and meets a chick named Christine (Martina Gedeck) who “cannot stand feminists,” thus making the two a perfect match. Naturally, Bruno and Christine practically fall in love at first sight, yet they also become swingers who engage in large orgies. While in Ireland, Michael learns that he impregnated Annabelle, but she was forced to get an abortion because the baby had ‘abnormal cells’, which is rather ironic considering the father of the aborted baby is attempting to perfect artificial reproduction. Meanwhile, Bruno’s relationship also takes a turn for the worse after Christine collapses at an orgy and a doctor subsequently reveals that she will no longer be able to walk again as a result of

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coccygeal necrosis. While Bruno attempts to save their relationship, it is too late as Christine opts for suicide and jumps off her balcony to her grizzly death. Of course, Bruno goes back to the mental institution, as he no longer wants to go on living as a result of his experiences. In the end, *Atomised* closes with the following epilogue: "Some forty-five years later, the scientific world came to the conclusion that there is an elementary relationship between sexual aggression and the pursuit of monopolies, dominance and the resulting conflicts of these pursuits – such as wars. Michael Djerzinsky was awarded the Nobel Prize for his alternative theory of the reproduction of the human race. His half-brother Bruno spent the remainder of his life in a psychiatric clinic. According to reports he was happy there."

While no masterpiece, *Atomised* unwittingly exposes modern German 'classics' like *Run Lola Run* (1998) aka *Lola rennt* and *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) for the vapid and superlatively soulless pieces of politically correct celluloid twaddle that they are, as Roehler's film ultimately points the finger at the counter-culture movement/68er-Bewegung generation and technocracy as the two great destroyers of German kultur, community, and family. For instance, in a scene of dialogue that could have been written by Teutonic philosopher of western decline Oswald Spengler, protagonist Michael is told by a mentor: "The thirst for knowledge! Only a few people have it. But these few are the most important power in the world. They keep on researching until one day they possess the key to rational knowledge. Nothing in the history of humanity was ever more important than the need for rational knowledge. Western civilization has sacrificed everything to that need...Its happiness, its hopes, its religion and ultimately its life." Indeed, in many ways, Michael reflects 'Fauſtian man' yet paradoxically shares qualities of Nietzsche's prophesized 'laſt man,' as a soft fellow with a typically Aryan drive for knowledge and discovery that is all too happy with the glacial emotions of the postmodern world, wallows in sexual impotence, and who is quite eager to see Aldous Huxley's prophesies in *Brave New World* (1931) fully realized. *Atomised* also wastes no time in destroying the hypocritical joke and abject failure that is feminism/women's lib as hilariously expressed in a story told by Bruno's girlfriend Christine regarding her experiences with brainwashed feminists: "I could never stand feminists [...] after turning every available man into a miserable, impotent neurotic, they systematically mourned the end of masculinity. So after sending their men packing they ended up getting humped by lousy Latino machos. Eventually they got themselves banged up and started making jam," thus demonstrating that feminism has only made women all the more miserable, not to mention the fact that it has created a war of hatred among the sexes that has destroyed the nuclear family and has caused the birth rate to decline in such a drastic manner among indigenous Germans (and most Europeans in general) that it can only be described as ethno-suicide. As auteur Oskar Roehler revealed in an interview with <http://cineuropa.org> as

to why he was interested in cinematically adapting *Atomised*: “I liked the book and wanted to make the film because it tells so much about my generation – especially the male generation – of people who are in their mid-40s now: their weaknesses and the bad experiences they have had with the generation before them and the cultural fights they had to go through. These were the reasons I wanted to do an adaptation of the book; the stories of these characters that were so lifelike and real. It is very daring in that it laughs about male sexuality and the inferiority complexes of men. The book is very fascinating because I never read about these topics before in such an honest way.” Indeed, while *Atomised* is not some sort of stoic ultra-conservative Evolaian critique about everything that is fundamentally flawed about the modern world, the film does manage to communicate some of the more obvious post-WWII social and cultural plagues that are eating away at the Occident and have only become all the more malignant as the days pass. Like his cinematic forefather Volker Schlöndorff’s greatest films, Roehler managed to simplify Houellebecq’s ideas with *Atomised* so that they could be made palatable to the most intellectually lazy of layman and in that regard the film more or less succeeds. Indeed, with the possible exception of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, who has essentially retired from filmmaking, no living filmmaker (including Houellebecq himself) would have been fully suited for adapting Houellebecq’s novel in all its thematic complexity and superlatively cynical culture pessimism, so one must just be happy with Roehler’s film, which is like the Teutonic equivalent to one of American Hebrew Todd Solondz’s fucked filmic family affairs.

-Ty E

BLACK GIRL
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Ossie Davis (1972)

Despite what some of my less than liberal socio-political views might suggest, I like to think that (or, my accurately, pretty much know) that I am extremely open-minded when it comes to cinema, at least until I get a significant taste of something and realize I can do without it, hence my refusal to watch virtually all new Hollywood films. Indeed, while my cinematic tastes are admittedly largely proudly Eurocentric, I could not help but eventually look into the rather small world of true African cinema, so naturally I am familiar with Senegalese novelist turned cinematic auteur Ousmane Sembène (or 'Sembène Ousmane' as he is known among certain frogs). Best known as the undisputed 'father of African film,' Sembène—a communist that studied filmmaking in the Soviet Union at Gorky Film Studio from 1962-1963 under Hebraic hack propagandist Mark Donskoy (*The Childhood of Maxim Gorky*, *A Mother's Heart*)—is also arguably the greatest black African filmmaker to have ever lived and a virtual one-man-film-industry that demonstrated that a black man could create his own cinematic universe in an artistic medium that was more or less solely invented, pioneered, and refined by Europids. Notably, the first Sembène film I ever saw was his arguable magnum opus *Xala* (1975), which is somewhat stereotypically black in the sense that it depicts a corrupt 'uncle tom' businessman that suffers from the ultimate negro nightmare of erectile dysfunction as a result of his self-hating and fellow-negro-exploiting ways. Indeed, while the film might not feature ebonic-ridden rap music or stoned stupid brothas' with their pants falling off their asses, it does include a number of classic perennial stereotypes that are associated with blacks. At the same time, the film is heavily influenced by ancient African folklore and folk culture (notably, the film also features a brief nod to Sembène's cracker hero Charlie Chaplin). To my surprise, I actually found *Xala* to be fairly humorous when I first saw it about a decade ago and thus decided to dig further into Sembène's oeuvre, thus leading me to his celebrated debut feature *La noire de...* (1966) aka *Black Girl*. Notable for being the very first feature-length film directed by an actual black African in sub-Saharan Africa (as opposed to a pseudo-negro flick directed by a white man or Jew), the almost-60-minute flick was somewhat of a hit in France upon its initial release despite its rather blatant anti-French persuasion and even won the coveted Prix Jean Vigo for 'best feature film' in 1966, thus securing Sembène's place in cinema history.

Despite being directed by an unrepentant Pan-African Marxist and thus something I would typically be repelled by, *Black Girl* proved to be anti-French and anti-white in the best sort of way as a cinematic work that features a scathing depiction of the decadence of the white bourgeois. A postcolonial tragedy that reveals both the innate absurdity of multiculturalism and the somewhat pre-

dictable cultural and racial tensions that it sires, Sembène black-and-white art-house flick follows a young eponymous negress as she learns the hard way the perils of moving from her native Dakar, Senegal to Antibes, France to work as a domestic servant for a super bitchy and sexually repressed white housewife and her well-meaning but weak and ineffectual white husband. Somewhat rightly described by various reviewers as “deceptively simple,” *Black Girl* is a fundamentally flawed film with a somewhat convoluted flashback structure where it is nearly impossible to tell whether or not the film takes place over the course of a few days or a couple of weeks (naturally, the fact that the heroine seems to have only a couple wardrobes does not help). Indeed, if the viewer did not know better, they would assume the titular negress opts to kill herself after only a couple days of domestic frog servitude, thus giving off the absurd impression that black women rather face death than do a mere couple days of hard housework. Of course, this was not Sembène’s intent, as *Black Girl* is a movie with a strong message that attempts to demystify the African view of the ‘European Dream’ and the assumed comforts that await poor African negroes in Europa, which is somewhat ironic considering that the filmmaker owes a good portion of his success, critical prestige, and artistic inspiration to France and the Occident in general. Although surely a work of agitprop, the film has a striking softness and distinct elegance about it due to its inordinately dainty dark-skinned lead and thankfully never succumbs to outlandish grotesqueries, senseless sexual debauchery, or bestial stupidity of an American black power classic like Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song (1971) directed by Melvin Van Peebles (who incidentally began his feature filmmaking career with the relatively tame French quasi-art-house flick *La Permission* (1968) aka *The Story of a Three-Day Pass*). Of course, Sembène’s debut feature is a film that is more about black powerlessness than black power. Instead of being a violent blood orgy and racist fantasy that does literally nothing to address the serious internal problems of the black community like Van Peebles’ flick, Sembène’s examines real problems like low self-esteem, illiteracy, and material envy.

A fifth-grade dropout that was born to a lowly fisherman, Sembène originally earned fame as a novelist, but he eventually realized that not many of his fellow negroes actually read books, so he eventually decided that cinema would be the best artistic medium to spread the Pan-African Marxist message, which is quite clear in his debut feature. Based on one of the director’s own short stories, *Black Girl* might be best described as a political manifesto in celluloid form. In short, the film is melodramatic agitprop’s piece that was clearly informed by Sembène late-life remark, “When women progress, society progresses.” While watching the film, the viewer soon comes to the realization that a negress will always be a perennial second-class-citizen in frogland and that France is a decadent and sexually inverted nation where women seem to wear the pants in relationships and have more testicular fortitude than the men. Once controlling much of

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Africa and the rest of the world, France is only a brittle cracked shell of what it used to be and is surely symbolically personified by the decadent white family in the film. Naturally, as the very first African-negro-directed film and a cinematic work that somewhat recently had its 50-year-old anniversary, *Black Girl* is like an ancient artifact that becomes most intriguing when compared to both contemporary black cinema and the state of negroes in France today. As the hordes of negroes, arabs, and other third worlders that are literally risking their lives just to get to France because they believe it will lead to a lifetime of relative leisure and government handouts, it seems Sembène—an assured victim of naïve acquiescence who seemed to have more faith in his own people than they did in him—was a little too optimistic in his hope that blacks would tell whitey to fuck off and instead stay in and build up negroland. Indeed, I would not be surprised if France was renamed ‘Greater Haiti’ in about a decade or so, but I digress. Of course, the great irony of non-Europids wanting to relocate to Europe is that Europe is (or, was) great because of native Europeans and the more non-Europids the continent accepts the less European Europe naturally becomes, thus leading to an overall decline in quality of life. After all, civilization is a precarious thing and not all peoples are suitable for it, or as Harvard-educated American political theorist Dr. Lothrop Stoddard once wrote in his classic text *The Revolt Against Civilization: The Menace of the Under Man* (1922), “Civilization thus depends absolutely upon the quality of its human supporters. Mere numbers mean nothing. The most brilliant civilization the world has ever seen arose in Athens—a tiny community where the number of freemen (i. e., genuine Athenians) numbered perhaps 50,000 all told. We therefore see that, for civilization to arise at all, a superior human stock is first necessary; while to perfect, or even to maintain that civilization, the human stock must be kept superior. And these are requirements more exacting than might be imagined. Surveying human history, we find that superior stocks are the exception rather than the rule. We have already seen how many races of men have never risen above the planes of savagery or barbarism, while relatively few races have shown the ability to create high and enduring civilizations.” Needless to say, France has been long extinguished of the stock that once made the nation great and flooding the country with largely hostile aliens from the Global South is only going to speed up its complete and utter capitulation. Undoubtedly, the France depicted in *Black Girl* seems like a sort of figurative luxury cruise ship that has a small hole and is slowly but surely beginning to sink, as the white characters certainly live a life of ease and luxury in a scenic resort area, but it is clear that they are weak and decadent and thus easily susceptible to a drastic decline.

True to Marxist form, *Black Girl* is a film that depicts work as an innate evil of sorts that always involves a sinister master-slave dynamic. Indeed, there is no nuance when it comes to Sembène illustrating that when a black person works for a white person, it is nothing more than a form of neo-slavery that

seeks to racially, culturally, and economically subjugate the mostly unwitting negro. In fact, the film exaggerates this to such an absurd degree that the titular ebony queens opts to commit suicide in a rather violent way after getting tired of a sexually-repressed white cunt bitching at her all the time (on top of it being somewhat absurd that someone would off themselves instead of simply quitting a job that they loathe, it should be noted that suicide is very rare among black women). In short, elements of the film border on the hopelessly histrionic to the point of heavily contradicting the film's oftentimes realist feel, but then again that is one of the reasons why the film is so bizarrely engulfing. Utilizing Godardian and Italian neorealist filmmaking techniques as well as African oral traditions, *Black Girl* is also a somewhat aesthetically paradoxical work in that it is an audaciously anti-neocolonial flick with extremely overt European influences. In fact, were it not for Sembène's blatant negro gaze and obvious intuitive racial empathy for the black female lead, one might assume the film was directed by an ethnomasochistic white liberal if they did not know better. Mostly comprised of unsynchronized dialogue of the eponymous heroine's clearly articulated thoughts as she complains in simple words her increasing disdain, sorrow, and fatigue in regard to her job, *Black Girl* certainly benefits from a seemingly unintentional oneiric-like quality to the point where the viewer feels just as imprisoned in the grating psychodrama that is her unconsciously culturally colonized mind.

Black Girl begins simply enough with the titular heroine Diouana (played by first-time actress Mbissine Thérèse Diop, who later appeared in a small role in Sembène's *Emitaï* (1971) aka *God of Thunder*) arriving in a cruise ship to the French Riviera from Dakar where she previously lived in a literal shack with her rather youthful mother. As a poor and completely illiterate girl with no history and next to nil personal belongings, Diouana naturally believes that her life can only get better now that she has moved to France to work as a domestic worker for a white family. Of course, Diouana eventually learns the hard way that there is nothing fun or exciting about being a poor and illiterate black girl in a bourgeois European country where she has no friends. Featuring a fairly disjointed narrative that abruptly switches back and forth between the past and present in a fairly effective manner that underscores the heroine's tragically pathetic plight and the steps that led to her being in such a less than ideal situation in the first place, the film slowly but surely uncovers how Diouana was more or less tricked into becoming an all-purpose-slave for a lazy cracker bitch that cannot even bother to play with her own kids or make her husband breakfast despite the fact that she does not even have a job. Virtually plucked off a Dakar street corner where she and other young negresses would wait at during the day in the hope of being hired by a rich white employer, Diouana is pure of heart and virtually infantile in terms of her understanding (or lack thereof) of the world and especially people, hence why she made for easy prey for a conspiring 'Madame' (played by Anne-Marie Jelinek, whose surname suggests Czech, and possibly Jewish, origins) that

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clearly believes she can bully the negress into doing anything for her. Married to a weak, ineffectual, and emasculated yet seemingly well-meaning nameless Monsieur (Robert Fontaine), Madame is clearly the boss of the house and wastes no time in turning Diouana into her own virtual personal lapdog. Initially plying her with gifts like her own used clothing, including silk underwear, and initially only making her watch her kids upon first hiring her in Dakar, Madame turns into a completely different person when Diouana arrives in France. Indeed, instead of being simply a nanny as she expected, Diouana receives a rather rude awakening when Madame also makes her a cook, maid, and an object of constant ridicule. For whatever reason, Diouana never once questions Madame's demands and instead keeps her misery inward. Indeed, as the film progresses, Diouana becomes engulfed in a psychologically crippling nightmare of perpetual ennui and melancholy as she passively accepts her own virtual slavery until it becomes completely unbearable and she succumbs to the most drastic and permanent form of defeat.

In a series of flashbacks, one learns that Diouana started a brief yet seemingly passionate romantic relationship with a black brother (Momar Nar Sene) from Dakar with revolutionary leanings as demonstrated by a fancy flag of Congolese independence leader and black nationalist martyr Patrice Lumumba that is hanging on his apartment wall. Needless to say, Diouana's boyfriend gets fairly agitated at her when she dares to have a little fun by playfully hopping across a war memorial in tribute to Dakar patriots that were killed in Europe during World War II. In fact, the boyfriend calls Diouana's seemingly harmless display "sacrilege" and violently rebukes her for her flagrant ignorance and naivety in regard to the memory of so many dead Dakar brothers. Despite their minor quarrels, it is clear that Diouana and her boyfriend are a great match and that the heroine should have stayed in Dakar to be with him instead of risking everything to work for a melanin-deprived bourgeois cracker family in a faraway land. Undoubtedly, Diouana's brief romance with her revolutionary beau is the only point in the film when she seems consistently happy and comfortable in her own skin. In short, Sembène is communicating to the viewer that it is always preferable for a black woman to be with a black man in a poor African homeland than living in a wealthier white world full of strangers.

While Diouana arrives in France virtually ready to party in a pretty polka-dot dress that she is quite proud of, Madame soon mocks her for wearing said dress and forces her to wear an ugly apron in a symbolic gesture to denote her new lowly status as an exotic neo-slave. Although the heroine hoped that she would at least have the opportunity to buy new clothing while in France, she does not even get to experience that fairly minor joy and spends literally all of her time virtually imprisoned in her employer's banally decorated apartment. When her white employers have some friends over for lunch one day, a rather rotund bald-headed guest of the somewhat pig-like sort randomly declares to Diouana, "Do

you mind, miss? I've never kissed a black woman" and then kisses her without her permission, thus predictably disgusting her in the process. While the heroine can tolerate cooking spicy rice for the guests, she seems almost irrevocably dehumanized after being pecked on the cheek by a fat and goofy old white dude. Monsieur also seems to have some sexual interest in Diouana, but he is too weak and impotent to act on his desires. Of course, Madame seems to notice her husband's interest in Diouana, hence one of the reasons for her poor treatment of the heroine. As the days pass, Diouana becomes more and more dejected and naturally escapes further inward. When Madame notices the heroine's glaring change in character, she snidely remarks, "Diouanne looks strange" and "She seems to be wasting away," though she ultimately comes to the conclusion that it is simply because she is "lazy." Of course, Madame is not exactly happy with her life either as demonstrated by remarks like, "I'm fed up with this life" after getting annoyed with her seemingly impotent husband for taking a nap. Indeed, as the director seems to suggest, Madame might be somewhat less of a ruthless bitch if her clueless husband knew how to sexually satisfy her. As Diouana thinks to herself regarding Madame's boldly bitchy behavior and Monsieur's similarly unhappy nature, "She wasn't like that in Dakar. Neither was he," thus suggesting that even white people prefer Africa to Europe. As for France itself, Diouana can only think, "For me, France is the kitchen, the living room, the bathroom and my bedroom. Where are the people that live in this country? The mistress told me, 'You'll see, Diouana, there are lovely shops in France.' Is France that blackhole?" Indeed, Diouana may be black as coal but nothing is darker to her than the bottomless pit that is the seemingly forsaken frog soul.

While Diouana finds working incessantly for an uptight bitch completely insufferable and experiences a variety of horrendous things like being rudely awakened by the sexually repressed white woman screaming in her face, "Get up, lazy-bones! [...] We're not in Africa!," it is only when the Madame writes a fake letter that is ostensibly from her mother in Dakar that she really loses it and becomes completely convinced that she is a slave. Indeed, Diouana can only weep with rage when the Monsieur reads aloud to her a rather bitchy letter that was supposedly written by her mother that reads, "My dear daughter, this is your mother writing. I've had no news since you left. I got the address of your employers through a friend. My health is getting worse every day. Why do you leave me penniless? I've nothing to live on while you squander your wages. I know you can't write but I'm sure your mistress will do it, as she's a lady and a mother and gave you her cast-off clothes for us. She'll write for you. You mustn't think only of yourself. You've sent nothing since you left and yet you've got your wages. What do you do with them? Think of your mother who has to pay even for water and who is so poor. I think of you and pray for you and your employers. Your Mother." To add insult to injury, Monsieur proceeds to write a phony reply letter to Diouana's mother with his own words while she thinks

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to herself, "That's not true. And it's not my letter. My mother didn't write it. And I didn't ask him to write a letter for me. And my mistress is no lady. It's because I can't write. If I could write, I'd tell about my mistress' 'kindness.' I'm a prisoner here." Naturally, the entire experience is humiliating for Diouana, as it forces her to confront her illiteracy and how such a handicap can so easily yet ruthlessly be used against her. Indeed, completely unable to express her own misery and torment to anyone, Diouana becomes overwhelmed with internal misery to the point where it becomes totally unbearable and she eventually completely emotionally implodes.

After the phony letter incident, Diouana opts to symbolically terminate her employment with the frigid frog family by taking back an authentic ancient African mask that she gave to them as a gift when they first hired her. When Madame notices the mask is missing and attempts to take it back, an unintentionally humorous interracial struggle over the primitive artifact occurs between the two women that only ends when Monsieur breaks up the little bitch fight. In a feeble attempt to appease Diouana, Monsieur subsequently attempts to pay her, but she drops the 20,000 francs on the floor and collapses, as if she feels great guilt and shame for figuratively prostituting herself for such worthless paper. At this point, Diouana thinks to herself, "Never again will the mistress scold me. Never again will she say, 'Diouana, make coffee.' Never again, 'Diouana, make rice.' Never again, 'Diouana, take off your shoes.' Never again, 'Diouana, wash this shirt.' Never again, 'Diouana, you're lazy.' Never will I be a slave. I did not come here for the apron or the money. Never will she see me again. Never will she scold me again. Never again, Diouana. Never will I see them again." Before opting to kill herself by slitting her own wrist in the family's bathtub, Diouana thinks to herself in regard to Madame, "She wanted to keep me as a slave," thus highlighting that her suicide is an extreme and revolutionary, if not somewhat warped, act of personal autonomy. Indeed, too impotent to defend herself in any other fashion, Diouana has her revenge against the family that emotionally destroyed her by destroying herself in their prized bathtub. After Diouana's dubious death results in a small scandal that is covered in a local newspaper, Monsieur opts to fly to Dakar to return the heroine's personal belongings, including the ancient mask, to her mother. When Monsieur meets Diouana's mother, he is somewhat bewildered when she refuses to take his blood money. In the end, a little black boy from Diouana's neighborhood scares Monsieur out of the shacktown by putting on the ancient mask and following him from behind in a manner not unlike some slasher movie killer in a symbolic scene where auteur Sembène seems to express his hope that African youth achieve a sort of atavistic reawakening by getting in touch with their ancient roots and ultimately scaring away whitey from the dark continent for good.

While I generally consider Marxists to be infinitely more repellent than fecal-feeding maggots on dog shit and regard Afrocentric types to be less credible in

terms of historical facts than a schizophrenic Christian Evangelical after taking a bad hit of acid, I somehow found *Black Girl* to be, relatively speaking, a fairly sensible film with a healthy message against the false song of multiculturalism and a sort of organic black pride that is not driven totally by resentment or an imagined glorious past involving ancient rocket-powered pyramids and magical pitch black Israelite god-kings, among various other patent absurdities. While it probably was not even Sembène's intention, the film also manages to do the seemingly impossible by deconstructing the loud and angry negress archetype. Indeed, in an exotic negroid prole fashion, the eponymous heroine of Sembène's debut feature radiates an inordinate amount of refined ebony elegance that is simply all but impossible to find in cinema history, including in negrophiliac Hollywood. In short, Spike Lee's films seem like neo-minstrel shows compared to the true negro kultur that Sembène created cinematically. Indeed, in terms of American negro filmmakers, it seems that only Charles Burnett (*Killer of Sheep*, *My Brother's Wedding*) comes close to Sembène in terms featuring nuanced black characters as opposed to mere stereotypical caricatures and one-note coons.

Notably, at the beginning of his fairly lengthy review of *Black Girl* for in the April 21, 1995 issue of the *Chicago Reader*, Jewish-American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum argued, "If you trace African film back to its first fiction feature, it is only thirty years old. Yet far from being underdeveloped, it begins on a more sophisticated level than any other cinema in the world." Of course, Rosenbaum's statement verges on puffery and completely ignores that Sembène's film owes a good portion of its potency to largely European influences and thus can hardly be described as a cinema that was sired from scratch, at least as far as aesthetics and filmmaking techniques are concerned (naturally, one also cannot forget that Sembène learned his craft from kosher commie Don-skoj). Of course, what makes the film truly and authentically African is the story it tells, thus giving some credence to Sembène's famous quote, "If Africans do not tell their own stories, Africa will soon disappear." As far as back as at least the short agitprop doc *Afrique 50* (1950)—the first French anticolonialist film and a once-quite-controversial piece that led to its French director René Vautier to being imprisoned for several months—certain European filmmakers, especially of the frog orientated sort, have directed sympathetic films about black Africans, yet such cinematic works oftentimes seem racially condescending, self-congratulatory, and virtue-signal-ridden when compared to the films of a real nigga like Sembène. In fact, in a 1965 polemical exchange between the two filmmakers, Sembène accused French cinéma-vérité co-founder Jean Rouch—a quasi-communist anthropologist that holds the dubious distinction of being "the father of Nigerien cinema" despite initially arriving to Nigeria as colonialist in 1941—of, "[looking] at us [black Africans] as if we were insects." As someone that is more often than not disgusted by the way Judaic filmmakers and Hebraic Hollywood depicts European history and European-Americans in film, I can

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certainly empathize with Sembène in a strange and somewhat unexpected way in that regard.

As a work of artful agitprop that is guided by poetical pathos and a rather blatant yet nonetheless potent and unforgettable message about the need for negro self-determination, I would have to mostly agree with Rosenbaum when he wrote regarding *Black Girl*, "I'm fully convinced that nothing in this movie can be weakened or spoiled by knowing the story in advance, which is why I'm not showing any hesitation about revealing it. For Sembène, the event is mere raw material articulation is everything." Of course, the film was made with a youthful black African audience in mind, so it should be easy to see why a black viewer, despite gender, might be horrified at the prospect of a buxty and beauteous negress violently offing herself due to living an insufferable slave-like existence of perennial domestic banality at the behest of a seriously sexually-repressed white bitch and her insanely impotent and outstandingly aloof cuckold husband. Unfortunately, history has not gone as Sembène hoped it would and now there are more African negroes in France than at any other time in history. Of course, these largely Islamic negroes have not come to France to become low-paying servants, but to act as shameless parasites and suck on the decrepit old withered teat of the French state while creating their own 'little Africas' inside of urban ghettos that no sane white person would dare to walk in. Indeed, it seems French novelist Jean Raspail was unfortunately all too prophetic in terms of his racially apocalyptic vision of Europe as depicted in his classic dystopian novel *Le Camp des Saints* (1973) aka *The Camp of the Saints*, as France and most of the rest of Europe is experiencing a sort of 'reverse colonialism' where the third world, seeking 'the white man's comfort' at the white man's expense, comes to feed on what is left of the virtual cock-less cadaver that is the contemporary West. As both *Black Girl* and *The Camp of the Saints* demonstrate in quite different ways, colonialism works both ways and has been largely disastrous for both sides in its disharmonious uniting of two very different races from two very different lands and cultures. Undoubtedly, one of the things that most stood out to me about *Black Girl* is the almost absurdly impressionable nature of the titular heroine in what ultimately seems to be a critique from Sembène in regard to an innate weakness of African negroes. Indeed, Lothrop Stoddard might as well have been describing the heroine of the film when he wrote, "This lack of constructive originality, however, renders the negro extremely susceptible to external influences. The Asiatic, conscious of his past and his potentialities, is chary of foreign innovations and refuses to recognize alien superiority. The negro, having no past, welcomes novelty and tacitly admits that others are his masters. Both brown and white men have been so accepted in Africa. The relatively faint resistance offered by the naturally brave blacks to white and brown conquest, the ready reception of Christianity and Islam, and the extraordinary personal ascendancy acquired by individual Arabs and Europeans, all indicate a

willingness to accept foreign tutelage which in the Asiatic is wholly absent.” Indeed, the eponymous heroine of the film immediately becomes enamored with the novelty of France and French culture and gleefully accepts a position as a mere servant, but this ultimately results in great misery and eventually tragedy.

For better or worse, resentment seems to be an innate ingredient of black identity and *Black Girl* is certainly dripping with such resentment, but it thankfully never reaches Spike Lee-esque proportions. Like the rebellious young college kid that cannot stand that he still relies on his parents for rent and food money, Sembène—a black African that was born a French citizen in an African nation that had been under French rule since the late-1800s—was quite flagrant in his resentment towards the French, which is arguably more apparent in *Black Girl* than any of his other films but, unlike many black American filmmakers, he at least offered a vision for a better future. Needless to say, it is a bitter and biting irony that the film was made with French money, won the 1966 Prix Jean Vigo for best feature film, and is technically a ‘French-Senegalese’ production. In short, Sembène’s debut is literal postcolonialism in celluloid form, even if the auteur intended it as a piece of pure and unadulterated Marxist orientated Pan-Africanism. In that sense, I can understand Sembène’s resentment, as if he probably always had it in the back of his mind that he was perennially colonized and could never achieve a complete sense of totally organic African purity, so it is nice to know that virtually all of the auteur’s films after *Black Girl* were true Senegalese productions. Unfortunately, Sembène never seemed to realize that his intellectual influences like Marxism and feminism were decidedly decadent intellectual movements that were largely created by European-Jews. Indeed, not unlike Frantz Fanon, Sembène’s mind was colonized by kosher quacks. Needless to say, Marx’s long-term influence on Africa has been largely ugly, bloody, and even genocidal. Slave-morality-oriented philosophy aside, Marxism is as alien to Africans as any thing French. While *Black Girl* gives somewhat different reasons as to why, in general, blacks will fail to collectively flourish in Europe, Stoddard offered fairly reasonable, if not exactly politically correct, theories when he wrote in regard to non-Europids in general, “Now how does the Under-Man look at civilization? This civilization offers him few benefits and fewer hopes. It usually affords him little beyond a meagre subsistence. And, sooner or later, he instinctively senses that he is a failure; that civilization’s prizes are not for him. But this civilization, which withholds benefits, does not hesitate to impose burdens. We have previously stated that civilization’s heaviest burdens are borne by the superior. Absolutely, this is true; relatively, the Under-Man’s intrinsically lighter burdens feel heavier because of his innate incapacity. The very discipline of the social order oppresses the Under-Man; it thwarts and chastises him at every turn. To wild nature’s society is a torment, while the congenial caveman, placed in civilization, is always in trouble and usually in jail.” Of course, the racial character of France’s prisons, criminal gangs, and ghettos cer-

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tainly demonstrate Stoddard is right, even though he wrote those words in 1922 long before the decolonization of Africa and flooding of Europe with various groups from the third world. Indubitably, one of the most important things I took away from *Black Girl* is that it is the first film directed by an African negro features a strong anti-multicultural message. Surely, Sembène's debut feature makes for a great double feature with Claire Denis' *White Madness* (2009)—a less than liberal flick about an unhinged white bitch that hates white people who ultimately sacrifices her entire family to anti-white negro revolutionaries because she refuses to move to Europe—as both films demonstrate in rather provocative ways how Africans and Europeans will never live in harmony. Of course, one only has to look at American, Haitian, and African history to realize this is true, but most whites rather live in denial of the fact that most blacks have nothing but contempt for them and nothing they do can change that. Personally, I much prefer watching films by the likes of Sembène, Carl Franklin, and even Spike Lee than taking in part in any real-life multicultural experiment and I say that as a proud and unrepentant Eurocentric cinephile.

-Ty E

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM

Otto Preminger (1955)

Nobody, including junkies, wants to watch most films about junkies, unless you have exceedingly excremental taste and can somehow trick yourself into believing there is any sort of truth in regard to the dope fiend lifestyle in senseless swill like Askhenazi pseudo-arthouse poser Darren Aronofsky's pleb-tier clinical con-job *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) where the soulless smackhead lifestyle is romanticized in a rather retarded MTV-esque fashion full of debasing hip hop montage masturbation and pathetic plastic histrionics, among other aesthetically bankrupt would-be-artsy-fartsy asininities. Aside from being an absolutely aesthetically atrocious film that test the bounds of feckless art faggotry and too-cool-for-school cultural retardation, the film was clearly directed by someone that has no direct experience with heroin or junkies but of course an authentic portrayal of such human debasement would have never been such a big hit with packs of mindlessly rebellious teenagers and sapless liberal academics. While attempting to do their own best Harmony Korine/Larry Clark impersonation, the Safdie brothers utilized their typical cheap gimmick of poorly disguising autistic trash as provocative art for *Heaven Knows What* (2014) where they utilized real junkies yet managed to say absolutely nothing new or interesting about the junky experience. While I do appreciate films like Barbet Schroeder's *More* (1969), Paul Morrissey's *Trash* (1970), Jerry Schatzberg's *The Panic in Needle Park* (1971), and *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) to varying degrees, none of these films also seem to provide the full junky experience, especially in terms of the vicious circle that comes with full-blown junkydom. Thankfully, blue-eyed goombah god Frank Sinatra was able to provide the world with a fuller look at the perturbing perils of heroin hell.

Needless to say, I never expected that a film from the mid-1950s starring alpha-wop performer Sinatra and directed by subversive Austro-American semite Otto Preminger (*Bonjour Tristesse*, *Anatomy of a Murder*) would provide in what is my best estimation the full junky experience, at least in a sort of soundly seedy post-noir sense where the most glaring trash on the streets is the people. Indeed, *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1956)—a film that could not be more immaculately and unforgettably titled—is far from a fun flick as a sort of cinematic equivalent to stale dog shit and old vomit boiling on a hot city sidewalk. In short, the film does what Preminger does best in terms of its hardly covert cynicism, misanthropy, and overall unflattering depiction of humanity; or, in this sad soulless case, subhumanity. In my admittedly counter-kosher yet reasonably artistically fair opinion, Preminger—an Austrian Jew that was oftentimes described as an 'Nazi' by collaborators due to his cold and sadistic authoritarian character (not to mention his strange fetish for playing Nazi characters, most famously in fellow chosenite Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17* (1953))—was no real artist

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and he never directed a true cinematic masterpiece despite coming pretty damn close with his classic film noir *Laura* (1944), but his strong and subversive character secured his place in cinema history as a somewhat memorable auteur that, for better or worse, helped to destroy the censors. As Andrew Sarris once stated of the filmmaker, "His enemies have never forgiven him for being a director with the personality of a producer [...] Preminger's legend is that of the cosmic cost accountant, a ruthless creature who will mangle the muse for the sake of a shooting schedule." More than an accountant, Preminger—the son of a once-powerful Austrian public prosecutor who earned a 'Doctor of Law' at the recommendation of his father—demonstrated the antichristian spirit of a tyrannical Talmudic lawyer that prides himself on the malefic maneuvering and manipulation of the legal system, which is actually something he both personally attempted and depicted with his films, including *The Man with the Golden Arm*.

While Preminger apparently originally had little interest in directing a film about a dreary dope fiend, he was quite keen on destroying the Hollywood Production Code, which states in the 'Crimes Against The Law' section of film censor Joseph I. Breen's document: "The illegal drug traffic, and drug addiction, must never be presented." While Jewish leftist actor John Garfield intended to play the lead in a projected cinematic adaptation of kosher quasi-commie Nelson Algren's 1949 source novel of the same name, the outlaw film noir star died prematurely in 1952 long before Preminger became interested in the project (in fact, Preminger bought the rights for the project from Garfield's estate). In the end, it was ultimately Algren's great misfortune that Preminger ever got interested in the project. Although the filmmaker originally had enough respect for the novelist to have him brought out from his home in Gary, Indiana to Hollywood to write the film's screenplay, he apparently did not respect him or his screenwriting abilities too much as he soon replaced him with Walter Newman (*Ace in the Hole*, *Cat Ballou*) in an artistically disastrous scenario that haunted the writer for the rest of his life, or as hapa film historian Chris Fujiwara explained in his biography *The World and Its Double: The Life and Work of Otto Preminger* (2008), "For Algren, Preminger would become an obsession, a symbol of the crass arrogance of power, an enemy with whom he would grapple again and again in his writing and his reminiscences." A man that was ruthlessly criticized by none other than his kosher-con racial kinsman Norman Podhoretz for glorifying ghetto trash at the expense of polite society, Algren had what might be described as the quintessential 'Barton Fink Mindset,' which is really underscored in a critique of Preminger where he states, "...the life of the common man has never filtered into Otto's brains and emotions; or into his talent such as he has. The book dealt with life at the bottom. Otto has never, not for so much as a single day, had any experience except that of life at the top." Unfortunately, the trouble with Algren's critique is that, despite being a Hollywood film featuring the novelty of a famous garlic-breathed singer-cum-star, Preminger's

The Man with the Golden Arm does an inordinately good job portraying the purgatorial (non)existence of poor dope-shooting and scam-running proles to the point where one feels like taking a shower after watching the film lest you succumb to an unnerving feeling of festering filth.

In his highly worthwhile text *Opium, journal d'une désintoxication* (1930) aka *Opium: The Diary of His Cure*—a delightful diary of self-deluding yet insightful spiritual degeneration that makes alpha-Beat William S. Burroughs' books on dope seem all-too-soulless by comparison—French poet and cinemagician Jean Cocteau states, "The half-sleep of opium makes us pass down corridors and cross halls and push open doors and lose ourselves in a world where people startled out of their sleep are horribly afraid of us." Undoubtedly, Cocteau's words are a great way to describe the inordinately haunting and oftentimes debasing experience of watching *The Man with the Golden Arm*, which is set in a piss poor polack ghetto of the North Side of Chicago where people seem to thrive on nothing more than fear, paranoia, and a special sort of social parasitism where even the feral version of 'man's best friend' is a commodity and suavely sociopathic dope dealers aggressively prey on (ex)addicts in the gleeful hope that they get rehooked. Indeed, as Burroughs once wrote, "The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client." As soon as the film's protagonist Frankie Machine (Frank Sinatra) is released from a federal Narcotic Farm in Lexington, Kentucky, he makes the mistake of heading back to his crud-crusted Chicago hellhole where his sinisterly slimy dealer Louie (Darren McGavin)—a virtual pimp of human souls that prides himself on underhandedly exploiting human weakness for maximum personal benefit—immediately begins offering him 'free' heroin (notably, the name of the drug is never mentioned). Unfortunately for street parasite Louie, at least initially, Frankie has big plans and wants to leave behind his previous criminal career as the 'dealer' in illegal card games to become the drummer of a big band. Of course, as Burroughs also wrote, "A junkie spends half his life waiting," and while waiting Frankie cannot ignore the, "thirty-five-pound monkey on his back."

Notably, in his book *Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy* (2008), English mischling psychiatrist Theodore Dalrymple completely demystifies the deluded view of drugs, especially opiates and heroin, as a source of profound artistic inspiration and creativity and instead presents them as a patently pathetic tool of the self-destructively nihilistic and, in turn, oftentimes criminal. In short, it is rare for happy people to become heroin addicts and it is only natural that someone suffering from a spiritual void would try to fill said void with what Burroughs lovingly described as 'Cocteau's kick.' Undoubtedly, such is the case of Frankie Machine who has somewhat tangible dreams but is living a virtual nightmare as the figurative emotional-punching-bag of a

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deranged wife named Zosh (Eleanor Parker) and the pawn of local small-time criminals. While Frankie deeply loves his ex-flame Molly (Kim Novak), he felt so guilty about (supposedly) crippling Zosh while drunk driving that he pathetically agreed to marry the crazy cunt while she was still in the hospital. In fact, Molly, who works as a server at a strip club, is the perfect dream girl as she encourages Frankie to pursue his dream of being a professional drummer while resentful wench Zosh berates him for even considering doing something that might better him and, in turn, give him a reason to leave her and move on with his life. Frankie also has a goofy best friend named 'Sparrow' (Arnold Stang) that runs a silly scam that involves peddling homeless street dogs to unsuspecting customers. While Sparrow is a good friend, he is also a bizarrely nebbish low-life and is involved with the same scumbags that plague Frankie's life. In short, Molly is the only true bright light in Frankie's increasingly darkening abyss of a life. Needless to say, anyone that has to deal with an insufferable bitch like Zosh would love to escape to the ecstatic warmth of a heroin high, so it is not long before dealer Louie finally convinces Frankie to embrace the narcotic void. As Louie gleefully states before Frankie shoots his first dope since his prison stint, "Monkey's never dead, dealer. They monkey never dies. When you kick him off.....he just hides in a corner waiting his turn."

As one can expect from any serious self-destructive addict, the abject misery of Frankie's personal life parallels the extent of his drug abuse, though the former oftentimes fuels the latter and vice versa; or, in short, the vicious circle that is dope fiend purgatory. Although Frankie knows what he must do due to lessons from a certain Dr. Lennox (who he proudly states of, "He was real good to me") as demonstrated by remarks like, "See, part of the cure is to keep yourself busy doing things you enjoy. Like for instance, I wanted to learn to drum and music," the totally callous and craven parasites of his subprole life keep scamming him into their sociopathic schemes. Indeed, aside from the fact that his wife Zosh is keeping him a virtual slave by pretending to be a wheelchair-bound cripple when she is actually perfectly capable of walking, Frankie's old boss Schwiefka (Robert Strauss)—a man that unequivocally proves that sometimes it is perfectly fine to judge a book by its cover—wants to make him his virtual slave again for his illegal card games and dope dealer Louie largely makes that happen with his highly addictive street smack. While Frankie does manage to make it into the musicians union, he botches his big band tryout due to suffering from drug withdrawal. To make matters worse, Frankie gets caught cheating during a long poker marathon that brings disgrace to his bastard of a boss Schwiefka. When Frankie beats him during an unsuccessful attempt to rob his drug stash, Louie naturally goes looking for him and is in quite surprise when he accidentally discovers that Zosh can actually walk. Afraid that Frankie will surely leave her if he discovers her big lie, Zosh actually kills Louie by pushing him over the railing of her apartment stairwell where he falls a couple floors to his miserable death (admittedly, this is

a fairly awesome and completely unexpected murder scene). Naturally, Frankie is immediately suspected of the killing due to being one of Louie's virtual dope slaves, but luckily he is hiding out at his great love Molly's apartment while he withdraws from dope. Needless to say, Frankie certainly does not have luck on his side but he does have love in the form of gorgeous ghetto Fräulein Molly who demonstrates through sheer action that she is the only true good element in the protagonist's life (after all, even Frankie's best bud Sparrow is, at best, a sleazy street scavenger that regularly lounges around low-lifes).

Zosh is such a pathetically evil monster that she actually dares to confess to Molly in regard to her long-term plans for her husband, "He put me in this chair. And as long as I sit here, he'll never leave me. He knows he belongs to me. I wouldn't wanna live if he left me. And I'd rather see him dead too than have him go to you." While Molly has come by to convince her to help in regard to his drug problems and being suspected of murder, Zosh—a woman so deranged that she regularly happily glances at a misspelled 'romantic' scrapbook chronicling her crippling and subsequent marriage to the protagonist—is only interested in keeping Frankie for herself and she will go to any low to keep him on her gutter grade femme fatale leash. In the end, Frankie, who has decided to leave town, finally discovers Zosh's handicap ruse and so does the local cop Captain Bednar (Emile Meyer) who immediately realizes that she is actually Louie's killer. With nothing left to lose aside from her miserable life, which is worth less than nil, Zosh impulsively decides to throwaway said miserable life by jumping off the balcony of her apartment building right in front of Frankie in what feels like a moment of karmic kismet where a murderess dispatches herself the same exact way that she killed her victim. In the end in what is ultimately a fittingly uncomfortable yet largely deserved 'happy ending,' Frankie and Molly leave town while perennial ghetto-dweller Sparrow predictably stays behind. Not surprisingly, Nelson Algren's source novel ends on a more negative and decidedly anti-Hollywood note with Frankie pulling a Rozz Williams and killing himself on April Fools' Day after being forced to abandon Molly while hiding from the cops. Needless to say, it always feels like a sick joke when 'love conquers all' in a Preminger picture.

In my opinion, Preminger might be an authentic auteur but he is also an obviously overrated auteur that never managed to direct a true masterpiece. Indeed, while Andrew Sarris was right when he wrote, "LAURA is Preminger's CITIZEN KANE, at least in the sense that Otto's detractors, like Orson's, have never permitted him to live it down," I do not think I would ever describe Laura as an unmitigated masterpiece yet, at the same time, none of Preminger's subsequent output comes even close to it aside from *The Man with the Golden Arm*. While I have not seen all the director's films (which would undoubtedly be an unrewarding and redundant task), I have seen most of the notable ones and they are largely too long, insufferably (socio)politically motivated, rambling, and plagued with

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a sort of obscenely obnoxious arrogance that the director was well known for. When Preminger attempted to make a virtual Zionist *The Gone with the Wind* via *Exodus* (1960), he only achieved bombastic banality and a sort of gratingly disingenuous humanism where he tries in vain to care about the plight of Palestinians in between glorifying Herzlian heroics. While the auteur was certainly successful in demonstrating his fetish for law and the manipulation of said law with his classic flick *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), no courtroom drama deserves to be at the preposterous length of 160 minutes. With his (anti)Catholic epic *The Cardinal* (1963)—a film where the auteur gleefully associates both Catholicism and his seemingly much despised Austro-Kraut homeland with the nastiness of National Socialism—Preminger was unable to hide his hatred for the Catholic Church and lead Tom Tryon (who was apparently at least partly inspired to quit acting due to his experiences with Preminger). As for his Panavision Pearl Harbor epic *In Harm's Way* (1965), Preminger produced a particularly plodding piece of all-star stagnation where John Wayne, Kirk Douglas, and Henry Fonda seem like they are pretending to star in a John Ford flick and failing miserably at it. While *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965) is a particularly potent preternatural psychological-thriller that, in many ways, defies classification, Preminger, who was ironically not really fond of the film, would never again direct a truly worthwhile movie. When he was not shitting on the American South with unintentionally grotesque tabloid-like trash like *Hurry Sundown* (1967), Preminger was paying insincere backhanded tribute to the hippies due to their mindless subversion of traditional white Christian American society with insufferably kitschy, pseudo-psychedelic twaddle like *Skidoo* (1968), which is notable for featuring a virtual graveyard of washed-up actors, including Jackie Gleason, Frankie Avalon, Cesar Romero, and Groucho Marx. As for *Such Good Friends* (1971) ghostwritten by Elaine May under the pseudonym 'Esther Dale,' Preminger made a valiant attempt at being a poor man's Woody Allen in an unintentionally absurd kosher sex-comedy that is about as hot as Whoopi Goldberg's nappy naughty bits.

Of course, one of the things that makes *The Man with the Golden Arm* so surprisingly enthralling aside from Frank Sinatra and Kim Novak's performances is that, with the exception of the iconic title sequence by Saul Bass, it is not particularly Premingerian in the emotional sense and it actually feels sincerely sympathetic (as opposed to arrogantly cynical) in its depiction of human degradation and desperation. Aside from source Nelson Algren's novel, the film probably owes its sense of humanistic authenticity to Sinatra who, unlike a lot of people that worked with Preminger, was unwillingly to take shit from the dictatorial director, which he was able to get away with due to his fame and popularity (notably, Marlon Brando, who snatched the lead role in *On the Waterfront* (1954) from Sinatra, was also interested in the role). In fact, Preminger was so impressed with Sinatra that he wanted to use him in an adaptation of Mario

Puzo's *The Godfather*, or as the auteur-cum-producer wrote, "Many years later Paramount asked me to direct *THE GODFATHER*. I thought Sinatra would be wonderful in the lead and sent him the book. I even offered to eliminate the character of the winger, who some people thought was patterned after Sinatra. Nevertheless he said, 'Ludvig, I pass on this.'" Luckily, Francis Ford Coppola would ultimately direct the film as Preminger has never directed a film as nearly as aesthetically potent and truly epic as *The Godfather* (1972) despite his tackling of various films with long-running times. As Chris Fujiwara noted in regard to the film, "Like *THE MOON IS BLUE*, *SAINT JOAN*, and, especially, *PORGY AND BESS*, *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM* is in this sense an exception to the main movement of Preminger's work after his departure from Fox and before *SKIDOO*: an abstract, hermetic film rather than one that involves itself with a reality that exists outside, and for other purposes than, the filmic project. The sets render Algren's skid row as an isolated and self-contained world, accentuating both its hopelessness and its lack of historicity. This world has no past and no future; it is read for the bulldozers. The stylization of some of the performances—Robert Strauss's and Arnold Stang's, notably—suits this desperate and artificial quality perfectly." Of course, this 'artificiality' that Fujiwara speaks of only underscores the protagonist's increasing junky jadedness, dirtbag delirium, and lingering lovesickness, as if the character has been condemned to a completely colorless heroin habitué hell. Indeed, the best compliment I can pay the film is that it is like the Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) of junky films as a boldly fucked flick that somehow manages to utilize studio artifice to underscore the metaphysical malaise of the urban underworld to the point where the viewer feels that they have actually spent a couple hours in heroin addict Hades.

If *The Man with the Golden Arm* is the junky cinematic jam par excellence where the viewer has the singular luxury of experiencing the spiritually necrotic nadir of narcotic nihilism, Jean Cocteau's surrealist directorial debut *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) aka *The Blood of a Poet*—a film that the poet turned filmmaker alludes to in his opium diary when he states, "My next work will be a film"—is its European arthouse celluloid counterpoint as an oneiric Orphic odyssey as inspired by the auteur's own apparently life-changing experiences with opium. In short, Cocteau's film is arguably an example of the 'positive' effects of opium. Notably, Cocteau would argue in his drug diary, "Opium, which changes our speeds, procures for us a very clear awareness of worlds which are superimposed on each other, which interpenetrate each other, but do not even suspect each other's existence." While I can somewhat respect Cocteau's somewhat naively romantic view of a drug that debased his soul and his words certainly make for a good description of the otherworldly experiences of the eponymous poet protagonist played by Enrique Riveros, *The Man with the Golden Arm* is unequivocally more in tune with the hauntingly hideous moral, emotional, physical, and

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spiritual lows associated with heroin addiction. In fact, I would warn the more impressionable art fags out there to stay clear of Cocteau's *Opium: The Diary of His Cure* lest they catch a nasty addiction that won't inspire much art but probably tons of all-consuming misery and quite possibly even death. After all, for every Bukowski and Burroughs, who were both miserable men, there are probably millions of degenerate drunks and junkies with failed artistic intentions and *The Man with the Golden Arm* does a rather respectful job depicting the perils of such a disgusting dead-end life. As for a vaguely similar real-life parallel to the character of protagonist Frankie Machine in terms of a junky jazz musician that lives to lose, American jazz trumpeter Chet Baker is a good example and, in that sense, queer fashion photographer Bruce Weber's documentary *Let's Get Lost* (1988) certainly makes for a great double feature with Preminger's flick. Needless to say, superficially romantic pop cinema like *The Basketball Diaries* (1995) is nothing short of a frivolous emotional con job if you are really looking to get down with dope fiends. While by no means a bad movie, Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996)—a film that seems more aesthetically inspired by psychedelic drugs than the opium oriented sort—has probably inspired more people to shoot junk than stay clear of it. As for junky films directed by actual junkies, Richard Kern (*Submit to Me*, *Fingered*) of the so-called Cinema of Transgression movement is probably the most notable example and naturally his films are totally morally retarded. Needless to say, most junky cinema is junk.

Notably, Andrew Sarris summed up Preminger's artistically curious cinematic career as follows, "We are left with a director who has made at least four masterpieces of ambiguity and objectivity—*LAURA*, *BONJOUR TRISTESSE*, *ADVISE AND CONSENT*, and *BUNNY LAKE IS MISSING*, a director who sees all problems and issues as a single-take two-shot, the stylistic expression of the eternal conflict, not between right and wrong, but between the right-wrong on one side and the right-wrong on the other, a representation of the right-wrong in all of us as our share of the human condition. In the middle of the conflict stands Otto Preminger, right-wrong, good-bad, and probably sincere-cynical." Indeed, aside from the occasional neo-Sirkian melodrama à la Fassbinder's *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971), not many films quite achieve the "sincere-cynical" of *The Man with the Golden Arm* where a marriage is depicted as something as spiritually deadly as narcotic addiction. And, undoubtedly, arguably more than any of Preminger's other films, his junky flick depicts, for better or worse, the signature penetrating Premingerian moral ambiguity (or lack of morality) that Sarris relatively soundly describes. In short, *The Man with the Golden Arm* is no pussy film, but a penetrating piece of understated pathos where one gets to the dead heart of addiction in a fashion that does not coddle the viewer or give them wild romantic ideas about addiction.

As someone that has personally known various junkies, including of the dead, undead, and almost-dead variety, *The Man with the Golden Arm* proved to be

at least strong enough to make me (almost) consider taking a nice warm shower lest bask in the metaphysical grudge and grime, but I must confess that the film does not address the philosophical aspect of junkydom. Indeed, as Cocteau once wrote, "The purity of a revolution can last a fortnight. That is why a poet, the revolutionary of the soul, limits himself to the about-turns of the mind. Every fortnight I change my programme. For me opium is a revolt. Addiction a revolt. The cure a revolt. I do not talk of my works. Each one guillotines the other. My only aim is to spare myself Napoleon." Of course, one also argue that the opioid epidemic plaguing white mainstream America is also a (largely unconscious and supremely misguided) collective nihilistic revolt against Hebraic Hollywood and all it stands for as Tinseltown is merely the propaganda arm for the globalized crypto-kosher post-white multicultural America. And, of course, it was Preminger, who literally utilized *The Man with the Golden Arm* as one of his various cinematic weapons to crush mainstream white Christian morality, who helped to pave the way to this Hollywoodland hell. In that sense, I somehow feel much better about recommending Victor Sjöström's silent dipsomaniac delight *The Phantom Carriage* (1921)—an aesthetically pioneering film that takes both a literal and figurative approach to depicting the haunting horrors of alcoholism—instead of Preminger's lumpenprole dope fiend flick when it comes to films depicting the purgatorial perils of addiction. Indeed, if non-junky Preminger's greatest contribution to the art of cinema was a junky flick featuring a popular wop crooner that was at least partly motivated by quasi-legal reasons, one comes to a rather dubious conclusion about his value and legacy as an artist. In that sense, Preminger was probably on a similar moral plane as a junky, albeit with the spirit of a Wall Street cokehead type. Of course, I say that as someone that considers transcendental European arthouse films like Robert Bresson's *The Devil, Probably* (1977) and Adriaan Ditvoorst's *White Madness* (1984) to be the absolute apotheosis of junky cinema, but such hermetic flicks were not made for the same American prole audience that *The Man with the Golden Arm* was meant to appeal to. After all, even when it comes to junkies, not all people are equal.

-Ty E

HOMUNCULUS
HOMUNCULUS

Otto Rippert (1916) Alexander Shevchenko has a gift of terror. He has this uncanny ability to take simple architectural pieces or even household antiquities and bring something absolutely sickening or terror filled with his long, abstract, and calculated shots. Same with Burial Ground, the shorts are too short to be giving away the linear flow of the story. In some degree, it does involve phantasmal rebirth which is a bold move for even him. The lighting, or lack there of, is a beautiful canvas that this film paints on. Darkness shrouds every surface. You cannot escape it, Shevchenko makes sure of that. "He also has a cunning sense of humor" The same way that the original Resident Evil incorporated the lone door opening animation, Homunculus uses it to the same advantage. As always, the music is masterful and twisting with macabre bleep-beats. Homunculus is what Jacob's Ladder would have been like, had it been 5 minutes long. There's no doubt that Shevchenko learned a lot under the wing of fellow surrealist Iskanov. With both these artists at the reigns of foreign surrealism, the world will indeed be a better place. The Tourist DVD could not arrive any sooner. Bring on the motion picture runtime.

-Maq

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

P.J. Hogan (2009)

It began as a simple question. "Did you want to screen Confessions of a Shopaholic?" she said. All I can really recall my reaction being was a loud and exaggerated scoff. There was no way in hell that I would be caught dead watching some dumb broad buy expensive clothes for an hour and a half. Somehow, somehow, I found myself in the empty theater with the only reasonable companion one could bring to a film of this lesser caliber - alcohol. Lots and lots of alcohol. What a strange night it soon unfolded to be. Love isn't that deep feeling associated with Ryan O'Neal, rather, it's that very shallow feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when you realize that you can live off a hard working male for a bit. That's the way Hollywood portrays it anyways. Take me home, pretty please? Confessions of a Shopaholic wasn't so much as a film experience as it was an interactive socializing convention amidst the backdrop of a Legally Blonde meets Devil Wears Prada knock off. For me, this is something that I'd never quite experienced before. Added with drama, what we had here was a localized version of MST3K. On to the film, as you can tell from the tag line "All she wanted was a little credit", this is a coy and slimy attempt to lure the American woman into a film starring the toady Isla Fisher. Considering we're in a recession, this film might as well be the introduction of Shaft in the slave trade era. I can imagine the box office attendant and the ushers strung to a tree, feet dangling and flashlights rolling on the carpet. Experimentally, this is a film that's designed to cater to every woman's needs of shopping, lying, cheating, and manipulating their way into the hearts and pockets of men. Carefully positioned between cold blooded slaughter and a speculative viewpoint, I'm approaching this film from every angle and I cannot admonish you from this film enough. As a date movie, it blows, simply. The trailer hinted not of a plot but with it lingered the stench of productivity and decay. I won't bother to see if this was fast tracked to release coinciding the debut of the new Friday the 13th film but I can realize that people will fall into two fan categories; those who want to see a "date movie" and those wanting to see a horror movie. Rebecca Bloomwood is a shopaholic. After collecting a rather large debt and avoiding the collector while attempting to become a writer for a top fashion magazine, she encounters totallyyy craaaazzy obstacles on the way. I refuse to ponder the thought any more but I don't recall watching women with debt taking shot after shot of liquor being PG material. Glub glub If you say "like", like every sentence then there's not a doubt in my mind that you will enjoy this film. After heading home, I realized how intoxicated I had become and how much this experience offended my every instinct and emotion. I felt like a ragdoll with no stitches. Like Rebecca, I too was stressed at the fact that I had to live her life, even for a little over an hour. I was in no way the proper state to write on this film so being hungover will

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have to suffice for now. Confessions of a Shopaholic takes the very problematic scenario every film has (a woman) and injects it into a film about cosmopolitan dreamlands of money, fame, success, and green scarves. This is an absolute travesty of all existential unhappiness rolled into a tight ball streamlining the decay of womanhood in general. Upon second thought, Touchstone Pictures hasn't produced anything good in a while. Final Verdict: Leslie Bibb looks like a fish.

-mAQ

LOST BOYS: THE TRIBE

P.J. Pesce (2008)

I had been waiting for a sequel to Joel Schumacher's sexy vampire classic *The Lost Boys* for sometime now. Apparently, the first attempt at a sequel to the film, *The Lost Girls*, was stopped because the repulsive rich bitch Julia Roberts caused a falling out between actors Kiefer Sutherland and Jason Patric. It would be another 20 years that the sequel to *The Lost Boys*, *Lost Boys: The Tribe*, would be released. The sequel was a direct-to-dvd low budget release, part of Warner Brothers genius idea of making shitty sequels to their best films. The *Lost Boys* director Joel Schumacher was completely against the production of *Lost Boys: The Tribe*. From the get go, *Lost Boys: The Tribe* looks like a fairly cheap and quickly made film. The opening titles look they were edited on an amateur high school kid's home computer to amuse his friends. The weakness of the introduction is in complete opposition to the power of "the flight of the vampire" featured in the opening of *The Lost Boys*. I knew immediately during the film's beginning *Lost Boys: The Tribe* would be an exercise in horror sinema blasphemy. How does one handle sitting through a long awaited piece of garbage sequel to one of their favorite vampire films? The "tribe" of vampires featured in *Lost Boys: The Tribe* are as contemporarily lame as one can expect for today's generation of MTV slaves. They are stupid, lack charisma and style, and spend all their time seeking irrational hedonistic pleasures. Instead of bloodsucking in style, they go around like a gang of retarded victims of cultural Marxism. Their leader, played by Angus Sutherland (½ brother of Kiefer), seems to have taken too many bong hits after brain damaging surfing sessions. Like most aspects of *Lost Boys: The Tribe*, casting didn't seem like much of a concern for the producers of the film. Tyree B HugRee The only actor to reprise his role from the original *The Lost Boys* was Corey Feldman as Edgar Frog. I must say that Feldman's performance is one of the most embarrassing that I have seen in film history. Although steadily approaching middle age, Feldman beats to death one liners throughout *Lost Boys: The Tribe* that seem like a grotesque parody of his performance in the original film. He wears similar militant clothes like in *The Lost Boys*, still uses comic books as his bloodsucker fighting guides, and tries to make his voice deeper than it really is. Unfortunately from Feldman, I don't think he ever hit the crucial stage of puberty in his life. Corey Haim makes a very brief appearance in the middle of the credits of *Lost Boys: The Tribe*, as a vampire that looked to be too overfed after a stay in a concentration camp. Feldman and Haim share quick verbal gabs at one other like they do on their reality show. The difference is they don't discuss how they let one another get raped by adult Hollywood types during their younger years. It would have been too painful to watch the drug induced brain fried Corey Haim attempting to play Sam throughout *Lost Boys: The Tribe*.

LOST BOYS: THE TRIBE

Loſt Boys: The Tribe is an excellent example of why film sequels are evil and only used to make a quick buck on the legacy of a quality film. Director Joel Schumacher has openly admitted that The Loſt Boys is his beſt film and he is right. One ſhould have reſpected his requeſt for Loſt Boys: The Tribe to never be made. I know Corey Feldman needs work but I ſee him more as ſomeone that blows black men in shitty prison movies.

-Ty E

SHROOMS

Paddy Breathnach (2007)

Shrooms was a nifty little gem I found amongst a list on new independent horror and to feed the insatiable appetite I have been having lately, I got my hands on a copy. To start off, I must say that the premise is ingenious. Five college students meet up with a friend and their guide Jake in Ireland. The whole purpose of the trip is to, well...trip. They will be camping in the woods for a couple of days having an extended psychedelic trip but don't realize the terror quite at hand. Jake is an expert of Psilocybin mushrooms and a sleazy guy at that. After briefly explaining the identifiable marks on the mushrooms, his eyes wander and he notices a death cap mushroom. This is a very big problem because apparently if you eat it, your hearts and lung will explode. Before the students got a chance to get too creeped out he explains in Irish folklore, that if you do not die, it is said to grant you foresight and intense ferocity. Tara is the ringleader of this event, and is the stupid one in the beginning of the movie. She is the one who wanders off and trips. She is the one who finds a pretty mushroom, and she is the one who decides to eat it. Upon ingesting it she suddenly starts to have a massive seizure, if it were not for Jake, who knows what might have happened. She is then carried back to the camp muttering, "I saw you save me". They then begin to collect the shrooms to brew some tea. Bluto (Dumb jock who is on Steroids, stereotype what?) gets denied from sleeping in his tent by his cock tease girlfriend so instead drinks some tea. He is now wandering through the woods talking to cows which is a truly hilarious scene. Tara has a dream where Bluto gets massacred, wakes up, finds him and forces him to go to sleep again. In the morning, she wakes up and finds he is missing. From this point on, Tara begins to see a hooded black figure that is described as a Black Butcher from folklore that killed many people. With a boom in independent horror, it is hard to find a diamond in the rough. The director is some Irish guy named Paddy Breathnach who has made a couple other unnoticeable films. The film's premise is the main treasure, that and a couple of really memorable creepy scenes which owes a lot to the eerie soundtrack playing all the while. Excellent cinematography mixed in with clever camera work. One thing that made this movie all the more enjoyable is the fact that the death cap mushrooms do exist but I know nothing about the folklore surrounding them. The actual term for the shroom is *Amanita phalloides* and no antidote is available for this. The best part of the film is the fucking ending. It seems over played at first but when it happens it is shocking, merciless, and brutal to the core. The ending also sets up a lot of layers to this film and could create multiple endings. Not only that but they also managed to capture the feeling of paranoia and the actual trip. The film seems like the most terrifying anti-drug advertisement ever made. "Don't do drugs or you will get brutally murdered!" and it just might work. After watching this I am

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truly terrified of doing Shrooms just in case i happen to remember the Cloaked figure. This film might touch down more with someone with personal drug history. This film does come recommended even if it has uninspired characters with inconsistent dialogue. If you are in the right setting, this film could chill you to the bones.

-Maq

NEXT DOOR

Pål Sletaune (2005)

Next Door is the immaculate conception of the new-age thriller; A messiah in blood-stained garb. Next Door is one of the most uncomfortable cinematic experiences I have ever had the pleasure of sitting through recently. Taking nods from Roman Polanski and other masters of creepy perversion, Pål Sletaune's first film of its kind strikes gold and weak hearts for unraveling an abrasive erotic thriller that unloads on you like a buck shot. I look down upon the terms "sexual" and "thriller" being directed towards a single target. Most of these self-proclaimed sexy thrillers bore me with their virgin-esque sluts parading around the screen awkwardly attempting to play a cock tease. With so much bland material out there that doesn't challenge hormones, It seems the genre never had a start until Basic Instinct (Which I didn't find "sexy"). Finally, a film has arrived that has challenged all preconceived notions and morals that have filled my head since growth. This is the film that will arouse you for all the wrong reasons. John is the man you were when your girlfriend of ages left you. Alone and afraid of the world, he works and spends the rest of his time confined in his prison-like flat pining over his lost girlfriend. His surroundings call him a consumer whore from afar which is a theme devoid of closure. Sparking from his lost romance, he finds himself lured into a very scary and intimate world with his two stunningly beautiful next door neighbors. Only with the recent acquaintances is he allowed to leave the mindset of a man mentally incarcerated to his apartment. Next Door is a film that relies heavily on its awaited conclusion so much that what I say must be cryptic and esoteric for your own pertinent means. Much of what is built is thanks to the brooding aura and stunning female casting choices. While John is the complete opposite with the face only a mother could love, the two lead female tenants are gorgeous and sexy in their own Nordic way. If films like this are given passage into US distribution soil thanks to Danger After Dark, then fight the good fight! Next Door is a stunning invasion into the seedy yet surreal world of masochism; emotional and physical.

-mAQ

MANDY
MANDY

Panos Cosmatos (2018)

While I certainly consider the 1980s to be one of the best decades for music and regard many films, ranging from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's swansong *Querelle* (1982) to Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* (1986), from the same era as being among my personal favorites, I have become increasingly disgusted with the entire nostalgia culture trend as is probably most popularly epitomized by the obscenely overrated Netflix series *Stranger Things*. A degradingly derivative, conspicuously contrived, and politically correct Spielbergian pseudo-artistic con featuring gay little racially ambiguous boys as heroes and a mostly mute baby dyke as a heroine, the preposterously popular show, not unlike the films of (sub)human turd Tarantino, indubitably reveals more about the artistic and cultural bankruptcy of our age than its actual true worth as popular entertainment. Indeed, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that, for better or worse, there is more originality, creativity, and humanity in a single episode of the original *Twilight Zone* or *The Outer Limits* than all of the episodes of *Stranger Things* combined, but I digress. Undoubtedly, it is a symptomatic of our spiritually sick and soulless age that people look to the Reaganite 1980s—a mostly materialistic age when most movies were mostly nothing more than mindless entertainment—as a means to calm metaphysical afflictions like *Weltschmerz* and *Sehnsucht*, but, of course, it is not all that surprising considering we live in a decidedly deracinated consumerist age where the only frame of reference for the past is in spiritually and culturally hollow Hollywood form. Personally, I find most of these nostalgia fetish pieces annoying specifically because they express virtual swooning adoration for the very same sort of lowbrow entertainment products that lead to such spiritual emptiness in the first place, as a Spielberg or George Lucas movie is surely not going to provide one with the same sort of cultural or spiritual nourishment that traditional religions, families, and societies once provided people. In short, these frivolous filmic products are narcotizing poison disguised as the cure. For that reason, I am able to, somewhat reluctantly, embrace the sort of 'reactionary retrowave' cinema of young Greco-Italian-Canadian auteur Panos Cosmatos, who does not merely fetishize the past but also critiques it in a refreshingly esoteric fashion the involves the utilization of both old school genre and experimental cinema techniques. Although Cosmatos has only directed two features, he demonstrated with his very first feature *Beyond the Black Rainbow* (2010) an inordinate maturity in terms of both aesthetic vision and worldview. Influenced by films ranging from Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt* to Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) to Saul Bass's sole directorial effort *Phase IV* (1974) to E. Elias Merhige's *Begotten* (1990), Cosmatos' directorial debut is indubitably visually alluring but what arguably makes it most interesting is its scathing anti-Boomer subtext. Indeed, as the young auteur has

revealed in various interviews, the film is partly a critique of the spiritually degeneracy of the Baby Boomer generation and how they foolishly experimented with dubious forms of occultism while high on psychedelics. In his latest and greatest film, *Mandy* (2018), Cosmatos not only expands on his anti-Boomer sentiments, but also demonstrates a further aesthetic refinement that ultimately reveals that the auteur is one of the most interesting filmmakers working today. Like a romance-revenge film as directed by the heterosexual godson of Kenneth Anger and Werner Schroeter, the film somehow manages to reconcile the psychedelic cinematic journey of something like *Lucifer Rising* (1972) with Charles Bronson/Michael Winner righteous retribution classics like *The Mechanic* (1972) and *Death Wish* (1974).

Notably, Cosmatos is actually the son of belated Greco-Italian filmmaker George P. Cosmatos, who of course is best known for Hollywood genre exercises, including the Sylvester Stallone vehicles *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) and *Cobra* (1986), the aquatic sci-fi-horror flick *Leviathan* (1989), and the celebrated Kurt Russell western *Tombstone* (1993). While the elder Cosmatos demonstrated a certain talent for eccentricity with the little-known 'rat horror' flick *Of Unknown Origin* (1983)—a somewhat underrated flick featuring Peter Weller in a surprisingly unforgettable performance that was one of the influences behind *Mandy*—the son, who clearly has different aesthetic tastes (notably, his belated mother was Swedish sculptor Birgitta Ljungberg-Cosmatos), is clearly the more idiosyncratic and experimental of the two. Indeed, it would be easy to accuse Cosmatos of nepotism but—aside from the fact that he did not direct his first feature until about half a decade after his father had died—this fat, swarthy, and goofy-looking fellow has clearly already paid his dues in terms of dedicating his life to the art of cinema and, unlike Brandon Cronenberg, he does not even seem remotely interested in parroting the auteur themes of his padre. While the film stars Mr. Meme Nicholas Cage as the lead, *Mandy* is clearly not the work of a simple artisan looking to support his family but an enterprising (and seemingly somewhat troubled) artiste that has a somewhat aesthetically schizophrenic affinity for both total trash and high-art. In other words, Cosmatos clearly made the film for himself, but luckily he has good enough taste to make films that appeal to slightly more people than just a marginal group of introverted autists.

In regard to his arguable magnum opus *Trouble in Mind* (1985), Alan Rudolph—a protégé of Robert Altman who got his start directing obscure no-budget horror trash like *Premonition* (1972) and *Nightmare Circus* (1974) aka *The Barn of the Naked Dead*—once remarked, “To me, love is always the turning point, the best hope for any future. And my favorite subject for a film.” If we are to take Rudolph’s words seriously then it is completely understandable why the protagonist of *Mandy* goes into full self-destructive exterminationist mode after his one-true-love is burned alive by members of a somewhat Manson Family-esque

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cult. Undoubtedly, Rudolph and Cosmatos' film have very little in common yet they do share at least two imperative similarities in terms of their combination of virtual worship of romantic love in a wicked world juxtaposed with a potent palette of (oftentimes neon) colors. Just like his previous feature *Beyond the Black Rainbow*, the film is set in 1983 as if to hint that it is the foreboding penultimate year just before the Orwellian nightmare begins, or so one would surely assume upon watching the films. Indeed, while *Mandy* might share various aesthetic similarities with films from the same decade when it is set, the film is sometimes as dark and dejecting as the most miserable works of German Expressionism despite paying homage to films as dumb and benign as *Friday the 13th* (1980) and *Phantasm II* (1988). In its sometimes gleeful recycling of popular horror flicks in an artsy fartsy fashion, Cosmatos' film somewhat recalls shameless guido rip-off movies like Giulio Paradisi's *Stridulum* (1979) aka *The Visitor*. Of course, unlike Paradisi, Cosmatos' relatively seamless pomo film referencing is clearly more influenced by cinematic nostalgia than sheer monetary gain. Undoubtedly, the fiercely phantasmagorical film is like a reworking of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth as meant to appeal to stupid horror fans that are not even familiar with said myth; or so one would assume if one actually believed that the average *My Sweet Satan*-esque metal head could stomach something even remotely like an art film. In fact, *Mandy* is one of the very few films that, in terms of influences and message, I would describe as a true white proletarian art film, though it is surely a cinematic work that most people seem to either love or love to hate. As for me, I was shocked that I could thoroughly enjoy a film that features stupid pointless heavy metal fonts for similarly seemingly pointless chapter title sequences, but I take what I can get. To some degree, the film is the cinematic equivalent of junk food and the sort of flick that provides a sort of childlike escapism, yet it does provide a tinge of spiritual nourishment and righteous romantic justice that similar films are quite lacking. In short, the film contains very little, if any, culturally syphilitic poz, which is certainly no small accomplishment considering the current cultural climate.

For me, the brilliance of *Mandy* comes in the form of the little things like an evil demonic biker gang that seems like it is the miserably misgotten spawn of the strangely iconic Cenobites from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987) brutally buttfucking the bikeboys of Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963). Likewise, the animation feels the bastard mongrel brood of characters from the esoteric erotic Japanese animated feature *Belladonna of Sadness* (1973) directed by Ei-ichi Yamamoto and the Canadian cult sci-fi-fantasy *Heavy Metal* (1981). As for the beautifully foreboding forest depicted in the film, it falls somewhere between the more mystical German *Heimat* films and the first two *The Evil Dead* films. Not unlike like Philip Ridley's comparably eerily mystical *The Passion of Darkly Noon* (1995), the film might be set in the American wilderness but

it was actually shot in Europe (indeed, while Saxony, Germany stands in for Appalachian region of North Carolina in the former film, Cosmatos opted for somewhere in Flemish Belgium for his feature). And, not just because of the Lowland Country setting, the film echoes the wonderful neo-Gothic weirdness of Belgian auteur filmmakers like André Delvaux (*One Night... a Train*, *Belle*) and Harry Kümel (*Daughters of Darkness*, *Malpertuis*). In short, Mandy resembles some sort of marvelous Frankenstein movie monster as carefully assembled from the butchered parts of 1980s horror/slasher cinema, the Fantastique genre, the psychedelic films of Kenneth Anger and Alejandro Jodorowsky, 1980s era David Lynch, Heavy Metal-esque animation, Stan Brakhage films like the *Dog Star Man* (1961-1964) cycle, and stupid heavy metal shit. Luckily, the film is greater than the sum of its seemingly absurdly combined hodgepodge of parts. If Nietzsche was right when he wrote, "There is one thing one has to have: either a soul that is cheerful by nature, or a soul made cheerful by work, love, art, and knowledge," then one must assume that Cosmatos has the latter type of soul as Mandy is clearly the expression of a man that lives for art and feels obligated to express this to the world. Undoubtedly, the film is not the expression of some simple artisan that simply learned a thing or two about cinema history from film school but an autodidact and natural cinephile that makes no distinction between lowbrow cinema trash and high celluloid art, but simply 'good' and 'bad' film of all sorts. In that sense, Cosmatos is somewhat like Nicolas Winding Refn sans the obnoxious autism.

In the featurette *Behind the Scenes of MANDY*, one of the film's producer, Daniel Noah, remarks in regard to a central theme of the flick, "To me, this film is ultimately a romance. It is the story of love and while it is a sad story—the story of lost love—it's also a story about when you lose someone, you still hold them in your heart. And this is a movie that we hope will provide comfort, which is a funny thing to say about a film that is such a dark journey. But it provides comfort because it speaks to people, like Panos and like us, and it says to them that they're not alone." Indeed, in many ways, the film, or at least the first half of it, is a simple tasteful love story of the rather wholesome sort where sex does not even really come into play, as the protagonists are depicted in a relatively normal domestic setting doing simple things that lovers tend to do like spooning each other in bed while talking about their favorite planets and watching shitty low-budget horror films together like Don Dohler's *Nightbeast* (1980). Indeed, it is not until the titular heroine is brutally murdered by a Jesus cult that we truly realize how powerful their love is, at least for the male protagonist who carries out a savagely sadistic scorched-earth policy against the culprits. An inordinately psychedelic neo-gothic romance-revenge hybrid where there is no real redemption aside from the glorious thrill of destroying one's enemies, Mandy cannot be described as an uplifting film yet it does somehow have a de-

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ranged triumphant spirit in the end. Surely, while watching the film I could not help but be reminded of various drunkenly lovelorn quotes by Edgar Allan Poe like, “The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world,” as the eponymous heroine’s fiery demise is indeed quite the sight, as is the various consequences of said death. Likewise, when Poe wrote in his short story *The Black Cat* (1843), “There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere Man,” he could be speaking of the male protagonist.

The story of *Mandy* is deceptively simple: Simple man lives a simple happy life with his beloved girlfriend; hippie Jesus cult ruins man’s life by kidnapping and murdering his girlfriend; destroyed simple man then dedicates his destroyed life to vengefully destroying every single member of the hippie cult. Of course, the film is more of an aesthetic journey than a narratively complex Kubrickian tale. The male protagonist is named ‘Red Miller’ (Nicolas Cage), which is a fitting name because he is a simple man that, by the end of the film, has a totally red-face as a result of all that blood that splatters on him while passionately dispatching his enemies. Red’s beloved girlfriend is named Mandy Bloom (Andrea Riseborough) and she also has a fitting name because she is beautiful young babe that is at the height of her physical prowess and feminine fertility. As hinted in the film, both characters come from rough traumatic backgrounds yet they have managed to find a special sort of happiness due to their strong love for one another. Even before she is killed, it is clear that Mandy is probably the only thing keeping Red from being a miserable mess. While the lovers live in an incredibly safe rural area called Crystal Lake in the remotest forests of the Shadow Mountains, Mandy has the grand misfortune of one day being randomly spotted while walking to work by a bleach blond hippie cult leader named Jeremiah Sand (Linus Roache)—a megalomaniac and charlatan that leads a motley crew called ‘Children of the New Dawn’—who immediately decides he cannot live without her, so he has his cult members kidnap her and Red. Being drugged out cult members that are mostly lacking in the physical prowess department, the Children of the New Dawn—a group of about half-a-dozen mostly bleach blond Aryan degenerates that look like they could be the family members of Stephen King fetishist and filmmaker Mick Garris—are not exactly fit for the kidnapping, so they summon a demonic biker gang called the ‘Black Skulls’ to carry out the operation. Rather curiously, the biker gang is summoned via a musical instrument called the “horns of Abraxas” and are given a large batch of hard LSD and a fat male victim—the weakest member of the cult—as payment (or “blood for blood”) for their actions. A somewhat hard bitch that had a traumatic upbringing (among other things, her father apparently taught her and other kids at a very young age how to mindlessly slaughter baby starlings), Mandy does not let a large dose of LSD stop her from completely humiliating and emasculat-

ing Jeremiah—an unequivocal god and legend in his own mind—when he bares both his naked body and soul to her and attempts to ply her with pathetic pseudo-poetic compliments in front of all of his followers. While presenting himself as a virtual god in mere mortal form, Mandy literally laughs in Jeremiah's face while his flaccid pecker is hanging out in what proves to be an especially unnerving moment of the film. Not unlike Charles Manson, Jeremiah is a failed folk musician that, rather conveniently, inevitably found “another path. The path I have always been truly destined for” and became a cult leader, so he is doubly internally wounded when Mandy mocks both his music and authority. Needless to say, Jeremiah needs to save face and uphold his authority in front of the cult after being so ruthlessly rejected, so he opts to have Mandy burned alive after literally conferring with himself in front of a mirror like the bargain bin Narcissus that he is and stating to himself whilst crying like a little girl, “Tell me what to do.” Unfortunately for them, Jeremiah and his crazed crew fail to murder Red. Instead, they make the ultimately fatal mistake of ruthlessly taunting Red by making him watch his beloved being burned alive, but not before Jeremiah's seemingly half-autistic right-hand man Brother Swan (Ned Dennehy) declares to him, “Take a good look, you worthless piece of human excrement. This is the tainted blade of the pale knight, straight from the abyssal layer” and then stabs him in the side with said “tainted blade.” Naturally, the only thing that Red cares about after surviving the horrific soul-crushing ordeal is pure and unadulterated bloodthirsty revenge. Needless to say, the self-stylized quasi-Gnostic cult is no match for the most broken-hearted of backwoods bros.

In what can either be seen as either a major flaw of the film or a perversely poetic statement about the power of love, Red, who seems almost literally possessed by the Greek goddess ‘Adrestia,’ expends very little effort when it comes to systematically exterminating rather enigmatic enemies that almost seem to have magic satanic powers. Indeed, upon visiting an old negro friend named ‘Caruthers’ (Bill Duke) in his remote trailer to fetch his prized crossbow named ‘The Reaper,’ Red is informed by his comrade that the Black Skulls are ungodly beings and will probably kill him, but the friendly warning does not faze him. Indeed, as Caruthers explains in a sort of strangely poetic country colored gentlemen sort of fashion in regard to the Black Skulls, “There's stories that there was a chapter that ran courier for a manufacturer of LSD. He took a disliking to them and cooked them up a special batch, and they have never been right in the head since. I seen them once from a distance. What you're hunting is rabid animals and you should go in knowing that your odds ain't that good, and you'll probably die [...] When I seen them things, they were in a world of pain. But you know what the freakiest part was? They fucking loved it.” After visiting Caruthers, Red also opts to forge a large battle axe, thus underscoring his compulsion towards a truly visceral and brutal ‘hands on’ sort of revenge as opposed to simply gunning down his enemies with some sort of assault rifle. Although

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Red is captured by the Black Skulls after crashing his car while attempting to hunt them down, he actually proves to be a formidable fighter against completely leather-clad faceless creatures that can hardly be described as human. Living in a home that more resembles the double-wide trailer of stereotypical meth-addled bikers than the ominous lair of demonic beings, the Black Skulls reveal certain idiosyncrasies despite their matching 'infernal uniforms.' For example, a gaunt and seemingly gay member of the group that seems to have a makeup dresser makes Red cry by stating, "You have a death wish." Red retorts by crying "I-I don't want. . . I don't want to talk about that" and telling him, "You're a vicious snow flake." Since he is the most faggy of the group, Red does not have to waste too much energy to takeout the lanky biker even though one of his hands is initially nailed to a floor. The next biker Red encounters is a grotesquely large and fat porn addict named 'Fuck Pig' that seems to be a demonic couch potato of sorts. On top of destroying Fuck Pig's living room while he is watching a porn, Red gets a couple gallons or so of the rather rotund biker's blood on his face after murdering him. While the final biker puts somewhat more of a fight as the two battle in front of a burning car, Red has no problem decapitating the bulky Jason Voorhees-esque being, especially after the creatures taunts him by stating in regard to Mandy, "She burns. She burns. She Burns." Before dispatching the final biker, Red himself transforms into a demonic being of sorts after fiendishly consuming some of the Black Skulls' cocaine and LSD. Of course, Red then makes his way to the church of the Children of the New Dawn after completely liquidating the Black Skulls brigade, but before he does he must meet a mysterious LSD chemist so that he can get directions.

The Chemist (played by Richard Brake, who is probably best known for playing the legendary 'Night King' in HBO's big (s)hit show *Game of Thrones*) is a Delphic hippie-guru-like figure with a pet tiger name 'Lizzie' and without Red even saying a single word to him, he remarks, "It's cool, man. Jovan warrior sent forth from the eye of the storm. When it's calm, I know it's good. Oh, man. They wronged you. Why they gotta be like that? You exude a cosmic darkness. Can you see that? Okay. The children. North." From there, Red heads north where he first encounters Brother Swan, who has the gall to state, "She... She burned brightly, Mandy. Don't you think? Still, better to burn out than fade." Since Swan has a big mouth, Red opts to underscore that fact by firmly penetrating his oral orifice with the butt of his battle axe, thereupon killing his creepy psychotic sycophantic ass in a rather brutal fashion that is something akin to deadly oral rape. From there, Red knocks the children off one by way as day turns to night until he eventually reaches their primitive church, which seems like it is located in a remote pit of hell. Somewhat predictably, Red first encounters Jeremiah's lead whore Mother Marlene (Olwen Fouéré)—a sort of evil and sexually insatiable Mary Magdalene figure with a disturbing million-cock-stare—who demonstrates a shocking degree of self-delusion and denial by

bragging without even showing the slightest inkling of fear that she is about to be murdered, “Jeremiah says. . .I’m the most sensual lover he’s ever experienced. . .because of my sensitivity. . .and my empathy. I can anticipate my lover’s every move. I meet them. Like warm waves. . .locking. . .the rocky. . .hard shore.” As the old whore of Jeremiah who was once told by her charlatan lover that, “Everything you do is wrong,” Mother Marlene was naturally jealous of Mandy and Red killing her almost seems like a compassionate act of mercy, even if he decapitates her. In what ultimately proves to be a grand entrance, Red scares the shit out of jerk-off Jeremiah Sand by rolling Mother Marlene’s decapitated dome into his lair. While Jeremiah commands, “Come no closer. God is in this room” and tells Red, “You’re just meat. Without a soul. Without a brain. Without anything,” the charlatan messiah soon reveals that he has nil authority by trying in vain to spare his own life by curiously offering to suck the protagonist’s prick. Indeed, it seems that the sex-obsessed sicko, like all sociopath/narcissist types, lacks the capacity to differentiate between love and sex, though he clearly sees the latter as a symbol of power. Of course, Red is not impressed with Jeremiah pansy pleadings of, “I’ll blow you, man. I’ll suck your fucking dick!,” so he crushes the cult leader’s head until eyeballs pop up with his bare hands and then sets his decapitated head on fire. Notably, as Red is crushing Jeremiah’s skull, he lets out an orgasmic yell that reveals that he has finally obtained the visceral emotional relief of killing the man that killed his one-true-love. In the end, Red erases all physical memory of the Children of the New Dawn by burning their church down and then nostalgically thinks of Mandy while driving away as if she is in the passenger seat of the car with him as he maintains a deranged expression of happiness on his absurdly blood-soaked face. As Red drives away, the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the sky, which, quite notably, are the lovers’ favorite planets as revealed during a tender moment near the beginning of the film before everything went to hell. Incidentally, in the same scene, Red jokes that he likes the Marvel comic character Galactus because he “eats planets,” which is fitting words for a man that murdered virtually every single member of a group called the Children of the New Dawn in what amounts to a sort of Gnostic Ragnarök.

Undoubtedly, Mandy is, in many ways, an exaggerated expression of Nietzsche’s words, “Ah, women. They make the highs higher and the lows more frequent.” Personally, I have seen enough men throw their lives away on women to feel a little bit agitated by certain aspects of the film, namely Red entering a perennial dark void of no return for a woman that seems like a cold cunt, though I can certainly sympathize with him. While the titular chick clearly does not deserve the inordinately brutal demise she receives, it is hard to deny that seems like a total bitch and it is probably no coincidence that her greatest outburst of emotion comes out in the form of her laughing demonically for an extended

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period of time at a sick sociopathic pseudo-messiah, as if she was begging for death. Notably, a scene at the beginning of the film where Jeremiah Sand first sees Mandy bears a striking resemblance to the artwork on Black Sabbath's 1970 self-titled debut album (additionally, aside from the fact that Mandy is wearing a Black Sabbath t-shirt in this scene, Cosmatos once remarked in regard to his intent with the film, "I wanted to create something like a heavy metal album cover from the '70s"). Of course, this is not the only moment in the film where Mandy resembles a witch. In short, Red—a man that literally devotes his entire life to his women—is too good for Mandy, thereupon making his vengeful mass-murdering spree all the more tragic. Of course, the fact that the heroine is a bitch makes the film an all the more romantic example of masculine sacrifice as the protagonist takes virtual otherworldly risks and it is doubtful that his lover would have even done a fraction of the same things for him had the tables been turned. It seems that auteur Cosmatos has a more sympathetic view of the heroine as he stated in an interview with [comingsoon.net](#), "I mean, it was very important to me that you actually care about Red and care about Mandy and feel something for them unless it just becomes a lot of noise signifying nothing, you know? And I really feel it's important, even for being just an abstract film, you still sort of feel some kind of connection to what you're watching emotionally." Judging by his own remarks, I can only assume that Cosmatos has a seemingly self-destructive fetish for broken women, as if he is the sort of dude that would stay with a batshit crazy bipolar bitch that got gang-banged by an entire underage high school football team. On the other hand, Cosmatos reveals another side of the heroine in an interview with [thebrag.com](#) that makes her seem more sympathetic where he states that she would have approved of Red's murderous revenge campaign, remarking, "Absolutely. I think she loves all of him, so this part is definitely a true part of them. And her too: I think she would have done the same for him." Undoubtedly a charitable (to say the least) view of women, Cosmatos also demonstrates an almost grotesque naïveté regarding womankind as if ladies have ever historically demonstrated a tendency towards sacrificing their security, let alone their lives, to avenge a male lover. In that sense, Mandy, despite being inordinately aesthetically mature, sometimes feels like wishful juvenilia, at least in an emotional sense. After all, while the filmmaker is nearly middle-aged, he is from a soft generation of man-children that were largely raised by women. I hate to say it, but I feel like Cosmatos needs to learn more about a life and the opposite sex before he makes another movie unless he decides to switch to the sort of stupid genre trash that he loves. Indeed, maybe Cosmatos should put down some of the unhealthy cinematic junk and watch some Fassbinder where he can learn more about the specific timeless peculiarities of the so-called fairer sex.

Nietzsche once wrote, "Heavy, melancholy people grow lighter through precisely that which makes others heavy, through hatred and love, and for a while

they rise to their surface.” For better or worse, the same can also be said of the film’s hero and his eponymous lover, as Red reaches his full potential as an almost godly Übermensch of retributive murder—or, more in tune with the character’s mindset, ‘Galactus’—when he loses his beloved and his lover demonstrates an almost otherworldly degree of potent maniacal contempt while mocking a psycho that has just kidnapped her. While I find the statement somewhat dubious in itself, Red’s actions do confirm Georges Bataille’s words, “The unleashed desire to kill that we call war goes far beyond the realm of religious activity. Sacrifice though, while like war a suspension of the commandment not to kill, is the religious act above all others.” Indeed, Red certainly achieves a sort of spiritual transcendence underscored by the final shot of the film that he would have never achieved had he not gone on his vengeance campaign of hyper homicidal heartbreak. While the film features a number of scenes of vulgar brutality, it also carries a good timeless traditional message about the power of love, which says a lot for a film that was, according to its director, influenced by, “the weird, amorphous vibe of [Lucio Fulci’s] CONQUEST” of all films. Additionally, I also respect Cosmatos for not being a politically correct cunt and instead having the gall to make an explicitly pro-revenge film of the artful sort in a pathetically pacifistic age of neutered nihilism. In fact, the auteur would state in an interview with *Filmmaker Magazine* in regard to *Mandy*, “I actually think [the act of vengeance] really does help the characters. I wouldn’t want to make a movie that punished the person taking revenge, and I tend to prefer films that don’t moralize about it.” The film also makes a mockery of commercialism as is especially expressed in an unforgettable scene where, shortly after his lover is murdered, Red becomes disturbed upon seeing a goofily perturbing TV commercial for a grotesque easy-mac-and-cheese brand called ‘Cheddar Goblin’ that involves an eponymous green monster absurdly vomiting the sub-food product onto a disturbingly overly cheery child’s head. In regard to the Cheddar Goblin scene, which provides a rare moment of comic relief in what is an otherwise largely heavy film, the great auteur Italian Ettore Scola was certainly right when he once said, “Grotesque humor is a noble and tragic way of representing contemporary problems.” In terms of aesthetic cultivation and relative lack of degeneracy, Cosmatos seems to have a lot of potential as an auteur, though one hopes he at least matures somewhat when it comes to women and cinema as boyish 1980s nostalgia only gets you so far as an artist. Indeed, maybe Cosmatos’ new buddy Nicolas Cage, who was such a big fan of E. Elias Merhige’s *Begotten* (1990) that he produced the auteur’s second film *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000), will try to convince him that the 1980s mostly sucked as indicated by rather retarded films he starred in like *Vampire’s Kiss* (1988). Still, both of Cosmatos’ features demonstrates he is a talented filmmaker with a lot of potential that seems to artistically benefit from some sort of internal misery. Indeed, I hate to say it, but I think that the auteur has a lot to gain from some more suf-

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fering. In fact, Mandy was apparently largely influenced by repressed rage the auteur felt as a result of the death of his parents, especially his mother, which explains the film's complete and utter lack of erotic love. After all, as Thomas Ligotti once noted, "Let's say it once and for all: Poe and Lovecraft—not to mention a Bruno Schulz or a Franz Kafka—were what the world at large would consider extremely disturbed individuals. And most people who are that disturbed are not able to create works of fiction. These and other names I could mention are people who are just on the cusp of total psychological derangement. Sometimes they cross over and fall into the province of 'outsider artists.' That's where the future development of horror fiction lies—in the next person who is almost too emotionally and psychologically damaged to live in the world but not too damaged to produce fiction." While I would not wish suffering on any one, especially not what happens to the male protagonist of Mandy, I think the greatest thing that might happen to a filmmaker like Cosmatos is to have a disastrous relationship with a soulless bitch like the titular thots from Bergman's *Summer with Monika* (1953) and Fassbinder's *Bolwieser* (1977) aka *The Stationmaster's Wife*. Speaking of human misery and tragedy, it should be noted that the film's Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson died of an accidental drug overdose before the film was even released. When I discovered this shortly after watching Mandy, I even felt a bit angry at the senseless loss despite knowing very little about the musician as Jóhannsson's exceedingly ethereal musical score is nearly immaculate and certainly one of the greatest and most potent aspects of the film. Apparently, Cosmatos took Jóhannsson's death rather hard, as he was hoping to establish a lifelong collaboration with the composer. Considering that Cosmatos is himself no stranger to drug abuse, I think he might want to consider directing the ultimate cinematic (anti)drug trip as he certainly already has all the artistic vigor to accomplish that.

-Ty E

HANGING SHADOWS: PERSPECTIVES ON ITALIAN HORROR CINEMA

Paolo Fazzini (2007)

Italian horror cinema (and Italian cinema in general) has always been something very magical to me. Its easy to imagine George A. Romero behind the camera directing the wretched disappointment that is *Land of the Dead*, but I can only fantasize about Lucio Fulci directing *Don't Torture a Duckling*. Italian horror cinema has always seemed an old country away. Director Paolo Fazzini introduced me to this world with his important documentary, *Hanging Shadows: Perspectives on Italian Horror Cinema*. With the exception of a couple of books, Italian Horror Cinema has been vaguely recognized as a merited part of film history. Native Italian countryman Fazzini exposes the men behind the cameras and other plays involved. He does this in a way pertaining to many aspects of Italian Horror Cinema. Between interviews, various killing sequences are featured through *Hanging Shadows*. Made for the documentary, these murders pay deliberate homage to the Italian maestros discussed.

Such things are discussed as whether or not Lucio Fulci was an artist or an artisan, Ruggero Deodato's contempt for the media, and many directors self-admitted fear. New directors also discuss their problems with getting films made in Italy. Italy seems to be having a serious problem in getting financiers for Horror films today. It would be great to see Michele Soavi release a new film every year. These interviews result in new and different perspectives when watching your favorite zombie, cannibal, or giallo masterpiece.

Hanging Shadows soundtrack is a variety of Italian hip hop beats and rap songs. Although I expected a soundtrack by Goblin, I found it to be fitting and complimentary of the documentary. Its flows well with its smooth and seamless editing. This makes for a much more interesting view in comparison to short documentaries and interviews found on most DVDs. Like most Italian films, the dialogue is very fast in comparison to the subtitles. You may end up rewinding scenes to see what Ruggero Deodato said, but it is well worth it. Nothing said in *Hanging Shadows* is insignificant or unimportant to any fan of Italian Horror films.

Film school is a waste of money when you can learn about film history by watching documentaries like *Hanging Shadows*. Besides, you most likely aren't going to find classes with an Italian Horror focus. I recommend *Hanging Shadows* to any fan of Italian cinema. It's not often that you get to hear the subversive maestros of the macabre speak!

-Ty E

LADY VENGEANCE
LADY VENGEANCE

Park Chan-wook (2005)

The final film in Park Chan-wook's Vengeance Trilogy; Lady Vengeance is a stifling femme fatale hiccup in Chan-wook's otherwise remarkable career. The trilogy began quietly with the poetic *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance*. The trilogy then took a sharp turn with the uproarious *Oldboy*. With word of Chan-wook developing a contemporary noir epic, the word excitement can only construe so much. Having watched *Lady Vengeance* around 4-5 years ago with a roommate, my initial sentiments were most crude. *Lady Vengeance* had what it took to bore an impressionable foreign fanatic beyond the realms of the unreal. Said roommate swore that it needed an additional viewing to fully set in the effects and thanks to Suncoast's 40% off all new DVDs sale, this wish of his became a reality. Before I had set out to rewatch *Lady Vengeance* I tried earnestly to remember details from the film. All I had drawn was blanks except for the final lengthened scene of familial justice. Here, deep within my blank memory banks, exists evidence of the wretchedness of *Lady Vengeance*. The introverted background of the character Geum-ja is so fatally flawed that it kills not only sympathy for the character but even her realized "white" form, as highlighted by Park Chan-wook's *Fade to Black and White* edition of the film. Now I fully understand why the title was trimmed from *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* to the simplified *Lady Vengeance*. There isn't a shred of decency in this film, not for Geum-ja and certainly not her irrational, horrendous daughter.

Lady Vengeance follows a woman named Geum-ja fresh off a 13 year stint in a women's prison for a crime she didn't commit. For 13 years, Geum-ja sat in the corner of her strange cell with many other women, watching as her cell-mates were sexually assaulted by a grotesque troll of a woman portrayed by Go Su-hee. This time was bid terribly as Geum-ja concocted her master plan boasting one step, a simple "kill Mr. Baek". Upon release, Geum-ja lingers about, visiting former cell-mates who are mostly connected as being a victim of sexual assault to Go Su-hee. Since Geum-ja since poisoned her for three years with bleach, a certain kind-hearted notoriety surrounded her. The film basically boils down to repeated instances of Geum-ja "winging it". Her plan is nil, the fruit of her preparation is an aesthetically pleasing N.Korean firearm, and the story is as convoluted as possible. If my short, fractured summary seemed at all confusing, turn back now as the narrative digresses much more than my seemingly-ramble dictated. This intricate pattern of feminine clockwork makes an interesting attempt at painting a mural of sinners but Park Chan-wook's ideal masculinity behind the camera smudges the intended effect. Despite suffering effects similar to what cancer can do to the nervous system, the shell of *Lady Vengeance* is what one would expect coming from the international sensation that brought us *Oldboy* and *J.S.A.* It is a technically efficient film that includes several examples of surrealism and

symbolism, the former being more worthy of screen-time than the latter. The argument of the intended symbolism during the final scene springs to mind. A scene in which defies filmmaking logic as we witness smoke billowing out of a room and Chan-wook musters the gumption of ambiguity and calls "symbolism." Obviously hinting towards a house fire, the finale wraps up with Geum-ja reuniting with her daughter in the alleyway outside of her house. For those who need the dots connected, when I see smoke and two parents blissfully asleep, only to switch setting to a girl barefoot in thick snow outside her house, a fire is the only thing that explains the events that have just transpired.

This clever ruse that Lady Vengeance is ignorantly putting forth on display attempts to instill a sense of righteousness into vengeance. Simpler means of vengeance, including all of the *Death Wish* films, did it far simpler and to much more effect. Another terrible condition plaguing Lady Vengeance is an atrocious script. I found myself in severe agony during the translation scene in which Geum-ja uttered the word "atonement" over and over, dizzying my already stewed hatred for every character in this film. It was bad enough that Geum-ja was rapping repetition but to have Choi Min-Sik repeat it over her words created a cinematic likeness to a 16 car pileup. The first half of the film scrambles to juxtapose flashbacks with present day character vignettes, ultimately creating a beast of cinema whose scruffy exterior could be comically reported as suffering from "bed-head". I understand Chan-wook's decision to include these scenes cause if executed correctly, could conjure a means of clarity. Since I am writing negatively about this aspect, you can presume that it failed against its own advantage. The collective of post-dyke characters that Geum-ja meets all represent *deus ex machina* in the sense that their existence is only to bring together a plan that is never seen to fruition. Geum-ja scraps the plan once she finds herself unable to kill again. Atonement for her sins? "Bad atonement...good atonement"? "Big atonement...small atonement"? You get the picture.

By the end of the film many glaring inconsistencies are made aware. Perhaps if Chan-wook's master plan was, in fact, to encapsulate a human interaction with trial and error then Lady Vengeance might have come out as another scorned girl-with-a-gun picture. Sadly, this wasn't the case the largest smear on Chan-wook's near perfect track record is born. With my prior exposure to Lady Vengeance being sour and my now current revisit to the arthouse director's choice in the *Fade to Black and White* version, I feel as if a terrible scab has been reopened. My body has since began detoxing itself slowly, making haste to scrape the remains of the radical feminization that Lady Vengeance planted. While the whole film is not to blame and the final scene involving Mr. Baek's punishment became quite rousing, it was not enough to save this picture from being such a flop of whimpering proportions. Lady Vengeance is a textbook example of what not to do when gifted with artistic freedom. This coming from a director who has always employed such demoralizing projects in masculinity (Not including *I'm a*

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Cyborg, But That's OK). Geum-ja is a vile woman, of whorish intent and inane means to reach her goals. If she even had any. Her frequent abuse of cinematic angst and shock value overloads the screen. No matter how many times she wears leather or eyeshadow or even how often they mention either the intended effect will never rub off on me. In short, Lady Vengeance was D.O.A.

-mAQ

THIRST

Park Chan-wook (2009)

I've given myself up to Park-Chan Wook and various other Korean masters. After charismatically bringing a manga to life with his mucky revenge thriller *Oldboy*, he separated himself from the pack by creating not only the greatest adaptation (arguably) of comic-to-cinema but insisted that this entity has an existence past paper thus making *Oldboy* seem so far apart from the rest of the pile. With his Vengeance trilogy, I have been impressed mostly but I will admit needing to rewatch all three for an overall satisfactory experience but with *Thirst*, Chan-wook seeks to reset the way the horror and vampire genre are to be digested. *Thirst* is a brooding vampire noir and I'd like to think the first of its kind. But this slow burning cinematic hemorrhage will inevitably take its toll on your default mood and I assume with this statement that the power of film is capable of moving you to either end of the extremes. The incredible aspect of *Thirst* is its multi-format inconsistencies that leap from scene to scene bewildering you with what appears to be embracing every manifestation of these night demons sans the bat metamorphosis. Perceived by me to be an unintentional ode to *The Invisible Man*, Sang-hyun adorns bandages spanning his entire body for what he doesn't realize to be a deathly allergy to sunlight. From the silent stalking to the coffin sleeping, *Thirst* spans all incarnations of vampire, save for the glitter variety. The Bandaged Saint's introduction to the screen is what sets this absent priest apart from the other sexually-ravenous Catholic members of the boy-loving kind. After hearing the pleas of a suicidal nurse in the confession stand, Sang-hyeon sighs and suggests to her a diet of sun and anti-depressants and to "forget that bastard who dumped you." Not so much holy as a vulnerable man. Wanting to do some good he volunteers his body as a vessel to play guinea pig to experiment treatment for an incurable disease called the Emmanuel Virus. After dying on the table after an unsuccessful blood transfusion(!), he returns to life softly praying and miraculously healing. All this leads up to his wild descent into the evil charms of a woman who is just given a tiny bit of power who then executes the lowly priests self-extinction. And thus the true majesty of *Thirst* is bared to all. In a way it seems despondent towards the cries of gender equality and feminism but as you can so succinctly envision in this tale of fiction coated in non-fiction, things are not always what they appear to be. While the male is really no good but at least strives for less than original sin, it's the female, "Eve", who banishes the immortal Adam to a silent purgatory of relentless emotional abuse. *Thirst* invokes in me a malicious wrath of hatred towards the promiscuity of women. As far as hypocrisy goes, I've indeed had my fill. The scene with Tae-ju having rough sex with one of Kang-Woo's dinner friends flustered me to no end. One facet of life I cannot indulge into is the whorish behaviors of the female. More recently, I've had to deal with heavy emotional baggage of the

THIRST

same caliber but not quite as fitting. I would strongly recommend you viewing Thirst if you've ever had female problems which applies to most men. Anyone who disagrees with me is a whipped bitch, that's all. Thirst is composed of select scenes of explosive conflict as the hunger drives and thrives within the unholy only to alternate between takes to a serene and peaceful look into the life of a nocturnal predator. It's not as though these are bad people. It's rather sorrowful to observe this wayward servant of god helplessly try to remain of good intent as he struggles with a condition that his "god" undoubtedly had to create; unless of course he seeks counsel in the open arms of science. Now on to the highlight of the show, sex and blood lust. If Thirst had to be known for one thing, it's the trauma-inducing sex scenes. To watch a vampire unaware of his own strength literally pound a virgin unabashedly while she winces in pain is as awkward as watching those POV porn angles of slapping genitalia. To its credit, Thirst also is cursed with incredibly realistic sex sequences. This is no escapist view into what sex should be or how it should be. No glamorous makeup, no soft grunts, no magical butterflies in the pit of your stomach. The lavish sequences of lust are raw, crude, and desirable only to those involved which is how sex in cinema should be. When the film finally reaches its forlorn conclusion, silence will swell up in the pit of your stomach which was the case for me and it seems that all of life's problems were solved with the promise of a lovely sacrifice. Far be it from me to exclaim this to be the best vampire film created in a long time but I'd be lying if I didn't admit this is one of the best. It's also rather uncommon for a film to show the truth of the ever-going female decay and how we are powerless against it.

-mAQ

NO MERCY FOR THE RUDE

Park Cheol-hee (2006)

At the top 10 of each genre lies at least one Korean film. With me, it is an escalated science. Koreans take ingenious ideas and with that, forge myth with matter in lines of technical aspects, thus creating a potent story backed mostly by stunning visuals. Ha-kyun Sin - Korean actor of personal favorite Save the Green Planet! - stars in the almost comedy that is No Mercy for the Rude. No Mercy for the Rude concerns a single man who is the highlight of our story. He grows up as a mute due to a genetic disfigurement leaving him with a short tongue. In order to save up for tongue surgery, he becomes a die hard assassin whose strict moral code leaves him only killing rude people. As one's mind might wonder about who deserves the label "rude", the film should be retitled No Mercy for Thugs. Our character is a cold soul. One who kills with out mercy, and one who strives to be a matador. The hypocrisy kicks in once this "rude" killer starts assassinating people, laying his swift knife of judgment upon anyone he disapproves of. The film feels like a three-part saga much like this years The Signal. The first half is a funny and uplifting comedy. The middle is like a scorching family drama, and the climax is a saddening trial of love, left with an ending worthy of The Believer's fame. The scene-stealer here isn't the aptly named mute assassin Killa, but his colleague in crime who is disappointingly unnameable. Blame it on the translation issues, not me. His friend and partner is a once Ballet student who has used his old style of dance to elevate his sword & dagger play to a dangerous level, and in turn he creates an art form out of killing, whereas our Killa just thrusts knives into chests. No Mercy for the Rude is by no means perfect. It transcends the line between good and great and nestles in it's own place. This film has a bold flavor. Whether you crave and accept it is your choice. This film at least comes recommended for the hilarious introduction and the somber ending.

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MARTYRS
MARTYRS

Pascal Laugier (2008)

With buzz circulating within the horror community about the over-privileged sea of French neo-feminist horror, *Martyrs* was just stock lined up to be fast tracked to an "Unrated" DVD cut available at your local Best Buy where the weak minds can stumble upon films that redefine "ultraviolence." This is funny in itself for the average viewer seeing as how the worst they've experienced is stocking stuffer garbage like *Hostel*, but in the comfort of their own living room they're treated with hyperactive scenes of misogynistic sadist nightmares that can only be described by horror's leading review experts as dully as possible. These releases allow for an influx of quote tags such as "Gorey," "A bloody roller-coaster," or any other spin off of the English language that could create a mirage thus deceiving you into purchasing just another horror film with women in their underwear. *Martyrs* starts off as any film of this caliber would; a scene of a bloody running, screaming girl with incredibly short hair. This ritual of sorts establishes our heroine as a vulnerable being that eventually transcends fear and humanity and becomes a shell aided only by a little girl Anna. Leading experts would love to know what had happened to poor Lucie but nary a bit of evidence remains in the warehouse where she was held captive for little over a years time. Cut to 15 odd years later. We're shown a lovely suburban home with a loving family that tends to their young children's needs and enjoys gardening and such antiquities of the "American dream." Knock on the door. A slight expressionless face of the father. Boom. Hole blasted through his gut. A cloaked female figure steps over his mangled figure and proceeds to systematically execute his family in a horrendous fashion, devoid of emotion and style. Truly a horrific sight to behold although the serenity of the white walls calms you down from full malfunction. From this introduction that thankfully wasn't abetted by classical music, were given glimpses into the story line and flashbacks to what actually happened to Lucie all those years ago. What's better is that we don't relive that much of what happened to Lucie, instead, Anna herself becomes a "martyr" in order to show us firsthand what transpired in those cells that reflect the clear and conservative terror that Cube brought to life. Tupperware has never seemed so prophetic before, has it? *Martyrs* has been called the opposite of *Funny Games* and I'd like to think that this assertion is absolute but I still find more substance in the ending of *Martyrs* than found in a rewind system of *Funny Games*, both past and present incarnations. Along with the striking cinematography of bright reds and abyss-like blacks that accompany most French horror, more than odd elements stand out that echo *Natural Born Killers* and *Bonnie & Clyde*. The pairing of Anna and Lucie bring about some awkward cooperative bonding scenes that seem almost out of place. Well, ultimately the effect is nulled upon discovery that both characters were necessary for each other. It all turns to shit with

that doomed kiss. With that one kiss that seems to cemented in the "culture" of French horror, both these martyrs were flying first-class into a life of sin. Lucie was condemned anyhow seeing as she murdered a 15- or so year old girl and a fashionable 18-something male that had his life ahead of him. If Martyrs acquiesced to one task, it would be issuing a warning against wandering womanhood and the perils of lesbianism. As Anna was shot down, Lucie looked perplexed at the action. It's as if she lacked any form of sexuality, which I'm sure was correct. Just when Martyrs has built atmosphere and died down like a simmering flame, the story seemed to drive into the soil. Nothing could come out of what had been left. The obstacles had been cleared out but just like that, a phoenix rose out of the ashes and shook embers off its glorious plumage. For the incredible wordplay, know that I'm not in love with Martyrs - I'm just in love with the final moments of the film. To avoid spoilers, I'll be discussing much of the impact and resolution in comments if needed be. Martyrs is a film that needs immediate disclosure during the credits. Don't turn off the film. Don't get up. Don't alter your existing environment in any way, shape, or form. For this reason, I pity those who experienced this in the theaters. For an enlightened and heightened mind set, no distractions are mandatory. Sit still and listen to the somber track scroll through its run time and the credits scroll upwards into the inevitable oblivion. Martyrdom is a metaphor for the pacing of this piece of cinema. First, you feel uncomfortable but wary enough to venture deeper into the darkness. The abuse collects and soaks. Sensory deprivation is up next followed by the annihilation of humanity and free will - Absolution upon the ending. Martyrs is an extremely flawed (not) horror film that is blessed with an ending that has "that stare." The kind that makes you question the previous events that only recently unraveled. A truly uncomfortable cinematic experience that is plagued with death at every corner but unearths beauty behind sacrifice. This film braves the clichés that comes hand in hand with the new wave of French horror.

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WHO IS K.K. DOWNEY?
WHO IS K.K. DOWNEY?

Pat Kiely, Darren Curtis (2008) *Who is K.K. Downey?* is largely a film i can appreciate. It manages to be witty, hilarious, and vastly entertaining, but also happens to trash an entire counter-culture. The glory of this trashing is that it actually manages to be harmful to this counterculture, the "indie hipster" trend. The film makes an attempt at making an "indie" film in the style of many indie bands are created and book frauds are produced. With that in mind, I will explain the story within a story. Theo and Terrence are in a shitty band and Theo is writing a book. This book largely resembles most auto-biographical literature that has to do with rim-jobs and cheese balls. Theo's book won't get published due to him being a fat white kid, so he tricks the sly Jewish book representative by giving the book to the star, K.K. Downey, thus turning it into a faux-biography. Terrence plays K.K. and becomes famous. Drugs, rock, blah, blah. The story depicted in this film revolves around an entire "way of life", by which, when i say that, i am openly mocking all conformity to be non-conformist. The film is indebted to J.T. Leroy, for his "auto-biographical" book about his life growing up and being repeatedly raped. This later turned out to be a hoax, and was the work of a female newspaper writer, which comes as a big disappointment. The degeneration of this style can be seen in many little conversational pieces, such as when K.K. does a reading, one hipster in the audience says "I find it to be like, Kafkaesque, but without like any bugs, right?" In that one line I knew that this films spoofing was part intentional, yet jokes still remain that mock the mockery. A book entirely about sodomy and heroin is largely uninteresting, but when it turns out to be a true story, people flock to discover beauty from a "false" spirit. In order to poke fun at people who quote philosophers and recite poetry, a scene involving an over-bearing jealous cynicist who happens to review music occurs. Alone at night, trying to discover the coincidences behind the sudden appearance of K.K, he masturbates to a picture of Voltaire. Seeing what he has done, he lowers the picture in shame. Besides the outrageous humor, the film has a collection of mesmerizing scenes, such as K.K's love interest's synth pop poetry performance. *Who is K.K. Downey?* is a film that i tried to hate at first, but i couldn't do it. It's brashly funny, honest, and manages to deliver a horrifying blow to these fads that seem invincible. Maybe now, we can derive some sense out of recent generations. As R.L. Stine would state, Hipsters beware, you're in for a scare. Playing at the 17th Philadelphia Film Festival www.phillyfests.com

-Maq

ZELDA

Pat O'Connor (1993)

Like his previous cinematic works *Le salamandre* (1969) and *Afrika* (1973), Alberto Cavallone's *Zelda* (1974) – a sometimes psychedelic, erotic melodrama about a celebrated racecar driver, his wife, and their merry *Ménage à trios* lifestyle – is a sufficiently, if superficially, nihilistic work about betrayal, negrophilia, murder, and mayhem from the seemingly preposterous perspective of debauched bourgeois types. *Zelda* would also be the first film that Cavallone gave into carnal commercialism as he shot scenes of hard pornography for the French version of the film, which I regretfully have yet to see. In a narrative structure quite similar to *Afrika*, *Zelda* begins with a scene of the bloody bodies of male protagonist race car driver Mark Davis (Giuseppe Mattei) and his Negress mistress Clarissa (Halina Kim) laying lifeless from what seems like an overly sentimental suicide pact, but as the film progresses and libertine-laden layers of the backstory are peeled back, one soon realizes a fierce and highly hypocritical form of female jealousy and treachery is ultimately to blame. Sometimes resembling a shallow arthouse film directed by a pretentious softcore pornographer on LSD, *Zelda* is best perceived as an elegant erotic flick of the posh pulp persuasion which – not unlike the wanton works of filmmakers Radley Metzger (*The Lickerish Quartet*, *Score*), Walerian Borowczyk (*Goto*, *Island of Love*, *La Marge*), and Tinto Brass (*Salon Kitty*, *Caligula*) – were quite popular in Europa during the 1970s. Of course, despite its similarities with other films of that era, *Zelda* – with innately iconoclastic and misanthropic themes and oftentimes anti-erotic sex scenes – has the unmistakable feel of an Alberto Cavallone film, albeit of his more commercial blend. With characters that spout such pseudo-existentialist gibberish like “we must destroy ourselves to justify our existence” and “I detest everything that is normal” – in between talking of bestiality and the lack of emotional authenticity in regard to interracial love – one cannot help but be enamored by succulently stylized cinematic sleaze that is Cavallone's – the one and only – *Zelda*.

Equipped with an action-packed assortment of acid-washed, negative, and overexposed stock footage featuring racecars, crotch-rockets, wild horses, airplanes and whatnot that comprise a large fraction (seemingly to be around ¼ of the film) of film, *Zelda* is a wayward cinematic kaleidoscope of cool bullshit that oversexed, ritzy twit types are into; none of which I can relate to, yet that does not detract for the rich kitsch of this cross-grained celluloid trainwreck. The title character of the film, *Zelda*, is a decisively duplicitous bitch with a terrible sexual itch she can't seem to scratch, hence her particularly perverse propensity for seducing and sleeping with members of both genders instead of her perpetually horny husband. Described in the film as “a dove, a snake and a bitch at the same time” like so many other miserable matriarchs of Italian families,

ZELDA

Zelda ultimately is the undisputed duce of the household and she wields power with her (and other people's) pussy. In short, sex acts as a debauched form of double-dealing in *Zelda* that leads to familial disintegration and eventually death. Of course, no one is innocent in the film as *Zelda*'s racecar-driving would-be-superstar husband Henry is more interested in scuba diving than the fact that his college-age daughter Ingrid (played by blonde bombshell Franca Gonella; a woman that can barely pass for 25) is philandering with his middle-aged Negro friend, a fellow racecar driver with a need for speed and pan-sexual degeneracy. Manic for miscegenation, racecar rockstar Henry eventually falls madly and unflinching in love with black babe Clarissa (Halina Kim) – the wife of his black buddy – who *Zelda* initially seduces, thereupon sparking the torrid threesome that will eventually culminate in the demise of her own marriage. Even after Henry's botched attempt at suicide, which paralyzes him and thus irreparably pacifies his sexual potency in the process, Clarissa stands behind her melanin-deprived man to the dismay of overzealous *Zelda*; the queen bitch of her less than humble abode. In the end, *Zelda* and the rest of the jaded lovers seek bloodthirsty vengeance of the most malevolent, multicultural sort.

With its cursory yet completely callous and cheaply charming cocktail of hedonistic sex, extreme sports, and mind-numbingly mundane yet unintentionally mirthful melodrama, *Zelda* is proof that style and cynicism can go a long way for a film that would otherwise be without a single inkling of merit. While nowhere near as worthwhile as Alberto Cavallone's quasi-surrealist sadomasochistic masterpieces of the cine-magically macabre such as *Man, Woman, and Beast* (1977) and *Blue Movie* (1978), nor even the phantasmagorical softcore flick *Blow Job* (1980), *Zelda* does make for a passable, if secondary, addition to his unruly miscegenation-based melodramas *Le salamandre* (1969) and *Afrika* (1973). Ultimately, *Zelda* is palatable due to its strikingly state-of-the-art synth-based musical score (created by Marcello Giombini), rather Roeg-esque nonlinear editing, pseudo-poetic psychedelic wild horse scenes, sleekly stylized shot composition, and hyper-hysterical scenes of histrionics. As a film with such positively preposterous dialogue as "is it really love or just the desire to sleep with someone with black skin?" and "Hurry up, I'm a bitch in heat," *Zelda* is just another great example as to why the Italians made some of the most terribly yet trimly trash films of the 1970s and 1980s.

-Ty E

GODZILLA VS. MECHA GODZILLA

Patrice Lefebvre (2002)

Cult status doesn't do much for me. If you tell me a film is praised and glorified for cutting edge low budget entertainment or abstract and obscene imagery, I won't become magnetized to the fad as much as the next fan would be. In case, *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is not merely just a bad film; it's downright disappointing. The conflicting and complex story is juicy in details but to continue the food metaphors, is tasteless. A group of scheming aliens are introduced without an introduction. I cannot recall the scene that shows their origin. They just appear with a greasy assassin and plot to steal an ancient statue capable of releasing King Caesar; The only weapon that can destroy MechaGodzilla. I hope King Caesar is in no more films. I don't think I could handle another unwelcome surprise. Pretty soon, King Caesar (being of fleshy and hairy descent) attempts to take on a giant robotic killing machine made out of space titanium. The very idea of physics allowing enough momentum for the "King" to damage MechaGodzilla flusters my brain and shatters my universe, although the idea of a giant hairy caveman doing battle with a robot lizard is a bit far out as well. King Caesar's attacking styles rapidly change as well. It's as if the original director jumped ship halfway through and left it up to a rookie to finish. He begins by pummeling Mecha G with his berserker rage, but once Mecha G gets a single hit in, Caesar runs and hides behind a rock waiting for Godzilla to save the day. The prophecy stated that Godzilla would need the help of the King, but it seems that the King needed all the help. Godzilla's costume is ridiculous in the entry. It looks childish and ligh-hearted. It lacks that product that gives it a scaly lizard look and with gestures that a constipated kick boxer makes, this Godzilla is hardly intimidating. I'd never seen an animal "put up dukes" until this disappointing sequel. For the first appearance of MechaGodzilla - Who had always looked good as an action figure - I found this to be a first impression of the disaster kind. *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* isn't all it was/is hyped up to be.

-mAQ

Bijou
Bijou

Patrice Rhomm (1978)

After the success of his debut crossover feature *Boys in the Sand* (1971)—a work that predated Gerard Damiano's hardcore hit *Deep Throat* (1972) by almost a year—auteur-pornographer Wakefield Poole (*Moving!, One, Two, Three*) bravely decided to do the seemingly nonsensical by following up his homo hit with an experimental erotic flick of the exceedingly ethereal and quasi-psychedelic sort that would prove to dumbfound most audience members. Indeed, a film with a title that is generally associated with classic American cocksucker flicks from the 1970s and 1980s, *Bijou* (1972) is a sort of arthouse 'head' flick featuring a brigade of phantom homo hippies giving head to an ostensibly heterosexual construction worker who finds himself being worshiped as a virtual sexual god by a group of languidly lurking shadowy sodomites of the somewhat ghostly sort. As auteur Poole describes in his audio commentary for the recent 2014 *Vinegar Syndrome* DVD release of his second feature, he originally intended to direct a heterosexual porn flick after being annoyed by the fact that dago Damiano cashed in on what the gay auteur did with *Boys in the Sand* via his mafia-distributed 'breeder hit' *Deep Throat*, which ultimately became the most profitable pornographic film of all time. Luckily, innate sexual invert Poole decided to stay true to his poof persuasion and directed *Bijou* instead which, although a fag fuck flick with minor heterosexual elements, has more in common with the experimental works of Stan Brakhage (*Dog Star Man*, *Scenes from Under Childhood*) and a Kenneth Anger flick like *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) than the average queer hardcore flick, albeit minus the diva-like fag hags and Crowleyite/Thelemite imagery and symbolism. Once lauded by *Variety* as follows, "Part Kubrick, part raunchy Disney [...] it looks like a porno film starring Robert Redford, Warren Beatty, Steve Reeves, and Joe Dallesandro," *Bijou* is pure body worship in celluloid form as set in a phantasmagoric poof pandemonium that blurs the line between homo heaven and hell. Although mostly shot in the filmmaker's apartment on 16mm film stock with a somewhat meager budget of about \$22,000, the work looks like a lavish big budget 35mm production, which is largely a result of the Poole's use of experimental lighting as a man with a background in theater. A decidedly drug-influenced work of the rather ambiguous and open-ended sort, auteur Poole described the film as follow in an introduction for the recent *Vinegar Syndrome* release: "I came up with the idea that I wanted to make an abstract full of enigmas and things that key off things in your mind...you had to make your own movie out of the images that you saw and whatever you brought to the film from your experiences would affect what you got from the movie." Of course, as a work about a straight construction worker who is sexually serviced by half a dozen men or so, *Bijou* is certainly a fag fantasy gone awry, but one not without aesthetic merit as a sort of mar-

velously misbegotten celluloid marriage between the so-called 'aesthetic fascism' of Leni Riefenstahl and the cine-magic of Kenneth Anger, which is certainly an aesthetically audacious cinematic combo made in hell.

Beginning with a thriller-like segment that director Poole himself described as being, "like a Hitchcockian tribute," *Bijou* starts with a fateful happenstance meeting between three strangers that ultimately acts as the catalyst for the rest of the plot. Indeed, after a slutty streetwalker-like chick (Cassandra Hart) sporting an aesthetically repellant fur coat and a mini-skirt is hit by a car at an intercity crosswalk driven by a young man (played by producer Marvin Shulman, who produced most of Poole's films) with a shaved head and a flamingly gay mustache, a dubious young construction of the opportunistic sort with a leather-fag mustache (played by porn star/director Ronnie Shark, who died of AIDS in 1991 at the age of 43) slyly snags the dead hooker's purse and takes it home with him after hiding it inside his coat jacket and making his way to the nearest subway. After getting back to his pathetically furnished dump of an apartment, the Construction Worker drinks a huge glass of milk that looks more like semen and empties the dead prostitute's purse out on his bed, ultimately finding pink lipstick, keys, an old letter and photography and, most importantly, an invitation for a mysterious club called *Bijou* that has to be used by 7:00 p.m. that day. After jerking off to images of naked chicks to the 'honkey blues' sounds of Led Zeppelin songs "Dazed and Confused" and "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" while taking a shower, the Construction Worker heads to club *Bijou* (interestingly, the entrance of which was shot in Poole's apartment building hallway). When he gets there, the blue collar (anti)hero hands his magic red ticket to a rather old Jew-y bitch of a ticket taker (Lydia Black) and is directed towards a door which he enters, only to discover everything is pitch black inside of the seemingly unoccupied club. Needless to say, the ostensibly heterosexual proletarian laborer has no clue what kind of nightmare of phantasmagoric homo hedonism that he has gotten himself into.

After a couple seconds of standing in the pitch black club of carnality, the Construction Worker notices a neon sign reading "remove shoes", which he immediately does. When he spots a second neon sign reading "remove clothes," he also does not think twice about doing that and soon enters a mystifying netherworld of distorted mirrors and white smoke. While walking through the club like a proudly well endowed panther on the prowl, the Construction Worker notices a variety of bizarre gigantic sensual statues, including a pink face with a giant penis hanging out of its mouth, as well as yellow sea urchins and a giant bouquet of pink hands. Eventually, the rather intrigued protagonist happens upon a sexually ambiguous longhaired individual laying face down on the floor in a somewhat crucified-like position. Of course, the sexually androgynous individual is a dude, but that does not stop the supposedly straight protagonist from promptly penetrating the tightly bound fellow's heinie highway. Since the

BIJOU

bound bitch boy does not move, it seems as if the protagonist is penetrating a fresh corpse. Like most men after having a good fuck, the Construction Worker falls asleep after his initiation into bum-buggery, but he is soon awakened by a mysterious collage film that is being projected by a seemingly pernicious unclad cameraman (as fittingly played by director Wakefield Poole). Eventually, four different projected screens appear with four different men provocatively undressing and eventually masturbating (this footage is actually the screen-tests Poole shot while auditioning performers during pre-production). While the four screens are being a projected, a fifth screen appears in the middle featuring the same seemingly wanton woman who was hit by the car at the beginning of the film. Just as the supposedly dead hooker strips off all her clothes, all four men reach sexual climax, as if she is responsible for initiating them into a life underworld sod lechery. After the projected masturbation scenes conclude, the Construction Worker passively allows a mysterious tattooed man (played director Poole's boyfriend Peter Schneckenburger aka Peter Fisk, who also starred in *Boys in the Sand*) to lick and suck him up and down. Eventually, the two men's rather languid sex session erupts into a somnambulist seven man orgy, with a new man appearing every couple minutes or so to join in the ritualistic manwich. By the end of the oneiric orgy, the protagonist takes on a more aggressive role and the men leave one-by-one by disappearing into the darkness just as they once 'came.' After blowing his load and achieving an otherworldly orgasm, the Construction Worker falls asleep in the same place he did previously after bugging the first boy and after waking up, he puts on his clothes and leaves the club a new proud member of the occult gay underworld. Indeed, the protagonist is in such a ecstatic state after his extra-erotic esoteric experiences that he does not even notice the bitchy ticket taker's attempt to give him another free pass to Bijou. In the final shot of the film, the Construction Worker smiles for the first time in the entire film, as if a gay orgy has solved all of his problems in life. Needless to say, it is doubtful that the protagonist will tell his co-worker about his experiences at NYC's premiere phantom poof club.

When it comes to old school bro-on-bro blue movies, Bijou is certainly the *Citizen Kane* (or more like *Metropolis*) of gay porn flicks, as an aesthetically, thematically, and technically revolutionary work that is more than just a mere masturbation aid for dudes that dig big dongs. While the film certainly has its hedonistic elements (after all, the director has admitted that he was heavily influenced by recreational drug use at the time of making the work, with some critics have even jokingly calling the film 'Boys on the Grass'), aesthetically speaking, Poole's film is certainly a piece of Apollonian art, especially when compared to the decidedly dark and deranged Dionysian works of Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*) and French artsploitation auteur/pornographer Jacques Scandelari (*Beyond Love and Evil*, *New York City Inferno*). American porn producer/auteur Jack Deveau would later direct a film in a similar aesthetic

vein entitled *Strictly Forbidden* (1976) aka *Le musée* about a young American tourist that finds himself trapped in a museum exhibit during after-hours where the statues and sculptures come alive at night and cum on the young yank lad's face. Additionally, the heterosexual hardcore flick *Visions* (1977) would also borrow from Poole's film by being partly set in a phantasmagorical netherworld featuring giant genitals and phantasm fuckers. Indeed, if National Socialist sculptor Arno Breker had been a gay pornographer, his films would probably resemble Poole's, as Bijou glorifies the male physical in a classical fashion just as much (if not more so) as it focuses of pre-AIDS bareback buggery. Of course, as a southern-bred boy with a background in theater, dancing, and choreography, Poole had a more 'traditional' view of aesthetics, which is quite apparent in a film like his second feature where he attempted to make cocksucking into a highly poetic and lyrical art. Notably, one of the 'performers' in the film, Bill Cable—a good friend of Marlon Brando's murderous son who later appeared in small roles in films like *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985) and *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark* (1988) as cops—was heterosexual (he died in a motorcycle in 1998 at age 51) and the director merely utilized him as a human statue of sorts (indeed, he does not actually engage in the gay orgy, but instead wraps a rope around the protagonist's head and stares menacingly). Interestingly but not surprisingly, the director attempted to go mainstream with his next effort *Wakefield Poole's Bible* (1973), which is neither gay nor pornographic and features three chapters based on Old Testament stories about female Biblical figures, with 'popular' female porn star Georgina Spelvin (*The Devil in Miss Jones*, *Police Academy*) playing one of the lead roles. Shot mostly in the director's apartment with all of the special effects done through the camera, Poole's transcendental masterpiece of atmospheric androphilia and erotic masculinity is indisputable proof that you do need that many resources to create an entire cinematic universe. If you ever thought about wondered what a psychedelic musical as imagined by the Village People might be like, but think the band's banal music is banal (Poole's film features a great ambient and ethereal score), Bijou features that and much more as a rather rare example of a crossover avant-garde colon-choker fuck flick.

-Ty E

RAZORTOOTH
RAZORTOOTH

Patricia Harrington (2007)

One thing about me, I love "When Animals Attack!" films. There isn't nothing I like more than watching a stupid teenage whore spray No-Tear baby shampoo in a giant python's eyes. When I saw the various posters for Razortooth, I expected this to be a shitty film, albeit a grand one with misplaced scenes of action. A film that I can take to get together's and laugh out loud about. Boy, was i wrong. Despite the amazing covers, this film is rotten. When the opening credits rolled through, I saw the directors name was Patricia. This horrified me for some inexplicable reason. Patricia is a name that gives me great grief. It singularly solidifies the fact that women are spawn to god awful names. In the beginning of the film, we have a couple of escaped convicts escaping jail. How quaint. This duo in terror slip by a police scouting unit that eventually is all slaughtered by a giant piranha-eel hybrid that looks fucking stupid. The funny thing about this is, the monster doesn't eat them. What kind of creature kills for sport besides an Alien bounty hunter? We then see the main character; some pompous asshole animal control worker who stares at a wedding ring laying on the counter in front of a wedding picture. I wouldn't have guessed, but due to the somber effect of the heartfelt music, my guess was that he had split with her. After hiding his anguish by playing the harmonica (Blues stereotype), he sets out to be annoying around town, playing the harmonica. After 5 minutes of him playing it, I wanted to reach through the screen and shove it up his ass. We meet his ex-wife, the only attractive female in the film, and she is the Sheriff. The entire film plays off on local fears of having an exotic creature ruining the cycle of life in a small country town. A similar incident happened very close to where I live. Creatures called "Snakeheads" were running around on land, eating all the fish and disrupting the order of balance. This film, being based on the swamp, is lush with type-casting, such as the pregnant trailer park beauty queens and the sickeningly obese chicken obsessed redneck who farts and giggles. About 1 hour and 10 minutes through the film, I literally felt sickened. I developed a high fever and had to sleep it off. This similar experience is what became of me after viewing Mondo Collecto. I think I am allergic to horrible displays of cinematic trauma. At about 1 hour and 20 minutes in, I passed out asleep in the living room. I woke up, not viewing the ending, but I can honestly say that I am glad I missed it. Perhaps I could have been one of the many fatalities displayed in this movie. Razortooth is god-awful.

-mAQ

THE WOMAN WHO POWDERS HERSELF

Patrick Bokanowski (1972)

Art Fags beware! You're in for a surrealist scare! *La Femme qui se poudre* (The Woman Who Powders Herself) is a short film that has been no doubt neglected just as the maker of the film Patrick Bokanowski. Despite his Polack sounding name, Patrick Bokanowski is a French filmmaker obviously following in the footsteps of France's greatest filmmaker/poet Jean Cocteau. Like Cocteau, Bokanowski is able to say something through visuals that the human mind could otherwise never articulate. Like all good poetry, *The Woman Who Powders Herself* is best looked at without trying to intellectualize and overanalyze. With a short film like this, one should just let the beauty seep into ones soul.

As a child I used to go to a certain unnamed life-saving museum on the east coast. At the museum there is an attraction know as laughing Sal, the former automaton Queen of a boardwalk Funhouse. Unlike most children, I was not afraid of Sal. I actually hoped her grotesque large manmade body would come to life and scare other vulnerable children. But alas, that never happened, but I also never forgot about laughing Sal. As soon as the screen faded to the first image of *The Woman Who Powders Herself*, I felt as if I was reunited with Sal, in all her beyond homely glory. Like my recollection of laughing Sal, the short film has the feeling of a vague yet soul piercing dream.

The score featured in *The Woman Who Powders Herself* sounds like it was created by a schizophrenic folly artist. The score (if you can even call it that) compliments the film in a way that very few other films have been successful with. To put it very simply, *The Woman Who Powers Herself* has neither linear story nor linear sound but a collection of perfectly collected broken pieces that could have been found in Jean Cocteau's own personal hell (although I believe Cocteau's hell would feature a man powdering his face). A truly complete piece of cinematic art should always (well almost always) have it's own original score. Although I consider myself a fan of Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou* and Aryan genius composer Richard Wagner, the short would have been more of masterpiece had the whole film been of 100% original material.

It is fairly hard to tell whether or not *The Woman Who Powders Herself* had an influence on any other artists, but for a work of it's originality and artistry, it had to influence someone. Before he was a hack, it seems that Begotten director E. Elias Merhige took a note or two from *The Woman Who Powders Herself*. People wearing featureless masks is always a good way to creep out filmgoers, especially in gritty black/white films. Lets not forget the particular dark liquid featured on the floor in *The Woman Who Powders Herself* that looked like a similar liquid (and with a similar shot composition) as god kills himself in *Begotten*. The difference between both films is that *The Woman Who Powders Herself* was at the right runtime at around 15 minutes whereas *Begotten* was an

THE WOMAN WHO POWDERS HERSELF

hour too long. I also wonder in Douglas P. alpha-neo-folk group Death In June saw The Woman Who Powder Herself and decided to wear a featureless mask with his German camouflage outfit.

Some people have said The Woman Who Powders Herself is a commentary on the idea of female beauty in the Victorian era. Although I do not deny this assertion, I could really care less. For me, The Woman Who Powders Herself is a somewhat modern day phantasmagoria that I can enjoy in the comfort of my living room. Very few films transfer me to a dream world of such extravagance and of such a fantastic nature. The Woman Who Powders Herself will stay in my mind's eye just the way that Eraserhead, The Blood of a Poet, Begotten (the first 15 minutes of course), Fireworks, and Meshes of the Afternoon have been burnt there.

-Ty E

MASCARA

Patrick Conrad (1987)

A totally thrilling and theatric tragicomedic tale about tyrannical brothers, torn and tormented sisters, tranny temptresses, heroically heterosexual French dress designers, unsubtly sexually aberrant S&M debauchery, heavily implied incest, and the grand tradition of classical opera and the Grand Guignol, the Belgian-Dutch-French co-production *Mascara* (1987) directed by Belgian auteur Patrick Conrad is as big-budget as curiously campy European arthouse sleaze works come as an ill-fated (both critically and commercially) film that is hopelessly screaming – like a hysterical queen suffering from benzo-withdraw while reminiscing over his/her favorite over-touchy-feely uncle – for a cult following it has, quite inexplicitly, yet to acquire. In the rich cinematic tradition of high-camp auteur filmmakers like Jean Cocteau, Luchino Visconti, Liliana Cavani, Werner Schroeter, and Agustí Villaronga, yet daringly disguised as a Hollywood psychosexual thriller with the intention of making it palatable for the philistine masses, *Mascara* ultimately proved to be too patently perverse and morally dubious for the average filmgoer, hence why it was a total failure at the box offices. Even so, the film still manages to put subsequent commercially successful transsexual thrillers like *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and *The Crying Game* (1992) to shame in its sometimes sardonic sensuality, conspicuous yet cabalistic cloven-footed camp consciousness, and strikingly erotic and anti-erotic absurdity, but it seems only a select few have had the honor of viewing this super 'sleeper' of cinema. Imagine Jean-Pierre Melville's 1950 cinematic adaptation of Jean Cocteau's novel *Les Enfants Terribles* except more penetratingly perverse, meets Cocteau's *Orpheus* (1950) aka *Orphée* where many of the character's genders are reversed (if not altogether ambiguous) and set in an underground opera house from hermaphrodite Hades akin to Monika Treut and Elfi Mikesch's Sacher-Masoch-esque realm of the sadistically sexually unchaste in *Seduction: The Cruel Woman* (1985), but exquisitely executed in such a torridly tongue-in-cheek style that one would never describe it as 'art,' at least with a straight face, and you have *Mascara*; a soundly sordid sin-saluting and eccentrically entertaining cinematic work where erratic erotomaniacs, delirious deviants, and the psychotically sexually confused are in the majority and the sexually sane are a sad underwhelming minority. That being said, whether one likes *Mascara* or not, I doubt any viewer of the film will ever forget the scenes featuring otherworldly netherworld 'Mister Butterfly'; a place lethally lurid operatic nightmare factory of fetishism and foul flesh where sex and violence go together like razorblades and cyanide. A near perfect work of titillating and terrorizing trash entertainment for refined cinephiles (or just a plain masterpiece for the trash-inclined), *Mascara* is a rare reminder that severely sleazy cinema can, in fact, be startlingly sophisticated with the sort of subversive aristocrat cinematic

MASCARA

class that 'perfect Wagnerite' Ludwig II of Bavaria and camp horror writer-poet Count Eric Stanislaus Stenbock would have surely appreciated.

Literally almost struck (via car) by fleeting love in the form of a only slightly-loony lady of class and sass named Gaby Hart (Charlotte Rampling), Chris Brine (Derek de Lint) – a surprisingly stoic and certifiably sane French costume designer – has no idea that he is about to become the pawn of a prominent and sexually perverted police commissioner; the ambiguous lifelong lover and brother of the special lady that will sweep away the dandy dressmaker's hearty heart. An aesthetically and sexually insane cinematic work featuring male femme fatales, corrupt cops who love ladies with cocks, esoteric S&M opera, and mysterious shemale deaths in a rather ridiculous realm where semen-demon-eats-semen-demen, Mascara is nothing short of Orpheus from ominous yet ostensibly orgasmic homo hell. A crazy cunt of a cop named Bert Sanders (Michael Sarrazin) – who according to his own sister, derived his fanatical love of opera as a baby whilst suckling on their culturally refined mother's nipple – loves his all-seeing/knowing/corrupting power as a perverted police commissioner, but not as much as his love for his widowed sister Gaby and shemales singing "Salome" by Richard Strauss. As the sort of slick sociopathic lawman of lunacy you would expect to find in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), except all the more aberrant and unabashedly arrogant, Bert uses his power to cover-up crimes, as well as his erratically exotic extra-extracurricular activities, but also to keep tabs on his sister's gentlemen callers. Needless to say, when Gaby starts fornicating with Frenchman Chris, the police officer decides his sister's boyfriend must go, but not before using the froggy costume-designer to special tailor a dress (that literally drives the already-crazy cop absolutely mad) for his favorite tranny opera singers at his favorite underground opera house *Mister Butterfly*; a hyper-hedonistic hellfire of heretical homos where powerful crypto-perverts and nefariously narcissistic high-class lady-dudes with tits and female asses 'go bump in the night.' When the star queen shemale of the Satanic surrealist S&M show is violently strangled to death one fateful night, Bert naturally attempts to implicate Chris – the man who designed the decadent dress – for the murder, thus forcing Gaby to decide whether she will defend her lover or loyally support her bat-shit crazy bro's conspiratorial plans. Apparently not the first time Bert butchered one of her love affairs, Gaby – a single mother whose husband died mysteriously a couple years before – is rather weary of starting a serious romantic relationship, thereupon sending mixed messages to Chris despite her unwavering love for the charming dressmaker. A sexually confused psychopath whose cunning yet corny charm is only rivaled by his fervently flaming freak-outs that are especially triggered by Chris' sparkly and shimmering dress, Bert would make for a standout case study for *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) as a character fit for an early John Waters, but played in an almost 'surrealistically' straight fashion that eclipses Christian Bale's stoic yet too severely satirical performance in *American Psycho* (2000). Like any

great work of killer camp cinema, one finds themselves subconsciously rooting for berserk bad boy Bert, even if one knows it will not be long before his perverse proclivity for chicks with dicks will get the better of him.

Mascara indubitably proved to be catastrophic for director Patrick Conrad's career in filmmaking as he would never direct a film again after his delightfully degrading big budget crypto-tribute to Cocteau. Interestingly, Mascara does the opposite of the classic camp subgenre of 'Grande Dame Guignol' in casting a middle-aged (not quite elderly, but surely past her prime!) Charlotte Rampling (*Tis Pity She's a Whore*, *Stardust Memories*) – an actress quite well known for playing a number of pathologically perverse and psychosexually disturbed roles throughout her career as a determined diva of decadence, including playing a concentration camp sex slave who senselessly swoons over a SS officer BDSM-style in Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974) and even falling in love with a chimpanzee in Nagisa Oshima's *Max mon amour* (1986) aka *Max, My Love* – in a relatively 'normal' role as a sad yet sensible woman whose emotionally debilitating personal problems stem from her uniquely unhinged brothers' incestuous love for her. Of course, Rampling's ostensibly against-type performance in Mascara is not the only thing marvelously mixed-up about Mascara, as the comprehensibly camp conscious cinematic affair maliciously molests the sexually aberrant aesthetic sensibility to the point where the audio-visually ravished viewer begs for more, but, unfortunately, at least as far as I know, no other film does what Belgian auteur Patrick Conrad's film does; homogenizing high and low kitsch in killer thriller form. Although Michael Sarrazin is generally best known for his performance in *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1969) directed by Sydney Pollack, I will always remember him as the loveable lonely lunatic in Mascara; a film that gave the Canadian actor the opportunity to make-up (with literal make-up) for his missed career-changing opportunity (Sarrazin was originally cast for the role but was unable to go through with it due to a prior contract) to play gay-for-pay cowboy Joe Buck in *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). Unfortunately, while *Midnight Cowboy* went on to be the first and only X-rated film to win "Best Picture" at the Academy Awards, Mascara is not even popular enough to warrant an actual DVD release, but I guess that is what one should expect from the only film that has done the seemingly impossible by aesthetically reconciling the high-camp decadence of Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* with the salacious slasher sodomy and bloody homo-cidal brutality of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980).

-Ty E

SIMONA
SIMONA

Patrick Longchamps (1974)

Without question, the Italian work *Simona* (1974) directed by Patrick Longchamps is the best film ever created based on the writings of French transgressive author Georges Bataille. Forget the pompously putrid performance art documentaries (*Visions of Excess*, *The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth*) starring HIV-positive homo-sadomasochist Ron Athey and Andrew Repasky McElhinney's obscenely degenerate porn flick *Story of the Eye* (2004), *Simona* is the only film based on the work of Bataille that deserves to be mentioned in the same sentence with the unabashedly decadent French author. *Simona* is based on Bataille's 1928 novella *Story of the Eye* and like the book, the film manages to do the seemingly impossible by successfully combining art with eroticism for a most savory feast of sensual aesthetic overload. Thankfully, *Simona* is not a mere rehashing of Bataille's book but a work that uses the original story as a sturdy skeleton for its many exquisite vignettes and delectable erotic scenarios. *Simona* is a cumming-of-age story about a beautiful and luscious lady named *Simona* (played by Italian goddess/actress Laura Antonelli) who generously carries along a young and naïve man-muse named *George* and uses him as a she-devil's plaything. *Simona* and *George* mischievously romp around the countryside, using everything from dairy products to clergymen as unconventional sex toys. Along the way, the twosome turns into a threesome when they virtually kidnap a cute but somewhat reluctant blonde girl. Although featuring deviant sex and nonstop full-frontal nudity throughout, *Simona* is a rare work of cinematic eroticism with class and without compromise that is guaranteed to titillate and tantalize the coldest of puritan prudes.

Near the beginning of *Simona*, the leading lady lets her boy toy know that, "milk is for the pussy" and, naturally, she acts accordingly, cooling herself off by sitting panty-less in a pleasant plate of delicious liquid dairy. *Simona* is certainly a committed proponent of body-wetness as she also finds the ocean to be a grand place for sexual exposure and team-based body ravagement. Some of the most breathtaking scenes featured in *Simona* are of a seaweed-heavy sex-triad on the beach. Taking cues from Nicholas Roeg (his collaborator Donald Cammell would later re-edit an English language version of the film that was never released), *Simona* features abstract and non-linear editing throughout, jumping back-and-forth from vulgar yet voluptuous scene-to-scene. Thus, due to the film's consistently erratic editing and always engrossing scenes, *Simona* proves to be an unflinchingly enthralling experience throughout. Like Bataille's novella, *Simona* truly has the feel of a person recalling their precious, pheromone-heavy memories. Thankfully, *Simona* manages to "cut the fat" when it comes to recalling the most penetrating and stimulating of her infamous personal history. Whether it to be her valiant attempt to seduce a pussy priest with her pussy or

life-shattering personal tragedy, not a dull moment is stored in the beautiful lady's beautiful mind.

Generally, when watching erotic Euro-sleaze flicks from the 1970s and 1980s, I am somewhat repelled by the domineering hippie "free love" atmosphere. *Simona* is different in that it has a timeless quality that fails to reek of pot smoke and venereal diseases. Featuring Baroque architecture and nude live-human-statues, the film is also a somewhat clever and tasteful erotic mockery of the Roman Catholic Church. Unsurprisingly, the film concludes with the quote, "...you can be Saints, either in a religious sense, or in an erotic sense" by Italian novelist Alberto Moravia. Indeed, *Simona* has an almost religious and spiritual tone to it, as if it is a perfect therapeutic response to the sexual repression caused by the Catholic Church. I consider it nothing less than the phenomenon of synchronicity that I happened to be reading Romanian philosopher E.M. Cioran's early work *Tears and Saints* during the same time as my viewing of the film. *Simona* is blasphemy gone beautiful; a meritorious trait indubitably shared by source-writer Bataille.

-Ty E

MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D
MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D

Patrick Lussier (2009)

One of my many pet peeves: When someone expresses distaste for a theater experience and groans "I'll just wait till it's released on DVD..." pertaining to admission prices. Seeing how rental prices are on average \$5 or below and DVD's, brand new, are around \$18, this assessment is brash and naive in nature. Sure, dramas aren't necessarily known for their impact on a 25 foot screen but horror films and action all owe their allegiance to the mighty screen. My Bloody Valentine 3D is a film that you either see in theaters or you don't see at all. It's that simple. Stemming from the original's plot line, My Bloody Valentine 3D divvies up the gore, storyline, and characters and tweaks each category as seen fit. The violence is elevated to an extreme level, the ending is altered to better fit the "bubble-gum" psycho-horror that is popularly seen today, and the characters are given that teen heartthrob makeover with their stunning eyes, less-is-more makeup appliance, and that flippy cow licked hair that's making a stylish comeback; We'll be seeing no more of those bushy 80s teenagers anymore. Good riddance. That is, unless Rob Zombie attempts to continue his "American" series ending with *The Devil's Rejects*. For the optimal 3D experience, the closer you sit to the screen, the more "penetrating" the optical effects will be. In regards to this film, My Bloody Valentine was destined for greatness in stunning 3D. The pickaxe is the prime weapon of choice to glorify with eye-popping visuals. The dimensions of the weapon allow for it to appear menacing off screen rather than a flat machete or an equally less impressive weapon. The pickaxe is also put to great use in this film, allowing for postmortem abortions, ripping out rib cage's, severing torso's, plucking out people's jaw's, and many other uses. My Bloody Valentine is as bloody as advertised with a special treatment of depth to man made body cavities. The original My Bloody Valentine has been christened "low budget charm" by pretty teenage girls but I find everything but charm in the collected product. The unforgiving dialogue, the tedious build up of suspense, the lack of usage of the pivotal miner; All these work against it. Underusing the intimidating Miner character is like putting a birthday cake in Jason Voorhees' hands. It's taking something good and befouling it with childish play things. The 3D remake is a step up from the original in near every way and even goes as far as to deconstruct the slasher genre and piece it together properly for the modern youth generation. In the state of a horror depression where every other film is a remake of some obscure Japanese tale or some feminist ghost activity followed by monotonous Saw sequels, a film that's designed for fast, flying violent fun is greeted with open arms as we cast a scornful eye over our shoulders, blaming Hollywood for killing one of the most popular genres with fluff. Thanks to the 3D format, the film has many foregrounds to focus on. Everything looks good in 3D, it's proven effortlessly except for films like *Journey to the Center of*

the Earth. I've heard only rumors of that travesty. From the riveting opening title sequence down to scenes of dialogue, the depth of the shots provides for a filling cinematic experience. This is an experience to herald and consummate with. Once I had strewn the formula of My Bloody Valentine 3D around and analyzed each part, your assumptions may be right. It may be new-wave horror and ultraviolent, it may have wily teenage humor and cliché plot twists, and it may have the flaws of the original going against it but with 3D on its side, My Bloody Valentine 3D is one of the more captivating theater experiences and deserves a go for being so.

-mAQ

DRIVE ANGRY 3D
DRIVE ANGRY 3D

Patrick Lussier (2011)

Two days ago, I had the pleasure of going to witness the rated R glory of Drive Angry in full 3D. You know, that latest gimmick that Hollywood has already done beat to death. Patrick Lussier came straight out of the box office from the 3D remake of My Bloody Valentine and hopped into the affable Drive Angry with Nicolas Cage attached to star. Now, although the 3D industry is largely based around tacky effects and the obligatory screen-busting props that fly out over yonder, Drive Angry does seem to be the film to see in 3D, what, with breasts bouncing and bullets flying and the general "fuck you" attitude smeared on the specialty screen installed. This brings me to the life force of Drive Angry and you might be pained to admit it; Nicolas Cage. Drive Angry couldn't have possibly been anything without Hollywood's least favorite and greatest character actor. Take Cage's performance in Deadfall for example. Eddie was the reason to see the film, hell, I still haven't seen the film. I just wooed YouTube into letting me watch Nicolas Cage's performances only, sparing myself the semblance of an atrocious plot and script worshipping a cast iron deity in the form of Eddie.

Stopping myself before I go too far out on a tangent, Drive Angry boasts a simple and delectable plot. Milton has escaped from hell and is seeking out his infant granddaughter before a satanic cult can sacrifice her to bring about the apocalypse. Realistically speaking, when I heard this storyline I simply assumed it was the sequel to Ghost Rider. Don't both hold foundations in hell and escaping the clutches of that ever-exaggerated Satan while speeding away in a vehicle of sorts? Another placeholder that Drive Angry touts for an encore is the immature and altogether disgusting sense of humor employed. Immediately following a fist, Amber Heard mocks her bald, butch fiancé by threatening to snitch on his secret love affair with her own dildo. Drive Angry is what I hope the second Ghost Rider film will model after and my wishes might be grounded in a more serene reality as the project is being helmed by Neveldine/Taylor, the fine folks behind the ludicrous and unappreciated Crank: High Voltage. If they can take the dormant brilliance of Cage and unleash it in a current of hell-bent violence and soul-punishing angst then we might just be looking at another comic classic to go right alongside Punisher: War Zone.

Drive Angry does have its crime of error about it; most cases can be blamed on the format of 3D itself. While My Bloody Valentine featured those pivotal scenes of "visceral towards camera = shocking" you've got to remember that film was the first horror film to be shot in 3D so the shtick was of brainstorming brilliance, at least to the heads of Lionsgate. In Drive Angry, it is almost bothersome to see skulls and fragments and debris fly at you. Which again, problem of the format ergo Drive Angry can sustain its luster. Not for long though, which leads me to the biggest inconsistency of Drive Angry; the awful, awful special

effects. For a film of this caliber and budget, you'd assume one would polish up the digital animated sequences of vehicular demolition enough to the point of shameless presentation. Again, you'd be wrong. A scene in example is when the incredible William Fichtner, as the Accountant, commandeers a hydrogen truck and laughably walks out of the cab onto the hood of an attached police car in a scene that seems all too familiar. Oh, that's right. It looks familiar because that very same effect was used in Bruce Willis' RED. Not only that, the tanker flips over two cars horizontally while Nicolas Cage speeds underneath it which recalls the same stunt used in, yet again, Bruce Willis' Live Free or Die Hard. Only this time the effect looks as if it was utilizing stop-motion animation. To give credit where credit is due; at least they have great choices of action inspiration.

The icing on the cake is without a doubt in my mind the glorious car chase sequences. There certainly is something deeply erotic hidden in the loud rumbling of a '69 Charger but I couldn't place an origin on it. With this sexuality in queue, Drive Angry goes the full mile with a gunfight during a sex scene, ridiculous and very Last Man Standing-ish. Patrick Lussier has come a long way from straight to video horror sequels when you look it at from a certain vantage. When a film like this comes around, you are, for sure, in for a treat of escapism to marvel at. By definition, Drive Angry has all the makings of an enjoyable ride: David Morse, Nicolas Cage, cinematic nihilism, and a broad spectrum of rude, crude, and lewd comments to appease the brat in us all. It is simply unfair that Amber Heard didn't disrobe before us. For some odd reason, since she has revealed to the paparazzi that she is in fact a dyke, no nude scenes have been written in her films since 2008's The Informers. It is either a strange rite of respect or the fallacy of common courtesy. I can't discern the difference, can you? Oh, and did I mention there's a brief scene of irrumatio?

-mAQ

PRIVATE PARTS
PRIVATE PARTS

Paul Bartel (1972)

Poor Paul Bartel. Imagine if you directed an excellent exploitation flick deserving of instant cult status that was buried by a studio and rarely seen, then a degenerate yet exceedingly popular Hebraic shock-jock horndog like Howard Stern comes along and creates a film with the same exact name a couple decades later, thus guaranteeing the film's permanent obscurity. Indeed, *Private Parts* (1972) is the debut feature of Bartel and unlike Stern's 1997 biopic of the same, it is wickedly funny and pleasantly perverse. Sort of like a compulsively campy mutation of *Psycho* (1960) featuring hagsploitation elements as if directed by the son of Curtis Harrington, Bartel's quasi-slasher flick is far too sophisticated for gorehounds yet too raunchy and perverse for the sort of bourgeois cinephiles who delicately diddle themselves to the artwork of the last Criterion Collection release. Made at a time when obnoxious bull-dykes did not have their own hit talk shows, parents would beat their sons if they decided to dress like girls, before tranny freaks and other sexual invalids associated with the authoritarian aberrosexual LGBT movements did not start throwing out smear words against heterosexuals like 'cisgender' and 'heteronormativity,' and—arguably most importantly—when fags still knew how to make fun of themselves, *Private Parts* is a masterpiece of cinematic homo self-exploitation that demonstrates that gays indeed had an important place in this world when gay-bashing was still somewhat vogue. Undoubtedly Bartel's most primitive and graphic work (indeed, the film features genitals as advertised), the film is partly a satire of the counter-culture era that features, among other things, a murderous woman who thinks she's a man that looks like Lou Reed, as well as an old bitchy puritanical hag who helps said loony Lou Reed look-a-like slaughter worthless hippie degenerates. Sort of like *Blood Feast* (1963) meets *Chelsea Girls* (1966), *Private Parts* is the tastefully trashy story of a 16-year-old teenage girl who moves in with her reclusive bull-dyke-like hotelier aunt who runs a rundown hotel inhabited by senile old cranks, gay closeted middle-aged reverends who live second lives as leather-fags, and a cock-less female-to-male tranny of the majorly murderous sort whose idea of a sexual climax is injecting her blood into a water-filled blowup doll. Featuring auteur Bartel during his more 'svelte' period in a Hitchcockian cameo as a man having anonymous sex in a public park, *Private Parts* is a rare 'psychotronic' work possessing both wit and intellect that demonstrates that horror and exploitation hacks have no excuse for directing mundane and/or mindless cinematic twaddle, as one can make a perfectly perverse film with a bit of sophistication. Opening with a marvelous montage featuring various nudes set against a pitch black background, *Private Parts* immediately sets a titillating tone of quasi-campy sex and violence of the postmodern Hitchcockian (emphasis on the cock!) sort.

After her less than homely bitch of a roommate Judy (Ann Gibbs) catches

her playing 'peeping tom' (aka she sees her screw some nerdy hippie), 16-year-old Cheryl Stratton (Ayn Ruymen)—a petite little lady that might suffer from a mild cause of autism—is forced to seek shelter elsewhere, thus she decides to head to a rundown hotel owned and operated by her eccentric estranged Aunt Martha (Lucille Benson). Upon arriving at the hotel, Aunt Martha, who seems like a repressed bull-dyke, is somewhat hostile, but finally agrees that she can stay under one condition: "that you promise not to wander around the hotel alone. This is no place for a little girl." Indeed, as a place inhabited by a gay religious leader named Mr. Moon (Laurie Main), who moonlights as a leather-fag despite being well into his 50s and has young twink hustlers sent to his room that he refuses to pay, and sundry women with varying degrees of dementia, Judy sticks out like a sore spade thumb. When Cheryl's bitchy ex-roommate's boy toy stops by to see Cheryl for dubious reasons, he finds himself decapitated by a mysterious slasher killer, with his headless corpse being thrown in an incinerator. Upon asking Aunt Martha about her blood uncle Orville and Cousin Alice, who is supposed to be twice her age, Cheryl gets some rather strange answers. While Aunt Martha states that Orville, "passed on several years ago, age of 73," she is slightly more ambiguous regarding Alice, stating, "I guess you'd say she's in the Lord's hands." Meanwhile, Cheryl learns that there is a reclusive photographer that lives at the hotel named George (John Ventantonio), who has turned one of the hotel rooms into a makeshift darkroom and only leaves his room at night. When Cheryl's intolerable bitch ex-roommate shows up at the hotel, Aunt Martha lures her to George's darkroom where she is assumedly slaughtered.

In what ultimately evolves into a non-romantic subplot, Cheryl meets a young man named Jeff (Stanley Livingston) at a locksmith store while getting a key made and the young man asks her to go on a date with him to a rock concert, which she agrees to do. Towards the last 30 minutes or so of *Private Parts*, the mysterious seeming homo George begins making regular appearances at night. While lurking near a park, a random man remarks to George, who looks like Hebraic proto-hipster Lou Reed, that, "Goddamn hippies, they're taking over this country. It's shameful! Ain't got no morals at all! All these young gals doing it left and right. They don't care. And there's nothing they won't do. You know what I mean?" The guy also says, "Goddamn weirdoes are taking over this country" and he must be right as George soon begins snapping photos of people having sex out in the open in a public park, with auteur Paul Bartel being one of the perverts. When George gets home from his naughty night in the park, Aunt Martha confronts him regarding an apparent obsession he has with Cheryl, telling him she has devoted her life to "helping him....overcome flesh," to which he emotionally replies, "you've helped ruin my life. You robbed me of a normal childhood and now you're trying to rob me of whatever little pleasures I can still enjoy...I'm a human being and I need human contact. Now." And, indeed, in

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his own wayward way, George attempts human contact with Cheryl by leaving her some fetishistic clothing (i.e. stockings, large gloves, etc.) on her bed with a note reading: "you would drive me crazy if you'd let me see you with these things on." Determined to prove she is a grown woman and not the annoying naïve little girl that she is, Cheryl puts on the stockings and gloves (which leaves her breasts, bush, and butt bare) and takes a bubble bath, which peeping tom George watches via a hidden hole in the wall Norman Bates style. After getting rather aroused by Cheryl's less than titillating performance, George 'has sex' the only way he knows how by injecting his blood into a translucent blowup doll. Indeed, instead of injecting the doll with his DNA the normal way by merely ejaculating in it with his prick, George uses a needle as a pseudo-penis and blood as his semen.

While Aunt Martha attempts to save Cheryl from the patently perverted photographer by kicking her out of the hotel, George calls the teen that night and she confesses to him that she likes him because he is the only one that doesn't treat her like a "little girl." That same night, Jeff picks up Cheryl for their planned date to the rock show, but she becomes angry after he asks her about her missing cousin Alice. Indeed, after Jeff mentions that Alice disappeared around the time she began hanging out with George, stupid little girl Cheryl becomes enraged at him for besmirching her prospective beau and heads back to the hotel. Upon arriving back at the hotel, Cheryl is warned by Aunt Martha that she has booked her a bus ticket for the next morning to Chicago and that she, "won't have whores and painted women in my house." When Jeff goes back to the hotel looking for Alice, he is knocked unconscious with a large glass bottle. Meanwhile, Cheryl meets George in his rather bizarrely decorated room and the two begin a photo session. Of course, things become rather strange for Cheryl when George boy attempts to inject her with his blood. During a struggle, George is killed after a large light stand falls on him, and when Aunt Martha storms into the room afterwards, Cheryl stereotypically cries rape. While Aunt Martha is fiddling with George's corpse, Cheryl realizes that the recently deceased photographer has breasts and is really a woman. Indeed, Aunt Martha offers Cheryl the chance to also be her pseudo-son like George, stating, "You can stay here and take his place. You can be my son." Of course, Cheryl declines, so Aunt Martha attempts to stab her with a butcher knife. In the end, the police arrive and Jeff survives. When leaving the hotel of closet-homo horror, Jeff spots Cheryl, who has taken on the identity of the perniciously puritanical persona of her Aunt Martha, who she has killed, just like Norman Bates did with his momma.

Undoubtedly, in its depiction of a deranged serial killer of the sexually schizophrenic sort, *Private Parts* anticipates the teenage tranny slasher flick *Sleepaway Camp* (1983), but of course, Bartel's film is infinitely more sophisticated as a work that updates Hitchcock's *Psycho* for the counter-culture age. One of the most interesting aspects of the film is that the most demented slasher killer in the film

is a repressed bull-dyke who is so out of touch with her own sexuality that she accuses her own female relatives of being wanton whores and even attempts to turn them into men. Indeed, on top of confessing that she had to be artificially inseminated to have her daughter Alicia, Aunt Martha states to Cheryl regarding why she did not have a child with her actual husband, "Not Orville, just me. He was too old. We went to a doctor and worked it out another way. Didn't need Orville." Indeed, if the outmoded and pathetically played-out horror genre needs anything, it is more films where the monster is a crazed carpet-muncher who is murderously hungry for the taste of a creamy, young cuntlet. Unquestionably a lost masterpiece as far as campy quasi-exploitation films are concerned, *Private Parts* is just another example as to why auteur Paul Bartel is one of the most underrated and overlooked filmmakers of his generation, as a sort of Curtis Harrington of his zeitgeist. Indeed, it seems that only exceedingly effete cock-sucking camp filmmakers like Harrington and Bartel had what it took to deal with directing boorish old fat cows.

-Ty E

EATING RAOUL
EATING RAOUL

Paul Bartel (1982)

When it comes to cinematic camp, I can rarely stand the intentional lowbrow and largely cartoonish camp exploitation 'auteur' filmmakers like Russ Meyer and Herschell Gordon Lewis. Indeed, the closest I can get to appreciating such proudly degenerate drivel is the films of actor and sometimes auteur Paul Bartel (*Death Race 2000*, *Lust in the Dust*), who was certainly a marvelous iconoclast and cinematic satirist that was just far too witty and subversive for the mainstream, hence the relative obscurity of most of his films today, especially when compared to the work of Meyer and even Lewis. Indeed, compared to Meyer and Lewis, Bartel also had much more testicular fortitude as a sort of less conservative west coast Paul Morrissey with no qualms about attacking the left and the counter-culture movement, with what is arguably his magnum opus, *Eating Raoul* (1982), being a sardonic satire of sexual liberation in Hollywood where an eccentric and slightly snobbish married couple begins luring in and slaughtering bourgeois swingers so they can steal their money in the hope of realizing their dream of opening a restaurant. Co-written by Richard Blackburn, who also acted as associate producer/quasi-co-director and previously directed the criminally underrated lesbian Lovecraftian vampire flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), *Eating Raoul* is a wonderfully wicked buffet of libertine laughs and lunacy that is marinated in a sort of rather refined elegance and sophisticated cynicism that reminds one why auteur Bartel was probably one of the most passive-aggressive misanthropes that has ever worked in film. Starring Bartel and lapsed Warhol superstar Mary Woronov (*Chelsea Girls*, *Silent Night*, *Bloody Night*), who starred alongside one another previously in a number of films (in fact, they would later reprise their roles from *Eating Raoul* in the 1986 cult horror-sci-fi flick *Chopping Mall*), in the lead roles with the sort of quirky chemistry that one could expect from an effete middle-aged fag and a seasoned fag hag, the film may not be art but there is certainly an artfulness to its audacious comedy. Featuring the sort of eclectic perverts that one would expect to see in an early John Waters film and set in a Hollywood quasi-Sodom where rape is even more common than theft in a work that alludes to the cannibalization of a Mexican mensch, *Eating Raoul* is a "comedy of murders" that allows the viewer to safely revel in the serial killing of various upper-middleclass degenerates from the comfort of their own home, thus the film also acts as a sort of scathing piece of cinematic therapy that may deter potential serial killers.

Opening with a narrator stating, "Hollywood, California, city of contrasts. Home to the rich and powerful...yet so popular with the broken and destitute. Here sex hunger is reflected in every aspect of daily life...and instant gratification is tirelessly pursued. A center of casual violence and capricious harassment...where rampant vice and amorality...permeate every strata of so-

ciety...and the barrier between food and sex has totally dissolved. It is a known fact that prolonged exposure to just such a psychopathic environment...will eventually warp even the most normal and decent among us. This then is the story of Hollywood today. Not a pretty story, but presented here exactly as it happened" juxtaposed with images of attempted sexual pillaging and various other forms of post-sexual revolution degeneracy, *Eating Raoul* immediately establishes a tone that is nothing if not pleasantly politically incorrect. Protagonist Paul Bland (Paul Bartel) is a discernibly bland, if not cultivated, man who makes a pathetic living working as a liquor store clerk and who, while working one day, makes the absurd mistake of ordering a case of \$400-a-bottle Château Lafite Rothschild wine from the store, which could not have happened at a worse time, as he needs \$20,000 to realize his dream of opening a fancy country kitchen restaurant. Although seemingly sexless, if not downright latently homosexual, Paul is married to a nurse that has bigger balls than he does named Mary (Mary Woronov) and she has an even harder time suffering fools than her ambiguously impotent hubby does. When a hyper horny patient named Mr. Barker (John Shearin) attempts to get in Mary's granny panties at the hospital, the wickedly wise nurse gets him back by getting an ugly old hick-like fellow to give him a 'high colonic.' With their rent jacked up to an extra \$175 a month and their apartment complex invaded by middle-aged swingers, Paul and Mary are not exactly in the highest of hopes.

After a couple degenerates attempt to rape Mary and Paul kills them with a frying pan, the couple comes up with the epiphany of luring sex perverts so they can kill and ultimately rob them. After all, as Paul complains, "People are pigs. How do they get away with it? Why should they live so well when good people like you and me get shafted?" so the married couple decides that it is their turn to do the shafting. After going to a single mother named "Donna the Dominatrix" (Susan Saiger) who has no problem talking about anything ranging from "golden showers" in front of her baby boy to advice about being a 'lady of the night,' the married couple places an ad in a local trash newspaper and Mary begins her marvelously murderous career of being a pseudo-dominatrix who accepts any sort of pervert, albeit for a hefty price. Indeed, Mary comes into contact with a pseudo-SS sadist who gets off to role-playing with concentration camp sex, an Aryan hippie rapist, an elderly midget cowboy with a large dog, and a proponent of paraphilic infantilism, among countless other patent perverts who Paul exterminates with a regular old kitchen frying pan.

After the couple unwittingly hires a young mestizo thief posing as a locksmith named Raoul Mendoza (played by real-life second-generation Mexican-American Robert Beltran), the married murderers turn into a threesome. Indeed, after breaking into Paul and Mary's place and discovering their dastardly deeds, Raoul offers to become their partners, as he plans to sell the corpses of their victims to a dog food company, thereupon making their serial killing business even

EATING RAOUL

more lucrative. Of course, Mary and Raoul eventually become lovers (Thai weed comes into play) and the latter conspires to kill Paul, as he wants the gringo's cash and naughty nurse wife. After Paul complains to Mary regarding Raoul, "Twice he tried to run me over...the rotten little beaner," the reasonably happily married murderer decides to take revenge against the Hispanic Don Juan by hiring a chick to pretend to be a nurse (as well as a blind nun and immigration agent) who coerces the pseudo-Latin lover to take an ostensible anti-venereal disease pill that ultimately makes him impotent. Of course, Raoul finally figures out that he has been fooled and pulls a gun on Paul, but Mary stands by her husband and whacks the whacked out Hispanic over the head with a frying pan, thus killing him. Forgetting that they have promised dinner to their realtor James (played by co-writer Richard Blackburn, who also played a porn addict obsessed with a magazine called "Nuns and Nazis"), Paul and Mary serve Raoul for dinner. In the end, the quasi-antiheroes get their restaurant. While eating Raoul, James states, "I hope you make this a permanent item on your menu...it's French," to which Mary replies, "No, it's Spanish."

Inspired by the classical cannibalistic serial killer antihero Sweeney Todd, as well as somewhat similarly themed films like the British black comedy *The Ladykillers* (1955) and François Truffaut's self-professed "favorite American film" *The Honeymoon Killers* (1969) directed by opera composer Leonard Kastle, *Eating Raoul* ultimately totally transcends its influences as a sort of Tinseltown take on the Grand Guignol that makes a mirthfully macabre mockery of everyone and everything, ranging from anally-retentive Château Lafite Rothschild snuffers to a lapsed Catholic Mexican professional thief with a special (and ultimately deadly) affinity for brown-on-white miscegenation. Featuring everything from auteur Paul Bartel killing over a dozen swingers by plunging an electric lantern into a hot tub to a Chicano conman proudly declaring, "I ain't no wetback" to a phony immigration agent, *Eating Raoul* is a rather idiosyncratic cinematic example of off-color comedy being channeled through a sort of venomous wit comparable to Oscar Wilde. Not surprisingly, a sequel to the film entitled *Bland Ambition*, which was written by the original writers (including Dick Blackburn, was scheduled for production, of which director Bartel described as, "[The film] starts with Paul and Mary Bland happily ensconced in their Country Kitchen, where they're doing a land-office business. The arrogant young Governor of California stops off to have lunch and is furious he is not recognized and permitted to jump the line. In retaliation, he sends a health inspector to close down the Country Kitchen, and Paul and Mary are encouraged by the media to retaliate in kind and run against him for Governor of California," but rather unfortunately, Vestron pulled the plug on the funding about 10 days before they were to begin shooting. Of course, the death of Bartel in 2000 at 61 from a heart attack guaranteed the sequel would never be made. Although described by auteur Bartel as follows, "I wanted to make a film about two greedy, uptight people who are at the same

time not so unlike you and me and Nancy and Ronnie, to keep it funny and yet communicate something about the psychology and perversity of those values . . . My movie touches on many things: the perversion of middle class values, the resurgence of Nixonism, machismo versus WASP fastidiousness, film noir . . . ,” Eating Raoul ultimately seems like an assault on ‘Americanism’ in general, from the rich workaholics who only find solace in banging their best bud’s wife to small-time cholo crooks who may hate everything that old school white America stands for, but still want a piece of the rotten American pie. Of course, it is quite doubtful that a film like Eating Raoul could be made today, as it lacks ‘diversity’ and ‘racial sensitivity,’ among countless other intolerable things that people are suppose to tolerate nowadays, thereupon making it all the more interesting that it was directed by one of the most flagrantly effete and pathologically passive-aggressive ‘queen’ character actors in film history

-Ty E

SCENES FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN BEVERLY HILLS
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Paul Bartel (1989)

It might seem unlikely that a stupid American would direct a campy and sometimes racially insensitive remake of the French classic ‘comedy of manners’ *The Rules of the Game* (1939) aka *La Règle du Jeu*, but character actor/sometimes-auteur Paul Bartel (*Eating Raoul*, *Death Race 2000*) did such a bold and wonderfully cinematically sacrilegious thing for his almost criminally underrated mutation of Renoir’s masterpiece, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* (1989). While I have yet to get around to seeing *The Rules of the Game*, I have seen enough of Renoir’s films to know that his anti-booboisie comedy of manners probably did not feature a dog performing cunnilingus on an ‘Uncle Tom’ negress or an East Asian gangster stating in broken English, “rabbits and Mexicans brains ain’t too big,” to a Mexican servant with an unhealthy gambling addiction. Indeed, like any cultivated celluloid comedy, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* is equal demented doses of the radically raunchy and wonderfully witty, as a superlatively sardonic work of the decidedly darkly comedic sort that makes a major mockery of the now-old school Beverly Hills bourgeoisie. Although I had seen the film before, I recently decided to re-watch Bartel’s unsung masterpiece of merry misanthropy (indeed, after watching most of his films, I am convinced that the director absolutely hates everyone) after realizing it was co-penned by Bruce Wagner (who has a small cameo at the beginning), whose 5-hour-long brainchild *Wild Palms* (1993) I recently developed a rather strange addiction to. Of course, both *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* and *Wild Palms* do a rather relentless job reaming the stinking rich rectum of Los Angeles’ uniquely unlovable upper-class. On top of being a rare cultured American comedy featuring an all-star cast (including Bartel playing his typically effortlessly effete self), the film is also notable in that young star Rebecca Schaeffer was murdered just six weeks after the film was released by a crazed ½ Korean fan who had been stalking her for 3 years (indeed, had she pursued her original aspirations of being a rabbi, she might not be dead today). Indeed, practically specially tailored to be an instant cult classic, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* is arguably Bartel’s most belligerently immoral and subtly sophisticated work to date, hence why it is probably less well known when compared to the director’s previous celluloid efforts of excess and eccentricity like *Death Race 2000* (1975) and *Eating Raoul* (1982), as it seems most American filmgoers prefer low-camp over wicked yet refined wit. A fiercely fucked farce that has a number of subplots, but mainly revolves around two male servants—a mestizo addicted to gambling and a bisexual hustler that has the words “Your Name” tastelessly tattooed to his assumedly diseased ass—who make a truly low-class wager as to who will be the first to sexually seduce the other’s employer, Bartel’s work is probably the only film that can boast such an

eclectically bonkers and stupidly salacious cast of characters, including a goofy fat ghost who died of autoerotic asphyxiation and has come back to haunt his horny wife, a male whore who gambles \$5,000 just so he can get into a romantic Chicano's pants, a gold-digging jigaboo who moonlights as an S&M porn star, and a divorced housewife who lusts after Mexicans because she has read one too many D.H. Lawrence novels, among countless other human creatures with an unquenchable hunger for humping anyone and everyone despite class differences (indeed, if the film demonstrates anything, it is that there is no such thing as discrimination in the bedroom, so long as one has a craving for the other person), so long as they do it in a super sleazy and secret way so as to not potentially hurt their loved ones.

Rich bitch Clare Lipkin (played by Jacqueline Bisset in a rather against-type role) gets so enraged with her chipmunk-mouthed Mexican maid Rosa (Edith Diaz) for breaking some sort of worthless porcelain knickknack in her home during a big fancy dinner feast that she throws boiling water in the poor over-the-hill Latina's rather bloated face. On top of that, a pathetically pretentious and ambiguously gay pansy who describes himself as "Beverly Hill's foremost thnologist" (aka diet doctor) named Dr. Mo Van De Kamp (Paul Bartel) decides to finish the mestizo maid off with an Abercrombie & Fitch brand handgun, so naturally the Hispanic houseboy Juan (played by Robert Beltran, who was previously in *Eating Raoul*) decides to honor his racial sister by throwing a boiling pot of water on his bossy boss Clare, but just before he does, it is revealed it was all a joke in celebration of the young servant's birthday. Unfortunately for Juan, his life is not exactly that interesting, as it is revealed that everything that he has just experienced was just a dream. On top of that, Juan owes an East Asian gangster named June-Bug (Jerry Tondo), who uses a muscular negro as his muscle, a long unpaid \$3,700 gambling debt. Luckily, a bisexual servant named Frank (played by Ray Sharkey, who died of AIDS in 1993 but not before giving it to a couple of his girlfriends) that works for his boss Clare's friend Lisabeth Hepburn-Saravian (played by lapsed Warhol superstar turned Roger Corman superstar Mary Woronov) makes a \$5,000 bet with him regarding who can seduce and sexually savage the other's employer first. Since Juan has no cash, he has agreed to give his anal virginity (and, in turn, his rampant heterosexuality) to Frank if he loses the wager. Of course, being a Paul Bartel film, it is somewhat easy to guess what happens to Juan's twink-taco.

Juan's boss Clare's husband Sidney (Paul Mazursky) has just died in a freak autoerotic asphyxiation accident and now his pathetic ghost is haunting her. Somewhat melancholy, as well as horny (her husband's ghost confesses to her that he became sexually disinterested with her after their daughter was born), due to the death of her hubby, Clare has some friend and family members over for the weekend, included her hack playwright brother Peter (Ed Begley Jr.), who has written works with titillating titles like "Little Shylock," and his new negress wife

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'To-Bel' (Arnetia Walker), who married the preppie would-be-tortured-artist on a whim after only knowing him for a couple of days because she assumes he is ridiculously wealthy (of course, as Dr. Mo Van De Kamp later reveals to her, Peter is on the, "last scraps of niggardly inheritance"). Needless to say, Clare is somewhat disturbed by her brother's rather dark romantic acquisition, though the family dog 'Bojangles' takes a special liking to To-Bel and maws at her afro-puff-covered pink-eye as if it is a raw steak. A shameless Uncle Tom that knows how to play pussy white men with her man-eating pussy, To-Bel absurdly states upon being absurdly asked if she has any relatives in Africa, "Isn't that interesting...but I have no desire to go to Africa. None whatsoever. Israel, yes," as if she assumes that Hebrews are where the real 'bucks' are. While Juan and Frank plot to get in the pussies of the posh hags, rich bitches Clare and Lisabeth do the same, with the latter stating regarding her unquenchable thirst for prole poles, "we're soft, they're hard...they work, they eat, they fuck." Divorced from her bald philandering gynecologist husband Howard (Wallace Shawn), Lisabeth is especially hungry for Hispanic flesh, stating regarding the Mexican servant, "There is something very D.H. Lawrence about Juan...something dark and something Aztec...that one could never know."

Feeling sorry for a hyper horny young teen in need of temporary sexual release, Juan gives Lisabeth's sensitive pianist son Willie (Barret Oliver of *The NeverEnding Story* fame) "righteous videotapes" (aka porn videos) and the young lad soon discovers that To-Bel is a porn star while watching a lurid Sapphic S&M blue movie where the ebony hoe cracks a female cracker with a whip. On top of that, it is also soon revealed that Lisabeth's husband Howard was in a steamy love affair with To-Bel, who wants to take revenge against her bastard of an ex-beau, which she does by boning his much more handsome and more well hung son Willie. Indeed, Willie later brags in front of his mother and all the other house guests that, "Aunt To-Bel told me that compared to my dad I was hung like a rhino." Indeed, Willie must have developed an instant mania for miscegenation, as he also screws fat Mexican maid Rosa. Of course, Willie is not the only one who gets lucky during the wanton weekend in the seemingly banal Beverly Hills suburb, as virtually everybody literally and figuratively screws everyone in *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*, though Frank, being a homo who pretends he's half-hetero, opts for drugging Clare instead of actually greasing her weasel, as Juan walks in on his passed out boss in bed with his friend and assumes the worst. While Juan actually manages to seal the salacious deal in terms of bugging hyper horny divorcee Lisabeth, he lies to Frank and pretends to lose the wager, thus absurdly resulting in the loss of his rampant heterosexuality (Frank fucks him from behind like he's a woman). Of course, in what seems to be a mockery of virtually every single Hollywood film ever made, everything works out in the end, with Juan beginning a relationship with old sugarmomma Lisabeth, Clare's daughter Zandra (Rebecca Schaeffer) hooking

up with dirty old man Dr. Mo Van De Kamp, and Clare finally getting over her husband's ghost, who is left with the ghost of the family dog (indeed, the poor doggy, like Sidney, also perished in a freak accident). In the end, the dead dog has the last word by telling ghost Sidney, "You're so full of shit."

A film with an intentionally pretentiously long title that sounds like the name of some sort of forgotten European neo-Marxist film from the late-1960s/1970s (actually, a Jewish documentarian directed a film in 1977 entitled *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Portugal*), *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* (1989) ultimately rips both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie a new asshole, which is certainly something any self-respecting person can appreciate. Indeed, while the film is a major mess in terms of narrative structure as a wayward work where the main 'plot' falls to the wayside almost immediately, it is also a mischievously mirthful orgy of ludicrous laughs that reminds one that there has indeed been a couple of masterful comedies made in Hollywood, though they certainly were not directed by Mel Brooks. Undoubtedly, had director Paul Bartel been Hebraic and not made jokes at the expense of Israel (as he does in the film), *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* would probably be revered as one of the greatest celluloid comedies of its rather unfunny era. Indeed, forget *Das Kapital*, Bartel's filmic farce features more cultivated hate and contempt for the upper-classes than failed bourgeois bum Marx could have ever dreamt of. Assuredly, one of the things that makes the film, like most of Bartel's work, so brilliant is that it is nearly impossible to tell what the director's political persuasion is, as he spares no one from his deliciously venomous scorn, including meek Mexican maids, virginal teenage piano prodigies, female Uncle Toms, the sort of annoying and spastic yappity little white dogs that old women like to spoil (Bartel actually had the gall to have the dog, Bo-Jangles, killed off), effeminate gynecologists, and various other beings that I typically find myself quite repelled by. Like the anti-liberal/anti-counter-culture cinematic works of Paul Morrissey, *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* also dares to make sex seem rather ridiculous, as a work that wallows in perversity but is, at best, rather anti-erotic, despite featuring nudity and whatnot (undoubtedly, I must admit that the sight of Mary Woronov's unclad body made for an unsettling experience). Ultimately, one of the main messages of the film is that everyone is a whore, but it is only the working-class who consciously realizes this, as they have to constantly prostitute themselves just to survive and thrive. Of course, the title of the film is quite tongue-in-cheek, as the real struggle that occurs in the film is between two lowly servants from the same class who are competing from poorly aged rich bitch gash. While I do not doubt that Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* is an unmitigated masterpiece, I have a feeling that *Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills* offers more wicked laughs, as a bodacious black comedy that is darker than Al Jolson in blackface and wittier than Oscar Wilde on crack.

SCENES FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN BEVERLY HILLS

-Ty E

NIGHT OF THE HELL HAMSTERS

Paul Campion (2006)

Hamsters are rather cute cuddly creatures that fill their cheeks with various nuts and fruits. Only this time, they seek blood from teenager invaders of their spectral realm. Paul Campion is the director of the glorious gem from New Zealand. While he might have borrowed the insatiable appetite of gore from his fellow native Peter Jackson, that is about the only relation in film that this short carries. (Frank, eat your heart out) When Nature Attacks is always a brilliant genre to make a film on. You save on most production expenses and you don't need to milk a brilliant script to get the idea of entertainment across. Night of the Hell Hamsters, just like Child's Play before it, takes great pride in delivering something playful in a demonic package with massive bloodshed. The babysitter (Note the ode to the pastel colored generation of ultraviolence) convinces her cowardly boyfriend to participate in a mock Ouija board "round" and in doing so, revives a demonic spirit named Spoz Gar (Ghostbusters which reanimates the tenant's furry companions into wide eyed harbingers of doom. With a New Zealand style of humor, this short invokes chuckles and gives a cricket bat another use as seen in Shaun of the Dead. (Only a wee bit more terrifying) Night of the Hell Hamsters is a bloody brilliant 15 minute short that will leave you clawing for more. Instead of featuring the casual "male friend causes apocalypse and heroine cleans up after his mess" plot line, this film gives some leeway to the feminist-charged film of today. I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to a possible sequel. Perhaps Paul Campion and R.L. Stine could collaborate to bring Monster Blood II to the big screen.

-mAQ

DECEPTION OF A GENERATION
DECEPTION OF A GENERATION

Paul Crouch Jr. (1985)

Deception of a Generation is a fine Christianity documentary about the occult, homosexuality, necromancers, Satan, and other related Antichrist elements that infiltrated Children's cartoons of the 1980s. Despite my apathy for Christianity and the silliness of the documentary, Deception of a Generation is pretty true in its assertion of anti-Christian influences that have subverted children's cartoons. Anyone that has been around and associated with the Long Island and NYC types knows that these individuals believe that blaspheming Christ is their "God Given" right. With shows like Family Guy, it is obvious that these Antichrist folks don't even try to hide their contempt for Christianity. Of course, when anyone (I.E. Mel Gibson) attempts to hold the "masters" accountable for their deeds, they go on an ad hominem attack campaign laced with so much estrogen that it would put professional complainer Jerry Seinfeld to shame.

Phil Phillips

Apparently children of the 1980s starting shouting "Jesus isn't the master of the Universe, He-Man is" in parking lots like it was nothing. Christian host Phil Phillips makes it clear that he believes children worship their occult cartoons more than a man that died for their sins. They also use tie-in action figures and toys to practice their "worship" of homosexual occultists. I really could care less about Christianity but it is no doubt that the occult dogma of TV (for both Children's shows and TV in general) has subverted the average American into a brain dead and impulsive, vice driven disciples of Satan (at least in a metaphorical sense). Are the Smurfs really dead (blue skin) homosexual communists of Satan? Is Jesus really a winner and Satan a loser? According to the host of Deception of a Generation, Phil Phillips, yes. The documentary also uncovers the homosexual agenda by Steven Spielberg's child classic "E.T." Phillips believes that these "Anti-Christian" teachings found in children's cartoons are a plot. I personally think that the Antichrist agenda found in children's cartoons is more about instinct than a plot. The state of New Jersey, Hollywood, and NYC (where most of these "creators" come from) might as well be the unofficial capitals of hell. These areas spawn the most paranoid individuals that have rarely left the city due to their fear of receiving a similar fate to those victims found in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. SATAN LURKS INSIDE YOUR CHILDREN'S TOYS The host of Deception of a Generation seems to be more a "false prophet" than a true believer. He can see the degeneracy so commonly seen in children's cartoons because he seems to have a certain "tainted" element to his own soul. Host Phillips gets especially excited when stating that Barbie is perfect except for having "Hong Kong stamped on her ass." Phillips is a similar false prophet to that of the boyish messianic power of Paul Sunday in There Will Be Blood exercises.

One has to admit that real Christianity in America has been for the most part destroyed. The only thing you have to do is turn on the television and see it's promotion of materialism, homosexuality, crime, drugs, false gods, and overall destructive behavior. The media leaders practiced their techniques subtly over half a century using Freudian psychological techniques. Now they do whatever they want whenever they want. Whether it be the whoring out of preteens on the Disney channel or the hateful filth against Western Civilization on MTV, the media leaders have done their job well. Despite having some good points, Deception of a Generation is unintentionally comical for the most part, thus confirming the lack of seriousness and "faith" gentile society puts into Christianity.

-Ty E

CLIFFORD
CLIFFORD

Paul Flaherty (1994)

Clifford excels at being the strangest normal film I have ever seen. Unlike Orson Welles' tactic at filming Citizen Kane's lead with a larger than life perspective, they reverse the camera effect to cast a 40 year old Martin Short as a 10 year old pseudo-Problem Child. Paul Flaherty (Director of Who's Harry Crumb?) creates an enjoyable almost-family film that has enough adult situations and pure evil to pass around. Martin Short plays 10 year old Clifford AKA The Antichrist. This little shit's biggest dream is going to the prehistoric theme park aptly titled Dinosaur World. He has a borderline case of talking to an inanimate object throughout his entire life. The film starts in the future. The year 2050 to be exact. There Clifford is a priest at a school for troubled boys. From this environment, he manifests his past to show us (the viewers) how much of a prick he was. Clifford wasn't no ordinary mischief maker. He aimed low and hard, making Charles Grodin's life a living hell. He ruins all aspect in his life just for his dream to be realized. Martin Short's acting as a child is down right amazing. Prior to this film, I didn't know much about the actor other than he wasn't young. Upon further scrutiny, I discovered that he was actually extremely aged. And no CGI? Most impressive. I wouldn't consider this film to be extremely hilarious but rather quirky, jovial, and engrossing. The chemistry between Martin and Charles is a definite experience which never falters but only flourishes. Over the course of the film's surprisingly short run time, not much is uncovered about the central character of Clifford. Other than being a PSA about the horrors of spoiled children, this film should be advertised as an full length abstinence commercial. Children live without mercy and are ruthless. The wits exchanged in the film are quickly exchanged without missing a cue until one victor is left standing. Charles Grodin does seem to have a habit of playing "that guy." The one you see in films that feature bastard children creating exasperating hardships then switch faces towards the end for a heart felt reunion. I don't know how many times I've seen Grodin snap in films. God knows if he has ever killed a cast member of the Beethoven series. The beginning sets up for a laughing riot but goes out with a small pop. If the ending were some how different, I'd definitely appreciate this dark comedy a lot more.

-mAQ

THE PEST

Paul Miller (1997)

Wow. Where do I begin on this comedic curiosity? I'll start with the obvious. The Pest is perhaps the most fucking retarded film I've ever had the pleasure of witnessing. New grounds are broken in terms of "awful" film making. I first saw The Pest around 3 years ago. I remember thinking it was a truly funny film. I kept this in mind when I rewatched it this past week. You know that feeling when you look at yourself in the past and get disgusted with the past you? I encountered that when I realized that I thought The Pest was comedic in an honest way.

If anything, The Pest is only really good for the impromptu musical opening. The rest is utter garbage that one cannot help but facepalm in the general direction of any of the cast/crew for participating in this monstrosity. They should have saw this coming. Armed with an arsenal of pro-Jewish/anti-German gags, this film can easily be dissected as a German hate piece. "Evil homosexual German" this, "Poor Jew" that. Even for the overly-sympathetic, this gets murderously irritating fast. The writer David Bar Katz, being a noted Jew, doesn't waste any time glorifying the Jews in an over-exempt amount of scenes that stretches across the entire run time. The punchline never comes either. The Pest retains some charm in its spin-off of The Most Dangerous Game. The pathetic part is that I recognize The Pest as being more accomplished than Ice T's Surviving the Game (You just lost it). Gary Busey's maniacal yells and sneer could make me cry any day. I'll regard The Pest as one of the worst comedies ever created from here on out. The proceeding events don't sit well with me but I favor The Pest over Surviving the Game and that's something I'd never want to admit. John Leguizamo is a universally adept actor. The exigency of accepting him starring in The Pest is becoming quite a chore. I hope that Leguizamo decided to fire his agent after this film. Himmel is his Nazi father's son and that's the way he'd put it. He is a raging homosexual who enjoys phallic imagery and seducing his father's hunting subjects. He'd rather pet snakes and mutter German sexual obscenities than murder poor Latino scam artists. The Pest features some of the worst jokes ever committed to celluloid performed by John Leguizamo. If you thought Corky Romano was bad, think again. Even though The Pest is a brand of humor for vegetables, I still found myself entertained enough to finish it. The level of stupidity it reaches can be deemed brilliant by few, but I don't think I ever want to watch this film again. Proceed with caution.

-mAQ

FLESH
FLESH

Paul Morrissey (1968)

Andy Warhol's *Flesh* (or more appropriately Paul Morrissey's *Flesh*) is an eccentric study in male prostitute body worship. Little Joe makes a living by supporting his family selling his body to dirty old men. He has no shame in it as he has to pay the bills somehow. Little Joe is a middle school dropout with an attitude. Paul Morrissey may be an anally retentive old queen but he sure admires the lifestyle of the poor and drugged out, hence his charm as a filmmaker. Little Joe's wife has no problem with Joe whoring his body out for cash. She participates in sexual encounters with women to get her sexual fill. Joe and his wife also have a baby together. Joe's obsession with laying around naked parallels that of his newborns daily activities. In one crucial scene, little Joe studies his son in awe as he crawls around on the floor. It is never too soon for a father to learn from his child. Joe has his best conversations with his Johns. They encourage Joe to work out as they admire his body. I found it pretty depressing (although somewhat touching) that Joe's "clients" took him more seriously than his family and close friends. Joe also makes sure to giving tips to a young hustler on how to get "dates." He encourages "gay for pay" sexual acts. Joe has to support his drug habit (and family) somehow. *Flesh* has the aesthetic of an amateur documentary film. I could only imagine *Flesh* in this aesthetic as anything different would take away from the raw power of the pathetic life of a hustler. Little Joe is not a glamorous individual. He can barely even make it out his apartment. Prostitution seems like the only legit reason for Joe to leave home. *Flesh* is mandatory viewing for all serious fans of independent cinema.

-Ty E

TRASH

Paul Morrissey (1970)

I have always thought that Andy Warhol was somewhat retarded. He always had the talent of “discovering” artists and financing their projects. I believe that his greatest find of sorts was his filmmaker Paul Morrissey who is often considered Warhol’s most hated collaborator. Andy Warhol’s Trash is a perfect example of why many pseudo artist hippies hate the underrated auteur. Italian American drug addict Joe Dallesandro was the star and centerpiece of Paul Morrissey’s legendary trash trilogy. The films voyeuristically explore the slavery (both mental and physical) that resulted from sex, drugs, and Rock n’ Roll “revolution” so often found in the late 1960’s. Joe is a slave to heroin and only shows ambition when attempting to obtain his drug of choice. He supports his habitat by giving sexual favors to woman he uses for drug money. Unfortunately for him, he can’t even get his dick up to satisfy the women offering to pay for his services. Despite looking like a hippie home video from the late 1960’s, Trash has more to stimulate the mind than all Darren Aronofsky films combined. Trash is a virtual document of white Americas decline into self destructive hedonism and mindless pleasure seeking. The “revolutionary” promoters (such as whiny agitator Abbie “Abe” Hoffman) of “liberation” movements of the late 1960’s were the children of former American (and from abroad) Communists (red diaper babies). The reality is that these scumbags subversives were bent on destroying western order and determined to get people to fall prey to their weaknesses for pleasurable vices. The irrational babbling of a drugged out rich bitch with clown make-up acts as a great metaphor for the “revolutionary” changes that occurred during the fall of the United States. Although Joe Dallesandro is constantly zoning out during the rich bitch’s idiotic ramblings, his responses are quite adequate. This drugged out girl isn’t even worth being acknowledged as a human being. To be fair, her “acting” and performance is unforgettable. The actress (her name was Andrea Feldman) later committed suicide by jumping of the 14th floor of an apartment building. A rosary and a can of coca cola was supposedly found in her hands (another metaphor?). Trash is far from being Trash. The film is an important piece of American history and better reflects America during the 1960’s than Easy Rider ever could. American youths are still being inspired by dead hippie legends and ruining their lives getting addicted to drugs. Paul Morrissey was the best weapon America ever had in the so-called war against drugs.

-Ty E

WOMEN IN REVOLT
WOMEN IN REVOLT

Paul Morrissey (1971)

On June 3, 1968, schizophrenic lesbian Valerie Solanas – the radical feminist who penned the laughably ludicrous SCUM Manifesto that urged the apparently-fairer sex to, “overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and eliminate the male sex” – arrived at the Warhol factory in atypically feminine attire and like the cowardly woman she was, shot the ultra-effete pop-artist Andy Warhol while he was preoccupied with the telephone. Although Solanas ultimately failed in her attempt to assassinate a man as physically frail as Andy Warhol with a loaded weapon, not least of all because she was an exceptionally mentally unhinged female with an innately irrational case of debilitating hysteria and delusions of grandeur, she continued to harass and stalk the supposedly misogynist artist after her release from New York State Prison for Women in 1971, of which she was once again arrested for not long thereafter. As Solanas told journalist Robert Marmorstein of *The Village Voice*, “[s]he has dedicated the remainder of her life to the avowed purpose of eliminating every single male from the face of the earth.” Of course, Andy Warhol took these threats very seriously and lived in fear for the rest of his life that the SCUMbag butch broad with an extra big dick-less chip on her shoulder would attempt to assassinate him again. Thankfully, Warhol still maintained his sense of humor during all of this as demonstrated by the film *Andy Warhol's Women in Revolt* (1971) directed by Paul Morrissey (*Trash*, *Blood for Dracula*). Not only would the film be the last production where Warhol himself got behind the camera, but *Women in Revolt* is also a parody of the so-called Women's Liberation Movement, most specifically targeting saucy psycho Solanas and her hubris-driven SCUM Manifesto. Starring Candy Darling (*Flesh*, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran*), Jackie Curtis (*Burroughs, W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*), and Holly Woodlawn (*Trash*, *Night Owl*) – three of the Warhol factory's most legendary transvestites – as the women leading a mindless and ultimately failed revolution against a mostly imagined patriarchal society under the acronym PIG (Politically Involved Girls), which is undoubtedly a sardonic snipe at Solanas' sordid SCUM (“Society For Cutting Up Men”), *Women In Revolt* is one of the greatest and most campy anti-feminist works ever made and a film that would only be rivaled by John Waters' later work *Female Trouble* (1974).

Although missing the always delightful Joe Dallesandro, *Women in Revolt* has much in common with the “Paul Morrissey Trilogy” (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) that the iconic junky hunk starred in due to it also being produced by Andy Warhol and its unmistakable pseudo-cinéma vérité anti-aesthetic. A lifelong opponent of liberalism and self-described “right-winger” of the Irish Roman Catholic persuasion, Paul Morrissey has consistently mocked those with less restrained bleeding hearts consistently throughout his filmmaking career and with *Women in*

Revolt – an audacious attack on the more preposterous trends associated with Second-wave feminism – the Warhol factory auteur assembled one of his most contemptuous and facetious attacks to date. According to the most articulate of the tranny trio, Jackie (Jackie Curtis) – a feisty virgin suffering from an acute case of sexual repression – the fierce feminists are, “tired of being exploited.” Not allowing her idealism to get in the way of her instinctive female narcissism and jealousy, Jackie has no problem proudly declaring that, “Candy’s after pussy, Holly’s after cock...What I’m after is something – intangible.” Indeed, like a “True Believer” in the sense outlined in German-American social psychologist Eric Hoffer’s 1951 book of the same name, Jackie – who keeps a slavish houseboy (Dusty Springs) to do her nails and tidy her apartment while incessantly torturing him physically and emotionally – is a woman who romantically dreams and somewhat actively aspires for a female-ruled future due to her absolute discontent with her own plush and privileged personal life. Like the failed-bourgeois communist revolutionary that scapegoats the abstract and impersonal “capitalist” for his personal failure, Jackie and her girls hold men and their pesky peckers responsible for their own (at least partially) self-induced misery. In the heat of passion, Jackie declares to her floppy-cock houseboy that, “Don’t you know there’s something more beautiful in this world than – that thing – between your legs? Haven’t you heard of Women’s liberation?...Cunt is beautiful...You know that males are inferior to females.” To her credit, the houseboy’s flaccid cock is quite unsightly, hence why she eventually ‘cheats’ on him by buying sex from a male prostitute named Johnny Minute (Johnny Kemper), thus embezzling the funds (which were conned out of a senile, elderly woman) of PIG and betraying and hereafter absconding from the feminist cause in the process. Unsurprisingly, the other two bro-broads of PIG also desert their newfound fascist-feminist ideology. Candy Darling is initially recruited for PIG to help launch the movement due to her glamorous status as a “society deb socialite” (as described by a hostile bull-dyke reporter). Of course, Darling’s intentions were never savory to begin with as she hoped to use PIG as a dubious means for launching a film acting career. Darling eventually becomes a talentless international actress with mostly non-speaking roles in Jules Verne adaptation filmed in Yugoslavia and Italian sexploitation films, including a fictional Roman epic work entitled *The Fornicon* by allowing film directors to, “fuck the daylights out of her.” Considering she was raped by her brutish, closet-case husband Marty (Martin Kove), Holly’s conversion to feminism is more reasonable than the other two, but she inevitably forsakes her femininity by bestially molesting any man that passes her general radius, thus eventually degenerating into a homeless wino wench by the conclusion of *Women in Revolt*. Needless to say, by the end of *Women in Revolt*, the PIG ladies have not only failed to get anywhere without the help of the by-now-fairly-greasy fried bacon between their legs, but have also blundered every superficial attempt at being uniquely ‘liberated’ as a woman via contrived

WOMEN IN REVOLT

female empowerment.

Before Andy Warhol succumbed to a botched gallbladder in New York City at 6:32 a.m. on February 22, 1987 (maybe death via assassination would have been a more glorious way to go out?!), two of the three stars in *Women in Revolt* would also perish tragically. On March 21, 1974, at aged 29, Candy Darling died of Lymphoma, of which s/he commented in a melodramatic letter sent to Warhol and friends, "Unfortunately before my death I had no desire left for life . . . I am just so bored by everything. You might say bored to death. (D)id you know I couldn't last. I always knew it. I wish I could meet you all again." Although Jackie Curtis would appear in the films *Underground U.S.A.* (1980) and *Burroughs* (1983), s/he eventually died of a heroin overdose at the age of 38 in 1985 that was eerily foretold in Lou Reed's popular song "Walk on the Wild Side" in the following verse, "...Jackie is just speeding away - Thought she was James Dean for a day... then I guess she had to crash, Valium would have helped that bash." As revealed in the documentary *Superstar in a Housedress* (2004), Curtis was receiving a blow-job from a woman when she died in what was 'her' first heterosexual liaison, which is assuredly an ironic and biting way for a drag-queen to croak. Even though Holly Woodlawn gave up on the fabulous life of an actress in 1979, thereupon cutting her hair and becoming a butch busboy after moving back home to Miami with her parents in the process, she would go on to play cameo roles in films like *Twin Falls Idaho* (1999) and as herself in the documentary *Jack Smith and the Destruction of Atlantis* (2006). Although *Women in Revolt* may not offer a strong argument for the equality nor superiority of the fairer sex, the brief and tragic lives of two of three of its anatomically-male stars makes for a worthy argument that – relatively speaking – biological females may in fact be stronger than the typical tranny. Of course, as the estrogen-deprived lesbo reporter at the conclusion of the film states, "The people want filth" and – thankfully – *Women in Revolt* is overflowing with it.

-Ty E

FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN

Paul Morrissey (1973)

Admittedly, although I personally prefer *Blood for Dracula* aka Andy Warhol's *Dracula* to its companion *Space-Vision 3D monster flick spoof Flesh for Frankenstein* aka Andy Warhol's *Frankenstein*, I find both films to be especially enthralling and entertaining as campy anti-tributes to two classic horror stories. Like *Blood for Dracula*, *Flesh for Frankenstein* – a work that is like an unruly marriage between William Castle and early John Waters, except more sophisticated and 'conservative' – is a twist on the iconic story it lampoons with a potent political subtext making up an integral part of the film, but instead of focusing on 'communism-for-dummies' like Morrissey's morose yet mirthful vampire flick, his mischievously magnetic tale of *Modern Prometheus* focuses on the racial obsessions of National Socialism, except with a Serbian spin. Married to his sexually promiscuous sister Baroness Katrin Frankenstein (Monique van Vooren), Baron von Frankenstein (Udo Kier in one of his most memorable performances) is a hyper-intellectual, inbred and all but impotent man (although he has somehow sired two children) who has substituted sex for emotionally sterile science, and sexual reproduction with corpse reanimation. Determined to build a super race of undead slaves of Serbian stock – who he believes are the direct descendents of the ancient Greeks – Baron Frankenstein will stop at nothing to achieve his goal, even if it means having to kill, dismember, and rebuild the bodies of sexually virile peasants in the process, but his sinister plans run amok when he picks the wrong working-class hero as his specimen. Insistent on finding an *Übermensch* of a male with an immaculate Serbian *nasum* and rampantly heterosexual demeanor; or as he states "a man who wants to make love to anything," because Dr. Frankenstein believes these sort of men make for the most loyal of slaves, things don't go exactly as planned when he decides to utilize the body of an anomalous Serbian peasant named Sacha (Srdjan Zelenovic) who aspires to live a life of celibacy in a monastery. Like *Blood for Dracula*, *Flesh for Frankenstein* is a work that obsessively focuses on the degenerate, spoiled blood of the morally and physically declining European aristocracy. In stark contrast to the aesthetically and thematically sterile genre films of British Hammer horror – formulaic works Paul Morrissey has made nil qualms about recognizing his detestation for – *Flesh for Frankenstein* brings life and new blood to a classic yet outmoded classic horror tale that is often seemingly lifeless when directed by less ardent filmic artists.

Somewhat surprisingly, *Blood for Dracula* and *Flesh for Frankenstein* were shot back-to-back in a mere seven days without anything resembling a completed script, as Paul Morrissey even went on to admit to an AFI audience that, "I think the secretary (Pat Hackett) made up most of the dialogue," which is quite remarkable considering the relative coherence of the film's story when compared

FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN

to the director's previous gritty, realist pseudo-cinéma vérité efforts like *Flesh* (1968) and *Trash* (1970). Morrissey made abundant room for changes to the script for *Flesh for Frankenstein*, stating, "Each night I'd think of what further absurdity might logically follow from where I began," and indeed, the film is undoubtedly the most batty and campy, yet strangely refined retelling of Mary Shelley's iconic story to date, even making Mel Brooks' parody *Young Frankenstein* (1974) seem prosaic and even hopelessly childish. As with *Blood for Dracula*, *Flesh for Frankenstein* features Joe Dallesandro as a proletarian partisan (Nicholas, the stableboy) who uncovers the perturbing and perverted plot of a debauched aristocrat (both times played by Udo Kier) who is more interested in the blood and guts of nubile young women than the tender, wet glory between their legs. In one of the most memorable lines in *Flesh for Frankenstein*, Baron von Frankenstein states to his socially inept assistant Otto (Arno Juerging), "To know death, Otto, you have to fuck life – in the gall bladder," in a hilarious and memorable scene that Paul Morrissey meant as a parody of a line from Italian commie auteur Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972); a film that the Warhol survivor was not particularly fond of, describing it as, "the worst kind of soap opera dressed up with these pretentious allusions, its self-proclaimed importance." Indeed, one of the main reasons why both *Flesh for Frankenstein* and *Blood for Dracula* have aged so gracefully over the years is due to the films' lack of odious ostentations. That being said, despite its innately perverted persuasion and absurdist gross-out imagery, *Flesh for Frankenstein* is clearly the work of a cultured man who understands the conventions of the genre and story he is spoofing that he is like Dr. Frankenstein himself, reassembling the pieces of the tale as a mad scientist auteur and resurrecting a wholly new and preposterously grotesque cinematic monster with a life of its own. My only complaint with *Flesh for Frankenstein* is that I will probably never get to see the film as it was meant to be seen: in gall bladder fucking 3D, where it brings the horror off the screen... and into your lap!

Featuring reproduction paintings by German Symbolist/Art Nouveau painter Franz von Stuck, who Adolf Hitler was notably a fan of (once even comparing his mother's eyes to one of the painter's renderings of Medusa's possessed orbs), and general Jugendstil inspired set design, *Flesh for Frankenstein*, like its brother film *Blood for Dracula*, is as classy and charming as horror comedies get, so it was only natural for audacious auteur Paul Morrissey to take his art and interest in German kultur one step further with the straight arthouse flick *Beethoven's Nephew* (1985). Although an admirable piece of celluloid art in itself, with *Beethoven's Nephew* it feels like there is a void within the film due to its lack of Morrissey's unmistakable, idiosyncratic humor. As Morrissey has mentioned himself, it seems that comical films last well past their expiration date, hence why *Flesh for Frankenstein* and *Blood for Dracula* both inspired nervous yet loud laughter after all of these years. Although seemingly one dimensional

in theme to the uninitiated viewer, *Flesh for Frankenstein* is a clever and canny cinematic concoction that chronicles the fall of Europa's aristocracy via the generational declension of a single German family. With a baron father who can only find sexual satisfaction by masturbating with a scalpel and a baroness mother who will fuck anything that moves, including a reactivated Serbian corpse, it is no surprise that the adolescent Frankenstein children display discernible homicidal pathologies as they play, hence why *Flesh for Frankenstein* concludes with a hint that they will lead a more sadistic, monstrous, and intrinsically anti-human future than their inbred parents. That being said, as much as I typically loathe sequels, I would love to see Morrissey's take on James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), but something tells me the world will never see the birth of such of a celluloid monster. With the European monster films, both Paul Morrissey and Joe Dallesandro would finally detach themselves from the celebrity of pop-art beast Andy Warhol and spark fruitful careers in their own right (not that their work with Warhol was not of their own making); the former directing films in the old world (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Beethoven's Nephew*) and Los Angeles (*Madame Wang's*) and the latter staying in Italy and starring in a variety of eclectic, if often dubbed, roles all around the continent. The two Warhol brand monster films would also mark the last time Morrissey and Dallesandro would work together and I personally cannot think of a better way to end an artistically lucrative partnership.

-Ty E

BLOOD FOR DRACULA
BLOOD FOR DRACULA

Paul Morrissey (1974)

I have always been fond of vampire films. One of the most unconventional vampire films of cinema history is Paul Morrissey's *Blood For Dracula*. The film is also known as Andy Warhol's *Dracula* despite the fact that Warhol had nothing to do with the film artistically (like most of his ventures). Unlike Paul Morrissey's under appreciated "flesh trilogy" *Blood for Dracula* seems to have an actual budget and even set design. Like Morrissey's "flesh trilogy," *Blood for Dracula* is essentially an auteur piece. God bless Paul Morrissey for making two brilliant "horror comedies" in the culturally rich country of Italy.

Blood for Dracula opens with Dracula (played by a young Udo Kier) putting on some ridiculously gothic makeup. Dracula even decides that he needs to put black paint in his hair so that all those that seem him know that he is a tragic figure. After all, Dracula is a member of the archaic and dying European aristocracy. He tells people that he is "the last of his kind" while speaking in a depressing yet accepting tone. Dracula can't even find a virgin girl for blood in the newly degenerate Italy.

The rival of Dracula is a young peasant and handyman named Mario played by the infamous Joe Dallesandro. Mario is a self proclaimed Marxist idealist who has plans of destroying both the aristocracy and petty Bourgeoisie. Mario feels that he shouldn't have to work so that others don't have to. Mario is firmly against the natural order of class distinction. After screwing a sluttish Bourgeoisie girl, he rants about revolution. Mario even has an "iron & sickle" hanging over his bed. Marxism has become Mario's reasoning so that he can rape and pillage those that have more than him. Somehow this peasant learned how to read and Karl Marx has showed Mario the light. When he encounters the decaying aristocrat Dracula, contempt fills Mario's spiteful heart. The written lies of Karl Marx has convinced Mario that he is "owed" something. This sort of mentality resulted in around 65 million people dead in the Soviet Union alone.

With *Blood for Dracula*, Paul Morrissey portrays the death of Europe and western civilization via classic horror story. The half civilized worker (or as Marxist's say "proletarian") has become the liberator of humanity. The weakening aristocracy is finally exterminated by the angry little "worker." Out of all the anticommunist filmmakers, Paul Morrissey executes his message best. What other director could perfectly execute a satire of Marxist revolutionary mass murdering mindset? Paul Morrissey, always a minimalist, put more thought into his films than money.

Dracula suffers from the poisoning of "bad blood" various times throughout *Blood for Dracula*. The assumed "virgin" girls in the film have already been defiled by a worker. I doubt I will ever see a man vomit blood with such expertise and elegance as Udo Kier in *Blood for Dracula*. In film, Joe Dallesandro also

probably gives his greatest cinematic performance. Holocaust survivor and child molester Roman Polanski also makes an appearance in Blood for Dracula as a swindling peasant. How good can a film get? Blood for Dracula is mandatory viewing for serious fans of Sinema.

-Ty E

MADAME WANG'S
MADAME WANG'S

Paul Morrissey (1981)

Always the charming and progressive celluloid cynic, anti-aesthetic auteur Paul Morrissey (*Trash*, *Women in Revolt*) left virtually nil nihilistically hedonistic American counter-culture group unscathed with his conservative-meets-trash filmic odysseys, so, naturally, when the decidedly destructive punk subculture reared its ugly Mohawk-adorned head during the late-1970s/early-1980s, it was only a matter of time before the factory filmmaker deconstructed the (non)ethos of the movement, swirled it around in a maggot-infested consumerist trashcan, and documented it for the untrained, weary eyes of cretinous fashion victims to see via *Madame Wang's* (1981). Centering around an East German KGB agent named Lutz (played by German medical student Patrick Schoene in his first and only acting role) who comes to Los Angeles, CA to spark a communist revolution by recruiting "hippies, Americans who hate their country" and Jane Fonda, but eventually gets caught up in the less than dainty disorder of creative panhandling and the L.A. punk scene, *Madame Wang's* is a work that is critical of both capitalism and communism, although the former political persuasion takes the larger brunt of Morrissey's bodacious misanthropic musings and moralizing. Like virtually all of Morrissey's cinematic works, *Madame Wang's* is a keenly unkind kitsch arthouse piece that – unlike the degenerate-friendly films of fellow camp filmmaker John Waters (*Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*) – maliciously mocks the miserable army of dastardly streetwalking delinquents that it depicts. In his implementation of a tall, dark, and handsome Nordic man of foreign origins with a stoic and deadly serious demeanor, Morrissey has recognized (longer after he finished the film) that protagonist Lutz is his vague alter-ego; a sound mind trapped in a nightmarish no man's land where traditional Occidental mores have been traded in unwaveringly for nihilistic hedonism and glorified (yet undignified) self-worship that is typical of late period civilization that, in terms of theme, is not totally out of line with Federico Fellini's timely depiction of imperial Rome in his decadent epic *Satyricon* (1969). Stereotypical, aloof and robotic in movement, Lutz is to *Madame Wang's* what Arnold Schwarzenegger would later be for James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984); an unwittingly witty gardener of human weeds, but unlike the charismatic cyborg assassin, the cryptic-communist kraut commando has more of a proclivity towards brutalizing himself than sorting out leftist revolutionaries from the future. More punk than Sid Vicious' postmortem smegma, *Madame Wang's* is a thematically insane indictment of the United States with a grandiosely gritty garbage dump aesthetic that only a seasoned pessimist could love.

After jumping ship in the Pacific ocean and swimming ashore, Lutz's first duty as a would-be martyr of Marxism is to cut himself up with his only piece of luggage; a sharp switchblade. As depicted early on in *Madame Wang's*, likeable

loon Lutz is a stoic sadomasochist who is ashamed of the artificial Soviet nation state he carries out espionage for, as expressed by his irksome response and lack of answer when asked about his curious country of origin. Not long after leaving the sewage-covered seaside, Lutz encounters a pretty prostitute (listed as 'Girl in Temple' in the film's credits and played by Morrissey real-life niece Christina Indri) who introduces him to her unconventional family of lapsed hippies, gay Buddhist gurus, intolerable drag queens, and petty, pathetic criminals that live in a post-industrial wasteland of sorts where trading worthless garbage makes for the sub-subculture's most vital currency. The middle-aged members of the decisively disgusting derelict group range from odious, obese drag queens to pathetic purveyors of Eastern religions, but what they all have in common is that they are all perverted and unscrupulous ex-hippie degenerates that – being the putrid parasites they are – hope to use protagonist Lutz for some sort of unsavory ghetto-level capitalist scheme. Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting and wildly idiosyncratic characters in Madame Wang's is a fiercely flaming fag pimp/door knob fetishist (listed as 'door knob collector' in the film's credits and played by off-off-Broadway star William Edgar) with probably every discomfiting mental affliction known to man, hence his obscenely ostentatious obnoxious and his complete and utter lack of personal integrity. Not far behind in libertine lunacy is a morbidly obese ex-hippie-turned transvestite (played by Jimmy Maddox) who is the sole parent of Lutz's hooker friend and a fat and seemingly half-retarded blonde boy that is addicted to McDonald's hamburgers and flatulence. The man-mother feels that, "It's not easy being a single parent, both mother and father, to two kids," hence why s/he recruits Lutz for robbing cars and wallets, which is totally unbecoming for an East German who states, "If I have any success here it's because I have discipline" in a country where any and everything has a price and getting rich by whatever deplorable means necessary is the highest of virtues, especially for those individuals that have the honor of living in L.A. Shot in part at the Long Beach Masonic Temple, which was owned by Jack Simmons, who also acted as the financial backer of Madame Wang's upon the agreement with Morrissey that he would use his building as a set for the film. Needless to say, the iconic superstructure makes for a sneering yet strangely symbolic place for Lutz and the hobo family squat, as the currency they so perilously crave is garnished with the same masonic symbols featured in their humble abode. Although Lutz believes he, "should become something like Che Guevara," out of necessity and to hide his Stasi origin, he is forced to take up odd jobs including being a pimp, prostitute, and punk rocker. Out of all of these particularly pathetic street person trades, Lutz – a miserable yet indomitable masochistic commie twink – seems to best excel at being a punk rocker due to his preternatural propensity for slashing himself with his beloved switchblade, but this anomalous career choice doesn't last long as the East German declares he "would rather do anything – anything than this." In a scene

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echoing the erratic and musically inept stage performances of The Germs frontman Darby Crash – a fascist junky homo-punk demigod inspired by Mussolini, Nietzsche, and Spengler (hence the most probable title origin of Spheeris' *The Decline of Western Civilization*) who believed in supreme order – Lutz ironically uses his communist anti-individualistic self-discipline to mutilate himself for a shocked audience that mistakenly believes his actions to be a display of individualistic visceral punkness at Madame Wang's (played by Ziegfeld girl Virginia Bruce in her last acting role) punk rock Chinese restaurant, which was based on a real-life L.A. punk venue owned by a certain Esther Wong.

Although Madame Wang's features amateurish direction not much better than the "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" (*Flesh, Trash, Heat*), horrid and sometimes inaudible sound, and set and costume design that would probably even offend barmaid-turned-thrift store proprietor-turned-John-Waters-superstar Edith Massey (*Female Trouble*, *Love Letter to Edie*), it was indubitably a conscious decision on the director's part as his previous work *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1978) – a comedic period piece and spoof – proved Morrissey was more than just a crude creator of risqué X-rated home videos. Probably more than any of his films, Madame Wang's manages to be both an insightful reflection and relentless roast of the intrinsically valueless subculture it depicts. Featuring musically inept lesbian folksingers with totally talentless tot song lyrics like, "I like Charlotte, I think she's so swell and if you don't like her Buster you can burn in Hell," a seemingly half-retarded, Johnny Thunders-like singer that throws infantile temper tantrums while on stage, and performances from real-life punk acts like The Mentors and Phranc, the self-described "All-American Jewish Lesbian Folksinger," Madame Wang's is debauched enough for most real-life punk rockers to enjoy, even if they have no inkling to the fact that Morrissey is relentlessly poking fun at them with his film. In the end, a brainwashed Aryan of the Marxist persuasion proves to be the most individualistic nonconformist punk rocker, but rather absurdly, it was only through collectivist communist brainwashing that he was able to persevere in a foreign land where freedom and self-expression is touted as one of the country's greatest virtues. Forever tainted by capitalism and punk, Lutz leaves America with the decision that he will no longer help spark a communist revolution, declaring, "I don't care anymore, it's their problem." I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say that in Madame Wang's and virtually all of Morrissey's other cinematic works, liberalism, counter-culture idealism, and consumer capitalism are no less worse deleterious against one's soul than spiritual syphilis.

-Ty E

FORTY DEUCE

Paul Morrissey (1982)

Before even knowing his name while I was still a wee lad, I had a visceral, irrational, and unwavering hatred for popular Hollywood actor Kevin Bacon, but I must admit that he must be doing something right as far as acting talents are considered. As the man I love to hate, boyish Bacon makes for an especially effective villain, so naturally I was intrigued when I discovered that the relatively successful actor played an exceedingly slimy and suicidal Sicilian-American gigolo in arthouse-trash auteur Paul Morrissey's first urban NYC youth work *Forty Deuce* (1982). Based on a play of the same name penned by controversial off-Broadway playwright Alan Bowne (Beirut, Sharon and Billy) who died of AIDS related illnesses at the premature age of 44, *Forty Deuce* is a work whose author is ironically symbiotic of the sort of sometimes lethal 'free loving' libertinage that Paul Morrissey thoroughly despised and routinely ridiculed in his films. *Forty Deuce* centers around two bisexual male prostitutes who are not nearly as handsome as "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" star Joe Dallesandro thereupon making them more desperate in their struggle to earn cash via cock and coke; or as the apathetic anti-hero of the film states: "I sell dick, I sell dope, I come, I go." In *Forty Deuce*, absurdist gutter-level hilarity ensues when the two putrid protagonists of the film discover that the virginal boy they hoped to sell has accidentally overdosed on heroin, henceforth they attempt to frame a bourgeois John for the belated boy's terribly tragic death. A vivid and – some would say – vicious depiction of 42nd Street trash, *Forty Deuce*, like most of Morrissey's work, portrays the liberal inspired dead-end road of self-satisfying sex and drugs in a uniquely unsentimental and decidedly dispiriting manner. Totally withdrawn from circulation by its distributor, which I am sure now-high-profile actor Kevin Bacon is thoroughly pleased about, *Forty Deuce* – not unlike most of Morrissey's post-Warhol factory works – is nearly impossible to find.

As an audacious and ambitious auteur known for single-handedly taking on every aspect of the filmmaking process with his gritty, gutter trash pictures, Alan Bowne's play was nothing short of impressive to Morrissey, stating of the work: "I had never encountered any play or film that could even remotely be considered as anti-sex, and here was this astonishing indictment of the liberal horror." As a work of 'toilet tautology' – which Morrissey described as, "an equation of sex to the toilet," *Forty Deuce* would make for an equally gritty and curiously scatological film adaptation where sex is no more glorious of a bodily function than defecation and urination. Spending most of his free time shooting up heroin on the toilet and shooting his load into human toilets, homo-for-heroin prostitute Ricky (Kevin Bacon) is indubitably a fine fellow with his high priorities, trading his soul and sucking poles for temporary mind-altering pleasure of the highly lethal kind. Featuring some of the most disgustingly depraved and damned de-

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spicable proletarian 'street capitalists' ever captured on sickly-looking celluloid, *Forty Deuce* is a candid testament to the sordid storm of human filth that consumed 42nd Street Manhattan only three decades ago. The most apt and fitting description of all the characters featured in the film is given by a hysterical hustling Negress who states: "We all niggas, nigga." Indeed, if anyone needs evidence that the United States has its own Third World, one only needs to view *Forty Deuce*. The only exception is a bourgeois John named Mr. Roper – who is ironically yet strangely fittingly played by recently deceased conservative commentator Andrew Breitbart's father-in-law Orson Bean (*Anatomy of a Murder*, Being John Malkovich) – a snide and significantly arrogant businessman who may look at the teenage boys he blows as trash, but he has no problem fondling their flesh, even admitting, "I derive the most intense pleasure from knowing that your body is being purchased in the same way as toothpaste or a pair of shoes. It's tit for tat, kids. Our tyranny as opposed to yours," so it is only all the more hilarious when the two lead male prostitutes trick the hotshot queen into committing accidental necrophilia and attempt to frame him for the death of a young boy.

Interestingly, most of the second half of *Forty Deuce* utilizes a split-screen that was first employed by Paul Morrissey's in the Warhol collaboration *Chelsea Girls* (1966). The split-screen is especially effective in that it underscores the bodacious bamboozling of the two hustlers and the pretentious claptrap of cryto-degenerate client Mr. Roper. Needless to say, *Forty Deuce* is a much starker and less jocular work than most of Morrissey's other realist campy comedies. Indeed, Kevin Bacon may have played a sadistic sodomite of the pederast persuasion in *Sleepers* (1996) directed by Barry Levinson, a phantasmagorical rapist in Paul Verhoeven's *Hollow Man* (2000), and a cunning child molester in Nicole Kassell's *The Woodsman* (2004), but none of these roles compare to all-encompassing filthiness of his cock-chomping, con-artist character in *Forty Deuce*. But then again, Orson Bean steals the show in the film as the posh and polished pervert character of Mr. Roper who not only lies to his bought boy toys about his reasoning for frequenting Manhattan ghettos, but ultimately lies to himself, until the moment he is carefully caressing an adolescent cadaver. That being said, I would not be surprised if Mr. Roper was designed as Paul Morrissey's filmic alter-ego because as an articulate, professionally-dressed, cultured, and conservative fellow, he is certainly the character most closest to his physical and mental likeliness out any film he as ever made. With a befitting score by Cameroonian musician Manu Dibango and a racially diverse cast of drug-dealing derelicts including a Puerto Rican that speaks Yiddish and racist blacks that make drug deals with white fags, *Forty Deuce* is an engulfing exposition of the multicultural sewer that is archetypically liberal New York City.

-Ty E

MIXED BLOOD

Paul Morrissey (1984)

One of the reasons that I thoroughly enjoy gritty urban crime films is because I often times find them to be gregariously gratifying and unintentionally hilarious. When I found out about Paul Morrissey's black comedy crime flick *Mixed Blood* – a work chock-full of politically incorrect racial tensions and multicultural sociopathic juvenile career criminals – I was fairly intrigued, as I have come to love the cynical gritty realism of the director's Warhol produced Trash trilogy (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) and his politically satiric *Monster* films (*Flesh for Frankenstein*, *Blood for Dracula*). After watching *Mixed Blood*, I must admit that I was more than delighted by the flick, as I surely can't remember the last time I "laughed out loud" while watching a film. Despite wickedly laughing throughout my viewing of *Mixed Blood*, I still wonder whether or not all of the somewhat ambiguous scenes featured in the film were intended to be capricious (I assume a little of both). After all, *Mixed Blood* features a variety of ethnic actors with heavy accents and nonexistent (yet charming) acting skills. The plot of *Mixed Blood* centers around two rival ethnic gangs – one composed of recently arrived underage illegal aliens (people described by the mainstream media as "undocumented workers") from Brazil and another composed of vicious Puerto Ricans – who battle for criminal (drug trafficking) control of New York City's Lower East Side. The Brazilian gang is led by Rita La Punta (aka the bitch), a middle-aged Mary Magdalene-like figure who controls the gang of ruthless and underage gangsters. Although she acts as a pseudo-mother to the boys of her gang, she also has a bastard biological son (whose father is unknown) named Thiago; a boy that is clearly mentally retarded (an unflattering fact Rita openly admits and regrets). The actress that plays Rita, Marilia Pera, is probably best known in the cinema world for her performance in Hector Babenco's *Pixote* (1981). When one of Rita's beloved adolescent hoods meets a grizzly death via being thrown off a roof by members of the Puerto Rican gang, she realizes that she must wage a war against the rival (but somewhat) similar race. As Rita dramatically states in *Mixed Blood*, "There Will be Blood."

If there ever was a crime film that dramatized the murderous dangers of urban race-mixing, it is the fittingly titled film *Mixed Blood*. Anti-heroine Rita has no reservations when she states the following regarding miscegenation, "Never mix blood." Over a quarter-century after *Mixed Blood* was released, racial tensions have only intensified for the worst in the (especially urban) Occidental world. Of course, Rita is not the only character featured in the film that despises other races, as every race is attacked by virtually every character in *Mixed Blood*; with whites being described as "whitefaces" and musical Puerto Ricans being labeled as "Spanish Negroes." In Paul Morrissey's Andy Warhol produced Trash Trilogy, the admittedly conservative director lampooned the absurdity of the hedonistic

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“counter-culture” revolution, drug addiction, free sex, and “women’s liberation.” In *Mixed Blood*, a film created over a decade after the final chapter in the original trilogy was released, Morrissey unabashedly foretells the crime-ridden virtual hellhole that would bloom like an army of weeds in a flower bed as a result of third world immigration (a direct result of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act proposed by hypocritical Zionist politician Emmanuel Celler and heavily supported by degenerate senator Ted Kennedy) and nihilistic race-mixing. The unspoken fact that multiculturalism advocates don’t dare ever mention – which is a central theme to *Mixed Blood* – is that so called minorities almost exclusively become victims of crime and terror from fellow minorities, and not from the distinctly (or so Hollywood tells us) and mystically evil white man. Of course, one must accept this largely forgotten biblical truth: for the life of every creature is its blood (Leviticus 17:14) – whether the collectively neurotic and illiberally-liberal sick members of white American and Northern/Western Europe acknowledge it or not – as virtually all other races and life forms do. In the urban nightmare contained within *Mixed Blood*, race-hate is in its most primitive, yet hilarious form. One of the funniest scenes occurs early on in the film when a black female cop approaches a drug dealer who has a line of buyers that crowd a city block. After inquiring about his blatantly illegal activities, the dealer retorts to the cop, “What the hell are you talking about you nigger bitch.....dyke.” Not long after, the cop visits Rita who also calls her a dyke. Naturally, racial and sexual discrimination are not the only things that make *Mixed Blood* an uproarious piece of black comedy crime cinema. One of the funniest characters in the film is Thiago – Rita’s delightfully dimwitted son – a young man who repeatedly states variations of the following when he is under the suspicion that a person is poking fun at him, “Don’t make fun of me, I don’t like it.” When it comes to unconventionally charismatic criminal speds, *Mixed Blood* generously delivers.

Like most crime-related films, *Mixed Blood* features a couple alphas and a bunch of betas, but of a totally unorthodox sort. Clearly, the greatest alpha featured in the film is Rita – a woman who leads a gang of underage boys from the comfort of her decrepit apartment; the intellectual epicenter of her crudely, but carefully assembled criminal enterprise. Like the equally exotic Anna Magnani (*Mamma Roma*, *The Fugitive Kind*), Rita is sexually alluring despite her overused and rapidly deteriorating flesh. Obviously, being a woman that has bedded uncountable men, Rita knows how to mentally manipulate youthful boys into executing her criminal demands. Juan, an alpha in the Puerto Rican gang, controls his men in a more masculine way – establishing authority via violent verbal and physical assault. During a particularly jocular scene in *Mixed Blood*, Juan states to one of his philistine henchmen, “Who the fuck washes his hands then takes a piss? Only a no brain spick would do something like this....I’m the only that tells you how to piss.” Indeed, Juan rules with a unruly black-market iron fist, ruthlessly mutilating and murdering rival gang members just

for kicks. To say the least, *Mixed Blood* is a counter-revolutionary vintage crime film with a certain authenticity that you won't find in Hollywood. Additionally, *Mixed Blood* is a wonderfully zany work that celebrates multiculturalism in a most honest way by valiantly portraying the true colors of a color-clashing urban dystopia. Instead of offering silly hope like the repulsively sentimental work *Crash* (2004), *Mixed Blood* condemns multiculturalism (the word itself being an oxymoron) and its culture-destroying tendencies (The failure of the USSR and Yugoslavia have proven this). Like Paul Morrissey's previous films, *Mixed Blood* is more relevant today than when it was originally released. Unlike your typical Hollywood crime, *Mixed Blood* neglects to romanticize the urban proletarian criminal world, but, instead, shows it for what it is; a group of uneducated individuals who irrationally see crime as the only way to survive. The film also features John Leguizamo's first credited film role, thus foreshadowing his fairly successful acting career in Hollywood crime films. Equipped with a complimentary and highly festive soundtrack, *Mixed Blood* is a truly vibrant (despite the ultra-realistic gritty anti-aesthetic used by Morrissey) and uncompromising black comedy crime drama that is a fine anti-tribute to the third-worldization of the United States. I will end this review with some words of wisdom from Rita, "You must always do what your mother says."

-Ty E

BEETHOVEN'S NEPHEW
BEETHOVEN'S NEPHEW

Paul Morrissey (1985)

Without a doubt, *Beethoven's Nephew* (1985) aka *Le neveu de Beethoven* is the most stoically serious and professionally produced film ever directed by iconoclastic Roman Catholic and self-described conservative auteur Paul Morrissey (*Flesh*, *Madame Wang's*) – a 'counter-revolutionary' filmmaker whose talents only increased and whose films became all the more personal the more he moved away from his ex-collaborator Andy Warhol. A French-West German co-production that was, quite inexplicably, co-penned by talented French-German actor Mathieu Carrière (*Young Törless*, *Malina*), who also stars in the film in a more minor role, *Beethoven's Nephew*, not unsurprisingly, is oftentimes compared to the big budget, Academy Award winning Hollywood film *Amadeus* (1984) directed by Miloš Forman, yet despite having a much lower budget work and being a work that is barely recognized in the United States, Morrissey's film goes to much greater extremes in giving a damning and demystifying depiction of the great German composer and his curious relationship with his nephew, so it is no surprise that it ultimately caused many modern day krauts to be sour, or as the director stated himself, "Beethoven was pure Molière, a character of lunacy and exaggeration, not the Shakespearean hero that the Germans now pretend. That was widely known during his lifetime." Indeed, if one were to judge the perturbing portrayal of the seemingly megalomaniac of a maestro in *Beethoven's Nephew*, it is easy to see how the rapist/murderer anti-hero Alex from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) was able to find a kindred spirit in the music of Beethoven. Utilizing Jacques Brenner's 1957 fictional memoir of Karl van Beethoven – a work largely rooted in fact that portrays the composer's nephew as a helpless victim of his famous uncle – but especially the groundbreaking work *Beethoven's Nephew* aka *Il Nipote di Beethoven* (1972) written by Italian author Luigi Magnani and excerpts from the composer's own personal letters, *Beethoven's Nephew* portrays the composer as crazy a crank of a cripple whose talent for music is totally transcended by his obsession with his young nephew and hatred of the boy's ostensibly whorish mother. A man who was apparently described by his own brother as having an, "almost total incapacity to have normal relationships with other people," and who charged his patrons to watch him hedonistically gorge himself as if he were the bastard great-great-great-great-grandfather of Hermann Göring, the mad maestro is tragicomedically depicted in *Beethoven's Nephew* – one of only a handful of films that manages to portray the unflattering connection between pure genius and sheer madness as a sort of idiot savant pathology – as a possessive pervert who does not think twice about physically manhandling his nephew away when the lad has his member intertwined in a voluptuous housemaid's meat-curtain.

As a lifelong listener of the Teutonic composer himself, director Paul Mor-

rissey has hypothesized that the new emotionalism in Beethoven's late quartets and the choral finale of his Ninth Symphony was the feeling of passionate love he had developed for his nephew and this is communicated aesthetically in the film in the following fashion as described by the auteur himself, "When Beethoven looks at his nephew, his emotions are not spoken but heard on the soundtrack, the emotions of the idealized music." Of course, as an aberrant authoritarian of sorts, Beethoven would also inevitably drive his nephew to attempt committing suicide by shooting himself in the head. As one learns while watching Beethoven's Nephew, Beethoven (Wolfgang Reichmann of Werner Herzog's *Signs of Life* (1968) aka *Lebenszeichen* and *Woyzeck* (1979)) completely and utterly hated his sister-in-law Johanna (Serge Gainsbourg 's one-time muse Jane Birkin), so when his brother Carl died of tuberculosis, he managed to take custody of his nephew Karl (Dietmar Prinz in his first and sole movie role) after a protracted legal battle against his brother's wanton widow, who, in part, was denied custody due to her dubious morals (she has an illegitimate child with another man and was a convicted thief) and lack of financial support. In Beethoven's Nephew, the maestro wastes no time in coddling and constantly looking after his proto-twink nephew, which rather annoys the lad as he has no life of his own and certainly does not have the talent to be the great musical composer his uncle wants him to be. Even when Karl manages to move away and go to private school, the unhinged uncle follows him along and even walks in on the boy and his friends engaging in smutty sex-capades in their dorm room, which naturally enrages Beethoven, but he gets all the more huffy and puffy when he realizes that his nephew is regularly seeing his mother – a high-class harlot who fornicates with men not much older than her son. Aside from his nephew, who the composer wastes a small fortune on to pay for his school and hyper-hedonistic lifestyle, Beethoven treats everyone around him as objects and obstacles to be manipulated for his own personal gain, and eventually he begins writing new music just so he can earn money from his patrons and spend it on things related to Karl's lavish lifestyle. When Karl falls hopelessly in love with an older woman named Leonore (Nathalie Baye of François Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) and the hit AIDS-themed TV movie *And the Band Played On* (1993)) who is a wealthy artist, the boy has finally managed to find a way to get away from his softcore sadist of an uncle, so Beethoven plots to irrevocably destroy the relationship. Finally fed up with the way his Uncle has dominated his personal life and has cock-blocked him innumerable times, Karl attempts suicide via bullet to the head, but miraculously survives. Using his uncle's weakness for him against him, Karl inevitably has the last laugh...even if he never laughs. In Paul Morrissey's mind, as well as apparently many Germans around the maestro's time, it was, quite ironically, nephew Karl who led to Herr Ludwig van Beethoven's worldly demise.

BEETHOVEN'S NEPHEW

While many viewers have described *Beethoven's Nephew* as a homophile work portraying Beethoven as an incestuous pederast of sorts who has a hysterical hatred of women, including *The New York Times* star critic Vincent Canby, who described the film as being, "full of homoerotic nuances," Paul Morrissey has vehemently denied what he sees as outright outrageous allegations. In fact, concerning the dubious dynamic of the one-sided relationship by the marvelously moonstruck maestro and his mostly emotionally monotone nephew in *Beethoven's Nephew*, Morrissey stated, "It's inconceivable to think that Beethoven wanted sex with his nephew. That's a "liberal," Freudian idea. I never thought this. There was no eroticism. What he seemed to want was what Frankenstein and Dracula wanted, control and possession. That's a much more powerful and confusing emotion. And although he never said it, maybe some kind of affection. His concerns with his nephew had more to do with his nephew's maturing, the reality that he was growing up and would no longer be under his control...Wanting to control life makes him more sympathetic to me, a conservative, because remember, to me sex is the stupid religion of the "liberal." In none of my films has sex ever been anything that anybody ever "wanted." To read Beethoven's motives as sexual is to swallow the pervasive liberal lie that sex is not just a positive value but the entire meaning of life on the planet! When you believe that lie, naturally it follows that all behavior gravitates towards that goal."

Indeed, considering virtually all of Paul Morrissey's films feature some sort of handsome, if not sadly strung-out, hunk in some form of undress, it would be easy to see that the filmmaker was living vicariously through the authoritarian anti-hero of *Beethoven's Nephew* – a darkly comical and romantic cinematic work featuring what is one of the most unhealthy uncle-nephew relationships ever captured on celluloid, yet executed with the sort of restrained subtlety of the silent era. Like the other famous Morrissey of Irish stock, many believe that Paul Morrissey has led a life of (Catholic) celibacy and his former collaborator Andy Warhol seems to have thought the same thing, writing, "The running question was, did he [Paul Morrissey] have a sex life or not? Everyone who'd ever known him insisted that he did absolutely nothing, and all his hours seemed accounted for, but still Paul was an attractive guy, so people constantly asked, 'What does he do? He must do something...,' yet no one seems to know what that "something" was as we only have his films as evidence and if something thing can be said about *Beethoven's Nephew*, it is that the director must really love Beethoven's music and looks nostalgically on the good old days of Occidental high kultur and when men taught their sons (or, in this case, nephews) responsibility and discipline, like staying away from salacious young ladies with syphilis. Even though Morrissey portrayed Beethoven as a belligerent and boorish bastard of a man in *Beethoven's Nephew*, the auteur ultimately, "was always entirely sympathetic to Beethoven. I feel sorry for him because he was the victim of his own selfishness.

I like the story because there's such a connection between his music and his life. I was struck by the fact that Beethoven never pontificated about his music. He'd say it was the best and then leave it at that. That was the one little area in which he was secure. Otherwise he was blind, helpless, a little like Mister Magoo. This makes him very human, even sympathetic." Indeed, one cannot help respect a man who is best known for depicting impotent hunk hustlers in a heroin haze and being the 'Warhol Factory Filmmaker,' yet finding a kindred spirit of sorts in Beethoven. In our contemporary zeitgeist where the popular nasty noise that is played on MTV and Hollywood movies that are written by proud pimps, crack-heads and dope fiends, clownish would-be-Whores of Babylon, enfant terrible twinkies that sound like Negress soul singers, braindead pothead metalheads who drown their musical ineptitude in distortion, white trash wiggers who confuse spastic illiteracy with poetry, and so-called country singers who throw up if they ever smelled a steaming cow turd, Beethoven's Nephew makes for a classy work of cinema that reminds one that there was actually a time when a person could actually have 'too much concern' for the welfare of their kin.

-Ty E

SPIKE OF BENSONHURST
SPIKE OF BENSONHURST

Paul Morrissey (1988)

Admittedly, I have a soft-spot for Italian-American greaseballs, especially when they are as ill-tempered, self-centered, and idiotic yet charismatic as the character Spike Fumo (played by Roman-like Sasha Mitchell; a man of Russian-Jewish descent) featuring in the Paul Morrissey film *Spike of Bensonhurst* (1988) aka *The Mafia Kid*. On top of being blessed with mostly Italian blood (he is $\frac{1}{4}$ Irish), Spike has a mother who is dabbling in lipstick lesbianism and an inmate father who is taking the rap for local mafia boss Baldo Cacetti (Ernest Borgnine), who apparently brutalized some hookers that were really male cops in drag. An ambitious young man who dreams of being a professional boxer, even if the fights are rigged, Spike fancies and inevitably impregnates blonde-haired Italian princess Angel (Maria Pitillo); the daughter of Mr. Cacetti. Although the small-time Mafioso likes Spike as an individual, he sees the aspiring boxer as nowhere good enough for his daughter, thus banishing the soon-to-be-father of his grandson to Red Hook, Brooklyn; a rough Puerto Rican neighborhood full of impoverishment, gutter-level criminality, and mafia-inflicted vice. Undoubtedly, Paul Morrissey's most accessible and conventional film to date, even if it is positively politically incorrect, *Spike of Bensonhurst* – which is like *Rocky* (1976) meets *Baby It's You* (1983) meets *Mixed Blood* (1985) in its urban multicultural melodrama, except with a more sophisticated sociopolitical subtext – should at least be as popular as John Hughes' films like *The Breakfast Club* (1985) and *Pretty in Pink* (1986) as it is certainly a 1980s cult comedy of the highest caliber, yet is only championed by those individuals that are blessed enough to have seen it. More confident, slightly more intelligent, and assuredly more ambitious than *Rocky Balboa*, Spike Fumo takes crime boss Baldo Cacetti's advice: "You're Italian... You gotta go out in the world and make something of yourself." Unfortunately for Mr. Cacetti, Spike's personal aspirations are bad for the family; both criminal and personal.

The Cosa Nostra neighborhood of "Little Italy" Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in *Spike of Bensonhurst* is not exactly same as it was during the early 20th century when it was a haven for less than prosperous Italian and Jewish immigrants. Indeed, the Dago district is still full of Italians and a couple Jews, but they now are an integral part of mainstream America, especially when it comes to left-wing political influence. Even the local Mafioso Baldo Cacetti admits he runs a respectable front, remarking to *Spike of Bensonhurst* protagonist Spike, "Hey, I even support the liberal politicians... All that garbage." It is mentioned in the film that one of the mafia boys even goes to a Live Aid to heighten the absurdity of bourgeois 'boldness, bluster, swagger' in this extraordinary wop-exploitation flick. When protagonist Spike is exiled by Mr. Cacetti to the Puerto Rican neighborhood of Red Hook – a place of pandemic poverty, hungry children, and

low-life drug dealers – he is transported to virtual old school Little Italy where a new generation of foreign tan people hope to achieve the American dream just like his Sicilian ancestors did only a couple generations ago. The Puerto Ricans are the ‘new Guineas’ and egomaniacal, machoman Spike sees it as his duty to civilize them by teaching the block’s children the ‘Brooklyn alphabet’ (“Fuckin’ A, Fuckin’ B, Fuckin’ C...”) and by beating up dawdler drug dealers, which inevitably catches the attention of Mr. Cacetti, who finances and profits from the drug operation in the neighborhood. Almost immediately upon relocating to Red Hook, Spike moves in with rival boxer Bandana’s (Rick Aviles) family, which is actively promoted by the grande dame (Antonia Rey) of the household, who cites great Italian heroes like “Caesar” and “Mussolini” as a sign of her deep admiration for the Italian people. Bandana’s mother is not the only one that likes narcissistic newcomer Spike because soon the Italian stallion has impregnated the daughter of the house, India (Talisa Soto), who was named in tribute to brown-people-liberator Mahatma Gandhi. Saucy Spike makes no qualms about expressing his sense of superiority to Bandana and his people, stating quite shamelessly, “seeing as I come from a more advanced culture as yourself, I want to tell you that we Italians would never let ourselves become the victims of these politicians and good damned drug dealers like you people. Forget about it!” Despite attending a Bar Mitzvah for the son of corrupt congressman Bernstein that is full of Mafioso’s, little does Spike realize, that it is his goombah crime boss relatives and family friends who are pumping drugs into the neighborhoods and in bed with (both literally and figuratively) the corrupt liberal politicians that he so thoroughly and vocally despises. In the end, hardheaded Spike, the son of a “Sicilian lowlife,” is able to reconcile the differences from his less than esteeming blood relations (his own mother calls him a “Pussy. Asshole. Fuck..”) and his adopted, less economically advantaged yet more loving Puerto Rican family.

Ultimately, Spike of Bensonhurst is an atypically ‘light-hearted’ and sometimes sentimental comedy by the almost exclusively sardonic Paul Morrissey with a positive message about the power and importance of family, even if they happen to be of the criminally-inclined and verbally/physically abusive kind. That being said, Spike of Bensonhurst is no less socio-politically astute than Morrissey’s previous works, but even more so as expressed by the film’s clever depiction of mafia-politician and Italian-Jewish political ties, thus beating Hollywood at their own cryptic-comedy game (e.g. American Pie series, Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle). Featuring a colorful cast of characters that would foretell the spoiled Guido cretinism as depicted by the real-life dumbass Dagos of the pathetically popular MTV reality show Jersey Shore (2009-present), Spike of Bensonhurst – although a satirically jovial work with rather ridiculous scenarios – offers a very true portrait of an America (criminal) political force that is not often seen by the WASP majority. Personally, as someone who attended college with the sort of overindulged, monetarily posh yet culturally uncultivated

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Italian-Americans featured in Spike of Bensonhurst and that are akin to puerile pretty boy Spike, are only a kickback away from total barbarism, but that is what the American dream is all about; going from rags to riches by any means possible – be it violent criminality or being a big enough putz to actually work hard for your earnings. Instead of starting a career pirating hardcore pornography as suggested by his Sicilian spiritual father Mr. Cacetti, Spike opts for a more honest, hardworking, blue-collar career as New York's finest; a true blue man in blue. I like to think that the character of Spike – a man who brought order to America's urban third world – holds a special place in Paul Morrissey's iron Roman Catholic heart.

-Ty E

VERUSCHKA: A LIFE FOR THE CAMERA

Paul Morrissey (2005)

Like a lot of guys, I have never understood the appeal of runaway and fashion models as I am not attracted to women that are only a couple inches shorter than me and lack an ass and tits (indeed, I can proudly say without exaggeration that my girlfriend has a delectably large and shapely derrière that goes perfectly with her equally immaculate true hourglass shape and nice and firm busty bosoms), but then again I am not a fag or a woman like most people that work in and/or follow fashion. Indeed, I am convinced that the homos that run the fashion industry are interested in tall beam-shaped women because they remind them of awkward and gawky teenage boys, but I digress. I must admit that there is at least one famous supermodel that I respect and my interest in her is completely accidental and purely the result of the fact that she just happened to be in a number of classic European arthouse works that I have seen over the past decade or so. Indeed, Prussian-born supermodel turned actress turned artist Veruschka von Lehndorff (real name 'Vera Gottliebe Anna Gräfin von Lehndorff-Steinort') has lived a totally unbelievable stranger-than-fiction life that is more melodramatic than the starkest and most tragic of Sirkian and Harlanian melodramas, or as the almost lethally lanky and alien-like diva stated herself, "My story seems like a horrible fairytale." Indeed, this is one of the many confessions that Veruschka makes in the documentary *Veruschka - Die Inszenierung (m)eines Körpers* (2005) aka *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera*, which is notable for being the first film that lapsed Warhol superstar auteur Paul Morrissey had directed in almost twenty years since he released his classic Guido comedy *Spike of Bensonhurst* (1988) starring Hebraic philistine Sasha Mitchell (the filmmaker would also direct the impossible-to-find feature *News from Nowhere* (2010) five years later after the release of the doc). Co-directed by the eponymous star's friend and sometimes photographer Bernd Böhm, the doc tells the uniquely unbelievable story about how Veruschka went from a homeless aristocrat interned in a concentration camp at the age of five after her Count father was executed for his involvement as a resistance fighter connected to the 20 July 1944 plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler to becoming arguably the most famous and prolific supermodel in all of human history. Although I cannot say that I was all that surprised to learn these things as someone that has seen her esoterically autobiographical work *Veruschka - poesia di una donna* (1971) directed by her then-boyfriend Franco Rubartelli and her pleasantly preposterous performance in drag as the titular character in Ulrike Ottinger's *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, Morrissey's particularly provocative collage-like doc—a film that is notable for featuring excerpts taken straight from new restored 35mm prints of Rubartelli's *Veruschka* and Ottinger's *Dorian Gray*, as well as various other insanely rare cinematic works and

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documents—reveals Veruschka to be a haunted and guilt-ridden woman who finds it to be quite therapeutic to hide behind various self-created personas and who is still just a “timid little girl” who has yet to get over the brutal murder of the father that she barely got to know. Indeed, Veruschka might be an insanely famous and wealthy supermodel who still models despite being well over three times the age of the average model, but she is also a barren woman who, unlike her sisters, never got married or had children and seems to suffer from a perennial state of loneliness that no amount of fame or fortune could compensate for. As the doc ultimately demonstrates, Veruschka is androgynous Nordic Aryan beauty at its most tragically and malignantly melancholy and forlorn and I would argue that, in terms of her background as someone whose aristocratic father was executed by the Nazis and strikingly statuesque yet perennially sad appearance, she is symbolic of the present state of Germany, which has become a fatherless Fatherland.

As revealed at the beginning of *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera*, Veruschka had graced over 800 magazine covers by 1970, but the last thing the supermodel ever thought about herself was that she was beautiful as she has dealt with self-loathing ever since she was a young child. Indeed, by the time she was a teen, Veruschka was extremely self-conscious about her inordinately tall and lanky frame and especially large feet and dreamed of looking like her sister Marie Eleanore “Nona,” who would eventually marry Richard Wagner’s great-grandson Wieland Wagner. Ironically, she was a chubby baby, or as she states of herself in the doc, “I was the second child, a chubby Caucasian baby in a palace, the only time in my life that I was really fat.” Veruschka was born on 14 May 1939 in Steinort in East Prussia at a 6,000-acre castle estate that had been in her old aristocratic family for centuries (although the baroque castle was built in 1689, the family had owned the land since the year 1400). Somewhat bizarrely, while her father was secretly working with the resistance, Nazi bigwig Joachim von Ribbentrop would be regularly hanging around Veruschka’s family castle where he would screen Nazi propaganda films and take propaganda photos with the supermodel and her siblings. In fact, Uncle Adolf’s headquarters, the Wolf’s Lair, was nearby Veruschka’s family castle just through the Masurian woods. Like many aristocrats that had originally supported National Socialism, Veruschka’s father eventually realized that the regime was run by mad men after seeing Jewish kids get liquidated on the Eastern Front and finding his complaints fell on deaf ears after complaining to a fellow Prussian aristocrat, field marshal Fedor von Bock, who was no fan of Hitler himself. Ultimately, Veruschka’s father stood trial before “the horrible Roland Freisler” and was sentenced to death and executed on September 18th 1944 at Plötzensee Prison where thousands of other members of the resistance were also executed. To add insult to injury, Veruschka’s mother was sent the bill for her husband’s execution. Due to her uniquely unpleasant childhood, Veruschka reflects regarding her early years of childhood innocence,

"I remember mostly the unpleasant, the idyllic I only know from photographs, where I laugh and seem happy on a swing with my father." As Veruschka explains regarding how the tragic death of her father impacted her for the rest of her life, "My father was one of thousands who lost their lives in the Resistance. The childish concept that I was to blame for the demise of my father befell me early and contributed much to the episodes of depression later."

While Veruschka's mother was imprisoned after her husband's execution and even members of her extended family were sent to concentration camps, all the family members survived and were reunited after the war, though they were left homeless and completely destitute. Naturally, the Nazis confiscated the family estate, which was soon overrun and taken over by the Soviets, who were notorious for deriving a special sense of sadistic glee when it came to stealing and destroying the property and possessions of the German aristocracy (while the von Lehndorff castle still stands today, it is more or less in ruins like much of former German territory in Eastern Europe). With her family left both penniless and homeless and lacking a patriarch (which is most certainly highly detrimental to any child), Veruschka ended up moving all around Germany while staying with various different family members, thus she ended up attending no less than thirteen different schools during her childhood that ranged from a small one-room schoolhouse to a Waldorf Institute. While she had an interest in dance, Veruschka's dream was to become a painter and, to the slight chagrin of her monetary-minded mother, she attended art school, but it was not long before she began being approached by photographers and began appearing in various magazines. Undoubtedly, Veruschka soon began to develop a sort of compensatory love and affection for modeling that her own real-life lacked as indicated by her remark, "A photo shoot is like a love triangle of the photographer, the camera and me. I imagine the camera to be a lover I am intensely flirting with." The first major photographer Veruschka worked with was Hollywood filmmaker Arthur Penn's brother Irving Penn, who was responsible for shooting her first cover for the American version of *Vogue* magazine. Naturally, the model was rather flattered when Salvador Dalí took a strong interest in her in the early 1960s and unwittingly taught her to view her body as a work of art when he worked with her. After appearing as herself in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), Veruschka's popularity completely blew up in the mainstream yellow press and she soon had many nicknames, including the "Naked Countess" in Germany and "Übermensch," "Frauleinwunder" and "Unucklabella" and abroad. Despite becoming rich and famous, Veruschka's blueblood family found her career choice to be "Really quite cheap" and "close to being a prostitute" because being a model was no way for any true noble woman to live.

As Veruschka explains regarding how her international fame began to negatively affect her psyche, "The problem starts, when you realize what it means to be a model. It concerns one to be such a fantasy figure that fools the peo-

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ple. Suddenly you are always expected to be perfect. People want to adore you and don't accept that you have weaknesses. Here lies the vicious circle." Over the years, Veruschka suffered various deep depressions and mental breakdowns, even attempting suicide and being brought to a mental institution in a strait-jacket at one point. Undoubtedly, Veruschka has a rather pessimistic and even morbid view of fashion and modeling as expressed in her remark, "Fashion and death are closely related, because fashion is made from death. Whatever today is fashion will be gone tomorrow. It happens every year and for a model it is not different in the fashion game. They come and go, every few years all the faces change." Luckily for Veruschka, her modeling career has still yet to end even though she is literally elderly. Assumedly as a result of some irrational guilt revolving around her tragic childhood, Veruschka also began to believe that she was "evil" because she believed she was culpable for "seducing" people with her work. Despite her rather delusional and neurotic view of herself, Veruschka does seem to be conscious of her greatest aesthetic strength as indicated by her rather accurate remark, "My melancholy expression is my trademark... a decadent sadness in the face almost always." Of course, the supermodel eventually got tired of modeling and decided that she wanted to cultivate herself into a serious and respectable artist even though it seemed impossible for a woman of her particular profession.

Indubitably, the fact that Veruschka had the gall to star in films and stage plays directed by German-Jewish lesbian avant-garde filmmaker Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*) in drag for next to nil money is more than enough evidence to demonstrate that she was truly serious about becoming a legitimate actress and artist, as appearing in such works, especially while dressed like a man, could only besmirch her seemingly unblemished career as an individual that was regarded by many as the most beautiful woman in the world. Indeed, in Ottinger's delightfully deranged dystopian epic *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, Veruschka portrays a new sort of postmodern Dorian Gray who degenerates into a debauched gangster of the mass murdering sort as a result of becoming a popular celebrity and international playboy who is 'created' and eventually 'ruined' by an overtly evil media dictator of sorts with the fitting name Dr. Mabuse as portrayed by French diva Delphine Seyrig. Veruschka would also portray decadent proto-fascist poet Gabriele D'Annunzio in Ottinger's 1983 theatrical staging of Elfriede Jelinek's play *Clara S.* Arguably, Veruschka would become most artistically prolific when she hooked up with photographer Holger Trülzsch and began using her body as a canvas and turned herself into a sort of "living sculpture." Indeed, Veruschka would spend 10-12 hours a day just to paint her unclad body for photo shoots where she would camouflage herself in her surroundings to the point of blending in almost immaculately with everything from rocks to dilapidated wooden doors to dead trees. Apparently, blending into her surroundings and 'disappearing' was quite therapeutic for Ver-

uschka, or as she explains, “We are horrified by it but for me impermanence is not horrible. It is rather liberating.” Notably, during the doc Veruschka proudly reads Susan Sontag’s description of her work with Trülzsch, which is described as reflecting, “...a desire to punish the self, dissolve the self into the world...to be stripped naked...to petrify the body and become matter.” Indeed, it seems the beautiful, rich, glamorous, and famous Veruschka would love nothing more than to disappear into oblivion.

Ever since the 2000s, Veruschka has been spending much of her time living in New York City where she apparently hangs out under the Brooklyn Bridge and creates art with people who have no idea who she really is, which she finds quite liberating. In fact, Veruschka directed a short film under the bridge entitled *Buddha Bum* and *Burning City* about hobos, who she describes as having a special affinity with. Probably due to the fact that she feels a kinship with him because they were both homeless aristocrats, Veruschka also developed an obsession with Buddha, stating during the doc, “We can all end up on the street in no time at all. Buddha was an aristocrat who became a beggar by choice.” Indeed, it almost seems as if Veruschka feels guilty over the fact that she is now wealthy after experiencing an impoverished childhood. It also seems that the supermodel has become disillusioned, as wealth (she was making \$10,000 a day when she was at her peak!) did not help to fill the void she felt as she probably hoped it would, but instead made her feel all the more detached from life and other people. Of course, as a woman that says things like, “What fascinates me about transformation is the possibility...to change one’s skin, the illusion that one is detached from the self,” it is quite clear that Veruschka is a woman that feels comfortable portraying any and every other person (and animal or inanimate object!) aside from herself. Indeed, as part of her curious “Veruschka’s Noble Gangstas” photo shoot, the supermodel unequivocally proves that she is better at pantomiming the appearances and mannerisms of low-class negro criminals than moronic white rappers like Ruff Raff and other racially schizophrenic untermensch scum.

Rather fittingly, *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera* concludes with still photos of the eponymous subject’s father, mother, and herself as a child as it emphasizes the fact that the model is indubitably the tragically pulchritudinous person she is today as a direct result of her entire life being completely destroyed when she was only five when her daddy was executed and the entire family fortune was lost. Notably, Veruschka does not make a single reference to her love life or why she never opted to get married or have kids, but I certainly do not doubt that it is a direct result of the internal pain she was exposed to as a child as a girl who loses her father at such a critical age is bound to have troubled relationships with men when she grows up. It should be noted that gay icon and pornographer Peter Berlin (whose real name was ‘Armin Hagen Freiherr von Hoyningen-Huene’) came from a similar background to Veruschka as an aristocrat whose father was

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killed in the Second World War and whose family lost their estate and entire fortune. Of course, Berlin ended up just as lonely and screwed up as Veruschka as a gay man with no heirs and only memories of vain and narcissistic glories as a homo icon and pornographer. Undoubtedly both Veruschka and Berlin's tragic yet high-profile lives act as sort of allegories for the death of old Europa as fallen sons and daughters of the Teutonic nobility that were forced to make their livings on their appearances instead of living great lives as leaders of Europe. Instead, Germany is now ruled and governed by the same sort of largely degenerate and psychopathic democratic whore politicians that make up American politics.

I am not at all surprised that Veruschka has a morbid view of fashion and the visual arts in general, as she is well aware of the fact that her father's execution via hanging on piano wire attached to a meat hook was actually filmed for Hitler's viewing pleasure. Near the beginning of *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera*, the supermodel mentions how she somewhat recently finally visited the location of her father's execution where she almost instantly suffered a blackout as she felt a sort of ominous and foreboding force in the atmosphere. Since her father used to take her to a lake to collect stones as a child, Veruschka developed a lifelong obsession with rocks and stones that is quite prominent in her personal paintings and photography. In fact, Franco Rubartelli's *Veruschka - poesia di una donna* (1971) begins with the supermodel's carefully painted face completely camouflaged amongst various stones. Personally, I found *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera* exceedingly enjoyable as it confirmed many of my suspicions about Veruschka as someone that is a fan of her films with Rubartelli and Ottinger, which are works that gave me a feeling that the supermodel was a morbidly melancholic and weltschmerz-racked lost soul of the conspicuously accursed sort who, somewhat paradoxically, resents her fame just as much as she wallows in it. Of course, the doc also convinced me that Veruschka has probably come closer to any woman in human history in terms of transforming her body into a genuine work of art, which is certainly no small accomplishment considering that virtually all members of the fairer sex spend a good portion of their lives looking at themselves in mirrors and experimenting with makeup and fashion. Indeed, Veruschka may be a fallen member of the Prussian nobility, but there is no mistaking her blueblood pedigree, even when she is in blackface drag as an American negro gangster. While I consider myself one of Paul Morrissey's greatest fans, I have to admit that I consider Veruschka to be the true auteur of *Veruschka: A Life for the Camera*, as all the film's potency and charisma comes from the supermodel, whose particularly penetrating presence haunts the viewer long after the film is over. Of course, Morrissey has always had a talent for finding and directing strikingly attractive and preternaturally charismatic people for his films and it is no different with his documentary, which more or less unwittingly depicts the moral and cultural decline of the Occident from the perspective of a woman who is, quite symbolically, post-WWII Germany's most internationally

famous aristocrat. Indeed, we certainly live in strange times when an elderly yet nonetheless still beautiful Prussian noblewoman sports blackface and pretends to be a young crotch-grabbing American negro thug.

-Ty E

FOREIGNERS OUT! SCHLINGENSIEFS CONTAINER
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Paul Poet (2002)

Probably the most socially and meta-politically active filmmaker who has ever lived, eternal enfant terrible auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensiefel started his own labor union, political party (Chance 2000, Vote for Yourself), TV show shows (both real and imaginary), art action projects (one of which at the Documenta X exhibition in Kassel, Germany got him arrested for posting a sign that read “Kill Helmut Kohl!”), and even staged his own cancer experience (with the ‘ready made’ opera *Mea culpa*), but undoubtedly one of his most interesting public stunts was setting up a satirical Big Brother-like art project/television show titled *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* aka *Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefel's Container* in 2000 where he put twelve nonwhite asylum seekers in a mini makeshift concentration camp and members of the audience could vote who they wanted to be deported during his “Please Love Austria—First European Coalition Week” quasi-carny campaign. Showcased during the *Wiener Festwochen* (Vienna Festival) in an area next to a bourgeois Viennese opera that is frequented by art connoisseurs and tourists, Schlingensiefel set up the terribly trash show as a form of active protest and counter-agit-prop against the election of extreme-right politician Jörg Haider, then-leader of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), into the National Council of Austria. As a leader who made no lie of his disdain for foreigners and leaders of Austria’s Jewish community, as well as man who was vocally nostalgic for National Socialism and a friend/financial benefactor of certain bigwig Arab dictators, Jörg Haider was not your typical cosmopolitan globalist, prostitute-like politician; he inspired sanctions brought against his charming country by fourteen member nations of the European Union, and Western countries also temporarily relieved their ambassadors in protest, even inciting then-U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright – an American Jewess with a kosher bone to pick – to publically announce, “We are deeply concerned about the Freedom Party’s entry into the Austrian government...a party that does not clearly distance itself from the atrocities of the Nazi era and the politics of hate.” In the delightfully deranged documentary *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* (2002) directed by Paul Poet (*Empire Me: New Worlds are Happening!*), one gets to experience the realer-than-reality-TV flagrant furor of political philistines of both the left and right as they are antagonized by the always spirited and sardonic Schlingensiefel as he bodaciously blows smoke out of his trusty red bullhorn. Featuring post-game interviews with cultural critics, academics, members of the FPÖ, and – most importantly – Schlingensiefel himself, *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* makes for a socio-politically insightful work of postmodern vaudeville insanity – Big Brother Nazi Style!

As Schlingensiefel explains in the documentary, he got the idea for modern ‘concentration camp containers’ for *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container*

around the time he directed his absurdist action flick *Terror 2000 - Intensivstation Deutschland* (1994); a work that features crowded *ausländer untermensch* in what seems like the inside of cattle cars. Throughout the documentary *Schlingensiefel* antagonizes and ultimately confuses the audiences crowded around the containers, proclaimed that Austria is the, “Land of the Nazis. Land of the fascist. Here is Nazi central.” As he explains in one of the post-show interviews for *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container*, he concurs that, “In some aspects this venture was swinish to the highest degree.” Indeed, whatever aberrant auteur filmmaker’s main objective with satirical campaign for “Foreigners Out—Artists against Human Rights,” he certainly managed to bring out the worst in people on both ends of the pseudo-dichotomous political spectrum. While inspiring hypocritical bleeding heart left-wingers to cry, “Foreigners In! Kick out the Krauts,” *Schlingensiefel* also managed to inspire joy and nostalgia in elderly old school Austrian National Socialists, even allowing a feeble old man – who can barely hold the bullhorn – to declare that all foreigners must be killed. As an academic explains in *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container*, *Schlingensiefel* utilized a form of social criticism originated by ‘Austrian H.L. Mencken’ Karl Kraus where one need not comment to articulate a criticism, but instead merely cite what you criticize ‘as-is’ in the right context, thus highlighting the absurdity of their political mantras and causing them to figuratively hang themselves with their own rhetoric in the process. Controversial Austrian author and Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek (*Wonderful, Wonderful Times, Lust*) also lent her support to *Schlingensiefel*’s sarcastic social experiment, writing a childish puppet show for the foreigners to perform for adoring audiences. Like virtually any great modern Austrian film, actor/director Paulus Manker (*Schmutz aka Dirt, Weininger's Last Night*) makes an appearance in *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* as a guest speaker. Ultimately the genius of *Schlingensiefel*’s “Please Love Austria” campaign is getting people out of their houses into the streets like the good ol’ days of street fights between National Socialist and Communist groups during the 1920s/1930s. Unfortunately, one of the most vehement and violent people in *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* is a middle-aged woman whose blatantly aroused nipples are poking out of her shirt as she verbally assaults *Schlingensiefel* to a most vindictive degree, as if she is receiving some sort of much needed sexual release. Needless to say, Austria is starving for some modern brownshirts.

In the end, *Schlingensiefel* concluded that *Foreigners out! Schlingensiefel's Container* was at least a partial flop due to what he described as the failure of “well-meaning leftist activists” to actually take action. *Schlingensiefel* also criticizes a speech by American theatre director Peter Sellars – a typically exceedingly effeminate left-winger who delivers an idiotically sentimental and impotent speech – for mentioning the ‘need’ for containers in NYC and Los Angeles, but not actually taking the initiative to setup such a gallant public spectacle. A female

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member of Schlingensief's crew also complains that passive, opportunistic left-wingers used Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container as a petty propaganda forum, thereupon diluting the objective of the TV show: bringing attention to the 'neo-nazi' political policies of Jörg Haider and the Freedom Party of Austria. Since the release of Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container, both Christoph Schlingensief and Jörg Haider have died, thus leaving a vast void in the German/Austrian media and public sphere. Schlingensief's antics in Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container were forever immortalized in popular Austrian crime-thriller *Silentium* (2004) directed by Wolfgang Murnberger where he plays himself as a wacky and intemperate director of oddball yet politically-charged plays. Whatever your political persuasion, one can learn a lot from Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container and Schlingensief's 'active-art' antics in general, as there is no doubt that it takes a certain type of integrity to get docile Westerners off their couch and into the street. That being said, maybe it's about time for David Duke to start an Occupy movement.

-Ty E

ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN

Paul Sabella (1996) Animated children's classic? or a film completely hidden by its outer shell to be realized for what it is? All Dogs Go To Heaven is an animated film about a dog named Charlie who had been framed for murder and was put on death row. Already not a film for kids. He then breaks out to meet up with his old partner-in-crime Carface. Note the antagonist. After meeting up at his old casino, he realizes it is rigged and takes up his share of the profits. Lifetime friend Itchy hears about Charlie's planned murder and tries to save him but it is too late. Charlie was murdered by this neo-gangster and was sent to Heaven. All Dogs Go To Heaven you see? Because unlike humans and their foul nature, a dog is incapable of committing an atrocious act upon the world. After a musical number involving the infallibility of god in a Dali inspired Heaven, Charlie steals back his watch (His life) and winds the clock back, proving god wrong and thrusting him back into the world. He surprises Itchy and plots to kill Carface. He stumbles upon a kidnapped orphan girl named Ann-Marie and brings her along due to her amazing ability to speak to animals. Using her sense to his advantage, he finds out the winners of races and places massive bets winning enough money to open his own bar. Many adventures await this gloomy trio in this animated film from hell. Now what makes this movie so inappropriate? There are many facets of this which prove to be not understood by kids but if grown up upon, could alter a sense of mind. To start off, this is a groundbreaking animated film. One simple reason. It takes the stereotype of an animated film being only for children and destroys it. This film is more of a neo-noir film with hints of surrealism and a satirical look at divinity in all forms. That, and its featuring of a homosexual singing alligator. Without all the subliminal content, the film is increasingly violent and nihilistic. Featuring scenes of murder, torture, and heavy scenes of smoking and intoxication.

Director Don Bluth really did a good job capturing the feel of the slums in this film. The quality of life seems so slow. It's very bleak and hard to keep a high spirit when you are constantly reminded of the poverty even for animals. Not only featuring an incredible heaven, but showing a terrifying hell. This is one of the most creepy scenes in an animated film. Comparable to the Satan scene in The Adventures Of Mark Twain. Not since the early Coffin Joe films has hell been captured vividly enough to terrify viewers. All Dogs Go To Heaven is a noir classic with enough violence and undertones to entertain any age group. This deserves the title of "Classic" and should be shown to your kids just to fuck them up a little bit.

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HARDCORE
HARDCORE

Paul Schrader (1979)

Long before flaming homo Hebrew Joel Schumacher (*Falling Down*, *The Lost Boys*) expressed his fantasy of seeing Nicholas Cage and Joaquin Phoenix in a quasi-homoerotic relationship in his sleazy crime-thriller *8mm* (1999)—the story of a private investigator who delves deep in the underworld of snuff films—screenwriter turned film auteur Paul Schrader (*Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, *The Comfort of Strangers*) directed *Hardcore* (1979), the almost gratuitously sleazy yet surprisingly spiritual celluloid tale of an extremely religious Calvinist businessman who enters the unhinged underworld of pornos, prostitutes, pimps, and snuff films in search of his missing daughter who was last seen in an amateur porn film with a twinkish homo hustler. A work rather similar to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), a work penned by Schrader, in its depiction of a sexually repressed outsider of the exceedingly lonely sort who enters a savage urban underworld with the noble intention of saving an underage girl from further moral and sexual degradation, *Hardcore* is assuredly one of the few and uncompromising films of its time in its relatively honest and politically incorrect depiction of the sort of degeneration of the body and soul that has plagued the West ever since the advent of the counter-culture movements and the sexual revolution, which guaranteed personal freedom of the self-indulgent and hedonist sort, but at the price of one's ancestral faith. Directed by a lapsed member of the Calvinist Christian Reformed Church who did not see his first movie until he was 17-years-old due to his rather strict and repressed upbringing, *Hardcore* also does not exactly give a flattering depiction of the religious community it portrays, so much so that the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan proclaimed that Schrader's work gave an "unfavorable depiction of middle America." More than anything, however, *Hardcore* demonstrates how impotent and ineffective religion is today in the face of a secular society addicted to sex and self-gratification of the needlessly and heedlessly nihilistic sort. Starring 'all-American' actor George C. Scott (Patton, Dr. Strangelove), a fellow who hated writer/director Paul Schrader so much that he threatened to quit the film and made the then-novice director promise he would never direct a film again (thankfully, he decided to break that promise), *Hardcore* is probably the only film ever made to demonstrate that sex is considered rather worthless and shallow for both stern Calvinists and debauched prostitutes.

Jake Van Dorn (George C. Scott) is a rather repressed yet successful divorced businessman of the Calvinist faith who works and prays hard, but has a hard time expressing emotions to his darling teenage daughter Kristen (Ilah Davis), who he alone raised. When Kristen disappears without a trace on a seemingly harmless church-sponsored trip to California, Jake wastes no time in hiring a private investigator named Andy Mast (Peter Boyle) after the police prove to be

rather worthless in their search. Naturally, Jake becomes quite disgusted with Maſt's vulgarity, but the real sickening icing on the decadent cake comes when the private investigator turns up a gritty 8mm amateur porn flick entitled "Slaves of Love" featuring the Calvinist businessman's daughter in a variety of compromised sexual positions with a blond fag that looks like an anorexic version of Peter Berlin. Rather absurdly, Maſt has Jake unwitting view the porn flick with his little girl, which inspires the Calvinist to cry out, "Turn it off! Turn if off! TURN IT OFF!" while in a ſtate of macabre metaphysical torture. Naturally, Jake assumes his good conservative daughter was kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery of sorts and that she did not merely runaway as the police and Maſt have insinuated, so he begins to dig deep into the world of a degenerate subculture where sex, sins, and souls are sold. When Jake catches his perverted P.I. Maſt messing around with a less than pretty porn ſtar, he fires his horribly horny ass and makes his way to Los Angeles, California to pose as a pornography producer in the Los Angeles Free Press so as to find better leads to the whereabouts of his daughter, hoping to run into the blond boy that boned her. Under the false pretense of auditioning young men for a fake porno film, Jake eventually runs into the blonde twink, a fairy fellow named Jism Jim, who banged his daughter for a couple bucks in the porn film and proceeds to brutally beat the little twink bitch, but not before getting information regarding Kristen (who he eloquently describes as "one crazy freaking bitch") and the man who made the film. With the information he receives from Jism, Jake is led to a sassy porno actress/hooker named Niki (Season Hubley), who the Calvinist pays a large weekly sum to travel with him and help find his daughter in San Diego where she might be hanging around as the lecherous lady has a number of seedy underworld connections. Rather ſtrangely, Niki and Jake become friendly with each other, largely because the Calvinist is the firſt man she has met who does not want to screw her and because he finds it easy to admit things to her that he could never say to Kristen, including the touching ſubject of his divorce. Through a degenerate fellow named Tod (Gary Graham) that Niki knows, Jake is lead to a ſiniſter mes-tizo named Ratan (Marc Alaimo) who deals in snuff films, which the Calvinist has the unfortunate opportunity to view for a large lump sum, thus confirming his suspicions regarding the lunatic of a Latino's dubious character. Ultimately, Kristen is found with Ratan and Jake has no problem blowing the beaner away when he finally catches him but Maſt, who has been hired by the Calvinist's brother (who felt Jake might be a danger to himself and others because he is an "angry, unhappy man"), does the killing. To Jake's surprise, he learns that his daughter ran away under her own free will, admitting to her father, "I'm with people who love me now. You robbed my life." Rather magically, Kristen comes around and agrees to come home with daddy, and Hardcore concludes in a half-positive fashion, though the father-daughter relationship is certainly going to need some work.

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Undoubtedly one of Paul Schrader's best films, *Hardcore* was also a rather personal work for the Dutch-American auteur as he based the protagonist of the film on his own father, a rather strict Calvinist who obviously had a deep and arguably deleterious influence on his son who, as his films testify to, seems to suffer from an unhealthy amount of guilt. As the protagonist Jake Van Dorn mentions in *Hardcore*, Calvinists believe in the theological doctrine of "Total Depravity," which teaches that as a consequence of the Fall of Man, every person is enslaved to the service of sin. Undoubtedly in *Hardcore* and *Taxi Driver*, as well as a number of other Schrader penned/directed films, it is interesting to note that the protagonist enters a virtual hell on earth where sin is a virtual currency and it is up to the protagonist to dig through the human slime and save a character from a doomed life of sinning. Interestingly, Jake Van Dorn's daughter runs away largely because of her father's repressive, sin-free religious nature, but it is also his deep commitment to Calvinism and the belief that he is going to heaven that gives him the seemingly superhuman strength to beat up homo hustlers, sadomasochistic pimps, and snuff producers. Whether one wants to admit it or not, most people are too weak to control their natural impulses and curiosity and need something like religion in their life to refrain 'sinning' and *Hardcore* certainly makes that point, but not without the criticism that with religion comes repression and a detachment from the 'mainstream,' especially in a relatively cosmopolitan country like America where homosexuality, sexual promiscuity, miscegenation, cross-dressing, and drug use are actively promoted by television and Hollywood. Indeed, what makes *Hardcore* a 'hardcore' film, especially as a Hollywood production, is that it exposes the fact that the root of degeneracy in America is a lack a serious traditional religiousness, especially among young whites in cities. As the grandson of a Dutchman who was a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, I doubt there will ever be a point in my life where I could ween myself off movies, especially like those in the anti-Hollywood tradition of *Hardcore*, a virtual celluloid gospel for the degenerate postmodern age.

-Ty E

CAT PEOPLE

Paul Schrader (1982)

When he was at the height of his fame, cocaine addiction, and flagrant homophilia, screenwriter turned auteur filmmaker Paul Schrader (*American Gigolo*, *The Canyons*)—a lapsed member of the Dutch Reformed Church who did not see his first movie until he was 17-years-old because his extremely religious Calvinist parents forbid it (notably, after the filmmaker and his brother Leonard became established in Hollywood, their mother wrote them a letter reading, “Father and I will miss you in heaven.”)—began work on what would ultimately be his biggest and most elaborate studio film, *Cat People* (1982), which he mainly decided to make as a means to maintain his artistically fruitful friendship with gay Italian production designer Ferdinando Scarfiotti, who was largely responsible for the distinct look of the director’s first big success *American Gigolo* (1980) starring Richard Gere. Indeed, as revealed in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998) by Peter Biskind, “Schrader was working hard and playing hard. He became very much a part of the gay party scene, which he had been flirting with since TAXI DRIVER days in 1975 [...] People like Schrader were attracted to it because they understood there was something religious in the intertwining of sex, death, and ecstasy.” Of course, Scarfiotti—a cultivated man with an aristocratic demeanor who treated his sets with a preternatural seriousness, like he was Michelangelo working on the Sistine Chapel—was one of these extremely chic sod party boys and Schrader gave him free reign over the *Cat People* set, even attempting to include an inter-title at the beginning of the flick reading “A film by Paul Schrader and Ferdinando Scarfiotti,” but ultimately being denied the request by the studio (since Scarfiotti was not part of the relevant union at the time, he had to be credited as a ‘Visual Consultant,’ even though he was in charge of every single set piece and the overall look of the entire film). Schrader had good reason to kiss Scarfiotti’s gay ass, as he was the production designer of Bernardo Bertolucci’s *Il conformista* (1970) aka *The Conformist*, which was one of the filmmaker’s favorite films and greatest influences at the time, or as he stated himself, “You looked at Bertolucci, it was just like he took Godard and Antonioni, put them in bed together, held a gun to their heads, and said, ‘You guys fuck or I’ll shoot you.’” Despite being intended as an revisionist remake of the classic 1942 Val Lewton/Jacques Tourneur production of the same name and his first film that he did not actually write, *Cat People* would ironically eventually become a fairly personal project for Schrader for various reasons, not least of all because he was fucking star Nastassja Kinski at the time he made it.

Barely even qualifying as a remake of the 1942 film (in fact, Schrader later expressed regret that they did not change the title of the film, as he felt critics had judged him harshly by comparing Tourneur’s film to his when they barely have anything in common), the film was heavily influenced by his philosophical

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propensity to put pussy on a pedestal, which was largely the result of his fear of the so-called fairer sex (indeed, the director has described the film as a “Dante and Beatrice story” in reference to Dante Alighieri’s “courtly love” for a Florentine woman named Beatrice Portinari who he worshipped from afar and who became a great source of inspiration for *Vita Nuova* and *The Divine Comedy*). Indeed, as is quite evident when comparing both films, Schrader did heavy uncredited reworking of Alan Ormsby’s original script, thereupon ultimately siring a semi-cryptic auteur piece where the male protagonist is more or less a stand-in for the filmmaker. While Schrader was obsessed with Kinski to the point where he planned to propose marriage to her, their relationship ended badly during the production and they eventually stopped talking on the set, though the clearly unhealthily obsessed filmmaker later followed her all the way to Paris in a desperate attempt to win her back. Of course, the young actress was not happy and when Schrader dared to corner her and some young stud that she was dating at the time, Kinski stated to the lovelorn filmmaker, “Paul, I always fuck my directors. And with you it was difficult.” Luckily, Schrader’s fetishistic Dante-esque worship of Kinski was channeled into *Cat People* where the actress naturally spends a good portion of the second half of the film baring all, including her dark-haired Teuton-polack beaver (notably, Kinski later attempted to get the beaver shots taken out of the film, arguing that they were being used against her wishes, even though she had long ago bared her bush at the ripe age of 14 in the Hammer horror flick *To the Devil a Daughter* (1976), among various other examples during her career). Considerably pissed that Kinski both dumped him and reneged on the nudity scenes, Schrader thankfully fought tooth and nail to keep these scenes intact. Indeed, while *Cat People* is not a fuck flick, it is exceptionally erotically-charged and it is hard to imagine the film without these imperative scenes where a completely unclad Kinski stalks the New Orleans bayous like a sexually insatiable beastess that is on the prowl for something to fuck and kill.

Admittedly, my recent decision to rewatch *Cat People* was largely inspired by the death of David Bowie, whose theme song “Cat People (Putting Out Fire)” act as sort of foreplay to the celluloid multiple orgasm that is Schrader’s succulently salacious piece of semi-sadomasochistic celluloid. Sort of like the *Death in Venice* of Hollywood horror (which is no surprise when one considers that Scarfiotti was the art director of Visconti’s masterful Thomas Mann adaptation), the film makes absolutely exquisite use of its truly foreboding New Orleans setting, thereupon making for a rare American film that gives the United States a truly exotic and otherworldly ancient essence that subtly underscores the fact that the largely Latin city is the culturally, racially, and spiritually mongrelized culmination of centuries of bizarre Afro-European intermingling. Indeed, the film might have a somewhat superficial and sometimes nonsensical storyline with plotholes, but that is somewhat irrelevant as the real appeal of the flick is its sort of decidedly aesthetically decadent neo-Cocteauian phantasmagoria, or as

Schrader once stated himself, "Previously, I've made films about daydreams – this is my first film about nightmares . . . It's about what goes on when the lights go out – the unconscious world inhabited by erotic fantasies, and what Cocteau calls the 'sacred monsters' . . . When you're dealing with the fantastic, you need a place where people would accept it (the myth) . . . New Orleans is one of those towns where you think almost anything can happen – and probably has!" Indeed, as *Cat People* clearly demonstrates, if you want to make an American horror film with strong atmosphere and a foreboding spirit, there is probably no better place than 'The City That Care Forgot.'

While the film is ostensibly based on the same DeWitt Bodeen short story as its 1942 namesake, *Cat People* is less a remake than a tribute to Romanticism, Symbolism, and Art Nouveau (in fact, Schrader shot a recreation of Belgian Symbolist painter Fernand Khnopff's painting "The Caress" featuring Kinski's mother Ruth Brigitte Tocki with a leopard's body, but opted to not use it in the film) and the films of great post-WWII guido auteurs like Visconti and Bertolucci. Additionally, aside from being a horror movie that, as Schrader described, "contains more skin than blood," it also probably has more in common with the Southern Gothic genre than supernatural horror. In other words, *Cat People* clearly was not made by or for horror fanboys who diddle themselves to Friday the 13th movies while sporting hockey masks, hence why it had much more success in Europe than the United States. Aside from being arguably the ultimate film for Nastassja Kinski fetishists, Schrader's flick is also probably the most elegant film ever made about zoophilia. The reluctantly supernatural yet unrepentantly sensual tale of an exotic yet terribly naive and seemingly borderline autistic beautiful young virgin of incestuous werecat stock who moves to New Orleans to be united with her long lost brother, only to become entrenched in a sort of seriously unwanted bizarre love triangle with her mentally sick sibling and a bookish yet extremely chivalrous zoo curator of the quasi-misanthropic sort who works with animals because he prefers them to people, *Cat People* is a somewhat cautionary tale about the perils of putting pussy on a pedestal, especially if said pussy is a crazy cunt of the uniquely unhinged and unpredictable sort. A horror film made for people that do not necessarily care for horror films that wallows in the dichotomous theme of the sacred and profane where Kinski does a fairly believable job portraying the ultimate archetypical virgin-whore, Schrader's film is notable for its genre in that it dares to blur the line between myths and the archaic psycho-historical roots of said myths, hence Cocteau's imperative influence.

After opening with an aesthetically pleasing ritual scene set in a fiery desert involving the 'sacrifice' of the lead female heroine's ancient female ancestor to a leopard by a group of nearly naked tribesmen covered with crude body paint (rather curiously, this people are clearly non-white), *Cat People* then flashes forward to the present day at a New Orleans airport where the female protagonist/quasi-

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anti-heroine Irena Gallier (Nastassja Kinski in a role that Bo Derek was originally intended to play) is virtually stalked all the way to a payphone by her long lost brother Paul (Malcolm McDowell), who she has not seen since they were very young children after both of their parents tragically died. Unbeknownst to Irena, her long dead parents were brother and sister and died in a dubious suicide pact of sorts that the circumstances of are never fully revealed. Also, quite unlike Paul, Irena is completely unaware of the fact that she and her brother are werewerecats and if she has sex with a man, she will transform into a black panther and will remain in that form until she kills another person. Of course, Paul is quite happy to see Irena, as he has big plans with her that mainly involve incestuous sex, lest they both be doomed to a life of perpetual murder and strange sexual dysfunction. As Irena learns upon arriving at her ancient family estate, the Galliers are watched over by a seemingly voodoo oriented negress servant named 'Female' (Ruby Dee in arguably her most unconventional and thankfully most apolitical role), who is also an orphan and who got her strange name (which is pronounced "feh-MAH-leh") after someone wrote on her birth certificate, "Child, Female" since she had no parents. While celebrating their (un)timely reunion during a sort of homecoming dinner where they eat "Female's special gumbo," Paul asks his sister if she remembers him in any way and she replies in a borderline sensual fashion, "Mmm, I used to fantasize about you...when I was in the orphanage. Well, you know, about you coming to rescue me and things. Daydreams." According to Paul, he "had the same dream," thus underscoring their innate supernatural connection as inbred werewerecats. Indeed, while she is not conscious of it yet, Irena's body is telling her to be defiled by her brother, who is determined to make his little sis his lover. Unfortunately for Paul, who gets temporary sexual release by fucking and killing dumb whores and trashy prostitutes, his sister will ultimately fall in love with a mere human, thereupon eventually leading to quite deadly consequences.

During their first night together, Paul gets so intolerably horny for his sister that he decides to seek the company of a hooker, thus resulting in unfortunate consequences for all involved. When a streetwalker arrives at a sleazy fleabag hotel to meet a john, she gets quite the surprise when she is brutally mauled by a black leopard that is hiding under a bed. As the viewer somewhat suspects, the leopard is actually Paul in animal form. Although the streetwalker survives the attack, the panther is left trapped in the hotel room and is eventually captured the next day by a zoologist/zoo curator named Oliver Yates (John Heard of C.H.U.D. (1984) and the Home Alone franchise) with the help of his female assistant/fuck-buddy Alice Perrin (Annette O'Toole of Superman III (1983) and Smallville (2001)) and some cops and imprisoned at a strange borderline Fellini-esque zoo where female secretaries do office work above cages full of dangerous animals. Although a handsome, intelligent, and seemingly physically strong fellow, Oliver is an introverted dork who spends his free time reciting

Dante and dreaming of an ideal woman that he can put on a pedestal and worship like a goddess. While his co-worker Alice—a reasonably beautiful babe with a classic Nordic physique and a fairly nice set of large firm tits—is clearly in love with him, Oliver is not quite interested in making her his serious lover, as he seems to be looking for a lady that is more exotic and enigmatic. Luckily, supernatural virgin Irena is probably the closest thing to a real-life goddess and she will soon enter Oliver's life by sheer happenstance. When Paul goes missing, Irena, who expected to be given an extensive tour of the city by her brother, goes looking for him around the French Quarter, thus eventually leading her to the zoo where she meets Oliver under awkward circumstances after running away from him after he startles her. Naturally, it is love at first sight for hopeless romantic Paul, who immediately offers Irena a job at the zoo gift shop. While everything initially goes splendid at the zoo, Irena is soon given somewhat of a shock after witnessing the black panther, who she has no clue is actually her brother, attacking and killing a fairly obnoxious zookeeper named Joe Creigh (Ed Begley, Jr. of Monte Hellman's *Cockfighter* (1974)). With a single bite, Paul-as-the-panther manages to completely dismember one of Joe's arms. Although Oliver resolves to euthanize the killer cat, he discovers it has escaped when he goes to its cage to kill it. Of course, as result of murdering Joe, Paul was able to transform back into a human and escape. As a result of witnessing his sister's budding romance with Oliver while imprisoned in the zoo, Paul is determined to deflower his little sis ASAP so that he can have the distinguished luxury of being the man who pops her cherry.

When Paul somewhat surprises Irena by randomly showing up back at the house after disappearing for days, he ignores his sister when she describes about being completely horrified as a result of witnessing Joe's brutal death and then proceeds to accuse her of wanting to jump on Oliver's cock, stating in a somewhat hostile yet nonetheless sexually-charged fashion, "You want to fuck him, don't you? You dream about fucking him. Your whole body burns. Burns all along your nerves. In your mouth, your breasts. You go wet between your legs." When Paul attempts to defile her while rationalizing his violently incestuous actions by stating, "But I'm the only one who can touch you, and you're the only one who can touch me. Don't you see we're saved together because we're the same," Irena predictably decides to flee the house and does so by instinctually doing a back-flip off a second floor building in a scene that somewhat seems like a homage to Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938). While a police officer finds Irena running down the street in a hysterical fashion and proceeds to question her, she opts to not tell him about her big brother's violently incestuous outburst. When another police officer comes by the house and his K9 dog starts barking after catching a scent, the police decide to search the home and ultimately find a large animal cage and the remains of three or four dead sluts and prostitutes, or as an inordinately stoic negro cop named Detective Brandt (Frankie Faison of the

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Hannibal Lecter franchise) tells Oliver while showing him the grisly crime scene, "I expect Gallier killed them first, possibly as part of some ritual. Then fed 'em to the leopard. We've found some others, too, over the years. Mostly prostitutes, female runaways, half-eaten, genitals torn out [...] Gallier's been in and out of psycho wards since he was 12. He's a religious fanatic." Needless to say, Oliver wants to know if Irena was in any way involved in the fetishistic murders and Detective Brandt calms some of his worries while stirring others by remarking, "We have no reason to suspect her. In fact, it looked as if he'd planned to kill her too."

With her brother Paul a wanted fugitive on the run and her servant Female imprisoned, Irena naturally accepts Oliver's invitation to move into his flat, thereupon accelerating the evolution of their initially fairly tame romance. Not long after she moves in, Oliver enthusiastically declares he plans to one day buy her a plantation and takes her on a sort of mini-vacation to a small red boathouse that he has on the bayou. While the two lovers have fun during the day while doing harmless things together like boating and crabbing, things get somewhat more intense later that night since both of them have become quite sexually frustrated as a result of the fact that Irena refuses to allow Oliver to deflower her. Of course, things get even more complicated when Oliver wakes up in the middle of the night and sees Irena screaming at him to not look at her since she is completely naked body and covered in blood. Indeed, as a result of her werecat instincts, Irena woke up in the middle of the night and decided to go hunting for prey in the form of a cute bunny rabbit that she sank her teeth into while it was still alive, even though she is a vegetarian. During the same night, Paul murders a dumb blonde named Billie (Tessa Richarde of Boaz Davidson's *The Last American Virgin* (1982)) that he met in a graveyard earlier that day after she gives him a blowjob in a hotel room. When the two lovers get back from their trip, Irena has a slight mental breakdown and expresses her doubt about her her sanity and the future of their relationship, so Oliver states to her in an intimately impassioned fashion, "Listen, Irena, I'm 34 years old. I spent most of my life looking for somebody...I even wanted to be in love with. Now that I've found you, I'm not gonna let you go. I love you." When Irena replies, "Oh, yeah? Would you love me just as much...if we, if we could never sleep together?," Oliver attempts to console her and assure her of his love for her by stating absurdly nonsensical pseudo-poetic things like, "I loved you before you were born." Unbeknownst to both Oliver and Irena, Paul while hiding in a tree above them the entire time and he listened to their entire conversation. Ultimately, Paul decides to surprise Irena by crashing through a window and then subsequently attempting to explain to her of the importance of them becoming lovers, stating in a violently despairing fashion, "Save me. Only you can stop this killing. You've got to make love with me...as brother and sister. I've searched for you for so long, from one foster home to another. We can live together as mates. Just

as our parents did. You do know that they were brother and sister, don't you? Oh yes. Make love with me and save both of us." While Paul gets a little bit rough with his sister, Irena eventually manages to escape by stabbing him in the hand with a piece of broken glass. When Oliver comes home later that night, he finds Paul there waiting for him in semi-panther form. Luckily, Alice shoots and kills Paul with a shotgun just after he transforms into a panther and attempts to maul Oliver. When Oliver later does an autopsy of the werecat, he is disturbed to find a human body inside the panther corpse. Even more curiously, after cutting open Paul's corpse, green gas oozes out and eventually evaporates both the panther and human corpse into a pool of flesh and viscera, thereupon conveniently ensuring that Oliver is unable to document the supernatural creature.

With her only living relative now dead, Irena decides to visit Female in prison to get advice about what she should do next and is ultimately given the semi-cryptic words of wisdom by the worldly spiritual negress, "Live as he [Paul] did: hidden, in jails. Never love. Pretend the world is what men think it is." Hoping to figuratively and literally flee from her truly nightmarish situation, Irena decides to flee town and buys a train ticket to Richmond, Virginia, but during the train ride she has an elaborate life-changing dream involving her dead brother Paul that fully awakens her long dormant atavistic instincts and transforms her from skittish prey into a lethally lecherous predator on the prowl. Indeed, during the otherworldly dream-sequence, Irena enters a windy transcendental desert realm with a dark orange tone where she is greeted by her brother, who is topless and declares to her in a quite proud fashion in regard to the legacy of their godly werecat heritage, "Long ago our ancestors sacrificed their children to the leopards. The souls of the children grew inside the leopards...until the leopards became human. We were gods then. We are an incestuous race. We can only make love with our own, otherwise we transform. And before we can become human again, we must kill." During the dream, Irena also meets her mother in panther form. After the dream, Irena evolves into a cruel, craven, and completely confident sexual predator and opts to travel back to New Orleans to hunt down Oliver so that she can lose her virginity and finally fully embrace her werecat birthright. Luckily for Irena, Oliver is so obsessively in love with her that he is somewhat willing to overlook certain things about her, including her primal urge to kill, especially after they fuck.

Before seeking out Oliver, Irena decides to crush the sexual competition by stalking and severely petrifying Alice, who is hopelessly in love with the male protagonist (notably, Alice's jealousy of Irena and love of Oliver is made quite clear in a scene where she states to the latter, "Her [Irena's] type will always be all right. Look, I'm not blind, Oliver. I've seen you obsessed before, [but] not like this. I even thought I'd seen you in love before. I guess that was just my vanity."). Indeed, in one of the few scenes in the film that was also in the original 1942 *Cat People*, Irena scares the shit out of Alice while she is swimming in an

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indoor swimming pool by lurking in the shadows and making bestial sounds (notably, Schrader opted to add an extra layer to Alice's vulnerability by having the character swim topless). When Irena eventually comes out and reveals herself to Alice after sadistically terrorizing her like a cat that is playing with a mouse that it is about to kill, her jealous rival loses all self-control and immediately accuses her of wanting to kill her. Of course, Irena just continues to play mind games with Alice by maintaining a gleefully sadistic smile and stating to her in a preposterously passive-aggressive fashion, "I'm sorry if I frightened you." While Alice subsequently calls Oliver and tells her about Irena's creepy behavior, the male protagonist hangs up the phone on her when his leopard lady love randomly walks in the house and begins stripping off her clothes in a provocative fashion where she more than obviously demonstrates that she is finally ready to fuck. Needless to say, Oliver experiences the erotic relief of a lifetime when he subsequently deflowers Irena after having been cock-blocked for such a long time. After the two fall asleep, Irena wakes up in the middle of the night and admires and licks blood that is dripping from her hemorrhaging de-hymened werecat cunt. Of course, not like after sampling her vaginal sanguine fluids, Irena transforms into a panther for the first time and pounces on Oliver, though her love for him stops her from slaughtering and killing him. Instead, werecat Irena flees Oliver's home and then causes a spectacle of herself by occupying a bridge where she is ultimately trapped by police. When Oliver eventually arrives at the scene, Irena jumps off the bridge and swims to land while dodging police bullets.

Naturally, Oliver immediately goes looking for Irena and is disturbed when he happens upon the mangled corpse of his elderly friend Yeatman Brewer (Emery Hollier), who she heroically killed so that she could transform back into a human. Not long after finding the dead body, Oliver is approached by Irena, who unrepentantly declares she killed Yeatman and then begs the protagonist to kill her, which he naturally refuses to do. When Oliver asks her why she did not kill him, she tells him that it is because she loves him. While stripping off her clothes, Irena then declares, "Free me. Make love to me again. I want to live with my own." Of course, Oliver enthusiastically abides, though he makes sure to tie all four of Irena's limbs to bedposts before penetrating the human pussycat's puss in a tastefully sleazy scene that is part quasi-religious ritual and part zoophilic S&M bondage scene. In a bizarre and totally unforgettably twist ending, it is casually revealed that Oliver has not only started a romance with Alice, but that he also has managed to keep Irena. Indeed, in the very last scene, Oliver is depicted gently stroking and hand-feeding a black panther at the zoo that the viewer presumes is Irena, who has been placed on a sort of perennial pedestal that arguably demonstrates that the curious male protagonist is more interested in romanticizing the idea of love than actually making love to women, henceforth underscoring auteur Schrader's somewhat 'idiosyncratic' philosophical view of

love and romance.

Ironically, despite originally being intended as an impersonal project where the auteur wanted to have the luxury of utilizing studio resources and to experiment with adapting someone else's work, *Cat People* would ultimately evolve into one of Schrader's most embarrassingly, if not somewhat cryptically, autobiographical works, albeit with a bizarre happy ending that is in stark contrast to what he actually experienced in real-life. Indeed, instead of having the grand honor of permanently keeping Nastassja Kinski imprisoned in a cage like the male protagonist in the film, Schrader was not only pathetically dumped by the actress but also heckled by then Universal Pictures executive Ned Tanen for filming various beaver shots of the intemperate Teutonic actress (as described in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, Tanen called up Schrader and said, "Listen, you fucking idiot, this girl [Kinski] is running around telling everybody you shot her crotch and you're going to put beaver shots in the middle of this movie, what the fuck are you doing?," to which the angry and vengeful lovelorn auteur apparently replied, "Oh man, she fucked me over and I'm going to fuck her, nobody's going to treat me this way. . ."). Luckily, Schrader did not have to excise the beaver shots from the film but both his career and personal life was a mess, as the film was a commercial failure and he had some serious drug problems, or as he stated himself, "My life was completely fucked up by women and drugs and my career had gone dead. The Russian roulette was the event that made it clear to me it was time to leave L.A., go to New York, and start over. So I did." Thankfully, unlike many of the other filmmakers of his generation that were associated with the New Hollywood movement, Schrader was able to get his shit together and went to Japan to direct what he has described as his masterpiece, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985), which is actually alluded to in *Cat People* (indeed, there is a shot in the film of a Mishima biography sitting on Oliver's nightstand). As Schrader would later state of the film and its importance in the context of his entire oeuvre, "It's the one I'd stand by – as a screenwriter it's *TAXI DRIVER*, but as a director it's *MISHIMA*." Somewhat ironically since Schrader once declared, "*STAR WARS* was the film that ate the heart and the soul of Hollywood. It created the big-budget comic book mentality," George Lucas was one of the executive producers on his Mishima biopic. Notably, there is actually a scene in *Cat People* where Schrader takes a snipe at Lucas and his commercialization of cinema where a couple little boys buy some *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) chewing gum from Kinski while she is working at the zoo gift shop. Of course, I am sure his film would have been more popular and profitable if Schrader had opted to release *Cat People* merchandise like Kinski sex lube and McDowell dildos, but I digress.

Notably, in the featurette *Cat People: An Intimate Portrait*, Schrader would reveal in regard to *Cat People* and its central Beatrice complex theme that he had a personal tendency to put pussies on a pedestal as a sort of therapeutic means to

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deal with his “fear of women.” Of course, no matter what women say, they never truly respect a man that treats them like an immaculate goddess that is worthy of worship, hence one of various reasons as to why Kinski grew to loathe Schrader as a woman that later admitted to him, “I always fuck my directors. And with you it was difficult.” Despite the fact that Schrader saw her as a goddess, Kinski’s quote clearly reveals that she felt that he was, at best, less than average, at least as far as fuck-buddies are concerned. Personally, one of the things I found most intriguing about the film was that Schrader attempted to do a sort of heterosexual take on Cocteau with a big budget Hollywood studio flick, which explains why it was so poorly received among filmgoers. Notably, in an interview featured in *Schrader on Schrader & Other Writings* (1990), the filmmaker would confess, “...on CAT PEOPLE the tapes I took along were BEAUTY AND THE BEAST and ORPHEUS, which are obviously nonpareil landmarks in the history of movies. There will never be another Cocteau.” Admittedly, when I first saw Schrader’s film over a decade ago, I was not all that impressed, but now I see it as a highly re-watched novelty of bizarre cocaine-addled cinematic experimentation where the seemingly disharmonious worlds of Hollywood horror trash and European arthouse reluctantly fucked and gave birth to an aesthetically majestic monster of a movie that is quite easy on the eyes. Additionally, I always appreciate a horror film where the archetypal roots of fear and eroticism are provocatively played with (as the filmmaker also stated in *Schrader on Schrader*, “The NEWSWEEK review said it was a movie for the Jung at heart, and I guess that’s pretty much what I wanted: the idea of myth and the kind of primal images that are embedded in our genes.”). Of course, Bowie’s addicting theme song and Scarfiotti’s extravagant sets alone are worth the price of admission. Indeed, as a wonderfully wanton and delightfully eclectically aesthetically decadent movie of erotic murder and mayhem that is like a popcorn flick for both Jungians and lapsed horror fiends turned arthouse fags, *Cat People* is the virtual definition of a cinematic guilty pleasure, at least if you’re lame and/or pretentious enough to feel guilty for liking it.

-Ty E

MISHIMA: A LIFE IN FOUR CHAPTERS

Paul Schrader (1985)

As someone who has always been a much better screenwriter than he ever was a film director, it was only natural that Paul Schrader (*American Gigolo*, *Patty Hearst*)—a man who was brought up in a strict Calvinist household and did not see his first movie until he was 17-years-old, thus missing the imperative emotional effect films have during those 'critical' childhood years, and ultimately developing a more 'intellectual' approach to filmmaking—would direct his greatest film about a writer, albeit one from a drastically different cultural and ethnic background. Gay, Japanese, right-wing, dandy, campy, body fetishist, unrepentant traditionalist, samurai, polymath, and a man who committed ritual suicide via seppuku after a failed military coup d'état with his private army, Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima was an extremely contradictory fellow who died at the height of his artistic and physical prowess and fulfilled his lifelong dream of leaving behind a beautiful corpse in the spirit of Italian high-Baroque painter Guido Reni's portrait of Christian martyr Saint Sebastian, while Schrader has spiritually and physically degenerated into one of the people responsible for scripting and directing some of the darkest mainstream American films of his time, including *Hardcore* (1979) and *Affliction* (1997), not to mention being the man that penned *Taxi Driver* (1976) directed by Martin Scorsese. With *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985), which was co-penned by his brother Leonard Schrader and his Japanese wife Chieko Schrader, Paul Schrader went to Japan to direct a film about a controversial figure that would ultimately never be screened in the country it was filmed in and takes place in. Initially receiving support from Mishima's widow and family, Schrader eventually lost the support when he refused to cut rather mundane gay bar scenes from the film of Mishima dancing with a fellow Dorian loving, Jap homo, thus leading to the film being indefinitely banned in the Land of the Rising Sun. Additionally, a good fraction of the budget for *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, about two million dollars, was contributed by Japanese producers, but they deny it to this very day due to the taboo circumstances revolving around the film, or as Schrader stated himself, "I moved to Japan and we had a Japanese producer who was able to raise half of the budget through his own money and from Fuji Television and Toho-Towa. Then, of course, the Japanese financiers tried to pull out at the last minute because of pressure from the widow. There was another drama involving that and the end result was that they gave us the money but claimed that they didn't. To this day, they claim that they did not finance the film." Undoubtedly, as far as I am concerned, especially in regard to staying faithful to a country's culture and language, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*—a work co-produced by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas of all people—is one of the most respectful 'Hollywood' films in its depiction of a foreign figure and peoples and were it not for

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Yukio Mishima's flagrant homosexuality upsetting the Japanese, it would probably be considered the greatest piece of cross-cultural filmmaking ever made. I guess *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* was destined for infamy in Japan after Schrader, in decidedly taboo fashion, opted to expose an unpixelated Jap bush to the Occidental world.

Beginning on the last day of Yukio Mishima's life, November 25, 1970, and ending with his ritual suicide after his failed coup for restoring order in Americanized Japan, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* tells the rest of the story of the conflicted man who sought a "Harmony of Pen and Sword" via a number of meticulously constructed minimalistic montages, including black-and-white flashbacks from his life and highly stylized depictions of excerpts from three of the Japanese writer's novels, including *Runaway Horses* (1969), *Kyoko's House* (1959), and *The Temple Of The Golden Pavilion* (1956), although a fourth novel—the innately homoerotic autobiographical work *Confessions of a Mask* (1949)—is cinematically visualized but never actually mentioned by name. Additionally, Mishima's militant nationalistic autobiographical manifesto/essay *Sun and Steel: Art, Action and Ritual Death* (1968)—an imperative work for understanding the writer's 'body fascism' and overall *Weltanschauung*—was also utilized for the film. In addition, the film finishes reenactments of Mishima's direction of his sole film *Patriotism* (1966)—a work that foreshadows his suicide—as well as depictions of the novelist's iconic homoerotic photo shoots with Japanese photographer/filmmaker Eikoh Hosoe. Starring Japanese actor Ken Ogata (*Vengeance Is Mine*, *The Pillow Book*)—a man who looks nothing like the novelist—in the role of Yukio Mishima, narration (using Mishima's actual written words) from American actor Roy Scheider (*The French Connection*, *All That Jazz*), and an iconic ethereal soundtrack from minimalist composer Philip Glass (*Koyaanisqatsi*, *The Thin Blue Line*), *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* certainly has the unmistakable feel of a work created by a racial and cultural outsider, yet one would be hardpressed to find a more seamless collaboration between Yanks and Japs. Featuring immaculate production design from Eiko Ishioka (*Closet Land*, *The Cell*), whose highly expressionistic and kaleidoscopic visualizations of novels seem to be in some sort of celluloid nirvana in between the early works of German auteuress Ulrike Ottinger (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, *Freak Orlando*) and the films of Japanese experimental Renaissance man Shūji Terayama (*Emperor Tomato Ketchup*, *Pastoral: To Die in the Country*), *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* certainly owes much of its aesthetically potency and intrigue to members of the Japanese crew, thus making it a work that never could have been contrived on a Hollywood studio lot by garish gaijin.

From the beginning of *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, it seems that Yukio Mishima has his own little heaven on earth as he lives on an almost aristocratic homestead that is surrounded by homoerotic European architecture, but as he

once wrote and is narrated in the film, “All my life I have been acutely aware of a contradiction in the very nature of my existence. For forty-five years I struggled to resolve this dilemma by writing plays and novels. The more I wrote, the more I realized mere words were not enough. So I found another form of expression.” A sickly boy since his birth, Mishima was taken in by his paternal grandmother, who had aristocratic airs because she was raised in the house of a Japanese prince and whose influence would no doubt rub-off on the novelist, and did not move back in with his immediate family until he was 12-years-old. As *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* depicts, Mishima was always an extremely oversensitive and introverted young man who had better command over words than his body. Despite developing into a muscular and statuesque samurai with his own private army, Mishima—whose father was a stern military minded man that used rather dubious parenting techniques such as holding his son under a moving train in order to desensitize him to fear—suffered the shame of being judged unfit to serve in the Second World War by a young military doctor who misdiagnosed that he had tuberculosis because he had a cold. While Mishima would later develop an affinity for ancient Japanese culture, he was largely influenced by decadent Occidental authors like Oscar Wilde, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Raymond Radiguet, so his transformation from a mere, albeit successful, wimpy writer who wrote about masturbating to ancient paintings of Christian martyrs into a master of both pen and sword was an exceedingly extreme, if not self-deceiving, one as expressed in his narration words, “My life is in many ways like that of an actor...I also wear a mask. I play a role. When he looks in the mirror, the homosexual, like the actor, sees what he fears most. The decay of the body,” and, of course, he made sure to allow himself to physically deteriorate by ultimately embracing death in a manner no less stoic than that of a kamikaze pilot.

Indubitably, the cinematic adaptations of Mishima’s novels featured in *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* are just as important, if not more important, for understanding the novelist’s character and essence as the anecdotal biographical elements from his real-life. For example, in the *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* segment, an ugly Buddhist acolyte boy afflicted with a compromising stutter becomes obsessed with the beauty of a pavilion and his irrational urge to destroy, which he inevitably does via arson, thus illustrating Mishima’s youthful fanatical aestheticism as well as pathological self-consciousness and physical weakness and the eventual destruction of his own body when it reach its peak in terms of masculine physique. In terms of Mishima’s transformation into a samurai, his nationalistic right-wing fanaticism, failed coup d’état, and final act of self-slaughter, the segment for the novel *Runaway Horses* is probably the most eerily foretelling in its resemblance to the novelist’s life as it follows a far-right reactionary trained in the samurai code who is involved in the assassination of corrupt business men (*Zaibatsu*) and eventually commits *seppuku*. An outspoken nationalist who lived by and actively promoted bushido, the code of the

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samurai, Mishima was vehemently hated by young Japanese leftists, who he saw as traitors to their own people. Mishima's attempt at a coup was sparked by his desire to restore order and protection of the Emperor of Japan (which to him was not a literal ruler, but the abstract essence of the Japanese people), so when he and members of the Tatenokai ("shield society"), his own private army, failed to get a response he wanted in restoring honor to the homeland, he committed suicide. In *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, Mishima's disillusionment with the future of Japan is made clear when he is shouted down by military men, thus it was only fitting that he, the last prominent samurai in his homeland, would famously commit seppuku, thereupon signaling the end of a period in Japanese history and the reign of modernism.

Although I would not consider myself a Yukio Mishima fanatic, I have read a number of his novels and he is certainly my favorite non-European writer, so my initial viewing of *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* was not as a total Mishima novice and I would be lying if I did not admit that Paul Schrader's biopic was much more impressive and faithful than I expected it would be, even if it is an undeniably flawed work. For one, I see nothing of the essence of Mishima in Ken Ogata, even if the everyday Joe Schmo yellow man looks indistinguishable to me, as the novelist radiated a sort of idiosyncratic charisma inherent only to the spiritual and cultural aristocracy of a nation's elite (especially for a collectivist-minded nation like Japan), hence why his work, unlike that of largely unknown Japanese literary figures, is quite popular even today outside his homeland despite his unrelenting disposition to cultural chauvinism. Judging by interviews I have viewed of Mishima, he speaks more eloquently in English than Ogata seems to speak in his native language of Japanese. Of course, it would have probably been impossible to find any actor that could permeate Mishima's idiosyncratic essence. A decadent homosexual dandy who morphed into a stoic samurai who meticulously reshaped his body by taking up weight training and a rigorous workout regimen of three sessions per week which never waned for the last 15 years of his life, Mishima was a walking contradiction as a sort of Japanese Gabriele D'Annunzio, a debauched romantic writer who also had his own private army and became a national war hero whose political and aesthetic ideas Benito Mussolini of all people ripped off. Of course, as *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* director Paul Schrader stated himself, "[Mishima] is too much of a scandal. [...] When Mishima died people said, 'Give us fifteen years and we'll tell you what we think about him,' but it's been more than fifteen years now and they still don't know what to say. Mishima has become a non-subject," thus his influence on Japan, at least culturally speaking, did not live up to D'Annunzio's legacy. Of course, as a man who wrote 34 novels, about 50 plays, about 25 books of short stories (around 200 total), at least 35 books of essays, one libretto, and directed an avant-garde film, not to mention his involvement in acting and promotion of traditional Japanese culture and theatre, Mishima's legacy as an

enduring aesthete is forever secured. For an introduction to the life and art of the last samurai, one cannot do better than viewing *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*—a work that director Paul Schrader even had to admit, “It’s the one I’d stand by – as a screenwriter it’s *Taxi Driver*, but as a director it’s *Mishima*.” Indeed, if anything, one will learn by watching *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* that Japanese culture is not just about eels squirting out of vaginal and anal orifices, mass rape, and the ‘Nordicizing’ of the Jap physique via degenerate anime.

-Ty E

THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS
THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS

Paul Schrader (1990)

While his keenly kaleidoscopic Yukio Mishima biopic *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985), as the director himself has recognized, is American auteur Paul Schrader's greatest accomplishment as a filmmaker, especially in terms of its aesthetic magnitude, I personally prefer his rather darker and mysterious works *Hardcore* (1979) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990), with the latter film being what I consider to be his most overlooked and underrated cinematic work yet which has virtually nil reputation and fan base in the United States. Rather ironically, Schrader—a man who is often regarded as a greater screenwriter than he is a filmmaker—did not pen the script for *The Comfort of Strangers*, but instead Nobel Prize-winning English playwright Harold Pinter adapted the screenplay from a 1981 book of the same name written by British novelist Ian McEwan—an author described by *The New York Times* critic John Leonard as, “one of the few English writers of fiction who belong these days to a dark Europe; he is a Samuel Beckett with some genital organization.” And, indeed, Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers* portrays a rather ominous and uncertain Europa, most specifically Venice, Italy (although the novel takes place in an unnamed city) where men no longer act like men and accept responsibility as fathers and patriarchs and where women, who have bought into feminism and can no longer rely on the strength and discipline that was a given for men of the past, have stepped up to the plate and have developed a sense of independence they never once had before, at least in terms of the Occident. Starring statuesque English sodomite Rupert Everett (*Another Country*, *Cemetery Man*) in the role of a modern weak and vain, albeit ostensibly heterosexual, man who is more concerned with his own appearance than that of the future of his relationship with his girlfriend (played by English actress Natasha Richardson) and Christopher Walken as a menacing Italian man who hates modernity and respects the patriarchal tradition, *The Comfort of Strangers* is a feverishly foreboding flick about what happens when a narcissistic proto-metrosexual Brit meets up with a Guido ‘spiritual fascist’ of sorts with a broken manhood who does not take kindly to ‘communist poofs’ and independent women with idealistic diarrhea of the mouth.

British couple Colin (Rupert Everett) and Mary (Natasha Richardson) have traveled to Venice for vacation so as to discuss the dubious future of their relationship. A nauseatingly vain man who has the audacity to admit he is jealous of his girlfriend's pulchritude, Colin is not sure if he wants to stay with Mary because she is a single mother with children from a previous relationship and he does not particularly like children as it seems it would take away attention for himself. Unbeknownst to them, a Venetian couple—a cunning and charismatic Italian-British (with a Guido father and Brit mother) man named Robert (Christopher Walken) and his Canadian wife Caroline (Helen Mirren in a surprisingly sub-

missive role)—have been watching the British couple ever since they arrived in Venice and have been taking voyeuristic pictures of Colin. One night after getting lost looking for a restaurant in Venice, Colin and Mary are approached by a stranger named Robert, who is dressed like a dapper dandy in a white suit and who is quite an articulate individual who seems to speak virtually every European language, and he brings them to his bar (although never telling the couple he owns it). A seemingly wealthy bar owner with what most people would describe as an anachronistic worldview, Robert always speaks of the greatness of the past when men were men and women were women, especially in regard to his father and grandfather. Upon first meeting Colin and Mary, Robert is asked how he met his wife Caroline, which he responds with “Let me tell you something: My father was a very big man. And all his life he wore a black mustache. When it was no longer black, he used a small brush, such as ladies use for their eyes. Mascara” and goes on a seemingly senseless spiel about how his older sisters traumatized him by covering him with make-up as a child and getting him drunk and locking him in their father’s much cherished study where he vomited and defecated everywhere, which the patriarch apparently never forgave him for. When Colin and Mary later go back to Robert’s lavishly furnished and classically stylized apartment, the Venetian would-be-alpha tells the bitchy Brit, “My father and his father understood themselves clearly... They were men... And they were proud of their sex. Women understood them too. Now, women treat men like children because they can’t take them seriously, but men, men like my father, my grandfather... women took very seriously. There was no uncertainty. No confusion.” When Colin makes a cynical comment regarding the Italian Stallion’s serious speech, Robert gives him a nice hard punch in the gut, which the ballsy beta of a Brit takes like a true bitch, pretending it never happened. Not long after, Colin and Mary join Robert and Caroline for dinner, where the gentlemanly Italian man compliments the British government and the Brit calls it “shit.” Angered by Colin’s cynical arrogance and liberal persuasion, Robert remarks, “I respect you as an Englishman but not if you are a communist poof.” Of course, as a man who pathologically snaps photos of a handsome male stranger and makes love to his wife with those same photos hanging over his bed, Robert’s actions seem to contradict his words.

As one learns whilst watching *The Comfort of Strangers*, Robert and Caroline have a somewhat unconventional sexual relationship that involves violent sadomasochism, which has left the wife partially crippled, which the little loony lady sees as a badge of honor of sorts. As Caroline proudly confesses to Mary, she enjoys the abuse her husband has given her (and “feeling like nothing”) and is quite thrilled to remain a slave in her own home at the demand of her domineering husband. Upon meeting the English couple, Caroline remarks regarding Colin’s wimpy demeanor, “Isn’t it sweet when men are shy?” as the Brit boy’s alien behavior seems like an absurd novelty when compared to the severe stern-

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ness of her husband—a man who sees it as his duty to put a woman in her place. Ultimately, cowardly 'gentle'-man Colin becomes the pretty prey of Robert and Caroline and—being a self-absorbed pansy with no predatory sense—the Englishman lacks the instincts to realize he is being drawn into a web that will lead to his premature demise. Towards the conclusion of *The Comfort of Strangers*, Robert remarks to Colin regarding a conversation with a friend, “I was telling the...that...you’re my lover and that Caroline is jealous because she likes you too,” thus playing with his prey before the kill, yet also hinting at a homosexual side that he is rather ashamed of hence why the effeminate Englishman will ultimately be the victim of his unhinged mind. Undoubtedly, Robert seems to see everything he hates about himself personified in Colin—a cowardly cynic with no strong sense of values who cares more about his appearance than his masculinity (or lack thereof)—thus explaining the Venetian ‘man’s man’ seemingly inexplicable dual hatred/fascination with the effortlessly effete Englishman. In a sense, Robert’s eventual crime against Colin towards the end of *The Comfort of Strangers* is a macabre act of mercy against a biological man with a chiseled Roman-like face and muscular body who is not mentally fit to be a man. It is only in his violent death that Colin becomes a man for the first time in his life, but also becomes the martyr of his Adonis-esque beauty, which, in a sense, was what he also dreamed of as an exceedingly vainglorious man.

A postmodern psychosexual horror flick disguised as a romantic melodrama set in paradise, *The Comfort of Strangers* is a sadistically seductive cinematic work that, like the British couple in relation to antagonist Colin, takes the viewer on an exotic and mystifying ride until it is too late and one is backed into a petrifying corner of no return. A virtual European arthouse flick as directed by a Hollywood outsider, *The Comfort of Strangers* is as good as foreigner directed films get when depicting Europa as a work that never attempts to contrive the kultur of the people it portrays, but makes it quite apparent to the viewer one is in a strange place with a rich history and historical legacy that its contemporary countrymen can no longer live up to. More importantly, *The Comfort of Strangers* is one of a handful of semi-Hollywood films that portrays the virtual death of masculinity and tradition in the Occident and does not exactly portray it as a good thing as one would expect from similarly themed works, but that probably has to do with the fact that it is an American/UK/Italian co-production as opposed to a purely Hebraic Hollywood production. Indeed, the character of Colin—the defender of patriarchy and tradition—may be a pernicious psychopath, but he is also a failed male as well as a curious perv who can only be superficially suave (and does quite an immaculate job doing it!) and obsess over the legacy of his father, the “Big Man,” and not his own legacy, while Rupert Everett’s character is a proud pansy wuss (or “communist poof”) who perishes without putting up a fight and whose girlfriend has more common sense than he does. When it comes down to it, the fact Everett’s character is gone will only

have a positive effect on his girlfriend and her children, who certainly do not need a beta girly-man who pathologically admires himself in the mirror around as a pseudo-father figure. When it comes to the death of the traditional sexes in the Occident, you will not find a more contemplative and insightful yet equally thrilling mainstream film than *The Comfort of Strangers*—a metaphysical horror flick that takes a brief look at sexual aberration in post-WWII Western man, but only leaves the viewer with questions and offers no answers.

-Ty E

LIGHT SLEEPER
LIGHT SLEEPER

Paul Schrader (1992)

It is oftentimes said that writers spend their entire lives writing the same book over and over again and of course the same has also been said of filmmakers, especially of the auteur oriented sort like Federico Fellini and Alexander Kluge, but also seemingly autistic Hollywood blockbuster whores like Steven Spielberg and Michael Bay. Undoubtedly, if any American auteur provides great evidence to this theory, it is screenwriter turned filmmaker Paul Schrader (*Cat People*, *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*), who first came to fame for penning *Taxi Driver* (1976) and would go on to direct a number of cinematic works that feel like reworkings of the screenplay for that film. Indeed, if *Hardcore* (1979) is a sort of 'Calvinist *Taxi Driver*' and *Affliction* (1997) is a 'redneck *Taxi Driver*,' Schrader's *Light Sleeper* (1992) is a 'bourgeois *Taxi Driver*,' albeit with a tad bit of *American Gigolo* (1980) thrown in for good measure (additionally, *The Walker* (2007) would be Schrader's 'dick-sucking Southern dandy American *Gigolo*' and the Scorsese/Schrader collaboration *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999) is like '*Taxi Driver* as an EMT'). Of course, in the sense that it is about a reasonably intelligent ex-drug addict who is suffering a midlife crisis, one could argue that it is the most autobiographical of Schrader's Bressonian 'a man and his room' films. In fact, as the auteur stated himself in the book *Schrader on Schrader & Other Writings* (1990) in regard to *Light Sleeper* and its relation to his other works, "Well, that form of the script is the same as the format of *TAXI DRIVER*, in that it uses pseudo-chapters rather than scene numbers, but the deeper connection comes from the fact that this is a character that I have felt comfortable with in the past and hadn't written about in some time. As to the specific moments – well, you don't want to be too self-referential, but if it works, it works, and if you're ploughing the same row ten or fifteen years on, you're going to end up with the same roots being dug up. The character of John LeTour is, in my mind, another installment of the characters of Travis Bickle in *TAXI DRIVER* and Julian Kay in *AMERICAN GIGOLO*. These characters are really not so much people as souls, they drift around and things happen to them, they watch and they are acted upon. I don't really see this group of films as a trilogy, I just think that as I get older my views about this character and these themes change. So that when the character and myself were in our twenties, he was very hostile and paranoid and felt oppressed by the world, and was a cab driver. When he was in his thirties he was very narcissistic and self-involved, and he was a gigolo. Now he's forty and he's anxious and uncertain, and he delivers drugs. He hasn't made anything of his life, and he doesn't know what will become of him." Needless to say, *Light Sleeper* does not feature a grungy porno-obsessed prole weirdo who becomes murderously obsessed with saving a hopelessly naive teenage prostitute from a white pimp like in *Taxi Driver*, but it

does feature a devastating portrait of self-destructive inwardness that explodes into a poetic transcendental bloodbath.

I might be a good decade shy of suffering a midlife crisis and I have never sold drugs as a career, but I certainly could somewhat empathize with the loner protagonist of Schrader's film, even if I found him to be somewhat of a passive bitch in many respects. Indeed, I could identify with the titular insomniac in the sense that the protagonist feels like he is trapped in a sort of perpetual soul-draining personal pandemonium where he hates his job and life and feels like he has no other options and has run out of what he describes as "luck" (notably, the protagonist and his friends believe in New Age bullshit and love chatting about numerology, among other hopelessly banal esoteric things). Undoubtedly, the increasingly mentally perturbed protagonist is like a forlorn phantom who passively drifts through life and does only the bare minimum to survive in his insufferably sterile and stagnant world of white collar dope dealing, though a seeming case of hypergraphia compels him to write in journals that he disposes of soon after he finishes filling them up with writing, as if he is ashamed of what he has written and considers it to be more or less a disposable waste that is the putrid result of his brain defecating. A film about a man with no life who, due to his trade, is constantly wandering in and out of other people's lives, it is not surprisingly probably the only flick where a drug dealer is used as a midlife crisis metaphor. While an extremely personal cinematic work, the protagonist is actually based on a real-life drug dealer that Schrader knew and naturally decided to reconnect with when he was assembling the project. Interestingly, Schrader has also compared *Light Sleeper* to *Taxi Driver* in the sense that he wrote the script very fast as if he was being compelled by some unseen force, or as he stated himself, "It came to me pretty much as a piece; I saw it all, and I always knew what was going to come next. What happened was that I had a dream about this character sometime in September 1990, somebody I had know years before. I woke up at about four in the morning, and I knew from that moment that he wanted me to write about him. By six I also knew I was definitely going to do just that. I hadn't written about this type of character in almost ten years. I'd been looking around for a personal, original piece to write and it hadn't been coming, so I had given up, and then it just came. So I set off to track down this man I had known." It should also be noted that Schrader has himself described *Light Sleeper* as an 'inverse *Taxi Driver*,' as the autobiographical lead was transformed from an active man that symbolically drove the cab to a passive man that sits in the back (in fact, Willem Dafoe spends almost as much as time in a taxi as De Niro's did in the Scorsese flick).

Not surprisingly, Schrader has described *Light Sleep* as his most personal film, with the prole ex-GI Travis Bickle being replaced with a character that the auteur could more relate to as a spiritually-oriented ex-drug addict who has suffered much personal failure, especially in relation to love and romance. During

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the film, the protagonist is reunited with his great love—a woman he has not seen in a longtime who he had a very toxic relationship with that involved lots of drugs and self-destruction—by happenstance and makes a predictable attempt to get back with her, only to lose her in the most violent and tragic of ways, thereupon leading him to take serious action for possibly the first time in his entire life. An emotionally turbulent flick with a somewhat ironical ending about a man who is only able to get free from his personal purgatory by finally accepting he is imprisoned, *Light Sleeper* is a tale of personal redemption that most people will find totally inexplicable because the morose protagonist ultimately loses his personal freedom at the conclusion yet develops a hopeful and optimistic mindset as a result. In other words, Schrader's film is a somewhat arcane cinematic work that probably can only be truly understood and/or appreciated by people that have experienced some form personal despair or alienation. Indeed, *Light Sleeper* might be about bourgeois coke peddlers and features some sex and nudity and a couple of violent deaths, but it is probably not going to appeal to someone that sees the guido gangsters of Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990) as cool cats that are worthy of emulation. In that sense, Schrader's film is one of only a handful of cinematic works that makes drug dealing seem about as glamorous as working as a technician at a Wal-Mart pharmacy.

As seemingly perennially dejected dope dealing protagonist John LeTour (Willem Dafoe) narrates at the very beginning of the film while riding in the back of a taxi, "Labor Day weekend. Some time for a garbage strike. Everybody crazy to stock up. They want to score at the last minute and they want it now. Never fails. The faces look alike. You gotta use memory tricks: each has some peculiarity. It keeps your sharp. A D.D. told me, when a drug dealer starts writing a diary, it's time to quit. I started writing after that. Not every night. Now and then. Fill up one book, throw it out, start another." Indeed, not unlike with the summer heat that makes the wops and negroes in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) become all the more irritable and destructive, the sight and stench of piles upon piles of trash that are crowding the streets of NYC as a result of the garbage strike seems to be only compounding LeTour's unending personal misery, which reaches its peak in the film and is ultimately released in the form of murder. A reformed drug addict that has ironically spent over the last decade peddling cocaine to a rich and largely Wall Street connected clientele that is willing to pay a highly inflated price so they don't have to endanger their lives by attempting to procure dubious product from dubious darkies on the literally and figuratively dark side of town, LeTour is a born loner-cum-loser that is forced to regularly socialize with various individuals that he seems to be quite apathetic towards as a result of his trade, including a 'Theological Cokehead' (David Spade) who states to the protagonist whilst sitting in his whitey tighties in between snorting a line of blow, "...so if there's no God, then how can we conceive of him? I mean, the idea of God presupposes the existence of God. That is the

Ontological Argument. That's Anselm. That's 1200 or 1400." The protagonist works for a hot yet vulgar fire-crotched fag hag named Ann (Susan Sarandon) and her mustached best fag friend Robert (David Clennon), who looks like the typical AIDS-ridden homo agitator featured in Rosa von Praunheim's aberrosexual agitprop docs *Silence = Death* (1990) and *Positive* (1990). As LeTour describes, Ann "made" him the d.d. bitch-boy he is today, as he found her glamorous and wanted to become a part of her supposedly exciting life, but a lot of things have changed since the 1970s and crack has destroyed the supposed glamour that was once associated with the black market drug trade. While Ann and Robert plan to get out of the criminal underground and go legit by starting a super chic cosmetics company, LeTour does not know what he wants to do, though he is thinking about getting into music recording. Of course, as his various past failed life plans demonstrate, LeTour is an aimless and seemingly weak-willed fellow who cannot seem to commit to anything, including Ann, who is clearly a longtime romantic interest of his. While Ann incessantly flirts with him to the point where she jokes about giving him blowjobs, LeTour just cannot seem to initiate a love affair with her, even though he is in her company all the time. Luckily, fate will force the protagonist to get a little bit of testicular fortitude and compel him to take serious action, even though he does not want to.

As a result of a "yuppie murder" involving a "19-year-old Barnard co-ed bitch" whose corpse was found with a large amount of cocaine in the middle of a public park, the police have become interested in high-class drug dealers of LeTour's ostensibly cultivated caliber. As a man that does not own a TV and does not read newspapers, LeTour learns about the homicide from a dopey ghetto wigger dope dealer named 'Jealous' (Sam Rockwell), who warns him to be on the lookout for pesky cops. Jealous also complains that, "19 gram shit is a drag" in regard to the size of their dope transaction, but the protagonist is not about to get charged with dealing because he is carrying a couple extra grams of the rich man's candy (as LeTour explains regarding the law, "19 is carrying, 20 is dealing" when it comes to cocaine). Not surprisingly, LeTour does not think much of his buyers or their drug-addled pseudo-philosophical rants as demonstrated by his remark, "Everybody wants to talk. It's like a compulsion. My philosophy is: You got nothing to say? Don't say it. They figure, you can tell a D.D. anything. Things they'd never tell anyone else. Of course they're stoned to start." Despite his antisocial attitude, LeTour cares enough about clients to not let them kill themselves with the drugs that he sells them. Indeed, when a fairly Jew-y junky Wall Street type of the exceedingly effeminate sort named Eddie (Paul Jabara)—a fellow whose drug addiction apparently ruined his marriage and a number of jobs—demands more drugs than the protagonist is willing to sell them, LeTour refuses to give in and later calls his client's brother when he suffers a sort of violently deranged dope psychosis. Undoubtedly, LeTour's most prestigious client is a suave yet slimy Swiss prick named Tis (Hebrew Victor Garber doing his

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best 'evil Aryan aristocrat' caricature) who has the protagonist deliver him some Valium (aka diazepam) at a hospital as a result of getting exceedingly stressed that he had to bring an underage teenage girl to the emergency room after she overdosed on coke. Although he has no clue at the beginning of the film, Tis will ultimately become LeTour's arch nemesis.

While LeTour has nothing to live for at the beginning of the film, that somewhat changes during a dreary rainy night when he spots his ex-girlfriend Marianne Jošt (Dana Delany) standing outside in the rain while riding in a taxi. LeTour has not seen or talked to Marianne in many years and she is not exactly happy to see him because they had a considerably corrosive drug-fueled relationship that concluded in a nasty fashion. Apparently, LeTour has made numerous attempts to reconnect with his ex-flame, but she has routinely ignored him as she fears reigniting the passionate and exciting yet mutually destructive cocaine-driven romance that they once had. While Marianne reluctantly agrees to get in the taxi, she soon gets out after LeTour lies to her by telling her that he is completely straight and has quit dealing (somewhat humorously, LeTour's beeper gives him away immediately after he tells Marianne in a seemingly sincere fashion that his powder-peddling days are over). Luckily for the protagonist, he later bumps into Marianne and her much nicer sister Randi (Jane Adams) while delivering drugs to Tis at the hospital. The Jošt sisters are at the hospital because their mother is dying of cancer, so it is a somewhat awkward time for LeTour to attempt to weasel his way back into Marianne's life. While her mother apparently loves him, Marianne refuses to allow LeTour to see her, though she agrees to follow him to the hospital cafeteria where she unloads her many justifiable grievances and complaints in regard to the seemingly nightmarish nature of their terribly failed romance. Somewhat ridiculously, Marianne more or less blames LeTour for ruining her entire life. Indeed, when LeTour dares to happily state to her in regard to their past relationship, "We were happy," she somewhat aggressively replies, "We were miserable. We were either scoring or coming down. Mostly coming down." Naturally, when the protagonist states, "Out on the streets dancing with friends. . . We were magical," Marianne begs to differ and replies, "You took off for 3 months without telling me and called once. That's how magical we were. You were an encyclopedia of suicidal fantasies. I heard every one. I mean, nobody could clear a room like you, John. And the friends, you may have noticed, turned out to be mine, not yours. I envy you. A convenient memory is a gift from God. In rehab it's called 'Euphoric Recall.' You only remember the highs, never the lows." Of course, Marianne's unwavering negativity and hostility does not stop LeTour from attempting to get her back, as he then brags to her about being clean from drugs for two years and states, "If I could do that, I could do anything. We could do anything. We could start all over again." Somewhat annoyed that he is attempting to drag her back into a relationship that she assumes will be catastrophic for her life, Mari-

anne abruptly decides to leave, though the viewer suspects that she still loves the protagonist and that she is fighting as hard as she can to not give into her deep-seated emotional and lustful longings. That night, instead of thinking about Marianne when he gets home, LeTour writes in regard to his sassy fag hag boss, "I can always find another way to make a living. I never planned this in the first place. Not like Ann. She came up to sell, have parties, make contacts. She was glamorous. I just wanted to be around her. She'd sit up listening to coke stories. Now it's me and Robert. The whole crowd was the same age then. Everybody's younger now. She made me." Of course, LeTour's desire to reignite his romance with Marianne does not end there.

When he has a lunch 'date' with Ann the next day, LeTour asks his beautiful boss, "What are the odds of meeting someone that you haven't seen in years twice in 2 days?" and she reveals her affinity for metaphysical mumbo jumbo by replying, "If it's indicated in your house of relationships, it's pretty high. You should have Robert do your chart." Indeed, aside from playing films directed by Crowleyite auteur Kenneth Anger at her apartment (indeed, during a scene at the beginning of the film, *Scorpio Rising* (1964) can be seen playing on a TV in Ann's apartment), Ann is into numerology and Madame Blavatsky, among other things that demonstrate that she is a superstitious chick who lives life according to 'emotions' and 'senses' as opposed to reason. While LeTour and Ann both seem like they want to declare their romantic affection for one another, it seems like they have too many emotional and psychological hang-ups to say what they really mean. When Ann asks him if he will still keep in contact with her after they close their underground stardust operation, LeTour holds Ann's hand and passionately declares in an unintentionally goofy fashion, "Ann, you want me, just call. Write a letter, tell a wino, I'll be there." Naturally, Ann is somewhat taken aback by LeTour's response and does not know how to react. While LeTour's conversation with Ann does not lead to anywhere romantic, he does finally rekindle his long awaited lurid love affair with his ex-flame Marianne later that night. Indeed, while she does accuse the protagonist of wasting a decade of her life, Marianne cannot help but kiss him in the hospital hallway and then take him back to her inordinately stylishly decorated apartment where they make passionate love. Notably, it is apparently the first time the two have fucked when they were both sober. While staring at LeTour's purple-headed love truncheon, Marianne remarks while practically drooling, "That's quite an erection!" and he replies, "I never had anything like it stoned." In fact, Marianne is so hopelessly horny that she gleefully confesses to the protagonist in regard to her aroused main vein, "I'm dripping." While the two have seemingly otherworldly sex and subsequently fall asleep while embracing one another in a loving fashion, LeTour later awakes to find Marianne getting dressed and preparing to sneak out of the apartment, thus underscoring the female character's annoyingly emotionally schizophrenic behavior. When LeTour questions her about what she is

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doing, Marianne states in an exceedingly bitchy fashion, "This is the end. It was wonderful and I'm glad it happened this way. It will never happen again. You will not call me. You will not see me again. I'm happy for you. I wish you the best. I'm leaving. I shouldn't have left the hospital, but I don't regret it. Please get dressed and leave as soon as you can. I have a key. Bye." Needless to say, LeTour refuses to accept his ladylove's rather callous final farewell, though, as the film soon demonstrates, both he and she would have been better off if he had.

On top of the fact that Marianne has dropped out of his life again and refuses to return his calls, LeTour finds himself being hassled by a short angry guido cop with the rather fitting name Bill Guidone (Robert Cicchini) who threatens to bust him if he does not give him any leads regarding the death of the rich 19-year-old "co-ed bitch" that was found with dope on her, stating in a stereotypically bombastic wop-ish fashion, "Tell me something I don't already know. It's either that, leave town, or get your ass busted day in, day out." When LeTour discovers that Marianne's mother has finally died, he makes the major mistake of randomly showing up at the funeral where he is predictably immediately verbally reamed by his morbidly depressed (ex)lover. Indeed, as soon as she sees the protagonist walk into the funeral home, Marianne causes a scene by smacking and pushing him while screaming in his face like a demented banshee bitch on crack, "Every time you come into my life something terrible happens. I thought I was rid of you. What are you . . . ? How did you . . . ? I don't want you here! I don't want you around! I don't want you around my mother! Damn you! Just get out! Get the fuck out of my life! Get out! Get out of here!" As LeTour soon discovers, Marianne's mother died when they were fucking, hence her hateful irrational hostility towards him, as if their lovemaking session resulted in her mommy's long overdue death. Later that night when LeTour goes to deliver some drugs to Swiss twit Tis at his luxury sky rise apartment, he is horrified to find Marianne there totally stoned out of her mind. Needless to say, Marianne is quite embarrassed and refrains from saying anything to LeTour. When a visibly highly dejected LeTour exits the apartment building, he soon hears a woman scream and receives the heartbreaking shock of a lifetime when he sees Marianne's corpse lying on the sidewalk pavement. Naturally, LeTour refuses to believe that Marianne would commit suicide by jumping out of a building. While the police, media, and even her family conclude that Marianne committed self-slaughter since she was morbidly depressed as a result of both her's mother death and the fact that she had completely ruined her life and had nothing to live for, LeTour immediately realizes that Tis killed both the 19-year-old teen and his lady love and thus seeks to take revenge against the super smug Swiss neo-preppie prick.

After calling guido cop Guidone and telling him that Marianne was murdered and hinting that Tis was the killer, LeTour decides that he must protect himself

and buys a handgun from a sleazy Latino and his sub-literate Afro-Hispanic homeboy. When Ann demands that the protagonist deliver some drugs to Tis, he attempts to refuse and complains, "I don't want to go. I have a bad vibe." Ultimately, LeTour eventually reluctantly agrees to deliver dope to Tis when Ann volunteers to accompany him, though he demands that they make a detour stop at his apartment so that he can grab his supposed "lucky sweater" (aka his gun). When the two cultivated coke dealers finally arrive at Tis' place, they are shocked to see two armed bodyguards at the door. In fact, the bodyguards piss Ann off so much that she grabs one of their guns, tosses it onto the ground, and yells, "I told you greasy fucks, no guns! When I see a fucking gun, I walk! How fucking dare you?!" Of course, Ann does not stop there, as she goes up to the other body guard—a small and swarthy mestizo—and hits him in the testicles while screaming, "And I don't know who you are, you little beaner, but kiss my fat ass!" When Tis finally comes out, he apologizes for the weapons and says they are merely for "emphasis." While Ann somewhat calms down, she knows something is suspicious when Tis tells her to leave so that he can talk to LeTour about police matters. Undoubtedly a smart little bitch that does not take shit from anyone, Ann follows Tis' demand by exiting the apartment but then proceeds to start screaming "fire" while knocking on various apartment doors, thus assuring the police will soon be there. As soon as Ann begins screaming like a harpy, a somewhat anticlimatic gun fight breaks out that ends with Tis running to a back bedroom while LeTour shoots and kills his two bodyguards, though the protagonist is shot in both the arm and leg in the process. Clearly in great pain as a result of his wounds, LeTour wobbles into the back bedroom where he shoots LeTour in the middle of the forehead while he less than inconspicuously attempts to grab a gun that he has hidden inside a duffle bag. Naturally, LeTour is subsequently imprisoned for murdering Tis and the two body guards, though he is in inordinately high spirits for a man that will probably spend the next half of a decade locked inside a cage located inside a maximum security prison full of psychopathic negro rapists, Latino gang members, and goombah gangsters, among other forms of human rabble. In the final scene of the film, which is an obvious homage to Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959), Ann visits LeTour in jail and the two expression their desire begin a lurid love affair. Indeed, after describing how he will probably spend no more than 5-7 years in prison, LeTour reveals that he is in high hopes and tells Ann, "It hasn't been so bad. It's a relief in a way. So far. I've been writing. . . And reading." LeTour also decides to ask Ann, "Did we ever fuck?," even though he already knows the answer. In regard to their future plan to finally fuck, LeTour states to Anne, "It's one of the things I think about. One of the things I look forward to. I've been looking forward," to which she replies, "Me, too. Strange how things work." In the end, LeTour kisses Ann's hand as a sort of gesture of love and devotion to her, even if it is doubtful that any woman would wait so many years for a man, especially a man

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whose member she never even got to sample.

Undoubtedly, the great borderline infuriating irony of *Light Sleeper* is that the hapless protagonist only becomes 'free' when he is imprisoned, as if he was so perennially stubborn in his fatalistically forlorn mindset that it took becoming a murderous criminal to realize what was right in front of his face all along, especially in terms of love, but of course one should not expect anything less from a Schrader flick where the whole Bressonian redemption motif is taken to almost absurdist extremes that border on the (pseudo)Biblical. Another great irony of the film is that, although it is hopelessly late-1980s/early-1990s in terms of overall aesthetic and largely soulless characters and was made at a time where auteurist cinema was practically completely dead, it is more auteur oriented and non-commercial in its essence than the most personal and idiosyncratic works of the New Hollywood era. Somewhat inexplicably, even the rather outmoded score by Michael Been (who incidentally played the apostle John in the Schrader penned Scorsese flick *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988)) still manages to perfectly compliment the film (notably, Schrader originally planned to use some Bob Dylan songs, but luckily he decided otherwise). It should also be noted that the film was shot by American cinematographer Edward Lachman who got his start acting as an assistant director and cameraman on Werner Herzog's masterpiece *Stroszek* (1977) and would go on to shoot important cinematic works ranging from Larry Clark's quasi-pornographic skater melodrama *Ken Park* (2002) to Ulrich Seidl's no less pornographic anti-globalization drama *Import/Export* (2007) to Todd Solondz's pedo piece *Life During Wartime* (2009). While it is quite obvious that Lachman at least partly modeled his cinematography after *Taxi Driver*, especially the many scenes where the protagonist is riding in a taxi, Schrader had the cinematographer watch a couple early Michelangelo Antonioni films to give him an idea of the look he wanted (notably, as the auteur once stated in regard to the film's look, "Antonioni is always good to look at because he loves to define situations by architecture"). Of course, the NYC architecture featured in the film is as dreary and emotionally oppressive as the protagonist's forsaken soul, thus making it all the more fitting that it concludes in a brightly lit white prison after the protagonist has figuratively 'seen the light.'

While *Light Sleeper* is surely not my favorite Schrader flick, it is arguably the director's most immaculate cinematic work to date. Indeed, aside from the dubiousness of the somewhat abrupt murderous climax (personally, I could not imagine a passive pussy like the protagonist killing anyone, let alone three men in a couple minutes) and glaring recycling of the Bressonian ending of *American Gigolo*, there is not much to criticize (indeed, I even found Susan Sarandon, who I usually cannot stand, quite fuckable, even when I was hoping someone would shove their cock in her mouth so that she would shut up). In its depiction of swarthy Wall Street types high on dope and a scene where Sarandon repugnantly flirts with a young Hasidic Hebrew that she regularly does 'business' with,

Schrader's film also has a vague and wholly unintentional *Der Stürmer*-esque quality. Considering the film's decidedly dispiriting tone and grim and gloomy aesthetic essence, I think it is only fitting that it features a Hasidic Jew, as they subscribe to a religion that worships death and they have a physical appearance that I personally find to be more insufferably grotesque than that of a semi-rotten bloated corpse, but I digress. While *Light Sleeper* has what might be described as a happy ending, it is still a decided downer that sometimes makes *Taxi Driver* seem like a dark romantic-comedy by comparison, even if it is nowhere near as violent or sleazy (in fact, Schrader should be commended for his understated approach to such subversive material). After all, there is not many films were a terribly troubled loner finds solace after killing three guys and being imprisoned, but such is the uniquely unhinged vision of a (once) suicidal lapsed Calvinist that was a member of a supposedly hip cocaine-fueled cocksucker party scene during the 1970s despite being heterosexual. A bizarrely optimistic 'feel-bad' flick that concludes in an almost absurdly yet somehow fittingly utopian way, *Light Sleeper* is a film that demonstrates to the viewer in a sensitively nuanced fashion that, no matter how miserable and unendurable existence gets, there will always be another exciting chapter in your life, even if your great love is thrown out of a building by a rather dapper Swiss psychopath.

-Ty E

FOREVER MINE
FOREVER MINE

Paul Schrader (1999)

As a filmmaker from a strict Dutch Calvinist background that makes intellectually oriented films about supremely fucked-up and oftentimes self-destructive individuals who once confessed that he was finally able to learn how to properly touch and have normal relationships with woman by hanging out with very touchy-feely oriented gay men, film critic turned screenwriter turned cinematic auteur Paul Schrader (*Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*, *The Canyons*)—arguably the last worthwhile and fairly untainted filmmaker of the so-called New Hollywood movement—does not exactly seem like someone that would be suitable for directing a lavish tragic romance with a sort of classic Golden Age Hollywood style yet he did just that and naturally it is one strange and sometimes baffling cinematic monster that makes love seem like a morbid mental illness that consumes the soul. Indeed, Schrader's self-described "beauty film" *Forever Mine* (1999) is, in many ways, not only the director's most bizarre work, but also his most overt artistic disaster as a shockingly ambitious flick that is ultimately, quite unfortunately, less than the sum of its parts, though nonetheless certainly worth seeing at least once, especially for those that already have an appreciation for the auteur (after all, the film is superior to a number of the director's other works, including *Blue Collar* (1978), *Light Of Day* (1987), *Witch Hunt* (1994), *Touch* (1997), *Dominion: Prequel to the Exorcist* (2005), *Adam Resurrected* (2008), and the studio-destroyed *The Dying of the Light* (2014)). In fact, I would almost argue that the film is a cinematic tragedy, as a would neo-Sirkian romantic epic that was supposed to seamlessly weave elements of a Scorseseian guido gangster flick and a De Palma crime-thriller, yet ultimately does not completely work as it was supposed to due to various reasons, not least of all lead Joseph Fiennes' glaringly uneven performance in a dual role. As Schrader has described in interviews, Fiennes had the impossible tasking of playing "Leonardo DiCaprio in *TITANIC* and Pacino in *CARLITO'S WAY* in the same movie." As for female lead Gretchen Mol, she demonstrates that she was a cold yet compulsively cute cunt long before her role as the always charming son-fucking whore murderess Gillian Darmody on *Boardwalk Empire* (2010-2014). Originally written by Schrader in the late-1980s for producer Alan Ladd (not to be confused with the tragic actor of the same name) at MGM and later brought to Columbia Pictures where Patrick Swayze of all people was originally scheduled to play the lead role, *Forever Mine* was ultimately put on the backburner for over a decade until after the director began filming his minor masterpiece *Affliction* (1997) in Montreal and he randomly met a Sri Lanka-Born conman named Damita Nikapota—a supremely shady fellow that was later imprisoned for using dead film producers' identities and producing imaginary films with titles like 'The Flying Scotsman'—who luckily agreed to raise funds for the film. While Schrader

finally managed to complete his dream romance flick, it succumbed to a similar sorry fate as many of his other films and ultimately made its debut on the Starz! cable channel instead of theaters after the film's production company went bankrupt and its assets were taken over by its Dutch insurers, who did not seem too keen on even promoting the film. Described by Schrader himself as being, "...nineteenth-century schmaltz: the formerly-thought-dead lover comes back in altered form, that Count of Monte Cristo/Heathcliff thing. I was trying to tap into the old sense of melodrama, with very lush visuals, and make a retro movie," *Forever Mine* is indeed an oftentimes pleasantly pulchritudinous yet mean-spirited and even misanthropic piece of rather refreshing filmic fluff with a dark and demented romantic edge that questions the sanity of individuals that completely submit to pure love, especially when it involves a treacherous woman that has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that she can never ever be trusted. In short, the film more or less portrays men that devote themselves to one single woman as recklessly self-destructive fools with their heads in the clouds who do not know when to quit and women as petty and callous and almost wholly glacial creatures that tend to prefer being with a wealthy and powerful man who cannot even get their pussy wet to a modest man that they love and have an otherworldly sexual relationship with. Featuring an original score by David Lynch regular Angelo Badalamenti, Schrader's rather artistically ardent film depicts in a somewhat aesthetically schizophrenic way the internal purgatory a young lovelorn man is trapped in after finding his one-true-love in a sunny beach paradise, only for said one-true-love to betray him in a nearly deadly fashion that results in both his physical and psychological transformation in what is ultimately a rare relatively contemporary American movie that demonstrates in a largely allegorical way the sort of misery that a woman can afflict on her lover, especially when monetary concerns are involved.

As made quite clear in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998) by Peter Biskind, Schrader is anything but a lady's man and when he was getting his start as a young screenwriter in Hollywood during the 1970s, no woman wanted anything to do with him, or as one excerpt from the book reveals, "Women didn't like Schrader, didn't appreciate his finer points. He had a crush on [Margot] Kidder. One night, the two of them were driving along Sunset in his car to meet Brian [De Palma] at a screening. 'Kiss me! Kiss me!' he implored, out of the blue. She pulled away [...] Paul was crushed, felt like he must display the mark of Cain. She slept with everything in pants—except him [...] Like Kidder, Sandy Weintraub couldn't stand Schrader: 'Paul was a very messed up human being. When he left his apartment, he went to a bar and sat there and drank all night.'" Indeed, when not bonding over guns with Hebraic 'Zen Fascist' John Milius and hanging out with his cocksucking comrades in a cocaine-fueled gay party scene, Schrader was failing badly with the ladies and it was only when he became an established filmmaker that things began to slightly change. For example, while

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working on his first self-described “beauty film” *Cat People* (1982), Schrader began a short-lived ‘romance’ with lead heroine Nastassja Kinski that ended with a failed marriage proposal and the filmmaker traveling to Europe to chase his love interest, who ultimately terribly humiliated him by stating, “Paul, I always fuck my directors. And with you it was difficult.” Like *Cat People*, *Forever Mine* features a Dante and Beatrice motif, though it is clear that Schrader, who went on to marry and have children with actress Mary Beth Hurt, has grown quite cynical as the years have passed in regard to pure love, especially when it comes to seemingly immaculately beautiful young women whose physical allurements are in stark contrast to their minds and souls. A sort of gleefully genre-bending romance-crime-drama-thriller that updates the theme of classic ancient Occidental myths like *Tristan and Iseult* and *Orpheus and Eurydice* in regard to love and sexuality compatibility not exactly always making for the most perfect of relationships, Schrader’s artistically enterprising experiment in narrative construction is a sort of romance flick for cynics who have given up on love yet still have nostalgia for past loves.

Schrader’s first film shot in CinemaScope, *Forever Mine* is somewhat of an unintentionally eccentric aesthetic enigma as a cinematic work that transforms from a sort of candy-colored beachside fairytale into a bourgeois Victorian Gothic erotic thriller, with early Fassbinder style dilapidated apartment scenes, flagrant Scorsese-esque Catholic imagery, and post-industrial ruins thrown in for good measure. Indeed, the film might be a mess of a movie in various ways, but it is a surprisingly enthralling mess of a movie with an oftentimes unpredictable yet absurdly improbable storyline that defies all sense and logic to the point of being embarrassingly addictive, even on subsequent viewings (in fact, I have watched the film four times and it holds up each time). Featuring stereotypically boorish and moronic garlic-marinated guido gangsters with fragile egos, a shamelessly and psychopathically corrupt politician that finds romantic poetry to be the language of a raving retard, an Anglo-Saxon college student that magically transforms into an extremely wealthy disfigured Latino black market ‘banker’ with connections to *Contras* and the South American drug underworld, and a fine ass female protagonist whose insufferable frigidness can only be penetrated by the protagonist’s prick and incessant flowery poetic pronouncements, the film may have various dubious ingredients that have about as much chemistry as Godiva chocolate and sun-fried dog shit, but it never fails to enthrall and surprise. Undoubtedly, another intriguing element of the film is that it features a sort of Dionysian hero that makes insanely irrational and oftentimes highly deleterious decisions for love and an Apollonian antagonist that is a cruel and calculating politician who specifically loathes the protagonist because of his talent for lurid love poetry and absurdly romantic *Weltanschauung*. Indeed, to the scumbag antagonist’s credit, the protagonist is nothing if not a ludicrously lovesick fool who practically invites his own death not once but twice just so that he can prove to

himself that his “love is pure,” hence his vocal willingness to die for love.

After beginning with the somewhat fitting yet slightly pretentious Walter Pater quote, “It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character in art” and an opening credit sequence featuring an almost obscenely pink fantasy castle that is ultimately revealed to be a hotel (in fact, the hotel in question, Loews Don CeSar Hotel in St. Pete Beach, Florida, was also used in Robert Altman’s *Health* (1980) and Sergio Leone’s *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984)), the film cuts to a shot of a man with a disfigured face named Manuel Esquema (Joseph Fiennes) sitting on an airplane next to his friend and body guard Javier Cesti (Vincent Laresca) while looking particularly forlorn, as if he is haunted by something and/or someone from his past. The year is 1987 and Esquema—a WASP pretending to be a Latino that has literally created a totally new identity for himself—is flying from Miami to New York to confront his past in the form of both the woman he loved who betrayed him and the man that thought he killed him. The last time these two people saw Esquema, he was a poor bum with big romantic dreams that lived in a dirty dilapidated apartment, but now he is an extremely wealthy international financier that does business with banks from all around the world, especially dirty ones. Flash back “14 years earlier,” the same man is depicted riding a bus to a Miami, though his name is not Esquema but Alan Riply and he is a terribly naïve yet passionate 23-year-old college student that has come to the coast of southeastern Florida to work as a lowly cabana boy at a luxury castle-like hotel with his somewhat hyperactive Hispanic homeboy Javier. While Javier attempts to coerce Alan into getting into the drug dealing business with him, the protagonist has his mind on somewhat more savory and romantic things, especially after he randomly spots a blonde beauty named Ella Brice (Gretchen Mol) emerging from the water one day while he is working on the beach. Using his job as a cabana boy as a reason to immediately introduce himself to her, Alan almost immediately becomes wax-poetic around Ella, who seems intrigued with the protagonist’s somewhat idiosyncratic way with words, radiating charms, and inordinate kindness and empathy. Of course, as a seemingly long-suffering wife in a lonely one-sided marriage with an up-and-coming New York politician who clearly is more interested in his work than her tits and ass, Ella cannot help but be smitten with the cute and charming cabana boy, who has her complete and undivided attention. As Ella will later confess to Alan, she, like many women, only married her husband Mark Brice (Ray Liotta) for his power and money, as she was previously a poor secretary that was ashamed of her humble background and cheap clothes. Needless to say, when Ella ends up falling in love with the poor cabana boy, she has a hard time fighting her natural female instincts towards hypergamy and cannot possibly fathom dumping her successful husband for an eccentric hopeless romantic who speaks in riddles and does not have a penny to his name.

Naturally, as a man that seems to believe that he fallen in love at first sight

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and is convinced that he must dedicate every moment of the rest of his life to one single woman, Alan—an obsessive romantic that spends his free time in his scantily decorated one-room apartment staring at a photo of his love interest—almost immediately begins borderline stalking Ella and when the heroine soon realizes this she becomes both fearful of and infatuated with the eccentric young cabana boy. Indeed, after strategically recommending that her husband Mark go to the hotel's nightclub one night, Alan shows up to said nightclub to spy on Ella while lurking in the shadows like a shy Don Juan that has yet to completely cultivate his romantic moves. When Ella leaves the club alone, Alan follows her home to declare his love for her, stating, "I think you're extraordinary," but she coldly replies, "There's always another woman." While Ella blows Alan off and tells him, "If my husband even saw us standing here—he doesn't think anything is innocent," she is clearly intrigued by the protagonist and voyeuristically gazes at him from her hotel window after they part ways, as if she regrets not immediately jumping on his cock. Indeed, one gets the impression that Ella got extremely wet as a result of the short conversation with Alan and immediately diddled her clit upon entering her hotel room. The next day, Alan is quite delighted when Ella approaches him on the beach while carrying a pink bikini and boldly declares to him in an overtly salacious fashion, "I was wondering what it would be like for us to kiss." Not only do the two soon kiss right there on the beach, but Alan also manages to coerce Ella into faking sick as a way to blow off a boat trip with her husband so that she can spend the evening with with him instead. Needless to say, Alan and Ella immediately make otherworldly orgasmic love that clearly penetrates the heroine in a fashion that she previously never felt possible. After the lovemaking session, the two go to a local bar where the two act like completely innocent youthful high school lovers and Ella states to Alan in an unintentionally incriminating fashion during a rare moment of vulnerability, "Sometimes it just amazes me. We're all so self-centered. And then you look around and you see everyone else. Everyone is the main character in their lives. They all have a story." Of course, as the trophy wife of an insanely arrogant and self-centered opportunistic asshole who does not take her seriously, Ella barely has a life and she makes for an awfully banal and passive main character in her own story.

Despite everything being so perfectly magical during their wild and wanton day of fucking, Ella demonstrates that she might be a tad bit bipolar by randomly turning into a cold bitch that same exact night. Indeed, after cynically stating that her hotel is nothing more than a "fantasy castle" and that she is in "fantasyland," Ella tells Alan her sob "story," stating in a somewhat bitchy fashion, "I was in the secretarial pool...Xeroxing, getting coffee, guys making jokes about me, the way I dressed. I didn't have any money. We didn't have any money. We moved from place to place. And then...guess what? The boss started asking me out. Everything changed. Then I became...Mrs. Mark Brice.

So...you like my story? Are you disappointed?" While Alan attempts to get Ella to leave her husband for him by simply stating with supreme confidence, "You will never be loved the way you are now. You never have been, and you never will be," her transformation into an ice queen is already complete and she declares, "I'm leaving tomorrow, it's over!" Naturally, being someone that was previously a working-class broad, Ella cannot fathom going back to living a life of lame lumpenprole stagnancy and describes Alan's plan as simply "impossible." While Alan stoically declares, "Refusal to love is just an excuse for cowardice. Emotional cowardice," Ella is just too damn feminine to have any intrinsic understanding of cowardice and will later betray her true love in such a pathetically pusillanimous fashion that it almost results in his death. Like most women, Ella is very concerned with her future security, yet what happens to the man she loves never really seems to cross her mind.

When Ella leaves the hotel with her husband to go back to the sterile suburbs of New York after their vacation is over, Alan immediately quits his job and borrows his homey Javier's car so that he can drive to his beloved's hometown where he plans to relocate permanently. Indeed, Alan wastes no time in acquiring an entry level position at a bank and renting a dilapidated one-room apartment in a quaint ghetto. While Ella is excited when she learns that Alan has moved nearby to be with her and the two once again have great sex after she sneaks out of her house to pay him a visit, the heroine once again morphs into a quite cunty ice queen during a post-coital conversation involving cheap Chinese takeout where she expresses her abject disgust with his crummy apartment (where the protagonist has notably written "Give All To Love" across the wall) and how she cannot bear the thought again of having to live in such a lowly fashion ever again. In short, Ella, like many women, is unwilling to settle for hypogamy and tells the protagonist that there is no way that she could ever considering divorcing Mark and getting with him, stating like the most fiercely frigid of quasi-lesbianic public school administrators, "Think, Alan. A person just can't wake up and start over." Of course, Ella can do whatever the hell she wants and is just making excuses for the fact that she has been hopelessly despoiled by her nice and laid-back bourgeois lifestyle. Quite unlike Alan, Ella is petrified of spontaneity, uncertainty, and selfless devotion, thus making her a sort of archetype for the worst qualities that members of the so-called fairer sex have to offer, though the protagonist seems to be in total denial of this. After going to a Catholic confessional where a busybody priest persuades her to stop betraying her husband and break off her relationship with Alan, Ella unwisely decides to tell Mark everything while crying seemingly phony tears as if she is some sort of victim that needs to be rescued instead of an adulterous liar. In an assumed classically feminine attempt to garner sympathy while attempting to project all of her guilt solely onto the protagonist, Ella cries to her husband in regard to Alan, "I wish I never met him." Of course, what Ella really means

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when she says that she wishes that “never met him” is that she hates that she has been forced to acknowledge the fact that Alan made her come to the bitter realization that she is in a soulless sham marriage and that she could be so much happier with someone else, but she is too weak and materialistic to devote herself to the man she loves. Needless to say, Mark immediately decides that he has to do something about the “lovesick cabana boy” and uses his political power to get Alan arrested on trumped up charges by having a couple corrupt cops plant drugs on him. While Alan is in prison, Mark pays him a visit and, somewhat surprisingly, offers to have his charges “dropped on a technicality” if he agrees leave Ella alone, but of course the protagonist adamantly refuses and proudly proclaiming, “Everything has a purpose. Everybody has a purpose. It is my purpose to be with Ella. Nothing can change that. Not you, not the police, not the courts. It’s just a fact...like plants turning to the sun. Or death. Or taxes.” Needless to say, Mark is less than impressed with Alan’s way with words and hilariously states to him in a condescending fashion as if he were talking to a mentally challenged child, “What is this gibberish and asks “Are you crazy? Nobody talks like this. Make sense [...] There are two types of people in this world: assholes and pricks. You’re an asshole. And I’m a prick. Do the math. Ella’s mine.”

When Mark eventually discovers that Alan has been writing absurdly arcane love letters to Ella from prison, he becomes exceedingly enraged, decides he must have his romantically unhinged rival liquidated, and ultimately has his short-tempered guido body guard Rick Martino (Myk Watford) setup a staged prison break that involves fugitive inmates dragging the protagonist to a construction set where he is shot and dropped in a large hole. Needless to say, when Mark boasts of Alan’s dubious death, Ella, who is drunk, breaks down and accuses her husband of killing him. Needless to say, Mark gets a little annoyed with Ella’s back-talking and slaps her across the face so hard that she falls to the floor. After confessing to her priest, “I was a...coward,” Ella completely loses her faith and never steps back into a church ever again. Meanwhile, after somehow magically surviving a shotgun blast that badly damages both his arm and half of his face, Alan manages to crawl back to Miami while in a half-dead state where he immediately pays his loyal friend Javier a late night visit. After pleading that he needs “money to buy a new life,” Javier informs him that he can earn both \$5,000 and a great underworld reputation by killing a man for a powerful drug cartel. With nothing left to lose as a man that has been robbed of his lady love, pretty boy good looks, and entire future, Alan manages to gather the courage and morally bankruptcy to kill a man that he does not even know named Manuel Esquema while the poor bloated beaver is quietly defecating in a public restroom. In a strange but somewhat fitting twist, Alan opts to adopt the name and identity of the man he so ruthlessly murdered and ultimately transforms himself from an all-American WASP into a sly Latino gangster. Indeed, Alan even contrives a

preposterous pseudo-poetic sob story that he later uses on Mark and Ella about how he was born deformed to a poor but loving family that taught him to be the highly successful career criminal that he is today.

At about the halfway point of *Forever Mine*, the film finally catches up to the present with Manuel/Alan finally arriving in New York to initiate his long awaited reunion with Ella and her hubby. Naturally, Alan has a personal vendetta against Mark and after discovering that his nemesis is now an ex-councilman that is about to be indicted by federal prosecutor for serious criminal charges, he decides to use his new identity as 'Manuel Esquema' and power as a powerful international financier to execute his quite cleverly constructed revenge plan. Indeed, with a completely new appearance, accent, and speech pattern, 'Manuel' has no problem convincing Mark that he is someone else and that he wants to help him get out of his legal bind, so long as he willing to pay a 'fair' amount for his services. Needless to say, Alan intends to take Ella as part of his payment, though Mark will not find this out until the services are rendered. Of course, Alan also his new identity as Señor Esquema as a means to get close to Ella who, despite everything, he still loves. When Mark invites Esquema over to his house for dinner after their first business meeting, he gladly accepts the offer as it provides him with the opportunity to see Ella for the first time in fourteen years. Not surprisingly, Ella seems totally phony when Alan arrives at her house, as if she is doing her best to the mask the perennial misery, guilt, and regret that plagues her quite posh yet pathetic life of perpetual bourgeois banality. As it turns out, the only thing that Ella has done over the past fourteen years is take pointless college courses and volunteer her time to reading to elderly people at a retirement home. When the protagonist asks her what her favorite book is, Ella rather revealingly declares with great joy that it is Gustave Flaubert's debut novel *Madame Bovary* (1856), which hints that the heroine is probably nostalgic about her past romance with Alan and has even considered committing suicide, as the book deals with the adulterous affairs of an eponymous protagonist who decides to have extramarital affairs because she hates her bourgeoisie life and who ultimately kills herself in the end. Rather shocked that anyone would have any sincere interest in what his spouse has to say since he clearly considers her nothing more than a trophy wife that he used as an aesthetically pleasing prop for his political career, Mark remarks to the protagonist while he is listening intently as Ella talks, "I can't believe you're really interested in this." During the same conversation, Ella also unwittingly reveals that she is rather unhappy with the fact that, although long married and quite financially secure, she is a barren woman by abruptly stating with a sense of pathetic hopeless excitement, "Oh, if I had a child I would love that child." Indeed, while it is a natural female instinct for a woman to marry a wealthy and successful man so that she will have a good provider for her children, Ella did not even get any kids out of her sham marriage, thus all the more underscoring the absurdity of her decision to betray

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Alan and stay with Mark. While Alan gives small hints of his true identity and wastes no opportunity to make Mark feel uneasy, the unhappily married couple surely does not believe that people come back from the dead and thus never suspect that the protagonist is anyone aside from an preternaturally poetic Latino weirdo with tons of money and a vulgar fashion sense.

When Alan has Ella meet him at a NYC bar under the dubious pretext of needing to find important information from her that will supposedly help him with her husband's criminal case, the protagonist almost immediately causes her to leave the taproom abruptly after he less than tactfully declares, "I just wanted to talk to you alone." When Ella asks him, "What do you really want?" Alan cryptically replies, "I think you know." Shortly after his fairly uneventful encounter with Ella, Mark's guido bodyguard Rick intentionally crashes his car into the back of Alan's vehicle while he is parked at a gas station pump and then threateningly states to the protagonist and his friend Javier, "You guys, you think you're really something, don't you? You slick Miami spicks come up here to fleece these dumb New Yorkers? You go sneakin' around, behind the boss' back, spyin' on his wife? Well, you think I'm on medication, huh? Just 'cause I'm white don't mean I'm dumb." Of course, Rick is probably pissed off over the fact that Alan previously embarrassed him by calling him a "guido" during a business meeting in front of his boss and other important men. Somewhat ironically for a man that loathes "slick Miami spicks," Rick is ultimately brutally murdered that night while getting a fake tan at a tacky tanning salon called 'Miami Bronze.' Indeed, Alan's #2 guy Javier has a showdown with Mark's #2 guy Rick that involves the former torturing and killing the latter while he is trapped in a tanning bed while wearing nothing but whitey tighties. Before putting a bullet in his brain, Javier states to Rick what is ultimately a rather lame pun in reference to Ripley's Believe It or Not! amusement museum franchise, "Alan Riply, believe it or not." Meanwhile, Alan breaks into the Brice's home and waits for Ella while hiding in the shadows of her bedroom like an awkward vampire. While Ella is initially petrified when she enters her house becomes she knows that Señor Esquema is waiting for her inside since his car is parked in her driveway, it is clear that she is just as excited, as if she is entranced by his erotic magnetism but does not know what to expect and is afraid of the consequences. When Ella shouts out his name and threatens to call the cops, the protagonist emerges from the shadows of her bedroom and reveals his true identity, thus resulting in very long-and-coming makeup sex that involves the heroine fucking the protagonist on the very same bed that she shares with her hubby. After the carnal passions have climaxed, Ella states to Alan while the two are still in bed during a classic moment of stereotypical female post-coital disclosure, "I've lived my life in regret." When Ella asks if he had sex with her out of revenge, Alan confesses, "Even when I thought I no longer cared for you, I still do" and foolishly agrees to not murder Mark like he had originally planned to. At this point, Ella finally declares that she wants

to “start over again” and begin a new life with Alan.

During their final business meeting, Esquema informs Mark that he has setup a plea bargain where he will plead guilty and only have to serve 10 months at a comfortable white collar prison. While Esquema tells Mark that he can keep his house, car, and \$300,000, he demands \$600,000 for his services. Considering the severity of his charges, Mark is quite happy with this deal and begins to celebrate by calling for champagne, but the celebration comes to a swift and bitter end when Esquema states calmly yet confidently adds, “There is one other condition...your wife.” At this point, Mark predictably goes completely berserk and begins shouting obscenities at the protagonist, who responds by calmly and quietly exiting the room while his somewhat unhinged adversary continues to scream his head off. After all, Mark cannot believe that Esquema would have the gall to imagine that immaculate blonde Aryan beauty Ella would be interested in a horribly disfigured third world gangster, even if he is a politician and thus knows that every pussy has a price. When Alan informs his comrade that he no longer wants him to kill Mark, Javier gets annoyed and remarks, “Nothing like love to screw up a good thing,” though the two longtime friends part on happy terms. During a classically Schrader-esque of keen cultural cynicism where the auteur more or less likens American capitalism and U.S. political systems to that of a third world whorehouse, Esquema recommends that Latino killer Javier, who is probably an illegal alien, donate money to a college since it might earn him an honorary doctorate and a school building being named after him. After coming up with the decision to obtain a new “all-American identity,” Alan picks up Ella and the two head to the a remote wooded area where they start a new life in a log cabin. Naturally, as a man that has lost virtually everything, including his wife, career, dignity, and pretty much his entire life, Mark has nothing left to live for and thus has his lawyer find Alan and Ella’s whereabouts so that he can exact his revenge. Indeed, Alan gets quite the shock when he gets out of the shower one day and discovers that Mark has broken into his cabin and has come to kill him, Ella, and himself. In regard to his planned bizarre love triangle oriented murder-suicide pact, Mark states to Alan in a joyously deranged fashion after shooting him in the thigh, “We’re all gonna die for love. See? I’m a romantic, too.” When the protagonist dares to vocally doubt Mark’s love for Ella, the romantically autistic antagonist becomes exceedingly enraged, shoves his gun in Alan’s face, and shouts, “How dare you judge me, you lovesick little nobody! I love her in my own way!” When Alan retorts, “Love is not your own way. It’s either pure...or selfish,” Mark asks the protagonist if his love is “pure” and when he affirmatively replies “yes,” the sadistic villain shoots him in the neck and then goes outside to wait for Ella. When Mark confronts Ella and implies that he has killed Alan, the heroine cries, “I will not lose him.” Although Ella attempts to go inside the cabin to see if Alan is ok, Mark grabs her, puts a gun to her head, and then demands that she say “I love you” one more time before he kills her.

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Luckily, before her lovelorn hubby can blow her brains out, Alan emerges from the cabin and begins brutally bashing Mark's head into a cement floor until he is dead. In the end, Ella attempts to keep Alan conscious while he is succumbing to his wounds by reminding him about how they first met. In the end after a series of flashback scenes, the film concludes with protagonists' saying the titular words: "Forever Mine" in what is ultimately a beautifully bittersweet conclusion to a beautifully bittersweet movie.

While *Forever Mine* concludes in almost infuriating ambiguity, auteur Schrader has hinted that the protagonist dies in the end, or as he stated in the audio commentary for the MGM DVD release of the film, "If anyone would ask me, 'Did he live or did he die?', I would always say, 'Well, he lives...in her memory,' which I guess is an appropriately romantic answer for this oddly romantic film." Indeed, "oddly romantic" is a pretty good way to describe the film, especially considering the reputation of the man that wrote and directed it, yet despite its sometimes almost oneiric fairytale essence, Schrader's decadently aesthetically pleasing dark romance reveals more insights in regard to the absurdities of love and its oftentimes senselessly tragic consequences than probably any of the shiksa-obsessed films that superlatively sexually dysfunctional Hebraic romcom maestro Woody Allen has ever made. Although oftentimes exquisitely ethereal in terms of visuals, *Forever Mine* is hardly a cinematic work that attempts to romanticize the pangs and perils of romance, as the film is like a sensitively written love letter that was penned with the blood of a stillborn babe and placed in a pretty pink envelope that is laced with anthrax and cheap Cuban cologne. Indeed, to any sane male, the love affair depicted in Schrader's film would seem like a deadly curse, as if the protagonist came under the spell of an inordinately gorgeous autistic witch that was not even totally conscious of her own sinisterly seductive sexual powers, thereupon making her all the more deleterious to her male victims. While Gretchen Mol's character might have a face and body that suggests she is an immaculate angel that sired with god's greatest materials, I would go so far as to argue that she is actually that true villain of the film, as a sort of bourgeois femme fatale who destroys both the protagonist and antagonist and whose treacherous and manipulative actions against both of these characters is inspired solely by her desire to avoid even the most mild of emotional and material discomforts. Undoubtedly, there is no question that Schrader thinks very little of the film heroine as he makes a joke in his audio commentary where he points out the fact that the "ice queen" is ironically standing next to a polar bear statue. Of course, the brilliance of Schrader's film is that he never dares to demonize or ridicule the heroine, but instead subtly depicts how, due to pathological passivity and supreme cowardice, she more or less stands by and watches as her one-true-love is destroyed. Not surprisingly, it is only in the end when the protagonist has become much wealthier than her husband that the heroine finally agrees to ditch her jail-bound hubby and get with him, so I must admit that I felt a little

bit of *schadenfreude* when said protagonist assumedly dies in the end and she is left with nothing but her own regret.

Notably, in her classic text *The Manipulated Man* (1971), antifeminist Jewess Esther Vilar has a fun little dictionary of sorts where she exposes what women, who typically delight in obfuscation, really mean when they say certain things. For example, in one decoding that certainly pertains to *Forever Mine*, Vilar claims that when a woman says, "A man must be able to protect me," what she really means is, "A man must be able to spare me from all forms of discomfort." Undoubtedly, this is one of the central conflicts of the film, as the heroine refuses to leave the husband she loathes for the man she that loves and has seemingly immaculate emotional and sexual compatibility with because she fears the prospect of poverty and, in turn, material discomfort, among other relatively petty things. Of course, this is one of the main innate timeless differences between men and women, as whereas a man is usually happy enough to just be with a woman that he loves, a woman always wants more and starts to loathe a man that has not dedicated his life solely to making her life easier. Another rather repellent feminine characteristic that the film highlights is the tendency of women to be more concerned with superficial appearances and the opinions of others than their and their lovers' own personal happiness, as the the film's rather vain and superficial heroine cannot bear the social repercussions of leaving her successful spouse for a poor young man with no reputation and instead stays in a completely loveless and childless marriage with a seemingly sociopathic political parasite whose wealth has been at least partially obtained via criminal means. Not surprisingly, not once in the film does the heroine express guilt over the fact that her husband is a criminal except when he ostensibly kills the protagonist. In an assumed attempt to spare herself personal guilt, the heroine also makes the fatal mistake of coercing her lover into not killing her scumbag spouse, thus giving said scumbag spouse the opportunity to kill both him and her. In short, *Forever Mine* is a film where love-crushes-all as a sweetly venomous and sometimes elegantly cynical cinematic work where an adulterous dame who married for money incites a fourteen year blood feud between two very different men that ends with both of their violent premature demises.

While I was only somewhat impressed when I originally watched *Forever Mine* nearly a decade ago, I have discovered with my recent re-watching of it that, like many of Schrader's films, it is a subtly intricate flick that made me come to the realization that its creator is a mentally accursed man that sees murder-suicide pacts and deadly game of cross-class adultery as deeply romantic, but I guess one should not expect anything less from the man that created the autobiographical antihero of *Travis Bickle*. I also recently came to the bitter and slightly embarrassing realization that I could empathize with the film's male protagonist in his self-destructive and masochistic quest to devote all to the love of his life. Like the film's protagonist, there is a certain woman in my life that I probably

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should loathe, but I just cannot find it in me, at least for long. While I have been in relationships with various beautiful women, I can safely say that I only still love one of them and I still pretty much have the same exact feelings for her that I have always had. Thankfully, unlike the film's protagonist and a lot of men in general, I do not take comfort in being some bitch's bitch, or as Villar noted in regard to the self-delusion that many men have when it comes to marriages and romantic relationships, "As a result of 'love,' man is able to hide his cowardly self-deception behind a smoke screen of sentiment. He is able to make himself believe that his senseless enslavement to woman and her hostages is more than an act of honor, it has a higher purpose. He is entirely happy in his role as a slave and has arrived at the goal he has so long desire." Undoubtedly, if there is anything to learn by watching *Forever Mine*, it is that one should never trust any woman, especially the sort that regularly lies and cheats on her husband. Additionally, any woman that marries a man that she does not love wholly deserves the abject metaphysical misery and grand sexual dissatisfaction that typically accompanies such a sham relationship, as she has robbed both herself and her spouse of true happiness due to both greed and/or cowardice.

-Ty E

THE CANYONS

Paul Schrader (2013)

It has been some time since lapsed Calvinist screenwriter turned audacious auteur Paul Schrader—the man who penned classics like *Taxi Driver* (1976) directed by Martin Scorsese and directed classics like *Hardcore* (1979) and *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985)—directed a film that got some notable attention, be it negative or positive, but with his recent work *The Canyons* (2013), he has certainly grabbed some headlines, if not due to the no-budget work's dubiously degenerate stars and almost unanimous critical scorn among professional film critics and fans alike. Starring the smoked out slut and media molested Disney child star turned raunchy train wreck Lindsay Lohan and 'sexually versatile' Hebraic porn star James Deen, *The Canyons* is a film that upon even a superficial glance one assumes is a tremendously trashy tabloid-worthy celluloid sleaze, which is no surprise considering director Paul Schrader has always had his 'genius in the gutter' as the metaphysically miserable mind behind *American Gigolo* (1980), *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990), and *Light Sleeper* (1992). Also starring in *The Canyons* is ancestrally cursed Jewess Amanda Brooks, whose 'trust fund stoner' brother was not only convicted of murdering his girlfriend this year, but whose psychopathic pervert father is Joseph Brooks—the seemingly sappy sentimentalist yet ultimately psychopathic Academy Award-winning songwriter behind the emotionally phony hit song "You Light Up My Life" and a serial rapist who was to be tried in the state Supreme Court for Manhattan on no less than 91 counts of rape, sexual abuse, criminal sexual act, assault, and other charges, but committed suicide so he would not have to deal with his demonically degenerate deeds. Undoubtedly, the lead antagonistic of *The Canyons* as played by gay-for-pay debauchee James Deen is not that unlike Joseph Brooks in his sexually predatory and ultimately psychopathic behavior, just as Lindsay Lohan's onscreen character is not that far off from her real-life persona as a lecherous lady who could be described as 'damaged goods,' thus one has to admit that Schrader's film is certainly an unflattering example of art reflecting life and vice versa. Penned by overrated quasi-nihilist novelist Bret Easton Ellis (*The Rules of Attraction*, *American Psycho*), who bashed Schrader's film before it was even released, stating, "The film is so languorous. It's an hour 30, and it seems like it's three hours long. I saw this as a pranky noirish thriller, but Schrader turned it into, well, a Schrader film," *The Canyons* is, indeed, pure Paul Schrader, which was surely to the corrupting celluloid work's benefit as a rare flick from 2013 that is reflective of America, as well as Hollywood's, all-encompassing moral, cultural, and aesthetic decline. Essentially, the *The Canyons* is the superlatively sordid story of a young trust fund kid psychopath who produces movies to "keep his father off his back," who starts a personal war with a struggling actor who is secretly screwing his prostitute-like girlfriend and who is a sort of

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psychopath-in-progress who has yet to learn what it takes to live, survive, and strive in Los Angeles. A no-budget piece of 'psychological horror porn' shot on a mere \$250,000 utilizing some of the most unsavory 'actors'/porn stars/socialites in Hollywood, *The Canyons* is not a suavely stylized Schrader-esque celluloid sleaze that lives and breathes the paradoxically sickening Hollywood sunlight, but a radically cinematically reflective work and an indictment of the Hollywood film industry itself, portraying a young producer as the most pernicious and perverted of manipulators who runs and 'directs' the show 'behind the scenes' and depicting a young actor as the mostly unholy of whores, who is willing to both literally and figuratively screw anyone, male or female, to get his way. Opening with a number of allegorical shots of various dilapidated, rundown, and closed movie theaters, *The Canyons* is also a work that portrays the Hollywood studio system as a sort of bankrupt bordello of sorts, run by lunatic libertine pimps (i.e. producers) and occupied by soulless prostitutes (i.e. actors) whose sole goal is to be the most high profile and wealthy sluts in the world.

In the first couple moments of *The Canyons*, one is introduced to the four lead characters, couples Tara (Lindsay Lohan) and Christian (James Dean) and Ryan (Nolan Gerard Funk) and Gina (Amanda Brooks), who are on a double date with one another at an upscale bar so the men, one an actor (Ryan) and another a producer (Christian) who landed the actor a job for an upcoming slasher flick he is producing, can meet each other for the first time, thus sparking the beginning of the end for both men's mutually exploitative relationships. Gina is something like a production assistant on a 'low-budget slasher flick' produced by tyrannical trust fund brat Christian, who is only involved with the film to keep his father off his back and pretend he has a semblance of a job. As a favor to her from Christian, who has nil interest in the film and does not even plan to be around for the work's production, Gina has managed to get her boyfriend Ryan, a fellow that somewhat misleadingly describes himself as a "more conventional guy," the lead role for the slasher flick. Unbeknownst to Christian and Gina, Ryan and Tara were once lovers and have rekindled their flame after meeting one another again by happenstance on pre-production for the film. Unfortunately for Ryan, his ex-lover Tara is a virtual sex slave of pretty boy psychopath Christian, who essentially forces her to have sex with strangers he meets on the internet, as he gets off to dominating her and loves 'directing it' on his cellphone. Not unsurprisingly, Christian has hired a goofy wigger 'private detective' to tail Tara wherever she goes, so he eventually learns of his girlfriend's affair with Ryan. Naturally, Christian starts a war with Ryan that involves the ostensibly heterosexual actor allowing another producer (a gay kraut who Christian asks him to blackmail sexually) to suck his cock so he can 'keep the part' in the slasher flick, hacking into his facebook, cellphone, and bank account (where he drains his money). Meanwhile, Ryan learns that a girl he used to date named Cynthia (Tenille Houston) is also a mutual ex-girlfriend of Christian who he still screws.

Ryan convinces Cynthia to tell Tara a sob story about how supposedly when she dated Christian, who she lovingly describes as a "sick little boy," he secretly put roofies in her drink and allowed a bunch of guys to 'run a train on her' while she was passed out, thus landing her in the emergency room at UCLA. Paranoid about the fact she has serially cheated on him with Ryan and his purported drugging of his ex-girlfriend, Tara begins to consider leaving Christian for good, but she also starts her own quasi-femme fatale-like 'psychological war' against her rich lunatic lover beforehand to 'soften him up,' including coercing the wealthy and wanton psychopath to experiment with his bi-curious side by allowing another man to blow him during one of their 'swinger nights' with random people they met on the internet. When Christian goes to his mandatory weekly counseling session (his father will 'pull his trust fund' if he does not go) with his therapist Dr. Campbell (symbolically played by queer auteur Gus Van Sant, a filmmaker who 'crossed the line' between the independent New Queer Cinema world and horribly hokey Hollywood blockbusters), he less than proudly admits regarding his brief and ultimately dis-empowering flirtation with faggotry, "Usually, I'm the one in control. Last night I wasn't. None of it seemed real. Not when that guy was sucking my dick or when Tara tried to get him to fuck me. Which didn't happen, FYI. There were certain things that Tara and the other girl wanted us to do, and I don't even know why I care. Just some dumb kids on the internet I'll never see again. Just...didn't feel like I wasn't in control. I felt objectified. The way the two of them just watched and told us what to do. Doesn't usually go down like that. Usually I'm the one directing the scene....It made me feel like an actor." Of course, Christian ultimately finds a way to become the "one directing the scene" again and it involves him killing a certain girl in coldblood who both he and Ryan used to date. In the end, Tara finally gets away from Christian, Ryan loses everything important to him yet develops a new found sense of sociopathy, and Christian is still at the top of his game, graduating on to becoming a calculating coldblooded killer opposed to being a mere calculating cock on coke.

While a sickeningly sleazy 'erotic thriller' featuring some of the most innately reprehensible, unredeemable, and revolting 'pretty cool people' characters in recent film history, *The Canyons* is more importantly, an unpretentious and far from preachy indictment of the contemporary American zeitgeist, where loveless and aberrant sex, mindless materialism, less than fulfilling hedonism, callous careerism, and fraudulent and mutually exploitative 'romantic' relationships, are just the name of the game, especially in an unwaveringly soulless and culturally hollow place like Hollywood, a decidedly degenerate dream-factory that, rather unfortunately, infects the rest of the world with its metaphysical maladies. As director Paul Schrader stated in a recent interview with *Film Comment Magazine* regarding the film, "...we're making art out of the remains of our empire. The junk that's left over. And this idea of a film that was crowdfunded, cast on-

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line, with one actor from a celebrity culture, one actor from adult-film culture, a writer and director who have gotten beat up in the past—felt like a post-Empire thing,” and, indeed, as a work featuring a child star turned disastrous diva and a small and frail boyish Jew porn star in the lead roles as directed by a lapsed Calvinist who did not see his first film until he was almost an adult yet would go on to become one of the most controversial and politically incorrect American screenwriters/directors of his decidedly degenerate generation, *The Canyons* is indubitably the superficially seductive and scandalous yet also nicely nuanced and anything but naïve piece of apocalyptic celluloid that is bound to go over the head of most viewers, especially those quick to condemn it due to its starcrossed stars and almost nonexistent budget. As Lindsay Lohan’s character rhetorically asks the character played by Amanda Brooks, “Ok, tell me something...Do you really like movies?...Really, really like movies? When’s the last time you went to see a movie in the theater? A movie that you really thought meant something to you?,” thus demonstrating not only the decline of cinema quality in Hollywood and as a “favorite American pastime,” but also how films are now made in general in the internet age with Schrader’s *The Canyons* being a curious product of this trend as a work funded by the ‘crowd funding’ internet tool of Kickstarter and largely making its premiere on the online video-on-demand on sites like YouTube.com. Screenwriter Bret Easton Ellis also further confirmed the ‘post-modern’ form of film production regarding *The Canyons* by remarking “Using social media as a way to help build a film is really like riding the wave into the future,” which is further confirmed by the film’s producer Braxton Pope, who proudly stated regarding the film, “Nothing about this film was orchestrated in a traditional way. We wanted to actively embrace all the digital and social media tools at our disposal and give the film real cinematic value – ‘The Canyons’ is the result of a forward thinking experiment with a terrific cast.” While certainly no masterpiece, *The Canyons* is reasonably ‘penetrating’ proof that director Paul Schrader has been to keep up with the times in terms of his cinematic subversiveness, that Lindsay Lohan is actually a capable actor when in the right sort of film, and that porn stars like James Deen have their place in mainstream films, albeit supremely sleazy ones that are better funded by the fans than put in the hands of solely monetary and propaganda motivated psychopathic Hollywood producers like antagonist Christian as played by James Deen. As stated by Deen’s character, “Nobody has a private life anymore” as a result of the internet, social networking sites, and whatnot, but at least now American movies are not totally monopolized by the Hebraic hands in Hollywood as demonstrated with the production of *The Canyons*, a work that proves that Paul Schrader is not only an audacious auteur but also a postmodern alchemist who is able to turn cultural shit (e.g. James Deen, Lindsay Lohan, Bret Easton Ellis) into cheap celluloid gold.

-Ty E

THERE WILL BE BLOOD

Paul Thomas Anderson (2007) *There Will Be Blood* is the latest Academy-Award nominated picture for the Oscar's could be lovechild Paul Thomas Anderson. The film has been heralded time and time again throughout the last Oscar race, but much to the avail of any P.T. Anderson fan, the Coen Brothers stole away with it. TWBB chronicles the rise and fall of oil tycoon Daniel Plainview, who through the years, becomes severely disjointed in between his work and his hatred for mankind. P.T. Anderson adapts Upton Sinclair's novel *Oil!* for his latest motion picture which propelled his career into a more serious tone. It seems in Hollywood, the greater the film is, the fewer theaters they get shown at; It's really quite a shame seeing as how this film should be seen nearly by the entire American population. With greed comes hatred, which eventually unfolds during this saga of the Plainview family. The film is entirely supported on the dialogue, acting, and cinematography. Much of the acclaim is being showered amongst Daniel Day-Lewis. While he deserves all of the credit, I must hand it to Paul Dano for his excellent role as the sniveling religious boy who cares for the development of his church and nothing more, not even the prospect of his family. When you look at it in perspective, both were selfish figments of the story. Much of the film is built off the American dream and flourishes off of the cardinal sins; lust, greed, and envy. This leads to complications with the newly erected Church of the Third Revelation. Faith and power often clash in this film. I haven't seen a godless character been played so well since Timothy Carey's *The World's Greatest Sinner*. The eventual decline of Daniel is one of heart-breaking importance, seeing such a proud man spiral into alcoholism and chronic back-pain is the outcome of such a story. What makes this film's legacy so powerful? The acting? The characters? The steel determination to be the best? All signs point to the fluidity that guides the scenes along a rail road track. *There Will Be Blood* is a must-see for anyone. If you are interested in history, character developments of the colossal sort, an amazing soundtrack by a member of Radiohead, or the acting of Daniel Day-Lewis, you will absolutely adore this film. To put it simply, the best red-blooded American film to ever be made.

-Maq

TURKISH DELIGHT
TURKISH DELIGHT

Paul Verhoeven (1973)

Lets face it, most film love stories are complete garbage. The ones that come out of Hollywood are especially appalling. Paul Verhoeven's Dutch masterpiece Turkish Delight is one of the very few exceptions to this rule. The film didn't receive the award for Best Dutch Film of the Century by the Netherlands Film festival for nothing. Turkish Delight is a powerful love story that shows the beginning and fatal conclusion of a relationship between man and woman of the unconventional sort. Rutger Hauer plays the eccentric artist and sex addict Eric. This young artist finds his ladylove in the form of redheaded teenager named Olga. The two young lovebirds hit it off perfectly with one another due to their practice of wild sex and erratic complimenting behavior. After first meeting each other, the couple symbolically engage in sex and eventually a car wreck. Not long after the wreck, Eric hunts down Olga at her parents store. Olga's mother already hates Eric and he could really care less. His only interest is Olga. Eventually Eric and Olga get married. Olga's mother attempts to accept bohemian artist Eric and his unconventional lifestyle. Eric responds to Olga's mothers token kindness by messing with the older woman's fake breast (she had breast cancer). Olga's father surprisingly accepts Eric as he seems to be a very mellow and laid back man. When the old man dies, Eric is offered to take over Olga's parents family business and instead flees to Amsterdam. Eric instead prefers to sculpt and draw figures of his new wife's nude body. Eric shows his love for Olga in some of the most perverse yet "touching" ways. In one unexpected moment, he digs through Olga's feces with his own bare hands to check for blood (she is in fear that she has cancer). Eric is an individual that is incapable of expressing how he feels to others in normal ways. But when Eric expresses his love for Olga, it is more than obvious. At the same time, Eric can be one of the most cruel individuals out there. For example, he sells a nude drawing of the two married lovers although he had already given the drawing to Olga as a loving gesture. Eric also later rapes Olga in a very sneaky and deceptive manner. Unsurprisingly, Olga seems to enjoy the unwanted sex until her mother bursts into the room in a belligerent rage of elderly fury. Turkish Delight also features a variety of dream and fantasy sequences that were no doubt inspired by the works of Italian maestro Federico Fellini. Eric imagines himself killing Olga's lover and then her. He also imagines Olga's father enjoying his funeral as if he was a young child attending a carnival for the first time. These dream sequences unsurprisingly further compliment the unconventional masterpiece that is Turkish Delight. Turkish Delight is a love story for the real passionate lovers out there. Those couples out there that have something special and unobtainable that makes others wonder. Turkish Delight is as close to a film will come to portraying one of those rare magnificent and spontaneously joyful relationships. Despite their hardships, Eric stays by Olga's

side to the end. Turkish Delight is a truly heartwarming film that features two humans at the height of intimacy.

-Ty E

KATIE TIPPEL
KATIE TIPPEL

Paul Verhoeven (1975)

Katie Tippel (1975) is another Dutch masterpiece from the early directing years of Paul Verhoeven. The film is a rags to riches story taking place during the 19th century as the banking scam of socialism started to rear its putrid head in the Netherlands. The film is based on the memoirs of true life Cinderella Neel Doff. As you can expect from Mr. Verhoeven, Katie Tippel is full of bizarre and even downright disturbing sexual moments. Katie Tippel's family have just arrived in Amsterdam without a penny to their name. Despite their lack of monetary success, Katie's mother and father have produced a number of kids they can't afford. The sole breadwinner of the family is Katie's overweight and fairly disgusting sister who has realized her baby making machine can feed her stomach. Katie's father (who eventually gets a job he loses) is pathetic to say the very least, and her mother seems to be willing to have her children do anything for a couple of pennies. Katie demonstrates from the start of the film that she is a fighter and won't let anyone get away with taking advantage of her. After being raped by her scrawny employer, she throws a brick through the window of the shop she once worked at. Against her own morals, Katie eventually takes up the undesirable career of a prostitute. She realizes early that men only end up taking advantage of her and she might as well get paid for it. One buyer even calls her most private area a "pretty little rose" and soon afterwards only gives her a couple cents due to her lack of experience. Rich people have always been cheap. Katie's overweight sister finds it only appropriate that she defecates in front of her parents while they eat dinner. In tribute to the dead art of reading, she wipes her hefty ass with a page that she tears out of a book. Earlier in the film, Katie's sister also finds it funny to drop the family's recently acquired puppy (that died in flooding of their shabby room) in the same toilet. Katie also finds her little brother prostituting himself to a dirty old rich man. When she tells her mother, she ignores what she says. Katie has more than enough reason to abandon her pitiful family. I have seen a variety of "success" films in America throughout my life as most Americans have. I find Katie Tippel to be preferable to those "American dream" propaganda pieces. Katie Tippel is full of artistic raunchiness which is something that I have always appreciated. The Dutch films of Paul Verhoeven are like the films Bernardo Bertolucci (although I am a fan of many of his films) except with more class and cohesion.

-Ty E

SOLDIER OF ORANGE

Paul Verhoeven (1977)

Soldier of Orange is one of the many Dutch masterpieces from Paul Verhoeven. Before Verhoeven started making Sci-Fi satires in Hollywood, he was Holland's most highly revered film director. But alas, like most international film talent, Verhoeven was taken away from his homeland to make big bucks for the men that live off of Mulholland Drive. Unsurprisingly, Soldier of Orange seems to be Verhoeven's most "Hollywood" Dutch film. I am sure that Mr. Verhoeven saw a few American war films before directing the film. Soldier of Orange is sort of a personal film for me. The film is set during the German occupation of Holland during World War II. I had relatives from The Netherlands living during that time period and can still feel the affects of that destructive (and pointless) war today. Soldier of Orange centers around a group of friends and the different paths they take during the war. Holland's greatest actor Rutger Hauer stars as the lead character Erik Lanshof, who joins up with the Dutch resistance and British to fight the Germans. Through his epic Journey, Erik realizes he can't even trust the best of friends. Paul Verhoeven took a more realistic approach than most on the subject of the second World War. You see as the Germans first invade Holland and their occupation is fairly peaceful. As the war progresses, the resistance gets more defiant and the tensions build up. Soldier of Orange also brings up how some Dutchmen joined the Waffen SS and fought for Germany on the eastern front. I find it odd that Paul Verhoeven forgot to mention the Dutch famine of 1944 where at least 18,000 people starved to death. Despite the lack of mention of this tragic event, I still respect Verhoeven's commitment to historical reality. Soldier of Orange features a variety of unfaithful sex scenarios. The friends in the film just can't seem to get enough of one another's sex partners. The men go from woman to woman like they are playing tag. These sex scenes are the only indicator that Paul Verhoeven would go on later to direct the ridiculous sleazy stripper drama fest Showgirls. Verhoeven has always been a master at filming scenes in the bedroom. Soldier of Orange also seemed to have a variety of subtle homoerotic scenes between the group of friends. The most obvious is a ballroom dance between Erik Lanshof and his friend Derek de Lint who is now a member of the SS. The two friends dance with each other, now on opposing sides in the war. This poignant scene is slightly erupted by some SS whores that desire Derek's Iron Cross metal he got for blowing up a Russian tank. Derek's demise is both pointless and tragic. A scene that director Paul Verhoeven later regretted shooting. There are too many worthless films that take place during World War II. Most of them are just rehashing of the same propaganda dribble. Soldier of Orange is a refreshing change with a very different perspective. It is a film that takes an unconventional route through a horrible war. Soldier of Orange also happens to be one of the best Dutch films

SOLDIER OF ORANGE

ever made. Be sure to see it before you watch Verhoeven's recent inferior film Black Book which also takes place during the German occupation of Holland. I conclude with saying that the obese queen of Holland was a less than admirable leader for that country during World War II.

-Ty E

SPETTERS

Paul Verhoeven (1980)

Spetters is without doubt Paul Verhoeven's most offensive film that he made in his homeland. The liberal Dutch even thought it was revolting. This was a thoroughly bold move on Verhoeven's part seeing as all his earlier films also have some type of controversy attached to them. Spetters also happens to be a rebellious masterpiece of European film making. It is rare to find movies of such unwholesome content that is of such high quality.

I have no interest in dirt bikes, motorcycles, motocross, or other crotch rocket related activities, yet I love racing themed Spetters. The film follows three young men that have dreams of making a career in motocross. They hate their hometowns and repetitive jobs, so motocross becomes the ideal profession for these young lads. Their ambition of changing careers also parallels their search for a new woman. Not only are these young men competing in motocross races, but also for the love of a blond femme fatale who has a food stand with her towering homosexual brother.

Spetters features an array of awkward nudity and sex scenes. One scene involves three young men comparing penis sizes. The guy with the biggest penis has the luxury of first attempting to put their manhood in the blond love interest. Another scene involves the faking of an orgasm by two of the young men and their girlfriends so that they can get out of sex. The young Calvinist mechanic also happens to spy on homosexual prostitutes and their Johns so that he can blackmail them for money later. Later this young man has something undesirable penetrate him which he later realizes he liked. Screwed up sex isn't the only thing featured in Spetters. Serious drama is found throughout the film. The youthful friends in Spetters realize as the days past that their ideal fantasies usually don't turnout the way that they would like. Fights, paralysis, rape, family problems, and failure are just a few of things that plague these callow friends. Dreams come at a substantial price and fellows in Spetters just don't seem to have enough to pay it.

Spetters is also a film about the "new" postwar Holland. The new Holland is a place of liberal and "everything goes" attitude. Before World War II, Holland was considered a proud moral country. After World War II, Holland became a socialized region where strict moral nationalist views became a taboo of sorts (like most of Europe). Spetters takes these liberal attitudes to extremes with "free love," miscegenation, gay gangbangs, and blasphemy against the Dutch reform church. I guess you could also say the same about the United States and Hollywood films. Of course, Hollywood started its blatant degeneracy in the late 1960s. Director Paul Verhoeven would later go on to direct the controversial Showgirls in Hollywood. The main difference between Showgirls and Spetters (other than the entire story) is that the latter is a serious film. So serious that one

SPETTERS

of the actors who commits suicide in Spetters would also go on to kill himself in real life. This is a film for anyone that likes to be both entertained and would like to see a quality film.

-Ty E

FLESH /& BLOOD

Paul Verhoeven (1985)

It would have probably sucked living during the Middle Ages because of the plague and all, but few things suck worse than Hollywood's blasphemous portrayals of those ghastly times. It would be very hard for me to come up with a "Top Five" list for "Best Films set during the Middle Ages" because I doubt that I even enjoy five films set during that death-filled era. Of course, when I found out that Dutch auteur Paul Verhoeven directed a blood-soaked film *Flesh & Blood* set during the Middle Ages, I felt compelled to see the cinematic adventure. After all, if there is a director that can take films with very stupid premises and make a masterpiece out of them (e.g. *Robocop*), Paul Verhoeven is the guy to get the cinematically ambitious job done right. *Flesh & Blood* is the film Verhoeven directed before completely surrendering himself to Hollywood with the Sci-fi classic *Robocop*, a film that virtually has nothing in common with his earlier Dutch Art House works, but deserves recognition in its own right. With *Flesh & Blood* Paul Verhoeven makes no pathetic attempts to romanticize the Middle Ages. The film features brutal rapes, castrated corpses hanging from trees, stillborn babies being born by virtual sex-slave mothers, and a very murderous form of Christianity. Even noblemen are at the constant threat of being murdered by ambitious barbarians looking to become Noblemen as well. *Flesh & Blood* follows a group of Mercenaries led by a devilishly Heroic man named Martin (played brilliantly by Rutger Hauer) and his rape victim/lover Agnes, a young Heiress who knows what she wants and how to get it. A young Italian ruler Steven Arnolfini, who is more interested in Science and inventions than his fiancé Agnes, realizes he must rescue her after the two would-be lovers share a mandrake. The driving plot of *Flesh & Blood* is finding out who will end up with Agnes: The middle-aged Barbarian Mercenary Martin who wishes he was a Nobleman or a Twenty-something year old Nobleman inventor Steven. Agnes may look like a pasty preteen while in the nude, but in her own Middle Age world she acts as a goddess. *Flesh & Blood* brings up some interesting ideas about class differences even if the film was set during the Middle Ages. The mercenaries want nothing more but to live the good life and become Noblemen. After all, gang raping children and castrating enemies can get quite banal after sometime and being the master of a castle has a certain classiness to it. After capturing a castle from some unfortunate Nobles with the plague, the Mercenaries start living the good life. They have plenty of food to eat and servants to serve them, but they look quite comic in their attempts at enjoying the Noble life. Heiress Agnes tries to show her Rapist Lover Martin how to eat with a fork which has comic results. Agnes seems to very much enjoy her lower-classed lover's pathetic attempts at becoming something he's not. Maybe Karl Marx wasn't the only effeminate mind conspiring for class warfare. *Flesh & Blood* may be no Turkish

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Delight, but it will certainly fulfill ones appetite for Middle Age raping, pillaging, murdering, and everything else historically that is so bloody nice. The film does not solely glamorize or romanticize the Middle Ages as a time when people spoke more eloquently and dressed nicer than they do nowadays like most Hollywood films set during that era. Instead, Flesh & Blood presents a world where death is around every corner, whether or not one is rich or poor. Interestingly enough, Flesh & Blood also presents a world where there was more passion and incentive for one to live life to their fullest. Yeah, maybe people believed that wooden statues of St. Martin of Tours were guiding them on a spiritual tour, but that is much more admirable than hoping a criminal Mulatto Messiah will deliver the world from Evil and bring about universal world peace. How weak.

-Ty E

BLACK BOOK

Paul Verhoeven (2006)

Black Book is Paul Verhoeven's first Dutch film since *The Fourth Man* (1983). The film is also the most expensive and high grossing Dutch cinema history. I have always wondered would it would be like if Paul Verhoeven went back to Holland and started directing films in his homeland again. Black Book made for a great film to compare to his past Dutch films to, especially *Soldier of Orange* (1977). Unfortunately Black Book could not compare to the artistic integrity of Verhoeven's earlier German occupation masterpiece.

Verhoeven jumped onto the Jewish sympathy bandwagon with Black Book. On top of that, the story was historical fiction. I think it would be more appropriate of Paulie boy to have made a film about Dutch famine of 1944 as it did kill 20,000 of his own kinsman. Of course, I doubt Verhoeven could get the funding necessary for a film about the suffering of the Dutch during World War II. Any film that starts off its opening in Israel is catering to the international crowd.

Black Book goes back to the days of Verhoeven's often and casual nudity scenes. I didn't need to see a beer belly krauts Wiener schnitzel. Carice van Houten's boobs also seemed to somehow pop out of her dress. That somehow may have even been a theme of the film. It's a shame that Verhoeven couldn't match the natural nudity of his Dutch films *Turkish Delight*, *Spetters*, and of course *Soldier of Orange*. The Hollywood years have really wore off on Verhoeven. After *Showgirls* there was no coming back.

Mr. Verhoeven has been Americanized. His recent films have all the features that cater to the lowest common denominator: cheap nudity, sex, guns, killing, and poop. I do have to admit that the dumping of shit on a topless Carice van Houten was fairly humorous and somewhat odd. I don't know what Verhoeven's intentions were with this scene but I had a good laugh.

In conclusion, Black Book was a watchable disappointment. Verhoeven's Dutch films and *Robocop* will always be my favorite from his lexicon. Black Book is better than the majority of the trash that comes out of Hollywood. Just don't expect the magic Verhoeven produced when working with fellow kinsman Rutger Hauer.

-Ty E

ELLE

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Paul Verhoeven (2016)

Out of all the filmmakers I can think of, no other has probably made a more successful transition from the European arthouse world to Hollywood than Dutch auteur Paul Verhoeven (*Total Recall*, *Basic Instinct*). In fact, Verhoeven has even been able to maintain his distinctly Dutch, subtly yet scathingly sardonic sense of humor as demonstrated by the fact that the satire of *Showgirls* (1995) flew over the heads of so many American viewers, including the NYC intellectuals, and it was wrongly labeled one of the worst movies ever made. Admittedly, I still prefer the auteur's early Dutch classics like *Turkish Delight* (1973), *Spetters* (1980), and *The Fourth Man* (1983) to most of his Hollywood films, so naturally I was initially excited when he returned to European filmmaking after almost two decades. Unfortunately, *Black Book* (2006)—a Zionist-friendly turd that has too much of a shallow Hollywood polish for my tastes—was quite inferior to Verhoeven's previous German occupation themed WWII flick *Soldier of Orange* (1977), which quite rightly focuses on the Dutch instead of the Jews. Luckily, Verhoeven did finally return to his true roots with the French-German co-production *Elle* (2016) starring redheaded mischling diva Isabelle Huppert in a role that feels like she was born to play, as if she is portraying the less autistic and more aggressive Paris sister of her character from Michael Haneke's *The Piano Teacher* (2001). While the film is provocatively entertaining as one would expect from a Verhoeven flick, it is far from a feel-good flick and, quite unlike *Robocop* (1987), not something I feel the need to revisit anytime seen, especially after watching it twice. Indeed, while on the superficial level it is a sort of unconventional rape-revenge dramedy where a supremely fucked up bourgeois bitch refuses to be a victim after suffering a rather violent episode of sexual rapine and ultimately demonstrates that it takes an insanely impenetrable ice queen to accomplish that task when rape and murder are involved, the film is also a sort of borderline absurdist allegory for the death of Europe, especially the culturally and spiritually senile European bourgeoisie. Set in a decidedly dysfunctional and decadent world of mostly disgustingly weak and emasculated men and soulless sex-obsessed women, the film effortlessly critiques everything that is innately repugnant and insufferably pathetic about modern Europe, especially France. Undoubtedly, Jean Cocteau might as well have been speaking about *Elle* when he once wrote in regard to his masterpiece *Orpheus* (1950), "Our age is becoming dried out with ideas. It is the child of the Encyclopedists. But having an idea is not enough: the idea must have us, haunt us, obsess us, become unbearable to us." While maintaining a mirthfully cynical and darkly humorous tone, the film is unequivocally haunting, as if Verhoeven wanted to make sure the price of admission for experiencing Isabelle Huppert being raped is nothing less than the perpetual rape of the viewer's soul. Based on the novel *Oh...* (2012) by

Philippe Djian—a Parisian racial outsider of mixed Algerian Jewish stock that is probably best known among cinephiles for writing the novel that acted as the basis for Jean-Jacques Beineix's hardly-female-friendly *37° 2 le matin* (1986) aka *Betty Blue*—the film also takes a somewhat subtle yet thankfully pleasantly politically correct approach to race relations. Indeed, aside from the heroine's son being literally cuckolded by his negro friend in an absurdly nightmarish manner that results in the Huppert's character becoming the stunned 'grandmother' of a mulatto baby, the rapist villain—a suave and successful yet seemingly sociopathic banker—is ambiguously Jewish (in fact, English subtitles were curiously changed to obscure this fact in European releases of the film).

Undoubtedly, the somewhat annoying brilliance of *Elle* is that the (anti)heroine Michèle Leblanc (Isabelle Huppert) is a uniquely unlikable ice queen that is so insanely impenetrable that it is hard to feel sorry for her when she is raped, especially considering that her cunt is so cold it is hard to imagine any man, no matter how aggressively virile and assertive, could violently shove his member in her seemingly frosty flesh cave. In fact, Verhoeven cleverly opens the film with the rape before we even get to know her character, as if the auteur wanted to deconstruct the viewer's sympathy for Michèle as the film progresses. In many ways, the film feels like a sort of post-feminist female fantasy as Michèle is a totally 'independent' woman that not only dictates over a 'hip' and 'sexy' videogame company staffed with largely attractive young men, but she also wields power over her adult son and even ex-husband, thereupon making the rape the one single instance in her life where she did not have total control over a male. Also, rather revealing, the heroine is shocked to eventually discover after chasing various red herrings that the married neighbor she lusts after (she even diddles herself while voyeuristically gazing at him via an upstairs window), Patrick (Laurent Lafitte)—a swarthy yet handsome young banker—is actually her rapist. Notably, instead of turning Patrick into the police, Michèle begins a somewhat short-lived sadomasochistic sexual relationship with him where violent rape is 'simulated,' at least until her cuckold son Vincent (Jonas Bloquet) bashes his brains in upon unwittingly walking in on one of their aberrant erotic episodes. As to whether or not Michèle intentionally gets Patrick killed is questionable (after all, she knew her son was home and also threatened to turn the rapist in), but she certainly does not shed a tear for her lunatic lover after he croaks under rather brutal circumstances. As can be expected from a seriously screwed up broad that regularly nonchalantly uses men as emotional punching bags because she has strategically acquired the monetary means to do so, Michèle has virtually demonic daddy issues due to the fact that she played a not-all-that-passive role at the mere age of ten in a massacre that her father carried out in the neighborhood that resulted in the death of no less than 27 children and adults and various cats and dogs. Needless to say, when Michèle's elderly imprisoned father is in news headlines again because he faces the possibility of parole, it adds an extra layer of paranoia

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to her life (after all, she even suspects her rape might be related to this). Luckily for her, by the end of *Elle* the titular twat has every single man in her life exactly where she wants them, including both her father and rapist dead. Needless to say, Michèle has an unspoken innate disgust of the patriarchy, but her patriarchal world is a morbid and morose mess of emasculated manginas, familial degeneration, and all-around emotionally-excruciating estrogen-driven dysfunction. Aside from the loser males in her family, Michèle is especially ashamed of her mother Irène (Judith Magre), who is a deeply narcissistic wanton old whore that proudly flaunts around a quasi-gigolo (Raphaël Lenglet) boyfriend that is young enough to be her grandson. In fact, the heroine hates her mother so much that when the old lady suffers a major stroke and goes into a deep coma, Michèle refuses to believe it and even asks a doctor if there is some way that her slutty old slag mommy might be faking it. Seemingly both jealous and disgusted by her mother's antics and arguably attracted to a rapist because of childhood traumas related to her father, Michèle suffers from what might be best described as the most warped (anti)Electra complex ever depicted in cinema history. Of course, as the film hints throughout, Michèle's strength is nothing more than an impenetrable shield that was put up long ago when she learned to distrust men after her father's murder spree and was forced to fend for herself. Undoubtedly, the film certainly demonstrates that the heroine has more than a little curiosity when it comes to a man that—for the first time in her fucked up life—completely physically dominates her and then takes her by force sexually. Needless to say, as a woman that refuses to defer power to any man, including an ex-husband that she still seems to love, she cannot let it last forever.

Notably, in a 1995 essay entitled *Showgirls: Portrait of a Film*, Verhoeven wrote, "This theme of redemption is part of American mythology. American movies are filled with these fairy tales in which everything comes out right and everybody goes to the seashore. It is an illusion that is supported by the whole culture, and is probably part of the larger unwillingness to look at unpleasant realities." While maintaining a savagely charming sort of addictively digestible cynicism, *Elle* not only basks in the unpleasant realities of the sexual dysfunction and cultural senility that plagues modern-day France in a manner that is oftentimes Rabelaisian, but it also makes a mockery out of the very idea of redemption, even if the film ends in a fashion that some misguided (feminist) types might interpret as redemptive as the heroine as she is irredeemably damaged and learns nothing from her exceedingly nightmarish experiences aside from further embracing her own warped form of gynocentrism where she figuratively carries around her son and ex-husband's testicles around in her purse via economic dependence. Instead of finding the security of a man in the end that saves her life and/or avenges her honor as one might expect from a film with similar themes, Michèle leads her already psychologically feeble son into becoming a murderer by going on a decidedly dangerous path that involves a 'voluntary' sexual rela-

tionship with the very man that brutally raped her. In short, Michèle is arguably just as hopelessly unhinged and sexually sick as her rapist who, like herself, is a successful professional that largely gets by in life by wearing a mask of sanity. The daughter of a sociopathic mass murderer, she seems to see her rape as less of a traumatic event than a great challenge where she can test her (both literal and figurative) pussy prowess against a man that is, quite unlike her ex-husband, a worthy adversary, thereupon going from prey to the ultimate predator. In that sense, it is no coincidence that a cat watches on with a soulless stare as Michèle is raped at the very beginning of the film as if the feline is the heroine herself coldly sizing up the strength of her enemy so as to adequately dispose of him later. While it is insinuated in the film that Michèle does not report the rape to the police because of the embarrassment that goes with being the daughter of an infamous mass murderer, it is really probably so that she can bide her time until she can eventually take matters into her own hands without getting in trouble with the law (after all, when the police question her after Patrick is killed, Michèle neglects to mention the previous rape or anything else related to it). Like a textbook sociopath, Michèle lacks empathy and merely sees people as things to be manipulated for personal gain. In the end, she even manages to manipulate her rapist—the one man that was able to control her, at least for a couple minutes—into complete and eternal submission. Notably, in a rather telling scene in the film, Michèle randomly acknowledges to a black nurse that she lacks any sort of maternal instincts, even stating in regard to her own son, “Sometimes I look at Vincent, the big lout with nothing special about him that came out of my belly, and I have to admit I don’t know him.” Of course, it is arguable as to whether or not Michèle really knows anyone, though it does seem that her rapist is a sort of kindred spirit as a fellow member of the cryptically unhinged bourgeoisie.

While it is easy to criticize (anti)heroine Michèle since she is a soulless bitch that, among other things, carries on a totally pointless one-sided affair with the husband of her sole true friend Anna (Anne Consigny)—a woman with a heart of gold that acts more like a mother to the heroine’s son than the heroine—she cannot be completely blamed for the sick emasculated world that has led to her professional success and the abject failure of all the men in her life. Indeed, as French New Right theorist Guillaume Faye argues in his book *Sexe et Dévoisement* (2011) aka *Sex and Deviance*, “But in reality, women are in no way responsible for the emasculation of men. One may suppose instead that feminism (which appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century) is not only a reaction to the traditional devaluing and inferiorising of women but, today above all, a response to this emasculation of men [...] The emasculation of young men of European origin is flagrant in France. What is more, since the 1970s, girls have been performing better in school, working harder, and taking their studies more seriously than boys. Zemmour rightly criticizes the effeminacy of social

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values, centered on protection, assistance, mothering, humanitarianism—ideals which, moreover, serve to compensate for the reality of a society increasingly shaken by a new pauperism, and by constantly rising criminality and insecurity, by barbarization, and by neo-primitivism. But things cannot be decreed: if men (and with them, social values) are emasculated, it is their own fault. Women are merely filling the vacuum, taking the place men have abdicated. Besides, many historical episodes (that of Joan of Arc being the most famous) show that women always tend to make up for the failures of men, replacing them.” I do not think it is a mere coincidence that Michèle’s father’s massacre was, according to the protagonist herself, sparked by his neighbors rebuking him for having their children take part in a Catholic ritual. Undoubtedly, this monstrous mass murder spree, which took place in 1976—almost a decade after the so-called May 1968 events and counterculture movement inspired a complete social and sexual change in France—is symbolic of a sort of apocalyptic Last Gasp of traditional French Catholic values. While true patriarchy is what led France to becoming one of the greatest civilizations and empires in all of human history, most people have amnesia when it comes to history and can only associate it with random negative things like Michèle’s father’s murder (just as leftists and feminists associate it with only slavery, misogyny, and war today). Of course, without patriarchy, society produces weak males like Michèle’s son and ex-husband and I doubt anyone truly believes such ‘men’ are superior to those of the past. While he’s not exactly my sort of writer, I think most people can agree that G. Michael Hopf was quite right when he wrote, “Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And, weak men create hard times.”

While rape-and-revenge films are certainly nothing new, *Elle* is so much different from such films that it would largely be a grave disservice to associate it with the (largely exploitation oriented) sub-genre. Indeed, instead of being a film where a chick gets raped, temporarily mentally deteriorates, and then somehow magically becomes a ‘bad ass’ killing machine that literally and/or figuratively castrates her attackers, Verhoeven’s film features a cold and calculated cunt who is sharp enough that she need not even bother to even kill her rapist herself as ‘consensual’ sex with him seems to be her greatest award in terms of her warped sense of female empowerment. While she might be living the feminist dream, Michèle does not feel the need to advertise her feminist tendencies like that total twat Lisbeth Salander from the absolutely atrocious crypto-commie *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* franchise. Additionally, despite buying a gun and other weapons, Michèle does not become homicidally hysterical in a self-destructive fashion like Zoë Tamerlis Lund’s iconic titular character in Abel Ferrara’s cult classic *Ms .45* (1981). Rather brilliantly, Verhoeven deprives the viewer of the sort of visceral animalistic satisfaction that is so typical of rape-and-revenge films, as if to point out the innate stupidity, phoniness, and hypocrisy of the sub-genre. While the rapist is indeed killed, his death is almost as shockingly brutal as the

rape he committed, thereupon leaving the viewer defiled (or ‘raped’) in both instances in what can be interpreted as some sort of ironical anti-violence message. In a soulless world where people tend to get shocked by very little of anything, it is no surprise such inhumane savagery is approached in such a ‘nonchalant’ fashion, as if Verhoeven resolved to have the viewer question their own (in)humanity without even necessarily being completely conscious of it. Either way, there is no question that the rape is a metaphor for a bigger and more important theme.

While it is not exactly a subtle example of symbolism, it is surely fitting, especially considering contemporary events, that the rapist is an unrepentant banker that seems rather cynical about his wife’s strict devotion to Catholicism. In short, he represents everything that is corrupt, degenerative, and ultimately necrotic about the multicultural farce that is modern France. Indeed, it is no coincidence that French Republican politician Fabien Di Filippo referred to corrupt President of France Emmanuel Macron as “President Rothschild” in late 2018 as he is symptom of such decay that originates centuries ago with the Jewish Rothschild banking dynasty. It also seems fitting that the film was made shortly after International Monetary Fund (IMF) head Dominique Strauss-Kahn—a Ashkenazi-Sephardi Jewish hybrid and socialist politician that was originally considered to be a leading candidate for the 2012 French Presidency—was accused of sexual assault and attempted rape against a black maid. Interestingly, in an article at the Jewish news website *The Forward*, Jewess Phoebe Maltz Bovy noted at the end of her review of *Elle*, “Oh, and one more pressing question: Is Patrick Jewish? Michèle briefly suspects a coworker of the assault, and asks him to drop trou, explaining that she’d assumed this coworker was Jewish (he’s not) and that the man she’s trying to locate is circumcised. We don’t know much about Patrick other than that he’s a banker and that he, unlike his wife, isn’t a devout Catholic. Is the evil sadistic rapist banker – like so many bankers in French literature, for example – a Jew? If so, if that’s even ambiguous, this would just add another whole layer of problematic-fave.” I’m going to wager that Patrick is Jewish and that the film cannot be fully appreciated without this being taken into consideration, especially considering recent historical events in France (e.g. Strauss-Kahn) and the western world in generation (e.g. Harvey Weinstein, who was a well known sexual predator long before he was ever officially busted). After all, as Larry David (in)famously stated during a 2017 SNL monologue, “A lot of sexual harassment stuff in the news, and I couldn’t help but notice a very disturbing pattern emerging, which is that many of the predators, not all, but many of them are Jews.” Also, I don’t know much about the film’s source writer Philippe Djian as English-language material on him is very limited, but his schizophrenic lineage as the son of a rootless Algerian Jewish father and a reactionary Catholic mother and early love of great antisemitic novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline is certainly keeping within the greater themes of Verhoeven’s film. It should also be noted that Djian found the May 1968 events in France as something he was

not particularly impressed with as he even went so far as to describe it as simply a time where “there were many girls in the streets” and “everyone seemed a little crazy.” Clearly, *Elle* depicts the longtime societal rotten fruits of May 1968, though not a single film critic seems willing to even consider that.

Undoubtedly, the connection between Jewishness and decline of the sexes as depicted in *Elle* was surely highlighted over a century ago by Otto Weininger, who felt Jewishness and femininity were one and the same, in his classic text *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character* where he argued, “Our age is not only Jewish, but also the most ‘feminine’; an age in which art represents only a sudarium of its humors; the age of the most gullible anarchism, without any understanding of the State and of justice; the age of the collectivist ethics of the species; the age in which history is viewed with the most astonishing lack of seriousness [historical materialism]; the age of capitalism and of Marxism; the age in which history, life, and science no longer mean anything, apart from economics and technology; the age when genius could be declared a form of madness, while it no longer possesses even one great artist or philosopher; the age of the least originality and its greatest pursuit; the age which can boast of being the first to have exalted eroticism, but not in order to forget oneself, the way the Romans or the Greeks did in their Bacchanalia, but in order to have the illusion of rediscovering oneself and giving substance to one’s vanity.” Interestingly, the lack of originality that Weininger speaks of is brought up by Michèle’s ex-husband Richard, himself a failed writer and exceedingly emasculated man, who soundly argues, “People don’t realize the art muscle needs training. Or else culture collapses, goes flabby. That’s what we’ve got now. Flabby culture. Originality or singularity used to be valued and sought after. Or even an end in itself. Now it’s a liability. I’m not talking about novelty.” In that sense, *Elle* is not just an entertaining and expertly executed film, but also a cinematic attack against modernity, even if it is also somewhat contaminated with the metaphysical affliction.

The Jewish angle of *Elle* also becomes more obvious when one reads the hysterical *The New Yorker* review written by neo-judeo-bolshevik critic Richard Brody—a Claude ‘Shoah’ Lanzmann fanboy who dedicated a good portion of his bio *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life Of Jean-Luc Godard* (2008) to attempting to prove that Godard is an antisemite—where he demonstrates a visceral hatred for Verhoeven by completely misrepresenting the director’s film *Black Book* and unsoundly arguing, “Let’s imagine a remake of *SCHINDLER’S LIST* in which a Jewish woman, while in a group herded naked into a gas chamber that turns out to be a shower, notices one S.S. officer, finds him thrillingly handsome, and, when she meets him—oh, wait, something like it already exists. Verhoeven made it in 2006, and it’s called *BLACK BOOK*.” After attempting to paint Verhoeven as a sort of perverted crypto-antisemite at the beginning of his review despite the fact that *Black Book* has an obvious pro-Zionist message,

Brody—a failed one-time filmmaker that, rather curiously, directed a film that no one has ever seen entitled *Liability Crisis* (1995) that rather revealingly involves a Jewish female documentarian whose obsession with the holocaust/Hitler spells disaster for her sex life—reveals that he has completely missed any message the film was trying to convey and instead cravenly resorts to accusing Verhoeven of being a sort of poser feminist, arguing, “Throughout the film, Verhoeven gives the impression of laughing up his sleeve at Michèle’s predicament as well as at her predilection, as if he were getting away with telling a sexist joke in a speech at a feminist convention. ELLE is no exploration of a woman’s life or psyche but a macho fantasy adorned with the trappings of liberation.” Of course, as someone that used the most absurd out-of-context circumstantial evidence to try to prove Godard is an evil antisemite, it is hard to imagine that Brody would miss the crucial (anti)kosher elements of Elle, though it could also be argued that he subconsciously became aware of the counter-kosher angle of the film and merely used his review as a means to (poorly) rationalize his potentially instinctual reaction. Either way, Brody’s Elle review reveals he knows nil about women and that the world could really benefit from less male feminists; be they Jewish or otherwise.

Aside from the obvious symbolic racial-political reasons as to why the rapist in Elle is also a successful banker, the character also represents a sort dichotomous representation of masculinity as underscored by Camille Paglia’s wise words from *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (1990), “Serial or sex murder, like fetishism, is a perversion of male intelligence. It is a criminal abstraction, masculine in its deranged egoism and orderliness. It is the asocial equivalent of philosophy, mathematics and music. There is no female Mozart because there is no female Jack the Ripper.” In fact, Weininger felt criminality was quite common in great men of history and he even went so far as to argue that France’s most legendary statesman and military leader Napoléon Bonaparte—a man who, incidentally, was the first to emancipate Jews in France and Europe in general—was driven to glory by criminal tendencies, stating, “Napoleon, the greatest of the conquerors, is a sufficient proof that great men of action are criminals, and therefore, not geniuses. One can understand him by thinking of the tremendous intensity with which he tried to escape from himself. There is this element in all the conquerors, great or small. Just because he had great gifts, greater than those of any emperor before him, he had greater difficulty in stifling the disapproving voice within him. The motive of his ambition was the craving to stifle his better self.” It can be argued that the anti-heroine of Elle sees her rapist as her sort of erotic Napoleon as that rare no-bullshit alpha-male that, not unlike her mass murder father and quite unlike her meek beta ex-husband and son, has the gall to take what he wants whilst completing ignoring the laws and conventions of polite society. Of course, this also explains the female obsession with serial killers as exemplified recently by

the unending media headlines in regard to the Netflix docu-series *Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes* (2019) and the Jewish director Joe Berlinger's accompanying biopic *Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil, and Vile* (2019) starring perennial frat-boy mischling Zac Efron as bad boy Bundy. On a more personal level, I used to be friends with a German-American chick that was pen pals with mestizo serial killer Richard Ramirez and it soon became apparent to me after a fleeting sexual excursion that her main interest in me was due to my 'unconventional' Weltanschauung, as if it got her wet to know that I sported a Death In June t-shirt and didn't think the Allies were the good guys during WWII.

Apparently, New Line Cinema founder Robert Shaye—a man that made himself very rich with the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise—once stated, “A black humor approach to filmmaking helps to diffuse the potential for offensiveness.” Undoubtedly, few other films validate this statement more than *Elle* where Verhoeven—arguably foremost master to this oftentimes cynical cinematic approach—demonstrates his singular talent for refined Rabelaisian satire where he manages to make the most uniquely uncomfortable of situations endlessly palatable in a manner comparable to disguising rancid maggot-ridden dog shit as Godiva Chocolatier. Indeed, the film does the seemingly impossible by making the European racial-sexual apocalypse seem entertaining, like when great Romanian pessimist Emil Cioran, himself a student of Weininger, once hilariously yet nonchalantly described his adopted hometown of Paris as an “apocalyptic garage” in the documentary *Apocalypse According to Cioran* (1995) directed by Gabriel Liiceanu. Undoubtedly, like much of Verhoeven's films, *Elle* is less a celebration of Occidental decline than a biting sassy and sophisticated reminder of it. In that sense, it is no surprise that the very last scene of the film features the heroine and her best friend Anna walking through a graveyard after bonding over insulting men together, as if to simply let the viewer know that the man-hunting cunts are carelessly walking on the corpse of Western Civilization and that they only have the utmost contempt for the long dead white men that were responsible for building said corpse that they are still unwittingly feeding off of. After all, whether conscious of it or not, these women blame white men for their current lot and, as they say: “Hell has no fury like a woman scorned.” As to the value of a film like *Elle* that criticizes decadence while also curiously embracing it, one must take heed of Cioran's wise words from the nihilistic classic *A Short History of Decay* (1949), “The mistake of those who apprehend decadence is to try to oppose it whereas it must be encouraged: by developing it exhausts itself and permits the advent of other forms. The true harbinger is not the man who offers a system when no one wants it, but rather the man who precipitates Chaos, its agent and incense-bearer. It is vulgar to trumpet dogmas in extenuated ages when any dream of the future seems a dream or an imposture. To make for the end of time with a flower in one's buttonhole—the sole

comportment worthy of us in time's passage. A pity there is no such thing as a Last Judgement, no occasion for a great defiance! Believers: hamfatters of eternity; faith: craving for a timeless stage. . . . But we unbelievers, we die with our decors, and too tired out to deceive ourselves with blazonry promised to our corpses."

-Ty E

EVENT HORIZON
EVENT HORIZON

Paul W.S. Anderson (1997)

I never find it suiting to watch a mainstream film, mainly ones that have aged since I last remember. I'd rather settle in an underground film, an obscure title, or a Die Hard film. I became somewhat of a joke around my community friends because I had not seen Event Horizon. Peer pressure led me to see In the Mouth of Madness (A very similar film) and more recently, Event Horizon. The creator of the Event Horizon (A spaceship which travels at light speed) enlists a rescue crew to discover what happened to the ship and its crew (The "revelation" at the end of the film is wholly unique and makes me think in an expansive viewpoint concerning space. I like that.) Sam "Dr. Grant" Neill plays a convincing role as the douche bag who will throw down the Scientific method on anyone who says otherwise. Rather than arguing reality, he simply looks for a logical answer, which in turn leads to some screwed up shit. (SPOILER) Later in the film, Dr. Grant becomes a savior of sorts. The ferry guard towards the gates of hell. Messianic if you will. The fresh gashes scarring his face prove to effect even the most jaded horror fan. Laurence Fishburne is still working on removing the stain from his action-packed performance in ANOES: Dream Warriors. His role is perhaps a little bit on the wooden side. I did not expect Event Horizon to even be ¼ this engaging. A stark cinematic odyssey brimming with a bit of classic ultra-violence (owing a huge debt to the classic Hellraiser.) By all means, I was shocked and disgusted with this film. It hurts to see that the youth of the "torture porn" era think that their films are disgusting. Event Horizon's depictions of cannibalism, chaos, hell, and everything dark is bar none and upsetting to say the least. Event Horizon is a mash-up of all great science-fiction films. Sets spring with Alien inspiration and characters and situations are all ripped from various classics. I wouldn't expect otherwise giving that the director is the same hack who brought us such insta-classics (Note the sarcasm) as Mortal Kombat, Resident Evil, and AVP. The star of this film is the beautiful leading lady; The Event Horizon herself. A stunning ship decorated with spikes and claw-like doors with provide a tense and claustrophobic atmosphere. The heart of the ship is a fortified black hole being suppressed by three magnetic rings. A gyroscopic heart of infinite terror would be the best way to describe it. My favorite aspect is the funky green lit crawlspaces creating a technical labyrinth. An addition to the greats of Science horror has been achieved, but I can't help but feel copped out when every "war in space" film has to have a goofy black guy on board. It's been this way since the Alien films came out. I can except a goofy black limo driver thwarting Urkel's evil plans, but not in space! Other than this and the recycled events, Event Horizon is damn near perfect. A film that deserves more credit for managing to be creepy and fucked up.

-mAQ

DEATH RACE

Paul W.S. Anderson (2008)

At the helm of this schlocky (not the compliment you'd come to expect) racing action film is world renowned action star Jason Statham whose primary goal is to drive this film somewhere other than in the gutter. It works to a degree before the other cast subsequently drags him and this movie into a homo-erotic prison hell. Death Race is an exercise in gambling with property rights. When you take a director with a horrifying reputation in Hollywood with such blunders as the ill-fated Resident Evil and the too-tacky Mortal Kombat, chances are that your remake has no chances. The machine is just designed that way. Where Paul W. S. Anderson shows for no talent, he too can create an awesome film (Event Horizon) and completely disregard something he had briefly called talent. Remakes have and always will be there. It's been that way for years. The only difference now is the quality and quantity of them. I'm sure in about 10-20 years, our collective society will look back upon the film era and scoff at the insubordination and lack of creativity when it comes to our modern film. If there were to be one rule of remakes, it should be to not insult the original vision and that is exactly what Anderson does. You might recall the classic exploitation original - Death Race 2000. You might also remember the wonderful point system, surprising political messages, and the wonderful system provided by Frank and Machine Gun Joe as to shelter the truth on which is hero or villain. Well, take Machine Gun Joe for instance. Sylvester Stallone plays a wonderful womanizer who is as cocky as he is arrogant. Well, now he's a homosexual Negro who jive talks his way out of tight situations. It's like Anderson purposely wanted to make a vision of Death Race 2000 opposite of what it was. Terrible news - He succeeded. Jail bait Latino women are introduced as navigators, not the reserved daughters of America that we recall from the classic. These women are gang-banging thugs that are street wise and sexy. They aint mind poppin a cap (Napalm canister) inna foo's ass. Sounds like Michael Bay wrote the script, don't it? For the defense of entertainment, this "reboot" (which has a lawsuit filed on it from stealing a ideas from a film called Joust) has what we expect from the trailer, violence, bloodshed, high-octane car chases, and lots of bullet casings. They threw in the MTV generation women for shits & giggles. Keep in mind that most of the gross revenue that this film will make is from men. Men who read Maxim none-the-less. The concept of a freedom fighting Frankenstein conserving his country's freedom looks great on paper, not so much a pyramid scheme to fake Frankenstein to keep the illusion alive. The vision of this film is blurred and scratched. Paul W. S. Anderson is a dying breed. One can only hope that these fascist directors are weeded out by their roots. Death Race is loud and annoying, frenetic and a bit full of itself. The film still manages to be entertaining, but I would never recommend paying for it or for die-hard fans of the original.

DEATH RACE

-mAQ

SCHMUTZ

Paulus Manker (1986)

While typically best known for being one of the most talented actors in the German-speaking world, even if he has aged horrifically over the past couple decades, Austrian actor Paulus Manker (Benny's Video, Brother of Sleep) is also an audacious auteur filmmaker who has directed some of the most immaculately assembled, if not acutely aberrant, Austrian films of the post-WWII era. Learning the craft of filmmaking by working with some of the most pathologically provocative and nihilistic filmmakers from his homeland, including Michael Haneke (Time of the Wolf, Funny Games) and Franz Novotny (Exit... But No Panic, Die Ausgesperrten aka The Excluded), Manker started his directing career with the completely unclassifiable and totally chilling yet suavely stylized post-industrial 'horror-thriller' Schmutz aka (1987) Dirt – a uniquely uncompromising and absurdly ambitious film that would earn a number of awards at festivals, including "Prize for the best director" and "Special recommendation for the soundtrack" at the 1987 Flanders International Film Festival Ghent, and would even be adapted into a book written by German writer Thorsten Becker, yet I doubt any novel could capture the fiercely foreboding and enthralling yet equally alienating atmosphere of the film. Centering around a humorless security guard who takes his unglamorous job watching over an abandoned paper mill a little too seriously and who experiences a brutal break with sanity after losing said job, Schmutz is like a nihilistic adaptation of F.W. Murnau's The Last Laugh (1924) aka Der letzte Mann for the post-WWII generation with its pomo post-industrial setting and irreparably lost protagonist, so it should be no surprise that Manker's former collaborators Novotny (who came up with the "idea" and "treatment") and Haneke (who wrote some of the dialogue) also contributed to the film as writers. For all those individuals who have worked at a job with a dreary dildo of a dude who treats every aspect of his work as if the fate of the world depends on it and brown-nosing the boss like a pathological shit-eater at what is nothing more than a dead-end job fit for a masochistic monkey, Schmutz makes for a horrifyingly 'postmodern human, all too postmodern human' work about a dispiriting dystopian world where a true 'purpose' in life is nowhere to be found. Featuring a super seductive synth-driven score by Swiss synthpop group Yello, Schmutz is probably the mostly readily digestible work ever made about the slow but steady mental disintegration of a maniac child killer.

Herr Joseph Schmutz (Fritz Schediwy, who played the Nietzsche-quoting, dipsomaniac criminal Willy in Berlin Alexanderplatz (1980) directed by R.W. Fassbinder) is an undeniably remarkable man whose life is about to change rather dramatically as a result of his new false sense of 'self-worth' after being hired to work at a monstrously sized abandoned paper factory as a meager security guard.

SCHMUTZ

As his seemingly megalomaniac of a boss (Hans-Michael Rehberg) tells him in a sinister fashion regarding his patrolling job, “Keep in mind, whatever the person in front of you is doing, whether he’s a trespasser or stray, child or criminal, he is in the wrong. He should not be where he is if you are standing opposite him. What do the peoples of the world call an invader into their territories?...Enemy.” A creepy kiss ass of the miserable middle-aged sort, Schmutz does not only go on the defensive against trespassers, but also his fellow security guard comrades as a traitor of the worst kind. Immediately upon first working with a goofy new security guard named Fux (Siggi Schwientek), Schmutz gives gruff to comrade in a rather ridiculously monotone manner as if he were an asexual automaton. Indeed, Fux offers Schmutz on-the-job free booze and babes, but the ungrateful fellow reacts with irrational rage like a tyrannical toddler who has an unhealthy devotion to his mommy. When Schmutz discovers Fux’s collection of porno magazines, the shuddersome and seemingly sexually sterile security guard cuts all the faces of women out from the pages of the mags and makes a collection of them and, for whatever curious reason, keeps them hidden in a drawer. When the bossman discovers Fux sleeping on the job in an inebriated state with two equally drunk, foxy ladies, the new employee has a gun pulled on him and is inevitably fired, thus leaving psycho Schmutz to work by his lonesome and to further stew in his own delusions and get in touch with his impending insanity. A victim of television, Schmutz suffers from sexual displacement and derives sexual pleasure via soap bars due to a television commercial he saw of two naked ladies in an intangible paradise advertising the wonders of sexy soap suds. Being the lone Führer of the post-industrial wasteland he guards with his rather worthless life, Schmutz begins attempting to murder any person that may have the misfortune of passing by the vicinity of where he works. After his boss breaks the bad news that his company no longer has a security contract with the owners of the decrepit paper factory, Schmutz loses his cool and venomously shouts at his boss, “You were entrusted with leadership! You can’t just simply elevate people and destroy them!” so he is naturally fired, but the screwy security guard stays at his job post, drawing up elaborate security plans and maliciously murdering anyone that crosses his pernicious path.

As someone who has worked with German New Cinema co-founder Alexander Kluge – a man whose first film, the experimental documentary short *Brutalität in Stein* (1961) aka *Brutality in Stone*, attempted to depict National Socialist architecture as something frightfully superhuman that was used to apparently ‘dehumanize’ the individual due to its preposterous massiveness – in the past, Paulus Manker was certainly someone who was in touch with all-encompassing alienation caused by industrialization and bureaucracy as portrayed in *Schmutz* – a film that does for technocratic post-Nazi Austria what David Lynch’s *Eraserhead* (1977) did for the putrid post-industrial hellhole that is Philadelphia. Schmutz also gives a number of nods to classic works of German-language cinema, but

the most obvious is a tribute to Fritz Lang's *M* (1931). Like *M*, Schmutz features a scene where the calamitous kiddy killer's shadow appears hovering over a little girl in a dress who is playing around, but Manker's scenario is all the more disheartening and disturbing because the murderer is not motivated by an innate sexual perversion that he cannot control, but by slavishly doing a dubious duty for a job he no longer even has, thus making him more of a sad schlemiel of his environment as opposed to someone born with a broken brain. Manker also makes a number of allusions to Austria's infamous Nazi past, which is especially obvious by the eagle emblem the security company Schmutz works for uses and is featured prominently on the guards' hats as it looks strikingly similar to the one featured in the coat of arms of the Nazi Party, thus allegorically symbolizing the nation's perennial connection to its naughty National Socialist past of blind allegiance to an authoritarian state that advocated violence against the individual, thus turning Austrian against Austrian and mensch against mensch.

In another rather allegorical and acutely apocalyptic scene, Schmutz the putz, after being fired from his job, shoots a television ad featuring the Austrian flag, thus making it seem as if Uncle Adolf's homeland is still in flames due to its infamous legacy, but like many scenarios featured in Schmutz, reality and virtual reality are nearly impossible to distinguish. The one thing that gives Schmutz any semblance of inner 'humanity' is his longing for 'paradise' (in the form of an old postcard of a tropical island he finds at the plant) and 'romance' (in the form of a soap bar and TV commercial), but neither of these things are organic objects, but rather, abstract ideas advertized by companies, thus one could easily argue that the super slayer of a security guard, not unlike the anti-heroes of Manker's two other feature-length films *Weiningers Nacht* (1990) aka *Weininger's Last Night* and *Der Kopf des Mohren* (1995) aka *The Moor's Head* is a victim of the post-modern condition, albeit one suffering from a rather extreme and hopeless case of the decidedly damned sort. In the end, Schmutz calls out to the archangels Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael as a fallen man whose spiritual descent and revolt against god has put him in league with the evil archangel Lucifer. Indeed, no other race but Faustian man, European man, has managed to fall from the grace so hard and so fast with Schmutz being a meager member of this tradition. As the same country that has sired Adolf Hitler, Viennese Actionism, and Peter Kern, it is no surprise that the totally talented Paulus Manker was able to churn out an auspicious celluloid work like Schmutz – a film that acts as an esoteric expression of the psychosis-ridden Austrian collective unconscious. With epic Riefenstahl-esque camera angles in ostensible sardonic anti-tribute to *Triumph of the Will* (1935) aka *Triumph des Willens* and a postmodern pessimism in the tradition of his filmic gurus Michael Haneke and Franz Novotny, Manker's Schmutz is a seamlessly assembled hodgepodge of twentieth century Germanic cinema ingredients that has only become all the more relevant as the years have past in an age where it seems that every month there is an autistic shooter who

SCHMUTZ

has went on a rampage at a school or movie theater.

-Ty E

WEININGER'S LAST NIGHT

Paulus Manker (1990)

With possibly the exception of Ulrike Ottinger's carnivalesque surrealist lesbian epic *Freak Orlando* (1981) and Christoph Schlingensiefel's *Mutters Maske* (1988) – a loose remake of Veit Harlan's National Socialist arthouse masterpiece *Opfergang* (1944) – there is no other film that I have been more obsessed with seeing than Paulus Manker's *Weiningers Nacht* (1990) aka *Weininger's Last Night*, not least of all because of having been enamored and intrigued with the film's tragic subject for a number of years. Described by fellow Austrian anti-Semite Adolf Hitler in the following manner, "Dietrich Eckhart once told me that in all his life he had known just one good Jew: Otto Weininger, who killed himself on the day when he realized that the Jew lives upon the decay of peoples," *Weininger's Last Night* is about a youthful genius who was plagued with dire inconsistencies and whose own ethno-masochistic proclivities would ultimately lead to his own self-inflicted premature demise at the age of 23 in 1903. Weininger proposed the controversial thesis that the archetypical Jew and the archetypical woman are one in the same: passive, unproductive, unconscious, and amoral. The son of a strict yet cultured Viennese Jewish goldsmith, the physically unremarkable Otto Weininger grew up to receive a Ph.D. degree in philosophy and finished his marvelous magnum opus *Sex and Character: A Fundamental Investigation* (1903) aka *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* less than a year later – a work that would make the young genius more popular in his day than Sigmund Freud – yet he would not live to see this fame as he committed suicide in the same house Beethoven died in shortly after the book's publication. 100% Hebrew by blood yet highly influenced by proto-Nazi racialist writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain's best-selling work *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), one could argue that Weininger's suicide was merely the act of a logical man carrying out his own thesis, as he argued that Judaism is "the extreme of cowardliness" and "The Jew has no really strong will." Indeed, it was not converting to Protestantism that freed Weininger from his innate 'Jewishness' but a desperate act of self-annihilation. As fellow anti-Semitic Semite and celebrated Jazz saxophonist Gilad Atzmon stated in his recent work *The Wandering Who? A Study of Jewish Identity Politics* (2011) about Weininger: "He hated women and Jews because he was a woman and a Jew. He adored Aryan masculinity because he probably lacked that quality in any significant amount in his own being. This revelation probably led Weininger to kill himself...he had managed to understand what his book was all about." For those who have studied Weininger's work and life, Atzmon's thoughts might not seem like much of a revelation, as Paulus Manker seems to draw the same conclusion in his minor masterpiece of celluloid theatre *Weininger's Last Night*; a film that is both an efficacious introduction to the

WEININGER'S LAST NIGHT

forlorn philosopher and an audacious piece of Austrian autocratic cinematic art.

No stranger to the curious case of Otto Weininger, Austrian theatric auteur Paulus Manker (Schmutz aka Dirt, *Der Kopf des Mohren* aka *The Moor's Head*) directed and starred in the 1982 work *Weininger's Night* (*The Soul of a Jew*) written by Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol, which proved to be his greatest triumph as a thespian, henceforth inspiring him to adapt it into the film *Weininger's Last Night*. Of Jewish ancestry himself (he dedicates the film to his Jewish father), Manker brings a certain authenticity and intense intimacy to *Weininger's Last Night* that is further exemplified by some of his casting decisions, notably the inclusion of his own mother Hilde Sochor to star as Otto Weininger's overbearing mom Adelheid. Virtually channeling the spirit of the suicidal Judaic man of immense genius, Manker would also play Weininger in the Hungarian film *My 20th Century* (1989) aka *Az én XX. Századom* directed by Ildikó Enyedi – a work that earned its director a *Caméra d'Or* ("Golden Camera") at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival – but no other acting role can compare to his performance and direction as immortalized in *Weininger's Last Night*; a work I would humbly consider the greatest celluloid 'tribute' to an intellectual figure ever made. A fabulous quasi-Freudian expressionistic psychodrama set almost entirely in one mere opera house theatre room, *Weininger's Last Night* is a tragicomedic window into one young genius' seemingly schizoid mind. Haunted by a female doppelganger (a virtual Jungian shadow), his overbearing parents, and historical intellectual figures of his day, including Sigmund Freud, August Strindberg, and Paul Julius Möbius, the Otto Weininger of *Weininger's Last Night* is propelled into hysterical states ranging from morbid megalomania to maniac depression, yet he is mostly able to prevail due to his intellectual sternness; a trait that English-language Weininger biographer David Abrahamsen (*The Mind and Death of a Genius*) argued was the only thing keeping the young genius from completely breaking with sanity. As is vividly expressed in the film, even during his untimely suicide by way of a firearm to the chest, Weininger was able to separate his visceral emotions from his domineering intellect, arguing that self-slaughter was no more of a physiological act than sneezing or coughing as described by controversial Italian-German psychiatrist-turned-avant-garde-writer Oskar Panizza. Despite its saturnine subject matter, *Weininger's Last Night* is ultimately a black comical work of the decidedly snide and cynical persuasion, but not so much so that the viewer is not introduced to Weininger's complex *weltanschauung* and his thoughts on Judaism, Aryanism, Zionism, Protestantism, and gender. If Woody Allen's character in *Zelig* (1983) was less sentimental and had more testicular fortitude and came-of-age in *Fin de siècle* Vienna, he would probably resemble the innately neurotic yet intellectually dynamic Otto Weininger featured in *Weininger's Last Night*.

On top of inspiring thinkers and artists as great as August Strindberg, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Kraus, Alfred Kubin, Robert Musil, Gertrude Stein and

Stefan Zweig, Otto Weininger and his work *Geschlecht und Charakter* would also inspire quasi-fascist thinkers like Austrian völkisch mystic Lanz von Liebenfels, Heimito von Doderer, Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran, and Sicilian Radical Traditionalist Baron Julius Evola, as well as the German National Socialists who edited the parts of his writing they did not agree with. Although Weininger's *Last Night* is arguably the greatest introduction to the life and ideas of Otto Weininger, one must have at least a basic understanding of the intellectual and political climate of late 19th century/early 20th Vienna to fully appreciate the film. At a time when so-called self-loathing Jews (Weininger, Karl Kraus, Egon Friedell, Arthur Trebitsch, etc.) and racially-conscious Jews (Max Nordau, Sigmund Freud, Theodor Herzl, Theodor Lessing, etc.) battled one another in the intellectual world, it is probably hard for modern viewers to accept such a seemingly absurd scenario, thus Weininger's *Last Night* makes for a strikingly singular and aesthetically extravagant awakening to this seemingly peculiar phenomenon in Austrian history. Despite being a man of overwhelming contradictions, Otto Weininger offers the following telling insight in the film: "Antisemitism is a Jewish invention." Like Jesus Christ – another great 'self-loathing Jew' of history – Weininger wears a crown of thorns and his is ultimately resurrected via the posthumous popularity of his work *Geschlecht und Charakter*; a work that will inevitably inspire the goyish antisemitism of the Third Reich. With potent yet preposterous scenarios of absurdist anti-Semitic puppet shows, castration-anxiety-fueled culinary circumcision, menacing Mel Brooks-esque musical numbers, and psychoanalytic psychodrama, Weininger's *Last Night* is a wonderfully wicked (un)love letter to not only to the film's subject, but a particular time and place in Europe before the rise and fall of Hitler, the death of European imperialism, and the founding of the State of Israel, thus it should be not surprise as to why, although Freud is still a darling of contemporary academics, Weininger has been conveniently disposed of in the kosher dustbin of history.

-Ty E

THE MOOR'S HEAD
THE MOOR'S HEAD

Paulus Manker (1995)

I am quite proud to say that, although I like some of his films like *Funny Games* (1997) and *The White Ribbon* (2007), I am certainly no Michael Haneke fanboy, which is largely due to the fact that I cannot stand the man, who resembles a sort of sneering Judaic left-wing intellectual in spite of his apparent Teutonic blue blood. Indeed, whenever I see a Haneke film, I can practically imagine him jerking off to himself while sitting in front of a mirror in his ivory tower like some nihilistic narcissus while fantasizing about the audience members he aesthetically assaulted with his obscenely self-conscious and largely self-congratulatory works. This of course is no fantasy of my own, but demonstrated by Haneke's own remarks and actions, like how he once bragged that audience members were horrified by a scene from his debut feature *The Seventh Continent* (1989) aka *Der siebente Kontinent* where the doomed family flushes all of their money down the toilet. While the director speaks of the "emotional glaciation" of the post-WWII Occident and whatnot, it seems like he is merely projecting his personality and view of the world. Naturally, when I discovered that someone else had adapted a screenplay penned by Haneke, I could not help but wonder if such a work would lack the director's proverbial wagging finger. Indeed, *Der Kopf des Mohren* (1995) aka *The Moor's Head* is Haneke as interpreted by fellow Austrian, actor/auteur Paulus Manker who, as far as I am concerned, has directed nothing but unsung masterpieces, including the post-industrial nightmare *Schmutz* (1987) aka *Dirt*, as well as the truly unclassifiable Weininger's *Last Night* (1990) aka *Weiningers Nacht*, which he also starred in. Based on the tragic life and genius philosophy of so-called self-loathing Jew Otto Weininger—a troubled young genius who committed suicide (interestingly, in the same house where Beethoven died) shortly after releasing his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*, which argued that all people are 'bisexual' (aka a mixture of male and the female character traits) to varying degrees and that the archetypal Jew is innately feminine and thus lacks a moral compass and true sense of individuality (soul)—Weininger's *Last Night* is one of the true contemporary masterpieces of Austrian cinema and a work that Manker, who is half-Jewish (his father was the Viennese Jewish theatre and TV director Gustav Manker), put himself into completely (on top of playing Weininger in the stage adaptation of Joshua Sobol's original play, Manker also played the suicidal Semite philosopher in Ildikó Enyedi's *My 20th Century* (1989) aka *Az én XX. Századom*). Unquestionably, *The Moor's Head* seems more like a work that Manker did to help out his buddy Haneke (who apparently wanted to direct it himself but for whatever reason couldn't) than a deep personal project, yet it is a 'lost classic' of sorts that would most certainly develop a cult following in the United States if it had better exposure. A work of

suburban metaphysical horror in the spirit of Haneke's own *The Seventh Continent* meets Todd Hayne's *Safe* (1995) and Jeff Nichols' *Take Shelter* (2011), *The Moor's Head* begins as a seemingly banal bourgeois drama and delightfully degenerates into a fiercely foreboding horror show about a successful family man who, upon hearing about a toxic gas leak accident at a nearby factory, becomes deleteriously psychologically perturbed and ultimately a threat to his family as he begins preparing for an imaginary apocalypse of sorts.

Afrocentrics will be delighted to know that the eponymous Moorhead of Manker's film is a reference to a gigantic painting of a big-lipped and spook-eyed negress, which is located at a ruined lot where the protagonist, Georg Hartmann (played by Viennese actor Gert Voss, who just died a couple months back), is having a nice home built for his loving family. Georg is a seemingly happy-go-lucky physicist that lives in an Austrian suburb and works hard at a testing lab and has a wife, Anna (German New Cinema star Angela Winkler, of countless classics like *The Tin Drum* (1979), as well as Haneke's 1992 flick *Benny's Video*), as well as three kids, including a teenage daughter and prepubescent boy and girl. Everything seems to be running smoothly in Georg's life until he hears a radio broadcast at work that a "terrible accident" has occurred at a nearby plant in Wiesing involving a gas explosion. While his coworkers couldn't care less that some poor fellow was exposed to hazardous gasses, Georg becomes quite unnerved by the news and almost immediately hallucinates seeing the assumed corpse of the man that perished in the accident. While taking a bath with a rubber duck, Georg also hallucinates seeing blood dripping from his wife's arms. Anna does not become aware of Georg's mental illness until he sells their lot with the Moorhead to buy a ruined country home that he plans to revamp into an ostensible 'paradise.' When Anna questions Georg's sanity after he shows her the country home and recommends that he see a psychiatrist, he smacks her so hard that she falls to the floor and suffers a bloody nose. Afterward, Georg explains that he wanted to move to the country to get away from the "chaos" of the city and then goes on to describe the emigration and suicide rates in Austria. While Georg manages to make up with Anna during their rendezvous in the countryside and he even agrees to attempt to buy back the Moorhead house, the scientist's sanity has only begun to wane all the more.

When Georg opts to stay home while his family goes on vacation in Italy, he takes the opportunity to turn the fancy family apartment into a sort of post-apocalyptic sanctuary equipped with an indoor garden, a virtual jungle with living birds, bunny rabbits, and baby chickens. While turning his flat into an ostensibly indomitable fortress, George actively feeds his paranoia and insanity by listening to the news and becomes especially intrigued by a broadcast about a crazed Chechnyan who committed self-immolation in Moscow. Meanwhile, wife Anna attempts to contact Georg, even sending him a telegram urging him to call her back, but he ignores it. Georg also begins recording his phone calls

THE MOOR'S HEAD

and whatnot as keepsakes. On the handful of occasions that Georg opts to venture out in public, he takes a hint from the Japanese and sports a protective mask over his face, so as not to acquire whatever imaginary virus might be out there. When an elderly busybody makes the mistake of routinely spying on what Georg is doing, he stabs her in the eye via a keyhole. Whatever became of the nosey old fart is anyone's guess, but she surely got what was coming to her.

Naturally, when Anna and the children arrive back from their trip to Italy, they are quite taken aback by what old Georg boy has done to the apartment. While Georg's preadolescent son Jakob (Manuel Löffler) is amazed by the garden apartment, his wife Anna is not nearly as happy and tells her husband that she feels like she is trapped in a "nightmare." As someone who believes his wife only cares about irreverent things, Georg believes that it is she and not he who is the one that is acting delusional. When Jakob hurts his foot and Anna attempts to take him and the rest of the children away, Georg stops her by brutally beating her in front of the kids. When Anna becomes so disturbed by the realization that she and her children have become imprisoned by her husband, she becomes hyper hysterical and vomits. That night, Georg hears Anna running through the apartment, so to stop her he bashes her over the head and instantly kills her. Determined to finish the job, Georg also violently kills all the livestock and slaughters his two young children with a kitchen knife and attempts to frame his wife for the killings by planting said kitchen knife in her cold dead hand. Of course, seeing as he is a schizophrenic of sorts, Georg only imagined the killings and is soon taken away to the loony bin after his wife calls the authorities, but not before he slices his own face up. In the end, the film closes with a quote by Enlightenment era German philosopher/poet Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

As depicted in the documentary *Celluloid Horror* (2004), Canadian cineaste and journalist Kier-La Janisse (author of the 2012 FAB Press release *House of Psychotic Women*) has done her part in promoting *The Moor's Head* by having it screened at her film festival *CineMuerte* aka 'Cinema of Death'—Canada's first and only international horror film festival—alongside works by Jörg Buttgerit, Jean Rollin, and Buddy Giovinazzo, among various others. Aside from that, it seems that Manker's film is destined to incinerate in the celluloid dustbin of history like so many other great German-language films. While I do not want to sound like some proud uncultivated philistine, I have to admit that I believe that what separates *The Moor's Head* from Haneke's oeuvre, is a certain sense of humanity that the *Funny Games* director seems to lack, as if he is above (and/or is too ill-equipped at) demonstrating empathy for his characters and audience. In other words, one does not get the impression while watching *The Moor's Head* that Manker thinks he is better than his characters and that he does not suffer from the narcissistic delusion that his shit does not smell. While nearly two decades old, the film has only become all the more horrifying and pertinent, especially considering the rise of survivalist and 'prepper' types who think that

the apocalypse is just around the corner. Indeed, considering the current state of the West, especially the United States, we can probably expect to see a number of Georg Hartmanns cropping up. The greatest Austrian 'arthouse horror' flick since Gerald Kargl's *Angst* (1983) aka *Schizophrenia*, *The Moor's Head* is a great reminder of the true artistic potential of the horror genre as opposed to mind-numbingly retarded 'supernatural horror,' the totally tedious 'torture porn' of psychopathic Zionist frat boy Eli Roth, and related celluloid swill that Hollywood incessantly defecates out to remind the world that America has no culture. While probably not an intention of the director, *The Moor's Head* also depicts a culturally and spiritually repressed technocratic zeitgeist where rapid Americanization and a lack of a spiritual 'Heimat' drive people crazy, hence why the lead character has an undying atavistic urge to live a simple life without cars and cities and attempts to move his family to the country (and when that fails, he brings the country to his apartment!). Of course, as Haneke demonstrated with his film *The White Ribbon*, the country is an evil place that spawns violent proto-Nazi children.

-Ty E

LUNA PARK
LUNA PARK

Pavel Lungin* (1992)

I have a soft-spot for Jewish Nazis and self-loathing Jews so when I found out about the Russian film *Luna Park*, I immediately had to see it. The Russian film follows a Neo-Nazi skinhead named Andrei who finds out that he is the bastard son of a moderately successful Jewish musician. Andrei's father is everything he hates, a Jew that is more successful than the majority of ethnic Russians and admittedly disdains anything involving real working-class work. On discovering that he is a mischling in the first degree, Andrei is even more enraged than he is whilst beating swarthy mongrels. After all, Andrei's whole being and reason for living is destroyed upon learning he is one of Abraham's bastard sons as his life centers around his anti-Jewish skinhead crew that inhabits the industrial bowels of an amusement park. *Luna Park* is surely one of those wonderful and rare films that is able to eloquently express the absurdity of being a human as well as the schizoid joy of having a self/hate relationship with oneself.

Currently, Russia contains the most Neo-Nazis in the world (oh, how time changes everything with biting irony), from feeble minded meathead skinhead thugs to somewhat legitimate mainstream Nationalist politicians. Russia used to also have the largest Jewish population in the world (mainly contained in The Pale of Settlement of Imperial Russia). After the "Russian" revolution of 1917 (a largely Jewish supported and executed affair), Jews were able to spread throughout the world like wandering locusts. Mass Murdering mongrel revolutionary Vladimir Lenin (1/4 Jewish himself) even made a speech in 1919 on the capitalist ills of anti-Jewish pogroms which was surely one of the first somewhat famous Pro-Jewish propaganda campaigns, something that has become all too common in the post-Eurocentric and globalized United States of America. Andrei of *Luna Park* is surely an unfortunate assimilated remnant of the once thriving and still hated Russian Jewry. Unlike Daniel Balint from Henry Bean's *The Believer*, there is nothing Jewish about Andrei's behavior nor pantomimes (not to mention, he is a body builder), for he truly is a robust Russian brute flowing with a radiant energy of testosterone. It is fairly obvious that Andrei would never make it in the world of Jewish vaudevillian comedy but as for his Father, that is a whole other story....

Although a lover of Russian cinema from all eras, I find it nearly impossible to relate to the 'Russian mentality,' even at the most fundamental level. With the barbaric Russians featured in *Luna Park*, this also holds true for me for they seemed to be psychologically wired in a way that Northern Europeans probably could relate to in the Middle Ages. Andrei's Jewish father, on the other hand, is instantly identifiable as Jewish, for he certainly shares the cynicism, humor, and arrogance of God's chosen tribe. I bet that the average American would also find Andrei's Jewish father to be the most 'American' and understandable due to

the bombardment of krappy-kosher-komedies that Hollywood has reamed them with since birth. Although clever and humorous, Andrei's Father is a highly despicable man, a swindling bohemian musician of the most culturally repulsive degree (he brought degenerate Jazz to Russia for god's sake), certainly someone sharing a similar genotype with Adam Sandler and Sacha Baron Cohen. Despite these glaring anti-goy traits, Andrei soon starts respecting his Father and his talents. It doesn't take Andrei long to realize he needs to shed his working-class skinhead lifestyle for the wealthy (at least rich for a Soviet) hedonistic living of a Judaic entertainer. It soon becomes apparent that the skinheads and virtual prostitutes of Luna Park hate Jews largely out of resentment, not for the love of Mother Russia.

Andrei's Jewish ancestry is revealed to him by his whorish lover, an older full-figured woman who also happened to be his deceased Mother's best friend. This older woman hates Andrei's Father for very personal reasons and wants nothing more than having the old Jewish bohemian die a miserable death with the musical compositions of Richard Wagner as the soundtrack. After all, Andrei's Jewish Father is a man known for screwing every young blond Russki in town (Andrei's girlfriend and Mother being two of them) so a lot of women in the area love and hate this Hebrew geezer. The real intensity and drama in Luna Park lies in a total personal war between Andrei's Father and all of the Russian Neo-Nazis, Andrei being the strongest deciding factor in who takes home final victory. Somehow, I found myself actually cheering for the Jewish con-man and his blue collar bastard son. After all, the skinheads (like in most films of this type and in real-life) in Luna Park come off as being a group of morons that flaunt petty idealism as a rationalization for their uncontrollable and improperly channeled hatred. If the skinheads really wanted to defeat the Jew, they would outdo him with cultural achievements and authentic/organic Russian art, not by proving that they are the untermensch barbarians that the real German National Socialists portrayed them as. These skinheads embody the slave-morality as described by Friedrich Nietzsche, for they cannot make a good reputation of themselves by achievement but instead blame the Judaics (the original promoters of the slave-morality) for their lack of success in their own country.

Luna Park starts excitingly with a savage brawl between skinheads and a group of bikers (ironically, sporting German helmets while fighting with the Neo-Nazis). The opening gang warfare scene also happens to be the most brutal segment in the film for Luna Park is no Romper Stomper. If you're looking for excessive philistine violence or a film that will pump you up for a fight, Luna Park surely fails in that regard. On the other hand, if you're looking for a film with somewhat subtle melodrama and multi-layered emotions, Luna Park is a film worth embracing. Despite being a film featuring a Neo-Nazi Anti-Hero, Luna Park is a fairly apolitical work that legitimately looks at the irrationality that is human nature. It is not often that I see a drama like this, where I don't

LUNA PARK

find myself questioning whether or not the director has any understanding of humanity (not to mention, human emotions) as is the case with most Hollywood films.

-Ty E

SUMMER OF LOVE

Paweł Pawlikowski (2005)

If one needs a great example of the United States' decisively devastating and detrimental effects on German culture since the conclusion of the Second World War, look no further than weirdo auteur Wenzel Storch's film *Summer of Love* (1992) aka *Sommer der Liebe* – the second psychedelic cinematic chapter in the filmmaker's so-called "Jürgen Höhne Trilogy" – as no other film expresses so vividly and violently the horrifying homogenizing effects of America's hippie trash pseudo-kultur on the ill-fated Fatherland. To be fair, the whole 'hippie' aesthetic and lifestyle started in Deutschland during the early 20th century via longhaired, back-to-nature völkisch artist-messiahs like Aryan "apostle of nature" artiste Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach and his protégé Fidus (born Hugo Reinhold Karl Johann Höppener) who both promoted "Lebensreform" (life-reform), Neo-Paganism, sun-worship, nudism, organic foods, vegetarianism, homeopathic medicines, and unconventional gender roles, among other things, which were later imported to sunny California via German immigrants, hence the old stereotype of the tall, tan, and blond surfer dude cruising waves on the beach, but I doubt Teuton auteur Wenzel Storch knows this, or at least forgot it due to too many bad trips with Aryan Alice to *Acidland*. Of course, Storch is no Hans Bitterman as indicated by the line, "if you hate the krauts, eat Brussels sprouts" in his psychotic cinematic tribute to the black sun *Summer of Love*; a film that can probably be best described as an arthouse film for 5th grade amphetamine addicts and acid freaks and the sort of sardonic anarcho-mystical film that seems like it was directed by the 'too cool for school' bastard son of fellow anti-Catholic auteur Herbert Achternbusch. A heretical hodgepodge of humiliatingly horrendous hippie cultural clichés and random references to mainstream German culture and politics, *Summer of Love* is like dog days diarrhea straight out of Wenzel Storch's auteur asshole, which is exactly what I needed to see after enduring some pretentious French puffery piece that I would rather not name just moments before I stepped into the less than gentle German filmmaker's wacked-out Super 8 wonderland. As the sort of fucked up farce of a film that I always hoped Herschell Gordon Lewis' films would be, but proved to without merit, even where maniacal murder is concerned, *Summer of Love* is an overdose of stupid subversive sinema with *Blood Feast* (1963) style bodily dismemberment to boot, but all the more bloody and berserk. If you ever thought John Lennon's assassination and Jimmi and Janis' overdoses are as funny as I do, *Summer of Love* is surely the film for you.

Aryan acid freaks in bold blackface, psychedelic portraits of the pope, middle-aged hippies on heroin, sauerkraut rocking out (literal 'Krautrock'), and bugs bugging on flowers are just a couple of the happening things that go on in *Summer of Love*, a film set during "the year 1972 earth time." As described in

SUMMER OF LOVE

the introduction to the film, “on our small blue planet (note: Storch’s earth is yellow, orange, and shit green) a group of young modern people is penetrating new dimensions of the mind. They were looking for the key to a better world and opened the door to a SUMMER OF LOVE,” but unfortunately, at least for p.c. poofs, Wenzel Storch’s peace is polluted with violent explosions, debilitating drug addiction, rabid racism and general human depravity. Centering on the acid-addled activities of fat freeloading flower child of flatulence Oleander (Jürgen Höhne) – a middle-aged burnout beatnik who prefers heroin to hotdogs and air guitar to the real thing – Summer of Love features a certain frisky foreboding love in the air, but where, I do not know. Like in certain hunter-gatherer tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa where the men shake one another’s penises when greeting one another, the free-thinking chicks of Storch’s unhinged hippie flick grab one another’s meaty tits in a salacious display of solidarity. In Storch’s bodacious beatnik realm, everything is possible, even hip racial slurs and spiritual sexual debasement of the most self-deprecating sort.

Oafish virtual-human-lawn-gnome Oleander is literally an electrifying individual who gives naïve nuns a special tingle when shaking their horribly holy hands, thus he figures the best way to help these little ladies with their broken stove is by merely sitting on it, thereupon drenching his sweet seat with his own sacrificial sweat. The nuns assume he is a, “funny guy...the sort who gets up at 10 at night when other people are going to bed,” but little do they realize that Oleander likes to rock-out with his cock-out in the daytime with young ladies while sporting a radically ridiculous red wig. Needless to say, in no time, Oleander has the women of the church dancing to the same beat of psychedelic sexual subversion as he does. After offering and opening bottles of beer for the nuns (who typically drink holy water), Oleander is complimented for his bottle-busting strength, which he replies is the result of strength-building stamp collecting. After setting the nuns’ Christmas tree on fire on Christmas Eve and secretly redecorating their monastery – the radical “results of weeklong secret handiwork” – the pleasantly plump perv of psychedelic psycho-babble belches the putrid stench of holy Xmas cookies and a groovy party begins where everyone is invited, thereupon resulting in a concert featuring cardboard cut-out air guitar. Without the nuns’ permission, Big O de-christianizes the now-unholy place “Rock-Monastery” where it is now inhabited by hippie heretics who use it as a hip hobo commune/head-shop. Naturally, Oleander, a hypnotic hippie holy-man of the messianic manic maniac sort, continues to spread his groovy guru gluttony all around the Teutonic countryside after turning the nuns into sexually promiscuous hippie gals worthy of joining the Manson family. The rather rotund renegade also runs into four happening hippie chicks named Trixi, Babsi, Trulli and Otti, last names being “Meier, Muller, Schulze, Schmidt swimming in a pool of shit,” and brings them to a Teutonic minstrel show where they request that the lone Negro play a cover of “Paint it Black.” Bored, Oleander

goes to another monastery where he meets Sister Jasmin, who has been, “waiting for him to redeem her for 2000 years,” so naturally the “strange saint” in faggy hippie sheep’s clothing reams and redeems her. Oleander tells Jasmin about his first true love Sandra, who he describes as “beautifully ugly” and later hedgehogs ride around in a neon jeep. Oleander’s ‘trip’ gets madder and badder and concludes in a mental maze of madness that includes mutilation, murder, and, finally, miscegenation.

It should not be a surprise to anyone that has seen *Summer of Love* or any of the decidedly deranged director’s other films that Wenzel Storch was literally tripping when he wrote the script. Although I do not doubt that Storch is down with ‘drop-out’ degeneracy and the soulless sexual revolution that came with it, *Summer of Love* is just as much a mockery of hippie culture as it is of Catholicism and mainstream kraut kultur. A vehement vision of one virulent lapsed Kraftwerk fan’s most frenzied fantasies in Super 8 celluloid form, *Summer of Love* seems like a work more sowed in love of hate than love of life, but one can see that Storch surely had fun when he directed this piece of sordid and surreal spirited scorched earth cinema. Although not his celluloid magnum opus – an honor that goes to his final chapter in the Jürgen Höhne Trilogy *A Journey Into Bliss* (2004) aka *Die Reise ins Glück* – Storch’s *Summer of Love* is not far behind as a work as wacky and wild as the most scatological of Schlingensiefel films, but set on a totally different planet of playful perversity and putridity. Described by *Rolling Stone* magazine as “Germany’s answer to John Wayne and Louis des Funès rolled into one. One can safely describe him as the master of ‘extreme acting’,” jolly Jürgen Höhne is just as much of an innate ingredient of *Summer of Love* as Storch’s subversive direction as a good humored prophet of the hippie cinematic apocalypse. An idiotically idiosyncratic work of avant-garde cinema, *Summer of Love* is an indisputable masterpiece of kaleidoscopic and terribly steaming trash cinema, as well as an eccentric epic of bittersweet cinematic excrement.

-Ty E

CARNE

CARNE

Pedro Almodóvar (1997)

Carne is a neat little medium length short film which is a follow up to I STAND ALONE (Seul contre tous). In its short 40 minute running time, we see the events leading up to those in I STAND ALONE. Gaspar Noe proves his legacy is well deserved with this short. I am beginning to wonder if he ever made a bad film. In the beginning we are given the warnings he slaps on most of his films. Just when you watch this and open your mouth to yawn, we are given a unapologetic look at a beautiful horse, mere seconds before getting stabbed in the throat, allowing his blood and life spill out. Before fully grasping its own death, it gets its neck sawed almost off. Arterial spray and tissue are flowing down the tiles. This is only but the first scene in Carne. The next images explain the wife of the butcher's feelings towards the pregnancy through a singular scene depicting a dull shot of her eating. You can simply feel her hesitance without looking too hard. Next, a child birth. If i was of the opposite sex, this scene would have made me cringe more. Then a beautiful infant holding a ripped up piece of paper. When connected in two, it spells a simple message of asking not to look for her when she is gone. With that, the butcher is left with Cynthia and him to fend for themselves in the slums of France. As the years rack up and he does the same activities everyday, you feel bored with life as he does. He begins to notice his lovely daughter of his own blood is developing her own womanly flesh. Only a precursor to his feelings in I STAND ALONE. This eventually ends up in a tragic incident that leaves him in jail with nothing. These moments allow the full registration of I STAND ALONE to finally register fully in your mind. Think of Carne as the missing piece to a grand, artful puzzle. The dialogue returning is as fresh as its sequel, which is impressive considering the gap between both films. In this film, his daughter follows a show her whole life about a Luchador that battles the evils of Lucifer. Not only is it quite funny to watch his escapades in the background, but years later when she is relocated to an institution, she witnesses this mysterious mans last words as he curses at Satan before his magnificent execution. This happens right as he leaves her to forget her. Moving on can be a symbolic bitch. Phillippe Nahon returns as the Parisian vulgar and raunchy butcher with a taste for violence and objectionable perversions. As of course, his cold stare can stop a moving train. Carne is a grand fucking film that not only proves that Gaspar Noe was born with such artistic talent, but it proves that even in a monster of a man, there is good.

-Maq

TRAMPA INFERNAL

Pedro Galindo III (1990)

When I worked at Movie Gallery, we had shelves full of Mexican films. The very thought disgusted me. At first I thought it was cause of my intolerance to the seedy "Illegal Aliens" but when I glanced at the back of several of these films, my hatred was affirmed. What lie before my eyes were Mexican drag queens with pistols and an obscene amount of lipstick. No, these weren't Spanish films. These were Mexican.

I stared at the plot and screen captures for Trampa Infernal (Hell's Path) long and hard. I wasn't sure if I wanted to brave through another cinematic atrocity. It's fine when it's from my homeland, but trash from Mexico? Even worse than having Terminal Cancer. What I got from this film was a animated gallery of the ugliest actors to ever appear on screen and a fraudulent film copying American classics. Take Michael Myer's Mask, give him Freddy Krueger's glove, then make him exactly like Predator except earthly. That is Jesse; this films villain. He is a war-vet who kills people for a completely unknown reason. Most of this films events happen completely without reason or trial. It's like that Gomez was simply shouting to his crew, "Yes! Throw that in the film!" I use the term film loosely. Our main bastard's name is Nacho, or Pancho. I really wasn't paying much attention to him thanks to his early 90's Weird Al fro. It's an equally disgusting hair piece mixed with the face of a goblin. Honestly, most of my dislike for this film stems from the unattractive cast but also is rooted deep within the films own disease. Simply put; its existence. Several scenes show off the budget and the directors passion excruciatingly well. Such as a machine gun shoot out which involves two physical indications of impact. Hundreds of rounds per minute and only a man is shot. His surroundings and the trailer remain intact. Meanwhile, no bullets pierce drywall or those sand bungalows those damn Mexicans live in. There may be some character who may approach you and start talking "gnarly" saying things like "Yeah mannn this is so bad it's good!" No. No it is not. Trampa Infernal is similar to eating Taco Bell and being stricken with explosive diarrhea. This is an uninspired, uninformed, and completely devoid of any respect from me.

-mAQ

SUBURBIA
SUBURBIA

Penelope Spheeris (1984)

Penelope Spheeris got her first serious start in the film industry with the punk documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981). The documentary features punk legend Darby Crash and his band the Germs (among other legends Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Fear, etc). A couple years later she would direct the 1980's hardcore punk masterpiece *Suburbia* (1984). The film follows a group of squatting punks and their virtual war against Californian rednecks (didn't know they existed). *Suburbia* features some of the best 1980s hardcore punk bands. Charismatic Jack Grisham and his band TSOL have powerful performances of their songs "Darker My Love" and "Wash Away." D.I. and The Vandals (before they sucked) also show their vintage talents. Your ears will be blessed with the gift of song. *Suburbia* is easily one of the most quotable films that I have ever seen (and I hate most quotable films). The performances by the punks in the film are as pathetic as you would expect from real punks (which many of the actors really were). Their apathy for life and everything in general is thoroughly reflected though out the entire punk rock romp. I have seen *Suburbia* so many times that it has become part of my cinematic family. Replay value is a guarantee with this film. Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers plays the lovable creep Razzle. Razzle is fond of rats and speaking of irrelevancies. The character of Jacki Diddley (who later had a minor role in Oliver Stone's *Platoon*) is the groups leader. His character seems to have taken one to many bowl hits in his lifetime. *Suburbia* features a wealth of colorful and unforgettable characters. People that always make interesting company despite their shortcomings. A minor Civil War between young Punks and jobless Rednecks erupts in backyard chaos. Growing up around rednecks, I welcome the cultural clashing fights. Punks and rednecks make the ultimate rivals. When rednecks start shooting dogs, it's time for pay-back. *Suburbia* is the definitive punk rock flick. Do yourself a favor and watch it. *Suburbia* is a *Clockwork Orange* for the apathetic generation. At the very least you will be rebelliously entertained.

-Ty E

DUDES

Penelope Spheeris (1987)

Dudes is a film that I really wanted to enjoy. Director Penelope Spheeris successfully created two punk classics before with the gritty documentary *Decline of Western Civilization* and the cult classic *Suburbia*. *Dudes* is merely a pathetic 1980's comedy that is excruciatingly painful to watch. I wish that I had never tracked down the film (I have been wanting to see it for years).

Dudes opens with an enticing scene featuring a concert performance by The Vandals (the original line-up). From there, the film goes down the fashion punk shitter. *Dudes* lead protagonist is played by love shy wuss Jon Cryer (who plays the pathetic Duckie in *Pretty in Pink*). Cryer is about as believable of a punk as Emilio Estevez was in *Repo Man* (which is a classic despite Estevez). *Dudes* also features Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Daniel Roebuck (who played stoner metalhead killer Samson 'John' Tollet in *River's Edge*). *Dudes* lacks the "authentic" punks found in *Suburbia*. A group of Hollywood exaggerated rednecks kill one of the punks (Flea) and his two aimless buds decide it's time for payback. This boring plot never captured me for second in this wretched generic punk garbage. The two punks would have been better off if they had killed themselves and had their bodies tied to a pole to be used as redneck target practice. I wanted to drag Daniel Roebuck by his Mohawk down a couple flights of stairs. As for Jon Cryer, I would just drop him off in Northeast, Washington D.C. I am sure that someone creeping around in a dark alley will make use of his fragile and pale body. *Dudes* features a horrible generic 1980's soundtrack that would put John Hughes films to shame. I was expecting to hear some tunes by The Germs, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys (which are merely mentioned), and The Circle Jerks. Fear front man Ving Lee stars as one of the dirty and blood thirsty rednecks. His appearance doesn't save this punk rock abomination. I hate to be harsh on a 1980's punk rock comedy but it's necessary. *Dudes* lacks the character and punk authenticity that makes *Suburbia* the timeless classic that it is. I am really not interested in seeing Indian dream sequences and Jon Cryer try to shoot a gun. I will always have *Suburbia*.

-Ty E

THE HARDER THEY COME
THE HARDER THEY COME

Perry Henzell (1972)

I have never been a big fan of the Blaxploitation films and I can honestly say that the only film from the played-out subgenre that I appreciate in any way is Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), which ultimately unwittingly gave birth to a neo-minstrel movie trend that has provided cultural cuckold Quentin Tarantino with a pseudo-religion of sorts. Of course, what makes *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* different from the rest of these films, aside from the fact that it was actually directed by a black man, is that it is a serious film made for serious reasons and was not meant as mere monetary-motivated exploitation of proletarian negro kultur, but as an action-packed agit-prop work with a blatant black power message, hence why the film was promoted by the Black Panther Party, who made it mandatory viewing among its members. Like Van Peebles' film, *The Harder They Come* (1972), which was the very first feature film produced in Jamaica, also takes a no bullshit approach in depicting a rebellious black antihero who is determined to rise above his sub-meager circumstances, even if it kills him. Directed by a white Jamaican of French Huguenot and English descent named Perry Henzell who attended boarding school in the United Kingdom during his teens and later attended McGill University in Montreal in 1953 and 1954 before dropping out and wandering around Europa, *The Harder They Come* is a rare piece of Eurupid-directed black cinema that is neither patronizing nor phony in its essence, but instead gives an authentic voice to the voiceless with a vengeance that is hard to ignore. Indeed, the film was such a groundbreaking moment in Jamaican cultural history that apparently when the film first premiered in Jamaica, some 40,000 people showed up at the theater, which only had a capacity for 1,500 audience members. Described by some as the 'the first English language movie in history to require subtitles in the United States' due to the fact that the actors speak a sub-literate form of Creole dialect, *The Harder They Come* was barely noticed when it was released in February 1973 in New York City by Roger Corman's New World Pictures, but instantly developed a cult following when it was screened as a midnight movie a couple months later, ultimately playing for 6 years straight. Arguably most notable due to its soundtrack by the film's star Jimmy Cliff, the film also brought reggae out of the third world and introduced it to Americans. Shot in a somewhat cinéma vérité-like style with oftentimes shaky handheld camera shots on 16mm film stock and loosely based on the life of real-life Jamaican negro outlaw/folk hero/"original rude boy" Vincent "Ivanhoe" Martin aka 'Rhyging'—a figure who gained fame in 1948 after escaping from prison, committing a series of robberies, and killing a couple of crackers before being gunned down by the cops—*The Harder They Come* is like the Bonnie and Clyde of the Caribbean, albeit much more gritty and organic in persuasion, as if the viewer becomes a passive accessory to the

crimes. Indeed, *The Harder They Come* is, if nothing else, an action-packed celluloid salute to the politically and socially impotent, perennially poor and disenfranchised, and hopelessly and stupidly romantic. A film that more or less features virtually every single negative stereotype associated with the black community, including unrealistic get-rich-quick schemes, charlatan preachers who wield power over the masses of the ignorant and poor for their own economic gain, young men who'd rather deal dope than do an honest day's work, and backstabbing women that cannot help but put their men in deadly situations, *The Harder They Come* is true social realism and not the phony plastic sort that bolshevik filmmakers tried in vain to peddle.

After his miserly grandmother dies and leaves him nothing aside from a couple of bucks (she sold her house before her death and wasted virtually all of the money on a big funeral), young soul brother Ivanhoe "Ivan" Martin (Jimmy Cliff) moves from an isolated rural area of Jamaica to urban Kingston in the hope that he will fulfill his dream of making a hit reggae album and becoming rich and famous overnight. Luckily for him, Ivan is far too ignorant to realize how little of a chance he has of actually making it big, thus he does not hesitate in trying everything to become a big star. When Ivan arrives in the superlatively shitty city, he discovers a plague of poverty, unemployment, crime, and political corruption. Although Ivan's mother (Lucia White) denies him a place to stay and takes the last bit of money he has, she gives him the name of a person that will ostensibly "try to help him"; a powerful charlatan known as the 'Preacher' (played by professional dentist Basil Keane, who was apparently the first black man that was an officer in the U.S. Navy, as well as a good friend of Martin Luther King, Jr.). That same night, Ivan meets a dubious dude named Jose (played by Carl Bradshaw, who has been described as, "Jamaica's most renowned actor") and the two go to a Rialto theater to watch the classic Spaghetti Western (according to director Henzell, wop westerns were the "staple of slum cinema" in Jamaica at the time) flick *Django* (1966) starring Franco Nero. In an important foreshadowing scene, an audience member in the theater remarks, "The hero can't die until the last reel." Indeed, *The Harder They Come* is certainly the closest thing to a black Jamaican western, with Cliff acting as Nero's character in *Django*. The next day, Ivan hears about a music producer on the radio named Hilton (played by Bob Charlton who, according to Henzell, is "one of the greatest insurance salesmen in the world") and becomes determined to chase him down to promote his music. Ultimately, Ivan takes residence in a broken down car on the Preacher's property and fixes up an old bike owned by the religious leader. Meanwhile, Ivan attempts to find work but fails everywhere he goes, which ultimately forces him to resort to begging. When Ivan asks a rich black bourgeois housewife (played by Beverly Anderson, who would later become the first lady of Jamaica as the wife of Prime Minister Michael Manley) for money, he is met with the nasty response, "What's the matter with you young, healthy boys? All you know to do is beg, beg,

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beg. That's all you can do, just beg?," thus demonstrating the class division in a nation with the rather ironic motto: "Out of Many, One People." Ultimately, Ivan starts a rather tame romance with a chick named Elsa (Janet Bartley), who is unfortunately one of the Preacher's many slavish young concubines. Naturally, the Preacher is repulsed by Ivan's love of pornography and reggae, so when he discovers that the young heretic is messing around with Elsa, he becomes enraged and kicks him out. When one of the Preacher's goons, Longa (played by real-life convicted rapist Elijah Chambers), attempts to takeaway Ivan's bike, the two get in a bloody knife fight and the struggling reggae artist is ultimately punished with "eight strokes of the tamarind switch" for his act of attempted murder in what is a rather homoerotic scene. Indeed, Ivan is bent over, has his pants pulled, and is whipped on the ass, which literally causes the antihero to piss himself. Although totally dehumanized by the experience of being bent over in public, Ivan luckily does not have to serve any jail time.

After his small brush with the law, Ivan finally gets the opportunity to record his song "The Harder They Come," but producer Hilton—an arrogant mulatto who has a complete monopoly over the entire Jamaican music industry—only offers him an insulting \$20 for the song, so he decides to take his business elsewhere. While Ivan attempts to sell his song to other music producers, no one will buy it as they all take orders from Hilton. Of course, Ivan eventually gives in and sells the record to Hilton for \$20, but the music producer tells an East Asian DJ to not play the song too much because, although he thinks that it is a great piece of music, he remarks regarding its composer, "he's a troublemaker. I don't want anything to do with him. I don't want to build him up." Still determined to make it big, Ivan tells his girlfriend Elsa that he refuses to live a straight life as a virtual slave, complaining to her, "You want me to go and beg for work for \$10 a week for the rest of my life? I tried that. I'd rather die. And I don't have to because I'm gonna make it," so he begins dealing dope after his friend Jose offers him a position trafficking ganja from the country to the city on a motorbike. When Ivan gets in an argument with Jose over the meager pay, the dealer conspires to get his underling busted and locked up so as to 'teach him a lesson' by informing on the reggae artist to the cops. When a white motorcycle cop goes to bust Ivan, he freaks out and kills the cop. Later that night, Ivan is setup by a random whore he is sleeping with and finds himself surrounded by a brigade of cops, but he manages to get away after wasting three black pigs. Naturally, Ivan decides to get his revenge against his treacherous friends, so he kills the whore and subsequently tries to kill Jose, but he gets away. Now the #1 fugitive in Jamaica, Ivan finds that he is wanted by both the cops and the ganja dealers, with a high yellow detective named Ray Jones (Winston Stone) more or less controlling both sides. Meanwhile, Hilton decides to re-release the song "The Harder They Come" due to Ivan's growing fame as a folk hero among Jamaicans and the song naturally becomes a big hit, though the cops soon have

it banned. With his newfound star fugitive status, Ivan becomes rather arrogant and shamelessly narcissistic, even forcing his fat friend Fitz (Bobby Loban) to take special photographs of himself posing with guns which he has sent to various media sources. Ivan also takes advantage of his fugitive status by stealing a convertible and driving around aimlessly in a field, as if he has finally achieved the 'Jamaican dream.' Of course, Ivan knows his days are numbered and wants to have his fun before getting gunned down like an animal. On the advice of a drug dealer friend named Pedro (Ras Daniel Hartman)—a Rastafarian who is the only person that does not betray his friend in the end—Ivan decides to flee to Cuba, but he ultimately finds himself cornered on a beach by a bunch of cops when he attempts to escape. Imagining himself to be Franco Nero in *Django*, Ivan decides to confront the cops even though he is out of bullets and is shot down, ultimately dying in a literal blaze of glory.

In the documentary *Midnight Movies: From the Margin to the Mainstream* (2005), director Perry Henzell states regarding his first feature: "The whole theme of *THE HARDER THEY COME* is: 'can the little man get through?' The promise of a city for somebody like that is an illusion... and their illusion is so strong that they'd rather die than give up the dream." Indeed, talk to any American black male teenager and over 99 out of 100 of them will probably tell you that they are going to be either a professional football player, basketball player, famous rapper, and/or pimp/gangster when they grow up, with the majority of which opting for the latter dream as it is the most practical. Hell, even millionaire football players in the NFL cannot help but assault cops, rape women, carry illegal weapons in public, and murder and/or put hits on people as demonstrated by the fact that various NFL players have been arrested/cited on 685 different occasions since 2000 (of course, the real figures are probably much higher, as the NFL has probably done their best to hide arrests, not to mention all the undetected crimes these guys have undoubtedly gotten away with). Despite being a revolutionary work with agitprop elements, auteur Henzell, who is a Nordic blond that grew up on a 22,000-acre plantation, is apparently no leftist, as J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum revealed in their authoritative work *Midnight Movies* (1983), "...Henzell denies any Marxist intentions and, according to journalist Claudia Dreifus, has views on economics that are only 'slightly to the left of Ayn Rand'." Furthermore, in the audio commentary Henzell gave for the Criterion Collection dvd release of *The Harder They Come*, the director mocks wealthy Americans for their stupid rules of conduct and dress, proclaiming that his family used their wealth as a root to freedom and not as a source of social imprisonment. That being said, I think that Henzell was able to relate to the poor blacks of Jamaica due to their uncompromising thirst for freedom as men that rather die young as ganja-peddling outlaws than die old as neo-slaves who work at dead-end jobs their entire lives and have nothing to show for it in the end. Indeed, as far as I can think of, *The Harder They Come* is the only

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film I have ever seen directed by a white man about a black subculture that does not seem like an impotent piece of P.C. propaganda, cultural cuckoldry, ball-less bleeding heart swill, and/or a total mockery of true negro kultur. Although Henzell started working on a second film, *No Place Like Home*, after the success he received from *The Harder They Come*, some movers lost the footage he shot and he scrapped the project for a couple decades, though he would eventually find the missing footage and finish the film in 2006 to some critical acclaim. Apparently, Henzell's daughter Justine, screenwriter Chris Salewicz, Xingu Films and Conquering Lion Pictures were set to start shooting a remake of *The Harder They Come* in 2013, though it is dubious at best whether or not such a work could capture the gritty essence of the original film, which is a work that puts most of the oeuvre of Senegalese auteur Ousmane Sembène—the 'father of African film'—to shame.

-Ty E

MONSTERS

Pete Docter (2001)

Setting flame to SXSW this year is Gareth Edwards's *Monsters*, an independent hell-on-earth science fiction film seating both the aspirations of the best of *District 9* and *The Mist*. What *Monsters* does is quite energy-efficient and relaxing, taking a big budget ideal and producing the film for a mere \$15,000 using natural lighting, two reoccurring cast members, and a slew of volunteers to partake in this interstellar experiment in outwards community film-making all on location without too much permission. Refusing to view any trailers for a promise of a fable that I'd appreciate more with no prior indication of the events to transpire, *Monsters* came as quite a shock once I discovered how passe the realization of extraterrestrial Cthulhu life was for mini-budget Edwards and his DV dreams. The realization of the creature design and the likening effect that they produced on camera blew my expectations out of the water. If Gareth Edwards could create such an airtight romance surrounded by alien-organic infection then surely SyFy could fund something with double the cost besides a sweeping retelling of *Sharkdactyl* vs. *Dinosloth* only to appease autistic B-movie "fans." To put it simply, *Monsters* is in most regards a symbiotic epic, in which taking in the cost of shooting, provides a vast amount of appreciation reserved for the surprising skill of acting Scoot McNairy and Whitney Able are convinced to convey. Not to mention the conspiracies between disillusioned Mexican film viewers, their rage towards a theorized "final solution" to border patrol by deploying alien life in their zone of dusty squalor.

With much zeal does Gareth Edwards sidestep from adapting either of the films it's been convicted of "stealing" from. While *The Mist* does carbon-copy the same tentacled beasts imagined by Lovecraft, the only charge *Monsters* is guilty of is presenting us with face-time to these gorgeously animated octopi. Whereas Darabont's *The Mist* ended on such a note of helplessness while we acknowledge such large beasts compared to a quaint and rusted station wagon. *Monsters* doesn't feature the alien apartheid that *District 9* is commended for, adorning its label with awards and praise which in a similar situation, *Monsters* might not be as soaked with praise but victim to argumentum ad infinitum. *District 9* is made for the action connoisseur and racial inequalities put to the test of bizarre alien weaponry while *Monsters* captures an entirely desolate and benign world of limitless terror at every turn. In a bold strike to extinguish pacing and the needlessness of a constant quick pace to further the flow of visual stimuli, *Monsters* dutifully takes its time to create a stream of animated creature consciousness rivaled by the chaotic preachings of the creatures starring time in the unfairly maligned *Cloverfield*. The one ideal to grasp onto is that the final verdict for your enjoyment of *Monsters* is left up to your imagination as much of the terror and mystique is derived from the unknown.

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Amidst the chaos is where *Monsters* finds the tale of our two and only characters. Not to disregard the mentioned roles of fiance and father but *Monsters* caters to a bond grown over mistakes and mildly genial embrace of the possibility of death. I often found myself bound between loving the film purely for creature-feature antics but then often sat in a quiet embrace with a glass of brandy waiting for one of these classic lovetypes to further the romantic congregation. Not to expel my "man card" but *Monsters* was a quality monster film while at the same time digressing towards a womanly atmosphere, a monster film in which both genders could embrace as their own. Quite an impressive achievement for someone who created this particular shortcut towards destruction of body and society on a laptop. Other than the technical achievements that *Monsters* documents in the smegma-stricken underbelly of what's considered "indie" in this day and age, a fragile and simple story is told with a fervor for science. Reportedly, Edwards was inspired by both *Jurassic Park* and the possibility of life on one of Jupiter's moons, Europa. Title card mentioned NASA probe with findings broke apart over Mexico infesting forests with sentient fungi and spaghetti monsters, hardly the makings of a science-fiction classic but surprise is a dish best served vegetated.

Monsters is far from perfect but given the budget and the lengths that this amateur film maker went to capture his vision of escort-love-suicide betwixt a jungle of mysterious monsters, *Monsters* preforms favorably with still so much steam in its veins. A theatrical experience might be recommended for maximum Mexican anarchy but *Monsters* is definitely a film in which you must rewatch the beginning after the end unless you retained the brief semblance of a conclusion thrust in your cerebellum at the dawn of the film experience. Even breathtaking moments such as the border cross reveals a terror in stucco that seems to be a fantasy including this "American dream" we live out to our full extent. The vulnerability that we are actually victim to is enough to drive a striking narrative into even the sleaziest horror film e.g. *Zombi 2* and *Jason Takes Manhattan*. Believing that an extraterrestrial force could overrun our land of the free and the brave is enough to drive even the most liberal-minded into a schemata of insanity. Pointlessly poetic and honest, *Monsters* rivals most science fiction to be released this year and I hope this euphoric brain chemistry never leaves the star-crossed lovers Andrew and Sam despite their pragmatic plight.

-mAQ

HOUSE

Pete Walker (1976)

As far as I am concerned, virtually everything about post-WWII Japanese culture, especially in relation to cinema, is hopelessly silly and superficial in a bizarre half-Americanized/half-feminized sort of way, as if the collective unconscious of the alpha-East Asian race was raped by Yanks and no film seems to express this distinctly bizarre phenomenon of cultural cuckoldry than the classic avant-garde horror-comedy *House* (1977) aka *Hausu* directed by Nobuhiko Ôbayashi. Rather absurdly, the birth of *House* came as a result of the Japanese film production company Toho approaching auteur Ôbayashi, who had previously only worked on experimental shorts, and asking him to create a film in the spirit of Steven Spielberg's summer blockbuster *Jaws* (1975), however *House* inevitably evolved into one of the most brazenly goofy and carelessly cartoonish celluloid ghost stories ever made, as a sort of jaded Jap *Suspiria* (1977) meets *The Evil Dead* (1981), except more recklessly wacky and made with cutesy Japanese schoolgirls suffering from exceedingly eccentric *Electra* complexes in mind. And, indeed, the story for *House* was largely inspired by the ideas of director's daughter Chigumi, which were eventually turned into a script by Chiho Katsura, though it would be about two years before the film was made as auteur Ôbayashi had to do a lot of promotion at Toho before they would let him direct the pet project (apparently, no director at Toho wanted to direct the film as they thought it would ruin their career, so they eventually let Ôbayashi do it himself). In part thematically inspired by the American nuking of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War, which auteur Ôbayashi, being born in Hiroshima, experienced as a child and lost virtually all of his childhood friends as a result, *House* is a sort of excessive escapist tale that warns viewers that if they dwell on the past, especially in relation to the pain and suffering of the Second World War, they will degenerate into a hateful human creature of sorts who resents everything about the present, thereupon making the film a fiercely modernist work created for the pansy post-samurai generation. Although never receiving the same unbeatable success as Spielberg's outstandingly overrated shark flick *Jaws*, *House* was a box office hit in Japan, even if the film was a critical failure of sorts that mainly received negative reviews, which is no surprise considering the curiously flamboyant and campy film is about as serious as a fart attack as a childish nonsensical cinematic work that positively personifies the phrase 'guilty pleasure.' Originally released as a double feature with a seemingly ridiculous romance film entitled *Pure Hearts in Mud* and sporting the morbidly 'inviting' tagline "How Seven Beauties Were Eaten!," *House* is avant-garde cinema at its most tastelessly palatable, as if made by Werner Nekes' half-caste Jap bastard brother for the Disney company, and horror cinema at its most horrendous hokey and anti-horrific, as if specially tailored for most the impotent and

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idiotic of white American Japanophiles.

Gorgeous (Kimiko Ikegami) is a popular and, apparently, 'Gorgeous' Japanese schoolgirl who seems to get wet just thinking about spending her summer vacation with her widowed father (Saho Sasazawa), a film composer who scores films in Italy (even bragging to his daughter, "Leone said my music was better than Morricone's"), but when Papa, who certainly knows best, comes home and greets his excited daughter, she is sent into a minor depression when he reveals he has a new wife and she has a new stepmother named Ryoko Ema (Haruko Wanibuchi). Considering Gorgeous' equally gorgeous mother died only a couple years before, she is not exactly ready for a new mother, so she writes a letter to her aunt asking if she and her six sassy schoolgirl friends can spend summer vacation with her. A lonely old spinster who lives all by her lonesome in an old traditional house in the middle of the country, Gorgeous' aunt (Yoko Minamida) naturally accepts Gorgeous' request, but little does the naïve niece realize that her mother's sister is a miserable old maid who, still waiting for the young soldier who promised to marry her when he came back from fighting during the Second World War, is a bitter (and quite literally) bloodthirsty bitch who dines on the blood of young, unmarried girls. With her motley crew of six zany and superficially idiosyncratic friends, including Prof (Ai Matsubara), Melody (Eriko Tanaka), Kung Fu (Miki Jinbo), Mac (Mieko Sato), Sweet (Masayo Miyako) and Fantasy (Kumiko Oba), Gorgeous heads to the plastically pretty pastoral lands of the country to her bittersweet auntie's house and on the way they buy a watermelon from a morbidly obese and ominous farmer fellow (Asei Kobayashi) who tells the way to the aunt's house, sinisterly stating to himself after the girls leave, "We haven't had visitors for long time. I'm sure...the lady will be very pleased." And, indeed, when Gorgeous and her gals arrive, Auntie, who has creepy white hair and is wheelchair bound, is quite pleased, but for all the wrong reasons. After presenting Auntie the watermelon, the girls are given a tour of the house, which soon begins attacking the girls in somewhat harmless way. When Mac later goes to retrieve the watermelon, which had been placed in a well to keep it refrigerated, she never returns and when Fantasy goes to look for the watermelon, she finds Mac's animated decapitated noggin in the well instead of a juicy fruit, thus ushering in the funny foreboding phantasmagoria at the less than humble haunted abode. After dismembered Mac's head bites Fantasy on the buttocks, the heteromorphic house of horrors takes on a surreally supernatural form, with skeletons dancing kookily in what seems like a warped funhouse on East Asian acid.

After going into her aunt's room, putting on her lipstick, and staring into her mirror, Gorgeous becomes possessed by her mirror, which cracks (with blood draining out and all), as if Auntie has taken over her body. While Gorgeous manages to walk out the front door seemingly unscathed, the rest of the girls are locked inside the demonic house and when the girls try to find Auntie to

unlock the door, the only thing they find is mangled Mac's severed hand in a jar. Melody makes the unwitting mistake of continuing to play the piano to keep her fearful friends' spirits up, but when Prof and Kung Fu later go to see her, her fingers have been eaten off and her entire body is inevitably consumed by the viciously voracious piano. After spotting Gorgeous sporting her aberrant aunt's bridal gown, Kung Fu finds Sweet's body being eaten by a tall grandfather clock. Scared and desperate, the surviving girls, Prof, Fantasy and Kung Fu, barricade themselves in the upper floor of the house, where they read Auntie's diary and realize the sadistic spinster still believes her fiancé is coming back for her, but they are interrupted by a giant-sized head of Gorgeous that states, "I'm in my aunt's world" and that Auntie died many years ago and that "she wanted to be married so badly that her body remained alive after her death. And she eats all the unmarried girls who come here." Immediately after Gorgeous' head goes wild, various appliances around the house attack the girls and Prof—the smartest girl in the lot—concludes that killing the aunt's white and furry cat, Blanche, will stop the superficial madness, but when Kung Fu master Kung Fu attempts to do so, she is gobbled up by a haunted light fixture from hell. Luckily, one of Kung Fu's dismembered legs manages to kick a painting of Blanche, but it only causes blood to spurt it out that ultimately floods the entire home with hemoglobin. With the entire house flooded with blood, Prof and Fantasy take shelter on a floating floorboard. Prof attempts to read Auntie's diary to discover the secret of the undead woman's demented mind, but she is pulled into the pool of water by an evil jar where her prepubescent-like body magically becomes unclad and is ultimately consumed by the bad blood. The only survivor, Fantasy, is soon approached by Gorgeous, but it is revealed in the reflection of the blood that it is really the aunt. Despite knowing better, Fantasy allows Auntie-as-Gorgeous to cradle her, even absurdly calling her, "Mommy." In the end, Gorgeous' stepmother Ryoko comes to Auntie's house to pick up the girls. Auntie, who has inhabited Gorgeous' body and is dressed in a traditional kimono, tells Ryoko the girls are sleeping but will awake soon because they will be 'hungry.' Before Ryoko knows it, she is seduced by Auntie, who shakes her hands and incinerates her to nothing as if touched by a nuclear bomb.

A sort of cutesy counter-culture-inspired celluloid softcore propaganda piece urging post-WWII Japanese youth to get over Hiroshima and have hedonistic fun or face an eternity of lonely misery and misanthropy, House eccentrically epitomizes the death of stoicism and the samurai in Japan, symbolically utilizing crude yet charismatic avant-garde pop art to aesthetically molest a traditional Japanese house. Indeed, after viewing House, I could not help but feel guilty for half-enjoying what is sort of the celluloid equivalent of Pop Rocks as a film that is fun to briefly wallow in and digest, but is a ultimately novelty with little to no redeeming qualities. Undoubtedly, I can think of few of films that so hopelessly personify 'all style and no substance' as much as House, the perfect film for

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culturally-retarded Americans to watch to feel culturally enriched or whatever. Personally, when it comes to cinematic ghost stories where furniture eats people, I much prefer the arthouse abortion *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* (1977), a film where the imprisoned ghost of decadent English artist Aubrey Beardsley looks on as a bloodthirsty bed consumes hedonistic hippies. Even next to Steve 'Friday the 13th' Miner's similarly themed, lackluster horror-comedy of the same name, *House* (1986), makes Ôbayashi's haunted house flick seem like a cynical novelty by comparison. With the Japanese schoolgirl characters in the film notably remarking regarding World War II Japanese soldiers that "Men were more manly back then," *House* ultimately makes the case that the Japs have become too emasculated and decadent after facing devastating defeat, as if the film was directed by a hyperactive schoolgirl under the influence of acid and gummy bears who is still peeved over the fact her mother kicked the bucket a couple years back. If you're looking for a mildly entertaining yet obscenely outmoded example as to why a world famous right-wing Japanese writer and Renaissance man like Yukio Mishima tried to run a coup d'état to restore the power of the emperor so as to cease the cultural and social degeneration of Japan, *House* makes for a great example of the sort of aesthetic soulless and philosophical passiveness the master of pen and sword was fighting against. Indeed, there is something peculiarly repressive about a film like *House*, which is as violently over-the-top as the Rape of Nanking, yet is ultimately as harmless as an episode of the Power Rangers.

-Ty E

STAG NIGHT

Peter A. Dowling (2008)

Ghost House Underground's *Stag Night* intends to do good with the very similar construct of *Midnight Meat Train* and *Creep*. Starring popular television actors Kip Pardue and Vinnesa Shaw, *Stag Night* concerns itself with the fates of six socialites as they disembark off a train at an abandoned station and in turn, are abandoned. Their problems do not stop there, however, as they witness a police officer get hacked to death by subterranean vagrants wielding machetes. *Stag Night* is utterly implausible as to prevent any sense of entertainment. Upon mentioning and discovering that the branch of the subway system has been closed since the fifties, then wandering down the line to witness a cop getting murdered, *Stag Night* takes a steep drop into the realm of the silly. Not only would the disappearance of a New York City police officer set off a chain of search/destroy but why were these vagrants hassling a vending machine in the first place? After all, *Stag Night*'s synopsis boasts "cannibal dwellers" and that is what sets it apart from being grounded in reality. Oh well. All is forgiven because surely there will be scenes of cannibalism later. Wait, what's that? They feed the flesh of the victims to their dogs?

Plastered on the artwork of the DVD is a quote that states "One of the most enjoyable chase thrillers of recent memory." Rather than using a blurb from any reputable source of fan base, *Stag Night* chose to quote Netflix, the broad-shouldered bastard of user reviews on the Internet, second only to IMDb. This incident reminds me of a Canadian film stooping even lower than *Stag Night* to collect quotes from YouTube. *One Week* was the title and its shame will shine through the darkest corners of Earth. To ingratiate is one thing but to force ideas from faceless sources who haven't even seen the film is a completely different ballgame. For what *Stag Night* is appraised for, the action, I find the confusing mixture of "fight" and chase scenes to be muddled up with a condition known as "shaky-cam syndrome". The events that transpire within the tunnels under New York can really only point to idiocy. These lad's prenuptial celebration, or *Stag Night*, is hampered down by our lead character's brother portrayed by Hollywood pussy Breckin Meyer. Now for Breckin Meyer to test his chops at the horror genre is fine. As long as we're safe from another rendition of *Garfield*, I suppose. It's when his character is superfluously imposed as a barroom brawler that things start to steer away from its own control.

The subterranean colony of murderous vagabonds is a situation I've seen before in several films; the only ones I can recall off the top of my head are *Demolition Man* and the film adaptation of *Super Mario Bros*. Both of these examples managed to craft life out of something degenerate and desperate, even if for short segments. *Stag Night* had all the time in the world to manipulate a beast to boast towards horror fans. Yet, alas, we're delivered this connotation of trite

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cinema. The only thing worse than Stag Night's everything is the "hyperkinetic" editing that disrupts the fluidity of scenes in an attempt at, what I guess, a jolting effect. It's not even the self-assuming quality of this film that leaves me keeled over with abdominal pains. It's the condition of Stag Night's being. What kind of director, one prominently known for writing Flightplan, a film considered big-budget, castigates a genre by filming something as devoid of emotion or purpose as Stag Night? This breed of film has me wondering aloud in a heated spit. Did Peter Dowling suddenly awake with a cold sweat? Did Dowling feel bestowed with a sense of purpose and the need to craft his nightmare into a medium as to share his darkest fears? I highly doubt it and if that was the case I'd say it's safe to assume Dowling has since relapsed into a mommas boy. Stag Night reminds me of a famous quote of Alfred Hitchcock's - "The more successful the villain, the more successful the picture." This rule does not apply to Stag Night. There is nothing extraordinary about these dwellers; they are neither subhumans or gifted with any incredible senses. The villains are as inconceivable as Dowling's nerve to put forth such banality to the video market.

-mAQ

THE RIG

Peter Atencio (2010)

To be honest, when I learned of the massive oil spill at the hands of BP in the Gulf of Mexico, my constant lingering thought wasn't of the destruction of the environment nor the hundreds of photos flooding social networking mediums of creatures covered in oil, dying. No, my constant was the slow realizing that soon we will be faced with an amassing of substandard horror films tacked on to adrenalize current events, sort of like what Bong Joon-ho accomplished with his tidy monster film *The Host*. Starring the incredibly bloated William Forsythe and Art LaFleur, *The Rig* only exists to profit off of the natural disaster. If anything, *The Rig* only manages to kick the ecosystem while it's down and out. Nothing of any value exists within *The Rig*, even for a fan of deep-sea terror as myself. It couldn't possibly be as challenging to invent a distinguishable creature as *The Rig* proposes through their lack of effort. In fact, the beastly hunters in *The Rig* seem awfully familiar. Oh, that's right. The supposed prehistoric monsters seem to be a rubber modeling of the "Sleestaks" from *Land of the Lost* painted black.

The Rig is similar to that of a scorned dog whom begs for forgiveness with doe eyes. As a dog would cower to your feet with its chew toy, *The Rig* hopes to amend its short-comings with likenesses to James Cameron's *Aliens*. As if casting a butch Puerto Rican replacement to Vasquez wasn't enough, the offshore rig is under the ownership of a Weyland Drilling Corp. Opening up with a submersible view of the drill penetrating the ocean floor, purplish steam begins to vent, confusing the gentleman in the manned vehicle. Suddenly, a disembodied jaw is shown snapping at the camera, destroying it and severing the feed to the control room. This character doesn't think much of it, however, as he and his crew are all vegetables, slave to the paper. The worst offender is the token heroic icon Faulkner, as he tirades endlessly about his past tours with Special Forces and manages to suffer the most hilarious, albeit predictable, fate of all the crew. Several progressive fixtures are installed early on but hardly linger in the memory, such as Freddy and his little brother Colin. After awhile, you start to wonder if the "script" these actors are reading from aren't just daily calendar quips.

The Intruder Within is a film of questionable meaning to *The Rig*. Perhaps the BP oil spill brought back fond childhood memories of the TV movie, but then again, that's highly unlikely as any comparison is drawn at the plot and not the now-antique execution. It's a silly thing that low-budget monster films put together before the millennium retains a certain charm that renders them highly watchable and enjoyable. It seems that no matter how close the current generation of creature-features try cutting it to the mold the result will also turn out to be a deformity and a near unwatchable abomination. *The Rig* is a prime offender in this instance. A shallow fit of comatose digital horror that refrains

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from excitement or amusing its own humble guests. It's trash like this that makes me ashamed to hold horror close to me as it seems more likely that an inept horror film be made then, say, an incompetent drama. For the first time in quite a bit, I'm actually at a loss for words as to this lifeless garbage before me.

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HANCOCK

Peter Berg* (2008)

"With great power, comes great responsibility" I recall this quote from a bottom-barrel cookie cutter superhero film once. Spider-Man hardly wowed me in any sense, this being surprising due to the always eclectic catalog of villains that Spidey could have faced off against. But no, he had to rival an old Willem Dafoe who played a cyborg version of the classic Green Goblin.

Meet Hancock, a superhero with a fresh start. With no serialization penning him to perform certain actions, it only seems logical and politically correct that the Black superhero would have no limitations and a clean slate to fuck up everything. Hancock is an alcoholic superhero who levels cities just to piss off city folks. He also has amnesia and some strange fetish for eagles and small children. While the film structures itself on a simple plot of the ever-so fragile "iconic" image of a superhero, Hancock is thrown into a bunch of super-obstacles and several twists. After the film was initially over, I began to ask around for opinions. Most were favorable with a dash of negativity. I don't think America is ready for a Black Superhero just as many aren't ready for a Black president. The film opens with slave-like jazz music resonating through the credits. We then see a homeless Black man with a nasty case of 5 O'clock shadow. After trying to halt a group of young Asian punks with his chemical-induced negotiation session, he gets called "Soulja Boy." Hancock responds by screaming "Konichiwa!" and impaling their SUV on a spike. Racial tension begins early. Heat picks up later when the idea of inter-racial marriages B.C. come into play. Comedy flairs when a French child (played by the queer Michael Myers kid from *Zombie's Halloween*) gets thrown into the air so hard he "surrenders" Candyman would have been proud of Will Smith's chocolate thunder. Some amazing visual flair is throttled through our retinas with a potent dose of incredible action, beautiful destruction effects, and raunchy humor. When I first heard news a while back that Hancock was being re-shot for a better rating, my stomach lurched, but with this viewing, I'm not too worried about it. That doesn't stop Hancock from severing arms, degrading homosexual's, and saying "Fuck." Hancock has its "mortal" flaws. The later pacing is mildly sluggish, plot holes are a-plenty, and Will Smith played a horrible alcoholic, but the film is all in good fun. A rip-roaring comedy with equal treatment of a Superhero film. This one is definitely more comedic than Iron Man and definitely more action packed. I'd like to look forward to a sequel. Perhaps even bring in a bonafide villain this time. I can see it now; Christian Bale playing yet another White supremacist in another black marketed film.

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THAT BOY
THAT BOY

Peter Berlin° (1974)

The closest thing to a real-life living and breathing Narcissus, gay Aryan sex icon Peter Berlin was so obscenely enamored with his own blond beast beautifulness that he acted as his own photographer and would not allow anyone to take portraits of him, aside from the occasional guest like Rick Castro (who is probably best known in the cinema world for co-directing the 1996 cocksucker cult classic *Hustler White* starring Madonna's one-time 'kept man' Tony Ward). With that being said, it should be no surprise that he would also direct himself in his own quasi-hardcore fag fuck flick, *That Boy* (1974), under the pseudonym 'Peter Burian' (Berlin opted to adopt his current pseudonym after a Hollywood actor named Peter Burian threatened to sue him). Born in 1942 as 'Armin Hagen Freiherr von Hoyningen-Huene,' Berlin came from a poor Prussian aristocratic family that lost all of its money and possessions during the Second World War when the future sex icon's young father was killed in battle and the family's eastern estate was stolen by the Soviets occupiers. A relative of Baltic German fashion photographer George Hoyningen-Huene, who was also gay and worked with Hebraic Hollywood homo-auteur George Cukor (*The Philadelphia Story*, *My Fair Lady*) and acted as a color consultant on his film *A Star Is Born* (1954) starring Judy Garland, Berlin may be somewhat of a dumb blond, but he also has an innate talent for photography, or at least so much is clear in *That Boy*, which features a number of the iconic kraut cocksucker's iconic portraits spliced in throughout the film. Starring Berlin as his alter ego 'Helmut' (one reviewer speculated the name might be a tribute to Helmut Berger and/or a reference to his 'warhead' of a cockhead) in a role where he becomes infatuated with a newly blind boy because he "seems so different from all the other street people" and "lives in a world all his own," the film is ultimately the most bizarre example of the star/director's rather intricate and bizarre brand of post-WWII Teutonic fairy narcissism and vanity. The second and final film Berlin starred in before directing a couple obscure shorts and dropping out of filmmaking and acting altogether, *That Boy* is the height of homo vanity in quasi-avant-garde form as a sort of west coast equivalent to the Warhol/Morrissey films, albeit minus any sort of irony, cynicism, or sociopolitical context, thus making for a seriously silly cinematic work that is distinctly charming due to the fact that it is completely unintentionally humorous despite its sentimental 'humanistic' aspirations as a rather ridiculous tale featuring camp elements (including middle-aged tranny hippie homos!) about a glamorous gay boy who falls in pseudo-love with an equally 'side-pipe' plagued blind boy. In the world of Peter Berlin, nothing else exists except him and his many horny admirers, who, at best, only are allowed a mere tiny taste of the muscular Teutonic twink. While dead serious in an almost poetic fashion, *That Boy* is also a superlatively side-splitting depiction of

the delusional beauty of an exceedingly eccentric gay dude with a silly Dutch boy haircut whose personal *weltanschauung* is self-worship and self-glorification. Indeed, if nothing else, Berlin is the ultimate unrivaled 'Übermensch' of sod sex icons, but of course, no one ever had to tell him that.

As a Blind Boy (Arron Black) narrates regarding the hypnotic sexual allure of protagonist Helmut (Peter Berlin) at the beginning of *That Boy* as the Aryan alpha-homo cruises down south of the Market and Polk Street areas of San Francisco as various people admire him: "Showing off that huge pleasure organ of his...everyone would stare at him...weird people, boys, girls, young men, freaks...everyone staring at this cock, doing anything to get his attention. Still, he ignored everyone...there was nothing anyone could do. I suppose he knew they'd follow him...anywhere, everywhere...just to get one more look at his cock. I followed too. I followed him...watched him everyday...strolling along the street...showing off his fine muscular body. I watched others look at him...pass him by as he stood on the street corner and take another look. Often, they would return...planning how they could lure him from his isolation." While Helmut rebuffs every single glaring girl and boy that passes his magnetic gay gaze, he develops a soft spot for the Blind Boy because he cannot imagine a life where one is deprived the sight of physical beauty, especially his own. Indeed, Helmut worships himself and derives the greatest satisfaction from being wanted by others who cannot have him. At the most, Helmut will let someone play with his cock and he might occasionally allow someone access to his poop-shute, but other than that he is a mere cockteasing cocksucker who does not even care about sucking cocks. When Helmut turns down some degenerate with a leather-fag mustache and Nazi hat, the unhappy fellow calls him "jack off" and hatefully proclaims, "you will be sorry bitch." Of course, Helmut barely even acknowledges the bitchy street sod and goes on his merry way, as he only has eyes for the poor Blind boy.

Ultimately, *That Boy* is comprised of a series of Anger-esque montages that are divided into a couple segments based on different SF street people that worship Helmut, which include an S&M photographer (who literally puts Helmut on a pedestal!), an exercise-obsessed high yellow negro twink, a urine-and-whip-loving 'power bottom' in a campy gay bar, and of course the ostensibly tragic Blind Boy character. And why is this Aryan hunk so obsessed with a Blind Boy? As Helmut narrates, "This boy intrigues me because he dresses so well and cares so much about his appearance." Apparently, the Blind Boy lost his vision the year before in an accident and is well aware of Helmut's appearance. Their 'relationship' begins when Helmut walks up to the Blind Boy and, while not saying a single word, helps the visually challenged twink cross the street in a hilarious scene where the bulges in each characters' pants is glaringly apparent. Surely, Helmut seems aroused by the fact that the Blind Boy must be dependent on him. As Helmut concludes at the end of the film regarding his new relationship:

THAT BOY

“I think I really found a friend. Someone I can talk to. Someone that can talk to me. Someone I can give protection to. Someone who, in return, can provide warmth and understanding when warmth and understanding are needed. Someone who will talk to me without fear and will listen in return. Someone who will share my fantasies and dreams without making demands while accepting help. I think of his fantasies...his dreams...and enjoy being with him. His mind is so much different...so much purer than the rest...he’s willing to understand and to listen...because there’s a joy in knowing no matter what events may occur, he will always hold me in his memory as I am now...as I was for him in these fine days.” Indeed, being the harmless pathological narcissist that he is, Helmut is most intrigued by the fact that the Blind Boy—being unable to see and all—will always remember him as the immaculate Aryan twink that, in terms of sod sexual magnetism, dominated the entire modern Sodom that is San Francisco. Notably, in real-life, Berlin’s longtime lover had a deformed leg, thus the sex icon’s fetishism for the handsome yet crippled is completely genuine and not something he incorporated in the film to make him seem like some morally righteous queer who was altruistic enough to give handicapped homos sympathy fucks.

Unquestionably, aside from the strange scenarios of seeing a masochistic man lick beer off Peter Berlin’s crotch while being whipped by a biker, a tiny muscular negro twink working out in a gym naked, and other fiercely foul examples of retrograde fetishistic faggotry, *That Boy* is a mighty awkward yet hysterically humorous experience simply due to the fact that it is full of so much pseudo-sensually narrated bad poetry. For example, Herr Berlin somberly narrates regarding the Blind Boy: “What a shame the boy can no longer see the color of the streets he dreams about” and “if only he could see.” When the credits roll, the hilarity still does not end, as the film gives “Special Thanks” to what I assume are hippie fellows as demonstrated by their names ‘Cardinal Mahdi Mahatma’ and ‘Crown Prince Jesus Christ Satan.’ Admittedly, for a directorial debut, Berlin’s work holds up, albeit for all the wrong reasons, as a virtual celluloid catalog of outmoded fag fashion and fetishes. I think John ‘The Pope of Trash’ Waters probably said it best when he described Berlin as a sort of walking and talking sex organ.

When it comes down to it, it is not Berlin but his uncut kraut cock, which gets all the great close-ups in the film, especially when he is walking down the street in his signature “saran” wrapped white pants (in fact, Berlin was given the nickname ‘Saran’ due to his perverse proclivity towards walking around town with his cock bulging out of his white pants). Notably, in the rather worthwhile documentary *That Man: Peter Berlin* (2005) directed by Jim Tushinski (*I Always Said Yes: The Many Lives of Wakefield Poole*), Berlin reveals that he derived the greatest sexual gratification from luring guys in the street and then blowing them off right before they thought they would have the opportunity to

blow him. Indeed, instead of being gay, it seems that Berlin was more in love with himself and his own body as an innate narcissist who puts the men of James Bidgood's classic cocksucker cult flick *Pink Narcissus* (1971) to shame in terms of self-worship and glorification. Indeed, even with their Cocteau-esque use of allegorical imagery involving mirrors and what not, Michael Zen's classics, *Falconhead* (1976) and *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters* (1984), cannot compare to the absolutely stupefying gay vanity of *That Boy*, which may be the most unflatteringly sincere yet paradoxically stereotypically gay film ever made. In that sense, it is probably for the better that Berlin never directed another feature, as it would have never been able to top his directorial debut, which probably said everything that the sex icon had to say about his life, philosophy, and personality in 80 minutes or so.

The spiritually prodigal son of a young Wehrmacht soldier whose Halstatt Nordic good looks and physique he passed on to his progeny before dying tragically in the Second World War while apparently saving a comrade in battle, Peter Berlin is, in many ways, a sort of symbol for the death of the Occident, as a man who, not unlike Fassbinder's Lebensborn-bred boy toy Armin Meier, would have gone on to do much greater things, like be a prestigious SS officer of an Aryan utopia covered in Berlin-esque Arno Breker statues, had World War II ended differently. Indeed, such is certainly a tragic fate for a man who was born with the name Armin Hagen Freiherr von Hoyningen-Huene and was probably destined to live in a castle, yet instead chose the suggestive porn name 'Peter Berlin' and preferred living in an American urban hippie gutter. In more than one way *That Boy* is a fitting title, as it depicts the striking mensch who was, psychologically speaking, a perennial boy whose narcissism, like many gay men, was comparable to that of an infant, thus hinting that he never got the proper maternal nourishment during his first critical years (after all, he was born during the middle of WWII in 1942, not much earlier before his father was killed). Like the first film the sex icon starred in, *Nights in Black Leather* (1973), *That Boy* demonstrates that fascistic aesthetics (which were partly inspired by Berlin's hero Tom of Finland's drawings) were quite chic among homos in the 1970s, thus symbolizing a certain sick irony of fate in Berlin's life as the spiritually fallen son of a Teutonic father and Fatherland. Indeed, *That Boy* demonstrates that 1970s San Francisco—with its tranny homo hippies, lurking and lecherous leather-fags, and bellbottom-wearing power-bottoms—was a sort of Weimar 2.0, with Peter Berlin being its unofficial prince, thus, in a sense, he did live the life of the the born aristocrat that he was after all.

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TARGETS
TARGETS

Peter Bogdanovich (1968)

Out of all the filmmakers associated with the so-called 'American New Wave' movement that lasted from the mid-to-late 1960s to early 1980s, Peter Bogdanovich (*Paper Moon*, *Saint Jack*)—a somewhat fallen auteur that is probably best known nowadays for his recurring guest role on HBO's *The Sopranos*—was certainly the most aesthetically conservative, banal, and least thematically subversive. Indeed, when his largely fellow kosher counterculture compatriots like Bob Rafelson, Monte Hellman, Robert Towne, and Henry Jaglom were playing iconoclast and attempting to destroy the mores of mainstream white Christian American while simultaneously remodeling the Hollywood studio system to create a more European orientated auteurist cinema, Bogdanovich was still jerking off to the films of Howard Hawks and attempting to be a sort of modernist John Ford that did not direct westerns (incidentally and somewhat ironically, Ford was apparently instrumental in destroying Bog's chance to direct an unrealized John Wayne western entitled *The Streets of Laredo*, which the filmmaker believed would have been his masterpiece). The son of a Serbian Orthodox Christian painter and Austrian-born Jewess, Bogdanovich started out as a dorky cinephile that acted as a film critic at *Esquire* and film programmer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, on top of spending much of his free time stalking his cinematic heroes, including Orson Welles, who he would eventually develop a close and cinephiliacally fruitful relationship with. Influenced by the film critics turned auteur filmmakers associated with *Cahiers du Cinéma* like Godard and Rohmer, Bogdanovich was naturally destined to make shamelessly cinephiliac films. Considering his largely ancient cinematic heroes, it was only natural that I would never develop any special fondness for Bogdanovich's undeniably uneven oeuvre. In fact, I cannot think of a single Bogdanovich flick that I really like, though I do have a certain unexpected respect for his somewhat preternatural debut feature *Targets* (1968) starring Golden Age Hollywood horror legend Boris Karloff in a superficially semi-autobiographical role as a washed-up horror star that has become completely disillusioned with his trade who finds himself fighting a Charles Whitman-esque spree-killer in a climatic showdown that is fittingly set at a drive-in theater. A piece of self-reflexive quasi-meta-cinema where Bogdanovich even plays a virtual unintended self-parody of himself as a young screenwriter with a hard-on for old man Karloff, the film is a Roger Corman-produced mess where goofy old school horror meets visceral real-life true crime horror. In short, unlike most of Bogdanovich's films, *Targets* is a somewhat idiosyncratic flick with a slight bit of good old testicular fortitude that pays anti-tribute to one of America's most unconventional mass murderers.

Undoubtedly, gay novelist and theater critic Ethan Mordden probably paid the film its greatest compliment while adequately summing up its overall impor-

tance in the context of cinema history when he wrote in his New Hollywood history book *Medium Cool: The Movies of the 1960s* (1990), “There is the feeling that the entire movie is a public-service commercial (for the control of firearms), which Bogdanovich can then turn about by calling *TARGETS* apolitical, a film for film’s sake. That it is: a B that redefines the B’s power, a film reassessing the nature of certain film categories—‘exploitation,’ ‘real-life,’ ‘horror.’ *TARGETS* is the real terror, *THE TERROR* just a movie. But then so is *TARGETS*.” Like any film produced by insincerely charming McHebrew schlockmeister Roger Corman, the film is largely the consequence half-baked planning and a miserly budget, but eager novice Bogdanovich was determined to direct his first movie and was willing to accept table scraps to do so. Shot on a shockingly meager budget of around \$130,000, the film had its genesis in the fact that star Corman was looking to capitalize off that the fact that Karloff owed him two days’ work and he decided his new young protege Bogdanovich, who previously worked with him as an assistant director on the outlaw biker flick *The Wild Angels* (1966), had the cost-cutting skills and technical competency to make him a quick cheapie that would make him a profit. In a sleazy attempt to give star Karloff more screen time, Corman also demanded that Bogdanovich use excerpts from his mostly lame and tame Napoleonic-era gothic horror flick *The Terror* (1963) starring (and partly co-ghost-directed by) Jack Nicholson. A perennially shameless penny-pincher, Corman ultimately funded a film that is, at least partially, a ruthless attack against the sort of mindnumbingly mindless and soullessly manufactured B horror flicks that he regularly defecated out. Somewhat of a Frankenstein monster of movie that is made of various pieces of scrap cinematic parts, *Targets* is in many ways the ultimate anti-Corman flick as a cinematic work that both mocks and was superficially modeled after the archetypal celluloid turd.

According to Peter Biskind in his magnum opus of New Hollywood gossip *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998), Corman gave Bogdanovich the following instructions in regard to directing *Targets*, “You know how Hitchcock shoots, don’t you? Plans every shot, totally prepared. You know how Hawks shoots, don’t you? Doesn’t plan anything. Rewrites on the set. Well, on this picture, I want you to be Hitchcock.” Of course, the film lacks the almost mathematical precision of a Hitch flick, but that is actually a good thing since the flick owes most of its potency to its almost sometimes cinema-vérité-like vibe and relative lack of cold technical precision, especially in comparison to Bogdanovich’s later films. Not surprisingly to anyone that has seen the film, *Targets* also had help from maverick auteur Samuel Fuller (*Naked Kiss*, *Shock Corridor*), who apparently did an uncredited revamping of the screenplay (which was co-written by the director’s then-wife Polly Platt) and guided his protégé Bogdanovich when it came to the film’s meager budget (in short, most of the film’s budget was saved for its extra long and climatic ending). Indeed, not unlike a Fuller flick, the film

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features a storyline that was ripped straight from a newspaper headline, namely the psychotic shooting spree of loony lone wolf mass murderer Charles 'Texas Tower Sniper' Whitman. An all-American-looking blond beast with a large muscular build and nearly genius IQ that went completely berserk on August 1, 1966 and murdered his wife and mother in their home and then headed to University of Texas at Austin where he killed 14 more people before being killed by some cops, Whitman was not exactly your stereotypical homicidal sniper (it is suspected that he might have been crazy because he had a pecan-sized brain tumor that may have pressed against his amygdala, which is a part of the brain that deals with anxiety and fight-or-flight responses).

Rather boldly, if not grotesquely and quite stereotypically, Bogdanovich's partly blames the Whitman-esque character's murderous meltdown on the soullessness and phoniness of white middle-class life. Indeed, Bogdanovich even goes so far as to blame some of the victims, especially the killer's wife and mother, for his aberrant actions, as these family members, who are hardly sympathetic, are depicted as emotionally neglectful buffoons that refuse to acknowledge that he is clearly unhinged. Like a stereotypical member of the Hebraic tribe, Bogdanovich less than subtly reveals his kosher contempt for WASPs and white suburbia (despite the fact that he is a real big fan of Aryan women as his dubious one-sided relationships with Cybill Shepherd and Dorothy Stratten demonstrate). Clearly ahead of his time as far as cultural Marxist bullshit is concerned, the film also includes mostly non-Europid heroes, including a China girl and Bogdanovich himself portraying a stereotypically whiny and neurotic screenwriter that is desperate to squeeze out the last bit of raw acting talent from Karloff's character in a rather crude and tasteless example of art intimating life and vice versa. Somewhat paradoxically, the film also manages to give Karloff some dignity while at the same time making him seem like a sad old joke. Indeed, somehow I assume that Karloff ultimately regretted having to owe Corman two days of work as *Targets* reveals that he probably would have done a fairly decent job playing the dainty tea-sipping cousin of one of the titular old farts of *Grumpy Old Men* (1993) in what is arguably the most unintentionally humorous yet somewhat horrifying roles of his very long career.

A sort of *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) for the film dork generation as directed by arguably the biggest film dork of his generation, *Targets* is in many ways the ultimate drive-in flick in that, aside from being virtually two films in one, it climaxes at a packed drive-in, thus contemporary viewers are unfortunately deprived of the full cinematic experience. Indeed, I don't think many things beat the cinematic thrill of watching a film about a sniper killing petrified audience members at a drive-in while at a drive-in with real-life petrified audience members. For better or worse, *Targets* is basically a glorified exploitation flick that takes the Ed Wood approach of both exploiting the past fame of a washed-up horror star and recycling cheap footage from a subpar horror movie that no one ever

wants to see again. Of course, Bogdanovich learned all of the tricks of the trades in the exploitation world, or as he stated in regard to working under Corman as an assistant director on *The Wild Angels*, "I went from getting the laundry to directing the picture in three weeks. Altogether, I worked 22 weeks – pre-production, shooting, second unit, cutting, dubbing – I haven't learned as much since." Needless to say, Bogdanovich worked for one of the worst yet worshiped some of the best like Welles and Fuller, thereupon resulting in a film that totally transcends Corman kitsch but could have never been made in the Hollywood studio system.

In a scenario that might scare away more cultivated viewers from ever wanting to other seek out any other misbegotten celluloid Corman crud, *Targets* begins with the less than climatic conclusion of *The Terror* that involves Karloff being drowned by a beauteous ghost. After the movie concludes, it is revealed that quasi-protagonist, Karloff more or less portraying himself under the somewhat ludicrous Murnau-esque name 'Byron Orlok,' is in a screening room and he is greatly pained to see his ludicrously lackluster performance in shallow hack work that is clearly not worthy of his famous name. When Byron's considerably kosher producer Marshall Smith (Monte Landis) brings up a new movie that he wants him to star in, Byron quickly replies, "I'm not making any more films, Marshall. I'm retiring." Aside from Marshall, Byron immediately disappoints young screenwriter Sammy Michaels (Bogdanovich in an obvious semi-autobiographical role), who has just written a script that he proudly proclaims was modeled after the geriatric Brit's real-life personality. While Sammy and his Chinese secretary Jenny (Nancy Hsueh) make an impassioned plea for him to seriously reconsider retiring, Byron stands firm and replies, "Sammy, you're a sweet boy, but you can't possibly understand what it feels like to be me. I'm an antique, out of date" and "I'm an anachronism. Sammy, look around you. The world belongs to the young. Make way for them." Of course, what Byron fails to realize is that semite Sammy is an overly sentimental cinephile that lives in the past and worships the films of yesteryear. Indeed, Sammy would probably give old man Bryon a sloppy blowjob if he asked him to, but the wash-up horror icon is not impressed by groveling or superficial praise.

Aside from being a living and breathing anachronism that could not even scare a neurotic toddler, Byron is disillusioned with horror movies simply because they seem like a goofy joke compared to real-life violence and murder, or as he states to Sammy after showing him a newspaper with a headline that reads, "YOUTH KILLS SIX IN SUPERMARKET" in regard to the impotency of his trade: "No one's afraid of a painted monster." Indeed, Byron seems most appalled by the fact that film critics have recently described his work as "high camp," as if he is Vincent Price or something (incidentally, Sammy considers asking Mr. Price to star in his new film when Byron declines). Luckily (or unluckily depending on who you are), Byron eventually gets the opportunity to

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encounter a real-life homicidal maniac by happenstance and confront his fears in regard to real-life human horrors. Although resembling the typical all-American clean-cut white boy, generically handsome Vietnam War veteran Bobby Thompson (Tim O'Kelly) is, mentally speaking, on the brink of blowing a gasket and gunning down as many people as possible before he is caught, including the two women that he loves most. In a rather improbable foreshadowing scene at the beginning of the film, Bobby even unwittingly catches Byron in the crosshairs of a rifle while he is hanging out at a gun store that he and his avid sport shooter father regularly patronize. As demonstrated by his oftentimes socially retarded behavior and seeming incapacity to relate to other people, Bobby seems to fall somewhere on the autism spectrum, though that seems to be the least of his problems as he has recently contracted an impulse to kill and even considers shooting his own father in the back one day while they are target practicing.

In a strange fucked up way that seems to demonstrate both the director's lack of emotional intelligence and somewhat busted moral compass, deranged gun-freak Bobby—a psychological cripple that is embroiled in an intense civil war with his conscience—sometimes seems like the most sympathetic character in the film, as if his mind and body has been taken over by some evil entity like the NASA space commander Lt. Col. Marcus Aurelius Belt in the badly botched first season *The X-Files* episode 'Space.' Indeed, while Byron merely seems like a stereotypical grumpy old fart that longs for eternity in a cold dark coffin, Sammy boy is an outstandingly obnoxious social climber that seems like he would pimp out of his own mother to further his career. Surely, the only time Byron/Karloff is not completely insufferable is when he pays tribute to Hollywood maverick Hollywood Howard Hawks by stating in regard his Pre-Code prison flick *The Criminal Code* (1931), "Thanks to him, it was my first really important part." Undoubtedly, it is a rather dejected experience to see a rather weak and defeated old Byron/Karloff stare at his much younger and stronger self while watching the Hawk flick on TV as Sammy/Bogdanovich lurks in the background. While Karloff was never much of an actor, he certainly radiated a sort of menacingly visceral stoicism during his younger years, hence his famous and iconic role as Frankenstein's monster in *Frankenstein* (1931), *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), and *Son of Frankenstein* (1939). Thankfully, Byron demonstrates he still has some of his fierce Modern Prometheus menace when he smacks the shit out of the sniper at the end of the film. Of course, Byron probably has other reasons for smacking the shit out of the sniper aside from his demented murder spree, as the elderly horror icon probably resents the fact that the relatively young killer is throwing away his life and, in turn, his youth.

Bobby might be a bat-shit crazy bastard with more than a couple screws loose, but he at least has enough of a conscience and foresight to know that he is about to explode and he even attempts to seek help from his wife the night before his killing spree, but unfortunately she is a stereotypical dumb and vapid

blonde shiksa that is too narcissistic to notice her hubby is about to get a tad bit homicidal. Indeed, when Bobby attempts to confide in her and meekly states, "I want to talk to you, Ilene. I don't know what's happening to me. Oh, I get funny ideas," his self-absorbed wife does not bother to take seriously what he has to say and instead instantly changes the subject and asks him what he thinks of her work outfit (notably, her outfit is out little consequence as she works as a telephone operator!). That night when Ilene gets home from work, she finds Bobby lurking in the shadows of their bedroom and demanding that she not turn on the light, thus hinting that he has malevolent intentions and seeks to dehumanize her before he can go through with the unsavory act of uxoricide. The next morning, Bobby shoots his wife in the gut when she attempts to give him an early morning kiss and then proceeds to gun down both his mother and a hapless delivery boy who just happens to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. Right before wasting his wifey, Bobby types the following words on his typewriter, "To Whom It May Concern: It is now 11:40 A.M. My wife is still asleep, but when she wakes up I am going to kill her. Then I am going to kill my mother. I know they will get me, but there will be more killing before I die." Aside from typing up the pointless note for the police, Bobby further reveals his morbid anal retentiveness by placing the corpses on beds and covering them with sheets. Of course, after killing his wife and mother, Bobby drives to town with a full arsenal in his trunk so that he can proceed to kill as many innocent people as possible. Somewhat humorously, before he starts shooting random strangers, Bobby heads to his favorite gun shop and buys 300 .30-06 Springfield cartridges and a box of four buck for a 12 gauge, which he has charged to his father's account, thereupon making his father an unwitting accessory to mass murder.

To his minor credit, Bobby seems to be fairly confident in his shooting talents, as he initially opts to snipe at people in cars on a busy highway while lying atop an oil storage tank in another unintentionally tastelessly tragicomic scene that underscores the auteur's aesthetic autism. Indeed, at one point, Bobby not only manages to kill an unsuspecting motorist during rush hour, but he also successfully takes out a female passenger after she frantically flees from the car in a scenario that is somewhat comparable to the intentionally humorous sniper scene in Luis Buñuel's late period surrealist classic *Le Fantôme de la liberté* (1974) aka *The Phantom of Liberty*. Undoubtedly, Bobby's choice of targets and method for taking out said targets has a certain ritualistic quality about it that really highlights the character's peculiar pathology-ridden mind. Needless to say, when he is forced to kill a worker that climbs up the oil tank and subsequently sees police cars, Bobby immediately hightails it out of the area in his convertible. To evade capture after the police spot him, Bobby wisely decides to seek sanctuary at a nearby drive-in theater where he calmly purchases a ticket and then bides his time until the parking lot fills up with hundreds of potential victims. On top of

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having a nice place to hide, Bobby has discovered the perfect place to kill tons of people, especially considering the venue is expected to be unusually packed with patrons due to a promotional appearance from horror icon Byron. Needless to say, Bobby does not expect to be taken out by a barely mobile British old horror fart. Indeed, while Corman's kitsch gothic *The Terror* plays at the theater, Bobby begins blowing away unwitting audience members while they sit in their parked cars. At first, not many people notice the random deaths due to the darkness and noise from the movie, but it does not take long before full panic sets in and people are desperately attempting to flee the drive-in in their cars.

As a distinguished celebrity guest, Byron calmly sits in a limo at the front of the screen with his oriental secretary Jenny and it is only when he notices the killings that he seems to be even remotely alive. In fact, Bobby's killing spree really gets Byron's blood flowing, as if it is the one thing he needs in his life to have a sort of spiritual reawakening. As an old school (pseudo)Victorian gentleman, Byron naturally goes into full-fledged fearless hero mode when Bobby makes the mistake of shooting Jenny, who thankfully only receives a minor flesh wound. Indeed, like the most inordinately eloquent of screen monsters or even slasher killers, Byron stoically treads towards Bobby like an aristocratic Übermensch on a mission. Notably, Bobby becomes rather petrified when he notices that Byron is walking in his direction just as a projected image of the actor walking in a similar determined fashion from *The Terror* is projected on the movie screen, thus inspiring the unhinged sniper to shoot in both directions as if he is afraid that he is about to be obliterated by a big scary movie monster in what is a truly unreal and even vaguely surreal scenario where a movie monster transforms into a real-life hero. When Byron reaches the seemingly autistic sniper, he uses his trusty cane to knock a Luger out of Bobby's hand and then proceeds to repeatedly bitch slap him until he collapses and curls up into a fetal position like an abused child. Bitch-slapping the sniper ultimately seems to have a therapeutic effect on Byron, as it seems to release some pent up rage and deep-seated resentment. When Byron finally calms down and notices that big bad Bobby has been psychologically obliterated and is lying on the ground in a fetal position like an abuse child (which, in a strange way, Bobby seems to be), he thinks out loud by stating, "Is that what I was afraid of?," thus revealing that the horror icon seems to have some unwarranted guilt and moral qualms about being involved in creating hokey horror in a world full of real monsters and predators. Indeed, by confronting Bobby, Byron seems to have finally absolved himself of guilt and latent fear in regard to real-life human monsters and their growing prominence in the Western world.

Not one to easily dismiss his own work, Peter Bogdanovich revealed in an interview with Noel Murray at the now defunct film site *The Dissolve* that he is quite proud of *Targets* and considers it an important film in his overall oeuvre, or as he seemingly insincerely stated with the martial gusto of a dozen Indian

eunuchs, “If it wasn’t for TARGETS, there wouldn’t be a LAST PICTURE SHOW. And TARGETS, unfortunately, from a social point of view, is not outdated, because we still have this terrible gun problem in the United States. I wish it was outdated, but it isn’t. You can still buy guns very easily, and we’ve seen in the last few years a lot of mass killings, like we showed in TARGETS. Unfortunately, it’s still a very common occurrence in the United States. I think it’s terrible.” Lame superficial anti-gun sentiments aside, Bogdanovich is also right when he describes the film as being still socially relevant, as deranged Batmanphile and failed neuroscience student James Holmes—a less than charming chap who, unlike Charles Whitman, has a less than handsome face that screams abject mental derangement—committed an infamous mass shooting on July 20, 2012 at a Century 16 movie theater in Aurora, Colorado that concluded with 12 people dying and over 70 suffering injuries. For better or worse, Targets is undoubtedly the most socially conscious film that Bogdanovich ever made, which is somewhat depressing when you think about it since it is a cheap exploitation film that was specially crafted to play at the sort of drive-in theaters that specialized in such superficially sleazy and salacious schlock films. Undoubtedly, the film also seems all the more powerful when one considers that Bogdanovich’s Dutch-Canadian Playboy Playmate girlfriend Dorothy Stratten was brutally murdered with a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun in a murder-suicide committed by her estranged Jewish pimp husband Paul Snider. Of course, being the typical Hebraic Hollywood leftist, Bogdanovich blames guns instead of his sociopathic kinsman Snider for Stratten’s grisly demise, or as he somewhat absurdly stated while making reference to Targets, “Well, the story’s impossible to tell without showing the gun culture. Of course, the gun culture was very much on my mind. It was terrible then, it’s terrible now. I had a personal encounter with that tragedy when [my girlfriend] Dorothy Stratten was murdered by a gun that the killer, who was an alien, wasn’t supposed to be allowed to have. His visa had expired, and he still was able to purchase a shotgun with the ease of, as you say, going to the market and buying butter. And he killed her with it. I’ve experienced personal tragedy as a result of the gun culture in this country, which is disgraceful, frankly.” Of course, according to Bogdanovich’s logic, one only needs to be a morally virtuous elderly old horror star with a cane to take out a bloodthirsty mass murderer. Additionally, I doubt being able to purchase a firearm would have stopped Snider for killing Stratten. After all, Snider not only killed Stratten, but he also raped her before shooting her and then demonstrated he had necrophiliac tendencies by sexually defiling her corpse. Notably, auteur Bob Fosse would immortalize Stratten’s tragic life and gruesome death with his somewhat underrated flick Star 80 (1983) starring Mariel Hemingway and Eric Roberts. While I certainly consider Fosse to be the superior filmmaker, I kind of wish that Bogdanovich had directed the film.

Now celebrated by contemporary philosemitic and Hebraic hipster filmmak-

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ers like Wes Anderson and Noah Baumbach, who produced his latest film—the decidedly degenerate Woody Allen clone *She's Funny That Way* (2014)—Bogdanovich has certainly come a long way since he directed *Targets* and demonstrated for the first and ultimately last time in his career that he might have a drop of testicular fortitude. While the would-be-auteur enjoyed great success with his first three post-Target features *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *What's Up, Doc?* (1972), and *Paper Moon* (1973), Bogdanovich more or less destroyed his reputation as a filmmaker with three super soulless flops in a row, including the lame Henry James adaptation *Daisy Miller* (1974), pseudo-Lubitsch-esque musical *At Long Last Love* (1975), and insipid silent movie love letter *Nickelodeon* (1976). With his rather retarded rom-com *They All Laughed* (1980) starring Dorothy Stratten, Bogdanovich put the final nail in the coffin of his filmmaking career and was completely destroyed financially, as he funded the flop himself with his own money and was ultimately forced to file for bankruptcy as a result. In what ultimately proved to be a super sleazy move to help get him back on his feet after the truly cringe-worthy cinematic disaster that was *They All Laughed*, Bogdanovich wrote the sickly self-serving 'memoir' *Killing of the Unicorn: Dorothy Stratten 1960-1980* (1984), which exploited the infamy of his lover's brutal death and contained many quasi-libelous allegations against the filmmaker's (former) friends (including, ultra-degenerate Hugh Hefner, who hilariously claimed to have suffered a stroke after reading it). Of course, Bogdanovich demonstrated with his directorial debut that he was willing to exploit both a real-life massacre and an elderly British actor that had a hard time finding work, so *Killing of the Unicorn* was really no big surprise.

Undoubtedly, the more I read about Bogdanovich, the more I despise him. The sort of stereotypical ugly semitic Woody Allen-esque 'nice guy' type that has spent a good portion of his life buying and groveling his way into blonde Aryaness panties, Bogdanovich basically destroyed his entire career as a result of promoting his uniquely untalented lovers Cybill Shepherd and Dorothy Stratten and attempting the impossible by trying in vain to turn these brainless beauties into respectable actresses. As noted in Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* and elsewhere, many of the people that were close with Bogdanovich credit his homely first-wife—screenwriter, producer, and production designer Polly Platt—as being the true source of his talent and early career success as a filmmaker. What is unquestionably true is that while Bogdanovich has never really made a decent film after parting ways with her aside from *Saint Jack* (1979), Platt would go on to work on a number of interesting and eclectic projects, including Robert Altman's underrated Great Depression era crime-drama *Thieves Like Us* (1974), Louie Malle's pederast-friendly *Pretty Baby* (1978), the totally trashy anti-white exploitation flick *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* (1979), and Wes Anderson's debut feature *Bottle Rocket* (1996). Despite treating her like garbage and divorcing her for a dumb blonde that he treated like a fragile porcelain doll as

opposed to an equal lover and companion, Bogdanovich would later pay tribute to his ex-wife Platt by stating, “She worked on important pictures and made major contributions. She was unique. There weren’t many women doing that kind of work at that time, particularly not one as well versed as she was. She knew all the departments, on a workmanlike basis, as opposed to most producers who just know things in theory.”

As for Bogdanovich, he was absolutely despised by many people in the film industry due to his supposed flaunted excesses, arrogance, delusions of grandeur, and general megalomania. In fact, when his feature *At Long Last Love* became a flop, many people in Hollywood were absolutely delighted and celebrated his failure, or as noted in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*: “‘People loathed Peter,’ says writer David Newman. ‘His ego was just so monstrous. He was the great I Am, the Second Coming. This screening was a disaster, a cataclysm.’ The word on the street was that Platt had been the power behind the throne, and without her, he was nothing [...] he didn’t need Platt to sabotage his reputation. He was so universally detested that Billy Wilder is supposed to have said that after news of the screening spread, you could hear the champagne corks popping all over town. Complained Bogdanovich, ‘It was treated as if we had committed one of the most heinous crimes ever, including child-murdering and rape.’” Of course, one of the things that makes *Targets* so intriguing is that it is a work of true cinematic grit that was created before Bogdanovich became famous, succumbed to egomania, and thought he could get away with simply peddling soulless Cy-bill Shepherd musicals. Indeed, although far from immaculate, *Targets* is respectable because it is, in various ways, a work of authentic abject desperation and completely bare nihilistic fury that arguably does a better job of the capturing the essence of its particular zeitgeist than Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider* (1969). Aside from possibly *Saint Jack*, which was originally supposed to be directed by Orson Welles, *Targets* is surely Bogdanovich’s most underrated film. According to Bogdanovich himself, the real reason the film fell under the radar and went fairly unnoticed at the time of its original release is that, not unlike with Richard Kelly’s *Donnie Darko* (2001) and how the September 11 terrorist attacks doomed its fate, it debuted at a less than auspicious time in the wake of the Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations. Undoubtedly, it is strangely fitting that the sniper in Bogdanovich is an all-American WASP that goes on a fairly indiscriminate killing spree, as the character can be seen as a symbolic of the white Christian Anglo-Saxon man reacting to the nation he built being taken away from him by negroes, Jewish intellectuals, feminists, and various other untermensch groups that waged war against him during the 1960s utilizing resentment-driven slave-morality tactics that have completely inverted the values and mores of the people that built this country. Of course, as a Jew, Bogdanovich has a sort of innate commitment to said anti-Occidental

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slave-morality, hence his silly and seemingly disingenuous anti-gun stance.

While *Targets* is arguably Bogdanovich's most audaciously 'auteurist' work, it still ultimately reeks of being a slightly immature fanboy jerk-off piece. I know I am certainly not the only person that believes this as David Thomson argued in his magnum opus *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (1975) in regard to Bogdanovich's innate failure in regard to becoming the true auteur that he always dreamed of being, "As a director, Bogdanovich made four lovely picture shows, revealing marvelous accomplishment, wit, and sense of place. But, ironically, they are less an auteur's films than the extension of criticism. *TARGETS*—made under Roger Corman's aegis, after Bogdanovich had fueled the bikes for *WILD ANGELS*—is a tribute to AIP horror pictures, to Boris Karloff, and to Hawks, and also a stylistic nod in the direction of Hitchcock and Lang." Notably, Ethan Mordden went even further than Thomson and soundly argued, "There are so many 'movies' going on inside Bogdanovich's *TARGETS* (1968) that the film is more a state-of-the-art insertion into cinema history than an act of entertainment-enlightenment. What *BARBARELLA* was to the era itself, *TARGETS* was to the development of the movies in that era; a demonstration piece." Indeed, in terms of sheer entertainment value, Bogdanovich's directorial debut is decidedly uneven, but it is still worth the ride and indubitably makes for an intriguing piece of cinephile history. Undoubtedly, Bogdanovich is the perfect example of what Ludwig Wittgenstein meant when he described his fellow Jews as lacking the capacity for true genius and being only capable of 'reproductive thinking,' or as the Vienna-born philosopher stated himself in a somewhat self-denigrating fashion, "Amongst Jews 'genius' is found only in the holy man. Even the greatest of Jewish thinkers is no more than talented. (Myself for instance.) I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively.." Indeed, Wittgenstein might as well have been describing Bogdanovich when he wrote in regard to the lack of genius of early Romantic period German-Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn, "Within all great art there is a WILD animal: tamed. Not with Mendelssohn, for example. All great art has man's primitive drives as its groundbass. They are not the melody (as they are with Wagner, perhaps) but they are what gives the melody its depth and power. In this sense Mendelssohn can be called a 'reproductive' artist." Somewhat interestingly, the same Wittgenstein compilation *Culture and Value* (1970) features the following insight: "A typical American film, naive and silly, can — for all its silliness and even by means of it — be instructive. A fatuous, self-conscious English film can teach one nothing. I have often learnt a lesson from a silly American film." As to what can be learned from *Targets*, certainly a number of important lessons can be gleaned from it, though I think the most obvious one is that Boris Karloff was much more horrifying and unnerving when more or less portraying himself as a dejected, self-pitying, pessimistic and semi-crippled old man than he ever was as the darling monster of James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931).

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Peter Care (1982)

There seems to be a tendency among certain cinephiles, myself included, to outright overlook and/or dismiss certain films because they were made in collaboration with a certain band or some other sort of musician(s), as if these works do not totally qualify as cinema and should be completely relegated to the ghetto realm of music videos and tour documentaries. Of course, it is hard to ignore when an artist whose music you hate and/or whose persona you find to be completely repugnant has played an imperative role in the making of a film. Indeed, admittedly, to this day, I refuse to watch any film featuring the Beatles and I probably never will, but then again I am glad I did not let my decided dislike of Mick Jagger to stop me from watching Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg's gangster-meets-rocker counterculture masterpiece *Performance* (1970), which ultimately led me to somehow developing a smidgen of respect for the Rolling Stones singer for appearing in such an ambitious film, even if he is arguably one of the world's first proto-wiggers. Additionally, although I generally loathe musicals and do not think much of Pink Floyd and especially the film's star Bob Geldof, I somehow appreciated Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (1982) more than I could have ever possibly fathomed. Of course, I am still very hesitant about watching any film involving any sort of heavy collaboration between a filmmaker and a band or musician, so naturally I was initially not too keen on seeing a mostly forgotten British experimental short film that was made in collaboration with a somewhat boring proto-industrial group and directed by a longtime music video hack and TV commercial whore who is responsible for such best-selling workout videos as *Cindy Crawford Shape Your Body Workout* (1992) and *Cindy Crawford: The Next Challenge Workout* (1993), among various other exceedingly embarrassing monetary motivated projects that no true serious auteur could have ever churned out. Indeed, the 22-minute British avant-garde neo-noir *Johnny YesNo* (1982) directed by Peter Care is not exactly something I expected to be a substantial piece of cinema, but after watching it I now believe it is and I am somewhat startled by its relative obscurity, especially since it was somewhat recently released in 2011 as part of a two DVD/two CD box-set by Mute Records after being out of print since the early 1980s.

Notable for being a rare short film that had an original and fairly notable soundtrack specially created for it, Care's almost criminally neglected cult classic was scored by British proto-industrial group Cabaret Voltaire, who originally distributed the film through their own label Doublevision in 1983 in the form of a VHS that included two alternate edits of sequences from the flick as well as three aesthetically complimentary music videos. Admittedly, although I am fond of some industrial music and the various other genres that the band has been associated with over their fairly long career (interestingly, they started their career

playing gigs with Joy Division), Cabaret Voltaire is not a group I have ever been particularly enamored with, yet their contribution to Johnny YesNo is comparable to that of Bobby Beausoleil and The Freedom Orchestra on Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972), tranny Wendy Carlos' Moog synthesizer interpretations of Beethoven for Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and John Carpenter's own score for *Halloween* (1978) in terms of adding an imperative extra aesthetic layer to overall film. Quite rightly compared to the films of David Lynch, including *Loſt Highway* (1997) and especially *Mulholland Dr.* (2001), in terms of themes, aesthetics, and motifs, Care's deliciously dystopian neo-noir is set in a sort of mythical and intentionally artificial looking Swinging Sixties urban hell that falls somewhere between the Eaſt London of the Kray twins and the pulp purgatory of Samuel Fuller flicks where vice reigns and nihilism is the sole collective faith of the forsaken populous. The feverishly foreboding tale of a rough and tough gangſter with a rather refreshingly masculine mind and persona who starts a heated romance with a cute waitress but then discovers the simultaneously literal and figurative woman of his dreams and then soon finds himself trapped in a hallucinatory living nightmare where all forms of perception come into question, Johnny YesNo is unequivocally one of the moſt preternaturally stylish neo-noir flicks ever made as a work that utilizes the cut-up technique of William S. Burroughs in a rare practical and rewarding way that makes the celluloid experiments of the queer junky novelist and his charming cocksucking comrade Antony Balch like *Towers Open Fire* (1963) and *Bill and Tony* (1972) seem like badly botched amateur attempts at kitchen sink realism by comparison. Indeed, with the possible exception of the kraut cyber-punk-noir *Decoder* (1984) directed by Muscha, Care's film certainly deserves its place in cinema history as the moſt aesthetically pleasing and aggressively atmospheric experimental neo-noir flick ever made and I say that as a less than enthusiastic viewer that originally thought it would be a boring chore to watch.

After featuring various beautiful night shots of Manchester city centre, including entrancing neon-lit signs of overtly sleazy looking places like Playboy's Manchester Casino Club, the film introduces the tall, dark, and handsome shadow-dwelling titular protagonist Johnny Yesno (Jack Elliott), who narrates in a sort of elegant calm and collected proletarian fashion, "Flashy nightclubs. Dirty little dives where you never see the light of day. Full of squares and creeps; the people on the make. For these are the places that women like to go to. You choose them or they choose you. Either way make sure the collar of your shirt isn't greasy. Buy the girl a drink. Let her talk about herself. You can have a lot of fun. Don't carry a lot around with you. When women dig you, you only need basics." From there, Johnny ſtands ſtoically in front of a neon-lit blue sign that reads "A Punch," which is probably the beſt way to describe the film's overall effect on the viewer as an unrelenting and unforgettable cinematic work that hits you hard, faſt, and out of nowhere. While riding around in a taxi while partially camou-

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flaged by shadows and with his face all busted up and bloody, Johnny proceeds to directly tell the viewer about he got into his current precarious predicament, which involves an almost romantically schizophrenic association with two different stunning women, with the protagonist stating regarding the deluge of disappoint that has recently engulfed him, "Well, you think you got your life worked out. You think you're happy and then something sneaks up on you when you're not looking...and changes everything." As Johnny states regarding his first love interest, a sexy brunette name Lorraine (Jude Calvert-Toulmin), and her less than prestigious prole background, "I met her in a dirty little dive called Pyjama Tops serving drinks. Her name was Lorraine. She had a badge that said Sandy, but I knew it wasn't her real name. She just wasn't a Sandy. I didn't realize then that something must have clicked between us. We even slept together, which was kind of cozy if you know what I mean. I woke up with a sore neck, but what the hell...She was worth it." After a night of flesh-filled fun with Lorraine, Johnny makes sure to wake up before she does and then proceeds to stare at her while she is sleeping while standing in her generically girly pink kitchen where a literal douchebag is hanging on the wall. When Lorraine says to the protagonist while talking in her sleep, "Johnny, don't go. Don't leave me, Johnny," he seems to get scared because he immediately exits her home like he is attempting to avoid the plague. In fact, just as Johnny walks out of her house, Lorraine, declares, "Johnny, I love you," but the protagonist does not hear her in a scene that hints at the protagonist's fears in regard to starting a serious monogamous relationship with a woman. As the film will later reveal, it seems that Johnny thinks Lorraine is just too much of a Plain Jane for his cultivated tastes, as she does not fit his romantic view of the ideal dream lover. Indeed, underneath Johnny's extra hard exterior as a pathologically stoic man's man lies a hopeless romantic who dreams of the day when he discovers the woman of his dreams.

Although not exactly the most intricately articulate of fellows, Johnny does not mince words, especially when it comes to his deep-seated contempt for his city and its largely nocturnal inhabitants, or as he states directly to the viewer while seeming like Travis Bickle's more handsome and dignified British big brother, "I hate these nowhere places full of nobodies doing nothing. A lot of jerks on dope of one sort or another. I have to keep saying to myself, 'Don't take this shit...Keep the creeps out.' It's nice to get away from it all." Notably, Johnny gets "away from it all" by staying at fancy hotels with fancy females, or as he states in an unintentionally humorous fashion, "There's no better feeling than walking into your favorite hotel with a good-looking girl on your arm. Well, her personality counts, too. I like girls that are hip, get drunk, drive their own cars, keep their independence." While clearly obsessed with procuring dainty dames of the opulent sort who like cars and beer and who make him feel like the most potent and desirable of super studs, Johnny seems to have some mixed feelings about the women in his metropolitan hellhole as indicated by his some-

what paranoid and pessimistic remark, "Some of these chicks are quite attractive but I wouldn't go near them if I was you. They're all treated like animals. I don't know how they stand it. They're nothing, like life in general, only worse." Of course, Johnny does not follow his own advice and almost loses his life after getting involved with a sort of perfectly pale blonde diva who is more or less the personal property of one of the most powerful yet physically unimpressive fat cat gangsters in town.

After concluding his fairly negative rant about the dubious character of the women in his city, Johnny adds, "Anyway, to get back to the story. A couple weeks after I left Lorraine, I met the girl of my dreams." Indeed, while standing outside a luxury hotel one night, Johnny became entranced upon seeing an absurdly angelic blonde femme fatale (also Jude Calvert-Toulmin) that looks like a sort of Nordic version of Elizabeth Taylor arriving in a pink convertible with her small and borderline elderly sugar daddy. Naturally, after thinking to himself, "She was all the same shade, like an angel [...] She was the best looking girl in the world," gentleman Johnny cannot help but get into the mystery blonde's prestigious panties, even though she apparently has a powerful 'boyfriend' with dangerous connections, or as the protagonist narrates, "The clerk told me that the little guy was a local big noise. The Casanova Counselor, they called him. He had a fleet of flashy cars and a load of flashy blondes to go with them. This one was special though, he kept her in a room of her own, so I got her name and changed my shirt. When a chick digs your shirt, you're half-way home." Indeed, Johnny wastes no time in attempting to swoon the blonde and he immediately calls her upon going inside the hotel, but when she hangs up on him after he states, "This is Johnny Yesno in room 202 and I think you're beautiful. Do you think you'd?," things begin getting fairly strange for the protagonist. Somewhat curiously, only seconds after calling the blonde, Johnny gets a knock at his door and is startled to find a wounded Lorraine crying, "Oh, Johnny, they shot me," just before falling into the protagonist's arms. Immediately after laying Lorraine on his bed, an unseen figure hits Johnny from behind and knocks him out cold, thus sending the protagonist into a sort of nightmarish delirium of psychosexual pandemonium where reality and fantasy become particularly hard to discern, especially where his two love interests are concerned.

Indeed, in a sort of Burroughs-esque cut-up montage, various scenes from previous parts of the film are edited together in a delightfully deranged dream-like way that makes the viewer question whether or not anything that Johnny has experienced previously has really even happened or is instead the product of a wayward imagination. In this sort of psychedelic neo-noir montage that certainly seems like it aesthetically influenced aspects of Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), Johnny hallucinates seeing the blonde walking inside the entrance of the hotel yet somehow ending up in Lorraine's kitchen where she admires herself in front of a small mirror near the glaring douchebag that is hanging next to her.

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When Johnny imagines Lorraine saying to him, “We’re in this together, don’t you see?” and then appearing in the kitchen in the same exact place where the blonde was just previously standing, he loses his stoic calm and collected essence and completely freaks out. During his paranoiac psychedelic bad trip, Johnny occasionally regains semi-consciousness and at one point he even notices that he has been strapped to a bedpost and has two large track marks on his arm as a result of the fact that a mysterious faceless figure is repeatedly injecting him with a dubious substance that seems to be largely responsible for his harrowing hallucinations and overall lack of consciousness. When Johnny finally awakes from his hypnotically hellish drug-induced purgatory, he finds himself lying on his back while all beaten up and bloody in a gravel quarry in the countryside, which ultimately proves to be all the more traumatizing for the conspicuously cocky city boy as he hates the country, or as he complains like some cowardly cosmopolitan pansy, “I hate the country, especially at night. You never know what you’re stepping into.”

Notably, when Johnny wakes up in the quarry and tries in vain to stand up while sliding down a steep gravel incline, the shot is seen from an extreme close-up of his traumatized face in a highly idiosyncratic and exceedingly ethereal scene that involved a specially designed camera rig device created by British experimental filmmaker Tony Hill (*Floor Film, Downside Up*) being attached to actor Jack Elliot’s body. It seems to take Johnny an entire day just to get out of the quarry, tread through the moorland, and over a couple of large hills before he finds any sign of civilization, thus underscoring his relative insignificance in the context of nature and the world as a whole, hence his fairly vocal loathing of the countryside. Indeed, upon reaching a gas station building, Johnny is so excited and jubilant after encountering a sign of post-industrial decay that he declares in a humorously pathetic way, “I found a wall. A beautiful white upright wall.” Needless to say, Johnny is fairly tired as a result of his journey and immediately falls to the ground upon grabbing the side of the building, but he is naturally temporarily rejuvenated when the blonde femme fatale and her sugar daddy randomly arrive at the gas station in the latter’s striking retro pink convertible. While the sugar daddy fills up his car with gas and inspects his engine, the blonde takes her beloved matching white pet poodle for a walk so that it can pee. Undoubtedly in no other film is there a scene where a protagonist stares so intently at someone while they are taking their dog for a piss as Johnny does in the film. While staring at the blonde from afar, Johnny has a hallucination about Lorraine’s bullet wound and then suffers what seems like a minor seizure. Needless to say, at this point, Johnny lacks the gall to approach the blonde while she is in the company of her overprotective sugar daddy, but he certainly does not give up there.

After the gas station scene where the eponymous protagonist has hit both literal and figurative rock bottom, Johnny wraps up his unhappy personal story by stating to the viewer, “I’ve gotta sort some of this mess out” and then the

credits role. Somewhat absurdly after a couple seconds of credits, the viewer is treated to a seemingly intentionally absurd tacked-on twist happy ending in the vein of *Blade Runner* (1982) where Johnny and Lorraine are featured driving in a convertible while traveling to some sort of pastoral paradise in a pseudo-sappy scene juxtaposed with melodic *Twin Peaks*-esque music. After Johnny states, "It was a piece of cake" regarding his accomplish to "sort some of this mess out," Lorraine reveals that she is actually also the blonde femme fatale and that she was shot by her pimp the night that the protagonist called her from her hotel room, though she has no hard feelings about the situation as indicated by her remark, "While I was glad to get away, my sugar daddy was quite sweet, really." As for Johnny boy, he could not be better, or as he narrates like some sort of would-be-wise old grandfather, "I wanted it to last forever, that journey with Lorraine by my side, but only just figured it out. The girl, the girl in the game and the girl of my dreams were the same person. It was weird, weird and wonderful. We drove on, a million miles away from the lousy world we've grown so used to...and we had a good time. Sometimes life does you a favor and sometimes you have to help it along." Indeed, if only real-life was so preposterously perfect as the oh-so neatly packaged ending of *Johnny YesNo*, which even makes the signature pseudo-ideal conclusions of the melodramas of Douglas Sirk seem more genuinely optimistic by comparison.

On of being probably the greatest 'post-punk psychedelic film noir' ever made, *Johnny YesNo* ultimately feels like a sort of missing link from cinema history that arguably exposes that David Lynch is not as an original and innovative filmmaker as everyone thinks he is. Aside from the fact that Lynch is a well known fan of industrial music and would probably seek out a film with a soundtrack by Cabaret Voltaire (incidentally, not unlike director Peter Care, Lynch has also directed various commercials and musical videos during his career as revealed in the highly worthwhile German documentary *The Fine Art of Separating People from Their Money* (1998) directed by Hermann Vaske and hosted by Dennis Hopper), the film's lead actress, Jude Calvert-Toulmin, who went on to become an erotic novelist, created a virtual online campaign to get *Johnny YesNo* recognized as the sort of secret father film to *Mulholland Dr.* Although I will not go into detail, I have to say that the aesthetic and thematic similarities between Care and Lynch's film are unmistakable to the point of being a severe annoyance. For whatever reason, Care would dedicate most of the rest of his career to directing music videos and tour videos for high-profile mainstream musicians like R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen, and Depeche Mode, though he did manage to churn out one fairly entertaining feature. Indeed, while not exactly featuring the innovative artistic integrity of *Johnny YesNo*, Care's long-awaited first feature *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys* (2002) starring Jodie Foster as a sadistic nun who gets off to punish teenage boys is notable for being a rare darkly comedic coming-of-age flick that makes various reference to William Blake (which is

JOHNNY YESNO

somewhat different to Johnny YesNo's references to W.S. Burroughs and J. G. Ballard). Of course, one can only imagine where Care's filmmaking career would have headed had he been given the money to pursue uncompromising cinematic works that challenged his talents, though I am sure there are those individuals that admire the fact that the filmmaker got the distinguished opportunity to direct Cindy Crawford while she was bending over in spandex pants.

Notably, for the release of the Johnny YesNo box-set released Mute Records (who apparently insisted that new film material be created for the release because they apparently felt no one would be interested in purchasing such an 'old' film), Care directed a sort of digital remake of the film entitled Johnny Yesno Redux (2008), which superficially follows the storyline of the original film and features some new remix tracks by Cabaret Voltaire. While I think the remake is a piss poor pile of deplorable digital diarrhea that makes it seem like Care lost any artistic talent that he originally had long ago, Johnny Yesno Redux is at least worth seeing as a double feature with the original film as it unwittingly insightfully exposes how much things have drastically morally, culturally, and artistically degenerate since the early 1980s. Aside from being shot in L.A. on a cheap HD camera instead of the North of England on 16mm film stock like the original film, the remake betrays the classic European beauty of its predecessor and stars a swarthy and scrawny Hebraic degenerate in the titular role and a trashy looking East Asian go-go dancer as the female lead in what ultimately resembles a sort of trashy third world porn flick. Undoubtedly while Johnny YesNo oftentimes give off the feeling of being a fairly enthralling and narcotizing nightmare, the remake is just plain irritating and aesthetically grating and thus is an ironically fitting portrait of contemporary times where sex and romance about as meaningful as drinking beer and vomiting. The remake is also hopelessly modern in the sense that it endorses the patently pathetic trend of yellow fever based miscegenation. To go back to Lynch one more time, Johnny Yesno Redux is ultimately to Johnny YesNo what *Inland Empire* (2006) is to *Eraserhead* (1977) and *Blue Velvet* (1986) as an aesthetically asinine and innately incoherent piece of unintentional self-parody of the decidedly dull digital age sort that highlights how lazy and unimaginative certain filmmakers have gotten over the past decade or so as a result of the digitization of 'cinema.'

An ecstatically eerie and almost erotically foreboding work of noir-ish phantasmagoria, Johnny YesNo seems like it could have been the sort of cinematic bible for filmmakers ranging from Darren Aronofsky to James Fotopoulos, but most importantly it is a cult film that actually manages to transcend its reputation in terms of quality. A rare dystopian work that references a mythical aesthetic and cultural past while simultaneously making predictions for a misleadingly future of soulless pseudo-utopianism where darkness his hidden behind sunshine, the malignantly moody and broody micro masterpiece was notably described by director Care in an interview with FACT Magazine as a sort of reaction to the

sort of aesthetic sterility associated with cultural Marxist agitprop docs that were popular with young filmmakers of that time, or as the auteur said himself, "At that time the English independent film scene was full of really important work, most of it political: you know, documentaries about the Glasgow rent strike and that sort of thing, left-wing subjects. I was involved in some of that work and believed in it, but for my own self-expression I wanted to make something that was the diametric opposite – so partly JOHNNY YESNO was a reaction to what I saw as the norm. But I was fascinated anyway by the idea that you could make a film about psychology, as opposed to politics." Indeed, the film may have been co-penned by a card-carrying feminist, but it ultimately seems like a work of unintentionally neo-fascist film noir that endorses classic heterosexual monogamy and traditional rural living. Indeed, in its seemingly half-hearted attempt to criticize the classic archetypal masculine antihero associated with film noir history, the film gives off the impression of endorsing these admirable character traits, especially in an era where more sensible people are starved for stoic white men that actually act like men and are not the least bit concerned with some absurd left-wing social construct like so-called 'gender equality.' Indeed, while the conspicuously contrived twist happy ending of Johnny YesNo was obviously meant to mock such an implausible Hollywood-esque scenario, I ultimately found it rather refreshing in its failed quasi-cryptic-cynicism, especially since it still manages to illustrate the natural beauty of a handsome macho man and feminine beautiful woman being in a passionate and loving relationship with one another. Luckily, the remake Johnny Yesno Redux at least concludes with an unhappy ending where the Asian girl drives off and leaves the pathetic Jew boy behind. Undoubtedly the best compliment that I can pay the film is that it is probably the closest thing to a 1980s equivalent to Cammell and Roeg's Performance as a work that takes an almost metaphysical approach to reflecting the particular zeitgeist and counterculture it was made within, with Cabaret Voltaire arguably being at the forefront of these aesthetic changes, at least musically speaking. Of course, one could easily argue that it is quite fitting that Johnny YesNo director Peter Care went on to become a music video director instead of a feature filmmaker as it indicative of the birth of MTV, the death of British experimental cinema, and the waning of the intelligence and attention-span of the average viewer. Not surprisingly, after reading various reviews, I discovered that many contemporary viewers find Care's film to be quite baffling, thus guaranteeing the film will remain a cult oddity that will probably only be remembered by hardcore Cabaret Voltaire fans and the occasional oddball cinephile.

-Ty E

HOMO SAPIENS 1900
HOMO SAPIENS 1900

Peter Cohen (1998)

I have read most of the definitive works regarding the history and theory of eugenics, so I was pleased to receive a copy of the 1998 documentary *Homo Sapiens 1900* directed by Peter Cohen; a work that describes the various eugenic programs that were practiced throughout Europe and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. *Homo Sapiens 1900* also takes a look at the Soviet Union's opposition to Mendel's theory of heredity; a science that was at odds with the political ideology of the plutocratic communist super state. Sir Francis Galton, half-cousin of Charles Darwin, is generally considered the pioneer of eugenics. Galton felt that with eugenics, man could pull out the "weeds" (which he felt were growing at much faster rate than "cream of the crop" genetics lines) out of the flower bed of humanity. Of course, eugenics was discredited after the defeat of National Socialist Germany during the conclusion of World War II, thus dying in its infancy as a science. In *Homo Sapiens 1900*, a general overview pertaining to the history of eugenics is presented in a cold and emotionless manner, no doubt complimenting the inhumane approach scientists and governments would take against individuals after eugenic programs were incorporated during the early part of the twentieth century.

With the rediscovery of Austrian monk Gregor Mendel's (who was ignored during his time) science of genetics during the early 1900s, came a popular interest in bettering the human race by the way of eugenics. When I was in college, my Biology professor mentioned on the first day of class that Charles Darwin owned a copy of the original scientific journal that featured the genetic theories of Mendel. Had Darwin actually read Mendel's work, he would have concocted a more intricate and full-proof theory of evolution, but I digress. Scientists were not the only public figures interested in eugenics; poets, philosophers, and painters also saw much hope in the new sciences, as they felt it was capable of accelerating the evolution of mankind. In *Homo Sapiens 1900*, various völkisch drawings by the mostly forgotten German symbolist artist Fidus are presented as evidence that leading artists of the twentieth century had also been put under the spell of eugenic-obsessiveness. As shown in the documentary, Fidus created a variety of drawings featuring nude Aryan ubermensch. Ironically, Fidus' work, as well as his nudist ethic, would later be discovered and utilized by psychedelic hippie artists of the late 1960s. In the United States, eugenics started to gain notice in a rather odd and downright peculiar manner. Near the beginning of *Homo Sapiens 1900*, you viewer is exposed to clips from the 1916 film *The Black Stork*; a documentary-like work featuring real-life American doctor Harry J. Haiselden as he refuses to perform surgery on a deformed baby (which eventually dies). During the early twentieth century, in an attempt to preserve the best Nordic bloodlines, America, Sweden, and Germany created laws forcing sterilization

on those individuals that were deemed not fit to breed. Of course, as modern indigenous population growth statistics in Germany and Sweden testifying to, the state-sanctioned eugenic goal of securing racial purity would prove to be in vain. Oswald Spengler, arguably the last great German thinker, once stated (despite his belief in race as a biological phenomenon) that, "Those who talk too much about race no longer have it in them." Interestingly enough, in Spengler's final work *Hour of Decision* (which was later banned in Nazi Germany), the philosopher (who argued against the Nazi's materialistic view of race) essentially predicted the "how", "why", and "when" in regard to the Third Reich's defeat.

By: Fidus

The real value of *Homo Sapiens 1900* is that it acts as a sound outline for studying the brief history of eugenics. The documentary also features various forgotten German racial theorist, such as eugenicist Hans F.K. Günther and Leonard Conti (the Swiss-Italian "Reich Health Leader" of the Third Reich), as well as the anti-eugenic "scientists" of the Soviet Union. *Homo Sapiens 1900* dedicates a good amount of time to Trofim Lysenko, the director of biology under Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. Inspired by Lamarckism (a discredited pseudo-science that emphasizes environmental influence on genetic inheritance), Lysenko designed a pseudo-scientific "socialist biology" which supported the communist creed that humans, being property of the state, were malleable automatons that could be socially engineered to do anything. As explained near the conclusion of *Homo Sapiens 1900*, Lysenko had his opponents (especially those who agreed with Mendel's theories) lined up and liquidated via a firing squad. If a person needs evidence that science can be completely warped to fit the political agenda of the state and/or scientist, the life of Trofim Lysenko makes for a perfect example. After watching *Homo Sapiens 1900*, it will be apparent to the viewer that man, whether he be a Hitlerite or Trotskyite, will always fail in attempting to bolster the evolutionary fate of mankind. Who knows what will result from the modern experiment of "globalization." I wholeheartedly agree with the sentiment (featured near the conclusion of *Homo Sapiens 1900*) that a man can only be judged by his accomplishments; not from fruits of another man that just happens to be of the same race (although one should take pride in their ethnic culture). If a person were to judge eugenics by its accomplishments, one would soon realize why it has been naturally weeded out. Instead of reversing occidental decline as foreseen by Oswald Spengler, eugenics (with the help of unpredictable technology) has only sped up the process. For more info on *Homo Sapiens 1900*, check out [First Run Features](#).

-Ty E

THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT
THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT

Peter Cornwell (2009)

Boo! It's a ghost! Or even worse!!! MANY GHOSTS (AND THEY HAVE NO EYELIDS!!!!). Ghosts are a fun thing to be fascinated and afraid of as a child. I remember watching Tobe Hooper's (or more like Steven Spielberg's) *Poltergeist* and thinking it was one of the scariest yet greatest movies ever made. Now I just think the film is mildly entertaining in a nostalgic sort of way. Other than *Poltergeist* and Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece *The Shining*, I cannot think of any other ghost film that ever interested me, which I believe is a shame. Why can't some half competent filmmaker direct a decent ghost flick? Better yet, why did I bother watching *The Haunting in Connecticut*? I watched *The Haunting in Connecticut* because I wanted to appease a young and beautiful lady. Also, one cannot forget that marvelous mad dog mAQ was once again able to use his deviant magic and get us into the film screening free of charge. Aside from another couple, my lady friend and I were the only two in the theater. I must admit the vacant atmosphere was perfect for seeing a horror and especially a ghost film. It is great being at a movie theater screening without having to deal with a loud-mouthed virtual gang (or real gangs) of noisy would-be rappers. Seeing as *The Haunting in Connecticut* was a ghost film, I can now understand how a group of rebels in white ghostlike costumes used to scare the Negro population. I guess the only thing that can scare a spook is a spook. Unfortunately, *The Haunting In Connecticut* was not the type of film that could scare a cracker unless we're talking about those spiritual types. Before seeing *The Haunting in Connecticut*, I watched a Discovery channel documentary on the "true story." Yes, believe it or not, a real teenager with cancer and his family was haunted by ghosts. The house that the family moved into used to be a mortuary. Unsurprisingly, the family at first believed that the boy with cancer hallucinated his visions of ghosts due to the drugs (which cause hallucinations as a side effect) he was taking. When the real "victims" of ghosts appear on the documentary, they're in the dark so no one can see what they look like. When they talk, it is apparent that this family is the "true believer" spiritual type that is afraid of using their intellect. Sort of like when you're a child and you can trick your mind into believe things that are kind of cool at that early age yet pathetic if you're older than 13 years old. The family featured in the movie *The Haunting in Connecticut* seem to be up about ½ a knot in intelligence. So what does the film *The Haunting in Connecticut* have to offer? It has a bunch of flickering editing (during the sepia vintage séance scenes) that is kind of fun in the movie theater (but will probably lose most of it's power on DVD). Other than that, nothing else really stuck out except maybe the Robert De Niro look-a-like that played a terminally ill minister. *The Haunting in Connecticut* is a fairly banal modern ghost story that can be compared to a barely lit candle that attempts to flicker but instead burns out. But then again,

with a film like *The Haunting in Connecticut* what could one actually expect?
-Ty E

BROKEN GODDESS
BROKEN GODDESS

Peter Dallas (1973)

Out of all the drag queen superstars that worked with Paul Morrissey and Andy Warhol, Holly Woodlawn (*Trash*, *Scarecrow in a Garden of Cucumbers*) is the only one who managed to live long enough to become middle-aged (in fact, s/he is still alive today and well into her 60s). While fellow tranny superstar Jackie Curtis made for an even less believable woman than Divine did, and Candy Darling would have easily passed as a member of the fairer sex were it not for his/her pesky cock, Ms. Woodlawn fell somewhere in between her *Women in Revolt* (1972) co-stars in terms of genuine female physical features. Despite Woodlawn's sub-homely appearance, some goofy gay filmmaker actually had the gall to direct a film where the tranny attempted to recapture the spirit of silent screen divas like Gloria Swanson and Theda Bara. Of course, unlike many of Warhol's superstars, Woodlawn was fairly decent at acting and Hollywood Golden Age auteur George Cukor (*The Philadelphia Story*, *My Fair Lady*) even attempted to petition the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for her to be nominated for 'Best Actress' for her decidedly degenerate gender-bending performance in Paul Morrissey's *Trash* (1970). Indeed, the 20-minute black-and-white silent short *Broken Goddess* (1973) directed by one-time auteur 'Dallas' stars Woodlawn as a majorly melancholy dude-goddess of the quasi-Gothic sort who does a bunch of melodramatic stares and poses, as if s/he is the only pseudo-girl left in the world. The closest thing to an aesthetic marriage between the films of Kenneth Anger and Werner Schroeter (in fact, the film is rather reminiscent of *Eaux d'Artifice* (1953), albeit the Anger flick features an Italian midget as opposed to a Puerto Rican American tranny), *Broken Goddess* features homo high-camp hysterics for sure, so I can only recommend the work to the already initiated, as it lacks the cheap quasi-scatological anti-feminist laughs of a film like *Women in Revolt*. Featuring Woodlawn wearing what auteur Dallas described as a "Western Kabuki" (a makeup style combining elements of Greek tragedy, pop art, and silent cinema aesthetics) on her face, *Broken Goddess* actually manages to do a little more than simply parrot the essence of the silent era, as a work that is equally aesthetically repugnant as it is strangely exquisite. As to why Dallas would do something so seemingly anachronistic as make a silent movie, the director once confessed: "Why, some people asked, a silent movie? Having had no education beyond New York City public high school (and that counts for nothing), I figured the best place to start directing great motion pictures was at the beginning. And move forward from there. Nice and simple; a one-character one-reeler. That's where D.W. Griffith started. And Mack Sennett. and Charlie Chaplin.." Shot during a series of twelve mornings (from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m.) that spanned a two month period at Bethesda Fountain in Central Park, NYC, *Broken Goddess* may not be up to

par with D. W. Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* or *The Yellow Man and the Girl* (1919) starring Lillian Gish, but it is surely not bad for a work where the star was oftentimes drunk on the set and was paid for his performance with a mere bottle of wine (little Gallo port to be exact).

Almost entirely in slow-motion, *Broken Goddess* features probably no more than 5 minutes of actual footage that has been slowed down to create a reasonably poetic effect similar to that of Derek Jarman's hallucinatory neo-Shakespearean masterpiece *The Angelic Conversation* (1985). Of course, there is no one-on-one conversations in Dallas' film, as Woodlawn merely talks to herself in an absurdly lovelorn fashion that is communicated via elegant inter-titles. In fact, the inter-titles are actually derived from song lyrics written by Jewish-Polish-Italian-American singer/songwriter Laura Nyro. In terms of a score, the film includes classic impressionist compositions by French composer Achille-Claude Debussy, who also, somewhat coincidentally, influenced Nyro. Opening with the inter-title, "Love and despair, reminders that we are man, child and woman. For, in the private most hours dares there among you one who will make distinction between himself and the world?," *Broken Goddess* then features the eponymous protagonist as played by Ms. Woodlawn walking slowly down a set of stairs while sporting a tattered black dress, as if s/he had just been raped, beaten, and left to die, or so one might assume due to his deathly depressed demeanor and rather ghost-like fashion of moving. Undoubtedly, the Central Park of Dallas' film more resembles an ancient Gothic graveyard than some unpleasant concrete jungle in NYC where cocksuckers go cruising. In between scenes of Woodlawn looking like a wounded animal while striking preposterous poses around the fountain and absurd inter-titles like, "Now the tears in the gutter are flooding the sea...Why was I born?," topless glamour shots of the Warhol superstar in a silky white dress appear, as if to demonstrate what the sad she-male looked like before suffering abject heartbreak. In the end, flaming creature Woodlawn walks up the same set of stairs that she walked down at the beginning of the film, thus *Broken Goddess* comes full-circle in the end, as if the character had finally found some sort of peace. Indeed, there might be hope for this seemingly hopeless tranny.

In his book *Joe Dallesandro: Warhol Superstar, Underground Film Icon, Actor*, writer Michael Ferguson noted regarding Holly Woodlawn: "She appeared in a few other low-budget films on the heels of *TRASH*, including *SCARECROW IN A GARDEN OF CUCUMBERS* (1972) and *BROKEN GODDESS* (1973), before famously telling a lamely inquisitive Geraldo Rivera in 1976, who wanted to know *WHAT* she was, that it didn't make any difference "as long as you look fabulous." Gracious and much sought after for years on the film festival circuit, she's inevitably queried about working with Joe [Dallesandro]." Indeed, aside from brief cameos in a couple of Rosa von Praunheim documentaries, including *Tally Brown, New York* (1973), as well as a small non-

BROKEN GODDESS

sexual role as a lounge singer in Armand Weston's pornographic take on Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray, Take Off* (1978), Woodlawn would not act in another film until the 1990s. Undoubtedly, in terms of Woodlawn films, you cannot find one that is classier and more cultivated than *Broken Goddess*, as it seems to be the one rare cinematic example where the dude-diva is taken terribly seriously. As for auteur Dallas, he apparently attempted to make a mainstream all-female comedy after releasing the silent short, but the studios were only interested in all-male buddy films (i.e. Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman; Paul Newman and Robert Redford; Al Pacino and Gene Hackman) and had no use for a work about a bunch of campy fag hags, so he never made another film, stating, "If I was ready for Hollywood, Hollywood sure wasn't ready for me. So I tended bar, wrote for magazines, painted silks for Halston." Whether they are completely conscious of it or not, most people have heard of Woodlawn via Lou Reed's 1972 hit song "Walk on the Wild Side," as s/he is the person mentioned at the very beginning of the song ("Holly came from Miami, FLA..."). Undoubtedly, *Broken Goddess* demonstrates that Woodlawn came a long way since that truly life-changing day when s/he, "Plucked her eyebrows on the way... Shaved her legs and then he was a she." Indeed, if nothing else, *Broken Goddess* is a celluloid enigma that reminds me more than any other film why I will never be able to wrap my head around the fact that certain people with penises have a more innate desire to be dreamy 'divas' than most authentic women do.

-Ty E

ADAM /& YVES

Peter De Rome (1974)

As far as rare porn flicks that are drenched in shameless yet distinctly cultivated cinephilia, you probably cannot do better than the Franco-America homo hardcore flick *Adam & Yves* (1974) directed by French-born yet British-bred avant-garde auteur-pornographer Peter De Rome (*The Fire Island Kids*, *Prometheus*). Indeed, a sort of hardcore homo reworking of Bernardo Bertolucci's erotic art-house magnum opus *Last Tango In Paris* (1972) made in partial homage to cine-magician Jean Cocteau 'starring' Swedish silent screen diva Greta Garbo in her last (and ultimately unauthorized) film appearance and featuring a nasty little nod to Blaxploitation and even an obfuscated hyper-homoerotic 'tribute' to Leni Riefenstahl, De Rome's first feature-length film is a cinephiliac mongrel of a movie that reeks of cinema history just as it does of urine-and-cum-drenched pissouirs. Produced by fellow auteur-pornographer/producer Jack Deveau, who also directed an artsy fartsy fuck flick in the capital of Frogland entitled *Le musée* (1974) aka *Strictly Forbidden* that same year, *Adam & Yves* depicts the brief and strictly anonymous "no strings attached" love affair between an American 'agfay' and a fairy Frenchman in Paris. In fact, De Rome would describe the work, which was originally titled 'Etoile,' in his memoir *The Erotic World of Peter de Rome* (1982) as being more or less a porn flick where virtually every scene is a tribute and/or parody of another film, writing: "The first episode is when he meets a young Frenchman in an unfurnished apartment in circumstances strangely similar to *LAST TANGO IN PARIS*. From then on, each of their adventures has its film parallel, and it becomes a guessing game to discover which film they are 'playing' – from a new and startling view of *QUEEN CHRISTINA* to an erotic extreme in black exploitation movies; from the extension of *Le Sang d'un Poète* already described to a discreet voyeur witnessing one of the more singular charms of the bourgeoisie." On top of cleverly synthesizing cinephilia with cocksucking, *Adam & Yves* is also quite notable due to its decidedly degenerate depiction of Paris as a historically fucked fetish-ridden nether-realm where proletarian perverts dip bread into piss and eat it as a delicacy (according to De Rome, this is a real French tradition that is referred to as "baba du pauvre") and old men snatch up the discarded cum-covered tissues of fat old prostitute as if they have discovered gold. Partially inspired by De Rome's experiences in Paris 25 years before, "the era of the Left Bank, Jean-Paul Sartre and Juliette Greco, students in black and the flowering of the Flore," had changed everything for the more socio-politically and aesthetically degenerate, *Adam & Yves* might seem like a curious mess of a 'Doran Love' blue movie today, but it is certainly one of the most ambitious, inventive, intelligent, and groundbreaking porn flicks ever made.

Aberrosexual blond Aryan American Adam (played by Michael Hardwick,

ADAM /& YVES

whose sole other film credit is *Boy-napped* (1975) co-starring hetero-flexible Hebrew Jamie Gillis) is on vacation in Paris and he loves swarthy frog fellows, but he also complains, “You French guys are all alike...just love them and leave them...isn’t that about it?!” Like the two heterosexual leads of *Last Tango In Paris*, Adam meets and ultimately buggers his swarthy sub-Europid quasi-lover Yves (Marcus Giovanni) one day in an abandoned apartment and they have been anonymous fuck buddies ever since, as the French fellow finds serious personal relationships—be they sexual or otherwise—to be too “difficult” and refuses to even tell the ever inquisitive American his real name. While Yves proudly professes that he feels like “getting away from people,” extroverted yank Adam feels like “getting closer to them,” hence the dubious status of their romantic relationship. Despite not revealing much about himself, Yves is eager to expose rather repellant French culinary traditions, including a shocking scenario that Adam witnesses where an old frog practices the “old French custom” (a practice that apparently dates back to the 1920s that De Rome once lovingly described as “the poor man’s rum baba”) of dipping his long phallic-like loaf of baguette in the fermenting juices of a ‘pissoir’ (a sort of fancy urban public urinal that was invented by the French and is quite common in Europe cities) so that his bread has more flavor. While Yves reveals a lot to Adam about Paris, the American also describes his experiences as a New Yorker, especially in regard to a special, “day for a lay when the air smelled like a locker room. A day to blow or get blow” when he met a random half-brain-dead 24-year-old ½ Polish/½ Irish mechanic named Bud (played by the hero of Deveau’s 1974 cocksucking cult classic *Drive*) whose “tower of power” he delicately blew. Indeed, like his French buddy, Adam is certainly a fellow that will very likely acquire gay cancer in the next decade or so.

Upon visiting the grave of the debauched Irish dandy poet Oscar Wilde, Yves proclaims to Adam like a truly hopeless queen, “Friendship is so difficult. So delicate. I’m single and have no friends. Only lovers, like poor Oscar Wilde.” The two lovers also demonstrate their sense of solidarity with the Wilde quote, “For his mourners will be outcast men and outcasts always mourn.” Naturally, the two friends also visit the tomb of French poet/cine-magician Jean Cocteau and Adam asks, “Wasn’t it Cocteau who compared France to a cock crowing on a garbage dump?,” to which his French boy toy replies, “no, a dung heap. Take-away the dung and the cock dies.” Upon taking a pilgrimage to the 11th century Chapelle Saint-Blaise des Simples in Milly-la-Forêt, which Cocteau covered with murals and was buried in as per as personal wishes, Adam looks through a keyhole in a scene in tribute to *The Blood of a Poet* (1930) aka *Le Sang d’un Poète* and spots a young Nordic Narcissus (played by Bill Young, who starred in Deveau’s *Le musée*, as well as De Rome’s second feature *The Destroying Angel*) masturbating for about ten minutes or so in a scene of pure body worship reminiscent of Leni Riefenstahl’s 1938 masterpiece *Olympia* (quite notably, De Rome

cited Riefenstahl as one of his influences in the 2011 documentary *Fragments: The Incomplete Films of Peter De Rome*). Later that night, Adam and Yves play a movie-guessing game quite similar to the one played by the three protagonists of Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* (2003) where they act out scenes from old movies. After Yves acts out a scene from the Pre-Code Hollywood flick *Queen Christina* (1933) starring Greta Garbo and directed by Armenian-American director Rouben Mamoulian, Adam describes how he once spotted the Swedish-born silent diva walking around NYC (indeed, Greta Garbo was shot by De Rome without her knowledge from top of a roof), stating of the experience, "It was one of the most exciting moments of my life...A living legend walking along First Avenue in New York."

In an undeniably iconic scene leading up to most daringly degenerate segment of *Adam & Yves*, the two eponymous protagonists drive past movie theatre marquees for various Blaxploitation flicks, including *Shaft* (1971), *Hell Up in Harlem* (1973), *The Legend of Nigger Charley* (1972), *The Mack* (1973), and *Five on the Black Hand Side* (1973), among various others, as well as a shot of a billboard of the director's very own 8-film compilation work *The Erotic Films of Peter De Rome* (1973). Set to the negrophiliac tribal beats, the Blaxploitation theatre marquee montage then cuts to a vomit-worthy black orgy in an extra-cramped public restroom, of which De Rome described as follows in his memoir: "For the black orgy scene in *ADAM & YVES* [...] I had engaged fifteen actors, but being very much aware of the exigencies of the situation, I was going to take no chances. So on the way over to shoot the scene (which took place in the men's room of the Lincoln Art Theater), I approached two hustlers on Third Avenue and asked them if they'd like to earn some easy bucks. They were both ready and willing, and my foresight paid off because five of my original fifteen failed to show and I was left with twelve, which is just about what I wanted – and quite enough to cope with in the confines of a 'can'." After the genuinely bestial and equally revolting spade gang-screw, Adam prepares to go back to NYC and says his goodbyes to Yves by melodramatically remarking "drive off" and "don't look back." After dropping off Adam at an airport, Yves spots an extra-mature Hooker of the rather overweight sort giving a blowjob to an equally fat and old bastard. After the Hooker finishes giving a hummer, she immediately spits the john jism in her mouth into a tissue, which is soon found by an elderly Hobo who is quite exhilarated by his major biological find. In the end, *Adam & Yves* concludes with the repeating of best line of dialogue from the two protagonists: "Wasn't it Cocteau who compared France to a cock crowing on a garbage dump? [...] No, a dung heap. Takeaway the dung and the cock dies." Indeed, De Rome seems to be saying that both fags and frogs need feces to survive.

Although never mentioning her by name, auteur Peter De Rome would describe his encounter with Greta Garbo that was used for his first feature as

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follows in his memoir: "Certain real-life situations provided me with scenes throughout the film, in fact. For many years in New York I lived very near a certain very celebrated and solitary lady who I'm sure would prefer to remain anonymous. I would sometimes see her out for a lonely walk and couldn't resist the opportunity of getting some footage one day when she was passing my house on First Avenue. This I was able to incorporate into the film in a scene which recalls the famous 'touching' scene in *QUEEN CHRISTINA*. So that any filmography now would hardly be complete without her return to the screen in *ADAM & YVES!*" Interestingly, as the director explained in the documentary *Fragments: The Incomplete Films of Peter De Rome* (2011) directed by Ethan Reid, he planned to do a gay version of the classic MGM Edmund Goulding movie *Grand Hotel* (1932) entitled *Grand Motel* starring kraut queer sex icon Peter Berlin in the role that was originally played by Garbo. Indeed, make no mistake about it, De Rome was not only in love with Golden Age Hollywood, but cinema history in general, with *Adam & Yves* featuring one of the most bizarrely eclectic collection of film references in cinema history (who else would combine Cocteau with Shaft?!), thereupon demonstrating that Quentin Tarantino's post-modern fanboy filmmaking gimmick is nothing new, as the little known British bum bandit with an even more unhealthy obsession with jigaboos was doing this decades before the *Kill Bill* director gave up his career working at a video rental store and began shoving incessant insipid exploitation film references in people's faces. Indeed, I suspect *Adam & Yves* would be much better known today if it were a simple (and straight) sexploitation flick as opposed to a full-blown blow-boy blue movie. Four years after the release of *Adam & Yves*, French auteur Jacques Scandelari (*Beyond Love and Evil*, *Monique*) would reverse the scenario of De Rome's film for his work *New York City Inferno* (1978), which is a much darker flick that anticipates William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) where a Frenchman heads to NYC to look for his boyfriend in the homo underworld and ultimately finds himself engulfed in an absurdly sleazy and scummy leather-fag Sodom. Of course, with his second and dramatically more ominous feature *The Destroying Angel*, De Rome demonstrated that he was just as proficient at cinematically defiling Poe as he was of Cocteau, but one would not expect anything less from the "grandfather of gay porn."

-Ty E

THE DESTROYING ANGEL

Peter De Rome (1976)

Aside from a handful of works directed by daring (and, in some cases, deranged) filmmakers like Jonas Middleton (*Illusions of a Lady*, *Through the Looking Glass*), Stephen Sayadian aka 'Rinse Dream' (*Nightdreams*, *Café Flesh*), Curt McDowell (*Thundercrack!*), and Michael Zen (*Falconhead*, *Falconhead Part II: The Maneaters*), there only a handful of avant-garde/arthouse horror porn flicks that have blessed this dark and depraved world, so naturally I always keep a lookout for similarly works themed from this rather idiosyncratic and somewhat inexplicable style of filmmaking. Recently, upon reading about the death of English avant-garde auteur-pornographer Peter De Rome on 21 June 2014 at the rather senile age of 89, I also learned that the fiercely fetishistic filmmaker directed an experimental hardcore homo horror flick entitled *The Destroying Angel* (1976), which was based on Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 doppelgänger-themed short story *William Wilson* (which was also loosely adapted by German filmmakers Stellan Rye and Hanns Heinz Ewers in 1913 as the silent horror flick *The Student of Prague* aka *Der Student von Prag*, as well as by Louis Malle in 1968 for the three segment omnibus film *Spirits of the Dead* aka *Histoires extraordinaires*) and borrowed its title from Luis Buñuel's Mexican surrealist masterpiece *The Exterminating Angel* (1962). As a man who worked as a publicist for David O. Selznick and even worked on Carol Reed's masterpiece *The Third Man* (1949) and Vittorio De Sica's *Terminal Station* (1953) aka *Stazione Termini*, De Rome was not exactly the typical gay pornographer as a cultivated and worldly man who began making short avant-garde porn flicks during the mid-1960s for the mere personal pleasure and never expected that he would develop any sort of reputation among art fags and more cultivated porn addicts. After hooking up with fellow auteur-pornographer/producer Jack Deveau (*Left-Handed*, *Drive*), De Rome released eight of his shorts under the title *The Erotic Films of Peter De Rome* and achieved success among both art and porn crowds, thus leading him to directing his first X-rated feature *Adam & Yves* (1974) which, on top of being more or less a gay take on Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972) and being heavily influenced by Jean Cocteau, is also notable for being the last film to feature silent screen diva Greta Garbo. Indeed, due to the fact that De Rome stalked Ms. Garbo around NYC and filmed the reclusive actress against her own will from a rooftop, she would ultimately unwittingly conclude her acting career by unknowingly appearing in a 3-minute scene in a gay porn flick that was made some 30+ years after her last role in George Cukor's *Two-Faced Woman* (1941). For his second feature, which like *Adam & Yves* was produced by Deveau, De Rome decided to mix leather-fags, psychedelic mushrooms, Christian guilt, and a tinge of fascistic imagery for a perversely potent, if not somewhat incoherent, mix of hardcore Poe-esque pornography that

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will certainly be a more of interest to fans of avant-garde horror than horny homos looking for a cheap squirt 'n' spurt aid. Directed by a man who beared a strikingly physical resemblance to Poe, De Rome's film is, if nothing else, probably the most demented and deranging depiction of a minister's degeneration into sexually depraved personal purgatory of hallucinatory homo orgies, deleterious doubles, quasi-demonic golden showers, rectum-reaming cucumbers, and less than saintly seed spilling.

Caswell Campbell (Timothy Kent) is a sexually inverted minister who has been in the seminary for two years and one day makes the major mistake of taking a break from his religious studies to put into practice his undying fantasies for male flesh and exotic hallucinogenic mushrooms (notably, the books *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* by John Allegro and *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality* by R.G. Wasson heavily inspired De Rome's screenplay). Upon taking his sod sabbatical, novice cocksucker Caswell decides to head to a shadowy and equally sleazy NYC leather-fag bar in the sadomasochistic spirit of William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) where he meets a meaty philistine biker buck named Bud (Bill Young) who, being a full-blow degenerate of the morally retarded sort, is proud of the fact that he shares the same name as the crappy America beer. Naturally, curious Caswell reluctantly takes Bud back to his pad near the Brooklyn Bridge, which is adorned with religious and icons, as well as a portrait of Edgar Allen Poe instead of Jesus Christ (indeed, it is quite apparent that something is a little off about the poof protagonist). After Bud insults minister's religious devotion and sexual performance and subsequently leaves his dimly lit apartment, Caswell confronts his double/doppelganger (who his identical from the minister aside from having a bigger cock and much more mangy hair) and for whatever decides to slowly devour a small red mushroom that he has magically found on a small nightstand near his bed. Before Caswell knows it, the mushroom, which he assumes to be a Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), has sent him into a surrealist sodomite nightmare where he becomes the passive victim in a golden shower orgy involving a brigade shirtless beefy beefcakes sporting tight denim jeans. Needless to say, Caswell is somewhat troubled by the entire experience of being ritualistically pissed on by a gang of fag phantoms with big pricks.

After his ugly phantasmagoric night of ritualistic communal urination, Caswell goes by a friend's house who, for whatever reason, has both a Jewish menorah, as well as a painting of a young Aryan twink wearing an Iron Cross necklace, hanging up in his loft. Needless to say, Caswell meets a dimwitted yet sexually eager twink (Philip Darden) at the party and brings him back to his Brooklyn flat where the two take shrooms and suck cocks. While literally tripping balls, Caswell's debauched doppelganger abruptly appears and gets in the middle of the sexually aberrant action. Indeed, Caswell watches in horrified amazement as his kinky double grins sadistically while being anally reamed by the minister's twink-

ish one-night-stand-man. After the plodding phantom threesome, Caswell decides he needs a break from his spiritual cramp and heads to the beach for a rather lonely vacation of would-be-holy serenity where he even turns down a muscular Mediterranean man for sex. Of course, the debauched doppelganger is not happy about this and appears while Caswell is shaving to tell the minister that, "I'm the air you breathe...the blood in your veins." After also telling Caswell that he is his "Angel of Light" (but that he can also destroy him), the doppelganger coerces the mentally perturbed minister into getting with the Mediterranean beach boy, who ultimately shoves cucumbers, bananas, and other quasi-phallic items in his holy manhole. In the end, Caswell realize that he was not taking Fly Agaric after all but the similar looking but quite poisonous mushroom *Amanita virosa* (or "Destroying Angel," hence the title of the film) and that he will soon die as there is not antidote. Clearly enraged as a young minister who has spent his remaining days living in hardcore sin and only has a couple hours to live, Caswell murders his doppelganger by stabbing him to death through a Cocteau-esque mirror. Dressed in monk-like religious garb, Caswell, who has somehow inherited his alter ego's mighty phallus, fiercely masturbates onto his own grave, thus spilling his seed onto the ground, which sinks into the earth and produces *Amanita muscaria*.

Not one to play around with puffery in regard to his own films, auteur Peter De Rome wrote regarding the somewhat spastic narrative of *The Destroying Angel* in his memoir *The Erotic World of Peter de Rome* (1982): "If not all of this is apparent to the casual viewer of the film, it is partly due to insufficient development of the theme on my part, and partly because the film was undershot, leaving our very creative editor, Bob Alvarez, with a difficult problem which he brilliantly manage to disguised with some virtuosos effects." Indeed, Alvarez edited a number majorly masturbatory jump-cut montages for the film that give it a certain hyper hallucinatory, psychosexual psychedelic flare, as if the viewer has been sentenced to endure surreally sadistic sexual savagery in some sort of post-counter-culture homo Hades that is ruled over by Fred Halsted. Indeed, *The Destroying Angel* certainly demonstrates why alpha-Beat William S. Burroughs, who once wrote De Rome a letter of praise describing his own film ideas, described De Rome's work as "gassy- a real rarity." Unfortunately, it is quite clear while watching the film that the over-ambitious auteur did not get to fully realize his vision and thus was forced to extend what would have probably made for a nearly immaculate short film into a discernibly fractured work that is barely feature-length. Aside from the fact that De Rome was unable to shoot all the scenes he needed, the work is also apparently missing a scene featuring Peter Berlin. Indeed, Andy Warhol's 'painting assistant' Rupert Smith probably said it best when he described De Rome's hardcore horror feature as, "a mess but a masterpiece," as a work that is discernibly flawed yet is a totally singular and strangely effective piece of pernicious pornography that, indeed, despite what

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politically correct poofs say, proves that homo sex can be horrifying, especially for those the god-fearing sort. Due to the AIDS scare and various other personal reasons, De Rome decided to quit directing artful fuck flicks after *The Destroying Angel*, complaining in his memoir regarding the pathetic state of porn at the time: “Sadly, what passes now for pornography in movie house plays gay sex films I find infinitely tedious and depressing. Possibly I am in the minority and most people would rather watch graphic scenes of explicit sex no matter how badly filmed. I would rather not. And for this reason I have tended to be relatively unproductive in the last few years. It’s an age-old gripe, and may sound presumptuous, but until and unless I can make the sort of films I want to make, I am not interested in making any.” Indeed, one can only guess what De Rome would have accomplished had he been given a proper budget to work with, as *The Destroying Angel* features more authentic horror than anything ever created by a contemporary no-talent zionist psychopathic like Eli Roth. It should also be noted that *The Destroying Angel* was not the the director’s last celluloid excursion in horror, as De Rome went on to play a malicious yet terribly charming man-loving magician in Long Island-based exploitation auteur Nathan Schiff’s short *Abracadaver!* (2008), which was included with the 2012 BFI dvd release *The Erotic Films of Peter De Rome*, who strikes fear into a married homo-hating heterosexual man and proudly states, “Magic’s quite gay [...] How many female magicians do you know? It’s a bit of a boy’s club.”

On top of being one of the greatest homo hardcore horror flicks ever made, *The Destroying Angel* should be also noted for being a rare work that attempts to establish the controversial link between homosexuality and religious fanaticism. In his groundbreaking 1886 text *Psychopathia Sexualis*, revolutionary Teutonic psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing recognized that a rather large numbers of gays become seriously mystical-minded and spiritually devout, but more importantly, he recognized the common link between spirituality and sexuality, writing: “But this relationship between religious and sexual feeling also manifests itself on indisputably psychopathological territory. Let it suffice to point to the powerfully active sensuality in the case histories of many religious maniacs, to the colorful mixture of religious and sexual deliria, that is observed so often in psychoses (e.g. among maniacal females who think they are the mother of God and the bearer of God), but most especially in psychoses with a masturbatory basis; finally, let us point to the lustful, gruesome self-flagellation, wounds, self-emasculations, even crucifixions on the basis of a morbid sexual-religious feeling.” Indeed, before he became a highly influential hieromonk for the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia that had an immense spiritual and theological influence on the Occident, Seraphim Rose was a practicing sodomite who only gave up his vice after accepting Orthodoxy. Of course, the tragic protagonist of De Rome’s film was not nearly as strong of a man as Rose. Needless to say, I would not mind hearing Rose’s always provocative insights regarding a seem-

ingly personal film like *The Destroying Angel*, as a work that somehow manages to create an aesthetically and thematically malevolent marriage between Poe, leather-faggotry, spirituality, and psychedelic mushrooms in a way in uniquely unhinged fashion that reeks of abject metaphysical malady.

-Ty E

INVITATION AU VOYAGE
INVITATION AU VOYAGE

Peter Del Monte (1982)

Like anyone, I like a good road movie, but finding one I have yet to see that catches my fancy has become a rather tedious task, so I do not exactly go hunting for them and prefer to allow them to fall into my lap. Knowing nothing about the film aside from the fact it was supposedly about a lurid incestuous love affair between fraternal twins, I decided to watch the French-Italian-German co-production *Invitation au voyage* (1982), a work based on a novel written by the relatively unknown French novelist Jean Bany that proved to not only be one of the most idiosyncratic road movies I have ever seen, but also a nicely nuanced piece that esoterically expresses the vapid essence of its particular zeitgeist. Directed by Italian auteur Peter Del Monte (Piso pisello aka Sweet Pea, Étoile aka Ballet), *Invitation au voyage* is a post-punk/death rock/new wave drenched work of laidback yet ominously off-beat celluloid poetry that, as demonstrated by the film's title, alludes to decadent French poet Charles Baudelaire, but also Siouxsie and the Banshees and Joan Jett. Despite winning the prize for the Best Artistic Contribution at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival and being a rare French cult arthouse flick to actually have a mainstream release in the United States (Sony Pictures put it out on VHS), *Invitation au voyage* has, rather unfortunately, faded into almost total obscurity like the hokey hairstyles featured in the film. A moody, melancholy, and even morbid road movie about incestuous twins—one male and one female—that might as well be doppelgangers were it not for having different genitals, *Invitation au voyage* unravels through a series of flashbacks what happens when a brother promises his sister he will make her “live again” if she were to ever die, which she does. Featuring a brother bathing his twin sis in a bathtub full of creamy white milk, an exquisite naked corpse in a cello case strapped on top of an antique Rolls Royce, and a curious corpse-like ‘protagonist’ who moves like a somnambulist as he internalizes and ultimately transsexualizes his innate incestuous feeling after his rock star sister dies in one of the most peculiar accidents of cinema history, *Invitation au voyage*, for better or worse, is a film about transformation and emasculation in the post-apocalyptic age of cultural degeneration.

As demonstrated by the fact that he puts the corpse of a naked woman in a cello case, loads and ties said makeshift coffin to his car, and drives away for a rather dubious road trip, loner Lucien Vallon (Laurent Malet) seems to be a lecherous lunatic and as the film *Invitation au voyage* progresses, this seems to be all the more true, but not in the manner that one initially assumes as he is not a psychopathic serial killer or a rapist, but a man with a rather unhealthy attachment to his sister that extends to incestuous necrophilia of the morbid milk fetishizing variety. As revealed later in the film, the naked dead girl is postmortem punkette Nina Scott (Corinne Reynaud), the more successful fraternal twin sister of Lu-

Lucien who has supported her brother both economically and emotionally with her music. As quite blatantly demonstrated in a flashback scene featuring the two totally unclad and embracing after coitus, Lucien and Nina were incestuous siblings, so when the 'female' half of the duo dies, it leaves the male half in a sort of existential pandemonium, which is tested during a road trip where the lovesick twin brother meets a number of individuals no less eccentric than himself who more or less unwittingly help him embrace his metamorphosis into a tranny weirdo who believes he has taken on the identity of his decidedly deceased sister. As twin sis Nina tells her brother regarding their rather close relationship sometime before she dies, "With us it's not the same. The others don't matter. No one but us understands," and, indeed, as Lucien will find out through his vaguely phantasmagoric odyssey through rural France in a Rolls Royce, no one can quite compare or even begin to act as a substitute for his sister. The first person Lucien meets on his trip is an exceedingly extroverted female kleptomaniac (Aurore Clément) who rather irks the mourning twin after she accidentally puts on his dead twin sister's black lipstick, thus inspiring the melancholy traveler to kick the stranger out of his car into the pouring rain of the night. By happenstance, Lucien later runs into the cutesy klepto at a bar and she tells him in a stereotypically French manner that he is "a phantom" and that he is "here without being here," which the half-dead man seems to take rather well and the two strangers, somewhat surprisingly, share carnal knowledge later that night. Of course, when Lucien notices the wind is blowing around the cello case containing his sister on his car, he has a rather senseless emotional freakout and pastes a number of Nina Scott flyers around the bar, thus leaving his klepto love interest in the dust. After running into two Norwegian truckers at a diner and helping them to translate a conversation with a French waitress, Lucien ultimately helps the two Nordic gentlemen get in the pants of the frisky frog waitress, so when the loner twin is run off the road by a group of delinquent teenagers, he receives help from the Nords get backing on the road and eventually goes his marginally merry way. After getting his car worked on at an auto repair shop, Lucien is met with a surprise when an elderly and seemingly half-senile geezer, who had hid inside the automobile, randomly pops up, but does not scare the melancholy twin too bad. Using Lucien as a way to hitchhike to a graveyard to visit his wife's grave, the odd old timer confesses his deep dissatisfaction with his daughter and son-in-law, stating, "Money's the only thing that interests them...not even screwing. I have no grandchildren," but also confessing his love for David Bowie and Nina Hagen, thus signifying the lack of real values and worship of false values in the West.

While driving and daydreaming at night, Lucien hits a half-deranged Turkish illegal alien named Timour (Mario Adorf) with his car. Although Timour initially pulls a gun on Lucien when he seeks to help the injured man, the strange stranger passes out and is driven back to his homestead by the young Frenchman.

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After playing a one-person game of Russian roulette while laying injured on a pool table, the hot tempered Turk confesses to Lucien he killed his “whore” wife, but, for whatever reason, later denies he killed his wife, meekly stating, “Those were all lies I told you last night. Forget everything.” After the Turk takes back what he said about killing his wife, Lucien tells Timour that he “does not make sense,” to which the ostensible wife-killer understatedly states, “neither do you,” thereupon establishing a strange sort of unspoken solidarity between the two mental men. With Timour riding along, Lucien heads to a farm where he grew up to meet up with his childhood friend Martine, but leaves rather abruptly without speaking to her and heads to Martine’s brother Gérard’s home where he reveals that his sister Nina is dead. After proclaiming, “I thought with her head, I saw with her eyes. You understand? Now, I see nothing...I feel nothing” regarding his sister, Lucien goes a little crazy and cuts himself with a butcher knife while crying and reveals to Gérard that he is hauling around his sister’s Nina’s corpse. After telling Gérard that Nina loved him very much, Lucien homoerotically kisses his friend as if his sis’ ghost is living vicariously through him, stating before he leaves to his friend, “never forget her.” The next day, Lucien takes his sister Nina’s nude corpse to a landfill and burns it. After going to a bar, Lucien once again runs into Timour, who is working as a server and is planning to go back to Turkey but needs a passport. Lucien, who has decided to take on the identity of his sister Nina (he promised to her “I’ll make you live again” were she to die shortly before she actually did die) and ultimately transforms into the tranny doppelganger of his big sis, gives Timour his passport. In the end, both Lucien and Timour head south via ship, but the latter does not recognize the former on the boat ride as he is dressed like a degenerate punk chick that wears far too mascara.

Whether looked at as a modernist tranny tragedy, post-punk road trip, macabre off-beat melodrama, arthouse Goth fetish flick, and/or decidedly degenerate dysfunctional filmic family affair, *Invitation au voyage* is most certainly hard to classify, but if anything is for sure regarding the film, it is a superlatively suavely stylized and ideally idiosyncratic cinematic work that never fails to be provocative in terms of its phantasmagoric ‘cold wave’ tableaux and froggy libertine themes. Shot by French cinematographer turned director Bruno Nuytten—the man behind the creepily compelling camera work of underrated frog cult flicks like *Zoo zéro* (1981), but more importantly Andrzej Żuławski’s *Possession* (1981)—*Invitation au Voyage* is a film that wallows in the ‘dark side’ of life and not in any sort of campy or cartoonish manner, but in a romantic and decadent fashion that borders on metaphysical horror and invokes the (di)spirit of not only Baudelaire, but also Edgar Allen Poe and Hanns Heinz Ewers. Featuring an insanely incestuous protagonist who ritualistically drinks milk that his twin sister died in during a freak accident involving electricity from a light bulb and a bathtub full of dirty dairy products, *Invitation au voyage* also features more

universal themes, especially regarding the specific era when it was made, when boys began to resemble girls and vice versa. Most notably, protagonist Lucien relies on his sister both economically and emotionally, as he, although a male, is the weaker of the twins, thus symbolizing the emasculation of males not only in France (though France is obviously one of the most worst off), but the entire Occident in general. Of course, in its inclusion of an old man who longs for grandchildren but whose daughter is too selfish and money-motivated to have them, *Invitation au voyage* is a work that focuses on cultural decay in Europe in general, which reaches its most absurd level when the criminally-inclined Turk Timour even decides he prefers his homeland to France and ultimately decides to sail home. The extremely moody tale of a young man who is only able to find solace after his sister's death by 'taking on her identity' and becoming a punk rock tranny, *Invitation au Voyage* is by no means a happy film, but certainly an aesthetically hypnotic and hallucinatory one that might offer a sense of hope to certain hopeless (homo) types, even if it will leave most viewers, myself included, with an odd combination of disgust and ecstasy.

-Ty E

BODY LOVE
BODY LOVE

Peter Diamond (2000)

If there is anyone that can be described as a ‘baron of blue movies’ or ‘prince of pornography,’ it is most certainly Guido pornographer Lasse Braun (Penetration aka French Blue, Sensations), who was born into a wealthy, aristocratic Italian family and seemed destined to pursue a career in law (he was originally destined to be a diplomat like his father, but his doctoral dissertation proved to be so controversial that it was dismissed, so he became a pornographer instead). Indeed, unlike Radley Metzger who made films in Europe about the rich and raunchy but was really an American Jew, Braun (whose real name is apparently ‘Alberto Ferro’) was a real blue blood who, not unlike maestro Luchino Visconti in regard to melodrama, used his worldliness and distinguished background to assemble some of the most eloquent, lavish, and artistically merited fuck flicks ever made. Instead of American smut-peddlers and other rabble, Braun took his aesthetic influences from idiosyncratic sources, including the erotic novels of 18th century French novelist/commie/shoe fetishist Nicolas-Edme Rétif (who coined the word “pornography” in his pro-prostitution plea *Le Pornographe* (1769)), as well as the Priapistic rituals and orgiastic festivals of the Dionysus cult and ceremonies in veneration of Aphrodite (Porne), among other esoteric erotic things. Very much a child of his time, Braun was not just a decadent dago aristocrat, but also a political crusader who, using a series of pseudonyms, traveled all around Europe (including Franco’s Spain and Pompidou’s France) beginning in the early 1960s and created the (in)famous hardcore loops that he is famous for. Ultimately, Braun set up shop in Copenhagen (hence, his Nordic pseudonym) and the controversial doctoral dissertation that ended his academic career, *Judiciary Censorship in the Western World*, laid the foundation for the legalization of hardcore pornography in Denmark on 4 June 1969. While best known for his loops, Braun did direct a couple notable features, with *Body Love* (1978)—a wickedly wanton work about a lily-licking and leotard-wearing teenager who is forced by her blue blood baron father to be deflowered at an orgy on the night of her 18th birthday—being easily one of the greatest, if not the greatest, films of his relatively successful career. Featuring an original best-selling soundtrack by kraut electric music maestro Klaus Schulze (Tangerine Dream, Ash Ra Tempel) that is probably more famous than the film itself and starring Catherine Ringer of the French New Wave outfit Les Rita Mitsouko as the Sapphic teenage girl who is forced to endure heterosexual penetration by her pseudo-blond bastard baron father, Braun’s avant-garde fuck flick is also a European music fan’s celluloid wet dream, as a work that almost sounds as good as it looks. Shot at Groeneveld Castle in the Dutch town of Baarn, *Body Love* is equal parts moronic aristocratic libertinism, post-counterculture pseudo-philosophical twaddle, unintentionally hilarious pretense, and aesthetic ecstasy.

After doing some gymnastic stretches and watching a woman in a flashy red outfit drive off in a white Mercedes-Benz via an upstairs window in her family castle, leotard-clad 18-year-old 'poor little rich girl' Martine (Catherine Ringer as 'Lolita Da Nova') is rudely confronted by her arrogant and equally effete aristocratic father 'The Baron' (Jean-Gérard Sorlin), who asks her if she is ready to be "mounted" for the first time in her life tonight. Although Martine assures her father that she will accept being ritualistically deflowered in front of him and his equally sex crazed carnal comrades during an orgy, she is a lipstick lesbo with a wicked streak who loathes all men. The woman in the red outfit that Martine was previously watching from the castle window is her stepmother Glenda (Glenda Farrell), who is a famous actress that, due to her Nordic figure and blonde hair, resembles a poor man's take on an Ingmar Bergman actress like Bibi Andersson or Liv Ullmann, albeit minus the class and melancholy demeanor. When Glenda enters the castle, she looks in a mirror and is startled to see a shabbily dressed Confederate officer staring back at her. After the mirror nonsensically cracks, Glenda runs down the stairs and is sexually ravaged by two men (one of which is wearing a confederate soldier hat) against her will. As it turns out, Glenda's husband the Baron paid for the men to mock rape her just so he could get off to hearing the details. Indeed, it seems like, as the old stereotype goes, the Baron is an impotent aristocrat. While Glenda complains that the men who raped her had "normal cocks" and were "ordinary men, not of noble bearing like you" to the Baron, she still enjoyed being ravaged by the plebian proles because she is a naughty nymphomaniac with an unquenchable sexual appetite.

A spoiled little lesbo girl, Martine cannot stand the idea of her assumed girlfriend Gilda (played by Gilda Arancio, who starred in a number of Jess Franco flicks) being defiled by other people, so after a wild Sapphic sexual session involving swing-based cunnilingus and cunt-to-cunt kisses (indeed, the two ladies bump labias in a rather furious fashion), she warns her beloved, "I don't want you to have sex with other girls or other men. Your body is meant for me." Meanwhile, Glenda talks with a small frog journalist (old school French fuck flick superstar Jack Gatteau), who is at least an entire foot shorter than her, about her acting career and how she plans to shoot a porn film in Mexico in the next couple months. When the Journalist remarks that it would cause a scandal for an actress of her caliber to star in a fuck flick, Glenda demonstrates she got a feminist lobotomy at a university by snidely remarking, "As a woman of modern times, I can do whatever I feel like...no limits." When the journalist eats dinner with the 'unconventional' family, Martine proceeds to discuss how they practice meditative hippie mumbo jumbo called "sensitivity training," but when the reporter attempts to touch the girl to try it out for himself, she immediately stops him and says "no men." Luckily, Martine's stepmother warns her, "Once you get the feeling of a man's prick inside your pussy, you'll change." When Martine takes the Journalist outside to a fancy trailer where she has a Uruguayan sex

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slave (Gemma Giménez) locked up, she begins to rather reluctantly tap into her repressed heterosexual side. After bragging that the sex slave will do anything that she commands, Martine has her sensual serf pleasure the Journalist. While she does not say anything, Martine is clearly aroused by the French journalist, who will ultimately be the one who deflowers her that night.

Indeed, during the final act of the film, Martine enters a sort of makeshift pleasuredome in the castle where a dozen or so naked and half-naked motionless multicultural individuals, including her father and stepmother, are positioned like mannequins. To get the silly 'transcendental meditation' inspired orgy going, Martine merely touches each motionless individual to 'activate' them to life (notably, for her father, she grabs his flaccid kingly cock) in a scenario that seems like a pretentious pornographic take on a Les Rita Mitsouko music video. As the bodies begin to move, Martine soon loses her black leotards (the same pair she wore at the beginning of the film) and has her cherry popped by the hyper horny frog Journalist, who is surely going to give the family a great write-up in whatever yellow journalism rag he writes for. Unquestionably, Klaus Schulze's exceedingly ethereal synthesizers reach otherworldly orgasmic extremes during the orgy scene that features a virtual ocean of bodies intertwined in indiscriminate carnal pageantry of the preposterously pompous pornographic sort. When all the loads have been busted and all the participant's genitals have been rubbed raw, everyone falls asleep on the floor except Martine and Glenda, with the former eventually leaving the room quite satisfied after having her pussy plundered by not just the Journalist, but three other less than masculine men. Indeed, Martine has finally gotten over her juvenile carpet-munching and has learned to love cocks and cum.

While I was rather repulsed by virtually all the character's in the film, as well as the pseudo-philosophical tangents that director Lasse Braun programmed the actors to go in, there is no denying that, in terms of pornography, *Body Love* is like the *Barry Lyndon* (1975) of fuck flicks, albeit with a much cooler soundtrack. Despite the film's absolutely insipid libertine sermonizing, Braun's film ultimately has a good message due to its decidedly decadent depiction of a tyrannical teenage lesbian who is forced to convert to heterosexuality. If *Body Love* had been made nowadays, it would be about a heterosexual boy who is forced to lose his anal virginity by his two man-hating bull-dyke mothers. I have to admit that it was quite to my schadenfreude that Braun's utopian dream of a libertine world full of transcendental meditation, pornographic art, and perennial free love has been replaced with an ugly dystopia full of spiritual retardation, soulless internet porn, and AIDS. In fact, Braun quit making porn films because he was disgusted with the soulless commercial approach of the American porn industry and the rise of schlocky videos. Not unlike a very different Italian aristocrat, fellow polymath Baron Julius Evola (who also had a keen interest in sex as demonstrated by his work 1958 *Eros* and the *Mysteries of Love*: The

Metaphysics of Sex), Braun withdrew into a more esoteric world after quitting porn and began writing scientific works on sexology and anthropology, as well as erotic novels and books on the history of sex. Without a doubt, *Body Love* is the work of a man of immense, if not misguided, talent who could have probably done something more useful with his life than mainstream pornography in the Nordic world.

-Ty E

WHEEL OF ASHES
WHEEL OF ASHES

Peter Emmanuel Goldman (1968)

In a culturally and morally inverted Occidental world that is plagued by rampant philo-Semitism, one would think that every single even remotely talented Hebrew filmmaker would be relatively well known, at least in the cinephile realm, but such is shockingly not the case for American-born experimental auteur Peter Emmanuel Goldman (*Pestilent City*, *The Sensualist*), who not only apparently taught a film course to a very Martin Scorsese at NYU during the 1960s (as seems evident in the Guido director's 1967 debut feature *Who's That Knocking at My Door*), but also very possibly the only true direct link to the American underground and the French New Wave. Indeed, after directing a couple influential documentaries and shorts, a seemingly impossible-to-find sexploitation feature entitled *The Sensualist* (1966), as well his revolutionary first 'serious' feature *Echoes of Silence* (1967), which inspired famous cineaste Amos Vogel to describe as auteur as "A major new talent," Goldman left for Paris to direct what would be his final and arguably greatest feature, *Wheel of Ashes* (1969) aka *Roue de cendres* starring frog counterculture actor Pierre Clémenti (Luis Buñuel's *Belle de Jour*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Il conformista* aka *The Conformist*) as a spiritually and sexually schizophrenic man who is trapped in a crossroad between heterosexuality and homosexuality, as well as Christianity and Hinduism. Considering how the French hate it when outsiders fiddle with their culture (apparently, the frogs decided they hated Francophile kraut Volker Schlöndorff's Proust adaptation *Un amour de Swann* (1984) aka *Swann in Love* before it was even released), it should be noted that the film's importance in frogland was described as follows in *Cahiers du Cinéma*: "There was not one of us who was not profoundly touched by this film... perhaps the first to give a true feeling of certain quarters of Paris." Admittedly, I only learned of Goldman while researching Clémenti who, as an actor/auteur that had worked with not only Buñuel and Bertolucci but also such diverse auteur filmmakers as Luchino Visconti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Liliana Cavani, Franco Brocani, Adriaan Dittvoorst, Philippe Garrel, Dusan Makavejev, and James Toback, among various others, is a sure sign of celluloid quality as *Wheel of Ashes* certainly confirms. Notably, Goldman was such a subversive figure of the NYC avant-garde that he broke with the gatekeeper of the scene, Jonas Mekas, for defending the work of Andy Warhol in his column at *The Village Voice*. Apparently, Goldman thought Mekas was a hypocrite for advocating "pure cinema" yet praising Warhol's *Eat* (1963), which he considered the height of cinematic banality. While fairly outmoded in regard to certain themes and styles, *Wheel of Ashes* is certainly fresher than a lot of the early pioneering works of the *La Nouvelle Vague*, or as the director's onetime-adversary Mekas once wrote: "His people come to life simply and believably – more believably than most of the people in the Chabrol and Truf-

faut cinema... the film has a thematic and formal beauty that is remarkable.” The surprisingly gritty and delectably dark story of a young socially alienated nihilist turned Hindu dilettante who must choose between the path of whimsical self-absorbed pleasure-seeking that he is used to or a highly disciplined ascetic path of unflinching spiritual devotion and saintly solitude, Goldman’s (anti)metaphysical indictment of the counterculture era and its curious fetishism for eastern religions ultimately lets the viewer know that you don’t have to shoot junk to be a junky.

Opening with the following quote, “THE LAW OF KARMA IS UNFAILING IN ITS OPERATION, AS IS THE LAW OF REBIRTH, UNTIL WE HAVE BECOME PERFECT IN LOVE. LOVE FULFILLS EVERY LAW,” *Wheel of Ashes* immediately lets the viewer know that it will be full of eastern mystical mumbo jumbo, yet it is ultimately a film that tells a tragic love story about a swarthy and scrawny frog boy named Pierre (Pierre Clémenti) who falls in love with a cute Danish girl, only to get scared when things get serious and escapes to an arcane ascetic world of self-imposed isolation where he tries to live the words of Indian Hindu mystics like Ramakrishna. In an opening montage featuring narration by Pierre juxtaposed with some of his crude drawings, the protagonist gives a good hint as to the state of his perturbed psyche by confessing: “Every morning, I asked myself how I was going to live. I could go to work. I could take a boat and leave my parents forever. I could stay on the ground in my filth, without moving. I could live intensely, full of hate, uncompromising. I could be banal, play the game and have a lot of women, try to be happy. They tell me I stray too far from reality. The only reality I know is chaos.” Pierre is in an ambiguously gay romance with a dude named David (played by Pierre Besançon, who apparently did some of the drawings for the film), but with winter coming to end and the sun rising, the protagonist gets hungry for pussy and must leave his comrade behind, or as he states himself, “...I can feel the Spring and with the Spring I smell women and David’s love can’t help me. I have to leave. David takes my hand and kisses me on the cheek, but I draw back. We can’t be happy together when women, with their fine legs, are coming between us.” Indeed, Pierre hits the streets and begins looking for lady meat, but he has no idea that he is ultimately going to take a metaphysical journey to hell after falling in love with a girl and becoming too afraid to completely commit himself to her.

Deciding to leave his apartment with David because he has “too much desire and resentment,” Pierre heads to Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris because he is, “determined to walk until overwhelmed by love,” even though, as he reflects, “I had nowhere to go. I had nothing to hope for.” Pierre first attempts to find love in the questionable form of a bitchy platinum blonde hooker, but he seems repulsed by the fact that she washes her gash right in front of his face just seconds before they are supposed to make love, so he leaves without so much as getting a

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hard-on. As demonstrated by the fact that he routinely points at gun at his temple whilst smirking in a goofy fashion, Pierre also seems to be somewhat suicidal, hence his sudden obsession with Vedanta Hinduism, which he gravitates to because it gives him a reason to live and establishes order in his rather aimless life. As Pierre narrates regarding his angst and feeling of emptiness, "When one is alone, hate grows and gnaws at one's insides. It ruins everything and creates a real nest of vipers in one's heart, everything becomes bitter. This bitterness is such a part of me. But it's not everything. The faint hope of youth remains. But since my youth refuses, that faint light will perhaps go out," yet his latest spiritual obsession will ultimately plague him with a sense of all-consuming loneliness that he has never felt before. After various botched encounters with bitchy pseudo-blondes, Pierre spots a delightful little Danish dame named Anka (Katinka Bo) at discotheque who smiles at him while she is dancing with another fellow. In the hope that Pierre will follow her and introduce himself, Anka quits dancing mid-song and sits at a bar where the protagonist soon predictably greets her. In a short photo montage, Goldman effectively expresses that the two have fallen in love and are quite happy together, but Pierre's fear of intimacy and commitment will eventually scare him away from his beloved and throw him into a hermetic world of Hindu-inspired hobo-esque living.

When Pierre goes to a screening of the criminally underrated Dutch avant-garde auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst's debut feature *Paranoia* (1967), he becomes uneasy when a dark-haired girl sitting next to him in the theater attempts to entice him by spreading her mostly unclad legs. After the screening, Pierre runs back to home to Anka and suddenly bursts out in tears, as if he is a little boy seeking protection from his mommy. When Anka asks Pierre what is wrong with him because he won't talk and is acting all moody and broody, he refuses to reply and thinks to himself that she is acting, "too possessive and demanding." Deciding he must "liberate himself from what the Indians call Samsara, the cycle of death and reincarnation" and "find wisdom and god within oneself," Pierre vows to give up going to restaurants, movie theaters, parties and to abstain from sex, as he sees everything else in life as secondary to his delusional spiritual mission. Before he knows it, Pierre's sanity begins to crack and he becomes a Hindu junky of sorts who does nothing but sleep and read the philosophies of the great Hindu gurus. Unfortunately for Pierre, he cannot abstain from carnal desires while he is asleep and passively succumbs to progressively bizarre sexual nightmares involving Anka and busty blonde hookers. Influenced by Ramakrishna's belief, "As long as man lingers in ignorance, as long, in other words, as he has not attained God, he will be reborn on earth. But he who has been illuminated will no longer have to return to earth nor to any other sphere," Pierre—a fellow that certainly never wants to be reborn—religiously repeats while in a state of perpetual delirium, "The law of evolution may oblige a soul to return in flesh, endlessly."

One day while Pierre is wasting away in bed and looking like death warmed over, Anka randomly shows up to his apartment and brings him some food so he assumedly does not starve. When Anka remarks regarding the squalor her beau is living in, "This is a terrible place, Pierre," he is not the least bit phased and says nothing. While the two make love, Pierre ruins their special moment together by refusing to hangout with Anka afterwards, as he cannot bring himself to break his spiritual psychosis and devote himself to her for just a couple hours or so. Needless to say, after Anka gets pregnant and Pierre still refuses to wean himself off his addiction to Hinduism hermeticism, she breaks of their (non)relationship, stating, "I'm not coming back anymore, I'm leaving. I can't wait for you forever, I don't know what you're doing." After Anka leaves for good, Pierre begins to lose what little is left of his sanity and suffers a series of hellish hallucinations involving repulsively effeminate elderly old men and sinister smirking streetwalkers, among other pernicious phantoms. Luckily, in the end, Pierre manages to emerge from his lair and describes seeing tons of people walking down the street for the first time in months as seeming, "completely unreal." As for reuniting with Anka, Pierre remarks, "I walked towards her and I held her close to me for minutes until her skin couldn't take any more scratching from my beard."

While auteur Peter Emmanuel Goldman probably could have had a reasonably artistically fruitful career as an avant-garde filmmaker, he decided to give up filmmaking so he could devote his life to the Zionist cause. As described in a somewhat recent article entitled Peter Emmanuel Goldman, Man of Many Worlds featured at JewishPress.com, while raised as an assimilated Jew with virtually nil spiritual and cultural connection to his roots, Goldman was apparently so deeply affected by the Munich massacre at the 1972 Summer Olympics when eleven Israeli Olympic team members were taken hostage and eventually executed by members of the Palestinian Black September Organization (BSO) that he became a devout Zionist virtually overnight who ultimately led no less than two Zionist organizations in Denmark (where he had been living at the time). In fact, Goldman became so deeply immersed in Talmudism that he divorced his beloved shiksa wife/baby momma because she refused to convert to Judaism and even became a good friend of assassinated Zionist extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane. Instead of continuing to make avant-garde works, Goldman eventually shifted gears completely and whored himself out to the Zionist cause by making less than artsy fartsy propaganda films like NBC in Lebanon: A Study of Media Misrepresentation (1983). In fact, Goldman became such a respected and noted Zionist that he was invited to the White House by President Reagan to discuss Middle East policy after co-editing the book *The Media's War Against Israel*, which was apparently a favorite among Israeli prime ministers and of course American senators and congressmen. Indubitably, knowing Goldman's life story in Zionism makes *Wheel of Ashes* an all the more potent work,

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as it depicts a young man suffering an existential crisis that neither Christianity nor Hinduism can solve. Of course, in his spiritual fanaticism, one could also argue that he became like the character of his film, albeit in a more functional and sane sort of way as a man connecting to his true culturally roots and not as some deluded hippie who thinks that some exotic alien religion will give him what he needs in life. While the protagonist of *Wheel of Ashes* ultimately finds solace in his beloved girlfriend, Goldman would ultimately realize that his race and religion were more important to him than a goy gal. With that said, Goldman, who is still alive at the old age of 75 despite some sources saying to the contrary, would certainly have no problem coming up with new material for another film. Interestingly, he recently finished his first novel, *Last Metro to Bleecker Street*, which seems to be a continuation of the themes he examined in films, as it is about three friends, two Jews and a Christian, who attempt to find meaning in their lives in 1960s NYC and Paris and ultimately become deeply religious, only to suffer new spiritual dilemmas. Personally, I would not mind seeing an arthouse film about a NYC-bred Jewish art fag who transforms into a Zionist true believer and reads from the Talmud with Meir Kahane, as it would certainly be a change of pace from the obscenely annoying Hebraic neuroticism of Noah Baumbach and the eclectic vulgarity of spoiled half-blood Jewess Lena Dunham.

-Ty E

THE HAMBURG SYNDROME

Peter Fleischmann (1979)

While the anti-Heimatfilm (or 'new' Heimatfilm)—a satirical and far-left take on 'Papa's Kino' and the nationalistic pro-German Heimatfilm that portrayed a romantic and sentimental portrayal of Teutonic rural life and kraut history—were quite popular and directed by a number of filmmakers of German New Cinema of the late-1960s/early-1970s, including Edgar Reitz (*Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany*), Volker Schlöndorff (*The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*), Herbert Achternbusch (*Bierkampf*), Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*The Niklashausen Journey*), and Werner Herzog (*Heart of Glass*), among countless others, the dystopian sci-fi anti-Heimatfilm is a more sparse breed as an unlikely marriage between European arthouse cinema and American cult horror/science fiction, and *The Hamburg Syndrome* (1979) aka *Die Hamburger Krankheit* aka *Illness of Hamburg* directed by Peter Fleischmann (*Dorothea's Revenge*, *Hard to Be a God* aka *Es ist nicht leicht ein Gott zu sein*) is probably the best and most wacky entry in this insanely idiosyncratic subgenre. Not unsurprisingly, Fleischmann was also responsible for the highly overrated but undeniably influential work *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern*, which is oftentimes regarded as the first anti-Heimatfilm and would go on to play an imperative influence on directors like Fassbinder and Schlöndorff. While *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* is an overly preachy tale about the supposed innate small-mindedness and crypto-nazi nature of Bavarian peasants who do not take kindly to a forest fag living in their wholesome village and are essentially the Southern kraut equivalent to the American Southern lynch mob archetype as concocted by the humble Hebrew dreammasters of Hollywood, *The Hamburg Syndrome* is a satirical and surrealist black comedy of the proto-Schlingensief type that does feature the Teutonic lynch mob, but also an aesthetically heretical hodgepodge of wheelchair bound cripples wielding giant dildos, dwarves working in hospitals, pigs consuming human corpses, boorish alcoholic bulldozers playing with the genitals of virus-ridden trannies, neo-stormtroopers with gasmasks hosing down unclad beauties, and various other scenarios of lunatic libertinage that won't put off cinephiles like myself who have a harder time digesting quasi-Marxist swill than they do German bratwursts.

An absurdist satirical odyssey that follows a motley crew, including a dorky yet handsome doctor (played by Helmut Griem), a beautiful young woman of the emotionally cold variety, a buffoonish sausage seller of the classic dumb kraut sort, and a vulgar anarchistic cripple in a wheel chair (played by no one less than Spanish playwright/filmmaker Fernando Arrabal) after they escape from a fascist quarantine camp in Hamburg and travel to the bottom of Germany to rural Bavaria in the hope of not contracting a deadly virus that turns people crazy for a couple of tragicomic moments and eventually concludes with their death in a

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fetal position, *The Hamburg Syndrome*, like *Traumstadt* (1973) aka *Dream City* directed by Johannes Schaaf and *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire* directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most idiosyncratically stylized dystopian science fiction films of post-WWII German cinema. To add to its ostensible cult and arthouse credibility, Roland Topor—a cofounder of the Panic movement with fellow scatological surrealists Alejandro Jodorowsky and Fernando Arrabal and the man who wrote the novel *The Tenant* (1964), which was later cinematically adapted by Roman Polanski in 1976 as the much more popular film of the same name—was one of the men who penned *The Hamburg Syndrome*, but perhaps more interesting is the fact that the film shows aesthetic influences from the popular North American post-apocalyptic horror/zombie flicks of George A. Romero like *The Crazies* (1973) and *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and the early venereal body horror works of Canadian auteur David Cronenberg, especially *Shivers* (1975) and *Rabid* (1977). Featuring a highly complimentary synthesizer-driven score by French composer Jean Michel Jarre, *The Hamburg Syndrome* is an aptly atmospheric and aesthetically pleasing Teutonic celluloid apocalypse directed by a man with a glaring ambivalence for Germany's past, be it lederhosen or the Third Reich, and a sort of left-wing Spenglerian vision of the Fatherland's seemingly foreboding future. That being said, *The Hamburg Syndrome* also makes for one of the most enthralling examples of esoteric sci-fi celluloid ethno-masochism ever made.

Handsome young doctor Sebastian Ellerwein (Helmut Griem) is a speaker at Hamburg's congress centre for a big scientific conference regarding the possibility of prolonging human life and things begin getting a little weird for him when he learns during the middle of an uplifting speech he is giving that his elderly professor friend has just suffered a seizure, thus ushering in epidemic hysteria in Hamburg. Not long after, Sebastian learns from an old doctor friend named Dr. Hamm (played in a cameo role by Rosel Zech of Fassbinder's *Lola* (1981) and *Veronika Voss* (1982)) that his professor friend is dead and that various other mysterious deaths have occurred around Hamburg as a result of a mysterious virus that seems as deadly and infectious as the bubonic plague. Meanwhile, a stereotypically boorish and racist kraut sausage seller named Heribert (Ulrich Wildgruber) is throwing trash at a deranged swarthy untermensch in a wheelchair named Ottokar (Fernando Arrabal) who is jubilantly wielding a dildo. A beautiful young woman Ulrike (Carline Seiser) goes to visit Heribert's prostitute girlfriend Sonja, but the streetwalker dies shortly after being racially defiled by a Turkish John. Apparently, a group of Turkish illegal aliens are responsible for bringing the deadly virus to Deutschland and after buying carnal knowledge from a group of destitute Aryan working girls, the pernicious plague spreads like cancer all around Hamburg. Like the terminal Turks, Heribert, Ottokar, and Ulrike are sent to a quarantine camp. While his colleagues believe the unidentified virus is undisputedly a viral disease and that a vaccination should be

immediately concocted, Sebastian believes that the plague has much more dubious source as people afflicted with it seem to die rather suddenly and without reason. After touching a man who has just died from the illness, Sebastian is also sent to the quarantine concentration camp, but soon he meets up with Heribert, Ottokar, and Ulrike and they make a hasty escape in the sausage man's wiener mobile and head South to redneck Deutschland.

The fearsome foursome make quite the oddball quartet, but they make due with their curious situation. Hotheaded meathead Heribert shows his sensitive side by helping infantile Ottokar urinate by tipping his wheelchair so he does not piss himself like an infant. Additionally, Ulrike equips Sebastian with a sort of heroic masculinity he never thought he had. Initially, the four do not have to worry about finding food because the always hospitable Heribert has a fan full of un-kosher kraut sausages, but rather unfortunately, a group of stormtrooping disinfectant crews come by and scorch the wiener-wagon (aka Heribert's "living") and take its owner away. Luckily, they meet up with a hippie-like fellow who effete sports Capri pants and Jesus sandals named Alexander (played by real-life commune leader/author/filmmaker Rainer Langhans, who also appeared in films by Fassbinder and Ulli Lommel), who owns a luxury trailer, and a deranged fellow named Fritz (Tilo Prückner) who believes standing naked on the top of roofs of houses is the best way to stay safe from the virus. Out of all the people heading South, Ulrike has the flattest affect and seems the least bothered by the deaths, to point where Sebastian even asks, "doesn't that affect you at all?" in regard to the sickening sight of a corpse, however the youthful Ice Queen's perennial emotional psychosis ultimately makes her a survivor who triumphs in the face of death while her compatriots croak endlessly by her wayside. When hero Sebastian drops dead from the virus after ironically proclaiming, "it's sufficient that a virus infects a cell, so that the cell divides itself indefinitely. The cancer cell multiplies continuously. A proof of immortality?" at what is only slightly past the halfway point of *The Hamburg Syndrome*, Ulrike opts for gluttonous decadence over depression and has herself a nice slice of cake while her romantic interest lies dead in a fetal position on the floor in front of a propaganda propagating television in what is one of many absurdist allegorical scenes featured in the film. Meanwhile, after a temporary disappearance, both Heribert and Ottokar reappear and have profited greatly from the epidemic as parasites of human suffering, thus alluding to the fact that degenerate proletarians became all-powerful National Socialist leaders following the cultural chaos after the Great War and the Great Depression of 1932 in the Weimar Republic and the rest of Central Europa. Rather conveniently, the German chancellor in *The Hamburg Syndrome* also succumbs to the epidemic, thus resulting in martial law and a fascist police state where most of the citizens are naively nationalistic and believe every lie that the government feeds them, including the appearance of a vaccine that seems to spread the virus as opposed to destroying it. In the end,

THE HAMBURG SYNDROME

it is not the virus that gets the seemingly immune Ulrike, but members of the anti-virus Gestapo, who steal her from her Grandfather's isolated rural Bavarian home. Totally ignorant of the fact that his granddaughter was kidnapped by a corrupt government as a mindless redneck kraut southerner, Ulrike's Opa yodels to her tribute in an ironically iconic Heimatfilm-esque ending that looks like a parody of a scene from a Luis Trenker mountain film.

Created in the wake of the so-called 'German Autumn' events of late 1977 when far-left West German terrorists of the Red Army Faction (RAF) kidnapped/killed an ex-SS man turned wealthy business man named Hanns-Martin Schleyer, as well as the hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane "Landshut" by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the subsequent mysterious deaths of the first generation of RAF leaders in their prison cells, *The Hamburg Syndrome* certainly makes for a much more eclectically enthralling work of anti-völkisch sentiment than the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978) aka *Deutschland im Herbst*, the work that inspired the phrase 'German Autumn' which was directed by a number of bigwigs of German New Cinema, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, and Volker Schlöndorff (who, incidentally, cofounded the production company Halleluja Film with Peter Fleischmann in 1969). Due to its North American influenced horror/science fiction conventions, sardonic surrealism, pernicious cultural cynicism, wacked out performance from Fernando Arrabal, soothing and succulent synth soundtrack, and delightfully daunting dystopian essence, *The Hamburg Syndrome*, unlike a lot of leftist films of German New Cinema, *Germany in Autumn* included, has aged quite gracefully and can easily be enjoyed by viewers of the apolitical or anti-leftist persuasion (myself included!), so it should be no surprise that the film would eventually achieve cult status in Germany. Essentially, *The Hamburg Syndrome* portrays the German people from North to South as an automaton-like collective who cannot change and are hopelessly set in their ways, hence their obsession with yodeling, lederhosen, and sickening sausages, so it is quite clear that director Peter Fleischmann, like many of the directors involved with *Germany in Autumn*, had become quite socio-politically disillusioned and had very little hope for Germany's future as they once did during the signing of the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, which launched German New Cinema and inspired the popular motto "Papas Kino ist tot" (Papa's cinema is dead). With a couple exceptions, it seems that the Teutonic prodigal son's cinema is also dead and *The Hamburg Syndrome* is an early, if highly entertaining, symptom of this cultural epidemic that marked the beginning of the end for art cinema in Germany (and Europe in general), which would become official with the death of German New Cinema's most popular and prolific auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder in 1982. Incidentally, Fassbinder's last screen appearance was as the lead protagonist in the farcical cyberpunk *Kamikaze 1989* (1982) directed by Wolf Gremm, which makes for the perfect double feature with *The*

Hamburg Syndrome.

In the original French poster for *The Hamburg Syndrome* (featured above), there is a small black caricature next to the title logo of Fernando Arrabal giving a Hitler salute in a wheelchair. Undoubtedly, this symbol can be seen as a metaphor for the post-WWII people as a whole who, although they had their cultural identity essentially taken away from them after the Second World War and have become cultural cripples and ethno-masochists of sorts, still have a deep and largely subconscious collective identity that is yearning for a sort of compromising nationalism that someone like director Peter Fleischmann would probably describe as authoritarianism, which was absurdly underscored in Germany in Autumn when Mr. German New Cinema Rainer Werner Fassbinder's own mother Lilo Pempeit confesses in regard to her ideal government, "The best thing would be a kind of authoritarian ruler who is benevolent, and kind and orderly." Of course, the greatest irony of German New Cinema and related directors like Peter Fleischmann is that with the virtual death on Teutonic art cinema and the German film industry as a whole, they were essentially the last of the directors to express a truly 'German' identity in film and *The Hamburg Syndrome* is irrefutable proof that Hitler's forsaken children also had a knack for singular science fiction of the sardonically dystopian sort.

-Ty E

HARD TO BE A GOD
HARD TO BE A GOD

Peter Fleischmann (1990)

While making a number of popular award-winning films, German auteur Peter Fleischmann (*Disaster* aka *Unheil*, *Dorothea's Revenge* aka *Dorotheas Rache*) never quite achieved the fame and glory that his celluloid compatriots of the German New Cinema like Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder did, as he is pretty much completely unknown outside of Germany despite the fact that he has made a couple films outside of his homeland. First coming to prominence for his slave-morality-stained leftist redneck-lynch-mob-themed anti-heimat work *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern*, Fleischmann would eventually develop a more polished Hollywood-style that was quite apparent in his dystopian sci-fi-horror flick *Die Hamburger Krankheit* (1979) aka *The Hamburg Syndrome*—a work that manages to combine anti-Heimat and arthouse aesthetics with the horror films of George A. Romero and David Cronenberg—but it would be the gigantic West German-French-Soviet co-production *Hard to Be a God* (1989) aka *Es ist nicht leicht ein Gott zu sein*, with the screenplay being mostly penned by Buñuel's late era screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière (*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *The Phantom of Liberty*), where he attempted to make an all-out blockbuster European film, which would ultimately prove to be a failure as the filmmaker would never again have the opportunity to work on such a large film again and since then has only directed three small documentaries. Based on the 1964 sci-fi novel of the same name written by Russian Jewish Soviet science fiction writers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, who are probably best known by cinephiles as writing a novel that would act as the basis for Andrei Tarkovsky's masterpiece *Stalker* (1979), *Hard to Be a God* is a sort of epic dystopian arthouse sci-fi-action-adventure-fantasy flick with an eclectic international all-star European cast that includes, among others, Bavarian wild man auteur Werner Herzog (*Even Dwarfs Started Small*, *Stroszek*), French counter-culture star Pierre Clémenti (*Sweet Movie*, *Steppenwolf*), German diva Christine Kaufmann (*Mädchen in Uniform*, *Egon Schiele – Exzess und Bestrafung*), Russian 'People's Artist' Aleksandr Filippenko (*The Career of Arturo Ui*, *The Master and Margarita*), and Viennese actress Birgit Doll (*Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *The Seventh Continent*). Made during the later stages of *Pereštroiika*, *Hard to Be a God* is an anti-fascist sci-fi flick with the unthinkable, Conan the Barbarian-esque 'fascistic' violence and aesthetics, not to mention a miserable and misanthropy-inspiring neo-medieval realm that is quite unbecoming for a European film directed by a quasi-arthouse director. Shot in the Ukraine and Soviet Central Asia over a troubled six-year period, *Hard to Be a God* has the feel of centuries upon centuries of Slavic serf suffering and even concludes with a mass extermination that puts *Schindler's List* (1993) to shame. On top of

that, Christine Kaufmann plays a carnally bestial babe who sheds some flesh, and Herr Herzog dies on screen after being literally stabbed in the back.

It is the future and a dude with a flat affect named Anton (Edward Zentara) works for the 'Institute of Experimental History' on planet Earth. He is sent on an exploratory space expedition to a backwards neighboring planet where the people are still in the dark ages. Under the alias of a primitive aristocrat named 'Rumata of Estoria,' Anton goes to the barbarian city of Arkanar to check up on one of the people who works for his institute, 'Mita' aka 'Cyril' (Werner Herzog), who lost contact with his team on planet Earth not long ago. Like Anton, Mita was only supposed to 'observe and report' what he saw while on the planet and not interfere with the inhabitants (which means allowing them to kill and rape each other and whatnot), but apparently his bleeding heart humanism has gotten him into a bit of trouble and thus he has been imprisoned. When Anton arrives in Arkanar, he meets the eccentric King (Pierre Clémenti), as well as his entourage, which includes an evil scheming minister named 'Reba' (Aleksandr Filippenko) who is described as "a contrarious man. He can't even bow properly," the wild and wanton royal whore Okana (Christine Kaufmann), the Prince, and various other exceedingly eccentric characters. Shortly after finding Mita, Anton realizes that his fellow countryman has gone soft and now wants to fight for the rights of the pitiful sub-peasant citizens of Arkanar, which is a big 'no' with the Institute of Experimental History, who do not want their employees messing with the history and progress of a underdeveloped planet in its dark age because, as one scientist states, "We had found our sister planet, the mirror of ourselves in a distant past. We must never dim this mirror." When Mita is killed for being named as a conspirator against the King (Mita made the fatal mistake of involving Mita in the revolution, as the minister merely uses it as an opportunity to liquidate his rivals and grab more power), Anton is forced to take his place and semi-permanently take up the archaic aristocratic persona of 'Rumata of Estoria,' which is the name of a nobleman who died long ago in a swamp. Through his research, Anton learns that Mita was involved with attempting to create the first printing press in Arkanar with the help of an inventor named Hauk (Mikhail Gluzskiy), but unconventional ideas and literacy are against the law in the unenlightened barbarian world. Meanwhile, Anton helps save the life of a 'proto-bolshevik' revolutionary of sorts named Suren (Hugues Quester), who local soldiers attempt to kill for reading revolutionary political propaganda in public in an attempt to rile up the citizenry.

In terms of staying in contact with his civilized yet emotionally sterile earth friends, Anton transmits exactly what he witnesses to them in real-time via his eyeball, so they know whether he is in danger or not. Ultimately, Anton hopes to find a local genius named Budach (Andrei Boltnev) from the neighboring city of Irukan as he is apparently the only real hope for getting the people out of the Dark Age, but rather unfortunately, the scholar is purportedly locked up in

HARD TO BE A GOD

a dungeon of torture run by the King's psychopathic minister Reba. On top of that, Anton witnesses firsthand what the locals think of science after discovering the corpse of a scientist who was attempting to build a telescope. Reba also has his men kill inventor Hauk, thus killing any chance of the printing press being realized. Among other things, Anton screws the King's feisty whore Okana and eventually starts a lurid love affair with his sassy servant Kyra (Anne Gautier), but she is later tortured and murdered by sadistic minister Reba for helping the earthling. Hoping to consolidate complete power, Reba also poisons the half-insane King, but luckily Anton helps to save the young Prince before he can be disposed of as well. With the help of a strong man named Baron Pampa (Elgudzha Burduli) and revolutionary Suren, Anton wages a revolt against Reba and his giant armies, but his earth buddies do not appreciate his attempt at tampering with history, so they interfere. In the end, Anton's friends from the institute head to Arkanar and the primitive people of the city mistake their spaceship for God. Meanwhile, revolutionary Suren gets a hold of one of Anton's futuristic laser weapons and pulls a Trotsky by exterminating virtually every single person in his presence. Of course, with his mission finished, Anton goes back to earth, but luckily his savage girlfriend/servant Kyra and the Prince manage to survive the apocalyptic ordeal.

Not unsurprisingly, the Strugatsky brothers' main request for a film version of their novel *Hard to Be a God* was that the director be a Soviet, but of course they did not get their wish, even if kraut auteur Peter Fleischmann is a bit of an anti-Occidental commie himself whose works like *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* and *The Hamburg Syndrome* are more critical of West Germany than the average Soviet propaganda flick. Apparently, the Strugatsky brothers also found Fleischmann to be a rather intolerable person to work with (judging by the less than thinly veiled propaganda in his films, I can certainly see why), so they abandoned the film and publicly trashed it when it was released, which ultimately led to a second adaptation of *Hard to Be a God* directed by Soviet veteran director Aleksei German and produced by Lenfilm. Quite curiously, like Fleischmann's 1989 version, German's adaptation of *Hard to Be a God*, which features a whopping 177-minute running time, also suffered a long and troubled production as a project that starting filming in 2000, but would not premiere until 2013, with the director dying before its premiere (German had finished principal photography in 2006 and spent the rest of the years editing the film to perfection, with his wife and son taking over post-synchronization when he died). Personally, I have never been a huge science fiction fan, but Fleischmann's *Hard to Be a God* seems more like a quasi-kitschy take on HBO's *Game of Thrones* with arthouse actors than a mere fanciful masturbation aid for virginal man-boys who fantasize about living in an imaginary utopian future where their autistic tendencies will be better suited. Additionally, aside from possibly *The Hamburg Syndrome*, *Hard to Be a God* is easily Fleischmann's best cinematic work to date, as it is not

as drenched in the sort of dreaded Frankfurt School-approved messages that unfortunately plague a good portion of his films. By no means resembling anything that can be described as a masterpiece, *Hard to Be a God* ultimately makes for an excellent fantasy flick for Eurocentric cinephiles that find Luke Skywalker to be a pansy momma's boy and cannot stomach the cardboard cynicism of Harrison Ford as Hans Solo, not to mention the fact that it puts David Lynch's convoluted celluloid mess *Dune* (1984) to abject shame. While undoubtedly an anti-fascist allegory with the last days of the Cold War lingering in the background, I thought *Hard to Be a God* worked better as a cautionary tale about the unexpected consequences when an advanced civilization (i.e. Europe) begins meddling with the affairs of more archaic peoples (i.e. Africa and a good percentage of the so-called third world). After all, Western weaponry has only made ancient African tribal feuds more genocidal and all the aid given to the doubly dark continent has only guaranteed that there will be all the more Sub-Saharanans that will be starving with each new generation. Indeed, the title 'Hard to Be a God' is practically interchangeable with the phrase 'The White Man's Burden.' Socio-political contexts aside, *Hard to Be a God* must also be given credit for featuring what is probably the most aesthetically repulsive wigs in cinema history, which can be forgiven since it is a work that manages to feature the sort of scenario you might expect from an episode of *Star Trek*, albeit with a bit of Teutonic testicular fortitude and ultra-violence.

-Ty E

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE /& HER LOVER
THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE /& HER LOVER

Peter Greenaway (1989)

About a decade ago, I made the rather grave mistake of watching British auteur Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books* (1991) – an audaciously avant-garde, flesh-driven cinematic adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* borrowing aesthetic attributes from Manierist paintings and featuring armies of elderly naked folk and a little boy happily swinging back and forth on a swing and urinating into a pool – which proved to be a terribly trying and exceedingly excruciating cinematic experience, so, naturally I have been a bit apprehensive about watching any other films directed by the seemingly pretentious and unpleasantly perverted filmmaker ever since. After hearing nothing but praise about Greenaway's previous cinematic effort *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989), including from braindead gorehounds and anti-arthouse advocates, I decided to give the auteur another chance, which I am most certainly happy I did, as the film proved to be one of the most suavely and sophisticatedly stylized and ideally idiosyncratic works of sordid scatological celluloid that I have ever seen, so much so that I am more than prepared to give *Prospero's Books* another chance. Probably Greenaway's most famous/infamous film, as well as his most accessible, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* is a greatly gastronomic themed work of corrupting culinary cinema featuring a farcical approach to food, feces, splashing, bathroom stall blowjobs, sadomasochism, and cannibalism, among various putrid and pleasing things. Oftentimes described as an allegorical work depicting tyranny and tragedy of Thatcherism in regard to Britannia, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* is luckily a work where the viewer need not know, nor care about the sociopolitical subtext to appreciate it as it is a film that is big on aesthetics, character, comedy, and storyline that does not sacrifice cinematic quality for some 'bigger' and now-relatively anachronistic message. Featuring Helen Mirren giving bathroom blowjobs, a bookish Jew being forced to eat his own book, a bitchy woman taking a fork to the face, and the torture of a pure as snow and angelic albino boy, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* is a rare cinematic work that reminds the viewer that black comedy has no bounds as an obsessively obscene yet aesthetically refined film that will make even the most cold and callous of viewers feel oddly overwrought. Doing the seemingly impossible by creating a seamless yet seemingly mismatched marriage between the aesthetic qualities of Baroque and Flemish paintings and thematic moral and sexual libertinism of lavishly lewd literary transgressors like the Marquis de Sade and especially Georges Bataille, Peter Greenaway has cooked a tasty, if not stomach-churning, celluloid meal with *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*; a film that reminds the viewer that sometimes there is a fine line between the physical appearance of chocolate mousse and feces, and high art and low art.

Things are getting ugly and rather unsanitary at the positively posh and upscale Le Hollandais Restaurant when the owner and head chef Richard Borst aka "The Cook" (Richard Bohringer) isn't able to pay psychotic sadist gangster Alfred Spica aka "The Thief" (Michael Gambon) money he owes. On top of stripping Borst's clothes off and rubbing dogs turds all over his disrobed body, super sicko Spica – a low-class yet curiously charismatic barbarian who loves gorging his mouth with food just as much he basks in humiliating and torturing people – also takes over his rather refined place of fine dining, thus setting the tone for a film about bad table manners that makes Paul Bartel's *Eating Raoul* (1982) seem like culinary child's play by comparison. Naturally, Spica makes a habit of attending Le Hollandais every night with his eccentric and erratic entourage, including his gorgeous and cultivated wife Georgina Spica aka "The Wife" (Helen Mirren) and criminal underlings Mitchel (Tom Roth), Cory (Ciarán Hinds), and Turpin (Roger Ashton-Griffiths), among various other ill-mannered low-lives and dedicated degenerates of the organized crime kind. A boorish, belligerent, and physically bloated megalomaniac who generally does and says whatever he wants whenever he wants, Alfred is not someone who is used to hearing "no" for an answer, let alone encountering people that have the gall and balls to contradict him, so the last thing he would suspect is that his well bred and seemingly uptight, bookish wife is having an affair with another man right under his nose. Unbeknownst to Alfred – a man who beats and rapes his wife from time to time – his wife Georgina is secretly having a heated love affair with an intelligent and seemingly introverted bookshop owner Michael (Alan Howard) that involves the collaboration of the Cook and his many employees in providing these lovers with sexual sanctuary at the restaurant. While Alfred goes on ridiculous rants about everything, including how close in proximity the vaginal hole and anus is on his wife and how about 60% of the patrons at the restaurant are Jewish, Georgina is getting her 'groove on' with Michael in toilet stalls, dirty dish rooms, walk-in refrigerators, and other sanitary and not so sanitary places. Of course, when Alfred finds out about Georgina's matrimonial indiscretions, he vows to kill and eat Michael, but he only fulfills half his promise, thus his wife makes sure that he keeps his word in what he describes as, "a revenge killing, an affair of the heart," but what turns into a sick sideshow of the stomach starring a devilishly charismatic gangster turned psychologically-castrated cannibal cuckold. Indeed, while it is Alfred that has Micheal literally stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey using pages from the bookshop owner's favorite tome, a book on the French Revolution, it is Georgina that makes sure her dead flame is properly dressed and fully cooked, so that her husband can also experience what it is like to have the penetrating bibliophile 'inside' his body.

As oftentimes described by reviewers of the film, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* utilizes eccentric characters, which are essentially walking and talking caricatures of the reasonably complex and calculating sort, as alle-

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE /& HER LOVER

gorical representations of the following: The Cook = Civil servants, The Thief = Thatcher and her insatiable need for greed and unwavering arrogance, The Wife = Britannia, The Lover = leftist/intellectuals who have the power to seduce, but are too impotent and ill-equipped to put up a worthy fight. Luckily, the film is too steeped in succulently stylized tableaux, character pathology and aesthetic scatology for one to feel like they have been penetrated with a putrid and pretentious political parable of the preposterous pomo sort. While Marco Ferreri's filmic food farce *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) aka *The Grande Bouffe* may make for a bodacious brunch with barrels of boobs, buffets, and belches, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* is a meticulously prepared three course celluloid meal that totally fulfills without the unwanted side-effects of sentimentalist flatulence and preachy political puffery that is known to result in deleterious diarrhea of the mind and soul. Admittedly, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* was specially prepared for those with refined taste for tableaux and iron stomachs for aberrant aestheticism and subversive themes, so if you're looking for some filmic fast food, stay clear of Greenaway's celluloid cuisine and head to the dead-end drive thru of Stevie Spielberg or Mickey Bay's mass-produced fodder.

-Ty E

THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE, HER LOVER

Peter Greenaway (1989)

I present to you a film with numerous bans and cuts, heavily censored around the world. Peter Greenaway directed the lush film which is indeed a "Black Comedy". The plot revolves around a restaurant named Le Hollandais which lays home to a bizarre kitchen crew. The co-owner is a despicable man named Albert who is married to a woman named Georgie. Throughout the film we realize that she is regularly abused as well as demeaned in public. She is afraid of him, and for the fact, everyone else is too. This situation sets the story up real nice and rarely gets boring.

One thing that makes this film click so well within our heads is the set pieces. The slums outside of the restaurant are boorish and breathe life in this offbeat film. When this film was released it garnered an "X" Rating only to be later cut to "NC-17".

The stories Albert exchanges nearly challenge the perversion of The Marquis De Sade. Albert's character is loathsome. Michael Gambon did a wonderful job and so did his weird sidekick Tim Roth. Upon viewing this film, the costumes strike your eyes and speak their own story, but the real magic happens once you enter the kitchen. A bearded strong man, a falsetto churning young lad, and the head cook Richard are just the fore-runners to such a surreal cast. The score is composed by Michael Nyman and pumps the moods up and presents each individual intense moment with Brass and Percussion. The dialogue is brash and immersive and the humor is razor sharp.

The director uses the color red so vividly just as in his other masterpiece "The Baby Of Mâcon". In a short summary, this film is a taboo-shattering theatrical masterpiece with Cannablism, Necrophila, Human Waste Consumption, and Fork Stabs to please even the most jaded cinema go-er. A tragic Love story at heart, this film could be considered Georges Batailles's Romeo & Juliet. A four-star dessert.

-Maq

NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS
NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS

Peter Hall (1995)

Never Talk to Strangers is not the film you are thinking about with Antonio Banderas. This one, in fact, is a 70's roughie XXX film. The only available copy is double-billed with the gorenography Hardgore. It is of no real importance and could easily be forgotten. The whole film is an 8mm loop of the same porn to make you feel like you got your money's worth. What makes this film worth your time? Well, it happens to have the most hilarious editing I have ever-bare witness to. The screenplay follows a man in a white coat sporting an Afro, sodomizing two young females and performing bizarre tortures, such as nipple clamping, and electric shock on the ejaculation resting on Woman #2. The editing compromises each scene featuring a close up shot of his face over-acting various emotions, sort of like flash cards. Some of them feature him slyly smiling and nodding, to show his approval, and others show curiosity. These various facial expressions cannot be described vividly and must be viewed for the full effect. The second enjoyable aspect of the film is the colorful, yet funky soundtrack. The soundtrack incorporates beats and melodies similar to the golden days of Blaxploitation; Easily the best soundtrack for a porno film. Never Talk to Strangers is a bland half-an-hour porn that features buckets of sweat and hair. Only should be viewed for hilarity.

-Maq

THE LEFT-HANDED WOMAN

Peter Handke (1977)

While best known, at least in the cinema world, as the screenwriter for various Wim Wenders films like *Falsche Bewegung* (1975) aka *The Wrong Movie* (which is itself a loose adaption of Goethe's 1795-1796 second novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*) and especially *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987) aka *Wings of Desire* (which was later loosely remade as the horrendous 1998 Hollywood movie *City of Angels* starring Nicholas Cage and Meg Ryan), avant-garde Slovene-Austrian writer Peter Handke has directed four feature-length films of his own, with his second work, *Die linkshändige Frau* (1978) aka *The Left-Handed Woman*, being easily his greatest and most revered, if not predictably controversial, cinematic effort to date. Rather bizarrely, especially considering a man who is foremost a novelist directed it, *The Left-Handed Woman* was originally envisioned as a screenplay and although the writer first released it as a book, he directed the film only a year later. On top of that, Handke's film is a work where the protagonist (or should I say 'anti-heroine'), whose psychological motivations are never examined, rarely speaks and does not even open her mouth until well past the 20-minute mark, thereupon making for a largely visually poetic work that does not seem like it would translate well on paper. Lauded in a review entitled "She Wants to Be Alone" featured in the 7 April 1980 issue of the *Village Voice* written by J. Hoberman (co-author of the seminal work *Midnight Movies*) as, "that rare thing, a genuinely poetic movie," Handke's film may not be as immaculately assembled as his cinematic collaborations with Wenders (who produced the film), yet *The Left-Handed Woman* certainly has a more authentic and overbearing soul that bleeds mercilessly with much internal pain, abject misery, and impenetrable melancholy, albeit in a sort of hermetic fashion that demands total patience and attention from the viewer. The superlatively somber and potentially suicide-inspiring story of a young married German mother living abroad in Paris who abruptly has what she describes as an "epiphany" and kicks her husband out of their apartment and ultimately leaves him for good without rhyme or reason, Handke's work has been described as everything from misogynistic to a rare true feminist film made by a man, yet if anything is for sure, it is that the lead character is an insufferable introvert who need not articulate her negation of society with words. Indeed, German actress Edith Clever, who previously played the eponymous role in Éric Rohmer's Heinrich von Kleist adaptation *The Marquise of O* (1976) aka *Die Marquise von O...*, certainly deserves credit for playing what I have come to regard as one of the most innately intolerable female characters in cinema history, as a cold mother and wife who brings coldness and rejection to virtually every single important person in her life, including her own young son. Indeed, forget Liv Ullmann's character in Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *Persona* (1966) and the bisexual terrorist mother

THE LEFT-HANDED WOMAN

of Salvatore Samperi's rather underrated work *Cuore di mamma* (1969) aka *Mother's Heart*, *The Left-Handed Woman* features the most tension-stirring tongue-tied female character that I have had the distinguished delight of suffering watching. Arguably most influenced by the films of Japanese auteur Yasujiro Ozu (*Tokyo Story*, *Early Spring*), whose portrait is featured prominently in the protagonist's apartment (not to mention the fact that she goes to a movie theater to watch one of his films), the work naturally features static camera work that underscores the eponymous character's sense of self-imposed isolation and intrinsic introversion. If you've ever wondered what was brewing in the seemingly dormant post-WWII Teutonic Volksgeist, Handke's almost malevolently melancholy film might not give you a positive answer, but it will certainly demonstrate that some members of the German fairer sex might have benefited from being members of the BDM (Bund Deutscher Mädel) during their teenage years.

Marianne (Edith Clever) is a German former writer/translator living in Paris who has given up her career to take care of her young nerdy son Stefan (Markus Mühleisen) and be a wife to her husband Bruno (Bruno Ganz). When Marianne meets up with her husband, who she has not seen in some time, at Roissy airport, she shows virtually nil love or joy for Bruno, who complains on the car drive back that he spent most of his trip to Finland drunk and that he hates the Finnish because, unlike other European languages, he could not understand a single word of the language. Bruno also does not seem to understand a single word his wife says either. After spending the night drinking wine in a metaphorical scene at a fancy restaurant where a flower wilts and Bruno discusses reading an English-language novel on the joys of feudal servitude, the somewhat odd couple subsequently have passionless sex that same night that concludes with the introverted wife looking dead with a totally expressionless stare that tells the viewer that something is not quite right with her. The next day, Marianne drops a bomb on her hubby as they stroll through a dreary park that will change both of their lives forever. Indeed, out of nowhere, Marianne reveals that she has had an "epiphany" and tells Bruno to "Go away. Leave me alone." With no real reason given, Marianne throws Bruno out of her life and takes control of their poor son, even though she seems almost as resentful of him as her spouse. When Bruno comes to visit his wife shortly after being kicked out of their apartment, he calls her a "mystic" (notably, Handke once wrote in his work that, "The mystical is the mind's beginning and at the same time hinders its further development.") and tells her that a couple of electroshocks would make her "reasonable again," though he also gives her money and supplies for work and then leaves, but not before warning her that she will die of loneliness. Indeed, despite claiming that typing gives her carpal tunnel syndrome, Marianne decides to take on a job as a translator. While staring at herself in the mirror (though she is right-handed, she becomes left-handed upon staring at her reflection), Marianne venomously declares to her imaginary adversaries (assumedly, her non-present hus-

band): “You think what you will! The more you think you know about me, the freer from you I become!”

Despite being a prepubescent grade school boy, little Stefan realizes that there is something cold and impenetrable about his mother, complaining to her while they eat dinner together one night: “You laugh like Philip. He always tries hard to laugh. You’re never really delighted. Just one time you were really delighted with me.” Indeed, even Marianne cannot deny she is a lousy mother, as she cannot even try to deny what Stefan says. When Marianne is visited by her elderly publisher (German actor/filmmaker Bernhard Wicki of *The Bridge* (1959) aka *Die Brücke* and *The Longest Day* (1962)), her lack of maternal qualities are once again reinforced, as her friend remarks, “You are only concerning yourself with the child now...to avoid responding to me. Why are you playing the mother-child game?” To Marianne’s credit, she retorts to her publisher’s remarks, “Maybe you’re right.” After giving her a copy of Gustave Flaubert’s *A Simple Heart* to translate, the publisher leaves Marianne with the remark: “Now begins the longtime of your solitude.” When Marianne begins translating, she becomes even less tolerant of her son and even gets so mad at him at one point that she literally wrings his neck in a seemingly homicidal fashion. Of course, Bruno eventually pays another visit to Marianne and tells her that one day that she will hang herself and makes the following marvelous misogynistic rant: “You women with your puny reason. With your brutal understanding for everything and everybody. And you’re never bored, you good-for nothing. All excited you sit around and let time pass. You know why nothing can ever become of you? Because you never get drunk alone. Like vain photographs of yourselves, you slouch in your tidy apartments. Machines of incapacitation for everything alive. Sniffing the ground, you crawl every which way, until death tears your mouth wide open. You and your new life. I never saw a woman who changed her life for good.” Bruno also confesses that he walked on foot to the apartment with the intention of “destroying” his estranged wife and when Marianne attempts to comfort him by touching him, he warns her by hostilely saying, “Don’t touch me. Please. Don’t touch me.” Indeed, at this point, it seems that any love that Bruno previously had for Marianne has now transformed into visceral hatred. Of course, aside from her fear that her husband might hurt her, Marianne seems totally unmoved by Bruno’s hatred. While Marianne demonstrates nothing but rejection and negation to all the important men in her life, she also turns down her female best friend Franziska (Angela Winkler) when she attempts to get her to join some feminist group.

When Marianne’s elderly father (played by German veteran actor Bernhard Minetti who starred in Leni Riefenstahl’s troubled 1954 film *Tiefland*) pays her a visit and she asks him if he still writes, he gives her the following somber spiel: “You’re saying I’m at life’s end and still writing. I think I have lived in the wrong direction. I’m not blaming it on the war or other circumstances, but on myself.

THE LEFT-HANDED WOMAN

Sometimes now my writing seems like an excuse to me. Sometimes of course it doesn't. Before falling asleep at night often I don't have anybody to think about. For the simple fact that I haven't met with anybody all day. Even though I know how good it feels to fall asleep thinking of someone. On the other hand I meet with people mainly to...make sure I'd be found in time if worst came to worst. Not by lying around for so long." After he confesses that he rarely cries (a major theme of much of post-WWII German cinema/literature is the 'inability to mourn'), Marianne's father warns his seemingly metaphysically dead daughter: "And you're going to end up just like me, Marianne. A remark that concludes the point of my mission." After they have their big talk, Marianne and her father go to a photobooth where they bump into a goofy out-of-work film actor (played by Wenders regular Rüdiger Vogler). After the father remarks to the actor that he is a poser who tries to act like a Hollywood star and refuses to put his true self into his roles, Marianne finds herself with a new love interest of sorts. Indeed, the actor bumps into Marianne a couple days later and confesses that he has never pursued a woman in his life, but he has looked for her for days. In the end, Marianne goes on a 'sentimental' camping trip with her son in what seems to be a junkyard and later Bruno stops by and confesses he is doing rather well despite the divorce, yet when the protagonist has a party with all her best friends and loved ones, she still has to admit her best friend Franziska, "even now I want to be alone," thus demonstrating her radical love of isolation. The film ultimately concludes with the following quote from artist/filmmaker Vlado Kristl: "Have you noticed there's only room for those who make room for themselves?"

Despite being nominated for the Golden Palm Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1978, as well as winning the German Film Award in Gold for "Best Editing" (Peter Przygodda) in 1978 and the Guild Film Award in Gold at the Guild of German Art House Cinemas festival in 1980, *The Left-Handed Woman* seemed to completely go over the head of certain less sophisticated viewers like Hebraic hack film critic Leonard Maltin, who complained regarding the work, "Time passes... and the audience falls asleep." Indeed, if you're looking for uplifting mindless entertainment of the conspicuously contrived Hollywood sort, Handke's work might inspire you to blow your brains out, but if you're looking for a totally engulfing work with a distinctive mood that claws at the soul without mercy yet also picks at the brain with equal severity, *The Left-Handed Woman* is certainly a singular work that makes most of Wenders' films seem like the counterfeit celluloid swill directed by an emotional retard by comparison. An anti-melodramatic malady of a movie revolving around an emotionally constipated woman who desires some sort of intangible freedom but is mostly a slave of her own stubbornness, isolation, and intolerance of other people, including her own loved ones, Handke's film is certainly a work that manages to express the essence of its particular glacial zeitgeist via a fiercely frigid Fräulein, which is certainly no small accomplishment, especially considering it was directed by a member

of the less hysterical sex. Compared to Volker Schlöndorff's similarly themed yet overtly feminist-driven work *A Free Woman* (1972) aka *Strohfeuer*—a film starring the director's then-wife Margarethe von Trotta, whose real-life divorce heavily inspired the film—*The Left-Handed Woman* seems like pernicious poetry that (quite unlike Schlöndorff's film!) never makes the mistake of attempting to make some sort of silly post-68er-Bewegung socio-political statement. As for Handke's aesthetic intent with the film, he once confessed, "What I am really striving to attain is monotony in its most intensive form." Indeed, *The Left-Handed Woman* is a work that turns banality into a sort of high celluloid art, as a film where nothing really goes on, yet every single scene is layered with a sort of nerve-racking intensity that never gives the viewer a chance to breathe. Unlike the typical Hollywood film, Handke offers no insights into the lead character's psychological motivations, thus it is up to the viewer to enter the seemingly half-loony lady's little head to see what makes her do the rather deleterious things she does. While I somewhat doubt it was the director's intent in terms of the film's title, the protagonist of the work is, spiritually speaking, certainly a follower of the Left-Hand Path, as a woman who has decided to break all the taboos of her bourgeois life and becomes her own god(dess), even if a rather weak and ineffective one whose greatest demonstration of personal sovereignty is walking around her neighborhood wearing a fancy (and rather aesthetically displeasing!) fur-coat. Made during a period of a so-called 'literaturverfilmungskrise' (literature adaptation crisis) in West Germany (Ronald Holloway once noted that, "Literature is the backbone of German cinema... Remove that backbone from the history of New German Cinema, and it appears to be a jelly-fish," *The Left-Handed Woman* is arguably most important because it proved German filmmakers could do more than just recycle played-out 19th century literary classics, as Handke's film is a truly modern avant-garde work that arguably managed to capture the spirit of its zeitgeist better than anything ever directed by Wenders or Schlöndorff. A sort of contra *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), Handke's film ultimately expresses more its lack of drama than any sort of histrionic acting ever could. Indeed, for those looking to 'understand' the seemingly inexplicable behavior of innately introverted women, you probably can do no better than *The Left-Handed Women*.

-Ty E

HEAVENLY CREATURES
HEAVENLY CREATURES

Peter Jackson (1994)

Good sadistic lesbian films are hard to come by. This is especially true in regards to high school girls. The French lesbian featured in Alexandre Aja's *High Tension* made me want to vomit. I wasn't surprised to find out that the blonde bull dyke with a crew cut was also a bit schizophrenic. For a notable fantastic yet deranged lesbo flick, one needs to turn to Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures*. The film stars a very young Kate Winslet who befriends (among other things) a loser fat girl. The unflattering looking and trollish Peter Jackson directed *Heavenly Creatures* before CGI special effects unfortunately caught his fancy. *Heavenly Creatures* combines fantasy, comedy, and horror for an unsettling experience of unconventional sorts. It makes one wonder why Peter Jackson would bother with a remake of *King Kong* (other than the monetary return). *Heavenly Creatures* is a film about an unholy relationship that is constantly interrupted by unpleasant situations (like tuberculosis). By the end of the film, the two ambiguous lovers prove they will do anything to keep their bond. *Heavenly Creatures* is based on the real life true crime case of Parker-Hulme. I won't go into anymore detail, but it involves sexual perversity and blood. I don't know about the real Juliet Hulme, but Kate Winslet has an amazing performance as an eccentric young lady that is a little too smart for her own good. Melanie Lynskey also does a good job playing the young ogre school girl Pauline Parker. I watched in disgust every time I saw Parker on screen. Out of all Peter Jackson's films, I believe *Heavenly Creatures* to be the most ambitious. The film does an exceptional job of coming in and out of dreams. The two schoolgirl friends in *Heavenly Creatures* aren't the most normal of girls and Peter Jackson's directing skills demonstrate that. Peter Jackson also gives respect to Carol Reed's *The Third Man* and Mr. Orson Welles. I wouldn't be surprised if Peter Jackson was in the middle of a Federico Fellini marathon during the production of *Heavenly Creatures*. The film certainly brought me to another world.

-Ty E

GOSSENKIND

Peter Kern (1991)

Speculating solely from his feature-length work *Gossenkind* (1992) aka *Street Kid* – the director’s only film released on any format (a long out-of-print VHS tape) in the U.S. and arguably (and rather strangely) his most ‘commercial’ cinematic effort to date, at least outside of Europe – I would assume Austrian actor/auteur Peter Kern (Domenica, Haider lebt - 1. April 2021) had a rather lecherous life-changing experience while still a young man in the prestigious Austrian Vienna Boys’ Choir as I have yet to see another pathologically perverse, pederast flick with such a conventionally directed and weirdly ‘wholesome’ pedo-packaging as if the filmmaker was a ‘poor man’s Spielberg’ who lost all restraint in regard to his taboo vice and went ‘full fantasy’ (as it were). Featuring everything from absurdist kraut auteur Christoph Schlingensief (Tunguska - The Crates Are Delivered!, The 120 Days of Bottrop) playing the seemingly tailored role of a retarded pedophile farm-boy who sports a vintage Wehrmacht hat, to a teenage hustler boy who is sadistically sodomized by his mother’s alcoholic boyfriend (while his mama watches on passively), *Street Kid* is surely not the sort of quirky and cute ‘kids film’ that it was advertised as, but a unsoundly soft-hearted NAMBLA-inspired pro-pedophile perv piece directed by an obscenely obese debauchee with a sick sense of cinematic sentimentalism. With its combination of city skaters destroying the concrete, salacious teen sex, and petty proletarian criminality, *Street Kid* is the virtual gritty celluloid prototype for Larry Clark’s *Kids* (1995), except with a more coherent narrative and no pretensions towards a realist cinéma vérité aesthetic. Essentially, *Street Kid* is a completely incriminating (at least, on the director’s part) cumming-of-age flick about an androgynous 14-year-old male hustler named Axel Glitter (Max Kellermann) – oddly, of no relation to Gary – who sports of preposterous Elvis pompadour, tight denim jeans, and cowboy boots. As someone whose own mother tells her only son that she couldn’t possibly have given birth to him and that he stinks “like a rat,” on top of being regularly abused by his mom’s belligerent boy toy, Axel is not the most appreciated of people with fucked haircuts, but he does get a superlatively sick yet sad self-esteem boost by peddling his aberrant adolescent ass on the streets. Luckily for him, Axel’s life changes, if only momentarily, when he meets a middle-aged bourgeois John and crypto-fag family man named Karl Heinz Brenner (Winfried Glatzeder, who was one of the most popular actors in kraut commie East Germany due to his performance in Heiner Carow’s 1973 hit film *The Legend of Paul and Paula*); a positively pathetic mensch of the mostly marvelously mundane kind whose own son is around the same age as the boy he is bugging. Needless to say, when a bunch of nosy middle-class types notice that cunning cock-sucker Karl is carrying on with a sardonic street kid who sells sex when not stealing skateboards, things get a bit troublesome for the fatherly

faggot and his surrogate sodomite son.

Axel Glitter has been arrested by the police for hawking his body to a variety of old homos a number of times, but as he tells his arresting officer upon questioning during the beginning of *Street Kid*, “you never get rid of horniness,” hence why prostitution is oftentimes described as the oldest profession in human history, at least among determinedly damned and degenerated, destitute types. Shamelessly borrowing themes and narrative ingredients from German author Thomas Mann’s novella *Death in Venice* (1912), and, in turn, Italian auteur Luchino Visconti’s 1971 film adaptation starring Dirk Bogarde of the same name, *Street Kid* also follows a dismally depressed ‘artiste,’ in this case a thespian, who is superficially respected by his colleagues, but does not feel anything resembling personal solace nor closeness towards anyone, not even his undersexed wife nor seemingly autistic son, until first encountering a 14-year-old boy who his call-boy-calling compatriot describes as being, “14. Skin like velvet, and the face of an angel..He kisses like an adult and he is just perfect.” A highly hermetic hidden homo who humps hustler hunks on the side and has fashioned himself a homestead and home life in the sort of banal bourgeoisie bedroom community that he has nothing but completely cloaked contempt for, Karl Heinz Brenner finds a suave savior in the form of a streetwalking pubescent prick-peddler that also happens to be a double illegal piece of high-priced pink-steel property being that he is both underage and a hustler in pre-legal-prostitution Deutschland. Of course, Mr. Brenner is not the only one breaking laws and matrimonial vows in his family, as his lascivious wife also has a rent boy on lease, not to mention the fact that their son, who seems to be no genius, but a sub-beta-male in the making like his father, is being savagely seduced by a seemingly retarded farmboy as devilishly depicted by Aryan aesthetic terrorist Christoph Schlingensiefel, thereupon giving *Street Kid* a vague celluloid kindred spirit to Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s thrilling psychodrama of inner-familial deceit *Chinese Roulette* (1976). That being said, one would not even suspect that *Street Kid* was a kraut flick, if it were not for the fact that all the dialogue is in German, because on top of featuring a number of swarthy semite-like actors that look like they could be the strikingly slim relatives of Peter Kern himself, the thematically taboo-ridden and totally taut celluloid work was directed in a highly contrived and sentimentally stereotypical manner not altogether different from a children’s Disney movie. When gay gentleman Karl Heinz finally gets the gall to “come out” as a kiddy cock-sucker, he wastes no time telling everyone who will listen to him, including a banal bank clerk, who he lets know after withdrawing all of his money from his savings account that, “I’m not going on vacation. I’m driving away with my 14-year-old boyfriend. In a forest we’ll undress and make love.” Of course, like most uptight, materialistic, and severely soulless middle-class types who prefer monetary comfort and mundane modesty to the life of their inner-libertine dreams any day due to an impenetrable fear of spontaneity and a need to con-

form, bougie boob boy-buggerer soon has second thoughts regarding his Thelma & Louise-esque adventures with Axel and with the law tailing his teen-twink-thrusting tommyrot, it seems like a better time than ever to poof-out.

As a sort of minor quasi-Marxist melodrama with a purely pro-pederaſt symbolic message of "die cis-system," Street Kid is easily one of the most degenerate and perturbing yet puerile cinematic I have ever seen and like Arthur J. Bressan Jr.'s adult-fucks-vulnerable-child flick Abuse (1983), one of a handful of curiously conspicuous out-and-out pedophilia-advocating films, which is baffling to me considering it has probably been a good three decades since director Peter Kern was able see and utilize his penis considering his iconic morbid obesity that has played a prominent role in leading to his bloated cult status in the German-speaking world. Ultimately, the most outrageously glaring message of Street Kid is that the only way for a homosexual man to be truly liberated from the heterosexual shackles of good, plain, and fake (as Axel, says himself, he hates "dishonest people") conventional society is by saving young street rats and acting as a flesh-fondling father figure of sorts or forever remain a closeted cuckold whose wife gets more callow cock than he does. As is typical of the average Hollywood drama, Street Kid features middle-class people that are hyper-hypocritical, decidedly disingenuous, unashamedly and ceaselessly banal, absurdly paranoid of any outsider, and innately artificial in character and emotional, the proletarian 'street kid' is audaciously authentic (of course, who would be modest after being anally man-handled by your mother's boyfriend as she looks passively on?!), sexually secure, wonderfully witty, and an all-around entertainer. Needless to say, Street Kid is not The Outsiders (1983) directed purported pederast Francis Ford Coppola, but it does prove that Peter Kern is quite the ambitious auteur of commercially campy cinematic deception, if not exactly a successful one. If you want proof that even pederasts can be sappy romantics, look no further than Peter Kern's Street Kid; a cinema work where sex, sodomy, and sickening smuttiness has never been so shortsightedly sentimental and superlatively superficial.

-Ty E

HAMLET: THIS IS YOUR FAMILY
HAMLET: THIS IS YOUR FAMILY

Peter Kern (2001)

If there is just one taboo obsession that German renegade Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensiefel (Egomania - Insel ohne Hoffnung, The 120 Days of Bottrop) revisited throughout his artistic career in various mediums, including film, theatre, television performance art, and political parties and rallies, it would undoubtedly be anything revolving around National Socialism – be it old school Hitlerism, degenerate neo-nazism, far-right populism, and/or *völkisch kultur and kunst*. Inspired by his discussions with Dietrich Kuhlbrodt – a Hamburg District Court lawyer for the persecution of crimes under National Socialism who also acted as film/theatre critic and sometimes performer in Schlingensiefel's films – and his fascination with concentration camps and Pasolini's final work *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), the filmmaker-turned-polymath only became all the more obsessed with all-things-nazi as the decades passed. First tackling the legacy of Adolf Hitler with his feature *Menu Total* (1986) aka *Meat, Your Parents* – a phantasmagorical fantasy of the decidedly depraved and structurally delirious that the daring auteur regarded as his finest film – Schlingensiefel went on to direct a play about homosexual neo-nazi leader (and later AIDS victim) Michael Kühnen (who the director portrayed in his film *Terror 2000*) entitled *Kühnen '94, Bring Me the Head of Adolf Hitler!* (1994) at the prestigious Volksbühne in Berlin, a remake of NS propagandist Veit Harlan's melodramatic masterpiece *Opfergang* (1944) entitled *Mutter's Maske* (1988), a Nazi-laden "German Trilogy" of films (*100 Years Adolf Hitler - The Last Hour in the Führerbunker*, *The German Chainsaw-Massacre* and *Terror 2000 - Germany out of Control*), and a racially-charged Big Brother reality spoof *Foreigners out!* Schlingensiefel's *Container* (2002) where a group of brown-to-black *untermensch* in a makeshift concentration are departed one-by-one by members of the Austrian voting public.

Undoubtedly, one of Schlingensiefel's most ambitious and audacious artistic flirtations with Teuton-flavored fascism was his play *Hamlet: This is Your Family—Nazi Line* (2001); a feverish and frantic freeform reworking of the Shakespeare classic starring a cast of real-life Swiss ex-nazis that was inspired by the director's belief that nazi-free, 'neutral' Switzerland was on the verge of adopting postmodern fascism à la the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei, SVP). Simultaneously a play, media frenzy, and active political action campaign, Schlingensiefel predictably caused an uproar in Switzerland, which was captured via the director's bloated buddy Peter Kern (who plays King Claudius in the play) via the documentary *Hamlet: This is Your Family* (2001). Utilizing the 'Nazi Line' protocol, which included SS-esque uniforms (one being donned by Schlingensiefel himself) and holding heated press conferences, the political program sought the objective: "Right wing extremists / neo-Nazis should

experience economical and social warmth and support in order to be integrated into our society. additionally NAZI~LINE invests into psychological and medical treatment of neo-Nazis. International Corporations as well as neo-Nazis and hate criminals are kindly asked to participate.” Needless to say Hamlet: This is Your Family is just another example as to why Christoph Schlingensief – not unlike the character Hamlet – was the Fatherland’s last great ‘enfant terrible.’

During the beginning of Hamlet: This is Your Family, Schlingensief – wearing a specially tailored Nazi Line SS officer uniform – makes it quite clear that he does not plan to play nice with the Swiss when he states at the beginning of a show, “Who financed your theatre? Jews who fled our...my country. Because they had to. You lined your pockets with Jewish money. You invested it in culture. That’s the truth.” Indeed, the director may have been a tad bit hard on the bombastic Swiss bourgeois, but he found a special place in his heart for brutish bootboys who used to sail the swastika. Dressed in full skinhead regalia, the carbon-copy commandos barbarically beat and sodomize effete actors on stage and sing punk rock skinhead anthems in a manner that would make most viewers doubt the authenticity of their political conversion. The lead ex-nazi Torsten Lemmer – a towering chap who sports a leather trenchcoat and slicked back hair – seems like a rather reasonable guy with surely sound intentions, but that does nothing to stop other members of Schlingensief’s production from treating him and his ex-Hitlerite comrades like they ran a gas chamber at Auschwitz, thereupon bringing doubt as to whether ex-neo-nazis can ever lead a normal life after ‘reintegrating’ into society. In fact, the prop-man for Hamlet: This is Your Family – a culturally-diversified degenerate with large African plates in his ears and aesthetically-repellent full-sleeves of tribal tattoos – adamantly refuses to “furnish props for the Nazis in this play” as if he is at risk for contracting some sort of obscure venereal disease by doing so. To the petty prop-man’s credit, one of the ex-nazi chicks claim that leader Lemmer is still a neo-nazi and that his alleged disavowing of his past is merely a ploy for him to become mayor of Düsseldorf, which probably had some to truth it as it was later revealed that he continued to work for a far-right record label from 2002-2006, despite marrying a Moroccan mud and converting to Islam in 2002. Regardless, in Hamlet: This is Your Family Lemmer and his ex-brownshirts pay tribute to poet/playright Bertolt Brecht – the Marxist race-traitor who committed racial treason by marrying multiple Jewesses – by taking a pilgrimage to his Berlin grave. Ultimately, I get the impression that Lemmer is merely a social misfit with no strong ideals aside from the desire to shock, provoke, and opportunistically attempt to gain political power because when Peter Kern asked him who he would have been during the Third Reich, he unhesitatingly states, “A resistance fighter, no doubt. I always oppose the establishment.” Aside from eccentric ex-nazis, Hamlet: This is Your Family also has the notable distinction of featuring Fassbinder Superstar Irm Hermann (in the play as Queen Gertrude), who has no inhibition about

HAMLET: THIS IS YOUR FAMILY

going topless despite being nearly 60-years-old at the time of filming. For the play, Schlingensiefel, also paid posthumous tribute to his spiritual father Rainer Werner Fassbinder for what would have been his 53rd birthday and to Hermann for her 500th performance. Naturally, *Hamlet: This is Your Family* – with its Germanization of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and tribute to Brecht and Fassbinder – is an Anglophile's worst nightmare.

Ultimately, in terms of a 'social change' experiment, *Hamlet: This is Your Family* seems to have been, at the very least, a partial failure, but as an active multimedia event and performance art play, Schlingensiefel was ultimately successful, at least in the context of creating something new, refreshing, and particularly provocative, which was in large part due to the filmmaker-turned-playwright's almost fascistic fanaticism, thereupon becoming the thing he loves to hate in the process, but to a more patently preposterous and innately ironic degree. *Hamlet: This is Your Family* would also act as a continuation of his work with his previous unclassifiable active art project *Foreigners out!* Schlingensiefel's *Container*, albeit this time more focusing on the terribly timid la-di-da bourgeois by belligerently and bluntly bombarding their natural habitat of the theatre, henceforth dropping political and artistic vulgarity into their lap via sardonically subverted reconstruction of Shakespeare where skinheads beat and bugger physically frail types that resemble the audience members themselves. Naturally, Schlingensiefel responded to certain audience attendees abruptly leaving the play by yelling to them, "you don't deserve theatre. You don't deserve culture. No more supper and no more culture. That's it...go to bed. Sleep til you're dead. That won't be long." And indeed, these passive spectators aka cultural parasites – individuals who are afraid to experience any new art or anything that isn't already regarded as a 'classic' because it takes them out of their well cultivated comfort zone – most certainly exhibit a sense of fear when confronted with Schlingensiefel's agile art without boundaries. As his friend/collaborator Elfriede Jelinek – an Austrian author who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2002 – stated of Schlingensiefel shortly after his death: "Schlingensiefel was one of the greatest artists who ever lived...He was not really a stage director (in spite of *Bayreuth* and *Parsifal*), he was everything: he was the artist as such. He has coined a new genre that has been removed from each classification. There will be nobody like him." Not unlike *Hamlet*, Schlingensiefel – who the theme of family (both literal and figurative) played an integral part of his oeuvre – died after decades of battling his family and defending his father(land) via his art without bounds and ideas without ideology while both enduring cleverly fabricated and detectably debilitating forms of madness.

-Ty E

HAIDER LEBT - 1. APRIL 2021

Peter Kern (2002)

Austrian actor/director Peter Kern – a portly man of seemingly Semitic ancestry – has never shied away from playing with themes relating to nationalism, the history of Nazism, and the so-called ‘far-right’ in general. In Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), while ironically sporting a SS uniform, Kern’s character reenacted Peter Lorre’s speech as the childkiller Hans Beckert from Fritz Lang’s *M* (1931), but the rather rotund Austrian actor’s flirtation with fascism would reach its zenith with the films he sat in the director’s chair for. With his early women-in-prison exploitation flick *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* (1983) aka *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* – a work he co-directed with fellow Fassbinder regular Kurt Raab – Kern created a work seemingly loosely inspired by H.G. Wells’ science fiction novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) about a neo-nazi dictatorship that has enslaved and sexually tortures, rapes, and kills female Filipino sex slaves. Later in his filmmaking career, Kern would focus on more serious nazi-themed subjects with the documentary *Hamlet: This is your Family, Nazi-line* (2001), a document of his buddy Christoph Schlingensiefel’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* starring real-life ex-neo-nazis. More recently, Kern created a Hollywood-like melodrama *Initiation* aka *Blutsfreundschaft* (2008) about a newbie neo-nazi who forms a bond with an old homosexual (Helmut Berger) who suffered persecution during the Third Reich era. Undoubtedly, out of all of Peter Kern’s auteur efforts, his dystopian sci-fi comedy *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* (2002) aka *Haider Lives* – a no-budget digital video work starring hot German actor August Diehl (*The Counterfeiter*, *Inglourious Basterds*) in a rarely-seen performance he agreed to do for free (like all the actors in the film) due to lack of funds. A satirical reworking of ex-nazi propagandist Wolfgang Liebeneiner’s (director of the 1941 pro-euthanasia work *Ich klage an* aka *I Accuse*) film *1. April 2000* (1952) – a political satire about continued allied occupation of Austria some half a century after the conclusion of the Second World War – Peter Kern’s *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* is both an artistic assault against recently deceased Austrian far-right politician Jörg Haider (longtime leader of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ)) and the dubious relationship of the United States government with Iraq. Set twenty years after the apparent rise and fall of Haider’s dictatorship of Austria and eventual occupation of Europe by America, *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* portrays a mythical future Austria with a silly softcore authoritarian dictatorship.

The title of Kern’s *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* is quite interesting because, as of October 11, 2008, the real-life Haider no longer lives. Dying under mysterious conditions that sparked speculation among Haider’s widow and conspiracy theorist alike, Jörg Haider – the first popular and powerful ‘right-wing’ Austrian nationalistic leader since the Third Reich and uncompromisingly nationalistic

politician believed to have 'Nazi sympathies' due to his positive remarks about members of the Waffen-SS and less than flattering remarks about certain Jewish leaders – was certainly the sort of controversial leader who would be marked for assassination by a variety of idealistic opponents. Closely monitored by Mossad (the Israeli Secret Service) due to his political ties (apparently receiving large money transfers) to prominent 'Islamofascist dictators' like Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi, as well as his vocal positive remarks about the National Socialist era and his 'minimalism' of the holocaust and recognition of atrocities committed against Germanic peoples during World War II, Haider was indubitably a politician that certain alien anti-European elements and innumerable mainstream left-wingers wanted dead, thus making the film *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* an all the more curious work since its initial release over a decade ago, especially considering he and his Arab associates are no longer living. A proud Austrian who wore lederhosen and engaged in mountaineering (as shown in the film), Haider was certainly not the sort of ethno-masochistic multiculturalist that is typical of most modern European and American politicians. That being said, it is interesting to note that director Peter Kern has described *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* as a 'Heimatfilm' (aka 'homeland-film'), but considering the filmmaker's political persuasion, this sardonic satire at the expense of Haider and Austrian nationalists in general, is not exactly in the tradition of Arnold Fanck's *The Holy Mountain* (1926) aka *Der heilige Berg*. Like his friend and collaborator Christoph Schlingensiefel did with *Mutter's Maske* (1988) – a freeform remake of the National Socialist arthouse masterpiece *Opfergang* (1944) directed by Veit Harlan – Kern molest, mangles, mutilates, and ultimately deconstructs and re-assembles the 'Heimatfilm', henceforth resulting in a schlocky and artistically sacrilegious final product that no one would confuse with the real thing.

Haider lebt - 1. April 2021 opens with the lead protagonist August Maria Kaiser (August Diehl), a German journalist, awaking from bed and discovering the American Anschluss of Austria is complete with the American dollar officially replacing the Euro and the implementation of U.S. laws, including Capital Punishment and yank-style Civil Rights. A.M. Kaiser (who likes to sleep through the morning, hence his initials) – a spokesman and reporter for the fictional German Free TV – sets out to make a documentary about the political climate in contemporary Austria and by doing so, is constantly harassed by members of an American Gestapo, who have outlawed Austrian vernacular and traditional Austrian folk songs. Apparently, like fellow Austrian nationalist leader Adolf Hitler, Haider inevitably caused his nation to fall in enemy hands after the fall of his short-lived 'Germania' empire (which included Germany and surrounding states). With European nations divided into American satellite states and Johnny Bush (fictional son of George) as the prime minister of Austria, A.M. Kaiser soon comes to realize that Europa is a technocratic entity of a prison planet where – through forced deracination and globalization – important

cultural ingredients like art and individuality are dissolving into nonexistence. Although Americans want Austrian citizens to believe he is dead, many people, including A.M. Kaiser, believe that ex-dictator Jörg Haider (whose reign lasted from 2003-2020) is hiding somewhere in the underground. As A.M. Kaiser discovers throughout his video-diary journey, Haider is, for many, a beloved folk hero like Uncle Adolf was to Germanic peoples in the 1930s and 1940s, but for some, including a disgruntled citizen played by Peter Kern himself, who almost has a heart attack while spewing his hatred, have less than fond memories about the missing Austrian politician. Eventually, Kaiser meets up with Mrs. Susanne Riess-Passer (Traute Hoess) – an excessively eccentric lady that loves the red-white-red (Austrian flag colors) and loathes the red-white-blue of the American occupiers – who is based on the real-life former politician of Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) that at onetime acted as a ‘puppet’ chairwoman and leader of the FPÖ due to Haider’s controversial reputation. As mentioned in *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021*, Riess-Passer earned the nickname ‘Königskobra’ (aka King Cobra) due to her loyalty to Haider. In the film, Riess-Passer leads A.M. Kaiser on an odyssey that ends in the forests of Austria, in the course of time revealing the truth about Haider’s whereabouts is finally revealed.

Considering Jörg Haider’s tragic death and posthumous rumors that the ill-fated Austrian politician was living a twink-filled, second life as a homosexual, one can only wonder how *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* would have turned out had it been conceived a decade later. A micro-budget film-within-a-film with science fiction pretenses, *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* – like Jean-Luc Godard’s *Alphaville* (1965) – has no elaborate futuristic sets nor any semblance that it actually takes place in a foreseeable future, thereupon making it one of the most clever and politically astute ‘homevideo aesthetic’ works ever made. Shot over the course of 7 days with unpaid actors, *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* – although a work seething with cynical anti-nationalist hatred hidden by satirical and often juvenile humor – is undoubtedly a labor of love that could have only been assembled by a man with a potent and penetrating vision. Predating the aesthetically and thematically similar work *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (2006) starring Sacha Baron Cohen, *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021*, as well as the films, plays, and TV shows of Peter Kern’s recently deceased compatriot Christoph Schlingensiefel, are ultimately more socio-politically insightful than the popular mockumentary by the same sociopathic jackasses that brought us *Brüno* (2009); a work that is incidentally (or not) about a gay Austrian. Of course, like the fictional future Europe portrayed in *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021*, it is questionable whether Kern and Schlingensiefel will ever gain a serious cult following, which is largely due to American homogenization and imported Hollywood anti-kultur. Say what you will about Jörg Haider, but at least he would have secured a future for the Heimat-film, had he actually lived long enough to become the uncontested Führer of the

HAIDER LEBT - I. APRIL 2021

Fatherland.
-Ty E

BLUTSFREUNDSCHAFT

Peter Kern (2009)

Undoubtedly, the Austrian neo-nazi-themed melodrama *Initiation* aka *Blutsfreundschaft* (2009) directed by Peter Kern (*Crazy Boys*, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation*) is one of the most haphazardly assembled and shamelessly clichéd films that I have seen all year, but I guess I should have expected so much after watching the trailer for it before enduring such a such an intrinsically wretched and repulsive work. Centering around a 16-year-old teenage protagonist named Axel (Harry Lampl) who randomly takes shelter in the home business of an 80-year-old homosexual laundromat owner named Gustav Tritzinsky (played by a lifeless Helmut Berger) after accidentally stabbing to death a leftist social worker in an effort to impress his new neo-nazi friend, *Blutsfreundschaft* is a work about an individual that has to make the crucial and totally black-and-white decision between becoming a Hitlerphile philistine or a dirty old man's personal twink-in-training. Directed by Peter Kern, who like fellow Fassbinder graduate Ulli Lommel (*Adolf and Marlene*, *Cocaine Cowboys*), went on to seemingly disown everything he learned from the German New Wave master auteur and directed a series of ludicrously lackluster exploitation films. For example, with Fassbinder cohort Kurt Raab, Kern co-directed the innately gratuitous women-in-prison flick *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* (1983) aka *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* – a rather repellant work featuring neo-nazi commandos sadistically raping, torturing, and murdering helpless, brown savage babes – so, before even viewing fractured and monstrously mundane melodrama *Blutsfreundschaft*, I knew I would probably have trouble taking it seriously. Still, I was willing to put my preconceptions aside, as a film featuring Helmut Berger, sexual perversion, and Nazis couldn't be half bad as proven by *The Damned* (1969), but, unfortunately, Kern is no Visconti and *Blutsfreundschaft* is no *Nicolo Donato's Brotherhood* (2009), though I would be lying if I did not admit the film kept me relatively stimulated throughout, but for all the wrong reasons, sort of the same way a tension headache would.

It is beyond question that Austrian Aryan abberosexual Helmut Berger was the flaming queen of the late 1960s and 1970s European silver screen as proven by his iconic and effortlessly effete performances in such masterpieces ranging from Massimo Dallamano's exploitative Oscar Wilde adaptation *Dorian Gray* (1970) to Luchino Visconti's arthouse epic *Ludwig* (1972), but in *Blutsfreundschaft*, the actor's talents go to waste as he seems like a tired, old eunuch incapable of even caring about the film he is starring in. In *Blutsfreundschaft*, Berger plays a mostly sad and sedentary homosexual senior citizen named Gustav Tritzinsky whose only motivation in life is being the greatest remover of stains from clothes. A member of the prestigious Hitler Youth as an adolescent, Tritzinsky's world fell into shambles when his boyhood *Lebensmensch* was executed in a concentration

BLUTSFREUNDSCHAFT

camp after the two blood brothers killed a senior member of the HJ during a scuffle centering around the leader realizing the boys were more than just typical butt buddies. Tritzinsky never got over his beau boy's death and partly blamed himself for it due to squealing while under interrogation by the SS. When skinhead-in-training Axel happens to stumble into the old man's laundromat, Tritzinsky is quite shocked by the startling resemblance between the seemingly nice neo-nazi and lover of his youth he lost long ago, thus causing him to recollect the torrid tragedy of his youth. Naturally, aside from half-hearted stormtrooper Axel, all the skinheads featured in *Blutsfreundschaft* are one-dimensional caricatures – savage white niggers if you will – that make the swinish Aryan thugs of the Hollywood neo-bolshevik agit-prop flick *American History X* (1998) seem like slightly subversive gentlemen and scholars. Of course, Tritzinsky is portrayed as a somber sage of sorts who, aside from his fellow sexual inverts, is the only virtuous person featured in the entirety of *Blutsfreundschaft*. Assuredly, the most nefarious characters in the film are the SS officers from Tritzinsky's youth; a malicious, elderly woman (despite the fact that women, especially antiquated ones, could not join the SS!) and a pernicious pervert who hits on Tritzinsky's boy-toy seconds before putting a bullet in his brain via his trusty luger. *Blutsfreundschaft* also features a young tranny-in-training named Jacob Ostermann aka Christina Thürmer (Melanie Kretschmann) who lives with and is best friends with Tritzinsky. Despite having XY chromosomes, Jacob/Christina becomes sort of a love interest for fairweather neo-nazi Axel. Proving he might be halfway heterosexual after all (in between literally shaking his bare ass for a dirty old man), Axel pounds a proud skinhead byrd (who is routinely beaten and spat and pissed on by the bodacious boot boys) with his wienerschitznel. In short, *Blutsfreundschaft* features the sort of callow libertine family affairs that Fassbinder might be directing as eternal punishment had he been banished to hell after his untimely death.

Needless to say, although *Blutsfreundschaft* purports to be a serious melodrama that takes a stern stance against 'hate,' this relatively graceless, uncultured, and pathetically preachy Austrian film feels more like an ADL-sponsored afterschool special with softcore exploitation undertones than the work of a filmmaker who had previously collaborated with Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Christoph Maria Schlingensiefel, Rosa von Praunheim, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Daniel Schmid, Werner Schroeter, and Edwin Bienen, among numerous other important European arthouse auteur filmmakers. After all, Mr. Schlingensiefel spent a good portion of his artistic career decrying the shallow sentiments of German and Austrian leftists, especially in regard to the Third Reich, yet with *Blutsfreundschaft*, Peter Kern even outdoes world-class wimp Wim Wenders with his untermensch sniveling and brownnosing. Considering my recent watching and enjoyment of Peter Kern's less than futuristic sci-fi satire *Haider lebt - 1.* April 2021 (2002) – a no-budget arthouse romp filmed within seven days with nil special-effects

on deplorable digital video – I cannot fathom why the clearly intelligent and inventive Austrian auteur would direct a film so unwaveringly asinine and patently propagandistic as *Blutsfreundschaft*; a film with cartoon nutzis that even Steven Spielberg wouldn't have the gall to glorify as the epitome of hatred and a legit threat to Occidental civilization – except that perhaps he was fulfilling the perfect fantasy for himself, as a rather rotund grand-queen seducing a fit, young Aryan twink. One can only assume that with *Blutsfreundschaft*, Kern was trying to tap into the international film market, most specifically the U.S, as I have never seen a European auteur embarrass himself so thoroughly and unabashedly since Werner Herzog's ethno-masochistic tribute to pre-holocaust Judea Invinible (2001). Although to the director's minor credit, at least Kern's *Blutsfreundschaft* has minor camp value and is consistently unintentionally entertaining due to its hysterical yet humdrum melodrama and hyper-homophilia. On his personal website, Peter Kern eloquently describes himself as, "Austrian, insane, hysterical, hypocritical and undemocratic," so I think I am somewhat willing to forgive him for his aesthetic shoddiness with *Blutsfreundschaft* and will leave it up to his fallen auteur comrades to sort him out whenever he kicks the bucket, presumably from a massive myocardial infarction.

-Ty E

MÖRDERSCHWESTERN
MÖRDERSCHWESTERN

Peter Kern (2011)

In ridiculous, ugly, and all-around aesthetically repulsive times, the world certainly needs consciously ridiculous, ugly, and all-around aesthetically repulsive films that remind the everyday lemming about the absurdity of the everyday degeneracy they take for granted as normal, and who could be better than a radically rotund Austrian queer like Peter Kern (*Crazy Boys*, *Gossenkind* aka *Street Kid*) to school the general public on their Hollywood-lobotomized stupidity? Best known to cinephiles as an effortlessly effete character actor who starred in a number of masterpieces by New German Cinema auteur filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Hans W. Geißendörfer, and Wim Wenders, and best known in his homeland as an eccentric public figure who is as obese as he is bizarrely goofy, Kern has also been a film director since 1980 who has directed a number of largely unknown films, including documentaries and queer melodramas, with campy comedies indubitably being his forte. With his self-described 'Heimat film' (which is really a digital video 'neo-anti-Heimat' film) *Haider lebt - 1. April 2021* (2002), Kern unfortunately demonstrated that although he is a typical leftist Jörg Haider/Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) hater, he also proved that he could make leftist humor strangely charming and even labyrinthine in its loony absurdity. With his sardonically satirical piece of quasi-scatological meta-cinema *Mörderschwestern* (2011) aka *Murder Sisters* aka *Murder Nurses* starring a very old and tired Austrian queen Helmut Berger (*The Damned*, *Ludwig*) in the against-type role of a passive doctor who becomes the victim of naughty nurses, Kern has cleverly crafted an anti-agitprop agitprop piece that keenly reflects his cultivated hatred for both the mainstream media/cinema and the film-going public in general. Partly inspired by the horrific Lainz Angels of Death murders—a series of bizarre murders committed by four nurse's aides (who were all released from prison after just 25 years!) at Lainz General Hospital in Vienna that took place between 1983 and 1989 where at least 49 (but upwards of 200) patients were killed via morphine doses and having watered forced in their lungs—*Mörderschwestern* is a calculatingly cruel and cynical comedy featuring anti-Heimat, hagsploitation, and Grand Guignol elements that gleefully tortures the viewer for about 70 minutes or so. A film that takes 'breaking the fourth wall' to ungodly extremes wherein a pernicious professor and a hysterically deranged homicidal nurse anti-heroine demand that the viewer ostensibly choose which character will die and how, *Mörderschwestern* follows in the Austrian audience-alienating/anti-Hollywood tradition of Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* (1997), although Kern's work is not plagued by pedantic (pseudo)intellectualism but instead opts for cinematically pissing and vomiting on the viewer with slapstick scat and intentional aesthetic dissonance and asinities.

Beginning with a scrawny troll-like Professor (Marc Bischoff of *Good Bye Lenin!* and *Taxidermia*) giving a rather bizarre lecture in the strikingly scenic Austrian countryside and declaring, “Around these druid rocks, many myths and legends exist about savage men. Many generations before us they used to convene next to the druid rocks. Today we have convened in a cinema to explore the secret rituals of the ancient Celts and the magical powers of the druid rock,” Mörderschwestern quite rudely announces that it’s not a conventional film from the get go, but instead an innately iconoclastic work that pisses on Austria, the filmgoer, and the mainstream media. Indeed, the Prof soon magically appears in a lecture hall and announces to the viewer, “We are going to tear down the boundaries of the silver screen in order to influence the events going on behind the scenes.” After the Professor quasi-molests a beautiful blond college student with an IQ of 75, Mörderschwestern anti-heroine Tabea (Susanne Wuest of the TV miniseries *Carlos the Jackal*)—the former ‘Angel of Death’ of Lainz hospital who has spent just 15 years in prison being raped by bull-dykes for her part in murdering numerous patients while working as a nurse—makes her rude introduction while working at an outdoor restaurant that specializes in roast pork knuckles at Prater amusement park in Vienna. Tabea injects the roast knuckles with poison and leaves it up to the viewer to decide which member of a dysfunctional Austrian family will die. Ultimately, ‘the abused girl’ (a teen that looks kind of like Anne Frank whose uncle slaps her around) is poisoned and Tabea follows her to Lainz hospital by intentionally dousing herself with boiling grease. Tabea accuses the viewer of being “weak-minded do-gooders” for allowing the ‘Abused Girl’ to survive the poisoning and then starts an argument with an audience member named ‘Josef’ (indeed, the film has a long running joke where a fictional film audience, which incessantly pops up in the right corner of the screen, interacts with Tabea), who she accuses of having a “tiny wiener.” Tabea also reveals—while absurdly wheeling around the Abused Girl in a mobile hospital bed—that regarding the fictional filmgoers, 88% of them have cheated on their lovers, three are HIV-positive, 60% are heterosexual, and an outstanding 100% are deceivers. Indeed, Tabea seems to have a low opinion of the general public and especially the viewer (aka you!).

From there, real newsreels from the Lainz Angels of Death murders are shown (including footage of an elderly man having his ass wiped by a nurse Seidl-style!) and it is revealed that four nurses were indicted on 49 murders, with a certain Waltraud Wagner (aka Tabea) being responsible for a whopping 35 of them. Of course, Tabea proclaims her innocence, declaring she and her friends were “the vanguards of a new health care system...Dispose, make room, cut costs.” Not surprisingly, it is alluded that the Angels of Death were following in the footsteps of the National Socialists by eradicating “life unworthy of life.” Tabea confesses, “15 years in prison have made me really keen. They gave me a new identity, but no new soul,” as she has only become all the more de-

MÖRDERSCHWESTERN

ranged over the past 1.5 decade. Indeed, Tabea became the 'prison bunny' (aka lesbian sex slave) of an elderly women while imprisoned, so now she is all the more an active enemy against society, hence her need to go back to her former place of employment and once again help eradicate unworthy life. Meanwhile, a certain Dr. Schleyer (Helmut Berger) is being drugged by a certain deranged nurse named Schwester Klara (Kathrin Beck) and Tabea proceeds to follow her every malicious move. Of course, Dr. Schleyer 'meets his maker' and some other eccentric characters face the wrath of the nasty nurses. Meanwhile, fictional audience member Josef figuratively jumps through the smashed fourth wall and attempts to stop the mayhem by pathetically pleading, "Hello and good afternoon, I am just a simple observer and don't want to disturb you any further. But if you play on, you will die. I know that, because I'm a member of your audience and I voted for your death... Stop it! Stop it right now, or you're all going to die!", as the Abused Girl is encouraged to seek revenge against her abusive uncle by nurse Klara. In the end, it is revealed that the fictional audience has voted that Tabea die, but before she is forced to commit suicide via seppuku, she vehemently shouts out these words of wisdom to the viewer, "Don't you watch every piece of crap at the movies or on YouTube? You are always going to see what I prepare for you. It wasn't you who took the decisions, it was only me. And rest assured, even if you escape today and manage to exit the auditorium unharmed, at home the TV will be waiting. And there they will show up, the powerful elites and tell you what to do. And – stupid as you are – you will choose the channel with the most crime on it."

Undoubtedly, *Mörderschwestern* is a film so morally repugnant, pathologically nonsensical, and proudly preposterous that it hardly can be described as a 'film' at all, but one must respect a work that is described by one of its characters as the, "worst movie of all time." Mixing Celtic mysticism with true crime, cold-blooded murder with juvenile slapstick humor, Heimat with hagsploitation, Austrian flags with roast knuckle, a pathetically passive post-twink Helmut Berger with sadomasochistic she-bitch nurses, and quasi-Brechtian audience-alienating pretense with totally trashy Troma-esque scat humor, *Mörderschwestern* is nothing short of an artistically reprehensible work that demonstrates that underneath auteur Peter Kern's fluffy blubber-like exterior lies a seasoned sadist who gets a kick out of torturing filmgoers, but not before heckling them for mindlessly watching sick videos on YouTube like that of a man behind mauled by a lion, which apparently received less than 6 millions (quite the number!) views as the film reveals. Directed by a man who once confessed his affinity for teenage boys in the Rosa von Praunheim documentary *Rent Boys* (2011) aka *Die Jungs vom Bahnhof Zoo* and more than demonstrated such sentiments with his pro-pederaast flick *Gossenkind* (1992) aka *Street Kid*, *Mörderschwestern* is ultimately a postmodern 'moralist' movie sermon from the proudly immoral and discernibly decadent (no man Kern's size who becomes so morbidly obese can blame his

problem on a mere thyroid problem), which is only apt in a culturally apocalyptic age where untermenschen human trash like Kanye West and Kim Kardashian are treated by the media as an international royal family. If nothing else, one must tip their hat to Kern for directing a film that defies all cinematic conventions and traditional (and not-so-traditional) forms of good taste, as Mörderschwestern is indubitably a third-rate anti-arthouse film directed by a third rate actor-turned-auteur, yet I cannot remember the last recent comedy that I watched more than once.

-Ty E

OUR TRIP TO AFRICA
OUR TRIP TO AFRICA

Peter Kubelka (1966)

After recently watching Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl's most recent piece of pleasantly perverse cinéma-vérité, *Im Keller* (2014) aka *In the Basement*, and witnessing the almost surreal scenario of a small and stocky elderly Austrian mensch happily discussing his various hunting expeditions on the Dark Continent and how his wife once made Wiener Schnitzel out of one of the various warthogs that he had killed, I decided it was about time that I watch the legendary landmark experimental doc *Unsere Afrikareise* (1961-1966) aka *Our Trip to Africa* directed by Peter Kubelka (Mosaik im Vertrauen, Arnulf Rainer) so I could witness some of these strange Schluchtenscheisser hunters in action while in the company of mostly naked black Africans. A 12 ½ minute doc with an almost hypnotic (meta)montage structure that was very meticulously and consciously edited together over a shocking 5 year period from about ten hours of sound recordings and a few hours of footage, Kubelka's film unequivocally makes a playful mockery of the Viennese petit-bourgeois European hunters it depicts and that is surely one of its greatest strength. Although he deeply resented the hunters, Kubelka decided to work on the film because he was unemployed at the time (in fact, not until after the filmmaker came to New York City in 1966 and screened *Our Trip to Africa* did he receive great praise and, in turn, gainful employment as a legendary film lecturer) and very much wanted to come into contact with real negro tribesmen. Although hired by the hunters to record their exotic safari, Kubelka cinematically defecated on his boss's in a manner that was somewhat typical of his curious filmmaking career, as a mensch that thrived on being intolerably difficult and seemingly senseless in his rebellion against the people and companies the commissioned him to make films for them. Indeed, when Kubelka was hired in 1957 to create a commercial for the powerful beer company *Scwechater*, he senselessly shot footage with an ancient camera that lacked a finder featuring barely visible people (apparently, the director was given the opportunity to use some of the most beautiful models in his country, but he surely let that opportunity go to waste) pretentiously drinking beer out of wine glasses, only to be sued by the company that hired him and be subsequently forced to leave the country upon completing the completely commercially worthless 1 ½ minute avant-garde 'advert,' which had the ironical title *Schwechater* (1958). Clearly, by the time he got around to making *Our Trip to Africa*, Kubelka thankfully had yet to learn a single lesson from the negative backlash and personal misfortune that his iconoclastic and aesthetically nihilistic avant-garde antics and overall seemingly pathologically passive-aggressive behavior (not surprisingly, Kubelka was raised in what he described as a "matriarchal situation," which was the result of his half-Jewish father never being around) caused him and seemed apathetic about the prospect of being perennially un-

employed, so he ultimately unleashed what is probably the most intricately obnoxious and schizophrenic yet strangely jolly vacation home movie ever made. Indeed, it might deeply offend certain absurdly anally retentive cinephiles to say this, but Kubelka's film is unquestionably the Africa addio (1966) aka Africa Blood and Guts of avant-garde and experimental filmmaking. As *Our Trip to Africa* delightfully demonstrates, when you mix Mondo Cane-esque imagery and 'Structuralist' filmmaking (or what Kubelka himself calls 'Metric Montage'), you get the most compulsively curious of results, as opposed to pretentious banality like much of Kubelka's other work.

Admittedly, I am not the greatest fan of so-called 'Structural film' or Structuralist filmmakers (notably, Kubelka has made the claim that his second film *Adebar* (1957), which he later turned into a 'sculpture' after damaging a frame, was the first Structuralist film ever made), especially of the seemingly aesthetically autistic sort that is peddled by the likes of Lithuanian-born NYC underground cinema/avant-garde gatekeeper Jonas Mekas and his best bud Kubelka is certainly no exception, but with *Our Trip to Africa* the Austrian auteur actually managed to create something that would appeal to people other than those sad souls that diddle themselves to hopelessly avant-garde works like Stan Brakhage's anti-erotic experimental birth flick *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular* (1961). Described by the director's fellow Slavic-blooded and deleteriously cinephiliac European homeboy Mekas as, "the richest, most articulate, and most compressed film I have ever seen," Kubelka's somewhat sardonic slice of the then-recently-decolonized Dark Continent is indubitably one of the most consciously convoluted and obsessively edited films ever made as a work where countless brief shots are juxtaposed with seemingly unrelated audio (which he calls 'sync events'), but there is certainly a sort of hermetic method to the (anti)movie madness. Like Werner Schroeter, Philippe Garrel, and Straub-Huillet and various other arcane avant-gardist who truly did not seem to care if anyone understood their films, Kubelka—an uncommonly articulate man that is more than eloquently fluent in English as his legendary film lectures demonstrate—never screens *Our Trip to Africa* with subtitles, which seems pretty senseless when one considers that the film loses a lot of its comedic tone when the viewer is unable to understand what the hunters are saying in Viennese gutter German. Basically, Kubelka saw it fit to juxtapose stupid things that the obscenely arrogant and buffoonish Austrian hunters said with scenes of hunting, wounded and dying animals, naked negroes, and other largely uncomfortably 'goofy' scenarios that will surely seem like conspicuous clichés to Americans and Western Europeans who have had the misfortune of learning everything that they know about Africa from Hollywood movies. Luckily, in the truly epic 232-minute documentary *Fragments of Kubelka* (2012) directed by Martina Kudláček (*In the Mirror of Maya Deren, Notes on Marie Menken*), the Austrian filmmaker not only translates the dialogue for most of *Our Trip to Africa*, but also gives a shot-to-shot breakdown

OUR TRIP TO AFRICA

of the entire film and its somewhat unconventional production history, thus revealing important and insightful contextual information about the footage that one could not possibly know otherwise.

As Kubelka reveals in *Fragments of Kubelka* regarding the genesis of *Our Trip to Africa*, “The plan was that I make a travelogue for the benefit of these people who had taken me on the trip. I had accepted in order to meet archaic people, so when I filmed I had not a definite plan, but they had, so many of the shots have been commissioned. All my films were commissioned films, which I then derailed into something else.” Featuring various emotionally eclectic brief juxtapositions that range from hilarious to horrific and hokey to hopeless, Kubelka’s tightly yet hysterically edited travelogue is ultimately impossible to peg with a specific central theme due to its erratic emotional range, innate abstractness, and discombobulating structure. Indeed, after watching the film, the viewer will have no idea if the safari went well, anyone on the trip got fucked or did some fucking, the slayed animals were actually eaten, or if the negroes like or disliked their strange Aryan guests. In short, the only thing one knows for sure after watching the short is that Kubelka has a tendency to take close-up shots of unclad jigboo genitals (including that of a little boy) and that the filmmaker thinks that the hunters are moronic just as the hunters think that the negroes are moronic. It should be noted that the schizophrenic emotional tone of *Our Trip to Africa* is completely intentional, or as Kubelka told his comrade Mekas as revealed in P. Adams Sitney’s classic text *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (2002), “My films have a function (this goes for the African film)—I play with the emotions and try to tear the emotions loose from the people, so that they would gain distance to their emotions, to their own feelings [...] When you see certain images or hear certain sounds you have certain emotions. So I must always cry when I see moving scenes, when I see the hero getting the first prize for the biggest round and they play the national anthem . . . I have to cry . . . or when they bury somebody, I have to cry. At the same time, I am angry at myself, because I know that it’s just the emotional mechanisms. So, with the African film. I do a lot of this, I trigger a lot of those mechanisms at the same time and create a lot of—at the same time—comic feelings, sad feelings.” Indeed, Kubelka’s film might not be as emotionally penetrating as Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi’s masterpiece *Addio zio Tom* (1971) aka *Goodbye Uncle Tom*, but it is most certainly the most emotionally involving Structuralist film that I have ever seen.

While edited in an innately non-linear fashion, completely lacking in character development (one never even hears the name of a single one of the subjects), and seemingly all but totally incoherent, *Our Trip to Africa* is surely guaranteed to give the viewer a nice big chuckle or two, not least of all during an oftentimes repeated shot of a stereotypically dressed white safari hunter resting his rifle on a negro servant’s shoulder while he aims at and eventually shoots a poor zebra. In

Fragments of Kubelka, Kubelka notes that, if psychoanalyzed, one could argue regarding the white hunters in the film that, "They couldn't get the women, so they shot the animals." Of course, considering that he personally collects primitive Africa Venus figurines and statues (including a life-size one featuring a giant derriere, which he proudly shows off in *Fragments of Kubelka*), it seems that Kubelka is projecting his own fetish for dark meat onto the white hunters. After an opening shot of a white hunter aiming his weapon that the director has described as a sort of 'protagonist' (even though the viewer can never clearly see the man's face), one is exposed to various shots that are frantically spliced together involving the hunting of a hippopotamus and a zebra with shots of the Hunters, including a Viennese woman and Arab man, lazily lounging on a boat juxtaposed with one Hunter asking, "What did we shoot?" and another replying "Tell me!," which is followed by a verbal list of animals that they killed, including a wild boar. After a shot of a dying zebra's leg moving juxtaposed with a hunter saying "Let's go," the film segues into a frame from an African Muslim wedding where, to quote the director, a "very proud" young negress with "fake arrogance" provocatively moves her cloaked head during the 'Dance of Dove' where she attempts to appeal to potential male suitors with her provocative passive-aggressive glances. In a shot that is assumedly used to illustrate the 'cruelness' and 'post-colonial arrogance' of Europeans, an ostensibly wicked white Hunter rides a camel that is being lead by a servile negro guide juxtaposed to the somewhat unnerving sounds of some unseen fatally injured animal succumbing to its wounds. Of course, Kubelka makes it quite clear that there is no honor in killing beautiful exotic beasts with state of art weapons that have turned hunting, not unlike war, into a lame and reasonably safe lackluster sport as opposed to in the past when it was somewhat of an art and took a special certain talent that involved, among other things, respecting one's prey. Like with the negroes, one gets that senses that the hunters are sneering at the animals, even after killing them, so Kubelka fights fire with fire by cinematically sneering at his fellow Austrians. As the virtual all-seeing and all-knowing god of his cinematic realm, Kubelka condemns the hunters to hell while portraying the Africans as the blessed meek who will inherit the earth.

Undoubtedly, one of the most absurd aspects of *Our Trip to Africa* is the various shots it features of mostly smiling white hunters interacting with the largely docile and content black natives. While most of these shots feature a primitively dressed negro helping the white hunters in some glaringly slavish and undignified fashion, there is one shot in the film that is almost borderline homoerotic where an Austrian man gently lights a pipe for a grateful negro who seems excited about trying what might be described as a 'European peace pipe' for the first time. In another scene, a short white female hunter is depicted making fun of a very tall black game warden in a fairly harmless way that is made to seem almost sinister via obnoxious laughter that has been synced with the scene.

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Ultimately, Kubelka makes fun of the female hunter by cutting from a shot of her shooting a rifle with the help of her assumed lover to a shot of a dangling darkie dick, as if to imply that the Hunteress would love to castrate colored cocks. While many of Leni Riefenstahl's detractors attempted to accuse her of fetishizing the unclad African negro body with her best-selling 1970s photographs of the Nuba people of Sudan (in fact, Judaic dyke Susan Sontag even went so far as to absurdly describe these photos of stark-naked negroid bodies as being "fascist aesthetics," as if physical healthiness and natural pulchritude is somehow fascistic), Kubelka makes no attempts to shield the fact that he is obsessed with decidedly dark African genitals, which include relatively long close-up shots of the breasts, derrieres, and beavers of black women, as well as the swinging wild black snakes of both a man and a little boy. In fact, the film concludes with a shot of a boy's penis juxtaposed with an African stating in broken English, "I like to visit your country," which then cuts to an ironical shot of a peasant woman treading through snowy Austria synced with the same African saying, "If I find [a] chance."

Near the beginning of the less than radical documentary *Free Radicals: A History of Experimental Film* (2012) directed by Pip Chodorov, Peter Kubelka stoically states regarding his films, "I never made compromises and really already a long time ago, I didn't care anymore if anyone likes it or not." After examining Kubelka's shockingly small (despite being a filmmaker for well over half a century, he has only made eight short films that barely add up to an hour worth of material) yet admittedly rather singular oeuvre, I certainly have no reason to doubt the truthfulness of filmmaker's remark in *Free Radicals* to the point where I would argue that the 'entertainment value' of *Our Trip to Africa*, which is totally absent from most of his other films, is largely the result of a circumstantial fluke. While the auteur is certainly responsible for bringing highly subjective meanings to these scenes with his sync event editing technique, it was actually the hunters who demanded that Kubelka shoot the various specific shots in the film, including the ones where they make themselves seem quite buffoonish and cruel, or so the filmmaker readily admits in *Fragments of Kubelka* while referencing various specific shots (including a rather unflattering close-up of a hunter proudly holding up the completely lifeless head of a giraffe only a moment or so after ruthlessly killing it). Notably, in a scene towards the end of *Our Trip to Africa* that is as equally heartbreaking as it is humorous, a wounded lioness that was shot by one of the hunters starts heading towards the camera and tries in vain to attack Kubelka while taking one of its last gasps. In his own highly idiosyncratic way, Kubelka creates a sort of 'filmic funeral' for the lioness that tried to attack him by juxtaposing shots of the dead beast being lifted onto the roof of a large truck by half a dozen negroes with a sort of curiously jovial dirge that makes the animal's senseless death seem like a sick joke.

Surely one of the greatest aspects of *Our Trip to Africa* is that, despite the

director's glaring disdain for his Austrian traveling companions and their decadent and destructive bourgeois ways, it is quite apparent that Kubelka had a fun and exciting trip where he got to admire both exotic wild animals and naked negroes in their indigenous habitats. Undoubtedly, I found the film infinitely more intriguing and rewarding than any of the works I have seen by frog-comie anthropologist-cum-documentarian Jean Rouch, whose ethnographic films feel rather patronizing in their depictions of Nigerian negroes (notably, native African filmmakers often criticized his films for distorting reality). Thankfully, Kubelka makes no attempts to portray himself as an expert on African tribes or tribal culture in *Our Trip to Africa*, thus the film has aged much more gracefully than the work of French far-leftist filmmakers like Rouch and René Vautier. Indeed, while I am not an autistic avant-garde film fanboy who rates a film on how hermetic and over-edited it is and thus would hardly describe the work as "one of cinema's few masterpieces" like the filmmaker's puffery-inclined comrade Jonas Mekas once did, I would be lying if I did not admit that Kubelka's glorified travelogue indubitably provides for a highly mesmerizing and unforgettable experience that demonstrates that there are actually filmmakers out there who have made motion pictures that are more 'compressed' and meticulously edited together than that of Guy Maddin, which is certainly no small accomplishment. As an intricately edited montage film that somewhat spasmodically cuts from scenes of dying animals, unclad negroes, and boorish post-colonial Europeans, among countless other seemingly incongruent things, without warning, *Our Trip to Africa* is sure to offend and discomfort contemporary whites and blacks living in the West who have been weaned on the venomous teat of post-Trotskyite political correctness, which is rather unfortunate considering that Kubelka seems like a fairly happy-go-lucky chap that does not have a single hateful bone in his body, even when he is going to strikingly extravagant lengths to cinematically mock and ridicule his fellow countryman in a film that they commissioned him to make.

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Peter Lorre (1951)

While best known as an iconic actor who starred in countless masterpieces of German and Hollywood film, including Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), and *Casablanca* (1942), Austro-Hungarian-born Jewish actor Peter Lorre was eventually typecast as a creepy kraut villain and suffered an undignified end to his acting career as a regular in hokey Roger Corman horror flicks, though he would write, direct, and star in one rather underrated cinematic masterpiece before dying somewhat prematurely at the age of 59 as a result of a stroke after suffering for years from gallbladder trouble and a soul-crushing morphine addiction. Like many Jewish actors/directors of his time, Lorre left Deutschland in 1933 after Uncle Adolf came to town and revamped the place, thereupon eventually landing in Hollywood where he starred in masterpieces like *Mad Love* (1935) directed by fellow Austrian-born immigrant Karl Freund, though, unlike many of his contemporaries, the actor came back to rubble-ridden Germany after the Second World War to direct what would be his first and last film as an auteur, *Der Verlorene* (1951) aka *The Lost One*. Indeed, *The Lost One* is a particularly invaluable work in that it features a depiction of the Fatherland from the perspective of a Hebrew who had to leave Germany due to Nazi persecution, only to return and see the world he once knew totally destroyed and literally and figuratively reduced to rubble. Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes Lorre's decidedly dejecting directorial debut so curiously enthralling and strikingly idiosyncratic (especially for a work of its time) is that he seems to implicate himself in Germany's collective guilt regarding the Nazi era, as if he too bled from the same Aryan fratricidal/suicidal wound that forever soiled the Fatherland's reputation and reduced hundreds upon hundreds of years of Teutonic kultur to a seemingly perennial taint. Before Lorre directed *The Lost One*, fellow Austrian-born Jew and top expressionist character actor Fritz Kortner, who fled Germany from the Nazis in 1933 but returned to the land of the Teutons in 1949 after having a less than successful character in Hollywood, played the vaguely autobiographical leading role in the Josef von Bány flick *Der Ruf* (1949) aka *The Last Illusion* as a German Jewish professor who flees the Third Reich, returns to his homeland after the Second World War, and dies tragically after realizing that nothing has changed since the demise of National Socialism. Undoubtedly, when comparing the two films, it is not only apparent that Lorre felt more German than his contemporary, but that the post-WWII situation was more hopeless, as if all of the Germans, including the Germans of Hebraic blood, had been condemned to a sort of permanent, pathological upheaval of the soul.

Released to an unenthusiastic German public that was infatuated with sentimental Heimatfilme and wanted nothing to do with dwelling on the darker

days of National Socialism and the rubble films that were quite popular immediately following the conclusion of the Second World War, *The Lost One* was ultimately such an economic and critical failure that it forced Lorre to return to Hollywood even though he hoped to direct a Teutonic adaptation of *Macbeth* set in post-WWII Germany. A reasonably audacious and aesthetically idiosyncratic work utilizing German expressionism (naturally, Lorre's performance is oftentimes compared to his role in Lang's *M*), film noir, Trümmerfilm ('rubble film') and Brechtian aesthetic techniques/conventions, Lorre's work's production history is as curious and as metaphysically afflicted as the film itself, as a troubled and seemingly cursed film production where the producer, Arnold Pressburger (who was also an Austrian Jew), died halfway through filming, co-star Karl John suffered an injury that resulted in an eight week delay that cost the project a lot of time and money, and where the sole finished print of the film burned up in a fire (luckily, editor C.O. Bartning somehow managed to reconstruct the entire film using a surviving negative). While I cannot say for sure as a non-German who was not born during that time, I have a feeling that *The Lost One* comes closer than any other film of its zeitgeist in expressing the feeling of malignant melancholy and abject hopelessness that plagued the Fatherland after it was destroyed after WWII, so it is only ironic that an opium-addled Jew known for portraying sinister yet pathetic murderers and who was paid a grave disservice by being featured in a Nazi propaganda film (an excerpt from Lang's *M* is featured in Fritz Hippler's 1940 Nazi propaganda flick *The Eternal Jew*) would prove to be arguably the most effective at cinematically expressing the post-Auschwitz Teutonic Volksgeist.

Edited in a seemingly sloppy and incoherent fashion, *The Lost One* is ultimately a work that intentionally makes next to nil distinction between the past and present, for there can be no forgetting of the past, especially if it is plagued by acute internal pain, lingering metaphysical torture, survivor's guilt, and—not least of all—a history of coldblooded murder of the highly personal sort. Opening with an inter-title stating that it is "drawn from factual accounts of the recent past" (apparently, the film was based on a newspaper article written by Egon Jameson, who also wrote an article that inspired Lang's *M*, about the dubious suicide of a 43-year-old man named 'Dr. Carl R.', who it is believed has also killed his medical assistant 'Hannes R. '), the film tells via a series of flashbacks about how an ex-Nazi scientist, who is living under a new identity in a refugee camp, became a quasi-misogynistic serial killer after his fiancée betrayed him to the enemy. A mostly Third Reich set work that is all but completely devoid of swastikas, brownshirts, blackshirts, Terminator-esque goose-stepping and passionate Sieg Heils, *The Lost One* is largely set during the last month of 1943 when it was fairly obvious that the Germans were headed towards a terrible defeat and a fiercely foreboding feeling was in the air that drove men to do ungodly things that seemed quite unthinkable only a couple years before. Beginning in

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the present in ruined post-WWII Germany, the film revolves around antihero Dr. Karl Neumeister (Peter Lorre), who works as a head doctor at a refugee camp called Elbe-D'venstett. Of course, Neumeister is not who he seems, as his real name is Dr. Karl Rothe and he only took on the alias 'Neumeister' after becoming a serial killer and faking his own death after an Allied bombing attack that destroyed his home. When a sinister stereotypically Prussian-like character from Rothe's past, Hösch alias Nowak (played by Karl John, who was popular during the Third Reich for playing rampantly heterosexual Prussian elitist types and who somewhat ironically concluded his career starring in Jewish American auteur William Friedkin's unsung masterpiece *Sorcerer* (1977)), shows up at the refugee camp, the ex-Nazi doctor must confront his pernicious previous life as a serial killer who began his murdering spree after strangling his own fiancée to death upon learning she had stolen and given away some of his scientific research on some sort of presumably deadly virus that was being created for the benefit of the Third Reich. When Hösch shows up at the refugee camp, he remarks to Rothe that their reuniting "couldn't be avoided," though he will ultimately come to regret this less than auspicious reunion. During the Second World War, Hösch worked as Rothe's slimy Gestapo assistant. While getting drunk and waving around a handgun that was once owned by his ex-assistant, Rothe accurately declares that, "We are the last ones" and tells through a series of flashbacks, beginning on December 8, 1943, how the doctor's then-happy life changed for the worst, stating to Hösch, "You know, it bears me down. Just think about it: Since December, the 8th 1943. With Tax. It's heavy. Wait...the strange thing is...I had it very good in the past, when you imposed your help on me." Of course, the ever conspiring assistant had less than altruistic reasons for helping Rothe, who could not have found a worst group of friends.

On December 8, 1943, Rothe learned from a conspiring Nazi colonel named Colonel Winkler (Helmuth Rudolph), who is responsible for counterintelligence for the Third Reich, that his beloved 24-year-old fiancée Inge Hermann (Renate Mannhardt) had stolen his important scientific research, which she gave to her Stockholm-based father who, in turn, gave it to the British. While talking with Winkler, Hösch describes Inge as a "slut." Ultimately, Winkler and Hösch will help to cover up Rothe's murder of his girlfriend, as the two men need the murderous doctor for his research and couldn't care less about a treacherous slut. While Winkler complains, "I can't stand to see blood, especially when it's from little defenseless animals," upon seeing blood drawn from a cute little bunny rabbit, he has much blut on his hands, though he is quite good at hiding it. After a somber dinner with Inge and her mother Frau Hermann (Johanna Hofer), Rothe confronts his deceitful lover and when she asks for reconciliation, he strangles her during an intimate moment of embrace when she least suspects it. Despite being the actual killer, Rothe feels the guiltiest about the murder of his fiancée and goes on to describe himself, Hösch, and Winkler as "bacilli,"

which takes on a second meaning due to the nature of their sinister scientific work. Of course, figuratively speaking, all three men are also an infectious disease that is eating away at what is left of the once seemingly invincible Third Reich. Winkler is disgusted by Rothe's guilt and berates him in a Nietzschean, automaton-like fashion by stating, "Your antiquated ethical lifestyle doesn't fit in these times [...] Keep on working and get along with the fact that you're still alive." Indeed, Winkler fully approves of Rothe's murder of Inge, stating, "We'd have had to eliminate her anyway. This way, she'll have a decent burial." Indeed, Inge's official cause of death is listed as, "a clear case of suicide by strangulation with a black leather belt." After all, Winkler needs Rothe to further his research on deleterious chemical weapons to destroy the Anglo-Saxon and Judeo-Bolshevik enemy. Of course, the Gestapo murder cover-up is so immaculately executed that not even Inge's mourning mother suspects foul play. As one can expect from a spiritually condemned man who has discovered the wonders of homicide, Rothe does not stop with Inge. Ultimately, Rothe encounters five women during the film and virtually all of them are dead by the end of the film, though not all of them are liquidated by the tiny yet strangely intimidating frog-egged Herr Doktor. Indeed, while the doctor kills some of the women, including one amidst the complete chaos of an Allied bomb raid, others, including Mrs. Hermann and a young 22-year-old teacher named Ursula Weber (Eva Ingeborg Scholz), are killed in the bombing of Rothe's apartment building. In fact, Rothe fakes his own death by listing his name as amongst those who perished in the raid. Rather interestingly, a street savvy hooker (Gisela Trowe) is the only one in the entire film that suspects Rothe of being a murderer and calls him out as such. After mindlessly staring at the bulging bosoms of a busty babe (Lotte Rausch) who comes on to him and warns him, "you don't live anymore if you are always frightened," Rothe demonstrates he is done with women and impulsively strangles her too, as if reenacting his murder of Inge (notably, none of the murders are actually depicted in the film, thus alluding to how the antihero has attempted to erase them from his mind).

Flash forward to the present, Rothe yells at Hösch for passing out drunk while telling his story and then proceeds to tell him how he planned to kill him and Winkler (who was eventually hanged), back during those events in December 1943. Rothe proceeds to say to his ex-assistant with more than a tint of survivor's guilt, "Unbelievable. The bomb night was over, thousands were dead. Thousands who wanted to live. But I, I was still alive. Unbelievable." After Hösch calls Rothe a pathetic coward and amateur due to his depression over the past and guilt over surviving the war when so many other innocent people died, the doctor kills his 'friend' and then himself by standing in front of a moving train. Needless to say, *The Lost One* is a decided downer any way you look at it and it could have only concluded with the death of virtually every character, especially the antihero himself. As the film demonstrates in the end, the only way for a person to truly

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escape their past is through a swift death.

It should be noted that after Peter Lorre fled Germany and eventually headed to the United States, he felt immense guilt over the fact that he left much of his friends and family behind and tried to compensate for it by getting actively involved in Hollywood anti-Nazi propaganda (of course, this would ultimately contribute to him being typecast as a freakish foreign villain). As described by his niece in the A&E documentary *Peter Lorre: The Master of Menace* (1996), Lorre was apparently advised by National Socialist Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, who was certainly a cinephile of sorts and once offered the half-Jewish auteur Fritz Lang the job of becoming the head of filmmaking for the Third Reich, of all people to flee Germany before it was too late, so one can only assume the actor felt extra guilt due to the fact that one of the top Nazis and Jew-baiters of the twentieth-century more or less saved his life. Undoubtedly, one of the most revealing scenes of *The Lost One* is when Lorre's character states, "Unbelievable. The bomb night was over, thousands were dead. Thousands who wanted to live. But I, I was still alive. Unbelievable." And, indeed, it was not only the death of Jews that caused Lorre survivor's guilt, but innocent Germans as well as demonstrated by the various innocent and virginal Aryan woman that are senselessly killed in *The Lost One*. Whatever was going on in Lorre's head at the time, it is undeniable that he did something totally daring and seemingly inexplicable when he decided to direct a film where he also portrays a Nazi serial killer scientist instead of a sympathetic and persecuted Jew like Fritz Kortner played in *Der Ruf*. Ultimately, *The Lost One* is an exceedingly nihilistic work where not even the slightest shade of redemption is made possible, with even Rudolf Hess' failed secret peace mission to England in 1941 and the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt against Hitler being mentioned in passing as if they were futile and ultimately worthless attempts to thwart the arrival of hell-on-earth. Starring Lorre as a sort of low-key cuckold take on Josef Mengele in a role where the actor effortlessly demonstrates he is not only one of the greatest portrayers of malignant melancholy and empathetic mad men/mass murderers, but one of the suavest cigarette smokers in cinema history, *The Lost One* quite arguably features the Austrian-born actor at his greatest. It should also be noted that not a single one of the 'Nazis' featured in the film is portrayed as a real National Socialist 'true believer' who actually believed in the Hitlerite Weltanschauung, but instead, as innately immoral opportunists who used the new regime as a deplorable means to obtain power and carry out deplorable crimes, thus making *The Lost One* less an anti-Nazi work than a patently pessimistic look at the intrinsically flawed human character under precarious circumstances. Of course, one of Lorre's other greatest achievements with the film was that he managed to transcend the Aryan and Jew dichotomy to create a work that is uncompromisingly critical of humanity as a whole. Indeed, while some Germans and Jews were able to forget about the war and its post-apocalyptic aftermath, Lorre, at

least in spirit, was one of the people that was left behind, hence the title 'The
Lost One.'

-Ty E

ARENA

ARENA

Peter Manoogian (1989)

Arena (1989) is the epitome of the greatness that Charles Band used to exude back in the glory years of the late 80s, early 90s when Moonbeam, Empire, and Full Moon thrived. These companies are responsible for creating absolute straight-to-video masterpieces certainly not limited to: Prison, Puppet Master 1 - 5, Prehysteria!, Jack Kirby: Time Warrior, Dolls, and Ghoulies - just to name a handful. These are pictures whose VHS racked up quite the hefty rental fee when I used to bother my mother for them each and every visit. It was never just the adults choice - I always had to have a say which probably made video rental stores the bane of my mothers existence. Lest she soothe a temper tantrum out in public, of course. I got my way and I was happy and look how well-versed in cinema I turned out to be. Exposure is critical in your younger years and Full Moon made for a wonderful gateway addiction and Arena is no stranger to that very same ethos that consumes these beautiful pieces of science-fiction wonder. Arena is a combat film first and a bit of runoff political commentary second. Don't worry about the latter of these features as Arena makes sure to shove strange alien creatures involved with martial arts right in your face, distracting from any other facet of filmmaking Arena could possibly meander about.

The year is 4038. Such an exaggerated future that there is no possible hope for us to meet and greet this specific year anytime in the 3 or 4 generations one can expect in a normal lifetime. Steve Armstrong is a spacecook in a spaceport with big dreams of relocating to Earth. This current goal greatly overshadows his teen dream of being an arena fighter in a combative sport simply known as "The Arena". After acquiring a significant amount of debt with the help of his boss, Steve Armstrong gets noticed for his fighting talent and joins The Arena with hopes to become the first human champion in over fifty years. With a plot as simple in mechanics as Arena, you'd be surprised just how far this film could have fallen. In fact, Arena surpasses every Full Moon release in quality for the past 3 years alone. In The Arena, it seems so wild that a human could even benefit from competing as its other contenders fit the profile of large, slimy extraterrestrials with a penchant for blood. Yet, Arena positions itself steadfast behind a plot device of a handicap that evens both the fighters' strength, thus making the game theoretically seem like child's play. This doesn't last long, though, until the sinister crime lord, Rogor, discovers a way to malfunction the handicap which endangers the life of Steve. As it is, Arena is that certain type of cinema that is digestible by genre fans of all persuasions. It is the Gerber baby food of science-fiction.

Another one of Arena's great strengths lies in its painstakingly created colorful aesthetic which compliments which further compliments the exclusive universe contained within the film. You could argue sources for influence as it is an Em-

pire Picture but it never reaches far enough into its inspirations to become anything more than an homage, if that. The fighting always remains hard-hitting and engaging and the creature designs are top-notch. The previous champion, Horn, is designed as a surly beast biomechanic whose stratagem tactic of injecting off-the-books space steroids results in his repeated victories, which definitely gives Arena a competitive edge. The character of Steve Armstrong is an appreciatory nod to cookie-cutter arrogance and youthful vigor that makes for quite the lead all-American archetype. Match that with its own brand of coy science-fiction humor and you got yourself a peak success in the era where rubber alien prosthetics could do no harm. As an added bonus, Arena features not one, but two lovely ladies - the tomboyish Quinn - fighting manager and go-getting girl - and the lovely Jade - promising femme fatale and overall bombshell. There really is no need for stating the equivalences in this case, Arena IS junk food and have I got a sweet tooth.

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DEMONIC TOYS
DEMONIC TOYS

Peter Manoogian (1992)

By now, Everyone has seen The Dark Knight. As far as pop culture goes, it's a necessity to view this. In fact, You'd owe it to your country according to pop-culture analysts and Hot Topic completists. Little did I realize that scribe David S. Goyer created the screenplay for Demonic Toys. That's quite a huge jump in the industry; Full Moon fare to Hollywood record-breaking material. It's only appropriate that I only now became cognizant of Peter Manoogian directing Eliminator, a film I plan on writing on soon. Demonic Toys destroys the basic fundamental guidelines of killer doll films. It's too true that in a film concerning murderous inanimate objects, one needn't focus on plot or early developmental stages. Golden rule being to include frequent enemy interactions and unsavory language and carnage. Demonic Toys disobeys like a good rebel but the film slightly becomes a more cluttered film despite its desperate attempt to differ itself from the crowd with a thought out plot. A pregnant cop gets caught in a satanic ritual to convert her unborn baby into a vessel of Satan's lovely child (As if anything else). This demon summons (or inhabits, it's never fully realized) a trio of iconic demonic toys to trim the already tiny potential body count trapped in a toy warehouse. Child's Play 2 featured a truly memorable scene in a toy factory. The impromptu adnexa surgery that was so horrifically drilled into our youth's brains is a scene that marks most that grew within that early 90s horror rush which produced many instant classics. Demonic Toys, being a Full Moon film, borrows heavily from the most mainstream doll film and incorporates the entire setting from the most popular scene in Child's Play 2, albeit not as adventurous and rather dreary. That character of Baby Oopsy-Daisy is portrayed as the hellish ringleader of the bunch but suffers from one-liner syndrome. The director/writer combo intended too much for this film to be an impassable force in "B horror" that they turned every line into a cheesy quip. This only halts down the given momentum thanks to the terrifying image of the evil incarnate Jack-N-The-Box. The bear however looks silly, that is until his transformation. I displease the satanic storyline as it makes every previous altercation an event in vain. Demonic Toys is definitely one of the better Full Moon catalog titles. The context of killer toys can be placed within any title for instant success. I'm still unsure of what to expect from the final product of Black Devil Doll. The trailer only makes the film look cheap and terribly unfunny but only time will tell. Demonic Toys is a stoic satanist story with enough low budget "punk rock rebel" attitude to keep most things at bay, including your social life, so please do not quote any lines from this film for your own sake.

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NEDS

Peter Mullan (2010)

One of my fondest memories as a child was hearing my father's adolescent fight stories. Growing up in a white working-class neighborhood during the 1960s, my father saw everyday fighting as a rite of passage that all boys enthusiastically engaged in, usually first occurring after one learned how to walk. One family story that I have always enjoyed, involves my father, at the age of 7 or 8, taking a baseball bat and smashing it against the arm of his 16 year old cousin, instantly cracking his kinsman's bone. I asked my father why he acted so violently and he explained to me that he knew his cousin was about to attack him, so he had to use whatever means he had to protect himself. My father also told me that there were no rules to street fighting, especially when battling someone that was much older and stronger. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to grow up in such a dangerous environment, where the possibility of dislocating a bone or losing an eye was an everyday possibility. Of course, I got in occasional fights, but I never had the opportunity to grow up in a neighborhood that contained an adolescent battlefield with armies of rock throwers, BB gun shooters, and knife wielders. After viewing the trailer for the 2010 film *Neds* directed by Peter Mullan, I soon realized that it had the potential to be the definitive white working-class street gang film. After eventually watching *Neds*, I was left galvanized and blissfully startled. To say that I was merely impressed by the gritty savagery and overall cinematic eminence of *Neds* would be a gross understatement.

Neds takes place in Glasgow, Scotland during the 1970s and was written/directed by Glasgow native Peter Mullan. I was not surprised to find out that Mullan has described the film as 'personal but not autobiographical', as the movie has a stark realism that could not have been contrived by even the most creative of bourgeois writers. Peter Mullan also directed the dark 2002 film *The Magdalene Sisters*, based on a true story regarding 'Magdalene asylums': virtual prisons for teenage girls that were seen, by their families and/or society, as falling from the grace of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Like *The Magdalene Sisters*, *Neds* is an artistic document regarding a part of United Kingdom history that has been all but ignored. Of course, English director Alan Clarke also contributed much in the way of cinematic social realism in the UK with notable films like *Scum* (1977) and *Made In Britain* (1982), yet these films lack the aesthetic prowess that gleams so stunningly throughout *Neds*. After all, one has to be quite the keen artist to find beauty in a white ghetto; a marvelous feat that Peter Mullan was able to triumphantly complete via *Neds*.

Neds is an acronym for "Non-Educated DelinquentS", which is a derogatory description for most of the characters featured in the film. The protagonist of *Neds*, John McGill, shows in the beginning of the film that he has the poten-

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tial to rise above his birthright as a Ned. Initially, John enters secondary school as a confident and studious boy that wants nothing more than to achieve an outstanding academic career. Despite his father being a pathetic alcoholic, his mother a hopeless neurotic, and his brother a petty criminal, John is determined to eventually graduate from a university. Of course, John eventually succumbs to his miserable environment during his teenage years and subsequently follows a desolate path of criminality. Upon becoming a virulent street fighter, John's personality begins to split, resulting in a nihilistic war against himself. John is a charismatic anti-hero that you will find yourself rooting for, even after he commits the most despicable of hate-fueled crimes. Although Hollywood has produced countless films portraying the struggle of the poor black man - always making sure to empathize with his life of crime; the philanthropists of Tinseltown have rarely given a voice to the white proletarian - the melanin-deprived Negro forgotten from the beginning of time. Neds is a real achievement because director Peter Mullan transcended his less than meager background and gave an authentic voice to the voiceless, in the form of true proletarian cinematic art.

Not only does Neds feature gritty socialism; It also includes a dream sequence of John fighting with Jesus Christ in a churchyard. Although this scene is quite serious, it is slightly silly and certainly one of the few segments of the film that does not provoke a total adrenalin rush. Neds may not feature a death camp-sized body count like your latest Hollywood action film, but it will strike terror in most audience's hearts. In fact, I can imagine many people, especially of the liberal "we are the world" persuasion, being offended and ultimately repelled by the film. If you are looking for a movie that offers shallow promises of hope and the sort reconciliation that is so typical of a neatly packaged Hollywood plot, Neds is probably not kind of film for you. Love it or loathe it, Neds will leave an irrevocable impression on you.

-Ty E

NICK /& NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST

Peter Sollett* (2008) Love is a beautiful thing. Let's talk about love, shall we? Love isn't described as a science, but rather a spiritual connection. Love is taking a female friend for a long walk on the beach. Love is that glowing feeling that bubbles in the pit of your intestines. Love is that feeling that wears thin after several years. Yes, that is love. And nowhere in Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist, will you find any form of emotion. You might feel a couple misplaced "awes" but watching Michael Cera stumble around for an hour and a half doesn't make me giddy or promise a fulfilling film experience. Then again, I'm not an Indie slut. Much of the film's punch comes from the soundtrack which it wastes no time in boasting at the start of the credits. Yes...you are watching the film. Insert a couple lines of credits then jump to a roster including We Are Scientists, Modest Mouse, Vampire Weekend, and clever Indie product placement bands. The film has several laughs and features a human for a plot device. A drunk slut named Caroline wanders off in the midst of the Big Apple and the group plans to find her while looking for a secret show with one of their favorite bands. The film follows the boy is pining over girl, meets new girl, loses new girl for old girl, realizes how fucking dumb his decision was and goes back to new girl. This film doesn't have that mythical chemistry though and would just rather use music as an adhesive. Shit was SO INDEPENDENT! In some films, the product placement is just horribly blatant such as my recent indulging in the Rollerball remake, in which they attempted to turn it into satire. Babylon A.D. was another guilty party. Nick & Norah's was caught red-handed for having a Myspace promotion union in which they find Indie bands that most likely win a contest. Their song is then featured in this hipster rom-com to a surprisingly dull effect. All the music sounds the same. In summarization: Producer #1: Hey, I have a great idea! Let's make a film with PLAYLIST in the title so you instantly relate it to MIXTAPE which all the HIPSTERS love. Producer #2: Yeah! Hey! There's this book with that in the title. Quick, make some calls! Let's put that QUIRKY & AWKWARD guy from Juno in it so he can add QUIRKINESS to the film. Producer #1: I can see it already! We should open the trailer with him stalling on the phone and torpidly saying B-DAY while staring at a picture that says HOMIE. Oh wow, this movie is so quirky and independent. Let's throw a REBEL chick in there for good measure. Nick & Norah is a more intelligent Juno without all that "Young Mother Lifetime" bullshit clogging up what the fans of Diablo Cody really want; quirkiness. Cera has proven nothing to me. He cannot act outside his Bleeker character and until he proves to me otherwise, he will continue to be blacklisted from my taste. Excuse my harsh cynicism as I partially enjoyed this film. That is until the last quarter of the film attempted to promote punk-rock zionism and Judiasm within a 10 minute span.

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PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK
PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

Peter Weir (1975)

If there is any cinematic work that can even vaguely be described as a women-in-prison (WiP) flick in terms of themes and motifs that is an unequivocal poetic masterpiece, it is the classic Australian horror-mystery-drama hybrid *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) directed by Peter Weir (*Dead Poets Society*, *The Truman Show*), which is ironically more erotic than any of the films that I have ever seen from the sometimes pornographic subgenre, even though it features nil nudity or explicit lesbo action. Of course, the film is far too idiosyncratic, enigmatic, whimsical and cultivated to be labeled a WiP flick, though it should be noted that Weir has experience with exploitation cinema as his debut feature *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974) surely demonstrates. As a cinematic work featuring a group of nubile young girls that are ruled over by a sadistic headmistress at an all-girl college where latent Sapphic tendencies seem to be the norm, Weir's film certainly sounds like it has the basic structure and themes of a WiP trash piece, but it is really a shockingly preternatural motion picture that transcends all genres and viewer expectations in a ridiculously refreshing fashion that reminds one why they love cinema. While I had been putting off watching the film for at least a decade since I expected it to be terribly banal flowery bullshit that would make Roman Polanski's *Tess* (1979) seem like Vera Chytilová's *Sedmikrásky* (1966) aka *Daisies* by comparison, I recently took the plunge and can proudly say that I absolutely fell in love with the film, if not for at least partially superficial reasons that largely have to do with the almost painfully beautiful blonde quasi-lead portrayed by one-time Fanta spokesperson Anne-Louise Lambert (*The Draughtsman's Contract*, *Somersault*), who absolutely radiates a certain decidedly delectable degree of classic European pulchritude without even having to expose a single tit or pubic hair. While Lambert disappears from the film at about the 35-minute mark, her presence manages to haunt the rest of the film in such a penetrating the fashion that it made me realize that it is the greatest cinematic ghost story without a ghost. Indeed, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is a film that wallows in a sort of wholly pure and organic oneiric beauty where it makes it seem as if it is the world's single greatest tragedy when a blonde virginal beauty disappears without a trace during a sunny picnic Hanging Rock, *Victoria on Valentine's Day in 1900* (notably and quite intriguingly, while a teacher and two other girls also disappear, the viewer, like most characters in the film, seems only really concerned with Lambert's character's disappearance, thus underscoring her haunting and otherworldly beauty). In other words, the film makes the preposterous comic sociological phrase 'missing white woman syndrome' seem like a laughable slave-morality-ridden joke that would only concern resentful untermenschen, as no negro, abo, or mulatto actresses could have made Weir's masterful flick work as there is no replacing genetic gold in the form of pale porcelain skin and shim-

mering golden locks. In other words, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is also a rare film that shamelessly celebrates the grand majesty of blonde Nordic beauty.

Based on the 1967 novel of the same name by Joan Lindsay that the Australian novelist has notably described as writing with great ease while in a sort of trance, the film is a mystery that, like its source material, thankfully concludes in eerie ambiguity and thus demands that the viewer ponder it for eternity, thereupon making for a cinematic work that truly keeps on giving with subsequent viewings. An early key work of the so-called Australian New Wave and arguably Australia's first international hit film, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* has proven over the past four decades that it is a timeless work as a result of its ambiguity, more or less seamless structure, exceedingly ethereal essence, and refreshingly unwavering embrace of true Occidental feminine beauty. Indeed, no one can watch the film without coming to the natural conclusion that Faustian woman is the most beautiful woman in the world. Additionally, the film is also notable for being a rare period piece that does not seem contrived, as the viewer truly feels like they have had the voyeuristic delight of encountering a very English late Victorian all-girls college where discipline, manners, and a strong moral compass are a must. Featuring a totally transcendental realm of perennial intrigue where the Victorian era is sort of metaphysically possessed by an enigmatic foreboding prehistoric presence that can be neither seen or heard but certainly felt, Weir's film is also arguably about a civilization on the brink of capitulation. As hinted by the fact that one can see Aborigine faces in the eponymous rock formations, one could argue that the cinematic work is, not unlike Weir's subsequent work *The Last Wave* (1977), a sort of post-colonial horror-thriller, though that is quite irrelevant to why the film is so great, as no one watches or enjoys it for its socio-political subtext(s) (in fact, the film also features a quasi-Dickensian subplot involving an orphan girl that is ruthlessly persecuted by a sadistic headmistress, but it is not executed in the sort of obnoxiously propagandistic fashion that would one expect from a Hollywood movie, but of course the film was directed by an authentic Anglo-Saxon as opposed to a kosher culture-distorter or spiritually castrated white liberal wimp). Indeed, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* oftentimes feels like the last gasps of a people and culture that is about to lose itself and succumb to cultural and social chaos of the decidedly deracinated post-industrial multicultural sort. The film also happens to be arguably the most effortlessly elegant, solacing, and charming 'horror' film ever made as an insanely soothing piece of hallucinatory celluloid where the most beautiful of living creatures is sacrificed to something that is literally quite inexplicable. Featuring an obscenely addictive musical score that ranges from two traditional Romanian panpipe pieces to classical pieces (including Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky) to the British Royal anthem "God Save the Queen," *Picnic at Hanging Rock* also thankfully feels completely devoid of the necrotizing taint of modernity. Of course, it should be no surprise that the film was more aesthetically influenced

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by the paintings of Australian Impressionists like Frederick McCubbin and the photography of David Hamilton than other films.

Opening with the somewhat misleading prologue that made many viewers think the film was based on total fact, "On Saturday 14th February 1900 a party of schoolgirls from Appleyard College picnicked at Hanging Rock near Mt. Macedon in the state of Victoria. During the afternoon several members of the party disappeared without trace...", Picnic at Hanging Rock then juxtaposes stunning Victorian landscapes with the female heroine Miranda (Anne-Louise Lambert) quoting Edgar Allan Poe and softly stating, "What we see and what we seem are but a dream—a dream within a dream." Miranda is a shockingly beautiful college student with a completely complimentary personality who is loved by all her classmates and most of her professors. In other words, she is a natural leader that exudes warmth, beauty, empathy, love, strength, and affection, among other classic virtues. If Miranda is an absolutely magnetic personality that radiates immaculate splendor and pleasantness, Appleyard College's headmistress, Mrs. Appleyard (Welsh British New Wave diva Rachel Roberts of Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) and Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* (1963)), is the complete opposite as a cold, callous, craven, and insufferable rotting old cunt who is mean and hateful to everyone, especially the weak and defenseless. Indeed, while Miranda treats her poor classmate with total love and respect, Mrs. Appleyard is totally ruthless with the school's most emotionally and economically impoverished student Sara (Margaret Nelson), who is an extremely sensitive orphan that seems to have almost latent lesbian feelings for her ravishing blonde friend. Somewhat ironically, by the end of the film, all three women will be gone from this world, but it is only Miranda that seems to realize this, as if she has some sort of sixth sense.

At the very beginning of the film, Miranda and her friends spend their St. Valentine's Day morning by reading Valentine's day cards to one another and helping each other get dressed, with a line of girls simultaneously tightening one another's corsets while standing in front of a window and basking in the early morning sunlight. Notably, Sara gives Miranda a card that reads, "Meet me, love, when day is ending." Rather unfortunately for all involved, Miranda will not get the opportunity to meet Sara at the end of the day. Somewhat strangely, after cherishing her card and declaring how she would love for her to meet her "sweet, funny family," Miranda attempts to warn her friend by stating to her in a deadly serious fashion, "You must learn to love someone else apart from me, Sara. I won't be here much longer," thereupon eerily foreshadowing the strange events to come. All the girls are excited about the day because they will be spending it at a local geological formation known as Hanging Rock where they plan to have a lavish and intimate pastoral picnic. Before leaving for the picnic, the girls collectively raise a phallic-like St. Valentine figure in the air in a quasi-ritualistic fashion, as if it will give them good luck in their quest for love. In an apt demon-

stration of her keen and calculating cruelty, Mrs. Appleyard allows every single girl attend the picnic, except poor orphan Sara, who she attempts to force to memorize and recite poetry. While Mrs. Appleyard warns the girls before they leave to not engage in “tomboy foolishness,” Miranda and her best friends ultimately fail to take heed of this seemingly petty warning, thereupon somewhat ironically resulting in their eventful downfall. When Sara attempts to recite her own poem that she has written in tribute to Valentine’s Day, Mrs. Appleyard immediately cuts her off and impulsively discounts her poetic prowess. While riding in a carriage on the way to Hanging Rock, a mathematics mistress named Miss Greta McCraw (Vivean Gray) notes that the rock formation is a million years old, which inspires a petite brunette named Irma (played by Karen Robson, who gave up on acting not long after appearing in the film and later became a Hollywood film lawyer and producer) remarks excitedly regarding the destination that it has been, “Waiting a million years just for us.” While only seemingly half-serious, Irma ultimately seems completely correct due to the bizarre and orphic things that will happen to her and her friends.

While the girls are on their way to Hanging Rock, a positively posh and somewhat prissy young Brit boy named Michael Fitzhubert (Dominic Guard of Joseph Losey’s *The Go-Between* (1971)) seems somewhat bored while picnicking with his elderly uncle Colonel Fitzhubert (Peter Collingwood) and aunt Mrs. Fitzhubert (Olga Dickie) in a nearby forest. When his uncle’s glaringly low-class valet Albert (John Jarratt of the *Wolf Creek* slasher franchise)—a former orphan whose forearms are covered with trashy primitive tattoos—generously offers him a sip of wine, Michael demonstrates his audacious anal retentiveness and keen sense of class consciousness by less than politely cleaning the cleaning the rim of the bottle before taking a small swig, thus underscoring the blatant class differences between the two young men. Indeed, while Albert is surely symbolic of the virtual white slaves and criminals of largely Irish and Scottish stock that built Australia with their sweat and blood, Michael is the kind of oh-so perfectly proper English chap that sees the country as a mere primitive colony and exotic vacation spot that is inhabited by uncultivated barbarians who have the grand misfortune of being hopelessly incapable of speaking the Queen’s English. Although they will soon become fairly good friends as a result of strange life-changing circumstances that will ultimately tie them together for eternity, the two young fellows could not be more different, with Michael having a rather romantic and even naïve view of the world and Albert, who has clearly experienced much misery and misfortune in his life, being quite disillusioned and pessimistic to the point of not wanting to take life too seriously lest he suffer more personal pain and disappointment. Indeed, one can certainly tell that happiness for Albert is simply a steady flow of cheap beer and fresh maid pussy (notably, the only people in the film depicted talking about and/or engaging in sex are peasants). Unbeknownst to Albert, his long lost sister Sara, who he has

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not seen since they were both little kids living in an orphanage, is one the students at Appleyard College and had Mrs. Appleyard not barred her from going to the picnic, he would have probably experienced the delight of a lifetime by being reunited with his estranged sibling by mere happenstance. Unfortunately, partly as a result of things that occur during the picnic, Albert will never see his sister again, which is quite sad when one considers how the film ends.

When the girls finally arrive at Hanging Rock, alpha-babe Miranda fittingly ushers in the grand celebration by joyously cutting a pink heart-shaped valentine cake and then the girls proceed to do wholesome girly things like examining flowers with magnifying glasses, reading books while lying in the grass, and glamorously basking in the sunlight, though not without the imperative help of lavish Victorian umbrellas. During the very feminine festivities, the youngest and most beautiful teacher of the school, Mademoiselle de Poitiers (Helen Morse)—a character that deeply cares for all her students and is naturally the total opposite of the eponymous bitch portrayed by Jeanne Moreau in Tony Richardson's somewhat underrated Jean Genet adaptation *Mademoiselle* (1966)—flips through an art book and comes to the conclusion that "Miranda is a Botticelli angel" after seeing an image of Early Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli's mid-1480s masterpiece *The Birth of Venus*. Right after Mademoiselle de Poitiers makes this sensually spoken borderline Sapphic declaration, Miranda, Irma, Marion (Jane Vallis), and a fat and annoying four-eyed blonde human turd named Edith Horton (Christine Schuler) enter the depths of the forest in pursuit of the top of Hanging Rock. While the mostly exceedingly dainty dames are attempting to cross a small stream, they are spotted by Michael and Albert, with the latter deeply offending his posh pal by remarking in regard to Miranda, "And 'ave a go at the last one! The blonde! Oh, she'd have a decent pair of legs. All the way up to her bum." Indeed, completely sheltered hopeless romantic Michael cannot bear to hear such crude lecherous language and bitches to Albert, "I'd rather you didn't say crude things like that," to which his prole friend rightly replies, "Oh, I say the crude things. You just think 'em. Take my word for it. The sheilas are all alike when it comes to fellas. Doesn't matter if it's a bloody college you come from or the Ballarat Orphanage where me and me kid sister was dragged up." At this point, Michael develops a romantic obsession with Miranda that only grows all the more extreme when the blonde beauty and her classmates mysteriously disappear into the Delphic depths of the foreboding rock formation.

While the girls are climbing up Hanging Rock, rather rotund dork Edith incessantly complains in a remarkably obnoxious fashion, stating things like, "I never thought it would be so nasty or I wouldn't have come." Unlike Edith, who is clearly not the outdoors type, the other girls seem completely entranced by the rocks, with Irma remarking while in a seemingly ecstatic state, "If only we could stay out all night and watch the moon rise." The girls also bring up that fact that Sara has been writing poetry "all about Miranda," which inspires Irma

to prophetically remark, "Sara reminds me of a little deer Papa brought home once. I looked after it, but it died. Mama always said it was doomed." After the girls take their socks and shoes off, it almost seems as if they are under the spell of some ominous supernatural force that is forcing them to head further up the rocks. Indeed, while staring down at her classmates from the top of the rocks, Marion—a blonde with glasses that somewhat looks like a nerdier version of Miranda—remarks while in a seemingly possessed state while sounding like an autistic philosopher, "Whatever can those people be doing down there? Like a lot of ants. Surprising the number of human beings [that] are without purpose. Although it is probable they're performing some function unknown to themselves." Somewhat bizarrely, Miranda calmly but seemingly impulsively replies to Marion by stating in a haunting fashion, "Everything begins and ends at exactly the right time and place." At this point, all the girls pass out as if under some sort of trance caused by the sun and eventually an iguana sinisterly passes by Miranda's body while she is lying unconscious on the ground. When the girls finally wake up from their seemingly blissful slumber, Edith declares, "I feel perfectly awful" and then asks her friends, "When are you going home?," but they do not even acknowledge her, let alone respond to her, and instead, as if trapped in an ethereal nightmare, enter into the recesses of the rock face like a parade of angels sacrificing themselves to hell. Completely haunted by what she sees, Edith screams hysterically and begins running back to her classmates. On her way back, Edith spots Miss Greta McCraw running across a plateau in nothing but her pantaloons. As it turns out, Miranda, Marion, Irma, and Miss McCraw have disappeared without a trace under most dubious circumstances that only become all the more bizarre and inexplicable as the film progresses.

Naturally, a large search party for the missing girls is eventually started and led by a fellow named Sergeant Bumpher (Wyn Roberts) and his comrade Constable Jones (Garry McDonald), but no one is found, thus completely mystifying all the local townspeople, who refuse to believe that one of their neighbors might be responsible for their dubious disappearance. When Sergeant Bumpher asks Michael why he was following the girls the day that they went missing, he replies in a somewhat scared fashion, "I was curious. In England, you ladies like that wouldn't be allowed to go walking. Not alone, anyway. But they'd gone by the time I came out of the trees, so I turned back." Not surprisingly considering she is a glaringly sexually repressed widow whose hatred seems to be largely the result of both her loneliness and lack of sexual release, headmistress Mrs. Appleyard seems especially interested to know if Edith was molested, but the local physician, an elderly fellow named Doctor McKenzie (John Fegan), gladly informs her that the fat girl is still "quite intact" (which is something he will notably repeat multiple times throughout the film). Despite the fact that he never even got the opportunity to introduce himself to the girls, Michael is especially disturbed by their disappearance, most specifically in regard to Miranda, who he seems to

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believe he loves. Indeed, as Michael meekly confides to Albert, "I wake up every night in a cold sweat...Just wondering if they're still alive." Of course, Michael is not too happy with Albert when he replies, "Yeah, well, the way I look at it is this: If the bloody cop and the bloody abo tracker and the bloody dog can't find 'em, well, no one bloody can. People have been bushed before today, and as far as I'm concerned, that's the stone end of it." Visibly distressed, Michael replies to the Australian peasant in an exceedingly bitchy fashion, "Well, it's not the end of it as far as I'm concerned. They may be out there dying of thirst on—that infernal rock and...you and I are sitting here drinking cold bloody beer." When Michael asks him to go with him to Hanging Rock to search for the girls, Albert initially replies, "A week in the bush, they'd be dead by now," though he ultimately decides to help out his posh pal because he probably thinks he is too big of a sheltered pansy to go on the search mission by himself.

When the two unlikely friends head to Hanging Rock to search for the missing girls, they ultimately find nothing, so Michael, who has become fanatical in his obsession with finding the little ladies, decides to stay there overnight by himself and even insults Albert for not being as concerned with finding the girls as he is (in fact, Michael insults his friend's lowly Australian peasant background, stating to him that he and his countrymen do not care enough, "Just because you lot are Australians..."). The next morning, it seems as if Michael is fighting with unseen forces while trying in vain to crawl across rocks while crying "Miranda," thus hinting at some sort of sinister supernatural presence at Hanging Rock. When Albert comes back to check up on his friend, he is shocked to find him completely broken and nearly delirious and thus immediately calls upon a rescue team who have the super sensitive bourgeois boy carried out on a stretcher. Before being driven away in a buggy, Michael, who seems to have temporarily lost the ability to speak, hands Albert a lace fragment from one of the girls' dresses in an almost conspiratorial fashion that he has clenched inside his hand, thus inspiring the rowdy Australian to quickly head back to Hanging Rock where he ultimately finds and kicks the body of Irma, who he naturally assumes is dead since she has been missing for over a week. Rather miraculously, Irma has survived and as Dr. McKenzie reports, she is still "quite intact," though is left temporarily bedridden due to exposure and dehydration, among other fairly minor health complications. Despite the fact that Irma has been found alive, headmistress Mrs. Appleyard is as bitchy and hateful as ever as parents are predictably withdrawing their daughters from the school as a result of their fear that it might be a dangerous place for their daughters to stay. A compulsively callous and craven cunt of a wicked wench if there ever was one, Mrs. Appleyard naturally takes out all of her hatred on the weakest and most defenseless girl Sarah, who she routinely threatens to send back to an orphanage if her guardian Mr. Cosgrove does not pay money that he owes the institution. Meanwhile, Michael attempts to befriend Irma, who has no recollection of what happened

to her or her friends, but ultimately scares her away when he eventually demands to know what happened to the other girls (notably, director Weir excised most of this subplot from his 1998 'director's cut'). In what is indubitably the most overtly 'horror-esque' scene in the entire movie, Irma, who probably already suffers from a bad case of survivor guilt, is both physically and verbally attacked by a group of girls led by fat Edith after she goes to see them one last time before she permanently departs from the school and heads back to Europa. While Mademoiselle de Poitiers slaps the shit out of Edith and breaks up the attack, the damage is already done and Irma goes away from the experience looking quite spooked.

As the film progresses towards its less than heartwarming conclusion, Mrs. Appleyard succumbs to both full-blown dipsomania and senseless sadism. Indeed, when she is not secretly sipping liquor that she has conveniently hidden inside a desk drawer that contains items that she has confiscated from students, the horrific headmistress is forcing Sara to undergo some sort of cruel and unusual punishment, including being strapped to a wall to ostensibly "cure her terrible stooping." As a result of Mrs. Appleyard's keenly cruel behavior, a barren teacher named Miss Lumley (Kirsty Child) awkwardly resigns from the college. Of course, this pushes Mrs. Appleyard even further over the edge as indicated by the fact that she soon informs Sara that she will have to withdraw from the college permanently and go back to the dreadful orphanage. In fact, while Mrs. Appleyard lies to Mademoiselle de Poitiers and tells her that Sara left with college with her guardian Mr. Cosgrove that morning, the young girl is still there and opts to kill herself by leaping from her bedroom window instead of enduring life in an orphanage once again. Indeed, the next morning, an elderly gardener is given the shock of a lifetime when he unexpectedly finds Sara's corpse in the greenhouse. Somewhat morbidly, just before it is revealed that Sara has killed herself, Albert reveals to Michael that his long lost sister visited him in a dream and stated to him, "I've come a long way to see ya, and now I must go." In the end, a nameless/faceless off-screen male narrator states: "The body of Mrs. Arthur Appleyard, Principal of Appleyard College, was found at the base of Hanging Rock on Friday 27 March 1900. Although the exact circumstances of her death are not known, it is believed she fell while attempting to climb the rock. The search for the missing school girls and their governess continued spasmodically for the next few years without success. To this day their disappearance remains a mystery." Rather fittingly, the film concludes with slow-motion footage of the girls at the picnic at Hanging Rock, with Miranda playfully waving "good bye" to the viewer at the very end.

Notably, the female Jungian Marion Woodman once wrote while speaking of a figurative 'virgin' (aka ideal female archetype), "The women who is a virgin, one in herself, does what she does not for power or out of the desire to please, but because what she does is true," which I think is a great way to describe Miranda

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of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Indeed, a young virginal lady of immaculate beauty who all women want to be and all men want to be with, Miranda is nothing short of the virtual real-life embodiment of the great goddesses of classical literature and ancient myths, hence the potency of the film, which effectively relies on the singular tragedy of such of a perfect female specimen simply disappearing when she is at the unequivocal peak of her pulchritude. For me, the film had an extra personal layer, as Miranda shares a superficial resemblance to the love of my life, who also shares a sort of organic paganiſtic oneness with nature and who always makes trips to the wilderness have a more magical and whimsical quality, like a *Fidus* painting come to life, albeit less cartoonish and more erotic. In other words, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is one of those rare films that I feel like I have fallen in love with, which was a big surprise as I expected it to be somewhat banal before I actually watched it. For me, the film was like a sort of insanely intoxicating pandemonium of foreplay, as if one were cock-blocked just before fucking their one-true-love for the first time, hence the timeless tragedy of Miranda and her friends disappearance. Of course, in a way, Miranda was sacrificed for her own beauty, as she disappeared while she was at her physical peak and thus will always be remembered as such by those that knew her, which is undoubtedly one of the things that makes *Picnic at Hanging Rock* so poetic. Indeed, one almost suspects that Yukio Mishima, who consciously decided to commit ritual suicide via seppuku after he reached his physical and artistic/intellectual peak, was in some way inspired by the film, but that is probably just wishful thinking (after all, the Japanese Renaissance man had very little use for beautiful women aside from as the occasional prop).

While Sofia Coppola had described *Picnic at Hanging Rock* as being an imperative influence on her films, especially *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) and *Marie Antoinette* (2006), Weir's masterful cinematic work somewhat ironically has a more organically feminine essence even though it was directed by a man whose other films have a fairly masculine touch to them (after all, it is somewhat hard to believe that the same man also directed *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003), but I digress). Indeed, Weir's metaphysical horror-romance is certainly a singular work as a film that really can only be vaguely compared to a handful of others films, including Jaromil Jireš's *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) and Richard Blackburn's sole feature *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973). Undoubtedly, it is somewhat curious that all of these films were made around the same time during the 1970s, as if they were a so-called reactionary response to sexual liberation and feminism, which more or less destroyed any mystique or integrity that young women once had, as their main veins went from being priceless commodities that were practically worth their weight in gold to becoming virtual toilets in the blink of an eye (indeed, unless you belong to a Mormon community, it is practically impossible to find a girl of Miranda's virtue in the contemporary Occident). As for more recent films with

a similar essence, Gaspar Noé's wife Lucile Hadžihalilović's debut feature *Innocence* (2004) is like a darker and all the more esoteric nod to Weir's film, albeit with a rather unfortunate lack of Anglo-Saxon beauty (though Marion Cotillard makes for a worthy substitute for Helen Morse's *Mademoiselle de Poitiers* character). As much as I enjoy all of the films I have mentioned, none of them is quite as perfect as *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, which I would describe as arguably one of the most accessible 'arthouse' movie ever made, as a rare cinematic work that can bring great joy and ecstasy to both wholesome little girls and dirty old men. Arguably the sunniest piece of gothic horror ever captured on celluloid, Weir's film is also probably the only 'girly' flick that you can watch and enjoy if you're a male and not feel embarrassed about it (which says a lot since the film technically easily passes the truly lesbianic Bechdel test). Indeed, in a quite potent yet unintentional way, the film is also a reminder why the true organic Überfrau of the world is the woman with the lightest colored pubic hair. Set in an all-female world where it seems like the quite common contemporary female flaw of navel-gazing is a shameful sin and part of a woman's true beauty lies in her lack of narcissism and mindless self-worship, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* certainly does seem like a "dream within a dream" in more ways than one, thereupon making it shockingly refreshing for modern viewers who are used to watching unintentionally absurd gynocentric twaddle where even the most imaginary of female problems are portrayed as grave matters. In that sense, one can look at the character of Miranda's disappearance as symbolic of the tragic decline of true Anglo-Saxon femininity. Indeed, compared to Miranda, Charlize Theron seems like a soulless dyke (but I guess that is what one expects from a woman whose mother violently killed her father) and Jennifer Lawrence comes off as a completely vapid and expressionless twat who seems to have the mental maturity of a 7-year-old girl. In other words, more eroticism permeates from a single shot of Miranda wearing a Victorian dress that hangs all the way down her ankles than in all of the various leaked shaved pussy shots of Ms. Lawrence that are floating around the internet combined.

-Ty E

FRIENDSHIP'S DEATH
FRIENDSHIP'S DEATH

Peter Wollen (1987)

If some exceedingly effete cosmopolitan leftist art fag attempted to remake Ridley Scott's culturally pessimistic science fiction masterpiece *Blade Runner* (1982) as an avant-garde Brechtian chamber piece with video art elements and set it Amman, Jordan during the Jordanian Civil War instead of dystopian Los Angeles, it might resemble the asinine celluloid abortion that is British (anti)sci-fi flick *Friendship's Death* (1987) penned and directed by English film theorist Peter Wollen (*Penthesilea*, *Crystal Gaze*) and starring arthouse diva Tilda Swinton (*The Last of England*, *Only Lovers Left Alive*) and Bill Paterson (*The Killing Fields*, *The Witches*). Indeed, a film theorist trained in French twaddle like structuralism and critical theory who co-wrote/co-directed a number of films with his postmodern feminist film theorist wife Laura Mulvey—a rather frigid looking chick who utilizes outmoded neo-Freudian hocus pocus to complain about 'phallogentrism' and 'patriarchy' being supposedly secretly hidden in cinema—Wollen (who is the co-publisher of various journals, including one with the curious name 'New Left Review') certainly seems to have a pathologically passive 'female touch,' or so one learns whilst watching the intolerably idealistic slave-morality-laden pomo sci-fi piece *Friendship's Death*. The quasi-philosophical tale of an alien robot in archetypically white British female form (quite arguably Tilda Swinton at her physically finest) that somehow develops a quasi-marxist 'revolutionary' *Weltanschauung* and joins the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) after getting mixed up in the events of 'Black September,' *Friendship's Death* is so ridden with phony bleeding heart idealism of the pedantic armchair revolutionary sort that the eponymous extraterrestrial machine protagonist actually makes the absurd 'post-human' complaint, "I can't accept sub-human status simply because I'm a machine." Indeed, if you are hoping to see bold and beauteous blond beast biorobotic androids like the replicants in *Blade Runner* in Wollen's noble-savage-saluting arthouse agitprop piece *Friendship's Death*, you're going to be in for a major disappointment as the film mostly wallows in philosophizing about how innately evil humans are, especially of the Occidental sort, as well as the misery of being a person without identity and without home, so as to make the viewer's heart bleed for Palestinians and whatnot. For whatever reason, my girlfriend and I assumed that *Friendship's Death* would be similar to an Ulrike Ottinger film, so we were exceedingly disappointed. While my beloved could only handle 10 minutes or so of seeing Tilda Swinton sporting an Arab chador, spewing insipid intellectual masturbation, and failing to seem like anything resembling an alien robot, I braved through the entirety of *Friendship's Death* and must admit that 70-minute work felt much longer than watching Fassbinder's epic *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) in its entirety. Indeed, if you ever wondered why Swinton finally decided to move out of the arthouse

world, Friendship's Death provides more than enough reasons.

The setting is Amman, Jordan during the 'Black September' civil war of 1970 and stereotypical white liberal British journalist Sullivan (Bill Paterson) is sympathetic to the cause of the PLO. Naturally, the Jordanians are hoping to rid the PLO from its city-centers. Sullivan is asked by members of the PLO to help identify a seemingly Anglo-Saxon woman named 'Friendship' (Tilda Swinton), who has no papers nor passport and has been captured by the Palestinian 'freedom-fighters.' For whatever reason (maybe he thinks he has a chance at bedding her?), Sullivan pretends to know Friendship and brings her to a fancy hotel, where most of Friendship's Death takes place. Friendship proclaims to be a space robot from the planet of Procryon who was heading to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) but experienced a major malfunction during 'atmospheric entry' and somehow landed in Amman where within a matter of hours she managed to get lost in the middle of a tank attack and inevitably become captured by the PLO. After hearing Friendship's story, Sullivan makes the cynical remark, "Spectacular performance! A woman in jeopardy, a reckless act of self-destruction; it all adds up to nonsense, doesn't it?," but the literally soulless extraterrestrial super robot is not laughing. Of course, after much plying and prying for information, Sullivan eventually begins to believe Friendship's spectacular tale. Meanwhile, Friendship, who was quite disturbed to see her Palestinian tour guide taken hostage by the Jordanian army, begins to forget her mission to MIT, starts sporting typical Islamic garb, and begins sympathizing with the PLO, even though she is not human, let alone an Arab Muslim. As a 'spacey, if not severely self-righteous, chick from another planet that says a lot of pretentious things like, "I dream of succulence...the flow of carbon and acid metabolism...hunters and gathers...Hijack victims," Friendship seems like she was the victim of a liberal arts college lobotomy, but Sullivan still manages to learn things about her home plane Procryon. As Friendship explains to Sullivan, "Where I come from all the biological life-forms are extinct. After the nuclear winter, they died. Only the computer survived. Of course, they were already far more advanced than any computers you have here on earth."

Naturally, Sullivan asks about the curious creatures that used to inhabit Procryon and invented the technology that sired the femme-robot in the first place, to which Friendship replies that they were, "Genetically programmed organisms like you. I think I'd describe them as kind of giant tree shrews...a bit bigger than you. They hibernated. They had this zoom lens system in their optical vision, too...I think some spiders do here. And these heat-seeking sensors which were like a ray of sunken pods." While doing some snooping around, Sullivan finds some colorful crystals owned by Friendship in one of the few discernibly sci-fi scenes of Friendship's Death and when the rebel robot walks in on the journalist playing with them, she gives him one as a memento. Obsessed with ancient human ruins, especially those in Jordan and how they relate to events of today,

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Friendship has little interest in soccer, complaining to Sullivan regarding the sport, "It's hard for me to see the attraction of it. I think I would prefer if the camera just chose one of the players and followed him. I mean, the players are more interesting than the ball, aren't they? The ball has to be the most uninteresting item of the game...totally devoid of color or expression....incapable of independent action...it's just round." Despite being an exceedingly emasculated left-wing weakling of the proudly cosmopolitan sort, Sullivan is somewhat offended by Friendship's remark and responds by stating, "What are you talking about? Britain's greatest contribution to the world; the family of balls [...] they're all British made. It makes you proud, doesn't it?," as if he were a card-carrying member of the BNP. As the days pass, the hotel the journalist and robot are staying at becomes bombarded with PLO snipers and other militants, thus making their conversations much harder to hear. Overtime, Friendship becomes increasingly misanthropic and develops a sort of Marxist-robot ideology, complaining to Sullivan, "I'm a robot, I'm a machine. Well, what replaced the machines here? Slaves. Unpaid labor. Moral dead matter. You can do what you like to a machine. It has no voice, no rights, no feelings. It's a new sphere for human cruelty. I know their vengeance and they act out of rage, but I have every reason to identify with the Palestinians," thus demonstrating her innate slave morality despite being a superior being to that of earthlings. Due to the violence of the civil war, Sullivan opts to leave Jordan and manages to snag two tickets to Damascus, but Friendship has already made up her mind to join the PLO and die in battle, stating why she has decided to abandon her original mission to MIT, "I've seen enough of earth to know that if I go to the United States I'll just be frog-marched off to some safe house somewhere in Virginia for debriefing...then when I've been squeezed dry, I'll be handed over to the engineers and the A.I. people. I'll be stripped down, cut-up, and be submitted to every kind of sadistic test they can devise." As a goodbye present, Sullivan gives Friendship a razorblade (she previously showed an interest in shaving) and she returns his kindness by kissing to "seal the gesture." Of course, Friendship presumably dies, but years later Sullivan remembers her after running into his friend Kubler (Patrick Bauchau), who is a member of the International Red Cross. With the help of his wiz kid teenage daughter, Sullivan is able to decipher the special crystal that Friendship gave to him and he learns that it is a 'digital storage system' (aka a sort of memory card) from a futuristic camera. The crystal reveals images of Amman, esoteric information, images of a human fetus, and countless other things that Friendship had recorded on her journey, thus giving Sullivan something to truly remember about Friendship.

A preposterously sanctimonious and unintentionally silly piece of hipster humanist celluloid hogwash that would only appeal to the science fiction fan who thinks Spock of Star Trek is a leftist hero and appreciate his Judaic Vulcan salute, Friendship's Death is nothing short of an archetypical bad British art-

house film from the 1980s. As someone who rather enjoyed the quasi-feminist dystopian flick *Closet Land* (1991) directed by Indian auteur Radha Bharadwaj, I can say my disdain for *Friendship's Death* was not simply due to its cliché globalist humanistic 'we-are-the-world' message but mainly due to its outmoded postmodern Brechtian and conspicuously contrived directing style, grating theatrical tableaux, and almost childlike essence, as if the film was specially made for the children of left-wing MPs living abroad at boarding schools as a sort of cinematic therapy for their homesickness. Undoubtedly, director Peter Wollen is probably best known to cinephiles for his first film credit as the co-writer of Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Passenger* (1975) aka *Professione: Reporter*, which also features a deracinated journalist as a protagonist and also deals with themes of rootlessness, loss of identity, and civil war. In fact, Wollen would once state of *Friendship's Death* that it is a sort of "a sequel" to *The Passenger*, albeit more "enclosed and claustrophobic," which certainly sounds like an unappetizing prospect for a film and the British auteur certainly delivered in that regard. While I am not fan of *The Passenger*, it demonstrates why Antonioni was a master cinematic craftsman and Wollen is a pedantic professor of plodding pretense who approaches directing films the same way a scientist looks through a microscope, with *Friendship's Death* being nothing more than a failed experiment of a film theorist's hypothesis for what might make an interesting 'avant-garde sci-fi' flick. In a favorable puffery-ridden review of the film written by German film scholar Thomas Elsaesser, who is a comrade of Wollen's, he revealed that, "In the early 1990s, at a conference in Vancouver about avant-garde, modernist, anti-narrative and neo-narrative filmmaking, Peter Wollen proposed a new category: films without a passport. What at the time was may be a lassitude with labels seems in retrospect to have been a programmatic announcement. Wollen's first solo film as a director is literally about existence without a passport, and is much more an exploration of the attendant state of mind, than a psychological study of two characters or of the generic complications resulting from a sci-fi plot in a polit-thriller." Rather unfortunately, with the dissolution of European film industries and the rise of international co-productions, Wollen's warped liberal wet dream of 'films without a passport' has come true, albeit not in the way he probably imagined. Of course, Wollen has not directed a single film since *Friendship's Death*, thus demonstrating you cannot get too far artistically without an 'artistic passport' (i.e. serious sense of identity, kultur, and nationality). More banal than bizarre, superficial than sincere, whiny than witty, derivative than diacritic, pedantic than provocative, and cold than charismatic, *Friendship's Death* has confirmed that I will never dare to watch any of the other experimental films that Wollen co-directed with his wife. Featuring a pansy cuckold xenophile as a male protagonist (a stand-in for Wollen perhaps?) who cannot even manage to seal the sensual deal with the exotic extraterrestrial, as well as a truly intellectually 'out-of-this-world' fem-alien robot that tries to make an argument about the

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ostensible connection between the big toe and the supposed oppression of the fairer sex, Friendship's Death is guaranteed to be aesthetic torture for cinephiles and sci-fi nerds alike, which is certainly at least one achievement on Wollen's part. Indeed, if the Israelis want to scare the Palestinians out of the holy land for good they should maybe consider screening Wollen's Friendship's Death all around the so-called Israeli West Bank barrier.

-Ty E

I'M AN ELEPHANT, MADAME

Peter Zadek (1969)

Despite being one of post-WWII Germany's most serious and influential theater directors, even popularizing the plays of William Shakespeare among German audiences, Peter Zadek also directed somewhat lowbrow satirical comedic films meant to appeal to even the most intellectually and aesthetically disadvantaged of filmgoers, which is especially true in regard to his work *The Roaring Fifties* (1983) aka *Die wilden Fünfziger*, a semi-scatological exploitation-like satire of the *Wirtschaftswunder* ("Economic Miracle") that the auteur, quite blasphemously, dedicated to German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who had recently died. Undoubtedly, Zadek's *The Roaring Fifties* seems like a Hollywood-esque mockery of Fassbinder's BRD Trilogy, which is rather unfortunate considering the German New Cinema alpha-auteur filmmaker's respect for the elder theater director. In fact, Fassbinder had so much respect for Zadek that he gave him a cameo role in his penultimate film *Veronika Voss* (1982), but, even more importantly, he also dedicated one of his greatest films, *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), to the older filmmaker. As to why Fassbinder felt the need to dedicate what is arguably his most popular flick to Zadek, he stated in an interview, "I don't do my dedications in such a way that I say, this film has a lot to do with so-and-so, who it's dedicated to, but in this case, for instance, I want to say that Zadek is one of those who shattered the ossified way of life that *The Marriage of Maria Braun* describes. From a certain point on, Zadek was also very important to me, as a person, as someone to talk to. It liberated me a bit to know there was someone around who was over fifty and completely set in his ways and then changed himself so totally. I find something very positive and hopeful in that. Five years ago he was a major figure just as he was, and then he changed himself totally." Indeed, born in Berlin in 1926 to a Jewish family and emigrating to London in 1934, where he would eventually cause great controversy by directing productions of works by frog queer degenerate Jean Genet, Zadek virtually lived a whole other life before he came back to Germany in 1958, but it was not until 1969 that he got to literally say "Fuck Germany" cinematically via his award-winning flick *I'm an Elephant, Madame* (1969) aka *Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame* to the nation that had rejected him and his family only a couple decades before. Winning the coveted Silver Bear award at the 19th Berlin International Film Festival, *I'm an Elephant, Madame*—an iconoclastic kraut counter-culture cult flick that is virtually totally unknown anywhere outside of Deutschland—is Zadek's sort of satirical and semi-surreal (anti)tribute to the German student movement (68er-Bewegung). Featuring music by the Velvet Underground (including a peculiar inter-title at the beginning of the film advertising "Andy Warhol" written in large text next to "Lou Reed & The Velvet Underground" in smaller text), *I'm an Ele-*

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phant, Madame is a film dedicated to all the children of Marx and Coca-Cola about a group of high school seniors from the Nordic northwestern German city of Bremen during the year 1968 who are itching for revolution and live to destroy German classical institutions, even if they have no truly realistic nor rational way to go about it. An aesthetically bombastic work of the Brechtian sort that brazenly blitzkriegs the fourth wall and features enough jaded jump-cuts to make the average French New Wave fan wet their panties, yet assembled in a relatively straight-forward manner that makes the film accessible to poor proles and philistines (Zadek was indubitably an equal opportunity offender!), *I'm an Elephant, Madame* is the post-WWII German-Jewish answer to Godard, albeit nowhere near as banal, that goes straight to the schizophrenic soul of the psychosis-ridden children of the Nazi generation.

Rull (Wolfgang Schneider) is the most radicalized and revolutionary senior at his classical German "gymnasium" school as a rebel without a cause who feels the need to believe he has a cause, even if he is a naughty little nihilist at heart who seems to act more than think. Not only does Rull threaten and mock his teachers with his brazenly bizarre behavior, but he almost brings misery to his friends, including his less than homely girlfriend. After deflowering his girlfriend Billa (Maja Eigen)—a butch and bitchy tomboy with a dyke haircut who hates the Fatherland just as much as her male compatriots—Rull lets everyone know about his victorious defiling of a virgin. In class, Rull gives teachers absurd reasons for failing to do his homework and gets especially irked when the class has a discussion comparing Roman philosopher Cicero with Hitler. Meanwhile, the times are changing at the Bremen school as 'progressive' liberal teachers are changing the curriculum, including a funny fellow named Dr. Nemitz (Heinz Baumann) that has the potential to be the new principal of the school, as well as a depressed English teacher who is obsessed with Donovan who gives music appreciation lectures (one on the 'Renaissance of Anglo-American Pop') on hippie rock and what not, which disgusts old school style teachers like Dr. Hartmann, who is afraid so-called 'progressives' are destroying his school and laying waste to 20 years of his life's work as a classical academic of the conservative sort. On top of digging Trotsky and Lenin, the students at the gymnasium school are digging the films of Andy Warhol, referencing the 320-minute avant-retard work *Sleep* (1963), a film that few Americans, let alone American high schoolers, can say they have seen. When Rull has the bright idea to spray paint a swastika on the side of a parliament building, he destroys any legitimacy regarding his revolutionary behavior, sparking a mini (and real) riot of sorts, including arguments between holocaust survivors and ex-soldiers, many of whom argue that the novice graffiti artist should be hanged and/or imprisoned for his tasteless vandalism. In the end, Rull, like many of his mixed up generation, comes out looking like a fool, which is in stark contrast to the novel *The Unadvised* aka *Die Unberatenen* written by Thomas Valentin which *I'm an Elephant, Madame* is

based on, which portrays the angst-ridden anti-hero as an actual hero of sorts.

Featuring absurdist lines like “When it’s raining the revolution will take place in the saloon” and a perturbed far-left protagonist who feels the need to graffiti walls with swastikas to make a point about political ignorance among the general German public, *I’m an Elephant, Madame* is certainly not a mindless tribute to the German student movement, but a superlatively sardonic work that leaves no group unscathed, especially the degenerate generation focused on in the film, which has gone from counter-culture to the mainstream as demonstrated by the fact that Angela Merkel—the present and first female Chancellor of Deutschland—was the secretary for “Agitprop” of the communist ‘Free German Youth’ (FDJ) when she was in high school. Notably, the scene towards the end of *I’m an Elephant, Madame*, which was purposely shot in black-and-white, is essentially documentary footage of the cultural chaos and political confusion that had consumed Germany during the late-1960s. For the swastika scene, Zadek apparently had real people give their reaction to theatrical Rull’s swastika stunt, thus illustrating the range of sociopolitical opinion of post-WWII Germans, including a holocaust survivor who emphatically states that the graffiti artist should be hanged immediately for his stunt juxtaposed against a German that argues that more Aryans than Jews were killed in the Second World War. I personally liked a scene where a nice German fellow argues that a swastika is merely a rune and “old Germanic symbol,” but I nearly fell out of my chair laughing after hearing some leftist loser state regarding Rull’s behavior, “He acted counter-revolutionary...It’s a disgrace,” thus demonstrating the cliché and brainwashed minds of young student activists in Germany during the 1960s. In another notable scene, a newscaster questions two girls about the swastika, asking them if it has any political meaning, which they deny, as if they have never heard of the Third Reich, thus demonstrating the ‘need to forget’ and cultural amnesia among certain Teutons in regard to history.

Undoubtedly, *I’m an Elephant, Madame*, not unlike Jack Nicholson’s forgotten counter-culture flick *Drive, He Said* (1971) is best looked at today as a nice and curious little cultural oddity of a radically repellant zeitgeist best left forgotten. Featuring a scene where protagonist Rull and his boyish girlfriend Billa absurdly yell “Fuck Germany!” for no apparent reason at all, *I’m an Elephant, Madame* can be seen as director Peter Zadek’s celluloid “fuck you” to Germany as a Jew who left the country after the National Socialist takeover, only to come back after the Second World War and make the sort of degenerate cinematic art that would have fueled Uncle Adolf’s flatulence, hence the director’s need to conclude the film with the intertitle “Made in Germany,” as if that was not already apparent. After all, what would be a greater source of revenge for a Jewish filmmaker than to make a film about an entire generation of conflicted Teutonic youth who hate their ex-Nazi parents and seek to turn the Fatherland into some idealistic Trotskyite utopia?! Concluding with a montage of a German soldier

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World War II memorial, and real stock footage of German soldiers dying on the Eastern Front and humiliated German POWs being marched by by the Soviets through the streets of Stalingrad intercut with scenes of students of the gymnasium taking their final examination, *I'm an Elephant, Madame* is, if nothing else, a cynical celebration of kraut cultural chaos. A sort of patently pretentious yet palatable Teutonic 68er-Bewegung equivalent to *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), *I'm an Elephant, Madame* is undoubtedly a film that has not aged gracefully, but is certainly infinitely more entertaining than virtually anything ever directed by New German Cinema ideologue and father figure Alexander Kluge and one of only a handful of German student movement themed works that might appeal to the average American filmgoer, especially pseudo-nostalgic teenagers who fetishize hippies and whatnot.

-Ty E

FROM WITHIN

Phedon Papamichael (2008)

Hollywood has a way of mocking Christians and Christianity every opportunity it gets. Of course, it is not hard to figure out why this occurrence is so prevalent among the movie makers from the Boulevard of broken dreams, but as of recently it has gotten entirely too blatant. Whatever happened to well made blasphemous films like *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) or *Elmer Gantry* (1960) that at least had somewhat questionable religious messages. When possessed girls started shoving crucifixes in their coochies in films like *The Exorcist* directed by Jewish director William Friedkin, the heretical sentiments were more than obvious. Nowadays, it seems that Hollywood vomits a couple hundred anti-Christian films mainly in the horror genre but also branching out into just about every other genre. Today, a film like Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is extremely rebellious and had better gore scenes than most contemporary horror films. Hell, Gibson even managed to piss off the kosher crew by beating them at their own game which I am sure most people can respect. This homely girl is the result of intercourse between Bruce Willis and Demi Moore. I just watched the "horror" film *From Within* which is part of the third *After Dark Horrorfest: 8 Films to Die for* film series. Out of all of the films I have seen in this series, *From Within* is easily the most Anti-Christian. In fact, it is so Anti-Christian that it even offends me and I am far from a saint. I grew up in a somewhat small town and was exposed to stupid superstitious rural folk. You know, the type of Jesus fans that a film like *From Within* portrays as blood thirsty country bumpkins looking blindly to do the lord's work. As a child, I was told by a good Christian child I was going to hell because I never went to church. I also recall a group of holy Negro children telling me that I was going to hell when I was 7 years old because I told them my favorite color was red (maybe because it's the color of the devil and blood or something?). The Christians featured in *From Within* are much more militant than the ones I grew up around, but it is a movie and not reality after all, isn't it? What happens when a series of suicides occur in a small Christian town in the good ole' U.S.A.? The good JC fans in *From Within* ignore the occurrences and cling tighter to their bibles. After some time though, the reason for the suicides becomes apparent when a nonbeliever named Aidan insults Christianity to a fanatical Christian teenager named Dylan who happens to be the son of the Pastor (who secretly likes to play buttdarts!). Aidan gets Dylan back though by stealing his virginal girlfriend and showing her why purity is boring. Of course, Dylan unleashes an angry mob (or just a few rednecks in a pick-up truck) on poor wussy pseudo-Goth boi Aiden. Aiden's mother, who dabbled in witchcraft, had her life cut short by the very same townspeople. *From Within*, is another one of those films that show why living in a small town where you know everyone is bad and can lead to death. *From Within* has all the signa-

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ture anti-Christian clichés that have become ever so popular with each passing year in Hollywood. The film features hateful and self-righteous Christian psychos, Christians looking to kill nonbelievers in the name of Christ, Christians lacking a sense of humor, Christian rednecks, Gay false prophet pastors, and the ever so popular Christian irrational hostility to outsiders. As much as I hate most evangelical types that I encounter, I felt that *From Within* was just stupid hateful trash. The most symbolic of this stupidity is having Adam Goldberg, the whiniest Jew in movies since Woody Allen, playing a tough redneck ex-con turned Christian crusader for Christ. This type of genius casting is equivalent to having Arnold Schwarzenegger playing a Rabbi in a film where he gives prayers to liberated Jews at Dachau concentration camp in 1945. I don't know, maybe Adam Goldberg wanted to pretend he had a pair of testicles for once in his life by playing a redneck. Poor Goldie, it was impossible for him to cover up the peculiar sounds that come out of his mouth when he talks even while playing a blue collar hooligan. *Kosher Commando Adam Goldberg* is not fooling anyone. *From Within* is one of those films that just demands you to feel how badly it sucks. With the film's series of suicides, it makes one wonder if that was the act intended for the viewer by the director after watching the film. The only possible way for one to get *From Within* out of their mind after watching it is to end one's tainted life there afterwards. For someone that has been a nonbeliever and outspoken against the obvious hypocrisies of Christianity from an early age, I even felt like I was going to hell after watching *From Within*. It makes me almost wish there was a hell so that I could rest easy at night knowing that filmmakers like Steven Spielberg would be getting a pitchfork in the ass while being escorted into hell by the devil himself.

-Ty E

GENERATION WAR

Phil Flora (1996)

During the late-1970s, the American television network NBC produced a kitschy sentimentalist 4-part mini-series entitled *Holocaust* (1978) starring Hollywood stars like Meryl Streep and James Woods that was so popular in West Germany that, as German history Alf Lüdtke wrote in his essay *Coming to Terms with the Past: Illusions of Remembering, Ways of Forgetting Nazism in West Germany*, no less than 20 million Teutons (or about 50% of the country's entire population) managed to see it, thereupon initiating a prevailing dialogue among post-Nazi Aryans about German culpability in the Second World War and thus ultimately demonstrating that Germans born after the war were much more susceptible to borderline tasteless propaganda of the hokey Hollywood-manufactured sort. While *Holocaust* more or less intrigued nearly half the entire German populous, many filmmakers associated with German New Cinema found the mini-series downright offensive, with auteur Edgar Reitz once complaining: "The difference between a scene that rings true and a scene written by commercial scriptwriters, as in *HOLOCAUST*, is similar to that between 'experience' and 'opinion'. Opinions about events can be circulated separately, manipulated, and pushed across desk, bought and sold. Experiences, on the other hand, are tied to human beings and their faculty of memory, they become false or falsified when living details are replaced in an effort to eliminate subjectivity and uniqueness. There are thousands of stories among our people that are worth being filmed [...] Authors all over the world are trying to take possession of their history [...] The most serious act of expropriation occurs when people are deprived of their history. With *HOLOCAUST*, the Americans have taken away our history." Luckily, Reitz and various other German filmmakers decided to respond by taking back their history by creating some of the greatest masterpieces of German New Cinema in what would be a reasonably successful campaign to counter carelessly contrived mythmaking works like *Holocaust*. Indeed, Reitz's *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), Volker Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum* (1979), Alexander Kluge's *Die Patriotin* (1979) aka *The Patriot*, and Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany Pale Mother* (1980), among countless other films, demonstrated that Germans had their own unique perspective regarding the Second World War and that they had much more to say than a couple of Germanophobic Hebraic Hollywood producers who would not dare set one foot in the country of poets and thinkers, as well as blood and soil. Unfortunately, as the somewhat recently released ZDF-produced German mini-series *Generation War* (2013) aka *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* (translation literally meaning "Our Mothers, Our Fathers") makes quite clear, ethno-masochism and self-flagellation has only all the more engulfed the Teutonic *Volksgeist* since the release of *Holocaust*.

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Carefully marketed as a true and honest depiction of the Second World War from a supposedly 'everyday German' perspective of that time period, *Generation War* has been described by various moronic reviewers as everything from "pro-Nazi" to vehemently anti-Polish, yet it ultimately features much of the same sort of Zionist-produced sensational filmic feces that is routinely excreted out of Hollywood, as a work featuring a middle-aged SS officer deriving almost sexual glee from shooting a prepubescent Jewish girl for no apparent reason (in fact, the same SS man is later shown during the same episode with the kosher blood still on his neck (!), as if it was an honor for German soldiers to walk around with Jewish vital fluids on their body), as well as handsome and archetypically Aryan-looking SS officer giving his mistress a DIY abortion by punching her in the stomach as hard he can. Undoubtedly, what makes the mini-series offensive to Jews and left-wingers is that it clearly distinguishes between suavely dressed sadomasochistic Schutzstaffel psychopaths and the average and regular 'apolitical' Germans. A nearly 280-minute, three-part mini-series that tells the ostensibly dejecting story of five young adult friends—two brothers in the Wehrmacht, a novice nurse, an aspiring 'diva,' and a Jewish tailor—that meet for one last time in 1941 before going their separate ways and all experiencing a unique, if not similarly harrowing and dehumanizing, odyssey of destruction that spans a 5 year period and concludes with the capitulation of the Third Reich and the would-be-tragic deaths of two of the characters, *Generation War* essentially portrays the Germans as exceedingly naive human whores that were unwittingly devoured and defecated out again by a cannibalistic Hitlerite machine with a gas chamber hidden in the back. A partially fantasy-based work where all Jews are portrayed as morally pristine supporters of Germany and a dashing Wehrmacht lieutenant hangs out with his Hebraic homey in public in 1941 as if it was common for Aryans and Jews to chill together and dance with young girls while listening to degenerate jazz music at that point in the war, the mini-series certainly sometimes borders on the absurd, so of course, it features enough sentimentalism to keep the average viewer from using their grey matter. A patently pathetic pity party without any real meaning or purpose where any sort of heroism that German soldiers may have had is completely discredited and where the average SS officer is portrayed as a sinisterly satanic sicko with an unquenchable thirst for the blood of god's chosen tribe, *Generation War* is a complete abject mockery of the already relentlessly besmirched and reviled era of Aryans that it depicts and purports to tell truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about. Of course, the series is really just a slave-morality-ridden fantasy that delights in portraying dishonor, dehumanization, desperation, and derangement, as if those are admirable qualities or something.

Beginning in Berlin 1941 on the eve of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, *Generation War* is narrated by a short Lieutenant named Wilhelm Winter (Volker Bruch) of the 'Windhund Company' of the Wehrmacht (German

army) who has already seen action in both Poland and France and is about to take his equally short brother Friedhelm (played by perennial twink Tom Schilling)—a “bookworm who loves Rimbaud and Jünger” (despite the fact he is a patent pacifist and Ernst Jünger wrote *Storm of Steel* (1920), which is considered the rival work to pansy Remarque’s 1929 anti-war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*)—to wage war on the Eastern Front. Before leaving to destroy the Bolshevik beast in the east, Wilhelm and Friedhelm have a party with their lifelong childhood friends, which include would-be-singer Greta (Katharina Schüttler), novice nurse Charlotte aka Charley (Miriam Stein), and Jewish tailor Viktor Goldstein (Ludwig Trepte). While Charlotte is desperately in love with Wilhelm and he knows it, the soldier does not want to pursue a romantic relationship with her until after the war just in case he dies. A proud race-mixer and lover of degenerate American swing music, Greta is in a relationship with Jew Viktor, who was supposed to inherit his WWI veteran father’s tailor shop, but it was destroyed during the so-called “Night of Broken Glass” (aka *Kristallnacht*). Ultimately, the five friends’ last night together concludes after a super Aryan Gestapo agent named Sturmbannführer Martin Dorn (Mark Waschke) shows up and states, “I got a report of swing music with Jews.” Ultimately, Hebrew-humper Greta will become Dorn’s whore, as the barmaid uses him so she can weasel her way out of an incitement charge for playing swing music and further her career as a singer. Indeed, despite developing a ‘Latin’ persona (she adopts the pseudonym ‘Greta Del Torres’), Greta ultimately sings for propaganda purposes on the Eastern Front.

Of course, it does not take long for the five friends to have their illusions regarding the 1000-year Reich destroyed. While Wilhelm is at first a highly respected lieutenant that has the complete allegiance of his men, he eventually becomes so completely disillusioned with the war after his entire platoon is eventually exterminated that he becomes a deserter, thus resulting in his arrest by Feldgendarmerie officers and sentence to death for treason, though he is eventually punished with being forced to become a member of a Strafbattalion (Penal Battalion) instead since Germany is losing the war and cannot afford to waste soldiers. Despite being initially an idealistic pacifist who hates the war and is even beaten up for cowardice and cynicism by his comrades, Friedhelm eventually becomes a cold and calculating, if not pathetic, killer, though he is almost killed at one point after being mistaken for a Russian soldier (he temporarily puts on a Red Army uniform to escape from a building that has been taken over by the Soviets). Luckily, Charlotte, who is a nurse on the Eastern Front, manages to save Friedhelm from a seemingly certain death. Believing Wilhelm is dead after being told such by Friedhelm, who could have sworn he saw his brother killed, Charlotte starts screwing the middle-aged head doctor at the field hospital she works at. After discovering that a middle-aged woman that she has hired to volunteer at the hospital, Lilja (Christiane Paul), is actually

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a Jew, Charlotte feels betrayed and gets the crypto-Judaic arrested. Meanwhile, Greta gets her fiendish fuckbuddy Dorn to create fake identity papers for Viktor so he can escape Germany, but the Gestapo agent betrays her and has her Jewish boyfriend shipped in a cattle car to a concentration camp, though the clever Hebrew manages to escape on the way upon learning that Jews are being slaughtered like lambs and he eventually joins up with some Polish partisans who are even more anti-Semitic than the SS, so he continues to shield his true identity. In the end, Wilhelm manages to survive the war by killing his sadistic Straf-battalion leader and heading back to Germany on foot, Friedhelm becomes an executioner/protégé of a Svengali SD officer named Hiemer (played by Sylvester Groth, who is best known for playing Goebbels in Tarantino's *Inglourious Bastards* (2009)) and later sacrifices himself to save a unit of Volkssturm soldiers that is largely comprised of young Hitler Youth boys, Charlotte is raped by a Soviet savage after her field hospital is overrun by bestial bolsheviks yet she manages to survive after the noble Jewess she once betrayed, Lilja, shows up as a Soviet officer and spares her life, Greta is imprisoned after telling Dorn's wife about their affair and committing 'Wehrkraftzersetzung' ("subversion of the war effort") and is later executed for her crimes, and Viktor manages to survive both the Nazis and Polish partisans. At the conclusion of *Generation War*, the three surviving friends—Wilhelm, Charlotte, and Viktor—meet back at the same bar they did in 1941 for a mostly melancholy reunion, with Germany being in complete ruins and American GIs occupying every corner. In a major "fuck you" to the United States and its hypocritical utilization of Nazis after the Second World War (most infamously, during 'Project Paperclip'), it is revealed that SS officer Dorn, who punched his pregnant mistress Greta in the stomach before sentencing her to death, has been hired by American GIs, who are well aware about his infamous past, to work as a bureaucrat for the new 'democratic' West German government.

Undoubtedly, you know a film is plagued by self-loathing and self-pity, meekness and weakness, and spiritual castration when an American film like Sam Peckinpah's *Cross of Iron* (1977), which is firmly anti-Nazi, manages to do a much better job at least portraying some Germans as stoic war heroes with titanic testicular fortitude. Indeed, *Generation War* seems like a pathetic plea created by a group of culturally cuckolded krauts who want to join the cult of victimhood like so many so-called minorities have. Seen by no less than 7 million German households when it premiered in 2013, this sub-middlebrow mini-series has now guaranteed that a whole new generation of Germans will go on looking at their grandparents and great-grandparents (why they absurdly decided to name the series "Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter" aka "Our Mothers, Our Fathers" is a complete mystery to me) as moronic cowards and opportunists who were easily duped into going to hell and back by a rather unimpressive dude with a Charlie Chaplin mustache. Undoubtedly, one of the worst lies associated with

the mini-series is that it ostensibly does something revolutionary by depicting WWII from a reasonably objective perspective, yet this was already done many decades ago and in a much more intelligent and artistically merited fashion by auteur filmmakers associated with German New Cinema like Fassbinder, Syberberg, Reitz, and even a feminist like Sanders-Brahms and a Marxist like Kluge. What makes *Generation War* even more repellant than it already is, is that it feebly attempts to associate itself with the grand legacy of German history, as is especially apparent in a scene where a portrait of German expressionist master auteur F.W. Murnau appears briefly. Of course, the mini-series is really the putrid pansy production of self-loathing krauts that were bred on a steady diet of Hollywood swill growing up and have watched too many episodes of *Band of Brothers* (2001). Of course, the series also panders to Jews, with its token Jewish character Viktor and unflattering depiction of Polack partisans as bigger Heeb-haters than the Nazis themselves being quite blatant examples of this.

A 'major event' mini-series that is more or less as aesthetically and historically worthless as ABC's *Holocaust*, *Generation War* is just more proof that the Germans will always be consumed with guilt and will never get over the Second World War, at least not anytime during this century. For anyone who wants to see a truly epic and truly Teutonic film that takes a sincere approach to German twentieth century history and the troubled relationships between different generations of Germans, you can probably do no better than Edgar Reitz's mega-neo-Heimat movie *Heimat*, which begins with a shot of a boulder with the words "Made in Germany" engraved on it for good reason. *Generation War*, on the other hand, might as well begin with an inter-title reading, "Made in kraut cuckoldland where the spirit of Spielberg trumped Syberberg and where guilt is as good as gold." Indeed, like a *German Gone with the Wind* where Scarlett O'Hara opts for suicide instead of bravely fighting on, *Generation War* depicts the physical and spiritual annihilation of an entire people, yet begs for shallow pity and contempt in the end instead of demanding the German people fight on, which is a sentiment that no one can truly respect, not even the perennially defeated Polacks in Poland or the dying Khoisan in South Africa.

-Ty E

THE SIN OF NORA MORAN
THE SIN OF NORA MORAN

Phil Goldstone (1933)

In traditional pre-globalized puritanical Amerikkka, one would most certainly be at a loss to find genuine expressions of art and themes of moral unscrupulousness in movies. Sure, even to this day, the business-minded Hollywood studios continue to refrain from creating actual cinematic art and large segments of the America populous still keeps their irrational minds firmly encased in a medieval pseudo-Nazarene ghetto, but unconventional cinema has, thankfully, managed to marginally flourish since the post-WWII era as proven by works like Kenneth Anger's iconic fetishistic masculine leather flick *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and Vincent Gallo's feeble foreplay-ridden blowjob diary *Brown Bunny* (2003). Of course, a handful of American filmmakers were able to create artistically significant libertine works like Alla Nazimova's ultra-campy Beardsley-esque production of *Salomé* (1923) and the reasonably Biblically-correct homoerotic avant-garde short *Lot In Sodom* (1933) during the Pre-Code era, but, unfortunately, most of these films were neglected up their initial releases and thus, unsurprisingly, have remained all but forgotten in a mongrelized nation that has always prided itself on its mass-man 'culture' of vile peasant supremacy. Recently, I happened to come across the uncommonly risqué avant-garde crime melodrama *The Sin of Nora Moran* (1933) aka *Voice from the Grave* directed by Phil Goldstone. Featuring premarital sexual promiscuity and high-class adultery, gross political corruption, noxious crimes of passion, and all around debauchery and criminality from prohibition era America, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is a film that is in the highly entertaining epicurean spirit of HBO's popular television series *Boardwalk Empire*. What makes the film especially interesting is that it was actually created during the era it portrays, yet, unlike most vintage Hollywood films of a similar but sapless sort created around the same time, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is distinctly uncompromising in its portrayal of ruling class corruption and rampant societal decadence. On top of candidly portraying the true grittiness and unwavering nihilistic hedonism of the era, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is an artistically ambitious and potent work that takes a totally transcendent yet agreeably mellifluous approach to storytelling, which has more in common with early European surrealist and arthouse works than the typical Hollywood crime and film noir flicks of that era.

The Sin of Nora Moran follows a sweet but tragic girl who has suffered immensely and without end during her ill-fated yet relatively far-flung life. Orphaned, raped, exploited, betrayed, and imprisoned, beautiful babyface Nora Moran (played by Banat-German-American actresses Zita Johann) is a lovely little lady who has led a life of grave contretemps, but she remains as darling and dainty as ever during her increasingly accursed personal journey. Essentially, Nora is the archetypal adversary of the typical film noir femme fatale.

While most film noir flicks portray the female lead as a conspiring succubus of sorts, Nora Moran of *The Sin of Nora Moran* is a natural victim who, against her somewhat strong will, becomes a virtual sex doll for men to rape, abuse, and ultimately dispose of. Although a mere quasi-burlesque circus performer trying to survive in an intrinsically ungodly world, Nora finds herself blindly climbing an ethically crooked social ladder and becoming the veiled mistress of a powerful yet disastrously irresponsible governor named Bill Crawford (played by Paul Cavanagh). When circus lion tamer Paulino (played by John Miljan) – a patently malicious man who also happens to be Nora’s personal serial rapist – finds out about the hopelessly star-crossed love affair, he naively conspires to blackmail the governor, but not without fatal results. After the accidental slaying of supreme degenerate Paulino, poor Nora, a selfless girl with seemingly no future, decides to take the blame, thus saving governor Bill and a conspiring District Attorney named John Grant (played by Alan Dinehart) from a career-shattering political scandal and a hot date with the electric chair. The short and sad story of Nora Moran is told from a variety of extravagant recollections and flashbacks-within-flashbacks and narrated by the District Attorney. Predating Christopher Nolan’s *Memento* (2000) and the films of Quentin Tarantino by well over half a century, Nora’s horribly hexed life story is told in a delightfully discordant manner of meticulously deconstructed chronology. *The Sin of Nora Moran* also features a grim glimpse inside Nora’s calamitous subconscious as she awaits her deplorable and wholly undeserved destiny on death row. Defying the fundamental plot and theme conventions of virtually every Hollywood film ever created, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is a daring downer that offers no happy endings nor any form of solace for the viewer; a fact the film hints at from the very beginning.

Despite its hyper doom and gloom buffet of murder, rape, and suicide, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is, in consummation, an abnormally gorgeous go-getter of a film that was lavishly assembled with a broken moral compass and a keen eye for artistic focus, but, of course, it has its flaws. Being a product of its era, *The Sin of Nora Moran* does have its share of aged-based thematic spoilage; most specifically, it’s surely outdated and modernly mundane portrayal of sin, which seems quite absurd in our present age of pronounced mass communal devolution. After all, I doubt the 1930s featured such everyday absurdities as members of the white bourgeois dressing like impoverished ghetto blacks and vice versa, and where even college professor speak colloquially and boast of sexual conquests and the need for violent social unrest. While viewing the film, I often found the District Attorney’s stoic and articulate narration to be unintentionally humorous as his once-common manner of refined ‘anglophile’ speech is now all but obsolete, henceforth linguistically deteriorating into the hooked-on-ebonics nation America is today. Naturally, the delinquent philandering antics of the manslaughtering governor seem quite tame by today’s standards as we now live

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in a country where a recent ex-president and ardent adulterer found great joy in showing his cigar in a husky Hebrew girl's snatch and where the current president is a literal double-bastard with anti-western Fanonian sympathies. In short, *The Sin of Nora Moran* is a classy, if somewhat outmoded and very slightly thematically moldy, tale of domestic transgression gone terribly awry. Combined with a spectacular nonlinear technique of mesmeric avant-garde storytelling that is comparable to F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and the once-assumed-lost Preston Sturges' penned work *The Power and Glory* (1933), *The Sin of Nora Moran* is an ideally idiosyncratic work that will seem like a recovered lost treasure to any serious and adventurous cinephile. In a manner of truly brazen blasphemy, *Nora Moran*, an 'unclean' girl of extra easy virtue, is betrayed and sacrificed for the sins of others just as Jesus Christ was. Like his fellow Hebraic kinsmen and low-budget carny filmmaker Lloyd Kaufman, *The Sin of Nora Moran* director Phil Goldstone was mainly a producer and peddler of smut, but he did have his moment(s) of brilliance. Although, I cannot say that I have seen most of his films (the majority of which seem to have deteriorated in some forgotten studio vaults), which range from obscure c-grade westerns like *Montana Bill* (1921) to exploitative works about venereal diseases like *Damaged Goods* (1937), *The Sin of Nora Moran* is indubitably Phil Goldstone's 'Citizen Kane' (and apparently this little b-movie did inspire Mr. Welles' masterpiece).

-Ty E

THE CONFORMIST

Phil Mulloy (1991)

By sheer happenstance, I watched Bernardo Bertolucci's arguable magnum opus *Il conformista* (1970) aka *The Conformist* for the very first time only a couple days before the Italian auteur died. As a longtime cinephile, it might seem inexplicable that I would wait so long to watch a purported great masterpiece of cinema history, but I have always had very strong mixed feelings about Bertolucci and surely regard him as among my least favorite of the great post-WWII *guido* filmmakers, namely due to his idiotically expressed political views and rather 'cosmopolitan' international career. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, out of all the Italian filmmakers, Bertolucci made the most successful transition to Hollywood and the international English-language market, as if his own nation and culture meant very little to him aside from as a tiresome tool to express his insipid political views, thereupon making it all the more ironic that Pier Paolo Pasolini—a fellow poet that, despite being a gay Marxist, basked in his *guidoness*, whether it be high or lowbrow—was more or less responsible for jump-starting his career by hiring him to work as first assistant on his debut feature *Accattone* (1961) and then co-penning (with help from his protégé Sergio Citti) his directorial debut *La commare secca* (1962) aka *The Grim Reaper*. Quite aesthetically different from anything else that he would later direct and indubitably Pasolinian in terms of theme and gritty realist location and mostly lewd lumpenproletariat characters, *The Grim Reaper* is like a *guido* ghetto reworking of Akira Kurosawa's classic *Rashômon* (1950) that reveals very little about the auteur's political persuasion aside from a general interest in street people. It was not until I had the grand displeasure of watching his beyond bloated five-hour neo-bolshevik epic *1900* (1976) aka *Novecento*—a film so sinisterly stupid in its mundane Marxist agit-prop and smugly contrived displays of the grotesque that it depicts a blackshirt fascist portrayed by Donald Sutherland not only gleefully killing a kitty cat via headbutting, but also bashing in the brains of a fascist little boy that he and his overweight bitch lover just molested—that I had to write-off Bertolucci as nothing more than a petty propagandist that hypocritically utilized Hollywood cash and stars to make unintentionally cheesy commie cinematic crap, hence why it took me so long to finally take the plunge and watch *The Conformist*. After all, I have no problem appreciating the work of commie artists as I regard both Pasolini and Visconti as being among my favorite filmmakers, but I cannot stomach someone that is so dishonestly dehumanizing and one-dimensional in their preposterously insincere pro-prole propaganda. Somewhat surprisingly, Bertolucci's fascist era flick is great and everything that *1900* isn't in terms of being rather nuanced, ambiguous, thoughtful, and even sometimes strikingly idiosyncratic (indeed, it is probably the only film will you find that features a surreal fascist dance party comprised of blind people).

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Luckily, despite being based on a novel by a Jewish communist by the name of Alberto Moravia—a half-heeb that had a somewhat schizophrenic genetic lineage in the sense that he had famous kosher paternal commie cousins that were murdered by Mussolini but also a fascist leader Augusto De Marsanich as a maternal uncle—The Conformist is arguably not only Bertolucci's most aesthetically complex and ambitious film, but also his most esoteric, otherworldly, and enigmatic to the point of seeming like a elliptical fascist nightmare of the perversely purgatorial sort where the emotional essence (as opposed to the historical facts) are depicted in a surprisingly poetic fashion. Naturally, a film of such a ambitious and ambiguous nature has invited varying, sometimes contradicting, theories and critiques from, rather unfortunately, mostly left-wing and communist sources. For example, in his classic text of turgid tediousness *The Altering Eye: Contemporary International Cinema* (1983), Hebraic film academic Robert Phillip Kolker made the rather dubious argument that, "THE CONFORMIST is one of a group of films, beginning with *ROME*, *OPEN CITY* and of which Visconti's *THE DAMNED* is a major example, that attempt to discuss fascism as a manifestation of perverted or misaligned sexuality. One source for this is perhaps Wilhelm Reich's *THE MASS PSYCHOLOGY OF FASCISM* as well as the historical realities of Nazi experimentations, eugenics, and fascism's obsessively male-centered ideology. Fascism is an ideology of denial and destruction, the romance of sacrifice and conquest brought to a climax in the abjuring of any human quality but the ability to kill and die. In truth it does not emerge from aberrant sexuality nor lead to it. Aberration occurs in its turning sexuality, as it turns any other human activity, into a thing to be used in a destructive way. Fascists are not degenerates [...] but the cause of degeneration; yet sexual perversity remains a favored means of explaining fascism or demonstrating its effects." While Reich was indeed a sexually abusive quack that rightly died in jail where all obscenely socially deleterious beings should, Kolker seems to have borrowed his understanding of fascism from Steven Spielberg, on top of completely ignoring the fact that, despite political persuasion, virtually all of the protagonists in Bertolucci's films are perverts of some sort, including the leftist ones. In fact, although surely somewhat sexually sick, the titular 'fascist' of *The Conformist* suffers from an understandable affliction, most notably post-traumatic stress, as a result of shooting a queer chauffeur that attempted to molest him when he was just a wee little lad, thereupon causing him to grow up into a somewhat screwed up individual that puts a premium on normalcy as a means to compensate for both his trauma and conflicted sexuality, hence his strong desire to prove himself as a fascist spy.

Simultaneously sympathetic and sickening like a perennially wounded animal that will go to any self-debasing low to soothe his seemingly perennial pain, the film's unconventional antihero, Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant)—the seemingly forsaken prodigy of a junky whore mother and loony institutional-

ized father that once had the honor of seeing Hitler stereotypically speak in a beer hall—cannot even really be seen as a true fascist as he would commit the same exact morally bankrupt betrayals for a communist regime, hence how he is able to so easily reunite with an exiled communist teacher-mentor named Professor Luca Quadri (Enzo Tarascio) that he has been hired to spy on. Not unlike Martin Ritt's John le Carré adaptation *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1965)—a film that makes the Cold War seem like a Kafka-esque nightmare where the lunatics have taken over the asylum—the film completely destroys the silly James Bond myth and depicts spies as the ultimate unscrupulous gutter-dwelling scum-bags and shiftier snakes. Ultimately, the film not only reveals the antihero to be an abject failure as a fascist, but also as a spy. Indeed, when Marcello cannot gain the testicular fortitude to kill his professor pal, a real fascist named Special Agent Manganiello (Gastone Moschin)—a virtual caricature of fascist will-to-power prowess that literally masturbates while fantasizing about executing undesirable *untermenschen* and is comparable to fascist politician Roberto Farinacci in terms of making Mussolini seem like a liberal eunuch by comparison due to his extreme anti-clerical and counter-kosher stances—carries out the job with the help of his shadowy underlings, but not before declaring in the presence of the pathetic protagonist, “For my money, cowards, pederasts, Jews are all the same. If it was up to me I'd line them all against the wall. Better, kill them at birth.” Of course, this short yet powerful piece of dialogue ends any lingering sense of doubt as to whether Marcello is a true fascist or not (in fact, in a scene where his handler cynically reveals that most fascist spies are monetary-motivated, it becomes clear that few of these fascists were ‘true believer’ types). In short, like in any society, the characters of *The Conformist* naturally adapt to their political climate, which completely changes by the end of the film, thus underscoring this unfortunate yet not-all-that-surprising human tendency.

When Orson Welles stated in a 1958 interview, “All of the eloquence of film is created in the editing room,” he surely could have had Bertolucci's masterpiece in mind as it is a film that is seemingly immaculate in terms of narrative structure despite being depicted largely from the perspective of a mental defective of sorts. With its elliptical editing that can be compared to Henry Jaglom's much inferior debut *A Safe Place* (1971) and the films of the late great British auteur Nicolas Roeg (who incidentally only died a couple days before Bertolucci), *The Conformist* reveals a individual whose perturbed psyche acts as an ‘unreliable narrator’ of sorts. Haunted by an exceedingly epicene homo from his childhood that he incorrectly believes he killed, Marcello has a deep all-consuming fear of his own latent sexuality and thus obtains a ‘beard’ in the form of a terribly dumb yet beautiful flapper-like wife named Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli) that he openly admits he has next to nil sexual or emotional interest in. Although Marcello does fall in love with his professor's young blonde wife Anna Quadri

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(Dominique Sanda), she proves to be a sexually flexible lesbian of sorts. Somewhat curiously, in two different sexually foreboding scenarios that underscore the protagonist's delicate mental state, Marcello randomly encounters Anna—or at least her archetypal doppelgänger—twice in semi-surreal situations before he ever officially meets her, including lying provocatively on the desk of a fascist official and lurking around a baroque brothel. Undoubtedly, aggressive bisexual Anna is a symbol of the ideal yet ultimately unobtainable archetypal female for the protagonist, so naturally he plays an imperative role in her grisly and ultimately completely pointless death. Indeed, like a perverse tribute to Oscar Wilde's words, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves," Marcello not only plays a (pathetically passive) role in murdering Anna, but also ultimately his own soul, hence his eventual breakdown near the very end of the film where he randomly happens upon Pasqualino 'Lino' Semirama (Pierre Clémenti)—the homosexual chauffeur that he wrongly assumed he killed as a child—and has a dangerous public freakout that really underscores the antihero's morbidly conflicted mindset. Indeed, not only does Marcello project his own crimes onto a completely bewildered Lino, who has no clue who the protagonist is, and accuse him of being the "assassin" that killed Professor Quadri and his wife Anna, but he also attacks his sole friend Italo Montanari (José Quaglio)—a blind fascist radio host—and accuses him of being a "fascist" and killer. Of course, it is hinted that the protagonist secretly resents Italo throughout the film, as he reminds him of his much loathed 'otherness.' In fact, when Italo notes they are both "different" and thus "two of a kind," Marcello becomes visibly annoyed. Clearly a fascist more out of necessity as a cripple than any sort of die-hard blackshirt, Italo also reveals he understands Marcello better than anyone else in the film by declaring to him, "It's funny though, you know? Everyone would like to be different from the others, but instead you want to be the same as everyone else." Undoubtedly, probably more lucidly than any other film that I have ever seen, *The Conformist* confirms C.G. Jung's wise words, "The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely."

While Marcello and his pathetically pathologically unhinged mind are the central focus of the film, there is no question that Bertolucci basks in exposing the deceptive beauty of the two female leads, especially Anna Quadri, who not only echoes Simonetta Vespucci in terms of her classic resplendent European beauty, but also some of the great divas of cinema history, including Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. Indeed, as Robin Wood noted in *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980) edited by Richard Roud, "In the context of Bertolucci's work, Anna becomes especially interesting: her 'decadent' characteristics correspond closely to the Sternberg/Ophüls/Welles side of Bertolucci's artistic allegiances, and that side is particularly pronounced in *THE CONFORMIST*, the most stylistically luxuriant film he has made [...] But the stylistic wager of *THE CONFORMIST* is only partly to be explained in terms of superfluous rhetoric:

many scenes—one thinks immediately of the dance-floor sequence, but there is no shortage of possible examples—are brought off with the superb assurance of an artist completely caught up in what he is doing, so that any discrepancy between effect and meaning disappears. The film, whether despite or because of its confusions, remains among the most fascinating of the past decade.” While Anna seems to be the auteur’s ideal woman in terms of pulchritude of both physique and personality, Marcello’s wife Giulia—a sort of brain-dead guidette Louise Brooks—acts as Bertolucci’s idea of a sort of dangerously passive dumb broad as her contrived good-looks mask a sort of dangerous idiocy-cum-apathy towards the sort of politics that Bertolucci despises. Both painfully bourgeois and immune to the more ugly extremes of feminist degeneration, the dark-haired Giulia is in stark contrast to the ‘liberated’ Sapphic blonde Anna. Still, neither woman can be described as upholding any sort of fascist ideal, though Giulia eventually gives birth to a child. As for Anna, she is senselessly destroyed by the fascist machine because she happens to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, which is rather fitting in a film that puts a premium on the absurdity of existence, especially when it comes to human interpersonal relationships.

Not unlike ‘fascist’ padrone played Robert De Niro in his subsequent epic *1900*, the titular character of *The Conformist* is a mentally and sexually feeble failure that manages to betray his real sole friend in the end. While I do not know all that much about Bertolucci’s tendencies toward betrayal, I think it is safe to say simply judging by his films that the auteur was a sexually degenerate pervert with a strange mind that was certainly lacking in terms of traditional male virtues and that his fascist characters were merely (possibly unconscious) stand-ins for himself. Indeed, with these fascist characters, the filmmaker projected all his own weaknesses and flaws onto the fascist enemy while celebrating an imagined neo-bolshevik ideal like the sexually potent and heroic commie peasant organizer portrayed by Gérard Depardieu in *1900*. As the son of a successful Italian poet that used his padre’s connections to ignite his filmmaking career, Bertolucci was certainly bourgeois and hardly made of the same stern stuff worthy of a Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo painting. In fact, in his classic text *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (1983), Peter Bondanella would confirm my suspicions when he argued, “...as a coherent explanation of the birth of a Fascist, *THE CONFORMIST* fails just as certainly as did the theories of Wilhelm Reich in *THE MASS PSYCHOLOGY OF FASCISM* (1933) or of Erich Fromm in *ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM* (1941), works which obviously influenced Bertolucci’s adaptation of Moravia’s novel. By placing the ultimate origin of Marcello’s conformity and his desire for normality in the realm of Marcello’s unconscious (the lingering memory of a homosexual attack), Bertolucci undermines any Marxist explanation of the rise of Italian Fascism through class struggle or middle-class repression of the working class. Paradoxically, although Bertolucci asserts in a number of interviews that

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Marcello embodies the middle-class origins of Italian Fascism, there is no evidence in the film to support this position. On the contrary, the only milieu ever reflected in *THE CONFORMIST*, that of the decadent bourgeoisie, includes not only Marcello and his family but also the anti-Fascist Quadri couple as well. Anna Quadri's lesbianism, as well as her husband's obvious voyeuristic pleasure in observing her sexual escapades with members of her sex, mark the anti-Fascists of the picture as members of the same decadent class to which Marcello belongs." Needless to say, *The Conformist* is not the sort of film a real (lumpen)prole would direct, especially when you compare them to the bawdy flicks of real working-class auteur Sergio Citti like *Ostia* (1970), *Casotto* (1977) aka *Beach House*, and *Due pezzi di pane* (1979) aka *Happy Hoboes*. Incidentally, like with Bertolucci, Pasolini co-penned Citti's debut *Ostia*.

A sort of bourgeois bohemian, Bertolucci seems very much typical of left-wingers from his class and generation in that his politics seem to be largely inspired self-loathing as opposed to any sort of organic sense of solidarity with the working-class. Of course, such seemingly self-contradictory behavior is, historically speaking, nothing new. Indeed, as Ted Kaczynski, who spent his entire academic career surrounded by bourgeois leftist types, once rightly wrote, "Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals), or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with their problems." Demonstrating that he is the sort of stereotypical leftist NPC that associates anything that is traditional and western as 'fascistic,' Bertolucci actually had the gall to state in a 1971 interview on French television, "Historical Fascism is dead, but middle class is always there, firmly in its place," thus underscoring that, like with the weaklings of antifa today, the auteur had a sort of primal fear of a sort of imagined fascist bogeyman despite never ever actually experiencing real fascism. Of course, as Uncle Ted also wrote, "Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good and successful. They hate America, they hate Western civilization, they hate white males, they hate rationality. The reasons that leftists give for hating the West, etc., clearly do not correspond with their real motives. They SAY they hate the West because it is warlike, imperialistic, sexist, ethnocentric and so forth, but where these same faults appear in socialist countries or in primitive cultures, the leftist finds excuses for them, or at best he GRUDGINGLY admits that they exist; whereas he ENTHUSIASTICALLY points out (and often greatly exaggerates) these faults where they appear in Western civilization. Thus it is clear that these faults are not the leftist's real motive for hating America and the West. He hates America and the West because they are strong and successful." Undoubtedly, what makes *The Conformist* antihero Marcello slightly more respectable than

the average bourgeois degenerate (and, of course, absolutely loathsome to someone like Bertolucci) is that he opts to side with a powerful movement instead of taking the slave-morality route by identifying with a victim class.

Undoubtedly, the only reason that *The Conformist* manages to display any sort of empathy for Marcello due to the very fact he is an irrational failure, which Bertolucci seemed to greatly identify with (despite his later great success as a filmmaker). In fact, although eponymous protagonist of his later epic *The Last Emperor* (1987) is a Manchurian monarch, Bertolucci seemed to identify with this character as well for similar reasons. Even in 1900—a film that almost rivals a Michael Bay flick in terms of its fiercely one-dimensional portrayal of villains—displays a sort of disgustingly morbid empathy for the pathetic fascist padrone played by De Niro. As David Thomson speculated in his classic cinematic reference guide, *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (1975) in regard to the scene where the ‘hero’ acts passively as his lover Anna is brutally killed, “The finale is passionate, whereas the logic of the film is to show that the man without passion is symptomatic of the modern world. In part, this may be because Bertolucci’s sympathy for the cold-hearted, isolated fascist hero was too great to deny his crucial action the elements of performance. The killing was, therefore, the crab’s dance, in response to the serpentine feminine dance earlier in the film that obliquely humiliates him. The idea of *THE CONFORMIST*, of this natural, unveil, but detached man, was graver and more penetrating than Bertolucci’s pleasure at cinematic expression.” In short, quite unlike his previous film *Partner*, which is full of distancing and other then-vogue alienation techniques, *The Conformist* thankfully is not contaminated with too much Godard-inspired Brechtian bullshit and instead embraces a sort of morbid romantic melodrama that even NS auteur Viet Harlan could have appreciated, especially during the right darkly tragic climatic moments. Undoubtedly, hardcore avant-gardist like Jean-Marie Straub and Frans van de Staak would surely regard Bertolucci’s magnum opus as aesthetically ‘fascistic.’ After all, in terms of aesthetics and themes, *The Conformist*—a film where a man sacrifices love and feminine beauty for the good of a fascist regime—can be seen as a sort of post-WWII antifascist equivalent to Harlan’s classic National Socialist melodrama *Opfergang* (1944).

It has been rightly said by various film critics, including American film scholar Millicent Marcus, that *The Conformist* is a sort of allegory for the triumphant rise and pathetically catastrophic fall of Italian fascism as epitomized by the film’s hero. Led by a terribly flawed chap by the name of Mussolini—a sort of failed Machiavellian Mafioso-like type that stole his ideas from much superior men like warrior-poet Gabriele D’Annunzio who proved to be a total disaster during WWII and who accomplished not much more than being Hitler’s failed Guido bitch-boy—Fascist Italy largely seems like a catastrophic joke on retrospect. Undoubtedly, self-described “superfascist” Julius Evola—a ‘right-wing’ thinker that

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so impressed Mussolini with his somewhat quixotic racial ideas that he hired him to start a racial journal that ultimately blended Sorelianism with Aryo-Roman eugenics—would have provided intriguing (meta)political inspiration for a communist like Bertolucci, especially in terms of his critiques of modern Italians in comparison to their much nobler ancient Roman ancestors. Indeed, creating a dichotomy between the negative modern ‘Mediterranean’ type and the ancient ‘Roman’ type, Evola described the former as stereotypically (proudly) dishonest, noisy/loudmouthed, sentimental, overly defensive, extroverted and lecherous, and the latter as noble, stoic, self-critical, and introverted. Undoubtedly, the titular character of *The Conformist* seems to have a less than ideal combination of traits from both groups as a sort of autistic neurotic Mediterranean nut-job. As Evola noted, “As is well known, during the Fascist era Italy attempted to start similar developments, whose most serious concern, though it was felt only by a minority, was to increasingly transform a ‘Mediterranean’ Italy into a ‘Roman’ Italy. An adequate integrating counterpart could have been the initial separation of Italy from her ‘Latin sisters’ and a reapproach to the German people, beyond the plane of mere political concerns.” Of course, as far as Europeans go, Italians and Germans have very little in common, hence the failure of this transformation, or as Evola himself reluctantly noted in the very same exact chapter of the same exact book in regard to the common perception among his countrymen, “In a previous chapter I mentioned the part played by anti-German prejudice in some patriotic Italian historiography influenced by Masonic and democratic-liberal ideology. This prejudice is also found in the cultural domain, and especially among those who cherish the myth of the Latin world [...] Italians and Germans, it is claimed, will never understand each other. Our Latin civilization and mind-set stand in contrast with anything German.” It is also no coincidence that there is a scene in the film where the protagonist’s blind radio host friend Italo attempts to hype up the supposed “Prussian aspect” of Mussolini and supposed “Latin aspect” of Hitler, as it was ultimately a preposterous alliance between two very cultures.

Speaking of Evola, he was heavily influenced by the Austrian Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger’s classic text *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*, which, whether intentional or not (I’m going to have to assume the latter), seems to have been a bigger psychological influence on *The Conformist* than the sort of stereotypical anti-Occidental Judaic psychoanalysts like Freud and Reich that clearly heavily influenced Bertolucci’s lesser films like *1900*. Although the film is somewhat Freudian in the sense that the protagonist is haunted by certain Oedipal conflicts that reach their peak when he takes part in the killing of a virtual ‘surrogate father’ in the form of his old professor friend, the film ultimately feels more Weininger-esque than overtly Freudian. While I do somewhat doubt that Bertolucci ever read Weininger, the romance between lead Marcello Clerici and Anna Quadri is one of the rare cinematic examples of

Weiningerian sexual compatibility. Believing that all people were to some degree 'bisexual' (e.g. a butch lesbian would have about 80% masculine traits/20% feminine traits), Weininger argued that people, including homosexuals, were naturally attracted to people with opposite (yet ultimately complimentary) sexual traits (for example, a male that is 90% male/10% female would most likely be attracted to a female that is 10% male/90% female). As Weininger once wrote in regard to the tendency, "I once heard a bisexual man exclaim at the sight of a bisexually active actress with a slight hint of a beard, a deep sonorous voice, and almost no hair on her head: 'What a gorgeous woman!' To every man 'woman' means something different and yet the same; in 'women' every poet has celebrated something different and yet identical." While the film's lead Marcello, who clearly has certain latent homosexual tendencies, is totally disgusted by his wife Giulia—a woman that is a sort of degenerate version of the archetype of the highly feminine submissive yet sexually insatiable housewife type—he virtually falls in love with the aggressive bisexual (or, possibly, even lesbian) Anna at first sight and his feelings are surely reciprocated, at least to some degree. Indeed, despite being a deeply troubled latent homosexual, Marcello reacts to Anna because her aberrosexuality compliments his own (to the antihero's slight chagrin, Anna also demonstrates an attraction to Marcello's wife). Of course, aside from not completely succumbing to raunchy Reichian retardation, *The Conformist* is nowhere near as sexually debasing as the director's later films like *1900*, which features full-frontal homosexual encounters between preteen boys and a sado-masochistic threesome of sorts involving Donald Sutherland, a fat chick, and a little boy that absurdly climaxes with the latter having his brains bashed in against a wall. Needless to say, *The Conformist* is not only more aesthetically ambitious than *1900*, but also considerably more intellectually, psychologically, and (meta)politically nuanced. In that sense, it is no surprise that Peter Bondanella would note in his text *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (1983) that, "With his adaptation of Alberto Moravia's *THE CONFORMIST*, Bertolucci produced what is perhaps his most visually satisfying film, although many reviewers and critics question its ideological coherence." Only really superficially 'antifascist,' especially compared to audaciously aberrant yet idiotic agitprop like *1900*, the film's (anti)hero just as easily could have been a commie, which is (arguably) one of the film's messages, hence the (arguably) ironical title.

While Bertolucci would go on to direct much bigger films with much bigger budgets, *The Conformist* is unquestionably his mostly aesthetically refined and most mesmerizing in terms of mise-en-scène, as if the auteur was attempting to reconcile the films of Orson Welles and Werner Schroeter for the target peasant audience of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972). Of course, it would be virtually criminal to not mention the imperative contributions of cinematographer Vittorio Storaro and production designer Ferdinando Scarfioni to the film (in fact, I do not think it is a coincidence that both men worked on

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Bertolucci's greatest films). A cultivated homosexual that also worked as an art designer on Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971), Scarfiotti arguably deserves more credit than anyone for elevating *The Conformist* to the level of high cinematic art. Interestingly, the auteur once confessed in a 1972 interview with Marilyn Goldin when asked if the film was Sternbergian, "Yes, indeed. Because in [THE SPIDER'S] STRATEGY I was more influenced by life, while in THE CONFORMIST I was more influenced by movies. One could say the point of departure was cinema; and the cinema I like is Sternberg, Ophüls and Welles." Needless to say none of these auteur filmmakers directed films for peasant audiences, as they all demonstrated the very same sort of aristocratic decadence that Bertolucci decried throughout his career. Revealing his own hypocritical Oedipal tendencies, Bertolucci actually stated in the same exact interview, "My own father was anti-Fascist, but obviously I feel that the whole bourgeoisie is my father. And Fascism was invented by the petit bourgeois [...] On top of that, THE CONFORMIST is a story about me and Godard. When I gave the professor Godard's phone number and address, I did it for a joke, but afterwards I said to myself, 'Well, maybe all that has some significance. . . . I'm Marcello and I make Fascist movies and I want to kill Godard who's a revolutionary, who makes revolutionary movies and who was my teacher.'" Aside from being admirably honest in regard to his deeply personal motivations, including his sort of cringe-worthy class self-loathing, for making the film, Bertolucci's remark also reveals his longing to kill his own sort of surrogate cinematic father in a film that is ultimately dually (and even schizophrenically) Oedipal. In that sense, it is no surprise that the antihero lacks the strength to personally kill his own father figure and instead really just wants to destroy his own mind and soul in the end. Indeed, somehow I doubt Bertolucci would have been a card-carrying commie had he born a couple decades before during a time when Marxism was not vogue and the trains ran on time. Needless to say, Bertolucci would have probably been a sort of Italian Hans-Jürgen Syberberg in terms of critical and academic neglect had he demonstrated more of an affinity for someone like Evola instead of Antonio Gramsci, but I digress. As to Bertolucci's reference to wanting to kill his filmic father figure Godard, it is somewhat ironic that he would choose a Moravia novel to accomplish such an admirably lofty task. After all, not unlike Bertolucci with *The Conformist*, *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt*—an adaptation of Moravia's existentialist novel *Il disprezzo* (1954)—is oftentimes (rightly) described by critics as Godard's magnum opus.

In his classic text *The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*—a classic sociopolitical text that proved to be an imperative influence on Mussolini in terms of his struggle to takeover Italy—Vilfredo Pareto noted, "It is a known fact that almost all revolutions have been the work, not of the common people, but of the aristocracy, and especially of the decayed part of the aristocracy." Of course, the same can be said of revolutionary cinema, as

Bertolucci's one-time hero Godard, who actually came from a family of anti-Semitic Vichy supporters, was certainly not a member of the working-class yet he dedicated a good portion of his career to defecating out mostly worthless (neo)Marxist agitprop. In the same book, Pareto argues that, "Elites often become effete. They preserve a certain passive courage, but lack active courage," which is certainly a good way to describe not only the titular character of *The Conformist*, but also Bertolucci himself. In fact, I would argue that in no other film does Bertolucci demonstrate that he is the politically passive-aggressive auteur par excellence, but at least in this context it works in his favor due to the antihero's conflicted psyche and incapacity to take direct decisive action. Seeing as the film concludes with it hinting that the antihero has finally 'went over to the other side' and embraced his latent homosexuality now that fascism is finally dead, one can interpret this as a sort of subtle confession by Bertolucci that anyone could have become a 'fascist' during those repressive times, including his perverted self (surely, it is no coincidence that his late era film *The Dreamers* (2003) is not much more than a gleefully gratuitous celebration of the sexual degeneracy of the post-WWII generation and the insipidly deleterious politics that accompanied such degeneracy). Either way, the film (unwittingly) confirms that the post-WWII era is, by definition, degenerate.

One of the most interesting aspects I discovered upon researching *The Conformist* is the divergent critiques and analyses of the film. Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting I found was by queer film theorist Parker Tyler, who argued in his book *Screening the Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies* (1972) in regard to Bertolucci's masterpiece that, "It is a brilliantly directed and photographed film—so stylish in performance that the crypto-fascist sex syndrome it portrays seems very true yet is so subtly woven with emotional and sexual ambiguity as to block the critic who wishes to assess the precise role played by homosexuality. The hero [...] is as false a heterosexual as he is a homosexual [...] Is he cowardly and treacherous because of his sex neurosis? Moravia's antifascist purpose seems to have been to associate fascist sadism and amorality with a particular sex complex in the male. This is embodied in a fucked-up hetero who—going by the plot line—is really homo [...] Further, the director Bertolucci has contrived from all this such a smooth, flexible, fast-moving melodrama that character motivation is swept along as bright blur with incidentally piercing insights." And, of course, this is the brilliance of a film directed by an auteur that is not typically known for being subtle—whether it be the (meta)political and/or psychosexual (notably, according to, Gideon Bachmann, Bertolucci was, "rescue[d] by [Carl] Jung" right before he made the film, which might explain the almost metaphysical essence of the film). From there, Taylor complains, "After due consideration, can we avoid formulating the moral that offbeat sex is schematic in being a fated part of the contagious moral vice which fascism is widely assumed to be? That, for its part, homosexuality can also be a thing of grace, a separate

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field of gravity, a poet's and philosopher's privilege and even (as in the classic pastorals) a lover's peaceful pursuit, seems to have been inconceivable in Mussolini's Italy. Or so *THE CONFORMIST* and similar movies would have us believe; even *DEATH IN VENICE*, whose era is the nineteenth century and whose Homeros is very young, beautiful, and untainted, makes turncoat homosexuality a symbolic disease." Of course, it is interesting that Taylor references a film by Visconti as he conveniently forgets the auteur's classic epic melodrama *The Damned* (1969), reminds one in its savagely hyper homoerotic depiction of the so-called Night of the Long Knives that the NSDAP's original paramilitary outfit, the *Sturmabteilung* (SA)—a group led by a subversive sod by the name of Ernst Röhm that demonstrated he was more radical than Bertolucci or any of his contemporaries when he once pridefully remarked, "Since I am an immature and wicked man, war and unrest appeal to me more than good bourgeois order. Brutality is respected, the people need wholesome fear. They want to fear someone. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive"—was completely led by well-known homosexuals and they certainly were not stereotypical pansy poofers, but I digress. While Tyler certainly brings up some interesting points, he seems to ignore the fact that, contrary to the gatekeepers of the LGBT pink gestapo, 'gay' is not a prepackaged one-size-fits-all identity and that the film's protagonist is more a victim of childhood trauma than his sexuality. In fact, had Marcello been more comfortable in his gayness, he might have been a fairly ferocious fascist and lived a more Edmund Heines-esque existence.

Ultimately, *The Conformist* is less about homosexuality than the ostensible fascistic nightmare of having to live in a society that has actual standards where everyone is expected to be guided by the same moral compass, hence why Bertolucci would once remark that the film is set, "...in the present, but it's the present dressed as the past." In the very last scene of the film in what seems to allude to the present and thus the so-called sexual revolution, counterculture movement, and student protest movement, the film's protagonist is depicted with flames illuminating his face while he is literally behind bar as a completely naked street hustler lies nearby. In short, with fascism dead, Marcello can now be himself and get fucked in the ass with pride, or so Bertolucci—a supposedly heterosexual man that filled many of his films with explicit homosexual content, including of the prepubescent sort—wants you to believe. Needless to say, it is quite fitting that Bertolucci died the same year exact year that right-ring strongman Matteo Salvini—a real mensch that seems like he could be the grandson of Fascio Special Agent Manganiello—took power to repair everything that the filmmaker's generation so zealously and thoughtlessly destroyed. Indeed, despite what one might think of the film's aesthetic value as what is arguably one of the greatest and most important cinematic works of its era, there is no denying that it is a strangely mercurial reflection of a sick society and era that is

in steady decline. As Pareto noted long ago in regard to the paradoxically spiritually necrotic character of privileged yet self-loathing bourgeois leftist types like Bertolucci, “Our bourgeoisie spends energy and money only to aid the enemy. Societies to help the vicious, the incapable, and the degenerate, spring up in extraordinary numbers; and among all these societies the bourgeoisie did not have the spirit to establish one, I say a single one, to defend their own rights. But then, do they have rights? It seems that they do not, for they are ashamed to speak of them. It is the owners who negate their right of ownership and donate money to the People’s Universities, which teach that everything should be taken from the owners. Viewed from a certain point, it can be said that in effect they have no rights, because they do not know how to defend them.” Like a virtual archetypal caricature of the spiritually sick bourgeois that Pareto speaks of, Bertolucci even once confessed in a 1978 interview with Jean A. Gili in regard to his film 1900, “Likewise I consider to be communist the feeling of guilt that I experience as a bourgeois—a feeling which, according to some conformists, makes the film appear to be manichean [...] As for me, the fact that I have a visceral feeling about my bourgeois origins, the fact that I accept the burden of a certain type of guilt which is not directly mine but belongs to my social class and those who support that class, is also a communist idea.” Of course, what Bertolucci’s confessions reveal to me is that, not unlike modern antifa members and trust-fund gutter-punks and squatters, he was a literal social degenerate compelled by a sort of passive Todestrieb, hence why he created socially, politically, and sexually deleterious cinematic works and never had children despite being married to no less than three different women (notably, as Max Nordau highlighted in his classic text *Entartung* (1892) aka *Degeneration*, degenerate artists tend not to reproduce and thus unwittingly solve the societal problem of their own tainted bloodlines). In that sense, I think that *The Conformist*, which is only superficially like Moravia’s source novel, can only be adequately interpreted as a sort of semi-cryptic schizophrenic internal dialogue by Bertolucci about what it might be like to be a fascist despite being psychologically ill-equipped and lacking the intrinsic desire for self-preservation and continuing one’s genetic line (while the antihero does have a child, it seems rather absurd that he and his wife are parents). Of course, just by directing a film of such a caliber as *The Conformist*, Bertolucci certainly accomplished more than most people do in their lives—whether they be Evolian neo-fascists or Limousine Marxists. Not unlike his virtual spiritual predecessors like the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, who also disgraced their social backgrounds, Bertolucci managed to achieve greatness in spite of his degeneracy, henceforth demonstrating that it is probably preferable to have despoiled bourgeois or noble blood to healthy peasant blood, at least if you are an artist.

-Ty E

ROBOT MONSTER
ROBOT MONSTER

Phil Tucker (1953)

I recall reading some interview with Quentin Tarantino when I was a kid in which he said something to the effect of "If I screen Rio Bravo for a girl and she doesn't love it, it's over" and thinking "You fucking dweeb...if you actually managed to get a something with female sex organs into your lair, you'd show her a John Wayne movie?! AND have the temerity to declare it "over" if such a sweaty, excessively masculine flick doesn't make her swoon?" Having huge Hollywood pocketbooks to bankroll your cinematic mixtapes makes a world of difference- imagine if that deformed dork had never managed to pillage and plagiarize his way to the top- he'd have to be like the rest of us and just be happy vag-titties will tolerate our "hobby", or be eternally grateful to baby-bearers who actually share our passion, regardless of whether or not they like an old Western flick or not. Rio Bravo, man?! I wonder if he made Uma Thurman watch that shit while jerking off all over her toes. I know there is a point to this tangent...oh yeah, Phil Tucker's CLASSIC 1953 film Robot Monster. Now, I'm not saying I'd relent from facebanging a hottie if she didn't share my unequivocal love of the misadventures of fishbowl-headed, gorilla-framed Ro-Man and a small handful of humans in Bronson Canyon, but it would definitely make me sad, and might lead to major resentment over time if she is an informed film geek like yours truly and rests on the tried-and-true appraisal of Robot Monster as being one of the "worst films of all time." Do any of you lazy fuckwits who resort to laughing at this flick realize that you are just parroting that GOP fuckslut Michael Medved's opinion from his insulting Golden Turkey Awards tome from the seventies? Have you actually seen this MASTERPIECE of economical sci-fi cinema?

Yes, masterpiece, assholes. For all the talk of "ineptitude", and claims that the film's reception drove the director to a suicide attempt (in fact, it was the producers blackballing him from the industry and not being able to get a cut of the million bucks the \$16,000 film ended up making at the box office...Variety even gave it a somewhat complimentary review!), Robot Monster is a brisk 62 minute approximation of sci-fi geek 10-year olds playing in a fort before supper. With scant props, locations relegated to a section of Griffith Park that will be instantly recognizable to anyone who has seen their share of B-Westerns and sci-fi cheese, some incongruous stock footage (not to mention surprisingly strong 3-D photography at his disposal), Tucker manages to wring the most of his post-post-apocalyptic scenario, as alien Ro-Man Extension XJ-2 strives to eliminate the few remaining humans left on earth with his Calcinator Death Ray, humans who coincidentally live just around the corner from the cave in which he resides. Said humans consist of a Euro-accented scientist, his frumpy wife, grating son Johnny (the appropriately annoying main character- if a kid is

in some late-night channel Z classic, he SHOULD be whiny voiced and Dennis the Menace-lite, dammit...children who can actually act are doomed to drug habits and reality TV, kids who just wince and whinny will live fitter, happier lives, though off hand I can think of plenty exceptions to this nonsensical rule of my own invention, so disregard the last few sentences), equally snot-nosed daughter Carla, older babe daughter, Alice, and a younger scientist love-interest of Alice, Roy. Living in some very slightly decorate ruins that the scientist has rigged so that the Ro-Man can't hear them and thus sniff out their location (despite the apparent fact these remaining humans are immune to his Calcinator Death Ray because of antibiotic serums developed by the scientists). Anyways, Johnny, being an inquisitive little shit, stumbles upon Ro-Man Extension XJ-2, who receives transmissions from his leader (also a dude in a gorilla suit and fishbowl helmet, but with a tesla coil) on a screen and whose Calcinator Death Ray looks for all intents and purposes like shortwave radio equipment, which, when activated, emits bubbles and makes the film stock get all strobe-lighty and reverse exposed. The ruthless Ro-Man is ready to stamp out the remaining Hu-Mans when he catches a glimpse of the fetching Alice and realizes that white, silky Hu-Man skin certainly beats whatever passes for feminine on the planet Ro-Man, and begins to have a change of heart, getting into frustrating, though robotically civil arguments with his commanding officer via telescreen. It is hard not to feel for Ro-Man...he's so patently ridiculous appearance-wise, all his machinery manages to do little more than emit bubbles and stock footage of dinosaurs and earthquakes, and worst yet, he's all alone in a cave and doesn't realize he's only a hop-and-skip away from the Griffith Park Observatory, which features a fantastic view of Los Angeles (looks so much nicer in aerial than slogging around it's crusted-over, syphilitic surface) and a Planetarium show about the Big Bang that is awesome on mushrooms but hard to slog through sober and surrounded by snickering high-school students. The pathos XJ-2 generates are pretty genuine and heart-felt, and, if you're anything like me, he soon transcends his antagonist status to become the true hero of the film, especially after he strangles Johnny's younger sister (kid death, in a fifties flick no less! yes!) and gets his mits on Alice.

I'm not going to go too in-depth about the remainder of the plot (except to say that if you've seen *Invaders from Mars*, or most any kid-centric sci-fi/horror from this time period, how it ends ain't hard to grok)- it is easy to come across like I'm poking fun at this flick by spelling out the particulars, but anyone who sees *Robot Monster* with an open heart and a weary mind will find that this film is fun in and of itself, and needs no mocking robot silhouettes (and Joel) to be a perfect affirmation of the wonders of no-budget, high-imagination cinema. The acting, cloying kiddies aside, is miles above other "worst film ever" contenders like Ed Wood's oeuvre or *Manos: The Hands of Fate* (save John Reynolds incomparable *Torgo*...a truly great piece of acid-drenched performance ART)-

ROBOT MONSTER

matinee-campy but not unbearably wooden. The location makes the most of the tiny desolate desert environs of Bronson Canyon, and the sparsity of the area and the set decorations lends it a certain air of knowing threadbare staginess that, were it done for a tenth of the budget by, say, the Kuchar brothers, would be shown in museums and praised by effete soy-fiends the world over instead of languishing in the infernal gooch of the bottom rungs of the Internet Movie DataBase. Instead, Phil Tucker is considered worthy of derision (he also directed *Dance Hall Racket*, written by and starring Lenny Bruce (!), which I'm making a point of watching soon) when *Robot Monster* has so much of the infectious, genuine SOUL that dudes like the Kuchars want to capture but can't quite nail because they are too hip and "with it" (not a knock on the Kuchars, just an observation- when you consciously try to make "outsider art", it is never quite the same as, say, Shoo-by Taylor's scatting)

So yeah, when it comes down to it, consider this review a personal ad. If you have firm B's, dark hair (shoulder length at least), tastefully applied make-up, a love of 'challenging' media, a round ass, and want to be the Alice to my cave-dwelling Ro-Man, well, yeah, you're probably too good to be true and are a cutter and will only fuck me because I remind you of your brother or something. Soiled Sinema...maybe not the best place to meet sane ladies. Which is FINE, fuck, goofing on *Robot Monster* might make me respect people in general just a tad bit less, or goofing on any of the art I hold dear, for that matter, but ultimately, who gives a fuck? Ass-and-titties is ass-and-titties, Tarantino, you insufferable doofus. That any woman has had to tolerate his pathetic pecker inside of her is a tragedy on par with *Robot Monster's* ridiculous retrospective reception.

-Jon-Christian

CABARET SIN

Philip Adrian Booth (1988)

Since one of my girlfriend's favorite films is Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), it was only natural that she would dig up a hardcore rip-off of the classic cyberpunk flick. Indeed, the stylishly salacious, vintage shot-on-video hardcore science fiction flick, *Cabaret Sin* (1987) aka *X TROP*, directed by one-time porn auteur Philip O'Toole, was such a hit upon its release that it was later re-edited and released in a non-pornographic cut under the title *Droid* (1988) a year later, with the director deciding to adopt the pseudonym 'Peter Williams' and claiming a bogus British background, as if it would make him seem more cultivated or something (of course, as far as I know, the Brits have never made a decent fuck flick, so adopting an English persona might be a wise choice for a filmmaker that is attempting to obfuscate the dubious history of their sex flick turned sci-fi flick). With about 10 minutes of extra hardcore footage and a conspicuously 'cooler' name, I naturally opted for watching *Cabaret Sin* over the fuck-free flick *Droid*. Typically, I try to stay away from any post-porn chic, shot-on-video fuck flick, especially if it seems like it was made to appeal to the banal tastes of virginal Trekkies and related sexually autistic nerds whose greatest fantasy is getting laid by Princess Leia Organa of Alderaan, yet when I saw screenshots from O'Toole's seemingly vaguely imaginative bargain bin blue movie, I could not resist. A nude neo-noir flick that seems like it was created by some sort of psychopathic pre-teen genius with easy access to an entire bordello of whores and the props of his local high school's theater department, *Cabaret Sin* is a strangely charming work that, due to its aesthetic ambitiousness and wanton weirdness despite its discernible lack of budget and asinine acting performances, has to be seen to be believed. Like *Liquid Sky* (1982) as directed by someone who does not know a god damn thing about new wave, new romanticism, or underground music/culture in general as molested by the post-apocalyptic pornographic cult classic *Café Flesh* (1982) directed by 'Rinse Dream' (aka Stephen Sayadian) meets countless popular 1980s Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster, O'Toole's decidedly decadent piece of eccentrically erotic dystopia ultimately defies all forms of cinematic sanity as a seemingly aesthetically apocalyptic work that combines most of the worst clichés of dystopian sci-fi cinema, the meta-kitschy essence of late-1980s music videos, and an army of perturbingly plastic would-be-pretty people sporting mullets and other forms of obscenely odious outmoded Reagan era mullets on their seemingly empty heads. Indeed, if you ever wanted to experience the worst of 1980s dystopian sci-fi in a playfully pornographic package that strives to be, orgasmically speaking, out-of-this-world but more resembles the thematically impotent and incoherent yet nonetheless endlessly enthralling fantasy of an autistic American west coast take on *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) with a nihilistically nostalgic softspot for the worst elements of *Star Wars* (1977), *Cabaret*

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Sin is a pure and unadulterated cinematically spaſtic win of the third cinematic kind as a hardcore-sci-fi hybrid.

The year and setting is Los Angeles 2020 and, as he narrates in a pseudo-noirish fashion, mullet man ‘Taylor’ (Greg Derek in what is clearly his moſt ‘famous’ role)—a horrible Harrison Ford/Mel Gibson hybrid played by a clear non-aſtor who ſeems like he was randomly diſcovered by the caſting agent while working out at Gold’s Gym—is a futuristic cop called an ‘Eliminator’ who works for the government as a lone wolf aſſaſſin. Although he hates to admit it as a macho killing machine that is not ſuppoſed to have emotions (of course, this is a reference to the Replicants of *Blade Runner*) deſpite the fact he is a fleſh and blood human and not a robot like a good portion of the aſſaſſins around the ſuperlatively ſhitty weſt coaſt city, he is a lethally lovelorn lad who longs for his beloved whore ‘Nicola’ (played by pseudonymous German buxom brunette ‘Kriſta Lane’), who eloquently ſmokes her fag in a fashion almoſt worthy of Sean Young à la *Blade Runner*. As Taylor narrates about himſelf in a leſs than impassioned manner: “It’s not that I’m a good cop...I’m a tired cop...tired of this dome, this job, this planet, but I ſtill did what any good cop tried to do. Stay alive.” Unquestionably, the L.A. of 2020, not unlike the real L.A. of today (which ſeems worſe, with its apocalyptic hodgepodge of impoverished Hispanics, diſillusioned and culturally cuckolded whites, negro gangſters, Eaſt Asians, IT-inclined Indians, 711-running Arabs, and other aſſorted forms of myſtery meat) is a decadent dyſtopian hellhole of the culturally and racially mongrelized ſort ſuffering from a ſevere caſe of malignant multiculturalism as demonſtrated by the fact that rather culturally confused individuals like meaty Meſtizos wearing goofy pseudo-Japanese clothing and white Islamic towelheads sporting buſineſſ ſuits can be found everywhere. Aſide from ‘Eliminators’ like Taylor that drive goofy futuristic hovercrafts that do not ſeem to move, the L.A. of this ſalacious piece of non-celluloid sci-fi is inhabited by angry androids called ‘The Reformers’ that have flaſhing beady red lights for eyes, black helmets, and black uniforms, thus making them ſeem like a croſs between a futuristic Geſtapo ſoldier and Darth Vader. Needless to ſay, Taylor ſeems like a ſecond-rate crack-addled pop-country ſinger compared to the Reformers.

In a ſcene parroting the famous ſpace alien cantina ſcene from *Star Wars*, Taylor enters a ſtyliſh, eclectically themed ſtrip club with the leſs than creative name “Pleasure Dome” where he ſees a Jap geiſha (Kriſtara Barrington) doing pseudo-Kabuki theater in front of a giant bald retro Jap head. Not ſurpriſingly, the ‘maſter of ceremonies’ of the club is a creepy ſmirking midget that waddles around with an equally creepy ventriloquiſt doll affixed to his ſhoulder. While lurking around the Pleasure Dome in a moody and broody manner in the hope that he will run into one of his targets, Taylor alſo watches in ſeeming boredom as a ſuperficially amorous chick in an aethetically vulgar Ancient Egyptian outfit, Azteca (Lorrie Lovett), ſtrips and fucks for the adoring audience. When a

girl goes up to Taylor, sits on his lap without permission, and asks, "Didn't I pleasure you?," he robotically replies, "Business before pleasure," but of course, as the film later reveals, the coldhearted cop is in love with naughty Nicola, who peddles her puss to a tyrannical towelhead named 'The Turk' (played by veteran Hebraic hardcore star Herschel Savage), who owns a sleazy local club.

While brooding at the Turk's club and watching a trombonist named Tammy Dorsey (Bunny Bleu) handle her instrument on stage as if it is a boner instead of a trombone in a scene that delightfully degenerates into a threesome where the fetishistic front-lady begins banging her band members for the discernibly aroused audience members, Taylor reminisces over his love for Nicola and complains to himself, "There I go again...getting all emotional...just when I thought I had forgotten her." In easily the most memorably and perversely potent segment of the film, Taylor recalls romantically slow-dancing with Nicola prom-style in a scene juxtaposed with a heated fuck session between the two jaded lovers. When Taylor finally gets the testicular fortitude to approach his beloved Nicola, she does not accept him warmly and lovingly but berates him rather viciously, complaining, "You're just like everyone else...you belong here. You're gonna die here. I'm going to do anything I can to get out of her." Indeed, as it turns out, Nicola is working for the enemy and after being nearly killed by a Reformer robot at the behest of the terrible Turk, the killer cop prepares to shoot his great ladylove with more than just good old fashioned baby batter. Of course, 'love conquers all' in the end and Taylor declares like a true punk poser, "fuck the system" after deciding that the woman he loves is more important to him than the dead-end job that he loves to hate. In the end, in the middle of Nicola sucking off Taylor in his rather hazy and almost otherworldly Greek-statue-adorned apartment, a Reformer android breaks down the door and the film concludes with the predictable inter-title: "To Be Continued..."

Of course, as one can expect from successful films, especially porn films, a sequel was made to Cabaret Sin entitled Empire of the Sins (1988), though it was directed by a dude named Kirdy Stevens (Little Me and Marla Strangelove, A Taste of Sugar) instead of Mr. O'Toole. In fact, scenes from both films were edited together to make the non-pornographic work Droid, which is vaguely more coherent than the two other films, though at the decided detriment of hopelessly 80s style hardcore debauchery. It should also be noted that both Empire of the Sins and Droid feature quasi-campy elements from the Naziploitation sub-genre. Of course, if 1980s style retrograde sci-fi is your thing, all three videos make for virtuous vices of the pleasantly post-apocalyptic sort that make the Mad Max films seem like the platitude-ridden product of an impotent Mormon mercenary. Indeed, in its own wayward way, Cabaret Sin is sort of 'outsider's art' as assembled by people with very little artistic talent who seemed to put their all into an erotic effort with eccentric tableaux that may have been made to appeal to the rather particular sentiments of virginal sci-fi nerds whose sole

CABARET SIN

sexual outlet is masturbation, but was clearly made with a 'free' and 'determined' spirit that will surely act as inspiration to any aspiring filmmaker or synth-pop musician. Through its sappy and seemingly intentionally cliché melodramatic romantic subplot and reckless aesthetic and thematic theft from countless 1980s sci-fi flicks, not to mention its inclusion of a totally random scene featuring an upside Casablanca (1942) poster hanging on the wall of a futuristic fuck club in a charmingly sleazy scenario that one might describe as 'cinematic heresy' (at least to those many individuals that think Michael Curtiz's film is one of the greatest cinematic masterworks ever made), Cabaret Sin also manages to make a mockery of Hollywood history and formulaic film conventions, which is certainly something I can respect. Of course, Los Angeles has only become all the more racially, culturally, and socially apocalyptic since the film was released over a 1/4 century ago as a result of the 'Reconquista' of the city by the supposed 'Aztlán,' the general mass colonization of the United States by third worlders of every stripe and creed, and the further spread of the neo-liberal metaphysical disease, among countless other things, so I think it is only natural that a remake of Cabaret Sin should be in order, though, considering the sorry state of the contemporary porn industry, it would probably be a reeking pile of anti-erotic bile steeped in miscegenation, cuckoldry, fake lips and tits, and ugly swarthy meathead dudes with monstrous dicks. Indeed, Cabaret Sin may make the L.A. of 2020 seem like a conspicuously corrupt culturally bastardized shithole where killer robots run rampant and creepy dwarfs are considered chic, but it pales in comparison to the real dystopia that waits the so-called 'City of Angels.'

-Ty E

SALT, SALIVA, SPERM AND SWEAT

Philip Brophy (1988)

While I am certainly innately anti-bourgeois and always have been, I absolutely loathe commies and other leftist rabble who, not unlike Marx and pretty much any other communist icon, are really just failed resentful members of the same pseudo-culture that they purport to hate, not to mention the fact that they subscribe to an even more extreme and soulless version of materialism than their capitalist enemies, thus I am very limited when it comes to true quality celluloid bourgeoisie-bashing. Indeed, aside from Douglas Sirk, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Todd Solondz, and to a lesser extent Oskar Roehler, there are not that many filmmakers that I consider to be masters of attacking the more repugnant members of the pansy ass petit-bourgeois and virtually all of these filmmakers created melodramas, so naturally I never expected to discover a sort of metapolitical experimental horror-comedy of the scathingly sardonic and scatological sort that rips both the neo-liberal middleclass and office work a new asshole, yet thankfully such a sweetly sick celluloid work does exist. A 47-minute piece of outstandingly outlandish and obscenely offbeat Australian iconoclasm, the alliteratively titled flick *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* (1988) directed by experimental musician, composer, academic, film scholar, and sometimes filmmaker Philip Brophy, who is probably best known for his satirical slapstick biopunk horror flick *Body Melt* (1993), is indubitably one of the best kept secrets of Australian cinema. Somewhat unbelievably purchased in 1990 by a British TV channel for a series called *Down Under* that screened new Australian independent films and ultimately aired the film in a somewhat butchered form, but largely unknown outside of the Australian continent, Brophy's charmingly subversive directorial debut is one of those oh-so rare cinematic works that is truly like no other film, albeit not in a sort of ultra-hermetic avant-gardist way, as it is a perniciously playful piece that is overflowing with tasteless toilet humor that could be, at least in a superficial way, understood by an ADHD-ridden toddler and even members of Australia's illustrious aborigine community. With that being said, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is also a sardonically philosophical and sometimes (anti)poetic work that virtually alleviates lowbrow celluloid scatology to an abstract art form. Featuring an embarrassingly candid portrait of a languid and largely emotionally vacant loser life that is segmented into four eponymous chapters, Brophy's foully yet farcically fetishistic experiment is a sort of post-Bataille work that seems like it was directed by the bastard Aussie brood of Charles Baudelaire and Jan Švankmajer as a sort of psychopathic punk mutation of Mike Judge's *Office Space* (1999) that more or less does for marvelously mundane yuppie office jobs what *Liquid Sky* (1982) did for the 'heroin chic' NYC fashion scene and what David Blyth's punk-fueled surrealist kiwi cult classic *Angel Mine* (1978) did for New Zealand suburbia as a venomous satire

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that spares no one, especially the protagonist. An almost dialogue-less work that disseminates a sort of grotesque misanthropic philosophy via the nameless 'writer' protagonist's archaic computer monitor, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is also highly accentuated by a fairly idiosyncratic sound landscape that was composed by director Brophy while he was seemingly listening to too much Throbbing Gristle and watching too many Valie Export and Kurt Kren flicks. Notably, during a August 9, 1988 interview on the TV program *The Movie Show*, Brophy stated regarding his cinematic debut that, "I would describe it as a film about the essences of life. It's based on, let's say, everything in life condensed down into four days and it's all kind of driven into one particular character which could be anyone...and it's about experiencing all the kind of possible intensities of sex and violence—image wise, symbolically, graphically, physically—that can happen everyday to, I think, anyone's life, except this film just kind of plays with it a bit more forcibly." Luckily, Brophy's remarks downplay the true depravity of *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat*, which is essentially an unwavering assault on the viewer that reminds them that Nietzsche was right when he prophesied the emergence of the spiritually bankrupt creature known as *der letzte mensch*.

Featuring a turd being 'birthed' from a beta-bitch's bung-hole, a little girl who proudly spells out "Clit-City" during an intense game of Scrabble, and a blonde beastess office boss who gleefully disciplines her underlings by bending them over and shoving a large dildo up their poop-shutes, among various other unforgettable unhinged things that put the best Troma flicks to abject shame, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is ultimately a darkly hilarious tale of collective societal cuckoldry and soul-sucking wage-slavery featuring an emotionally comatose protagonist of the all-around sexually and socially dysfunctional sort who lives to philosophize about biological fluids in a seemingly failed attempt to rationalize his magnificently meek and masochistic existence as an office drone whose only true forms of personal expression are his work computer and anus. Although the film might be the closest thing to a sort of experimental Ozploitation flick, it utilizes various cinematic techniques of both horror cinema and pornography, or as auteur Brophy stated himself on *The Movie Show*, "A lot of the film is close-up photography and I think a lot of the film is based on physical and material details, which is something that is very important in all horror and pornographic films where things are in such close-up and in such detail that they virtually become abstract, like blood and sweat and gore and whatnot and fluids like that that glisten and so in that sense the film is, if you're talking about the look of it, it thrusts those things upfront in an almost anatomical kind of way, so it is not a very poetic or aesthetic film in that sense, I don't think." Indeed, featuring a sort of carefully constructed 'clinical kitsch' (anti)aesthetic that epitomizes the worst of plastic 1980s preppie (pseudo)culture, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is an intentionally sapless piece of 16mm celluloid (with a couple scenes shot on Super-8) that somehow performs the seemingly impossible tasking of being un-

waveringly entertaining, but then again I guess it is hard to make a film featuring a farcical approach to fecal fetishism and a protagonist who blows his cunt boss' brains out boring. Indeed, if you have ever had a shitty office job that you hated, Brophy's film provides an exceptionally ecstatically therapeutic experience that is the next best thing to flooding Apple headquarters with rancid feces.

In a fittingly mundane fashion, the film opens with a shot of an archaic computer monitor that reads: "These are moist times we live in. The solid has been replaced with the liquid. Nothing stands still much anymore. Everything turns to water. The ethereal has been transformed into the aquatic. Sink or swim – float if you're lucky. The signs of the times are all wet: the proximity of the sun melting the polar icecaps; the destruction of the ozone layer causing endless rain; and still the bulk of the ocean vastly unexplored. And things just keep getting wetter. As they get wetter, we become more absorbent. Soaking up anything and everything. Never dry, never thirsty, but always room for one more drink. There are no origins here: no fountain of youth; no spring of knowledge; no elixir of life; no well of contentment. All is either condensation or evaporation. An endless return to wet." These words were written by the nameless hapless protagonist, who physically resembles a sort of archetypically gawky Anglo-Saxon dork and who lives, works, and acts like an autistic automaton who merely floats through life like a rusty robot that has no control over its body. At the beginning of the film, the viewer watches as the protagonist wakes up with a discernible expression of both abject misery and apathy on his face, holds a coffee pot in his hand while staring into the camera like a melancholy zombie, and then accidentally brush his teeth with antiseptic cream before heading to work. The protagonist lives in an apartment next door to a perverted slob that sips on a juice box while delighting in a TV program that involves a man being force-fed literal shit in an aberrantly allegorical scenario that surely recalls the infamous scene in Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) where a slave girl is forced to feast on feces. Set over the course of four different days, the film depicts how the protagonist is more or less involved in the same increasingly insipid day-to-day routines that only get worse as time passes as if the character is imprisoned in a sort of perpetual dystopian temporal loop, thus inspiring the viewer to hope that he is eventually put out of his misery.

While the protagonist might be a weak and meek wage-slave who lacks the drive and passion to change any aspect of his intolerably banal life, he is at least rebellious enough to utilize his time at work to codify his own idiosyncratic fetish-based personal bio-philosophy. Indeed, immediately upon arriving at his unnervingly sterile work office, the protagonist immediately types on his computer, "The world? You're soaking in it. Saturated by its every move and every rhythm, it is the womb you were biologically prepared for. The world sprays you, drowns you, boils you, swallows you and spits you out. Still, you strive to have a presence in the world; to leave your mark upon it. Such is the

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old-world charm of fingerprinting: you leave your mark on the world. But now with genetic fingerprinting, your mark never leaves you. It stays in your blood, your saliva, your semen. Your identity now springs from your bodily fluids, interpreted by a photochemical scan of your DNA. In these moist times, bodily fluids become increasingly vital." As his wayward writings surely indicate, the protagonist seeks solace in defecating, especially at the graffiti-covered public restroom at his work where he oftentimes falls into a sort of narcotizing trance while sitting on the toilet. At one point in the film, a co-worker masturbates in another bathroom stall while watching the protagonist on the toilet through a peephole. As the protagonist types regarding the power of food and feces and their effects on the human body, "Our bodies are moist machines fueled by our own fluids. Everything we saturate passes through, just as we continually pass through. The end of the line is only an S-bend continuing on somewhere else. Everything turns to water. Everything is reconstituted. We are never what we eat. We are always what we just ate."

While the hopelessly hapless protagonist types, "We are always what we just ate," there is no indication that he devours semen, shit, pussy juice, menstrual blood, or any of the other bodily fluids that he seems to fancy. Indeed, while he does have a girlfriend (played by somewhat popular Australian actress/comedian Jean Kittson in an uncredited first time film role), the protagonist is never portrayed fucking or even kissing her (though his sexual disinterest in her is hinted in a scene where his girlfriend holds up a coffee mug that reads "SEX is not a four letter word" and he replies by holding up a mug that reads "But Fuck is"), which is rather curious for a fellow with a fiercely fetishistic body fluid Weltanschauung. In fact, the protagonist is more interested in playing with his girlfriend's prepubescent children than her, with the protagonist even at one point in the film fantasizing about fucking his lady love's prepubescent son after seeing the little lad's bare buttocks (somewhat humorously, the little boy is featured wearing a Blood Feast (1963) t-shirt at one point in the film). As a rather rude and violent little girl that dares to spell out "Clit City" during a game of Scrabble, the protagonist's girlfriend's little daughter has much more testicular fortitude than he does, thus arguably reflecting the emasculation of the male sex in general in a technocratic globalist society where masculine strength has become obsolete and men have been reduced to doing the same sort of abstract paper-shuffling as women as a means to support themselves. In fact, the protagonist seems somewhat perturbed by the little girl's savage Scrabble talent and later goes home and says the anti-prayer, "Eat. Shit. Die" before going to sleep. Of course, the fact that the protagonist has no family of his own and is forced to deal with the somewhat sinister spawn of a single mother who he has no interest in fucking not only reflects how much of a loser beta-boy the character is, but is also symbolic of the everyday dysfunctional social relations that are becoming increasingly common in real-life in Western nations. Luckily for the loser lead, he will eventually

receive his dream of death within the next couple days, thus guaranteeing that he will never get the opportunity in embrace his assumed latent gay pederastic tendencies, though not before taking a two-foot-long rubber pseudo-schlong in his much cherished man-hole.

According to the protagonist's writings, "To become dry is to die. Dead cultures are based on dust and air, dirt and prayer. Ashes to Ashes and dust to dust – it's all just hot air. Never trust archeologists with suntans, tradesmen with dirt under their nails, preachers with parched skin. Should you come into contact with them – immediately place yourself under a running tap. (Water isn't for cleansing – it's for getting wet.)" Unfortunately, the protagonist never seems to actually get wet himself aside from when he is taking a dump and the toilet water splashes him on the ass. The closest that the protagonist ever gets to sexual wetness is when he is tediously flirting with his girlfriend in a goofy fashion, but when his blonde beastess boss catches him doing this at work, she takes him to her back office, forces him to bend over, whips out a giant dildo that she has specially placed in a fancy suitcase, and then ruthlessly reams him in the rectum with the rubber member (though thankfully this part is not actually depicted in the film). Not long after being defiled with a gigantic dildo, the protagonist types, "Listen to your body: Body holes, body parts, body fluids. A thousand-and-one triggers at the touch of a button: the body button. Touch it and it is engaged – you are activated. Eroticism is for writers and philosophers. For them, sex is up in the air. Come down to earth: the world is your orifice." While the protagonist is a writer of sorts, his sense of eroticism is, at best, autistic and, at worse, totally impotent and nonexistent. Of course, the world is not his orifice, as he is the one that is always getting fucked by the world.

At one point in the film, the protagonist decides to call a phone-sex hotline called 'Phantasy Phone' and is then subsequently depicted meekly performing cunnilingus on his lady friend while a fancy meal sits on a table in the background. By licking his (non)lover's lily, the protagonist finally for once comes into close contact with some of the precious bodily fluids that he regularly rants and raves about in his writings, though it does not seem like a particularly spectacular experience for the protagonist. As the title of the film hints, the final segment of the film is titled "Sweat" and it depicts everything that can possibly go wrong for a white bourgeois untermensch who already lives a less than auspicious existence. Aside from being rudely awakened by the less than soothing sounds of shitty generic rock music on his alarm cock (which he subsequently smashes to bits) and cutting himself while shaving, the protagonist's oh-so loving girlfriend senselessly headbutts him in the balls when he gets to work. On top of that, both the protagonist's girlfriend and bitch boss gang up on him and then proceed to take turns slapping him in the face, thus bringing him to an all-time low in terms of his already outstanding emasculation. In an assumed attempt to redeem his rather marginal manhood, the protagonist goes into his

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boss' office and blows her brains out with a handgun while she is working at her desk. Despite the fact that her brains are literally lying on her desk, the bitch boss somehow manages to shoot the protagonist in the back while he is walking out of her office. Ultimately, the entire shooting scenario is revealed to be a day-dream that the protagonist has while he is sitting on a toilet. Rather fittingly, when the protagonist gets off the toilet, a used tampon is revealed to be floating in the toilet. From there, the protagonist types, "These are moist times we live in. If things don't explode – they melt. One way or another, everything gets wet. Ashes to acid; dust to pus. One way or another, everything gets wet." After getting beat up by his girlfriend's kids, the protagonist goes home and is less than warmly greeted by a uniquely punk-goth fellow sporting a leather-jacket with a button reading "Life's a fucked fuck!" who shoots him in the stomach. Instead of going to the hospital, the protagonist decides to bask in his bodily fluids and bleed out. Before assumedly kicking the bucket from too much blood loss, the protagonist types, "Salt, saliva, sperm and sweat."

As the great Teutonic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "All prejudices come from the intestines." Of course, considering that the protagonist of *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* seems to have a fairly weak stomach and tends to have the most fun while barfing and defecating, one can only assume that he is prejudiced against his entire life and the world in general, hence why he lets himself die in the end in the most pathetic and passive of fashions. Indeed, the protagonist lacks the gall, self-discipline, and drive to actually commit suicide, so it ironically comes as a sort blessing in disguise when some random dirty punk degenerate senselessly shoots him, but as the great frog right-wing anarchist Louis-Ferdinand Céline once wrote regarding the dilemma of continuing to live an insufferably phony existence and committing suicide, "The worst part is wondering how you'll find the strength tomorrow to go doing what you did today and have been doing for much too long, where you'll find the strength for all that stupid running around, those projects that come to nothing, those attempts to escape from crushing necessity, which always founder and serve only to convince you one more time that destiny is implacable, that every night will find you down and out, crushed by the dread of more and more sordid and insecure tomorrows. And maybe it's treacherous old age coming on, threatening the worst. Not much music left inside us for life to dance to. Our youth has gone to the ends of the earth to die in the silence of the truth. And where, I ask you, can a man escape to, when he hasn't enough madness left inside him? The truth is an endless death agony. The truth is death. You have to choose: death or lies. I've never been able to kill myself." Luckily, in the end, the protagonist of Brophy's film does not have to gather the courage or will power to off himself yet he still manages to achieve his seemingly unspoken dream of dying a bitter-sweet death while soaked in his own much beloved bodily fluids, thus one could argue that the film has a sort of cynic's equivalent to a happy ending. Speaking

of Céline, who had an imperative influence on the Beat Movement, William S. Burroughs is indubitably one of the biggest influences behind *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat*, which wallows in the same sort of jovially grotesque and intricately politically correct humor that was penned by the trust-fund-sponsored junky queer literary outlaw.

Notably, in his humorously titled 2004 essay *My Dreadful Failure as an Australian Filmmaker*, auteur Philip Brophy wrote regarding his debut feature *Body Melt*, “Ten years ago, I thought it would be really fun to get the then ‘Coles girl’ (Lisa McCune) to drop her placenta one month prior to child birth, then have the placenta force its way down her husband’s (Brett Climo) throat while her womb explodes. I also thought it would be a barrel of monkeys to kill a whole lot of soapie stars in a feature film. I also thought people would like it. Here in Australia, they sure didn’t. *Body Melt* had no ‘hero’, no ‘journey’, no ‘3-act-structure’, no ‘multicultural aspirations’, and no condescending dismissal of bogan suburbia (very important in quality Aussie comedy). Late last year Tarantino proclaimed *Body Melt* ‘the best Australian film of the 90’s’ - but hey, what would he know? David Stratton hit it better on the mark: ‘Pity.’” Since *Body Melt*, like a lot of so-called body horror films, tends to be a flick that people either love or love to hate, it should be no surprise that *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* has suffered a similar fate in terms of obtaining a dubious reputation. Indeed, in the book *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* edited by Derek Jones, Irish film professor and movie producer Dr. Rod Stoneman (who via the Irish Film Board, acted as an executive producer on Peter Mullan’s *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002)) noted that, aside from being heavily reedited when it was screened on British TV in 1990, Brophy’s film was found to be mighty offensive by certain Scottish college students. Indeed, as Dr. Stoneman wrote in the book, “There was, however, further controversy about *SALT, SALIVA, SPERM AND SWEAT* at a student seminar on censorship in Glasgow University the year after its transmission. The necessary mischief involved in pushing the boundaries of British television with such a deliberately rude and shocking piece were challenged by a student audience, who thought that the desirous look from the main character to a young boy drying himself by the fire after a bath (which had been reduced from a prolonged stare to a glancing ambiguity in the cut version) was still outrageous and unacceptable. Some young people apparently felt that child sex abuse was too serious an issue to be played with in a satire about something else.”

While not exactly an unequivocal masterpiece, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is almost immaculate in the context of the particular preternatural cinematic universe that it inhabits, sort of like similarly unclassifiable and inexplicable quasi-artsy works like *Themroc* (1973) directed by Claude Faraldo and *Animales racionales* (1983) aka *Human Animals* directed by filmmaker/screenwriter Eligio Herrero. While *Body Melt* is undoubtedly regarded as Brophy’s celluloid magnum opus, I unquestionably prefer his first film because I found its scathing

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anti-bourgeois iconoclasm and post-punk anti-aesthetic to be truly unrivaled (while *Body Melt* is, at least to some extent, derivative and just too much like the early horror-comedies of Peter Jackson like *Bad Taste* (1987) and *Dead Alive* (1992) aka *Braindead* for my liking). Indeed, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* is the film that Nick Zedd and various other dope-addled members of the Cinema of Transgression wish they had directed but lacked the sophistication, artistic prowess, and sense of cinema (to read some of Brophy's essays on film, check-out his official website). Unlike Zedd and company, Brophy understands that you have to understand the rules of cinema before you break them. If you ever needed a sort of intricate metapolitical argument as to why you should never step foot in an office and you do not feel like reading esoteric Radical Traditionalist writings or suffering the experience of working under some self-important feminist-brainwashed female boss who wishes that her clit would grow into a cock, *Salt, Saliva, Sperm and Sweat* should provide you with enough fiercely fucked food-for-thought to inspire you to prefer doing manual labor over shuffling papers.

-Ty E

AH POOK IS HERE

Philip Hunt (1994)

Ah Pook is Here is an animated short film directed by Phillip Hunt in the year of 1994. It was based off of a William S. Burroughs novel of the same title. William S. Burroughs' deadpan reading of this short was derived from his recordings on a compilation known as Dead City Radio. The result is a wonderfully cosmic tale of the last gods struggle with the deterioration of the common man. Besides, what kind of man is a man without junk? The fleshy-organic creature of Ah Pook is a deliriously unwelcome looking creation. A stitched demi-god of cataclysmic sorrow and doubt. His likeness is mysteriously similar to Nightmare Before Christmas' Oogie Boogie. Willam S. Burroughs' voice is a gravelly patch of burden stretched across this beautiful animated film. The vast complexities are endless and each viewing supplements your taste for knowledge.

"In the scattered remains of a burnt out cosmos, the last god, "AH POOK" debates with his alter ego the trembling balance between life and death. An animated stream of consciousness in Burroughs' idiosyncratically mesmeric voice breaks delivers us a requiem for the carcasses of Armageddon, nihilistic ramblings of "the last god" searching for meaning in his universe, and finally a bitter manifesto of enlightenment, and liberation." The original recording in Dead City Radio contained the line "Bryon Gysin had the all-purpose nuclear bedtime story... the all-purpose bedtime story, in fact: Some trillions of years ago, a sloppy, dirty giant flicked grease from his finger. One of those gobs of grease is our universe on its way to the floor... Splat." This line was apparently in the theatrically released edit of this short film, but for some reason, it's absent from the commercially released print replaced with "No More Hitler's, No More Stalin's".

When I become Death, Death is the seed from which I grow... Itzama, spirit of early mist and showers. Ixtaub, goddess of ropes and snares. Ixchel, the spider web, catcher of morning dew. Zooheekock, virgin fire patroness of infants. Adziz, the master of cold. Kockupocket, who works in fire. Ixtahdoom, she who spits out precious stones. Ixchunchan, the dangerous one. Ah Pook, the destroyer. Hiroshima, 1945, August 6, sixteen minutes past 8 AM. Who really gave that order? Answer: Control. Answer: The Ugly American. Answer: The instrument of Control. Question: If Control's control is absolute, why does Control need to control? Answer: Control... needs time. Question: Is Control controlled by its need to control? Answer: Yes. Why does Control need humans, as you call them? Answer: Wait... wait! Time, a landing field. Death needs time like a junkie needs junk. And what does Death need time for? Answer: The answer is sooo simple. Death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for Ah Pook's sake. Death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for Ah Pook's sweet sake, you stupid vulgar greedy ugly American death-sucker. Death needs time for what it kills to grow in, for Ah Pook's sweet

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sake, you stupid vulgar greedy ugly American death-sucker... Like this. We have a new type of rule now. Not one man rule, or rule of aristocracy, or plutocracy, but of small groups elevated to positions of absolute power by random pressures and subject to political and economic factors that leave little room for decision. They are representatives of abstract forces... Ah Pook picks up a double-barrel shotgun and opens the breech, where two shells are chambered. It closes the breech... who've reached power through surrender of self. The iron-willed dictator is a thing of the past. There will be no more Stalins, no more Hitlers. The rulers of this most insecure of all worlds are rulers by accident... Ah Pook is caressing the shotgun... inept, frightened pilots at the controls of a... Ah Pook puts the shotgun into its mouth, and its voice continues: ... vast machine they cannot understand, calling in experts to tell them which buttons to push. Ah Pook pulls the trigger. — William S. Burroughs

Ah Pook is Here is a specially crafted art short. It houses endless meaning within its minuscule runtime. The results are a feverishly analytical piece of the collapse of everything - the downfall of society and religion. The fallibility of God is neigh. Ah Pook is Here is everywhere near as important as any children's classic. A mandatory viewing for any fan of Burroughs or surrealist animation.

-mAQ

THE WANDERERS

Philip Kaufman (1979)

Films about gangs and criminals have no doubt attracted degenerate youth all across America. These are films where young gangstas find their true models and messiahs. To see this pathetic trend, one only has to go to an urban area (and most rural areas) on a busy day and see how many youths are sporting a Scarface or 50 Cent shirt. Call me crazy, but I think Tony Montana is a piece of erratic trash (that ultimately fails). I am also not sure whether or not I would even give 50 Cent the title of "Sub-Man" because he just seems much lower than that. Sadly, to the bottom feeding males of our society, criminals with money are always going to be their greatest heroes because that is as best as these individuals (that lack individuality) can strive for. I do believe, however, that all young males (no matter what type of background) form a "gang" in some form or manner, as it is natural. The "gang" members featured in the 1979 film *The Wanderers* are certainly of a more "mellow" nature.

The main gang featured in *The Wanderers* is a group of young Italian-Americans greasers known as "The Wanderers." This gang is not full of your typical dego wops, but a more "gentle" group of garlic lovers. I was looking for something more stereotypical of these gangster Italian-Americans, but they ultimately act like a bunch of whiney Jews who complain about not being able to get laid. Maybe Martin Scorsese should have directed *The Wanderers* instead of Philip Kaufman. Despite *The Wanderers* gang being the main gang in the film, I found myself more interested in the lesser shown gangs.

The Fordham Baldies is the "toughest" gang in *The Wanderers*. These guys are sort of proto-skinhead types that sport leather jackets to match their equally shiny shaved heads. This gang seems to be a mixture of WASP types with a token beefy Negro for good measure. Although the Baldies are much more interesting than the Wanderers, my favorite gang in *The Wanderers* is easily the Duck Boys. The Duck Boys are an all Irish gang of silent psychopath leprechauns that sport raggedy working-class clothes. This gang of murdering Catholics gave a new meaning to the no longer used word "mick." The other two gangs featured in *The Wanderers*, The Wongs (Chinese) and The Del Bombers (Black), were of really no interest.

The Wanderers was a film that obviously attempted to make something nostalgic out of early 1960s NYC gangs. Unfortunately, the film was too weak in its portrayal of that era. Still, I found *The Wanderers* to be a breath of fresh air in comparison to your contemporary "KILLZ EVREE MUDHA FUCKA" gang film that has become so common in Hollywood. I know the producers in Hollywood have no interest in criminal violence (only white collar stuff), so why do they find it so necessary to expose already degenerate youths to it?!?

-Ty E

THE REFLECTING SKIN
THE REFLECTING SKIN

Philip Ridley (1990)

If the devil himself created a coming-of-age film in an attempt to lure children on a metaphysical road to hell, I believe that film would resemble Philip Ridley's 1990 film *The Reflecting Skin*. Despite being Ridley's directorial debut, *The Reflecting Skin* features the kind of attention to details and distinct artistry that you would expect from a mature auteur. *The Reflecting Skin*, like many great films, is ripe full of ungodly perversion and unquenchable obsession. The child protagonist of the film, Seth Dove, is naive to true darkness that has engulfed his decaying rural community in rural Idaho. Set in the 1950s, *The Reflecting Skin* is most likely the darkest portrayal in film history of a past era in American that is generally regarded as "The Good Old Days." Personally, I see the 1950s as the beginning of the end for traditional America. With the allies win in the second World War, came a time of prosperity in the USA that American citizens had never seen before. Of course, luxury usually breeds uncontrollable hedonism and eventually unstable decadence. In *The Reflecting Skin*, it is apparent that the stranglehold of the original puritan ethic is crumbling away in America. Instead of fulfilling the American dream, prosperity only ignited the surly flames of an American Nightmare. In *The Reflecting Skin*, God is dead, as the citizens of rural Idaho have (in their hearts) killed him - they just don't know it yet.

From the beginning of *The Reflecting Skin*, it is apparent that 9 year old Seth Dove is a little confused as to what is truly "Good" and "Evil" in the world. After his father commits suicide via self-immolation, Seth is left with his fanatically religious, yet morbidly neurotic religious Mother and progressive war veteran brother Cameron (played excellently by Viggo Mortensen). Before committing suicide, Seth's father introduces his son to vampire folklore. After learning about vampires, Seth is convinced that his English neighbor Dolphin, a grieving widow still in love with her departed beloved, is a bloodsucking succubus who is out to drink the blood and steal the youthful vitality of his brother Cameron. After all, Dolphin tells Seth that she is over 200 years old and disgusted by the fact that human flesh rapidly decays. Whereas Seth's cold puritanical mother physically and mentally abuses him for the smallest of infractions, the highly sensual Dolphin, who is contrary in character to every member of the puritan rural community, shows empathy for the boy's delinquency. Believing that puritanical stringency is golden, Seth can only assume that the dionysian nature of Dolphin is evil, thus vampiric. Obviously much more laidback than his kinfolk, Seth's older Cameron brother soon finds himself falling in love with the enigmatic Dolphin. Brother Cameron sees his own mother as a vampire (of the psychic non-blood-sucking sort), whose self-obsessed religious psychosis drained her own husband of his vitality. Whilst laying flowers on his father's grave, Cameron acknowledges that his Mother's vilely abusive character caused the early death of his father/her hus-

band.

Seth's father commits suicide after being (falsely) accused of child molestation. A one-eyed Sheriff, who gives off the vibe of a secretive pederast, asks Seth (while being extra "touchy" with the frightened lad) if his father ever molested him. From the beginning of *The Reflecting Skin*, it is obvious that a car of leatherjacket sporting teenagers holds sole responsibility for the evil acts occurring in the community. The sheriff describes the child molesters as a "new kind of animal." Of course, with the self-worship and dedication to personal self-indulgence promoted by Hollywood after the second World War, it is no surprise that dormant pedophiles would awaken and eventually start committing their unspeakable crimes. With collective American prosperity at the end of World War II, came the opportunity for many teenagers to have a wider range of freedom via their own personal automobiles. Taking cues from 1950s Hollywood rebels James Dean and Marlon Brando, the pedo-mobile of teens in *The Reflecting Skin* look like they could have been extras in the teenage rebellion flick *The Wild One*. Obviously, most teens from the 1950s that took influence from the likes of Dean and Brando never went on to engage in child molestation, yet the philosophy of Hollywood endorsed juvenile rebel would pave the way to such perverted extremes. After all, *The Reflecting Skin* is a film about American puritan decay in a vacuum - portraying one communities moral degeneration in a bizarrely surrealistic, yet classically tasteful manner.

Seth's naive nature becomes most glaring when he mistakes a rotting white fetus for an angel and sleeps with it, as if it was his most cherished personal teddy bear. By the end of *The Reflecting Skin*, one can only speculate what will become of the tragedy-stricken little boy. I almost wish that director Philip Ridley would make a sequel to *The Reflecting Skin* portraying Seth's inevitable downward spiral into nihilistic oblivion. After *The Reflecting Skin*, Ridley directed *The Passion of Darkly Moon* (1995), a film about a mentally defective puritan man who develops an unwanted sexual obsession for a beautiful woman that nurses him back to health - eventually falling into the depths of madness. In 2009, Philip Ridley released his third feature *Heartless*, a film about a young man who makes a Faustian pact that he will soon come to regret. Despite the dark nature of his film, Ridley's cinematic intentions are quite noble, as if he is a post-Christian philosopher attempting to establish some morality in a seemingly hopeless apocalyptic world. Indeed, *The Reflecting Skin* is a film that accepts the death of Christianity in the Occident, yet begs the viewer to go beyond nihilism and accept elements of traditional Western morality that are still pertinent to maintaining stability in the rapidly deteriorating modern world. In one evening, I viewed Philip Ridley's small filmography in a personal movie marathon. After watching the films, I can express without hesitation that Philip Ridley is one of the most neglected auteur filmmaker of our times, as his films offer a admirable combination of philosophical insight and audacious imagery that can only be

THE REFLECTING SKIN

lumped in their own distinct category: The Films of Philip Ridley. At the very least give The Reflecting Skin a chance, as the film's stark imagery will even cause the skin of a cold immoralist emotional-cadaver to dance.

-Ty E

THE PASSION OF DARKLY NOON

Philip Ridley (1995)

Upon first viewing Philip Ridley's second feature-length film *The Passion of Darkly Noon* (1995), I was – at best – mildly entertained, but regrettably disheartened, yet the film never left my mind. I originally watched the work a day after I first saw Ridley's daring debut feature *The Reflecting Skin* (1990); a work I instantly regarded as one of my favorite films, so one could say I had exaggerated expectations before watching the director's second feature. Recently, I took it upon myself to re-watch both *The Reflecting Skin* and *The Passion of Darkly Noon* as a double-feature. Like *The Reflecting Skin*, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* proved to be a more aesthetically potent and nobly mystifying work upon subsequent viewings. Starring Brendan Fraser, Ashley Judd, and Viggo Mortensen, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* is a work that boasts an all-star Hollywood cast and a seemingly straightforward plot for a thriller, yet – not unlike *The Reflecting Skin* – it is a film that unmitigatedly transcends preconceptions one would have for such a seemingly formulaic and straightforward work. Like Ingmar Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *The Passion of Darkly Noon* takes its title from passage 1 Corinthians 13 ("Now we see through a glass, darkly...") of the Bible and deals with the inevitable hopelessness of a degenerative mental disorder in an exotic rural setting. Although set in the Appalachian region of North Carolina, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* was actually filmed in rural Germany, thus giving the work a mystical quality comparable to that of the elysian silent German Mountains films. Akin to his previous effort *The Reflecting Skin*, Philip Ridley's *The Passion of Darkly Noon* is an audacious adult fairytale that is in good company with films like Garth Maxwell's *Jack Be Nimble* (1993), Nick Willing's *Photographing Fairies* (1997), and Jeremy Thomas' *All the Little Animals* (1999). Unsurprisingly, director Philip Ridley cited the child folk tales of the Brothers Grimm as a major influence on the storyline and aura of *The Passion of Darkly Noon*; a work of penetrating imponderabilia that is patently otherworldly from its erratic opening to its curiously hopeful (if equally tragic) ending. Like David Lynch (who Ridley is often compared to), Ridley has described his approach to filmmaking as primarily intuitive and barely intellectual, hence the quasi-spiritual nature of his work. Despite the ethereal constitution of *The Passion of Darkly Noon*, the film is scarcely sympathetic towards Christianity, especially of the ultra-conservative cultish sort, and, in fact, portrays an overbearing Nazarene upbringing as the nefarious and demonic source of psychosis and corrosive pathology. In part, Ridley hired the two lead actors due to their vintage all-American good looks as he felt that Brendan Fraser resembled Elvis Presley and that Ashley Judd echoed the semblance of Marilyn Monroe. While watching *The Passion of Darkly Noon*, it is easy to see why the director made this conscious decision, as like the character of Darkly (Fraser),

THE PASSION OF DARKLY NOON

Mr. Presley was a sexually-puritanical momma's boy and like Ms. Monroe, Callie (Judd) is an unorthodox temptress with a knack for seducing men of various creeds and ages. Indeed, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* is a diacritic slice of zeftful yet zany imported American pie. Of course, like all great culinary artists, Ridley has his own secret esoteric recipe.

Darkly Moon (played by Brendan Fraser) has a couple problems. He is a virgin man-child whose only close friends/family members – his parents – have been gunned down by angry town folk. Running frantically in an attempt to save his hopelessly holy life, Darkly boy somehow ends up in the forests of Appalachia and is nearly run down by a kindly coffin-transporter named Jude (Loren Dean). Seeing that Darkly is blatantly daunted and possibly deranged, Jude brings the large lad to beauteous blonde Callie's quaint and secluded forest-covered homestead. Upon nursing Darkly back to equilibrium, Callie takes an instant, if enigmatic, liking to the goofy boy and his peculiar brand of innocence. Unfortunately for both Darkly and Callie, the passive commando-for-Christ and his idle penis soon develop an overwhelming love for the tender woman that treated him so graciously. Callie is in love with a prick of a mute named Clay (Viggo Mortensen); a man that does not need words to express his pathological haughtiness and sexual prowess. To deal with his staggering sexual repression, Darkly commits the almighty sin of spilling his seeds in the moonlight, but this proves to an insufficient form of erotic deliverance for a man that has yet to penetrate and respire an actual furry flapper before his dismally weary, sad virginal eyes. Darkly also engages in masochistic behavior, torturing himself via barbed wire and even going so far as wearing an undergarment suit of bloodletting wired spikes. It is not until Darkly meets Clay's eccentric mother Roxy (Grace Zabriskie) randomly in the woods that he begins to consider that Callie may be an ill-boding conspiring witch that holds sinister supernatural sway over him. After seeing a 20-foot-long silver shoe randomly floating down the river, Clay begins to lose what is left of his Christian-lobotomized mind, but it is not until Clay sees bullet-ridden apparitions of his deceased parents that the loony lad must deal with cunning Callie and her dubious (and apparently diabolical) ways. In a fairytale realm, Darkly's visions might be seemingly genuine, but it is quite apparent in *The Passion of Darkly Noon* that, from the get go, the poor boy is suffering from a monumental mental disturbance that is steadily disintegrating what is left of his fragile personality. Inevitably, Darkly finally experiences an atavistic transformation, henceforth 'evolving' into a quasi-paganized red-body-paint-wearing modern day berserker of sorts who carries a spear and is immune to pain and has nil serious qualms about storming half-naked through a fire and brimstone domain of scorching flames.

Auteur Philip Ridley has described his work *The Passion of Darkly Noon* as, "Marquis de Sade meets Liberace" (minus the homoerotic flamboyancy) but also as a work with its own "fairytale language" and "dream logic." As a trained

painter and all-around multifarious artist, Ridley has also admitted to realizing his films mostly in a visual fashion as opposed to a dialogue-driven manner. As a fan of Brian De Palma's *Carrie* (1976), Ridley has noted that *The Passion of Darkly Noon* is a work where one knows from the beginning that something awe-inspiring will inevitably befall the lead protagonist, thus leading to an impetuous climax that acts as a substitute to an actual sexual orgasm. Somewhat strikingly, Ridley considers *The Passion of Darkly Noon* a virtual reflective visual/thematic encyclopedia of horror cinema, as he cites everything from the films of Roger Corman to classic slasher flicks like John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) and Sean S. Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* (1980) as influences, but I certainly failed to consciously notice any of these (apparently) crucial and seamlessly blended works upon my initial viewing of the film. This may be due to the fact that Ridley intended these references as not pastiche nor parody, but as pseudo-spiritual allusions comparable to those made with traditional Christian iconography, thus, in a sense, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* is a work of eclectic blasphemy and artistically-refined horror cinema worship. On top of taking a quasi-pagan stance by portraying the eternal power of nature as the height of purity and depicting Christianity as a baneful source of aberrant inorganic abstraction, as well as making somewhat cynical references to the bible itself, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* begets a religion out of the almost wholly unholy horror genre, replacing Christ with fictional mass murderers Michael Myers/Jason Vorhees and mother Mary/Mary Magdalene with the archetypal seductive scream-queen, except to a more labyrinthine level. Of course, it would be superlatively misleading and disparaging to merely compare *The Passion of Darkly Noon* to works of traditional horror cinema, as it certainly transcends – both in aesthetic and thematic complexity – the mostly mundane formulas of the often formless genre. Ultimately, *The Passion of Darkly Noon* has more in common (at least visually) with the work of Ridley's painter hero Frances Bacon – the subversive Anglo-Irish figurative painter – than any kitsch horror flick created by B-movie producers just to make a quick buck, as the filmmaker is foremost an uncompromising artist and secondly, a horror fan, hence his is lack of notoriety even in the horror world. Ultimately, Philip Ridley's summed up *The Passion of Darkly Noon* as a tale of silver (magic, enchantment, innocence, etc) versus red (passion, blood, the darker feelings, etc), which I think is quite an apropos description, but, naturally, one will never discover the erotically-charged essence and marvelous mystique of the film unless they actually take the time to watch it and reflect on the delightfulness of Darkly's invigorated lapse with sanity and the virtual forest of hair that lays quite naturally on Ashley Judd's underarm.

-Ty E

HEARTLESS
HEARTLESS

Philip Ridley (2009)

Ever since I first saw his debut cult masterpiece *The Reflecting Skin* (1990) starring a relatively then-unknown Viggo Mortensen, I have been a rather staunch supporter of British auteur/playwright and all-around subversive Renaissance man Philip Ridley, who got his first big break in the film industry by penning the script for *The Krays* (1990) directed by Peter Medak. After directing two completely captivating cinematic neo-fairytale masterpieces, *The Reflecting Skin* and *The Passion of Darkly Noon* (1995), Ridley—for whatever inexplicable reason (apparently, he spent the time writing plays and children's books)—would not direct another film for another 15 years, so one can say that his most recent film, *Heartless* (2009), was more than a little bit long awaited, hence why it was such a big disappointment for me and many of his fans. While Ridley opted for setting *The Reflecting Skin* in iconic rural 1950s Idaho (although the work was actually filmed in Alberta, Canada) and *The Passion of Darkly Noon* in Appalachian region of North Carolina (although the work was actually filmed in Germany, thus giving it a mystical mountain film feel), *Heartless* would be the first film the auteur directed that was actually set in his home city of East London, thus the film naturally lacks the sort of idiosyncratic 'Amero-Heimat horror' essence of his previous works. Indeed, a curious piece of Chav and wog-infested 'hoodie-horror' in the convoluted spirit of Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987) and Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001), *Heartless* depicts a 'heartless' and hellish London in the decidedly decadent post-empire age of multiculturalism, globalization, miscegenation and cultural/racial chaos. A deconstructed and de-Teutonized reworking of Goethe's *Faust* set in one of the Occidental cities most heavily hit by the culture-distorting decay of globalization and multiculturalism, *Heartless* is a far cry from the sort of 'völkisch Gothic' metaphysical horror of his previous two features as a work of metropolitan horror, yet it is no less dark and foreboding in character, even if it is easily the artist's most inferior cinematic work to date. Admittedly, when I first saw *Heartless*, I was completely and irrevocably disappointed, but the film has slightly grown on me in subsequent viewings. Made in an pre-apocalyptic age where third world savages riot and brutally murder British soldiers in the street in tribute to some meta-megalomaniac towelhead god and where many areas of London, not unlike many modern European cities, have turned into 'no go zones' for indigenous Brits, *Heartless* is culturally pessimistic horror disguised as a supernatural psychological thriller that makes one really realize how the world has culturally and morally degenerated since Johann Wolfgang von Goethe first began writing *Faust* over two centuries ago.

Jamie Morgan (Jim Sturgess) is a troubled and introverted weirdo with a heart-shaped birthmark on his face who lives in a multicultural hellhole in East Lon-

don and is thus the object of scorn and ridicule amongst the socially-decaying area's mostly brown-skinned populous. In terms of employment, Jamie is a photographer who prefers the organic aesthetic of real film over digital diarrhea and who shares a humble studio with his brother George (Timothy Spall) and wigger nephew Lee (Luke Treadaway). One day, a Slavic aspiring model named Tia (French actress/supermodel Clémence Poésy) walks into the studio and Jamie falls in love with her at first sight, but she leaves abruptly and in a rather hysterical manner after idiotic nephew Lee makes a crude sexual remark to her. Meanwhile, as reported on local television, a series of brutal murders involving dismembered body parts committed by mostly nonwhite 'youths' wearing demon masks have been occurring around East London. One day, Jamie makes the major mistake of taking photos of the hooded hoodlums—who are not wearing demon masks but are actual demons—and not long after, he is severely beaten and his beloved mother Marion (Ruth Sheen) is set on fire and killed by the hip-hop monsters. On top of that, Jamie's new friend A.J. (played by intolerable 'British' negro actor/director Noel Clarke)—an ex-gang member who has magically turned his life around—is also murdered, with his arm being the only piece of his body that is found by the police. After buying a gun from a shady mongrel to protect himself, Jamie contemplates suicide, but those plans are thwarted when he gets a cellphone call from a mysterious man known simply as 'Papa B' (Joseph Mawle of Game of Thrones fame), who invites him to his dilapidated apartment. Upon arriving at Mr. B's flat, Jamie is greeted by a little Indian girl with a traditional Hindu dot on her head named Belle (Nikita Mištry), who acts as the Mephistopheles-like man's assistant. As he reveals Jamie, Papa B killed his mother (to make him "ready" to come to him) and is a harbinger of chaos and hell-on-earth who spouts the following speech: "Man is most creative at a time of peace and calm... I don't think so. Give Mankind nothing but calm and order, and Mankind is nothing on its own but a grazing cow. Man needs to be unpredictable to feel truly alive. To progress. To create. Mother Nature knows this. That's why she gives us cyclones, tsunamis. But sometimes, just sometimes, Mother Nature, she can't do it all. So what happens then? I help" and "It's atrocity that marks the birth of a new era. Gas chambers... Hiroshima... 9/11... And I, in my humble way contribute to that process."

Ultimately, Jamie makes a seemingly rewarding Faustian pact with Papa B to graffiti city walls with "God is a stupid fuck!" once every few months in return for removing his cock-blocking birthmark. To remove all his birthmarks, Jamie dowses himself with a sort of satanic Molotov cocktail and his entire body is scorched, but he rises from the ashes of his burnt flesh like a proud phoenix. Unfortunately for him, Jamie has been lied to and instead of simply scrawling "God is a stupid fuck!" on already trashed East London buildings, he is told by a funny fellow named 'Weapons Man' (Eddie Marsan)—an employee of Papa B—that he must kill a young man in the following manner: "Heart to be cut

HEARTLESS

out while victim is still alive and said heart to be placed on steps of a church, any church, your choice, by midnight.” After refusing to do it and being brutally flung around a wall by an invisible and unknown force at Papa B’s disposal, Jamie gives in and, with the strangely maternal-like help of Belle, goes hunting for a victim. Ultimately, Jamie picks up a young gay narcissistic hustler under the false pretense of buying gay sex and inevitably brutally murders him in his apartment. Meanwhile, Jamie starts a hot and heavy relationship with Tia, but he does not realize she is cahoots with nephew Lee to steal his deceased mother’s jewels to pay back a grotesque-looking gang dealer named ‘She’ (Brit negro mongrel John Macmillan), who controls all the hooded wog monsters in East London. After getting jealous over his friendship with Belle (she calls Jamie “father”), Papa B demands that Jamie kill Tia as punishment. During a struggle, Tia—who actually did end up falling in love with Jamie despite her initially dubious plans—is accidentally shot dead by Lee and Jamie kills She not long after. In the end, Jamie is chased down by hooded demons and later by Papa B, but one of the hood demons, now in human form, ultimately hits him with a Molotov cocktail and he dies in solace recalling a moment with his belated father before ascending to a bright light of sorts. As Jamie is a rather unreliable narrator, it is never clear whether or not the supernatural things he witness are real or merely the product of a damaged and seemingly schizophrenic mind.

Easily director Philip Ridley’s most commercial and contemporary and least auteur-driven work, *Heartless* is nothing short of an artistic failure on the filmmaker’s part, but it is not completely without merit as it allegorically depicts the very real social and cultural horrors of technocratic post-industrial London in a most uniquely unflattering way. The fact that *Heartless* features the perennially repulsive Noel Clarke—the star of the race-mixing pro-crime piece of celluloid shit *Kidulthood* (2006) and star/director of its equally excrement-ridden sequel *Adulthood* (2008)—only adds to the film’s curious cred as a work pre-apocalyptic horror of the mayhem-filled multi-cult sort. Interestingly, in the behind-the-scenes featurette *Dynamite Sky: The Making of Heartless*, auteur Ridley confesses that *Heartless* was partially inspired by the murder of his friend, which resulted in the filmmaker becoming a social recluse for 2-3 years like protagonist Jamie. Indeed, probably no other European city has faced such a devastating occupation from hostile ‘immigrants’ from the global south than London and *Heartless* is a sort of horror equivalent to *Harry Brown* (2009) as a rare British film that does not shy away from depicting the city as shitty as it really and revoltingly is. Of course, aesthetically speaking, *Heartless* seems horribly shallow and weak when compared to Ridley’s previous efforts, as if he was attempting to make a film that would appeal to jaded emo fags from the Lumpenproletariat. Featuring soulless CGI, superlatively superficial characters, and a disjointed story, *Heartless* certainly epitomizes the cultural joke and spiritual void that is post-WWII England. To be quite honest, after watching the

film at least three times, I still had trouble wrapping my head around the fact that *Heartless* is a Philip Ridley flick, as if the work is a sorry celluloid symptom of the very degeneracy it negatively depicts. Still, *Heartless* is better and more preternatural than no less than 95% of the horror/psychological thriller flicks that come out nowadays. Of course, compared to fellow British 'hoodie horror' flick *Eden Lake* (2008), *Heartless*—with its thematic ambiguity, wimpy emo fag music (which unfortunately Ridley co-composed!), and deconstruction of horror conventions—seems like a sappy and sentimental yet strangely soulless Faustian equivalent to Bruce LaBruce's deconstructed zombie flick *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People* (2008), albeit less politically correct (which is something I can certainly respect!). Indeed, most interesting as a postmodern cinematic raping of Goethe's *Faust* than as a Philip Ridley film, *Heartless* is certainly worth seeing but will probably never develop the cult following that *The Reflecting Skin* did and rightfully so!

-Ty E

LE NÉCROPHILE
LE NÉCROPHILE

Philippe Barassat (2004)

Unfortunately, temerarious and innovative films about necrophilia are quite hard to come by, so I am always stimulated by the possibility of viewing a new work of audacious avant-garde corpse-fucking. With their wealth of films relating to jaded incestuous romances gone awry and sexually aberrant behavior galore, one would think that France would have produced a number of revolutionary man-loves-corpse epics by now, but quite regrettably, that is not the case. Naturally, when I discovered the 36-minute French short *Le nécrophile* (2004) directed by Philippe Barassat, I was on tenterhooks. Admittedly, as a longtime kraut-lover and loather of abstract ideas relating to culture-distorting liberty, I must admit that I am an unrepentant Francophobe of sorts who would rather watch a screening of *Schindler's List* at an Israeli drive-in than languish through the mundane masturbatory marxist disgorge that comes along with a Jean-Luc Godard marathon. That being said, I did not expect *Le nécrophile* to be as romantic nor as aesthetically-gratifying as either of Buttgereit's *Nekromantik* flicks, yet it certainly proved to be a more farcical work with its brief yet fulfilling buffet of jovial incestuous pedophilia, campy cannibalism, and marvelously morbid moments of exceedingly awkward necrophilia. Indeed, *Le nécrophile* may deal with some of the most taboo topics ever explored in cinema, but these sordid scenarios are expressed in such a merry and startlingly palatable manner that I almost forgot that I was watching a film about serial necrophilia and the long-term effects such demented behavior could potentially have on a seemingly virginal preteen girl. The film follows a loathsome lunatic who is so grotesque and patently pathetic in appearance (and character) that he looks like the ill-fated bastard spawn of Peter Lorre à la Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) and a mutant frog (He even has an elastic bug-catching tongue to boot) with Down syndrome. When not isolating himself from the general peasant populous of the decrepit urban ghetto he calls home, the nervous necro basks in bumping angelic cadavers in the night. This unintentionally humorous heteroclit fellow is so terribly timid that he is even unstrung whilst in the one-sided company of an inanimate corpse. When the piteous man is forced to adopt his young niece after her parents die, he must become more creative and covert in regards to probing cold-cadavers during the dead of night. When an adolescent Afro-Arab teenager falls in cross-breed puppy-love with his niece, the neurotic necro finds that his much cherished midnights of intimate necromancy are disastrously jeopardized, thus eventually culminating into dreadfully flustering results.

What makes *Le nécrophile* especially deathly dreary and markedly morose is not the actual moments of debauched necrophilia, but the domestic dystopian setting of the film; a discernibly decayed French ghetto inhabited by third world refugees and thoroughly mongrelized post-racial Frenchmen. While the unusu-

ally unprepossessing anti-hero resembles a bloated corpse himself and is thus symbolic of France of the old (one could argue that the corpse-fucking is an allegory for the inability of the average working-class Frenchman to respond to change) and now degenerated, the lovesick brown boy is denotative of the new 'French'; an innately hostile alien population that will ultimately replace the indigenous race(s) of France via mass illegal immigration and miscegenation. Out of all the characters featured in *Le nécrophile*, the necro's niece is indubitably the most seemingly pure and untainted. With her glistening golden blonde-locks and angelic fair-skin, one ultimately feels more repelled by the prospect of the colored teen defiling her than seeing the depraved necrophile manhandle an expired corpse. As one soon finds out while watching *Le nécrophile*, the nymphet niece is not exactly the most unsullied and immaculate of little girls, but she is a self-sacrificing mademoiselle who will do anything – and I mean anything – to safeguard her exceedingly eccentric uncle and the dubious relationship that they share, even if it involves being deflowered at a less than mature age in a most nauseous and nefarious sort of way. In the end, the little gal proves to be her Uncle's most dutiful guardian angel, despite the fact that she seems to be at an already more corrupted and unsalvageable state than a man that delights in dating and devouring the deceased. Although tragically despoiled during her early years of childhood, the bittersweet little lass is quite stalwart, stoic, and sophisticated for her age due to a short lifetime's worth of personal struggle, thus she acts as a symbol of hope for France; a once proud and invigorative nation that is now literally full of corpses (who actually make a reanimated appearance in the film) from great heroes of a long forgotten past.

Although featuring some of the most unmentionable moments ever captured on celluloid, *Le nécrophile* is essentially a lovesome (if ludicrous) and sentimental (without being simpleminded) tragicomedic neo-fairytale about the unbreakable bond of family ties. If the longtime decadent and irrevocably deracinated French have to make a film about necrophilia, incest, and cannibalism as a way to inspire ideas of self-preservation, nationalism, in-group loyalty, then so be it. I, for one, always wished Georges Bataille was a fascist and Philippe Barassat's *Le nécrophile* seems to be an undaunted expression of the next best thing.

-Ty E

LA CICATRICE INTÉRIEURE
LA CICATRICE INTÉRIEURE

Philippe Garrel (1972)

Contrary to popular belief, it was not so much the supremely popular yet wholly untalented hack Andy Warhol but rather fellow hack director, the largely unknown outside of France, Philippe Garrel, who journeyed with the statuesque Nordic beauty and 60s icon, Nico (aka Christa Päffgen) on her downward spiral—a path which would inevitably lead to her tragic descent into self-imposed uglification and heroin abuse, as well as her appearance in several of Garrel's mediocre, if not altogether uninteresting films. The father of French mainstream actor, Louis Garrel of *The Dreamers* (2003) fame, and director of such undistinguished, avant-garde but cherished Francophile classics as *Le berceau de cristal* (1976) and *Liberté, la nuit* (1983), Philippe Garrel has become something of a cult figure in his native France, which comes as no surprise seeing that his distinctly French films—copiously characterized by plot-less, nonsensical, black and white vignettes featuring up-close shots of not just Nico but Jean Seberg and various other malnourished muses' faces as they pretend to be suicidal with their taut, nude bodies starkly sprawled over barren floors, along with sappy, unlikely sob stories of romantic love gone awry—could only appeal to that haughty collective of pretentious, posh and prissy poofers who also apotheosize perverse visionaries like faux-French Jew musician-turned-director Serge Gainsbourg (who quite sordidly cast his own daughter Charlotte Gainsbourg in the lead role of the incestuous, pretentious and pointless *Charlotte for Ever* (1986), in which the budding pubescent girl traipses about the house half-nude while her father looks on wantonly, seemingly salivating at the sight of his daughter's burgeoning bosom). Indeed, while Garrel, like his equally pompous and pretentious poofer countryman Gainsbourg, is much acclaimed in the Gallophile world, it was not until his collaboration with the flaxen-turned-scarlet-turned-raven haired Nico in the lead role of *The Inner Scar* aka *La cicatrice intérieure* (1972) that he had his first stab at international fame as a seemingly bona-fide (yet ultimately rather artistically vacuous) surrealist visionary auteur, while also successfully documenting the early beginnings of the beautiful Aryanness' coup de grace.

A far cry from her youthful, sumptuously attired supermodel self as seen in her debut film, Fellini's undoubtedly most famous picture, *La Dolce Vita* (1960), in which she only played a minor but memorable role (if not for her Aryan good looks alone) and in great contrast to the starry-eyed, flaxen-haired bohemian chanteuse universally known from her days with Lou Reed in the *Velvet Underground*—of which, Paul Morrissey once noted, “the group needed something beautiful (Nico) to counteract the kind of screeching ugliness they were trying to sell, and the combination of a really beautiful girl standing in front of all this decadence was what we needed”—Nico brazenly shuns all that is beautiful in then boyfriend, Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar* starring as a rather

dowdy giantess donning a drabby frock, innately unfitting dyed dark crimson hair and a presence so unpleasantly child-like and perpetually grating that it continuously impinges upon the audience in a most discomfiting and unsettling way (a dream role for Nico, as director Paul Morrissey once remarked after getting to know her better, “She liked being perceived as ugly”). Shot on location in various exotic locales, including a noisy, actively spewing volcano in Iceland, a desolate wasteland in Death Valley and near the craggy foot of Mt. Sinai in Egypt, the film begins with Nico curled into a fetal position on a rock, rhythmically rocking herself back and forth as if to sooth against some unseen, supernatural violence being perpetuated against her (perhaps the mysterious “inner scar” that the film’s title alludes to?) Philippe Garrel (apparently rather unfittingly playing the devil, as Nico goes on to refer to him) appears from out of nowhere, a decidedly unattractive, scrawny man who takes on the likeness of a strangely dull and unfebrile nutcracker—having a very stiff, almost robotic gait, sporting an unkempt unfurled mane of hair resembling that of a care-free drug addict coming down from one too many acid trips, and wearing perhaps the most ill-fitting pair of pants I have ever seen on a man (indeed, those brown leather trousers hugged his scrotum so tightly as to render him a eunuch). The next ten minutes or so entail Nico ceaselessly harassing this odd, mentally and nearly physically nullified male, and idling around the barren landscapes with him, alternating between dramatically falling to the ground in a fit of rage or yelling at him intermittently, at times seeming like an insufferable toddler in the grips of a temper tantrum, or like a petulant adolescent girl grappling with a pathological case of psychosis—stimulating premenstrual syndrome (“You’re the devil! I hate you!”). Garrel, in rather less than devilish fashion, acquiesces quite sullenly to this barrage of puerile verbal abuse, only looking down at the ground, and continuing to walk, seemingly meandering as if on a path to nothingness—in essence, representative of the direction of the film as a whole.

In the next scene, a somewhat more passive Nico delivers a somber soliloquy, entirely in German, in a dark, otherworldly underground cavern, with spires of stalagmites and stalactites stabbing at the air around her, inexplicably ending with the screen panning to the right to reveal the visage of a young, dark-skinned boy, seemingly of some Amazonian (or other nebulous third-world derived extraction) hidden among some rocks, staring penetratingly in Nico’s direction, fixed in time in what seems to be a catatonic state (this is one of many affronts to the senses and to logic, in that here, and for the remainder of the film, he continually casts characters who seem racially alien to their surroundings save for the decidedly Aryan Nico, of course). What immediately follows is perhaps one of the most memorable, surreal scenes of this all at once seemingly nonsensical, frustrating yet captivating film: Nico, atop a white horse, being led on a leash through the desert by her very own son, Ari Boulogne (then 8-years-old, the product of Nico’s affair with France’s very own James Bond, Alain Delon,

LA CICATRICE INTÉRIEURE

who adamantly denied the child as his own) navigating around rings of flames (a most memorable scene indeed, as it is has been heavily utilized as a clip for use in pretentious, amateur home-made Youtube music videos). One of the rare highlights of this film—aside from the overall National Geographic feel driving its entire *mise-en-scène*—this particularly surreal flaming desert presentation is accented by music from Nico's very own and perhaps most famous, avant-garde solo album, *Desertshore* (1970), in which the scene is paired with "All That is My Own," which, much like the other songs on the album (also appearing at varying points in the film) sounds a bit like a medieval funeral dirge with subtle tinges of psychedelic, kraut-rock influence, which could be most aptly compared to fellow German act Popol Vuh -- whose dreamy, melodic psychedelia fueled sound provided ambiance in several of Werner Herzog's films, most notably *Nosferatu the Vampyre* aka *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* (1979) and *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* aka *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* (1972).

The next scene cuts to a prissy (but again, dowdily dressed) Nico, seemingly having another premenstrual bitch fit, on some rocks in what appears to be the craggy desert environment of Mt. Sinai. Nico looking every bit like some world-weary, wizened pagan prophetess waxing philosophical, loudly screeches, "There is no mercy! There is no justice! The seas shall rise over your heads and drown you all!" after which, a somewhat more Mediterranean in appearance Philippe Garrel look-a-like, played by Daniel Pommereulle, wearing equally ill-fitting, sterility-inducing leather pants, makes his way toward Nico by way of a jagged, winding path, guiding an overflowing procession of goats and sheep with each step. In the background, a man on a white horse is seen, inexplicably waving a white flag, as if to signify that he is surrendering, but to what is never made known.

The remainder of the film, appearing to have been shot entirely on location in the naturally paradoxical fairy land of temperamental, ever combating fire and frost, Iceland, is perhaps the most revealing in terms of delivering any semblance of a plot to this otherwise, "art for art's sake" direction-less film. Starting off in its typically aimless manner, this segment introduces a series of vignettes featuring a rather limp-wristed, decidedly un-Icelandic, pathetic waif of a man played by Pierre Clementi, an archer—and a dead ringer for that thoroughly haughty and annoying British attention-seeking actor, Russell Brand, only about 50 pounds lighter—who traverses the dreary island via boat and horseback, most often appearing fully nude with his wang rendered so flaccid by the frigid temperature that it's barely able to wave in the wind. This dark-haired, scrawny and seemingly impotent character—which appears to be an archetype of sorts, perhaps representing man's immortal, unshakeable impetus toward self-discovery and fulfillment in spite of his futility and weakness (or perhaps I'm giving Garrel too much credit here), who obviously possesses no Scandinavian genetic make-up whatsoever—is a tremendous mismatch against the traditionally Nordic back-

ground of Iceland, as seen in this film with its frothy, frigid waters, unnaturally vibrantly blue glaciers, and fire-spewing volcanoes, all of which, at least in the schema of my mind, evoke images of flaxen-haired, muscle-bound Viking berserkers arriving as the island's first inhabitants with kidnapped crimson-haired, freckled Celtic maidens in tow. The archer (who would be a much more appropriate fit as a loin-cloth wearing or nude, dick-dangling Indian—interchangeably of dot or feather derivation—in some remote jungle of South America or the Indian subcontinent) has a series of strange interactions with the fitting indigene, Nordic Nico, who appears in one scene at the foot of a waterfall, where she brashly and peculiarly proclaims to him, “We can never be here until we’re gone.” In the subsequent, typically disjointed scene, the archer is seen standing, with his weakly muscled, bare-assed and pathetic physique shown in the foreground, against the mighty and entrancing background scenery of the booming bellowing of a vociferous volcano which, actively spewing flaming emissions, conveniently plants a flaming drop of fire at his feet, which he somehow picks up and carries with him through the darkness. And in yet another discordant cut, the proximate scene depicts a dark-haired toddler (Clementi’s son) intermittently grinning and then wincing for about five minutes while drifting afloat on a small glacier, in a bed of feathers (indeed, it is terribly difficult to make any sense of these scenes, if there was ever any intention for any kind of sense to be made of them). Toward the end of this particular segment, an unusual link between scenes is made with the archer appearing adjacent to the child, screaming in French, and then running over to Nico, who appears initially to be in an almost catatonic state, bedecked with flowers surrounding her on the ash-covered earth. She caresses the archer’s face, while uttering in an uncharacteristically softer, more passive manner, “He gave me my senses, he gave me my pride...I beg you to stay. I will give you a name, a name you can remember me by”; after which, she stands up and walks out and sluggishly walks into the distance, never giving him a name.

In the final act, and perhaps the only segment that seems to make any sense, the archer, riding a dark horse, again comes upon a spaced-out Nico, still donning her drabby pre-Christian Mesopotamian era vestment and overall look, who is gazing across the barren, ashen Icelandic wilderness, while a volcano sputters in the background. They walk together somberly and silently to the seashore, where he boards a boat and sets adrift; she subsequently begins screaming seemingly caustic remarks at him in German, like a mentally deranged adolescent girl in desperate need of a double dose of depakote. The next cut reveals Nico, once again, delivering a frustrated German soliloquy, and holding a rock in one hand; she comes upon the burnt out husk of the boat from which the archer had set adrift just minutes prior. Seemingly fearful that the archer is dead, Nico drops the rock, and is presumably frozen in a state of shock; however, her fears are assuaged in the next scene when the archer makes his final appearance. Another

LA CICATRICE INTÉRIEURE

song from *Desertshore* begins at this juncture, titled “König” which helps the ending to make a little more sense. Nico, perched atop some volcanic rocks, stares felicitously over the frozen, ashen earth below her, as the archer, holding a sword, with his legs spread out so that his frozen, shrunken member is still on full display, slowly and ceremoniously raises the sword above his head, to which Nico triumphantly grabs it, signifying that she has become the king, the ultimate ruler of the cold, dreary domain, and perhaps, hopefully that she has come to have some control over her fiery, frenetic feelings. It is this final image of the film that is perhaps one of its most beautiful and entrancing, and perfectly befitting an archetype or Tarot card illustration: a Nordic ice goddess, finally exercising complete control over her frosty, yet fiery chaotic dominion, both that which exists outside and within herself.

Admittedly, even at only an hour in length, *The Inner Scar* initially made for a very difficult film to sit through in its entirety. On the surface, like many of Garrel’s films, it is an idiosyncratic, nonsensical piece and one can only arrive at the conclusion that it only makes sense to its creators, decidedly poofy French director, Philippe Garrel and the self-loathing, lover of all things weird, Nordic beauty Nico, who at ten years his senior, was involved in a lengthy and tumultuous personal and professional relationship with Garrel, a point at which she became heavily and inescapably addicted to heroin (seemingly almost counter-intuitively, as Warhol’s *Factory* was well-known for its raucous excess in terms of ‘sex, drugs, and rock n’ roll’, it was not until she met Garrel later on Nico that she really became hooked on heroin, and began a slow and steady decline in terms of deterioration of her health, overall looks, and artistic output). However, upon a subsequent viewing, and having read a great deal about Nico and her brief, tragic life (which was sadly cut short in the most pathetic way imaginable, after she had attempted to wean herself off of heroin, and suffered a minor heart attack while riding a bicycle in Ibiza with her son), the film’s odd, incoherent non-message is somewhat more decipherable: as the daughter of a German soldier who died in a concentration camp after sustaining serious brain injuries during World War II, and after having allegedly been raped by an American GI at just 15 years of age, Nico, although incredibly beautiful, was clearly afflicted by serious mental trauma during the more formative years of her life, leading her to having a proclivity for hooking up with a variety of unsavory and unsuitable male characters: Lou Reed, lead singer of the Velvet Underground who, according to Paul Morrissey, dissolved the band out of jealousy toward the eccentric German songstress, French playboy Alain Delon, who fathered a son with the erratic and unstable Nico, and who subsequently rejected the child (and whose parents eventually took the boy in so that he would not be given up to child protective services), and Philippe Garrel, who utilized her distinctive beauty and idiosyncratic nature as a focal point of one of the many chapters of the nonsensical celluloid diaries he crafted about the many women he miraculously bedded.

It is clear that Nico was a terribly tortured soul, a woman—who in spite of her immense beauty and the promise of fortune, fame, and happiness that could spring out of it—could not let go of the tragic, traumatic experiences that pervaded her life, and that reinforced the unquenchable thirst to pursue ugliness and weirdness at all costs, a seemingly nonsensical process of self-deprecation that is beautifully and surreally illustrated in Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar*, a title which very likely alludes to kind of indelible inner anguish propagated by the enemy within.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

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Philippe Garrel (1974)

For the longest time, I absolutely could not fathom why a certain lover of mine appreciated the films of dope-addled French avant-garde filmmaker Philippe Garrel (*Le Révélateur*, *La cicatrice intérieure* aka *The Inner Scar*) even though she was a rare woman whose aesthetic sensibilities I could virtually always count on. Notably, this same lover had modeled for a series of photo shoots with a sleazy middle-aged scumbag that I did not particularly appreciate, as the person in the pictures did not seem like the same girl that I knew and loved. Indeed, her smiles and poses in these photos were unnervingly sincere to me as I could tell just by looking at her always entrancing eyes that she was not genuinely happy, but of course she was a girl that was quite good at wearing a figurative mask because she was a people-pleaser even though she did not really care about actually pleasing people. As a hardcore introvert with serious problems with anxiety as a result of certain traumas that she suffered during childhood, she mastered the art of being rather agreeable around people in the hope that she could completely avoid being triggered by unpleasant emotions. In fact, she was so highly sensitive to any form of anger, negativity, or hostility that I would sometimes unwittingly upset her if I was annoyed or mad about something that had absolutely nothing to do with her or her actions even though hurting her was the last thing on my mind since she was the only person that I truly loved and cared about yet she still had a hard time believing this because her reaction was innate and instinctive response to past traumas. Anyway, as a result of being with her and becoming accustomed to her sensitivities, I think I can finally understand why she had such a strong affection for Garrel's meta-minimalistic cinematic works. Quite unlike the sleazy photographer that took photos of my lover just so that he would have an excuse to ogle hot young babes while simultaneously monetarily profiting from it, Garrel had a singular talent for exposing the real essence, beauty, vulnerability, and sensitivity of the women that he directed, which is arguably the most apparent in his silent black-and-white feature *Les hautes solitudes* (1974) aka *The High Solitudes* starring tragic American actress Jean Seberg (*Bonjour Tristesse*, *Lilith*) in what would indubitably not only be the greatest, but also most revealing and poetic performance of her entire fairly uneven acting career. Forget gay arthouse auteur Mark Rappaport's kitschy and bitchy video art rant *From the Journals of Jean Seberg* (1995), Garrel's film might not feature any insightful historical facts or even dialogue, but you will learn more about the ill-fated screen heroine's damaged psyche and perpetual pathos by watching five minutes of the flick than by watching all of the American pseudo-biopic starring decidedly dorky Woody Allen graduate Mary Beth Hurt. Directed by an uncompromising auteur who demonstrated that he had the exact opposite approach to filmmaking to Hitchcock when he declared in an autumn 1970 interview in *Af-*

terimage #2 that, “making the film is the most interesting [part]. What comes after it’s made isn’t very interesting,” Garrel’s sometimes devastating filmic love letter is an experiment in cinematic “collective psychosis” (or at least that is how Garrel described it) as an emotionally invasive and foreboding work that digs deep into the actress’ sad and forsaken soul and reveals her to be a hopelessly forlorn spirit that was ultimately on a path to complete self-obliteration. Indeed, certainly no one would be surprised to learn after watching her performance in *Les hautes solitudes* that Seberg perished under dubious circumstances that were officially ruled a suicide only five years after the film was released. If cinema can be truly prophetic and take the form of a sort of quasi-Expressionistic suicide letter, Garrel’s flick is indubitably one of the greatest and most poetic cinematic declarations of self-slaughter ever made.

In many ways, *Les hautes solitudes* might be described as the ultimate Garrelian film as a totally plotless and stripped down piece of sometimes suffocatingly sullen and nearly always somber celluloid that it patently cinematically primitive to the point where it even makes Andy Warhol’s *Chelsea Girls* (1966) seem like Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) in terms of technical prowess innovation (incidentally, Garrel has compared his film to *Chelsea Girls*). Indeed, a completely silent work without title sequences or a musical score that was shot on bold black-and-white 16mm film stock, the film oftentimes feels like a series of avant-garde screen tests, so it should be no surprise that Garrel stating regarding his flick and lead actress Seberg’s imperative role in the making of it, “The idea was to make a film out of the outtakes of a film that never existed in the first place. So I conceived *LES HAUTES SOLITUDES* as outtakes, a very raw texture on her face. Her agent, her friends, everybody thought I wasn’t serious in my endeavor. I arrived every day at Seberg’s apartment with my camera and filmed her on the balcony, close to the window, for hours, with no role and no script. No-one thought that it was a real film, but she was very independent and didn’t care about this. I consider *LES HAUTES SOLITUDES* as much a Seberg film as mine.” To Garrel’s credit, Seberg’s performance is largely what makes the film worth watching, as one has the rather rare and wholly singular opportunity to pay witness to the strangely endearing tragedy of irreparably despoiled beauty as embodied by the forsaken blonde diva, who provides the greatest ‘performance’ of her career in an almost ghostly role where she does not even speak a single audible word, yet manages to make the viewer feel completely haunted in the end, like they have witnessed the slow and painful death of an angel that bled to death after having its wings torn off by. Arguably, the most curious and generally surprising aspect of *Les hautes solitudes* is that it was apparently at least partially inspired by Teutonic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s penultimate book *The Antichrist* (1895) aka *Der Antichrist* which, at least upon a superficial glance, seems like describing Woody Allen’s *Annie Hall* (1977) as a modern adaptation of Uncle Adolf’s *Mein Kampf* (1925). Surely, the only superficial similarities I

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can see between Nietzsche's classic anti-Christian polemic and Garrel's film are the raw and visceral madness and mental derangement that they both permeate. Of course, I doubt that this ever crossed the mind of a fairly unkempt frog junky bohemian like Garrel, but there is no question that Seberg was a product and ultimately a victim of both the Nazarene spiritual sickness and Judaic decadence that Nietzsche decries in his classic iconoclastic book, thus one could argue that *Les hautes solitudes* is Nietzschean in a sort of accidentally subtextual fashion. Additionally, you will learn no less about Nietzsche's philosophies from Garrel's flick than you would by watching Liliana Cavani's botched biopic *Al di là del bene e del male* (1977) aka *Beyond Good and Evil*.

If a spacey dope-addled French dandy managed to obtain a couple thousand dollars, a 16mm Bolex camera and a number of rolls of film, and a couple inordinately beautiful women and attempted to remake Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *Persona* (1966) in the style of an early Werner Schroeter flick, it might begin to describe the aesthetic essence of *Les hautes solitudes*, which mainly revolves around the glaring metaphysical misery of Seberg and the much younger and happier Tina Aumont's superficially empathetic but seemingly futile and somewhat questionable attempts to comfort and console the hapless lead while she is in one of her various melancholic states. While the two leads in *Persona* begin to become one in a sense, the two lovely looking ladies in Garrel's film could not be more different in terms of both appearance and character, thus there is no real union between the two. Indeed, if Aumont's enchanting smile, cutesy pulchritude, and somewhat mischievous demeanor was not there to balance out Seberg's malignant melancholy and seemingly terminal *Weltschmerz*, the film would probably be too excruciating to bear in its entirety. Notably, according to Garrel's own words, the film was largely Seberg's instinctive vision and not the result of calculated art faggotry or pretense, or as the filmmaker stated himself in a 1975 interview, "When I met her, we talked about Godard straight away. I found it interesting to create a piece that escaped *À bout de soufflé* insofar as it was still very present in the filming. And, she was passionate about the Actor Studio [method acting]. She forced me to do scenes from the Actor Studio. She said to me, 'Tomorrow, I will give you a plan, but I will only give you my plan if you act me something.' So, I had to play a thief. I had to steal a thousand francs from her bag and then leave – running. We tried to do that and then after, I was truly scared, she followed me down the stairs... Effectively, I had returned to psychoses – and quite easily. She said to me that it was like that when they worked at the Actor Studio and that it was necessary to work in that way. And so, we tried to make the film like that, to make something that uses psychodrama, and that serves to really liberate something. As she is a star, at a very specific level, even I was under observation, with regards to her work. The work had perhaps been very useful to her, because she wrote me a letter; it seemed to say that we had created a positive and important piece of work. That

said, she thought the film that was completely incomprehensible.” Of course, the incomprehensibility Garrel speaks of is Seberg’s mind, which is depicted in such a completely raw and stark-naked fashion in *Les hautes solitudes* that no Hollywood film could ever dream of rivaling it in terms of sheer pathos. Of course, one must credit the unscrupulous exploiters and pimps of Tinseltown for helping to destroy Seberg’s mind and soul in such an irreparable manner that she could pull off such an unsettlingly penetrating ‘performance.’

Although she is only a marginal and seemingly random figure of the film that only appears at the very beginning, Teutonic diva Christa ‘Nico’ Päffgen (who was nicknamed after Greek auteur Nikos Papatakis by her German photographer friend Herbert Tobias) is featured in the opening scene of *Les hautes solitudes* lying on the ground while her eyes are moving in a strange and erratic fashion as if she is a tweaker that is coming down from a high. Of course, Nico was Garrel’s main diva during the 1970s and arguably the most imperative source of inspiration for him at the time, so her brief appearance in the film is, at least contextually speaking, both important and revealing, especially if you are familiar with *La Cicatrice Intérieure*. When Jean Seberg eventually first appears, she is depicted having a sort of anxiety-ridden panic attack while lying in bed by herself in a long static scene that involves her crying hysterically and slamming her head against a pillow like an agitated child that is throwing a temper tantrum, though she eventually seems to find some peace and then falls asleep. This first scene more or less foreshadows virtually everything that will occur for the rest of the film, as Seberg is mostly portrayed in various states of internal misery, existential crisis, restlessness, and/or melancholy, with the occasional fleeting moment of happiness. Notably, Seberg is oftentimes portrayed with a shadow covering about half her face in a fairly symmetrical fashion, as if to indicate she is a bipolar broad that has fallen into the darkness and is always on the verge of shifting back and forth between sanity and insanity, with her dark side always threatening to consume her ‘true self.’ Unfortunately, it seems that it is only a matter of time before Seberg’s entire being succumbs to total despair. Somewhat curiously, it seems that anytime that Seberg seems happy, she is wearing either a hat or hood, as if having something covering her head gives her a certain sense of psychological security because it partly shields her from the world. Seberg’s only ostensible friend in the film is Tina Aumont, who seems to be dating a perpetually depressed dude portrayed by Laurent Terzieff (of Gillo Pontecorvo’s *Kapò* (1960) and Luis Buñuel’s *La voie lactée* (1969) aka *The Milky Way*). While Seberg shows signs of depression and misery at least 80-85% of the time, Aumont is probably only upset about 15-20% of time and thus she naturally acts as a sort of security blanket to the protagonist, though one suspects the French Jewess might have ulterior motives as she certainly has a more sinister side.

While Aumont finds joy in simply talking to and caressing her beau Terzieff

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in shadowy doorways, Seberg only seems to be truly in her element when she is doing somewhat bizarre things like taking showers while wearing tacky jewelry, as if doing such absurd things make her temporarily forget the cold hard reality of her nightmarish existence. Of course, Seberg tends to fall into her own sort of personal purgatory when she is all alone as is especially apparent in a scene where she sits on a floor in a fetal position while dressed in a nightgown. At one point in the film, Aumont walks in on Seberg at just the right moment and saves her while she is seemingly attempting to commit suicide by downing pills with alcohol. One of the ways that Aumont is able to console Seberg and put her in a temporary happy place is by combing her hair like a nurturing mother that is taking care of her daughter, as if it reminds the lead of a time in her life before she became plagued with mental illness. Indeed, Aumont might be almost eight years older than Seberg, but she is certainly the more mature and maternal person in their seemingly co-dependent relationship. There are more than a couple hints that Aumont might have unsavory intentions in regard to her friendship with mental cripple Seberg, as she sometimes makes an evil bitch smirk, especially when she is playing with a switchblade in a fairly fetishistic fashion. During one of Seberg's merrier moments, she is depicted sporting a large fancy fur-coat as if she is briefly reliving her most magical and glamorous years a famous-movie star before she suffered the disgrace of becoming the white sugar-momma whore of the black panthers and unloved wife to various sleazy and abusive Israelite types of the physically grotesque sort. If one thing is for sure, Seberg seems about twenty times as mentally unhinged and melancholic in *Les hautes solitudes* than Carole Bouquet's character does in Schroeter's *Tag der Idioten* (1981) aka *Day of the Idiots*. Of course, this is amazing when one considers that Seberg only had the benefit of her mere facial expressions while much of Bouquet's mental derangement is largely depicted via surrealism, Sapphic urophilia, and bizarre special effects, among other things that demonstrate that Schroeter had a profound affection for female misery and mental derangement. Certainly Garrel's film provides ample evidence that Seberg might have made a great silent era actress, as she certainly says more with her eyes than words ever could.

Although a fairly insignificant figure of the film, Slavic frog pansy Terzief is depicted at one point staring at his reflection in a table as if he is embracing the void and is totally fed up with life to the point of wanting to end it all yet lacks the drive and testicular fortitude to do so. Aumont also does the same thing, but she does not look nearly as forlorn as Terzief, who one suspects might be a victim of the cunning dark-haired dame's whimsical feminine wrath. As the film progress, Seberg and Aumont spend most of their bonding time smoking and talking to one another in a somewhat somber and even seemingly semi-apathetic fashion, as if their relationship has run its course and the two no longer find any value in one another. If anything is for sure, it is that all the characters in

the film are haunted, though Seberg seems irreparably internally damaged while Aumont seems to just be going through a minor phase that probably has a lot to do with her dubious relationship with brooding beta-body Terzief. During the last couple of minutes of the film, Seberg is depicted smiling while wearing a goofy hat with a veil and flowers on it, though her happiness soon disintegrates while talking to some unseen person. In the end, the film fittingly concludes with Seberg sitting alone in the darkness where she goes from being physically violent to sobbing hysterically in only a matter of seconds. Of course, in terms of both the film and in real-life, Seberg had no one else in the end aside from the personal pandemonium of her own psyche. Not surprisingly, Seberg ultimately decided to risk it all by breaking through said pandemonium.

Although it might come as a shock to some people, Seberg actually once directed an experimental film entitled *Ballad for Billy the Kid* (1974), but it seems impossible to find and it was extremely poorly received upon its less than auspicious premiere. Indeed, as Jonathan Rosenbaum, who personally met Seberg a handful of times, noted in his essay *Riddles of a Sphinx: From the Journals of Jean Seberg*, "The only other time I ever saw Seberg in the flesh was in late 1974, and then only from a distance. I was present at what may have been the world premiere of a short film she wrote, directed, and starred in, *BALLAD FOR [BILLY] THE KID*, at the London Film Festival [...] It was a French hippie 'underground' effort that resembled many others of that period, and though it was embarrassingly bad, the derision of the audience seemed needlessly cruel and vindictive. I remember thinking how painful it must have been for Seberg." While I would not be surprised if *Ballad for Billy the Kid* actually is total garbage of the hippie leftist sort, I think with *Les hautes solitudes*, which was incidentally released the same year as her short film, Seberg proved that she was an 'auteur' of sorts that did have something of artistic merit to express. After all, a burnt out heroin-addled bohemian like Garrel would probably not say something like, "I consider *LES HAUTES SOLITUDES* as much a Seberg film as mine," if he did not truly mean it. In other words, the film would be nothing without Seberg, who is the spirit of this virtual celluloid dirge. Certainly Garrel's contribution to the film was largely passive at best, but it also epitomizes his particular and admittedly fairly preternatural brand of auteur filmmaking. Interestingly, Garrel once stated in an interview in regard his approach and artistic handicaps to directing the film, "...I took control of the camera, but I didn't know how to operate it, so it was quite disastrous technically, but, at the same time, I liked it better because it allowed me more freedom. [...] Now, I see that to take control of the camera myself is something like having an iron arm. It is like an artificial limb. There is some horror in that. That is what Welles explains. I have not known a solution to it. Maybe one day we will use a radio-controlled camera that works alone."

As someone that is somewhat familiar with Nietzsche's *The Antichrist*, I have

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no clue how the book inspired Garrel's film, yet the text certainly gives some insights in regard to Seberg's spiritual affliction and internal misery as is potently expressed in the flick. An American Nordic beauty of Swedish, English, and German extraction that was brought up in a devoutly Lutheran household, Seberg was instilled with a deep sense of terribly naive Christian altruism at an early age that consumed her entire life and indubitably led to many of the extremely poor and self-destructive choices that she made during her fairly short life. Of course, Nietzsche felt that Christianity was an intrinsically corrosive Jewish spiritual virus (in the book, he describes the "Christian" as "that ultimate of lying, is the Jew all over again—he is threefold the Jew...") that was responsible for 'taming' and ultimately weakening the 'blond beast' (aka Aryan peoples) and Seberg certainly represented the worst qualities of racially deracinated Judeo-Christian decadence. Indeed, while Seberg both funded and fucked honky-hating Black Panther leaders because she felt she was doing the Lord's work by helping the weak and meek, such self-debasing behavior is nothing short of a major Nietzschean sin as indicated by quotes from the book like, "The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our charity. And one should help them to it. What is more harmful than any vice?—Practical sympathy for the botched and the weak—Christianity." Nietzsche also discusses in *The Antichrist* how the Hebrews are historical harbingers of decadent movements and trends who used said decadent movements and trends as a sort of spiritual weapon against their enemies, or as he states in the book, "Psychologically, the Jews are a people gifted with the very strongest vitality, so much so that when they found themselves facing impossible conditions of life they chose voluntarily, and with a profound talent for self-preservation, the side of all those instincts which make for decadence—not as if mastered by them, but as if detecting in them a power by which 'the world' could be defied. The Jews are the very opposite of decadents: they have simply been forced into appearing in that guise, and with a degree of skill approaching the non plus ultra of histrionic genius they have managed to put themselves at the head of all decadent movements [...] decadence is no more than a means to an end. Men of this sort have a vital interest in making mankind sick, and in confusing the values of 'good' and 'bad,' 'true' and 'false' in a manner that is not only dangerous to life, but also slanders it." Indeed, rich Jews like George Soros do not simply fund and support black, gay, feminist, and illegal immigrant groups out of the sheer goodness of their hearts, but because they use them as weaponized pawns to undermine the white majority, who unwittingly buy into this culturally and socially corrosive garbage due to the hopelessly naïve slave-morality that they learned from Christianity, with the weak white liberal atheist being nothing more than a lapsed Christian who buys into the same slave-morality mumbo jumbo that his ancestors worshiped. As a woman that made herself the concubine of black nationalists, married at least two Jews (included kosher commie screenwriter John Berry's son), and reg-

ularly sought advice from a rabbi instead of the sort of Lutheran leaders that she was brought up with, Seberg is a great example of a white liberal useful idiot who succumbed to the two-headed golden calf of Jewish decadence and nihilist post-Christian altruism.

Indeed, not unlike super Shiksa Marilyn Monroe, Seberg probably would have never met such a grisly end had she not got involved with the Hebrews in Hollywood in the first place (notably, Seberg suffered her first major mental breakdown shortly after cheating on her first husband with an ugly French Jew named Romain Gary, who was almost the same age as her father and who she later married). When I watch *Les hautes solitudes*, I see a terribly forsaken female who could have anything she wanted but whose embracing of 'liberal' (translation: Cultural Marxist) degeneracy and, in turn, betrayal of her heritage and both physical and spiritual debasement at the hands of Tschandala untermensch trash, ultimately led to her complete and utter mental deterioration. Personally, in the context of Seberg's strong ties to the racially hostile Hebraic tribe, I see frog Jewess Tina Aumont's character in Garrel's film as a sort of Salome-esque femme fatale that pretends to console the lead while really pushing her over the edge, hence the scenes in the flick where she is playing with a switchblade while she has a sinister smile on her face. Naturally, there are few more effective things for destroying a woman's self-esteem than being in the presence of a much younger and more confident beautiful woman and Aumont seems to be quite confident about the fact in the film as she smiles while Seberg looks like she is on the verge of swallowing a couple bottles of pills. Of course, it is only fitting that *Les hautes solitudes* has a fiercely forlorn aesthetic that falls somewhere between Expressionism and cinéma-vérité, as the film bleeds a sort modern realist horror that will probably not make much sense to viewers unless they have done their research on the lead's tragic background as a tragically misguided woman whose downfall as a result of the faith-based pseudo-religion known as liberalism ultimately confirmed that Nietzsche was right in regard to the catastrophic effects of the Christian slave-morality, especially on a race of conquerors whose original pagan religion endorsed a master-morality that promoted honor, nobility, and strength, among various other imperative moral ingredients that are looked down on nowadays. While Seberg's debut performance as the eponymous lead in *Saint Joan* (1957) directed by Otto Preminger (who was another ruthless Judaic that emotionally abused the actress) was largely panned by critics when the film was originally released, her performance in *Les hautes solitudes* is probably the closest she ever came to comparing to the majesty of Renée Falconetti in Carl Th. Dreyer's silent masterpiece *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) aka *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. Although Garrel was such a weak man and toxic lover that he had a tendency to get his lovers, including Nico, addicted to heroin, his film demonstrates an inordinate empathy for members of the so-called fairer sex, especially those of the overtly mentally imbalanced sort. Indeed, while watching

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Les hautes solitudes, there is no doubt in the viewer's mind that the auteur loved and respected Seberg's vulnerability, which is quite a rare quality for a heterosexual man.

-Ty E

LE BERCEAU DE CRISTAL

Philippe Garrel (1976)

Admittedly, I was somewhat hesitant to view another one of patently pretentious French director Philippe Garrel's works, especially in a sober state, as his perhaps most internationally famous work, *Le Cicatrice Interieure* (1972), starring his beloved muse Nico in the lead role, left me with somewhat ambivalent feelings in which I found myself all at once thoroughly entranced by its surrealist scenarios against pallid, yet powerful panoramas but on the other hand gratingly annoyed by Nico's decidedly childish, whiny behavior and the all around excruciatingly difficult to follow plot (or lack thereof). But being the ever-faithful film viewer that I am, and seeing that I am also a dedicated fan of the flax-haired chanteuse Nico, even if she is an occasionally annoying actress, I decided to give Garrel another chance with *Le berceau de cristal* aka *The Crystal Cradle* (1975), and I am quite thankful I did—my only regrets being that I could not have turned out all of the lights in my humble home and found myself viewing it while plonked down on the couch surrounded in total darkness and inebriated by some blissfully mind-altering substance. Indeed, at just over an hour long, *Le berceau de cristal* is another aimlessly meandering and surreal yet minimalist work with the entirety of its focus on the decidedly divine Nico, Garrel's much loved opiate-abusing muse, which in much the same vein as its sister film *Le Cicatrice Interieure* turns a somewhat uncomfortable, angst-ridden eye to unraveling the corrupted contents of Nico's soul—with krautrock hippie composers Ash Ra Tempel providing the mellow musical score—that will either pleasantly tap into one's overly emotional, romantic inner goth or send the scintillating synapses of the drug-addled dope fiend all the more abuzz (or, for the more conventional film viewer, will render him absolutely mad and desiring only to gouge his eyes out).

Le berceau de cristal is indeed a very dark, minimalist work, the main focus of which is Nico's lovely, sculpted visage, to which the viewer is introduced with her inside a dark tomb, intermittently taking a puff of a cigarette, reading pages from a book, and applying powder to her face. Almost immediately, the smooth, ethereal music of Ash Ra Tempel aurally wisps about, as if it is invisibly accentuating something unseen in the empty, yet tenebrous atmosphere. In typical fashion, Garrel spends a lot of time (as ever, too much time, especially for the less attentive viewer) focusing on Nico's face for minutes at a time, which is perhaps testament to his languishing pretentiousness as a stereotypical Frenchman (or perhaps he was truly in love with the statuesque beauty and wanted to forever immortalize her angelic countenance, even if to a rather pedantic extent). The meandering music suddenly turns more ominous, at which point the audience bears witness to a marvelous montage of surreal images, seemingly symbols born out of Nico's imagination: first, a crescent moon against a black sky, then

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four cloaked female figures, sitting side-by-side in darkness, juxtaposed against the next scene of a virginal, yet maniacal nymph muttering something inaudible to herself in a sunlit forest (played by much beloved French actress Dominique Sanda). At about 20 minutes into the film, Garrel again turns to Nico's face, and she begins reading some decidedly angsty, goth-ridden nonsensical poetry (the sort of vapid stuff I'd ashamedly written during my agonizingly embarrassing adolescent years), with lines like, "I have come to lie with you. I have come to die with you. On your pallid shoulder and your golden chest, in a wilderness of glass we rest." After Nico reads a couple more lines, Anita Pallenberg, the Italian-German model and muse of the Rolling Stones appears on the screen, and starts snorting a substance off of her hand (presumably cocaine) and smiles impishly into the camera, yet never uttering a single word. Nico, in her characteristically throaty and masculine German accent, continues to read her rather puerile poetry until, at the very end of the film, while seated in a chair still within the confines of the dark tomb, she brings a small gun to her temple and proceeds to blow her brains out (pretending of course), at which point she sprawls herself across the chair in the most dramatic fashion possible, presumed a victim to her overactive, drug-addled imagination, somber soliloquies and pedantic prose.

While *Le berceau de cristal* is at times rather monotonous and slow and definitely nonsensical, there is a certain mysterious charm to the film that will undoubtedly enthrall and perhaps even excite the more morbidly inclined and introverted of individuals, or those who frequently partake in chemically altered states and can find themselves patiently entranced by sometimes minutes-long shots focused solely on Nico's face (especially with its achingly haunting krautrock soundtrack, also titled *Le berceau de cristal* by Ash Ra Tempel who presumably collaborated with Garrel in some fashion, or to whom Garrel made the work as a sort of homage, as the album's cover art featuring a naked nymph seated on a rock is also seen in the film). Compared against Garrel's more acclaimed and ambitious work *Le Cicatrice Interieure*, *Le berceau de cristal* is aesthetically underwhelming but equally nonsensical and just as thick on symbolism yet much less grating in terms of its lack of plot and virtual absence of any sort of dialogue, particularly of the puerile and/or pedantic sort. Featuring appearances by his much loved, drug-addled muses (namely Nico, and Anita Pallenberg, who both battled hellish heroin addictions themselves, with Nico later tragically dying while in recovery), and heavy on ethereal, dreamy imagery, juxtaposed against an overall minimal aura, *Le berceau de cristal* is testament to Garrel's lustful love for his leading ladies, and essential viewing for art fag film lovers everywhere, either of the inherently mentally moribund persuasion, or for those who can artificially render themselves stupefied and drooling in front of a tv screen (in a good way, of course).

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

SOMBRE

Philippe Grandrieux (1998)

I am not a diehard serial killer fetishist or anything, but *Sombre* (1998)—an experimental work directed by French auteur Philippe Grandrieux (*A New Life* aka *La vie nouvelle*, *Un Lac*) about a violent serial killer/rapist of the perennially lonely sort who falls in love with a woman for the first time in his entire life—is easily one of the most darkly romantic and disturbingly beautiful films I have ever seen. Directed by an ex-video artist loosely associated with the so-called ‘New French Extremity’ movement, *Sombre* is a work of aesthetically majestic yet paradoxically minimalistic metaphysical horror depicting an innately impenetrable antihero living in a glacial zeitgeist who is provoked to rape and murder simply by being merely touched by a member of the fairer sex. Slaughtering sluts, prostitutes, and other wanton women along the frog countryside, the angst-ridden antihero of *Sombre* faces the most unsettling prospect of his entire life when a beautiful virgin falls in love with him and vice versa. A perturbing and penetrating love story for the foreboding age of Occidental decline, *Sombre* ultimately portrays the impossibility of love in our contemporary times where most Europeans think children are a nuisance and marriage is looked at as a mere business transaction. The slightly saner yet more melancholy son of Gerald Kargl’s *Angst* (1983) and the more cultivated yet crazed celluloid big brother of Jörg Buttgerit’s nihilistic kraut serial flick *Schramm* (1994), *Sombre* is the cinematic cream of the crop when it comes to films about sexually dysfunctional and sadistic human predators. Directed by a filmmaker who has cited the films of F.W. Murnau, Robert Bresson, Stan Brakhage, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, as well as the writings of philosophers ranging from Marcus Aurelius to Gilles Deleuze, as major influences, *Sombre* is a Weltschmerz-rattled and cognitive-dissidence-straddled neo-fairytale in the lunatic libertine spirit of Michael Stock’s *Prince in Hell* (1993) aka *Prinz in Hölleland* about a serial killer who acts as a puppet-master both on and off stage and who does whatever he wants, with whoever he wants, whenever he wants, so when his power is tested by the proposition of the uncontrollable—love, human warmth, and sexual ecstasy—he must come to terms with the little bit of ‘humanity’ he has left. A delectably deranging and discombobulating cinematic work that dares the viewer to dig deep in the decidedly dark abyss of a damaged mind that is attempting to persevere in the face of undying psychological sickness and plaguing pathology, *Sombre* ultimately seems like a serial killer flick that was directed by an actual (and rather quite sensitive) serial killer, as a sort of esoteric arthouse celluloid equivalent to Moors Murderer Ian Brady’s book *The Gates of Janus: Serial Killing and Its Analysis* (2001).

Nordic frog Jean (Marc Barbé) is a man that certainly knows how to make children laugh and cheer wildly but he is also a curiously fucked fellow who

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knows how to make a woman scream for her life. Set in the French countryside during the Tour de France, Sombre follows the seemingly most somber man in rural frogland as he gives puppet shows to standing ovations of children, picks up prostitutes and ritualistically rapes and murders them with his bare hands, and eventually bumps into the seemingly most somber woman in rural frogland, thus offering him a rare chance at personal redemption. Jean has a very specific routine when it comes to raping and killing women that involves him making the unsuspecting victim strip bare while blindfolded and forcing them to spread their legs a couple inches from his face. Indeed, Jean stares at a woman's naughty bits as if putting 'pussy on a pedestal', but at the same time he does not seem to know what to do with it, as if he is an impotent pedantic scientist taking a theoretical approach to sex. It seems that due to impotence and pent up sexual frustration, Jean can only derive of sense of solace and sexual release by strangling sluts to death. One day, gentleman Jean's view of life, love, and humanity is forever changed when he goes driving and offers to give a ride to a chick named Claire (Romanian Jewess Elina Löwensohn) whose car has just broken down. Unlike the lecherous ladies he typically picks up, Claire is a sensitive virgin who seems to suffer from a perennial form of sadness, as if she was once internally wounded and the scars failed to heal. Claire has a sister named Christine (Geraldine Voillat) who, on top of being a pseudo-blonde bimbo, is rather extroverted, especially in comparison to her somber sis. In between strangling to death prostitutes, Jean begins hanging out with both Claire and Christine. While Christine does everything she can to grab Jean's warped gaze, including incessant skinny dipping, he only has eyes for Claire. One day whilst swimming at the lake, Jean decides enough is enough when it comes to Christine's never-ending nakedness and starts strangling the loose lady and only stops just shy of killing her, which naturally perturbs Claire. After getting involved in a bizarre failed threesome in a seedy motel room that mainly involves Jean tying up the girls in bondage and smacking them around like slaves, Claire decides to help her sister escape by her putting on a train to paris, though she stays with the serial killer as she seems to believe she can save him from himself. As two terribly lonely and decidedly damaged individuals whose 'faults' seem to complement one another, Jean and Claire inevitably fall in love and somewhat attempt to become a real couple. In fact, Jean even makes passionate love to virgin Claire and thus he also loses his 'vanilla sex' virginity. Of course, Jean and Claire cannot last as a romantic entity as the former has a lust for brutality and the latter does not want to become a victim of the former's lust for brutality. Since he truly loves her and is afraid of what he might do to her in the future, Jean rather reluctantly yet swiftly pushes Claire away by telling her to "get lost" and "vanish" after the two make passionate love, thus displaying love and mercy for another person for the first time in his loser life as god's most lonely man.

A sort of tastefully sordid postmodern neo-fairytale (in one rather symbolic

scene, Claire find and puts on a 'Big Bad Wolf' costume owned by Jean) told in a purely visual and mood-driven style reminiscent of the great poetic works of silent cinema (F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) certainly comes to mind), *Sombre* is easily one of the most strangely touching and singularly romantic films I have ever seen and unlike a film like *Dahmler* (2002) starring Jeremy Renner, Grandrieux actually manages to work in its unflinching 'humanization' of a sadistic serial killer. Indeed, in the end, antihero Jean of *Sombre* seems even more genuinely pathetic than Peter Lorre did in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931). Additionally, Jean of *Sombre* does not seem like a cinematic caricature like Lorre in *M*, but more like a seemingly normal fellow who, if the viewer did not know any better, has something slightly off about him that one cannot quite pinpoint and that is what makes Grandrieux's work such a delectably disturbing piece of 'humanistic horror.' In the end, *Sombre* seems more like a romantic tragedy than anything else in its daunting depiction of two discernibly damaged soul-mates who might have been able to live a long life of mutual beauty with one another had it not been for each characters' respective 'hang-ups.' A 'thinking man's serial killer flick' that will surely bore the hell out of the sort of horror fanatic that gets an almost pornographic thrill from seeing the likes of slasher killers like Michael Myers and Leatherface in action, *Sombre* is a sort of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986) for those cinephiles who enjoy reading Schopenhauer over Fangoria. Such a viewer dividing work that it inspired those running the 1998 Locarno Film Festival to release the following official statement, "Half of the jury would like to call attention to *Sombre*. Our jury split between those who were morally offended by the film and those who saw a purpose in its darkness, and in the strength of its mise-en-scene and images," *Sombre* is a true love story for a pre-apocalyptic age that has become disillusioned with love, and a zestless zeitgeist where men prefer porn and whores and where women prefer careers and cuckolds to actual true love and romance. Featuring an inconspicuously complimentary score by Alan Vega (frontman of the electronic protopunk duo Suicide), as well as a strange appearance by the classic Bauhaus song "Bela Lugosi's Dead," *Sombre* is a fiercely foreboding work dripping with atmosphere that offers the filmgoer more than just a mere film, but an oneiric celluloid odyssey that totally transcends most people's comfort zones. Auteur Philippe Grandrieux's first 'official' feature film (though he has been making video art and installations since the 1980s), *Sombre* may be a majorly melancholy work that pricks and prods at the soul without mercy, but it is also ample evidence that film as an artistic medium is far from dead and that some cinematic territories have only been marginally explored. Indeed, if you thought David Fincher made the serial killer film a respectable subgenre with big budget and superficially stylized melodramatic swill like *Se7en* (1995) and *Zodiac* (2007), you have yet to be metaphysically touched by a cinematic manhunter in the way that only Grandrieux's *Sombre* does.

SOMBRE

-Ty E

LA VIE NOUVELLE

Philippe Grandrieux (2002)

As a filmmaker that got his start working in the now-dead artistic medium of 'video art', French aberrant-garde auteur Philippe Grandrieux (*Sombre*, *Un Lac* aka *A Lake*) has a fairly singular visceral filmmaking style that, although can be compared to other so-called 'New French Extremity' auteur filmmakers like Gaspar Noé (*I Stand Alone*, *Irréversible*) and Bruno Dumont (*Twentynine Palms*, *Hors Satan* aka *Outside Satan*), is ultimately in a lethally lurid league of his own. It may be because I am a little bit wacked out but I thought Grandrieux's *Sombre* (1998) starring Romanian-born Jewess Elina Löwensohn (*Schindler's List*, *Nadja*) was quite possibly the most darkly romantic and touching serial killer flick I have ever had the devilishly delectable pleasure of seeing. A filmmaker far too artsy fartsy for art-antagonistic gorehounds and jaded horror fanatics, but also too dark and visceral for the sort of pseudo-cultivated cinephiles who get hard-ons from the latest box-sets released by the Criterion Collection, Grandrieux is a virtual one-man celluloid army with an unwavering scorched earth policy whose films wallow in the deepest and darkest corners of the human psyche, thus his outstanding oeuvre is in innate contrast to what everything Hollywood (and most cinema in general) stands for as you will find nil 'feel good' escapism, soulless sentimentalism, calculating quirkiness, Viagra-fueled fratboy sex, nor anti-reality happy endings in his films. As frog psychoanalyst Jean-Claude Polack stated of Grandrieux's work, "Unlike Pasolini who is really interested in the way that society is theatrically transforming the ceremony of predating into a show, there is here an experimental cinema; it is true; that is trying to register, thanks to the camera, what humans eyes would never be able to see in order to deconstruct and analyze reality. Grandrieux's films are analytical films, like a microscope, that give the viewer the possibility to see more accurately what is movement, emotion, sensation, colour, darkness and the emergence of the image (either material or thought)." Indeed, watching Grandrieux's *A New Life* (2002) aka *La vie nouvelle* aka *Betrayed and Sold* is like temporarily entering the irreparably debased mind of one of the female kidnapped sex slaves from Pasolini's *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975) and facing the absolutely grueling experience of her psychological transformation from passive beauty to voracious sexual she-beast, but that is just one of the many lost souls you will be savagely molested with by the film. An uniquely unhinged, ugly, and unhappy yet paradoxically ethereal reworking of the Orpheus myth that would have caused Cocteau to have a heart attack about a sexually confused young American soldier on leave who shows up to some sinister Slavic Sodom with his discernibly deranged buddy and absurdly falls in love with an Eastern European prostitute/sex slave and decides it is solely up to him to save her from her deranging dystopian life of lechery, *A New Life* is a film without redemption, without

love, without hope, and—most importantly—without humanity (Of course, it depends on your definition of ‘humanity’).

Set in some unmentioned post-industrial/post-communist Eastern European hellhole (it was actually filmed in Sofia, Bulgaria), *A New Life* begins with nightmarish unfocused shots of a group of male and female human cattle huddled together like they are about to be sent to Gulag as they await their ‘new lives’ as mafia-owned sex slaves. After having their hair cut viciously with a large knife by a real-life boogeyman named Boyan (Zsolt Nagy) who has a sinister and seemingly supernatural form of charisma, the slav(e)s are beaten and raped so they can be ‘broken in’ for sexual servitude. Focusing mainly on pretty yet psychosis-ridden prostitute-slave named Melania (French actress Anna Mouglalis), the viewer is thrown into a bottomless abyss of her physical, but especially meta-physical, slavery. When not entertaining prospective ‘customers’ by doing some exotic dancing in a seemingly possessed state at a dimly lit bar, Melania is brutally beaten and smacked around by a completely crazed and equally craven French client who, due to his sexual impotence, can only get off by brutalizing broads not only with hands, but also by singing loony lovey-dovey lyrics like, “happy is the man who dies of love...until you lose your mind” (translated from the French song “*Aimer À Perdre La Raison*”). When young American dork soldier Seymour (American actor Zachary Knighton, who is probably best known for his role on the ABC comedy series *Happy Endings*) shows up to the seemingly post-apocalyptic Eastern European warzone-without-war with his discernibly mentally damaged buddy Roscoe (played by French actor Marc Barbé as a character that the viewer never really knows if he is Seymour’s lover, father, or brother, but he seems like a composite of all three), he soon purchases Melania’s pussy for a pretty penny. Like virtually all the men that buy ‘love’ from Melania, Seymour is too impotent to get an erection when in the company of the Slavic streetwalker’s sexy unclad body, though he eventually manages to bust a load in her from behind in what is literally less than a second long sex session of the patently pathetic sort (the scene hints that Seymour is a closet-homosexual, hence his need to screw from behind, not to mention his dubious relationship with Roscoe). Despite his failure to fuck her properly, would-be-semen-demon Seymour becomes totally obsessed with Melania in a postmodern Orphic manner and somehow inexplicably believes he can save her from both physical and sensual slavery, even though the damage has always been done and there is no salvation for a waywardly wanton woman like her. Ultimately, Melania is a sub-pricey material commodity traded between all the men featured in *A New Life*, with malevolent Mafioso mad men Boyan being her pimp puppet master who perniciously pulls all the strings, which he does with the sadistic glee of a NKVD hangman hooked on heroin and Euro-Trash trance music. In the end, pseudo-savior Seymour unwittingly becomes the pansy protégé of Svengali-like barbarian Boyan. Brought into a stinking Slavic inferno of sexual savagery and sadism after paying

Boyan for an entire night with Melania, Seymour ultimately leaves as a soulless hate-driven sexual savage who beats and rapes women with Luciferian gusto. In losing himself, Seymour also loses his best friend Roscoe to a starving pack of 'man's best friend.' In the sardonically titled *A New Life*, man becomes beast and beast literally and figuratively swallows man in a film where vicious circles are as prevalent as dainty dance moves and sexual impotence.

A sort of cinematic warm-up for what the Americanized Occident can expect after the world finally collapses in a coming convergence of catastrophes and we enter a new dark age where man has an atavistic awakening and reverts back to primalism, *A New Life* is cinema at its most viciously visceral and devastatingly disillusioned directed by a filmmaker who has dared to gaze into the abyss and has created films that gaze into the viewer in a manner that might be described as 'aesthetic terrorism' were it not for the fact that the filmmaker is clearly not trying to simply shock the viewer (otherwise, he would not make terrifyingly transcendental works with sparse dialogue for a mostly marginal audience). A true 'cinema of cruelty' for a nihilistically numbed and dumbed down age where most viewers get an almost pornographic thrill from seeing explosions and terrorist attacks in movies, *A New Life* is a grandly gut-wrenching and soul-stabbing cinematic work that allows no sense of detachment from the filmgoer and the character's in film. Adapted from a script written in a sort of prose poem form by auteur Grandrieux and French writer Eric Vuillard, *A New Life* is celluloid poetry of purity about impurity, as if the director wanted to update *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) directed by F.W. Murnau (who Grandrieux has cited as a major influence) in the setting of World War III. In attempting to describe his artistic and philosophical intent with *A New Life* to interviewer Nichole Brenez, Grandrieux offered the following insights: "My dream is to create a completely 'Spinoza-ist' film, built upon ethical categories: rage, joy, pride ... and essentially each of these categories would be a pure block of sensations, passing from one to the other with enormous suddenness. So the film would be a constant vibration of emotions and affects, and all that would reunite us, reinscribe us into the material in which we're formed: the perceptual material of our first years, our first moments, our childhood. Before speech. That's the impulse – the desire – which led to the film." Featuring a raging synth-driven score by French poets/performers Etant Donnés and a somber Blue Velvet-esque lounge singing solo by prostitute Melania, *A New Life* is a film where singing, song, and dance are the only escape for characters who live in a very real hell-on-earth and have reached a point of no return and thus completely bask in the very few real archaic sensations they can still feel. Suggested by co-screenwriter Eric Vuillard as being "a documentary on the living," *A New Life* is ultimately an abstract of the bestially living who have—for various reasons—discarded civilization for sensation and spirituality for mortal sin in a world where brutal impotency, hatred, and remorselessness reigns with a post-Stalinist iron-fist. A potent poetic piece

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of anti-pornography in an era where every male seems addicted to pornography yet cannot satisfy his girlfriend, *A New Life* is a corrosive collision of brutalized bodies and brains that makes Auschwitz seem like Disneyworld and Cocteau's phantasmagorical masterpiece *Orphée* (1950) aka *Orpheus* seem like a juvenile celluloid heaven-on-earth.

-Ty E

UN LAC

Philippe Grandrieux (2008)

Although experimenting with video art as far back as the mid-1970s, revolutionary French auteur Philippe Grandrieux (*Sombre*, *White Epilepsy*)—arguably the most innovative and idiosyncratic director associated with the so-called New French Extremity—has only directed three feature-length films. Undoubtedly, Grandrieux's first two features, *Sombre* (1998) and *A New Life* (2002) aka *La vie nouvelle*, are two of the most decidedly dark and viciously visceral yet unnervingly joyous works I have ever seen in my life to the point where I can safely say that it seems to me that the auteur has totally reinvented film as an artistic medium and has created his own cinematic language. Of course, the director's third and most recent feature, *Un lac* (2008) aka *A Lake*, is no less an experimental and uncompromising work, yet it is certainly a less violent and more minimalistic film that centers around a seemingly unlikely 'protagonist' for a Grandrieux; a young man with what the filmmaker described as having a pure heart. Naturally, Grandrieux's definition of a 'pure heart' might be a tad different than that of the average filmgoer as the young male protagonist suffers from epilepsy and has quasi-incestuous feelings for his own sister, so when a handsome stranger shows up and interrupts the order of things, internal tragedy strikes. Set in an unnamed snowy wooded region (apparently, the film was shot in the Swiss Alps) near an unnamed lake in an unnamed country in the North where the handful of inhabitants speak French with mostly Russian accents, *Un lac*, despite being directed by a frog, has a thoroughly Teutonic essence that feels like Edgar Reitz's *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) meets the darkly romantic paintings of Caspar David Friedrich and philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Indeed, as an auteur who has named F.W. Murnau, Robert Bresson, Jean Epstein, Stan Brakhage, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder as imperative filmic influences, Grandrieux treats film as a deadly serious, if not strangely joyous, artistic medium comparable to literature and painting, even if some could argue that his films mostly fit in the horror genre. Indeed, if I had to lump *Un lac* into any 'genre,' I would describe it as a naturalistic and metaphysical neo-Heimat horror film, but that would be probably selling the work too short. A decidedly daunting depiction of man as beast in his most natural and instinctive habitat, *Un lac* can ultimately be philosophically summed up by the protagonist's words: "As is the death of the man... So is the death of the animal... One soul. Only one... No man has dominion over the wind."

Un lac opens rather intensely with a young man named Alexi (Dmitriy Kubasov) hysterically hacking away at something with great passion. Alex is a woodcutter and he is chopping down a tree as if completely one with nature and not in the sort of phony hippie environmentalist sort of way, but as someone who grew up in depths of the forest and has grown to deeply respect nature with the same

care one would give to his fellow human beings. Rather unfortunately, Alexi suffers from regular horrific epileptic fits and is known to suffer body-stunning attacks whilst all by his lonesome. As depicted early on in the film, Alexi goes to his sister Hege (Natalie Rehorová) for comfort after suffering epileptic fits, but his love for his sister seems more than simply sibling based as indicated by his awkward remark to her, "You're my sister. Even so...", which she seems to intentionally ignore the meaning of. One day while working, Alexi is approached by a strange young man who seems to be around the same age as him who simply states, "I'm Jurgen. I've come to cut wood." Indeed, while Jurgen (Alexei Solonchev) has come to simply cut wood, he also comes to fall in love at first sight with Alexi's sister Hege. One day, Alexi, Hege, and Jurgen head out for a play date in the country and the newcomer and young lady seem rather close to one another despite being virtual strangers. From atop a waterfall, Alexi witnesses his sister and Hege kissing, so he runs away like a hurt little girl into the depths of the snowy forest. Eventually, Hege and Jurgen go looking for Alexi. At the dead of night, Jurgen eventually finds Alex half-frozen-to-death and does everything he can to revive him, ultimately saving the epileptic logger's life. Jurgen brings Alexi back home and the troubled woodcutter immediately embraces his blind mother Liv (Simona Huelsemann) in a most childlike manner. That night, Alexi stares at Jurgen in an almost possessed manner as he sleeps and tells his sister Hege that the stranger "must stay" as he has helped both of the siblings. After a happy day with the entire family (excluding the blind mother and missing father), Hege and Jurgen finally make love, but not before the lady demands a pre-coitus kiss from her gentleman caller. Needless to say, Hege is a discernibly changed woman after being deflowered and her incessantly lurking brother is not very happy about that, though he does not have the gall to confess such. Out of seemingly nowhere (indeed, *Un lac* is nothing if not a film where the viewer is left both figuratively and literally in the dark!), Alexi and Hege's father Christian (Vitaliy Kishchenko) eventually shows up and his blind wife lovingly greets him by stating, "I waited for you, Christian," to which he less than warmly replies "I'm here, Liv." Alexi also takes the time to embrace his father, hugging him at hip-level like a scared child and strangely stating to his papa, "I don't know now" as if his entire life has been rattled to the core by irreparable chaos. During a somberly lit dinner scene where the dinner table is nowhere to be seen, father Christian encourages his debutante daughter to serve newcomer Jurgen as if he is symbolically giving away his daughter. The next day, Hege sings with noticeable joy and her brother Alexi attempts to destroy this joy by jealously stating, "It's not like before...Your voice," but he cannot phase her undying feeling of love and happiness. In the end, lovelorn epileptic Alexi continues to have seizures (but this time his father, as opposed to his sister, comforts him) and without anyone in the family knowing except blind mother Liv, sister Hege leaves with Jurgen to start a new life in what is the closest thing to a

happy ending when it comes to a Philippe Grandrieux film.

A sort of brazenly bittersweet mix of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968) meets Harmony Korine's *Julien Donkey-Boy* (1999) as directed by a man who is just as much of a sculptor and painter as he is a filmmaker, *Un lac* is undoubtedly as organic and traditionally themed as films come as a work that could have just as easily have been set in the middle-ages. Indeed, considering our superlatively soulless and technocratic age where more and more films resemble video games and where Hollywood makes sick flicks like *The Kids Are All Right* (2010) directed by kosher carpet-muncher Lisa Cholodenko depicting loony lesbos as ideal bourgeois parents, *Un lac* is a strikingly wholesome and family-oriented work. Despite the everyday hardships of their lives, Grandrieux depicted the family of *Un lac* with the utmost empathy and respect and not in the sentimentalist manner typical of old school German Heimat films. Of course, Grandrieux's sympathizes do not simply lie in man, but beast as well as demonstrated by the virtual worship the family of *Un lac* gives to their sole horse. Indeed, in one especially endearing scene at the beginning of the film, protagonist Alexi embraces the horse in such as deeply passionate and loving manner that most modern viewers would probably mistake the scenario for bestiality. Although I doubt Grandrieux would like hearing this, I suspect *Un lac* is the sort of avant-garde film one might have expected from a contemporary auteur of the Third Reich had the Teutonic empire not perished in a mere 12 years. Of course, in its innate melancholy and delightfully draining depiction of an 'unconventional' family, *Un lac* would probably be deemed a subversive work by a contemporary incarnation of the Third Reich, but it is also undoubtedly a work that will seem even more subversive to the typical autistic Tarantino fanboy or fervent French New Wave fanatic. A true film for all and no one, *Un lac* is the radical remainder that it is not cinema that is dead, but the film directors behind the cameras, with Grandrieux being a rare exception. Although I compared it to *A New Life* (2002) aka *La vie nouvelle* in a previous review, *Un lac* is the closest thing to a contemporary equivalent to *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and like Murnau's masterpiece, Grandrieux's film is unfortunately wasted on most viewers. Apparently, once described by the director as the other side of the coin to *La vie nouvelle*, *Un lac* is ultimately a virtually dialogue-less family film that gets at the heart of tenderness, but not without exploring the inner torment such tenderness sires in those with a pure heart who come into contact with impurity.

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Philippe Mora (1989)

Even years before the premiere of *The X-Files* when I was a little kid that just learned how to ride a bike without training wheels, I was obsessed with extraterrestrials, UFOs, and especially Grey Aliens. Indeed, when the love of my life told me when we first met that she stopped eating red meat as a child because of alien cattle mutilations, I knew I had found my soulmate. In fact, I unwittingly developed a nearly decade long obsession simply because I randomly happened upon the iconic grey alien graphics used by the skateboard company Alien Workshop (AWS). Even with my later adult obsession with the most arcane and impenetrable of experimental and arthouse cinema, I can still say without hesitation that my favorite TV series of all time is still *The X-Files*, though I must admit that the last couple of seasons were rather pathetic. In fact, after recently watching the somewhat disappointing 2016 tenth season entitled 'The Event Series,' I could not help but subsequently re-watch every single episode of the entire series, which I followed up with every single episode of the somewhat underrated but nonetheless inferior NBC UFO conspiracy theory-based sci-fi television series *Dark Skies* (1996-1997) starring Eric Close and Megan Ward. Featuring a movie-like pilot that was directed by Tobe Hooper, *Dark Skies* is unfortunately plagued with unintentionally kitschy special effects that pale in comparison to those of *The X-Files*, yet they are still largely superior to those of the flagrantly flawed, sometimes nonsensical, and oftentimes unintentionally humorous cult item *Communion* (1989) directed by French-born Jewish-Australian documentarian turned horror/exploitation trash auteur Philippe Mora (*Mad Dog Morgan*, *Pterodactyl Woman from Beverly Hills*). Probably best known nowadays for the uniquely horrendous *Howling* (anti)sequels *Howling II: Your Sister Is a Werewolf* (1985) and *Howling III: The Marsupials* (1987), Mora might be described as a sort of Mel Brooks of Aussie horror trash, hence why *Communion*—a film based on the 1987 'nonfiction' novel of the same name by Whitley Strieber—is such a rather ridiculous flick as a unbelievably convoluted cinematic work with next to nil plot that attempts to take an ostensibly serious approach to the depiction of an extra neurotic and eccentric Christopher Walken receiving alien anal probes and dancing with so-called 'Little Blue Doctor' aliens, among other things.

Feeling like the marvelously misbegotten result of an atheistic nonbeliever of the UFO religion trying in vain to make a relatively realistic alien abduction drama that is supposedly based on a true story but instead siring a pseudo-psychoanalytic psychodrama featuring tons of reference to degenerate art about a wholly fictional eccentric Jewish NYC comedian type that seems nothing like the real-life Strieber who is on the brink of a total mental breakdown and attempts to blame it on rectum-reaming little green men, *Communion* is an unequivocal

cinematic disaster that is somehow compelling due to the film's leading man Christopher Walken's singularly whacky performance, primitive pre-CGI in-camera special effects, and the overall awkward and emotionally schizophrenic tone. Notably, long before the film or the novel it was based on were ever conceived, director Mora and writer Strieber began what would become a longtime friendship after meeting each other in a sort of London beatnik scene during the late-1960s (notably, Mora also befriended the film's composer Eric Clapton around this same time). While the two apparently lost contact at some point during the next two decades, Strieber reunited with Mora in the 1980s after the latter just completed his fairly weak war drama *Death of a Soldier* (1986) starring James Coburn and confided in him that he believed that he had been abducted by aliens, so the filmmaker recommended that he both write about his experiences and see a psychiatrist (or as Mora stated himself, "He didn't know whether he should get a psychiatrist or publisher . . . And I encouraged him to get both."). After taking various lie detector tests and receiving extensive testing for temporal lobe epilepsy and other brain abnormalities, Strieber—a horror writer who, somewhat suspiciously, already became famous for novels like *The Wolfen* (1978) and *The Hunger* (1981), which were both eventually adapted into movies, before he was ever abducted by aliens—became thoroughly convinced that he indeed made contacts with visitors though, as Mora's movie makes quite clear, he has always been conflicted with the exact nature of his experiences (for instance, Strieber is not even sure if they were actually aliens and has hinted that he might have been a lifelong victim of government intelligence and/or military agencies).

While Mora found Strieber's claims to be somewhat dubious (as the director has noted in various places, while he does not doubt that his friend is telling the truth, he doubts the circumstances surrounding his claims), Mr. Walken—a mensch that seems far too cynical and smug to believe anything that he cannot see, buy, touch, eat, fuck, and/or kill—is a total unbeliever and in the film it totally shows. Undoubtedly, *Communion* seems like it was made more as platform for Walken to go wild and express his deepest and darkest emotions than to take a serious look at the reality of the alien question. In fact, Strieber, who comes off as a fairly normal and sedate WASP, saw nothing of himself in Walken's performance and was dissatisfied with the film before it was even released, not least of all because it features scenes of improvisation that sometimes resembles bad avant-garde performance art (rather revealingly, when Strieber confronted Walken with his concern that he was making him seem a little too bit crazy, the actor apparently arrogantly replied, "If the shoe fits"). Undoubtedly, it is not a bad sign when a director creates a film based on a true story about a longtime friend and that friend is completely disappointed with it. Additionally, it is not a good sign when a mainstream movie based on a longtime #1 New York Times bestseller is both a commercial and critical failure. Ultimately, *Communion*

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nion feels like a sort of preposterously pretentious psychological horror-comedy disguised as a sci-fi-cum-drama that features the novelty of a quite pompous and Jew-y NYC intellectual type with marriage problems that collects shitty overpriced modern art being abducted by aliens, but then again one could argue that the movie is really about a megalomaniacal human dildo that mentally deteriorates on the weight of his own insanely inflated ego. While Strieber apparently collects the sort of tasteless modern art that is featured in the film, he seems nothing like the sometimes insufferable and egocentrically unhinged neo-dandy dickhead that Walken portrays in the film. Of course, as a film that features the famously quirky Hollywood actor being anally probed and in a S&M-like scene where he is strapped naked to a sort of makeshift alien experiment table, *Communion* is indubitably both the foremost film for Christopher Walken fetishists and a potent piece of evidence that Mr. Mora might be a latent homo (after all, in his debut feature *Mad Dog Morgan* (1976), the filmmaker would include a scene where Dennis Hopper is brutally raped in prison).

Interestingly, in a 1951 letter to an American friend, alpha-psychoanalyst C.G. Jung—a somewhat unexpected innovator in the field aliens and UFOs studies who began collecting data on the subject as early as 1946—wrote, “I’m puzzled to death about these phenomena, because I haven’t been able yet to make out with sufficient certainty whether the whole thing is a rumor with concomitant singular and mass hallucination, or a downright fact. Either case would be highly interesting. If it’s a rumor, then the apparition of discs must be a symbol produced by the unconscious. We know what such a thing would mean seen from the psychological standpoint. If on the other hand it is a hard and concrete fact, we are surely confronted with something thoroughly out of the way. At a time when the world is divided by an iron curtain—a fact unheard-of in human history—we might expect all sorts of funny things, since when such a thing happens in an individual it means a complete dissociation, which is instantly compensated by symbols of wholeness and unity. The phenomenon of the saucers might even be both, rumor as well as fact. In this case it would be what I call a synchronicity. It’s just too bad that we don’t know enough about it.” In Mora’s *Communion*, there is not the faintest piece of evidence that aliens and spaceships are the product of the protagonist’s unconscious, as it is only when he has made ‘contact’ and been ‘abducted’ that his mind begins to deteriorate. Additionally, the protagonist is more petrified at the thought of being mentally ill than being experimented on by aliens, hence why he comes to almost like the extraterrestrials once he realizes that he has indeed been abducted. After all, the film is set in Reaganite America when hedonism, materialism, escapism, and Hollywood fantasy were at an all-time high and the Cold War began to cool as a result of ‘perestroika’ and ‘glasnost’ appeared in the Soviet Union, thus it should be no surprise that it fails to take a Jungian approach and explain the psychological and cultural implications of alien abduction. As a film made in the age of

friendly extraterrestrial likes the eponymous alien of Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), the film could not have been made at a worst time, hence its abject commercial and critical failure. Despite being supposedly based on real events, *Communion* features completely abstract moments of darkly humorous quasi-Fellini-esque surrealism that come completely out of left field in what seems to be auteur Mora's semi-cryptic attempt to critique the entire subject of the film. While the aliens in the film have dubious intentions that involve anal play, they are quite cartoonish (for example, the grey aliens seem like they were designed for the clay animation franchise *Gumby*) and are hardly grotesquely sinister in physical appearance like the disgustingly erotic extraterrestrials of *Xtro* (1982) and *Alien* (1979). Featuring a protagonist that has a bizarrely intricate form of writer's block where he begins to question both his own sanity and entire life, *Communion* feels like what might happen if a man with the mind of Larry David and the body of Walken was abducted by perverted extraterrestrials that read too much Freud and not enough Jung, hence the film's Judaic auteur.

The year is 1985 and despite being a successful NYC writer that is rich enough to own original pieces of degenerate modern art, Whitley Strieber (Christopher Walken) is beginning to have dubious psychological problems as revealed at the very beginning of the film after he wakes up in the middle of the night as a result of feeling some sort of presence in his bedroom that he cannot quite wrap his mind around. It all starts on October 4 while Strieber is writing on his computer and it "fucks him" by crashing, thus causing him to lose a day's worth of work. Indeed, when his wife Anne (played by Lindsay Crouse, who was notably married to Zionist writer David Mamet at that time) and his young son Andrew (Joel Carlson) come home, Strieber complains with an exaggerated Yiddish accent, "oy vey what a day" and then goes on to describe how he believes "the computer turned off for a reason" because "the book I'm writing is no good." While Strieber does not know it yet, he is indeed correct as he will have an inexplicable experience that night in his cabin that will eventually lead to him writing a very different sort of novel. After firefighters arrive at his apartment as a result of him burning dinner, Strieber drives his wife, son, friend Alex (Andreas Katsulas), and Alex's lady friend to his remote cabin in the woods of upstate New York. That night while lying in bed and acting like a jackass, Strieber attempts to get his wife to say something "dirty" by asking her, "Can you say erection?," but the fun and games soon come to an end after everyone falls asleep when a bright light randomly fill the inside of cabin and the protagonist soon sees an almond-eyed 'grey' (who is actually dark yellow) peeping at him from behind a cabinet in his room. While everyone is awakened by the aliens and a grey even 'zaps' Strieber on the head with some sort of instrument, no one in the house can recollect exactly what happened the next day, though everyone seems to suspect something strange happened. As a result of he and his lady friend being completely spooked by something that they cannot quite describe,

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Alex, who is a sort goofy foreign Hebrew with a ridiculous fake accent, becomes inordinately belligerent and angrily demands, "Take us home, Whitley." As Strieber will eventually discover while under experimental hypnosis, he was the victim of aliens with a bunghole fetish.

While everything initially seems normal after the unexplained cabin experience, it becomes quite obvious a couple weeks later that things are not quite right when Strieber freaks out and screams at a 13-year-old girl sporting a fly mask at a Halloween party after he mistakes her for a sinister insectoid alien. Indeed, as a result of making a supreme ass of himself in front of their mutual bourgeois friends, Strieber's wife Anne berates him and declares in a fashion that reveals that she is not a fan of motherhood, "I've got one child. I don't need another." No longer acting like the Woody Allen-esque smart ass that she married, Anne also bitchily declares to Strieber, "You know, you used to be funny" after he gets extremely moody and yells at her simply because she attempts to be nice and do her wifely duties by cleaning his extremely cluttered work space. Naturally, Strieber's son Andrew also begins to realize that something is wrong with his father and eventually asks him why he is always "sad," but he lies and simply states, "I'm having a hard time, you know, with my writing." When the family goes back to their cottage right after Christmas, Strieber has another abduction experience where he begins to become convinced that he is being experimented on by extraterrestrial beings. Indeed, while in bed, Strieber is abducted by cloaked 'little blue doctor' aliens with grotesque negro-like faces while his hysterical wife looks like she is having a hellish orgasm while in a seemingly semi-paralyzed state. The next day, Strieber, who is beginning to realize what is happening to him, becomes sick and suffers a horrible migraine. Upon looking at her husband's head, Anne finds a strange mark on Strieber's head that looks like a spider bite that ultimately proves to be a scar from an alien implant. As a result of his moody and erratic behavior, Anne berates Strieber that night by mocking him for being "scared of shadows" and then demands to him, "you come back to me," as if she believes that he has totally lost his mind. Determined not to become a victim of enigmatic beings for a second night during his Christmas vacation, Strieber whips out a shotgun while his wife bitches at him, "I'm sick of this macho bullshit. You're so self-indulgent." Ultimately, Strieber almost blows a hole in his wife with his shotgun after seeing a little blue doctor hiding behind a vase in his cabin, thus leading to the family heading back to NYC so that the protagonist can get so much needed help.

When her son Andrew asks if god exists and Anne replies, "I hope so [...] but nobody knows," it becomes clear that the little boy was also visited by the aliens after he replies, "So were all alone, except for the little blue doctors. They come to the cabin. They have big black eyes. They're really scary. They said, 'We won't hurt you,' but I prayed for them to go away but they kept just shining their lights on me. God didn't make them go away." After talking to his wife, Strieber

reluctantly agrees to see a psychiatrist that “specializes in rape cases” named Dr. Janet Duffy (Frances Sternhagen). Like the Strieber family, Dr. Duffy collects degenerate modern art, though she also seems to have a stereotypical white bourgeois liberal fetish for primitive tribal African art. Indeed, the various pieces of art in Dr. Duffy’s home make the place almost seem more extraterrestrial than the interior of the alien’s spaceship. When Strieber visits Dr. Duffy and she recommends that he receive hypnotic regression therapy, he initially refuses and arrogantly declares to his wife, “I’d stick pins in my eyeballs before I’d let that whacko woman fool with me [...] She should pay me.” After becoming annoyed with his irrational behavior, Anne decides enough is enough and makes the following ultimatum to her “selfish prick” husband: “I’m gonna tell you something. You’re gonna go back in that woman’s office, we’re going to find out what is wrong with you, or we’re not going to have any marriage left.” Needless to say, Strieber reluctantly agrees and soon discovers the true nature of his abduction experiences.

During his first session of hypnotic regression therapy, Strieber experiences both vivid literal flashbacks and sort of surreal nightmares that inspire him to nonsensically proclaim, “The world is blowing up. My boy is dead.” Totally unable to deal with the experience, Strieber quits the session before he really discovers anything truly insightful and proclaims to Dr. Duffy, “I don’t need this. Bad dreams.” Indeed, it is only when Strieber talks to his son about “little blue doctors” and “tall thin ones” and realizes that he is more afraid of the aliens than his little boy that he gets the testicular fortitude to once again go under hypnosis. While Andrew finds the aliens to be somewhat “scary,” he also describes them to his father as being, “soft and perfect.” While under hypnosis, Strieber recalls being anally probed by one of the little blue doctors with a high-tech vibrator that is pulled from a hole in the wall of a spaceship. Upon realizing his anal cavity is about to be assaulted by a scary shiny object of unknown origin, Strieber tries in vain to reason with the aliens by stating, “Can we talk this over? It looks like you’re gonna sing White Christmas,” but naturally the aliens have no interest in arguing with smart ass NYC intellectuals. The aliens also strap Strieber’s nude body to an operating table where they proceed to conduct dubious experiments. As a result of Strieber’s ‘successful’ hypnotic regression therapy, Dr. Duffy becomes convinced that he is indeed a genuine victim of alien abduction and invites him to become part of a support group for fellow abductees, which include a paranoid policeman and a couple whiny Jewesses. During the group session, Strieber meets a woman that claims her unborn fetus was stolen from her by aliens and talks to another that mentions that both her daughter and granddaughter were also been abducted. Eventually, Strieber begins to believe that he was first abducted when he was a little boy and that his son is also being abducted.

While dressed like a sort of culturally confused Gothic Latino pimp and

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seeming inordinately jubilant like a Bipolar person that is suffering from a manic episode, Strieber declares to his wife that he is going out for “a pack of cigarettes” even though he does not smoke and then heads to the woods of upstate New York so that he can confront his alien tormentors. Rather magically and inexplicably, Strieber somehow manages to effortlessly find the aliens, who are inside what looks more like an extravagant outhouse than a spaceship. Instead of being afraid, Strieber is quite friendly with the aliens and greets them with high-fives and a present in the form of a camcorder, thus inspiring the extraterrestrials to dance like autistic toddlers. Before Strieber knows it, he finds himself confronted by his doppelganger, who is dressed like a magician and who is no less arrogant than the protagonist. When Strieber remarks, “I am the dreamer and you’re the dream,” he gets somewhat of a shock when his doppelganger replies, “The only thing that matters is what I’m about to show you” and then reveals to him a partially unmasked grey alien, which has grotesque flesh that looks like something in between that of an insect and a rotting human corpse. When the doppelganger then reveals that it is not actually the alien’s face, Strieber humorously replies, “You’re not gonna let us see you. That’s a good idea.” Apparently, the alien’s true head is something like a Russian nesting doll (aka matryoshka doll) though, like with everything else regarding his abductions experiences, Strieber is not sure what is actually true. As far as Strieber is concerned, he is just glad that he is not insane.

After his eventful experience with the alien doppelganger, Strieber goes home happy as if he has experienced a massive life-changing revelation and proudly declares to his wife that he was “chosen” by the aliens. At this point, Anne seems to have finally accepted that her husband is not actually nuts and their deteriorating marriage begins to repair. Notably, the married couple go to an art museum where Strieber stands in front of a Jackson Pollock painting while his wife fittingly stands in front of a Lee Krasner painting. At this point, Strieber reveals his true feelings regarding his extraterrestrial experiences by softly stating, “It would be narcissistic of use to feel alone in the universe. People used to think the world was flat – it’s the center of things. It excludes the possibility of visitors. It’s really another kind of the same kind of thinking. The world is getting so small that it would be nice to meet someone new,” to which his wife supportively replies, “I don’t know what you saw. It doesn’t matter. It’s just god. You saw something extraordinary. There are many faces of god. Masks of god.” Anne then tells her husband he is “different” and that, in regard to the aliens, “I think they gave you a gift. You better use it.” Naturally, Strieber soon begins writing a new book, which would ultimately be what the film was adapted from. In the end, Strieber thinks that the aliens have come to visit him one night, so he more or less forces his wife and son to follow him to the top of their apartment building to greet the extraterrestrial begins, but he is ultimately disappointed when he does not find any aliens on his roof. Of course, everyone knows that

aliens do not abduct people in overpopulated cities where they would be easily spotted.

For better or worse, *Communion* is probably the most thoughtful and abstract film that has ever been made on the subject of supposedly real-life aliens, even if it is an incoherent and singularly unintentionally humorous mess of a movie that was directed by a man that seems to have about as much interest in real-life alien abductions as Tarantino does in cinematically portraying authentic human pathos and eros. Notably, auteur Philippe Mora has described the surreal scene near the end of the film where the protagonist actively confronts the aliens as an 'ode' to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Although seemingly impossible to tell while watching the scene, it should also be noted that Mora opted to have the protagonist's doppelganger dressed as a magician because he believes that any act of contact between aliens and humans would have to be a "magical" experience. Personally, I believe that this strangely zany magic act is just one of the many indications in the film that Mora does not believe that his friend Strieber was actually abducted by aliens, as if the director wanted to distance himself from the ostensible reality of his friend's experiences as much as possible lest he be labelled a UFO nutjob. Surely, it is hard for me to imagine someone watching *Communion* and then coming to the conclusion that Strieber is a reliable victim of alien abduction and all it entails. If I were to guess, I would assume that Strieber was more than victim of too many youthful acid trips than alien anal probes. As if to make a feeble attempt to capitalize off of the marginal cult status that his feature would eventually acquire, Mora would later go on to direct a quasi-documentary with the rather revealing title *According to Occam's Razor* (1999) where he spends a good portion of the time debunking UFO nuts in what is ultimately a glorified home movie that reveals more about the director's psyche than anything about the fact and fiction of extraterrestrials.

As someone that is fairly familiar with most of Mora's cinematic oeuvre, I can only assume that the only thing that the filmmaker truly believes is that Uncle Adolf was the most evil man that ever lived as indicated by his documentaries and especially his arguable magnum opus *Snide and Prejudice* (1998), which more or less depicts an abridged history of the Third Reich as acted out by mental patients portraying Nazi leaders and fittingly presided over by a flagrantly Jewish psychoanalyst named Dr. Cohen that indubitably acts as a stand-in for the director. Surely no novice to the subject of National Socialism, the film makes references to the more esoteric elements of Nazi history, including the somewhat enigmatic völkisch occult group the Thule Society, which acted as the genesis of what would eventually become the National Socialist German Workers' Party (aka Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei aka NSDAP). The son of a French Jewish Resistance fighter turned restaurateur and gallery owner whose first important film was the Nazi doc *Swaastika* (1973), Mora may have spent most of his filmmaking career directing low-camp kitsch and hokey horror

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trash, but *Snide and Prejudice* reveals that he has a striking pathological obsession with Hitler and National Socialism that seems to rival that of the average UFO conspiracy theorist. Needless to say, Mora's doc *According to Occam's Razor*, which has an entire segment dedicated to the Third Reich, attempts to make the dubious claim that the Nazis met aliens and that an Arno Breker statue might have been the very first depiction of a nude human body that aliens had ever seen. In short, Mora's doc unequivocally demonstrates that he believes that UFO conspiracy theories are a sad and laughable joke and that he probably only went to the effort of directing *Communion* to capitalize off of the great success of his friend Strieber's hit novel.

Interestingly, in his published letter *On Flying Saucers*, C.G. Jung wrote, "What astonishes me most of all is that the American Air Force, despite all the information it must possess, and despite its alleged fear of creating a panic similar to the one which broke out in New Jersey on the occasion of [Orson] Welles's radio play [The War of the Worlds], is systematically working towards that very thing by refusing to release an authentic and reliable account of the facts. All we have to go on is the occasional information squeezed out by journalists. It is therefore impossible for the uninitiated to form an adequate picture of what is happening. Although for eight years I have been collecting everything that came within my reach, I must admit I am no further forward today than I was at the beginning. I still do not know what we are up against with these 'flying saucers.' The reports are so weird that, granted the reality of these phenomena, one feels tempted to compare them with parapsychological happenings. Because we lack any sure foundation, all speculation is worthless. We must wait and see what the future brings. So-called 'scientific' explanations, such as Menzel's reflection theory, are possible only if all the reports that fail to fit the theory are conveniently overlooked." To quote Fox Mulder's famous poster in response to Jung's remarks, "I Want to Believe," but rather unfortunately the evidence is strangely lacking. While ostensibly depicting the real-life abduction of a mainstream horror novelist, *Communion* also features a semi-cryptic believer-skeptic dialectic and that is arguably the greatest and most revealing attribute of the entire film, but then again one also cannot go wrong with Christopher Walken bitching to aliens about being anally probed. In its glaring inclusion of awkward and seemingly nonsensical scenes, including Walken putting on a grey alien mask and telling his doppelganger, "I am the dreamer and you're the dream" in a segment that can hardly be described as a literal depiction of an alien abduction, Mora's film also anticipates the sort of postmodern meta elements of the more satirical episodes of *The X-Files*, which is surely fitting considering that both Strieber's book and Mora's movie are parodied in the classic third season episode "Jose Chung's From Outer Space," which is notable for featuring Mulder screaming with a faggoty falsetto voice upon discovering what he assumes is a dead grey alien corpse.

In his essay *UFOs In Modern Painting*, Jung noted in regard to what he perceived as the nihilistic apocalyptic degeneracy of modern art, "Whilst I was collecting the material for this essay, I happened to come across the work of a painter who, profoundly disturbed by the way things are going in the world today, has given expression to the fundamental fear of our age—the catastrophic outbreak of destructive forces which everyone dreads. It is, indeed, a law of painting to give visible shape to the dominant trends of the age, and for some time now painters have taken as their subject the disintegration of forms and the 'breaking of tables,' creating pictures which, abstractly detached from meaning and feeling alike, are distinguished by their 'meaninglessness' as much as by their deliberate aloofness from the spectator. These painters have immersed themselves in the destructive element and have created a new conception of beauty, one that delights in the alienation of meaning and of feeling. Everything consists of debris, unorganized fragments, holes, distortions, overlappings, infantilisms, and crudities which outdo the clumsiest attempts of primitive art and belie the traditional idea of skill. Just as women's fashions find every innovation, however absurd and repellent, 'beautiful,' so too does modern art of this kind. It is the 'beauty' of chaos. That is what this art heralds and eulogizes: the gorgeous rubbish heap of our civilization. It must be admitted that such an undertaking is productive of fear, especially when allied to the political possibilities of our catastrophic age. One can well imagine that in an epoch of the 'great destroyers' it is a particular satisfaction to be at least the broom that sweeps the rubbish into the corner." Of course, Jung's analysis, especially in regard to, "debris, unorganized fragments, holes, distortions, overlappings, infantilisms, and crudities which outdo the clumsiest attempts of primitive art and belie the traditional idea of skill," is a great way to describe the oftentimes captivating cinematic disaster that is *Communion*, which was not directed by the son of a degenerate artist mother and galley owner father for no reason. Additionally, it is no coincidence that the film references artistic works ranging from Giorgio de Chirico to Pollock to primitive African tribal art. Indeed, only a sick and self-destructive society with an apocalyptic death wish could glorify the infantile tribal expressions of negro savages or the glorified finger-painting of a Jewess-loving shabbos goy pricks like Pollock, just as only a troubled and disturbed world could produce mass delusions about little grey men that anally assault dumb hicks from the sticks. While I would love to believe, my cynicism tells me that Jung was probably right when he soundly speculated that the UFO phenomenon is largely the expression of post-religious Occidental man's disturbed collective unconscious. Either way, *Communion* is infinitely more entertaining than Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) where Monsieur Truffaut makes contact with the most banally benign aliens of cinema history.

-Ty E

JOHAN - MON ÉTÉ 75
JOHAN - MON ÉTÉ 75

Philippe Vallois (1976)

As much as I hate to admit it, French fag filmmakers of the 1970s were some of the most aesthetically and thematically audacious auteur directors of their time as pissed off pansy poofs who used the artistic medium of film to disseminate an inately iconoclastic Weltanschauung, even making committed commies seem like nothing more than 'bobo' (aka bourgeois bohemians) posers in the process. Indeed, shit-stabbing filmmakers like Jacques Scandelari aka 'Marvin Merkins' (*La philosophie dans le boudoir* aka *Beyond Love and Evil*, *New York City Inferno*), Lionel Soukaz (*Race d'Ep: un siècle d'images de l'homosexualité* aka *The Homosexual Century*, *Ixe*), Philippe Vallois (*Nous étions un seul homme* aka *We Were One Man*, *Haltéroflic* aka *Rainbow Serpent*), and Stéphane Marti (*La Cité des Neuf portes*, *Mira corpora*) basically represented a celluloid army of flaming frog Rosa von Praunheims who concocted a uniquely unhinged homo universe of the cinematic sort that blurred the lines between art and pornography, fiction and nonfiction, and morality and immorality. Indeed, representing the quasi-commie cocksucking side of the counter-culture movement, queer filmmakers took a radically revolutionary stance to filmmaking that is totally at odds with the authoritarian bourgeois LGBT fag mainstream that has taken a monopoly over fagdom nowadays, with a film like *Johan - Mon été 75* (1976) aka *Johan, carnet intime homosexuel* aka *Journal intime homosexuel d'un été 75* aka *Johan* being the sort of Communist Manifesto of patently politically incorrect vintage French fag flicks, as a decidedly depraved piece of reflexive sodomite cinema of the quasi-Cinéma vérité sort featuring unsimulated sod sex and anal-fisting, sadomasochistic Nazi fetishism, glorification of brother-on-brother incest, interracial buggery, and a rather unflattering depiction of sexual introverts as promiscuous perverts who engage in 24-hour orgies in public bathhouses. A sort of debauched autobiographical docudrama/quasi-mockery and arthouse-porn flick set in Paris (and partially New York City) about auteur Philippe Vallois (who both plays himself, but is also depicted by no less than two other actors) as he longs for his eponymous imprisoned kleptomaniac boi toy 'Johan' so he engages in assorted, eclectic sexual affairs to find a substitute for Johan while waiting for said boi toy's release, *Johan* was essentially banned upon its release in 1976 due to its perverse pornographic imagery and has thus developed a sort of cult status since then despite the fact that few people had actually seen the film until relatively recently because, although the film was screened at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival, the French censors got a hold, butchered it, and the original negative was destroyed. A somewhat plot-less piece of excess-ridden aberrosexuality, *Johan* is like Godard meets Garrel meets a raunchy Jean Rouch as directed by Wakefield Poole's 'bottom brother' as a work that is as subversive in its direction as it is in its morality.

Paris-based filmmaker Philippe Vallois' boyfriend Johan—a cocksucking criminal who is quite keen on thievery, pathological lying, sexual promiscuity, and brother bugging—is in jail, so the auteur decides to fill his 'romantic' void by cruising for men who share his locked-up lover's apparently irreplaceable qualities. In fact, the filmmaker has the gall to write to his imprisoned boy toy, "Johan, the boy who will replace you in the film must be more than just beautiful and a dancer," but the filmmaker's search for savage sensuality will ultimately prove to be much less fruitful than he hoped it would be. When Philippe interviews the decidedly dimwitted twin brother of Johan in a gay sauna, the seemingly confused brother mumbles, "I only had sex with my twin. His name is Johan. He's in jail." Despite his absurdly obsessive love for Johan as demonstrated by comments he makes to his boy toy in letters like, "If you had been only a sex champion, I would have left you as I did the others," Philippe cannot seem to keep his trouser snake in his trousers, as if he is subconsciously tempted to sabotage his relationship so as to release him from his self-destructive prison of poof love. During his journey, Philippe candidly exposes the truly seedy hermetic homo realm that is the pre-AIDS international gay underground, proudly bragging regarding the advantages of being a cocksucker in an increasingly cosmopolitan world, "It is easy for a gay man to discover a new town. It is one of our advantages. We meet people. Gay bars, nightclubs, and finally the sauna where I stayed 24 hours until I was exhausted. The most hidden of my desires had been satisfied." And, indeed, as a raunchy rectum reamer of the innately insatiable sort, Philippe does not shy away from interracial buggery with an anonymous black buck, not to mention taking two fists in the ass (whilst he masturbates and drinks from a toilet bowl!) from a stranger that has covered his hands in Crisco. Phil also learns that regarding poppers, "it liberates a lot of people" and that a lot of sadomasochistic sodomites like to roleplay by dressing up as Gestapo dudes. Of course, being a sissy sod, Philippe is quite the sentimentalist as indicated by a nostalgic memory he wrote to Johan in a letter: "Do you remember the first time I had sex with you? We nearly didn't do it. I could not get an erection because my desire was too strong." As can be expected from two less than monogamous homosexuals, there is a certain innate darkness to Philippe and Johan's relationship as demonstrated by the filmmaker's words to his lover regarding a mutually shared STD, "Do you remember the gift you gave me or I gave you? We'll never know who was guilty...Personally, I think it was you." Despite its sometimes ominous undertones, Johan concludes on a joyous, campy, and—for lack of a better word—'gay' note with the eponymous non-hero being released from prison and being warmly greeted by Philippe and his entourage, which includes a blonde Nordic fag hag (who dreams of having a love child with poofs Philippe and Johan!) and a man with a perverted mustache dressed in drag as alpha-diva Maria Callas, a woman noted for being the gay intelligentsia's answer to Judy Garland, hence P.P. Pasolini's one-time cinematic collaboration with her.

If nothing else, Johan demonstrates how lame both gay culture and cinema have become since the film's initial release nearly 40 years ago, as a work that will probably offend contemporary politically correct poofers just as much as it would offend members of the Westboro Baptist Church. Indeed, Johan is the sort of unflinchingly depraved queer flick that laughs in the face of remarks like "God Hates Fags" as a work that takes pride in its almost demonic sexual sacrilege. In other words, Johan makes the art-porn flicks of Canadian poof Bruce LaBruce seem like the spasitic celluloid temper tantrums of a sexually abused gay toddler version of Jacques Derrida, even seeming like what might have passed through the deranged mind of frog philosopher Michel Foucault—a sexual sadist who intentionally infected unwitting partners with AIDS—as he took his last gasp whilst succumbing to gay cancer. A sort of artsy fartsy gay gonzo blue movie of the radically reflexive and embarrassingly autobiographical kind that ravages the 'fourth wall' so as to make the viewer squirm with abject disgust, Johan will ultimately appeal most to fans of auteur-pornographers like Jack Deveau (*Drive, Left-Handed*), Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself, Sextool*), and Peter De Rome (*The Fire Island Kids, Adam & Yves*) more than Criterion Collection-collecting fans of *La Nouvelle Vague*. In fact, French filmmaker/art-pornographer/film poster designer Jean-Étienne Siry (*Et... Dieu créa les hommes aka And God Created Man, Un escargot dans la tête aka Snails in the Head*), who penned the screenplay for Deveau's bizarre French blue movie flick *Le musée* (1976) aka *Strictly Forbidden*, has a small role in Johan, thus signifying the virtually nonexistent line between arthouse cinema and pornography in France during the 1970s. It should be noted that the uncensored version of Johan was assumed a number of decades ago, but luckily, as auteur Philippe Vallois revealed in a featurette included on a DVD release of the film, someone working at a French film archive discovered a reel with the label 'Johan' on it and of course the rest is history, with the revolutionary wanton work finally being available for viewing for the first time in a number of decades after being assumed to be lost for good. Part pseudo-documentary, part decidedly degenerate existentialist erotic confessional, part celluloid counter-culture artifact, and part arthouse work in the artful yet aimless spirit of Philippe Garrel's *La Cicatrice Intérieure* (1972) aka *The Inner Scar*, Johan is ultimately a collage of perversely poetic sexual pathology. Featuring, among other things, a mother's day celebrating Darby Crash look-alike and violent SS fetish photos, Johan is historical celluloid proof that there was a time when sodomy was synonymous with criminality. Indeed, Johan is probably one of the most flagrant examples of the Jean Genet school of filmmaking as a work that even makes Rainer Werner Fassbinder's swansong *Querelle* (1982) seem too bourgeois. In sum, Johan should be approached with the same caution as one might give while letting a crack-addled Detroit prostitute in their home.

-Ty E

WE WERE ONE MAN

Philippe Vallois (1979)

The French (as well as the Dutch, British, etc.) typically hate Germans, which one can only assume is in part due to the fact that the frogs are a decidedly effete and cosmopolitan group of people who love to engage in puffery regarding their so-called “open-mindedness” while the krauts have always (or at least used to) put a premium on manliness, honor (hence why they effortlessly fucked up the rifle-droppers during the Second World War), and actually producing thoughtful and practical philosophers (as well as science, technology, music, etc.), so naturally a homosexual love story between males from each respective nation would make for an explosive and inevitably inauspicious affair. Indeed, such is the case in regard to queer fur licker Philippe Vallois’ – director of such Euro-homo classics as *Johan – Mon été 75* (1976) and *Haltéroflic* (1983) aka *Rainbow Serpent* – intrinsically cockeyed cinematic tale of discordant gay love gone awry *Nous étions un seul homme* (1979) aka *We Were One Man*; a severely sordid and sometimes inexplicably sentimental melodrama where sodomite sadomasochism and German vs. French wartime hatred meet head on for the most shocking and sickening of consequences. The plot of *We Were One Man* is simple enough: Set during the final days of the Second World War, a half-retarded French farm boy with severe social and emotional problems and masochist tendencies discovers a blood-soaked blond beast not far from his homestead and seizes the opportunity to take the marred Aryan man home, thereupon resulting in the development of decisively deranged companionship between racial enemies that eventually devolves into barnyard butt-darting of the bellicose variety. As a sort of *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) meets François Truffaut’s *Jules and Jim* (1962) meets John Boorman’s *Deliverance* (1972), *We Were One Man* is not exactly the sort of fag flick that would be popular with modern gay audiences, but instead the sort of sadistic leather-fags of the 1970s that boxhead queen auteur Rosa von Praunheim warned the world about in his unintentionally side-splitting docudrama *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971). In other words, *We Were One Man* deserves recognition with such positively putrid and perverse celluloid cocksucker classics as *Querelle* (1982) directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Agustín Villaronga’s *In a Glass Cage* (1987) and *The Sea* (2000), Michael Stock’s *Prinz in Hölleland* (1993) aka *Prince in Hell*, and *Frisk* (1995) directed by Todd Verow.

One thing I noticed almost immediately about *We Were One Man* is it’s striking similarities with the audaciously aberrant Belgian arthouse flick *Vase de Noces* (1974) aka *Wedding Trough* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie* directed by Thierry Zéno. Aside from featuring a swarthy and scrawny anti-hero that spends his days and nights on the farm mentally degenerating into a vile creature who knows no restraint like *Vase de Noces*, *We Were One Man* also has a strange,

WE WERE ONE MAN

foreboding, and ominous nightmarish quality to it that – despite being set largely during the sunny daylight hours – is all its own, which would also predominate in the more recent Walloon horror flick *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal* directed by Fabrice Du Welz. French farm boy Guy Rouveron (Serge Avedikian) has some serious problems, the majority of which are the result of his brain-damaged mind and little does he realize when he discovers the Aryan ‘apple of his eye’ – a handsome soldier of Breker-esque strength and beauty – lying in the woods that his inner-turmoil will seem to triple. Rolf (played by Polish-born porn star Piotr Stanislas) is a stoic, strong, and restrained fellow whose father is a German officer and whose only male-to-male bonding experience was in the Hitler Youth and Wehrmacht – despite his apathy for the Third Reich – thus his by-chance acquaintance with Guy opens his eyes to the fact that not all men are secure in their masculinity and sense of self. Indeed, Guy battles with seeming schizophrenic illusions, memories of an unpleasant stay in a mental institution, and sexually servicing a girl that he does not love just so that she likes him and he can say he has a friend. Shortly after Guy rescues Rolf and nurses him back to health, the stoic German soldier attempts to leave, but his feeble-minded French admirer follows him like a scared puppy dog. Going so far as to chase the German soldier and declare that he is stronger than Rolf, Guy eventually gets the Nordic ‘deserter’ to cease to his demands, thereupon ushering in their tragic and ultimately brutal romance. As a seemingly paranoid schizzo who delusionally remarks to Rolf that, “I saw in your eyes that you hate me. I feel when people don’t like me. It doesn’t change, I’ve always been alone,” it is only a matter of time before Guy cracks, it is just a matter of how, when, and to what extent.

We Were One Man – although featuring a couple sentimental, if not quirky and queer, moments and a dimly lit expressionistic erotic scene – is fundamentally an unconventional character study about a severely demented and dangerous individual whose lack of sanity is never up for question. The title “*We Were One Man*” ultimately sums up the fact that Rolf – a real and confident man – enables Guy to feel like a “real man” by living vicariously through his masculinity. Needless to say, wacko gay boy Guy wants to keep Rolf all for his own and will do anything, including slaughtering a dog out of jealousy, to get what he wants. In his overall cock-sucking creepiness, grotesque gay guy Guy borders on a Dahmeresque level of depravity as a lonely individual who will stop at nothing ‘keep’ his buff beefcake; the man he always wish he could be. Indeed, *We Were One Man* is surely deserving of a cult audience and certainly comparable to the best works of Rosa von Praunheim, Todd Verow, Bruce LaBruce, and Marco Kreuzpaintner, and a work that totally transcends the ‘homosexual’ label in its inordinate and irksome idiosyncrasy. Naturally, *We Were One Man* does not make the case for gay equality, but then again director Philippe Vallois was not doing more humble homos any favors with his previous work *Johan* (1976) aka *Johan – Mon été 75*; a work featuring images of leder schwule sadomasochists adorned

in swastika armbands and gestapo hats beating and mutilating one another, as well as twink twin-on-twin incest, on top of an unhealthy dose of outlandish and campy pornographic imagery. If you ever wondered how *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) might have turned out had it been a morbid melodrama set in rural France during the Second World War with a flaky, fruity, and feverish fag frog instead of cannibalistic inbred Texans as the playful predators, *We Were One Man* is probably your best bet.

-Ty E

DEAD CALM
DEAD CALM

Phillip Noyce (1989)

Having to be reminded of Billy Zane's psycho-spree dailies from a chance encounter with a mint VHS edition in the community thrift store, I set out to watch *Dead Calm* the day I bought, if not for Billy Zane, then surely for Sam Neill. As you know without my sentiments regarding the topic of Dr. Alan Grant, Neill has turned role after role into something intelligent and quasi-masculine, even archetypes that shouldn't drop machismo. From an insurance fraud investigator to paleontologist, Sam Neill chisels his own persona out of this generally "nerdy" classifications and brings a wit and charisma to even the most absent character given in a screen play. *Dead Calm* is further proof of this when John (Neill) is stranded on a sinking boat of a past crew that were slaughtered by an emotionally-imbalanced Billy Zane, who has now commandeered his vessel along with his wife and left him to die. As you can tell by my impromptu synopsis, this is a dame flick but one that does very little justice for their cries for sincerity.

Dead Calm was directed by Phillip Noyce, an Australian director known throughout for his espionage and politically charged suspense films and sadly, not for *Dead Calm*. Once sight breaks of an exhausted male figure adorned with a cowboy hat, Sam Neill uses his scarcely explained experience in nautical military action to navigate the "dingy" back to the ship from whence Hughie (Zane) came, even after the delirious stranger begs him not to go as all six crew members died of "food poisoning." Things turn for the worse, specifically for Jon, when he opens a sealed door and the crew floods in with their perky, bare breasts buoyant against the rushing seawater escaping; the focused subject of our voyeuristic perverted cameraman while he captures all the "action" necessary for the arousal of the more seasoned deviants of cinema.

To switch lanes completely and in such a juvenile manner, one of the reasons I found *The Mist* to be an excellent and effective survival-horror film might have had something to do with the harmonizing soundtrack. The quick and jarring operatic vocals in tune with the crashing waves within *Dead Calm* allow so much atmosphere to stick to what could just be another extra ordinary thriller with the acting talents of two of cinema's greatest leading men and a popular slut. One of *Dead Calm*'s greatest aesthetic strengths is the music leaving much to be desired from the lonely, rocking sea. Noyce doesn't bring anything new to the table by representing our ocean mother with his existing character artistry. To personify the crashing waves and eerie emptiness might require someone who has more of a penchant for environmental manipulation and not just Harrison Ford agenda films. To spin back to the inclusion of a now-popular slut as the lead heroine, I'd like to take this otherwise simple film and tread it into even darker waters.

Many of you who have seen the film are aware of the sexual insanity of the

later mark in which Rae is "seduced" by Hughie after many failed attempts at distracting him long enough to reverse the boat's direction. With hopes to save her husband from the ticking time-bomb that is a sinking ghost ship, she becomes distracted with his rippling pecs and abs and finds herself in a naked embrace on their bed. When the dog stumbles in the door and stares at her curiously, Kidman finds it in her female nature to attempt to get up with intentions to put the dog away. Hughie shushes her and scares the beast away, only for it to return moments later. As the dog stares, one could assume this as an ample opportunity to assist in leashing the hell hound and preventing the slaughter of Rae's good intentions. But as this is the movies and these films tend to carry nonfictional accounts of womanly behavior, she gives in to his pulsing libido as they form a passionate coupling. Edit this atrocious sex scene with snipes of Sam Neill fighting for his life and you got yourself a real buzz kill. Nice going, Rae. You singlehandedly killed your marriage and my respect for you.

Asides from the raw dog Straw Dogs approach to questionable lust, *Dead Calm* remains with a mood that the title properly instills. It's a slowly paced thriller, not one of thrilling segments involving high-velocity chase sequences, but rather a demented sociopath suffering all forms of mother issues as his sanity and true intentions slowly unfold. Nicole "Whore" Kidman brings together a nice early performance as a woman escaping from the memory of ejecting her son through the windshield in high volume traffic, probably as the result of texting her BFF. While this is never really looked back upon as the film picks up, Kidman plays the near exact role she did in *Birthday Girl* - quiet, melodramatic, and pretty stupid. Much of the film's frustrating moments come from either the asshole dog that you can't wait to be killed off or Kidman's inability to grab a knife or weapon. This is made increasingly agitating given that this isn't a hostage situation and the freedom Billy Zane allows her on the boat is overwhelming. *Dead Calm* is made possible on accounts of Billy Zane's wonderful performance and Sam Neill's persistence to save his wife who is busy bedding down with a serial killer. But hey, you can't tell me you wouldn't sleep with Billy Zane had you the chance.

-mAQ

MALADOLESCENZA
MALADOLESCENZA

Pier Giuseppe Murgia (1977)

Maladolescenza (Spielen Wir Liebe) is an extremely controversial film which was outright banned in many countries but is available with an X rating in Austria. Maladolescenza can be translated into adolescent malice and that does account for the plot. The film stars three children/teenagers who are in a bizarre love triangle. Laura is madly in love with Fabrizio. He lives in the forest behind her family's loft. She spends her summer afternoons exploring with Fabrizio on mountains and in caves. Some of the scenery is magnificent such as the "Ice Palace" which is truly a remarkable natural creation. Fabrizio is the kind of guy who likes it rough as we see in several heartbreaking scenes where he proudly humiliates Laura and makes her cry. It starts out innocent enough but then gets deadly. Sicking his German Shepard and tying her on the ground for a snake is only the beginning. Fabrizio completes his ritual of degradation and humiliation by taking her virginity in the ice palace. Shocked and confused, Laura doesn't know what to make of how much Fabrizio has changed. He begins to use her sexually until they meet Sylvia. Sylvia is the perfect example of a Barbie doll. Blond hair and blue eyes, she is a bitch in all forms whether or not her soul exists. She begins to join in this games with Fabrizio in one graphic scene where they shoot a blackbird with many arrows. The legitimacy of this scene can be argued but it looks very real. They torture Laura emotionally and have sex in front of her just to see her embarrassment and watch her heart break. No matter what happens in this film, nothing will prepare you for the ending. This film is highly frowned upon due to its child pornographic content, but if you look past all of the moral issues at hand, you will see a wonderful character study and a heartbreaking story of true love and puberty. Fabrizio's character is the most peculiar. He lives in the forest almost Peter Pan style, never wanting to grow old. You see an outer shell of malice and venom but in several scenes, we question his motives as he watches Laura's house while she sleeps. We never really understand why he treats her with such cruelty when it is obviously a mutual love between them. After making this film, Martin Loeb's (Fabrizio) career was ruined and was instantly black listed while Eva Lonesco became a star and has continued to make films. The film has a hypnotic children's theme which roots sound tribal-like and features distorted whistles to capture the menace of the dog. The characters can almost be traced on Jodorowsky's Fando Y Lis. Such captivating qualities possess each individual character. I can understand why this Lolita-esque film is under such fire to this day. It's hard being a parent and seeing what your child could be up to. Such innocence is not easy to watch be corrupted. A film that captures your attention instantly. It not only lives up to its horrid hype but is a wonderful film that clearly shows the line between art and pornography. Never before has a film captured the evil of hormones frozen

in an angelic state depicted by the youth of the damned.
-mAQ

MAMMA ROMA
MAMMA ROMA

Pier Paolo Pasolini (1962) *Mamma Roma* is an Italian film written and directed by philosopher, linguist, novelist, playwright, filmmaker, newspaper and magazine columnist, actor, painter and political figure Pier Paolo Pasolini (March 5, 1922 – November 2, 1975). It came out in 1962 when World War II was still fresh in the mind of Italians and other Europeans. *Mamma Roma* follows the lives of a middle aged prostitute and her 16 year old son. They live in a poor area of Italy surrounded with pimps, prostitutes, and thieves. Essentially its about a single mother that is doing all she can just to support herself and her son.

Throughout the film, no one can be trusted. Mother and son truly only have each other. The son is beaten up by a gang of people that were supposed to be friends. He is also lead on and humiliated by a girl with a bad reputation. When the son finally makes friends with a group of boys, they end up being criminals that lead him into a life of theft. Eventually he is caught and imprisoned. While he's incarcerated he becomes ill and eventually dies. His poor Mother has nothing left afterwards.

Writer and director Pasolini was a Marxist and many of his films dealt with proletarians. *Mamma Roma* exposed that in Capitalist Italy the poor faced a life of alienation, unemployment, economic instability, and crime. People could barely live on a day to day basis without being the victim or victimizer of a crime.

Pasolini mainly casted nonactors in *Mamma Roma* to give it a more realistic (bordering on *cinéma vérité*) feel. Throughout the film the characters seemed authentic and almost documentary like. *Mamma Roma* is rich in a culture that is not very often exposed. Pasolini was able to give the proletarians a voice through cinema. I believe that cinema is the most effective way to get a glimpse into culture (without actually around culture) when done correctly. Pasolini was able to accomplish this due to the films realism. I'm personally against Marxism and can consider *Mamma Roma* among one of my favorite films. It has captured a time in history that has long past.

Communication in *Mamma Roma* can be unpleasant at times. Even friends turn on you in the end. Pasolini, being a Marxist and Collectivist sees Capitalism and Individualism as being deterioration of the exploited proletarian. In a world such as this, communication can be very unpredictable. Friends are constantly lying to you while talking to them. People can turn their back on you when you least expect it. Communication in poverty stricken Italy becomes completely unreliable. When communication becomes unreliable in a society, it starts to crumble. For the Mother and Son in *Mamma Roma*, they lose each other and everything else.

Pasolini was able to capture a varying types of communication. Whether it be the communication of dominance in a fight or men inquiring prostitutes, it generally resulted negatively. Pasolini had his own political views which influenced

a lot of the negative types of communication in a Capitalist society. Despite the political agenda, I felt that Mamma Roma gave me a sense of a culturally rich ancient society. Very few films have impacted me. It has inspired me to watch more Italian films and a variety of films from around the world. When watching a foreign film, you feel like you are missing out on a part of the world. I at least felt that a culture was communicated to me after viewing Mamma Roma.

-Ty E

TEOREMA
TEOREMA

Pier Paolo Pasolini (1968)

While with his prophetically scandalous cinematic swansong *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), Italian Renaissance man Pier Paolo Pasolini (Accattone, *The Hawks and the Sparrows*) decided to show EVERYTHING, including such savory scenarios as stark-naked crying girls reluctantly devouring literal fascist feces and the scalping of nice aristocratic boys by sinister sodomite stormtroopers, the auteur exposed virtually nothing, at least graphically speaking, in his film *Theorem* (1968) aka *Teorema* – a work that wallows in ambiguity and features next to nil nudity, and was promoted with the tempting tagline: “There are only 923 words spoken in “Teorema” - but it says everything!” In fact, the film’s title, which means “Theorem” in Italian, gives a rather obvious hint to Pasolini’s experimental styles with the film as an active practice of his own film theories in a work that has baffled viewers both due its arcane aesthetic and thematic nature and its ostensibly radical, revolutionary anti-bourgeois and anti-Vatican message. In fact, *Teorema* sparked so much confusion that it earned a special award at the Venice Film Festival from the International Catholic Film Office, only for the prize to be absurdly taken away when the Vatican complained. Indeed, a film about a mysterious “being” played by Terence Stamp—an English actor who has made a singular career playing sinisterly suave villains—who comes as a guest to the lavish, if not lifeless, home of a bourgeois Milanese family and buggers each member senselessly to the point of abject infatuation, including the somber Sicilian maid, only to leave them high and dry after bringing a wild spark into their lonely lives and thereupon resulting in the most extreme and unforeseeable consequences, it is no surprise that *Teorema* disconcerted a number of rather critical viewers, not least of all the upper echelons of the Catholic church, but that was Pasolini’s genius as a lifelong Marxist who surely was not a slogan-slinging, cardboard communist. A character not modeled after Jesus Christ as often assumed, Pasolini stated of Stamp as a mysterious guest: “Originally, I intended this visitor to be a fertility god, the typical god of preindustrial religion, the sun-god, the Biblical god, God the Father. Naturally, when confronted with things as they were, I had to abandon my original idea and so I made Terence Stamp into a generically ultraterrestrial and metaphysical apparition: he could be the Devil, or a mixture of God and the Devil. The important thing is that he is something authentic and unstoppable,” and “It is an Old Testament, not a New Testament, visitor.” If anything is for sure about the vivacious and sexually virile visitor, it is that he is better at persuading with his hands than with his mouth, which makes him the most holy of hustlers and a true prophet of the Pasolinian realm.

Things dramatically change for a banal bourgeois family when a handsome, humble, and hypnotic visitor shows up and reveals through his gentle touch and

lecherous love that one must actually 'live' for life to be worth living, thus abandoning material possessions and social mores for embracing one's true erotic and emotional proclivities. In his first miraculous act, the visitor saves the family's melancholy maid Emilia (1970s 'Marxist diva' Laura Betti, who apparently was more involved in 'directing' Stamp than Pasolini) from suicide, for which she repays him with serene and sensual sins of the flesh. From there, the visitor works his way up to fornicating with every member of the mundane middle-class family, despite age and sex. Naturally, considering he is bunking with the teenage son of the family, Pietro (Andrés José Cruz Soublette), the Visitor sleeps with the passive prodigal son first. After becoming sexually aroused by the Visitor's chic fashion sense and fetishistically caressing a pair of his pants, the mother of the house, Lucia ("Miss Rome" 1946 Silvana Mangano, who Stamp admitted was the first woman to give him a 'wet dream' as a little lad), strips off her clothes and lures the stranger in for sensual pleasure, for which he naturally abides. When the father of the home, Paolo (Massimo Girotti, whose acting career spanned seven decades)—a factory owner with a number of disgruntled workers—falls ill from an unexplained ailment of the bedridden sort, the Visitor heals him through his mere touch by wrapping the sick man's legs around his neck in a symbolic scene of ritualistic homoeroticism that actor Terrence Stamp stated of some twenty years after his performance in *Teorema*, "I did not then realize that the position in which I held him, with his [clothed] legs up on my shoulders, around my neck, was one used by homosexuals in intercourse." Last, but certainly not least, the Visitor makes passionate love to the initially awkward teenage daughter of the house, Odetta (played by Princess Anne Wiazemsky, the then-wife of Jean-Luc Godard), who finally overcomes her fear of man and electro-complex-like infatuation with her father. While the Visitor saves the life of the maid, inspires individuality and artistic expression in the son, gives pleasure and emotional support to the lonely and sexually repressed mother, saves the life of the sick father in both a biological and metaphysical fashion, and makes a woman of the once-oversensitive daughter, things take a rather dramatic turn for the worse when the Visitor must leave just as casually and understatedly as he came.

In the end of *Teorema*, the son is a degenerate self-loathing artist who paints a canvas merely blue and subsequently urinates on it, the daughter enters a tragic comatose state, the mother becomes a militant cougar who hunts and beds young heterosexual twink prey, and the father gives away his factory business and strips off all of his clothes (and, in turn, he entire identity) at a train station (Milan Central Station) that Mussolini built and screams like a wounded animal on the brink of a horrific death. More interestingly and inexplicably, the maid Emilia, as an intuitive peasant who is lacking when it comes to the intellect, achieves a sort of sainthood that involves her hair turning green, becomes virtually mute and begins to eat raw nettles, levitates over a farmhouse in front of adoring peas-

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ants, and is lastly buried in the earth by a old peasant woman where she can weep for the world in the soil. As a card-carrying communist, director Paolo Pasolini was probably well aware that the Freudian-inspired sexualization of the public, as advocated by Judeo-Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky and Frankfurt school intellectuals like Herbert "Father of the New Left" Marcuse, was used as a technique to destroy the infrastructure and moral fabric of a society and in *Teorema* he cinematically carried out such a then-provocative scenario to almost supernatural extremes, albeit with a conspicuously and idiosyncratically Catholic bend. While on the set of *Teorema* in San Angelo Lodigiano, Pasolini even had the audacity to admit to an interviewer regarding the work, "this is the first film I have shot in a bourgeois milieu with bourgeois characters. Until now, I have never done this because I could not bear to have to live with people I could not stand for months on end, fixing the script and then shooting the film." Although Pasolini's all-consuming commie-sodomite-Catholic hatred of the bourgeois boobs was rather seething, he did admit regarding the characters in *Teorema*, "I chose people who were not particularly odious, people who elicited a certainly sympathy—they are typical of the bourgeoisie, but not the very worst bourgeoisie," even if he inevitably ruins these characters' lives in the process.

Ultimately, it seems like Pasolini's greatest fantasy for *Teorema* was having a British bad boy invade people's beds—something the director indubitably probably wanted to experience firsthand himself—as a suave savior of sodomy, quite literally bugging away the bourgeoisie in a one-cock revolution of the semi-spiritual and seemingly quasi-Satanic. As for Stamp himself, he would describe Pasolini in a somewhat recent interview featured on the 2007 BFI DVD release of *Teorema* as an intellectual failure of sorts, whose "philosophies went nowhere" in the long run. Additionally, in the same interview, Stamp described how he "never received a penny" for his iconic role in *Teorema*, stating rather unflatteringly of Pasolini, "He may have been a left-wing communist in theory but in reality he was looking after number one." Still, Stamp's 'free' performance was ultimately worth it as it would prove to be one of the most interesting and stand-out roles of his career, even if he speaks next to no words. The second film in Pier Paolo Pasolini's "Mythical Cycle," *Teorema* proved to be an unholy yet strikingly spiritually mismatched marriage between communism and catholic sentiments, which has enabled his films to better stand the test of time than many of his leftist compatriots, whose totally materialistic philosophies and dreams of a Marxist society have drastically devolved (which is saying a lot!) into the brain-dead, Hollywood and MTV-spoon-fed form they take today. Ironically, the bourgeoisie of today—with its middle-class cultural marxism, perverse proclivities towards xenophilia and miscegenation, feminism and LGBT lunacy, and other stamps of cultural decay—is far more decadent and degenerate than that of the family in Pasolini's *Teorema*. After all, I am sure Pasolini himself would have been sickened by the 'bourgeois buggerer' idea of gay marriage as it would

have offended both his respect for Catholicism and his Marxist sensibilities as someone who wanted to subvert the middle-class and not the banalization of his own subversive sexual subculture. Indeed, times have certainly changed when a once-revolutionary work like *Teorema* seems rather tame.

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PIGSTY

PIGSTY

Pier Paolo Pasolini (1969)

While cinematic cannibalism in Italy is almost solely associated with the so-called “cannibal boom” that lasted roughly from 1977 to 1981 and sired exquisitely exploitative films like Ruggero Deodato’s *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) and Umberto Lenzi’s *Cannibal Ferox* (1981) aka *Make Them Die Slowly*, Guido poet/polymath Pier Paolo Pasolini (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, *Teorema*) preceded his less cultivated countrymen by almost a decade with his highly ambitious and somewhat impenetrable flick *Porcile* (1969) aka *Pigsty* – an intrinsically anti-capitalist and anti-fascist celluloid work submersed in semiotic scatology that centers on such taboo topics as man-on-pig bestiality, patricide, and cannibalism, among various other decidedly deplorable things that are not typically featured in arthouse films. Considered by many to be his most complex and arcane cinematic effort, *Pigsty* was naturally met with disapproval by discombobulated audiences during its ill-fated screening in Venice and Pasolini responded to the hopelessly confused with the following description, “To understand the film you have to have more heart than head (better yet, if there is head used so much the better): because there is to understand the desperate story of a sinner who makes of his sin his sanctity...there is to understand the ambiguous and dramatic relationship between the old capitalism and the new which concludes, even if in the tones of an almost contemplative poem, with a condemnation of them both.” Essentially two films in one (in fact, both segments originally had separate names: “*Orgia*” and “*Porcile*”), *Pigsty* features a dichotomous depiction of two strikingly different but thematically connected times – the first segment portraying a medieval Italian vagabond man who discovers war, battle, cannibalism, and anarchy, and the second segment portraying a fiendishly fetishistic ex-Nazi family who are now wealthy industrialists – the film manages to be part excess-ridden epic poem and part sardonic satire where shit and swine become subversive symbols of the Fatherland during the post-Nazi era of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (“economic miracle”). A virtual father film to his exceedingly subversive and excess and excrement-ridden, scatological cinematic swansong *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), minus the grotesque imagery, *Pigsty* was Pasolini’s first attempt to “crystallize horror. To make a Petrarchan sonnet on a theme from *Lautréamont*” and “making the cinema aristocratic: unconsumable,” which is quite ironic for a self-proclaimed Marxist who vied for a classless collectivist society and wanted to appeal to the mindless masses (which he inevitably did with his mass culture “*Trilogy of Life*”). With an incriminating (Pasolini has admitted his identification with the medieval cannibal that spouts the words) tagline like, “I killed my father, I ate human flesh and I quiver with joy,” *Pigsty* makes for quite a potent and pessimistic work that portrays a new sort of era (as well as the “new beginning” of the old one that preceded it) following the destruction of

Italy in Europa during the Second World War where ex-Nazis have now taken on the irredeemable role of their former enemy, the capitalistic Jew, as rampant materialists who cannibalize and defecate their own history and national kultur, thus committing fratricide against the Fatherland and the old perennial kultur that originally held it together.

In the first segment of *Pigsty*, the viewer is introduced to a destitute barbarian man (French actor Pierre Clémenti, who worked with Visconti, Buñuel, Bertolucci, Makavejev, and Cavani, among other countless great auteurs) who desperately tries to survive on infertile land around a volcano (the actor would later reprise the role of an unclad character who hangs around volcanoes in Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar* (1972) aka *La cicatrice intérieure*). After coming upon a battlefield featuring corpses and archaic weaponry, the unnamed man picks up a rifle and helmet and eventually comes across a soldier he stoically slays during a moment of potential mercy, thus beginning his personal war of anarchy against the state. Clearly a hungry fellow who is tired of dining on grass and snakes, the bloodlusting warrior decapitates and devours his enemy and, not long after, a goofy cannibal (Pasolini's protégé Franco Citti) comes by and joins in. Naturally, the two anarchistic anthropophagites become comrades in arms and slaughter another group of men and take a woman as a slave, thus forming a cannibalistic tribe that continues to slaughter any group of people that has the misfortune of crossing their pernicious path. After a man escapes from the bloodthirsty brutality of the cannibal crew, he notifies the local Christian law enforcement, thereupon inevitably resulting in their capture and a judicial trial where the two hedonistic head-hunters are condemned to death. While the cannibal played by baked Citti meekly begs for forgiveness before the Christian cross in a most groveling manner, the ferocious flesh-eater played by Clémenti continuously repeats, "I killed my father, I ate human flesh and I quiver with joy," while in a trance-like state as he bravely accepts death. Of course, both beasts of prey become prey of beasts as a result of their ravenous escapades, thus concluding the first segment of *Pigsty*. As director Pasolini wrote himself regarding the anthropophaginian anti-hero, "I identify in part with the character of Pierre Clémenti (apocalyptic anarchy, and—let us say—total contestation in the existential plane)."

The second segment of *Pigsty*, as written by Pasolini, "takes place in the industrialized part of Germany, at Godesberg, near Cologne, which is where Adenauer used to live, in the villa of a big German industrialist like Krupp, say—one of the old industrial families." Pathologically perverse protagonist Julian (French actor Jean-Pierre Léaud, who is best known for playing François Truffaut's filmic alter-ego "Antoine Doinel") is the son of a flagrantly evil ex-Nazi industrialist with an anachronistic Uncle Adolf mustache named Signor Klotz (Alberto Lionello). Julian is a passive nihilist and cowardly cuckold of sorts who has next to nil interest in politics, business, or women, but he likes flying kites as an in-

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trinsically immature 'mensch' who engages in infantile escapism, yet most of all, he loves riding dirty in his father's pigpen as a pathological pig porker, but no one knows about his swinish secret. Although he has no interest in touching her, Julian has a leftist girlfriend named Ida (played by Anne Wiazemsky, who also starred in Pasolini's *Teorema*) who futilely attempts to get her beau involved in revolutionary politics as a member of the 1968 German student movement. After finally confessing his subversive vice for swine, Julian falls into a catatonic state and Ida and the boy's mother (Margherita Lozano) try to figure out the source of his sickness and seemingly split-personality. Meanwhile, Julian's father explains to his wife while in bed that, "The days of Grosz and Brecht aren't over...I could have been drawn by Grosz in the form of a sad pig," but the industrialist's fears are in vain as he essentially has nothing to worry about because, aside from kraut commie artists George Grosz and Bertolt Brecht being dead, the wealthy degenerate can sleep safely knowing, as he says himself, "Germany!...What a capacity to digest!...And what a capacity to defecate!...Nobody more than us Germans!...Over the heart of our Puritan sons!"

Indeed, while Mr. Klotz devours Teutonic kultur (filling his majestic mansion with antique furniture and renaissance paintings) and industry, his son stands by passively and sexually services swine. When not playing an angelic rendition of *Horst-Wessel-Lied* (the co-national anthem of the Third Reich) on his antique harp, Signor Klotz confides in his slavish servant Hans Günther (played by Italian auteur Marco Ferreri), a name most likely in reference to real-life National Socialist eugenicist Hans F. K. Günther, and verbally battles his arch-enemy Herdhitze – the pseudonym of a man whose real surname is Hirt and who gassed tons of Jews and collected the skulls of "Bolshevik Jew commissars" during the Second World and received "plastic surgery, Italian style" to hide his true identity. After making a toast to "Jews and Pigs," Klotz and Hirt-Herdhitze decide that their mutual blackmail schemes against each other cancel each other out, thus they agree to merge their industrial empires (a scene Pasolini stated was a reference to the merger of Montecatini chemical works and Edison electric company, which resulted in the first big Italian industrial conglomerate). After awakening like a somnambulist, Julian enters the pigsty for the final time and not long after, Signor Klotz and his compatriots get the news from a group of refined proletarians that the sole male heir to the Klotz empire has been slopped up by swine, but are told to speak, "not a word to a soul" about the young man's death-by-sow as passive and silent spectators of history. As Pasolini wrote, "I identify also with Jean-Pierre Léaud (eaten by the pigs, cannibalized rather than a cannibal)—ambiguity, fleeting identity, and everything which the boy says in that long monologue to his girl friend who then leaves."

Although seemingly anti-Teutonic in persuasion, *Pigsty* was described by Pasolini as follows: "The explicit political content of the film has its subject, as its historical situation, Germany. But the film is not about Germany, but about

the ambiguous relationship of old and new capitalism. Germany was chosen as a way to illustrate a case. The implicit political content of the film, instead, is a desperate mistrust of all historical societies: Thus it is a film of apocalyptic anarchism." In a sense, *Pigsty* is Pasolini's "2001: A Space Odyssey" in that, aside from being rather arcane and exceedingly enigmatic like Kubrick's epic sci-fi masterpiece, it chronicles the (de)evolution of humanity from a cannibalistic anarchic savage to a meticulous and materialistic murderer of the authoritarian kind who has assembled an industrial line form of death and cultural destruction. Of course, where Kubrick arguably hints at a "great new beginning" for mankind with the star-child featured at the conclusion of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Pasolini foresees a deleterious post-cultural dystopia where man eats man via technological industry and quite figuratively shits him out. In fact, the poet wrote the following regarding the meaning of the film: "The simplified message of the film is this: society, every society, devours both its disobedient sons and the sons who are neither obedient nor disobedient. The sons must be obedient, and that's that..." Of course, as someone whose father, Carlo Alberto Pasolini, saved the life of Benito Mussolini in 1926 when 15-year-old anarchist Anteo Zamboni's attempted to assassinate the Duce and thus incidentally securing the fascist reign for nearly two more decades, gay Marxist Pasolini was most certainly a disobedient son, yet, quite ironically, it would be his Republican partisan brother Guido who was killed by a bunch of cannibalistic Communists. Before he was executed, Guido Pasolini apparently shouted to his commie captors, "the only justice Communists knew was a bullet in the back of the head." It seems that Pier Paolo Pasolini was in denial about the fact that the political persuasion he actively promoted for what would be most of his life was responsible for more death and destruction during the the 20th Century than both fascism and capitalism combined, as well as the "horrible universe" he wrote of, but, of course, while communism has essentially collapsed in Europe, the sort of culture-distorting cannibalistic capitalism the director esoterically depicted in *Pigsty* has only gotten all the more piggish. In short, where is Pasolini we need him?!

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Pier Paolo Pasolini (1970)

For all of my cinephiliac life, I have been pondering whether or not I think Danish auteur Lars von Trier (*Europa, Melancholia*)—undoubtedly one of the most interesting and relatively original filmmakers of the post-Fassbinder age—is a great artist, determined dilettante, and/or a downright fraud that simply thrives on trolling in a super sophisticated way and not much more. While I find that Howard Hampton tends to be an obnoxious writer that is oftentimes absurdly wrong, if not downright delusional, in his assertions, I could not help but agree with him when he argued in an essay featured in the writing compilation *Born in Flames: Termite Dreams, Dialectical Fairy Tales, and Pop Apocalypses* (2007) that, “There’s something about Lars von Trier’s prodigiously assured films that elicits indignation, as though their labyrinthine descents into the undermined of movie history were affronts to the sanctity of cinema itself.” Indeed, there’s oftentimes something unbearably insufferable about von Trier’s seemingly ambivalent, if not autistic, cinemania, as if the auteur enjoys nothing more than giving himself—and only himself—an extravagant masturbatory massage to his own cinephilia while presuming the viewer is just not on his passive-aggressively megalomaniacal level, but this is not the only problem with much of his work. After all, with his various patently pretentious manifesto/declarations—most of which are a rather loathsome combination of pretension and utter meaninglessness—and curiously drastic changes in style, it is hard not to assume that von Trier is terribly bored with cinema and that he is now mainly just engaging in a self-satisfying game of covert cinematic onanism and that he does not even take his own work that seriously, hence my suspicion that much of what he does is, at best, artistically prestigious displays of trolling and, at worst, completely emotionally counterfeit con-jobs. While von Trier even demonstrated a certain aesthetic aptitude as a child with shorts like *Why Try to Escape from Which You Know You Can’t Escape from? Because You Are a Coward* (1970)—a film that briefly appears in *The House That Jack Built* in a somewhat cryptic (and ultimately incriminating) fashion that connects the auteur’s childhood to that of the eponymous serial killer—his *Weltanschauung* has always been weak, shallow, and seemingly disingenuous, as if it would be too much of a struggle for the auteur to reveal anything about himself aside from being a morbidly depressed degenerate that makes superficial (meta)political statements because he lacks the capacity to commit to anything aside from acting like a little twat.

If I were to judge Herr von Trier on his latest feature *The House That Jack Built* (2018)—a mostly sorry Socratic serial killer flick where the auteur merely rehashes his old tricks and does for the art of murder what he did for sex in *NYMPHOMANIAC* (2013), albeit to a noticeably considerably less ambitious

degree—I would certainly have to go with artistic fraud. After all, von Trier, who was clearly spiritually castrated after his ostensibly infamous 2011 Cannes press conference incident where he made some benign Nazi jokes, even decided to sell his soul to promote the film by following the insipid script of the Hollywood mainstream and declaring without even the slightest hint of irony, “THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT celebrates the idea that life is evil and soulless, which is sadly proven by the recent rise of the Homo trumpus – the rat king.” While Trump has certainly proved himself to be a Zionist shabbos goy stooge of sorts that talks big yet not has accomplished a single one of the nationalistic promises he originally campaigned on, von Trier, in his clear political retardation, has clearly revealed he is completely drunk on the cashmere commie Kool-Aid by expressing sentiments worthy of dumb twats like Alyssa Milano despite once being the provocative enfant terrible that directed truly subversive films like *Manderlay* (2005), which does a brilliant job exposing the hyper hypocrisy, racial fetishism, and disgusting disingenuous of white leftist women like Milano. In that sense, von Trier is undoubtedly more like Trump than he would like to think as they are both supreme bullshitters that talk big but really have no strong principles aside from stroking their own ludicrously inflated egos. Of course, whereas Trump has the insipid spirit of a fat fuck drag queen, von Trier is like a depressed emo girl that just wishes her parents would at least notice the superficial wounds on her wrist from another failed phony suicide attempt. Rather intriguingly, even when he still wrongly believed that he was Jewish during the early part of his filmmaking career, von Trier dared to depict a Nazi in a sympathetic light in *Befrielsesbilleder* (1982) aka *Images of Liberation*, thus one has to question his motivations which seem to be nothing more than a childish desire to provoke as if he has a pathological self-destructive need to be a twat. Featuring totally tasteless torture porn scenes that are clearly a cheap immature attempt by the auteur at shock value (when he’s already done much more maturely shocking scenes in previous films), crappy CGI imagery worthy of some shitty C grade video game, Elvis Presley’s borderline homely granddaughter having her tits chopped off, and von Trier arguably revealing his own petty resentment of handsome masculine American men by having Matt Dillon portraying a psychopathic serial killer (while also arguably attempting to live vicariously through said character despite his typical tendency towards living vicariously through bat-shit-crazy female characters, hence why the film does not work), *The House That Jack Built* is ultimately a pointless film where the auteur tries in vain to attempt to say about life and its supposed evil banality what Emil Cioran already said more intelligently and elegantly many decades before. Of course, I have other reasons for thinking the film is an exceedingly empty piece of shit that cannot be saved by the shock of butchered tits and dead children, as I have been recently revisiting von Trier’s earlier films and cannot help but notice the difference in terms of aesthetic maturity back when the filmmaker had more of a

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legitimate reason to consider himself the cinematic heir of fellow Danish auteur Carl Theodor Dreyer.

In fact, von Trier was so arrogant about seeing himself as a sort of new Dreyer that he once dared to cinematically adapt the master auteur's unused screenplay adaptation of Euripides' play *Medea*, thereupon forever linking himself to his artistically superior cinematic countryman. Luckily (and somewhat surprising), the film is one of the filmmaker's soberest and most aesthetically alluring, ambitious, and successfully experimental cinematic works to date, as if even a total troll like von Trier realized it would be nothing short of cinematic sacrilege to defile Dreyer with his typical masturbatory digressions and apathetic cinephiliac references. In fact, *Medea* (1988) looks, in many ways, as old as the long-dead director that inspired it despite being plagued by an anachronism or two in regard to the wardrobe, as if the film was recently discovered in an ancient bottle on some remote island for future generations to discover. As to why the film has such a distinct 'timeless' quality that seems to even transcend cinema history, Jack Stevenson explained in his book *Lars Von Trier* (2002) in regard to the auteur's filmmaking method, "He shot the film on ¾-inch video tape, readjusted color and light, transferred it to 35mm film and then copied it back to 1-inch video tape. The result of this laborious experimental process was a train of images that seemed on the verge of dissolving in murk and graininess. The classic dialogue, sounding a bit inappropriate in Danish, was then laid on post-sync." Aside from the somehow strangely enthralling *Boardinghouse* (1982)—supposedly the first shot-on-video horror flick ever made—I cannot think of many films that were shot on archaic video and then blown up to 35mm film, but somehow von Trier manages to make this work as *Medea*, quite unlike the director's *Dogme 95* flicks, looks more ancient and archetypal than artificial and artless.

While it is no surprise that von Trier wanted to pay tribute to Dreyer—his nation's unequivocal cinematic master and a filmmaker that he has routinely quoted throughout his career—the genesis of the film is somewhat less personal. Originally planned by the Danish TV channel DR-TV in 1985 as a fairly normal adaptation of Euripides' play, von Trier did not even get involved in the project until after the original director Søren Iversen quit the production and the auteur was offered the project. Of course, von Trier completely changed the project and basically started from scratch, or as Stevenson explained, "Instead of faithfully adapting Euripides' tragedy for the screen, he chose to use Carl Th. Dreyer's script of the same name which the director had written in 1965-6 but had never found financing for. Dreyer's script was not a straightforward adaptation of Euripides' play, but rather an attempt to re-create the original story which might have inspired Euripides. Von Trier's film, in turn, as he states in the prologue, was not an attempt to make Dreyer's film, but rather was his personal interpretation of the manuscript. In any case, *MEDEA* was not purely based on von Trier's own material, and this was exceptional." Undoubtedly, von Trier's film is

about as far away from *The House That Jack Built* as far as artistic and ideological purity is concerned as it mostly rings emotionally true, does not wallow in the provocative for provocative's sake, and arguably has the most seemingly organic and timeless aesthetic of all of the auteur's films. Despite this, the film received mixed reviews (that leaned towards the majority being negative) from Danish film critics and von Trier has himself criticized various aspects of the film. Indeed, only Danish filmmaker and film scholar Christian Braad Thomsen—a personal friend of Rainer Werner Fassbinder that has paid tribute to his cocksucking kraut comrade with both a great book and documentary—seems to have realized the film's virtual genius.

Notably, von Trier had nil interest in Euripides' play and was merely obsessed with paying tribute to his filmic forefather, or as the auteur explained to Stig Björkman in *Trier on von Trier* (1999), "The subject didn't fascinate me at all! I've never been interested in classical drama. I was more interested that it was something Dreyer had been involved with." Yet, according to Jonathan Rosenbaum—one of the few American film critics worth reading—von Trier's film is far from an even remotely faithful adaptation. Indeed, as Rosenbaum explained in a brief September 1997 review, "Pay no attention to the claims that this 1988 Danish video feature by Lars von Trier (*BREAKING THE WAVES*) is a faithful or even remotely respectful realization of the late Carl Dreyer's unrealized script, cowritten by poet Preben Thomsen. For starters, the Dreyer script, based only loosely on the Euripides tragedy, features a chorus that is omitted here, its lines grotesquely converted into printed titles when they aren't simply dropped; many of Dreyer's scenes are eliminated, scrambled, or placed elsewhere in the overall continuity, and some of von Trier's scenes and sequences are strictly his own invention. That said, this is well worth seeing as a visually inventive and highly dramatic version of the Medea story, with strong performances by Kirsten Olesen and Udo Kier. In some respects it's as striking as anything von Trier has done, but Dreyer could never have accepted this florid piece of showmanship as even a remote approximation of his intentions." While Rosenbaum review is mostly favorable, he would later take a much harsher view of the film in his anti-Trier/anti-Trump diatribe "Sad!": *Why I Won't Watch Antichrist* featured in the compilation *Unwatchable* (2019) where he somewhat venomously argues, "...my opinion of the filmmaker himself steadily plummeted as I saw the postmodernist hash he was making out of my favorite filmmaker (and his alleged role model) Carl Dreyer [...] *MEDEA* claims to be based on Dreyer and Preben Thomsen's unrealized screenplay adapting the Euripides tragedy, but reading the Dreyer text is all that's needed to expose von Trier as something of a con artist." Of course, to truly respect von Trier as he really is and not have any deluded expectations, one must accept that he is a sneering con artist, albeit a very talented and aesthetically enterprising one who, rather unfortunately, is unquestionably one of the most interesting filmmakers working today. Undoubtedly, *Medea* is

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arguably most notable in that one forgets while watching it that it was directed by film history's foremost #1 troll, so it does not surprise me that von Trier himself is not fond of the flick, as if it pains him to be reminded that he exposed too much of himself by not succumbing to the temptation towards shock value and dark irony.

Although Rosenbaum complains that von Trier excised a supposed 'radical feminist' subtext from Dreyer's script, it would be absurdly deluded to somehow see von Trier as more 'right wing' than Dreyer. After all, despite directing subversive cinematic works like *Michael* (1924)—a silent film with fairly blatant gay themes—and having a troubled childhood as the adopted bastard son of a Scanian maid that he never got to know, Dreyer was a lifelong right-winger that once stated, "Even when I was with *Eksrabladet*, I was conservative...I don't believe in revolutions. They have, as a rule, the tedious quality of pulling development back. I believe more in evolution, in the small advances." As the product of insanely deluded commie nudists, including a Jewish (step)father and self-described "whore" mother that let him do whatever he wanted to as a kid, von Trier hardly received any discipline as a child, let alone, a sort of traditional pre-counterculture Danish upbringing involving Christian teachings and a traditional upbringing, so it is only natural that he would dedicate his filmmaking career to virtually 'acting out' like a debauched problem child that, not matter what he does, still cannot get the attention he craves from his self-absorbed and drug-addled parents. Of course, this is why von Trier can never be great like his hero Dreyer as he still has the emotional maturity of a teenager and, as Rosenbaum noted, has glaring maniac-depressive tendencies, which is a good way to describe the behavior of the titular anti-heroine of *Medea* who, as a scorned cunt that cannot believe she was tricked by a man, decides that the most despicable of revenges is more important than the lives of her two young sons. While Rosenbaum has complained of von Trier's excising of Dreyer's ostensible radical feminist subtext, there is no question that the auteur sympathizes with the titular (anti)heroine as her husband is portrayed as an arrogant and idiotic fool that more or less gets what he deserves, at least in the oftentimes hysterical director's mind.

As a stripped-down adaptation of *Medea* that was further stripped-down by the director from Dreyer's original screenplay, von Trier's film naturally contains a very simple storyline, but of course the film is, not unlike F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927)—another film that manages to create a great sense of the foreboding via foggy wetlands—largely notable due to its singular aesthetic approach and atmosphere. While the eponymous lead is technically not in every scene and we briefly encounter the perspective of other characters, the film is largely an uncompromising tribute to *Medea's* lovelorn anguish and pathos as a brutal bipolar bitch the opts to destroy her virtual entire world and all those that wronged her once she discovers that her husband—a

man whose dubious intellect is, unfortunately for him, totally overpowered by his ambition and arrogance—has betrayed her. While scant on dialogue, the film is inordinately quotable in a thankfully non-Hollywood-esque fashion as virtually every single word carries heavy meaning and manages to completely expose the essence of each character, which is rather fitting in a moody little art movie where the actors move around with a certain slow somnambulist intrigue as if von Trier was attempting to reconcile the very different acting methods of Robert Bresson and Ingmar Bergman. Indeed, from the carefully stylized acting to the amount of fog in the area, every aspect of the film seems perfectly calculated in a cinematic work that basks in the intentionally imperfect—whether it be character, cinematic technique, or historical accuracy.

To von Trier's credit, he makes his intentions perfectly clear at the very beginning of the film in an inter-title where he declares: "This film is based on a script by Carl Th. Dreyer and Preben Thomsen after Euripides' drama MEDEA. Carl Th. Dreyer never realized his script. This is not an attempt to make his film, but due with reverence, a personal interpretation and homage to the master." From there, we are introduced to Medea (Kirsten Olesen) as she meditatively marines in a shallow pool of water on the shore as she grasps at the sand beneath as the tide begins to cover her as she is on the brink of some sort of life-changing psychological break. As another inter-title then reads: "Jason built his vessel Argo and sailed to Colchis to fetch the Golden Fleece which he won with the help of Medea, the beautiful and wise, who gave him her love. Her love has now turned to hatred. Jason betrays Medea and the two sons she has borne him. Together they fled from Colchis and arrived in Corinth as outlaws. Medea left her distant country. Jason left her here." Indeed, a powerful, albeit somewhat evil, woman that practices the dark arts, Medea sacrificed everything for her selfish husband Jason (Udo Kier in probably the most 'butch' role of his career) and even plopped out two sons for him in the process but he's already decided to throw everything away because he has an unquenchable thirst for power and the female protagonist has no place in his future life. Unfortunately for virtually all parties concerned, King Creon of Corinth (Henning Jensen) wants to secure his throne and he decides to do this by having his beloved daughter Glauce (Ludmilla Glinska)—a rather nubile dame that enjoys exposing her unclad body, as if she sincerely believes that she is god's great gift to humanity—marry powerful warrior and hero Jason. To add insult to injury, King Creon banishes Medea and her sons from his kingdom because he is rightly afraid that she will use her evil powers to get revenge against him and his daughter. Unfortunately for him, King Creon naively agrees to give Medea one day to get her affairs in order before she leaves, thus giving her enough time to perfectly plot her rather ruthless revenge. Needless to say, Medea is successful as she not only kills King Creon and his daughter, but also brutally hangs both her sons so that Jason will live with the pain and shame for eternity. Before hatching her pernicious plot, Medea se-

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cures her getaway by agreeing to help King Aegeus of Athens (Baard Owe) with family infertility problems. In the end, Jason loses everything and seemingly suffers a mental breakdown while Medea—a hard bitch that rarely expresses any emotions—weeps while sailing away on King Aegeus' ship after exposing her hair for the first time in the film as if self-induced grief is the only scenario where she can express her sense of femininity. In short, everyone loses at the conclusion of this brutal tragedy, especially Medea, hence the vicious circle that accompanies being a bipolar bitch.

While the characters in *Medea* do not say much, the very few words that are expressed certainly reveal a certain mutual disappointment when it comes to the opposite sex and biology. For example, while the mother of two boys, Medea is not very proud of her ability to give life and even proclaims she would prefer the life of a warrior to the womb, stating, "I'd rather bleed behind a shield than bearing a man's children." As for Jason, he seems willing to forsake women altogether, declaring, "If only men could have children without the agency of women." Certainly the sort of cold cunt that would give her son autism due to her lack of nurturing qualities, Medea—an assumed closet-romantic—seems to have only had children out of her love for Jason, hence her proclivity towards prolicide. In fact, Medea hints at such a motivation when she declares, "There is no greater sorrow than love," especially after coming to the bitter conclusion that her husband's "only ambition was to be the king's son-in-law." To Medea's credit, Jason is such a cowardly self-absorbed piece-of-shit that he dares to proclaim to the heroine that his betrayal was done to benefit her and their children, thereupon also insulting her intelligence in the process. When Jason declares to her, "Your pride is your misfortune," one cannot help but sympathize with Medea when she replies, "And your pride, Jason...is your good fortune. My weakness and blindness led me to encourage your vanity. You want it to look as if I have left you. You are betraying your own children." In the end, both parents not only betray their own children, but fall victim to their own pride, thereupon causing mostly relative innocents to die in the end. Undoubtedly, if there is anything that one can learn from the film, it is that no one in a relationship is innocent as shitty people tend to choose shitty partners. Additionally, Medea and Jason are the couple from hell and it is almost fitting that the former executes sort of post-birth abortions by killing her son as if to rid the world of their demonic genes.

Notably, as the decades have passed since the film's over thirty years ago, auteur Lars von Trier has had very few good things to say about *Medea*. For example, in *Trier on von Trier* he confesses, ". . . I don't feel very happy with the film. I think that's because of all that Viking crap that I never really got a grip on. No matter what you do with things like this, the result is always a sort of fancy-dress party. It's bloody difficult to get it to look at all sensible. I don't think we've really got enough distance to all this Viking business. But when you look at

what Kurosawa does with similar things, it looks impressive. Like *THE SEVEN SAMURAI*. But if you look at the film more closely, you can see that the helmets they're wearing are terribly badly made. Maybe Kurosawa thought his films were insubstantial. But both time and geographic distance have eroded that, so you go along with it." Aside from being someone that has always considered Kurosawa's films, especially *The Seven Samurai*, to be absurdly overrated, it is easier for me to embrace the 'period costumes' in von Trier's film than in big budget pseudo-prestige TV bullshit like *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019) and *Vikings* (2013-current) where mostly candy ass modern actors preposterously pretend to be medieval bad asses. Not surprisingly, at the end of the same interview, von Trier would ultimately sum up his feelings about the film as follows, "MEDEA doesn't say much to me these days. It's got some nice scenes, but only on a superficial level. MEDEA was possibly a precursor to *BREAKING THE WAVES* in some of its usage of melodramatic form." Of course, *Breaking the Waves* (1996) suffers from contrived pseudo-Dreyer-esque flourishes, an absurdly off-putting utilization of pop music, and a ridiculous pseudo-transcendental ending that completely contradicts the film's entire tone. Personally, it is somewhat hard for me to take von Trier's opinion of his own work completely seriously as he apparently regards *Epidemic* (1987)—an abortive mess of a movie of the masturbatory metacinematic sort—as his 'personal favorite' of his films while distancing himself from most of his other fair superior early films like his debut feature *The Element of Crime* (1984). I think what separates *Medea* from much of von Trier's oeuvre is that, out of respect for Dreyer, von Trier demonstrated some sensible restraint for the first (and probably last) time in his filmmaking career and did not succumb to the seemingly self-destruction compulsion towards juvenile troll tactics. In that sense, it is arguably the auteur's most subversive and idiosyncratic work to date and von Trier's sort of equivalent to David Lynch's *The Straight Story* (1999) as an understated oddity in the filmmaker's oeuvre that benefits from a sort of quasi-Bressonian simplicity.

Of course, von Trier is not the first filmmaker to tackle the timeless Ancient Greek tragedy of *Medea*, which is a myth that, in general, seems to appeal to more experimental and subversive filmmakers. In fact, von Trier is not even the most subversive or iconoclastic auteur to adapt it as Dutch auteur Frans Zwartjes—undoubtedly one of the most idiosyncratic filmmakers that has ever lived—directed a rarely-seen minimalistic version simply titled *Medea* (1982) where two actresses play all the roles. Taking the tragedy to a totally different extreme, fellow Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh's posthumously released six-episode miniseries *Medea* (2005) updates the story for the degenerate world of Dutch democratic politics. Arguably even more unconventional than Zwartjes' film, obscure Italian female experimental filmmaker Pia Epemian's *Medea* (1969) seems like the sort of film the eponymous anti-heroine might directed if she was a full-blown schizophrenic. In subversive guido auteur Marco Fer-

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rer's delectably debauched *The Story of Piera* (1983) aka *Storia di Piera*—one of the Italian filmmaker's countless criminally overlooked films—great frog mischling beauty Isabelle Huppert portrays a young girl that learns to play the role of Medea in high school and later plays the role as adult actress in a particularly perversely preternatural film that, among other things, features the novelty of borderline mother-daughter incest, among other things. Of course, Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Medea* (1969) starring Greek-American opera diva Maria Callas as the brilliantly cast titular lead is probably the greatest and most revered adaptation of the Greek tragedy. Personally, in terms of sheer rewatchability, I prefer von Trier's version despite my perennial mixed feelings about its auteur and my general preference for Pasolini over the Danish auteur.

Notably, von Trier himself seriously doubts that his Dreyer tribute is actually Dreyer-esque as demonstrated by his words, "The film was supposed to be a bit Dreyerish. I felt very connected to his aesthetic. But a lot of the film is too insubstantial. And we had that model of the Viking castle where Medea lived. I can't stand that sort of thing. It looked terrible. The problem was that the budget didn't let us film the whole thing on location. We came up with several Fellini-style solutions instead." I have no idea what von Trier is alluding to as *Medea* is one of the least Fellini-esque films that I have ever seen, but I digress. As far as Dreyer's influence, *Medea* has an almost fiercely foggy oneiric and ominous essence that is vaguely comparable to Dreyer's truly nightmarish masterpiece *Vampyr* (1932). As far as the eponymous heroine's passion and pathos are concerned, von Trier's film sometimes feels like a sort of apocalyptic nod to *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) with strands of *Gertrud* (1964). Not surprisingly, Jonathan Rosenbaum is less convinced of Dreyer's influence and sees the film as being more Wellesian, or as he stated in his review, "In fact, apart from patches of Dreyer's dialogue, *MEDEA* is not at all like Dreyer, occasionally a bit like Ingmar Bergman, and mostly like Orson Welles — the Welles, that is, of *MACBETH* and *OTHELLO*. I hasten to add that the two films have very different styles, starting with the studio sets and long takes of *MACBETH* and the disparate 'found' locations and splintered montage of *OTHELLO*. But von Trier, like many a postmodernist music-video maestro, never lets stylistic consistency get in the way of his stockpile of effects. Insofar as there's any kind of dramatic logic at all, *Medea* is usually framed like *Lady Macbeth* in *MACBETH* and Jason (Udo Kier) like *Othello* in *OTHELLO*." Indeed, von Trier's *Medea* is quite comparable to Welles' pleasantly peculiar adaptations of classic Western texts as experimental and even borderline avant-garde takes on these all-too-familiar stories that bring new lifeblood to the narratively necrotic. Not unlike Welles' Shakespeare adaptations *Macbeth* (1948), *Othello* (1951), and *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), *Medea* does what great cinema should do by adding something to the ancient tragedy that could never be accomplished in theater or any other medium. Of course, the fact that the film features very little dialogue yet is at-

mospherically hypnotic throughout underscores this fact in terms of cinema's artistic singularity.

Whereas *Medea* is big on aesthetic and sparse on words, von Trier's later celebrated 'USA – Land of Opportunities' trilogy films *Dogville* (2003) and *Manderlay* (2005) are absurdly aesthetically barren and overly talky as if the auteur went through a nihilistic Godardian phase where he was obsessed with destroying cinema. Indeed, these two films (the projected third and final film in the trilogy, *Washington*, has yet to enter production) are not much more than glorified filmed theater where von Trier virtually attempts to duplicate what Fassbinder did with his somewhat experimental obscure TV plays *Das Kaffeehaus* (1970) aka *The Coffee Shop*, *Bremer Freiheit* (1972) aka *Bremen Freedom*, *Nora Helmer* (1974), and *Frauen in New York* (1977) aka *Women in New York*. While it is only natural that Fassbinder would direct such films due to his theater background and experience as both an actor and playwright, von Trier has always been most focused on cinematic technique and cultivating a distinct aesthetic, thus *Dogville* and *Manderlay* seem like expressions of a tired old auteur with a contempt for cinema who has gotten incredibly bored with the medium and I say that as someone that finds these to films to be somewhat enjoyable. Of course, *Medea* and *Dogville* have one very important thing in common in that they conclude in a rather incriminating way that reveals von Trier's sort of feminine rage. Indeed, while his latest failed film *The House That Jack Built* plays out like some murder fantasy fetish piece, it does not ring true the way *Medea* does where a hypnotically harrowing deluge of resentment, hatred, and misanthropy spills out in the end, thus it is quite fitting that the titular heroine begins the film lying in water as the tide begins to engulf her body. Naturally, considering von Trier's recent uncharacteristic affliction of Trump Derangement Syndrome, I would not be surprised if he came out as gender fluid or even followed in the step of his virtual artistic nemeses, Wachowski brothers, and came out as an a full-blown autogynophile. Indeed, it is probably no coincidence that von Trier's greatest films like *Medea* and *Antichrist* (2009) involve crazy cunts that make men miserable, especially since the auteur is himself a crazy cunt that likes to make men miserable.

Undoubtedly, it is somewhat ironic that von Trier's anti-Trump turd *The House That Jack Built* is largely is largely about death, as it feels like the creation of someone that believes in nothing and is totally afraid of death and the uncertainty that surrounds it, especially if one considers things that von Trier has said in the past. Indeed, demonstrating once again that Dreyer is surely one of his most imperative influences, von Trier stated in a manner that even almost borders on nationalist pride, "...people are always sacrificing themselves completely in Dreyer's films—and in mine. It must be a particularly Danish characteristic! So what can we say about sacrifice? [...] someone who sacrifices himself or herself is at least giving their existence some sort of meaning—if you can see

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a meaning in doing something for others, for an idea, a belief. The characters in these films are struggling to bring meaning to their time on earth. It must feel easier to die if you're doing it for something you believe in." Of course, as a clearly intelligent and oftentimes iconoclastic individual, von Trier reveals that he believes in nothing, especially sacrifice, when he parrots retarded conformist anti-Trump twaddle and he will probably never become a true cinematic master until he dares to direct a film that he is willing to sacrifice his life—or some aspect of his life—for. After all, at least with *Medea* he at least sacrificed his ego and exposed a certain vulnerability that he has yet to duplicate in any of his other films, hence the source of its striking emotional potency. After all, I cannot think of another film where I managed to feel sympathy for a sick evil bitch that kills her own children whereas I could not wait for the painfully banal and pedantic serial killer fuck in *The House That Jack Built* to die so I would not listen to his pathetic pseudo-philosophical pontificating anymore.

-Ty E

SALÒ OR THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM

Pier Paolo Pasolini (1975)

Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom was Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini's last work before his murder by a male prostitute. The circumstances surrounding Pasolini's death are dubious and make one wonder if Salò had anything to do with artistic genius's disappearance from the world forever. The film is based on the book *The 120 Days of Sodom* by Marquis de Sade. Pasolini adapted the novel for the fascist period in Europe during the 1940s. Through explicit and almost unbearable imagery, Pasolini gets his point across about the degradation of the human body by the fascist state.

The title Salò is taken after the fascist state that Pasolini's brother Guido was killed at in an ambush during the second World War. The significance of the title alone makes one wonder if Pasolini ever got over the death of his brother. I also believe that it would be fair to say that Pasolini believed fascism to be the main culprit in his brother's death. Salò is a film that presents human beings as merely objects for manipulation and torture for by the fascist state. Like those young individuals featured in Salò, Pasolini must have felt his own brother was worthlessly sacrificed for the fascist state. A theme prevalent throughout Salò is the destruction of the family so that the state can take ownership over the individual. One girl in the film cries for her own death as she prefers the conclusion of her life over being deflowered by fascists. Her mother was killed trying to save her and she no longer wants to go on living. A fascist leader merely laughs at her and tells her that her suffering only makes him happier. The United States government has also done a great job destroying the American family. Shabbos Goy puppet and president Barack Obama intends to further the dissolution of the American family with his new "Zero to Five" big brother plan. The point of this plan is to indoctrinate child at birth with lies about "tolerance" and "altruism" so that they don't have to wait till kindergarten. After all, the gate keepers don't want children learning about individualism or respect for self. That would be against international banking and neo-Bolshevik interests.

The young people that are raped and tortured in Salò are objects of the state and can do nothing about it. The fascist leaders are obsessed with "deflowering" their young victims as they want to officially taint them. What good are slaves if they haven't had their morale broken first? The fascist leaders do what they do because they desire power. They desire power due to their inability for sexual release as demonstrated by their many acts of perversity. Whatever sexual act they engage in, they are never fulfilled. This forces the leaders to get more deranged with sexual desire until their victims are left dead. Rumor has it that Adolf Hitler enjoyed being peed on by his young niece Geli Raubal. Whether this is true or not is questionable, but one of the fascist leaders featured in Salò surely enjoys it. Also the fascist leaders featured in the film take upon themselves to dress in drag

SALÒ OR THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM

before they have a gourmet buffet of shit. It is arguable that Nazi leader Hermann Göring was a transvestite. Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels made no lie about his annoyance by Göring's effeminate behavior in his 1945 diaries. Pier Paolo Pasolini makes it clear that the archetypical fascist was not someone that was into traditional sexual activities.

Of course, being a homosexual, Pier Paolo Pasolini was also not into ordinary sex. One fascist leader in *Salò* states, "The act of the sodomite signifies the death of the human species." Pasolini was not a man that hid his thoughts in matters even if they conflicted with who he was. The sodomite fascist leaders make it clear in *Salò* that they will defile and destroy all beautiful human beings. Incapable of reproducing, they do the opposite and destroy. Another sinister looking fascist that goes by the title "the president" states, "when one prefers men, it is difficult to change one's perspective. The difference between a boy and a girl is enormous. We cannot consider one that is obviously inferior." Hence, the idea of the aesthetically pleasing Aryan superman. All victims featured in *Salò* also become conspirators amongst one another in the fascist state. Out of fear and desperation, each individual caught committing a "crime" against the state confesses another victim's crime. After a girl is found with a photograph of a boy by a fascist leader she cowardly tells on two girls that engage in lesbianism. The two lesbian girls tell on a fascist guard who practices miscegenation with a Negro servant girl. Like many loyal fascists, the race defiler salutes his murderers to the very end. The fascist state has completely destroyed all forms of individualism.

Although the Bolsheviks (and their international proteges) were clearly responsible for more suffering than any group in human history, the fascist world of *Salò* metaphorically champions the sadistic Marxist world. Pier Paolo Pasolini, an Italian communist, never made any lie when criticizing Marxism so naturally fascism was an easy target for the late director. *Salò* is a work so graphic and morally depraved that it encourages the viewer to be completely demoralized by its conclusion. None of the sex featured in *Salò* is erotic nor are any of the deaths "cool." *Salò* ends with the fascist leaders watching torture via binoculars inside a comfy mansion room. This scene emphasizes the sick voyeurism the viewer engages in safely through their private television set. The viewers have disassociated themselves from the horrors of the film just as many fascist (and allies) leaders did during the second World War.

-Ty E

DISTRICT B13

Pierre Morel (2004) *District B13* is a slick and well executed French action film directed by Pierre Morel. The film is based on a story written by action auteur Luc Besson (who also acted as one of the film's producers). *District B13* features real stunts (no CGI or other BS here) that compliment the film's fluidity and perfectly calculated nature. Many of the stunts are in the form of the urban art of Parkour. Individuals involved in Parkour utilize urban terrain as an obstacle based art similar to skateboarding.

I must admit that I am not the biggest fan of action films. My favorite action films are usually directed by no other than Luc Besson. *District B13* takes place in the not so distant future coming upon an age where the world is nearing an apocalypse. The city of *District B13* is blocked in by an apartheid wall (similar to the one Israel has around the Palestinians). The French government has decided to put a wall around the city due to its uncontrollable crime and chaotic nature. *District B13* is quite reflexive of the ghettos in France today. Third world immigrants have flooded slums of France as cheap labor to make up for the physically inept French. Like the corrupt politician in *District B13*, French President Nicholas Sarkozy has also called third world population (directed at Muslims) "scum." Various riots have also taken place in the slums, in protest of President Sarkozy. It is no doubt that *District B13* is a social commentary on the current socio-political situations occurring today in France. French President Nicholas Sarkozy "You've had enough of this gang of scum, haven't you?" said Nicolas Sarkozy to residents in a Paris suburb affected by rioting. "Well we're going to get rid of them." The two heroes of *District B13*, are a *District B13* local and a slick cop. Their objective is to disassemble a bomb before it blows up the whole city. Of course, you can expect some surprises on the way. The cop and local have to fight a gang to get to the bomb. The gang's lead muscle is a fat wigger by the name of K2 (which he has shaved in the back of his head). Their leader is an ambiguous homosexual who has an addiction to cocaine. Expect to see some serious shit go down between the gang and its rich man's candy fueled leader. Various plot twists and turns occur in *District B13* guaranteeing for a thinking man's joyride. I find it refreshing to watching an action film that actually has some thought put into it. I will be sure to follow the work of Pierre Morel and Luc Besson in the future. I just wonder whether or not Nicholas Sarkozy has seen *District B13*. I would love to hear his reaction.

-Ty E

TAKEN
TAKEN

Pierre Morel (2008)

Bare with me here. Taken (2009) is an action/revenge film in such vain of neo-classics as Death Sentence, but this time it stars Liam Neeson who plays a fluidly flat character who still manages to be creative with the kills and action. The plot essentially follows the barren yet populated philosophy that women are stupid and get themselves in heaps of trouble. Such is the plot and motivator for Taken. Liam Neeson's daughter is kidnapped by dirty Albanians into trafficking. This film was taken from a September release to a January date. Such is the woes of Hollywood. Judging from the visceral and bodily damage, one could guess that the screenwriter is Luc Besson. Such an exciting action film can only be directed by Pierre Morel, the director of politico-parkour film District B13. The same bloodless physical violence hits France yet again, this time with more nut shots and broken limbs than before. The dirty, filthy Albanian people have been cinematically mongrelized into greedy sexual dictators working in unison towards a better and more sexual France. Yet again, a film has exaggerated Eastern horrors worse than others (mainly for drug induced sexual extremes and female slavery), this time playing on the fact that Albania was known for its relentless violence during its prehistory. Liam Neeson's role in the film can feel as if he is re-enacting one of the eccentric quirky characters from Steve Martin's Pink Panther, though I must admit I haven't been quite generous in giving the film the credit it deserves. His daughter, acted by Maggie Grace (of bitch Lost fame) accidentally (whoops!) winds up in an esteemed trafficking environment where she ends up getting doped on narcotics and sold to ethnic bankers. A true misogynist work of immeasurable genius. Taken makes sure you cannot find any other excuse but to blame the naive and slutty friend couplet that winds up in this situation from, surprise, being slutty. Taken has not taken much space up on Soiled Sinema. The film is short, sweet, and infinitely piquant as a whole. It retains some emotional leverage against the misanthropist (especially misogynist) in you. The acting can be a sufferable sacrifice for Eastern European horror served at a high velocity. You like action? Liam Neeson breaks some miserable Frenchman's nose every 10 minutes. You ratio that up and it equals a film not as good as the revenge encore Death Sentence, but still pretty damn good. Now if only Dick MaSterson played the inexorable ex-CIA lead. Other women that fuck shit up.

-mAQ

WEIRD WEIRDO

Pierre-Alain Jolivet (1969)

One of my best friends growing up was literally the most infamous and all-around worst behaved kid in school and like many bad boys, he had a curious relationship with his mother that even seemed borderline incestuous (once, my friend and I walked by his mother's bedroom and saw her standing in front of a mirror naked, as if it was normal to get undressed with your door open while having three sons always running around the house). No matter what crime my friend committed—be it hitting the high school principal in the head with a full bottle of Gatorade or stealing expensive pieces of equipment from school—his mother still babied him as if he were the absolute epitome of baby Jesus-like purity. His mother also taught him and his friends (myself included) that all women were whores that would ruin a man's life without thinking twice, so naturally my friend did not treat his lady friends that well (even breaking one of their noses, hence one of the many reasons why I stopped hanging out with him). Although my friend is not a French mannequin-loving rapist serial killer, he certainly does remind me a bit of the Oedipal-plagued antihero of the avant-garde counter-culture frog flick *Weird Weirdo* (1969) aka *Le grand cérémonial* directed by Pierre-Alain Jolivet (*Bérénice*, *Black Mirror*). A playfully aberrant and aesthetically and thematically quasi-autistic piece of mod-art-molested artsploitation cinema that is based on a play by Spanish auteur filmmaker/Renaissance man/Panic Movement founder Fernando Arrabal (*Viva la muerte*, *I Will Walk Like a Crazy Horse*) that was once lovingly described as "Arrabal's weirdest play yet," *Weird Weirdo* is the sordid semi-surreal story of a wayward young man with sadistic tendencies who falls in love with an equally wayward woman with masochistic tendencies who suffers from kleptomania in a cinematic work that strangely proves that opposites attract, especially when they are sexually dysfunctional whack jobs. Directed by an obscure French auteur who is best remembered, if at all, for his rather rough yet strikingly aesthetically pleasing sadomasochistic arthouse flick *The Punishment* (1973) aka *La punition*—a work about a high-class hooker who faces sexual displeasure under pernicious patrons with exotic S&M tastes—*Weird Weirdo* features a strangely hypnotic hodgepodge of trashy and classy themes and aesthetics that will appeal to both Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jean Rollin fans alike, though Arrabal fanatics might find the film to be not insane enough for their liking. Indeed, while Alejandro Jodorowsky's Arrabal adaptation *Fando y Lis* (1968) is even crazier than its source material (Arrabal even admitted this himself), *Weird Weirdo* was made to be palatable for more 'general' audiences, sort of like a date movie for decidedly debauched dudes and dames as a work with a tinge of melodramatic romance, not to mention a strangely happy ending. Like Jacques Baratier's *Piège* (1970), *Weird Weirdo* also features a cameo from the playwright as an eccentric shop

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owner and thus should be a cult classic of sorts by now, but due to its unavailability (the print I found looks like it was found in a Mexican garbage dump), it will just have to remain in the celluloid dustbin of history.

Cavanosa (Michel Tureau) is no Casanova as a hysterical and homicidal momma's boy who thinks all women are whores and treats them as such by scooping them up at night and ditching their corpses in large boxes at a railway station. During one of his daily drop offs, Cavanosa spots a young beauty named Syl (played by Marcella Saint-Amant, who appeared on the American soap opera *Days of Our Lives* during the mid-1960s) being chased by an angry crowd yelling "stop thief!" because she has just stolen a purse, which she hands to the crazed young man. Later, Syl finds Cavanosa and accuses him of waiting for his mommy (indeed, he has been spending the entire day thinking of his equally mental mother trying to kiss him), but he claims that he killed her. Cavanosa's mother taught him to hate woman, so he seeks solace in semi-anatomically correct mannequins, which he seems to have hundreds of. That night, the deranged young man confesses to his insane mother (played by Ginette Leclerc, who previously starred in Henri-Georges Clouzot's 1943 masterpiece *Le Corbeau: The Raven*) while being tucked into bed like a toddler that he is in love with, "A very young woman. Very beautiful. Very pure." Needless to say, the Mother, who practically carries her progeny's testicles around in her purse, becomes agitated by her son's declaration of love, thus upsetting him in the process, so when Syl gives Cavanosa a bouquet of roses the next day, he flips out, rips up the flowers, stomps on the torn petals and tells his love interest "Commit suicide immediately. Here. In front of me. That's what I want," which only turns her on all the more since she is a major masochist who delights in being degraded by young dandies. When Syl begs Cavanosa to kiss her, he responds quite hysterically by stating, "You're just a whore who kisses every guy she meets [...] Me, I'm the one nobody wants to kiss. I'm doing my best to be hated. Only my mother loves me. And I killed her. And she died because of you, slut," even though his mother is clearly still alive. Ultimately, the demented dandy agrees that Syl can spend the night at Cavanosa's house so long as she lets him kill her that very same night. Meanwhile, Cavanosa's mother goes to a police superintendent and tells him that her son is the serial killer that is responsible for dropping off dead chicks in boxes at the train station, even going so far as to describe her beloved son as follows: "He's hunchbacked, he's lame, he's repulsive." On the other side of the city, Syl brings Cavanosa to meet with her (ex)boyfriend, who she tries to dump. Eventually, the tableside bizarre love triangle results in jealousy and resentment on the maniac momma's boy's part, so Cavanosa essentially tells Syl and her boyfriend to go fuck off and die.

After attempting to buy lingerie from Fernando Arrabal for his mother but forgetting her size, Cavanosa once again meets up with Syl, who has bought a whip so that he can beat her with it. Before they go back to Cavanosa's casa, the

young man forces his new nubile little girlfriend to get naked in public. When Cavanosa arrives back home, his mother accuses him of losing his virginity and tells him that Syl is nothing but a dirty whore who wants to “pump a child out of you.” Cavanosa is so irked by his mother’s irrational hatred, he attempts stabbing her with a knife but chickens out at the last minute and buries his head in her crotch as if he wants to reenter her womb. Of course, Mommy Dearest lets her little boy know, “All women are whores, my darling. I’ve sacrificed my life for you.” When salacious Syl arrives at Cavanosa’s humble abode, he undresses her and makes her say the word “Volubilis” (the name of an ancient Roman city located in what is now Morocco that fell to local tribes around 285 and was never again reclaimed by the Romans as it was in an indefensible region in the southwest corner of the empire). From there, Cavanosa makes Syl wear a white dress and a crown of thorns as his mother laughs in a maniacal manner while watching them through a peephole. In a semi-foreshadowing phantasmagoric dream-sequence, Cavanosa has ditched all of his mannequins in a dump and kills Syl, but not before telling her he loves her. After the dream-sequence ends and the viewer is transferred back to some semblance of reality, we watch as Syl admires her boyfriend’s eclectic mannequin collection. Undoubtedly, the centerpiece of the life-size doll collection is a creepy black mannequin with a third eye in its forehead and a hand protruding out of the top of its cranium. When Cavanosa joins Syl in the mannequin room, the two proceed to blowtorch all of the dolls, mainly their faces, breasts, and crotch regions (aka the most important physical parts of a woman). After the pyromaniac fun is over, the Mother breaks into the room while in a seemingly demonically possessed state and irrationally accuses her son of being a bastard. Indeed, Cavanosa is such a bastard that he ties Syl to a bed and begins to violently rape her, but the little lady is not completely satisfied and tells him to do it harder. Unfortunately, Syl’s ex-Boyfriend randomly pops in to save the day before Cavanosa can sexually savage her some more. Luckily, Cavanosa beats up the ex-Boyfriend and ties him up in the bathroom and everyone else proceeds to drink tea at a small dinner table (indeed, Syl, Cavanosa, and Mother manage to all get along for a second or two). Ultimately, Cavanosa lets the ex-Boyfriend go and then puts Syl on a leash like a dog. With Syl by his side, Cavanosa decides to get rid of all his childish possessions and destroys the rest of his mannequins in a large bonfire outside. After Syl throws Cavanosa’s favorite mannequin into a lake, the two proceed to make passionate love. Later on, Cavanosa asks his lover “Do you think mommy is dead?” and Syl sets him straight by slapping him in the face like a little bitch boy. Indeed, in the end, Cavanosa has finally gotten over his mommy issues and can now go on with a normal romantic relationship, as a sadist who has found his masochist.

Apparently, Fernando Arrabal’s original play version of *Weird Weirdo* concludes in a less classically romantic fashion with Cavanosa finding another masochist

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madam in what is a biting ironic conclusion. Personally, I did not mind the somewhat unexpected Hollywood-like ending of the film, as *Weird Weirdo* already has enough unhinged perversion, nasty nihilism, and flagrant misogyny and misanthropy crammed into it to keep me happy. The only thing that I found somewhat outmoded and annoying about the film is a pseudo-documentary scene towards the end where a news reporter asks random strangers who they think might be responsible for killing chicks and dumping their bodies at the railway station. While one 'racist' fellow proclaims that there is no way that an indigenous French man can be capable of such crimes (he assumes an Algerian is the culprit), another man blames the cops, remarking that if the police spent less time beating up far-left student activists and focused their efforts on the killer, they would have found him by now. Of course, as a fundamentally feminist-free work featuring a female kleptomaniac who falls in love with a deranged dude of the murderously sadistic sort who incessantly threatens to kill her, *Weird Weirdo* is not exactly a left-wing work, at least in the traditional sense, even if it is an adamantly anti-bourgeois film. Indeed, compared to French left-wing counter-culture works of the same era like those directed by Agnès Varda and Jean-Luc Godard, among countless others, *Weird Weirdo* seems radically reactionary. On top of featuring a number of otherworldly and equally titillating tableaux, the film is nearly immaculately accented by an eerie and ethereal yet melodic soundtrack created by relatively unknown French composer Jack Arel (a regular collaborator of Jean-Claude Petit who co-composed the song "Psychedelic Portrait," which was featured in an episode of the British cult TV series *The Prisoner*). It should also be noted that the film received its English title 'Weird Weirdo' from Beat filmmaker/film distributor Antony Balch (*Secrets of Sex* aka *Bizarre*, *Computer Killers* aka *Horror Hospital*)—a collaborator of William S. Burroughs who directed the short films *Towers Open Fire* (1963) and *The Cut Ups* (1967) and produced the 1968 version of Benjamin Christensen's silent masterpiece *Häxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages* featuring narration from Burroughs—who bought the film and distributed it in the UK (Notably, Balch was also responsible for re-titling Joël Séria's sacrilegious cult masterpiece *Don't Deliver Us from Evil* (1971) aka *Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal*). Indeed, for fans of surrealism, bizarre counter-culture cinema, the Panic Movement, celluloid sadomasochism, wayward misogyny and/or curious cult cinema, *Weird Weirdo* is certainly worth digging up and devouring with a date who does not mind a bit of sadomasochistic cinematic debauchery.

-Ty E

BLOOD

Piers Haggard (1971)

Although the gutter auteur's most expensive production at the time with a budget about twice as much as one of his typical features at supposedly \$20,000 (Bill Landis of Sleazoid Express fame soundly speculated that the filmmaker must have spent a good portion of the money on his mortgage), the monster family melodrama *Blood* (1974) directed by Andy Milligan (*The Body Beneath*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*) runs under 60 minutes (though a 74 minute print apparently exists somewhere), was conveniently shot mostly at the filmmaker's northern Staten Island home, and as the director's friend Jimmy McDonough wrote in his excellent biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2001), the work "had all the requisite Milligan ingredients—sick family, domineering wives, limping servants—but the results are inert and, even for Andy, amateurish." Somewhat strangely, I have noticed that *Blood* is the film that most Milligan mongers recommend to novices, which is probably owing to the film's brief running time and fairly fast pace, especially compared to the director's more dialogue-heavy works like *Guru*, *the Mad Monk* (1970) and *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!* (1972). Maybe it is because I enjoy watching nasty films about nasty people doing nasty things after being forced into less than ideal situations, but I have yet to see a 'bad' Milligan movie and that certainly includes this little minimalistic and misanthropic monster movie melodrama hybrid. Milligan's sort of angry yet autistic take on *The Addams Family* meets Roger Corman's *The Little Shop of Horrors* (1960) minus the intentional humor as channeled through the director's rather idiosyncratic misogynistic, sadomasochistic, and compulsively cockeyed lens, *Blood* was one of the few films that the filmmaker directed that was not produced and distributed by Semitic smut-peddler William Mishkin, as it was released by Bryanston Pictures, which is notable for releasing Paul Morrissey's *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) aka Andy Warhol's *Frankenstein*, Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), Robert Fuest's *The Devil's Rain* (1975) featuring Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, John Carpenter's pre-Halloween sci-fi parody *Dark Star* (1974), and Ralph Bakshi's racially-charged satire *Coonskin* (1975), as well as being founded by Guido Mafioso boss Anthony "Big Tony" Peraino with his son Lou as a way to hide the millions of illegal untaxed dollars they made off of the porn chic crossover classic *Deep Throat* (1972). Although Milligan was routinely screwed over by Mishkin and his all the more repellant lawyer son, he claimed to have somehow managed to get Peraino to pay him \$40,000 for *Blood*, which was unheard of because apparently the goombah gangster was somewhat of a penny-pincher, thus making the film one of the director's greatest financial successes. A histrionically melodramatic tale about a decidedly disharmonious marriage of monster miscegenation between the Wolf-

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man's cuckold scientist son and the less than charismatic queen bitch daughter of Dracula and their deleteriously loyal Christian servant who not so secretly loves the husband and hates the wife, the film will ultimately prove to be too much for most horror fiends and gorehounds due to being a minimalistic exploitation flick with an almost *Gone with the Wind*-esque melodramatic 'elegance' (notably, Milligan worked on an Antebellum era epic melodrama entitled *House of Seven Belles* (1979), but never finished it and the footage is now considered lost). A suburban anti-family melodrama disguised as a Victorian era Gothic horror costume piece, *Blood* bleeds profusely the sort of inter-family contempt that only a spiteful little sadistic sod like Mr. Milligan was capable of and considering that it was made around the time that the filmmaker's wife/superstar Candy Hammond (*Seeds of Sin*, *Gutter Trash*) divorced him and moved back to her hometown in North Carolina, the director's signature seething hatred, misanthropy, and misogyny seems all the more audaciously authentic.

Despite being the proud progeny of the Wolfman, Dr. Lawrence Orlovsky (one-time actor Allan Berendt) is his bitch wife's loyal bitch and he has more or less devoted his entire life trying in vain to keep his uniquely ungrateful spouse relatively comfortable. Lawrence's wife is a crippled bloodsucking cunt named Regina Orlovsky (Milligan superstar Hope Stansbury, who penned the director's first film *Vapors* (1965)) and like many mentally unhinged housewives, she spends most of the day bedridden, but it is not just because she is a manic depressive, as she is also a genetically degenerate vampire who happens to be the daughter of the Count Dracula. Unfortunately for her, Regina lacks the cultivated charm, wit, and subtlety of her alpha-ghoul progenitor. Due to their infamous family backgrounds, the two were forced to marry as a "duty" to their famous monster fathers and now they have a childless extended anti-family comprised solely of crippled servants who have literally dedicated their lives to serving them in the most dangerous and deleterious sort of ways. Regina hates servant Carrie (played by Patricia Gaul, who went on to have small roles in mainstream films like Kasdan's *The Bill Chase* (1983) and *Silverado* (1985)) not only because she is a practicing Christian who blesses her food each meal with a small crucifix, but also because she can tell that she and her lycanthropic hubby have a crush on one another. Orlando (Michael Fischetti, who appeared in John Huston's *Prizzi's Honor* (1985) and Robert Mandel's *F/X* (1986) is the least hated and most cuckolded of the servants and Carlotta (Pichulina Hempel) is certainly the most hideous, grotesque, crippled, and retarded, which is all a direct result of her parasitic masters' experiments. Indeed, Carlotta, who apparently used to be rather bright, was adopted while still just a little girl from a Budapest-based orphanage by the Orlovsky family, but when Regina used a little bit too much of her blood one day to quench her undying lust for sanguine fluids, it temporarily cut off the oxygen to her brain, henceforth causing her irreparable brain damage that has left her a blabbering buffoon who bungles everything she does and

thus making her the perfect defenseless scapegoat for the rest of the family, who blame all their own failings on her. Changing the family surname from Talbot to Orlovsky and moving to Europe in 1869 after his father died to obscure the fact that he is the son of the infamous Wolfman, Lawrence has brought back the entire messed up anti-family to his east coast hometown of 'Mortavia' (a name Milligan previously used for the fictional medieval Slavic nation featured in *Guru*, the Mad Monk) because he is running out of funds and suspects that family lawyer/executioner Carl Root (rather queenish Broadway composer John Wallowitch in his first and his last film role) has been stealing his inheritance and "legacy." Of course, little does Lawrence and the rest of the family realize that the United States is still not exactly hospitable to their curious mongrel monster kind.

After shooing away a bitchy busybody realtor named Mr. Markham (Martin Reymert, who later appeared in Milligan's 1978 film *Legacy of Blood*)—a revoltingly effete über-queen if there ever was one who insists on showing his tenant the garden and rooms around his new home—and telling him to never come by the house again under any circumstances as he plans to mail the rent out in advance, childless patriarch Lawrence sneaks his entire eccentric family into their new less than humble abode via a backdoor. As a degenerate blood addict with an acute aversion to sunlight, Regina barely survives the trip and her face resembles that of a melted plastic baby doll head by the time she finds safety in darkness. To make matters worse, Regina needs weekly blood transfusions and overused guinea pig Carlotta's once vital blood is beginning to be not very agreeable with her highly sensitive undead body. On top of having to deal with his wife's pathological bitching and belligerent bouts of somewhat warranted jealousy, Lawrence, who has followed his father's wishes by becoming a doctor and devotes most of his life to attempting to find a cure for the ungodly family taint, spends most his time experimenting with serums, with servants Carrie, Orlando, and Carlotta also having secondary jobs as his scientific assistants. Lycanthropic mad scientist Lawrence is also experimenting with the sap of exotic and highly dangerous carnivorous plants as he hopes it will prove to be a reliable substitute to blood that will help keep his wife's eternal addiction to vital fluids in check. Unfortunately, the plants are growing rather vicious and attempt to eat anyone that happens to get too close to them. Possibly a side effect from the strange plants, servants Carrie and Orlando are suffering from a grotesque unmentioned ailment that makes their legs look like that of a malnourished concentration camp victim, albeit with the added bonus of perennially oozing puss. In fact, Orlando's leg is so warped that he has to waddle around on his knees, which is certainly symbolic of his sorry lot in life as the virtual serf of Count Dracula and the Wolfman's degenerate spawn. Of course, despite everything that her husband and servants do for her, Regina is still an ungrateful bitch who runs the house like a fascistic PMS-plagued whorehouse madam who

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hasn't had a good fuck in a decade. To Regina's minor credit, her husband refuses to have sex with her, even when she begs by throwing herself at him like a drunken teenage girl at a frat boy party. Indeed, when Regina tells her husband that she hates him and to "go to hell" after he rebuffs her rather pathetic sexual advances, Lawrence replies, "we're already there." Of course, compared to what he and his fucked family will experience over the next couple of days, Lawrence has yet to experience anything even remotely resembling Hades.

When Lawrence surprises his miserly lawyer Carl Root by randomly showing up at his office without notifying him that he has returned to the United States, he discovers that the swindler has sold the entire family estate without his permission and mispent the money on bad business deals, so he threatens him by remarking, "You forget that I have all my father's traits inbred in me, so take care" and eventually tries to kill the faggy swindler with his bare hands. Luckily, Lawrence's meeting with Root is not completely bloodboiling, as he gets the opportunity to meet the scumbag lawyer's beautiful young secretary Prudence Towers (Pamela Adams), who he virtually falls in love with at first sight. Meanwhile, servant Carrie's young brother Johnny (David Bevans) swings by the monster manor and it becomes immediately clear that he and his sister have incestuous feelings for one another. When Johnny checks on his sister's bad leg and sees that it is even worse than the last time he saw it, he threatens to call the authorities and demands that Carrie meet with him the next day, but of course the siblings never see each other again. Indeed, upon attempting to leave the Orlovsky home, Johnny is stopped by Regina, who kills him with a butcher knife to the noggin and subsequently melts his corpse with acid after he threatens to go to the authorities in regard to her husband's dubious experiments. When nosy realtor Markham talks to an equally nosy old obese wench in the neighborhood who mentions that the Orlovsky's are not home and complains, "you can't trust dem' damn foreigners" despite the fact they're clearly not foreigners as demonstrated by their crude hopelessly American accents, the brazen busybody decides to sneak into the house, only to discover Carrie, Orlando, and Carlotta performing experiments in a makeshift laboratory in the basement. Realizing that Markham has seen too much, Carrie and Orlando knock the realtor out and feed him to the carnivorous plants, who slowly drain the realtor of his fruity pansy blood.

Meanwhile, Regina gets so hungry that she decapitates a mouse with her beloved butcher knife in a classically cruel Milligan-esque unsimulated rodent-killing scene and eats its head while her husband Lawrence goes on a romantic date with Prudence at the cemetery where his Wolfman father, who apparently died a violent death at the hands of a hateful redneck lynch mob, is buried. After telling Prudence, "I only wish I could have been fortunate enough to meet you before I married her" and complaining about being forced into an arranged marriage with a woman he ultimately grew to love to hate, hopeless romantic

Lawrence passionately kisses his new lady friend, but the two perfectly matched lovebirds are soon interrupted by a creepy corpse-like old hag with an Eastern European accent named Petra (Eve Crosby, who later appeared in the 1999 Troma flick *Terror Firmer*) who rebukes them for hanging out at the graveyard after visiting hours and proclaims that the graves are “all of my children.” When Petra realizes who Lawrence really is, she warns him to go home because there will be a full moon that night, so the crypto-lycanthrope runs away as fast as he can so that he does not defile his precious new lover. Unfortunately, some other jealous monster will ultimately get to his unwitting sweetheart Prudence.

When Petra, who was apparently Lawrence’s belated father the Wolfman’s mistress for 15 years, comes by the Orlovsky home and blackmails Regina by threatening to reveal their family secret(s), the bitchy bloodsucker kills her by biting her on the neck and drinking her blood, but not before sadistically chopping her hands off by abruptly slamming the top of a treasure chest onto them. Before killing Petra, Regina learns that her husband has cheated on her with Prudence and she only becomes all the more enraged when the old hag rubs it in her face by remarking, “The wife is always the last to know.” Needless to say, Regina pays poor unsuspecting Prudence a visit and kills her by draining her of her vital fluids. Meanwhile, Lawrence comes home and tells his servants to pack everything and to get ready to go back to Europe because he killed Carl Root after turning into a werewolf and losing control of his temper. When Regina finally comes back home, she brags to Lawrence about killing his mistress Prudence, berates him for cheating on her, and projects her own thoughts by accusing him of wanting to kill her, to which he replies like a true spineless cuckold, “You’re wrong, I wouldn’t desert you after all these years.” Of course, being a hysterical and innately intemperate crazed cunt, Regina attacks Lawrence and both of them subsequently transform into their respective monster forms. While husband and wife attempt to strangle one another to death, a fire breaks out that kills every single person in the house, including the servants. In a charmingly tasteless twist ending, another exceedingly gay realtor (played by Joe Downing, who fittingly appeared in Milligan’s now-lost 1973 gay vampire flick *Dragula*) rents out the semi-burnt down house, which is being restored, for a cheap price to a super Teutonic-looking fellow named Baron von Frankenstein.

While plagued by crude makeup, sub-childish special effects, almost silent era style histrionic acting, and spastic direction involving the director’s signature ‘swirl camera’ technique taken to perversely pathological extremes, *Blood* is pure Milligan in the most complimentary sense and indeed a rather fitting introduction to the filmmaker’s oeuvre. Probably better than any of the gutter auteur’s other films, the film demonstrates the director’s unrivaled talent for maliciously molesting horror and monster movie genre conventions and molding them to fit his own wickedly wayward worldview. Indeed, for those who cherish Universal Monsters movies, *Blood* might prove to be an unnerving, if not

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uniquely unforgettable experience, as if a sub-literate American Jean Genet attempted to film a play about the forlorn children of Count Dracula and the Wolf Man in his damp, dark, and moldy basement using actors he cast from a thrift store while high on crystal meth and poppers. Pure and unadulterated celluloid sexual psychosis with the pleasantly perverse passion of 101 raving lovesick psychopaths, Milligan's film is true 'outsider art' as a completely authentic, unadulterated, and innately intemperate expression of the filmmaker's misbegotten anti-Oedipal being. Indeed, in many ways, *Blood*, like many of Milligan's other movies, is a rather incriminating film that would offer a virtual gold mine for any half-serious psychoanalyst, but one scene that particularly stuck out to me was when protagonist Lawrence Orlovsky states after killing Carl Root while in werewolf form, "I couldn't control my temper. I didn't want to do it." To me, that piece of seemingly insignificant dialogue seemed like a half-hearted attempt on Milligan's part to apologize (or at least an excuse) for his all around sadistic, bitchy, and callous behavior, which was probably the product of the emotional and physical abuse he suffered at the hands of his deranged and morbidly obese alcoholic mommy, who seemed to raise her son in such a cruel fashion that he ultimately grew up to become completely incapable of controlling his behavior or communicating with other people in any sort of rational, sensible, or respectful way. Certainly, filmmaking was a sort of therapy for his internal torment and as Greek-French playwright Antonin Artaud once wrote, "No one has ever written, painted, sculpted, modeled, built, or invented except literally to get out of hell." Of course, the literal and figurative monsters of *Blood* only get out of their personal hells after being literally burned alive, thus demonstrating the severity of Milligan's suffering and cynicism with life. Indeed, Milligan may have been one of the most technically inept auteur filmmakers who ever lived, but he understood the archetypal roots of monsters better than the modern 'masters of horror' like John Landis, Joe Dante, Tobe Hooper, Stuart Gordon, etc.

-Ty E

BLACK XXX-MAS

Pieter Van Hees (1999)

Feeling more like a cynical Scrooge this year than ever before, I decided to forgo my annual viewing of *A Christmas Story* (1983) and instead hunted for the most callously cynical and just plain fucked up Christmas film that I could find sans Santa slasher flicks, which ultimately led me to a Belgian short of all things with the blatantly intentionally trashy title *Black XXX-Mas* (1999) directed by Flemish auteur Pieter Van Hees (*Dirty Mind*, *Waste Land*). Judging by the title, one might assume Van Hees' film is an interracial porn parody of Bob Clark's classic Canadian proto-slasher flick *Black Christmas* (1974) and even though it does feature some revolting jungle fever scenarios, it is actually an absurdly grotesque and sadistically sardonic anti-avant-garde molestation of the classic European fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* featuring a nasty and rather nihilistic Nordic take on blaxploitation cinema and set in a decidedly dystopian Belgium of the near future where whites have become a sheltered and soulless minority and Santa Claus is a drunken negro robber who, instead of leaving presents, takes more than just milk and cookies on Xmas eve, especially while lurking around the nice and cozy homes of rich crackers with fireplaces. A film that was made as part of the relatively unknown Belgian film movement 'Trauma 99' that was started as a reaction against the patently pretentious Danish 'meta-realist' film movement *Dogme 95* started by Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg that went completely against the grain of the European arthouse world by advocating the use of gratuitous special effects whenever possible, *Black XXX-Mas* is pure and unadulterated celluloid trash with an aesthetically and thematically iconoclastic punch that features an intentionally artificial and plastically flashy aesthetic that makes the \$100 million explosions of Michael Bay seem quite 'avant-garde.' Although I did not realize it until after watching it, I was shocked to learn that the short was directed by the same Flemish filmmaker who directed the arthouse 'folk horror' flick *Linkeroever* (2008) aka *Left Bank*, which is a fairly serious and elegantly paced work with ancient European pagan themes that hardly seems like it was assembled by the same kind of guy that would make culturally pessimistic Xmas-themed black comedies featuring kraut cannibal cops, teenage mulatto cokeheads, and a colored crook Kris Kringle. Opening with the words "Warning: An Exploitation Tale," *Black XXX-Mas* is the way exploitation films should be as a short and sweet assault of audacious aesthetic aberrance, unwavering moral bankruptcy, and keenly kitschy carnage in a work that exploits every unsettling social plague and rubs it in the viewer's face with the utmost malevolence, thus forcing the viewer to confront an unfortunate reality that they would never be exposed to in any Hollywood hack piece.

Opening with the *Dogme-95*-mocking inter-title, "This certificate proves that BLACK XXX-MAS was made according to the rules of TRAUMA 99,"

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Black XXX-Mas then introduces 'God' (Manou Kersting)—an obscenely goofy-looking dude with a white leather-fag mustache that almost resembles a negro sporting 'whiteface' due to his somewhat primitive facial features—sitting on a fancy souped-up hammock in an all-white ethereal pleasure-dome playing a fairly cheap looking portable video game system (aka 'God's Gameboy'), which contains planet earth and ultimately reveals the setting of the film on its screen, the 'Urban Jungle,' where the discernibly sadistic master of the universe manipulates humans into doing mostly bad and degenerate things. From there, the viewer is introduced to 'Little Red' (Rochelle Gadd)—the mulatto progeny of a beer-chugging black career criminal and a haggard-looking old white slut that seems to suffer from estrogen deprivation—and as she narrates to the viewer with a trashy lower-class British accent in a fairy tale sort of way, "Once upon a time, there was a thing called reality. Now, in reality, there are no good guys or bad guys; there are just bad guys and guys that are worse. Well...that's what my dad says." Little Red's daddy is 'Black Santa' (Trinidadian actor Don Warrington, who appeared in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* (1996)) and he might be a ruthless robber, but he knows that the multicultural ghetto is no place for anyone, least of all little girls, and as he tells his daughter after seeing her reflection in his beer can as she attempts to sneak out at night in a red mini-skirt, "IT'S A FUCKING JUNGLE OUT THERE!!!!" After watching some trashy TV and drinking some cheap canned beer, Black Santa heads out to rob some rich white folks on Christmas eve, which gives Little Red the opportunity to escape out of her apartment window and enter 'The Forest' (as advertised on a beat-up car) where she is sexually harassed by seriously scuzzy black and Arab gangsters while going to buy some cocaine from a slimy Chinaman. When Little Red gives the oriental dope dealer the cash, he picks it up with his teeth and then proceeds to grab the miscegenated teen's derriere as she goes to grab her bag of coke from a clothesline (!), so she gives the sneaky slant-eyed chink a nice big karate kick to the gut, aggressively declares to the yellow man, "don't fuck with me" and "the customer is always right," and goes on her merry way.

Everything seems great after Little Red gets her dope and she celebrates by lighting a big fat joint, but the one-lady party soon ends when a fascist cop with a phony German accent named Wolfgang Schutzwald (also played by Manou Kersting)—a fiendish fellow whose surname ironically translates as 'protector of the woods'—pulls up in a typically ridiculous-looking smart car and begins feeling up the poor little half-black girl after she fails to show ID. When someone takes photos of Wolfgang (or as he tells Little Red, 'Wolfy' for short) while he is grabbing Little Red's milk chocolate ass and tits, he decides to unload his service gun on them and soon discovers he killed about half a dozen female teenage tourists. After destroying the film in the dead tourists' cameras, Wolfy states to Little Red, "If you haven't seen anything tonight, I promise to stop bonking you in the ass," but she reacts rather melodramatically like blacks tend to do in

such precarious situations by threatening to send him to jail and hitting him, so he rationally responds by knocking her out and eating her, stating as he begins gorging on her fingers, "Well, I'm afraid I have to remove the last body of evidence." Indeed, Wolfy is a sort of postmodern lycanthrope and he seems to have a special taste for dark meat, but unbeknownst to him, so does his wifey. Indeed, while Wolfy was eating Little Red Riding Hood in the hood, Black Santa was robbing his apartment in the white bourgeois side of town and in the middle of gathering up expensive stuff to steal, Mrs. Wolfy came out, saw the giant negro in the red suit, and got so hopelessly aroused that she decided to take off her robe and let the spade stranger do whatever he wanted to with her. Naturally, as a proud black man, Black Santa isn't about to turn down a fully willing white woman, especially when she makes it so easy for him. Unbeknownst to Mrs. Wolfy, Black Santa knocked out here prepubescent son when he had the gall to come out and ask Choco-Claus if he was Santa while the thieving soul brother was just getting started loading his sack with stolen merchandise.

When Wolfy gets home, he happily shouts "honey, I'm home," but when he notices his wife giving the big black buck in a Santa outfit a blowjob, he yells "oh my gut," pulls out his service pistol, and begins unloading bullets everywhere, symbolically shooting his wedding portrait in the process. While attempting to run away from the flying bullets, unclad Mrs. Wolfy turns around and reveals 'she' is actually a he, a s/he curiously has a cock between her legs, though Wolfgang and Black Santa don't seem to mind. In an attempt to stop her homicidal hubby from killing her new black beau, Mrs. Wolfy jumps in front of Black Santa and is ultimately sprayed with a fatal storm of bullets. While Wolfy stares with a shocked look on his face at his beloved's bloody bare-skinned corpse, Black Santa decides to take decisive action, grabs an assault rifle that is conveniently hanging over the fireplace, and literally blows the cannibalistic cop's head off after firing a single shot. Meanwhile, Black Santa's wanton old wench wife calls a male whore service and 'orders' a swarthy fellow named 'The Italian Stallion', who soon rolls to her door on roller-skates sporting assless leather-chaps and proceeds to show her some Mediterranean carnal magic. After killing Wolfy, Black Santa hears the voice of his daughter coming from inside the corpse of the dead cop, so he rips open the fallen policeman's mangled corpse and discovers his little girl Little Red inside. After telling Little Red, "I love you, darling" and groping her bloody breasts, the two head home and sing Christmas songs with Mrs. Black Santa under their Christmas tree where they have placed Wolfy's star-shaped police badge at the top in a pseudo-sentimental scene mocking the idea of a traditional 'white' Christmas. In the end, God, who has two bitches by his side, gets tired of playing his Gameboy and declares, "you know there are still people that say I don't do shit for poor people. Life is a bitch."

Personally, I have more sympathy for cannibalistic kraut cops than naughty negro robbers in ghettoized Santa Claus outfits, but I enjoyed Black XXX-Mas

BLACK XXX-MAS

all the same, as it dares to depict the truly dystopian Europe of the near future and laugh about it in an ultra-cynical and culturally pessimistic fashion that lets the viewer know that auteur Pieter Van Hees has no doubt in his mind that technocracy, miscegenation, multiculturalism, and black 'culture' will not only lead to the death of the timeless European holiday of Christmas and fairy tales like Little Red Riding Hood, but his nation in general. Of course, 'death' might be too extreme a word, as it seems more like a defilement and bastardization of Xmas and European culture, just as Black Santa's daughter Little Red is the product of a mongrelization of Europid genetics and just as Black XXX-Mas is an ugly celluloid bastard that borrows cinematic ingredients from everything from old school blaxploitation flicks to the most superlatively soulless and artificial-looking action-packed CGI-ridden Hollywood blockbusters. Naturally, the difference between Van Hees' film and the mostly worthless works that it pays (anti)homage to is that the auteur intentionally utilized (or 'exploited,' hence why it is truly "an exploitation tale" as advertised at the beginning) these conspicuously crappy conventions and clichés to such an excessive and exaggerated degree that there is no doubt that the director created the film as a sort of radical and even nihilistic reaction to what he sees as the degradation of the art of cinema and culture in general as a result of a largely American/globalist influence. Indeed, with his later feature film *Left Bank*, Van Hees proved that he not only had the capacity to create something serious and even beautiful, but that he has a true deep sense of Flemish identity as reflected in the film's traditional European pagan themes that ultimately establish a link between the ancient past and the present in its depiction of rebirth and reincarnation, among other things. Of course, in its devilishly humorous depiction of a ruthless god who literally plays with human lives for entertainment and who less than sentimentally declares "life is a bitch," Black XXX-Mas could also be described as a piece of atheistic pomo paganism of the post-Odinist sort that reminds the viewer that traditional Christian beliefs and merry Christmases have become obsolete in an increasingly globalized multicultural world. Of course, whatever way you look at it, Van Hees' short is a fiercely funny antidote to that soulless consumerist joke that Christmas and the so-called 'holiday season' has become.

-Ty E

LEFT BANK

Pieter Van Hees (2008)

Sadly, I can't say I am too fond of many contemporary films from Europe. It seems that most films nowadays from Europa suffer from the same pathetic and bland "we are the world" globalist feeling that are so typical of Hollywood films. Sorry, but if I wanted to see an Arab wearing a turban, I don't need to see them in a French (like the wretched filthy Paris, je t'aime) or German film. An American intercity cab driver is an easier way to see this anti-cultural phenomenon. Every once in a while I will be surprised by a film from Europe that actually has some type of cultural and nationalist feel to it. The Flemish "horror" film *Left Bank* is one of those so rare contemporary European films that is worthy of high praise.

Left Bank follows in the wonderful horror tradition of *The Wicker Man* (1973) old thyme European pagan themes. Also like *The Wicker Man*, *Left Bank* follows a confused protagonist as they start to uncover the ancient beliefs and practices of their ancestors. Upon first to watch *Left Bank* (which I knew nothing about), I expected some type of pretentious existentialist garbage so typical of many European films today. As *Left Bank* unravels, the film becomes progressively engulfing and addictive. It would not be at all falt to call the film merely a "horror" film as the majority of braindead populous horror fans probably wouldn't make it 30 minutes into the film. Being from Belgium, the *Left Bank* also has subtitles which are guaranteed to ward off fans of something like say *The Ruins* or *Saw V*.

The protagonist of *Left Bank* is young competing runner named Marie who is slightly anti-social. After finding out she has to stop running and miss a much anticipated tournament in Portugal due to problems with her woman parts, Marie goes into a depression. Her emotions changed overnight, however, when she hooks up with a cool guy named Bob and they start having sex in every angle and place in Bob's fancy apartment. Marie almost instantly moves into the apartment which happens to be located in the dreaded *Left Bank*. Great sex can only last so long as Marie becomes obsessed with a mystery concerning a young girl who disappeared from the apartment that Marie inhabits.

Marie eventually finds out that the apartment she now lives in also happens to be located in a place where pre-Christian human sacrifices took place. Marie's eccentric mother "feels" the evilness of the apartment and naturally wants her daughter to move out. Marie, however, is stubborn and insists on uncovering the mysteries of *Left Bank*. Marie also receives a knee injury that gets uglier the more she realizes she has gotten herself in too deep. To say anymore about the film would be to give too much away.

Europe seems to be having a trend of quality and artistically merited horror films. The Swedish film *Let The Right One In* was a surprisingly good new take on the vampire film. *Left Bank* is an ambitious and original horror film that

LEFT BANK

also deserves the acclaim that Let the Right One In has received. Unfortunately, I think that Left Bank might be a little too confusing for the typical American film goer. I am sure that the Europeans will have enough common sense to make sequels to these films unlike the typical coke snorting American producer.

-Ty E

THE PROTECTOR

Prachya Pinkaew (2005) Note: For Future Reference, This Review Covers the Tom-Yum-Goong Feature, Not the Heavily Cut American Version.

With the relatively small splurge of Dragon Dynasty titles being examined and reviewed, I turn my attention to one of the films that had me hyped for some time. I remember watching promo videos for The Protector on YouTube and feeling incredibly throttled, past adrenaline and Internet hype. The same synthetic boost has recrudesced in the form of a promo reel that first appeared on Twitch film. The film is Ong Bak 2 and this time Tony Jaa has moved past Pinkaew to further his name and drop the lame excuse of a lacking story. Although Pinkaew embraced the feud between the debut director Tony Jaa, even he should admire the amount of martial arts diversity that Jaa is dabbling in.

Animal companionship is a wonderful thing. I fondly recall one of my personal favorite retro video games for the Nintendo Entertainment System. The title was Blaster Master and much like The Protector, you star as a warrior on a mission to retrieve an animal very dear to you. I reminisce constantly on the ambient electronic key shifts that make up the Blaster Master opening score. The plot revolves around a Boy and his frog, who happens to jump onto a power generator and feeds off radiation thus grows to an enormous size and burrows into the ground. Once you enter the chasm, you find a futuristic space-tank waiting for you. While The Protector doesn't travel into the realms of the unreal, the source has a similar heart. Currently, Tony Jaa has subjectively been placed on a high-seated pedestal for me. While my personal love for martial arts stretches from the glories of the chambers of Shaolin and the merciless form of Wu-Tang, to Donnie Yen and Sammo Hung, that ultimately ends in guilty pleasures of Wesley Snipes in the original Blade film; I'd like to think I have a diverse taste. Hell, combat in general enralls me. I wouldn't be considered a necessarily violent person but I won't deny vicious thoughts. Tony Jaa to me is that angry rock music teenagers listen to to extinguish their angst temporarily. But for me, Tony Jaa just makes me want to kick ass even more. Reflecting his culture & religion as painfully demonstrated in Ong-Bak: The Thai Warrior, Jaa tramples his opponents while brazenly wearing and promoting symbols of his culture. He makes his traditions "cool" and "badass" by beating thugs to death with face-cracking Muay Thai moves that prove daunting even to a 6'7 man child. The effort in which he provides do defeat wave after wave can articulately recall to the side-scrolling beat-em-up series of Streets of Rage for the Sega Genesis. Now that I ponder on the thought, much of Tony Jaa's The Protector can be compared to old-school video games. Truth be told, The Protector is a step up from Ong-Bak in several distinguishable categories. For one, the fighting is more extreme and more frequent. Tony Jaa is not a household name yet. For his own brand of self-product placement included in Ong-Bak, Jaa would continuously

THE PROTECTOR

do over-the-top stunts in slow motion just to wow you. They don't fit in with the background really but watch a man with flaming legs do intense acrobatics is a very accommodating thing. Following by foot is the orchestrated score created by none other than the hip hop guru, The RZA. For those of you who aren't blissfully educated in the subcultures of rap, the RZA is the creator of the enamorous Wu-Tang Clan and an accomplished proprietor of most Asian cinema related releases. Other than scoring martial arts films and black-themed samurai cartoons (Afro Samurai), the RZA grants many lost kung-fu films DVD releases in several box sets and bargain bin collections. For this I am eternally grateful. Sides from that, he appears in several films as a sickeningly thin black power character, ala Derailed. His performance along with Vincent Cassel's makes the film. Back to the subject of the score, other than a few popping rhythmic tunes, the rest is everyday culture-infused squabble that only bares a soul to prevent distraction. The Protector features an incredibly awkward plot point of a Thai man's love for his elephants. Given the raw Lion King treatment, The Protector features seldom emotional depth and is only accentuated by the DVD cover art showing several explosions and a bleeding shirtless man. Had they attempted to create a tender backdrop to the disc, the film would have fallen flat on its face. Expect nothing other than pleasurable violence and Tony Jaa breaking over 50 henchmen in half. The Protector is as big of an action wet dream as it sounds.

-mAQ

GANDU

Qaushiq Mukherjee (2010)

It seems with the culture-distorting and deracinating power of globalization and Americanization, India has finally caught up to the late-1960s American cinema underground, at least if one were to judge solely by the independent 'anti-Bollywood rap musical' *Gandu* (2010) aka *Asshole* directed by controversial Bengali auteur 'Q' aka Qaushiq Mukherjee (*Love in India, Tasher Desh*). Paraded around the world, including Yale University, the 2010 South Asian International Film Festival in New York City, and the 2011 Berlin International Film Festival, among various other places, as a revolutionary work due to its innately transgressive and subversive nature as a rare Indian film that features unsimulated sex, hardcore drug use, raunchy anti-social rap music, and various other forms of 'western' post-counter-culture cosmopolitan liberal degeneracy, *Gandu* is an intentionally juvenile work with a potent punk rock spirit about a young loser Bengali graffiti 'artist' and amateur rapper who lives in the trash-ridden and poverty-stricken bowels of Kolkata. Like any pretentious auteur, Mr. Q opted for shooting most of *Gandu* in black-and-white film stock (though he actually used a high-definition Canon EOS 7D Single-lens reflex camera), which admittedly gives the film a more gritty and timeless feel, but also makes it rather reek of deluded self-importance. In a September 2012 interview with Travis Carwford for *Artsploitation* films, director Q described his reasons for directing the film as follows: "GANDU was born out of a hunger that became a challenge, to make a film without the boundaries of morality that my society has built around us. To be able to go back to the basics, and make the film without virtually any support system barring my immediate resources. The idea of working on a rapper's story was on my mind for some time, and also the image of a rickshawala. I wanted to make a punk film – pungent, noisy, and dirty, something that is prohibited in Indian society." And, indeed, Q was not lying as the film was not only shot on a miniscule budget with only eight crew members and no official script, but *Gandu* was also banned in India, thus demonstrating that Indian cinema has come a long way since Jean Renoir directed *The River* (1951) aka *Le Fleuve* and helped launch the careers of both Indian auteur Satyajit Ray and his cinematographer Subrata Mitra. Indeed, with its lack of narrative structure/plot, decidedly degenerate social outcast protagonist and equally debased supporting characters, *Cinéma vérité*-like interviews with real-life folks, pointless *Chelsea Girls*-esque split-screen scenes, patently pessimistic depiction of capitalist urban life, and less than puritanical portrayal of sex (and mostly decadent/dysfunctional sex at that), *Gandu* is—for better or worse—the first anti-Hollywood/anti-Bollywood Warholian Indian flick, thus making it a truly revolutionary work worthy of cinephile attention.

Gandu aka *Asshole* (Anubrata Basu) is an asshole born from a loser lineage

GANDU

of perennial assholes (or so his enemies say) as the bastard son of a busy Bengali whore who merely wanders around his superlatively shitty city all day and starts all sorts of nihilistic ruckus, essentially acting like a social retard for social retard's sake. To financially support himself and not starve to death, Gandu steals money from his overweight mother Kamalika's (Kamalika Banerjee) boyfriend Dasbabu (Shilajeet Majumdar) while the two lurid love turds are having radically repellant sex. According to Gandu, "An asshole life is a fucking asshole life," and to keep himself semi-sane and cope with the patently pathetic nature of his gutter-bound existence, the young Bengali bastard composes a crappy musical cocktail of punk/rap with juvenile lyrics like, "In a dark corner of your room I lurk. You feel love I feel like puking. Your sins burn you, You sit up. Petrified of losing your youth. Some fuck will run away with it. I've seen a lot of swines around. I sit and think in the dark corner of your room. When will the mask FALL OFF YOUR FACE?". Indeed, Gandu is no Nietzsche, nor even a Tupac, but his angst is authentic and his art and dreams all that he has and thus he uses them to fill the gaping void in his sub-proletarian soul. One day, Gandu is walking around like a jackass and bumps into a fellow dreamer and Bruce Lee-wannabe named Ricksha (Joyraj Bhattacharya) who smacks him around like a little bitch for getting in his way and having an arrogant attitude. Gandu must be a majorly masochistic fellow because he has a dream that night about being buggered by Ricksha and the two become best friends in a mostly platonic fashion shortly thereafter. Among other things, the two chaps rap for impoverished child audiences in seemingly war-torn ghettos, smoke heroin, watch pornography, and buy bootleg Bruce Lee VCDs from China. Eventually, Gandu is caught stealing and watching his mother screwing her boyfriend, so he and Ricksha smoke some heroin and hit the road and go on a sort of drug-induced spiritual pilgrimage where they are given a strange drug by a Sadhu and a poet tells the rapper he is the star hero of a film (thus comprising a rather bizarre film-within-a-film sequence). Not long after, Gandu magically wins the '50,000 jackpot' in the local lottery and goes to find a "nice girl to fuck" aka a prostitute (portrayed Rii Sen, who plays two other female roles in the film, including the Goddess Kali), which he does in the sole color scene featured in Gandu. After gaining carnal knowledge from the amorous 'Angel,' Gandu decides to record a five-song rap demo as he dreams of one day getting a "Red Carpet welcome on the Streets of New York." With the Goddess Kali teasing and molesting him in the dark, Gandu somehow rises from the Bengali rubble and rabble and becomes a big rap/punk star; or does he?!? Indeed, in the drug-and-delusion-addled world of Gandu, nothing is as it seems.

Featuring a culturally mongrelized Bengali rap-punk soundtrack, unsimulated scenes of little Bengali boys busting little loads and a fully unclad Goddess Kali playing with young boys, and an all-around westernized take of urban Bengali living, Gandu has the grand distinction of being the most degenerate Indian film

ever made, but, of course, that was auteur Q's goal. Of course, Gandu also stands out in that it is a Bengali film as opposed to Hindi flick, which director Q put in perspective when he stated in an interview, "India has hundreds of cultures, languages, religions, and philosophies. Every region, or state, has its unique history and a strong sense of identity. Hindi is technically our national language, and has northwestern Indian origins. Bengal is in the east, and has a very different approach to life. Currently, under the umbrella of India, the homogenization process has made urban life fairly similar, but the basic differences exist. It would be politically incorrect to begin this subject of difference in our cultures, because I will vehemently proclaim the Bengali culture to be the best in the world, full of ancient insight and pagan values, modern intellectual abilities and a desire to be strikingly different from anyone else, but then, I am a Bengali." Indeed, despite its anarchistic, anti-social, and iconoclastic essence, Gandu has an unmistakable 'Bengali *völkisch*' feel that seems to betray its overall 'message.' Indeed, as someone who has been to enough punk concerts and has seen enough erotic flicks to have nil interest in seeing such things appear in a bastardized form in an Indian film, I think that Gandu's most potent and preternatural qualities lie in its dark mysticism and surrealist imagery, especially in regard to those scenes featuring Kali. Oftentimes compared to Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996) and the films of Gaspar Noé, Gandu certainly does seem like a less violent Bengali take on *I Stand Alone* (1998), albeit with a more spiritual and, in turn, conflicted, view of the rotten third world urban hellhole it portrays. Whether looked at as a piece of locally-directed Bengali 'poverty-porn,' culturally-mongrelized punk-rap musical, Indian arthouse flick, a postmodern Indian response to Hesse's *Siddhartha*, and/or a revolutionary landmark in Indian cinema, it would be simply xenophilic puffery to describe Gandu as a 'masterpiece' in any sense of the word, yet it has at least inspired me to keep an eye on the future of Indian cinema, which is no small accomplishment.

-Ty E

RUBBER
RUBBER

Quentin Dupieux (2010)

You're just as likely to prevent a natural disaster as you are to understand the driving force behind Quentin Dupieux's *Rubber*. Known through and through-out as a film dictating a sentient, psycho-kinetic tire on a killing spree, *Rubber* is that damn iconic just from the teaser trailer alone. When I had seen the trailer around a year ago I had questioned some of the segments in the trailer. "Why are there chairs methodically placed on a desert road? Why is there a small group of people wielding binoculars?" Starting out *Rubber* on a high note, Quentin (Mr. Oizo to those familiar with his *Lamb's Anger*) simply tosses a "no reason" into our lap and throws a police officer into a trunk of an automobile and drives off into the distance. It is as simple as that, folks. *Rubber* takes pride in its off-kilter insanity yet it represents a force so strong that it is indeed impossible to shrug the film off, whether you enjoyed it or not. *Rubber* is quite potent in its form of contemporary avant-garde. Let's not forget the soundtrack created by Mr. Oizo himself with the help of Justice's Gaspard Augé. It's worthy of any Ed Banger aficionado with that rare disembodied appeal that works as not just thematic sauce for the images, but as an incredible project altogether.

I would consider myself a sizable fan of Mr. Oizo's work. Most fittingly, my favorite track that he has produced is the tentatively titled *Bruce Willis is Dead*. It is a track that I've committed to playing if that fateful day were ever to come. When I had heard of the film *Rubber*, I made no connection between a psychic tire and the French electro house producer. When it finally dawned on me, Quentin being Oizo's slave name, I was shocked and thrilled at the same time. It is always a pleasant treat watching someone excel in a particular medium only to toggle forms, no matter if it turns out to be a classic case of "Don't quit your day job." *Rubber* is quite the opposite and it surpasses even that when traces of the electronic eccentricity of Oizo come gasping for breath through the screen. The lead character, Robert, is a special kind of tire; brandless, the puppet master presumes. Who I refer to as the puppet master is the sheriff figure who leads the charade, the film within a film, within a film. Ties get severed and origins unnecessary as Dupieux wheels us around on an utterly insensible film. *Rubber* is a batty creation, incomprehensibly blind, perhaps even to its own origin. This is why *Rubber* rubs off with such exclusive wit and esotericism. It's the definition of a pet project and I'm amazed that something like this could even have to gall to request funding. I'd imagine that Dupieux put forth most of the money on this production. Unless of course *Rubber*'s producer is a nerd, in which case, more power to him.

Rubber takes a strange turn once the post-post-meta elaboration begins. A group of individuals are called to a dune overlooking a Californian desert. Given binoculars, a member of the group, a small boy, quickly quips "I hope it's not

a silent film!" So right off the bat normal conventions are dismissively tossed out the proverbial window and a sheen keen to absurdist methods is layered evenly. What occurs from here spreads to plots of poisoning and trope-bashing demonstrations of Dupieux's authority on set. Some of us might want Rubber to progress, maybe flesh out a tad differently from its willed path but Dupieux reminds us who exactly is in charge--for the masochist in us all. Had Rubber been a short 20 minute film like several critics suggest then the sparkling after-taste, well, wouldn't exist. It would have been an experience to sleep off while you arise, continuing about your ritualistic day of instant ramen and cheap beer. I intend to not flesh out some of the more disconcerting aspects of Rubber for the integrity of this picture means as much to it as blood does to us. No iconoclastic remarks could harm Rubber's cemented reputation as "that killer tire film" for Quentin anticipated such and placed his film firmly on high ground. Rubber is a film I recommend to every soul because whether or not they enjoy isn't the case for recommendation. It is the fact that opinion will be so bewildering and eschewed that the only relative comparison to the result would be that of a riot.

-mAQ

HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN
HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN

R.J. Kizer (1988)

Rowdy Roddy Piper; This name about sums up the level of seriousness in the film. This wrestler plays a character named Sam Hell. Don't be fooled, he isn't as badass as his name implies, but i didn't say he wasn't a pimp. In a world full of infertility after a nuclear attack, babies start springing up from the sexual trail Sam left behind. Forced by a government division called MedTech, Hell must journey into Frogtown to rescue female hostages and knock em' up. Hell Comes to Frogtown takes the theme of Escape from New York, with the forced government work and the consequences for saying no. This politically-sparked maneuver fits well with the controversy of the U.S. Draft. Forced labor is rarely a good thing, nor a promising one. Hell Comes to Frogtown is laden with a comic book feel. The quirkiness of the characters allows the film to stretch and pace evenly. This is all thanks to the Howard the Duck-esque special effects. Infertility is a nightmare that was recently explored in Children of Men. No doubt, Children of Men is the greater film and would be near perfect had the pregnant carrier been a Negro. That disgusting cast choice was a bold move as how the birth rate for Africans is huge. Multiculturalism is a tactic that most contemporary directors in the mainstream use in their arsenal. This project was later granted a 1.5 million dollar budget and switched to 35mm. Despite having the backings of Roger Corman, the studio execs weren't ballsy enough to have nudity or gore. What makes Frogtown so much damn fun is the backfired attempt at making Rowdy Roddy Piper into a Hollywood badass. While this film did bomb, it was resurrected as a cult classic; a title it does deserve. Frogs have never looked so slimy. They are presented with low guttural voices and a fascination for dancing white women. This individual scene has to do with a Frogman getting an erection and calls it "The Three Snakes" I can only imagine horrible images in my head so i thank god everyday that i didn't have to see that. Hell Comes to Frogtown is hilarious, ridiculous, and good-spirited. Avoid the sequels at all costs. Any sequel with Roddy Piper is trash. This film could have used some wrestling moves against Frogs though.

-mAQ

CLOSET LAND

Radha Bharadwaj (1991) *Closet Land* is a film about torture. Don't get this confused in with the pointless films that show other ethnicities torturing white devils, this one lies within the mind. The film is backed with two actors, equally amazing. There is no other characters outside the tight, limited space reminiscent to the claustrophobia of *Cube*.

When i think of proper political films, only a few spring to mind; *Arlington Road* is one of the more narcissistic ones. The plot concerns a person (Alan Rickman) confining a woman (Madeleine Stowe) who is believed to hide political propaganda in her children's books in order to subliminally mold them to resist the government. With a plot that speaks of no depth or details to it, it goes surprisingly far. It's a neat little political gem that causes you to think and pay attention to every move this sadistic interrogator makes. You are unsure of who the real victim is, most of the runtime. Whether it be Rickman or Stowe, neither of them have a say in the matter. The one thing i can truly applaud the film for, is it's incredible use of sounds. Of course, Rickman shines as the oppressor. The film ends with a blurb stating the percentage of citizens being wrongly and cruelly tortured & interrogated by their own government. Statistics like these rattle you to the core. The film speaks against propaganda, though itself can be seen as anti-government propaganda. I wouldn't put it past India-born director Radha Bharadwaj. Her feminist touch to this film shows greatly, and only weightens the serious tone down to an almost halt. The ending is one that you can never be certain. Is it just another cruel technique to make her a victim of her conscious? *Closet Land* is an incredibly effective and tense, brooding thriller. It showers light on inhumane torture and interrogation but relies too much on gender and it's own propaganda needs.

-Maq

THE OPENING OF MISTY BEETHOVEN
THE OPENING OF MISTY BEETHOVEN

Radley Metzger (1976)

When it comes to the ‘great’ works of the Golden Age of Porn, chances are megalomaniacal Hebrew pornstar/pornographer Jamie Gillis (Water Power, New Wave Hookers) is featured in it performing some ungodly sexual act on some seemingly naïve goy gals and/or guys and such is certainly the same, at least to some extent, in regard to Radley Metzger’s *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (1976) aka *Misty Beethoven*; a loose (in more ways than one) and lecherous erotic adaption of Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion* (1912), as well as the hokey Hollywood musical adaption *My Fair Lady* (1964) directed by George Cukor. A work following a psychopathically charismatic and wantonly wisecracking sexologist of the discernibly Semitic persuasion who in his unwavering narcissism believes he has the sexual skills to turn a prudish and erotically challenged wasp prostitute named *Misty Beethoven* (Constance Money) into the most wild, wicked, and desired whore of the posh pussy-peddling sort, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, whether intentional or not on the director’s part, as a whole, makes for an audacious allegory for the Hebraic influence over eroticizing and oversexualizing the Christian Occidental with its Semitic sexologist as the suave Svengali teacher of a neurotic Nordic babe who, quite symbolically, has the same Germanic surname as one of the greatest musical composers of human history, thus making its inclusion of three major Western cities (Paris, Rome, New York City) all the more meaningful and perversely penetrating. Directed by Radley Metzger (using the pseudonym ‘Henry Paris’), a man who got his start in the filmmaking world editing trailers for Janus films (the parent company of *The Criterion Collection*) of François Truffaut and Ingmar Bergman films but would become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, artsy fartsy pornographers who ever lived, and starring Jamie Gillis, the actor and director apparently had a connection that transcended the mere obsession of defiling blonde beastesses of the super sexy Shiksa sort. As Benson Hurst wrote in the liner notes of the *DISTRIBPIX INC.* DVD release of *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, “Radley seemed to have a soft spot for Jamie. Though they hadn’t seen each other in years, they lived in the same city and would often ask after each other. They seemed content to conduct an invisible dance around each other, like two old Jewish compadres not wanting to break the magic spell of their separation.” Unsurprisingly, Constance Money (born Susan Jensen) – a woman who went from an A+ high school student and cheerleader turned a woman who had one of the most seen vaginas in the world (her stint in porn was mainly to help pay for her college tuition) – has less than fond memories of *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* due to the fact she made virtually nil money (she claims to have never signed a release nor got paid and hated Metzger) from starring in one of the most monetarily and critically successful porn flicks ever made,

but also because she started an off-screen romantic fling with co-star Jamie Gillis that got a bit too sexually violent for her taste, thus acting in stark contrast to her character's 'last laugh' at a former sex sage turned cuckold.

As Constance Money once stated regarding her experience with starring in *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, "Misty" is a good movie because it is real. The incidents in the film were happening to me at the time, especially my relationship with Jamie [Jamie Gillis]. Henry Paris [director Radley Metzger] made me that character. He told me I couldn't act, so I fit the part." Indeed, as a woman who does not know how to apply lipstick without looking like a crack-addicted ghetto drag queen and soullessly advertises that she accepts compensation for her costly cunt in the form of credit card via an especially anti-erotic American Express t-shirt, Miss Misty looks and acts like a dead dud in bed would, but things change when super suave sexologist Dr. Seymour Love (Jamie Gillis) – who clearly studied at a different university than Magnus Hirschfeld and Alfred Kinsey due to his rampant heterosexuality and hypnotic playboy personality – takes up the challenge of rigorously training her to be the most sexy and salacious streetwalker in the world after seeing her give a haphazard handjob to the Napoleon Bonaparte (whose less than bold boner is almost pulled apart, but he inevitably gets off) in a Paris movie theater. A libidinous lady's man of the dually 'cocky' and devilishly charming conman sort, Dr. Love has a feisty female assistant named Geraldine Rich (Jacqueline Beudant) to help give Misty a more female yet fiery touch in the art of love in a rather rigorous sexual training that involves facials, blowjobs, handjobs, sodomy, girl-on-girl action, and just about everything besides standard vanilla sex because, after all, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* stars Jamie Gillis; a semen demon of the bisexual, sexually versatile kind. As her guru of lascivious yet loveless sensuality, Dr. Love has Misty get some practical experience of the eclectically erotic sort, including giving hope to the homosexually hopeless by helping an impotent make-up-wearing art dealer (played by fashion model turned gay porn star Casey Donovan; star of Wakefield Poole's 1971 gay porn hit *Boys in the Sand*) of the poofster persuasion to achieve orgasm via juicy vaginal stimulation and performing a virtual magic act by causing a trio of dapperly dressed butlers to achieve orgasms simultaneously while standing in unison. After evolving into a masterful madam of the job, be it of the blow, hand, rim or otherwise, Misty steps things up by competing in a carnal knowledge contest at a wild porn party at the home of famed pornographer publisher Lawrence Layman (played by Ras Kean aka Ras King and modeled after Hugh Hefner) so she can be creamed and eventually crowned with the glorious title of "Goldenrod Girl." Needless to say, Misty wins via her wild wantonness and develops an ego larger than the cocks she routinely polishes and thus turns the tables on Doc Love, leaving his dick in the dust as a professional playboy turned pathetic pushover who hopelessly lusts after a stupid Shiksa that he transformed into a virtual baroness of blowjobs and buggery.

THE OPENING OF MISTY BEETHOVEN

Despite being one of the most strikingly stylized and elegantly assembled porn flicks ever created, a relative 'honor' no doubt, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* is oftentimes an exceedingly anti-erotic celluloid affair that would probably mostly appeal to sadomasochistic lesbians of the bourgeois persuasion, as well as cultivated cuckolds who prefer to be on the receiving end when it comes to copulation. In short, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, although flagrantly farcical, is, like a good percentage of porno flicks, a fiercely fetishistic work that, in terms of its professed 'eroticism,' will mostly appeal to the sexually dysfunctional, hence its debauched lace curtain setting among the rich and sexually powerless. Naturally, it takes a proletarian pussy to whip these blue-balled, bluebloods into shape. Probably most famous/infamous for an extraordinarily emasculating "pegging" scene involving a butch bourgeois bitch with a dyke haircut named Barbara (played by then 46-year-old Gloria Leonard), Misty, and quasi-poof publisher Lawrence Layman (it has been said by his former bunny concubines that the real-life Mr. Hefner needs a steady diet of Viagra and gay porn to "rise to the occasion"); a fellow that is apparently powerful in the pornographic print world but whose idea of a good time is being anally penetrated by a social-climbing hooker. *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* must have gotten some people hot and bothered, especially among passive men, as few adult films, even of the 'porn chic' sort, have developed so much prestige to the point of being the closest X-rated work to crossover into the mainstream and being taken seriously by film critics and academics. On top of Radley Metzger winning the award for "Best Director" from the Adult Film Association of America for *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, along with the film winning "Best Film" (and being one of the first films to be inducted in the XRCO Hall of Fame) Jamie Gillis (who was inducted in the XRCO Hall of Fame later as an 'actor' in 1985) won the award for "Best Actor" for his performance, but apparently the greatest honor he received for his work came from a random Rebbe at a Purim party. As Benson Hurst wrote, "The sign of true success is when art penetrates popular consciousness and appears in the unlikeliest of places. Mark Jacobson, writer, journalist and esteemed chronicler of New York life, recalls attending a Purim party with Jamie somewhere in deep Brooklyn...it turned out to be way wilder than any Hebrew school grad might have imagined...Rabbis were stumbling around with empty Jack Daniels bottles, their beards sopped with vodka. Several fights broke out. Jamie was a little amazed by this. "Jews! Drunk and fighting!" he kept saying, like a New York Post headline. As they stood there, one of these orthodox types hurtled himself in their direction, his thick, Torah-studying glasses flying off his face and landing right at Jamie's feet. Jamie picked the glasses up and handed them back to the man...The rabbi adjusted his glasses, taking care to flop his paies in the proper position. Now able to see again, he took one look at Jamie and said, "You! You I know! Misty Beethoven!" Then he stumbled happily toward the door," which is quite the Hebraic honor for

a Jewish man who shares the same birthday with Adolf Hitler and is, in part, best known for playing an evil enema bandit who cleaned the intestinal pipes of unsuspecting goy gals.

In its utilization of themes from works by George Bernard Shaw, Dali-esque set design, and art deco architecture, *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* is just as much of a sexual ravaging of European kultur as it was for *Constance Money*, which was created at a time where prostitution and smut-peddling had replaced empires and high art in the Occident due to the apocalyptic conditions spawned by the Second World War. After all, it is a grand tradition of conquerors to pillage the conquered people's women and take them as corrupted concubines and the same thing can generally be said in the context of art. As Jamie Gillis' onetime-roommate and fellow Judaic porn performer Robert Kerman aka R. Bolla (*Cannibal Holocaust*) once stated, "I hope that porn is the most unrighteous thing I do. If we go out of our way to be scumbags, that's the sin, when I do porn, I offend Shakespeare more than God," and I think it is safe to say that Mr. Shaw (incidentally, the Greek mythological figure 'Pygmalion' that inspired his play also influenced Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*) would be less than enthralled to learn that his art was turned into sensually stylized cinematic smut of the Semitic sort. Indeed, while the Hebrews certainly take the kosher cake when it comes to dominating ownership and propagandistic propagation of pornography, Aryans undoubtedly dominate when it comes to pulchritude and sexual stamina, or as the great antisemitic Semite Otto Weininger once wrote, "The Jew is always more absorbed by sexual matters than the Aryan, although he is notably less potent sexually and less liable to be enmeshed in a great passion," and the anti-climatic (at least for Dr. Love) conclusion of *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, quite unintentionally I am sure, shares the same sentiment.

-Ty E

A MAN LIKE EVA
A MAN LIKE EVA

Radu Gabrea (1984)

“I wanna die like James Dean. You know how he died?”; or so asks a fanatical auteur named “Eva” – a fanatical filmmaker who lives, breaths, and directs films and has a hard time differentiating between the real world and the cinematic realm – to his film crew as he puts them in grave danger as he fantasizes about a subconscious suicide of sorts while driving like a perturbed maniac on the prowl in the claustrophobic cinematic work *Ein Mann wie EVA* (1984) aka *A Man Like Eva* directed by Jewish-Romanian auteur Radu Gabrea (*The Secret of the Ice Cave*, *The Beheaded Rooster*). Of course, the “Eva” (played by Eva Mattes in dyke drag) of *A Man Like Eva* is really supposed to be the pseudonym of Rainer Werner Fassbinder – the König of German Cinema whose own personal life paralleled the nihilistic and naked melodrama of his many cinematic efforts like no other auteur in the world before nor after him – as a work of celluloid grained in relatively, if not oftentimes obfuscated, objective biographical truth that both pays homage to the auteur yet at the same basks in the open wounds of his faults, failures, and general ugliness; terrible traits that would also provide him a positive source ‘to direct’ his tragic genius. A lifelong lover and loather of women who has been both severely criticized and revered for his uniquely unflattering but innately intimate depiction of the fierce fairer sex in groundbreaking and totally singular works like *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), *Fear of Fear* (1975), *The Stationmaster’s Wife* (1977), and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978), among countless others, Fassbinder would have certainly appreciated the irony behind the fact that Eva Mattes – a marvelous and monstrous movie “mean girl” who played the lead role in the director’s *Jail Bait* (1973) aka *Wildwechsel* as a seemingly sociopathic teenage femme fatale who preposterously plots to have her boyfriend kill her overprotective father so she can have more ‘freedom’ – of all Fass-bande graduates would depict him. Aside from sharing a similarly homely semi-mongoloid appearance, both Fassbinder and his former actress know how to play “queen bitch” and anyone who has seen the director’s *Germany in Autumn* (1978) would have to completely concur as he was not a master of misery and misanthropy-driven melodrama for nothing! Beginning with the quote, “It is better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you are not,” written by French pederast and Nobel Peace prize for literature André Gide, *A Man Like Eva* immediately lets the viewer know that the angst-ridden anti-hero is a rather unpleasant and in more ways than one. Ostensibly oneiric in tone throughout in some sort of melancholy metaphysical hell mostly contained within a mere house, *A Man Like Eva* is a dauntingly dispiriting work that indubitably reminds one why Fassbinder’s death was probably not solely the result of a miscalculation of how much stardust he snorted up his nose, but a preordained outcome that was a long time

in the making.

As his ex-wife Ingrid Caven – his filmic Marlene Dietrich to her Josef von Sternberg – once eloquently expressed: “Rainer was a homosexual who also needed a woman. It’s that simple and that complex.” Indeed, if one were merely going on the daunting and even disgusting depiction of the filmmaker in *A Man Like Eva*, one would think Fassbinder was merely a furious and oftentimes flustered fag-meister whose jealous scorn would instantly incinerate even the most cuntish heated and hysterical of harlots, thereupon one could hardly describe the film as a masturbatory memorial ejaculated out by one unknown to capitalize off the posthumous infamy of another. Herr Eva is not exactly a pretty fellow due to his pudgy build and overall pitiful appearance, but that does not prevent him, despite his gayness, from getting blowjobs from his lead actress Gudrun (Lisa Kreuzer); a character that seems most in tune with Ingrid Caven, but sharing attributes of his other lead divas Hanna Schygulla, Irm Hermann, Margit Carstensen, and Barbara Valentin. Of course, blowjobs aren’t just blowjobs as it is the gender of the mouth that counts and Eva clearly prefers thin lips, no hips, and firm grips and he won’t let any beauteous bitch in his way stop him from haphazardly attempting to convert happy heterosexual men to seedy sodomy. Eva’s male ‘sex slave’ of sorts in *A Man Like Eva* is a genial but groveling buck negro named Ali (played by black Senegalese-Bavarian Charles M. Huber) – a character that is clearly a composite of Fassbinder’s real-life lovers Günther Kaufmann (*Whity*, *Querelle*) and El Hedi ben Salem (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, *Fox and His Friends*), the latter of which would commit suicide via hanging like the character, albeit under much starker conditions. In an interview for the book *Chaos as Usual: Conversations About Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (2000) compiled by Fassbinder’s late-era film editor and the Fassbinder Foundation head Juliane Lorenz (Lili Marleen, Veronika Voss), German New Wave dandy auteur Werner Schroeter held his filmmaker friend partly responsible for his lover El Hedi ben Salem’s death, stating: “It was a simple story. Salem had hanged himself in jail. I blamed Rainer for that. I told him that people assume responsibilities for one another...I blamed Rainer because I felt he had let down a friend who, to a certain extent, was not his equal. Salem was not an educated person; he was not at all sure of himself,” which also characterizes Eva’s relationship with Ali in *A Man Like Eva*, where the blighted black boyfriend makes every attempt to get his lackadaisical lover’s attention, only to be unappreciated to the point where he sees no way out other than via suicide. Indeed, erratically evil Eva is not only an authoritarian auteur on film sets, but a demented dictator of the house that he and his incestuous film family occupy, dictating to his female actors who they may and may not sleep with (especially those he wants to fuck!) and trying to convert handsome heterosexual actors into homosexuality thus entangling his actors in fatalistic bizarre love triangles with himself at the center of it as a puppet-master of sorts. Needless to say, *A Man Like Eva* concludes

A MAN LIKE EVA

on quite a superbly sour note that is not all that different from a Fassbinder melodrama, although more dreamlike and exceptionally eerie in its essence and dramaturgical execution.

A phantasmagorical frisk of Fassbinder's ill-fated life, *A Man Like Eva* is a fleeting and funereal yet fantastical film featuring an oftentimes ferocious but mostly frivolous virtual ghost of post-war German film history as the protagonist. As an old man in creepy clown makeup tells Eva after discovering the self-slaughtered body of another crude composite character named Walter/Armand (played by Werner Stocker) – a rampantly heterosexual love interest of the filmmaker – near the end of the film: "I'd prefer anything in the world to being a fool..But I wouldn't want to be you!" Indeed, if any German New Wave auteur paid for his art with literal flesh and blood, it was Rainer Werner Fassbinder; a man who lost two lovers via suicide (to which he felt overwhelming guilt about), suffered a self-annihilating drug addiction, and a chance at a financially (especially considering the sort of money he was making towards the end of career) stable bourgeois life he always claimed to abhor yet seemed to have a misguided nostalgia for, hence his failed attempt at marriage, as well as his obsession with Bavarian Catholic iconography as expressionistically depicted in *A Man Like Eva*. An absurdly audacious and ambitious auteur who once stated, "I would like to build a house with my films. Some are the cellar, others the wall, still others the windows. But I hope in the end it will be a house," Fassbinder's house comes allegorically alive in *A Man Like Eva* with his epic melodramatic period piece *Effi Briest* (1974) acting as the wallpaper, the fictionalized anecdotes from his life acting his bricks, and the film itself being an endearing, albeit firmly faultfinding, obituary from one of the filmmaker's most favorite actresses, Eva Mattes, and certainly one of the most strikingly singular gifts a screen diva could bestow upon a respected director, especially since she essentially owes her early success to the man (*Jail Bait*, *Eight Hours are Not a Day*, *Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Effi Briest*). Naturally, *A Man Like Eva* is a melodramatically morose memorial that was a direct aesthetic result of Fassbinder's death as the seemingly manic-depressive man it pays tribute to certainly would have attempted to put a stop to the work had he been alive, but in the spirit of *Jail Bait* (1973), *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), *Querelle* (1982), and countless other cinematic works, director Radu Gabrea and Eva Mattes had no interest in sparing anyone's feelings, especially those of a six-foot-under enfant terrible.

In one of Fassbinder's infamous 'misogynistic' aphorisms that was often used against him by fuming feminist detractors, he made the insightful observation that: "Women who let themselves be oppressed often are more beautiful than women who fight back." Judging by the severely sickly and estrogen-deprived appearance of most prominent feminists, it should be no surprise as to why Fassbinder hit a nerve with these often hostile and hysterical people, but if one were to judge the filmmaker's personality on the basis of Eva Mattes, who knew the

man all too well, it is easy to see how he came to this revelation being a 'spiritual woman' of sorts who saw less intellectual beauties as perennial enemies that would always bed the men he could never truly satisfy as a biological man. In another aphorism by the antagonistic auteur, he wrote: "Most men simply cannot oppress women as perfectly as women would like them to." Of course, Fassbinder, who was by now means a handsome man, gave women the marvelous masochism that they inconspicuously craved, hence the spell he put over Irm Hermann, among countless other women, to the point where she seriously thought that should could convert to him to heterosexuality as she described in Rosa von Praunheim's documentary Fassbinder's Women (2000). If one learns anything from A Man Like Eva, it is that Fassbinder, as a gay man, was able to give women something they could not get from heterosexual men, but at the same time was unable to give the femininity and biological womanhood desired by straight men he swooned over, as an anomalous being that fit somewhere in between, henceforth his innate need to create an unconventional family of sorts that was brewing with chaos and destruction. That being said, A Man Like Eva is a must-see film for any self-respecting Fassbinder fan, though I doubt it would make anyone wish they had the opportunity to be a part of the hapless auteur filmmaker's descent into an abyss of loneliness and eventual self-obliteration.

-Ty E

PAFNUCIO SANTO
PAFNUCIO SANTO

Rafael Corkidi (1977)

With his unfinished Marxist Mexican celluloid odyssey ¡Qué viva México! (1932), homo Bolshevik auteur Sergei M. Eisenstein (Battleship Potemkin, Alexander Nevsky), despite failing to fully realize his artistic vision, essentially planted the seeds for all avant-garde and largely far-left Mexican (and sometimes Spanish) films to come, especially in regard to surrealist/acid westerns like Alejandro Jodorowsky's *El Topo* (1970) aka *The Mole* and Fernando Arrabal's *Long Live Death* (1971) aka *Viva la muerte*. Undoubtedly, if any of these follows the most closely thematically to ¡Qué viva México! in terms of its anti-colonial sentiment and call-to-commie-arms sociopolitical spirit, it is surrealist quasi-western Pafnucio Santo (1977) directed by Rafael Corkidi (*Angels and Cherubs*, *Desires* aka *Deseos*). Best remembered today as the cleverly calculating cinematographer behind the stunning camera work in Jodorowsky's *Fando y Lis* (1968), *El Topo*, and *The Holy Mountain* (1973), as well *The Mansion of Madness* (1973) directed by Juan López Moctezuma and *Anticlimax* (1973) directed by Mexican Renaissance man Gelsen Gas, Rafael Corkidi and his films, which are virtually impossible to find by any legal and official means, have undoubtedly been dropped in the garbage heap of surrealist cinema history, which is indubitably a minor cinematic tragedy of sorts, if not a surprising one considering the somewhat impenetrable, compulsively artsy fartsy, and overwhelmingly non-linear nature of these works. Rather absurdly chosen as the Mexican entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 50th Academy Awards but ultimately not being accepted as a nominee, Pafnucio Santo—a terribly pretentious peasant pseudo-Biblical tale—is a sometimes ominous and always odd operatic hodgepodge of nauseating nudity (including unclad old men and little boys, including the director's son) and demonic erotic dances, unadulterated anti-Americanism, minor Nunsplotation, sardonic anti-Catholicism, mystifying Mexican folk hero worship, Makavejev-esque communist criticism from the left, and quasi-high-camp of the Hispanic sort. Featuring a number of characters, who are sometimes in drag and played by the same actors, lip-synching to popular opera (sometimes in German!), Pafnucio Santo is undoubtedly a work that owes much credit to arthouse camp/kitsch auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema, especially Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Der Bomberpilot*), Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King*, *Hitler: A Film from Germany*), and Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*), thereupon making it a work that stands far enough apart from the films of Jodorowsky and Arrabal as a curious celluloid cultural mongrel of sorts despite its somewhat militant Mexican power message. Centering around a sort of preteen Mexican Marxist messiah/revolutionary, Pafnucio Santo follows the (un)holy 'Hispanic' hero through history as he plays stupid American football in Aztec ruins, talks to his

spiritual mother Frida Kahlo, and discovers that Patty Hearst is a big bitch and nihilistic misanthrope who is not a true red Marxist revolutionary.

Told in operatic surrealist segments (journey, visitations, vespers, revolution, etc.) that vary in quality but are virtually always visually entrancing, Pafnucio Santo begins with the introduction of a dark emissary (Juan Barrón), who resembles a cross between Che Guevara and Leon Trotsky, has flames flashing from his face, and sports a militant uniform that looks like a cross between that of a fascist blackshirt and those worn by the killing squads that belonged to the Soviet Cheka. Upon running into Adam and Eve, the dark figure criticizes them for covering their genitals, thereupon criticizing the anti-life/anti-sex dogma of the Catholic Church that has spiritually castrated horny Mexican peasants. When seeing Jesus Christ die on the cross in the desert, the dark revolutionary pays him no mind, but he sneers with vile hatred when seeing a deadly crew of Klu Klux Klanners carrying a large burning cross, shotguns, ropes, and chains. The dark emissary also watches in disgust as a group of Jewish women and children are led through a gate with the infamous Auschwitz quote "Arbeit macht frei" ("work makes (you) free"), which was undoubtedly a German joke against the Jews and communists that director Rafael Corkidi certainly does not find funny as a true believer of the Gospel According to St. Marx. The black-caped emissary is here to make sure that a young football-tossing boy named Pafnucio Santo (the director's son Pablo Corkidi) aka Holy Pafnucio is able to find a Marxist anti-Mother-Mary-like woman to give birth to a new Red Messiah of the Mestizo revolution. When preteen prophet Pafnucio meets with degenerate communist artist Frida Kahlo, she sings to the little lad, "The Party ordered you to look for the mother...who has the people's struggle in her blood...because the red Messiah is about to be born. He will be, like Lenin, a great leader, a bold fight. A titan of the future!" and the boy bolshevik goes on his merry way to find the potential mother for Jesus Marx. Pafnucio also encounters Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés, the man who crushed the Aztec empire and helped form the mongrelized multicultural nightmare that Mexico is today, singing in a pigsty in an allegorical scene that demonstrates that the director thinks the conquistador was a pig who turned the Aztec lands into a pile of pig shit. When Pafnucio runs into a lady named 'Patty Kane' (a reference to Patty Hearst and Orson Welles' Citizen Kane, the film that defiled the heiress' grandfather William Randolph Hearst's legacy), he finds her to be a 'red fascist' (as his comrades goosiestep) and nihilistic misanthrope as demonstrated by her singing of the following lines, "I hate people, I love war! Everything makes me sick, in this world!" thereupon making her an excellent candidate for being the Mother of Mexican Marxism. Pafnucio also runs into hostility from a stereotypically Mexican folk dancer, who states hatefully after the boy compliments her Mexican hat dance skills, "The little dance that you like so much, and I've been dancing all my life, is a plague! It's what they call "nationalism", "patriotism"...and I used it to get

PAFNUCIO SANTO

fucked! The Jarabe Tapatío is for everyone and everything, yes sir!," which rather upsets the wee lad. Little Pafnucio also has a marvelously melodramatic time viewing a Teutonic opera performance of William Shakespeare's classic tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, but only when meeting Emiliano Zapata in drag (played by Gina Morett, who plays at least two more characters in the film), who looks quite fine whilst wearing nothing more than a vest of shotgun shells, does he seem to discover his Marxist Mother Mary and is able to shed his American football uniform forever.

A work that, while retaining the original lyrics of classic opera compositions, features totally different subtitles with stupidly stereotypical revolutionary lines like "red star of gleaming red" and "Mexicans, heed the cry of war! Awaken!," Pafnucio Santo is essentially an aberrant and absurdist agitprop flick that performs a sort of reverse-colonialism, aesthetically raping and pillaging classical European culture. Considering that the largely left-wing Mexican-Americans of California elected Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger governor of California simply because he is the Terminator, it is highly doubtful that such an art-addled work as Pafnucio Santo would have entertained them, let alone inspired the everyday Jose Schmose Mexican proletarian to take revolutionary political action. Featuring American football players playing an aggressive game in ancient Mexican monuments set to musical compositions by Richard Wagner and a young revolutionary who likes to dress like a cliché brainwashed American slob with a football helmet and Mickey Mouse t-shirt, Pafnucio Santo basically takes the stance that not only did the Spanish destroy the ancient Aztec gods and indigenous culture, but that cultural colonialism still lives on today in Mexico via Americanization/globalization. Despite its superficial aesthetic and thematic similarities with the films of Jodorowsky, Pafnucio Santo is ultimately a different breed as a Heimat film for Hispanics who hate the word 'Hispanic' and dream of the return of the Mesoamerican deity of war Huitzilopochtli and the destruction of Amero-gringo hegemony.

Undoubtedly a work that derives its greatest strengths from its iconoclastic imagery and propensity for making KKK lynch mobs and Hebrew tots being led to the gas chamber seem like an exceedingly ethereal nightmare of the abhorrently aesthetically pleasing sort, Pafnucio Santo is best seen today as a failed yet oftentimes enthralling piece of novelty celluloid concept (anti)art deserving of minor cult status. More militantly idealistic than the celluloid magic tricks and jestering of Jodorowsky, Pafnucio Santo is also a work of Third World propaganda cinema that slightly rises above the level of simple commie clichés, even if the work is ridden with such vomit-inducing Trotskyites banalities. The closest thing to a Mexican Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Rafael Corkidi proved with Pafnucio Santo one can still hate a people/culture (i.e. Europeans), but respect them at the same time as demonstrated by the director's use of musical compositions by Anton Dvorak, Edvard Grieg, Antonio Vivaldi, Richard Wagner and Giacomo

Puccini, as well as his curious nods to Shakespeare and Orson Welles and undeniable influence from European arthouse cinema of the late-1970s. A film that will certainly be of interest to those oh-so few 'Brown Power' cinephiles and the white nationalist cinephiles that hate them and would like to study the psyche of the enemy, Pafnucio Santo is political propaganda at its most patently perverse as a sort of bootlegged made-in-Mexico Meštizo brother film to Makavejev's Sweet Movie (1974). Described in a 1977 New York Times review as being, "a bit like a homemade backyard shrine, admirable for what it says about the builder's capacity for compassion, regrettable in its confusion of prettiness for high art," Pafnucio Santo is nothing short of amazing proof that even gringo-hating Mexicans can be pompous art fags who can have an exaggerated sense of prowess as cultural critiques. Of course, if a race war occurs in North America and Mexicans and other Amerindians either win or establish their own ethno-nationalist racial state, I hope at least that Pafnucio Santo and director Rafael Corkidi's other films are rediscovered and acknowledged as true Meštizo art, but I seriously doubt it as the film lacks a certain machismo spirit. After all, I doubt many masculine Mexicans would approve of their hero Emiliano Zapata depicted with tits and no cock, but I would say I respect Corkidi for inventing a sort of Schroeter-esque form of Cholo high-camp.

-Ty E

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S LAST RESORT
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S LAST RESORT

Rafal Zielinski (1994)

The two Coreys star in National Lampoon's Last Resort. This straight to VHS trash classic is virtually unknown to most movie fans (and for good reason). This was also one of the last films in which Feldman and Haim collaborated with each other. Corey Haim's brain doesn't seem as fried in Last Resort as it tragically is now. At least ¼ of Last Resort is spent making the audience aware that they are watching a movie. This reflexive tool gets old fast. Last Resort also takes a neo vaudevillian approach in tribute to Feldman and Haim's comedic pioneering ancestors. I got the feeling the Last Resort was like Forbidden Zone for special ed. Middle school kids. Soul Mates. The cartoon like quality of the film invites the viewers to just have fun. At not point does Las Resort take itself seriously. The villains of the film constantly change wardrobe and voices. Pirates and Hitler go great together. Corey Feldman also appears briefly at the end in his Michael Jackson costume. He has a true love for the king on pop. A bickering elderly Jewish couple also appear in the film. They haven't had sex in over thirty years. Unfortunately their abstinence ends at the conclusion of Last Resort. A Texan couple appears dumb and excited (for MOVIES!) in contrast to the Jewish couple. Every wack job attends Last Resort. The most interesting aspect of Last Resort is the film's set design. Purposely contrived and exaggerated, I found myself enjoying the look of Last Resort. The film also had similar cardboard cutout look to Richard Elfman's Forbidden Zone. Last Resort borders on the silly and the surreal. I remember watching the film in elementary school and thinking it was fucked. It sure beats a film like Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle (an all time low for humanity).

-Ty E

FLEISCH

Rainer Erler (1979)

Naturally, as an American, it is not often that I bump into late-1970s German horror films at thrift stores, so when I discovered a VHS copy of *Fleisch* (1979) aka *Spare Parts* aka *Hôtel de l'apocalypse* aka *Carne* aka *Le motel rouge* directed by West German TV auteur/novelist Rainer Erler (*Operation Ganymed*, *Das blaue Palais* mini-series) in a giant black case, I naturally bought it (or should I say, my girlfriend bought it for me). Exceedingly misleadingly marketed in the United States as a sexually-charged slasher flick (the Vidmark Entertainment VHS release I have features a scantily clad babe on the cover whose body parts have been dismembered as if her limbs are puzzle pieces) and featuring the somewhat ridiculous puffery-plagued tagline: "The cutting edge in medical terror!," *Fleisch* was produced by the German TV channel ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen aka Second German Television) which, through its experimental feature slot 'Das kleine Fernsehspiel,' produced a number of important works by top auteur filmmakers associated with German New Cinema, including Werner Schroeter, Helma Sanders-Brahms, and Ulrike Ottinger, as well as foreigner experimental filmmakers like Raoul Ruiz and Stephen Dwoskin. Of course, *Fleisch* is certainly no highbrow avant-garde work, as a somewhat hokey horror-thriller with rather terrible dialogue, an absolutely abhorrent hippie-esque folk soundtrack, and a convoluted and sometimes just plain nonsensical storyline, yet the film has something about it that makes it marginally notable, especially in regard to its distinct German perspective regarding the United States. Indeed, shot in New Mexico and New York City, Erler's anti-intellectual exercise in so-called "medical terror" features an America where everything, including illegally harvest organs, has a price and people do not bullshit, especially when it comes to killing and 'kicking ass.' Indeed, sort of like the Paris, Texas of kraut quasi-exploitation cinema, *Fleisch* is at its greatest and most stunning when depicting the barren beauty of southwestern landscapes and unbelievably ugly east coast urban decay. Depicting a country where people are so stupid that they do not even know that Germany is a European nation and where truckers comprise a secret society of honorable, if not violent and uneducated, renegade heroes of sorts, Erler's film may be a second rate horror-thriller with conspicuously contrived dialogue and a sometimes nonsensical plot, but it offers a rare honest cinematic depiction of the ostensibly glorious United States of America and its semi-feral-like Euripid citizens.

Hot young blonde Teuton Monica (Jutta Speidel) has just married her American musician boyfriend Mike (Herbert Herrmann) and for their honeymoon, they have decided to take a whimsical road trip across the American southwest, even though they have very little money to spend. While cruising through New Mexico, the two spot a shockingly cheap motel with the strangely fitting name

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Honeymoon Inn that offers couples a room and free coffee for a mere \$7.50 a night. When the two newlyweds drive up to the motel, they are immediately greeted by the eccentric owner (Tedi Altice), who dresses like a white trash gypsy and has a rather contrived friendliness, as if she is a big bitch suffering from constipation who is trying as hard as she can to put on a friendly front. Upon renting a motel room, the two lovers are soon bombarded with personal questions by the motel owner, who remarks to Monica, "Well, I can hear you ain't American and I can see you ain't from Mexico." After Monica remarks that she is from Germany, the motel owner absurdly asks, "Germany? Oh, is that in Europe?," to which the sensual young Aryan beauty sarcastically replies, "Yes, I'm a kraut...A Fritz, a Fräulein...Anything wrong with that?" After settling into their motel room, Monica and Mike do what newlyweds should do by making passionate love, but the fun soon ends after they finish having sex and subsequently frolic around outside in the arid desert where they soon notice a mysterious ambulance driving off-road. Monica must have supernatural powers as she instinctively runs away from the ambulance and begs her hubby to do the same, but he ignores his wife's warnings and is soon kidnapped by the two EMTs driving the vehicle. Luckily, Monica manages to get away, but when she goes to the motel owner for help, the old pseudo-gypsy con-woman pretends not to know her and seems quite apathetic to the blonde babe's pleas for help. Indeed, the motel owner is in cahoots with the mad medic kidnapppers and she calls back the ambulance to kidnap the horrified German girl, but Monica manages to get away and subsequently waves down a cynical redneck Polack trucker named Bill (Wolf Roth).

While Bill is initially annoyed by Monica's fear-based shivering and assumes she is a teenage runaway who has some sort of pathetic "sob story," he soon begins to warm up to her and realizes she is really in trouble after hearing her somewhat dubious story. Indeed, Bill is a hardworking trucker who is fueled by "uppers and a steady supply of coffee" and has no time to help anyone because he has to transport "20 tons of frozen beef to New York," but he cannot help but help a hot young half-naked Aryan babe in need. After running into the EMT kidnapppers at a diner, who eloquently describe Monica as a junky "bitch" who escaped from a mental institution, Bill begins to totally believe Monica's story and agrees to selflessly help her to find her husband Mike. With the support of his uncommonly loyal trucker comrades, Bill comes up with the plan to have Monica and himself intentionally kidnapped by the black market ambulance bandits so they can trap the malevolent medics and have them interrogated regarding Mike's whereabouts. Indeed, after the two are kidnapped at the Honeymoon Inn (Monica sports a brunette wig to obscure her identity), Bill's trucker friends chase down and trap the ambulance and attempt to interrogate the EMT goons, but the degenerate medics will not go down without a fight. After shooting and killing one of the murderous medics, Bill strips the other one naked and puts him in the meat freezer in the back of his truck in an attempt to get the pseudo-

EMT to talk. As it turns out, the ambulance is used to kidnap complete strangers who are sold at \$2000 a head to sinister surgeons who run an international black market organ bank that is patronized by wealthy cripples that need organ transplants. Bill and Monica learn that a certain Dr. Jackson (played by German documentary filmmaker/actress Charlotte Kerr) is responsible for running the underground organ harvesting industry, so they decide to pose as medics and head to the hospital of horrors where the organ harvesting takes place in the hope of finding Mike.

Needless to say, Monica is rather shocked when she is randomly approached by Dr. Jackson while waiting for Bill in the ambulance and learns that the seemingly depraved doctor is actually a sophisticated and reasonably attractive woman who takes her job rather seriously, especially in regard to preserving and transplanting donor organs. Ultimately, Dr. Jackson figures out that Monica is the wife of involuntary organ donor Mike and coerces Bill and the Teutonic beauty to fly out to NYC via airplane to transport a couple of 'patients.' On the airplane ride, Monica discovers her husband Mike, who has been drugged and is strapped to a stretcher, in the back of the plane, but she and Bill are soon drugged against their will and tied to their seats. When the plane lands in NYC, Monica somehow manages to escape after abruptly jumping out of the airplane door and running through a series of abandoned buildings, but her personal crusade to help Mike and Bill now seems hopeless, so she merely waits at a dangerous park nearby the hospital where her husband and friend are imprisoned and begins to cry hysterically. When a police Sergeant (Bob Cunningham) spots Monica sitting in a dangerous part of central park, he has her detained and listens to her rather far-fetched story involving murderous medics and sinister surgeons. As it turns out, Dr. Jackson has come forward to the police and has confessed to her crimes. With the rather worthless help of the police, Dr. Jackson and Monica manage to smuggle Mike and Bill out of the heavily secure hospital, but they are chased down by the good doctor's Svengali-like male Intern (Christoph Lindert), who slicks back his hair in a rather unfashionable fashion that is not unlike Hannibal Lecter, thus giving him an ominous appearance. As Dr. Jackson reveals, she was blackmailed by the Intern into getting involved with the organ harvesting black market after she got involved in a dubious organ transplant involving her terminally ill son. When Dr. Jackson first met Monica and realized the deleterious effects she was having on people's lives, she finally decided enough was enough, or so she explains to the young Aryaness. Ultimately, Dr. Jackson manages to save Monica, Mike, and Bill by dropping them off on the street in the middle of a car chase between her and the Intern's men. In the end, Dr. Jackson becomes a martyr of sorts after she is killed in a car crash when her ambulance is run off a road by the Intern's men. Ironically, Dr. Jackson does not become an organ donor in the end, though Monica, Mike, and Bill pay their respects to her at her funeral.

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Undoubtedly, compared to the great works of German New Cinema being produced at the same time by ZDF, *Fleisch* seems like an obscenely outmoded celluloid pseudo-horror turd that has become less than fresh with age, yet if looked at as an original cinematic portrait of America and its eclectic landscapes from a depicted from a distinctly Teutonic perspective, the film is surprisingly entertaining and certainly has some minor aesthetic merit. Indeed, if you're looking for a celluloid postcard of America that does not emotionally drain and/or bore the viewer like the malignantly melancholy quasi-existentialist cinematic meanderings of Wim Wenders, *Fleisch* makes for a reasonably fun filmic road trip through the United States. Surprisingly, Rainer Erler's film was somewhat recently remade by South African auteur Oliver Schmitz (*Mapantsula*, *Paris, je t'aime*) as a German-SA co-production entitled *Deadly Harvest* (2008) aka *Fleisch*. Of course, there are countless other films in the same vein as *Fleisch*, including Michael Crichton's *Coma* (1978), *Cardiac Arrest* (1980), Larry Cohen's *The Ambulance* (1990), and *Turistas* (2006) directed by Hollywood hack John Stockwell, but one can hardly call any of these films masterpieces. Undoubtedly, *Fleisch* must have stricken fear into some Germans when it was first released, as a work where virtually all of the characters are either uneducated and/or hicks, New Mexican seems like seem sort of hellishly hot rural pandemonium-like wasteland, NYC looks like a grimy and even somewhat grim third world sewer, and doctors/medics target foreigners for their priceless organs. As for real-life organ harvesting, it is well documented that the Israeli's have been doing it for decades, with the government of the only official Jewish nation in the world even confessing to stealing the organs of dead Palestinians during the 1990s. With that being said, I have to admit that I would love to see Roland Klick, who directed his classic acid western *Deadlock* (1970) in the Negev Desert during the chaotic aftermath of the Six-Day War, get back behind the camera for the first time in decades and direct a film in the spirit of *Fleisch* on Israeli organ harvesting. Indeed, for fans of anti-intellectual kraut filmmmmakers from the 1970s/1980s like Klick, Roger Fritz, Klaus Lemke, Rudolf Thome, and Eckhart Schmidt, *Fleisch* makes for a sometimes aesthetically pleasing piece of Teuton-sired trash Americana.

-Ty E

THE LAST REVENGE

Rainer Kirberg (1982)

Naturally wanting to distance themselves from the legacy of the Third Reich, some young filmmakers of German New Cinema looked towards the grandfather generation for a 'legitimate' German film heritage, with Bavarian wild man auteur Werner Herzog (Stroszek, Woyzeck) being one of the most vocal proponents of this notion as a man who was mentored by German Jewish film critic/historian Lotte Eisner (author of the imperative Teutonic film history works Murnau, Fritz Lang, and The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt) and would later play the ultimate celluloid tribute to his ancestors by remaking German expressionist master auteur F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) as *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979). Indeed, even the 'heart' of German New Cinema, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, looked to his grandfather generation as a man who used German Jewish novelist Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) as a template for many of his films, including his cinematically monolithic 14-part magnum opus *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980). Additionally, Fassbinder also produced and starred in *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves* directed by Ulli Lommel, which is a sort of quasi-remake/tribute to Fritz Lang's expressionist masterwork *M* (1931) starring Peter Lorre. Undoubtedly, out of all the films of the German New Cinema era, the kraut classic *Die letzte Rache* (1982) aka *The Last Revenge* directed by Rainer Kirberg (Grottenolm, *The Sleeping Girl*) has to be the most literal take on Teutonic expressionism. An exceedingly eccentric and eerie yet darkly humorous work that seems like a celluloid crossbreed between Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler* (1922) and *Metropolis* (1927), and Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1982), *The Last Revenge* certainly feels like the marvelously misbegotten celluloid creation of a raving mad movie scientist with an acute aversion to anything post-expressionist. Made in collaboration with the Neue Deutsche Welle group *Der Plan*, whose third album "Die letzte Rache" was the soundtrack for the film and whose member Moritz Reichelt was partly responsible for the surrealist set design (not to mention member Frank Fenstermacher has a small role in the film), *The Last Revenge* was produced by the West German TV channel ZDF as part of their 'Das Kleine Fernsehspiel' series—a program responsible for producing important works by Fassbinder, Rosa von Praunheim, Edgar Reitz, and virtually any other important German filmmakers of the 1970s/1980s—and would develop a virtual instant cult following in Germany when it was first released and rightly so as a rare work that manages to pay apt tribute to the Fatherland's expressionist legacy yet also manages to add to the aesthetic style that auteur filmmakers like Murnau, Lang, and Wiene pioneered. Starring the criminally underrated

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German actor Erwin Leder—a man who valiantly portrayed the schizophrenic serial killer in Austrian auteur Gerald Kargl's criminally underrated masterpiece *Angst* (1983) and would go on to play eclectic roles in everything from portraying a Waffen SS officer in Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) to playing a memorable role in the grotesque Hungarian arthouse flick *Taxidermia* (2006)—in the lead role, *The Last Revenge* is like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* for those that cannot stomach silent film scores.

The Worldly (Erwin Leder) is a gaunt dandy-like dude who lives in a Teutonic desert where trios of singing fish heads pop out of the ground that somewhat resemble the sandworm from Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice* (1988) and deliver prophetic songs of truth and tragedy with a sort of sadiſtically sardonic flare. After traveling for some time on foot, Worldly reaches Water Hill, the home of the great Ruler (Gerhard Kittler, who died shortly after shooting the film), who invites the seemingly half-deranged dandy into his semi-aquatic home. The Ruler has juſt learned that his fiercely flamboyant Morrissey-esque son (Paul Adler) and quasi-dyke daughter (Anke Gieseke) are carrying on an incestuous affair, so he asks the Worldly—a man that catches the dictator's attention by ſtating, "You interest me and I will interest you"—to do as follows: "I've loſt my son. You're the Worldly. Go out into this world and look for the man who will be my heir inſtead of my son." To hide his undying shame, the Ruler decides to build a monument to cover up his perverse progeny's decidedly degenerate legacy, ſtating, "I will put up a monument for you. Yes, the failure that you were in flesh and blood ſhall be clad in iron and ſtone." Of course, the Worldly agrees to do the Ruler's bidding and declares, "You ſhan't be disappointed" to the somewhat melancholy monarch. Of course, as prophesied by a crooning trio of grotesque fish regarding the Worldly's upcoming urban expedition, "ill fortune would ſtrike, what terrible plight. Bad luck! Bad luck! He overrated his far-sight!" and indeed things do not go exactly as planned in eccentric expressioniſtic krautland. Of course, the Worldly finds his task to be rather dubious, but nonetheless finds three potential successors to the throne. The firſt is an obscenely narcissiſtic pansy fellow named 'the Beautiful' (Armin Sorg) who is, at the very leaſt, ambiguouſly gay. The ſecond potential heir is a swarthy philiſtine muscleman narcissiſt named 'the Strong' (Georg Ensermann) and the third is a neurotic and pedantic egghead named 'the Wiſe' (Richard Pleuger) who proudly proclaims, "Knowledge is my greateſt virtue. Knowledge – always ſeeking for the truth. Reason aſks the queſtion "why?", while the reſt of the world goes by," while ignoring the fact that his life is going down the drain as he ſpends all his time reading books. Of course, as can be expected from three exceedingly ſelf-centered and power-hungry gentlemen, the contenders for the throne end up ſpending more time plotting each other's demise than proving to be fit for rule, ſo the Worldly ultimately comes to the conclusion that he and only he can be the new ruler, declaring to hiſelf, "I'm wandering this world, offering his inheritance: Fortune, wealth, and power.

But what must I find: Nothing but stupidity, debility, and arrogance. He has no heir. No one is worthy. Nobody! Really nobody!," as a true opportunistic man with a Svengali-like plan.

Unbeknownst to the Worldly, a dubious Inspector (Josef Ostendorf) and his Assistant (played by Der Plan member Frank Fenstermacher) hired by the Ruler have been following him on his search and figures out his conspiratorial plan to take the throne. After giving a truly Goebbels-esque speech to the citizens of the post-industrial metropolis regarding his quest to find a new successor to the throne, the Worldly is given quite the shock when the Ruler takes the stage and gives a hysterical Hitler-esque speech denouncing him. Of course, the Worldly is imprisoned due to his treacherous plan and decides to seek revenge against the Ruler while getting all moody broody in his jail cell, declaring to himself, "The hour of retribution is near. Everything is a question of time." And, indeed, the Worldly gets his revenge when a sinister and equally insane Rotwang-esque Scientist (Volker Niederfahrenheit), who works for a huge industrial conglomerate called 'Krebs' (undoubtedly a reference to 400-year-old German dynasty Krupps that Visconti 'damned' in his 1969 masterpiece *The Damned*), breaks him out of prison and helps him seek his revenge against the Ruler. Rather unfortunately, in killing the Ruler, the Worldly and the Scientist unwittingly make him immortal, which was the Monarch's plan all along. In the end, the Worldly—a man who once proudly professed, "I am the dark unknown...the person nobody's heard"—must come to the realization that he is nothing more than a pawn after the Ruler says to him, "Your friend achieved something great. I will pardon your rashness which, due to my maneuvering, has borne fruit. Let me assure you, you've achieved your goal: You've killed me! But I had anticipated your imprudence. Just as you disposed of those that may have hindered me, you have now eliminated the last obstacle in my way. You've created what you wished to destroy! You thought this would be the end, instead it is the beginning. Death has become life, time has become eternity. When death hath overcome them all, as they rot and stink repulsively, 't'is I who'll stand forever tall, never to perish, divinity! Farewell my friend. You have served your purpose. You have played your role! I shall now leave you to your fate." Naturally, in the end, *The Last Revenge* manages to get weirder and weirder and more ludicrously labyrinthine, with the Ruler's incestuous adult children torturing their father in his immortality, said Ruler's children dying a tragic yet romantic death, and the Worldly taking on a deranged messianic-like mentality.

As for as I am concerned, no other post-WWII film that I have seen has managed to better capture the aesthetic essence of works from the German expressionist than *The Last Revenge*. On top of that, there is no other film of its era that manages to be so detached from the prevailing aesthetic(s) of German New Cinema, as if auteur Rainer Kirberg had been given a time machine from the evil alien from the once-lost German science fiction *Algol: Tragedy of*

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Power (1920) directed by Hans Werckmeister in the hopes of destroying the Teutonic New Wave. While I am typically skeptical of films that attempt to mimic old films from the past and see it nothing more than a needlessly novel gimmick (with the obscenely overrated Academy Award-winning French flick *The Artist* (2011) being a great example of this), *The Last Revenge* manages to transcend mere postmodern dilettantism as a work that even manages to transcend *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1926) aka *Secrets of a Soul* directed by G.W. Pabst in terms of its wonderfully wayward celluloid idiosyncrasy. In terms of its featuring of *Triumph of the Will*-esque speeches from antihero the Worldly and his nemesis the Ruler, *The Last Revenge* also seems to mock, if not unintentionally so, the thesis put forward in kosher commie film critic Siegfried Kracauer's reductionist-ridden Teutophobic polemic *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947). In fact, one of the things that makes *The Last Revenge* such a refreshing work, aside from its obvious audacious aesthetics and absurdist blend of storytelling, is its general lack of far-left political posturing and soulless social realism, as a work that would have certainly irked Kracauer, who vehemently bemoaned the so-called 'escapist' and aesthetic-driven essence of German expressionism. Indeed, avant-garde in a fashion on the polar opposite side of the spectrum to the aesthetically sterile works of a neo-bolshevik filmmaker like Jean-Marie Straub, *The Last Revenge* easily achieves what Canadian auteur Guy Maddin has merely attempted to during his entire filmmaker career as an innately provocative and strangely humorous neo-expressionist work that does not seem like it was directed by some autistic fanboy cinephile who has seen one-too-many Fritz Lang flicks.

-Ty E

SCHNEEWEISSROSENROT

Rainer Langhans (1991)

While people tend to look at the Nazi era as the darkest chapter in 21st century German history, I personally see the late-1960s with the rise of the German student movement (aka '68er-Bewegung'), counter-culture types, and ultimately far-left terrorists to be the most decidedly despicable point in Teutonic history of the past century, even if it sired the most exciting film movement since the German expressionist period. Indeed, while National Socialism inevitably led's to Deutschland's complete and utter spiritual and physical ruin, thief and butchering of its land, annihilation of countless irreplaceable pieces of art and architecture, and the death of a good portion of the country's populous, the counter-culture put the final nail in the coffin of German culture and resulted in what Nietzsche once described as a 'Umwertung aller Werte' (aka transvaluation of all values), albeit of a decidedly degenerate slave-morality-driven sort where worship of the untermensch (i.e. aberosexuals, mostly Jewish communist revolutionaries, rock stars, third worlders, etc.) and weakness reigned and centuries of German kultur and tradition was disposed of without a second's thought due to its ostensible 'fascist' character, being replaced with xenophilia (aka 'noble savage' worship and fetishism), drug (pseudo)culture, anti-Occidental Frankfurt school twaddle and related commie theories, and polygamous communal living. Undoubtedly, one of the most central and important figures of the kraut counter-culture movement was perennial hippie Rainer Langhans, who was a founder of the (in)famous West Berlin commune 'Kommune 1' and who was known for his romantic relationship with German fashion model and bohemian sex symbol Uschi Obermaier, as the two were described as 'the most beautiful couple in Germany' (despite the fact that Langhans looks like a scrawnier and more Jew-y version of Weird Al Yankovic). Aside from being a popular hippie degenerate and all-around bullshit-ridden charlatan, Langhans was also a part-time actor who appeared in classic German New Cinema flicks like *Haytabo* (1971) co-directed by Ulli Lommel, *World on a Wire* (1973) directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and *The Hamburg Syndrome* (1979) directed by Peter Fleischmann, so it should be no surprise that he eventually tried his hand at directing, with his documentary *Schneeweissrosenrot* (1991) aka *SnowwhiteRosered*, which he co-directed with Christa Ritter, offering an insightful depiction of the decadent zeitgeist of which he was an iconoclastic icon. Centering around twin German gold-diggers Jutta and Gisela Schmidt (aka Jutta Winkelmann and Gisela Getty)—two commie counter-culture/proto-punk divas of the sexually androgynous and neo-Bolshevik sort who gained fame due to their association with degenerate oil heir/kidnap victim John Paul Getty III (who Gisela married, which spawned the actor Balthazar Getty) and their association with Langhans/Kommune 1—*Schneeweissrosenrot* ultimately depicts a self-absorbed late-1960s/early-1970s

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West Germany inhabited by narcotic-addled narcissists and delusional far-left dilettantes who reached for the sky in terms of their rather childish yet dangerously unhinged utopian dreams, only to get a rather rude awakening when they were smacked in the face with the reality of soul-destroying drug addiction, dysfunctional 'unconventional' families, and the high price of free love and so-called communal living. Featuring interviews with a number of great German New Cinema filmmakers that personally knew both Gisela and Jutta, including Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Alexander Kluge, and Adolf Winkelmann, as well as various famous American figures like Dennis Hopper, Leonard Cohen, Timothy Leary, and Sean Penn, Schneeweissrosenrot ultimately makes for a sometimes interesting and insightful celluloid artifact that, quite ironically (especially considering it was co-directed by all-mighty anti-bourgeois charlatan guru Langhans), deconstructs and tears apart the shallow and innately infantile idealism of the so-called 'peace and love' generation. In short, I found Schneeweissrosenrot to be a bittersweet piece of celluloid Schadenfreude in terms of its unflattering depiction of the fall of the West German fellaheen.

Opening with a semi-surreal scene of tall corpse-like twin sisters Gisela and Jutta blowing away a cardboard cutout of Dennis Hopper sporting a cowboy hat and proceeding to beat one another in what seems like jealous incestuous hatred, Schneeweissrosenrot immediately lets the viewer know that the two subjects of the documentary are less than ladylike femme fatale rebels without a cause. The prodigal daughters of a seemingly highly decorated ex-Nazi Wehrmacht officer who was already in his 50s when they were born and thus had not much of his relationship with his little girls, Gisela-Martina and Jutta Schmidt, who were born and came of age in Kassel in Northern Hesse, were spawned in the year 1949 and, like many people of their generation, they rebelled against their 'fascistic' family and Fatherland, eventually becoming middle-class Leninists and members of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany). Since West Germany became "too serious and cold for them," the twins headed to Rome after they both divorced their husbands on the same day and came to the exceedingly absurd conclusion that they were the "hottest women in the world" while living la dolce vita in the Mediterranean, where they became part of the entourage of famous Italian film figures like Federico Fellini and Carlo Ponti, among others. Eventually, the two meet 'the golden hippie' John Paul Getty III, who was kidnapped in the summer of 1973, with the kidnappers asking for a hefty ransom of \$17 million, which the young man's grandfather John Paul Getty Sr. declined. After all, it is suspected that John Getty, who needed to support a rather large drug habit, was in on his own kidnapping (apparently he would often joke about being kidnapped and the twins were even temporarily arrested due to their assumed complicity in the conspiracy), but when an envelop containing the golden hippie's severed ear and hair was delivered to a popular daily newspaper, cheap grandfather Getty Sr. decided to pay up, though he was only willing to put up \$2.2 million as that is the

largest amount that can be tax deductible and thus son John Paul Getty II (Getty III's father) is forced to pay back the rest of the ransom at 4% interest to his cold-blooded blueblood father. Getty III was released in December 1973 shortly after the ransom was paid and, to the dismay of Jutta, he would marry Gisela in 1974 about 5 months after impregnating her with the seed that would later sire Hollywood actor Balthazar Getty. As their friends reveal in *Schneeweißrosenrot*, regarding the strikingly different yet complimentary characteristics of the twins, Gisela is a soft and easy going gal with dreamy ideas while her sis Jutta is a hard and aggressive dame who executes her sister's ideas. Of course, Gisela was in for a big surprise when Getty's grandpa decided to deny him his first trust fund payment of \$2 million because he disapproved of their marriage, so the two lived rather uncomfortably, especially for cocaine-snorting and heroin-shooting dip-somaniacs with rather expensive drug habits. In 1981, Getty III took an almost fatal cocktail of methadone, Valium, and alcohol that caused him to have a stroke and severe liver damage that would leave him a blind paraplegic paralyzed from the neck down and who would suffer greatly for the rest of his short pathetic life. Despite his lack of sexuality potency, Gisela, who frequented Kommune 1 and carried on an affair with a much younger live-in boyfriend that is ten years her junior, stayed with Getty III—a man described by one commentator in the documentary as a “monster...but a compassionate monster”—in the hope of fulfilling her lifelong dream and cashing in on the marriage, but her handicapped hubby had the audacity to divorce her in 1993 and she only got about \$1 million (after lawyer expenses, who took about another \$1 million for their inflated fees) out of the deal despite hoping to make sure Gisela and her sister Jutta are set for life. Indeed, *Schneeweißrosenrot* goes so far as even featuring Gisela crying about the fact that her “dreams didn't come true” and ultimately wasting her life married to a cripple for nothing as her gold-digger scheme fell through, but I doubt anyone watching the documentary will feel even a smidge of sympathy for the lapsed counter-culture commie turned capitalist whore.

In terms of their relation to German New Cinema, Werner Herzog makes the claim in *Schneeweißrosenrot* that Gisela and Jutta won the “Grand Prize of Oberhausen” (a reference to the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen) with their short *Heinrich Viel* (1969), but their directing careers pretty much ended there, though Gisela would direct the documentary *Tim Leary: The Art of Dying* (2008) nearly four decades later. Additionally, Jutta would star in the lead female role of the Alexander Kluge flick *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* (1974) aka *In Danger and Dire Distress the Middle of the Road Leads to Death* and would appear in a couple small roles in marginal West German movies and TV shows, including the crime-comedy *Peng! Du bist tot!* (1987) directed by her ex-husband Adolf Winkelmann. Gisela was less active in film, though she would appear in a small role in the Wim Wenders' flick *The State of Things* (1982) aka *Der Stand der Dinge*. Quite hilariously

SCHNEEWEISSROSENROT

but not surprisingly, Jutta's ex-hubby Winkelmann totally discredits the twins' involvement in filmmaking as nothing more than a novelty, stating, "We, the men, were the real doers, the thinkers, made everything possible – the girls were just there as decoration, to help us, do stuff – I think that's how we saw it." While Herzog commits a bit of puffery in regard to the historical importance of the twins in regard to New German Cinema, he certainly questions their values and morals (or lack thereof), remarking regarding when he knew them in the late-1960s, "It was a turbulent time...Both for me and for the twins. They lived near where I lived, together with a gang of car thieves. One day my car had been broken into and for a moment I suspected them but they said, no, they hadn't broken into my car." Indeed, pedantic pinko auteur Alexander Kluge states something similar about the twins' character, remarking, "I consider the two to be extremely self-sufficient. I can't separate self-sufficiency from crime or intrigue because anyone who thinks he can do it, can do it."

In one particularly notable photo collage scene featured in *Schneeweissrosenrot*, Jutta and Gisela are featured in various black-and-white photographs topless sporting SS hats that echo the infamous scene of Charlotte Rampling singing the Marlene Dietrich song "Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte" in Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974). Undoubtedly, this SS striptease acts as a sort of accidental allegory for Deutschland in the post-WWII era, especially when compared to a photo also featured in the documentary of the twins' father sporting a Nazi uniform, where discipline has been traded in for debauchery and the patriarchy has been overpowered by the matriarchy. In terms of Jutta and Gisela's supposed sex appeal, I just cannot wrap my head around how so many kraut and yank counter-culture types found these two androgynous opportunists, who resembled half-caste Chinese teenage boys, so terribly delectable, but then again, most of these effortlessly effete fellows assumedly needed a little bit of testosterone to balance out their own estrogen imbalances. Admittedly, had Rainer Werner Fassbinder—a man obsessed with doppelgangers, femme fatales, and general cruel women—not overdosed in 1982, it would have been nice to see him direct a biopic about the lurid lives of the twins, who might be best described as 'Mata Haris of Germany's counter-culture generation.' If nothing else, *Schneeweissrosenrot* will always be a memorable documentary for me in that David Lynch's *Loft Highway* (1997) will forever be all the more bizarre for me after discovering star Balthazar Getty's parents are no less debauched than the characters of the film, not to mention the fact that John Paul Getty III's kidnapping is eerily reminiscent of the one in *Blue Velvet* (1986); severed ear and all.

-Ty E

KATZELMACHER

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1969)

Dramatically different in theme to his first feature-length film *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) aka *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod*, but similarly marvelously minimalistic (comprised mostly of extended still shots and a sterile and dispiriting *mise-en-scène*) and brazenly bleak (despite being shot in a stylistically discordant, over-exposed manner) in its aesthetic, *Katzelmacher* (1969) aka *Cock Artist* – the second feature film by German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder – would prove that the director behind that cinematic work had already developed a complex *weltanschauung* long before he became a well respected and equally scandalous figure in the Teutonic cinema world. A film version of an Anti-Theater play he had written and staged a year before that was quite successful on a local level, Fassbinder assembled *Katzelmacher* over the course of a mere nine days and released it only three months after the premiere of *Love Is Colder Than Death*, the film which enabled the filmmaker to earn almost a million marks in prizes and state subsidies, which would lead to nine more feature-length films in the next 12 months and numerous wrecked cars by Günther Kaufmann (Fassbinder's black Bavarian boy toy at the time). As Fassbinder's best friend/composer Peer Raben stated in an interview, Fassbinder, "was the first to introduce cinematographic elements into stage productions. *Katzelmacher* was the first major movie adaptation of a play in which actors from Action Theater performed. It was practically an adaptation of the play we had done on stage, with the same cast...*Katzelmacher* has a style of its own. As a movie it represented something entirely new for the screen." The film would also be the first in a lifelong career obsession of cinematically assaulting the petite bourgeoisie, thereupon tearing at the most delicate and sensitive underbelly of the middle-class' superlatively superficial soul. Starring Fassbinder in the lead role as a Greek who comes to the Fatherland in search of work, but finds himself at the center of a battle of the embittered under-sexed (and, in some cases, over-sexed) sexes, *Katzelmacher* gets to the root of the latent racism of young kraut degenerates who are neither sexually nor materially content, thus channeling their angst-addled hostility on an easy target; a destitute foreigner who does not understand the vernacular of the people hurling hysterical insults at him. As a sort of minimalistic avant-garde proto- *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) minus the naked melodrama and warm kaleidoscopic colors that would dominate Fassbinder's later films, *Katzelmacher* provides more than enough proof, at least where Fassbinder is concerned, that artistic talent is innate and cannot be developed and that a true genius only needs to refine his craft and maintain his will.

The emotionally and sexually stagnant world of *Katzelmacher* is a patently pathetic place full of unhealthy, useless and abusive relationships based on a damn-

KATZELMACHER

ing degree of dependence and co-dependence. Beauteous babe Marie (Hanna Schygulla) is owned by bloated Erich (Hans Hirschmüller), a physically abusive fellow of an unappealing slob-like tawny appearance; semi-sadistic Elisabeth (Irm Hermann) – a queen bitch with a lazy eye – keeps decidedly degenerate Peter (Peter Moland) as a virtual slave because he hates working even more than he hates his lady; rosy-cheeked Rosy (Elga Sorbas) passively prostitutes herself to Franz (Harry Baer), and Paul (Rudolf Waldemar Brem) screws Helga (Lilith Ungerer) because he has nothing better to do, thus making up a relentless realm of lower middle-class monotony, misery, misanthropy, and mild melodrama. When Greek foreigner worker Jorgos (Rainer Werner Fassbinder in an uncredited role) comes to town, these sad and mostly sedentary post-teenage (but perennially adolescent in their ample and aimless angst) Teutons unite for once in their seething yet senseless hatred of the mild-mannered Mediterranean man from the South. Only Maria – a lonely lady who finds a kindred spirit in the swarthy (although no more swarthy than her ex-beau) Southern foreigner – finds it in her heart to accept Jorgos, so much so that she begins to fall in love with him and vice versa, despite the fact he already has a family back home. After all, according to Maria, the fact that Jorgos is a family man does not matter because, "Everything's different in Greece," or so she assumes. Elisabeth is also slightly more civil to the geeky Greek because he rents a room from her and acts as a source of cash flow, so as to make up for the unpaid rent of her deadbeat boyfriend. Assuming he is Italian for a number of days before actually discovering he is Greek, the German males of the group first begin developing a hatred for Jorgos after one of them seems him undress and notices that "his dick" is "better built" than their own, thus developing jealousy against the exotic primitive. It also does not help that their girlfriends use Jorgos as a tormenting tool of jealousy against the exceedingly emasculated men, thus further fueling the flame of race-hate and their ever swelling sexual inadequacy. Going against the grain of the German boob bourgeois, Maria refutes her friends' dubious claims regarding Jorgos, claiming that she can tell by his eyes that he is a decent person, so their relationship only gets all the more intimate when the Greek tells her she has "eyes like stars." First making the preposterous claim that Jorgos raped one of the uglier girls, their hatred is turned up another notch when a rumor is spread that the Greek is a communist because, after all, "Greece is full of communists." The male members – none of whom work thus have maximum idle time to seethe with hostility and capricious contempt – pretend to be friends with the friendly but unwitting foreigner and even openly chat about castrating the German-illiterate man right in front him, giving him a toast with their glasses not long after proclaiming their perverse plan. Naturally, the group's hatred finally reaches its zenith and they inevitably attack a rather surprised Jorgos, who cannot make sense of the cowardly collective act. Despite its rather determinedly disgusting and depressing subject matter, Katzelmacher works best as a brazen

black comedy of the anarchistic avant-garde sort.

Although being a breakthrough for Fassbinder in terms of its critical and monetary success, it seems the filmmaker would grow to hate the film as he listed it, as well as two of his other early cinematic works – *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970) aka *Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?* and *Jail Bait* (1973) aka *Wildwechsel* – in a list he made of “The Most Disgusting” (which also included works by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg and his ex-collaborator Michael Fengler) of the German New Wave for a “Hitlist of German films” that was published in 1981. Indeed, while nearly immaculate in its minimalist direction and stark yet sardonic melodrama, *Katzelmacher* seems like a rather minor cinematic effort when compared to similarly themed later works like *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1972) aka *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* and especially *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) aka *Angst essen Seele auf*. Considerably influenced by the films of Jean-Luc Godard, theatre/films of Jean-Marie Straub (Fassbinder initially wrote *Katzelmacher* to fill up time for the filmmaker’s 10-minute-long staging of an adaptation of Ferdinand Bruckner’s *Sickness of Youth*), and the theories of German communist playwright Bertolt Brecht, *Katzelmacher* was created at a time before Fassbinder mastered his own filmmaking craft yet the formative cinematic work still displays the unmistakable essence of a born-genius. Portraying the young German bourgeois as a group of self-loathing losers suffering from sexual impotence and latent Nazi tendencies, *Katzelmacher* is a potent peek at Fassbinder at a time when he still bought into libelous Marxist lies, especially in regard to the ‘authoritarian personality,’ that he would later, to some extent, renounce in films like *Mother Küsters’ Trip to Heaven* (1975) and *The Third Generation* (1979) by portraying the same sort of far-leftists as narcissistic hypocrites and imbeciles who are worse than the people they claim to despise. After all, even if the characters of *Katzelmacher* were to join some sort of fascism movement, it would end rather abruptly due to their pathetic, nihilistic attitudes and total lack of work ethic because, although they may be the grandchildren of Uncle Adolf, the Führer had fallen before teaching them some tough love and discipline.

-Ty E

GODS OF THE PLAGUE
GODS OF THE PLAGUE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1970)

Although most of them are too cool for school to know or take the effort to find out, none other than a high-strung German (there is nothing cool about being about a member of the master race!), Rainer Werner Fassbinder, is responsible for directing what is probably the most quintessential gangster hipster flick, *Gods of the Plague* (1970) aka *Götter der Pest*. A sort of monotonously melancholy and misanthropic gangster/pseudo-film noir flick for fairy-like fellows who are totally too dainty, depressed, and vehemently vogue to hold a gun, let alone actually shoot or point one at somebody, *Gods of the Plague* follows the miserable musings and defiantly blank yet sassy stares of a misery-addled anti-hero with an archetypal hipster appearance, including the highly fashionable American Civil War-esque mutton chops and a mustache, as well as a pathologically posturing I-don't-give-a-shit-even-though-I-spend-a-lot-of-time-preparing-my-ironically-outmoded-wardrobe-attitude that that makes the totally hip hipster seem like he would not even care if someone raped him in the ass and/or set him on fire. A sort of unofficial sequel/reworking of Fassbinder's feature-length directorial debut *Love is Colder than Death* (1969) aka *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod*, *Gods of the Plague* is a homoerotic Godardian/Brecht-esque deconstruction of the American gangster flick/film noir about an absurdly apathetic fellow who does not seem to care even in the slightest about the fact that he has just been released from jail and seems especially quite disinterested in his loving girlfriend, so he decides to find another chick with a similarly apathetic demeanor and ultimately falls in love with a naughty Negro criminal with the fitting name "Gorilla" who is responsible for killing his brother. The black criminal is played by Günther Kaufmann (*Kamikaze* 1989, *Querelle*) in what would be the first of many cinematic collaborations with Fassbinder who, for deeply personal and perverse reasons, fell madly in homo love with him. The first of the ill-fated filmmaker's three great loves, Kaufmann was described by Fassbinder as "my Bavarian Negro" and a paradoxical Negro who, as the director describes, "thinks Bavarian, feels Bavarian, and speaks Bavarian. And that's why he gets a shock every morning when he looks in the mirror." Of course, as a married man with two quadroon children, the biggest shock for Kaufmann was the fact that a kraut fairy fell in love with him and wanted to make him an arthouse superstar in a country that only a few decades before put a very high premium on racial purity. Also featuring Carla Aulaulu (aka Carla Egerer)—a muse/superstar of Fassbinder's celluloid compatriot Werner Schroeter, as well as future feminist filmmaker and onetime-wife of Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta (*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, *Hannah Arendt*), in one of the leading roles, *Gods of the Plague* is indubitably an interesting footnote from German New Cinema history, even if it seems like hokey homo hipster celluloid

heaven and features grossly gratuitous shots of Günther Kaufmann's bare black ass and an unflattering shot of star Harry Baer's limp cock and balls.

Fresh out of prison and consumed with a superlatively self-destructive case of Weltschmerz, Franz Walsch (Harry Baer) seems rather reluctant to see his diva Dietrich-esque singer girlfriend Johanna Reiher (Hanna Schygulla) perform at a dark and seedy lounge but, against his own better judgment, he does and the couple have a sort of anti-celebration at a local restaurant due to his release from prison, but when he refuses to eat a delicacy of snails, things go drastically downhill from there. After Johanna tells Franz that she loves him, he rather disinterestedly replies "I have to phone someone." Franz also visits his mother (not by chance played by Fassbinder's real mother Lilo Pempeit) with his brother Marian (Marian Seidowsky) in what will ultimately be the last visit together. Not long after, Franz accompanies Johanna to a gambling event between gay Americans, krauts, and a faggy frog. Johanna is exhilarated to win a game of blackjack, but when she goes to tell Franz, he is nowhere to be found. Franz has learned that his brother has been shot and decides to passively dump prissy and possessive Johanna and hangout with the much more laidback chick named Margarethe (Margarethe von Trotta). After successfully avoiding paying his hotel bill, Franz has the bright idea to rob a gang of vulgar Turks, who instantly capture and manhandle him after he grabs one of their bags, but luckily his deceased bro's old lady Magdalena Fuller (Fassbinder's onetime wife Ingrid Caven) pays off the hostile foreigners with a kiss and some cash. Magdalena takes Franz home and takes off his pants, but he finds the entire thing rather banal, so his penis hangs rather languidly like that of a cold corpse laying in a morgue. More than anyone, Franz wants to meet the mysterious man who killed his brother, 'Gorilla' (Günther Kaufmann), and when he does, he is not the least bit letdown. Franz respects Herr Gorilla for killing his brother and even falls in love with him. Like the Franz by Fassbinder himself of *Love is Colder than Death*, Franz of *Gods of the Plague* also has no qualms about sharing his girl Margarethe with Gorilla, so long as he is willing to disrobe in front of him. Meanwhile, jilted lover Johanna wants to get back at Franz for his abrupt abandoning of her, so she starts fornicating with a cop and ultimately sets him up to be killed. Franz, Gorilla, and older blond gangster plot to rob a supermarket, but unfortunately the black buck's porn-peddling girlfriend Carla Aulaulu (as Carla Aulaulu) has tipped off Johanna, who has in turn tipped off her new cop boyfriend. Both Franz and the old gangster are instantly killed by a cop during a raid, but Gorilla, who has been shot, manages to wobble out of the supermarket, find his girlfriend Carla, and shoots her after tying her to a chair. Before dropping dead himself, Gorilla states "Life is very precious... even right now," a line featured a countless number of times in Werner Schroeter's arthouse epic *Eika Katappa* (1969).

In his 1981 "Hitlist of German Films", Fassbinder not only listed *Gods of the Plague* as one of "The Most Beautiful" films of German New Cinema, but

GODS OF THE PLAGUE

also as number five among his “Top Ten” list of all the films he ever directed. Personally, I cannot agree with Fassbinder regarding the film in the context of his entire oeuvre, but I have to assume the director has personal reasons for giving *Gods of the Plague* so much praise as it was made in at least partial dedication to the director’s “first love.” While most of the film was shot in dark interiors to the point of obscuring the faces of characters, Fassbinder made sure to shoot many of the scenes with Günther Kaufmann outside in bright sunlight, including the most expensive scene of the film of a countryside that was shot in a helicopter. Undoubtedly, a formative work from an auteur who had yet to master his craft, *Gods of the Plague* is a must-see work for Fassbinder fanatics as a marginally superior flick to its ‘brother film’ *Love is Colder than Death*. For those that find the conventions of gangster flicks to be a bit sterile, *Gods of the Plague* makes for a rather rude and a little bit faggy aesthetic and thematic ravaging of the subgenre. Indeed, with its sometimes campy imagery, less than inconspicuous homoerotic undertones, joyless and impassionate sex, portrait paintings of “Mad King Ludwig II” and room-size pop-art portraits, horribly hopeless and hapless ‘heroes’, gynophobia, and terribly tragic ending, *Gods of the Plague* is arthouse film noir with a decidedly dark and dead soul. Although I think hipsters might find the wardrobes and moods featured in *Gods of the Plague* to catch their fancy, the film is still sophisticated and ‘masculine’ enough to totally appeal to their mumblecore-inclined nature, even if Fassbinder himself stated that it was, “probably a homosexual film.”

-Ty E

LOVE IS COLDER THAN DEATH

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1970)

Undoubtedly, few directors, including great ones, successfully achieve making a masterpiece with their directorial debut and German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*Satan's Brew*, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*) is certainly no exception to this unofficial rule, as his first feature-length cinematic effort, *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) aka *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* is a highly aesthetically derivative, albeit particularly personalized, work that owes more to classic American film and the French New Wave than any sort of Teutonic film movement, yet it is surely an auteur piece, but one plagued by the ultimately banal practice of deconstructing and reconstructing gangster films – a cinematic practice that autistic fanboy Quentin Tarantino would ultimately take to more degenerate and philistine extremes. Beginning with dedication to four of the film's influences, including Claude Chabrol, Éric Rohmer, Jean-Marie Straub, Linio and Cuncho (the final tribute being a reference to the two main characters in Damiano Damiani's 1966 film *A Bullet for the General* aka *El Chuchó, quién sabe?*), *Love Is Colder Than Death* is a work that ultimately owes more to the early amateurish gangster films of Jean-Luc Godard and the ex-convict protagonist Franz Biberkopf (Fassbinder's character in the film is even named Franz) of Alfred Döblin's Weimar era modernist novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) than the hodgepodge of individuals Fassbinder decided to actually pay official tribute to. Even the original iconic poster of star Ulli Lommel sporting a trench coat and aiming a handgun at the viewer is inspired by Alain Delon's character from French auteur Jean-Pierre Melville's crime flick *Le Samourai* (1967), yet Fassbinder still managed to leave his novice auteur fingerprints in what is a German film that ripped off frog films that ripped off Yank films. In an interview, Fassbinder differentiated the character he plays in *Love Is Colder Than Death* from all other classic crime films with the following insight regarding his nihilistic gangster persona, "Franz doesn't have any backup—he's a loner. Not like the great loners in the American flicks, though, where it's never really clear to me why they're loners. They're just heroes, I guess. Franz is no hero. He's primitive, just wants to work for himself, doesn't want to hand over any of what he earns." Indeed, Fassbinder, a man who once described himself as a 'romantic anarchist,' essentially plays himself as a reckless renegade of the hyper alienated and antagonistic sort, even among fellow crooks, who is more interested in doing his own thing than following an established gang code and making a big name for himself, despite it ultimately having deleterious and self-destructive results. A film with a timeless title that has influenced countless post-punk/darkwave/coldwave song titles and band names, *Love Is Colder Than Death* – the first film in Fassbinder's early black-and-white 'Gangster Film Trilogy,' preceding *Gods of the Plague* (1970) and *The American Soldier* (1970) –

LOVE IS COLDER THAN DEATH

is the quintessential minimalistic kraut gangster flick set in a disillusioned, post-nationalistic Teutonic zeitgeist where every man is condemned to fight alone, especially in the metaphysical sense, whether he likes it or not. As protagonist Franz learns, having a friend, especially con friends, has more cons than benefits, especially when a jealous and extremely fertile woman is placed in the middle of it all.

Criminal dilettante, petty pimp, and sometimes bank robber Franz (Fassbinder) falls into trouble when he refuses to join a multicultural organized crime enterprise called the Syndicate. A lone man of the intrinsically individualistic lone wolf persuasion, Franz is brutally beat in an anti-melodramatic Brechtian fashion after refusing to join the Syndicate as he has enough company already as he lives with his hooker girlfriend Johanna (Hanna Schygulla) – a wanton woman who wants marriage and stability despite being a lowly flesh-peddler. The Syndicate orders a stool pigeon by the name of Bruno (Ulli Lommel) to befriend Franz so he can keep tabs on him. Rather strangely, perennial loner Franz takes an instant liking to Bruno and even invites the Syndicate member to move in with him and Johanna. On top of sharing his apartment, Franz begins to share his woman with Bruno, but jealousy of the outsider taking away attention from her man, seemingly harmless cutesy girl Johanna ends up causing more trouble than the Syndicate ever could in her pernicious scheme to drive the two men apart. In between tedious trips to department stores that involve harassing a sales woman (Irm Hermann), including Fassbinder's nod to Hitchcock when his character tells the retailer that he is, "looking for round glasses like the cop in "Psycho" had," Bruno – a man who claims he killed his dad at the mere age of 12 via a vase smash to the head and became a gang leader by age 16 – commits a couple murders and pins them on his supposed pal Franz. Bruno also has plans to slay Johanna for the Syndicate, but little does he know that the quite literal femme fatale has different plans of a more elaborately evil sort. Bored with Bruno and mad at Franz for not marrying her, Johanna tips off the cops about a bank robbery that the two men have planned, thus resulting in the murder of the *Ménage à trios* and the death of a handsome two-faced traitor who is drunk on his own narcissism. Regarding Schygulla's character Johanna, Fassbinder stated the following in an interview, "Hanna's the key to everything. You can tell that the character she plays is totally bogged down in bourgeois values—much, much worse than all the others. That's what she wants to preserve, and that's the reason she betrays Lommel to the police, because she'd rather be alone than be part of a threesome; that she just can't handle." Of course, like Fassbinder's epic cinematic miniseries *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), the homoerotic subtext between Franz and Bruno is the most personal key in Fassbinder's dark romantic gangland fantasy, where conspiring whores make for the most malignant force against man and his most forbidden and intangible dreams.

As a man who worked as both a pimp and hustler in real-life during his

teenage years, even pimping his young, dragged-out pal Udo Kier to foreign 'guest workers,' Rainer Werner Fassbinder, unlike most filmmakers who directed similarly themed works, actually lived out the gangster lifestyle he cinematically portrayed to a degree, even if in a rather gay fashion, and he had the following to say about the underworld lifestyle, "the gangster environment is a bourgeois setting turned on its head so to speak. My gangsters do the same things that capitalists do except they do them as criminals. The gangster's goals are just as bourgeois as the capitalist's." Indeed, in the context of *Love Is Colder Than Death* in regard to art reflecting life and vice versa, Fassbinder is Franz and Fassbinder is Franz, albeit in a much more butch fashion than the damned director would later do in works like *Fox and His Friends* (1975) – a work where posh fags make for much more ruthless and wretched villains than buffoonish gangsters and flesh-flaunting femme fatales. Shot over a 24 day period in April 1969 in an ostensibly overexposed fashion on the dreary streets and in the sterile buildings of Munich, *Love Is Colder Than Death* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in June 1969 and the screening concluded with a loud combination of jeers and cheers, including a number of hecklers yelling "dilettantism," yet Fassbinder approached the stage like a victorious dictator who had just conquered an enemy nation and had its leaders ceremoniously executed, thus signaling the arrival of post-WWII Germany's most important and influential filmmaker. While I am no connoisseur of gangster flicks of any persuasion (although the sort featuring Guido philistines also makes for great laughs), Fassbinder's *Love Is Colder Than Death* has an ingredient that makes it radically different from, say, Godard's *Breathless* (1960) aka *À bout de souffle*, which is having a soul as opposed to asinine and azoic posturing and bland Bogart fetishism. While I regard *Love Is Colder Than Death* as being far from one of Fassbinder's greatest works, it does make for a nice novelty in seeing a cinematic genius during his most primitive stage and how he evolved into the idiosyncratic Übermensch auteur behind Berlin Alexanderplatz – one of the most important and ambitious cinematic works in all of film history. Indeed, with the death of two of his three great loves via suicide as inspired by his own belligerent and neglectful behavior, as well as his own lonely demise a little over a decade after completing his first feature-length film, *Love Is Colder Than Death* has developed all the more meaning since its underwhelming premiere at the Berlinale over four decades ago.

-Ty E

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER
THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1970)

Originally planned as featuring the director's then (and thoroughly heterosexual) lover Günther Kaufmann (*Rio das Mortes*, *Whity*) and to be shot on CinemaScope in Berlin, *The American Soldier* (1970) aka *Der amerikanische Soldat* was ultimately postponed due to auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's bitter and failed love affair with the film's heterosexual black Bavarian star and would inevitably deevolve. Instead, Fassbinder decided to fly to Paris to enjoy the city of love's sodomite saunas. When *The American Soldier* went into production, it did not feature Herr Kaufmann and was shot with a low-budget using black-and-white film stock, thus making the film have similar aesthetic qualities to the director's two previous kraut gangster flicks, *Love is Colder than Death* (1969) aka *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* and *Gods of the Plague* (1970) aka *Götter der Pest*. All three films would make up a kraut-fried yet Hollywood inspired gangster film trilogy, with the final chapter, *The American Soldier*, being arguably the most cinematically reflexive and purposely postmodern yet ultimately incoherent and avant-garde-addled. With a misleading title that is more representative of Fassbinder's Americanized love for Hollywood cinema than a true description of the film's hero, *The American Soldier* follows a German-born man who "flew over the great pond" to America and fought as an honorary Yank in the Vietnam war to battle the same Bolshevik plague his Teutonic brothers fought in the Second World War, only to come back to his hometown of Munich to work as a cold-blooded contract killer for a trio of corrupt gangster-movie-worshipping cops who have a naughty knack for gambling with pornographic playing cards and petty criminals' lives. Referencing to grand queen auteur filmmakers of German cinema history, F.W. Murnau and Rosa von Praunheim, the latter of which who would incidentally become an arch nemesis of Fassbinder (von Praunheim even once admitted he was relieved when he died), *The American Soldier* is less an homage to American gangster flicks than a film that deconstructs such works, while also criticizing the corrosive cultural hegemony of America/Hollywood on not just Germany, but also the entire world, hence why the film's protagonist, a Vietnam vet, ultimately did dirty work for the USA and has now come back to his homeland to wreak havoc and kill a couple fellow krauts along the way. By no means a cinematically immaculate masterpiece, *The American Soldier* is essentially a curious piece of experimental kraut crime cinema directed by a man that was destined for greater and less masturbatory things who was practically raised on Hollywood films, but would become what was indisputably post-WWII Germany's most important and prolific filmmaker and who ultimately made his celluloid works palatable to both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, something his quasi-commie compatriots like Alexander Kluge and Jean-Marie Straub could never do as pedantic guards of the German of the far-left Ivory

Tower. Of course, *The American Soldier* seems like it was specially tailored for left-leaning film critics and those that would love nothing more than to see the gangster flick aesthetically and thematically defiled, but it is still pure Fassbinder, even not as cultivated and more audience antagonistic.

Ricky (Karl Scheydt) alias Richard Murphy alias Richard Von Rezzori, who describes his lifetime story to a whore as follows, "It all began in Germany...Once upon a time, there was a little boy...He flew over the great pond...Damn it," is the man with the plan, otherwise known as contract killing, but the problem is that a single snitch can get him killed and killing fellow criminals for cops comes with its own number of liabilities. A seemingly stoic veteran of the Vietnam War, which he simply describes as being "loud," Ricky is more than ready to show off his imported skills as an American-manufactured killing machine. A fellow with a sadistic streak, Ricky almost scares to death a slutty chick (Irm Hermann who is credited as "hure" aka "whore") by kicking her out of his car and shooting her full of blanks. Not someone to forget an old friend, Ricky hooks up with his old comrade Franz Walsch (Fassbinder reprised his role from *Lover is Colder than Death*) or as he states while trying to get a hold of him over the phone, "W for "war," A for "Alamo," L for "Lenin," S for "science fiction," C for "crime," H for "hell." Ricky and Franz go for a scenic and soothing ride and the reluctant American sentimentally states to his comrade, "Nothing ever happens in Germany...I'm rather fond of old Germany, all the same." Indeed, the two boorish Bavarian buds seem to have more than enough fun drinking cheap beer and littering with the empty cans. After going to his mother (Eva Ingeborg Scholz) and Clark Gable-loving gay brother (Kurt Raab) in what turns out to be a rather uneventful family get together involving pinball and foreboding emotional coldness, Franz gets what he came back to Munich for, killing people that apparently need to be killed. The first person that is gunned down is a gay palm-reading gypsy named Tony (played by Ulli Lommel in what is very possibly his most unflattering role ever), which proves to be a rather lackluster, if not lethal, task for Ricky. Seemingly nonsensical things happen around Ricky, including the strange behavior of a maid (Margarethe von Trotta), who after describing supposed German racism against Turks that are called "Ali" (this discussion would inevitably evolve into Fassbinder's Sirkian masterpiece *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974)) and crying about her lover Pierre, stabs herself in the stomach with a butcher knife samurai-style while hanging over a stairwell railing. Of course, Ricky has bigger things to worry about than paying mind to a seeming horribly hysterical and melancholy maniac of a maid because he has fallen in love with one of his contract killing targets, Rosa von Praunheim (Elga Sorbas), the girlfriend of one of the pernicious police who hired him to do their dirty work. Of course, since they hired him to commit highly illegal and innately incriminating acts, the police also decide to dispose of Ricky, but unfortunately Franz gets in the middle of it, thus resulting in the deaths of two best friend who would have

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been better off dead during the Second World War, at least if one were to judge by their romantic longings for a nation that, at least in spirit, no longer exists.

Trading in the pioneering celluloid poems of Teutonic master auteur F.W. Murnau (*Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*, *The Last Laugh* aka *Der letzte Mann*) for a uniquely unhealthy and culturally vapid diet of cheap carboncopy cinematic products otherwise known as Hollywood gangster films, Germany lost more than just a good percentage of its population, as well as its international reputation as a result of the Second World War and *The American Soldier*, like much of Fassbinder's oeuvre, is certainly a scathing symptom of that. Featuring cops who think they are gangsters after watching one too many American film noir flicks and a culturally confused protagonist who clearly loves his birth nation more than his adopted one yet seems tragically deracinated from it for whatever reason, *The American Soldier* is the sad, if not oftentimes sardonic, tale of a nation with a decidedly dead soul, where everyone can be bought, sold, and/or killed for the right price, which is undoubtedly an American tradition. The fact that the protagonist of the film, Ricky, who is admittedly "rather fond of old Germany," is an ostensible aristocrat who consciously made the decision to degrade himself by becoming a peasant soldier in a nation populated by Europe's rejects in a war battling communism—the very thing the German National Socialists sought to destroy on the Eastern Front—only goes to show how far Germany had fallen.

Tastelessly enough, director Rainer Werner Fassbinder would marry star Ingrid Caven during a lunch break in between shooting for *The American Soldier* and the director can even be seen wearing the same white suit he wore during the wedding in the film. Incidentally, Günther Kaufmann, who Fassbinder fired from starring in *The American Soldier* for not reciprocating his love to the director, would act as the filmmaker's best man at the wedding. While not starring in *The American Soldier*, Kaufmann would provide his Jim Morrison-like vocals to the film's theme song "So Much Tenderness," with the lyrics being written by Fassbinder himself and the music by Peer Raben. Fassbinder's wife Ingrid Caven, who would divorce the filmmaker in two years and inevitably become the cinematic diva of Daniel Schmid (*Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma*) sings and performs a song she wrote entitled, "With My Tears," towards the beginning of *The American Soldier*. The ultimately bastardized and partially aborted yet still spawned product of a project initially intended to be realized as a romantic present for a black buck Bavarian, *The American Soldier* practically stews in a certain pessimistic melancholy that is surely colder than death, but also relies on the pseudo-masculine Hollywood cinematic conventions promoted to profit off of the poor proletarian looking to learn how to posture themselves as imaginary American bad asses. As American as imported sauerkraut, *The American Soldier* is the aesthetically wacky result of what happens when a cultureless consumer consumes a real culture and is vomited out by said real culture.

-Ty E

THE NIKLASHAUSEN JOURNEY
THE NIKLASHAUSEN JOURNEY

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1970)

Out of all the films in German New cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's extensive celluloid oeuvre, his early TV-movie *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970) aka *Die Niklashauser Fart* – a revolutionary quasi-anti-revolutionary cinematic work co-directed by Michael Fengler (*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, *Weg vom Fenster*) – is easily the artistically erratic enfant terrible's most audaciously abstract, avant-garde and politically pretentious work, thus it should be no surprise that it is one of the filmmaker's most least viewed and discussed films, even among academics. Quite easy to write-off as a wretched and curiously convoluted piece of experimental celluloid trash that is most symbiotic of its decidedly defiant generation, *The Niklashausen Journey* still offers an intriguing and oftentimes aesthetically intoxicating look at Fassbinder at his most political as an uniquely unloyal and uncompromising anarchist disillusioned with the political trends of his zany and overzealous zeitgeist. Extra loosely based on the real-life 15th century south-central German folk hero Hans Böhm – otherwise known as “the Drummer of Niklashausen” – who after claiming to see a vision of the Virgin Mary sermonizing slave-morality-inspired words of social equality, preached the absolute abolition of forced labor, tolls, levies and other payments to the nobility, thereupon inspiring tens of thousands of peasants to revolt, was charged with heresy and burnt at the stake on July 19, 1476 on the order of the Bishop of Würzburg, *The Niklashausen Journey* is as audaciously anachronistic as films come. Heavily influenced by positively pedantic commie frog Jean-Luc Godard's dystopian black comedy *Week End* aka *Weekend* (1967) and Brazilian auteur Glauber Rocha's class conscious western *Antônio das Mortes* (1969) aka *O Dragão da Maldade Contra o Santo Guerreiro* – a work the German auteur would also pay tribute to with his subsequent TV-movie *Rio das Mortes* (1971) – as well as a number of anti-Heimat films by corrupted krauts like Herbert Achternbusch and Werner Herzog, *The Niklashausen Journey* is foremost Fassbinder's audacious response to the failed far-left student revolts of 1968 with the filmmaker himself playing the reflexive role of the 'Black Monk'; the dubious and cryptic mastermind of an anti-aristocratic/anti-capitalist revolution in the beautiful Teutonic countryside. Featuring music and performances by the founding Krautrock group Amon Düül II, *The Niklashausen Journey* is a peculiar product of its time directed by a German New Wave master who had yet to master his marvelous niche for naked melodrama and refine his particular political persuasion.

The Black Monk (played by Fassbinder in an uncredited performance) – a black-leather-jacket-sporting con-man/intellectual revolutionary – is conspiring among his equally coldhearted compatriots (a blessedly beauteous Hanna Schygulla as “Johanna” being one of them) as to how and when they will spark a

peasant revolt against an extremely effete aristocratic bishop and his overweight and seemingly catatonic, panty-flashing mother. The malacious monk mastermind concludes that it will only take a handful of people (as Johanna mentions, only “3 or 4” people are needed to form the “vanguard of the party”) to make the serf revolt a rather bloody and brutal reality, so he is quite thrilled when he runs into proletarian pawn Hans Böhm (Michael König); a megalomaniacal, if not mentally feeble, hippie mystic who feels confident in his serf sermonizing and self-worshiping heroics after he claims to have been given a blessing by the Mother Mary herself to exterminate lawnmowers and the all-powerful aristocracy. Vomiting corrosive communist intellectual masturbation from Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*, the plotting peasants pump themselves up for a collectivist coup d’état that is destined to fail right from the get go. Black Bavarian Günther Kaufmann – who plays the role of the “Leader of Farmers” – is also ripe for a renege revolution, especially after reading about how his black panther brothers were slaughtered like common swine by American pig police. As with every so-called ‘people’s revolution,’ the revolt is funded by a bored aristocrat, this time in the fecund form of a rich bitch named Magarethe (played by Margit Carstensen) who has the hots for sexually potent peasant hero Hans Böhm. While most of the revolutionary hippie yeomen inevitably meet a similar fate to Jesus Christ, the Black Monk lives on to spread the unholy gospel like an incurable venereal disease, infecting everyone he can with a corrupt cause with only one reward; a violent death. Featuring a trying collection of tableaux ranging from the titillating and transgressive, to the terribly trite and aesthetically tormenting, *The Niklashausen Journey* is, at worst, a strikingly sloppy mess of pompous political self-pollution and, at best, a bold, blunt, and beautiful expression of subversive sociopolitical cinematic art, but, at the very least, one has to admit that the film is an ambitious aesthetic affair, even if Fassbinder himself rarely, if ever, referenced the work at any point in his. If I did not know better, I would never suspected that *The Niklashausen Journey* was shot for a late-night slot for WDR Television’s drama unit, especially a work where the loony lead protagonist declares, “Long Live Lenin...Smash Fascism!” in a manner that was surely suppose to be sardonic and symbolic of left-wing hero-worship, at least in to Fassbinder’s politically discouraged eyes.

Undoubtedly borrowing aesthetic techniques from his friend Werner Schroeter, especially his early epic of allegorical tableau *Eika Katappa* (1969), even including an absurdist quasi-operatic performance from the German New Wave dandy’s muse Magdalena Montezuma (*Der Tod der Maria Malibran*, *Der Rosenkönig*), Rainer Werner Fassbinder was still indubitably a ‘work-in-progress’ as a filmmaker at the time he co-directed *The Niklashausen Journey*; a seriously structurally splintered, semi-surrealist and strikingly symbolic cinematic work that can easily be compared to the early films of Carmelo Bene (*Capricci*), Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo*), Jane Arden (*The Other Side of the Underneath*),

THE NIKLASHAUSEN JOURNEY

and Rafael Corkidi (Pafnucio Santo). Of course, like most of Fassbinder's films, *The Niklashausen Journey* ultimately has a distinctly post-war German essence of ecstatic and eccentric ethno-masochism and a need to atone for the Fatherland's National Socialist past. An individual who described himself as a "Romantic Anarchist" (which he stated 3 months before his death in March 1982) who personally knew members of the far-left West Germany terrorist group the Red Army Faction (RAF), including cinematography student Holger Meins (a bomb-maker who starved himself to death during a clearly failed prison hunger strike) yet thought their actions were stupid and their armed violence to be self-defeating, Fassbinder was one of the few individuals of the 1968 generation to upload his radical, if not severely skeptical, utopianism. In fact, the filmmaker once stated in regard to his motivation to keep on directing films, "From utopia, the concrete longing for this utopia. If this longing is driven out of me, I will not do anything else; that's why as a creative person I have the feeling of being murdered in Germany, if you would please not mistake that for paranoia....I believe this recent witch-hunt...was staged in order to destroy individual utopias...If it comes to the point where my fears are greater than my longing for something beautiful, then I'll quit. And not just quit working." Of course, Fassbinder did "quit...and not just working" when he overdosed on cocaine in 1982, but he would ultimately direct a number of politically oriented cinematic works, including (but not limited to) *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), *Satan's Brew* (1976), *Germany in Autumn* (1978), and *The Third Generation* (1979) preceding the release of his most politically conscious film *The Niklashausen Journey*. Featuring a trio of bloody, face-painted Maenads calling for the God of War (Ares), debauched aristocratic pederasts in dire fear of peasants, Uncle Tom U.S. military police trained to kill their black soul brothers, Krautrock rockers rocking out recklessly, junkyard-based political crucifixions, and failed revolutionary leaders who are more than willing to spare endless cycles of sacrificial pleasant lambs in their struggle for the Trotskyite 'Permanent Revolution,' *The Niklashausen Journey* makes for an aesthetically and intellectually intriguing cinematic work, if not Fassbinder's very best.

The 'message' of *The Niklashausen Journey* can probably best summed up with a preacher from the film's sermon: "Nevertheless, every revolutionary uprising leads to new injustices...occasions of new unrest and inequalities...and gives rise to new disruptions...An evil may not be driven out with an even greater evil." Too bad, Fassbinder's one-time collaborator Alexander Kluge – the racially self-flagellating Frankfurt School lawyer-turned-filmmaker and personal friend of anti-Aryan Jewish-Marxist philosopher Theodor W. Adorno – never seemed to understand these words of wisdom.

-Ty E

WHY DOES HERR R. RUN AMOK?

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1970)

Credited as being co-directed by both German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder (In a Year of 13 Moons, Berlin Alexanderplatz) and his early mentor/eventual business partner/late enemy Michael Fengler (who also co-directed *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970) that same year with Fassbinder), *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970) aka *Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?* was also the first film shot in color associated with the Fass-bande Anti-Theater, as well as one of RWF's first big cinematic hits. While Fassbinder apparently only sketched scene outlines for the film and even credited the work more as his co-director's than his own, both he and Fengler were given a directorial award ("Film Award in Gold") for *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*—a mostly improvised work that was shot over a mere 13 day period—at the 1971 German Film prize competition. Additionally, Hanna Schygulla, who plays a supporting role in the film, said that in a 2003 interview with the *Village Voice* that *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* was completely directed by Fengler who, in stark contrast to Fassbinder's directing style, had the actors completely improvise their dialogue for the film, hence its almost documentary-like feel. Probably more insightful, however, is that Fassbinder listed *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* in his 1981 "Hitlist of German Films", which includes favorite and most hated films of German New Cinema, including his own, as "The Most Disgusting" among Teutonic cinema. Not one to mince words, Fassbinder also listed *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* co-director Michael Fengler and star Kurt Raab in his "Hitlist" as being amongst his "Worst Experience" working with individuals in his filmmaking career. Still, whether it is entirely the result of Fengler's almost-distinguishable direction or not, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, not unlike the Ulli Lommel directed and Raab penned/starring work *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* certainly bares a shade or two of Fassbinder's auteur signature, which is undoubtedly the result of his irrefutable dictatorship over his Superstars and collaborators, namely those that belonged to the pre-cinema Anti-Theater that he led with a sado-masochistic iron-fist. A sort of thematic and aesthetic prototype for what would be his first domestic commercial success, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* aka (1971) *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten*, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* follows an underappreciated middle-class cuckold of a man who is patronized by a wife he does not love and who has a little loser for a son and ultimately commits self-slaughter in the end, but not before committing total familicide, after being suffocated by too much bourgeois banality and suburban soullessness as a man whose subconscious and conscious hit head on like a runaway train into a brick-wall. A sort of proto-Dogme 95 flick with a pseudo-cinéma vérité aesthetic featuring intentionally mundane improvised dialogue, *Why Does Herr R.*

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Run Amok? is the sick, sardonic and fiercely foreboding story of a man who is so overwhelmed by his buried negative and violent emotions and inability to express himself in any meaningful way that he hangs himself in his work restroom, but not before taking his wife and child with him.

Herr Raab (Kurt Raab) has slicked and properly parted hair that Adolf Hitler would have certainly approved of and his three-piece suit undoubtedly compliments his ostensibly professional appearance, which is quite important for an office lemming of a technical draftsman who sees it as the utter most importance to please his boss with good and honest hard work, but obtaining a promotion seems to be a somewhat impossible task. Raab's boss (Franz Maron), who is a rather swarthy and even sinister man that bears a striking resemblance to a member of the Romulan alien race from the Star Trek universe, wants him to go beyond the basic technical work and become a serious player and problem solver for the corporate team, but he always seems to be somewhere else as an innate introvert with somewhat sub-par social skills and seemingly autistic qualities. Mr. Raab gets along well with his mostly mundane co-workers, who include Fassbinder's mother Lilo Pempeit and Fass-bande regulars Peter Moland and Harry Baer (Fassbinder's main "artistic consultant" and assistant director), so his sanity, or lack thereof, is never questioned. While a respectable member of society who gets along with his coworkers and neighbors as a sort of marginally acknowledged 'non-entity', Raab has a propensity for making an unintentional ass of himself, especially in a scene where he attempts to buy a vinyl record for his wife at a local music shop featuring a song he heard on the radio, but forgets the name of the album/artist so to his humiliation and to the humor of the sales-girls that work there, he pathetically attempts to hum the tunes in a less than lackluster manner. Aside from having a patronizing wife (Lilith Ungerer, who being someone Raab apparently did not like in real-life, makes for immaculate casting) who figuratively carries around his testicles in her purse, demands that he buy every needless she wants, and provides an incessant source of noise via her busybody meanderings with friends and family members, Herr Raab has a young son named Amadeus (played by co-director Michael Fengler's real-life son Johannes Fengler) who, unlike all the kids in his class, has an incapacity to learn such hard arithmetic equations as 6X6 and 6X7 due to 'anti-social' behavior revolving around his lack of concentration and innate introverted nature, something he shares in common with his father.

Suffering from migraines and probably cognizant of the fact that it is only a matter of time before he explodes with a storm of violence, Raab tries in vain to seek help from a psychologist as the overwhelmingly prosaic nature of evening family dinners, sad Sunday walks in the park, and lonely nights watching TV programs that are just as banal as his own existence are really starting to overwhelm his unconscious and are starting to take conscious forms. The only time Raab seems to be able to fully enjoy himself and really be himself is when meet-

ing with an old friend (played by Fassbinder's best friend/composer Peer Raben), but this only comes to all the more highlight the sheer and utter pathetic nature of his existence as the two perform an absolutely horrendous cover of a melancholy song via grating harmonica. After dealing with his wife, a woman who does not work but has the gall to complain to her hubby that "the older you get, more stupid you get, and fatter," and a nauseating neighbor (played by original Fassbinder Superstar Irm Hermann) babbling about nothing and unable to fix the reception of his television screen so as to block these whiny women out, Herr Raab finally explodes with an act of irrevocable violence, killing both women, as well as his son, rather absurdly using an ugly bourgeois ornamental candlestick in a furious and impulsive act of familicide. The next day, the police come to arrest Raab at his work and ultimately find that he has killed himself via hanging in the bathroom, symbolically one of the few places where he was able to find personal privacy and 'relief' from those individuals that ultimately helped contribute to his going over the edge and committing one of the most work acts imaginable. If nothing else, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, through a series of seriously monotonous scenes, does a more than sufficient job in answering why a bourgeois kraut cuckold transforms into a coldblooded killer of the spouse-sacrificing and pedigree-purging sort in a cruel celluloid climax that makes for a more potent argument against capitalism and the bourgeois than anything that kosher conman Karl Marx, himself a failed member of the bourgeois who lived off the generosity of others, ever wrote.

Despite evidence to the contrary, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970) is still regarded and advertised as being a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film to this day, including on official DVD releases and—more importantly—on the official Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation website. Seeing as Fassbinder later distanced himself from directing static and minimalistic Godardian works, it is no surprise that he would later distance himself from *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* and even go so far as describing it as one of "The Most Disgusting" films in all of German New Cinema. Additionally, co-director Michael Fengler, who would ultimately make a fortune producing the German wunderkind filmmaker's films and acting as his business partner, would later go on to describe Fassbinder as "a bad, bad guy" and would get in a heated legal battle with his mother Lilo Pempeit over the ownership of the films after the Teutonic auteur's premature death in 1982, thus it is only natural that he would try to take artistic credit for any of the RWF films he could and *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* is easily the most blatant example of this. Even if Fassbinder did not physically direct the film, his quasi-incestuous and over domineering influence on the actors as the undisputed Führer of the Anti-Theater is quite apparent in *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, a film that has the blatant essence of an early RWF work. Considering that Michael Fengler was only responsible for directing a handful of films after *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* and would totally quit

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his involvement with filmmaking in every context—be it as director, producer, or otherwise—shortly after his enemy/business partner's tragic death only goes to show that he was nothing without R.W. Fassbinder and certainly no artist nor 'auteur' in his own right. Assuredly an anomaly among Fassbinder's oeuvre, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* is, at best, a revolutionary cinematic work foretelling the Dogme 95 movement and the arthouse realistic works of Gus van Sant, Larry Clark, and Harmony Korine, and, at worst, a novel experiment of cinematic improvisation with an almost direction-less direction to it, owed to the fact that the man who should have been totally responsible for creating it was all but absent from its actual production. Of course, like *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973), *Satan's Brew* (1976), and *The Stationmaster's Wife* (1977), *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* would be nothing without star/production designer Kurt Raab's hypnotic, if not strikingly pathetic, charisma, thus maybe he deserves the true 'authorship' of the film, but judging by the absolute horrendous and totally trashy monetary-inclined post-Fassbinder women-in-prison (WiP) film he directed, *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* (1983) aka *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* aka *Escape from Blood Plantation*, I might be giving him too much credit. Either way, *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* is Kurt Raab at his finest and the ever-so-obsessive R.W. Fassbinder at his most creatively neglectful, which made for a rather interesting and incendiary celluloid recipe indeed.

-Ty E

BEWARE OF A HOLY WHORE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1971)

By no means one of German New Wave auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's greatest films, *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) aka *Warnung vor einer heiligen Nutte* – an anecdotally embarrassing semi-autobiographical based on the filmmaker's virtual hell on foreign earth while filming the wacky and tacky kraut anti-western *Whity* (1971) only a couple months before – is a virtual “who's who” of New German cinema, features acting performances by Fassbinder himself, Werner Schroeter, Margarethe von Trotta, Ulli Lommel, Kurt Raab, Hanna Schygulla, Ingrid Caven, Harry Baer, Magdalena Montezuma, and countless others. Marking a break in Fassbinder's oeuvre and an unofficial start to the cinematic works associated with the director's “avant-garde” Anti-Theater (an-titeater) – the troupe of pre-film actors that the director lived with and made his original films with – *Beware of a Holy Whore* is probably the closest as one will ever get to understanding the “controlled chaos” of the auteur's filmic family and frenzied filmmaking process. Indeed, some of Fassbinder's collaborators have less than fond memories of the film, including celebrated cinematographer Michael Ballhaus who stated in an interview: “Some of the films we did together, such as *Beware of a Holy Whore*, I find pretty awful when I see them today.” Undoubtedly, I would be lying if I did not admit that *Beware of a Holy Whore* made me feel a bit ambivalent toward the Fassbinder family, including the director himself, as the emotionally sterile (although intentionally so) yet sin-ridden cinematic work is like François Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) aka *La Nuit Américaine* meets Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt* (1963) aka *Le Mépris* from insanely inane inhospitable hell where unadulterated narcissism fuels a fickle furor of nihilistic sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll that would ultimately take a tragic toll on the filmmaker behind it in the long run. As actor-turned-director Margarethe von Trotta explained in an interview regarding Fassbinder: “When we were filming *Beware of a Holy Whore* in Sorrento, he would go on three or four hours of sleep. Like Pasolini. There are people like that – often people who freely, almost obsessively, give rein to their sexuality, without becoming intellectually or artistically drained. They derive special spiritual and creative power from their excesses...I sometimes wonder if those people know that their lives will be short and therefore need to burn their candle on both ends, frantically living for the moment.” With its various scenes of unsanctified girlfriend-swapping, brutality against girls and girly men, brazen bisexual affairs, dubious money handling, crippling cocktail of alcoholic and other unidentified controlled substances, and all around hostile human ugliness, *Beware of a Holy Whore* left me with the unforgettable impression that Rainer Werner Fassbinder needed real-life manic melodrama to fuel him with enough tenacity and vigor to crack out celluloid melodramas works so quickly as a sort of king of psychic vampires of the artisti-

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cally driven sort.

If any film displays the passive arrogance of post-war Germans, especially of the ostensibly anal Aryan 'artiste,' it is most certainly *Beware of a Holy Whore*; a work of penetrating "pornographic pretentiousness" and "narcissism-exploitation" where every single character has their head so far up their own ass that it brings a new meaning to Uncle Adolf's quote, "Those who cannot see past their own nose deserve our pity more than anything else." Of course, one will have a hard time feeling even the most measly morsel of sympathy for the most characters in the film as their film-wrecking wretchedness of douche-bag dandy decadence, shifty and seedy sexual secretion sharing, prissy prima donna pomposity, and vehement vulgarian vanity is just about enough to make a speed-driven Warhol Superstar (it should be noted that *Beware of a Holy Whore* has the feel of a slick and professionally directed early Factory film) feel consumed with decided disgust, but one must respect Fassbinder for having enough whorish humility to reflexively resort to the most unflattering of self-criticism and self-parody. Waiting for the patently pretentious and audaciously arrogant auteur filmmaker Jeff (played by Colombian-born actor Lou Castel whose blond boyish looks are a far cry from Fassbinder's semi-Mongolian schoolboy appearance), as well as the production money and film stock to show up and start filming, the cast and crew featured in *Beware of a Holy Whore* find themselves sulking in self-isolated corners of cumbersomeness, but things only get worse with the arrival of the dickhead dictator of a director who can't find happiness in cock, cunt, or caviar, hence his pathological need to create films. Only the always cool Eddie Constantine, who plays himself as the international lead star, can keep his cool around a band apart of 20-30-somethings who seem more interested in contriving poses for their contemptible contemporaries than utilizing their "method acting" for the silver screen. Indeed, tons of "whoring" goes on in *Beware of a Holy Whore*, pitting fag against fag hag with notable harlot heartlessness from Margarethe von Trotta who, despite being engaged to the production manager Sascha (played by Fassbinder), has no problem philandering with director Jeff; a switch-hitting softcore sadist that enjoys physically, sexually, and verbally abusing both boys and girls, especially the emotionally needy sort. Jeff also has a jealous actor boy toy named Ricky (played by Marquard Bohm) who looks like an inbred version of Mick Jagger and is plotting revenge against his deceitful dick-sucking director lover. Ulli Lommel – who would direct his first feature *Haytabo* (1971) around the same time as *Beware of a Holy Whore* using many of the same actors, including charismatic Constantine in the lead role – plays the role of a set manager that, like in real-life, dreams of becoming a director in his own right and seems to utilize any opportunity he can get for Jeff to degrade him. In one of the more standout performances, Magdalena Montezuma plays "Irm," a thinly disguised pseudonym for Irm Hermann (who seems to have dubbed her own voice for "Irm" later), who like the real woman, was deeply in love and financially sup-

ported the director during his early years of poverty as a novice filmmaker and was repaid for affection with physical and verbal brutality. In a scene that totally seems to capture his essence, Werner Schroeter plays a photographer with a graceful passivity that allows him to escape from the renegade film production rather unscathed just as he did the New German cinema scene. Although a marginal role, Kurt Raab plays a character whose grotesque yet gut-busting gayness and crude cross-dressing makes for a rare moment of comic relief in *Beware of a Holy Whore* that is more than needed. If Fassbinder achieved anything with the film aside from depicting the downright despicableness of everything that went on during his early film productions, it is that he was able to juggle an ungodly number of inciting idiosyncratic characters in a film that essentially takes place in a handful of rooms.

In *The 120 Days of Bottrop* (1997) – a work the director described as the last modern “German New Wave” film – effortlessly erratic enfant terrible auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel would go on to parody Fassbinder’s *Beware of a Holy Whore* with stunning sardonic sharpness that can only be absolutely approached by watching both films as a double feature. Needless to say, Schlingensiefel’s satirical scat film does not feature an inkling of the intrinsically irritating pretense that plagues Fassbinder’s flick. Although opening with the inter-title “PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL,” *Beware of a Holy Whore* really seems to be full of characters whose self-control and social sanity is the only thing that “goes.” The characters in the film are so arrogant that they make a Roman blonde beast – a tall Nordic man that looks like an albino straight out of a National Socialist propaganda poster – think that that he is “subhuman” and that they treat him “like a black” because they are all “Übermenschs” from Munich who “all belong together.” Of course, the godforsaken Guido could not be further from the truth, as these Bavarian Aryans are quite the miserable motley crew whose contrary physical appearances are only rivaled by their personal rivalries. Concluding with the Thomas Mann quote, “I tell you that I am often deadly tired to represent human kind without to participate in human kind.,” *Beware of a Holy Whore* certainly gets across – for better or worse – that Fassbinder was going to portray the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, thus it is no surprise that filmmaker Jeff states, “I guess I won’t be content until I know...he’s been completely destroyed,” as the very last word spoken in the film. The “he” presumably being Fassbinder himself, who inevitably destroyed himself with the behind-the-scenes chaos he dealt with on a day-to-day basis with filmmaking being the only part of life he could control, thereupon sacrificing himself for cinema. More an important artifact of his filmmaking career and his brand of filmmaking, *Beware of a Holy Whore* lets the viewer know that although actors may be the worst of whores, we as spectators are nothing more than passive Johns.

-Ty E

PIONEERS IN INGOLSTADT
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Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1971)

Undoubtedly, even most Fassbinder fanatics will agree that *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* (1971) aka *Pioniere in Ingolstadt* is not the Bavarian enfant terrible auteur filmmaker's greatest film. In fact, Fassbinder himself thought it was an artistic failure and listed it as one of "The Most Disappointing" films of German New Cinema in a 'Hitlist of German Films' he compiled for a West German film magazine in 1981 just one year before he overdosed on a corrosive narcotic cocktail. Admittedly, when I first saw *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* about a decade ago or so, I was shocked by how bad it was and thought it was totally unwatchable, innately incoherent, and nothing short of an abject failure from a budding auteur who was still experimenting as a young filmmaker in his formative years, yet the film has strangely grown on me since then, or so I discovered with a recent and rather reluctant re-watching of the work. Based on the controversial 1926 play (or "comedy in 14 Scenes") of the same name written by Bavarian proto-feminist Marieluise Fleißer (1901-1974)—a naive Catholic educated protégé of kraut commie Bertolt Brecht—Fassbinder's *Pioneers of Ingolstadt* was ultimately an important work in the sense that it helped revive the name and work of the source writer, who also had a heavily influence on Bavarian absurdist auteur Herbert Achternbusch. Written in collaboration Brecht, the play was inspired by autobiographical anecdotes from the playwright's life and would ultimately cause her so much personal trouble that she apparently never fully recovered from the experience. Due to its frank depiction of sex and supposed sexism in small Teutonic towns, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* caused a major scandal when it first premiered at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin in 1929, thus inspiring National Socialist scorn, the condemnation of the film by the Ingolstadt mayor (who attacked the playwright for "dirtying her own nest"), and Fleißer's own father becoming so angry that he threw her out of the family home, among other things.

Of course, Fassbinder's filmic adaptation is much more radical, pessimistic, and misanthropic than the source material as an avant-garde work that depicts a young virginal gal going from being an idealistic sweetheart who is looking to fall in love to morally degenerating into a wild and wanton whore who quite literally spreads her legs for any man that passes her salacious gaze. A decidedly damning depiction of a group of German soldiers (or 'pioneers') who come to a small Bavarian village build a bridge, only to sexually debase and humiliate every young and desperate Fräulein in town, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* is a sort of avant-garde anti-Heimat film that portrays rural Germania as a cryptically decadent place where most women conspire to drop their panties for even the most boorish of soldiers. Although originally intending to update the play and feature the pioneers wearing contemporary West German army uniforms, Fassbinder decided

to make *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* a strangely anachronistic work where the soldiers sport shabby Wehrmacht uniforms, including swastika insignia (though, for whatever reason, only a couple of the men sport the sacred swastika), yet when one (portrayed by Fassbinder's black Bavarian boy toy Günther Kaufmann) of the soldiers is black (!) for some inexplicable reason. A marvelous mess of a movie that is infinitely more interesting and provocative than an anti-Heimat classic like *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* directed by Peter Fleischmann, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* is classic Fassbinder in the sense that it features a rather idiosyncratic critique of Germany that does not simply wallow in far-left clichés like so many other related works of the zeitgeist.

The pioneers have come to the small Bavarian region of Ingolstadt and all the town folk are celebrating their arrival with a parade, especially the young lumpenprole debutantes of the town. While blonde babe Berta (Hanna Schygulla) is looking for love in the form of a true gentleman in uniform, her friend Alma (Irm Hermann) is a proud whore who knows how to get what she wants and will spread her legs for any man that gives her the proper attention. One calm night, Berta meets a soldier in a park named Karl (Harry Baer) and the two begin what the viewer assumes to be a classic romance, but things are not so simple and puritanical in the world of *Pioneers of Ingolstadt*. Meanwhile, while Alma is hunting for wild Wehrmacht cock, a third girl named Frieda (Carla Egerer) is sharing a dance with an uptight army sergeant (Klaus Löwitsch) who believes that being a sergeant makes him a "better person." Ingolstadt is run by a pompous and pathologically misogynistic bald dude named Fritz Unertl (Walter Sedlmayr) and his handsome yet arrogant and seemingly autistic son Fabian (Rudolf Waldemar Brem), who hopes to make Berta—the family servant—his loyal girlfriend. Before long, Karl begins acting cold towards Berta and even stands her up on a date, ultimately sending his horny and tasteless negro friend Max (Günther Kaufmann) to meet her instead. While talking to himself in front of a mirror, fag boy Fabian declares, "I have a car, my dear Miss Berta. As of today, I own a car. Your love is mine forever" as if the fact his daddy bought him a new blue BMW means that she will instantly fall in love with him, which of course never happens. In between acting like the most pathetic 'pickup artist' in Bavaria, Fabian attempts to blackmail the Sergeant in a rather absurd and totally nonsensical manner. Fabian wants to blow up the bridge that the pioneers are building, but he has a change of heart when the Sergeant smacks him around like a little bitch for attempting to blackmail him. In the end, Karl coldly fucks and drops Berta (who ends up allowing multiple men to fuck her brains out in the park), the Sergeant is murdered by his merry men, the pioneers brutally beat Fabian and Fabian falls in love with Alma (who goes from being a vocal whore to a settled down bourgeois prude), and the viewer never knows what becomes of the bridge. Of course, the irony of *Pioneers of Ingolstadt* is that instead of

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bringing the people together by building the bridge, the pioneers wrecked havoc in the small Bavarian town and ruin a life or two in the process.

In its libertine-like depiction of a men as sexually potent pigs who are only interested in sex and women as either emotionally hysterical morons or quasi-psychopathic calculating gold diggers, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* goes to great and even quasi-exploitative extremes to unequivocally prove that both sexes are innately incompatible yet paradoxically cannot live without one another, albeit for very different reasons. Of course, being a sexual outsider of the sadomasochistic sodomite sort, Fassbinder was not exactly the most prominent proponent of heterosexual monogamy and *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* certainly reflects that with a certain bitterness comparable to the gay gutter melodramas of mad misogynist Andy Milligan and the early films of Andy Warhol, albeit with a certain post-WWII anti-Heimat Teuton style. For fans of little blonde beastess Hanna Schygulla, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* features the usually strong diva at her most desperate and self-sacrificial as a tragically naïve girl who is looking for love, but is conned into loveless sex and debasement. Concluding with Schygulla lying on the ground in a dress with both of her legs spread wide open after being sexually serviced by a couple virile soldiers, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* somewhat strangely reminded me of one of the number of degenerate high school party horror stories that I heard about as a teenager where some young girl tried to get some guy's attention and got inebriated and taken advantage of instead.

Although Fassbinder played the eponymous lead in Volker Schlöndorff's made-for-television adaptation of *Baal* (1970), *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* would be the closest the auteur ever got to cinematically adapting the work of Bertolt Brecht and as the filmmaker's Danish friend Christian Braad Thomsen revealed in his comprehensive study *Fassbinder: The Life And Work Of A Provocative Genius* (2004) regarding Marieluise Fleißer: "Brecht himself had encouraged her to write *Pioneers in Ingolstadt*, because he was impressed by her ability to characterize a small-town provincial milieu in dialogue, whose apparent naivety contained sharp criticism. Fleißer was a dialectician; her solidarity was not false and her criticism not without love. This also fascinated Fassbinder. Just as Fleißer would hardly have managed to make her breakthrough without Brecht, so the young Fassbinder would hardly have started to write without Fleißer." It should be noted that after scandal revolving around the 1929 premiere of her play, Fleißer parted ways with Brecht, got engaged to a right-wing poet, and even became a devout Catholic in her old age. Apparently, not unlike the girls in her play who fell prey to the sleazy soldiers, Fleißer was exploited by Brecht and would confess in an interview on her seventieth birthday, "Brecht destroyed something in me." Indeed, considering the intentional soulless and intellectual masturbation of Brecht's work, it is only fitting that Fassbinder would opt for adapting Fleißer instead because, like the filmmaker, her writings have a sort of rather uncommon empathy for her characters. In other words, whereas Brecht was a treacherous

philo-Semitic communist scumbag who had a mostly deleterious effect on both German theatre and cinema with his anti-emotional Marxist puffery, Fleißer and Fassbinder were not afraid of emotions and gave a voice to the voiceless. Indeed, *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* might be an artistic failure, but it is much more interesting than any of the filmic Brecht adaptations that I have seen.

-Ty E

RIO DAS MORTES
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Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1971)

Undoubtedly, if I were to name my least favorite Rainer Werner Fassbinder flick, it would most certainly be the superlatively sorry made-for-television celluloid abortion *Rio das Mortes* (1971), which has the distinction of being the director's eighth feature and borrowing its name from the Brazilian 'cinema novo' period piece *Antônio das Mortes* aka *O Dragão da Maldade Contra o Santo Guerreiro* (1969) directed by Glauber Rocha. A miserable mess of a movie that feels like a proto-mumblecore flick starring a bunch of exceedingly effeminate lower-middleclass longhaired dirty hippie bastards, the film would probably be considered a quirky comedy if it was actually funny, but it ultimately falls in almost every regard. Apparently based on an idea by kraut Francophile Volker Schlöndorff, *Rio das Mortes* is also slightly notable for being a semi-autobiographical work for Fassbinder. Like the pathetic protagonists of the film, who attempt to obtain funds for an extravagant journey to Peru to search for purported Mayan treasures, Fassbinder left no stone unturned in his attempt to get funding for his first feature *Love is Colder Than Death* (1969), which he eventually found in the rather unconventional form of an eccentric old widow named Hanna Axmann-Rezzori, who also played the woman that provides the hapless heroes of *Rio das Mortes* with the monetary means to fund their adventure in what is indubitably a true depiction of life reflecting art and vice versa. Ultimately, *Rio das Mortes* is a stupid movie about stupid people who are so severely stupid that they do not realize that *Rio das Mortes* is actually in Brazil and not Peru, despite the fact they manage to secure the funds to go there in the end. Notable only for an ultimately random and irrelevant scene where micro-diva Hanna Schygulla dances ecstatically to Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock" while a flabby leather-jacket-clad Fassbinder oafishly admires her provocative dance moves in a scene the actress would later describe in the documentary *Fassbinder in Hollywood* (2002) as the closest she ever came to sharing mutual love with the auteur, *Rio das Mortes* is an excellent example of the sort bad film that every great auteur directs, as a work that seems to fall apart at the seams yet features a number of the signature ingredients the filmmaker is best known for. Undoubtedly a mostly intrinsically worthless cinematic work that I could only recommend to Fassbinder completists and the handful of people that are into kraut counter-culture crap, *Rio das Mortes* is, if nothing else, a testament to the fact that West Germans of the late-1960s/early-1970s were just as idiotically idealistic as their American counterparts.

Little blond Aryaness Hanna (Hanna Schygulla) is being hassled on the phone by her overbearing mother, who wants her young daughter to quit smoking on an empty stomach and to get marriage ASAP. Of course, The problem is that the little lady's boyfriend Michael (Michael König) is a hopeless dreamer

of the hippie philistine sort and he has nil interest in bourgeois traditions, let alone being tied down by a woman who wants to squash dreams and aspirations. When Michael shows up at Hanna's apartments and discovers his black Bavarian friend Günther (Günther Kaufmann) there who has not seen in some time, he gives the Teutonic jigaboo an impassioned pussy punch to the face and two men begin to brawl in what is easily one of the most poorly choreographed and patently pathetic fight scenes of film history. The reason Michael attacked Günther is that he long ago betrayed his best friend and joined the navy, thereupon breaking a promise the two made together on agreeing to never join the military. Of course, after the fight, Michael and Günther get their bromance back on and soon begin plotting a dubious trip to Peru to hunt for Mayan gold. In between complaining to her boyfriend, Hanna attends feminist workshops where a gigantic cock with letters USSA is scrawled on the wall and where German dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's muse Magdalena Montezuma makes the silly declaration, "The repression of women can be best recognized in women's own behavior." Of course, the only person attempting to repress people in Rio das Mortes is high-strung Hanna. Naturally, Hanna becomes jealous of Günther almost instantly as she is a mixed-up and feminist-brainwashed college student who wants to get married and live a respectable life, yet at the same time she wants to pretend that she is an 'independent woman.' Of course, that does not stop Hanna from cheating on her braindead boy toy by having sex with the Bavarian black buck in a rather desperate and debauched attempt to destroy his plans to go to Peru with Michael. Among other things, Michael sells his prized sports car for a meager sum to a sleazy used car salesman (played by an extra sleazy and creepy Ulli Lommel) to help fund the trip, but it is only a small fraction of the amount that he and Günther need to pay for the rather pricey adventure. When Michael meets a pretentious beatnik bastard (played by prolific producer Joachim von Mengershausen, who produced Edgar Reitz's *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (1984) and Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* (1987), among countless other important German films)—a effortlessly effete student of Central America history—he becomes enraged, as the THC-addled fellow wants to bring girls along on the trip, which is a big no-no when it comes to big boyish dreams. As *Rio das Mortes* makes quite clear from essentially the get go, Michael and Günther are interested in going on a real pre-pubescent little boys' adventure and that does not include girl as they have kuddies. Eventually, an eccentric yet wealthy old lady (played Hanna Axmann-Rezzori, who gave Fassbinder 20,000 marks to make his feature *Love is Colder Than Death* (1969)) gives Michael and Günther the money they need to make their pilgrimage to Peru. As the two friends board the plane, Hanna watches from a distance and pulls a revolver out, but she ultimately decides not to shoot. Instead, she pulls out a tube of lipsticks and applies it to her sensual lips to prepare herself for her quest to find a new man.

RIO DAS MORTES

As Fassbinder's Danish filmmaker friend Christian Braad Thomsen (Kære Irene aka Dear Irene, *Koks i kulissen* aka *Ladies on the Rocks*) once wrote, "Rio das Mortes does not succeed as a film and is probably the only one of Fassbinder's early avant-garde films that is uninteresting. The light comedy form did not suit him..." which is certainly an apt description of the failed Fass-bande flick *After all*, Fassbinder's greatest excursion in comedy, *Satan's Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten*, utilizes sardonic slapstick of the innately anarchistic sort and can hardly be described as a being 'light.' Despite being an abject artistic failure, *Rio das Mortes* was a happy experience for Fassbinder's right-hand man and assistant director Harry Baer, who stated of the production's importance in an interview featured in the book *Chaos as Usual: Conversations About Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (2000): "In *Rio das Mortes*, I realized for the first time that Rainer was fully in charge as director. He stylized Hanna and Günther Kaufmann not just on film but right there in real life. The way those two acted—nobody talks that way and nobody walks that way. If finally understood that he used this artificiality as a tool. That was something special." Naturally, Fassbinder fans (myself included!) will find a thing or two to like about *Rio das Mortes*, but that does not change the fact that it is a painful celluloid abortion that leaves much to be desired. Of course, the image of Fassbinder dancing retardedly like a pseudo-hipster hack to Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock" while admiring Hanna Schygulla's idiosyncratic grace will forever be burnt into my mind. Of course, I have to admit that I would love to see a sequel to *Rio das Mortes* directed by Werner Herzog featuring the two protagonists of the film slowly but surely going mad during their adventure in Peru as a result of starvation and pernicious practical jokes played by cannibalistic brown Indian men, but it is probably a little too late for that.

-Ty E

WHITY

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1971) Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Whity is an unflattering tribute to the American Western (and America in general). The film centers around the son of a slave master(who also is a slave). This sad fellow goes by the name of "Whity." Mulatto Whity is a very conflicting character that has no clue where he stands. He is basically an unofficial member of the Nicholson slave owner family.

The Nicholson family is comprised of Ben Nicholson (the father), his young wife Katherine, homosexual son Frank(played by Uli "shot on video horror and straight to DVD" Lommel), and retarded Davy. Whity doesn't quite fit in with his family. He is more of a tool of the family as they use him to carry out their dirty and conspiratorial deeds. They eventually even inquire Whity to kill fellow family members. Whity is most the most innocent of the deranged bunch. Whity has a very theater like look and feel (like most of Fassbinder's films). Pale white make-up makes the Nicholsons look like white ghosts. I guess whites really are dead when they can't do their own work. Although Whity has minimal set design, it effectively portrays a decayed and dead society with its lack of color. Whity is a REAL drama that tugs at all undesired emotions. Whity is truly a lost soul. Gay incest also appears in Whity. Was this one of Fassbinder's many weird sexual fantasies? Probably since Fassbinder considered Whity to be one of his most personal films. Fassbinder was without doubt one of the bravest filmmakers of the German New Wave(maybe even more so than Werner Herzog). Fassbinder at the very least was the most darkly dramatic. Whity is the ultimate anti-western. The Western is most certainly not one of my favorite genres. John Wayne was a coward that never fought it any war. I also think that Mr. John Ford was one of many overrated Hollywood directors. The Hollywood American West is one of the biggest myths about America. The slave owning element of Whity brings reality to that myth and smashes it. It makes me wonder if Fassbinder was a fan of the american "western."

-Ty E

BREMEN FREEDOM
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Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1972)

Out of all the 40+ films German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder directed over the less than two decades he was active before his tragic yet undoubtedly inevitable death via drug overdose, the filmmaker's minimalistic TV-plays, which he made sporadically throughout his career and include *Das Kaffeehaus* (1970) aka *The Coffee House*, *Bremer Freiheit* (1972) aka *Bremen Freedom*, *Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht* (1975) aka *Like a Bird on a Wire*, and *Frauen in New York* (1977) aka *Women in New York*, are the most neglected and hard-to-find works to find today, with not a single one of these films ever being released in the United States in any form for whatever reason. Most of these films are probably far too aesthetically theatrical and minimalistic, blatantly low-budget, and primitively directed to interest the layman Fassbinder fan, so it is quite doubtful whether they will ever be released in any home format, yet luckily all of these films are available to those who know where to look for them. My favorite of these uniquely understated and aesthetically revolutionary TV-plays is *Bremen Freedom* (1972) aka *Bremer Freiheit: Frau Geesche Gottfried - Ein bürgerliches Trauerspiel* aka *Bremen Coffee* starring Margit Carstensen (*Satan's Brew, Possession*). Indeed, while sassy little blonde bombshell Hanna Schygulla was Fassbinder's main and most iconic diva, the slender and statuesque Margit Carstensen was arguably the most eclectically talented actress the German auteur ever worked with, with her performance in *Bremen Freedom* being one of the greatest and most disturbingly passionate yet simultaneously humorous performances she ever gave as a curious counterpoint to her role as the masochistic lead of *Martha* (1974). Based on the 1971 play of the same name written by Fassbinder himself specifically for Margit Carstensen, *Bremen Freedom* is an audaciously anti-bourgeois 'period piece' rather loosely inspired by the life and time of German female serial killer Gesche Margarethe Gottfried who, not unlike most female mass murderers, passively aggressively used poison as her weapon of choice, ultimately killing 15 people, including her parents, her two husbands, her fiancé and even her children, via arsenic in Bremen and Hanover between 1813 and 1827, thus resulting in her public beheading. In Fassbinder's quasi-Brechtian *Bremen Freedom*, one never sees said beheading, but instead enters the macabre mind of a crafty bitch who sees coldblooded coffee murders as a form of liberation and utilizes her domestic wifely duties as a malevolent means to carry out such callous cappuccino-flavored carnage.

Oftentimes falsely described as a feminist film, *Bremen Freedom* is indeed innately iconoclastic, depicting Gottfried in a somewhat sympathetic, if not critical, light by presenting her as a fierce femme fatale fighter of the kraut bourgeois patriarchy, yet the work ultimately depicts her murderous act of 'female libera-

tion' as futile and even lunatic, as she never reaches the sort of existential solace and personal freedom that she was hoping for when she started lacing her loved one's coffee and tea with arsenic. Although *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975) was the first major work where Fassbinder proved he was no blind philistine propagandist for the far-left as a work that received heavy criticism from Marxists, feminists and other degenerate middle-class rabble due to its unflattering depiction of the German Communist Party and 'bourgeois anti-bourgeois' armchair revolutionaries, *Bremen Freedom* proved the self-described "Romantic Anarchist" (a statement he made three months before his untimely death) was no meek pawn of Kluge and company, but a staunch equal opportunity offender who offered some of the most unwaveringly scathing and biting criticism of his degenerate generation. Featuring aesthetically rebellious sets that are all but totally empty aside from a couple pieces of antique furniture and mirrors, and soothing scenes of the ocean, harbor, and a hellish inferno projected in the background in what seems to be an archaic yet nonetheless aesthetically pleasing form of Chroma key compositing (aka blue screen), *Bremen Freedom* is a revolutionary work that Danish auteur Lars von Trier must have studied religiously in preparation for his mainstream anti-American avant-garde works *Dogville* (2003) and *Manderlay* (2005) as a minimalistic work about a lonely lady who only discovers more loneliness whilst in the company of others.

Geesche Gottfried (Margit Carstensen) is a virtual slave in her own household as a hysterical and highstrung yet intelligent lady who must literally wait on hand and knee for her pig of a patriarchal and majorly misogynistic husband Johann Gerhard Miltenberger (played by Ulli Lommel as a sort of 'bourgeois Svengali' figure). For the first couple of minutes of *Bremen Freedom*, one does not even see Geesche's face, but merely her legs and feet as she scampers wildly to appease her husband as an exceedingly annoying baby cries off-screen in the background. Johann has his wife running around the house like a diner waitress for coffee, newspapers, and schnapps, and when he can no longer think of a petty task for Geesche to do, he gets his sadistic kicks from belittling her as if she was a handicapped child. When Geesche, who is clearly sexually repressed, proclaims to her husband, "I want to sleep with you," he slaps her to the ground and demands her to say "I'm hot for you" as if she is a dog. Seeing no way out of the situation, Geesche poisons Johann's coffee and before he dies, a bloody rash appears across his face that resembles the sort of hokey monster makeup one would expect to see in one of Ulli Lommel's recent direct-to-DVD zombie flicks. When Johann croaks via death-by-coffee, Geesche decides to give superlatively soulless and sentimental institutional bourgeois love another chance and gets with a boorish ape-like man named Michael Gottfried (Wolfgang Schenck, who would later play a similar role in Fassbinder's *Effi Briesst* (1974)), who seems caring and respectable at first, yet ultimately proves he is no less petty and dictatorial than her first husband. Among other things, Michael hates the fact that Geesche has

BREMEN FREEDOM

children from her previous marriage, stating, "I need a wife with whom I can have children on my own. I cannot bear to see another man's children in the house." When the two get into a heated argument about the status of the torrid relationship, Michael states to Geesche, "Look at yourself, how hard you are. A real woman would now be lying on the floor completely shattered and crying bitterly," as if he is shocked by her rather flat affect in the face of heated heartbreak, despite the fact that he started a romantic relationship with her shortly after her first husband Johann mysteriously dropped dead. When Michael and Geesche get married, the gorilla-like groom dies on the altar, fittingly leaving the bride to spend her honeymoon with a corpse. When announcing the deaths of both husbands, children, and parents to her crippled soldier brother Johann (Fritz Schediwy), Geesche does not express even the most remote remorse nor sorrow, even going on a proto-feminist tangent that irks her bro, hysterically stating, "I shall live my life as I wish. To live one's own life, Johann, that ought to be everybody's aim. And a woman is a human being, even if there are too few men and women who are already aware of it." Naturally, Geesche also poisons her brother Johann as he had the gall to mock her for her psychosis-ridden feminist spiel. Indeed, Geesche ultimately lives her life the way she wishes as a psychotic serial killer, but it does not last long. After her friend Luisa Mauer (Hanna Schygulla) hints at the fact she knows she is a killer, Geesche poisons her female companion and even lets her know that she has laced her beverage with arsenic before she croaks, but shortly after Fassbinder shows up and reveals that he went to a criminal court and found poison in the coffee. When Fassbinder asks Geesche why she poisoned him, she responds with, "Now I shall die" as if she is relieved by the fact she has a date with a guillotine, thus confirming she will never ever again have to suffer the absolutely hellish burden of being a bourgeois housewife.

While not actually depicted in the Brechtian (and thus anticlimactic) Bremen Freedom, the real-life Gesche Gottfried was beheaded in 1831 in what was the last public execution in the Northern German city of Bremen. Indeed, while it is rather dubious whether or not she was really a feminist freedom fighter of sorts, one must admit that being publically executed in a rather brutal manner is as far away as one can get from being a simple domestic petite-bourgeois housewife. More than anything, Bremen Freedom depicts Gesche as a tragic and misguided figure with a slave-morality in the Nietzschean sense who ironically utilized her servant duties as an ostensibly humble housewife who serves her husband coffee as a warped means to liberate herself from her figurative shackles, eventually becoming even more boldly and maliciously homicidal when the toxic spiked hot stuff did not give her the sense of freedom she expected it would, thus leading to her own predictable (and arguably self-consciously desired) self-destruction, somewhat ironically 'dying like a man' in the end. Undoubtedly, like many contemporary feminists, the more Gesche sought liberalization via mur-

derous mocha, the more it became apparent that said liberalization was merely an intangible ideal and utopian dream that turned the once-humble housewife into a psychosis-plagued neurotic of the fatally fanatical sort who lives to kill and spout stupid slogans (“well-behaved women seldom make history” certainly comes to mind in this context!) After all, Gesche Gottfried did, indeed, make history and in a manner with which few other women can compare. Aside from *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* directed by Ulli Lommel, which the auteur merely produced and had a small acting role in, *Bremen Freedom* stands out as Fassbinder’s sole serial killer flick, yet when it comes down to it, the simplistically yet suavely stylized TV-play is really a black comedy of the dry, witty, and severely social critical sort that spares no one, not least of all female ‘progressives.’ While conspicuously criticizing the old kraut middleclass order, *Bremen Freedom* more importantly attacks the new order, especially the so-called ‘women’s liberation movement,’ utilizing Gesche Gottfried as a symbol of irrational female rebellion whose macabre methods not only cannibalistically destroyed her entire extended family, but also destroyed herself as a little lady who is nothing if not her own worst enemy. As hinted in by Fassbinder in a scene in *Bremen Freedom* where Geesche asks for sex from her husband in a most groveling manner (only to be rebuffed and thrown to the ground), the murders possibly could have been avoided had the female anti-hero not become so frigid and sexually repressed, but such sentiments might offend the good taste of a humungous Hebraic feminist whale like Andrea Dworkin. Like Fassbinder’s later more popular works, especially *The Stationmaster’s Wife* (1977) aka *Bolwieser* and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), *Bremen Freedom* cruelly demonstrates there was a hefty price women had to pay for female emancipation, namely the loss of their souls and potential soulmates.

-Ty E

THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT
THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1972)

Aside from the fantastic first four feature-length freak flicks directed by kraut mischling auteuress Ulrike Ottinger (*A Ticket of No Return*, *Freak Orlando*) and the subversive scatological cyber-dyke sci-fi films of sexually ambiguous Austrian auteur A. Hans Scheirl (*Flaming Ears*, *Dandy Dust*), I cannot think of many lesbian films I can tolerate, let alone praise, but a German gentleman by the name of Rainer Werner Fassbinder – the German New Cinema master of morose melodrama – did direct a Sapphic cinematic work of sorts about lily-licker love gone awry that I cannot deny my delight for. Indeed, regarded as one of Fassbinder's greatest achievements as both a filmmaker and as a playwright, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) aka *Die Bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant*, although a film about lurid love between two women (and a third lipstick lesbian in the mix that stands sycophantically on the side) and not featuring a single male character in the film, was actually based on the homosexual filmmaker's failed romance with his black Bavarian boyfriend Günther Kaufmann; a married heterosexual man with two kids. As mentioned in the Fassbinder biography *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1987) written by Robert Katz (co-scriptwriter of Wolf Gremm's 1982 film *Kamikaze 89* starring R.W. Fassbinder), "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant, subtitled "Real Feeling," is the story, transsexualized into a lesbian love affair, of Rainer's relationship with Günther...Rainer never challenged the view held by those closest to him that every word in the play was spoken either to or by him. But it goes much further than mere revelation or even soul-baring. A year later he would turn it into one of his most powerful films, both versions making a deep descent into the nature of love." Written by Fassbinder during a spontaneous 12-hour flight from Berlin to Los Angeles, California (that involved the filmmaker demanding that he and his Superstars skip the vacation trip and fly straight back to the Fatherland so as immediately get to work on his new script) and filmed in a mere ten days by cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (whose house was utilized as the setting for the film), *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* would prove to be one of the filmmaker's most strangely personal, if not cryptically so, works, thus brazenly and bodaciously baring his whole positively pitiful soul and hopelessly humiliating failed romance for the entire whole world to see, albeit in a more aesthetically pleasing and delectably dainty form. Like the debauched yet decorated dyke anti-hero of the film, Fassbinder would literally try to buy the love of his reluctant black beau by showering him with expensive Lamborghinis – four of which the masculine mulatto Bavarian managed to total in a mere year – while his Superstars starved for money and attention, thus resulting in a mutiny or two against filmmaker Führer. Starring damaged diva Margit Carstensen (*Satan's Brew*, *Chinese Roulette*) in her first major collaboration with Fassbinder (she previously appeared in minor

roles in two of the filmmaker's two 1970 TV-movies; *Das Kaffeehaus* and *The Niklashausen Journey*) as an antagonistic, alcohol-addled aristocrat who loathes men almost as much she hates waking up before noon, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* is a decisively dispiriting and drastically dreary drama about a horrendously hateful and monstrously miserable woman of an unprepossessing personality named Petra von Kant who believes she has found true love in the form of a young beautiful lower-middleclass woman, but cannot deal with the fact that her gorgeous girlfriend still needs men to sexually service her as everyone knows that women make for a poor and patently passive substitute for a job biologically fit for a man.

Petra von Kant – a famous yet fiendish fashion designer based in Bremen who, despite her wealth and prestige, is unable to pay the bills on time – is undoubtedly a miserable cunt whose only source of solace comes from fresh female genitalia in pretty proletarian form. A sedentary sadist who has her own virtual slave/assistant named Marlene (Irm Hermann) – a mostly mute masochist who gladly endures her wicked employer's emotional abuse – Petra is a loser in every way, especially in regard to love, except when it comes to her work and propensity to plague other people with her penetrating pang and perturbing passion. When Petra's cousin Sidonie von Grasenabb (Schaake) appears early on in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* to discuss her happy marriage of humility and honesty, the fiercely foul fashion designer reveals her unwavering, seething hatred of men. While Sidonie explains how her, "humility paid off" because her husband, "thinks he's the boss, but in the end," she gets her way, Petra firmly believes that, "marriage brings out the worst in people." Although a lecherous lesbian, Petra has been married twice; once to a 'great love' named Pierre – a handsome fellow of a fiery heart who thought he was immortal but died four months before their daughter was born via car crash, thus turning her into a young widow of a wench – and the second marriage started apparently quite lovingly but ended in utter disgust and divorce. Although a bona fide bitch with a complete and utter contempt for men, Petra displays a certain unusual fear and all-around rather odd relationship with her own mother, thus hinting at the deep-seated source of her own homosexuality and failures as a wife, mother, and female. Petra also has a hidden hostility towards her mommy that is unwaveringly unleashed when she hits rock bottom, even going so far as calling the woman who gave birth to her a "miserable little whore," right to her face. The emotionally despondent mother of an adolescent girl named Gabriele (Eva Mattes), Petra does not have to worry about nurturing her daughter nor providing her with natural motherly love because she keeps her away at boarding school, but she does make a random appearance in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* that will ultimately scar the already dyke-like girl for life, thus perpetuating the vicious familial circle of female discontent. When it comes down to it, the only thing Petra cares about is herself, so when she falls in dubious love with a married 23-year-old blonde

THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT

beauty named Karin Thimm (Hanna Schygulla) – who the infatuated fashion designer offers financial support to under the pretense that she becomes a model – things get a bit complicated over time, even if a briefly successful artistic and romantic relationship is sired, especially when the younger lady proves that she cannot be bought, nor personally possessed; a hard fact that the spoiled aristocrat who is used to getting everything she wants cannot accept. A heartless sadist who delights in dishing out heaps of hatred and relentless rejection, Petra von Kant finally learns what it is like to be on the receiving end of rejection and resentment, especially when she learns that a poor primitive Negro man of all people satisfied her femme in a manly manner that she never could.

Essentially comprised of five positively potent and penetrating acts with long over-extended scenes, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* is an exceedingly elegant and expressively stylized theatre piece of neo-baroque beauty adapted for the silver screen that, not unlike *Rope* (1948) directed by Alfred Hitchcock (Fassbinder even makes a 'Hitchcockian' cameo of sorts), is set in one room featuring a gigantic reproduction of Nicolas Poussin's 1629 classical baroque painting "Midas and Bacchus"; a work that is more reflective of the film's male homosexual cryptic origins than any content featured in the film itself. With the character of Marlene – Petra's masochistic assistant who stands to the side silently throughout the film and endures her master's narcissistic brutality – the viewer has an 'outsider' character to identify with, who although actually appearing in the scenes with the other characters, has no more of an influence on her malevolent master's romantic relationship than the filmgoer. Without Marlene as her meek servant and secret quasi-voyeur, Petra no longer has a constant source of energy for her sadism, hence why when the silent slave leaves without saying a word, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* concludes. At one point in the film, Karin makes a derogatory remark about Marlene and her relationship to her master, which Petra replies, "she's not screwy...she loves me!" in confidence that her groveling peon will always be there to lick her puss and paint her portrait, thus the sadistic she-devil's total abandonment by the sensitive Sappho serf comes as the ultimate surprise and lesson in modesty. Like Marlene, the viewer watches the emotional rise and fall of Petra von Kant; a woman that believes she and her girlfriend, "shall conquer the world together," yet when Karin displays will power and personal integrity that is greater than any sum of money or luxury her lezzy lover can provide, the aberrant aristocrat reaches a point of personal crisis that is so overwhelming that it is like no other pain she has endured before, not even the death of her beloved husband over a decade before. When it comes down to it, Petra von Kant – a superlatively spoiled blueblood ice queen who is used to getting whatever she wants, whenever she wants, due to her wealth and prestige – cannot deal with the fact that she does not have the godlike power to personally possess who ever she wants, hence the double-meaning of her naive remark of, "I've paid for enough," when addressing a personal threat from her

cousin Sidonie. It is only when Petra accepts the fact that not all people can be bought and sold and that love is not about possessing the lover that she can begin to emerge from her personal crisis, and that her personal assistant Marlene is finally set free, thus dissolving the bitter tears of a tyrannical noblewoman of a less than noble persuasion who for the first time in her life understands the meaning and importance of humility.

A claustrophobic and sadomasochistic celluloid psychodrama of a consciously theatrical design, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* is easily one of the deepest and most daunting melodramas I have ever seen, not to mention one of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's most personal and powerful achievements as a cinematic artist who was just as great of a playwright as he was a filmmaker. Expressing himself vicariously through the fictional female character of Petra von Kant, Fassbinder revealed himself to be a man so megalomaniacal that he would denigrate someone in a dastardly manner by calling them a "rotten little rat," while in the same conversation pleading to that same person how much he loves them and how they had "stabbed" him "in the heart." Of course, as Petra's mother Valerie von Kant (Gisela Fackeldey) explains to her daughter while still disapproving of her Sapphic proclivities, love only can prevail when one is able to, "learn to love without demanding." Whether or not Fassbinder was eventually able to love without demanding remains to be seen, but we do know that two of his subsequent 'great loves' committed suicide after his foredoomed romantic relationship with heterosexual flame Günther Kaufmann fizzled out, thus making *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* and especially *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* – a work made in tribute to his ill-fated third love Armin Meier, who committed self-slaughter shortly after the two broke up – as well as countless other films directed by the filmmaker to be the only notable and positive byproducts of his calamitous intimate affairs, which is more than most people can say about the results of severed relationships with ex-sweethearts. Eva Mattes (*Eight Hours are Not a Day*, *Effi Briest*), who played Petra von Kant's daughter, certainly did not think Fassbinder had the most fabulously fateful love life as she portrayed the star-crossed superstar auteur in full drag-king apparel for the utterly unconventional biopic *A Man Like Eva* (1984) aka *Ein Mann wie EVA*; a sensitively assembled yet shaming cinematic depiction of the film director's self-destructive tendencies, especially in the relentless realm of romance. Apparently, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* did not sit well with a number of real-life lesbians as an angry abberosexual army of muff-divers from various Sapphic special interest groups picketed the film when it played at the New York Film Festival in 1972, but as Petra von Kant learned herself, the truth hurts, especially when told from the perspective of a man-loving man that has never venerated the vag.

-Ty E

THE MERCHANT OF FOUR SEASONS
THE MERCHANT OF FOUR SEASONS

Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1972)

German New Cinema wunderkind Rainer Werner Fassbinder's first big domestic commercial and critical success, and a work almost unanimously praised by everyone who saw it—be they uncultivated members of the proletariat or pompous bourgeois snobs—*The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971) aka *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* was also an extremely personal film for the director who based the soul-stinging work on his own cold family and what he witnessed personally as a mere kindergartener. Centering around a likeable yet superlatively slob-like “born loser” based on the director's own favorite uncle, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* was described by Fassbinder himself as “a story familiar to almost everyone I know. A man wishes that he had made something other of his life than he did. His education, his surroundings, and circumstances frustrate the fulfillment of his dream.” In fact, Fassbinder's uncle was such an important influence on the director at an early age that he was a father figure (his own father, an abortion doctor, had little interest in him) of sorts or as the director's mother Lilo Pempeit described after bringing her troubled grade school son to a child psychologist, “Rainer was supposed to draw a picture of his family. Where the father belonged, he drew his uncle, my brother. This uncle became the model for the protagonist of *The Merchant of Four Seasons*.” The first film Fassbinder made after being melodramatically moved and totally transformed by the kaleidoscopic Hollywood melodramas of Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk (*All That Heaven Allows*, *Written on the Wind*), *The Merchant of Four Seasons* confirmed that the filmmaker was not merely a pretentious dilettante who had watched one too many American film noir movies and Marxist Godard flicks, but an audacious auteur who had a downright nasty knack for cinematic emotional range and expressing the darker aspects of the (in)human condition, especially in regard to those things that cannot merely be expressed with words, mundane existentialist meanderings, and pretentious psychobabble. A positively perturbing yet ingeniously simplistic post-WWII kraut tragedy about a seeming ‘everyman’ who discovers he no longer has the will to live due to his unbearable longing for love and warmth that neither his friends nor family seem decent enough to provide him with, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* is like a virtual celluloid suicide letter/epitaph written posthumously by Fassbinder, who inevitably suffered a similar cataclysmic fate himself, in tribute to an uncle only he seemed to understand, but being a wee and ultimately impotent lad, was totally incapable of helping. A brutally beautiful film about emotionally ugly members of the Bavarian bourgeois, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* is an absolutely engulfing warning to family members everywhere why love (or more like lack thereof) is colder than death. Made on an absurdly meager budget of 178,000 marks (less than \$120,000) over an eleven day period, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* is just

another reason why Rainer Werner Fassbinder was one of the most prolific filmmakers who ever lived of not just German cinema history, but cinema history in general.

In the opening of *The Merchant of Four Seasons*, one is introduced to unpleasantly plump philistine protagonist Hans Epp (Hans Hirschmüller) and the root of his internal sickness and perennial longing for love, warmth, and acceptance. Returning from his stint in the French Foreign Legion, Hans hopes that his mother (Gusti Kreissl), an apparently devout Catholic who has not seen her son in a year, will embrace him with warm and tender arms, but instead she callously complains “It’s just like you to arrive in the middle of the night” and “The good die young and people like you come back.” Of course, Hans will also inevitably die young and ultimately have the ‘last laugh’ in a warped sort of way, but it will not be from being penetrated by *untermensch* bullets nor an Arab sword, but due to his decidedly deleterious weakness for alcohol, which will eventually culminate in his prolonged suicide via intentional alcohol overdose while drinking with his friends and family, who watch on passively, at a local bar. In love with a woman who rejected him due to his undignified profession as a fruit-peddler and married to a patronizing and philandering woman named Irmgard (Irm Hermann) who he does not love but made the mistake of having a young daughter with, Hans—a rather tiny yet unflatteringly pudgy individual with a discernibly swarthy appearance—is stuck in a less than ideal domestic situation that makes him all the more bitter and depressed with each passing day. After an alcohol binge one night where he tells his friends at the bar how he was fired from his previous job as a police officer after a co-employee walked on him receiving a blowjob from a hooker looking to get out of a bad situation, Hans comes home to his angry wife Irmgard, who calls him a “rat,” which enrages the boorish born loser to the point where he irrationally physically assaults her in front of the couple’s young daughter Renate (Andrea Schober). Rather absurdly, Irmgard seeks shelter with Hans’ family, who all take turns trashing their blood relative in a remarkably vile manner in support of a genetic outsider. Only Hans’ sister Anna Epp (Hanna Schygulla) shows her brother support and points out the innate hypocrisy and seething hatred of the Epp family, especially in regard to the protagonist’s journalist brother-in-law Kurt (Kurt Raab), second sister Heide (Heide Simon), and sermonizing mother. When Hans arrives to makeup with his wife and to plead with her to come home, Irmgard calls her lawyer and asks for a divorce, which causes her husband to suffer a major heart attack, while a good portion of his family look on without lifting a finger to help him. Bedridden from the heart attack, Hans stewes in melancholy while his wanton and witchlike wife begins an affair with a random stranger named Anzell (Karl Scheydt), which leads to daughter Renate walking in on her mother engaging in carnal knowledge with the mysterious fellow. Despite her extramarital excursions, Irmgard decides to makeup with Hans and comes up with the seem-

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ingly bright idea to hire an employee to peddle fruit for them since her hubby can no longer risk overexerting himself as it might result in another, and very possibly fatal, heart attack. By happenstance, Hans ultimately hires Anzell—the man that gave his wife the sexual satisfaction he never could—for the job, which naturally stuns Irmgard, who conspires to get him fired. Luckily, Hans runs into an old friend from the legion named Harry Radeck (Klaus Löwitsch) and hires him for the job, which temporarily makes for a bright light in the failed family man's life, but all seemingly good things must come to end when you're an eternal failure.

Essentially, the final third of *The Merchant of Four Seasons* depicts Hans as he slowly but surely wastes away via depression and alcohol, while his friend Harry replaces him as a father, husband, and business man. While Hans' fruit business is now a monetary success and has even inspired his mother to give him the backhanded compliment, "I always felt ashamed when people asked what my son did. I got all hot under the collar. But now I'm really proud of him. You have a proper business now," he remains apathetic and continues to stew in his miserable and seemingly misanthropic melancholy. In fact, Hans no longer enjoys the all the things that made his life worth living, including his favorite music LP, which he smashes into bits, as well as his "great love" (Ingrid Caven), who he rebuffs after she undresses and approaches him for sex. Although he cannot articulate why, Hans wants to die and will use the rest of his short life to achieve this task, which ironically makes for his greatest accomplishment during his brief existence. During Hans' last night alive, he takes a shot of liquor for every single person/institution he loved/hated but was ultimately rejected by, as if accusing them all for contributing to his demise. Hans tells his best friend Harry "you're the only real human being...but you're a swine, too." Apparently, even Harry screwed over Hans during their time fighting for the legion in Morocco in 1947 when his friends voyeuristically watched him be tortured via whip by an Arab soldier (played by Fassbinder's 'second great love' El Hedi ben Salem) in a fetishistic S&M fashion and only helped him when it was apparent that the savage soldier was going to execute him. While Harry ultimately saved Hans from the Islamic savage, the born loser proclaimed to his compatriot that "You should have let me die," as if accusing him of the misery he would subsequently incur after leaving the legion. At Hans's funeral, only his "great love" seems to truly mourn him and the always-conspiring Irmgard makes Harry the inevitable offer, "You know the business. I can't manage on my own. And you get on well with Renate. You like her. I don't know what you feel for me, whether you like me but I like having you around. If we were to team up it'd be the best for everyone, I think...for you...for me...and especially for Renate." Of course, Harry, who already became the man of the Epp household by proxy long before Hans committed suicide, receives an offer from Irmgard that he cannot refuse and he assumedly lives happily ever after with his chubby chums' unhappy family.

Everything seems to work out in the end for the better, as if Hans knew all along that he was preordained to be sacrificed.

Undoubtedly, the production of *The Merchant of Four Seasons* was almost just as much a family feud as the film itself. Ingrid Caven (as 'Ingrid Fassbinder')—Fassbinder's then-wife and rival of virtually every other Fass-bande Superstar, be they male or female—not only played the role of 'the Merchant's Great Love,' but also acted as the production manager for *The Merchant of Four Seasons*. Apparently, Caven infuriated Fassbinder's perennial 'artistic consultant/assistant director' Harry Baer so much that he decided to throw her out of a ground-floor window, but Mrs. Fassbinder was not the only one that inflamed the hot-headed homo because he also apparently chased around Irm Hermann, who played Hans' bitchy and unfaithful wife, with a knife. Apparently reduced to tears a number of times by Fassbinder during *The Merchant of Four Seasons* in what was probably the greatest performance of her acting career, Hermann—who despite the filmmaker's homosexuality, deeply loved and financially supported him during his early poverty years—later stated of the production that she "was treated like filth." Of course, all of this makes for the greatest irony as Fassbinder once told an interviewer regarding his films, "When I show people, on the screen, the ways that things can go wrong...my aim is to warn them that that's the way things will go if they don't change their lives," yet he inevitably managed to push everyone out of his life, including *The Merchant of Four Seasons* stars Irm Hermann and Kurt Raab before his premature death in 1982.

An emotionally crippling tale of a chubby and somewhat cherubic cuckold who deracinates himself from his unloving family in spirit and emotion before his seemingly preordained death by drink, *The Merchant of Four Seasons* singlehandedly confirmed that Rainer Werner Fassbinder was a rare filmmaker of German New Cinema who could not only appeal to the stunted feelings of the bloated Bavarian bourgeois, but also poor 'plebeians' and philistines who had nil interest in the counterfeit intellectualism of directors like Alexander Kluge, Jean-Marie Straub and Wim Wenders, whose films only tended to interest those lounging in the far-left Ivory Tower. Incidentally, Wenders, who was also born in 1945 and had a doctor for a father like Fassbinder, would describe *The Merchant of Four Seasons* as his favorite film directed by his deceased cinematic compatriot in an audio commentary he did for a somewhat recent DVD release of the film. Fassbinder himself regarded the film highly among his oeuvre as well, citing *The Merchant of Four Seasons* as among "The Best" among German New Cinema, as well his tenth favorite film among his own "Top Ten of My Own Films" in a "Hitlist of German Films" he wrote in 1981. A Teutonic masterpiece of the melodramatically macabre, it is no surprise that *The Merchant of Four Seasons* was described by more than one film critic as the greatest and most important films of German New Cinema, even if Fassbinder would go on to direct a number of superior works. Ultimately, *The Merchant of Four Sea-*

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sons is an emotionally trying yet sensitively assembled tribute to everyone who has ever had a loser uncle (mine had the (mis)fortune of dying before I was born) or a familial black sheep who was never given their due.

-Ty E

WORLD ON A WIRE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1973)

I would not describe myself as anything even remotely along the lines of a science fiction fan or a connoisseur, but I am an unwavering Rainer Werner Fassbinder fiend of sorts, so naturally I am quite keen on his sole yet immense contribution to the sci-fi genre, *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire*, a 212 minute proto-cyberpunk epic shot on 16mm film that was originally released as a two-part miniseries for West German television. Nearly impossible to find until rather recently after a completely restored version appeared at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival in 2010 and was eventually released on DVD/Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection in February 2012, *World on a Wire* is a Teutonized, semi-futuristic celluloid adaptation of *Simulacron-3* (1964) aka *Counterfeit World* by American science fiction novelist Daniel F. Galouye. Featuring next to nil action nor special effects yet a variety of aesthetically exquisite and quasi-futuristic and sometimes classical sets, *World on a Wire* is a rare cultivated thinking man's sci-fi flick for the non-autistic that is certainly a wonderful oddity among Fassbinder's work in that it is his sole experiment in science fiction, although the director would later play the lead role in his friend Wolf Gremm's darkly comedic and curiously campy science fiction work *Kamikaze 1989* (1982) aka *Kamikaze 89*. Of course, being a fairly early work by Fassbinder, who was especially influenced by American gangster flicks and films of the French New Wave during his formative years as a filmmaker, *World on a Wire* is more a neo-noir epic set in an aesthetically pleasing technocratic nightmare than an emotionally vacant feeble fantasy-driven escapist piece for virginal fanboys. Featuring what seems to be the majority of Fassbinder's superstars, including Margit Carstensen, Kurt Raab, Ingrid Caven, and Ulli Lommel, among countless others, as well as a cameo from the filmmaker's friend/fellow filmmaker Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Der Bomberpilot*) and his statuesque muse Magdalena Montezuma, *World on a Wire* is arguably the German New Cinema alpha-auteur's first great and epic masterpiece, as a sort of ambitious warm-up for his celluloid magnum opus and *Gesamtkunstwerk*, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980). A culturally pessimistic work about a charming kraut Humphrey Bogart/James Bond-like character who finds himself a rather lonely yet marked man and who begins to believe the world he lives in may be virtual reality as opposed to actual reality, *World on a Wire*—a work predating *Blade Runner* (1982) by nearly a decade and *The Matrix* (1999) by over a quarter of a century—brings up moral questions about artificial intelligence and what happens when man's creations have more so-called 'humanity' than man himself, but also the age old questions regarding persona versus individual and how people perceive others, especially in a world that is increasingly technology-driven. Additionally, *World on a Wire* also happens to be Fassbinder's least 'queer' and most innately masculine

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cinematic work, thus making it the perfect introduction to the enfant terrible auteur filmmaker's outstanding and highly idiosyncratic oeuvre.

Things are getting rather morally dubious and just plain bizarre at the institute for cybernetics and future science (Institut für Kybernetik und Zukunftsforschung aka "IKZ"), where a new supercomputer holds a simulation program called "Simulacron one" featuring a "virtual reality" of the real world, including 9,000 "identity units" (or electronic man-made individuals with the ability to think, feel, and have memories), some of which have made the mistake of wanting to become real living and breathing human beings. Professor Henry Vollmer (Adrian Hoven), who is apparently on the brink of a major world-changing discovery that "would mean the end of the world," is the seemingly half-mad head of the Simulacron one program and after stating a number of degrading and quasi-insane things to the Secretary of State Von Weinlaub, including "you are nothing more than the image others have made of you," dies under extremely questionable circumstances that appear to be totally nonsensical after randomly collapsing. With Vollmer dead, man's man and lone-wolf Dr. Fred Stiller (Klaus Löwitsch) becomes his successor, but he seems reluctant to take the job, especially after Günther Lause (Ivan Desny), the security adviser of IKZ, mysteriously disappears without a trace after passing on a secret regarding Vollmer's apparent breakthrough. Even stranger, no one at IKZ seems to remember Mr. Lause, thus leading to the beginning of Stiller's cognitive dissonance and war against virtual reality as the "man who knew too much." In control of IKZ is a Svengali fellow named Herbert Siskins (Karl Heinz Vosgerau), who is secretly working with in a partnership with the industrial conglomerate "United Steel." When one of the contact units, a fellow named Einstein (played by Gottfried John), who happens to be the only one that knows about the simulation, manages to enter the body of IKZ scientist Fritz Walfang (Günter Lamprecht) and enters 'reality,' Stiller discovers that his world is nothing more than a simulation as well, thus ultimately leading to the good doctor's figurative and literal break with reality, but his 'delusions' and fears are not unwarranted. In between banging a number of babes, including Vollmer's daughter Eva (kraut diva Mascha Rabben) and Siskins' blonde secretary Gloria Fromm (Barbara Valentin), Stiller runs away from the threat of being involuntarily institutionalized in a nut house, packs of police, assassination attempts, and phantom German Shepherds, among other things, after he is framed in a conspiracy created by Siskins and his corporate goons for the death of professor Vollmer and the IKZ's psychiatrist Franz Hahn (Wolfgang Schenck), a man that eventually realized the corruption at the cybernetics institute. Eventually, Stiller realizes he has a true friend and not just a femme fatale in the form of Eva Vollmer, who is a human contact unit to the real world. Stiller also learns that he was modeled after a real-life human named Dr. Fred Stiller who designed an electric model of himself just for kicks. Considering the real Fred Stiller developed a sort of 'god complex' and megalomania due

to his control of the Simulacron virtual world, Eva's love waned from him and she began to develop a deeper love for the sensually electronic Stiller, thus she decided to switch the bodies of both men. Despite its patently pessimistic tone, *World on a Wire* concludes on a rather positive note, especially for a Fassbinder flick, though it might strike fear into the typical Hollywood filmgoer due to its less than flattering depiction of the real world (as opposed to the Simulacron realm).

In 1973, director Rainer Werner Fassbinder wrote regarding *World on a Wire*, "This, of course, creates doubts about ourselves merely being projections, since, in that world, projections and real persons look alike...what this is about is based on an old, philosophical model which here creates a certain kind of horror." With internet social network sites like facebook changing the way people communicate and ultimately replacing real-life physical contact, Fassbinder's sentiments seem all the more pertinent today in an era where a person's internet persona typically transcends the true character of their true personality, at least in other people's eyes, or to once again quote mad scientist Henry Vollmer, "you are nothing more than the image others have made of you." For a master of oftentimes macabre and misanthropic melodrama, Fassbinder certainly made a great contribution to the realm of science fiction with *World on a Wire*, a cinematically epic work that manages to combine film noir, high-camp, softcore S&M imagery, a phantasmagorical Cocteau-esque use of mirrors, Sirkian set-design and melodrama, a fantastic and seemingly sardonic hodgepodge of old and new European actors (as well as counter-culture types like Rainer Langhans), music ranging from Richard Wagner's "Liebestod" to dreary counter-culture krautrock, absurdist imagery and comedy, and a soothing pseudo-futurist aesthetic for a film that is without contemporaries, although it does make for great double viewing with Stanley Kubrick's equally antagonistically 'futuristic' sci-fi *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). Unfortunately, world-class cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Fox and His Friends*), who filmed *World on a Wire*, later bought the rights to Galouye's *Simulacron-3* (1964) and planned to film another adaptation of the sci-fi novel, but he ultimately committed cinematic blasphemy by selling them to epic kraut hack Roland Emmerich (*Independence Day*, *Godzilla*), who produced the big science fiction turd *The Thirteenth Floor* (1999). For me, *World on a Wire* is just one (but a very big one at that!) of the many reasons why Rainer Werner Fassbinder is the filmmaker whose oeuvre I must often come back to. Rather unfortunately, no scientist thought to make an "identity unit" of Fassbinder so as to prevent world cinema from being the technocratic nightmare of CGI swill, robotic emotions, and silicone tits that it is today. A delightful dystopian flick that does not wallow in technology fetishism, globalist propaganda, and senseless and soulless special effects, *World on a Wire* is undoubtedly one of the most enthralling portrayals of paranoia-based solipsism in cinema history.

WORLD ON A WIRE

-Ty E

ALI: FEAR EATS THE SOUL

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1974)

Movie miscegenation has been blatantly beaten-to-death for quite some time in Hollywood, yet the Tinseltown agents of melodramatic agitprop have yet to produce a race-mixing propaganda piece nearly as provocative, true to life, and ripe with subversive strife as German New Cinema master of melodrama Rainer Werner Fassbinder's masterpiece *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) aka *Angst essen Seele auf*; an uniquely uncompromising look at a decidedly doomed love affair between a lonely 60-year-old widow and a 30-something-year-old Moroccan immigrant worker of less than meager means. Part subversive homage to Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk's intensely idiosyncratic Hollywood melodramas *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and *Imitation of Life* (1959), *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* proved that Fassbinder learned much from his spiritual cinematic guru, but not without transcending the elder director's studio-system-shackled sense for cinema by giving it a revolutionary West German twist. Starring Fassbinder's then-boyfriend El Hedi ben Salem – a poor Moroccan-born immigrant who lived with his family (a wife and two kids) in a French Arab ghetto before becoming a Fass-bande Superstar – as the colored guest-worker who finds unlikely love and warmth in the form of a socially naive German widow, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* carries a certain audacious, if not exaggerated, authenticity to it that was even more brutally reflected in real-life with both actor and auteur being six feet under less than a decade after the release of the film that would prove to be their greatest collaboration with one another. While Fassbinder's friend Werner Schroeter – the greatest 'dandy' of German New Wave Cinema – held the filmmaker partly responsible for El Hedi ben Salem's death due to his belief that, "he had let down a friend who, to a certain extent, was not his equal. Salem was not an educated person; he was not at all sure of himself," the auteur certainly displayed his sensitivity to his exotic lover's precarious plight in *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*; a striking cinematic work that, although coming from an ostensibly 'far-leftist' perspective, if not a rather distinctive and highly individualistic one, demonstrates that all 'forbidden loves,' especially racially mixed ones, are predestined to social ostracism and, more likely than not, inevitable obliteration. Filmed in two weeks in between shooting *Martha* (1974) – another early Sirk-influenced film – and the black-and-white epic period piece *Effi Briest* (1974), *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* proved to be just another reason as to why Rainer Werner Fassbinder is probably the most prolific German filmmaker who ever lived as an absurdly active auteur who made more cinematic masterpieces in a year than most filmmakers make in a lifetime.

In an essay he wrote on Douglas Sirk, Fassbinder remarked regarding the curious conclusion of *All That Heaven Allows* – the film that the German New Cinema auteur loosely remade as *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* – that, "Then later Jane

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goes back to Rock, because she keeps having headaches, which happens to all of us if we don't fuck often enough. But when she's back, it isn't a happy ending, even though they're together, the two of them. A person who creates so many problems in love won't be able to be happy later on... Human beings can't be alone, but they can't be together either. They're full of despair..." And naturally, such is the world of *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, but Fassbinder takes things to more misanthropic and even nihilistic extremes. The main difference between the younger filmmaker and his filmic father figure is probably best symbolically summed up in two different yet similar scenes from each respective filmmaker's films involving adult children and a lone television. While a TV is used as a soulless bourgeois gift so as to appease their mother, who has just broken up with her younger lover (played by Rock Hudson) and is quite lonely and melancholy, by the conspiring children in *All That Heaven Allows*, the son of the female protagonist of *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* kicks in his mother's boobtube and another son calls her a "whore" after his mommy reveals she has married a young Arab. Working in arguably the most revolutionary period in German filmmaking history, Fassbinder was able to depict a sort of hopeless honesty in his films that Douglas Sirk never had the privilege of, at least while working somewhat servilely for the monetary-inclined money-men of Hollywood.

One rainy night after getting off after a tiring day of work, 60-year-old Emmi Kurowski (Brigitte Mira) – a widowed cleaning woman from a working-class background who was once a Nazi party member – finally decides to investigate the exotic foreign music (*Al Asfourieh* by Sabah) coming from a local bar that has always intrigued her on her nightly walks home, so she goes inside the somewhat seedy saloon and meets her soon-to-be-husband Ali (El Hedi ben Salem) by happenstance. Inside, she encounters a couple German women, one of which being the bar owner and Ali's sometimes-lover Barbara (Barbara Valentin), and a handful of Arab men. Ali's "cock is kaput," so he turns down the sexual offer of a haggard kraut whore, but he does agree to dance with "the old woman" Emmi after his racial compatriot tells him to do so in a somewhat heckling manner, thereupon ushering in the unconventional relationship between the ignorant, half-literate 30-something-year-old Moroccan guest-worker and the lonely widow who does not have a bad word to say about Uncle Hitler. Although Emmi and Ali face derision and denigration from the bar patrons, it is nothing compared to the virtual hell on earth they will experience from the gentle German woman's family, friends, and neighbors after getting married on a wild whim. Emmi's grown-up children essentially disown her (despite the fact that their father was a Polish foreigner himself) and her neighbors cruelly gang up on her like a bunch of conniving bitches in heat seeking to sever her soul, in part due to their jealousy of her newfound happiness, and it even gets so bad that the owner of the local grocery store refuses to serve the couple despite the weary wife's many years as a loyal patron. Initially facing seething hatred and social ostracism due

to their unconventional mixed blood marriage, the extraordinary odd couple still attempts to prove “love conquers all” and Emmi theorizes that taking a long vacation will provide for a nice change of scenery and that when they come home, everything will return to normal. Magically, when the couple returns from their short sunny sabbatical, Emmi’s wish is granted and suddenly everyone has ‘accepted’ the two rare lovebirds, albeit in a most condescending, two-faced, and even parasitical sort of way. Finally relieved she has been once again accepted among the petty Teutonic proletariat, Emmi ignores the fact that they treats Ali as not an individual, but as a perennial foreigner and novelty quasi-Negro-Arab Übermensch of immense strength and sexual potency, even showing his strength off to her crudely curious friends like he is a monkey doing tricks and forcing him like a virtual slave to move objects around for her neighbors. Clearly hurt, Ali goes back to his ex-lover Barbara for sex, comfort, and couscous (a native dish Emmi now refuses to eat/cook for her homesick husband as she wants him to learn to eat sauerkraut). Emmi eventually comes to her senses, but it seems too late as Ali shuns his rather worried wife, even pretending not to know who she is when she randomly shows up at his place of employment where his work pals describe her as his, “Moroccan grandmother.” It is only when the two dance to the same song at the same bar where they initially met that the two can reconcile their differences and once again feel the particularly ‘platonic love’ (as indicated by Emmi’s remark that she does not care if over-anxious Ali sleeps with other women) that brought them together in the first place, but Ali’s health takes a turn for the worst due to a bursting stomach ulcer, thereupon leaving his body temporarily kaput. As Fassbinder once stated in an interview, “Of course, the ending’s meant to take this private story, which I’m crazy about and also happen to think is very important, and give it a thrust into reality, including in the mind of the moviegoer.”

Indeed, a lot has changed since the release of *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, but Fassbinder’s cinematic depiction of the social turmoil and cultural suicide that is globalization and “multiculturalism” – an oxymoronic word if there ever was one – has only proved to be all the more true nearly four decades after the film’s initial release. While the ‘Nazi Generation’ – Fassbinder’s mother’s generation which he many times cinematically criticized – has all but totally died out, only to be replaced by ethnomasochistic Germans with nil sense of kultur nor community, the foreign guest workers of Ali’s generation have spawned kids who are less keen on work and more prone to criminality (even making certain sectors of Germany “no go zones” for indigenous Germans) and hostility to the adopted anti-homeland that pays for their existence. It is worth noting Ali remarks to Emmi regarding kraut-towelhead relations during their first conversation, “German master...Arab dog,” because although the foreigners from the South might still be seen as unsettled savages even by ‘well-meaning’ blockhead liberals, they have now began to bark and bite while their pathetically passive Aryan masters

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become elderly and emaciated. After all, no matter how rich or powerful the elderly master is, he is no match when cornered in his home by a pack rabid canines who have been kicked one too many times. In real-life, Fassbinder essentially brought El Hedi ben Salem out of the ghetto and turned him into an international cinema Superstar, thereupon going from literal rags to designer clothes, only to turn his back on him when the filmmaker no longer needed/desired him. While drunk, Salem ended up violently stabbing three people and was subsequently deported to France where he killed himself by way of hanging in 1982 while in prison, thus marking the second suicide of one of Fassbinder's ill-fated lovers/stars, another to whom he would dedicate one of his films. In an interview with German auteur Frank Ripplloh (*Taxi zum Klo*), Rainer Werner Fassbinder – a homosexual man of many calamitous love affairs – admitted that filmmaking was a substitute of sorts for love, stating, “When I was very small I already knew I was supposed to make many films. I can only tell you that when I shot my first take it was more fantastic than the most fantastic orgasm I ever had. That was a feeling, indescribable.” With that in mind, it should be no surprise for those that have seen *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* that the film is more than an imitation of life as a reflection of Fassbinder's idealized empathy for a minority lover that he could not express to any notable degree in real-life. Although Fassbinder was buggered by a seemingly non-gay brown-man from a gutter, for which he returned favor by humanizing him and his people via cinema, he ultimately kicked him to the curb just like the common latent-Nazi Germans he portrays in *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*. Still, while a black Hollywood star like Will Smith does not add up to much more than an artistically-vacant Hollywood affirmative-action case on showbiz steroids, El Hedi ben Salem has been secured a place in cinema history that few melanin-strong actors can boast as the archetypical 'unknown foreigner' with strengths and aspirations, but also with flaws and failures, thus being given a 'human' form, although I am sure he was more thrilled about being the first man – be it black or white – to do a nude sex scene with buxom blonde beastess Barbara Valentin.

-Ty E

EFFI BRIEST

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1974)

Considered a dream project of sorts by director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Effi Briest* (1974) aka *Fontane Effi Briest* – an ornamental and vaguely oneiric black-and-white epic period piece based on Huguenot-German novelist Theodor Fontane's 1894 novel of the same name – was a daunting project which the auteur put his heart, soul, and money into, taking about 58 days (as opposed to his usual 9 to 20 days) to complete shooting, yet the work and wealth that went into the meticulously stylized work ultimately paid-off in the long run, at least as the director and a number of critics were concerned, as it went on to be hailed as one of the ill-fated filmmaker's greatest cinematic works, henceforth winning the 1974 Interfilm Award at the 24th Berlin International Film Festival and being nominated for the Golden Bear. With the full title of the film being the absurdly long *Fontane Effi Briest oder Viele, die eine Ahnung haben von ihren Möglichkeiten und Bedürfnissen und dennoch das herrschende System in ihrem Kopf akzeptieren durch ihre Taten und es somit festigen und durchaus bestätigen*, Fassbinder indubitably made no lie about the fact that it was a big film for him and probably a work that he expected would be a glaring great cinematic work in the context of all of film history as a whole, which being named as one of the "Best 1,000 Movies Ever Made" by *The New York Times*, one can argue there is evidence to support that claim, yet as a fanatical fan of the Fass man's cinematic oeuvre myself, I cannot agree with this seemingly ridiculous assessment. Essentially Fassbinder's cinematic equivalent to the classic Hollywood civil war epic romance *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Effi Briest* – almost entirely lacking the idiosyncratic subversive qualities and maniac melodrama that his fans know and love – is like an ostensibly highbrow melodramatic chick flick for petit-bourgeois Marxists and suburban socialists who are just as much as fascinated by and as materialistic as the society that they would love to see destroyed. Somewhat a cinematic swansong for Hanna Schygulla (who stars in the title role), in part due to the actress' disagreement over interpretations of the character and what she saw as low pay, as well the filmmaker's new diva obsession Margit Carstensen, *Effi Briest* would mark the last time Fassbinder worked with the itchy-bitsy (and apparently bitchy) bombshell blonde until *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979). Playing a seemingly impenetrable and dispassionate character constrained by the superficially stoic yet shallow social conventions and mores of the late 19th century Prussian aristocracy, Schygulla later admitted in retrospect in an interview regarding her purposefully plastic performance in *Effi Briest*, "I actually wanted to play it with more expression. I realize now that the movie is so good precisely because I was not allowed to express myself." Undoubtedly a man who had a way with words, Fassbinder would state, "I can't stand the sight of your face any more," regarding Schygulla's little revolt, but the

EFFI BRIEST

filmmaker's remarks had totally new meaning for me after enduring her seemingly endless pathetic performance in *Effi Briest*; an aesthetically refined yet virtually emotionally empty epic in cultural decay, artistic dismay, and tedious Teutonic tautology.

Utilizing Theodor Fontanes's words in character dialogues, off-screen narration, and old Germanic text and letters, *Effi Briest* is indubitably a surprisingly fateful cinematic adaptation, especially for a Fassbinder film, as a virtual celluloid love letter to the man that wrote the source material, hence Hanna Schygulla restrained acting as the positively pretty yet physically and emotionally pedomorphic protagonist. 17-year-old *Effi Briest*, a naive "child of nature" and a girly ditz with a decidedly dapper exterior, probably does not make a very wise decision when she marries a man twenty years her senior named Baron Geert von Inſtetten (Wolfgang Schenck); a patently pedantic Prussian aristocrat and "art fiend" who delights in high kultur and keeping young women rather restrained. The daughter of a curious cuckold of a merchant (Herbert Steinmetz) who oddly and odiously states, "I envy her" in regard to the marrying of his daughter to a man old enough to be her father, and a severe social-climbing mommy (not coincidentally played by Fassbinder's real-life mother Lilo Pempeit), elfish *Effi* does not really have the opportunity to think twice about marrying a banal baron who will make her internal life an inferno, but her social and material life something of great majesty, at least in her parents' minds. Admitting to her mother that she has mixed feelings about the baron because he, "is a man of principles" and "probity," *Effi* – a delicate dame that is more prone to impulse than intelligence – feels somewhat pained and frightened by prospects of the future in regard to her less than handsome future husband; a man whose psychological, physical, and social dominance guarantee he will be ruling the house with a firm iron-first. Of course, gorgeous and gracefully girly girl *Effi* marries Geert the gentleman brute and thus their miserable marriage of monotony and failed monogamy begins. Needless to say, their marriage is less about mutual love, sex, and romance than homosexual Fassbinder's short-lived marriage to his friend/diva Ingrid Caven. On top of moving her into a home in a small Baltic town that is purportedly haunted by ghosts, thus scaring her into submission, *Effi* must endure Geert's blueblood passion for fine art and his blatantly bitchy servant Johanna (Irm Hermann), who won't even look the young girl in the eye because, being a cold wench, she is certainly the true soul-mate for the Baron, but lacks the social status to be with him. Things get slightly better for *Effi* when she hires an overweight lapsed Catholic servant named Roswitha (Ursula Strätz), but the blood in her veins does not really start pumping until Geert's associate Crampas (Ulli Lommel whose typically suave, Sven-gali like essence was snuffed out as a result of his voice being dubbed over post-production Italian style) – a major in the military – comes to town and comes in the sexually repressed girl on the seaside with his semen. Of course, Crampas, quite literally and figuratively, only comes

and goes, but Effi makes the mistake of leaving around incriminating letters between the two lecherous love birds that are found by the Baron a number of years later. To maintain his social dignity and any questions as to whether or not he is a cowardly cuckold, Geert duels and inevitably kills Crampas and banishes Effi from his home, despite the fact that the mismatched married couple now have a daughter. In good Prussian aristocratic society, a mere infraction results in the complete and utter social ostracization and virtual annihilation of one's life, or so little Effi comes to learn after her erotic escapades with a dapper man she admittedly never loved, nor adored.

Assembling a seemingly asinine anti-auteur piece with not a single likeable nor empathetic character, Fassbinder admitted regarding Effi Brieß in a 1974 interview with Kraft Wetzel for the West Berlin publication Kino that, "it isn't a film about a woman, but a film about Fontane, about this writer's attitude toward his society. It's not a film that tells a story, but a film that traces an attitude." Indeed, the director even went so far as stating that Effi Brieß is, "a film that really only works in the German language," yet I seriously doubt that lost-in-translation linguistics are responsible for the ludicrously languid and lusterless lifeblood (or lack thereof) that is Effi Brieß; a periodically poetic yet profoundly prosaic epic of celluloid melodramatic impotency and insipidity. Best known for his intrinsically idiosyncratic and marvelously merciless melodramas with a sharp and scathing sociopolitical consciousness, Fassbinder inexplicably stated in the same interview with Kino that, "my personal interest is more in literary topics... The fact that I made things like EIGHT HOURS ARE NOT A DAY has to do with my having grasped certain societal mechanisms and recognizing perfectly calmly that you have to do something for the audience. And with other films like EFFI BRIEST and the earlier ones, there I was doing something for myself." Of course, considering Fassbinder named his less than masterful work Beware of a Holy Whore (1971) as his best film and Despair (1978) as his third best in a personal Top-Ten list of his films in 1981, it is quite obvious that the genius filmmaker was not exactly the most keen judge of his own cinematic oeuvre. As someone who has seen and likes virtually all of the director's films and considers no less than five of them masterpieces, I do not hesitate to state that Effi Brieß is one of Fassbinder's least worthwhile and rewarding cinematic efforts, as a sometimes admittedly aesthetically outstanding, yet ultimately uninspiring and uninventive work that is the celluloid equivalent of a piece of Victorian antique furniture that is pleasing to look at in passing but is not comfortable to sit in nor worth the price, at least for the majority of patrons. Portraying an extinct society that essentially dissolved into a much larger and more petty German middle-class, Effi Brieß is a foggy window into a cultural graveyard of the less than noble, noble living dead that was better off left resting in its cold crypt.

Sharing some similarities with Fassbinder's other films, Effi Brieß is surely a wayward (but this time rather weak) 'women's picture,' if not an unflattering one

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that portrays the 'fairer sex' as being nothing short of morally retarded and servile yet decidedly disloyal. As Baron Geert von InStetten – an absurdly authoritarian man but not without honor – states to his beauteous yet besotted wife Effi, “Women, of course are the first to cry for a policeman, but the law doesn't interest them.” Indeed, hopeless Effi's only admitted guilt for cheating on her husband is her lack of guilt in regard to her carnal deceit. A proud Prussian patrician, it comes as the ultimate insult that Effi philanders with a man who is half polish, bad with women, and a gambler, even if he is the “perfect cavalier.” Only when she is banished, disgraced, and has her budding child taken away does Effi admit that her big Baron beau is “petty” and “cruel” – character flaws she recognized in him long ago, but she married the mundane and monstrous man anyway solely as a means of gaining social status and piddling prestige. Judging by the petty yet pathetically pitiful problems faced by the characters in *Effi Briest*, one can only speculate that Fassbinder – a man personally plagued by suicidal lovers, a steady diet of narcotic drugs, and a pugnacious personality – almost longed for the much simpler times portrayed in his superlatively softcore cinematic saga of aristocratic manners and gestures. Unfortunately, it seems Fassbinder's source of solace was also a source of slumber for his viewers, at least in regard to *Effi Briest*; the master enfant terrible auteur filmmaker's attempt at confirming that he could direct a garden-variety film in the dispiriting spirit of classic Hollywood golden age melodramas, which, ironically, might have been the damned director's single greatest and most pernicious provocation of his career. If you ever had the compulsion to make your grandmother a Fassbinder fan, just buy a gently used copy of *Effi Briest* for her trusty VHS player.

-Ty E

MARTHA

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1974)

Out of all of German New Cinema auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's female Superstars, slender Nordic beauty Margit Carstensen (*Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*, Berlin Alexanderplatz) was undoubtedly the best at portraying nauseatingly neurotic, schizophrenic, pathetic, hysterical, and otherwise deranged women. As a calculating and cold aristocratic lesbian who learns that love is colder than death in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), a bourgeois babe who cannot tell the difference between real sex and imagined sex in *Fear of Fear* (1975), and a neurotic fan-girl with no sense of self-worth who unwaveringly devotes her sad soul to her favorite writer in *Satan's Brew* (1976), Carstensen is one of few actresses who, despite being blatantly bewitching, was able to make herself seem totally ugly and radically repellant due to her horrifically hypnotic hysterical screen performances, but none of these film roles compare to her majestically masochistic character in Fassbinder's underrated and under-seen TV-movie *Martha* (1974); a sharp-as-a-stake-in-the-heart Sirkian melodrama about a relationship between a metaphysical master and self-sacrificing slave. Loosely based on themes from the short story *For the Rest of Her Life* by Cornell Woolrich, *Martha* was in limbo due to legal reasons revolving around the Woolrich estate and was not screened for some 20 years after its initial completion, thus making it rather ripe for a cult following among Fassbinder fans and more high-class horror fans alike. Of course, *Martha* – a film centering around a seemingly sterile bourgeoisie married couple – is not your typical late night horror show, but a malicious melodrama with curious comedic undertones that forces the viewer to sympathize with either a meek masochist who is afraid of her own shadow or a strikingly suave sadist who gets the job done, but nothing in between. Assembled right before Fassbinder's early masterpiece *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), *Martha* was naturally soon forgotten, but after over four decades, it is about time that viewers catch up with the 'minor masterpieces' of a prolific filmmaker who made films faster than most people could watch them. With *Martha*, persecution mania has never been so cinematically marvelous, thus lucidly illustrating as to why German filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder was able to beat Hollywood at their own game and did it quite gingerly by utilizing the seemingly meager medium of kraut television to do so.

Seeming like a dramatized depiction of one of the more 'conventional' case studies from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), *Martha* was a more personal work for director Rainer Werner Fassbinder than one would assume upon a superficial glance of the film. As Austrian actor Karlheinz Böhm (Sissi, Peeping Tom) stated in an interview for the book *Chaos as Usual: Conversations About Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (1997), "Rainer had a very fractured relationship with his father; in *Martha* I practically depicted his father, and, be-

MARTHA

cause of that film, Rainer and I talked a great deal about the man – as a psychoanalyst, then, I would understand his homosexual excesses.” Indeed, Böhm may play an arrogant sadistic scoundrel of the delightfully dapper sort named Helmut Salomon in *Martha*, but a clear-cut ‘black-and-white’ depiction of human evil is nowhere to be seen in the film because in the world of reckless matrimonial relationships, it always takes two to tango. It is oftentimes said that opposites attract and that is surely the case with *Martha*; a frenzied filmic fairy tale of sorts about one sad virginal spinster’s subconscious conquest to be eternally enslaved or at least perish pathetically trying. *Martha* Heyer (Margit Carstensen) is a hysterical woman and her daily doses of Valium do little to calm her all-consuming anxiety and almost surreal social ineptitude. Needless to say, when her father (Adrian Hoven) – a man she has a rather dubious relationship with – drops dead unexpectedly in her arms and states, “Let go of me” as his final words to his daughter while meeting together on a vacation in Spain, manic-depressive *Martha* is all shaken up, even more so than usual, and things only get worse when she discovers that her purse is stolen by a nefarious Arab-Negro (Fassbinder boy toy El Hedi ben Salem) in the process. One soon learns that *Martha*’s hyper-hysterical mother (Gisela Fackeldey) – a wretched woman who spares no chance to denigrate and humiliate her daughter in between popping pills and guzzling liquor – is a large source of the 31-year-old virginal librarian’s penetrating problems. An innate introvert who sought refuge in the fantasy world of book and fictional characters at a young age, *Martha* essentially has the emotional and sexual maturity of a mentally perturbed preteen, thereupon making her the perfect sheep for the slaughter for a predatory psychopath with patently perverse and pernicious intentions. Although initially meeting him by happenstance during her tragic trip to Spain, masochist *Martha* will not talk to her sadistic future husband Helmut Salomon – a man with a malicious and malevolent master plan to enslave the weak woman of his dreams and make her his absolute odious and obsequious devil’s plaything – at a bourgeois buffet with friends and family members. Naturally, hellish Helmut makes a fool of miserable *Martha* in front of the dinner guests, but it is his private remark, “I don’t think you’re very beautiful...and certainly not attractive and charming. You’re too thin, almost skinny. When one looks at you, one can almost feel your bones. And I have the impression your body smells,” that really turns on the under-sexed spinster, thus resulting in the first (forced) kiss between the two loony lovers and absolute disgust from the old maid’s monopolizing mother, who faints after voyeuristically spying on the demented duo as the whole fateful event takes place. With *Martha* no longer the slave of her malignant mommy, Helmut now reigns supreme sadist over the forlorn fecund-free female after stoically taking her shaking hand in marriage.

Featuring some of the blackest hallucinatory humor to ever grace the silver-screen, *Martha* is indubitably a mischievous movie by an auteur with an unflattering and uncompromising understanding of human nature. In the end,

anti-heroine Martha is a paraplegic – the inevitable result of her own devastatingly delusional mind – resigned to a wheelchair for the rest of her life as the indisputable perennial slave of suave fiend Helmet. Director Rainer Werner Fassbinder even regarded the conclusion of Martha as a ‘happy ending,’ stating, “When Martha can no longer take care of herself, she has finally gotten what she wanted all along.” Unsurprisingly, star Margit Carstensen had a different opinion and responded to Fassbinder’s statement with the remark, “I wouldn’t go that far. I really think that this is a resignation on her part.” Whatever one’s opinion of the two unconventionally complimentary companions in Martha, it would be hard to argue that – for better and certainly for worse – Martha the masochist and Helmet the sadist are an immaculate match of mental derangement that were unequivocally meant to be. The same can also be said of Fassbinder and Carstensen, whose creative relationship was not much different in spirit from the monstrous married couple featured in Martha, so much so that the clearly agitated actress described the director as, “a wretched person” during the making of the film, thus underlying how the German New Cinema auteur filmmaker’s oeuvre was a true expression of ‘life reflecting art’ and vice versa. Featuring some of the most ruthlessly lecherous ‘love’ scenes ever captured in cinema history, including sexual arousal via severe sunburn and orgasmic ecstasy via kitten-killing, Martha is nothing short of a minor masterpiece of the melodramatically macabre and horrendously humorous, as a film that accepts the absurdity of human nature for what it is; nothing more and nothing less. The next time I hear about a woman who is finally murdered by her abusive husband after going back to him time and time again after decades of abhorrent abuse, I will always remember Martha; a brutal yet beautiful antidote to feminist folly about the need for imaginary gender equality.

-Ty E

FEAR OF FEAR
FEAR OF FEAR

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1975)

When it comes to the totally singular and untouchable cinematic oeuvre of German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*In a Year of 13 Moons*, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*), even his secondary and less revered/known works are minor masterpieces of sorts, with his made-for-television melodramatic 'women's film' *Fear of Fear* (1975) aka *Angst vor der Angst* starring Nordic diva Margit Carstensen being a perfect example of this. A semi-Sirkian melodrama with quasi-Hitchcockian undertones of the aesthetically minimalistic social realist sort, *Fear of Fear* is a sort of deconstructed sister film to Fassbinder's *Martha* (1974), which also starred Carstensen in the lead role, that centers around a hysterical housewife who is ultimately diagnosed with schizophrenia and who mentally deteriorates after her second child is born and thus gets hooked on a corrosive cocktail of alcohol, valium, and Hebraic rock n roll. A feverishly foreboding yet rather clinical and realistic work in comparison to *Martha*, as well as a little sister film to *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* which also concludes with Kurt Raab's suicide via hanging, *Fear of Fear* is based on the real-life experiences of a crazy middleclass kraut chick in her mid-30s named Asta Scheib, but also informed by Fassbinder's own mental illness and bourgeois up-bringing. Emotionally overwhelmed by two tiny tots, a semi-detached husband who is totally occupied with school and passing a math exam, a bitchy busybody mother-in-law and equally hateful sister-in-law, scheming quack doctors who are not much more than glorified drug dealers, and a horny pharmacist of the superlatively swarthy sort who is willing to break his oath to get in an Aryan middleclass goddess' panties, *Fear of Fear* is ultimately a remainder why living a contrived and safe life as a member of the bourgeoisie can have dangerous mental health hazards. Rather strangely, despite playing a hopelessly hysterical woman who suffers from hallucinations and has sex with men for valium, Margit Carstensen gives a rather reserved and strikingly elegant performance in *Fear of Fear*, especially when compared to her rather radical roles in Fassbinder classics like *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Bremen Freedom* (1972), *Nora Helmer* (1974), and especially *Martha*. Indeed, like the protagonist's drug of choice, valium, *Fear of Fear* is a somewhat misleadingly soothing yet ultimately dark and understated work that is rather 'softcore' in terms of Fassbinder's signature Artaud-esque naked melodrama. And while not one of the filmmaker's grand masterpieces, *Fear of Fear* puts phony, emotionally counterfeit, carelessly cliché Hollywood mental illness melodramas like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), *Girl, Interrupted* (1999), *The Jacket* (2005), and other related celluloid swill that romanticizes and/or stereotypes mental illness to total shame in its uncompromising authenticity and sensitivity.

As a beauteous housewife with everything she could possibly need, Margot

(Margit Carstensen) would be the last person one would assume suffers from acute mental instability, but after popping out a second child she begins to lose touch with reality and becomes incapable of carrying out simple motherly duties like simply watching her children. Among other things, Margot is beginning to see things that are not there because whenever she stares at something too closely (which is oftentimes herself in a mirror), her vision begins to blur as if she is looking at the world underwater. While Margot's husband Kurt (Ulrich Faulhaber) is a man that has done more than his duty to provide for his family and is in the process of furthering his career, he sometimes ignores his wifey because he is studying for a career-changing math exam that could make his wife and children's standard of living even better. One of Margot's problems stems from the fact that her husband's brother-in-law Karli (played by Fassbinder's third and final great love, Armin Meier) loves and cares for her more than her actual hubby Kurt. As is typical of the so-called fairer sex, Margot faces the most scorn from other women, namely her hateful mother-and-law (Brigitte Mira) and jealous sister-and-law Lore (Irm Hermann), who spend a good portion of their time acting like caddy little busybodies who obsess over other people's lives because they have no real lives of their own. Meanwhile, a sad strange neighbor named Herr Bauer (Kurt Raab) of the somewhat reclusive sort makes feeble attempts to talk to Margot, who is totally disgusted by the man and rejects his pleas, but little does she realize that he is suffering from a similar sort of Weltschmerz and is looking for the same thing as her; love, acceptance, and sympathy in a banal and conspicuously contrived bourgeois world that seems to lack all three. Due to her overwhelmingly debilitating 'angst of angst,' Margot eventually goes to a doctor and is simply prescribed valium as if she were the stereotypical neurotic housewife. On top of popping pills, Margot also likes to lose herself in wine and Leonard Cohen (an unfortunate favorite of Fassbinder's!) albums.

As is predictable, Margot eventually gets addicted to valium and runs out of pills, so she tries to charm the local pharmacist Dr. Merck (Adrian Hoven) into giving her an illegal prescription refill, but he wants sex and she is not ready to give it. Of course, after facing intolerable hostility from her mother-in-law and sister-in-law—both of whom seem to think that it is a form of mental illness for a mother to display love and affection towards her children—Margot finally decides to peddle her puss for a prescription. After reaching an all-time low after becoming a virtual middleclass prostitute and starting an unwanted extramarital affair with the local pharmacist, Margot makes a feeble attempt at suicide by barely cutting her wrists and her loyal fuck body naturally Dr. Merck stitches her up. A quack doctor eventually diagnoses Margot as a schizophrenic and things begin to look rather grim. When her husband Kurt breaks down and asks her why she attempted to kill herself, Margot denies that she wanted to die and did it because, "I simply wanted to feel the pain. I wanted to take my mind off my fear." Indeed, fear proves to be Margot's greatest enemy and after

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her husband catches her lying in bed with her young daughter, who is totally naked, he has her put in a nuthouse where the doctor eventually declares the hysterical housewife sane. Ultimately, Margot is ordered to take medication, which will allow her to “live like any normal person.” In the end, Margot goes home, takes a job as a typist, and seems ‘back to normal.’ In the final scene, Karli reveals to Margot that the weird neighbor Mr. Bauer committed suicide, to which the hysterical housewife responds in a most monotone manner by stating, “I’m not upset. I’m so calm. I’m completely calm. You can leave me alone, really” like a drugged zombie who is merely lying to herself so as to maintain a life of seeming bourgeois normalcy, which is undoubtedly all she can expect from life considering her quite sensitive mental state. Of course, despite her hostility towards the man, Mr. Bauer was nothing sort of the male equivalent of Margot as someone suffering from melancholy who longed for love and acceptance, but never got it, hence his tragic self-slaughter.

Despite his seeming lifelong seething hatred of the Teutonic bourgeois, R.W. Fassbinder—who one must not forget came from a cultivated bourgeois family (his father was a doctor and would-be-poet and his mother was a translator)—certainly made a number of distinctly boobeise melodramas, with *Fear of Fear* being one of the most, if not most, obvious examples. After all, it is doubtful that many lumpenprole philistines would be able to relate to protagonist Margot’s seemingly petty personal problems. Indeed, not unlike the great self-loathing Jews of history like Otto Weininger and Jesus Christ, Fassbinder made for an excellent critic of the bourgeoisie and unlike a failed member of the bourgeoisie like Karl Marx, the filmmaker at least had a certain uncommon sympathy for members of his social class, namely bat shit crazy women. It should also be noted that the director’s mother, Lilo Pempeit, who has a small role in *Fear of Fear*, was a somewhat inept parent that, like the character of Margot, was known to be rather neglectful of her son, leaving him in movie theaters all day (which is actually how he developed his love of movies) and what not. Undoubtedly, *Fear of Fear* is deeply embedded in the Fassbinder cinematic universe as a work that is not only a sister film to *Martha*, but also the director’s first color film *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970). Indeed, it is no coincidence that Kurt Raab plays the role of Mr. Bauer in *Fear of Fear* as he essentially reprised his role from *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* as a seemingly unremarkable yet ultimately fucked fellow who is undeniably the male counterpart of Carstensen’s character Margot, albeit minus the good looks. Sort of like Fassbinder’s own take on John Cassavetes’ *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), albeit nowhere near as depressing and strangely solacing, with nice little nods to Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954) in its playful depiction of window-based voyeurism and scopophilia, *Fear of Fear* is a bold yet beautiful bourgeois ‘women’s film’ that reminds the viewer that there are some advantages to being a middleclass mental case, especially when compared to, say, a deranged bum, with ‘happy pills’ and

a warm bed to sleep in being just some of the perks. While *Fear of Fear* might seem somewhat weak when compared to the dreamlike high-camp aesthetics and darkly humorous hysteria of *Martha*, it is still a minor masterpiece nonetheless that delicately demonstrates why so many seemingly spoiled women with relatively high living standards become unhinged and start destroying an ideal life that the majority of women in this world can only dream of. A film essentially specially tailored for all the warped preppy soccer moms in America, *Fear of Fear* has indubitably yet to find its true audience.

-Ty E

FOX AND HIS FRIENDS
FOX AND HIS FRIENDS

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1975)

Undoubtedly one of master Neuer Deutscher Film auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's most accessible and least thematically intricate films, *Fox and His Friends* (1975) aka *Faustrecht der Freiheit* – which also stars the usually fleshly filmmaker in the lead title and rather robust role – also happens to be one of his most immaculate and personal works. Created during the middle period of his filmmaking career, which is also often regarded as his most 'inner' time as a film director, *Fox and His Friends* was the first film in which Fassbinder portrayed an overtly homosexual love story (despite the fact that his innate gayness was a driving influence behind his artful and audaciously naked melodramas), but also a cinematic work that would cause criticism and outrage due to its less than flattering portrayal of gay subcultures, especially of the hyper-anal-retentive bourgeois bugger sort. Created in dedication 'for Armin and all the others,' Armin being Armin Meier – Fassbinder's uneducated orphan (he was a Lebensborn baby sired by the Nazi SS) lover – *Fox and His Friends* is an intelligent yet highly intimate indictment of opulent homos and how one gay proletarian is eaten up and spit out by a sassy sect of positively pompous, prissy, and pretentious pansies of the particularly posturing sort. Ironically, Fassbinder's Aryan Übermensch boy toy Armin Meier (who later himself was featured in subsequent Fass-bande films like *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*, *Fear of Fear*, *Satan's Brew*, etc.) – who was constantly belittled and bemeaned by the German filmmaker due to his lack of refinement – would meet a grizzly end in 1978 that was startlingly similar to that of the protagonist (ironically played by Fassbinder himself) of *Fox and His Friends*. Not surprisingly, Fassbinder would direct another film in tribute to Meier, *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden*, which like *Fox and His Friends*, is also quite boldly bleak and intensely personal, but aside from the fact that the protagonist is an orphan, has a proclivity towards peckers and commits suicide, the transvestite/nullo character Erwin/Elvira's (played by Volker Spengler) life bears little resemblance to that of the ill-starred man it was dedicated to. The fact that *Fox and His Friends* was created a couple of years before Meier's death with a strikingly slenderized Fassbinder playing the role of the lead Franz Bieberkopf aka "Fox, the Talking Head" makes the film all the more eerie, especially considering that the filmmaker figuratively walks in the shabby shoes of an exploited and degraded character he knew all too well yet subsequently gave the real mensch Meier hell, thereupon leading to his cinematically prophesized demise. Knowing Fassbinder's quasi-incestuous relationship with his group of actors, I do not think it would be a stretch to speculate that Fassbinder forecasted and even helped provoke Meier's premature demise, as well as his own in 1982, as it most certainly had to have crossed his mind as so vividly prognosticated in *Fox and His Friends*; a work about fair-weather fag

friends and the bloodsucking emotional and financial brutality they beget.

Fox and His Friends begins with the introduction of charming yet uncultured carny Franz Bieberkopf – best known in the carnival trade as "Fox, the Talking Head" – and his even more captivating boyfriend Klaus (Karl Scheydt), the criminally-inclined carnival owner. Unfortunately for Fox, his beautiful beau is arrested for tax fraud while in the middle of one of his theatrical carny routines, so now jobless and sexless, Fox – a man of very little means and no other trades – decides to buy a lottery ticket in an overtly obsessed manner that is quite similar to that of the child protagonist from *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) directed by Mel Stuart. Also, like the fantasy musical penned by Roald Dahl, Fox magically buys the winning ticket, but with money he swindled out of a portly florist named 'Fatty' Schmidt (Peter Kern), thereupon winning 500,000 German marks in the process; much to his delight and child-like amazement, he soon has reasonably rich and refined Francophile, antique fetishist homosexuals swooning over him but the oftentimes crude and careless ragbag-turned-rich carney conman ultimately proves to be no match for the bombastic bourgeois buggerers' cunning and conspiring ways. Initially rejected by la-did-a-lace-curtain cocksucker Eugene (Peter Chatel) and his euphuistic entourage of sharply dressed sodomites, largely due to his indelicate humdrum demeanor, Fox is soon accepted when his prospective paramour realizes the seemingly base carny boy has just become independently wealthy. Although the exceedingly egoistical Eugene already has a personal twink of his own named Philip (Harry Baer of Fassbinder's *Jail Bait* aka *Wildwechsel*, *The Third Generation* aka *Die dritte Generation*) who is notably more pretty and polished than wild Fox, he cannot help but like the curious carny chap for his newly acquired capital and proletarian penis, although he would never have the gall and genuineness to admit so. Indeed, Fox may be a sub-literate with a decided disdain for high-camp, French restaurants, and first edition copies of Oscar Wilde and Lord Byron's works, but he is not so blind as to be somewhat aware of Eugene's vainglorious and even villainous intentions. As far as his sexual prowess is concerned, Fox – to the complete and utter offense of posh and prissy Eugene – states quite proudly that, "I am proletarian; they are more potent." Of course, Eugene – being a born materialist of the money-massaging and maliciously machinating sort – is less concerned with the size of Fox's cornholer than his cash wad and he is willing to use a variety of certainly corrupt, clandestine, and calculating methods to get it when all his inamorato wants in return is mere love and affection; two things the would-be-rich bitch has an incapacity for giving. Before he knows it, Fox is 'investing' in Eugene's and his father's business, buying an overpriced apartment and useless antiques, and paying for lavish vacations for the two, yet Eugene remains an unwavering ingrate of the most prim parasitic sort, henceforth resulting in heartbreak and even a heart attack for the lapsed carney, which his fleeting lover barely notices. Naturally, things take a turn for the worst when

FOX AND HIS FRIENDS

Fox is prescribed valium.

In the documentary *Die Nacht der Regisseure* (1995) aka *Night of Filmmakers* directed by Edgar Reitz and produced for BFI TV, Fassbinder super starlet Hanna Schygulla (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Lili Marleen*) states regarding the filmmaker who launched her career prominent German actress of the New German Cinema: "But I've got to say he made some very powerful films without me... Now when I see the films from a distance I like some of them very much. For example, *Fox, the Talking Head*. Back when I saw it I thought, 'Oh well, he did a nice job of fashioning himself in the role of the victim.' I see it all differently today through his death." And, indeed, it is hard to imagine watching *Fox and His Friends* today without considering the highly personal context in which it was made, especially in regard to Fassbinder's scandalous and tragic love life. It should also be noted that Fassbinder's star-crossed Moroccan lover El Hedi ben Salem (*Welt am Draht* aka *World on a Wire*, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*) – who also committed self-slaughter in a fit of desperation like Armin Meier – also makes a most fitting appearance in *Fox and His Friends* as an Arab hustler, which the character Eugene treats with the most despicable disdainfulness despite his desire to be buggered by the brown chap. In Rosa von Praunheim's exceedingly enlightening documentary *Fassbinder's Women* (2000) aka *Fassbinder Was the Only One for Me: The Willing Victims of Rainer Werner F.* it is revealed that – not unlike pop-art-con-artist Andy Warhol – Fassbinder had a tendency for building up downtrodden people, especially in regard to his lovers El Hedi ben Salem and Armin Meier, only to throw them away when he got tired of them, thereupon putting these individuals in an even worse situation than they originally started with, ultimately culminating in their tragic suicides. Of course, unlike Warhol, Fassbinder had enough intelligence, sensitivity, empathy, and integrity to channel these character flaws into his film, especially in regard to *Fox and His Friends* and *In a Year of Thirteen Moons*. Like the protagonists of his films *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971), *Fox and His Friends* (1975), and *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1978), the German New Wave auteur would inevitably learn that personal success does not always lead to eternal happiness, hence Fassbinder's lonely demise by way of extremely likely subconscious suicide in a manner not all that dissimilar from the protagonist of *Fox and His Friends*. That being said, if there is any filmmaker who can be described as 'dying for his art,' it is indubitably Rainer Werner Fassbinder; a man whose decisively debauched and destructive personal life was eclipsed by his only slightly more melodramatic films.

-Ty E

LIKE A BIRD ON A WIRE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1975)

Among the lovely leading ladies of Fassbinder's eclectic entourage, including the elegant and ethereal flaxen-haired Hanna Schygulla (whose Nordic beauty perfectly exemplified the Arno Breker ideal), the devilishly divine, waif-like, and ever erratic and neurotic norn Margit Carstensen, and the altogether charming yet somewhat homely and ever pre-menstrually-charged Irm Herman, there is but one leading lady, Brigitte Mira, who stands out not least of all because of her rather advanced age and thoroughly endearing gnome-like appearance, but because of the intense warmth, sweet naiveté and grandmotherly charm she so masterfully exudes—clearly all very natural, positive female traits which Ms. Mira carried over in a very fluid fashion into her rememorable roles in such Fassbinder classics as *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) and *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* (1974). Indeed, these very traits are precisely what made Mother Mira so very likeable as an actress in nearly every role she played, and which also granted her a very special place in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's sometimes very debauched and wicked heart; seeing that Fassbinder was a notoriously difficult director to work with, whose penchant for fierce and fiery arguments and childish, unrepentant displays of queendom, often driven by derisive and contemptuous cat-fights with his leading actresses (such as Hanna Schygulla, whom he once famously accused of “busting his balls,” and whose face he couldn't stand to see anymore after she demanded higher pay on the set of *Effi Briest* (1972), and with whom he would not resume work again until 1978), it comes as no surprise that the ever gentle and unassuming Brigitte Mira, with her thoroughly mild affect (even in moments of anger or frustration), would arouse even in the often faggishly flustered Fassbinder only feelings of deep feminine warmth and admiration—to such an extent that he directed his very own bizarre, yet rather winsome and fun homage to Brigitte Mira, appearing as herself in the lead role in the 45-minute made-for-television film, *Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht* aka *Like a Bird on a Wire* (1975), in what is perhaps one of the most oddly campy autobiographical pieces ever committed to celluloid.

Named for the Leonard Cohen song “Like a Bird on a Wire” (Fassbinder apparently being a tremendous fan of the Jewish folk icon), *Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht* begins with a close-up shot of Brigitte (who herself, interestingly, was the daughter of a German mother and Russian-born Jewish composer despite the fact she played small roles in National Socialist era movies) mournfully singing the German lyrics to the song, juxtaposed against Leonard Cohen's wanna-be Appalachian' kosher hillbilly blues vocals in the background. Brigitte's vividly blue eyes tremble and appear rather glassy in this beginning title scene, as if she is on the verge of tears, and combined with the rather melodramatic, melancholic lyrics, one can easily anticipate that the bulk of the film will in-

LIKE A BIRD ON A WIRE

volve the older actress reminiscing about the glory days of the Reich and how everything since has gone to shit (which it will, to some extent, but the film also, quite interestingly, “devolves” into something of a debauched, high camp musical later on). After joyously downing one too many glasses of vodka, Ms. Mira, in Fred Rogers-like fashion, welcomes the audience into the make-shift living room of her home (while also acknowledging it is a film set) and rather somberly recounts her youth as an operetta soubrette, occasionally bursting, almost seemingly schizophrenically, into songs about the trials and tribulations of her difficult love life, with intermittent breaks to describe each of the five men who have in their own unique and troubling ways left deep impressions on her (one of which was apparently a concentration camp survivor and also a hardened criminal, and yet another who was an export merchant and womanizer who very boldly brought his out-of-town girlfriends home to meet his wife). After describing in vivid and mournful drunken detail her long series of failed relationships, Ms. Mira boards a train with Evelyn Künneke (a famous German singer and actress, part of the Lili Marleen generation, who went on to make several cameo appearances in films by Rosa von Praunheim, as well as several other Fassbinder films), in which the two engage in a rather unpleasant, yet typically female—catty and passive aggressive—conversation.

The remainder of the film sees Brigitte re-live her youth as an operetta soubrette, in which she dazzlingly sings a couple of German classics, including a few songs by Marlene Dietrich and Evelyn Künneke, while on stage in a leather fag bar (with her son Ingfried Hoffmann on piano) amid dozens of ball-busting bear cubs and full-grown, hirsute biker bears dressed to the nines in leather vests, tight chaps, chain mail and military hats, and in yet another scene, Mother Mira hosts an all-ladies fashion show in which she again sings a couple of numbers while fascinatingly describing her childhood years growing up during the Reich. In the penultimate scene, in what is perhaps the most interesting act of this anything but banal film, Brigitte sees herself as the sole female focus, dressed in a glamorous blue dress with a feather boa around her neck, bedecked in elegant gemstone jewelry, prancing around and singing about diamonds amid a gym full of muscular fags—one of which includes Fassbinder favorite and one-time boyfriend who later committed suicide, Moroccan Negro El Hedi ben Salem—rather unemotionally lifting weights while flexing their abdominal muscles with their semi-turgid members resting both comfortably and conspicuously in bright orange, rhinestone-encrusted speedos (clearly, the most tantalizing of eye candy for the fanciful Fassbinder, who quite conveniently couldn't resist adding a flattering photo of himself at this jocular juncture). Indeed, this is a very enjoyable and unusual film, even coming from rather quirky and melodramatic Fassbinder, and a must-see for anyone who relishes the director's work, this film especially being a clear and lasting homage to one of his best loved leading ladies, Brigitte Mira; a wonderful woman who would return the favor

by describing the oftentimes maligned filmmaker to an interviewer as, "a gentleman through and through." Featuring muscle-bound, banana-hammock wearing bodybuilders and leather fag clones galore, in effect being an alluring amalgamation of Mira's drunken soliloquies and reminiscences of her past, interspersed with a cornucopia of fetishistic gay imagery, *Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht* has the unique characteristic of being a lasting, high camp tribute to perhaps not the prettiest of the Fassbinder femmes, but clearly the one who with her motherly sentimentality and always kind demeanor melted the seemingly incorrigible Fassbinder's heart.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

MOTHER KÜSTERS GOES TO HEAVEN
MOTHER KÜSTERS GOES TO HEAVEN

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1975)

Out of all of German New Cinema auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films that deal with the innate hypocrisy of the radical left, especially in regard to its impotent armchair (anti)intelligentsia of the post-WWII era, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* aka *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975) aka *Mutter Küsters' Fahrt zum Himmel* takes the most personal and uncompromising, albeit classically melodramatic, approach against what the director saw as a disease of the soul of the self-loathing, anti-bourgeois bourgeois. Borrowing its title from one of Fassbinder's favorite films, *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* (1929) aka *Mother Krause's Journey to Happiness* directed by directed by Phil Jutzi, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* has a message that is in stark contrast to the conspicuously com-symp film that partly inspired it, not least of all due to the fact that where the silent film portrays communism as the savior of the sub-working-class (even if the protagonist is too late in receiving such ungodly help), the Sirkian German New Cinema film portrays the Marxist doctrine as a tool used by members of the parasitic bourgeois, who in their intrinsic emotional and social sterility, still attempt to subjugate the proletariat, albeit through more pathologically patronizing, pathetic, and entirely misleading means. On top of both filmmakers cinematically adapting Alfred Döblin's novel, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), Jutzi and Fassbinder would both go through changes in political persuasions during their filmmaking careers, with the older Jutzi going from being a leading director of proletarian films and an active member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) to a National Socialist party member and strangely prolific director of short films (from 1933 to 1941, he directed 49 short films) and Nazi spy dramas, and with the younger Fassbinder going from a rather cliché quasi-commie comrade who hung out with members of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group and made minimalistic films in the vein of Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Luc Godard attacking the supposed latent Nazism and authoritarianism of the bourgeois, to becoming a hyper-pessimist who described himself as a 'romantic anarchist' and directed a number of naked melodramas and black comedies condemning 'money-changing Marxists' and 'aristocratic Trotskyites.' What makes *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* especially effective in its condemnation of cardboard commies and antique connoisseur anarchists is that it utilizes a kindly and innocent grandma figure as the object of the bloodsucking neo-bolsheviks' exploitation. Like his rarely seen TV movie *Like a Bird on a Wire* (1975) aka *Wie ein Vogel auf dem Draht* made that same year, Fassbinder directed *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* in tribute to Brigitte Mira (Ali: *Fear Eats the Soul*, *Chinese Roulette*), who plays the title role as a working-class housewife named Emma Küsters whose world is turned irrevocably upside down after her husband runs amok and kills his supervisor and then himself. While in a state of shock

and complete and utter vulnerability, the widow becomes the unwitting pawn of predatory and posh poser proponents of the proletariat who, despite claiming to be friends of the working-class, have never done a day of real work in their entire lives.

A rather naïve yet hearty woman of a limited education and even more meager monetary means, 60-something-year-old Emma Küsters faces virtual hell when her husband Hermann, a man who has worked a menial job at a tire factory for over twenty years, kills his boss and himself in an enraged moment of temporary insanity, thus leaving his wife a widow, who in turn becomes the proletarian prey of sleazy journalists and wealthy communists. As someone whose 'rebel without a care' James Dean-like son Ernst (played by Fassbinder's then-boyfriend Armin Meier) is the passive cuckold of his overweening and domineering wife Helene (played by Irm Hermann) and whose daughter Corinna (Ingrid Caven) cares more about peddling her ass on stage in a selfish yet self-exploitative attempt at establishing a fruitful dance career than her father's disastrous death, Emma naturally becomes the victim of wolves in sheep's clothing in the form of a bourgeois communist couple named Karl (Karlheinz Böhm) and Marianne Tillmann (Margit Carstensen) who, in a groveling and grotesque display of counterfeit empathy, tell her that her husband was a 'revolutionary' and victim of capitalism. While Emma initially finds the Tillmanns' propaganda to be quite dubious, not least of all because her late husband described communists as unruly troublemakers and her daughter describes West German commies as 'armchair communists' and Red East Germany as a virtual slave state where a small minority rules over the majority thus totally contradicting the idea of a classless society, she eventually concedes to the Tillmanns' wish to join the Communist Party. After all, while her daughter is now fornicating with an odiously opportunistic journalist named Niemeyer (Gottfried John) who wrote a scathing article about her husband, Karl Tillmann wrote a singularly sympathetic article of masterful and manipulative propaganda for the pink agitprop newspaper he is the proprietor of as a commie capitalist. In fact, Emma takes such an active role in the Communist Party that she even gives a speech at one of their meetings, where she later meets a nerdy revolutionary fellow named Horst Knab (Matthias Fuchs) – the sort of intemperate and anti-intellectual leftist terrorist that Fassbinder would portray in a more fiercely farcical manner in his subsequent film *The Third Generation* (1979) aka *Die dritte Generation* – who quite confidently proclaims, like a seasoned psychopath, he really and truly has her interests in mind. Fed up with the Tillmanns' tedious verbal swill, but especially their lack of action as patronizing posh pricks whose passive actions have done next to nil in clearing her husband's name, Emma joins up with cracked kook Knab and his gang of anti-everything anarchists, and is in for a big surprise when she and her new malcontent crew go to the office of the yellow press magazine Niemeyer works for and make some rather irrational demands.

MOTHER KÜSTERS GOES TO HEAVEN

To appease more fantasy-minded American viewers, Fassbinder created two radically different endings for *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*: one where Emma literally goes to heaven after a tragic showdown with the police and the second being a much happier one, to the point of absurdity, that recalls F.W. Murnau's German expressionist masterpiece *The Last Laugh* (1924) aka *Der letzte Mann* in its outstanding yet ostentatious optimism, but both conclusions thankfully express the complete and utter futility of radical left-wing action. Personally, I prefer the 'happy ending' as few filmic characters are more deserving of it and despite portraying a sort of 'fantasy reality' at the end, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* features a sweet and suitably sentimental scenario you would never see in Hollywood yet executed with an immaculate Sirkian flare that makes the Danish-German filmmaker's films like *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and *Imitation of Life* (1959) seem ostensibly outmoded and thematically irrelevant due to Fassbinder's socio-politically astute insights as a lapsed member of the extreme left. What makes *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* especially interesting is that not for one moment in the film does Fassbinder make it seem like protagonist Emma or any other member of the working-class will "break its chains" because, as history has proven, revolutions never happen from 'below' as demonstrated by the Russian Revolution, which was, in part, funded by Wall Street and led by mostly Jewish intellectuals from bourgeois and aristocratic backgrounds who were failed members of their own privileged class backgrounds (Russian SFSR leader Vladimir Lenin was from a wealthy family and was a failed lawyer whose interest in 'revolutionary' activity was due to his deep-seated desire for revenge against the czar for having his brother executed in 1887). In a sense, the armchair revolutionaries featured in *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* are no different from the ethno-masochistic bourgeois American whites who describe themselves as "progressive" (but, at least as far as mother nature is concerned, are retrogressive) and dominate positions in mainstream academia, the media, and the government today – main difference between the two groups being that, while the kraut commies of the 1970s patronizingly 'fought' for the mostly white Teutonic proletariat (after all, there were not that many colored folks in the Fatherland back then like there are today), their contemporary Yankee quasi-commie compatriots confirm their sense of superiority over working-class whites by championing non-whites, illegal aliens, abberosexuals of every stripe, the disabled, and just about every other loser 'victim' group that confirms they are a degenerate class who has developed an inexorable slave-morality and a sickening sense of self-loathing, and epitomize the decadent elite who, in an act of social suicidal, inevitably wipes itself out as described in Italian philosopher Vilfredo Pareto's *The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology*.

In an interview featured in the book *Chaos as Usual: Conversations About Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (1997), *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* star Brigitte

Mira described her experience with the film as follows, "I remember *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*: that practically caused a riot, people whistled and booed, not because the film was bad but because the subject was so controversial. I know nothing about politics and I don't feel entitled to make any judgments. Rainer always said, "you certainly know your job." That was high praise coming from him." Indeed, a film that attacks a very large portion of the audience it was created for, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* also manages to give an honest, albeit patently pessimistic, message to the working-class that the bourgeois never did them any favors in the past and they certainly are not showing them any genuine empathy and support today, sort of like how white leftists in America have only all the more crippled the majority of blacks by supporting their campaign for independence and stability via the welfare state and anachronistic programs like affirmative action. Of course, it goes without saying that the media in *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven* is portrayed as no less a source of exploitation of the working-class and victims of crimes, but everyone already knows that, so it makes for a less important and interesting aspect of the film. Foretelling his own premature death, Fassbinder once admitted in an interview that his main motivation as a filmmaker was, "the concrete longing for this utopia. If this longing is driven out of me, I will not do anything else; that's why as a creative person I have the feeling of being murdered in Germany, if you would please not mistake that for paranoia... I believe this recent witch-hunt... was staged in order to destroy individual utopias... If it comes to the point where my fears are greater than my longing for something beautiful, then I'll quit. And not just quit working," and, indeed, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*, in its patent pessimism and uncompromising cynicism, seems like the work of a man disillusioned with politics and people, so it is no surprise that he would be dead seven years later as one of the few members of German New Cinema who had the gall to admit his generation had failed, but not without giving false hope to the hopeless in the process.

-Ty E

CHINESE ROULETTE
CHINESE ROULETTE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1976)

German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Querelle*) died before he ever got the opportunity to direct a film in Hollywood, which at various points during his career he admitted he wanted to do, yet he did a direct couple films that seemed contrived and slick enough to have been assembled in Tinseltown, including *Despair* (1978) and *Lili Marleen* (1981), but indubitably the ill-fated filmmaker's tragicomic gothic psychological thriller *Chinese Roulette* (1976) aka *Chinesisches Roulette* radiates this manufactured studio essence the most, as if Alfred Hitchcock was forty years younger and had stopped in Germany to direct an international work with an all-star European cast. And, indeed, considering it was Fassbinder's first international co-production and most expensive film up until that point (at an estimated DEM 1,100,000), *Chinese Roulette* was indisputable proof that the director, unlike many German filmmakers of his generation, was more than willing to make cinematic works that were not just accessible to Germans and other Europeans, pretentious cinephiles, and idealistic left-wingers. Admittedly, when I first saw *Chinese Roulette*—a work with a seemingly marketed running time under 90 minutes, cutting edge music by German electronic group Kraftwerk, and a tightly scripted and conspicuously contrived storyline—I felt it was not much more than a neatly assembled celluloid novelty directed by an arthouse filmmaker who wanted to try his lot at creating a somewhat mainstream thriller that would give him a larger audience and my opinion has not changed much since subsequent viewings, even if the work has grown on me since then and I believe that despite the film's formulaic thriller structure, it is probably far too nihilistic and misanthropic for the everyday filmgoer to appreciate. Shot in a small castle owned by cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Goodfellas*) located in Stockach in Unterfranken, Germany and co-produced by Michael Fengler (who previously co-directed *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970) with Fassbinder) and Franco-Swiss auteur Barbet Schroeder (*General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait*, *Maitresse*) and starring French arthouse divas, including Jean-Luc Godard's muse Anna Karina and Macha Méril (Godard's *A Married Woman* (1964) aka *Une femme mariée*, Buñuel's *Belle de jour* (1967)), *Chinese Roulette* is a sort of anti-bourgeois thriller clearly made with the bourgeois in mind as a sort of acidic aesthetic attack on the upper-middle class by taking them to task on their lives of lies and luxury, especially where it hurts most; the traditional institutions of family and marriage. Centering around a seemingly unloved yet spoiled crippled little girl who essentially unleashes an elaborate game of emotional terrorism against her philandering parents, *Chinese Roulette* shows what happens when a wife and husband and their extramarital lovers are unwittingly forced to stay together under one roof

while their sole child plays 'mind games' with them that eventually erupts into attempted murder during a psychodramatic game of Chinese Roulette which more resembles Russian Roulette in the end.

Ariane (Margit Carstensen) and Gerhard Christ (Alexander Allerson) are a wealthy Munich couple that plan to spend their weekends on opposite ends of Europe, as the wife claims to be going to Milan, Italy while the husband plans to stay in Oslo, Norway. Of course, both Ariane and Gerhard are lying and having extramarital affairs, so things get a little strange when they both make the unwitting mistake of taking their secret lovers to their shared country home, Traunitz castle. The Christs have a 12-year-old crippled daughter named Angela (played Andrea Schober, who also starred in Fassbinder's *The Merchant of the Four Seasons* (1972) as a little girl who had the misfortune of witnessing her mother's infidelities) who, despite still playing with dolls, is a rather clever and even cold and callous girl who especially hates her mother Ariane, who seems to hate her deluded daughter even more. When Gerhard and his French hairdresser mistress Irene Cartis (Anna Karina) run into Ariane and her boyfriend Kolbe (Ulli Lommel), who works for her husband, at Traunitz castle by what seems to initially be happenstance, they handle the situation rather well and decide to carry on the weekend getaway as a fucked foursome. The castle is run by a bitchy housekeeper named Kast (Brigitte Mira) who absurdly describes people that cut her off while driving as "fascists" and her sexually-confused, dildo-hiding dilettante writer son Gabriel (Volker Spengler). Although a virtual slave whose life essentially consists of groveling like a dog for her servants, Kast has nothing but sheer and utter contempt for the Christ family and her opportunistic son Gabriel hopes to exploit Gerhard's work connection so he can get a writing deal. Later it is revealed that the Christ's daughter Angela designed the elaborate plan to get her parents and their lovers all under the same roof and literally caught with their pants down (Gabriel initially walks in on his wife Ariane and his employee/her lover Kolbe on the floor in embrace) while engaged in mutual infidelities. Of course, things do not really get bad until Angela makes an unsuspected arrival to Traunitz castle with her mute nanny (Macha Méril), whose name is also Traunitz.

After rhetorically asking Gabriel "Would you want to sleep with a cripple?", Angela also confesses to the servant boy, "Do you know how long Daddy has been cheating on Mother with that woman?...Eleven years. And do you know what happened 11 years ago? I fell ill 11 years ago. It's as simple as that. Everything is simple. Life itself is simple. I learned that from Traunitz," thus revealing that she believes she is responsible for the dissolution of her parent's marriage and the reason she believes her mother hates her, further adding, "In their hearts, they blame me for their messed-up lives." And, indeed, Angela seems to be right because while outside, her mother Ariane picks up a gun and locks her daughter's head in the crosshairs from an upstairs window, which nat-

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urally disturbs Gerhard, Kolbe, and Irene, the latter of whom pull the gun away from the little girl target. Naturally, Angela makes various attempts to play her parents and their lovers against one another, but terroristic tension does not reach its boiling point until the cruel cripple convinces everyone at the Traunitz castle to play a game of 'Chinese Roulette', a devilishly psychology-driven and self-incriminating game where players divide into two teams, where one group tries to guess what each individual member the other group is thinking of by asking questions like, "In the Third Reich, what would the person have been?," which is inevitably the last question asked during the game. Angela ultimately decides the members of each team, with her mother Ariane, Kasz, Kolbe, and Irene on the first team (which is clearly comprised of the people she hates most) and herself, her father Gehard, Traunitz, and Gabriel on the other team. Of course, Angela's team has picked her own mother as the member of the other team who her group is describing. In terms of what writers might have invented the person, Gerhard picks Goethe, Gabriel picks Nietzsche, Angela picks Oscar Wilde, and Traunitz picks the best of all with Satanic National Socialist horror writer Hanns Heinz Ewers. When asked "What would this person be in the Third Reich?," Angela's answer is a "Commandant of the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen." When Ariane finally realizes her daughter has compared her to a Jew-gassing death camp commandant, she flips out, tells her she is "a horror. A dirty, revolting little beast," picks up a pistol, and shoots Traunitz (who she knows is her daughter's only friend and, as the film hints, possibly her lesbian lover). It is subsequently revealed Traunitz is ok and that she received nothing more than a superficial flesh wound. During the postgame wrap, Gabriel states to Angela, "You knew something like this would happen, didn't you?...But you wanted her to shoot you." Clearly irked, Angela responds to Gabriel by telling him that she has known for two years that he is a hack writer who has plagiarized everything he has ever written. In the last scene before the credits roll, a second shot is heard outside the house, but the shooter and victim are left up to the viewer's imagination in what is Fassbinder's psychological attack against the viewer. Undoubtedly, in *Chinese Roulette*, no one wins and everyone loses; it is just a matter of how much each individual loses, especially in regard to their civility and sanity.

While undoubtedly one of auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's least personal and least autobiographical works, *Chinese Roulette* reveals a good deal about the director's sometimes sinister, sadomasochistic, and Svengali trickster character. In fact, Fassbinder was known to play Chinese Roulette with his friend and asked/answered questions no less provocative and malicious than those of the characters in his film. It should be noted that *Chinese Roulette* was the last film Fassbinder collaborated with Ulli Lommel on before the actor completely changed trades and permanently moved to the United States where directed two films for Andy Warhol before starting his dwindling career as a maker of direct-

to-DVD z-grade horror flicks. Lommel was apparently dating Anna Karina at the time and managed to get her to star in *Chinese Roulette*, thus depicting the actor-turned-director at his 'romantic playboy' prime, before he became the butt of jokes to impotent fanboys and gorehounds who have never actually seen his films. Despite its modern soundtrack (Kraftwerk's "Radioactivity" was a new single when the film was released), beautiful sets, mathematical camera angles, and contrived and precisely constructed storyline, *Chinese Roulette* is a brazenly brutal work of unrelenting doom and gloom and was ultimately hated by West German audiences upon its initial release, which is no surprise considering it is a blatantly bourgeois work that shows no mercy in malevolently assaulting the psyche of the bourgeois viewer.

As a man born into a cultivated but unloving Bavarian bourgeois family whose father essentially wanted nothing to do with him and whose mother had more interest in her young boyfriend than her son, Fassbinder certainly seems to side with the character of Angela in *Chinese Roulette*, whose hopeless undying desire for love and affection propels her into baiting her mother into trying to kill her so as to put her out of her own misery. Undoubtedly, virtually every character in *Chinese Roulette* is dead inside and learns nothing from their nearly-deadly game of *Chinese Roulette*, thus demonstrating Fassbinder's disillusionment with not only the nuclear family and bourgeois values, but post-cultural consumer-based Occidental society in general, which has only degenerated all the more since the film's release. Fitting somewhere in the writings of Harold Pinter and the films *Mommie Dearest* (1981) and Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955), *Chinese Roulette* is a sort of more hot than hokey hagsploitation flick where the hag is a miserable MILF and connoisseur of Haute couture, thus making the film an all the more bittersweet tortuous celluloid treat to swallow. Seamlessly mixing high-camp with high-class, Fassbinder demonstrates his destructive disdain for all facets of bourgeois life with *Chinese Roulette*, a film about an unhinged unmother whose disdain for her sole child Angela Christ ultimately results in the second spawning of a 13-year-old antichrist who, being a seemingly suicidal cripple who is unlikely to reproduce, acts as the final genetic line of the family, just like the director himself (who was himself a sole child and a homosexual who never reproduced). Arguably the greatest director of nihilistically naked and hysterical cinematic melodramas who has ever lived, as well as a perniciously possessive poof whose actions led to the death of 2 of his 3 great loves (one of them, Armin Meier, who later committed suicide, appears in an uncredited role in *Chinese Roulette* as a gas station attendant), Fassbinder more than likely possessed the inner-child of a little attention-deprived girl and with *Chinese Roulette* he undoubtedly traps the viewer into his world of menacing mind games, but, I for one, must admit I enjoyed playing and will pray that I never have a pissed cripple for a daughter. While *Chinese Roulette* is easily one of Fassbinder's most fundamentally formulaic and concisely constructed works

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that certainly proved he could do more with less in terms of assembling a thriller than the average Hollywood for-hire hack director, the film also demonstrates that he was an absurdly audience-antagonistic man whose works would have easily offended the morals of the American filmgoer, thus it is probably for the better that he never made it to the corporate Hollywood studio system, even if he would have indubitably done damage worth noticing.

-Ty E

I ONLY WANT YOU TO LOVE ME

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1976)

Although originally only intended as a television production, and certainly one of his lesser-known films, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's thoroughly anti-capitalistic *I Only Want You To Love Me* (1976) aka *Ich will doch nur, daß ihr mich liebt* likely resonated with viewers, as it did with myself, not simply because of its vivid rendering of the adverse effects of unbridled capitalism and its far-reaching, sometimes deleterious effects in late 60s Germany, but more so because it so acutely portrays and diagnoses the modern archetype of pussy-whipped males (many of whom I've personally known) and the burgeoning black hole from which they can never escape (a hole that is inevitably dug deeper once an ill-thought out marriage, inevitable baby, and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of credit card debt are thrown in the mix). Indeed, like so many of Fassbinder's films, it is very hard to not feel some excruciating, aching sense of empathy for the characters portrayed in *I Only Want You To Love Me*—specifically for Peter Trepper, the delusional, and emasculated main character—a man whose intense, overarching desire for love and recognition goes crushingly unfulfilled. Like Erwin/Elvira Weishaupt, the mentally nullified nullo tranny in Fassbinder's *In A Year of 13 Moons* (1978) and sweet, Mother Hubbard-like Emma Küsters in *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), Peter Trepper's unwavering devotion and yearning for the acceptance of those he loves goes ever unreciprocated; but instead of opting for especially ultramodern panaceas to his problems, as is so typical of Fassbinder films—such as pursuing an irreversible sex change or joining the German Communist Party—Peter instead finds himself hopelessly seduced and ultimately destroyed by money and its often complicated relationship with human (specifically female) desires and emotions.

Told in a non-linear yet remarkably fluid, easy-to-follow manner, *I Only Want You To Love Me* follows the constant ups and downs in the tumultuous life of Peter Trepper, a shy, emotionally retarded and undoubtedly unpopular young man not yet in his mid-20s. Indeed, the title of this working-class melodrama, *I Only Want You To Love Me*, perfectly sums up Peter's on-going quandary and sole impetus behind his entire existence as the unloved son of middle-class Catholic Bavarian parents. As ever, Fassbinder's acute eye for chillingly portraying fascistic family relationships and dynamics is spot on in his portrayal of Peter's mother—a cold, distinctly unmotherly mother who psychologically castrates Peter from the time he can fit into his first pair of lederhosen, and his father, an inattentive, money-driven businessman who is so disinterested in his wife and son that he is impelled to both house and bed multiple whores in other cities, a move that results in his wife becoming pathologically jealous and vicious to all around her, least of all her young son (yet she cannot bring herself to leave Peter's father as all of her material comforts are easily provided for her).

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Eventually, Peter meets his future-wife, Erika (a decidedly puggish and homely Bavarian babe, and certainly not deserving of a man of Peter's caliber, not least of all in the looks department) whom he eventually weds, erroneously believing, like so many hopeless and emasculated beta males, that marrying the first woman to give him the time of day is the magical cure-all he's been searching for all his life.

Following a lukewarm wedding reception completely void of any congratulatory tone, Peter's thoroughly antagonistic progenitors give up the home that he lovingly built for them from scratch at the beginning of the film (an especially tough blow to take considering that Peter and his young wife and future baby factory, Erika, could really use a place to hunker down as they embark on their ill-fated marriage) and are all too happy to see him set off to Munich to begin a new and promisingly lucrative, yet punishing construction job through which he hopes to support himself and his seemingly happy wife. Riding high on his success at having attained a new wife (albeit a rather stout, homely and piggish one—but the first and only woman he'll ever penetrate), a sweet new apartment in one of Germany's poshest big cities (replete with Turks and Moroccans on all sides, as even the landlord quietly admonishes), and a career in construction for which he seems to be richly rewarded (not realizing that the pipe-smoking Bavarian overlord of the construction company intends to cut his hours), Peter brazenly spends every back-breaking penny he's earned and then some, going as far as to max out credit cards and take out new loans in order to buy his never-satisfied and soon-to-be gestating wife the latest in minimalistic, IKEA-esque furniture, a factory grade sewing machine, designer clothes, and an antique gold bracelet (the latter of which being the equivalent of what is today known as a "push ring"—an extravagant and costly piece of jewelry lovingly bequeathed upon a spoiled alpha female as reward for successfully birthing a child). Of course, it is very easy to see where all of this is going—for a man such as Peter, whose wife and parents are his pathetic, sole sources of both emotional support and intense mental anguish and through which money becomes his only means of attempting to acquire the love and approval of either—his already frayed edges and fragile ego cannot help but bring him to one day snap and commit a characteristically pathetic murder.

Admittedly, *I Only Want You To Love Me* is much less interesting than Fassbinder's other works, (which are typically and entertainingly replete with sordid tales of homosexual liaisons, trashy tranny escapades, and debauched interracial love triangle romps), but this film is no less important than Fassbinder's other films in the respect that it again very keenly illustrates the fascistic psychological interplay that exists in male and female gender role relationships (whether documenting the denigrating mother and emasculated son, pussy-whipped husband and spoiled wife, or dominant bear daddy and twinkly boy son, etc.), in this case bringing money into play as the central, driving force of upheaval in

an already meaningless or befouled relationship. Furthermore, some academics would go so far as to claim that Peter Trepper's behavior was born not out of a lack of self-esteem or confidence which drove him to spend non-existent money, but instead from a Freudian-derived sense of narcissism; such a theory seems to me like a bunch of hyper-pseudo-intellectual, meaningless claptrap because—let's face it: some men are just born with an innately submissive, overtly female essence, and Peter Trepper won't be the first or last who couldn't resist purchasing his plump, spoiled wife a brand new car for completing their first wedding anniversary (something of a feat indeed, considering the times in which we live) or bestowing her with a "push ring" for popping out a child who will most assuredly be christened Jayden, Kayden, Brayden, Aidan, or some other modern, sickeningly common variant thereof. Indeed, *I Only Want You To Love Me* should be required viewing for any young, emasculated male who is considering taking his girlfriend for a walk down the aisle—especially with the ever-present, unabashedly Semitic-inspired mental effluvia surrounding television programming such as *Bridezilla* or *The Bachelor* irreparably altering the already fragile, malleable minds of young girls who, in turn grow up to idolize celebrity women who intentionally leak their dispassionate sex tapes so that legions of otherwise impotent beta-males can masturbate while their celebrity-obsessed soon-to-be wives dream of subserviently sucking Kanye West's supremely sour spade blade while sporting the latest pair of Uggs.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

SATAN'S BREW
SATAN'S BREW

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1976)

Although I still haven't managed to view all of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's extensive filmography, I am quite certain that his work *Satan's Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten* – a work assembled during a period of immense professional distress for the Bavarian-born auteur – is his greatest kraut comedy and one of his most distinguished and delightfully deranged works in general. Opening with a quote by the Greco-French schizophrenic playwright Antonin Artaud and inspired by his surrealist "theatre of cruelty" theories, *Satan's Brew* lacks the signature manic melodrama of Fassbinder's previous films and instead replaces it with slapstick sadism, grotesque gags, potent political nihilism, and a sardonic smidge of homosexual glorification. Centering around a philandering poet named Kranz (Kurt Raab) who spends more time finding new holes for his penis than writing verses with his pen, *Satan's Brew* is ultimately a work about the self-flagellating extremes a writer will go through while experiencing a chronic and mentally crippling spat of writer's block. A lapsed leftist who earned minor praise during the student movement of 1968 as a poet of the failed revolution, Kranz quite hypocritically and shamelessly sinks to the level of a full-fledged con-artist of the real-life 'role-playing' sort by "becoming" German Conservative Revolutionary poet Stefan George after unwittingly plagiarizing his poem *The Albatross*. On top of flagrantly and failingly attempting to steal George's physical, aesthetic, and mystical 'messianic' essence, Kranz also goes to the seemingly schizophrenic and marvelously masochistic extremes of adopting George's sodomite sexual persuasion, henceforth resulting in the most absurd of consequences. Undoubtedly one of the most insanely idiosyncratic and fiercely frolicsome cinematic works of Fassbinder's exceptionally prolific filmmaking career, *Satan's Brew* is a potent and oftentimes aesthetically putrid piece of laugh-out-loud lunacy that could and should be easily regarded as not only one of the greatest German comedies ever made, but also one of the most fantastic works of cinematic facetiousness ever made. Period.

Left: Stefan George with brothers Stauffenberg ~ Right: Kranz as George with a male prostitute model

To get a more thoughtful understanding and pleasurable experience out of *Satan's Brew*, one must indubitably at least have a rudimentary understanding of Stefan George and his influence over prominent figures of early twentieth century Germany. Before becoming very likely Germany's most eminent and important sage poet and occult teacher – an avant-garde nationalist messiah of sorts who dreamed of an esoteric Teutonic empire ruled by artistic elites – Stefan George was a decadent scribbler who cavorted with Fin de siècle French Symbolists like Arthur Rimbaud's pederast poet lover Paul Verlaine and proto-surrealist Stéphane Mallarmé. Despite his blatant high-camp persuasion – both

in terms of his poetry and iconic appearance – George advocated a life of conservative celibacy for his younger protégés; members of his George Kreis literary circle. Of course, George and his arcane odist nationalistic work did not merely appeal to up-and-coming homophiles, but also many prominent Germany intellectuals and artists of his heyday, including National Socialist architect Albert Speer, whose older brother was part of the literary circle and who once described the secretive sage upon seeing him in public as having, “radiated dignity and pride and a kind of priestliness... there was something magnetic about him.” Indeed, renegade aristocrat Claus von Stauffenberg and his elder brother Berthold Alfred Maria Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg (who George dedicated his poem *Geheimes Deutschland* aka “Secret Germany” to) – both of whom were involved in the 20 July plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler – were also members of George’s circle and even quoted passages from the poet’s work *Der Widerchrist* aka *The Anti-Christ* to fellow members of the conspiracy. Of course, despite being barely recognized outside of his homeland of Germany, especially after his death and the conclusion of the Second World War when nationalistic sentiment in Germany became somewhat taboo, few poets in history have exercised such a formative and ultimately imperative role in shaping the mind’s of a nation’s young elite, thus to compare him to a deadbeat degenerate such as Kranz of *Satan’s Brew* is nothing short of an antagonistic absurdity.

Needless to say, anti-hero Kranz of *Satan’s Brew* has next to nil of the metaphysical aristocratic influence of Stefan George as he is a lecherous literary nonentity whose only followers are his lonely blue-blood mistress and another concubine, Andree (Margit Carstensen), from the country who suffers from an acute case of neuroticism; a wobbly weakling of a woman who substitutes the soulless lyrics of her ambivalent lover for a life of her own. On top of his faithful fans/lovers, Kranz spends his downtime bickering with his stocky wife Luise (Helen Vita) – who seems more like a controlling mother than a perennial ladylove – and playing with his seemingly autistic half-retarded brother Ernst (Volker Spengler); a distinctly perverted man-child with a pathological fetish for flies. One day, after realizing that he has subconsciously plagiarized a poem by Stefan George, subsequently deciding that, “I have the strength..to be Stefan George,” a figure he proclaims is only second to Friedrich Nietzsche in terms of the kraut written word. Soon thereafter, Kranz hysterically attempts to recapture every biographical element and character attribute of the famed Conservative Revolutionary poet, including striking George’s particularly picturesque dramatic poses (with make-up to boot) and starting a literary circle of his own, but instead of gaining fervent full-fledged fans of his own, the exceedingly pathetic poet hires male prostitutes, which he specifically states must be of mostly Latin origin with one or two “Germanic” Germans. George even goes as far as swapping his rampant heterosexuality for a visit to the tearoom, confusing a male prostitute’s cryptic-gigolo-lingo for poetry, thus making it seem that

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Fassbinder is insinuating that homosexual are born-poets, forced into linguistic esotericism out of necessity out of fear of negative repercussions from good bourgeois society. A conspiring thief and constant borrower, Kranz is only able to shed his pseudo-identity as Stefan George and break his writer's block when he is maliciously manhandled by one of his creditors (a prostitute and her band of beatboys), thereupon becoming conscious of his lust for pain and inevitably resulting in the inspiration he needs for penning his best-selling novel *Fascism Victorious, or No Funeral for the Führer's Dog*; undoubtedly a postmodern existentialist romp of sorts.

In the end, Kranz loses all of his loser followers and most of his mistresses, including his undersexed wife, but he also earns praise from mainstream society by a recently converted fan's remark that his new written works are thankfully, "not that leftist junk you (Kranz) use to fabricate." With *Satan's Brew*, Fassbinder cleverly criticized and lampooned the radical leftist idealism of his youth (as he would also do with his subsequent works *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* and *The Third Generation* to the dismay of many of his followers), as well as the personal struggle he suffered as an auteur in an unprolific state of artistic limbo. That being said, *Satan's Brew* is nothing short of a dynamic declaration of his creative return and personal reinvention as a filmmaker, even if it is of the slightly self-denigrating yet strikingly scrupulous sort. The impeccable antidote to lifeless pseudo-independent Hollywood comedies like *I ♥ Huckabees* (2004), *Me and You and Everyone We Know* (2005), *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) and other related self-important, would-be-philosophical existentialist excrement, *Satan's Brew* is a gregarious gag show for those film fanatics who have a hard time keeping from laughing jovially when confronted with words like "humanism", "xenophobia", "diversity", and other linguistic burps urped by vogue social regressive types. Stefan George and Rainer Werner Fassbinder may not have had a lot in common aside from their predilection towards tender dicks and a strong sense of 'Germanness' as expressed in their work, but they certainly could agree that youthful left-wing idealism is a dead-end street of aesthetic duplicity and pretentious posturing.

-Ty E

THE STATIONMASTER'S WIFE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1977)

While a number of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films deal with miserable male cuckolds, typically of the ball-less bourgeois variety that make Scarlet O'Hara seem like a sensitive sweetheart, none of the director's other films focus on this male-castrating subject so fiercely and uncompromisingly as *The Stationmaster's Wife* (1977) aka *Bolwieser*, thereupon making it one of the tragic German auteur filmmaker's most decidedly dispiriting and melodramatically disgusting works as the sort of celluloid equivalent of having a vasectomy. Based on the novel *Bolwieser: the novel of a husband* (1931) written by largely forgotten Bavarian socialist-anarchist writer Oskar Maria Graf, whose works were banned in 1934 (apparently, he was offended when his books were not burned during the Nazi book burnings, so he wrote an anti-Nazi appeal in a commie newspaper to change that) and who left Europa for New York City in 1938, *The Stationmaster's Wife* is a sort of anti-völkisch noir-ish in the spirit of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), except all the more brutal and told from the perspective of the husband as opposed to the wife, set during the pre-Hitler 1920s and centering around a Bavarian petit-bourgeois railway stationmaster who has the supreme honor of marrying his town's most conniving and conspiring whore, who destroys the protagonist's life one extramarital affair at a time. Starring actor/production designer Kurt Raab (*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, *The American Soldier*) in his last Fassbinder film before the actor left the filmmaker's life on bad terms, *The Stationmaster's Wife* is notable in that it was largely fueled by cocaine, or as the star admitted himself, "So I took the powder every day, and Fassbinder was always ready to divide this treasure with me. He even let me take charge of the pillbox, and I used its contents as freely as sugar. During the shooting, my concentration was total. I hear nothing and nothing could disturb me. Everything was crystal clear inside me and my thoughts were unimaginably profound, knowing as I did that I was creating a marvelous *Bolwieser*." In a sense, Kurt Raab, who died prematurely of AIDS related causes at the age of 46 in 1988 as disturbingly depicted in the posthumously released documentary he co-directed *Yearning for Sodom* (1989) aka *Sehnsucht nach Sodom*, was Fassbinder's equivalent to John Water superstar *Divine* in that he was an extremely effete man-muse who was willing to do virtually anything and everything for his auteur master. Committing filicide in *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1971), going from being a disgraced far-left poet to pretending to be gay German Conservative Revolutionary poet sage Stefan George in *Satan's Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten*, and portraying a pederast serial killer who moonlights as a drag queen in the Fassbinder produced horror masterpiece *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* directed by Ulli Lommel, Raab was certainly willing to take one for the Anti-Theater team and in no other performance was

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the actor depicted so degradingly and patently pathetically as in *The Stationmaster's Wife*, a virtual metaphysical horror film for men that I had trouble viewing a second time due to its perturbingly pathetic portrayal of a perturbingly pathetic cuckolded man that would have probably made for the perfect masturbation aid for a weak degenerate like Sigmund Freud.

After marrying Hanni (Elisabeth Trissenaar)—the daughter of a local brewery owner and the most brazenly bitchy, conspiring slut of her Bavarian town—absurdly weak stationmaster Xaver Ferdinand Maria Bolwieser (Kurt Raab) becomes the king of the cuckolds in Southern Deutschland, ultimately becoming the sad laughing stock of his friends, family, and co-workers, who quite openly mock him to his face, even laughing collectively at his pussy passivity in the face of abject disgrace. On top of sleeping with other men right under his neurotic nose, whore Hanni has the gall to call her husband Xaver “chubby” as a nickname. Hanni is carrying on a rather conspicuous affair with a butcher named Franz Merkl (Bernhard Helfrich), who she gives her hubby Xaver’s money to in perverse payment for pounding her puss, but also to pretend she has some sort of business arrangement with her less than secret boyfriend. Like the typical self-centered psychopath, Hanni pretends to be the victim when her husband attempts to confront her about calling him “chubby” and her dubious relationship with butcher Merkl, crying, “how vile...how disgusting” after hubby Chubby questions her femme fatale-like ways. Naturally, considering everyone knows his wife is a cheating cunt and that he is a cowardly cuck who does nothing about it, Xaver’s semi-respected social status as a financially secure and important uniform-adorned stationmaster is compromised. Meanwhile, Merkl begins to blow off his malicious mistress Hanni due to local controversy surrounding their bad behavior, so she, being a pathologically lecherous lady of the hyper histrionic sort, goes looking for another man to swoon over her and inevitably finds herself in bed with a suave yet sleazy barber named Schafftaler (played lovingly and quasi-heterosexually by Udo Kier). After Schafftaler gives Hanni a Greta Garbo-inspired hairdo, the brazen bourgeois hussy finds herself immediately able to crawl back in the bed of Merkl, thus rebuffing the barber, who she just screwed minutes earlier, in the process. A self-righteous pervert who is irked by the fact that everyone in his town is gossiping about the fact that he is screwing the stationmaster’s wife, Merkl—with the equally self-deluded support of his whore Hanni—decides to sue members of the Bavarian town for slander, thus further driving Xaver into a position of disrespect, which he, being a cowardly cuckold with nil backbone nor balls, supports. In an idiotic attempt to spare his wanton wife Hanni’s dubious dignity and social prestige, Xaver lies in court and is ultimately later charged with perjury, for which he is rewarded with a four year prison sentence and the loss of his prestigious position as a stationmaster.

Before landing in prison, Xaver finally exerts his seemingly nonexistent testicular fortitude by quasi-raping her, stating whilst having bittersweet sex with

his wench of a wife, “You’re...my...property. I can do what I like with you,” but his minute or two of sad sexual prowess and imaginary glory proves to be in vain as his beloved is back in bed with Schafftaler in no time. After vengeful and jealous two-faced Merkl reveals to Xaver that his wife is cheating on him with “slimy Schafftaler” in a pathetic attempt to get his mistress back, the buffoonish stationmaster, while drunk as an Irish-American NASCAR fan, decides to confront his wife, but he naturally caves in the next morning when his majorly manipulative “better half” bullshits her way out of the situation. After Hanni symbolically leaves with Schafftaler on a train to Munich so she can screw the male hairstylist in relative secrecy, lovelorn Merkl decides to pay his ex-mistress back by telling on her husband Xaver for committing perjury during the slander trial. After receiving a warrant for his arrest on the suspicion of perjury, Xaver is sent to prison, but when he is granted temporary freedom until his actual trial date, he begs like a bitch to stay in prison, confessing to the prison guard, “But I’m...I’m guilty” and complaining, “I can’t show myself in public anymore. Where on earth shall I go?” like a true cuck champ. When Xaver gets out of prison, he learns that a most moronic underling employee of his, Mangst (Volker Spengler)—a Nazi brownshirt who tells inane jokes and used to laugh in his boss’ face—has taken over his job as the stationmaster. Considering Xaver was a civil servant and thus belonging to a profession which is a pillar of Teutonic society, he is not only found guilty, but given an inordinately long sentence for his petty crime. On top of the fact she has ruined his career and destroyed his life, Hanni asks Xaver for a divorce while he is carrying out his prison sentence, which he accepts gracefully as the divorce does not require him to appear in court in his pathetic prison garb.

Kurt Raab’s sort of symbolic cinematic swansong as a Fassbinder superstar who was no less a cuckold to the filmmaker as his character Xaver is to his wife Hanni, *The Stationmaster’s Wife* is a devilishly disheartening film on all accounts, as if the director created it in revenge against heterosexual males, demonstrating the lunatic lows some meek men will go to appease their psychopathic wives. The fact that the film was made while both the lead actor and director were incessantly snorting coke makes it seem all the more strange as it is certainly not a cinematic work that will give anyone a rush, but send the viewer into a depression like no other cinematic period piece before nor after it. Regarding his cocaine-addled performance, Raab would go on to state regarding how he felt while shooting versus how his performance looked on screen, “That nothing of these feelings was transferred to the screen, that my acting became stiff and my movements poor was something I would only learn later. Fassbinder just left me in my dreamworld, where I had become great,” though critics like Wilhelm Roth would contradict his sentiments, even if *The Stationmaster’s Wife* is not exactly regarded as one of the director’s masterpieces. Originally released as a 2-part and 201 minute mini-series for West German television, *The Stationmaster’s*

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Wife was later cut into a 112 minute movie, which was not released until 1983 due to copyright problems. Ultimately, the abridged version of *The Stationmaster's Wife*, which is the version I watched and the only version available to American viewers, received a certain amount of posthumous fame when it was fittingly released on the first anniversary of Fassbinder's death. Personally, I have no interest in watching the original 201 cut of *The Stationmaster's Wife* as the cut version was a grueling experience enough, but with the rise of cuckold porn and emasculated husbands brainwashed by feminism and wives brainwashed by Oprah in both Europe and America, the film, despite taking place in a forgotten time and being about unfashionable people, has only become all the more relevant since its release. A sort of aesthetically sinister take on F.W. Murnau's German expressionist masterpiece *The Last Laugh* (1924) aka *Der letzte Mann* in its depiction of a man who derives his self-esteem and social prestige from his uniform and who degenerates to nothing after losing it, *The Stationmaster's Wife* is a rare work of German New Cinema that reminds viewers how social status and prestige in pre-WWII Germany was not measured by personal wealth, but by uniform and job title, hence why the German Conservative Revolutionary philosopher Oswald Spengler argued for 'Prussian Socialism' over National Socialism in his sole political tract *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (1919) aka *Prussianism and Socialism*, arguing, "English society is founded on the distinction between rich and poor, Prussian society on the distinction between command and obedience...Democracy in England means the possibility for everyone to become rich, in Prussia the possibility of attaining to every existing rank." Of course, Fassbinder was a Bavarian and his animosity for the sort of Prussianism Spengler spoke of is an innate ingredient of *The Stationmaster's Wife*; arguably the only film ever made that has the potential to drive cuckolds to suicide!

-Ty E

WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1977)

One of German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's greatest accomplishments as a filmmaker is that he managed outdo his hero Douglas Sirk and revitalize the old school Hollywood woman's film and make it palatable to people aside from elderly bourgeois female anglophiles and fickle old queens. Indeed, I have a rather low tolerance for busybody bitches babbling incessantly about nothing and scheming in a superlatively shadowy slave-morality-driven fashion that no heterosexual man could fathom any sane human being was capable of. Of course, Fassbinder was not a heterosexual man, even if he attempted to portray butch boys in films like *The American Soldier* (1970) and *Whity* (1971), so he was able to understand women in a rather unique fashion and he was able to transfer his personal insights on the oftentimes less fair fairer sex via his plays and films. In fact, with his early masterpiece *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), Fassbinder managed to transsexualize his own failed romantic relationship with married black Bavarian Günther Kaufmann, ultimately having Margit Carstensen portraying himself and Hanna Schygulla portraying his negro lover! Undoubtedly, Fassbinder's greatest accomplishment in terms of a 'women's picture' is his made-for-television work *Women in New York* (1977) aka *Frauen in New York*. A teutonized (anti)adaptation of American playwright turned Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce's hit play *The Women* (1936)—a work that was previously adapted by Yiddish queen George Cukor in 1939, made into a musical entitled *The Opposite Sex* (1956), and most recently updated in tasteless trash form in 2008 by Diane English—*Women in New York* is among one of Fassbinder's most aesthetically bizarre works (Peer Raben's discordant yet ethereal musical score only accentuates this) and also, aside from his quirky early mess of a movie *Rio das Mortes* (1971), sardonic self-denigrating masterpiece *Satan's Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten*, terrorist-themed satire *Die dritte Generation* (1979) aka *The Third Generation*, and *Wirtschaftswunder*-themed late-period work *Lola* (1981), the tragic filmmaker's only cinematic excursion in comedy. Like the original Broadway production of Luce's play from the 1930s, Fassbinder's *Women in New York* has the distinction of featuring an all-broad cast (40 of them!) with not a single male actor (though unseen male characters are constantly belittled by the women). Like *Das Kaffeehaus* (1970), *Bremen Freedom* (1972), and *Nora Helmer* (1974), *Women in New York* is essentially filmed theater, but unlike the previous three films, the play was shot on actual film (as opposed to archaic video) and features rather elaborate sets pieces taken from Fassbinder's actual original theater production, not to mention the fact that all the actresses from the original stage performance reprised their roles for the film. In its theatric tableaux, *Women in New York* is like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) meets Fassbinder's own *World on a Wire* aka (1973) *Welt*

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am Draht, albeit with a quasi-campy gynocentric stench and a fashion sense that anticipates the sci-fi cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982). One of Fassbinder's most difficult works in the sense that one has to endure fast-talking Frauen chattering amongst one another in a shockingly sophisticated fashion, *Women in New York* is, as Fassbinder's Danish filmmaker friend Christian Braad Thomsen once wrote, a film that "occupies an important place in Fassbinder's work," even if only a handful of people have seen the film and it is nearly impossible to view today, at least by any official means.

Mary Haines (Christa Berndl) is an upper-middleclass housewife in her mid-30s living in fancy 1930s NYC who is married to a hotshot stockbroker in Wall Street named Stephen Haines. Unbeknownst to Mary, who is a rather innocent and naïve little lady (quite unlike her mostly caddy and callous friends!), her husband is carrying on an affair with a low-class hussy salesgirl in her mid-20s named Crystal Allen (Barbara Sukowa). Mary is the central figures of a cosmopolitan clique of friends who spend most of their time talking shit about other people, especially each other, so it comes as no surprise that she learns of her hubby's infidelities via her always scheming bitch friend Sylvia Fowler (Fassbinder diva Margit Carstensen in a radically repellent role). Of course, the seriousness of the situation does not hit home from Mary until she goes to get her nails done at beauty salon and the manicurist, who does not know the person she is servicing is thee Mrs. Stephen Haines, unwittingly gossips about how her friend Crystal is having an affair with a certain Mr. Stephen Haines. When Mary finally gets the gall to approach Crystal about her affair with her beloved husband, the homewrecker venomously states, "You're just an old habit to him. If it wasn't for the kids he'd left you long ago." While Mary's widowed mother tells her daughter to stay faithful to her spouse and forgive him for his extramarital indiscretions, Mr. Haines has already made up his mind and divorces his rather desperate wife so he can marry cute young cunt Crystal. Of course, Mary gets advice from various different women from eclectic backgrounds and learns that many older women, especially from working-class backgrounds, are willing to tolerate cheating and beatings from their husbands as they fear they will not be able to find a new man due to their advanced age and antiquated looks, or as one character states, "Pride is a luxury a woman in love can't afford." Meanwhile, Mary's preteen tomboy daughter is turning into a staunch bull dyke and fears growing breasts, confessing to her mother, "I don't want to be a girl anyway! I hate girls. They talk too much and they're stupid. And boys are allowed everything and girls nothing." Of course, Mary's daughter is not the only gal who resents being a woman as the divorced dame's writer friend Nancy (Angela Schmid) has decided to dedicate her life to being a stoic feminist of the frigid and seemingly lesbian sort. In the end, Mary learns to be a ruthless bitch just like her adversary and when she discovers that her ex-husband's new wife is carrying on an affair with a fellow named Mr. Buck Winston, she decides to take

her swift revenge. Although not actually depicted at the conclusion of *Women In New York*, the viewer infers that Mary steals back her husband by telling him that his new wife has a new boy toy in what is a ultimately a pseudo-happy ending. After all, protagonist Mary has morally degenerated to the level of her rather repugnant shebitch enemies, but apparently that is the price a woman must pay with old age.

As Christian Braad Thomsen wrote in his book *Fassbinder: The Life And Work Of A Provocative Genius* (2004) regarding the characters of *Women in New York*, “The women are less puppets in a male game than puppets in their own game to catch men.” Indeed, in its uniquely unflattering depiction of women at their most pathologically vicious, conspiring, callous, and craven, *Women in New York* reminded me of a thematic cross between the ideas and theories expressed in anti-Semitic Semite Otto Weininger’s masterpiece of misogyny *Sex and Character* (1903) aka *Geschlecht und Charakter* meets German-American Baltimore sage H.L. Mencken’s ironically titled work *In Defense of Women* (1918), yet at the same time, it is a film that is meant to be devoured by women; just not the sort who think flashing their tiny tits in public is a reasonable form of political protest. As a Fassbinder flick, Thomsen perfectly summed up its importance when he wrote: “*Women in New York* is the only theatre production Fassbinder preserved for posterity. He had already recorded *The Coffee Shop* and *Bremen Coffee* on video and *Katzelmacher* and *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* on film, but not with exactly the same casts, the same stage sets and the same text as in the original productions for the stage. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* was not staged by him, but by Peer Raben, nor was the film a recording of the theatre production. *Garbage, the City and Death* also exists as a film with the title *Shadow of Angels*, but under the direction of Daniel Schmid.” Indeed, in no other film does Fassbinder’s telling confession, “In the theatre I staged things as if it were a film, and then shot films as if it were theatre” become more clear than in his film version of *Women in New York*. Admittedly, while so-called ‘women’s films’ are not exactly my cup of tea (I would rather watch the latest Michael Bay or Eli Roth flick than endure most of these films), *Women in New York* ultimately proved to me that, in the right hysterical homo hands, the pseudo-genre could be somewhat palatable and aesthetically prestigious. A rather wicked work depicting the 1930s NYC female upper-class as a bunch of bickering high-class whores that derive the utmost satisfaction from seeing their friends’ lives fall into shambles, *Women in New York* is ultimately a film that not only incriminates the fairer sex, but auteur Fassbinder as well. Indeed, it is no coincidence that 2 of 3 of Fassbinder’s great loves committed suicide and that his female friend Eva Mattes (who portrays an unsavory pregnant housewife named Edith in *Women in New York* who has four children despite hating children) would depict him in the diacritic biopic *A Man Like Eva* (1984) aka *Ein Mann wie EVA* directed by Radu Gabrea. For any man looking for a reason not to

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get married, just watch Fassbinder's Women in New York and bask in the wild wonder of booboisie bitchiness.

-Ty E

DESPAIR

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1978)

Out of all of the films in German New Wave alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's cinematic oeuvre, I unhesitatingly regard *Despair* (1978) – a cinematic adaptation of the 1936 Vladimir Nabokov of the same name – as the director's greatest failure as a filmmaker as an ambitious and audacious work that had all the ingredients for what could have been a completely chilling yet cruelly campy S&M arthouse masterpiece, but ultimately fell short of being a piece of celluloid perfection due to language barriers and business-inspired artistic compromises, among other things. Fassbinder's most expensive film at that time, even costing more than all of his precious cinematic works combined, and funded using tax-shelter money, *Despair* was a rare German film of its time in that it had guaranteed international distribution from a major US studio, thus it was rather disastrously decided that the work would be shot simultaneously in English (making it the first of two films Fassbinder shot in English, preceding *Lili Marleen* (1981)) and German, thereupon resulting in a curiously culturally-mongrelized (in the culture-distorting Hollywood sense) and somewhat contrived high-camp work missing a soul and a bit of the filmmaker's signature auteur flare. Featuring gay English actor Dirk Bogarde (*The Servant*, *The Night Porter* aka *Il Portiere di notte*) – one of the stars of Fassbinder's self-professed #1 favorite film *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei* directed by Luchino Visconti – *Despair* received a less than warm reception when it played at the 1978 Cannes Film Festival and the star was so disenchanted with the film that he inevitably disowned own it, complaining that the director erratically re-cut the film during a manic moment of melancholy. Not by any means fluent in the language that *Despair* was widely released with it, Fassbinder would go on to describe his lost-in-translation direction of the film as follows in an interview with Gian Luigi Rondi, "It's true, there was a whole bunch of words I didn't catch... but in film it's much more important how language sounds than what its concrete content is. From my point of view, even in German the most important thing is the melody of a sentence, its tonal coloration, its modeling. And then Dirk Bogarde was in the cast. I didn't need to understand his English, any more than he needed to understand my German. During the shooting an almost extrasensory form of communication developed between us; he understood what I wanted, and I understood perfectly what he was doing." Of course, judging by Sir Bogarde's rather severe reaction to the whole ordeal, one must question Fassbinder's remark regarding the supposed 'chemistry' (Fassbinder was known for being afraid of and artistically handicapped by 'big stars') he had developed with the actor, but the filmmaker never reneged his opinion that *Despair* was one of the best films he had ever made, even listing it as number three in a top ten list of his personal favorites of all the films he had ever directed. Depicting the slow

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but steady mental disintegration of a white Russian émigré and tycoon mogul named Hermann Hermann (Dirk Bogarde) with a rather radically discordant racial persuasion (his father was German-Russian and his mother was a member of the Jewish Rothschild banking dynasty) who comes up with the dubious and duplicitous scheme of faking his own death after taking out a hefty insurance policy and killing a proletarian man he believes to be his doppelgänger (but looks only slightly like him), so he can start a new life in Switzerland, *Despair* is probably the closest a film has ever come to cinematically depicting the haunted German psyche during the Weimar Republic era and on the eve of the National Socialist takeover as analyzed in German-Jewish Frankfurt school film theorist Siegfried Kracauer revolutionary text *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947). Needless to say, also like Kracauer's propagandistic pop psychology book, *Despair* sounds more delectable in its seemingly mind-fucking magnificence than it actually is.

A reasonably successful capitalist who has taken over his Russian family's chocolate company and relocated abroad in Germany due to the capitalist-killing chaos of the Russian Revolution, Hermann Hermann (Bogarde) is really nothing more than a glorified cuckold at home who can only 'rise to the occasion' with his cock (or so only one can only assume since he is always fully clothed) when engaged in softcore sadomasochism like having his lecherous wife lovingly licking his boots. A patent pushover who mistakes petty pomposity with personal prestige, Hermann passively ignores the fact that his busty and blonde yet slightly bloated wife Lydia (Andréa Ferréol of Marco Ferreri's *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) and *The Tin Drum* (1979) aka *Die Blechtrommel*) is carrying on a lurid love affair with her own cousin Ardalion (Fassbinder Superstar Volker Spengler of *Satan's Brew* (1976) and *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978)), a horribly horny hack of a painter who looks like a gay and grotesque version of Vincent van Gogh, had the Dutch painter packed on 50 pounds and had a botched lobotomy. Despite the fact he has no problem telling Ardalion to his face that he is, "nothing but a Ukrainian peasant pretending to be a bohemian," Hermann does not have the gall nor the balls to be brawl with the exceedingly effete fellow who is quite blatantly bugging his wife, thus one can only assume that he is quite apathetic when it comes to penetrating his salacious spouse as she is clearly a woman he does not love and vice versa, but a trophy wife with big tits and nil brain. A nauseatingly narcissistic fellow who most naively tells people that regarding his relationship with his wife, "She needs a patronizing type like I need a patronizable woman. Were a perfect couple. I like literature...She likes trash. I'm clear thinking...she's scatter brained. We are a perfect match...Like a lock and key," hysterical Hermann eventually comes to terms that he is stuck in a demeaning and deferential dead-end marriage and is living a life of lingering lethargy and lunacy, thus he must breakthrough and develop a new identity. A forsaken fellow who is also facing bankruptcy and the loss of his glorious chocolate factory,

Hermann begins to confuse the words "merger" and "murderer" as his life becomes all the more miserable. Needless to say, when a merger with another chocolate company falls through, murders begins to sound like a much better option. A typically Nabokov-esque "unreliable narrator" (or in the case of the film, a demented schizophrenic), Hermann was described by Fassbinder, who put a new spin of the character with the help of screenwriter Tom Stoppard, as follows in an interview, "The crisis experienced by the hero...who suddenly has the feeling that the rug's being pulled out from under him. You could list a whole series of reasons for that: the political, economic, and social problems of those years; but the real or, at least, the most important reason is his sudden insight that everything's pointless and that nothing has meaning anymore. Why? Because old age is approaching, the age when a person just doesn't expect anything new, when a person no longer gets satisfaction from looking for things, desiring things, coming up with ideas." A desperate man living in desperate times who already lived through the virtual hell of the Russian Revolution, Hermann comes up with a complex, albeit ultimately imbecilic, conspiracy that involves calculated coldblooded murder that will offer him one last chance to transcend the banality of his current life as a posh pansy for something more 'real,' but rather unfortunately, the batshit crazy candyman has trouble discerning between reality and his own audio-visual delusions.

While Hermann falsely believes him to be his 'double' and an immaculate doppelgänger, destitute peasant philosopher Felix (Klaus Löwitsch) – a poor but prideful man who believes that, "Philosophy is an invention of the rich. So is religion...poetry. I don't believe in love either" – could not be anymore diametrically opposed in character to the cowardly choco-capitalist. Although H.H. is a sexually and physically impotent tyrant (at least in his own mind) of a weakling who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, has never done a minutes worth of physical labor in his entire life, lives a lavish and heedlessly hedonistic lifestyle, and generally hides inside his head as opposed to confronting the outside world, Felix is a stoic man's man who lives off the land, has a powerful body, and takes pride himself, thus the two characters represent the two extremes of Occidental man and naturally, for modernity to go on, the decadent and derailed mensch must kill his archaic comrade. While Hermann seems to have sexually repressed homoerotic feelings for Felix as especially obvious when the worker gets naked and shows off his proletarian physique, he has a pernicious plan to kill the down-and-out drifter as he believes they are physically identical, thus enabling him to fake his own death with a simple change of clothes and identities and cashing in on a new life insurance policy he has just obtained and subsequently escaping to neutral Switzerland so he can begin a new life. As a man who tells his insurance salesman, "I have neither priest nor doctor. I need them not at all. So why shouldn't I confide in my insurance consultant?," Hermann, aside from suffering from schizophrenia, also seems to be plagued

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by acute autism of the deracinated aristocrat sort. Of course, anyone viewing *Despair* knows that Hermann is hopelessly fated to fail, thus giving the character a certain vague tragicomic charisma in his feeble and feckless campaign for freedom from a forlorn life of personal failure and unfulfilling fetishism. As someone who opportunistically bought forged personal identity cards to fit in with changing political trends, including going from a blackshirt fighting reds in the white army to a “Caucasian” fighting SA brownshirts in the red army, Hermann at least has enough honesty to admit to himself (as well as a potential business client) that he is merely a, “yellow belly in a brown hat” whose life has amounted to nothing. Throughout *Despair*, Hermann says a lot of contradictory things about his mother who he has admitted incestuous feelings and goes from described her as a, “fat bourgeois addicted to chocolate,” to a “pure Russian of princely stock.” Of course, as a Rothschild (assuming Hermann is not lying), Hermann’s mother comes from a positively parasitic family that made its fortune by loaning money to opposing sides during all major European wars during the last couple centuries, thus the candyman was born with both blood and chocolate on his hands. Fassbinder certainly had complex and rather empathetic feelings regarding the character, stating, “What do people like Hermann Hermann usually do when it becomes clear to them that they’re at a turning point where they have everything behind them and nothing ahead of them? They pull into their shell, they resign themselves, and rather than admit that their life’s over, they’d prefer to spend the rest of it in a sea of compromises and resignation. The few who rebel, on the other hand, even if in a totally irrational way, those people achieve something, they discover something that gives them new hope. So no exoneration, but if you’re comparing him to the person who gives up in the face of life, I prefer the person who’s at least still capable of hope, even madness.”

In a writing Fassbinder did on *Despair* during pre-production of the film, he concluded the essay with the following sentence, “Of this despair and the painful search for something in motion, and the courage to recognize a utopia and to open yourself up to it, however poor it may be—of these things I tell in this film.” Of course, the L’Enfant terrible auteur used the artistic medium of cinema as a means to, “recognize a utopia,” albeit an innately imaginary one, with *Despair* being a project of potential celluloid paradise that was ultimately held down by its star power, international film crew, monetary motivated utilization of a foreign language, and big budget. Utilizing some of the sets from Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman’s commercial and critical failure *The Serpent’s Egg* (1977) – a work also set in pre-Nazi Germany and centering on a foreigner character (played by a foreign actor) that many people felt did not ‘work’ artistically and featured nonsensical casting (David Carradine is certainly not Bergman material) – *Despair* almost seems like it was a foreordained film from the very beginning. Ironically, protagonist Hermann Hermann – a man who claims the schizophrenic ancestry of, “my father was a German speaking Rus-

sian from Ravel. My mother was a Rothschild” – is a fellow who, like Fassbinder himself (especially in regard to *Despair*), is an idiosyncratic entity with a capacity for greatness, but ultimately fails in carrying out a meticulously constructed master plan due to cognitive dissonance and confusion. With his utilization of Dirk Bogarde instead of one of his Superstars (Kurt Raab comes to mind...) and focusing on debauched and deranged aristocrats as opposed to marginal and melancholy members of the middle-class, Fassbinder must have been trying to realize the dream of directing a Teutonized Luchino Visconti period piece of the arthouse Euro-sleaze persuasion with *Despair* – the first film where the director replaced a good percentage of his original film crew with professionals from all around the world, hence the too “polished and pretty” feel of the work. Sort of like the debauched and abridged blueblood equivalent to Berlin Alexanderplatz (1980) in its depiction of the perturbed protagonist’s precarious personal life and plagued psyche and how it parallels the increasingly chaos of the wanton Weimar Republic, *Despair* ultimately seems, not unlike *Effi Briest* (1974), more like a fantasy project for Fassbinder where he was able to use a professional crew, nice budget, and take his directing skills to new levels in terms of technique, but unfortunately the film seems less like an intimate ‘auteur piece’ and more in the vein of a Tinto Brass big budget exploitation flick on psychosexual steroids made to appeal to both decadent bourgeoisie Americans and European alike, but no notable audience ever seemed interested in the film as a piece of smutty yet sleekly stylized S&M cinema that was not even approved of by its posh poof star Dirk Bogarde. Of course, a failure by Fassbinder is always more interesting than a supposed masterpiece by Wim Wenders or Jean-Luc Godard, thus making *Despair* worth seeing for fans of German New Cinema’s prodigal yet princely son. After all, what other film features odiously obese gay Austrian Peter Kern as a Nazi SA brownshirt who works for a chocolate company and whose beautiful brown uniform is described by protagonist H.H. as, “most appropriate, a chocolate-colored jacket!”

-Ty E

GERMANY IN AUTUMN
GERMANY IN AUTUMN

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1978)

It has been my experience and that of everyone I know who has spoken on the subject of anthology films (especially those where a number of filmmakers contribute an individual segment to the film) that they are almost unanimously and without fail uneven and flawed films because at least one of the individualized celluloid 'petites vignettes' will be an inferior work, thus sticking out like a Polish philosopher while juxtaposed alongside cinematic greatness. This would explain why there are so many horror movies in this format as this unofficial rule of filmmaking/storytelling is almost irrelevant when dealing with a genre that is typically innately inferior, formulaic, and rarely artistic, not to mention the fact that it is much easier to digest 30, rather than 90 minutes, of cheap sex, violence, and murder. The first segment of *Flesh and Fantasy* (1943) directed by Julien Duvivier, "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" directed by Federico Fellini for *Boccaccio '70* (1962). "Toby Dammit" directed by Federico Fellini for *Spirits of the Dead* (1968), "Superbia - The Pride" directed by Ulrike Ottinger for *Seven Women, Seven Sins* (1986), "Far From Yokohama" from *Mystery Train* (1989) directed by Jim Jarmusch "We Fuck Alone" directed by Gaspar Noé for *Distrikt* (2006), and "Les souffrances d'un oeuf meurtri" directed by Roland Lethem for anachronistic compilation *Incarnation - Cinema Abattoir* (1967 – 2007) are just a meager handful of the anthological cinematic miscreations that are part of cinema history. Undoubtedly, as far as I am concerned, the most uneven, one-sided, and cinematically handicapped multi-director film that I have seen is *Germany in Autumn* (1978) aka *Deutschland im Herbst*; a film that, despite being coordinated by critically-revered Frankfurt school legal counselor turned filmmaker Alexander Kluge, and featuring contributions from nine different German auteur filmmakers (Alf Brustellin, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge, Maximiliane Mainka, Beate Mainka-Jellinghaus, Peter Schubert, Bernhard Sinkel, Hans Peter Cloos, Edgar Reitz, Katja Rupé, and Volker Schlöndorff), owes any artistic merit it may have to one filmmaker and naturally he is also the best known and seemingly least politically-motivated. The film centers around various filmmakers' responses to the death of prominent German businessman Hanns Martin Schleyer (a former officer of the SS and NSDAP member) and the dubious suicides of three imprisoned far-left terrorists (Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe of the Red Army Faction aka Baader-Meinhof Group) whose revolutionary guerrilla gang had him kidnapped and killed. Admittedly, a number of the filmmakers that contributed to *Germany in Autumn* I was not even familiar with upon first viewing the cinematic work and I believe that it is for good reason because aside from Fassbinder's realist but unsurprisingly melodramatic segment – which is around 25-minutes, thus making up roughly ¼ of the total film – I could have never conceived of

socio-politically active kraut auteurs making the murderous mayhem of a bunch of ethno-masochistic “New Left” (influenced by Mao, Fanon, Guevara, Frankfurt school, etc) neo-marxist terrorists seem so banal. Needless to say, this review is mainly going to be focused on Fassbinder’s domestic debauchery, which is no surprise seeing that I am a fan of the Bavarian-born filmmaker’s relatively objective, thoughtful, and provocative treatment of the RAF and related leftist activists of the same zeitgeist in his previous film satirical melodrama *Mother Küsters’ Trip to Heaven* (1975) and his later bodacious black comedy *The Third Generation* (1979) aka *Die Dritte Generation*.

Despite being designed with the ambitious objective of being an ostensibly politically-charged cinematic work of social and historical significance, *Germany in Autumn* – like many of Alexander Kluge’s cinematic works in general – is mostly a rather emotionally and aesthetically sterile experience, sort of like what one would expect the soul of a dead old Bolshevik to be like, but it does not start out that way. Beginning with Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s segment set in the German New Wave king’s actual Munich-based apartment, the filmmaker’s keen contribution to *Germany in Autumn* is surprisingly intimate and rather revealing, so much so that I was severely shocked by the artistically vapid remainder of the film with the structure of the work being like a head without a body. Featuring Fassbinder, his then-boyfriend Armin Meier (in one of his last screen performances before his suicide that same year), his mother Lilo Pempeit (who appeared in around half of the her son’s films, usually in a minor role) and his ex-wife Ingrid Caven (who only ‘appears’ via telephone while talking to her homo ex-hubby), *Germany in Autumn* depicts the foredoomed filmmaker at his most naked; both literally and figuratively. Although seemingly a pure documentary of the filmmaker’s everyday life upon a superficial glance, the seriously saucy yet strikingly sentimental segment of the film is based on tightly scripted material, but that is not to say that the scenes are purely contrived without biographical basis as they do the parallel the erratic yet engrossing events of Fassbinder’s coke-fueled life in the fast lane. The segments of the filmmaker’s interaction with his beau boi Armin Meier – whose bulging bratwurst compensates for his congenitally blighted brain, in spite of his being a Lebensborn baby (somebody must have snuck a brownshirt into the program) – are especially telling, as he treats his ill-fated boyfriend as if his ignorance and lack of intelligence are so glaring that he cannot tell whether his opinions are real or the poorly performed product of sophomoric sarcasm, which is perfectly exemplified when the filmmaker asks him “You’re actually serious, aren’t you?” in regard to the live-in boyfriend’s query as to whether or not the imprisoned Baader-Meinhof Group terrorist should be “shot” or “hanged.” When the manly and meaty moron (or at least that is how he is portrayed) Meier remarks that, “if they (RAF) don’t follow the law, the state doesn’t have to either,” furious Fassbinder – dressed preposterously in leather-fag apparel that can barely contain his unflatteringly flabby physique – lunges at and

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physically assaults his fairy flame who is wearing nothing but a bath towel. In another particularly telling scene, Meier brings home a random frail, four-eyed nerd from a local bar, under the pretense that the gangly gay geek didn't have a place to stay for the night. Fassbinder, initially intrigued, takes one glance at the blissfully sleeping fag, then erupts into a blind rage in which he demands that Armin immediately evict the anal intruder from the premises. Clearly emotionally stirred by Meier's assumed lack of celibacy, Fassbinder curls into a ball on the floor, unleashing a pent up storm of tears, to which Armin responds by coddling him like a baby desperate for its mother's teat. By no means a physically handsome man, one can only assume that Meier – who is notably more hunky, masculine, and muscular than Fassbinder – constantly got the urge to cheat on his man with finer Aryan specimens. Naturally, when dealing with his mother Lilo Pempeit – a woman who left her son practically in the streets when he was still prepubescent – Fassbinder is much colder and matter-of-fact, so much so that he gets her to admit, "The best thing would be a kind of authoritarian ruler who is benevolent, and kind and orderly" as far as the sort of government she would like to see formed in Germany. In other words, Ms. Pempeit – a woman who lived through the Third Reich – would like to see another Uncle Adolf in charge, thereupon showing the political and philosophical divide between her epoch and that of the third generation.

During a candid interview towards the middle of *Germany in Autumn*, in what is indubitably one of the best examples in film history of someone who fits the "True Believer" archetype as outlined by the book of the same name written by German-American social writer Eric Hoffer – who essentially argued that political extremists rarely opt for adopting a more moderate political persuasion after shedding a previous one, but instead one that is just as, if not more, extreme – Horst Mahler, a lawyer by trade who became one of the founding members of the Red Army Faction and arguably the spiritual 'Rebbe' (as he certainly looks like one in *Germany in Autumn*) of the group, states in justification for the cold-blooded murder of 'capitalist pigs' that revolutionaries have, "disgust at the fact that we had fascism, state-sponsored fascist murder, the fascist extermination of other people, and that this had social cause which continue today" in West Germany. Although originally a member of the magical Maoist faith, Mahler would later have a change of heart and shift to the far-right despite being of partial Jewish ancestry, thereupon eventually resulting in his founding of the "Society for the Rehabilitation of Those persecuted for Refutation of the Holocaust" and repeated arrests for 'Volksverhetzung' ("incitement of popular hatred") and 'holocaust denial.' Mahler now has the distinct honor of serving a 12-year prison sentence for refuting the official events of the holocaust due to his unkosher, pro-Hitler rhetoric. Whatever one thinks of Mahler's political views, one has to admit – whether on the left or right – that Germany is not the 'democracy' it claims to be, ironically using Nazi-style authoritarian anti-freedom-of-speech

tactics against pro-Nazi sentiments. It should be noted that Germany in Autumn was assembled at a time when the Fatherland had yet to be considered a 'stable' democracy of sorts, hence the hollow dreams of certainly leftist filmmakers that a Marxist utopia could still be realized in post-war Germany. As a liberal democracy, modern Germany offers its citizenry the right to freedom of prostitution and partaking in said bought flesh, cultural vapidness (when was the last time Germany produced a great filmmaker, let alone philosopher, novelist, painter, or composer?!), colonization from hostile elements from the continental south and east, generational indigenous population decline, the hegemony of Americanization and globalization, and a Fatherland without fathers and without a future. As much as I think the Lenfant terrible 'rock star' terrorists of the RAF were deluded nihilists (of the sort described by Albert Camus in his seminal 1951 work *The Rebel* aka *L'Homme révolté*) of the ethno-masochistic bend, at least they proved to be a generation of quasi-Faustian, foolhardy, if not foolish Germans with blood pumping through their veins. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about most of their spiritual compatriots who contributed to Germany in Autumn; a work that is more symbiotic of the early stage of a Spenglerian "Winter" – the final, twilight stage of civilization where spiritual creativity is totally devitalized, everyday life is a grueling experience, and atheistic materialistic cosmopolitanism reigns – than that of a rich cinematic harvest.

-Ty E

IN A YEAR OF 13 MOONS
IN A YEAR OF 13 MOONS

Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1978)

Typically regarded as singularly prolific Neuer Deutscher Film auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's most intimate and lugubrious film, *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* – a foreboding work that centers around the last couple days of a suicidal transvestite – also happens to be one of the tragic filmmaker's greatest and most ambitious works. Dedicated to Fassbinder's lover of four years, Armin Meier (*Satan's Brew*, *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*), who committed suicide after the gay filmmaker broke up with him during a trip to New York in May 1978, *In a Year of 13 Moons* is hardly the biographical portrayal it pays posthumous tribute to. Apparently accused of belittling and torturing Meier, Fassbinder was attacked in the German tabloids and even received anonymous death threats for what many perceived as provoking the young man's self-slaughter. After considering being a farmer in Paraguay or a social recluse, Fassbinder finally opted to deal with the heated heartbreak of Meier's death by getting to work on *In a Year of 13 Moons*, a film he went on to explain, "What is important for me is that I managed to make a film which does not simply translate my emotions about the suicide. That is my pain and mourning about the fact that I may have failed in some respects in this relationship, but that I made a film...which goes far beyond this; which tells a lot more than I could have told about Armin. And for me this was a decision for life." As a product of the Lebensborn program – a National Socialist SS breeding project which allowed SS officers to sire children with random racially Nordic women – Meier is similar to the protagonist of *In a Year of 13 Moons* in that he spent his early childhood years as an orphan and never knew who his biological parents were, but the literal biographical similarities between Fassbinder's ill-fated beau and the fictional character essentially end there. As an average-sized mensch with a striking resemblance to James Dean as depicted in his passive yet potent performance in Fassbinder's *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), Meier does not even vaguely physically resemble the towering Nordic transvestite played by Volker Spengler in *In a Year of 13 Moons*, nor did he have his penis cut off in *Casablanca* because a Jewish holocaust survivor treated him with romantic disdain like the character in the film. Of course, being the starkest of the filmmaker's always distressing and oftentimes nihilistic melodramas, one is better off forgetting the facts that inspired *In a Year of 13 Moons* and instead embrace the emotions that sparked film as Fassbinder did not title his feature-length work *Love is Colder than Death* (1969) for nothing. Needless to say, *In a Year of 13 Moons* proved to be one of the most agonizing and afflicting films I have ever seen, and I mean that in the most positive way, as no other film has provoked in me the ability to empathize with the all-consuming misery of a dick-less and suicidal tranny.

From its emotionally bombarding beginning to its harrowing yet inescapable end, *In a Year of 13 Moons* is an emotionally excruciating cinematic excursion that takes no prisoners in terms of its propensity to inflict shame and misery onto the viewer. Beginning with the superbly superstitious claim that, "Every seventh year is a Year of the Moon. People whose lives are strongly influenced by their emotions suffer more intensely from depressions in these years. To a lesser degree, this is also true of years with 13 new moons. When a Moon Year also has 13 new moons inescapable personal tragedies may occur. In the 20th century, this dangerous constellation occurs six times. One of these is 1978....," *In a Year of 13 Moons* shifts gears and reveals our humble and humiliated protagonist Erwin / Elvira Weishaupt (Volker Spengler) who is beaten by a gang of Slavic homosexuals after one of them is repulsed to find that the tall transvestite is no female but a neutered nullo nutjob. As a married man with a grownup daughter and a butcher by trade, Erwin does not seem like the sort of individual that would fall hopelessly in love with fancy rich fellows, let alone have himself castrated for the most trivial of reasons. Erwin's hooker friend 'Red Zora' (Ingrid Caven), a 'tart with a heart,' states that her full-time drag-queen friend was not even gay until relatively recently and his decision to undergo a sex change was for seemingly no reason. Of course, as you watch *In a Year of 13 Moons*, you learn that Erwin went through the excessive procedure in the totally delusional hope that a man he loved, Anton Saitz (played by real-life orphan Gottfried John) – a holocaust survivor turned black marketer turned prestigious property speculator – would accept him as a serious lover if he were a pseudo-woman of sorts. As an ex-butcher who had no problem mutilating live animals, an act he said gave meaning to their lives, Erwin must have seen castration as only a minor sacrifice in the conquest of true and eternal love, but unfortunately things don't go as planned and the genitally-deprived he-woman is left with nothing to show for his unspeakable suffering, including his mangled manhood. In *In a Year of 13 Moons*, the viewer follows the particularly perturbed protagonist as he makes a desperate attempt to pick up the broken pieces of his past, but on his fateful personal odyssey, Erwin is only met with cold rejection and disdain from those individuals that are supposed to love him the most. Erwin even revisits the Catholic convent he spent his youth in, discombobulating the nun who helped raise him, Sister Gudrun (Lilo Pempeit), with his absurd gentle giant drag queen appearance. Describing the child she knew as a 'good boy,' the now grown up Erwin reflects on the fact that it was in his youthful days in the convent that he learned to lie to others because by engaging in deceptive behavior he was rewarded, thereupon sparking the quasi-schizophrenic dichotomy between his true internal self and the role he would play until falling in love with the holocaust survivor of his dreams. As can be expected, Erwin is never able to reconcile the transformation of his former male self and his 'Elvira' persona, thus resulting in the most lamentable yet inevitable of consequences.

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In a Year of 13 Moons is an interesting and undoubtedly controversial work in that it contradicts Hollywood history, portraying a good, Aryan German of notably Nordic features as the victim of a cold, calculating and glaringly ugly Jew, who laughs at the man who purports to love him when he realizes he become a eunuch for him. In a sense, Fassbinder – who arguably tormented his boyfriend to the point that he committed suicide – is symbolic of Jew jerk Saitz in both repellant appearance and character and Meier – a lonely Lebensborn boy who was originally spawned to be one of Germany's greatest sons – is Erwin, a man that is ultimately destroyed by a life of misfortune and heartbreak. Fassbinder may have had a reputation for abusing women and drugs, but one must admit there was a certain uncompromising honesty, albeit cryptic, in his cinematic art, with In a Year of 13 Moons being one of his most striking, sensitive and artistically merited examples. German auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel would pay sardonic tribute to Fassbinder and his masterpiece of melodramatic misery In a Year of 13 Moons with his work The 120 Days of Böttrop (1997); a work also starring Volker Spengler and other Fassbinder survivors. Ultimately, Fassbinder himself would reach an end as tragic, if not more pathetic, than his lover Meier; but this is what one might come to expect for an individual who fucked virtually every cast member of his films, had a menagerie of exotic brown men at his beck and call and ultimately died alone of a cocaine overdose with his last script in hand.

-Ty E

THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1979)

If I were to choose one film by Rainer Werner Fassbinder to recommend to a Fass-bande virgin, it would undoubtedly be *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) aka *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* – the first and best film in the German New Wave filmmaker's BRD Trilogy (preceding *Veronika Voss* and *Lola*) and the director's most nationally and internationally profitable film – as this wunderbar work not only touches on many of the themes that occupy the director's extensive oeuvre – not least of all the post-Nazi German consciousness – but it is also one of his most accessible, gripping, and enthralling works. *The Marriage of Maria Braun* also happens to be the first Fassbinder film I ever saw about a decade ago and over the years I have realized I was right in my initial assumption that it is one of the German New Wave filmmaker's best films. Described by French New Wave founder and alpha-auteur François Truffaut (*400 Blows*, *Fahrenheit 451*) in the prestigious publication *Cahiers du Cinéma* as "an original work of epic and poetic qualities" in which Fassbinder "has broken out of the ivory tower of the cinephiles," *The Marriage of Maria Braun* is probably the single greatest cinematic depiction of life for citizens in post-war Germany and the warped and seemingly irreparable male-female gender dynamics that such chaos sowed as the sort of film Helma Sanders-Brahms wishes she could have assembled with her slave-morality-driven celluloid feminist abortion Germany, *Pale Mother* (1980) aka *Deutschland bleiche Mutter*, but lacks the artistry, sensitivity, and honesty to do so. Unlike Sanders-Brahms's film, Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* portrays both the corruption and moral degeneration of both genders of a newlywed married couple as a result of completely cataclysmic and uncontrollable circumstances that resulted at the conclusion of the Second World War during Germany Year Zero and a decade or so there afterward.

Essentially, Fassbinder's erudite equivalent to the Hollywood epic *Gone with the Wind* (1939), except set within the context of post-Hitler Germany instead of the American Civil War and Reconstruction era South, *The Marriage of Maria Braun* is quite possibly Fassbinder's greatest aesthetic and historical document of the father-less Fatherland that came to be as a result of the tumultuous and tormenting tides of war. Originally sprung from a failed made-for-TV collaboration tentatively titled *The Marriage of our Parents* between Fassbinder and Frankfurt school filmmaker Alexander Kluge after the critical success of their mostly aesthetically and politically odious omnibus film collaboration *Germany in Autumn* (1978), thankfully *The Marriage of Maria Braun* developed into a different celluloid creature entirely; a one with heart and soul, even if the accursed characters of their film of theirs figuratively torn out. Originally created from a rough draft assembled by Fassbinder and his filmic compatriots Klaus-Dieter Lang and Kurt Raab, *The Marriage of Maria Braun* was ultimately rewritten for

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screen by longtime collaborator Peter Märthesheimer (producer of Fassbinder's *Despair* and mini-series *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, among various other films) and his partner Pea Fröhlich, a professor of psychology and pedagogy with Michael Fengler (co-director of Fassbinder's *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*) and star-crossed Austrian actress Romy Schneider in mind for the title role. Although Schneider probably would have been most fitting as the lost lead, it would be Fassbinder Superstar Hanna Schygulla (*Love is Colder than Death*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*) – arguably the greatest and most important actress of New German Cinema – who would give the performance of a lifetime for *The Marriage of Maria Braun*; a film that would prove to be one of the most important films of *Neuer Deutscher Film*, as well as German cinema history as a whole.

Right from the rough getgo of *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, it is most apparent that newlyweds Maria (Hanna Schygulla) and Hermann Braun (Klaus Löwitsch) are in for a rocky ride of a rather foredoomed marriage. Barely surviving their marriage ceremony as the building they get married in tumbles before them and almost crushes them during an Allied bombing raid in 1943, the two severed sweethearts only get to spend "half a day and a whole night" before Hermann – a German Wehrmacht soldier – is shipped back to the apocalyptic setting that is the Eastern front. Rather unsurprisingly for a man of his ill-fortune, Hermann fails to return to his mate Maria after an extended period of waiting for him to return randomly in a ghost train of sorts. When Maria's soldier brother-in-law Willy (Gottfried John) states that Hermann has been undoubtedly killed like most of the men of his unfortunate unit, she makes the best of things and becomes a hostess at a dilapidated makeshift bar for American Negro soldiers and eventually starts a relationship with a heavysset, middle-aged black soldier named Bill (played by American conductor George Byrd), which results in a merry mix of miscegenation and with a mulatto embryo in her white womb. Naturally, it is to Maria's grand surprise when Hermann shows up after years of captivity in a Ruskie hellhole – looking like a disheveled holocaust survivor no less – to the delight of witnessing his sweet Maria fornicating with a butterball untermensch Schwarzie. Naturally, a feverish fight ensues between heated Hermann and wild black buck Bill that is abruptly ended when the lady of the bizarre bi-racial love triangle breaks a big bottle over the head of her Negro gentlemen caller, thereupon resulting in his decisive death and a charge against the glorified callgirl for murder by American occupational forces. A stoic soldier that has already endured much shame and misery at the hands of Slavic savages, hubby Hermann takes the rap for Maria's incendiary indiscretion, thus resulting in his imprisonment. To her delight, Maria looses the little Günther Kaufmann (a real-life product of a similar coupling between an American Negro G.I. and a Aryan barbarian) in her stomach under dubious circumstances centering around a doped-up doctor that she is peddling her flesh to in return for special medical

favours. With her spouse in jail, Maria takes it upon herself to become “The Mata Hari of the economic Miracle,” or as she states quite callously and sardonically yet undeniably honestly: “I am a master of disguise: A tool of capitalism by day and an agent of the working classes by night.” Assuring her humiliated husband that she is, “going to build a house for us, as you would have done” in an exceedingly emasculating manner as he stands most impotent as an imprisoned man of no means, Maria climbs up the corporate ladder by becoming the mistress of a wealthy industrialist named Karl Oswald (Ivan Desny), who inevitably falls full-fledge in love with the blond beautiful beastess named Maria Braun. Determined to keep Maria in his life, even if she refuses to marry him, loverboy Oswald makes Hermann a monetary offer that he cannot refuse and that few honest husbands would accept that results in the decidedly disgraced husband’s indefinite disappearance to Canada immediately after he is released from prison.

To rationalize post-war prostitute-like professions, Maria tells her husband Hermann, “I’ve led this life for you...for us.” To her credit, her words more or less ring true, but that does not change the damage done from her less than monogamist lifestyle. Ultimately, Maria Braun – a self-made woman who ironically flaunts and taints her flesh to obtain independence – becomes a proto-feminist ‘modern woman’ out of necessity as she emotionally de-evolves into a cold, calculating careerist without capacity for love nor empathy, but a materialist madame and lecherous lady with a propensity for loveless sex and buying expensive things she does not need to impress people she does not like, thus *The Marriage of Maria Braun* makes for a marvelous movie that is not only reflective of the cosmopolitan, capitalist German woman, but also Western ‘womanhood’ as a whole. Interestingly, while German women were forced into virtual prostitution (not to mention rape, abortions, and starvation) and rebuilding of their decimated nation due to the abject destruction of the German *mensch* via the ravages of war (both physically and mentally, from everything from death to disgrace and literal and figurative castration), American women also inevitably adopted this lifeless lifestyle of callous careerism as well despite America’s ‘progress’ after winning the Second World War, therefore, when it comes to progress of *kultur* and healthy living, one could argue that no one really won the war, at least where happiness is concerned, thus begging the question as to whether or not the real victims of war were the actual survivors. After all, it is no coincidence that the surname of the anti-heroess of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* is the same as that of Uncle Adolf’s mistress/short-lived bride, but unlike the Führer and his *Fräulein* – who were able to bask in the glory of self-annihilation and escape the mundane milieu of modernity (and, of course, war crimes) – the bedeviled Brauns become begotten byproducts of cosmopolitan capitalism and the banality of enterprise. Indeed, if nothing else, *The Marriage of Maria Braun* proves that a woman’s greatest commodity is her body which can buy her petty power and material possession as opposed to the misogynistic servitude of marriage and

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motherhood. As calamitously depicted in the film's crushing and crestfallen climax, economic and sexual freedom cannot buy happiness, let alone an impassioned marriage, but it can empower you to buy sexy outfits to wear needlessly around the house.

Concluding disastrously juxtaposed with the announcement that "Germany is world champion" in regard to West Germany's winning of the soccer world championship and with the final image of then-Chancellor of West Germany Helmut Schmidt, R.W. Fassbinder offered a grim premonition of the splintered Fatherland's future with *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. Although the Berlin Wall has fallen and the Soviet Union with it, coupled with having the European continent's biggest economy, including the world's fourth largest economy by nominal GDP and the fifth largest in terms of purchasing power, and one the highest standards of living in the world, the nation is also facing long-term indigenous population decline (lower than 1946), a devastating deluge of illegal aliens from the east and south who are mostly unskilled, uneducated, and unemployable yet commit the majority of violent crimes, the legalization of prostitution (no doubt, a most symbolic event!), and the virtual extinction of cultural creators like Fassbinder himself. I guess when you have so many designer shoes and dresses to choose from, why worry about your extincting nation?!

-Ty E

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1980)

In terms of sheer size, artistic scope, and all-encompassing ambitiousness, Berlin Alexanderplatz (1980) – a 15 ½ hour film based on the 1929 Alfred Döblin novel of the same name that is considered the longest “cinematic film” ever made and was originally broadcasted on West German television in 14-parts, including 13 single chapters and an experimental two hour epilogue – was indubitably German New Cinema König Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s crowning achievement as, quite arguably, the greatest and most important filmmaker of his disillusioned and revolutionary zeitgeist as an ambivalent child of the post-WWII generation. Originally read by the director when he was only fourteen or fifteen years old, Döblin’s modernist magnum opus Berlin Alexanderplatz (1929) would be described by Fassbinder as a life-changing work of literature that, confessing in a collection of “unorganized thoughts” on the novel that he wrote, he had, “unconsciously turned Döblin’s imaginings into my life. Yet once again it was the novel that helped me to overcome the alarming crisis that resulted and to work at establishing something that could eventually become, I hope, more or less that thing one calls an identity, to the extent that’s even possible with all this screwed-up mess.” And, indeed, traces of Döblin’s crucial influence can be seen scattered throughout Fassbinder’s cinematic oeuvre, including deriving plots for two of his early films (Love Is Colder than Death and Gods of the Plague) from Berlin Alexanderplatz and constantly recycling the name “Franz” (the name of the protagonist in the novel) for a number of his films, including his debut-feature Love Is Colder Than Death (1969), Katzelmacher (1969), Gods of the Plague (1970), and The American Soldier (1970), as well as going so far as even taking the protagonist’s full-name “Franz Bieberkopf” for his highly personal work Fox and His Friends (1975). By no means a literal filmic adaptation of Döblin’s sometimes seemingly incoherent novel, Fassbinder’s Berlin Alexanderplatz is a more naturalistic work that does not wallow in montage nor the modernist Joyce-esque esotericism of its source material and features an epilogue that sums up the director’s highly and singularly personalized interpretation of the novel as a filmmaker who had a transcendent talent for synthesizing the personal with the historical and sociopolitical, thus making for a relatively accessible work, even if it infamously enraged West German viewers during its initial TV broadcast, that portrays the rampant wantonness of the rarely working, working-class of Weimar Republic Berlin during the late-1920s within a melancholy microcosm of an ex-con and his mixed-up mind, and the people that make his life all but unbearable and tediously tragic. Centering on a fundamentally flawed anti-hero Franz Biberkopf (played by Günter Lamprecht) – an ex-convict who has just been released from prison after a four year stay for killing his prostitute girlfriend in the heat of the moment – Berlin Alexanderplatz fol-

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lows a man that, no matter hard he tries, has a difficult time being 'straight' and living a life without crime, especially when a Svengali creature of a man named Reinhold (Gottfried John) turns his life – and everyone around him – upside down.

While most prisoners who have not made love to a woman nor lived in a room without bars for a number of years would be nothing less than overjoyed to be released from prison and get on with their personal lives, ex-pimp Franz Biberkopf is not your average fellow, even if he fits the timeless stereotype of a loud, boorish, boastful and belligerent kraut who feeds his bloated belly with beer more than he nurtures his mind with knowledge or even common sense. After being virtually forced off the grounds of Tegel prison after becoming a free man for the first time in four years, Herr Biberkopf is quite overwhelmed with his destitute and degenerate surrounds in what seems to be a moment of temporary insanity, but he is 'nursed' back to mental health by two eccentric Orthodox Jews who have a seething Semitic hatred of one another. Not long after, big brazen bastard Biberkopf virtually rapes a woman named Minna (Karin Baal), the sister of the prostitute girlfriend he killed four years before because he correctly believed she was about to leave him. Despite witnessing Biberkopf's brutal murder of his lover Ida (Barbara Valentin), Frau Baß (Brigitte Mira), a kindly if not pathologically nosy landlady, has maintained the ex-con's studio apartment, so he need not worry about finding a place to stay. Naturally, being a jolly alcoholic who has not had a cold beer in years, Biberkopf soon goes to his favorite bar/hangout owned by his friend Max (Claus Holm) after meeting up with his best friend Meck (Franz Buchrieser) by happenstance on the seedy streets of Berlin. Taking Meck's advice that Minna is bad news, Biberkopf befriends a new love interest in the form of a young Polish gal named Lina Przybilla (Elisabeth Trissenaar). After a wild session of sex, the ex-con vows to Lina that he will go "straight" and work an honest job as opposing to going back to pimping, but such things are easier said than done in a decidedly damning depression era where even normal men commit robberies and cutesy girls peddle their flesh just to survive.

Determined to live an honorable life, Biberkopf works a number of odd jobs, including peddling tie holders on the streets and, to the dismay of an old Jewish friend, naively selling copies of the National Socialist newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* while wearing a swastika armband. A rather desperate fellow with a mostly apolitical political persuasion, Biberkopf finds it all but unavoidable that he will get in a barroom fight with some old communist friends. Seconds away from beating a babyish Bolshevik brute with a chair at Max's pub, Biberkopf decides to find a new line of work and hooks up with Lina's 'uncle' Otto Lüders (Hark Bohm), a fellow ex-con who, unbeknownst to Franz, never managed to shed his criminal ways, and starts selling shoelaces door-to-door. While on the job, Biberkopf ends up cheating on Lina with a lonely bourgeois widow and

Otto later robs the woman after hearing about his partner's salacious story about the lonely woman with a luxurious mansion apartment. When Biberkopf goes back to the widow's house for another game of carnal knowledge, the woman closes the door on him, thus leaving him rather distraught, so he runs away to a flophouse, where he will stay indefinitely after realizing it is quite hard to stay 'straight,' especially when working with a dishonest partner with a pathetic proclivity for robbing harmless women. After failing to locate Franz, Lina and Meck end up hooking up and the ex-con goes on a delirious drinking binge for quite a number of days.

After breaking out of his hallucinatory hooch hypnosis, Franz B. hooks up with sexy streetwalker Eva (Hanna Schygulla), who quite inexplicably, is perennially in love with the overweight ex-con as he used to be her pimp, thus holding a special softspot in the hot little harlot's heart. In fact, exquisite Eva is so in love with Herr Biberkopf that she is the one that is responsible for paying the rent at his flat when he was away at prison, thus proving her deep-seated devotion to the ex-con, even if she is a prostitute who sells her pussy to make a living. Franz also meets up with Meck again, who admits his short fling with Lina, which his friend has no problem with, but now he has moved on to much bigger things as a member of a posh fellow named Pums' criminal crew. While Pums (Ivan Desny) immediately offers Franz a job 'selling fruit,' the ex-con turns him down as he wants to stay straight. Franz also meets a stuttering sadist named Reinhold (Gottfried John), an ex-revolutionary who is part of Pums' criminal enterprise and who, for better or worse, will inevitably become the most important and influential person in the ex-cons life. Reinhold devises a dubious scheme where he passes old and now undesirable girlfriends onto Franz, which works out quite well for a while, but things go awry when Mr. Biberkopf decides he prefers to keep a cabaret singer/dancer named Cilly (Annemarie Düringer), which infuriates the stuttering girlfriend-swapper, thus inspiring him to seek revenge against what he sees as a 'disloyal' friend. A delightful chap who hates drama, Franz is eventually coerced into committing a robbery with Pums' gang, but it is not until he is actually involved with carrying out the crime that he realizes the magnitude of what sort of criminal corruption he is involved with, thus causing him to freakout on his compatriots, who don't taken kindly to his hysterics. While driving away with the loot, paranoid Reinhold accuses Franz of being a 'stool pigeon' and throws him out of the backdoor of the car into a car behind them. Although everyone believes he is dead, Biberkopf has merely lost his right arm.

Not unsurprisingly, Franz B is nursed back to health by Eva and her seemingly slavish lover Herbert (Roger Fritz) and eventually gets involved with a criminal enterprise after meeting a flamboyant Nietzschean conman named Willy (Fritz Schediwy) at a cabaret. Through Eva, Biberkopf also meets the love of his life in the form of a sweet and beautiful yet slightly dimwitted prostitute, a character that was apparently partly modeled after the character Gelsomina (Giulietta

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Masina) from Federico Fellini's *La Strada* (1954), that he 'christens' "Mieze" (Barbara Sukowa) in a symbolic act of his singular love for her. Although Mieze initially support the one-armed Franz, he gets tired of living off of a woman, so he does the seemingly unthinkable by visiting Reinhold – the Mephistopheles-like man that tried to kill him and will inevitably take him to hell and back – so that he can join up with Pums' gang again. Franz also introduces Mieze to his criminal compatriots, including Reinhold, who seems to have a rather dubious and even strangely romantic feeling for the man he once tried to exterminate and who becomes immediately jealous of his one-armed friend's seemingly immaculate relationship with the seemingly angelic girl. After learning that Mieze loves a young man and that she wants Eva to have Franz's baby since she's infertile, Biberkopf nearly beats her to death, but the two inevitably reconcile their differences and become stronger than ever after taking an amazing trip to a folkish forest in Freienwalde, but a malicious man named Reinhold has pernicious plans for the little lady so as to seek revenge against Herr Biberkopf for falling in love with a woman. After blackmailing Meck into getting Mieze to travel to Freienwalde, a special place where she and Franz originally fell in love, like a little lamb being led to the slaughter, Reinhold commits the most unholy act of lover's revenge by proxy against the intrinsically innocent flesh-peddler. With all that has happened, Franz Biberkopf still cannot seem to get Reinhold out of his heart.

The last two hours of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, a surrealist epilogue entitled "My Dream of the Dream of Franz Biberkopf by Alfred Döblin," seems in rather stark contrast to the rest of the film's naturalism due to its Clive Barker-like sadomasochistic and sexually subversive imagery, not to mention its pseudo-Luciferian essence as if Goethe's *Faust* were set in the mind of a Weimar era mad man entering metaphysical hell. While Reinhold is in jail and is, quite reluctantly, finally embracing his latent homosexuality, Franz is in a mental institution and in a comatose like state, thus the majority of the epilogue takes place in his haunted mind, which is comprised of seemingly real phantasms of his past and present. Guided by two rather cynical yet wise and stoic, Super Aryan guardian angels named Terah (Margit Carstensen) and Sarug (Helmut Griem) that look like they came out of a *Fidus* painting, Franz is reunited with the dead, including Ida – the woman who has haunted his life ever since the day he beat her to death and sent her straight to hell – and Pums, who has apparently committed suicide. In a seemingly Satanic slaughterhouse dream sequence of psychosexual phantasmagoria, Reinhold raises a bloody hatchet as if he is the grim reaper over a pile of naked and immobile bodies belonging to Franz's former lovers, whom the one-armed wonder later joins after stripping off all his clothes. Franz also has a transsexual moment in preposterous pancake make-up drag where he speaks to "Reinhold Christ," a grotesque Willard-esque scene where he crawls on the floor with an army of rodents, has a surrealist boxing match

with old Reinhold in the spirit of the real-life match between German heavy-weight champion Max Schmeling and American negro Joe "Brown Bomber" Louis, an attempt by old Pums to literally rip his heart out, and even becoming Jesus Christ the crucified himself in an apocalyptic Hieronymus Bosch-like scenario recalling Germany's physical and cultural destruction during both World Wars. Mr. Biberkopf also encounters bands of Nazi SA brownshirts fighting communists in scenes that vaguely echo Fassbinder's enemy Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's cinematic magna opera *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977). Indeed, like Syberberg's Wagnerian Hitler epic, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is a rare example of cinema as 'Gesamtkunstwerk' and the epilogue of Fassbinder's daunting Döblin adaption, which features Richard Wagner's "Liebestod" aka "love death" ("Mild und leise wie er lächelt") from the opera *Tristan und Isolde*, is not only the icy, albeit darkly romantic, icing on the cake of the miniseries, but also the cinematic coda to the filmmaker's entire life as a lonely man searching for love and an identity, but only really finding both esoterically via cinema.

As Fassbinder wrote regarding the antagonistic yet hopelessly potent relationship between anti-heroes Franz Biberkopf and Reinhold in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, "I read it as the story of two men whose little bit of life on this earth is ruined because they don't have the opportunity to get up the courage even to recognize, let alone admit, that they like each other in an unusual way, love each other somehow, that something mysterious ties them to each other more closely than is generally considered suitable for men." Indeed, unlike Döblin's novel, Fassbinder's adaption of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* makes no ambiguity of "The love that dare not speak its name" between the two strikingly different men: Franz, being an impulsive and extroverted philistine with a practical mind and a big, yet fragile heart; and Reinhold, a resentful and sadistic introvert with an intimidating intellect but without a shred of common sense who has led a life of repressing his feelings, thus resulting in violent acts sired by his sexual repression. While *Berlin Alexanderplatz* portrays a type of economic depression, more obvious and important to the film is the decided depression of the soul and collective unconscious of Germany, and as Fassbinder's celluloid oeuvre demonstrates, the director had incurable cases of melancholia and *Weltschmerz*, thus acting as the highest expression of his nation's "heart" during the post-WWII era. While Fassbinder always saw Franz Biberkopf as his 'alter-ego' of sorts, his actions and behavior demonstrate that he was more like Reinhold, so it should be no surprise that he originally intended to portray the curious character in a feature-length version of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* starring Gérard Depardieu (as Franz B.) and Jeane Moreau that was ultimately aborted. Just as dullard Franz was always the victim of Reinhold's psychopathic savagery, so were Fassbinder's three great true loves – Günther Kaufmann, El Hedi ben Salem, and Armin Meier – victims of the perennially miserable and malicious filmmaker's calculated cruelty, with the second two of his ill-fated boyfriends inevitably committing suicide as a result of

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

his cruel and contemptible behavior. As contemporary German filmmaker Tom Tykwer (*Run Lola Run*, *The Princess and the Warrior*) wrote in 2007 in an essay entitled *Berlin Alexanderplatz: He Who Lives in a Human Skin*, “Franz’s love of Reinhold is a mystery not only to himself but also to us—and yet we know what he’s talking about. The film touches here on a collective secret knowledge that, rumbling in our subconscious, brings to mind on some strange evening of our life a confusing feeling of deepest tenderness for a person we never really thought played an important role in our life.” Of course, where Döblin’s novel ended on a rather low and anti-climatic note, Fassbinder goes full-force with *Berlin Alexanderplatz* – an epic celluloid tribute by the director to love and hate, life and death, and the Whore of Babylon and the Grim Reaper in the forsaken Fatherland.

Although a rather unflattering anecdote, apparently Fassbinder went from envisioning *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as a mere feature film to a fourteen part epic in an attempt to fund an absurdly expensive drug habit, and was described by Michael Fengler, who helped draw up the one-year shooting schedule of the film series, as detailed by Robert Katz in the Fassbinder biography *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1989): “He was now so heavily into drugs [Fengler recalls] that Harry Baer and I came up with a precise plan on how we would manage the whole thing. We estimated that during the filming he would spend forty thousand marks a month to satisfy his need, about half a million for the whole year. We thought it would be idiotic to leave it all to chance, so we decided to buy all the stuff ourselves in advance and sell it off to him piecemeal, without his knowing that it came from us, of course. The idea was to have some control over his habit by knowing what and how much he was getting.” As early Fassbinder collaborator Peter Berling also revealed regarding the director’s coke-fueled direction of *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), which, despite being the most successful film of the auteur filmmaker’s career, was squeezed in as a “cheap quickie” before shooting *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, “Whatever combination of drugs he’d concocted, it certainly stimulated output, though once he couldn’t move or be moved for two days... To keep the engine going, Fengler hired three assistants who did nothing but fly all over Europe to get stuff for Rainer, but his thirst for cocaine alone seemed unquenchable. It grew to seven or eight grams a day.” Quite miraculously, Fassbinder ended up getting off drugs for the majority of shooting of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and approached the film with the sort of fanatical professionalism that one would expect from Leni Riefenstahl’s prodigal son, only to get coked up again around the time of shooting the particularly phantasmagorical epilogue, which one could argue was to the film’s benefit due to its exceptionally ominous, oneiric, and otherworldly essence. Not unsurprisingly, Fassbinder was no different from his fictional ill-fated characters Franz and Reinhold in that regard as all three men more or less adjusted their drug intake according to their needs and, of course, it seems there was always a need

as individuals who were always on the brink of existential crisis. As was probably expected by those who knew him, Fassbinder ultimately succumbed to his deleterious addiction a mere two years after completing *Berlin Alexanderplatz* – a monolithic magnum opus of a movie that the director probably assumed he would never be able to top. After his death, a policeman apparently told a reporter that, “Even Fassbinder’s just a man,” and, indeed, it really was only a matter of time before the filmmaker’s superhuman, stardom-charged work ethic caught up with him as a man who long ago made a ‘Faustian pact’ by sacrificing his life for his art.

Over three decades later and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* still seems like the virtual blueprint for popular premium cable channel shows like *Six Feet Under* (2001-2005) and *Boardwalk Empire* (2010-present), albeit Fassbinder’s work is more aesthetically and thematically intricate, morally dubious, and remarkably unforgettable that, not unlike how the German New Cinema master auteur described Döblin’s novels imperative influence on him, is for many viewers, a life-changing work. That being said, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is more like an overextended, experimental melodrama recollecting Fassbinder’s entire life work as a filmmaker, and then some, as the epically melodramatic celluloid “romantic anarchist” equivalent to prophet philosopher Oswald Spengler’s final work *The Hour of Decision* (1934), a best seller that was ultimately banned by the National Socialists that predicted an apocalyptic scenario that involved the defeat of the Third Reich and destruction of Germany by the exact year, as well as the decline of power in the Occidental world and the rise of the Third World. In many ways, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is a lovely and luxurious, if not patently pessimistic and prophetic, love-hate elegy for Germania as a lurid libertine melodrama set during the apocalyptic beginning of the end of the Teutonic Fatherland. Franz Biberkopf, a kindhearted, if not clumsy and boorish, man who may have had a much different life had he lived during a much simpler and less criminally inclined zeitgeist, is a symbol of German debasement and original sin, and whose story, as Döblin wrote in the preface of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, is important because, “To listen to this, and to meditate on it, will be of benefit to many who, like Franz Biberkopf, live in a human skin, and, like this Franz Biberkopf, ask more of life than a piece of bread and butter.” As chaos rises and engulfs all of the Occident and its former colonies, one could learn a thing or two about the pathology and metaphysics of tragedy in the post-national/post-Hitler and cosmopolitan technocratic age by watching Fassbinder’s masterpiece *Berlin Alexanderplatz* – quite arguably the last great work of Gesamtkunstwerk of European history.

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LILI MARLEEN
LILI MARLEEN

Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1981)

Undoubtedly, my least favorite films directed by German New cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder tend to be his later, more polished big-budget works for quite obvious reasons with his wartime romance *Lili Marleen* (1981) being somewhere in the middle of this 'least-liked' list. Loosely based on the true story of German chanson singer-songwriter Lale Anderson and her popular 1939 interpretation of the morbid yet melodious song "Lili Marleen" that especially appealed to lonely and sexually frustrated soldiers, not just among the Fatherland, but also troops among both Axis and Allied powers, *Lili Marleen* is ultimately a tragic and patently pessimistic tale of mismatched miscegenation gone awry and how one lady's forbidden love for a successful Swiss Semite almost sank her stupendous music career. An exceptional example of Fassbinder (almost) goes Hollywood, *Lili Marleen*, like the typical Tinseltown period piece, rarely resembles actual historical truth, at least where the central character's storyline is concerned, which is not exactly a bad thing as the German New Wave auteur was known to belligerently bastardize his source material to his aesthetic and thematic advantage, but when a director attempts to make an incidental 'holocaust hero' out of a beautiful blonde bombshell like Hanna Schygulla, you know a film has a certain daunting distastefulness to it. Only vaguely based on Anderson's autobiographical novel *Der Himmel hat viele Farben* (aka *The Heavens Have Many Colors*) according to the singer's final husband Arthur Beul, *Lili Marleen* is a marvelous but sometimes mundane quasi-musical melodrama that features the incessant replaying of the title song to the point where it almost drives the viewer insane, which was indubitably a conscious decision on Fassbinder's part as symbolized in a scene in the film where the female protagonist's Jewish lover is literally tortured by the SS via nonstop replaying of the nauseating musical number. A rare commissioned work, Fassbinder himself apparently had no interest in directing *Lili Marleen*, but did have the foresight and big enough of a Faustian spirit to create a film with a relatively realistic 'Nazi aesthetic' or as Schygulla said in an interview regarding the director, the filmmaker apparently said they, "were making the film from hell." Indeed, like many of Fassbinder's later works, *Lili Marleen* certainly had big bucks (at an estimated DEM 10,500,000 or what is today roughly \$ 7,153,070.00) behind it, at least when compared to his first feature *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) or even his mid-period masterpiece *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974). Like his Vladimir Nabokov adaptation *Despair* (1978), *Lili Marleen* was shot in English despite the fact that the director did not know the language, not to mention the fact the film is based almost entirely in Germany and Switzerland. Undoubtedly, one of his most commercially successful cinematic works, *Lili Marleen* also enabled Fassbinder to reach a new, more philistine inclined audience due to its rather

formulaic persuasion, at least for a Fass-bande film, even if it featured a less than 'happy' Hollywood ending and a conflicting moral compass. Still, Lili Marleen had enough National Socialist eye candy to keep me reasonably entertained and Hanna Schygulla never looked so blatantly bewitching as the salacious singer who inevitably uses and abuses her star-power to survive the Third Reich in relative comfort and seductive style, even if she is unable to enjoy it because her kosher companion is nowhere to be found.

Wee and wild Willie (Hanna Schygulla), a born seductress, knows how to play both sides of the game. The romantic lover of a rich Swiss Jew named Robert Mendelsson (Giancarlo Giannini) – a man whose wealthy family is deeply involved with the Jewish resistance as those that make falsified documents and smuggle assets out of Germany for their fellow Hebrews, not to mention their deeper involvement with the Jewish paramilitary terrorist organization Haganah – Willie finds herself in a peculiar position when she becomes one of the most popular singers in the Third Reich (and all of Europe). Naturally, Robert's father David Mendelsson (Mel Ferrer) – one of the richest Jews in Switzerland – finds Aryanness Willie to be a lady with most dubious intentions, with her German ancestry being "enough" to make him "suspicious" of her. Although Willie admits jokingly that she is "Aryan back to the Stone Age" in terms of racial ancestry, she is genuinely in love with Robert and vice versa, but they picked a most unfortunate time to fall head over heels for one another. Robert's father David goes behind his son's back and uses his quite questionable political influence (i.e. money) to have Willie declared a 'persona non grata' by the Swiss government and an expulsion order is declared so that Willie cannot enter the country, thereupon severing the two miscegenation-celebrating love birds' relationship, at least geographically speaking. Like Schygulla's character Maria Braun in Fassbinder's previous cinematic success *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979), Willie's separation from her Yiddish beau only strengthens her motivation to go on with her rise to fame paralleling the upsurge of wartime chaos in Europe. Needless to say, Willie displays a real 'triumph of the will' to be able to juggle her rise to Nazi fame as a fascist diva with her rebellious reputation for rabid Rassenschande ("race defilement") and rampant racial treason due to her love for Robert and behind-the-scenes activity with the Jewish resistance. Both Udo Kier (as "Drewitz") and R.W. Fassbinder (in an uncredited role as "Gunther Weissenborn"; Führer of the Jude resistance) play members of the shadowy Jewish Underground. Interestingly, upon superficial glance, there seems to be no innate difference between members of the Jewish resistance and members of the Gestapo in terms of their dapper fascistic leather-clad dress style and dubious conspiratorial actions as Willie soon learns herself, but the same can be said of the numerous unknown soldiers from both the Axis and Allied powers, who look to the song "Lili Marleen" for a few moments of solace in between bloodshed and brutality.

LILI MARLEEN

At the conclusion of *Lili Marleen*, it seems that only the Zionist international network has won the war with Willie's romances having withered into bitter resentment, the Jewish Mendelsson family coming out of the war completely unscathed and more prominent and powerful than ever, and with many of the 'good German' characters corpses rotting away in a far off land, Fassbinder's dark wartime romance is not an uplifting cinematic affair, thereupon putting it in bitersweet synchronicity with the song that guides the film's dispiriting essence. Although I thought absurdist German auteur Christoph Maria Schlingensief was playing another preposterous prank when he argued in the documentary *Christoph Schlingensief und seine Filme* (2005) that he believed Fassbinder was more influenced by the campy melodramas of Nazi filmmaker Veit Harlan than the Hollywood melodramas of Danish-German filmmaker Douglas Sirk, the aesthetic influence of the man who directed the National Socialist arthouse flick *Opfergang* (1944) is more than obvious in *Lili Marleen*, especially during the 'Strength Through Joy' party scene where determinedly decadent Nazi officers take a ride down a figurative slide of doom, not to mention the Third Reich style inter-titles and Harlan-esque set-designs featured throughout the film. Writing-off the Nazi Party itself as something akin to a big show business act of sorts as especially epitomized in a number of Riefenstahl-esque rally-like performances given by protagonist Willie, *Lili Marleen* is hardly the sort of World War II film you would expect Hollywood to produce, even if it is Germany's cinematic equivalent to such a fundamentally formulaic style of film, albeit riddled with Fassbinder's pronounced pessimism of strikingly Spenglerian proportions, thus it should be no surprise that the reluctant Nazi singer meets her Jewish beloved on 'Oswald Spengler Street' during a happy yet hopeless scene where the two lovebirds temporarily reunite and make love. One almost must appreciate the irony of a scene in *Lili Marleen* where Willie's Nazi handler mentions that despite the fact that Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels feels that the singer's popular song lacks "the spirit of National Socialism," the tragic tune was enjoyed by no less "6 million German soldiers" via Radio Belgrade.

On why Fassbinder refused to portray Jews as exclusively honorable and holy characters as Hollywood and most of modern German cinema does, he stated in an interview: "I think that the constant practice of making Jews taboo, which has existed since 1945 in Germany, can lead to an antipathy towards Jews, especially with young people who have no direct experience with Jews. As a child, whenever I met a Jew, someone whispered to me, that's a Jew, act polite, be friendly... I was never able to think that was a correct attitude... philo-Semites are anti-Semites who love Jews... I cannot say I am not unaffected about what happened to the Jews in the Third Reich. But I am absolutely more unaffected than those who are attacking me." As for why Fassbinder portrays the Jewish underground, especially those tied with the Mendelsson family, as two-faced Zio-Gangsters of sorts, a statement he made in another interview offers pos-

sible insights: “The Bourgeoisie needed the Jews in order to stop despising its own attitudes, to be able to feel proud, important and strong. The final result of such subconscious self-hatred was the mass annihilation of the Jews in the Third Reich. It was really an attempt to weed out what people didn’t want to acknowledge in themselves. This relationship means that in some way the history of the Germans and the Jews is linked for all time, not just during the period from 1933 to 1945. Something like a new original sin will be passed on to people who are born and live in Germany, a sin that is not less weighty because the sons of the murders now wash their hands in innocence.” As depicted in *Lili Marleen* and countless other films Fassbinder directed over the years, especially during his late period, the anti-fascist filmmaker certainly carried this supposed burden of “original sin,” albeit quite antagonistically, thus the importance of his films historically and culturally, especially when combating the one-sided kosher propaganda of Hollywood.

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Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1981)

When I first attempted to view German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's fortieth and antepenultimate film *Lola* (1981)—the concluding historical chapter of the director's BRD Trilogy, following *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) and *Veronika Voss* (1982), which focused on the West German *Wirtschaftswunder* ("economic miracle") of the 1950s—I honestly could not get into it and found it hard to believe that such a seemingly soft and fluffy work is oftentimes regarded as one of the late great filmmaker's minor masterpieces. And, indeed, upon its initial theatrical release, *Lola* was a commercial and critical flop and inspired the producers to cut their losses by not producing Fassbinder's ultimately unrealized film project *Cocaine*, a drug-related work that would have been surely interesting, if not depressing, considering the way the director lived his remaining years and eventually died. Of course, like virtually every Fassbinder film—whether I liked it or not upon my initial viewing—I decided to give *Lola* a second look recently and, somewhat to my surprise (I don't typically change my mind about a film), I found myself simply captivated by the jovially cynical kraut 'romantic comedy' that is *Lola*, a festive and kaleidoscopic anti-celebration of capitalist corruption during the last years of the Adenauer era (1957-1958) set in a town with two very different yet intrinsically connected worlds: the everyday and seemingly ordinary business realm and the seedy and sleazy whorehouse that acts as the town's power elite's own personal pleasure dome. Loosely based on Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930) aka *Der blaue Engel* starring Marlene Dietrich and its source novel *Professor Unrat* (1905) written by Heinrich Mann (Thomas Mann's older brother), *Lola* centers around the timeless tale of an outsider and his interaction with a new group in a new area and said outsider's transformation as a result of his ultimately life-changing experiences, which, as one can expect from a Fassbinder film, involve corruption and dehumanization of a once noble and virtuous fellow who falls not only prey to capitalistic 'birds of prey,' but also his own unchallenged weaknesses as a traditional Prussian aristocrat with a positively pristine moral compass. Of course, compared to *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Veronika Voss*, both of which conclude with major characters dying horrible and unnatural deaths, *Lola* ends on a semi-happy, if not socially deleterious, note that will be totally inexplicable to the average American filmgoer and brings validation to Fassbinder's telling claim that, "A good director can contrive a happy ending that leaves you dissatisfied. You know that something is wrong—it just can't end that way." Indeed, had it been one of Fassbinder's earlier works, the protagonist would have surely 'run amok' in the end, but far from the aesthetically static and minimalistic cinematic Godardian works of the filmmaker's formative films, *Lola* is a celluloid cabaret of luscious carnal colors clearly inspired by the

director's #1 favorite film *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei* directed by Italian maestro Luchino Visconti, as well as the popular Hollywood melodramas of Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk. A quasi-nihilistic condemnation of moral corruption, social cowardliness, and corporate cronyism in post-Nazi 'democratic' West Germany, *Lola* is, aside from a meticulously stylized period piece, a carefully cultivated key to the past that lets the viewer know how the nation culturally devolved into the materialistic Americanized land that no longer has poets and thinkers, even if for a time they had great and groundbreaking filmmakers like Fassbinder himself.

During the first couple moments of *Lola*, one gets a very good indication of the film's feisty female title character and her weltanschauung, as a capitalistically wanton woman who, to quote Oscar Wilde, "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." After her beta-male friend reads some melancholy poetry to her, *Lola* (played by Barbara Sukowa, who played a radically different 'angelic' streetwalker in Fassbinder's masterpiece *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), which won the new star the German 'best young actress' Award)—the girl with the "sweetest ass in all of NATO"—complains that she does not like it because it is not funny and when her comrade remarks that "poetry comes from the soul" and "the soul is sad," she proudly and stoically states, "For me, the mind knows more than the soul" and as a professional whore who sells her flesh to every bigwig in her town, she is certainly not bullshitting. The cabaret whorehouse that *Lola* sings, dances, and sells her sweet sex to is owned by a certain 'construction entrepreneur' named Schuckert (played by perennial filmic 'boorish bad buy' Mario Adorf), a man who also essentially owns the young feline-like flesh-peddler and provides financial support to her mulatto bastard child, which the girl's mother raises. Not only does Herr Schuckert own *Lola*, who arrogantly but rightfully describes as his "private whore," and the cathouse, but he is also essentially the secret ruler of the small West German town, Coburg, that has made him rich and even tells the local mayor what to do, but his ruthless rule is ultimately threatened when an idealistic and morally pristine East Prussian aristocrat named von Bohm (Armin Mueller-Stahl) comes to the area to work as its building commissioner. Luckily for Schuckert, von Bohm basically falls in love at first sight with his Mistress *Lola* not knowing that his romantic interest lives a double life as a raunchy femme fatale who knows how to put a spell over any man. Unbeknownst to him, von Bohm takes residence in a home where *Lola*'s mother's (Karin Baal) works as a housekeeper, which is also occupied by a race-mixing American negro soldier (played by Fassbinder's one-time flame Günther Kaufmann, the real-life product of a black American G.I./white German woman relations). Before von Bohm arrives in town, the only one that puts a resistance to Schuckert and his cronies' shenanigans is a cowardly cuckold named Esslin (Matthias Fuchs) who follows the writings of anarchist Mikhail Bakunin yet considers himself a "humanist" and "rejects revolution", thus he

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puts up no real fight at all, but that does not stop him from telling the new building commissioner about the town's parasitic power elite. A small man on the totem pole among Schuckert's crooked crew who moonlights as a drummer at the cabaret at night and who seems to love Lola too yet is too intrinsically cowardly and weak to seriously pursue her, Esslin's pseudo-subversive political persuasion seems to be more a reaction to resentment and his failure as a man as opposed to a serious form of idealism, but he gets his revenge on Schuckert and company by taking the unsuspecting von Bohm to the local whorehouse one night, where the priestly Prussian learns that not only is Lola a two-faced prostitute who led him to believe that she was a cultivated girl of class into East Asian art, but also that every member of the town's ruling class, including the mayor, is a dedicated degenerate. Von Bohm begins to lose it and openly plots revenge against Schuckert and his minions by revealing the corrupt business contracts, insider trading, and bribing of politicians that has been going on for some time, but deep down inside, his heart is screaming for Lola. Finally, Schuckert—a proud prole who got rich quick via the “economic miracle” but never lost his charmingly vulgar character—confronts Von Bohm and tells him to go to Lola and “do whatever you want. She's a whore.” A broken man with nothing to lose, von Bohm takes Schuckert's advice, goes to the whorehouse, and takes Lola to bed, but instead of sexually ravaging her, he cries like a cowardly cuck, which brings utter joy to the prostitute as she realizes he is the first man in her life to actually love her and not see her as a pricey piece of ass. In the end, von Bohm is internally eaten by the town's corruption, but finds solace in it and marries Lola, who naturally spends her honeymoon screwing her #1 customer/business partner Schuckert.

In a somewhat recent interview included as an extra feature with Criterion Collection DVD release of *Lola*—part of the *The BRD Trilogy* box-set they released—star Barbara Sukowa state of her parents' generation that they were, “Absolutely traumatized people. They had seen the films of the openings of the concentration camps...but they also themselves had incredible losses...and, uh...they were the perpetrators...and I can't even imagine what it meant to deal with all that.” Indeed, the character she played in *Lola* is clearly, like Maria Braun of *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, someone who has been irreparably spiritually and emotionally damaged by the Second World War and has traded in their femininity, humility, happiness, and even self-respect just so she could survive, which she did quite well as a sort of ‘feminist by circumstance’ who used her body, the only thing she had left to barter with, to turn herself into an almost cannibalistic businesswoman and fierce femme fatale who has learned every titillating trick of the trade when it comes to seducing men, be they dorky anarchists or old fashioned aristocrats with seemingly unconquerable moral characters. A woman whose father was killed in battle in Stalingrad during the Second World War and who birthed a bastard mulatto (one can only assume how/why this hap-

pened), Lola, like many German women of her generation, had to make the decision whether to live in desperation (or worse, simply die) or utilize her best and most highly desirable asset—the “sweetest ass in all of NATO”—to live a life of security and, albeit disgraceful and degrading, relative success. While critics have oftentimes described Fassbinder as an overt misogynist and woman-hater due to his somewhat unflattering cinematic depictions of women, it is clear while watching *Lola* that he empathizes with this seemingly sociopathic whore, giving her a voice without condemning or whitewashing her, but portraying her as a tragic child of circumstance who triumphed in the end, even if it was probably not the way she dreamed of as an undefiled and pre-disillusioned little girl.

Interestingly enough, the main villain of *Lola*, Schuckert, is not an ancestrally blessed blueblood who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but a proud proletarian who has no problem flaunting the fact that he loves big boobs and butts, beer, and belligerent behavior, thus highlighting the fact that the desperation in West Germany following the second World War enabled the opportunity for some of the most parasitic and barbaric individuals to profit greatly and become members of the ruling class, which also acts as an enthralling indictment on democracy and capitalism of itself. Of course, this is a common theme in much of Fassbinder's oeuvre, which probably reached its most controversial and totally taboo extreme in *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* where a good Aryan orphan boy grows up to be a melancholy and mixed-up butcher who tragically falls in love with and has a sex-change for a rich and seemingly evil Jewish holocaust survivor turned black market bootlegger turned ‘legitimate businessman,’ who only laughs at and rejects his ‘dick-less’ ex-lover after learning of his dramatic life/body-altering operation, thus highlighting the sort of callous and cutthroat sort of individual that it takes to compete in a capitalist society, especially during a depression, but also the sort of unscrupulous and morally unhinged individual it takes to survive a concentration camp. Undoubtedly, the melodramatic and thematic genius of *Lola*, as well as much of Fassbinder's work, was not only to ask, but also answer the questions no one seemed even interesting in acknowledging, let alone studying, in regard to how modern day Germany came to be the economic powerhouse it is today after the nation was totally destroyed after the Second World War.

German-Jewish theatre/film director Peter Zadek (*I'm an Elephant*, *Madame*, *Ice Age*), who Fassbinder dedicated *The Marriage of Maria Braun* to and even gave a cameo role to as an old filmmaker in *Veronika Voss*, also directed his own pseudo-kraut comedy based on the “economic miracle.” Made in tribute to Fassbinder shortly after his premature death via drug overdose, Zadek's *The Roaring Fifties* (1983) aka *Die wilden Fünfziger* is a totally kosher Hollywood-like sex comedy featuring countless tasteless quasi-exploitation scenes of naked (and mostly ‘mature’) women and a number of scathing scatological Hebraic jokes, including a references to SS leader Heinrich Himmler's chicken farm (which the

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film's protagonist makes a monetary killing on!) and the Nazi fetishism of certain American politicians. Featuring Juraj Kukura—a tall, dark, handsome and totally un-Aryan Slovak Clark Gable-clone—in the lead role, *The Roaring Fifties* is really just a potent, but ultimately forgettable, piece of evidence regarding how Fassbinder artistically eclipsed his much older hero Zadek, a man the filmmaker once described as “one of those who shattered the ossified way of life that *THE MARRIAGE OF MARIA BRAUN* describes. From a certain point on, Zadek was also very important to me, as a person, as someone to talk to. It liberated me a bit to know there was someone around who was over fifty and completely set in his way and then changed himself so totally.” Although arguably the weakest chapter in the BRD Trilogy, *Lola* is still one of the greatest films ever made about the West German “economic miracle” as it ingeniously depicts the spirit of an entire degenerate generation via a melodramatic microcosm featuring the unlikely relationship between a morally pristine and socially respectable Prussian aristocrat that represents Germany of the old and his fateful interaction with a cute and corrupt call-girl who acts as an unflattering archetype for what is now described as a ‘modern’ and independent German woman. Ironically, as American film professor Jane Shattuc documents in her study *Television, Tabloids, and Tears: Fassbinder and Popular Culture* (1995), were it not for Germany’s defeat in the Second World War, triumph of democracy and capitalism in West Germany, and the subsequent *Wirtschaftswunder*, it is rather unlikely that someone like Fassbinder—an unrepentant, miscegenating homosexual libertine—would have been able to not only become the Fatherland’s most famous and popular post-WWII filmmaker, but be a filmmaker at all, thus making the master of Teutonic melodramatics an unpredictable consequence of the very phenomenon and political system that he spent his entire career criticizing, yet artistically and monetarily profited from greatly. That being said, *Maria Braun*, *Lola*, and *Veronika Voss* can be seen as not only female characters that Fassbinder could relate to, but also transsexualized cinematic alter-egos where he could cinematically live out the fantasies that he wanted to live out in real-life, but could not as an overweight biological man with acne scars and an unflattering semi-Asiatic appearance.

-Ty E

THEATER IN TRANCE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1981)

Technically, German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's antepenultimate film was the rarely-seen documentary *Theatre in Trance* (1981) aka *Theater in Trance* aka *Theatre in Trance: Ein Film In 14 Teilen*, an ethereal and poetic 91-minute celluloid document covering the 1981 'Theaters of the World' (aka "Theater der Welt 1981") that took place in Cologne, Germany on the Rhine. Covering an event that included over 30 different theater/dance groups (including *Het Werktheater*, *Squat Theater*, *Sombras Blancas*, *Kipper Kids*, *Jérôme Savary*, *Yoshi Oida*, etc.) from 15 different countries who gave over 100 performances over a two week period, and told in 14 fragmented yet seamlessly woven segments, *Theater in Trance* is more of an avant-garde tribute to theater and a call for truly anarchic theatrical art than a simple report document of the *Theaters of the World* event. On top of being one of Fassbinder's rarest films (it has yet to be released in the United States in any form), *Theater in Trance*, which was commissioned for West German television channel ZDF and shot on a handheld 16mm camera, also has the distinction of being the only documentary the auteur made, but of course, it is by no means a conventional documentary (in fact, Fassbinder's Danish filmmaker friend Christian Braad Thomsen described it as more of an 'anti-documentary'). Featuring typically monotone narration by Fassbinder himself of excerpts from his poet/playwright hero Antonin Artaud's collection of essays *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938) aka *Le Théâtre et son Double*—an iconoclastic assault on modern Occidental theater and art that expresses the importance of Europeans to develop an atavistic awakening and recovering "the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought"—*Theater of Trance* is essentially an eclectic collection of 14 theatric tableaux that the filmmaker felt were worth preserving (and, in some instances, potentially mocking). Indeed, ranging from theatric performances of a fellow declaring that he "feels like Adolf Hitler" to primitive African dancing, *Theater in Trance* has a strikingly oneiric stream-of-consciousness essence where the images sometimes seem in stark contrast to Fassbinder's readings, as if the filmmaker was attempting to express his agreement with Artaud in regard to the current degenerate state of European theater and the need to destroy and rebuild it. As a work directed by a man who got his start in theater and once stated, "In the theatre I stage things as if it were a film, and then shoot films as if it were theatre," *Theater in Trance* acts a sort of mixed-medium esoteric celluloid metapolitical manifesto on not only theatre, but cinema and cultural politics as well. Indeed, the tone of *Theater in Trance* can probably be best summed in a scene where Fassbinder narrates the following words to images of naked women in what seems to be a sanatorium for the mentally deranged: "The theater, like the plague, is a crisis which is resolved by death or cure. And the plague is a supe-

THEATER IN TRANCE

rior disease because it is a total crisis after which nothing remains except death or an extreme purification. Similarly the theater is a disease because it is the supreme equilibrium which cannot be achieved without destruction. It invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies and we can see that from the human point of view the action of theater, like that of plague, is beneficial for impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world."

Undoubtedly, *Theater in Trance* begins charmingly enough with a satirical scene of theater bigwigs and wine-sniffing kraut cultural bosses being served champagne and whatnot by butlers to the soothing Teutonic technocratic sounds of "Computer World" by Kraftwerk, but not before the following words are narrated, that theatre (and, in turn, cinema), "never goes so far as to ask itself whether this social and intellectual system might not be based on injustice through pure chance. But I say that this present state of society is unjust and worthy of destruction." Of course, being set during the post-counter-culture era, *Theater in Trance* is packed with subversive and sometimes sacrilegious theatric performance that ranges from simple nudity of the high-camp sort to all-out scatological performances of the literally infantile ass-licking-and-fingering sort. Among other things, the documentary features Jack Smith-esque diva shows, countless unmanly men in drag, bodacious negro dancing performed by muscular black broads sporting aesthetically repellant neon tights, adult women pretending to be little girls while riding mini-tricycles, pseudo-cripples being wheeled around in wheelchairs as if in a drag race, pretentious art-punk-noise performance art, and cyber-punk instillations that seem to be taken straight out of *Kamikaze 89* (1982); the final film Fassbinder starred in. In one rather amusing segment, a degenerate Brit with an Uncle Adolf mustache of the theater group the Kippers Kids (co-founded by Martin von Haselberg, the husband of Bette Midler) self-righteously declares, "The reason we really came here tonight is that we want to have an intellectual discussion about what is theater and what is not theater. What is art and what is not art," only seconds after his female partner shoves an object up his ass. From there, the Kipper Kid has his ass wiped and licked by his partner and the two proceed to get messy Viennese Actionist style. Although Fassbinder mumbles words in a seemingly apathetic manner, one gets the impression he considers the Artraud's writings to be the holy writ of both theatre and cinema. This becomes especially apparent by the fact that he tends to repeat the same passages, with the following words seeming to be the most imperative text: "Either we return all the arts to a central position, a central necessity and find an analogy between a gesture in painting or in the theatre and the gesture of the lava in the catastrophe of a volcanic explosion, or we must stop painting, gabbling, writing and anything else." In the final performance of *Theater in Trance* in a rather wayward work entitled 'Andy Warhol's Last love' performed by a group called Squat Theatre (started by Hungarian Jew-

ish refugees who had a hard time correctly practicing social realism), the corpse of Red Army Faction cofounder/far-left-wing terrorist Ulrike Meinhof is sexually ravaged in her jail cell by an alien and transported to a revolutionary planet where she is ordered to do the following: “The intergalactic 21st revolutionary committee sentences Andy Warhol to be shot for his merits. The sentence is to be carried out instantly. The intergalactic 21st revolutionary committee designates Ulrike Meinhof to carry out the death sentence.” Rather fittingly, the documentary concludes with Artaud’s words: “Only in the acting out of a temptation, in which life has everything to lose and the spirit has everything to gain, can the theatre regain its specific meaning.”

Aside from *Theater in Trance*, Fassbinder would pay tribute to his hero Antonin Artaud with *Satan’s Brew* (1976) aka *Satansbraten*, which opens with a curious quote from the playwright, as well as *Despair* (1978), which was dedicated to the Greek-French mad man of theater. As demonstrated by a good portion of his films, but especially *World on a Wire* (1973) aka *Welt am Draht*, *Satan’s Brew*, and *Despair*, Fassbinder was obsessed with the idea of the double/shadow/doppelganger, so it should be no surprise he included the following quote from Artaud in *Theater in Trance*: “Every real effigy has a shadow which is its double, and art must falter and fail from the moment the sculptor believes he has liberated the kind of shadow whose very existence will destroy his repose.” Not surprisingly considering it was the enfant terrible’s only celluloid excursion in documentary cinema, *Theater in Trance* is in many ways Fassbinder’s most bizarre and idiosyncratic work and probably his most revealing film in terms of expressing his particular artistic *Weltanschauung*, which certainly owes more to Artaud than kraut commie Brecht. That being said, the documentary is no mere completist work as I initially assumed but essential viewing for serious Fassbinder fans. Probably only comparable to his Swiss friend Daniel Schmid’s documentary *The Written Face* (1995) aka *Das geschriebene Gesicht*—a nonlinear ‘dream documentary’ about Japanese Kabuki theater—*Theater in Trance* is more of a hypnotic ‘experience’ than anything, but one with actual ‘intellectual’ meat to it that demands just as much visceral soul as grey matter, or as Fassbinder once stated himself, “it is not thinking but dreaming that broadens life.” Mixing the Vietnam War, Warhol, Meinhof, Kraftwerk, and art-punk, *Theater in Trance* holds up remarkably well today as a nonlinear document of cultural debris and it is undoubtedly all thanks to Fassbinder’s innately anarchistic yet highly personalized approach to the typically aesthetically sterile documentary form. During *Theater in Trance*, an unnamed female narrator speaks the following line: “The thick-skinned Germans sleep in their bottomless pride.” While that line might be an attack against an entire people, he also leaves the prophetic line for himself: “Dying is an art like everything. I can do it particularly well.”

-Ty E

QUERELLE
QUERELLE

Rainer Werner Fassbinder° (1982)

Querelle was the last film directed by legendary German New Waver Rainer Werner Fassbinder before his too early death via cocaine and sleeping pills overdose. The film's source material comes from the novel of the same title by famous gay French writer and criminal Jean Genet. The film follows Querelle who is a sailor and gay serial killer looking for love in all the wrong places. The world that he lives in looks like a gay bar from hell, with skies of fire and phallic architecture throughout. Querelle's world doesn't feature any limp wristed faggots, but a variety of "village people" style masculinity that would make Kenneth Anger blush in excitement. Gay Sodomasochism is one of the most common events to be found in Querelle as it was in R.W. Fassbinder's real-life. The wardrobes and occupations of the men found in the film seem to take inspiration from The Wild One featuring Marlon Brando, Kenneth Anger's Fireworks and Scorpios Rising, and even Jean Genet's own short film Un Chant d'Amour. One knife fight featured in Querelle, a disgruntled lesbian feminist would undoubtedly call Phallogentric, reminded me of the one featured in Nicholas Ray's Rebel Without a Cause between James Dean's character and his revival. I find all these various influences of Querelle to be ironic as Fassbinder was known for writing and directing his own originally tragic dramas. Querelle makes for an odd film for the fatalistic director to end his career. Querelle is not the type of homosexual film that Hollywood would want the mainstream audience to see. Ang Lee's gay "taboo breaking" hit Brokeback Mountain left the impression of American audiences that most gay men are longing for love just like heterosexuals. The reality is that most gay men are mostly prone to "slutty behavior." Furthermore, they are known widely to be pathological liars, con men, and reject all forms of morality due to a natural habit of self-concealment, and leads to a stubborn self-deception about one's own gayness and it's implication, as noted in scholar Henry Makow's most recent book. Querelle presents a world very close to these subversive and sadistic characteristics. Dr. Makow's recent anti-feminist masterpiece Cruel Hoax: Feminism & The New World Order goes into depth about the Hollywood lies surrounding Homosexual "morality" and related topics. Serial Killer Jeffrey Dahmer, Nazi SA Leader Ernst Röhm, and the sick NAMBLA pedophiles that promote the infiltrating of Boy Scout groups to molest young boys for gay recruitment, aren't looking for "normal" love. All gay men aren't psychos that lack morals but it's important to acknowledge the reality of things as the Luciferians that run Hollywood so aggressively try to cover-up. I wouldn't have a problem with Hollywood if it decided to put films out like Tom Kalin's Swoon and Fassbinder's Querelle for mainstream viewing. Both of these films are masterpiece works of art that lack any type of hidden agenda. You aren't going to find a half Bavarian/half black towering homosexual sodomizing a young

killer sailor in the next Hollywood gay film. Of course, with all the degeneracy so often promoted in Hollywood, a scene like this will be no big thing from American audiences. The next thing Hollywood will be trying to promote is films about pedophilia, showing it as perfectly normal and those that don't accept will be labeled "NAZI BUTCHER KILLERS!!!" Querelle is a fine art piece of sado-masochistic expression. A film that radiates both colorful sets and even more colorful(not literally) individuals. French Actress Jeanne Moreau(Jules et Jim) plays the role of a lady that runs by the name Lysiane who sings a song throughout Querelle with the lines "Each Man killing the thing he loves." These song lyrics become the most apparent theme of the overall film. A theme in which Querelle, a buffed up looking James Dean, would ultimately torture his life. The ending of Querelle is as "happy" as such of it's nature can be.

-Ty E

VERONIKA VOSS
VERONIKA VOSS

Rainer Werner Fassbinder^o (1982)

New German Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's penultimate film, *Veronika Voss* (1982) aka *Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss* aka *The Longing of Veronika Voss* – a black-and-white neo-noir work that is just as much a tribute to old school UFA Teutonic melodramas as it inspired by Billy Wilder's film noir masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) – is also the second film in the director's BRD Trilogy (films set in Bundesrepublik Deutschland over three decades following World War II), sandwiched in between *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) and *Lola* (1981). Loosely based on the tragic life of German actress Sybille Schmitz (Carl Th. Dreyer's 1932 phantasmagorical masterpiece *Vampyr*, the forgotten 1943 Nazi masterpiece *Titanic*), who as a prominent diva of the National Socialist silverscreen, was blacklisted after the conclusion of the Second World War and found it virtually impossible to obtain lead roles. Naturally, sassy Schmitz's erratic behavior and wayward affairs with both men and women only further compounded her problems with the German film industry. No longer a celebrated starlet, but more like a damned diva, Schmitz did what many non-working actors do during downtime by drowning her tears with alcohol, but things only got worse as time passed and depression weighed her down, even resulting in suicide attempts and a stay at a mental institution. Schmitz eventually found herself an 'angel of death' from Munch in the form of a criminally-inclined physician who sold her morphine at absurd prices, and when the actress could no longer fund her nasty habit, the good doctor assisted her in predictable suicide, which is ironic considering that in the last film she starred in, *Das Haus an der Küste* (1953), she portrayed a character who also committed self-slaughter due to all-consuming despair. Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss* more or less portrays a similar scenario with Fassbinder's naked and nihilistic melodrama, but what makes the film an especially standout work is that the director attempted to stylize the miserable melancholy melodrama in a manner during the UFA eras from when Sybille Schmitz worked as an actress as a mostly metaphysically macabre yet masterfully directed celluloid obituary for a bygone era in German cinema and history. In *Veronika Voss*, there is no question as to whether or not the star-crossed starlet will die, nor by what method, but when and where.

The year is 1955; exactly one decade after the fall of the Third Reich and the place in Munich. *Veronika Voss* (Rosel Zech as an 'Ingrid Caven' type), a formerly loved and glorified queen of the UFA silverscreen, is now a shunned has-been who finds herself more concerned with the magical feeling chemical of morphine than the organic high she once obtained by starring in mainstream movies as a prominent celebrity and much-desired sexual icon. During one rainy night after watching one of her old movies in a local movie theater (with Fass-

binder making a cameo sitting in a chair in the row above the damaged diva) and running abruptly out of the screening after realizing her own life now mirrors that of the tragic character she once played, Voss encounters a white knight in shining armor named Robert Krahn (East German actor Hilmar Thate in one of his first West German roles); a less than handsome, short and swarthy blue collar sports journalist who does not think twice about saving the blond bombshell from the pain of the rain. Krahn has no idea that Voss is a once-famous movie star, thus the actress is extra impressed that a stranger would help her, confessing to him as they fine dine at a local restaurant, "Let me tell you it was a joy for me that someone should take care of me without knowing I'm Veronika Voss and how famous I am. I felt like a human being again." Of course, being a perennial actress, Voss is only playing a role as a crypto-drug-addict who has essentially given up on life and is now a lost cause, but that does not stop gentlemen Krahn from helping to save a woman in trouble who clearly cannot save herself. Featuring flashbacks to her past life, including the happiness she once had working on film sets with her favorite film director (Volker Spengler) and the slow but steady disintegration of her marriage with screenwriter Max Rehbein (Armin Mueller-Stahl), Voss' life, like West Germany itself, has indubitably rotted rather radically and cannot be replenished to any notable degree.

Not long into their torrid non-relationship, Krahn realizes that Veronika is the dope sick virtual prisoner as an inpatient of a naughty neurologist named Dr. Marianne Katz (Annemarie Düringer) – a lethal lesbian that, like many female sadists/serial killers, uses poison as her method of murder – who keeps the emotionally afflicted actress high on a steady diet of opiates that she also has the power to take away, which she does from time to time so as to speed up the actress' final descent into oblivion. Despite interfering with the personal life of another woman and a rich one at that, Krahn convinces his longtime girlfriend Henriette (Cornelia Froboess) to go to Dr. Katz posing as a doctor-shopping rich woman looking for a negligent physician to provide her with a prescription for morphine, thus obtaining proof of the doctor of death's criminal malpractice. Although Henriette receives the prescription for the narcotics, she makes the mistake of making a questionable phone call right outside her office, thus revealing her cover, so the demented doc has her ran over and killed. Naturally, Robert Krahn shows up with the police, but Dr. Katz has already covered up the murder and Veronika Voss goes along with her opium dealer's charade about not really knowing the sports journalist and would-be-savior. As Fassbinder told his filmmaking friend Frank Ripplow in a 1982 interview regarding Veronika Voss' passive acceptance of her own murder: "She accepts it completely because she knows in any case that the game is played out, there won't be any more variations – that's how I'd interpret it – no major opportunities for variations, and then a person can simply accept the end; there isn't anything left that interests her much."

VERONIKA VOSS

In the Fassbinder biography *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1987), author Robert Katz wrote: "Veronika Voss, a tight little black-and-white movie with a bite that's hard to forget, would have been, if you had to die young, the film to exit on." While I can understand Katz's reasoning, I personally prefer Fassbinder's final, posthumously released work *Querelle* (1982) to *Veronika Voss* any day, not least of all because the Jean Genet adaptation, although riddled with death and human recklessness, seems to be a work directed by a man with a desire to drive on with life, at least artistically speaking. While a sleekly stylized celluloid work that sticks out quite boldly among Fassbinder's diverse cinematic oeuvre, *Veronika Voss* reeks of a decidedly defeated tone as if directed by a nihilistic filmmaker who has finally accepted death. That being said, it should be no surprise that before working on *Veronika Voss*, Fassbinder started working on an unrealized film projectable entitled "Cocaine," which he wrote the following proposal for in 1980: "The film *Cocaine*, based on Pitigrilli, will most certainly not be a film for or against that drug; *Cocaine* will be a film about the kind of experiences (with specifics) that someone has who constantly lives under the influence of the drug cocaine... In short, the decision in favor of a short but fulfilled life or a long but unaware and on the whole alienated existence will be left entirely up to the audience. My film won't help them at all." Of course, Fassbinder personally opted for the "short but fulfilled life," much like his drug addicted character *Veronika Voss*, even if his own life personal/artistic life never reached the unbearable lows of the fictional character. After all, for someone who was marking absurd remarks like, "I'd rather be a streetsweeper in Mexico than a filmmaker in Germany," by 1977 – a number of years before his death and the height of his commercial/critical success as a rare famous and world renowned German director – Fassbinder could not have been a truly happy-go-lucky fellow. It should also be noted that *Veronika Voss* features a subplot about an elderly holocaust survivor named Mr. Treibel (Peter Lühr), who is also a patient of killer Katz, that drowns out his memories of Treblinka concentration camp with the hard stuff. Unlike Voss, who had the time of her life during the Third Reich era, the elderly Treibel is now happily married, but in the end both morphine addicts – who lived inverse lives in terms of the chronology of their chronic metaphysical pain – can no longer cope, thereupon ending up in the same self-prophesied predicament of passing over via poison prescription. Like Fassbinder himself, the two characters undoubtedly reached the point of no return. In regard to both Voss and Fassbinder, the materially-inclined bad buys come out the winners with Katz and her corrupt crew taking over the Diva's assets and Hollywood homogenizing world cinema with big budget blockbusters.

-Ty E

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA

Raja Gosnell* (2008)

"Disney Classic" is a dying term. Since the partnership with Pixar, or maybe before that, Disney took the shortcut to making revenue and creating films for younger audiences by lowering the quality severely. It's apart of a standing theory that something you love as a child stays with you, no matter how corny or horrible it is. It's just something that happens as you age, same as your taste buds skip favorites. Thus began Operation Childhood Pillaging. We had no choice but to stand aside in the sidelines watching Disney making Lion King prequels, sequels, and dequels. Same with Little Mermaid, Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast, and every other animated masterpiece there is out there. This wretched spawn quickly clogged the Disney library with so many straight to DVD releases that I hold no respect for the company anymore. Not even The Fox and the Hound can save it. To sucker punch Disney once again, I bring to reference the race relations depicted in most of the classic films. Every one has a theme of it, subversive or not. My man Walt must have realized that in order to draw a crowd to his animations; to separate his from the others, he must paint his own caricatures of how he views Asians, Blacks, and Mexicans. In this context, Disney has returned to their ways and targeted Mexicans for this outing of Equator drama. Propaganda has never been so blatant. Mexico as well for that matter. A pristine suburbia with perfect lawns edited seamlessly to show the rolling hills of beautiful Beverly Hills then a quick comparison to the seedy and dirty Mexican landscape. Compare these two places and what you get is a place south of America that has been filmed to look like a petri dish. Sure, colorful characters were produced, but at what cost? Beverly Hills Chihuahua is stenciled in the style of Homeward Bound but with gardeners, sombreros, and burritos. The depicted lead voiced by Nick at Nite favorite George Lopez is a false hero. He isn't the protagonist nor does he have hero blood. He's nothing but a perverted Mexican (dog) who goes through no extremes while the "American" German Shepard does. In the end, the Mexican dog wins the prize he set out for while the "American" paved the yellow brick road for him. Lopez is around for a prime total of 20 minutes tops in which he lustfully mutters *senorita* and other Spanish nonsense. If Beverly Hills Chihuahua attempted to teach its brainwashed one thing, it's to think low of Mexicans. All stereotypes are portrayed whether it is Mariachi, creepster, Dog-fighting crime lord, or landscapers. Despite having the racial hatred that Disney Classics are so "acclaimed" for, Beverly Hills Chihuahua succeeds in no way, leaving a slimy trail behind its own rear end. One of which that smells surprisingly like Tacos. Beverly Hills Chihuahua is Legally Blonde for latino kids.

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BABYLON - IM BETT MIT DEM TEUFEL
BABYLON - IM BETT MIT DEM TEUFEL

Ralf Huettner (1991)

As far as I am concerned, the only great German horror filmmaker of the 1990s was Jörg Buttgerreit (Nekromantik, Schramm) and he was an avant-gardist of sorts who only directed two features during that entire decade before giving up on filmmaking for good (though he has recently made a comeback of sorts, albeit in a somewhat under-whelming way). Of course, aside from a couple notable exceptions over the decades, kraut cinematic horror has been more or less dead since the German expressionist era of the 1920s and 30s, with the 1990s being a particularly pathetic decade for not only what German-French-Jewish film critic Lotte H. Eisner described as the 'Haunted Screen,' but Teutonic cinema in general. Indeed, while the 'socially-conscious-minded' directors of German New Cinema had little interest and use for the genre (though a couple masterpieces, including Lommel's *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves* and Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), were made during that time), the post-Fassbinder era was even worse. One of the few German horror flicks from the early 90s that I did manage to find some marginal value in is the sleekly stylized horror-thriller-drama hybrid *Babylon - Im Bett mit dem Teufel* (1992) aka *Babylon - In Bed with the Devil* directed by Ralf Huettner (*Texas - Doc Snyder hält die Welt in Atem*, *Vincent Wants to Sea*) and starring Natja Brunckhorst, who is best known for playing the eponymous teenage junky protagonist of the kraut cult classic *Christiane F. - Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981). Featuring a fetishism for foul human flesh in the spirit of kosher Canadian auteur David Cronenberg, the phantasmagoric and even sometimes kaleidoscopic aestheticism of Guido giallo maestro Dario Argento, the offbeat and jazz-driven mystery and intrigue of David Lynch, and a twist ending that falls in somewhere between Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Babylon* certainly features an eclectic hodge-podge of cinematic influences that transcends horror and borrows everything, ranging from the meticulously stylized pseudo-softcore flicks of Zalman King to even the high-camp of Werner Schroeter, thus making the film of interest to more 'idiosyncratic' cinephiles. Make no mistake about it, Huettner's film is a piece of salacious and sleazy celluloid trash of the rather radical ridiculous sort, yet it is also a charming work of celluloid trash that acts as a reminder that some modernist horror flicks can have a semblance of class and cultivation. The sordid story of a young statuesque nurse with a Nordic build who hooks up with a suave psychopathic salesman of the semen demon sort who impregnates a number beautiful young ladies that ultimately die a miserable death when their wombs explode after the demon seed inside themselves completely fertilizes, *Babylon* could be described as an allegory for AIDS and other STDs in the post-sexual liberation age, but it is better not to analyze the director's intent, as

the film is best enjoyed as a work of reasonably aesthetically pleasing fantasy of the female-flesh-fixating sort.

Opening with a young pregnant lady suffering some sort of complication relating to pregnancy in an opera house while her dubious boyfriend Lothar (played by Dominic Raacke of 45-year-old German TV crime series *Tatort* and Brian De Palma's lazy 2012 lesbo thriller *Passion*) checks out some sassy S&M-obsessed chick flashing her big bosoms in a nearby balcony, *Babylon* immediately lets the viewer know their entering a semi-surreal erotic pandemonium where every human act seems to have some sort sexual connotation. While Lothar's girlfriend is rushed to the hospital that night, she soon dies after her stomach inexplicably explodes. After walking in on a blind lesbian named Sabine Vogt masturbating to a tennis game on TV, protagonist Maria (played by Natja Brunckhorst of Christiane F. and Fassbinder's final 1982 film *Querelle*)—a reasonably attractive yet somehow single nurse—finds the exceedingly bloody and gore-adorned corpse of the pregnant girl. The next day, Maria goes to the apartment of the dead girl's parents to let them know about their daughter's rather bizarre death, but when she arrives there she notices a Svengali-like salesman, Lothar (Maria has no idea he is the dead girl's boyfriend), attempting to sell the parents worthless crap. The father of the deceased, Herr Czermecki (Gerd Lohmeyer), is a hyper-paranoid Slavic midget suffering from a serious case of small man's complex who accuses Lothar and Maria of being in cahoots together to swindle his family upon hearing the bad news regarding his belated daughter's mysterious death-by-exploding-stomach. In fact, Herr Czermecki completely loses it and pulls out a gun on the two guests, but Lothar manages to snatch the weapon away from the mad little mensch and helps Maria escape from the apartment unscathed. Of course, Lothar is no hero, as a lethally lecherous lady's man who knows how to appeal to women's weaknesses, especially where superficial compliments are concerned.

A rather charming (but not exactly handsome) devil with a moronic goatee in the spirit of Anton LaVey who hits on girls by asking them if they are Swedish (the film seems to insinuate that Germans see their Germanic brothers the Swedes as their racial superiors) and stating such silly things as, "I'll give you wings and fuck you to heaven, sister Maria. You want that? Or should I send you to hell? I can screw you to hell. My prick can do it all," Lothar offers Maria a ride home and before the young lady knows it, she is copulating with the satanic salesman, who pounds her pussy so hard that the raspberry-flavored condom breaks. On top of coercing Maria into sex, Lothar also convinces the nurse of compiling a list with the addresses of all the patients at her hospital so he can come by their home, so as to exploit their sorrow by selling them junk that they do not need, or as he proudly states himself, "the sick are so susceptible." Needless to say, Maria eventually feels bad about exploiting her patients and starts a fight with Lothar that concludes with the premature end of their relationship

BABYLON - IM BETT MIT DEM TEUFEL

and the sinisterly suave salesman hatefully stating to the nurse upon leaving her apartment, "pity your tits are so small." Of course, Maria naturally gets pregnant as a result of her rubber-busting fling with Lothar and she eventually convinces her doctor friend Tilmann (Michael Greiling) to perform an illegal abortion on her. Before having her unborn babe vacuumed out of her womb, Maria takes Sapphic blind patient Sabine on a 'date' to an opera house to inform her that a cancerous tumor in her body has become malignant. A visually impaired lipstick lesbian, Sabine wastes no time in attempting to get into Maria's panties, but after learning about her terminal illness, she forgets about feelings for the nurse and opts for committing suicide via self-defenestration. Naturally, Maria is rather disturbed when she sees a piece of Sabine's brains on the ground near where the blind babe committed suicide.

Meanwhile, Lothar begins inseminating other young beautiful women with his deadly gentleman's relish, including Maria's blonde and big-breasted nurse friend Bibi. Lothar charms Bibi the same way he charmed Maria by asking her if she is a Swedish model, as he is a pernicious one-note-wonder of a pick-up artist who need not do much to swoon beautiful yet terribly stupid young women. When Maria finally receives an abortion from Tilmann in what is a rather grotesque scene involving the graphic vacuuming of the protagonist's womb, the mangled aborted fetus manages to escape and ends up in a garbage dump. Shortly after the abortion, Maria witness Bibi's pregnant stomach exploding while the two are driving somewhere and she blames Lothar for her friend's ghastly death. Naturally, with all of her friends dropping like flies, Maria is questioned by the police, with one of the officers even rather rudely asking her, "Are you gay? Are you a lesbian? Sabine Vogt had shaved her private part." Eventually, Maria comes to the conclusion that enough is enough and decides to waste Lothar by shooting him while he is taking a leak in a urinal, but the psychopathic salesman seems to have already succumbed to his own seemingly supernatural STD. After Dr. Tilmann, who is secretly in love with the nurse, helps Maria escape the crime scene, the young lady goes looking for her aborted fetus in a garbage dump and when she eventually finds it, she is sucked into a gigantic womb as if she is being reborn. When Maria awakes from her ostensible rebirth, she finds herself awakening in a hospital bed and being greeted by Lothar of all people. Indeed, Maria has just given birth to her husband Lothar's child and virtually everything that has happened in the film was merely a dream. Of course, Lothar is still revealed to be a scumbag, as he engages in sadomasochistic sex with another woman while talking to his wife Maria, who is still recuperating in the hospital, on the phone. In the end, Lothar states directly to the viewer: "I'm a machine...made from over 100 billion parts. I took 500 million years to mature. Can't you feel it?"

An oneiric celluloid work that is equally aesthetically orgasmic as it is ominous, Babylon may be far from a masterpiece but it is probably better than virtu-

ally every Hollywood horror movie that has been released in the two last decades or so. In its depiction of a man who kills every woman that falls in love with him and his leather lechwater, the film seems like a rather loose transexualized reworking of Satanic Teutonic Renaissance man Hanns Heinz Ewers' masterpiece *Alraune* (1911), which was adapted for film on at least five different occasions (the last adaptation was directed in 1952 by Arthur Maria Rabenalt under the title *Alraune* aka *The Unnatural* and starred Erich von Stroheim). Indeed, with its reversal of the gender of the quasi-supernatural sexual predator, *Babylon* certainly seems like it could have been informed by post-WWII feminist brainwashing, yet the film has too many gratuitous ass and tits shots for me to believe that director Ralf Huettner is some sort of sexually cuckolded cinematic warrior against misogyny and whatnot. Interestingly, leads Natja Brunckhorst and Dominic Raacke were real-life lovers at the time of shooting the film and even had a child together a year before the work was released. Personally, I find Brunckhorst rather unappealing but I barely recognized her in *Babylon*, as the director managed to direct her from all the right angles, including from behind in a scene featuring her unclad derriere. Of course, those looking for a cheap masturbation aid will probably be disappointed by the work, unless you're a prepubescent boy who gets aroused by seeing a mere mammary gland, as the film is far too silly and, in parts, sickening to act as a sort of celluloid aphrodisiac. Indeed, while the film features scenes that make women's bodies seem like something akin to an Arno Breker statue, *Babylon* ultimately makes sex and romance seem ridiculous in many respects, especially when it comes to the pathetic figure of the so-called "pickup artist" as depicted by literal sex monster Lothar. Indeed, as Huettner's film demonstrates, if a man has to use exceedingly pathetic bullshit tactics to scam his way into a woman's main vein, he is, at the very least, a disingenuous fellow and possibly a psychopath like antagonist Lothar. Of course, as a work that depicts death-by-gestation, *Babylon* will probably be the most horrifying to young females, especially of the pregnant sort, and probably should not be viewed by a chick that has had an abortion, as it features a somewhat graphic scene of the protagonist's unborn mutant fetus being sucked out of her womb during surgery. Indeed, a work of racy reproductive horror that is probably the closest thing to a kraut *Dead Ringers* (1988), albeit nowhere near as sophisticated (but arguably more stylish), *Babylon* is cultivated celluloid trash with a surprising amount of elegance and dark humor that ultimately reminds the viewer that there are some rare films that manage to straddle the usually fine line between cinematic crud and charm.

-Ty E

FRITZ THE CAT
FRITZ THE CAT

Ralph Bakshi (1972)

Fritz the Cat is the greatest animated film ever conceived via trigger-pull abortion. Robert Crumb, creator of the comic, might loathe it but that's natural during the porting of a form of printed literature to filmic properties. Alan Moore boasts his hatred as does Robert Crumb. These two men are no alike. One writes proper graphic novels lamenting political and societal importance and the other transfers his sexual deviance in the form of crude, rude drawings. Crumb is the father of underground comics while underlings attempt to catch some of his glory, namely Mike Diana. Nothing against the man but I find his artistic style dated and under the weather. After seeing his ridiculous interview in the film *Affliction*, I found many a bad trait within the cartoonist. With this, I begin my review of Fritz the Cat which in a way, is a review of humanity. Depressing, isn't it? I'd been warned of the pornographic nature of Fritz the Cat upon the dawning of Netflix some odd years ago. My mother told me never to watch both *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* or *Fritz the Cat*. I heard only tales of this pornographic cartoon that brought to mind visions of Felix the Cat playing with sex toys. I really didn't know what to expect and once I hit play on the DVD remote, I knew I had a real treasure at hand. The genius of Fritz the Cat is birthed from the twisted mind of fetishist extraordinaire Robert Crumb. The story plays out as Fritz, a cat, eventually tires of the "norms" and would rather live his life by inciting riots and enjoying the power plays of the 60s by consuming tons of drugs and consummating with all the animals he can find, especially Negro bitches. In this fantastical world that's not too far from the truth, there are two classes; cats and crows. Cats are whites, respectably, and crows are the Afro-American folks, obviously. In the vein of classic Disney, "dem" Negroes are portrayed as janky jive-talkers with crumbling shoes and cigars hanging out their shady beaks. Throughout his rebellious phase, Fritz begins to adopt a slave mentality while apologizing for the persecution of blacks and goes on about how he really feels for their suffering and how he loses sleep over the evils of the white man. All until he says "Hey boy!" while requesting an ale from the colored gentleman behind the bar. Just goes to show how hard most college level whites try to assimilate into city cultures. The only mistake this Bakshi directed imagining of Fritz the Cat makes is the self-label of "satire." In question, this so-called sardonic atmosphere is aided by real life scenarios. Had this film been live action, Fritz the White Male might as well have been a documentary on the gutter life of urban citizens. These cognizant depictions of a sub-segregated New York propel the brilliance of Fritz the Cat into unheard of extremes. Crumb was apparently so disappointed with this "embarrassment" of a film that he promptly killed off the character in his comic strip. This was a sad and miserable day for both cinema and comic fans seeing as Fritz the Cat is a highly likable character even if he does

wind up in trouble under the wing of Neo-Nazi rabbits and Negro drug lords. To some, Fritz is even a hero of both the effort of war and peace. He ventures out into a malleable world consisting of fornication, semen, titty fucking, reefer indulging, and causing a bit of widespread panic. In his quest that equates with him becoming a fugitive, you too will feel "naughty" watching this film that was unfairly rated X. To incline this gravely important animated performance upon you, the adaptation might not be honorary to the intended theme of the comic strip but in regards to the film's lifespan, Fritz the Cat remains one of the most important films to have ever been created for the sake of racial digression and promised persuasion of prejudice.

-mAQ

COOL WORLD
COOL WORLD

Ralph Bakshi (1992)

Being redirected by splashes of classic memories of Cool World, I decided to revisit the sudsy noir-typed gonzo inspirations found within the vault of Ralph Bakshi's return to feature films. After *Fire and Ice*, it just seemed that Bakshi retired all too soon to the measly slave-tracks that is syndicated television. But before you knew it, a new film was announced to predate the repopulated live-action/animated musings of *Space Jam*. *Cool World* stars Brad Pitt before he hit the spotlight with his best roles to date (*Kalifornia* and *True Romance*) and Kim Basinger playing herself for the seductive and manipulating Holli Would; lending voice to toon and likeness to "Noid." Imagine my surprise when I discovered this magical land that filled my head with throbbing fetishes as a child turned out to be a spoiled script behind even more rotten directing, not to mention the animated population of *Cool World* to be less-than-Crumb fantasies of bizarre slapstick and catty chubbies with heaving breasts. Things aren't all bad in *Cool World*, however as life is cheap and women are even cheaper.

Taking an aimless road, *Cool World* opens with Frank Harris, a WWII veteran returning home to his lovely Ma with a personal gift to the both, a motorcycle. After one fateful accident minutes later, Frank Harris is thrust into an animated paradoxical world of cigarettes, twisted surreal architecture, and boozy women. Coincidentally, some 40+ years later, an animator played unconvincingly by Gabriel Byrne creates *Cool World* and is too sucked into some strange, incoherent wormhole that leads to the place of his creating. Funny thing about this is that this portal to *Cool World* opens on golden opportunities and never without plot progression in mind which connects even more wildly to the theory that *Cool World* is just the hidden fetishes coming to fruition within a possibly comatose Frank Harris' mind. Once we are introduced to the 3 - 4 re-occurring characters that highlight the faceless world of cool, we are met with a femme fatale blonde bombshell by the name of Holli Would, who kills the shit out of Jessica Rabbit in terms of evoking youthful sexuality to bloom prematurely. Throughout the entirety of the time spent in the radical degeneracy of *Cool World*, sporadic looped footage of a doodle mob parades slowly across the screen obscuring the sights and sounds that *Cool World* has to offer. This mental onslaught is yet another cheap tactic that Bakshi employs in what is possibly the worst in his career. The amount of zero mentality looped footage alone is staggering and impossible not to pick up on.

One of the only merits that *Cool World* has to offer is terrific background visuals in a wild neon mess that houses oversexualized Saturday morning cartoon fodder. The "doodles" in their reverse beat generation are all broad shouldered or teeming with unsubtle cleavage. In regards to the decade of the 90s and the

video rental boom, I must digress that Cool World must have had something to do with the current generation's obsession of Japanese animated women and their almost always incestuous relationships. Cool World didn't invent the fanatical subversion of animated fantasy but it sure as hell broke it out into the mainstream by planting seeds within children's minds. For me growing up, the plot of Cool World escaped me. I simply had memories of scrambled scenes that held no continuity other than Brad Pitt smoking and bimbo cartoons. After committing myself to the institution that is Cool World, I feel that this is one of those rare occurrences in which the memories lasting within the stems of past viewings are more favorable than the current result. Re-watching Cool World certainly rotted the core of my past recollection and the only safe tiding I can manage is to envision this film as the inhibitions of a comatose soldier returned home. That certainly spices up the frequent shortcomings and inconsistencies littering this animated abortion.

As with most of Bakshi's work, there are fragments of inspired genius and Cool World is not without these brilliant minerals but treading through the run time seems like an infinite purgatory. Perhaps Bakshi had developed a lazy senility which would certainly explain the looped alienating segments of crude illustrations. Seems as if scrapped storyboards were used as a sensory overload to stimulate the mind into processing all of which this film doesn't offer. But what Cool World does offer is a terrific mondo metropolis realized by screaming and twisted branches mutating off cityscapes. Furthermore, Cool World recycles most of Bakshi's previous successful avant-garde animations e.g. Fritz the Cat and Hey Good Lookin'. Inspired so, the costumes of many-a-citizen of Cool World seemed idealized by that same whisper that Bakshi fell victim to during conception of the 50's extravagance. As it is, this is a venture into live-action/animation that I'd prefer to avoid in favor for the multicultural exploitation that is Space Jam or the more successful greasy noir that is Who Framed Roger Rabbit?. While Roger Rabbit didn't have such gratuitous and delightfully harmful sexuality, it encompassed the desperation and dinginess of film noir so much better than the shattered product of Cool World. In praise to Cool World, it was one of the few examples to reach viral hall of fame with the rare event of "desecrating" the Hollywood sign by constructing a 75 foot tall Holli on top of the letter "D". I suppose the legacy of Cool World is destined to perish among an elusive photograph of such and the bargain begging price of five dollars. To put it rather simply, Cool World is just another disappointing debacle of squandered talent - should have been reserved for art galleries and not cineplexes.

-mAQ

HARPYA
HARPYA

Raoul Servais (1979)

In 1979, Belgian filmmaker Raoul Servais created a short feature entitled *Harpya*. This little number came about to me in the guise of a friend and a forum thread pertaining to the creepiest videos one could find on the Internet. Raoul Servais has developed a film career of experimental shorts spanning 15 years and won the Palme d'Or at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival for Best Short Film. Surely the sparse acclaim must mean something? Well, in fact, Servais developed the first 35mm outburst of surrealism detracting the nature of feminine creatures. What *Harpya* discusses with its limpid parable is not a "mythological femme fatale" but a common mistress and the carnivorous aftermath of accepting such into your home. Dario Argento even managed to stretch his presence to encapsulate the same exact schematic for his *Masters of Horror: Jenifer*. This plot outline isn't exclusive to *Harpya* though; science fiction writer C.L. Moore brought to light the same dissent towards the parasitic womankind in *Shambleau*. The dreamy effect of *Harpya* is captured using front projection: the act of projecting the scenery onto the bodies of the actors in front of a highly reflective surface. Using what also seems to be stop-motion animation, Servais and Švankmajer must have dominated the animated avant-garde scene of the 60s and 70s.

The epicentre of the film isn't the dapper host but the insatiable hybrid of woman and bird. This mythological beast known as the Harpy is a breasted bird of thieving instincts. Within *Harpya*, the fellow saves the creature from an unknown man strangling her in a fountain. Saving her, he becomes fascinated at her majestic and strange figure, no doubt a victim of cognitive dissonance. The allure must have been held in the breasts, I assume because this was the case for me. After perching the beast on his armchair within his haven. Immediately succumbing to hunger, the man sets out to eat only to have the harpy appear at his side, striking a loud orchestral splurge and drastic lighting changes. The horrors of the household happen in a more subtle aspect to near every man punished with a helpless and immobile significant other. I sit back and listen to the horror stories of lazy liaisons and grin at my fortune. I never get cocky though as I could find myself in the same internal slavery and avoid kinship at most costs. Soon the man's plight grows into a more turbulent force: unable to eat his own food, leave his own house, and having to sneak around. The suffering is become unbearable, donning all 3 of his hats, the man opens his door to have the wrath of the harpy swoop down and devour his legs, a cunning metaphor for the handicap of relationships.

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Harpya is perfect in every way. Being only 9 minutes in length, every scene was exact to a blueprint of absolute narrative. Even the warnings of post-menarche rings through the film. Harpya can also be ingested both intellectually or visually. You don't necessarily have to think of the subversive nature about Harpya, you could just enjoy the feast of lucid lust. A bona fide visual vaccine to ball-and-chain relationships and the wondrous world of abjecting women.

-mAQ

THE WONDERFUL, HORRIBLE LIFE OF LENI RIEFENSTAHL
THE WONDERFUL, HORRIBLE LIFE OF LENI RIEFENSTAHL

Ray Müller (1993)

Leni Riefenstahl is without a doubt the greatest female filmmaker to ever live. However, to look at her as merely a woman filmmaker would be a mistake as the majority of female filmmakers are mediocre to say the least. When a film like Cheryl Dunye's degenerate interracial dyke-fest *The Watermelon Woman* is regarded as an independent film masterpiece by film critics, it is obvious that people have to go out of their way to give female filmmakers the recognition they generally do not deserve. Leni Riefenstahl's 1934 film *Triumph of the Will*, despite being a ¾ of a century old, is a film of an incomparable aesthetic magnitude, set at a time and place that could never be duplicated. I can only assume that it has always been a little more than irritating for feminists and female filmmakers to realize that the greatest film directed by a woman is a National Socialist (Nazi) "propaganda" documentary. In the documentary *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl* the viewer receives an incredible portrait of an 89 year old Leni Riefenstahl and her amazing career as the world's greatest female filmmaker.

Beautiful

Athletic and Courageous

Despite being 89 years old, Leni Riefenstahl is fairly spunky and energetic in *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*. When annoyed by the inquiries and comments of the documentary director Ray Müller, Leni has no problem telling off a man that looks to be about half her age. In fact, Ms. Riefenstahl starts shaking Mr. Müller after she becomes annoyed by his questions in regards to the first Nazi documentary she worked on, a film that was never finished. Thankfully, Leni also has no problem discussing her acquaintances with the top National Socialists. Beyond elderly Leni becomes enraged when director Ray Müller mentions that in Nazi minister of propaganda's Joseph Goebbels 1933 diary, Goebbels wrote about how Leni Riefenstahl would frequently visit the little doctor. Leni responds she never "put out" for poor Joey Goebbels, although Goebbels attempted many times to have her as his mistress. Leni Riefenstahl was a woman that could have any man she wanted and for some reason I doubt Mr. Goebbels would have been able to please Leni. After all, Leni's later lifelong partner Horst Kettner was 40 years her junior. Leni Riefenstahl should also be recognized as being the queens of the cougars.

One of the biggest complaints thrown against Leni Riefenstahl is that she has a "fascist aesthetic." Yep, you got it, some ugly weakling considers showing muscular, powerful, and beautiful bodies as evidence of visual fascism. To prove one truly has a cultural Marxist "equality aesthetic" they have to make films featuring the most hideous and deformed people in the world as everyone knows that should show a filmmakers commitment to the most important cul-

tural achievement: DIVERSITY! Not only do critics claim that her National Socialist documentaries are “aesthetic fascism”, but they also claim her photos of the African Nubian people of central Sudan are further evidence of her criminal “aesthetic fascism.” I guess it just goes to show how ugly resentful NYC and LA film critics will make any type of pathetic attempt at discrediting the organic beauty right in front of their undeserving squinted eyes.

African Aesthetic Fascism Throughout The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl I was very impressed with Leni’s uncompromising pride and attitude toward her long eclectic career. The only thing that annoyed me was her statement that she is unhappy that she ever made Triumph of the Will. Sure, the film may have blacklisted Leni Riefenstahl as a filmmaker for the rest of her life, but Triumph of the Will also happens to be one of the greatest achievements of cinema history. If your typical filmmaker were to even make one film anywhere near the quality of Triumph of the Will, they deserve lifelong recognition of as a cinematic master of aesthetics. It would have also been a nice “FUCK YOU” to her critics had Leni showed no regret in directing Triumph of the Will. Of course, I am sure Riefenstahl’s early German Mountain film career of Aryan Volk mysticism is enough to repel the typical anti-European critic, a part of Leni’s career that she seems to have no regrets about.

Leni directing director Ray Müller

At around three hours in length, The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl is a long but certainly not banal documentary. The documentary is a portrait of a woman who became the greatest female filmmaker within a supposedly “misogynistic regime.” Despite the claimed sexism against women in National Socialist Germany, Leni Riefenstahl was a woman who excelled within those “misogynistic” social constraints. I can also certainly say that I have never heard of a feminist with even a drop of the talent and strength Leni Riefenstahl radiated. Of course, feminists are typically degenerate women and Leni Riefenstahl was an Aryan Superfrau.

-Ty E

ROSWELL ALIEN AUTOPSY
ROSWELL ALIEN AUTOPSY

Ray Santilli (1995)

In the year 1947, a speculated UFO crash rocked the town of Roswell, New Mexico. Since then, Roswell has not only become the poster event of all conspiracies, but has become a pop culture phenomenon; spawning books, movies, a syndicated television series, and even a film. The most popular of all these is the speculated Autopsy tape of an alien being captured by the US Military. Ray Santilli is the "founder" of this archived footage and in the year 2006, revealed that it was actually a reconstruction, almost as Hideshi Hino's *Flowers of Flesh & Blood* was. The difference between the two is that Santilli claims that the film this is based off actually exists within the footage itself. By the time they had enough money to purchase said film, the humidity had gotten the best of it, and the only survivors were several frames, which he then spliced in the footage. While this being an outrageous claim, I cannot help but to wonder. Some scenes in this tape seem all too real. The Alien Autopsy tape is basically an E.T. Snuff film. We see two men cutting the aliens skin open, providing a glimpse at the weird organ structure of the species. The eyes are all black until later, when they peel off the film covering it to reveal eyes that inspired a creature in the Hollywood sci-fi comedy *Men In Black*. The set pieces are eerie and bathed in light. The reality factor of it being in black and white doesn't help it's cause considering that color was definitely an option in that year. These men are dressed as if they are going on Iskanov's set of *Philosophy of a Knife*, except they aren't as sinister in purpose. The skin looks partially real. Latex is visible in some scenes, but i really give kudos to the injured leg. They pull out pieces of shrapnel and debris of the extraterrestrials leg. It's almost cringe worthy. The authenticity of the film, while being said to be a hoax, is still one to ponder over. Kodak photo labs have not verified the time of the tape, however, two frames of film have been. The shots are of a staircase and an open doorway. These have been traced back to the year '47. All in all, the Roswell tape is mystifying and creepy, regardless if it is a hoax or not.

-mAQ

MONDO COLLECTO

Raymond P. Whalen (2006) Documentaries are perfect for documenting things. With this in mind, i will begin to explain the abomination that is this film. Most films, as horrible as they are, have some good things about them. This one has about 2, and this is not enough to notice until the after thought. This documentary slaps the title of "MONDO" on it blasphemously as there is nothing "MONDO" about this film at all. It is narrated by the director with a fez named ROCKN ROLL RAY. I can notice your brows furrowing as we speak. This man takes us through the incredible world of collecting and how boring and hypocritical it can be. Most of the collecting segments are populated by Hippie Jews and over-patriotic douche bags. We see about 5 collections and over 3 collections of nothing. The most interesting were the gun segment and the vintage action figure one. These segments are separated with GO-GO dancing ladies with wigs, ranging from attractive to bag lady. Composed with a shitty score for the scenes, it's easy to get distracted or acquire a headache from this abysmal film. Many of the scenes are viewed as "joke" material. An annoying camera man pissing off the lead singer of IMPALED or IMPALER. I cant remember. The only thing i think this film is worth is the incredible segment with Ted V. Mikels. He is truly a viking lost in time. One thing that i do laugh about when i think back to watching this, was the night where this film made me sick. The scene with the man who has a couple of 8mm films to be exact. I instantly started vomiting and was ill the next day, only to be mysteriously cured with the memory of this film vanishing. I understand this film is supposed to be strange, but it fails. Without the Phantom of Paradise and a man's strange fascination with Pez, this title is best to avoid.

-Maq

THE BRUTALISATION OF FRANZ BLUM
THE BRUTALISATION OF FRANZ BLUM

Reinhard Hauff (1974)

Typically, a left-wing prison flick sounds like a rather revolting prospect as such works are typically created by idiotically idealistic do-gooder types sporting proverbial 'good guy' badges with a seemingly autistic understanding of human nature and who have no concept of reality nor the drastically culturally different people that they self-righteously profess to defend, yet somehow I managed to get into the quasi-commie kraut work *Die Verrohung des Franz Blum* (1974) aka *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* directed by Reinhard Hauff, an auteur who has displayed his solidarity with left-wing activism and commie terrorists with critically acclaimed but not mostly forgotten works like *Messer im Kopf* (1978) aka *Knife in the head* and *Stammheim - Die Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe vor Gericht* (1986). Luckily with *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum*, Hauff had the help of real-life bank robber turned writer/actor Burkhard Driest (Cross of Iron, *Querelle*), who not only acted as the lead villain in the film, but penned the script based on his own experiences in prison, thus lending a certain visceral authenticity to the film that would escape bourgeois leftist activist types. Responsible for penning the unreleased Nazi-themed black comedy *Son of Hitler* (1978) starring Bud Cort and Peter Cushing and playing the pernicious gangster who belittles the title protagonist of Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977), to being accused (but vindicated) of rape in 1980 by German actress Monika Lundi, Driest is undoubtedly lived an interesting life in film and otherwise and his less than sensationalized depiction of prison life in *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* seems to ring more true than most prison films. The story of a young man and educated bank employee who drove the getaway car in a bank robbery and who refused to name his co-conspirators, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* shows how a supposedly morally noble yet criminally inclined individual transforms into an authoritarian criminal mastermind as a result of his 'brutalization' via prison corruption, namely that revolving around his fellow inmates. A film that essentially makes the statement that prisons do not "reform criminals" (not shit!) but instead turns them into hard fascists who are willing to use every and any individual and/or underhanded scheme to get his way, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum*, like many contemporary works of jailhouse cinema makes a mere critique, but like virtually all idealistic leftist works, offers no real solutions. Starring internationally acclaimed German actor Jürgen Prochnow of *Das Boot* (1981) and *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) in one his very first roles, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* is a raw reminder that one probably learns a great deal more about human nature from a prison sentence than from going to college to get impractical knowledge.

Franz Blum (Jürgen Prochnow) has made the mistake of being involved with a bank robbery that will ultimately result in him losing the best years of his life

after he is given a prison sentence. During one of his first days in the slammer, Franz cries like a little bitch because he has a migraine and a lanky leftist lunatic intellectual named Bielich (Eike Gallwitz) gives him some aspirin to help. To express his gratitude to Bielich for being kind in an unkind place, Franz acts as a witness after Bielich is attacked by prison bully Walter 'Tiger' Kuul (writer Burkhard Driest), who is carrying on a gay relationship with a man named "Marie" (Lutz Mackensy). Being the undisputed alpha of the prison, Kuul naturally seeks revenge against Franz and beats him nearly an inch away from his life, which inspired the novice convict to make a failed attempt at suicide via slitting his wrists with his trusty razor. After learning that forming a gang can make one's time prison go much smoother, Franz, who joins up with a baker turned child molester named Goh (Karl-Heinz Merz), gets his own criminal enterprise running and in no time, he has countless minions who back him. Unfortunately, although he is not a genius, crazy Kuul is still undisputed Führer of the prison underworld. After drugging Kuul's food via tranquilizers, Franz, who has given up being fair a long time ago, is able to get enough leverage to beat up his Neanderthal-like nemesis. By dealing tobacco, coffee, and other products at a lower rate, Franz soon becomes the king of the jail house, but he soon consolidates even more power after becoming in charge of the prison's sports department. While Franz manages to get everyone on his side, Bielich finds his new behavior absolutely deplorable, that his methods are as "cynical as the system," and threatens to tell everyone about his parasitical ways. To prove he is an equal opportunist and diehard democratic, Franz gives Bielich the platform to make his plans, but the other inmates shout him down, stating things like, "what do you want weirdo?" Of course, Franz's 'scheme' works out as his prison underlings force Bielich, who has a heart condition, to run with them, which ultimately kills the noble anti-fascists. Ironically, Bielich dies in the same spot where Franz originally helped him after Kuul attacks him. Things get even more ironic when Franz is released from prison that same day for "good conduct," thus making his efforts to become the dictator in the prison all in vain.

Beginning as a supposedly sensitive and noble man who is willing to help anyone in need, Franz transforms into a tyrannical dictator who utilizes seemingly unlimited conspiratorial tactics, including screwing over formers and even murder by proxy. Of course, anyone with a shred of common sense, aside from loony liberals, knows that prisons aren't designed to rehabilitate anyone, but are rather used to punish the individual and hopefully get them 'scared straight' enough after their sentence to quit committing crimes. Naturally, being a leftist, director Reinhard Hauff goes one step further by insinuating that prison turns convicts into 'degenerate fascist cavemen' who subscribe to irrationalism, brute force, and collectivism as a form of underworld self-rule. While I certainly would not want to have a stay at the Teutonic prison featured in *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum*, the prison life featured in the film is not much worse than a high school environ-

THE BRUTALISATION OF FRANZ BLUM

ment, except with a little bit more extortion, theft, violence, and other related uncivil behavior. Indeed, while the lead antagonist attempts to force Franz to give him a blowjob (he bites his cock instead) and he gets a good beating too, there is no rape, bodily dismemberment, successful suicides, nor gangster prison guards (though they take bribes), no situation featured in *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* would have realistically change the protagonist from a "good guy" into a "bad guy" unless he already had such sadistic propensities inside of himself all along, hence his involvement in the bank robbery that landed him in prison in the first place. Undoubtedly, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* is not the HBO prison drama *Oz* (1997-2003) where nefarious neo-Nazi's rape white alcoholic lawyers and female prison guards begin steamy romances with cons. If anything, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* is interesting because it shows less barbaric prisons, especially those in Europe, during the early 1970s than prisons of today, which are multicultural sewers owned by private companies that train crooks and thieves to turn into murders and gay rapists. The fact that writer/actor Burkhard Driest was able to leave prison and become an esteemed writer and actor and able to be involved with *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* without suffering an emotional breakdown just goes to show that director Reinhard Hauff is a neo-marxist pansy who would have probably benefited from a prison stay because, if nothing else, he would have at least developed some testicular fortitude and realized his message with *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* is ultimately whiny at best and ridiculously redundant at worse. Jürgen Prochnow would later star in the film *Die Konsequenz* (1977) aka *The Consequence* directed by Wolfgang Petersen playing a pederast prison inmate who falls for a 15-year-old lad in a role radically more repulsive than the one he played in *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum*. Needless to say, one could argue that getting softly sodomized by your elder gentleman lover could be a bit more brutal than getting the shit beat out of you. For the closest thing to a kraut equivalent to the rather underrated American cult prison flick *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (1971), *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum* is undoubtedly your best bet, minus the forced anal entry.

-Ty E

KNIFE IN THE HEAD

Reinhard Hauff (1978)

Like kraut Francophile Volker Schlöndorff (*A Degree of Murder*, *The Tin Drum*), Teutonic filmmaker Reinhard Hauff (*Mathias Kneissl*, *The Brutalisation of Franz Blum*) was a stereotypical left-winger of his age of the innately idealistic sort, so it should be no surprise that probably his greatest achievement as a film director was winning the Golden Bear award at the 36th Berlin International Film Festival in 1986 for his *Stammheim - Die Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe vor Gericht* (1986) aka *Stammheim - The Baader-Meinhof Gang On Trial*, a work that acts as a quasi-tribute to the mad Marxist terrorist martyrs of the Red Army Faction and portrays the judges and attorneys as nasty crypto-nazis who are bound to sire a Fourth Reich. While Hauff has never been a particularly well known filmmaker in the United States, his melodramatic celluloid polemic *Messer im Kopf* (1978) aka *Knife in the Head*, which was penned by Peter Schneider (Hauff's *Der Mann auf der Mauer* (1982) aka *The Man on the Wall*, Margarethe von Trotta's *Das Versprechen* (1995) aka *The Promise*), is probably his most well known film among the American arthouse crowd simply due to the fact that it is the only one of the filmmaker's films that has been released here (New Yorker Video released a VHS of the film in 1998). If it were not for the fact that Swiss leading man Bruno Ganz (*Wings of Desire*, *Der Untergang* aka *Downfall*) gave such a 'daring' performance in the film that it is worthy of being compared to his role in Wim Wenders' neo-noir *The American Friend* (1977), it would be hard for me to recommend anything about *Knife in the Head*, which not unlike Schlöndorff and von Trotta's banal Heinrich Böll adaptation *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, or: how violence develops and where it can lead (1975), is not much more than a less than thinly veiled far-leftist rant in solidarity with the RAF and against the West German government and media. And, indeed, like *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, *Knife in the Head* also stars masculine leftist pseudo-diva and filmic feminist Angela Winkler (*Hunting Scenes from Bavaria, Germany in Autumn*) as a bitchy broad who has rather poor taste in both men and politics and goes so far as callously cuckolding her crippled husband. In other words, Rauff is essentially a 'poor man's Schlöndorff' who never achieved the sort of international 'fame and fortune' that his cinematic compatriot did, so it should be no surprise that most of the filmmaker's films have fallen into obscurity. A film about a brainy biogeneticist who gets shot in the brain after a scared kraut cop mistakes him for a terrorist that stabbed him in the stomach, *Knife in the Head* is a decidedly depressing yet redundantly left-leaning story about a man who is essentially turned into an infant as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and must relearn everything (i.e. walking and talking) and deal with harassment from cops who want to make him a scapegoat so as to hide their own incompetence.

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Scientist Dr. Berthold Hoffmann (Bruno Ganz) has an annoying bourgeois Marxist 'true believer' wife named Ann (Angela Winkler) and when he goes to pick up his wife at a leftist terrorist political rally that is raided by neo-Gestapo-like police, he is mistaken for a leftist lunatic by a young cop named Schurig (Udo Samel), who was stabbed in the stomach by another terrorist, so he ends up getting shot in the head and losing all the data in his brilliant mind and is thus confined to a hospital bed for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, wife Ann is carrying on an affair with a pansy commie named Volker (Heinz Hoenig), not to mention the fact that a prick of a policeman wants Herr Hoffmann transferred to a prison hospital, but luckily a caring doctor named Dr. Groeske (Eike Gallwitz) blocks the cop's rather absurd request. Slowly but surely, Hoffmann becomes mobile, learns a couple words, begins feeding himself, and learns to dupe the cops. In one rather repellant scene, Hoffmann, who is wheelchair-bound, is mildly manhandled by a cop and becomes disrobed as a result, so he begins playing with his prick in front of the prick policeman so as to assumedly psyche the cop out. Rather distastefully but humorously, Hoffmann also uses his disabilities as a means to get a young nurse named Angelika (played by Werner Schroeter regular Carla Egerer) to feel sorry for him and ultimately shows\ him her tiny tits. Eventually, Hoffmann gets the gall and upward mobility to escape from the hospital after going incognito in doctor scrubs. Despite being only vaguely articulate and being imprisoned in a spastic body, Hoffmann attempts to go back to work at the "Traut Institute for Genetics," but one of his co-employees notices his brain is not quite right and calls his wife, who picks him up and takes him to the country where the two feebly attempt to rekindle their rather broken relationship. When night comes, a couple cops attempt to arrest Hoffmann for fleeing the hospital, but luckily the brain-damaged biogeneticist's lawyer Anleitner (Hans Christian Blech) has solved all his legal problems already. When Hoffmann finally gets out of the hospital, he is welcomed home with cuckoldry due the fact that his wife's terrorist boyfriend Volker is now squatting there. When Hoffmann ask Volker where his knife is, the commie replies "Here. In your head" (hence, the title of the film!). Extremely irked by Volker's venomous arrogance, Hoffmann finds his trusty knife and approaches his nemesis in a threatening manner, stating, "I'm gonna stab you fucker... You'd like it best if I were dead." Of course, Angela kicks Hoffmann out of his own apartment a second later, but luckily terrorist Volker is later apprehended by the cops. In the end in what is easily the most potent scene of *Knife in the Head*, Hoffmann goes to the flat of the cop Schurig who shot him and asks the man why he shot him. Schurig tells Hoffmann he is "playing the idiot" and the latter responds with "maybe you were scared just scared. Like me" regarding the incident that left the biogeneticist a cripple. After that, the two men reenact the event that transpired the night Hoffmann was shot, albeit switching roles. Ultimately, Hoffmann gets some piece of mind by threatening to shoot him, smacking him over the head, and making

him cry. Of course, his actions are in vain as they will not help him get his wife and job back.

In one of the most unintentionally hilarious scenes of *Knife in the Head*, one hears a cop read a diary entry written by Hoffmann that states as follows: "The thought of killing yourself is undoubtedly only the reversal of the wish to kill. An American in my situation would probably just shoot blindly out of the window." Indeed, judging by the series of mass-shooting sprees that have occurred in the good ol' United States of America over the past decade or so, Hoffmann's words seem to ring truer today than when *Knife in the Head* was released well over three decades ago, but that does not change the fact that the film is plagued with carelessly cliché leftist inanities. Of course, considering the reality of innately impotent and ultimately government-strengthening terrorist attacks committed by German terrorist groups like the RAF in West Germany during the 1970s, it seems quite hypocritical for a refined agitpropagandist like Reinhard Hauff to make such claims against America. Indeed, aside from Prussian master Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (*Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King, Hitler: A Film from Germany*), Fassbinder seemed to be the only filmmaker of his generation mature enough to see the moronic antics of the RAF for what they were. On top of demonstrating that all idealistic revolutions are bound to fail in *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970) and depicting communist intellectuals as hypocrites who are oftentimes members of the bourgeoisie themselves (albeit, failed members of the bourgeoisie like Marx himself) in *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven* (1975), Fassbinder acknowledged with his scathing satire *The Third Generation* (1979) that the terrorists merely empowered not only the German government, but big evil corporations as well. Indeed, despite its anti-authority/anti-cop/anti-media message, *Knife in the Head* is clearly a work that was made for the bourgeois, but of course, like director Reinhard Hauff (who began as a subversive filmmaker but became a somewhat mainstream filmmaker), the same people who were part of the late-1960s German student movement (68er-Bewegung) would later become the leaders, politicians, CEOs, and mainstream media pawns of the ostensibly corrupt nation they professed to despise as depicted in the soullessly stylized mainstream German flick *The Edukators* (2004) starring swarthy Yerd-Teuton mutt Daniel Brühl. A rather simple yet well acted film about a man who ends up in the wrong place at the wrong time, *Knife in the Head* ultimately attempts to get the mainstream middle-class to give a shit about the concerns of the far-left and it ultimately fails as a work that merely preaches to the kraut quasi-commie choir. Of course, if the viewer approaches the film by looking at protagonist Hoffmann's crippling as a metaphor for not only the helplessness of everyday Germans during the RAF terrorist attacks but also as an allegory for the destruction of German identity/kultur as a result of the Second World War (think Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948)), *Knife in the Head* ultimately becomes a more poignant and less preachy work. Of course, *Knife in the*

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Head is also a must-see film for Bruno Ganz fans.

-Ty E

BABY SITTER

René Clément (1975)

You can pretty much guarantee that when a filmmaker enters the forbidden realm of pornography, his career is more or less coming to a bitter and truly degenerate end of no return, both artistically and professionally. Indeed, aside from the rather rare exceptions like Wes Craven, who left a comfortable job as an English professor and entered the more lucrative pornographic underworld where he apparently made “many hard core X-rated films” under various pseudonyms (even working on Gerard Damiano’s 1972 crossover hit *Deep Throat*, though the actual role he had in the mafia-backed film is still unknown to this day) before he directed his first feature *The Last House on the Left* (1972), the filmmaker who begins directing porn is more or less a dead filmmaker who is whoring himself out just to pay the bills. While Guido artsploitation auteur Alberto Cavallone (*Man, Woman and Beast* aka *Spell – Dolce mattatoi*, *Blow Job – Soffio erotico*) did enter the final stage of his career when he began directing fuck flicks under the ‘classy’ pseudo-aristocratic pseudonym ‘Baron Corvo,’ his career is interesting in that a good number of his ‘classic’ films were released in alternate pornographic cuts well before he the director ever became a full-blown pornographer. Indeed, Cavallone’s singularly aberrant cult classics *Zelda* (1974), *Blue Movie* (1978), and *Blow Job – Soffio erotico* (1980) were all released at various stages with pornographic inserts, though this should be no surprise to anyone that has seen the original non-pornographic cuts of these works, as they are ultimately more subversive and perverse than the fuck flicks that were being made at the time, even if they were less sexually explicit. Indeed, while ‘subversive’ sex has always been a major theme of Cavallone’s oeuvre, the director mostly chose to depict carnal pleasure in a decidedly ‘anti-erotic’ and even deranged fashion and this is, somewhat ironically, most apparent in his straight fuck flicks. In that sense, Cavallone was a sort of poor man’s Pasolini, albeit rampantly heterosexual and much more nihilistic.

Directed under the name ‘Baron Corvo’ (a pseudonym he borrowed from gay English novelist, artist, and would-be-priest Frederick Rolfe), *Il nano erotico* (1982) aka *Baby Sitter* aka *Being Captured* aka *Il nano e la strega* aka *Petites fesses juvéniles* (pour membres bienfaiteurs) reflects Cavallone’s rather reluctant attitude in regard to directing his first ‘straight porn flick’ (though his previous work, the 1980 ‘erotic thriller’ *La gemella erotica* is assumed to have been shot ‘hardcore’), which is about as sexually appealing as syphilis as a work featuring a demented dago dwarf in a thong raping a young girl with giant dildos to meta-kitschy sounds of disco music. A sort of Guido take on the superlatively sleazy American-Danish coproduction *The Sinful Dwarf* (1973) aka *Dværgen* directed by Vidal Raski, which depicts a depressed and lonely yet equally deranged and deadly Danish dwarf running a white slavery and heroin ring with his mother,

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Baby Sitter depicts the insane, if not largely inane, Italo-degeneracy that ensues when a young girl comes to work as a babysitter for a young couple, only to find that baby is really a full grown, phallus frenzied, dildo-wielding dwarf who enslaves her and dementedly defiles her. Needless to say, Cavallone's dumbfounding Dwarfsploitation flick is for initiates only. In other words, if Werner Herzog's *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) aka *Auch Zwerge haben klein angefangen* made you squirm with abject disgust at the sight of devilish little people doing depraved and destructive things, *Baby Sitter* will prove to be the ultimate anti-aphrodisiac, especially if you're a member of the fairer sex, as a nihilistically wanton work of whimsical derangement where a swarthy and perennially giggling achondroplastic dwarf pulls out a suitcase of large dildos and inserts them in the various holes of a naïve teen as if he is an Asperger-addled toddler experimenting with building blocks.

Exotic 19-year-old redheaded babysitter Sabrina (Sabrina Mastrorrenzi) loves her boyfriend Johnny so much that she gently jerks him off while riding on his Honda crotch-rocket, but she is put off by his indomitable jealousy and she questions whether he really loves her or not. Luckily, a nightmare day involving debauched dwarfs and dildos will ultimately prove to Sabrina that Johnny does indeed love her after all. After giving Johnny fellatio in a scenic field and stroking his main gear while he gives her a ride on his super cool Jap motorcycle, Sabrina is, to the chagrin of her boy toy, picked up by a wealthy middle-aged blonde babe named Dominique (Dominique Saint Claire) and her swarthy mustache adorned chauffeur in a white Mercedes so that she can carry out her latest babysitting job. As Dominique explains to her, Sabrina will be watching a little boy named 'Willy,' though little does he realized that she will be ravaged by the 'child's' Willy. Indeed, soon after Dominique leaves Sabrina at her plush countryside home that is just a couple miles outside of Rome, the baby sitter discovers she has been locked inside the house and soon after that, Willy aka 'Peeping'—a discernibly dago-like achondroplastic dwarf (Petit Loup) in a classic children's sailor outfit—abruptly appears from his baby bed and pierces the young lady with a blowdart with tranquilizer on it, thus knocking her out instantly.

When Sabrina awakes, she is tied in bondage to a fireplace and wearing nothing but a tiny thong. While she was asleep, little Willy took the liberty of stripping her of her clothes and providing her a rather unflattering thong similar to his own. After pulling out a suitcase full of various large dildos, Willy begins probing Sabrina's nether-regions in a rather perverse fashion. Meanwhile, Dominique and the Chauffeur have sex while watching Willy defile Sabrina via security footage. When Willy goes down shoving dildos in Sabrina's various flesh-wounds, he ties her to a footstool and begins whipping her in a savage fashion. Ultimately, Willy gets Sabrina to 'voluntarily' do anything he wants, so long as he agrees to let her go at the end of the night. After proclaiming, "I am very eccentric," Willy has Sabrina sit on top of him reverse-cowgirl style and jerk

him off. Meanwhile, Sabrina's boyfriend goes looking for his girlfriend, as he seems to rightfully suspect that Dominique is a demented bitch with uniquely unsavory intentions. Eventually, Willy confesses to Sabrina that Dominique is his wife and in reciprocation for him allowing her to fuck any man she wants, she calls babysitting agencies and tricks stupid young girls to come to their home so that he can kidnap and defile them. Of course, one would assume that the rather odd couple would have been caught by now, but as Willy brags to Sabrina, he kills all the babysitters when he gets bored with defiling them. Indeed, Willy plans to kill Sabrina by giving her a poisonous enema, but just before he invades her anus, she hits him in the ribs and manages to escape. While the Chauffeur runs out and attempts to capture Sabrina at the demand of deranged bitch Dominique, boyfriend Johnny arrives at just the right time. In the end, Sabrina confesses to her boyfriend, "This has been an experience I will never forget" and, to the delight of Johnny, agrees that she will never babysit again.

Believe it or not, *Baby Sitter* was not the last XXX debauched dwarf flick that Albert Cavallone directed. Indeed, the director followed the film with the supposedly somewhat superior work, *Pat una donna particolare* (1982), the same year which, aside from featuring most of the same 'actors' from the previous film, also once again starred petite pervert Petit Loup. Interestingly, both of the films were shot at the same villa a couple miles outside of Rome where *Rosso sangue* (1981) aka *Absurd* directed by Joe D'Amato (as 'Peter Newton' aka 'Aristide Massaccesi') was directed the previous year. As someone with a small softspot for small people, I somehow managed to enjoy *Baby Sitter* more than most Cavallone fans, even if I found myself forwarding through some of the overlong sex scenes. When it comes down to it, the film is essentially a strangely humorous nihilist comedy directed by a disillusioned auteur who seemed like he wanted to take revenge against the film world by directing one of the most distinctly unsexy and just plain debasing fuck flicks ever made. In that regard, Cavallone is a lot like American artsploitation auteur Roger Watkins (*The Last House on Dead End Street*, *Shadows of the Mind*), who directed three masterful and strikingly artful, if not discernibly anti-erotic, misanthropic, and nihilistic dark blue movies—*Her Name Was Lisa* (1981), *Corruption* (1983), and *Midnight Heat* (1983)—under the Teutonic classical music inspired pseudonym 'Richard Mahler.' As Roberto Curti noted in his excellent 2007 essay *Alberto Cavallone: Story of an Eye*, Cavallone's son Giulio offered the following speculation as to why his father directed porn: "Alberto did them for money, I wouldn't say negligently, but doing things his own way, just to piss off the producer [...] You know, this is a compromise that could have made sense in Alberto's logic: 'You don't let me do the film I want to do and instead you almost force me to make shitty hardcore porn? Well, that's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna shoot these films but I won't put my name on them, and I'm gonna do them my own way!'"

A work I can only recommend to Cavallone completists, sadomasochistic

BABY SITTER

dwarfs, and/or morbidly masochistic individuals who get off to being debased by the unnatural sights of a malevolent midget defiling a young dame, *Baby Sitter* is nothing short of a sick celluloid joke at the expense of both pornophiles and the Italian film industry. With his purported masterpieces, *Maldoror* (1977)—a lost adaptation of pseudonymous French poet Comte de Lautréamont's late-19th-century proto-surrealist poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* aka *The Songs of Maldoror*, which was also unsuccessfully adapted by cine-magician Kenneth Anger and successfully adapted by Japanese auteur Shūji Terayama—never being released as a result of distribution problems and a number of his other films negatively affected by everything from suicidal producers (e.g. *Blow Job – Soffio erotico*) to being completely aborted (e.g. *Il ragazzo che fece fumare il Vesuvio* aka *The Boy Who Made the Vesuvio Erupt*), Cavallone had every right to be aesthetically vengeful, thus one could argue that *Baby Sitter* and *Pat una donna particolare* are almost just as much 'auteur' pieces as his early works, as they reflect the filmmaker at his most incendiary, iconoclastic, and misanthropic. Indeed, what other man would take aesthetic revenge against society by making a fuck flick where a beautiful young girl is defiled by a dildo-wielding dwarf?!

-Ty E

MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH

René Daalder (1976)

Massacre at Central High is the film quoted as "predicting punk and Columbine." Undoubtedly, these allegations are stupid as the pretension of stating that a vengeful rampage would have never existed had someone the gall to create a tempestuous attack perpetrated a dear student, and punk? The only crime this film is guilty of is predicting a lack of vision in the future of cinema based around school shootings. Besides from this inane assessment, Rene Daalder, a protege of Russ Meyer, created a film unheard of for its time. The idyllic walls lined with lockers are being governed by the "in" crowd, a group of four "jock" ruffians whose tactics of terror include severe degradation and rape. These instances of rough-housing go virtually unacted upon and have prompted the staff of students to quietly walk in fear with their tails in between their legs. That is, until the new kid arrives at Central High, name of David. David not only shares a friendly history with one of the "country club" tyrants but is owed a due equal to repose in this blistering high school environment. Soon after, David makes sure to white-knight himself to the graduating class and Mark's girl, Theresa. The unfolding of several key events lead to inciting a homeroom war that would later be heavily "borrowed" from *Heathers*, a teenage girl's fantasy of attitude and angst delivered with sappy-crevice young-adultisms.

The prior position of counseling is scrapped however, as David suffers a crippling blow-back from the bullies which lead to the designated title reflecting horror elements, which this film is surprisingly (and thankfully) void of. Rather than to honor of acknowledge his speakings of peace and equal mindedness, David turns to murder to exorcise the frustration and pain from his very veins, corrupting the last half of the film into a slasher-esque marathon of righteous suffering and violent sentiments to those who have wronged him or deemed unworthy of life. David's rage is arguably permitted however. Dutch filmmaker Rene Daalder spent line after line with intermittent scenes building upon David's ritualistic jog, releasing the stress necessary to retain a calm, collected attitude and foresight. When even the simplest relief is taken from a man, it's no surprise to witness an out-lash of explosive fury and mercilessness. What follows is quirky tomfoolery with sports equipment and a general misanthropy.

Strangely enough, the Italians got a hold of the initial print and edited pornographic inserts, amping up the hair, sweat, rape, and teenage promiscuity to a disturbing level. The result is known as *Sexy Jeans* - shock value? postmortem. The flavoring of hatefucking only really benefits to the attempted rape which is now transformed into a successful raping of both Mary and Jane. It's true that violence speaks much more when documented unflinchingly and if you're watching this film in the first place, chances are you slide into this category.

MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH

Without the XXX material, the basic teenage relationships are centered around the blossoming womanhood, not that of a 12 year old girl but the transition from innocent cherub to swindling harlot. As evidenced by this strange idea known as reality and the cinema to which it reflects, romance is as silly and tumultuous as born in a school setting. The questionable freebie persona of the average experimenting lady is demonstrated in *Massacre at Central High* with bell-bottoms, buggies, and buggery.

An interesting addition to Daalder's undiscovered masterpiece of aggression within education is that the campus is run entirely by the students, from the library to the student lounge. Adults do not have a role until the very final scene at the annual dance and even then, their oblivious nature to the plight of education and the rise of violent crimes is staggeringly accurate still to this day. Supervision is acceptable to a point for the mind retains malleability up until your first social experiences with troublemakers and misfits. This problem leads to David's madness and his transformation into an "evil" archetype is shocking enough for the once affable eccentric. Witnessing the infectious symptoms of power turn even the warm, cynical bookworm Arthur has David even more keen to the idea of systematically slaughtering the scheming studentkind. For this, allusions to Columbine will no doubt surface. Despite the media stacking such titles as Neo-Nazis, Violent gamers, and metalheads onto the duo of Eric & Dylan, *Massacre at Central High* represents a justifiable (to an extent) quest of retaliation that one might expect a sided Dutch diva to preach.

Also known as the Blackboard Massacre, what sets this film apart from other bully/revenge/exploitation films is the teasing of genres it so wildly commits. First an engaging portrait of life in the 70s only to switch to a completely anarchic environment of execution, *Massacre at Central High* establishes itself as the prime contender for best school rampage film. Disregard entirely the residual comedy of *Heathers* and push aside the retrogression of van Sant's *Elephant* in favor for this underrated thriller worthy of global recognition, not just from the wops. David is once sympathetic and then a hero. Altered to a prophet of pain and freer of the quasi-oligarchy that existed in the sterile halls, David becomes cold and unmoving - unstoppable. The love for Theresa alone helps create a wholly complex finale with emotion enough to elevate this above the schlock of cult DVD. No doubt will this classic be misunderstood as the sensitivities of the dying West skyrocket.

-mAQ

POPULATION: 1

René Daalder (1986)

As much as I despise musicals, especially those made during the decisively dreadful and innately soulless 1980s, I cannot help declare my forbidden love for the melodious and misanthropic dystopian punk rock sci-fi musical *Population: 1* (1986) directed by Dutch auteur René Daalder (*Habitat*, *Hysteria*) and starring Tomata du Plenty, an early member of the ultra-campy psychedelic drag-queen troupe *The Cockettes* and singer of the seminal synthpunk band *the Screamers*. Although I have known for some time that Daalder is an eclectic and multitalented filmmaker due the stark contrast between his early Meyer-esque exploitation flick *Massacre at Central High* (1976) and his more recent documentary *Here is Always Somewhere Else* (2007) – a very personal work about the director's forlorn friend Bas Jan Ader – it was not until I viewed *Population: 1* that I realized that the flying Dutchman should have a much more illustrious and popular filmmaking career, at least among dedicated cinephiles. Essentially, like *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981) meets *Liquid Sky* (1982) meets *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985) meets *The Running Man* (1987), except on an expertly-disguised micro-budget, *Population: 1* is probably the best (and only) example of an 'arthouse punk' flick. Utilizing a surprisingly peachy pomo potpourri of utterly new and then-high-tech video technology, archived concert footage, animated nudes, and vintage silent film and newsreel clips, *Population: 1* is a positively punchy postmodern punk rock musical that – when compared to the 'artistic integrity' of punk movie classics like Ulli Lommel's *Blank Generation* (1980), Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia* (1984) and Zale Dalen's *Terminal City Ricochet* (1990) – seems like a misunderstood masterpiece among mindless mediocrity. Originally encountering the punk scene after his teacher Russ Meyer asked him to work on the never-made film *Who Killed Bambi?* (1978), a cinematic work intended as a punk rock equivalent of *The Beatles' A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and a quasi-sequel to *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) that was also co-written by Roger Ebert, Daalder set-up "Sex Pistols USA" headquarters in his house in LA and eventually ended up meeting and befriending Tomata du Plenty and the two decided to collaborate on a conceptual 'music-video album' and a post-apocalyptic arthouse flick entitled *Mensch* in the style of German expressionist works like Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920); none of which came to fruition. Picking up the scraps from the aborted music-videos and footage Daalder filmed for *The Screamers* concerts at the Whisky and Roxy in LA and working fast after du Plenty was diagnosed HIV positive, the two eventually assembled the 60-minute semi-futuristic feature *Population: 1*, which is quite arguably the most ambitious and experimental punk film ever made and a vivid and witty piece of early video art.

Population: 1 is a virtual one-man show that stars Tomata du Plenty as the

POPULATION: 1

satirically narcissistic host, a typically nauseating product of the 1980s and a positively positive (even when complaining) yet uniquely uncivil civil servant (a defense contractor) and the purported last man who earth who describes his coming-of-age as being chronicled in the novels Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), and the classic Hollywood film *East of Eden* (1955) starring James Dean. *Population: 1* essentially consists of du Plenty going on an erratic and somewhat preachy yet pleasantly peculiar spiel about his life and memories, and an iconoclastic history lesson about the United States, hence why the film features a picturesque pastiche of concert footage and old newsreel excerpts. Indeed, long before Robert Zemeckis ever chronicled the history of social change in twentieth century America through the countrified eyes of a cutesy Alabama-born mental-invalid via *Forrest Gump* (1994), Rene Daalder was able to superimpose images of modern actors over seemingly ancient historical film footage. Like Mr. Gump, du Plenty is a hopeless romantic at heart that that is most impassioned when speaking of his steamy love affair with his sometimes hostile girlfriend Sheela Edwards. Although not particularly beautiful nor elegant, Edwards – who looks like should could be Alla Nazimova's more vicious, long-lost great-granddaughter – is a seductive singer and a ferocious femme fatale as especially exemplified by her cover of Marion HARRISS' 1920 hit "I'm a Jazz Vampire." A proudly emasculated American male in the tradition of Rudolph Valentino, but nowhere near as attractive and charming, du Plenty sings feminist duets with Ms. Edwards and allows her to physically pummel him when not on stage, thereupon sparking mass effeminization in American males; or so he says in an awfully proud, pussified manner. Showing his dedication to the American anti-fascist cause, du Plenty, although a cowardly draft-dodger, also shares his scarlet lady with American troops during the Second World War. Of course, not all of du Plenty's memories are as fond as he would like them to be, especially in regard to his stay with fellow chosen "elites" in a New Wavish cabaret-like atomic bomb shelter. The final 1/3 of *Population: 1* also happens to be one of the most interesting segments of the film, featuring appearances from Beck (then-12-years-old), Vampira (Maila Nurmi), El Duce (*The Screamers*, *The Mentors*), Penelope Houston (*The Avengers*), members of the Chicano rock group Los Lobos, and Dutch actor Carel Struycken ("Lurch" of *The Adams Family* film series), among others. On top of playing an acting role in the film, *The Screamers* drummer K. K. Barrett also worked as the art director for *Population: 1*. Barrett's spectacular work in the film must have gotten someone's attention, as he went on to be a production designer for such big name Spike Jonze and Sofia Coppola films as *Being John Malkovich* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), *I ♥ Huckabees* (2004), and *Where the Wild Things Are* (2009). Needless to say, aside from being a outstandingly ostentatious and totally outlandish pioneering work of vivacious video art, *Population: 1* is a virtual

who's who of popular and not-so-popular American musicians and artists, thus it should be no surprise that MTV would subsequently borrow its audio/visual aesthetic from the film.

Not unsurprisingly, *Population: 1* is far from every *The Screemers* fan's favorite film as the work is regarded as the motivating factor behind the band's messy and irreparable breakup. Originally, Tommy Gear – the keyboardist, vocalist, and co-songwriter of *The Screemers* – was supposed to compose the musical score for *Population: 1*, but he inevitably walked off the set of the film midway through its production in a most histrionic fashion after getting in a number of back-and-forth cavils with Tomata du Plenty. Some blame director Rene Daalder for this, as it has been claimed by certain individuals that he pitted the band members against one another so as to have greater artistic control over the production. Whatever the reality behind this claim, one would have a hard time denying that *Population: 1*, even with its many famous/infamous actors and megalomaniac lead character, is essentially an auteur-piece created by a filmmaker with a very specific and utterly uncompromising vision, henceforth it would also be misleading to describe the film as mere 'punk rock musical.' Indeed, *Population: 1* has pioneering punks as actors and memorable musical numbers, but it is barely the sort of work that can be appreciated, let alone adequately gauged by the average glue-sniffing philistine with a retarded haircut.

-Ty E

HERE IS ALWAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE
HERE IS ALWAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE

René Daalder (2007)

In 1975, the Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader set to sea in the smallest sailboat (13 ft pocket cruiser) that ever attempted to cross the Atlantic. 10 months later, Ader's boat was found on the West South-west coast of Ireland. Unsurprisingly, Bas Jan Ader's body has never been found. In the wonderful documentary *Here is Always Somewhere Else* directed by friend and fellow Dutchman-turned-American Renee Daalder, the director tries to unravel the enigma surrounding the tortured soul of Bas Jan Ader and what caused the Dutch artist to take a dangerous journey across the Atlantic. As you soon find out in the documentary *Here Is Always Somewhere Else*, Bas Jan Ader never felt content anywhere he settled in the world, finally concluding that a voyage across God's sea might be the antidote for his deracinated restlessness.

Like my own Dutch grandfather, Bas Jan Ader and *Here is Always Somewhere Else* director Renee Daalder felt that America would be an ideal place to relocate to after growing up as a youth in The Netherlands during the horrors of World War II. Also like my grandfather, Ader's family fought in the resistance when Germany occupied their country during the war. Unlike many other resistance fighters (mostly Communists, Anarchists, and other anti-Nationalist dissidents) in other countries during the second World War, many of those fighting the occupation of The Netherlands were not mainly politically motivated. It should also be noted that despite being Germanic themselves, the Dutch for centuries have thought of Germans as half-civilized barbarians (centuries ago when The Netherlands was one of the most powerful/advanced countries in the world, Germany was still a bunch of scattered fiefs), on top of being fairly tolerant of Jews (The Netherlands is one of the few European countries not known to have engaged in anti-Jewish pogroms). Since the German occupation of The Netherlands during World War II, the Dutch opinion of Germans has gone from looking at them as half-educated peasants to the Dutch disdaining anything German. It is easy to tell in *Here is Always Somewhere Else* that director Renee Daalder is not particularly fond of Germans. The Dutch maybe the most individualistic people in the world and were certainly not going to allow other people to dictate to them how to live, especially when you consider that Germany planned to assimilate the Dutch (they were considered fellow Aryans by the SS) and make The Netherlands part of "Greater Germany." In the documentary *Here is Always Somewhere Else* it is revealed that Bas Jan Ader's mother and father helped save the lives of countless Jews whilst running a Dutch Calvinist ministry. My own Dutch great-grandmother saved many Jewish lives during the German occupation and she was commemorated by the entire Amsterdam Jewish community at her funeral. Unfortunately, Bas Jan Ader's minister father was not as lucky during the war and would pay the ultimate price for his self-

less heroism, being executed for his role in the resistance by the Germans. The life and death of Bas Jan Ader's father would play a huge role in influencing the tragic Dutch artist.

For me, the greatest films are those that were created in war torn post-World War II Europa. From a Europe in ruins came some of the most tragic and emotionally stirring films that the world had yet to see before. Had World War II not occurred, the world would have never experienced the auteur masterworks of Fassbinder in Germany, Pasolini in Italy, Tarkovsky in Russia, Truffaut in France, and countless others. This is no surprise as World War I also influenced one of the greatest artistic and cinematic movements, the German expressionists. Those countries that did not feel the chaos and erratic nature of the first World War surely felt in the second war, the "neutral" country of The Netherlands probably being one of the best examples of this. Dutch filmmaker Paul Verhoeven has stated various times in interviews that seeing dead bodies in the street as a child during World War II played a major role in influencing his use of cinematic brutality in films like *Robocop* and *Starship Troopers*. Of course, his absurd use of violence as a condemnation of human bestiality is certainly lost on most American viewers.

Like Paul Verhoeven, Bas Jan Ader and Renee Daalder left The Netherlands in hope that they would become successful artists in the United States. Although Verhoeven and Daalder found some rooting and success working in Hollywood, Bas Jan Ader never truly felt American nor the solace he hoped for as a citizen of a new world. In *Here is Always Somewhere Else*, Daalder states that he feels that Ader's inability to assimilate in America is probably the result of a "love and hate" relationship ingrained in the Dutch soul from centuries of Calvinism. My own Dutch grandfather also never felt the calmness he was searching for in the United States, even taking trips back to The Netherlands despite having a less than modest income. Despite being born and raised in the United States, I have also never been felt like a true "American" nor did I ever find camaraderie with white American culture, only eventually finding a true organic soulful connection with European cinema, literature, and philosophy. The title of *Here is Always Somewhere Else* is taken from Bas Jan Ader's constant revisiting of The Netherlands and World War II, permanently imbedded aspects of the Dutch artist's life that he could never deracinate himself from, no matter how much he wanted to, eventually resulting in his unsuccessful solo sail across the Atlantic.

Another major influence on Bas Jan Ader was Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and that "matter did not matter." Apparently, Ader's mother discussed Einstein with her young son, something (like World War II) introduced to the artist in his youth that would play a central role in influencing artwork. Not feeling content as a professor in 1970, Ader started filming himself falling off roofs, falling out of trees, and riding bicycles into the dam of Amsterdam. In a sense, one could see him as a proto-Jackass comedian but Bas Jan Ader found

HERE IS ALWAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE

nothing funny about abusing his body for art. Ader's dangerous exploits were his impossible trials at getting lost in the cosmos as he that felt he was enslaved by gravity. Ader's friend Renee Daalder would also take influence from Ader's obsession with revolting against gravity but from a more pessimistic perspective. In Daalder's highly influential High School revenge film *Massacre at Central High*, a student uses gravity as a deadly dismembering weapon against his classmates. It is almost hard to believe that the director of *Here is Always Somewhere Else* also directed *Massacre at Central High* but I guess that is what one could expect from the artsy protégé of artless exploitation auteur Russ Meyer.

Like Paul Verhoeven after him, *Here Is Always Somewhere* director Renee Daalder soon realized that if he ever wanted to make it in Hollywood, he would have to compromise his "Dutchness" and artistry for his American film efforts. In the 1970s, Daalder attempted to make a film where movies are made completely on computers, something the business in executives in Hollywood felt to be a "preposterous" idea. Of course, now it is virtually impossible to make films without the use of computers but I guess one must forgive the money-driven men that run Hollywood as a unique "vision" is not a top priority in Tinseltown. Although not being restrained by businessmen like his friend Renee Daalder when working in the art world, Bas Jan Ader found it impossible to relate to fellow artists whilst teaching art at various California artist institutes. In *Here is Always Somewhere Else*, an effeminate and pudgy former student of Ader discusses how he and his fellow classmates never understood Ader nor his art. Despite sounding like a giddy middle aged woman, this former student also talks about how American artists were attempting to create "masculine" works whereas they thought Ader to be effeminate (in which they confused with his European sensibility) because he took photographs of himself crying. Bas Jan Ader had also been heavily influenced by the philosophical works of Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein, something that dumbfounded his proud American philistine students. Of course, history has shown that all great artists are usually misunderstood by their contemporaries as Bas Jan Ader's work did not receive an onslaught in popularity until the early 1990s.

As shown in *Here Is Always Somewhere Else*, feeling more alienated from the American art world and with his marriage becoming more turbulent, Bas Jan Ader finally decided that he would engage in an exodus from the world as he knew it. During his remaining days on this earth, Ader was inspired by the life of Donald Crowhurst, a British businessman turned sailor who committed suicide by jumping off his boat during his last voyage. Like Bas Jan Ader, Crowhurst was also heavily influenced by Albert Einstein, writing his own theory of the universe and declaring himself a "cosmic being" before diving into the oceanic abyss forever. Bas Jan Ader was also following into his father's footsteps as a restless rube. During the early years of their marriage, Ader's father suddenly became anxious and told his wife that he would be riding his bicycle from The

Netherlands to Palestine. Unlike his son, despite encountering disease on the way, Ader senior was successful in his pilgrimage to Palestine. What biting irony that Ader's Father, a man that would have saved countless Jews during World War II, would not live to see the Jews (mainly from Europe) reoccupy (through force of arms) Palestine in the form of modern day Israel.

Despite being barely feature length (at just over 60 minutes), *Here Is Always Somewhere Else* is easily one of the greatest and emotionally enthralling documentaries that I have ever seen. Although I have my own personal ancestral reasons for liking the film, one would be hard-pressed to find another documentary so uniquely intimate but at the same time leaves the viewer with tons of questions. As director Renee Daalder and Ader's friends/family members reveal in *Here Is Always Somewhere Else*, no one truly knew and understood the haunted Dutch artist. One thing friends did know about Bas Jan Ader is that he was known to set himself up for tragic endings as this heartbreaking documentary testifies to. If one looks at art history, one knows that it is not uncommon for artists to go on pilgrimages, self-imposed exile, or commit suicide. Bas Jan Ader experienced all three, finally getting lost in the cosmos, something that he always desired.

-Ty E

DIE HARD 2
DIE HARD 2

Renny Harlin (1990)

Die Harder.

The average Joe American icon is back played by Aryan badass god Bruce Willis, but this time he is left in a very uncomfortable situation. 2 years after the events at Nakatomi Plaza, John is in Dulles Airport waiting for his wife to land when he begins to catch suspicion of yet another terrorist job. He first catches wind when he notices another another black power Urkel-looking motherfucker enter a restricted area and began noticing them wearing army jackets. After tailing them, a shoot out appears in a baggage warehouse. Leaving the white man dead and the black man jumping fences to get out, McClane goes and talks to the airport police chief played by the awfully annoying Dennis Franz who i will continually disagree of his German heritage.

Franz is an annoying bastard in character and out. He of course tells McClane he is wrong, and well frankly, we know that McClane is never wrong. He mentions the Glock porcelain handguns which of course, do not exist. After this incident, McClane takes it up to the big dog's offices while they dismiss him too. Then all the lights go out and the communications are dead. It seems the spaghetti western legend Franco Nero plays a pissed off mercenary who is trying to get his dictator back. He refuses to turn everything back on until the dictator is safely landed and allowed to escape.

The planes that are currently in flight and will continue to circle the airport until either their demands are met, or they run out of fuel. After a couple of double crosses and the realization that McClane's wife is on one of the planes, they realize they fucked with the wrong American. So how can you get better than the original Die Hard? Well, the recipe seems to be more explosions, eye stabbing, gun shots, and snow bike chases.

Now for a fan of all cinema you will see a couple of surprises in the cast. The biggest one for me is Franco Nero who plays the coffin-dragging, gun-toting Italian bad ass Django in his collection of films. Second would be John Amos who was the owner of the McDonald's rip-off in one of Eddie Murphy's only good films, Coming To America (God Bless Arsenio Hall) and the last is the return of Reginald VelJohnson who makes a triumphant return in a really funny 3 minute scene discussing how fucking crazy McClane is. The acting is grand but what strikes you the most is the action. McClane is a poor son-of-a-bitch. This guy goes through hell and gets nothing in return. That is one of the most lovable parts of the series. Another great thing about this film is that it shows how arrogant security is and could be viewed as a horrific foreshadowing to 9/11. This film even sports the #2 most horrifying plane crash on MaximOnline's article. I am not even going to comment on the director. He made that trash Cliffhanger.

Again, the ethnicity's are pushing a little much when they expect us to believe

a Wop to play a Latin-American from a fake country used in the other great action film "COMMANDO". The script for the original Die Hard was actually supposed to be Commando 2. Now that would have been interesting. The accuracies in the film have been dis proven many times such as the location of the company that manufactures Glocks and the fuel tanks on airplanes. Despite this films flaws, it does what it does best. Kick ass and take names. Die Hard 2 is a definite sequel that delivers on all fronts whether it be stabbing someone in the eye with an icicle or having a duel on the wing of a plane.

-Maq

THE BLIND OWL
THE BLIND OWL

Reza Abdoh (1992)

Undoubtedly a mystifying film, most obviously due to the fact that it features no credits, no imdb.com page, no poster, and virtually nil information available about it anywhere, on top of being created by a first-time film director, *The Blind Owl* (1992) directed by the late Reza Abdoh – a gay Iranian-born playwright/theatre director who died at the mere age of 32, thus never really having the opportunity to develop into a distinguished auteur filmmaker – is an apocalyptic (yet seemingly apathetically so) avant-garde film set in the boiling but barely breathing bowels of Los Angeles that will make any viewer who watches the cinematic work feel proud that they don't live there if they aren't already a long-suffering resident. Extremely loosely based on Iran's foremost modern writer Sadegh Hedayat's controversial novel of the same name – a work oftentimes described as one of world literature's greatest masterpieces that was also adapted for the silver screen by Iranian filmmaker Kiumars Derambakhsh in 1974 and allegory-prone Chilean auteur Raúl Ruiz previously in 1987 – *The Blind Owl* as depicted by aberrant Abdoh is a gravely gut-wrenching work where skinheaded leather-fags fight and set one another on fire under bridges under the moonlight, severely disabled trannies are seedy yet sedentary sex objects, grown adopted sons buy their fathers prime ass streetwalkers, bourgeois clerks pay fag hustlers money where they wear nothing more than fishnet stockings in candid photos, *Street Fighter II* and real fights provide one with a constant source of adrenalin-pumping entertainment, and people get hit by cars just as often as they get their asses kicked. Like Alex Cox's punk cult flick *Repo Man* (1984) as directed by a mind-numbingly nihilistic Rainer Werner Fassbinder on crack and dying from AIDS, *The Blind Owl* (1992) is not a work for the fake or faint of heart and surely not the spiritually saved. Directed by a man whose life was cut short at the mere age of 32 via AIDS via unsafe sodomy who is best remembered as a plainly peculiar playwright/director who staged mammoth iconoclastic plays in rather unlikely places like rusty warehouses and abandoned buildings, *The Blind Owl* is surely engulfed by a foreordained coldness of the soul and spirit; a sardonic farewell to what was never meant to be. Apparently surprisingly minimalistic, low-fi, and low profile for a work directed by Reza Abdoh, whose plays were known to be quite antagonistic, dauntingly deranged and ADHD-driven, and high decibel, *The Blind Owl* does also share a lot in common with his theater of the off-off-Broadway and extra-absurd, including a curious collection of characters that would be better off dying in a nuclear holocaust, sickening human savagery, and his usual troupe of actors that made up his *Dar A Luz* company, including Tony Torn (the flabby, faggy son of Rip), Tom Fitzpatrick, Tom Pearl, and Juliana Francis.

Describing his first and only feature-length film *The Blind Owl*, director Reza

Abdoh stated rather superficially but in a nonetheless insightful manner: “I’m working on a film. New ideas are coming because the experience is new. Basically my thoughts are the same. Someone said you’re always writing the same book or painting the same painting, but every time it’s so radically shifted that you can’t possibly say it’s the same thing. And in the same way, my film embodies what I’m thinking about, what I’m concerned with—not just my aesthetic but what I’m concerned with in life... And I’m finding that the film is depicting more and more that sort of a relationship in its poetics and in its language and in its politics and story.” Indeed, upon superficial glance, it would seem that *The Blind Owl* – a wonderfully wacked work with nothing resembling a linear plot, but absolutely anomalous Altman-esque meandering – has no serious objective, let alone sociopolitical subtexts, but from a more esoteric angle, the film has more to it than what meets the petrified and weary, turned blind eye. Essentially, *The Blind Owl* is a miserable and, some would say, misanthropic, if not ‘empathetically’ so, melodrama about a bunch of dorky and steadily deteriorating prostitutes who attract a virtual army of absurdly aberrant and anomalous Johns, Junkies, and Jerk-offs. Emotionally vacant anti-hero Ricky (Peter Jacobs), an 18-year-old hustler that seems like a middle-aged momma’s boy with an acute case of autism, so tragedy strikes when his mother Anna (Paulina Sahagun-Macias) collapses from an unmentioned illness that keeps her mostly bedridden for the rest of the film. Like most characters in *The Blind Owl*, Ricky is probably better off dead, especially as someone who makes a living getting and giving head from hysterical handicapped homos, so in a sense his madre’s slow but steady death is not exactly the saddest thing in the world considering she will finally achieve liberation of mind and body for eternity. Ricky happens to sell his flesh to the same diabetic and seemingly deranged mortician John as a young woman named Janey (Juliana Francis); a go-getter of an emotionally dead gal who often gets the shit beat out of her by her decidedly dickhead of a boyfriend. Ricky also has an unsympathetic father who slips him some cash every so often. A flabby and faggy blind man named (Anthony Torn) with a crippled and creepy transgendered ‘wife’ (played by Johnnie Baima aka Sandie Crisp aka “The Goddess Bunny”) also calls on the call-boy services of Ricky, who helps bath, read to, and feed the ocular cripple. Ricky also has a new friend from Nevada with a fucked-up haircut and art fag mustache/goatee combo named Trenn (Tom Pearl) who provides a sort of silent, phantasmagorical comic relief to *The Blind Owl*, especially when bashing people’s heads in with inanimate objects. In between the minimalist manic melodrama of the film, individuals ranging from prepubescent Hispanic boys to elderly old white men fall apathetically to their deaths off the same house roof.

Featuring the same regional setting, zeitgeist, similar type characters (street-walkers and morticians) and even some of the same actors (HIV-positive performance artist Ron Athey makes an appearance in his first film role) as Bruce

THE BLIND OWL

LaBruce's *Hu\$tlr White* (1996), *The Blind Owl* has a much different essence and tone than the quasi-pornographic film that would follow it. Although I cannot say that I have read the source novel that it is loosely based on, *The Blind Owl* certainly falls in line with the source book's narrator's thoughts: "the presence of death annihilates all that is imaginary. We are the offspring of death and death delivers us from the tantalizing, fraudulent attractions of life; it is death that beckons us from the depths of life. If at times we come to a halt, we do so to hear the call of death... Throughout our lives, the finger of death points at us." Indeed, while nothing seems 'real' in the film due to its ostensibly oneiric, ominous, yet comically absurdist feel, the final fate of fatality seems like the only thing guaranteed in *The Blind Owl*; a film that feels like the 'Eraserhead of the West Coast' as directed by Harmony Korine's bastard Iranian-born cousin. *The Blind Owl* – a completely cynical cinematic work depicting the upper-lower-class rabble of L.A. – with a mongrelized bastard protagonist of Amero-mutt white and meszito admixture, is undoubtedly a picture of not just America, but the world of the deracinated and globalized future where prostitution, destitution, dysfunction, and destruction, both on the personal and collective level, is the norm. In a world where one's dignity is bought and sold to gender-confused cripples and embalmers of the dead, and human automatons of various colors and creeds commit suicide like lemmings falling off a cliff, one need not to worry about the future, but instead, embrace one's death. In the end of *The Blind Owl*, the L.A. undead walk the earth with nowhere else to go and nothing else to do. Although a choice that was not of his own, director Reza Abdoh would also ultimately have to give into death and as far as I am concerned, *The Blind Owl* is his last will and testament, at least cinematically speaking.

-Ty E

NIGHTS IN BLACK LEATHER

Richard Abel (1973)

A couple of years back, after browsing documentaries on imdb.com featuring John Waters (who seems to be in virtually every doc) as a commentator, I discovered the documentary *That Man: Peter Berlin* (2005) directed by Jim Tushinski, and, in turn, discovered the rather curious 1970s gay sex icon Peter Berlin, who looks like a Tom of Finland caricature ‘cum’ to life (in fact, Tom of Finland would sketch Berlin a couple times). Among other things, I learned whilst watching *That Man: Peter Berlin* that Berlin was a German aristocrat born with the blue-blood name Baron Armin Hagen Freiherr von Hoyningen-Huene, yet he grew up poor after his German soldier father was tragically blown up during the remaining days of the Second World War while trying to save a comrade from a minefield. Growing up father-less and nearly destitute in the midst of post-WWII Germany, Berlin later became a designer and photographer, but in his early 30s decided to seek out fortune and fame in the fag capital of the world, San Francisco, where he created two quasi-artsy porn flicks, *Nights in Black Leather* (1973) and *That Boy* (1974), in the spirit of the gritty anti-cinema ‘collaborations’ of Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey. Naturally, as a longtime Morrissey fan, I decided to dig up both of Berlin’s films, though I could only find *Nights in Black Leather* (formerly titled ‘*Post HaSte HuStle*’) directed by Richard Abel (under the pseudonym Ignatio Rutkowski). About 60% less-than-hardcore homo sex and 40% unintentionally hilarious self-body-worship and masculine narcissism, *Nights in Black Leather* is old school fagdom at its almost simultaneously unflattering yet self-flattering and thus works best today as a celluloid novelty that demands a certain commitment to fast-forwarding from the viewer (especially if you are not into gay sex featuring a dude with a ‘Dutch boy’ hairdo). Describing the film himself as “not a great piece of art” and his collaboration with Abel as follows, “There was never a script and never a big idea. He edited the film, he was doing the sound and I had nothing to do with the making of the film. I was just in front of it and telling him what to do so I sort of gave him the idea, do this shot here or make it all...” in the documentary *That Man: Peter Berlin*, Berlin has made it rather clear that *Nights in Black Leather* is a quasi-autobiographical non-narrative work, which is only all the more accented by the film’s voyeuristic cinéma vérité-like aesthetic. Originally assumed lost until a 16mm negative of the film was found in storage somewhere in Southern California somewhat recently, *Nights in Black Leather* now can live on as a cult piece of memorabilia of narcissistic cocksucking from Germany’s most debauched and passively misanthropic yet strikingly Nordish blueblood Übermensch. A retro gay blue movie that ironically reinforces a sort of Aryan racial superiority in its scopophilic ga(y)ze at a true German aristocrat, *Nights in Black Leather* is, if nothing else, one of the most bizarre promotions of eugenics and good breeding made in the

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post-Schutzstaffel world.

German immigrant Peter Berlin (credited as Peter Burian) is cruising around San Francisco but his days are getting more and more plagued by banality as indicated by the following words he writes to a German friend regarding his day-to-day encounters with people: "All I need to do is lie on the grass and just ignore the people. Last week I met quite a few and you know how it goes. Conversation. Hell, what's your name? Peter? You have a nice accent, where do you come from? Germany? Oh, how long you have been here? Do you like it? And after I go through this 20 times, even the faces look all the same. I naturally get tired of it because I know exactly what they really are interested in. And it all happened in San Francisco." Indeed, Mr. Berlin makes no 'bones' about the fact that he thinks he is the *Übermensch* and that all other people should feel privileged to admire his immaculate blueblood beauty. One night after going cruising at a gay bar apparently full of homo cowboys and Indians where he felt like he played a "part in a western movie," Peter gets a phone call from a secret admirer who proclaims his very scary love and affection for the Teutonic *Über*-twink. Of course, potent Peter—an unrepentant meta-narcissist who never turns down an opportunity to be admired—laps up all the pervert caller's crude compliments, even masturbating to remarks like, "You're my great pagan Nordic god! My great strong blond god." After the "pleasant diversion from a restless night," Peter candidly discusses his encounter with a homo Hitlerite, stating of the extra-erotic encounter, "I just met a young boy just as I was wearing my leather outfit who took me to his place, dressed himself up all in leather, put on a swastika armband and an iron cross. Having me stand in the corner of his room, which he had hung with floor to ceiling mirrors, and told me, 'We are both strong... We're equals... The world will bow before us.' I did not dare to tell him that I voted for the socialist in the last German elections, but he got me very excited all the same." Of course, Peter proceeds to lure in a couple young men and make them his admiring slaves. In what is quite possibly the most telling scene with regard to the protagonist's mentality, Peter goes to a party and pompously narrates, "Then, a few days later a friend invited me to a party. He told me there would be many different kinds of people there, so I decided to go because it might be interesting, although I usually don't like parties so much. Most of them turn out to be so boring...and this one was no exception." Indeed, in a Warhol-esque setting featuring drag queens and other assorted aesthetically repellant queers, Peter seems bored to death and leaves in what is only a couple minutes but ultimately seems like a lifetime. In the end, Peter writes to his German friend, "how nice it is to lay here on the grass and be alone for a while. When I think about my friends in Europe, I get lonesome. New faces are always exciting but I've seen enough for now. Yes, in nostalgic moments like this, when I look across the ocean, I know that old friends are the best," though that does not stop him from very shortly thereafter hooking up with a Peter Berlin lookalike.

While directed by the star's film school educated friend Richard Abel, *Nights in Black Leather*, with its amateurish direction and camera molesting the subject, is certainly a Peter Berlin auteur piece. Once described by John Waters as a "full-body genital," singularly self-absorbed Baron Berlin is notable for doing all his own iconic photography, so it should be no surprise that for his second (and ultimately final) film, *That Boy* (1974), he also acted as the director. While seemingly like nothing more than a brainless hunk with big junk, Berlin actually comes from a culturally distinguished family, with his paternal grandmother's side being made up of philosophers and attaches and the other side being comprised of artists and photographers, with his great uncle being American fashion photographer George Hoyningen-Huene, who also worked in Hollywood as a consultant on Technicolor for George Cukor, among other things. Despite *Nights in Black Leather* and *That Boy* making Berlin famous practically overnight, he had nil interest in making more porn flicks nor did he ever become more famous, ultimately dedicating the rest of his life to watching TV (with Oprah and Bill O'Reilly being some of his personal favorites) as he describes in the documentary *That Man: Peter Berlin*. Apparently, Peter Berlin has now become big with heterosexual women and lesbians, or so director Jim Tushinski would describe in the audio commentary for the dvd release of *That Man: Peter Berlin*. Indeed, after personally watching *Nights in Black Leather*, it is hard for me to believe that modern day viewers would be interested in using the film as a masturbation aid, as it now seems to work best as a black comedy, especially in the pre-apocalyptic age of pansy political correctness where heteros are almost just as effeminate as homos and a proudly gay yet simultaneously proudly male figure like Peter Berlin could never become popular.

-Ty E

MAGIC
MAGIC

Richard Attenborough (1978)

Magic - the art of illusion. As a young adult, we all denounce any and all forms of magic (most of us, that is). The idea of rabbits and hats weigh down reality enough. But what if the truest form of magic came from your cerebrum or psychosis and dementia? That's the motif of a young Anthony Hopkins' Magic - an eerie and terrifying tale of ventriloquism and obsession. Think Night of the Living Dummy, but amped up to an extreme level of disturbing visual prose. Anthony Hopkins' greatest role was not his turn as Hannibal Lecter but as Corky; a distant magician who racks up a lot of rage and isn't very motivated. This causes him to pick the easy way out and becoming a ventriloquist. Hitting the big time, he finds himself pressured into stardom and into taking a psych evaluation. Scared of what the results might be, he escapes into a backwoods hotel only to find his high school sweetheart. Fats (His dummy) doesn't like the idea of him losing his partner so when people start dying, the real question is whether it's Corky or Fats doing the deed. I remember reading about Magic several years ago. All reactions pointed towards absolute terror incarnate. I rarely trust a film reviewer, but I felt compelled to experience this one on my own with a fresh slate. Seeing as how Dark Sky Films had recently released it, I picked up a copy myself. Magic blew me away leaving me in a defunct daze. Richard Attenborough has masterfully created a riveting suspense film with enough paranoia and romance to bide its own sweet time until the "shocking conclusion". Although I haven't gotten around to inspecting the original novel written by William Goldman, I fear that it will not house the emotional intensity that Sir Hopkins brought to the recessed role of Corky.

My experiences with Magic are one and many. During the love-making scene, aided by the musical cues from the acclaimed Jerry Goldsmith, I felt the nerves shoot throughout my body. I don't get shaken easily but Magic had found a weakness and exploited it. In an attempt to analyze the film, what you see is what you get. While being a pretty normal film by today's standards, Magic indeed has something for everybody. There's voyeurism, madness, mayhem, murder, magic, and developmental leads galore! Magic is by no means an "Art" film but it supplies an old-fashioned backdrop of a resort on the water. These settings in horror films always appear so open and spaced but when the terror picks up, these corners become tighter and tighter, allowing fewer outcomes other than an inevitable death. Magic is a glorified speech against the corruption of the modern psychological horror. With such a stellar plaque to brandish, it also serves as the most horrifying and well made film concerning a ventriloquist dummy.

-mAQ

L'IMMORTEL

Richard Berry (2010)

Perhaps better known within the Western continents as *22 Bullets*, *L'Immortel* is based loosely around the real life events of Jacky Le Mat, a mafioso who was shot 22 times and left for dead. As you can most likely assume, Le Mat survived and exacted bloody revenge on his assailants. As far as I can tell, this exposure of the "Revenge of the Professional" will no doubt draw comparisons to Vincent Cassel's *Mesrine* crime epic but allow me to assure you that in no way, shape, or form are these two films to be connected or juxtaposed aside from the country of origin and a sweeping tale of true crime reincarnated via cinema. My hopes for *L'Immortel* were exceedingly substantial after seeing a true return to form from Vincent Cassel at damn near his best and I could only hope the same for the Moroccan titan, Jean Reno. Sadly, *L'Immortel* never fully recognizes its potential until too late, giving us a sub-par film that secures its lead actor's potential a bit too far in.

Picking up with a quiet prelude was the smart and reasonable way to open this film of a bloodthirsty retiree; bloodthirsty being implied as Charly Mattei's bloody roots are never looked fiercely upon save for a single flashback scene of a youthful assassination. As Charly picks up his son from the grandmothers house, Reno gives us the same semblance of a giddy killer as seen and recycled from *Leon: The Professional*. One of several reasons why the film substitutes the need for plot consistency is due to Jean Reno's quirky and charming performance as a quiet, hulking killer with a heart of euphoric gold. After enjoying the company of his son, Charly lets him out of the car to explore a festival while he parks the car. Proceeding an overture of opera, a black unmarked van pulls up and 8 masked men get out with weapons drawn. Shot after shot, bullet after bullet, is buried in Jean Reno's body with a brutality unmatched by most crime films. Facial tearing and fleshy squib, *L'Immortel* opens up with a lit fuse waiting for the foundation to blast open and once it does, the onslaught of incredible editing and seamless violence becomes intertwined with the frustrating and mundane.

Key scene being the surgery and in this scene we are introduced to the characters running the film and motivations, the aforementioned 22 bullets. Voltage peaks at scene of slug removal - lead like candy. Metal dish stained red delicious with a heaving mound of clinking confections. Words that come to mind when this scene takes place. I had never thought my mind would so vividly explode with imagination as it did with Jean Reno's comatose body on a hospital gurney. *22 Bullets* might forever be known as the "little thriller that couldn't" but it remains a career necessity and a stunning evolution of Jean Reno as a bad ass with a heart and serves as a prime weight on his character alignment scale. While I can appreciate all forms of the man's kindness, his entries of *Crimson Rivers*,

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Empire of the Wolves, and now, 22 Bullets, really help to even out his contributions of family friendly adult entertainment including Godzilla, The Big Blue, The Pink Panther, and For Roseanna. Marketing this film to an American audience is what the split personality of 22 Bullets has in mind. France has it right with a sprawling cityscape overshadowed by a near-crippled marauding mafioso. American audiences are instead treated with the poster concept of a tacky look-alike to that of a straight-to-DVD Al Pacino machine. Vending machine quality and all. The tag-line "Revenge of the Professional" is misconstrued in an attempt to market this film to fans of Leon: The Professional and the reoccurring affinity for classical music. Hook, line, sinker?

No matter what you hear, L'Immortel is simply and ethically one of those films in which the only opinion you can holster is your own. From someone who has an endearing appreciation for all of Jean Reno's line of work and bloody crime thrillers, L'Immortel is a bittersweet film caressing the honor system supposed in most of these killers in their call of duty. Jean Reno turns over an excellent and versatile performance as a wicked murderer not to be fucked with. Within his smile and wrinkles, his face tells a tale that every movie fleshes out. Behind wise eyes lurks a terrific character actor that accommodates real life emotion with a harrowing efficiency. Sadly, L'Immortel becomes ensnared by loose ends and patented revenge devices in such a way that the only real saving grace is the keen brutality and jolting violence. To quote Uzi Joe on the subject of Jean Reno's tears, "Each tear is a thousand souls of weaker men who died trying to gain his powers." Fantasy put to the side, I believe him.

-mAQ

LEMORA: A CHILD'S TALE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Richard Blackburn (1973)

The idea of a mid-1970s PG-rated vampire flick about a young girl usually seems like a less than tempting prospect, but after hearing much underground praise for the film *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973) aka *Lemora: The Lady Dracula* aka *The Legendary Curse of Lemora* directed by Richard Blackburn, I finally decided to suck it up and give the film a fair and serious viewing after having a copy of the work in my possession for over a year. *Lemora* is probably one of the best reasons as to why one should not judge a film by its rating and marginality, as it proved to be one of the most truly virtuoso vampire flicks I have had the luxury to see and one of the most uniquely American 'horror' films ever made. Taking critical inspiration from H.P. Lovecraft (*The Shadow Over Innsmouth*), Arthur Machen (*The White People*), Mervyn Laurence Peake (*Boy in Darkness*), film noir, and the more unadorned aspects of 20th century American history, *Lemora* is a splendidly unrivaled Southern Gothic set in the depression era American south. After seeing the relative success of *Count Yorga, Vampire* (1970) directed by Bob Kelljan, *Lemora* director Richard Blackburn (rightfully) felt confident that he could direct a superior horror film due to his somewhat uncommon literate understanding of the horror story, especially those written by the likes of Lovecraft. Sticking to the southern tradition of honoring family history, Blackburn's paternal confederate ancestry would also be a crucial inspiration on the pleasantly peculiar atmosphere and themes of country fried grit, bastardized backwoods Baptist Christianity, and downright unholy repression-based perversions that are featured throughout the film. On top of providing his ½ Yankee son with inspirational stories about real-life country yokels who don't take kindly to strangers in their towns, Richard's father C.V. Blackburn also acted as executive producer for *Lemora* and even played a small role in the film as a seemingly drunken man urinating in public. Richard Blackburn, himself, would also play the imperative role of the Reverend; a somewhat dubious religious leader who acts as a surrogate father to the child lead Lila Lee (played by the already adult age Cheryl "Rainbeaux" Smith).

Despite her maturity in real-life, no better person was born to play the role of 13-year-old Lila Lee in *Lemora* than Cheryl Smith. Nowadays, Smith is best known for her roles in a variety of cult films (*Caged Heat*, *Phantom of the Paradise*, Cheech and Chong's *Up In Smoke*) and playing drums with alpha-dyke musician Joan Jett. Horror films are well known for their glaring lack of sufficient and believable acting, yet Cheryl Smith, with her truly sad and 'damaged' facial expressions, lent a certain authenticity to *Lemora* that is central to the driving emotional and visceral potency of the film. Lesley Gilb, who plays the nazi chic lesbian vampiress *Lemora* with unconventional witch attributes, also adds a exigent ingredient to the film as she acts as the perfect antithesis to the

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innocence of little lady Lila Lee, both in personality and physique. While Lila is a humble and thoroughly chaste girl with angelic blonde hair and a pleasantly petite body, Lemora is a domineering vamp with a tall stature and dark features (aside from her corpse-like skin) who does not take no for an answer, whether it be from a man, monster, or child. Lemora has a collection of loyal undead children and hopes to coherence Lila into joining her ferocious foster family by using a variety of somewhat subtle erotically driven compliments such as, "what an exciting figure you have." The male characters featured in Lemora range from degenerate criminals to active scumbags to potential molesters, yet most of the women are puritanically dressed Baptist lemmings who swoon for the handsome charlatan Reverend. Lila's father is a well dressed, pudgy gangster who did the unspeakable act of killing his wife/daughter's mother, hence why the lonely girl was adopted by the good Reverend. The Reverend himself even seems to have a hard time keeping his hands off of Lila's little lily, but through the imagined power of the lord and misinterpreting religious texts, he seems to mostly persevere, at least for most of the film. During the beginning of Lemora, Lila is summoned by her apparently dying father (under false pretenses) to meet him in the decaying feral town of Astaroth where everyone has some degree of the degenerative Lovecraftian "Astaroth look." On route, Lila's bus is attacked by barbaric lycanthropic-like vampires and is intern saved and imprisoned by the beautiful yet endlessly cunning Lemora who therein throws the young girl into a phantasmagorical tribulation where the line between reality and dreams has been illustriously ripped apart at the seams.

Lemora, not unlike Valerie and Her Week of Wonders (1970) directed by Jaromil Jireš and The Reflecting Skin (1990) directed by Philip Ridley, is an ominous coming-of-age flick that – while too scary, sexualized, and incoherent for the typical child (and a number of prudish adults) to view – does manages to recapture the wonder and hopeless bewilderment of childhood. As a longtime cynic, skeptic, and misanthrope (even as a prepubescent child), I was even able to tap into my "inner-child" via Lemora. In fact, I was so surprised by the impact the film had on me that I re-watched Lemora two more times the day after my initial viewing just to make sure I was not in a state of random hypnotic derangement during the night before. Seeing Lemora was the closest I have come to recapturing the singularly penetrating and totally unpredictable experience I had while randomly watching Don Coscarelli's Phantasm (1979) late one night on cable television for the first time when I was about ten years old. Lemora is one of few American horror films that has managed to combine stark surrealism, taboo religious themes, traditional horror elements, vintage Americana, and unpretentious artsy in a work that stands alone in terms of originality and sheer quality of pure entertainment. The fact that Lemora is not as well known nor as highly revered (by fans and critics alike) as films like George A. Romero's Night of the Living Dead (1968) and Sam Raimi's The Evil Dead (1981) is nothing short of a

testament to the peasant-like philistine tastes of artistically-disinterested American audiences. Although some believe the obscurity of *Lemora* is the result of the film being banned by the Catholic League of Decency, director Richard Blackburn has voiced (on the audio commentary of the Synapse Films release of the film) that such claims are nothing short of hearsay as he has never received any form of formal notification from the organization. Thankfully, at least the French – the people who essentially invented film theory and have consistently esteemed film as a legitimate art form – have long respected *Lemora* as piece of exceptionally crafted cinematic design. After all, Erich von Stroheim did not spend his remaining days in France for nothing.

Lemora seems to be an all around cursed production of sorts as not only did the film fall into the unfortunate realm of uncertainty after a limited run of theatrical distribution, but the two lead actresses of the film would also meet grim fates. Cheryl "Rainbeaux" Smith, who was apparently high on painkillers throughout the production of *Lemora*, died in late 2002 at the age of 47 after suffering complications from liver disease and hepatitis due to a calamitous two decade addiction to heroin, which also resulted in two prison sentences and the total disintegration of her acting career. Of course, Smith was not as innocent on the real-life set of *Lemora* as her character seems in the movie as she apparently bragged to the film crew that she gave Dick Blackburn a bulging boner during their kissing scene; a claim the bashful director wholly denies. Lesley Gilb (aka Lesley Taplin), whose acting career unfortunately all but ended after her excellent performance as the title character in *Lemora*, died tragically in a car accident on highway 101 in Los Angeles, California in 2009 at the age of 62. Aside from a brief period of critical acclaim for co-writing the script for Paul Bartel's black comedy *Eating Raoul* (1982) and penning a couple episodes for the George A. Romero produced anthology horror TV series *Tales From the Darkside* (1983-1988), *Lemora* director Richard Blackburn's filmmaking career was also cut prematurely short. Still, few filmmakers can boast that they have assembled a work as gorgeously quaint, exemplar, and full of artistic integrity as *Lemora*, and for that alone, Mr. Blackburn deserves much praise. The film is a virtual confederate haunted house amusement ride in film form that never falls into banality and calculated clichés, nor preposterous pretensions, but provides the viewer with an incomparable time of very real predatory pedophilic monsters, as well as those of the imaginary bloodsucking sort. By the conclusion of *Lemora*, the viewer will probably question whether or not Lila's experiences were the product of reality or her dreams, which is indubitably one of the greatest strengths of a fundamentally anarchic primordial film of ceaseless ambiguity where nothing is as it seems.

-Ty E

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

Richard Brooks (1958)

Flaming Southerner Tennessee Williams sure had a knack for writing drama, especially America's greatest form of drama, the Southern Gothic. Despite the different director, every film I have had the pleasure of viewing with a story written by Tennessee Williams always turns out to be a work of dramatic cinema brilliance. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), starring a very young Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor, is another brilliant work based on a play by Tennessee Williams. Watching *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* makes one realize that there was actually a time when Hollywood (somewhat) justly portrayed the American South as a place that has more than superstitious religious hicks trying to give their sisters a lick. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* takes a look at a rich Southern family amidst a family tragedy involving the dying of Big Daddy, a family man and personal empire builder.

Big Daddy is big and fat, but his own self-made empire is even bigger. Unfortunately for Big Daddy, as he states himself, a man can't buy life. Big Daddy has no interest in screwing his nagging wife, but he's proud that he's willing to buy her anything she may fancy. Big Daddy also has two sons that disappoint him, one being a greedy lawyer named Gooper and the other being a 30 year old kid named Brick (Paul Newman). Big Daddy wants to hookup his lazy alcoholic son Brick with his empire, but Brick won't agree to get his hot wife Maggie the Cat pregnant because he rather screw his dead friend Skipper (when he was alive, of course). Maggie the Cat, played by a very young Elizabeth Taylor, is a woman who has curves that are practically busting out of the seams of her clothes. What a shame her homosexual husband is unwilling to tame her.

The acting chemistry between Maggie the Cat and Brick is intense to say the least. The casting director of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* certainly made the right decision when pairing Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor as the two leads. A wretched cunt by the name of Sister-woman was also brilliantly played in a repulsive manner by Madeleine Sherwood, a character known for shooting out many children out of her cooch. I don't think I have ever been more disgusted by an antagonist in my life and the only thing this bitch by the atrocious nickname of Sister-woman wanted was money via her father-in-law Big Daddy. Big Daddy, being the swaggering pimp that he is, knows how much of a moneygrubber Sister-woman is and thankfully treats her rude behavior accordingly. Big Daddy may not want to screw his aged wife Big Mamma, but he sure picked the right woman to keep his sons/daughter-in-laws in check. What a drama-rama in one big house in the Deep South.

With *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, it is once again proven that if you have a brilliantly written story and charismatic cast, a film can work without an auteur. Apparently mother-lover Elvis Presley turned down the role of Brick and I am

certainly glad. The Aryan-looking half-Jew Paul Newman is certainly an actor that followed not too far behind in Marlon Brando's footsteps, also showing he had what it takes to play in a lead in a story written by Tennessee Williams. Although I had yet to see Elizabeth Taylor's acting skills before *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, I assumed she would be an annoying prude to see on screen due to her overblown celebrity status. I must admit that her performance in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was one of a seductive and smooth walking/talking hot kitty.

-Ty E

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR
LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR

Richard Brooks (1977)

As the onscreen and offscreen lover of both neurotic heeb Woody Allen and Italian stallion Al Pacino, Nordic actress Diane Keaton has certainly shown a penchant for quasi-miscegenation and seemingly mismatched romances with short, swarthy off-white fellows, but none of her real-life nor fiction love affairs compared to the ones featured in the absurdly underrated flick *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977) directed by subversive Jewish-American auteur Richard Brooks (Elmer Gantry, *In Cold Blood*). Based on the 1975 novel of the same name written by Jewess novelist Judith Rossner about the real-life brutal murder of Roseann Quinn, a 28-year-old New York City schoolteacher who led a deleterious double life as a pill-popping bar whore whose wild and wanton behavior led to her grizzly and premature death, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* is a dark yet sometimes humorous melodrama about an idealistic lapsed Catholic Irish-American girl who, when not teaching deaf Negro children as a brainwashed McLiberal, is screwing random Guidos and middle-aged Judaic fellows she picks up at the bar. A rare (and arguably, unintentional) depiction of the decidedly disastrous effects the so-called “new left” and counter-culture movements had on white Americans that was written and directed from the perspective of members of the chosen amongst god’s chosen, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* is, not unsurprisingly, virtually unknown today and has yet to be released on dvd despite featuring such big name actors and actresses like Diane Keaton and Richard Gere. Belonging in good company with other such great culturally pessimistic celluloid works from the 1970s like *Joe* (1970) directed by John G. Avildsen, *Death Wish* (1974) directed by Michael Winner, *Taxi Driver* (1976) directed by Martin Scorsese, and Paul Schrader’s *Hardcore* (1979), *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* follows the moral degeneration of an Irish-American chick who, after falling in love with and being defiled by her married Jewish college professor who subsequently dumps her goy gal ass, turns into an alcohol-addled, pill-popping whore who screws sleazy philistine fellows when she is not wasting her life being a bleeding heart liberal who devotes her time to teaching deaf multicultural kids, despite essentially loathing her own family. An exceedingly enthralling, if not oftentimes infuriating, depiction of a naïve girl who essentially has a hole burnt into her soul after too much loony leftist brainwashing in college and being used as a cheap thrill by a Hebraic college professor who sees her nothing more as a sexy yet stupid Shiksa, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* is like a well meaning after-school special on the ills of Marcusian madness and the ethno-masochistic and xenophiliac do-gooder white slaves and self-sacrificing nihilists it creates.

The psychologically crippling self-loathing of Irish-American Theresa Dunn (Diane Keaton) started at a young age when she developed scoliosis as a young girl and was forced to wear a rather unflattering full-body cast to help straighten

her back. The daughter of a hardworking traditional Irish Catholic man (Richard Kiley) who is repelled and angered by his baby girl's would-be-rebellious leftist politics she was dogmatically indoctrinated with in college, Theresa certainly does not suffer from an Elektra complex as she falls in love with a sleazy and self-satisfied Jewish college professor named Martin (Alan Feinstein), who does not think twice about dumping the dumb girl after the school year ends. Naturally, Theresa develops a rather pessimistic and self-loathing outlook on life after the overly intellectual Israelite breaks up with her, but being a victim of a "New Left" education (symbolically taught to her by the Semitic man who literally and figuratively screwed her over), she believes she must fulfill the most holy and righteous of causes by turning poor black deaf children into intellectual heavyweights, even though she treats most of her own biological family members with disdain. An unconsciously suicidal ice queen with no real personal plans for the future aside from slaving away to the public system as a selfless servant of ghetto blacks who see her as a condescending and self-righteous nuisance, Theresa makes sure she will never have a family of her own by nonsensically having a hysterectomy, telling the doctor she wants "no kids."

Eventually, Theresa begins living a second life and becomes a regular fixture at local bars and clubs and starts a purely sexual relationship with a dumb wop named Tony (Richard Gere), who enjoys doing pushups while high on speed while wearing nothing more than a leather-fag-esque jockstrap. Theresa also begins dating a nice but nerdy welfare case worker named James (William Atherton), the sort of man she would have married and had kids with were she not so positively sexually depraved and nihilistic. While James falls in love with Theresa and will do anything for her, the McBitch just cannot get enough of rough sex with retarded Guido Tony, who is at least intelligent enough to arrive at the insight, "I don't believe it...teacher of little kids cruising crummy bars...Jesus Christ, no wonder the country is so screwed up." Naturally, Tony eventually smacks Theresa around and eventually gets her arrested for drug possession, thus leading to the inevitable end of the debauched pseudo-romantic relationship. While James does everything he can to declare his love and respect for Theresa, the Irish lass cannot help but give away her ass to degenerates at her favorite bar. One night, Theresa picks the wrong guy and it ultimately results in her being brutally raped and slashed to death. Looking to get screwed one more time before midnight on New Year's Eve, Theresa hooks up with a deranged ex-con and closet-case homo named Gary (Tom Berenger), who has just had a faggy lover's spat with his gay lover. When Gary fails to "rise to the occasion" after going back to the Irish-American gal's apartment, he goes on a seemingly pointless rant about how "in my neighborhood, if you didn't fight you were a fruit...In prison, if you didn't fight, you spread ass." Not unsurprisingly, Theresa attempts to throw psychopathic gay boi Gary out of her apartment, but it is only at this point that he is finally able to penetrate her, first with a knife

LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR

and then with his penis. In the end, Theresa “lived by the dick and died by the dick,” as a result of turning her back on the important lessons she learned being brought up in the Catholic Church.

Aside from featuring the cinematic exquisiteness of LeVar Burton of Reading Rainbow fame playing a ghetto thug who literally busts Richard Gere’s balls, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* also makes for a striking and stern indictment of the self-absorbed narcissism and nihilistic hedonism of the baby boomer generation, the first generation brought up on television and arguably the most spoiled generation in all of human history. Hopelessly brainwashed by the quasi-Marxist Judaic swill she was infected with in college and defiled by an arrogant and pretentious Jewish professor she clearly had deep yet delusional respect for as opposed to meeting a man of her own racial and cultural persuasion who would have treated her right and she could have started a family with, Theresa, like many people of her generation and subsequent generations of European Americans, is essentially in a state of perennial childhood as a girl who never grew up and accepted responsibility, but instead drowned her misery in cheap beer and untermensch semen. Aside from the fact it features Fellini-esque dream-sequences and avant-garde montages, a film like *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* could have never been made in contemporary Hollywood due to its no bullshit critique of degenerate counter-culture values and liberal education and I would not be surprised if this film has yet to be released on DVD for these very reasons. The fact that the film was penned and directed by Jews makes the motives behind *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* seem all the more dubious as a sort of “*Annie Hall* from Hell” and degenerate Philip Roth inspired melodrama with a tinge of *Jud Süß* (1940) swooning over a beautiful goy Shiksa who is slowly but surely spiritually, emotionally, and physically defiled by alien politics and men, both of which stunt her ability to grow into a nice Irish Catholic girl and instead lead to her demise as a victim of a self-loathing sodomite, her virtual Jungian animus, who she would have never met had she not developed a propensity for picking up perverts in seedy bars after giving up on real romantic relationships in general. Stating such pseudo-empowerment feminist vomit like, “I’m my own girl. I belong to me,” Theresa ultimately proves her idiotic independence by setting herself up on a slippery slope of soulless sex and mind-numbing drugs, with her last act of intercourse symbolically climaxing in her death. While *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* is a film that has been known to be quite irksome for leftist and feminist types, it certainly confirms the feminist mantra/bumper sticker, “Well behaved women rarely make history.”

-Ty E

MODERN VAMPIRES

Richard Elfman (1998)

Although I have never been particularly fond of Bela Lugosi's iconic portrayal of Dracula, I have always had an instinctive fondness for vampires and their charismatic and hypnotic persona's. In fact, Dracula is my favorite famous monster but I welcome the warm company of any coldblooded bloodsucker; whether it be the cunning cryptic intentions of the grotesque rat-like ghoul and rotting aristocrat Count Orlok from F.W. Murnau's pioneering silent flick *Nosferatu* (1922) or the distinctly suave style of Jim Morrison-esque undead shaman David (played by Kiefer Sutherland) from Joel Schumacher's *The Lost Boys* (1987); a still fresh and hip revamp of vampire storytelling. Unfortunately, it has been sometime since I saw a vampire film that left a deep enough impression on me to pierce my skin and draw blood. Despite being somewhat entertaining as a whole, the mostly overrated film *Stake Land* (2010) – a post-apocalyptic flick with vampires that are as mentally defective and undiscerning of eaters as brain-dead zombies – totally demystifies and demolishes the ancient legacy of vampires. Although apparently featuring roaming conquering armies of the fanged undead, *Stake Land* is as vampire-illiterate as vampire films come and unfortunately it belongs to a recurring trend. Of course, the teenage-panty-moisting *Twilight* series has left a completely different but equally odious garlic smell that has overwhelmed the vampire story which I will not even begin to describe. Luckily, I had the honor of recently discovering, watching, and re-watching *Modern Vampires* (1998) aka *Revenant* directed by Richard Elfman; a vampire black comedy that is both genuinely humorous and cognizant of the supernatural legend it so lovingly but lethally lampoons. Needless to say, when I discovered that the man who directed the maniacal and malevolent surrealist musical comedy *Forbidden Zone* (1982) sank his teeth into the age old tale of the vampyre, and reawakened it by setting it in contemporary times, I was instantly entranced and secured a copy for a mere 1 penny online; no doubt a minor but notable investment with a priceless return of infinite replay value.

Admittedly, Richard Elfman was aiming for the most philistine of audiences with some of the glaringly trashy, lowbrow scenes featured in *Modern Vampires*. Of course, the gutter-grade neo-vaudevillian comedy contained within the film is indubitably an imperative part of its politically incorrect appeal. The main protagonist of *Modern Vampires* is Dallas (played by Caspar Van Dien, an actor once described as a "perfect life-sized Ken doll"); a cigar-smoking, undead-rebel-without-a-cause who falls out of favor with the Count (the decadent "dictator" of vampires) decades ago after turning a crippled member of the Hitler Youth named Hans Van Helsing (played by Marco Hofschneider of *Europa Europa*) into a vampire without permission. Hans was the son of old school National Socialist Doctor Frederick Van Helsing (played by Rod Steiger); a seriously ide-

MODERN VAMPIRES

alistic and unintentionally comical Viennese vampire exterminator whose love for the Führer has never swayed. Proving his undying commitment to the final solution of the vampire problem, Dr. Van Helsing unflinchingly murders his own son immediately upon learning that he is a vampire. Flash forward to modern times, elderly Dr. Van Helsing has traveled to the epicenter of vampire culture – Los Angeles, California; the official sin-ridden city of bloodsuckers – to kill Dallas and any other compatriot of the parasitical subspecies that he can find. As the occult leaders of the city, the decadent vampires of L.A. are stern libertines who don't take kindly to the unwarranted prudishness of mere mortals. Out of desperation due to the feebleness of a golden übermensch heart, Dr. Van Helsing (the real Steiger also had a heart attack before the film) becomes 1/2 of the ultimate comedic odd-couple when he unconventionally recruits black Crips members "Time Bomb" (played by the usually over-sensitive actor Gabriel Casseus) to help kill vampires gangsta style. Being a laidback vampire, Dallas is more interested in finding a baby vamp (who he illegally "turned" two decades earlier) named Nico aka the "Hollywood Slasher"; an intemperate female novice bloodsucker who acts as a pseudo-hooker so as to lure in her hopelessly pathetic and perverted middle-age bourgeois businessman prey. Of course, the Count wants to kill the bewitching trailer park pearl Nico due to her unofficial status as a vampire and her reckless public predacity of humans that compromises official bloodsucker secrecy. Although taking place over the course of a couple days and nights (with flashbacks from decades past), *Modern Vampires* feel like an unrestrained all-night nosferatu party. Paying tribute to Paul Morrissey's (not Andy Warhol's) *Blood for Dracula* (1974), Homo-Aryan-character-actor and sub-international-superstar Udo Kier plays the hilarious role of the first vampire to be annihilated for the greater cause of the long deceased Third Reich when he is staked by Dr. Van Helsing's loyal but initially reluctant Uncle Tom. *Modern Vampires* also features a notable performance from the mostly grotesque Sex and the City star Kim Cattrall as a surprisingly sexy and comical German vampire named Ulrike who quite eloquently tells Negro gang members that they are, "untermensch." Scotsman Craig Ferguson also does a superb job portraying an English vampire whose lucid lingo and mostly dry humor would undoubtedly bring warmth to the seemingly cold-heart of Queen Elizabeth. As one can expect, *Modern Vampires* is a postmodern take on the vampire tale where every convention of the horror subgenre is either calculatedly exaggerated or quite consciously terminated. Although on first glance seeming like a half-ass exercise in tasteless depravity, *Modern Vampires* is a passionate (if sometimes deplorable) homage to a perennial story that is worth any vampirephiliac's time.

Modern Vampires also antedates the somewhat similar vampire politics and hedonism of HBO's extremely popular television series *True Blood* by a decade. Like *Modern Vampires*, *True Blood* explores the ancient international microcosm of the coffin-hibernating cryptic vampire elite from a neoteric perspective.

Thankfully, the bloodlusting killers of *Modern Vampires*, unlike like those of *True blood*, are committed bluebloods who have no interest in joining human society and are stoically politically incorrect. Of course, like *True Blood*, *Modern Vampires* features gratuitous nudity, visceral violence, and bodacious bodily dismemberment, but (thankfully) lacks the misplaced and totally superficial melodrama of the HBO show. Unfortunately, *Modern Vampires* has fallen into the unideal fate of being lost in an abyss of mostly mediocre, forgotten vampire flicks, but, with the notoriety of popular series like *True Blood*, it does have the potential to become a somewhat revered Cult item in coming decades. It also does not hurt that *Modern Vampires* director Richard Elfman is the undeniably depraved, audacious auteur behind one of America's greatest Cult films; *Forbidden Zone*. If the idea of an 'anti-vampire' film sounds like a bloody delectable prospect to you, *Modern Vampires* will certainly have you feeling reasonably fulfilled. Just do not expect the film to have a charismatic Count in the tradition of Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee as the oafish 'alpha'-bloodsucker of *Modern Vampires* seems more interested in smoking meatpoles and crack than focusing on seducing and turning the most beautiful living female in town.

-Ty E

PATRICK
PATRICK

Richard Franklin (1978)

In the 1978 Ozploitation flick *Patrick*, a naive nurse named Kathy develops unwarranted empathy for a comatose matricidal killer named Patrick. After killing his Mother and her lover three years earlier (whose lovemaking further perturbed poor disturbed Patty boi) - Patrick - probably caused by his incapacity to psychologically cope with his dirty derelict deeds - fell into a coma. Although Patrick is impotent as far as physical mobility goes, he has developed keen psychokinetic powers. Nurse Kathy - a fetching young lady with an inquisitive mind - finds herself fondling Patrick's genitals out of curiosity - even arousing his vegetated member. Overtime, Patrick develops an increasingly romantic obsession with hot twat nurse Kathy. Jealous of any man that enters Kathy's life, self-centered Patrick begins to manipulate events in her life from the discreet comfort of his sterile hospital bed. Like a lot of guys with mommy issues, love struck Patrick naively mistakes Kathy's kindness and sympathy for love, thus intensifying his psychokinetic wave of destruction after the cutesy nurse neglects to reciprocate his delusional feelings. Of course, Kathy eventually tells Patrick - in a fit of unrestrained rage - that on top of being a narcissistic Momma's boy who is incapable of true love - he has nothing to offer her, aside from psychokinetic scribbles on an electric typewriter. At best, Patrick is a quasi-villain who is not exactly evil, but acts more like an irrational neurotic girl whose judgment is blurred due to fluctuating hormone levels during a monthly menstrual cycle - as he always acts out violently when things do not work out in his favor. That being said, *Patrick* is indubitably an unconventional work of horror and a neglected cinematic gem that is guaranteed to offer the viewer a jolly old deranged time - where the monster is an immature matricidal maniac's mind, yet despite his lack of animation, he still gets your adrenalin pumping just fine.

Patrick was directed by Richard Franklin, a Hitchcock connoisseur who freely admits his psychokinetic horror film was influenced by the Ed Gein inspired masterpiece *Psycho* (1960). In fact, Franklin developed a real-life friendship with Hitch and would later go on to direct *Roadgames* (1981) - a mobile vehicle reworking of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1958) - as well as *Psycho II* (1983) - a surprisingly decent sequel to Alfred Hitchcock's original masterpiece. Despite taking influence from Hitchcock's *Psycho*, *Patrick* is a highly original film in its own right. Although both films feature pathetic matricidal killers who have obvious problems socializing with the opposite sex, the similarities pretty much end there. *Patrick* screenwriter Everett De Roche based the script on a real-life mentally unstable individual named Patrick - who jumped off a balcony after discovering his wife was sleeping with another man - becoming completely paralyzed in the process, aside from being able to spit and catch random erections (like Patrick in the film). Richard Franklin openly admitted (in a DVD audio

commentary) that he had "literary pretensions" whilst directing Patrick - taking the liberty to include unreferenced quotes from William Shakespeare (*The Tempest*) and Oscar Wilde in the film. While girlishly arguing with Nurse Kathy via an electric hospital typewriter, Patrick psychokinetically plagiarizes Wilde's famous quote, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves." Of course, Patrick - being a neurotic maniac - self-deceptively believes that he is in love with Kathy, despite the fact that he has never physically embraced her (nor could he). The hospital's matron - Cassidy - a bitter old wench who seems to suffer from a dire case of sexual repression - has a seemingly irrational hatred for comatose Patrick - as well as an instant contempt for Kathy upon first meeting her. Cassidy - a godless realist and self-satisfied "humanistic" proponent of euthanasia - who at first seems like a vile she-bitch gatekeeper from hospital Hades - ends up coming off as one of the wisest characters by the conclusion of Patrick. Had Kathy practiced the same cold and calculated hospital procedures stringently endorsed by Matron Cassidy, she would have undoubtedly avoided Patrick's hospital bed led reign of temper tantrum terror.

Although early psychoanalysts like Wilhelm Reich and C.G. Jung (who wrote extensively on parapsychology throughout his career) attempted to study Occult phenomena - such unconventional research has now become virtually abandoned in the medical world. In fact, Jung once attended a séance performed by an adolescent girl psychic and also wrote on several clinical cases of double consciousness. Of course, as so cynically portrayed by the doctors in Patrick - the golden age of studying unexplainable psychological phenomenon is long gone. Nowadays, psychologists are only interested diagnosing individuals via brain scans and prescribing dangerous (and many times unpredictable) psychoactive drugs. Nurse Kathy encounters a doctor - who is more arrogant than charming - that freely admits he was originally interested in studying the more mysterious elements of the brain and human psychology - but is now only interested in monetary success. Only Kathy - a naive nurse who is dubious of modern medicine - finds abnormal Patrick to be of an intriguing character. What makes Patrick more interesting than most films of a similar supernatural nature is that it provokes the audience to ask questions \regarding euthanasia - as well as the validity of cold materialistic science when treating psychological blemishes of a less accurately definable sort. Richard Franklin and screenwriting co-partner Everett De Roche originally intended to make a sequel to Patrick; *Patrick II: The Man Who Wasn't There*, but, alas, fate did not work in their favor, thus the project never left pre-production. Additionally, in the audio commentary for the Synapse DVD release of Patrick, director Richard Franklin acknowledges his interest in remaking Patrick with modern filmmaking technology just as Alfred Hitchcock did with some of his earlier films. Unfortunately, it is now impossible for Franklin to remake Patrick as he passed away in 2007. Still, novice director Mark Hartley announced in February 2010 that he would be remaking the film - undoubtedly

PATRICK

the (often times unfortunate) fate of all decent (and not so decent) horror films. Admittedly, it would be interesting to see a modern day Patrick who utilizes a computer and the internet as his pseudo-romantic weaponry of the third eye controlled kind. For more info on Patrick, check out Synapse Films.

-Ty E

CLOAK /& DAGGER

Richard Franklin (1984) *Spoilers in 5th paragraph*

Cut to a winter night in a foreign land. The key irresponsible Russian guard wanders off into the parking lot. Being a sentry is never a forgivable role for a counter-terrorist. In the frosty sky, we see a patriotic parachute deploy. This marks the arrival of a modern mustachioed warrior who stops at nothing other than to tackle the poor guard out of the sky. All this, then crippling a young lady. Meet the man known as Jack Flack; a super agent, womanizer, and professional alpha male. Cloak & Dagger was a must for me to purchase. Not for the classic game nostalgia but thanks to the reality of it being apart of a double feature package - the counterpart being the obligatory Fred Savage/Nintendo vessel known as The Wizard. I can't help myself. I love The Wizard. It's so bad! (End The Wizard reference). While Cloak & Dagger is a swell thriller guised as a compatible family film, something sinister lurks behind the prissy rating. Something dark and recessive. What lies beneath is a level of psychological dementia with a child playing the part of a victim. Cloak & Dagger never really was a game to begin with. Little Davey has an imaginary spy friend who's a character in his favorite role-playing game. Davey is a seeker of thrills and has an active imagination. Throughout the course of the film, you'll be thinking to yourself words like "normal" and "acceptable". Thanks to the generation of parents turning to Ritalin for their children who never met expectations, Cloak & Dagger is an attack on the malleability of a child's mind. This film is a piece of propaganda telling you that your kid is in fact, screwed beyond repair and that the mind taking control is something that is forced by parental shunning and trauma. Director Richard Franklin isn't a sheltered fan of Hitchcock. Inspired by the master of suspense's work, Franklin helmed the needless sequel to Psycho - Psycho II. In fact, the old couple had starring roles in the original psycho including John McIntire who played Al Chambers and Jeanette Nolan who did the voice for Norma Bates. As this film being a suspense film directed towards the younger audience, I'd say that Franklin did a marvelous job at slowly shining light to the terrific terror one can feel thanks to the wonders of cinema. Individualism is cast out for the revered Atari boom. Consider this Hitchcock's ode to technology and the death to the scholarly child.

As for the multi-angled ending, one might misconstrue the endings true intention. I don't favor the idea of singling out an idea and solidifying it to be the definitive vision of said artist, but with Cloak & Dagger, it's a must. The ending summarizes with Jack Flack dying, leaving the boy with a fresh mind only to have his father seemingly die in an exploding airplane. What becomes of this is a silhouette of Jack Flack's figure changing into that of his dad. One could easily accept the PG roots and deem his father an impossibly lucky bastard but the idea of him swapping heroes at the last second and becoming a

CLOAK /& DAGGER

woeful orphan fits the equation so much easier. Either way, Davey will never be the same again. Whether you notice Jack Flack attempting to coerce young Davey into slaughtering people cause it's "all apart of the game" or the undeniable rip off that is Home Alone 3, Cloak & Dagger has aged extremely well. I dearly miss able child stars. I'd trade Henry Thomas over Freddie Highmore any given dawn. Cloak & Dagger is sadistic in nature and a delicious piece of Atari product placement. While Nintendo was busy fronting the "Radical!" 80s rebel attitude, Atari was catering to the bespectacled geek era. Who knew interactive technology could inspire cultures and fashions.

-mAQ

SOUTHLAND TALES

Richard Kelly (2007)

Richard Kelly's new film, *Southland Tales*, is virtually impossible to describe without bringing up the spoilers in the film, and let's be honest; they're worth the wait. *Southland Tales* is the newest apocalyptic film from the creator of *Donnie Darko*. As we noticed from his previous work, the man has the end of times on his mind and exercises his thoughts well. *Southland Tales* is a mind trip through the vast tyrannical face of Los Angeles. The plot concerns an almost (Damn me for saying it, but "Lynchian") look into the center story of a single person who is visited by amnesia and is involved in something a lot more complex than it seems, and when I say complex, I mean you won't have a fucking clue as to what is going on until the end. Just like Richard Kelly, he mixes amazing character depth with zany special effects. I must give the man credit for being a digital artist such as himself. He also brings out incredible performances out of mild actors; people who have normally not been seen in such an in-depth role. Justin Timberlake for example, is the narrator of the film. He probably has my favorite role, and his musical number was simply fascinating. Richard Kelly manages to include these new-wave electro songs in his films, and still maintain the quality, which to this day astounds me. I really cannot describe this film at all, due to it being a cacophony of insanity, science, failed feminism, and messianic figures. When I hear all these critics showering the film with negative remarks, it makes me smirk because it is suffering the exact same fate as his other film had dealt with. *Southland Tales* will prevail, just as Jodorowsky was verbally assaulted for his use of symbolism and lack of story, Kelly will too prevail in the sea of hypocritical Americans. Emotionally affecting, religion mocking, and evangelical madness. This is the near future film of the century. No one has captured something ever quite like this before. Just as *Donnie Darko* was the prelude to the 9/11 attacks, *Southland Tales* might be the opening score to a beautiful apocalypse. Part political satire, part surrealism, All American.

-Maq

SUBMIT TO ME
SUBMIT TO ME

Richard Kern (1985)

If his films were actually in any way sensual or erotic, I would be tempted to label Richard Kern (*Manhattan Love Suicides*, *The Evil Cameraman*)—a somewhat dorky fellow that has the dubious distinction of being the most prolific filmmaker that the Cinema of Transgression movement ever produced, even though he never managed to direct a single feature-length film—a pornographer, yet the gratuitous sex and nudity of his films, which certainly seems fairly outmoded nowadays, is ultimately about as arousing as a vasectomy or used tampon. Undoubtedly, Kern is like a sort of avant-garde exploitation auteur, as he merely cuts out the pretense of a plot and character development in favor of solely focusing on all the degenerate scenes of sex and violence that are the reason people go to see exploitation films in the first place. Indeed, Kern's arguable magnum opus *Fingered* (1988) feels like what might happen if some morally retarded junky Mansonite creep attempted to condense Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972) into a mere pseudo-snuff flick where only sleazily stylized sex and violence matters. In short, Kern's films are mere climaxes with only the most rudimentary elements of token foreplay, so it should be no surprise that the auteur would go on to be both a music video director and porn photographer for *Hustler*, among other things that demonstrate that the filmmaker may have a short attention span and fragmented mind as a result of all the various drugs that he fried his brain with during the 1980s. In fact, for his early work *Submit to Me* (1985), Kern disposed of narrative entirely to create what is a 12-minute performance (anti)art piece where about a dozen or so of his decidedly debauched friends engage in some of the things they like best like bondage, heroin, aberrant sex, and ultra-violence, among other things that will probably not seem too extreme to many contemporary viewers as overrated pseudo-artsy-fartsy mainstream films like Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994) and Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) have already surpassed them in terms of sheer graphic sexual content and gratuitous violence. Of course, what separates Kern's no-budget cinematic works from these oftentimes unintentionally hokey Hollywood films is that the degeneracy they depict is mostly genuine and reflects the real-life experiences and passion of the filmmaker and performers as opposed to the sort of phony bullshit that you would expect to be accepted by some monetary-motivated producer in Tinseltown who lives in a large mansion in Malibu. When asked in the early 1990s for an article entitled *The Evil Cameraman: An Introduction to Richard Kern* by Paul Anthony-Woods about how many people that starred in his films had already died, Kern replied, "Five or six people I knew have died in the last few years, three who were in the films. One was suicide, a couple were AIDS. One girl got beaten up by a drug dealer, and died afterwards. The guy who committed suicide had AIDS. People die

from AIDS and OD's all the time.”

Featuring a virtual who's who of the Cinema of Transgression movement, including the director himself, filmmaker Tommy Turner, Lung Leg, and Lydia Lunch, among various others, Kern's anti-linear celluloid 'apolitical agit-prop' piece was once described by fellow Transgressive filmmaker Tessa Hughes-Freeland (*Baby Doll*, *Nymphomania*) as “an ocular assault of prurient psychopornadelia,” though the makers seem to have been more interested in heroin than acid as especially reflected in a scene towards the end of the film where a junky overdoses and his corpse subsequently begins to rot while he still has the needle in his arm. In fact, the man that portrays the junky overdosing is Cinema of Transgression auteur Tommy Turner who is notable for not only being a real-life junky, but also being a shockingly unprolific filmmaker who only managed to ever direct a handful of films, including the aborted feature *Where Evil Dwells* (1985) co-directed with queer artist David Wojnarowicz and the short *Rat Trap* (1986) co-directed with Hughes-Freeland, with *Simonland* (1984) being the only film he ever managed to direct all by himself (though Kern helped him out a lot by acting as his cinematographer). Undoubtedly, Turner's pathetic, cadaverous 'performance' in *Submit to Me* is quite indicative of the film's self-destructively autobiographical essence, with auteur Kern acting as a sort of anarchistic ringmaster to all the visceral post-punk filmic festivities. While expressing a sort of stylized realism, Kern's film is not without its schlocky cinematic influences. Aside from his first film *Goodbye 42nd Street* (1986) being a tribute to the exceedingly trashy horror and exploitation films that would play the infamous eponymous street, Kern revealed some of his horror influences when he stated in his interview with Anthony-Woods, “I read Tom Savini's make-up book around the time of *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. Later, I saw *THE EVIL DEAD* for the first time, and the effects really shocked me. Now, they seem more commonplace. When I came to do *SUBMIT TO ME NOW*, I did the effects in about six hours. It was kind of a cheap trick, submitting art movie lovers to horror movie effects.” Not unlike the films of Dutch avant-garde auteur Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*) and the early works of Aryan Kaganof (*The Dead Man 2: Return of the Dead Man*, *Ten Monologues from the Lives of the Serial Killers*), *Submit to Me* is 'horror' at its most direct, pure, unadulterated, visceral, and confrontational, albeit somewhat more primitive and amateurish. Incidentally, all three filmmakers have been attacked by feminists and accused of misogyny, thus proving that they all must be doing something right.

While *Submit to Me* was made by a real-life junky and features real-life junkies acting like junkies, Kern once stated in regard to what inspired the film's overall aesthetic, “I remembered how movies looked to me when I was fucked up on acid.” In fact, the film was originally entitled *Acid Death* and was routinely screened at various downtown NYC LSD parties, but many of the original performers opted to have their parts excised from the film for obvious reasons,

SUBMIT TO ME

thus resulting in Kern more or less reconstructing the entire film into something completely different and more fluidly violent. In fact, when asked about the 30-minute film *Acid Death* in an interview with Jack Sargeant, Kern stated, "I took all the good stuff, and put it into *SUBMIT TO ME*." In its depiction of people seductively staring into the camera while showing off their flagrant acts of degeneracy, the film sort of feels like a sort circle jerk where the 'characters' unload their spunk on Kern and, in turn, the viewer, hence the title of the flick. Indeed, by the end of the film, the viewer will feel like that they have been violently defiled by a collective of rabid punk squatters who live to disturb and debase, at least when they are not shooting up or sucking cock, among other things. Unlike the drug-addled fag and fag hag superstars of Warhol's films, the people in Kern's crusty cinematic work have literally nothing to say yet they demand your attention even more. In that sense, *Submit to Me* is like Warhol's *Screen Tests* (1964) series meets *Blow Job* (1964), albeit fueled by hatred, angst, and pernicious playfulness of the mentally and morally defective sort.

Set to the less than soothing sounds of "Cherub" by the *Butthole Surfers*, *Submit to Me* fittingly opens with a high-angle shot of Kern's main diva Lydia Lunch, who initially resembles an innocent child but soon transforms into a sexual predator with a serious case of penis envy as demonstrated by the fact that she turns the end of her dress into a makeshift cock of sorts which she begins stroking while sticking out her derriere and maintaining a seriously salacious look on her would-be-seductive guidette face. Meanwhile, a seemingly anorexic chick sporting nothing but an atrocious pair of tighty whitey underwear and vinyl gloves rolls around on the ground like a spastic retard. At first, the chicks seem to only get uglier and uglier as represented by the third chick, who is an androgynous broad with a rather repellent dyke haircut who (pseudo)seductively unbuttons a white button-up shirt and shows off her somewhat unsatisfying heroin chic body. The fourth chick proves not to be a chick at all, but a small girly man in a super gay costume that makes him seem like a cross between Jim Morrison and a campy leprechaun. In a vaguely foreboding chiaroscuro scene that one might describe as a sort of Deathrock go-go-dance, Kern's one-time girlfriend Audrey Rose (of Kern's *King of Sex* (1986) and *Submit to Me Now* (1987)) dances seductively while sporting nothing but a tacky vest and a garter belt. As Ms. Rose's performance and much of Kern's photography demonstrates, the filmmaker seems to have a special affinity for deathly skinny chicks with no tits or hips.

At a little bit past the three minute and thirty second mark of the film, a series of quickly displayed inter-titles that ultimately spell-out "D-E-S-T-R-O-Y" appear on the screen and *Submit to Me* begins taking a somewhat darker tone, with the next 'performer' that is featured being a naked chick that is hogtied and is trying in vain to wiggle across the ground like a petrified animal that senses that it is about to be slaughtered. Meanwhile, a blindfolded man in bondage

who has a rope attached from his cock to his neck in a discernibly painful fashion somewhat humorously hops around and eventually falls to the ground after predictably losing his balance. In the style of the classic 'shaky cam' scenes in *The Evil Dead* where the camera follows Bruce Campbell (or some other character) while he is running at warped speed in the woods, the camera comes up on a screaming woman played by Tommy Turner's then-wife Amy Turner. In the next scene, Kern's waif protégé Lung Leg sits on a disgustingly dirty floor while sporting nothing but a discernibly despoiled white slip and does fairly silly things like smearing a good portion of her lips with dark red lipstick and making goofy faces at the camera like a petulant child who is mad at her parents because they will not buy her a pony (of course, Leg would take her cutesy deranged pixie child routine to hilariously murderous extremes in Kern's (anti)classic *You Killed Me First* (1985)). Eventually, Ms. Leg whips out a knife she has hidden somewhat near her pussy under her dress and begins carelessly stabbing the air with it as if she is fantasizing about killing a room full of people, though she does not seem the least bit threatening as she seems to suffer from poor motor skills, not to mention the fact she looks fairly small and weak, hence her charm as a sort of preposterously pedomorphic punkette with grotesquely greasy hair who seems to believe that she is an ancient Norse Berserker. In one of the more aesthetically pleasing and ethereal scenes of the film, a naked man and woman that are completely covered in blood wrestle one another in a rather violent fashion as if attempting to ripe each other's guts apart on a white floor that they soak with vital fluids in a sinisterly sensual scenario that seems like it could be a deleted scene from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* (1987). Meanwhile, Tommy Turner croaks after shooting junk into his arm while watching TV and then proceeds to rot. After Turner decays, two blackhaired goth chicks (one of whom seems like they might actually be a tranny) strangle each other to death using a piano wire that causes blood to gush out of their throats. In one of the various scenes that makes me assume that Kern is either a cuckold and/or masochist (after all, Kern depicted a man, filmmaker Charles Pinion, being simultaneously ass and mouth-fucked by two chicks sporting strap-on dildos in his short *The Bitches* (1992)), a menacing she-bitch leads out a man on a dog-leash that is wearing nothing but a gimp mask, puts a gun to the back of his head, and then blows his brains out. For about the final minute or so of the film, a man drenched in blood screams in agony whilst standing in a red room. The End.

It should be noted that Kern directed a sequel of sorts to *Submit to Me* with the fairly fitting title *Submit to Me Now* (1987) which more or less follows the same exact anarchistic performance-based format and features a number of the same people. Apparently, Kern intended the sequel to mark the end of both his filmmaking career and that particular chapter in his personal life, or as the auteur stated in an interview with Jack Sargeant, "SUBMIT TO ME NOW was the last thing I did before I went off the deep end on drugs – it says "The End" at the

SUBMIT TO ME

end of it.” Of course, it would be a couple more years before Kern really quit filmmaking (which he somewhat recently resumed doing, albeit in a somewhat less ambitious way), but he had pretty much disposed of all forms of narrative at that point as reflected in his later works like *X Is Y* (1990), *Nazi* (1991), and *Sewing Circle* (1992), thus one could argue that *Submit to Me* and its sequel represent his truest and most organic auteur style as a filmmaker whereas his more narrative oriented works like *The Right Side of My Brain* (1985) and *Fingered* (1988) reflect the sort of heavy influence that star and co-writer Lydia Lunch had over his work when they collaborated with one another. Indeed, it seems that, as her cinematic collaborations with Kern demonstrate, Ms. Lunch has slightly more talent than what is between her legs. Notably, a screenshot from *Submit to Me* of Lunch’s rival *Lung Leg* was used as the cover art for the Sonic Youth album *EVOL* (1986) by SST Records. It should also be noted that members of Sonic Youth appear in *Submit to Me* and Kern would be responsible for co-directing the band’s music video for *Death Valley 69* (1986). One thing I certainly appreciate about Kern is that he does not overestimate the value of his ‘art’ or present it as something deeper than it actually is, which cannot be really said of his compatriot Nick Zedd, who always seems to babble on in interviews like a perennial victim about how he is some sort of tragically misunderstood artistic genius. Indeed, when Kern was interviewed by *Vice* in December 2012 and the interviewer noted that his *Submit to Me* films were “almost like moving photographs,” Kern replied by remarking like a proud philistine who does not feel the need to impress anyone, “I was looking for weirdness. Just trying to think of what weird thing can this person do. There was one guy with a really little dick and he said, ‘I really want to be in there.’ He would just bug the shit out of me. And I said, ‘Okay, you can just shave your pubes.’ Which was a weird thing back then, if you’re a guy. So he said, ‘Okay, I’ll do that.’ And it was just really weird.” Personally, I consider Kern’s films to be art in a sort of lowbrow punk rock sense as they vividly express the morally retarded, dope-addled, and sexually dysfunctional spirit of their particular innately nihilistic zeitgeist. Undoubtedly if it were not for films like *Submit to Me* and some of the other cinematic works directed by Kern and his compatriots, one would certainly not have any idea of the lows that American kultur had reached during the 1980s, especially considering that NYC city is oftentimes considered America’s cultural epicenter and the Cinema of Transgression movement was the closest thing that the city had to an avant-garde cinema scene at that time.

-Ty E

THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BRAIN

Richard Kern (1985)

While I would not exactly describe Richard Kern (*You Killed Me First*, *Manhattan Love Suicides*) as any sort of avant-garde or arthouse auteur, his less than 30-minute black-and-white cinematic piece *The Right Side of My Brain* (1985) is indubitably somewhat artsy fartsy in the sense that it would bore the hell out of mainstream filmgoers even though it features an unsimulated blowjob scene and Sapphic sadomasochistic sex, among other gratingly directed debauched scenarios that are about as erotic as the women's restroom in a downtown Detroit McDonalds. More or less the somewhat predictable result of star and co-writer Lydia Lunch, who the filmmaker apparently once "worshiped from afar" (or so he stated in the doc *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier), approaching Kern and asking him to direct it, the fetishistic (anti)erotic micro-epic depicts female sexuality in a fairly unflattering fashion with its less than playfully perverse portrayal of a masochistic cum-dump degenerate who morbidly metastasizes into a full-blown sadist as a result of her brutal sexual experiences with violent long haired dudes that resemble the gringo brothers of Richard Ramirez. Indeed, if you ever desired to be drenched in the putrid festering vaginal juices of Ms. Lunch yet are averse to contracting an STD or two, *The Right Side of My Brain* is probably your best bet as a seedy and sleazy no-budget 'snuff chic' flick where the viewer enters deep inside the anti-diva's (sub)conscious mind and is exposed to her more intimate and vulnerable psycho-sexual realms. Additionally, the film features the very awkward scenario of seeing lapsed Black Flag frontman Henry Rollins with longhair in a would-be-rough S&M sex scene with Lunch that is somewhat botched by a petrified little boy with a knife. In other words, the film features the special novelty of two overrated so-called 'spoken word' artists engaging in savagely brutal sex where cum and vaginal secretions are nowhere to be seen. For better or worse, *The Right Side of My Brain* probably deserves the somewhat oxymoronic label of being an avant-garde white trash porno piece, though I cannot really imagine anyone being in any way sexually aroused by it aside from maybe a very special sort of gynophobic serial killer and/or pretentious lesbian intellectual. As mentioned in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, Lunch described the film as follows: "A psycho-sexual, emotional, nymphomaniacal drama based on one poor, unfortunate girl who just gets abused throughout, and possibly on why one may want to get abused. Abuse may titillate one's imagination or emotions which could be far superior to feeling rot or ugliness. So it's just a little expose, and the possible reasons for why one girl could be led to be so distraught." Of course, as the debauched brainchild of a morally bankrupt street slut who credits her sexually predatory behavior as being the result of being molested by her own father (or as she stated in her remarkably coldly written whore memoir *Para-*

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doxia: *A Predator's Diary* (1997), "So twisted by men, a man, my father, that I became like one"), the film certainly has a psycho-autobiographical element to it that demonstrates that Lunch has no qualms about looking at both men and women as sexual prey even though she was once herself the prey of a pernicious pervert who also just happened to be her daddy.

Comprised of about half a dozen or so petite vignettes featuring Lunch in some sort of sexually deranged situation involving some sort of unsavory scumbag who gets a kick out of degrading women juxtaposed with annoyingly monotone narration from the female lead, *The Right Side of My Brain* is indubitably an ugly film about ugly people doing ugly things just to satisfy their baser instincts. Notably, after directing all the scenes for the film, Lunch watched the footage and wrote the pseudo-salacious dialogue, which is narrated in an annoyingly monotone fashion throughout and is in the style of her sleazy spoken word performances. As Lunch complains at the very beginning of the film while sounding like she wants a large throbbing cock shoved down her throat, "I felt like I was drowning...slowly, sinking...being suffocated...Sucked into an endless vacuum. A void...a place where reality was no longer necessary. I could hardly move from the bed. I didn't wanna move." In the next scene, Lunch is depicted fondling her own titties juxtaposed with the narration, "I just wanted to be left alone...To play hide-and-go-seek with my neighbors. Just me and my dreams. Just me and my nightmares. The need to feel alive was killing me...torturing me, holding me up in the ugliest of corners." As is quite apparent at this point, Lunch has an undying aching desire to have her thoroughly used and abused cunt filled by some malevolent man, or as she narrates, "Always waiting...waiting and for what? Him...that special someone...the White Knight...the Jack of Diamonds, the King of Hearts. Him" and "Him...The Gravedigger." Lunch is speaking specifically of a gawky cigarette-smoking sadist (No Wave musician Norman Westberg of Swans) with a fiercely flat affect that resembles a serial killer and carries a shotgun around like it is his cock, or as she states, "One night he came over...he was beautiful. He was a mess. He stepped out of the gutter and into my arms, or at least that's what he'd say and he was so filthy, I guess you'd believe it. But he was different...very different. One in a million." As Lunch states in regard to her experiences with Westberg, she is, "waiting to find out the difference between a crazy man and a crazy woman." At the end of the scene, Lunch states in a suspenseful fashion, "Crazy women tolerate this behavior because love is deaf and dumb and stupid and it hurts like hell and that's better than nothing," and Westberg proceeds to point his shotgun in her pussy as if he wants to make a bigger hole between her legs. Naturally, Lunch gets all hot and bothered upon having a gun aimed at her cunt to the point where she develops a cutesy expression on her face that makes her seem like a flirtatious teenage virgin. Of course, the only thing that could make Lunch's cock-chaffer even wider is a gunshot blast. Naturally, crazy men like Westberg

turn Lunch on because she suffers from the delusional belief that, "...they love you so, so much...They will try to kill you."

In the second major segment of the film, Lunch narrates while lying in bed, "Dreaming...I was only dreaming, but even in sleep I saw no rest. I was beginning to lose control of my senses. I was wrestling with myself and losing. It was like someone else was pulling all the strings. I wasn't feeling like myself, at all. Something was wrong. The right side of my brain was going berserk. I couldn't possibly want what it was I thought I wanted. The anatomy of melancholy. No, I had a bad dream, that was all. I have a lot of bad dreams." After a seemingly aborted attempt to masturbate, Lunch calls some random loser (Brian Moran) and thinks to herself how good it feels to be "split in two" and "all torn up." When her loser fuck-buddy finally arrives, Lunch meekly licks his hands and fingers, which eventually enrages him to the point where he violently shoves said hands and fingers down her throat. As for the abuse that Lunch seems to wallow in, she narrates while being orally brutalized, "I just wanted to feel really, really alive...that's all. No matter what the expense." As far as lecherous Lydia is concerned, there is a "thin line between a kiss and a scream." Indeed, after pissing Mr. Moran off by aggressively grabbing his cock, Lunch gets pummeled with his fists, which turns her on so much that she later masturbates while thinking about it. Indeed, the more Lunch is beaten and brutalized, the more her masochistic tendencies grow, or as she pseudo-poetically narrates, "My every waking moment was spent trying to fend off the beasts inside me. Nothing seemed to satisfy this unquenchable monster...This unbearable longing, this yearning for everything bad and ugly and self-destructive." Of course, it is only a matter of time before Lunch begins dishing out pain and destruction.

In the next segment of the film, Lunch is depicted giving an unsimulated blowjob to her longtime Australian-born boyfriend J.G. Thirlwell, who was not only responsible for being the "soundtrack coordinator" of *The Right Side of My Brain* and contributing music to a number of other Kern flicks, but also composed the titular song for David Wojnarowicz and Tommy Turner's aborted Cinema of Transgression art-horror epic *Where Evil Dwells* (1985) with his electronic noise-rock side-project *Wiseblood*. During the segment, sunglasses-adorned Thirlwell rips off Lunch's top, manhandles her mammary glands, and eventually physically forces her to lip-lock his cock while she narrates things like, "It feels so good to be alive and squirming under his fists...and made to do exactly what they want you to do because that's what you want." At the end of the segment, Lunch bitches when Thirlwell forces her off his cock, "They always stopped short of giving exactly what I wanted," thus making it seem as if no man can completely fulfill her completely insatiable sexual needs. As Lunch narrates after Thirlwell abruptly leaves her all hot and bothered, "I was my own worst enemy and I liked it like that," thereupon acknowledging the fact that the sexual violence that she regularly endures is entirely voluntary.

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Maybe it is because I have read one-too-many of his books as a teenager where he incessantly complains about things like skinheads kicking his ass or why he hates everything, but it is hard for me to imagine Henry Rollins chasing after any woman, especially a wanton wench like Lunch. Indeed, in the next segment of the film, Rollins is depicted literally chasing Lunch through a forest while she narrates, "...running headlong into my own demise. Running not away from it, but to embrace it and rejoice in it with open arms." As she thinks to herself, Lunch wants Rollins to "catch me and conquer me." Of course, Rollins eventually catches and manhandles Lunch when she runs inside a house, but a problem arises when a little blond boy who is hiding behind a nearby bed becomes an unconventional cock-block of sorts. Indeed, after Rollins begins getting a little bit rough with Lunch after she violently pushes him away, the boy emerges from behind a bed with a knife, so the ex-Black Flag singer picks him up and begins shaking him like he wants to snuff him out via shaken baby syndrome. When the boy eventually manages to get free after Lunch begins attacking Rollins, the masochistic bitch switches places with the little lad and begins receiving a series of blows to her body and face while being pinned down on a bed. In a sort of twist ending to the segment, the blond boy proceeds to look under Lunch's clothing and presumably attempts to molest her after she is left unconscious as a result of the beating that Rollins doled out to her.

The final segment of the film is important in that it demonstrates that all Lunch's beatings and rapes have paid off in the long run, as she has gone from being a meek and masochistic heterosexual woman to transforming into a Saphic sadist who dishes out savage beatings to other sexually dysfunctional broads, though she is somewhat baffled about her own sexual transformation, or as she narrates, "I did not know where I was...Or where I would end up...And I didn't care. It was as if I was beside myself." Indeed, not only does Lunch graduate on to sadomasochistic lesbian affairs but she also engages in white-on-yellow miscegenation with a brutal looking East Asian chick (pussy-loving Proto-riot grrrl musician Sally Ven Yu Berg of groups like Egoslavia and SHE). While initially seeming quite timid and rather intimidated by the yellow diva, Lunch soon engages in some mutual tit-touching with the oriental dame that eventually evolves into her smacking around and beating the slant-eyed little bitch. As Lunch narrates at this point regarding her sexuality, "I wanted to feel good and throbbing and wet and real, but all I felt was filthy and dirty and cheap. That's why I was torturing myself...beating myself at my own game." After giving the chink chick a good thrashing, Lunch narrates at the very end of the film, "We'll take the bad with the bad and make it worse, ok...So if it kills me, so what." Of course, as demonstrated by the fact that she has physically deteriorated so drastically over the past couple of decades, Lunch clearly embraced this nihilistic metasexual weltanschauung in her real-life.

While ostensibly 'deep' and 'esoteric' in terms of its depiction of the more un-

flattering examples of female sexuality, *The Right Side of My Brain* ultimately has a fairly simple and easy to understand message about the vicious circle that is sexual abuse and how victims oftentimes graduate on to becoming full-blown victimizers, including star Lydia Lunch who is completely conscious of her perversions and their source yet she chooses to exercise as opposed to exorcise her all-consuming sexual demons. Indeed, one of the things that makes the film undeniably potent despite oftentimes wallowing in banality is that Lunch brings a certain aberrant authenticity to the role that demonstrates that she probably could have had a fairly lucrative career as a full-blown porn star. As Lunch described the film in the doc *Blank City*, "THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BRAIN was my investigation into a specific type of female psyche. It was completely instinctual and I think Richard [Kern] just knew exactly also what I wanted." Indeed, I think Kern, who is well known for letting his actors/performers take control of his films creatively, knew to let Lunch just be herself and let her gutter lechery just drip from the screen, which it most certainly does. For better or worse, no one can watch *The Right Side of My Brain* without concluding that Lunch is a conniving cum-dump and proud sexual predator with a pathological need to make both men and women her servile little sex slaves and cuckolds, with Kern arguably being the latter, at least artistically speaking, as a mensch that has no problem with a woman taking over his own film.

Indubitably Kern and Lunch's subsequent collaboration *Fingered* (1986) is superior as it is innately more enthralling and even darkly humorous, not to mention more sexually subversive, yet *The Right Side of My Brain* certainly has a more ominous and foreboding tone to it that makes it fairly unforgettable, even if it is also sometimes annoying and boring. Like *Fingered*, the film features a sort of post-Expressionist aesthetic that almost seems to excrete a sort of erotic 'evil' as opposed to merely mimicking it, hence its strange and almost inexplicable minor degree of idiosyncratic aesthetic potency. Certainly the 'private dick' that Lunch depicted in Beth B and Scott B's *Vortex* (1982) seems like a naïve teenage girl compared to her 'character' in *The Right Side of My Brain*. In terms of visceral rawness and organic integrity, I would certainly rather watch Kern's film over Lars von Trier's epic, botched orgasm *NYMPH()MANIAC* (2013) starring Charlotte Gainsbourg, who makes Lunch seem like a young Sophia Loren when it comes to physical attractiveness and overall sexual appeal (even if Lunch looks like a decaying 70-year-old crackwhore nowadays). It should be noted that Lunch and Rollins would later reprise their roles as onscreen lovers in the somewhat uneventful arthouse flick *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* (1990) directed by Babeth Mondini. Personally, I cannot imagine Rollins being able to fulfill Lunch's voracious sadomasochistic needs, but I guess that is the main appeal of seeing the two together. While I still would not want to touch Lunch's pussy with a ten-foot-pole even while she was at her physical peak during her Kern years, I have to give the perennial spoken word slut credit for being able to

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embody malignantly manipulative and unhinged 'feminine' sexuality in such a artfully sleazy way, especially in *The Right Side of My Brain* where she demonstrates that she is better at beating up some Asian dyke than downing the dick of her longtime beau.

-Ty E

YOU KILLED ME FIRST

Richard Kern (1985)

Call me old fashioned, but there are few things more lame and impotent to me than blaming one's failure in life on their parents, especially when the same culture-distorting people and institutions, like teachers and MTV, telling people to loathe their parents are also the same Occident-hating parasites that are part of the malefic mainstream entity that would love nothing more than to see the world transformed into a horribly homogenized raceless and cultureless void where everyone is 'equal' in their social enslavement, destitution, sexual dysfunction, and cultural and spiritual retardation. Indeed, the patently pathetic baby boomers—the most superlatively spoiled and pampered generation in all of human history (at least, up until that time period)—got bored with their pampered and all-too-comfortable lives and decided to mindlessly rebel against their parents and disrespect their fathers as a result of being provoked by everyone from retarded drug-addled rockers John Lennon and Mick Jagger to anti-Occidental German-born kosher commie agitators ranging from Wilhelm Reich to Herbert Marcuse, thereupon eventually resulting in the proliferation of racial and cultural chaos, the welfare state, sexual dysfunction, single-mothers and rampant bastardization, and malignant miscegenation, among various other socially and culturally apocalyptic things that had previously been quite rare and/or taboo in the Western world. Of course, a lot has changed since Reich and Marcuse penned their patently preposterous pro-pedophile psychobabble and anti-parent/anti-parent sentiment has now more or less reached the intellectual prowess of Beavis and Butt-Head as reflected by the rise of corporate 'punk' stores like Hot Topic and the popularity of pre-packaged pseudo-rebellious cum-dump pop stars like Miley Cyrus. Of course, the underground has become no less sterile and moronically generic than mainstream when it comes to pseudo(meta)political assaults against family matters. Arguably, the most unintentionally hilarious cinematic example of senseless self-pitying anti-parent sentiment is the (in)famous Cinema of Transgression short *You Killed Me First* (1985) directed by photographer and gutter auteur Richard Kern (*Goodbye 42nd Street*, *Submit to Me Now*). Apparently a response to President Ronnie Reagan's 1988 farewell address where he self-righteously stated, "And let me offer lesson number one about America: All great change in America begins at the dinner table. So, tomorrow night in the kitchen I hope the talking begins. And children, if your parents haven't been teaching you what it means to be an American, let 'em know and nail 'em on it. That would be a very American thing to do," Kern's truly 'reactionary' 11-minute celluloid rant is ultimately a testimony to the circular intellectual bankruptcy of the Cinema of Transgression movement and related NYC post-punk movements, yet it is also strangely endearing as a work where an AIDS-ridden queer artist, David Wojnarowicz, is given the opportunity to take out his

YOU KILLED ME FIRST

rectal-reaming rage by enacting a sort of fairly eccentric performance art exorcism on both his abusive biological father and American cuckservative paternal figure Reagan, who he partly blamed for the proliferation of gay cancer as depicted in kraut alpha-queen Rosa von Praunheim's doc *Silence = Death* (1990). Sort of like a post-punk mutation of *Father Knows Best* as directed by the heterosexual hatechild of John Waters and Curt McDowell meets *My So-Called Life* as penned by the left-wing philistine stepchild of Paul Morrissey, *You Killed Me First* ultimately feels like an autistic agitprop flick that serves no real political purpose aside from inciting the viewer into mindlessly hating their family and ancestral origins, thus making for a work with a mind-numbingly idiotic message that is not all that different from the one spread by American public schools. Luckily, Kern's short-but-(un)sweet film is slightly more interesting and entertaining than any teacher I have ever had.

The superlatively stupid story of a discernibly dirty and unkempt proto-emo teenage skank and born-loser with seemingly slimy black hair who sadistically murders her entire family because she suffers from the delusion that they figuratively 'killed her' first due to their American pie style values, *You Killed Me First* unsurprisingly had its genesis in a somewhat abortive drug binge, or as auteur Kern described in an interview featured in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant when asked if it was originally part of an installation with David Wojnarowicz: "The whole idea was conceived when me and David went out to buy some heroin one day and we got burned, so we got back to the apartment and we shot up this stuff and got these big welts on our arms instead of getting high. I said: 'I've got some ecstasy in the other room, let's shoot that up, fuck it' and then we started talking 'we're really good friends man' [laughs]. You know how ecstasy works." Indeed, seeing Wojnarowicz portraying the less than proud conservative father of a greasy-haired teenage social outcast led me to seeing the film as the sort of Cinema of Transgression equivalent to *Reefer Madness*, albeit actually fairly humorous and thankfully brief. In fact, when Sargeant proposed that "*YOU KILLED ME FIRST*, again, to me, was a straight John Waters' style film, I think a lot of people see that as your best film," Kern replied, "That's what other people told me...that it was the most concise." Of course, the film also benefits from lacking Kern regular Lydia Lunch, though the flick's star 'Leg Lung'—a sort of short and scrawny Lydia clone with a giant round head full of messy tangled black hair that seems more than a little bit mentally challenged as indicated by her bizarre speech patterns, unnervingly fidgety behavior, and tendency to botch simple two syllable words, among other things—is not exactly much of an improvement as far as leading ladies are concerned. A kind of unintentional satire of the sort of mindlessly nihilistic suburban youth rebel archetype that became especially vogue after the release of Nicholas Ray's CinemaScope classic *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Kern's film is so shockingly stupid and childish as a result of its kindergarten

aesthetic anarchism that I still cannot believe it exists and I say that as a fan of Nick Millard's *Criminally Insane* (1975). Naturally, *You Killed Me First* lacks the beautifully seductive romantic rebellious spirit of Ray's film, which has been replaced by a sort of viscerally vulgar infantilism plagued by festering blood-and-semen-stained teenage cunts and braindead glue-sniffers, among other rather repellent things that remind one why Warhol Factory filmmaker Paul Morrissey described the counterculture movement and liberalism as a "toilet culture."

Set in "New York City: 1985" as indicated by a glittery gold inter-title that seems to be in the style of the furniture that you might find at a Hebraic-owned Manhattan pawnshop, *You Killed Me First* opens with a stereotypical white suburban mother (portrayed by degenerate third-wave feminist 'performance artist' Karen Finley of Harvey Keith's *Mondo New York* (1988) and Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia* (1993)) serving her seated family members a baked turkey and declaring, "It's my pleasure being a mother to do this for y'all." The 'black sheep' of the family is the youngest daughter Elizabeth (Kern regular Lung Leg) and her mother instantly rebukes her for refusing to wash her hands before eating while her father (David Wojnarowicz) complains regarding her deadbeat boyfriend, "That guy stunk from here to tomorrow" and "I don't want that slime in this house anymore." While Elizabeth's parents resent her and her unfortunate choice in men (as Elizabeth proudly explains, she found her boyfriend on the street), they love her happy overachiever sister Debra (Jessica Craig-Martin) and the "nice young man" named Nick (Nick Cooper) that she dates. For a nearly incoherent bitch that complains that her parents treat her like a prisoner, Elizabeth is allowed to get away with a lot of bombastic bullshit spewing, as she soon dominates the dinner table conversation and begins violently screaming at her parents while slurring and botching her words like an inordinately aggressive toddler with Down syndrome, "You know, you have given me nothing but pain—pain, pain—ever, ever since you were born." As demonstrated by her remarks like, "You got the nerve to pray for me...holier-than-thou [...] you're just as disgusting as I am," Elizabeth cannot stand that her parents hold her to certain generic civilized standards like bathing. Indeed, as she states, Elizabeth cannot stand how her supposedly hypocritical parents are, "pressuring me to be holy or something and you're fucking made of shit. You don't even know... You don't even know what goodness is. You're fucking as evil as sin. I hate you, I've always hated you." Being a vehemently anti-logical little lunatic, Elizabeth eventually decides that familicide will be the only way for her to cleanse herself of her family's ostensibly evasive influence. After all, one cannot tolerate family members who incessantly nag you about getting a haircut and dating nice boys.

As a perennially infantile teenager who does not seem to realize she bleeds out of her gash and should probably take a shower every once and a while, Elizabeth likes spending her free time doing curious things like sticking her tongue out at creepy stuffed animals, playing with barfing puppets, and drawing goofy pic-

YOU KILLED ME FIRST

tures of demonic monsters with magic markers. When Elizabeth introduces her scumbag boyfriend 'Cheese' (Montanna Houston) to her parents, she seems less annoyed with the fact that her dad calls her beau a "son-of-a-bitch" than the fact that her mother calls her by her real name, bitching, "Hey, don't call me Elizabeth anymore. My name's Cassandra." Indeed, like most criminals and weirdos with identity issues, Elizabeth refuses to be called by her real name and spends the rest of the film bitching every time anyone addresses her by her real name. It seems that like a lot of contemporary American morons, Elizabeth confuses superficial things like haircuts, names, tattoos and personal hygiene as genuine forms of individuality, thereupon failing to realize that she is not different from the average ostensibly 'misunderstood' teenage goth or emo-fag loser. Indeed, Elizabeth is just as much of a conformist as her much hated family members, albeit she just belongs to the losing team. Of course, Elizabeth would never figure this out because she is the most fierce of petulant philistine children.

After Elizabeth shockingly allows her mother to give her a new hairdo, the giddy matriarch joyously declares, "Elizabeth, I am so happy that you're letting me do this. It is going to be the windswept look just like in *Mademoiselle* magazine, you know, the new wave look like Liza Minnelli," while she predictably whines, bitches, and moans. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's sibling Debra tries in vain to give her some sisterly advice by stating, "You know, Elizabeth, you should really try to be nicer to mom and dad. They're only trying to help, you know. And mom's really worried about you. She's thinks you're never going to catch a husband. Even Nick said you could be pretty if you just made a little effort to be more feminine. And, you know, no sorority in America is going to accept you the way you look now. I can't believe I have this big zit on my face for my date with Nick," but the anti-heroine does not bother to even take a single second to consider her sister's fairly reasonable point of view. When her mother buys both her and her sister new sweaters, Elizabeth reveals that she is a insufferable ingrate by immediately bitching, "how dare you buy this ugly thing for me. I don't want it. Take it back." In one of the most humorous lines of dialogue in the film, Elizabeth's mother reacts to her obscenely ungrateful attitude by stating, "That's why I got you one that was cheaper because I knew that you wouldn't like it. Why don't you cut it up and write 'fuck' or 'anarchy' on it?!" Of course, being an assumed punk rock true believer, Elizabeth probably thinks that intentionally tearing up your clothing is what posers do and probably prefers wearing authentically dirty and worn-out clothing with holes in it that she has not washed in weeks.

When Elizabeth's less than dear daddy catches her smoking cigarettes, he demands that she sit down so they can have a little father-daughter chat where he rants, "You know, I don't understand you for a minute. Elizabeth, your mother and I have given you our brain and you have made no use of it absolutely whatsoever. I mean, you constantly disregard the fine examples set by your sister,

you turned your room into a zoo, you're threatening to do it to the rest of this house, and that goddamn rabbit of yours has been defecating all over this house all week long. You don't even change its water. It tries to climb into the tub while I'm taking a shower." After stoically declaring, "You need to be taught a lesson," the patriarch whips out a paper bag containing Elizabeth's strangely lifeless pet bunny rabbit and bludgeons it to death with a mallet while she screams in horror, "That's my bunny." Needless to say, Elizabeth's trauma is only the more compounded when she decides to do a little bit of investigating upon hearing her mother loudly moaning and then discovers her daddy penetrating her mommy doggy style. Of course, Elizabeth is lucky to have parents that still love one another and regularly fuck like bunny rabbits, but she does not see it that way as she hates her mother and father with a passion and cannot stand seeing them happy.

After her cutesy white bunny rabbit is beaten to death and witnessing the passionate 'primal scene' between her parents, Elizabeth decides to release some stress by handling what seems to be a sort of 'puking voodoo doll' that barfs when she squeezes it. When her father later walks in on her watching some degenerate TV show and scolds her for watching such "filth," Elizabeth retorts, "It's no worse than watching you make mom moan all night," so her daddy shuts her up by giving her a much needed smack across the face. When Elizabeth's mother dares to rip up the childish demonic monster drawings that she created with magic markers, the oh-so angsty anti-heroine finally loses what little self-restraint she has, decides enough is enough, and proceeds to retrieve a small revolver from a small dresser table in her parent's room that her father recently bought and proudly showed off by unloading a round in his living room. In the end, the film comes full circle when Elizabeth meets her family at the dinner table, says to her mother, "You're about as pretty as a donkey's ass, man," and then declares to her big sis while waving her weapon, "I'm going to get rid of you first" and "I can't believe you're alive. You don't deserve to live. I hate you." After putting bullets in the brains of both her sister and father, Elizabeth declares to her mother, "You gotta go, too." After her mother once again dares call her by her real name, Elizabeth declares with a good healthy dose of seething hatred, "My name is Cassandra. You killed me first" and then shoots her in the head, thereupon causing her brains to splatter across the wall. Although the viewer never learns what becomes of the anti-heroine, I think that it is safe to say that Elizabeth will probably hate prison or an insane asylum even more than she hated living with her parents, thus her excessive actions were certainly, at best, in vain and a great example of her mental handicaps and sheer and utter incapacity to think things through.

Somewhat unbelievably, *You Killed Me First* has become such an iconic influence that it has inspired a number of West Coast graffiti artists, who have tagged the image of Lung Leg aiming her weapon around various buildings in

YOU KILLED ME FIRST

Los Angeles and Las Vegas. With that being said, it is somewhat fitting that such a stupendously stupid and senseless cinematic work would influence the most stupendously stupid and senseless of gutter artists, especially considering that Kern's film defiles the mind and spirit and so-called street artists defile their urban habitat, thereupon making for the perfect match in pre-apocalyptic aesthetic hell. Personally, I think Ms. Leg is one of the most particularly pathetic of iconic anti-heroines as a dirty dipshit chick that looks like she could possibly have a dick and makes the Manson Family chicks seem like iconoclastic scholars and deeply devout spiritual leaders by comparison. Indeed, if Lung Leg did not seem so glaringly retarded and pathetic in *You Killed Me First*, the film would probably be as banal as hell as most of its potency lies in its seemingly unintended humor, which David Wojnarowicz also contributes a great deal to by trying in vain to absurdly pantomime a Christian cuckservative as opposed to the AIDS-ridden junky faggot and ex-hustler that he actually was. Indeed, as is typical of people that attempt to mock another group of people, Wojnarowicz and the gang demonstrate that they lack any innate understanding of the typical American suburban family, thus exposing their own innate degeneracy as people that clearly did not have the choice to be alienated from mainstream society, which is as alien to them as Norwegian black metal is to American blacks. Speaking of American negroes, Leg almost outdoes the slave-morality-ridden Black Lives Matter beasts in terms of her hysterically hostile and obscenely obnoxious performance. In that sense, Leg's character personifies everything that is repugnant about young Americans, as anti-heroine Elizabeth is a ludicrously self-righteous, self-pitying and entitled little bitch who sneers at the thought of things like personal responsibility and accountability, among other things.

Not surprisingly, Lung Leg is apparently almost as unhinged as the character she portrayed in *You Killed Me First*, or so it seems if we are to believe Nick Zedd, who claimed in his work *Bleed* that the Cinema of Transgression diva believed that she was tortured by a "communist war goddess" named "ninny" who could transform people into folding chairs and radiators and was planning to destroy Christmas by turning it into "a German holiday" (I guess Ms. Leg does not realize that the popular Christian holiday is of largely Teutonic origins). Despite her fairly idiosyncratic brand of good old Teutonophobia, Lung apparently had an unhealthy infatuation with German musician Blixa Bargeld of *Einstürzende Neubauten*, or as Kern stated in an interview with Jack Sargeant, "...Lung was totally convinced that Blixa was her soul mate. She went to Germany and sought him out and found him, and I imagine had sex with him – at least once probably – and was convinced she was gonna be with him forever. Somehow it didn't work out." Of course, as her long awaited comeback role in Jon Springer's rather botched pseudo-arthouse horror flick *The Hagstone Demon* (2011) starring Mark Borchardt of *American Movie* (1999) demonstrates, Leg is far from the marginally cute art school dropout that she was in *You Killed*

Me First.

While horrendously edited, the merrily morbid familicide flick was apparently in even worse shape before Kern had it remastered and reedited for DVD, yet some of the film's fans had the gall to complain that the new 'director's cut' was inferior because it lacked the sub-Warholian essence of the original cut, but as the filmmaker himself stated, "if anything, the remastering makes **YOU KILLED ME FIRST** more watchable. The movie is still very rough but the distracting problems with some of the edits and sound dropout are gone. I felt that the problems I took out constantly reminded the audience that the movie was a movie and a shittily made one at that." While I am far from any sort of Kern groupie, I think I can agree with many of his fans when I say it is easily the director's greatest film, which is somewhat ironic considering it is also one of his least sexually graphic works. Of course, aside from possibly sexually schizophrenic rapists and high school emo girls with intricate rape fantasies, I doubt many people can truly appreciate a film like *Finger* (1986) where an insufferable sidewalk skank like Lydia Lunch screams, "make me fucking cum, you fucking filthy cock. Do it!" while being violently finger-fucked by some longhaired tattooed degenerate that looks like the retarded blue-collar brother of Rozz Williams. Described by alpha-hipster Thurston 'Sonic Youth' Moore in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier as follows, "**YOU KILLED ME FIRST** was the great dysfunctional family film," Kern's thankfully unpretentious short is basically a no bullshit micro-exploitation flick that cuts all the fat and only leaves the sordid and sick elements that make people gravitate towards celluloid trash in the first place. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Kern would pay tribute to the great works of (s)exploitation with his early work *Goodbye 42nd Street* (1986). I think Kern summed up *You Killed Me First* and the rest of his oeuvre best when he stated regarding his (anti)artistic Weltanschauung, "I didn't feel I was making art. I felt like I was being a lunatic. Doing anything I wanted. Nobody could tell me what to do. Fuck you to everybody. That was the whole attitude." Indeed, while Kern's film probably deserves to be relegated to the semen-soaked urinal of avant-garde cinema history, I have to admit that *You Killed Me First* has more replay value than the average Godard flick.

-Ty E

MY NIGHTMARE
MY NIGHTMARE

Richard Kern (1993)

My Nightmare is just one of many excellent Super 8 short films directed by the original goth Richard Kern. His style of film making serializes the transgression between extreme perversion and sado-masochism. Just one of his broad filmography conveniently packaged in a DVD collection - The Hardcore Collection - this short materializes slowly into being one of his more graphic and in-your-face short films. The non-linear plot features one man waking from a peaceful slumber. He rolls over in his nude posture and begins to vigorously masturbate in his pseudo-dream state. He dreams of a beautiful muse pleasuring him in graphic detail. These fantastical masturbatory daydreams escalate in passion and roughness. Spanking and various activities begin getting fiercer and fiercer along with his movements. He finishes, puts his pants on, walks to the door and greets the very same model he dreamed of. After numerous hopeful sexual attempts that are denied embarrassingly, it is obvious how pathetic this loner is. A vast character portrait of a man who might have taken his profession in hope for a royal lifestyle. A photographer should be swimming in women, right? This is a masterful erotic short which conveys a deep sadness relevant to all humanity. In Kern's eyes, Women exist to tease men of any soul left in their body. He creates these embarrassing, sadistic, or tortuous shorts that shouldn't arouse a normal man, but they do. Although, I would have rather seen Kern-ette Lydia Lunch in all these uncompromising situations, I cannot complain for this piece of gutter art. A must-see, along with all of his other Super 8 shorts. Except You Killed Me First. Jesus, I hate that film.

-mAQ

FREEDOM WRITERS

Richard LaGravenese (2007)

While I don't exactly know the racial or ethnic origins of writer/director Richard LaGravenese, it doesn't really matter too much, because Zionist propaganda is not a Jewish-exclusive technique. *Freedom Writers* is one of those rare films that comes along and nurtures the imagination of anyone aware of Israeli Nationalist influence on American media. Whereas most Hollywood films tend to employ various forms of globalist Jewish intellectualism in subtle ways, *Freedom Writers* achieves a special kind of chutzpah by taking the classic "Teacher Helps Hapless Student(s)" Hollywood subgenre, transforming it, molding it, and finally crossing the threshold into full-blown political propaganda. The legacy of this film should be remembered for decades to come as it takes the torturous tactics of the *Shin Bet* and turns it into *Shin B.E.T.* with a contrived urban atmosphere and an all-star hip hop soundtrack. *Freedom Writers* is not a movie about gang violence; it's a movie about Israel. The plot of the film is simple enough. After the mandated racial integration of an inner-city California high school, a woman named Erin Gruwell, played by Hillary Swank, shows up trying to seize an exciting opportunity for her as a teacher and thus live out the legacy of her father, a man who marched in the Civil Rights movement and is now an embittered curmudgeon. After dealing with the cynicisms of her faculty, she realizes that the racial hatred in the school is too overwhelming for the traditional curriculum. The turning point in the film, about a half hour into it, occurs when she encounters a cartoon portraying a black man with large lips that one of the students draws. I'd like to focus on that particular scene, because it carries the tone for the remaining hour and a half. After making a comparison of this cartoon with the cartoons of the Jews that would be published in German newspapers, she goes on to compare the National Socialist party to a gang, and describes Hitler as a man who gave the Germans "pride and identity and somebody to blame." When she asks the class to raise their hand if they know about the holocaust, the only white kid there raises his hand. This is a class comprising what looks like thirty to forty people. When she then asks the class to raise their hand if they have ever been shot at, every single person in the class other than the white kid raises his or her hand. The message thus becomes quite obvious: those who know about the holocaust stay out of gang violence and other associated forms of trouble, and those who turn their backs on the holocaust are doomed. As if the intent of the picture could not be blatant enough by this point, Swank also throws in some secular progressive propaganda for good measure (keep in mind, Zionism is an inherently secular ideology). When one of the black kids says that it's better to die for one's own people, as a warrior, Swank retorts that when you die, "you're going to rot in the ground, and people are going to go on living." She then points out that "nobody is going to want to remember you, because

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all you left behind is this [racist cartoon].” Leaving aside the fact that, according to her logic, the person will be rotting in the ground and unable to tell if anyone remembers him in the first place, her comment is still completely false. Clearly, she does want to remember Hitler. She really wants to remember the guy, and her mission is to educate everyone about Uncle Adolf until the savage beast in them completely disappears. In order to reshape the minds of these youngsters, Swank simply strikes at them with a barrage of intense holocaust awareness training. She teaches them about the holocaust, she has them read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, she organizes a field trip to the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance (which is essentially a holocaust museum sponsored by Zionists), she introduces them to holocaust survivors, and then she flies out the woman who sheltered Anne Frank in WWII to speak with them. It is not any kind of easy task to determine exactly what the kids actually learn in this class, especially when the film makes various references to the fact that Swank brazenly defies the curriculum and merely teaches the kids what she herself deems important, but they sure seem enthused. The main purpose of the film, to promote Zionism, is enshrouded by the fact that these kids actually wrote in journals about their lives. That is, actually, the main thrust of the real-life story that this film is based on. Swank introduces the idea of journal-writing in a very understated way compared to the fury the overall film expresses regarding the holocaust, but the majority of the film then goes on to chronicle the documentation of these teenagers’ personal lives without explaining the necessity for them to write in a journal in the first place. The purpose is simply to compare the lives of struggling inner-city teenagers to the lives of Jews suffering through the holocaust. The two scenarios bear no comparison, obviously, for the simple fact that the Jews suffered under the policy of central government, whereas no such policies exist that cause gang warfare. However, despite the lack of correlation between the Jews of the holocaust and the film’s situation, the imagery is invoked to suggest a causal hypothesis stating that due to indignant European oppression, Blacks, Latinos and Cambodians are in a poor situation. Rather than combat low self-esteem and cultural irresponsibility, Freedom Writers embraces that very sense of irresponsibility and utilizes Nazi imagery as a means of pointing the finger at white privilege. Meanwhile, bad role models and harmful cultural figures like Snoop Dogg are celebrated as a means to bind the races together. To add some struggle to the plot, which has no real central conflict, Swank’s husband grows impatient with her superheroism and uncompromisingly positive outlook on life. The problem is that he is a 40-something-year-old aspiring architect who is unmotivated, lazy, and caught up in what he considers the wrong job. This entire subplot fails demonstrably, as although the man is clearly upset, the house both he and Swank occupy is extraordinarily lavish. It has plenty of space and all sorts of expensive furnishings and knickknacks – objects that could never be purchased on a teacher’s salary. The husband is clearly the breadwinner in the relation-

ship, although the film portrays him as a nihilistic loser. It seems as though the entire point of this conflict insertion is to keep some sort of problem afloat in an otherwise mindless celebration of tolerance and Jewish pride. The technical methods of propaganda in the film are also worth mentioning, as it transcends formulaic Hollywood conventions to create something absurdly unique. The use of time-elapsing montage is employed so fiercely it becomes difficult to absorb what is actually happening. I counted a total of eleven time-elapsing montages, ten if you don't count the footage of the Rodney King riots that kicks off the film. It is difficult to count these montages because one of them includes two sub-montages within. The intent is to exasperate the audience and simplify the issues these teenagers face as problems, albeit serious, that can be easily remedied. Some of the imagery in these montages utilizes symbolism and strategic lighting, so as to literally illuminate various members of the class when they write in their journals. The use of sentimentalism is also heavily employed with various scenes relying on sappy music. Perhaps the most offensive aspect of *Freedom Writers* is the distinct lack of actual Jewish people in the film. Other than the holocaust survivors that show up and are mainly voiced-over, the film is made in the shadow of other people's suffering with a very limited use of those actual people. Familiarity can breed contempt, and parlaying the Jews into infallible superpeople is done exactly by not introducing them as significant characters. While the various students all undergo a great deal of suffering, as the film points out, their sympathies are directed most highly toward the Jews rather than each other, because while each of these people in Swank's class have their own shortcomings, no such admissions are made for any Jewish people. The message has nothing to do with overcoming a bad situation, but rather, the ontological superiority of Jews. In purely formalistic terms, *Freedom Writers* is an awful film. The main conflict of the story switches gratuitously, the subplot involving Swank and her husband makes little to no sense, all of the subplots of each class member are met with dead ends, and the facts of the real-life story do little justice to the message of the film adaptation. The ending of the movie concludes, "Many freedom writers were the first in their families to graduate high school and go to college." Not only is the weasel word "many" used, but it doesn't even apply to the actual rate of college graduation among these freedom writers. Even if they all actually graduated college, what does the message of the story say? That holocaust awareness is the chief method of success, or that it's more effective for a teacher to stay with the same class for all four years of high school with her own curriculum that has more to do with moral judgments than actual information? As a work of art, *Freedom Writers* fails on numerous levels. But as a piece of propaganda, one can't help but admire the cold, calculated technique that went into the creation of this monstrosity. The confusion and lack of continuity in plot juxtaposed with holocaust awareness, the only consistent recurring theme, makes for a brilliant propaganda piece that invokes the most intense suppression of logic during the

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Soviet era. Even the film's very title is so unabashedly patronizing that you feel as though you're really dealing with a genuine Zio-classic from beginning to end.
-blind lame okb

VISIONS

Richard Pearce (1977)

Admittedly, surrealist operatic porn seems like a superlatively stupid and patently pointless concept, but then again it also sounds quite intriguing, especially if you're a somewhat peculiar person like me who only watches old school blue movies for potential aesthetic value. As far as I know, the only somewhat operatic fuck flick that exists is the lost classic of lechery, *Visions* (1977) aka *Larrys saftiga porrdrömmar* directed by stage manager/director turned porn auteur turned 'legit' exploitation hack Chuck Vincent (Blue Summer, Roommates) under the curious Hispanic pseudonym 'Felix Miguel Arroyo.' While best known for humorous yet hot porn flicks starring sensual superstars like Veronica Hart, Samantha Fox, and Jamie Gillis, Vincent is best known for creating a seriously dark, phantasmagoric, experimental, and just plain bizarre feature with *Visions*, hence why he probably opted for using a pen name instead of his own, as it certainly does not seem like it was directed by the same pornographer. A sort of marginally melancholy heterosexual equivalent to Wakefield Poole's avant-garde fag fuck flick *Bijou* (1972) as a mostly silent film that is largely set in a sort of pitch black pornographic pandemonium featuring giant genitals and phantom butt-fuckers, Vincent's transcendently salacious piece of celluloid has been described by some reviewers as the porn film you might expect Nordic Northern American auteur Guy Maddin to make, yet the film is far too serious and 'sexually sound' to have been directed by the incest and all-around-perversion-obsessed man that directed such idiosyncratic works as *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) and *Careful* (1992). Indeed, one of the most intriguing things about *Visions* is that everything is played 'straight' and is never tongue-in-cheek, which is quite unusual for a man whose specialty is comedy-driven cumshots. Of course, like the equally artistically endowed auteur pornographer the Amero Brothers (*Bacchanale*, *The Death of Scorpio*), Vincent was a rampant homo who made rampantly hetero porn flicks during the great Golden Age of Porn aka 'Porn Chic' era. Indeed, a work featuring a fairy-like fellow with a prepubescent mustache performing cunnilingus on an extra-exotic flapper sitting on a swing juxtaposed to the potent yet hardly pornographic sounds of Richard Wagner's "Die Walküre" aka "The Valkyrie," as well as a watching passively as the ghost of his beloved wife sucks the cocks of jagged rock formations, *Visions* is a curious collection of vice-ridden Gothic and absurdist visions contained with tantalizing and oftentimes even tasteful tableaux that reminds one that there is oftentimes a rather thin line between art and pornography, for both typically wallow in ritual and fetishism.

Melancholy musical composer Larry (played by Wade Nichols of Armand Weston's 1978 pornographic Oscar Wilde adaptation *Take Off* and Radley Metzger's 1979 work *Maraschino Cherry*) cannot get over the tragic death of his

VISIONS

lover (Susan McBain), so he spends all his free time composing music while imagining his wife dancing to his compositions. One night while practicing at a studio, Larry is approached by a philosophizing Janitor (W.P. Dremak) who asks him if he does anything aside from practice like party. Of course, as Larry explains regarding his music, "this is my party." After giving Larry a swig of liquor, the Janitor proceeds to get on his figurative soapbox and begins berating the composer's work for its lack of soulfulness, stating in bastardized American English: "Larry...I'm gonna tell ya' something. Your playin' ain't so hot. Oh now, you got all the notes right, but it's empty...you lack mystery in your music...soul...you understand what I mean? You gotta get a life-force in it. All those longhairs had to do it, like that, uh, Beethoven fellow...didn't he die of cirrhosis or syphilis or something like that? Yeah, and Mozart...MOZ-ART...now he was a wild one too. How do you think they wrote great music? By feeding great emotions! Did you ever fall in love with anybody? Really in love with them – more than yourself. I did." After Larry once again sees a vision of his dead wife, he leaves the studio room to follow her, which makes the Janitor think that he has offended him with his harsh words, so he yells to the musicians, "I think you're gonna be great one day. I really do." When Larry enters another room, he bumps into two dorky looking burglars (David Christopher and Michael Thorpe) and is soon hit over the head and knocked unconscious by one of the goons, thus transporting him to a sexually surreal netherworld of gigantic genitals and operatic orgies.

After entering the sexually surreal underworld, Larry follows his sensual somnambulist-like lover through various rather risqué orgy rooms. After a long romantic rendezvous with his lover on a fur-adorned bed in what seems to be a cave which is lit up by hundreds of cameras, Larry loses his significant other after being temporarily woken up by the Janitor, who ultimately fails to fully revive him. From there, Larry enters a vice-ridden vaudeville-themed room featuring a cunt-licking Uncle Sam with a faggy frog mustache, a swing-riding flapper with exotic make-up, a midget ringmaster (played by Luis De Jesus aka 'Mr. Short Stud'), a raunchy redhead, and a construction worker who looks like a member of the Village People. Although Larry does not really join in their somewhat sinister seeming sexscapades, he does get erotically embroiled in an angelic all-white orgy room where he is treated to a long session of skull-buggery, which is topped off with classic coitus. After suffering a heart attack after being checked by two dorky paramedics, Larry enters a hardcore hedonistic hell where he is tied to a stake and is forced to witness the sadistic torture of the two burglars that hit him over the head by big black beastess and her equally cruel Caucasoid comrade. After one of the burglars faces death via medieval sword to the chest, Larry is set free by his captors and is reunited with his lover who takes him to a dark yet fiery room where they make love and are ultimately united forever. Indeed, while the Janitor yells to Larry's corpse, "Larry, don't leave us. You can make it," the musical composer decides to stay with his love for eternity by accepting

death.

Like Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948) meets a heterosexual take on Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) with a splash of gentile vaudeville, Vincent's *Visions* is not only a visually fantastic fuck flick that is more about phantasmagoria than frivolous fetishism, but is also a genuinely romantic porn picture that will most likely be more enjoyable to lovers than erotically-challenged losers who live with their grandmothers and are merely looking for a cheap and quick masturbation aid. Indeed, more than anything else, the film seems like the most ambitious and desperate attempt of a real creatively repressed artist who is forced to make a living as a pornographer at truly expressing express himself. Needless to say, as a work of celluloid art, *Visions* is a somewhat incoherent cinematic vision, but as porn, it is an unequivocal singular masterpiece that manages to reasonably successfully seamlessly combine poetry and pornography in a way that sometimes makes you forget that you're watching a woman sucking the cock of a rock.

-Ty E

NO MERCY
NO MERCY

Richard Pearce (1986)

Swallowing grit, I decided to watch and review a newer Korean film from the same company that brought us the manic youth transpiring in *Attack the Gas Station!* Even though these films have nothing to do with each other other than country of origin, I feel that this noted was better than just jumping headfirst into discussing the wildly fluctuating events that occur within the confines of this newer Korean thriller. *No Mercy*, much like *A Bittersweet Life*, *Truck, Mother, The Chaser*, and *Memories of Murder*, is another excellent K-thriller displaying the exploitative world of Korean crime as popularized in cinema. A steadfast picture without the help of such blockbuster faces of Byung-hun Lee or Kang-ho Song, *No Mercy* gets right into the jugular at merely the halfway mark and never lets go, not even past the rolling credits. Even though I continue to be in a concise state of duress after my viewings of such emotionally hampering films, it appears I can still channel human emotion into an addressable manner, which is nice.

No Mercy centers around two characters and neither one of them is more important than the other to the fruition of the tale; the only questionable difference is that one of them has more to lose. Sul Kyung-gu is a top forensic investigator who now lives a quiet life waiting for the arrival of his daughter who was in the United States for reasons unexplained at the time. As he dabbles in odd cases and gives advice to the detectives in charge, this does well with establishing a very real connection to the police station and dividing him apart from these unbeatable detective heroes. Min-ho's involvement in a murder case committed by an environmental activist becomes all the more personal when he is handed an envelope while at the airport containing pictures of his kidnapped daughter. Now in order for him to ever see his daughter again, the killer demands to be released in 3 days in turn for her safe carriage. This is where *No Mercy* turns from typical police drama into a young, rebellious vehicle for insistent evidence tampering, which is a very cool departure from your casual search-and-seizure operations via cinema. I'm looking at you, *CSI* and *Law and Order*.

In a radical and idiotic move, *No Mercy* has been centering itself around its visceral climax entirely, as if to discredit the incredibly paced previous events. Heralding the ending by comparing it to *Oldboy's* is a blunder on their part. Giving the audience expectations and predictability is exactly what is wrong with modern cinema. Going into a film blind to what may or may not occur is a rarity these days, what, with all the suburbanites checking reviews and ratings with their fancy smart-phones. There might as well be an app for spoilers. Another critical mishap in the same vein was the shot-by-shot remake of [*Rec*], *Quarantine*, which featured the final shot of the film not only in the trailer, but as

the theatrical poster. No Mercy is a film that stands true to its title, as most films seem to nowadays. Disaster Movie was a disaster, Dead Calm was a quiet thriller, The Other Guys is a film concerning people that I don't care about, and No Mercy doesn't particularly care about any character by the sudden end of this diabolical over-stylized "horror" film.

When the ending does piece itself together after some frantic rogue detective work, the results will be vicious and will incite a session of brainstorming much needed. With all the previous events that transpired, one must pause the film or to seek in retrospect, all preceding scenes and realize the gravity of the situation that these characters were lured into. While I may be considered a hypocrite for bringing to light the banal state of the industry and its pilfering of cinematic curveballs, I had no choice but to face and attack this blatant mimicry of the artistry of the photoplay. For what it is worth, No Mercy isn't one of the Korean masterpieces that I hoped it would be but due to the complexity of the "big reveal" and the chemistry between the antagonist and protagonist, this comes out as a clever, murder-charged spectacle that is easy on the eyes, as are most budgeted Korean films however. It's just a shame that the creators feel the need to reference the "shocking" ending as a selling point for their already-gifted film.

-mAQ

HARDWARE
HARDWARE

Richard Stanley (1990)

Without question, Dylan McDermott is one of the biggest and most grating human dildos to have ever graced the silver-screen and thus it is no surprise that he has starred in some of the most banal movies and TV shows oftentimes playing the unbelievable role of doctors, but there is at least one film he starred in that has some testicular fortitude and aesthetic allure. Indeed, somehow dildo McDermott played the lead role in the post-apocalyptic dystopian cyberpunk flick *Hardware* (1990) directed by South African auteur Richard Stanley (*Dust Devil*, *The Theatre Bizarre*). A sort of superlatively stylish *The Terminator* rip-off meets a poor man's take on Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985), albeit more culturally cynical, punk rock, and bitingly acid-washed, *Hardware* is like a sci-fi flick for those exceedingly negative nihilists who couldn't care less if the world suffers some sort of nasty global nuclear holocaust. The debut feature film of auteur Stanley, who previously directed music videos from bands like English Gothic rock group *Fields of the Nephilim* and Johnny Rotten's post-Sex Pistols post-punk group *Public Image Ltd (PiL)*, the film is no less musically-inclined as a work featuring cameos from Iggy Pop as a raunchy radio host, Lemmy of *Motörhead* as a taxicab driver, and Carl McCoy of *Fields of the Nephilim* as a somewhat sinister desert-lurking nomad of the post-apocalyptic cowboy sort, hence its mostly deserved cult status today as a sort of science fiction flick for losers, loners, born again Spenglerians and/or unrepentant recreational drug users whose brains have been turned to mush. Indeed, set in a world with deformed dickhead midget junk dealers, futuristic television broadcasts inspired by the acid house group *Psychic TV*, lard ass peeping toms with Hebraic surnames that get off to prank calling their neighbors, bitchy protagonists on welfare with voracious appetites for sex and drugs, and a self-regenerating and human-exterminating robot, *Hardware* is like Philip K. Dick on punk and psychedelics. Indeed, part unpretentious arthouse, part degenerate dystopian sci-fi, part soft core yet suave spatter flick, and part sardonic satire, Stanley's less than flattering filmic depiction of the future is undoubtedly a rare science fiction work that does not make you feel like a virginal dork for watching it. Featuring scorching red desert landscape scenes which were filmed on location in Morocco that look sort of like Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984) were it set in some sort of post-Jihad hell, *Hardware*—a work based on the short story "Shok" from the British sci-fi-oriented comic *2000 AD* about 'Strato-Bat Pilot' who buys the head of a Shok Trooper Robot and gives it to his artist girlfriend as a present for one of her projects, thus resulting in bloody murderous consequences—is also indisputable proof that you can take a mostly moronic storyline and make something truly aesthetically transcendental if you have the right flare as a filmmaker.

A Nomad (Carl McCoy) dressed in all black that looks like something in between the Grim Reaper and a post-apocalyptic cowboy digs up some robot parts, including a metallic skull, out the sand of a desert wasteland and brings it to a junk shop owned by an asshole midget named Alvy (played by Mark Northover, who is best known for his role in the 1988 fantasy flick *Willow* directed by Ron Howard). While Alvy is in the back of his store, a smart-ass soldier with a bionic arm named Moses "Hard Mo" Baxter (dildo Dylan McDermott) buys the robot parts from the Nomad, though he sells all the parts to Alvy except the menacing robo-skull, which he plans to give to his rather reclusive girlfriend Jill (Stacey Travis of *Phantasm II* (1988) and *Ghost World* (2001)) as a special Christmas gift. Since it has been sometime since Mo has come by to see Jill, she is somewhat reluctant to allow him in her flat, but she eventually gives in as she loves her mensch, even if he is a rather negligent boyfriend who leaves for long periods of time without contacting her. A somewhat eccentric and high-strung artist, Jill uses the robot head as the finishing piece of an 'abstract' sculpture she is creating. While Mo tries to convince his girlfriend to make more commercial-oriented works, Jill—a pathological pothead and unabashed welfare recipient who lives off the government—has no interest in 'selling-out,' as she creates her art for herself and herself alone. While Mo has given up all hope of having a child, Jill clearly wants one, but her patent pessimism and cultural cynicism makes her think it is a bad idea. Of course, as the two lovers will soon learn, the government is plotting to exterminate humans via killer robots, so it indeed might be a bad idea to bring children into this decidedly dystopian world.

While having 'make-up sex,' Mo and Jill are spied on by a grotesque fat Judaic-like neighbor named Lincoln Wineberg, Jr. (William Hootkins), who on top of being a peeping tom and all-around pathetic pervert, is also responsible for putting security in the local apartment buildings. Meanwhile, junk dealer Alvy learns that the robot parts that were brought in by the mysterious Nomad from the desert are from a robot called the 'M.A.R.K. 13,' so he tells Mo to come by his shop, but when the soldier gets there, he finds the wisecrack midget dead as a result of mysterious cytotoxin poisoning. As Mo learns after looking in the Bible, the robot is named after the quote, "No flesh shall be spared" under Mark 13:20, thus making the ex-soldier realize that the government has created a genocidal man-murdering machine. While at Alvy's place, Mo also realizes that the killer robot is capable of self-repair, though it has a strange weakness to water and humidity. Although Mo attempts to get his friend Shades (John Lynch) to go by Jill's place to protect her from the M.A.R.K. 13 robot skull, his comrade is far too inebriated on some sort of psychedelic drug. While playing peeping tom, pathetic pervert Wineberg notices a robot—the fully self-repaired M.A.R.K. 13—peeping out of Jill's place, so he goes by her place to warn her. Indeed, the robot has already attempted to exterminate Jill, who is locked in the apartment, and when wanton Wineberg shows up at her apartment, he doesn't

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think twice about sexually harassing her in a superlatively sleazy fashion. Of course, Wineberg does not believe Jill's seemingly far-fetched story about a murderous robot, so he is killed after not taking heed of the young lady's warning not to go near her blinds (indeed, Wineberg hoped to open the blinds so it would be easier to peep on her). After managing to flee to her kitchen, Jill manages to avoid the robot's infrared vision by hiding behind a refrigerator and ultimately does a little bit of damage to the death-bot. While Mo, Shades, and an apartment security team manage to kill the robot shortly upon arriving at the apartment, the M.A.R.K. 13 manages to come back to life and drag Jill out the window while she is embracing her boy toy. While would-be-macho Mo attempts to be a bad ass and fights in a foolish haphazard manner with the Robot, he is soon fatally wounded and dies slowly, with the security team also being exterminated as well. After hacking into the kill-bot's CPU in an attempt to malfunction it, Jill learns the M.A.R.K. 13's weakness for water, so she lures it into her bathroom and kills it with her shower. In the end, it is revealed by a radio DJ named "Angry Bob - The Guy with the Industrial Dick" that the government's Defense Department plans to mass-produce M.A.R.K. 13 Cyborgs, thus setting up Hardware for a sequel that was planned but never actually made.

Apparently, director Richard Stanley originally intended to make Hardware more of an allegorical 'anti-fascist' work that was inspired by his upbringing in Apartheid era South Africa, but luckily you would never catch that watching the film. Indeed, in its depiction of a government weapon that is capable of exterminating countless people in distant lands, Stanley's film certainly seems more relevant today in our age of unmanned drones and whatnot. Interestingly, before shooting Hardware, Stanley joined a guerrilla Muslim faction in the Soviet War in Afghanistan, which produced the documentary short *Voice of the Moon* (1990) and inspired the overall aesthetic of the director's dystopian flick. Featuring apocalyptic spiritual references ranging from Mark 13 to the Hindu Goddess Kali to Tarkovsky's masterpiece *Stalker* (1979), Hardware is, if nothing else, the greatest metaphysical punk rock sci-fi flick ever made and arguably the greatest *The Terminator* rip-off ever made as a sort of *Future-Kill* (1985) on steroids meets *Blade Runner* (1982) on LSD. Although Stanley never got to realize his dream of making a sequel for bureaucratic business reasons (apparently, the rights to the original film were split between various parties), he did write a complete script under the title *Hardware II: Ground Zero*, which would have been more 'acid western' oriented. By no means a masterpiece of any sort, Hardware is certainly one of the most decadent, degenerate, debasing, pessimistic, and even misanthropic sci-fi flickers ever made, as a work that dares to depict the overall disgusting essence of the particular zeitgeist when it was made. Indeed, with the nerdy philo-Semitism of *Star Trek*, it is quite refreshing to see a sick sci-fi flick were a grotesque kosher peeping tom states things like, "Taking that big dick [...] suck it dry [...] squeeze it," while masturbating while

spying on his neighbor being brutally slaughtered by a Biblically-named cyborg. Of course, the soundtrack featuring music by Public Image Ltd., Motörhead, Ministry, and Iggy Pop did not hurt either. And, of course, the film would have been better without dildo McDermott, who might have fared better playing the M.A.R.K., or so one would assume after seeing his rather robotic acting performance. Indeed, I put off watching Hardware for about a decade because I knew he was in the film, but after watching the work, I have to say that I need to stop allowing myself from being deterred towards watching films because of appalling actors.

-Ty E

DUST DEVIL
DUST DEVIL

Richard Stanley (1992)

Long before there was HBO's *True Detective* and the viewer had the opportunity to go on a philosophical and metaphysical odyssey involving super sinister serial killers, disgruntled law men with nihilistic philosophies, deathly barren desert landscapes, and ritualistic sex murders as committed by less than savory followers of the left-hand path merely by turning on their TV and tuning in, there existed the seemingly accursed artsy fartsy South African-UK horror flick *Dust Devil* (1992) directed by Richard Stanley (*Hardware*, *The Theatre Bizarre*). Part Southern African Gothic, part post-apartheid allegory, part decidedly dark continent acid (anti)western, part esoteric celluloid quest, part surrealist arthouse horror show, part existential study of the death drive, part transcendental serial killer flick, part avant-garde meta-cinema, and part shockingly cultivated metaphysical crime-thriller, Stanley's film is a curious work with a production history that was just as much a journey of sorts for the auteur as it was for the protagonists of the film. Filmed in the intolerably arid and dusty deserts of Namibia (16 of the film crew's motor vehicles were ground to a halt during the seven week shoot by the extreme dust) with a dedicated crew who were apparently almost driven to the verge of insanity, *Dust Devil* ultimately fell prey to the pernicious anti-artist kosher predatory capitalism of the Weinstein brothers of Miramax, who cut the film to a stereotypical horror movie running time of less than 90 minutes and excised the film of all its iconic dream-sequences, surrealism, and all the more potent elements that made it such a true idiosyncratic Tarkovskyan arthouse masterpiece. It was not until well over a decade later when Stanley's cut of the film was released in the United States as a part of a now-out-of-print 5-disc DVD set put out by Subversive Cinema featuring the director's 'The Final Cut' version, the original work print, three of the director's excellent rare documentaries (*The Secret Glory*, *Voice of the Moon*, *The White Darkness*), and the original soundtrack by Simon Boswell (who composed the score for Jodorowsky's *Santa Sangre* (1989) and Stanley's debut feature *Hardware* (1990), among various other horror/cult classics) that the real *Dust Devil* was belatedly unleashed on the world.

The genesis of *Dust Devil* was an aborted 16mm film of the same name that Stanley attempted to direct in 1984 (Stanley and the cinematographer's conscription in the South African Defense Force and the then current Angolan Bush War put a premature end to the production) that was inspired by a dream the director had, as well as a real-life serial killer Nhadiop from Namibia that had a fetish for killing white women and was purported to have magical powers. In that sense, the film was a literal and figurative dream-project for the auteur. Although the great-grandson of famous late-18th-century Welsh explorer of Africa, Sir Henry Morton Stanley, who once wrote in his work *Through the Dark Conti-*

ment regarding sub-Saharan Africans that “the savage only respects force, power, boldness, and decision,” Stanley was unfortunately spawned from card-carrying commies with far-left ethno-masochistic tendencies. Luckily, the filmmaker’s feminist neo-bolshevik Boasian anthropologist mother surrounded him with real-life magic, mystics, and witchdoctors as a young child, hence the highly spiritual nature of his films. Like Giulio Questi’s bizarre Gothic spaghetti western *Django Kill... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967) meets *The Hitcher* (1986) meets Wes Craven’s *The Hills Have Eyes* (1997) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) as directed by the South African bastard cinematic progeny of Andrei Tarkovsky, Donald Cammell, Mario Bava, and Ousmane Sembène, *Dust Devil* is the wayward horror-art result of a reluctant white man with an undeniable Faustian spirit (among other things, Stanley roamed around Afghanistan with Mujahideen rebels during the late-1980s, became initiated in voodoo rites in Haiti in 2000, and spent a good portion of his life traveling around Europa attempting to solve the mystery of tragic Jewish SS-Obersturmführer Otto Rahn and his search for the Holy Grail) who curiously sees the foremost murderous shape-shifting demon who haunts Southern Africa as a tall, dark, and handsome Nordic mensch who is more stoic than John Wayne and Clint Eastwood but a more suave lady’s man than Marcello Mastroianni.

Dust Devil is narrated by desert negro sage Joe Niemand (John Matshikiza), who is a ‘Sangoma’ (traditional healer), mystic, and cinephile that lives near Spitzkoppe in Namibia where he used to work at a now defunct movie theater where he fondly remembers catching a double feature of Dario Argento’s *Birds with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) and the Hammer-Shaw Brothers coproduction *Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* (1974) starring Peter Cushing. Joe is blind in one eye, which has a creepy faded bluish pigment to it. Jigaboo Joe will help guide his black South African cop friend from Bethanie, Sgt. Ben Mukurob (Zakes Mokae), who he believes is an ‘Uncle Tom’ (as demonstrated by his remark to him, “you gotta stop thinking like a white man and think like a man instead”), in his journey to hunt down an entity known as the ‘Dust Devil’ (played by Irish-American actor Robert John Burke, who is probably best known for playing the eponymous role in *RoboCop 3*) who hitches rides from attractive yet troubled white chicks in their 30s, seduces and has sex with them, murders them, and ritualistically dismembers their bodies. Indeed, during the beginning of the film, the Dust Devil breaks a girl’s neck named Saartjie Haarhoff (Terry Norton) just as she has an orgasm (what a way to die!), cuts up her body into dozens of pieces (keeping all her fingers except her thumbs for himself), uses her vital fluids to paint demonic Manson-esque blood murals on the walls of her home, and then burns the entire place down. Sergeant Ben first becomes aware that he is dealing with some dark entity when he investigates the Haarhoff murder and learns from a mortician at the local morgue, Dr. Leidzinger (obese German actress Marianne Sägebrect of Percy Adlon’s 1987

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kraut romantic comedy *Bagdad Café*), that the victim's body was used in some black magic witchcraft ritual (the body sustained "evisceration, partial cremation, sexual mutilation and possibly even cannibalism" along with having a clock piece wedged in her naughty bits). Meanwhile, a young woman named Wendy Robinson (Chelsea Field) in Johannesburg, South Africa is slapped by her husband Mark (Rufus Swart) after he accuses her of having cheated on him, so she leaves her nice suburban neighborhood and heads to Namibia. Needless to say, Wendy will become the Dust Devil's victim and Sgt. Ben and husband Mark will attempt to find her before it's too late.

While driving on a highway in Namibia, Wendy sees the handsome Dust Devil, who just got done mutilating a young man in a trailer and is dressed in a sort of post-punk industrial cowboy outfit in the spirit of British Gothic group Fields of Nephilim (the singer of the group, Carl McCoy, who previously played a similar figure in *Stanley's Hardware*, was originally supposed to play the Dust Devil but had to turn it down) and naturally picks him up as she clearly sees him as sexually appealing. After revealing that he is headed to "nowhere," the Dust Devil describes himself as a perennial traveler who feels most comfortable on the open road. While talking to her, the Dust Devil learns that Wendy has a nihilistic philosophy as demonstrated by her hate-fueled comments, "fuck superior forces" and "when you're dead, you're dead." Naturally, hardcore atheist Wendy becomes quite disturbed when she sees a doppelgänger of the Dust Devil hitchhiking on the road despite the fact he is sitting in her passenger seat. Ultimately, the Dust Devil disappears from the car and Wendy later considers committing suicide via slitting her wrists at a motel room, but she becomes happy when the demonic cowboy appears again and they start a heated sexual romance. Meanwhile, husband Mark lands in Namibia and is soon beaten by a group of blacks at a bar after they learn he served in the South African army (interestingly but not surprisingly, Stanley revealed in the audio commentary track for the film that the black actors really did hate Rufus Swart in real-life and began to really beat him during the bar scene). Indeed, hatred for white South Africans is universal among blacks from Namibia and Mark acts as a symbol of white power and oppression. Meanwhile, Sgt. Ben is told by his boss, Capt. Beyman (William Hootkins of *Star Wars* (1977) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981))—a sort of white counterpart to the black cop who also grieves the loss of his wife (while Beyman's wife is dead, Ben's wife left him 15 years ago because their son was killed in the 'white' military)—that he will soon have to take him off the case, but that he will give him all the documents on the Dust Devil and give him one more chance. More than solving a criminal case and saving a young white chick he couldn't care less about, Ben is seeking deliverance and redemption and he hopes to obtain it by catching the killer. A somewhat weird guy who listens to whale sounds instead of music and watches footage of whales being butchered by evil white folks, Ben also suffers from disturbing nightmares, including a burnt

skeleton ripping his heart out. Needless to say, Ben's dreams will not prepare him for his showdown with the Duſt Devil.

After being arrested by two stupid young white cops who get off to beating old negroes, playing with dismembered body parts, and looking at vintage homoerotic wrestling magazines, Mark is placed in a jail cell in a backward police station where he is found by Ben, who asks him if Wendy is his wife. While Mark and Ben team up to track down Wendy and the Duſt Devil before it is too late, racial tensions make their collaboration impossible. After Wendy finds a fancy case owned by her new lover containing dismembered fingers, she finds herself on the brink of being ritualistically murdered by the Duſt Devil, who walks in on her while she is fiddling with his things and tells her that his victims "wanted to die" and that he can "tell when someone's time up." Indeed, the Duſt Devil is a symbol of Wendy's 'Id' and desire, but she no longer longs for death and decides to fight back. When Wendy asks the Duſt Devil who he is, he states that he is, "from the other side of the mirror. I come from you." While Wendy manages to escape from the Duſt Devil juſt before he drives his ritualistic dagger into her after hitting him over the head, the demon uses his telekinetic powers to crash her Volkswagen into a big rig truck, so she flees into the abyss-like depths of the desert on foot without food and water. When the Duſt Devil totals Ben's truck as he and Mark are heading to find Wendy, the young white man and old black man decide to go their separate ways after the latter handcuffs the former to the wrecked automobile after he pulls a gun on him. Eventually, Wendy finds a super sandy ghost town where she eventually runs into Ben, but rejects his help. When Ben enters a ruined movie theater that is completely full of sand, the Duſt Devil messes with the cop's head by projecting a film featuring his wife and baby son, but luckily Joe somehow manages to get inside his head and tell him that it is merely an illusion like life itself, even comparing life to cinema. Unfortunately, Ben is soon killed in a rather anticlimactic fashion by the Duſt Devil, who drives his dagger into his gut, but death was what he desired all along as a broken and restless man who had nothing left to live for. Luckily, Wendy manages to get a hold of a shotgun and blows the Duſt Devil's entire head away right after he declares his love for her. In a twist ending, Wendy more or less inherits the Duſt Devil's demonic spirit and becomes a Duſt Demoness of sorts who immediately begins hunting for male prey. As for husband Mark, he is left to die in the desert by Wendy, who contemplates killing him before going on her merry way, but he does not give up hope that he will one day return to suburbia with his beloved bitch wife.

In the audio commentary for the Subversive Cinema DVD release of Duſt Devil, director Richard Stanley proudly remarks that the film was, "intended as a love letter to poſt-apartheid South Africa" and a "message to the Rainbow Nation [...] I wanted to show the way they were going to work things out." As a film where the villain is a white demonic cowboy who kills beautiful Aryan

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women for sport, the black cop who worked for the apartheid era police is senselessly sacrificed, a white South African ex-military man is brutally beaten by blacks merely for being white and is left to literally rot by his cheating wife, and the white female lead becomes a demon, I am not exactly sure how the film is suppose to show South Africans how to “work things out,” but then again, with the increasing number of murders of white Afrikaner Boer farmers by blacks in what has been described as the early stages of white genocide by Genocide Watch and has been intentionally ignored by the mainstream media (though, somewhat surprisingly, NBC once reported on the deplorable phenomenon, albeit in a typically biased manner that downplayed the racial aspect of it), one could argue that Stanley was certainly on to something. In its depiction of a pedophile-like white priest handing young white boys bullets and forcing them to engage in target practice, two young degenerate blond-haired cops brutally beating a kindly old negro for fun in an obscenely cartoonish fashion, and a black man telling his Uncle Tom friend to “stop thinking like a white man and think like a man instead,” Stanley certainly demonstrates what he thinks of white South Africa and the Occident in general. Ironically, the filmmaker currently resides in Montségur in southern France with the spirits of the Cathars, which does not surprise me, as I doubt he wants to deal with the social and racial chaos of his seemingly forsaken homeland. Personally, I find it quite fitting that *Dust Devil*—an ostensible “love letter to post-apartheid South Africa”—failed to ever receive a proper theatrical debut and almost instantaneously fell into obscurity upon its less than auspicious release, as it is somewhat symbolic of the failure of leftist utopian dreams regarding race relations and the all around abject failure of black-ruled South Africa as a whole. Unquestionably, one of the most potent scenes in the film is when the eponymous demon burns down his first victim’s home, as it acts as a sort allegory for the death of white civilization on the dark continent as is underscored by shots of colonial era vintage images of white people burning up and being reduced to ash, as if they never even existed.

Quite arguably a masterpiece that is unfortunately glaringly tainted by its half-baked quasi-commie social commentary and exceedingly ethno-masochistic depictions of black-white race relations, *Dust Devil* is certainly a work that, had it been created a couple of decades earlier, would have become a hit midnight movie like Alejandro Jodorowsky’s *El Topo* (1970) and David Lynch’s *Eraserhead* (1977), but as Stanley has stated in countless interviews, fate has not been too kind to him, with most of his film projects resulting in personal bankruptcy and the destruction of all his personal relationships. Of course, when one makes a film that makes liberal use of real black magic archetypes and themes, they probably should expect a little karmic blowback in their persona lives. Somewhat notably, shortly after *Dust Devil* finished shooting, one of the girls that worked as part of the art department for the film, Ina Roux, died after falling asleep at the wheel of her automobile one night in a manner not all that dis-

similar to how protagonist Wendy does in the movie (Ina's sister Amelia, who also worked on the film, was also in the crash but managed to survive). In a kind tribute to her memory, Stanley concludes his 'The Final Cut' version of the film with a dedication to Ms. Roux, whose pointless death is surely symbolic of the negative spiritual energy that *Duſt Devil* bleeds in a moſt profuſe faſhion. Indeed, not unlike a Tarkovsky flick, the film is an intimidating and taxing metaphysical celluloid odyssey that certainly demands more than moſt filmgoers are willing to give, thus making it an eſpecially disappointing work for the ſtereotypical ſlasher fan, as well as jaded gorehounds who are juſt looking for a quick maſturbatory thrill. If you're looking to ſee a truly tranſcendental horror film this Halloween with a decidedly dark vibe that totally lacks the 'fun' faċtor that people oftentimes aſſociate with the genre, watch *Duſt Devil* and baſk in the deluge of daunting demonic energy, foreboding paranoia, racial and cultural ſchizophrenia, eſoteric murder, ſpiritual nihilism, and poſt-colonial dread that the work wallows in. Indeed, more than anything, the film ſeems like Sir Henry Morton Stanley's worſt nightmare come to life and then ſome.

-Ty E

THE SECRET GLORY
THE SECRET GLORY

Richard Stanley (2001)

The Secret Glory is an exceptional documentary directed by Richard Stanley on the extraordinary life of SS officer Otto Rahn. When one speaks of members of the SS, they automatically think of a devil in human form. Rahn was not your typical SS man as he was a sensitive artist that joined "the club," as he put it to a friend, "dear paul, one has to eat." SS leader Heinrich Himmler recruited Otto Rahn due to Rahn's study of ancient Germanic cultures. Rahn was also able to confirm Himmler's ancient Aryan ancestry. After watching The Secret Glory it is made clear that Otto Rahn was a loner and an individualist. Someone that certainly had no interest in supporting collectivist governments such as the National Socialists. On the other hand, like the National Socialists, Rahn wanted the great European nations to unite (including France where he did much of his research). Otto Rahn inevitably had a falling out with the SS and had the audacity to quit the cult-like organization. Otto Rahn's emotionally cold mother sewed him a sweater with an SS lightning bolt on it that he wore very often. This is quite ironic considering that Rahn's mother was Jewish. Like almost all of the major Nazis were rumored to be Jewish (and conveniently almost all of their ancestral records were destroyed after World War II), Otto Rahn, like SS founder Emil Maurice, is confirmed to be of Jewish ancestry. Otto Rahn was a homosexual as well, and this also led to his unfortunate downfall. The SS gave Otto Rahn two options: to enter a concentration camp or commit suicide. Rahn was forced to work at two concentrations camps (including Dachau) as punishment and he was well aware what was going on in them. Naturally, Otto Rahn committed suicide by taking sleeping pills and freezing to death at a mountainside in Austria. Many rumors live on today about Rahn's suicide being faked. As The Secret Glory demonstrates, Otto Rahn had a very interesting life full of many mysteries. The documentary left me with many questions that I know will never be answered. Out of all the Nazi players I have read about, Otto Rahn is without doubt one of the most interesting (if not the most interesting). He is also much more worthy of notoriety than Indiana Jones (and the overrated banal actor the plays him), the Hollywood character whose life parallels (as Nigel Graddon's recent book on Otto Rahn insightfully demonstrates) Rahn's. The Secret Glory brings up high probability that Otto Rahn believed that Lucifer was "the son of God." It is also interesting to note that Rahn never said the word "God" out loud (also a Jewish belief). He was verily an individual that had his own ideas and theories. It was only appropriate that Otto Rahn would die by his own hand. The structure of The Secret Glory is a very dark yet soothing experience. Director Richard Stanley interweaves interview footage, vintage photographs, and early films (Fritz Lang's *M*, Aleksandr Nevskiy, etc) in a seamless manner. The music featured in The Secret Glory is very melancholy and gloomy. This

is a soundtrack that perfectly compliments the image of a timeless (and for the most part neglected) figure. Otto Rahn was an individual whom many said was always searching for something. The urge this young man had ultimately led to his death. One could say that Otto Rahn was doomed from birth, but very few could claim that they led a life as interesting as this unconventional SS man. I have yet to see a clear photograph of Otto Rahn in his black SS uniforms (if one even exists) and I find that only fitting.

-Ty E

THE WHITE DARKNESS
THE WHITE DARKNESS

Richard Stanley (2002)

The White Darkness is a documentary examining voodoo practiced by black Haitians. The documentary was directed by Richard Stanley who claims that he has some Haitian Indian blood due to one of his ancestors fucking an indigenous individual. The documentary also takes a brief look at the slavery of black Haitians and its unfortunate legacy. The black Haitians claim that they live in the past now. That sounds like a slave mentality to me.

Richard Stanley with a voodoo goddess

Apparently voodoo was put on the black Haitians by a rich European as a joke to another European. The black Haitians don't consider voodoo a joke by any means. Brain scans have been done to prove that weird changes occur while Haitians are in a "voodoo trance." I guess one man's practical joke is another man's entire meaning of life. The Haitians also pride themselves in their denial of Christianity. Some whites want to believe that these voodoo fanatics are Catholics. One black Haitian laughs at the thought. Thankfully, some third world people haven't fallen for the anti-human and false lies of so-called Christian altruism. Despite voodoo being a joke, these black Haitians practice voodoo in a respectable and serious manner.

Naive American Christian Military Men wasting their time as usual

Although proud of their escape from slavery, the black Haitians demand that the world provide them food and living resources. One man claims that the black Haitians will always live in the past, unlike the white man. That being said, it seems as if the former slaves are uninterested in true independence as they demand some sort of reparations. Sounds like something similar going on in the United States that seems to only get worse.

Mudman Represent!

The black Haitians also hate seeing whitey on their turf and would pull a gun on them for no reason. This irrational act results in a handful of black Haitian deaths. My recommendation is that the whites cut off the blacks and just let them be. Strength comes from hardship, not from accommodating weakness. The White Darkness is an unintentionally exploitive documentary guaranteed to entertain and enlighten the viewer on third world matters.

-Ty E

THE MEATRACK

Richard Stockton (1970)

In my opinion, there are few forms of existence that are as patently pathetic, self-debasing, and nihilistic than that of the male hustler, yet queer filmmakers like Gus van Sant (*Mala Noche*, *My Own Private Idaho*) and Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass*, *Hustler White*) have dedicated their filmmaking careers to romanticizing the lives of these sad and seemingly forsaken individuals. Of course, with so many ostensibly heterosexual 'gay-for-pay' dick-peddlers out there, the hustler gives the homo the ultimate and seemingly intangible lifelong dream of being buggered by a butch boy, so it is no surprise that some gay filmmakers have depicted the young and desperate male prostitute as an almost religious figure, which began long before any sexual invert ever went to film school as demonstrated by the neo-classical boysploitation portraits of 19th-century kraut photographer Wilhelm von Gloeden. With his innovative Warhol-produced anti-counter-culture trilogy (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*) starring Joe Dallesandro and his post-Warhol effort *Forty Deuce* (1982) starring a then-unknown Kevin Bacon, proud right-wing auteur Paul Morrissey managed to demystify the hustler archetype by presenting the life of a male prostitute as being part of overall liberal 'toilet culture' and a non-life plagued by spiritual and material poverty, soul-draining drug addiction, perennial apathy, and even sexual impotence. Aside from Morrissey's work, a little know artsploitation flick from the same zeitgeist with the fitting, if not sleazily fetishistic, title *The Meatrack* (1970) directed by one-time-auteur Richard Stockton and directed by Joel Ensana (whose sole film credit was writing the first episode of the forgotten TV series *Norman Corwin Presents* (1972)) also attempted to depict the waywardly wasteful life of a gigolo in all of its unhinged unglory. A film that cannot completely decide whether it wants to be a salacious sexploitation flick, a poor man's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), and/or a serious and artsy character study about the sort of damaged psyche it takes for one to peddle their ass to ugly old men that wear dresses and other sorts of unsavory sexual deviants. Directed in a cockeyed and oneiric yet gritty and realistic semi-amateurish style reminiscent of the more interesting films of sadomasochistic sodomite gutter auteur Andy Milligan (*Nightbirds*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*), as well as early 1970s porn chic cult flicks like *The Back Row* (1973) directed by Jerry Douglas and the narrative-driven works of Jack Deveau (*Left-Handed*, *Drive*), *The Meatrack* is ultimately a curious celluloid convergence of tasteless 42nd street celluloid sleaze and the pseudo-existentialist cocksucker blues. The tragic, if not uneventful, story of a human meatrack and dreary dead soul with nothing to lose except his loser-lifestyle-sustaining good looks, *The Meatrack* is a just over-an-hour-long scum-and-cum-covered 16mm peepshow of one down-and-out male prostitute's own private pandemonium.

As the incessant foggy flashback scenes in *The Meatrack* readily demonstrate,

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J.C. (played by David Calder, but not the classically trained English actor of the same name) is haunted by the ghosts of the past as he had a less than ideal childhood as a poor proletarian fellow who had a man-hating and low-rank money-grubbing whore for a mother (Jan Stratton, who appeared in minor roles in films like *The Enforcer* (1976) starring Clint Eastwood and *The Great Santini* (1979) starring Robert Duvall) and a philandering deadbeat father (played by one-time actor Bob Romero, who personifies the word 'Guido'). At a young and critical age, J.C.'s brazen bitch of a mother taught her son that all men are horndog assholes and that one should exploit themselves for money, stating to her son, "Aside from robbing a bank, you do anything you can to get money, you understand? Don't you waste your time fooling around with cars and girls... You just take account of what you got and you use it for all it's worth." Of course, the only thing C.J. has got is a masculine muscular build and a fuck-you rebel-without-a-cause attitude, which he is willing to sell for a rather affordable price to the most repugnant of strangers. As can be expected, most of C.J. patrons are old pansy queens who get off to being savagely sodomized by the young mensch. When some pretentious middle-aged fag arrogantly states to C.J., "Kids like you don't come cheap... but its mine, all mine," the prostitute later makes his getaway and does not have to do the dirty deed with the posh poof. C.J. temporary hooks up with a horny housewife, but her clinginess annoys the hell out of the lecherous loner, so he takes a bus to San Francisco where he hooks up with an old used-up queen of a queer named Ken (Steven Ferris) with a large bulging gut who asks the hustler if he is "hot for leather" and adds, "Myself, I like them real, real butch." Ultimately, C.J. dresses up in an Anger-esque sailor uniform à la *Fireworks* (1947) and brutally beats and sexually savages Ken, who is in full drag queen regalia, including an unflattering corset and an equally repellant hag wig. When Ken gives C.J. the backhanded compliment, "You know, you don't look like a hustler. Their usually pimply faced and wear dirty socks. I know you're not a bum," the unimpressed prostitute shows his complete and utter disdain for the patron by asking, "What's it to you? You got what you wanted, right?" in a rather snide fashion. Needless to say, cocksucker Ken is hurt and somberly says to C.J., "You are the most unfriendly young man. You don't talk... You don't listen... Oh, how typical, you just do what you have to do. Oh, you're all alike. Just meat... pieces of meat." Exceedingly self-loathing, Ken then says to himself, "Gay, huh, that's a laugh! It's a lonely life." From there, C.J. heads to a movie theater that is playing C-grade trash *Attack of the Crab Monsters* (1957) and *The Scream Skull* (1958) and makes the following threat to a crotch-grabbing prospective buyer of a blowjob, "I said ten bucks or I'll break your hand!" in a rather hateful yet monotone manner. While administering a much unwanted blowjob, C.J. has a childhood flashback of witnessing his mother screwing a strange man. Indeed, C.J. has major mommy issues that have resulted in one rather warped view of sexuality.

After catching a Photographer (Rodney Wheelock) sexually assaulting a young lady named Jean (Donna Troy), C.J. beats the pernicious pervert, saves the girl, and becomes a smalltime hero of sorts and demonstrates he is not a total scumbag. Jean and C.J. instantly start a seemingly intimate love affair, but their happiness is cut short when two deranged tranny criminals hold them hostage with knives and force them to star in an amateur porn film, which they shoot on an archaic 16mm Bolex camera. Naturally, Jean and C.J. decide to leave town together, but they need money. Jean has no clue that her new boy toy is a gay-for-pay hustler and when she makes a derogatory remark about queers, C.J. semi-defends gays by stating, "To me, they're like that Charlie Chaplin...funny and sad, like everything." To fund their trip, C.J. tells Jean to hangout at a movie theater and then he picks up a Leather-Fag that looks like he just walked off the set of *Scorpio Rising* (1964). The Leather-Fag remarks to C.J. that he caught his eye because he is, "the damned, meanest looking kid I've seen today" and the two go back to the Hustler's apartment where the patron pays to get a beating, but just as he is about to cum, Jean randomly walks in and discovers her lover is half-homo. Needless to say, Jean runs away and C.J. follows her but he is too slow and ultimately witnesses his beloved being tragically killed after being hit by a car. Somewhat depressed, C.J. goes to a screening of *All the Sins of Sodom* (1968) directed by Joseph W. Sarno and has a panic attack while some dude is going down on him and storms out of the theater via a backdoor emergency exit where he is then verbally assaulted by a seemingly schizophrenic Jesus Freak Preacher (Alan Dye) who yells at the hustler, "I condemn in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I condemn you sinner." From there, C.J. keeps running into the night and a flashback of him running as a child is spliced in. C.J. also remembers a traumatizing moment from his unfortunate childhood when his loser father berated him for crying, hence his incapacity for expressing emotion. In the end, C.J. is picked up by some flaming fairy and tells the driver he does not care where he is going, thus continuing his vicious cycle of reckless wandering and prick-peddling vice.

A conspicuously culturally pessimistic work about an (at least spiritually) innately impenetrable young man on a literal and figurative road to nowhere, *The Meatrack* ultimately portrays the Hustler as an antisocial individual seemingly suffering from schizoid disorder who has totally given up on real-life and does as little as possible (i.e. prostitutes himself) so as not to starve to death. Of course, I am sure there are some perverted poofs and even misguided women out there that might find such a tragic and emotionally void fellow appealing, but *The Meatrack* will ultimately prove to be a major downer for any semi-sane person. Undoubtedly, *The Meatrack* is one of those rare films that made me feel decidedly dirty after watching it, as if I just passively followed antihero C.J. along on his cruising campaign and did nothing to stop him from debasing his mind and body. Indeed, while the name 'The Meatrack' makes the work sound

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like some old school S&M blue movie (indeed, at least one porn film has the same name), the title really says it all, as C.J. is really nothing more than a walking and (barely) talking delicacy for lonely degenerates. More entertaining than similarly themed Warhol flicks like *My Hustler* (1965) and more raw and realistic than *Midnight Cowboy*, *The Meatrack* is certainly an underrated work of its decadent celluloid breed that deserves a larger audience than the handful of uncultivated exploitation fans who see it as a cheap thrill. In fact, those looking for softcore pornography will most likely find *The Meatrack* to be hopelessly banal, if not downright insulting, as the film feels as if it gawks at the gawker in disapproval for exploiting a loser's misery. Sometimes feeling like a work of *cinéma vérité* due to its jerky handheld camera work and distinct voyeuristic gaze, *The Meatrack* ultimately makes a film like van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) seem like counterfeit art faggotry directed by a misguided bourgeois queer whose romanticization for dick-peddling is quite akin to absurdly phony Hollywood films and mainstream TV shows that depict negroes as noble savages and rocket scientists. A rare film where the cipher-like star's lack of acting talent is to the film's benefit as it highlights the metaphysically dead protagonist's lack of emotion and unwaveringly apathy, *The Meatrack* certainly packs a mean and perturbing punch of urban celluloid slime and grime that captures the essence of those spiritually excrement-ridden times before AIDS made hustling an even more deleterious profession.

-Ty E

THE MISLED ROMANCE OF CANNIBAL GIRL /& INCEST BOY

Richard Taylor (2007)

The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy is a gorey yet cute “girl meets boy” short film. The short was shot on Super 8 film (one of my favorite formats) and has a quite appealing aesthetic. The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy also has Troma’s tromatic “seal of approval” and features Troma founder Lloyd Kaufman having his head appropriately stomped into a bloody mess. Any film featuring the Neo-vaudevillian antics of Lloyd deserves a look. Cannibal Girl begins her short relationship with Incest Boy after eating incest boy’s sister’s gash out to a point much rawer than any other meat curtain could be. The two lovers have sexual relations in a graveyard shortly after becoming acquainted. Cannibal Girl enjoys her ride on incest boy and his disgusting inbred mutant tail. The couple also encounters a group of lame ass looking scene people that would fit in well at a local pop punk concert. A couple that kills for each other is a couple that loves one another. The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy features an atmospheric score that surprisingly works great with the erotically bloody short. Most short films (and low budget films in general) feature shitty music that was obviously put in the film as it was the only music available or as a promise to a friend. This may be the case for The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy, but it works. Whether it be Cannibal Girl biting off a perverts cock or the two lovers embracing each others bloody hearts, the psychedelic music fits the deranged image. I give The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy an elite SS stamp of approval as it is an amateur short actually worth viewing. It borders between art and gratuitous trash. If you liked fucked up gore films and the early films of Gay Baltimore Auteur John Waters, The Misled Romance of Cannibal Girl and Incest Boy is the short for you. Supporting Super 8 Sinema is a godly act.

-Ty E

BEDEVILLED
BEDEVILLED

Richard Thorpe (1955)

Forget what you heard. *Bedevilled* (2010) isn't the post-revival Korean horror/thriller that it has so endearingly been heralded. Thank you for allowing me to issue that statement before starting, as if you had a choice. I had long sought out *Bedevilled* as similar tastes beckoned me. Hell, I find it a struggle to not enjoy a Korean thriller, the likes of which have been completely Westernized and easily appease whatever hunger my tastes crave on these late, lonely nights. What is bleak about this scenario is that originally, *Bedevilled* held so much promise and integrity, but at the hands of a novice director, was a spoiled effort. I don't blame Chul-soo Yang personally as this is an admirable debut attempt at what could of been a South Korean masterpiece. I won't hold his name in high esteem, at least, until he redeems the talent he hinted at briefly in *Bedevilled*. Much fortune was squandered with this failed attempt at storytelling, so I find it hard to commit spelling out the turbulence encountered by *Bedevilled* and its misapplied approach to conventional misandry.

To perfectly sum up *Bedevilled*, allow me to quote one of the elder wenches - "A woman's most happy with a dick in her mouth". I'd be hard-pressed to dispute this given my experience with women; such a cantankerous, rivalry-obsessed sex, hardly fairer, teeming with unbridled hostility disguised as angelic ignorance. The plot is relayed like so; an upper-class woman gets forced unto a vacation period and decides to visit her childhood friend on a secluded island. What becomes of her is all-too similar to the entrapping situation she encountered on the mainland of Seoul - witnessing a crime but keeping hush. Hae-won beholds the aggravated abuse suffered at the hands of friend Bok-nam which includes, but is not limited to: rape, objectification, abuse of both physical and emotional degrees, and extreme degradation at the hands of her peers. This all changes when a life is taken and you will watch, slowly, as a feral vengeance of forms is released out of the mousy Bok-nam. Try not to take my synopsis too close to heart as I dramatized much of the alleged impact. *Bedevilled* toys about with its apocalyptic battle of the sexes, so much that the intended thrilling sensation is lost due to expiration. Yes, *Bedevilled* is one of those offenders who is so pleased with itself that, due to its own carelessness, loses much of the intended effect.

Bedevilled is an experience I wanted to turn back on and muster kind thoughts towards. I longed to think of the episode and relive the tragedy and violence that I foresaw coming, before even viewing the trailer or hearing of the finale. The simple recommendation for die hard horror fans sold me enough because their words didn't fail me with *I Saw the Devil*. That, however, is an entirely different beast as Kim Jee-woon is a skilled and masterful director of suspense. Odds are, Jee-woon will deliver what the picture promises and he has done so accordingly. *Bedevilled* also features much of that first grade symbolism of color choices, as

in the virginal lead Hae-won dons a soft white dress whereas Bok-nam wears dirty flannel. This is repeated quite often in *Bedevilled*, peaking when Hae-won returns to finish something she should have so long ago, wearing darker colors. This can also be noted in Aronofsky's *Black Swan* but exempt from backlash as the film encompasses a palette of colors and moods while *Bedevilled* is just a lazy rape/revenge film with ample atmosphere.

Bok-nam is a strange creature. No doubt is Seo Yeong-hie an exceptional actress, as she appeared in the superior *The Chaser*, but the role she is given within is so lifeless without her extended torture. What *Bedevilled* excels at, quite fittingly, is a rampant and erotic form of disturbing (yet arousing) sexuality. Simply watching Bok-nam's brother-in-law rape her while her husband fishes is an act of which words cannot begin to describe the enticing set-up and feminine defeat. Bok-nam had quite a good time, it would appear. Color this a similar experience as to Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* in which consent can be argued. As Major Charles Rane lectured in *Rolling Thunder* with a philosophical line "You learn to love the rope. That's how you beat them" - Bok-nam surely applied the same strategy to regulatory bouts of rape, rape, pass. Simply replace the "o" with an "a" and this can very well be a universal mantra of survival. This is where the fun ends, sadly, as *Bedevilled* soon builds into a once shocking, now derivative slasher film. Once the initial falling out occurs, one cannot help but to be unmoved by the second, third, fourth slaying as it is anticipated. The events prior tease and hint towards the final solution of *Bedevilled* but is unable to keep its promise of excellent standards. I wouldn't call *Bedevilled* a terrible picture, merely of plight. It is surely a contemptuous bitch of cinema but only for the first hour of screen time, then it drips into slow-stalk hack and slash territory and never looks back. *Bedevilled* is different tonally, though, so much can be negated as it does feature a grassland aesthetic which boasts rich cultural properties. Much to my chagrin, however, this isn't enough to save *Bedevilled* from an early grave. It might display a pivotal "moral of the story" cue card by the end of the film but that won't replenish the lack of nihilism to support it throughout.

-mAQ

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

Richard Wolstencroft (1999)

Pearls Before Swine is a cinematic mixed bag directed by Australian Richard Wolstencroft. I had an interest in watching the film as iconoclast Boyd Rice stars in the lead as a subversive “intellectual” hit man. Like Boyd Rice, director Richard Wolstencroft has flirted with fascism which can get a person blacklisted instantly in any field they may be interested in working in. For the controversial dialogue featured in Pearls Before Swine, I salute (or Roman salute) Richard Wolstencroft as a director that has balls in a contemporary degenerate society where the average filmmaker is truly scared to take any chances. My main problem with Pearls Before Swine, aside from the film's blatant low-budget, is how it attempts to be “cool” with its immature “life of crime” angle. I have never been too fond of how Quentin Tarantino attempts to make films that radiate “cool.” With Pearls Before Swine, director Richard Wolstencroft's form of cool involves snorting coke and silly stylized sex scenes. What do these things have to do with rants about the beauty of Nazi film director Leni Liefenstahl's films? I perfectly understand the S&M scenes as even that putrid kosher dyke Susan Sontag, who once stated so arrogantly “the white race is the cancer of human history,” admitted that sadomasochism is fascism in sex form. Sorry, but I just can't see Joseph Goebbels and Otto Skorzeny snorting lines of coke while sporting gay ass pleather pants. My favorite parts of Pearls Before Swine involve the speeches and tangents Boyd Rice goes on throughout the film. Sorry, but I really cannot imagine Mr. Rice as a badass hit man but more of an underground professor. In fact, maybe Boyd should start his own one of a kind school that studies both fascism and the occult. Anyone that has read *Standing in Two Circles: The Collected Works of Boyd Rice* knows that the man has done his fair share of studying and speculating. Some of the dialogues in Pearls Before Swine, however, are almost borderline self-parodies. When Boyd Rice starts talking about how Friedrich Nietzsche went insane, it kind of had me staring at the floor. I mean come on, I am sure most people that have an interest in Boyd Rice also know a little bit about ubermensch Nietzsche.

Pearls Before Swine also features an interesting soundtrack with music by Boyd Rice and the wonderful neo-folk tunes of Death in June. In fact, Death in June front man Douglas P. plays a character in the film that sells Boyd Rice some dirty vintage magazines. Pearls Before Swine also features Douglas P. (or at least one can only assume) in one of his awesome masks that he wears for Death in June. Douglas P.'s acting seems to also be a little more “professional” than Boyd Rice's. I just wish that the two collaborators will one day find a film project that better suits them. I watched Pearls Before Swine twice and must say that the film was better in the second viewing. The reason for this is probably because I was more prepared for the film's very low production values and mediocre acting.

Pearls Before Swine is a film that is more of a small treat for those individuals that already know of the lead actors in it. Otherwise, I would not recommend the film to many other people. Even for those that are fans of Boyd Rice, I am not sure that they would enjoy Mr. Rice getting paddled in the butt by an old man. Although I respect Pearls Before Swine director Richard Wolstencroft's bold, anti-politically correct filmmaking, I hope he is better prepared for future film productions.

-Ty E

HELLRAISER
HELLRAISER

Rick Bota (2005)

Undoubtedly, seeing *Hellraiser* (1987) aka Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* aka Sado-masochists from *Beyond the Grave* directed by British queer horror novelist turned auteur Clive Barker (*Nightbreed*, *Lord of Illusions*), which I first saw during elementary school, was a life changing experience as it demonstrated to me that horror films could not only be artful, spiritual, and hermetic, but also that some wanton women are willing to commit the most ungodly of evils just to get laid, including feeding male-prey to a sexually sadistic flesh-eating corpse. Shot on a budget of a mere \$1,000,000 and earning \$2,000,000, *Hellraiser* announced to the world that Barker was not a mere passive novelist who hides in his lair and masturbates to works by the Marquis de Sade, but an aesthetically aberrant auteur who was not afraid to cinematically produce his fetishism for sadomasochism, phantasmagoric surrealism, and arthouse cinema for mass consumption. Fed up with the fact that British hack George Pavolou destroyed his literary vision with goofy b-movies like *Underworld* (1985) aka *Transmutations* and *Rawhead Rex* (1986), Clive Barker—who previously dabbled with directing the quasi-homoerotic esoteric arthouse shorts *Salome* (1973) and *The Forbidden Heart* (1978)—decided that he would be faithful to his own novella *The Hellbound Heart* (1986) and cinematically adapt it himself, thus resulting in *Hellraiser*; the hermetic homo horror answer to the films of Derek Jarman. In fact, the British experimental industrial group Coil, which previously composed the score from Jarman's *The Angelic Conversation* (1985) and later the filmmaker's swansong *Blue* (1993), also created a soundtrack for *Hellraiser*, but the group had to withdraw their music (which Barker described as "bowel churning" and which was ultimately released in isolation in 1987 as the album *The Unreleased Themes for Hellraiser*) after some higher-ups decided it was commercially unfitting, thus a more 'traditional' horror score by hack American composer Christopher Young (*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*) was added to the film. Indeed, I almost hate to admit it, but what makes *Hellraiser* as successful as it is, is its seemingly aesthetically unruly combination of ominously oneiric and fiercely foreboding aestheticism with cheap classic horror conventions that trick the most Hollywood lobotomized of philistine filmgoers to devour actual celluloid art. Like *The Orphic Trilogy* directed by Jean Cocteau (who Barker has cited as a major influence) as reinterpreted by the sodomite serial killer(s) from William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) yet set in an ostensibly heterosexual pandemonium inhabited by lethally lecherous femme fatales and debauched sexual psychopaths, *Hellraiser* is nothing short of one of the finest and most important celluloid nightmares ever to reach the mainstream and a work that is only all the more relevant today with BDSM and so-called 'body modification' (as Barker has noted, the appearance of the Cenobites and the

sets were influenced by gay S&M magazines that members of Coil lent to him) having become all the more trendy since the film's initial release over 25 years ago.

Beginning in Morocco—a historical hotspot for depraved Europeans in exile—a degenerate white man named Frank Cotton (Sean Chapman) is asked by a junk-peddling Chinaman, “What’s your pleasure, sir?” in what is one of the mostly unintentionally humorous scenes of *Hellraiser*. Ultimately, fucked Frank buys the seemingly ancient ‘puzzle box’ (aka ‘Lemarchand’s box,’ with the specific box Frank buys being the ‘Lament Configuration’ box) and needless to say, he solves the puzzle, thus resulting in his entire body being ripped into shreds by chains with hooks and the room he was occupying turning into a sort of sodomite serial killer butcher shop from hell. Flash forward to an undisclosed period of time not long after, Frank’s cuckold brother Larry (Andrew Robinson) moves into the Cotton family home with his lecherous second wife Julia (Clare Higgins), who had an affair with Frank right before she got married to her more respectable yet less than sexually virile husband. Since Frank’s teenage daughter Kirsty (Ashley Laurence) thinks her stepmother Julia is a two-faced bitch, she decides to live elsewhere somewhere near by. With ancient Asian sex statues and pornography adorning the Cotton home, it is quite apparent that Frank recently squatted there, but Larry believes his brother has fled the authorities and will not be back anytime soon. Unbeknownst to the Cottons, the butchered remnants of Frank’s corpse lie under the floorboards of the attic and when Larry cuts his hand and a drip of blood seeps into the floor, the body of the dismembered pervert is partly rejuvenated. Ultimately, Julia finds zombie-like Frank crawling around in the attic like a misbegotten, aborted fetus come back to life and since she is still in lust with him and his sexual thrust, she agrees to lure men back to the Cotton abode and kill them, so he can devour their flesh and blood so as to make his corpsy body whole again and the two sociopathic killers can rekindle their unsavory sadomasochistic romance. Frank confesses that his interest in the puzzle box came after he had experienced every sick and twisted sexual experience he could think of and heard the box offered a whole new ballgame regarding the paradox that is the connection between pain and pleasure. Of course, after solving the puzzle, Frank was introduced to the ‘Cenobites,’ grotesque and ritualistically mutilated extra-dimensional beings who described themselves as, “explorers in the further regions of experience...demons to some, angels to others.” Of course, Frank was no match for the Cenobites’ otherworldly orgasmic powers and was ripped to shreds like a wet noodle.

Ultimately, Julia becomes a Lady Macbeth-like femme fatale who becomes more beautiful and beguiling the more she kills. Meanwhile, Kirsty becomes suspicious of Julia after seeing her bring home strange men to the Cotton home and eventually walks in on Frank feeding off a corpse after following her stepmother to the attic. Naturally, Frank attacks Kirsty but she escapes with the puz-

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zle box and collapses shortly afterward. Awakening in a hospital bed, Kirsty, like her unhinged uncle, solves the puzzle box, which summons the Cenobites. Although the Cenobites intend to give her a 'good time' in hedonistic Hades, Kirsty contests their power and explains to the lead Cenobite 'Pinhead' aka 'Priest' (Doug Bradley) that one of their initiates/victims, Frank, managed to escape. In exchange for her life, Kirsty agrees to lead the Cenobites to Frank. Meanwhile, Frank has taken over his brother Larry's body and when Kirsty comes to the Cotton home, Frank-as-Larry claims to his 'daughter' that she that has nothing to worry about as he has ostensibly killed her deranged Uncle (the flayed body of her father is used as evidence of 'Frank's corpse'). Not long after, the Cenobites show up and Kirsty attempts to run out of the house but is stopped by Frank, who reveals his true identity and attempts to engage in carnal knowledge with his niece. After Kirsty rejects his sexual charm, Frank decides to use his niece's body to fully rejuvenate himself but accidentally stabs his lover Julia instead and remorselessly suckles on her vital fluids, thus bringing his health back to equilibrium. While Kirsty eventually delivers Frank to the Cenobites as she promised and his body is ripped to shreds, the demons of debauchery renege on their deal and attempt to take her to pain-and-pleasure pandemonium. Kirsty manages to reverse the position of the pieces of the puzzle box and the Cenobites begin to disappear as a result, with her cipher-like boyfriend randomly showing up to finish the job, but ultimately the Cotton house is left in flames. In the end, Kirsty throws the puzzle box in the fire, but a Jesus-like bum comes by and retrieves the object from the flames, ultimately transforming into a winged serpent and flying away. In the end, the film comes full circle and concludes just as curiously as it began with the Chinese peddler asking someone, "What's your pleasure, sir?" thus leaving Hellraiser open for countless pointless sequels.

Admittedly, while I found the sequel Hellbound: Hellraiser II (1988) somewhat marginally entertaining, I could not stomach any of the handful of other Hellraiser sequels that I attempted to view. In the end, it is quite ironic that Clive Barker—a man who once stated regarding his reason for deciding to adapt *The Hellbound Heart*, "12 years ago, having survived two horrendous experiences as a screenwriter, I decided to take the jump into directing something myself"—would give birth to an exceedingly bastardized cinematic franchise with which he would not have any direct involvement after the third sequel (not to mention the fact that most of the sequels are director-to-dvd swill). Indeed, it is rather unfortunate that Pinhead and the Cenobites have now become horror clichés like Jason Vorhees, Leatherface, Michael Myers, and Freddy Krueger. Luckily, Barker revealed somewhat recently that he will be involved in writing and coordinating a Hellraiser remake, stating in a October 24, 2013 facebook post: "A few weeks ago I had a very productive meeting with Bob Weinstein of Dimension Pictures, in the course of which I pitched a remake of the first HELLRAISER film... Today I have officially been invited to write the script based upon that

pitch. What can I tell you about it? Well, it will not be a film awash with CGI. I remain as passionate about the power of practical make-up effects as I was when I wrote and directed the first HELLRAISER. Of course the best make-up in the world loses force if not inhabited by a first-rate actor. I told the Dimension team that in my opinion there could never be a Pinhead without Doug Bradley, and much to my delight Bob Weinstein agreed.” Of course, Mr. Weinstein is one of the last people I would want to see producing a Hellraiser remake, but such is sorry fate of such a popular franchise.

In the decades that have passed since the initial release of Hellraiser, ordinary people, especially those of the Eurypid sort, are beginning to more and more to resemble Cenobites as if they are Pinhead’s pussy little brother, which is a sign that masochism has become innate in the Occident where pleasure and pain, especially of the masochistic sort, are beginning to become one in the same. Of course, like much of Barker’s work, Hellraiser features a sodomite subtext yet nowadays the themes are totally relevant to modern debauched heterosexual America as demonstrated by the fact that so-called ‘heteronormative’ individuals nowadays suffer from sexual dysfunction, hence the rise of miscegenation, cuckoldry, cougars, and various other forms of degenerate sexuality and paraphilia. Indeed, mainstream sex-death-art that makes palatable for the mainstream what a film like Jörg Buttgerit’s *Der Todesking* (1989) cannot, Hellraiser is a sort of allegorical cautionary tale that warns the viewer not to give in too deeply to their perversion or face a deplorable fate like AIDS, the clap, becoming a baby-daddy, or even a slow and agonizing death. Managing to reconcile Cocteau with Burroughs and Cronenberg, and Poe with Shakespeare, Hellraiser is more artfully merited than some might assume upon a superficial glance, but that does not really matter as it is, most importantly, one of the greatest post-German expressionist horror films ever made. The fact that the iconic image of Pinhead has transcended the popularity of Hellraiser itself in mainstream pop culture only further obscures the dilettante-like genius of Barker’s ambitious first feature, but I guess that is a small price to pay for a 1980s horror film that actually matters.

-Ty E

HELLRAISER: HELLWORLD
HELLRAISER: HELLWORLD

Rick Bota (2005)

What Curse of the Puppet Master did for the franchise, Hellraiser: Hellworld attempts to do for its own withering fable of the Cenobites and their excessive philosophies of pleasure and pain. While I appreciate the levelheadedness of Rick Bota, director of the last three entries, Hellraiser: Hellworld plays out as more of a psychological slasher/vengeance tale and has about as much to do with Pinhead as Friday the 13th: A New Beginning had to do with Jason Voorhees. In this adaptation of Clive Barker's characters, the Cenobites go digital as a group of "hardcore Internet gamers" rendezvous at a red-lit house party hosted by Lance Henriksen and have to fight to stay alive. Or rather, try to have sex with everyone and fall into half-assed traps. Now for someone who has experimented with online games, the Hellworld title appears to have had little or no thought put into it. A shoddy first-person door layout ala early Resident Evil titles accompanies all of the gameplay and for me, a video game enthusiast, seeing something so dreadful being taken seriously is as bad as watching two kids attempt to play FFVIII in Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle. The typical attractive teenage peril is employed as is with the rest of the slasher genre. Hellraiser: Hellworld isn't anything special but unlike some of the more wretched cash-ins, this one ain't too bad. Hellworld also does an exemplary job at usurping your wanted attention and wasting it on something as banal as an eighth entry in a series that should have ceased to exist after the second.

To start on my riffing, any recent film with Lance Henriksen is bound to be your typical straight-to-video 'sploitation title chock full of terrible unknown actors in hopes to revitalize forgotten sagas. Or the track record of sub par quality, perhaps these are all just quick money-makers catering to the horror completists. Either way, both crunch out a profit at the disdain of the intellectually challenged consumer. Now don't get me wrong, Hellraiser: Hellworld is a piece of under-produced shit but it still manages the simple task of guilty entertainment. I found the first 20 minutes to drag on as my hand slid down my face while I sporadically groaned but once the virtual inconsistencies ceased to pan out, I found myself a lot more capable of handling the latest Cenobite venture. Needless to say, the usual duo appears; Pinhead and Chatterer, along with several converted characters. I have always found myself so disappointed in any incarnation of Chatterer past the first two Hellraiser films. The clicking of the ghoulish creature's bicuspid ground my nerves down to chalk in the same fashion that the White Rabbit's bite in Svankmajer's Alice did. I haven't seen most of the "unofficial" Hellraiser films but I'm making it a personal goal to wrap viewing them all up within the next month. Clive Barker emerged with a vision, as demented and hellish as it was, and it exploded with flavor. While it was a bitter and cruel experiment on film, the ideas of which he presented were

entirely his own. Past the second film, plot devices and similar tortures are just retreaded. The neck wound on the Female cenobite is repeated in almost every film as I can see and the similar chain effects are thrown in for good, nostalgic measure. Only the short film No More Souls dared to provide "new flesh" to Clive Barker's masterful carving of a puzzle box and the entities that lie within. For directors to mold artistic inspiration into something as simple as psychosexual philosophical musings shouldn't be too hard but in today's day & age, this fact seems quite impossible. As I have said, Hellraiser: Hellworld is a pile of rubbish that didn't leave me with regrets, but I'm quite sure some of the other entries will. Until then, a capable time-waster.

-mAQ

MANUFACTURING DISSSENT: UNCOVERING MICHAEL MOORE
MANUFACTURING DISSSENT: UNCOVERING MICHAEL MOORE

Rick Caine (2007)

Slob megalomaniac Michael Moore is your stereotypical American liberal. A physically and mentally weak childlike pseudo subversive bent on messianic authoritarianism. He preaches about the evils of the Republican “other” yet practices the same strategies (at a shallow, vain, and powerless level). Moore does more good for the Republican party than harm. He discredits, confuses, and manipulates American democrats to the point of helplessness. Like all uneducated and lazy propagandists, Moore utilizes comedy as a means of brainwashing control. He fears that people will see through his bloated gut and it’s lines of lies (make them laugh and they won’t think). Moore is a firm and unapologetic fact manipulator disinformation “guy” for the big guys. Michael Moore, in essence, is the embodiment of lethargic white liberal hedonism and the self-interest it fulfills. Manufacturing Dissent: Uncovering Michael Moore is a low budget documentary looking at the lies and manipulations practiced by that flaunting “lower middleclass” cosmopolitan. The documentary features interviews with former friends, associates, and other relations to Michael Moore (and his “documentaries”). You learn about a couple of the manipulations and out right lies Moore has used in some of his films. He comes out of Manufacturing Dissent looking as a hateful weasel willing to use any type “strategy” possible to get his unflattering image plastered on American billboards. Michael Moore gives the American audience entertainment as that’s what they really want (thinking is boring). I didn’t really learn anything new watching Manufacturing Dissent. I doubt the documentary has helped very much to change people’s opinion on Moore (not many jokes). You just have to look at Michael Moore to tell that he’s up to no good. He probably got beat up a good number of times growing up. He doesn’t want those evil white folks having guns!

-Ty E

BAD BOYS

Rick Rosenthal (1983)

It is becoming harder and harder from me to find the cinematic equivalent of junk food. Like junk food, I am very particular about the kind of trash cinema I further indulge in after my initial consumption. Last night, I had a jolly good time watching *Bad Boys* (1983) starring a very young and humble (despite portraying a violent criminal) Sean Penn. I originally discovered the existence of *Bad Boys* after seeing a tasteless trailer for it on my treasured dvd copy of *Class* of 1984. I figured if *Bad Boys* was exploitative enough to be advertised next to the cult classic dystopian high school film *Class* of 1984, the least I could do was give the vintage prison film a serious viewing. I can happily report that *Bad Boys* was an extremely enjoyable experience, certainly a film worth revisiting periodically, in a similar fashion to self-destructively clogging up my arteries after an occasional (about yearly) trip to Burger King.

I can say with pride that I have never had the misfortune of watching *Bad Boys*, the directorial debut of abhorrent Hollywood hack Michael Bay, starring uncle Tom duo Will Smith and Martin Lawrence. That being said, I believe that the only film with the title *Bad Boys* that deserves to be acknowledged by film going audiences is the film directed by Rick Rosenthal. In *Bad Boys*, Sean Penn plays an American mick by the name of Mick O'Brien. O'Brien surely does not hold the mythical luck of the Irish as he accidentally kills a young hispanic boy during a wild car race with a couple men in blue. Mickey the mick's luck also proves to be in the negative when he realizes that the swarthy boy he killed was the brother of rival gang leader Paco Moreno. *Bad Boys* is a film that does not play the misleading game of political correctness like most modern day Hollywood features as the gangs featured in the film are racially segregated. Thankfully, director Rick Rosenthal (whether consciously or subconsciously) decided not to give any type of preachy social commentary as to the racial divisions featured in the film.

Director Rick Rosenthal fittingly makes a cameo in *Bad Boys* as the judge that obnoxiously sentences Mick O'Brien to his stay at a juvenile detention center. Upon entering the teen penitentiary, O'Brien soon learns the dirty politics of an inmate duo-dictatorship run by a blonde beast known as Viking and an uncouth Negro nicknamed Tweety. Mick shares a prison cell with a deranged miniature Israelite appropriately named Barry Horowitz. Barry looks and acts like art house auteur Harmony Korine as he did (before heroin when appeared on Letterman in 1995) during his teenage skateboarding years. Barry earned his stay at the juvenile detention center after attempting to blow up up a building containing a couple bullies (Barry admits that he ended up killing 3 innocent people, leaving the bullies unscathed) that had beat him up earlier. I hate to say it but blowhard Barry (he admittedly loves to converse) is easily the most charis-

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matic and interesting character in *Bad Boys*. Although Sean Penn does a decent job playing a juvenile jailbird in the film, it is hard to imagine after watching *Bad Boys* that he would later play a ridiculously retarded father in *I am Sam*. The quality of Penn's performance in *Bad Boys* fits in somewhere between his role as Spicoli (his greatest performance) in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and his role as a post-virginal retard in *I am Sam* (his most embarrassing performance).

Not too long ago I watched *Felon* (2008), another film that shows the absurdity of racial diversity when humans are forced to stay in the most savage of manmade concrete habitats. Although I enjoyed *Felon* to a certain notable degree, I have no interest in watching the film ever again. For me, *Bad Boys* was no doubt a different kind of experience as I plan on revisiting the film sometime in the foreseeable future. Like *Class of 1984*, *Bad Boys* radiates a certain kind of vintage gritty charm that cannot be duplicated in modern films. The film opens with photos of innocent looking grade school, before they were exposed to the utter depravity of urban jungles and turned into metropolitan manimals themselves. Like many Hollywood prison films, *Bad Boys* ends with an asinine sentimental message of hope. It has been nearly 30 years since the film was released and there is no sign of decreasing crime but that does not deduct from the (albeit redundant) message of the film. The main moral intendment of *Bad Boys* is that no matter how bad of an environment one grows up in, everyone makes a conscious decision regarding the actions that will play a big role in dictating their future. Admittedly, I do not support rational decisions for every set of circumstances. I was certainly glad when Barry attacked the prison official with a golf club (easily the funniest scene in the movie) in *Bad Boys* after he was condemned to solitary confinement (a one man ghetto for a Judaic certainly cannot be a pleasurable experience) for the remainder of his penitentiary sentence. As the film *Bad Boys* testifies to, most individuals receive jail time by making deficient decisions usually in a pathetic attempt to prove their uncivilized pseudo-masculinity. I have seen some of my childhood friends go down this downward spiraling road and there was certainly no absurd 'rehabilitation' during their caged prison stay. *Bad Boys* may not scare aspiring criminals straight but it is without fail when it comes to engrossing cinematic recreation.

-Ty E

BLADE RUNNER

Ridley Scott (1982) Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* may be the most overanalyzed film on college campuses. No surprise here considering modern academia's obsession with postmodernism. These theories reflect a soulless society that is only able to reflect and unable to innovate. These postmodernists are content with the end of culture and essentially civilization. They are also the same scholars that have a fetish for Marxism and Globalization. But when you mix men in a blender you get quite a mess.

Blade Runner does successfully attempt to reflect the future of the world. The environment is shit, the majority of people look like they sleep in a dumpster, third world immigrants flood the streets, and people like Harrison Ford are cops. This is a much scarier world than any apocalyptic film George A. Romero would make. The future looks bleak for man.

Harrison Ford is in his most suited role as a unemotional asshole cop. Aside from Vince Vaughn, Ford is my most hated actor. The fact that he mainly plays the "good guy" in films reflects the true evils of Hollywood. The manmade "Aryan" replicant (played by Dutchman Rutger Hauer) has much more human in him than Ford probably does in real life. Of course, "more human than human" is one of the main themes of *Blade Runner*. It makes you wonder if ideologist protesters are already planning ahead for replicant rights.

Blade Runner is another one of the great Neo-Noirs (Polanski's *Chinatown* being my personal favorite). But how good do Neo-Noirs get? Probably not as good as the German expressionist films that inspired the original Film Noir's before it. Could *Blade Runner* ever compare to Fritz Lang's *M*? It probably doesn't matter seeing as most of the old masterpieces are getting buried under horrible hacks like Richard Linklater and his existentialist garbage.

A couple things were changed when *Blade Runner* was adapted for the screen (from Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*). The original name of the Tyrell corporation was the Semitic Rosen. I have read various articles on *Blade Runner* trying to parallel the film to American slavery, Nazis, and other mean stuff. I even read one essay on the film that compared the scientist who invented replicants to SS scientist Josef Mengele. Well lets take a look at *Blade Runner* from a more simple and realistic perspective. The world is shit in *Blade Runner* because of internationalism (Bolshevism or Globalization, same shit different piles) and the evil corporation is called "Rosen." I don't think Philip K. Dick was a fan of Marxist schools of thought. The Rosen corporation name change happened for obvious reasons. The film that postmodernists hold so dear to their hearts was most likely written by Philip K. Dick in complete contempt. Most of these "scholars" can't get passed fundamentally flawed contemporary schools of thought. They claim to be thinking "outside" the box when they aren't even aware it exists.

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Blade Runner's best asset is its costume and set design. The film is a fairly aesthetically pleasing experience. Dwarf robots with Kaiser helmets can also be quite interesting. Like most of Ridley's Scott's films, visuals seem to be his main focus. Of course this is his insurance that people will see his films. People need to be impressed by cool looking stuff. I was. I just wish I could steal some of inventor J.F. Sebastian's toys.

The femme fatales of Neo-Noir Blade Runner aren't typical of past she-devils. The most vicious of the femme bots is killed within minutes of being on screen. She was also the only one to bare her body (and not at all worth seeing). I guess Ridley Scott would have been considered misogynistic if he had created the standard femme fatale. The femme fatales in Blade Runner are more cutesy than dangerous. Ridley Scott is one dangerous cinema convention breaker! Over the years Blade Runner has become more and more recognized as a masterpiece. I would agree with this to some extent. I find myself going back to it at least once a year. Its beautiful film to watch. I just wouldn't get too wrapped up in trying to analyze it for a deeper meaning. Hollywood isn't interested.

-Ty E

THE COUNSELOR

Ridley Scott (2013)

In my opinion Sir Ridley Scott (and to a greater extent, his belated little brother Tony) epitomizes what one might describe as an 'artisan filmmaker,' as a director who is clearly a master of technique and calculatingly constructing films as if he were a carpenter of celluloid, yet lacks a true personal vision (after all, the only film he ever wrote a screenplay for was for his early short *Boy and Bicycle* (1956), which was made when he was a photography student) and thus cannot be described as a real auteur (after all, how could one ever compare someone like Ridley to real cinematic artists like Pasolini, Fassbinder, Herzog, Syberberg, etc.?!). That being said, it seems that the quality of Scott's films relies heavily on the script that he decides to use for a film and there is probably no better example of this than his most recent celluloid effort *The Counselor* (2013), which was penned by contemporary Southern Gothic novelist Cormac McCarthy (*Blood Meridian*, *No Country for Old Men*) in what was ultimately the writer's first attempt at writing a film screenplay. Until recently, as far as I was concerned, the last great film Scott made was *Blade Runner* (1982) as he seems to have been constructing absurdly asinine and insipid eye-candy ever since, with his pseudo-pre-sequel to *Alien* (1979), *Prometheus* (2012), being the height of the famed filmmaker's action-packed and slickly stylized soulless celluloid products, yet *The Counselor* proved to a welcomed shock for me, if not a visually irrelevant one. As with any highly literary and philosophically inclined work with an unhappy ending and a tasty tinge of political incorrectness underscored by decidedly depressing unpopular human truths, *The Counselor* has been largely panned by both mainstream film critics and filmgoers alike as a work that was clearly made for an undeserving and proudly uncultivated audience that also creamed their panties for Martin Scorsese's 3+ hour music video tribute to American Hebraic psychopathy, *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). A sort of pre-North American Civil War *Breaking Bad* (in fact, Dean 'Hank Schrader' Norris has a small role in the film as a rich coke buyer) with the tragic poetic eloquence of Shakespeare, the penetrating pessimism and scathing cynicism of Schopenhauer, and the tastelessly charming cracker sociology of Jim Goad, *The Counselor* is a somewhat delightful downer of a mainstream movie that unequivocally proves that pretty plastic Hollywood people can appear quasi-sophisticated if given the right lines to read. A nasty and even nihilistic Southwestern Gothic where wimpy white collar lawyers, ruthlessly murderous Mestizo drug cartels, naïve Catholic girls, ferocious car-fucking femme fatales, head-decapitating-wires, and snuff films collide in a celluloid cultural clash made in the Armageddon-stirring age of globalization and 'Reconquista' of the Aztlán by brown hordes with nothing to lose, *The Counselor* is the sort of film that slaps the viewer in the face and then proceeds to bugger their body, hence the work's lack of acceptance among the

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escapism-humping American public. A film that essentially depicts a white collar criminal's worst night, *The Counselor* tells the aesthetically and thematically torrid tale of a relatively young and handsome hotshot lawyer enslaved to love who becomes immersed in an intricate one-off drug deal with a Mexican drug cartel that goes terribly wrong as a result of bad luck and a lethally lecherous female fatale whose 'naughty bits' are described by her Brian Grazer-look-alike boyfriend (Javier Bardem) as having suction properties equivalent to that of a bottom-feeder fish.

A charming statuesque lawyer simply known as 'The Counselor' (played by rather talented Irish-German actor Michael Fassbender) wants to pop the question to his nice and loving yet terribly naïve long-distance girlfriend Laura (Penélope Cruz), so he decides to woo her by flying all the way to Amsterdam (the Dutch capital city is home to Coester Diamonds, one of the oldest diamond polishing factories in the world, thus demonstrating the Counselor's desire to buy only the best for his girlfriend) to buy a nice sized rock from a Sephardic Jewish Diamond Dealer (ironically played by Bruno Ganz, who is best known around the world for portraying Hitler in *Downfall* (2004) aka *Der Untergang*). On top of buying a nice and expensive engagement ring for his beloved Latina, the Counselor is given a nice and long free-of-charge rant from the Diamond Dealer about the superiority and corrosive power that is the international Hebrew nation and how, "Every country that has driven out the Jews has suffered the same fate." Naturally, Laura accepts the Counselor's rather awkward wedding proposal, but the lawyer is also strapped for cash as a result of buying the wedding ring so he rather reluctantly decides to get involved in a major one-time coke deal with his party boy MeStizo friend Reiner (Javier Bardem)—a legit entrepreneur and club owner who moonlights as an underworld drug kingpin and who lives a lavishly lecherous lifestyle, hence his need for greed—but little does he realize that his friend's psychopathic girlfriend Malkina (Cameron Diaz) has plans of her own. A wickedly wanton woman whose 'pussy power' literally scares her boyfriend Reiner (who tells the Counselor a story about how she freaked him out after she fucked his car and drenched his windshield with her girl juices), Malkina (a name derived from 'Grimalkin' which means an evil looking female cat) is a fierce femme fatale of the sociopath-chic variety who has cheetah print tattoos and literally gets sexually aroused by the sight of her two pet cheetahs (Raoul and Silvia) "bringing down jackrabbits at 70 miles an hour" and uses all people, including her friends and boyfriend, for her own personal gain. Left an emotionally brutalized bastard at the age of 3 after her parents were apparently thrown out of a helicopter into the Atlantic Ocean and eventually working her way up in the world as a seductive stripper, Malkina disguises her internal pain with her stunning beauty and by flashing around her dubiously obtained wealth. When the Counselor makes the unwitting mistake of helping a client, a Mexican murderess named Ruth (Rosie Perez), by bailing out her crotch-rocket-

riding son—a high level member of a drug cartel known simply as ‘The Green Hornet’ (Richard Cabral) who likes freaking out white girls by telling them he is on a steady diet of dog food—he basically marks himself, his girlfriend, and all his business partners as dead men.

If the Counselor had taken the advice of wise-ass middleman dealer named Weſtray (Brad Pitt)—a cynical fellow who might have been a philosopher and/or a monk had he lived in a less decadent age—regarding not getting involved with the drug cartel, which is responsible for sex slavery and snuff films, the meta-tragic route his life inevitably takes could have been easily avoided. Seemingly more knowledgeable about her boyfriend’s drug business (and, in turn, the Counselor’s) than he is, Malkina hires a sinisterly stoic dude known as “The Wireman” (Sam Spruell) to kill drug runner Green Hornet (who is carrying a key to a sewage truck containing barrels with \$20 million dollars worth of cocaine) to steal the very same drug supply that the Counselor and his friends are tied to. Naturally, after the drug cartel realizes that the Counselor bailed out the Green Hornet from jail, they doubt the timing was a coincidence and assume the lawyer was the one responsible for killing their comrade and attempting to steal their cocaine. Eventually, two drug cartel members dressed as cops kill the Wireman and take back the drugs, thus Malkina’s scheme falls through. In no time, Reiner is accidentally killed while attempting to flee from members of the drug cartel and the Counselor’s fiancée is beaten and kidnapped. Meanwhile, Weſtray takes a plane to London in an attempt to evade the wrath of the drug lords. When the Counselor attempts to reach out to a high-ranking member of the cartel named Jefe (Rubén Blades) in a desperate attempt to save Laura, he is told there is nothing he can do and that he must be a man and accept his unfortunate fate as a marked man who made an unwise decision long ago that cannot be changed. In an act of complete impotence, the Counselor goes to Mexico to find Laura, but ends up doing a lot of drinking and crying instead due to his undying guilt. Meanwhile, Malkina, who is determined to get rich quick since her prior scheme fell through and her sugar daddy Reiner is dead, decides to track down Weſtray (who she apparently previously had an affair with and knows how to manipulate) in London and uses a stunning hired slut (Weſtray’s admitted sole weakness is women) played by Natalie Dormer to steal his bank codes and social security number. Weſtray is ultimately killed when Malkina pays a hired goon to throw a so-called ‘bolito’ (a mechanical device with a battery-operated motor that wraps a wire around the victim’s neck until their carotid arteries are severed and, in some cases, their head pops off) around his neck. Meanwhile, the Counselor receives a mysterious DVD-R with “Hola!” written on it, which assumedly features a snuff video of Laura being executed (the next scene features Laura’s decapitated body being dumped in a landfill). In the end, queen bitch Malkina is victorious and tells her banker (Goran Višnjic) about her plans to head to China and convert all of her money into diamonds. After all, diamonds are a girl’s best

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friend, especially when you're a cross between Ted Bundy and Marilyn Monroe.

In one of the more philosophical scenes early on in *The Counselor*, the old Jewish diamond dealer delivers the following spiel to the eponymous protagonist of the film in regard to the cultural wasteland that is modern Spain and the historical legacy of world Jewry: "There's no culture save for the Semitic culture there. The last known culture before that was the Greek, and there will be no culture after. Nothing. The heart of any culture is to be found in the nature of the hero... In the classical world, it is the warrior, but in the Western world it is the man of God. From Moses to Christ. The prophet, the penitent. Such a figure is unknown to the Greeks. Unheard of, unimaginable...because there is only a man of God, not a man of gods, and this god is the god of the Jewish people. There is no other god. We see him—what is the word? Uh...purloined. Purloined in the West. How do you steal a God? The Jew beholds his tormentor dressed in the vestments of his own ancient culture. Everything bears a strange familiarity. But the fit is always poor and the hands are always dripping blood." Indeed, one would assume from the old Heeb's rant that the sorry state of the miserable and cultureless Mexico depicted in *The Counselor* was Sephardic revenge for the ancient execution of Marrana Jew Francisca Nuñez de Carabajal in 'New Spain' (aka Spanish colonial Mexico) in 1596 during the Inquisition. Indeed, with his previous effort *American Gangster* (2007) where Australian goy Russell Crowe plays a Hebrew hammer of a detective who proudly sports a Star of David gold chain, as well as his upcoming Biblical epic *Exodus* (2014), flagrant philo-Semite Ridley Scott has never shied away from expressing his career-securing solidarity with the self-described chosen amongst God's chosen and *The Counselor* is no different, but luckily the film is as culturally pessimistic as Hollywood films come as a work that depicts Mexico as a rabid mongrel beast with the brain of a demented demon that would love nothing more than to slowly torture and dismember pussy America to its bloated jelly-filled Judaic core. After telling the rather humorous joke, "you want to know why Jesus wasn't born in Mexico? He couldn't find three wise men or a virgin," criminal sage WeStray warns the Counselor with the following words regarding the true motivation of the Mexican drug cartels: "Hey Counselor, here's something else to consider: The beheadings and the mutilations—that's just business. Gotta keep up appearances. It's not like there's some smoldering rage at the bottom of it. Let's see if we can guess who it is they really want to kill. You, Counselor. You." Indeed, savagely snuffing out white collar, white lawyers must be a rather refined delicacy when you live in a country where running water is a luxury and you can purchase dismembered teenage girls for less than a pretty penny.

On top of frying criminally organized beaners to the point of seeming like the most uniquely ugly and unhinged, radically repellent, and decidedly perverted people in the world, *The Counselor* features a number of 'misogynistic' aphorisms in the spirit of Weininger (albeit, of the dime store sort) like, "Women

have funny ideas about sex. They're supposed to be so modest. Yeah (chuckles). Let me tell you, when they get it in their heads how they want to fuck, they're like a freight train." And, indeed, the sexually sadistic she-bitch played by Cameron Diaz quite openly admits that she believes that sexuality and sadism are not mutually exclusive but inherently connected, as she sternly professes that the weakness of humans when compared to that of natural predators (aka her pet cheetahs) of the wild is as follows: "It is our faintness of heart that has driven us to the edge of ruin. Perhaps you won't agree, but nothing is crueler than a coward. And the slaughter to come...is probably beyond our imagining." Needless to say, the mayhem-splattered Mexico of *The Counselor* has a big black heart flowing with cheap tequila, cocaine and, most importantly, pure and unadulterated hate and bloodlust. Indeed, as a country that has been left relatively unscathed by virtually all of the major wars of the last century and is populated by a nation of superlatively spoiled people (even the poor live like kings in the good old USA!) who absurdly believe their nation is invincible and is exempt from the sort of poverty and chaos that plagues the majority of the world, America certainly has no idea what is in store for it is if the Mexican drug cartels take control and/or the North American continent enters a racial civil war. Of course, the coward of *The Counselor*, aside from America in general (indeed, it is no coincidence that Diaz's character snidely states to a semi-morally-minded young lady, "You know what I like about Americans? You can depend on them."), is the Counselor as demonstrated by his dubious actions in the face of fear and a telling remark made by a bitter ex-client: "the Counselor here has a way of sullin' up like a possum when he don't get his own way. I'm gonna say you probably noticed it. And that ain't really the problem. The real problem is, is his thin skin makes it okay in his eyes for you to wind up under the bus." Indeed, aside from the scheming femme fatale played by Diaz, it is ultimately the Counselor's shifty behavior and cowardice that lead his fiancée and friends to the slaughter. While featuring the aesthetic prowess of the latest sportscar commercial, *The Counselor* at least has enough patently pessimistic food-for-thought to keep the most culturally pessimistic of *Blade Runner* fans reasonably happy. That being said, one can only assume that *The Counselor* receives the prestige that *Blade Runner* would eventually achieve after a decade or so, but somehow I doubt it as Americans are only getting stupider and stupider as their country goes to the untermensch dogs and international moneychangers.

-Ty E

FRITT VILT
FRITT VILT

Roar Uthaug (2006)
aka Cold Prey

Heard some rumors breezing through the grapevine about the so-called savior of slashers. Upon watching, I now feel that prominent horror writers are brainless apes as this isn't a rebirth at all, more of a proper horror film of a vengeful figure with the similar "strangers in an unfamiliar area getting killed with ridiculous weaponry" story arch. Ever seen *Extreme Ops*? Neither have I but judging from a synopsis comparison, these two films are one and the same but with a tad bit more snowboarding involved on the opposite end. Despite what people seem to narrate this towards, *Cold Prey* is a lot like *The Descent* in a snowy wasteland. The sequel to *Cold Prey* even goes in similar fashion with the upcoming *Descent* sequel though I'm sure *Fritt Vilt II* will be superior in every aspect. A group of entirely likable characters go to an uncharted rolling mountain area paved with snow for extreme fun. Upon acquainting with the Ron Weasley-lookalike and the fashionable males and females with their perfectly feathered hair, the extreme(!) sports play soon takes off winding down with the compound fracture suffered by the ginger known only as Morten Tobias. Leaving his wand at home in his well-kept dorm room, they have no choice but to take refuge in an abandoned hotel that unknowingly has earned the title of "Hotel of Evil" some many odd years ago. After a while the predominant tension finally gives way and explodes and sputters until most everyone dies by way of the "snowman." *Cold Prey* surprised me on many levels that I will begin to explain switching from sardonic interfaces which can be interchanged with a more serious tone. That's the best way to approach over hyped horror films; it keeps a fresh grab bag of thoughts and quibbles safe from the wary eyes of cynicism and unappreciative ideas. For what *Cold Prey* succeeds in deserves a keen eye for imagery, settings, and character development; *Cold Prey* has all these plus more but never fully takes off towards greatness due to a forgettable plot shift and expendable characters that should have stood a chance but were killed off in unimpressive ways to trim fat from the real prize - survival. The pickax mayhem was glamorized with real terror in *My Bloody Valentine* and later emblazoned with more of the "red stuff" in the 3D remake of *My Bloody Valentine*. The usage in *Cold Prey* doesn't really differ or stand out with any inventive murders but the hulking figure of the Snowman sets the playground for some surprising scares and jump out moments. *Cold Prey* might not be revolutionary but it is damn good fun and nonchalantly stylish to boot. For the annual role of spirited feminist survivor, Ingrid Bolsø Berdal performs flawlessly as Jannicke. She's boyish, peppy, and desirable. Plus she looks grand covered in snow and blood. Two color extremes and opposite elements fit the role of a horror movie with a flare of passion. Switching from camera-friendly aspects, I turn my attention to love

depicted in film. I have an ideal mindset for youthful love and sacrifice. That one key scene in the Stan Winston funded remake of *How to Make a Monster* struck a right chord with the daring portrayal of a doomed male emasculating his ego to tell a woman that he never had a chance, only to be slain several scenes later. A similar tale of "love" is woven in *Cold Prey*, breaking down barriers of standards and stifling the blood flow to create "user-generated" emotions using this defined contemporary version of "cold horror" as a vessel. Who cares if the starlets brains are butterscotch? In the long run, *Cold Prey* tramples much of what I've seen from the horror community over the years. It's no messiah but a disciple of taking old-school terror and mixing it with the new school expertise of cinematography. Unlike most "trapped" films, the environment really allows for a fit of helplessness with no aid of magically locked doors. For a solid villain plagued with writers block and a precise unraveling of events, *Cold Prey* will do you no shame in its irregular piecing together of a surefire hit. It might not live up to your morbidly high expectations but I dare you to hate this film. Double dog dare you. And what's more strange to come is a sequel that if looked at in the proper light, succeeds over the predecessor.

-mAQ

DAYLIGHT
DAYLIGHT

Rob Cohen (1996)

A disaster film installed within the boundaries of reality, *Daylight* isn't your exaggerated planet-in-peril film that we're by now accustomed to. No earth shattering nuclear warhead or enormous asteroid hurtling towards our blue planet, just a simple and avoidable disaster that jeopardizes and kills but a large handful. I repeat, not a world-killing event. Starring in this chancre-sore of claustrophobia is Sylvester Stallone who continues his embarrassing trend of adopting wildly perverse names such as Marion Cobretti, Lincoln Hawk, and in this case, Kit Latura. *Daylight* couldn't normally be considered a "special" film in any universe but ours. But since we're the special case, the denizens of a wholly hostile race, these scenes of hopelessness, persecution, and intense disaster terror in what might be the greatest explosion scene recorded on video, *Daylight* manages to progress into a stellar action/suspense film with a quick-to-twitch narrative.

Daylight sure had the innards of a summer blockbuster and a fine one at that. Electing the maiden of this voyage underground is a chance encounter of a bunch of two-bit punks and a convoy of trucks containing barrels of explosive, toxic materials. As fate would have it, the punks in the stolen car swerve and crash right into one of the payloads resulting in an extravagant explosion. This explosion scene is not only ambivalent in its miniature comic genocide but appalling in its graphic depiction of irreversible structure damage. To take this film as humor is a cinema sin though and should not be disregarded as a tablet of disposable meat. Each of the "survivors" highlighting this film is a real person, over the top or not. The narcissistic young delinquent is Sage Stallone, co-founder of exploitation DVD company Grindhouse Releasing and son of Sylvester Stallone, in one of his very few acting roles. Only in *Chaos* was he allowed to vent and portray the attitude of these venomous films he so lovingly wishes to restore and distribute. After this initial explosion, ex-EMS chief Latura, now cab driver, is mere feet from the tunnel as it explodes. He watches the structure outside of the Holland tunnel crumble violently, showering debris on top of its fleeing commuters.

Deciding to aim for redemption of a failed previous job that left him with a suicidal conscience and a bizarre fetish for martyrdom, Kit aims to find a way within the smoldering ruins to assist the survivors in escaping before the toxic fumes cause the humans to succumb to infinite silence. To reach the inner tunnel walls, Kit must descend through a series of oxygenating fans that are on a time delay. This introductory scene between Stallone and tunnel reinstates that hypnotic paranoia of fans that has been leeching on me since viewing *Alien*³ as a child. After near-escaping, our lone hero is vaulted into a vacuum tunnel and blasts a seal into the tunnel. This alone is the precursor to Kit Latura's odyssey that proves *Daylight* to be pretty rogue when it comes to characters fate selec-

tion. The inescapable nihilism of a catastrophe weighs solid with exploding racial tension. After Madelyne follows screams for help and traces the callback to a prison transport with a giant Negro gripping the bars screaming, she regresses the idea of helping them. After some lurid discouragement by way of "rape eye," Madelyne decides to release them from their cage. Some support that unleashed, the bullish black man does nothing but to impede upon escape attempts in his chronic hyperventilation.

Despite the unusual assortment of characters trapped between the rubble and the Hudson river, they never stay too muddled in the confines of cliché. To prove this, might I bring up the whiny and selfish love interest in Madelyne. This woman is established in the beginning of the film as a worthless being with gypsy dreams. After being dumped or cheated on, she packs her bags and leaves her low rent apartment with dreams of grandeur in New Jersey. Being caught in this mess taught her nothing about selflessness and when a wooden plank collapses, dropping her into a rapidly flooding room, she begs and screams for them not to leave her. She wishes for the world and she will never have it. This right here is true-to-life character sketching, as slimy and obtrusive as can be. One of the greatest feats of *Daylight* is presenting a disaster epic in which plausibility is a heavy factor. Laden with incredible special effects and seat-squirring tension, *Daylight* is a film that was a warm and enthralling experience in retro 90s adventure cheese. Definitely the high point in Rob Cohen's filmography.

-mAQ

HOWL
HOWL

Rob Epstein* (2010)

It has been a while since I saw a film that left me in a state of revulsion-based inebriation. The 2010 film *Howl*, based on the 1957 obscenity trial regarding Allen Ginsberg and his putrid poem *Howl*, indubitably induced an acute case of cinematic nauseousness in my otherwise healthy body. It has been a couple days since I had the displeasure of watching this piece of excrement entertainment; which gave me enough time for my health to once again reach equilibrium. To get over the cinematic sickness created by *Howl*, I consumed the 2010 documentary *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, a wonderful tribute to the greatest mind of the Beat Generation. In the documentary, Allen Ginsberg narcissistically (in a completely pointless and petty manner) questions W.S. Burroughs about the former love he had for the obnoxious poet. In *Howl*, James Franco (who plays the young Allen Ginsberg) somehow manages to capture a very similar type of repellent narcissism that the real Ginsberg so shamelessly flaunted. Despite watching uncountable horror films last week; *Howl* was the only movie that left me in shock, conjuring up what I can best describe as the cinematic equivalent to AIDS.

In 2001, James Franco somehow was able to capture the troubled spirit of Jimmy Dean in the biographical TV movie *James Dean*. Mr. Franco must be a meticulous method actor, as he was also able to capture the all-encompassing ugliness of Allen Ginsberg in *Howl*. Throughout the film, Franco recites the perverted poetry of Hebrew Marxist Allen Ginsberg. Despite the fact that it is taboo nowadays to associate Jews and Marxism as two heads of the same unholy kosher beast; Ginsberg synchronized these two seemingly different identities within his poetry. *Howl* reaches a peak in putridity when James Franco recites the following line from the poem: "Where you accuse your doctors of insanity and plot the Hebrew socialist revolution against the fascist national Golgotha." Of course, *Howl* is more like a conglomerate of perverted Judeo-Marxist psychobabbling, and far from a howl of hallucinating poetry. James Franco must have put in his complete vigor as an actor whilst attempting to duplicate the distinct accent, sporadic speech patterns, and peculiar pantomimes of Kaddish-obsessed Allen Ginsberg.

Like most good Jewish boys, Allen Ginsberg took after his mental Marxist mother. In *Howl*, it is revealed that Ginsberg's Mommy exposed him to Communism and unhappy stays at mental institutions. To Ginsberg's credit (as well as the directors of *Howl*), his poetry makes more sense when you put it in context with his upbringing. I certainly have no doubt that Ginsberg was truly expressing the psychosis-ridden spirit of his subconscious/conscious mind, thus resulting in authentic personal art. After all, art is subjective and relative to the eye of the beholder. Of course, I found it hilarious when various literary experts

in *Howl* de-construct Ginsberg's poem as being without artistic merit. The Beat generation writers (especially William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg) successfully popularized literary libertinism in America. William S. Burroughs was surely a sagely teacher of Occult studies whose influence seems infinite. I cannot say the same about Ginsberg. As expressed (whether the filmmakers were conscious of this or not) in the film *Howl*, it seems that Ginsberg was only talented in regards to offending decent folk. Although *Howl* portrays the 1957 obscenity trial as a triumph over American Puritanism; the event really just signified an all-time low for American art. *Howl* portrays Allen Ginsberg as heroic rebel, yet the 1957 obscenity trial was probably the best publicity outlet that the word-shitting poet ever had. In style and form, *Howl* certainly compliments the anti-linear lunatic lyricism of Allen Ginsberg. It is without question that James Franco deserves an Oscar for the relentless struggle he took up in portraying Allen Ginsberg; the retarded Rebbe of nonsensical poetry.

-Ty E

STAND BY ME
STAND BY ME

Rob Reiner (1986)

Most coming of age films are pretty lame, especially when you “come of age.” One coming of age film that I can say that I still have an appreciation for is Rob Reiner’s *Stand By Me*. As a child, I thought the film was the “deepest” and “coolest” of films about kids. I also felt as a 12 year old, searching for the dead body of a fellow kid would be quite the adventure. Whether people want to believe it or not, looking for a dead body is something that every adolescent male would participate in with his friends if he got the opportunity.

Most of my friends from when I was 12 years old are now criminals and aimless high school dropouts. Unfortunately, I have even heard some of them have had kids. The narrator of *Stand By Me* mentions that you have your best friends at age 12 and believe that to be true. It’s the time in your life when things start to get exciting and very few friends have pretensions. It is also a time when you still don’t have to take life too seriously and you feel as if you’re invincible. The young men featured in *Stand By Me* get involved in more than a few dangerous things. The boys in *Stand By Me* also encounter a group of high school criminals that have a greaser style. Kiefer Sutherland leads this gang of petty hoodlums with a soft spoken voice of sadism. The difference between the young boys and older boys is obvious. When you get to the age of the high school boys, the subversive games become serious. The older boys never really grow up and just end up degenerate criminals.

River Phoenix stars in the film as the tough 12 year old Chris. A campfire confessional between Chris and Gordie foreshadows a gay campfire confessional with River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves in *My Own Private Idaho* some years later. *Stand By Me* is one of few coming of age films that brings up somewhat serious issues between 12 year old boys. Corey Feldman also appears in the film as an eccentric kid named Teddy whose father tried to burn his ear off. I am sure everyone has known a kid in their life with similarly odd behavior.

One of the most stand out scenes in *Stand By Me* involves a leech in a place it shouldn’t be. When I first saw this scene as a child, I was almost traumatized. Another great scene is when Gordie tells his story about a kid named Lardass who pays his whole town back via projectile vomit. *Stand By Me* is full of many memorable scenes with equally memorable characters. Sadly, today’s youth are probably only exposed to politically correct feel good garbage.

-Ty E

THE AFTERMAN

Rob Van Eyck (1985)

From the depths of Belgian cinema comes a strange post-nuke cult sexcapade, *The Afterman*. Directed by Rob Van Eyck, *The Afterman* is what I'd imagine Carlton Mellick's novella, *Razor Wire Pubic Hair*, to be stripped of its futuristic and blasphemous overtones. Inside my own circuit of friends is a long-lasting joke that anything with rape, I'll condone. As true as this has turned out to be, I wasn't prepared for the molestation within this near-silent classic. *The Afterman* is no exception of rape as it features sexual assault that titillates, not in erotic conventions such as nudity. No, nudity has nothing to do with the arousing spectrum *The Afterman* embraces. Opening to a bearded man, mute and feral, having just had sex with a frozen corpse, whom I believe to be a lover in past, *The Afterman* quickly thrusts our "hero" into a situation of forced physicality. In fact, everything about *The Afterman* is forced. When a computer timer slowly ticks down, the man, who can no longer read or write, begins to panic. After this, we assume that this bunker he's been holed up in evacuated him to survey the condition of the earth he once grazed.

Misleading theatrical poster.

After several minutes, the man notices a small group of men at the top of a nearby hill. Excited to see other lifeforms, with animation even, the man greets them with intentions of communion. Thrown to the ground and pinned, the man, our lead character, is raped by a group of men. Already *The Afterman* establishes itself as a film that doesn't concern nor care for any of the characters within. A brash and unspeakable odyssey of sex with-lasting, *The Afterman* is one of the few films I can say takes no prisoners. After this event, which would scar any self-respecting male, the man continues his journey. It seems without any social construct, the idea of rape has vaporized completely and what's left is nothing more than that of a canine searching and subduing a bitch in heat. This over-sexed Dystopian film is bold with crisp sound effects, almost deafening against the silent backdrop of a mysteriously plagued Earth. As with most conventional post-apocalyptic films, the condition is never described or prescribed.

Stumbling upon a patch of farmland, our lead witnesses a sullen, bruised woman bending over and tilling the soil for what crops the climate could possibly let thrive. As she is bent over, a husky bald man glances for his wife. Noticing he is alone, he approaches the beauty and lowers his pants, forcing himself upon her in a scene that rivals most pornography. With the same flair as *Women In Prison* films but hardcore compared to the rather tame lesbian antics, *The Afterman* provides exciting smut, degradation and experimentalism in the same package. It's a film you can endorse because of its maverick roots and a film you'll find yourself hiding in your closet for the contents are a divine mélange

THE AFTERMAN

of hyper-sexuality that hits home, well, for me it is. The minimalism of *The Afterman* is also intoxicating. Van Eyck proves that digitally destroyed settings are not necessary for a tale of absence. But in this simplicity is a tale of bizarrokink, proven by applying its deviant standards to all forms of fetishism, whether religion takes hold of ones head to force fellatio or man/women - man/man rape grips your fancy.

Soon the woman demonstrates Stockholm Syndrome, or the breakdown of key psychological components of the same, and accompanies the overweight man as he journeys towards oblivion. After housing in a shack, a cult of sex-crazed maniacs bludgeon the man, who has proven himself a pussy, and the woman abducted to their lair of sexual humiliation. While spying, the man notices the bizarre actions of these degenerates which includes and is not limited to, throwing a woman bareback onto a dining table and slathering her body in gravy and stringy meat. Surely *The Afterman* is before its time and would more likely be appreciated in any civilization other than ours. After escaping into a religious sect of occultism(?), forced sodomy is had, much to my shock, and the couple is on their way again. This key scene of Monk cock sucking brings Bataille to mind while I mentally revisit the *Story of the Eye*. In a world gone mad, this couple demonstrates the necessity for some sort of foundation. A world without morals, without laws, is a scary world indeed. This unlikely coupling of beauty and beast softens the blow of what is left up to the imagination. The only negative aspect I can slander *The Afterman* with is its jumping significant periods of time with no indication whatsoever. Surely this is a world my cock would benefit in, but would my mind reside comfortably? *The Afterman* provides these questions and leaves the answers up to you - society or sex?

-mAQ

AFTERMAN 2: A KISS TO THE DEVIL

Rob Van Eyck (2005)

Call me crazy, but I highly doubt that neo-nazis and towelhead Islamic terrorists would unite as one to control Europa as some degenerate Islamic National Socialist Fourth Reich, nor do I think a bunch of lipstick lesbos with bad bleach and boob jobs would make for fervent 'freedom fighters' of the sexually and spiritually ennobled sort, but such is the ludicrous scenario presented in the sardonic dystopian cult flick *Afterman 2* (2005) aka *Afterman 2: A Kiss to the Devil* directed by iconoclastic Flemish auteur Rob Van Eyck (De aardwolf, Blue Belgium). A worthy and all the more wanton and just plain wacky, if not innately inferior, sequel to distinguishably debauched director Van Eyck's most internationally renowned celluloid work *The Afterman* (1985), *Afterman 2* follows the 'Afterman' (once again played by Flemish Expressionist painter Jacques Verbiest, who has gotten all the more chubby and cherub-like after some two decades) as he leaves exile in Mother Russia after his beauteous beloved drops dead and heads back to Belgium, only to learn that his homeland, as well as the rest of Europe, has turned into a demented Islamofascist-National Socialist dystopian dictatorship run by Osama Bin Laden that has enslaved most people in poorly constructed, easily escapable concentration camps that would send the average so-called 'asylum seeker' (aka illegal alien from the third world) scoffing in fits of laughter. Following a curious cuckold of an anti-hero who was anally raped, fed on muskrats, and was forced to give mad sodomite monks head in the original film *The Afterman*, many excerpts of which are revisited via a number of flashback scenes, *Afterman 2* is about a man who has already dealt with love, loss, and bisexual sodomy yet who consciously decides to reenter a wild world of the anarchically neo-barbaric libertinage, lethality, and lunacy for the viewer's sick pleasure. A sadomasochistically moral-free 'black comedy' of the no-budget Euro-cult variety (as opposed to the totally worthless and disposable 'Euro-sleaze' variety) with nods to old school 'women in prison' (WiP) flicks, *Afterman 2* is director Rob Van Eyck's exceedingly eccentric and all the more pessimistic and misanthropic update on the decidedly degenerating state of Europa since *The Afterman*, where the continent has become entirely 'multi-cultural' and full of militant Muslims, thus, had he seen it, making the cult film possibly Anders Behring Breivik's favorite, or at least a 'guilty pleasure,' which is also how I might describe the film.

As indicated at the introduction of *Afterman 2*, "The year is 2012... After the September 11, 2001 tragedy and the subsequent wars and economical depressions, Europe became a self sustaining fundamentalist right-wing regime controlled by all kinds of fascistic militias." Of course, the main menace in the film is a National Socialist-fetishizing Hitlerite Osama Bin Laden, who has an equally sex-obsessed Saddam Hussein, as well as a bunch of less than hand-

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some neo-SS men, at his disposal, who have put most of Europe's population into archaic concentration camps that make Auschwitz seem like some sort of technocratic super-prison from the somewhat distant future. As semi-literally written towards the beginning of *Afterman 2*, "Meanwhile, in far-away Russia, The Afterman decides, after the death of his wife, to go back to his European Fatherland." Undoubtedly, the Afterman is much more slob-like, rotund, and pussy-crazed since his debut in *The Afterman* some twenty years earlier, but he also seems much wiser and more stoic, and when he notices an elderly female lover hang herself when he leaves Russia, he pays her no mind nor pity. On his way out of Rusland, the Afterman is stopped by a Stalinist-like female guard, who notices the big bulge in his pants and forces him to allow her to aggressively suck him off. After swallowing Afterman's big business, the raunchy Russian guard lets him know that in regard to his destination of Antwerp, Belgium that, "They deported everybody from there... Too much radiation!" The Afterman arrives in Europa in what seems to be a couple paces, even kicking over a pervert priest who is about to anally pork a naughty nympho nun in the process, but he is quite disturbed when he notices neo-fascist troops and tyrannical towelheads shooting and enslaving his people, so the post-apocalyptic hero starts killing the soldiers and saving big breasted babes. Eventually, the always affable Afterman hooks up with a group of semi-sadistic Sapphic revolutionaries called simply "The Women Rebels" who run a large beer brewery and one of the ostensibly gay gals, a broad name Britt (Frida Farrell) who magically speaks English (despite everyone else in the film speaking Dutch, French, etc.) falls in love-at-first sight with him after noticing his bulging 'horsedick' and gives him a sensual bubble bath, as the hero—being an unfortunate product of the post-apocalyptic age—has never had the luxury of bathing before. Of course, Britt's lesbo lover freaks on her due to the burlesque bubble bath, for which she stoically responds, "So the fuck what?!... He's never had a bath... he's never seen soap... he's such an old man, what could he do?" Meanwhile, Bin Laden becomes sexually-obsessed with Britt and her big tits, declaring, "I want the blond with the big hooters! Her big juicy jugs are perfect to put my kingssize cock in between!," so his SS Henchman plot to get her.

Meanwhile, the Afterman and his Britt are attacked by fascist EMT ambulance crew, which leaves the boorish hero beaten and bruised and his babe kidnapped by Bin Laden's fresh crew. Naturally, the Afterman hooks up with the Women Rebels to get Britt back, even if she has already been sexually defiled by a big wig towelhead like Bin Laden, who enjoys reading the morning paper whilst loudly defecating on his luxury houseboat. Posing as classy caterers, the Afterman and the combat carpet-munchers manage to rescue Britt on Bin Laden's luxury yacht and the two lovers sail away on a shitty ship that is ironically named "Poseidon" in a pseudo-romantic moment parodying epic celluloid garbage like James Cameron's disaster turd *Titanic* (1997). Recalling a flashback

from *The Afterman* where the hero watches a ritzy lesbo drowning a girl during poolside cunnilingus, the Afterman dreams of strangling to death said lethally lecherous lesbo with a gigantic red dildo. The Afterman and Britt eventually make it back to his radioactive Fatherland of Antwerp, which is still occupied by the same cult of medieval cocksuckers that forced the hero to give him head in *The Afterman*. The cult forces Afterman and Britt to share in eating the tiny heart of an innocent child they have just ritualistically sacrificed. Unbeknownst to them, Bin Laden, the SS men, and Britt's ex have caught up with them and take Britt prisoner once again, but luckily the Women Rebels want revenge and they have the hospitable help of Afterman. Rather unfortunately, one of Bin Laden's jealous SS men, who is in cahoots with Britt's butch ex, gives Britt to a maniacal Mengele-esque Nazi butcher, who makes mincemeat of the little lady. After the Afterman and the Women Rebels exterminate the SS man and Britt's ex, they discover a cooler with the label "Britt - Age 26" containing the organs of the apocalyptic hero's great love. In a heartwarming farewell, the Afterman and the blond leader of the Women Rebels spread Britt's ashes in a river and cross the border for Rusland. In the end, the Afterman man comes full circle, going from Russia to Antwerp to Russia again, but picking up a butch bleach blonde lesbo Führer on the way.

A scathing, if not intentionally stupid, scatological satire of modern day Europa and the world in general, *Afterman 2* totally lacks the vague 'arthouse' element of *The Aftermath*, thus making it a work that will more likely appeal to philistine exploitation fans more than anyone else, which is sad considering the film's lack of political correctness because, if anything, cultivated cinephiles and art fags need to be rid of their archaic leftist politics. Featuring the real voice of Osama Bin Laden dubbed into scenes with falsely translated subtitles about his "horsedick" and need to screw "blondes," *Afterman 2* is not exactly a film that was made to appeal to the 'cultural sensitivity' of European and American 'social cuckolds' who feel a need to cater to any swarthy untermensch that happens to be illegally squatting in their nation. As for Rob Van Eyck's deranged dystopia where Islamic terrorists and neo-nazis unite as depicted in *Afterman 2*, such is nothing short of farcical fantasy because there is not a single nationalist group desperate enough in Europe to align themselves with tribes of towelheads in Europe, even if both groups are common perennial enemies of the Hebrew/Zionist. If the world ends with militant bull dykes waging hell against a Muslim National Socialist dictatorship, that still beats the more probable fate where Africans and Asian from the global south turn Europa into a third world sewer as is happening today, thus one could argue *Afterman 2* makes the future seem brighter than it really is. Apparently director Rob Van Eyck has decided not to wait another two decades for another sequel as *Afterman 3*, a work about a global warming disaster, just recently premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Needless to say, I cannot wait to see who rapes the Afterman in the ostensibly final chapter in the

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Afterman trilogy.

-Ty E

HALLOWEEN

Rob Zombie (2007)

I really wasn't offended when I heard Rob Zombie was planning to remake John Carpenter's Halloween. I grew up watching Halloween and the Halloween franchise. They entertained me and nothing more. I don't hold Halloween as a sacred film not to be tampered with. The countless sequels did enough in destroying the films so-called "legacy." Rob Zombie created a fanboy jerk off epic (a 2 hour long slasher film?) with his remake of Halloween. Zombie couldn't help but fill in all the little details that are absent in the original, which gave it it's power. I remember as a child dreaming out scenarios for the missing aspects of Halloween. Wondering what Michael Myers did in the mental hospital all those years, what psychological elements caused young Michael to kill his sister, and other predictable "childish" thoughts. At over 40 years of age, Rob Zombie's fan boy fantasies have come true. He managed to destroy one of his favorite films. Rob Zombie obviously has dreams of being considered the "Quentin Tarantino" of the horror genre. Watching countless horrible horror films, learning their simple conventions (and how to break them), assembled fragments of those horror films (as evidence of horror knowledge and trivia), have countless "famous" actors and actresses, and then stylizing the film for the new film generation of unprogressive fans. Post-modernism long ago reared it's ugly head and has given us what we have already seen. Rob Zombie's Halloween is another attempt at making an "art" piece of post-modernism. PURE EVIL! The first good half of Halloween follows Michael Myers into his route of sociopathic mental deterioration. None of the Myers "back story" is necessary (it is Zombie's fan boy soul unleashed). The rest of the film follows a somewhat similar plot to the original Halloween. Since House of 1000 Corpses and The Devil's Rejects, Rob Zombie has picked up a couple skills in shot composition, editing, and overall construction of the entire film. He once again decided to put in "hip" music (another nod to Tarantino) to give the film a "timeless" feel. Michael Myers somehow grows into a seven foot tall giant in the mental hospital. He looked more like a fake wrestler from the WCW than a slasher killer. Unsurprisingly, Rob Zombie committed to such a lame and unoriginal idea. I hope the upcoming remake of A Nightmare on Elm Street doesn't feature an eight foot tall tranny Freddy Krueger. Rob Zombie's Halloween features Halloween franchise child actress Danielle Harris all grown up and topless (covered in blood). I really hope this wasn't some sick fantasy of Rob Zombie's. In the mid 1990's Harris was the victim of an obsessed stalking fan (I assume Halloween fan). The lonely fellow made threats that he would kill her. Nonetheless, Harris decided to flaunt her blood covered boobies for the remake. Her performance's in Halloween 4 and 5 must have been a real eye opener for Rob Zombie. His morbid wish has finally come true. Halloween 4: Return of Michael Myers Era Danielle Harris Lady

HALLOWEEN

Danielle Harris in Rob Zombie's Halloween Halloween also updates American suburbia with modern degeneracy. In the original Halloween, Michael Myers seemed to come from the typical American wholesome suburban background (which made him "scarier"). Rob Zombie's Michael Myers is a white trash child with a stripper mother (Zombie once again whores out his wife) and a foul mouthed trailer park stepfather. Although this Myer family may better reflect contemporary American "family values," it added nothing to the "power" of the film. The end of Rob Zombie's Halloween turns into a dark underexposed mess. Zombie needs to learn the basics innovated by the pioneers in cinema and their abilities to utilize shadows to their cinematically gothic benefit. Rob Zombie simply makes scenes dark to make them "spooky." What comes out is a bunch of scenes that are underexposed and almost unwatchable. I figured that Rob Zombie could have bought himself a nice lighting crew but shadows are just too artsy! Rob Zombie's Halloween is a sometimes entertaining "update" of the original films for today's apathetic American audience. It offers a couple interesting new cheap elements and a whole entourage of embarrassing ones. Zombie's Halloween is a fan boys dream turned nightmare. May Jesus Christ accept his forgiveness.

-Ty E

FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

Robert A. Endelson (1977)

While the superlatively sleazy exploitation flick *Fight for Your Life* (1977) aka *Blood Bath at 1313 Fury Road* aka *Getting Even* aka *Held Hostage* aka *I Hate Your Guts* aka *The Hostage's Bloody Revenge* aka *Hostage Staying Alive* has been described by countless film reviewers as one of the most racist and politically incorrect films ever made (for example, the dorks at AllMovie.com described the work as “amazingly racist”) due to its depiction of a conspicuously white trash fugitive killer terrorizing a black bourgeois family and saying some not-so-nice things about negroes, the reality is that it is one of the most overtly anti-white (or, more like ‘anti-white proletarian’) pieces of Hebraic agitprop ever dreamed up by a bunch of scheming Semitic smut-peddlers, though that does not mean it cannot be enjoyed by the good, the proud, and the racially insensitive members of white America. Indeed, directed and co-produced by Jewish pornographer turned dentist Robert A. Endelson (*Filthiest Show in Town*), penned by Hebrew hack Straw Weisman (who, most recently, acted as an executive producer on his young kinsman James Franco’s 2014 Faulkner adaptation *The Sound and the Fury*), and produced by Judaic sexploitation mogul William Mishkin (who, among other things, was responsible for producing most of gutter auteur Andy Milligan’s films), *Fight for Your Life* is as shameless as films get as an unsubtle piece of majorly moronic race-hate that was clearly made to appeal to the more base instincts of both blacks and whites, the former being mostly depicted as dignified saints and the latter as a combination of law abiding morons who question nothing, resentful white trash scum, and nigger-loving whores. A work that, despite being about a cracker con that ‘tortures’ a nice negro family, only features whites being killed (including a prepubescent boy and a beautiful teenager girl), *Fight for Your Life*, not unlike the also Judaic directed mess *Good Luck, Miss Wyckoff* (1979) is just one sick Semitic fantasy where the Jew is nowhere to be seen and the white man is the authoritarian puppet master who wallows in torturing so-called ‘people of color.’ Starring mainstream actor William Sanderson (who is best known for his role as ‘J.F. Sebastian’ in Ripley Scott’s 1982 sci-fi masterpiece *Blade Runner*) in an exceedingly embarrassing role as a raving redneck rapist killer whose favorite words are “nigger” and “coon” and featuring a less than subtle “black power” message that rejects the Christian message of “turning the other cheek” (in one literally heavy handed scene, the redneck villain repeatedly smacks a negro patriarch on both sides of his cheeks with a bible), *Fight For Your Life* is the sort of film that makes it quite clear the Hebrews did their damndest to fan the flames of white hate.

While traveling through Manhattan in a prison van en route to Sing Sing, southern fried white trash sadist alpha-con Jesse Lee Kane (William Sanderson) and his two slavish colored comrades—a sexually depraved East Asian named

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Ling Chow (Peter Yoshida) and a stereotypically coke-addled and flashy dressing Puerto Rican named Chino (Daniel Faraldo)—manage to escape after the automobile crashes and they murder the prison guards. Luckily, the fucked fugitive trio do not have to look far to find a car, which they steal from a typically effeminately dressed negro pimp, whose flashy clothes Chino steals. Meanwhile, an atypically cultivated negro family named the Turners headed by a self-declared pacifist Christian patriarch named Preacher Ted (Robert Judd) and his much more aggressive wife Mrs. Turner (Catherine Peppers) congregate at a dinner table and disagree with one another in a respectful fashion regarding their feelings on evil white folks and black unity. Unquestionably, the toughest member of the Turner tribe is wheelchair bound Grandma Turner (Lela Small), who, to the chagrin of pussy peacemaker Ted, proudly proclaims to her preteen grandson Floyd (played by Reggie Rock Bythewood, who went on to become a director/producer/screenwriter who has directed big budget black cinema garbage like *Biker Boyz* (2003) starring Laurence Fishburne), “Black Power...that’s where it’s at.” Mrs. Turner is not exactly a fan of crackers either and, unfortunately for her, her daughter Corrie (Yvonne Ross) is friends with her dead son’s white girlfriend Karen (played by Bonnie Martin and who she blames for the death of her son), who is invited to eat with the family. Of course, Karen will never make it to dinner, as sexually depraved chink Ling Chow will find her, molest her, and murder her, before she gets to the front door. Indeed, while on the run, Jesse Lee Kane and his multicultural minions make it to the Turner home and torture the family à la *The Last House on the Left* (1972), albeit in a bawdy and bigoted Blaxploitation fashion.

As killer Kane and his seemingly half-retarded comrades torture the Turner family to perform degrading Stepin Fetchit-esque routines, a humorous and uptight cop named Lt. Reilly (David Cargill)—a seemingly emotionally vacant fellow who so mindlessly follows the law that he got his own best friend’s son imprisoned in a horrendous jail due to a meager marijuana charge—begins looking for the three outlaws. A somewhat impulsively unhinged maniac, Kane makes the mistake of killing a liquor store owner not far from the Turner home, thus eventually leading cop Reilly and a bunch small-town hick police to the fugitives, but before then, the trashy criminals have their fun at the expense of the dignity of some rather dapper darkies. Indeed, Kane likes calling preacher Ted things like “black ass coon” and “black ass bugger.” In tribute to a MLK Jr. portrait hanging on the wall of the Turner home, Kane also says “Martin Luther Coon” a couple times. Unquestionably, Ling is the most depraved of the three fugitives, as he not only molests and murders blonde teen Karen when he catches her walking to the Turner home through the woods, but he also beats in the skull of Floyd’s white friend and “blood brother” (David Dewlow), who also happens to be the son of the local Sheriff, who makes it a personal mission to take out Kane and his followers when he discovers his brutally murdered progeny.

Of course, like most post-WWII screen racists, Kane is depicted as a loser with an inferiority complex who gets a self-esteem boost by torturing poor little 'minorities.' In fact, Kane's persecution-complex is so transparent that he more or less confesses to his victims that he was raped in prison while still just a teenager. Going from victim to victimizer, Kane rapes Mr. Turner's virginal teenage daughter Corrie, which infuriates the patriarch so much that he finally gets the testicular fortitude to fight back against his torturer. Indeed, the last ten minutes or so of the film feature a racially-charged showdown between Kane and Mr. Turner, but before that, Chino is fatally wounded by a bullet to the balls by the Turner family and Ling commits accidental suicide when he attempts to make a great escape out of a window and is fatally wounded by broken glass. After listening in on the radio and learning that Corrie was raped, uptight lawman Lt. Reilly decides to break the law for the first time and throws a handgun to Mr. Turner so he can have a showdown with Kane, who is using Mrs. Turner as a hostage and has a gun to her head. After Kane states to Mr. Turner during their showdown, "Ain't gonna be a fair fight, boy...everyone knows whites are naturally superior," the spade preacher accuses the fugitive of being a faggot who was raped by negroes in jail, even stating, "Is that what happened to you Kane...some big black boogeyman stick it to you, boy? I knew you weren't a man." By this point, Kane begins losing more than just his cool and screams at Mr. Turner in a hysterically hateful fashion, "I hate you...You just like the black man my momma run off with." Of course, Turner shoots Kane dead, thus spreading the message to black audience members to never accept pacifism when dealing with racist whites.

In its depiction of a poor white redneck who uses an East Asian and Latino to persecute a noble middle class negro family, *Fight for Your Life* seems to spread some audaciously absurd allegorical message about the state of America that borders on science fiction. If the film had been about a heinous Hebraic banker who, with the help of an East Indian, a Chinaman, and a deracinated white liberal WASP, kidnapped and tortured a white Christian middle class family while demanding a pound of flesh, it would probably best reflect the current socio-political climate of America today. In fact, *Fight for Your Life* was made and advertised to incite blacks, which it did, or so was described by Bill Landis and Michelle Clifford in *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002). Indeed, as the authors wrote regarding the experience of watching the film with a largely black audience: "When the pacifist Turner finally shoots Cain, the Empire crowd broke into cheers: "Fuckin' cracker deserved it!" White patrons tried to leave the theater as unassumingly as possible [...] The whole freakish racist hallucination is distinguished by William Sanderson's idiosyncratic fireball performance as Cain, which inflamed the Empire audience into booing, hollering "cracker" and "honky," and flinging any handy object at his image on the screen. Even

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little kids with their parents joined in the act. Sleazoid Express never witnessed an audience so enraged and unified against what was going on on the screen.”

Unquestionably, *Fight for Your Life* makes the perfect double feature along with the somewhat strange anti-Anglo Blaxploitation *Bone* (1972) directed by kosher cult director Larry Cohen, which depicts an arrogant slick-talking black buck thief torturing an white upper-middle class married couple. Of course, while white racist Kane is depicted as a purely despicable monster in *Fight for Your Life*, the eponymous black racist Bone is treated as a hero who gave two hypocritical bourgeois honkies just what they deserved, thus reflecting the rather transparent agenda among Jewish exploitation filmmakers during the 1970s, which is not all that different from the Hebrews that run Hollywood today. I certainly cannot think of a National Socialist propaganda film that is so hateful in its one dimensional propaganda that it depicts a Jew putting a gun to the head of a infant, but that is just one of the many cartoonish things one sees the redneck racist do in the *Fight for Your Life*, which does for American exploitation cinema what Judeo-Bolsheviks Leon Trotsky and Ilya Ehrenburg's writings did in terms of siring irrational hatred for the dreaded Nordic race. Ironically, *Fight for Your Life* was also made to appeal to the very same racist rednecks it criticizes, thus demonstrating the truly ungodly lengths a Hebraic hack will go to just to make a shekel.

-Ty E

NEIGHBOR

Robert A. Masciantonio (2009)

Such a sweet and welcoming face; beauty of that sexual caliber could be no more devious than any of the other bitches of the world, as Gualtiero Jacopetti should have titled *La donna nel mondo* (Women of the World). Continuing forward with the guise of a flawless clothed body, indie horror welcomes a new gore starlet with America Olivo. She teems with slutty class and a giggle that will melt your heart - and she's a serial killer. And so the ball has been dropped and no heads are turning. I wonder why that is? Oh, it's because this isn't new and worst off, it isn't good. Neighbor aka Robert A. Masciantonio's Neighbor is an awful film and a prime offender of gore-for-the-sake-of-gore. Switch sights to disappointment because this is solid proof that eye candy only goes as far as unstimulated entertainment; eye candy and moving pictures should never be mixed. Just look at the prime examples of D.O.A. - Dead or Alive, Bandidas, Tomb Raider, Onechanbara, Attack Girls' Swim Team vs. Undead, or many of the other countless titles with the mirrored modus operandi. Any film that occupies matter over mind has a general success rate of single digits and proves to be as intimidating and infuriating as the prices they charge for cinema feces. The film on trial here opens with a beautiful woman listening to music and dancing around a very nice kitchen. She eats a bowl of cereal and presumes her joyous shuffle without an air of menace other than the knowledge of this film's primary genre alignment. As she goes upstairs and opens a door, flash to two beyond mutilated bodies tied up in chairs. The woman screams and when the trauma passes, she laughs. Such a tedious opening for a film, and to think Masciantonio actually attempted to "psyche" us out with juvenile playground tactics. Had this been a mind game of a film or implemented in a later stage of story progression, I might have been fooled but we're not in Kindergarten and what I watched was too stupid for words. With the plot in concern, the film adopts a simple tale of a new girl in town who begins a spree of murder that disconnects a tight-knit community of friends. But between you and me, none of this really happens. Almost no mention of her moving into town recently was exchanged between cast, time just churns up into fine dust as the run time is squandered by America Olivo in skimpy clothes torturing dude-bros. While this rendition of horror might seem appealing, it could only be so to the next Evil Dead memorabilia sporting metal-head who would appreciate something for the effects of violence and brutality towards unsuspecting victims. While I appreciate a nice scene of mayhem and murder as much as the average consumer of oddities, I enjoy it to be wrapped nicely in something called continuity and story archs, not a film centering itself around tits and blood, which we don't get none or much of either. Now to flip planes sharply, America Olivo is a great actress for what she's done. She was beautiful in Bitch Slap however no amount of good looks could have made that

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film palpable for me and she turns a nice psychotic turn in Neighbor which is presumably a natural talent. Neighbor just isn't equipped with really much of anything other than a circle of guys drinking in a bar planning a party. That's the key set up for the brutal shenanigans to take place, only it never does all in part to "The Girl" kidnapping our lead protagonist and torturing him and his girlfriend to soak up the rest of the time necessary for "feature length." Also, he later presumes he's dreaming during a slow purging from existence in an effort to channel An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge vibes of post-Jacob's Ladder discord. I find it very discomforting that I can only praise the level of stark violence in Neighbor. I'd really like to be able to proclaim something in this abscessed project to have value or meaning but it's misplaced as a skin flick but doesn't aspire to be anything but cock-teasing on celluloid. You'd think they could fit a nice shower scene in the midst of Neighbor, I mean, with all the scenes of home invasion on display here that equate to little or nothing. Neighbor is a mess of a film; the kind that you are embarrassed to have watched. While some idiots can mistake the context of cruelty and splatter to be "camp", I cannot accept this travesty for something that it isn't - tolerable. While America Olivo is an attractive female who isn't afraid to bare all for us in Playboy, she's just a face - a body composed of tissue, muscle, bone, and fluid who will inevitably perish and rot. She and I will never amount to anything because time destroys all. Neighbor is a pitiful excuse for a horror movie; a two-tone wall of off-whites painted by someone with scarce knowledge of real horror. The revelation that life is precious...and I actually wasted 2 hours of my life on this fetid shit.

-mAQ

EMPEROR OF THE NORTH

Robert Aldrich (1973)

I've visited the cinematic subject of homeless folk several times in the last month. It seems that every corner I turn houses some film spanning many genres with homeless people as either key character pieces or undesirable pawns and deus ex machina's. When I read a summarized plot regarding an epic battle on a train, the action fan in me squealed and throbbed. After finally watching a film I'd never go out of my way to see, my view on classic period cinema was been shaken to the core. With a name like Sam Peckinpah's attached, you know you're in for a treat. Sadly, he didn't see the potential that we saw and jumped ship. The project was then picked up by Robert Aldrich who you may know from *The Dirty Dozen*. There's no doubt that Peckinpah would have created a bold and sadistic masterpiece, but I'd rather not chance time or fate and settle with this Western cult film of its own status. Originally titled *Emperor of the North Pole*, the film was quickly re-titled after the name turned out to be synonymous with Christmas. Little did the general audience know that they were missing out on a hellacious masculine viewing experience which is above any modern language. Simply put, I've never seen a film quite like *Emperor of the North*. It is a deep seated film relaying historical events with the lifestyle of a hobo. This being of such critical importance as how our economy is in the middle of a meltdown situation. Now there is a huge difference betwixt a homeless person and a hobo. A hobo (on screen) has the charisma to survive. He is armed with the will to steal and a sharp personality to boot. Homeless people are shown (and interact) as a sluggish, begging force that lacks any method of motivation. A lamprey, if you will. This film makes me appreciate the old times in which every man worked for his own, even if he had nothing to work towards. I hope if our current business climate plummets, that I'd be given the chance to hitch on trains.

Lee Marvin turns tables and heads as the legendary bum A-No. 1. This drifter is the greatest bum around. Ernest Borgnine plays Shack, a ruthless and sadistic train conductor who cherishes a threatening reputation of murdering any hobo that hitches his train without a ticket. Too bad old Shack meets his match when he crosses wits with A-No. 1. Both Lee Marvin and Ernest Borgnine bring their exquisite personalities to the big screen in this film. I'd always admired Borgnine after he said the key to his long life was his frequent masturbation. It takes a gutsy character such as himself to boast something so bravado and impromptu as that. He might be a familiar face thanks to his role as Ted Denslow in *BASEketball*. A role that might have won his infinite favorings thanks to his ability to humor us so well. Trust me, after watching him act Shack's character, I like seeing him smile instead of snarl. In a film that equates into a 10 minute long testosterone slinging death fest, *Emperor of the North* has anything that is apart of a daily breakfast. I'd like to imagine Peckinpah's credits stapled to the film, but this is a

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film best left untouched. A film preserved by its own natural contents, Emperor of the North is mandatory viewing for anyone interested in the history of film. Not only a rustic masterpiece, but a masterpiece with an extremely high replay value.

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THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK

Robert Altman (1969)

“New Hollywood” auteur Robert Altman (M*A*S*H, Nashville) is a filmmaker who has directed a number of films that I like to some degree for varying reasons, but his pre-fame work *That Cold Day in the Park* (1969)—a box-office disaster upon its release—is my personal favorite work of his and, along with his British-American psychological thriller *Images* (1972), arguably the darkest and most unsettling idiosyncratic work in the filmmaker’s entire oeuvre. An American-Canadian production shot on a rather small budget of \$500,000 based on the novel of the same name written by American actor/screenwriter Peter Miles (who wrote it along with the bad b-movie *They Saved Hitler’s Brain* (1968), under the less than inconspicuous pseudonym Richard Miles), *That Cold Day in the Park* is part moody maniac melodrama, part psychological horror-thriller, part callous leftist criticism of the British Columbian bourgeois, part creepy and even borderline campy comedy, and part dichotomous class/character study and is most like a post-*The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971) Fassbinder melodrama minus sympathy for its lunatic spinster lady lead and a certain dark and shadowiness that echoes gothic horror. Shot by Hungarian cinematographer László Kovács, who got his start working on no-budget works like *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies!!?* (1964) and would go on to shoot *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Five Easy Pieces* (1970) and was a pioneering member of the American New Wave, but would go on to directing less artistically merited big blockbusters like Steven Spielberg’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *Ghostbusters* (1984), *That Cold Day in the Park* is an intentionally claustrophobically shot ‘chamber piece’ about a sexually repressed and fiercely frigid old maid who lives as a self-imprisoned slave in her lonely and dreary apartment, but discovers a sort of bright white light in the form of a young and seemingly melancholy teenage boy sitting on a bench all by his lonesome on a rather rainy day. Advertised with the superlatively sensationalized tagline, “HOW FAR WILL A WOMAN GO...to possess a 19 year-old boy?,” *That Cold Day in the Park* is ultimately a foreboding and shuddersome celluloid tale of a uniquely unhinged babe somewhat past her physical prime who would probably have been vaginally penetrated by her high school sweetheart, but instead locked herself away in a neo-Victorian nightmare of ‘proper play dates’ with elderly men and women who happen to belong to the same pseudo-ritzy social clique as her morbid widow mother did. A chamber piece-sized work with an unsettlingly anti-erotic clash of social classes between a figurative princess who has locked herself in a tower and the figurative pretty boy knight she takes it upon herself to assign to save her but ultimately winds up locked away with her, *That Cold Day in the Park* is one of the most delightful yet equally depressing diacritic depictions of repressed horniness-gone-homicidal

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ever captured on celluloid.

Middle-aged spinster Frances Austen (Oscar-award winning theater/film actress Sandy Dennis of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) fame) lives in an elegant, if not uniquely ugly and mundanely minimalistic Vancouver apartment that might be occupied by a living and breathing woman, but has the unmistakable metaphysical feeling of death and lack of all vitality. Against the better judgment of some brazen bourgeois bitch who invokes the beyond-the-grave scorn of the old maid's dead mother, frigid Frances decides to invite a seemingly lonely and visibly wet and cold teenage boy she spots from her window to come and stay inside her apartment. The boy (played by actor turned college history professor Michael Burns) in question, whose real name is never mentioned, agrees to follow Frances back to her apartment, but he does not do this verbally as he pretends to be mute and somewhat dumb, but ultimately proves to be a delightful and entertaining guest to a woman who wants some wantonness in her life, but lacks the experience and social ease to attain it. The first thing Frances does to make the boy feel at home is give him a seemingly sexually-charged but ultimately anticlimactic bubble bath that ultimately proves to be the most sensual and unclothed moment 'sexual' moment they share with one another during their radically ridiculous pseudo-relationship. Sort of like a bourgeois woman-child who has never grown up nor did a day's work in her entire patently privileged yet less than joyous life, Frances will do anything to keep the lost-but-not-found twink boy she snatched up from outside, so she has the creepily childish idea to lock him in the guest bedroom that she allows him to sleep in. Of course, Frances is not a total monster, just a socially retarded one, as she supplies the boy with decent food, clothes, shoes, luxurious shelter, and neverending and hopelessly hysterical chatter that is quite indicative of her intensely introverted and largely insipid, brain damaged mind. Of course, the boy has a life outside his new hermetic home with Frances, so he sneaks out the window in his locked prison window to be with his bitchy big sister and her wild war veteran boyfriend.

When the Boy leaves Frances' apartment to go meet his big sis Nina (Susanne Benton), he walks in on her screwing her boyfriend Nick (David Garfield), but does not seem the least bit shocked as the two seem to share a quasi-incestuous relationship. The Boy tells sister Nina and her boy toy about how Frances has a "strange attitude toward sex" and makes a "big deal about it," but prefers living with her because he has his own room and board. As the viewer learns, the Boy originally intended to meet his sister and her boyfriend on 'that cold day in the park' that sparked the by-chance meeting with seemingly fickle Frances. When Frances unlocks the Boy's door and surprises him with a hearty breakfast in bed, she notices he is gone and is crushed. Naturally, when the Boy shows up later that day at her door, she is quite jubilant and welcomes him in. Not long after when Frances goes to a gynecologist to get contraceptives, lying to the vag doc

that she is single but getting married (sexual protection was not so easy to get back in those days), in a rather dramatic attempt to prepare herself for sharing her novice carnal knowledge with the Boy, the Boy's sister shows up to the apartment and demands a free bath, complaining, "I have told you, I do not take a bath everyday...what kind brat would deprive his sister of a bath?!" The Boy's sister pulls him into the bath and even attempts to seduce him, seductively stating, "Imagine if I was not your sister," in a whorish fashion. Of course, the Boy is not the only one who gets unwanted sexual attention as Frances has an elderly doctor friend named Dr. Stevenson, who has been trying to get in her panties for years, but she is decidedly disgusted by him and his lecherous longings, especially after visiting the gynecologist and having her naughty bits fiddled with in a sterile fashion. When Frances enters the Boy's bedroom, unwittingly believing he is sleeping under the covers with only his blond hair showing (he is really hanging out with his big sis), she reveals her affection for him and declares "I want you to make love to me," so when she finally realizes it is a toy doll under the covers, she has a momentarily paused but ultimately hysterical freakout and shrieks as if she found a mutilated dead body. After discovering Frances has nailed his bedroom window shut, thus making him unable to enter the outside world, the Boy reveals to his conspiring non-lover that he is not deaf and dumb, stating, "Don't think I can't get out of here...I can get out anytime I want...And if you think by keeping me here I am going to get in bed with you or anything like that, you're wrong...If I want a girl or anything I'll just go out and get one myself...And I might not come back." Clearly a cracked chick with nothing to lose, especially in regard to her dignity, Frances takes the Boy's statement deathly serious as a sort of ultimatum and responds to him not long after by confessing, "I'm sorry, so so sorry. I don't want you to be angry with me. I want you to stay here...I want things to stay the way they are...You can understand that, can't you?! I can't let you go...Not now." To solve the strange sexual situation or lack thereof, Frances has the bright idea to buy the boy a prostitute and bring her back to the apartment. After a failed attempt to coerce an aggressive Amy Winehouse-look-alike of streetwalker to come home with her, Francis is approached by a pimp and finally procures a haggard hooker (Linda Sorenson, who played villain Stegman's mother in Mark L. Lester's *Class of 1984* (1982)) that she brings back to her apartment for the Boy. Rather unfortunately, Frances becomes insufferably jealous and homicidally infuriated by said haggard hooker when she hears her would-be-wonder-boy making love to her and drives a butcher knife into her heart in a manner that would have probably be like Norman Bates' mother. That *Cold Day in the Park* ends in slight ambiguity, though Frances' insanity has surely reached a totally new level of nastiness.

Sort of like *The Collector* (1965) starring Terence Stamp meets *Misery* (1990) starring Kathy Bates, except with a pleasantly foul 'Gothic Canadian' flavor, *That Cold Day in the Park* is undoubtedly a underrated celluloid work that has yet to

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get its due, though thankfully some have taken notice of Robert Altman's lost minor masterpiece. For example, Canadian homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce's debut feature-length film *No Skin Off My Ass* (1993) is a satirical remake of *That Cold Day in the Park* that replaces the bourgeois spinster with a homopunk hairdresser and the Boy with a neo-nazi skinhead, which is all the more interesting considering that the Peter Miles novel that Altman used as the source novel originally centered around a repressed homosexual longing after a lonely hustler. Robert Altman would later utilize theater actress Sandy Dennis' distinctive acting talents for his film *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (1982), but, in my humble opinion, the actress never again gave a screen performance as hauntingly hypnotic as in *That Cold Day in the Park*. Incidentally, actress Sandy Dennis become a 'cradle robber' in real life when she started a relationship with actor Eric Roberts—a man nearly two decades her junior—that lasted from 1980 to 1985, on top of being a 'spiritual spinster' of sorts, vocally admitting she never wanted children, stating in a 1989 interview with *People* magazine regarding a miscarriage she had in 1965, "if I'd been a mother, I would have loved the child, but I just didn't have any connection with it when I was pregnant ... I never, ever wanted children. It would have been like having an elephant." Ironically, Dennis died childless at the premature age of 54 from ovarian cancer, a disease that is more likely to affect women who have never had children, though the deranged would-be-superman Christopher Dennis featured in *Confessions of a Superhero* (2007)—a documentary about people who dress up in superhero outfits at the Hollywood Walk of Fame and beg for tips—claims to be the bastard son of the actress, though her family denies it. Either way, Sandy Dennis was undoubtedly born to play Frances Austen of *That Cold Day in the Park*, a film that, in its depiction of bourgeois bitch frigidity and prole sexual virility, makes for the closest thing to a Marxist-Freudian Gothic melodrama, albeit being nowhere near as annoying, superlatively soulless, or aesthetically retarded as it sounds. Indeed, Robert Altman was sort of a leftist prick who played an imperative role in popularizing M*A*S*H with his absurdly overrated 1970 film of the same name and made a bunch of others films about improvised nothingness, but *That Cold Day in the Park*, as well as *Thieves Like Us* (1974), *Short Cuts* (1993), and a couple other films, stops me from despising the filmmaker outright as a glorified TV director posing as a serious auteur and cinematic artist.

-Ty E

BREWSTER MCCLOUD

Robert Altman (1970)

Love him or loathe him (I feelings of a little bit of both), belated auteur Robert Altman (Nashville, Gosford Park) is one of the few American filmmakers in Hollywood history to rarely play it safe as a mensch that thrived on taking both professional and artistic risks. For example, when Altman—a stubborn old chap that spent over two decades slaving away in the industrial film and television world before really getting noticed—first achieved great commercial and critical success with the sardonic antiwar flick M*A*S*H (1970), the filmmaker decided to follow it up the same year with what is arguably the most innately anarchistic, idiosyncratic, and inexplicable flick of his entire career. Indeed, although a flawed flick with a somewhat incoherent plot, Brewster McCloud (1970) aka Bird Shit aka Brewster McCloud's (Sexy) Flying Machine is, at least in my opinion, one of the most strangely sophisticated and underrated films of Altman's entire career as a sort of experimental neo-fable where bird shit and serial killing collide in a quixotically liberating fashion that really underscores the rebellious filmmaker's untamable spirit and commitment to inordinate celluloid assholery. The great-grandson of a German Catholic Forty-Eighter rebel that fled Schleswig-Holstein, Germany after the failed leftist Revolutions of 1848, Altman was indubitably born with rebellion in his blood and his fucked little flick is a fiercely farcical attack on both America and American culture that was fittingly set in the same state that JFK was assassinated only a couple years as a scathingly cinematic work that effortlessly assaults and molests all forms of authority. The story of a young virginal serial killer with both a strangling and bird fetish that dedicates his entire life to achieving his rather lofty dream of being able to fly by building special wings with the help of a beautiful blonde fallen angel, the film is ultimately a uniquely unhinged allegory for Altman's own weltanschauung of total personal freedom in an oppressive realm plagued by bureaucratic stupidity, cultural and moral retardation, carny hustler capitalism, nihilistic materialism, and necrotizing (post)Puritanism. In that sense, Altman's film has a similar spirit to cinematic works as diverse as Terry Gilliam's dystopian masterpiece Brazil (1985) and Werner Herzog's classic doc Little Dieter Needs to Fly (1997) in terms of its overtly allegorical depiction of flying as the ultimate symbol of personal freedom and transcendence. Starring Bud Cort in an underrated pre-fame performance as a vaguely similar role to his eponymous character in Hal Ashby's Harold and Maude (1971) where he also breaks down the fourth wall by making goofy faces directly at the camera, Brewster McCloud probably should be a more readily worshiped cult item due to its director and lead actor, yet it strangely seems to be considered a minor work even among certain Altmanphiles. Personally, I rather re-watch the film over Altman's best respected classics like M*A*S*H and Nashville any day, but then again I probably find the

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sight of freshly splattered bird shit on the face of an elderly female corpse to be more humorous than the average person.

Somewhat humorously, Altman was so dissatisfied with Brewster McCloud screenwriter Doran William Cannon's script that he was quite critical about it to the press, even once telling the writer over the phone that "It was crap." As to why Altman—a filmmaker well known for severely irking screenwriters by using their screenplays as mere superficial guidelines as opposed to the holy writ—would opt to use Cannon's supposedly super shitty script, he once simply explained to Mitchell Zuckoff in *Robert Altman: The Oral Biography* (2009), "I forget what the writer's name was, but he has sole screen credit. Cannon, yeah, Cannon. It was just a dreadful piece, I thought. But it was a kid flying, a gem of an idea I could work off." Indeed, one can only assume Altman performed something nothing short of cinematic alchemy when he turned the turd of a screenplay into a surreal scatological satire that both literally and figuratively shits on authority and that brutally attacks both uptight politicians and sexually liberated hippie cunts alike with equal savagely scathing glee. As a cinematic work directed by a lifelong left-wing pothead with a mild degree of negrophilia, the film naturally features a number of grotesque white and redneck caricatures but these caricatures are mostly strangely charmingly lovable and have some of the best lines. Indeed, the film has a number of great scenes of racial hilarity, including an old bitch bitching at a black crow "Get out, you nigger bird!" and a corrupt cop complaining while at a zoo to his long suffering wife, "If I want to see some monkeys, I'll go over to niggertown." While Altman might have had a retarded political sense that is typical of many people that work in Hollywood, he was thankfully no social justice warrior faggot and certainly more a cultivated cynic and mirthful misanthrope than some sort of staunch leftist ideologue. Surely, Brewster McCloud has the capacity to trigger the more spiritually castrated of white liberals and 'biological Marxists,' which is indubitably part of its pleasantly peculiar charm. In fact, Altman was known to 'racially taunt' certain 'minority' friends, or as Hebraic producer Peter Newman (O.C. and Stiggs) once stated, "I was quoted once saying Bob called me 'the Jew with the money.' Bob was totally irreverent. First of all, I didn't have any money. More important, some people saw an implication that it was anti-Semitic. Nothing could be further from the truth. God knows he wasn't anti-Semitic. He was just outrageous."

Over the years, my opinion of the celebrated pop film critic Roger Ebert has slightly changed somewhat and has become a little bit more nuanced, as I have come to the conclusion that he tended to be either completely right or completely wrong when it came to assessing the value of a film. Indeed, Ebert seems to have written the most intellectually sound and insightful review of Brewster McCloud when it was first released in late 1970. For example, Ebert concluded his 3.5 out of 4 star review with the following words: "I'm not sure it's about

anything. I imagine you could extract a subject from it, and I'll try that the next time I see it. But I wonder if the movie isn't primarily style; if Altman doesn't have a personal sense of humor and wants his directing style to reflect it. One could, of course, get into a deep thing about birds and wings and freedom, but why?" While Ebert might be right and it is probably pointless to attempt to analyze the film, one cannot deny that the film itself is an expression of freedom as work of scatological slapstick sardonicism that tests the bounds of both good taste and wickedly frolicsome comedic storytelling. In other words, the film's very existence legitimizes its own central theme as an experimental comedy that Altman jeopardized his newfound post-M*A*S*H fame and professional reputation in Hollywood by making, as such an absurdly antisocial and playfully anti-American flick could only have been an abject disaster commercially speaking, which it was.

Altman's most overtly Fellini-esque cinematic work to the point where the film's epilogue seems like a party-cum-tribute to the Italian maestro's somewhat more obscure work *I clowns* (1970) aka *The Clowns*, Brewster McCLOUD is probably the director's most overtly 'cinophile' oriented film. Somewhat unexpectedly, the film even pays anti-tribute to *Bullitt* (1968) via an arrogant San Francisco police detective and a fairly long and bizarre chase scene that concludes with said police detective blowing his brains out after crashing his ugly sports car. Altman had somewhat dubious moral reasons for loathing the famous *Bullitt* chase scene, or as he explained himself to David Thompson, "I felt that was a really irresponsible scene, because you weren't supposed to care about any of the people who got killed as a result of his driving. I had my cop commit suicide." Needless to say, the *Bullitt* anti-homage has caused the film to age somewhat less gracefully, yet still manages to inspire some nervous laughs. Notably, the most obvious and frequent cinematic reference in Altman's film is *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), including Margaret 'Wicked Witch of the West' Hamilton portraying a negrophobic old socialite that is murdered while sporting a pair of iconic ruby rhinestone slippers that a bird shits on. Additionally, commie *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) screenwriter Waldo Salt's daughter Jennifer Salt appears at the end of the film holding a *Todo*-esque dog while dressed like Dorothy Gale. Of course, *The Wizard of Oz* is a quite cleverly fitting film to reference in Brewster McCLOUD as the film undoubtedly takes a rather hostilely ironic approach to the famous Dorothy quote, "There's no place like home." Indeed, aside from depicting Houston as a sort of hick dystopia populated by low-class perverts and wanton weirdoes and ruled over by a senile pseudo-aristocracy and protected by insanely incompetent lawmen, the film's titular 'antihero' dreams of nothing more than literally fleeing the nest and flying away for good so that he will no longer have to suffer the soul-draining collective stupidity and compulsive closed-mindedness of his fellow citizenry, hence his need to kill. On the other hand, Altman's flick surely makes for a wayward tourist advert that probably makes

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Houston seem infinitely more exotic and intriguing than it actually is. Of course, you know the film depicts much simpler and more racially homogeneous times in that it does not feature a single Mexican, Muslim, or transgender sexual cripple. Indeed, the film might depict the superlatively shitty southeastern Texas city in a singularly unflattering fashion, but the aesthetically displeasing metropolis seems like a majestic utopia compared to the real-life 'multicultural' Houston of today.

Beginning with no less than three different opening scenes that reveal that Altman has a keen fondness for 'trolling' his audience in a manner that is even sometimes obnoxious, Brewster McCloud first begins with the introduction of a quack 'Lecturer' (played by René Auberjonois, who was named after his paternal Swiss post-Impressionist painter grandfather)—a mostly repugnant and ironically pedantic figure that Altman used as a form of "punctuation" for the film—that proceeds to lecture to both the viewer and an unseen class, stating in a pseudo-profound fashion, "Flight of birds, flight of man, man's similarity to birds, birds' similarity to man. These are the subjects at hand. We will deal with them for the next hour or so, and hope that we will draw no conclusions, otherwise the subject shall cease to fascinate us and, alas, another dream would be lost. There are far too few." In seemingly unintentional tribute to Altman's Teutonic roots, the almost insufferably zany Lecturer then proceeds to quote Goethe, stating, "The desire to fly has been ever-present in the mind of man, but the reality has been long in coming." Not surprisingly, the loony Lecturer is featured at various times in the film as he pedantically recites dry academic ornithological information that more or less parallels what is going on in the life and world of quasi-autistic protagonist Brewster McCloud (Bud Cort). A strange young man that lives an odd owl-like existence in the fallout shelter of the Houston Astrodome where he devotes most of his time to learning how to fly and building a very special set of wings, McCloud seems to be a bastard without a family, but luckily a beautiful blonde MILF named Louise (Sally Kellerman)—a sort of seductive fairy godmother that used to have wings as revealed by the curious sight of two large glaring scars on her back—provides him with all the emotional, philosophical, and criminal support he needs. Indeed, whenever McCloud needs help stealing something or committing a crime, Louise and her black raven companion are always there. Likewise, anytime that someone hassles the protagonist, they soon find themselves strangled to death and covered in bird shit in what is like an unhinged form of 'divine punishment,' though it is never clear as to who actually commits these shit-stained strangulations. Indeed, the only thing that is ever really revealed is that McCloud considers himself guilty of the grisly crimes and greatly fears prison time. As he ultimately reveals at the end of the film, McCloud rather brave death than be imprisoned inside the slammer.

At the beginning of the film, McCloud takes a rather degrading but ulti-

mately strangely rewarding job as the personal chauffeur of a rich evil old fart named Abraham Wright (underrated actor Stacy Keach in relatively effective old fart makeup). Old Abe is a mean miserable miser that has no problem sexually groping young dago dames and verbally assaulting old negroes from the comfort of his wheelchair while doing his rounds picking up the monthly rent from the various ghetto apartment buildings and sanatoriums that he rules over with a firm iron-fist as a proud old school authoritarian slumlord. Naturally, Abraham thinks McCloud is nothing short of “deplorable” and a “goddamn faggot” and even aggressively tells him as much while simultaneously mocking his driving abilities. Additionally, Abraham suspects that the elderly negroes at one of his sanatoriums are “dirty pinko” parasites that are plotting against him and thus plots to have them removed from his dilapidated buildings. Being an old fart that seems like he is too lazy to even wipe his own ass, Abe also has problems with his bowels and even shits his pants at one point and then playfully quips, “I just dumped a steamer through the hoop.” Although it takes the viewer some time become completely aware of this fact due to the somewhat convoluted nature of the film, the only reason McCloud goes to work for Abe is because he is the brother of aviation pioneers Orville and Wilbur Wright and thus owns an ancient aviation book that was given to him by his famous siblings. Naturally, McCloud not only steals the book, but also ruthlessly liquidates Abe after he has gotten what he needs. Indeed, in what is arguably the most timelessly hilarious and bizarrely iconic scene of the entire film, Abe’s strangled wheelchair-bound corpse causes a number of car crashes after it is pushed down a major highway in a merrily morbid scene where Altman is certainly at his most wonderfully wicked.

As a result of McCloud being involved in the death of a politically-connected old bitch conductor-cum-soprano-socialite named Daphne Heap (Margaret Hamilton) that makes the ultimately fatal mistake of calling Louise’s loyal raven a “nigger bird,” a bigwig Houston politician named Haskell Weeks (William Windom)—a soft, sleazy, and effete capitalist pig that may or may not be a twink-loving queer—hires a “San Francisco super cop” with “piercing blue eyes” named Detective Frank Shaft (Michael Murphy) to solve the mystery of the local strangler, thus leading to potential problems for the protagonist. Aside from the milky white bird droppings found on the heads of the strangling victims, Detective Shaft—a pretentious prick and fast-talking narcissist that immediately develops a great disdain for Weeks and local law enforcement—has no leads in murders aside from the basic modus operandi of the killer(s), so he even seriously considers hiring a professional “scatologist.” While he seems to think he is a too-cool-for-school Anglo-American Übermensch of the Steve McQueen-esque variety, Detective Shaft is more of a raging queen and a tragicomic cipher of a character who’s completely random death invites big laughs from the viewer. Indeed, Detective Shaft ultimately decides to blow his brains out after losing a fairly

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long chase with a dumb dame and crashing his car. Somewhat curiously, before committing self-slaughter with his own service revolver, one of Shaft's blue eyes turns shit brown in a scene that really seems to underscore the supreme superficiality and fragility of his handsomeness and ostensible martial prowess. In short, I doubt Altman was a big McQueen fan, even though both men seemed to have a similar affinity for drugs and debauchery.

As a deceptively beautiful and dapper defrocked 'fallen angel' that ruthlessly marches to the beat of her own drum, McCloud's virtual fairy godmother Louise—a true light-bringer of rebellion that might be a literal 'exterminating angel' and always sports a trench coat (with nothing underneath)—is a virtual female Lucifer though, instead of seducing the protagonist out of Eden like with Adam and Eve, she seems to lead him away from a 'forbidden fruit' of sorts. Indeed, Louise loathes sex and its all-too-human implications and tries desperately to steer McCloud clear of it as indicated by remarks like, "People like Hope accept what's been told to them. They don't think that they can be free. They don't even believe they can be free. Their is the closest thing they have to . . . flying [...] Something happens to them as they grow. They turn more and more toward earth. When they experience sex, they simply settle for it and procreate more of their own kind. So you must never be tempted. Don't ever let anything take away your full concentration from your work." Hope (Jennifer Salt) is a dumb chick that enjoys visiting McCloud in his subterranean lair and flirting with him to such a masturbatory degree that she manages to have ecstatic orgasms just by being in his mere presence, but the protagonist could care less as he is a rare virginal young man that thinks more about flying than fucking. Unfortunately, McCloud eventually meets a girl that does catch his fancy, thus leading to his senseless betrayal of Louise and ultimately his own devastating demise. Indeed, if one did not know that Brewster McCloud was directed by Robert Altman, one might assume it was created by some warped anarchistic Puritan, as the film contains a less than flattering depiction of sex and sociosexual issues.

Although he seems to have nil interest in the opposite sex, McCloud somehow manages to fall hard for an anti-cute creature named Suzanne (Shelley Duvall in her very first film role), who is unquestionably the homeliest and most harebrained whore in all of Texas. Indeed, upon attempting to steal her car—an orange and black Plymouth Road Runner that she herself stole from a redneck that tried to rape her—McCloud finds himself immediately attracted to the exceedingly dumb and insufferably extroverted twat Suzanne who, although an Astrodome usher that gives unintentionally obnoxious tours, proudly proclaims to be a race car driver. In fact, initially Suzanne unwittingly saves McCloud from prison by beating Detective Shaft in a police chase with her Plymouth Road Runner that ultimately results in the stud SF super cop committing via blue hara-kiri, but she will also mindlessly cause the hero's literal and figurative downfall. Indeed, when McCloud opts to succumb to carnal desire and sacrifice

his chastity by sleeping with super slut Suzanne, Louise meekly whimpers like a fragile wounded animal and decides to leave him for good. While McCloud accuses Louise of lying to him regarding sex and she attempts to defend herself by stating, "That girl almost got you called. I asked you not to see her again. You only have one friend, Brewster: Me. I'm the only one that cares about you [...] I am the only one that has never lied to you," he is in complete denial about his precarious situation and retorts, "It's not like you said it would be at all, Louise. Susan is nothing like you said." Seemingly blinded by Suzanne's beaver and tiny boobs, McCloud even ignores the serious implications of a rather revealing post-coital conversation where his moronic beloved discusses finding a lawyer for his flying device and even confesses that she is "afraid" of flying. While Suzanne wants to stay put in town and ignores him when he says she will have to "fly-away" with him, McCloud—a boy that has dedicated his life to attempting to escape from where he lives—still seems oblivious to the glaring fact that he has found a piss poor match for a mate.

When McCloud makes the absurd mistake of confiding in his stupendously dopey dame Suzanne that he needs to leave town because, to quote the protagonist regarding the police, "They'll put me in a cage" and then reveals "all the people that died" are the result of his own absurdist strangling campaign, Suzanne secretly decides to betray him by snitching on him. Indeed, Suzanne ultimately decides to call her failed artist ex-boyfriend Bernard to tell him that she has "been dating this really weird boy" and then hysterically remarks while acting like a poor little victim, "I think he is crazy. He thinks he can fly. And I think he's the one that's been strangling all those people." Unfortunately for McCloud, Bernard is the personal bitch boy of local bigwig Haskell Weeks, who is determined to catch the strangler so that he can bring back good ol' banal order back to Houston. Needless to say, Suzanne not only betrays McCloud by snitching on him, but she also cheats on him with her ex-beau Bernard—an ambiguously gay chap that used to do abstract etching on old cider bottles—who somewhat ironically refuses to have sex before marriage despite the (anti)heroine's rather sexually aggressive behavior. In the end, Mr. Weeks is thankfully strangled and police invade the Houston Astrodome while McCloud, who is completely heartbroken because he has just discovered Suzanne has betrayed him, takes the dangerous risk of making his first flight with his rather preposterous work-in-progress wings, but unfortunately the protagonist suffers a fate similar to Icarus and falls to his death after only a couple moments of truly transcendental freedom. In short, McCloud certainly falls short of finding his figurative Holy Grail and instead succumbs to a lethal form of lovelorn despair. Although the film concludes on a less than uplifting note with a decidedly dispiriting allegorical scenario where Altman seems to more or less express his belief that even the most rebellious and idiosyncratic of individuals are hopelessly imprisoned by society and thus are doomed to fail if they attempt to get rid of their figurative shack-

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les, the uniquely unhappy ending is followed by a strangely joyous Fellini-esque circus credits scene featuring all the lead appearing in goofy sideshow outfits, including Shelley Duvall dressed as a Raggedy Ann doll and Jennifer Salt dressed as Dorothy Gale.

In terms of low-class Lone Star state lunacy, it is hard to imagine that there would be a *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986) without Altman's Brewster McCLOUD. In fact, I wonder if Tobe Hooper was somewhat influenced by the film when he made his original masterpiece *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), as the wheelchair-bound monster Abraham Wright certainly seems like he could be a bourgeois kinsman of Leatherface's beloved grandpa, not to mention the fact that Altman's film depicts its Texas metropolitan location as a spiritually necrotizing and culturally decaying void inhabited by relatively grotesque subhuman characters that reflect the worst in retrograde post-JFK redneck retardation. In short, Altman's film is like an urban companion to the darkly comedic rural raunchiness and grotesque caricatures of Hooper's TCM films. Indeed, Brewster McCLOUD might be a farcical fantasy and quasi-arthouse neo-fairytale of sorts that Bob Altman seemed to allow his subconscious to run wild on (aside from movie and biblical references, the film is also vaguely Arthurian), but I think it is ultimately a visceral and innately intuitive depiction of the death of America, especially in regard to the Euro-American founder's decidedly decadent descendants. After all, it is no surprise that the 'victims' of the film include an old spinster heiress, the cutthroat capitalist miser brother of the Wright brothers, and effete political bigwig, as these characters symbolize everything that is sick, decrepit, and senile about American (while the Wright brothers symbolize everything that is great about the nation as self-made pioneers that completely changed history in a manner that is completely unrivaled). Of course, as a virtual lifelong overweight pothead, gambler, and dipsomaniac, Altman somewhat ironically symbolizes the other side of the coin of this cultural degeneracy. It also goes without saying that the 'bad guys' of Altman's film seem rather benign in comparison to the corrupt politicians and malignant multicultural mess of Houston today (in fact, it is now a so-called 'minority-majority' city where a good portion of the inhabitants don't even speak English). It should also be noted that, although many of the murdered 'victims' of the film are big bad evil racists, many of the great American pioneers of the twentieth-century, including industrialist Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh, were racially-conscious patriots that vocally warned of many of the problems that plague America today, especially in regard to kosher culture-distorters. Whether he was conscious of it or not, Altman was a sort of shabbos goy spreader of the 'culture-disease' that now plagues America, but his films still have a certain cynical Euro-American sensibility that cannot be ignored. One also cannot forget that Altman directed *The Long Goodbye* (1973), which features arguably the most grotesque Jewish gangster caricature in cinema history as played by Hebraic Hollywood filmmaker

Mark Rydell.

Undoubtedly, one of the most shocking and unconventional aspects of Brewster McCloud, especially since it was directed by a resentment-driven leftist like Altman, is that it seems to endorse a sort of Nietzschean master morality to the point where a literal 'bird of prey' plays a role in the killing of 100% McAmerican 'lamb' untermenschen. Indeed, the eponymous protagonist has no qualms about literally hunting his prey to achieve his lofty aims while the rest of society at least pretends to be imprisoned in a badly bastardized form of a Christian slave morality. After all, McCloud's actions against his enemies are practically rationalized by the following words from Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) where the reluctantly Teutonic philosopher notes, "[T]he problem with the other origin of the 'good,' of the good man, as the person of resentment has thought it out for himself, demands some conclusion. It is not surprising that the lambs should bear a grudge against the great birds of prey, but that is no reason for blaming the great birds of prey for taking the little lambs. And when the lambs say among themselves, 'These birds of prey are evil, and he who least resembles a bird of prey, who is rather its opposite, a lamb,—should he not be good?' then there is nothing to carp with in this ideal's establishment, though the birds of prey may regard it a little mockingly, and maybe say to themselves, 'We bear no grudge against them, these good lambs, we even love them: nothing is tastier than a tender lamb.'" Surely, one cannot help but be reminded of Nietzsche's words each time the black raven appears in the film just before one of the protagonist's enemies is strangled. Just as Nietzsche argued that both birds of prey and blond beasts should not be held responsible for supposed 'evil' like murder because their actions stemmed from pure strength and not some sort of malevolent intent, McCloud's actions cannot be judged as simply sinister crimes but instead an expression of aristocratic good and 'will to power.' Not surprisingly, it is only when McCloud abandons his master morality and succumbs to trivial fleeting emotions that he meets his downfall and is destroyed in a scenario that is like Fellini meets ancient Greek Mythology.

Interestingly, when reminded in an interview conducted by David Thompson that he described Brewster McCloud as his personal favorite of all the times he made in a 1976 issue of *Playboy* magazine, Altman responded, "I think it's probably among the most creative and original films I've done. NASHVILLE is another. But every one I feel that way about has things that I think no one has ever envisaged. And how they got done, I don't know . . ." Indeed, it is certainly a shock that such an iconoclastic and just downright antisocial and misanthropic film was ever released by a major studio like Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in the first place, though it is surely no surprise it was an abject failure that barely played in theaters. Unfortunately, Altman would never come even close to ever directing a film as gleefully subversive and venomously sardonic as Brewster McCloud again, but luckily the late great Teutonic auteur Christoph Schlingensiefel

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(Egomania – Island without Hope, The German Chainsaw-Massacre) would somewhat follow in his footsteps and direct some of the most mirthfully obscene, whimsically scatological, racially insensitive, and eclectically anarchic films ever made. In fact, Altman's flick probably has the most in common with Schlingensiefel's cinematic oeuvre than any other film(s) in terms of being a surrealist genre-molesting fantasy flick that was certainly not made for kids, even though many kids would surely appreciate its unabashedly scatological approach to ornithology.

Despite its mostly mischievously jovial tone and sometimes unabashedly juvenile humor, Brewster McCloud is ultimately a rather dark and gloomy film about the incapacity of a young budding Übermensch to prevail in a philistine-ridden dystopia plagued by cornball conformity, buffoonish bureaucracy, senseless sexual infantilism, and socio-political vulgarity. Of course, the titular hero's tragic quest can be seen as a sort of quasi-prophetic allegory for Altman's own life as a rebellious filmmaker reluctantly working within the artistically oppressive realm of Hollywood, thus making it all the more poignant that the film was a total failure. In a somewhat cryptic way, the film also seems to reveal Altman's own insecurities, especially in regard to being an artist and supposed 'genius.' After all, McCloud both literally and figuratively falls hard in terms of realizing his *weltanschauung*, completing his magnum opus, and achieving true transcendence. In that sense, Brewster McCloud is a fairly devastating film that probably should be seen by any serious prospective artist. Notably, according to Altman's own son Stephen Altman—a production designer that worked on virtually all of his father's films from *Come Back to the 5 & Dime*, *Jimmy Dean*, *Jimmy Dean* (1982) onward—he was an unscrupulous charlatan, huckster, and conman of sorts that emotionally neglected his kids and only really cared about himself and his films. Indeed, as Stephen Altman confessed to Mitchell Zuckoff in regard to his father, "I think he had a fear of being found out that he was just a normal person and wasn't a genius. To me, he was like the typical con man. Like how he would get his movies together and get the people involved. He was like Tom Sawyer painting the picket fence. If the movie was made, and everybody made money, he wasn't a con man anymore, he was just a great director and leader and salesman, you know? If it all falls apart and everybody loses their money, then he's a con man. Most of the time he made it work, so that's why everybody kept hanging around. I mean, if he wasn't successful, most people wouldn't be hanging out with him. No, no, no, we wouldn't be here at all. So that's the way it goes." Indeed, it might be argued that Brewster McCloud is nothing short of a shameless piece of shit-soaked tragicomic con-artistry, yet it is also a genuinely humorous and unforgettable piece of shit-soaked tragicomic con-artistry that makes *M*A*S*H* seem like *Hogan's Heroes* as far as subversion and iconoclasm is concerned. In terms of a specific message, the film has a number of both glaring and cryptic messages, though I think it is safe to say that Altman's somewhat

arcane cinematic work is largely a sort of cautionary tale for young men about the importance of putting one's work and passion(s) before women. After all, Brewster McCloud was directed by a middle-aged man that already had been married three times and had half a dozen kids before he achieved any real sort of artistic prestige or financial success. Had Altman, not unlike his hero Ingmar Bergman, not treated his wives like shit and neglected his children, he almost certainly would not have become a great filmmaker. Unfortunately, as the eponymous protagonist of Altman's film learns the hard way, sometimes you cannot help but put pussy on a pedestal, even if it could mean the spiritual and/or physical death of you, but of course as Nietzsche once famously wrote, "Ah, women. They make the highs higher and the lows more frequent."

-Ty E

THIEVES LIKE US
THIEVES LIKE US

Robert Altman (1974)

As a relatively subversive and iconoclastic 'anti-Hollywood Hollywood' auteur that sometimes took a relatively 'nonchalant' approach to the filmmaking process and was not afraid to completely rework and rewrite screenplays, come up with random endings on the spot while shooting (e.g. *California Split*), and allowed actors to improvise, Robert Altman (*M*A*S*H*, *Nashville*) certainly performed a grand yet considerably underappreciated artistically ironic feat with *Thieves Like Us* (1974), which happens to be both one of his greatest yet most conventional films. Indeed, aside from being a rare Altman film that is fairly faithful to its source material, the flick was made in the wake of the culturally revolutionary success of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) when countless other filmmaker also attempted to capitalize off the prestige of the Great Depression era crime-drama as demonstrated by works including (but certainly not limited to) Roger Corman's *Bloody Mama* (1970), Martin Scorsese's Corman-produced hack exploitation piece *Boxcar Bertha* (1972), and John Milius' underrated directorial debut *Dillinger* (1973). While I rather like both *Bonnie and Clyde* and Milius' somewhat exploitative *Dillinger* biopic, I have no qualms about admitting that I think *Thieves Like Us* is easily the greatest and most timeless of the films associated with this neo-retro counterculture subgenre and I say that as someone that would rather fuck Faye Dunaway's half-rotten corpse than even so much as kiss Shelley Duvall's fairly thin lips. Of course, the mostly unattractive cast of Altman's film is one of the many things that makes it so great as a cinematic work that never falls into the 'romantic myth' that makes *Bonnie and Clyde* seem sometimes so phony, superficially propagandistic, and just plain insipidly Hollywood-esque. Adapted from relatively forgotten writer Edward Anderson's 1937 crime novel of the same name, Altman's film does a noble job recreating the atmosphere and cultural landscape of the decidedly destitute Great Depression era South to the point where it features no traditional score and instead cleverly relies on diegetic music and radio broadcasts to emphasize a pre-TV world when radio was still king. Naturally, as someone born in 1925, Altman had the distinguished advantage of remembering such a world when entire families had not yet collectively succumbed to the soft narcotizing lobotomy that is the idiotic box, which is quite apparent while watching the film. Thankfully, the film also does not feature contrived antiheroes like the Bogart-loving frog of Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* that parrot the behavior of Hollywood movie stars, as it is set in a demystified world where even motion pictures do not even seem to exist (even though they did). In short, there is no glamour or crime fetishism in Altman's stark yet strangely beautiful vision of the serenely scenic wasteland that was the 1930s American South.

Undoubtedly, the famous quote from John Huston's classic film *The Asphalt*

Jungle (1950) that “crime is only a left-handed form of human endeavor” has arguably never been better expressed in a film than in *Thieves Like Us* where all-too-human flaws, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities are depicted in a soundly sensitively expressed fashion to the point where the viewer cannot help but deeply sympathize with a goofy young hillbilly fugitive that once killed a man during a botched robbery. Adapted from the same name novel that acted as the source of Nicholas Ray’s classic *They Live by Night* (1949)—a film that Altman somewhat dubiously claimed to have never seen (in fact, Altman claimed that he began preproduction on his film before even realizing that Ray had already adapted the same novel)—the film even manages to be more tender and humanistic than its Hollywood Golden Age predecessor. Indeed, virtually every single character in the film, especially the lead and his lover, is a hapless loser with very bad luck to the point where the viewer can only assume they will meet a very tragic end. Although featuring a glaringly mismatched trio of cross-generational fugitive bank robbers whose rather brazen behavior ultimately leads to their somewhat predictable demise, the film is first and foremost an almost shockingly touching love story about two goofy virginal misfit hicks that happen to fall in love at the most inconvenient of times in what is ultimately a decidedly doomed romance that should last a lifetime but only lasts what seems like a couple months. In terms of the sheer awkwardness of their short-lived romance, leads Keith Caradine and Shelley Duvall bring a refreshingly singular chemistry that, despite their occasional petty verbal bickering, is pure of spirit and in stark contrast to the bloody violence that the film contains. As much as I appreciate Farley Granger as an actor, his portrayal of lead antihero ‘Bowie’ in Ray’s *They Live by Night* seems somewhat shallow and one-dimensional compared to fittingly gawky Caradine’s iconic performance in Altman’s film. Additionally, quite unlike Duvall, Cathy O’Donnell is just too effortlessly entrancing to portray a silly hick chick with a name like ‘Keechie.’

Admittedly, my initial interest in originally seeing *Thieves Like Us* was my love of the film’s title and how it inspired by both the classic New Order song of the same name and multinational synth-driven post-punk band of the same name. As absurdly shallow as that sounds, I knew I could count on both bands due to their cinephiliac tendencies (after all, *Thieves Like Us* tend to pillage great European cult films to make their ‘official’ music videos). After recently re-watching the film, I am pretty much convinced that it is Altman’s most immaculately directed and just downright all-around flawless flick, even if it is also one of his least sophisticated and artistically ambitious. Undoubtedly, the film owes a great deal of its foreboding pastoral pulchritude to French cinematographer Jean Bofferty (*Who Are You, Polly Maggoo?*, Alain Resnais’ *Je t’aime, je t’aime*), who Altman hired specifically due to his foreign background and lack of prejudice in terms of shooting in the ‘dreaded’ American South. Not unlike Dutch master cinematographer Robby Müller with films like Wim Wenders’

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Paris, Texas (1984) and Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law* (1986), Bofferty demonstrates a keen appreciation for exotic rural American landscape that is simply nonexistent in most Hollywood films set in similar locations. Indeed, compared to the emphasis on the scenery in *Thieves Like Us*, Altman's *Nashville* (1975)—a film that was also penned by Joan Tewkesbury—seems like it could have been filmed on a cheap Hollywood sound stage. Not unlike Stanley Kubrick's underrated 18th-century epic *Barry Lyndon* (1975), Altman's film rings quite true in terms of the era it depicts and never succumbs to unintentional kitsch or camp like so many Hollywood period pieces. Indeed, you might not exactly find the world depicted in Altman's film to be terribly romantic in the superficial Bonnie and Clyde-esque sort of fashion, but you will be glad you experienced what is ultimately a pleasantly devastating depiction of that particular zeitgeist.

Beginning on a forebodingly rainy day in Mississippi with a slight sense of gleeful doom and gloom in the air, *Thieves Like Us* introduces two members of the eponymous trio with a fittingly anticlimactic prison escape that involves the characters carjacking a rather rotund and equally dimwitted pothead after a fairly mellow day of extra leisurely prisonside fishing. The youngest yet seemingly most intelligent and seemingly sane of the group, infectiously goofy yet incessantly glowering 23-year-old protagonist Bowie A. Bowers (Keith Carradine) was originally in prison for killing a store clerk during a botched robbery that ruined his entire life. Luckily for him (or rather unluckily as the film eventually reveals), Bowie has teamed up with two veteran middle-aged bank robbers named T-Dub 'Three-toed' Masefield (Bert Remsen) and Elmo 'Chicamaw' Mobley (John Schuck). While T-Dub is an almost disturbingly jolly unrepentant pervert with a fetish for underage female relatives and Chicamaw is an angry drunk and shameless slob, the only vice that Bowers really seems to suffer from is youth and the tragic naivety that oftentimes accompanies it. Although the only member of the gang that was actually convicted of murder, Bowie cannot really seem to stomach death and violence and thus naturally becomes disgusted when Chicamaw proves to be a rather trigger-happy gent when it comes to confronting cops and elderly bank clerks. In fact, Bowie is such a sensitive sweetheart with a hillbilly heart of gold that he spends his first night out of prison as a fugitive befriending a stray dog and sleeping with the yellow beast under a train track in a scene that really underscores that he is a lovable loner that the audience cannot help but happily root for. The day after the gang's less than great escape from prison, Bowie arrives at the home of an alcoholic gas station owner named Dee Mobley (Tom Skerritt) where he first meets the girl he will fall in love with. The teenage daughter of Dee and 'second cousin' of Chicamaw, Keechie (Shelley Duvall) is anything but a charming cutie but, like the protagonist, she is a goofy and gawky redneck dork and thus they make for quite the ideal couple. Indeed, Bowie and Keechie become in many ways the 'perfect couple,' but unfortunately fate intervenes and puts a swift brutal end to the heterodoxically heartwarming

romance. At first, Bowie is too shy and inexperienced to properly flirt with Keechie and instead grills her about whether or not she has a 'fella.' Notably, Bowie is so obviously infatuated with Keechie that he seems sincerely shocked when she denies having a beau. Luckily for Bowie, he not only eventually becomes Keechie's fella, but also her first fella as she is a naive virgin that seems like she spent way too much time in a Southern Baptist Sunday school.

When Bowie rhetorically asks the stray dog at the beginning of the film, "You belong to someone? You're just a thief like me," he probably reveals more about himself verbally than at any other time in the film, so it is only tragically fitting that when he decides that he wants to "belong" to Keechie and quit being a thief that he is literally shot down in a most gruesome fashion as if the gods were punishing him for overcoming some sort of ugly archetype that he was never really meant to be. Had he had a more privileged upbringing, Bowie might have grown up to become a community college professor or accountant, but instead he reluctantly embraced a world of crime. Unlike his psychopathic goofballs partners T-Dub and Chicamaw, who do not really seem to understand him in any innate or meaningful way, Bowie actually seems to have the capacity to go straight and lead a relatively normal life. In fact, he seems to desperately long to become thoroughly domesticated and eventually start a family, especially after falling in love with Keechie, but being a fugitive makes it an impossible task. In fact, when Bowie is injured in a car accident, Chicamaw makes their situation seemingly infinitely worse by murdering two cops in cold blood so that they can flee the scene before being recognized as fugitive bank robbers. Somewhat ironically, it is also this same car wreck that leads to Bowie falling in love, as Keechie nurses him back to health when he is injured and eventually joins him in bed where the two new lovebirds demonstrate their keen attraction towards one another by making love no less than two times that night. Indeed, before they even kiss, Keechie demonstrates with the great sensitivity that she treats Bowie's wounds that she loves him.

While Bowie parts ways with his partners after the car accident and buys a secluded cabin for him and Keechie to live in, he is counting on one more big bank robbery score so that he and his beloved can flee the United States to start a new life in Mexico. While the bank robbery goes relatively smoothly aside from Chicamaw impulsively murdering a bank clerk, T-Dub is subsequently killed by the cops while waiting in a parked for his wife outside a seedy motel that he just bought. Additionally, Chicamaw is caught and imprisoned, thus leaving Bowie to fend for himself in a world where he has next to nil friends. Unfortunately, Bowie makes the ultimately fatal mistake of hiding out at a small cabin owned by T-Dub's supremely cunty sister-in-law 'Mattie' (Louise Fletcher), who has a fiercely frigid demeanor as if she has not had a good fuck in well over a decade. Angered by the fact that T-Dub married her underage daughter Lula and holding a perversely petty grudge against the protagonist because he once dared to

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positively compare her to his mother, Mattie ultimately betrays Bowie and even has him setup to be brutally murdered by the Texas Rangers even though she knows that Keechie is pregnant with his unborn child. Indeed, after a successful attempt to spring Chickamaw from prison, only to kick his partner out of the car and force him to fend for himself in prison garb in the middle of the country when he becomes extremely belligerent, Bowie comes home to an ambush that involves about a dozen Texas Rangers unloading hundreds of bullets on him when he unwittingly enters cabin where he believes his beloved Keechie is waiting for him. Indeed, Bowie becomes the completely unsuspecting victim of an extra deadly trap as a result of a bitter blonde bitch wanting to get even with him over some imaginary wrong.

In the end in a scene that is set at least a couple months after Bowie's brutal murder, Keechie is depicted sitting at a train station as she waits for a ride to Fort Worth, Texas. Notably, Keechie states to a woman (played by the film's screenwriter Joan Tewkesbury) sitting beside her in regard to her pregnancy, "I think it'll be a boy. Well, I hope it is. But if it is, he sure will not be named after his daddy, God rest his soul. He crossed me up once too often, lying. He doesn't deserve to have no baby named after him." Aside from speaking fairly coldly and harshly about her dead one-true-love, Keechie lies to the woman and claims that Bowie was a victim of "consumption" and then consumes another Coke, thus revealing her abject embarrassment in regard to the ultra-violent extermination of her beloved. Notably, in a scene earlier in the film where he unwittingly foretells his own legacy, Bowie remarks to Keechie, "Chickamaw was telling me about that lawyer friend of his in Mexico. Hawkins. He didn't believe much in that heaven or hell stuff. Said the only way a man lived on was through his children." Indeed, Bowie may be dead, but his infamous legacy and his great love for Keechie lives on in via his unborn child, even if the mother of said unborn child seems to be attempting to erase his memory. Of course, Bowie's words can also be seen as a sort of warning against the ungodly crime against nature known as miscegenation, as a half-breed that looks and acts nothing like you does not carry on your legacy and might as well be the spawn of a stranger. Racial purity aside, Bowie and his buddies are indubitably authentic examples of the 'white negro' archetype and not the phony sort that Hebraic proto-hipster Norman Mailer romanticized about. Undoubtedly, Baltimore sage H.L. Mencken—a German-American not unlike Altman that seemed to detest WASP lumpenproles—might as well have been describing his opinion of the protagonists of *Thieves Like Us* when he wrote in his autobiography *Happy Day* (1940) that, ". . . a great many anthropoid blacks from the South have come to town since the city dole began to rise above what they could hope to earn at home, and soon or late some effort may be made to chase them back. But if that time ever comes the uprising will probably be led, not by native Baltimoreans, but by the Anglo-Saxon baboons from the West Virginia mountains who have

flocked in for the same reason, and are now competing with the blacks for the poorer sort of jobs.” Of course, Altman’s film demonstrates that the auteur had slightly more empathy for hicks and hillbillies, especially when one considers that Mencken once wrote, “It requires a conscious effort for me to pump up any genuine sympathy for the downtrodden, and in the end I usually conclude that they have their own follies and incapacities to thank for their trouble.”

In terms of its depiction of ‘*coup de foudre*,’ especially of a less idealized and more realistic sort, *Thieves Like Us* really has no contemporaries and makes the lawless love affair between the improbably attractive titular antiheroes portrayed by Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie and Clyde* seem as emotionally and erotically counterfeit as a feminist fuck flick featuring a bunch of sub-attractive girls with blue hair and tacky tattoos. The film also has the distinction of being, aside from Dušan Makavejev’s *The Coca-Cola Kid* (1985), the world’s longest (anti)Coke commercial as a surprisingly iconic flick set in a world where the sickeningly sugary beverage seems to have replaced water and where ads for the soda have taken the place of political sloganeering (indeed, in Altman’s film the Coca-Cola logo is to the 1930s U.S. what the swastika was to German during the same era). Admittedly, I certainly had the irrational desire to drink a Coke and then rob a bank after seeing the film. Of course, one of the most brilliant aspects of the film is its seamlessly interweaving of relatively lighthearted and touching subjects like youthful innocence and virginal awkwardness with senseless brutality and death as is especially personified by tragic antihero Bowie, who just never had a chance in terms of accomplishing the relatively small goal of starting a family and living a normal life. Notably, even Altman—a somewhat cynical auteur that always preferred to depict a harsh reality over some sort of feel-good banality—found the ending of Edward Anderson’s source novel where Keechie also dies to be such a downer that he opted to change it, or as he explained to David Thompson in *Altman on Altman* (2006), “In the novel, she dies in the shoot-out at the cabin. The only change I made was that I had her live and put that little coda in the railway station, saying that she survived and went off, pregnant, into the world. It just seemed to me that to kill them both was too brutal of an ending, and I wanted the sense that something from these people continued on.”

While antihero Bowie surely dies a brutal senseless death in the end via covert firing squad, there is certainly something morbidly romantic about it in the sense that the character more or less perished at a true highpoint of his life as a young man that had just fallen in love and impregnated his beloved not long after losing virginity, so it should be no surprise that the film briefly alludes to *Romeo and Juliet*. Indeed, while he never gets to experience the joys that come with being a father or grandfather, he is spared the pain of growing old, seeing loved ones die, and experiencing the sort of degenerative poor health that accompanies old age. In a sense, Bowie realizes George Bernard Shaw’s goal, “The greatest thing

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in life is to die young but delay it as long as possible,” as he lives just long enough to spread his seed and sire an heir in between running an infamous, albeit only semi-successful, bank robbing operation. Indeed, science demonstrates that the point of life is to reproduce and in that sense Bowie’s life finds true meaning in the end, thus making *Thieves Like Us* one of Altman’s least nihilistic films. Indeed, compared to Altman’s previous classic *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971) where the eponymous dies a rather lonely death alone in the cold bitter snow while his literal whore lover is somewhere else staring into space while high on morphine, the film is a strangely joyous celebration of life and love, albeit set it in a quasi-apocalyptic era of abject misery and poverty.

Although I find many of her opinions on film to be patently absurd and reveal that she was a pretty big Americentric philistine for a highly celebrated NYC Jewish intellectual, Pauline Kael—Altman’s greatest and most shameless fan-girl—wrote a fairly insightful review of the film in the February 4, 1974 issue of *The New Yorker* where she argued, “In other Altman films, there is always something that people can complain about; they ask, ‘What’s that there for?’ In *THIEVES LIKE US*, there’s nothing to stumble over. It’s a serenely simple film—contained and complete.” In fact, the laid back pace and tone of the film was intentional, or as Altman once explained himself to David Thompson, “I don’t know if you can do this kind of stuff today, taking your time and being so leisurely about it. I don’t know if you could really do it then. But *THIEVES* had the pace that I think was exactly what it required. If I shot it today, I don’t think I’d have the courage to do it.” Undoubtedly, Kael pays her greatest compliment to the film at the very end of her review where she somewhat soundly argues in regard to the true distinctly American cultural prowess of the film, “For the last two years now, friends of mine have been shouting that Altman must do *THE WILD PALMS* or *AS I LAY DYING*; they’ve been convinced that he is the man to bring Faulkner to the screen. Maybe he knew it all along, and maybe he was smart enough to know that he could do it best by using someone else’s material for his text [...] But *THIEVES LIKE US* is HIS Faulkner novel.” Of course, the great irony is that, despite the filmmaker’s incessant stupid and stereotypical anti-American remarks during his relatively long life as a hopeless generic liberal democrat type, Altman is responsible for creating one of the most timeless pieces of hearty and organic celluloid Americana. Indeed, while the film surely benefited from its foreign frog cinematographer, *Thieves Like Us* could have only been directed by an authentic American just as cinematic works as diverse as D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and Harmony Korine’s *Gummo* (1997) could have only been been directed by yanks (even if the latter film is largely inspired by a sort of anti-Europid post-Yiddish psychosis).

Commercially speaking, Altman’s film was, not surprisingly, an abject failure, though apparently it was at least partly the result of the studio’s lack of promotion, or as star John Schuck once stated, “*THIEVES* was a picture that was so

non-mainstream that the studio had no idea how to promote it. They treated it like a bank-robbery movie, which it isn't, of course [...] But it was released and went in a few weeks." Apparently, Altman was rather protective of his film to the point of shouting down talkative audience members during screenings, or as screenwriter and sometimes filmmaker Buck Henry (Heaven Can Wait, First Family) revealed with the following somewhat humorous anecdote, "I met Bob in Cannes. He and Kathryn said, 'Come to a screening of THIEVES.' We went to the screening and he went nuts because people were still milling around and talking when the film started. He stood up and yelled, 'Goddammit, you fucking people. Will you sit down!' Scared the hell out of them—they did." Notably, out of all the books that I have read about Altman featuring remarks from his friends and associates, Buck Henry's handful of remarks in Robert Altman: The Oral Biography (2009) by Mitchell Zuckoff proved to be some of the most unflattering. Indeed, it seems that Henry thought Altman was somewhat of a phony megalomaniac that hypocritically vomited leftist platitudes while ruling as a virtual Dionysian god under his own filmmaking dictatorship, or as quite kosher The Graduate screenwriter explained, "In the back of my head I was always aware that he could turn on a dime if someone said something that really irritated him or had an opinion that didn't make him laugh. I think he had very strict rules of behavior—I would imagine having something to do with his childhood. His rage against the establishment was one or two parts bullshit. Everybody kissed Bob's ass. They realized that he was an important filmmaker—regarded as that around the world. He liked the feeling of being really angry." If Henry is to be believed, it seems that Altman modeled the mean-spirited and belligerent dipsomaniac character Chicamaw played by Schuck after himself. Undoubtedly the least sympathetic of the three titular bank robbers, Chicamaw is a loathsome fat pig and unrepentant copkiller whose aberrant actions ultimately inspire the police to be more proactive in their murderous manhunt. Of course, Altman became a filmmaker instead of a career criminal and it can probably be argued that his negative personal qualities almost certainly benefited him as a cinematic artist, hence a Hollywood film as gloriously morally ambiguous as Thieves Like Us.

Arguably the most understatedly romantic film crime flick ever made, Thieves Like Us is a real shocker in that it actually dares to trade-in the 'romantic myth' of glamorous Depression Era gangsterdom for the inordinate wholesomeness of unspoiled young love in a hopeless world where organic beauty and sensitivity are seen as dire vulnerabilities that one just cannot afford to have. Of course, Altman's heartening depiction of young love seems all the more unlikely when one considers he was a lifelong lady's man that was married no less than three times and was known to be both emotionally and physically abusive with women, especially when he was drunk. In short, Altman was the complete opposite of the film's terminally romantically shy antihero Bowie, thus demonstrating the

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filmmaker's artistic integrity as man that was willing to give a certain degree of touching humanity to a virginal bank-robber that he had seemingly nothing in common with. Of course, Altman also deserves respect for making a romantic leading lady out of someone as hypnotically homely and anti-voluptuous as Shelley Duvall (in fact, Altman accentuates her particularly preternatural face in a scene where she stares meekly into a distorted mirror). Undoubtedly, James Joyce's famous phrase, "sentimentality is unearned emotion" certainly does not pertain to *Thieves Like Us* as it is a cinematic work that forces the viewer to submit to the good, bad, and ugly of human existence and it ultimately ends on an almost crushingly un sentimental note that reminds one of the singular coldness of the so-called fairer sex. Surely, if you do not let yourself be completely consumed by the film's characters and their hermetic world of crime and relatively wholesome carnality, you will get little out of it as the flick was certainly not directed by a carny showman that gets a kick out of leading armies of philistines by their noses with cheap visual gimmicks and kitschy melodrama, hence its relative lack of popularity among the masses. Surely, if there is any film that demonstrates in a sort of metapolitical fashion that Mencken—a truly American Nietzschean that was also no fan of FDR's so-called New Deal—was right when he wrote, "Democracy is only a dream: it should be put in the same category as Arcadia, Santa Claus, and Heaven," it is indubitably Altman's tender yet tough tribute to one of America's least flattering eras. To mention Mencken one more time, I think it is safe to say that he might as well have been talking about *Thieves Like Us* and Altman's oeuvre in general when he wrote, "Nine times out of ten, in the arts as in life, there is actually no truth to be discovered; there is only error to be exposed."

-Ty E

3 WOMEN

Robert Altman (1977)

Probably Robert Altman's greatest strength as a director was his intimate interaction with his actors. Altman was a man that certainly expected his actors to give it their all whether it be in the form of a long exaggerated/improvised acting scenes or displays of unflattering and unconventional nudity, the MASH man drained all the talent he could from the actors he directed. If Alfred Hitchcock felt that "Actors are cattle", Robert Altman must have felt his actors were prime cut angus beef meant for the consumption of the most discriminating of cinematic patrons. With the film *3 Women*, Mr. Altman wanted to disgust his audience with a couple slabs of rotting and disgusting meat via the repellent homely actresses Shelley Duvall and Sissy Spacek. To their credit, Brian De Palma knew what he was doing when he had Sickly Spacek play the languid lead of Carrie and Stanley Kubrick certainly knew what he was doing when he had Shelley Duvall play the horrendously hysterical wife of a deranged man in *The Shining*. Robert Altman brought both of those naturally scary women together in *3 Women* in a way I have yet to be seen done before. Pretty much everyone has seen the weird girl at school growing up, the kind of loner girl that you catch a sight of trying to indiscreetly (or not so indiscreetly) take sniffs of her underarm or nervously laughing at the boisterous behavior of a group of wild buck Negroes. These peculiar women are usually on an even lower social status level than that of the nerdy guy because at least people try to fuck with geeks guys for the hell of it. Maybe if the ugly girl is lucky, she might catch the fancy of an absurdly ugly sexual deviant who has an interest in defiling her because at least with her, he might be able to get away with whatever he wants. In Robert Altman's *3 Women* one loser girl finds her love while starting a job at a depressing old folks home in the form of another loser girl who is a little more socially ambitious. Sissy Spacek plays Pinky Rose, a nice woman-girl who seems very excited about the thought of actually having a female friend. Shelley Duvall plays Millie, the object of Pinky Rose's social desire. Throughout the film, Pinky Rose starts turning into Millie (in character), making for one creature-like union. The third woman in *3 Women* is a bizarre freak of a woman who paints fantastic murals in a small abandoned desert community. Despite her lack of character and speech in the film, her sometimes monstrous and grotesque paintings radiate a certain atmosphere that emotionally drives the film. Millie instantly takes a liking to the third woman after seeing her artwork which angers the pseudo-pretentious Pinky Rose. By the end of *3 Women* all 3 women become one. Unsurprisingly, the often ambiguous Robert Altman has no concrete meaning for the end of the film. *3 Women* has been compared to Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* for good reason, for both films express a sort of naturalistic horror in the form of females interacting emotionally and unconsciously becoming one in a

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way. With 3 Women, no one can argue that Robert Altman never made a great horror flick. Robert Altman made a lot of great films with a lot of great acting performances which makes it unfortunate that he is best known for MASH. A film like 3 Women makes MASH look glaringly like the laughably overrated cynical anti-war romp that it is. 3 Women will mostly leave (for better or for worse) a feeling of disgust on the viewer when the film is over, but that sort of disgust is what makes one remember the emotional power of cinema. Even after having nightmares featuring Shelley Duvall in the nude not long after seeing 3 Women, I still feel that I invested my time wisely in viewing the film.

-Ty E

STREAMERS

Robert Altman (1983)

Due to both political and aesthetic reasons, I have always had somewhat mixed feelings for American auteur Robert Altman (M*A*S*H, McCabe & Mrs. Miller), but I can at least admit that the majority of his films, including rough early projects like *That Cold Day in the Park* (1969) and disastrous failures like his (anti)teen comedy *O.C. and Stiggs* (1987), are at least interesting to some extent. On the other hand, Altman—a sort of experimental anti-perfectionist that loved improvisation and did very little takes who tended to only use screenplays as a general guideline—seemed incapable of directing an immaculate masterpiece and was not exactly an unrivaled master when it came to *mise-en-scène* and intricate tableaux. Indeed, many of Altman's films resemble glorified filmed theater, so it should be no surprise that some of his most potent (and underrated) films are claustrophobic low-budget chamber pieces, including *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (1982), *Streamers* (1983), and *Secret Honor* (1984), which were more or less made back-to-back during a low period in the director's career after the mixed reception of his big budget musical *Popeye* (1980) starring Robin Williams when he could no longer find work in Hollywood as a result of being virtually unofficially blacklisted. While many Altmanphiles might disagree, I would certainly argue that *Streamers* is unequivocally one of Altman's most unnervingly intense, subversive, nihilistic, and perverse films, even if it takes place entirely in one ugly scantily decorated room that resembles the barracks of some ungodly third world death camp. A sort of gay bastard brother film to the first act of Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam War flick *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), Altman's film is also notable for being a rare cinematic work set during the the Second Indochina War that does not wallow in pseudo-humanistic antiwar clichés and instead focuses on the internal struggles and senseless tragedy that arise in a morose military microcosm as a result of fags, crypto-fags, and heteroflexible colored gentlemen being forced to live with one another. Needless to say, *Streamers* is a film that, quite thankfully, does nothing to help further the multicultural cause. Quite unlike most mainstream Hollywood liberal potheads, Altman was by no means a pussy, as he was a World War II veteran that flew on more than fifty bombing missions as a United States Army Air Forces crewman on a B-24 Liberator with the 307th Bomb Group in Borneo and the Dutch East Indies (notably, only 30% of crewmen survived thirty missions, yet Altman somehow managed to survive fifty). In short, unlike his whiny liberal (and largely kosher) colleagues, Altman actually earned the right to bitch about the military due to his own personal experience, but with his (anti)war flick *Streamers* he managed to achieve something that totally transcends petty party politics and superficial pot-addled pro-peace sentiments. While adapted by David Rabe from his 1976 play of the same title, *Streamers*

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was a somewhat personal film for Altman, or as he confessed in an interview with David Thompson featured in Altman on Altman (2006), “When I was in US Air Force as a pilot during World War II, I was eighteen years old. There was always the threat of being attacked by the Japanese, though I was never in that kind of situation. But I remember being in a barrack room and sleeping next to somebody I didn’t know, and that can be frightening because you’re not sure of yourself and you try to act the way a bunch of rough fellas do. Being an individual can lead to a lot of problems. The boys in *STREAMERS* are in a real pressure cooker. Everything is based on fear. It was more about that than Vietnam.” A cinematic work that makes the first act of Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* seem like it was directed by Steven Spielberg due to its refreshingly pure and unadulterated essence and refreshingly raw depiction on unfiltered emotional vulgarity and vulnerability, Altman’s exceedingly emotionally erratic Vietnam War era exercise in military barracks bickering and brutality is questionably one of the greatest cinematic examples as to why the auteur was a singular master when it came to dealing with actors (notably, the entire cast won the Best Actor award at the 1982 Venice Film Festival). While Matthew Modine starred in a number of popular Vietnam War flicks, including *Full Metal Jacket* and Alan Parker’s *Birdy* (1984), the actor undoubtedly gives his greatest and most memorable performance in Altman’s rarely-seen film.

Sometimes seeming like a perversely psychosexual poofter-plagued episode of *The Twilight Zone* where every single character, whether it be a white bourgeois pansy or ghetto negro thug, is sexually neurotic and seems to rate somewhere between a 3 and 6 on the Kinsey Heterosexual–Homosexual Rating Scale, *Streamers* is ostensibly about how a small group of soldiers deal with the fact that one of their comrades is a flagrant flaming faggot, yet ultimately every single character seems to be a closet case, latent homosexual, or self-loathing sod. Aside from being a meditation on the perils and precariousness of homosocial behavior in a strictly male environment where being a homo is the ultimate sin against masculinity, the film also deals with the stressful anxieties of interracial housing and the seemingly innate impossibility of a black man and white man forming an authentic friendship where racial hang-ups do not come into play. Thankfully far from politically correct in many regards despite having a vague humanistic tone, Altman’s film depicts a socially discordant microcosm where blacks attempt to dissuade other blacks from hanging out with whites and soldiers rather pretend that their comrade is not a cocksucker even though he’s a raging queen that constantly hits on them in the most shameless, albeit somewhat cryptic, of ways. As many of his films, including his most famous cinematic work *M*A*S*H* (1970)—an oftentimes mirthfully morbid movie where a suicidal latent homosexual is ‘cured’ of his sexual perversion after his friend guilt trips a chick into fucking the gayness out of him—clearly demonstrate, Altman had somewhat of a fondness for poking fun at poofs, which probably at least partially

explains the absurdly awkward and often offentimes unnerving tone of *Streamers*. Indeed, the viewer is made to feel just as unsettled as the characters in the film in terms of the oftentimes suffocating and pathologically sexually schizophrenic nature of this fairly minimalistic psychodramatic chamber piece.

Notably, in his October 9, 1983 review of the film for *The New York Times*, Vincent Canby complained, "STREAMERS, Robert Altman's screen adaptation of David Rabe's tough, bloody, sorrowful stage play, is a maddening movie. It goes partway toward realizing the full effect of a stage play as a film, then botches the job by the overabundant use of film techniques, which dismember what should be an ensemble performance . . . Mr. Rabe's play, one of the major hits of the 1976-77 New York theater season, is confined to a single set, a bleak room in an Army barracks where five soldiers, under the bleary eyes of two boozey old sergeants, are awaiting assignment to Vietnam." I don't know if Canby saw the same film, but Altman's adaptation is indeed set entirely in a single ugly and aesthetically barren room that really underscores the claustrophobic misery and melancholy that plagues the characters in what is ultimately an exquisitely emotionally grotesque ensemble performance piece that really obsesses over the darker side of human vulnerability and the games that people play when it comes to maintaining a generic social identity. Aside from close-ups and a couple tracking shots and signature Altman-esque zoom shots, the film is fairly conservative in terms of its direction and stylization and I can only imagine that it would be painfully slower were it not for the director's very precise techniques, especially in regard to certain character nuances that are highlighted via said filmmaking techniques. Indeed, among other things, Altman forces the viewer to bask in the dread and embarrassment of a hopelessly effeminate gay boy as he buries his head in a pillow like an upset toddler while he is being mocked by his friends due to his unfortunate sexual vices. Likewise, Altman effortlessly demonstrates the sick chemistry of the queer boy and a hyper neurotic ghetto negro by including close-up shots of the two playing an extra repugnant game of gay interracial footsies. In short, Altman subtly exploits many of his signature cinematic techniques to his advantage and makes the viewer feel like another awkward bitch recruit in the most spiritually barren of military barracks. For better or worse, Altman's film is like an aberosexual boot camp in cinematic form.

Streamers begins with a somewhat understated depiction of a slightly shocking scenario where a seemingly gay and Jewish recruit named Martin (Albert Macklin) demonstrates his dissatisfaction with the military by half-heartedly slitting one of his wrists in the bathroom of his barracks. A fellow effeminate fag named Richie (degenerate Jewish pop artist Roy Lichtenstein's gay mischling son Mitchell Lichtenstein) stops Martin from finishing the job and forces him to get help. Of course, instead of simply comforting Martin, Richie also bitches at him in a stereotypical gay queen-ish fashion for being so melodramatic. While barrack mate Billy (Matthew Modine) seems to be rather disturbed by Martin's

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actions and even offers to help him, his sassy colored comrade Roger (David Alan Grier in a pre-fame role) his hardly moved by the rather lackluster attempt at self-slaughter and gleefully describes it as, "Ain't no thang' but a chicken wing." Despite being members of rival races, wussy white boy Billy and gregarious smooth-talking negro Roger have developed a fairly playful friendship of sorts that oftentimes involves them speculating as to whether or not Richie is an authentic fudge-packing homo. While fairly militant in their condemnation of butt banditry, Billy and Roger strangely agree that Richie is "cute." As men that seem like they might be latently gay themselves, Billy and Roger want to give Richie the benefit of the doubt, but the effortlessly effete queen is obsessed with flaunting his rather refined faggotry and thus naturally does ridiculous things to draw unnecessary attention to himself, including wear a goofy hat that he proudly describes as an "authentic Greek fishermen's cap." Indeed, as his incessant request for movie dates demonstrates, Richie has a crush on Billy, but the latter is in denial about this forbidden crush. As for Billy's sexual proclivities, he seems like a self-loathing closet-case, especially after he tells a long dubious story about he and a supposed pal named 'Frankie' used to scam queers out of money on a regular basis, only for said supposed friend to later become queer as a result of coming to the following absurd rationalization, "What does it matter who does it to you? Some guy or some old broad, you close your eyes, a mouth's a mouth." Naturally, as a cocksucker with a crush, Richie believes that Billy is really the 'Frankie' of the story and even goes so far as asking him. Needless to say, Billy, who is ashamed of the fact that he is a college-educated dork, does not take it too well when Richie accuses him of having a gay past. In fact, Billy becomes so enraged that he yells in Richie's face, "You are really sick, you know that? Your brain is really, truly rancid. You know there's a theory now it's genetic, that it's all a matter of genes and shit like that? You, man. You and the rot that's make out of your feeble fucking mind."

Aside from the occasional half-ass suicide attempt and drunken buffoonery of certain goofy commanding officers, the boys in the barracks do not really experience problems until a new negro recruit named Carlyle (Michael Wright of *Sugar Hill* (1994) and HBO's *Oz* (1997-2002)) from a different unit begins lurking around and causing problems of both the racially and sexually orientated sort. Arguably the most hyper histrionic black character in all of cinema history, Carlyle is a shameless race-hustler, would-be-pimp, depressed dipsomaniac, and sexual degenerate that soon develops an overwhelming desire to sodomize Richie, which naturally disgusts both the white and black characters. While in the company of his fellow brother Roger, Carlyle bitches that his unit is full of "pale boring motherfuckers" who are "short on soul." Carlyle believes that the army is controlled by evil white racists and when Roger notes that the First Sergeant is an authentic negro, he sarcastically replies in a savagely smug fashion, "That's good news, blood. I heard Hitler was a Jew, too." A pathetic bully that always

has a bottle of cheap liquor in his hand, guilt-ridden conman Carlyle loves forcing his degeneracy onto other people and he even coerces Roger into drinking by insinuating that he is an 'uncle tom' if he doesn't take a sip. While ostensibly a bad ass nigga, Carlyle makes a pathetic fool of himself the very first day he is there by sneaking into the barracks late at night while exceedingly inebriated and crawling on the ground with a bottle of liquor in his hand whilst crying hysterically, "They are gonna send my fucking ass to fucking Vietnam and kill me." Although he wants people to think he is a tough thug that doesn't take shit from anyone, Carlyle is really an emotionally hysterical neurotic coward that clearly has been severely psychologically damaged as a result of growing up fatherless in a nasty negro ghetto, so it is no surprise that his petty determination to prove he is a bad ass alpha-nigga ultimately has tragic consequences. While Billy and Roger go so far as to describe Richie is "cute" despite their homo-hating sentiments, Carlyle incessantly describes him as a "punk" and almost immediately expresses his desire to fuck said punk. Needless to say, Billy and Roger refuse to see such a uniquely unsavory display of bestial gay miscegenation take place in their barracks, but Carlyle is not exactly the sort of guy that takes no for an answer, especially when it is an issue of getting his 'nut' from a feminine limp-wristed cracker boy that likes reading books about Ingmar Bergman. Despite his fairly belligerent anti-white racism, Carlyle is somewhat willing to critique his own race and even insightfully blames the collective failure of negroes on hyper-emotionalism, stating, "That's my problem. Maybe that's the black man's problem altogether. You ever consider that? Too much feeling. I mean, it's like he too close to everything. You know, too close to his body, his blood. Man, it ain't like he got no good mind or nothing. It's just that he believes in his body." At the same time, Carlyle's anti-fag and anti-white taunting gets so extreme that even meta-wuss Richie gets pissed and makes the racially-charged statement to Billy right in front of the nasty negro, "He's one of them who hasn't come far down out of the trees yet, Billy. Believe me." As the film hints also in regard to the characters' masculinity (or lack thereof), Carlyle's beloved 'blackness' acts as a sort of artificial pseudo-identity that gives him a misguided sense of belonging, even though other negroes don't even seem to like him. Indeed, the initial reason Carlyle begins lurking around the barracks is because he learns a fellow black brother lives there, though he has a hard time actually remembering Roger's name. Somewhat ironically, it is ultimately gay boy Richie that Carlyle develops the closest bond with, thus underscoring the absurdity of his racial prejudices. Of course, as a man with a massive inferiority complex, Carlyle also seems especially excited by the prospect of sexually brutalizing a smart, cultivated, and handsome white boy, hence the sick trend of black-on-white prison rape. After all, people tend to try to defile and/or destroy those things that make them feel a sense of inferiority.

Aside from all the recruits seeming like closet rectum-reamers, middle-aged

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officers Rooney (Guy Boyd) and Cokes (George Dzundza)—longtime friends that fought in both World War II and the Korean War together—can't keep their hands off one another and seem like old lovers. Incessantly playing games of drunken grab-ass, Rooney and Cokes delight in mocking the admiring young recruits while bragging about their dubious military conquests. For example, Rooney gleefully boasts about how fat fuck Cokes is a “fucking hero” that took out “47 chinky-dinky chinese gooks,” including one sly young slant-eye that was hiding in a spider hole. Coke also recounts how a comrade named O'Flannigan did not get to sing “Beautiful Streamer” (hence the title of the film) as a result of falling to his death due his parachute failing to open after jumping out of an airplane. Unlike the young recruits, the officers seem to love the military lifestyle as if they are part of some degenerate Männerbünde where ‘boys can be boys’ without the nuisance of feminine energy and pheromones, mammary glands, and the scent of warm wet vaginas. Somewhat curiously, Rooney and Cokes also have a tendency to sleep together in the same small room. While Rooney and Cokes only seem to need each other and never once mention the carnal pleasures that they can acquire from members of the opposite sex, Carlyle coerces Roger and Billy into going to “a cathouse that is full of cats” for a little bit of “sex, drugs, danger, danger.” Somewhat ironically, gay boy Richie, who has little interest in the ‘fruit that made man wise,’ ends up paying for the three recruits to patronize the low-budget negress pussy-peddlers. Unfortunately, serious trouble arises when the boys get back and Richie demands that both Roger and Billy leave the barracks so that he can be sodomized by sexually insatiable spade Carlyle. Indeed, as Roger mockingly states, “Richie is one of those white boys that want to get fucked by a nigger.” Of course, the two refuse to allow gay interracial buggery to occur in their barracks and Billy even goes so far to describe Carlyle as a “fucking animal,” to which the hyper horny negro hysterically replies like a savage beast on the verge of murderous impulse, “I want my fucking nut. I want my nut, man! What the fuck you so uptight for, huh? He wants me. This boy here wants me. Richie wants me, man. Who the fuck are you to stop it?”

Rather predictably, things escalate terribly when Carlyle is denied his opportunity to anally annihilate the queer cracker boy. An unequivocal ghetto child with a special talent for esoteric street (anti)logic, Carlyle gets so enraged when Billy makes a failed attempt to throw a shoe at him that he takes a knife and slashes the palm of the rather naïve young cracker's hand. After falling into a state of shock and hiding in the barracks bathroom for a little bit, Billy makes the ultimately fatal mistake of coming back out and stating in what is ultimately his most potent line of dialogue in the entire film, “Jesus H. Christ. You know what I'm doing? You know what I'm standing here doing? I'm a 24-year-old college graduate—goddamn intellectual type, and I got a knife in my hand, thinking about coming up behind one black human being, and I'm thinking nigger this and nigger that. I want to cut his throat. That is ridiculous, man. I never faced

anybody in my life with anything to kill them. You understand me? I don't have a goddamn thing on the line here." Unfortunately, Billy then makes the seriously stupid mistake of dropping the knife and then hatefully yelling in Carlyle's face "sambo." As can be predicted, Carlyle grabs the knife and immediately stabs Billy in the stomach after he calls him "sambo" in what almost seems like an instinctive reflexive response that really highlights the colored character's racial sensitivity. Of course, Carlyle does not stop there, as he also stabs Rooney in the stomach after the poor drunk bastard randomly stumbles into the barracks and threatens to stab him with a broken bottle upon noticing that he has fatally wounded Billy. When the MPs eventually show up after Richie goes for help, both Billy and Rooney are already both dead, though they eventually catch Carlyle, who is covered in the blood of his victims, wandering around the base like a chicken with its head cut off. Completely in denial that he has just brutally murdered two people and more or less ruined his entire life in a matter of minutes, true blue dindu Carlyle rather ridiculously, if not predictably, maintains his innocence and even demands to be immediately released, absurdly stating with a sort of quasi-crackhead ghetto elegance, "Look, I've had enough of this. Listen, all you guys are going to have to be going now, all right? Seriously. Now, if you just kindly remove these cuffs from my hands. Get me a bus ticket home. I've quit the Army. I'm not going to be quit. I have quit the army."

After the corpses are removed and Carlyle is forcibly taken away in handcuffs, both Roger and Richie are forced to stay in the barracks, with the former immediately rebuking the latter for not owning up to being a faggot and, in turn, partially unwittingly igniting the horrific events that took place that night. Indeed, Roger ultimately blames Richie for all the homoerotically-charged mayhem that has occurred. Before the two manage to fall asleep, Cokes, who is drunk as a skunk and has no clue his best bud has just been brutally murdered, sneaks into the barracks and then proceeds to shock the recruits by emotionally breaking down after Roger mentions that Richie is a queer. Indeed, upon seeing Richie sobbing like a little girl that has misplaced her dolly, Cokes attempts to comfort the boy by misguidedly stating, "There's a lot more worse things than being a queer in this world. I mean, you could have leukemia. That's worse. I keep thinking if there was something I could've done, if it was different. If I'd have killed more gooks or more krauts or more dinks—or if I had a wife, I had kids—I never had any. My mother did. She died of it anyway. That if I let that little gook out of that spider hole he was in I was sitting on—I'd let him out now if he was in there. But he ain't. How am I ever going to forget it? That funny little guy." As demonstrated by his confession, it seems one of the reasons that Cokes drinks so much is because he has not gotten over the fact that he barbarically killed a goofy gook boy that reminded him of Charlie Chaplin. In the end, the survivors of the micro-massacre all seem emotionally defeated. Undoubtedly, what makes all of these characters, including unhinged jigaboo Carlyle, seem

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all-too-human in the end is that they are all slaves of their own distinct fears, vulnerabilities, impulses, and traumas. Indeed, even Carlyle—an insufferable piece of untermensch excrement that practically personifies all of the qualities that whites cannot stand about certain low-class negroes—comes out looking like a tragic victim whose horrific actions were the natural consequence of a lifetime of ghetto negro debasement.

From the Sacred Band of Thebes in Ancient Greece to the merry Mediterranean adventures of Lord Byron to the sexually sadistic leadership of the Sturmabteilung (SA) Brownshirts, there has always been a curious link between militarism and homosexuality, but in Altman's *Streamers* there is certainly nothing even remotely romantic about it. Of course, it could be argued that the film is just as much about (post)Puritan America's long history of anxiety and erotic schizophrenia when it comes to all-things-sexual, as none of the characters have a healthy outlook on sex, let alone romantic relationships (which are never even really discussed). On the other hand, despite revolving around homophobic hysteria, the film is also a sort of sick fag fantasy, especially in regard to ghetto negro Carlyle's rather vocal eagerness when it comes to getting his "nut" via an effete boy (indeed, despite what Hollywood tells you, homo-hating is the norm in the black community, thus ostensibly heterosexual negroes that have sex with men prefer to be on the 'down-low'). Aside from the most masochistic of homos and cock-sucking cucks with a fetish for dark meat, the film is also probably the ultimate celluloid anti-aphrodisiac for the majority of gays. Indeed, Carlyle is certainly no twink. Surely, it is doubtful that such a thematically subversive film could be made today, as it features somewhat unflattering depictions of both gays and negroes, as well as naughty words that might cause seizures in the easily triggered. Indeed, aside from depicting blacks as innately racially hysterical and just plain racist (of course, whites are also depicted as such, albeit in a different way), the main gay character is a manipulative masochist that uses a poor ghetto negro as a tool in a feeble attempt to make his ambiguously gay Caucasian crush jealous. Undoubtedly, if anything can be learned from the film, it is that interracial harmony is an absurd communist fantasy and gay men and straight men are from different universes and thus can never be true comrades. In an age where both poor negroes and flamboyant faggots are presented by Hollywood and American public schools as perennial victims and the height of moral superiority, *Streamers* indubitably makes for an insightful flick that exposes racial and sexual problems that are completely hidden in the mainstream. While Altman might have been a lifelong leftist pothead, but he was not afraid to be politically incorrect and speak his mind. After all, only a couple years later, Altman would direct his badly botched yet nonetheless sometimes entertaining (anti)teen comedy *O.C. and Stiggs* (1987), which is notable for poking fun at pretentious poofs, deranged Vietnam War veterans, rambling black bums, and even Mariticide, among other things.

Notably, the virtual bible of gay cinema, *Images in the Dark: Encyclopedia of Gay and Lesbian Film and Video* (1994) by Raymond Murray, features a fairly favorable review of *Streamers* that reads: "Director Robert Altman utilizes the intensity of the theatrical experience with the opportunities offered through film in this adaptation of David Rabe's award-winning play. *STREAMERS* is an ensemble piece, set in a claustrophobic Army barracks, featuring four ill-assorted young soldiers waiting for assignments to Vietnam. The men must grapple with their hidden fears and prejudices, which, in turn, generate sexual intolerance, racial distrust and a misunderstanding that leads to violence." While written by a gay left-winger, the review unwittingly exposes the perils of so-called 'diversity' as is emotionally erratically yet somehow elegantly depicted in Altman's film. After doing a little bit of background reading, it seems that most reviewers of the film seem to have completely missed the film's most important insights. Indeed, in his relatively favorable review featured in *Time Magazine*, Richard Corliss absurdly wrote, "Michael Wright glides through the barracks like a hipster on a death mission," which sounds like he is describing some lame counterculture satire like Altman's own *M*A*S*H*. Personally, I think it would be more accurate to say that whacked-out homo negro Wright demonstrates his murderously mad racial sensitivity to some uptight college-educated cracker prick that committed the dual negro sin of denying him unhealthy STD-ridden sex and calling him "sambo." Despite a lifetime of cultural Marxist propaganda, most people seem to realize on at least a subconscious instinctual level the Orwellian neo-commie slogan 'diversity is our strength' is a grotesque lie that is an insult to all of human history. After all, even Robert D. Putnam—a leftist WASP that is so pathetically deracinated that he actually converted to his wife's religion of Judaism—had to admit in his magnum opus *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), which he postponed publishing for years because he was afraid to reveal his less than kosher findings, that so-called multicultural has led to the complete and utter destruction of civic, social, associational, and political life (aka 'social capital') in the United States, hence the overall lack of cohesion among the largely isolated white majority and destruction of virtually every American city due to black criminality and white flight. At the most fundamental level, the barracks in *Streamers* acts as a sort of symbolic microcosm of the socially necrotizing madhouse that is multicultural America, so naturally it is no surprise that the film concludes with completely senseless interracial murder because some poor helpless minority could not handle being called a couple big bad mean words (notably, the made-up phrase 'white fragility' is quite popular among contemporary leftists, which is rather funny since whites, quite unlike blacks and Jews, do not tend to commit violent crimes and/or suffer mental breakdowns as a result of experiencing name-calling or imagined racial insensitivity). Despite the commie lie that people are completely malleable and can be brainwashed and manipulated enough to the point

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where they magically shed their most intrinsic biological instincts, straight white males will always prefer straight white males, ghetto negroes will always prefer ghetto negroes, and effeminate homos will always prefer effeminate homos, or so one learns while watching *Streamers*. More sophisticated and nuanced than similarly themed cinematic works like Jack Garfein's *The Strange One* (1957), John Huston's *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967), and John Flynn's *The Sergeant* (1968), *Streamers* is unquestionably flawed but is undoubtedly the sort of Grand Illusion of the rather preternatural self-loathing gay military subgenre. Not unlike his Sam Shepard vehicle *Fool for Love* (1985), the film is indubitably one of Altman's most underrated flicks and evidence that the auteur was at his most subversive when working with a small budget and away from the constraints of some big Hollywood studio. I certainly cannot think of another rampantly heterosexual American auteur that would have the gall to make an extremely awkward film about the dangers and dilemmas of 'Dorian love,' especially one like Altman that incessantly used fags as a source of comic relief in his films. Indeed, when the time finally arrives when some Jewish tranny or triracial feminist dyke academic gets the gall to attempt to discredit leftist cynic Altman by portraying him as some sort of sinister German-American homophobe with cryptic anti-semitic tendencies (after all, he dared to wage war against the very kosher Hollywood studio system and even directed films featuring grotesque Yid gangsters), I would not be the least bit surprised if they attempted to present *Streamers* as the virtual *Jud Süß* of gay war movies.

-Ty E

DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST

Robert Bresson (1951)

I honestly do not know much about the Catholic Church aside from the fact that it is now seems to be controlled by evil antichrist types that seem more interested in phantoms like climate change and the shoah and protecting serial child rapists and other castration-worthy perverts than the teachings of J.C., but I also have to assume that most modern priests are closet homosexuals, pedos, autistic, and/or sociopaths as I cannot imagine any even remotely normal man taking the cloth in our spiritually retarded age. Indeed, I might think Otto Preminger was a culture-distorting piece of shit that was largely dedicated to dismantling traditional white Christian values with his innately subversive films, but I cannot help but feel that his failed epic *The Cardinal* (1963)—a film inspired by the dubious life of hardcore closet-queen and Baby Doll-hater Cardinal Francis Spellman—exposed some hard truths about the lack of masculine fortitude and hypocrisy associated with the clearly spiritually and morally declining priesthood. Needless to say, I was not prepared to see a film where I came to believe a young wine-addled priest of the socially retarded sort achieves sainthood as is depicted in *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951) aka *Journal d'un curé de champagne*—a film based on the 1936 Georges Bernanos novel of the same name—but this cinematic masterpiece was directed by French master auteur Robert Bresson who is one of the few filmmakers that achieved a true sense of the spiritual in cinema, as opposed to simply depicting contrived (yet oftentimes curiously homoerotic) biblical bullshit à la half-chosenite Cecil B. DeMille, and I say that as a largely apathetic agnostic that could not be a believer if I wanted to. While oftentimes associated with the heretically Catholic moral rigor and asceticism of Jansenism, this did not exactly inform the filmmaker's singular aesthetic, or as Paul Schrader—a lapsed Dutch-American Calvinist that has modeled much of his films after Bresson's, especially *Pickpocket* (1959)—wrote in his groundbreaking text *Transcendental Style in Film* (1972), “Bresson, the artist, received no aid or comfort from Jansenism; he had to look elsewhere for his aesthetics.” Luckily, Bresson, quite unlike far too many modern filmmakers—both good and bad—looked far beyond the cinematic realm for aesthetic influences.

An anti-modernist that, on an inspirational level, did not give a shit about modern trends—whether they be spiritual, cinematic, or political—Bresson might seem like a right-wing anarchist of sorts to some people (myself included) and his aesthetic interests were neither vogue nor wholly traditionalism, but that is largely why he was such a pleasantly preternatural filmmaker, or as Schrader also wrote, “Bresson cannot be tied down to any one heresy; he is a heretic all his own. His techniques of portraiture come from Byzantium; his theology of predestination, free will, and grace from Jansenism; his aesthetics from Scholasticism. To each tradition he brings the virtues of the other, and to cinema he brings the

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virtues of all three. Perhaps this is why no religious denomination has ever embraced Bresson's seemingly religious films; they haven't figured out what sort of heretic he is yet." Indeed, religion or not, *Diary of a Country Priest* is as heretical as films come as a flick that even makes Pasolini's biblical flicks and sardonic (anti)Catholic satires of Luis Buñuel seem like immaturely and inelegantly rebellious pussy posturing by comparison due to Bresson's singular devotion to the strikingly transcendent in a world plagued with the positively putrid and material. As someone that lost 'faith' (or whatever) as a young kid, *Diary of a Country Priest* at least made me feel like a believer during its 115-minute running-time and even caused me to momentarily consider that there is much more than life and the shitty people in it. One could even say that, not unlike many of Bresson's other films, it is a merrily morbid cinematic work that celebrates death to the point where Christianity—or at least the auteur's splendidly curious version of it—is centered around the worship of death, which is beautifully underscored by the priest protagonist's final dying words after asking for absolution: "What does it matter? All is grace." Indeed, Bresson wants the viewer to know that the body is a temporal prison and thus one should never fear death as life is the real hell. In fact, as Bresson's pitch black yet singularly subtle understated humor reveals, life is largely a sick joke at the expense of the good and sensitive like the eponymous protagonist of the film.

Although Bresson's previous and second feature *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) is a highly worthwhile dark gothic (anti)romance where a scorned bourgeois bitch played by Spanish beauty María Casares dedicates her life to getting a disturbingly intricate revenge against her ex-lover simply because he falls in love with another woman from a less prestigious class, it was not until his third film *Diary of a Country Priest*—a cinematic work so precisely and immaculately constructed that it makes most films seem like they are layered with lard—that he created the template for the singular 'transcendental style' that he is best known for. Indeed, one could argue that the film created a complete paradigm shift in the art of filmmaking as it was surely an imperative influence on the filmmakers and intellectuals associated with the *La Nouvelle Vague* and later American New Wave masterpieces like Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and Schrader's *Hardcore* (1979), yet no filmmaker—be it Michael Haneke, Carlos Reygadas, Bruno Dumont, Dietrich Brüggemann or countless other examples—has come close to capturing Bresson's style or aesthetic rigor. In short, Bresson lives in a world of his own, which is fitting for a man that once wrote in regard to his cinematic philosophy, "The CINEMA did not start from zero. Everything to be called into question." Undoubtedly, *Diary of a Country Priest* offers the first serious glimpse of the singular Bressonian cinematic world where typical movie ingredients like entertainment, star power, psychological motivation, and sexual magnetism, among other things, are scant, if not totally nonexistent, and a rare spiritual experience in celluloid form is offered to those viewers bold enough to

embrace it. Undoubtedly, the film is the first good example of why Schrader was right when he wrote, “Bresson’s characters, his movies, and Bresson himself all become icons. . . . Bresson has transcended himself: he is blazed in mosaics in some moss-grown temple.” Indeed, like most of his cinematic works, it is somewhat hard to believe that a single man conceived of such a film, but of course Bresson was not your typical man or filmmaker as one of the greats in the top tier class of cinematograph masters that includes F.W. Murnau and Carl Theodor Dreyer, among few others.

While only a highly intelligent artistic genius could dream up a film like Bresson’s, it is hardly an intellectual exercise, or as the great frog critic André Bazin once wrote, “If *THE DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST* impresses us as a masterpiece, and this with an almost physical impact, if it moves the critic and the uncritical alike, it is primarily because of its power to stir the emotions, rather than the intelligence, at their highest level of sensitivity.” Indeed, one would do best to embrace the film like one should embrace death without fear or hesitation as it is a film that bleeds into the soul as it progresses to the point where it feels completely right and hardly dejecting when the young priest—a man that has sacrificed his mind and body for his faith—dies in the end. While the priest technically dies of stomach cancer, which is fitting since he cannot stomach life (not to mention food), one gets the sense that the true source of his death is a spiritual malady and that he is no longer fit for the ‘prison’ of his body. Indeed, there is no doubt from the very first shot of the character that the young ‘Priest of Ambricourt’ (Belgian-born Swiss actor Claude Laydu in his first and most well-known acting role)—a forlorn figure that, not coincidentally, appears framed behind a fence at the beginning of the film in a manner that underscores his status as a virtual inmate in an ‘earthly prison’—suffers greatly with mere existence and is pretty much socially retarded (read: proto-autistic), but he is also a ‘true believer’ and not in the negative pathological sense as he is willing to sacrifice what little health he has to help a small village with an oppressive atmosphere as inhabited by mostly coldhearted and petty people that immediately despise him just due to his mere presence as a character of a sort of simple untainted Dostoevskian good. In fact, even the eponymous donkey of *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) seems to be treated better than the priest as at least the animal is beloved by the kind and innocent but, quite unlike the ass of Bresson’s later film, the young Catholic brother makes it quite clear to the viewer how he feels, though his internal pain always feels like a total necessary part of his journey. In fact, one could say that the young Priest’s faith is ostensibly morbidly masochistic as an anxiety-ridden prole that is incapable of praying who attempts to spiritually counsel people that would rather spit on him and write him threatening anonymous letters demanding that he leave the village (which actually happens), yet there is a certain undeniable nobility and purity in his ‘passion,’ even if it arguably contributes to his seemingly unavoidable premature demise.

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While it would not be sensible to describe *Diary of a Country Priest* as a 'realist' film, there is certainly an inordinate realism of spirit and essence, as if Bresson personally examined the soul of each 'actor' (or 'model' as Bresson would say) to see if they were right for the role. For example, Nicole Ladmiral, who plays a troubled young aristocratic girl that threatens suicide, committed suicide in real-life at the age of 28 by throwing herself under a subway train some years after the film was released (to make matters more morbid, Ladmiral previously provided narration for Georges Franju's abattoir documentary *Blood of the Beasts* (1949) aka *Le sang des bêtes*). As for lead actor Claude Laydu, he was borderline brainwashed by Bresson for a year in preparation for the role and he would ultimately take an extreme method acting approach to his 'performance' by living with a group of young priests for many weeks, intentionally starving himself to make himself look ill, and sporting an authentic priest cassock and matching boots. As for the priest protagonist's mentor 'Priest of Torcy,' he was actually portrayed by Bresson's own doctor Adrien Borel who only agreed to do the role so long as he could use a pseudonym (he is credited as 'Andre Guibert' in the film). While the acting might be a tad bit more 'melodramatic' than Bresson's later films where the models just act like virtual somnambulists, Laydu's performance is arguably the most memorable of the auteur's films aside from possibly Nadine Nortier in his subsequent Georges Bernanos adaptation *Mouchette* (1967) where a poor young girl chooses death over life before she even reaches full womanhood. Indeed, Laydu plays a pathetic priest but you cannot help but respect the passion behind his, well, passion. Another 'realist' aspect of the film is Bresson's utilization of oftentimes grating off-screen noises (e.g. squeaking of a wagon wheel), which helps to subtly intensify the contrast between the everyday and spiritual. Indeed, while Bresson makes great use of chiaroscuro as seemingly influenced by the paintings of Dutch Golden Age painters like Johannes Vermeer and Godfried Schalcken, the film does not utilize special effects or garish pageantry to express the spiritual like so many idiotic Hollywood films. After all, as Bresson once wrote, "It is in its pure form that an art hits hard."

Beginning with a shot of a sign of Ambricourt—a real-life commune in the Pas-de-Calais department in northern France—the viewer arrives just as the new 'Priest of Ambricourt' (Claude Laydu) arrives to the area for his new parish where he soon catches the local rich Count (Jean Riveyre) being a little too intimate with his dejected daughter Chantal's (Nicole Ladmiral) rather beautiful governess. As the rather literal title of the film indicates, the Priest oftentimes writes in his diary and as his first entry reads, "I don't think I'm doing anything wrong in writing down daily, with absolute frankness, the simplest and most insignificant secrets of a life actually lacking any trace of mystery." Undoubtedly, the diary is one of the priest's few sources of solace, as if he needs it to remind himself of his very existence lest him succumb to a sort of self-dissolution. As demonstrated by the fact that the action and drama of the film is oftentimes echoed

by his words in what is ultimately a cinematically ingenious use of pleonasm, the protagonist is an honest priest—even maybe too painfully and autisticly so to the point where the viewer is forced to suffer silently with him as he routinely puts himself in the most miserable of situations. When a grumpy old fart named ‘Fabregars’ (Léon Arvel) bitches about having to pay for aspects of his wife’s funeral, the Priest is left completely “distracted,” as if it is the end of the world or something, thereupon underscoring the protagonist’s complete and utter incapacity to deal with everyday assholes. Aside from adults not respecting him, the Priest is also mocked by the children he teaches. For example, a young girl named Séraphita Dumonte (Martine Lemaire) pretends to be keen on the Scriptural basis of the Eucharist to get his attention, but then embarrasses him for the enjoyment of her classmates by mock-flirtatiously stating in regard to the root of her ostensible biblical prowess, “It’s because you have such beautiful eyes.” When the Priest meets his new mentor, the Priest of Torcy (Adrien Borel), the older and wiser brother instantly berates him for being a sensitive pussy by stating, “You young priests! What have you young men got in your veins these days? In my time they made men of the church, leaders of parishes, real masters!” While the Priest of Torcy is certainly somewhat of a resentful old prick, his heart is in the right place and does provide the young priest with helpful dictums like, “Keep order all day long” and “A true priest is never loved.” In the end, the young priest proves to live and eventually die by these words as he is never loved and rarely even liked, but he does earn the respect of some of his most aggressive and cynical detractors.

Although everyone hates the priest, including little kids, that does not stop him from idealistically attempting to inspire his seemingly impenetrable haters with his own special idealistic Catholic philosophy. To the young Priest’s credit, his idealism is pure and his desire to ‘save’ is as equally pure, hence his handful of notable successes. Indeed, the young Priest manages to convince the local Countess (Rachel Bérendt) to get over her deep-seated hatred of god as a result of the premature death of her young son who she practically worships (for example, instead of a rosary and religious paintings, the Countess sports a locket necklace featuring a pic of her dead son and has decorated her room with pics of said dead son). In fact, the Countess is so inspired to let go of her hatred and resume her communion with god after an intense spiritual argument with the young priest, who she initially does not take seriously, that she actually destroys her beloved locket necklace her dead son. In fact, the Countess even writes a heartfelt thank-you letter that concludes with, “I hope I don’t hurt your pride by calling you a child. You are one, and may God keep you so always,” but she soon dies as if her hatred was the only thing keeping her alive. Despite being a sickly wimp, the viewer never doubts the intense sincerity of his words when he sternly warns the countess, “God will break you,” so there is a certain heartwarming irony in her unexpected death, which naturally disturbs her dysfunctional aristocratic

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family, as if her bodily demise was god's greatest gift. To make matters worse, the Countess' daughter Chantal (Nicole Ladmiral), who hates her mother for being a pathetic cuckquean, hatefully attempts to blame the priest for her death, thereupon further tainting the protagonist's local reputation. While the priest fails in his attempt to get Chantal to give confession, he does somehow magically suspect a suicide letter in her pocket, which he forces her to give it to him and then subsequently burns it without even reading it. Although seemingly half-autistic, the priest was able to read terrible thoughts of suicide in the troubled teenage girl's unsettlingly penetrating eyes and thus acted accordingly without even the slightest hesitation. In what is probably the most humorous moment of the entire film, Chantal tells the Priest, "You must be the devil" after asking for said letter as if she, as the unloved sole surviving child of bitter old blueblood, is shocked that someone could actually feel her great internal pain for the first time in her entire life. In the end, Chantal seems to believe in the Priest's power and when she asks how he was able to do the seemingly impossible by calming her hateful mother, he replies, "A lost secret. You too will find it and lose it in turn, and others will pass it on after you." In the end, the Priest dies but his crucial influence on seemingly hopeless people like Chantal lives on.

Aside from learning from the misery of everyday life, the priest also learns a thing or two from the Priest of Torcy, but even he cannot provide the protagonist with any sort of solace when a certain Dr. Delbende (Antoine Balpêtré) assumedly commits suicide because he "lost his faith" as a result of losing patients due to dubious local rumors. Indeed, as the priest complains in regard to the suicide, "I was in no condition to listen to his confidences just then. They were like molten lead poured on an open wound. I have never suffered so much and likely never will again, even when I die." In fact, the suicide seems to perturb the priest more than when he finally learns that he is dying of stomach cancer, but of course Dr. Delbende committed a mortal sin which is one of the worst things a Catholic can do. Naturally, as the victim of local rumors himself, the young priest certainly sees a kindred spirit Dr. Delbende who even expresses a sort of spiritual kinship to the protagonist before he commits self-slaughter. In fact, the Priest even takes no offense when Dr. Delbende informs him during a medical examination that his poor health is the degenerate genetic consequence of generations of impoverished alcoholics in his family. In that sense, it seems Dr. Delbende is a fan of the writings of Cesare Lombroso and Émile Zola.

Notably, the Priest's only moment of reprieve is when he receives a ride on the back of motorcycle as underscored by the words in his diary, "By some premonition I can't explain, I understood that God didn't want me to die without knowing something of this risk. Just enough for my sacrifice to be complete when it's time came." While a simple motorcycle ride where nothing particularly interesting happens, it is obviously a moment of complete bliss for the protagonist as demonstrated by the shockingly large ecstatic smile on his face. Luckily, be-

fore he dies, the priest is able to convince an old friend, Priest Dufrety (Bernard Hubrenne), who has lost the faith and is living in sin with a woman, to hook up with the Priest of Torcy so that he can get back on track with God and the Church. In the end, Priest Dufrety sends the Priest of Torcy a brief letter revealing that the young priest was vomiting up blood before he died and then asked for absolution, but then stated with his last dying words, “What does it matter? All is grace.”

Simply put, I don't give a fuck about Catholic fathers or the Catholic Church, but *Diary of a Country Priest* made me feel like a believer, especially in regard to the titular protagonist becoming a saint, at least in the spiritual sense. While later filmmakers like Carlos Reygadas and Dietrich Brüggemann have attempted similar things in regard to transcendental, their cinematic works are, at best, mostly deluded expressions of epigonism, especially when contrasted with Bresson's films. Undoubtedly, the same can be said of Paul Schrader's most recent film *First Reformed* (2017), which is like a more subversive and less spiritually sound Americanized reworking of *Diary of a Country Priest* where the American auteur reveals more about his own spiritual sickness than any sort of innate understanding of the somewhat mysterious forces that compelled the no less mysterious French master auteur (who, despite revealing his cinematic philosophy in his classic text *Notes on the Cinematograph* (1975), still remains a largely enigmatic figure). Still, Schrader's film is a worthy watch and one of the best films of 2017, yet it also demonstrates the aesthetic and metaphysical degeneration of cinema since the release of Bresson's masterpiece, as it is clearly the expression of a spiritually lost and emasculated leftist type who no longer believes in himself, let alone the faith of his forefathers. Speaking of Schrader, he provided an important insight into Bresson's true power as a filmmaker in *Transcendental Style in Film* by contrasting him with Carl Th. Dreyer—one of the few filmmakers on the same level as the French master auteur—and ultimately argues in a manner that makes sense of the titular priest's death in *Diary of a Country Priest* that, “Bresson, on the other hand, is the artist of the resurrection, the artist of stasis. The cross for Bresson is a means to a resurrected end, and he is careful not to confuse the cross and the resurrection. Like Dreyer, Bresson uses suffering through the prison metaphor (the ‘symbol of the Cross’), but unlike Dreyer, Bresson transforms the prison into a symbol of resurrection. In this manner Bresson is like the Byzantine Christian who, as theologian Henri Daniel-Rops writes, ‘preferred the theology of Glory to the theology of the Cross.’ Suffering for Bresson is never more than a stepping-stone to stasis.” Indeed, the young priest might be barfing up blood in the end, but his premature death, which is not even actually depicted in the film, is among the most joyous, if not the most joyous, in cinema history. Additionally, only in underrated French auteur Maurice Pialat's sort of neo-Bressonian masterpiece *Under the Sun of Satan* (1987) aka *Sous le soleil de Satan*—the third and final of three masterpiece films based

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on a novel by Georges Bernanos (of course, Bresson directed the other two)—comes as close to Bresson's film in terms of successfully depicting a particularly perturbed priest's passion towards sainthood, albeit in a somewhat more fucked fashion.

Notably, in a top ten list of his favorite films, Russian master auteur Andrei Tarkovsky (Andrei Rublev, *Solaris*) actually ranked *Diary of a Country Priest* as his #1 favorite film of all-time. While I personally rank Tarkovsky as one of the greatest filmmakers of all-time, I would be lying if I did not admit that I consider Bresson to be the superior auteur and *Diary of a Country Priest* to be superior to anything that the Russian director ever directed, even if it does not quite compete with the atmospheric aesthetic allure of films like *Stalker* (1979) and *The Mirror* (1975). After all, whereas Tarkovsky brings us religious imagery and great pangs of spiritual doubt, Bresson even provides cynical agnostics like myself a sort of cinematic spiritual experience that feels both timeless and perennial as a film that, somewhat inexplicably, feels like it could have been created before the birth of film. As to what separates Tarkovsky from Bresson and other master practitioners of transcendental style like Ozu and Dreyer, Schrader provided a worthy answer when he argued, "To my mind, Andrei Tarkovsky was not interested in the transcendental style per se. He had religious themes, obsessions, and characters. He was austere. He employed distancing devices. But his intent was different. A transcendental guide or guru or film director self-effacingly seeks to escort the respondent to another level of consciousness, a Wholly Other World. The transcendental film director is a 'spirit guide.' Tarkovsky was more interested in passing through the portal himself than he was in escorting his viewer." Indeed, Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* is one of my favorite films of all-time, but it seems like an experimental exercise in masturbatory nostalgia when compared to Bresson's great '(anti)coming-of-age' flicks like *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966) and *Mouchette* (1967). Arguably more importantly, at least to me, Bresson is one of the few filmmakers that, despite the oftentimes deathly dark subject matter of his films, gives me hope as he proved that great timeless and spiritual art could still be produced in the post-Spenglerian age. Indeed, as Richard Roud argued in his excellent text *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980) in regard to Bresson's penultimate masterpiece *The Devil Probably*, "Even though Bresson has painted a dark picture of wasted youth and beauty (Truffaut called it Bresson's most 'voluptuous film'), one came out of the film with a sense of exaltation. When a civilization can produce a work of art as perfectly achieved as this, it is hard to believe that there is not hope for it." Indeed, take that Spengler.

One of the reasons I found Christianity to be so revoltingly impotent as a child is due to the obsession with prayer and the sort of mindless docility and acceptance of misery it inspires, so I could not help but feel quite strongly when the young priest declares, "Never had I felt so violently the revolt of the body against prayer." Instead of praying like a pussy, the priest takes action in, some-

what ironically, an arguably Nietzschean sense and puts both his body and mind on the line while just getting by on cheap wine and stale bread to the point where it results in self-obliteration and he finally escapes from the prison of his body. Indeed, even after getting his terminal cancer diagnosis, the priest does not stop in his seemingly completely genuine acts of Catholic idealism to the point where he gets another priest, who has sinned with a woman and now styles himself as an enterprising intellectual, to replace him in the end. In that sense, the priest is a highly inspirational character like a fanatical artist not unlike Bresson himself. In fact, I could not help but think of Rainer Werner Fassbinder of all people and how the singular workaholic auteur was even working on a Rosa Luxemburg biopic script entitled *Rosa L* when he overdosed on cocaine and barbiturates. *Diary of a Country Priest* is not just the passion of a young priest, but also the passion of Bresson who revolutionized cinema in a way that the likes of contemporary pseudo-Bressonian art fags like Bruno Dumont and Gus Van Sant can only dream of.

Undoubtedly, film critic André Bazin probably paid the greatest tribute to the film when he argued at the end of his *Cahiers du Cinéma* essay on it, "It is hardly enough to say of this work, once removed, that it is in essence faithful to the original because, to being with, it is the novel. But most of all the resulting work is not, certainly, better (that kind of judgment is meaningless . . .) but 'more' than the book. The aesthetic pleasure we derive from Bresson's film, while the acknowledgement for it goes, essentially, to the genius of Bernanos, includes all that novel has to offer plus, in addition, its refraction in the cinema." In short, Bresson accomplished what very few filmmakers do by totally transcending his source material and ultimately demonstrating the true potential of cinema as an artistic medium. In fact, Bresson proved with his rather idiosyncratic Jansenist *Weltanschauung* and assumed Byzantium and Gothic influences in his adaptation of a 'modern' novel that, despite most movies being mindless trash that is meant to appeal to the lowest common denominator, cinema is the fullest and most advanced art form with the most potential for both aesthetic and thematic evolution. Indeed, while Schrader made a great point when he argued, "Motion pictures were not born in religious practice, but instead are the totally profane offspring of capitalism and technology. If a religious artist in cinema attempts to go back to his origins, he will find only entrepreneurs and technocrats. When the Holy tries to enter into the cinema, the intrinsically profane art, there are bound to be some unusual consequences," he was ultimately underscoring Bresson's singular genius as an artist that brought transcendence to a commercial medium and with *Diary of a Country Priest*, which somewhat ironically was a commercial success, he created one of the greatest pieces of art of the twentieth-century and one of the rare films that deserves to be revered to the same degree as great Gothic architecture, Byzantine icons, and other great artistic pieces associated with the Occident. While Nietzsche was probably mostly right when

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he wrote, "The Christian resolution to find the world ugly and bad, has made the world ugly and bad," Bresson's films would have probably at least make him reconsider. After all, as Roud soundly recognized, "By the end of the film, even the non-believer is forced to acknowledge that the little country priest is a saint—whatever that word may mean. His final liberation comes not only from his acceptance of his approaching and painful death, but from the knowledge that his conflicts have not really been with the Countess, or Chantal, or Seraphita, but with himself. And these conflicts are resolved: *tout est grâce*." Of course, Nietzsche also might a good point when he argued, "What do savage tribes at present accept first of all from Europeans? Brandy and Christianity, the European narcotics.—And by what means are they fastest ruined?—By the European narcotics," but somehow I doubt these savages could embrace the truly Christian Diary of a Country Priest even if they wanted to. After all, the film is the opposite of a narcotic and Europeans, not unlike Bresson, do Christianity best when coming from an ascetic angle as opposed to a pussy proto-humanist prayer version.

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Robert Bresson (1967)

Out of all my ex-girlfriends, I can sincerely say that I only regard one as being a genuinely decent and selfless human being, which becomes all the more notable when one considers that she suffered a horribly abusive childhood and could have easily become a horrendous piece of shit like some many other people from similar backgrounds. Luckily for my ex, she is a distinctly beautiful babe with a perfect hourglass shape, more than ample derriere, and nice shapely tits, though she once had extremely poor self-esteem due to abusive family members, especially her exceedingly jealous mother, and thus could not even bask in her own singularly statuesque body. In fact, it was only until I routinely reminded her for a couple years that she actually became fully aware of her positively prepossessing pulchritude, though she never let it go to her head and instead developed an appreciation for feminine beauty in general. For those that do not know her and saw her on the street, this might seem completely inexplicable, especially considering so many modern American women have such bloated senses of self-worth, but such a miserable childhood involving alcoholic parents, including a violent bipolar mother, can certainly warp one's self-esteem, or so I sadly discovered during my relationship with her. While it has been nearly a decade since this specific ex-girlfriend and I broke up, I was recently reminded of her after watching the pastoral tragedy *Mouchette* (1967)—a film that, like the director's previous masterpiece *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), was based on a novel of the same name by French Roman Catholic monarchist Georges Bernanos—directed by French master auteur Robert Bresson (*Pickpocket*, *L'argent*), who has indubitably become one of my favorite filmmakers in recent years. Indeed, the film, which was like virtual metaphysical *Déjà vu* for me, feels like a biographical depiction of my ex as a teenager, albeit set in 1960s bumfuck frogland, as the female lead Nadine Nortier not only resembles my ex in terms of appearance, gestures, and pantomimes, but her experiences and family situation is also eerily similar. Also like the heroine of *Mouchette*, my ex could be rather rude and crude (indeed, on top of being prone to mooning people for sport and thus exposing her arguable best physical attribute for free, she was not beneath mocking uppity negress aggressors to their faces with monkey sounds and racial slurs). While I certainly will not attempt to argue what is the superior film, I cannot help but admit that my emotional connection to Nortier's character was much stronger and more personal than that of Anne Wiazemsky's character in Bresson's previous (and somewhat similarly themed) masterpiece *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966). An unrivaled master of what he himself called the 'cinematograph,' Bresson demonstrates a sharp, intuitive, and uniquely unsentimental humanistic respect and empathy for an ultimately quite mean, vulgar, and unkempt teenager girl that no one seems to love or care for aside from her dying mother. Indeed,

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the eponymous lead is more than a little bit rough around the edges and her pain, misery, and heartbreaking dejection can be clearly read across her youthful yet ultimately terminally tragic face. A filmmaker that best described his own filmmaking style when he declared, "I limit myself to what is indispensable," it should be no surprise that Bresson constructed a film where pretty much every single frame of film and single sound is imperative, as if he somehow was able to capture every crucial moment in the last couple days of a girl that ultimately decided to choose death over life on a virtual whim. In that sense, *Mouchette* might be best described as an 'emotional autopsy' were it not so much more as one of the great works of truly transcendental cinema.

Although it probably makes me sound like a proper scumbag, the reason I prefer the titular teen of *Mouchette* to the almost insufferably cutesy chick of *Au hasard Balthazar* is that I found the passivity of the latter when it came to her incessant victimhood to be somewhat infuriating, even if she was a being of angelic purity. Indeed, not unlike my ex-girlfriend, *Mouchette* decides to take revenge against the sick and pathetic alcohol-fueled society that uses and abuses her, though most of her actions are indubitably misguided, at least on a superficial level. In fact, the heroine oftentimes does repugnant and even downright sadistic things yet the viewer is able to easily sympathize with her due to Bresson's brilliance as a filmmaker that preferred the natural organic gestures and expressions of a non-actor (or what he called 'human models') to the counterfeit melodramatics, histrionics, and plastic posturing of many professional actors, or as he once wrote, "An actor in cinematography might as well be in a foreign country. He does not speak its language." Clearly influenced by Bresson, Louis Malle—a filmmaker that usually worked with popular actors, including Hollywood stars—followed the lesson of *Mouchette* by getting a real rural lumpenprole teen to portray the lead in his WWII era Vichy masterpiece *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974). As both films demonstrate, Bresson was certainly right when he wrote, "Respect man's nature without wishing it more palpable than it is," as the films derive their potency and intrigue through the authenticity of gesture and emotion as expressed by their non-actor leads. Although it is accepted among many film critics, including Charles Barr and Joseph Cunneen, that *Mouchette* is arguably Bresson's most accessible film, to me it was so much more as it felt like a beautifully bittersweet deluge of *Déjà vu* due to the female lead's authenticity of facial expressions and gestures, as if I was transported to some past alternate reality where my ex-girlfriend was a 1960s Provençal farm girl that opted to kill herself instead of going on with life. While Bresson made a number of films containing the timeless theme of suicide and thus can be regarded as the unequivocal maestro of self-slaughter cinema, there is really no other cinematic work in film history where the unpardonable sin seems so nonchalantly beautiful and metaphysically sound, though I initially found myself having a hard time detailing specifically why aside from acknowledging its particularly preternatural lack of

premeditation. In that regard, the film's lead also reminds me of my ex (who, thankfully, never offed herself).

Undoubtedly, *Mouchette* clearly demonstrates that Jean-Luc Godard was right when he stated on the frog TV doc *Un metteur en ordre*: Robert Bresson in regard to his cinematic hero, "If I wanted to characterize Bresson, I said once in an interview that to me he's a Grand Inquisitor, someone who, despite the risk or violence involved, penetrates to the very depths of a human being." Of course, very few people would openly admit that they want to endure head-on the sort of soul-crushing experience that leads a cute teenager girl killing herself in the end. For example, in his entry on Bresson in *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980), film scholar and cineaste Richard Roud makes the somewhat dubious complaint, "Indeed, there is something almost sadistic in the way in which the girl is treated, not only by the other characters in the film but by Bresson as well. She is a victim, and he is unable to make anything more of her than that." Aside from his seeming incapacity to discern between sadism and deep empathy, Roud seems to be ignoring that the titular teen expresses free will, albeit in an oftentimes miserably misguided fashion that involves pelting classmates with mud and ultimately committing suicide. While one might be tempted to point to the annoyingly over referenced Nietzsche quote, "Beware that, when fighting monsters, you yourself do not become a monster... for when you gaze long into the abyss. The abyss gazes also into you," in regard to the tragic nature of the character, she expresses slight glimmers of hope just before destroying herself in a playful gesture of self-slaughter that is akin to a silly game. Like me with my ex, the viewer learns to love the film's heroine because of her coarseness, vulgarity, tactlessness, and gross naivety when it comes to confronting her life, thereupon making her suicide all the more heartbreaking yet somehow fitting and even liberating.

At the very beginning of the film, the viewer is introduced to a somber middle-aged woman (portrayed by French novelist Marie Cardinal) in a church that declares, "What will become of them without me? I can feel it in my breast." The woman in question is the titular protagonist's mother and she is terminally ill and thus naturally fears for the future of his poor dysfunctional family. Although barely a teenager, *Mouchette* has already had to take her dying bedridden mother's place at home and thus must care for her baby brother and clean and cook for her entire family, which also includes her ungrateful deadbeat alcoholic bootlegger father (Paul Hebert) and similarly scummy and swarthy brother. On top of her home life being fairly draining, virtually every other aspect of *Mouchette*'s life is miserable and degrading, especially at school where she has no friends and is tormented by her fiercely frigid teacher. Aside from her dying mother, no one really seems to care about *Mouchette*, especially not her physically and emotionally abusive father. In short, the little lady heroine lives a life of perpetual misery, torment, and abuse as a child that rarely gets to experience

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the joys of being a child. In fact, the only time that Mouchette has any sort of reprieve from the sick sad joke that is her life is when she is able to briefly enjoy a bumper car ride at a local fair after a somewhat mysterious young mother randomly gives her a token for said ride. Being ill-equipped to socialize, especially with members of the opposite sex, Mouchette uses crashing her bumper car into that of a young boy's car as a strangely touching means of flirting. Rather unfortunately, the heroine musters up courage and makes an attempt to talk to the boy after the ride, but her deadbeat dipsomaniac dad slaps her in the face just as she invitingly smiles at the lad, who is wearing bourgeois and is probably a sort of dream boy for the heroine. From there, everything goes downhill for the poor little dame.

In Mouchette's pathetic gin-fueled village, there is a sort of sexual rivalry between a swarthy epileptic poacher named Arsène (Jean-Claude Gilbert of Bresson's previous film *Au hasard Balthazar*) and a somewhat older gamekeeper named Mathieu (Jean Vimenet) because the two are both in love with a somewhat bitchy young barmaid with a blonde dyke cut named Louisa (Marine Trichet). While Arsène is a middle-aged loner that somewhat resembles Mouchette's father in terms of his decidedly dirty deadbeat appearance and overall sleazy character, Mathieu is a respected married man (who just happens to be in love with a woman that is clearly not his wife). One day after wandering into the woods after school and getting lost in a rainstorm that she confuses for a 'cyclone,' Mouchette encounters Arsène during a less than auspicious moment after he wrongly assumes that he has killed his rival Mathieu during a drunk brawl. Rather disturbingly, although Mouchette, whole clearly senses a kindred spirit as a fellow loner that is hated by local, treats the pathetic poacher with inordinate affection, comforts and sings to him when he suffers a rather unnerving seizure, and proudly promises to provide him with an alibi for his ostensible murder of Mathieu, Arsène decides to pay her back by getting her drunk and raping her. While Mouchette initially ruthlessly fights Arsène off when he is attempting to rape her, she eventually embraces her involuntary deflowering by warmly wrapping her arms around him once he penetrates her. Not surprisingly, she later proudly states to Mathieu's wife, "Mr. Arsène's my lover. Ask him. He'll tell you," thereupon underscoring her depressingly misguided view of romance and affection and overall social retardation. Of course, as a young peasant girl that has local boys routinely flashing their cocks at her, Mouchette does not exactly have a healthy background for understanding sex and romance.

While it is somewhat arguable as to what the true catalyst is that leads to her suicide, Mouchette's mother's death certainly does not help and ultimately leads her on a morbidly melancholic road to self-annihilation. Indeed, despite being aware of the fact that her mother has just died, everyone seems to gang up on Mouchette on the day after she loses her sole loving parent, as if she lives in a village occupied by frogland's most sadistic, hateful, and most frigid

individuals. For example, her pathetic (non)father calls her a “little hussy” right after he mother dies, henceforth inspiring Mouchette to loudly yell “merde” (aka “shit”) and then wander the village where she is met with unwarranted abuse after abuse from an eclectic range of individuals that includes teenage boys and bitter old farts. On a quest to find her baby brother some milk, Mouchette goes to the local grocery store where the female grocer gives her a croissant and tells her that she is sorry about her mother, but then calls her a “little slut” after the hapless heroine accidentally breaks a bowl of coffee and then post-coital scratches on her chest subsequently become quite noticeable to the bitchy busybody. Upon being randomly invited into gamekeeper Mathieu’s house under dubious pretenses, the man’s wife attempts to get Mouchette to admit that Arsène got her drunk and raped her as the old woman realizes she reeks of gin from the night before, but she refuses to give up her self-described “lover,” thus revealing her sick (yet nonetheless understandable) sense of solidarity with the village’s foremost misfit criminal. After refusing to collude with the gamekeeper and his wife in bringing down her rapist, Mouchette visits an exceedingly elderly woman that almost seems like a sort of female Grim Reaper who engages in ‘ancestor worship’ and proudly declares, “I love the dead. I understand them.” When Mouchette demonstrates her somewhat strange sense of contempt for the old woman by rebelliously grinds mud onto a fancy rug with her oversized clogs, the odd old-timer remains eerily calm and simply states, “Are you asleep? Your heart’s asleep. Don’t wake it too fast. You have time enough.” Clearly not wanting her help, Mouchette hatefully states to the old woman, “You disgusting old thing,” to which she calmly replies, “I only want to help you. You’re being mean. It’s because you can’t understand. There’s evil in your eyes.” Despite her rather rude and hateful behavior, the old woman gives the female protagonist a burial shroud for her mother’s corpse and some dresses. As to why Mouchette is so mean and rude to the old woman, it seems that she fears she will grow up to be an eccentric loner and recluse just like her, thus assumedly giving her just one more reason to commit suicide.

As if being egged on by the universe to off herself, Mouchette witnesses, among other things, the horrific sight of cutesy rabbits being gunned down by local hunters while taking a scenic stroll in the country (notably, the film actually features authentic footage of rabbits being killed and it is surprisingly grisly, thus forcing the viewer to confront the discomfort that the heroine feels). When the heroine reaches a grimly placid pond, she wraps a white muslin dress that the old woman gave to her around her body and then proceeds to roll down a hill in what just seems to be simple innocent childish fun, at least initially. Unfortunately, the final nail in the casket occurs for Mouchette when she attempts to wave to a man on a large tractor and he completely ignores her. After that, Mouchette decides to roll down the hill two more times and on her final attempt she accomplishes her goal of falling into the pond where she drowns in what is

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indubitably the sereneſt and moſt ſublime depiction of ſuicide in cinema hiſtory. In the end, the film comes full circle with the ſoothing ſounds of “Magnificat” from Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi’s Baroque Psalm composition ‘Vespers for the Blessed Virgin.’ As Bresson ſtated in an interview with Yvonne Baby featured in the March 14, 1967 issue of the newspaper *Le Monde* in regard to the ſignificance of this composition, “The music isn’t about ſuſtenance or reinforcement; it precedes and it concludes. It envelops the film in Chriſtianity. It was neceſſary.”

While I admittedly found the conclusion of *Mouchette* to be inordinately beautiful, I also found it to be somewhat heartbreaking for personal reasons as the titular teen juſt as eaſily could have been my ex-girlfriend. Indeed, before we got together, she did quite mindleſſly reckless things like overdose on cough ſyrup during a failed excursion in ‘robo-tripping’ in between getting in fights with her mother that led to her being almoſt literally ſtrangled to death. Luckily, quite unlike the film’s tragic heroine, my ex is now a happily married mother with a child that receives the love and affection she deſerved but never received as a child. Of course, Bresson’s film made me realize that she juſt as eaſily could have ſuccumbed to ſome miſerable, pathetic, and/or pointleſſly tragic fate had circumſtances in her life been ſlightly different. In that ſenſe, *Mouchette* was eaſily the moſt potent film I have ever ſeen dealing with the ſubject of ſuicide, which of course Bresson was the unequivocal maſter of as also demonstrated by his later works like *Une femme douce* (1969) aka *A Gentle Woman* and *Le diable probalement* (1977) aka *The Devil Probably*. Of course, the eponymous heroine’s final act is like a poor vulgar country prole equivalent to ‘A Gentle Creature’ in the Doſtoevskian ſenſe (after all, like the real-life ſeamſtreſs that inſpired Doſtoevsky’s titular ſhort ſtory, Bresson’s character is an example of a “meek ſuicide” that “keeps haunting you for a long time”). As Joseph Cunneen rightly noted in his book *Robert Bresson: A Spiritual Style in Film* (2003), “MOUCHETTE is perhaps the moſt touching of Bresson’s films, and its poetic realism ſucceeds in giving the girl’s ‘ſuicide’ the overtones of liberation. The film is emotionally accessible to a broad public, except for thoſe who are unable to ſee anything but bleakneſs in its ending.” Indeed, arguably the moſt ſhocking aſpect of the film is how unſhocking the ſuicide really is, which is a teſtament to Bresson’s ſingular genius as a genuine humaniſtic artiſt.

Although I have mixed feelings about ſuicide and the integrity (or lack thereof) involved with ſuch a truly permanent act, *Mouchette* certainly made me rethink it from a philoſophical perſpective. In fact, the film inſpired to revisit E. M. Cioran’s arguable magnum opus *A Short Hiſtory of Decay* (1949) aka *Précis de decomposition*, moſt ſpecifically his aphoriſtic eſſay ‘My Heroes’ where he argues, “When we are young we look for heroes. I have had mine: Kleiſt, Karoline von Günderröde, Nerval, Otto Weininger. . . . Intoxicated by their ſuicides, I

was certain that they alone had gone to the end, that they drew, in death, the right conclusion from their thwarted or fulfilled loves, from their broken minds or philosophic pain. That a man should survive his passion was enough to make him contemptible or abject in my eyes: which is to say that humanity was superfluous. I discovered in it an infinitesimal number of lofty resolutions and so much compromise with life that I turned away from it, determined to put an end to it all before I was thirty. But as the years went by, I lost the pride of youth: each day, like a lesson in humility, I reminded myself that I was still alive, that I was betraying my dreams among men rotten with . . . life. Exasperated by the expectation of no longer existing, I considered it a duty to cleave my flesh when dawn broke after a night of love, and that it was a nameless degradation to sully by memory an excess of sighs. Or, at other moments, how was one to insult duration further, when one had grasped everything in a dilation which enthrones pride in the very heavens? I thought that the only action a man could perform without shame was to take his life, that he had no right to diminish himself in the succession of days and the inertia of misery. Not elect, I kept telling myself, but those who committed suicide. Even now, I have more esteem for a concierge who hangs himself than for a living poet. Man is provisionally exempt from suicide: that is his one glory, his one excuse. But he is not aware of it, and calls cowardice the courage of those who dared to raise themselves by death above themselves. We are bound together by a tacit pact to go on to the last breath: this pact which cements our solidarity dooms us nonetheless—our entire race is stricken by its infamy. Without suicide, no salvation. Strange! that death, thought eternal, has not become part of our ‘behavior’: sole reality, it cannot become a vogue. Thus, as living men, we are all retarded. . . .”Of course, it is ironically the ‘pride of youth’ that gives the titular heroine of the film the nerve enact *felo-de-se* with such fierce yet playfully executed finality, though she clearly does not need a deep philosophical argument to off herself, which makes her self-obliteration all the more ‘pure’ and morbidly intriguing (indeed, personally I find the stereotypical ‘bourgeois intellectual suicide’ to be mostly banal, if not downright completely cliché). When Mouchette’s mother warns her just before croaking, “Make sure you never get taken in by lazy workmen or drunks,” not long after she is raped by the most loathsome of drunken deadbeat lumpenproles, it becomes all too painfully clear that her life is already a devastatingly fatalistic disaster and that her future will indubitably be plagued with unending pain, misery, and abuse. Although even somewhat immature for her age as indicated by her cravenly childish bullying of her classmates and preposterously nihilistic displays of fruitless rebellion, the heroine certainly has a certain intuitive wisdom that is beyond her years on a visceral level that not even Cioran—the well educated son of an Orthodox priest who, compared to most Romanians of his era, had a relatively comfortable upbringing—could comprehend, at least not instinctually. Either way, it is impossible to be angry with

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Mouchette for her actions.

Undoubtedly, one really realizes the brilliance of *Mouchette* when one considers that Bresson simply saw it as a sort of experiment or “essai” (aka “exercise”). Indeed, as Bresson confided to Godard in a May 1966 interview featured in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in regard to his objective with the film, “Instead of a whole group of lives and different characters . . . I want to concentrate, constantly, absolutely, on one face, the face of this little girl, to see her reactions. . . . And I will choose, yes, the most awkward little girl there is, and try to draw from her everything that she will not suspect I am drawing from her. That is what interests me, and the camera will not leave her.” While I have obviously never met Nadine Nortier and was not even born until almost two decades after the film was released, there is no doubt in my mind that Bresson managed to capture her completely organic expressions in all their coarseness, vulgarity, tactlessness, awkwardness and youthful purity. Surely, it is no coincidence that the very first aphorism of Bresson’s rather short yet completely invaluable text *Notes on the Cinematographer* (1975) is, “Rid myself of the accumulated errors and untruths. Get to know my resources, make sure of them,” as *Mouchette*, like virtually all of the filmmaker’s great works, does not contain a single false note or second of filler. Indeed, as the film reveals, André Bazin was right when he wrote that Bresson is “concerned not with the psychology but with the physiology of existence,” though it is impossible to not assume things about Nortier’s character’s psychology when confronted with her rather unforgettable physiology.

Although I will not attempt any sort of theological interpretation of *Mouchette* in regard to the heroine’s suicide, film scholar turned auteur Paul Schrader, who incidentally recently completed his own rather Bressonian film *First Reformed* (2017), provides a good argument in his sole book *Transcendental Style In Film* (1972) when he states, “Intertwined with the abjuration of the body in Bresson’s films is the vexing problem of suicide: If the body enslaves the soul, why not destroy the body and be free? St. Ambrose stated the case quite clearly: ‘Let us die, if we may leave, or if we be denied leave, yet let us die. God cannot be offended with this, when we use it for a remedy,’ and Augustine and Aquinas rushed to counter the argument. Marvin Zeman, in an essay on suicide in Bresson’s films, has demonstrated that Bresson, particularly in his later films, has come to associate himself with a radical wing of Christianity (including, among others, St. Ambrose, John Donne, and George Bernanos) which regards suicide as a positive good.” Charles Barr certainly provides support for Schrader’s claim when he argued in his essay on *Mouchette* featured in the book *The Films Of Robert Bresson* (1969) that, “Her suicide is right; and Bresson gets from us, certainly, the ‘stock’ responses to such a suicide – pity for her, disgust for those who caused it. But, to go back to the point I started on, he quite excludes the often almost inseparable shallower response, the impulse to despair of the world, but rather to luxuriate in hopelessness, as in Shelley’s lines ‘I could lie down like a tired

child / And weep away [this] life of care'. The 'tired child' here does nothing like this." Indeed, in her own dubious way, the heroine achieves transcendence by escaping the seemingly perennial void of her own painfully dead-end earthly existence. If Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was right when he wrote, "The meaning of earthly existence lies not, as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering but in the development of the soul," one can see why Mouchette chose death over life as she seemed to be foredoomed to a forsaken existence that would have only all the more warped and debased her already rather damaged soul, thus her suicide seems like an act of (seemingly subconscious) self-salvation. Notably, Bresson would even admit in an interview with Napoléon Murat featured in the March 16, 1967 issue of *Le Figaro littéraire* when questioned about despair in source writer Bernanos' work that, "If there is despair in his work, it's due to an error in the writing, more likely due to poor reading. Even suicide . . . Mouchette's, for example—Bernanos says this in so many words—is not cause for despair. Her innocence, her terror are like those of an animal being tracked. In the film there's a parallel between the game bird and Mouchette. For her, death isn't an end, a finality (Bernanos dixit) but, on the contrary, it's a beginning. She's waiting for a revelation."

At the very end of his interview with Georges Sadoul featured in the March 16, 1967 issue of the French literary publication *Les Lettres Françaises*, Bresson reveals his surprising sense of humility by remarking in a rhetorical fashion, "I wonder if my films are worth the effort they require." For me, the simple answer to his (non)question is that, in terms of quality, Bresson's films provide a value that is probably worth more than every single film associated with the *La Nouvelle Vague* combined, as they do the seemingly inexplicable by providing a spiritual experience in celluloid form that will follow (or, some might say, 'haunt') the viewer for the rest of their lives, which is certainly no small accomplishment for any serious artist. After recently revisiting *Dead Poets Society* (1989)—a film directed by an Australian auteur that I have always had great respect for—my belief that Mouchette features the greatest suicide scene in cinema history has only been reinforced. Indeed, famous for its scene near the end where Robert Sean Leonard's character commits suicide because his uptight father will not allow him to pursue his dream of becoming a theater fag, the famous offing scene in *Dead Poets Society* ultimately seems like a cheap melodramatic ritual when compared to the transcendental majesty of Bresson's depiction of spontaneous teenage self-termination. Even after writing this long ass review, I feel that words are simply inadequate when it comes to describing the great joyous passion of little Mouchette's suicide, no matter how sick or demented that sounds.

-Ty E

LANCELOT OF THE LAKE
LANCELOT OF THE LAKE

Robert Bresson (1974)

A number of years ago, I started binge-watching various TV series and eventually encountered a new show I never heard of called *Game of Thrones*. As a fan of HBO original series like *The Sopranos*, *Oz*, and *Carnivàle* and classic epic fantasy flicks like John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1981), I had no reason to suspect that I would dislike the show and—at least for a couple seasons—I was proven right as I found the mostly-all-European cast and sometimes brutal fight scenes to be rather refreshing compared to most of the xenophiliac crypto-commie crap that passes for popular entertainment. Of course, as someone that was told as a very young impressionable kid by a much older faux-sword-wielding cousin that he was a medieval knight in a former life, the show naturally also had personal appeal for me in the true fantasy sense. Rather unfortunately, over the years, the show has become more and more insanely popular despite its glaring overall declining quality and has become a sort of sports-ball equivalent for craft-beer-fetishizing urban chic hipsters at dive bars as demonstrated by the countless radically retarded reaction videos on YouTube, yet I kept watching the show in the naïve hope that the Night King and his army of undead Aryan Übermensch White Walkers would destroy the entire world in a glorious end-of-the-world showdown where death—and only death—prevails in a truly apocalyptic fashion that concludes with a Säuberung of all of humanity. Of course, being a show penned by two Hebraic hacks that did not have the benefit of relying on source material for the last couple seasons because source writer George R. R. Martin (who, incidentally, recently magically discovered that he was about 1/4 chosenite after a genetic test for the PBS show *Finding Your Roots*) seems to suffer from perennial writer's block (or, probably more accurately, he seems to have written himself into a corner), the final season is innately idiotic shit and involves a number of patently preposterous and carelessly contrived deus ex machine scenarios, including a virtual little girl inexplicably killing the most powerful supernatural creature in the entire world in what is arguably the most painful cinematic 'ruined orgasm' scenario in all of moving picture history. While coethnic show creators David Benioff and D. B. Weiss—two proud beneficiaries of nepotism that are so severely hated by die hard *GoT* fans that they are affectionately known as 'dumb and dumber'—try to justify their shitty writing under the guise of 'subverting expectations,' it is clearly motivated to some degree by atavistic racial hatred and contempt, hence its gleeful kabalistic approach to warping and distorting perennial European myths and archetypes (surely, it is nothing short of painfully symbolic that former CIA Deputy Director David S. Cohen, who is the brother-in-law of Benioff, had a cameo on the show). Needless to say, after foolishly enduring such asinine aesthetic terrorism, I felt the need for complete cinematic purification in the form of immersing my-

self in real European medieval fantasy that is everything that GoT is not and naturally decided on re-watching *Lancelot of the Lake* (1974) aka *Lancelot du Lac* directed by French master auteur Robert Bresson (Pickpocket, *Au Hasard Balthazar*). Unlike GoT, which tries to pass off cheap gratuitous sex and violence and an alien hatred for ancient European archetypes as being brilliantly 'subversive' (undoubtedly, resentment-driven 'culture distortion' is a more apt description), Bresson's film is the real delightfully Delphic deal as a seriously subversive piece of arcane yet assiduous Arthurian cinema that thankfully does not depict an insultingly idiotic fantasy world where dipsomaniacal dwarfs, all-noble eunuchs, foreign savages, and potty-mouthed little girls are the greatest and most heroic moral crusaders and a tiny tom-boy magically defeats literal death in icy anthropomorphic form. Magnificently metaphysically morose and melancholic in its great tragedy, like Christ's still-warm corpse trampled on by a wandering band of money-changers on a humid mosquito-ridden night, the film utilizes the great Occidental myths of the past to depict foredoomed spirit of the present in a manner that can almost be described as Cioranian sans the gleeful cynicism and spiritual sterility.

Whereas *Game of Thrones* concludes in a manner that is more underwhelming, insipid, and morally retarded than one might expect from the weed-whacked fan fiction of a considerably mentally feeble Moroccan teenage sociopath and was clearly written by sickeningly self-satisfied speds with a clear kosher contempt for their audience where marvelously Michael Bay-esque spectacle is supreme and narrative consistency is, at best, a sad secondary concern, *Lancelot of the Lake* is a spiritually stark yet deathly devout Arthurian tone poem that basks in the inevitably tragic and depicts knightly battle as appropriately entertaining as a blood-splattered abattoir and as romantic as the cold blue bloated corpse of an unfaithful soul mate. Austerely apocalyptic, the film depicts a somewhat anachronistic realm of deluded desires and dead dreams where people oftentimes pray to god yet he never responds and where the disappearance of the Grail is symbolic of man's moral and spiritual descent. While not romantic in the 'traditional' sense, the film is certainly equipped with a sort of uniquely understated lovelorn pathos as personified by the tragic ill-fated love affair of the eponymous protagonist Lancelot and his beloved mistress Queen Guinevere as they sneak around the shadows like forsaken somnambulists that haven't quite considered that they might already be in hell. Of course, the forlorn dark romance does not stop there as Lancelot's moody and broody men also perish under lamentable circumstances, including his young protégé and best friend Gawain, who tragically dies at the hand of the man he loves yet still manages to express with a certain degree of unforgettable ghostly resonance the last dying words, "my heart is with him." And, despite their glaring flaws and all the more glaringly dejecting demeanors, your heart cannot help but also be with Lancelot and his knights, thereupon making the sting of their brutal demise all the more indelible just as

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any great Bresson character, no matter how 'model-like.'

Right from the get-go, Bresson establishes an eerily yet exquisitely morbid tone with premonitions of things to come in the form of brutal battle scenes, including the senseless destruction of religious icons, knights being decapitated and taking blades to the genitals, and skeletons (still sporting plate amour) hanging from trees while being pecked at by crows. From there, the film opens with a prologue spelled out in blood-red-letters unfolding on an image of a chalice (aka the Holy Grail) that reads: "After marvelous adventures in which Lancelot of the Lake played a heroic part, the Knights of the Round Table set off in search of the Grail. The Grail was a vessel in which Joseph of Arimathea had gathered the blood of Christ. It was to bestow supernatural power. It was believed hidden in Brittany. Merlin, before his death, pledged the knights to the quest. Merlin had indicated that the quest should be led by Perceval (Parsifal), not by Lancelot. After leaving the castle, the knights were dispersed. Perceval was not seen again. Two years have passed. Decimated, the knights return to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. They have not found the Grail." After the prologue, the viewer encounters another unsettling premonition where an old woman declares to her assumed granddaughter, "He whose footfalls precede him will die within a year." When the granddaughter points out that she said the same exact thing the previous day, the old woman ominously replies, "It is the same omen for them all." In what ultimately proves to be a less than auspicious scene, Lancelot (Luc Simon), who (quite symbolically) got lost after a disastrous battle that claimed the lives of many of his men, then appears to the old woman and asks for directions so that he can get back to his camp. Of course, things only go downhill from there as the film progresses and Bresson leaves it up to the viewer to speculate as to why the knights could not find the Grail and why Camelot and the Round Table eventually completely fall apart. While Lancelot's treacherous love affair with his beloved king's wife certainly contributes to this, there are other (seemingly much darker) forces involved that hint at a certain collective forsaken state of man, as if all hope and goodness has been extinguished from the world, hence the staying power of Bresson's film in the increasingly spiritually and culturally necrotizing Occident.

I hate to sound like a simple knuckle-dragging mamzer, but arguably the most potent theme of *Lancelot of the Lake* is the particularly precarious nature of putting pussy on a pedestal, especially in an all-male context, and how a single woman can lead to the destruction of an entire male order, though Bresson apparently had a more romantic view of the situation as indicated by his words, "Lancelot and Guinevere are like Tristan and Isolde without the love potion. A predestined love, a passionate love facing impossible obstacles. This love and its fluctuations provide the movement of the film." Indeed, to quote the GoT character Maester Aemon played by the late great Peter Vaughan (*Straw Dogs*, *The Remains of the Day*), "Love is the death of duty," or so the titular

antihero and his comrades discover the hard way. For being a patently poorly written show that attempted to pass off the bastardization of classic fantasy conventions as brilliant displays of literary subversion, especially during the last couple seasons, *Game of Thrones* did have its memorable moments of perennial truth and Maester Aemon's words ultimately inspire the show's hero Jon Snow to more or less save the world by selflessly sacrificing his love and killing his demented dragon bitch lover-cum-aunt who, among other things, used foreign brown hordes to carry out a full-blown genocide of Dresden-esque proportions because her 'feelings were hurt.' In *Lancelot of the Lake*, the titular hero also decides to sacrifice his love, but it ultimately proves to be too-little-too-late. Notably, as Bresson wrote in an essay entitled 'Torn Between Fidelity and Felony' in regard to the film, "I am a Christian filmmaker. But I have no intention of drawing a parallel between our secularized culture and a previous time when people lived lives of exalted faith. I didn't make *LANCELOT* to elaborate on a parable. Our hero is aware of his responsibility for the failure to find the Grail; I'm interested in how he is torn between fidelity and felony, love and purity. He's a man crushed by the machine of a destiny shaped by luck and predestination. . . . There is neither conversion nor redemption in my film—unlike some other stories about the Knights of the Round Table. Nonetheless, *Lancelot's* remorse could be seen as the beginning of atonement. . . . I am absolutely not the Jansenist people sometimes call me. . . . except maybe when it has to do with form." As Bresson's words indicate, he completely subverts expectations and, quite unlike the Hebraic *GoT* hacks, brings aesthetic honor to his cultural heritage in a largely aesthetically bankrupt age without honor. In that sense, Bresson follows in the footsteps of his *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) collaborator Jean Cocteau in terms of taking a respectably subversive modernist approach to classic European myths.

Notably once describing the absence of the ever elusive Grail as its "secret engine," Bresson somewhat curiously made the film after deciding to dedicate his career to 'contemporary' cinema as opposed to period pieces, so it is only natural that it is inordinately contemporary in the metaphysical sense. Indeed, as Bresson stated himself, "I think the temptation of modern life was constantly with me; it was brought up by the events in *LANCELOT*. Even religious faith: How could I forget the current crisis in the Church? I wanted to title the film *THE GRAIL*, precisely because of the intensity of the Grail's absence throughout the film." Surely, after watching a film as decidedly dispiriting and hypnotically hopeless yet as strikingly transcendental as *Lancelot of the Lake*, it is no surprise that Bresson followed it up with *Le Diable probablement* (1977) aka *The Devil, Probably* where suicide seems to be the only true reprieve from the superlatively spiritually/culturally/politically bankrupt world of (post)modernity. Indeed, in many ways, Bresson's almost intolerably hopeless (anti)Arthurian tragedy foreshadows the suffocating *Weltschmerz* and despondency that afflicts the charac-

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ters of the auteur's singularly bleak last couple of films. In other words, although a masterpiece in its own right, *Lancelot of the Lake*—a fantasy flick that is carefully stripped-down to the bare essentials and mostly glaringly devoid of the escapist elements that typically define fantasy flicks—feels like a sort of imperative cinematic initiation for *The Devil, Probably* and the auteur's swansong *L'Argent* (1983).

While probably not Bresson's intent, it is surely strikingly symbolic that Queen Guinevere is portrayed by Laura Duke Condominas, who is the daughter of decidedly degenerate French-American feminist sculptor and sometimes filmmaker Niki de Saint-Phalle. Aside from the fact that Condominas was married to a man that was associated with the Zanzibar Group—a counterculture experimental cinema (micro)movement that was led by alienated (and mostly long-haired) youth not unlike the characters of *The Devil, Probably*—her mother de Saint-Phalle demonstrated with her incest-driven experimental feature *Daddy* (1973) a fiercely forsaken spirit that could not be further from the Grail in terms of spirit. Still, despite her madre's debauched essence and association with a bunch of frog hippie weirdos, Condominas could not be more immaculate in her forsakenly lovelorn gloom in *Lancelot of the Lake* as she manages to keep both Lancelot and the viewer hopelessly leashed to her penetratingly pensive pulchritudinous despite her complete and utter lack of sexually suggestive behavior. Indeed, Condominas' Queen Guinevere ostensibly bleeds purity despite cuckolding her honorable royal husband and, in turn, completely compromising the very existence of the Knights of the Round Table. Of course, to go back to Maester Aemon: "What is honor compared to a woman's love?" While the singularly honorable Lancelot virtually unwittingly unleashes a knightly Ragnarök due to his betrayal, the film makes it almost seem worth it, at least for a second, hence the true timeless tragedy of it all. In that sense, quite unlike most cinema, Bresson's film is as timeless as the ancient parable that inspired it despite its sometimes glaring aesthetic anachronisms.

While Queen Guinevere's infidelity and Lancelot's treachery surely act as the catalyst to the virtually apocalyptic downfall of Camelot, certain feminine tendencies among certain very resentful effete males also contribute to the destruction of the Knights of the Round Table. While Lancelot's betrayal is at least somewhat understandable, his longtime enemy Mordred (Patrick Bernhard)—a cowardly little toad that acts as a central source of chaos inside Camelot—is an innately repugnant creature without even the remotest redeemable qualities and he arguably plays the most crucial role in collapsing the kingdom. When all the Knights went to battle in a tragic event that led to the deaths of many of the members of the Round Table and disappearance of the Grail, Mordred—a sniveling "virgin sword" that cons others into doing his fighting for him—stayed behind with the women. Ostensibly a knight yet seemingly completely unwilling to fight, Mordred undoubtedly makes Queen Guinevere seem look like a

naively innocent virgin as far as negative feminine qualities are concerned as he is a prissy yet quite pernicious passive-aggressive narcissist and compulsive coward that, instead of offering Lancelot's friendship, conspires like GoT queen bitch Cersei Lannister to use the most craven of means to destroy the protagonist and takeover Camelot. As even Gawain remarks to Lancelot in regard to Mordred's refusal of peace, "For much lesser affronts, you've drawn your sword and struck at the heart." Needless to say, Mordred believes he has all the ammo he needs to destroy Lancelot when he learns of his affair with Queen Guinevere and he even conspires to have the protagonist assassinated, declaring his followers, "His blood on the floor here will unmask the adulterous traitor." While the assassination plot is an abject failure and Lancelot manages to avert a battle with King Arthur by voluntarily relinquishing his ladylove, Mordred destroys everything by unexpectedly capturing the castle in an apocalyptic battle that concludes with seemingly every single character dying, including the horses. Indeed, in a deceptively ominous forest, men die from blood loss via their genitals while renegade archers pick them off from the comfort of trees. As for Lancelot, he cries out "Guinevere" and then collapses next to a pile of his dead comrades, including his king.

Notably, in the imperative (yet somewhat dated) film resource *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980), Richard Roud argues in regard to Bresson's great accomplishment with the film, "Psychologically, the film is his richest—for it is not a simple triangle story. There is also Gawain (Gauvain), who is presented as Lancelot's best friend and also in love with Guinevere—and yet loyal to both Arthur and Lancelot. Between these four characters there is a tension which is all the stronger because it is never clearly defined. Although the film ends in total destruction, there is a kind of transcendent radiance in the relations between the main characters because of the way in which Bresson portrays this birth of desire and a more exalted form of passion. And it is from this struggle that LANCELOT derives its strength and luminosity and that sense of physical and spiritual exaltation that had been absent in Bresson's oeuvre since PICK-POCKET." Indeed, the film leaves the indelible sting that comes with the death of beauty; the beauty of young porcelain-like epicene bodies and a sort of emotional war between true love, true friendship, and honor, hence the true tragedy of it all. In its brazenly brutal climactic depiction of archers killing the knights from trees with the comfort of knowing they do not even have to face their victims, the film also alludes to the Battle of Crécy (26 August 1346), which marked the beginning of the end of knights after the English effortlessly decimated the French with the longbow; or, in short, the death of honor and heroism following the Middle Ages and evolution of technology and, in turn, rise of emotionally detached/dishonorable forms of warfare (notably, such a scenario is not just typical of Occidental cinema, as it is poetically depicted in Japanese auteur Masaki Kobayashi's masterpiece *Harakiri* (1962) when three Ashigaru contemptibly use

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matchlock guns to kill the film's protagonist as he stoically commits seppuku). As Roud noted in this regard, "Ostensibly the subject of the film is the self-thwarting love of Lancelot and Guinevere, but it is also—or even more—a film about the end of the Middle Ages. The impossible quest for the Grail has ended in failure, and the impossible dream of an ideal society has also proved unworkable. It is not accident that Bresson ends the film with the slaughter of the knights by foot-soldiers with cross-bows. This may not be historically accurate, but this is not a realistic film. Nevertheless, it presents us with a view of feudal society that is marred by none of the complacency or sentimentality of films like *LES VISITEURS DU SOIR*." Of course, the death of true belief and spirituality would also follow, hence the disappearance of the Grail.

Since it is probably impossible to gauge the true aesthetic influence of a film as understatedly masterful as *Lancelot of the Lake*, it almost seems like an act of heretical cinephilia to argue that Bresson was probably somewhat influenced by younger filmmakers, namely Philippe Garrel and his early experimental parables like *Le Lit de la Vierge* (1969) aka *The Virgin's Bed* and *La cicatrice intérieure* (1972) aka *The Inner Scar*. Of course, Garrel was obviously heavily influenced by Bresson himself and never quite achieved the maturity and influence of the old master who, quite unlike any other filmmaker, demonstrated a unrivaled understanding of younger generations well into his golden years as is especially obvious in *The Devil, Probably*. One cannot also forget that Garrel was associated with the Zanzibar Group, which *Lancelot of the Lake* female lead Laura Duke Condominas was also associated with. Undoubtedly, in its beautifully brutal and audaciously anachronistic approach to ancient European myth, Yvan Lagrange's underrated *Tristan et Iseult* (1972) is insanely idiosyncratically Bressonian in the best sort of way. While utilizing slightly more supernatural elements, Dutch auteur Jos Stelling's debut feature *Mariken van Nieumeghen* (1974) can almost be described as brutally Bressonian due to its uncompromisingly unflattering depiction of humanity and no bullshit approach to death and destruction. Speaking of Dutch filmmakers, Paul Verhoeven's *Flesh+Blood* (1985)—a sort of proto-*Game of Thrones* that subverts classic fantasy archetypes and is full of blood, boobs, and barbarism—is like Bresson meets Hollywood. It is also certainly fitting that Perceval is MIA in *Lancelot of the Lake* as Éric Rohmer's *Perceval* (1978) could not be more different than Bresson's film in terms of its absurd artifice, flowery fantasy, and preposterous pageantry.

Notably, in his virtual cinematic manifesto *Notes on the Cinematograph* (1975)—a tiny book that is certainly worth its weight in gold where the auteur reveals his cinematic ideas and philosophy in aphoristic form—Bresson declares, "Cinematography, a military art. Prepare a film like a battle." Of course, Bresson's words are dually true in regard to *Lancelot of the Lake*, which also can be described as embodying both the original French military meaning and contemporary artistic meaning of the word 'avant-garde.' Undoubtedly, it is strangely

fitting that the Arthurian avant-garde led by the titular lead of the film is exterminated in the end by a more technically advanced group of archers that are fighting in the name of a cowardly traitor as it not only foreshadows the future of Arthurian cinema and (European) cinema as a whole, but the Occident in general; just as it is strangely fitting that gay mischling SS-Obersturmführer Otto Rahn ultimately committed suicide under rather dubious circumstances after his noble yet hopelessly naive failed real-life attempt to find the Holy Grail. While Game of Thrones and the books based on it played at attempting to be 'subversive' in the realm of epic fantasy (it is probably no coincidence that George R. R. Martin was heavily influenced by kosher frog Maurice Druon), they ultimately represent failed exercises of nihilism as less than nobly sired by aesthetically hostile racial aliens that have only contempt (and ultimately nil innate understanding) of the ancient Occidental archetypes they frivolously play with. Indeed, whereas GoT is nothing more than normie entertainment that ultimately proved to excel in little more than execrable escapism in its final season, Lancelot of the Lake represents the apocalyptic state of an ancient myth and ultimately an organic representation the sick soul of Europa.

Indeed, in its depiction of a morosely moribund männerbund that accepts total death before dishonor, the film also celebrates the European spirit in its twilight. Of course, the all-too-pretty long-haired hippie knights with anachronistic fruity lime-green tights more than hint at Occidental decline, but it is better that they accept death in battle than a slow degenerative decline, just as it would be ideal if Europe went out in a Götterdämmerung over the slow and painful humiliation that is the insanely insidious and innately anti-European globohomo game plan of the present where even Nietzsche's Last Man has been totally transcended in terms of pathetic passivity and aberosexuals, hostile alien invaders, and the melanin-privileged have been absurdly morally elevated to the level that knights, war heroes, and great statesmen once were before the latently apocalyptic Americanization of the world. After all, even if a young enterprising Euroid wants to attempt to demonstrate their heroism in battle nowadays, they don't really have any real options aside from fighting for a perennial enemy in a cold and detached war against his own racial/cultural interests in a decidedly dystopian technocratic zionist military comprised of women, illegal aliens, perverts, and other less than knightly elements. Rather unfortunately, to quote Death In June, "IT IS THE FATE OF OUR AGE THAT WE FIGHT IN ISOLATION."

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Robert Bresson (1977)

As demonstrated by figures ranging from D.W. Griffith to Federico Fellini to Jean-Luc Godard to Dario Argento, even great filmmakers tend to eventually lose touch with cultural trends and their surroundings in general with old age and thus their cinematic output sometimes severely suffers as a result. As his extremely uneven cinematic swansong *We Can't Go Home Again* (1973) demonstrates, even truly rebellious filmmakers like great Hollywood anarchist Nicholas Ray—a man that lived in a so-called 'filmmaking commune' with his students when he was already well into his 60s while working as a film professor—that attempt try to keep up with youth trends can fail miserably and just seem incredibly ridiculous. In short, it is oftentimes easy to tell if a film was directed by an old fart even if it was directed by a distinctly talented old fart. Of course, there are certainly notable exceptions like Danish maestro Carl Th. Dreyer, who concluded his long distinguished career with a timeless masterpiece like *Gertrud* (1964), but I don't think any other filmmaker can really compare compete in terms of singular golden years relevance than French master auteur Robert Bresson. Indeed, Bresson concluded his career with the decidedly dark masterpiece *L'argent* (1983) aka *Money* but his penultimate feature *Le diable probablement* (1977) aka *The Devil, Probably* is indubitably an unparalleled accomplishment in terms of an elderly auteur managing to depict with great intricacy, nuance, and keen social relevance the darkest aspects plaguing contemporary youth. Directed by Bresson when he was already in his late 70s, the film was considered such a subversive and emotionally brutal youth pic when it was originally released that it was championed by figures ranging from mischling punk pioneer Richard Hell to Teutonic cinematic iconoclast Rainer Werner Fassbinder. In fact, Hell dared to describe the flick as "the most punk movie ever made," but of course that would be selling the film too short. Undoubtedly, Fassbinder, who threatened to quit the 27th Berlin International Film Festival unless it received an award (it ultimately won the Silver Bear - Special Jury Prize), paid the film its greatest compliment when he stated to Christian Braad Thomsen in a 1977 interview that, "Robert Bresson's *LE DIABLE PROBABLEMENT* ... is the most shattering film I've seen this Berlin Festival. I think it's a major film [...]. [I]n the future—and this world will probably last for another few thousand years—this film will be more important than all the rubbish which is now considered important but which never really goes deep enough[.] The questions Bresson asks will never be unimportant." Indeed, Bresson's film puts forward many imperative, albeit uniquely uncomfortable questions, but luckily the wise old auteur lacks the arrogance and ignorance to try to actually provide answers for them, as *The Devil, Probably* is an audaciously austere meditation on pre-apocalyptic youthful angst that beautifully bleeds a certain unmistakable Occidental hopelessness as

symbolically personified by a passively suicidal lad that lacks even the will power to kill himself yet somehow manages to pull a date with death in the end.

Indeed, fuck Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Jean-Luc Godard's *Masculin Féminin* (1966), Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969), Franc Roddam's *Quadrophenia* (1979), *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), John Hughes' *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Heathers* (1989), and countless other films that acted as virtual cinematic therapy to various generations of self-obsessed teenagers and young adults, old fart Bresson was responsible for making the single greatest and most brutal teen rebellion flick ever made. In fact, even Fassbinder's own rarely-seen teen angst feature *Wildwechsel* (1973) aka *Jail Bait* seems as intellectually insipid and sleazy as the crusty kosher comedy *American Pie* (1999) when compared to the misanthropic majesty of Bresson's somewhat overlooked masterpiece. Of course, unlike Fassbinder, Bresson does not believe humans will be around for anywhere near a couple thousand years from now as it is a staunchly apocalyptic cinematic work that makes it seem as if humanity as a whole is, for better or worse, on its last gasp. While the characters in the film are dressed in an aesthetically vulgar fashion that makes it seem as if they were run over by a psychedelic dump truck driven by Jim Morrison (incidentally, the final scene in the film was shot at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris where *The Door* singer is buried), *The Devil, Probably* could not be more relevant in terms of depicting the cultural, social, and moral bankruptcy of the materialistic bourgeois, as well as the various metaphysical afflictions that plague contemporary youth, namely those of the hopelessly deluded and spiritually forsaken left-leaning sort. The sad and pathetic yet audaciously and refreshingly brutally pessimistic story of a passively suicidal quasi-hippie twink dropout that has lost faith in love, religion, science, civilization, politics, and just about everything else that makes life worth living, the film probably features what is arguably the most stoic depiction of a totally senseless tragedy ever committed to celluloid. In terms of sheer artistic fortitude in the face of trendy neo-Marxist bullshit, Bresson's film demonstrates the uncompromising stoicism of a kamikaze fighter pilot just before crashing into a U.S. warship.

If there ever was a film that might possibly influenced failed bourgeois leftist types to refrain from throwing bottles of old piss at elderly Trump supporters and quit Soros-backed commie terrorist groups like antifa, it is indubitably *The Devil, Probably* where the sheer impotence, phoniness, narcissistic virtue signaling, and dead-end social dysfunction of the so-called revolutionary lifestyle is exposed for the insipidly sick joke that it is in an inordinately elegant fashion that demonstrates Bresson's mastery of his own distinct cinematic language. Indeed, the young long-haired leftists in the film come off seeming like virtual metaphysical zombies that have been foredoomed to wait for the incoming apocalypse while carrying out innately impotent acts of 'intellectual' resistance at the unwitting command of a Joker-esque devil that gets his kicks from seeing the dregs of

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youth figuratively dig their own graves. Of course, as the great Francis Parker Yockey once insightfully wrote, "A moment's reflection shows that Liberalism is entirely negative. It is not a formative force, but always and only a disintegrating force," hence the signature left-wing tendency to simply break down and virtually never build up. Rather intriguingly, quite unlike his comrades, the protagonist of the film has become disillusioned with leftist politics and would probably agree with Yockey's Spenglerian sentiment, "If pessimism is despair, optimism is cowardice and stupidity. Is there any need to choose between them?" In fact, in the end, the protagonist opts for a Roman-esque suicide as a young man that can no longer be bothered with petty things like neo-Marxist mental masturbation or the distribution of pornography in Catholic churches, as he has opted to swallow the biggest 'black-pill' in an age where his comrades think red flags and chink dictators are cool and that the starvation-diet materialism of Marxism will somehow defeat the consumerist materialism of capitalism. While Bresson's films certainly has strong anti-capitalist themes, it is almost just as critical of the left, especially in regard to how trendy neo-bolshevik political movements have destroyed entire generations of youth and turned them into soulless shells of human beings that only know how to bitch and break things.

While *The Devil, Probably* effortlessly critiques various aspects of far-leftist political movements, the sexual liberation movement, psychoanalysis and related degenerate bullshit, in a swift and unemotional manner that is comparable to a meth-addled German master gardener attending to weeds, it is very clear while watching the film that Bresson is deeply concerned with the threat of pollution and its central role in the fall of man. In fact, Bresson broke with his own cinematic conventions and dared to include stock footage of pollution in the film to the underscore precarious state of humanity. Despite his fairly negative portrayal of the leftist youth in his film, Bresson had a certain 'pessimistic hope' that the film would somehow inspire a rebellion against such a grim garbage-filled fate, or as he explained in a June 13, 1977 interview with the French weekly news magazine *L'Express*, "I hope with all my heart that the young will deploy all the power of their youth against the massive forces of demolition that are ravaging the world (for which they will have to pay the price). But it might be too late." Judging simply by his film, which is drenched in a certain preternaturally stoic apocalyptic doom and gloom, I can only suspect that Bresson truly believes in his heart of hearts that humanity is practically kaput and barely even deserves to exist due to what it has done to earth and its innocent non-human inhabitants. Indeed, judging simply by the world depicted in *The Devil, Probably*, the word 'humanity' can only be taken as a grave insult. As for the devil, he is merely a convenient perennial scapegoat for humanity. Needless to say, the film reveals that Bresson has little hope for the survival of the Occident and the world in general, but as Richard Roud once wisely wrote in *Cinema - A Critical Dictionary - The Major Film-Makers* (1980) in regard to the great aesthetic irony of

the flick, “When a civilization can produce a work of art as perfectly achieved as this, it is hard to believe that there is no hope for it.” I, for one, can certainly not think of another film where the image of a young leftist bitch sobbing becomes such an emotionally poignant experience or where the murder of a suicidal friend by an insanely indifferent dead-eyed junky is depicted with such exceedingly elegant understated brutality. While he would probably disagree with me, Bresson was surely a rare auteur that had a singular talent for great pulchritude in banal ugliness.

Notably, French New Wave maestro François Truffaut once described *The Devil, Probably* as Bresson’s most “voluptuous film,” which is somewhat curious since the film does not feature much ‘sensual’ imagery aside from an extremely brief titty shot and some covert crotch shots of anorexic dope-addled frog boys in tighty whities. In terms of their boyish physiques and pathetically passive demeanors, these Gallic girly men more closely resemble cum-crusted catamites than the proper revolutionaries and are surely symbolic of the emasculation of post-WWII Europa, especially post-colonial France. Naturally, as sexually dubious individuals that lack most conventional masculine traits, the film’s characters, especially the protagonist, have serious problems when it comes to love and romance. Completely conflicted when it comes to the issue of whether or not he loves both or neither of his two favorite lady friends, the protagonist of the film clearly has not read H.L. Mencken’s wise words, “Love is the delusion that one woman differs from another.” To make matters even more confusing, the hapless hero—a chap that seems totally incapable of truly connecting to anyone, especially his estranged parents—is, for whatever reason, best friends with a similarly emotionally comatose guy that he dislikes who also happens to be banging his beloved girlfriend. In short, the characters cannot even seem to salvage their personal relationships, let alone the dying planet that they believe they are fighting for. In short, these characters focus on the big (and seemingly unsolvable) problems that world is facing as if it gives them a good enough reason in their own deluded minds to ignore their own glaring (and, in many ways, quite fixable) personal problems, which is surely one of the defining traits of the archetypal left-winger.

At the very beginning of the film, we learn that the film’s meta-pessimistic protagonist Charles (played by twink-ish non-actor Antoine Monnier, who is the great-grandson of post-impressionist painter Henri Matisse) is already dead as indicated by two different contradicting newspaper articles that read: “YOUNG MAN COMMITS SUICIDE IN PERE-LACHAISE” and “PERE-LACHAISE ‘SUICIDE’ WAS MURDER.” By the end of the film, the viewer learns that technically both newspaper headlines are correct, though neither really reveals the absurdly tragic circumstances surrounding the young man’s death. After revealing the questionable death of the protagonist, the film cuts to an inter-title reading “SIX MONTHS EARLIER...” and then introduces hermetic world

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of the exceedingly epicene protagonist Charles and his similarly depressed and socially alienated comrades. Notably, in one of the very first scenes in the film, Charles mocks a self-stylized far-left revolutionary who gives a pathetic speech where he idiotically declares, "I proclaim destruction. Everyone can destroy. It's easy. We can sway hundreds of thousands of people with slogans." No longer impressed by insipid left-wing slogans and mindless acts of destruction, Charles believes "There is no point" and that people that engaged in such mindlessly deleterious behavior are simply "idiots." Charles' best 'frenemy' Michel (Henri de Maublanc), who still believes in left-wing causes, does not approve of the critique and snidely states to Charles, "You want to know everything and end up doing nothing." To Michel's credit, Charles is indeed a major underachiever and pessimistic that seems to regulate most of his time to complaining and fantasizing about suicide. In that sense, Charles is like a much cooler and more sophisticated frog equivalent to the eponymous protagonist of Hal Ashby's *Harold and Maude* (1971), though he thankfully never succumbs to gerontophilia or discovers happiness via an insufferably spunky elderly proto-hippie holocaust survivor. Aside from their political differences, Michel is in love with Charles' longtime girlfriend Alberte (Tina Irissari) who, unbeknownst to the protagonist, seems to reciprocate his feelings. To make matters even more romantically complex, Charles is also fucking a happy-go-lucky chick named Edwige (Laetitia Carcano), who is being used for nude photos and stupid political acts by the same lame unnamed political revolutionary from the beginning of the film that the protagonist rightly loathes. Indeed, among other things, Edwige engages in inserting pornographic imagery of herself inside holy writings at a local Catholic church where the leftists regularly hangout and harass bishops. For example, a young female revolutionary bitches at the bishop, "You're so civilized, so cultured, you and your bishops. Is that why your music is insipid and your hymns inane? All those words and gestures you invented are so insignificant they're humiliating. God doesn't reveal himself through mediocrity." As if foreseeing the sort of post-spiritual leftist Christian churches that exist nowadays in Europe and pollute the minds of its followers by endorsing the colonization of the continent by young hostile Muslim hordes, another revolutionary remarks, "...like it or not, the Christianity of the future will be without religion." The only thing that Charles seems to enjoy is sex, which is a topic he discusses with an inordinate degree of excitement. Not unlike many people his age, Charles also has a hard time distinguishing between love and lust, though by the end of his short life it becomes clear he only ever really truly experienced the latter.

Notably, the great poesy pessimistic philosopher Emil Cioran once described his adopted hometown of Paris as an "apocalyptic garage," which is a somewhat generous way to describe the aesthetically oppressive, socially alienating, and spiritually necrotizing frog capital that is depicted in Bresson's film. Undoubtedly, Charles might have had second thoughts about suicide were he to

have read wonderful insights from Cioran like, “It is not worth the bother of killing yourself, since you always kill yourself too late” and “What saved me is the idea of suicide. Without the idea of suicide I would have surely killed myself. What allowed me to keep on living was knowing I had this option, always in sight... But really, without it I could have never endured life.” Of course, as the film’s senselessly tragic conclusion reveals, Charles lacks the gall and will power to personally pull the tragic and kill himself and thus resigns his fate to one of the most loathsome of barely human creatures. Indeed, were it not for the grotesque morally bankruptcy of his friend Valentin (Nicolas Deguy)—an extra-jaded junky that spends most of his time bedridden when he is not out stealing from churches—Charles would probably not have ended his life so prematurely, as he is far too passive and chronically indecisive to commit such a permanent task. Undoubtedly, one of the most tragic aspects of Charles’ suicide-by-junky is that his entire inner circle is well aware of his psychological decline and morbid obsession with self-slaughter. In fact, when Charles even goes so far as asking his anti-pal Michel, “Do you think I could kill myself?,” he receives the somewhat arrogant response, “Not for a moment. Because if we were really done for, as you say we are, if there really was no hope, I’d still want to live in spite of everything.” Additionally, Charles confesses to a female friend that he made a failed attempt at drowning himself in her bathtub, but she does not seem to take him serious. It is ultimately Charles’ two female lovers that are the most proactive in trying to stop him from committing suicide, but their actions are fairly impotent. For example, when his main girlfriend Alberte receives the horrified shock that Charles is carrying around a small bottle of cyanide in a bag, she simply throws it away but ultimately lacks the strength to confront her beloved about the curious find. In fact, Alberte even finds a rather incriminating scribbling from one of Charles’ journals where he has copied a citation from Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s final novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) that reads, “When will I kill myself, if not now?,” but she lacks the strength to mention it to anyone aside from her secret lover Michel of all people. Somewhat ironically, it is his semi-secret lover Edwige’s recommendation that Charles see a quack psychoanalyst that leads him on a concrete path to self-annihilation. To Charles’ credit, he makes various small attempts to get over his all-consuming death wish. For example, despite his side relationship with Edwige, Charles decides to ask his longtime girlfriend Alberte if she will marry him and she actually accepts his proposal even though she seems to love Michel more. Notably, almost immediately after agreeing to marry him, Alberte begins crying in bed after sharing carnal knowledge with Charles. As to whether Alberte breaks down because she knows he relationship with Charles is doomed or because she loves Michel more is anyone’s guess, but there is no doubt she is having a hard time living a semi-polyamorous lifestyle. Indeed, like with their impotent left-wing activism, the characters in the film seem to believe that sexual freedom will somehow lead to happiness and some sort of

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utopia when, in reality, these things have only made them more miserable and disillusioned with life. Needless to say, Charles and Alberte's engagement goes nowhere.

In what is undoubtedly one of the most deceptively ingenious and thematically revealing scenes of the entire film, Charles more or less lays out his entire nihilistic Weltanschauung for a rather repugnant money-grubbing psychoanalyst named Dr. Mime (Régis Hanrion), who obviously has nil sincere interest in curing the troubled young man. Clearly a proponent of quasi-Freudian psychobabble of the neurosis-inducing sort, Dr. Mime—a man whose arrogance is only rivaled by his horribly hidden greed—believes childhood spankings and bad dreams are to blame for Charles' decided disillusionment with life, but as the protagonist tell him himself in a line of dialogue that illustrates the central theme of the film, "But Doctor, I'm not ill. My illness is seeing too clearly." Indeed, as Charles has concluded, no truly sane individual can feel content and happy in a sick and insipid world where baby seals are clubbed to death for profit, communism and its equally odious offshoots have replaced religion, lust is synonymous with love, hippies are considered cool, gender has been erased, being bedridden with heroin withdrawal is a full-time job, and the world faces the very real threat of total nuclear war followed by an atomic winter, but as Cioran once wrote, "Only a monster can allow himself the luxury of seeing things as they are," hence why the protagonist is considered a weirdo even by his best friends and girlfriend(s). When asked by the insufferably supercilious Dr. Mime, "Isn't being right compensation for being alive?," Charles replies, "In losing my life, here's what I'd lose," grabs a crumpled up advertisement from one of his pants pocket, and then absurdly recites with an absurd lack of enthusiasm that really underscores his great disgust for life and modernity, "Family planning, package holidays—cultural, sporting, linguistic. The cultivated man's library. All sports. How to adopt a child. Parent-teacher associations. Education. Teaching 0 to 4 years, 7 to 14 years, 14 to 17 years. Preparation for marriage. Military duties. Europe. Decorations—honorary insignia. The single woman. Paid sick leave, unpaid sick leave. The successful man. Tax benefits for the elderly. Local taxes. Hire purchase. Radio and television rentals. Credit cards. Home repairs. Index-linking. VAT and consumers." Needless to say, Charles does not learn much from the psychoanalyst, at least until he complains in regard to suicide, "Doctor. I don't think I will ever be able to . . . Do the deed. To think I would suddenly stop thinking, seeing, hearing" and Dr. Mime unwittingly gives him the 'cure' he needs by retorting, "That's why the ancient Romans entrusted a servant or friend with the task." Indeed, while Charles might lack the nerve to blow his own brains out, he is at least confident that he has a friend that is unscrupulous enough to do it for him for a meager fee. Somewhat ironically and rather humorously, Edwige convinces Charles' friends that the therapy is a great success after talking on the phone with Dr. Mime while session is still going on.

Due to his unbelievable negligence and clear disinterest in his patient's mental health, Dr. Mime might be best described as a sort of 'passive villain' and a figure that not even anti-Freudian chosenite Thomas Szasz could have dreamed up.

Since there are surely no authentic ancient Romans living in contemporary Paris, Charles must settle for his junky comrade Valentin when it comes to his friend-assisted suicide. While Valentin is a lazy bum that lies in bed all day when he is not robbing church or shooting junk into his scrawny arm, he does become somewhat intrigued when Charles asks him to do a "favor" that is "Worthy of the ancient Romans" and then offers him all of his remaining cash to get the deadly deed done. Before heading to Père Lachaise Cemetery to be voluntarily executed by his most innately iniquitous of comrades, Charles celebrates with a small glass of wine to calm his nerves while Valentin, who clearly has no concern for the life of his friend, maintains a disturbingly dead expression on his greasy frog face. While he initially seems excited about dying, Charles somewhat somberly states while strolling through the graveyard, "I thought at a time like this I'd have sublime thoughts." Indeed, even right before receiving his long awaited dream of dying, Charles is decidedly disappointed with life. When Charles then attempts to start a conversation by stating, "Shall I tell you?," Valentin coldly cuts him off by shooting from behind, thereupon extinguishing the protagonist's life with a single bullet to the head. Undoubtedly, had Charles been hanging out with more high quality friends he would probably still be alive, but of course the devastatingly dejected protagonist was already too irreparably alienated from any person of real value in his life, hence his desperate need to rely of the services of a junky fuck-up. While it might have been more superficially fitting had Charles died next to the gravesite of Rimbaud fan-boy Jim Morrison, Charles body collapses near the grave of French Communist Party (PCF) leader Maurice Thorez in a symbolic scenario that can be interpreted in many ways, though I think that it is safe to say that it reflects the nihilistic navel-gazing, slave-morality-induced moping, and sort of spiritual death that comes with becoming a far-leftist shill. Since left-wing ideologies, especially those of the post-WWII French sort, are oftentimes inspired by sheer resentment, failure, self-loathing, and ethno-masochism, it is ultimately no big surprise that someone like Charles ended up the way he did as he really only followed the next logical step of the trendy political persuasion of his zeitgeist. After all, not even a stoic pessimistic like Bresson could predict that future French leftists would endorse the collectively suicidal path of inviting hordes of Muslims to France that would eventually turn Paris into a virtual third world hellhole where terrorist attacks are a relatively common occurrence, no-go-zones (or what pussy frog politicians call 'sensitive urban zones') are the norm, and a mostly unreported rape epidemic brings new meaning to the classic phrase 'City of Love.'

Borrowing its title from a line in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's final novel *The Broth-*

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ers Karamazov (1880), *The Devil, Probably* arguably has an ironic title as the devil is nothing more than an all-too-convenient scapegoat for humanity; or, more accurately, Beelzebub is simply a reflection of man and only those individuals that are scared of the truth would blame the infernal Führer for the sins of man. Indeed, Cioran probably said it best when he wrote in his classic text *Précis de decomposition* (1949) aka *A Short History of Decay*, “Because he overflows with life, the Devil has no altar: man recognizes himself too readily in him to worship him; he detests him for good reason; he repudiates himself, and maintains the indigent attributes of God. But the Devil never complains and never aspires to found a religion: are we not here to safeguard him from inanition and oblivion?” While he might not be anything resembling a devil of any sort, the protagonist Charles is a sort of modern post-hippie Christ of his own suffering who, despite his philosophical purity and relative keen lucidity in regard to the metaphysical affliction of his age, sacrifices himself to the very same post-religious nihilism that made him suicidal in the first place. In that sense, the devil wins in the end. After all, Charles not only commits the unpardonable sin of suicide, but also accepts the ultimate form of defeat in a forsaken world where those virtuous individuals that known better should feel all the more obligated to fight against the devils of the world, even if said fighting is ultimately in vain. Indeed, Teutonic ultra-pessimist Oswald Spengler certainly said it best when he wrote in his short work *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1932), “We are born into this time and must bravely follow the path to the destined end. There is no other way. Our duty is to hold on to the lost position, without hope, without rescue, like that Roman soldier whose bones were found in front of a door in Pompeii, who, during the eruption of Vesuvius, died at his post because they forgot to relieve him. That is greatness. That is what it means to be a thoroughbred. The honorable end is the one thing that can not be taken from a man.” Needless to say, I was not surprised to learn after watching *The Devil, Probably* that Bresson included the following aphorism in his text *Notes on the Cinematographer* (1975), “These horrible days—when shooting film disgusts me, when I am exhausted, powerless in the face of so many obstacles—are part of my method of work.” Undoubtedly as a pessimistic artist that struggled to create challenging cinematic works in an era that was surely undeserving of such monumental experiments in cinematic form, Bresson certainly demonstrated a certain Spenglerian greatness.

As for as European degeneracy is concerned, post-'68 France arguably reflects the height of it, thus it is quite fortunate that Bresson—undoubtedly one of the greatest filmmakers that has ever lived—had the gall to assault it with his scathing sardonic wit. Although not coined at the time the film was released, the youth of *The Devil, Probably* surely suffer from what French New Right figure Louis Pauwels described as “Mental AIDS.” Indeed, as fellow french New Right figure Guillaume Faye once wrote on the subject, “AIDS comes from a retro-

virus that destroys an organism's immune system. 'Mental AIDS' is an infection of a psychological nature that affects virtually all the 'elites'—the political class, the media class, show business, the 'cultural' community, 'artists,' filmmakers—inclining them to oppose the interests of their own people and to advocate degenerate values as if they were actually ones of regeneration." Naturally, these ideas are nothing new as revealed by the great Irish poet W. B. Yeats wise words in regard to the degenerative power of leftist politics, "What's equality? – Muck in the yard: Historic nations grow, From above to below." While protagonist Charles of Bresson's film has gone full-blown nihilist yet somehow also finally realizes that his values lack values, the same can certainly not be said of his idiotic comrades. Indeed, these characters somehow think they are working to fix the world by engaging in degenerate sex, destruction for destruction's sake, communism, feminism, and other infantile societal diseases despite the fact that these things are only speeding up the demise of their nation as present-day France (and especially Paris) clearly demonstrates. Like their present-day equivalents, most Parisian youth in Bresson's film lack what the ancient Greeks called 'thymos' and instead are consumed with a sort of wholly corrosive passive-aggressive resentment. As for protagonist Charles, who is clearly more perceptive than his friends, he suffers from a sort of inverted thymos that has caused him to become consumed with so much melancholy and Weltschmerz that he simply cannot bear the pain of living anymore. Needless to say, Bresson was one of the few French filmmakers working during the 1970s that did not suffer from 'Mental AIDS,' hence one of the many reasons why his late period films are so important and singular in the context of all of European cinema history. Notably, not unlike the protagonist of Bresson's film, Spengler believed that the Abendland—the West—was in its final stage of civilization and that urban areas represented this social and cultural decay the most. Indeed, in describing 'The Soul of the City,' Spengler explained with great pessimistic lucidity, "Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies. ... Primitive folk can loosen themselves from the soil and wander, but the intellectual nomad never. ... Home is for him any one of these giant cities, but even the nearest village is alien territory. ... Even disgust at this pretentiousness, weariness of the thousand-hued glitter, the taedium vitae that in the end overcomes many, does not set them free. They take the City with them into the mountains or on the sea. They have lost the country within themselves and will never regain it outside." While Spengler was a proud German conservative, there is no doubt that protagonist Charles—a young man that literally cannot live with the fact that his estranged father makes tons of money destroying forests—would concur with this sentiment. Although just speculation, I think that simply judging by the ideas disseminated in *The Devil, Probably* that Bresson would have found a kindred spirit in Finnish deep ecologist Pentti Linkola who, in critiquing the self-described 'religion of death' of democracy,

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noted in his revolutionary text *Can Life Prevail?: A Revolutionary Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (2004), “Never before in history have the distinguishing values of a culture been things as concretely destructive for life and the quality of life as democracy, individual freedom and human rights — not to mention money. Freedom here means the freedom to consume, to exploit, to read upon others. All rights, even the most seemingly beautiful — women’s rights, children’s rights, rights for the disabled — only express one thing: ME, ME, ME. Pure selfishness has been given a new name: ‘self-realisation’, now considered the noblest of all morals. Words like responsibility, duty, humility, self-sacrifice, nurturing and care are always spat upon, if they still happen to be mentioned. For all their mistakes, even such recently buried ideologies as fascism and socialism, both of which emphasized communal values and contained restrictive norms, were on a higher ethical level.” While sort of self-stylized leftist quasi-ecologists, the characters of Bresson’s film are unequivocally plagued with the sort of ME-ME-ME democratic disease that Linkola speaks of, hence the complete and utter futility of their cause. Indeed, free love and gay rights seem rather petty and ultimately quite irrelevant in the grand scheme of things when the entire world is virtually in flames.

Notably, Bresson once confessed in regard to *The Devil, Probably* that, “This film is my most horrifying, but not the most despairing. I wouldn’t call any of my films despairing.” On the other hand, as Joseph Cunneen noted in his text *Robert Bresson: A Spiritual Style in Film* (2003) in regard to the film, “One needs to remember, in any case, that though Bresson made the movie as a warning against dangerous directions in contemporary society, he is not arguing a thesis or presenting an alternate plan or action. He remains, above all, an artist continuing his research on what cinematography can express in a way that no other art can.” Personally, I found the film quite delightfully despairing and I would not surprise if it had the power to drive certain people to suicide just as Werner Herzog’s similarly darkly humorous and grotesquely tragic *Stroszek* (1977) proved to be the right film for Joy Division front man Ian Curtis to watch before hanging himself. On the subject on self-extermination and its relation to the film, Cioran provides the following insights, “When we are young we look for heroes. I have had mine: Kleist, Karoline von Günderrode, Nerval, Otto Weininger. . . . Intoxicated by their suicides, I was certain that they alone had gone to the end, that they drew, in death, the right conclusion from their thwarted or fulfilled loves, from their broken minds or philosophic pain [...] But as the years went by, I lost the pride of youth: each day, like a lesson in humility, I reminded myself that I was still alive, that I was betraying my dreams among men rotten with . . . life. Exasperated by the expectation of no longer existing, I considered it a duty to cleave my flesh when dawn broke after a night of love, and that it was a nameless degradation to sully by memory an excess of sighs [...] Even now, I have more esteem for a concierge who hangs himself

than for a living poet. Man is provisionally exempt from suicide: that is his one glory, his one excuse. But he is not aware of it, and calls cowardice the courage of those who dared to raise themselves by death above themselves. We are bound together by a tacit pact to go on to the last breath: this pact which cements our solidarity dooms us nonetheless—our entire race is stricken by its infamy. Without suicide, no salvation. Strange! that death, though eternal, has not become part of our ‘behavior’: sole reality, it cannot become a vogue. Thus, as living men, we are all retarded . . .” Judging by Cioran’s words and Bresson’s film, it seems that certain types of suicides have always been reserved for a sort of ‘degenerate spiritual elite.’ Undoubtedly Bresson’s protégé Louis Malle certainly had this romantic view in mind when he put his blood, sweat, and tears into *Le feu follet* (1963) aka *The Fire Within*, which is notably adapted from a novel by literary fascist turned suicide victim Pierre Drieu La Rochelle.

When asked by an interviewer at *L’Express* what he was like as a young man in comparison to the nihilistic youth of his film, Bresson—an extremely private man with a somewhat mysterious past—responded with, “As if I could tell you! Violent? Absolutist? Excessive? Lots of alcohol and tobacco. Now I don’t drink or smoke.” While they are quite different in other ways, I think it is safe to say that *The Devil, Probably* protagonist Charles is a sort of youthful stand-in for Bresson, as if the auteur was trying to imagine how miserable it would be for him to be a young man during the 1970s. In fact, in an interview with American auteur Paul Schrader featured in his book *Transcendental Style in Film* (1972), Bresson’s would make an argument for suicide that is quite similar to Charles’, stating that, “there is something which makes suicide possible—not just possible but even necessary: it is the vision of void, the feeling of void which is impossible to bear. You want anything to stop your life. . . .this way of wanting to die is many things: it is a disgust with life, with people around you, with living only for money. To see everything which is good to live for disappear, when you see that you cannot fall in love with people, not only with a woman, but all the people around you, you find yourself alone with people. I can imagine living in disgust with so many things which are against you around you, and then you feel like suicide.” Indeed, while it is easy to see Charles as a spoiled brat with both mommy and daddy issues, his suicide almost seems like an unavoidable bodily reaction, like having a wet dream while still a virgin or belching after eating a greasy chili dog. Either way, Charles was in many ways long dead before the bullet entered his skull. While *The Devil, Probably* is certainly a singular cinematic that could never truly even be superficially mimicked, it has influenced at least one underrated masterpiece that I can think of. Indeed, aside from featuring the same exact virtually intolerable stock footage of baby seals being beaten to death, *De Witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness* directed by criminally neglected Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst also revolves around a hopelessly foredoomed suicidal young man that lives off the grid and

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hangs out with junkies. Both of these films, like both Bresson and Ditvoorst's cinematic works in general, are destined to only be appreciated by a tragically blessed few, but as Cioran wrote in *A Short History of Decay*, "How could we bear the weight and sheer depth of works and masterpieces, if to their texture certain impertinent and delicious minds had not added the fringes of subtle scorn and ready ironies? And how could we endure the codes, the customs, the paragraphs of the heart which inertia and propriety have superimposed upon futile and intelligent vies, if it were not for those playful beings whose refinement puts them at once at the apex and in the margin of society?" Of course, to admit to being an admirer of *The Devil, Probably* is to also virtually admit that one fantasies about suicide and the death of civilization, or at least one would expect nothing less from the film's most loyal of proponents. On the other hand, the film can simply be admired for its strangely cozily hermetic depiction of the misspent lives and beauty of youth, thus it can be argued that it follows in the tradition of French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud. After all, when Rimbaud wrote in regard to his poetry, "I turned silences and nights into words. What was unutterable, I wrote down. I made the whirling world stand still" he could have been describing what Bresson accomplished with the oftentimes misused artistic medium of film.

-Ty E

THE CREEK

Robert Butler (1984)

I try to approach independent horror with an open mind, taking in all atmospheric qualities and the simple urge to create; this is what starts film off most times. Writer/Director Erik Soulliard takes a very common tale and puts a slightly different spin on it. One thing that amazed me with the film is how similar it was to a novel I had read when I was a child. Author Gary Brandner writes a book about three high school friends who re-unite at their high school at the reunion of the death of a classmate. Note that Gary also wrote the novel that inspired *THE HOWLING*. So the plot as you may have guessed is basically a retelling of the old friends die hard tale, but with a transparent green-skinned Billy-friend-ghost killing off people or does he? A revenge tale done right for the new generation. The acting starts off pretty amateurish but gets better throughout the running time. Expect a beauty and talent in actress Kathryn Merry as "Angel". While featuring a great ghost character, and a dynamic score that even goes as far as to make you uneasy, this film sets up a nice mood that gets you a little bit tense. It's nice to see a low-budget horror film done right. All you need nowadays is a camera, fake blood, and some women volunteering to bare all for their chance at horror stardom. This film takes the simple rule of re-uniting friends for a night of murder and mayhem. What starts off as a minimalistic old school horror tale turns sour near the end. All credibility just turns over and rots. The duo of Coop and Jesse just seem to get more and more injured while moaning and limping for 20 minutes. It's like watching a true sequel to *Jackass (Hospital Visits & Such)*. The ending doesn't ruin it all. *The Creek* is still a damn fun and effective horror film to gawk at. Kathryn Merry is worth the price alone. Expect horrible ghost wardrobes as well.

-Maq

CHAFED ELBOWS
CHAFED ELBOWS

Robert Downey Sr. (1966)

As far as films about incest are concerned, especially of the mother-son Oedipal variety, no film takes such an absurdly hilarious and unwaveringly obnoxious approach to the subject than psychopathically sardonic flick *Chafed Elbows* (1966) directed by Robert Downey, Sr. (Putney Swope, Greaser's Palace). Of course, being mostly comprised of black-and-white 35mm still camera photographs that were developed at the director's local drugstore and being only 58 minutes in length, *Chafed Elbows* barely qualifies as a film at all and, in terms of technique and direction, more resembles the sort of amateurish photo collages created by little girls and bored moms that have flooded YouTube, thus making it all the more ingenious in its glaring early-1960s NYC ghetto production values. Made on a dime store budget of around \$12,000 (I was actually surprised it cost that much to make), *Chafed Elbows* would go on to be an underground classic and provide credibility to the American 'avant-garde' and cinematic sleaziness and would even share a double bill in 1967 at Bleeker Street Cinema in Greenwich Village with cine-magickian Kenneth Anger's similarly subversive and groundbreaking work *Scorpio Rising* (1964). Of course, centering around a nervous breakdown-plagued anti-hero who shares carnal knowledge with his mother, gives birth to money, shoots cops, caters potato salad (or at least tries) at bar mitzvahs, and feels that he is entitled to government welfare like any and every self-righteous American deadbeat, *Chafed Elbows* is from a strikingly different planet than *Scorpio Rising* as a sort of fiercely fucked Freudian celluloid vaudeville show of the absurdist aberrant-garde sort that must have been a major influence on Downey's debauched racial kinsmen Harmony Korine, whose debut *Gummo* (1997) features a similarly spasmodic and idiosyncratic collection of seemingly morally insane and stream-of-consciousness skits, pranks, and uncompromising cultural cynicism. A film that satires America just as much as it is a sordid symptom of it, *Chafed Elbows* attacks everyone from corrupt cops to crackpot psychoanalysts to kosher Jews, as well as filmmaker Andy Warhol and Jonas Mekas, and everyone in between. Indeed, if you ever wanted a jovial antidote to everything you hate about the USA, *Chafed Elbows* is cinematic iconoclasm and kosher camp at its most hopelessly ill-restrained and incendiary, as if it was directed by Woody Allen's crackhead stepbrother, except actually funny and not whiny nor wimpy.

As one learns during the first couple minutes of *Chafed Elbows*, perverted proletarian protagonist Walter Dinsmore (George Morgan) not only sleeps side-by-side with his mother (played by Downey's then wife Elsie Downey, who plays ALL the female roles in the film), but also has steamy incestuous sex with her as well. Rather unfortunately, Walter—a rather goofy fellow with a flat affect and not a dime to his name—narrates that he is in the middle of his "annual

November breakdown” (although the film, which is in two parts, takes place during his “annual January breakdown”) and all of Greenwich Village will feel his pain and pessimism, whether they want to or not. After going to a doctor, Walter learns he is pregnant and the deranged doc recommends that he, being a man with a mangina, get a hysterectomy, but instead he magically gives birth to 189 ten dollar bills through his knee via cesarean section, which he concludes may be the result of having swallowed a nickel when he was 5 or 6 years old. On his way home from the doctor, Walt walks into a sleazy artist who prices him at \$1700.00 and hopes to hang and sell him at a gallery, but it never happens. Not long after, Walter tells his psychoanalyst that his greatest fear is getting his mother pregnant, which is apparently a “common fantasy,” or at least Freud and equally deluded disciples thought. Although there is no doubt that Walter loves his mommy dearest, the hack psychoanalyst also tells her that his sick son “hates women,” which seems to be true as he treats virtually every girl he meets with neurotic disdain, even if he bangs a couple from time to time. Walter also makes his big debut as a cop character in a no-budget art flick destined for the Cannes film festival and has a chat with the lighting man, a patently pretentious would-be-auteur named “Leo Realism” (who claims to be listed in the Yellow Pages under “truth”). In a clear parody of Andy Warhol and his monotonous celluloid turd *Sleep* (1963), a film featuring a man doing nothing but sleeping for 5 hours, Mr. Realism offers Walter the job of starring in his new arthouse flick “Smoke” where all he has to do is “sit on a park bench for seven hours and puff on a cigarette.” On a lunch break while still in his police uniform, Walter does some slapstick traffic controlling and kills a real cop after he brags about “smashing a junky’s skull in.” On top of screwing his mother, Walter also impregnated his vegetarian cousin Leviticus who self-righteously proclaims she “won’t even eat animal crackers.” After Leviticus proclaims she is knocked up and that he should financially support her, Walter thinks twice and solves his problem by throwing her out a window. Not long after, Walter visits his brother who plans to “beat the system” by starting his own business, an amusement park that he describes as follows: “It is only gonna be open to white people but on the inside, there’s only gonna be black people. I’m going to have rides like Whip the Slave and Lynch a Nigger...lots of black people are going to have jobs and security just ‘cause of me.” Naturally, Walt—a loony loner without a cause—turns his brother down in regard to becoming a partner in his bigot bro’s dream business.

During the second part of *Chafed Elbows*, Walter lets the viewer know, “I kind of like part two. It’s got a “collagic,” dreamy, angelic quality. It’s one of my favorite breakdowns.” Indeed, the second part of the film actually features a scene in color of a tiny racist gook calling Walter a “thankless, sinful, Caucasian, spineless, Anglo-Saxon, mentally retarded, middle-class heterosexual” and blesses him “in the name of the Dow, the Jones and the Industrial.” Undoubtedly blessed, Walter decides to become a poet and immediately gets to

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work on his acceptance speech for the Pulitzer Prize and eventually recites the poetic line “My miniskirt and I checked into a motel and as we were getting into bed, we spotted an old Negro looking in the window. Miniskirt said not to worry because he was probably a peeping Uncle Tom” to a civil rights buff and dean at the ‘New School.’ The dean gives Walter the esoteric bit of knowledge that “Trotsky was a Mexican” and that “Hitler is a hairdresser and alive in Los Angeles.” After talking to an anti-liberal black street philosopher, Walter decides to do something more “real” and becomes a rock star, but he doesn’t “feel it” and decides to walk among his people, thus attracting the attention of a bunch of horny teenage girl and, of course, his greatest fan, his mother. Not long after, Walter is hired to “dish out potato salad at a bar mitzvah in Mineola, Long Island,” but he is fired by the owner of the catering business after kicking the potato salad out the truck while passing through Jamaica. Job or not, Walter decides to attend the bar mitzvah anyway and starts a hot fling with a crazy Jewish chick named Rhoda Dendron that he finds hiding under a dinner table. After telling Rhoda that she managed to put a pretty good tremor in his ‘tick-a-roo-roo’ and offering her to put a big kiss-a-wang-wang on her ‘ruby nugget,’ Walter rips the goofy gal’s clothes off, throws the owner of the catering business off a roof for momentarily cock-blocking him, and defiles the nice Jewish girl, but, to the little lady’s dismay, ultimately succumbs to premature ejaculation. After coming home, Walter is happy to discover his slob of a father has drunk himself to death and proceeds to hit his mother on the head with a hammer and assumes he has killed her, but, quite miraculously, she awakens and states quite eloquently, “You can’t kill real love, Walter. Let that be a lesson to ya.” In an exceedingly happy ending to a rather merrily macabre movie, Walter and his mother get legally “peacefulized,” move into a rent-controlled apartment just outside of Manhattan, and eagerly await their first born child and first welfare check.

If any character in film history has truly achieved the “American dream,” it is indubitably loser’s loser and deadbeat’s deadbeat Walter Dinsmore, a man that has the opportunity to indulge in every dream job, including actor, rock star, and money-birther, yet ultimately achieves nothing aside from siring an inbred child and living on the taxpayer’s dime; two uniquely unnatural dreams that only could be realized in the land of the free and home of the brave. What is great about Chafed Elbows is that director Robert Downey, Sr.’s celluloid ‘seething cynicism as celluloid sketch-comedy’ knows no bounds, as he manages to target virtually every segment of the American (and most specifically, early-1960s NYC) populous, including (but certainly not limited too), boorish blue collar workers, pedantic college professors, hypocritical feminists, clannish Orthodox Jews, East Asian megalomaniacs, avant-garde filmmakers, psychoanalysts, monetary motivated practitioners of medicine, soulless newscasters, egocentric Guindos, belligerent bull dykes, and various other groups/individuals ripe for mock-

ery. Not unsurprisingly, Downey even goes so far as mocking the film itself in a scene where a character states “The only thing about these low-budget films is that all the action is behind the camera” and Walter Dinsmore (standing in for Downey) replies “Don’t worry about it. This whole thing will blow over in less than an hour” (Chafed Elbows has a 58 min running time) Undoubtedly, at least as far as I am concerned, Downey has a naughty knack for making hatred and cultural pessimism a pleasantly palatable thing and it is with Chafed Elbows that he was able to realize this to the fullest, even if the film is essentially a sardonic slideshow of human sideshows directed by a man that clearly only knew the most fundamental aspects of filmmaking techniques. Once described in a 1967 interview as being “like a Marx brothers movie that has Lenny Bruce language in it,” Chafed Elbows is pure and unadulterated Hebrew humor (and I mean that in the most ‘positive’ sense, relatively speaking of course) minus the terminal taint of Hollywood philistinism and cultural Marxist hysteria. If you ever wonder what must be going on in someone’s mind to be a Sigmund Freud or a Wilhelm Reich but without having to dig through all the novelty intellectualism and anti-European sentiment, Chafed Elbows—a sort of healthy median between the crappy commie caricatures of George Grosz and the early films of Harmony Korine—makes for a singularly hilarious view at the Oedipal Hebraic psyche and all of its creepily corrupted corners and crevices.

-Ty E

PUTNEY SWOPE
PUTNEY SWOPE

Robert Downey Sr. (1969)

While I couldn't care less if his much more famous son died the same way as his crack smoking and dick-peddling character in *Less Than Zero* (1987), absurdist avant-garde auteur Robert John Downey, Sr. (Chafed Elbows, Greaser's Palace) directed a low-budget underground film or two that certainly deserves wider audiences, especially in regard to his breakthrough feature *Putney Swope* (1969), a film shot on a mere \$120,000 poverty budget (although some sources say \$200,000) that would arguably be the filmmaker's greatest achievement as a director. Sort of like Blaxploitation meets postmodern Judaic vaudeville meets Dada and Luis Buñuel and the Marx brothers on dope, *Putney Swope* is a wildly idiosyncratic and incendiary comedy that simultaneously satires the morally retarded and philistinism-promoting advertising world, the dying Anglo-Saxon elite (especially on Madison Avenue), corporate corruption and its ability to corrupt anyone regardless of racial persuasion, revolutionary politics (especially of the far-left and black militant persuasion), and black America and its post-Civil Rights political struggle. Far too politically incorrect, eccentrically esoteric, culturally cynical, and audaciously absurd and oftentimes nonsensical for fans of philistine kosher comedies starring Adam Sandler and directed by Judd Apatow, *Putney Swope* rather strangely owes a good portion of its success to Jane Fonda recommending the film on Johnny Carson's *The Tonight Show* in 1969. Indeed, unlike a lot of so-called Blaxploitation films, which were directed by Hollywood Hebrews to capitalize on the success of Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), *Putney Swope* is an experimental arthouse flick that attacks both black and white and, at best, can only be described as proto-Blaxploitation (it predates Van Peebles' film and *Shaft* (1971)) of the anti-Amerikkkan sort. The strikingly sardonic low-budget celluloid story of a powerless token Uncle Tom black man on the executive board of an advertising firm who anomalously becomes chairman of the board upon a democratic fluke after the original leader literally drops dead, and that was partly inspired by director Robert John Downey, Sr.'s own experience as an advertising executive (he created a commercial for Preparation H of all things, which was rejected by his bosses but later appeared in his 1968 film *No More Excuses*), *Putney Swope* depicts what happens when white America devolves morally and ethnically into black America and the racially-charged, jive-ass absurdity that follows in a film that was probably not shot in mostly black-and-white just for financial reasons.

In a striking opening scene that is indubitably a parody of the beginning of Leni Riefenstahl's National Socialist masterpiece *Triumph of the Will* (1935) aka *Triumph des Willens* of Uncle Adolf flying in a plane and landing on the ground like God coming down from the heavens, a funny and seemingly faggy 60-something-year-old fellow in fetishistic biker apparel with German iron crosses,

totenkopfs, a confederate flag, and Nazi eagle patches (sewed to a leather-fag-esque denim vest) named Dr. Alvin Weasly, apparently one of the most respected motivational researchers in the country, arrives via helicopter and is paid \$28,000 by a executive board of an advertising firm for merely providing the insight, "Beer is for men who doubt their masculinity. That's why it's so popular at sporting events and poker games. On a superficial level, a glass of beer is a cool, soothing beverage. But in reality, a glass of beer is pee-pee-dickie." Not long after, the chairman of the board croaks at the end of the table and using the democratic process that bureaucratic wasps like so much and has ultimately led to their wane of power in the USA, the other executives vote who will be the next leader and, magically, lone Negro Putney Swope (played by Arnold Johnson of Sanford and Son fame, who had trouble memorizing lines, so director Robert Downey, Sr. later dubbed his parts) takes control of the advertising firm, thereupon turning it into an absurd Afrocentric advertising company that is aptly renamed "Truth and Soul, Inc." After stealing the advertising idea of a tall and goofy wasp and selling it to a self-described "happy chink" named Wing Soney (Tom Odachi), Swope fires every single white employee (aside from a "token white man," who is paid the least) and replaces them with all blacks of the brutish black power persuasion, including nefarious Negro militants, black Muslims (a naughty Negro named "The Arab" played by Antonio Fargas makes for one of the most interesting characters), high yellow pricks, and statuesque black divas. Indeed, if you thought Anglo-Saxon America was corrupt, you have yet to see the jaded jigaboo jive realm of Putney Swope.

Ostensibly attempting to rid the black community of its vices, Putney Swope ends doing business with alcohol, war toys, or tobacco companies and soon grabs the attention of the President of the United States, a megalomaniacal German midget named Mimeo (played by Pepi Hermine, who also played "The President" in Werner Herzog's *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970)) and his pot-smoking and Jew-hating Kissinger-esque kraut associate Mr. Borman Six (a character played by Lawrence Wolf and a name likely inspired by Nazi leader Martin Bormann and the apparent death of six million Jews during WWII), a fiercely funny man who states, "hey, it's cold in here. Throw another Jew on the fire" as he smokes a joint with the little leader of the free world. Undoubtedly, Putney Swope rules with a brassy black iron fist and he has no problem firing his employees left and right, especially after stealing their ideas from them and claiming them as his own (sort of like how black Afrocentrics claim to have invented imaginary civilizations and pioneered every area of science, technology, art, culture, etc.), but it proves to make for great business, thus making for the perfect cannibalistic capitalist model. Creating commercials featuring the sole Ms. Redneck New Jersey, bodacious black power breakfast cereals, sentimental race-mixing ballads featuring black boys and white girls, psychedelic multicultural chicks with nice tits jumping around topless in an airplane, and a Nazi

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Borman-mobile with a star of David on the front hood, Swope turns the advertising world into a nihilistic post-Anglo-Saxon Negro nightmare of softcore race-mixing and does so with pointlessly perverse product placement. Naturally, Putney Swope, who constantly changes his dictator look from a militant black panther like Huey P. Newton to a cigar-smoking Fidel Castro to an exceedingly effeminate African tribesmen in a moomoo, eventually runs in to trouble with his homeboys, especially the jihad jigaboo Arab, a “true believer” who considers his boss an unscrupulous and egomaniacal sell-out and sinisterly sleazy traitor to the honkey-hating revolution. A proud brotha’ named Myron X also lets Swope know that he has sold-out and is now “confusing obscenity with originality” in terms of his Russ Meyer-esque advertising campaigns. In the end, everyone one at Truth and Soul, Inc., especially Putney Swope, is more corrupt than the most psychopathic of degenerate wasps, so the Arab decides to take revenge by blowing up all the money at the firm terrorist-style.

If one learns anything from Putney Swope, it is that—regardless of creed, race, and/or ethnicity—capitalism corrupts, especially when the inexperienced slave becomes the master. Interestingly, the original members of the executive board of an advertising firm featured at the beginning of the film are all white (with the exception of a couple Jews thrown in for good measure), with a number of whom being elderly fellows are either asleep, senile, and even dead, thus illustrating the decay of the original Anglo-Saxon elite that originally ruled virtually every crevice of America’s power structure, but has given a good portion of their power away due to feebleness and decay. Ironically, it is also the wasp’s love of democracy, freedom, and law that leads to the very overthrow of the Anglo-Saxon elite, thus making Putney Swope a sardonic yet strikingly realistic depiction of post-Civil Rights America through a maniac microcosm as dreamed up in a delightfully deranged manner by director Robert Downey, Sr. Interestingly, Spike Lee later directed a film very similar in theme and sentiment to Putney Swope entitled *Bamboozled* (2000). Of course, Spike Lee, who has never been a friend of the Jews, portrays the degenerate corporate elite as racist yet paradoxically Negrophiliac Hebrews, thus one could agree that it is also a satire (as well as update) of the ideas expressed in Judaic auteur Robert John Downey, Sr.’s *Putney Swope*, a film that spreads the very same stereotypes that the black filmmaker’s flick condemns. Even fellow Israelite Amos Vogel had to admit in his groundbreaking work *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974) regarding *Putney Swope*, “In this wild satire of Madison Avenue, nobody – not even blacks, arabs, midgets, or Jews – remains exempt from the director’s corrosive, bizarre humor,” hence the film’s genius and ability to stand the test of time after all these years of politically correct brainwashing. While being a brilliant and brazen work that would never be made in our insanely xenophiliac times, where ‘racial sensitivity’ has reached insane neo-bolshevik levels, *Putney Swope* does show its age in spoofing events and trends of the late-1960s that many modern viewers would probably have a

hard time understanding. Still, Putney Swope is a singular work of biting celluloid iconoclasm that takes no prisoners in reminding one of how America and American filmmakers have turned into a bunch of cowardly cultural cuckolds who are hopelessly brainwashed by the sort of mediocre sentimentalism media that the anti-hero Putney Swope sought out to destroy.

-Ty E

POUND
POUND

Robert Downey Sr. (1970)

Probably best remembered nowadays for being the first film to feature kosher coke fiend Robert Downey, Jr. in the childishly charming role of a puppy(!) at the ripe age of 5, *Pound* (1970) is a relatively forgotten and rarely seen film directed by the mainstream Hollywood actor/comedian's underground filmmaker father Robert Downey, Sr. (*Chafed Elbows*, *Greaser's Palace*) that until somewhat recently was assumed to be lost. Rated X due to its naughty language and released on a double-bill with the decadent high-camp Roman epic *Fellini Satyricon* (1969), *Pound* was essentially cursed upon its release and would not really reappear until 2005 when Downey found a damaged original 35mm print of the work in his "cameraman's ex-wife's closet," which was in such poor shape that it could not even be run through a film projector, but luckily the print was somehow digitally scanned and restored (though the film has yet to be released on DVD). Luckily, I managed to track down a reasonably decent print of *Pound* with Hebrew subtitles, which only add to the film's sardonic and superlatively sidesplitting Hebraic humor, and I can happily report that it is nothing short of a cult comedy classic and one of Downey's most audaciously absurd cinematic works. Adapted from an off-off-Broadway play written by the auteur in 1961 entitled *The Comeuppance*, *Pound* is the pleasantly politically incorrect tale of over a dozen spastic dogs, a Siamese cat, and penguin that are depicted by humans who wait in vain for someone to adopt them from an animal shelter before they are put to sleep for good. In addition to the absolutely scathing surrealist absurdity of the wayward puppy prison, *Pound* also features a biting and seemingly random subplot about a David Berkowitz-esque pseudo-negro serial killer that goes by the name "Honky Killer" who goes around killing loving Aryan couples, thus unwittingly prophesying the so-called 'Son of Sam' killings that terrorized New Yorkers during the summer of 1976. Indeed, with its curious combo of mouthy mutts and seemingly a schizophrenic lady-killing serial killer, one might assume that Berkowitz was a fan of *Pound*. Following in the nihilistic perversity of *Chafed Elbows* (1966) and the radically satirical racial-hustling of *Putney Swope* (1969), *Pound* is like *All Dogs Go to Heaven* (1989) on speed and acid as directed by an unflinching auteur that could have shown Woody Allen a thing or two about kosher celluloid comedy with true testicular fortitude.

Some supreme wack-job (James Green) with a shotgun, who has been dubbed by the media as the "Honky Killer" due to his perverse propensity for killing white couples and calling media networks while using a fake frog-like black voice, is out on the prowl in NYC, while the only thing a group of dogs in a pound on the other side of town can think of is being adopted and surviving their tragic internment in virtual hound hell. Of course, outside a couple scenes, including some doggy style coitus, the melancholy mutts are depicted by humans of the

mostly horny and high strung sort. Indeed, inside and outside of the animal shelter is a dog-eat-dog world and everyone is hungry, whether it be for race hate, rape, or hard drugs. One less than little Dachshund (Marshall Efron) with a Hitler mustache apparently used to deal dope on the outside and swears that, "The only stuff I have is pure cocaine, the greatest sexual drug since Eva Braun." Undoubtedly, the verbally rabid dog is a Mexican Hairless (Downey, Sr. regular Lawrence Wolf), who proclaims "I'm proud to be a Mexican hairless," though another canine accuses him of being a crypto-Jew. Naturally, the lone Siamese Cat (Ching Yeh) is played by a pissy Chinaman with a retarded hairdo who somewhat resembles Japanese cult leader Shoko Asahara. To the annoyance of her fellow doggies, a 'Mutt Bitch' (played by the director's first wife/ Robert Jr.'s mommy Elsie Downey) likes to do grating opera solos, which inspires a male mutt to state, "Now I know why the governor terminated funding for the so-called arts." There's a grouchy, seemingly demented old fart (Stan Gottlieb) who sports a glittery silk robe, and who used to fight but now just talks a bunch of shit fittingly playing the role of an over-the-hill Boxer with more bark than bite. With Antonio Fargas of Putney Swope playing the role of a Greyhound, one should not also be too surprised to see a Black Panther-like political rally going on in the pup pound.

When it comes down to it, none of the dogs really care about each other and merely blabber on about their own problems, fantasies, and desires, which are depicted in surreal Amarcord-esque dream-sequences. When a whiny canine complains, "Why does everyone have to be black or white?... What about the grays?," his criticism goes on deaf doggy ears despite the eclectic collection of pedigrees/non-pedigrees at the pound who could benefit from such a 'humanistic' philosophy. When a young puppy (Robert Downey, Jr.) is brought to the pound, he is soon adopted by a violent jigaboo dope dealer, thus causing the rest of the dogs to realize their days are numbered as they wait with a foreboding feeling of impending doom and gloom. Meanwhile, the Honky Killer kills a loving couple as the boyfriend performs cunnilingus on his girlfriend on a park bench. Eventually, Honky Killer calls the local Police Chief (L. Errol Jaye) and after getting off the phone, the black cop remarks to his white underlings, "Well at least we know he's a brother...but if he is really the Honky Killer, why should he threaten me." In a feeble attempt to ostensibly seek penance for his sins, a deranged doggy confesses that he wishes he could, "find all the creatures I raped and tell them I'm sorry... If they hadn't resisted, I wouldn't have done it," but literally seconds later he attempts to perform involuntary lily-licking on the Mutt Bitch. In the end, all the poor doggies are gassed in an Auschwitz-esque fashion and take a train to the afterlife. As for the Honky Killer, he attempts to kill his wife at the deep end of their drained swimming pool, but a young piano player, who is carrying of an affair with the killer's wife, pops out and stops him. As they say, "Don't shoot the piano player; he's doing the best he can" and of course

POUND

Robert Downey, Sr. was doing the best he could do with Pound.

A work that brings new meaning to the phrase, "Society has gone to the dogs," Pound is an aberrantly allegorical work that somehow manages to make all the multicultural chaos, urban decay, psychopathic serial killers, bitchy black (and not to mention, morbidly obese) government employees (indeed, the manager of the animal shelter is a sort of New Wave Aunt Jemima), degenerate dope dealers, and related metropolitan American filth seem so much more joyous and wonderful. At the website, Robert Downey Jr. Film Guide, the actor summed up his bittersweet feelings on the films as follows: "Dad got a grant to make a film about dogs. He said it would be more realistic if he could have actors interpret what the dogs were feeling ... Pound is about how everyone's basically waiting to die. [My father takes] kind of a dark comedic attitude toward very real issues that some people don't even touch on ... I played a dog in a pound. We were all going to get gassed unless we got taken, so that was our motivation! It was a real art piece ... I couldn't understand why we had to shoot scenes over and over. It was disconcerting and rather boring ... [A crewmember on *The Shaggy Dog*] came up to me and said, "I used to baby-sit you when your dad was making Pound. I know what it was like back then." And he handed me the slate from Pound which was the first movie I ever made, and it said 3/17/70, so it was literally like 35 years ago. It looked like something the art department had come up with to look like a period collector's item, like Sotheby's from *The Fortune*. So lately there's been a whole sense of closure." How Robert Jr. went from starting his acting career by playing a puppy in Pound and going on to work with James Toback on a number of films to starring in blockbuster superhero schlock like *Iron Man* (2008) is anyone's guess, but it might have to do with the fact his filmmaker father exposed him to the wonderful world of drugs (i.e. marijuana) shortly after appearing in his first film role when he was still just a little pup. Of course, while somewhat sophisticated, Pound could certainly qualify as a 'pothead picture' as it would explain Robert Downey Sr.'s nasty knack for endless non-sequiturs, one-liners, and puns, as if a coherent plot would be too much to ask for from a hyper-cynical Semitic stoner. A film that truly epitomizes the genuine spirit of Sephardic Jewess Emma Lazarus' words that adorn the bronze plaque of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" Pound is the uniquely unflattering allegorical depiction of America in mutt microcosm that reminds the viewer that 'every dog has its day,' at least when it comes to death.

-Ty E

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

Robert F. McGowan (1924)

Although I still regard him as a somewhat preposterous and pathologically pedantic quasi-autistic frog who ranks among the most overrated filmmakers in filmmaking history, my opinion of Jean-Luc Godard has changed somewhat drastically over the past couple years and I now at least consider him to be a sort of eccentric cinematic genius whose overall oeuvre is not even really truly appreciated or understood by many of the same communist and left-wing dildos that claim to be his greatest proponents. After all, even Godard himself regards one of his most famous and insanely overrated films, *Bande à part* (1964) aka *Band of Outsiders*, as nothing more than mere hack work that he created to help his then wife Anna Karina's career, or as the auteur once stated himself in regard to its lack of importance in the context of his entire oeuvre, "That's why I called it 'Bande à part.' It's really apart, it won't change anything, it's a diversion, a *Bande à part*." Despite the fact that he never stopped creating innovative films or evolving as an artist, many people seem to assume that he stopped being an interesting filmmaker after he finished his apocalyptic dystopian black comedy *Weekend* (1967 film), fired his regular crew, and began living a more reclusive existence. Although Godard did waste about 12 or 13 years creating mostly worthless Maoist agitprop flicks with kosher communist Jean-Pierre Gorin under the so-called 'Dziga Vertov Group' and tinkering around with building a video studio and experimenting with then-state-of-the-art video technology, he did eventually return to what he described as "cinema cinema" and attempted to reenter the mainstream with a fairly fine flick that he would curiously describe as his "second first film." Indeed, although largely plotless and fairly idiosyncratic, *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (1980) aka *Every Man for Himself* aka *Slow Motion* was a fairly serious attempt by Godard to get back into the public consciousness and create a film that could be appreciated by more people than just 'bobos' (aka bourgeois bohemians) and socially retarded film dorks. After finally watching the film, I must admit that is indubitably one of Godard's most humorous and accessible works, albeit if not for some of the wrong reasons which largely have to do with self-exploitation and what might be described as 'aesthetic autism.'

Notable for being an embarrassingly personal work for Godard, especially in regard to his early years with his longtime partner Anne-Marie Miéville, the director once described the title as being best translated into English as "Save Your Ass," which makes much sense when one considers the absolutely appalling female lovers and ex-lovers that the insufferably hip and emotionally broken protagonist must put up with while walking around like a sullen bohemian ghost. Don't get me wrong, the overtly autobiographically named protagonist Paul Godard is a too-cool-for-school sack of shit that has incestuous fantasies about his own preteen daughter (who was inspired by Godard's partner Miéville's daugh-

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ter), regularly calls his daughter and girlfriend a “bitch,” and is just an all around unlikely frog shithead that has next to no redeeming qualities aside from his biting sincerity, yet he still seems to have a tiny inkling more of humanity than the “Les Bitches” that plague his absolutely miserable life. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons I enjoyed the film so much is due to Godard’s unadulterated honesty in terms of demonstrating beyond a shadow of a doubt that he and many of the people in his life are soulless snakes, self-absorbed pieces of elegantly packaged excrement, and intemperate sexual predators with patently pathetic post-Marxist political persuasions who really seem to epitomize everything that is wrong with post-counterculture Europe, especially among the so-called cultural elite (after all, one cannot forget that Godard is considered a national treasure of sorts and that he has been strongly supported by influential leaders like Hebraic socialist Jack Lang, who served as France’s Minister of Culture from 1981 to 1986 and 1988 to 1992).

Notably, the Criterion Collection release of the film included an essay entitled *Every Man for Himself: Themes and Variations* by Amy Taubin where the misguided gynocentric authoress reveals she has never actually done any serious research on Godard or his personal life by absurdly arguing that the cinematic work is really the director’s “second first film” because he had some sort of life-changing feminist awakening where he realized the errors of the ostensible patriarchal male gaze, but in reality the auteur is a closest misogynist of sorts whose rare feminist posturing is even less sincere than his moronic Maoist phase. In fact, Taubin notes that the only “empathetic connection” in the film occurs between the female protagonists, but any sane non-cucked male will easily realize that the scene in question is nothing more than a stereotypical depiction of the sort of shallow female solidarity that women show for one another against a man that they both happened to have fucked. After all, only a thoroughly brainwashed feminist like Taubin, who once appeared in a film by ultra-feminist Jewess Yvonne Rainer, could describe a film like *Every Man for Himself* as “erroneously titled” that concludes with the male protagonist dying in the street whilst his daughter and ex-wife walk away in cold indifference (indeed, one can only assume that Taubin believes that Paul Godard’s tragic death was well deserved). Made after the auteur suffered two failed marriages that ended in bitter divorces and causes irrevocable emotional damage that blatantly affected his filmmaking career, Godard’s “second first film” is the disturbing yet nonetheless devilishly humorous expression of a completely disillusioned man that has clearly given up on the prospect of true love and creating a family, hence the director’s lack of children and continued less than monogamous relationship with Míéville, who can hardly compete with Anna Karina or Anne Wiazemsky in terms of sheer elegance or pulchritude, among other things.

Right from the get-go with his debut feature *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* where the male protagonist is killed after his dyke-cut-adorned Amer-

ican girlfriend betrays him by ratting him out to the cops, Godard revealed in what would ultimately prove to be a lifelong theme that the so-called fairer sex has a certain instinctual lack of loyalty and empathy when it comes to members of the opposite sex. In his semi-autobiographical eight feature *Une femme mariée* (1964) aka *A Married Woman* that was inspired by his one-sided marriage to Anna Karina, Godard would argue that modern European women lack the capacity for love and monogamy because they have been brainwashed by magazines, movies, and cultural trends that have instilled them with the grand delusion that the ideal 'liberated' woman is more or less a self-worshiping hedonistic whore of the culturally retarded sort who is only interested in her own quest for pleasure and shallow reputation among other vainglorious women that live to model their largely worthless lives after the fantasy worlds created by the homo advertisers of Madison Avenue. Of course, in *Masculin Féminin* (1966) Godard would demonstrate that most young women are mindless idiots that have the wants and needs of insatiable ADHD-ridden toddlers. Needless to say, *Every Man for Himself*—a film that was made at a time when Godard had given up on love and pretty much life in general—is no less unflattering in its portrayal of pretty people with pussies. In fact, the film seems to be a sort of rejection of women in general, so it should be no surprise that cultural Marxist wimp Robert Phillip Kolker once described the title of the flick in his book *The Altering Eye* (1983) as being "...not only sexist but almost the same as Werner Herzog's *EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF AND GOD AGAINST ALL*." Undoubtedly, only an exceedingly emasculated pansy would describe the title as "sexist," especially considering the film more or less demonstrates that both men and women are responsible for dysfunctional relationships, even if women are inordinately cold and self-consumed beings that have a nasty knack for being able to turn-off their emotions when it is to their personal advantage, especially when men are involved.

In her classic text *The Manipulated Man* (1971), anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vila expressed a sentiment that Godard would probably agree with when she stated, "Women really are callous creatures – mainly because it is to their disadvantage to feel deeply. Feelings might seduce them into choosing a man who is of no use to them, i.e., a man who they could not manipulate at will." Undoubtedly *Every Man for Himself* is notable for depicting two very different female protagonists suppressing their feelings towards men in a film that subtly demonstrates that women all have a sort of innate quasi-sociopathic quality that is beneficial to their survival. Indeed, as someone that still seems to love her (ex)boyfriend yet wants to be completely independent and start a career of her own as a writer, Denise Rimbaud (Nathalie Baye) cannot give into her true emotions lest she ruin her dubious professional plans. In a somewhat different and all the more debasing fashion, cutesy yet cunty streetwalker Isabelle Rivière (Isabelle Huppert) has to pretend she fancies fat bald old farts because she

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makes her living peddling her pussy. In fact, the only character that dares to ever expose any degree of personal vulnerability is male protagonist Paul Godard (French rock musician Jacques Dutronc), who makes one last desperate yet ultimately completely hopeless attempt at the end of the film in what is arguably the most memorable scene of the entire flick to both literally and figuratively 'hold onto' his ex-girlfriend Denise before she leaves him for good. In that sense, *Every Man for Himself* is undoubtedly Godard's most strangely and unforgettably heartbreaking film.

Divided into three main segments (and a couple sub-segments) that follows three protagonists whose stories prove to intersect in the end, *Every Man for Himself* is a sort of exceedingly eccentric esoteric romantic-comedy for lovelorn misanthropes and cynics. Undoubtedly, one could also describe the flick as a melodrama for irredeemably miserable intellectuals who have forgotten what it means to truly feel something, especially when it comes to other people. Not unlike Godard, the autobiographical protagonist Paul—a less than sunny sunglasses-adorned jerk-off that somewhat resembles a more refined and anally retentive 1980s era James Spader—is a filmmaker that works at a TV station, loves fiddling with video equipment, and is responsible for using his professional connections to give his (ex)lover a job working in his trade. At the beginning of the film, Paul calls his ex-girlfriend Denise from a hotel while working on a television project and then leaves the building abruptly after telling her that he will be by to see her in an hour. Somewhat hilariously, while Paul is attempting to get in his car, a racially ambiguous male hotel employee declares his love for him and states in a sickly salacious fashion, "I want you to fuck my ass. Fuck me, sir. I've been fucked by half the navy. There's nothing better than a nice little asshole," but naturally the rampantly heterosexual filmmaker turns down the rather needy troglodyte's extra odious request. While Paul is not beneath banging hookers and fantasizing about his flat-chested preteen daughter, he is certainly no rectum-reaming homo. Of course, it is only Paul's bad luck that the only person that wants to fuck him is a disgusting creature that he wants nothing to do with. As far as the viewer knows, the only pussy that Paul is regularly penetrating is that of less than sweet streetwalker Isabelle Rivière, who seems completely incapable of any genuine human affection, let alone love with a man.

When Paul goes to pick up his daughter Cécile (Swiss auteur Alain Tanner's daughter Cécile Tanner) from soccer practice, he talks to her commie coach and asks him in a curiously nonchalant fashion, "You ever felt like feeling her up or fucking her up the ass or something?" In a scene that hints at the director's somewhat less than ambiguous pedophilic tendencies, Paul also complains to the coach, "I think it's unfair that a mother can touch her daughter or son more easily than a father can," thus underscoring the character's somewhat warped logic and busted moral compass (though one must admit that women are typically more

likely to get away with child abuse; whether it be sexual or otherwise). As a favor to his ex-girlfriend, Paul attempts to pick up filmmaker and novelist Marguerite Duras from a college, but the old hag seems to be absurdly antisocial and never even makes a single appearance in the film. Since Ms. Duras refuses to speak in front of a class that she is supposed to lecture to at the college, Paul reluctantly stands in for her and states to the class in a vaguely melancholic fashion, "I make films to keep myself busy. If I had the strength, I'd do nothing at all. Because I can't bear to do nothing, I make films. There's no other reason. That's the most honest thing I can say about my work. That goes for me too. As for Ms. Duras, every time you see a truck pass by . . . think of it as the word of a woman passing by." Ultimately, Paul falls to manage to bring Duras to the local TV station where they both work for a planned TV interview, so pissy prima donna Denise reacts by absurdly calling him a "fascist" and smacking the shit out of him right in front of his daughter, thus underscoring the heroine's deep-seated and highly irrational hostility for her ex-beau. That night, Paul eats dinner with his ex-wife and daughter (Paule Muret) and they treat him with bitter resentment like virtually all of the women in his life, so he reacts by calling them "bitches." Of course, the only reason Paul's ex-wife agrees to eat dinner with him is to get her monthly child support check. Not unlike Denise, Paul's ex-wife deeply resents him and has no qualms about letting him know it. Luckily, Paul has enough money that he can pay for a woman that at least tries to pretend that she loves him and his seemingly wandering cock.

As hinted at various points in the film, Denise would not have a career in television were it not for her ex-boyfriend Paul, but now she has it in her mind that she wants to be completely free and is willing to live on a farm in the country and work at a publishing company that is owned by another ex-boyfriend to make a new life for herself. Indeed, over-the-hill debutante Denise—a nasty passive-aggressive bitch that no man should have to suffer—believes that her bicycle will bring her true freedom. While visiting the farm house that she plans to live at, a girl that already lives there states to Denise, "Let me show you something" and then proceeds to drop her pants, bend over with her ass and pussy in front of a line of cows, and proudly declares, "Sometimes they give your ass crack a good lick." Of course, being an emotionally barren woman that seems to lack a sense of humor, Denise is hardly impressed by the rather raunchy and zany quasi-zoophilic display. As Denise confesses to Paul over the phone in regard to why their relationship is a failure and why it must end for good, "People always say – They always say – They say you need someone to lean on. I wanted someone to lean with. We've never really leaned on each other. We never leaned on each other. Something seemed to stop us." Of course, both Paul and Denise are miserable broken individuals that really know how to make an ugly situation even uglier. To Denise's credit, she does not seem to be nearly as innately and irrevocably soulless as Paul's prostitute pal Isabelle,

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but it seems dubious at best that she could ever maintain anything resembling a healthy relationship. Needless to say, it is a good thing that Denise does not have any children, as she lacks any real nurturing qualities and could only bring great pain and misery to the lives of any progeny she might spawn.

When we first meet pretty pussy-peddler Isabelle Rivière—a sassy bitch that lacks tact who seems to loathe everyone and everything, including men and sex—she is waiting in line for a movie with Paul, who is attempting to be a gentleman by taking her on a date even though he is really only with her to purchase her pink-eye. Not interested in the charade of romantic courting, Isabelle coerces Paul into skipping the movie and just going straight to the fucking. While they are having sex, Paul gets annoyed with Isabelle's blatantly fake moans of pleasures and complains, "stop working so hard" and "stop pretending." Of course, as the viewer soon discovers, Isabelle seems to lack the capacity for any sort of genuine human emotion aside from a vague degree of melancholy to the point where she seems like a rare woman with Asperger syndrome. For whatever reason, all of Isabelle's roommates seem to hate her and are quite glad that she is moving out of their apartment. When Isabelle's sister randomly shows up at the flat and begs for money so that she can bail some friends out of jail, the robot-like prostitute gets a sick idea and offers to be her little sis' pimp despite the fact that she hates pimps as demonstrated by the fact she was roughed up by one while being given the following words of wisdom in regard to her gender, "No one's independent. Not the whore or the typist [...] Only banks are independent, but banks are killers." To make sure her sister has the appropriate carnal goods, Isabelle demands to see her tits and asks if she has a "thick bush." To prepare for the pussy-peddling trade, Isabelle also asks her sister, "Have you ever licked a guy's asshole?" and then remarks, "You'll probably have to. But don't just say yes to everything. What guys like is to humiliate you," thus highlighting her rather misandric view of men. The next day, Isabelle is humiliated by a middle-aged mensch who makes her do a little bit of roleplaying where she pretends to be his daughter, but she fails miserably and is kicked out of the hotel room due to her lack of spirit and emotional authenticity. Luckily, Isabelle bumps into a grade school friend by happenstance who offers her an exceedingly easy job working for a TV station, but she does not even seem marginally interested in pursuing a lucrative career that does not involve allowing strange old men to defile her cunt. Indeed, it almost seems like Isabelle likes being a prostitute because it gives her some exceedingly warped sense of personal sovereignty (of course, such deranged thinking is not uncommon among contemporary feminists, hence the preposterous propensity of certain porn stars and prostitutes to make lame statements about the supposed feminist qualities of their trashy choice of trade).

In a nice little twist towards the end of the film where all three of the protagonists are confronted with one another by mere happenstance, Isabelle shows up to an apartment that she hopes to rent and randomly discovers Paul jump-

ing over a table and tackling Denise in an allegorical scene where the filmmaker makes one last desperate attempt to save his relationship by symbolically breaking through the gap that separates him and his beloved. Of course, Paul's rather sad and hopeless self-described "idea" is a total failure and he confesses, "We want to touch, but we only bruise each other." Needless to say, little misandrist Isabelle is horrified by Paul's final last attempt to save his relationship with Denise and complains, "You're crazy. She looks like she's hurt," to which he humorously replies, "She's got a hard head. She's a banker's daughter. I'm going out for a walk." Not surprisingly, Denise and Isabelle seem to bond over their mutual resentment towards Paul, though the former confesses that it will be hard leaving him, thus revealing that she truly loves him after all even though her extremely harsh words and actions indicate otherwise. In the end, Paul is hit by a car after bumping into his ex-wife and daughter. On top of the fact that she seems totally disinterested in Paul's previous proposal that they see each other more often, the ex-wife makes no attempt to get him help while he lies dying in the street. In fact, Paul's ex-wife even says to their daughter, "it's nothing to do with us" and then forces the little girl to leave while her father assumedly dies in the street. Notably, Isabelle's novice prostitute sister also sees Paul and even seems concerned about him, but her john manages to coerce her into leaving the scene lest the two be spotted by the wrong people. While lying in the street, Paul thinks to himself, "Rather stupidly, I started thinking I'm not dying. My life hasn't flashed before my eyes. I'm not dying . . . I don't feel any . . ."

Admittedly, one of the reasons I found *Every Man for Himself* to be so (unintentionally) humorous is because it features a number of absurdly awkward slow-motion scenes that make it seem as if Godard is fairly autistic when it comes to cinematically expressing certain human emotions. Godard named this strangely wacky slo-mo technique 'decomposition' and he first employed it in his quasi-pedro TV series *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* (1977). Notably, 'decomposition' is even utilized in a seemingly unintentionally hilarious climatic scene when the male protagonist is hit by a car, which becomes all the more strikingly odd when one considers that Godard almost died in the summer of 1972 as a result of terrible motorcycle accident that cost him one of his testicles and contributed to him becoming a social recluse of sorts. Surely, there is no doubt to anyone that has seen Godard's "second first film" that it was directed by a decidedly unhappy and devastatingly disillusioned individual that is haunted by ex-lovers that he believes are 'killing' him. Indeed, while Godard might have a cold and unintentionally humorously smug exterior, it seems that a hopelessly haunted and terminally lovelorn man exists underneath. In a scathing review that she wrote on the film for *The New Yorker*, obnoxious philistine Jewess Pauline Kael somewhat rightly complained, "I got the feeling that Godard doesn't believe in anything anymore; he wants to make movies, but maybe he doesn't really believe in movies anymore, either." Of course, what Kael seems to fail to realize

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is that Godard had finally matured and realizes that there was more to life than movies and making silly porno Tarantino-esque movies about movies. Not surprisingly, Godard would later criticize his former friends from the French New Wave due to their formulaic cinephiliac approach to filmmaking, stating, "I am amazed that people who lack ideas for new films (including some old friends like Truffaut, Rivette, who don't have any more ideas than the guys whom they denounced twenty years ago), continue to adhere to the one and self-same system of filmmaking, which is easy to describe: a sum of so many million, multiplied by so many weeks, multiplied by a certain number of people." Indeed, while one can argue that some of Godard's later films are nothing more than badly botched experiments, no one cannot deny that he has not continued to evolve as an artist and create cinematic works that were increasingly more complex and challenging. After all, only an obsessively committed oddball genius of sorts could create something like *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998).

Indeed, instead of being a "film about film" like his "first first film" *Breathless*, *Every Man for Himself* is a surprisingly vulnerable and incriminating film about a uniquely unlikable and pathetically perverted man that finally got the gall to expose his particularly preternatural persuasion to the entire world. As Richard Brody described in his biography *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life Of Jean-Luc Godard* (2008), Godard did not even write a script for the film but instead created a "video script" that included still photographs of the actors and a voiceover commentary from the auteur where he describes "how I see" as opposed to simply "images of the film, how they will be." Additionally, after hiring Nathalie Baye as the female protagonist (*Miou-Miou* was originally cast for the role, but opted out when she discovered she would be starring alongside Isabelle Huppert), he convinced her to let him stay at her country home for several days because, as the actress speculates, he "needed to imbue himself with each of [her] gestures." In short, unlike his perennially infantile would-be protégé Tarantino, Godard eventually stopped being a mere cinephiliac fanboy poser and began making films about real-life, most notably his own rather dejecting existence. While *Breathless* was a big hit that changed cinema history and inspired important film movements ranging from New Hollywood to New German Cinema, *Every Man for Himself* had a much different fate, including being booed when it was premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980, though the film was a relative commercial success and positively received by many critics at that time. Incidentally, Godard himself would once note regarding the difference between his "second first film" and how he originally approached filmmaking, "With *BREATHLESS*, I rebelled against all those tired shots with the camera anchored on a tripod, and now I made a film of what I used to think were those awful steady shots." Indeed, say what you will about the content, but *Every Man for Himself* is seemingly infinitely more immaculate in terms of form than *Breathless*, which is the rebellious work of an intemperate boy and

not a thoughtful man with life experience.

Personally, as someone that initially greatly disliked Godard because I felt his films were too phony and contrived (incidentally, I would later discover that the filmmaker considers some of his most popular films like *Contempt* (1963) and *Band Of Outsiders* (1964) to be more or less hack work), I must confess that *Every Man for Himself* is probably my favorite flick by the auteur. Indeed, in the film we discover that Godard is a bitter, spiteful, and all-around despicable self-pitying twat that patronizes hookers and fancies little girls, but certainly that is more interesting and enthralling to see than the mundane meta masturbation of a sexually challenged film dork like the young immature auteur that directed *Breathless*, which might be best described as the 'poser film fanboy par excellence.' Of course, one also cannot completely write-off the integrity of a filmmaker who once rejected a special prize from the New York Film Critics in 1995 because, to quote a fax sent by Godard, "JLG was never able through his whole moviemaker/career to: Prevent M. Spielberg from rebuilding Auschwitz." In *Every Man for Himself*, Godard rebuilt something that is certainly more horrifying than the Auschwitz showers of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), as the filmmaker presents his life as a sort of perpetual purgatory where he is consumed by gynocentric ridicule and mockery and pangs of lovesick disgrace, isolation, and personal failure. In short, quite unlike the director's early films, no aspiring filmmaker one can watch the flick and seriously see Godard as an admirable hero or cool role model. Still, despite Godard's decided disillusionment with love and women in general, *Every Man for Himself* manages to express a deep affection for feminine beauty in an understated and nicely nuanced fashion, as if the auteur is almost ashamed to reveal his infatuation with femininity. Certainly, I cannot think of another film where I became so entranced by a woman's hair blowing in the wind as I did with Nathalie Baye's in Godard's film, which I consider amazing on retrospect considering I found her character to be mostly insufferable otherwise. Aside from being a one-man pity part, *Every Man for Himself* is also a film about the tragedy of still deeply loving a person that you have grown to loathe. Also, the film is a rare cinematic work that manages to communicate the sort of metaphysical affliction that comes with being in love with a person but knowing your relationship with them is hopelessly doomed and that there is nothing you can do about it even though your soul longs to be with them for eternity. In short, Godard's film is the sort of ruthless romcom Woody Allen might direct if he had some degree of testicular fortitude and was less interested in being a smart ass. A portrait of the obscenely grotesque joke that has become Occidental love and romance, *Every Man for Himself* is a virtual testament to Godard's failure as both a man and lover. Of course, judging by the female characters in the film who somehow manage to be both frigid yet whorish and heartless yet hysterical, it is easy to see why he has thrown in the towel on love. Although Godard might slightly disprove, I must admit that at

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the end of the film where the male protagonist is dying in the street I could not help but think of José Millán Astray's classic quote, "Death to intelligence! Long live death!"

-Ty E

THE SIN OF JESUS

Robert Frank (1961)

After recently re-watching Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and reflecting on its smug anti-Christian hatred, I can only feel disgust when thinking about a Jewish writer and/or director attempting to utilize Christian themes, so the last thing that I would want to see is a modernist Jesus flick based on a story by a Christ-hating Judeo-bolshevik and directed by a Hebraic hipster that has a reputation for taking photos that mock white people and glorify negroes. Indeed, even the title of *The Sin of Jesus* (1961) directed by photographer and sometimes filmmaker Robert Frank (*Pull My Daisy*, *Cocksucker Blues*) reeks of a keenly kosher form of contempt for Christianity, yet I must admit that it is still nonetheless a strangely beautiful cinematic parable that seems like the sort of film Ingmar Bergman might have directed had he been temporarily possessed by the spirits of Werner Herzog and Tobe Hooper. Surely a sort of masterful warm-up for the eerily hypnotically haunting depiction of remote rural America as portrayed in singular cinematic works ranging from Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) to Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977), the 37-minute black-and-white feature is a stark yet oneiric piece of Gothic Americana where auteur Frank reveals a sort of visceral fear and dread for all-things-rural. Based on a short story by Soviet Jewish commie writer Isaac Babel—a notable victim of Joseph Stalin's Great Purge that was shot dead on 27 January 1940 after confessing to being a Trotskyite spy—the film is like a Hebraic hinterland horror film as seen from the perspective of a cosmopolitan Jew with a decidedly disturbed and completely distorted view of white rural Christian America. A film that practically bleeds misery and melancholy in every single frame, *The Sin of Jesus* is as innately and unkindly unchristian as films come that feature Jesus Christ in a central role. Featuring a weak and sullen yet arrogant and heretical Jesus that pimps out his angels and is so pathetically morbidly depressed that he finds it virtually impossible to look a beautiful big-eyed woman in the face who he eventually begs for forgiveness from, Frank's arguable cinematic magnum opus also features what is probably the most stereotypically Jewish depiction of Jesus in cinema history. Hardly the blond, handsome, and heroic Aryan Christ of European history or a Cecil B. DeMille biblical epic, the eponymous progeny of god in Frank's film does not heal the blind but is himself blind to humanity and human suffering, hence his pathetic pleading for forgiveness to a uniquely unsophisticated woman that finds herself unwittingly killing an angel due to her desperate horniness. Of course, in its condemnation of a deity that causes human suffering, the film is almost cliché in its Jewishness to the point where it reveals that both auteur Frank and source writer Babel have no true understanding of Christianity or Jesus Christ, at least in the emotional sense. Indeed, even the goofy vampiric Christ portrayed by Teutonic queer avant-garde auteur

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Michael Bryntrup in his Super-8 epic *Jesus - Der Film* (1986) is holier than the emotionally comatose loser featured in Frank's film.

Strikingly ravishingly shot in terms of detail to the point where you clearly see a moth succumbing to death in a tattered spider web and mold growing on the walls of a dilapidated farmhouse, *The Sin of Jesus* is a poignantly pessimistic film where both physical and metaphysical decay ultimately make for a delightfully dejecting combo of the strangely transcendent sort in a film that seems like it was made in tribute to the apocalyptic philosophy of meta-nihilistic lapsed fascist Emil Cioran. Admittedly, I am not all too familiar with the writings of Judaic source writer Babel, but upon doing research on the author it became immediately apparent that he was an inordinately well educated man of many contradictions that, despite being from a wealthy family and receiving a thorough Jewish education that involved extensive study of the Talmud and Hebrew, would go on to support an atheistic communist regime that ultimately made him one of its many victims. When not dabbling in Zionist youth circles and French literary pretensions, Babel found time to befriend Russian peasants, whores, priests, and Cossack soldiers, among various other gentiles that were hardly fluent in Yiddish or Talmud studies. In fact, as his stories reveal, Babel developed a sort of Slavic-based 'noble savage' fetish, which is even apparent in Frank's *The Sin of Jesus* adaptation, which depicts the horrifically hapless life of a dumb peasant broad that just cannot win in life, even with the help of the ostensibly holiest of interventions. As Maurice Friedberg at the Jewish Virtual Library noted regarding Babel's bizarre gentile fetish, "It is this envy of what he saw as gentile physical strength and absence of moral restraints that caused Babel to create a gallery of Jewish protagonists who bore little resemblance to pathetic Jews described in certain Yiddish literature or to the Zionist dreamers and visionaries in certain modern Hebrew novels [...] Babel's scenes of resplendent Jewish wedding feasts and magnificent funeral processions are reminiscent of the lush canvases of a Breughel." Of course, as his photographs, especially his most famous work *The Americans* (1958), reveal, Frank also shares this gentile fetish.

Speaking of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Sin of Jesus* is like the sort of film he might have directed had he been an underground Jewish beatnik filmmaker during the 1960s who was attempting to depict a post-apocalyptic farm where an impoverished philistine Jewess is forced to do manual labor as a result of NYC being wiped out in a nuclear holocaust. Indeed, while the film might feature Jesus and the actors portraying the leads are not all Jewish (Italian-American Julie Bovasso plays the female lead and Greek-American Telly Savalas plays her dead-beat beau), most of them certainly have would could be described as a stereotypical Hebraic appearance, including the angels. Needless to say, a film featuring Jesus, a farm, and hard manual labor could certainly be described as a dystopian scenario for a Jewish beatnik like Frank, so Jonas Mekas might have been right

when he stated regarding the film in *Movie Journal: The Rise of New American Cinema, 1959-1971*, "No, I do not exaggerate much if I say, or rather repeat, that *THE SIN OF JESUS* will go into film history as one of the most pessimistic films ever made. Its pessimism is its main virtue. 'If your aim is high, it should be you that comes through the most,' says Robert Frank. The Pessimism of the film is his own: It is his own soul that he is revealing, his own unconscious. But we know that when it comes to true creation, it is the most personal art that is also the most universal. Self-expression of an artist is a universal act, it expresses a universal content. The lonely woman's (Julie Bovasso's) accusing and desperate cry in the dark, doomed New Jersey fields is an expression of the desperation of our own existence." Notably, Mekas would pay tribute to *The Sin of Jesus* in his film diary *Loŝt, Loŝt, Loŝt* (1976), which features behind-the-scenes footage of Frank directing the film. While Frank's film is certainly a strikingly pessimistic piece of cinema that would probably be unbearable were it not for its consistently potent moments of rural gothic pulchritude and foreboding atmosphere, it is first and foremost an expression of grueling melancholia where the viewer is virtually submerged in the hapless heroine's metaphysical waterfall of tears. Arguably most surprisingly, *The Sin of Jesus* is a fairly tender cinematic work with a uniquely cold and impenetrable Jesus Christ that has never been seen before or since in cinema history.

As referenced in *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas & the New York Underground* (1992) by David E. James, François Truffaut somewhat humorously stated in 1961 in regard to *The Sin of Jesus* after seeing it in a Paris movie theater, "That's the worst movie I've ever seen. I guess I'm just not an original sin boy." Not to undermine the importance of the great half-heeb frog auteur's classic debut feature, but Frank's film contains more visceral sorrow in a single shot than Truffaut's sad autobiographical coming-of-age flick *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (1959) aka *The 400 Blows* does in its entirety. Of course, the difference between Truffaut and Frank is the former loved life and the latter seems to loathe it, or at least one would assume after watching his nightmarish pseudo-biblical pastoral parable, which not only condemns god but also could be interpreted as a sort of abstract suicide letter. Naturally, due to being based on a story by Jew Babel, adapted for the screen by a Jew named Howard Shulman, and directed by Jew Frank, the somewhat arrogantly titled film also gives you a good idea as to why the average Jew could never accept Jesus Christ as their lord and savior. Undoubtedly, the Jesus of Frank's film seems like a pathetic beatnik hobo compared to the Übermensch of suffering portrayed by Jim Caviezel in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). In short, *The Sin of Jesus* is a devastating reminder as to why Jews will never forgive Jesus for the perennial curse of living with the unpardonable sin of deicide.

The Sin of Jesus begins depressingly enough with forlorn female protagonist Arina (Julie Bovasso in an uncredited lead role) grudgingly getting out of bed in

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the morning while her good-for-nothing fat bastard beau Felix (Telli Savales in what was supposedly his first film role) continues to sleep. While Arina spends all day working on the farm and counting eggs, Felix sleeps like a champ as if he would rather be dead than living. As Arina narrates in regard to her lonely and stagnant life, “Months roll by with baby inside. Well . . . Nobody minds. I’m the only woman here.” To convince herself that her pathetic life is somewhat tolerable, Arina thinks to herself, “Oh, it’s good. It’s good. Felix lives with me now . . . that’s good. In that barn. Oh, well. It’s my room.” Needless to say, when Felix’s friend (Philip Sterling)—a degenerate pervert that wastes no time in feeling up the female protagonist—comes by the farm and informs her regarding her bedridden boy toy, “He’s gonna be away for a longtime [...] I’m here now. I’ll be back,” she takes it extremely poorly, as her sole joy in life is crushed. When Arina later attempts to coerce Felix into not leaving by pleading to him in pathetic desperation, he gets physically violent and says nasty things to her like, “I’m sick of you and I’m sick of this place.” Of course, considering the baby growing in Arina’s body is probably not his as indicated in a flashback rape scene involving his friend, it is no surprise that Felix wants nothing to do with her or her unborn babe.

After reaching an all-time low after being left all by her lonesome, Arina is somewhat startled one day when she walks into her dilapidated barn and feels a sort of spiritual presence, or as she states herself, “[It] looks like a church. It is so still. Not a sound. So still. I’m all alone. Alone.” Luckily, before Arina knows it, a rather sullen and gaunt Jesus Christ (Roberts Blossom) appears inside the barn, so she immediately complains to him, “Jesus? Lord Jesus? I’m the girl that works on the farm. He left me. Felix went away. I have his baby. I don’t know what to do. He went away. Felix left me. I’m troubled. Please. Please, can you help me? I’m in trouble. I don’t know what to do.” While Jesus cannot perform the miracle of bringing deadbeat buffoon Felix back, he can perform certain miracles and makes her a special offer, stating like a pawnshop dealer with an unnervingly flat affect, “In heaven, there is an angel named Alfred. He is very unhappy. He wants to return to earth. For four years, I will give him to you as a husband. There’s lots of fun in him, but no seriousness.” Indeed, as the viewer soon learns, Alfred (St. George Brian) is probably the most mirthfully autistic and mindlessly hedonistic angel of cinema history, yet he is ultimately no match for the desperate lechery of pathetically sexually repressed protagonist Arina, who does not consider the extreme sensitivity of the heavenly young man’s otherworldly body. Jesus also informs Arina that there is no chance that she will be able to have a baby with Alfred, but she does not care because she is so excited.

When Jesus comes back a second time, he brings with him a less than angelic collection of multicultural angels that include a couple depressed young Jewesses, a lone negro, a seemingly queer and depressed fire-crotched boy, and a goofy four-eyed Asian, among others. Of course, Jesus also brings Alfred, who

is a fairly gawky boy that looks like he would make for a better son than lover for Arina. When Jesus declares, "The Angels have come to be at your wedding," Arina immediately attempts to leave with Alfred, as if she is so desperately horny that she cannot even bother to spare a couple minutes to celebrate her special day with an extremely special supernatural cast of characters. Jesus also makes sure to inform Arina in regard to Alfred's wings that they are, "delicate as a baby's bread. If you don't take them off each night before he goes to bed, you will kill him." Rather unfortunately but not all that surprisingly considering she is a fairly slow-witted woman, Arina seems to be too excited to pay attention when Jesus warns her of autistic angel Alfred's fatally frail wings. After the somewhat kitschy yet nonetheless celestial wedding ceremony where the angels throw feathers and play brass instruments in tribute to the eccentric newlyweds, Arina brings Alfred inside her humble abode and celebrates with him in an otherworldly scene that seems like the female protagonist's idea of heaven. Not surprisingly, Arina forgets to take off Alfred's wings before mounting his otherworldly member, thus resulting in a tragic deadly honeymoon. Undoubtedly, Arina was completely infatuated with her new husband and revealed a sort of radiating glow of seemingly immaculate happiness during their wedding night that was in stark contrast to her previous morbidly melancholy self, so naturally Arina takes Alfred's rather senseless premature death fairly badly. Somewhat provocatively, Arina ultimately blames her own stupidity that led to Alfred's death on Jesus, as if he did not warn her about making sure to take off the angel's wings before fucking him.

The next day, Arina carries Alfred's tattered wings outside to Jesus, who states to her in a benign authoritarian fashion, "As it is on earth, so shall it be with you for this day on" and then calmly berates her for "killing my angel." At this point, Arina becomes irately hysterical and loudly cries out, "Who made me like this? Who made my body heavy like this? Who made my soul lonely and stupid? Tell me! Who made a woman like me?" but Jesus simply looks away and states without even the slightest hint of emotion, "Go back, Irena. There is nothing more to say." When Arina finally goes inside, she holds her womb while recalling a tragic incident when Felix's creepy friend raped her, hence her somewhat mysterious pregnancy and why her (ex)beau probably left her. When Arina goes outside the next day, she yells, "I don't want to know. I don't need any answers" while a rather dejected and guilt-ridden Jesus meekly lurks around the farm. No longer able to tolerate her insufferably lonely life of incessant misery and misfortune, Arina curses the world and especially its creator. In the end, Jesus succumbs to guilt and vulnerability, gets on his knees, and then reveals that he is hardly almighty by pathetically pleading to Arina, "Forgive me. Forgive your sinful god," but she now lacks the capacity for forgiveness and coldly replies, "Me ... forgive him? I can't. I have no forgiveness." Undoubtedly, in Arina's heart, god is now dead.

THE SIN OF JESUS

Undoubtedly, the more I find out about director Robert Frank, the more loathsome he seems, so I think it is only fitting that he is no fan of *The Sin of Jesus*, which I regard as easily his greatest and most accomplished cinematic achievement. Indeed, in an interview with Jack Sargeant featured in the book *Naked Lens: Beat Cinema* (1995), Frank would state the film “was not very good” and explain, “Well, it was an Isaac Babel story and the mistake was to take a story and try and make a film of it, but I was learning, you know, because there was no film schools, you had to learn by making stuff.” Aside from his rarely-seen Rolling Stones doc *Cocksucker Blues* (1972), the rest of Frank’s cinematic oeuvre is either obscenely overrated (e.g. *Pull My Daisy*), aesthetically autistic (e.g. *Me and My Brother*), embarrassingly masturbatory (e.g. *Conversations in Vermont*, *The Present*), or just plain worthless (e.g. *Energy and How to Get It*). With his sole mainstream feature *Candy Mountain* (1987) co-directed by Rudy Wurlitzer, Frank would ultimately get over his obsession with hipster posturing, so naturally I never suspected that he would have directed something worthwhile in his early filmmaking. In fact, as a result of my disappointment with the director’s other films, I was absolutely shocked by how much I appreciated *The Sin of Jesus* to the point where I am shocked that Frank even directed it. Certainly, female lead Julie Bovasso and cinematographer German cinematographer Gert Berliner—a man best known for his photography—deserve a lot of credit for the film’s aesthetic majesty, as the actress’ performance and the cinematography are certainly the most memorable aspects of the film. Of course, unlike most of Frank’s films, the Jesus parable actually has an actual storyline and talented actors as opposed to posturing beatniks and schizophrenic Hebrews doing nothing. Although just an assumption, I am pretty sure that Frank’s post-holocaust hatred and pathos certainly inspired his uniquely unkindly depiction of Jesus. Naturally, I can see how the film might be embarrassing for the director on retrospect, as it reveals an outstanding arrogance and megalomania in its renouncing of god, but then again that is one of the things that makes it so powerful. Indeed, the film certainly features the sort of Christ-hating that inspired Jews like Babel to become Bolsheviks. In terms of other covertly kosher quasi-metaphysical movies where the lead character arrogantly turns their back on god in the end, Hebraic auteur Michael Tolkin’s debut feature *The Rapture* (1991) starring half-Hebrews Mimi Rogers and David Duchovny is in many ways quite thematically similar to *The Sin of Jesus* and the two films certainly make for a great double feature.

Despite my lack of religiousness and my general revulsion towards hypocritical Christ-bashing Jews that never seem to find the time to criticize the various glaringly barbaric aspects of Judaism and the tyrannical genocidal Jewish G-d, I think that it is a sad irony that, out of all of the many J.C. films that have been made, *The Sin of Jesus* is probably my favorite. Of course, the film is less about Jesus than it is about a lefty Jew’s contempt for the idea of Jesus and what he represents, but that is not why I appreciate it. Indeed, to me, the film un-

equivocally proves that an artist's work can be appreciated in spite of its dubious political or even metaphysical message. After all, I doubt most fans of Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972) have ever read *Moonchild* (1923) or would describe themselves as Crowleyites. As an urban Jewish bohemian that was born to a wealthy Judaic family in Switzerland during the Nazi era who once dubiously bitched regarding the supposed antisemitism of a cop in a small Arkansas town, "I remember the guy [policeman] took me into the police station, and he sat there and put his feet on the table. It came out that I was Jewish because I had a letter from the Guggenheim Foundation. They really were primitive," Frank seems like the last person that could create a potent and lasting piece of rural cinematic Americana, yet *The Sin of Jesus* is simply unforgettable in terms of its sheer imagery, venomous cynicism, throbbing pathos and penetrating pangs of pessimism. After watching Frank's film and noticing its seething rage directed towards god, I could not help but be reminded of Judaic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's wise and rather un-Jewish words, "It isn't sensible to be furious even at Hitler; how much less so at God." Of course, the somewhat bizarre thing about *The Sin of Jesus* is that Frank reveals rage towards a religious figure that he, as a proud atheistic Jew, does not even actually believe in, but then again one could argue that the film is actually an attempt to confront the seeming absurdity of poor, ignorant, and downtrodden peasants being the most likely to have faith in Jesus of Nazareth when they have such horrible, miserable, and accursed lives. In that sense, the film proves to be provocative, if not misguided, but I suspect that it is just really one of the seemingly infinite examples of a Jew rejecting that Jesus was not the long awaited Messiah of the Messianic prophecies. As to how someone that is so poor and unlucky could be religious, Wittgenstein offered an insight when he wrote, "People are religious to the extent that they believe themselves to be not so much imperfect as ill. Any man who is half-way decent will think himself extremely imperfect, but a religious man thinks himself wretched." After all, it takes a certain degree of profound arrogance to, not unlike Frank, condemn a religious figure, especially a creator god, even if you do not believe in said religious figure, but I guess it might be a little different with Jesus, who makes Jews feel culpable for deicide, hence the classic antisemitic slur 'Christ-killer.' Additionally, I would not be surprised if Jews like Frank blame Jesus for pogroms and even the holocaust, not to mention the stereotype of a Hebrew complaining "Where was God?" in relation to said holocaust (in that sense, one could argue that Frank's film is a sort of cryptic-holocaust flick where a Christian acts as a stand-in for a Jew in the denouncing of god). While Hollywood movies and mainstream TV shows never miss an opportunity to mock Christ, *The Sin of Jesus* seems to be one of the few cinematic examples where a Jew 'attempts' to make some sense of the supposed 'false messiah,' so naturally it should be no surprise that the film wallows in misery, melancholy, and tragic misfortune, as if it is the expression of the Jewish collective unconscious. Either

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way, Frank's film surely had the opposite result on me as the director intended, as it gave me the urge to learn more about the real Jesus Christ, who was surely not anything like the eponymous melancholy wimp of 'The Sin of Jesus.

-Ty E

THE HITCHER

Robert Harmon (1986)

Rutger Hauer is one of the most intense actors ever to grace the silver screen. Unfortunately, he has never acquired as many roles as he deserves. Dutchman Hauer personifies the ultimate male character. He makes "actors" like Harrison Ford (especially in *Blade Runner*) and Dustin Hoffman look like the weak males that they really are. Rutger Hauer demands your complete attention in every scene he is featured in. His role as a killer in *The Hitcher* was a wise choice on the casting directors part. *The Hitcher* follows a young man and his attempt at escaping the murderous stoicism of Rutger Hauer (as the Hitcher). The hitcher loves to play psychological games with the young man. In a way, the hitcher is turning the young man into a "man." The hitcher forces the young man to develop his killer instinct for survival. Rutger Hauer becomes the teacher that you never asked to have. Antichrist Michael Bay recently produced a blasphemous remake of *The Hitcher*, a film that I turned off within minutes. It offers the same trash you can expect from most contemporary cheap violence found in the lairs of Hollywood hell. It also features a female heroine to compliment Hollywood's obsession with promoting feminism (not for female rights, but to subvert Western culture). In short, it stinks worse than a pile of homeless vomit. I really wish the young man in *The Hitcher* took a nice big bite out of the finger he had mistaken for a French fry. Unintentional cannibalism is a trend that really needs to catch on. I am sure there is a surplus of third world meat just waiting to be devoured. Rutger Hauer didn't become a superman by eating cabbage.

In conclusion, *The Hitcher* is a fun psychological slasher film. I would be lying if I didn't say I admired the ambiguity of the hitchhiker and his various mind games. I didn't have much respect from the young man. He reminded me more of a turd that needed to be flushed. The end of *The Hitcher* was quite heartbreaking.

-Ty E

SLEEPAWAY CAMP
SLEEPAWAY CAMP

Robert Hiltzik (1983)

Aside from when I saw a number of the A Nightmare on Elm Street films and John Carpenter's Halloween (1978) when I was a little kid and my initial viewing of The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974) and its sardonic sequel The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (1986) when I was in middle school, I cannot think of very many slasher flicks that have ever left any sort of deep impression me, especially after I became a teenage and was no longer impressed by pseudo-mystifying retarded masked killers and bare breasts, though I can think of at least one film from the mostly hopelessly banally formulaic and singularly soulless horror sub-genre that left me, like most first time viewers of the film, quite shocked and even repelled. Indeed, Sleepaway Camp (1983) aka Nightmare Vacation directed by Robert Hiltzik is notable for having one of the most ridiculously shocking and equally repugnant twist endings in all of cinema history and luckily when I first saw the film when I was about 18 no one had already spoiled it for me (in fact, if you have not seen the film and want to, you should probably refrain from reading this review, even though the flick will probably still surprise you even if you know what to expect). While more or less just as tasteless, illogical, ineptly directed and artless as the average stupid disposable slasher turd, the film somehow has lots of character, charm, gallons of venomous gallows humor, and a preternaturally perverse conclusion that is guaranteed to internally wound the legions of LGBT lobotomized lemmings belonging to the forsaken generation known as millennials. Featuring ugly muscular wops in booty shorts that accentuate their genitals, preteen boys doing crude borderline homoerotic things like putting their bare asses in other boys' faces, a goofy minstrel-esque Uncle Tom negro with large frog eyes, creepy gay dream-sequences involving small children and their bourgeois flamer 'fathers,' a superlatively shady and ambiguously Hebraic summer camp owner who is more concerned with losing business than losing campers to horrific deaths, and slutty guidettes that have dedicated their sad little petty lives to making sure that all boys have their eyes on them and no other girls, Sleepaway Camp is a pleasantly offensive and bittersweetly sickeningly piece of pseudo-Freudian slasher trash as directed by a seemingly psychopathic kosher would-be-comedian who uses the horror sub-genre as a means to playfully poke fun of pedos, homos, sluts, dumb wops, buffoonish blacks and various other kinds of people that are easy to make fun of yet are rarely satirized in cinema nowadays because Hollywood is run mostly by culture-distorting cultural Marxist degenerates of the largely Judaic persuasion who want the masses to believe that flooding the United States with third worlders, pretending that all races and genders are equal, and accepting a guy that wants to have his balls chopped and dick turned inside out is normal are all important religious doctrines that will lead the country to becoming some sort of magical utopia where race, sex,

and morality have all been transcended in a manner that makes the peak liberal future world depicted in John Boorman's *Zardoz* (1974) seem outmoded and counterrevolutionary by comparison. Arguably one of the most idiosyncratic elements of the film aside from its singularly shocking ending is its shameless misuse of histrionic melodrama in a manner that reminds the viewer they are watching a film about a bunch of goofy New York City and New Jersey Jews and Guidos and not some boring uptight WASPs like the ones that are mocked in Hebraic Hollywood hack Barry Sonnenfeld's *Addams Family Values* (1993), thus making the cinematic experience all the more racially insensitive and, in turn, hilarious. Bathed in more (seemingly unintentional) bathos than blood as a distinctly tasteless yet undeniably creative slasher piece where all the victims are murdered in various absurd ways that makes a mockery out of their fairly violent and brutal deaths, *Sleepaway Camp* is like a disharmonious marriage between the seemingly discordant cinematic sensibilities of veteran Semitic smut-peddler Lloyd Kaufman and an exceedingly emotionally stunted pothead Douglas Sirk.

After a pseudo-omnibus and pointlessly long establishing shot of an abandoned summer called 'Camp Arawak' where a piece of wood reading "For Sale" is nailed to the main sign, the film cuts to a shot of a little boy named Peter and his twin sister Angela play fighting on a boat while their discernibly effete divorced single father John Baker (Dan Tursi) sunbathes like some rich old self-absorbed queen. When a moronic lifeguard who is clearly desperate for pussy foolishly allows a Jewish American Princess named Mary Ann (Alyson Mord) take over the steering wheel after she desperately begs him by saying outstandingly arrogant things like, "I know who to drive these things...My old man's got one twice as big," things get a little bit ugly and reveal why a man should never allow a woman to drive. Indeed, not long after the father and his kids' boat tips over after the poof-like patriarch clumsily loses his balance and causes the entire small sea vessel to flip over, Mary Ann loses control of the speedboat and runs them over, thereupon killing the patriarch and his son, or so it initially seems. Curiously, a random queer named Lenny (James Paradise), who watches while in a state of paralyzed horror when the speedboat mows down the family, screams when he sees the father's corpse floating in the lake, thus hinting that the kid's daddy is a donut-puncher. Flash forward eight years later and the little girl, Angela Baker (Felissa Rose), is now a seemingly autistic teenage girl of the extremely introverted sort who lives with her gregarious guido cousin Ricky Thomas (Jonathan Tiersten) and discernibly deranged aunt Dr. Martha Thomas (Desiree Gould), who is seeing the kids off to summer camp and, for whatever reason, strangely opts to give the kids phony medical documents for a physical, but not before warning the two, "Just be careful not to tell anyone how you got them. Oh, no, no...I'm afraid they would not approve of that at all...even though they know that I am a doctor." Aunt Martha, who dresses like some sort of super chic French lipstick lesbian and seems to suffer from some sort of

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comorbid Bipolar disorder, is such an exceedingly eccentric woman that she tied a string around her finger to remember to give the kids the medical documents, though it will not be until the end of the film that the viewer discovers the true degree of her derangement.

Camp Arawak is owned and run by a dirty old man named Mel Coštic (veteran Jewish actor Mike Kellin, who appeared in Richard Fleischer's *The Boston Strangler* (1968)) that looks like he could be the debauched brother of pulp auteur Samuel Fuller and seems like the sort of guy that made his fortune illegally peddling porn, pussy, and PCP, among other things. Unbeknownst to Mel, one of his campers this summer is an aspiring sadistic killer who has a fetish for creative killings and does not take kindly to unscrupulous conmen like himself who are not above hiring pedophiles and paying his negro employees a slave wage and treating them like they are retarded farm animals. When Angela and her cousin Ricky arrive at the camp, the perennially passive-aggressive protagonist refuses to both eat and talk, so a nice guido camp counselor of the stoic and muscular yet dumb sort named Ronnie (Paul DeAngelo) asks a morbidly obese slob of a cook named Artie (Owen Hughes) to specially prepare her whatever meal she might fancy in the hope that she will finally eat something. Unfortunately, proudly boorish vulgarian Artie is a repentant pedophile who calls underage girls "fresh chicken" and "baldies," so naturally he seizes the opportunity to try to molest Angela when he takes her in the back of the camp kitchen, but luckily cousin Ricky walks in before he can whip out his pedo prick. Somewhat strangely, not long after he attempts to defile Angela, Artie is critically injured and has all of the flesh on his flabby body horribly burned as a result of a mysterious camper causing a giant pot of boiling water to spill on the hapless hog-like kiddyfucker. Of course, kosher conman Mel is more interested in covering up the incident than the safety of his head cook, so he offers an extra \$50 to each of the other cooks, who all happen to be meek acting nonwhites, to keep their mouths shut. As one might expect after seeing what happens to Artie after he attempts to molest the protagonist, every single character that dares to mess with quasi-autistic introvert Angela meets a grisly end, though one is not completely sure until the very end of the film as to whether or not she is actually the killer, especially since her cousin Ricky, who has serious anger problems, is especially protective of her.

Undoubtedly Angela's biggest nemesis at summer camp is a conspicuously cunty guidette slut with a glaringly large head and petite body named Judy (Karen Fields) who is so shamelessly narcissistic that she wears a shirt with her name on it and is jealous of any girl that gets more male attention than her, including creepy introverts like the protagonist. Naturally, Angela makes Judy feel quite uneasy by incessantly staring at her while maintaining an emotionless facial expression that ultimately causes the teenage she-bitch to fly into irrational rages. As is insinuated at the beginning of the film, Ricky and Judy were apparently a romantic item the previous summer, but now that the little slut has

the attention of older boys, she has no need for the little lad, who calls her a “bitch” under his breath after she blows him off upon the two being reunited for the first time in a year. Unfortunately for Angela, Judy is best friends with the main female camp counselor Meg (Katherine Kamhi), who also develops a special irrational hatred and resentment towards the ‘passively antisocial’ protagonist. Luckily for Angela, at least a first, Ricky’s sweet and generically handsome yet insufferably banal Aryan friend Paul (Christopher Collet of Michael Apted’s *Firstborn* (1984) and Marshall Brickman’s *The Manhattan Project* (1986)), soon develops a crush on her and treats her with an inordinate degree of kindness and respect that she is not used to. In fact, the first time he talks to Angela, Paul manages to get her to speak for the first time in the entire film (she simply says “goodnight,” which causes the would-be-loverboy to jump with joy), but the same night, a mullet-adorned boy named Kenny (soap opera actor John E. Dunn of the long running show *All My Children* aka AMC) who insulted the protagonist by rather rudely asking her “why are you so fucked up?” is drowned in the camp lake and found the next morning by an agitated counselor with snakes and other creatures on his already rotting corpse. Of course, conman Mel treats Kenny’s death like it is an accident, even though he knows that the teen was a good swimmer. When a group of boys dare to pelt Angela with water balloons from the relative safety of a cabin roof, the leader of the craven culprits, Billy (Loris Sallahain), soon finds himself locked inside a bathroom stall while taking a “wicked dump” where he is soon stung to death by a large swarm of bees in a fashion that recalls Curtis Harrington’s TV movie *Killer Bees* (1974) after some mysterious killer drops a beehive inside the locked piss-stained makeshift prison cell. Needless to say, the enigmatic mystery killer suffers from an eccentric form of sadism as reflected in the fairly eclectic ways he decides to dispatch his/her victims and the deaths only get all the more absurd as the film progresses.

When Paul makes various attempts to kiss and get physical with Angela and he is routinely rebuffed by the unconventionally shy protagonist for seemingly no reason, he naturally becomes sexually frustrated and soon falls prey to the lustful charms of alpha-slut Judy, who is jealous of the attention that the female lead gets from the ‘nice boy’ and thus takes him into the woods and begins kissing him even though she seems to have no genuine sexual interest in him. While Paul eventually pushes Judy away, the damage is already done as both Ricky and Angela witness his treacherous pseudo-romantic encounter with the resident camp whore. Of course, Paul immediately begs Angela to forgive him, but jealous wench Judy ruins his impassioned apology by revealing to the protagonist that he called her a “prude” due to her unwillingness to take their relationship to a more physical level. Meanwhile, conman Mel, who is more or less hysterical over the fact that reputation of his summer camp business is ruined due to all the recent violent deaths and is thus extremely desperate to discover the identity of the killer, comes to the somewhat dubious conclusion that Ricky—a fairly ver-

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bally violent and emotionally erratic young man that loves calling his enemies “cocksuckers” and threatening them in various way—is the mystery murderer and even grabs and attacks the young man and accuses him of the crimes while Amy and Meg proceed throw Angela into a lake. Needless to say, both Judy and Meg do not live long after what they do to Angela.

Indeed, Judy dies in what is arguably the most horrific yet fitting death scene when the killer visits her in her cabin while she is all alone, knocks her out, and she proceeds to shove an electric curling iron in her seemingly overused pussy while she is semi-conscious, thus causing the bitchy high school harlot to scream in abject horror as she perishes as a result of her badly burnt baby-chute. Additionally, after curiously agreeing to meet Mel for a romantic dinner despite the fact that he is probably old enough to be her grandfather, cunt counselor Meg is killed after someone literally stabs her in the back while she is showering in preparation for his dubious date with the dirty old man. Needless to say, when Mel, who was hoping to get a piece of young counselor cunt, goes looking for Meg when she does not show up for their planned dinner date and eventually discovers her unclad corpse lying face down with brutal stabs wound on the back, he breaks down and self-righteously declares in regard to Ricky, who he still believes is the killer, “He did it! I had him and I let him go... Please forgive me, Meg. I’ll stop him. I gotta stop him. He won’t get away, Meg. He won’t get away from me again.” Meanwhile, Paul meets up with Angela and pleads with her to give him a second chance and she replies by uttering the famous foreboding line, “Meet me at the waterfront after the social.” Around the same time, four out of six little preteen boys that were responsible for throwing sand at Angela are brutally hacked into pieces in the woods. When Mel finally finds Ricky, he begins brutally beating him to death with his bare hands like a savage rabid ape and then proceeds to attempt to escape from the camp so that no one will discover the deplorable things that he has done. Unfortunately for him, Mel decides to walk by the camp archery target and gets killed after the mysterious murder shoots an arrow into his neck, but not before saying while in a state of paralyzing denial upon observing the identity of the killer, “It can’t be you. It can’t be. It can’t be.” Of course, at this point in the film, it becomes fairly clear that Ricky is not the killer as he has just been beaten within an inch of his life by Mel and could not possibly have caught up with his would-be-killer so soon.

When Paul finally meets Angela at the waterfront, he is predictably excited when she seems to shed her sensual shyness and tells him to take his clothes off so that they can go skinny-dipping together in what one would assume would be a rather romantic late night swim between two virginal lovebirds. When counselor Ronnie and a nice female counselor named Susie (Susan Glaze) go looking for unaccounted campers due to the various string of brutal murders that have occurred that night, they eventually happen upon a completely unclad Angela, who is quietly singing to herself while cradling an equally naked Paul

like he is precious little baby. At this point, the film begins getting especially unhinged and Angela has a flashback from eight years before when her crazy Aunt Martha sinisterly stated to 'her' upon adopting her after the death of her father and sibling, "Oh, you're going to enjoy living with us so much. Yes, I know you are! As a welcome home present, I bought you such wonderful new clothes. I just hope that Richard doesn't get jealous that I didn't get him anything. Oh, but then, he is such a dear. I'm sure that he won't mind. You see, I've always wanted a little girl. But, of course, when my husband left... Oh, well, that's all water under the bridge, as I always say. Water under the bridge! But it certainly will be a nice little surprise when Richard comes home to find a little girl in the house. Yes, I've always dreamed of a little girl just like you. I mean, we already have a little boy, so another one would simply not do. No, no, absolutely not. A little girl would be so much nicer, don't you think so, Angela? Angela... such a lovely name." Indeed, in a terrible transsexual twist, Angela is revealed to be not actually Angela but 'Peter.' Indeed, after his father and twin sister died, Aunt Martha forced Peter to assume his sister's identity and take her name, hence the protagonist's reluctance to shower with other girls at the camp and forged medical record, among other various questionable things that do not quite add up until the very end of the film. Since Aunt Martha is a doctor, she probably regularly injected poor Peter with female hormones when he was growing up. After the flashback scene, Ronnie and Susie are startled to see that 'Angela,' who is completely naked aside from blood that is soaked all over her body and is growling like a rabid beast in heat while holding Paul's decapitated head in one hand and a bloody knife in the other, is actually a male and has a swarthy little cock. Ultimately, Ronnie is more shocked about the fact that Angela has a penis and no tits than he is about coming to the revelation that she is actually the mysterious killer and that she has just decapitated Paul with a fairly small knife as demonstrated by the gregarious Guido's remark, "How can it be? My god, she's a boy!" Indeed, unfortunately it seems that Aunt Martha did not have enough skills as a doctor to personally give Angela a full sex change. Of course, the viewer is also more startled about the fact the ostensibly female protagonist has a prick than the fact that (s)he has just killed a very nice and caring young gentleman who would not dare to even harm a fly.

As can be expected for a film that was created on a relatively minuscule budget of \$350,000 yet went on to earn \$11,000,000 at the box office, *Sleepaway Camp* was followed by a couple sequels, albeit of the apparently unauthorized sort. Indeed, *Sleepaway Camp II: Unhappy Campers* (1988) and *Sleepaway Camp III: Teenage Wasteland* (1989) feature Bruce Springsteen's younger sister Pamela Springsteen as a post-op tranny Angela who has achieved her dream of becoming an ostensible biological woman with a gash yet still has a big enough undying homicidal urge to masquerade as a counselor at a nearby camp so that she can exterminate dumb teenagers in a variety of creatively malefic ways. Instead of

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the original director Hiltzik, Michael A. Simpson was responsible for directing both of these 'rogue sequels,' which have a sort of somewhat schlocky low-camp tone and are notable for predating both Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (1994) and *Scream* (1996) in terms of being darkly comedic pieces of 'metacinema' that poke fun at the outmoded clichés and conventions of the slasher subgenre. The director of the two unofficial sequels, Michael A. Simpson, apparently wrote a screenplay for a third sequel entitled *Sleepaway Camp: Berserk*, but it is doubtful that it will ever get made, especially considering he has no rights to the franchise. A third unofficial sequel entitled *Sleepaway Camp IV: The Survivor* directed by Jim Markovic began production in the early 1990s but was aborted, though the footage from the unfinished film was included with Anchor Bay/Starz Entertainment's *Sleepaway Camp* DVD boxed set and in 2012 the film was even completed after recycled footage from the previous films was mixed with the new footage in an Ulli Lommel-esque fashion and subsequently released on DVD. After discovering that the original film had such a large cult following, the original *Sleepaway Camp* director, Robert Hiltzik, who curiously never directed another film after his first, decided to direct the first 'official' sequel. Indeed, while welcomed by fans, Hiltzik's sequel *Return to Sleepaway Camp* (2008) proved to be an abject disappointment and has next to nil of the charm, charisma, or effective dark humor of the original film. Apparently, Hiltzik also began working on a third 'official' sequel entitled *Sleepaway Camp Reunion* so as to complete a trilogy, as well as a remake, but hopefully neither of these films will reach past the pre-production stage as the franchise has become even more laughable than the *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, and even *Leprechaun* film series.

Undoubtedly, *Sleepaway Camp* hold a special place in American 1980s horror cinema history alongside William Asher's *Night Warning* (1982) aka *Butcher, Baker, Nightmare Maker* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985), and Robert Harmon's *The Hitcher* (1986) as a rare sodomite slasher flick that baffles the mostly braindead fans of the horror subgenre. Of course, unlike the other mentioned films, there is nothing ambiguous in terms of the innate gayness of Hiltzik's film, which will surely offend the hell of out preposterously prissy LGBT social justice warrior types due to its uniquely flattering depiction of a homicidal boy who had a gay dad and whose deranged aunt inspired his murderous tendencies after forcing him to become a crypto-tranny when he was still just a little boy. As real-life true crime history like the life of American serial killer Henry Lee Lucas demonstrates, 'Angela' is not the first person who grew up to become a serial killer after his caretaker made him wear dresses. Despite the fact that the film features nil female nudity and is plagued by fairly creepy and/or crude insinuations of random homoeroticism (including a scene where a young boy puts his bare ass in another boy's face) and extra perverse male nudity (aside from the shocking ending, the film also apparently featured a male skinny-

dipping scene featuring male full-frontal nudity but it was later cut), Sleepaway Camp director Hiltzik is apparently a married father, thus it would not be hard for SJWs to accuse him of being a homo-hater. Somewhat curiously as revealed in an inter-title featured at the very beginning of the film reading, "In Fond Memory of Mom, A Doer," Hiltzik dedicated the film to his mother, which becomes all the more strange to think about when one considers the film's many similarities with Hitchcock's classic proto-slasher flick *Psycho* (1960).

The ultimate chick-with-a-dick slasher flick, Hiltzik's somewhat sophisticatedly sleazy cinematic work is an assault on the viewer, especially the male heterosexual viewer, who spends a good portion of the movie thinking about what is under the strange female lead's panties, only to discover it is a shriveled flaccid cock, Sleepaway Camp certainly deserves the dubious distinction of being a sort of slasher equivalent of Michael Sarne's botched Gore Vidal adaptation *Myra Breckinridge* (1970). Indeed, in terms of its bizarre approach to gender-bending and fairly cynical look at humanity, the film is probably the only slasher flick that could be screened as a double feature with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's masterpiece *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* (1978) aka *In a Year with 13 Moons*, though I think it work best in a double screening with Paul Bartel's underrated Hitchcockian 'trans-slasher' *Private Parts* (1972), which features a carnally confused killer who is a chick that wished she had a dick. Aside from Bartel's film, other films that feature a transsexual killer whose gender confusion is an innate ingredient of their homicidal rage include William A. Fraker's *A Reflection of Fear* (1972), Don Gronquist's *Unhinged* (1982), and Geoffrey 'Romper Stomper' Wright's *Cherry Falls* (2000) starring tragic Hollywood diva Brittany Murphy. Additionally, Bob Clark's debut *She-Man: A Story of Fixation* (1967) and Russ Meyer's *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) provide more absurdist examples of tyrannical transsexual sadism and savagery. Exceedingly Hebraic in its summer camp setting (as films like *Dirty Dancing* only cryptically hint at, most American Hebrew children go to Zionist summer camps where they are brainwashed into oblivion about the superiority of their race), almost vaudevillian murder gimmicks and lowbrow humor, and post-Freudian sexual perversity, Sleepaway Camp is ultimately like *The Burning* (1981) with balls and a bad attitude, at least as far as sleazy Semitic slasher flicks are concerned, though thankfully it lacks the involvement of kosher creatures like Jason Alexander and Harvey Weinstein. In its wicked subversion and transsexualization of the played-out 'final girl' trope and decidedly dubious depiction of the victims as 'getting what they deserved,' not mention its depiction of a autistic teenage chick with a prick, Hiltzik's film is ultimately more cleverly transgressive than most of the films associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement, albeit it was clearly constructed to appeal to an unwitting mainstream audience, thus arguably making it all the more subversive. Of course, unlike most slasher flicks, Hiltzik's film is at least partially scary, as nothing would be more horri-

SLEEPAWAY CAMP

fyng to a teenage boy than to taking off a girl's panties and finding a wrinkly cock instead of creamy cunt staring back at them. Naturally, the film would also probably scare the hell out of certain parents and child alike in its particularly perverse 'Primal Scene' (or what Freud called 'Urszene') flashback segment where the mentally perturbed protagonist recalls giggling with his twin sister upon catching their beloved daddy in bed with his lover. Indeed, you know a horror flick is doing something right when you do not know whether or not you should laugh or vomit during scenes that have nothing to do with violent death, dismemberments, etc. Indeed, if there was a slasher that might inspire Bruce Jenner to get the testicular fortitude to go all the way with his patently preposterous post-midlife-crisis tranny charade and make the mistake of a lifetime by getting his cock and balls hacked off, it is mostly certainly Sleepaway Camp, which plainly demonstrates that a chick with a dick is an unspeakable sight that incites a sort of short-term metaphysical affliction in those individuals that are unfortunate enough to witness such a thing.

-Ty E

RETURN TO SLEEPAWAY CAMP

Robert Hiltzik (2008)

How could I not drool at the news of a planned Sleepaway Camp sequel? Especially after how disturbing the ending to the original was. The long awaited sequel is finally released and my prying eyes are craving for more inspired camp slashers. How do you think I took it when Robert Hiltzik slapped me in the face with his film? I almost teared up a tiny bit. And to think Isaac Hayes' (Bless your soul) last film was this trife piece of shit. Return to Sleepaway Camp is the most uninspired sequel I've seen. What makes this more of a supreme let-down is the fact that popular horror sites are calling it the film to end all horror films. That might be a little out of context but they might as well had said it.

The film opens up with a character named Alan. He is a bit of a retard and the film uses this as not a plot for sympathy but a tool to make you hate this character, at least I did. Alan is a sniveling little shit full of inane Pre-school insults. His constant bullying has acquired him to be bullied thus sparking a voracious food chain of Big-medium-small. The arsenal of dialogue Alan carries is retarded, plain and simple. I'd hate to use such a generic description, but I do mean "retarded" in the most offensive way possible. After Alan more-or-less calls people doo-doo heads, the killings begin. Several of the cast members are rejoining the story from the previous films after a long hiatus. Hibernation is a deadly force to reckon with. This sequel appears to disregard the two middle films and just initiates what Hiltzik believes are clever kills. Clever being filling someones stomach with gasoline and lighting them on fire. Or giving someone a deep-fryer swirlie. The lot of these kills can be found in any Friday the 13th continuation. Completely devoid of imagination. As opposed to a Listening copy. Smart move, Mr. Hiltzik. During research of the film, I discovered an iMDB thread of a certain poster claiming this to be the best movie ever; a "masterpiece". With a bit of free time, I viewed the profile and found this to be said users only post to the defunct account. This is a similar tactic used by independent horror film directors to promote their film by creating a counterfeit opinion. Return to Sleepaway Camp is a travesty of horror. It struggles to capture that 80s pathos. The only thing Hiltzik managed to create with this unnecessary sequel was a visual surgery on the senses. Robert Hiltzik, I have a message for you. "Your ass stinks."

-mAQ

SHREDDER ORPHEUS
SHREDDER ORPHEUS

Robert McGinley (1990)

While Jacques Demy's *Parking* (1985) is a rather strange and unfortunately equally kitschy update of Jean Cocteau's classic *Orpheus* (1950) aka *Orphée*, it pales in comparison to the otherworldly new wave-ish dystopian decadence of the obscure little cult item *Shredder Orpheus* (1990), which is easily the most insanely idiosyncratic cinematic reworking of the ancient Greek myth ever made. Indeed, an innately whimsical work that absolutely personifies the phrase, "guilty pleasure," the film even makes Patrick Conrad's high-camp mutation of *Orpheus*, *Mascara* (1987), which replaces hell with a fancy tranny-run S&M opera house, seem rather restrained by comparison. While advertised as a sort of brother film to classic goofy 1980s skate flicks like *Thrashin'* (1986) and *Gleaming the Cube* (1989) and marketed with the totally 'tubular' tagline, "They're shredding their way to Hell!", *Shredder Orpheus* is more like Cocteau's *Orpheus* meets Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982) as directed by someone that is more interested in making a mockery of the New Wave and New Romanticist fashion sense than promoting it as demonstrated by the fact that the heavy-metal-minded protagonist 'shreds' on lead guitar and that the villains look like preposterously dressed fashion victims who look like they graduated from the Klaus Nomi and Steve Strange School of Fashion. Written, directed, produced, and starring a then-rather-young Robert McGinley in what would be his directorial debut, this post-apocalyptic sk8 cult flick may not be comparable to what Orson Welles achieved at 26 with his true auteur piece *Citizen Kane* (1941), but it is certainly what one might describe as a "hidden gem" or "lost cult classic," as a rather curious and original work that really has no contemporaries. Released by the VHS-only film production and distribution company Action International Pictures (AIP) that was founded by Anglo-Jewish choreographer turned filmmaker David Winters (who, incidentally, directed *Thrashin'*), *Shredder Orpheus* was pretty much guaranteed to be forgotten right from the get go, but luckily a bunch of film nerds that are obsessed with the company that distributed it on videotape have given it new life via the internet. Influenced by everything from films like Cocteau's *Orpheus* and Marcel Camus' *Black Orpheus* (1959) to old school skate and music subcultures to C.G. Jung's theories on archetypes and featuring a throbbing musical score by an ex-member of the industrial metal group Ministry and half-crazed Hebraic writer, poet, and performance artist Steven Jay "Jesse" Bernstein (who was a comrade of alpha-Beat William S. Burroughs) as a crippled war veteran, belligerent babbling bum, hobo guru, and proletarian philosopher that wheels himself around on a skateboard to get from place to place, *Shredder Orpheus* is a hysterical hodgepodge of high but mostly low kultur that reminds one how truly aesthetically absurd and fantasy-driven the late-1980s/early-1990s were. Set in a dystopian world where television is liter-

ally broadcasted in hell, the film is pure fetishistic fantasy escapism of the rather pleasantly retrograde sort. Indeed, in no other film will you find what could be called, “New Wave Cocteauian Kitsch.”

As narrated by a crippled war veteran named ‘Axel’ (Steven Jesse Bernstein)—a fellow who has to rely on a skateboard for mobility because spending three years fighting in Central American jungles left him without the use of his hips and ripped his nervous system to shreds—while rolling around in dystopian Seattle of Shredder Orpheus, five acres of shipping containers have been used to house the proletarian population in an futuristic hellhole that is called ‘The Grey Zone.’ To pass the time, Axel and his much younger sexually deviant shoplifter skate buddies ‘Scratch’ (Linda Severt) and ‘Razoreus’ (Marshall Reid) regularly leave the zone to see their friend Orpheus’ band ‘Orpheus and the Shredders’ play. Orpheus Hellenbach (played by writer/director/producer Robert McGinley) has a beautiful fiancée named Eurydice (Megan Murphy) and it looks like they have a bright future together, but when an evil executive from an aesthetically terrorist TV station located in hell called Euthanasia Broadcasting Network (EBN) sees the little lady playing a gig on television with her boy toy at a venue called the ‘Club Trash Bin’ and concludes that she is the “key to the heartbeat of the youth market,” he and his equally deathly pale ‘psychic vampire’ cohorts come up with a conspiratorial plan to kidnap her and make her a perennial slave to the nefarious television network. Indeed, after the couple’s wedding where the groom Orpheus is given a rare Gibson guitar that was co-created by Jimi Hendrix and that was designed to be the “ultimate power-chord machine that would alter and elevate human consciousness,” Eurydice is kidnapped and brought to the infernal EBN TV station. Of course, Orpheus chases after his beloved and enters hell where he is momentarily reunited with his deceased parents who now work as virtual slaves whose job is to shred peoples’ memories, which they do with a mere paper shredder. While his father attempts to shred his memory because otherwise he could subject himself to “100,000 years of word processing” hell for not following orders, Orpheus is saved when his mother intervenes, though it comes at the price of losing his memory of his parents in a symbolic scene reflecting the protagonist’s break with his progenitors and maturation to adulthood.

After being coerced into performing with his new haze-generating Hendrix guitar on television by a Svengali-like TV producer that looks like he could be the more stocky little brother of Klaus Nomi and terrorizing the discernibly jaded Goth-like hell inhabitants of hell with his killer guitar shredding, Orpheus is told by the rather dapper Dracula-esque dictator of EBN, Hades (Gian-Carlo Scandiuzzi) and his more empathetic wife Persephone (Vera McCaughan) that he and Eurydice may leave hell and return to the Grey Zone if he manages to walk back home without looking back at his wife. Of course, the entire thing is a trick to bring up television ratings and while Orpheus does manage to get out of the broadcasted hellhole, his beloved princess Eurydice is trapped there forever

SHREDDER ORPHEUS

as a regularly performing slave of the network, thus causing the protagonist to fall into a deep and dark metaphysical prison of internal infernal misery. While Orpheus and his band become all the more popular as time passes, he “doesn’t give a shit” because his undying love and longing for Eurydice only grows all the more with each passing day. After deciding enough is enough after seeing his wife dance on stage with Hades in a scene that resembles an old German expressionist film, Orpheus opts to go on a Wagnerian quest and skates through a killer parking garage to get to hell to save Eurydice.

Unbeknownst to Orpheus, who believes he has been given a gift from the gods, the pernicious producer at EBN has supplied him with a demonic haze-blowing skateboard, as Hades and his comrades want the heroic skate rat to come back to their studios so they can improve their ratings. After literally jumping off the Satanic multi-story parking garage with his skateboard and skating through some infernal tunnels, Orpheus eventually arrives in hell where Hades coerces him into playing the sole contestant on a deadly game show where he must choose between two doors: one containing his death and the other containing his beloved Eurydice. Of course the game is rigged and Orpheus soon finds himself being decapitated by a group of chainsaw-wielding she-bitches who resemble members of Gwar after he ends up choosing the wrong door. In a scene clearly ripped from a scene near the end of David Lynch’s *Eraserhead* (1977), Orpheus’ decapitated head enters the spotlight of a studio floor and Eurydice picks it up and says goodbye to her beloved in a broadcasted scenario that certainly earns EBN record ratings. After the show, the EBN producer carelessly disposes of Orpheus’ head, which ends up in a river and is later found by one of the belated skate-rocker’s young comrades. In the end, the skaters use Orpheus’ skull as a source of meaning in their rather nihilistic lives and regularly perform rituals with it. Indeed, via his skull, Orpheus’ legacy lives on as a sort of timeless skater mythology.

While it probably does not say much, *Shredder Orpheus* is easily the most sophisticated and intricate skater flick ever made as a work that even makes the skate rat favorite *Thrashin’*—a reworking of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* meets a punk take on *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)—seem rather conventional by comparison. Unquestionably, one of the most interesting things about McGinley’s flick is its seemingly absurd yet somewhat admirable attempt to create a sort of skater mythology as influenced by the theories of C.G. Jung. Indeed, skulls have always been a part of skateboard culture, with the most popular skate company of the 1980s, Powell Peralta, which had a skate team called ‘The Bones Brigade,’ even using one for their iconic logo. In *Shredder Orpheus*, the skull becomes a positive image as opposed to the negative as it becomes an archetype for valor, courage, artistic integrity, and general heroism. In that sense, the film certainly brings new meaning to the age old expression: “skate or die.” Speaking of Powell Peralta, McGinley would state in a late 2013 interview regarding his

influences for the film: "I already mentioned the Cocteau films, but a key inspiration were the Stacey Peralta and the Bones Brigade videos." For whatever reason, McGinley would not direct another feature until almost a decade later when he released *Jimmy Zip* (1999), which is apparently about a young pyromaniac who teams up with a metal sculptor to wage war against both the art world and criminal underworld. While directed and edited in a fairly conventional 'hack-like' style, *Shredder Orpheus* is anything but conventional when it comes to its eccentric themes and imaginary, as a sort of satirical dystopian neo-fairytale of the rather anarchistic yet mythmaking sort. Trashed by the fashion keen punk rock fanboys that assembled the resourceful yet insufferably written book *Destroy All Movies!!! The Complete Guide to Punks on Film* (2010), McGinley's poorly neglected should-be-cult-classic is a work that, somewhat paradoxically, will probably be best understood and appreciated by cinephiles with a special palate for experimental and avant-garde works, as opposed to punk rock philistines and contemporary skaters. Indeed, *Shredder Orpheus* may feature rather lame old school skater slang and majorly moronic scenes of comic relief, but it is also a piece of tastefully trashy punk poetry. As for the place of the Orpheus myth in the modern day world, director McGinley probably said it best when he stated in an interview regarding his interest in reworking the ancient story: "Usually protagonists in the Hero's Journey stories are warriors, but Orpheus is a unique hero: a transformative artist and musician that could manipulate consciousness as well as animate material objects. I found the music-driven love and death story embodied in the Orpheus archetype irresistible." Indeed, Orpheus is the hero of poets and artists, so it is only natural that *Shredder Orpheus* depicts hell as a mainstream television network that is run by pale yet swarthy beings that incessantly distort reality and look like they slithered out of the ghettos of Eastern Europe.

-Ty E

ORDINARY PEOPLE
ORDINARY PEOPLE

Robert Redford (1980) *Ordinary People* is a hopeful film about a Bourgeoisie family with WASP psychosis that is cured by a magical Jewish psychiatrist. The film won four academy awards and was the directorial debut from Robert Redford. *Ordinary People* is also fairly weak and hollow drama that examines the character conflicts in a typical banal white upper middle class family. The film was most likely so critically acclaimed because of its endorsement of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. The film's protagonist, Conrad, is a quite conflicted character. The order and discipline so commonly associated with people of Conrad's over privileged background is coming to shambles. After the accidental boating death of his universally loved brother Buck (and suffering from survivor guilt), Conrad made the decision to attempt suicide and fails. Once released from a mental hospital, he still is incapable of functioning in his orderly upper middle class background. He eventually starts to see a mysterious psychiatrist Dr. Berger. Dr. Berger uses unconventional and psychoanalytic psychiatry techniques in hopes of rescuing Conrad from his genteel psychosis. We never get to know anything about Dr. Berger's character aside for his brilliant ability to de-racinate a WASP from their pathological roots. He gives no evidence of his true character as he certainly does not want to reveal his own "psychosis." Dr. Berger seems to suffer from a sort of sociopath behavior bent on subversion for subversions sake. He would have made a great disciple under Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was heavily influenced by his contempt for German culture and strong ties to his Jewish background. He considered Germans to be pathological because of their emphasis on gender differences (among other things). He so arrogantly sought to "cure" Germans (referring to them as Aryans) of their "irrational" cultural heritage and norms. Freud further displayed his disdain for Western Civilization when he stated, "We are bringing America the plague" in reference to his introduction of psychoanalysis to the United States. Interestingly enough, Freud refused to ever have himself psychoanalyzed. This is very telling of both his character and agenda. Dr. Berger mirrors Freud in contemporary (or at least for when the film was made) practice.

Ordinary People is one of the more subtle Hollywood propaganda films that I have seen. It lets the WASP upper middle class know that they can cool down with a little help from wacky Jewish psychiatrists. Dr. Berger is a priest of the New World Order. His methods are not to be questioned and he is a producer of crucial psychological results. He encourages weakness and that weakness results in a sort of happy nihilism. By the end of *Ordinary People*, Conrad has less control over himself than before. The difference is that Conrad is now accepting of his weakness. It has been said many times that psychoanalysis has actually made patients worse due to their consciousness of their own faults and hang-ups. The real question to ask when *Ordinary People* reaches its conclusion is whether or

not Conrad was cured. I highly doubt it.
-Ty E

KIDS
KIDS

Robert Rodriguez (2001)

Kids, Larry Clark's debut film, is still the best film by the perverted director. The film also made a name for Harmony Korine. Korine's cameo in Kids as a drug distributing raver is also a memorable thing to see. I think I would give Korine more credit with the creation of Kids as he introduced Larry Clark to the urban "subculture" featured in the film. In all honesty, Kids is an exploitation film in the truest sense with a slight hint of artistry. I remember becoming interested in Kids at a young age when I heard it was a film featuring skateboarding. When I actually got around to watching the film, I felt both disgusted and humored. I couldn't help but hate the two main wigger skaters, but at the same time find their antics to be retarded poetry. Casper claims to be "the dopest" ghost but really is degenerate filth. It makes one wonder if Justin Pierce, the actor that played Casper, decided to take his own life after realizing his performance in Kids is immortalized forever on celluloid. One also can't forget Harold Hunter, the real-life crackhead and professional skateboarder who rode for Zoo York skateboarding company. Mr. Hunter recently died, but thankfully he too has been immortalized in the film. Harold shows he has no shame when he shakes his dick for a group of white girls and boys. He also couldn't care less if a girl tells him to "stop!" Harold Hunter is better known in the skateboard world for his part in the Zoo York Mix-Tape. Another scene that truly sticks out in my mind is when a group of preteen boys share a blunt together on a couch. They are all lined up by skin color and show their respects to "the savior" Jesus Christ. I couldn't help but think it was odd that Larry Clark had them all touching each other with their shirts off. Mr. Clark is without doubt a borderline pedophile. Larry has even gone as far as to start skateboarding so he can become part of the "youth" subculture. I guess he really cares for children. Kids also made me realize that America is really turning into "the third world." Ever since the film came out over a decade ago, America has had even larger flood of uneducated immigrants. The youth featured in Kids, many of which mongrelized beyond racial recognition, are aimless and worthless. They live to fuck (and produce more unwanted children), get fucked up, and destroy. Destruction seems to really be their only instinct and they do it well. That being said, the only quality these individuals have is their ability to unintentionally entertain. A friend once told me that Kids "burned a hole in his soul" and I couldn't help but laugh.

-Ty E

GRINDHOUSE

Robert Rodriguez (2007) *Cannibal Holocaust*, *I Spit on Your Grave*, *The Beyond*, and *Thriller: A Cruel Picture* are all films that I hold close to my heart. You can call these films a number of things. This includes exploitation, trash, art, and masterpieces. But please don't call these films "grindhouse." That word has been tainted by Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodríguez. Once again this duo has proved their contempt for originality and ability to butcher genre upon genre. But this time they have gone too far.

Tarantino and Rodriguez thought it would be cute to make a "grindhouse" double feature. *Death Proof* and *Planet Terror* are these fan boys new crime. I originally told myself I wouldn't watch *Grindhouse* but I gave in. As much as I was bored by *Kill Bill* and *Sin City*, I had to see those two butt buddies takes on the "grindhouse" film. Since my hatred runs much more deep for Tarantino, I decided to watch Rodriguez's *Planet Terror* first. The whole film was a complete piece of trash. This is the only characteristic that it had in common with any "grindhouse" film. But I must admit that I was entertained. It had enough gore and disgusting stuff to keep my interest. I just wish that I could have personally killed the midget El Wray. Rodriguez really must have no idea what makes a bad ass. El Wray may possibly be the weakest, ugliest, and lamest "badass" in film history. I hope this character was a joke. Rodriguez gets off easy with *Planet Terror*. I just hope that he doesn't think he's an innovative director. He needs to watch other films besides ones directed by Sergio Leone. Tarantino's *Death Proof* is probably the most embarrassing movie I have seen all year. The rumors of Tarantino frying his brain on ecstasy must be true. *Death Proof*'s dialogue is even more horribly contrived than ever. I have always found Tarantino's dialogue to be boring verbal masturbation and *Death Proof*'s dialogue can't even get up. Tarantino is constantly praised for his dialogue and obsession with creating the anti-film (which he stole from Godard, among other things). He has also been praised as a self trained movie scholar. Too bad Tarantino generally has shitty taste in both film and music. His films are highly reflective of that. *Death Proof* is another "girl power" flick. Tarantino loves tough girls and women's empowerment. I wonder if Tarantino is funded by the "Bolsheviks of America." The Bolsheviks loved having women being killed in war and cheap death. I was exhilarated when the first car of girls was demolished. Kudos to Tarantino for killing the ones he loves. Tarantino always has a way of mixing death and violence with humor. 99% of the time he fails. For once he accomplished this with the dismemberment of some stoned drug bitches leg via car window. Of course, both *Death Proof* and *Planet Terror* features cameos from Tarantino. I don't know why Tarantino would think people are interested in seeing his big chin and hearing his coke driven voice. At least Alfred Hitchcock's cameos were subtle and entertaining. Tarantino wants to put his big tongue in your mouth.

GRINDHOUSE

Spooky Eli Roth also makes an awkward cameo in Death Proof. Tarantino must have realized how much Roth really loves him. Both "directors" should have cut their appearances. Grindhouse also comes equipped with faux trailers of movies inspired by the real grindhouse flicks. Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS was probably the first film Tarantino jerked off to in the theaters. Grindhouse was also made grainy to give it a classic real grindhouse look. I just thought it was lame and cheap (and not in a good way). If Tarantino and Rodriguez love Grindhouse films so much they should have invested money in having the best of them restored. The only thing these guys did was commit celluloid blasphemy.

-Ty E

THE HUSTLER

Robert Rossen (1961)

Paul Newman maybe the ultimate Hustler of Hollywood, a mischling Judaic with an Aryan phenotype and an assertive martial prowess, he could have been a poster boy for the Waffen SS. In the Hollywood Zionist epic Exodus, Newman even plays a Zionist Jew who fools a British military man into thinking he is a fellow British Aryan soldier. Newman, in his undeniable stoicism, cunningly smiles along as the Brit brags about how good his Jew-dar is and how he could conclusively spot a Judaic anywhere. In the classic film The Hustler, the young Paul Newman goes all out in signature hustling style as a young man who shoots pool better than most of his criminal elders. If anything, The Hustler should have been the name of Newman's autobiography. I have no interest in playing/watching pool or going to bars, but The Hustler is a film that I could not navigate my eyes away from. Paul Newman plays a cool cat by the named of "Crazy Eddie" Felson, a man that may not be crazy but he surely has an uncontrollable aura of confidence. It seems Crazy Eddie is more interested in beating the best pool players than taking all their money, a character flaw that results in monetary loss for the young man. It is not until Crazy Eddie meets an older con-man psychopath named Bert that he finally learns to hustle like a true capitalist. Unfortunately for Eddie, Bert also likes to hustle his students as long as it results in monetary gain. Crazy Eddie may be a hustler but he certainly is not the best at hustling the opposite sex. In fact, Eddie's love interest Sarah hustles him when she pays for his food and eventually gives him a place to stay. Sarah is an alcoholic writer who is no doubt Eddie's intellectual superior. Due to her quick wits and flawless intellect, Sarah soon picks up on the fact that Bert is hustling Eddie. The real battle in The Hustler becomes between Bert and Sarah, a duel of psychological warfare that makes the film the intense vintage classic that it is. Out of all the people that Crazy Eddie encounters, it seems he respects his fellow hustler pool players the most. Eddie especially has a soft spot for Minnesota Fats, a fat hustler who despite his fatness has an aristocratic manner. In 1986, Paul Newman reprises his role as Crazy Eddie in the Martin Scorsese film The Color of Money. In this film, Crazy Eddie no longer has the youthful exuberance that he had in The Hustler. In fact, it seems that Crazy Eddie has taken over many of the character traits of the highly despicable Bert. Now almost elderly, Crazy Eddie finds himself a young hotshot pool player to make money off of. I found this to be a reasonable change as Crazy Eddie's world in The Hustler is destroyed and he has finally learned the way of the beast, but I guess that is what one should expect in a parasitical criminal underworld, for the nicest guys always come in last.

-Ty E

ANTS!
ANTS!

Robert Scheerer (1977)

aka "It Happened at Lakewood Manor" (1977) I love, love, love animal revenge trash. Especially when it's made-for-TV fodder that isn't constricted by television actors or cameos or ridiculous inserts of scenes brandishing exclusive footage of ants conspiring out of a kitchen sink. Wait, all these tags fit *Ants!* perfectly and oh, what a marvelous television film this is. Rather than being dreary, serious, and heavy headed, *Ants!* takes scenes of actual bodily invasion of tiny insects and makes it somewhat unnerving. Pay mind to the subtle foreign eroticism of the PolyGram video art. Only attacking ants on a screaming girl could bring out the curvaceous assets of this 70s whore.

Ants! starts off suddenly with the horrors of construction and the destruction of a natural environment. Granted, every bit of land is as much a habitat to them as it is to us and critters do invade our home unprovoked so survival of the fittest does exclusively fit here. But only this time they haven't disturbed any innocent thing, they've unleashed a nest of vehement ants that have adopted our insecticides and use it against us in the form of venomous bites. As soon as these scenes of environmental disaster end, another begins of lame character development in which a hippie chick bags a lifeguard by less-than-suave moves that put most pre-pubescent teens to shame. A greedy casino promoter soon plans to purchase the nearby hotel for demolition unbeknownst to the mild-mannered owner. The plot is especially water-thin at birth and only gets diluted more with drab stories of two star-crossed lovers that seek parental blessing. This being said, Lynda Day George plays the heroine and becomes a hindrance at the end. She's told not to move. "Just stay still" they said. "No." she said. This goes back and forth as she twitches with an accelerative fervor that will infuriate the saint in us all. *Ants!* is a conscientious animal attack! film with scenes that feature creepy crawling spirals of poisonous ants. The deaths aren't glorified or icky, they're simply nerve endings being incapacitated along with screaming. Although, it is a shame to see a young Suzanne Somers die slowly by ant bites. Several scenes allow for a spontaneous influx of entertainment including one that borders irony. In a jab at voyeurism, an onlooking crowd has lethal ants blown all over them thanks to the rescue helicopter above them. As you watch suburbanite after suburbanite screaming, scratching at their flesh to remove the ants, you feel a sort of sadistic satisfaction as if you just quenched an unknown thirst. Only to accompany these fierce attacks is a trippy retro score. *Ants!* is definitely choice of the litter on terms of cheesy B-fare TNT-style nature attack films. The scenes of ravaging ants is a fun endeavor to be a part of and I find this to be a more believable although embarrassing portion of creature insanity. The ending is played out perfectly as the survivors run up floor by floor to escape the wave of creatures. The final solution also brings similar thoughts akin to Tommy Lee Jones' Vol-

cano, which is good for some surefire laughs. Ants! is a film that can get under your skin in the right mood. Seeing appendages covered entirely in ants even leaves me feeling unsettled. This isn't the greatest I've seen but a surprise appearance from Brian Dennehy made me rather ecstatic. Of course, such trash could only come from the mind that brought us Jaws 3-D.

-mAQ

Laurin
Laurin

Robert Sigl (1989)

While the Germans have had quite arguably a greater impact on horror cinema than any other nation in the world, by the time of the Nazi era, the Teutons had more or less completely abandoned the genre. Indeed, aside from Niklaus Schilling's *Nachtschatten* (1972) aka *Nightshade* and Ulli Lommel's *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves* and Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), German New Cinema—the greatest and most important German film movement of the post-WWII era—did not really produce any notable horror films. As conservative auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg argued in his magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), post-WWII Germans felt the need to dispose of their national myths as their nation's entire kultur had been supposedly tainted by Uncle Adolf and his merry men, hence the obsession with far-left politics, revolutionary terrorism, feminism, and other cultural ills among filmmakers associated with German New Cinema. After all, one cannot forget that the greatest Aryan horror novelist of the early 20th century, Hanns Heinz Ewers—a remarkable satanic Renaissance man of sorts who was one of the first people to recognize film as a legitimate artistic medium, penned the screenplay for the first independent film in cinema history, *The Student of Prague* (1913), and whose 1911 masterpiece horror novel *Alraune* was cinematically adapted no less than five times (not to mention the fact that the Hollywood *Species* films are a reworking of *Alraune*)—was a National Socialist party member and wrote a biographical novel on Nazi martyr Horst Wessel, which was later adapted into the early NS propaganda film *Hans Westmar* (1933). Luckily, a handful of German filmmakers like Jörg Buttgeriet (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*) and Robert Sigl (*Schrei - denn ich werde dich töten!* aka *School's Out*, *Hepzibah - Sie holt dich im Schlaf* aka *The Village*) decided to create their own new myths in the Teutonic tradition of mystifying angst, with the latter's work *Laurin* (1989) aka *Laurin: A Journey Into Death* being arguably one of the greatest and most underrated films of German film history as a visually exquisite cross-genre work with an intricate and labyrinthine plot that is depicted from the innocent perspective of a little girl.

Of course, as a Gothic fairytale-like period piece set in an exotic location (despite ostensibly set in a 19th century German seaside village, the film was actually shot in Hungary) that is like the Czech arthouse vampire fantasy masterpiece *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) aka *Valerie a týden divů* meets Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Effi Brieß* (1974) meets Lucio Fulci's unconventional giallo *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972), *Laurin* is not your typical horror film, as a work of nearly perfectly paced celluloid elegance of the timeless sort that does not wallow in contemporary postmodern diseases like irony, cynicism, or parody. Indeed, one would never suspect that auteur Robert Sigl was only 25-

years-old when he started production on the film, which ultimately earned him the Bavarian Film Award in 1989 for 'Best New Director,' thus becoming the youngest filmmaker to ever earn the coveted prize (he was also nominated for the Max-Ophüls-Award the same year). Directed by a man who once stated, "I hate the Christian church and especially the Pope," Laurin may be rather traditional in terms of aesthetic style and storytelling, but the work has unflinching anti-Christian and even homoerotic undertones despite being a sensitively assembled film where the protagonist is a little girl. Indeed, like Richard Blackburn's lesbian-themed Lovecraftian vampire flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973) and Philip Ridley's 1950s-set rural American bloodsucker work *The Reflecting Skin* (1990), Laurin is a decidedly dark and sexually disturbing neo-fairytale where a child is forced to grow up due to horrifying circumstances that have entered her life relating to death and perversion. Shot in a rural area of Hungary that apparently had not changed in over a hundred years with a mostly all-Hungarian cast, Laurin is an otherworldly Teutonic-Magyar celluloid *Nachtmahr* of great beauty and cultivated brutality where the hinterlands become a place of mystifying horrors and secretive sexual savagery.

Little Laurin (Dóra Szinetár) is watching her seafarer father Arne (János Derzsi) grab her beautiful mother Flora Anderson's (Brigitte Karner) bosoms from her crib. Not surprisingly, Laurin's grandmother Olga (Hédi Temessy) yells at her son Arne for manhandling his wife in front of their daughter. Of course, the little girl does not mind because she can tell her parents are deeply in love. As a man who is constantly away due to his job, Arne is about to head to the sea once again, but he does not realize that this will be the last time he sees his wife. Before Arne leaves, Flora reveals to him that she is pregnant, which brings the seafarer great joy. Though Arne promises his wife that, "Someday, I will take you along and we'll sail down the river and out into the deep blue sea," fate has different and rather unfortunate plans for the two true lovers. Indeed, not long after seeing her husband off as he sails away to god knows where, Flora spots a man fiddling with the corpse of a young gypsy boy. Incidentally, the same gypsy boy banged on little Laurin's window for help only minutes before, but she was too scared to answer the scared little boy's pleas for help. The next day, a peasant man finds Flora's corpse floating in the water next to the bridge, with a jewelry box that the dead woman's husband had given her shimmering through the water from the bottom of the lake. Grandmother Olga is so angered by Flora's dubious death that she damns god, but little does she realize that one of god's servants' progeny was involved with her daughter-in-law's tragic death. When Laurin goes to look at her mother's corpse at night, she notices a tear trickling down her cold postmortem progenitor's pale yet strangely beautiful cheek. Grandmother Olga attempts to setup Arne with a hot redheaded single mother named Frau Greta Berghaus (Kati Sír) who has a little boy named Stefan (Barnabás Tóth) that Laurin is friends with, but the stoic seafarer refuses to remarry as he still

Laurin

loves Flora. Naturally, Arne eventually goes back to the sea and once again leaves his daughter Laurin and mother Olga helpless.

Around the same time Arne leaves, his virtual doppelganger arrives. Indeed, Laurin mistakes the local Pařtor's (Endre Kátay) son Van Rees (Károly Eperjes) for her own father when he arrives on ship. Van Rees is a secretive and seemingly impenetrable man with a somewhat flat affect who becomes Laurin and Stefan's schoolteacher and he seems to develop a special interest in both of them for varying reasons. When Stefan is bullied in class by a couple boys, his mother Greta invites the teacher over for dinner, but on Van Rees' arrival at the house, he overhears the young mother talking with his Pařtor father. It turns out that the Pařtor has been carrying on an affair with Greta Berghaus and Stefan is his bastard son, thus making him Van Rees' half-brother. Van Rees' mother died when he was just a boy and his Pařtor father, who never got over the death of his wife, abused his son during his childhood, hence his disdain for religion and rather peculiar relationship with both his father and young children. While the Pařtor is such a puritanical man that he refuses to have mirrors in house because they are purportedly "instruments of human vanity," that does not stop him from screwing a young woman that, in terms of age, could be his daughter. Eventually, Stefan disappears and Laurin goes looking for her friend, which eventually leads her to theorizing that Van Rees is involved as she finds her missing friend's glasses in the mouth of an evil-looking black wolfdog owned by the Van Rees family. Indeed, in an earlier and rather disturbing scene in the film, Van Rees crudely gazes at his ½ bastard brother Stefan's naked body from an outdoor window, as if turned on by the little lad. Eventually, Laurin finds a secret door in the floor at some ruins near the local church that leads to a purgatory-like basement 'sex dungeon' of sorts where Van Rees takes his little boys. While Van Rees eventually finds Laurin hiding in a closet and states to her in a somewhat sinister fashion, "I don't like having little girls spy on me," the little girl manages to escape his limp-wrist pansy grasp. Of course, knowing that the little girl is aware that he is a pernicious pedophile serial killer, Van Rees stalks Laurin all the way back to her house and intends to kill her slasher-style with a knife. Through a dream-sequence, it is revealed that Laurin's mother actually died by accident after falling off the bridge while attempting to escape from Van Rees upon spotting him carrying the dead gypsy boy. To scare Van Rees, Laurin has the bright idea to wear her dead mother's cloak, thus tricking the killer into thinking he is seeing a ghost of the women whose death he inadvertently caused. Indeed, Van Rees panics upon seeing Laurin dressed in the ghostly cloak, thereupon causing him to fall backwards down some stairs and eventually die in a freak accident after a large nail sticking in the wall enters the back of his skull and penetrates his diseased brain. After Van Rees dies, blood trickles from his eyes as if he is weeping as a result of his miserable childhood and in sympathy for all the children he has killed. As for Laurin, she feels empowered by wearing her belated

mother's cloak, especially after using it to kill her mother's killer.

Interestingly, apparently director Robert Sigl received an exceedingly negative response from both students and professors while attending Munich Film Academy due to the homoerotic and even incestuous nature of his films, with his 20-minute short *Der Weihnachtsbaum* (1983) aka *The Christmas Tree* being deemed especially offensive due to its supposed depiction of pathological sadomasochistic relationship between a father and son. In an interview with the director featured in the book *Caligari's Heirs: The German Cinema of Fear after 1945* (2006), Sigl stated regarding his less than ideal experience at film school and his decisive desire to change his style for his first feature so as to make it more accessible to a more general audience: "I guess some people felt personally offended because of the psychosexual symbolism and theme. In *LAURIN*, I packaged all this by phrasing it in the psychosexual terms of a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, which made it more palatable to a broader audience. This way, it's more subliminal. Because I do want to reach a lot of people, even entertain them. But that doesn't matter much in one's first efforts as a filmmaker; they're usually more about refining one's style anyway. As a matter of fact, an idiosyncratic style doesn't seem to be much in demand these days. Someone like Polanski, Lynch, or Cronenberg would have a hard time if they were starting out today." Indeed, *Laurin* is like the Brothers Grimm meets Leopold and Loeb as set in a living Caspar David Friedrich painting, which makes for a shockingly aesthetically fruitful combo that can be appreciated by both adults and children alike. While Sigl's first feature *Laurin* was a hit upon its release and went on to develop an international cult following of sorts, the director has yet to direct anything else nearly as interesting, as if he was perennially jinxed by the greatness of his debut film. Aside from a couple TV movies, including the *Scream* rip-off *Schrei - denn ich werde dich töten!* (1999) aka *School's Out*, which was distributed in the U.S. by Fangoria, Sigl has mainly spent most of career directing miniseries, including the *Twin Peaks*-esque *Stella Stellaris* (1993), as well as episodes of popular German TV series like *Lexx* (1997-2002) and *Tatort* (1969-current). Apparently, the last episode of *Tatort* that Sigl directed caused much controversy in Deutschland, as it featured an incestuous sex scene. Why Sigl decided to abandon the glorious path he created with his masterpiece *Laurin* and went on to direct less mature works is questionable, but at least the director demonstrated for a moment during the late-1980s that somewhere deep down in the German collective unconscious lays the dark legacy of the Brothers Grimm. Sort of like an (anti)Heimat take on Fritz Lang's masterpiece *M* (1931) in its depiction of a pathetic and mentally perturbed pedophile serial killer, *Laurin* is undoubtedly one of the sickest celluloid fairytales ever made as a work depicting a man lusting over and assumedly killing his own prepubescent ½ brother, yet Sigl directed the film in such a carefully cultivated, nuanced, and poetic fashion that it never seems like cheap horror trash, thus reminding the viewer why

L A U R I N

Germany is the same nation that produced H.H. Ewers and F.W. Murnau.
-Ty E

THE DEVIL CAME AT NIGHT

Robert Siodmak (1957)

I doubt it would be a stretch to say that, since the birth of cinema, Germany has consistently been the #1 producer of top notch and innovative serial killers flicks, especially of the authentically audacious and bloodcurdling, yet artistically merited sort. Whether it be German expressionism (Fritz Lang's *M*), the German New Wave (*The Tenderness of Wolves*), or obscure arthouse splatter flicks (Schramm), few other nations can boast (not that Germany needs nor wants to further the case for their 'bloodstained' history) of such truly visceral and intriguing films about bloodlusting cut-throats. Undoubtedly, Germany's relatively vast history of true crime during and after both World Wars played an imperative role in influencing these films. While some everyday citizens were literally prostituting themselves so as to avert starvation as chaos in the cities reigned during both wars, the circumstances were ripe for German serial killers like cannibal Fritz Haarmann, child/sex killer Peter "The Vampire of Düsseldorf" Kürten, Carl Großmann, cannibal Karl Denke, Nazi stormtrooper sergeant Paul "the S-Bahn murderer" Ogorzow, and retarded peeping tom Bruno Lüdke to evade the law for a more extended period of time. Despite not knowing how many minutes are in an hour, supremely mentally defective serial killer Bruno Lüdke managed to kill upwards of 51 victims, mainly women, during a 15-year stretch of unrestrained sadism that peaked during the most hectic days of the Second World War. Recently, I had the distinct pleasure of viewing the West German film *The Devil Came at Night* (1957) aka *Nachts, wenn der Teufel kam* aka *The Devil Strikes at Night* directed by Robert Siodmak (*Son of Dracula*, *The Killers*); a work depicting Bruno Lüdke's ghastly homicidal delinquency amid the pandemonium of WWII-era Germany. Resembling parts of a number of great films created before and after it, *The Devil Came at Night* is like Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) meets Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948) meets Ulli Lommel's *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) meets Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (2004), but it is also an original masterpiece in its own right. In short, *The Devil Came at Night* is a distinctly delectable work that totally transcends formulaic genre classification, yet offers some of the best elements from a number genres/subgenres, including the traditional German World War II film, true crime detective story, film noir, serial killer horror flick, and somewhat traditional melodrama. Personally, I cannot think of a more exciting prospect for a setting for a serial killer running rampant than a National Socialist-era war torn German city during a malefic storm of steel.

The Devil Came at Night follows an apolitical (but highly decorated) military officer turned detective sergeant named Axel Kersten (played by Claus Holm) who aims to profile and inevitably jail a serial killer while somewhat precariously jumping over the many hurdles of the bureaucratic Nazi legal system. After

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finding out that a low-level Nazi party member is wrongfully accused of murder, Kersten does his research and is eventually led to Bruno Lüdke (who is played in a most impeccable fashion by Mario Adorf); a profoundly idiotic strongman whose savage lack of intelligence is only rivaled by his supremely scant morality. One can only wonder why daft lunatic Lüdke was not conscripted into the Dirlewanger Brigade – a patently delinquent and collectively deranged division of the Waffen-SS that was comprised of mental patients, perverts, and criminals of all colors (including Gypsies and Slavs) – as the strangely proficient daft serial killer may have proven to be a murderous war hero of sorts. On top of being mentally retarded, big boy Bruno is a bodacious braggart who quite eagerly (but somewhat unknowingly) spills his aberrant beans to investigator Alex Kersten. Despite his exceptional performance in implicating and apprehending a much desired serial killer in a hopelessly chaotic and collapsing nation that is facing the very real possibility of absolute annihilation, Mr. Kersten soon learns that if you fail to play by the official National Socialist playbook, there are dire consequences. Despite his lack of mental competency, Bruno quite adamantly cites Nazi Article 51 as an excuse for his gross and unforgivable criminality. Unlike most Nazi-related films, *The Devil Came at Night* takes a somewhat subtle approach to criticizing the bureaucracy of blood that resonated throughout the Third Reich. Misusing Nazi eugenic ideas, even Bruno, a mentally vapid creature, is able to rationalize his heinous and coldly calculated crimes. To illustrate the absurdity of these laws, a careerist SS-Gruppenführer ('group leader') named Rossdorf (who has a striking resemblance to real-life Waffen-SS Sturmbannführer-turned-Muslim Johann von Leers) cites virtually the same argument as deranged dullard Lüdke in regard to the 'genetic' blameworthiness of the killer.

Although born in Dresden, Germany (despite claiming Memphis, Tennessee for passport purposes), *The Devil Came at Night* director Robert Siodmak – who was born a Jew – would leave his homeland for Hollywood (after a brief stay in Paris, France) in 1939 due to the rise of National Socialism. During his fruitful career in Hollywood, Siodmak managed to direct 23 films, most specifically a signature style of film noir flicks, including *Phantom Lady* (1944) and *The Killers* (1945); which the director earned a 'Best Director' Oscar nomination for. After failing to create acclaimed works outside the film noir style (which was apparently unpopular with the majority of Americans of that era), Siodmak returned to Europa in 1952 and after directing a couple films including an adaptation of Gerhart Hauptmann's 1911 play *Die Ratten* ('The Rats'), the auteur eventually completed his post-Hollywood masterpiece *The Devil Came at Night*. Upon viewing the film, I noticed it had a slightly Hollywood film noir 'feel' to it, but I was totally ignorant in regards to the director's transnational background. Generally, I would be most repelled by the prospect of a Hollywood-ized filmmaker directing a European production, but for *The Devil Came at Night*, the 'Tinseltown tint' works to the film's advantage. After all, one could hardly think of a

better setting for a film noir than the dark alleyways and shadowy hallways of steadily dilapidating WWII era urban Germany, aside from maybe the Warsaw ghetto. Like a typical Hollywood film, *The Devil Came at Night* lacks any sort of domineering artistry as it is most specifically a solidly crafted work that tells a captivating story, and therein lays its greatest strength. *The Devil Came at Night* is a gripping and grim flick that, like witnessing a real-life stabbing or fatal car accident, echoes in one's mind long after the film has concluded. Although lacking the buckets of blood and fetishistic brutality of a modern Hollywood serial killer films, *The Devil Came at Night* is fundamentally more sinister and compelling. Maybe David Fincher should have taken notice of the German precision behind *The Devil Came at Night* when he worked on *Zodiac* (2007) as he could have easily avoided assembling an overly monotonous test in stagnant banality and derelict dillydallying.

The Devil Came at Night concludes with the phrase, "Wheels shall roll for victory" painted on the side of a train en-route to the hellish, but cold Eastern Front. Essentially, this ironic expression sums up a major theme of the film: the absurdity and futility of stern idealism amongst imminent defeat. In the end, human bodies roll and defeat ascends. For mere political reasons and beside the fact the Third Reich is crumbling, SS officer Rossdorf justifies his mission to have an innocent man executed. Kersten, who is undoubtedly a more talented and intelligent man, selflessly puts his own career on the line to vindicate the wrongly accused. Of course, the innocent man sentenced to death is undoubtedly symbolic of the Holocaust. Although few will admit it today openly, a small segment of the German Jewish population was actively involved in nation-destroying communist uprisings and war profiteering, but the majority would pay for the sins of the few. During *The Devil Came at Night*, a middleclass Jewess mentions that her once-respected professor husband died at Auschwitz concentration camp. Clearly, this man was not Kurt Eisner – the once infamous (but now memorialized) Jewish ultra-left-wing journalist that led the Communist Revolution that dismantled the Wittelsbach monarchy in Bavaria – but he was killed just the same due to his mere ancestry. Somewhat ironically, Nazi law worked in the favor of mentally defective Aryan Bruno Lüdke for a period of time. In one particularly humorous scene in *The Devil Came at Night*, Bruno states, "I'm only Bruno, the retard...I am a mental case. FUCK ALL OF YOU", after a cop insinuates that he was involved in a theft. Nazism aside, *The Devil Came at Night* is a work that highlights the universal failure of human law and order and the unintentional destruction it sometimes begets. Nowadays, we give special legal protection to members of 'victim status' groups because of who they sodomize and the size of their lips, and the entire Occident is beginning to rival Nazi Germany in terms of absurd authoritarian laws. Regardless of politics, *The Devil Came at Night* was impressive enough on the international level to be nominated for The Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, which

THE DEVIL CAME AT NIGHT

is not bad for a film that portrays the SS saving the Fatherland from a retarded serial killer.

-Ty E

SHUFFLE

Robert Townsend (1987)

Shuffle is an early art film directed by punk auteur Sogo Ishii. The prerequisite for all Ishii films happens to be striking visuals, a blaring punk soundtrack, and at least one outrageous scenario. For these reasons, he is a punk film pioneer up there with Zedd and Kern. He is most known for Panic High School, Burst City, and Electric Dragon 80,000V. Probably galvanizing the lesser film Run Lola Run, Shuffle is a story that is told without words. The actions of each individual is what shines through to you. Meet an unnamed punk shaving his head. The distorted angles and views might represent his displaced emotions. This man murdered his girlfriend and is hunting down the Yakuza who hooked her on drugs. The style of the film is largely what captivates the audience so vividly. The film's heart is a 20+ minute long street chase scene which erupts into a flashback. The parkour-esque environment that this film erupts with is one reason why I enjoy this film so much. The character houses great torture in his eyes as he screams to a detective to stop chasing him. This short was based off a manga entitled Run. When Ishii decided to adapt the work into film, he didn't ask permission to do so. After the film was completed, he projected it to the author and got approval, although he was shunned for his negligence. The story itself owes a debt to early noir. I wouldn't doubt for one second that Shuffle's plot piece inspired the creation of such classic games as River City Ransom and Double Dragon, although being hectic and darker. Shuffle isn't a masterwork. In fact, the film is pretty hard to get through at times, but the ending is where the pact is sealed and fates are decided. An ending worthy of being placed near the beginning of Irreversible and the ending of La Haine. Shuffle is a powerful film, without a doubt, but it is just another Japanese film. We have enough of those already.

-mAQ

HARLIS
HARLIS

Robert van Ackeren (1972)

Out of all the great filmmakers of the 1970s belonging to German New Cinema, Dutch-German auteur Robert van Ackeren (*Blondie's Number One*, *The Last Word* aka *Der letzte Schrei*) is probably the director who stands out most as an unwaveringly rampant heterosexual with a naughty and seemingly nihilistic knack for black humor. Originally a prolific cinematographer who was responsible for some of the most important films of German New Cinema, including Werner Schroeter's *Eika Katappa* (1969) and Rosa von Praunheim's gritty celluloid agitprop homo-manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), as well as Roland Klick's kraut cult classics *Bübchen* (1968) and *Deadlock* (1970), van Ackeren would inevitably become a director in his own as the foremost heterosexualist auteur of female-flesh-fetishizing cinema, which is rather ironic considering his past camera work on some of the gayest films of the post-WWII era. Although a proud breeder, van Ackeren was certainly no prude and decadently demonstrated his affinity for lipstick lesbianism with the sardonic and darkly comedic melodrama *Harlis* (1972) aka *The Sensuous Three* aka *Eine Handvoll Zärtlichkeit* starring Fassbinder superstar turned director Ulli Lommel (*Love Is Colder Than Death*, *Blank Generation*) and redheaded counter-culture diva Mascha Rabben (*Der Bomberpilot*, *World on a Wire* aka *Welt am Draht*). A sort of snidely satirical Sapphic take on Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972) meets Werner Schroeter's excess-ridden and history-obscuring take on the Third Reich, *Der Bomberpilot* (1970), *Harlis* is the melodramatically ridiculous and sometimes raunchy tale of a cross-dressing and SS-uniform-sporting lesbo cabaret dancer who falls in love with a man for the very first time in her entire life, only to spark jealousy and hatred among her sassy Sapphic cabaret troupe, not to mention an even more deleterious situation with her male lover's brother and sexually-repressed fiancé. Exaggerating the conventions of traditional Hollywood melodramas to the point of sadistic satire with some film noir, Hitchcock, and 'mad scientist'/James Bond villain conventions thrown in for good measure, *Harlis* is probably director Robert van Ackeren's most accessible and least serious yet paradoxically most idiosyncratic and aesthetically ambitious work to date. While a true blue(balled) heterosexual, van Ackeren has demonstrated a keen interest in ball-crushing cuckoldry, male submissiveness, and sexual sadomasochism and *Harlis* is certainly no exception in expressing these dubious testicle-terrorizing themes, but unlike most of his subsequent films, the director's Sappho SS S&M comedy makes for a more pleasantly palatable flick due to its lack of seriousness with said themes. A brazen black comedy of the rare hetero-camp variety, *Harlis* is a film for those who found the Hebraic Teutophobia of Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1968) to be about as humorous as a hernia and the camp value of Fosse's *Cabaret* as be-

ing just too plain gay and Liza Minnelli as just too plain unbelievable as a sex icon/diva.

Ulli Lommel, with his signature slicked back jet-black hair, plays a somewhat monetary privileged fellow named Raymond and he is enjoying the view at a lesbian cabaret where two beautiful babes named Harlis (Mascha Rabben) and Pera (Gabriele Lafari) are performing as cross-dressing, finely dressed and butt-darting officers of the infamous Schutzstaffel. Although he does not know, Harlis and Pera are not just dance partners but also longtime sexual partners, so when he goes to meet the girls backstage he is in for quite a surprise when he learns that men are “not in fashion.” Pera wastes no time letting Ray know that she thinks that “men are shit,” but Harlis, who has never displayed an interest in men in her entire life, falls head over heels for the tall, dark, and handsome gentleman. A rather assertive broad with a seemingly unquenchable sex drive, Harlis wastes no time asking Raymond “your place or mine?” so they can get straight to business, which rather shocks the masculinity of the novice lesbo-lover, who remarks “usually it’s the man that asks that.” While Harlis finds sex with Raymond to be nothing less than enjoyable, as a longtime lily-licker, she still needs a woman to fulfill her salacious abberosexual appetite, so she continues to maintain her relationship with her longtime girlfriend Pera. Unfortunately, Harlis has a rather pernicious and stereotypically Hebrew-like (in the Nazi propaganda sense, of course!) brother named Prado (German junky/ex-convict Rolf Zacher) who takes an instant dislike to Harlis (although he secretly wants her all to himself), as well as a pesky and pestering girlfriend/fiance named Ria (Heidy Bohlen) who makes the ultimatum, “You better decide soon. I can’t go on this way much longer...either we get married or I’ll buy out your share.” Raymond’s interest in Ria is solely monetary as the two symbolically own a butcher shop/grocery store business, but he is getting tired of being a bloated bourgeois boob and a romantic relationship with Harlis grants him the perfect great escape from a very potentially dreadful marriage. Of course, when sneaky prick Prado walks in on Harlis and Pera rubbing pussies on Raymond’s bed, he wastes no time tying up the two naked girls in bondage and giving his brother the naughty news. A truly ideal cuckold boyfriend, Raymond forces his bastard brother to untie both girls and really couldn’t care less if his girlfriend is still a committed carpet-muncher, but when Prado tells his brother’s longtime girlfriend Ria about her cheating boy toy’s new lesbo girlfriend, things get ugly for everyone involved. On top of that, Pera makes an ultimatum to Harlis that it is either her or Raymond, so she gives the now-subversive sexual persuasion of heterosexual monogamy a try. Raymond ultimately breaks it off with both his girlfriend Ria and brother Prado and the two odious cast-offs have the brilliant idea to get together (and eventually orchestrate a marriage), in part to spite that ‘little bitch’ Harlis.

Naturally, being a lifelong lesbian, Harlis has some reservations about her newly found quasi-heterosexuality and admits to Raymond, who like a good

HARLIS

cuck is applying nail polish to her toenails, that, "My future looks very uncertain now. A man loves a woman who loves women...he tries to teach her to make love like a normal woman but he doesn't succeed...and she loves him except there are complications...and when he finds her in the embrace of another woman...he wants to die because he is so naïve and too sentimental" but also that, "This is the first time I have ever felt fear...because I'm so happy." Of course, Harlis should also fear Raymond's extremely jealous and patently perverted brother Prado as he wants the lipstick lesbo all for himself and he is willing to do just about anything to obtain, including committing a number of ungodly crimes. Among other things, Brother Prado sinisterly stalks Harlis and when he catches her, he rapes her from behind after jamming her head in a car window. And when Raymond tries to comfort her, she says it is too late as the damage has already been done. In a heat of vengeful passion, Ray smacks his pussy brother around like a little girl. While Raymond attempts to make a honest heterosexual real woman out of Harlis, she is still physically and metaphysically enslaved to sourpuss Pera. After having her lesbo crew call in Raymond, Harlis, who is sensually caressing her girlfriend Pera in a provocation fashion, states, "I want you to know the truth about me...I'll never change," which absolutely stuns the emotionally brutalized boyfriend. Thoroughly depressed, Ray makes a pathetic attempt at suicide by poisoning himself like a Hollywood Golden Age diva but Harlis walks in on him before he drops dead. Of course, Ria swoops in on wounded dove Raymond while he is recuperating in the hospital, but the lily-licker-loving mensch rebuffs her and gets back with Harlis. Ultimately, Raymond and Pera agree to share Harlis in a sort of seemingly science fiction Ménage à trios comprised of a heterosexual man, lesbian woman, and novice bisexual. When Raymond, Harlis, and Pera join new couple Prado and Ria to celebrate the odious odd couple's wedding, things get a bit ugly, especially after the groom expresses his undying affection for another woman. Jealous of the fact Raymond has Harlis at least ½ to himself, Prado freaks out on his new fiancé Ria due to her 'normativity,' stating to her with the uttermost contempt, "Yes, that's exactly what revolts me...The fact that you're so ordinary...the fact that you're like all other women...so conventional, so maternal, so virtuous, so industries, so boring...you've got a cash register between your legs." In the end, Prado strangles his bride to death and Raymond, Harlis, and Pera live happily ever after as a novel cabaret act/sexual trio. Harlis concludes with a man from the cabaret audience remarking the famous last words, "what times we live."

Despite winning the prestigious Ernst Lubitsch Award in 1973, Harlis is all but forgotten today, even in its native land of Germany, and has yet to be released in any home media format in the United States. What makes Harlis especially interesting and reflective of contemporary German culture is that director Dutch-Teuton Robert van Ackeren utilized an aberrant assortment of Lubitsch/Mel Brooks/Josef von Sternberg Hebraic humor (with a sprinkling of

Hitchcock thrown in for good measure!) to the point where the film seems like a satire of Judaic directed comedies satirizing Germans/Nazis (after all, Hollywood never distinguishes between the two!) and the melancholy score by Gustav Mahler only adds to the maniacal melodramatic absurdity of it all. Of course, Harlis is much darker than the films that it takes influence from as a sort of Über-nihilistic distortion of German history that utilizes Hollywood's own reality-distorting melodramatic conventions against itself in an uncompromisingly cynical way to the point of recalling the grotesquery of the *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*. While director Robert van Ackeren would continue to direct sexually explicit and romantically nihilistic themed films, including his best known work *A Woman in Flames* (1983) aka *Die Flambierte Frau*—a film about a bourgeoisie housewife turned high-priced hooker—as well two “Heimatfilm porn” flicks, including *Deutschland privat - Eine Anthologie des Volksfilms* (1980) and *Deutschland privat - Im Land der bunten Träume* (2007), where he placed ads in newspapers convincing good patriotic German couples to send him their own homemade porn flicks which he turned into kraut cock-and-cunt compilations, he has yet to direct another film as thematically brazen and sardonic as Harlis. Indeed, forget flabby fanboy Kevin Smith's retarded romantic comedy *Chasing Amy* (1997), Harlis, at least as far as I know, is the greatest film ever made about what happens when, “A man loves a woman who loves women,” and naturally it does not take itself even remotely serious, even if it features lavish wardrobes, statuesque Sapphos, aesthetically exquisite tableaux. Advertised as “A Larmoyant Comedy,” Harlis provides some of the most charmingly campy fun you will ever have watching rape, suicide, and uxoricide. For those looking for comic relief from the fact that Deutschland and the rest of Occident is a culturally vapid and seemingly apocalyptic multicultural nightmare where women act like men and vice versa, Harlis is probably your best bet as a totally titillating piece of celluloid tragicomedy created at a time when Ulli Lommel was a great leading man and had yet to be regarded as one of the worst filmmakers who had ever lived and New German Cinema diva Mascha Rabben had yet to fall off the face of earth.

-Ty E

A WOMAN IN FLAMES
A WOMAN IN FLAMES

Robert van Ackeren (1983)

In describing the varying types of femininity in his magnum opus *Sex and Character: An Investigation Of Fundamental Principles* (1903), Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger concluded that the two archetypal extremes of the fairer sex are the “mother” and the “prostitute,” arguing, “Prostitution is not a result of social conditions, but of some cause deep in the nature of women; prostitutes who have been ”reclaimed” frequently, even if provided for, return to their old way of life. . . . I may note finally, that prostitution is not a modern growth; it has been known from the earliest times, and even was a part of some ancient religions, as, for instance, among the Phoenicians.” If the prostitute type is an inborn quality of certain woman, it would most certainly describe the protagonist of erotically-charged sub-arthouse flick *A Woman in Flames* (1983) aka *Die flambierte Frau* directed by Dutch-German cinematographer-turned-auteur Robert van Ackeren (*Harlis* aka *The Sensuous Three*, *Purity of Heart* aka *Die Reinheit des Herzens*). The superlatively salacious story of a childless housewife who leaves her life of relative bourgeois luxury to become a high price call-girl who eventually makes the major mistake of starting clearly a foredoomed relationship with a bisexual hustler who dreams of being a restaurant owner, *A Woman in Flames* is a decidedly depressing yet strangely jocular and teasing, sin-saluting cinematic work featuring a curious collection of sexual spastics, fucked fetishists, closet queens, fascistic leather-men, cultivated cocksuckers, and other repressed perverts who must patronize prostitutes to get the sort of lurid loving that they so deeply and pathetically long for, but cannot find elsewhere. Like virtually all of debauched director Robert van Ackeren’s sex-obsessed works, *A Woman in Flames* features weak cuckold men, ‘strong’ and sexually promiscuous women, sadomasochism and eclectic fetishism, and a risqué romance between two troubled yet strangely sexually complimentary lovers. Undoubtedly director van Ackeren’s most popular, successful, and commercial work to date, *A Woman in Flames* is virtual softcore pornography for leftist intellectuals, feminists, and other members of the vogue kraut bourgeoisie. Featuring passive men that cannot ‘assert’ themselves, aggressive women who use whips as pseudo-phalluses, and a naughty nympho as a sort of high-dollar-whore hero who empowers herself by peddling her puss for cash as opposed to giving it away for ‘free’ to her husband, *A Woman in Flames* ultimately makes for an absurd look at the human byproducts that have been created by feminist brainwashing, kosher capitalism, and the destruction of traditional genders that came as a result of the Second World War.

Despite living a lavish lifestyle, owning a nice home (courtesy of her husband’s income!), and spending her work-free days listening to records and talking with friends on the phone, Eva (Gudrun Landgrebe) hates being a domestic house-

wife. After her husband complains about the fact she used his razor to shave her legs, forgot to buy wine, put glasses in the wrong places, and has done virtually nothing all day, Eva freely admits she is the opposite of the ideal wife due to being a horrible cook, a failure at setting the table, an awkward dancer, as well as someone who failed both her driving and medical exams, and a total failure when it comes to learning both math (numbers and formulas make her 'dizzy') and languages. Since her self-absorbed spouse couldn't care less what she says regarding her lack of domestic talents, Eva decides enough is enough and leaves her hubby a goodbye note stating, "I don't love you anymore," and she packs her bags and walks out of the house without him ever noticing. In no time, Eva makes the acquaintance of a madame/female pimp named Yvonne (van Ackeren regular Gabriele Lafari) who teaches the disgruntled housewife everything she needs to know about peddling her flesh, including how the normal work requires that she lay on the bed and spread her legs, and that if a John wants out of the ordinary, it will cost him extra. A failure as a wife who seems to hate all rules and institutions, Eva has a hard time carrying out even the most fundamental aspects of her job, including simply spreading her legs and becoming the passive "love servant" of a bastard of a businessman who expects to get cash for cunt any time he wants. Of course, Eva has yet to find her true calling when it comes to being a sex worker. One night, while hanging out at a ritzy bar, Eva is approached by an effete bisexual gigolo named Chris (European arthouse superstar Mathieu Carrière), who makes a great impression on her after facetiously stating, "Why are you staring at me? I find you vulgar and badly made-up." While the two high-class prostitutes become a couple, problems arise when Chris' sod sugar daddy Kurt (Hanns Zischler) becomes jealous of the happy heterosexual relationship the two have together. Meanwhile, Eva runs into her ex-husband at a bookstore and he demands that she have sex with him one more time, but she naturally turns him down and states in defense regarding her new degenerate profession, "I'm a woman who does men like you a favor. A married woman doesn't take money for it. Unmarried women who live from men are sluts. And when you do it as your profession, you're a whore. And I'll be the best paid whore, because I offer the least."

Of course, once she realizes she derives pleasure from humiliating an anal retentive beta-male (nothing says beta like a white man married to an Asian woman!) by calling him gay and making him wear a woman's apron and lipstick, Eva finds her natural calling as a ball-crushing and fag-flagellating dominatrix. Eva even expresses her love to Chris in a somewhat sadistic manner by telling him that she loves him because his eyes are too blue, his nose is too large, and his mouth is too narrow, but not without finishing him off with a blowjob. Not long after, Eva and Chris rent out a flat together which they use as their own live-in brothel, but naturally problems arise when the two lovers regularly see each other having sex with customers, but to be fair, the lady of the house never screws her

A WOMAN IN FLAMES

Johns, but merely beats the shit out of them, including a brutal scenario where she crushes a man's fingers by stepping on them with stilettos. With the help of cultured colon-choker Kurt, Eva and Chris are even able to pretend to be members of high society while entertaining intellectuals and scholars. Eva even tells some pompous dinner guests that she is writing a thesis on "melancholy and boredom" and Chris purports to be a 'freelance photographer' (his specialty being 'ID photos'). As Chris states, "Eva and I love the same books, the same films and the same music. We think and feel always the same. We are ideal lovers," and, indeed, he is right, but trouble arises when he confesses his dream of opening a restaurant with Kurt. Additionally, a conflict of interest brews when Eva tells Chris she wants to have a daughter (with blonde hair, like when "she was a child"), but when the kind gentleman asks her to marry him, she states she is not the kind of woman that wants to get married. After fighting with Eva over the fact that she gets paid for "disdaining men," Chris goes to a *Querelle*-like gay bar (incidentally, director van Ackeren played a small role in Fassbinder's 1982 adaptation of the Genet novel) with Kurt and dances like a gay robot to some Kraftwerk-esque synth song. Over time, the bizarre love triangle between Eva, Chris, and Kurt turns into an all out war. Eva attempts to intimidate Kurt by stripping in front of him, which disarms the dandy fairy, but he has a lot of money and Chris needs his sugar daddy so he can achieve his lifelong dream of opening a restaurant. Without asking his girlfriend's permission, Chris uses his and Eva's money, which is in a joint bank account, to buy a restaurant, which inevitably destroys what is left of their relationship. After Eva refuses to kiss Chris, he punches her in the face, douses her with vodka, and sets her on fire with a lit candle, thus turning her into a literal "woman in flames" (or not). In the end, Eva is somehow still alive and empowered by the fact she is an 'independent woman' (or something), even visiting her ex-boy toy Chris' restaurant just to spite him.

Featuring a musical score by Fassbinder's best friend/main composer Peer Raben and a small performance from German dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's muse Magdalena Montezuma as an uptight bourgeois type, *A Woman in Flames* is technically a work of German New Cinema, but with its too-slick production values, *Basic Instinct*-esque eroticism, and quite clear appeal to pompous perverts who do a lot of wine-sniffing, *A Woman in Flames* seems more like a blue movie for impotent bluebloods and upper-middleclass types suffering from a midlife crisis than a serious work of celluloid art. Of course, I am sure there are many bourgeois feminists and cuckolds out there that could come up with a clever argument as to why *A Woman in Flames* is a piece of socially empowering and sexually liberating work that portrays the ghastly traditional institution of marriage as something worse than prostitution and 'female empowerment' as more important than being with someone you love. Ultimately, *A Woman in Flames* is a film about marginally attractive individuals with majorly appalling

and rather repulsive personalities who inevitably reap what they sow, thus they deserve not even the smallest inkling of the viewer's sympathy. While protagonist Eva of *A Woman in Flames* flirts with the idea of a having daughter, she knows deep down that she is and will always be a lonely streetwalker with an incapacity for normal love. As Otto Weininger described in *Sex and Character*, "The prostitute is the great seductress of the world, the female Don Juan, the being in the woman that knows the art of love, that cultivates it, teaches it, and enjoys it," yet Eva goes a step or two further as someone who derives great pleasure from humiliating and torturing men and she does a great job doing it, but she would probably make about as good a mother as Jeffrey Dahmer would make a father. As she demonstrates when she contemptuously tells her lover Chris when breaking off their relationship, "I fell in love with a gigolo... I don't want to grow old with the owner of a restaurant," Eva is the sort of woman who would rather be in a relationship with a capitalist cocksucker with AIDS than be with a clean man who runs a legitimate business. When comparing the sort of men that hookers are attracted to, Weininger argued, "The prostitute, on the other hand, is most attracted by a careless, idle, dissipated man. A man that has lost self-restraint repels the mother-woman, is attractive to the prostitute. There are women who are dissatisfied with a son that is idle at school; there are others who encourage him. The diligent boy pleases the mother-woman, the idle and careless boy wins approval from the prostitute type." Indeed, it is no coincidence that the sort of men Eva gets paid to beat as a dominatrix are rich businessmen and the men she enjoys sharing carnal knowledge with are degenerates who blow old men for money.

With prostitution being made totally legal in Germany in 2002, *A Woman in Flames* now seems rather outmoded, yet the film is still marginally 'important' in its depiction of how far the Fatherland has degenerated since having 'democracy' forced on it after the Second World War. While Rainer Werner Fassbinder did a much better job with his BRD Trilogy (*The Marriage of Marian Braun*, *Veronika Voss*, *Lola*) in depicting how the chaos of World War II and the subsequent "Wirtschaftswunder" ("Economic Miracle") forced an entire generation of German women to become both literal and/or figurative whores and turned an entire generation of men into cuckolds, betas, and bitches, *A Woman in Flames* goes a couple steps further in its explicitness as a cinematic work that is more a symptom of the cultural decay it portrays and glorification of prostitution as opposed to a critique of such things. As a filmmaker who would direct two porn flicks, *Deutschland privat - Eine Anthologie des Volksfilms* (1980) and *Deutschland privat - Im Land der bunten Träume* (2007), utilizing footage sent to him from couples around Germany who wanted their homemade sextapes forever immortalized, director Robert van Ackeren certainly deserves credit as Deutschland's foremost anti-völkisch pornographer!

-Ty E

FORREST GUMP
FORREST GUMP

Robert Zemeckis (1994)

Robert Zemeckis' *Forrest Gump* is without a doubt the single most confounding studio blockbuster I've ever seen more times than I would ever dare to count. A child of the nineties, I couldn't wait for the video release to see all kinds of neat special effects that I hardly understood as they didn't involve ripping half of Tom Hanks' face off to reveal a pissed off robot or Lieutenant Dan instantly respawning his legs and running from dinosaurs, but despite the disappointment, watched and re-watched the flick whenever it aired on television because, well, it was an EVENT, just like *Schindler's List*, one that lazy teacher's would assign essays on for extra credit. It was also one of those staple videos that seemingly every family video library, even those whose only other titles are fitness tapes and Czech tranny porn (both dad masturbation fodder, but only one of which would be hidden in a generic tape cover labeled "Christmas '89"). It was one of those ubiquitous nineties blockbusters that was pervasive in a way that only nineties blockbusters were, spawning a restaurant, endless parodies, catchphrases (how many times have you heard "Run, Forrest, Run!" in YOUR formative years?), and "watercooler discussion." A movie that somehow managed to be something for everyone, while underneath the schmaltz and "humor" and Zelig-like effects work, actually offers a black hole of ideological emptiness. The kind of movie where a mentally retarded manchild from the South stumbles blindly through history with unwavering patriotic stupidity, interacting with characters like black retarded manchild Bubba, crippled Vietnam Vet Lieutenant Dan, and junk-addled child molestation victim-cum-AIDS whore Jenny to prove some ultimately muddled, bewildering message about America. Something that nods to the supposed multi-cultural inclusiveness of the place, while at the same time bowing to time-honored Christian Right notions of finding virtue in ignorance vs. being some goddamn pinko thinking person, and successfully tarring-and-feathering the baby boomer generation as a wanton cesspool of carnality that one can only breeze past if he can "Run, Forrest, Run."

By now the story should be familiar, but I'll rehash it for all five of you who haven't spent a childhood parked in front of this mess. An obnoxious, drawling Hollywood caricature of a mentally challenged person sits at a bus stop, rambling to random passerby the highly improbably details of his life. A more honest film would be just this deluded 'tard telling his ridiculous stories to people who would in turn turn up the volume of their headphones or high tail it to the next bus stop and little else, but in Hollywood, even the most impatient of his audience stands are humbled by stories in which a leg-braced Gump teaches Elvis Presley how to shake his hips, inspires John Lennon's "Imagine", prompts the Watergate investigation, and basically directly or indirectly inspires all of the "major events"

of the latter half of the twentieth century. What drives Gump to succeed despite a laughable appearance and a speaking style that takes the worst of Gomer Pyle and pushes it to the edges of the dreaded "full retard"? The love of a good woman, of course, or in this case, a drug addicted, STUDENT PROTESTING (*gasp*), molestation-victim who will die, of course, for having used drugs, protested, and had sex with characters aside from the drawling retarded guy, or maybe because she finally gives in and has sex with the retarded guy, which some members of the target audience might find a bit icky?

Aside from Jenny, the other female relationship driving Forrest's life is Mama, delivered by Sally Field in likewise drawling hyuk hyuk mode, delivering the kind of quaint, meaningless nuggets of wisdom like "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get" that seem to go over so resoundingly with American audiences and lobotomy patients the world over. When Mama dies (not of AIDS, but of old age, though she does fuck a school administrator to get Forrest into a regular school when he's a kid, so maybe the slut was asking for it), the saccharine-to-the-point of diabetes Alan Silvestri score kicks in, underscoring that this is a big moment, one of those moments "we can all relate to." Earlier in the film, while heroically serving in Vietnam (and getting shot in the "butt-tocks", President Nixon, hyuck hyuck), Forrest first encounters death via his African-American analogue, Bubba. At this point I could go on and on about the unlikelihood of this friendship, of these two being on the field to begin with, but the entire movie thumbs its nose at actual history or common sense to offer some strange high school history book, "feel good" version of events, while all the while functioning as a horror movie for anyone who doesn't toe the extremely moderate but slightly right of center ideal audience the studio computers no doubt told Zemeckis and co. to tailor the turd to. Seriously, just like any eighties slasher movie, if you're black, you're dead, if you have sex outside of marriage (even if it's symbolic childhood marriage to a dense dunce), dead, if you turn your back on God and actually want to die after a devastating war injury, you will be subjected to your fair share of humiliation and torture until you learn to have faith in Christ, our father, or, excuse me, Gump, the secular Jesus for the nineties.

In other words, this reads like something John Milius would write if instead of being upfront (and badass) about his macho militarism he tried to sneak it in the backdoor, gussying a fatalistic, fascist view of the world with every overplayed song from the baby boomer years, "cute" antics, and lots of that "feel good" crap someone like Milius would have no patience for. But just for a second, imagine a John Milius Forrest Gump... where instead of merely punching that sexist student protester dude (because being a possessive stalker of a woman with significant childhood trauma is okay, but disagreeing with a fairly awful war...tsk tsk), Gump crushes his sternum and douses him in flames, where upon finding Bubba bleeding Gump severs his head and holds it up at Valhalla before fin-

FORREST GUMP

ishing off Lt. Dan, no longer a man. Where after decimating the Vietnamese countryside in Ramboesque feats, Gump returns, helps the Watergate burglars get away, and then spends the rest of the film RE-writing history, a sort of right-wing Inglorious Bastards. It would be an uncomfortable, queasily violent film for most, but done with verve and HONEST about its intentions. Is Forrest Gump really the right-wing parable arriving in a big, rainbow colored Trojan horse may of its detractors make it out to be? I think it is a lot more confused and audience-pandering than intentionally political, and after perusing the novel on which the film is ostensibly based, deduce that a lot of the thematic strangeness of the movie comes from both softening the edges of Forrest Gump to the point he is akin to jarheaded Jesus via Rain Man (the character is a bit more similarly retarded in the book and actually curses and is about 240 pounds, for starters) and leaving out some of his more outlandish adventures (NASA, life with cannibals, a pet monkey) so as to ensure Oscar nominations and maximum boomer relatability. This isn't a parable, dammit, this IS America.

As of yet, I've said little about the acting, and there isn't much to say. Suitably loud caricatures amped up to the nth degree so as to compete with the Zelig-esque special effects (and the magical erasure of Gary Sinise' legs). Speaking of Sinise, I quite enjoyed his turn as director/actor in *Of Mice and Men*, but with Gump, he sold his soul to the Hollywood Beast and can now be seen weekly performing at an Indian Casino near you with the "Lieutenant Dan Band." Robin Wright Penn is suitably worn looking as an AIDS carrier but does little but look glum, worried, or bitter throughout, even when she's 'sposed to be young and an object of infatuation. Oh yeah, she almost commits suicide to "Free Bird." Sweet home Alabama, y'all. Sally Field is deserving of a ball peen hammer to the face. Tom Hanks performance has been so often parodied and is such a part of our pop cultural lexicon that I think it is often difficult to remember just how annoying it truly is. I don't have a kneejerk reaction to the vanilla megacelebrity status of Hanks. He is capable of reliable performances from time to time, and unlike someone, like, say, Julia Roberts, the sole pleasure I derive from his flicks tends not to be imagining him hanging from a meathook in my basement. Forrest Gump is one hell of a blemish, though (one the masses the masses awarded over \$677 million bucks to, a fact that doesn't make me want to re-evaluate the film, but humanity as a whole). When watching a superior Hanks flick, like *Joe Vs. The Volcano*, I always have to try to keep Gump out of my head in a manner akin to breathing slowly and trying to convince vomit not to escape my esophagus.

So gather the family, children up front, and let the history wash over 'em. Learn to toe the line, and make great waves simply by shutting off your brain and running toward success without taking detours to smoke "wacky weed" or question the government. Try not to think too hard about Forrest's suitability in raising the Sixth Sense kid he gets saddled with a few years after his sole sexual

experience with Jenny, who marries Forrest then promptly dies for maximum pathos. As Forrest replies to the military recruiter who asks him "Have you given any thought to your future, son?"

"Thought?"

-Jon-Christian

MYSTIQUE
MYSTIQUE

Roberta Findlay* (1979)

Maybe it's the high number of heebs in the hardcore industry and/or because most fuck flicks, like their viewers, tend to be not too cultivated, but Teutophilac pornography seems to be all but nonexistent, unless one counts Nazisploitation, which one might better describe as "yid smut." If there ever was a porn auteur with a crush on kraut kultur, it was the late Roger Watkins (*The Last House on Dead End Street*, *Midnight Heat*), whose pornographer pen name 'Richard Mahler' is a dichotomous tribute to Aryan Romantic composer Richard Wagner and Jewish late-Romantic composer Gustav Mahler. Notably, Watkins' dark and nihilistic hardcore flick *Corruption* (1983) is a loose reworking of Teutonic maestro Wagner's *Das Rheingold*—the first cycle of the composer's four-cycle *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total work of art") opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876) aka *The Ring of the Nibelung*—but the pornographic auteur also liked 'futuristic' kraut music as well. Indeed, Watkins included the electronic Teutonic track "We Are the Robots" by synthpop pioneers Kraftwerk in his first fuck flick *Her Name Was Lisa* (1980). Less well known is the fact that Watkins penned the script to a lesbian reworking of great German writer Thomas Mann's classic ephhebophile novel *Death in Venice* (1912), which largely has to do with the fact that the director of the porn adaptation failed to give him any sort of credit for his work. Directed by 'roughie' pioneer and jaded Jewess Roberta Findlay (*Take Me Naked*, *Angel Number 9*) under the curious male pseudonym Robert W. Norman, *Mystique* (1979) is not only the most decidedly degenerate Mann film adaptation ever made, but a rare porn flick that features heavy use of the Mahler song cycle "Kindertotenlieder" (aka "Songs on the Death of Children"). On top of that, the film features cryptic reference to the historical feud between Mahler and Wagner's wife Cosima Wagner (the lead character's name is "Alma" in reference to Mahler's wife, while her love interest turned enemy's name is 'Cosima'). As Watkins, who was apparently bitter after all of these years for what he saw as Findley taking credit for his work, stated in an interview in *Headpress 23: Funhouse* (2002) regarding his crucial role in *Mystique* (which he never mentions by name): "...What I did was take Thomas Mann's *DEATH IN VENICE* and turned it into an old lesbian fashion photographer, dying of cancer, who falls in love with this young woman – she can't be pubescent like in the book. I gave this script to them [Findley and Walter Sears], they read it and said, 'This is really great, Roger. This is really great, but can we ask you something? Rather than have the old lesbian be a fashion photographer, could we have her be a tub player?' [laughs] And they were absolutely serious! I said, 'You can do whatever you like, I don't care. You bought it, it's yours.' I think that is my main Roberta Findlay story." Luckily, Findlay ultimately decided to stay true to Watkins' script and dropped the tuba player idea. The superlatively sordid quasi-Nietzschean

Sapphic tale of a terminally dame of the Apollonian sort who falls in love with a younger dame of the Dionysian sort who makes her live a living hell in between lurid lady-licking, *Myſtique* is certainly, for better or worse, one of the most perniciously philosophical and ſtrangely cultivated carpet-muncher fuck flicks ever made.

Assumedly not to confuse the raincoat crowd, *Myſtique* opens with the following narrated ‘artistic warning’ juxtaposed with waves crashing onto a beach: “The makers of this motion picture wish to inform you of the unique nature of this film you’re about to see. We will take you on a journey of mystery. We will reveal to you the secret passion of a woman...A unique woman who lives her fantasies and dreams her realities...Or is the reverse true? You decide.” After the narration concludes, the following lovely little piece from French Symbolist Paul Valéry that my lady friend especially liked appears: “From this infusions of smoky rose...The sea regained its purity...Its usual transparency...Lost was the wine, and drunk the waves! I saw high in the briny air...Forms unfathomed leaping there.” Indeed, before the film even begins, the viewer knows that they are not watching the average frivolous fuck flick, but an oneiric odyssey where orgasms and orgies take a back seat to perverse poetry. The protagonist of *Myſtique* is an exceedingly melancholy fashion photographer named Alma (Georgina Spelvin of *Devil in Miss Jones* (1973)) who cannot get over the fact that she had to give up her successful career because she is plagued by some unmentioned Camille-esque ‘wasting away’ terminal illness. As Alma tells her overly concerned doctor (Jake Teague in an absurd old man wig), she has no friends or family because, as she melodramatically states, “my work has been my life.” Under her doctor’s advice, Alma moves to her secluded scenic beach house where she can wither away in relative comfort while fantasizing about her physician pearl-diving and penetrating her under-used puss, among other things. Notably, during one of her various sex fantasies, the doctor busts a sticky load on Alma’s face and tells her, “Now you can sleep easier.”

Alma’s life changes dramatically one day when she spots a dark-haired dame with a red cloak named Cosima (Samantha Fox of Roger Watkins’ *Her Name Was Lisa*) sitting on a bench on her beachside back-porch. While Alma initially bitches at the sensual stranger for being on her property, she becomes immediately intrigued by Cosima and her ravishing pulchritude, so she apologizes for initial bitchiness and invites her in for some tea. While drinking tea, Cosima complains that the classical music her host is playing is “depressing” and Alma responds by stating, “it should be. It’s Gustav Mahler’s ‘Kindertotenlieder’... ‘Songs about dead children.’” After bitching some more about Mahler’s melancholy music, Cosima remarks to Alma in a dubious way, “You might say I’m an actress of sorts,” so the lapsed fashion photographer invites her to come over later to do a photo shoot, thus ushering in the beginning of their dark and decadent dyke romance. Indeed, the photo shoot is just a pretense so that Alma

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can get in Cosima's panties and before the two know it, they are engaging in carpet-munching 69 sessions and cunt-on-cunt 'scissoring.' While everything seems great at first, Alma changes the mood of the romance when she asks Cosima, "Do you love me?" and she bitchily responds by complaining, "Does it matter? We made beautiful love...Must I love you?," as if repelled by the idea of monogamous love. Indeed, as her Squeaky Fromme-esque cloak demonstrates, Cosima subscribes to a hyper hedonistic 'dark hippie' weltanschauung and she is rather turned off by Alma's 'airs' of conservative cultivation and introverted hermetic lifestyle, so she decides to change that by inviting some of her degenerate male friends over.

Needless to say, when Alma walks in on Cosima and sees her being penetrated by a criminally-inclined blond hook-nosed philistine named Arthur (Randy West) on her couch, she becomes exceedingly enraged, especially when her young lover asks her "Did you ever taste semen?" after licking up her partner's cum and then brags that it tastes better than her tea. Cosima demands that Alma kick Arthur out of her house immediately, but the young brute soon comes back with an equally barbaric friend named Max (Vaughn Mitchell) to teach the frigid middle-aged woman a lesson. Indeed, the next day while Alma is taking a quiet and relaxing bath, Arthur and Max storm in her bathroom and gang rape her in the tub, with each man showing his meaty member in one of her fleshy orifices. Right after Arthur and Max get done showing Alma a "good time," Cosima walks in while sporting a top-hat and carrying a whip and sadistically remarks, "How cozy...How very fucking cozy. I didn't think you had it in you, my dear. Two men at one time...My, my." Later that night, Alma asks Cosima why she did not help her when she was being raped, but the fetishistic femme fatale denies the rape ever took place and soon convinces her lover that it never even happened. The next day, Alma's doctor comes by to give her some painkillers and compliments her on her taste in music since she is playing a record of Wagner's "Liebestod." As soon as the doctor leaves, Arthur barges in and rudely remarks "you're doctor friend is a fucking geek" while his pal Max steals her painkillers. Annoyed by the soothing Germanic sounds of "Liebestod," Max complains "Cosima is right, this bitch has no taste in music" and smashes the Wagner record, which causes Alma to get so mad that she calls him a "pig." As "punishment" for calling Max a "pig," the two brutal degenerates once again rape Alma while queen bitch Cosima smirks sinisterly.

To demonstrate her complete and utter authority over hopelessly lovelorn Alma, Cosima forces the middle-age broad to be the subject of pornographic photo shoots. On top of that, Cosima uses Alma's wealth to hire a number of pointless "domestics" to ostensibly clean the house, do the laundry, etc. Naturally, Cosima has hired these so-called domestics to satisfy her debauched proclivities. Of course, introvert Alma can't handle that many people being in her house and even ignores Arthur when he hilariously asks her, "Hey bitch, where's

the one about the dead babies?," adding, "That one kind of grows on you" regarding the Mahler album. While Alma broods all by her lonesome in her room, various orgies around the house that Cosima 'directs' and photographs while carrying around a whip. When Alma finally gets the gall to confront Cosima and pleads to her, "I love you. Why do you want to torture me so?," she responds by proselytizing in a hippie fashion, stating, "My must learn who you are. You must live your life. You cannot perpetually hide behind your camera. You must be part of life... Otherwise, you do not live. Come... Join us, Alma, join us in the celebration of life. If you want love, you must learn how to give love. Otherwise, you cannot be part of life." Alma responds to Cosima's speech by remarking, "I think I see. I think I'm beginning to understand" and subsequently passively submits to pornographic porn shoots and orgies, thus demonstrating that she has finally embraced her evil girlfriend's Dionysian way of life. In the end, Alma dies after submitting to an orgy and in a bizarre dream-sequence, she says goodbye to her doctor and Cosima, as if to thank both of them for what they have done for her.

Pornography aside, *MyStique* is certainly a wicked and malevolent little film that depicts gang-rape as an acceptable means to cure an introverted recluse of her social awkwardness, yet it somehow manages to stay true to some of the themes of Thomas Mann's source novel, namely the Nietzschean dichotomy of Apollo and Dionysus. Indeed, in her innate self-restraint and need to live a life of structured beauty, Alma represents the Greek god Apollo while Cosima represents the god Dionysus due to her practice and active promotion of hedonistic excesses. Of course, being a fuck flick, Dionysus certainly triumphs in the end of *MyStique*, thus subversively reversing the conclusion of *Death in Venice*. Of course, the film also stays true to Mann's novella in its intertextual utilization of the ideas in Plato's *Symposium* regarding the connection of erotic love to philosophical wisdom as depicted in the stormy yet ultimately insightful romance between Alma and Cosima. Notably, like Italian maestro Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971) adaptation starring Dirk Bogarde, *MyStique* also features compositions by Mahler that help to accentuate the overall tone of the film. Despite being directed by Roberta Findlay, the film certainly has the idiosyncratic essence of a Roger Watkins hardcore flick, thus making it all the more absurd that he was not credited for his work. Watkins would have his revenge against Findlay in an interview in *Headpress 23: Funhouse* where he mocked her one-time husband Michael Findlay's grisly death via helicopter blade decapitation by stating regarding the tragic ordeal, "It's so funny. I think that is hilarious." While I think Findlay is mostly a no-talent hack filmmaker who used her belated ex-husband to further her own career, *MyStique* certainly demonstrates that she had some talent, especially when having a relatively well written script to work with (notably, Findlay worked more as a cinematographer than as a writer/director, thus her 'talent' seemed to be more in the technical

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realm). In some way, it seems that the sea had a positive effect on her work as demonstrated by her softcore melodrama *The Clamdigger's Daughter* (1973) which, like *Mystique*, has a similarly dark and almost Gothic dream-like atmosphere, as well as a complimentary classical score featuring compositions by Beethoven, Bruckner, and Bach, among others. Unquestionably, if you're one of those oh-so rare individuals that considers themselves both a Germanophile and porn chic era fan like I do, Findlay's flick will surely provide you with a singular and almost inexplicable experience that will make you realize how amazing it is that such an aberrant work got created in the first place, for surely no such film could ever be monetarily successful (apparently, Findlay regarded the film as a 'misfire' of sorts). Indeed, it certainly says something about the dualistic nature of 'Richard Mahler' that he could turn world-class Teutonic masterpieces into some of the seediest, most sadistic, and anti-sexy pieces of celluloid smut ever assembled.

-Ty E

COPKILLER

Roberto Faenza (1983)

Call me anti-Guido but I have never been particularly allured by the mostly cheap scent of stereotypically gritty Italian giallo flicks. Of course, I love such giallo classics as Dario Argento's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) and Lucio Fulci's odd Catholic-guilt themed work *Don't Torture a Duckling* (1972) but I generally rather re-watch a Hitchcock classic than put blind faith in an obscure film from the Italian horror-crime-mystery subgenre. Recently, I took a chance on the criminally underrated giallo *Copkiller* (1983) aka *The Order of Death* aka *Corrupt* aka *Bad Cop Chronicles #2* aka *Corrupt Lieutenant* directed by Roberto Faenza and featuring Harvey Keitel and John Lydon aka Johnny Rotten (of *The Sex Pistols* and *Public Image Ltd*) in his only starring role. In *Copkiller*, Keitel and Lydon play a cryptic gay game of back-and-forth homoerotic, sadomasochistic master and slave. Leo Smith (played by Lydon) is a spoiled little boy with nothing to do but confess to Lt. Fred O'Connor (played by Keitel) that he is the sole culprit in a recent string of vehement cop-killings; the most serious and personal offense when it comes to dealing with the men in blue. Immediately upon hearing Smith's confession, O'Connor finds such claims to be nothing short of dubious and intrinsically ludicrous. After all, Smith looks and acts like a relatively harmless Mick fairy from outer-space, thus O'Connor prematurely concludes that the ladylike lad lacks the testicular fortitude to commit such suicidal cop-antagonizing deeds. O'Connor is more concerned by the fact that Smith has been stalking him and has found his secret "Bad Lt." apartment that he shares with his fellow crooked "police partner." After questioning him and bitterly shoving his head in a fully-functional and running oven a couple times, O'Connor decides to imprison Smith in his bathroom and keep him as a barely-clothed personal pet. Naturally, O'Connor is not a totally mean kidnapper as he provides Smith with food via a dog bowl and sympathetically acknowledges to his captive that it is a shame that such a "good looking guy like you, locked-up in a bathroom." To say that Keitel and Lydon have an idiosyncratic, prowling yet strangely affectionate kind of relationship throughout *Copkiller* would be a gross and naive understatement. The sort of unnatural chemistry the two leads in the film have is the kind that leads to genocide and gang warfare. Simply put, *Copkiller* may be one of the strangest "buddy flicks" ever assembled.

Right from the beginning, *Copkiller* is a wonderful filmic present that is quite pleasurable to unravel for those cinephiles that love surprise gifts. Not only does one discover who purported copkiller Leo Smith is but one also discovers that Fred O'Connor is simply not a corrupt cop with a rough exterior. From the get go, one gets the impression that little midge O'Connor is a posturing brute of sorts, but, as recognized by Leo Smith, the lunatic lieutenant has a 'maternal'

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Achilles heel. Although seeming like a weak and harmless pervert, it is quite apparent that limey Leo has something much starker lurking beyond his physically and mentally sickly yet strangely charismatic persona. Initially, it seems as if smiley Smith's aim is to be gang-raped by a precinct of police but his true conspiratorial agenda is not completely revealed until the remaining minutes of *Copkiller*. Indeed, the film has a couple notable deaths and the killer looks most daft yet delightful in his cop uniform and matching black ski-mask but the real delicious "red meat" of *Copkiller* is the thoroughly jovial and equally sadistic psychological power-play between Smith and O'Connor. Throughout the film, one is kept wondering who is the craziest partner of this truly odd couple. Of course, stoic O'Connor is the man in the relationship as he personifies the ad hominem-based, cultural Marxist "authoritarian personality" type and Smith is surely more effeminate and conspiring in his constantly unpredictable, passive girlish behavior in the sense outlined by Otto Weininger. In other words, whereas O'Connor is a stern 'man-of-action', Smith is a cold and calculating conniver. Like O'Connor, the viewer unravels who Smith really is as *Copkiller* progresses yet the more one learns about this truly loco sod, the more confusing his true agenda seems. That being said, *Copkiller* deserves recognition amongst the greatest of giallo films, but it is also entitled to notoriety as a work that totally transcends the restricting and stereotyped subgenre.

One of the most obvious aspects of *Copkiller* that makes it stand proudly alone (and relatively unknown) amongst most giallo films is its all-star international cast and New York City setting. Of course, there are some other giallo films that take place in NYC (i.e. Lucio Fulci's *The New York Ripper*) but *Copkiller* – unlike any other film of the subgenre – truly manages to capture the violent zeitgeist of the city at that time as if it was directed by Abel Ferrara's homo-serial-killer cousin. If it were not for *Copkiller* director Robert Faenza's fondness for Marxism, it is doubtful the film would have ever been made as the director was forced to work in the good ol' free USA after his Italian Communist Party-sympathetic work *Si salvi chi vuole* (1980) was deemed politically incorrect in his homeland. Featuring a musical score by legendary Italian film composer Ennio Morricone, *Copkiller* permeates a distinct atmosphere that one can only find in the great gritty NYC crime films of the early 1980s, but, at the same time, the film is secluded in a unique "ghetto" all of its own. In a sense, *Copkiller* is also a "thinking man's slasher film" as one gets to deeply penetrate the hopelessly tainted mind of a coldblooded, psychopathic killer in a most personal way. Although I am sure many cinephiles see *Copkiller* as an primer and/or unofficial sequel/prequel (as some greedy fellows later tried to market as) to Abel Ferrara's more successful work *Bad Lieutenant* (1992) starring Harvey Keitel, the film stands fairly well on its own two feet as an unconventional anti-giallo that twists and wonderfully warps all of the rules of the subgenre it barely belongs to. Like William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), *Copkiller* defiantly (yet more sub-

tlety) enters an area of the gay-world that is most certainly off limits to modern politically correct filmmakers. Although seemingly different, Leo Smith and Lt. Fred O'Connor share a vice that is for them, more naughty than nice, henceforth Copkiller is a work that most significantly enters into the deplorable and forbidden realms of the psyche than the less disturbing physical world of a corrupt cop's secret apartment. If I had to guess John Wayne Gacy's or Jeffrey Dahmer's favorite film, Copkiller would undoubtedly be at the top of the list. Unfortunately, like many Americans, I seriously doubt these two upstanding U.S. citizens had the grand opportunity to watch this lovely piece of cinematic Americana.

-Ty E

THE WICKER MAN
THE WICKER MAN

Robin Hardy (1973)

Probably most favorably described by Film magazine *Cinefantastique* as being “The Citizen Kane of horror movies,” *The Wicker Man* (1973) directed by British screenwriter/director Robin Hardy (*The Fantasiist*, *The Wicker Tree*) is certainly deserving out its reputation as not only one of the best and most imaginatively idiosyncratic ‘horror’ films ever made, but also one of the best British films ever made period. A sort of thematically and aesthetically audacious anti-Hammer horror flick in its featuring of Hammer icons Christopher Lee and Ingrid Pitt but focusing on themes of old school Celtic paganism as opposed to the sterile old Semite religion of Christianity, *The Wicker Man* essentially created a new spiritual and cultural cinematic universe as a work that most specifically focuses on pagan sacrifice to the sun-god in a menacing yet mystifying manner that does not resort to Judeo-Christian finger-pointing and pseudo-spiritual mumbo jumbo of the conspicuously contrived New-Age sort. Adapted from the little known David Pinner novel *Ritual* (1967), which was originally intended as a film treatment for an unrealized work directed by Michael Winner (but was ultimately turned into a novel when Winner declined), *The Wicker Man* eventually began to evolve into a film when screenwriter Anthony Shaffer (who previously penned Hitchcock’s *Frenzy* (1972)) and actor Christopher Lee paid Pinner £15,000 (a little over \$23,400) for the rights to the novel. Dropping virtually all of the comedic nuances of Pinner’s novel, Shaffer ultimately only used *Ritual* as a loose basis for the script for *The Wicker Man* and only came to find the major theme of the film when he “finally hit upon the abstract concept of sacrifice,” which eventually ripened into the iconic wooden ‘wicker man’ statue, hence the film’s title. Spawned from a single sentence in Julius Caesar’s *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* aka *Commentaries on the Gallic War* regarding his account of Celtic pagan Druids using towering wicker human-shaped statues for the purpose of human sacrifice by burning it in effigy, the wicker man became arguably the most important ingredient in *The Wicker Man*, but luckily screenwriter Shaffer, who was ironically Jewish (or not ironic considering the less than flattering depiction of self-flagellating Christ worship in the film), became obsessed with all things Euro-pagan and did meticulous research for the film, utilizing the groundbreaking work *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890) by the Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer as one of his most imperative frames of references. With the reasonably objective research and screenplay by Shaffer, director Robin Hardy was able to assemble one of the most hypnotic, culturally keen, and aesthetically pleasing pieces of celluloid heathenism ever made via *The Wicker Man*, a celestial and naturally kaleidoscopic cinematic work that manages to cinematically reintroduce the religion of the old Occidental world through the much maligned and oftentimes awfully artless hor-

ror genre. Probably the only film to make neo-paganism seem rather romantic and not the simply the delusional make-believe hobby of morbidly obese fanboy degenerates with bad skin who mistake their lack of self-control in regard to eating and sexual fetishism as a religion, *The Wicker Man* also happens to be the best film ever made about an unwitting fool who is chosen to be king for a day.

Sergeant Neil Howie (Edward Woodward) is a stoic and deeply religious middle-aged Christian who views everything in the world through a narrow Christ lens. When Howie receives an anonymous letter requesting that he go to the Scottish island Summerisle—a remote and quaint but wild and wonderfully scenic Scottish Hebridean island best known for its production of fruit despite its dead volcanic soil—to research the mysterious disappearance of a 12-year-old girl named Rowan Morrison (Gerry Cowper), who apparently disappeared a couple months ago, the lone and seemingly rather lonely cop personally flies there, not realizing that anti-Christ horndog heathenism awaits him there. Upon arriving on the island, Howie instantly realizes there is something off-putting and innately alien about the Summerisle residents, especially considering that no one, not even the girl's own culinary artist mother, seems interested in answering his questions and finding little Rowan Morrison. When taking residence in a bar/inn aptly titled *The Green Man Inn* run by an exceedingly effete fellow named Alder MacGregor (mime/actor Lindsay Kemp) and his voluptuous and beautiful nymphet daughter Willow (Swedish actress Britt Ekland), he learns that the funny folks of Summerisle do not just enjoy getting drunk and jolly like the average Scotsman, but also having mass orgies in graveyards and grinding their genitals against tombstones. On his first night in the inn, Howie has a rather hard time controlling himself as wanton Willow attempts to seduce him with an orgasmic song and sensuality, but being a man who should have lost his virginity decades ago, he manages to maintain his cool and save his seed. The next day, Howie walks in on the local school teacher Miss Rose (Diane Cilento) stating to her preteen girl class regarding the maypole, "The phallic symbol. That is correct. It is the image of the penis, which is venerated in religions such as ours, as symbolizing the generative force in nature." Naturally, Howie finally realizes that Summerisle is a proudly 'perverse', penis-worshiping pagan island where Christianity has been discarded like a putrid pair of feces-stained underwear, fresh young girls dance unclad around phallic poles for fertility rituals whilst dreaming of spawning sons and daughters, and graveyards feature dried up umbilical cords hanging from trees and headstones are inscribed with such salacious prayers as "protected by the ejaculation of serpents." After discovering a tree (navel skin and all) where Rowan Morrison's corpse is ostensibly buried, Howie pays a visit to a certain Laird (aka Lord) Summerisle (Christopher Lee), who has apparently been expecting the humorless cop. Seemingly holding nothing back, Lord Summerisle tells Howie about the history of the island and how his spiritually progressive Victorian scientist grandfather not only developed new strains of

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fruit that could survive and thrive in Scotland's brutal climate and volcanic soil, but also introduced the local peasant populous to the old Celtic gods, which the conservative cop finds rather unsettling, but at least the lord grants him the authority to exhume Rowan Morrison's grave. Instead of finding a preteen female corpse, however, Howie is agitated to find a gutted bunny rabbit, which he takes by Lord Summerisle's estate and flings at the neo-Victorian pagan gentleman, accusing him of murdering Rowan Morrison in some bizarre pagan sacrifice.

After researching some documents and photographs regarding the previous year's harvest and learning the crops—the only source of the island's income—had failed, Howie comes to the natural conclusion that Rowan Morrison is very likely still alive and that the pagan islanders plan to sacrifice her at the annual May Day celebrations so as to ensure a fruitful harvest for the following year. While Howie plans to leave on May Day so he can get more cops and bust the heathens of Summerisle, someone has sabotaged his plane, which fails to take off, so being forced to stay on the island with time of the essence, he decides to look for Rowan Morrison all by his lonesome. After knocking innkeeper MacGregor unconscious and stealing his costume, Howie goes incognito by dressing as "Punch", a central character in the May Day festival. Howie joins up with the rest of the islanders, who are also in costume, and manages to pass off the charade of portraying Punch, even becoming involved in eroticized but ultimately benign sacrifices to pagan gods, but he makes the fatal mistake of blowing his cover when Rowan Morrison is revealed tied to a pole. Quite the dashing hero with a softspot for virginal preteens, Howie knocks out one of the islanders and manages to free Rowan, but she leads him into a well orchestrated trap by taking him through a cave where Lord Summerisle and his merry minions are waiting for him on the other side. Lord Summerisle reveals to Howie that he, being a virginal man who came of his own free will with the authority of the king as a representative of the law, is merely a specially picked pawn in a pagan game and that the entire story of Rowan Morrison being missing was merely a pretense to get him to come to the island. While Howie was right that the Lord Summerisle and his Celtic compatriots were planning to make a human sacrifice for May Day in the hope that the coming year's harvest would be a success, it is he and not Rowan Morrison that will be sacrificed to the sun in a scenario where the "hunter is hunted." As Miss Rose tells the petrified officer, "You are the fool, Mr. Howie...Punch, one of the great fool-victims of history. For you have accepted the role of king for a day. And who but a fool would do that? But you will be revered and anointed as a king." Since Howie ostensibly came of his own free will, is a mature virgin, and has "the power of a king - representing the law," he apparently makes for a distinctly outstanding sacrificial offering to the gods and the best spiritual hope Summerisle has for having a fruitful harvest. Howie essentially tells the Summerisle residents that they are madly superstitious and the crops merely failed because they were not meant to grow on such a cold and

infertile island, but they pay him no mind, strip off his clothes, cover him in a special monk-like ceremonial robe, and march him up a cliff with his hands behind his back where the wicker man stands. Totally petrified by the mammoth wicker statue standing before him, which also has various farm animals imprisoned in it, Howie is carried up and locked in the wicker man, where he will ultimately have the rare and dignified honor of dying a 'martyr's death.' After setting the statue ablaze, the pagans sing the medieval English folk-song "Sumer Is Icumen In" while Howie denounces them by self-righteously proclaiming that the Christian god has punished them for the past failed harvest due to the pagan faith and innately deceitful ways. As the wicker man burns, Howie recites "Psalm 23" from the Old Testament and prays to God to not forget him and to save a place for him in heaven. As the wicker man crumbles in flames, taking Howie with it, the final shot of *The Wicker Man* zooms into the sun that looks over the pagan people as the true harvester of all people and all life. In the end, the pagan cycle of death and rebirth is complete.

Made in the wake of the the popular hippie and counter-culture movements of the late-1960s where certain 'enlightened' individuals hanged up their rosaries and crucifixes and traded them in for New Age mumbo jumbo, including warped and watered down 'feel good' forms of neo-paganism and so-called 'eclectic paganism,' *The Wicker Man* is assuredly a spiritual slap in the face to posturing occultnik dilettantes and smug bourgeois bookstore witches who thought that by adopting minor elements and rituals of the ancient, more sex and nature friendly religions and disregarding the more unflattering elements of said religions that they could rationalize their self-absorbed hedonism and seem totally cool, chic, and enlightened while doing it. In a reasonably objective manner, *The Wicker Man* portrays the good, the bad, and the ugly of Celtic paganism without resorting to hocus pocus puffery, ridiculous romanticism, cliché Christian condemnation, or plastic parody, and for that reason alone, the film deserves a special place in cinema history. The only film ever made that is part folk musical, part Celtic völkisch flick, part celluloid 'game' and pseudo-murder mystery, part pagan parable, and part high-class intellectual horror show, *The Wicker Man* is nothing short of an ideally idiosyncratic cinema masterpiece that makes for a 'magical' marriage between arthouse and mainstream cinema.

Rather unfortunately and cinematically sacrilegiously, a feminist-fueled American remake of *The Wicker Man* starring Nicholas Cage was released in 2006, but thankfully even the most bottom of the barrel rabble among horror fans found the film to be nothing short of a patently pointless celluloid abortion. Undoubtedly, even more aesthetically tragic, *The Wicker Man* director Robin Hardy somewhat recently released a so called "spiritual sequel" entitled *The Wicker Tree* (2011) that I would even go as far as arguing is worse than the patently pathetic 2006 remake. At best, *The Wicker Tree* seems like a philistine-friendly parody of the original *The Wicker Man* directed by a man trying to

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cash in on the legacy of an unrivaled cinematic masterpiece he directed almost four decades earlier. Based on director Hardy's own 2006 novel *Cowboys for Christ: On May Day*, *The Wicker Tree* depicts the 'absurdity' that occurs when a group of god-bothering redneck Texan Christian fundamentalists led by a revolting pop singer make the unwitting mistake of travelling to Scotland and attempting to convert heathens who worship the goddess Sulis. While centering on the theme of a metaphysical/physical clash between nature-worshipping paganism and nature-cuckolding Christianity like *The Wicker Man*, *The Wicker Tree* shamelessly wallows in cheap and tasteless sex, embarrassing pseudo-kosher comic relief, superficial and superlatively soulless social commentary, and an absolutely asinine aesthetic package that is a total insult to the original 1973 film. Apparently when discussing the mixed reviews *The Wicker Tree* received, director Hardy attempted to defend the film by stating, "The New York Times's reviewer said it wasn't as gritty as the original *Wicker Man*, but it's a thousand times better than the remake. I was quite happy with that," but when asked whether he preferred the original 1973 or the "spiritual sequel," the only thing he could say was, "No, I really don't." Of course, Hardy is not fooling anyone, not even himself. To further taint the legacy of *The Wicker Man*, Hardy is working on a third film entitled *The Wrath of the Gods* (2015), which will act as the concluding chapter of a totally pointless 'The Wicker Man Trilogy.' Apparently a 'romantic black comedy' based on *Twilight of the Gods* aka *Götterdämmerung*, the final part of Richard Wagner's four cycle epic opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* aka *The Ring of the Nibelung* where "the gods get their comeuppance," *The Wrath of the Gods* will be primarily set in the Shetland Islands (though originally set in Iceland) and focus on Norse mythology. While I cannot say anything good about the 2006 remake nor the 2011 'spiritual sequel,' the neofolk outfit *Nature And Organisation* led by British musician Michael Cashmore did an excellent cover (featuring Scottish singer Rose McDowall of *Strawberry Switchblade* on vocals) of the song "Willow's Song" featured in *The Wicker Man* written by Paul Giovanni (and sung by Annie Ross) for their album *Beauty Reaps The Blood Of Solitude* (1994), renaming the song simply, "Wicker Man Song." While "Willow's Song" is undoubtedly my favorite song from *The Wicker Man*, American composer Paul Giovanni, who died from AIDS-related causes in 1990 at the mere age of 57, did an exquisite job with the entire soundtrack, thereupon adding an extra layer to the film's foreboding folkish atmosphere.

Only vaguely a horror flick (and almost insulting and certainly misleading to describe it as such!), *The Wicker Man* is nothing short of an amazingly thrilling and titillating piece of celluloid spiritual atavism featuring a charmingly curious esoteric realm that seems like a utopia to some viewers and an unhinged nightmare to others. Despite its Semitic screenwriter, *The Wicker Man* is as unflinchingly Northern European as films come and a piece of (for some perturbing) purity that reminds one how the world has decidedly degenerated since

the abandoning of native paganism, adopting the Judaic desert religion of Christianity, and starting a worldwide campaign against nature. Featuring a practical execution of ideas not unlike those espoused by back-to-nature groups like the German Wandervogel groups, whose ideas were inevitably adopted by the National Socialists in various forms, *The Wicker Man* is probably most 'horrifying' today in that it makes spiritual blasphemy and sacrificing a virginal Christian cop once a year a small price to pay for living in a truly organic folk community with natural values as opposed to living in the culturally/racially mongrelized and spiritually sick 'multicultural' mainstream where sex and life are meaningless, everything has a price but no value, and an innate and all-encompassing ugliness pervades every aspect of life. A film where not only the protagonist, but also the viewer, is made a fool and king for a day via a mystifying metaphysical murder located on a breathtaking and beautiful island paradise populated by beautiful yet brutal people, *The Wicker Man* is the closest thing ever made to a Celtic pagan spiritual journey in celluloid form. On top of that, *The Wicker Man* is also the only film that has the grand distinction of featuring Sir Christopher Lee as a megalomaniac cult leader in *völkisch* drag in a role, performance, and film that the actor himself would declare the best of his career, which, I, for one, concur with as both a hater of Hammer horror and *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (2001–2003), but also as a fan of both horror and arthouse cinema. Indeed, *The Wicker Man* is probably the only quasi-musical ever made where one does not feel like they have been raped by a gang of rabid trannies after watching it, but more importantly, it is also one of the most chillingly charming and wickedly bewitching depictions of celluloid blasphemy and spiritual cuckoldry ever made.

-Ty E

WHAT WE DO IS SECRET
WHAT WE DO IS SECRET

Rodger Grossman (2007)

When I found out that a film full of Hollywood “has been” stars was going to be made about the punk legend Darby Crash and his band The Germs, I was disgusted. Hollywood has made enough films distorting the image of rockers (among other historical social figures), but I never thought that sunset boulevard would ever touch upon the short life of junkie fascist punk rocker Darby Crash. To top off this horrendous idea for a film, they decided to cast A Walk to Remember star Shane West as Darby Crash. I doubt Darby Crash was ever a fan of shitty teenage girl romance films.

After viewing the film, I was surprised to find that Shane West was the best thing about it. The young actor had the look of Darby Crash down pretty accurately. Although no one could ever truly impersonate the unique gestures and speech of Darby, Shane West at least gets by. The casting of Rick Gonzalez as Pat Smear was a horrible decision by the casting director of What We Do Is Secret. Smear never had an atrocious “latino (or whatever it’s supposed to be)” accent. I doubt Gonzalez even attempted to recreate the real Pat Smear. Smear is of negro, American Indian, Jewish, and German blood. For some reason, What We Do Is Secret tries to make him out as some cool avant-garde Latino. I guess the flood in third world immigration made having Smear become Latino more interesting for newly arrived “American” audiences.

Darby Crash

Apparently, Pat Smear referred to the cast of What We Do Is Secret as “the baby Germs.” Smear had the job of training the cast how to play The Germs songs for the film. Maybe Pat Smear could have also trained Rick Gonzalez to at least somewhat portray him. That would have required Rick Gonzalez to talk with a sort of gay California drugged out accent. For some reason, I think most Germs fans would have preferred that.

All and all, What We Do Is Secret is a weak film about Darby Crash and The Germs. It is the type of film that might inspire individuals that have never heard of The Germs to look further into the band. For those interested, Penelope Spheeris’ The Decline of Western Civilization is the documentary to checkout if you want to see the real Darby Crash. Also the book Lexicon Devil: The Fast Times and Short Life of Darby Crash and The Germs is something worth checking out. The book spans the same period featured in What We Do Is Secret except much more in depth. That being said, What We Do Is Secret is at best watchable.

-Ty E

NOBODY LOVES ALICE

Roger A. Scheck (2008)

Nobody loves Alice is a full-length debut independent horror film directed by Roger Scheck. The plot follows a very overdone plot of a “I love you so much I’m going to kidnap you” sort of pattern, but with a higher dosage. Alice is an adorably shy new secretary at her new office. She can never seem to find love, so she forces people to love them. How, you might ask? By binding and torturing them of course! I had only a few problems with this disturbing gem and one of them is the length of the film. For a film of this uncomfortable caliber, for my own sanity, should be around 40 minutes. I’d be a liar if I didn’t admit that this film had me on edge for most of its runtime. Nobody Loves Alice can be called the lovechild of May and Misery. The director really seems to have directing down, this being his first film and all. The acting of course is a mixed bag for being an independent. We have our natural talent, and then the lesser works. Alice was a perfect role for the lovely Nitzan Mager. She might seem to have a heart full of gold, but rest assured, this bitch is stone cold. Despite its low budget, the film has some greatly filmed scenes with some realistic bloodshed. The set of the torture room was intense as hell. It must have taken a while to splatter all that blood on the wall and mattress. I only had a few real complaints with this film, one being the stupidity of the characters at random intervals. One second they will have a great idea and do something completely original for the “psycho-chick” genre, only to walk into a room and completely lose their guard. Words cannot describe the tension this film brought out. At times I was giggling at Alice’s cute and shy mannerisms, only to be horrified and distraught five minutes later. Nobody Loves Alice is a physical and emotional ride through relationship hell. I don’t think I will be looking for love anytime soon. This Lifetime movie from hell comes highly recommended.

-Maq

THE RULES OF ATTRACTION
THE RULES OF ATTRACTION

Roger Avary (2002)

The Rules of Attraction is easily the best "college" film. Unlike most college films, the students in this film actually got somewhat of an education. Most college films deal with a pathetic individual who is incapable of doing school work so he schemes a way out of it. The Rules of Attraction skips the school aspect of college and completely goes for the social. The film is an initiation into the world of dark American hedonism full of sex, drugs, and "Rock & Roll." These is the only real education American colleges give. Sean Bateman (brother of Patrick Bateman from American Psycho) is a swell womanizing drug dealer who likes to smoke a lot of dope. He's in love with an ethnic virgin by the name of Lauren who enjoys looking at books full of sexually transmitted diseases. Paul Denton, a suave and stylish homosexual also has his eyes on Sean Bateman. Paul likes Sean because he's a dirty boy and looks like "he can't remember whether he's catholic or not." Obviously The Rules of Attraction features of variety of other sex scenes that aren't exactly to the liking of the main characters. Kevin Arnold from The Wonder Years almost makes an appearance in The Rules of Attraction as a college student shooting heroin in between his toes in his underwear. Mr. Arnold is watching Robert Wiene's German expressionist masterpiece The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari during his trip to opium heaven. The Rules of Attraction director Roger Avary also showed tribute to F.W. Murnau's Nosferatu in Killing Zoe. Avary's love for German expressionism hardly shows up in his actual filmmaking techniques. The Rules of Attraction features a variety of experimental editing techniques which range from innovative to failing. Either way, I much preferred the editing in The Rules of Attraction to most of the Soviet Montage ADHD style editing too prevalent in contemporary films. A lot of the editing also works well as a tool that interacts with the "connections" between the individuals in the story. I especially liked the editing sequences of the shy girl who decides to end her life early. These editing montages recap her earlier appearances in the film which are easy to miss the first time around. The Rules of Attraction is a fairly conventional yet quality film. I find myself coming back to it a couple times a year. I once told a cheerleader that I liked the film and she told me it was depressing. It is about time someone made a serious college film and surprisingly Roger Avary was the man to do it. Finally, a college film that acknowledges all of the rape that happens on campus.

-Ty E

USHER

Roger Corman (1960)

Beginning his eclectic life in subtextual Poe-esque cultish camp horror with the black-and-white 8mm short *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1942), a work based on the 1839 Edgar Allan Poe short story of the same name that the director created in high school at the youthful age of 14 and would later describe as mere “juvenalia” but would set the tone for all of his work to come, criminally underrated American auteur Curtis Harrington (*How Awful About Allan, What’s the Matter with Helen?*) would conclude his unparalleled filmmaking career by coming full circle with *Usher* (2002), a less than 40 minute remake of the very story he adapted as a teenager. In his unfinished, posthumously released memoir *Nice Guys Don’t Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), Harrington describes the influence of Poe’s short story as follows, “‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ was the story that gripped me, held me in thrall as no other story ever had. By the end of it, I was almost gasping for breath and leapt from my chair in an attempt to relieve the pressure on my brain. The horror of the story’s final revelation of the returned corpse totally engulfed my mind and senses. My memory was seared with it, leaving a scar that I would never lose. It was as if I had discovered my soul mate in the world of literature.” And, indeed, as a personal friend and collaborator of cinemagickian/Crowleyite Kenneth Anger who was responsible for some of the cinematography in *Puce Moment* (1953) and played the character of somnambulist Cesare from the German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) in *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), as well as documenting the art of Thelemite and ‘Scarlet Woman’ Marjorie Cameron (who later appeared in Harrington’s first feature-length film *Night Tide* (1961) as a ‘Water Witch’) in the short documentary *The Wormwood Star* (1956), among various other occult connections and directing occult themed films, Curtis Harrington was certainly someone who had found solace in the darkness and *Usher* is certainly no exception to his life of glistening in the shadows. Partially founded by the brokering of his signed copy of Aleister Crowley’s *The Book of Thoth : A Short Essay on the Tarot of the Egyptians* by ex-Church of Satan members/occultist Zeena (daughter of CoS founder Anton LaVey) and Nikolas Schreck, *Usher* was Harrington’s first film in nearly two decades since directing the quasi-skinflick *Mata Hari* (1985) starring Sylvia ‘Emmanuelle’ Kristel and produced by Menahem Golan after suffering a lifetime of having his cinematic works be deleteriously defiled and butchered by sociopathic Hollywood producers and studios, thus the final celluloid work also acts as his last pure artistic statement. Like his original 1942 adaptation of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Usher* features Harrington playing both leads as the twin anti-heroes, including in drag as Madeline Usher, thereupon expressing his innate ‘femininity’ and homosexuality, a theme he embraced

USHER

in a similarly macabre manner with his phantasmagorical avant-garde surrealist horror short *Fragment of Seeking* (1946).

In *Usher*, elderly poet twins Roderick and Madeline Usher are certainly the celluloid alter-egos of Curtis Harrington, a filmmaker figuratively taking his last gasp in cinematic form via the poetic deaths of the two siblings who share the same dark soul. Indeed, one could even look at *Usher* as one of the most lavish and dark home-movies ever made as Harrington shot it in his own strikingly elegant, if not seemingly melancholy, antique and fine art adorned Gothic home, and even counted on his own friends to star in and help create the virtual 35mm obituary. Roger Corman, who directed the most famous cinematic adaptation of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *House of Usher* (1960) and who assigned Harrington to direct *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet* (1965) and *Queen of Blood* (1966), also provided insurance that was needed to shoot in eerie Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles for *Usher*. Featuring a naïve young poet named Truman Jones (Sean Nepita) who has the honor of being invited to the House of Usher mansion to be schooled in life and all its dark crevices and corners and not the sort of pseudo-knowledge taught by reading a bunch of flowery poetry, *Usher* is a film directed by a sweet and generous, if not ominous old-timer who no longer understands the world he lives in, thus he escaped to the dreadful dream world where the only certainty in life is misery and inevitable loss of said life. Picked up by the Usher Twins' French chauffeur/butler Pierre (Fabrice Uzan), pansy-like protagonist Truman Jones enters the home and life of his dark yet gentlemanly mentor Roderick Usher with almost childish apprehension and naivety. Roderick lets Jones know that he is "not a teacher" but "simply a poet and perhaps not a very good one at that" and that poetry is from the heart, which the artist himself can only know and fully discover and integrate into their work. Jones' first encounter with Roderick's sister Madeline is a rather anti-social one as she does not even acknowledge him as she is apparently in ill health. A true gentleman through and through, Roderick entertains his guest by sharing lunch and wine, playing chess, walking around his pet Rottweiler Lucifer, and messing around with an Ouija board. Naturally, Jones is intrigued by the rather reclusive Madeline and one day she does come by for some outdoor tea with the guest and her twin brother and the siblings discuss poetry, including their critical agreements on the 'dry' scribblings of T.S. Eliot, how W. H. Auden will be nothing more than a footnote in a century, and how "above all, there is Reverdy...possibly the greatest poetry of the twentieth century." Curtis Harrington, a man who learned French while living in Europe during his early adult years, displays his disdain for the idea of poetry being translated when Madeline Usher pretentiously remarks, "when the words are changed, the poem vanishes." And, indeed, the same occurred with the butchering of his films like *The Killing Kind* (1973) and *Ruby* (1977) by sinister Svengali producers, which also lead to the partial vanishing of Curtis Harrington's auteur signature as a celluloid poet, which is undoubtedly

the most horrific thing to consider when watching his films.

Apparently terminally ill, Roderick Usher tells Jones regarding his twin sister that “The doctor gives her no hope and I’m absolutely terrified.” Unfortunately, it is during their mutual birthday party featuring guests in the spirit of James Whale’s *The Old Dark House* (1932)—a film that Curtis Harrington saved from being lost forever—that signals the beginning of the end for the Usher twins. Featuring a number of idiosyncratic party guests, including a priest (ironically played by ex-Satanist Nikolas Schreck), a doctor, a butch blonde lesbian poetess (Zeena Schreck, daughter and ‘magical killer’ of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey), and a couple bloated bluebloods, the birthday party begins merrily with wine and party masks, but apparently Madeline drinks a bit too much aged booze for her age and randomly tragicomedically drops dead during an initially happy dance with the ever so patronizing Mr. Jones. Rather oddly, Roderick initially seems quite youthful and even ecstatic after his dear sister croaks as if he has forgotten they both share the same blackened soul, but then, as Jones states, came that “last night.” On Jones’ last evening at the House of Usher, he receives a spooky telephone call from the ghost of Madeline stating, “Tell Roderick I will be seeing him soon,” and, sure enough, she does and comes adorned with rotten corpse-like flesh and remarkably dainty skeletal hands. A terribly stormy night, Roderick initially wallows in the witchy weather while playing discordant melodies madly on his beloved piano, but Madeline has come back to collect her brother and Jones learns the rather unfortunate truth that the two eccentric elderly twins share not only the same taste in poets and aesthetics, but also the same saturnine soul. After she enters the less than humble Usher abode, Madeline angrily accuses Roderick of burying her alive, but the two ultimately reconcile by sharing a big quasi-incestuous kiss, lips to skull, and are thereupon united for eternity with the forlorn brother’s necessary death. Naturally, Mr. Jones leaves the house with the sunrise, but it is doubtful whether or not he learned anything about poetry, aside that one cannot fake what is innate, especially when it comes to the perennially disheartened hearts of the Ushers, who lived as gloomily yet paradoxically merrily and poetically as they would die as damned yet dandy demon seeds as living and breathing Jungian anima/animus archetypes. Undoubtedly, director Curtis Harrington did not decide to portray both Roderick and Madeline Usher for no reason as they act as allegorical metaphysical reflections of his own sexually ambiguous and internally cadaverous soul.

A true ‘auteur’ piece summing up the dark, foreboding, and transcendental thread that defines director Curtis Harrington’s entire career as an experimental avant-garde filmmaker turned cult horror master, *Usher* is certainly a work that will be most appreciated by those already rather familiar with the filmmaker’s oeuvre as the final expression of a man who lived and breathed movies, especially of the absurdly melodramatic campy horror variety. Featuring visual and

USHER

verbal references to Harrington's favorite artists, including the painting "The Kiss" (1907-08) by Austrian symbolist painter Gustav Klimt and the genius of French proto-surrealist/cubist poet Pierre Reverdy, Usher is also a tribute to the aesthetic ingredients that inspired Curtis Harrington to get up in the morning and become one of the most subtly cultivated cinematic artists of the typically artless and uniquely unrefined horror genre. Indeed, considering the desperate poverty-budget circumstances the film was made under, Usher is truly the last testament of an auteur filmmaker whose dreams were too big and idiosyncratic for the likes of the monetary-inclined culture-distorters of Hollywood, yet whose artistic spirit still managed to prevail in the end with one last work of conspicuously campy and creepy celluloid poetry. Compared to his first film *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1942), which was recently released for the first time on *The Curtis Harrington Short Film Collection DVD/Blu-ray* combo put out by *Flicker Alley*, Usher, like great wine (incidentally, Harrington's favorite choice of drink), is the finespun product of maturity and purity. Thankfully, Curtis Harrington died happy knowing that he was able to create one last film free from the constraints of petty producers, writing in his memoir regarding Usher, "I was thrilled with the results. It was, indeed, the film I had intended to make. Nobody had told me what script to write, what scenes to shoot, or how it should be cut. It was truly an heir to my early films."

A man who lived when films were actually shot on film as opposed to schlocky and seemingly soulless digital, Harrington also remarked at the conclusion of his memoir regarding the dubious future of film, "Just as the development of sound-on-film technology doomed the silent film as a creative medium, now digitization will doom film itself. It is as if the painter's traditional pigments have been replaced by artificial colors that could never match the qualities that made older paintings great. Films can be reproduced on television, or made with digital technology, but a real film is in the magic of refracted light on a screen, of moving shadows." Ironically, most people interested in seeing Usher, as well as Harrington's other elegant work of horror, will have to settle for digital viewing via DVD/Blu-ray, which is a small price to pay to experience the works of a celluloid spiritual son of Edgar Allan Poe, a protege of avant-garde filmmaker/voodoo priestess Maya Deren (*Meshes of the Afternoon*, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*) and Roger Corman, a personal friend/collaborator of Kenneth Anger, and one of the oh so very few aesthete-minded filmmakers who ever worked in Hollywood and the horror genre. A celluloid swansong from the soul about twins that share one soul directed by a man with a rather conflicted soul, Usher is, as described by personally by Curtis Harrington via his alter-ego Roderick Usher, the product of a macabre mind that had to admit that "I have been suffering from a certain morbidity of the mind. I'm tormented by images of the conqueror worm devouring flesh... That flesh that once gave so much pleasure."

-Ty E

THE INTRUDER
THE INTRUDER

Roger Corman (1962)

Aside from his part as a producer for the early works of auteur filmmakers like Curtis Harrington, Paul Bartel and Monte Hellman, as well as a couple of the films in his 1960s Edgar Allan Poe cycle like *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964) starring Vincent Price, exploitation mogul Roger Corman is someone I never really cared for, especially considering that the older I get, the more weary I am of schlockmeisters and solely monetary-motivated exploitation hacks. From blaxploitation to hixploitation to piranha-ploitation and everywhere in between, Corman has attempted to capitalize on virtually every social controversy, scandal, stereotype, fad, and phenomenon that has plagued the United States, so it is only natural that he would try to profit off the race-hate of the Civil Rights era and the military-enforced racial integration of the South, which, at least financially speaking, ultimately backfired on the anti-auteur. Indeed, *The Intruder* (1962) aka *The Stranger* aka *I Hate Your Guts!* aka *Shame* is notable for being, among other things, the only film Corman ever made that lost money, which is a fact Corman would be keen to bring up anytime he was asked about the film. Indeed, as belated celluloid sleaze addict Bill Landis and his wife Michelle Clifford noted in their book, *Sleazoid Express: A Mind-Twisting Tour Through the Grindhouse Cinema of Times Square* (2002) regarding the reason for the failure of the film, "...not many theaters in his distribution network wanted to play a film that used the word "nigger" every few seconds. Years later, Corman called *THE INTRUDER* the only film he regretted making." Despite Corman's vocal regrets regarding the film and casting a then unknown William Shatner as the lead (the director apparently blamed the actor for its failure and Shatner even once joked that the film's re-released title *I Hate Your Guts!* was aimed at him), the sometimes race-hustler would later describe it as his greatest film, which is pretty convenient considering the current socio-political climate, especially considering the fact that the United States has a mulatto president with his own bargain bin brand of pimp-like race-hustling. Starring semi-Nordic-looking Hebrew William Shatner as a fiendish double-talking white nationalist type with the predictable Germanic surname 'Cramer' (which, ironically, is a surname that Jews oftentimes have) who arrives at a fictional southern town via bus to incite racial hatred against poor innocent and defenseless negroes and prevent them from integrating into a white school, *The Intruder* is based on the 1959 novel of the same name by speculative fiction novelist and screenwriter Charles Beaumont of *The Twilight Zone* fame and thus reflects the same sort of sensational fantasy filmmaking, even if the film was shot in a semi-gritty pseudo-Fuller-esque fashion that was utilized to make the viewer feel like they were trapped in the backwards confederate realm of sub-literate racist hick bigots of the ultra-untermensch sort. Notably, Corman made such an ass of himself in the southern

town where he shot the film, East Prairie, Missouri, that the chief of police of the area kicked him and his crew out. Indeed, seeing how Corman portrays the place and people of *The Intruder*, it is no surprise that the chief of police threw him out for being a communist, as the film uses Soviet style agitprop à la Sergei Eisenstein's anti-Kulak abortion *Bezhin Meadow* (1937) to get its misbegotten message across, albeit minus any sort of nuance or symbolism. Still, despite all of its glaring flaws and insanely manipulated cultural Marxist essence, *The Intruder* is, aside from some of his Poe adaptations, easily the best film Corman ever dumped out of his mixed-up, miserly money-worshipping mind.

Adam Cramer (William Shatner), a handsome Nordic-looking fellow in black sunglasses, gazes at negroes picking cotton from a bus window while headed to the fictional southern town of Caxton where he will attempt to rile up the already 'negrophobic' white majority against the black minority. Ku Klux Cramer works for a group called the 'Patrick Henry Society' (a name clearly taken from the real-life anti-communist conservative group 'The John Birch Society', which, unlike the group depicted in the film, was not critical of Jews) and has the hypnotic charm as well as all-American good looks to easily talk people into following his anti-colored/anti-kosher cause. Upon checking into a hotel, Cramer learns that the people already hate coons after the elderly front desk attendant complains regarding the bellboy, "I swear, I believe that boy's got nigger blood in him somewhere." Cramer also uses his charm to swoon an underage blonde high school girl named Ella McDaniel (Beverly Lunsford), whose grandfather fears "a great big black flood" and asks his granddaughter regarding the forced integration of ten negroes at her school, "What about you, Ella? What do you think about sitting in a room with a bunch of big buck niggers?" Ella's father Tom (Frank Maxwell) is a reluctant liberal journalist and he immediately has a gut feeling that Cramer is an evil conniver who plans to spread hatred and violence in the town. One of the first things Cramer does upon getting in town is meeting with its richest man, Verne Shipman (Robert Emhardt), who almost instantly provides him with money and a corvette to drive, which he uses to impress stupid teen Ella into letting him screw her after he divulges his plan to enforce segregation in the town. While Shipman at first argues with Cramer's plans to destroy racial integration and reinstate segregation as he thinks his methods are illegal, the intruder argues that integration is anti-democratic, stating, "Is it the collective will of the people that niggers should be able to take over the whole world? Because that's what's going to happen." Of course, it is no time before Cramer gets the lynch mob going, as everyone in the area seems to agree that integration is the "greatest wrong the government has ever perpetrated."

Providing complete validation to Gustave Le Bon's classic text *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895), Cramer incites a large crowd to attack a car full of negroes after delivering an impassioned speech where he states, "This so-called 'Advancement of Colored People' is now and always has been nothing

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but a communist front headed by a Jew who hates America and doesn't make any bones about it either. Well, the commies didn't waste a second. They knew only too well, friends, that the quickest way to cripple a country is to mongrelize it. They poured all the millions of dollars that the Jews could get to them to do one thing: desegregation," and declares he is willing to give his life to make sure his country stays "free, white, and American." Rather strangely, the entire mob pussies out after the negro patriarch, who has a mustache similar to Hitler, gets sassy with them. Of course, things get ugly later when Cramer drives Shipman's corvette through "Nigger Town" (the black area of the town) with robe-adorned KKK goons who eventually burn a cross to scare the spooks. After that, Cramer goes back to his hotel room and seduces the 'reformed nymphomaniac' wife of his new 'friend' Sam Griffin, who is a salesman that is out-of-town. Being a salesman, Sam knows Cramer is a bullshitter and confronts Cramer after his wife Vi leaves him after learning from the front desk clerk at the hotel that they fucked the previous night. Cramer also finds himself in trouble when some of his followers blow up a black church and kill the negro pastor, resulting in his arrest, but his followers protest and bail him out. Exceedingly arrogant, Cramer is proud of his arrest, stating, "Never underestimate the value of a jail sentence. Remember Socrates, Lenin, and Hitler." Meanwhile, proto-liberal do-gooder Tom, who has more or less degenerated into a 'white uncle Tom', coerces a young negro teen named Joey Greene (Charles Barnes) to go back to the white high school despite threat of death. When Cramer's followers see Tom walking negro Joe to the high school, they decide to teach him a lesson by beating him so badly that they break a bunch of his ribs, poke out one of his eyes, and cause him serious internal bleeding that leaves him in critical condition at the hospital. Cramer uses Tom's hospitalization as a means of coercing his daughter Ella into making up a lie about being raped by Joey, as he claims it will help her father. Of course, Ella obliges and a lynch mob comes for Joey, but luckily Sam Griffin, who is still pissed that Cramer screwed his wanton wife, saves the day by getting the teenage girl to admit that she lied about the rape. Needless to say, Cramer is revealed to be a lying sociopathic conman to the townspeople and he tries in vain to discredit Griffin by calling his wife a Jew and nigger-fucker, but it is already too late. Demonstrating he is the 'better man,' Griffin gets Cramer, who looks discernibly defeated, to leave town on the next bus. As for Joey, one can only hope that he produced a grandson (who looks like Trayvon Martin) who got even with those evil white folk by impregnating some poor cracker girl, thus completely destroying her bloodline for all of eternity.

Featuring real-life poor grizzled white trash scum and tobacco-spitting porch monkeys as extras, not to mention ominous cross-burnings and bloodthirsty cracker lynch mobs, *The Intruder* most certainly demonstrates that would-be-auteur Roger Corman really went out of his way to incite racial hatred and controversy while attempting to peddle it off as 'progressive' social realist art. Of

course, anyone with half a brain can tell while watching the film that Corman is just about as sincere in his negro-championing as villain Adam Cramer. In the 2007 featurette *Remembering The Intruder*, Corman would state regarding the film: "I took great creative pleasure in making that film. I was disappointed that it didn't do well commercially but it almost got its money back and I thought, 'Well, I lost a little bit of money but I made a film that was important to me.'" In the same featurette, William Shatner remarked regarding Corman and *The Intruder*, "He brags about how this is the only film of his that ever lost money... and I think, really, that he deliberately lost money on it, so that he could brag about at least one of his pictures not making money." Even in Alex Stapleton's documentary *Corman's World: Exploits of a Hollywood Rebel* (2011)—a superlatively sappy and sentimental love letter to the schlockmeister—Corman cries about the failure of the film, while also pretending he is some sort of morally righteous artistic martyr, melodramatically stating in a revoltingly phony fashion: "The picture was a wonderful commercial failure. I started to say a wonderful critical success but I got confused but I'll leave the confusion there because it's all wound up in my mind. It sort of gets me in the stomach when I talk about it." In the same documentary, Corman's brother Gene Corman, who co-produced the film, declares regarding *The Intruder*, "This is the only film that I don't think we ever made money on yet it was our best film. We were ahead of the time." Rather absurdly, in the same documentary, Corman more or less credits the film for turning him into an 'artiste' and more serious filmmaker, declaring that the work made him "rethink" his "method of making pictures" by learning the "method acting technique" and then proceeds to talk about "text and subtext" like a pedantic community college professor who has never even seen a F.W. Murnau or Ingmar Bergman flick.

With all the recent senseless and animalistic destruction, opportunistic theft and looting, and savage violence committed by hordes of mindless angry self-entitled negroes as a result of a white cop being cleared of killing a violent negro thug from Ferguson, Missouri whose equally degenerate parents have done their damndest to profit off their son's death thus demonstrating that integration is an abject failure, *The Intruder* seems all the more like a patently absurd and sociopathic manipulative joke. Notably, Corman would even note the failure of multiculturalism and black-and-white race relations in the featurette *Remembering The Intruder* where he states, "this problem is still with us. It's been partially solved, but it hasn't been completely solved and it will not be completely solved for a long time." Of course, the problem will never be solved, unless you're one of the Hollywood lobotomized automatons who hope to see a future where everyone has a light feces-colored complexion. In *The Intruder*, every white character, including the protagonist's daughter who presumably sleeps with the 'fascist' villain Cramer on their first date and lies about a poor innocent righteous negro raping her, is portrayed as either moronically evil or terribly flawed to the

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point of easily succumbing to evil, while the single black character is portrayed as an innocent lamb that just wants to live a simple life in a rotten world plagued with cracker brand racism. Corman also attempts to portray antagonist Cramer's remark that integration was a Jewish plot as patently absurd, but it is an indisputable fact that the NAACP was co-founded by Israelite Henry Moskowitz and that Jew groups like The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League were all central in fighting anti-negro prejudice, and that black groups like the NAACP, the Urban League, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee received the greatest funding from Hebrews, not to mention the fact that about 50% of the civil rights attorneys in the South during the 1960s were Jews, as were over 50% of the 'Whites' who went to Mississippi in 1964 to eradicate the Jim Crow Laws. Of course, as Malcolm X revealed, Jews, who owned the majority of liquor stores in black neighborhoods, were not doing this out of the kindness of their hearts, but to weaken the white Christian majority and gain the power they wield today. Unsurprisingly, Corman is himself half Hebrew (his paternal grandparents Jacob Corman and Bessie Arst were Russian Jewish immigrants), thus his personal motivations for making *The Intruder* are obvious. While Corman is oftentimes credited as a 'rebel' who subverted Hollywood, it could not be further from the truth, with *The Intruder* being one of the most conformist works he ever made, as a work that spreads the very sort of message that the culture-distorters in Tinseltown are all about, albeit having been done in a less sophisticated fashion that was made to appeal to the very people it denigrates. In that sense, Corman may be cinema history's most brazen and shameless yet successful carny huckster, as a sort of west coast Lloyd Kaufman, albeit minus the wit, charisma, and eccentricity.

-Ty E

THE BRUTES

Roger Fritz (1970)

Like with comedies, Germany has never been a big exporter of gritty and ultra-masculine exploitation films, especially the sort someone like spastic fanboy Quentin Tarantino rambles on about, yet one Teutonic actor/auteur, Roger Fritz (Mädchen, Mädchen aka Girls, Girls, Häschen in der Grube aka Rabbit in the Pit) made a couple superlatively sleazy yet shockingly artful quasi-exploitation flicks that certainly deserve attention, with his work Mädchen... nur mit Gewalt (1970) aka Cry Rape aka The Brutes aka Love by Rape being arguably his greatest film. Beginning as a photojournalist who snapped photos for mainstream magazines like Stern and Vogue Paris, Fritz assisted Luchino Visconti with the direction of his segment of the Italian film anthology Boccaccio '70 (1962) and The Leopard (1963) while living in Rome and began acting and making short films in the early 1960s, including his first short Verstummete Stimmen (1961), which won him a German Film Award, as well as a short about the building of the Berlin Wall entitled Zimmer im Grünen (1962), which earned him the official certificate 'Besonders wertvoll' (meaning 'Particularly Valuable', which German auteur Hellmuth Costard mocked by making a quasi-pornographic avant-garde short of the same name in 1968) which is only awarded to German works of extraordinary artistic value. By the late-1960s, Fritz luckily opted to stop appealing to the vogue politics and aesthetics of that zeitgeist and began making violent and sexually nihilistic works, with his first feature Mädchen, Mädchen (1967) aka Girls, Girls, which was co-written by anti-arthouse auteur Eckhart Schmidt (Der Fan aka Trance, Loft) being a success and winning the director's soon-to-be wife Helga Anders (The White Horses TV series, Derrick TV series) the German Film Award for 'Best Performance by a Young Actress.' Although Fritz would go on to star in films directed by Fassbinder like Despair (1978), Lili Marleen (1981), and Querelle (1982), he was a member of the lesser known German film movement 'Neue Münchner Gruppe' aka 'New Munich Group,' which also included his comrade Eckhart Schmidt, Klaus Lemke, and Rudolf Thome. Like Roland Klick (Deadlock, Supermarkt), Fritz would sow hatred and disdain in the dogooder leftist critics with his rape-without-revenge-themed artsploitation flick The Brutes (I use the alternate American title of Mädchen... nur mit Gewalt for sake of convenience in this review), yet the film has a visceral elegance and unadulterated form of nihilistic violence that is surely rarer today in cinema than when the film was released over four decades ago. Described in Variety as follows, "It's the cruelest, most ruthless, inclement, and carnal-manic story to transpire from a German film for a long time. Told with cold, almost clinical detachment, devoid of any "moral message," it still manages to draw a few drops of humanity from a flood of barbarous inhumanity," The Brutes has a sort of fiercely foreboding essence that is hidden deeply in the post-WWII German collective

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unconscious that films of German New Cinema mostly simply chose to ignore. The twisted Teutonic tale of two friends in their 30s and an underage girl that one of the two men chooses to rape while the other simply prefers psychological torture, *The Brutes* is a piece of pernicious celluloid poetry featuring Fassbinder actors and a score by Irmin Schmidt of the pioneering krautrock group Can that reminds viewers that not all Germans filmmakers of the 1970s were art fags and neo-bolshevik/feminist provocateurs.

Mike (Arthur Brauss, who played the killer eponymous lead of Wim Wenders' most brutal film, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*) and Werner aka 'Warren' (played by Klaus Löwitsch, who played the James Bond-like lead in *Welt am Draht* aka *World on a Wire*, among countless other Fassbinder flicks) are best friends who get a kick out of sexually harassing women, including married ones whose husbands are at work. Undoubtedly, Mike is the alpha of the two friends due to having a far greater intellectual prowess and he has no problem berating Werner, who has a hard time picking up chicks on his own in front of other people. In fact, it seems neither friend can 'rise to the occasion' without the other buddy egging him on, as if they are more aroused by the hyper-masculine camaraderie of it all than getting in between a hot chick's legs. One day, the two friends go go-karting and Werner ends up getting in a little crash with a super suave prick named Jerry (played by Rolf Zacher, who, aside from once being married to Gisela Getty, was a member of the krautrock group *Amon Düül II* during the early 1970s), who just happens to have four beautiful babes with him. In the end, Warren and Jerry let bygones be bygones and everyone goes to cool down at a bar. Ultimately, it is decided that everyone will go and have a bonfire party at a remote construction site on the outskirts of town, with an underage teen named Alice (Helga Anders) deciding to hitch a ride with the two strange friends. Of course, for whatever reason, Alice's friends never show up and Werner gets it in his mind that he wants to rape her after seeing her skinny-dipping, stating rather bestially to his man Mike, "Aww man, is that a great little body. Man, I'm horny." Mike teases Werner's lack of talent when it comes to the ladies and has no problem stating to Alice, "My dear Alice...Excuse my frankness but would you allow me to bang you tonight?," but she playfully rebuffs his request. Being a virtual child with a grown woman's body, Alice is only interested in playing hide-and-go-seek and the two friends humor her, but Werner has ulterior motives of the sexually savage sort, which Mike encourages. When Alice goes hiding, Mike instigates Werner into raping her, stating, "There she is, get her. Take her. Run, it's your last chance." Needless to say, Werner rapes Alice and Mike gets himself off by driving around in his car and flashing his headlights on the two literally down-and-dirty non-lovers. While Werner sexually pillages Alice, she attempts to fight by slapping her rapist in the face, but that only arouses him all the more, as he smiles at his victim with a sort of unsavory and sadistic glee.

Of course, everything changes in *The Brutes* after the rape. The next day, Werner seems to be genuinely sorry for what he has done and Alice threatens to tell her father and cops about the incident. In his patently childish defense, Werner yells to Alice, "First you drive a guy crazy and then you start to bawl. You were begging for it, you bitch." From there, Mike begins to play mind-games with Alice, telling her he will personally drive her to the police station and help her file charges. Of course, his ultimate goal is to scare Alice from actually going to the police, as he goes into the humiliating detail about how her naughty bits would be examined by a police doctor for 'vaginal trauma,' how she will have to describe the size of Werner's 'SO' (sex organ), and how she will have to explain to the courts why she decided to get in a car with two strangers in the first place. Needless to say, Mike psyches Alice out and she rethinks about going to the police. Rather bizarrely, Werner begins getting rather infuriated by Mike's emotional cruelty as if he is defending his girlfriend from a random brute, so he throws his bud into a manmade pond. From there, a full-on brawl breaks out and Werner nearly drowns Mike, but Alice ironically convinces him to save his friend from a very certain death. While Mike is unconscious, Werner attempts to rape Alice again after she reluctantly allows him to kiss her, but does a rather pathetic job as it is quite clear he is ashamed of himself. After regaining consciousness and hiding out for a bit, Mike manages to catch Werner at knifepoint and binds his legs and arms, ultimately threatening to castrate him (it seems pedantic intellectual Mike is jealous of Werner's animalistic sexual stamina). Instead, Mike merely stabs Werner in the leg and gives the knife to Alice to cut him loose. In the end, police arrive via helicopter and Alice neglects to mention she was raped, even though the police give her multiple opportunities to do such. In the last scene, the Teutonic threesome drives away together, with Alice now ironically seeming like the most domineering of the trio in the end, thus demonstrating the hermetic power of the feminine touch and the ability of sensitive women to tame rough and tough men of the rapist sort.

Although it is mere speculation on my part, it seems that *The Brutes* stars Klaus Löwitsch and Arthur Brauss and director Roger Fritz must have had great chemistry with one another as all three of them would go on to star in Sam Peckinpah's *Cross of Iron* (1977) together. While Löwitsch played one of the more major characters as a soap-hating and knife-loving super soldier Corporal Krüger, Fritz would play a closeted homosexual soldier named Lieutenant Triebig, and Brauss played a SS man named 'Zoll' who has his pecker bitten off by a hungry Bolshevik bitch. Undoubtedly, *The Brutes* has the some sort of venomously visceral and untamed masculinity, which is unfortunately quite rare in post-WWII German cinema, especially from the young German filmmakers of the early 1970s. Indeed, like Roland Klick's *Deadlock* (1970), Rainer Erler's *Fleisch* (1979) aka *Spare Parts*, and Eckhart Schmidt's *Alpha City* (1985), Fritz's *The Brutes* managed to offer some good old martial masculinity in Ger-

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man cinema that was all but castrated by the nation's defeat during the Second World War. While Fritz's feature filmmaking career basically ended after *The Brutes* and he would only go on to direct TV movies and TV series (though he did direct one more feature, *Frankfurt: The Face of a City* (1981) aka *Frankfurt Kaiserstraße*), he would continue acting, with his last role being in Ulli Lommel's major mess *Daniel der Zauberer* (2004). Currently, Fritz still works as a photographer and did the still photography for Fassbinder's swansong *Querelle* (1982), about which he also published a book. Despite its hyper-masculinity, there also seems to be a homoerotic subtext to *The Brutes* that is in a similar vein to *Querelle*. Of course, it is homoeroticism in the Ernst Röhm sense and not the queenish Werner Schroeter sense. Featuring none of the silly sort of outlandish and cartoonish histrionic overacting that plagues many Italian exploitation films of a similar ilk, *The Brutes* is a Teutonic psychosexual-thriller with testicular fortitude that makes one wish that there were more Roger Fritzes and Roland Klicks in Deutschland than Margarethe von Trotta and Jean-Marie Straubs, as Tarantino's films would certainly benefit from Aryanism and less Guidoism. Indeed, had Tarantino discovered the films of the New Munich Group, he might have been less prone to racial, cultural, and sexual cuckoldry, but maybe I am just being a tad bit too optimistic. Either way, Roger Fritz's *The Brutes* is indisputable proof that cinematic rape and violence can be tasteful and even artistically merited if put into the right man's hands.

-Ty E

BLOOD AND ROSES

Roger Vadim (1960)

While Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is certainly the most famous gothic horror vampire novel ever cinematically adapted as indicated by important cinematic works ranging from F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) to Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) to Francis Ford Coppola's somewhat uneven *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), fellow Irishman Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872) has arguably been responsible for inspiring the most ideally idiosyncratic and erotically-charged of bloodsucker flicks. Indeed, Carl Theodor Dreyer's semi-sound masterpiece *Vampyr* (1932), Roger Vadim's *Et mourir de plaisir* (1960) aka *Blood and Roses* aka *Carmilla* aka *To Die with Pleasure*, British auteur Roy Ward Baker's Hammer flick *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), and Spanish auteur Vicente Aranda's *The Blood Spattered Bride* (1972) aka *La Novia Ensangrentada* are all wildly divergent and mostly rather memorable vampire flicks that all happen to be based on the same somewhat ambiguously lesbianic Le Fanu novella. While I personally like all of these films aside from the uniquely idiotic *The Vampire Lovers* starring Hebraic hoe Ingrid Pitt (undoubtedly, Madeline Smith is much sexier), I have recently become completely obsessed with the imagery of *Blood and Roses* and I say that as someone that has a generally low opinion of Monsieur Vadim and his rather curious cunt-crazed sub-pornographic approach to filmmaking. In short, I have to concur with the book *Rough Guide to Film: An A-Z of Directors and Their Movies* (2007) where it says, "After the publication of his autobiography, *BARDOT, DENEUVE, and FONDA: MY LIFE WITH THREE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD*, Roger Vadim had the gall to complain that his work had been overshadowed by his lovers, and that people had forgotten what a good director he was." As the title of his (second!) autobiography demonstrates, Vadim was indubitably a shameless man (and probably some effete sort of narcissist) that put pussy on a pedestal and cared more about premium grade poontang than creating real quality cinema, though he somehow had some minor talent. As the title of the autobiography also demonstrates, Vadim seems to have nil respect for his second and least known wife Annette Strøyberg—a Danish dame that eventually banged such famous leading man as Vittorio Gassman, Alain Delon, Omar Sharif and Warren Beatty, among others international screen studs—yet she starred in two of his most notable films, including *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1959) aka *Dangerous Liaisons* and of course *Blood and Roses*.

For those that ever wondered where vexatious French novelist turn cinematic auteur Alain Robbe-Grillet (*Trans-Europ-Express*, *L'Eden et après* aka *Eden and After*) borrowed his entire somnambulist-babes-covered-in-blood aesthetic from, look no further than Vadim's addictively lusciously kaleidoscopic, strangely somberly sensual, and overall gorgeous gothic horror melodrama where

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covert Sapphic supernatural obsession manages to effortlessly overshadow overt heterosexual incest despite the film's complete and utter lack of overt carpet-munching action. Indeed, forget the classic bean-flicker bloodsucker flicks of Jean Rollin, Jess Franco, and José Ramón Larraz, *Blood and Roses* is the film that started it all and female vampire Fantastique par excellence. As someone that has never had a particularly big hard-on for the whole lesbo vamp Euro-sleaze routine due to the innate phoniness and insipidity of it all, Vadim's film reminded me that the first is oftentimes the best. Unfortunately, it seems that the film's influence is greater than its overall popularity as a cinematic work that more or less sired an entire horror subgenre yet is not nearly as well known as many of the (largely shitty) films associated with said subgenre. Aside from showing Mario Bava the way and acting as a virtual template for Jean Rollin's entire oeuvre, *Blood and Roses* was such a big influence of Japanese auteur Nobuhiko Obayashi of *Hausu* (1977) aka *House* fame that the auteur's avant-garde short *Emotion* (1966)—a surprisingly aesthetically pleasing experiment in cinematic wizardry that somehow manages to be just as goofy as it is romantic—begins with a dedication to Vadim's film. Considering that his film *Lisa and the Devil* (1974) features a death scene that is an obvious homage to the lead vampire Carmilla's death in *Blood and Roses*, one could even argue that goombah gothic horror maestro Bava virtually owes his entire aesthetic to Vadim's vamp flick. Interestingly but not all that surprisingly considering his track record as a filmmaker that seemed to be most focused on putting his lover(s) on a pedestal, it seems that Vadim himself never intended or expected the film to be anything special, thus underscoring his overall lack of agency as a filmmaker.

While it does not all that surprise me that Vadim was so obsessed with premium grade golden pussy that he was willing to risk his then-budding career for it, it does somewhat surprise me that he seems to have saw *Blood and Roses* as a sort of worthless gift that he gave to his wife in an ultimately failed attempt to jumpstart her acting career, or as the filmmaker explained himself in *Bardot Deneuve Fonda: My Life with the Three Most Beautiful Women in the World* (1986) in regard to the quite dubious background of the film, "For Annette's next film, I came up with the idea of having her play a female vampire. In a role of this type her beauty would conceal her lack of experience. I should have gone to an analyst to find out why I was sacrificing my career to fulfill the desires of a Danish beauty that had suddenly imagined she was an actress. After the success of *LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES*, I received many offers and could have directed a major international production. But I didn't see an analyst, and in the beginning of 1960, in Rome, I began shooting *BLOOD AND ROSES* with Annette Vadim, Elsa Martinelli and Mel Ferrer. It was a strange work, a little ahead of its time, but nevertheless well received by some because of its esthetic qualities." Somewhat ironically, Annette Strøyberg—a cutesy blonde that could be mistaken by some as Brigitte Bardot's somewhat

moodier doppelgänger—is undoubtedly one of the greatest aspects of the film, as she bleeds lovesick pathos and a certain distinctly feminine melancholy (also, one cannot blame her for wanting her cuckolded hubby to make her a star as the filmmaker previously did just that with Bardot in his once-scandalous *And God Created Woman* (1956)). While Vadim somewhat admirably confessed that the film was just something that he put together to appease a woman that did not seem much more to him than a poor man's Bardot, it is unequivocally a revolutionary horror film for a number of reasons, not least of all because of its virtual elevation of perennial horror clichés to something strangely artistic. Indeed, aside from creating a sub-genre that would influence everyone from Rollin to the mostly artistically bankrupt Brits of Hammer horror, Vadim's rather romantic celluloid orgasm also predates George A. Romero's *Martin* (1978) in terms of presenting vampirism as a morbid psychological delusion brought about by some hereditary genetic taint. Luckily, unlike *Martin*, there is some ambiguity as to whether or not the lead vampire's genetic problems are supernatural or simply psychological. Personally, I think the fact that *Blood and Roses* is a horror film is of little consequence, at least as far as its positive attributes are concerned. In fact, I have to assume that it would appeal more to fans of Cocteau and Robbe-Grillet than Romero, Carpenter, and Craven fanboys, but I digress.

While Vadim seems to have been rampantly heterosexual to almost a fault, he surely owes some of his greatest gifts to the crucial aesthetic influence of a fellow frog of the proudly cocksucking sort. Indeed, while poet and cine-magician Jean Cocteau might not have ever personally directed a horror flick, *Blood and Roses* is surely the second best thing as a cinematic work that manages to parrot the pleasantly primitive practical special effects from classic cinematic works like *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) aka *The Blood of a Poet*, *Orphée* (1950) aka *Orpheus*, and *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) aka *Beauty and the Beast* without seeming too ridiculous or shamelessly plagiaristic. Additionally, not unlike *Orpheus*, Vadim's film features a seemingly seamless mix of ancient European myth and aesthetics with the modern. Simultaneously orgasmically oneiric and lugubriously phantasmagoric, the film straddles a strangely healthy line between wholesome pre-porn exploitation and surrealist pop art, as if Vadim wanted to prove that he could sire the most tastefully trashy film ever made (in fact, I would argue that his greatest attribute as a filmmaker was his special knack for injecting the artless with art and bringing class to the classless). Of course, it pretty much goes without saying that, like any decent Vadim flick, the auteur is completely infatuated by the female lead as if he wanted to prove to the world (and, curiously, to himself) how ravishing and mysterious his wife is. Quite unlike the erotically ebullient Bardot in *And God Created Woman*, Strøberg has a sort of painfully tragic and morosely mercurial essence that is slowly but surely unleashed on the viewer so when the film reaches its climax it is only natural that she succumbs to a heartbreakingly brutal yet fittingly absurd demise. Despite her lack of expe-

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rience, Strøyberg seems like she was born to play a virtual human statue in an Ingmar Bergman or Werner Schroeter flick, as she is a painfully pulchritudinous diva that reveals with a mere slight glance much more than words ever could, hence Vadim's seemingly absurd faith in her as an actress despite her lack of experience. While Mel Ferrer is technically the lead, his scenes seem like frivolous filler anytime that Strøyberg exits the screen as she is virtually the entire soul and libido of the film. As for Elsa Martinelli, she seems like a self-conscious little girl when compared to the wantonly wounded womanhood and eerie grace of Strøyberg. While it might sound like puffery, I prefer Strøyberg's performance to that of those given by Bardot, Deneuve, and Fonda in Vadim's much more popular films. Of course, poor little rich girl Fonda would have probably made an even worse vampire than she did as a pinko commie revolutionary. On the other hand, it would be hard to imagine Strøyberg playing the lead in *And God Created Woman* or *Barbarella* (1968) as she does not seem like she could be moronically bubbly enough.

Say what you will about the film's weak storyline or glaring lack of character development, but *Blood and Roses* is a hopelessly hypnotically beautiful film, which is largely the result of Vadim's cinematographer Claude Renoir (as his name hints, he is related to French master auteur Jean Renoir, as his actor father is the nephew of the filmmaker). While it could be argued that the film is an exercise in high-camp kitsch, I sincerely doubt that Vadim was operating with the same mindset as a Werner Schroeter or Daniel Schmid. Indeed, Vadim might have put a premium on cinematic pulchritude, especially where statuesque Aryan women are concerned, but he was working from a strictly (and, some would say, hopelessly) heterosexual perspective. Apparently, the film, or at least its female lead, was even beautiful enough to catch the fancy of alpha-surrealist Salvador Dalí. As Vadim explained in Bardot Deneuve Fonda, "On September 28, BLOOD AND ROSES was shown in Paris. After the rather well-received screening, the guests were invited to a party at Maxim's. It was an unusually brilliant evening. The cream of Paris thought that having supper with a female vampire was great fun. 'I loved your cannibal with such pink skin,' said Salvador Dalí." Of course, the film is practically driven by pinks and especially reds; whether it be a red rose fading to a light pink after being touched by a vamp or a vamp bleeding deep carnal red via her supple bare breasts. As the film's English title certainly hints, certain vital fluids have an erotic energy that transcends semen and natural vaginal lube. As for flowers, they are a symbol of purity and virginity, hence why the vampiress is able to drain a rose of its red with her mere touch.

Somewhat abruptly and unexpectedly the film begins (and ultimately ends) on an airplane destined for Rome with a somewhat unreliable narrator named Dr. Verari (René-Jean Chauffard) as he explains to some similarly insufferably swarthy colleagues the curious tale of a bizarre love triangle of the incestuous

bloodsucking (and covertly bisexual) sort. Indeed, as the good doctor explains, a tall, dark, and vaguely handsome 'Italian' aristocrat named Leopoldo De Karnstein (Mel Ferrer) severely suffered from a complicated situation with his fiancée Georgia Monteverdi (Elsa Martinelli) and Austrian cousin Carmilla (Annette Strøyberg). While his fiancée clearly loves him and looks forward to marrying him, it is clear that Carmilla—a highly sensitive little lady of the somewhat anti-social and aggressive sort—loves him to an even more unsettling degree, as she seems to believe they are soul mates. Although less obvious, Carmilla also seems to have strong sexual feelings for Georgia, though one gets the impression that her sexual interest in her is largely because she loves her cousin and thus desires to sexually dominate the woman that has taken away the man that she so deeply loves. As Dr. Verari describes in regard to the darkly romantic atmosphere of the story, it is "...the most secluded parts of the Roman countryside. It's a place that inspires daydreaming. And melancholy, as well." A bad blonde bitch and proto-goth gal with an affinity for the dark and morbid yet has the rather misleading fair golden complexion of an angel, Carmilla is quite proud of the fact that she is supposedly descended from an accursed bloodline of vampires that, aside from the exception of a gorgeous girl named Millarca, were eventually ruthlessly exterminated with extreme prejudice by local townsfolk. As Carmilla brags in regard to her ancient undead ancestor, who bears a striking resemblance to her as revealed by an old painting, "She was called Millarca. She was a Karnstein from the heyday. She passionately loved her cousin Ludwig von Karnstein. She died before the wedding in Ludwig's arms, who swore her an everlasting love." Dedicated to his deceased cousin, Ludwig built Millarca a special secret hidden tomb in the family abbey, hence why she was the sole member to survive the family vampire massacre. Needless to say, Carmilla sees herself as Millarca and Leopoldo as Ludwig. Rather unfortunately for Carmilla, Leopoldo does not love her nearly as much as Ludwig loved Millarca.

I might be an antisocial sadist of sorts, but I found myself completely and gleefully rooting for Carmilla, even after she 'transforms' into a vampire and begins killing hot young maid girls. While Leopoldo boasts in regard to his family, "We've ceased being vampires since 1775," Carmilla—the only surviving member of the Austrian branch of the family—does indeed adopt a vampiric form of sorts after a big fireworks show that accidentally results in the Karnstein family crypt being opened, thus leading to the anti-heroine wandering in and being possessed by her ancient vampire relative Millarca; or so it seems, at least for most of the film. Indeed, somewhat unfortunately, the film pulls a 'gotcha' towards the end where the dubious narrator Dr. Verari explains to Leopoldo that Carmilla has degenerated into a literally bloodthirsty schizophrenic as a result of her soul-crushing lovesickness for her cousin. When Leopoldo complains in regard to his cousin's deadly love, "I thought she understood. That we can't always live like daydreaming children," the doc explains, "She never stopped

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dreaming. She didn't want to suffer. So she escaped from herself by neurosis. Traumatism, neurosis, split personality . . . The defeated Carmilla became the uncompromising Millarca; the one who hurt people. When she killed Lisa, she didn't only obey the legend. She also identified herself to the woman you love." Somewhat ironically (or not so considering the film leaves some slight ambiguity as to whether or not she is actually a vamp), Carmilla is killed in a freak accident via a stake to the heart after dynamite is quite conveniently and somewhat symbolically used to destroy the Karnstein family crypt. In the end, the film comes full-circle, albeit with the newly wed Leopoldo and Georgia flying together instead of Dr. Verari and his pals. In a twist, it is revealed that Millarca may or may not have also come to possess Georgia's body.

Rather unfortunately, *Blood and Roses* has never been released on DVD aside from in Germany in 2014 and this French/German language kraut suffers from an infuriating lack of cool dream scenes that are included in the unfortunately low-quality dubbed EP-speed VHS that was released in the United States by Paramount a very long time ago. Indeed, for example, an iconic scene where Carmilla's shirt becomes magically soaked in blood is inexplicably cut short in the German DVD version, as if kraut audiences could only handle so much blood. Additionally, shots of faded rose petals, which have lost their color due to being touched by a vamp, have been completely excised from the DVD. In fact, I would argue that the American VHS contains an all-around superior cut of the film as the unintentionally goofy character of Dr. Verari is only of minor importance and instead Millarca, who provides the film with its elegantly ominous tone, rather fittingly does both the opening and closing narration. For those that prefer pure literal horror to preposterous psychobabble, the American dubbed VHS is also superior as it confirms that the vampiress Millarca has indeed possessed the female characters. Considering they have already released Vadim's inferior (but unquestionably more popular) film *And God Created Woman*, one can only pray that the Criterion Collection will spare *Blood and Roses* from the celluloid dustbin of history and release a nice complete print of the film on Blu-ray, but I am probably being way too optimistic (realistically, I would not be surprised if Kino Lorber eventually released the film as they have already released a couple Vadim films, including the proto-Nazisploitation flick *Le vice et la vertu* (1963) aka *Vice and Virtue*, Arthur Schnitzler adaptation *La Ronde* (1964) aka *Circle of Love*, and ultra-lame caper *The Hot Touch* (1981)).

Notably, Vadim actually intended to direct another vampire flick starring his ex-girlfriend Catherine Deneuve, but it was never made because the director put it on hold to direct the somewhat uneven *Jeux de Nuit* (1980) aka *Night Games* and for whatever reason never got around to getting back to it (of course, Deneuve would ultimately star in Tony Scott's gorgeous goth chic debut feature *The Hunger* (1983) starring David Bowie)). As for horror cinema in general, Vadim's only other contribution to the genre was his somewhat lackluster seg-

ment from the Edgar Allan Poe omnibus *Histoires extraordinaires* (1968) aka *Spirits of the Dead* also co-directed by Louis Malle and Federico Fellini (undoubtedly, Fellini's masterful concluding segment 'Toby Dammit' makes the rest of the film seem pointless by comparison). Always a sort of whore for publicity, Vadim also managed to attach his name to the horror genre by allowing publishers to use his celebrity for the short story collection *Roger Vadim présente : Histoires de vampires* (1961), which was a French translation of the Italian vampire story collection *I Vampiri tra Noi* (the same exact collection, which features Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, was later published in Britain in 1965 by Pan Books under the outstandingly generic name *The Vampire*). Of course, considering that Vadim was not much of a filmmaker in general, one must give him credit for managing to virtually sire an entire horror sub-genre with a single stand-alone film, but one must also at least partially credit the heroine Annette Strøyberg for the film's potency, as she not only brings a certain sensual melancholy to the experience, but also apparently inspired real-life dread and horror in the auteur, or as Vadim pathetically recounted in *Memoirs of the Devil* (1976), "Annette had a special knack for disappearing at the most inappropriate moments. She began with a master stroke. I had made *ET MOURIR DE PLAISIR* for her. It was her own film in a way, her first big part. The producers had organized a gala evening at Maxim's for the premiere. Annette was the star of the evening and seemed happy, surrounded by friends and the press, who had liked the film. Before the champagne sherbet, she got up and left the table. I thought she had left for a couple of minutes, but she did not return. The cloakroom lady told me she had taken her coat. The vampire had vanished into thin air, leaving no message. She had answered her lover's call. I could understand that she lacked the courage to tell me, but not even to stay for the end of the evening, which was my gift to her and for which I had worked so hard—that was graceless of her. Since I don't enjoy drinking when I'm really depressed, I did not have the consolation of drowning my sorrows in liquor." In short, Vadim demonstrates that a filmmaker that puts pussy on a pedestal and dedicates his entire career to glorifying the beauty of his wives is not a man at all, but a cowardly cuck, hence why all of these beauties eventually left him. Of course, one could argue that it takes a true cuck to shamelessly cinematically expose his wife's finer traits to the entire world. Naturally, when one thinks of Vadim, it is hard to think of any other signature auteur qualities aside from his virtual filmic wife-swapping (after all, even Godard eventually learned his lesson in that regard).

Needless to say, I am not the only person that has a low opinion of Vadim's flagrant womanizing and groveling for cunt. Indeed, in the featurette *Reflections of Darkness: Del Valle on Kümel*, Flemish auteur Harry Kümel—director of the rather resplendent lesbo vampire flick *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) aka *Les lèvres rouges*, which was clearly aesthetically influenced by *Blood and Roses*—states of Vadim and his vampire flick, "It's not as sloppy as *ET DIEU... CRÉA*

BLOOD AND ROSES

LA FEMME or all the other, harder [films]. He's a sloppy filmmaker. He was not truly a filmmaker, Vadim. He was a womanizer. You can be both, but still, I think his main interest—his main interest in life—was women." In fact, it seems that Kümel believes that Blood and Roses was mainly good due to the cinematographer, or as he explained, "It's a film which I like, but I thought Roger Vadim was always a bit sloppy [...] And Claude Renoir did a lot in that movie. Naturally, if you have a cameraman of the caliber of Claude Renoir—Claude Renoir was one of the—Well, the French had such sensational cameramen. Alekan, who did the wonderful film by Cocteau LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE. Henri Alekan, a wonderful cameraman. The French had a sensational cinema which has been completely destroyed by the nouvelle vague, you know that. It's a complete disaster for Europe, in fact." Undoubtedly, had Vadim not been a somewhat older filmmaker and thus familiar with French cinema's classic 'Tradition of Quality,' Blood and Roses might not have been nearly as aesthetically orgasmic. In terms of frog vampire flicks from around the same era, the underrated black-and-white short Fantasmagorie (1964) directed by Patrice Moliard and starring Edith Scob of Eyes Without a Face (1960) fame seems like what might happen if a nihilistic member of the La Nouvelle Vague attempted to assemble an avant-garde gothic vampire flick that was completely extinguished of the warm blood red erotic vitality and Cocteau-eque pop surrealism that epitomizes Vadim's film. Either way, Blood and Roses seem rather radical in terms of form and atmosphere when compared to The Vampire Lovers, which is based on the same exact Le Fanu novella. As far as I am concerned, the only true spiritual sequel to Vadim's film is Joël Séria's Mais ne nous délivrez pas du mal (1971) aka Don't Deliver Us from Evil—a pleasantly pernicious piece of Baudelairian pastoral folk horror—as a cinematic the celebrates the very same sort of Sapphic evil that the other film less than sincerely attempts to condemn. In short, Séria's film is the sort of cinematic work Vadim might have directed had he been more intelligent and iconoclastic and less focused on whoring out his wife (of course, auteur Séria did whore out his wife Jeanne Goupil for that film and a number of others, but he did it with more artistic integrity). Although not a literal vampire flick, the Teutonic Heimat horror piece Nachtschatten (1972) aka Nightshade directed by Niklaus Schilling is like a morbidly nihilistic yet no less romantic response to Vadim's film where the filmmaker's wife Elke Haltaufderheide—a virtual Annette Strøyberg doppelganger—portrays a sort of metaphysical vampire of sorts that has a talent for effortlessly sapping a man of his energy, though she ultimately rightly succumbs to her own guilt-ridden spiritual sickness. With its blood red roses, hauntingly beautiful rural setting, gothic essence, and lethally lovesick blonde anti-heroine, Nightshade unquestionably owes a heavy aesthetic debt to Blood and Roses.

Undoubtedly, one can understand the film's anti-heroine's romantic plight when considers Arthur Schopenhauer's wise words, "Belief is like love: it can-

not be compelled; and as any attempt to compel love produces hate, so it is the attempt to compel belief which first produces real unbelief." Out of her hopelessly impossible love for the male protagonist, Carmilla learns to both hate and embrace a virtual ancestral religion of blood, which is ultimately rather noble in its perversity, hence the poetically tragic nature of the heroine. Indeed, while Carmilla's unwavering dedication to love is decidedly deadly, it also makes her a strangely admirable and sympathetic figure who seems like a lovely angelic creature compared to her all-too-bourgeois family members (to Carmilla's credit, she has seemingly nil interest in money as it is also revealed that she is much richer than her beloved guido cousin). Indeed, when I think of Carmilla, I am reminded of National Socialist Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn's words, "Know this: I live beast days. I am a water hour. At night my eyelids droop like forest and sky. My love knows few words: I like it in your blood." Not unlike the eponymous lily-licking bloodsucker of the David Lynch produced *Nadja* (1994) directed by Michael Almereyda, Carmilla is a rare example female vampire that can compete with the great male vampires of cinema history in terms of memorability and tragic intrigue. Of course, it was ultimately Monsieur Vadim that was the real victim of the nubile female nosferatu and for that alone, if nothing else, he deserves at least a modicum of reluctant respect for his sacrifice as both an emasculated man and hack filmmaker. While Vadim's marriages and romances were short-lived, *Blood and Roses* is forever!

-Ty E

LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET
LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET

Roger Watkins (1977)

When Roger Watkin's turned his drug binge into a film, It holds the record for being an instant cult classic. His exploitation film, The Last House on Dead End Street, was another of the misleading titles that point all towards unneeded bloodshed and nudity, when in this film, is not the main point. The film takes an approach of displaying blood as the ultimate payback for the belligerent Terry Hawkins, who was just released from prison. Due to his drug charges, Mr. Hawkins was locked up for some time. Upon being released, he puffs on a cigarette, and sets his horrible plot in motion. For the most part, the film develops like most of the timeless cinema of its age; clunky and gritty. I honestly couldn't be more happy with the finished product. For a film that cost only \$800 dollars, It works to advantage entirely. Hell, since Watkins got three thousand dollars, he decided to blow most of it on his amphetamines. The film not only created an exploitation that involved a fanatical blow to the film market and created a venomous main character who wasn't even a good guy. Normally most films pave way for some optimism. After discussing his failed porno films, Terry decides to film a snuff movie, cause that is what people really want to see. His very words sent shivers down my spine, cause, let's face it. If you watched this film, It's because of the violence. "Don't feed the drug-child" As the primary audience, we are catering to this exaggerated whim of Terry. The Last House on Dead End Street could even be prophetic similar to Arthur C. Clarke's work. Besides having the conventional "One good guy and One bad guy," this film tends to show both opposing forces in an evil light. We got the maniacal blood-lusting aspiring film-maker, and we got the Jewish studio representative who refuses to market Terry's work. It has also been recently revealed that ToeTag Pictures is working on a sequel to this film, conveniently after Watkin's death. This plan to put a sequel to a film that needs none, let alone doesn't even carry a proper timeline, is inconceivable. It's almost as bad as ToeTag revealing their plans to make a sequel to The Redsin Tower. The film was originally billed as starring/written/directed by different people, when it was in fact Watkins himself. So when you see that devilish gleam in Hawkin's eyes, you can see the drugs effect on his unstable mind. Perhaps one of the more artful scenes, was in a fetishist's apartment. It shows a married woman being whipped by a hunchback in Blackface. Too bad more sleaze couldn't be like this. The Last House on Dead End Street is a film sumptuous with negative energy. This is a film that breeds the thoughts of economic distrust. The title is deceiving, but don't let it get the best of you. With the conditions of his film making process in mind, It saddens me to think of him as an accidental filmmaker, but until i see proof of substance in his other films, my case stands.

-Maq

THE LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET

Roger Watkins (1977)

About a decade ago or so ago, I watched Roger Watkins' lost Helter Skelter-esque horror-exploitation flick *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) aka *At the Hour of Our Death* aka *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* aka *The Fun House* and I was so turned off by the film's absurdly amateurish and carelessly crude 1970s film school aesthetic that I did not even bother finishing it, ultimately shrugging it off as typical overrated cult horror crap that is worshiped by undiscerning fanboys who rate the quality of a film simply by its rarity, but not long after my initial viewing, I re-watched the film while stoned and came to the solid conclusion that it was one of the greatest masterpieces of its unhinged and unkosher kind. That being said, I still regard *The Last House on Dead End Street* as one of the greatest exploitation/horror flicks ever made as a work that it is second to none in expressing pernicious psychopathy in a sort of exceedingly eerie and atmospheric form. One of the many rip-offs of Wes Craven's excess-ridden exploitation flick *The Last House on the Left* (1972) that actually manages to be better than the original, *The Last House on Dead End Street* is a sort of pseudo-snuff arthouse flick of the uncommonly visceral sort directed by a true degenerate and seeming psychopath who, being high constantly during the film's production, spent only \$800 of the \$3,000 allotted for the actual film and spent most of the remainder on amphetamines. Nearly impossible to see until about a decade ago when the now defunct dvd company Barrel Entertainment released a double-disc DVD of it in 2002, *The Last House on Dead End Street* was so riddled with urban legends and mystification that no one even knew who actually directed the film until 2000 when Roger Watkins (aka Victor Janos aka Steven Morrison aka Claude Armand, etc.) revealed on an internet messageboard that he was the true auteur of this malicious and macabre no-budget cinematic masterpiece. In fact, not only was it revealed that Watkins was the director, but that he was also responsible for most other aspects in regard to the creation of *The Last House on Dead End Street*, not only writing, producing, and editing the film, but also acting as the charismatic lead anti-hero. The seemingly semi-autobiographical story of a Manson-like ex-pornographer who gets out of prison after a one year sentence relating to drug charges and nonsensically takes bloodthirsty revenge on society by making snuff films with a band of psychopathic degenerates that he personally banded together, *The Last House on Dead End Street* was so shocking to viewers on its initial release in 1977 (the film was completed in 1972, but an actress threatened to sue because Watkins included hardcore porn loops of her without permission, so the release was held back) that people thought it was an authentic snuff film, which was an urban legend that the film's sleazy distributor apparently encouraged. A rare American exploitation auteur piece directed by a patently pessimistic and curi-

THE LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET

ously cynical speed addict who would go on to become a nihilistic pornographer, *The Last House on Dead End Street*, like the so-called Manson Family, is a demented and deranged depiction of the darker side of counter-culture movements as a god awfully grotesque celluloid work with a fiercely foreboding and even apocalyptic atmosphere and nil moral compass. Featuring brutal slaughterhouse scenes that predate those featured in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's dark arthouse melodrama *In a Year with 13 Moons* (1978) aka *In einem Jahr mit 13 Monden* and gorgeously grotesque gore scenes that put *The Last House on the Left* and just about every other exploitation film of its time to shame, *The Last House on Dead End Street* is indubitably a singular exploitation flick in that it was clearly sired by a misanthropic and even malevolent man with a cold, black heart whose onscreen character and real-life persona seem totally identical.

Charismatic rock-star-like ex-con Terry Hawkins (Roger Watkins) has just gotten out of jail for serving a one year sentence for drug related charges and despite claiming he liked the 'security' of prison, he firmly feels it is his god-given right to seek revenge against society for sending him to the jailhouse, so he comes up with the bright idea to become a snuff film director because, after all, people are terribly tired of simple pornography, so something new and innovative needs to be made. First, Terry gets a cowardly cuckold of a camera man named Bill Drexel (Bill Schlageter as Lawrence Bornman) that he used to shoot porn loops with in the past, but ultimately screwed over after stealing the poor fellow's film. As for criminal cohorts, Terry hires two 'witchy' nihilistic chicks, Kathy Hughes (Kathy Curtin as Janet Sorely) and Patricia Kuhn (Pat Canestro as Elaine Norcross), as well as a crazed cow-fucker of a butcher named Ken Hardy (cinematographer Ken Fisher as Dennis Crawford), to 'play' as active performers in his nasty snuff flick. As for victims, angry angst-ridden auteur Terry cons a movie money man named Steve Randall (Steve Sweet as Alex Kregar), a porn star named Suzie Knowles (Suzie Neumeyer as Geraldine Saunders), and a debauched husband and wife couple, (Edward E. Pixley as Franklin Statz) and Nancy Palmer (Nancy Vrooman as Barbara Amunson), as unsuspecting victims for their snuff flick who they ultimately lure to an abandoned building where they will be meticulously tortured, dismembered, and slowly killed for the snuff flick. Like most people of his degenerate generation, Terry Hawkins, who sports a *Zardoz*-like mask while in kill mode, is an idiotic idealist of the bodacious beatnik variety who spouts pseudo-rebellious hippie jargon and feels his acts of vengeful viciousness are of a nobly revolutionary variety and thus he does not think twice of sacrificing human beings for his aberrant celluloid art. When the homicidal hippies begin killing, they do it with gusto and positively perverse pleasure as they suffer from delusions of grandeur and counter-culture brainwashing. Among other things, a less than homely topless broad in Terry's crew attaches an animal hoof to her crotch and forces one of the male victims to suck on her pseudo-cock. Terry and the gang also strap the victims to a makeshift

operating table and begin operating on the unfortunate individuals, drilling their eyes with electric drills and opening them up and taking their organs, including the intestines, out as if performing a Viennese Actionist-inspired vivisection. In an off-screen voiceover added to the film against Roger Watkins' will (the filmmaker felt it ruined the entire film), *The Last House on Dead End Street* concludes with the post-script anecdote announcing that Terry Hawkins and his maniac crew were apprehended and jailed for their crimes.

Rather unfortunately, the original Watkins' director's cut of *The Last House on Dead End Street*, which was titled 'The Cuckoo Clocks Of Hell' (a reference to the nazi-themed Kurt Vonnegut novel *Mother Night* (1961)) and was a whopping 175 minutes in length, has yet to be unearthed and purportedly the single surviving print might be deteriorating in a New York film lab, thus it is quite doubtful that the world will ever get to see the film as the filmmaker intended it to be. As Watkins revealed in the audio commentary for the Barrel Entertainment release of *The Last House on Dead End Street*, his assistant Bernie Travis butchered the 78-minute cut of the film that exists today, which rather irked the director. In fact, in the same audio commentary, Watkins states of Travis that he "recently committed suicide... I'm glad to say" and that his suicidal ex-assistant was an, "inept fool" who was simply "juggling imagery around" when he put together the 78-minute cut of *The Last House on Dead End Street*. Of course, Watkins, who was a protégé of Hollywood bad boy auteur Nicholas Ray (*Rebel Without a Cause*, *They Lived by Night*), had a lot to be pissed off and disgruntled about as he ultimately became in real-life what his character Terry Hawkins in *The Last House on Dead End Street* despised as he made his living in the 1980s directing gritty Taxi Driver-esque porno flicks. After directing the porn flick *Her Name Was Lisa* (1980) under the pseudonym Richard Mahler, Watkins made his second and final attempt at directing a horror flick with *Shadows of the Mind* (1980) aka *A Heritage of Blood* under the pseudonym Bernard Travis, but the production of the film proved to be a horrendous experience for the director and the film itself was nothing short of an abject artistic failure with nil of the grizzly aesthetic idiosyncrasies, foreboding atmosphere, nor nightmarish nihilism of *The Last House on Dead End Street*. As someone who has seen *Shadows of the Mind* (which the director himself described as, "a piece of trash"), as well as a number of Watkins' porn flicks like *Corruption* (1983) and *Midnight Heat* (1983)—both of which star Judaic porn legend Jamie Gillis—I can state with the utmost confidence that *The Last House on Dead End Street* is the accursed filmmaker's unrivaled movie magnum opus, even in its present butchered state at 78-minutes.

A radically raw and ravenous horror flick from meth-fueled counter-culture hell featuring white college chicks in Jolson-esque blackface being whipped at decadent jet-set parties, bourgeois degenerates being orally raped via dismembered animal hooves, and a fiercely fucked filmmaker who is more destructively

THE LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET

dedicated to creating celluloid art than the eponymous auteur terrorist of John Waters' satire Cecil B. DeMented (2000), *The Last House on Dead End Street* is an ideally incendiary, iconoclastic, and idiosyncratic artsploitation horror flick from a seemingly authentic psychopath auteur who rather unfortunately never accomplished anything else even remotely as interesting as mental illness and drug addiction apparently took their toll on Mr. Watkins. Wired (and wasting the film production costs) on meth while directing films and recently joking about the suicide of one of his former collaborators in a dvd audio commentary, Watkins was without question a true sleaze-bag of sorts in real-life and whenever I re-watch *The Last House on Dead End Street*, I cannot help but think the actor/director was acting out a deep dark fantasy when he directed the film and that's arguably the scariest thing about the wonderfully wicked cinematic work. A self-reflexive film-within-a-film where Watkins as Hawkins (in)famously yells, "I'm directing this fucking movie!," *The Last House on Dead End Street* is a true auteur piece that tested the bounds of morality and one's duty as an artist. Created by a man with next to nil interest in horror/exploitation cinema who once confessed in an interview, "You have to understand that the scariest film of all time to me is Orson Welles' *The Trial*. I think that's the most horrifying film ever made, not *The Last House on Dead End Street*, not any splatter film. I was heavily influenced by *Un Chien Andalou*, by the fact that it could shock and still does," *The Last House on Dead End Street* was a film that was made at the right place, at the right time, by the 'right' person, and will thus live on to be a holy grail of (unhinged!) underground horror cinema despite the fact its original dubious history has been demystified for over a decade.

A nasty and nihilistic yet charismatic and captivating true no-budget film directed by nasty and nihilistic yet charismatic and captivating individual who, not unlike the character he portrayed in the work, was too far morally gone to make a big name for himself and start a career as a serious auteur filmmaker of sorts, *The Last House on Dead End Street* is ultimately an extreme celluloid symptom of a country and culture afflicted with a metaphysical disease of the soul. Forget contemporary soulless and tasteless exploitation flicks like the August Underground trilogy directed by fat fanboy Fred Vogel (who was originally supposed to produce an 'authorized' sequel to *The Last House on Dead End Street*, but luckily Watkins dropped dead before he could authorize an aesthetic molestation of his masterpiece), *The Last House on Dead End Street* is the real deal as a work of uncompromising, deranged celluloid decadence and visceral vulgarity that no one wants to admit they enjoy, even if it is one of their favorite exploitation flicks (as it is certainly one of mine). Notably, Las Vegas-based exploitation auteur Ron Atkins (*Schizophreniac: The Whore Mangler, Mutilation Mile*) somewhat recently directed a quasi-sequel/tribute to *The Last House on Dead End Street* entitled *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* (2011) starring fellow exploitation auteur Jim Van Bebber (*Deadbeat at Dawn, The Manson Family*) in

the role of Terry Hawkins, which is certainly worth checking out if you're a fan of the original fan, but it lacks the unwavering viciousness of Watkins' film and is essentially an ultra-violent psychedelic black comedy from postmodern exploitation hell. Indeed, as its rip-off tagline advertised, *The Last House on Dead End Street* may be "only a movie!" but it is also probably the only movie that acts as the sort of cinematic equivalent of being spiritually tortured and raped by a counter-culture cult, which is certainly no small achievement on auteur Roger Watkins' part, even if he refused actually taking credit for the film for what was a good portion of his lifetime.

-Ty E

SHADOWS OF THE MIND
SHADOWS OF THE MIND

Roger Watkins (1979)

While best known for his pleasantly politically incorrect Manson-esque quasi-artsploitation horror flick *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) aka *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*, sub-underground auteur Roger Watkins (*Corruption*, *Midnight Heat*)—a man that is certainly a top contender for America's most sleazy 'auteur' filmmaker as a drug-addled human trainwreck who used his god-given artistic talent to direct some of the most nihilistic, misanthropic, and pessimistic porno films ever made—would ultimately direct more fuck flicks than horror flicks. In fact, Watkins only directed one other horror flick, *Shadows of the Mind* (1980) aka *A Heritage of Blood*, which was credited to the pseudonym 'Bernard Travis' and which the auteur vehemently disowned (in fact, it was not until October 2005 that Watkins owned up to directing the film). Indeed, as Watkins stated in an interview featured in issue #23 of *Headpress Journal*: "It's a piece of trash. I mean even the porno films I did, I think they are well done for the most part. But this is just inept. It's just an abomination. The stories I could tell about that mess..." Somewhat interestingly, 'Bernard Travis' was not actually a pseudonym created by the actual director but the name of the film's money man, who put his name on the film and who Watkins had much ill will towards, even rejoicing when the man kicked the bucket under tragic circumstances. Indeed, Travis later committed suicide and Watkins would jokingly insinuate that he murdered him, stating regarding his nemesis and his lack of a director's credit for *Shadows of the Mind*: "Yes, the suicide case. I really scared the shit out of Fenton [the film's producer], because he told me Bernie committed suicide and I said to him "What makes you think it was suicide?" But that guy, Bernie Travis, he put his name down as the director, and that's shit! It's bad enough to steal, but are you going to put your name on shit?! And him and his wife put their names down as the writers. Fine with me, I would never allow my name on that garbage—or even [my pseudonyms] Richard Mahler or Victor Janos for that matter." On top of being the film's financial backer and pseudo-director, Travis was also the husband of the uniquely untalented lead actress of the film, Marion Joyce, who is not exactly easy on the eyes or ears. Indeed, to put it more bluntly, Joyce seems like a typically spoiled, overweight, and all-around grotesque JAP (aka Jewish American Princess). Indeed, probably the most horrifying and disturbing element of the film is Joyce's horrendous Hebraic NYC accent. Indeed, *Shadows of the Mind* seems to be more or less the banally ugly, patently pointless, and aesthetically odious outcome of Watkins whoring himself to an unkosher backer who wanted to make a film glorifying his innately inglorious kosher wife. Needless to say, the film is quite the disappoint seeing as it is more or less considered a 'lost film' by the marvelously mischievous mensch who brought the world *The Last House on Dead End Street*. Indeed, aside from a

couple striking gore scenarios and flashback scenes that seem like something out of an obscure Czech New Wave flick, the film seems like a poor man's equivalent to those horrendous PG-13 horror-thrillers that are incessantly shit out by Hollywood and are specially tailored to appeal to the low IQs of hormone-ridden teenage girls.

Almost immediately seeming like one of the most hopelessly schlocky Freud-fetishizing pseudo-Hitchcockian flicks ever made, albeit minus the suspense, *Shadows of the Mind* centers around angst-ridden anti-heroine Elise Halsted (Marion Joyce)—a meta-bourgeois basketcase that is certainly of no relation to S&M sodomite pornographer Fred Halsted—who went crazy at age 12 after witnessing the rather pathetic pondside drowning accident of her father and stepmother, thus resulting in her long-term institutionalization. Now an adult (it is hard to tell how old she is, but she looks like she is at least in her mid-30s, if not older) who has spent most of her life in a loony bin receiving experimental treatment, Elise finds her rather fragile sanity tested when her 'progressive' pill-peddling psychiatrist Dr. Robert Lang (Erik Rolfe) abruptly releases her back into society, thus forcing her to move back to the large family estate where she witnessed her father and stepmother drown. Elise's only living relative is her self-obsessed hot shot Wall Street swindler stepbrother Leland Sayers (G.E. Barrymore)—a prestigiously pompous littler pisser who drives a sports car and has not bothered to visit his stepsister once since her initial institutionalization—and he wants her immediately recommitted so that he can be the sole heir to the family estate. When Leland rudely arrives at the family home in his candy ass sports car, Elise, who seems more than a tad bit socially retarded, refuses to embrace him and yells at him for never visiting her in the nuthouse. When Leland incites the family groundskeeper Andrew (Anthony Frank)—a creepy dude that likes perversely staring at homely young girls and stroking his scythe as if it is his cock (I hate to say it, but Watkins seems to be paying tribute to Carl Th. Dreyer's 1932 masterpiece *Vampyr* during this scene)—by insinuating that Elise plans to sell the estate thus leaving him out of the job, the pissed off prole worker goes insane and attacks the hysterical little heiress. Needless to say, groundskeeper Andrew is soon slaughtered with his own beloved scythe.

Later that night, Dr. Lang and his much younger and vaguely beauteous fiancée Diana Russell (Bianca Sloane) come by the Halsted estate to spend a quaint evening with Elise and her dickhead stepbrother Robert. Naturally, Elise becomes quite unhappy when Dr. Lang arrives with his fiancée, as she is in love with her doctor yet at the same time sees him as a father figure of sorts, thus causing her to associate Diana with her much hated stepmother, who she blames for her less than ideal childhood and poor papa's premature death. Of course, psychopathic pseudo-playboy Robert—an exceedingly effete little turd that seems like a miserable mix between a meth-addled fag queen and a stereotypically repugnant Jewish stand-up comedian—acts like a first-rate posh prick

SHADOWS OF THE MIND

and makes wisecracks like, "I wonder what the poor people are doing tonight," which demonstrates his nauseatingly annoying narcissism. Needless to say, Dr. Lang is not amused by Robert's glaring arrogance and unwarranted sense of superiority, especially after he hits on his fiancée Diana, so he soon decides to take his babe and leave, but his car fails to start, thus forcing him and his lady friend to stay the night at the Halsted home (which Watkins described as an, "rundown Citizen Kane-like befouled Mansion in Westchester County"). Of course, when everyone goes to sleep, murderously jealous Elise goes on an unhinged murder spree which begins with her stepbrother, whose eye she gouges out, and concludes with the seemingly ritualistic burning of Diana. After managing to lock Dr. Lang in a room, Elise, who has covered her face with clownish make-up that makes her look like a six-year-old drag queen, surprise attacks Diana and repeatedly stabs her in the chest with a butcher knife. From there, Elise drags Diana outside, doses her body with gasoline, and sets her on fire while the unlucky little lady is still alive. As Diana screams in pain while burning to death, Elise laughs maniacally while deriving sadistic glee from the young woman's brutal death. In the end, the only thing that remains of poor Diana is a burnt skeleton and Elise is sent back to the mental institution, though she probably won't enjoy her stay there as much as she did before, as it is quite doubtful that Dr. Lang will want to continue treating her since she burned his fiancée alive and all. After everything is said and done, it is revealed that Elise accidentally caused her father's death while attempting to kill her stepmother when they were riding in a small rowboat in a placid pond. Indeed, after 12-year-old Elise knocked her stepmother into the water by hitting her over the head with a paddle, Mr. Halsted jumped in to save her, thus resulting in both of their would-be-tragic deaths.

Despite being less than 80 minutes long, *Shadows of the Mind* feels like it is well over two hours in length, which probably has to do with the fact it does not show a single murder scene until about 40 minutes in and routinely recycles a number of the same flashback scenes, as if the editor did not have enough footage to work with to edit together an entire feature film, thus he decided to merely reuse the same banal scenes over-and-over again. Indeed, this absolutely appalling quasi-melodramatic horror abortion ultimately seems like an over-extended short film, which probably largely has to do with the fact that auteur Roger Watkins was forced to work with contemptible crew of pretentious NYU film school graduates who tried to lead a mutiny of sorts against the director on the set, thus bastardizing his original artistic vision, or as the auteur stated himself in the *Headpress* interview: "I learnt something interesting on that set. Here's what I learnt: As I said, I wanted to make films when I was ten. I'm sixteen and I'm good. At twenty-two I'm real good. All of a sudden this asshole Fenton has got me directing this film that I wrote with Paul, and he's hired these assholes out of film school or visual arts who think they know everything and they know fucking nothing. But because they are all friends, they are like gang-

ing up on me. "I want this... no, no I want this..." It's just like pulling teeth to get the shot you want, and then when you see it it's not the shot you want anyway [...] Do you know William James? Henry James' brother? He had this saying: 'looking glass self.' You could be the most handsome man in the world, but if everybody around you tells you that you are fucking ugly, you will believe it. I would get all these people who knew nothing and I had to question: "Wait a minute. Do I know what I'm doing? Maybe these eighty-seven jerks out of NYU and out of the School of Visual Arts, maybe they know and I don't know?" I actually went through a sort of crisis which lasted a few months. Then I said, "No, they know fucking nothing!" But it happens." Indeed, aside from its sometimes foreboding tone and its handful of scenes of demented ultra-violence, it is hard to tell that Watkins was the man in the thrift store grade director's seat.

Undoubtedly, the most 'entertaining' element of the film is its shockingly horrendous acting, especially from the pudgy slag lead, who resembles a gigantic autistic toddler who suffered brain damage after taking one-too-many hits of acid. Of course, you know a film is a plodding pile of philistine celluloid shit when the director describes it as follows: "Of course the production is a nightmare: You can actually see the "star" looking for cue cards as she tries to deliver her lines; the crew was an inept bunch of shitheads from NYU, each one of them thinking they were a combination of Welles, Buñuel, and Fellini, No, I take that back, each one of them thinking they were a combination of Michael Winner, Roy Ward Baker and numerous other money making hacks." Rather interestingly, Watkins subsequently directed a dark comedy entitled Spittoon (1981) based on the hellish production of *Shadows of the Mind* starring the auteur himself as a famous Nazi filmmaker who became famous during the silent era. Unfortunately, *Spittoon* seems to be impossible to find. Undoubtedly, any film that mocks a work as innately wretched and aesthetically insipid as *Shadows of the Mind* must be some sort of lost masterpiece. Indeed, maybe if there was a scene in the film where the lead actress was gang raped by some high ass homies from Harlem, *Shadows of the Mind* might have been more appealing, but ultimately the film is as limp as a veteran porn star's diseased dick.

-Ty E

CORRUPTION
CORRUPTION

Roger Watkins (1983)

Undoubtedly, a multi-film collaboration between underground exploitation auteur turned nihilist pornographer Roger Watkins (*The Last House on Dead End Street*, *Shadows of the Mind*) and Hebraic porn chic leading man Jamie Gillis (*Through the Looking Glass*, *Water Power*) was a malevolent match made in celluloid hell. Naturally, this uniquely unsavory collaboration ultimately produced two of the world's darkest and most unhinged, mystifying, and nihilistic fuck flicks ever made, which is saying a lot considering that they were made within an quasi-underground industry that is dominated by mostly degenerate and forsaken lost souls who make a living exposing their most sacred moments and body parts. Out of the two films that the mischievous movie men made together, *Corruption* (1983) and *Midnight Heat* (1983), the former is undoubtedly the greatest, sickest, and most provocative, as a sort morbid masterpiece of the late porn chic era. Watkins directed both films under the pseudonym 'Richard Mahler' (a somewhat ironic amalgamation of the names Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler), which indicative of the director's love of classical music, which is also quite clear in *Corruption*. A 'loose' (and I mean LOOSE) reworking of Teutonic maestro Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold*—the first cycle of the composer's four-cycle *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total work of art") opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876) aka *The Ring of the Nibelung*—that the director originally hoped would be three hours and more faithful to the source material, *Corruption* is probably the most wanton and wicked 'Wagnerian' flick ever made as a work featuring an Hebrew born on the same day as infamous Wagnerite Adolf Hitler in the lead role, a prissy porn actress reading a vintage copy of Cosima Wagner's *Diaries: 1878-1883*, and of course music from *Das Rheingold*. Needless to say, Watkins' film is certainly more wicked than wanton, as a work that is more likely to inspire the viewer to shoot themselves than their wad. A fucked flick with truly filthy fucking that feels like an unholy marriage between the paranoia-addled labyrinths of Franz Kafka, the unhinged underworld lechery of David Lynch, and the politically incorrect urban nihilism of William Friedkin and Martin Scorsese, *Corruption* may be an aberrant adaption of *Das Rheingold*, but it really owes most of its soul-stabbing sensationalism to the sorry socio-political climate of the post-counter-culture era, as a work set in a world where there is not only no such thing as "free love," but only the renouncing of love, and where sex comes at the price of one's soul. Directed by a truly reluctant pornographer who had never seen a porn flick previously and who refused to direct the actual sex scenes, *Corruption* is a conspicuously corrupt piece of sleazy celluloid featuring 'honorable' businessmen selling their souls, seemingly Satanic Kafka-esque whorehouses run by bitchy Wagnerites, treacherous Gothic top-hat-wearing necrophiles, and ungodly bastard brothers that reminds one that

there is indeed such a thing as a cultivated hate-fueled fuck flick. The film also reminds one that the least interesting thing about Jamie Gillis is his circumcised kosher cock, as he barely demonstrates his carnal knowledge in the flick yet it ultimately features the actor at his greatest and most strangely understated.

As stoic lead Mr. Williams (played Jamie Gillis in a role that seems to be modeled after the character Wotan, ruler of the gods, from Wagner's opera) states at the beginning of the film to a gangster named Mr. Franklin (Michael Gaunt), "I believe in business. I believe in honoring my contracts. I believe...without honor...all business becomes quite useless," yet little does the businessman realize that business will ultimately lead to him entering a literally and figuratively dark realm of the sexually taboo and sensually meta-sadistic. Mr. Williams is involved in a dubious business deal with a dubious dude of the seemingly mafioso-oriented sort named Mr. Franklin involving a mysterious suitcase. While Williams half-heartedly claims that he loves his wife Doreen (Tiffany Clark) because she doesn't ask for much (?!), he is completely obsessed with his spouse's little sister, Felicia (Kelly Nichols), who he spies on masturbating. For a major business transaction, Williams makes the seemingly moronic mistake of sending his feeble-minded partner Alan (George Payne) to carry out the truly curious transaction. Little does Williams realize that Alan will betray him and join the other side. Indeed, to carry out the transaction, Alan enters a subterranean whorehouse where the whores, who do not even show the slightest traces of empathy and love, force him to follow their debasing command. Ultimately, Alan will come to the realization that he enjoys power and pleasure over purity and love as a result of his experiences at the semi-surreal brothel. Alan will also come to the realization that he is an exhibitionist and necrophile who gets off to copulating with corpses, especially in front of men who he betrays.

Upon first arriving at the building that Williams has sent him to where he is supposed to carry out some sort of unspecified transaction, Alan encounters a brazenly bitchy receptionist aka "Woman at Desk" (Samantha Fox) who mocks him while flipping through a copy of Romantic maestro Richard Wagner's wife Cosima Wagner's diaries. Alan is told to enter a room where he meets a lingerie-adorned "Woman in Blue" (Tanya Lawson) who tells him to "do nothing" while she fiercely masturbates. Eventually the blue babe commands Alan to, "Come over here and smell my pussy," which he naturally complies with like a good little passive boy. After provocatively stating to Alan, "There's something nice about the smell of a cunt, isn't there Alan? Something exciting...something forbidden. Just watch...Just sit there and watch me fuck myself," the Woman in Blue reveals to the businessman that she is not going to fuck him because she has "given up on men." After Alan is asked if he could give up on women and "rely on nobody" but himself, the Woman in Blue is annoyed by his uncertain answer and tells him, "what you're looking for is beyond that door." In the next room, Alan meets a "Woman in Red" (Marilyn Gee) who tells him to "eat me,"

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which the beta businessman does with a sort of hesitant gusto. Of course, while the red woman gives him a blowjob, she ultimately refuses to give him an orgasm and says, “one more door Alan, one more room” just as he says “I’m cuming.” In the third and final room, Allan meets a “Woman in Black” (Tish Ambrose) who tells him that he must “renounce love” if he wants the thing that all men desire, which is “power.” After agreeing that he will renounce love, the Woman in Black states in a bitchy tone, “Well, come and fuck me.” When the two strangers make (anti)love, the “Woman in Black” seems both bored-to-death and exceedingly annoyed and when Alan is about to cum, she states in a contemptible manner, “don’t cum inside me,” so he busts on her bum instead. When Alan leaves the final hate-fuck session, he finds a suitcase waiting for him. Of course, Alan, who has renounced love (and thus has become like the dwarf Alberich of Wagner’s play, which has been described by kosher commie Theodor Adorno as a “negative Jewish stereotype”), has already made his decision to betray Williams.

When Williams goes to meet his low-life quasi-midget criminal brother Larry (Bobby Astyr)—a superlatively swarthy and sleazy guy that puts the “Kosher Nostra” members of Nicolas Winding Refn’s *Drive* (2011) to abject shame in terms of innate repugnance and moral bankruptcy—at a strip club where the the strippers danced in a seemingly trance-like fashion like somnambulists on crack, he begins to realize the depth of the personal hell that he has gotten himself into. Like his (ex)comrade Alan, Williams is taken by little lunatic Larry through a pandemonium of pernicious perversion where he witnesses lurid lipstick lesbianism, gimp-themed S&M brutality, and even necrophilia. Indeed, while Williams finds the necrophilia so disturbing that he bangs on the door and screams, “Open this fucking door” at the guy fucking the corpse, his bastard ½ brother Larry finds the entire scenario to be rather hilarious. Of course, the necrophile in question is Alan and he now only has contempt for Williams and his pansy second-rate businessman ways. Meanwhile, Williams’ feisty sister-in-law Felicia is kidnapped by one of the leaders of the mafia group that the businessman did business with. As a result of Alan’s treachery, the mafia men never got what Williams promised them, thus they want revenge. While the mafia pig anally pillages Felicia, he sadistically states, “Williams asked us to do his dirty work for him. We knew it was only a matter of time before we owned him. I guess he knew that too...otherwise he wouldn’t have sent that fool Alan on a man’s errand.” Not long after that, Williams’ bastard ½ brother Larry comes in and blows both Felicia and the raging rapist away, or so the viewer assumes (their deaths are not actually depicted). In the end, Williams’ wife becomes a soulless whore (indeed, she acts more or less like the ‘Woman in Black’) and says to her hubby, “You know what I want? I wanna get fucked. Not make love. I wanna just fuck. Think you can accommodate?” Of course, since Williams is more in love with a prostitute named Erda (played by Vanessa del Rio in a role named after an “earth goddess” from Wagner’s opera who warns Wotan of an

impending doom), he does not really care that his wife has degenerated into a debauched whore. As the conclusion of the film reveals, Larry set up Williams from the beginning.

On top of being one of the most foreboding fuck flicks I have ever seen, *Corruption* also happens to be one of the most wonderfully cryptically incoherent, as a lecherously labyrinthine work that seems like Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1973) meets Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) as directed by the world's most pernicious Wagnerite pornographer. Indeed, when everything is said and done, it is almost a cinematic tragedy that it is a mere porn flick, as the film shows elements of what could have been a cult masterpiece, especially if Watkins had been able to make the 3 hour erotic epic that he originally intended, as a true pornographic 'Gesamtkunstwerk' would be nothing short of magical. As anyone can tell by reading an interview with him, Watkins was a real lowlife and patent underachiever who wasted his life and artistic talent on drug addiction, so in a way, it was only natural that he become a pornographer. While *Corruption* is, in many ways, quite anti-erotic, I surely found it more sexually appealing than most blue movies, as the sinister sleaze element certainly equips the work with a sort of debauched danger that most similarly themed films lack, not to mention the fact the film has a certain debauched dream logic that is quite singular, especially compared to similar works. A waywardly wanton and wicked de-Teutonized pornographic adaptation of one of Wagner's most revered works starring swarthy sensual Hebrews, *Corruption* is a fine aesthetic example as to why Oswald Spengler was probably not nearly as pessimistic as he could have been when foretelling Occidental decline. Indeed, somehow Wagner and circumcised wieners seem like a curious combo.

-Ty E

AMERICAN BABYLON
AMERICAN BABYLON

Roger Watkins (1985)

Before prematurely concluding both his porn and filmmaking career with the apparently forgettable shot-on-video effort *Decadence* (1988), Roger Watkins aka 'Richard Mahler'—the man who forever delightfully debased the horror realm with his misanthropic work of nefariously nihilistic Mansonite artsploitation *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977)—blessed the world of bizarre blue movies with his penultimate piece of eccentric celluloid excess *American Babylon* (1987) aka *Babylon USA*, which like Fred Halsted's *Sextool* (1975), was one of only a handful of porn flicks that was shot on 35mm film stock. A film made to mock the raincoat crowd and Pee-wee Herman types, as well as the banal and equally bored American suburban bourgeoisie that could afford the pricey projectors and film reels to jerk-off in the dark in the privacy of their own basements, Watkins' reluctantly wanton work is positively penetrating anti-porn at its most darkly humorous. Indeed, a piece of mischievously mirthful meta-cinema and porn-within-a-porn-within-a-porn about a basement-dwelling porn addict who watches fuck flicks in a literal raincoat and a motorcycle helmet and his considerably whipped neighbor/'best friend' who calls his conspicuously cunt-y wife 'mother' and is good at taking orders from other people, especially wanton women, *American Babylon* depicts via a secretly seedy suburban microcosm the pathetic loneliness that oftentimes 'comes' with pornophilia, extramarital affairs, and religious fever. An iconoclastic assault on Christian evangelism, marriage, middle-class living, and porn addiction, Watkins' work is nothing if not a totally and shockingly singular work made on the brink of the death of porn chic, which probably has largely to do with the fact that the auteur had total creative freedom with the film, or as he stated in an interview with David Kerekes featured in *Headpress 23: Funhouse* (2002): "CORRUPTION and AMERICAN BABYLON are two I had absolute, total control over." A timely work created around the time when the porn industry drastically degenerated into the soulless and malignant smut tumor it is today and started producing plot-less and artless shot-on-video twaddle that was meant to sexually excite the most moronic of debauched dullards and delinquents, *American Babylon* is a sort of unofficial declaration of the pornographic apocalypse.

Meek 'house husband' Thomas (played by actor/porn star Michael Gaunt, who appeared in everything from the late-1960s BBC children series *Jackanory* to Lucio Fulci's 1980 classic *City of the Living Dead*) arrives home calling for his domineering wife Mary (played by Chelsea Balke, who starred in Sharon Mitchell's delightfully titled 1985 work *D.O.D.: Dick of Death*), but instead finds a sandwich, glass of milk, and note reading, "Honey, Tuesday night is aerobics night. See you after a time. Your loving wife, Mary." Rather annoyed by his wife's absence and her use of the nonsensical non-phrase "See you after

a time,” Thomas decides to head over to the house of his small, swarthy, and sleazy neighbor Robert (played by pornographic ‘character actor’ Bobby ‘Clown Prince of Porn’ Astyr), who is a pathetic yet exceedingly arrogant and narcissistic porn addict who spends virtually all of his time watching fuck flicks and denies sexual pleasure to his undersexed wife Joan (Tish Ambrose, who appeared in virtually all of Watkins’ fuck flicks). Indeed, when Joan begins masturbating in an attempt to turn on her horndog hubby, he bitches with a gutter-grade NYC Jewish accent, “Joan, I really wish you wouldn’t do that. It’s distracting. Enough is a fuckin’ nuff’.” Together, Robert and Tom watch vintage black-and-white films together like “Teenage Pigment In Heat” a film by ‘Bernard America.’ An early casualty of porn addiction who lives and breathes amateur blue movies, Robert excitedly describes the poorly directed fuck flick to Thomas as follows: “Get a load of this footage, Thomas. No adult cinema, this. No, no contemporary triple X theater, this is a dirty movie. The screen just literally drips guilt. The debasement is what does it. Look at the cunt. You can’t tell but I know it. It’s just dripping wet and stinks to high heaven.” Indeed, Robert is so enamored with porn that he will not even notice Thomas beginning an affair with his wife Joan right in front of his face.

Spiritual cuckold and human doormat Thomas is indubitably his wife Mary’s little bitch and he has no problem admitting it, even to women who he is cheating on his spouse with. When Thomas fails to drink the milk she left him while she was at aerobics, she complains, “son-of-a-bitch didn’t even drink his milk” and forces him to drink it later, but not before berating him a number of times. When Thomas walks in on Mary, who he lovingly calls ‘mother,’ masturbating, he ruins her orgasm by driving his face into her gash, but he makes up for it by dining on and penetrating her naughty bits. After sex, the two go to bed, but they are both awakened by a phone call from Robert’s wife Joan, who demands that Thomas meet her at 2 pm the next day at a local pizza joint because, as she says to the whipped married man, “I want to suck your cock.” Of course, being a cowardly cuck who can be easily manipulated by any woman, Thomas follows Joan’s orders and soon finds himself receiving head in the lady’s room of the pizza joint, though he complains, “Joan, this is a public restroom. Anyone can walk in here” during the middle of the blowjob. After blowing his load, Thomas, proclaims, “Gee Joan, that was swell. I’d really love to do it again sometime, if it is at all possible,” to which his friend’s wife replies while semen is dripping from her face, “I can’t hardly wait.” Indeed, the next time Thomas comes over to Robert’s place to watch a fuck flick called “Butt Girls in Bondage,” he is treated to a handjob from Joan, whose husband is so hypnotized by the hardcore reel that he does not notice that his “best wife” (indeed, Robert seems to think he has more than one wife) is stroking the pole of his “best friend.” When Robert later walks in on his wife Joan being fucked by a butch bitch with a strap-on while Thomas masturbates nearby while absurdly sporting old school beatnik

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garb, he does not even notice a thing and goes on to pathetically proclaim how glad he is that he just found his Swiss army knife like the proud man-child that he is.

Unquestionably, *American Babylon* becomes much more bizarre and intriguingly inexplicable during the last 20 minutes or so. After Robert tells a bogus bullshit story about how he once had an affair with two bisexual sisters that just magically happened to show up in the upstairs bedroom of his home while he was vacuuming downstairs with his beloved Hoover vacuum cleaner (indeed, he seems more aroused by the thought of his vacuum than the two imaginary incestuous sluts he encountered), the film begins to deconstruct. To differentiate between sections of the film, director Roger Watkins opted for shooting the film's main narrative in color and the fictional fuck films that the characters watch in black-and-white. Of course, by the end of the film, the main characters are also depicted in black-and-white, thus rudely demolishing the imaginary 'Fourth Wall' of the film and making the viewer well aware that they are watching a porn flick. Indeed, when the character Robert states to Thomas, "Only a fool would believe a story like that. I mean, think about it," after he fails to differentiate between fact and fantasy, he is really speaking to the viewer from the perspective of auteur Watkins, who seems to have only the bitterest contempt for his audience. During the last 10 minutes or so of *American Babylon*, a title card for an imaginary film entitled "Menopausal Males in Bondage" (A film by Thomas and Robert) appears and various scenes from the movie appear in an abridged recapping of the entire film, thus forcing the viewer to come to terms with the fact that they have been 'had' by the director and are, not unlike the characters of the film, 'Menopausal Males' in bondage to pornography and impotency. Like Thomas and Robert, the viewer lives their life vicariously through television characters and dope-addled porn stars. Also, towards the end of the film, Thomas' wife Mary shoots her TV with a shotgun after becoming quite agitated with what she sees on the screen, thus suggesting that porn and television are just two heads of the same incapacitating and lobotomizing American beast. In the end, *American Babylon* concludes with a pop-art-like portrait of Abraham 'Honest Abe' Lincoln, who not only symbolizes America's degeneration since the last century, but also how the nation itself is founded on myths, with pornography itself being a perverse product of this mythmaking.

More than any of Watkins' other films, *American Babylon* reveals the director's venomous contempt for Christian evangelism, which is most apparent during a scene where the character Robert listens to some carny-like radio preacher and states to his neighbor: "Thomas, I have a theory about these self-appointed sanctimonious radio proselytizers...I think they're all suffering from some massive guilt complex. Somewhere in their seedy little pasts, each and every one of them has committed some heinous act for which they can find no absolution. So what they've done is beat themselves over the heads with it, and after eons

of introspection some kind of dark knights of the soul, they have been metamorphosed into what I like to call 'Leapers into the Light.' They are going to beat us over the head with it, buddy, and there ain't no gettin' away." While Watkins has made it quite clear in various interviews that he got involved in the porn industry for monetary reasons, one certainly gets the feeling while watching *American Babylon* that he also did it to attack the medieval-minded so-called "Judeo-Christian" (itself, an oxymoron) evangelists who have turned America into the great laughing stock of the world.

While Roger Watkins was fairly dismissive of most of his hardcore flicks, he seemed to have a 'soft spot' for *American Babylon* as revealed in his remark in *Headpress 23: Funhouse*: "I made that with my own money. I like that film. I can't even find a good tape of it now. I have a bootleg. It's interesting to me; it's about boredom. It's about two men who sit around bored watching pornography. Basically that's it. I kind of like it. I think the last shot is an eight minute static, b&w shot of these two forlorn guys sitting near a window in a bar listening to 'Glory Glory Hallelujah' or something." Although somewhat inaccurately describing his own film (he was known to have drug problems throughout his entire life), Watkins is correct when he states *American Babylon* is hard-to-find, as even I had to track down a poor quality bootleg copy, which is rather unfortunate considering it is one of the few true masterpieces of porn, not to mention one of the most sophisticated and iconoclastic works that the industry has ever produced, as the sort of fuck flick Godard might have directed had he been a forsaken drug-addled American exploitation auteur. While some might suspect that the title of the film might have been inspired by the scandalous and oftentimes salacious pages of Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon* (1959), Watkins revealed otherwise, stating, "There was a porn series that made a lot of money – *BABYLON PINK*, *BABYLON YELLOW*, *Babylon* whatever. *AMERICAN BABYLON* capitalized on all that, but I had written it in a more imaginative way." Lauded as the "last great adult film to come out of New York," *American Babylon* is unquestionably the sort of fuck flick that transcends porn ghetto, as one might describe it as one of the most eloquently obnoxious assaults on both the American porn industry and America in general. A work that depicts suburbia as a sort of American pie that is completely rotten inside where the men are either cuckolded automatons or impotent porn addicts and the women are hyper horny undersexed deviants looking to fuck anything and everything that moves, *American Babylon* innovatively manages to portray what everyone knows but is too afraid to say by using the taboo art of pornography for a practical purpose, which was certainly one of Watkins' greatest talents as a filmmaker. Indeed, Watkins is the only filmmaker I can think of who would have probably made socially keen snuff films were he given the opportunity.

-Ty E

INDEPENDENCE DAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Roland Emmerich^o (1996)

Of all the movies I could choose from to represent the United States of America, I would choose the 1996 Roland Emmerich film *Independence Day*. I do not mean to say that in the sense that *Independence Day* in any way portrays the traditional values commonly associated with America, nor am I saying that it really has anything to do with America's origins in a political sense. When I say that *Independence Day* represents America, I mean to say that it represents the sort of sociopolitical direction that America has taken in recent years, in almost every possible way. Perhaps for this reason it is fitting that the film has proven to be so culturally relevant, and in some ways, it could be a landmark for the new attitude of America's future generations. It would be folly to insinuate that *Independence Day* has anything to do with the zeitgeist of the American people of today. Rather, as it stands now, it is actually total propaganda. The plot of the movie establishes itself very simply enough: when extraordinarily large spaceships begin to loom over the atmosphere of Earth, people speculate on their presence before realizing that they contain an entire alien race that goes from planet to planet, wiping out all available resources and then moving on. The aliens have no homeland of their own, require massive amounts of subsistence, and they are dangerous, so the war is on. There are three basic thematic elements to *Independence Day* that bring about a sense of cohesiveness in its cryptic message. Namely, they are multiculturalism, hedonism, and perhaps most importantly, the triumph of Jewish intellectualism over puerile European brutality. All three of these ideas interweave with each other quite fluidly, so it is important to delineate the well-hidden measures of this film's very ambitious agenda.

Maybe the strangest part about the multicultural aspects present in the film has to do with a sense of post-Communist paranoia one gets from this blockbuster. Within the first few minutes of the film, a Sky news broadcast is shown with a caption that establishes it as "Soviet central news." The Soviet Union fell in 1991 and the era of perestroika had come and gone by this point, but nevertheless it is alive and well in the mind of Emmerich and writer Dean Devlin. There is also a map of Russia later in the film where St. Petersburg is referred to as "Petrograd" (that particular name of the city was only used from 1914-1924), and other Russian words on the same map are horribly misspelled. It could have been out of thematic necessity that these decisions were made. The blatant and conscious message of the film has to do with setting relatively minor disputes in favor of uniting for a common good, so these quick shots speak volumes for the imaginary political climate that characterizes the film. In another shot, the Arab nations and Israelis are working together to assemble a militia. There is actually a montage of countries around the world, near the end of the film, re-

ceiving messages in morse code about an upcoming invasion on the aliens, and so a sense of teamwork is given through the urgent behaviors of each country's people. As stated, even the "enemy" countries such as Russia and China are in on the act. But the message of the film has very little to do with global unity. It has a lot more to do with United States hegemony, especially since the morse code they are receiving has to do with America's great plan and no one else's. Keeping consistent with the entire multicultural agenda, this sort of global harmony has to be guided by a dominating force. The other countries, regardless of their weapons, technology, and accomplishments, are operating under the American plan with very little influence of their own. It is quite obviously no mistake that the great comeback on the aliens takes place on July 4th, but to call this merely nationalistic propaganda would mischaracterize the depth of the film's agenda.

Another interesting part of the film is its glorification of the degradation of traditional American values and its emphasis on "if it feels good, do it." The chief example for this is in the character of Jasmine Dubrow (Vivica A. Fox), the woman Captain Steven Hiller (Will Smith) wants to marry. Jasmine lives in a very expensive-looking home in the suburbs, she has an illegitimate child who seems very well-adjusted, a successful military soldier wants to marry her, and she also just so happens to be a stripper. It seems as though this issue would cause at least some strife in the subplot. After all, both conventional wisdom and numerous professional studies state that most women working in the sex industry are either addicted to drugs or have had very traumatic past sexual or family experiences and need therapy, or both. Nevertheless, this is a relatively unimportant issue for the film. In the one single scene that seriously addresses the issue, the First Lady misunderstands what Jasmine means when she says she is a "dancer," so Jasmine clarifies. The First Lady says, "Oh, I'm sorry," to which Jasmine replies, "I'm not. It's good money."

In addition to the unnecessary risqué elements to the film, there is also perhaps an even stranger sort of component to this message of discouraging personal responsibility. Many anti-tobacco organizations cite Hollywood as having a "pro-smoking" agenda in its movies due to the many supposedly garish demonstrations of actors smoking cigarettes and cigars. Independence Day manages to qualify for such a complaint in that it actually glorifies the smoking of cigars. Throughout the film we see Hiller planning victory cigars for the two different air strikes he goes on against the aliens, and he even manages to convince the straight-laced David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum) to share a smoke with him after the film's climax where the aliens are officially destroyed. One of the very last lines in the film involves Levinson looking at the cigar and saying, "I could get used to it." I would say it is fairly rare to see a film pander to the tobacco lobby so blatantly as to make the characters show such a non-ironic vocal appreciation for smoking. In some ways it is almost admirable to see a film so intentionally backwards in its values.

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It is important to know that the idea for Independence Day was concocted at Emmerich's sister-in-law's child's bar mitzvah when a rabbi asked Emmerich and Devlin what they would do if they woke up to find an alien spacecraft the size of the city in the sky. Given the subtle elements of dichotomizing Jewish intellectualism with gentile boorishness that seems to enshroud the film, it is safe to say that the place of the film's conception had to have left a profound indention on the execution of the film itself. Throughout Independence Day, the recurring themes of Jewish greatness play a role in plot advancement while non-Jews are treated as complacent go-to men and/or broad-shouldered fighters who rely more on gut instincts than intellectual analysis. These concepts are most importantly exemplified through the Levinsons, David and his father Julius (Judd Hirsch).

Before examining the Levinsons, the two other characters of Jewish origin bear examination for the messages they help contextualize. Harvey Fierstein plays a character named Marty who serves simply as comic relief for the first part of the film. While he is meant to be laughed at for his overbearingly flamboyant behavior, there is an undercurrent of empathy and altruism in his behavior. The main impetus of his presence is him frantically trying to call his relatives and loved ones (even his doctor in the Hamptons) to warn them of an impending alien attack. More interesting than Fierstein's minor role, however, is in the other Jewish character Captain Jimmy Wilder (Harry Connick Jr.). Before the fighting begins, Wilder curiously gives a humorous speech in homage to the Reverend Jesse Jackson, a fierce proponent of liberal multiculturalism. Wilder is Hiller's good friend in the Air Force, and apparently he is the best gunman out of all of them as only he is able to target one of the smaller alien ships. Several of the other fleet members are killed by the aliens and the mission is aborted. Wilder decides to outrun the aliens, or something to that effect, and dies in the process. Now, while the previous deaths do not seem to affect Hiller in the slightest, when Wilder gets shot down, Hiller emits a loud, classic, "Nooooo!" that seems to devalue the previous casualties by placing all the emphasis on the one fighter of noticeably Jewish origin who dies. While it bears mentioning that Hiller and Wilder do have an established friendship, there is camaraderie between all of the soldiers during the mission briefing that seems to suggest a group unity. One can only wonder if the implications run any deeper than the mere mourning of a fallen friend, especially in a military context where emotions would normally be suppressed as a survival technique.

Beyond the ambiguous ideas of Jewish superiority that the smaller roles present in terms of morality and ontological importance, the main Jewish-focused themes develop as a result of the intellectualism behind David and Julius Levinson who both essentially carry the plot of the film. While there are very minor drawbacks to their personalities, such as David's tendency to get airsick or both of their incessant argumentativeness and nagging, both characters are nearly flawless in

their actions. Out of all the radio analysts working for the government, David Levinson is the one random schmoe who manages to discover that the aliens are exploiting Earth satellites to relay messages back and forth. This sets up the Levinsons' vital importance to the plot. When they go off to warn the president (Bill Pullman) using high-tech gadgetry for David to contact his estranged wife who just happens to be the advisor for the president, they are allowed to escape with him on a private jet. There, Julius Levinson continues to further the plot by accusing the government of hiding a crashed alien spacecraft in Area 51, which the secretary of defense confirms despite even the president's dismissal of the idea. The entire notion of an old Jewish man instinctively knowing about Area 51 whereas the actual President of the United States does not is Independence Day's best achievement by far. Here, the viewer is treated to a showcase of conspiratorial activity in a highly secretive organization that the president is clearly too incompetent to even be aware of. What are the implications of this? When the president marvels to Julius of such cryptic activities, Julius simply responds, "You don't think they'd spend \$20,000 on a hammer, \$30,000 on a toilet seat, do you?"

The absurdity gets stronger when David actually speaks to the Area 51 scientists who have been observing this alien spacecraft for decades. Apparently the presence of the mothership has repowered the spacecraft, allowing a few days of serious analysis regarding what each button and switch on the main console does. Nevertheless, the scientists are baffled by the computer code that the ship displays on a monitor of some sort. When David Levinson points out in mere seconds that it is most probably an alien code to facilitate the coordination of their ships, as if it requires any kind of serious depth to see this, the main scientist replies, "You're really starting to make us look bad." In addition to this nonsensical exchange, another one occurs later on where Julius randomly tells David he might catch a cold, which inspires David with the revelatory idea of uploading a virus onto the alien mothership. Of course, the idea is met with initial skepticism despite its obvious effectiveness. The most interesting aspect of all of this is that even the secretive underground government organizations prove to be just as worthless and incompetent as the mainstream ones. Apparently, the government in all of its various forms can benefit immensely from that certain Jewish *je ne sais quos*.

The film, by this point, has featured David trumping all of the various government-appointed radio analysts by identifying the exploitation of Earth satellites, Julius making a fool of the president by yelling about Area 51, David demeaning the purpose of the Area 51 scientists by recognizing something as simple as alien communication frequencies, and David coming up with the groundbreaking idea of implanting a virus into the alien mothership, which no other government official was able to come up with. But let's explore the treatment of gentiles in the film. One of the most offensive examples is in Russell Casse (Randy Quaid), a

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Vietnam veteran who supposedly has imagined his own abduction by aliens due to post-traumatic stress disorder. As a crop duster, he is uninspired, unhappy, an alcoholic, and the target of verbal ridicule from his own friends. But when the alien mothership arrives, he is able to assert himself by latching onto his intended role in life, not as a crop duster, but as a tactical killing machine employed by the U.S. Government. Clearly, as the film shows, he is unintelligent and incompetent. Even when he tells the commanding general about his experience of being abducted by aliens, he is greeted with condescension. It is only appropriate that he is the martyr who winds up sacrificing his own pathetic life to destroy the mothership at the end.

This sort of idea of “returning to your purpose in life” is also explored in the president. Throughout most of the film, he speaks in the sort of whispery, grunty voice that Bill Pullman is known for, with few exceptions. When he finally gives a rabble-rousing speech right before the final attack, however, the whisperiness of his voice is completely gone. He is now a man with purpose, and that purpose is to be a demagogue that promotes violent warfare. Earlier in the film, he makes the strategic blunder of trying to nuke the mothership, the consequences of which go strangely unexplained. Perhaps to make this wrong right, the President himself decides to become one of the fighting masses, so he volunteers to go into a ship and fight himself. He even acknowledges to the general that his true role is as a fighter, not a strategic leader of any kind.

To make the split between gentiles and Jews even more abundantly clear, literally the only form of Christianity that is represented in *Independence Day* comes about halfway through the film, where an insane paranoid extremist is sitting on top of a pile of rubble, yelling about the apocalypse while pointing to his bible. Near the end of the film, Julius Levinson is sitting in a multicultural circle, warmly reciting a Jewish prayer in Hebrew. When the newly-fired Secretary of Defense says, “I’m not Jewish,” Julius replies, “Not everyone’s perfect.” To the average viewer, this joke would merely be seen as a playful quip and nothing more. With a careful eye, however, this joke actually represents one of the very consistent themes that constantly directs the film. Fighting against the repressive yoke of gentile control, the two Jewish characters manage to intellectually muscle their way out, strategically guiding the gentiles into the right path and using their manpower to save the planet.

There is nothing contradictory about any of the messages in this film. Rather, they fit together very appropriately. The elements of hedonism, multiculturalism, and Jewish superiority combine to form a message advocating what appears to be a Cultural Marxist Globalized McWorld of sorts. This kind of subtle propaganda comes straight from the Free Love Era of the 1960s, molested by a jingoistic neoconservative undercurrent, and put right out for the consumption of the American working class. But what kind of lesson can we derive from a film as technically calculated and devoid of artistic merit as this? Well, as David

Levinson shows, the way to defeat the oppressive forces is by using pure information that he injects into a virus. Rather than relying on violence and gunplay, he uses information to ripen the aliens for defeat. It is through this intellect more than anything that David manages to save the world. All information can be used a virus, even Independence Day itself, and if this movie is to be remembered by anyone at all twenty or thirty years in the future, it should be for this reason alone.

-Blind Lame OKB

GODZILLA
GODZILLA

Roland Emmerich° (1998)

To esoterically credit the enigmatic, illustrious Otis Heterosexual, *Godzilla* (1998) is a largely entertaining film with great performances meaning only Jean Reno is the survivor of this thespian Western kaiju film. Another relic on exhibit are those 90s CGI effects that look rustic by today's standards and tiny Iguana monsters running around, slipping on gumballs, all the while, the Benny Hill theme plays in your head to a certain French extent. Roland Emmerich is a Hollywood trash icon of disaster films, most notably *Independence Day*, the upcoming 2012, and *The Day After Tomorrow*. Hailing from Western Germany, this fool has brought us many explosive summer blockbusters but they all lack any form of serenity. At long last, Emmerich seeks to fix this fatal flaw in popcorn films but buttering *Godzilla* down with that similar tragedy mercy-execution scene that was also visited to a purer effect in *King Kong*. First understand that this film is an instant action classic of sorts and the casting decision of Jean Reno is to blame. In regards to his performance, It seems that Mr. Reno finally was able to mix his Elvis impersonation perfectly in context while making fun of Western civilization. His roles normally revolve around pro-France outlaws or self-loathing Frenchman. As seen in *Flushed Away* when telling his squad to make like the French, his team responded swiftly with a bold "We surrender!" Now for Jean Reno's credibility, this native Moroccan action star has worked himself out as a hero to me and I graciously enjoy every single film he has ever appeared in. Yes, even *The Pink Panther*. So it comes as no surprise to me that I thoroughly enjoyed *Godzilla* for what it was; Jean Reno driving away from a rabid lizard. Jean Reno is *Godzilla's* muse and without him, this film would be complete shit for the most part. *Godzilla* must be seen in a post-*Cloverfield* atmosphere. It's intended this way with extreme cause. With *Cloverfield* fresh in my mind, *Godzilla's* action scenes came as a great nostalgic surprise to me. Enjoying the premature viral advertising of *Godzilla*, I found the chase scenes to be thrilling and the design of *Godzilla* to be fundamentally important to the American monster genre. For a PG-13 monster film, I noticed the light-hearted scenes to be followed with the implied ravaging of French agents as being especially dark for the set tone of *Godzilla*. Like most films depicting a crisis looking to be averted by military action, *Godzilla* revels in its own excess with corny Military humor and renegade hero soldiers. Kevin Dunn will later move on to play the exact same smartass role in *Small Soldiers* and *Transformers*. *Godzilla* is, as we all know, a hulking reptile on two legs with a series of dorsal plates that magnify (seemingly) radiation to lend power to his atomic breath. When given the rights to this film, the US studios agreed a simple restriction on *Godzilla*: keep the spirit of *Gojira* intact. As we can see here, Roland Emmerich completely shat all over their requests, the spirit, and the creature itself. Rather than be-

ing seen as a monster, Godzilla is sympathized by Ferris Bueller as an animal suffering from maternal instincts. The idea of A-sexual capabilities definitely adds an obstacle and a precious 30+ minutes but ultimately fails in producing favor from an unsure audience. While most film coming from angry directors is brandished with a rebellious air of nihilism, Emmerich is the kind of angry director that gets heated by his work being critically maligned so he placed spoof characters of Siskel & Ebert as to shut them up. As expected, Godzilla went on to get "Two thumbs down."

Godzilla is a film that deserves the aberrant reaction that has been anchored in by bandwagon buffoons. I can't decide what is worse; the fact that Emmerich admitted to not liking the Godzilla films or the dialogue and casting of Simpsons regulars. Godzilla will never win the heart of the community but might find a hearty home in the eyes of cult film enthusiasts. It's one thing to enjoy a "bad" movie every now and again but to appreciate a film based on its reverse reception is ridiculous. Rebelling against rebellion will ultimately counter counterproductivity. In a way, I enjoyed the Godzilla film for the enthusiastic destruction of a playground known as New York but other than that, this film is carried on the shoulders of Jean Reno. I don't think I could handle sitting through this film for another 4 years though. Consider Roland Emmerich a provocateur of the present age.

-mAQ

THE PATRIOT
THE PATRIOT

Roland Emmerich° (2000)

As one of 26 signatories to the Oberhausen Manifesto of 1962, which marked the 'official' launch of the New German Cinema aka Neuer Deutscher Film against "Papas Kino," auteur Alexander Kluge – a Frankfurt school lawyer turned filmmaker who traded trades at the recommendation of Theodor W. Adorno (who, in turn, introduced Kluge to Fritz Lang, thus enabling Kluge to work as an assistant on the 1959 *The Tiger of Eschnapur* and learn the tricks of the trade from one of the masters) – acted as a sort of 'father figure' filmmaker for the fellow filmmakers of his generation, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, thus inevitably resulting in the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978) aka *Deutschland im Herbst*; a politically-charged work featuring film contributions from eight Teuton directors (including Kluge, Fassbinder, Edgar Reitz and Volker Schlöndorff) responding to the dubious deaths of far-left terrorists belonging to the RAF aka Baader-Meinhof gang, who had purportedly committed suicide in a heavily secure prison, as well as the future of Germany as a whole. With his segment for *Germany in Autumn*, Kluge would introduce the character of Gabi Teichert (Hannelore Hoger); a historian of Hessian history and proud Aryaness who attempts to dig deeper and deeper (both literally and figuratively as an amateur archeologist with a spade and as a studied scholar and history teacher) into Germany's past so as to discover 'positive' secrets from 2000 years of Teutonic history. Gabi Teichert would also be the lead protagonist in Kluge's subsequent film *The Patriotic Woman* (1979) aka *Die Patriotin* aka *The Patriot* – an anti-climatic and anti-melodramatic drama-documentary hybrid utilizing a constructivist method of montage as a means to distance the viewer from tragedy, action, and, well, entertainment – which follows a proud German patriot and 'dreamer of the day' who slowly but surely falls into an abyss of bitter disappointment where she comes to learn through trial and error that, whether she wants to admit it to herself or not, there is no definitive German history, but an inherent antagonism between public and personal history. A special lady who takes an "interest in all the dead of the Reich," including those who fought for the Third Reich, and who fanatically believes that, "the material for advanced history lessons isn't positive enough because our German history isn't positive enough either," hence her personal crusade to change that, Teichert is ultimately upstaged by the historical lessons of a dead 'talking knee' (inspired by Bavarian author/poet Christian Morgenstern's marvelously morbid poet "The Knee") that used to belong to an unfortunate fellow named Corporal Wieland, who belonged to the ill-fated 6th Army (the first German field army to be totally destroyed in WWII) of the Wehrmacht and who fell at the battle of Stalingrad on January 29, 1943, but as narrated in the film, all that was left of the fallen fellow was, "nothing more than a knee. It is not a tree, it is not a tent, nothing

else.” A cinematic work directed by a German man who was born in 1932 and thus remembers the Third Reich, as well as his hometown and family home being blown to bits by British bombers during the Second World War, *The Patriot* is an ostensibly guilt-ridden celluloid work that, quite undoubtedly, shamelessly and aesthetically sterilely wallows in Kluge’s Jewish mentor’s super absurd remark that, “Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,” but at least the director has the gall to admit that there is no such thing as a definitive account of history.

In a somewhat recent interview from 20 February 2012 entitled “I am a patriot of the 20s”: An Interview with Alexander Kluge” conducted by Candace Wirt, Kluge stated the following regarding his film *The Patriot* (1979) and being a ‘collector’ of history like Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (who appear in the film): “A poet is always a collector. You have to find something. You do not have to invent reality, but to find reality. In the 30s and 40s, there was the Holocaust in our country. It is necessary to dig for the reasons and to dig deeper and deeper and deeper. You can’t carry on with the poetry of ancient times. You have to find these ancient times. Where are the roots of criminal behavior? And then there may also be roots for the remedy.” Indeed, while I am rather surprised that Kluge thinks of himself as a poet, I am not the least bit shocked that the Holocaust is his frame of reference and inspiration for analyzing history, as if all moments in German history were leading up to a genocidal racial holy war against foreign peoples whose influences on the Teutons has been mostly rather recent (basically, a couple centuries). An eternal ethno-masochist who was, quite involuntarily, one of ‘Hitler’s children,’ being from the generation that knew nothing but National Socialism, at least until 1945 when his nation was reduced to nothing more than a “Tot Reich” of rubble and regret, Kluge has assembled a work with *The Patriot* that, more than anything, basks in the personal misery of German history, albeit in an ironically intentionally mundane and monotone sort of way, as envisioned by a deleterious deconstructivist auteur of the anti-Occidental Frankfurt school persuasion who firmly associates films with a “magical” (i.e. being entertaining) quality as being of a manipulative National Socialist persuasion. A fiercely fragmented film directed by a man who is clearly more obsessed with the dead than the living, *The Patriot* intentionally establishes a deep divide between the spectator and the film’s protagonist by using abrupt voice-over narration (from Kluge himself), documentary and vintage footage, silent film style inter-titles, paintings by Caspar David Friedrich, a poster from the anti-Polish National Socialist propaganda film *Heimkehr* (1941) aka *Homecoming* directed by Gustav Ucicky (who is ironically believed to be the bastard son of Austrian symbolist painter Gustav Klimt), and even archetypal images from Hindu cosmology, as a means to illustrate the subjectivity and complexity of history, as well as to deter too much empathy for Gabi Teichert, but especially her cause for a patriotic pro-German history. Like Teichert, who wants to “change history” and attempts to do so by attending SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany; a

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rather unlikely place to find individuals fond of German history) political conventions and doing illegal archeological digging to find positive raw 'historical material,' only to be disappointed in the end, the viewer must come to terms with the fact that the land of the romantics, thinkers, and philosophers is not so romantic, but barbaric and even philistine, with its history of dehumanization and death of its populous at the hands of the state, but also, as narrated by Kluge, that, "At the time of this emperor [Napoleon I], the scholars Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm dug intensively into German history. They dug and dug and unearthed the fairy tales. Their content: how a people deals with its wishes over a period of 800 years," thus resulting in some 'positive' aesthetic byproducts. Of course, in contemporary Germany, it seems that Auschwitz has replaced Grimm's fairy tales, just as defeat, guilt, and self-hatred has replaced a national conscious and kultur. In *The Patriot*, there is no 'volkgeist,' but instead, the expressions of an over-intellectualized dead soul whose fear of national identity is no less grand than his hostility toward celluloid beauty, because as a shabbos goy and Frankfurt school victim, Kluge is one of those individuals who personify Albert Camus' words, "Those who lack the courage will always find a philosophy to justify it," of which anti-Aryan academic, antagonistic ausländer, and all-around agitator Adorno happily provided to him.

Indeed, *The Patriot* is undoubtedly a film that must be seen multiples times to be digested properly, but that presupposes that it is a cinematic work that is worth seeing in the first place, which is dubious at best, unless you happen to be a 'true believer' whose doctrine is that somewhere in proximity with the 'New Left,' or someone who wants to understand how the contemporary, ethno-masochistic German artistic/academic thinks and feels. At the conclusion of *The Patriot*, Kluge even went as far as pure obfuscation of meaning, stating in regarding to a scene of the 'talking knee' speaking in the dead language of Latin that, "When the knee speaks Latin, I do not at all assume that anyone understands that, at least not anyone who interests me as a viewer," thus highlighting (if one does their homework), in a needlessly esoteric way, a time when knowledge of history was restricted to a small minority of individuals. Of course, today history has been 'democratized,' at least to some extent (but certainly not in Germany and many other European nations where it is a criminal offense to disagree with certain elements of 20th century history, especially the sort that Kluge has spent his life and career dwelling on), but as demonstrated by protagonist Gabi Teichert of *The Patriot*, who, "was sure the material for history lessons at the advanced level was deficient," people tend to believe the version of history they want to believe, or at least the version of history that has been beat into their brain since birth because, after all, no one enjoys cognitive dissonance. Although, as narrated in *The Patriot* that, "It's hard to present a patriotic version of German history," things would be quite different if Germany had won the Second World War, as it is quite doubtful that the "The Holocaust" would still be described as the

most horrible and tragic event in human history, as it is today as a result of the victor's version of history becoming the 'official' history of the Second World War. Probably not. If Germany had won the war, the Holocaust (which would undoubtedly not be called "The Holocaust"; with the phrase itself not being actively promoted until the mid-1970s by American/Israeli Zionist circles) would probably be portrayed as a noble and necessary campaign against a hostile enemy, if mentioned at all, but few are willing to question the subjectivity of history, not even Alexander Kluge. If *The Patriot* does anything of value, it is opening up the viewer's mind to the complexity and indefiniteness of history in a variety of both personal and political ways. For example, early on in *The Patriot*, documentary footage of British bomber pilots who, "have not learned anything definite about Germany. They have just expertly shot up the country for eighteen hours. Now they are returning to their quarter to sleep," but they are quite proud of the fact that "Total 950 Kaput Krauts" (i.e. they killed 950 Germans) despite their lack of understanding of German people, kultur, and history because their context for 'understanding' the country's history is that of defeating an enemy nation and not understanding it on any personal or 'objective' academic level. Of course, Kluge, who personally experienced the terror bombings of the British, sees that particular history from a totally different perspective.

In the end, the closest the viewer ever gets to personally 'knowing' Gabi Teichert is by seeing her naked body from the perverted perspective of a peeping Tom with insomnia, thereupon underscoring the voyeuristic and scopophilic quality of cinema itself. Rather absurdly, Ms. Teichert, being a virtual victim of patriotic psychosis, sees the peeping Tom's actions as "contemporary research" and not all that different from her own as a historical researcher, thus baffling the viewer with her rather odd perspective on being the victim of a unsavory sexual degenerate who rapes women with his eyes via binoculars. In short, at least as far as *The Patriot* is concerned, 'perspective is everything' when it comes to history. At the end of *The Patriot*, it is revealed that, "Every New Year's Eve, Gabi Teichert reflects on the 365 days had. The hope remains for improving the material for advanced history in the coming year," even if, "The Hessen Culture Ministry wants to abolish history altogether. And combine it with geography and government to make 'social studies'."

As Corporal Wieland states in *The Patriot*, "In the name of the dead of Germany and the 6th Army, I'd now like to express my principle views. If everyone can speak, so can I. A dead knee sees things a bit differently. For example, Bismarck, who is said to have made history...Often I'm asked where I learned so much. It's a mistake to think that the printed matter in libraries is related to history. We, the dead and their parts, are history. Every cell that doesn't want to die knows everything, from the beginning right to the very end. Only the quarrelsome brain doesn't. We dead cells know everything and have reason to. The resurrection of the dead, and who really wants to die, presupposes a thorough

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knowledge of history. Basically I'm a historical expert. Other dead colleagues refer to me as the 'Father of Accuracy,' but he also later admits, "Note that a knee strides forward in principle. Over 2,000 km to Stalingrad, it bends and stretches every half metre, directed by an obstinate brain that's still there and has no more to say. Some say I use the word 'principle' too much. Quite right. It's a habit I picked up from Corporal Wieland's brain. I always said 'principle' when it was under pressure. I myself have no principles, just a firm will to survive." Holocaust survivor, novelist, and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel certainly has principles, but one can only wonder what account of history his circumcised member has to tell or at least the members of his racial kinsmen, at least judging by the original Yiddish version of his novel *Night* (1955) where the writer reveals that certain concentration camp survivors ran off to "fargvaldikh dayshe shikses" ("rape German shikses" aka "impure German women") so as to seek Jewish revenge for aggressive Nazi antisemitism. That being said, if one were to use Kluge's *The Patriot* as a guide for interpreting history, one can only guess the historical value of films like Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), but something tells me that the director's friend/mentor Theodor W. Adorno had already made up his mind on such historical matters and would give the films his full approval, at least judging by his rather subjective and exceedingly emotional quote, "Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." If Kluge considers himself a poet and his film *The Patriot* is, in turn, a work of celluloid poetry, I guess then, at least going by Adorno's logic, the filmmaker is a kraut barbarian.

Even in his self-loathing, Alexander Kluge was still able to reveal, if only to a minor extent, the taboo historical truth in terms of Germany's collective suffering during the Second World War, which Hollywood has never and will never acknowledge, and for that alone, he deserves some minor praise. During a segment of *The Patriot* featuring documentary footage of bomber pilots dropping bombs on a German city and burning buildings during a literal "Holocaust" (burnt offering) scenario, the voice-over narrator states: "Let us not forget that sixty thousand people burned to death in Hamburg." Although the historical record shows that more Germans than Jews died in the Second World War, not to mention the millions that died after the war during Stalin's expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and the starvation of German POWs by various allied nations, who is willing to acknowledge it?! Until Germany and other European nations come to terms with less than comforting aspects of their own histories and rediscover their roots, Europa will continue to decay until all that is left is a 'multicultural,' alien-conquered corpse and one does not need to be a patriotic philistine to acknowledge this truth.

-Ty E

10,000 BC

Roland Emmerich° (2008)

Movies like 10,000 BC just absolutely disgust me. I can just imagine director Roland Emmerich sitting in his lair and counting his gold coins that he suckered out of American audiences hands. He knows that the audience is braindead and whatever crap he makes people will see. 10,000 BC features some of the most hideous mongrelized people I have ever seen in my life. Why anyone would want to see these people in a movie is beyond me. 10,000 BC is another one of those hollow epics that pretend to be reflecting history. Warlords wouldn't wait days to rape their victims. Savage soldiers still practice gang rape regularly. I guess that virtual savages featured in the film had a moral code that they placed a firm commitment on. Roland Emmerich proved his disdainful hatred towards reality with his pluralistic propaganda "piece" Independence Day. The only white character in 10,000 BC was killed. He is an old man hidden behind colorful tattered rags to give him a "larger than life" power. When the savage protagonist kills the man it confirms that old man's power is an illusion. Emmerich's reason for this scene is to promote riots in American cities and the destruction of "whity". After the white man is killed, all the savages go ape shit and start killing like crazy. Emmerich portrays them as impulsive yet "noble" animals. 10,000 BC even fails at it's attempts in showman special effects. The CGI mammoths were pathetic to say the least. A lady friend I know was disappointed in the lack of saber -toothed tigers. She felt the savages should have been ripped to pieces by the tiger. The only exciting scene in 10,000 BC was when the hideous "old mother" finally kicks the bucket. It was only appropriate on Emmerich's part to finally put old mother out of her aesthetically unpleasing misery. When American high school students get their education history lessons from Hollywood fantasies, the world will crumble. May Roland Emmerich lead the citizens of the world into hell.

-Ty E

BÜBCHEN
BÜBCHEN

Roland Klick (1968)

The subject of deranged children and childkillers oftentimes makes for radically ridiculous and absurdly nonsensical films, especially when treated in a straight and serious fashion with a cheap, contrived, and oftentimes sentimental pseudo-moralistic message tacked on at the end, but at least one cinematic work that I know of, the Western German flick *Bübchen* (1968) aka *Little Boy* aka *Der kleine Vampir* aka *The Little Vampire* directed by lone-wolf auteur Roland Klick (Deadlock, Supermarkt), manages to handle this uniquely unsettling subject in a fashion that neither preaches a superficial social message, nor treats it in a less than serious and stoic manner yet still manages to be unwaveringly enthralling in its depiction of the seemingly everyday human child as a coldblooded killer. Rather unpopular with film critics in West Germany upon its release due to its uncompromising lack of a then-vogue far-left social critique and Trotskyite finger-pointing, *Bübchen* is a sort of neo-realist 'horror' flick minus genre conventions that gives the audience a *cinéma vérité*-like view of the seemingly chaotic post-WWII German lower-middleclass and how such a seemingly typical yet innately dysfunctional community deals with the tragic mysterious disappearance of a cute little 2-year-old blonde girl. Apparently inspired by a true story Roland Klick read about in the newspaper, the filmmaker managed to pen the script for *Bübchen* in a mere 16 hours and planned to shoot in black-and-white. Luckily, the film was shot in color as it manages to capture the grim and colorless, foreboding Teutonic post-industrial wasteland it portrays, where all the adults spend all their time getting drunk and the children are always involved in some barbaric feral-like activity that often results in the senseless destruction of something or other. Like Ulli Lommel's serial killer masterpiece *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* and many films of German New Cinema—a nationalist film movement Roland Klick was typically an aesthetic and sociopolitical opponent of—*Bübchen* is essentially a 'horror-of-personality' work mostly shot from the perspective of the prepubescent perpetrator, thereupon making it all the more disconcerting. Sort of like *Baby's Day Out* (1994) as directed by TCM-era Tobe Hooper meets Michael Haneke's *Benny's Video* (1992), although never plodding and infinitely more cinematically entertaining, *Bübchen* portrays a drastically degenerating Deutschland where parents are more occupied with beer cans in their hand than their children, thus they can only panic and create cockeyed theories about 'sexual predators' when a wee baby disappears.

9-year-old Teutonic preteen Achim (Sascha Urchs) is not like other children, especially boys, to the point where he lies to his friends so as to avoid actually hanging out with them. Seeming to suffer from Asperger syndrome with schizoid tendencies and consistently maintaining a fiercely flat affect, Achim

pathologically plays with a toy monkey on a rope and seems to prefer the indoors to the outdoors and personal privacy to playing with others kids his age. When his parents make the mistake of allowing a ditzy pixie bitch of a teenager girl named Monika Behm (Renate Roland)—a girl that looks a cross between title character of *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) and Bjork with an androgynous boyish fashion sense borrowed from Twiggy—to watch Achim, as well as his baby sister, it ultimately results in what will be the most terrible day of their lives. Unbeknownst to Achim's parents, Monika is a slutty and superlatively self-centered girl who has no qualms about ditching the kids she is supposed to be babysitting to be sexually manhandled by a young man much older than herself. Like the pathetic segment of *Mondo cane* (1962) featuring a bunch of decidedly drunk krauts drowning in their sorrow in the Reeperbahn Strasse of Hamburg, Achim's parents, especially his father (Sieghardt Rupp), are loser boozers who manage to keep a semblance of lower-middleclass normality, but it all comes crashing down via the painful death of their child that no amount of alcohol will numb. After the parents leave the house and babysitter Monika follows not long after to fornicate in a car with her mechanic boyfriend Otto Borowski (Jürgen Jung), Achim decides to take a couple seemingly innocent photographs of his baby sister, but not longer after the boy has the bright idea to place a plastic bag over the helpless girl's head, thus leading to her premature death via rather sickening soricide. Wasting no time to take full advantage of his lack of adult supervision, Achim also plays 'peeping Tom' and watches his babysitter Monika and her much older boy toy Otto screwing in a purple car, which the boy subsequently enters and steals the babysitter's bra as a souvenir. When Achim's parents come home, they soon notice that their baby daughter is missing and the calculating child killer offers to help support the ultimately futile cause to find his sister. Meanwhile, Monika, who does not want anyone to know she is a teenage tramp who only cares about herself, denies she ever left the home, but soon police get involved and the holes in her personal testimony are exposed. The cold and calculating Achim strategically makes up a lie that he saw a shady young man with a purple car on the day of his sister's appearance, which ultimately makes Monika's boyfriend Otto, who owns a similarly colored car, a suspect. Of course, this leads the police to realizing that Monika was screwing Otto in his automobile when she was supposed to be watching Achim's sister. Monika's father Erich Behm (Hubert Suschka), who accepts and oftentimes even seems to relish the fact his daughter is a little floozy, comes to the natural conclusion that Achim was probably involved with his sister's disappearance and tell the children's parents such. Not wanting to accept the fact their child is probably a deranged little dude, which is quite obvious to anyone looking at the seemingly soulless and monotone fellow, Achim's parents kick out the Behm family, who happened to be their best friends. Of course, Achim's father, who probably knows his son better than anyone else, investigates the local

BÜBCHEN

junkyard where the boy plays and where Monika got laid, where he discovers the blanket-draped corpse of his only daughter. Instead of going to police and accepting responsibility for what happened, the man gets rid of his baby girl's body, but his son finally gives into pressure and admits the crime to police detectives. Of course, when Achim is taken to where he dumped his sister's corpse, the body is nowhere to be found due to his father's dubious disposing of it in a coal mine shaft. In the end, the illusion of middleclass normality is restored to the German town and a less than proud father must forever live with the fact that his son is the cold-blooded murderer of his very own sister. After everything is said and done, Achim, who has a similarly emotionless stare to matricidal mass murder/child killer Adam Lanza, seems not even the least bit affected by what he has done, but seems all the more dangerous due to successfully getting away with the most sickening sort of crime.

Like Clu Gulager's kaleidoscopic arthouse horror short *A Day with the Boys* (1969) and both cinematic adaptations of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), *Bübchen* went where few films have gone before nor after by portraying the seemingly innocent child as a killer, but unlike the other three cinematic works, Klick's realistically creepy kraut 'coming-of-age' flick never attempts to blame anyone for the prepubescent perpetrator's dubious mental state, which is thankfully never explained nor intellectually dwelt upon, but simply portrayed in as objective a manner as possible. Still, in its sort of then-contemporary anti-Heimatfilm depiction of blue collar Germans as boorish beer-binging bastards who avoid uncomfortable realities at any cost, *Bübchen* is certainly a quasi-crypto condemnation of a nation that, not unlike a number of Fassbinder's flicks, especially *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1972) and *Jail Bait* (1973) aka *Wildwechsel*, portrays a working-class people that are both unable to handle their emotions and especially the truth, so they simply act out in rather irrational and ultimately deleterious fashions, albeit in Klick's flick, things go back to 'normal again,' thus making it all the more unnerving. An unflinchingly fucked celluloid family affair for the tradition-less and unguided post-Nazi generation, *Bübchen* is a look at the Teutonic collective conscious through the maniacal microcosm of a deranged demon seed whose act of killing his own baby sister was no more significant to him than pulling a weed.

Hoping to direct his acid western *Deadlock* first, Roland Klick described in the documentary *Das Kino des Roland Klick* (1997) aka *The Cinema of Roland Klick* how he got around to directing *Bübchen* as follows, "For a while I was Fellini's gopher, I was desperate, and drove to Rome. I tried to get a hold of myself there, and got to work with Fellini on "Satyricon." And it was there that I imagined the "Bübchen" story. Which is a small story, really. And the small scope of the story reflects my own modest means, in a way." Indeed, with its gritty lower-middleclass 'Germanic' realism and rather documentarian-like perspective, *Bübchen* is not only about as far away as one could get from Fellini's

big budget's myth-driven surrealist works, but also director Roland Klick's own much more popular counter-culture cinematic works like *Deadlock*, *Supermarkt*, and *White Star*. Indeed, *Bübchen* is like a work of German New Cinema, except with a much bigger soul, if not a decidedly despairing one, which is rather ironic since the work was apparently not given its proper due and actually never received the popularity it deserved until it was re-released under the misleading title *Der kleine Vampir* aka *The Little Vampire*. As Klick stated regarding critics' initial panning of *Bübchen* yet its subsequent popularity as a work that, unlike many left-leaning works of German New Cinema, has stood the test of time, "That's the way it was...Purely for the reason that the film had classical aesthetics, told a simple story...It is told psychologically, too. The character's actions are very palpable. But it didn't interpret it in a socially critical way. It didn't point an accusing finger. And all of that was out of fashion, so to say, back then. But that's why my films are still popular today." A film by Dutch-German cinematographer-turned-filmmaker Robert van Ackeren (*Blondie's Number One*, *A Woman in Flames*), who also shot important and artistically groundbreaking films directed by Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Salome*) and Rosa von Praunheim (*It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives*), *Bübchen* is a nearly immaculate anomaly among German cinema by a kraut cult filmmaker who managed to make a sort of accidental hybrid between the (anti)Heimatfilm and German New Cinema, except making it highly palatable for both proletarian and pretentious art fags alike, something that Austrian auteur Michael Haneke has yet to accomplish in all of his career of trying. If you ever wanted to watch the sort of celluloid work that realistically portrays the sort of kid that kills, there is probably no better example than *Bübchen*, arguably 'un-German' German auteur Roland Klick's most distinctly 'German' film.

-Ty E

DEADLOCK
DEADLOCK

Roland Klick (1970)

As probably anyone who regularly reads this site knows, I have a general apathy towards Westerns of most persuasions, so any film that I do happen to like from this absurdly anachronistic and outmoded genre tends to be of the convention-extermimating, cowboy-less, and aesthetically antagonistic, acid and/or arthouse sort and the West German, psychedelic Western *Deadlock* (1970) directed by Roland Klick (Supermarkt, White Star) is certainly not the sort of cowboys and Indians movie your slaphappy grandpappy watched to get inspired to kill krauts during the Second World War. With endorsement from surrealist Acid Western master Alejandro Jodorowsky, who stated, "DEADLOCK is fantastic. A bizarre, glowing film," it has the backing of a man who essentially raped and deconstructed the genre, but unlike *El Topo* (1970), Klick's film is not shrouded in esoteric symbolism and messianic-like self-glorification. As a filmmaker who once vehemently stated, "We're not supposed to make films like Alexander Kluge for the fine people in the ivory tower!" and someone who was disdained in his homeland by fellow filmmakers and film critics due to his intrinsically action-packed and anti-intellectual works, Klick was striving for something more 'subconscious' (his admitted initial approach when creating a film) and adventurous with his films and *Deadlock* does just that, but with a completely corrupted, counter-culture flare as if directed by a German working-class Donald Cammell. Although ostensibly set in Mexico on the border of California, *Deadlock* was actually filmed in Negev Desert, Israel during the chaotic aftermath of the Six-Day War in a rather rare case where a film set was a virtual battlefield, which Klick described as follows, "DEADLOCK...was one big incredible adventure. There had just been a war...They were still there, barrels pointed! Jordan was over here, Israel was over there...The mountains were full of cannons. And right between all that, in no man's land, was our shooting location...We were really shooting right between two fronts! The whole venture...also because there wasn't much money..an incredible adventure...I think this power really translated to the adventure onscreen. It's a film of its own!" And, indeed, love it or loathe, *Deadlock* permeates an all-powerful, transcendental atmosphere that is somewhere in between Arcadia and the apocalypse as if Werner Herzog were attempting to remake Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972) as a Western, but decided to drop all the Thelemic/Crowleyite imagery and replaced it with a sun-washed babe named Mascha Rabben in a border-less abyss of desert decay. Featuring a highly complementary musical score by early krautrock group Can, *Deadlock* is a völkisch work of the psychedelic anarchist sort that proves that at least one kraut auteur was able to more than competently adopt the Western genre in an Aryan acidhead form, thereupon making Roland Klick the virtual Fidus of post-WWII Teutonic filmmaking, yet with an agile

spirit no less impressive than Austrian adventurist auteur Luis Trenker. A particularly penetrating piece of 'scorched earth' celluloid, *Deadlock* lets the viewer know that sometimes sun-worship can blur one's vision and mind, and can even cause sadism-stirring sunburn. Needless to say, John Wayne and John Ford would find themselves in hell (if they aren't already there) were they to view Klick's *Deadlock* – a positively potent post-totenkopf 'trip' ironically set in the Hebraic holy land.

A young American killer named Kid (kraut cult actor Marquard Bohm of *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun* and Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971)) with a bullet in his arm lies dying in a barren and arid Mexican desert with a total population of three people. He and his comrade Anthony "The Old Killer" Sunshine (Scotsman Anthony Dawson of Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder* (1954) and *Dr. No* (1962)) carried out a robbery that earned them a million dollars cash, but while making a would-be-great escape, Kid was shot in the arm and he believes his callous co-conspirator may have done the shooting, thus he fled to a depopulated desert via train-hopping where he believed no one would possibly look for him, but rather unfortunately, someone does find him during a moment of complete and utter vulnerability. While lying unconscious, Kid is discovered by a goofy guido-like fellow named Charles "The Rat" Dump (German-Italian actor Mario Adorf of *The Tin Drum* (1979) aka *Die Blechtromme* and Fassbinder's *Lola* (1981)) who noticed the young man's Mauser (the same model used to build Han Solo's blaster in *Star Wars*) and briefcase full of tons of cash. Mr. Dump is about to smash Kid's skull in with a boulder and take the money and run, but the lanky, longhaired youth begins to move and the potential murderer has second thoughts. Dump – a rather pathetic and cowardly dolt with somewhat of a kind, albeit crude and corrupted, heart – takes the Kid back to his shack-like home. Dump conspires how he can take over the cash, but as a blatantly broken man who makes the baseless claim that he is in charge of the law of the land as a representative of the "North American Mining Company," which is clearly dead as the desert soil, he is clearly no match for the Kid, nor his pernicious partner Sunshine. A 'poor man's Clint Eastwood,' albeit more gritty and ugly, Sunshine is a stoic sadist who is looking for the Kid, so he can get the cash, but the lad and his new partner Mr. Dump are waiting for an inevitable showdown with a rather unpredictable outcome where one winner takes all. Dump may be the master of his derelict desert domain, but he also has a sexually repressed and belligerently bitchy old lady named Corinna (Betty Segal) – an erratic ex-prostitute with saddlebags for thighs that no one wants to screw anymore, hence her perverse proclivity towards flashing her grotesque racks of spoiled meat at Kid – and their salacious and super sensitive yet seemingly stupid spawn, a stunningly statuesque daughter named Jessy (Mascha Rabben) who is a naughty nymphomaniac that roams around his humble abode like a dog in heat. Dump's personal dump of a home used to be an "Oasis in the Desert" with a

DEADLOCK

wild whorehouse stock full of tasty meat and sand-side gambling, but the only thing left now is a couple dreary and dilapidated buildings and signs that constitute a desert ghetto and seem like a degenerate, ghost town version of Madame Kate's pussy-peddling enterprise in *East of Eden* (1955) directed by Elia Kazan and starring James Dean. When Sunshine finally shows up, he tries to get doofus Dump to lure the Kid into a treacherous trap, but the tables are inevitably turned as the ex-pimp does not know how to keep his 'cool' and makes a number of failed attempts at coldheartedly killing and conning the old killer, which will ultimately cost him his life in the end. Naturally, jackass Dump is no match for the two robbers as he has the decided disposition of a hyper-horny donkey with rabies. While Sunshine meticulously tortures Dump in a variety of ways, including using him for target practice and chasing him with his own beaten up truck, the Kid gets ready to make his move for the money in a battle between old school 'cool' and new school 'cool.' In *Deadlock*, the will to power and the struggle for survival go hand in a world of abject isolation of both the physical and psychological kind.

An aggressive 'lone wolf' at aesthetic civil war with the arthouse auteur filmmakers of New German Cinema, Roland Klick offered cinematic works that did not bore nor patronize the proletarian viewer, but instead offered instinctual, anti-intellectual cinema with hearty meat and bones that made stylish celluloid art and social controversy palatable for the masses, without making any artistic compromises in the process. In the documentary *Das Kino des Roland Klick* (1997) aka *The Cinema of Roland Klick*, Klick stated the following in regard to the perceived lack of 'German' character of his films, "And now the question would be: What is German? Why do films look German?...In essence, films look German for the following reason: They don't take the risk of the unknown, of the unexplained, hence: of the magical, which is constructed by the imagination. They have the tendency to over-explain every element. Not only verbally, but also visually...I choose these locations subconsciously, at first...I'm a big fan of secrets." And indeed, *Deadlock* is steeped with an innate mystifying character from the bloody beginning to the even bloodier end. A marvelously metaphysical work, although of the nihilistic and nefarious sort, *Deadlock* brings a soul to a badly beaten-to-death genre that, quite ironically, was only able to obtain artistic merit when it was imported to a foreign continent, with Klick's Western being one of the furthest away in spirit from the likes of Irish-American propagandist John Ford. While borrowing thematic and aesthetic attributes from Spaghetti Westerns by dirty dago auteurs like Sergio Leone and Sergio Corbucci, *Deadlock* is its own beast and a blond one at that, dancing in the face of death and embracing human darkness, heart and soul, in the bitter yet ultimately stoical end. While Klick has been besmirched and condemned by his fellow countrymen for the perceived lack of 'German' character of his films, I would argue that *Deadlock* more than assertively permeates the forlorn Faustian

spirit of the 6th Army (Wehrmacht) Stalingrad, but especially the Afrika Korps, as a rare work of post-WWII Teutonic cinema with an uncompromising masculinity and testicular fortitude of a seasoned soldier as opposed to the accepted defeat of an effete 'auteur' sitting in an ivory tower. Most importantly, at least philosophically speaking, Deadlock is not a work that meekly wallows in pity, defeat, and forgiveness, but, on the contrary, is a renegade piece of relentless and poetic celluloid barbarism and Teutonic irrationalism that reminds the viewer to "never forget" that life is a war and those not strong enough or willing enough to accept it are better off dead.

-Ty E

SUPERMARKT
SUPERMARKT

Roland Klick (1974)

While I appreciate the fact that the auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema opted for creating revolutionary cinematic works that were thematically and aesthetically antagonistic against "Papas Kino" and Hollywood, I would be lying if I did not admit that I have complete and utter respect for anti-intellectual auteur Roland Klick (Bübchen, White Star) for rebelling against his more cultivated and philosophical countrymen by creating gritty action films that remind viewers that not all krauts had their testicles stomped in after the Second World War. While his anarchistic psychedelic western *Deadlock* (1970) will always be my favorite work of truly brutal celluloid grit from the avant-garde action auteur Klick, his subsequent cinematic work *Supermarkt* (1974) – a fierce and unflinching flick centering around a fucked teen rebel who lives on the streets of Hamburg and who gets involved with dubious smalltime crooks, jaded journalists, posh poofs, and less than pretty prostitutes – is no less enthralling with its gusty guerrilla style direction, suave subversiveness, and decidedly busted moral compass. Described by its distribution company filmgalerie451 as being, "Between 'The French Connection' and 'Rebel Without A Cause', 'Supermarket' is rightfully regarded as a cult classic of German cinema," *Supermarkt* is indeed an uncompromising crossbreed between action-packed nihilism and sexually and morally confused teen rebellion that does to action-crime flicks and the city of Hamburg – a place that seems to have only superficially recovered from the firebombings it experienced during the Second World War – what *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel* directed by Daniel Schmid did for campy and morbid melodrama and the seemingly shitty city of Frankfurt. A more immaculate yet no less brassy depiction of the unruly criminal subcultures of Hamburg as portrayed in Klaus Lemke's cult flick *Rocker* (1972), *Supermarkt* depicts a spiritually and socially devitalized post-industrial hellhole where both criminals and everyday citizens are colder than death, posh pederasts pay top dollar for teenage twinkles and homely hookers peddle their putrefied pussies to support their forsaken bastard children, love is not even worthy of being described as an illusion, and journalists are more interested in hanging out with outlaws than their wives and work. Featuring groundbreaking cinematography from Jošt Vacano, who would later provide his talents to *Das Boot* (1981) directed by Wolfgang Petersen and *Robocop* (1987), as well as virtually every other Paul Verhoeven flick, *Supermarkt* is arguably the first film to feature Steadicam-style camera work despite predating the release of the official Steadicam by two years, thus making for a hypnotic form of action cinema that throws the viewer into a Teutonic ghetto of erratic ecstasy and audaciously afflicting angst. If *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981), which director Roland Klick was originally supposed to direct before he was fired by producer Bernd Eichinger, had

a filmic big brother that was not addicted to heroin, it is most certainly Supermarkt – a crusty yet charismatic celluloid story from the seedy city streets that treats aimless crime as a crude yet compulsory way of life.

Willi (played by non-actor Charly Wierzejewski in his first film role) has a wayward way of life as a handsome yet homeless teenage-rebel-by-default who must do whatever he needs to survive while dogging Hamburg cops and much more corrupt criminals, including thieving and prostituting himself to despicable degenerates of the independently wealthy sort. During the beginning of Supermarkt, Willi runs away from the police for what seems to be no reason at all as he has committed no crime, but he is arrested any way and he and another teenage troublemaker make a getaway from the crowded police station, almost running over a cop with a stolen car in the process, thus ushering in the Weltschmerz-ridden anti-hero's life as a feral-like fugitive of the law. To make ends meet, Willi has united with a highly manipulative middle-aged career criminal named Theo (Walter Kohut) who devises a pathetic scheme where the boy pretends to be a hustler and lures in wealthy homosexuals so the twosome can beat and rob them. Of course, being a rather empathetic fellow for a criminally-inclined teenage thug, Willi botches the plan and allows the John to escape and ends up brutally beating Theo in the process. The same homosexual (Hans-Michael Rehberg) offers Willi a ride in his car and the teen makes the mistake of accepting it and is ultimately sadistically sodomized by the affluent fairy who lives in an art-adorned manor with his Mommy. When Willi later attempts to collect the money he earned for reluctantly allowing the prick of a poofster to anally penetrate him, things go wrong when the fudge-packer makes the fatal error of belittling the boy due to his blatant lack of social prestige, henceforth resulting in the fickle fairy's gruesome death. Although playing wide receiver on the pink team, Willi falls in love with a less than pretty prostitute named Monika (Fassbinder graduate Eva Mattes) who sports a tasteless blonde wig and a greasy pizza face full of unflattering zits. Although Willi's willy fails to 'rise to the occasion' during an intimate moment with Monika, the prostitute loves the young hoodlum because he treats her little boy in a fatherly fashion and she has yet to meet another man that displays such gentlemanly behavior. Willi is also helped by an idealistic journalist named Frank (Michael Degen) whose wife resents the boy and the oddly obsessive interest her husband shows to him, but the young mensch cannot completely trust the career scribbler as a teenage murderer and fugitive of the law who is on the run, so he seeks sanctuary elsewhere. A radically romantic lady's man, Willi hatches a master criminal plot with the philistine thug Theo to rob a supermarket's money transporter, but with the cops circling in on him and with a drunken and conspiring moron for a partner, the outlaw youth does not exactly have luck on his side, but he does have a stalwart spirit and an unconquerable will to survive.

Due to the seething hatred and criticism he received from his fellow German

SUPERMARKT

filmmakers and film critics, anarchic Aryan apostate auteur Roland Klick has remained a marginal figure of cinema both in his homeland and abroad, which is quite ridiculous considering he created highly accessible cinematic works like *Supermarkt* that do the seemingly impossible by bringing art and poetry to a terribly tactless genre that has traditionally been the celluloid equivalent of junk food. Breaking countless conventions of the outmoded genre, *Supermarkt* portrays a fellow whose crude criminality is a result of circumstance and not a contrived sort of action-hero courage, and who experiences the ultimate form of denigration and emasculation via anal penetration by an opulent queen who in his bourgeois arrogance, even tries to get out of paying the gay-for-pay anti-hero, thereupon demystifying the "rebel" archetype in the process. Indeed, as someone who is willing to risk his life for a girl he seems to have no desire to fornicate with, Willi is like a fallen saint in a post-industrial Sodom and a Teutonic teenage Travis Bickle who is willing to sacrifice everything (not that he has much, aside from his earthly life to spare) so that a bastard baby boy and his streetwalker of a mother can live a relatively normal life, even if it is with stolen money earned in a robbery that results in a freak death or two.

If one were to go by *Supermarkt* as a frame of reference, it is quite obvious that director Roland Klick would have churned out a superior and all the more seedy film had he been the one to direct *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* as planned as opposed to for-hire, semi-hack Uli Edel (*Body of Evidence*, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*), but instead, the auteur has only gone on to direct a couple more disappointing features, including the excess-laden punk flick *White Star* (1983), which was ultimately sabotaged by its cokehead star Dennis Hopper's incessant searches for nose candy, and a number of TV movies for US networks under a pseudonym. It seems that, like his enemies from German New Cinema, Klick can no longer procure the funds he needs to make films, so maybe it is about time he visits a supermarket.

-Ty E

WHITE STAR

Roland Klick (1983)

According to mainstream cultural critic/film historian Peter Biskind in his classic Hollywood Babylon-esque book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and Rock 'N Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (1998), cinematic counter-culture auteur/actor Dennis Hopper (*Easy Rider*, *The Last Movie*) was snorting about three grams of cocaine, chugging around 30 cans of beer, as well as mixing it with marijuana and Cuba libres, at the height of his deranging drug addiction, which certainly had a somewhat artistically fruitful (he starred in a number of great foreign/cult flicks) yet mentally and economically draining effect on his career. During around the time of his most excessive drug debauchery, Hopper starred in two German films, *The American Friend* (1977) aka *Der amerikanische Freund* directed by Wim(p) Wenders and the relatively forgotten kraut cult flick *White Star* (1983) directed by Roland Klick, which has the dubious distinction of being the last film the coke and alcohol-addled actor starred in before he disappeared into the Mexican desert in a high post-hippie haze, was arrested, and finally entered rehab, where he would arguably emerge stronger than ever, subsequently delivering masterful performances in Tim Hunter's *River's Edge* (1986) and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986). Partially artistically sabotaged by Hopper's coke-inspired incessant tardiness, decidedly debilitating drug withdraw, consistent forgetting/botching of dialogue, and all-around belligerent behavior as a real-life "tortured maniac" playing a cinematic "tortured maniac," *White Star* as an unfinished, finished product was ultimately summed up by director/producer Roland Klick as follows, "The film has many great scenes, but its compactness creates too much pressure because we only shot all the big scenes. But other scenes belong in there as well." Unfortunately, Hopper's highs and lows were not the only thing that corrupted Klick's artistic vision as B-movie carny huckster producer Roger Corman—a man known for butchering films, including nonsensically adding scenes from one unrelated and adding them to another and committing a sort of shameless cinematic plagiarism—unfortunately bought the U.S. distribution rights for *White Star*, cut over twenty minutes of footage, inexplicably added concert scenes of the punk band TSOL from Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia* (1984), dubbed some of Hopper's dialogue, and re-titled the film *Let It Rock*. Aside from turning *White Star* into an aesthetic and thematic hatchet job that is barely recognizable from what Klick originally released with his German cut, Corman somehow managed to change Hopper's character from being a sleazy music manager into a reporter investigating the punk rock scene. Luckily the original cut of *White Star*, which was shot in English and features a virtually all-American cast despite being set in Berlin, was released in Germany on DVD by filmgalerie 451, but, rather unfortunately, those few Americans who have seen Klick's flick have only seen it as the careless celluloid

WHITE STAR

abortion know as *Let It Rock*. Originally intended to be a relatively decent sized budget production starring a number of big stars, including Jane Birkin, *White Star* would ultimately only feature Hopper, as well as horror/cult veteran David Hess (*The Last House on the Left*, *Hitch-Hike*), and a supporting cast of literal GIs from the U.S Army theater from Berlin, thus making for a culturally mongrelized celluloid work that, although undeniably entertaining, lacks the power of kraut lone-wolf auteur Roland Klick's previous feature-length efforts *Bübchen* (1968), *Deadlock* (1970), and *Supermarkt* (1974) and would ultimately mark the unofficial end of the filmmaker's career as one of Germany's rare 'masculine' and arthouse-antagonistic filmmakers.

A synth-pop musician named Moody Mudinsky (Terrance Robay in his first and sole film role)—a mild mannered and unpretentious young man who has yet to be corrupted by the sex, drugs, and money typical of the music world—has just quit his band *The Purple Rats* and has gone solo, but he makes the mistake of teaming up with a has-been music producer named Kenneth Barlow (Dennis Hopper), an American, and the purported son of a WWII era American spy who acted as the touring manager of the Rolling Stones in the 1960s, but who has fallen to the dubious and groveling level of becoming an "ordained minister" in the so-called Sun City Unification Church and wants to make a comeback in the modern-day Tangerine Dream-flavored music world, despite his pathological propensity for living in the past. Moody is now Barlow's 'White Star,' so it is only natural that the two will collaborate on a debut solo album entitled 'White Star.' Barlow is willing to use every and any dirty and degenerate trick to make his musician client a star and himself rich, and begins by paying his fucked and fiendish swarthy friend Frank (David Hess) to smash up a couple shop windows thereby creating a contrived punk riot at Moody's debut solo show that ultimately wipes out four city blocks, but proves to also make for good publicity. Sticking to the age old truism "There is no such thing as bad publicity," Barlow (who gets his own ass kicked in the process) has his faithful friend Frank stir another punk riot in a recording studio, hang up countless flyers around Berlin for an imaginary "White Star" concert tour and then destroys said flyers with red paint (with the painted threat "Kill Moody"), and stage an assassination against his star which ultimately gets an adoring fan killed. Moody's negro friend George, who runs a fittingly titled recording studio called 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' confides to his honky pal that "Barlow sold you down the river...Your his White Star." And indeed, as a squeaky clean 'All-American'-like kraut with blond hair, blue eyes, and not a single dirty thought in his mind nor any sort of moral taint, Moody makes for the perfect prey for perennial bad boy Barlow, who himself admits, "I haven't changed man...The times have changed...The fucking times have changed." When he and Moody are late for a press announcement due to bad traffic, Barlow states the eloquent humanistic words, "God damn, what we need is a god damn good depression so these fuckers couldn't afford fucking cars."

In no time, Barlow has defiled Moody's mind and body with his superlatively shady business and publicity tactics to the point where the aspiring synth-pop star/musician finds himself pissing on a hospital floor during a press opportunity where he is really supposed to be cheering up the young girl who was accidentally shot as a result of his manager's beautifully botched assassination attempt. Of course, the female fan with a bullet in her brain dies and so does Moody's newly acquired popularity, thus he decides to finally tell bastard Barlow, "We gotta split up, you are killing me man," which is certainly no exaggeration. In the end, Moody fails to "show them" he "can do it again" as a sleaze-bag who may fit in the late-1960s drug dealer-like manager, but is certainly not the sort of man that should be managing rock-antagonistic synth-pop groups who play a more traditionally 'European' and non-Blues/American negro inspired style of music.

Much like *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *The Sky Is Falling* directed by Silvio Narizzano and *Out of the Blue* (1980), *White Star* is a sort of unromantic antidote to the druggy counter-culture swill Dennis Hopper played a major part in glorifying with his absurdly overrated directorial debut *Easy Rider* (1969). Unfortunately, unlike *Bloodbath* and *Out of the Blue*, the latter of which the actor also acted as the director of, *White Star* suffered severely from Hopper's life-consuming cocaine addiction, or as director Roland Klick stated himself regarding the actor, "As we began, cocaine started to become an issue. He started to really flip out if he didn't have any or couldn't get any. He'd turn into this animal. And occasionally he'd turn up absent... We would wait all day for Hopper to show up for two hours in a state where we could shoot something... This time pressure led us to cut more quiet scenes of the film." Of course, when it comes to the actual scenes where Hopper, hopped on coke, actually showed up to shoot and that are actually featured in *White Star*, no one would doubt for a second that the character he is 'playing' is a cracked conman who is long past his glory days and is now nothing more than an absurd walking-and-talking anachronism who would have probably been better off dying from an overdose during the late-1960s-early-1970s like many of his cocaine cowboy compatriots. If nothing else, *White Star* manages to demystify the supposed magic of rock n roll, as well as the entertainment industry in general, by portraying it as a conspicuously corrupt and monetary-motivated degenerate pseudo-dream-factory that has just as much a corrosive and debauching effect on its clients as it does to adoring music fans. While Hopper's character Barlow incessantly describes his rather naive client Moody as the "damn future," his belligerent bullshit is routinely exposed by nauseatingly nostalgic statements he makes, like how his clients from the 1960s "were real stars. There were real stars." Apparently describing *White Star* as, "The emotionally most demanding film I've ever made, and therefore the most dangerous one - for me," Hopper was arrested in Mexico shortly after the film's production and finally went to rehab, where he would thankfully, unlike his character in Klick's film, emerge victoriously from his debauched drug psychosis

WHITE STAR

and ultimately give some of the greatest and most iconic performances of career in films like *River's Edge* (1986), *Blue Velvet* (1986), and *Paris Trout* (1991), among various others. Unfortunately, director Roland Klick, who *White Star* star David Hess, himself an American Jew, once somewhat backhandedly described as being, "a dreamer inside a German – not an easy thing to be!," never recovered from his experience with the Hopper vehicle and he would go on to become a for-hire American TV hack who, probably ashamed of how desperate his career had become, directed a number of TV movies for US network stations under a pseudonym that has yet to be revealed. Still, for those that enjoy the Americanized punk and Kraftwerk-inspired films of German auteur Eckhart Schmidt like cinematic kraut cult classics like *Der Fan* (1982) aka *Trance*, *Loft - Die neue Saat der Gewalt* (1985), and *Alpha City* (1985) that portray a Berlin and a music scene that no longer exist, *White Star* makes for worthy enough way to waste 90 minutes or so because, after all, how could a very high Dennis Hopper, as well as a Svengali-like Hebrew like David Hess, in an American-fried Teutonic flick not be anything less than recklessly entertaining?! In short, *White Star* is a decent enough celluloid high for Hopperheads, if not a slightly impure one.

-Ty E

THE BLOODTHIRSTY FAIRY

Roland Lethem (1969)

Sophisticated and worthwhile fairy flicks are doubtlessly hard to come by because – let’s face it – miniature flying nymphs are mostly of interest to little girls and sexually frustrated middle-aged wiccans and not many other people. The conspiring female fays on HBO’s *True Blood* are somewhat tolerable due to their seductive sex appeal, but their baroque male counterparts certainly put to shame those real-life effete estrogen-driven fellows who feel it is a bold political statement to wear nothing but pink thongs at homo-rights parades. Additionally, the sort of little winged imps featured in the British film *Photographing Fairies* (1997) directed by Nick Willing are about as appealing as CGI fireflies due to their miniscule size, lack of character, and seemingly asexual nature. It was not until I saw the Belgian arthouse-exploitation short *The Bloodthirsty Fairy* (1968) aka *La fée sanguinaire* directed by Roland Lethem (*La Ballade des amants maudits*, In Memoriam Alfons Vranckx) that I felt I found the superlative and definitive fairy flick, albeit of the lavishly lecherous and preternatural avant-garde persuasion. As a student of early surrealist master filmmakers such as Jean Cocteau and Luis Buñuel and Japanese auteur directors like Seijun Suzuki and Ishirō Honda, Lethem is certainly a filmmaker with imperative and contradistinctive influences, thus his cinematic works are – quite unsurprisingly – strikingly singular and ostensibly original accomplishments in a class all of their own. With the aesthetically and thematically merciless and incendiary poetic 15-minute short *The Sufferings of a Ravaged Egg* (1967) aka *Les souffrances d’un oeuf meurtri* (1967) – in a fashion worthy of Georges Bataille at the height of his demiurgic depravity – the Belgian auteur proved that maggots in postmortem vaginas make for sapient symbolic social commentary against the Catholic church. With his admittedly sometimes repetitive but undeniably hypnotic thaumaturgical 22-minute short *Le Vampire de la Cinémathèque* (1971), Lethem turned his camera on fellow Belgian physician and mathematician Joseph Plateau’s 1832 invention of the phenakistoscope (an early animation device made from a spinning disk) to create an optical illusion of an exquisite and statuesque lady degenerating into a hideous archetypical witch. Out of all of his curiously corporeal cinematic efforts, *The Bloodthirsty Fairy* seems to be his most erotically potent yet venomously vulgar, as well as politically and thematically transgressive work. In short, Lethem’s fairy tale makes the less-than-erotically-charged films of Richard Kern (*You Killed Me First, Fingered*) seem like failed pastiche experiments in softcore dandy dilettantism by comparison.

During the beginning of *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, a relatively young intellectual who resembles a stereotypical late-1960s pretentious French leftist twat notices a barrel on his front doorstep that was recently delivered by two swarthy-looking hippie bastards. Upon opening the seemingly humdrum barrel, the man

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discovers a beautiful unclad woman submerged in water inside. Not long after making this particularly stunning discovery, the comely human-sized fairy without wings emerges from the barrel and begins performing beguiling gestures, much to the noticeably intrigued pundit's delight. In no time, the young intellectual finds himself turning into a hopeless romantic and impulsive philistine of sorts, giving the fairy sensual bubble baths while gently massaging her feet in a dainty manner, but little does he know that his quasi-supernatural Madonna is a brassy black-hearted butcher in the spirit of the soulless darling from Hanns Heinz Ewers' *Alraune* with a keen and unquenchable addiction to politically-motivated bloodlust. On top of beating police to death in a most jubilant manner just for kicks and choking nuns into purgatory before finding her latest gentleman suitor as depicted in a series of flashbacks in *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, the pitiless puck also has pernicious plans for her new infatuated Romeo. As someone who initially thought that Jörg Buttgerit made totally commensurately prodigious cinematic works, I think I have to change my assessment of the aberrant Aryan auteur after discovering the works of Roland Lethem, most specifically *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*. Packed with equal doses of iconoclastic beauty and brusque yet seemingly comical brutality, *The Bloodthirsty Fairy* – much like the works of blond beast Buttgerit – is a rare work that can be enjoyed by both thoroughly desensitized/deranged gorehounds and adventurous arthouse cinema addicts.

The Bloodthirsty Fairy also features a political subtext that was somewhat lost on me due to my version of the Belgian film's lack of English subtitles. Essentially, the perturbed member-dismembering pixie seems to be a lone wolf anarchist (another possible nod to Bataille) of sorts as she collects the castrated cocks of famous/infamous assassinated political leaders ranging from Civil Rights Christ Martin Luther King, Jr. to American Nazi Party Führer George Lincoln Rockwell (whose Aryan-American member is noticeably uncircumcised) to apartheid-advocating South African Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd. Unfortunately, the genital-gnawing fairy was unable to eunuchize Henry Kissinger, thus his special kosher Johnson jar remains empty, but one must admit that this fierce fay has quite the eclectic and prestigious political penis pile!

-Ty E

THE LITTLE GREEN MAN

Roland Lethem (2013)

Unquestionably, Roland Lethem (*La Fée sanguinaire* aka *The Bloodthirsty Fairy*, *Les Souffrances d'un oeuf meurtri* aka *The Sufferings of a Ravaged Egg*) is one of the most anarchistic and hopelessly ill-restrained auteur filmmakers that Belgium has ever produced, which is saying a lot considering he is from the same country that spawned the curiously coprophagia-crueted celluloid nightmare *Vase de Noces* (1974) aka *Wedding Through* aka *The Pig Fucking Movie*. Indeed, from the cutesy cock-castrating pixie bitch of *The Bloodthirsty Fairy* to the anti-Catholic Cocteau-esque approach to maggots in rotting cunts in *The Sufferings of a Ravaged Egg*, Lethem is certainly a wonderfully mad mensch who knows how to get a subversive cinephile's attention and luckily, despite being an old geezer in his 70s, he still manages to direct iconoclastic and totally original films featuring beautiful young babes being sexually brutalized. Indeed, for his latest film, *Le petit bonhomme vert* (2013) aka *The Little Green Man*—an absurdly fucked and fiercely fetishistic yet farcical 11-minute short about a cute chick's daunting date with a rather romantic cacti—Lethem demonstrates that he has not gone soft over the past couple of decades, even if the film lacks the graphic depictions of bloody cunts and castrated cocks that inspired foremost American cineaste Amos Vogel to pay tribute to the auteur in his classic text *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974). Dedicated to the memory of Japanese 'pinku eiga' auteur Kōji Wakamatsu (*Go, Go, Second Time Virgin, Ecstasy of the Angels*)—another aberrant-garde filmmaker who liked to make films about nubile little girls being used and abused in a variety of highly imaginative and eclectic ways—Lethem's little slice of celluloid lunacy is a short but sweet piece of playfully pernicious perversity that somehow manages to be simultaneously humorous, erotic, and exceedingly absurd. It also happens to be probably the only film where a woman performs coitus with a talking cactus.

Valérie (Vanja Maria Godée) is a crypto-horny French-speaking Belgian babe in her 30s who seems to like plants more than people and one would guess from her flagrant bitchiness that she might be more than a little bit sexually starved. While at a plant nursery, Valérie is asked by an employee if she needs help but she says nothing and looks at the well meaning fellow as if he is the world's single biggest asshole. When Valérie spots a beautiful bouquet of flowers, she becomes so enamored with the sight and smell of the plants that she rubs her face into them as if it is a nice and savory crotch. Of course, Valérie naturally becomes especially intrigued when she spots a small white phallic-like cactus. When Valérie picks up the cactus and hears some unseen person say "you're so beautiful," she becomes so startled that she pricks her finger on one of the plant's thorns. When she hears the same seemingly invisible fellow say "you smell so good," Valérie looks around and eventually realizes that the small white phallic-

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like cactus is actually talking to her. After the cactus introduces himself as “the little green man” and proceeds to hit on Valérie, she gets quite bitchy and makes the following heartless threat to the rather charming cacti, “it looks like you want me to mash you like a dirty little crap. All it takes is a good squashing with my heel.” Of course, the ‘Little Green Man’ is a sort of Don Juan of cactuses and he eventually coerces Valérie into dropping her panties and sitting on top of his thorny head. While Valérie cries like a little girl while riding the cactus, complete ecstasy is written all over her face. Valérie is also fed bullshit by the cactus about how they are going to have a baby together like, “It’s gonna be a wonderful baby” and “our great child.” As it turns out, the Little Green Man is more interested in stealing Valérie’s panties than having a mongrelized human-cactus hybrid baby with her.

Aside from its cute, if not unflattering, depiction of the innate passive-aggressiveness of the ‘fairer sex’ and the tendency of women to say “no” when they really mean “yes,” *The Little Green Man* features no great revelations or insights about mankind, but it is quite eccentrically erotic and manically mirthful as a work that is certainly in the spirit of auteur Roland Lethem’s earlier works, albeit more lavishly directed. In terms of a cinematic equivalent to some sort of salacious activity, the film is like a ‘blow and go’ as a short but sweet and highly sensual affair that lasts about 10 minutes. While I was somewhat disappointed that Lethem did not opt to show the Aryanness lead’s post-cactus-coitus meat curtain (after all, he showed the eponymous ‘red cunt’ in *Le Sexe Enragé* aka *The Red Cunt*), the film is ultimately more potent due to the fact that it does not show anything aside from the sadomasochistic delight on protagonist Valérie’s face as she moves in and out of the prickly plant pecker. For Belgian cinephiles, it should be noted that veteran actor Jean-Louis Sibile (*Wait Until Spring*, *Bandini*, *A Promise*) makes a somewhat cryptic cameo in the film. Ultimately, *The Little Green Man* owes a large part of its potency to Vanja Maria Godée’s performance. Despite the fact that she had only appeared in one other short film before appearing in *The Little Green Man*, Godée demonstrates in Lethem’s film that she is an unrivaled master at simulating mounting a cactus and certainly more believable than 99% of the top female porn stars when pretending to derive pleasure from the seemingly unpleasurable. After watching Lethem’s work, I will certainly never look at cacti in the same way again. For those couples that use ultra ribbed condoms, *The Little Green Man* is probably a film you might want to steer clear of, but then again, I am sure that the short will inspire some debauched little dame to stick something sharp and prickly inside herself that might leave scars (or worse).

-Ty E

BAD BOY BUBBY

Rolf de Heer (1993)

Finally, the lines of bad taste and extreme nihilism have been crossed without squandering the quality of a film. I have seen countless films trying to jump on the sadistic bandwagon, by throwing globs of blood and taboo situations in their film trying to bring about a new Gummo. All of their efforts are in vain, and only makes the director look intellectually challenged. Director Rolf De Heer not only creates a film that will sicken you with its clueless sadism, but will also throw you in a world we have seen all our life, but in a new perspective. Nicholas Hope (Scooby Doo & Anacondas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid) plays Bubby. Bubby is a 35 year old socially challenged man-child who learns only through imitation and deranged experimentation. His mother resembles the egg lady from Pink Flamingo's and using her sternness, she coerces Bubby into having sex with her. She has raised him into believing the outside world was filled with poisonous gas and he should never leave. All this changes when his pop comes home. The film involves a two room decrepit apartment, which is covered in stains and cracks in the wall. De Heer had over thirty cameramen shooting the scenes to give it a discovery look; sort of like Aladdin's bravado "A Whole New World." The film is potentially a Fish out of Water comedy mixed with the malignancy that leaks from Harmony Korine's films. One potentially avant-garde method used in this film are the microphones sewn into Hope's wig, to record the sound as if it were being heard. The film is not merciful in its actual depicted cruelty towards a cat. This may be flagged as a horrible thing to do, I agree, but I cannot deny that it built up the mood and character to an extreme degree. The character essentially grows up in a hostile environment with sexual indecency, degeneracy, and violence. Through his act of imitation, he becomes a better person. Bubby can also be seen as a messianic character, suddenly reborn into a new world where he changes things using a power he was unaware, much like he is of his surroundings. Bad Boy Bubby is a visually striking film lit up with vibrant colors expressing an unmistakable doom containing non-stop aggression and cinematic diseases in the first half an hour, then morphs into something beautiful; an important film that features amazing musical performances and a truly wrenching experience. An unforgettable masterpiece of dark humor.

-Maq

ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT
ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT

Rolf de Heer (2003)

Spoiler Alert. Discusses key plot elements within.

If there is one universal character trait of the opposite sex that I absolutely loathe, it is their instinctive talent for conspiring. I believe this cryptic female weapon is also the reason why many women hate one another as they are always suspicious as to the true intentions of fellow members of the same sex. In the 2003 film *Alexandra's Project*, I was exposed to one woman's well-thought-out sadistic conspiracy against her own husband. The film was directed by Dutch-Aussie auteur Rolf de Heer, a director whose film *Bad Boy Bubby* both repulsed and engrossed me. It was clear to me after watching 10 minutes of *Bad Boy Bubby* that Rolf De Heer is one of few modern filmmakers with a very original and distinct vision, so original that I cannot think of many filmmakers with comparable work. Like *Bad Boy Bubby*, *Alexandra's Project* shows the complete psychological deterioration of a man as he is both physically and mentally beguiled by a wicked woman.

In the beginning of *Alexandra's Project*, we are introduced to Birthday boy Steve and his seemingly perfect nuclear family. Steve's wife Alex seems a bit mouse-like and timid but she does not give any evidence that she is a psychopathic wench. It is also apparent that the household and everything within it are from the fruitful fatherly labor of Steve. When he goes to work, Steve is exhilarated to find out that he is being promoted, on top of receiving a nice birthday party from his co-workers. Little does Steve realize that his wife is putting the finishing touches on her life destroying birthday present to him. When Steve comes home, he is distressed to find the locks on his security system have been changed (but the door is left open) and that his family is nowhere to be found. Steve eventually notices a birthday wrapped VHS tape which he immediately opens and inquisitively begins to watch on the lone TV sitting in front of him. The tape begins with his wife Alex and two kids wishing him happy birthday. Early on during the video, Alex soon tells her kids to leave so that she can give her husband a less than graceful striptease that is never finished. Leaving Steve most likely only partially aroused (similar to their marriage), Alex begins giving her pitiless present of psychological warfare.

After going on a bitchy tirade about feeling like an objectified woman (some college Feminist studies class probably warped her mind), Alex pretends to blow her brains out with an unloaded handgun. By this point Steve is noticeably disturbed by Alexandra's erratic estrogen-driven behavior. Alex then begins to provocatively fondle her own breasts, eventually feebly attempting to pierce a needle through them. With her nipples hard, it becomes obvious that Alex is aroused by the sadistic behavior that she has emotionally tortured her husband with. Alex then makes up an extravagant lie that she has breast cancer and most

likely only has a 50-50 chance of surviving the ordeal. Eventually, the cutthroat cunt reveals that she is leaving Steve with their children (who love their father dearly), making sure that he will never see them again. This is quite revealing of the self-worship that is womanhood. Despite acknowledging that both Steve and his children love each other a great deal, Alex is willing to destroy her children's lives just to quench her soulless thirst for petty vengeance. Despite the fact that Steve has devoted his entire life to his family, not mention the fact he provided them with luxuries that the majority of women in the world wish they had, Alex ruins her loyal husband's (and her children's lives) life just because she feels objectified and assumes Steve has cheated on her. Alex's irrational behavior is typical of the female slave-morality. Due to the fact she is afraid of her husband talking over her, Alex allowed all her hatred to boil up until she is able to gain enough gall to go beyond his back and plot a sadistic conspiracy to destroy him.

Despite complaining about feeling like a personal fuck-toy for her husband, Alex was able to save up enough money to escape from Steve by prostituting herself while he was working. One of Alex's pussy patrons is the next door neighbor, a hairy and overweight man (who Steve dislikes) that screws Steve's wife canine copulation style on the birthday present video. Alex's self-degradation to escape degradation is a great example of slave-morality inspired female logic. Maybe if Alex had been born over a century ago when women actually had to do somewhat hard work (when home appliance technology did not exist like it does today) around the house and watch 10 kids, she would not suffer from bipolar female neuroticism that plagues women of the western world today. Without modern technology (accessible video cameras and prison-like security systems), Alex would have never been able to carry out her somewhat elaborate project against her husband. Where Mike Haneke only accomplished banality with *Benny's Video*, a film about a boy losing touch with reality via the virtual reality of his video camera, Rolf de Heer cleverly delivered a film that shows that one's life can be ruined and family destroyed merely by watching a home video. After watching *Alexandra's Project*, even the least misogynistic of males will find themselves (at least temporarily) infuriated at the 'fairer' sex.

-Ty E

BLUTIGER FREITAG
BLUTIGER FREITAG

Rolf Olsen (1972)

Although few people will admit it, especially pretentious ‘socially conscious’ cinephiles (aka armchair neo-Marxists who blow their loads to the films of Godard and Straub), sometimes totally trashy exploitation films tell you more about a zeitgeist than the most critically revered and ostensibly intellectually sophisticated of arthouse works. Indeed, when it comes to films of the 1970s depicting the far-left terrorism that almost threw West Germany into a civil war, I think that the curious Kraut-Guido co-production *Blutiger Freitag* (1972) aka *Bloody Friday* aka *Violent Offender* aka *Freies Geleit oder die Geiseln sterben* exudes a less biased and more accurate depiction of the spirit of the times than most of the works directed by the likes of celebrated leftist auteur filmmakers like Volker Schlöndorff, Margarethe von Trotta, and Alexander Kluge. Co-directed by Austrian-born actor turned Aryan exploitation hack Rolf Olsen—a jack of all celluloid trades who had directed virtually every type of trash film, including crap kraut comedies, softcore ‘report’ flicks, racially insensitive mondo movies, and even children’s films—*Bloody Friday* is vaguely socio-politically conscious filmic filth of the exquisitely exploitative sort that is like the comsymp agitprop piece *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1975) as directed by the asshole bastard son of Alfred Vohrer (one of the main directors of the Edgar Wallace franchise by Rialto) and some goombah exploitation hack like Umberto Lenzi. Indeed, tastelessly exploiting popular issues in West German during the 1970s like the far-left terrorism of the Red Army Faction/Baader-Meinhof Gang, so-called ‘xenophobia’ (especially in regard to the “Gastarbeiter” aka “guest worker” phenomenon), latent Nazism, and capital punishment in regard to terrorists, Olsen’s film ultimately takes a refreshingly cynical approach to issues that filmmakers associated with German New Cinema took deadly serious. Featuring rampant anti-Guido sentiment, gratuitous canine killings, toddlers carrying around live hand grenades, psychopathic criminals complaining about hemorrhoid problems, frigid bull-dykes in suit jackets who suffer mental breakdowns after being carnally manhandled by macho men, bank robbers robbing wussy multicultural American GIs, small-time capitalist whore venders peddling hotdogs at crime scenes, everyday citizens calling for the gassing of criminals, and psychedelic montages juxtaposing images of hairy pussies and slaughtered animals, *Bloody Friday* may not be up to par with the sardonic insanity of Fassbinder’s black comedy crime flick *The Third Generation* (1979) aka *Die dritte Generation*, but it is certainly a wild and wicked, as well as slightly artful and oftentimes hilarious, celluloid ride with a busted moral compass that makes a marvelous mockery of national tragedy.

Prisoner Heinz Klett (played by Raimund Harmstorf, who is best known for playing the Nietzschean villain Wolf Larsen in the German 1971 Jack Lon-

don adaption *Der Seewolf* aka *The Seewolf*) is a psychopathic career criminal of the neo-Viking sort with long hair and a beard who looks like he walked off the set of Klaus Lemke's kraut cult classic *Rocker* (1972) who manages to escape from a Munich court house after brutally beating two elderly cops in a bathroom. Indeed, after complaining to the old cops, "Look, do I shit here or in court?," Heinz is allowed to enter a bathroom stall where he manages to receive a handgun via a window with the help of his criminal compatriots Luigi Belloni (Gianni Macchia) and Stevo (Totò Mignone). After exiting the stall, Heinz waves his weapons at the elderly cops and a struggle breaks out that leaves both old lawmen beaten to a bloody pulp. While Heinz and Luigi manage to escape from the court house unscathed, their comrade Stevo is caught and taken into custody. Luigi is a Gastarbeiter from Italy who works at a gas station where he constantly faces anti-Guido sentiment from rude asshole krauts with bad attitudes, but he does not care too much because he is engaged to a rather beautiful blonde Aryan babe named Helen aka Heidi Hofbauer (played by Christine Böhm, who would later star in Jacques Demy's 1979 romantic period piece *Lady Oscar*), not to mention the fact that he thinks he is about to get rich via a planned bank robbery. Due to her goombah boyfriend, Helen faces persecution from some of her co-workers, with one complaining, "I tell you it's that Italian. When Helen met him that's when her big problems started." To the bitchy co-worker's credit, Helen is involved in a bank robbery plot with her fiancé Luigi and hotheaded lunatic Heinz, who is the untermensch 'mastermind' of the plan. When Helen's AWOL fugitive soldier brother Christian (portrayed by actor/singer Amadeus August, who is best known for playing the protagonist of the 1971 French-German swashbuckler TV series *Quentin Durward*)—a reasonably morally pristine young man who just happened to accidentally kill one of his commanders—shows up to see his lovely little sister, Heinz attempts to coerce him into getting involved in the bank robbery after starting a fist fight with the man and realizing he is pretty tough and can be put to good use. Luigi also attempts some goombah smooth-talking on Christian, arguing regarding their dubious economic future, "Where else are we going to get rich, in Italia?! Or spending a lifetime making chocolates in Germania?! In America where the niggers and whites are fighting?! They say heaven helps those that help themselves." While Christian initially declines, he eventually decides to join up after his sister reveals that she is pregnant and that she needs all the financial help she can get, as one can hardly raise a family with her lover Luigi's undignified job as a gas station attendant. Of course, little does Christian realize that he, his sister, and the rest of the conspirators will die like rabid dogs.

To get the appropriate intimidating weapons and ammunition to rob a bank, Heinz and his motley crew of lumpenprole misfits first rob a group of American GIs, thus accidentally resulting in one unlucky yank's death. While pigheaded degenerate Heinz believes that his bank robbery scheme is immaculate, he ul-

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timately fails to take a number of considerations in mind, though he has some marginally clever ideas, like attempting to frame bourgeois-bred far-left terrorist for the crimes, remarking to Luigi, "We gotta get hold of one of those supped up sports cars. We gotta make it look like the job is the Baader-Meinhof Gang." Indeed, as a true gutter-dwelling proletarian without a cent to his name, Heinz knows that the Baader bunch are just a bunch of failed bourgeois pretty boy and girl pansies who cannot match his majesty in terms of raw working-class criminality. When the Heinz and his crew eventually get around to robbing the bank, they are in for quite a surprise when the alarm is sounded and 'safety grills' cover the windows and doors, thus locking the crooks and their hostages inside the building. Of course, the group takes all the bank patrons hostage, including a hot yet annoying and moronically morally self-righteous chick named Marie Lotzmann (played by Gila von Weitershausen, who previously appeared in Louis Malle's 1971 flick *Murmur of the Heart* as a prostitute), who happens to be the daughter of a wealthy grocery store owner. Naturally, Heinz decides to jack-up the ransom from a mere \$500,000 to \$1 million after learning that his hot hostage's daddy is a rather rich dude. Naturally, the hostage situation sires a media frenzy of sorts, with newscasters, hotdog vendors, opportunistic politicians and police officers, and bored everyday citizens all taking advantage of the dire situation in their own different yet equally parasitic ways. Meanwhile, as Christian begins to develop a quasi-romantic relationship with sermonizing rich bitch Marie, Heinz is getting drunk on liquor and attempting to get his hostages drunk with him. Of course, things go wrong for the group when a small boy accidentally gets a hold of one of Christian's grenades and pulls out the pin, as a cop dives on the explosive shortly after and is brutally killed as a result of the explosive detonating on his stomach. While the dead cop's actions were rather nonsensical (there was no real reason for him to throw himself on the grenade, as no one was around him when it exploded), the media portrays the officer as a righteous martyr who saved the lives of countless people. After one of the female hostages dies unexpectedly as a result of a stress-induced heart attack, the gang decides to let the children and old men go, but naturally the young and sexy hostages must stay, so dashing twink Christian provides them with his company as a way to protect them from his compatriots, especially deranged dipsomaniac Heinz.

When Heinz's gang finally has the ransom money delivered to them by the police, they make their getaway to a secret hideout and bring two of the female hostages, Marie and a lipstick lesbian named Dagmar Neuss (Daniela Giordano), with them as insurance. When a cop catches the gang picking up Helen at their hangout, Luigi is severely crippled after being bitten by a police dog and thus the cop and canine are subsequently murdered by the crew as retribution. When the gang finally gets to their main hideout in the Bavarian woods, everything begins to fall apart, especially after Heinz murders dyke Dagmar after she insults his sex-

ual performance after voluntarily agreeing to having wild sex with him. Indeed, the late night carnal session is so nightmarish for gynecentric gal Dagmar that she has psychedelic hallucinations of bushy vaginas and bloody slaughtered cattle in a gorgeously grotesque montage that is easily the most artsy fartsy and visually striking scene of *Bloody Friday*. When Christian learns that Heinz has killed the lipstick lesbian, he becomes enraged and smashes a piece of firewood over the gang leader's rather thick skull, which ignites a scuffle between Luigi and Helen that results in the former's accidental death via firearm. Indeed, things get so tragic for the gang that Helen unwittingly kills her goombah baby-daddy. The next day, borderline-good-guy Christian saves rich girl Marie's life by letting her go, even though he never actually got the opportunity to make love with her. Not long after that, a virtual army of police blitzkrieg the gang's hideout and immediately shoot pregnant Helen dead, so her brother Christian naturally flips out and begins unloading ammo on pigs, but he is soon shot down as well. While Heinz lasts the longest, he is also gunned down in a glaze of (in)glory, ironically collapsing on the ransom money that he risked his life to earn. In the end, the film concludes in a contrived pseudo-moralistic manner with the following Napoleon Bonaparte quote: "Crime is as contagious as the pest. No one can commit one without having to pay for it..."

At the very beginning of *Bloody Friday*, an inter-title appears warning the viewer: "The events in this film are based on actual facts. For obvious reasons, certain details and names have been changed but not in any endeavor to distort the truth." In the sense that is based on a true story, largely revolves around a darkly humorous media-circus-plagued bank robbery, and features goofy Guido villains, Olsen's film is like the *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) of crime-oriented krautploitation flicks (somewhat shockingly, Olsen's film actually predates the Sidney Lumet flick by 3 years). Of course, despite being ostensibly based on the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the film is innately exploitive any way you look at it, yet it is ultimately more effective than a film like *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, as it shows that the criminals are just as moronic as the cops and that the masses, like virtually all masses, don't know shit about anything (though it is pretty hilarious when an elderly man calls for the gassing a killers). Indeed, despite its concluding Napoleon quote, *Bloody Friday* is nasty unadulterated celluloid nihilism that laughs in the face of the troubled Teutonic zeitgeist that it so degenerately depicts. Unlike most Euro-exploitation flick, the film is also vaguely 'artsy' at points and even features some arthouse stars, including ditzy dame Renate Roland, who got her start playing the negligent teenage babysitter in Roland Klick's *Bübchen* (1968) and would later appear in Fassbinder's TV mini-series *Eight Hours are Not a Day* (1972-1973). Speaking of Fassbinder, Olsen's film strangely covers a number of the same major themes and forms of allegorical imagery that would that alpha German New Cinema auteur would incorporate in his films, including the proletarian crime world (i.e.

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Love Is Colder Than Death, *The American Soldier*), terrorism (i.e. *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*, *The Third Generation*), lesbian-based misandry (i.e. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*), xenophobia (i.e. *Katzelmacher*, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*), capitalism-inspired working-class rage and resentment (i.e. *I Only Want You to Love Me*), and slaughterhouses (i.e. *In a Year of 13 Moons*).

For whatever reason, gay American actor Lee Payant—a man whose greatest claim to fame was dubbing the eponymous role of the 1960s TV serial *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* in English and being the long-term boyfriend of black American actor/musician Gordon Heath—was responsible for directing part of the English cut of the film, though the exploitation flick does not feature any overt homoerotic content. Somewhat notably, there is a scene or two in *Bloody Friday* where the camera hovers over Heinz's tight leather pants to emphasize the size of his man-meat, as if to demonstrate that he has both literally and figuratively big balls, but also possibly to appeal the poof sensibility of pansy co-director Payant (who would never direct another film). Indeed, Heinz exudes rampant heterosexuality of the majorly macho yet dangerously violent sort in a somewhat cliché and stereotypical fashion that is not atypical of the ultra-macho antagonists of Tennessee Williams' plays. Indeed, like the characters in Williams' work (i.e. Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*), Heinz is a character that is both condemned and cryptically glorified due to his boorish and even bestial masculinity. Unquestionably, *Bloody Friday* is a rare German action-crime flick that dares to depict true Viking-esque all-balls masculinity in a patently politically incorrect fashion, and for that reason alone makes it more exciting than anything that has ever been directed by the likes of von Trotta and Kluge. An aesthetically pernicious piece of reasonably polished yet rather visceral psychotronic kraut cinema, *Bloody Friday* is not only proof that Aryans can make good exploitation films, but also that there can sometimes be a 'healthy' and highly entertaining median between pure cinematic trash and socially conscious auteur cinema.

-Ty E

FANTOM SEDUCER

Roman Nowicki (2005) If you have visited XploitedCinema.com before, chances are you have come across a series from Roman Nowicki called Fantom Kiler. Despite from having ripe spelling difficulties, the films manage to provide a very hallucinatory soft-core horror porn with some great scenes and many busty librarians who wander in the woods only to have their wardrobe conveniently removed due to tree branches. Well, in this film series, he takes a similar theme but instead of wonderful visuals, he decides to substitute the soft-core for hard-core. Fantom Seducer is now a full-scale porno with less of a glassy and polished feel and more of a lustful approach; completely disregarding the only artistic integrity it had. So instead of following a linear plot, the Fantom is now a demon that moves from women that have denied the host. So it seduces these women with his lust. As great as this sounds, it doesn't work for what it is. It should have focused on being one of the two. Not a half-assed horror/porn hybrid. This is no Slaughter Disc, mind you. Roman was always notable for his effective score in the Kiler trilogy, but in this outing the music is just embarrassing. Not much can really be said about Fantom Seducer that isn't already obvious. It's a bad porn with beautiful women. As genius as this sounds, it's too bland for it's own good. Don't expect a color saturated slasher film cause you will be sorely disappointed.

-Maq

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ROSEMARY'S BABY

Roman Polanski (1968)

Since I have never been particularly superstitious, even as a young child, I am not too fond of supernatural horror films involving the devil, demons, demonic possession, and related ungodly ingredients that are oftentimes painfully cliché, generic, and just plain downright banal when depicted cinematically by the mostly atheistic and Zionist unbelievers of unholywood. Indeed, I find nude scenes of bloated Jewess Lena Dunham to be infinitely more horrifying than a demonically possessed Linda Blair stabbing her jailbait snatch with a crucifix in William Friedkin's classic William Peter Blatty adaptation *The Exorcist* (1973). Likewise, I find it simply impossible to find little dude Damien of *The Omen* (1976) to be even remotely ominous, but I would not be surprised if Judaic director Richard Donner has a certain unsettling feeling when he thinks of Anglo-Saxon children, as he certainly would not be the first or the last Hebraic filmmaker to direct a film where a cute Nordic kid is supposed to be the personification of absolute evil. Undoubtedly, the most blatant and famous example of a Jewish filmmaker mocking white Christians and their beliefs is indubitably *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) directed by Roman Polanski and based on the best-selling horror novel of the same name by fellow chosenite Ira Levin. Produced by Hebraic carny-like schlockmeister filmmaker William Castle (*House on Haunted Hill*, *The Tingler*) and made under the guidance of Judaic Paramount Pictures executive Robert Evans (real name Robert J. Shapera), the classic horror film is as kosher as a Jewish wedding in terms of the most important people behind it, which makes perfect sense when one considers that it is about an overly sweet and sensitive yet oftentimes awfully annoying Catholic girl that literally gets fucked by the devil and inseminated with his sinister seed. Starring insufferable archetypical white liberal moron Mia Farrow—a woman that should probably go down in history as the originator of the grotesque virtue-signaling-based Hollywood trend of adopting child of different races from around the world as if they are accessories—with the sort of vomit-worthy hipster chic dyke haircut that is quite typical among bourgeois leftist feminist bitches nowadays, the film is almost like a parable about the nefarious (post)counterculture influence of Jews on the seemingly hopelessly naive and impressionable white middleclass, especially young and dumb WASP debutantes, but that does not mean it is not a virtually immaculate horror classic that it is probably the best that the (sub)genre has to offer.

Until yesterday, the last time I saw *Rosemary's Baby* was nearly a decade ago with an ex-girlfriend, who is incidentally currently pregnant (quite unlike Farrow's character, there is no way she could give birth to anything resembling a demon child), so naturally my thoughts on and appreciation of the film has changed somewhat over the past ten years or so. Notable for being Polanski's

first adaptation of a novel and not an original story made in collaboration with his longtime co-writer Gérard Brach, the film might be looked at as the director's first piece of for-hire hack work were it not so readily apparent that he put himself completely into the film's screenplay and seemingly immaculate direction (notably, male lead John Cassavetes, who butted heads with Polanski throughout the production, would later state regarding the director, "You can't dispute the fact that he's an artist, but yet you have to say ROSEMARY'S BABY is not art."). Although it might be fucked up to say on retrospect, the film feels so innately and even smugly 'evil' that it almost seems like an act of twisted fate that his wife Sharon Tate and unborn child were brutally murdered by members of the so-called Manson Family not long after its release (at the very least, this fact only adds to the film's potency). While people have accused Polanski of being a crypto-Satanist of sorts despite his glaring nihilistic sympathies, Rosemary's Baby is certainly a rare film where the viewer finds it hard to root for the all-too-sweet Catholic girl protagonist when the Satanic antagonists are so much more charming, worldly, elegant, and mild-mannered. In fact, Ethan Mordden would go so far to argue in his classic text *Medium Cool: The Movies of the 1960s* (1990), "Even worse, because she is powerless, is the heroine of Roman Polanski's ROSEMARY'S BABY (1968), who drives the public into crazes with her dithering and wondering. All praise to Mia Farrow for fulfilling the director's intentions—for he obviously does not want us to identify, even sympathize with, Rosemary, one of the film's very few characters who is not a full-fledged ghoul. Farrow winces, whines, and withers, but she can't stand up and say no [...] Polanski is rooting for the devil. A year before the infamous Rolling Stones concert at Altamont and the climax of rock-as-demonism, the director says, this is what the times favor; this is where we have landed. We like the darkness. We sing the monster." Not surprisingly, in 2003 Judaic source writer Ira Levin would complain in regard to his belief that the film and his source novel inspired religious fanaticism, "Lately, I've had a new worry. The success of ROSEMARY'S BABY inspired EXORCISTS and OMENS and lots of et ceteras. Two generations of youngsters have grown to adulthood watching depictions of Satan as a living reality. Here's what I worry about now: if I hadn't pursued an idea for a suspense novel almost forty years ago, would there be quite as many religious fundamentalists around today?" Of course, Levin's remark reeks of the sort of repugnantly smug Jewish leftist anti-Christian arrogance that has turned academia, various art movements, and 'Western' culture in general into what might be best described as a putrid rotting dead horse that needs to be, at the very least, buried deep in mountains of manure. While the film makes brief reference to Nietzsche in a scene where titular female protagonist looks at a magazine with a cover that reads, "Is God Dead?," the German philosopher did not delight in the prospect as he was afraid that it would lead to collective nihilism and ultimately the death of the Occident.

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After recently re-watching the film, it was apparent to me that *Rosemary's Baby* is almost a satire of irrational Christian fears as written and directed by someone that seems like they would smile at the prospect of a devil defiling a pedomorphic Catholic girl, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a filmmaker that has a self-confessed affection for much younger women and thus can personally relate to such displays of ungodly carnality. Indeed, ultimately in the end, the cutesy yet unintentionally kooky female protagonist learns to 'love the devil' (or at least his half-human bastard son) and the Satanists prevail and proudly declare, "God is dead! Satan lives!" in great megalomaniacal triumph. Of course, such a scenario is probably quite satisfying to Jews who believe that Christians think of them as 'Christ-killers.' In fact, the only thing that could make the film more immaculate in terms of its elegantly executed contempt for Christendom is if it was produced by a studio named the Synagogue of Satan. Whilst one could argue that the film is poking fun at old school 'antisemitic' tropes about Jews using Christian babies for satanic rituals, it is quite obvious that Polanski takes great glee in depicting these stylishly sinister scenarios. In that sense, Levin is not too far off when speculating that the film influenced Christians to get more militant, as *Rosemary's Baby* is, in many ways, more incriminating regarding the sinister influence on Hebraic Hollywood than even the most sophisticated of white nationalist oriented propaganda pieces. Of course, the fact that Church of Satan founder Anton Szandor LaVey—a Jewish carry that plagiarized a good portion of his atheistic philosophy of self-worship from the writings of Russian Jewess Ayn Rand—made up an enduring myth that he worked as both a technical consultant for the satanic rituals and acted in an uncredited cameo role as Satan only adds to the film's satanic Jewish cred.

The virtual stereotype for the helpless white bourgeois princess, Rosemary Woodhouse (Mia Farrow) made her first big mistake when she married a scheming swarthy hack actor named Guy (John Cassavetes) that absurdly believes that acting in television is where "the artistic thrill" is at, thus underscoring his insincerity and lack of values and moral principles. Of course, Guy is more of a con-artist than an artist but his young wifey is too much of an airheaded sweet-heart to realize that. Quite unbeknownst to the tragically naïve protagonist, her sleazy hubby is willing to play cuckold to the devil himself just so that he can get his acting career started. Notably, at the beginning of the film, Rosemary and Guy are depicted making love in the most soulless and mechanical fashion imaginable as if it were a chore in a scene that really highlights the sorry sham that is their marriage, but I guess one should not expect anything less in a glaringly mismatched relationship where the wife resembles a sort of androgynous Virgin Mary and the husband seems like a terribly desperate and morally bankrupt Jewish used car salesman with a tendency towards banging intoxicated guidettes. Against the sound advice of her ambiguously gay ex-landlord Hutch (Maurice Evans)—a queen-ish fellow that curiously writes "stories for boys" yet seems

to lack any interest in any traditionally masculine subjects—Rosemary and her husband move into an apartment complex with the unflattering nickname ‘Black Bramford’ with a dubious history that includes Victorian cannibal sisters, devil worshipers, and mysterious dead infants wrapped in newspapers, among other things that people do not typically associate with a perfect bourgeois apartment building. Not long after moving in, Rosemary is excited to befriend a gorgeous goombah babe named Terry Gionoffrio (Victoria Vetri under the pseudonym ‘Angela Dorian’ in a small role where she humorously complains that people think she looks like Victoria Vetri), only to find her new gal pal not long after with her blood and brains splattered across concrete as a result of a dubious suicide that involved her falling seven floors from a Bramford apartment window. Terry was an ex-junky that was taken in by Rosemary’s exceedingly eccentric elderly neighbors Minnie (Ruth Gordon) and Roman Caštevets (Sidney Blackmer) who supposedly treated her as the “child they never had.” Of course, as the viewer eventually speculates, Terry was originally the Caštevets’s choice for the carrier of Satan’s half-human spawn, but now that Rosemary has moved in they have a much better choice for Satan’s female cattle. After all, Terry’s drug and STD ridden body was surely not fit to produce the ungodly spawn of the Prince of Darkness. Somewhat strangely, Rosemary is not too disturbed when Minnie—a perniciously pushy little pipsqueak bitch that openly admits that she never takes no for an answer—gives her a supposed good luck charm containing a dubious herb named ‘tannis root’ that Terry was wearing when she died horrifically under questionable circumstances. Despite being repulsed by the putrid smell of tannis root, Rosemary is a good little follower and agrees to wear the antique necklace, at least until she realizes that it is really a satanic good luck charm of sorts that really contains a evil fungus called ‘Devil’s Pepper.’

While his wife Minnie is the worst extreme of the nagging and perennially scheming Jewish mother (even though she is technically not a mother), Roman is an elegant quasi-Svengali-like old fart that knows how to play the game when it comes to manipulating people, especially to the benefit of his infernal god, though he is not afraid to express his anti-Christian sentiments. Indeed, Roman somewhat disturbs Rosemary not long after they meet by stating things like, “No Pope ever visits a city where the newspaper are on strike” and “You don’t need to have respect for him [The Pope] because he pretends that he is holy.” Still, as a confused lapsed Catholic that has bad memories regarding frigid old nuns, Rosemary seems like easy prey for Roman’s heretical influence. When Rosemary’s rather wise pal Hutch randomly meets Roman, he immediately becomes suspicious of him, especially due to his, “pierced ears and piercing eyes.” Rather sadly, Hutch is the only person that seems to truly have Rosemary’s best interests in mind, but he is no match for the manipulative majesty of Roman, aggressive scheming of Minnie, or overbearing bullshitting of Guy. Like Rosemary, Guy wants to have children, albeit for the totally wrong reasons. Of course, as

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the film reveals, Rosemary could not have picked a worst time to have her first child. While Rosemary believes that her first pregnancy has been planned by her and Guy, Roman and Minnie have already hatched a pernicious well thought out plan to have her procreate with Beelzebub. When Guy lands a respectable acting role as a result of the original actor going blind under mysterious circumstances, he becomes inordinately overjoyed and absolutely delights Rosemary by telling her that he wants to have a baby. Unbeknownst to Rosemary, Guy has made a pact with Castevets to allow Satan to fuck and impregnate her in return for a successful acting career. Indeed, Guy is such a pathetic narcissist that he made a deal to become Satan's cuckold in return for the shallowest of careers. There is no doubt that Guy does not truly love Rosemary, who seems to be completely blind to this lack of love, at least at first. As his tasteless choice of trade and phony charismatic personality hint, Guy loves himself and only himself and he certainly has no qualms about making a quasi-Faustian pact that involves sacrificing his wife's fresh womb to be a demonic baby incubator the Devil himself to advance his acting career. In fact, the morning after he has Rosemary drugged and raped by Satan, he lies to her and states that he fucked her in her sleep, even jokingly describing it as, "Kinda fun in a necrophile sort of way." To make sure that Rosemary was properly knocked out so that Satan could penetrate her Catholic cunt without even the slightest bit of resistance, Guy forced her to eat chocolate mousse that was drugged by Minnie even though she complained it had a "chalky under taste." While Rosemary remembers being defiled by something inhuman, she ultimately rights off the satanic rape as merely a bad dream even though her body is covered in claw marks as if someone roughly violated her during sex. Needless to say, Rosemary's incessant refusal to ever say "no" to the satanic conspirators becomes increasingly aggravating to the point where the viewer eventually finds it nearly impossible to sympathize with her plight. Indeed, not unlike the stupid rich WASP college student that buys into all the propaganda of largely Jewish cultural Marxists, feminists, LGBT agitators, and other scum, Rosemary hardly deserves pity as she is a feeble-minded individual that is a mindless traitor to both herself and her ancestral faith.

Undoubtedly, one of the most overtly Jewish aspects of the film is that Rosemary is coerced by the Castevets into going to see an arrogant satanic obstetrician named Dr. Abraham Sapirstein (Ralph Bellamy) after she gets pregnant. Aside from developing a compulsion to eat raw meat, Rosemary suffers great stomach pain after getting pregnant and suspects something is extremely wrong, but super smug semite Dr. Sapirstein arrogantly discounts her complaints and endorses her drinking a strange cocktail that is prepared by Minnie of all people instead of taking normal pregnancy vitamins. Like with virtually every evil character she encounters, Rosemary seems to have next to nil intuition into the true insidious nature of Dr. Sapirstein until it is much too late, which is rather depressing since she is a genuinely nice and trusting little lady that, to her ultimately rather

tragic detriment, seems to be willing to give virtually anyone the benefit of the doubt. Indeed, Rosemary does not realize that the Castevets are members of a witch coven until she has unwittingly caused her homey Hutch to fall into a coma and eventually croak as a result of having a spell put on him by the elderly Satanists. Clearly realizing that he might be a threat to their satanic agenda, Roman put a spell on Hutch not long after first meeting him. Before croaking, Hutch managed to procure an antique book entitled *All Of Them Witches* that reveals that Roman is from a satanic family and that his name is really an anagram for his real Satanic name 'Steven Marcato.' To add insult to injury, Roman names Rosemary's half-breed demonic child 'Adrian' in tribute to his infamous bigwig Satanist father Adrian Marcato, who has an entire chapter dedicated to him in *All Of Them Witches*. While Rosemary makes a desperate attempt to convince another Jewish obstetrician named Dr. Hill (Charles Grodin) into helping her give birth lest her child be stolen by satanic conspirators, the good doctor naturally does not believe her rather wild and fantastic story and thus betrays her by informing Guy and Sapirstein about her whereabouts. Surely one of the most sinister Judaic characters in cinema history, Sapirstein even dares to blackmail Rosemary by threatening to have her committed to a mental institution if she continues to complain about a satanic conspiracy against her. In short, Rosemary—a genuinely sweet and sensitive girl that could make for a truly devout Christian were she not married to a scumbag and mixed up with such malevolent characters—is no match for any of the Satanists in terms of sheer will power, intellect, and moral bankruptcy. In the end, Rosemary is horrified to discover that her baby, which she was told was dead, has the eyes of Satan, yet Roman manages to coerce her into being the demonic being's mother in what ultimately proves to be a wickedly warped twist ending where Satan is glorious and a sweet and sensitive young Catholic girl learns to love her satanic bastard progeny that was sired via ritualistic phantasmagoric rape. Of course, this scenario ultimately not much different from the one depicted in Judd Apatow's *Knocked Up* (2007) where singularly obnoxious Judaic lard ass Seth Rogen portrays a Hebraic slacker that proudly engages in *Rassenschande* with a blonde Shiksa portrayed by Katherine Heigl.

Not surprisingly, *Rosemary's Baby* is a favorite film among many real-life 'Satanists,' including the Church of Satan, which officially endorses the film in the eponymous book *The Church of Satan* by Magistra Blanche Barton as approved by the pseudo-church's founder Magus Anton Szandor LaVey. Additionally, LaVey's estranged son-in-law Nikolas Schreck—a one-eared Satanist turned Tantric Buddhist that is probably best known as the frontman of the goofy pseudo-deathrock group Radio Werewolf—highly praised the film in his book *The Satanic Screen: An Illustrated Guide to the Devil in Cinema* (2001) where rightly noted, "The film is remarkably free of the clichés that marred previous films of Satanism. To cite only one of the most obvious examples, Castavet's

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coven are not bloodthirsty fiends slaving to commit blood sacrifices.” In his book, ex-Satanist Schreck also makes it quite clear that, despite the claims of both various Christian and Satanic groups to the contrary, the film was not the product of genuine devout Satanists, or as he states himself, “ROSEMARY’S BABY became a kind of blueprint for the occult renaissance of the late 1960s, quite unintentionally placing the Hollywood seal of approval on the Black Arts. Putting the cart before the horse, both occultists and Christians of different stripes have looked in the film for hidden magical messages and authentic Satanic lore. Rumors have spread that the film-makers must have sought technical advice for ‘real’ Satanists to imbue the film with such seeming authenticity.” While I have made fun of Schreck in the past, I certainly cannot deny that he probably said it best when he noted regarding the importance of the film in the context of satanic cinema a whole, “The impact of ROSEMARY’S BABY on the Satanic cinema can hardly be overestimated. Its popular success moved the Devil from the margins of the film world to the centre, directly inspiring a tidal wave of diabolical movies that surged around the world for a full decade after its release. One of those rare films that transcends its original beginnings as simple escapist entertainment, it was elevated by its mysterious inner force into its own dark myth. ROSEMARY’S BABY was fortuitously released at exactly the right time, capitalizing on and helping to create the sixties occult revival that it will always be associated with.” While Kenneth Anger is the undoubtedly the greatest occult filmmaker to have ever lived, Polanski certainly deserves the credit for bringing overt left-hand path themes to the mainstream (though Val Lewton surely made a valiant attempt with *The Seventh Victim* (1943), which was clearly a major influence on *Rosemary’s Baby*).

Aside from being noted by some, including ex-Satanist Schreck, as a sort of allegory for the birth of the Age of Satan (or what Thelemites like Anger describe as the Aeon of Horus), *Rosemary’s Baby* is also (in)famous for supposedly being a cursed movie, namely due to the Manson Family brutally murdering auteur Polanski’s pregnant wife Sharon Tate and unborn child. Aside from that, the film’s Polish musical composer Krzysztof Komeda died in 1969 of more or less the same illness (haematoma of the brain) that the film’s character Hutch died after having a spell put on him by the Satanists. Of course, Mia Farrow’s entire post-*Rosemary’s Baby* life seems to be at least somewhat cursed in various ways. Indeed, aside from the fact that she was married to a purported pedo and had a sick brother that was a convicted gay child molester, Farrow, whose then-hubby Frank Sinatra notably divorced her because she refused to quit Polanski’s film, would later star in a number of rip-off films ranging from Richard Loncraine’s virtually totally unknown UK-Canadian production *The Haunting of Julia* (1977) aka *Full Circle* to the dreadful *The Omen* (2006) remake where she demonstrates a nasty knack for unintentional self-parody. While in *Rosemary’s Baby* Farrow seems like a genuinely pure and virgin-like beauty that is no match for a coven

of evil conniving witches, Farrow would go on to seem like the archetypal psychologically decrepitude white liberal pseudo-intellectual whack-job, hence her dubious marriage to a patently pathetic physical specimen like neurotic Hebraic dork Woody Allen.

Undoubtedly, if I were to pick a song that I believe best sums up the spirit of seemingly accursed auteur Roman Polanski and his films, especially *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967), and *The Ninth Gate* (1999)—all cinematic works where evil prevails in the end—it would be “Sympathy for the Devil” by the Rolling Stones, even if it is not exactly the sort of song that he would use in one of his films. Indeed, while Polanski’s films reveal that he has extremely pessimistic existentialist tendencies, they also demonstrate that, at least allegorically speaking, he has no problem sympathizing with the plight of Satan, but I guess one would not expect anything less from a Polish Jew that personally witnessed the worst of the Kraków Ghetto as a child and whose mother died in Auschwitz concentration camp, not to mention the fact that he was forced against his will to pose as a Roman Catholic lest her be found out as a Jew and sent to a concentration camp like both of his parents. Of course, not unlike Satan in *Rosemary's Baby*, Jewish outsider Polanski impregnated a blonde Aryan beauty, thus making the murder of said blonde Aryan beauty and the dead half-Jewish fetus seem all the more bizarre on retrospect, as if the auteur had been punished by god for his bold cinematic sins. As someone that is not particularly religious, I somehow find the bizarre metaphysical implications of *Rosemary's Baby* to be surprisingly intriguing, especially considering that even a carny huckster like William Castle—a man that thrived like no other in terms of being a shameless cinematic smut-peddler—felt severe guilt in regard to producing the film, even writing when his hit satanic flick was receiving Academy Awards, “All my life I had yearned for the applause, approval and recognition of my peers and when the awards were being passed out, I no longer cared. I was at home, very frightened of ROSEMARY’S BABY.” On top of feeling guilty about the spiritual influence of the film, Castle also suffered kidney failure shortly after it was released. To Castle’s credit, the horror films that he personally directed like *The Tingler* (1959) and even his swansong *Shanks* (1974) are fun and hokey with cartoonish depictions of good and evil and surely not works that celebrate Satan, so it almost seems sickly absurd that he was involved with producing a film that is nothing short of Satanic cinema par excellence. While there is ample evidence to argue that *Rosemary's Baby* is a sort of dark crypto-comedy at the expense of Christian true believers, there is denying that it has a singular dark and ominous essence that has yet to be rivaled by any other film. Undoubtedly, it is one of those oh-so rare films that, although I come back to it every couple years, I cannot exactly say that I am a true fan even though I believe that is one of the most subversive, immaculate, and artistically merited that has ever come out of Hollywood. While Polanski once stated, “I no more believed in Satan as evil

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incarnate than I believed in a personal god; the whole idea conflicted with my rational view of the world," his sins, life of artistic and monetary success yet strange misfortune, and films certainly seem to contradict this. Indeed, one could also argue that working in Hollywood caused Polanski to lose his soul, or as David Thomson noted in his trusty film reference book *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* regarding the auteur's inexplicable decline as a cinematic artist with an unmistakable style, "Once upon a time, it would have seemed impossible for Polanski to stagnate. Yet it has happened. *DEATH AND THE MAIDEN* and *THE NINTH GATE* did not seem to belong to him, whereas, once, he had put his stamp on anything and everything. This liberty has not enriched him. There has been no talk of a return to America; and no hint of that music not having to be faced. In Paris, Polanski seems disconsolate, a thumb-twiddler. And while time passes, the mood for his best films is nearly forgotten." Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed *Macbeth* (1971) and to even some extent *The Pianist* (2002), but the somewhat flawed *The Tenant* (1976) aka *Le Locataire* seems to be the director's last display of unadulterated artistic integrity. As for *Rosemary's Baby*, it might be adapted from the novel of an obscenely overrated mainstream horror novelist, but it is pure Polanski in a darkly comedic misanthropic sort of fashion that, for better or worse, reminds viewers why people used to oftentimes oftentimes associated Jews and Judaism with Satanism. In other words, I am not surprised that the film was directed by an inordinately artistically gift holocaust survivor.

-Ty E

THE BLIND FLY

Romano Scavolini (1966)

Unquestionably, Romano Scavolini is one of the more curious cases in post-WWII Italian cinema. While best known nowadays for his vicious video nasty slasher flick *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* (1981) aka *Blood Splash* aka *Nightmare* and his Gothic psychedelic giallo *Un bianco vestito per Marialé* (1972) aka *Spirits of Death* aka *A White Dress for Marialé*, Scavolini spent his early career making highly experimental celluloid poems of sorts that would probably bore his art-allergic horror fans to death. Indeed, with his avant-garde short *Ecce Homo* (1967), Scavolini anticipated the sort of collage videos that are a favorite among YouTube users, albeit using it for postmodern agitprop purposes, juxtaposing Biblical Renaissance paintings with modern images of war, consumer products, and surgery. Whether Scavolini borrowed the title for *Ecce Homo* from Friedrich Nietzsche's 1908 autobiography of the same name or from the words of Pontius Pilate in the Vulgate translation of John 19:5 is questionable, but if one thing is for sure, it is that the director's first feature *A mosca cieca* (1966) aka *The Blind Fly* aka *Ricordati di Haron* aka *Blind-Man's Buff*, which was described as a masterpiece by none other than Italian futurist/fascist poet Giuseppe Ungaretti, depicts a dispirited world of doom and gloom where God is dead and the 'last man' reigns supreme. Vaguely inspired by Albert Camus' novel *L'Étranger* (1942) aka *The Stranger*, *The Blind Fly* is a little piece of black-and-white cultural pessimism that follows a strange and mostly soulless character who steals a gun out of a car, pushes away his loving girlfriend, ponders on fear and mathematics with friends, and ultimately decides to shoot at a crowd of strangers headed to a soccer stadium on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Despite being made in the same country that gave the world Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975), Alberto Cavallone's *Blue Movie* (1978), Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), the strangely gorgeous gore of Lucio Fulci, the horror porn works of Joe D'Amato (i.e. *Erotic Nights of the Living Dead* aka *Le notti erotiche dei morti viventi*), and the histrionic theatric iconoclasm of Carmelo Bene (*Don Giovanni*, *Salomè*), among countless other examples, *The Blind Fly* was considered so obscene by the Italian board of censors that it was (and still is) banned in Italy and has never had a commercial screening, or as auteur Scavolini stated himself in an interview with www.splattercontainer.com, the work was, "metaphorically burned at the stake by three censorship commissions and by the State Council" due to its perceived blasphemy, pornography, and irrational violence. Made over a year period of random filming after producer Enzo Nasso (who went on to produce Scavolini's work *The Dress Rehearsal* (1968) aka *La prova generale*) gave the director a bunch of 16mm film stock (which the director described as being, "decaying, almost unusable scraps"), *The Blind Fly* was originally a whopping 6 hours long,

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but Scavolini decided to cut down the film to about an hour and focus on the curious character of a metaphysically dead murderer named 'Carlo' who decides to waste some random people as a rather irrational way of dealing with the fact that he is a heartless void merely wandering this earth who is consumed with nothingness upon nothingness. Described by auteur Scavolini as a "Beckettian movie" and featuring anti-urban/anti-modernist quotes from French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, *The Blind Fly* is certainly the kind of rare film that might push the wrong person over the edge, as a film that "shows the absence of God in our society" (which, according to Scavolini, is the best description of the work and how Catholic intellectuals described the film) and offers no sense of solace, but instead, a nightmare of naked nihilism that reminds the viewer why old Europa is on its last gasp.

Beginning with a shot of two men laying on the ground as if they are dead, *The Blind Fly* almost instantly establishes a sense of absurdism, unease, and tragicomedy. The antihero of the film is Carlo (Carlo Cecchi) and aside from his girlfriend (Italian diva Laura Troschel) and a couple friends, he is completely alone in the world, though his loved ones are also beginning to compound his loneliness, as he finds it harder and harder to relate to them. After horsing around with a friend, stealing a pistol he spots in an unlocked car, and buying a newspaper, Carlo goes back to his dungeon-like room and seems to contemplate many things, including suicide, as demonstrated by the fact that he puts the barrel of the gun he has stolen to his forehead. In flashbacks, we see Carlo is having trouble with his girlfriend because after the two make love, he sulks while sitting at the end of the bed, as if disgusted with the ordeal and his incapacity for reciprocating love in a meaningful way. When Carlo meets a friend, he learns the following 'mathematical' formula: "Five is killed by Six but Five killed Four. Every number...Any number...kills the previous number just to be killed by the following number [...] One is always a victim. It's the destiny of the first ones...to be victims." Carlo seems to be rather appreciative of his arithmetic-inclined friend's pessimism, as demonstrated by his remark to him, "I feel safe with you. You're always so peaceful." Indeed, Carlo is proof that misery loves company. After making love with his girlfriend, Carlo kicks her out of bed, but not before remarking, "You look at me like...like I was an old, impotent man," which she of course denies (but, as Carlo states, he "sees it" in her eyes). Indeed, Carlo is so dead inside that he has nil interest in sex, complaining to his beloved, "I told you I did not feel like making love to you." When his girlfriend asks him why he never asks her whether or not she loves him, Carlo calls her "stupid" and an "idiot" and proceeds to chase her away in a rather nasty fashion. While randomly sitting by himself at a table in the city, an old man comes up to Carlo and goes on about how he noticed him staring at a young couple. The old man also tells Carlo that the young lady belonging to the couple he was staring at could feel his penetrating eyes on her, as if his hatred had metaphysical

powers. Most importantly, the old man tells Carlo that he can tell he is upset by the way he holds a cigarette. Like most activities he is involved with, Carlo goes to a local fair all by his lonesome and plays a game where he shoots a toy gun, which is juxtaposed with shots of him gunning down random strangers. When Carlo meets up with another friend, he confesses he is scared and proceeds to put his gun to the back of his comrade's head while asking if he feels fear. Juxtaposing scenes of a soccer game with shots of Carlo killing random strangers who are heading to the stadium where said soccer game is taking place, the viewer soon realizes that the antihero has completely lost it for good. After a seemingly schizophrenic montage featuring Carlo running away frantically from the scene of the crime, random dead bodies with animated quasi-psychedelic special effects, Carlo running up to and hugging his girlfriend, and the antihero grabbing his head while in a seemingly majorly melancholy state, the following inter-title pops up: "Standing Still – Alone – Being Defeated – Never – Samuel – It Never Begins – It Never Ends." Before going on a murder rampage, Carlo is asked by a friend why he is carrying a gun and he simply responds with, "I need it." Indeed, Carlo needed to kill in a last ditch effort to see if he had any capacity for emotions, namely guilt, but it is dubious whether or not he found what he was looking for upon committing the unpardonable act.

While auteur Romano Scavolini has cited Samuel Beckett as having the biggest philosophical influence on *The Blind Fly*, I found the utilization of segments from libertine poet Rimbaud's *Illuminations* (1874) to be the most effective in summing up the overall tone of the film, with the excerpt being as follows: "I am an ephemeral and not at all too discontented citizen of a metropolis which is believed to be modern because every known taste has been avoided in the furnishing and the exteriors of the house, as well as in the layout of the city. Here you cannot point out the trace of a single monument to the past. Morals and language have been reduced to their simplest expression, in short! These millions of people who have no need to know each other carry on their education, their work, and their old age so similarly that the course of their lives must be several times shorter than the findings of absurd statistics allow the peoples of the continent. Thus, from my window, I see new apparitions roaming through the thick and endless coal-smoke – our woodland shade, our summer's night! – new Furies, in front of my cottage which is my country and my whole heart since everything here is like this; Death without tears, our active daughter and servant, a desperate Love and a pretty Crime whimpering in the mud of the street." Virtually completely silent aside from strategically placed music of the mostly discordant sort (though some German classical music is thrown in for good measure) and a couple lines of dialogue between characters, *The Blind Fly* is ultimately a severely suffocating, claustrophobic, alienating, and dejecting work that expresses through what is nothing short of raw cinematic poetry the metaphysical crisis of 'modern man' (very much in the Jungian sense) and his

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lack of culture and community in a technocratic world of abstraction, deracination, and godlessness. Indeed, aside from Louis Malle's adaptation Pierre Drieu La Rochelle *The Fire Within* (1963) aka *Le feu follet*, which follows a lonely alcoholic who tries to find a reason not to commit suicide, and Wim Wenders' Peter Handke adaptation *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (1972) aka *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, which follows an emotionally dead soccer goalie who kills a movie theater cashier for seemingly no reason, *The Blind Fly* is certainly the most effective cinematic depiction of abject hopelessness and despair in an emotionally glacial metropolitan society of anti-organic mediocrity that I have had the distinguished honor of seeing. Undoubtedly, *The Blind Fly* is easily auteur Scavolini's most dangerously intimate work, so it should be no surprise that the director warns on his official website that "it is an hectic film not to be liked by the grand public." Described by filmmaker/cinema connoisseur Gideon Bachmann (who appeared in a couple Fellini flicks and directed the documentary *Ciao, Federico!* (1970), which features a behind-the-scenes look at Fellini *Satyricon* (1969)) as follows, "It is the first all-filmic, all-musical film from modern Italy constructed like a musical composition, moving in movements like a sonata, broken up into chords like variations on a theme, and finally expressive primarily through the images it stimulates in the mind, it is essentially a cry of anguish in a world of emotional voids, a cry of solitude," *The Blind Fly* is ultimately a peturbingly penetrating reminder of the power of cinema as an artistic medium if in the right hands, as Scavolini's film is a virtual declaration of intolerable existential crisis and homicidal tendencies, which he was thankfully able to release in a creative way via the art of film.

-Ty E

NIGHTMARE IN A DAMAGED BRAIN

Romano Scavolini (1981)

While Guido filmmaker Romano Scavolini (*Un bianco vestito per Marialé* aka *Spirits of Death*, *Savage Hunt*) was once such an innovative and audacious filmmaker that the great Italian fascist poet Giuseppe Ungaretti described his first feature, *A mosca cieca* (1966) aka *The Blind Fly* aka *Ricordati di Haron*, as a masterpiece, for whatever inexplicable reason, he decided to irreparably taint his artistic reputation and became a genre hack of sorts who directed (sub)mainstream giallo, slasher, *Poliziotteschi*, action, and war flicks. Indeed, due to Scavolini's artistic transgressions, he is best known nowadays as the man who directed the rather nasty and gratuitously violent and bloody slasher flick *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* (1981) aka *Blood Splash* aka *Nightmare* aka *Schizo* aka *Cauchemars à Daytona Beach*, which was banned as a 'Video Nasty' in the UK due to its tasteless marketing gimmicks, which included a vomit bag and a competition to guess the weight of a fake brain in a jar. An Italian-American coproduction that actually does not suffer from poor dubbing and dirty dagos pretending to be American Anglos, *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* is certainly a rare slasher flick with actual style and elegance that is unfortunately eclipsed by its silly slasher clichés, moronic moments of comic relief, and prominence of child actors. Advertised with the cheap tagline, "If You Were Terrified By "Dawn of the Dead" & "Friday the 13th" You Must See Nightmare!", the film is also notable for irking American Guido special effects man Tom Savini, who threatened to sue over the fact that he was credited as the "Effects Director" on posters and old video prints of the film. While Savini denies he was the effects man (claiming to be a mere 'consultant' instead) and even went so far as describing the film as a "piece of shit" (even though the film is clearly better than at least half the stuff he has worked on during his rather uneven and uniquely artistically unmerited career), auteur Scavolini told one of the writers at *retroslashers.net* in 2007 that the *From Dusk till Dawn* (1996) star had ulterior motives and was indeed responsible for the effects, remarking, "He denied being involved in the making of *Nightmare's* special effects for various reasons; mainly because he wanted more money if his name was used – as it was, at the beginning, in the poster of the film. But I know at least two other reasons, mainly psychological, but I will not release them to anyone." Whatever the truth of the matter is regarding Savini and his questionable statements, it is indisputable that another special effects man on the film, Les Larrain (aka Lorrain aka Loraine), killed himself shortly after working on *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain*. Featuring Grand Guignol-esque violence and gore, a genetic (as well as Oedipal) explanation for homicide, and a cracked killer who is always suffering from unintentionally hilarious seizures where it seems as if his mouth is overflowing with cum, *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* is a truly nasty video nasty that demonstrates that auteur Scavolini

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went from a sort of cultivated celluloid nihilism that quoted Rimbaud and Beckett as depicted in *The Blind Fly* to a savage philistine nihilism that wallows in blood, visceral hatred, and pointless heavy metal style misanthropy.

George Tatum (played by Baird Stafford, who starred in only one other film, Scavolini's Vietnam War flick *Dog Tags* (1988)) is an Aryan American nutcase who spends his days and nights being strapped to a chair in a straitjacket and being force-fed anti-psychotics in a mental institution. Indeed, among other things, George has been diagnosed with the following afflictions (as featured on an archaic early-1980s computer monitor): schizophrenia, mild amnesia, homicidal, dream fixation, and seizures. As *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* slowly but surely reveals as the film progresses in dream-sequences that the mental patient suffers from, George viciously slaughtered both of his parents with an axe while he was still just a wee lad after walking in on his parents engaging in BDSM. Thinking his mother was beating his father (who was bound to the bed while getting said beatings), little George decapitated his mommy with an axe, fetishistically butchered the rest of her headless body, and then proceeded to drive his rather brutal weapon of choice into his sexually debauched daddy's astonished face. Now, George has a family of his own and after becoming the main human guinea pig in a dubious study involving a highly secretive experimental drug, he is magically declared sane and gets the opportunity to leave the nuthouse and reunite with his estranged family. While George is suppose to go to a halfway house, his damaged dome tells him to go elsewhere. Before heading to Daytona Beach, Florida where his family lives, George decides to stalk the slimy semen-and-scum-covered streets of 42nd Street in New York City where he checks out the peepshows, including one where a woman in a phone booth pleasures herself with a dildo for the viewer's pleasure, but the unhinged family man suffers from a major seizure and fails to bust a load. After his peepshow mishap, George stalks a chick all the way back to her house, slits her throat while she is on the phone, drives his knife into her gut as if he is thrusting his cock in her cunt, and then whispers to his victim, "I'm sorry."

Meanwhile, in Daytona Beach, George's (ex)wife Susan Temper (Sharon Smith) is messing around with her Hebrew hippy boyfriend Bob Rosen (played by cinematographer/sound man Mik Cribben, who originally worked on dark porn chic flicks like Armand Weston's *The Defiance of Good* (1975) and Cecil Howard's *The Final Sin* (1977)) on his small yacht. Although a hysterical single mother who is quite incompetent when it comes to disciplining her three children and giving them affection, Susan is quite hysterical when it comes to her kids and interrupts coitus with Bob (who complains, "Oh, come on. Woman... You're torturing me! I have needs... I'm a human being... I've got feelings") to check up on her kids and learns that her son C.J. (C.J. Cooke) is ostensibly severely injured. Of course, C.J. is a scheming prankster who is quite desperate for his worthless mother's attention and while claiming to have been stabbed, he merely covered

his t-shirt with ketchup and made up an unbelievable story. As punishment for crying wolf, C.J.'s mother berates him and sends him to his room for the rest of the day. When C.J. scares his babysitter Kathy (Danny Ronan) by putting on a giant monster costume, the teenage girl threatens to quit and tells Susan that her son is "evil." In what is probably the 'classiest' scene in slasher cinema history, boyfriend Bob makes a passing reference to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966). Meanwhile, George makes various futile attempts to call his family to tell them to get out of their house, as he cannot stop himself from killing them if they are there when he arrives. George also calls his Doctor and complains, "I'm stronger than the pills," but the Doc ultimately does not get there in time. First, George kills a neighbor girl named Candy (Candy Marchese) and ties her corpse to a chair in the attic of the Temper home, which C.J. and Kathy find. Eventually, George comes to the Temper home as if he is Michael Myers while sporting C.J.'s monster mask (thus Kathy assumes that it is merely C.J. playing another prank) and proceeds to kill everyone in sight. After strangling the babysitter's boyfriend to death and then brutally killing Kathy with a hammer, George heads to C.J.'s room and begins breaking down the door with his hammer. Luckily, C.J. is just as homicidal as his father and blows daddy dearest away with a revolver. When Susan comes home and sees her estranged husband's corpse on the ground, she screams, "That's my husband... That's my husband!," as if it is a big surprise. In the end, C.J. arrogantly sits in a police car and winks at the camera. Luckily, Scavolini opted for not making a worthless sequel.

Unquestionably, *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* is a classless, tasteless, and conspicuously corrupt piece of cracked celluloid, yet due to its strangely soothing yet foreboding musical score, elegantly executed murder montages (sorry, Eisenstein!), and striking unhinged gore, it manages to stand out amongst most slasher swill. The fact that Tom Savini hates the film somehow makes me appreciate it even more, as it is quite at odds with the political correct super negro gore of counter-culture auteur George A. Romero. Featuring the sort of Freudian pop psychology typical of similarly less appreciated slasher flicks like Richard Franklin's *Patrick* (1978) and Ulli Lommel's *The Boogeyman* (1980), *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* is certainly better directed than any of the *Friday the 13th* films and makes most of the entries in the Halloween franchise seem like hokey hogwash. Indeed, for fans of Mediterranean slasher classics like Mario Bava's *A Bay of Blood* aka *Twitch of the Death Nerve* and Juan Piquer Simón's *Pieces* (1982), *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* makes for mandatory viewing. A work that embraces ancestral heritage (the whole "the apple does not fall far from the tree" deal) and marvelously mocks the parenting skills of single mothers, *Nightmare in a Damaged Brain* thankfully does not fall in line with the contemporary pansy p.c. approach to horror filmmaking, even if it portrays blond beasts butchering babes and whatnot. For those that question Romano Scavolini's tal-

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ent as a filmmaker, just checkout his work The Blind Fly and wallow in the mind of an existentialist killer and forget you ever saw Nightmare in a Damaged Brain.

-Ty E

THE DEATHMAKER

Romuald Karmakar (1995)

While truly subversive kraut cinema essentially went kaput with the tragic, if not predictable, death of Rainer Werner Fassbinder and, in turn, German New Cinema in general, in 1982, a handful of Teutonic filmmakers have attempted to keep up the struggle for truly aesthetically and thematically subversive celluloid that does not bend over for the culture-distorters of Hollywood. Indeed, aside from figures like the late, great scatological multi-media Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief (Mutter's Maske, The German Chainsaw Massacre) and Berlin-based blond underground beast Jörg Buttgerreit of NEKRomantik (1987) sub-fame, there are not too many Fritzes nowadays who have been pushing the bounds of cinematic sanity, though a certain punk-spirited filmmaker named Romuald Karmakar (Die Nacht singt ihre Lieder aka Nightsongs, Das Himmler Projekt aka The Himmler Project) directed a film about an infamous real-life serial killer named Fritz Haarmann aka "Vampire of Hanover"—a meta-sadistic sodomite with an unquenchable thirst for twink flesh who bugged and butchered no less than 27 of what he described as "joy boys" between 1918 and 1924, though he claimed to have murdered "somewhere between 50 and 70" victims—that, although reasonably subversive in many regards, managed to receive a reasonable amount of commercial and critical prestige upon its initial release nearly two decades ago. Based on the story of a cannibalistic cocksucker that has inspired no less than two masterpieces of German cinema, including Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) and Ulli Lommel's Fassbinder-produced *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* starring and penned by Kurt Raab, *The Deathmaker* aka *Der Totmacher* is a truly Teutonic work directed by a contemporary subversive kraut auteur who, whether intentionally or not, ultimately pays tribute to his cinematic heritage with another film about Herr Haarmann. Released on dvd in the United States under the title Monte Hellman presents *The Deathmaker* (notably, director Karmakar directed a short fanboy-like doc on Hellman in 1988 entitled *Hellman Rider*), Karmakar's decidedly demented and even sometimes darkly humorous theatrical quasi-docudrama largely owes its potency to actor Götz George (Tatort, Schtonk!)—the son of great German silent era actor Heinrich George (Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, Berlin-Alexanderplatz), who went on to star in a number of National Socialist classics directed by Veit Harlan like *Jud Süß* (1940) and *Kolberg* (1945), and was starved to death in a Soviet death camp—who plays the eponymous lead role as a whacky and even goofy gay serial killer who suffered from a major case of erotophonophilia and who, among other things, used to whack off the man-meat of young boys and flush them down his toilet. Indeed, a dialogue-heavy work that is based on the transcripts of the interrogation of sod serial killer Fritz Haarmann and mostly set in a single interrogation room

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that was directed by a fellow clearly influenced by Prussian conservative auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg as demonstrated by his experimental documentary *The Himmler Project* (2000) aka *Das Himmler Projekt* where German Manfred Zapatka actor spends about 3 hours reading a speech given by Reichsführer of the Schutzstaffel (SS) in 1943, *The Deathmaker* is certainly a work that will probably bore to death most mainstream serial killer movie fetishists who think Hannibal Lecter is a cool dude and regard David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995) as an unmitigated masterpiece, for Karmakar's audaciously anti-climatic film demands audience participation as an intellectually playful, if not patently perverse, piece of aesthetically audacious celluloid that, in terms of aesthetics, falls somewhere in between the theatric techniques of philo-Semetic kraut commie poet/playwright Bertolt Brecht and the politically-charged works of Reinhard Hauff (Mathias Kneissl, *Stammheim - Die Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe vor Gericht*). As director Karmakar said himself about the film, *The Deathmaker* evokes "the motto of Immanuel Kant's enlightenment," as a morally and politically ambiguous work where both the pre-Nazi German state and the sodomite serial killer are simultaneously put on trial, with the filmgoer acting as a judge who must do the seemingly unthinkable by using their own mind and thinking for themselves when it comes to interpreting the dastardly deeds of Haarmann in the context of post-WWI/pre-Hitler Deutschland.

The year is 1924 and a somewhat uptight and rather humorless psychology professor named Dr. Ernst Schultze (Jürgen Hentsch) has been summoned to Göttingen to interview and interrogate Hanover-based cannibalistic sodomite serial killer Fritz Haarmann (Götz George) to see if the clearly crazed criminal is mentally fit enough to stand trial for the murder, postmortem molestation, mutilation, and cannibalization of some 27 young boys and twinkles between 1918 and 1924. Due to his background as a police informant, Haarmann has not only gained infamy for maliciously murdering countless young and desperate boys on the fringes of society, but also because he was unwittingly protected by the police while he was at the height of his homo-style homicide campaign, thereupon siring an international scandal that has shaken all of depression era kraut society to the already semi-decayed core. Upon first interviewing Haarmann, Dr. Schultze attempts to gauge the killer's intelligence and educational background and comes to the realization that he is dealing with someone who seems to be borderline retarded and semi-autistic, as it takes the tastelessly charming killer forever to figure how many 100 marks one needs to have 1,000 marks, thus demonstrating his pathetic sub-elementary-school-level education. Indeed, Haarmann himself even admits that the military did not want him because he was listed as an "invalid" (in fact, he was imprisoned around the time that World War I began). Like a lot of homos, Haarmann resents and fears his father, stating regarding his old man, "Even as a little boy I had to work. That's why I couldn't stand him! And he always yelled at me, "You scarey-pants!" I couldn't help shitting

my pants. I didn't want to!" When Dr. Schultze attempts to get the sick yet strangely happy-go-lucky literal man-eater to confess that he is a cannibalistic murderer by asking him what sort of meat he uses when making bouillon soup (of course, the secret ingredient is Aryan boy beef), Haarmann evades the question, but it does not take him long to act like a belligerent braggart who takes great pleasure in describing his defiling and dismemberment of various "joy boys." In fact, Haarmann gets so comfortable while talking with the psychologist that he begins hitting on a discernibly shaken Stenographer (Pierre Franckh), who is responsible for transcribing all of the interviews. Indeed, while massaging a piece of paper as if it is a man's bare body, Haarmann stares fiendishly at the noticeably unnerved Stenographer and even attempts to flirt with him in a rather vulgar fashion, but his low IQ and lack of cultivation makes him seem like a pathetic, if not pernicious, fool.

As Haarmann explains while laughing in a rather jovial fashion, he cut his victims' stomachs open with a knife and let their bowels fall out. Aside from selling their mensch meat on the black market, the cannibalistic colon-choker found a variety of disturbingly creative ways to dispose of his victim's body parts, including throwing fingers into a local river (when asked by young boys what he was doing, Haarmann said he was "feeding the fish") and flushing genitals down toilets, but not before cutting them into 3 or 4 pieces, which the killer painstakingly describes as a somewhat hard thing to do due the squishy nature of guy gristles. While not exactly a genius, Haarmann has a rather humorous sense of humor, especially when he rhetorically asks regarding the Professor, "...he knows everything, but keeps asking?," after getting annoyed with Dr. Schultze's pedantic persona and insufferably sterile academic arrogance. When one of Haarmann's escaped victims, Fürsorgezögling Kress (Marek Harloff), swings by the interrogation room to identify the serial killer, the 'Butcher of Hanover' denies knowing him because the boy, who apparently has a major case of scabies, denies they partook in mutual masturbation, as the killer always engaged in this aberrant act with his joy boys. Although having a fiancée that he apparently occasionally had sex with, Haarmann's true love is a young degenerate named Hans Grans, who sold the possessions of his boy toy's victims on the black market, and when Dr. Schultze proposes that the boyfriend should be executed for his dubious involvement in the murders, the saddened serial killer comes to his defense by stating, "he's still young and careless." In fact, Haarmann even momentarily cries when describing the ostensible 'innocence' of his breechloader beau. When asked by the Professor if he has any last requests, Haarmann replies, "A nice cheese sandwich, a nice cup of coffee...and a nice cigar. When we've finished our coffee, we can go. But don't touch. They should say that Fritz Haarmann...went to the scaffold...with colossal, fearless, military courage! Then I'll give a little speech." Towards the end of their interview, Haarmann attempts to talk the Professor into releasing a book based on their interview sessions, declaring, "This book'll

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make you a millionaire! You'll see. When the trial comes up it'll be a hit. Even in 100 years!" Additionally, the opportunistic lust killer also declares that the Stenographer should also get a "suit" for "working so hard" on transcribing the interrogation and that his boyfriend Hans should get "a few marks, too," for helping with 'solving' the murders. Before their last interview session concludes, Haarmann breaks down and declares that he wants to get to know his executioner because he firmly believes that the hangman, "mußt'n get in contact with commies." While sobbing like a little baby, the severely sullen serial killer also asks Dr. Schultze in a rather desperate fashion, "But you will come back before my head's chopped off?," to which the Professor replies, "Yes, I will come back." Indeed, in the end, it seems that Haarmann has managed to even charm Dr. Schultze, though the quite putridly pedantic Professor would never actually admit it.

Winning the Deutscher Filmpreis (the highest and most prestigious film award) for "Best Feature Film," "Best Direction," and "Best Actor" at the 1996 German Film Awards, as well as earning star Götz George the Volpi Cup at the Venice Film Festival and being chosen as Germany's official submission to the 69th Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film, *The Deathmaker* is by no means the typical small and soon forgotten arthouse vanity piece as its various prizes and seemingly unlikely American release certainly prove, thus demonstrating the German public has not been completely mentally colonized and lobotomized by the neo-vaudevillian real-life villains of cinematic vulgarity in Hollywood. Rather unfortunately, aside from a couple somewhat notable exceptions like *Der Freie Wille* (2006) aka *The Free Will* directed by Matthias Glasner, *Ein Leben lang kurze Hosen tragen* (2002) aka *The Child I Never Was* directed by Kai S. Pieck, a couple films directed by Oskar Roehler (*Agnes and His Brothers*, *The Elementary Particles*) and some of auteur Karmakar's subsequent works, German cinema has not really evolved much since the release of *The Deathmaker*, especially when compared with the great masterworks of German New Cinema created during the 1970s and early 1980s by truly revolutionary auteur filmmakers like Fassbinder, Herzog, Syberberg, Schroeter, Sanders-Brahms, etc. It should be noted that *The Deathmaker* is also a work of metacinema that pays tongue-in-cheek tribute to the great Haarmann films of the past, as demonstrated by a random scene in the film where the boy-buggering butcher antihero narcissistically remarks, "Me, too, now! I've even made it into the movies! I'm in cinemas all over the world! China, Japan," after the Professor expresses his doubts that the killer is a great man like Napoleon, thus demonstrating the nearly century-long obsession the cinema world and the general public has had with serial killers.

On top of somewhat subtly commenting on the fact that Haarmann was one of the first celebrity serial killers whose crimes were glorified, romanticized, and bastardized by the Weimar press (indeed, from Lang's *M* to a best-selling 2007

Hanover Tourism Board calendar featuring a caricature of the killer, Haarmann has unquestionably been immortalized for his harrowing homo-cidal deeds), *The Deathmaker* also somewhat feebly and rather dubiously attempts to establish a link between Haarmann and National Socialism. Indeed, aside from mentioning the fact that the serial killer lived across the street from a Jewish temple, the eponymous antihero makes various seemingly nonsensical anti-communist and anti-Semitic statements throughout the film, especially during a scene where he states the following in a decidedly deranged fashion while absurdly comparing himself to Jesus Christ: "The Jews yelled, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Now they're yelling at me like that. I never did them any harm, the communists. It must've been the same back then." While not exactly glamorizing Haarmann in a manner comparable to Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), it should also be noted that he is easily the most interesting and likeable character in the entire film because, while Dr. Schultze acts like a humorless and self-righteous dick and the Stenographer is not much more than a skittish automaton-like cipher, the Lustmord-obsessed lunatic is a rather piteous and emotional fellow who clearly suffered his fair share of abuse and social alienation during his all-too-short life. Indeed, not unlike American aberrosexual Aryan serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, who was a rather lonely fellow who confessed in various interviews that he ate his victims as a warped means to get close to them and "keep a part of them," Fritz Haarmann was a pathetic figure who longed for acceptance and friendship (at one point in the film, he mentions that no one would be his friend because, "I used to shit my pants"), so it is only ironic that it was only when he serially raped, killed, and devoured young boys that he gained the grand reputation in society he so eagerly craved. Undoubtedly, auteur Romuald Karmakar's greatest accomplishment with *The Deathmaker* is deconstructing the myth of Haarmann's sinister legacy, as a work where one more or less gets to spend an evening with the beast himself. A sort of over-extended yet understated tribute to the underworld trial scene at the conclusion of Fritz Lang's *M* as directed by the bastard punk rocker son of Brecht, Hauff, and Syberberg, Karmakar's wicked little wonder film is, quite unlike most of the plastically polished works that are defecated out of Deutschland nowadays by solely monetary-motivated studios, a rare piece of legitimate Teutonic kultur that ultimately proves that German cinema is not actually completely dead like one of Haarmann's tragic twink victim, but merely hibernating until a time comes when a more deserving audience is born. Of course, *The Deathmaker* is more of a condemnation of society than anything else, as it would be pure aesthetic blasphemy to create a classically beautiful work during our spiritually sick zeitgeist, hence why the film was set during the Weimar era.

-Ty E

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Romuald Karmakar (2000)

Although just mere speculation based on a lifelong obsession with cinema and over a decade of studying film, I am going to have to assume that Germans are easily the most cinematically besmirched, reviled, and mocked people in cinema history, with Hebraic Hollywood doing the majority of this beaten-to-death post-WWII Teutophobia (of course, anti-German sentiment goes back at least to the time of the First World War, with Hollywood playing a central role in the hate-campaign against those evil 'Huns'). Indeed, from chief rabbi of the celluloid holocaust Steven Spielberg to infantile toilet-humor comedies like *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story* (2004) and *Brüno* (2009) to philo-Semitic pseudo-arthouse fag Wes Anderson, Hollywood has every angle of kraut-bashing covered, so it seems absolutely unnecessary that German filmmakers themselves would wallow in Germanophobia, yet such filmmakers exist as demonstrated by various directors associated with German New Cinema from the late-1960s to the early-1980s, with Volker Schlöndorff being one of the major pioneers of the so-called 'anti-Heimat' (aka 'anti-homeland' film) sub-genre. Of course, like any so-called 'progressive' nation, Deutschland has received its fair share of untermenschen immigrants from the global south, especially of the Turkish and/or Muslim sort, including a number of filmmakers like Sohrab Shahid Sals (Utopia, *Hans - Ein Junge in Deutschland*), Kutlug Ataman (*Lola and Billy the Kid* aka *Lola + Bilidikid*), and Fatih Akin (*The Edge of Heaven*, *Head-on*), who have all paid back their host nation with celluloid Hun-hating. Unquestionably, one of the more curious cases of 'Teutophobia' (if it can even be called that) inside of Germany is the work of contemporary arthouse auteur Romuald Karmakar (*The Deathmaker* aka *Der Totmacher*, *Nightsongs* aka *Die Nacht singt ihre Lieder*) who, although German by way of birth (he was born in Wiesbaden) and culture, is the racially schizophrenic progeny of an Indian man and a French woman (though one would not be able to tell this by looking at him, as he looks like some sort of Nordic/Mediterranean mix). Of course, as his first feature *The Deathmaker* (1995)—a work clearly inspired by Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) and possibly Ulli Lommel's Fassbinder-produced masterpiece *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*—demonstrates, Karmakar clearly considers himself a part of some sort of Teutonic cinematic heritage, albeit a mostly unflattering one filled with sodomite serial killers, genocidal Nazis, and majorly melancholy bourgeois degenerates. Influenced by the revolutionary auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema (in fact, he once worked as an assistant to Bavarian absurdist artist Herbert Achternbusch on the 1989 film *Mix Wix*) and punk rock, Karmakar has assembled a striking and reasonably subversive oeuvre that has given him a mostly deserved reputation as one of the few interesting and provocative contemporary German filmmakers. Starting with

the amateur feature *Eine Freundschaft in Deutschland* (1985) aka *A Friendship in Germany*, which features the director playing Adolf Hitler, Karmakar has also demonstrated a lifelong obsession with Teutonic history and kultur, but of course, it is of mostly the dark and negative sort.

Undoubtedly, more than any of the director's other films, *Manila* (2000) demonstrates Karmakar's love-hate relationship with German history. Promoted with the totally tasteless tagline, "No Matter How Far You Travel, You'll Always Be a Bastard!," the film was almost unanimously trashed by German film critics and filmgoers upon its release to the point where Karmakar apparently felt the need to personally apologize for the film when introducing it at German film festivals. Indeed, as Elke de Wit wrote regarding the film for the *Central Europe Review*: "The verdict of every single person that I spoke to about *MANILA* (2000) at the 51st Berlinale was negative. The film was described as boring, predictable, portraying stereotypical Germans and bringing nothing new [...] my suspicions were further aroused when Karmakar virtually apologized for his film as he introduced it to the audience. He said that he did not know why it had been treated so disparagingly by everybody and that he had never intended to offend anyone. He had simply wanted to tell the story of all these individuals." Indeed, depicting a group of Germans stuck at a crowded Philippine airport as a bunch of loud, boorish, brash, vain, prideful, racist, homophobic alcoholic-addled kraut neo-colonialist perverts who sexually and financially exploit yellow people and act with an unwarranted sense of superiority, *Manila* is certainly more intricately anti-Teutonic than a piece of xenophiliac pseudo-arthouse hipster trash like Wes Anderson's *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007) where a smartass young American Hebraic hipster type tells off some loud, fag, and ugly elderly German tourists, as if American Jews are the world's foremost patrons of civility. Of course, as a work featuring Fassbinder superstar Margit Carstensen (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven*) and Edgar Wallace star Eddi Arent playing himself (and even performing a mock murder mystery), as well as popular contemporary Germany actors like Sky du Mont (*Derrick*, Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*), kraut comedian Herbert Feuerstein, Martin Semmelrogge (*Das Boot*, *Derrick*), and Jürgen Vogel (*Rosenstraße*, *The Free Will* aka *Der freie Wille*), *Manila* is a work that wallows in Teutonic cinema history of both the cultivated and kitschy sort. It should also be noted that the film was co-written by German novelist Bodo Kirchhoff, so he certainly deserves some of the blame for the film's Teuton-trashing. A sort of intentionally claustrophobic tragicomedy featuring kraut-cock-loving Jewesses, unsavory sub-Aryan sex tourists, prosaic Jew-pandering school teachers, and pseudo-suave psychopathic airline managers all trapped with one another at a Philippine airport as they wait while in an increasingly agitated state to get back to the Fatherland, *Manila* unwittingly reveals why traveling aboard can ironically lead to one adopting more nationalistic views.

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Beginning with footage on a television of a seemingly half-crazed and flaming gay Filipino Christian preacher demanding that his followers “bow your heads” to the “lord” while crying in a creepy fashion, Manila instantly gives the viewer the feeling that the Philippines is a rather culturally and spiritually confused nation due to various Occidental influences. Of course, the Spanish are gone, but now other Europeans, including the Germans, use the Southeast Asian island as their own personal playground. The bourgeois krauts at Manila airport are less than happy as there is a delay for their flight, so they must pass the time by getting drunk and mingling with one another. The guy in charge of the airport, Jochen Osterfeld (Sky du Mont), is a pseudo-charming psychopathic prick that has the gall to ask his hot archotypically Aryan blonde flight attendant named Kerstin (Nina Heimlich), “are you menstruating again?,” after he becomes offended by her tone of voice. Married teachers Regine (Margit Carstensen) and Knut Görler (Peter Rühling) no longer enjoy one another’s company, so the latter begins chatting with an extroverted fellow on the brink of old age named Walter (played by Michael Degen, who previously starred in Roland Klick’s kraut cult classic *Supermarkt*), who has married a native named Maribel (Chin Chin Gutierrez) and proudly states of his financially beneficial marriage arrangement, “He who marries a Filipina, also marries a whole Philippine village.” Walter is going back to Germany to bury his lifelong comrade Kurt who he met while just a child in the ‘Volkssturm’ (A militia setup during remaining days of WWII comprised of underage boys and old men) and who was a tough man that survived everything, including malaria, but ultimately succumbed to a foul filipina’s deadly diseased snatch. Walter also credits his dead friend Kurt for cleaning up the Philippines by remarking, “It used to be a real nut house before. The lowest level, fags, transvestites...all mixed up. But then Klaus came and cleaned it all up.”

Naturally, brainwashed liberal educator Regine takes some offense to Walter’s remarks and states regarding herself and her semi-cuckolded husband Knut, “We don’t think like that, Mr. Walter. We are both teachers. German and History. And when we for example were in Prague or Warsaw...we knew exactly what that meant. Not only Hradschine...but also Heydrich. Not only ghetto, but also Brandt.” Unluckily for Regine, Knut begins to take a special likening towards alpha-male Walter as he makes him feel more like a real mensch. Meanwhile, a creepy looking kraut named Herbert (played by Manfred Zapatka, who read a 3-hour Heinrich Himmler speech for Karmakar’s 2000 experimental documentary *Das Himmler-Projekt* aka *The Himmler Project*), who looks like an older, fatter, and more alien-like version of Conan O’Brien, and his much younger cousin Rudi (Jürgen Vogel) begin chatting up a German-speaking Jewess named Elizabeth (played by mainstream Hollywood actress Elizabeth McGovern, who has starred in everything from Robert Redford’s *Ordinary People* to *Kick-Ass*) whose parents fled Deutschland in 1937 but decided it was ok to comeback to

the country when charismatic crypto-commie West German chancellor Willy Brandt won the glorious Noble Peace Prize. Herbert is such a patent pig that he makes his introduction to Elizabeth by letting her see a piece of paper with the name "Heike" written on it and then subsequently revealing that it is his wife's name and that it was "written by a pussy" (indeed, apparently the pathetic guy paid a Filipino prostitute a pretty penny to put a paintbrush in her pussy). When Rudi remarks to Elizabeth, "That's interesting, I never spoke to a Jewess..." and Herbert retorts, "There aren't many left in our country anyway...Don't get me wrong," the Jewess replies to them by strangely stating, "I get you right, don't worry. We're all not kosher." After revealing her seemingly ethno-masochistic fetish for Aryan men, Elizabeth recites poetry that acts as a major theme of the film: "A German at home...that's an ideal world and for that reason not very interesting [...] A German far away from home...that's always a small, open wound."

In a feeble attempt to appease the increasingly agitated German passengers, airport manager Jochen Osterfeld brings out old school German star Eddi Arent as entertainment and proudly states that the man has starred in 28 Edgar Wallace films (Rudi corrects him by stating, "In 29, you fag!"). To keep them entertained, Arent plays out a mock murder mystery in the middle of the airport and boorish bastard Herbert is fittingly named as the killer after the actor uses Thomas Mann's classic 1912 novel *Death in Venice* as a clue. Meanwhile, a degenerate Austrian would-be-pimp pervert named Franz (Martin Semmelrogge), who has a pathological obsession with showing off his prized "redwing shoes" and lurks around the bathroom as if he owns the place, attempts to hook up various German tourists with Filipino prostitutes and even shows nerd Knut photographs of filthy-looking Flip gashes, to which the teacher remarks regarding his wife's 'Casa Vulva', "Regine's does look different." Although it is never made clear who she actually is, a Filipino janitor that resembles an obese 12-year-old American Indian boy named Mercy (Ces Quesada) is constantly at Franz's side and she seems to take pride in the fact that she is with the most spastic, degenerate, and seemingly half-autistic Austrian in all of the Philippines. Meanwhile, Herbert becomes agitated while talking to his cousin Rudi about his wife and it is soon revealed that the angry kraut is secretly receiving a blowjob from a Filipino under the table, as if receiving oral sex makes him all the more angry and hateful. Of course, eventually everyone at the airport notices Herbert's indiscretion and Jewess Elizabeth sardonically remarks while alluding to the holocaust regarding the unsavory scenario, "If Buchenwald had seen more of that, the Germans would be better off now." Since he did not get to finish what he began with the flip flirtina cop-all, Hotheaded Herbert opts for going solo and unloading his sub-Aryan seed in the bathroom and fucked Franz, who seems to be on the verge of suffering a cataclysmic autistic fit, follows him and goes completely crazy, accusing him of owing him money for hooking up with a prostitute (for whatever

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reason, Franz seems to think both Filipino women and the airport bathroom are his own personal property). While furiously masturbating, Herbert begins to weep while Franz continues to pound on the bathroom stall in an increasingly fanatical and spasmodic fashion. After everything is said and done, Hebert busts a load in the toilet and Franz's fat untermensch lady friend leaves him, but not before calling him a "cheater" and a "pig." At the other end of the airport, Knut's wife Regine, who is quite mousy and hopelessly introverted, starts a conversation with Walter's young Filipina wife Maribel about how she and her husband fought for 20 years to set up a memorial for the Jews, "so the remembrance of the holocaust should not fade," as if the so-called Shoah is not thrown in German peoples' faces 24/7. Meanwhile, hyper horny kraut Rudi manages to get his miscegenation on with Jewess Elizabeth, thus hinting that there might finally be peace between Germans and Jews. At the end of the film, all the German passengers get together in a dichotomous scene depicting the two extremes of German kultur; as what starts with Knut conducting an imaginary orchestra devolves into a beer-hall sing-a-long song worthy of the drunkest of brownshirts. The scene becomes all the more significant when one considers what director Karmakar once said regarding the film: "I see this film as one great human orchestra. It was my task to write the score so that it didn't degenerate into a cacophony, but produced a melody in five bars or acts." Of course, in the end, the Germans finally make their way back to Deutschland, but not before leaving their irreparable mark on the Southeast Asian island.

A rare German 'dramedy' that is not totally retarded, completely unfunny, and aesthetically insipid like *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003) and countless horrendous Til Schweiger films, *Manila* is ultimately a rare film that attempts to depict both the good and bad regarding the German people without resorting to too many cliché kraut stereotypes (of course, the film features many of the typical stereotypes, but also features a couple of new ones as well). Indeed, a work of cultivated krautsploitation directed by a man who seems more influenced by Brecht than Russ Meyer, Karmakar's quasi-chamber-piece (or 'neo-Kammerspielfilm') is softcore Teutophobia with a bittersweet heart that, unlike the cinematic works of an adamant anti-kraut like Spielberg, features next to nil ill will to the Teutons, but instead merely pokes fun at their supposed quirks and idiosyncrasies in a rather playful, if not sometimes borderline pernicious, fashion. That being said, I can practically imagine Karmakar during pre-production of the work driving around in his car while blasting Rammstein and dreaming up scenarios for the film. More than anything, *Manila*—with its large cast of curious characters, long scenes of dialogue, and somewhat minimalistic laidback style—seems like an aberrant Aryan take on the theatric yet naturalistic and mostly plot-less films of American auteur Robert Altman (*Nashville*, *Short Cuts*). While not exactly as good as Karmakar's minor masterpiece *Deathmaker*, *Manila* is unquestionably infinitely more interesting than Spielberg's similarly themed Tom Hanks vehicle

The Terminal (2004). With its overt and not so overt references to the holocaust and cast of mostly homely (if not sometimes downright ugly) krauts, not to mention the fact that the film received a considerably negative backlash in Germany, Manila is a film that should have inspired some new young German auteur filmmakers to direct films that more adequately depict their countrymen just as the laughably horrendous Hollywood miniseries Holocaust (1978) inspired Edgar Reitz and various other filmmakers of German New Cinema, who wanted to take their history and heritage back from foreign hands, to create their own masterpieces, but it seems that contemporary Germany has a serious void when it comes to serious auteur filmmakers. Notably, not one of the characters featured in Karmakar's film seem like they have the capacity to be a great Sturmbannführer, but then again, none of the characters seem like they have what it takes to be a great artist like an F.W. Murnau or even a Max Ernst either, as if the Fatherland is out of geniuses and only has rich boorish assholes who only know how to consume as opposed to produce. While World War II was certainly quite dsygenic for Germany, I do not believe the land of poets and thinkers has completely degenerated into a post-völkisch technocratic nightmare of banal bureaucrats and beer-bellied buffoons. With that being said, I think communal viewings of Manila and readings of Nietzsche might be more beneficial to the next generation of German film students than analyzing Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin (1925) and learning the latest 'cutting-edge' techniques from industrial filmmakers in Hollywood. Indeed, a somewhat wicked work of kraut constructive criticism as created by a racial outsider, Karmakar's film is proof that, in some small way, members of the Ausländer community can contribute to society, even if it is virtually always in a 'negative' way.

-Ty E

SCHIZOPHRENIAC: THE WHORE MANGLER
SCHIZOPHRENIAC: THE WHORE MANGLER

Ron Atkins (1997)

Schizophreniac: The Whore Mangler is an all American comedy more than anything. Schizophrenic Italian-American Harry Russo and his doll have a bone to pick with the world. Mr. Russo has decided to dedicate his life to killing dirty whores and dressing in drag. Russo doesn't give a shit about anyone or anything. He is also unaware that he is one of the greatest comedians alive.

Schizophreniac was shot on video but director Ron Atkins made sure to provide extremely offensive material to make up for the lack of production values. The actor that played Harry Russo, John Ginacaspro, gives off one of the most insanely passionate performances that one could expect from a low budget film. I wouldn't be surprised if Ginacaspro took pointers from Robert De Niro's performance in Taxi Driver. Harry Russo almost makes Travis Bickle look like a bitch.

Schizophreniac isn't the first film dealing with a mentally unstable Italian-American man that has mother issues. William Lustig's Maniac featured Joe Spinell as Frank Zito in a female hating frenzy. The difference between Schizophreniac and Maniac is that Ginacaspro goes for psycho comedy whereas Spinell wanted to portray the certifiably insane. Harry Russo certainly mangles some naked whores while achieving hate filled gratification. Frank Zito, on the other hand, attempts to fit in society and ultimately fails horribly as his brutal woman killing confirms.

There is no shortage of violence and nudity in Schizophreniac. Harry Russo especially likes to get naked (unfortunately) when wearing lipstick and a Twisted Sister style wig. The ways in which Russo aggressively talk and act are poetic to say the least. It is the kind of poetry that you would expect to see in the alley of the ghetto section of little Italy. Actor John Ginacaspro is obviously one of those types of characters you meet in real life and never forget.

I am a supporter of real independent and low budget filmmaking. As can be expected, most low budget films are complete shit. Ron Atkin's Schizophreniac is an exception to the afflicted world of extremely low budget filmmaking. When you have a star like John Ginacaspro and a director with an eye for entertainment like Ron Atkins, it is hard to go wrong.

-Ty E

THE CUCKOO CLOCKS OF HELL

Ron Atkins (2011)

When I heard about the film *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* (2011) directed by Ron Atkins, an exceedingly trashy apocalyptic work featuring lunatic-leads of truly obscure cult cinema, Terry Hawkins (the anti-hero of Roger Watkins' 1977 cult masterpiece *Last House on Dead End Street* that was played by Watkins himself) played by Jim Van Bebber (director of *Deadbeat at Dawn* and *The Mansion Family*) and Harry Russo (the anti-hero of Ron Atkins' *Schizophreniac: The Whore Mangler* and *Necromaniac: Schizophreniac 2*) played by John Giancaspro, I was a tad bit skeptical of such an ambitious movie scenario, especially considering the film was shot in digital video; a medium in stark contrast to the gritty 16mm film used for its extremely influential predecessor *Last House on Dead End Street*. I initially watched *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* at 4am on a Thursday night, which turned out to be a wholly surreal and hypnotic (if thoroughly mentally deranging), but strangely pleasurable, sort of scenario, which proved to be just as power on subsequent (and more mentally cognizant) viewings. After all, hearing Jim Van Bebber incessantly yelling, "NIGGER" whilst giggling like the maniacal midget 'Hombre' from Werner Herzog's classic *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) is even a delightfully idiosyncratic experience for such a fundamentally contra politically correct individual like myself. While *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is unsurprisingly a tribute to the *Schizophreniac* films and, most specifically, the late Roger Watkins' sole masterpiece *Last House on Dead End Street*, the film is also an unhinged libertine homage to the iconic American film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), featuring apish white-men in monkey masks and a wicked bitch witch with suave neo-psychedelic style. Although featuring a plot, the individual segments of *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*, which range from frenzied quasi-vaudevillian comedy acts to mock-snuff footage, are ultimately more significant than the whole. After a brief lover's spat upon initially meeting in Las Vegas, Terry Hawkins and Harry Russo, a virtual Beavis and Butthead from Hell, become unwaveringly loyal comrades of carnage and search for the mysterious "Nigger of Cause" whilst following the magnificent "Nigger Brick" road. On their magical mystery tour for the unholy desert grail, the two playful psychopaths rape Jewish bitches, humorously hail Uncle Adolf, malevolently murder negro-like monkey-men, and share plenty of laughs, among many other splendid activities.

Aesthetically and thematically, *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is easily Ron Atkins' greatest and most ambitious accomplishment as a filmmaker. While the film does feature a number of realist home-video-style scenes that Atkins is well known for, *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* also features a storm of potent picturesque outdoor scenes as Hawkins and Russo cruise the Nigger Brick Road, as well as a number of colorful skits of Giancaspro performing as a variety of

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quotable personas, ranging from a stereotypical china-man to an abortion-venerating pseudo-Dracula. If Atkins goal was to infuse *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* with the aura and atmosphere of a truly trashy post-apocalyptic scenario, he indubitably succeeded, as I felt like I was watching a film discovered in a trailer park time-capsule left from some imaginary second American Civil War. Undoubtedly, the vigorously violent (yet hilarious) racial hatred that permeates throughout *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* would be a major catalyst for such a scenario. During *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*, Watkins candidly describes his transformation from being racially apathetic to a staunch and unrepentant racist. In such fanatically politically-correct times, the mainstream proclivity towards 'racial sensitivity' seems to have only fanned the flames of race-hate in a country that now has its first mulatto president. In my most humble opinion, the greatest achievement of *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is providing a therapeutic outlet for those individuals that find themselves increasingly intolerant of so called tolerance and repelled by the putrid stench of pc-swill. While featuring a wealth of brutal rape and kindred-spirit killings, *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is ultimately an unconventional "post-modern" comedy that is highly conscious of both obscure cult cinema and America's most critical (and unspoken) domestic issues.

While filming *Last House on Dead End Street*, director Roger Watkins was consistently high on amphetamine. Although he spent about \$3000.00 on the drugs that would fuel his film direction and infamous performance as Terry Hawkins, Watkins only spent around \$800.00 on the actual production of *Last House on Dead End Street*, which is undoubtedly a great achievement on his part. Jim Van Bebber has also admitted that he had partaken in mind-altering substances during the production of *The Manson Family* (2003), so it is only befitting that he would later play the role of Terry Hawkins in *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*. I can only hypothesize that the same, somewhat reckless, recreational activity went on during the making of *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* as such subversive behavior is merely part of a long and grand tradition of cult filmmaking. I must commend Ron Atkins for *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* considering that not only is it his movie Magnum opus, but it is also a worthy and canonized tribute to *Last House on Dead End Street* and the filmmaker's late friend Roger Watkins. Not merely parroting the legacy of its predecessor, *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is *Last House on Dead End Street* seen through the lens of Ron Atkin's own distinct and pleasantly peculiar universe. In short, *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell* is mandatory-viewing for any true fan of cult films, especially those individuals that don't get yeast infections from hearing wonderful words like "chink" and "spick."

Roger Michael Watkins (September 17, 1948 – March 6, 2007)

Throughout *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*, the character of Terry Hawkins con-

tinuously looks on with a smirk at the loony antics of Harry Russo in gleeful approval. I believe that is how Roger Watkins would have responded to The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell had he lived long enough to see it.

-Ty E

TREMORS
TREMORS

Ron Underwood (1990)

It's a lot easier to scare someone to put them in a quasi-realistic scenario. That might even be the reason why they decided to let the events of one of America's greatest horror films unfold upon rural America. Two Jack-of-all-trades everymen get caught up in a parasite warfare underneath the ground. Creatures with the potential ability to travel under dirt at high velocities begin to devour people from the ground. The very concept of rednecks facing paranormal danger isn't anything new. It's been shown in Chris Carter's *The X-Files* and even *Men In Black (MIB.)* These figures of life get grabbed from underground and gobbled up by giant worms. I must be honest, the creature design is nothing short of amazing. It's a shame when you realize the point of the film was to build suspense on the monster's physical features, yet the poster brandishes its huge face. What a buzz kill. Kevin Bacon plays the main redneck. He is the smart ass one with the wit and flowing locks. Due to films attacking every superstition or abnormal fear, Ron Underwood decided to expand the old "Don't step on a crack, You'll break your mother's back" scene and turn it into a nightmare, whereas the only place you are safe at, is on a rock in the middle of nowhere. A similar film element is also found in *Critters*. Why does Hollywood hate the country so much? *Tremors* is a horror comedy. What's so rare about this one, is that it is actually funny. A reckless hero is found in Michael Gross, who plays Burt. Burt is the guy we always laugh at. the one who has an obsession with cleaning and collecting guns he never uses. Well now, It looks like he might have a chance to enter some guerrilla warfare in his own backyard. The film might as well give step-by-step instructions on how to create a home-made bomb. Walter Chang is the local nut job oriental who owns the convenience store. What a stereotype, eh? Using his insanity in a speech, he dubs the creatures "Graboids." Yet another hint that the rural parts don't exactly teem with intelligence. *Tremors* is yet another great film which is bogged down by a horrible franchise of several sequels and a syndicated television series. While the 2nd film being nearly as entertaining, It loses most of the charm that the first film carried like a medallion.

-Maq

FUTURE-KILL

Ronald W. Moore (1985)

After watching horror film after horror film, you find less and less that you want to comeback to. Many are forgettable or at the very least have no type of replay value. Its not that they are bad films, but you get all you can out of them after just one viewing. This is especially true in regards to more obscure and unknown horror flicks. After watching Future-Kill, directed and co-written by Ronald W. Moore, I felt I had found something that I could pop into my DVD player anytime and watch. Not that it is the greatest film ever made or in any way artistically merited. Future-Kill is just a fun film that you can watch with your friends anytime. It has just enough laughs and gore to keep a group of people happy. Don't let the cover artwork by H.R. Giger deceive you. Future-Kill is faraway from being in the darkly erotic nature of Giger's work. Instead what you get is a mixture between National Lampoon's Animal House, The Warriors, and a very slight hint of David Cronenberg. Future-Kill's antagonist Splatter has a couple sexual problems for perv Freudians out there. Future-Kill was directed in 1985, around the time that the American Hardcore punk scene started to die out. The mutants in the film seem to represent that subculture both politically and aesthetically. The frat boys represent that typical naive American looking to have fun and not give a shit about anything or anyone else. One of the things that makes Future-Kill so interesting is the interaction between the frat boys and the mutants. This interaction makes for a fun survival flick in the middle of a man made zoo; the city. Gore and killing are abundant in Future-Kill but not exclusive to the rest of the film. The combination of all elements of the film is what makes Future-Kill enjoyable. With its combination of synthesizer based music, cyberpunk wardrobe, cheap boob shots, and unapologetically lame jokes, Future-Kill keeps you interested throughout. Future-Kill is a great flick for anyone out there looking to add something new to their DVD collection. At the very least you won't be disappointed. Its full of 80's nostalgia for those born in the era of the 8 Bit NES system and synthesizer based music. I'm sure Future-Kill can be fit into a marathon viewing of The Evil Dead, Dawn of the Dead, Fast Times at Ridgemont High, and Maniac.

-Ty E

DIE BETTWURST
DIE BETTWURST

Rosa von Praunheim° (1971)

Undoubtedly, there are few things more banal than leftists, oftentimes themselves (failed) members of the petite bourgeoisie, complaining about the bourgeoisie (i.e. non-poor white heterosexual gentiles), but when approached by the right person in the right context, it can sometimes be accomplished in a successful manner that does not inspire one to blow their brains out. Indeed, utilizing his own aged aunt in the leading role where she essentially plays herself in a performance that is clearly largely improvised, Berlin-based auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*City of Lost Souls*, *Anita: Dances of Vice*) was able to create a satire of the bourgeoisie with his first feature-length narrative film *Die Bettwurst* (1971) aka *The Bolsters*, a campy and culturally cynical work that playfully assaults the so-called institution of marriage in its devastatingly dopey and kitschy depiction of an ostensible 'romance' between a woman well into her middle-age and an emotionally hysterical, high-strung, and flamingly faggy 30-year-old homosexual. An assault on both the bourgeoisie and closet cocksuckers disguised as a campy no-budget sitcom with next to no plot, *Die Bettwurst* is somewhat 'gentle' for a Rosa von Praunheim film as it features next to nil nudity, gross-out scenarios, sexual perversion, or blatant poof agitprop as it was made before the director declared his war against heterosexuality with the celluloid manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971). Starring von Praunheim's real-life aunt Luzi Kryn—a slightly chubby chipmunk-like woman who loves attention and hates men—playing herself in a rather ridiculous performance where she constantly looks directly at the camera to make sure it is following her every move, as well as gigolo-turned-actor Dietmar Kracht, who died under mysterious conditions in 1976 after downing a bottle of whisky and jumping in a lake, *Die Bettwurst* features one of the most pleasantly annoying odd couples of cinema history as a sort of platinum blonde Bonnie and Clyde of bad bourgeois bad taste in what amounts to the director's hetero-hating thoughts on marriage. Featuring the aesthetic and melodramatic prowess of an odiously outmoded 1970s soap opera had it been directed by John Waters' kraut cousin, *Die Bettwurst* is ultimately a rare celluloid critique of marriage and the middleclass that has a certain hokey humanity to it that reminds viewers how futile it is for certain homosexuals to understand heterosexual marriage and monogamy, as if suffering from a sort of spiritual autism. Directed by a man who once admitted a sense of relief when his auteur archenemy Rainer Werner Fassbinder—the master of naked Teutonic melodrama and alpha-auteur of the German New Wave—overdosed in 1982, *Die Bettwurst* signaled the arrival of German New Wave's closest thing to a queer Troma-like exploitation filmmaker.

As a single middleclass woman well into her middle-age years who lives a

rather sedentary and passionless existence incessantly hiding herself in her apartment and striking vogue poses for no one but herself, Luzi Kryn's favorite pastime is complaining about petty problems, including three 'problems' (wrong color, wrong spelling of maiden name, and wrong font style) regarding a gravestone that she bought for her deceased mother, one of the few people she had to talk to in life and someone she certainly modeled her own mundane life after. One day while strutting like a gay peacock down a shipyard in all black, including black leather, blatantly gay Teutonic twink Dietmar Kracht runs into mature floozy Luzi, who immediately berates him for being so careless as to drop money on the ground, arrogantly describing the stranger as "grossly negligent." Before they both know it, the two 'fall in love' at first sight, telling each other their life stories. Dietmar confesses he has always lost things since he was a young child due to his 'terrible nervousness,' but luckily he is a kleptomaniac so anything he loses he makes up for in the end. Originally from Mannheim, Dietmar sounds like a flaming Boris Becker and discusses his personal history to Luzi as if every moment of it was nothing short of a trying tragedy. Losing his mother at the mere age of 15 over 15 years ago in the Netherlands from uterine cancer, Dietmar finds a sort of 'mother' figure in Luzi, who can relate as her own mommy just died. More important, Dietmar, as a hyper homo of the pathologically narcissistic and absurdly superficial sort, loves Luzi's platinum hair, telling her, "You have hair like my mother. And like me," but, of course, the little lady loves wearing wigs as demonstrated by the fact that she is sporting a different one in every single scene of *Die Bettwürst*.

Growing up in the Red Light district of Mannheim where he cavorted with criminal hoodlums and wanton whores, Dietmar, who has really screwed up teeth that give a pretty good idea of the poverty his life has been plagued with and a rather scrawny physique despite his propensity for showing it off via short shorts, decided to make his escape to the Northern German city Kiel, which proved to be a good investment as that is where he met Luzi, a mature middle-class woman old enough and desperate enough to accept a proletarian poof as her beloved boy toy. A hysterical and histrionic woman who proves to be a constant source of unintentional humor, Luzi has no problem admitting she hates men as she stabbed one of her ex-boyfriends and caused another to attempt suicide, but luckily Dietmar has changed that and vice versa. Typically having to find refuge in sluts from the red district due to the fact that bourgeois girls would literally sneer at him due to his 'common' background, Dietmar finally finds 'true love' and happiness in Luzi and learns to become a productive member of the TV-worshiping, shopping-loving lower middle-class. In a rather absurd 'love scene' of the heavy petting puffery-ridden sort, Dietmar confesses his love for Luzi's breasts, eyes, hair, 'everything' and how he would kill himself without her, which the little lady loves hearing. Naturally, Luzi wallows in the attention, thus confirming their imaginary status as soulmates. After having what is as-

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sumedly hot and steamy coitus, Dietmar confess his past life as a petty criminal, how he spent time in prison, which scared him straight, and his fear that his old friends are looking for him, but Luzi promises to protect him in her bourgeois dreamworld where no bad guy could possibly appear. Luzi ultimately teaches Dietmar how to live the proper middle-class life, which includes warm and sensual showers, passionate vacuuming, gardening, cooking, watching every color TV program (“theater of late”), celebrating Christmas gift-giving with a plastic tree, and dancing at subpar restaurants. Unfortunately, trouble arrives in paradise when Dietmar’s old mafia comrades kidnap Luzi, but the heroic boyfriend wastes no time (aside from a bit of crying, panting, and stammering) in hunting down the goons and shooting one of them with a gun on a beach, thus saving his beloved lover as a neurotic knight in shining armor. In the end, after being absurdly helped by one of the mafia hoodlums into a small plane, Dietmar and Luzi flee for paradise.

Taking its name from a sausage-shaped neck pillow—an unflattering symbol of mundane middleclass comfort if there ever was one—that Luzi gives Dietmar for Christmas, *Die Bettwurst* is a cynical camp anti-celebration of the kraut bourgeois that, somewhat paradoxically, manages to give a soul, albeit a superlatively schlocky one, to the seemingly soulless, which auteur Rosa von Praunheim would ultimately do in a much different context for homos, hustlers, homely hags, and other human rabble with his subsequent films. *Die Bettwurst* was followed by one official sequel, *Die Berliner Bettwurst* (1975), which also starred Luzi Kryn and Dietmar Kracht, but considering the latter of whom died in a mysterious drowning accident, what could have evolved into a full on sitcom considering both of the film’s popularity, ultimately died prematurely. Although, it should be noted that in von Praunheim’s ‘erotic’ campy cannibal-themed short *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* (1999), the director’s aunt Luzi Kryn would reprise her role as the absurdly annoying woman who demands that men (most specifically, gay porn star Jeff Stryker) worship her. In terms of kraut cinema and cultural history, *Die Bettwurst* is assuredly a sad sign of how Teutonic cinema has degenerated since F.W. Murnau, himself a homosexual, and Leni Riefenstahl because, while the former two promoted German culture and traditions, Rosa von Praunheim’s film mocks Aryan culture, particularly that of the middle-class, into oblivion, ultimately portraying the gay lifestyle and even prostitution as preferable to bourgeois life. Though, to be fair, von Praunheim would later berate middle-age bourgeois faggots in his agitprop work *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), portraying them as pernicious parasites who take in young twinkles and glamor them with their wealth and knowledge of culture. The closeted gay character played by Dietmar Kracht of *Die Bettwurst* is basically summed up in the following quote from the documentary, “As the gays are being despised by the square as ill and inferior, they try to become more square to remove their guilty feeling with an

excess of bourgeois virtues. They are politically passive and act conservative in gratitude for not being beaten to death. Gays are ashamed of their sexual orientation, for they were told for centuries what hogs they are. Therefore they escape from that horrible reality into the romantic world of kitsch and ideals. Their dreams are dreams of clossies, dreams about a man, at whose side they are being released from the adversities of every day life into a world that only consists of love and romance. Not the homosexuals are perverse, but the situation, in which they have to live in." Of course, whatever situation von Praunheim may be in, he will always be perverse and his first feature *Die Bettwurst* demonstrates that he is a fellow who finds ordinary lifestyles perverse, thus the film acts as a sort of window into the homo soul where traditions like Christmas and strolls in the park are treated with the utmost malice, which is certainly more respectable and honest than mainstreaming propaganda faggot trash like *Will & Grace*.

-Ty E

IT IS NOT THE HOMOSEXUAL WHO IS PERVERSE, BUT THE SOCIETY IN WHICH HE LIVES

IT IS NOT THE HOMOSEXUAL WHO IS PERVERSE, BUT THE
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Rosa von Praunheim° (1971)

Despite its ludicrously longwinded title, the groundbreaking underground homophobic flick *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) aka *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* directed by Germany's most hysterical auteur queen – the always rabble-rousing Rosa von Praunheim (Tally Brown, New York, *A Virus Knows No Morals*) – is not exactly the most flattering tribute to the Fatherland's sodomite subculture, but more of a condemnation of how these gay boys tend to live their lives; strutting, sucking, and fucking with not a care in their minds, except how well they dress, dance, and debate petty cultural sentiments. No stranger to hostile homosexualist controversy, but instead, a perverted provocateur who loves to wallow in it, von Praunheim attached the taunting tagline, "This is our Holocaust, New York City is our Auschwitz, Ronald Reagan is our Hitler" to his documentary *Positive* (1990) and launched a libelous account against fellow German New Wave queer Rainer Werner Fassbinder with his shamelessly sensational documentary *Fassbinder's Women* (2000) aka *Fassbinder Was the Only One for Me: The Willing Victims of Rainer Werner F*, yet the pseudo-aristocratic auteur also proved that he could also lash out at his own sexual compatriots with *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...*; a work that is what modern political Zionist founder Theodor Herzl's political tract *Der Judenstaat* (1896) was to international Jewry. While Herzl's purported to have an answer to the Jewish question, prissy von Praunheim ultimately proposes in his documentary that, "Let's work together with the blacks and women's liberation. Get involved politically. Being gay is not a career"; a strategy that seems to have been militantly followed by mainstream gaydom if one were to go by the fact that America has its first homophiliac, mulatto president. Indeed, *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* is indubitably a gritty celluloid pity party with vindictive victimhood sprinkled throughout, but it is also a call to cock-sucking arms that condemns the individualistic homosexual for not adopting a collectivist quasi-bolshie-buggerer stance.

Part pseudo-docudrama and part filmic manifesto, *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* follows a novice homo named Daniel (Bernd Feuerhelm) as he endures a rite of passage of anal penetration of sorts in his new hometown of gay Berlin. Unschooled in the unofficial laws and mores of proper sodomite society, Daniel has no inkling as to the emotional and physical abuse that he will endure at the hands of more aggressive and predatory elder gays. Although attempting pseudo-matrimony with a more experienced sexual invert named Clemens (Berryt Bohlen), the relationship only lasts a mere four months, thus leaving Daniel emotionally vulnerable to packs of bestial leather fags, rich old

queens, and other assorted narcissistic poofers with unsavory intentions. Eventually, Daniel begins to learn the tricks of the cock-teasing trade, henceforth becoming one of the hottest twink bachelors in Berlin-Gaydenberg and securing a job at a hip gay bar, but it will take him a lot of random sexual encounters in bars, tearooms, and drag shows to realize there is more to homosexuality than pompous haircuts and backroom blowjobs. In *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...*, von Praunheim describes quintessential gay marriage as a poor and rather pathetic imitation of heterosexual marriage where mutual duties are replaced by idealistic and totally unrealistic love that is really about 'self-love' and idol worship. Inevitably, the homosexual wedlock falls apart because of self-centeredness and mutual competition. Due to their innate megalomaniacal self-worship, many homosexuals are doomed to, "loneliness, and a vast void...cluttered with new imaginary and vain dreams." *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* even goes as far as stating of gay men that, "they are stuck at an infantile level," thus concurring with the theory that some homosexuals merely never reached sexual maturity, hence their proclivity towards the same sex aka fucking one's self. While the 'leather fag' is presented as the gay subculture whose, "masculinity is damaged the most," the repellant flaming queen is portrayed as the most honest homosexual, if to a most exaggerated and society antagonistic degree. Needless to say, *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* is the sort of 'politically incorrect' vintage portrayal that mainstream propagandists from various so-called "LGBT" special interest groups would absolutely disdain and condemn, had the film been released recently.

Undoubtedly, Rosa von Praunheim is the most infamous/famous gay activist filmmaker in German history and very possibly in the entire world, thereupon making *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* mandatory for serious cinephiles and queer kultur aficionados alike. With its positively piss poor cinematography, mundane melodrama, and inciting off-screen narration, this undeniably interesting (if for all the wrong reason!) and curiously captivating work makes for an oddball cinematic odyssey that is akin to being an active voyeur in early 1970s Berlin seedy sodomite scene, except without having to deal with all the real-life effete drama. Due to its less than graceful direction, rather contrived scenarios, and overall absurdly awkward aesthetic and thematic essence, *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* oftentimes feels like a cracked cross between a cultural anthropologist documentary and a *Mondo Cane* movie that is poorly patched together with an assertive narrated political rant. Of course, as expressed in the film, von Praunheim would be the first to admit that the supposed artistic superiority of the homosexual is an old wives' tale as aesthetic interest is merely a way to make the miserable homo's life more endurable, so one must not look down on the activist auteur for the creative ineptitude of *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...*; a work that will make you laugh, cringe, wince and feel embarrassed due to its unabashedly

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honest projection of homosexual lifestyles. If Rosa von Praunheim has a single greatest attribute as a filmmaker, it is his Aspergers-like audaciousness as a patently peculiar propagandist of perversity and his early work *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse...* is certainly no exception.

-Ty E

TALLY BROWN, NEW YORK

Rosa von Praunheim^o (1979)

I don't know what it is about fags and loud, bossy, and belligerent fat chicks, but they seem to go together like puke and whisky. Of course, with the homo-homogenizing LGBT propaganda machine, it seems every cutesy ditz bitch in high school nowadays wants her own pet poof friend as demonstrated by recent trash pseudo-quirky queer teen comedies like *G.B.F.* (2013). Long before fags made for trendy accessories for heterosexual chicks, there existed depraved women known as fag hags—typically lecherous, masculine, and repugnant women of the morally retarded sort—who were in solidarity with homos, as kindred corroded spirits of sorts. Undoubtedly, probably no other filmmaker in cinema history has had such an affinity for the most repulsive and grotesque of fag hags than kraut aberrosexual agitator Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Your Heart in My Head*), who got his start pushing vulgar old women into low-camp films when he opted for casting his own aunt as the dubious lover of a young hustler in his first feature *Die Bettwurst* (1970), which spawned the sequel *Berliner Bettwurst* (1973) and the short quasi-sequel *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* (1999). While Lotti Huber (*Anita: Dances of Vice* aka *Anita – Tänze des Lasters*, *Affengeil*)—an old *Der Stürmer*-worthy Jewess who was a cabaret dancer during the Weimar era—was arguably von Praunheim's 'greatest' discovery in terms of wayward overweight women, American Jewess Tally Brown certainly held her own in terms of audacious anti-beauty as a degenerate diva of debauchery. Indeed, with his documentary *Tally Brown, New York* (1979), which offers a telling cinematic portrait of Tally, von Praunheim managed to receive the German Film Award in Silver for 'Outstanding Non-Feature Film' in 1979. To von Praunheim's credit, *Tally Brown, New York* is a priceless work for those interested in underground cinema of the 1960s, as the eponymous subject starred in various films directed by Andy Warhol and Gregory J. Markopoulos. Indeed, appearing in the lost Warhol/Smith collaboration *Batman Dracula* (1964) and Markopoulos' homosexualized feature-length Aeschylus adaptation *The Illiac Passion* (1967), Brown certainly solidified her place in cinema history, even if she does not seem to understand the magnitude of her contributions. A big woman that some might mistake as a big man in drag, Tally Brown was a classically trained singer who opted for a life of nocturnal debauchery instead of opera and decided to become what she described as the 'white Billie Holiday,' ultimately becoming one of the first 'white' jazz singers to perform at negro strip joints and degenerate venues in Las Vegas. In von Praunheim's *Tally Brown, New York*, Brown discusses how much she loved working for the mafia, being a friend of tragic tranny Candy Darling, and smoking dope for over two decades without feeling the slightest inkling towards dependency.

Beginning with a shot of giant sign with the film's title, *Tally Brown, New*

TALLY BROWN, NEW YORK

York immediately lets the viewer know that they are about to encounter a star diva of sorts, but of course, being a Rosa von Praunheim film, it is not a woman that any heterosexual man would ever want to screw, even while they are drunk. In what is unquestionably a great way to make an introduction, Tally first appears in the documentary singing a cover of David Bowie's hit song "Heroes", but she changes up the lyrics a little bit and adds her own line, "I...I can be a bitch so you stay stoned all the time but were lovers and that is a fact" and concludes the song in German (Bowie also did a version of the song in German entitled "Helden"). The kind of gal that would have enjoyed being featured in Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon*, Tally is quite candid about her life, but it still seems like a lot is left out of the doc, as one can only cram so much material in a 90 minute film. Growing up in a Jewish neighborhood of NYC populated by Teutonized Hebrews who escaped Uncle Adolf's National Socialist Germany, Tally was born to a man in real estate but she seems somewhat evasive about her upbringing, stating to von Praunheim after he asks about her childhood, "How did I grow up? Like everyone else!", as if it was an intrusive question. An innately cosmopolitan individual, Tally talks with great joy about how NYC is such a great and constantly changing place where immigrant communities come in, build up a neighborhood, and then another immigrant group comes in and continues the cycle of multicultural malignancy. Proudly proclaiming, "I sing city song," Tally considers herself an "urban creature" who cannot survive outside of urban areas, confessing, "The country can kill me. I'm just a city child."

Taking her first serious blues singing job at a black strip bar in Boston, Tally proudly states her favorite venues were the "most rauchiest ones." Eventually, Tally made her way to Las Vegas where she did all-night shows from 7pm to 7am each day. In terms of what she liked most about Vegas, Tally describes how she was thrilled to see women selling their jewelry and men selling their wives for gambling money. Although she never made it big in Hollywood, Tally remarks regarding her love for Hollywoodland, "Well...I don't want you to take this personally Rosa, but the thing I love best about Hollywood is that they give you little things that make life endurable." While living in the courter of New Orleans, Tally believes she got a "European felling" without actually going to Europa. After discussing how she has been using drugs for two decades without getting addicted (though a couple of her ex-boyfriends apparently went insane due to their affinity for narcotics), gay and seemingly autistic actor Taylor Mead (*The Flower Thief*, *Taylor Mead's Ass*)—the 'first underground film star'—rambles on about how he names all of his pet cats after Tally, absurdly proclaiming, "There's probably no more beautiful woman in the world than Tally Brown." As for her underground acting career, Tally describes how she was 'tripping' for four days on a Warhol production, not realizing she was being filmed, even describing herself as looking like a "petulant baby whale" in the finished film. The ultimate flagrant fag hag, Tally wastes no time proclaiming her undying love for lurking in

gay bath houses. In one of the more unintentionally humorous scenes of the documentary, Tally's East Asian painter ex-boyfriend states, "Well, I must confess, I never saw someone quite like Tally...and what startled me was, here was someone who was completely unconcerned with her weight...physical weight in the conversation sense...but was completely sensuous and beautiful." With fellow Warhol superstars like Candy Darling, Ondine, and Mary Woronov, Tally also starred in the Lloyd Kaufman co-produced slasher flick *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1974) where she took advantage of gorging on fake blood (aka chocolate syrup). Towards the end of the documentary, Divine does a drag show to a Kraftwerk song. In the end, Divine seems like the 'greater' of the two divas, though Tally could be her big sister.

Undoubtedly, Rosa von Praunheim has always been more proficient at making documentaries than narrative films and Tally Brown, *New York* is certainly one of his more serious docs, thus making it mandatory viewing for anyone with an interest in the homo-supremacist auteur. If nothing else, von Praunheim's documentary is one of the greatest portraits of a real live fag hag ever made. While the overweight over-the-hill fag hag is probably the most odious breed of human creatures to ever populate the earth aside from big bloated bull dykes, Tally Brown, *New York* manages to portray the eponymous subject in a quasi-poetic way that even manages to do the unthinkable by even radiating an inkling of class. Indeed, Tally is certainly more tolerable than von Praunheim's scatological Semitic superstar Lotti Huber, whose mere presence in films like *Anita: Dances of Vice* is probably enough to induce vomiting in more sensitive viewers. Tally Brown, *New York* is also notable in that Tally gives a strangely endearing tribute to her tranny friend Candy Darling—probably the only shemale that could pass for a female—who died of lymphoma on March 21, 1974, aged 29 and wrote in a letter to Andy Warhol right before she died, "Unfortunately before my death I had no desire left for life... I am just so bored by everything. You might say bored to death. Did you know I couldn't last. I always knew it. I wish I could meet you all again." One of the last films Darling starred in before s/he died was a film directed by von Praunheim's ex boy toy Werner Schroeter, *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*. While Darling was deathly depressed with life, Tally Brown seemed to love to live, or at least that is certainly the impression one gets while watching Tally Brown, *New York*, a documentary that redefines the word 'diva' for a generation fed on negrophilia, fast food, and dope.

-Ty E

CITY OF LOST SOULS
CITY OF LOST SOULS

Rosa von Praunheim° (1983)

If a cracked kraut queen attempted to remake Paul Morrissey's Warhol tranny superstar satire of feminism and so-called 'women's liberation' *Women In Revolt* (1971) and shot it in late-cold war Berlin with a loony far-left punk pro-chicks-with-dicks angle, it might begin to describe *City of Lost Souls* (1983) aka *Berlin Blues* aka *Stadt Der Verlorenen Seelen* directed by less than humble homo-supremacist auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Horror Vacui*, *Anita: Dances of Vice*). Described by one viewer as a sort of 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001) in reverse,' *City of Lost Souls* is a black comedy 'maniac musical' that follows an American-born anti-communist tranny (played by real-life transsexual musician Jayne County) who eventually becomes a rock 'n' roll star in East Berlin via her autobiographical hit "I Fell in Love with a Russian Soldier," among various other things in an intentionally grotesque trash-camp celluloid work with a fiercely foul flavor in the spirit of the early pre-*Hairspray* (1988) works of John Waters and films starring the Cockettes like *Tricia's Wedding* (1971) and *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972). Not just an innately idiotic celluloid sleaze-fest in the spirit of the "third sex" (the phrase is mentioned in the film a number of times) theories of decidedly debauched German-Jewish sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, whose life Praunheim would later depict in the just-plain-bad biopic *The Einstein of Sex: Life and Work of Dr. M. Hirschfeld* (1999), *City of Lost Souls* is thankfully a perversely politically incorrect work of sleazy celluloid iconoclasm that features a Harlem-born black tranny being verbally assaulted by the word "Nigger" by a Jewish boy in a yarmulke, an American-born Jewess 'erotic trapeze' artist who finds love in the form of a woman-beating grandson of a Nazi war hero, a self-loathing Peter Berlin-wannabe American homo who promotes the virtues of the Auschwitz death camp motto "Arbeit macht frei" ("work makes (you) free"), and another yank Jewess who comes to Deutschland in the hope of dissolving her bitter holocaust-inspired Teutonophobia, only to learn she hates the krauts even more after actually meeting some real ones. Set mostly in a raunchy West Berlin-based fast food restaurant called "Hamburger Köni-gen" (*Hamburger Queen*) that is run by a real-life big bosomed pre-op black tranny and diva-with-a-dick named Angie Stardust (*Hard Women*, *Die Alptraumfrau*) as himself/herself, *City of Lost Souls* is a mostly plot-less poof piece that is driven by its sexually subversive star power as opposed to anything resembling a discernible storyline. Shot over the course of six weeks mostly in auteur Rosa von Praunheim's assumedly semen-soaked basement, *City of Lost Souls* is celluloid camp at its most intrinsically intemperate and iconoclastic, thereupon making it one of the director's 'greatest' and most genuine works.

Busty big black transvestite Angie Stardust had a rather horrendous child in Harlem as a man-woman whose father tried to beat her 'femininity' out of her as

a boy, but she eventually managed to escape and become “the first black transsexual” at such prestigious clubs in New York City as 82 Club (a pre-Stonewall drag queen revue Jayne County later performed at). To escape racism, Angie came to Berlin and runs both the “Hamburger Queen” restaurant, as well as the “Pension Stardust” boarding house, which is occupied by a number of sex-craved trannies, high-strung homos, and related sex fiends. New to Berlin and the Pension Stardust is a feisty American Jewess ‘erotic trapeze’ artist named Judith Flex and her crippled bleach-blond American-Aryan partner Tron von Hollywood. Judith and Tron are proud to say, “I love Germany...Germany is beautiful...It’s so clean...The bus is always on time,” upon first arriving, thus demonstrating their peculiar ‘National Socialist’ romance of the divided ex-Nazi nation. Tron also proudly states, “My grandmother used to say “Work makes you free!” (“Arbeit macht frei”),” thereupon demonstrating his ‘fascistic’ upbringing. Not long after Tron’s spiel about the merits of Deutschland, a little lad in a yarmulke sings, “Ten little niggers went across the Rhein...One fell in the water then there were but nine...,” which naturally upsets big black Angie, who states, “Stupid, this little monster! I’ve got nothing against kids, but I’ve been here 13 years. People haven’t progressed. They don’t consider the past, the shit they caused. We have feelings too!,” which undoubtedly reflects director Rosa von Praunheim’s conviction that ‘everyday fascism’ still reigns in the Fatherland.

Also featured in *City of Lost Souls* is a voodoo Negro named Gary who practices black magic and gives witchcraft therapy to gay naked krauts. A homo Negro tranny named Joaquin La Habana, who is Angie Stardust’s protégé, spends a lot of time giving blowjobs to the pickles at the Hamburger Queen. A male nurse turned transman named Tara O’Hara, who pisses off her fellow tranny roommate Loretta (Lorraine Muthke) by bringing too many men by the apartment, is the femme fatal diva of the Pension Stardust. After running into a fellow American Jewess who discusses her overwhelming hatred of krauts, Judith Flex starts a romantic relationship with a German who beats women and who takes her to the ruins of Arno Breker statues and old Nazi monuments and who has no problem admitting, “My grandfather was a Nazi...My father was 19 when the war ended, and was in the Nazi guerrilla movement against the occupation, Werwolf.” Judith responds to her new boy toy’s confession by stating, “you know, I’m Jewish. I think my grandfather is also a bit Nazi. Of course, not Nazi, but everything must be Jewish...Who’s Jewish, what’s Jewish, and I can only be with Jews there...The same thing, you know?,” thus demonstrating the girl’s hatred of Zionism and her belief it is one in the same with National Socialism. After the Nazi boy asks if they can still be together due to their adversarial ancestries, Judith proudly proclaims, “We’re modern. Maybe in Berlin, a cosmopolitan city, we have a chance,” and the two odd couple begins to kiss with a sort of wacky sci-fi noise playing in the background, which gives a good idea what director von Praunheim thinks of heterosexual relationships. Meanwhile,

CITY OF LOST SOULS

Lila (Jayne County) discusses with Angie Stardust how she got pregnant by a commie Russian and how she wants to abort the baby, declaring “Just because I like to get fucked by Russians don’t mean that I want to have their children” as an unproud “communist fucker.” The father of the unborn child was a Russian recruiter from the East German GDR and Lila ended up killing him during their sex-capades. Ultimately, lily white turncoat Lila, who was brought up a good anti-communist Reaganite in the United States, decides to go to the east and becomes a big star with her hit song “I Fell in Love with a Russian Soldier” and even has the opportunity to sing for the Red Chairman. Singing live in East German TV, Lila is absurdly standing on a stage featuring portraits of Karl Marx and Lenin and a large ‘hammer and sickle’ (☒) in the background. After receiving a police order to leave Germany ASAP, Gary goes insane and starts a fire in the Pension Stardust, which erupts into a hellish homo orgy that kills both the black magician and twink Tron. Distraught her friends and apartment are gone forever, Angie Stardust sings a short melancholy ballad, but *City of Lost Souls* ultimately ends on a positive night with a performance from Jayne County at Hamburger Queen.

Described somewhat cynically and derogatively in *The Queer German Cinema* (2000) by Alice Kuzniar as, “little more than a vehicle for a group of transvestites to parade themselves through dance and song within a loosely concocted narrative about the employees at a “Burger Queen” restaurant. At its premiere the film was not even watched by the audience but accompanied at party where the celebrating actors again could star as themselves,” *City of Lost Souls* is indubitably a playfully prissy and perverse portrait of nasty tranny (and homo) narcissism directed by one of the most narcissistic filmmakers who has ever lived (be they gay or otherwise), yet it does make for a scathing assault of the American philistine view of Germany and the Second World War. Early on in the film, Judith Flex and Tron become agitated about having to wait so long for getting visas, arrogantly proclaiming, “but we’re Americans!,” in regard to the fact they have to wait just as long as Palestinians and Turks in line. The anti-American kraut fellow working at the visa office retorts to the two arrogant Americans by stating, “Who cares... You must follow the rules. Oh, you Americans! You think you won the war! You didn’t!,” henceforth demonstrating the delusion of most Americans that they singularly won the Second World War, yet were incapable of defeating communism and even allied with the Red menace, thus giving Eastern Germany to the Soviets. Undoubtedly inspired by the cult flick *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972) starring the psychedelic theater troupe the Cockettes in its depiction of proletarian transvestites attempting to make it in a sexually depraved ghetto, *City of Lost Souls* ‘Germanizes’ the experience in the form of a pinko commie cocksucker poof piece that, aside from its less than seductive song and dance pieces, will appeal to homos and heteros alike in its satirizing of not only both homos and heteros, but also American anti-communism and East

German kraut communism. Featuring naked negroes sporting ghoulish Ronald Reagan masks, transvestites masturbating chair legs and sucking off pickles, negro black magicians reading William L. Shirer's error-ridden tome *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960), kraut cops discussing the need to rid the Fatherland of blacks, black men eating watermelon and practicing voodoo, and Judaic erotic trapeze artists nearly falling to their deaths, *City of Lost Souls* is lurid and sordid celluloid libertinage at its most eccentrically excess-ridden and pseudo-extravagant as Rosa von Praunheim's sort of (anti)love imported love letter to his nation and city of birth. Since the release of *City of Lost Souls*, some of the stars of the film have met grizzly, almost camp-like ends because while Tron von Hollywood died of AIDS in the early 1990s, tranny Tara O'Hara, who also contracted gay cancer (but did not die from it), was found beaten to a bloody pulp in a Tiergarten Women's bathroom and layed in a hospital in a coma for a couple weeks before the doc took her off life support. Luckily, Rosa von Praunheim has managed to immortalize their lives via *City of Lost Souls*, a film that makes transvestism seem like a sunny and surreal from of scatological schizophrenia.

-Ty E

A VIRUS KNOWS NO MORALS
A VIRUS KNOWS NO MORALS

Rosa von Praunheim° (1986)

Jokes about AIDS, especially in regard to gay men, have basically become a favorite pastime among American youth, at least when I was growing up, yet leave it to kraut queer auteur and annoying gay activist Rosa von Praunheim (*Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity, Your Heart in My Head*) to have been the first person to dare to make a black comedy musical about gay cancer in all its society decaying glory. Created at a time when HIV positive homos were dropping like flies from the decidedly deleterious disease, *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1986) aka *Ein Virus kennt keine* is a compulsively campy and morally diseased renegade romp about the AIDS epidemic, its self-destructive victims, and those professional individuals who profited in some sort of way, be they yellow journalists, demented doctors, or gay fag-exploiting sauna owners. *A Virus Knows No Morals* was ultimately the first and only redeeming chapter in an unusually uneven tetralogy of AIDS themed films directed by von Praunheim, which was followed by an intolerably serious and sentimental documentary trilogy that includes, *Silence = Death* (1990), *Positive* (1990), and *Fire Under Your Ass* (1990), the former two of which focus on AIDS activism in NYC and the latter of which, which was never completed/released, centers on AIDS in the director's hometown of Berlin. Without question, *A Virus Knows No Morals* is the most aesthetically idiosyncratic and idiotic, enthralling, and least preachy/prissy of the von Praunheim AIDS flicks as a somewhat neglected kraut cult exploitation masterpiece that makes an unwaveringly sardonic and scathing indictment regarding everything related to what was once described as "Gay Related Immune Deficiency"(GRID). An aesthetically putrid assault on idiotically idealistic far-left revolutionaries, pernicious penny-pinching physicians, 'bug-chasers' and 'gift-givers', hack journalists, fag-bashing moms, and homos and homo-haters of all stripes and colors, *A Virus Knows No Morals* is fag self-exploitation at its most flagrantly loony and just plain weird, even starring director Rosa von Praunheim as a sodomite sauna owner who makes tons of money off homos catching STDs at his own business. A morally and aesthetically reckless work that proves that the abberosexual agitator actually has a self-denigrating sense of humor that does not involve licking the taint of the pansy p.c. police, *A Virus Knows No Morals* is depraved celluloid camp at its most aesthetically criminally contagious as a sort of cinematic equivalent to AIDS that breaks down cinema themes and conventions until the spectator cannot back down and is forced to wallow in filmic filth.

As Rosa von Praunheim's character states at the beginning of *A Virus Knows No Morals*, "I'm Rudiger Kakinski, sauna owner. I earn plenty on the gays, who spend long nights of pleasure in my sex club. My lover is Christian. He studies church music. He loves me very much, but I must always remind him

that I can't love just one. Sex means to me freedom with many," but unfortunately he has AIDS, which his wimpy Christ-bothering boy toy seems to tolerate rather well given the fact that the disease was pretty much a death sentence in 1985. Also featured in the absurdiest HIV positive celluloid hell that is *A Virus Knows No Morals* is a certain "Prof. Dr. Blood" (Maria Hasenäcker), a seemingly sociopathic virologist and plague expert, who rather enjoys giving nonsensical safe-sex demonstrations using dildos and contaminated semen, saliva, urine, and blood. Itching to catch the latest contaminated cocksucker story is Carola Shurksh (Eva-Maria Kurz), a superlatively shameless and sleazy reporter for a tabloid called the 'Purple Pages' who is rather adamant about taking photos of babies with AIDS for the latest headline of her newspaper. No less insane than Shurksh is Ms. Tomalik-Samenkorn (Ina Blum), a perverted psychotherapist who "believes AIDS, her specialty, is psychosomatic" and who "loves sex. There, her specialty is bisexual men." Her bisexual male nurse boyfriend Karl Kolle (Thilo von Trotha) is a "revolutionary of the old school" (i.e. 1968 German student movement) who, after sabotaging an AIDS educational video screening, declares, "This is an action of the ASI! The Army of the Sick and Impotent. Down with the reactionary medical asses. We demand humane treatment and psychological care for AIDS victims. The AIDS revolt will destroy the fascist medical regime." Quite the odd couple, Tomalik-Samenkorn declares to her bent boy toy Karl Kolle, "I want a child from a gay before they die out" and then literally proceeds to jump his bi-bones. Clearly deranged, comrade Kolle declares, "The AIDS victims are the proletariat of tomorrow. The world revolution of bodies and viruses will spell the definitive doom of capitalism," while in mid-coitus with his lunatic lover. Rejected by his mother due to his HIV positive status and denied sex by his Christian lover, bourgeois bitch boy businessman Rudiger Kakinski begins to lose his sanity, though he couldn't care less about helping to make his semen-drenched sauna STD-proof as he will not even put a condom vending machine in as it is bad for business because, after all, it is a well known fact that safe sex is not cool among hip homos. In the hope of coming to terms with his disease, Kakinski goes to psychotherapist Tomalik-Samenkorn, who wears an absurd blond wig for whatever reason while working (yet maintaining her long brunette hair while fucking), and she waves a mini coffin around him and tells the HIV positive sauna victim to essentially accept death like a man as a gift from God. Meanwhile, while rather stoic and even seemingly happy about his boyfriend's HIV positive status, Kakinski's Christian boyfriend Christian is totally devastated upon learning he is positive, but luckily nurse Karl Kolle takes him aside and teaches him the far-left political virtues of being a positive poofster. Not letting a little thing like AIDS let him down, Rudiger gets into anonymous tearoom sex in a semi-surreal scenario that resembles a parody of a bad horror flick as one would expect to have been directed by the late, great celluloid scat-meister Herr Schlingensiefel.

A VIRUS KNOWS NO MORALS

Meanwhile, deranged journalist Carola Shurksh goes incognito as a poorly disguised homosexual male and invades a fag-frequented pissoir while sporting a large veiny strap-on dildo and runs into her prodigal poof son, who is cruising for anonymous sex, thus ushering in the end of their seemingly macabre mother-son relationship. Meanwhile, Dr. Blood and an associate named Dr. Hablesword head to Central Africa where dandy negroes eat fried chicken with fancy white gloves to study the origin of AIDS and the natives' apparent 'sex problems', which makes for an interesting journey because, after all, as the demented doc states, "One hears thrilling things about these savages. There are even whispers of cannibalism. At any rate, the natives supposedly ingest the long-tailed monkey, and thereby infect themselves." While immersed in her study of AIDS monkeys, Dr. Blood does not realize she is being banged from behind by a tranny-like African tribesman and before she knows it, a HIV positive primate has infected her with gay cancer. Meanwhile, cracked commie revolutionary Karl Kolle shows up at Kakinski's Sodom-like sauna in a Grim Reaper costume, accusing the owner of being a "rotten exploiter of gays. Getting rich while the people here get AIDS" and that his "filthy shop is a kind of extermination camp!" and proceeds to rob all these queer queens of their precious jewelry as a sort of radical red Robin Hood of the Red Plague. Meanwhile a couple nurses at the local AIDS clinic get bored and one confesses, "I can't get over that Rock Hudson was gay. I was such a fan." To exterminate their boredom, the nasty nurses bet which AIDS patient will drop during the night, with one stating, "Let's roll the dice. Who'll kick the bucket first. The jigaboo on 2, the needle freak on 4, or the fat assfucker on 6. I bet a bottle of champagne" and another nurse complaining, "If the Lord doesn't take at least three in the night, I'm underworked." Meanwhile, Kainski somewhat comes to terms with his HIV positive status, even though his friends are dropping dead like flies, while strolling all by his lonesome in a graveyard where the diseased-ridden corpses of his comrades lay buried, confessing, "Maybe only the weak die from it, and the strong live on. I want to live. I'll beat the disease. Tomorrow they'll find a cure. The disease still makes me horny. I fuck now only with positives. The doctors try to forbid us that, too, claiming we always risk new infection. But sex is life, and I believe in life." Rather unfortunately, Kakinski's boyfriend Christian is not nearly doing as well as he is on his death bed and cocksucker karma reaches jaded journalist Shurksh at the hospital after a delirious and half-deranged AIDS patient with a death wish infects her with AIDS by sadistically stabbing her in the derriere with a tainted needle. Psycho psychotherapist Tomalik-Samenkorn also contracts AIDS from her gay nurse boyfriend Kolle and attempts to spread the deadly disease by pawing her positive puss on the streets for free. In the end, every character in *A Virus Knows No Morals* contracts AIDS and the film takes on a vague *Night of the Living Dead*-esque tone as all of Deutschland is ravaged with the deleterious disease

that was just once thought of as 'gay cancer' and the HIV positive populous is shipped to a quarantine island called 'Hell Gay Land.' Luckily, Bolshevik neo-bolshevik nurse Karl Kolle sort of saves the day, at least for a small period of time.

Rosa von Praunheim's audacious attempt to satirically turn the AIDS epidemic into an exaggerated "Deutscher Herbst"-like scenario where the Fatherland is on the verge of civil war and turning into a neo-fascist police state and utilizing horror, sci-fi, and exploitation conventions to do so, *A Virus Knows No Morals* ultimately makes for one of the director's most accessible yet paradoxically most iconoclastic works. Indeed, unlike most of von Praunheim's films, *A Virus Knows No Morals* has a distinct aesthetic and thematic essence similar to kraut arthouse cult flicks of the late-1980s/early-1990s directed by underground auteur filmmakers like Jörg Buttgerit (*Nekromantik*, *Schramm*) and Christoph Schlingensief (*United Trash*, *The 120 Days of Bottrop*). In fact, *A Virus Knows No Morals* 'star' Eva-Maria Kurz would later appear in Buttgerit's *Der Todeskung* (1990) and *Nekromantik 2* (1991), as well as Schlingensief's *Das deutsche Kettensägen Massaker* (1990) aka *The German Chainsaw Massacre* and *Terror 2000 - Intensivstation Deutschland* (1994), thus adding to von Praunheim's seemingly unlikely kraut cinema cult cred as born agitpropagandist who is one of the most, if not the most, well known gay activist filmmaker who has ever lived. Although rather jadedly jovial throughout, *A Virus Knows No Morals* also makes for a just plain bizarre cinematic work that will make even the most debauched of viewers cringe in disgust at the film's lunatic libertinage and bodacious bad taste, as if von Praunheim was attempting to make his most patently offensive work ever, which he indubitably accomplished. After all, Rosa von Praunheim is even hated by his fellow gays for his flagrant fear-mongering regarding safe sex and AIDS activism and *A Virus Knows No Morals* is certainly a far cry from the sickeningly serious 'scared straight' style agitprop that plagues his subsequent AIDS-themed documentaries *Silence = Death* (1990) and *Positive* (1990). Filmed utilizing non-actors in a guerilla-style of filmmaking that would ultimately influence homocore auteur Bruce LaBruce, among countless others, *A Virus Knows No Morals* also has the peculiar distinction of featuring the curiously amateurish cockeyed camera angles, unhinged urban grit, white trash camp, and horrific depictions of heterosexual sex that were the signature style of AIDS-addled exploitation auteur Andy Milligan (*The Body Beneath*, *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*), thereupon making it a worthy and rather unsung masterpiece of exploitation cinema that gives rare artistic merit to the mostly negated niche 'genre.' Of course, *A Virus Knows No Morals* would inspire other AIDS-themed black comedy musicals, the best of which being *Zero Patience* (1993), though Canadian auteur John Greyson's sodomite sermonizing, which transcends that of von Praunheim's, is rather off putting to say the least. Indisputable proof that Rosa von Praunheim knows no morals even if he has spent

A VIRUS KNOWS NO MORALS

entire lifetime tell other people and organization, especially of the poor persuasion, what to do, A Virus Knows No Morals is a window into a diseased soul that, although ridiculously entertaining, is probably not good for one's health.

-Ty E

ANITA: DANCES OF VICE

Rosa von Praunheim^o (1987)

Despite his lifelong cinematic campaign to make the world a more cocksucker-friendly place to live where all social mores are molested and murdered and sexual perversions are welcomed, kraut queer auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) seems to think pre-Nazi Weimar Republic Germany was a sort of hyper-hedonistic homo heaven on earth that was superior to modern day fag-friendly Germany, or so one would ultimately assume while watching his pleasurable perverse postmodern German neo-expressionist work *Anita: Dances of Vice* (1987) aka *Anita – Tänze des Lasters*, a work that depicts the present as a colorless realm of repression that literally and figuratively institutionalizes the perverted and preternatural and the past as a magical and kaleidoscopic world where libertinism is king and any and every sort of superlatively sordid debauchery is welcomed. In part based on the short and eclectically self-destructive hedonist life of androgynous cabaret dancer/actress/writer Anita Berber (1899-1928)—a wildly wanton woman who was addicted to no less than seven drugs, but was popular and iconic enough to have her likeliness painted by “*Neue Sachlichkeit*” (New Objectivity) painter Otto Dix, which was later featured on a 1991 German postage stamp—as well as her gay husband/dancing partner, Sebastian Droste, *Anita: Dances of Vice*, which features a dichotomous film-within-a-film, portrays the blandness of the modern kraut culture and cinema by portraying what happens when a senile, morbidly obese, and elderly old crank cunt goes around telling people she is real-life femme fatale Anita Berber and displays her fat ass in public, thereupon resulting in her institutionalization and her escape into the imaginary psychosis-ridden realm of expressionism. Following up what he started with *Horror Vacui - Die Angst vor der Leere* (1984)—a satirical neo-expressionist flick featuring collective cult gang rapes that would earn the director the Los Angeles Film Critics Award for “best experimental film” in 1985—*Anita: Dances of Vice* would ultimately become one of Rosa von Praunheim’s most internationally revered films as a sort of lurid love letter to the great films of German expressionism with abstract inter-titles and all, as well as an aesthetically audacious response to German kultur and cinema of the past and postmodern attack on the banality and sterility of Teutonic kultur today. Featuring ugly penises with venereal diseases (something that von Praunheim is most certainly accustomed too!), somewhat explicit sex of the hairy-bush-fingering sort, physically degenerated derrieres, exquisite suicides, exceedingly eccentric old women that look like drag queens and young men that look like muscular lesbians, lunatic ladies quoting the Gospel according to Saint Marx via the Communist Manifesto, real-life burn victims kissing fictional celluloid Anita Berbers, and various other strikingly scathing and scatological yet aesthetically pleasing scenarios,

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Anita: Dances of Vice is a somewhat singular work from Rosa von Praunheim's oeuvre in that it is proof that he is capable of more than just amateurishly assembled abberosexual agitprop. Of course, considering Anita: Dances of Vice was shot by lesbian cinematographer Elfi Mikesch, who also shot some of dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's best and most visually stunning films, including *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* and *Deux* (2002) aka *Two*, one cannot give von Praunheim all the credit for his thematically sickening yet charismatically kaleidoscopic tribute to early-twentieth-century kraut vice, especially of the debauched dyke-fest sort.

While passionately preaching, "I won't undress, you pigs! I'm an artist, not a whore! Pigs!" to a small audience of strangers, absolutely odious old-timer Frau Kutowski (von Praunheim's 'degenerate diva' Lotti Huber)—a grotesquely Judaic unladylike lady of the lascivious sort who would have made a standout specimen for National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's naughty Nazi tabloid newspaper *Der Stürmer* as the height of Hebraic hideousness—proves otherwise during the first couple minutes of Anita: Dances of Vice. After making an obscene ass of herself by proudly displaying her bloated yet baggy bare ass in public for mocking Berliners to see, deranged elderly dame Frau Kutowski, a flagrantly loony lady well past both her physical and mental prime who seriously believes she is the long dead cabaret dancer Anita Berber, is arrested and is swiftly sent to a nuthouse where her deleterious dementia is all the more strengthened by the sterile scenery. While the real world crazy cunt Kutowski lives in a banal black-and-white nachtmahr of the seemingly postmortem sort, the mental patient manages to transfer herself back to the late-1920s by imagining her nurse (played by Ina Blum) as her young self/Anita Berber and that her doctor is her gay boy toy/rival Sebastian Droste (Mikael Honesseau). When not escaping into her esoteric fantasies of romantic suicides, onieric-like opium hazes, fingering a feisty Fräulein's bearded clam, and mocking her satanic dandy dancer partner Droste (a fellow that has no problem admitting, "I hate women and I love men"), cuckoo Kutowski gropes female nurses' genitals and verbally assaults fellow inmates by declaring "A better future. What do I care about the future? I live for the moment, Rosa Luxemburg. The world's an ass, and we're its farts. Each of us stinks in his own way. That's the spice of life!" after a hysterical hag of an Marxist inmate declares, "the words of the Communist Manifesto: 'Socialism or the plunge to barbarism! For a better future!'" Meanwhile, angry Aryan men are plotting for the destruction of Weimar degeneracy and looking for a new Führer with a firm fist, who will ultimately be Adolf Hitler, a man that will put a swift end to cabaret debauchery and German expressionist cinema. Luckily, Anita Berber will die of tuberculosis in 1928, thus never getting to meet Uncle Adolf. While on her death bed, Anita Berber is told by a priest that "Only faith can save you now," which the debauched diva responds to by eloquently stating, "Who says 'ass' has got to say 'hole'." Luckily, Frau Kutowski has a much more

fortunate fate and simply leaves the loony bin, assumedly living the rest of her remaining years in relative comfort.

An idiosyncratic piece of equally iconic and iconoclastic cinema, *Anita: Dances of Vice* manages to find a (un)healthy aesthetic/thematic medium between old school German expressionist films in the spirit of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) and *Algot: Tragedy of Power* (1920), the latter of which Anita Berber's partner Sebastian Droste appeared in, as well as classic Hollywood hagsploitation flicks like *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) and Curtis Harrington's *What's the Matter With Helen?* (1971) and the Isadora Duncan biopic *The Loves of Isadora aka Isadora* (1968) directed by Karel Reisz. A sort of celluloid equivalent to the dubious thesis proposed in kosher commie film critic Siegfried Kracauer's book *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947)—a work that argues a link between the escapist/expressionist/nightmarish nature of films of the Weimar era and the rise of Nationalism Socialism—*Anita: Dances of Vice*, to the homo-supremacist filmmaker's credit, still manages to be one of director Rosa von Praunheim's least politically-charged celluloid works in that not unlike films of German expressionism, emphasizes aestheticism over agitprop. That being said, *Anita: Dances of Vice* and *Horror Vacui* are two of only a handful of German New Cinema films that will appeal to fans of German expressionism, even if the film can in no way compare to the silent masterpieces of F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang. A conspicuously camp molestation of German expressionism with a geriatric gay gal as the decidedly depraved pseudo-diva lead, *Anita: Dances of Vice* is as close as auteur von Praunheim has come to paying (anti)homage to his Fatherland, especially during a scene in the film when the vulgarian anti-hero proudly proclaims "Berlin is the capital of sin and I am her queen." Of course, the real queen of *Anita: Dances of Vice* is radical rectum-reamer Rosa von Praunheim himself, a man so obnoxious and aberrant that he is even hated by many of his cocksucking compatriots in both German New Cinema (Fassbinder included!) and 'gay rights' activism. Considering von Praunheim's poofer-style political militancy, I do not think it would be a stretch to say that von Praunheim would have more likely been a member of the National Socialist SA brownshirts—a group whose leadership was littered with homos, including its rather rotund leader Ernst Röhm—as opposed to a German expressionist filmmaker, which is supported by the fact that the director's real father may have been an SS commander or Nazi photographer as revealed in the auteur's documentary *Two Mothers* (2007) aka *Meine Mütter - Spurensuche in Riga*. Even in his homage to "great nude star Anita Berber," Praunheim is unable to avoid the fact that his hero Anita lived a short depraved life of venereal disease, cocaine and alcohol addiction, self-exploitation and malignant melancholy, thus making National Socialism seem like the only natural response to the wanton Weimar Republic she so perfectly exemplified, a patently putrid place that is not all that different from

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the entire Occidental world today. Maybe if we are lucky, von Praunheim will direct a sequel to Anita: Dances of Vice with an aesthetic style in the spirit of National Socialist masterpieces Triumph of the Will (1935) and Olympia (1938) featuring an elderly descendent of Anne Frank who believes she is world-class diva Leni Riefenstahl.

-Ty E

POSITIVE

Rosa von Praunheim^o (1990)

Undoubtedly, German homosexual supremacist auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) has always been better at being an audacious agitpropangdist than a narrative filmmaker, as demonstrated by his first early celluloid manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), a work that manages to enrage both homos and heteros alike in its uniquely unflattering depiction of kraut cocksucker subcultures. Not surprisingly, in the 1980s Praunheim became obsessed with AIDS and began churning out eclectic works about gay cancer, starting with the deranged satirical musical *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1985) aka *Ein Virus kennt keine*. A couple years after the release of *A Virus Knows No Morals*, von Praunheim started an AIDS documentary trilogy, which includes *Silence = Death* (1990) aka *Die Aids-Trilogie: Schweigen = Tod - Künstler in New York kämpfen gegen AIDS*, *Positive* (1990) aka *Die Aids-Trilogie: Positiv - Die Antwort schwuler Männer in New York auf AIDS*, and *Fire Under Your Ass* (1990), the latter of which the director never released for whatever reason. Out all the films in von Praunheim's partially aborted AIDS trilogy, the second documentary *Positive*—a work chronicling New York City's gay community's hysterical response during the rise of gay cancer during the 1980s that depicts how pissed off homos (and later lesbians) organized themselves and took matters into their own hands after they felt the government was doing little to help them—is undoubtedly the most politically-charged, 'important', and ultimately mundane work that essentially depicts how the deadly disease was largely responsible for spawning the powerful LGBT community in the United States today. Rather unconventional for a von Praunheim documentary, *Positive* is a rare doc where the debauched and attention-starved director is seeming invisible as he had the late NYC-based HIV-positive journalist/filmmaker Phil Zwickler—a man who attempted to promote safe-sex via condom-core porn flicks depicting contraceptives as sexy—act as the producer and host of the film. Advertised with the absurd tagline "This is our holocaust, New York City is our Auschwitz, Ronald Reagan is our Hitler," *Positive*, being a NYC-centered work, is also a fairly Philo-Semitic work featuring a number of homo Israelites, including novelist Larry Kramer, lesbian activist/novelist Sarah Schulman, and gay activist/professor Arnie Kantrowitz, as they hysterically attempt to described the silence regarding the AIDS epidemic as having parallels to the Nazi holocaust, especially indicting former mayor of New York City Ed Koch, himself Jewish and believed to be a closest homo, as allowing tons of poofs to perish as a result of his supposed apathy and political inaction. A work that attempts to blame politicians and the Christian right for the fact that fags were dying off because they were practicing promiscuous unsafe sex in tearooms and

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whatnot and, quite naturally, obtained AIDS as a result, *Positive* is ultimately a work that shows the roots of how the so-called LGBT community got so out of touch with reality and demanded they be treated as special citizens and make Christians and other religious people recognize the fact they loved sucking diseased cocks. Unfortunately, *Positive* is nowhere as interesting as it sounds as a work that is essentially nothing more than an overextended celluloid whine-fest of the agitated abberosexual variety.

Beginning with the peculiar introduction of HIV-positive host/producer New York filmmaker and journalist Phil Zwickler, who discusses his worries and concerns about allowing a weirdo like Rosa von Praunheim (who he describes as making “voyeuristic and nightmarish films”) exploit him for a film, *Positive* immediately starts to lose some steam as a work that is ultimately one long and sentimentalized poof propaganda piece. One of the most focused on subjects of the documentary is playwright/novelist/gay activist Larry Kramer, who proclaims, “I’m sick of guys who can only think with their cocks” in an emotionally erratic manner and discusses how his anti-tearoom novel *Faggots* (1978) was inspired by the fact that he was pissed at a lot of his fellow poofs for being in the cocksucker closet, namely former mayor Ed Koch. Originally called “Gay related immune deficiency” (GRID), AIDS hit the gay community like the plague in the early 1980s and as singer/songwriter/AIDS activist Michael Callen (who later appeared in small rolls in films like *Philadelphia* (1993) and John Greyson’s AIDS musical *Zero Patience* (1993)), who lists a long laundry list of STDs he has, describes in detail, like many of the subjects of *Positive*, how becoming HIV positive totally changed his life and how he spent a good portion of the rest of his life promoting AIDS awareness via protest and aesthetic propaganda. Avant-Garde singer/composer Diamanda Galás, whose sole brother Philip-Dimitri Galás died of AIDS, also weighs in with her two cents, describing how as someone from a long tradition of dirge singers, she declared a sworn oath against the person(s) responsible for the death of her beloved brother. Naturally, Galás hardly holds her brother to blame for the promiscuity that led to his premature demise and like most of the people in the documentary, she is talking about the federal government and politicians, and joined Larry Kramer’s group AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) when she speaks of her sworn oath. Indeed, if nothing else, *Positive* is largely about gays ‘acting up’ against the government, which has indubitably become a tyrannical tradition among the queer community since the release of the documentary.

Featuring dubious tributes to gay icons/AIDS victims like gay pornographer-turned-filmmaker Arthur J. Bressan, Jr. (Daddy Dearest, Buddie) and homo BDSM photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, *Positive* is not exactly a work that depicts the AIDS-ridden community in a positively ‘positive’ light, but instead as a bunch of whiny perverts who expect the government to be responsible for their reckless and irresponsible behavior, as if politicians forced them to have

unprotected anal sex with ten guys a night in a slimy, semen-soaked public bathroom. It should be noted that filmmaker Arthur J. Bressan, Jr. glorified pederasty in his film *Abuse* (1983), a rather mundane melodrama about an abused boy who chooses to be in the company of a gay documentary filmmaker as opposed to his violent parents. Basically, Praunheim's *Positive* employs the same sort of logic-bending message as Bressan's *Abuse* by blaming others for certain gay men's own sexual weaknesses. With curious quotes from protestors like "the government has blood on its hands," "killed by Koch," and "hands off Stonewall, liar," *Positive* portrays a pathologically prissy and pissed poof community that demands the majority be concerned with the self-induced problems of a sexually subversive minority who is responsible for being the biggest spreader of AIDS in the world. Ultimately, virtually all of the subjects featured in *Positive*, especially hysterical Hebraic homo Larry Kramer, are radically repellant characters who are exceedingly hard to emphasize with. While *Positive* would probably be revered as one of Rosa von Praunheim's most important works among cultural critics in the gay community, I found it to be one of his least artistically ambitious and entertaining works, as if it was directed by some TV hack from MTV. Only recommended to Rosa von Praunheim's completists, gay agitators, and those interested in seeing how the queer community became so politically powerful and shockingly arrogant, *Positive* is ultimately a piss poor poof propaganda piece with stupid sentimentalist overtones that lacks the sort of obscenely outrageous and provocative essence typical of a von Praunheim work. That being said, I doubt *Positive* prevented anyone from becoming HIV-positive as the typical tearoom demon semon would probably have a hard time getting through this asinine piece of would-be-audacious and flagrantly Philo-Semitic agitprop, thus this deluded doc should be totally written-off as a sociopolitically nasty byproduct of HIV hysteria of the heeb far-left sort as directed by a culturally cuckolded kraut.

-Ty E

SILENCE = DEATH
SILENCE = DEATH

Rosa von Praunheim° (1990)

I probably should not admit this, but I have a certain amount of respect for kraut queer auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) in terms of his undyingly subversive approach to both his life and filmmaking, even if I find him to be a remarkably repellant individual who probably would have deserved what was coming to him had he been an artist and activist during the Third Reich era (ironically, as revealed in his own documentary *Two Mothers* (2007), von Praunheim might be the bastard son of the infamous SS-*Standartenführer* Rudolf Lange who, among other things, apparently liquidated 250,000 people in a little less than six months). Like with any auteur filmmaker that interests me, I have gone to the effort of attempting to track down any and every von Praunheim flick that I can find, but only a tiny fraction of his 80+ film oeuvre (which includes shorts and documentaries) is actually available, especially in terms of his works that actually feature English subtitles. Not unlike his kraut cocksucker arch-nemesis Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who he made the remarkable documentary *Fassbinder's Women* (2000) aka *Fassbinder Was the Only One for Me: The Willing Victims of Rainer Werner F* about, von Praunheim is a rather prolific filmmaker who seems to make films faster than people can see them, but unlike the tragic *Querelle* (1982) director, he actually got the opportunity to work in the United States at various different times in his career. Of course, while Fassbinder would have probably opted to work in Hollywood (where von Praunheim would eventually direct the short *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* (1999) starring all-American bisexual porn star Jeff Stryker) in tribute to his love-hate relationship with Golden Age works from Tinseltown, von Praunheim has spent most of his time focusing on New York City for largely socio-political reasons that have little to do with actual filmmaking, as it is a cultural epicenter of AIDS activism and gay life. Indeed, as Fassbinder once criticized about him in an article in tribute to their mutual dandy-like friend Werner Schroeter, "Rosa von Praunheim, a man who is so progressive, whose consciousness is so liberated from all our bourgeois longings that he actually believes he alone has the right, almost a monopoly, to use the film medium to reflect his or anybody else's homosexuality," and that is certainly quite apparent in the director's aborted documentary 'AIDS trilogy' that he made in collaboration with Phil Zwickler between 1989 and 1990 in New York City during the height of the gay cancer epidemic.

It should be noted that von Praunheim's AIDS trilogy is actually part of a tetralogy that also includes the low-camp Schlingensief-*esque* HIV satire *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1986) aka *Ein Virus kennt keine*, but von Praunheim never finished or released the final film *Fire Under Your Ass* (1990) aka *Die Aids-Trilogie: Feuer unterm Arsch - Vom Leben und Sterben schwuler Männer* in

Berlin, which takes a look at how the epidemic effected the filmmaker's hometown of Berlin. While I saw the first film in the trilogy, *Positive* (1990) aka *Die Aids-Trilogie: Positiv - Die Antwort schwuler Männer in New York auf AIDS*, a couple years ago, it was not until recently that I saw the first doc, *Silence = Death* (1990) aka *Die Aids-Trilogie: Schweigen = Tod - Künstler in New York kämpfen gegen AIDS*, which is indubitably the most superlatively subversive, defiantly grotesque, and aberrantly artistic of the films as an overtly wayward and compulsively confrontational work that takes a look at various HIV-positive NYC-based artists and their works as they lament on living with an innately incapacitating disease that has turned them into the most odious and grotesque of social outcasts, or so they describe while criticizing their various enemies of the heterosexual Christian right (or what Iranian-born American experimental playwright, sometimes filmmaker, and AIDS victim Reza Abdoh once affectionately described as the 'Tight White Right'). Indeed, *Silence = Death* is an unrepentant and sometimes unhinged homo-hate agitprop piece where prominent sexually introverted artists like eventual AIDS victim David Wojnarowicz and Beat writer turned NAMBLA member Allen Ginsberg demonstrate their undying contempt for the U.S. government, which the former unequivocally blames for the AIDS epidemic, as if Ronnie Reagan put a gun to his head and made him give head to a stranger in some seedy public bathroom. Needless to say, von Praunheim's decidedly debasing doc is nothing like your contemporary piece of sanitized sod celluloid, which typically depicts gays as happy-go-lucky upstanding citizens who just want to be accepted and just happen to like cocks instead of cunts yet somehow magically manage to contract AIDS and various other STDs more often. In other words, the fierce fags of *Silence = Death* do not care if your grandma likes them and openly admit they would love nothing more than to destroy powerful homo-hating churches and politicians, especially Wojnarowicz, who seems to hate just about everyone aside from fellow queers with AIDS. Indeed, you know the subjects of a documentary are somewhat crazed when proud pedo poet Allen Ginsberg seems like the most rational and sane one.

Without even a credit sequence or title scene, *Silence = Death* abruptly begins with a stereotypically loudmouthed and flamboyant Guido-like poet named Emilio Cubeiro sitting in his ugly and rather dilapidated apartment and going on a heated rant about how he was diagnosed with AIDS six weeks ago and how he has a "gut feeling" that "someone caused this," even speculating that he is a victim of some sort of CIA germ warfare program against poofs. After complaining about how he hates feeling like a victim and how he recently saw a group of well dressed young Republicans chanting at a group of gay protestors, "You people got AIDS because you fucking deserved it," Cubeiro randomly whips out a small revolver and declares, "I've always been a person that lived by the sword in the sense that you're gonna die [...] the same way you lived. I've always been an

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asshole in one sense, so there's no better way to go out, I don't think. Let me see what you think of this [...] now, I really want you to take a look at my asshole." From there things get ugly and Cubeiro drops his pants, bends over in front of the camera, puts the revolver in his rectum, and then pulls the trigger, thus resulting in a large amount of oily liquid shit to gush out of his AIDS-ridden anus in a patently preposterous Marian Dora-esque 'performance art' routine that would surely alienate any sane heterosexual viewer from supporting the gay cause. After Cubeiro's mock suicide by bullet through the bung hole, shots of his rather 'ghetto' apartment are juxtaposed with a recording of his unintentionally hilarious Lydia Lunch produced album *Death of an Asshole* (1989), which features the rather ludicrous line: "...to fuck death is to master death...you give it orders, you tell it when to cum. You see, death is your slave even when it is your master." Indeed, von Praunheim's *Silence = Death* seems to fetishize AIDS in a decidedly deranged way that makes it seem like dying from gay cancer is the ultimate 'orgasm,' as well as a post-Stonewall 'rite of passage' that only the most hardcore of homos experience.

Undoubtedly, the real 'star' of von Praunheim's doc is perennially amateurish painter, photographer, writer, filmmaker, performance artist, and AIDS activist David Wojnarowicz, who succumbed to gay cancer two years after the film was released and who would probably not be remembered today and celebrated by all the right people were it not for his brazenly bombastic aberrosexual activism and the specific nature of his untimely death. As Wojnarowicz explains, he used to hide in the cocksucker closet, which enabled him to, "enjoy something about this self-silence, self anonymity where I could travel across America, hitchhike in a car where I'm picked up by a cop who, if he knew what I thought for two seconds, would shoot me on the road," but because of the AIDS epidemic and the death of his lover, Warhol groupie and photographer Peter Hujar, he has become aggressively vocal about his homosexuality and blatantly blames Christian churches, politicians, and the government for the outbreak, as if it is a 'fascistic' disease that punishes gays for their sexual proclivities (when, in reality, the epidemic is a direct result of the anti-mores promoted by the so-called sexual liberation movement and Marcusean 'new left'). As his autobiographical books and 'biopic' *Postcards from America* (1994) directed by Steve McLean reveal, Wojnarowicz, not unlike many gay men that don't seem overtly effeminate, was routinely sexually abused as a child and even became a dick-peddler during his teenage years. In terms of the fact that he knows that he is going to very likely succumb to his illness soon, Wojnarowicz reveals that he does not believe in any sort of afterlife and somewhat cynically states, "...when you die, you become fly food and somehow that is comforting," as if he longs to rot and decay. As he aggressively declares during one of his various rather hostile histrionic rants, Wojnarowicz does not want a memorial when he dies, but instead he wants his friends to drop his emaciated corpse onto the front steps of the White House in a

gesture that would reflect his belief that, “these are the people that are responsible for my death.” Indeed, Wojnarowicz does not believe that his lethally lecherous behavior is at all responsible for the fact that he is going to die as indicated by his rather ridiculous remark, “It’s not my sucking dick that is responsible for my death, or my getting fucked in the ass, or any of these things. These people, at this point, are responsible for my death because their inactivity and their total gesture of silence after eight years of this.” Personally, if I peddled my prick to strangers or regularly reamed anonymous rectums in piss-and-shit-drenched public restrooms, I would most certainly consider it my own fault if I contracted AIDS and died, but I guess I am an unenlightened heterosexual homophobe who does not understand the wayward wonders of a self-destructive sexual pathology.

Somewhat humorously, Hebraic homo poet Allen Ginsberg credits the fact that he is fucked by supposedly ‘heterosexual’ men instead of fellow slutty ‘queens’ like himself that he does not have AIDS. Notably, Ginsberg reveals that he is regularly tested for AIDS because he does not want it on his conscious if one of his self-described “much younger” lovers contracts the disease from him. Unlike Wojnarowicz, who was as debauched as they come as an ex-hustler and tearoom queen, Ginsberg at least expresses a degree of self-responsibility as opposed to simply blaming everything on the Christian Right and government. Of course, to be fair, Ginsberg confesses that he oftentimes has a ‘hard time’ getting an erection because, being an overweight Israelite who has probably never exercised in his entire life, he has to take blood pressure pills, so his sex life was probably not as prolific as a younger man like Wojnarowicz. According to Ginsberg, humanity itself is like HIV, as he states, “the planet itself has AIDS” due to all the pollution. Personally, I find Ginsberg’s poetry to be the literary equivalent of AIDS (after all, Ginsberg’s bud William S. Burroughs did not speak of ‘word viruses’ for nothing), but I digress. In von Praunheim’s *Silence = Death*, Ginsberg becomes a rare voice of reason who, as far as the viewer can judge from what he says, is doing his part to prevent the spread of the most deadly phenomenon in the gay community since the Night of the Long Knives. To Wojnarowicz’s marginal credit, one gets the impression that after his boy toy Hujar succumbed to HIV in 1987, he became all the more nihilistic and self-destructive, as if he was trying in vain to spite the entire world by screaming that he is a terminally ill faggot and he is proud of it. Of course, I’m sure Fräulein von Praunheim could appreciate such pure and unadulterated megalomania, hence why Wojnarowicz probably ultimately became the main subject of the doc.

Unquestionably, *Silence = Death* reaches its zenith in terms of unadulterated aesthetic grotesquery towards the end when Wojnarowicz’s degenerate amateurish short *A Fire in My Belly*—a work featuring ants crawling across crucifixes and other similarly juvenile and silly things that attempt to offend but only bore or annoy—is juxtaposed with the song “This is the Law of the Plaque” by Greek-American avant-garde singer/composer Diamanda Galás, whose own

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playwright brother Philip-Dimitri Galás perished as a result of AIDS. A good portion of the doc is dedicated to showing off paintings and drawings by AIDS-ridden artists like Rafael Gamba, Keith Haring, and Peter Kunz, with the latter of whom being depicted in an exceedingly emaciated state on what seems to be his deathbed. Although all these artists have very different styles, what all their paintings seem to have in common aside from being hopelessly 'modern' yet primitive in persuasion is a sort of less than subtle synthesis of sex and death, thus making it seem like their actual deaths from the most deleterious of STDs would be their true magnum opuses. Not unlike his subsequent AIDS trilogy documentary *Positive*, *Silence = Death* is notable for a von Praunheim doc in that the filmmaker did not find a way to incorporate himself in it in a rather obnoxious and narcissistic way like he typically does, yet it still somehow manages to be just as innately subversive and radically repellent as his other works, as if the queen of kraut queer cinema went out of his way to work with the most vulgar HIV-positive artists that he could find. It might interest cinophiles to know that 'lo-fi' experimental film maverick Mike Kuchar (*Sins of the Fleshapoids*, *The Craven Sluck*) acted as the film's cinematographer, which might explain the exceedingly and almost proudly amateurish essence of the film as if the work was shot in the seediest basement in Sodom with Andy Warhol's camera and leftover film reels and with forsaken soul of 'flaming' filmmaker turned intentional AIDS casualty Jack Smith (*Flaming Creatures*, *Normal Love*) acting as a sort of spiritual adviser.

Ultimately, *Silence = Death* is an (anti)nostalgic gay celluloid archive created at a time when sod artists were still actually subversive and not interested in becoming like their banal bourgeois heterosexual enemies by demanding that they be allowed to get married and adopt starving negroes from some AIDS ravaged nation in Africa, among other things. Indeed, in my opinion, AIDS was not just one of the worst things to happen to gays because it killed them like flies, but also because it inspired the cocksucker community to align themselves with their perennial enemies, lesbos, and become politically active in the most pathetic and obnoxious victim-mentality-based way imaginable, thereupon seemingly killing their true contribution to society as pioneering artists and cultural subversives as opposed to being infantile narcissists who somehow think parading around in public in pink thongs and little girls fairy wings is somehow a demonstration of some sort of pride. Indeed, if great fag filmmakers like Fassbinder and Pasolini were alive today, I am sure they would cringe upon hearing the vomit-worthy acronym 'LGBT.' While the title of *Silence = Death* is in reference to the belief that if homos kept silent about their homosexuality and the AIDS epidemic then many more homos would die as a result of lack of public awareness and, in turn, government inaction in regard to the gay plague, queers cannot shut their mouths nowadays even though they have nothing of value to say and they never will as the new gay mainstream is a plastic pre-packaged pseudo-identity that has

never sired a single Jean Cocteau, Ludwig Wittgenstein, W.S. Burroughs, Kenneth Anger or even von Praunheim, not to mention the fact that it's automaton-like members are more banal than the most soulless of David Matthews Band loving frat-boys, albeit they dress ten times worse. If you want to sample the old school homo world before it became vogue to smoke poles and flaunt social justice warrior credentials, checkout von Praunheim's doc and bask in the lost glory of true gay grit of the deadly, demented, and diseased sort.

-Ty E

I AM MY OWN WOMAN
I AM MY OWN WOMAN

Rosa von Praunheim° (1992)

As far as I know, *I Am My Own Woman* (1992) aka *Ich bin meine eigene Frau* directed by aberrosexual agitpropagandist and all-around gay agitator Rosa von Praunheim (*Die Bettwurst*, *A Virus Knows No Morals*) is the only biographical film ever made about the life and times of an East German tranny. Additionally, it is also probably the only Brechtian docudrama ever made about a tranny, be they German or otherwise, thus making it seem like a film that would only appeal to a bourgeois art fag in art school, yet it also happens to be one of von Praunheim's most mature, if not patently propagandistic, works as a rather sentimental work from a rather unsentimental and very scatological kind of guy. Based on the 1992 autobiography of the same name by Charlotte von Mahlsdorf (born Lothar Berfelde), who survived both the Nazis and Stasis and appears as 'herself' in the film, Praunheim's decadent yet perversely dignified PBS-esque quasi-documentary depicts the stranger-than-fiction story of a born-tranny who, among other things, killed his National Socialist leader father with a wooden stirring stick(!), was almost raped by hordes of semi-Asiatic Soviet soldiers after being mistaken for a woman, became the man-muse of a degenerate Prussian aristocrat, opened up a popular phony antique museum full of factory-made everyday items, was awarded with the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and somehow managed to find a very special place in two different authoritarian worlds where men in dresses are more than just a little bit frowned about. Taking a rather bizarre and meta-reflexive approach to the documentary format as a sort of documentary/docudrama/narrative film hybrid of the pathologically Brechtian sort, *I Am My Own Woman* not only features two actors portraying the subject during 'her' younger years, but also Charlotte von Mahlsdorf him/herself, who constantly interrupts scenes of episodes from her exceedingly eccentric life to explain, among other things, how they are exact reproductions of what happened in his/her real-life. A hermetic history of homo kraut underground and beyond, Praunheim's critically revered doc demonstrates that the malignant debauchery of the Weimar era was not merely an isolated phenomenon of Teutonic history, as sexual degeneracy in the Fatherland has always existed, albeit it was mostly regulated to the underworld in the past. Centering around a seemingly benign but ultimately mischievous and semi-psychopathic creature who passive-aggressively got what s/he wanted whenever she wanted just like so many other calm and calculating women, von Praunheim's film is interesting in that it proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that von Mahlsdorf had an innately bourgeois broad brain and was not simply some sexually confused wack-job like Buffalo Bill from *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). While just as patently perverted as the director's previous works in many different ways, *I Am My Own Woman* marked the beginning of a more serious, sentimental, and

controlled von Praunheim who had unofficially taken on the job of being Germany's foremost gay anthropologist, ethnologist, and documentarian. A bizarre Oedipal tale where the subject literally kills his father, but instead of wanting to make love to his mother, he wanted to be her instead, *I Am My Own Woman* is a work that has to be seen to be believed (and, indeed, it is certainly hard to believe some of von Mahlsdorf's curious anecdotes, as they read more like a Teutonic tranny *The Twilight Zone* than historical fact).

As Charlotte von Mahlsdorf states at the beginning of the film, "My life's ideal is the Gründerzeit period (1880-1900) and I've made my dream come true. For over 30 years my furniture collection has been housed here at my Gründerzeit Museum in Mahlsdorf. I live here like a woman at the turn of the century." Von Mahlsdorf attributes his/her obsession with the Gründerzeit era to her beloved anti-Nazi granduncle whose house s/he was born in. As someone who confesses that, "Even as a child I liked to dust and clean," it should be no surprise that von Mahlsdorf got her first job at an antique shop in 1942 while still just a teenage boy (as portrayed by Jens Taschner). A self-described "transvestite," von Mahlsdorf found solace in staying with his aunt, who was a transsexual bull-dyke who had no problem walking around in public wearing men's clothing during the Nazi era. Ultimately, von Mahlsdorf became aware that he was not the only man who felt like a woman when his aunt introduced him to Jewish sexologist Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's book *The Transvestites* aka *Die Transvestiten*, which he read religiously when not being buggered by a hyper horny stable boy. While von Mahlsdorf found much love and support in his Sapphic aunt and granduncle (who warned him of "brown-shirted criminals" like his father), he faced virtual hell-on-earth at his family home in the form of his Nazi leader Papi (Utz Krause), who the protagonist describes as "absolute evil" and who whipped his son's bare ass in a homoerotic fashion for playing with dolls. When von Mahlsdorf's father gave him the ultimatum that he either chose between him or his mother, the momma's boy decided to take decisive action and brutally beat his father to death with a wooden stirring tool and, as a result of his actions, he was sent to Tübingen for a psychiatric examination by a certain Doctor Ritter and ultimately sentenced to four years in a reformatory in 1945. Luckily for the twink tranny, Nazi Germany was losing a war, so he managed to get out of the reformatory early, though he faced much danger while walking around the destroyed streets of Berlin, which were being bombed by Soviet dive bombers and stalked by hardcore National Socialists who were looking to lynch traitors and deserters. In fact, Von Mahlsdorf was also almost executed for being a supposed deserter, but a Nazi officer saved his life at the very last minute. Needless to say, as a child of war, von Mahlsdorf had to grow up fast. In other words, he had to be his 'own woman' and like most desperate women, he used his body to advance his sorry lot in life.

When not dodging the advances of Red Army rapists (during one scene in the

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film, a Russian goes to rape him, but cries, "Impossible! German women have cocks!" after lifting his dress and getting a nice little surprise), von Mahlsdorf (as depicted by von Praunheim dude-diva Ichgola Androgyn) was helping deliver pigs at a swine farm and giving transvestite balls at Friedrichsfelde Castle, which was in a state of disrepair before the Teutonic tranny helped fix things up in 1946. Apparently, the "crème de la crème of the Prussian aristocracy" held tranny balls at the castle over a century before von Mahlsdorf ever showed up, thus proving that Prussia always had its own esoteric poof world. Eventually, von Mahlsdorf became the extra loyal 'servant girl' and sex object of a rather round WWI officer named Herbert von Zitzenau (Robert Dietl) in a relationship that would span about a decade until the debauched aristocrat predicted his own death in 1957 after entering a hospital and ultimately subsequently succumbing to a fatal heart attack. As the no-bullshit transvestite states regarding her innate attraction to fat old farts, "I've always been erotically drawn to older men. It's the same for me as many women: one feels protected." From von Zitzenau, von Mahlsdorf learned much about homosexual history during the Kaiser's time, as well as a series of S&M-style sexual role-playing games he would later use with his "Lebensmensch" Jochen (Rainer Luhn), who he met in a public restroom. Mahlsdorf's relationship with Jochen lasted for 27 years until the latter's death in 1987. In 1959, Mahlsdorf began what he would be best remembered for by opening a Gründerzeit era museum at a 200 year house called 'Mahlsdorf' manor, hence his pseudonymous aristocratic name. Of course, the Stasi attempted to takeover von Mahlsdorf's business and by 1974 it got so bad that he began giving away his antiques to friends, lest they fall into cold commie hands, but in the end s/he persevered and won her personal war against the bolshevik beast.

In the late 1980s, von Mahlsdorf hired two bull-dykes to help him run his museum and one of them describes how she, "almost choked to death laughing" upon meeting the elderly tranny. As Mahlsdorf describes, "like all women in East Germany who turned 60, I got my pension and was able to visit the West for the first time in many years," but being the year 1988, the transvestite would be saddened to discover that all except one of her former lovers that lived in the West were already dead. During the late-1970s, von Mahlsdorf starred in various East German movies and TV shows in small bit roles as transvestites, but her proudest accomplishment was starring in the first (and ultimately last) gay East German film, *Coming Out* (1989) directed by cult auteur Heiner Carow, who is best known for his work *The Legend of Paul and Paula* (1973) aka *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*. As von Mahlsdorf states, "The 9th of November, 1989, was not only the premier for the film *COMING OUT*, it was also the day of "coming out" for all of East Germany." Indeed, the Berlin Wall finally opened up so that East Germans could freely travel to the west and vice versa without being molested by Stasi guards. Of course, with capitalism eventually hitting the Stalinized East, von Mahlsdorf found herself unable to pay the bills

and had to sell many of her precious antiques which, as s/he states herself, were irreplaceable. Indeed, rather ironically, after 30 years resisting the Stasi, the ostensibly democratic German government managed to annex her Gründerzeit Museum. On top of that, a group of 70 or so neo-nazis crashed von Mahlsdorf's "First gay-lesbian spring party for East and West since the Wall" and beat up all her friends, including women, without scruple. In the end, von Mahlsdorf tries to establish a link between the old National Socialist regime and gutter-dwelling neo-Nazi skinheads, as if they are at all comparable in any meaningful way. Of course, von Mahlsdorf is a simple-minded person and sees anti-gay as anti-gay and nothing more.

At the very end of *I Am My Own Woman*, Charlotte von Mahlsdorf declares while warmly smiling while in the company of her best friends, "I am a totally happy person." Unquestionably, I believe her as von Mahlsdorf seems like a rather happy-go-lucky person throughout the film, but I found some parts about her story to be somewhat dubious as all the pieces of the tale fit together a little bit too perfectly. Indeed, despite there being a scene in the film where the teenage von Mahlsdorf is asked by a doctor why he hasn't joined the Hitler Youth and s/he responds, "Because it doesn't interest me," in real-life he was indeed once a member of the Hitler Youth and joined the group in 1942 just like all boys his age did at that time (after all, it was the law and the boys had no choice, so it is odd that von Praunheim would lie about this). To von Mahlsdorf's credit, s/he was not the good little politically correct type who meekly cowered to the truly fascistic dogma of the LGBT crowd, as s/he caused a controversy that lost her many supporters at a Berlin lecture on 12 March 1997 after remarking: "That lesbians and gays can't have children is after all quite natural. Nature too seeks out what it can use, what can reproduce and what can't. If we look at it like that, if lesbians and gays did have children, then we'd have a lot more unemployed people today." Undoubtedly, if I learned anything from watching *I Am My Own Woman*, it is that gays and even transvestites always have a special and important place in society, even if they live in a culture that is purportedly homophobic. Additionally, as von Mahlsdorf's relationship with WWI officer Herbert von Zitzenuw proves, homosexuality was more or less openly accepted in Germany among even the Prussian aristocracy, which certainly is at odds with the mainstream cultural Marxist narrative that Germany is a historically homo-hating and fag-bashing nation. Of course, *I Am My Own Woman* is not the only documentary that von Praunheim has made about a transvestite, as he later directed a 50-minute film entitled *Der rosa Riese* (2008) aka *The Pink Giant* about tranny rapist serial killer Wolfgang Schmidt (now known as Beate Schmidt) aka "The Beast of Beelitz" aka "Pink Giant" who sexually abused and murdered 5 women between the ages of 34 to 66 years old and even killed a 3 month old baby by slamming it against a tree stump. Indeed, by comparing the subjects of *I Am My Own Woman* and *The Pink Giant*, it becomes quite appar-

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ent that transvestites come in various shapes and forms, with some being sweet old ladies like Mrs. Doubtfire and others being murderous psychos like Buffalo Bill. Of course, the gay mainstream wants you to believe all old transvestites are like von Mahlsdorf and Mrs. Doubtfire. As I Am My Own Woman reveals, you do not need the Pink Gestapo to be your own woman if you're a transvestite.

-Ty E

NEUROSID: 50 YEARS OF PERVERSITY

Rosa von Praunheim° (1995)

New German cinema spawned a lot of full-fledged, and oftentimes faggy, narcissists, but hysterical homo-supremacist Rosa von Praunheim (*The Einstein of Sex: Life and Work of Dr. M. Hirschfeld, Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis*) – the uncrowned queen of queer low-kitsch and flaunting big dicks – indubitably takes the cum-layered cake for being the most conceited cocksucker if there ever was one. Unlike his enemy Rainer Werner Fassbinder and their mutual friend Werner Schroeter – both of whom also played for the pink team, if not more reservedly so – von Praunheim directs films that almost exclusively focus on himself and his own sexual vice (with a couple of fierce females thrown in for good measure), so much so that his mission has been to not only offend those horrid heteros, but also his fellow gays, in part due to his incessant propagandizing of AIDS-related and safe-sex (i.e. pro-condom) issues as a sort of self-pointed fag Führer of the exceedingly embarrassing and annoying sort. With his early and unintentionally hilarious and ludicrous campy docudrama and virtual poofer political manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), von Praunheim – then only a princess of priss and pestering – demanded that young homos get out of the tearoom and leather fag bar and take to the streets to unite with their eternal enemy, lily-licking lesbos, along with other marginalized groups (i.e. non-whites) as is quite the norm today in U.S.A., and to demand politics power and representation. Again, in the early 1990s after directing one of the first films about AIDS *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1985), prancing Praunheim took to the streets of NYC demanding recognition of the AIDS epidemic among gays and directed a gay cancer trilogy (*Positive, Silence = Death, Fire Under Your Ass*). Von Praunheim also proved his propensity towards putrid pomposity in 1991 by “outing” and wrongly outing various German celebrities on the TV show *Explosiv - Der heiÙe Stuhl* as hidden homos. Of course, no one probably knows his intrinsic negligent narcissism and pestiferous perversity better than Rosa von Praunheim himself as depicted in his manic mockumentary *Neurosid - 50 Jahre pervers* (1995) aka *Neurosid: 50 Years of Perversity*; a largely autobiographical work that was advertised with the relatively reasonable plea of puffery: “John Waters meets Orson Welles in this gay *Citizen Kane*!”

Who Shot Rosa von Praunheim? or so drives the mystery behind *Neurosid: 50 Years of Perversity*; a work that also acts as a saucy and sadistic summary of the decidedly depraved director’s life and filmmaking career up until that point. Indeed, it is easy to see how after imploring an audience at the premiere of his new film to, “excuse me for my fame. Excuse me for my beauty. Excuse me for my artistic talent,” one would want to do devastating bodily harm to Rosa von Praunheim and thereupon put an end to his aberrant art and broadcasted self-worship,

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so it should be no surprise that the suspects of the shooting are wide and vast and personal and impersonal. Another problem arises when the self-deprecating yet self-deceiving dick-sucking director's body goes immediately missing after the shooting, thus giving *Neurosid: 50 Years of Perversity* the feel of a sordid yet significantly satirical political-thriller. In the rather unlikely tradition of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), a sleazy homo-hating TV journalist named Gesine Ganzmann-Seipel (played by Désirée Nick, German Roman Catholic theologian, cabaret artist, comedian, actress, and mother to a bastard son of Prince Heinrich Julius of Hanover) to dig up the dookie-covered scoop on von Praunheim's positively perverse personal life, henceforth steadfastly scouring the terribly tainted "blood and sperm" of his troubled STD-ridden romances, atypical artistic relationships, and the infinite reasons why the world hates the AIDS-absorbed anarchic auteur of morally and aesthetically bankrupt lunatic lechery. As a manic mensch who admitted to being sexually aroused by and attempting to seduce his own father as a boy, found his first true love while giving away tricks in a turd-tinged tearoom, directed quasi-pornographic films using burn victims, forced his poor students to film him having sex with men while acting as a guest film professor for a San Francisco-based workshop he 'taught' in 1977, married a beautiful woman solely to receive a 15,000 mark government subsidy given to German newlyweds so he could fund his first films, and a sexual maniac who earned the title of "Traitor of the Year" in a prominent German newspaper *Bunde*, it is no surprise that Gesine discovers a letter written sent to von Praunheim stating: "To the chief of the gay and lesbian sows and swine...in Berlin, Rosa von Praunheim. You damned gay and lesbian swine...are due for slaughter. It's your fault that people...are due for slaughter. It's your fault that people...are infected with the AIDS disease...due to your ass-fucking and so on. We're almost...the same as the SS under our idea, Adolph Hitler. Such as you must be 100% gassed to death." Of course, Fräulein Gesine discovers a lot more unflattering things about von Praunheim, not least of all his savage sodomite sexual spirit and apparently rectum-ripping member (not that he does not expose it a number of times in the film), his vehement verbal fag-bashing of fellow flaming fairies, and – most of all – his mind-numbingly nauseating narcissism. Needless to say, although *Neurosid: 50 Years of Perversity* purports to being a biting satire of the asshole-assaulting auteur, the film also acts as the perfect publicity for his career and a virtual advertisement for his more memorable cinematic works, including appearances from actors and excerpts from *Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), *Army of Lovers or Revolt of the Perverts* (1979), *Horror Vacui* (1984), and *A Virus Knows No Morals* (1985), among a number of others.

Naturally, a lot has changed in Rosa von Praunheim's life since the release of *Neurosid: 50 Years of Perversity*, not the least of all the life-changing revelation that the mother who thought he needed counseling to cure his gayness and the fa-

ther he always wanted to fuck were not really his biological parents at all after his then 94-year-old adoptive mother, Gertrud Mischwitzky, finally told him the tormenting truth in 2000. Since then, von Praunheim has directed the documentary *Two Mothers* (2007) aka *Meine Mütter - Spurensuche in Riga* which revealed that he was born in a prison that his birth mother – who was fond of black market goods and sexy SS commanders – was imprisoned in and that his real father may have been a notorious Nazi photographer. They say hysterical women produce hysterical homos, so it should be no surprise that von Praunheim's Nazi nympho harlot of a mother inevitably had a mental breakdown and was institutionalized where she died under dubious circumstances not much later. Additionally, for all of his hating of National Socialism, I think that is quite likely that Ms. von Praunheim would have been a beer-boozing and cum-guzzling SA brownshirt had he lived during the era leading up to the Third Reich because like the the avant-gay auteur, the leaders of the Sturmabteilung, including the leader and co-founder Ernst Röhm and his poofer pretty boy deputy Edmund Heines, enjoyed fighting in the streets and brutal barebacking, so much so that homosexual Jewish-German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (who, incidentally is a hero of von Praunheim's, to the extent that he directed the biopic *The Einstein of Sex* in tribute) apparently had a number of incriminating medical dossiers on the National Sodomites. Of course, von Praunheim also went on to direct the documentary *Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis* to expose the hidden history of homo Hitlerites, as well as contemporary leather Führers and head-giving skinheads. Needless to say, with all of von Praunheim's cinematic excursions in erotic eccentricity and crude camp carnality, it is about time that he updates *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*; a work that – although making for the perfect introduction to the flaming filmmaker's curiously quaint and queer oeuvre – now seems quite outrageously outmoded. After all, at the time of filming *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*, von Praunheim only had 60+ friends who died of AIDS and had yet to make a film (*Your Heart in My Head* (2005)) about cock-chomping cannibals. That being said, maybe the fierce fudge-packing filmmaker should wait until he acquires AIDS before revamping *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*, but then again, Rosa von Praunheim is no Derek Jarman.

-Ty E

CAN I BE YOUR BRATWURST, PLEASE?
CAN I BE YOUR BRATWURST, PLEASE?

Rosa von Praunheim° (1999)

For his just-under-30-minutes short *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* (1999), Berlin-based bad boy buggerer auteur Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts, Your Heart in My Head*) returned to his low-camp cult roots, albeit Americanizing and Christmasizing it in the process in what amounts to a softcore cannibal Christmas special of the hopelessly hokey Golden Age Hollywood homage variety. A rare Rosa von Praunheim narrative flick shot in English in Los Angeles, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* has the grand degenerate distinction of featuring mostly-gay American porn star Jeff Stryker (*Jamie Loves Jeff, Zombie 4: After Death*)—a meaty moron of a man who had his member immortalized via the “Jeff Stryker Cock and Balls” dildo (apparently, the pseudo-cock made headlines when Stryker and the manufacturer of the item litigated for the rights to its likeness as part of the porn star’s “intellectual property”)—as he dreams his way through American history, bumping into Marilyn Monroe and turning into German expressionist master auteur F.W. Murnau, among various other wacky things. Also featuring von Praunheim’s real-life aunt Luzi Kryn, who starred in the director’s first hit cult flick *Die Bettwurst* (1971) and its sequel *Berliner Bettwurst* (1975), *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is also a fucked ‘family affair’ of sorts that climaxes with a curious Christmas feast of the cock-chopping and limb-licking persuasion that reminds one why porn stars, hustlers, and hunks are always referred to as ‘meat’ and nothing much more. Produced by Regina Ziegler, whose creative relationship started with von Praunheim when she helped with *Die Bettwurst* and produced its sequel *Berliner Bettwurst*, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is essentially a micro-sequel to the original *Bettwurst* films, or as stated at Zieglerfilms.com, “*Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* bears all the earmarks of a consummated trilogy: a kinky, ribald, diverting, hilarious Erotic Tale. And not a moment too soon, for it was the last screen appearance of the nonagenarian Luci Kryn.” Apparently, the co-star of *Die Bettwurst* and *Berliner Bettwurst*, bitchy blond twink Dietmar Kracht, made a failed attempt at swimming Lake Havel one night, therefore a true sequel never could have been made, thus *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* offers something quite different and all the more psychopathically comedic and senselessly scatological. Produced as part of Regina Ziegler’s *Erotic Tales*—a multi-volume series of sexually-charged shorts directed by master auteur filmmaker’s from around the world, including Ken Russell, Bob Rafelson, and Nicholas Roeg—*Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is a short and sick depiction of a sexually and racially eclectic collective of cannibals, including everything from negro trannies and leather-fags to bitchy little girls and latina midgets, who all want a piece of Jeff Stryker’s meatrack.

Opening with the off-screen narration from a German-born hotel owner

(Karl-Heinz Teuber) stating quite jollily, "Christmas... is a feast of love and food but we had no idea whom to eat this year. We didn't care about gender or race or age. We were open-minded and tolerant but we hated bad food. All the club members in our little family hotel had agreed on a special test... Only our fantasies could decide whether someone was just a piece of meat or really perfect for the main course. This time we only want the very best and we prayed and prayed he would come along in time," *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* then introduces porn star Jeff Stryker, who has just arrived in Hollywood via bus and walks by a building with iconic movie stars like Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable, James Dean, John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, etc. painted on it. The first thing Stryker does after arriving in Los Angeles is bumping into a girl on rollerblades who dreams of licking blood off his muscle-bound body. After the rather bizarre run-in with the ravenous roller-girl, Stryker heads to a hotel and is hypnotized by its kraut owner who warns him, "And if you're not a good boy, you will get German discipline" before showing him to his room. Not long after, Stryker becomes JFK and has a dreamy bedroom date with a Marilyn Monroe clone straight out of Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance* (1985), but being gay, he turns her down for sex. Next, Stryker goes on a dream date with the Hotel Owner's elderly mother Lucy (von Praunheim's aunt Luci Kryn) and she has him go pick her up some Christmas items, including German sausage, but on the way back he runs into a big black buck leather-fag of the high yellow persuasion, who dreams of having a faggy married bourgeois life with the cracker cocksucker that revolves around yappy American Eskimo dogs and complaining at dinner like a nagging house wife. After an earthquake, Stryker loses consciousness and before he knows it, he dreams of a busty blonde masseuse (Sirena Irwin, who acts as the voice of Mrs. SpongeBob of *SpongeBob SquarePants*), who the porn star tells "I do have an oversized enlarged organ" after she asks if he has any muscle problems. Indeed, in terms of dialogue alone, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is not much more than a softcore porn flick, albeit of the aberrant-garde variety.

After his rough erotically-charged massage with the masseuse, Stryker goes on a date with a Hispanic chick in a debauched guided tour of Hollywood in a hearse, where the driver shows places where star actors died and/or got busted for sex crimes. Inspired by Kenneth Anger's dubious anecdote from his tabloid masterpiece *Hollywood Babylon* (1959) told by the creepy tour guide, Stryker imagines himself as German master auteur F.W. Murnau (*Nosferatu*, a *Symphony of Horror*, *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*) dying in a car accident after a sexual mishap involving giving his 14-year-old Philippine servant driver a blowjob. The tour guide describes how Murnau's death was a tragedy as the director could have potentially directed a sequel to his masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922) entitled *Nosferatu II: Going Down for the Count* were it not for his tragic premature death. Later that day, Stryker is approached by a terribly hungry little girl who bites his arm and runs away like a wild animal and immediately

CAN I BE YOUR BRATWURST, PLEASE?

after, a black tranny named Vaginal Davis dreams of licking whipped cream off the porn star's toes. After taking a shower in a scene where Rosa von Praunheim gets to show off his film's star's meat, Stryker receives a curious phone call from Mexican midget Selene Luna (*Firecracker*, *My Bloody Valentine 3D*), who fantasizes about the sexual athlete washing her car. After all his odd encounters with the many eclectic perverts around Hollywood, Stryker is invited to a Christmas feast by the Hotel Owner. When Stryker arrives, he runs into all the perverted people he had met previously that day and it is declared "A Christmas miracle" by said perverts, and before he knows it, the Midwestern meatrack is laying on the dinner table and being covered in disgusting and grotesque neon-colored sauces. Before chowing down, the Hotel Manage declares, "Dearest friends and club members... And as you all know WE ONLY EAT WHAT WE LIVE; isn't that right?! We believe in the beauty of human nature and with that in mind, I would like to propose a toast. Will you all please raise your glasses to human nature." After that, Stryker's body parts are eaten by his new friends, with little latina Selene Luna chewing on his exaggerated wiener and the Hotel Owner eating his eyes, but an earthquake puts a stop to the La Grotesque Grande Bouffe and the porn star wakes up, realizing it was all a dream. While sunbathing poolside at the hotel, Stryker is served giant sausages by a young twink waiter, who asks him: Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?

A sort of strikingly stupid and scatological *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) meets Paul Morrissey's *Heat* (1972) made in the style of the Grand Guignol and pre-Hollywood John Waters, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is a sexually aberrant and sardonic film of the killer kitsch cannibal variety that wastes no time in associating the human body and sexual subversion with a sort of natural cannibalism that is not only to be practiced, but celebrated. Essentially, the film glorifies and 'takes ownership' of the age old Christian libel of associating homosexuality with cannibalism, thereupon making *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* a satirical cinematic platter of poof political incorrectness that is bound to offend more high-strung homos and provide great propaganda for the infamous Westboro Baptist Church. Of course, director Rosa von Praunheim did not stop his interest in camp cannibalism with *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* as he followed up the work with the macabre low-budget melodrama *Your Heart in My Head* (2005) aka *Dein Herz in meinem Hirn*, a nasty bit of digital video diarrhea funded with German government tax money that is loosely based on the life and times of real-life German cannibal Armin Meiwes. Around the time he was making *Your Heart in My Head*, von Praunheim admitted he had been studying cannibalism for over 20 years, stating regarding his interested in the Meiwes case, "What interests me is the gay aspect and that it's also about sado-masochistic experiences." In an interview he did with the www.advocate.com regarding cannibalism and *Your Heart in My Head*, Praunheim stated, "I don't know if it will shock people. People tend to react with disgust on the one hand

and curiosity on the other. We always say I love you so much I could eat you,” and, indeed, “I love you so much I could eat you” is essentially the main theme of *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?*, though the director seems to mistake love with sleazy sex and fetishism, which is certainly an apt way to describe homosexuality. That being said, gay porn star Jeff Stryker made the perfect star of *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* as his greatest talent is being a piece of high dollar meat on display who is respected more for his cock and carnality than his character and creed. Not exactly Fred Halsted’s vision of Los Angeles, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is essentially Jeff Stryker plays himself for the pleasure of perverts everywhere. A film that will undoubtedly be more of interest to Troma and cult movie fans as opposed to queenish fanbois of *Queer as Folk*, *Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?* is also probably the most unwaveringly depraved and morally intemperate Christmas-themed film ever made, even making slasher Santa flicks like *Christmas Evil* (1980) and *Silent Night, Deadly Night* seem tame by comparison, though it makes for a great double-feature with *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1974), which features Warhol Superstars, homo-auteur Jack Smith (*Flaming Creatures*, *Normal Love*), and Tally Brown, the latter of whom von Praunheim directed a documentary about entitled *Tally Brown, New York* (1979). A patently pun-possessed piece of prepubescent-minded celluloid perversity, *Can I Be your Bratwurst, Please?* ultimately makes for a rancid raspberry dessert of thematically ‘cocky’ and aesthetically cannibalistic celluloid culinary art that tastes repulsive going in and leaves a bad aftertaste, yet is still unforgettable nonetheless.

-Ty E

NORTH FACE
NORTH FACE

Rosa von Praunheim° (1999)

After discovering the 2008 German mountaineering film *North Face*, based on a true story involving a team of mountain climbers (two Bavarians and two Austrians) that attempted to climb North Face of the Eiger mountain in 1936, I immediately went to the local library and rented a copy. I was intrigued to see how modern German filmmakers would handle the historical relationship mountaineering had in promoting German national pride for the government of the Third Reich. After all, before the National Socialists ever established total power, the "Mountain film" was very popular in Germany. In fact, the Third Reich's greatest propagandist (not to mention, greatest female filmmaker in film history), Leni Riefenstahl, started her cinema career by starring in Arnold Fanck's *The Holy Mountain* (1926). Upon viewing *The Holy Mountain* for the first time, I was spellbound by the Nordic mysticism and völkisch aesthetic of the film. Before initially viewing *North Face*, I wondered if the film would somehow echo back to the Teutonic spirituality of the original German mountain films. After watching *North Face*, I can honestly say that my hunger for organic German cinema (not the globalist films that are considered "German" cinema nowadays) was fulfilled.

One of Adolf Hitler's most imperative goals (as outlined in *Mein Kampf*) was to unite all Germanic people around the world. In *North Face*, two Germans and two Austrians unite to climb the Eiger as a symbolic act of pan-German unity. Two years after the 1936 mountaineering expedition featured in *North Face* took place, Germany annexed Uncle Adolf's homeland Austria; which was no surprise considering 99.73 percent of Austria's welcomed the Third Reich. Unlike most modern German films about the Third Reich, *North Face* is not completely drenched in defeatist apologies for Nazism. Instead, the film focuses on the strong wills of the individual mountain climbers. In fact, the two German mountaineers, Toni and Andi, decide to quit the German Wehrmacht (army) after they are denied leave for their expedition. Mountaineering, unlike most popular team sports like Football and Basketball, is a true expression of the Faustian spirit. European man, the Faustian man, has always had the instinct to conquer nature and the world. In an undeniable display of bravery and nobility, the mountaineers featured in *North Face* are willing to risk their lives just to be the first to conquer the North Face of Eiger.

The Italian philosopher Julius Evola once wrote a book (*Mediations on the Peak*) on his mountaineering experiences. Baron Evola saw mountain climbing as a metaphor for a spiritual quest. Although in agreement with Evola's inspiring mountaineering philosophy, I believe that mountain climbing can be a spiritual quest in itself. Very few recreational physical activities are comparable to mountaineering, where the individual has to be completely in tune

and at the behest of nature. As so wonderfully portrayed in *North Face*, one wrong move in mountain climbing can result in instantaneous death. I can only imagine the gratifying and life affirming feeling that climbing to the top of a mountain would bestow upon a person. That being said, I really have to give praise to *North Face* director Philipp Stölzl and the courageous cast/crew of the film. *North Face* does not feature a "videogame aesthetic" and humdrum CGI special effects like most modern day action-adventure films. When watching *North Face*, it was hard for me to fathom the fact that the filmmakers were able to create a movie that takes place mostly on a genuine snow and ice-covered mountain. On top of the dangerous and laborious camerawork featured in the film, the actors utilized the original mountaineer equipment used in the 1930s. The cinematic adventure featured in *North Face* makes *127 Hours* feel like a trip to a plastic Hollywood playground by comparison. I certainly cannot imagine any Tinseltown filmmaker or actor taking a death-defying Faustian gamble just to create a breathtaking film like *North Face*. It is no coincidence that the same country that produced Werner Herzog and his mesmerizing film *Fitzcarraldo*, also produced *North Face*.

I have no problem admitting that I have always had little interest in action and adventure films, including films involving mountaineering. To be quite honest, I had no grand expectations for *North Face*, as I expected it to be another cheap and shallow action-adventure film, except with Nazis. After watching this adrenalin-driven mountain climbing picture, I consider it a worthy tribute to the German mountain films of yesteryear. *North Face* may not have a happy ending tacked on like your typical Hollywood movie, but the sorrowful conclusion is quite fitting when you put the film in historical context. Like the protagonists featured in *North Face*, the Third Reich may have failed but the German people gave it their all and fought to the irreconcilable end.

-Ty E

FASSBINDER'S WOMEN
FASSBINDER'S WOMEN

Rosa von Praunheim° (2000)

As revealed in the book *The Queer German Cinema* (2000) by Alice Kuzniar, agitprop-oriented queer kraut auteur and all-around homo-agitator Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Horror vacui*) was apparently quite relieved when his nemesis Rainer Werner Fassbinder—the true heart of German New Cinema and arguably the most important Teutonic filmmaker of the post-WWII era—dropped dead from a drug overdose in 1982 at the premature age of 37. Indeed, while von Praunheim is probably the most important and influential figure of German Queer Cinema, Fassbinder was the most important figure of German cinema in general, hence the former's undying jealousy. While still alive, Fassbinder made it quite clear that he was no fan of von Praunheim either, ultimately remarking regarding his enemy in an article he wrote in defense of Werner Schroeter (von Praunheim's ex-boyfriend): "Rosa von Praunheim, a man who is so progressive, whose consciousness is so liberated from all our bourgeois longings that he actually believes he alone has the right, almost a monopoly, to use the film medium to reflect his or anybody else's homosexuality." Of course, many things can be said of von Praunheim, but being a total 'pansy' is not one of them, at least as a filmmaker, as he had the gall to make what is probably the best documentary ever made about his rival Fassbinder's personal life, *Fassbinder's Women* (2000) aka *Für mich gab's nur noch Fassbinder - Die Glücklichen Opfer Des Rainer Werner F aka Fassbinder Was the Only One for Me: The Willing Victims of Rainer Werner F*. As von Praunheim would state regarding his ex-enemy Fassbinder and his decision to make a documentary about him, "Fassbinder, I knew him when he was starting out, and I couldn't like him. I was jealous of him, envious, and I never liked melodrama. It was only after his death that I really became aware of his qualities. I was fascinated by his wild life – contrast with bourgeois dramas – and his courage to live out the most extreme situations." For *Fassbinder's Women*, von Praunheim managed to interview most of Fassbinder's closest friends, acquaintances, and collaborators and dig up some new gossipy gay dirt about the dead film director. Needless to say, *Fassbinder's Women* reveals a man that was no less complex, melodramatic, erratic, deleterious, and paradoxical than his films. Indeed, converting ostensibly heterosexual comrades to cocksucking, causing countless men/women to fall in love with him for the mere narcissistic pleasure, and turning friends on to drug addiction are just a couple things you will learn about R.W.F. while watching von Praunheim's tell-all scandal-ridden doc. While not featuring a single frame nor excerpt from any of Fassbinder's films, *Fassbinder's Women* is also loaded with countless rare photographs of the filmmaker in his natural habitats, which range from leather-fag S&M bars to nude beaches, thus making the documentary essential viewing for any serious

fan of R.W.F. and his wayward celluloid 'Weltanschauung.'

In terms of all the many beautiful ladies in Fassbinder's life, actress Irm Hermann was apparently "the woman that probably loved him most" as demonstrated by the fact that she financially supported him when he was a nobody, took out a life-destroying loan for his first film, and even attempted to prostitute herself for the filmmaker. Nowadays, Hermann, who typically played bitchy and sexually repressed women in the filmmaker's films, finds great joy in just visiting Fassbinder's grave and reminiscing over the not-so-good days. As a lesser known Fass-bande actress, Ursula Strätz, happily states, "Fassbinder was the only one for me," which is a sentiment that most of her contemporaries seem to also share. Indeed, apparently Fassbinder "loved being loved," even if he was apparently incapable of reciprocating said love and spent his entire filmmaking career obsessing over the innate inequality that comes with virtually all romantic relationships. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Fassbinder's first feature film was entitled *Love is Colder Than Death* (1969). On top of having a short-lived love affair with his future musical composer Peer Raben, Fassbinder managed to convert his assistant director/actor/right-hand man Harry Baer, who originally intended to get married and have kids, to homosexuality during a trip to Paris. Indeed, the portrait of Fassbinder that appears in *Fassbinder's Women* is that of a hysterical hyper-asshole and self-consumed control-freak, but as the director's one-time cameraman Michael Ballhaus (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*) stated regarding his working relationship with the filmmaker, "My attitude has always been that if someone is good they can get away with it. I'd rather work with someone complex and brilliant, like Fassbinder or Scorsese, who aren't so nice, than with someone who is nice but boring." Additionally, Fassman's main leading lady Hanna Schygulla goes so far as even stating that "in a way it was like living in a fascist regime" in terms of working with him, but at the same time he also tended to bring the best out of people and pump up their self-esteem. Of course, Fassbinder just as easily could break someone as demonstrated by the tragic suicides of two of his three great loves. While called "Fassbinder's Women," the documentary is just as much about the men in Fassbinder's life as the title is more of a campy ironic reference to the fact that the filmmaker gave all his male friends/collaborators female nicknames (i.e. Harry Baer was 'Ilse,' Ballhaus was 'Sonja,' Peter Berling was 'Mummy,' etc.). Indeed, while most of the people in the doc seem to agree that Fassbinder was more or less predominately homosexual in persuasion, he also needed a woman in his life like most heterosexual men do, hence his short-lived marriage to actress Ingrid Caven (who only appears in the doc via telephone) and later relationship with film editor Juliane Lorenz (who is now the head of Fassbinder Foundation, which is the foremost promoter of the filmmaker's work). Undoubtedly, if anything is for sure, it is that Fassbinder was not only less gay than Rosa von Praunheim, but also a greater filmmaker, hence why the latter

FASSBINDER'S WOMEN

went on to direct a documentary about the former. On the other hand, Fassbinder once paid 'tribute' to von Praunheim by naming a female character in his avant-garde gangster flick *The American Soldier* (1970) 'Rosa von Praunheim.'

While missing important actors/actresses from the filmmaker's life like Margit Carstensen (who apparently backed out of the doc at the last minute), Barbara Sukowa, Ulli Lommel, Günther Kaufmann, Gottfried John, and a couple others, *Fassbinder's Women* is easily the most insightful, informative, and incriminating documentary I have ever seen on the belated Bavarian bad boy auteur. For instance, Fassbinder's ex-wife Ingrid Caven revealed that the filmmaker somehow managed to 'assert himself' on her, remarking, "He was like a normal man. He really tried. He even screwed me. I think he'd made up his mind to do it. I don't know how much he enjoyed it. He did what he had to do. It was amazing. I don't think he forced himself." One also learns that, quite ironically, it was Fassbinder's 'right-hand man' and assistant director Harry Baer that ultimately acted as the courier of cocaine that would take the filmmaker's life. One also gets to see Brigitte 'Mother Küsters' Mira—who despite being ½ Jewish, got her start in acting playing a villain in the Nazi propaganda series *Liese und Miese* and who Fassbinder made an unlikely film star with *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) aka *Angst essen Seele auf*—describe how the filmmaker's Arab boyfriend El Hedi ben Salem (who played Mira's lover in *Ali*) would act like a wild animal when he was drunk (he would ultimately stab three strangers while inebriated). Of course, the subjects of the documentary also discuss how Fassbinder contributed to the deaths of two out of three of his great loves, El Hedi ben Salem and Armin Meier, as both of the men committed suicide after the filmmaker became bored with them (the filmmaker tended to date people that were his inferiors). Undoubtedly, out of all the subjects featured in *Fassbinder's Women*, Irm Hermann seemed the most empathetic regarding the filmmaker, stating of his life and seemingly inevitable premature death, "I don't know how things are judged in the next world, but I think he'd already been through hell on earth, despite all his fame. He was punished enough. I don't think you have to suffer twice. He suffered enough." If one thing is quite clear to the viewer after watching von Praunheim's *Fassbinder's Women*, it is that all those who worked with Fassbinder (with the possible exception of cinematographer Michael Ballhaus and already established stars like Jeanne Moreau), virtually none of them would go on to greater prestige and success after the filmmaker died. As Brigitte Mira confesses in the documentary regarding Fassbinder's imperative role in her acting role, "If he were still here, I'd have had better opportunities. In an interview recently I was asked what I wanted and I said 'An Oscar.' But I could get one only if Rainer were alive. I'm sure of that," thus demonstrating the actress' undying faith in the filmmaker's craft after all these years. Indeed, as a man who turned seemingly bimbo-like blonde bombshell Barbara Valentin (who was dubbed by the press as a "German Jayne Mansfield" despite the fact she was Austrian) into

a serious and somewhat respected arthouse actress and who made an illiterate Moroccan laborer like El Hedi ben Salem into a memorable movie star, Fassbinder must have been doing something right. Of course, more than anything, Fassbinder's *Women* reminds one of all the unmade films the world has been cheated out of as a result of Fassbinder's tragic and senseless premature death.

-Ty E

THE EINSTEIN OF SEX
THE EINSTEIN OF SEX

Rosa von Praunheim° (2000)

Undoubtedly, out of the many good, bad, and ugly films directed by queer kraut agitpropagandist Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*), the debauched director's pseudo-docudrama *The Einstein of Sex: Life and Work of Dr. M. Hirschfeld* (1999) aka *Der Einstein des Sex*—a work depicting the life and times of pioneering Jewish German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld—is one of the Berlin-based filmmaker's most deathly serious yet aesthetically and cinematically flaccid works. Sort of like a lurid and lecherous Lifetime movie with a couple softcore sex scenes and semi-grotesque genital-mutilating surgery scenes, *The Einstein of Sex* is quite possibly the most absurd tribute to a ridiculous figure ever made, as von Praunheim's sort of perverse poof tribute to a leftist Hebrew subversive who, while exceedingly gay in the extra-effeminate sort of way and dedicating his life to legalizing homosexuality in the Fatherland, had a rather banal sex life and seemed more interested in coldly examining the warped genitals of hermaphrodites and collecting ancient dildos, or at least one would assume after viewing this desperately debauched yet stupidly serious docudrama. Had National Socialist Germany won the Second World War, it is very doubtful that people would know the name Magnus Hirschfeld today for obvious reasons, but since the Occident has drastically degenerated into a gigantic Weimar Republic of sorts as a whole, he is now revered as a Sodomite God among certain curious circles like the so-called 'queer community' and has been described as "the first advocate for homosexual and transgender rights" due to his special affection for fags. Herr Hirschfeld also has a minor connection to cinema history in that he co-wrote and had a cameo in the silent flick *Different From The Others* (1919) aka *Anders als die Andern*, a work revered today for being one of the first films to feature a positive depiction of homosexuals and that would act as the basic plot inspiration for *Victim* (1961) starring Dirk Bogarde, which has the grand distinction of being the first film to feature the word "homosexual." A seemingly senseless piece of scatological sentimentalism, mindless homo Heeb worship, and childish condemnation of fag-bashing National Socialists who had the audacity to destroy Hirschfeld's sexual 'research' institute, burn his books, and force the good doctor into exile, *The Einstein of Sex* is just as innately idiotic in its message as the films of celluloid Shoah saint S. Spielberg, but what makes von Praunheim's film different is that it is so amateurishly directed and curiously nonsensical in its construction that it is ultimately a work of accidental queersploitation. In fact, considering that it is essentially a work of fiction where von Praunheim totally invented events, incidents, and motivations regarding the life and work Hirschfeld, *The Einstein of Sex* is not much more reliable as a work of history regarding its subject than *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1975) is regarding the reality

of Nazi concentration camps.

In Rosa von Praunheim's mind, Magnus Hirschfeld developed his affinity for championing sexual perversion after his father, who was a respected physician, congratulated him as a prepubescent boy for drawing pictures of wild animals having sex. When Hirschfeld (played by Friedel von Wangenheim, who co-wrote the film, in what would be his first and last film role) came of age and went to school for medicine to become a physician, he was absolutely offended by the fact that his professor would describe a pederast as a degenerate, so he tells his friend that he wants to become a sort of Bolshevik of medicine and that together, "We can change everything. We can change this university. We can change the whole world." Hirschfeld's friend thinks he's deranged so their friendship ends, but luckily he meets a disgraced Austrian aristocrat named Baron von Teschenberg (Gerd Lukas Storzer) who caused a scandal when he was caught giving a blowjob to a soldier and was disinherited by his family, so he becomes the doc's loyal assistant. Meanwhile, Hirschfeld starts the Scientific Humanitarian Committee to defend the rights of homos, trannies, and other sexual misfits and drafts a petition to overturn Paragraph 175 to legalize homosexuality, ultimately managing to get over 5000 people to sign it, including Hermann Hesse, Rainer Maria Rilke, Albert Einstein, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Gerhart Hauptmann and countless others, but the law is never overturned in the physician's lifetime. Hirschfeld also passively butts heads with masculine homosexual activist Adolf Brand (played by blond-haired German Jew Ben Becker) who has nothing but sheer and utter disdain for effeminate gays and glorifies the masculine heroism of ancient Greeks, telling the Yiddish doc regarding his poof patients and overall efforts, "Those creatures are neither man nor woman, and you lump such wretched stepchildren of nature together with these blossoming, glorious boys. We don't need a doctor who spends his time in brothels and privies examining the underpants of Jews with three anuses." Of course, being a sodomite socialist Semite, Hirschfeld has a very different view on things and will do anything to deracinate and subvert traditional German society, as exemplified in his diagnosis of a pansy patient, "Congratulations. As you suspected, you are clearly same-sex inclined. I prescribe repeated visits to the Adonis Dance Club. There you'll meet others like yourself. Fall in love, be happy. Stay away from public toilets, limit the amount of intercourse and avoid depraved people." Despite devoting his life to Hirschfeld, Baron von Teschenberg is incapable of getting the doctor to have a sexual/romantic relationship with him, so after being blackmailed by a hustler, he decides to commit suicide.

Throughout *The Einstein of Sex*, Dr. Hirschfeld becomes involved in various forms of queer quackery, including transplanting 'heterosexual testicles' bought on the black market to homosexual men in the hopes of changing their sexual orientation. Of course, in Rosa von Praunheim's mind such scientific stupidity is somewhat successful as demonstrated by a young colon-choker's remarks after

THE EINSTEIN OF SEX

receiving hetero-testicles that, “My body now longs for a woman, but my soul still cries out for a man.” With the wraith of Wotan brewing in the collective unconscious of Deutschland, Hirschfeld is beaten by evil anti-Semites and has his work described as “Jewish Pig Asshole-Intellectualism” by a young man attending one of his lectures. Meanwhile, after untying a string wrapped around a tranny named Dorchen’s dick (Tima die Göttliche), he obtains a homo housewife of sorts in the form of said Transman, whose job is to clean and maintain his new Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sexual Research) building in Berlin. Although well past middle-aged, Hirschfeld finally fucks more than just antique toys and begins a sadomasochistic sexual relationship with a young follower named Karl Giese (Olaf Drauschke). To the sheer and utter heartbreak of kosher twink Giese, Hirschfeld leaves the Institute for Sexual Research and travels abroad, where he starts a sexual relationship with a young oriental twinkie. From the comfort of movie theaters, Hirschfeld watches newsreels of the National Socialist takeover, the destruction of his sex institute, and the burning of his books. In the end, Giese commits suicide, Dorchen disappears, the Institute for Sexual Research is destroyed, and Hirschfeld takes exile in Paris, France where he tries in vain to start a new sex institute and dies a rich and fat man.

While Hirschfeld’s cocksucking campaign died with the rise and rule of National Socialism in Germany from 1933-1945, the debauched doctor’s work ultimately paid-off in the long run as demonstrated by the simple fact that a film like *The Einstein of Sex* could be made in Germany, not to mention the fact that a good percentage of post-WWII filmmakers, including Rosa von Praunheim, but also Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Schroeter, Ulrike Ottinger, Monika Treut, Jochen Hick, Frank Ripploh and countless others, are/were homosexuals/lesbians. Not only was the anti-homo-sex provision Paragraph 175 abolished entirely in 1988 (where it was fully revoked in 1994 after the German reunification) in Germany and the legalization of gay prostitution, among other aberrant things, in the Fatherland since Hirschfeld’s death, but the physician’s ideas of a “third sex” and collective gay effeminacy have essentially become the norm in not only Germany/Europe, but also North America as well, where ‘gay’ has turned into a MTV-fabricated prepackaged pseudo-culture that revolves around such worthless garbage as Lady Gaga, Will & Grace, raunchy race-mixing, cultural Marxism, victim politics, and bourgeois gay marriage. As *The Einstein of Sex* one-dimensionally depicts, Adolf Brand—a Stirnerite anarchist who published the masculine homosexual periodical *Der Eigene* (“The Own”), which promoted völkisch artists like Fidus (Hugo Reinhold Karl Johann Höppener) and nationalist/proto-nazi writers like Hans Blüher, as well as the founder of the Wandervogel-like *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (GdE), which promoted German unity and a sort of warrior creed of Sparta—promoted a form of gaydom that is virtually not existent today which valued and championed masculinity, heroism, and the resurrection of the Germanic Männerbund that

totally rejected Hirschfeld's view of the gay male as a third sex, but even went so far as arguing that homosexual men were more masculine. Of course, Rosa von Praunheim portrays Adolf Brand in a negative light in *The Einstein of Sex*, depicting him as an abhorrent anti-Semitic megalomaniac, but in reality he represented a distinct culturally German view of homosexuality whereas Hirschfeld represented a leftist Jewish view that has gone on to dominate the Occident world as a result of Germany's defeat during the Second World War. It is worth noting that Otto Weininger, an Austrian Jewish philosopher, who would go on to influence Ludwig Wittgenstein and Hans Blüher, argued in his once-highly influential work *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character* that Jewishness and femininity are one in the same, thus making Hirschfeld's view an alien creed that has subverted gay, as well as heterosexual, European culture and turned it into a putrid pile of poofer degeneracy. Of course, Weininger's theories do not seem that out of line when one looks at popular figures like Woody Allen, Jerry Seinfeld, Steven Spielberg, and Richard Simmons, and see that the Jewish race is severely lacking in testosterone.

Indeed, Hirschfeld was the 'Einstein of Sex' in that while today many German sexologists, like Adolf Brand, have been largely forgotten, the Hebraic physician has been sainted by Philo-Semitic sodomites and his ideas, like those of fellow perverted Judaic Freud, have entered and flourished in the mainstream of society, even if the name Magnus Hirschfeld is, quite thankfully, not exactly a household name. Undoubtedly, *The Einstein of Sex* is Rosa von Praunheim's most Philo-Semitic and politically correct work to date as a piece of absurdly aesthetically repellant and conspicuously kitschy pseudo-docudrama with a nauseating sentimental score, shockingly wooden acting, and prosaic direction that is only marginally saved from total worthlessness as a cinematic by work by its handful of scenes of accidental comical relief involving Hirschfeld screwing his sex toy antiques, Nazi violence, and the when good gay doctor is attacked by the character Adolf Brand, who states such eloquent things as, "Love between men is love between heroes. Down with sissies, fairies, nellies and queens." Undoubtedly, von Praunheim should stick to directing warped agitprop documentaries and aberrant-garde camp comedies as *The Einstein of Sex* feels like it was directed by an autistic psychopath trying in vain to mimic genuine human emotion. If I did not know better, I would have thought someone cut director Rosa von Praunheim's balls off just like Hirschfeld did to his patients as *The Einstein of Sex* lacks more testicular fortitude than a gang of Indian eunuchs.

-Ty E

MEN, HEROES, AND GAY NAZIS
MEN, HEROES, AND GAY NAZIS

Rosa von Praunheim° (2005)

Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis is a captivating and sometimes hilarious documentary that would offend both members of GLAAD and the German National Democratic Party (NPD). Gay Nazis (both historically and contemporarily) are not a group that Holocaust promoters want people to know about. It is just not a good thing to advertise these taboo facts when trying to gain sympathy and money for “discriminated” groups. Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis makes the claim that 10%-15% of German Neo-Nazis are homosexuals. German filmmaker and gay rights activist Rosa von Praunheim directed this documentary that MTV doesn't want you to see.

The Neo-Nazis featured in Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis are for the most part very nice guys. Director Rosa von Praunheim stated of the subjects featured in the documentary, “Some may be shocked that I do not take a stand in my film and do not portray gay neo-Nazis as monsters, but as people living their lives in dramatic contradiction.” Thankfully, von Praunheim didn't cower to the mainstream pressures of “condemning” the gay Nazis as deranged monsters. Instead, he allows the viewer to simply observe statements by the pink Nazis so you can make up your own mind about the material. I am sure one of the gay Neo-Nazis really offends viewers when he mentions that liberals love multiculturalism because they don't have to travel to fuck people of different races. Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis also goes into detail about some of the original Nazi members that were openly gay. SA leader Ernst Röhm was notorious for heavy drinking and sending off storm troopers to stomp in the faces of communists. Sadistic homosexual Edmund Heines, Röhm's deputy in the SA, is said in the documentary to have had set-up his own special concentration camp so he could torture and kill victims for pleasure. Maybe Holocaust museums should think about putting up displays featuring Heines and his barbarous legacy.

Edmund Heines Apparently Nazi regalia and costumes are really big in the gay community in a nonpolitical way. The documentary features a skinhead discussing how some homosexuals enjoy role playing where one partner plays the “Nazi” and the other plays the “Jew” during a rape scenario. Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis also features a gay group registered by the government that dresses up in military clothing and has outdoor orgies. It's hard not to laugh during these segments of the documentary. Especially when it features a young skinhead simulating masturbation as he reads Mein Kampf. Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis is an interesting documentary that proves that truth is always stranger than fiction. Whether it be a Neo-Nazi that was jailed for years just for disputing details regarding the Nazi Holocaust in Nazi Germany or a Neo-Nazi that hates Islamic foreigners because they are homophobic, the documentary features a wealth of thought provoking and unconventional material. Rosa von Praunheim proves

that all gay rights activists aren't just whiny weaklings that further propagate gay stereotypes. Maybe one day historians will finally find conclusive evidence regarding Adolf Hitler's questionable sexuality. Would the gay rights groups blame his actions on being persecuted?

-Ty E

YOUR HEART IN MY HEAD
YOUR HEART IN MY HEAD

Rosa von Praunheim° (2005)

The real-life true crime story of gay kraut cannibal Armin Meiwes—a man who butchered, killed, and ate a voluntary victim, including his penis, that he met on the internet—has inspired popular culture in a manner not seen in the miscegenation-based man-eating of American blond beast Jeffrey Dahmer, including the popular song “Mein Teil” (which reached second place in German music charts after its release) by Teutonic industrial group Rammstein and the title of untermensch American degenerate Marilyn Manson’s album *Eat Me, Drink Me* (2007) but, more importantly, it inspired a number of films, especially in the Fatherland. Undoubtedly, the most mainstream, totally worthless, and pathetically politically correct film based on the cannibal case is *Grimm Love* (2006) aka *Rohtenburg*, which was initially banned in Germany after Armin Meiwes complained the film infringed on his “personal rights.” Of course, the most brutal and aberrantly artsy cinematic take on the Meiwes case is the splatter-arthouse flick *Cannibal* (2006) directed by Marian Dora, a relentlessly unhinged piece of putrid, anti-politically correct poetry that was also banned in Deutschland that obsessively attempted to reconstruct the actual events that took place between the cannibal and the man whose cock he chomped on. Aside from possibly Fassbinder superstar Ulli Lommel’s *Diary of a Cannibal* (2007), a deplorable piece of digital diarrhea set in Los Angeles featuring a heterosexual flesh-eating couple as opposed to a homo one, *Your Heart in My Head* (2005) aka *Dein Herz in meinem Hirn* directed by hysterical homo-supremacist Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Horror Vacui*) is the loosest and most fictitious take on the Armin Meiwes case. A no-budget digital work oftentimes shot from the perspective of the sexually aberrant anti-hero and his trusty camcorder, *Your Heart in My Head* is a crudely assembled piece of campy cannibal melodrama featuring two strikingly ugly and lethally lonely kraut cocksuckers who are too afraid to suck each other’s cock yet ultimately find temporary solace and romantic companionship in vorarephilia, at least until one of the two men bleeds out and the other carries his decapitated head around like a little girl clutching a much cherished baby doll. A depressing and pathetic tale about two rather depressing and pathetic middle-aged men well past their prime who see dining on one another as the only way of finding ‘light’ in a world plagued by all-encompassing deadness, *Your Heart in My Head* has the grand distinction of being probably the only truly ‘serious’ gay cannibal melodrama ever made, which would have been probably better handled in Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s hands were he still alive, but Rosa von Praunheim adds a certain fiercely faggy flare to the film that makes it undeniably entertaining, if not endearingly autistic and aesthetically obnoxious and even revolting.

Achim Grenz (*Martin Molitor*) is a divorced and unemployed middle-aged

school teacher and neurotic Norman Bates-esque momma's boy of the latently homosexual sort who has no one to talk to or confide in, so he talks to himself via camcorder. Unlike Armin Meiwes, who lived in a village in a large and dilapidated ancient home, Achim lives in a small suburban home in Spandau, Berlin, a place he lovingly describes as "the kingdom of the dead" that is full of "dead people, dead cars, dead streets, dead bushes...everything is dead." Under the pretense of socializing over chess, Achim invites a high school teacher named Peter Mack (Martin Ontrop) to his house. Upon their first visit, Achim finds Peter's behavior to be "a bit rough," especially after he ironically describes the color his home as follows: "Doesn't it make you think of a butcher shop and things like pigs cut in half, dripping?" Achim kicks Peter out, but later he comes back and apologizes, thus ushering in the beginning of their uniquely unhinged and mostly sexless romantic relationship. Achim likes Peter so much that he immediately introduces him to his overbearing yet disabled mother Anna Lisa (also played by Martin Molitor), who is clearly a lonely sexually repressed bitch who seems to be the source of her son's innate passivity, misery, and sheer and utter lack of testicular fortitude. Although no friend of man's best friend, Achim is given a dog named Gina by Peter. When Achim kills the canine, Peter locks him in his own basement but the door was never really locked and the deranged dog-slayer spends three entire days in a virtual domestic dungeon because he was too cowardly to even attempt to try and open the door. Seemingly trying in vain, Peter attempts every shady tactic he can think of, including physical and verbal violence, to make a man out of perennial cuckold Achim. As Peter tells Achim, "There's nothing wrong with a craving for meat. Men need protein." Despite his repulsion in regard to his cowardice, Peter remarks to Achim's mother regarding her son, "I like him so much; I could eat him alive," but, of course, the roles are ultimately reversed when the wimpy middle-aged untermensch finally develops enough gall to go more than balls deep. After pretending to castrate his own cock, Peter begins to show weakness in front of Achim after it is revealed that he is a homeless transient who has lost everything and is no longer a school teacher as he claimed, but just a perverted bum who likes to talk a lot of shit. Peter inevitably convinces Achim to cut off his peter and ultimately kill and eat him because he believes that "to be eaten is to be holy...to be revered...highly honored..." and being a homeless latent homo, he no longer has anything less to lose. After Peter chugs some liquor and takes some pills, Achim turns him into a eunuch and then a corpse and later decapitates and performs an amateur embalming of his body. After his own mother also dies due to his own neglect, Achim, who has gone through some warped ritualistic transformation due to his cannibalism, proudly declares to his camcorder, "At last I'm my own master. No carping mother, no dominating asshole friend." With Peter's guts in his formerly weak stomach and his head carefully placed in a cardboard box, Achim decides to take a fabulous trip down South, thus beginning his new life as a man

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with a sort of cannibalistic confidence that he did not have previously.

Probably even more so than the absurdly melodramatic Jeffrey Dahmer biopic *Dahmer* (2002) starring Jeremy Renner, Praunheim's *Your Heart in My Head* dares the viewer to empathize with an exceedingly pathetic and lonely man who dares to eat the flesh of another man as a drastically desperate way to feel both 'empowered' and close to someone for the first time in his life. Undoubtedly one of the most melancholy yet strangely campy depictions of post-WWII Germany ever made, *Your Heart in My Head* certainly is quite effective, if not rather ridiculous for a no-budget flick with a humble home-video aesthetic that looks like it was shot over a mere weekend amongst friends. One must give director Rosa von Praunheim credit where credit is due as the film was condemned by conservative politicians from Armin Miewes' hometown, including Axel Wintermeyer, a Christian Democrat representative in the state parliament, who described *Your Heart in My Head* as "glorifying a perverse criminal" and stated that the film's title is "hard to beat for tastelessness," which is no small insult in a country where prostitution is legal and small sex toys are sold in coin machines in subway and bus stations. Originally advertised as a "mix of grotesque, thriller, and documentary... a gruesome comedy" by the North Rhine-Westphalia Film Institute, which partially funded the film to the disgust of many German taxpayers, *Your Heart in My Head*—a work that is essentially an autistic melodrama with a tinge of sexually sadistic splatter scenes—represents an all time low in terms of aesthetics in the land of thinkers and poets, but the Armin Miewes case is as well, as both reflect a spiritually sick nation longing for vitality. If *Your Heart in My Head* can be described as a 'horror' flick, it is only in the völkisch sense in its dreary depiction of modern urban Germany as a cultural graveyard of alienation and sexual perversion where physical and emotional ugliness is adulated. Indeed, it is no coincidence that anti-hero Achim describes his hometown as the "Kingdom of the Dead" and if an alpha-degenerate like auteur Rosa von Praunheim understands this, one can only speculate that the Fatherland has a truly forsaken future.

-Ty E

TWO MOTHERS

Rosa von Praunheim° (2007)

Believe it or not, quite fittingly, kraut queer filmmaker and all-around gay agitator Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) is the bastard son of a whore who was spawned like a literal born criminal in prison, or so one learns while watching his rather personal documentary *Meine Mütter – Spurensuche in Riga* (2007) aka *Two Mothers – The Search Began in Riga*. Indeed, until his adoptive mother, Gertrud Mischwitzky, told him otherwise in 2000 not long before she died, von Praunheim never even remotely suspected that he was adopted, let alone the seemingly forsaken progeny of a Nazi whore criminal who mysteriously died in a mental institution as a result of supposed ‘chronic diarrhea’ in 1946. In *Two Mothers*, von Praunheim not only chronicled his strenuous and seemingly futile search for the identity of his biological parents, but also the history of Eastern Europe, especially Riga, Latvia, during the German occupation, the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe and the dissolving of Prussia, and of course the holocaust. With the documentary, von Praunheim has achieved something he has never achieved before by making a film that is more or less a fag-free affair that can be enjoyed by the entire family. In other words, the doc is the one von Praunheim flick that will not cause your grandmother to suffer a massive heart attack, as a documentary featuring various elderly grandmas and great-grandmas sentimentally discussing the past. On top of revealing that von Praunheim has come a long way since he was fittingly begotten in a National Socialist jail, *Two Mothers* also paints a portrait of Eastern Europe that is quite eerie, as a sort of cultural graveyard that never recovered from its de-Germanization and subsequent Sovietization. Among other things, von Praunheim learns during his ancestral quest that his mother was from the Prussian town of Pyritz, which was built in the early 1200s and destroyed in February 1945 by the Red Army. Indeed, believe it or not, Aryan alpha-berrosexual von Praunheim actually gets in touch with his inner ‘Heimat’ in *Two Mothers*. The doc also has its moments of unintentional humor, especially when the director incessantly asks researchers and historians if there is any chance that he is Jewish, as if his goofy kraut appearance does not blatantly tell otherwise. Of course, instead of learning that he is a member of god’s chosen tribe, von Praunheim discovers that there is a good chance that he is the prodigal progeny of one of the most murderous commanders of the SS Einsatzgruppe. Indeed, *Two Mothers* is certainly a fucked filmic family affair, but it is also quite touching in its own post-apocalyptic Heimat sort of way. Undoubtedly, more than anything, the doc reveals that an entire people can be destroyed in one single generation, with von Praunheim—a mensch who is the direct product of the chaos of the Second World War and who considers himself to be a member of an international queer nation as opposed to the

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German nation—being the most blatant symbol of this degeneration.

Opening with home movie footage of auteur Rosa von Praunheim (real name Holger Mitschwitzky) celebrating the 96th birthday of his adoptive mother Gertrud Mischwitzky, *Two Mothers* immediately gives the viewer the feeling that, despite the director's degenerate behavior as a poor public figure who has dedicated a good portion of his career to directing aberrosexual agitprop, he has a fairly good relationship with the woman who raised him. In 2000, von Praunheim's adoptive mother revealed to him that she adopted him from a German orphanage in Riga, Latvia where his adoptive father, who was in the navy, had been stationed. Probably thinking he could make a great film while also learning about the woman that gave birth to him in the process, von Praunheim heads to the Slavic city for the first time in 63 years to discover who his real biological mother was, though he has very little information to work with and one historian describes his search as being like attempting to find a needle in a haystack. Since most public records were destroyed during the chaos of the Second World War, it is rather unlikely that von Praunheim will find any leads, yet after a researcher randomly discovers a near-ancient receipt for diapers for a baby named Holger Radtke, the filmmaker soon sets his eyes on the photograph of a curious woman that gave birth to him over 60 years ago for the first time in his life. As it turns out, the director's biological mother is a woman named Edith Radtke and she apparently was a real-life femme fatale of sorts who was the mistress of many powerful men, including a famous Nazi photographer named Max Ehlert, a business manager (who she apparently was engaged to), and a commander of an Einsatzgruppe unit who loved whoring and drinking. As for von Praunheim's mother's current whereabouts, she apparently died in a nuthouse in 1946 after suffering chronic diarrhea, which ostensibly led to her death via heart muscle degeneration. Not surprisingly, it is revealed that the woman that signed off on Radtke's death certificate was well known for her use of euthanasia and would typically list the cause of death as a heart attack anytime she had someone exterminated. A victim of electroshock therapy, Radtke was probably not in the most peaceful state of mind when she perished under rather dubious circumstances.

While on his odyssey to discover the origins of his mother and her family, von Praunheim spends almost just as much time researching the fate of the Jews during the Second World War, especially in Riga and the Baltic region in general. Among other things, the director hooks up with an eccentric and oftentimes gratingly annoying left-wing researcher named Anita Kugler, who is best known for writing the book *Scherwitz: Der jüdische SS-Offizier* (2004) aka *Scherwitz: The Jewish SS Officer*, which details the truly stranger-than-fiction story of a Jewish SS officer named Fritz Scherwitz who commanded a concentration camp(!) and has been described as a sort of 'Semitic Schindler' due to his protection of his fellow Hebrews during his reign as a kosher Nazi, though he was arrested after the Second World War for his apparent involvement in the execution of three Jews.

As for Herr von Praunheim's potential genetic links to the big H, the director may have been the progeny of one of two Einsatzgruppe commanders, which include Franz Walter Stahlecker and Rudolf Lange. While Stahlecker was killed by Soviet partisans in early 1942 (over 8 months before von Praunheim born), Lange—a man whose greatest claim to infamy is that he apparently liquidated 250,000 people in a little less than six months—disappeared sometime in late-February 1945, thus making it more likely that the latter man is the filmmaker's father. Additionally, as described in the doc, Lange was known for “whoring around” and Praunheim's mother was a whore.

At the conclusion of *Two Mothers*, von Praunheim asks himself regarding the identity of his biological father: “Do I really want to know?” In the documentary *Rosakinder* (2012) aka *Rosa's Children*—a tribute to the filmmaker directed by five of his former students, including Tom Tykwer, Julia von Heinz, and Chris Kraus—von Praunheim opts out of seeing if he is related to an infamous SS man. Indeed, filmmaker Chris Kraus (*Vier Minuten* aka *Four Minutes*, *The Poll Diaries*), who also appears in *Two Mothers* as well, may be related to his ex-teacher via his SS officer grandfather, but von Praunheim did not have the gall to find out for sure by taking a DNA test, as if discovering he is the bastard boi of a much hated Hebrew hunter will somehow turn him into an evil Nazi butcher overnight or something. Undoubtedly, it would be the ultimate irony of genetic fate if it was discovered that von Praunheim—a man whose pseudonymous name is in reference to the pink triangle that cocksuckers had to where in concentration camps—is the son of one of the *Schutzstaffel's* foremost slaughterers.

Although I almost hate to say it, *Two Mothers* gave me a newfound respect for Rosa von Praunheim. Indeed, while the doc dwells way too much on the holocaust, the director also uncovered important yet highly neglected pieces of the history that is rarely talked about, especially in the United States. For example, the director learns that his family was the victim of Soviet mass theft after interviewing a stoic old-timer named Ekkehart Wendorff, who was born on a 600-year-old estate in Pyritz, which is where von Praunheim's mother was originally from. Like much of what used to be called Prussia, Pyritz fell into Slavic hands after WWI and was physically destroyed by the Red Army in February 1, 1945, with the German population being subsequently expelled and forced to fend for their own in the west. Interestingly, Wendorff states regarding theft of his hometown: “The expulsion of Germans from the eastern territories remains a crime and an injustice. I'm not going to say, “That's fine, just keep the land.” If the politicians ever say that, then we deserve reparations. I always say, “A half-truth is a total lie.” The German empire never fell.” Towards the conclusion of *Two Mothers*, von Praunheim attends a ‘Pyritz Heimat’ reunion where he meets his exceedingly elderly aunt and cousin. To von Praunheim's credit, despite the fact that his relatives and the people of Pyritz are ‘god-fearing’ and rather nationalistic, the filmmaker pays them great respect and seems to appreciate their

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culture and customs. One can only fathom how von Praunheim would have turned out had he been raised by his biological parents in Pyritz. Indeed, everyone knows the stereotype of gay men having cold mothers and as a man whose mother disposed of him immediately after he was born, von Praunheim might owe his signature sexuality to the lack of nurturing he received as an infant (notably, Fassbinder's boyfriend Armin Meier and sod serial killer Jürgen Bartsch were also illegitimate children who were deprived of affection as infants). Indeed, one would never suspect from a baby pic of von Praunheim featured in *Two Mothers* that he would grow up to be a rampantly homosexual colon-choking chauvinist who would have gay sex in front of his students and direct films about cocksucker cannibals. Indeed, the one thing I kept asking myself while watching the documentary is how Edith Radtke would have reacted had she survived the nut ward and met her big gay biological son.

-Ty E

KING OF COMICS

Rosa von Praunheim° (2012)

I have never been a comic book fan and never understood the appeal of reading glorified picture books nor have I ever had any interest in comic book film adaptations, but I do like the campy dark horror-comedy *Killer Condom* (1996) aka *Kondom des Grauens*, which was based on 1987 work of the same name written by kraut queer comic book artist Ralf König. Despite being an unrepentant homo with a pathological propensity for drawing massive monster members, König is easily the most famous and commercially successful comic book artist working in Germany today, so it should be no surprise that foremost Teutonic gay agitator and fag-fascist filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim (*Army of Lovers* or *Revolt of the Perverts*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) would direct a documentary about the comic king. Indeed, *König des Comics - Ralf König* (2012) aka *Der König des Comics über und mit Ralf König* aka *King of Comics* is just another one of many examples as to why von Praunheim is the greatest aberrosexual anthropologist-sociologist ethnology documentarian who has ever lived, as the documentary digs deep into the life and work of Ralf König, a man who went from being a meager peasant woodworker to being one of the most controversial and politically incorrect comic book artists of his zeitgeist and a rare gay artist who actually managed to crossover into the mainstream in a mostly non-affirmative-action-based fashion. Simultaneously a man who worships and fetishizes the bronze bungholes of brown men from foreign southern lands and depicts Muslims as the most primitively-minded yet decidedly dangerous philistines in the world, König is depicted as an equal opportunity offender in *King of Comics*, though his allegiance to quasi-hermetic homo sects in the Fatherland, especially Munich, cannot be denied. Taking cocksucker clichés to such extremes that his work manages to parody everything from the erotic caricatures of Tom of Finland to the mainstream homogenized fagdom typical of American suburban sodomite sitcoms like *Will & Grace*, König managed to catch the attention of the heterosexual mainstream, with his comics *Der bewegte Mann* (1987) and *Pretty Baby* (1988) being adapted into the popular award-winning German comedy *Der bewegte Mann* (1994) aka *The Most Desired Man* aka *Maybe ... Maybe Not* directed by Sönke Wortmann and starring Til Schweiger and Katja Riemann. Seeming like the typical gay story aside from the subject's success at comic arts, *King of Comics* tells the story of a strange boy from a small village who did not 'find himself' until moving to the big city, being sexually used and abused by older men, dressing in drag, developing a dubious taste for dark meat, and eventually becoming a married member of the buggery bourgeois.

Swiss dentist René Krummenacher (who co-directed the S&M-themed documentary *The Pierce File* (2002) and acted as cinematographer of the von Praun-

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heim doc Phooey, Rosa (2002)) has been a Ralf König fan for 26 years and credits the comic artist for helping him to come to terms with his homosexuality. With the help of von Praunheim, Krummenacher is finally going to get to meet his hero and luckily for him, König is no 'spiritual queen' with airs of anal-retentive arrogance, but a rather humble fellow who has a giant portrait of a cow hanging on his apartment wall. Indeed, growing up in the small town of Soest in North Rhine-Westphalia, West Germany, König even dated a chick when he was a teenager but when he failed to assert himself on her, he had to confess to his lady friend that he liked boys and not girls. Only managing to graduate middle school, König worked a banal job as a 'joiner' (a type of low-level carpenter) for eight grueling hours each day, which enabled him to develop a sort of 'cerebral cinema' in his mind where he would dream up comic scenarios while at work that he would ultimately bring to life in comic book form. After meeting a comic book publisher who found him 'sexy,' König published what he describes as 'adolescent scribbles,' which were really nothing more than crude homo erotica with comedic undertones. With Rosa von Praunheim's book *Sex und Karriere* (1978) aka *Sex and Career* as his gay bible and after attending a fag festival with his fat fag hag friend where he was quasi-raped, König finally came out of the closet in 1979, even leaving a note out at his workspace letting his heterosexual prole coworkers know that he is a proud poof. To the scribbler's surprise, none of his comrades at work confronted him about his homosexuality, thus leading König to come to the conclusion that the heteros were more afraid of him than he was of them.

As *King of Comics* candidly reveals, although initially disgusted by effeminate queens and drag queens, König began dressing in drag himself after entering the homo underworld, which he does on occasion to this day. Meanwhile, despite lacking a high school education, König was accepted into *Kunstakademie Düsseldorf* art academy in 1981 and managed to publish three full-length comics in a single year while attending school. Finding Düsseldorf boring, König decided to go to Munich where he became a gay celebrity and started becoming politically active in poof power groups. König also became active in indulging in brown men, namely a fellow who he simply describes as 'The Brazilian' and who, not unlike Rainer Werner Fassbinder with his brown boy toys Günther Kaufmann and El Hedi ben Salem, he blew all his money on with lavish vacations and whatnot to appease his swarthy but apparently sexually virile schwarze mensch. While becoming accepted as a mainstream figure, the comic artist could not stomach the fact a hit film based on his work, *The Most Desired Man*, catered mostly to heterosexual audiences and made a mockery of gaydom. With a growing hetero audience, as well as the growing homo-hating Muslim population in Germany, König began making politically incorrect comics mocking the Prophet Mohammad as well as those white liberals that were too afraid to acknowledge the fact that people who force their women to wear towels over their heads might

have a hard time playing nice in a liberal democracy where prostitution is legal. Now living the life of a bourgeois housewife with his young boy toy Olaf Gabriel, König downplays his talents to Kruppenacher, who he sells three large paintings.

During the beginning of *King of Comics*, auteur Rosa von Praunheim asks a heterosexual comic fan, “Can Ralf König comics make you gay?,” to which the man jokingly replies “yeah.” Personally, after watching the documentary, I believe that if it were not for the comic artist’s more obsessively detailed drawings of men’s rectums and his natural tendency toward bizarre pro-gay messages, one would think König was a heterosexual mocking homo kultur in a fashion not unlike American animated shows like *South Park* and *Family Guy*, albeit taken to a more perversely pornographic and unwaveringly debauched degree that would certainly baffle American viewers. Although I am far from a comic connoisseur, I think König’s aesthetic seems like Robert Crumb meets Matt Groening with a slightly and quasi-sarcastic influence from *Tom of Finland*. As a German heterosexual comic bookstore owner named Bert Henning states regarding König’s work, “He’s definitely on the right track in that his comics, probably without intention, are very cinematic.” While I cannot say I have seen any other König film adaptations, *Killer Condom*—a deranged dark comedy with special-effects work done by arthouse-splatter auteur Jörg Buttgerit about a gay twink-loving wop cop police detective who goes on a mission to uncover the dubious origins of ravenous rubbers after losing a testicle via a carnivorous condom—is certainly a rather raunchy and patently politically incorrect (albeit with a taken-on pro-gay message at the end) work that is bound to offend more gay than straight viewers. During *King of Comics*, director von Praunheim, who is well known in Germany for his audaciously annoying and arrogant approach to AIDS activism, seems somewhat irked by König’s *Killer Condom* as he interpreted it as an anti-condom film, but luckily the comic artist makes no apologies for his work. Of course, as a man who made a comic in tribute to his friend who died of AIDS-related complications, König has probably done his part in the gay cancer campaign. Indeed, König has created comics about racially pure ‘right-wing homophobic’ terriers, a gay molestation of Goldilocks and the Three Bears featuring a tranny hair-hat negress as Goldilocks and three fat hairy men as ‘bears’, a moronic and ostensibly heterosexual muscle-bound Spanish construction worker who likes rim-jobs named ‘Ramon’, and a gerontophilic Platonic dialogue between a geezer-like Plato and a monstrously hung Narcissus, so there is no doubt that the comic artist has done his part as a cocksucking culture-distorter who has defiled the mainstream, with von Praunheim’s *King of Comics* being an interesting and equally incriminating introduction to his wayward world.

-Ty E

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS
THE TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS

Ross Kagan Marks (1996)

I was flipping through the television and came upon a rather “controversial” film entitled *The Twilight of the Golds*. The protagonist is played by an extra effeminate Brendan Fraser. *The Twilight of the Golds* follows a nice reform Jewish family as they come to terms with their gay artistic son David (played by Fraser). David is a Jewish fellow that has an athletic Aryan boyfriend and is anticipating the production of his own rendition of a play by Nazi inspiration Richard Wagner. David makes sure to acknowledge that Mr. Wagner was said to have Jewish blood and the family agrees that “Jewish anti-Semites are the worst.” I recall Larry David also defending the artistry of Richard Wagner against a Zionist extremist in a splendid episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. The tragedy that Gold family faces is that David’s sister may give birth to a gay child. David’s sister has a doctor husband who has been doing controversial genetic testing. He cautiously tests his pregnant wife and finds out that the child has a good chance of being a homosexual. The conflicted doctor also has problems with his own family as he was brought up an orthodox Jew. The doctor’s father is outraged by his sons “experiments” alluding to “you know what.” Maybe the orthodox father was thinking about the evil Nazi experimenter of Jewish blood Hans Eppinger. David almost has a nervous breakdown when he finds out that his sister may abort her gay son. He has yet to be accepted by his liberal Jewish family and this potential abortion is the last straw. David bitches out all his family members and cuts off contact with them bitterly. *The Twilight of the Golds* brings up questions about humans playing god and accepting gay relatives. How gay. *The Twilight of the Golds* is a nice little propaganda film targeted at the sentimental “cultured” crowd. It has all the proper ingredients for those good doer types to confirm that they are making the right choice. Brendan Fraser’s gay artsy look is similar to his outfit in *Encino Man*. Obnoxious alpha lesbo Rosie O’Donnell also has a supporting role as a woman that can’t have children (surprise?). *The Twilight of the Golds* is a “progressive” film for today’s “progressive” people.

-Ty E

DEATH RACERS

Roy Knyrim (2008) If you have any knowledge of The Asylum's stature in the film industry, you can already call this a dud from miles away. For the people who are new to the term "The Asylum", what they are is a California based company that specializes in low-budget horror. Their defining characteristic is that every film sans a couple are "rip-offs" of a current Blockbuster in theaters. This time, they took Death Race and added Insane Clown Posse to the mix. The plot is never important with these films; it's like multiple choice. Take a shattered government which consists of 4 people in suits in a back room with a flag in the background. This is our government and it is in danger. Some greasy guy is manufacturing Sarin gas to release into a water supply so they form a Battle Royale II stolen scheme to have people race to kill the man known as Reaper. There are also explosive devices lined in the base of the head. Hmmmm....The headliner of this film and all around product placement is the music and fan base of horrorcore rappers Insane Clown Posse. They inject their horribly shoddy discography into the film at every scene so there isn't a moment that goes by when you don't hear clowns rapping in the background about Juggalo's and Shangri-La. Just goes to show that some things refuse to change. I could go on about my opinions on ICP but this is a review on the film, not the nature of the band. The racers are an obnoxious bunch. Mexican perverts (Is there any other kind?), bimbo dykes, a military duo, and the killer clowns. It is their mission to stop Reaper and save the world. Somehow, they've incorporated some point system for killing prisoners that wander the grounds. The film's plot holes run rampant as nothing is explained. Death Racers is a mess. There is violence present but has no substance. It is immature, shoddy, and thinks that putting stars (to some) in a film will boost ratings and fans. This may be true, but lets hope fans of ICP and film alike can see this film for the cesspool it is. If you don't like ICP, avoid this film like the plague.

-mAQ

ASYLUM
ASYLUM

Roy Ward Baker (1972)

So begins my initiation rite into the oeuvre of Amicus Productions, the company that rivals Hammer Film in style but not composition. I had long seen the unforgettable poster art of *Asylum* and had the picturesque image of a packaged head immersed in my memory banks. Up until today, I had the film trapped in a queue hell of sorts, that seems to shuffle priority often. After viewing a very similar film but a few months ago, *Tales that Witness Madness*, and being floored by several of the shorts, I decided to apprehend *Asylum* with the very same unwillingness I had shown its unrelated companion. Upon revelation of the film's basic guideline, I immediately sunk into what felt like a thematic whirlpool towards Svankmajer's excellent sanitarium picture, *Lunacy*. The construct of the "framing story" is quite simple and meandering to the tales that await our ensemble cast. The story follows such; a young psychiatrist enters a secluded sanitarium with hopes of a prospering job only to find a sinister game in which begs him to meet & greet four patients and determine which used to be the authoritarian figure before an uprising at the funny farm.

The first short up for trial is *Frozen Fear*. By proxy, *Frozen Fear* is the casual "dead lover comes back" tale that you've seen in near every portmanteau film of any age. In this tiny picture, a husky senior prepares to hack his gorgeous free-spirited wife into pieces, only after learning of her boding, yet still innocent, shamanism. After the grisly deed is done, Walter suddenly is attacked by the tidily disposed of heiress while the surviving loony takes the fall after a terrifying instance of animated appendages damages her psyche and ironically, her face as well. After all, Bonnie was the woman Walter was leaving Ruth for, who in actuality, seemed like an oppressive, yet, endearing power-hungry lass who possessed unearthly beauty, as well as vocal cords. I suppose my entrapment within the miserable chafe experienced by most, if not all, anthology films could be summed up to the neatly packaged brown paper parcel figures containing once erotic flesh. The delicate task of wrapping Ruth's pretty little head with butcher knots elevates this eroded piece of introductory horror into an experience invigorating though easily forgettable, especially in comparison with the later tales. But as it stands, I take great pride in the flaccid two-dimensional character Walter as he and I both share a similar taste in women and brandy.

The second tale finds Peter Cushing in his stoic skeletal prime requesting an unusual suit from an impoverished tailor. Given very specific instructions, Bruno is supplied with effervescent material in which to craft a suit, but only past the stroke of midnight is he to work. The stipulations apply direct stress to Bruno's marriage that is suffering in part to the wife's loneliness. Her needy nature coincides to the fate of one Mr. Bruno and lands him incarcerated within

a mental institution for the incurably insane. Our lead character, Dr. Martin, so humbly believes in psychotherapy and rationalization to all events deemed otherworldly by diseased minds. It's his job to filter truth from fiction and fact from fantasy and this is the adhesive coating to all these stories within. After Bruno explains his story to the noticeably bewildered Dr. Martin, Bruno begs the good doctor to find "Otto". One would think that spotting a large mannequin wearing an illuminated suit wouldn't be too difficult a task, not even in part to his peeling facial features. The *Weird Tailor* is unlike most tales that I've seen in these portmanteau films as it beckons originality. Author Robert Bloch's stories of horror translate well from the realms of reality to ideals slightly more grounded in grim parables of monsters and murder.

Afterwards, our next story is revealed in the shape of a young, nubile Charlotte Rampling plays Barbara, a neurotic heiress who, upon release from an asylum, is imprisoned within her own house by her loving brother and a portly nurse. This leads her to reuniting with a friend named Lucy, who is brought upon by the pills that Barbara consumes hungrily as if they were bits of hard candy. *Lucy Comes to Stay* is perhaps the worst of the Asylum tales but continues to show effort placing it into the genre of murder mystery. For the sheer femininity of it all, *Lucy Comes to Stay* is the typical bad-girl RX fantasy you witness in such films as *Girl, Interrupted* in which pseudo-lesbian relationships clash with the stupidity of it all. The vanity of Barbara's character is revealed after the story is told as she smiles to Lucy in the mirror, the misguided hormones winding into a tornado of self-assessment and utter satiation. The final short film takes place at the current coordinates of Dr. Martin, within his own reality as well, for his unbelieving eyes to witness. Still not quite sure who Dr. Starr is, Martin meets the final patient, Dr. Byron, and his collection of miniature automatons built with supposed organic viscera and the capacity to will one's mind within the tiny bodies.

This is the default "tiny terror" story that winds up in most films of this caliber but you won't find a complaint out of me. These films of sinister puppetry tickle my fancy in ways that undercooked psychopath dramas will never have the pleasure of doing. As several Amicus horror pictures seem to embrace, *Asylum* is but one of the strange style of "Choose your own adventure" novels that Amicus breeds, according to the synopsis of *The Beast Must Die*. The tales within *Asylum* are refreshing and morbid, embracing modern gothic with varying aesthetics. *The Weird Tailor* being the most accomplished in art direction as the dark cobblestone streets are rivaled by a suit that emits an eerie glow. *Asylum* is an excellent entry in horror anthology but I feel more partial to *Tales that Witness Madness* as the framing story was genuinely surprising and ultimately featured more variety of horrific tales. It's a shame that Max Rosenberg, co-president of Amicus Productions, didn't favor film as much as the directors he employed showed. In an interview collected in a featurette called *Inside the Fear*

ASYLUM

Factory, Max Rosenberg admits having "no emotional investment in this kind of filmmaking and I did it to make money." Which he did, following the release of Asylum, with Tales from the Crypt.

-mAQ

PIG

Rozz Williams (1998)

Pig, co-created by Rozz Williams (singer/founder of goth band Christian Death) and Dutchman Nico B. is a diamond in the rough of somewhat contemporary short films. This is especially true in regards to films of a similar nature (if there is anything similar). Shot on gritty and scratched black and white film, Pig looks like its film was found in the abandoned house it was filmed in. It captures a world that is buried at the bottom of a dark soul's unconscious. Rozz Williams's set design is amazing as expected. Collages of the apocalypse surround rooms and they are even read from a truly unholy book. Rozz's art is easily identifiable as it is piercingly full of taboos. Pig is also easily the most lively of Rozz's art (for more of his art checkout the book "Art of Rozz Williams: From Christian Death to Death") as it is his only film. I think that Rozz Williams and Nico B. may owe a small debt to auteurs of the past. Luis Buñuel (*Un Chien Andalou*), Jean Cocteau (*Blood of a Poet*), Maya Deren (*Meshes of the Afternoon*), and Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks*) to name a few. Pig is easily able to hold its own with these masterpieces. I have yet to see any other recent short films worthy of this recognition (unless you count the first 15 minutes of Elias Merhige's *Begotten*). Pig in its entirety is one bad (or good) surrealistic dream. Body mutilation, head bandaged sign language, and atmospheric car rides stick in your mind long after the film is over. This is a world I would enjoy visiting if I had the opportunity and nerve to do so. I am sure Rozz Williams did as he committed suicide (*April Fool's* 1998) shortly after Pig's completion. The musical score of Pig is similar to that of Rozz Williams's music projects (Christian Death, Shadow Project, etc). Ambient sounds and noise perfectly compliment the film's nihilistic and detached tone. Obviously something you would expect of Rozz Williams. The score becomes especially intense in a scene that continuously spins around in circles in a room in the abandoned house. Hitler also makes a couple auditory appearances. Pig is a film that is recommended reviewing for everyday of the week. When I watch it I can't help to think what Rozz Williams could have created cinema wise in years to come. Rozz admittedly used Pig as a way to exorcise and transfer his inner demons. In real life I don't think he accomplished this. (his suicide is an indicator of that) Instead he created a transgressive masterpiece.

-Ty E

ROTE SONNE
ROTE SONNE

Rudolf Thome (1970)

Undoubtedly, one of the best ways to get a penetrating and somewhat metapolitical understanding of the drug-addled minds, degenerate souls, and dispiriting spirits of the overzealous zeitgeist that sired counter-culture movements, second-wave feminism, would-be-hip hippie bastards, cultural Marxism, kosher cosmopolitanism, and virtually every other anti-Occidental trend that hit Europe and North America during the late-1960s is by viewing ostensibly 'revolutionary' cinematic works from this thankfully bygone era, which, when feeling rather masochistic, I do from time to time. Recently, I decided to watch the West German flick *Rote Sonne* (1969) aka *Red Sun* after learning it was a feminist science fiction film that was promoted with the outwardly titillating tagline: "Frei, wild, cool und tödlich" (free, wild, cool and deadly). Directed by Southern kraut auteur Rudolf Thome (*Supergirl – Das Mädchen von den Sternen*, *Tarot*) – a filmmaker who has been described as "the German Eric Rohmer" and who, like his cinematic compatriots Peter Nestler, Eckhart Schmidt, Max Zihlmann, and Klaus Lemke, belonged to the so-called "New Munich Group"; a collective of closely related "cinephiles" and documentarians who were unassociated with and ultimately eclipsed by filmmakers of the New German Cinema – *Rote Sonne* is a genre conscious yet audaciously antagonistic celluloid work that is more of dystopian anti-sci-fi flick that, whether intentional or not on the director's part (most people believe the work to be a genuine 'feminist film'), makes for a fabulous farce of feminism as opposed to a special-effects-driven celluloid manifesto that argues for so-called gender equality that one would expect from such a seemingly wretched work. Described by internationally renowned German auteur Wim Wenders (*Paris, Texas*, *Wings of Desire*) in the January 1970 issue of *Filmkritik* in the following manner, "Red Sun is one of the rarest kind among European cinema - one that doesn't imitate American cinema. In the *Red Sun* the actors always talk like they wouldn't need to bother about the story of the movie. They are just boldly present in the scene, talking and acting as if they do not yet know what's next....," Thome did indeed assemble the sort of seemingly plodding and virtually plot-less yet inconspicuously clever film that makes popular American New Wave counter-culture works like *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Bound for Glory* (1976) seem like pastiche pieces of prosaic philistinism in its scathing (and apparently accidental) assault on the wild world of women's liberation. Centering around a beatnik bastard who looks like an inbred version of Mick Jagger who moves into a hormone-driven house occupied by a cult of murderously wanton women who kill any man that they date for longer than five days so as to prevent falling in love with them, *Rote Sonne* takes feminist stereotypes to such extremes that one could never take such a loony liberation philosophy serious again after watching the film, not that any sane or sensible person

would in the first place. Starring counter-culture sex symbol, German left-wing movement icon, and international super groupie Uschi Obermaier (born Chrissi Malberg) – a real-life wanton woman who lived in the kraut hippie commune Kommune 1 (K1) and carried many high-profile romances with rock ‘n’ roll stars, including Keith Richard, Mick Jagger, and Jimi Hendrix – *Rote Sonne* is nothing short of being bohemian Bavarian cult cinema degeneracy in its most killer and kaleidoscopic form.

Thomas (played by Marquard Böhm of Klick’s *Deadlock* (1970) and Fassbinder’s *Beware of the Holy Whore* (1971)) is a beatnik bum who has abandoned his 3-year-old child and wife and has just landed in Munich from Hamburg and he is already trying to swindle a taxi-driver out of cash, instead of paying him a tip. Luckily, Thomas – a man who states about himself that, “Tactics were never my strong point, but my broken charm is irresistible” – runs into his ex-girlfriend Peggy (Uschi Obermaier) at a bar and she invites him to squat at her home, which is full of very literal ‘femme fatales’ who seem like a bunch of lollipop and lily-licking lipstick lesbians, but they are something much more sinister as misandry-championing succubi who suck and fuck men, but for no more than five days. As Thomas finds out while interrogating a small blonde babe named Isolde (Gaby Go), Peggy killed her unfaithful boyfriend 18 months ago by pushing him off a balcony and telling the police that he committed suicide and ever since, she made the girls make a pact that they would kill any boyfriend they have after five days so as to prevent them from falling in love with a potentially fleeting philanderer. Of course, like any megalomaniacal cult leader, Peggy does not follow her own dogma, thus her Teutonic boy toy Thomas manages to live past five days, but being a wonderfully wacked out wench, the fatalistic female Führer is bound to crack at some point. The more men these murderous madams kill, the more fanatical their cult of the crazy cunt becomes as they begin building and testing bombs and even assassinate fellow female members who they believe are involved with treachery. Needless to say, these beautiful brunette and blonde beastesses give the brownshirts a run for the money because although National Socialism and the Männerbünde might be totally tot in Deutschland, fierce Feminazis have rightfully taken their place. With totally emasculated males who make absurd statements like “We got to break with tradition. That’s today’s task,” and “Even if we have to change the weather to change society, then we’ll do it,” women have to naturally step up the plate, but, unfortunately, as the gorgeous gun-toting gals of *Rote Sonne* ultimately find out, no matter how many times one reads old Hebraic hags and Semitic slags of the Levite-left like Emma Goldman and Rosa Luxemburg, there is no cure for homicidal female hysteria, especially of the (unconsciously) shabbos goy, gynocentric sort.

Like her character in *Rote Sonne*, Uschi Obermaier apparently made some absurd demands in her contract for the film, including having her then-boyfriend

ROTE SONNE

and commundard Rainer Langhans (a “mover and shaker” of the Kommune 1 commune) on set at all times, working no longer than 4-day work weeks, and weekly paid flights from Munich to Berlin for the leftist love birds. As Obermaier would later admit, she had no actual interest in politics and her sole reason for living at Kommune 1 was to be with Langhans, a rather repugnant fellow who looked like the kraut version of John Lennon (Obermaier and Langhans were even described as the “German version” of John Lennon and Yoko Ono by the press), except even more gawky and gaunt. Interestingly enough, both Obermaier and Langhans would later star in the kraut counter-culture science fiction work *Haytabo* (1971) co-directed (with Peter Moland) by Ulli Lommel of all people and also starring Eddie Constantine and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, thus demonstrating the popularity of *Rote Sonne* at that time as an instant cult classic. Although still making films today, director Rudolf Thome would never again make another celebrated cinematic work that was as big of a hit as *Rote Sonne*, thereupon proving that one can never predict cultural trends, nor when they will degenerate into forgotten aesthetic debris. While few know of or talk about *Rote Sonne* today, the film does hold up to some degree as a quasi-ancient celluloid artifact from a thankfully dead, but still influential era when girls wanted to be boys and boys wanted to be girls and spoiled bourgeois white people wanted to live their lives in the vein of mythical ‘noble savages.’ Personally, I think feminists would be contributing to the great cause of mankind if they assassinated beatnik beta-boys, but as *Rote Sonne* has proved, they tend to go wild for those weasley wanton wimps.

-Ty E

SUPERGIRL - DAS MÄDCHEN VON DEN STERNEN

Rudolf Thome (1971)

When I hear a film described as an “undercooked indie hybrid” of Jean-Luc Godard’s *Le Mépris* (1963) aka *Contempt* and Jonathan Glazer’s *Under the Skin* (2013), I have to admit it sounds more cinematically appetizing than I would like to admit. Indeed, that is how a certain German cinephile described the hopelessly offbeat West German cult flick *Supergirl - Das Mädchen von den Sternen* (1971) which, despite being advertised as a sci-fi flick upon its initial release over four decades ago and being categorized on *imdb.com* as a ‘comedy,’ is really a sort of jet-set (anti)romance and post-counterculture ‘cuckold fantasy’ as directed by a dubious dude who seems to get off to seeing ‘mysterious’ underfed women destroying men and turning them into groveling and dejected lovelorn losers of the alcohol-addled sort. Indeed, described as a “Regisseur der Frauen” aka “Director of Women” in his native land of Deutschland, Rudolf Thome (Detektive, Berlin Chamissoplatz) is probably best known for his dystopian counterculture flick *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun*, which depicts a crazed cult of fierce feminist cunts who seduce men and then subsequently kill them for sport as if they have been lobotomized by deranged dyke and failed Warhol assassin Valerie Solanas’ infamous SCUM Manifesto. While I initially assumed that *Red Sun* had to be a sort of dry satire of women’s lib and the sexual revolution, apparently Thome’s tongue was not as firmly placed in his cheek as I had once assumed. Indeed, like most of Thome’s early work, *Supergirl* was penned by Max Zihlmann and is an obscenely outmoded too-cool-for-school film about too-cool-for-school dudes who for fall prey to a much cooler chick that is literally and figuratively out of this world (or something). Like many of the filmmakers associated with the largely forgotten New Munich Group (aka ‘Neue Münchner Gruppe’) that was later eclipsed by New German Cinema as led by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (who was, somewhat ironically, inspired by NMG filmmakers like Thome and Klaus Lemke as his early cinephile works like *Love Is Colder Than Death* and *The American Soldier* demonstrate), Thome was heavily inspired by Godard and his tiresome tendency to fiddle with beaten-to-death old school Hollywood genre conventions, especially relating to film noir. Unfortunately, Thome took this tendency one or two steps further than Godard to the point where there was nothing left except a compulsively quirky and sometimes ‘pretty’ cross-genre shell of a film that is arguably best exemplified by *Supergirl*. Despite the film’s title, the work has virtually nothing to do with comic book superheroine of the same name aside the fact that the eponymous chick is from another planet and enjoys reading comic books. A work that transcends Godard’s *Alphaville* (1965) in terms of its asinine ‘anti-sci-fi’ angle (notably, the film even features a cameo appearance by Eddie ‘Lemmy Caution’ Constantine himself), *Supergirl* is a rather ridiculous exercise in would-be-style, proto-hipster wit(lessness), postmodern referencing,

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and pathetic retrograde jet-set degeneracy. For fans of seemingly autistic ass-less and tit-less girls that resemble scrawny preteen boys, heterosexual men that act and look more effeminate than the most flagrantly flaming of queers, and/or a cuisine of clichés about movie clichés, Thome's quirk-ridden wonder film guarantees to offers the worst (or 'best,' depending who you are and what kind of dames you find delectable) of early-1970s kraut post-counterculture cult cinema.

As some great generic krautrock blazes in the background (created by Swiss composer Patrick Moraz, who also composed music for Swiss auteur Alain Tanner), a stoic and seemingly possessed young girl (Iris Berben, who previously starred in Thome's *Detektive* and would go on to have a long acting career) in a strikingly silly yellow jumpsuit emerges from a weed-covered field on the outskirts of Munich as if she is on some sort of mission to murder a bunch of men, or buy an entire new wardrobe. When the mysterious woman reaches a highway, she immediately flags down an exceedingly effete and somewhat overweight 33-year-old playboy in a sports car named Charly Seibert (Nikolaus Dutsch, who looked much more masculine as fascist cop in Uwe Brandner's *I Love You, I Kill You* (1971)), who immediately asks the strange young lady regarding her jumpsuit, "Are you not wearing anything under that?" but she does not reply as she rarely talks, especially when asked specific questions about her life. When chubby Charly brings the curious chick back to his ostensibly hip pad, she immediately strips off her rather unflattering jumpsuit and crawls into a bed where she immediately falls asleep. While digging through the girl's jumpsuit, Charly finds a Bolivian passport indicating that her name is 'Francesca Farnese.' Charly is too much of a pussy to try to fuck Francesca but he does buy her like ten expensive wardrobes while Fassbinder watches from outside and smokes a cigarette in arguably the most 'subtle' cameo role in film history and then he takes her to the opulent home of his much more famous and slightly more attractive writer friend Evers (West German counterculture icon Marquard 'German Belmondo' Böhm of Thome's *Red Sun* and Roland Klick's *Deadlock* (1970)), who is a depressed dipsomaniac that "loves mysterious women" and is terribly tired of his blonde bombshell superstar wife Elsa Morandi (played by the director's then-wife, writer/director/producer Karin Thome, who was previously married to underrated auteur Uwe Brandner). Evers is a would-be-romantic of sorts who writes stuff like "He took her in his arms and said, 'I tried to hate you'" and his latest 1,200-page tome *Cynthia* is such a big hit that a bigwig Hollywood producer named Polonsky (American actor Jess Hahn in a role that is more likely in tribute to black-listed kosher commie director Abraham Polonsky of *Romance of a Horsethief* (1971) starring Yul Brynner and Jane Birkin than Roman Polanski) that thinks the film adaptation "will be the biggest hit since *DOCTOR ZHIVAGO*."

While Evers has no interest in selling his precious book rights to monetary-obsessed Polonsky—a proudly unscrupulous mensch of the cigar-sucking sort

that is the complete opposite of his real-life Judeo-bolshevik namesake as a sort of Anglo-American 'cowboy producer' who lives to sell-out and cash-in—Francesca tries her damndest to change his mind. Although not revealed until later on in the film, Francesca was apparently “born on the third planet of the Alpha Centauri system” and she was sent to earth to stop a rival political party from her home planet from attacking and colonizing earth. The daughter of the president of her planet, Francesca was part of an important expedition that was sent to earth to warn earthlings of an impending attack from the rival political party, but instead of landing in Washington D.C. to warn the President of the United States as intended, her spaceship crash-landed in West Germany and she was the only survivor. Through Evers' connection to Polonsky—a relatively powerful man with many political connections who is good friends with a U.S senator—Francesca hopes to be able to warn the U.S. President before things are too late. Unfortunately for her, Francesca is treated like a cute and delicate little social-climbing slut by everyone she meets, especially Polonsky, who wants to make her his new Warholian 'superstar,' hence the title of the film. Meanwhile, Evers just wants to get into Francesca's out-of-this-world underwear, but she seems more interested in reading Marvel comics than being dined, wined, and defiled by a famous writer with a self-destructive fetish for “mysterious women.” As a result of Francesca's influence, Evers eventually agrees to sell his book rights to Polonsky, so the two (non)lovers both fly to Spain to meet with the producer. Unfortunately, Francesca becomes increasingly paranoid upon arriving in Spain as she suspects a black Cadillac is following her, but as Polonsky's driver tells her in what is easily the most rather retarded movie cliché of the entire film: “You watch too many movies.”

While Polonsky says “Who's the girl? Hire her immediately!” upon being introduced to Francesca, the producer soon decides to use “Gestapo methods” to find out more about the personal background of the intriguing young lady and soon learns that her Bolivian passport is a fake and that there is no record that she even exists, as she has no social security number or any other sort of official records to her name. When Polonsky introduces Francesca to his U.S. Senator friend at her urging, the Supergirl makes a major ass of herself by telling him that she is an extraterrestrial from another planet that has come to warn him about an impending attack against earth. Meanwhile, at the same party, drunken Evers slaps his wife Elsa in front of a large number of people and is soon manhandled for daring to hit a 'lady.' After the party, Evers shoots and kills a super swarthy and seemingly anorexic man with long black-hair that has been following Francesca around Germany and Spain, though he does it not to protect her but because he is jealous of the fellow and suspects it might be her husband. After the senseless killing, Francesca reveals to Evers her true identity as a literal 'Supergirl' from outerspace, as well as the fact that the man he has killed was one of her extraterrestrial comrades who has been following her to warn her about

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their enemies. After Francesca tells Evers her long and seemingly preposterous story about the Alpha Centauri revolution and then pleads with him to take her to Moscow, the thoroughly inebriated writer responds predictably by stating, "You read too many comics."

When Francesca and Evers go back to Munich after their strange aborted scenic yet sexless 'vacation' in Spain, they still fail to commence coitus, though the writer still has not given up. Meanwhile, the sinister black Cadillac continues to follow Francesca everywhere she goes. After another failed night of pathetically attempting to get into Francesca's panties that concludes with the extraterrestrial debutante falling asleep early and subsequently spastically tossing and turning as if suffering a seizure-inducing nightmare, Evers decides to go by his fellow playboy pal Charly's pad to get good and drunk while complaining about his impossible failed love affair with the Supergirl. While Charly tells Evers how everyone in their clique thinks that Francesca is completely insane due to her 'war of the worlds' story and that Polonsky no longer wants to cast her in his upcoming film, the Supergirl buys a dozen or so comics from a newspaper stand in Munich. Charly also attempts to convince Evers to reconcile with his wife Elsa, but he is not hearing it and states to his friend while the two are both stinking drunk: "I don't like you, Charley. I never liked you. You're a revolting pig. You're somewhat a regular human being." In an 'open ending' of the rather anti-climatic sort, Francesca voluntarily gets inside the black Cadillac that has been chasing her during the entire film, but not before trashing her comics, and assumedly disappears from planet earth forever. In the end, lovelorn drunkard Evers goes on the balcony of his lavish mansion and stares up into the sky as if to mourn the fact that he never got to bugger the seemingly autistic Supergirl.

With its oftentimes pathetically drunk too-cool-for-school effeminate male characters, seemingly braindead cipher-like sex-starved beauties, incessant 'off-beat' humor, slow-burning melancholy and even misanthropic tone, and exotic locations and partial Spanish setting, not to mention cameos from Fassbinder and Eddie Constantine, Supergirl largely feels like a bare bones bargain bin version of *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971), albeit with a preposterous sci-fi angle and minus the meta-cinematic elements that made the 'anti-theater anti-film' so intriguing. Ironically, Thome attempted to get Fassbinder to produce his film, once writing in *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (1988) edited by Eric Rentschler: "I was in a jam. Distressed, I sought out Fassbinder, who just had received the Federal Film Prize in Gold and 650,000 marks for his second feature film, *KATZELMACHER*. I asked everyone I knew. Finally Karin found a rich private source in Hamburg who was willing to lend us part of the money (125,000 marks). We went on to make *SUPERGIRL* with this money." Thome would also write regarding the public reaction to the film: "The production was a technical tour de force [...] The final version was accepted and I'm not exaggerating when I say that the TV editors were excited. The film was

aired in March and I received numerous crank calls from people who threatened all kinds of things. They thought I was putting them on. They thought that I wasn't serious about the story of SUPERGIRL, this girl from another planet." Like the West German public of the early 1970s, I also had a very, very hard time taking the film seriously, but after reading Thome's own words, I am going to have to take his word for it and assume that he is a strange and emasculated dude that seems more aroused by the prospect of being led on by a mysterious girl that he cannot have than actually manning up and showing a lady a good time with his cock. Indeed, somehow it is hard for me to watch a film like Supergirl where a rich and famous playboy writer somehow cannot manage to get the girl he wants in bed without thinking the director is some sort of majorly masochistic cuckold. After Supergirl, Thome began working on a film entitled Rio Guaniamo about "two friends who take off for Venezuela one day to hunt in the jungle for diamonds" that he absurdly anticipated would be produced by Columbia Pictures, but the Hollywood studio predictably blew him off and the auteur would later complain regarding the fact that his Bavarian comrade Werner Herzog actually managed to finish his own exotic South American epic: "That was right at the time when Herzog was making AGUIRRE and Antonioni was working on a film about the half-overgrown Amazon city, Manaus, which around 1900 had had one of the largest opera houses in the world. Unfortunately only Werner finished his film. I never forgave him for not showing the jungle as I imagined life in the jungle." Of course, it is easy to see after watching Supergirl why Herzog and Fassbinder went on to do great things and create great cinematic masterpieces while Thome soon fell into obscurity and never again achieved the fleeting popularity and success he did with Red Sun. Indeed, luckily films featuring German guys wearing colorful queer scarfs and purple shirts soon fell out of fashion.

-Ty E

LOOKING FOR EILEEN
LOOKING FOR EILEEN

Rudolf van den Berg* (1987)

Quite notably, the great Vienna-born Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was himself $\frac{3}{4}$ Jewish and described his mind as being “100% Hebraic,” once wrote: “In western civilization the Jew is always measured on scales which do not fit him [...] And by taking the words of our language as the only possible standards we constantly fail to do them justice. So at one time they are overestimated, at another underestimated.” Naturally, I agree with Wittgenstein, especially when it comes to art and cinema, and I would certainly argue that a German-Jewish or British-Jewish filmmaker tends to have more in common with a Jewish Hollywood filmmaker than a fellow German filmmaker or British filmmaker of the wholly European-blooded sort. Indeed, I have watched tons of different films from around the world from different time periods and zeitgeists and I have noticed that it is much easier and appropriate to compare Jewish filmmakers to other Jewish filmmakers from different nations than to compare them to the gentiles of their own respective host nations, especially in Europe, for a number of reasons but mainly in that their works tend to lack a certain organic poetry and rawness and have a certain conspicuously contrived, calculated, cosmopolitan, and highly conscious essence about them that is especially apparent in Hebraic Hollywood where ‘genre cinema’ and various forms of comedy (e.g. parody, satire) does not reign for no reason as it reflects the concreteness of the Judaic mind. As Wittgenstein also once wrote in regard to the Jews: “What Renan calls the ‘bon sens précoce’ of the semitic races (an idea which had occurred to me too a long time ago) is their unpoetic mentality, which heads straight for what is concrete.” Indeed, when kosher commie cultural theorist Theodor Adorno once wrote in an absurdly arrogant fashion, “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,” what he really meant is ‘I am going to use the holocaust as an excuse as to why you evil Aryan goyim have no right to express the most beautiful and romantic aspects of their innate racial essence because I am jealous that we Jews suck at writing poetry.’ Anyway, I have recently been on a Dutch cinema kick and in the process of discovering various notable auteur filmmakers in the Netherlands, I naturally encountered Jewish auteur Rudolf van den Berg (De Johnsons aka The Johnsons, Süskind), who is a perfect example of an ostensibly ‘European’ filmmaker who might as well be working in Hollywood as all of his works reflect a deep deracination from the culture and people they depict. Van den Berg’s innate lack of Dutchness is most apparent in what is arguably his greatest and most well known work, *De Avonden* (1989) aka *Evenings*—an adaptation of Gerard Reve’s 1947 novel of the same name—as it is based on one of the most important and innately Dutch works of the post-WWII era, yet it feels like it was directed by a well trained Hollywood technician with no intrinsic understanding of Dutch culture

or people. Even more so than *Evenings*, van Den Berg's second feature *Zoeken naar Eileen* (1987) aka *Looking for Eileen*—a work based on the 1981 novel of the same name written by second generation holocaust survivor Leon de Winter (whose work *La Place de la Bastille* van den Berg previously adapted as his first feature *Bastille* (1984)—feels like a contrived Hollywood production that just happened to be shot in the Netherlands and not a work that was directed by a man who grew up in the same country as Adriaan Ditvoorst, Jos Stelling, Theo van Gogh, and Alex van Warmerdam. Indeed, in its Judaic obsession with the all-beauteous exotic shiksa, *Looking for Eileen* is like the American Pie of romance-thrillers, albeit minus the retarded raunchy humor and with a slight bit of class.

On his personal website, auteur van den Berg wrote regarding *Looking for Eileen*, “A strong romantic story, audiences still love it to this very day. Even though, at the time, I had the feeling I was a sell-out, because it missed the engagement and underlying existential ideas of my previous work.” If van den Berg means by “sell-out” a work that seems like it was made more with an American than Dutch audience in mind, he is certainly right as it is an unfavorably formulaic and easy-to-follow flick where about half of the dialogue is in English and one of the main stars is a hot mainstream actress who bares some skin. A sort of cross-genre romance-crime-thriller-melodrama featuring Lysette Anthony at her physical peak flashing some boobs and beaver and rather talented Dutch actor Thom Hoffman (Luger, De Witte Waan aka *White Madness*) in one of his most hopelessly ordinary yet at the same time strangely Jew-y roles, van den Berg's work has a strange character about it in that it feels like what would happen if a Hollywood producer got a hold of a European arthouse production and did his damndest to make sure that it would be palatable to the most art-antagonistic of proud American philistines. Indeed, *Looking for Eileen* certainly follows the Hebraic Hollywood tradition of featuring a stunningly beautiful chick being in hopelessly love with a less than handsome dork who makes up for his lack of sex appeal and testosterone with his shallow charm, emasculating sensitivity, and slightly above average intellect. Unfortunately for the less than handsome dork, he loses his stunningly beautiful wife and, in turn, his mind, after she unexpectedly dies in a car wreck on the way to the airport to travel to a mere book auction in London, thereupon causing the protagonist to realize the strange and cruel nature of fate. In fact, protagonist Philip de Wit (Thom Hoffman) is so distraught after the untimely death of his wife Marian (Lysette Anthony) that he locks himself in his bathroom and attempts suicide by swallowing an entire bottle full of pills, but his father and father-in-law break into his home after he fails to answer the door and save him just before he croaks by forcing him to vomit up the surely fatal cocktail of prescription drugs. Of course, there is a Hitchcockian twist to *Looking for Eileen* in that a year after the widowed protagonist's wife dies, his dead wifey Marian's Irish Catholic dop-

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pelgänger randomly shows up in his life while looking for a copy of *Tristan und Isolde* at the English-language bookstore that both he and his belated beloved used to run together. Unfortunately for pansy Philip, the Irish chick not only has a bastard baby but is also married to a stereotypically violent and stupid red-faced mick philistine bastard that is connected to the IRA, among other things. In other words, emotionally perturbed protagonist Philip is so irrationally desperate to get his deceased lover back that, despite being a candy ass bibliophile who is so exceedingly effete that grade school children pick on him (during the same moment his wife dies in a car wreck, three little kids led by a turd-like Turk boy push him into a pond), he manages to develop the gall and testicular fortitude to enter the Dutch criminal underworld where he encounters violent junkie bums, barbaric gangsters, fat low-grade hookers, scheming fags, and related subhuman rabble that live off the grid.

As one would surely expect from such a Semitic cinematic work where everything is so deliberately quirky and out of tune with the hopelessly banal Aryan world, Philip's sole friend is curiously a goofy negro with an Afro-mullet named Geoffrey (Kenneth Herdigein) who does the bitch work at the protagonist's bookstore business. Geoffrey is certainly no scholar, but he provides much needed support for Philip when he has one of his many wussy bourgeois white-boy breakdowns. When his dead wife's mick doppelgänger, Eileen (also played by Lysette Anthony), decides to leave abruptly upon first entering his life after randomly walking into the protagonist's bookstore, it is jigaboo Geoffrey that is the one who convinces the fairly passive protagonist to chase her down. Ultimately, Philip follows Eileen to an abandoned building full of junky hobos where he transforms into a valiant white knight and saves her while one of the dope sick vagrants is trying to rob her. While bravely Philip acts as her savior, Eileen repays him by acting like somewhat of a bitch, as she lacks the cultivation of the protagonist's deceased wife but he does not mind too much as he is a lovelorn loser who thinks the strange Irish peasant girl with a bastard baby can somehow fill the large void that Marian's tragic death left. For their first date, Philip takes Eileen to an art museum to show her the 1923 painting "Nude Bending Down" by French post-Impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard featuring a woman whose face is obscured because her head is turned sideways and who is wearing nothing but a pair of high-heels wiping her leg. Although annoyed by the fact that the woman is wearing shoes despite being completely naked otherwise, Eileen proclaims to like the painting and later in the film she will come to be a real-life personification of the woman in Bonnard's piece. Rather conveniently, Philip first became aware of the painting shortly before his wife kicked the bucket, so he sort of sees Eileen's relatively positive response to the piece of art as a sign of fate.

Of course, Eileen eventually vanishes and Philip immediately panics, but he manages to find her whereabouts at a seedy hotel, but she is unfortunately al-

ready gone when he gets there. While at the hotel, one of the inhabitants gives Philip a letter that was sent to Eileen that was written by a certain 'Tristan' to a certain 'Isolde.' When Philip later goes back to his home-cum-bookstore, he is given the shock of a lifetime after being less than warmly greeted by Eileen's estranged husband Marc Nolan (Gary Whelan), who pulls a gun on the protagonist and ultimately personifies the 'tragic hero' (or what he calls "King Sucker, King Cuckold") of *Tristan und Isolde*. Marc is a boorish and belligerent Irish Catholic bastard with IRA connections who forces Philip to drive him to Amsterdam so that he might find his wife Eileen and baby daughter. As Philip soon learns, Eileen ran off to the Netherlands with her secret young druggy lover Kevin Fletcher (Ronald Tholen), who is the 'Tristan' that wrote the letter. While Marc and Philip initially reluctantly work as a team to find Eileen in an Amsterdam ghetto, the latter eventually breaks away and manages to track down his would-be-ladylove at a whorehouse called 'Hotel Wong' where he even goes so far as to smack around an Irish prostitute in the hope of finding pertinent information regarding his dream-lover's whereabouts. As it turns out Eileen's real name is 'Susan Callagher' and she is actually at the whorehouse. Ultimately, Philip saves Eileen from Marc when the latter shows up and demands the baby, but she is later falsely charged with the murder of her lover Kevin Fletcher, whose bloody corpse the protagonist later finds lying in a bathtub.

Flash forward two years later and at first it seems as if Philip and 'Eileen' have multiple children with one another and are living in a luxurious castle in Jouvemont, Belgium. Of course, the reality is not quite as romantic, as Eileen merely works at the castle as a nanny and Philip just came by the estate by happenstance as he is now a successful architect who has come by to do some work. Naturally, when Philip sees Eileen, he becomes obsessed with her and has to meet with her again. Upon reuniting with Eileen, Philip learns that Kevin was actually the real father of Eileen's child and the only reason she married Mark is because he was 'Catholic' and could provide her and her child with protection. Indeed, apparently Kevin was a protestant whose parents had been assassinated by the IRA, so Eileen was afraid that their 'half-Catholic/half-Protestant' baby would be in danger, so she made unwitting moron Marc her cuckold husband by lying and telling him that she was pregnant with his baby. Eventually, Eileen got tired of Mark and his "beer belly and football mentality," so she decided to go looking for her true love/baby daddy Kevin in the Netherlands, but when she finally tracked him down, he had already been murdered. In the end, Philip shows a picture of his dead wife to Eileen and reveals that his initial obsession with her was due to her striking resemblance to his belated spouse. Of course, Eileen has a characteristically jealous female response and complains in a bitchy manner "I'm not her," to which the protagonist replies "I know. I figured that out" and adds, "Do you think it makes any difference the reason you feel attracted to someone?" While the two part ways and begin walking away after the little lady

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gets a tad bit bitchy, Eileen and Philip cannot contain their mutual attraction toward one another, so they both turn around, run towards one another, embrace, and passionately kiss, thus ushering in the beginning of their dubious romance.

Undoubtedly, *Looking for Eileen* is like an overly melodramatic soup-operish mix of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), George Sluizer's *Spoorloos* (1988) aka *The Vanishing*, and Theo van Gogh's *Loos* (1989), albeit it is nowhere as good as any of the other three films. Notably and not surprisingly, Sluizer, who was also Jewish (even though he once accused Ariel Sharon of shooting two Palestinian children in what the Israeli officials absurdly described as 'modern blood libel'), produced van den Berg's debut feature *Bastille* (1984). In fact, van den Berg would ultimately become a sort of 'poor man's Sluizer' as a filmmaker who began making increasingly Hollywoodized and less arthouse-oriented works that were shot in English, but he never did quite make it to his spiritual and racial home in Hollywood, though he did manage to direct Burt Reynolds and Julie Christie in the fairly unknown abject failure *Snapshots* (2002). Additionally, the director's Friedrich Dürrenmatt adaptation *The Cold Light of Day* (1996) was later remade by Sean Penn as *The Pledge* (2001) starring Jack Nicholson and Benicio Del Toro (though Ladislao Vajda's German-language adaptation *It Happened in Broad Daylight* (1958) aka *Es geschah am hellichten Tag* is better than both of the later two adaptations). Lately, van den Berg has devoted himself to working on almost exclusively Jewish-themed material, most notably *Süskind* (2012) about the controversial eponymous Dutch Jewish council who has been called both a Nazi collaborator and holocaust hero due to his stranger-than-fiction involvement in the deportation of Dutch Jews to concentration camps. On top of also planning a feature on famous 17th-century Sephardic Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza—a once-controversial figure who was expelled from the Jewish community due to his supposed heretical ideas—entitled *Spinoza Con Brio*, van den Berg also recently released the seemingly intriguing documentary *Hamartía: More or Less Louis van Gaasteren* (2014), which centers around the killing of a Jewish refugee during WWII by the filmmaker's Dutch gay mentor and filmmaker friend Louis van Gaasteren. While featuring no overtly Jewish content, *Looking for Eileen* is 100% the product of Judaic minds and could have just as easily been set in Brooklyn and starring Robert Downey Jr. and Winona Ryder. Indeed, were I to rate the film against a similarly themed work by a great European arthouse auteur like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, I would have to say the film is a soulless piece of celluloid superficiality that, in a characteristically Jewish fashion, puts pussy on a pedestal and depicts masculine men as brutes, but were I to compare it to Hollywood films of the same era, I would have to admit it is a rare genre-bending romance that appeals more to men than women and its not just because it shows Lysette Anthony's boobs and beaver. For those interested in seeing *Looking for Eileen* star Thom Hoffman in a more masculine and 'virile' role that completely contradicts his Dustin Hoffman-esque performance in van

den Berg's film, checkout Aryan Kaganof's darkly and perversely poetic cult classic *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy*, which features the Dutch actor committing unsimulated sex acts on a gentle Jap chick with a shaved snatch. As for van den Berg and Hoffman at the height of their artistic collaboration with one another, checkout *De Avonden* (1989) aka *Evenings*, which is easily the single strangest Dutch film ever directed by a Hebraic filmmaker.

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Rudolf van den Berg* (1989)

If the Netherlands has anything representing a sort of Dutch equivalent to J.D. Salinger's obnoxiously overrated novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), it is probably *De avonden* (1947) aka *The Evenings* by Gerard Reve, which is so popular in its native land that it was ranked first among works created since 1900 in the Dutch homeland in a 2002 poll conducted by members of the Society for Dutch Literature. Written by a subversive sodomite of the almost pathologically anti-communist sort who was brought in to the atheistic Marxist faith by his parents but later converted to Roman Catholicism and who claimed to use homosexuality as merely a motif for his work which ultimately dealt with the theme of the inferiority of human love in comparison to 'divine love,' *The Evenings* is certainly a more intricate, mature, and multilayered work in comparison to Salinger's oftentimes intolerably whiny proto-hipster novel. In fact, the novel was deemed so bizarre due to its largely plotless and sometimes dreamlike structure that it was believed that it could never be adapted into a film, yet Dutch auteur Rudolf van den Berg (*De Johnsons* aka *The Johnsons*, Süskind) had the gall to take up the challenge, or as he later reflected regarding his decision to adapt the novel: "EVENINGS (DE AVONDEN) is the best known Dutch literary novel of all time, so turning it into a film was a great challenge. Everybody agreed it couldn't be done, so I ignored all advice, and told the story backwards compared to the book. I remember feeling that through each and every shot the story began to reveal to me something about myself until eventually, when the film was finished, I finally understood what the film was about." While van den Berg's 1989 film adaptation of the same name was criticized by certain film critics because they felt it was not a faithful adaptation, the film became somewhat of a cult hit in the Netherlands and managed to earn no less than two Golden Calves (the Dutch equivalent to the Oscars), including 'best film' and 'best actor,' thus demonstrating its importance in the context of Dutch cinema history.

The darkly comedic story of a hyper-neurotic 23-year-old college dropout turned office worker who is terrified of confronting the year 1948 as he is of embracing his latent homosexuality, *Evenings* is, not unlike the films of German auteur Volker Schlöndorff, a slightly dumbed down and stripped take on its source material that ultimately attempts to capture the spirit of Reve's work while paying biographical tribute to the writer himself (as reflected in the film's gay angle), but of course the director also hoped to add his own angle as reflected in an almost ghostly Jewish presence throughout the flick (while the film features no Jewish characters, a closed Jewish shop is featured throughout, as if to subtly symbolize the eradication of the fairly ancient and once thriving Dutch Jewish community during the Second World War). Indeed, not surprisingly considering van den Berg's Judaic background, the film takes

a Freudian-cum-Kafkaesque approach to Reve's work as it wallows in strikingly surreal and oftentimes dark symbolic psycho-sexual imagery, especially of the Oedipal sort, including big breasts dripping with milk, and certainly does not really emphasize the Roman Catholic subtext like Paul Verhoeven's somewhat superior Gerard Reve adaptation *De vierde man* (1983) aka *The Fourth Man*, which also stars Thom Hoffman. Unquestionably, van den Berg's film owes a great deal of its peculiar potency to lead Hoffman who, as a man who starred in such great and eclectic films as Theo van Gogh's daringly iconoclastic debut feature *Luger* (1982), Adriaan Ditvoorst's Dutch magical realist magnum opus *De Witte Waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*, and Aryan Kaganof's darkly humorously pornographic cinematic poem *Shabondama Elegy* (1999) aka *Tokyo Elegy*, is arguably the greatest and certainly the most daring Dutch actor of his generation. Simultaneously depicting the literally and figuratively nightmarish neuroticism of a young crypto-cocksucker suffering from an acute case of oikophobia who must come to terms with his desire to suck cock despite living with horrifically humdrum parents with whom he takes great pains to relate, as well as portraying post-WWII Holland from the perspective of a Jew who seems to have mixed feelings regarding the Dutch role in the war, *Evenings* is ultimately a work that straddles an aesthetically schizophrenic line between the forlorn and farcical as well as the hyperrealist and absurd, thus making for an undeniably unforgettable, if not somewhat uneven, coming-of-age work that makes it seem like the Dutch psyche was a hidden casualty of the Second World War.

23-year-old college dropout turned office worker Frits van Etgers (Thom Hoffman) is going to have one hell of a struggle trying to deal with Christmas and the days after that leading up to New Year's Eve of 1947, which he seems to believe will conclude with some sort of apocalypse that seems to be more metaphysical than literal. Frits lives by the personal mantra, "Things are bad. Otherwise I'm fine," and he seems completely incapable of relating to anyone, especially his hopelessly banal and old-fashioned communist parents, who have no idea what to do with their seemingly perennially problematic prodigal son. With his father (Rijk de Gooyer) being a half-deaf hard ass who asks his son rather rude things like, "Don't you ever doubt your sanity?" and his mother (Viviane de Muynck) being an easily upset worrywart who likes calling her son 'mouse,' Frits is on the verge of insanity as a result of living with his parents and incessantly fantasizes about them dying in grisly ways. At the very beginning of the film, Frits suffers from a tormenting nightmare set 11 minutes before the New Year where he spots a fellow closeted homosexual named Wim (Jobst Schnibbe) outside from his upstairs window and subsequently runs to his parents to tell them something that he just cannot find the words to say. Of course, what Frits cannot tell his parents is that he has the unshakeable urge to smoke some pole and to pound some twinks.

Partly because he has an immaculate head of red hair that he prides himself

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on, but mainly because he is hopelessly neurotic and suffers from a variety of pathologies, Frits is obsessed with balding and wastes no time telling people, including his much hated family man brother Joop (Kees Hulst), that they are suffering from a receding hairline. When Frits attends a Christmas event at his high school, he informs a former teacher while urinating next to him, "Mr. Wening, some bald people are quite happy," in what can be described as the protagonist's warped attempt at complimenting another person. At the same event, Frits imagines himself one day becoming as famous as Dante, Shakespeare, and Einstein, among others. While Frits is certainly a preternaturally intelligent guy with somewhat cultivated taste, he is also a hopeless slacker who has yet to attempt to fulfill his dream of being a famous writer by actually writing something. Instead, Frits likes unloading his curious and oftentimes appalling criticisms, fantasies, and desires on his oddball friends and apathetic family members. For example, Frits tells his four-eyed comrade Viktor (Gijs Scholten van Aschat) that, regarding his father, "My only hope is that he hangs himself." Indeed, an intolerably anally retentive chap, Frits cannot stomach the fact that his half-dead papa constantly farts, mashes his food, and uses a sugar spoon for a porridge pot. Sexually speaking, Frits is all screwed up as demonstrated by the fact that he puts his penis between his thighs to make it seem as if he is a girl with a bushy beaver and then proceeds to examine his rectum with a mirror while repeatedly asking himself, "What am I? A cone or a funnel?" as if to question whether he is a man or a woman. While carefully inspecting his anus, Frits states to himself in a rather intrigued fashion regarding his toxic-waste-dispensing nether-region, "Disgusting. If you saw a photo of it...you'd never believe it was human." As demonstrated by the fact that he abruptly blows off his virtual doppelganger Wim—a fellow closet case that has the same exact haircut and some of the same neurotic tendencies as the protagonist—after the young man gets a little too 'personal' with him, Frits is deathly afraid of his hidden sexuality.

One night, Frits decides to pay a visit to his quirky offbeat female photographer friend Bep (Elja Pelgrom) and on a whim he decides to bury his head into the little lady's crotch and then proceeds to pull up her dress. While Bep initially becomes angry and pushes his hand off of her, she subsequently puts Frits' hand on her naughty bits, which startles the protagonist and causes him to immediately abort the rather awkward sexual encounter. Possibly because she thinks he is a gynophobic nancy boy and thus feels sorry for him, Bep gives Frits a stuffed rabbit to borrow, which becomes a sort of symbol of his repressed sexuality and which he punishes by anally pillaging it with a stick. If there is anyone else like Frits in his town, it is his demented one-eyed friend Maurits Duivenis (Pierre Bokma), who fantasizes about strangling little boys in the woods and also shows signs of being a repressed rectum-reamer, albeit of the more sadomasochistic sort. Despite the fact that Frits states to Maurits, "I'm polite but that is partly fear. With you, I'm never sure I won't get stabbed in a dark alley," the two cer-

tainly have a special connection due to being sexually perverted social outcasts. Needless to say, Frits suffers from a histrionic freakout and flees when Maurits attempts to grab his cock while describing in a fetishistic manner how he would torture a young boy. Unquestionably, Frits receives a sort of epiphany regarding his life when he discovers that his beloved closest crush Wim has committed suicide and although he never says it outright, the protagonist knows that he must embrace his homosexuality if he ever wants to live anything resembling a tolerable life. While Frits becomes obsessed with the idea of coming out to his parents on New Year's Eve night, he ultimately wusses out, runs outside into the street, and suffers a hellish allegorical hallucination where he sees a group of menacing demonic figures in masks standing among otherworldly flames that the protagonist's dead friend Wim soon walks by. In the end, Frits finds it in himself to find forgiveness for his unsympathetic parents and declares to himself before going to bed regarding surviving the New Year, "It's all over, gone. But I'm alive. I breathe, therefore I'm alive. Whatever ordeals...pain, disasters...I'm alive." After falling asleep, Frits dreams about his smiling parents collectively telling him, "Frits, it has been seen. Yes, son. It has not gone unnoticed," as if they are letting him know that they realize he is gay and accept it. In a metacinematic scene in tribute to source writer Gerard Reve, who seemed to use writing as a source of solace and therapeutic outlet for his neurotic tendencies like so many writers, the film concludes with Frits beginning to write for the first time in the film in a heavy-handedly triumphant scene complimented by uplifting transcendental music.

While I would have surely appreciated it if director Rudolf van den Berg had chosen to emphasize Gerard Reve's innate anticommunist and Roman Catholic tendencies in his adaptation of *Evenings*, the film certainly exceeded any expectations I had for the work, though I think that is largely owed to Thom Hoffman's singular performance in what was surely an intricate and undeniably unflattering role. Aside from van den Berg's predictable Freudian approach to the source novel, the film has an all-too-polished Hollywood-like aesthetic that can be somewhat distracting and even annoying, especially considering the overall subversive essence of the novel, which would have certainly been better adapted by an indigenous Dutchman like Adriaan Ditvoorst who demonstrated a proficiency for adapting the works of Willem Frederik Hermans (who, with Reve and Hebrew Harry Mulisch, is considered one of the 'Great Three' of post-WWII Dutch literature). Indeed, like the works of fellow Dutch Judaic George Sluizer (*Spoorloos* aka *The Vanishing*, *Dark Blood*), van den Berg's film has a certain deracinated 'cosmopolitan' feel about it that, for better or worse, betrays the decided Dutchness of its source material, thus probably making it more accessible for foreign viewers. Undoubtedly, *Evenings* is worth seeing just for Hoffman's performance alone as a cracked crypto-homo trichophile that ultimately makes Holden Caulfield seem like an insufferable failed bourgeois man-child

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who needs to shut-up and just get laid. Of course, antihero Frits of van den Berg's film also needs to get laid, but being a confused cocksucker in pre-sexual liberation Calvinist Holland ultimately makes for a more interesting scenario than a rich American wuss who is too afraid to lose his virginity, even after paying a pussy-peddler for her valuable time. Judging by van den Berg's subsequent work *De Johnsons* (1992) aka *The Johnsons*—a strange and somewhat original yet mostly mediocre horror flick starring Dutch diva Monique van de Ven of *Turkish Delight* (1973) fame that is notable for apparently being the last Dutch horror film of the twentieth century, but not much else—*Evenings* certainly seems to owe most of its potency to Reve's novel as channeled through the wayward spirit of Herr Hoffman. Of course, the film is just as much a (anti)tribute to and psycho-biography of Gerard Reve as it is an adaptation of the writer's novel, which is ultimately what makes it quite intriguing and fairly original for a work of its kind.

-Ty E

THE JOHNSONS

Rudolf van den Berg* (1992)

A very longtime ago when an evil propaganda video chain known as Blockbuster still existed and before rather useful websites like YouTube were ever even dreamed of and insanely rare films became available at the mere press of a button, one would be certainly hard-pressed to find any DVDs for under \$20, let alone any worthwhile ones, so when I discovered an Anchor Bay Entertainment release for a strange horror film with a seemingly mummified fetus with piercing blue eyes on the cover entitled *The Johnsons* for only a mere \$3 at a certain now defunct home video chain known for selling things at an exorbitant price, I naturally impulsively bought it, even though I had never heard of, let alone seen, the film. As a company that released great films like *The Wicker Man* (1973), *Suspiria* (1977), *Maniac* (1980), *The Evil Dead* trilogy (1981-1992), *The Beyond* (1981), and *Repo Man* (1984), among various other genre classics, Anchor Bay was a company I thought I could trust when it came to quality cult and horror cinema yet *The Johnsons* proved to be an innately incoherent fiercely fuming pile of filmic feces with ludicrously laughable bad dubbing and featuring a token negro scholar, deranged Auschwitz-esque baldboys that like painting fetuses with blood, and borderline gratuitous shots of the floppy cocks of honky tribesmen with phallic faceless masks. Anyway, about fifteen years later I would reencounter the film by accident after being exposed to the oeuvre of Dutch Jewish auteur Rudolf van den Berg (*Süskind*, *Tirza*), who was responsible for directing the work, and I was finally able to understand why I found it so unbelievably inexplicable and brazenly bizarre. Directed by an arthouse auteur turned would-be-mainstream hack turned foremost master of Dutch celluloid Judaica, *De Johnsons* (1992) aka *The Johnsons* aka *Xangadix* aka *Rituales sangrientos* is a majorly mongrelized, if not admittedly curious, multicultural-friendly miscreation of a movie that is technically Dutch but clearly directed with a culturally retarded American audience in mind, though the film naturally never made it to U.S. theaters. Interestingly, despite never managing to secure a theatrical release in the United States, van den Berg's film still managed to develop a loyal cult following via bootlegs that was hungry for horror due to the rather pathetic state of the genre at the time.

With his second feature *Zoeken naar Eileen* (1987) aka *Looking for Eileen*, van den Berg had already proved he aimed to work in Hollywood as it starred mainstream British beauty Lysette Anthony and about half of the dialogue was in English, but with his third feature *De Avonden* (1989) aka *Evenings*—a worthwhile, if somewhat contrived, adaptation of great Dutch post-WWII writer Gerard Reve's classic 1947 novel of the same name—he proved he was a capable, if not somewhat 'unDutch,' filmmaker, but not exactly one with a special knack for horror cinema. Ultimately, *The Johnsons* was a last minute 'for-hire' work

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for van den Berg that was only given to him after the original writer and director, Ruud van Hemert (Schatjes aka Army Brats aka Darlings!, Ik ook van jou aka I Love You Too), was fired from the production because the producers did not like his approach to the material. A work with a long and troubled production history that is arguably as bizarre and culturally confused as the finished film itself, *The Johnsons* was originally titled *The Johnson Blues* and was dreamed up by American screenwriter, producer, and documentarian Roy Frumkes (*Document of the Dead*, *Street Trash*, *The Substitute* franchise), who originally planned the project to be the story of a father and son being attacked by inbred hicks while on a camping trip in New York, with Clint Eastwood playing the lead protagonist and Oliver Reed portraying the role of the 'blue-eyed' Johnson clan leader 'Unk.' Originally, Frumkes planned to produce the film for a production company that he started with fellow Hebrew Richard Abram, but when the latter moved to the Netherlands the company was dissolved and he took the project with him. Rewritten by Frumkes' pal Rocco Simonelli and then eventually rewritten again by van den Berg's oftentimes collaborator, fellow Dutch Israelite Leon de Winter, the film eventually evolved into an eccentric 'mystical horror' of the quasi-Freudian sort involving ancient Amazonian Indian paganism, pedantic Surinamese negro professors, murderous menstruating teenagers, seven incestuous baldheaded mute psychopath killers, magic mother-daughter sensuality, sinister blue-eyed fetuses, and multicultural chaos galore.

Undoubtedly, Dutch horror is not even worthy of being described as a ghetto as it is virtually nonexistent, even though, like their Flemish and Walloon neighbors, Dutchmen tend to be good at making decidedly dark and depraved films that make slasher and monster movies seem totally pointless and irrelevant by comparison. While Dick Maas' *De Lift* (1983), Paul Verhoeven's *The Fourth Man* (1983), and the low-budget medium-length work *Necrophobia* (1995) are certainly fun and worth seeing by any semi-serious fan of the genre, they hardly put Dutch horror on the map and *The Johnsons*, which has been wrongly described as 'last Dutch horror film in the twentieth century' (the credit actually goes to the fairly unknown *Necrophobia*), is no different but it is surely of some interest as a marginally original work that unwittingly demonstrates that multiculturalism is a cataclysmic curse that has turned the world into a culturally schizophrenic and spiritually impoverished place that is much more horrifying than any stupid celluloid scare-fest featuring a masked retard stalking and murdering half-braindead teenagers. The film stars Dutch diva Monique van de Ven of such Dutch era arthouse classics as *Turkish Delight*, *Katie Toppel* (1975), and *The Fourth Man* but she is practically unrecognizable and the girl who plays her daughter looks more like a Mestizo than a Dutch debutante. A work in the tradition of Peter Weir's *The Last Wave* (1977) and William Girdler's Graham Masterton adaptation *The Manitou* (1978) in that it uses horror and thriller conventions to pseudo-cryptically attempt to instill post-colonial guilt in the white

honky viewer, *The Johnsons* tells the cross-cultural tale of how an evil French anthropologist that stole an 'evil deity,' an ominous fetus in a large glass vase, from a group of imaginary Amazonian Indians called the Mahxitu and thus unwittingly released a terrible curse in the Occident that eventually made its way to the Netherlands after an evil eponymous American doctor engaged in a top secret artificial insemination project that resulted in the sinister and inauspicious siring of seven psychopathic baldheaded mute brothers and the sister they have been born to fuck. Featuring unintentionally hilarious racial caricatures, including a fat negress with horse hair on her head biting into a greasy piece of fried chicken and a 'supernatural negro' who sports ancient Indian tribal gear and tries to warn his deracinated uncle tom professor son not to fiddle with evil spirits, as well as a decidedly dystopian Netherlands where trash literally overflows in the street and indigenously Dutch people seem like a minority that merely exists to provide foreigners with police and incestuous psychopaths, the culturally mongrelized nature of van den Berg's work is ultimately much scarier than the intentional horror and graphic murder scenes that the film contains.

At the beginning of *The Johnsons*, the eponymous evil American physician Dr. Johnson (Rodney Beddal) is congratulated by his fellow doctors and nurses for delivering septuplets, so he celebrates by driving to some remote wooded area where he immediately gets out of his car, smears a good portion of some strange colored mud that resembles feces onto his face, demands that some deity that he describes as a "Snake of a hundred heads. Lion of burning flame" set him free, walks into a river that soon becomes encircled with flames, and greets his god 'Xangadix,' which looks like an evil stillborn fetus with super Aryan blue-eyes. Although not revealed until much later in the film as the film is set 21 years after their births, the septuplets were the product of a top secret artificial insemination project carried out in the Netherlands that involved Dr. Johnson stealing cells from unwitting patients and creating an artificial uterus that produced seven embryos from one ovum. These seven fetuses grew up to be so murderously psychopathic that by age seven they collectively committed a massacre at their children's home that resulted in the deaths of sixteen other kids and have been locked up in a maximum security mental institution ever since in the rather remote area of the Biesbosch wetlands in South Holland. Of course, the seven psychopaths are really the progeny of the evil deity named Xangadix, whose wrath was unleashed on the world after he was stolen from the Amazonian Indians that guarded him in 1934 by a Frenchman named Vidal-Naquet, who ultimately went mad and killed himself shortly after committing his ungodly act of 'cultural appropriation.' The savage septuplets were created using the eggs of a young journalist named Victoria Lucas (Monique van de Ven), who is now a widowed mother with a teenage daughter named Emalee (Esmée de la Bretonière), who is on the verge of having her period and keeps having nightmares involving seven murderous bald brothers that have a fetish for painting primitive fetus drawings on

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walls with red blood. Although almost 14-years-old, Emalee already has a psychiatrist named Dr. Goldman (Elise Hoomans) and being an old Jewess of the Freudian school, she speculates that the teen's nightmares are the result of her being on the verge of her menstruation cycle. Indeed, Goldman is unfortunately correct, as Emalee's 21-year-old septuplets bastard half-brothers can sense she is about to bleed and want to have an incestuous orgy with her ASAP but first they have to escape from the maximum security prison they have been held captive in since they were seven. By impregnating Emalee, the brothers will unleash total horror and destruction on mankind. Rather curiously, despite being an ancient evil Indian deity from pre-European times, Xangadix demands that a blue-eyed woman be fertilized.

Undoubtedly, *The Johnsons* features an 'unconventional' hero in the form a deracinated Suriname-born negro nerd named Professor Keller (Kenneth Herdigein) who is ashamed of his elderly father (Otto Sterman), who scams a negress into buying some black pepper from him because she believes it will banish an evil spirit from her grotesquely gluttonous daughter's bloated body. When Papa Keller sees rare recovered footage of the failed 1932 Vidal-Naquet expedition that features footage of the infamous Xangadix deity, he immediately decides to take decisive action by stealing the priceless film reels from his son's university and burning them in a fireplace. Papa Keller may be an eccentric old negro with a couple screws loose, but he is certainly wiser than his anally retentive uncle tom professor son, thus hinting that he should have raised his boy in Suriname instead of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, an indigenous Dutchman named De Graaf (Rik van Uffelen) of 'Department of Education and Science' gets in contact with Professor Keller because he knows the academic has written essays on exorcisms and wants his professional advice because he is in charge of dealing with the evil septuplets and has no clue what to do with such big bad evil bald-headed bastards since the maximum security mental institution that they are imprisoned in is set to be demolished. Rather conveniently, the nutward is located in the rather isolated and almost completely unpopulated area of Biesbosch wetlands, which Victoria takes her daughter Emalee camping to because she has a journalism assignment involving taking photos of a rare bird called a night heron. Of course, the mother and daughter ultimately spot more psychopathic bastards than rare birds. Indeed, the septuplets manage to escape from the mental institution after catching the security guards off guard while they are watching old episodes of Laurel and Hardy, killing them all in an ultra-violent fashion that involves dismembering their bodies and using their blood to draw ancient fetus drawings on the walls, and escaping through the roof of the building where they spot Emalee and her mother from across a canal. It is actually Emalee's presence that magically causes her lethally loony long lost brothers' prison cells to open. Since they are practically magnetized to their sister's naughty bits, the brothers immediately begin sniffing out Emalee's fresh teenage flesh-flowers and before

the young girl knows it, one of her big bros is trying to rape her but luckily she has a hysterical response to the attack and manages to decapitate her would-be-rapist. Needless to say, the mother and daughter immediately hightail it out of Biesbosch and seek safety back in trash-covered Amsterdam, but of course the sibling-sex-craved septuplets follow them.

Although he says pretentious things to his father like, "This is the age of science...voodoo is passé," Professor Keller and, in turn, Emalee and her mother, ultimately come to rely on the Surinamese spade's invaluable magic knowhow to battle the seven psychopathic brothers and Xangadix. Although as black as Zwarte Piet, Papa Keller dresses up in Mahxitu Indian garb and performs a ritual with the help of a rooster that helps his son Professor Keller to find an old document that reveals to him that Victoria is the escaped psychopathic septuplets' less than proud progenitor, although she does not realize it until after the black academic has the chance to tell her after they kill Dr. Goldman and one of them kidnaps Emalee. Indeed, while Victoria, Emalee, and Professor manage to kill five of the last six surviving brothers in the former's apartment, one manages to kidnap his long lost sister and getaway. Ultimately, Victoria and Professor Keller follow the last Johnson brother to a sewage treatment plant (!) where he proceeds to prepare to ritualistically rape Emalee in front of the devil deity Xangadix, but luckily Papa Keller randomly shows up in his flamboyant injun garb and coaches the protagonist on how to defeat Xangadix, who appears in all of his blue-eyed fetus glory while surrounded by a white haze. As Papa Keller tells Victoria, "This embryo can't stand a mother's warmth," so she begins cradling the grotesque booger-like monster fetus, which causes it to explode and a literal bloodbath of menstrual blood to soak the mother and daughter in a somewhat fetishistic scene that seems to put special emphasize on the queen on the Dutch silversreen Monique van de Ven's blood-soaked derriere.

Interestingly, on his own official personal website, director Rudolf van den Berg confesses that *The Johnsons* was not much more than a 'for-hire' hack job, stating of the work, "I had big doubts about taking on this film. I didn't want to feel like a sell-out. But two things convinced me to direct the movie: at the time my second daughter was born and I wanted to take good care of my family. Secondly, I wanted to prove to myself that I could direct any film, including horror. Horror experts tell me that *The Johnsons* has become a sort of cult film in the US and elsewhere and is still appreciated today. Nice experience, taught me a lot, but once is enough." Ironically, aside from possibly his indisputable magnum opus *De Avonden* (1989) aka *Evenings*, *The Johnsons* is easily van den Berg's most bizarre, idiosyncratic, and, somewhat strangely, fetishistic work to date. Indeed, the film is less than subtly scatological and includes multiple scenes where people are covered in feces, one scene where Emalee pisses herself, and numerous references and allusions to periods and menstrual blood (in one scene, Emalee has some good clean fun by laughing jovially while playing with

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a tampon), among other things that make the work more intriguing and memorable than it actually should be. The film is also drenched in incest of various sorts that includes, aside from malevolent mystical brother-sister ritualistic rape, a super sensual scene that van den Berg has described as one of his favorite parts of the film where mother Victoria and daughter Emalee embrace while they are completely unclad as they take an intimate bath together that turns ugly when the latter suffers a horrific hallucination and mistakes her naked mommy for one of the perversely pernicious phallic-mask-adorned Johnson brothers.

Cinephiles might be interested to know that *The Johnsons* features numerous nods to various others films, including *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) as represented by Xangadix who looks like a grotesque mutant version of the iconic 'starchild' in Kubrick's film, as well as *Hellraiser* (1987) as personified by the last surviving Johnson brother who bears a striking resemblance to Pinhead sans the pins. Somewhat to my surprise, the film was not only somewhat of a hit in the Netherlands that actually managed to outsell various Hollywood movies in the theaters, but also developed a loyal cult following among American horror fans (of course, the early 1990s were a horrendous time for horror everywhere), with top American horror film critic and cineaste Chas Balun even giving the film a rather rave write-up where he concluded his review in *Deep Red* with the somewhat agreeable remark, "Fuck Craven's *SCREAM*, this is the real deal." Although I thought the film was a piece of crusty and conspicuously convoluted celluloid crap when I first saw it about 15 years ago, my obsession with Dutch cinema and recent assessment of van den Berg's oeuvre has led me to bizarrely appreciate *The Johnsons* as a sort of cross-cultural celluloid train wreck with a hysterical hodgepodge of incongruent cinematic and cultural influences that strangely personify some of the most preposterous and laughable aspects of multiculturalism, globalization and so-called 'post-colonialism.' Indeed, what other film features an elderly negro running around the Netherlands in festive Amazonian Indian garb while seven cracked crackers that are possessed by an evil embryonic blue-eyed Indian deity attempt to rape and impregnate their sister with their demon seed?!

-Ty E

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Rufus Butler Seder (1985)

While I typically loathe fiction writing aside from some pre-Stephen King horror and the occasional racially charged dystopian work like Jean Raspail's eerily prophetic novel *Le Camp des Saints* (1973) aka *The Camp of the Saints*, I recently got the urge to watch a horror-related flick about a writer who is losing their mind and I was not in the mood to re-watch a film as long as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). After watching a couple minutes of Steve Miner's Vietnam War themed horror-comedy *House* (1986), I got rather annoyed by the film's overt phoniness and uncultivated goofiness and began looking for other options, thus leading me to momentarily consider watching third rate works like Oliver Stone's fairly rough debut feature *Seizure* (1974) aka *Queen of Evil* and Maltese-Canadian auteur Mario Azzopardi's somewhat genre-confused feature *Deadline* (1984), but I was not in a masochistic enough mindset to endure either work. Luckily, as a direct result of my recent obsession with the Kuchar brothers, just the right film I was looking for practically fell right into my lap. Indeed, *Screamplay* (1985) written and directed by onetime-auteur Rufus Butler Seder not only stars George Kuchar in the most curiously boorishly 'butch' acting role of his career as a murderously aggressive meathead with an unquenchable thirst for young pussy, but it is also probably the only film ever released by the proud smut-peddlers at Troma Entertainment that has any sort of true artistic merit as a strikingly potent piece of neo-Expressionist metacinema of the fairly idiosyncratic and satirical horror-comedy oriented sort that was shot on bold black-and-white film stock and features pleasantly primitive special effects. A work that is to noir-ish Hollywood Babylon-esque Hollywoodland classics like Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and John Schlesinger's *The Day of the Locust* (1975) what the epically unhinged Kuchar penned pornographic cult classic *Thundercrack!* (1975) was to classic 'old dark house' mysteries like *The Old Dark House* (1932), Seder's film is one of those oh-so rare works that I would describe as a sort of regrettably undiscovered cult classic as a cinematic work that probably owes its undeserved marginality due to its rather unfortunate association with the celluloid turd factory known as Troma (notably, in the introduction to the DVD release of the film, Lloyd Kaufman described Seder as, "The Luis Buñuel of Tromaville").

A fairly singular work that might be described as a curious cross between the campy cult classics of Paul Bartel like *Private Parts* (1972) and *Eating Raoul* (1982), Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1980), the shamelessly cinephiliac works of Guy Maddin, and kitschy lo-fi avant-garde flicks of Kuchar and his all the more perverse student Curt McDowell, *Screamplay* managed to effectively end writer, director, and star Seder's all-too-brief filmmaking career due to its commercial failure, though he would later utilize some of the special ef-

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fects he pioneered in the film to start an artistically revolutionary career with his artistic invention of 'Lifetiles,' which are animated murals that can be found in museums and various other institutions around the world. The genesis of the film came as a result of Seder moving back to Boston from Los Angeles after spending about a decade attempting to get a feature made about Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla that was ultimately ruined as a result of the quite dubious business tactics of a sleazy producer (not surprisingly, *Screamplay* features multiple sleazy Hebraic Hollywood producer types). Not unlike David Lynch, Seder, who began making films when he was only 12, studied at the American Film Institute and he won various awards for his experimental shorts, but his first feature would not be his *Eraserhead* (1977), at least as far as cult status is concerned. Although mostly shot in a 20 foot by 40 foot 'makeshift studio' that the director assembled inside his South Boston loft, the film manages to conjure up the illusion of a somewhat eerie Expressionist Hollywood apartment complex, which is inhabited by a number of eccentric lowlife types, including a proudly wanton washed-up B-movie actress, burn out dope-addled rocker with a messianic mindset, and a hopelessly desperate aspiring young actress who has big dreams but questionable talent. Featuring auteur Seder himself in the lead role as an eccentric novice screenwriter who comes to Hollywood in the hope of starting a career but ultimately gets in the middle of a whodunit murder mystery and finds himself working as a janitor for \$30.00 a week at a sleazy apartment building as the personal bitch boy of a remarkably macho George Kuchar (who apparently modeled his performance after Richard Gere's in Jim McBride's *Goddard* remake *Breathless* (1983)), *Screamplay* has apparently been described by its director as "kinda boring," yet I found it to be the most shockingly entertaining film I have seen in some time as a shamelessly cinephiliac satire of Tinseltown that features both camp and arthouse elements and unwittingly exposes *Sin City* (2005) for the intolerably phony faux-noir fanboy porn piece that it is. A work that the eponymous auteur of Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (1994) seems to have borrowed a good portion of his ideas from, the film is ultimately a sad example of a first time auteur making an excellent and fairly original work that has unfortunately been virtually relegated to the celluloid dustbin of history.

Screamplay begins with a premise that is indubitably patently preposterous but somehow manages to mostly work in the end. Indeed, the film starts with a shot of dorky protagonist Edgar Allan (Rufus Butler Seder) sitting with his arms raised over his typewriter like a seemingly possessed Frankenstein monster and attempting to finish a screenplay-cum-letter, which is more or less the film's entire storyline, before a shadowy monster of sorts that has just invaded his room attacks him, or as the character writes himself, "Dear Mr. Weiner, just a quick note to tell you that the killer is approaching me from behind and, by the time you read this, I may be very well dead. It's all because of my screenplay. I'll try to explain as quickly as possible. It all started a short time ago when I

first arrived here in . . . Hollywood.” Mr. Al Weiner (somewhat humorously played by the director’s father Eugene Seder, who was also responsible for some of the film’s special effects) is a sleazy Hollywood producer with a stereotypical German-Jewish surname who the protagonist bumps into at the beginning of the film after his wife leaves him because he is broke and refuses to go to his big Hollywood movie mogul brother Irving Weiner (Bob Wilson) for help since he is a fairly prideful creature. After arriving in Hollywood via bus, Edgar goes by a diner and annoys the exceedingly bitchy waitress (Johanna Wagner) because he wants to make the most of a \$1.00 minimum the place has and becomes somewhat indecisive in terms of what type of pie he wants (Edgar can’t decide between coconut cream pie and deep-dish poison berry). When the waitress calls Edgar a “creepy little jerk,” he becomes discernibly enraged and immediately takes his revenge by whipping out his typewriter and writing a scenario where the cunt server is violently murdered by a mysterious figure that stabs her in the face with a pie cutter, thus causing her blood and pie pieces to splatter across the diner’s \$1.00 minimum sign. After the protagonist types up the fairly inspired death scene, Al Weiner shows up at the diner and gives Edgar his business card. Of course, little does Edgar realize that a scummy little parasite like Weiner will ultimately be his savior in the end, but not before the protagonist experiences destitution, mental deterioration, and the murder of various new friends, among various other unpleasant things.

After leaving the diner and subsequently joyously passing the Hollywood Walk of Fame stars of great iconic horror figures like Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, and Peter Lorre, Edgar has the honor of going to an old school movie theater where he pays one dollar to attend a triple horror feature of German Expressionist classics that includes such masterpieces as F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), Carl Boese and Paul Wegener’s *The Golem* (1920), and Robert Wiene’s *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), but things go completely downhill for the protagonist after that. Indeed, while Edgar is taking a piss in a theater urinal, a deranged tranny on roller-skates glides into the bathroom, snatches his typewriter, and then pulls a gun on the protagonist and declares “Chow baby” when he attempts to get his prized personal possession back. Luckily, a boorish middle-aged brute named Martin (George Kuchar) soon emerges from one of the bathroom stalls, twirls the transvestite around on his roller-skates, and then breaks his neck with outstanding ease while the cross-dressing crook is still spinning around in circles. While Edgar is shocked by what he witnesses and complains “She’s dead,” Martin does not shed a single tear for his gender-challenged victim, stating, “It doesn’t matter. This whole entire is a garbage can full of maggots and flies. You gotta’ squat a couple now and again just to keep them in line.” Not long after, police attempt to break into the bathroom, so Edgar escapes with Martin, but he unfortunately leaves a page from his script behind, thus giving the less than bright cops a lead. Needless to say, the police

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are not too disheartened to find the wasted tranny criminal lying dead on the bathroom floor, with one cop quipping, “We got one dead closet queen” and pocketing the dead sadistic shemale’s cash.

Martin is the manager of an apartment building called ‘Welcome Apartments’ and he offers Edgar a room to stay in and \$30 a week to be building’s custodian, which the desperate protagonist naturally reluctantly accepts. While Edgar remarks, “Don’t worry. Writers are very solitary sorts of people” when Martin warns him not to get involved with the other tenants, it is only a matter of time before the protagonist is trapped in a sort of Hollywood ghetto purgatory where every single person seems to suffer from some serious personality disorder. Indeed, the apartment has its own sort of local Norma Desmond figure in the form of a character named Nina Ray (M. Lynda Robinson), who is a proudly whorish washed up B-movie actress that is best known for playing a ‘vampire princess’ in a fictional film called *Kiss and Kill* and who more or less rapes Edgar when he comes by her apartment to fix her tub. Nina proudly proclaims that she has the “hottest titties in Hollywood” and that she “fucked some biggies to get where I am today,” yet nowadays she is willing to fuck wimpy losers like Edgar, thus reflecting her rather tragic fall from grace. Naughty Nina gives acting lessons to a young aspiring actress named Holly (Katy Bolger), who dress like Judy Garland from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and who is dating a motorcycle-riding hotshot actor named Nicky Blair (James M. Connor) who is starring in a \$20 million film and is described by the media as the new James Dean, even though he is a rather banal dude with the IQ of a gnat. As the viewer suspects, it is not long before Holly becomes Edgar’s love interest, even if he seems more interested in writing his script than the opposite sex. Arguably the most demented tenant of the apartment building is a burnt out rocker named ‘Lot’ (Bob White), who resembles a cross between Moses and Satan Claus, enjoys playing Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in d minor on his electric guitar, conjures up religious prophecies while he is high on dope, and believes that the apocalypse is soon coming to the uniquely unholy modern-day Sodom of Hollywood. Of course, when people soon begin dropping dead at the apartment, Lot’s preposterous prophecies begin to seem not all that crazy, at least to him. While Lot warns Edgar, “Hollywood is the land of the doomed” and “Those who come to live here die. Go back, brother, I beg you. A thousand avenging angels of the lord will destroy you with their flaming swords,” the protagonist is broke and has no choice but stay. Ultimately it is not Lot’s prophecies but Edgar’s screenplay that will foretell the death and mayhem that will ensue at the apartment complex.

A figuratively (and arguably literally) deadly serious artist, Edgar offers Holly the following advice in regard to fine tuning her acting skills after watching her pathetic attempt to rehearse lines from Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull*, “Break through your innocence; let yourself go. Whenever you feel passion of any kind—hatred, jealousy, lust...even the urge to kill...that’s what I use in my writing—

latch onto it. Ride it like the crest of a wave. Let the undertow pull you down to your depths. At first, you'll be terrified and disgusted with what you find, but when you face your despair, your vulgarity, your depravity and learn to bring it all to the surface, that's when you'll be a great actress." Of course, little does Edgar realize how seriously Holly will take his somewhat egomaniacal words of wisdom. When Edgar "Give thanks to the gods of Ganja" by smoking reefer with Lot, the two see a 'vision' of the protagonist attempting to strangle Holly to death by the apartment poolside. Naturally, deluded dope fiend Lot decides to "purge" Edgar of his "evil" by burning his hand. In revenge against Lot for senselessly burning his hand on an open flame, Edgar decides to write a scene in his screenplay where a "burnt out rock star" is fittingly burnt alive after being drenched with gasoline and lit on fire. In fact, anytime a character does something that annoys Edgar, he gets his revenge by 'killing them off' via his screenplay, but things get extra weird for the protagonist when these people being dropping dead in real-life in the same exact fashion that he had written.

When a super sleazy would-be producer named Keven Kleindorf (played by Hollywood sound editor Ed Callahan) that makes Al Weiner seem like a priest by comparison in terms of moral bankruptcy approaches the protagonist and offers him his services in regard to getting his screenplay turned into a movie, Edgar is more annoyed than anything, but that does not stop the ambiguously kosher conman from routinely hassling him about his script. Meanwhile, Holly begins throwing herself at Edgar and saying preposterous things like, "Do anything you want to me. Help me to explore my passion," even though she is still dating Nicky. Though Edgar initially attempts to ignore Holly's rather flagrant sexual advances, he soon finds himself somewhat falling in love with her. While Nicky eventually lands Holly a major role in a big budget movie and even offers Edgar a job on the production, it all falls through in an extra tragicomic when the Hollywood heartthrob moronically crashes his beloved motorcycle into the side of a large truck. Naturally, Holly becomes quite upset when she sees her suave beau smashed like a fly and Martin attempts to comfort her by absurdly declaring "It's ok, Holly" whilst grabbing her fairly tender tits. Martin is in love with Holly and he will do anything to make her a traditional domestic housewife, but she's repulsed by him, not to mention the fact that she has big dreams of becoming a legendary Hollywood diva. When Nicky drops dead, Lot stoically declares like a thoroughly inebriated ghetto wino, "Nicky Blair's death is the beginning of the end. Nicky, in his blind search for the top, has fallen into the pits of hell. There can be no escape. We're all going to die." Indeed, not long after Nicky kicks the bucket, Nina is drowned in her bathtub and two distinctly moronic police detectives, Sgt. Joe Blatz (George Cordeiro) and his much taller and dimmer Guido sidekick Tony Cassano (Basil J. Bova), begin suspecting that Edgar is the culprit due to a tip from the bitchy waitress from the beginning of the film.

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With Edgar being suspected of Nina's death, shameless scumbag Kleindorf decides to get the media involved so as to get publicity for the protagonist's screenplay, which is beginning to mirror reality in a way that does not sit well with the young screenwriter. Meanwhile, Al Weiner tries in vain to get in contact with Edgar about buying his script for \$100,000 since his media mogul brother Irv Weiner wants to make a "classy and bloody" film. On top of everything else, Edgar begins suspecting that Martin might be the killer. Martin also begins getting on Edgar about not doing his custodial work and makes violent threats to him like, "You cross me and I'll kick your artsy fartsy into the street. Remember, as long as you're here, you're a custodian...a janitor...a peon...a nothing." To make matters worse, someone has stolen Edgar's script which, if found by the cops, could be used as evidence against the protagonist. Towards the end of the film, things come full circle, with the same scene from the beginning of the film of Edgar typically demonically at his typewriter as some ominous figure's shadow lurks over him. The ominous figure in question is revealed to be Martin and he has come to bash Edgar's brains in with a mallet because he wrongly thinks that he is the killer, but luckily Holly saves the day and knocks him out before he can crack the protagonist's skull. Unfortunately, things get strange for Edgar when Holly begins strangling him while reciting a scene from his script. Indeed, not only is Holly the person who stole Edgar's script, but she is also the killer. Luckily for Edgar, Martin eventually wakes up and knocks Holly out before she can kill him. Somewhat absurdly, Martin accuses Edgar of forcing him to hit his beloved Holly over the head with a mallet and then begins to prepare to crush the protagonist's skull with his own typewriter, but luckily Joe Blatz and his cop goons show up at just the right second and shoot the apartment manager with so many bullets that he falls through a wall. While succumbing to her head wounds, Holly confesses to Edgar in regard to why she committed the grisly murders, "Look, Edgar, it was me! I wanted it to be a surprise. I wanted to show you what a great actress I could be. And I am a great actress, aren't I? Tell me! And I'll be great in Nicky's movie, won't I? Kiss me, Edgar. You're a great screenwriter. Preparing for this role was so difficult, but acting in your movie taught me so much. You were right, I was limited, but now I'm ready to play anything. I could play any role. It was hard work, but we did it. We sunk to the depths. . .together." In the end, Edgar reluctantly agrees to sell his script to Weiner's brother's studio. When Weiner asks Edgar, "Who would want to kill a talented kid like you?" after he reveals that he was almost murdered, the protagonist concludes the film with the tastefully cheesy pun, "Holly would."

It would probably interest fans of the *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966) director that \$20,000 out of about \$45,000 of the budget of *Screamplay* was spent on George Kuchar's hospital bills after he broke his ankle in three places while working on the film. Personally, I think that was a small price to pay, as Kuchar unequivocally gives the greatest and most memorable performance in the film

and saves it from being simply yet another horror film with superlatively shitty acting. Despite the fact that even director/star Sefer agrees that he gave the greatest performance in the film, Kuchar apparently felt he gave a horrendous performance, or as he stated in an interview with Scott MacDonald that is featured in the book *A Critical Cinema* (1988), “When I got on the set, I decided I was going to be OK: I wasn’t going to fall apart ahead of time. I was going to be a together person. Then the night before my big scene, I fell apart as usual. I was just a wreck. I knew my lines and everything, but I went through the thing in a daze, and I thought I was absolutely awful and felt so sorry for them having paid the airfare to get me out there to do the scene. I was just so hideous, and I knew I said the lines horribly. Then nobody said anything. I thought they were too embarrassed to tell me how horrible it was [...] Then the next day the director said it was really good, and I said I thought it was miserable. It was constantly like that through the whole picture. I was always just hideous.” Of course, as a goofy queer who actually manages to be highly believable as a sort of creepily hyper horny macho pig with homicidal tendencies, Kuchar’s performance is nothing short of unbelievably outstanding and even comparable to Marlon Brando’s in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) in a curious sort of way.

While I typically loathe films like the badly botched Lovecraft adaptations *The Call of Cthulhu* (2005) directed by Andrew Leman and *The Whisperer in Darkness* (2011) directed by Sean Branney as well as Michel Hazanavicius’ obscenely overrated Academy Award winning turd *The Artist* (2011) that attempt to parrot outmoded vintage film styles, *Screamplay* is original, aesthetically idiosyncratic, and enthralling enough to be more than just a cheap gimmick or curious novelty. In fact, I found the film so aesthetically enamoring that I was not all that surprised to learn that auteur Rufus Butler Seder eventually became a Renaissance man of sorts whose Lifetiles exhibits are featured in museums all around the world, thus it was somewhat a blessing that *Screamplay* was a flop as it led him to creating a new art form, even if it seems somewhat like a cinematic tragedy that he never got the chance to make another film. As Seder told NewsOK regarding his interest in film, “I was more interested, I think, in the plasticity of film for the lack of a better word, rather than directing actors,” which is somewhat strange considering his film is just as entertaining in terms of characters as it is with its fairly singular *mise-en-scène* and special effects. The only other sort of neo-Expressionist film from the 1980s that I can recommend aside from Seder’s work is the somewhat obscure German flick *Die letzte Rache* (1982) aka *The Last Revenge* directed by Rainer Kirberg, though it is somewhat less accessible (indeed, while featuring fairly preternatural visuals, Seder’s flick can be easily followed by both art-shy gorehounds and autistic fanboys). For those interested in seeing *Screamplay*, it is also probably worth watching the film with the audio commentary track by Seder that is featured with the Troma DVD release. Among other things, Seder reveals in the commentary his affin-

SCREAMPLAY

ity for Buñuel and the fact that Troma Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz had “absolutely nothing” to do with the film. Seder originally planned to have New Line Cinema release the film but after a disastrous review following the Boston Film Festival, Seder had to settle for Troma, which he described as “the bottom of the barrel choice.” Indeed, in an interview with Michael Adams at Movieline, Seder demonstrated his dissatisfaction with Troma distributing the film, stating, “I never really felt that my movie belonged in their pantheon.” Ideally, it would probably be best if Kino Lorber re-released the film, but something tells me that Lloyd Kaufman is not interested in promoting cinematic art unless the price is right. Both a love letter to horror film history and an ambitious cinematic experiment in the eccentrically phantasmagorical, *Screamplay* seems like what avant-garde cinema would be like if it was specially tailored to be palatable to normal folk.

-Ty E

WAVES OF LUST

Ruggero Deodato (1975)

While his ultra-violent cop flick *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* (1976) aka *Uomini si nasce poliziotti si muore* co-penned by Fernando Di Leo (*Caliber 9*, *Avere vent'anni* aka *To Be Twenty*) is oftentimes considered his first brutal breakout film, Italian exploitation auteur Ruggero Deodato (*Jungle Holocaust*, *The House on the Edge of the Park*) did direct a film the year before that, aside from his crowned cannibal subgenre masterpiece *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), which is just as endlessly engrossing as the best of his films. A rather surprisingly refined and risqué rip-off of Roman Polanski's early Polish masterpiece *Knife in the Water* (1962) aka *Nóż w wodzie*, *Waves of Lust* (1975) aka *A Wave of Pleasure* aka *Una ondata di piacere* was a sordid cinematic 'family affair' of sorts for Deodato, as not only does the film star the director's then-wife Silvia Dionisio (*The Fascist Jew*, *Murder Syndrome* aka *Murder obsession*), but it also features a small appearance from their son Saverio Deodato, yet it is certainly not the sort of sunny and sentimental beach film one would want to watch with the entire family as a scenic yet seedy and salacious cinematic work in the spirit of late-1960s Italian jet-set erotic thrillers with a little bit of murder and a whole lot more of exposed and unrobed suntanned bodies. Centering on an awfully arrogant alcoholic industrialist and egomaniacal would-be-Übermensch named Giorgio who invites a young couple to join him and his long suffering wife/slave for a weekend cruise on his expensive and fully furnished yacht, *Waves of Lust* is a titillating and rarely tedious thriller about passion and power among four Nordic Hightalians of the hyper horny and somewhat homicidal sort. Ironically, Deodato initially had nil interest in directing a film that was even remotely flesh-driven and had the goal to "maneuver it out of the erotic ghetto," and his jealous wife was not too happy with the idea of him directing other women in completely compromised and unclad positions, so to solve the problem, the auteur's sexy spouse Silvia Dionisio (who was quite popular at the time, not least of all due to a nude pictorial she did with her model sister for *Playboy* magazine in 1976) managed to talk the producers into annulling another actress' contract who was originally slated to star in the film so that her husband could direct her engaged in simulated carnal knowledge as opposed to some other random woman. Needless to say, Deodato managed to get over his anxiety of filming female flesh, so much so that he would inevitably become infamous for directing exploitation works featuring hordes of stripped and sadistic savages slaughtering arrogant leftist anthropologists in South American rainforests, as well as swarthy NYC thugs cutting up cute au naturel girls for fun, thereupon making *Waves of Lust* a nice cinematic vacation from the director's more grotesque and vulgar works, even if it does feature some of the director's auteur signature themes, including murder, mayhem, exploitative nudity, animal killings and whatnot.

WAVES OF LUST

Giorgio (British actor John Steiner of *Caligula* (1979) directed by Tinto Brass and *The Berlin Affair* (1985) directed by Liliana Cavani) is a grade A asshole of sorts and the fact that he is a rich industrialist only further compounds his flagrant and feverish megalomania and unquenchable thirst for power and pounding pussy. Naturally, Giorgio's beautiful but somewhat masochistic wife Silvia (American actress Elizabeth Turner of Lucio Fulci's *The Psychic* (1977) and Antonio Margheriti's *Cannibal Apocalypse* (1980)) takes the brunt of his drunken brutality and sexual sadism, but he also has a keen proclivity for compelling his capitalist compatriots to commit suicide due to his nefarious narcissism as depicted in the beginning of *Waves of Lust*. Although Giorgio may be the undisputed master of his domain and dependent dame Silvia, he is about to get a lesson in love, lechery, and lethality from a young and beautiful couple of more humble and hot means. Strikingly stunning lovebirds Barbara (Silvia Dionisio) and Irem (Al Cliver) already have Giorgio and Silvia in their calculating and inconspicuous crosshairs after seeing the rich prick on his luxurious yacht and belittling his brutalized wife as they sunbath from afar on the beach. Seemingly a femme fatale of the counter-culture sort due to her insistence on using her brain and never wearing a bra, Barbara silently stalks and eventually approaches Giorgio at an art gallery in a foreshadowing scene where the filthy rich fellow buys a degenerate painting that looks like a bloodstain and the two make plans for dinner that inevitably results in an informal invitation from the corrupt capitalist captain to the luscious lady and her strong and stoic boyfriend Irem – a physical superman of a specimen who makes the elder man seem like a pansy peon of the particularly posh and prudish persuasion. Immediately upon boarding the ship and heading out to sea, cross-couple sexual tensions arise that involve Giorgio slobbering over Barbara and vice versa, Irem seducing Silvia and vice versa, and least, but not least, Barbara swooning over Silvia and vice versa. Despite all the sleazy passes and snide sexual remarks he makes at Barbara, Giorgio procrastinates in sealing the sensual deal with the little lady, but he has no problem incessantly drinking like a fish out of water and verbally assaulting his slavish wife Silvia, which rather infuriates the younger couple, thus leading to their secret desire to lead a 'slave revolt' of murderous mutiny against the captain of the ship. While Irem remains stoic in the face of opulent sadist Giorgio, Barbara begins to lead the wealthy vulgarian on in a sensual sort of way that will inevitably have rather risky results for the rich twat. In fact, Giorgio becomes so intoxicated with Barbara's beguiling beauty and charm that he even hints at giving Irem a "present" in the form of his emotional wreck of a wife, but things get a little strange and paranoia strikes when a psychological war is directed at the industrialist, including the appearance of a ghastly painting in his room and faulty scuba gear that almost drowns the fellow. Like Giorgio, one does not learn until the very end of *Waves of Lust* who of the vengeful vacationing seafarers is trying to snuff out the demon of a seaman.

A film featuring an all blond and Nordic cast, *Waves of Lust* seems hardly like a work shot in the same country where Pasolini made his films and were it not for the film's innate sleaziness and Italian-language cut, it would be virtually impossible to tell this decidedly decadent and delightful film about beautiful bourgeois people doing bad things was a genuine Italian production. Sort of like a soft-core (both in terms of theme and imagery) and less nihilistic thriller equivalent to nihilistic Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone's iconoclastic and semi-psychedelic wife-swapping celluloid odyssey *Zelda* (1974) – a brutal and bodacious indictment of the debauched bourgeois featuring miscegenation-inspired murder – in its depiction of the salacious and sadistic sex-capades and snorkeling of the wealthy, wanton, and reckless, *Waves of Lust* is an unwavering cinematic assault on the senses that is undoubtedly enthralling from beginning to end, if not for all the wrong reasons. Featuring charmingly mediocre scenes of mundane melodrama and seriously strabismic scenarios of sexual socialization that are far less convincing than virtually any 'porn chic' from the Golden Age of Porn, *Waves of Lust*, not unlike most of director Ruggero Deodato's films, owes a good bit of its entertainment value to its blatant lack of plausibility and preposterous porn flick style acting. With its nearly immaculate (reality speaking, of course!) pacing and fulfilling finale, pulchritudinous posh people, marvelous Mediterranean scenery and vintage tropical musical score by Marcello Giombini (the man responsible for the amazing synthesizer-driven score in Cavallone's *Zelda* (1974), as well as trash exploitation works by Guido genre-hack-turned-porn-hack Joe D'Amato, including *Anthropophagus* (1980) and *Erotic Nights of the Living Dead* (1980)), *Waves of Lust* is a work of extravagant escapist exploitation cinema that offers a much needed celluloid getaway for both arthouse and giallo fans alike as a work that is like *Knife in the Water* (1962) and Lina Wertmüller's *Swept Away* (1974) meets *Goombah Baywatch* as directed by a much happier and less cinematically murderous pre-divorced Ruggero Deodato. Needless to say, I doubt it is a coincidence that Deodato directed his misanthropic masterpiece *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) shortly after his divorce with Silvia Dionisio, as the director seemed to get stuck in a riptide of anti-romance and belligerent bloodlust after the dismembering of his marriage, thereupon making *Waves of Lust* an especially interesting exception in his oeuvre. It seems that like the antagonist Giorgio of *Waves of Lust*, Deodato would become a much more bellicose, brazen, and ultimately broken man after coming under the spell of saucy succubus of the seedy silver screen, Silvia Dionisio – the main attraction of this pleasing celluloid plagiary of Polanski's early masterpiece.

-Ty E

LIVE LIKE A COP, DIE LIKE A MAN
LIVE LIKE A COP, DIE LIKE A MAN

Ruggero Deodato (1976)

Maybe it is due to their seemingly innate hatred of cops and authority in general, or overall dubious respect for law and order, but no other filmmakers in the world made better corrupt cop flicks than the Italians, especially in regard to the Guido Poliziotteschi subgenre of the late-1960s and 1970s. Of course, it should be no surprise that Ruggero Deodato (*Waves of Lust*, *The House on the Edge of the Park*)—an Italian auteur who had his own fair share of legal trouble relating to his magnum opus *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), which features real animal killings and would result in the filmmaker's arrest for murder due to its snuff-like depictions of death—would contribute a major work to the gloriously ridiculous goombah crime-action subgenre. Penned by the undisputed master of Poliziotteschi flicks, director Fernando Di Leo (*Caliber 9*, *The Boss*), *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* (1976) aka *Uomini si nasce poliziotti si muore* aka *The Terminators* was Deodato's first and sole contribution to the subgenre yet it also happens to be one of the greatest and most unconventional Italo-crime flicks ever made. Aside from featuring hyper-cynical scenes of ultra-violence, malignant moral retardation, and insane chase scenes (which the director shot during rush hour in downtown Rome without getting the appropriate permits, thus demonstrating his quasi-criminal-like status as a filmmaker), *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* is notable for its homoerotic subtext. Indeed, the two pretty boy antihero cops of the film, a blond Nordic (Ray Lovelock) and a brunette Mediterranean (Marc Porel), seem to be one and the same and do literally everything together, especially when it comes to needlessly nasty and rather nihilistic violence and murder of the rather sadistic sort. Indeed, like Giulio Questi's *Django Kill!... If You Live, Shoot!* (1967), which features a brigade of fascistic black-shirt cowboy homos, Deodato attempts to make a link between ultra-masculine sadism and sodomy, as if they are one and the same. A sort of gay Guido Starsky & Hutch featuring two old twinkies riding around on a crotch-rocket together as if permanently joined ass-to-cock, *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* is certainly a curious work that demonstrates that Deodato and Di Leo were nothing, if not two of the most cynical Italian filmmakers of their generation, which is certainly no small accomplishment. By no means a masterpiece, Deodato's film still deserves to be regarded as the dirty dago answer to William Friedkin's *The French Connection* (1971), as a work that almost single-handedly discredits the claim that the Poliziotteschi subgenre has 'fascistic' undertones, as the film is flagrantly anti-fascistic to the core, as an anti-fascist-fag-cop crime thriller where the ambiguously gay cop duo shoots and kills first and asks questions later, even before the criminal has actually committed a crime. Featuring seemingly unintentionally ironic 'folk ballad' songs written and sung by Italian-British star Ray Lovelock (who would later star in screenwriter Di Leo's rather underrated 1978

(anti)counter-culture flick *Avere vent'anni aka To Be Twenty*), *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* is undoubtedly one of the most aesthetically and thematically warped cop flicks ever made. After all, what other cop flick would feature Fellini star Alvaro Vitali (Fellini's *Roma*, *Amarcord*) as a goofy pornography-addicted apartment building concierge as a form of exceedingly random comic relief?!

Anti-gangster unit gangster-like cops Fred (Marc Porel) and Tony (Ray Lovelock) aka (Al)Fred(o) and (An)Tony(o) are two best buds who do everything together, including fucking, killing and 'riding' together. Indeed, during the first scene of *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man*, Fred drives a motorcycle while Tony sits behind him as if he is his beloved girlfriend and the two are about to have a romantic candlelit dinner. After two sleazy criminals on motorbikes attempt to steal a chick's purse and drag her bloody and unconscious body down the street, Fred and Tony spend ten minutes chasing them down. In the end, both of the criminals are dead, with the second criminal's death a result of Fred breaking his neck after catching him. After the two criminals are made into roadkill, bystanders who witnessed the chase are shocked to learn that the two men that killed the street thugs are hotshot cops attached to an anti-gang unit. Despite the fact that they seem hopelessly in love with one another, Fred and Tony routinely harass women together, especially a young and beautiful secretary that works at their station named Norma (played by the director's then-wife Silvia Dionisio, who also starred in *Waves of Lust*) who rejects their macho posturing, complaining to them, "Masculine supremacy is bullshit, you believe you're Superman... You invite us to a sumptuous banquet but don't get past the starters." Indeed, the police secretary must have taken too many women's lib classes in college, as she calls Fred and Tony "phalocrats" and goes on and on about how no man has the sexual stamina to adequately sexually satisfy a woman. Of course, the dynamic duo has no problem finding other chicks, including their maid's daughter and various other random women they bump into. Ultimately, Fred and Tony's main objective in the film is to take out an elusive and crazed mob boss named Pasquini (Renato Salvatori), who makes for their perfect nemesis, as he matches the two corrupt cocksucker cops in terms of moral bankruptcy and sadism. In between torturing bouncers with fire, using small fish thugs as punching bags, burning up wealthy gangster's luxurious Cadillacs, and wasting Pasolini protégé Franco Citti (who plays a deranged hostage-taker), the boys engage in a rather primitive, if not always hilarious, form of misogyny and manage to get in a couple girls' panties along the way. As for their enemy Pasquini, he gets his kicks gouging the eyes out of treacherous junkie scumbags. Somewhat humorously, little do Fred and Tony realize that they will face their greatest struggle against Pasquini's blonde nymphomaniac sister Lina (played by the director's then-sister-in-law Sofia Dionisio), who proves she has more sexual potency than both cops combined, thus confirming the bitchy police secretary's remark that men lacked the stamina to completely satisfy a woman. In the end, the dynamic

LIVE LIKE A COP, DIE LIKE A MAN

ambiguously gay duo saves the day merely blowing up a boat they just happen to find the detonator for in what is a pathetically anticlimactic ending that seems to be specially designed to piss 'fascistic' Poliziotteschi fans off.

Undoubtedly, few things sound less delectable than an anti-fascist Poliziotteschi film with feminist undertones, yet *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* manages to be reasonably entertaining simply because it breaks convention and seems awfully politically incorrect nowadays. In its depiction of cops as sadistic shit-stabbers who are, at the very least, just as depraved as gangsters, Deodato's film seems to follow commie hero Maxim Gorki's line of thinking when he once wrote: "Eradicate the homosexual and fascism will disappear." Naturally, a film like *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* could never been made nowadays, not even in a country like Italy where political correctness has not been nearly as corrosive. Instead, of Deodato's Poliziotteschi flick, we now have films like the kraut queer flick *Freier Fall* (2013) aka *Free Fall* where a young and married rookie cop with a pregnant wife is converted to cocksucking by another young rookie cop who, of course, faces discrimination from other police officers. Considering its absurd and seemingly nonsensical English title, *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* should probably be called 'Dirty Homos' as a work that, like most films of its subgenre, was clearly influenced by *Dirty Harry* (1971), albeit with the message inverted to appease to beta-males, communists, and feminists and other human crud. Still, despite its dubious politics, Deodato's 'anti-Poliziotteschi' can actually be enjoyed by real men and would probably be the last sort of film a frigid feminist cow would want to watch, thus making the film's socio-political subtext ultimately seem pointless, as if the writer and director just wanted to have the pleasure of mocking the unwitting filmgoer. Ironically, the film was trashed by Italian film critics upon its release as it was perceived as 'fascist,' or as the director revealed in the featurette *Poliziotti Violenti*: "B-movies are never considered left-winged. Culture is considered left-winged, so anything that's not an A-movie isn't culture. It's a B-movie, and fascist. But most of these film writers were left-winged. Active left-wingers [...] Italian cinema has always been this way. If you're not cultural, you're right-winged. If you're mediocre and make technical films, you're right-winged. Who can figure it out? When I tried to make a politically-oriented film against the politics of that time, I was called a fascist. Twenty-three years later I was called the first to fight the mass media. The communist newspaper "Manifesto" wanted to tar and feather me. Twenty-three years later they dedicated two color pages to me for CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST." Indeed, like the director's greatest films, including *Cannibal Holocaust*, *Live Like a Cop, Die Like a Man* features a sort of nihilistic contempt for society and humanity in general, thus making the film mandatory viewing for Deodato fans. The film also happens to be the greatest ambiguously gay cop buddy flick ever made.

-Ty E

CANNIBAL

Ruggero Deodato (1980)

Marian Dora's debut film "Cannibal" is the most disgusting and perverse film i have ever seen and yet it's so strikingly beautiful. In many ways it could be viewed as two lost souls who find their way to each other through the Internet in order to satisfy each other, or it could be viewed as one of the most notorious crimes in the 21st Century. In 2001, Armin Meiwes posted an advertisement on the Internet, which read, "looking for a well-built 18 to 30-year-old to be slaughtered and then consumed". He got a response. The film tells the story poetically starting off with a reading of Hansel & Gretel then switches view to "The Man" who is Armin's character. He is a bald silent man wandering around town with a black suit and suitcase. He is very enigmatic. We are told his story through silent conversations with many men in coffee shops, diners, and community parks. He decided against killing women because we need them to benefit our species. Then he stumbles upon a reply. The perfect male. He begins to talk to "The Flesh" and they schedule the day. They meet and he brings them to his house. They arrange many drinks and rooms. I dare not ruin the violence in this movie for it will dull down the effect that this movie spews forth but I will say this film has the most putrid butchery ever printed before. This film is a festering stone on cinema's walkway. The acting, of course, is amazing. Expect no less from the geniuses that bring you this picture. Before he begins this event that will forever change his life and leave him scarred with the title "Cannibal", he has problems with it. As any man would. Doing something this extreme does desensitize you eventually and you can certainly notice with he is butchering that there is a soul behind his eyes.

Not only does this film has the most malignant violence and the most disturbingly realistic scene of castration but this film puts August Underground's Mordum to shame. The sexuality of this film is filthy and the torture is more realistic. The staff at Unearthed Films has brought this gem to our hands and is available via www.unearthedfilms.com. This is the easily the most disturbing film i have ever seen, and to think that the director helped direct The Green River Killer is shameful. A stunning work of art and the most repulsive love story ever put to film, but beware. They are adapting this story into a Hollywood film that will prove to be utter shit.

GRIMM LOVE

For your viewing pleasure, I have located the actual site where The Man met The Flesh. You can search for "Franky" and find the title of his posts, but nothing more because this is just an archive.

The Cannibal Cafe

-Maq

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST
CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST

Ruggero Deodato (1980)

Over a decade ago or so, I began my search for a certain infamous Italian cannibal film that I was led to believe was the Holy Grail of horror and splatter cinema and considering the film was never released in the USA in any home format (as it is today), not to mention the fact that it was not exactly as easy as it is today to find such rare films online, it felt like a rather hopeless situation in terms of seeing the film, so I inevitably caved and swallowed my pride, went to a horrific horror convention flooded with flabby fanboys who masturbate to Friday the 13th Part III (1982) while wearing Wal-Mart hockey masks, and did the unthinkable by buying a bootleg copy of Cannibal Holocaust (1980) directed by Ruggero Deodato (Waves of Lust, The House on the Edge of the Park) from a superlatively slimy and sleazy bootlegger from NYC. While the act of paying a parasitical urban pirate money for a film he had no part in creating disgusted me just as if I bought crack from some jaded jigaboo, I had no idea that the less than pristine print of Cannibal Holocaust was going to shock me in such a severe manner that I realized that my lifetime of being desensitized due to my horror movie addiction was not nearly as bad as I had originally assumed, thus leading me to similarly 'infamous' cinematic works like Pasolini's Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975), Tinto Brass' Salon Kitty (1976), Roger Watkins' Last House on Dead End Street (1977), Gerald Kargl's Angst (1983), Jörg Buttgerit's Nekromantik (1987), Gaspar Noé's Irréversible (2002), and countless other conspicuously controversial cinematic works that have made it all but impossible for me to take any Hollywood film seriously in terms of 'taking risks' and shocking the viewer. While Italian cannibal films are not exactly my favorite film subgenre, I still regard Cannibal Holocaust as king and can honestly say it is the only guido flesh-eater flick that I have taken the trouble to view more than once. In fact, after nearly half a decade without seeing it, I decided to re-watch Cannibal Holocaust recently and once again realized why it is the only "found footage" film I can stomach, as well as one of the only films that I am not surprised was banned not only in its native country of Italy, but also a number of other countries and why it still remains banned today in some places as one of the only exploitation films that brings minor poetry to senseless animal slaughter.

A surprisingly seamless yet savage film-within-a-film, Cannibal Holocaust has been described as a potent piece of cinematic social commentary, as well as repugnant, reprehensible, and racist film with no redeeming qualities. Frankly, I couldn't care less if some sissy ethno-masochistic xenophile that lurks in an overpriced independent coffee shop is even vaguely correct in his assessment of the film, but it is a fact that director Ruggero Deodato has cited the less than politically correct Italian documentary filmmakers Gualtiero Jacopetti, Paolo Cavara, and Franco Prosperi of Mondo cane (1962) fame as a major influence behind the

film. Like Jacopetti, Cavara, and Prosperi's documentaries, *Cannibal Holocaust* does not wallow in cuckold 'cultural sensitivity' as it portrays "noble savages" (the Yanomamo and Shamatari tribesmen featured in the film are authentic, but only the Yanomamo partake in a form of post-mortem ritual cannibalism) in a uniquely unflattering light, even if the film has an absurd tacked-on message, "I wonder who the real cannibals are?," in a feeble and superficial attempt to condemn imperialism and whatnot. What is more important is that Spaghetti Western maestro Sergio Leone (*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, *Once Upon a Time in America*) wrote a letter to director Deodato after watching *Cannibal Holocaust*, which stated, "Dear Ruggero, what a movie! The second part is a masterpiece of cinematographic realism, but everything seems so real that I think you will get in trouble with all the world." And, indeed, the film caused all kinds of hell around the world, hence its relative scarcity until rather recently. Featuring a pseudo-documentary entitled "The Last Road to Hell" (which features real murder scenarios from around the glorious Third World) within the film in the tradition of Jacopetti and Prosperi's *Africa Addio* (1966) and *Goodbye Uncle Tom* (1971), as well as film reels of a film crew's ill-fated attempt to create a documentary about Amazon Rainforest tribes while raping, pillaging, and terrorizing people, *Cannibal Holocaust* is more than ample proof that the Occident, as well as the rest of the world (whether they like it or not), has reached an apocalyptic stage since the less ominous days of Italian Neorealism. If you're a braindead gorehound and want to learn about the innate culture-distorting ills of multiculturalism without having to read a single line from a banal book written by some poof of a pencil-pusher, *Cannibal Holocaust* is probably the film for you.

During the beginning of *Cannibal Holocaust*, one learns about a missing American film crew comprised of director Alan Yates, his girlfriend Faye Daniels, and two cameramen Jack Anders and Mark Tomaso who traveled to the Amazon to make a documentary about warring indigenous cannibal tribes. A bleeding heart liberal cultural anthropologist named Harold Monroe (played by Jewish-American pornstar Robert Kerman aka R. Bolla of *Debbie Does Dallas* (1978)) from NYU ends up leading a rescue team to find the forsaken filmmakers. When he arrives in the Amazon, Mr. Monroe hooks up with a guide named Chaco, a charismatic barbarian of a man who snorts cocaine off a knife, and his twinkish assistant Miguel. With the help of a coke-snorting Yacumo tribesman who was taken hostage by the military, the group delves deep inside the rainforest where no other white men would dare to tread, killing real animals on the way and witnessing tribesmen performing adultery punishment against whorish wives, which involves rock-cock dildos being rammed up the philandering women's vaginas. Eventually Monroe and his motley crew locates the warring Yanomamö and Shamatari tribes. After saving the lives of some of the more yellow-bellied Yanomamö, Monroe and his crew are invited back to the tribe's tree village, but

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not without suspicion of their weird white man ways, and after having a naked swim with some of the penis-prodding tribeswomen, the anthropologist is taken to a spiritual shrine used to ward off evil Eurupid spirits where the bones of the missing American filmmakers are located. Naturally, pissed off that those disenfranchised Indians dare to eat cultivated gringos, Monroe freaks out and has a hysterical hissy fit and fires off a couple rounds from his gun, but things cool down when the anthropologist trades a magical tape recorder to the savages for the fallen film crew's film reels and the two groups celebrate by dining on fresh human meat. Of course, Monroe proves his cultivated open-mindedness and dedication to diversity by chowing down on the remains of savage, if not rather reluctantly so.

When Monroe returns back to his inhospitable cosmopolitan habitat of NYC, he is offered by a team of sleazy and shallow executives at the generically named "Pan American Broadcast Company" to host a show of a broadcasted documentary that is being made from the footage he recovered tentatively entitled, "The Green Inferno." Monroe is shown one of director Alan Yates' previous documentaries, *The Last Road to Hell*, which features footage of exterminated Africans and piles of corpses of color. The anthropologist also learns that Yates was known to stage some of the footage to make it more enthralling and soon Monroe is exposed to how far the fiendish filmmaker was willing to go to get the perfect wide-angle rape shot and stunning savage-on-savage slaughter. Quite reluctantly, Monroe reviews the 'found-footage' that he is supposed to host and learns a number of unflattering things about his foredoomed filmmaker friends, including their taste for butchering and eating giant turtles, burning down entire villages of tribesmen and then forcing them to watch how white folks from America have sex, savagely defiling a savage woman via gringo gang-rape and subsequently impaling her body and blaming it on the savages as a sick sex ritual, blowing away tribesmen with their 'boomsticks,' and a variety of other odious displays of behavior that gets Alan Yates and his film crew brutally butchered and eaten by armies of the Yaomamö. Disgusted with himself for being an American white man like Mr. Alan Yates, Monroe leaves the final screening disillusioned, but at least the TV executives decide to destroy the footage.

Not unsurprisingly, *Cannibal Holocaust* was confiscated by authorities a mere ten days after its premiere in Milan, Italy, but director Ruggero Deodato had bigger problems as he was not only charged with obscenity, but also murder as the courts believed the simulated death scenes in the film were real and that the actors that played Alan Yates and his compatriots really met true death, which is the sort of audacious auteur infamy that few other filmmakers can boast. As for *Cannibal Holocaust* star Robert Kerman, he had the following to say about his experience with mad maestro Ruggero Deodato, stating he is, "A maniac – totally nuts! He was often stressed and he lost his control sometimes and would shout. That really pissed me off. I always had the feeling that Deodato drove

everybody crazy. And those animal scenes! I thought those pictures were created by special effects men, but no way was it...I told Deodato I would curse him if he kept on filming those animal mutilation scenes...Those scenes are disgusting and perverted." Of course, one has to be doing something right when they have the propensity to piss-off and gross-out a Hebraic hardcore pornstar who once admitted, "I hope that porn is the most unrighteous thing I do. If we go out of our way to be scumbags, that's the sin; when I do porn, I offend Shakespeare more than God." The great irony of *Cannibal Holocaust* is that despite being considered one of the most decidedly disturbing, exceedingly exploitative, and ceaselessly shocking films ever made, it also happens to be quite breathtaking and even majestic in parts, which is only all the more accentuated by Riz Ortolani's melodious and highly memorable musical score. While not a work of 'art cinema' itself, *Cannibal Holocaust* is a singular exploitation piece in that it transcends the celluloid ghetto it ostensibly belongs to as a work that proves that films featuring naked brigades of savages castrating and cannibalizing evil white men and primitive women being impaled on poles can be not only aesthetically and thematically redeeming, but also endlessly enthralling. Also, clearly a relentless misanthropic, director Deodato does not care about sparing your emotions and if you came to *Cannibal Holocaust* hoping to get your jollies off by seeing hordes of denuded exotic primitives being wild and wanton and Amazonian miscegenation between savages and the racially sacrilegious, you're in for a rude awakening!

Predating *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) – one of the most critically and especially commercially successful independent films ever made (grossing over US\$248 million worldwide) – by nearly two decades yet taking the whole "found footage" gimmick to a much deeper and more depraved level, *Cannibal Holocaust*, despite its lack of availability until relatively recently (Grindhouse Releasing released a great DVD of the film in 2005 in the U.S.), has managed to develop an almost religious cult following over the decades that proves the particularly perverse potency of the film. With proponents like Troma Führer Lloyd Kaufman of all people, who compared the animal slaughtering scenes in the film to Bolshevik auteur Vsevolod Pudovkin's theory of montage, writing, "In *Cannibal Holocaust*, we see the actors kill and rip apart a giant sea turtle and other animals. The brain has been conditioned to accept that which it's now seeing as real. This mixture of real and staged violence, combined with the handheld camerawork and the rough, unedited quality of the second half of the movie, is certainly enough to convince someone that what they are watching is real," *Cannibal Holocaust* proved horror films can be made that truly horrify the viewer to the point of shock and bring one to actually reexamine their entire *Weltanschauung* on a worldly cross-cultural scale, thus actually making them use their gray matter for once, which is truly an achievement for a genre in which its entire basis lay in striking the nerve of man's most archaic emotions. A film that demystifies

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the power of news media and supposedly authentic documentary films, *Cannibal Holocaust*, to reference *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), figuratively reveals the “man behind the curtain,” puts him on trial, and has him executed by a savage swarm of sanguinary mud people who may have a virtual incapacity for reason, but who know when someone is truly deserving of death, which is indubitably one of the few truly ‘universal’ laws of humanity. An incendiary indictment of both degenerate Westerners of the pathologically materialistic persuasion and naive cultural anthropologists of the commie Boasian blend who believe in hocus pocus like “cultural relativism” but are shell-shocked when actually experiencing primitive peoples first hand, *Cannibal Holocaust* is easily the foremost anti-globalization horror work ever made and an inexplicably anti-agitprop agitprop work that intensely illustrates, quite ironically, via a pseudo-ethnology *cinéma vérité* work in the vein of French leftist anthropologist/filmmaker Jean Rouch – a xenophilic man whose supposedly sympathetic documentary depictions of peoples of the dark continent was oftentimes viewed by native filmmakers as having “distorted African realities” – that different races and cultures have an innate incapacity for living in harmony together and that the more the peoples of the world come together, the more barbaric murder the planet will experience on a mayhem-ridden multicultural scale. However, more than anything, Ruggero Deodato has managed to package more practical anthropological insights and lessons in the subjectivity of documentary film/electronic media than one would probably receive at the undergraduate level at an American liberal arts university and if anyone can reach the deluded and damaged minds of fierce philistine gorehounds, they must be a savage genius of the Svengali Italian Stallion sort.

-Ty E

HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF THE PARK

Ruggero Deodato (1980)

Ruggero Deodato's classic is what I would refer to as an original rape revenge classic. It is in many ways similar to Craven's *The Last House on the Left*, but far superior. *The Last House on the Left* is a film that should burn in cinema hell. It is a film undeserving of any of its "cult" praise and notoriety. It is also a non-credited remake of Bergman's classic *The Virgin Spring*. Funny how *The Last House on the Left* gets a remake but *The Virgin Spring* isn't being credited for it. *House on the Edge of the Park* carries a far greater purpose than shock value. The resulting finale will leave you stunned and satisfied. The foreshadowing was laid on thick and heavily. You almost feel ashamed to have not picked up on it sooner. In retrospect, *House on the Edge of the Park* is the polar opposite of most rape revenge films. The revenge scene comes blossoming out of a fatal mistake and turns the film into a teenage recklessness/murder plot game. The alignment of the characters are unsure of at the beginning. When we meet "Alex", he seems charismatic and happy, only being dragged down by his job and the rich yuppies who try and trick his mentally retarded friend (Giovanni Lombardo Radice) out of money. So he takes things into his own hands to finally stick it to "the man". You'll soon uncover that every one involved has a greater purpose. David Hess turns another great role as a psycho-sexual maniac. It seems as if he was made for the role of being a rapist. His character is unforgiving and a hollow shell devoid of any normal emotion. Humanity has reared its ugly head for all that are involved. None would escape this situation unharmed. Forget about the idea that this is an anti-drug commercial like its *Last House on the Left* counterpart. The only mistake these women made were going to the "party" in the first place. Originally a video nasty, this film is now available uncut for your viewing pleasure. I couldn't imagine watching this film with 11+ minutes chopped out for the tamer audiences. The sexual violence is needed in order to establish the story and the poignancy. *House on the Edge of the Park* is a brash and uncompromising film depicting rape and sexual mutilation. It doesn't just stop there. This film is just an all round damn fine roughie experience. What else could you really ask for?

-mAQ

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

Rupert Wyatt (2011)

Rise of the Planet of the Apes is a film about an uprising of those a few rungs down the evolutionary ladder against humans that succeeds in showing up the human race two-fold; both in terms of arguments as to why the human race deserves to be blotted off the face of the earth by its closest cousins, and in a broader sense, as the likely next step in evolution- the computer- finally succeeding in leaving human “actors” behind in the dust. Here we are presented with a riveting revolutionary parable chock full of emotion and nuance, but only when the flesh-and-blood humans are off-screen (or getting beaten to a pulp by pixelated primates). Recall when “The Phantom Menace” and that Final Fantasy film that had all but nothing to do with any of the games came out and there were all these debates about whether a CGI “performance” could overtake human acting and if this was the death of cinema as we know it and how in no time we might very well be plugged into the Matrix or sending a dude back in time to fuck our mom and save her from Conan and shit? And how you likely looked at Jar Jar Binks shucking and jiving and shining Anakin’s shoes and thought “never gonna happen”? Well, think again.

Rise of the Planet of the Apes concerns the usually semi-kinda-interesting-for-a-pretty-fella James Franco as a drying patch of paint/scientist attempting to cure Alzheimer’s. You know he’s serious and willing to commit all the necessary reckless scientific gobbledygook that will make it a Planet of the Apes because his dad, phoned in by John Lithgow, suffers from the affliction, and furthermore, hasn’t John Lithgow always looked kind of like an orangutan? So with that in mind, Franco works for a pharmaceutical company and has to test his cure on apes, but conveniently smack dab in the middle of a presentation one of his computer-generated chimps bursts through the windows of the boardroom and gets blown away by security guards and lo-and-behold she was pregnant so Franco, with all the conviction and personality of a paper plate, takes home the baby and in almost no-time realizes the brain serum from the pregnant mother was passed genetically to his new housemate, who in short time totally makes Nim Chimpsky and Koko and those gorillas from Congo totally look like the lice-chowing simps they are... To allude to past pictures in the franchise Lithgow’s doddering dad names the little guy Caesar (played by computer pixels arranged around a motion-captured performance by that “give me my preciouss” guy from Lord of the Rings). In short time, Caesar is communicating through sign-language, walking semi-upright, kicking ass in IQ-tests, and becoming more and more aware at the humiliating position he is placed in by society- not quite a man, not quite a monkey (an ape, to be exact).

So Franco goes all ‘renegade’ and decides to sneak some of the forbidden

Alzheimer's medicine from the lab and take it home to test on dad and the same guy who was having trouble playing chopsticks at the beginning of the film is grimacing and mincing his way through an intense piano workout and around this time an over-the-top asshole neighbor attacks Caesar, who just wants friends aside from the dull pair he's stuck with, with a baseball bat and so Franco takes him to the zoo to get patched up and he meets his love interest, a chick so bland I think they hired her so that Franco would seem to be giving an acting performance in comparison but all her presence succeeds in doing is to grind the film to halt whenever a pixel-primate ain't on screen. So as Caesar grows, both in size and intelligence, he starts to understand his position in the world, at one point asking Franco with a fierce look of indignation whether he is a pet or his son. In explaining to Caesar his origins, what with the medical testing and the death of his mom, he plants the seed of revolutionary consciousness. Soon, the Alzheimer's cure backfires, Lithgow starts wandering around in a daze and trying to drive that one asshole neighbor's car, over-the-top asshole neighbor proceeds to start pummeling the old guy, and Caesar springs to action, beating his ass and chomping on his fingers. This indiscretion gets Caesar taken away and locked up in a primate prison, where abusive (and horrendously acted) human guards and the feeling of having been betrayed by his human father, who is unable to spring his charge from the facility, work together to cement the fate of our budding Chimp Guevara.

Some more plot occurs, all of which eventually leads to an evolved-ape escape/revolt which climaxes on the Golden Gate Bridge and will have the blood pumping and heart racing as the computer-animated apes are indeed more animated and lively and sympathetic than any of the human cast members. Caesar, for example, is a sight to behold. The animation is done well to the point my suspension of disbelief was nearly total, and I didn't for a second pause to consider in many scenes that the human actors might be acting to an empty space. Rather, the human actors seemed to be digitally drawn in, either lifeless and bland or cartoonish and broad, whereas the facial expression Caesar begins to wear about a half-hour is fraught with complexity, somewhere between a hurt child and an indignant teenager, or "father, why art thou forsaken me?" and "die, honky." Caesar and his companions, be it the kindly circus orangutan (you won't confuse 'im for Lithgow cuz this fucker can "act"), the perpetually pissed-off gorilla, or the bad-ass Bonobo Koba, who ain't got no use for no damned dirty humans, make this film. I've always been one to side with flesh-and-blood, honest-to-Gawd human emotion over something created by engineers using computer programs, but in this case, I think it's really been proven that just like a machine can totally whoop ass at chess, it can also whoop ass at making chimps seem capable of whooping ass at chess. Let's see a chimp handler make THAT happen without making everyone stay on set for like three hours extra. Shit, let's see 'em make James Franco convincingly win a game of chess...ha!

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

One particular moment of the film warrants mention above all others, though it is something of a spoiler (that you and your 11-year old nephew already know all about). At one point, having already “educated” his fellow apes at the primate prison, Caesar leads his least favorite guard into the ‘playpen’ area, refusing to return to his cage. Wielding a cattle prod and looking like a cross between Jeremy Renner and DJ Qualls (and apparently acted by some kid from the Harry Potter flicks? I wouldn’t know...), the guard lands some blows, which Caesar does his best to dodge, a wry, enraged glint in his green eyes. As the tides of battle turn once Caesar intercepts a would-be chilling blow and grips his arm, Caesar, up to this point communicating solely through sign, let’s loose with a full-throttled, vocal “NO!” that, despite the latent predictability of much of this flick (it’s a prequel to Planet of the Apes, after all, so we kinda know the eventual outcome and pretty big swaths of what must happen to bring us to The Statue of Liberty resembling that which pees in its own mouth for Youtube hits), still managed to elicit gasps and a cheer or two from the audience. So convincing is Caesar that somehow this obvious plot development manages to come as a rousing surprise, and from that point on the film is one big “fuck you” to “the man” (or, in this case, just “man”), catharsis on the scale of The Battle of Algiers, only supplanting documentary realism with chimps on horses and Algerians with apes (I think part of the reason Rise works the way it does, for a misanthrope like myself anyways, is that intelligent chimps will always make for more likable protagonists than any know-nothing human beings), or computer generated simulacra thereof. (Oh yeah, Andy Serkis is underneath Caesar’s pixels and maybe some other nominally “human” “actors” are involved, but give ‘em a few months and I’m sure they’ll figure out how to get guys like him out of the equation entirely so the studios can reap pure profit and credit and the machines can slowly but surely start plugging us into “The Matrix”)(Remember The Matrix? Wonder how many weeks until we are sitting before a Matrix reboot?) All in all, you can do a lot worse, and probably not a whole lot better as far as summer fare goes. You’ll walk out of the theater, your head swimming with images of apes spearing humans and raising the red flag of rectal-digging resistance while in actuality the computers and their number-crunching studio executive human analogues wage the REAL revolution right underneath our noses.

-Jon-Christian

BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS

Russ Meyer (1970)

Undoubtedly, probably the easiest way for one to discredit the late Roger Ebert's competency as a critic of the movies is to point out the fact that he co-penned the script for the absolutely aesthetically appalling and socio-politically sickening piece of crappy celluloid counter-culture camp *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) – a pomo pseudo-homo 'musical-horror-sex-comedy' that epitomizes everything that is culturally corrosive about American pseudo-culture, while also reflecting the sort of hedonistic and materialistic liberal *Weltanschauung* the populist cinephile who wrote it was a part of. Directed by and co-written by sexploitation auteur and movie mazophilic Russ Meyer (*Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, *Beneath the Valley of the Ultra-Vixens*) – a similarly rather rotund man co-scripter Roger Ebert was a faithful fanboy of – *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is a uniquely ugly X-rated window into all the soulless lust and lifestyles, vapid music and culture, degenerate politics, and delusional dreams that transformed the United States of America into the Philo-semitic, philistine, technocratic quasi-Third World sewer it is today. Featuring porn stars, sentimental race-mixing, softcore Negrophilia, curiously cliché Teutonophobia (despite the fact that both Ebert and Meyer are apparently Amero-krauts), emotionally plastic psychedelic parties, trips to abortion clinics, hyper-hip hippie lingo, posh rebellion, feminist capitalism, retarded rock n roll, and just about every other anti-cultural ingredient that Hollywood thrives on and the American public mindlessly gets high on, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is America and camp filmmaking at its worse as a relentlessly wretched work that curiously wallows in the sort of social sewage it so haphazardly attempts to satirize, yet is indubitably a part of. Originally intended as a sequel to the marvelously mundane melodrama *Valley of the Dolls* (1967) – a shallow movie about shallow babes who have too much fun with big boys and barbiturates – *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* ultimately evolved into a somewhat superior, but equally shallow and senseless parody of the original film, with an equal dumb-downing dosage of tacked-on moralizing. After my second viewing of *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* not long after Ebert kicked the big boy bucket, I decided enough was enough and I can safely say that I will never reduce myself to such asinine audio-visual rancidness again, though I would be lying if I did not admit that the final ten minutes or so of the film act as a sort of therapeutic cleansing of the soul in comparison to the rest of the work as a brutal scenario inspired by the mayhem of the Manson Family – the 'acid fascists', who if doing nothing else of value, helped to put the final nail in the coffin of the hippies and the 1960s, which was a great way to conclude a deplorable phenomenon that was rooted in the phony slave-morality-driven ideology of peace, love, and tolerance.

Three would-be-wild-and-wanton women – Kelly MacNamara (Dolly Read;

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the first British Playboy Playmate of the Month), Casey Anderson (Cynthia Myers; Playmate of the Month for the December, 1968 issue of Playboy), and Petronella "Pet" Danforth (Marcia McBroom; a popular black fashion model of the 1970s) – make up a multicultural and quasi-feminist rock band called "The Kelly Affair" whose members wear a lot of unsightly make-up and have equally awful and artificial personalities. Kelly MacNamara is the unofficial leader of the group and her pouty pussy of a beta-male boyfriend Harris Allsworth (David Gurian) manages the group, but he is hardly the right man to keep both the band and his girlfriend satisfied. When Kelly drags the band and her beau to Los Angeles to track down her estranged aunt, Susan Lake (Phyllis Davis, who got her first big break playing minor roles in Elvis Presley movies) – the sole heiress of a one million dollar fortune, things begin to become a bit strange and hyper-hedonistic for the gullible glamour gals. Things seem to be looking up when Kelly's aunt Susan proves to be a pleasant broad, who, quite absurdly, offers to give 1/3 of her inheritance to her niece upon first meeting her, but a stereotypically conservative yet corrupt financial advisor Porter Hall (Duncan McLeod) has different plans, as he does not want a half-baked hippie chick getting her pretty paws on the dough as he wants to keep it for himself. Meanwhile, The Kelly Affair plays a show at a faggy fuehrer freak named Ronnie "Z-Man" Barzell's (John LaZar in his sole memorable acting role) 'happening crib,' which ultimately causes a number of radical changes for the band. Zany Z-Man – a clever, if not half-crazy, megalomaniac with a peculiarly gregarious god complex – becomes the manager of the band and forces them to change their name to "The Carrie Nations," thus ushering a new beginning of sin, sex, success, and social stupidity for the awfully annoying all-girl group. On top of firing Harris, Kelly dumps the frail fellow for a blond bimbo beast and top-dollar gigolo named Lance Rocke (Michael Blodgett, who scripted Turner & Hooch (1989)), who helps the girl to get in touch with her inner-greed and vaginal orgasms. Deeply hurt, Harris gets hooked on drugs and alcohol and begins dating a predatory porn star named Ashley St. Ives (Edy Williams, who later married Russ Meyer and who the director, like a true cultural cuckold, later photographed for the March 1973 issue of Playboy), who ultimately insults the gentle gentleman's complete and utter lack of sexual prowess, thus causing the bashful boy to think he may be a closet queer. Casey has a pathetic one-night stand with Harris that ends in pregnancy, but she later has an abortion after getting advice from a Saphic fashion designer she has a brief lesbian affair with. Ebony diva Petronella begins a steamy love affair with a black law student named Emerson Thorne (Harrison Page), but things go awfully awry when she cheats on her man with a barbaric black prize-fighter named Randy Black (James Iglehart), whose character was modeled after Muhammad Ali. Although Kelly dumps Lance after he beats Harris to a bloody pulp, the erratically emotional ex-manager/ex-boyfriend attempts suicide and fails, but manages to paralyze himself in the process, thus

further stifling his already rather pathetic sexual potential. Although the band continues to get more popular by playing on popular TV shows, the members get further involved with too much sex, drugs, rock n roll, and abortions. All the counter-culture fun and games ends in a climax of campy carnage when Z-Man has a deadly Dionysian party at his mansion that begins with a relaxed cocktail of psychedelic drugs and sex, and concludes with the music producer revealing he has tits and that 'he is a she' and decides to murder everyone around him, including his own lapsed National Socialist butler/bartender who may or may not be Nazi heavyweight Martin Bormann.

Russ Meyer's only major studio production and probably his most accessible work (the director himself regarded it as his "most important" film), *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is, in my opinion, low camp done too polished and clean-cut, sort of like an early John Waters flick minus the charmingly trashy character, authentically eccentric actors, and grotesque gross-out imagery. Indeed, in terms of its overwhelming aesthetic repugnancy, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is a work of cinematic grotesquery, but not the sort that, to quote the psychopathic messiah of perversion Z-Man, that makes me think, "This is my happening and it freaks me out!" Directed by a man who was a virgin until he was in his twenties and who, rather pathetically, lost his virginity to a big breasted prostitute during his military service in the Second World War, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, like all Russ Meyer films, has the essence of a man with a pair of permanent boob-goggles who was intimidated by and put pussy on a pedestal and watched one too many episodes of Hogan's Heroes. Indeed, what separates Meyer's films from the schlocky cinematic works of fellow American low-camp crusaders John Waters and Paul Bartel (*Eating Raoul*, *Lust in the Dust*) is that the "big tit man" lacked a queer sensibility because he was a "big tit man" and not a "big dick man" like the latter two directors. With its cast of highly untalented Playboy playmates with vapid personalities and even less acting abilities, and cardboard caricatures of figures like Phil Spector (who, like the Z-Man, would go on a deranged killing spree) and Muhammad Ali, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is too passively playful and artistically conservative to be regarded as a classic work of camp as it is more geared toward the bloated American booboisie – a classless class Russ Meyer certainly belonged to and Roger Ebert fed with his armchair liberal brand of film criticism. Meyer and Ebert probably should have taken some lessons from Paul Morrissey (*Flesh*, *Women in Revolt*), who despite being an unrepentant right-wing Roman Catholic, created much more effective sardonic satires of libertine lunacy and the counter-culture movements because, unlike the flabby and flaccid liberal men behind *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, he was able to see the anti-cultural debauchery of the late-1960s/early-1970s for what it was (i.e. total garbage), from an insightful and idiosyncratic outsider's perspective.

With vomit-inducing dialogue from glorified hookers like, "Hey man, I dig.

BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS

You're on an ego trip" and "Don't Bogart the joint," it is easy to see why *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is the cinematic equivalent of genital warts as an ugly, highly infectious and seemingly incurable influence on American (non)culture that reminds one why the late-1960s/early-1970s make for the most repugnant, deleterious, and unflattering point in American history. If some day in the future, an advanced alien race comes to earth and attempts to find out why the West passively capitulated in an apocalyptic scenario, one would just have them watch *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* – a film without a soul but steeped in superficial sin and salaciousness of the conspicuously contrived sort that could only appeal to the sort of guy that is better at sleazily staring at gorgeous women than he is at banging them – to see why the Occident died with a retarded whimper. A less than banging bacchanal in banality and anemic aesthetic barbarity, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is what I assume the movies might be like in hell and if Russ Meyer and Roger Ebert are in Hades, which one would naturally assume they are, I hope the devil himself is forcing them to watch the films of real cultivated camp auteur filmmakers like Werner Schroeter and Daniel Schmid while being whipped by Rainer Werner Fassbinder with a golden reel of Nazi-produced 35mm film. Indeed, it is not a good sign when America's first double-bastard president – a man with the class of a preppy pimp – states, "Roger was the movies." Undoubtedly, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* was Roger Ebert's closet thing to his own 'auteur piece' and it concludes with a female-to-male transvestite slaughtering a group of pretty (vapid) people, but I guess that is what one expects from a man who looked like a middle-aged lesbian for most of his life.

-Ty E

THE SHADOW

Russell Mulcahy (1994)

Be it the alignment of the planets or what, but I've been flat out addicted to the classic 90s films of yesteryear. First *The Shadow*, then *The Phantom*, *Demolition Man*, and etc. The nostalgia invades my senses like a tidal wave. It's truly invigorating to watch films with a completely morphed mindset. When I first watched *Judge Dredd*, I found an entertaining action vehicle for Stallone, now I see a horrific vision of the future displayed by an above-average film that is hated by everyone. I felt it was the right time to re watch Alec Baldwin's *The Shadow*. In the world of international cinema, the great era of the 90s and 80s presented a period where language authenticity wasn't needed. Any Mongolian could pick up an educated English vocabulary and accent regardless of the time period. It was something that fans lived with. Cinema is constantly evolving, so has the audience's perception. We know notice when a Spanish conquistador speaks English. So it's only fitting that Alec Baldwin plays a humanoid Jabba the Hutt character named Ying-ko (Or something) that is passed off as a native. He ultimately finds redemption in a lost art of shadow manipulation. Then, in a *Ghostbusters 2* turn, Genghis Khan's ancestor is awoken from a slumber to finish what his cousin started. *The Shadow* is as much of a neo-noir as it attempts to be. Important to an extent, this isn't a *Dark City* or an excellent adaptation. While being close to the radio show, this contains a superhero figment that is noticed as exaggerated. *The Shadow* is an idea. An idea of an elusive man fighting a never ending quest to redeem himself. He might be forgiven, but for himself to forgive his own deeds is a different journey. To his aid comes an early example of the blossoming CGI experiment. For being such a young technique, it's used quite effectively. *The Shadow*, not only is a great story acted by a talented cast, but is also a technical achievement. The frequent use of shadows even in the most lighted places provides a sense of evil lurking every which corner. After all, New York is the "most villainous place in the world". The comedy scale tips a bit when you watch Baldwin attempt a sub-Jedi Mind Trick on the 30s femme fatale daughter of a mad scientist. The one scene that always stuck out was the imprisonment in the water chamber by a certain Dr. Frankfurter. *The Shadow* is a perfect example of pulp fiction, without the horrendous droning dialogue. Wonderfully exciting and still fresh to this day. It's hard to imagine Alec Baldwin as the washed up actor that he is in this day and age. *cough* Georgia Rule *cough*

-mAQ

TALES FROM THE HOOD
TALES FROM THE HOOD

Rusty Cundieff (1995)

As long as I can remember seeing Negro-oriented horror films, I can still recall that disgusting feeling growing in the pit of my stomach. As much as I love violence and rap, the idea of a bunch of Negroes running away from some supernatural entity screaming "Nigger!" non-stop just turns me off to the genre as a whole. Much to my surprise, *Tales from the Hood* was actually excellent and construed the horrifying reality of propaganda behind even the simplest of big-budget films. Director Rusty Cundieff appears in one of the segments aimed at showing the horrors of a black step-father. His role is that of an incredibly docile teacher who has an almost "white" stature. This character is the teacher to a boy who fears a monster that leaves him with welts and bruises. The white man's black man then goes to the boys house and unwillingly "unleashes" the monster which results in a fight between two "African-American" adults; One being a large male with a demeaning presence, and the other being a wimpy dread-locked queer. The stories range from quirky "Better-than-Creepshow" to urban surrealism "Black men ruin everything good" The scene in example of the second type of short, would be the last segment called *Hard-core Convert*. All in all, this segments purpose it to set up the twist ending and to provide this film with more structure by ripping off Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. The question of "Can man be rehabilitated?" is answered in this film. The path that the character chooses is obviously the same path that the director/writer has in mind for the average Negro criminal. As Mr. Simms says and I quote "I don't think you can rehabilitate those types. No, you just kill them" The violence towards Negroes doesn't stop there. The stories exchange all their own political commentary on "hot" topics such as police brutality and black-on-black violence, with a dash of neo-Nazi's in them. The most infamous tale of all is *KKK Comeuppance*; a tale which features the single most horrifying doll horror story ever. A story to marvel over; An ex-Klansman is running for Governor of a southern state. If that weren't enough, he still hates "spooks" While he is about to refurbish his recently bought house (An old slave plantation with a macabre past), the local crazy Uncle Tom begins to spout ridiculous stories about killer dolls. Madness ensues. I didn't care too much for the first story (*Rogue Cop Revelation*.) The standard zombie format is going to be stale; making him black isn't going to change things up. Out of all the originality that is present in this film, this short is the sore thumb that drags it down. Most viewers of this film have seen this film as a child. While i can recall the excitement of renting a *Hard R* rated film, I wouldn't have appreciated this piece of self-hating trash as much as i do now. This film is an exercise in inter-racial racism. A classic horror anthology with touches of satire and sparkles with horrifying segments of Negro lynchings, burnings, axings, and many more archived footage with a point to prove. Negroes are going to be the

end of themselves. While the many remain to be of a pure and independent spirit, most would rather blame their parents or whine about growing up in the streets. Rusty Cundieff is basically telling you to shut the fuck up and change your life, or else. It comes as no surprise that this anti-Negro film directed by a Negro is executive produced by Spike Lee.

-mAQ

LOST RIVER
LOST RIVER

Ryan Gosling (2015)

Naturally, as someone that has an innate aversion to virtually all-things-Hollywood, I find it rather dubious when some huge Tinseltown superstar randomly decides that they want to become a 'cinematic artiste' and begin directing films, as if to prove to themselves that they are more than just glorified prostitutes. Indeed, Warren Beatty's epically banal Bolshevik belch *Reds* (1981), Sean Penn's badly botched Friedrich Dürrenmatt adaptation *The Pledge* (2001), Angelina Jolie's culturally retarded piece of plodding plagiarism *In the Land of Blood and Honey* (2001), and especially George Clooney's pointlessly black-and-white pseudo-arthouse comsymp joke *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005) are just a couple examples of what happens when extremely rich and famous airheads get bored and decide that they want to play artist by using the seemingly limitless technical and monetary resources at their disposal to up their game in terms of shallow virtue signaling and lame leftist cheerleading, among other less than noble things. One also cannot forget the fact that actors-turned-directors like Ron Howard and Robert Redford have probably done more to perpetuate the misguided stereotype that WASPs are humorless soulless dorks with their films than any of the films directed by their racially hostile Hebraic colleagues. Of course, some actors have proved that they had would it takes to be a great auteur as demonstrated by English character actor Charles Laughton's sole feature *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) and Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Out of the Blue* (1980), but these are mostly rare exceptions. Needless to say, when I initially discovered that Canadian heartthrob Ryan Gosling—an actor that I consider to be fairly talented, even if he has appeared in a number of supremely shitty films that are made to wet the panties of preteen girls—was directing his first feature, I was quite intrigued but also somewhat concerned. While on one hand, Gosling proved early on in his career that he had an inordinate degree of emotional intelligence by managing to seemingly perfectly pull off the role of a self-loathing Jewish neo-Nazi in Henry Bean's *The Believer* (2001) despite his totally non-kosher Aryan good looks, the unquestionably talented actor does not exactly scream fanatical auteur and seems more like a follower than a leader, thus making him seem somewhat unfit for the dictatorial duties of being a filmmaker (after all, film history has demonstrated that many of the great auteur filmmakers ranging from Stanley Kubrick to Rainer Werner Fassbinder have proven to be almost intolerable to work with). After all, unfortunately for Gosling, it seems that many of the great filmmakers of history also tended to be quite nerdy, unattractive, and/or otherwise unlikable. Of course, if there is any contemporary actor that I would want to see direct a film, it is Gosling, so naturally I was quite excited upon learning about his directorial debut *Loſt River* (2014). Although the film had the honor of premiering in competition in the *Un Certain Regard*

section of the 2014 Cannes Film Festival, it was almost unanimously trashed by critics and received piss poor limited theatrical distribution (in fact, the film's U.S. distributor Warner Bros. Pictures even considering selling it to another studio due to its poor reception). Considering the critics seem to love anything that is directed by absurdly arrogant white liberal psychopaths like Beatty and Clooney, I only became all the more interested in seeing Gosling after learning of its poor critical reception. Luckily, *Loſt River* not only proved to be a legitimate auteur effort that hints that Gosling might one day become a formidable filmmaker with his own distinct cinematic vision, but it is also somewhat politically correct as a sometimes surprising flick that breaks with the mainstream white/Jewish liberal narrative, especially in regard to its rather empathetic portrayal of white proles and their rapid decline.

One of the most frequent criticisms that Gosling's film has received is that it is 'derivative,' even though it takes a more subtle and seamless approach to honoring its influences than shameless negrophile Tarantino does with his films. Personally, I think many of these critics were offended that a brooding pretty boy like Gosling dared to make such an ambitious and oftentimes beautiful film that does not follow the mainstream leftist narrative and instead depicts a spiritually necrotizing dystopian realm featuring poor struggling white families, deranged black bums, disillusioned anti-American immigrants, and an ambiguously Jewish banker played by real-life Judaic Ben Mendelsohn that acts as a zany villain who tries to take advantage of a single mother that is desperate to support her two sons. Seemingly completely apolitical and without any real agenda aside from the desire to create cinematic art, Gosling seems to have merely abstractly channeled his emotional response to the rampant societal decay that he encountered while visiting the post-industrial wasteland that is Detroit. Shot by Belgian cinematographer Benoît Debie, who has shot a number of important contemporary arthouse works, including Gaspar Noé's *Irréversible* (2002) and *Enter the Void* (2009), Lucile Hadžihalilović's *Innocence* (2004), Fabrice Du Welz's *Calvaire* (2004) aka *The Ordeal* and *Vinyan* (2008), and Harmony Korine's *Spring Breakers* (2012), among other notable films, *Loſt River* feels the result of Gosling attempting to make a *Detroit Blue Velvet* meets a pro-Europid *Gummo* disguised as an homage to Mario Bava and *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*, albeit with shades of Terrence Malick, early Tim Burton, and Derek Cianfrance, among other less conspicuous influences. Championed by Mexican Hollywood filmmaker Guillermo del Toro (*The Devil's Backbone*, *Pan's Labyrinth*) of all people, Gosling's film undoubtedly deserves comparisons to David Robert Mitchell's excellent arthouse-horror flick *It Follows* (2014) in that sense that it is an intentionally visually anachronistic piece of slow-burning and foreboding celluloid Americana that portrays Detroit and America in general as a sort of perennial purgatory that has been plagued by some unknown metaphysical curse that has destroyed love, happiness, the family, and virtually

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everything else that makes life worth living.

While I do not want to succumb to Kael-esque puffery, *Loſt River* is a great contemporary example as to why foreigner filmmakers oftentimes make more insightful and juſt damn delightfully damning cinematic depictions of the United States than native directors. Indeed, if Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) depicted an America where even the moſt remote regions of the Midwest were afflicted with the alienating and dejecting effects of capitalism, Gosling's ſtrangely sentimental neo-fairytale depicts a rotting America empire on the verge of the apocalypse where love and romance seems to be a bittersweet memory from a time when romantic interpersonal connections were ſtill possible and fathers and ſtrong men ſtill held ſociety together. In Gosling's film, demonic dick-heads ruthleſsly rule all segments of ſociety as if they were placed in their places of power by the devil himſelf, virtually all young people ſeem to have already given up hope, and all old people either ſeem to be insane or in ſome catatonic ſtate as if they cannot cope with what has happened to the world. At leaſt partly inspired by Gosling's upbringing as the ſcared ſon of an attractive ſingle mother who was inceſſantly hit on by men, *Loſt River* is also a rare contemporary film that demonstrates that ſingle moms are oftentimes not the ſtrong and independent 'bad aſſes' that Hollywood movies and the mainſtream media and TV would have you believe, but inſtead vulnerable, desperate, and oftentimes damaged dames that ſometimes have to ſubject themſelves to degradation juſt to make ends meet. Additionally, the film reveals that ſingle mothers are incapable of controlling their ſons, as the male protagonist not only ſomewhat reſents his mother, but also acts as both a ſurrogate husband and father as a young man that ſeems to ſpend more time raising and teaching his younger brother than his mommy does. Notably, in an interview with del Toro during the firſt day of the 2015 SXSW Film Feſtival, Gosling would confeſs in regard to the uneasy feeling of growing up with a beauteous mom that was always the center of unwanted male attention and its imperative influence on his film, "When you're a kid and you have a ſingle mom, all men feel like wolves. Guys would whiſtle at her — it was very predatory and threatening. As a kid I felt helpleſs, ſo you ſtart to imagine all theſe [ſcenarios] where you can do ſomething. You ſee the world through the filter of your imagination." Considering the film features a ſcene where a ſingle mother aſſumedly brutally murders a poſh pervert that attempts to get a little bit too close to her, there is no queſtion that, in a ſeſe, *Loſt River* is an almoſt brutally incriminating auteur piece that hints that Gosling ſuffers from a ſomewhat ſtrange caſe of modern miſandry that ſeems to be the unintended conſequence of being the ſon of a MILF.

Featuring a highly complementary original muſical ſcore by Johnny Jewel, who is the owner/producer of the great record label Italians Do It Better and who is probably beſt known for his muſic in *Bronson* (2008) and *Drive* (2011), *Loſt River* predictably demonstrates that Gosling's collaborations with Danish

auteur Nicolas Winding Refn have had a huge aesthetic influence on him as a filmmaker. In short, the Jewel produced Chromatics song, “Yes (Love Theme from Lost River)” is just as an imperative ingredient of the film as the Kavinsky, Chromatics, and Desire songs are in Drive. Of course, Gosling’s friendship with del Toro, who convinced Gosling to direct the film by telling the actor-turned-auteur that he would direct his script if he did not, also had a major influence on the genesis of the film. Luckily, Gosling’s film is not plagued with the lame and predictable sort of quasi-Marxist subtexts that totally tainted the Mexican filmmaker’s more notable cinematic works. While probably not a conscious decision, Gosling was not doing his career a favor by casting a Judaic actor with the quite famous Hebraic surname ‘Mendelsohn’ (although not related to the famous German-Jewish Mendelssohn family, Mendelsohn is indeed descended from Prussian Jews). Likewise, Gosling revealed that he was not a white liberal bleeding heart faggot when he opted to allow black crackheads who just happened to wander onto the set to appear in the film in fairly unflattering yet nonetheless humorous roles, or as he explained to del Toro, “In some cases we found ourselves in situations where it was easier to let whoever showed up to be in the movie as opposed to keep them out. The actors had to try to weave these strangers into the reality of the movie. There’s one case where we were shooting in the gas station...and I think they were selling something else in the gas station, and some people really wanted it. It got really intense so at a certain point we said, ‘Fuck it, just let them into the scene.’”

In its quite quixotic combination of quasi-Fantastique imagery and gritty subprole realism that oftentimes feels disturbingly surreal in a sort of Korine-esque sense, *Lost River* is indubitably a strange celluloid beast that is sure to bother cinephiles and philistines alike due to its unwillingness to be ghettoized into any single genre or style, not to mention the fact that it oftentimes straddles the line between highly stylized high-camp kitsch and serious understated melodrama. Arguably more intriguingly, the film reveals Gosling to be, not unlike his characters in *Drive* and *Only God Forgives*, a lost soul with a lot of pent up rage, as it depicts forlorn characters that commit ultra-violent yet justified murders, thus hinting that the filmmaker is no pussy pacifist (in fact, when he was only in first grade, he was suspended from school for throwing steak knives at some bullies during recess). Indeed, the violence in the film is not the sort of soulless cartoonish Tarantino-esque sensationalism that works the same way as a cumshot does in a fuck flick, but is instead a seemingly sincere and therapeutic expression of the filmmaker’s own desire for revenge and poetic justice, which is ultimately cinematically unleashed on perverted Judaic bankers and psychopathic bullies. It should also be noted that Gosling opted to whore out his strong Latina baby-momma Eva Mendes and had her play the role of a sort of neo-cabaret scream queen that makes a living being brutally murdered in an glamorously gorgeous fashion on stage for admiring sadists. Undoubtedly, Gosling’s single mother

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background and choice in female partner says a lot about him as a person and thus it should be no surprise that *Loſt River* depicts an innately morally and sexually inverted world where fathers are spoken of if they are mysterious ghosts, a chaotic matriarchy is the only form of family, and girls are oftentimes braver and more stoic than boys. Once somewhat curiously described by Gosling as “my version of *Dark GOONIES*,” the film took the director three years to complete after conception, but I believe it was worth the wait. In fact, before even coming up with a screenplay or storyline, Gosling began shooting footage of the ruins of Detroit with a RED digital camera (though most of the film would eventually be shot on 35mm film), thus reflecting his obsessive dedication to the project, which is quite apparent while watching the film.

Surely when I think of *Loſt River*, the following Heinrich Mann quote comes to mind, “Aestheticism is the product of times without hope, of states that kill hope.” Indeed, like a Tim Burton flick on cheap hillbilly acid, albeit with a soul, Gosling’s flick features a foreboding forsaken netherworld where a certain repugnant and sometimes putrid aesthetic seems to engulf everyone’s life. From the flagrantly trashy neon graffiti on ruined buildings and homes in Detroit to a dimly lit demonic cabaret where decadent dimestore divas ply their trade and bring a sort of unhinged collective ecstasy to an abhorrent audience comprised of wealthy degenerates that get off to the sickly sordid sight of dead dames covered in blood to the strikingly beautiful destruction of ancient middleclass homes in flames during the blue hour, *Loſt River* depicts an aesthetically atrocious yet nonetheless undeniably enthralling world dominated by corrosive colors and imagery that hardly brings solace to the soul yet cannot be ignored. While the aesthetically degrading graffiti seems like the modern-day equivalent of cave drawings as created by sub-literate urban neo-primitives, the cabaret shows and house fires give off the vibe of being Satanic rituals that entertain the wealthy psychopaths that have managed to succeed in the conspicuously corrupt sinking ship that is post-Christian multicultural America. Notably, even the sub-lumpenprole villain in the film sports a flashy diamond-studded Michael Jackson-esque jacket that seems to represent the sort of style-over-substance mentality that plagues not only Detroit but the country in general. Quite fittingly, virtually all the visuals that represent something loving are static and/or lo-fi, including seemingly ancient wedding footage of a terminally distraught widowed grandmother and the cheap keyboard of her inordinately soulful yet sullen granddaughter. Undoubtedly, one of the most uniquely unforgettable moments of the film is when Irish actress Saoirse Ronan sings the absolutely haunting song “Tell Me” on her tiny electric keyboard. In many ways that the director probably did not consciously intend, Gosling’s film is almost like an artsy fartsy advertisement from Emperor Trump’s glorious “Make America Great Again” campaign. On the other hand, the world depicted in the film is so forsaken that it seems completely beyond any sort of redemption, hence why the characters decide to move

in the end.

Loſt Rivers begins with a little blond boy named Franky emerging from his family's exceedingly dilapidated family home and crying to himself, "I'm gonna help you. A monſter gonna eat you, Dada. The monſter gonna eat me, Father." Unfortunately, this poor little lad does not have a "dada" and inſtead relies on his young adult brother Bones (Iain De Caeſtecker)—a ſeemingly loſt and confused fellow that could hardly be described as a ſtrong alpha-male—for a paternal figure. While buſty redheaded momma Billy (Chriſtina Hendricks) loves her boys and would do anything for them, ſhe is certainly no ſubſtitute for a proper patriarch and is on the brink of loſing the family home to an evil predatory bank that is bent on buying every ſingle houſe in the area and then burning them down. Indeed, Billy and her boys, who are one of the laſt ſurviving families in their neighborhood, watch in anxiety-ridden dread as their neighbors' homes are regularly burned down by leſs than ſympathetic guys that work for the bank. While his mother clearly needs extra help and ſupport, Bones hopes to leave the area as ſoon as he finishes working on his car. To buy parts for his ſupremely ſhitty antique automobile, Bones ſteals copper pipes out of abandoned buildings and then ſells them to a negro junkyard owner. Unfortunately, Bones more or leſs risks his life when he goes pillaging for copper as he is liable to be caught by a deranged ghetto Führer named 'Bully' (Matt Smith), who rides around in a ſupremely ſhitty white convertible with a makeshift 'throne' and ſhouts things out of a bullhorn like, "I put a ſign up here that ſays 'Don't let me ſee your fucking face near my motherfucking copper.' This is my fucking copper. I own this fucking copper. I own this city. I own this copper. This is my fucking copper [...] This is my country, this is my city. I own this fucking city [...] Welcome to Bullytown!" Undoubtedly, Bully's mobile bullhorn buffoonery ſeems like a ſavagely ſardonic parody of the unorthodox political campaigning tactics of the fictional presidential candidate Hal Phillip Walker in Robert Altman's classic ſatirical country muſical *Nashville* (1975). Needless to ſay, when Bully ſpots Bones ſtealing copper, he declares him a dead man and demands that his underling 'Face' (Torrey Wigfield) hunt down the male protagonist. As the bombastic negro that owns the junkyard warns Bones, "Bully running everything now. You a dead motherfucker. You know, he caught that boy up there on St. Mary's, that little Chinese boy. Cut his goddamn lips off with a pair of ſciſſors. You think that motherfucker looked funny in the beginning? You ought to ſee him now, Bones. No more copper. No more you, Bones." In fact, when 'Face' fails to catch Bones after the latter ſteals back a ſack of copper that was ſtolen from him, Bully decides to cruelly puniſh him by cutting off his lips, hence his rather unfortunate nickname.

When Billy goes to the big bad bank to diſcuſs a houſe loan that ſhe is three months behind on, ſhe is leſs than delighted to meet a new exceedingly arrogant banker named Dave (Ben Mendelsohn) who practically radiates ſleaziness and

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who has been brought to the area to consolidate bank branches. When Billy willfully expresses her strong desire to keep her house since it belonged to her grandmother, Dave practically mocks her peasant sentimentality and tries to coerce her into giving up the house, stating, "If I were you...I'd make the payments, walk away with the money. Because I'm telling you, the wolves, if they're not already at your door...they're gonna be there very fucking soon." After discovering that Billy has no job and thus no means of acquiring capital to pay off the loan, Dave gives her a business card for a schlocky yet sinister cabaret that he owns and hints that she should whore herself out by complimenting her on her beauty. Indeed, while Billy does not want to believe it, Dave wants her to be his whore and he is wholly willing to exploit her monetary desperation to get in her MILF panties. Naturally, when Bones eventually discovers that his mother is in dire need of money to pay for the family home, he decides that he must use his copper pillaging money for her instead of parts for his car. As the film progresses, Bones must avoid ghetto quasi-wigger antagonist Bully and his henchman Face while his mother attempts to not be raped or molested by upper-class scumbag Dave, with both villains ultimately reflecting the fact that all levels of society are controlled by innately evil and craven sadists that exploit the weaknesses and desperation of the protagonists. While Bully reflects evil in its most visceral, primitive, and savage form, Dave is like the devil in the form of an obnoxious Jewish comedian. In the seemingly perennial pandemonium that is *Lost River*, hope is nonexistent and love seems like a strange memory. Additionally, aside from the sadistic glee that the villains derive from tormenting their victims, the entire population of the town seems plagued by anhedonia.

While Bones seems to have some romantic interest in his beautiful and intelligent yet somber neighbor 'Rat' (Saoirse Ronan)—a girl whose unfortunate nickname derives from the fact her best friend is her pet rodent 'Nick'—the two seem to lack the strength to declare their affection for one another and thus act like virtual children around one another. Rat's deep love for Bones is hinted in a scene where she soulfully sings a song on her keyboard with the rather revealing lyrics "Whisper, that you want me / And I'll, love you always / Truly, you will be mine / For eternity." While Rat is a rather eccentric chick that enjoys watching vintage documentaries on a seemingly ancient projector, she seems perfectly sane compared to her borderline catatonic grandmother (British scream queen Barbara Steele in a role originally intended for Karen Black, who died of cancer before shooting), who has not spoken since her hubby died decades before and who spends all her time incessantly watching home movies from her wedding. After running away from Bully and his goon Face one day, Bones discovers a road that leads to a somewhat ominous yet nonetheless stunning river that curiously has streetlights sticking out of the water, as if a lost aquatic ghost-town lies underneath. When Bones tells Rat about his strange discovery, she informs him that there is indeed a town under the river that was intentionally submerged

with water during the building of a reservoir, hence the name 'Loſt River.' As Rat explains to Bones, "My grandmother used to live there. She hasn't been the same ever since. No one has. As soon as the laſt town was drowned...an evil spell was caſt on Loſt River [...] That's why this whole place feels like it's underwater too." Needless to say, Bones finds Rat's ſtory to be somewhat dubious, eſpecially in regard to curſe. The next day, Bones decides to dive into the river and gets the ſhock of a lifetime when he happens upon a large dinosaur, which is actually a diſplay piece from an old amuſement park. That night, Rat shows Bones a vintage doc about the building of the dam and flooding of the neighborhood and then remarks in regard to the death of her grandfather and how it effected her grandmother, "He died during the conſtruction of the dam. She hasn't ſpoken ever ſince." When Rat asks Bones, "Now do you believe about the ſpell?" and he replies, "No," ſhe tells him "That only way to break it is to bring a piece to the ſurface." Needless to ſay, it is ultimately up to Bones to end the curſe, though it is going to have to take diſcovering that his mother is working as a quaſi-proſtitute for the male protagonist to get the gall to dive to the depths of the river, decapitate the dinosaur diſplay, and use it to ſymbolically break the curſe.

As revealed by his rather forward ſleazily ſalacious confeſſion to her, "I like to fuck. That's my problem. And when I meet a bad bitch, it drives me crazy. I really, really...think about it," degenerate Dave is deſperate to defile buſty Billy. In a ſcene where he ſings the ſong "Cool Water" composed by Johnny Jewel at his cabaret for an adoring audience of bourgeois degenerates, Dave also demonſtrates that he is the ſort of rampantly heterosexual Jewish banker equivalent to Dean Stockwell's poof pimp character in Lynch's *Blue Velvet*. Needless to ſay, it is only a matter of time before ſhameless ſexual predator Dave attempts to moleſt Billy, who practically bleeds vulnerability, or ſo it ſeems. Although a hopeless girly girl that likes to cry a lot, Billy has a ſomewhat fierce cabaret routine that involves her ſlicing up and peeling off her face in a marvelouſly morbid faſhion that recalls both Georges Franju's *Les yeux ſans viſage* (1960) aka *Eyes Without a Face* and Jeſús Franco's ſuper ſchlocky quaſi-remake *Faceless* (1988). The main diva of the cabaret is a ſaſsy Latina named 'Miss Kitty Cat' (Gosling's girl Eva Mendes) and ſhe helps Billy with her act, but ſhe also encourages her to get involved with an all the more unſavory ſide job that ultimately puts the female protagonist in a very precarious ſituation that debauched dickhead Dave takes full advantage of. When Billy takes a ſpecial job at the cabaret at Cat's recommendation to earn extra money that involves her being locked inside a tranſlucent purple 'ſhell' while paying perverts ſtand in front of her and do whatever they want, ſhe does not conſider that Dave has a ſpecial remote to open ſaid ſhell. Unluckily for Dave, Billy is indeed a "bad bitch" and waſtes no time in ſtabbing him in the ear with her prized ſwitchblade in a Jodorowsky-eſque ſcene that is ſomewhat ſurpriſing in terms of how the violence unfolds. Indeed, Dave,

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who does a sort of eccentrically debauched mating dance of sorts before trying to hump the heroine, does not even get to touch so much as a titty before Billy stabs him in the ear (it should also be noted that Dave is already deaf in his other ear, so if he somehow survives the stabbing, he is probably left completely deaf). Meanwhile, to protect her best bud Bones while he hides inside a convenience store, Rat more or less sacrifices herself in the name of loving by accepting a ride home from Bully. Of course, being the evil sadistic villain that he is, Bully violently murders Rat's beloved rat by violently stabbing it multiple times. As a result of finding about his mother's degrading job after driving her to work one day and being unable to cope with Bully's increasingly sinister behavior, Bones decides enough is enough and decides to leave his little brother Franky with Rat so that he can dive into the lake and obtain the sort of 'hobo holy grail' that will supposedly break the curse. Unfortunately, while Rat is playing with Franky, Bully's bitch boy Face shows up and sets her house on fire. While Rat's grandmother is in the same room as Face when he sets her house on fire, the catatonic elderly widow barely pays him a glance and allows herself to be burned alive in the home after her wedding home movie ends. When Bully later attempts to run Bones over after setting the protagonist's car on fire, the protagonist takes the decapitated plastic dinosaur head that he has rescued from the lake and throws at his nemesis' windshield, thus causing the psychopath to crash his car and ultimately drown in the lake in a fittingly horrendous fashion. In the end, Bones, Billy, Franky, and Rat leave their Detroit neighborhood with a foreign taxi driver (Reda Kateb) for good to assumedly start a new life somewhere else where psychotic negro crackheads, megalomaniacal wigger lunatics, and eccentric Jewish sexual predators are less prominent.

Notably, during one particularly telling scene in *Loſt River* that seems to underscore one of the central themes of the film, Gosling reveals his true feelings about Obama era America in a scenario where the taxi driver played by Reda Kateb states regarding the grand illusion that is the American dream, "They like burning houses, you know. This is like a game. You know...in my country, in my place...when you heard about America, everybody said...there's so much money there...and you're gonna have a big car, a big house and a swimming pool...and you're gonna catch money on the floor...and you juſt have to take it and pick it up. Um, finally, it's different, but...you realize when you arrive here, it's different. So everybody's looking for a better life somewhere. It's tied up. And maybe we'll find some. One day." According to Gosling in various interviews related to the film, he apparently used to have a "crush" on America and Detroit, but that all changed when he finally realized his dream of visiting the Midwestern city and discovered that it was an ungodly hellhole that is not fit for human living. Indeed, while Harmony Korine—a racist Judaic that, on numerous occasions, has expressed his contempt and hatred for whites—made the South seem like a poſt-apocalyptic white trash sewer in *Gummo* (contrary to

being set in the small Midwestern town of Xenia, Ohio as described in the film, it was actually shot in the director's hometown of Nashville, Tennessee) in a fashion that reeks of arrogance towards the Euro-American goyim, Gosling reveals a great empathy towards the surviving inhabitants of Motor City, as if he too, despite being a Canadian, nostalgically longs for a no longer existent America that was unequivocally destroyed by so-called civil rights, desegregation, multiculturalism, and deindustrialization, among other things. Instead of succumbing to the grotesque act of vanity known as virtue signaling or attempting to portray ghetto negroes as all-wise rocket scientists, Gosling presents an unhinged wonderland where both whites and blacks are under some mysterious curse that has destroyed the nuclear family and turned everyone into poor neo-serfs of some ominous faceless banking entity that is run by effeminate beta-bitches that have a thirst for blood and desperate single moms. While I somewhat doubt it was a conscious decision on Gosling's part, Mendelsohn's character can almost be described as a quasi-Lynchian equivalent to the titular villain of Veit Harlan's infamous National Socialist classic *Jud Süß* (1940 film) and that is just one of the many reasons why *Loft River* is both intriguing and highly relevant.

I would have never guessed that Gosling is a Fassbinder fan, but Barbara Steele's character seems to be a clever subtextual reference to the tragic Teutonic auteur's classic film *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979). Indeed, aside from the fact that Steele dresses virtually exactly the same way as Braun does after she assumes her husband has died, the fact that the character incessantly re-watches a home movie of her wedding seems to be alluding to the title of Fassbinder's film, not to mention the fact that both characters arguably commit (subconscious) suicide and symbolically suffer the same fiery fate as their homes. Of course, like many of the characters in Fassbinder's films, Steele's character suffers from great sorrow and the total incapacity to grieve, but I digress. If there is anything to be learned about Gosling simply by watching his directorial debut, it is that, despite his charm and cutesy behavior during interviews, he seems to be a covertly melancholic man who, despite his great success, is still deeply haunted by old wounds, as if he is still the scared boy who lost his father and ultimately suffered the horrible fate of being incessantly drenched in estrogen and ultimately learning "to think like a girl" (indeed, this is how Gosling described what happened to him after his parents divorced when he was 13 and he was forced under the dubious influence of his mother and elder sister). In his directorial debut, Gosling certainly demonstrates has a sort of inordinate talent when it comes to choosing female wardrobes and makeup to the point where it seems like he watched a Werner Schroeter marathon in preparation for his film. Like Schroeter and his Swiss pal Daniel Schmid, Gosling also seems to be diva obsessed, especially for a heterosexual man (after all, the actor could have pretty much any woman in the entire world, yet he is with Mendes, who is a somewhat rough alpha-bitch of sorts that can hardly be described as one of the most beautiful babes in the

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world). Either way, *Lost River* is surely the film that the millions upon millions of Gosling fangirls (and boys) need to see if they want to understand the real Ryan Gosling, who proved that he is not the mensch that everyone thinks he is by siring an allegorical neo-fairytale that transcends the brutality of a Brothers Grimm tale that arguably reveals that its creator is a troubled yet nonetheless hopeful young man who still seems trapped in an internal pandemonium of foreboding boyish melancholy. Still, despite the film's melancholic tone, it radiates a certain dark childish wonder and intrigue, hence why the director has described seemingly unlikely fantasy movies as *The Secret of NIMH* (1982), *Howard the Duck* (1986), and *Batteries Not Included* (1987) as having an important influence on his film. Notably, during an interview conducted at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival, Gosling expressed being somewhat disturbed as a child by a scene in *Howard the Duck* featuring a naked duck chick.

When it comes down to it, *Lost River* ultimately features a simple yet timeless moral message of Arthurian proportions (in fact, Gosling once described the character Bones as being 'Parzival' and Bully being the 'Red Knight') where a hero must not only gather the courage to first identify and then confront an evil, but also put his life on the line and attempt destroy it. After all, protagonist Bones is initially too afraid to even acknowledge the 'curse' and is only willing to accept and fight it when both his ladylove and mother fall victim to this evil, but I guess one cannot accept much from the emasculated son of a single mother. Notably, as Aryan Christ C.G. Jung noted in his classic text *Modern Man In Search Of a Soul* (1933) in regard to the tendency of man to ignore problems like the plague, "The biblical fall of man presents the dawn of consciousness as a curse. And as a matter of fact it is in this light that we first look upon every problem that forces us to greater consciousness and separates us even further from the paradise of unconscious childhood. Every one of us gladly turns away from his problems; if possible, they must not be mentioned, or, better still, their existence is denied. We wish to make our lives simple, certain and smooth—and for that reason problems are tabu. We choose to have certainties and no doubts—results and no experiments—without even seeing that certainties can arise only through doubt, and results through experiment. The artful denial of a problem will not produce conviction; on the contrary, a wider and higher consciousness is called for to give us the certainty and clarity we need." Of course, *Lost River* is a luscious and deliciously phantasmagoric arthouse fantasy flick and thus does not diagnosis the real curse that is plaguing America, but the very fact that it acknowledges the accursed state of America automatically puts it above virtually all contemporary Hollywood films in terms of importance and relevance, though I guess that that does not say much since Tinseltown thrives on gross lies and deceptions. Thankfully, Gosling unwittingly opted to hire a Hebrew to play the role of a hyper horny and decidedly degenerate evil banker, thus the film is ultimately more realistic in terms of presenting the malignant virus that is eating

away at America than the director originally intended.

Interestingly, in *Modern Man In Search Of a Soul*, Jung also makes an attempt at art criticism and argues, “The personal idiosyncrasies that creep into a work of art are not essential; in fact, the more we have to cope with these peculiarities, the less is it a question of art. What is essential in a work of art is that it should rise far above the realm of personal life and speak from the spirit and heart of the poet as man to the spirit and heart of mankind. The personal aspect is a limitation—and even a sin—in the realm of art. When a form of ‘art’ is primarily personal it deserves to be treated as if it were a neurosis [...] In his capacity of artist he is neither autoerotic, no hetero-erotic, nor erotic in any sense. He is objective and impersonal—even inhuman—for as an artist he is his work, and not a human being.” Judging by Jung’s opinion, *Loft River* is a highly successful piece of cinematic art that is only cryptically personal and thus hardly plagued by the autistic masturbatory idiosyncrasies that epitomize much of Godard and Tarantino’s cinematic works. In other words, Gosling has already demonstrated with his first film that he knows how to direct a fairly entertaining and aesthetically pleasing arthouse film for the masses that does not succumb to self-indulgent fetishes or frivolous postmodern film referencing.

Although just speculation, I am pretty confident that, not unlike Richard Kelly’s *Donnie Darko* (2001), *Loft River* will eventually develop a loyal cult following. Personally, I can safely say that the film gets better and better with each subsequent viewing, as one certainly feels more comfortable the longer one spends in Gosling’s world. Indeed, for all of its flaws, the film is indubitably a respectable directorial debut from an actor that has proven that he has both an imagination and artistic integrity. After all, had Gosling wanted to guarantee commercial success for his debut feature, he would have pulled a Warren Beatty or Zach Braff and directed a lame bourgeois drama with a romantic subplot starring himself in the lead role, but instead he hired washed-up European scream queens, strange Brits, and seemingly half-insane negro amateurs to appear in a somewhat enigmatic, fairly forlorn, and almost addictively melancholic movie that manages to find preternatural pulchritude in the death of the American dream and the rotting of the American middleclass. Undoubtedly, Gosling has always given me the impression that he is a nice and charming young man with a very well hidden dark and melancholic interior, which I believe is elegantly expressed in *Loft River*. While it seems somewhat improbable now since he has a half-Latino family to support, Gosling could probably evolve into a formidable auteur if he were to mostly give up on acting and dedicate most of his efforts to writing and directing. Like *The Place Beyond the Pines* (2012) meets *Beyond the Black Rainbow* (2010) meets a less phony *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012) for America’s declining white majority as directed by a closet cinephile that loves gorgeous guido Gothic horror like Bava’s *Black Sunday* (1960) and early Tim Burton flicks like *Beetlejuice* (1988) just as much as the greats of Eu-

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ropean arthouse like Bergman and Fassbinder, Gosling's debut deserves to be seen by anyone that loves and respects the artistic medium of film. Additionally, *Lost River* is probably the greatest and most deranged fantasy film to have ever been directed by a (lapsed) Mormon, which is certainly no small accomplishment considering some of the more bizarre beliefs that members of the religion hold.

-Ty E

TORCHED

Ryan Nicholson (2003)

Many of you in the extreme gore scene have heard of Ryan Nicholson before. He directed the straight-to-video film LIVE FEED and is releasing his new film GUTTERBALLS soon. His first film is actually a short rape/vengeance film which has garnered notoriety for its graphic depiction of genital torture. While there is nothing wrong with genital torture, I do have a problem with a lack of story, or acting even. Deanna is an unbelievably tattooed nurse who works at the local hospital. She gets raped while leaving her apartment and then later almost gets raped again. So she decides to extract the sperm and find out the identity of her rapist and see if it's the same one tied up in her living room. Rape revenge films don't need an award for an amazing yet gripping storyline but they at least entertain and have certain advantages over any other counterpart. In Torched, I see none. The effects are fucking amazing. The blowtorch to the testicles scene left me cringing and the stabbing of the penis with syringes made me want to be a woman. I wanted to love this film but I couldn't bring myself to lie to myself. The soundtrack is ridiculous. I guess Plotdigger expects you to feel horrible for someone getting raped while hardcore rap plays in the background. A song about fucking, nonetheless. The editing is shoddy and the camera work seems like the camera is taped to a board and carried around. Ryan Nicholson's entry in Rape revenge films adds nothing new to the dying genre except maybe a step up in gore and torture. Stick with the classics, kids. It's rare that you see a crying woman stumble into the shower only to emerge with her hair perfectly dry and untouched. This is another reason to see Torched. For the effects and the hilarity. People need to learn that putting Death Metal in a soundtrack kills whatever mood it has. Brain Damage Films in particular needs to take a hint from this. Torched is an amateur attack designed to make you grossed out but can't even find its way to the door. Only recommended for gorehounds.

-Maq

GUTTERBALLS
GUTTERBALLS

Ryan Nicholson (2008)

I have disliked the past two Ryan Nicholson films thanks to my own blend of harsh cynicism. For the love of the genre, I have even tried to force myself to appreciate his work but much to my dismay, I could not express gratitude for the creation of these films (*Torched* and *Live Feed*). With his newest film *Gutterballs*, all that is about to change. *Gutterballs* to me, is the perfect mixture of sustainable genres, creating a film that is as violent as it is hilarious. This film is a genius mix of vulgar comedy, brutal horror, and extreme sexual perversions and nudity. There is no doubt in my mind that this film would be rated X if it were to be submitted to the MPAA. It might even sicken the critics. *Gutterballs* features explicit sexual acts, prolonged scenes of rape, sexual torture, head explosions, bowling pin sodomies, and 70's Afro's. The lanes shine with an eerie neon glow and the disco ball & lights trigger cinematic luminescent intensity. The dialogue is even ripe with "Your mom" jokes.

The entire film is constructed around the setting of the Excalibur bowling alley. Inside this disco house is where some of the most bizarre and creative deaths will take place. Nicholson has really got his film making down pat and for this I am so glad. His father, Roy, even helps him with his film making. I think to myself "Damn...Ryan must have a cool dad". If my dad supported rape and carnage, well, I don't know what I'd do. Perhaps discuss the pros and cons of virility? The film features some of the most wonderful music that screams Donna Summers on meth. It's all funky classics and primary beats that really fit the era this film adapts to. This film making team's earlier effort called *Live Feed* was a disappointment to me. Without the tag of being a *Hostel* ripoff, the film still lacked a general direction and screamed with impoverished acting. The camera angles and lighting were shoddy at the most critical points and the characters were so damn annoying that I'd give life & limb for them to encounter incredibly horrifying demises. Much to my from-the-grave happiness, most of the douche bag's were eliminated. He improves upon every single flaw and delivers an amazingly entertaining film. I might even purchase this to own. *Gutterballs* is the perfect date film, provided that your woman is into gore and rape as a fantasy perversion. If that's the case, why bother watching this? The characters are all amazing, polished, vulgar, and stylish. I felt bad for hating the transvestite so much. It caused me to question whether I had gay hatred hidden under everything, but I realized promptly it was just the wimpy character. Steve is the typical jock with the popped collar and features perhaps the most vulgar mouth I have ever heard. I would almost promise you that he says "fuck" every sentence. *Gutterballs* is a screwed up film that excels at appearing cartoonish and wacky. While not being serious, It features enough audacity to surprise even the most jaded cinema-goer. Plotdigger films has suddenly been granted massive

potential. While being a bit immature for a film, there in lies the whole point. From a lover of horror cinema, I honestly cannot see anything critically wrong with this film. Gutterballs is fun for the whole family. The non-existent kind, that is.

-mAQ

STAR VEHICLE
STAR VEHICLE

Ryan Nicholson (2010)

The last I had seen Canadian director Ryan Nicholson he had been bowling strikes with his grotesque neo-revival of some odd, extreme horror circuitry in *Gutterballs*. Skipping right on over *Hanger*, a film Nicholson directed previously, I tackled *Star Vehicle* without either a care in the world or a care for the synopsis. This led me down a sinister road pertaining to dismal line delivery and deadbeat violence. *Star Vehicle* is one of those strange occurrences in horror where the violence isn't amped up past 11 and the storyline fails to hold a candle to Tommy Wiseau's *The Room*. A significant problem with *Star Vehicle* is that its attempts to channel meta but transcends an homage and becomes redundant and completely blinded by the love of horror films. You could at least consider *Star Vehicle* a passionate film, albeit devoid of any talent that Nicholson had hinted at in his discotheque thriller *Gutterballs*.

Star Vehicle concerns the story of a one Don Cardini, a "movie driver" whose eventual outburst of psychopathy is as awkward as Dan Ellis' perm. Given the task of driving around the hot-to-trot cast and crew of a new horror film, Don woos scream queen obsession *Riversa Red* into reading his screenplay, making a jealous fool out of the director obviously styled after Nick Palumbo. What transpires are clumsy events igniting a homicidal rage that takes the lives of cast, crew, and co-workers. Now, for a film of this caliber you'd think the catalyst to such an outrageous display of produced on-screen effects would have been something of tangible evidence. The truth is farther than it seems, however, as everyone is a pawn in a game entitled as manipulation. For Nicholson to pull this stunt, to keep us guessing assuredly, isn't far past his previous films. *Gutterballs* pulled the same string but had the raunchy rape to accompany it and gallons of silly syrup to spill all over the alleys. *Star Vehicle* could be considered Nicholson holding back, restrained from achieving desired effect, if you will. Not once does the scale tip towards over-the-top; even during the bloody and degrading showdown. No doubt Cardini is an obsessive fan, we all have our obsessions. But the line is drawn once Nicholson's previous obsession with meta reaches outrageous proportions and dozens of slapstick references and winks towards the genre flurry out of the television set.

My main problem with *Star Vehicle* is the dead delivery of lines. The characters never exude the wit delivered with Nicholson's carefully crafted quips. The actors besmirch the attitude and suave posture that one would uphold in such a situation. Instead, we're given lines sneaking out from between gritted teeth. Another foul mediation of filmmaking that Nicholson needs to work on is the handling of his actors. Nicholson is a man of a good heart, this I can tell. This also plays a part in his perhaps all too passive role as director. Residential egoistical director Nick Palumbo wasn't afraid to push whores and men past their

limits in the arguably excellent Murder-Set-Pieces. Neither was David Cronenberg when he smacked around Susan Petrie in order for her to simply "emote" on the set of Shivers. Quite frankly, if Nicholson ever hoped to blow by this cycling niche he is entrapped in, he must learn to push his actors to desired result instead of just shrugging mediocrity off. Unless of course he doesn't very much care about creating quality over the obligatory quantity. Star Vehicle is what must be an arbitrary detractor from the immediate continuation of the Gutterballs franchise. I bless the concept of originality but condemn the diseased rodent.

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DOWN TO HELL
DOWN TO HELL

Ryûhei Kitamura (1997)

Down to Hell is Ryuhei Kitamura's first stab at film making. It also stands as the acting prequel to his hit cult film Versus, which was splendid for combining properties of Evil Dead with popular Capcom game Devil May Cry. Thanks to Kitamura's break out in Hollywood after his release of Midnight Meat Train and Godzilla: Final Wars, he seems to finally be moving on to complete his Versus sequel, which I am dreading. Down to Hell is a simplistic short film; one might even call it a student film without a second glance. The characters have no real name or background and the plot structure seems to rip off classic short story The Most Dangerous Game. These "punks" initiate a game in which a man they were hired(?) to kill is granted a 10 minute head start to start hiding. After this, the game begins, but with that Versus twist we all love. The dead become undead and the body count begins to pile up, but in a minuscule way thanks to the small cast. I'm not one to cherish a directors early work only cause I approve of his later directing efforts. In all reality of the phrase "fine film making", this early effort flat out sucks. Down to Hell is cheap and an amateur's work of "Art". Sam Raimi might be proud of this lacking effort, but I sure the hell am not. Down to Hell has a prehistoric version of the Casio music that makes Versus so energetic. I could find some way to appreciate it, but I'm reveling in the sheer "almost hatred" I have for this film. Down to Hell is ridiculous and a petty excuse for a horror film. It doesn't titillate, it doesn't excite, and it does not pass the time any easier. Just repeat to yourself. It's only a short film...It's only a short film....It is only a short film.

-mAQ

GODZILLA: FINAL WARS

Ryûhei Kitamura (2004) To bring him back once more to put a temporary seal on the series, the latest Japanese craze Ryûhei Kitamura is tackling the subject of Godzilla. In this melodramatic action film, we are treated to a Godzilla film with not so much Godzilla. Although this is an offense punishable by death, what we are given is a retarded feel-good Japanese film every little bit of a mix between his earlier works *Versus* and *Alive* with a dash of a monster bonanza. *Godzilla: Final Wars* could have been an easy production. Just make a souped-up *Destroy All Monsters!* with a bigger budget and bigger monsters. The roster wouldn't be so much a problem if they had included the popular and bad ass monsters, and by bad ass, I do not mean King Caesar. Why this creature became a licensed Toho creation is beyond me. It closely resembles a Fraggles on meth. This is a Godzilla film that officially "tries too hard". Whereas most Godzilla films feature that quick ten minutes of hating Godzilla, then relying on him, then hating him at the end, this film features a meaty plot about Mutants, Aliens, Body Snatchers, and *Dragonball Z* genomes. Might be a little too much for the average Gojira enthusiast but it fits nicely in a film that was never meant to be taken seriously in the first place. The last 30 or so minutes is when Godzilla makes his appearance and it is decidedly not as epic as imagined. He does the tail whip here and there and employs his Atomic Breath when needed but mostly sticks to Lizard boxing which befuddled me. In his most glorious moment, Toho decided to really insult the 1998 Godzilla film by having the real Godzilla pick up the tuna-eating monster and vaporize him in a bout of humility. *Godzilla: Final Wars* is pretty intense. It is a fine helping that I will allow to cap off this generation's Godzilla flow. It just seems tedious to watch the entire world become completely leveled in a matter of days only for civilization to be completely rebuilt several years later. Only time can tell when Japan's bogeyman will be awakened for his next world-saving mission. I just hope I'm around to see it.

-mAQ

THE MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN
THE MIDNIGHT MEAT TRAIN

Ryûhei Kitamura (2008) -Spoilers-

There was once a time when horror was something that was respected. Families would gather around the tube during Halloween, not to enjoy the festivities, but to indulge in the steamy rerun matter existing on televisions also known as horror movie marathons. Its a shame that it is but a mere shadow of what it used to be and no matter how many times I repeat this to myself, it will never get better. Horror is the most popular genre as of the 2000's and this is the worst thing to ever happen to it. I'd been following the trailer to this Clive Barker film for some time now. Maybe even around a year. I was monitoring my presentations during work when I caught the name Ryuhei Kitamura. Seeing this on a trailer in a small-town theater surprised the hell out of me. Had I been consuming some sort of food, I reckon I would have choked. Going back to the next set, I sat down in the darkened theater and saw two names sharing a story that oozed coolness on the big screen; Clive Barker & Ryuhei Kitamura. I had several volumes of the Books of Blood anthology and I can say that I'm very grateful that I never got around to reading them. After viewing the *Midnight Meat Train*, I allowed the experience to soak into my cerebrum. I accounted for every frame of violence and character progression. I wallowed in the stylish blood and the subterranean creatures. What I got was an ill-received film that borders a new-age genius. The screenplay has been altered to better suit a full length feature film. This adds depth, obsession, love, friendship, and an entire second-level advantage that allows the film to be something more of a shallow creepster film that only really functions to provide a small plot twist. Vinnie Jones leads the sadistic side of the film with a cold steeled face and posture that is eerily alike his murder weapon. Perhaps Kitamura planned for this murderous extension to go all the way. Bradley Cooper plays the surprising likable Leon. Leon is a man who questions the art world, much like I do. In exchange for human apathy, he is given the chance to become a renowned artist. After photographing someone last seen on a train, he becomes engrossed in a huge conspiracy lying under the tunnels of the grandest city in the world. Things switch up a bit as the main focus re-evaluates its choices and decides to shed light onto his girlfriends struggle with Leon's unhealthy obsession. Vinnie Jones cuts a swath through the nocturnal citizens of NYC which results in some brutal scenes of incredible violence. Everything about this film is really beautiful. The only thing that obnoxiously sticks out is the co-lead Leslie Bibb. She does the role great and I appreciate her enthusiasm to star in a horror film as nihilistic as this is, but her pretty face and curves negate the masculine effect and the metallic feel that this film carries on its shoulders. It's very heart breaking to hear about *Midnight Meat Train's* limited theatrical release and its immediate exposure onto DVD. This is the best big budget horror film to come out in a while. With promises such as *Quaran-*

tine, *The Uninvited*, and *The Haunting of Molly Hartley*. Horror is now about preteen actresses and CGI ghosts. It's a sad time for fans like us. *The Midnight Meat Train* is an irreconcilably graphic force. This is the kind of horror that is made for theaters; stark colors, graphic violence, and a firm anti-hero. God, I love horror films.

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TOKYO ZOMBIE
TOKYO ZOMBIE

Sakichi Satō (2005)

Tokyo Zombie is a film that should have worked, given the status quo of fans adoring the original and simple manga that seemed to worship everything bland about the myth of a zombie. With the openness of a low budget zombie film, using restrained effects and dollar store make up, this film should have walked into its own game at least well equipped and not relying on the marketing lines of "_____ of Ichi the Killer." This two step process consisting of genre butchery and title familiarity is a common game employed by most, if not all, current filmmakers. Now who would have known with the script writer of Ichi the Killer and the lead of Tadanobu Asano returning in a script coveting jujitsu gags and undead jokes would have spoiled so easy. Overexposure this is not, Tokyo Zombie never even had a chance. Tokyo Zombie suffers from a disease; a sickly one that causes rashes, blisters, uncontrollable hysteria, and bouts of manic-depressive film making at its most atrocious. The plot sounded simple enough. After seeing the one-sheet for this film, I soon lost hope for Tokyo Zombie. Color me homophobic but the poster makes it look like a straight up homosexual zombie film (This is no Bruce LaBruce project). The decadence of Tokyo is prescribed with a surreal touch as a man-made garbage mountain called Black Fuji offers free shelter for anything that needs to be buried, even secrets. From this, a chemical reaction causes bodies to unearth and roam the streets of Tokyo while two bumbling wanna-be jujitsu fighters fight their way, obviously, through zombie after zombie. Don't get too used to this straight forward plot device, soon all will be trashed in a vain attempt at contemporary Dystopian aristocracy in which you must fight or squeeze to make a living and what a living it isn't. Tokyo Zombie's flaws outweigh the brief, BRIEF, moments of humor. In several scenes, a muffled and dissipated chortle might escape from your vocal orifice but that is the most I got from Tokyo Zombie. The set design in the beginning is an awful cream color with no enthusiasm in scenery and the most vibrancy you will get from this film can be found in stills strategically spread across blogs as to hype up the "unhypeable." Let's face it, even the plot synopsis makes this film sound awful to the point of repelling. Anybody who is anybody knows that the best mixture of martial arts and zombies is the brief stint of Father McGruder in fan favorite Braindead. This alone promised to be mocking the mockery of death in cinema but the jokes were dusty and recycled from films back. Ads argue that this came before Shaun of the Dead which would mean this is an earlier example of the resolute stone being "zom-com." Yes, this may be true but at least Shaun of the Dead had the benefit of being entertaining and not as much of a waste of time as this piece of "kawaii" garbage that anyone with an Inyuasha shirt and cat ears will snatch up in some Pocky-fueled "Wapanese" rage. Tokyo Zombie plays out in three or more absurd chapters, each one wholly different than the last. First

there is the "oddball buddy comedy" segment which is more or less a complete waste of life, dictated by me in the most incendiary way possible. Then we're "treated" to the alimonious slut coliseum portion that is nurtured by a story of a pyramid based aristocracy. All the while, you are being bludgeoned with tidbits of slipshod jujitsu/Russia stories. I am not amused and cannot stress the gaps cutting off Tokyo Zombie from my logic. I mean, has anyone really been far even as decided to use even go want do look more like? It seems this film was made as a vehicle for the movement of manga adaptations we've been seeing pop up recently; Detroit Metal City, Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge, and Tokyo Zombie. These are only ones I've viewed recently as I'm sure the list extends out farther than that. Point being, if you're a rabid Tadanobu Asano fan, avoid this as your suave Japanese counterpart in culture has been reduced to a "retarded" pathetic worm who cannot fight, cannot act, and cannot entertain. In essence, there's absolutely no reason to view Tokyo Zombie as long as you have at your disposal better zombie films and trust me, there are many.

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MOTHER'S HEART
MOTHER'S HEART

Salvatore Samperi (1969)

While I have seen a variety of Brechtian sociopolitical arthouse films that I found to be quite aesthetically and intellectual intriguing, albeit at the same time tending to be emotionally vacant and mostly mundane mental masturbation, including Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (1967) and *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970) co-directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Michael Fengler, none of these films have a soul as rich yet tragicomic as the criminally neglected Italian work *Mother's Heart* (1969) aka *Cuore di mamma* directed by relatively forgotten Goombah auteur Salvatore Samperi (*Stormtroopers* aka *Sturmtruppen*, *The Corruption* aka *La bonne*). A particularly pessimistic yet strangely passionate film centering around a mute Hightalian mother who watches seemingly helplessly and speechlessly as both her family and nation breakdown in an absurdist fashion via stereotyped political pathologies of both the far left and far right persuasion, *Mother's Heart* is an insanely idiosyncratic film that seems like it was co-scripted by Sicilian 'ultra-fascist' philosopher Julius Evola's more nihilistic brother and directed by a Ginny Wes Anderson were he more wanton and less of a pansy Philosemite. Featuring a suitably somber yet solacing musical score by none other than Italian maestro Ennio Morricone (*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, *Days of Heaven*) and starring the gorgeous Carla Gravina of *The Antichrist* (1974) aka *L'anticristo*, *Mother's Heart* is just as odd of a collection of Guido talent as it is an audaciously avant-garde arthouse work with no contemporaries. Centering around a divorced mother of three with fascist children (led by "Big Brother") who joins an anti-bourgeois terrorist cell and works at a blasphemous yet bookstore that recommends works by the Marquis de Sade to grade school kids, *Mother's Heart* sardonically shows what happens when a moratory, melancholy mommy who – aside from being far from a Mother Madonna-like figure, is certainly no Mary Magdalene either – gets involved with terrorism and class action warfare while nonchalantly watching her genocidal neo-fascist children come-of-age in a devitalized nation consumed with decadence and on the blatant brink of self-annihilation. Featuring child nudity and volatile, Tourette syndrome spiels coming from prepubescent mouths, as well as dubious situations between adults and children, *Mother's Heart* – for better or worse – is like nothing you have ever seen before, as the sort of film every kid would love to see, but that most adults would be at a loss to even begin to understand.

Depressed divorcee Lorenza Garrone (Carla Gravina) has some serious problems, but she is literally not saying a word as woman who may or may not be mute, but judging by the fact that people talk to her as if they are expecting her to respond, one can only assume that she has made the conscious decision to stop talking, even if her active vocalness could have easily prevented her pernicious eldest son from gassing his little sister, among countless other incidents

of baneful behavior from the brazenly bad yet bright young buck. While her three children (the two oldest children being Gravina's real-life spawn) are indubitably geniuses with intellects that far surpass most adults, they choose some rather peculiar intellectual proclivities that include rocket science, bio-chemistry, Lombroso-inspired Positivist criminology, eugenics, tattooing, hardcore fascist politics, and chemical murder methods. During the beginning of *Mother's Heart*, we are introduced to the terrible threesome, but especially the eldest, a dark-haired lad named Massimo (Mauro Gravina) who holds down the beautiful babysitter Berta (Rina Franchetti) by force and tattoos a beautiful rose on her wild working-class derriere, which is depicted in an exceedingly aesthetically pleasing montage during the opening credits of the film. A little lad who always sports a nice and shiny Nazi army helmet, ultra-macho preteen Massimo – a "Big Brother" in every sense of the phrase – is undoubtedly the master of his domain and the undisputed "Duce" among his siblings, maid, and babysitter and despite seeming rather intelligent, he also seems to suffer from coprolalia, copropraxia, and coprographia, not to mention sadomasochistic and homicidal tendencies, but he manages to channel all of these 'character flaws' in his flagrant fight for fascism. After all, with a red-handed mother and an absent, albeit wealthy father, who else but macho and martial Massimo is fit to establish order at home. When Massimo notices his baby brother is not upholding the honor of his race and family, he bombards him with the followings slurs, "Enough is enough with this filth... Little wild pig, Negro of the Amazon, vile communist, cannibal, African!" The self-appointed gallant guru of his siblings, Massimo wastes no time telling his sister Anna (Monica Gravina) that, "a parasite is a Negro, living on the shoulders of others," when she asks him what a parasite is. The product of a divorce, Massimo clearly has to compensate for his ineffectual parents' lack of parenting skills and questionable morals. With a seemingly vapid and neglectful mother who can barely hold a job at a degenerate bookstore and who loves her sexy, Sapphic ex-sister-in-law more than her own children, it is only a matter of time before mini megalomaniac Massimo starts killing off his siblings in freak accidents of the stereotypically fascist kind.

Upon her first appearance in *Mother's Heart*, it is quite apparent that Lorenza Garrone does not seem to care about anything, especially when it comes to her children and their apparent sadism, because after her son tells her that, "the skin of the butt burns in no time at all. Like paper" after tattooing the babysitter's buttocks, she does not even acknowledge it and merely proceeds to mindlessly watch television with the other *Enfants Terribles*. As lady Lorenza learns whilst listening to a political minister on TV, "Over time everything works out... we Italians have faith in time... It's our great savior," but things prove to be quite the opposite for the mirthless mother of three. After seeing an intriguing young hippie bastard in a pink shirt one day while at work, languid Lorenza finally seems alive and 'in the moment' and wastes no time leaving her job without warning and fol-

MOTHER'S HEART

lowing the funny fellow around town. Meanwhile, while her children are left by their lonesome, Lorenza's eldest son Massimo blows up the family cat in a failed rocket launch on the beach, but not before calling his baby brother an, "Ugly rampant pissing brat, shitter, disgusting incontinent, vicious, coprophiliac!" after the wee blond babe defecates in his favorite swastika-adorned nazi helmet. Losing the fellow in the pink shirt (who happens to be a pinko commie bastard whose terrorist cell the monotone mommy will soon join), Lorenza reverts back to her intrinsic imbecilic state and slavishly goes back to her work, where the quasi-Marxist manager (who stresses social class sensitivity) of the bookstore recommends the Marquis de Sade's classic lurid libertine novel *Juſtine* or the *Misfortunes of Virtue* (1791) to a mother for her 9-year-old child who is bedridden with mumps, which he describes as a 'tearjerker,' but the mother is called back home after hearing about the family cat dying in what her son Massimo eulogizes as being, "one who has died, sacrificed for the triumph of science. Struck down by secular idiocy and brutality." Lorenza's sassy ex-sister-in-law Magda Franti (Beba Loncar), who she is apparently carrying on a secret lesbian relationship with (for who knows how long), reveals a lot about the mute mother's character when she states to her, "When I met you, you were a spoiled child... Taking your shower with your shirt on, I bet. What idiocy! I refused. I began to reject everything starting at age 6. I hate it when they tell me what to do... But you, you stay standing there, you don't react, you let them guide you. First you were tamed by your father. Then the monster of perfection that is your husband – to watch him is to die from boredom. I'm his sister, but this does not prevent me from seeing him for what he is... You should pick up your life like I do... I say this just for you. You know I love you. Your life is so boring." Indeed, with increasingly troublesome tragedies brewing at home, including the death of her blond baby boy via dubious bathtub accident and later the death of her daughter Anna via gassing by Massimo, as well as repeated reprimands and her eventual firing from her job at the bookshop, Lorenza gets all the more involved with a super stereotypical, slogan and statistic spouting, communist terrorist group whose members state things like, "The bourgeoisie has no other pleasure than to degrade all." Ironically, a degraded bourgeois babe herself, Lorenza eventually decides it is time to payback her ex-husband by blowing up his prestigious pharmaceutical factory, thus consummating the physical and financial ruin of her entire family with a big bang.

A sardonic, semiotic window into counter-culture chaos of late-1960s Italy (as well as the Occident in general), *Mother's Heart* is a titillating and terribly tragicomic work that uses a mute mommy as a charming and cute cipher for depicting sociopolitical abuse from both extremes of the political spectrum, but being set during the post-WWII era when fascism was already defeated, the film mainly focuses on the lunacy of the left and how such destructive politics are sired by nihilistic and impotent members of the upper-classes and especially

the self-loathing members of bourgeois. Being a bored blonde babe of the less than blessed bourgeois sort, plagued protagonist Lorenza naturally becomes a mindless victim of neo-bolshevik banality of the bomb making and planting sort, thus *Mother's Heart* ultimately managed to foretell real-life terrorist cells like the Baader-Meinhof Group in West Germany, which was comprised mostly of middle-class college students who were facing increasing feelings of alienation from their families and the capitalistic, 'democratic' way of life. As her son Massimo tells her before blowing himself up in another attempt at launching a rocket for the glory and triumph of Italian national science, "You, Mom, haven't said anything, so you're my accomplice. Silence indicates consent. After all, you have profited on all these things that happened. Now you're free. You have your Magda, who is your love, but you can't have all the profits for free. If you do not want me to go tell the police it was you who killed your children, you must help me kill Magda, because Magda is corrupting you. She's a freak. I don't want you to become like her, degenerate and communist. But we'll talk again. We'll have time to talk about everything." Indeed, the boy, who acts as an exaggerated archetype for fascism as a nationalist extremist whose fascist fanaticism is stirred by an unquenchable desire to restore order in his family, which is symbolic of Italian nation itself, is right as his neglectful mother could have easily prevented her children's deaths had she been more responsible, but instead, gives into her lesbian decadence and, as a last resort due to her guilt as an "accomplice" of her son's fascism, pinko terrorism. When Massimo perishes, once again a result of his mother's pathological negligence, Lorenza is finally ready to completely throw away her reasonably plush personal life by becoming a full-time anti-Occidental terrorist and thus destroying her ex-husband's pharmaceutical empire, thereupon symbolizing via one dysfunctional family, the downfall of Italy as a whole. An allegory for Italy and Europa's decided degeneration as a result of cosmopolitanism and cultural Marxism, which has only gotten worse since the film's release with the flooding and colonization of the nation with illegal and mostly hostile aliens from the global South (which began in 1962), the formation of the anti-European "European Union," and the impending economic collapse, *Mother's Heart*, albeit somewhat dated, is ultimately a work that is more important today than when it was first released over four decades ago. With the rise of neo-fascist groups in the Mediterranean like Golden Dawn in Greece and CasaPound in Italy, one can only assume what the true sons of Europe have in store for Mother Europa if the continent experiences a highly probable collapse in the next decade or so.

-Ty E

ERNESTO
ERNESTO

Salvatore Samperi (1979)

While effeminate gay Jews aren't hard to find in cinema, especially in Hollywood, Italian films, especially of the melodramatically ironic sort, featuring homo Hebrews are not exactly common place, yet the Guido coming-of-age flick *Ernesto* (1979) directed by Salvatore Samperi (*Malicious* aka *Malizia*, *The Corruption* aka *La bonne*) was once regarded as one of the greatest fag-themed flicks ever made, but like most of the director's work, has fallen into relatively obscurity. Not unlike his fellow iconoclastic ginny auteur countryman Alberto Cavallone (*Le salamandre*, *Zelda*), controversial director Salvatore Samperi made a number of strikingly subversive and underrated works like *Mother's Heart* (1969) aka *Cuore di mamma*, *Kill the Fatted Calf and Roast It* (1970) aka *Uccidete il vitello grasso e arrostitelo*, *Submission* (1976) aka *Scandalo*, and a variety of other erotically aberrant arthouse flicks (as well as some less interesting wop 'sex comedies'), but is virtually totally unknown now, with *Ernesto* being arguably his most well known and critically revered work, even earning one of its stars, popular proletarian actor/director Michele Placido (an actor on the Italian TV series *La Piovra*), the Silver Bear for Best Actor at the 29th Berlin International Film Festival. Based on the 1953 (but not published until 1975, long after the author's death) unfinished autobiographical novel of the same name written by Italian Jew poet/novelist Umberto Saba, who rather ironically once wrote for a newspaper owned by Benito Mussolini but faced some persecution during the Second World War due to his stern refusal to convert to Catholicism, *Ernesto* tells the curious coming-of-age tale set in 1911 Trieste, Italy of a 17-year-old Jewish bastard named Ernesto of the quasi-commie persuasion who finds his sexual awakening in the form of a butch and buff yet tender stableboy with a leather-fag mustache who introduces him to, among other things, sodomy. Of course, all good things must cum to an end and socialist ideologist Ernesto, a social-climber like the goyish gentile father who left him a bastard before he was even born, inevitably realizes that marrying a rich and sexually androgynous debutante will be the best move he can make for his future, thus leaving the blue collar grease-ball hunk who took his anal virginity a sad victim of capitalist exploitation. Described by Canadian gay far-leftist agitator/film critic Thomas Waugh as follows, "as a sketch of the dynamics of a cross-generational and inter-class relationship and of the rites of gay initiation, *Ernesto* is masterful. It is also, if you look, a profound analysis of the politics of family and social control, and within the relationship, of the politics of role playing, bum fucking, and power. As if that were not enough, Samperi has provided a suggestive speculation on what the gay subculture must have been like in Mediterranean society eighty years ago," *Ernesto* is ultimately a satirical leftist critique of (kosher) capitalism disguised as a coming-of-age cock-sucker flick that reminds one why 'Italians

do it better,' even in regard to cliché Marxist bullshit.

Ernešt (Bavarian actor Martin Halm) is a 17-year-old poser socialist of the cynical and self-satisfied sort who has just graduated high school and feels on top of the world as he struts around in a bitching bowler hat, watch chain, and dandy cane, but he is also totally sexually inexperienced and wants to wait until he is 18 to share carnal pleasure with a nice Italian girl. Aside from his loving mother (Virna Lisi), Ernešto is an object of contempt and scorn among his Jewish merchant family, especially his religious uncle Giovanni (Francisco Marsó) who has little hope for the boy because, after all, as he states himself, "he's the son of a man who became a Jew for money" (as history has proven, the situation is typically the reverse). Ernešto's uncle also has no problem telling his nephew that the first time he saw the boy's father, he thought "that goy is a bastard," thus expressing contempt for and a sense of superiority over gentiles, surely a rare occurrence in any film, be it gay or otherwise. Indeed, after Ernešto's mother got pregnant with him, her husband ran off, thus disgracing her and the family in the process and leaving a 1/2 goy black sheep to constantly remind them of this fact. Of course, Ernešto has zero tolerance for his Uncle's kosher contempt and reads the socialist publication "The Worker" in protest, even telling his family members, "I hope the socialists take over and hang you" during a Jewish ceremony. Not one to get his hands dirty as an effete member of the bourgeois (his aunt describes him as having a "socialist tongue with a capitalist stomach"), Ernešto takes a job as a clerk in a warehouse owned and run by a fellow Judaic named Signor Carlo Wilder (Turi Ferro) and ultimately takes his revenge on his family by passively allowing himself to be buggered by a low-wage worker simply named "The Man" (Michele Placido), who tells his partner-in-cocksucking-crime "Do you know what it is like to be a friend of a guy like me?" Indeed, turn-of-the-century Italy has serious sanctions against sodomy that even force a big businessman to commit suicide after he is caught with a young boy, so it does not take long for Ernešto to reconsider his future as a man who allows himself to be rectally probed by other men. After randomly paying a beautiful diva of a prostitute for a couple minutes of her time, Ernešto loses his heterosexual virginity and realizes he is more 'sexually versatile' than he once thought and reconsiders his options in terms of his sexuality and social prestige. An aspiring violinist, Ernešto ultimately quits his job (largely because he wants to get away from "The Man") and starts a little romance with a rather naive and sexually androgynous 15-year-old bourgeois boy from a family of considerable social prestige named Ilio (Lara Wendel), but it is ultimately the boy's feisty twin sister Rachele (also played by Lara Wendel) who the up-and-coming Jewish commie-turned-capitalist marries. As the "wedding will make up for her marriage," Ernešto complacently agrees to marry Rachele in respect to his mother, who ruined the family's reputation due to marrying a goy that left her with a bastard 1/2 Jewish son about two decades before. In the end, high Hebrew society and kosher capitalism trump

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genuine sensuality and individuality for the gay commie turned closest-cast capitalist Ernesto, a boy who once idealistically stated “prostitutes are the victims of a bourgeois society,” yet patronizingly penetrates one for a couple shekels.

Compared to one of his absurdist avant-garde masterpieces like *Mother's Heart* (1969) aka *Cuore di mamma*, Ernesto is not exactly the most controversial Salvatore Samperi flick, though its unflattering depiction of the early twentieth century Italian Jewish bourgeois might lead some to think that Il Duce and Uncle Adolf were correct in their estimation of European Jewry and its exploitation of indigenous populations. Undoubtedly, Ernesto is a sensitively handled, if not equally sardonic, and culturally respectful period piece quite unlike the culturally mongrelized celluloid sort the perennial cosmopolitans of Hollywood churn out. A criminally underrated master of aberrant arthouse eroticism, Ernesto is certainly typical of Salvatore Samperi oeuvre, although the film clearly had a larger budget and was made palatable for a larger audience than some of his earlier works, even as a melodramatic Katzenfresser work that deals with Hebraic homosexuality. Featuring a mischling Marxist who has no problem calling his fellow Hebrews “shylocks” and being anally penetrated by proletarians poofs, Ernesto is a rare work with gay themes that will appeal to both the hopelessly politically incorrect libertines as well as anally retentive socialist sodomites like *Thomas Waugh*, which is no small achievement. As a man who is known for directing films about young boys who become obsessed with older and exhibitionistic women, Samperi was certainly not a ‘queer’ filmmaker, which was certainly to the benefit of Ernesto, a timeless coming-of-age flick that shows how a young man, as so many young men do, goes from being a rebellious idealist to a complacent social cuckold when reality penetrates him harder and deeper than any blue collar worker's blue-veined custard chucker could.

-Ty E

PRINCE

Sam de Jong (2015)

Long before the socio-cultural plague of political correctness and the active promotion of the genetically apocalyptic nightmare known as miscegenation, the 'tragic half-breed' used to be a somewhat common figure of cinema for obvious reasons as indicated by an eclectic assortment of cinematic works ranging from Alfred Hitchcock's *Murder!* (1930) to both John M. Stahl's 1934 version and Douglas Sirk's 1959 version of *Imitation of Life* to voodoo oriented B-movie horror trash like George Terwilliger's *Ouanga* (1936) aka *Love Wanga* to Raoul Walsh's Antebellum South mulatto melodrama *Band of Angels* (1957) to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's grotesquely bizarre Euro-western *Whity* (1971). After all, one does not need to see the scientific data to realize that the mongrel—an innately raceless and cultureless individual that can never truly belong to either of the races that they have descended from—oftentimes suffers from a socially, psychologically, and genetically schizophrenic existence where nothing seems quite right. When I recently learned about a new hip Dutch flick about a half-white/half-Arab teenage, I was naturally intrigued, even if I suspected it would feature phony multicultural-friendly sentiments about the singular intrinsic nobility of the ungodly human mutt. Indeed, *Prins* (2015) aka *Prince* directed by seemingly drug-addled first-time feature film director Sam de Jong (*Magnesium*, *Marc Jacobs*) was co-produced by the hipster leftist cultural parasites at *Vice* and a Dutch production company that is curiously named 100% Halal, yet somehow it does have some positive cinematic attributes, even if it does feature a truly vomit-worthy pro-miscegenation 'happy ending' that more or less destroys the entire film and makes me assume that the filmmaker is a completely compromised whore who would never dare to make any truly subversive (socio)political statement with one of his films. Directed by a filmmaker who describes his own work as being, "heavily influenced by present-day youth culture and studies the implications of growing up in the 21st century: in the face of our rapidly changing multi-ethnic society where pop culture is the new predominant religion," the film is clearly the production of a terribly deracinated and Hollywoodized Dutchman who, as a result of probably watching garbage ranging from TV shows like *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* to Hollywood garbage like *Save the Last Dance* (2001) while growing up in the Netherlands (notably, de Jong was only 28-years-old when he directed the film), believes the great corporate globalist and cultural Marxist lie that all races of people are exactly the same. Set in a government-subsided Amsterdam ghetto where the rotten fruits of so-called multiculturalism, the welfare state, and race-mixing are unintentionally unflatteringly exposed, *Prince* semi-stylishly depicts the patently pathetic life of a half-breed teenager with a lecherous white single mother and junky Moroccan hobo father who ostensibly 'falls in love' with a blonde beauty he barely knows

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and ultimately finds himself the victim of said blonde beauty's tattoo-covered boyfriend and his four-wheeler-riding multicultural 'gang,' among other seemingly petty problems that seem quite grand to a virginal momma's boy who wants to make a name for himself in an innately materialistic lumpenprole microcosm where a person's reputation is based solely on what clothes they wear and what car they drive.

Obviously influenced by the films of Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn, especially *Drive* (2011) and *Only God Forgives* (2013), and to a lesser extent Adam Wingard's *The Guest* (2014), de Jong's film has a sort of late-1980s/early-1990s neo-retro style and synthesizer-driven score (courtesy of Palmbomen aka 'Kai Hugo'), thereupon making it all the more of a grating experience that it features a bunch of super swarthy turd-skinned Arab boys with glaringly greasy mullets who practically slobber over an extra fair-skinned blonde babe whose genetics they would love to destroy with their caveman DNA. Featuring a cast comprised of mostly non-actors (notably, every single one of the Arab actors uses their real-life first name, as if it would be too hard for them to use a fake name for their characters) who seem to epitomize Amsterdam's new 'vibrant' post-racial (translation: uprooted, decultured, and mongrelized) society, *Prince* naturally features the sort of wholly imaginary and carefully sentimentalized depiction of how effeminate white bourgeois hipsters and leftists wish to think of multicultural lumpenprole neighborhoods. Of course, while every single Arab character is portrayed as a noble savage and/or victim of white racism, every single bully and villain (aside from a token buffer negro) is a heterosexual white male yet, to be fair, the film features a good portion of negative stereotypes that one typically associates with both Arabs and single mothers. For instance, none of the Arabs have jobs and they devote most of their time to destroying public property and committing petty crimes so that they can buy expensive designer clothing for the sole purpose of flaunting it around their friends. In that sense, both the Arab and white characters have the same morally and spiritually bankrupt Weltanschauung as the average young American negro, thus underscoring the totally deleterious effect that rap music has had on the West. Indeed, while the viewer is supposed to be highly sympathetic to the eponymous protagonist and his dubious plight, he is a gutter-level criminal and youthful low-life that is not beneath kicking his sister in the stomach and physically assaulting his mother. Yes, somehow the filmgoer is supposed to root for a small Middle Eastern mutt in his pursuit of procuring a tall blonde Dutch babe, as if cuckoldry is something the average viewer desires to experience. After all, the film's target audience is clearly not Arabs, who clearly have no use for synth-pop or genre-bending quasi-arthouse films, among other things. A stoner Bildungsroman about a hapless bastard that wants to become a virtual aristocrat in his culturally confused ghetto where dysgenic relationships seem to be the norm, *Prince* is like a marginally artsy fartsy Dutch *Stand by Me* (1986) for a decidedly doomed

generation without values or spirituality that has been spoon-fed since birth on a steady diet feel-good racial nihilism and kosher culture-distorting. If de Jong had any intention with the film aside from directing his own feature and attempting to further cultivate his cinematic craft, it was to try to give hope to the completely hopeless, which might be somewhat admirable if it were not a film about a Moroccan mongrel who is unwittingly committed to speeding up the racial apocalypse in the Netherlands.

Like most half-caste people in the West, 17-year-old Prince protagonist Ayoub (Ayoub Elasri) has a government-subsidized white single mother and a dead-beat foreign father who spends most of his time loitering and mumbling about pointless bullshit. Not surprisingly, Ayoub's sister Demi (Olivia Lonsdale)—a considerably less swarthy girl who looks like she has Latin blood—has a different father, thus confirming that the protagonist's mother has particularly poor taste in men. Unfortunately for Ayoub and Demi, their mother is so poor that they have to share a bedroom. Despite the fact they are clearly living on the government's dime as residents of a sterile looking Amsterdam housing project where all the apartment buildings seem like they were modeled after the ghettos of some Eastern European ex-communist shithole, Ayoub and his friends love spending their free time destroying government property, with blowing up mailboxes seeming to be their favorite pastime. The boys also enjoy incessantly collectively chewing on sunflower seeds, which is apparently a common custom among their Arab ancestors from the Moroccan motherland. Aside from his two mullet-sporting Arabs friends, Oussama (Oussama Addi) and Achraf (Achraf Meziani), Ayoub has a white best friend named Franky (Jorik Scholten), who looks like a young Robert Görl of the German electropunk/Neue Deutsche Welle band Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (D.A.F.) and whose boorish philistine big brother Ronnie (played by non-actor Peter Douma, who was apparently a real-life bully that de Jong went to school with) is the leader of a local European-negro multicultural 'gang.' Ronnie is the typical dumb low IQ bully and he likes insulting Ayoub because of his mongrel blood and saying things to him like, "Pancake. Dog's face. Son of a whore. Half-blood. Goddamn it." Of course, Ayoub is a literal "son of a whore" and "half-blood," so the insults naturally hurt but they also reaffirm the protagonist's desire to get serious and making something of himself. Indeed, at the beginning of the film after Ronnie insults him, Ayoub declares to his comrades, "Our time will come." Unfortunately for him, at least at the beginning of the film, Ayoub believes that he is in love with a blonde babe that he does not even know named Laura (Sigrid ten Napel) who is the girlfriend of a tyrannical tattoo-covered degenerate named Vince that belongs to Ronnie's gang. Needless to say, trouble comes Ayoub's way when he begins hitting on Laura.

During the beginning of the film, Ayoub makes his sister Demi promise that she does not "become like mom" and she in turn makes him promise that

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he does not become like his deadbeat dope-addled dad. While his mother is a melancholic dipsomaniac with two bastard kids of varying racial pedigree who have different father, Ayoub's dad is an even bigger loser as he is a discernibly dirty Moroccan junky bum with greasy long black curls who resembles a sort of perennially stoned gothic Latino cowboy. Rather pathetically, the protagonist regularly visits his father at the bottom of an empty blue swimming pool where he gives him money so that he can buy junk to shoot into his arm. At one point, Ayoub's father gives him a wrinkled old black-and-white postcard and inexplicably states, "Whistler," though he is an Indian-giver of sorts and later asks his son to give him back the seemingly worthless object. Naturally, like any child, Ayoub loves his father, but cannot emotionally deal with the fact that he is a heroin-addled hobo whose arms are covered in grotesque track marks. When Ayoub asks his mother what is wrong with his father, she acts somewhat evasive and describes him as a "little bird." At one point in the film, Ayoub's father gets so high that he starts laughing manically while grabbing all over his son to the point where the protagonist becomes so petrified that he flees from his padre and subsequently projectile vomits. Literally right after Ayoub vomits, a local 'crime boss' named Kalpa (Dutch rapper Freddy Tratlhner) pulls up in a shiny purple Lamborghini and throws the protagonist an energy drink and states, "Come and see me soon. It's been too long." Notably, this scene is stylized in a sort of ominous neo-Expressionist fashion, as Kalpa's face is completely hidden behind the tinted window of his Lamborghini in a scenario that strangely reminded me of the sinister black-swathed coach that takes Thomas Hutter to Count Orlok's castle in F.W. Murnau's masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922). Indeed, at this point in the film, especially in regard to the scenes featuring Kalpa, Prince becomes increasingly more Magical Realist oriented, which is of course a long tradition of Lowland cinema.

When Ayoub dares to attempt to talk to his would-be-ladylove Laura, she predictably tells her jealous boyfriend, so Ronnie and Vince decide to teach the protagonist a simple lesson. Indeed, after Ronnie pours a drink over Ayoub's head, Vince spits in the protagonist's face. Being a small and scrawny half-caste towelhead that does not look like he has even reached puberty, Ayoub does not even bother to attempt to fight back. To make matters worse, Ayoub's best friend Franky begins dating his beloved half-sister Demi. Feeling quite betrayed and jealous over the fact that his best friend and sister now have a fairly intimate relationship, Ayoub pathetically runs up to Franky, punches him in the nose, and then runs away. On top of that, Ayoub starts an argument with Demi that leads to him kicking her in the stomach and pushing their mother on the ground in a scene that more than clearly demonstrates that the protagonist will probably grow up to be a wife-beater just like his Islamic paternal ancestors. In revenge for punching his brother Franky and ultimately breaking his nose, Ronnie and his friends, including a big burly buffer negro that seems to lack

the capacity to speak, take turns punching Ayoub to the point where his face is left bloody and bruised. Of course, seeing Ayoub take such a brutal gang beating rather upsets stereotypical feminine angelic beauty Laura, whose brutish boyfriend Vince smacks her around when she gets out of line and attempts to stop the interracial beating. After being betrayed by both his friends and family, Ayoub naturally feels lost and, with nowhere to turn, he seeks sanctuary in crazed cracker wigger criminal Kalpa, who ultimately attempts to get him to 'embrace' the dark side and become an underling in his small operation.

Somewhat curiously, when Ayoub first goes to see Kalpa—a stereotypical tall blond Dutchman, albeit of the particularly deranged and demented sort—the career criminal gives him an energy drink and a pair of fairly vulgar looking but quite expensive blue Giuseppe Zanotti designer shoes (how Kalpa knows the protagonist's shoe size in advance is anyone's guess). Kalpa is a sort of 'Aryan Fagin' and he is determined to lure Ayoub into his criminal operation with stupid gifts that appeal to image-obsessed teenagers like the protagonist whose social status is based solely on what shiny clothing and jewelry they wear. After telling Ayoub to put on his new Zanotti kicks, Kalpa opens a door in his house and reveals that he has a fully functioning butcher shop inside, including a giant pig that he proceeds to borderline sensual taunt, as if he gets a sexual kick out of torturing living things. As if to make a bizarre point to the protagonist about his power and to test his stomach, Kalpa then proceeds to gleefully slaughter the giant live pig in front of Ayoub. While all this is going on, Kalpa's sidekick, a short and pedomorphic chap named Rudy, is smirking while grinding meat in a meat grinder. Apparently, as Ayoub's friends tell him at the beginning of the film, when Rudy began working for him, Kalpa began fucking his mother as a means to debase him and put him in his place. Before working for Kalpa, Rudy had a long blond ponytail and wore 'wigger chic' gangster style clothing, but now he has short dark slicked back hair and sports tight-fitting all-black clothing and strange jewelry, as if he is some sort of goth chic gangster who has fully embraced the darker side of criminality of materialism. On top of everything else, Rudy is curiously missing most of the fingers on one of his hands, as if he got it stuck caught in a meat grinder (or Kalpa intentionally put it in said meat grinder as some form of punishment). In short, Kalpa—a man that drives a Lamborghini and only owns that latest in expensive top designer goods by companies like Gucci, Valentino, and Rolex—quite literally epitomizes the evils of excess and material insatiability and he wants Ayoub to also adopt these vices so that he will become his virtual slave, hence why he gave them the Zanotti shoes and energy drinks. Initially, Kalpa's attempt to lure Ayoub to the dark side works quite well, as the protagonist walks around his neighborhood with his new Zanotti shoes like he owns the place and even treats his friends like they are pathetic plebs for not owning such cool kicks. For his first 'job' assignment, Kalpa has Ayoub drive a moped while Rudy rides on the back and hits a negro

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in the back of the head with a pipe so that they can steal his metal briefcase. For his efforts, Kalpa gives Ayoub a couple hundred Euros.

After getting beat up by Ronnie and his gang and then watching his dad shoot up heroin and collapse, Ayoub becomes extremely upset and literally runs to Kalpa's pad for support where he is easily coerced into snorting a couple lines of cocaine and where the sadistic criminal ceremoniously places a golden crown on his head, hence the title of the film (in fact, in between snorting coke, Rudy declares that Ayoub is a "Prince"). Needless to say, it seems like a dream come true when Kalpa lets Ayoub drive his Lamborghini while he is high on cocaine, as it gives the protagonist the adrenaline rush of a lifetime. Unfortunately, while in the Lamborghini, Ayoub gets a call from his mother and learns that his father has just died of a heroin overdose (of course, Ayoub more or less witnessed said overdose and probably could have saved his father's life had he called for help, but instead he decided to runaway like a scared little girl). When Kalpa repeatedly asks Ayoub in a creepy fashion "Who hurt you?" in regard to the black eye he has received from the gang beating and he tells him what happened, the sadistic criminal demands that the protagonist drive to where Ronnie's motley crew are hanging out so that they can teach them a valuable lesson. Indeed, after getting out of the Lamborghini upon arriving at their desired destination, Kalpa whips out two handguns, begins firing them in an indiscriminate fashion, and then demands that Ronnie and his thug pals get on the ground and begin licking the pavement while meowing like cats. While Rudy seem to delight in seeing Ronnie and his friends being debased by sadist Kalpa, Ayoub seems to be somewhat disturbed by how much his new friends are enjoying torturing other people. Of course, when Kalpa hands Ayoub one of his pistols and demands that he shoot Ronnie, the protagonist gets afraid, especially after he sees a vision of his father hovering over the gang leader. Somewhat absurdly, Ayoub decides to shoot Kalpa in the hand so that he drops his gun instead of Ronnie. Ultimately, Ayoub lets Ronnie and his friends go and then scares away Kalpa with his gun.

Rather ridiculously, Ayoub's father long overdue death comes as a sort of blessing in disguise, as it causes everyone to feel sorry to him to the point where they want to be in his life again. Indeed, not only does Ronnie and Franky makeup with Ayoub, but Laura also decides to be his girlfriend. Indeed, apparently Laura's father was also a "little bird" (aka self-destructive junky dead-beat) and somehow this unfortunate commonality with the protagonist makes her develop romantic feelings for him (of course, in reality, women are attracted to strength and not weakness, but Laura is probably damaged goods and, like the protagonist's mother, has poor taste in men). Additionally, Ayoub learns to accept that Franky loves his sister and the two best friends decide to let bygones be bygones and proceed to act as if their friendship did not have a temporary detour. Rather inexplicably, unhinged sadist Kalpa does not opt to seek revenge against Ayoub for betraying him and shooting him in the hand, even

though he is a ruthless psychopath that enjoys personally slaughtering animals and torturing animals. Somewhat ironically, despite the fact that he hates being a half-breed, Ayoub never seems to consider that, if he gets with a chick like Laura and procreates with her, he will be perpetuating the same vicious circle of racially schizophrenic dysgenic misery that his mother bequeathed onto him when she senselessly opted to reproduce with a Moroccan junky deadbeat, but I digress. After all, clearly director de Jong wanted to make a film where style and sentimentality trumps sanity and sensibility.

Unquestionably an almost redundantly simple underdog tale where supposed good triumphs over supposed evil and 'love' (or at least the multicultural fairytale version of it) conquers all in the end, Prince is just too plain juvenile, thematically superficial, and sentimental for me to believe that auteur Sam de Jong—a considerably goofy looking and seemingly sinfully stupid fellow that comes off as a perennially giggling pothead philistine in an interview he did with Vice—is a malicious covert cinematic propagandist who like, say, loyal shabbos goy Quentin Tarantino or gargole-esque Judaic culture-distorter J.J. Abrams, wants to actively promote the destruction of the Occident and outbreeding of Europeans, yet his debut feature still manages to promote those anti-values all the same. After all, the culturally bankrupt 'bobos' (aka bourgeois bohemians) and abersexual hipsters at Vice would not produce such a film if it was anything less, as ethno-masochism and xenophilia just come with a territory when it comes to that would-be-wild bunch. Of course, with the recent New Year's Eve rape and sexual assault epidemic in Germany as committed by Arabs (notably, 25 out of 30 of the suspects were from Algeria and Morocco), de Jong's film seems like a bad joke as directed by a hopelessly naïve and deracinated Dutchman who has never stopped to think of the true validity of the absurd multicultural fantasy that all races are exactly the same and have the same views on sex, love, and romance. What makes the film all the more absurd is that the teenage towelhead protagonist shows literally nil overt sexual infatuation with his love interest, as if he is a little boy whose balls have not dropped and lacks the thirst for pussy, when in reality a good percentage of the Arab rapists that have turned formerly relatively crime-free Sweden into the rape capital of the West are usually around the same age as the protagonist. In short, Arabs are not exactly known for being chivalrous hopeless romantics. Of course, one cannot deny that it takes a special sort of cuckold auteur to make his cinematic debut with a film where an Arab boy who physically assaults his own mother and sister is depicted as a righteous protagonist who deserves a nice blonde Aryan girl. To de Jong's credit, he is not quite as shameful as fellow Dutch filmmaker Martin Koolhoven, who started out his filmmaking career in a quite promising fashion with the darkly surreal arthouse drama *AmnesiA* (2001), yet went on to completely sell his soul and make singularly moronic pro-miscegenation rom-coms like *Het schnitzelparadijs* (2005) aka *Schnitzel Paradise* where an inordinately sophisticated Moroccan uses his

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third world charms to woo a blonde babe. Naturally, one also cannot forget the assassination of Theo van Gogh by a Moroccan pothead who lived on government welfare in an Amsterdam ghetto not unlike the one depicted in *Prince*. Although he was brutally murdered in 2004 before things got really bad with Muslims in Europe, van Gogh prophetically demonstrated with his mini-series *Najib en Julia* (2003) and film *Cool!* (2004) that both multiculturalism and interracial romances are doomed to catastrophic tragedy for all parties involved.

As *Prince* unwittingly demonstrates, third world people make third world communities and no amount of Western comforts or neo-liberal public school brainwashing is going to change that as second and third generation Arabs in Western Europe have clearly demonstrated. In its depiction of a seeming semi-artistic loser protagonist with a unintentionally goofy personality, cast of curious characters that sport outmoded 1980s and 1990s clothing and haircuts, and somewhat contrived pathological quirkiness, *Prince* is like a non-comedic Dutch-Arab *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) as directed by a dopey dork that wanted to make *Drive* but lacked the maturity and testicular fortitude, among other things. Undoubtedly, director de Jong has some talent as a filmmaker, especially where visuals are concerned, thus making it seem all the more of an artistic sin that he would figuratively bend over and take it in the ass from the deluded devils of political correctness. After all, if there is anything that all the great filmmakers of Dutch cinema have in common, it is that they were almost always subversive and proudly politically incorrect as the cinematic works of Adriaan Ditvoorst, Frans Zwartjes, Alex van Warmerdam, Jos Stelling, and even Paul Verhoeven clearly demonstrates. Of course, tragic Dutch auteur Ditvoorst included an Asiatic junky with a white girlfriend in his magnum opus/swan song *De witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness*, but that does not mean he actively promoted miscegenation like de Jong (in fact, Ditvoorst's film depicts a sort of pre-apocalyptic world and such a relationship can clearly be seen as a sign of a society that is on the brink of complete capitulation). Additionally, Dutch auteur Lodewijk Crijns has directed various commercial multiculturalism oriented comedies like *Jezus is een Palestijn* (1999) aka *Jesus is a Palestinian* and *Alleen maar nette mensen* (2012) aka *Only Decent People*, yet these are exceedingly incendiary and iconoclastic films that make *South Park* seem like *Sesame Street*.

Of course, *Prince*—a film that attempts to humanize the inhumane—is a cinematic work that ultimately demonstrates that you cannot polish a turd, let alone multiple turds, as a delusional flick that attempts to bring sappy sentimentalism to a multicultural ghetto. Indeed, the viewer is somehow expected to sympathize with delinquent noble neo-savages who engage in crime, assault women, blow up public property, and contribute to the overall deterioration of the Netherlands by turning it into a third world hellhole. In the age of taharrush gamea where even leftists and liberals are beginning to realize that multiculturalism is an abject failure and that so-called 'migrants' are actually parasitic hostile

invaders who seek to destroy the Occident and plan to accomplish what their ancestors had been trying for well over a thousand years, the film almost seems like a sick joke at the expense of the viewer's intelligence. As the bastard brood of an irresponsible and idiotic white Christian European mother who presumably forgot to wear a condom and a Moroccan Muslim father who would not even be in the Netherlands were it not for the fact that West European politicians are bought whores who are doing the bidding of their globalist masters and rely on the untermensch vote to win elections, the titular protagonist of Prince can be seen as the contemporary equivalent of the 'tragic half-breed,' thus making it all the more absurd that the film concludes with the character starting a romance with a blonde and very potentially spreading his genetic curse by getting her pregnant. As far as I am concerned, the only chance de Jong ever has of becoming a formidable auteur with an original vision is if he has a lengthy stay at a special reeducation camp, but maybe I am being a little bit too optimistic.

-Ty E

JARHEAD
JARHEAD

Sam Mendes* (2005) Jarhead is another war film about a young man reaching true manhood and masculinity through the rite of military passage. This convention is used in so many war films that the film felt like nothing new. Jarhead was just a contemporary and polished version of the same story told in a slightly different way. The film was directed by Sam Mendes known for the highly overrated and banal American Beauty. Another soulless existentialist film set in suburbia. American Beauty was tooted around as a artistic "Masterpiece" to somehow give Hollywood artistic credibility.

Jarhead, although taking place during the first war in the Persian gulf, seems like a response to the disastrous and failure war in Iraq. I learned as much from Jarhead about war as I would from watching Fox news. The film would be ideal for screening after a drunken super bowl party. Jake Gyllenhaal almost makes Jarhead appealing to high school girls. The presentation of soldiers in Jarhead is embarrassing. Contrived idiocy, cuss words (fuck was used 278 times), and male bonding are nothing new in the American war film. The so-called antiwar Vietnam films did all these things better twenty and thirty years ago. But of course, these overused conventions made for a generous monetary investment. Too bad poor director Sam Mendes didn't get the critical ravings he did with his earlier films. I guess Jarhead was too hollow of a film this time. Jarhead has also reinforced my belief in that there is no such thing as a Hollywood antiwar film. Like all the other antiwar films, it entertains audiences with excitement and action. Its dramatic scenes are laughable at best and leave the viewer feeling embarrassing after watching them. Hollywood really never was able to execute drama appropriately. After reading articles comparing the novel version of Jarhead and the film and I wasn't surprised. Of course the film is going to leave the significance of the novel out. Meaning isn't important when your trying to make a buck. At least Stanley Kubrick was able to make his book adaptations interesting and well executed. Jarhead felt like a weak shell rip off of Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket. I still haven't figured out whether this was Sam Mendes intention or not. Mendes is another one of the perfection filmmakers that model everything they do after Stanley Kubrick. Unsurprisingly, none of these directors come even close to matching Kubrick's eye for constructed perfection and artisan craftsmanship. Kubrick never put his soul on celluloid and neither would any of these up and coming hacks. I can foresee a series of films similar to Jarhead in the upcoming years. Hollywood will obviously take the failure of the United States in Iraqi and capitalize on it. Eventually one of these will be hailed as a undisputable masterpiece capturing the essence of tragedy and suffering in war. Underpaid War veterans will shelve out their hard earned cash to see it while the film producers sit at their mansion and count their wads of cash.

-Ty E

AWAY WE GO

Sam Mendes* (2009)

In the liberal-petit-bourgeois “feel good”(but of course sometimes unhappy) film *Away We Go*, a 30ish year old white (only in skin, not in soul) male figures out he is going to be a father whilst eating out his Negress girlfriend. This scene happens to be the opening scene of the film and it also sets the feeling for everything that goes on there afterward. What I mean by setting the “feeling” is that the hipster (of course sporting an ironic army jacket) “white” guy is completely dominated by his *sista* girlfriend. The Negress proves her dominance merely by complaining while the male (in a subservient sexual position) performs cunnilingus on his ungrateful girlfriend.

Away We Go is your typical release from Focus Features, a mainstream (part of NBC) “Independent” film studio. The difference between the films released by Michael Bay and Focus Features is that the films released by the latter are apparently supposed to be artistic. Focus Features idea of art must be ugly people, flat aesthetics, and cultural Marxist (AKA “progressive”) ideals. The “male” lead in *Away We Go* is no doubt the “ideal” man in our “progressive” contemporary socio-political world. After all, he is introduced to the film as a castrated “male”, unable to assert himself (inside his girlfriend’s vagina), he settles for satisfying his complaining woman by licking her meat curtain (a true tribute to the gender politics of the iron curtain). Don’t get me wrong, it is ok to return certain types of sexual favors, but the “man” in *Away We Go* certainly seems more interested in pleasuring his “woman” as if he were her lesbian lover.

This guy’s ancestors were Berserkers?!?

“Progressive” film studios like Focus Features are often pushing collectivist cultural Marxist ideas on to the “educated” classes of America and pretend its “revolutionary.” Mainstream “Gay” culture, “unconventional” (aka degenerate) families, multicultural nihilism, internationalism, and anti-individualism are just some of the new “values” being pushed by films that for the most part have absolutely nothing to offer in the way of cinematic innovation. If a man has been dominated by a woman sexually, does that make the film groundbreaking? Wasn’t commie Guido Bernardo Bertolluci already doing sexually deranged/Marxist cinema like this almost over half a century ago? At least Bertolluci actually knew how to do it artistically. What white man would ever eat out a black woman? I bet Bertolluci would.

The scene of cunnilingus in *Away We Go* is easily the most “powerful” scene in the whole movie and I do not say that as a compliment. I say that in that I was completely disgusted by the scene and it is evidence that even upper middleclass America has been completely desensitized by and succumbed to degeneracy. The mulatto child born through miscegenation practiced by the couple in *Away We Go* is best representative of the global degeneracy being pushed

AWAY WE GO

by studios like Focus Features. A world without roots, without culture, without gender, without race, and without tradition. Away We Go indeed, into our own self-prophesizing apocalypse.

-Ty E

STRAW DOGS

Sam Peckinpah (1971)

While I would not call myself a connoisseur since I have, quite regrettably, only seen a small fraction of the films in his apparently somewhat uneven oeuvre, I have much respect for true western auteur Sam Peckinpah (*The Wild Bunch*, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*) simply on the basis of the fact that he was a rare macho and rampantly heterosexual Hollywood filmmaker that, as both a man and an artist, made John Ford, Howard Hawks, and Clint Eastwood seem like prosaic pussies by comparison. In fact, I consider Peckinpah to be one of the few filmmakers in Hollywood history that represented the real America as a genuinely fierce fellow that was descended from western frontiersmen and not some semi-Asiatic momma's boy whose ancestors hailed from an Eastern Europe ghetto like so many of the filmmakers and producers in Tinseltown. Indeed, Peckinpah may have been one of those countless moronic white Americans who made fanciful claims of imagined injun blood and described himself as a "liberal democrat," but his film unequivocally gush a sort of visceral and unadulterated masculinity that is totally absent from virtually all forms of cinema nowadays. Certainly, if the film world has ever had an Ambrose Bierce, it was most certainly Peckinpah as a sort of ruthless and bitter warrior-poet who was largely molded as both a man and artist as a result of his wartime experiences. When Hebraic intellectual and TV host Clifton Fadiman stated of the sardonic writer, "Bierce was never a great writer. He has painful faults of vulgarity and cheapness of imagination. But... his style, for one thing, will preserve him; and the purity of his misanthropy, too, will help to keep him alive," he might as well have been talking about Peckinpah, who may have been no Bergman but confirmed his place in cinema history with the unmistakably sincere hatred, contempt, and cynicism for humanity that he captured on celluloid. While I tend to prefer Peckinpah's more flawed works like his wickedly wayward Wehrmacht flick *Cross of Iron* (1977), which the auteur notably turned down future blockbusters like *King Kong* (1976) and *Superman* (1978) to direct, I have to agree with most people in saying that *Straw Dogs* (1971) is one of his best, if not his best, film, though I suspect I like it for somewhat different reasons than most people, at least thematically speaking. The oftentimes much maligned story of an exceedingly unlikable, pretentious, arrogant, and pathologically passive-aggressive American mathematician of the small, short, swarthy, and physically weak sort who relocates to the backward rural hometown of his English wife and who is ultimately forced to fight to the death for his and his less than beloved spouse's life as a result of tensions he largely provoked due to his pompous and passive-aggressive dealings with a motley crew of construction workers that he hired to work on his garage, Peckinpah's wonderfully morbid masterpiece is a film that not surprisingly upset countless left-wing film critics

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upon its release because it revealed that even smug NYC intellectual types have a capacity for unhinged ultra-violence and bloodthirsty murder. Indeed, if you have ever wondered how some of the biggest mass murderers of the twentieth-century were weak and frail Jewish intellectuals like Leon Trotsky, *Straw Dogs* certainly gives some hints, even if that was not Peckinpah's intention, as a truly shocking cinematic work that reveals that puny passive pushovers oftentimes have an uncontrollable fury of seething rage and hatred hidden beneath their pathetic exteriors as a result of having no outlet for all the hatred and aggression that has built up inside of them after a lifetime of cowardice in the face of hostility.

Not unlike Stanley Kubrick with *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), Peckinpah was heavily influenced by Robert Ardrey's classic paleoanthropological texts *African Genesis* (1961) and *The Territorial Imperative* (1966) while making *Straw Dogs*, which was somewhat loosely adapted from the novel *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* by Gordon M. Williams and copenned by Jewish screenwriter David Zelag Goodman (*Logan's Run*, *Eyes of Laura Mars*). Notably, both Peckinpah and Goodman loathed the source novel, which is quite fitting since novelist Williams hated the film because he felt it did not even vaguely resemble his book. While probably not Peckinpah's conscious intent, *Straw Dogs* is, in a somewhat esoteric way, ultimately the tale of a pompous Hebraic intellectual who has nothing but contempt for his blonde Aryan wife and is ultimately forced to fight his natural born enemies, a gang of Aryan proles, as a seemingly subconscious result of both neglecting his spouse and treating the Aryan proles like worthless subhuman garbage that are not even fit enough to shine his shoes. Quite infamous for a scene where the female lead is raped by an ex-boyfriend and comes to enjoy it so much that she actually cums in ecstasy, the film also depicts what can happen when a horny woman that is constantly surrounded by masculine and virile men is both sexually and emotionally neglected by her ugly and physically weak pint-sized hubby. Indeed, *Straw Dogs* depicts in a refreshingly crude, raw, and atavistic way that women have strong sexual needs, including being occasionally violently manhandled by mensch with a mighty sexual prowess who knows what he is doing. A piece of classic Peckinpah in its darkly ironical depiction of an ostensible protagonist that is actually both the villain and the central source of all the problems that plague most of the characters, especially the female lead, the film undoubtedly features Dustin Hoffman in the perfect role as a distinctly unlikable Hebraic intellectual that you could imagine espousing the anti-gospel of Marx were he not an aggressively antisocial math dork. Indeed, *Straw Dogs*—a work that can be accurately simultaneously described as a rape and revenge flick, British Wild Bunch, and West Country western (as it was described in the doc *Mantrap Straw Dogs: The Final Cut* (2003))—is, in a sick sort of way, kind of like a fantasy film for physically weak and effeminate Jewish intellectual types like Woody Allen due to its

depiction of a beady-eyed Über-dildo discovering that he makes for a deadlier man than a gang of strong and aggressive hicks that work hard with their hands and fuck hard with their cocks.

David Sumner (Dustin Hoffman) may have an unmistakable British surname but he is undoubtedly the archetypal American Judaic intellectual type and thus it can only end badly when he relocates to a small town in a remote part of Cornwall, England where the locals do not take too kindly to arrogant anally retentive yank nerds who looks down on them because they do not have the luxury of working a job that involves a lot of typing, reading, and abstract paper-shuffling. Somewhat curiously considering his seeming disdain for his spouse's lowly lumpenprole origins, the place that David moves to is the hometown of his wife Amy (Susan George of Richard Fleischer's *Mandingo* (1975)) who, unlike the protagonist, is 'off the people' and has no problem getting along with the locals, as she grew up with them. In fact, Amy seems to be more comfortable around the local yokels than her own husband, thus hinting early on in the film that they should have never gotten married in the first place. Leaving his job at the university under the questionable pretense of receiving a research grant, David's main motivation for moving to the hillbilly Brit town for the next year is because he is terribly afraid of the race riots that are going on at his college campus and various other places in the United States, thus underscoring the fact that he is a pathetic coward who would rather runaway from a fight than face his problems head on, so it is only perversely ironic that he will be forced to literally fight for his life against five rough and tough working men that could probably effortlessly beat him to death in a fair one-on-one fight. At the very beginning of the film, virtually all of the principal characters are introduced in a scenario where David's manhood is almost instantly comprised in a fairly glaring way. On top of the fact that David looks like a complete and utter pansy while carrying a box of groceries and prancing around like an autistic dolt in fairly feminine looking white tennis shoes, he reveals his curious apathy for masculine things when he mocks a large antique 'mantrap' (which were used against poachers) that his loving wife Amy has bought him for his birthday. During this same scene, Amy is reunited with her ex-lover Charlie Venner (Del Henney) who, despite not having seen in six years, she still seems to be very much in love as if they never broken up in the first place. Indeed, one certainly immediately questions how Amy could be married to an unattractive intellectual untermensch like Davey boy if she is clearly highly attracted to a handsome and charming yet uneducated working-class chap. In fact, the sexual chemistry between the two ex-lovers is so obvious that Charlie even has the gall to put his arm around Amy and say to her like a sleazy braggart, "There was once a time, Mrs. Sumner, when you were ready to beg me for it," though she pushes his arm away as if she is still mad at him for some wrong he committed long ago. Notably, during this entire scene, Amy stands next to Charlie as opposed to her husband David,

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thus foreshadowing the course the film will eventually take. Of course, caring very little for his wife and her emotions, David barely acknowledges the obvious connection between Amy and Charlie and even hires the charming hillbilly to work on his garage, which will ultimately prove to be his first serious mistake in a series of easily preventable mistakes that eventually lead to rape and coldblooded mass murder.

David decides to hire Charlie to build his garage because the guys currently working on it, Norman Scutt (Ken Hutchison of Ralph Nelson's *The Wrath of God* (1972) and Richard Donner's *Ladyhawke* (1985)) and 'rat man' Chris Cawsey (Irish character actor Jim Norton of Francis Lawrence's *Water for Elephants* (2011)), are "taking forever." Charlie also brings his friend Phil Riddaway (Donald Webster) to work on the project, thus making for a quartet of boorish Brit hicks that will be constantly hanging at Charlie's new home Trencher's Farm, which is where Amy grew up and which is clearly a place that is far too rustic and folksy for a cosmopolitan intellectual like David. When David asks Amy if she and Charlie were lovers in the past, she naturally lies and states, "Venner tried to get fresh once. Nothing happened." Of course, you can tell just when they are together that Amy gets wet anytime she thinks about country hunk Charlie, but eternal coward David prefers to ignore this. Stuck in a clearly loveless and largely sexless marriage with a seemingly emotionally vacant dork, Amy will ultimately use Charlie and his comrades as a dubious and ultimately highly deleterious means to channel her sexual frustration and resentment towards her negligent hubby. Indeed, it is quite apparent that Amy seems far comfortable around Charlie and the gang than her own husband. When David asks her regarding Charlie and his friends, "What was so funny with them?," Amy replies, "They just think you're strange" in a fashion that reveals that she feels exactly the same way about him. While David might have a great intellect when it comes to science and mathematics, he is somewhat socially retarded and seems to use his unwavering arrogance and cynicism as a mask so that he can disguise his quasi-autistic qualities and fragile psyche, but of course it is only a matter of time before the masks falls off. Trapped in a virtual prison as result of living on a remote property and constantly being in the presence of an outstandingly arrogant and unsympathetic husband that incessantly treats her like a badly behaved child and even yells at her anytime she attempts to show him affection, Amy not surprisingly transfers most of her love and affection to a cat, so naturally it quite upsets her when David mistreats the kitty and even threatens, "If she's in my study, I'll killer her." In fact, when Amy is not around, David even goes so far as jovially kicking and throwing objects at the cat, thus revealing that he has a sadistic side that he will come to fully embrace by the end of the film.

When David yells at her, "Get the garage makers and the rat catchers – Get them to all finish! Oh, and, and fix the toilet and clean up the kitchen [...] I love you, Amy, but I want you to leave me alone," Amy tears up and replies, "Ok,

I'll leave you alone with your blackboard." After intentionally agitating David by putting a piece of gum on his chalkboard in what seems to be a desperate attempt by the character to get her self-absorbed husband to pay attention to her, Amy goes for a drive and when she gets back she intentionally exposes her bare legs and panties to Charlie and his friends as a means to both assert her badly wounded womanhood and to get back at her unloving hubby. After intentionally showing her flesh off like a scheming Lolita on the prowl, Amy then proceeds to absurdly complain to David regarding Charlie and his friends, "They were practically licking my body," but she does not get the response she intended as her less than empathetic spouse is hardly jealous and instead rebukes her for not wearing a bra, stating, "You shouldn't go around without one and not expect that type to stare." Considerably agitated at this point, Amy mocks David's glaring lack of masculinity by stating, "Look...if you could hammer a nail, Venner and Scutt wouldn't be out there" and then proceeds to go to the second floor of the house under the dubious pretense of taking a shower, strips off her shirt, and then shows off her bare breasts to Charlie and the gang while they are busy working on the roof. Needless to say, Charlie naturally sees Amy's seductive behavior as a direct invitation that he will take full advantage of later in the film. After all, when a married woman has the gall to randomly show you her bare bazongas, it is probably because she is in desperate need of being sexually ravaged because her husband is not getting the job done.

When the local holy man Reverend Barney Hood (actor and screenwriter Colin Welland, who is probably best known for penning *Chariots of Fire* (1981) and his role in Ken Loach's *Kes* (1969)) comes by Trencher's farm, David acts quite smug by immediately handing him a 'church donation' and playing loud and obnoxious bagpipe music, which Amy rightly immediately turns off (notably, David will later turn on the same exact music as a way to agitate the senses of men that are trying to kill him). Of course, David is no less hostile when talking to the good Reverend than he is with everyone else, as he is a little man that respects no one and probably suffers from a somewhat subtle form of megalomania. Indeed, when Reverend Hood asks him in regard to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, "You're a scientist. Can you deny the responsibility?," David replies in an insufferably arrogant fashion, "Can you? After all, there's never been a kingdom given to so much bloodshed as that of Christ," but the man of god proves to the protagonist that he is not as stupid as he thinks by immediately replying, "That's Montesquieu, isn't it?" and then opting to leave. That night, David is in for quite a shock when he opens his bedroom closet and discovers the corpse of his wife's kitten, which has been missing all day, hanging from clothesline. Completely oblivious to his wife's feelings, David merely walks away from the closet and passively watches as his wife investigates and suffers the shock of discovering her lifeless kitty cat hanging from a rope. When Amy blames "Scutt or Cawsey" for the kitty-lynching and tells David that they did it, "To prove

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to you they could get into your bedroom,” David proves he is a pathetic pussy by nonsensically replying, “I don’t believe that” and then preposterously arguing that “anybody passing” could have lynched the feline, even though their house is located in the middle of nowhere. While David finally agrees to question the workers about the cat, he ultimately pussies out upon talking to the men and instead agrees to go hunting with them the next day, thereupon unwittingly setting up for his wife to suffer a most brutal assault that could have easily been avoided had he had the testicular fortitude to confront his tormentor(s).

As the viewer somewhat suspects, the workers have ulterior motives for taking David to the moors to hunt as Charlie plans to pay his ex-lover Amy a visit while she is conveniently home alone. Indeed, the men leave David to hunt birds by himself while Scutt secretly watches the physically weak mathematician try in vain to properly aim and shoot his shotgun at a target. Rather revealingly, when Charlie shows up at her home unannounced by himself, Amy does not think twice about inviting him inside, even though she is dressed fairly scantily. When Charlie proceeds to passionately kiss her, Amy kisses him back for a couple seconds but then eventually complains, “Please leave me.” At this point, Charlie warns her, “Don’t tease me, Amy. Please,” but Amy decides to get somewhat physically violent, so he slaps her around and then drags by her hair to a couch where he strips off her clothes and warns her while preparing to penetrate her pussy, “I don’t want to reave you, but I will.” At this point, Amy barely resists and even softly says “no” while activity kissing Charlie. Indeed, while Amy practically rubs her wet pussy in David’s face in a desperate attempt to get her husband’s attention and still ends up getting rejected, Charlie wants her cunt so bad that he is literally willing to fight for it to the point where it could result in having to serve a prison sentence. One suspects Amy’s initial resistance was just a means for her to not only pretend like she had no intention of cheating on her husband, but also to experience what it feels like to be desperately wanted by a masculine alpha-male. Interestingly, when Charlie takes his shirt off, the scene notably cuts to a brief shot of David taking his shirt off as if to highlight that Amy is finally getting the opportunity to be sexually ravaged by a real man as opposed to her small and physical frail hubby. Ultimately what started out as a rape results in truly passionate lovemaking of the mutually orgasmic sort, with Amy even moaning to Charlie, “hold me.” Notably, at the same moment their carnal session reaches its climax, David manages to shoot and kill a bird. Unfortunately, things take a considerably ugly turn for the worst when Charlie notices the barrel of a shotgun being pointed at his face while he is lying next to Amy. Indeed, scumbag Scutt has turned on Charlie and forces his friend to watch while he brutally buggers Amy while she screams in abject horror. Luckily for Amy, Scutt only lasts a couple seconds, though the emotional pain and trauma seems permanent. As the viewer suspects, the entire situation probably would have been nearly immaculate for Amy had savage hick Scutt not showed

up and ruined everything with his primitive sexual habits.

Totally oblivious to the fact that his wife has just been sexually pillaged, David comes home while Amy is smoking in bed and bitches in a pathetic fashion where he is clearly putting on airs of masculinity, "I'm firing Scutt and Vener tomorrow [...] Because they stuck it to me on the moor today," to which she snidely replies, "They also serve [those] who sit at home and wait." When David asks her what she means, Amy rightly replies, "Nothing. If you'd have said something to them ages ago...about the cat, this would never have happened. None of it." While David does actually fire Charlie and his friends the next day, it only pours gasoline on the fire in terms of the working men's hatred for him which will eventually reach its peak in a final showdown that could have been easily avoided were it not for the protagonist's unwavering arrogance and seemingly pathological passive-aggressiveness. Indeed, during an annual church event held by Reverend Hood that is attended by every single person in town, including David and Amy (who suffers traumatic rape flashbacks as a result of all the noise and rambunctious behavior that she is bombarded with at the event), a local teenage girl named Janice Hedden (Sally Thomsett) goes missing after foolishly leaving with a local retard named Henry Niles (half-Hebrew David Warner of Peckinpah's *Cross of Iron* and Donner's *The Omen* (1976)) who is known for being a child molester. Notably, Janice's unwise decision to leave with Henry is a direct result of David treating her with apathy, as the ignorant teen craves male attention and decided to seek it elsewhere after the protagonist rudely snubbed. Ultimately, Henry accidentally strangles Janice to death in a barn while desperately trying to keep her quiet after some people that are looking for the titillating teen walk by the building and call her name. Janice is the daughter of a rough, tough, and perennially unemployed dipsomaniac brute named Tom Hedden (Peter Vaughan, who is probably best known for his role as Maester Aemon on HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011-2015)) who is Charlie's uncle and who acts as a sort of greatly respected patriarch for all the local young men, even though he is a jobless ex-con who spends most of his time lurking in the local bar. When Tom sees David at the beginning of the film, he looks at him in complete and utter disdain after noticing that the exceedingly effeminate protagonist is sporting a perfectly clean pair tennis shoes as opposed to the sort of work boots that every other single man in the town wears. Needless to say, when Tom and the rest of the men discover that David is harboring child molester Henry, they decide to wage a sort of total war against him, especially after the protagonist dares to refuse to handover the mentally feeble pedophile.

Upon driving back from the church event at night, Drive accidentally hits Henry with his car, so he decides to bring the mentally challenged pervert back to his house to recuperate until he can get in contact with a doctor, even though Amy does not want the retard in the house because she knows of his unsavory reputation. Since he cannot get in contact with anyone since they are all still at the

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church event, David makes the mistake of calling the local pub where Tom and the boys are hanging out. When the bartender informs Tom and the men that Henry is at David's house, they grab two bottles of liquor to gain "liquid courage" and immediately head to the protagonist's humble abode. While Tom sits by his car at the recommendation of the younger men, Charlie, Scutt, and Cawsey force their way into David's house and violently demand that the protagonist hand over the retard. Seeming more interested in being a passive-aggressive prick than actually caring about Henry's safety, David somewhat unbelievably becomes annoyingly idealistic about the retard's responsibility and adamantly refuses to hand him over, even though Amy also wants the pedo out of her house. While David eventually manages to talk them into leaving so they can go find Janice, Tom refuses to leave without Henry, so the men walk back to the house and begin attempting to break the door down. Although the local magistrate, Major John Scott (T. P. McKenna of Joseph Strick's botched Joyce adaptation *Ulysses* (1967) and Milos Forman's *Valmont* (1989)), eventually shows up and attempts to get Tom and his men to leave, they refuse to budge and instead proceed to berate the lawman for not having the retard institutionalized a longtime ago when he first gained his reputation for being a dangerous kiddy-fucker. When Major Scott is accidentally violently killed after getting in a struggle with Tom over his shotgun, the members of the redneck lynch mob immediately realize that they have nothing left to lose and commit to a full-blown hillbilly siege against David. Indeed, after Scutt declares, "Accessories, we are" and Charlie replies, "That is the law," the men, who are obviously quite inebriated at this point, proceed to attack the house with full force by cutting the phone line, knocking out at all the windows, and dropping live rats inside the building while screaming crude obscenities at David. Of course, it is quite apparent that these country boys delight in destroying the house and taunting the petrified protagonist and his wife. In that sense, the somewhat seem like a rural equivalent to the Droogs of Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, albeit vaguely less nihilistic (after all, they have come to kill a child rapist, even if a couple of them are rapists themselves). The one advantage that David has over the country boys is that, aside from being sober, he is more serious and methodical and less emotional when it comes to combat, or so the viewer discovers as the protagonist gets in touch with his killer side and dispatches each character one-by-one.

Although a pathetic pansy, David realizes at this point that, as a result of Major Scott's death, both he and wife's lives are on the line, as Tom and the boys cannot afford to have any living witnesses if they expect to escape a lengthy prison sentence. When the hillbillies begin breaking smashing every window in the house while yelling less than clever things like "dirty yank bastard," David finally decides to take action, stoically declares Amy to, "This is my affair," and then forces his wife to go upstairs and turn on all the lights so that it is hard for the invaders to see inside the home. When Amy declares, "If you don't let

them have what they want, then I'm going" and then proceeds to open the door to let Charlie in, David decides to scare her into submission by grabbing by her hair and smacking the shit out of her just like her rapist did earlier in the film. When David states to her, "We're dead if they get in," Amy seems to finally begin to realize the severity of the situation and starts fighting back in her own fairly pathetic way. As the homicidal hicks begin invading the house while laughing and jeering like demonic redneck jesters at a satanic hoedown (at one point, Cawsey, who is wearing a prosthetic clown nose, rides a tricycle through a shed door), David temporarily stuns them by throwing buckets of boiling water in their faces. Of course, it is not long before the men once again attempt to Blitzkrieg the house, but when Tom takes the lead and attempts to make his way through a window, David ultimately causes him to blow off his foot with his own shotgun after hitting the weapon with a fire-poker. After that, David finds Chris Cawsey standing in his living room and the two get in an intense standoff that somewhat implausibly concludes with the meek mathematician bashing the rat catcher's brains in with a fire-poker. After David kills Cawsey, Charlie enters the home with Tom's shotgun and the protagonist encourages him to shoot him because he thinks the gun is empty. Luckily for David, Charlie does not decide to shoot him because the shotgun is actually loaded.

When David and Charlie hear Amy screaming on the second floor, they both proceed to run up the stairs to the bedroom where they find sexual sadist Scutt attempting to rape the heroine. Demonstrating that he actually probably does genuinely love Amy and that he certainly cares more about her than his comrade, Charlie shoots and kills sick fuck Scutt. At this point, David and Charlie start brawling and the two men soon find themselves rolling down the stairs together in a climatic slow-motion fight sequence that concludes in a completely unforgettable way. During this scene, Amy seems especially emotionally conflicted to the point where the viewer somewhat suspects that she wants Charlie to triumph over David (after all, with most of his friends dead, Charlie will no longer have any negative influences in his life and can now dedicated himself to her). Notably, when David grabs the mantrap, Amy cries, "No, Charlie!" but it is already too late. Indeed, in what is one of the most brutal death scenes in cinema history, David manages to unleash the mantrap over his rival's head, thus causing Charlie to die a somewhat slow grisly death as the teeth of the trap bite into his now quite literally red neck. After killing Charlie and taking a sort of short victory tour around the downstairs of the house, David brags to himself while in a state of almost disbelief, "Jesus. I got 'em all," but he ultimately speaks too soon as Phil Riddaway enters the home and begins effortlessly beating the shit out of the puny protagonist. Although she hesitates for a fairly longtime as if she would not mind to see her hubby die (after all, he is the man that just killed her one-time lover Charlie), Amy eventually grabs a shotgun and shoots and kills Phil right before he beats David to death. In the end, despite every-

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thing that has happened, David makes Amy feel vulnerable by curiously leaving her at the house while he drives retard Henry back to town. During the car ride, Henry pathetically mumbles, "I don't know my way home" and David replies to him in an almost gleeful manner while smirking, "That's ok. I don't either," thus underscoring the fact that the protagonist has reached a point of no return in both his life and marriage.

With the pathetic and somewhat disconcerting western trend of beautiful women getting involved in unhappy marriages with physically weak and unattractive yet wealthy men due to the fact that technology, bureaucracy, and various other factors have made it fairly easy for certain clever effeminate men to become rich and powerful while at the same time strong and masculine males are becoming more and more obsolete, *Straw Dogs* has only become all the more relevant, if not politically incorrect, since its release nearly half a century ago. Indeed, women instinctively tend towards hypergamy and thus nowadays they find themselves in the curious situation of marrying weak and pathetic office bureaucrats that their female ancestors would have never even considered touching with a ten-foot pole, thereupon resulting in unnatural and distinctly dissatisfying marriages where the wife naturally finds herself longing for the kind of man that would spontaneously bend her over a kitchen table and begin plowing her cuntkin into oblivion. Surely, *Straw Dogs* is a rare kind of film in that it acts as a sort of antidote to the countless revolting romance scenarios featured in Woody Allen, Ben Stiller, Noah Baumbach, Henry Jaglom, and Seth Rogen flicks where a physically grotesque and singularly obnoxious Jew-boy of the nauseatingly nebbish sort somehow magically hooks up with a hot blonde babe, as if it is somehow a normal and desirable occurrence that should be celebrated by everyone lest they be labelled a heartless antisemite. Of course, no sexually sound Aryan babe could ever find their cunt getting wet to the sound of Dustin Hoffman's nasally monotone voice, but Hollywood has spent at least half a century trying to prove otherwise in its incessant campaign of cultural cuckolding via celluloid. Of course, aside from the fact that her quasi-rapist also happens to be an ex-lover, one of the main reasons that the female heroine of *Straw Dogs* finds it so pleasurable to be vaginally pillaged is because it had been such a long time since she had been at the complete will of a strong and capable man that makes her feel like a woman, which is something that a Hebraic fellow like Herr Hoffman is just not capable of (after all, it is no coincidence that he gave one of his greatest acting performance in drag in Sydney Pollack's *Tootsie* (1982)). Indeed, somehow I suspect that if the average frigid feminist were routinely manhandled by a real man, they would probably be cured of their metaphysical affliction and political retardation.

Notably in response to a 1971 review featured in *The New Yorker* where she described *Straw Dogs* as a "fascist" film, Peckinpah wrote a letter to Pauline Kael where he stated, "I read your review. Its ambivalence was complete, although I

was distressed that you didn't pick up that David was inciting the very violence he was running away from. After the killing of Cawsey, he realizes exactly what he has done. I appreciate your concern and involvement, but I don't appreciate the description of the film as a fascist one because it has connotations which to me are odious [...] How you can identify any element of my work in terms of fascism is beyond my belief and a red flag." Of course, being a left-wing Jewess, Kael probably could not fathom how Hebraic Hoffman's character could have been in the wrong against a group of barbaric English Nordic hillbillies, just as she probably could never consider that anti-Jewish pogroms were often the result of the goyim getting fed up with passive-aggressive money-lending tactics and the active support of genocidal anti-Christian communist movements that was quite common among certain members of the Judaic tribe during the early twentieth-century, among other things, but I digress. As a man descended from Nordic frontiersmen that immigrated from the Frisian Islands to the United States during the mid-19th-century and played a role in taming the hostile territories of the great American West, as well as an ex-soldier who witnessed the barbaric behavior between the Chinese and Japanese while stationed in China during WWII as member of the United States Marine Corps, Peckinpah undoubtedly knew more about the nature of mankind and his violence than the average Hollywood filmmaker and especially some frigid old Hebrewess, hence the singular importance of his oeuvre as a sort of Nietzsche of the Western genre. Notably, Peckinpah was apparently not too fond of the attitudes of certain arrogant Judaic types and according to Straw Dogs producer Daniel Melnick in the doc *Passion & Poetry: The Ballad of Sam Peckinpah* (2005) directed by Mike Siegel, he was not afraid to put high-minded Hebrews in their place and saying things to them like, "You're just a goddamn New York intellectual Jew." Of course, that is also what I usually think when I hear some hopelessly sheltered left-wing film critic denounce a film as being "fascist," "reactionary," "problematic," or any of the other sad, pathetic, and predictable outmoded buzzwords that they love to throw around, as the use of such meaningless labels ultimately reveals to me that the writer is a completely compromised grade A pussy whose opinion has about as much as intrinsic intellectual merit as a large pile of steaming horse shit.

Naturally, I was not surprised to discover upon somewhat reluctantly watching it that Israeli filmmaker Rod Lurie's 2011 *Straw Dogs* remake is a piece of terminally prosaic cinematic blasphemy that lacks any of the aesthetic and philosophical qualities that made Peckinpah's original film so damn great. Indeed, somehow Lurie felt that putting glasses on a semi-handsome guy like James Marsden and getting a Swede like Alexander Skarsgård to portray a Mississippi hillbilly would make for plausible characters. Of course, Lurie's remake is nothing more than a retrograde bargain bin Hicksploitation flick on monetary steroids that was directed by a typical Hebraic hack who has an irrational hatred of Southerners and racially schizophrenic infatuation with dumb blonde shiksas.

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Personally, I think a more practical update of the film would involve a white liberal pansy moving to the Deep South hometown of his high yellow black wife and ultimately causing a violent attack as a result of saying various stereotypical patronizing white bleeding heart liberal things to his spade spouse's friends about how he "doesn't see color" and has a "black bff" while they openly call him a cracker and take turns plundering his lady's main vein, but of course that would never happen, as the culture-distorters of Hollywood loathe reality and are all about creating propagandistic fantasy realms that they hope audiences will eventually mimic in real-life. Of course, one of the things that makes Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* so potent is that it does feature a relatively realistic scenario where a weak and frail Hebraic intellectual type with poor social skills is married to a Nordic beauty who he treats like a child. After all, Swedish beauty Britt Ekland jumpstarted her career by marrying hardly handsome Hebrew Peter Sellers in the mid-1960s and such mismatched hypergamy-based marriages have only become all the more common today. Working in Hollywood for a good portion of his life, there is no doubt that Peckinpah—a real man that, quite unlike the typical studio hack, dared to depict the true depravity of humanity, as well as the manipulative and sometimes masochistic nature of womankind—oftentimes encountered these sham relationships and revoltingly insufferable passive-aggressive Dustin Hoffman types, so it is only fitting that he would direct a film like *Straw Dogs* that demonstrates that even pussy pacifists, who pride themselves on their ostensibly civilized behavior, are just as every bit capable of bloodthirsty murder as the extroverted hicks that they look down on. Indeed, as producer Melnick, himself a member of the chosen tribe, rightly stated of Peckinpah in *Passion & Poetry*, "I always felt that he was perhaps the last man making movies who had both guts and integrity." Of course, guts and integrity are even harder to find in Hollywood—a patently phony place that prides itself in lying, cheating, stealing, and whoring—than genuine artistic talent, which says a lot. A sort of less arcane father film to the criminally underrated Anglian pastoral arthouse piece *Requiem for a Village* (1976) directed by Lindsay Anderson's editor David Gladwell, *Straw Dogs* is ultimately a sort of post-Heimat quasi-horror-thriller that asks many hard questions and thankfully does not offer any safe or easy answers to any of them, though the film unquestionably demonstrates that seeing a stunning young woman in a loveless relationship with a swarthy little dork ultimately makes for a more revolting and unnatural sight than seeing her being passionately manhandled by a strong and attractive man that actually loves her. After all, it is no mere coincidence that most women (translation: all women) have rape fantasies and, as *Straw Dogs* reveals, not all rapists are equal in the eyes of a woman..

-Ty E

BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFREDO GARCIA

Sam Peckinpah (1974)

Over the years, I have compiled a mental list of must-see films that I procrastinate watching because I want to be in the right mood and setting to appreciate such a supposed masterpiece and do not want to somehow ruin what can be an aesthetically transcendent experience. Indeed, I still haven't seen a number of Ingmar Bergman's films, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Parsifal* (1982), Krzysztof Kiesłowski's *Three Colours* trilogy, and countless other films that I probably should have watched many years ago. After recently finally watching *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974) aka *Tráiganme la cabeza de Alfredo García* directed by absolutely singular Hollywood maverick Sam Peckinpah (*Ride the High Country*, *The Wild Bunch*), I can only say that I am pissed at myself for waiting about a decade too long to watch what is one of the most pleasantly venomously visceral and inexplicably cathartic yet senselessly tragic films that I have ever seen. In fact, I think it is now my favorite Peckinpah flick and I say that as one of the rare individuals that prefers *Straw Dogs* (1971) to his supposed magnum opus *The Wild Bunch* (1969). Sometimes feeling like a paradoxically immaculate exploitation flick on steroids as directed by a refreshingly unpretentious cinematic master possessed by the perennially bitter spirit of Ambrose Bierce, the film is notable for being the only work directed by Peckinpah that is a true 'director's cut' as it was released exactly the way he intended it to be and it certainly shows as a deliciously unpleasant movie that is dripping with spiritual morbidity, latent misanthropy, and a foredoomed sort of tenderness that only the Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid (1973) director was capable of. Indeed, fuck Peckinpah's somewhat minor celebrated westerns like *Ride the High Country* (1962) and *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970), *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is forever! Featuring a hard-drinking and self-destructive war veteran antihero that is always conspicuously hiding his thoroughly inebriated bloodshot eyes behind sunglasses and who has a fetish for fiery yet sensual Latinas, the film is also, for better or worse (I go with the latter), Peckinpah's most autobiographical and auteur-driven work. Made at the beginning of the late period of the filmmaker's career after the failure of *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is, in the best sort of way, the sort of film you would expect from a terribly talented yet troubled man that once pathetically confessed, "I can't direct when I'm sober." The sad, slightly pitiful, sometimes melancholic and ultimately hopelessly tragic yet endlessly enthralling and perversely passionate tale of a hapless gringo bartender that gets him and his beloved pussy-peddler mestizo lover sucked into the highly dangerous Mexican criminal underworld upon learning about the large bounty placed upon the literal head of a dead male-whore that made the mistake of impregnating his crime boss's special little girl, the film is also a rather fittingly love letter to Peckinpah's virtual second home of

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Mexico. Indeed, despite the film's dark and morbid content, it also manages to reveal Peckinpah's more sensitive side, namely his love of Mexico and the Mexican people and especially his love of young nubile Mexican women. After all, the love of Peckinpah's love was Mexican actress Begonia Palacios (1965–1984), who he married no less than three times and had a daughter with. Like the protagonist's lover in the film, Palacios was perennially passionately devoted to Peckinpah who, not unlike the character in the film, had a hard time adequately (and sanely) expressing his emotions to his brown-skinned beloved. Of course, much like Peckinpah, the film's antihero—a painfully conspicuous stand-in for the alcoholic auteur—does not realize what he has until it is too late and he has lost it, especially where love is concerned.

A film that has managed to have entries in both *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* (2003) edited by Steven Schneider and *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time (And How They Got That Way)* (1978) by Zionist turd Harry Medved and Randy Dreyfuss, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is certainly the sort of shockingly unflinching, venomously vexatious, and unrepentantly 'politically incorrect' cinematic work that divides viewers. Indeed, I certainly cannot imagine a true blue optimist coming away from watching the film without feeling like they have suffered some sort of major metaphysical trauma that causes them to question the very meaning of life. For pessimists, the film offers a virtual playground of human stupidity, absurdism, and senseless tragedy in poetic celluloid form. In fact, the film even concludes with a close-up of a smoking gun barrel pointed directly at the audience, as if to remind the viewer in a humorously obnoxious fashion that life is all about pain, death, and destruction and that no one escapes death. Set in a wicked and wayward world devoid of heroes where only the meanest and morally bankrupt of motherfuckers thrive and survive, Peckinpah's flick is in many ways the 'antihero film par excellence' where an underdog pays the ultimate price for playing a very naughty game in a uniquely underhanded fashion that involves the decaying dismembered head of a Mexican chap that had cuckolded him only a couple weeks before. A compulsively cynical and somewhat morally dubious dude that is willing to risk his life if he sees a special opportunity to get rich quick, the antihero attempts to cheat in a deadly game with Mexico's criminal elite that involves him procuring the head of a man that only he knows is already dead for a \$1 million bounty. Unfortunately, the protagonist unwittingly pays the ultimate cost for his singularly sleazy efforts, which eventually results in him losing every single thing that he truly values, namely what is left of his personal integrity and the inordinately sweet and loving Latina love of his life.

Vaguely (anti)Orphic in its daunting depiction of an antihero that loses his lover and intentionally enters a sort of figurative hell south of the border, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is unquestionably an action film that totally transcends genre as a work that might also be described as being simultaneously

a black tragicomedy, cowboy-less neo-western, Mexican gangster flick, necro-buddy movie, artsploitation revenge-thriller, and ultra-violent dark romance. In short, the film is a subversive work of cinematic art of the totally true grit oriented sort as directed by a man that was not afraid to be a man, especially in the unflattering sense of the word. More reluctantly neurotic and self-denigrating than self-pitying, the film is also, somewhat surprisingly, more drenched in grief and gloom than it is blood and gut, though it is by no means a tame film as far as delightfully deranged ultra-violence is concerned. Featuring singularly darkly humorous scenarios like a gay hit man knocking out a hooker that dares to hit on him and a protagonist that uses vodka to clean his genitals after a long hard night of dirty interracial sex, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is a hopelessly humanistic film in the sense that Peckinpah dares to reveal the most unflattering aspects of human vulnerability, moral fragility, and suffering, but one should not expect anything less from an auteur that owned up to the fact that he was a self-destructive fuck-up and dipsomaniac that was incapable of living a stable life and maintaining a healthy romantic relationship.

Undoubtedly, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* does for the action genre what Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* did for European high-camp in terms of being a rare film where virtually every single shot resembles a painting in terms of its seemingly immaculate composition. Indeed, despite technically being a genre film and featuring about as much sleazy content as a gleefully morally bankrupt 1970s Italian exploitation film, the aesthetic integrity of film deserves to be compared to the greatest and most hypnotic tableaux vivants of Visconti, which says a lot since most of the film is set in the Mexican countryside and inside dilapidated buildings that are not even fit for rabid barnyard animals. Once rightly described by belated pop film critic Roger Ebert as "some kind of bizarre masterpiece," the film provides the hallucinatory experience of hard drugs with the timeless tragic nuance of Shakespeare, albeit in a manner that can be easily consumed by the most inebriated of sub-literate white lumpenproles and mestizo farmers.

At the very beginning of the film, the viewer is exposed to the misleadingly splendid and serene image of a beautiful pregnant teenager as she basks in the sunlight beside a placid lake with swans in a scenario that resembles a sort of ethereal Mexican pastoral heaven. Before the viewer knows it, the young girl is brought before a sort of family kangaroo court where her crime boss father 'El Jefe' (played by Mexican actor and auteur Emilio Fernández, who is best known for directing the Palme d'Or award winning feature *María Candelaria* (1944)) demands to know who impregnated her while a virtual army of people that include her family members, Catholic nuns, and gangsters watch on in abject anticipation. When the teenager, who clearly loves the lucky mensch that knocked her up, refuses to comply, El Jefe has her top ripped off in a quasi-incestuous that eventually morally degenerates into minor torture. When the

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tormented topless teen can no longer take the physical and emotional pain of being tortured in front of a bunch of people, she finally reveals that her father's protégé "Alfredo Garcia" is the sperm donor of her unborn child. Although El Jefe somberly states of Garcia that, "He was like a son to me," he desperately lusts for revenge and immediately offers a bounty for her daughter's baby-daddy of \$1 million, thus leading to many of his henchmen immediately vacating the premises so that they can go hunting for the poor miserable fool that idiotically got his all-powerful cutthroat boss's teenage daughter pregnant. While El Jefe will sort of get his revenge in the end in a somewhat expected way, so will his lovelorn daughter in what ultimately proves to be one fucked up Mexican family drama.

Unfortunately for the film's gringo protagonist Bennie (Warren Oates)—a retired U.S. Army officer turned perennially drunk bartender that seems set on wasting away in a third world hellhole—he eventually learns of the bounty when two homo hit men show up at his bar in Mexico City and begin asking about the whereabouts of the seemingly elusive Alfredo Garcia. Indeed, when suavely dressed cocksucker career criminals Sappensly (Robert Webber) and Johnny Quill (Gig Young) show up at his bar and begin waving around money and asking about Garcia, born loser Bennie immediately begins scheming and lies to the two unconventionally intimidating killers by claiming that he does not know the man. As it turns out, Garcia cuckolded Bennie only a couple weeks before by banging his beloved Hispanic hooker girlfriend Elita (Isela Vega). When Bennie talks to Elita and learns that Garcia is already dead as a result of stereotypically dying in a drunken car crash, he believes he has a 'sure thing' and will be able to easily collect the bounty without having to actually commit a murder. Needless to say, Bennie has no qualms about defiling Alfredo's corpse. Unfortunately for him, Bennie's lazy amoral scheme will eventually lead him on a suicidal path of no return involving violent deaths and grisly (self)destruction. After talking to Sappensly and Quill's pompous German boss 'Max' (played by Helmut Dantine, who also acted as the film's executive producer), they agree to pay him \$10,000 for the head of Alfredo Garcia, though they also threaten to kill him if he fucks up. In fact, one of Max's associates—a very Jewy four-eyed fellow that reeks of NYC style arrogance—even dares to call Bennie "a loser," but he calmly retorts, "Nobody loses all the time." Somewhat ironically, while Bennie eventually does obtain the head, he ultimately loses everything else in the process. While *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* might be a true underdog tale, said underdog goes down and brings virtually everyone else with him.

As far as the timeless 'whore with a heart of gold' archetype is concerned, Elita—a pleasant little pussy-peddler who is quite proud of her naked body as demonstrated by the fact that she is always flaunting it, including in front of potential rapists—is arguably the most sympathetic, lovable, and believable 'sport-

ing girl' in cinema history and I say that as someone that is a great fan of Giulietta Masina's tragic lovelorn streetwalker in Federico Fellini's early classic *Le notti di Cabiria* (1957) aka *Nights of Cabiria*. Indeed, Elita's flagrantly expressed love for booze-loving burnout Bennie is largely responsible for humanizing him as he would be a mostly despicable character otherwise, hence why it is so devastatingly heartbreaking when the protagonist's absurd get-rich-quick scheme ultimately leads to her obscenely senseless premature demise. In fact, while Peckinpah has oftentimes been criticized for being a supposed misogynist, it is ultimately the main two female characters, Elita and El Jefe's teenage daughter, that are the strongest and most sympathetic characters in the entire film as two inordinately selfless women that are willing to sacrifice everything for the love of their man. Undoubtedly, the darkest and most emotionally wounding irony of the film is that Bennie unwittingly assigns his lover Elita's death for a scheme that she was very vocally against from the very beginning, thus highlighting her virtually suicidal loyalty. Indeed, it is almost as if Elita has a sort of noble savage sixth sense that helps her foresee serious danger that bumbling buffoon Bennie lacks. Intending to get married and more or less 'retire' together upon collecting the bounty, the money naturally ultimately becomes pointless once Elita is killed, which indubitably explains why Bennie eventually decides to go on a suicidal killing spree in end in an act that is probably best described as a form of stupendously sick broken-hearted penance of the murderously mournful sort.

After spending a vodka-fueled picnic together where the lovers demonstrate their love for one another and agree on getting married soon in an inordinately sweet and tender Peckinpah love scene that really underscores the auteur's surprising emotional range as a filmmaker, Elita makes the mistake of talking Bennie into camping out in the dangerous Mexican countryside under the stars. Not surprisingly considering the setting and director, the romantic scene in the picture perfect pastoral setting degenerates from classic romance into attempted rape and brutal vengeful murder. Unfortunately, two inhumane hippie bikers (one played by musician-turned-actor Kris Kristofferson and the other by Donnie Fritts) crash their campsite and almost immediately demand at gunpoint that they be able to take turns raping Elita, who, somewhat disturbingly, is quite the trooper in terms of embracing her ugly fate. Indeed, when Bennie violently threatens the armed bikers, Elita replies, "Oh, no, you won't, Benny. I've been here before, you don't know the way," as if she has been in a similar situation many times before. A totally tough hot tamale that even manages play sexual assault by her own rules, Elita takes the biker played by Kristofferson aside, takes off her shirt, proudly puffs out her bare tits, and even violently slaps the would-be-rapist in the face in a manner that seems to turn-on that degenerate bikeboy bastard. Rather curiously, Elita even seems to enjoy it when the biker begins passionately kissing her, but that does not last long as Bennie manages to catch the bikers off guard and then ruthlessly kills them both, but not before declaring

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“Hey! You’re dirt!” to the dirty hippie that is defiling his beloved. Of course, had not Elita played it so cool in the situation and neglected to act like a stereotypical hysterical woman, both she and Bennie would have probably been killed immediately, thus demonstrating that the heroine is more of a natural survivor than her somewhat insecure gringo lover. Undoubtedly, before she is killed, Elita acts as Bennie’s virtual guardian angel, so it is no surprise that he goes in full self-combustion mode after her tragic death. Indeed, Elita may be a cheap Mexican whore, but she has a certain penetrating purity of spirit that her cynical and somewhat jaded lover just completely lacks.

Notably, it is only after the unsavory incident with the bikers—an episode that clearly internally wounds the antihero’s manhood—that Bennie finally dares to come completely clean and admits to Elita his intention of digging up her ex-lover Alfredo’s assumedly somewhat rotten corpse and decapitating the head. While Elita is completely against the plan and describes it as an act of desecration, Bennie cynically describes Alfredo as their “saint” and then absurdly argues like some sort of cynical redneck pseudo-philosopher, “Listen, the church cuts off the feet, fingers, any other goddamn thing from the saints, don’t they? Well, what the hell, Alfredo’s our saint. He’s a saint of our money. And I’m gonna borrow a piece of him.” At this point, Elita, who cannot believe that her beau wants to actually decapitate the head of her rotting ex-beau, almost considers breaking up with Bennie, but she cannot bear to betray her beloved and instead reluctantly guides him to Alfredo’s small hometown village. Somewhat disturbingly, the lovers witness a rather joyous funeral for a small child at the same exact graveyard that Alfredo is buried out. Undoubtedly, the dead child in the small wooden coffin is eerily symbolic of the child that Bennie and Elita will never have together, as the latter will soon be dead. When Bennie finally goes to do the dirty deed and begins digging up Alfredo’s freshly buried grave, Elita simply cannot watch and walks away. Unfortunately, Bennie will never see her alive again, as he is soon knocked out cold with a shovel by an unseen assailant and later wakes up buried underneath the ground next to Elita’s lifeless corpse. Upon digging himself out of the shallow grave, Bennie tries in vain to revive Elita’s corpse, only to absurdly accuse her of wanting to be with Alfredo when she fails to wake up from her perennial slumber. Of course, upon emerging from the ground, Bennie—a pathetic man that has just lost the one person in the entire world that truly loved and cared him—is virtually reborn and proceeds to degenerate into a quasi-nihilistic killer whose best friend becomes a decapitated Mexican head. Indeed, not long after Elita is killed, Bennie manages to catch up with the malevolent mestizos that murdered his lover and stole Alfredo’s head. Upon unleashing a storm of bullets on both the men and killing them in cold blood, the antihero states with a sort of morbid sadistic glee that, “it feels so damn good.” After that, Alfredo’s head becomes Bennie’s best friend and closet confidant. While Alfredo’s family eventually attempts to take the head back

at gunpoint, Sappensly and Quill randomly show up and begin exterminating the poor unwitting peasants with a machine-gun, though the latter is eventually killed by one of Garcia's relatives. When Bennie demonstrates his lack of tact by asking Sappensly "do I get paid?" while the highly homicidal homo hit man is caressing the still warm corpse of his gay lover, the seemingly psychopathic cocksucker gets a little bit irked and naturally attempts to kill the protagonist. Luckily, Bennie manages to kill Sappensly before the sod can get a shot in.

After procuring fresh ice for Alfredo's head and even giving said head a shower later on at his apartment, Bennie symbolically packs the rotten dome piece inside Elita's picnic basket and then visits Max and his goons at their lavish hotel headquarters to ostensibly get paid for the bounty. When a discernibly angry Bennie dares to question Max about what he wants the head for, the sly kraut criminal retorts, "No question, Benny . . . The ten thousand answers it all." With nothing left to lose and completely angry with both himself and the career criminals that hired him, Bennie proceeds to describe how the picnic basket that is carrying the head "belonged to a very special lady" and then abruptly proceeds to shoot and kill every single man in the room. Luckily, Bennie manages to grab El Jefe's business card off of Max's corpse, thus giving him the information he needs to collect the full bounty. Instead of a mere \$10,000, Bennie seeks to gain \$1 million by personally delivering the head to the man that put out the bounty, but unfortunately for the gangster leader the antihero no longer has any use for money. Looking to avenge his dead lover and place the blame at the supposed source of all his largely self-induced troubles, Bennie decides to pay El Jefe at his lavish estate and give Alfredo's head to him personally. Needless to say, Bennie sparks a massacre that he himself will never emerge from. Quite fittingly, if not sickly, Bennie arrives at the house during the baptism of El Jefe's grandson, who also happens to be Alfredo's son. Indeed, the same day that the bastard baby boy is baptized, his father's head is delivered to his grandfather. Needless to say, lovesick lunatic Bennie—a man that has lost everything, not least of all the love of his life and what was left of his personal dignity—is quite dissatisfied when El Jefe simply hands over a briefcase with \$1 million and dispassionately remarks, "Take it and go. I have everything that I want. I have my grandson. So go. Don't forget to take that [Alfredo's head] and throw it to the pigs." In fact, Bennie becomes deeply infuriated, yells, "Sixteen people are dead because of him . . . and you. And me. And one of 'em was a damn good friend of mine!" and then begins shooting El Jefe's henchmen. In a nice little twist, Bennie also murders El Jefe at the request of his daughter, who has still not gotten over the fact that her father put a literal price on her lover's head. In the end, Bennie says to El Jefe's daughter, "You take care of the boy . . . and I'll take care of the father" and then attempts to escape from the gangster's well guarded estate by driving his car through the well-guarded front gate, but he is ultimately struck down with seemingly thousands of bandito bullets in what proves to be a fitting

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quasi-suicidal melodramatic conclusion to one miserable wasted life in a wicked romance film where a forsaken loser avenges the murder of his lover the best way he can.

I think it is safe to say Peckinpah would agree with Robert Bresson's personal cinematic philosophy that, to quote the French master auteur, "I'd rather people feel a film before understanding. I'd rather feelings arise before intellect." After all, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*—an inordinately visceral film that increasingly pokes and prods at the soul of the viewer in a manner that might be seen by some as a sort of metaphysical torture—disgusted many reviewers when it was originally released and I would not be surprised if the average contemporary 'normie' viewer would have a hard time explaining the film's antihero Bennie true motivations, especially in the end when he chooses death over driving away with a small fortune. Of course, one could easily argue that Peckinpah and his film are example of what Poe described when he wrote about "the human thirst for self-torture," but the auteur seemed to be more conscious of his psychological defects than most, thus making it all the more tragic that he died the way he did. Indeed, in a 1974 interview with Joe Gelmis of *Newsday*, Peckinpah would even go so far as to confess during a somewhat depressing moment of self-illumination, "I'm the greatest stupid romantic in the world . . . really stupid. I'm an outsider and I think being an outsider is a lonely, losing job. I would love to be married and live in a split-level house, I love all that shit, but I don't do it. I get into many problems, I drink too much, and I get into too many fights. Next year, I'll be fifty years old and I've got to quit. Three knuckles have been broken; it's gone, right there right there, and right there, you can see it. . . ." Not unlike the antihero of his family, Peckinpah probably would have loved nothing more than to have spent the rest of his life living in a modest Mexican home with his Latina true love Begoña Palacios, but instead he became a slave to his own personal demons and more or less drank himself to death while trying in vain to reignite his stagnating filmmaking career. Of course, to understand Peckinpah's film on a more innate and visceral level, one must be familiar with a certain degree of misery and desperation. Luckily, instead of being marinated in moody melancholia like a Bergman flick, Peckinpah's film concludes with an exceedingly energetic and even transcendental form of self-destruction that feels strangely satisfying. In that sense, one could argue that the film has a quasi-happy ending as the antihero's internal suffering comes to an end and he even manages to avenge a young Mexican teenage mother in the process, thus slightly redeeming himself in the end.

While the increasingly erratic and self-destructive auteur made a number of films throughout his career depicting mad misfits and unhinged loners, none of these come close to the magisterial madness of *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* where full-fledged self-annihilation becomes a poetic form of spiritual transcendence and the only logical answer to a life no longer worth living.

In that sense, it should be no surprise that Peckinpah—a man that had already completely submitted to his dipsomaniacal demons—would never direct another masterpiece, though *Cross of Iron* (1977) is certainly a classic ‘antiwar’ film of sorts and arguably the best film ever directed by an American from the German perspective during WWII. Indeed, Peckinpah’s Steve McQueen vehicle *The Getaway* (1972)—another darkly romantic ‘action’ flick that is by no means a bad film—seems like prosaic pussy play compared to the whimsical unhingement, unrelenting spiritual ravenousness, and morbid moral decrepitude of the true renegade cinematic masterpiece that is *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*. I surely cannot think of another film where an ultraviolent death in rural Mexico at the hands of a bunch of insufferably swarthy bloodthirsty banditos seems like a ‘noble’ and relatively morally redeeming prospect. After all, in the end, the antihero finally demonstrates that his ‘very special lady’ is worth more to him than all the money in the world, even though, quite tragically, he could not actually prove this to her when she was actually still alive. In other words, the film bleeds romantic regret in a perversely poetic fashion, as if Peckinpah was compelled by his haunted (sub)conscious to pay tribute and respect to all the wives and girlfriends that he left emotionally devastated due to his belligerent and explosively abusive behavior. While I have great respect for Peckinpah as a cinematic artist, his films almost always give me a feeling of great relief that I am nowhere near as hopelessly forsaken as the clearly internally wounded man that created them. Notably, Peckinpah’s deeply flawed swansong *The Osterman Weekend* (1973) features a deranged renegade CIA agent portrayed by belated British actor John Hurt that is morbidly obsessed with the absolutely heinous post-coital murder of his beloved platinum blonde wife portrayed by Danish model Merete Van Kamp. Indeed, not unlike the antihero of *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, Hurt’s heartsick character goes on a virtual suicide mission that involves a lot of senseless death and destruction. Of course, both of these characters are indubitably quasi-cryptic expressions of Peckinpah’s own heavy-hearted regret and vulnerability and reveal that the filmmaker was a haunted (ex)romantic that virtually suffered a pathological obsession in regard to his lost loves. Rather revealingly, when asked by Kathleen Carroll of *The Daily News* in 1974 about his intent with *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, Peckinpah gave the less than flattering response, “The picture is about two things: it is about a love story, and it is about vengeance, a dish, as Machiavelli said, that is best served cold. . . . Somebody asked if I hit women, and I said, ‘Of course I do, I believe in equal rights for women. . . .’ If you study and live with something at all, you find that tenderness and violence sometimes go hand in hand.” While I have never hit a woman and consider so-called sexual equality to be a sad joke at the expense of both genders, I can certainly understand the dichotomy of tenderness and violence when it comes to romance, as deep emotions are certainly stirred when it comes to true love, especially when at least

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one person in the relationship suffers from personal demons. After all, there is no greater motivation for murder than some sort of unquenchable thirst for romantic revenge, but I digress. If you ever wondered about the personal and psychological motivations behind spree-killings and/or violent suicides, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is one of the oh-so very few films that offers such daunting insights. Indeed, if you're a lovelorn man suffering from crushing grief and need some inspiration to go on a suicidal mass murder mission, Peckinpah's cinematic work is certainly the film to see as a sort of *Titanic* (1997) for romantically forsaken psychos and weebegone winos. Of course, more importantly, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* is a morbidly romantic masterpiece that contains the following timeless message: "¡Viva la Muerte!"

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CROSS OF IRON

Sam Peckinpah (1977)

A culturally mongrelized Anglo-Kraut co-production shot in what was then commie Yugoslavia with money put up by a West German porn producer, *Cross of Iron* (1977) directed by Sam Peckinpah (*The Wild Bunch*, *Straw Dogs*) is not only a rare anti-war film that has testicular fortitude, but also probably the only American directed World War II flick from the German perspective that is actually worth seeing and does not wallow endlessly in tiresome Teutonophobia. Of course, being a work created with American and British viewers in mind, *Cross of Iron* follows in the culturally disrespectful Hollywood tradition of featuring an international cast speaking in English for the German roles, but at least the film does feature some authentic Aryans, including Fassbinder superstars Klaus Löwitsch (*Despair*, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*), Dieter Schidor (*Satan's Brew*, *Querelle*), and Roger Fritz (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Lili Marleen*), as well as real-life German bank robber turned writer/actor Burkhard Driest (*Son of Hitler*, *Stroszek*), and Academy Award winning Austrian-born actor Maximilian Schell (*Judgment at Nuremberg*, *The Man in the Glass Booth*). Based on the 1956 novel *The Willing Flesh* by German soldier turned novelist Willi Heinrich, which may have been based on the true story of Johann Scherz—*Schwerdfeger*—a German non-commissioned officer and super soldier who was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (the highest award possible in the Third Reich), *Cross of Iron* is the ultra-violent and philosophically unhinged story of a naughty kraut NCO who equally hates National Socialism and aristocrats yet also happens to be one of the greatest and most brave bastards killing Bolsheviks on the dreaded Eastern Front. Featuring quotes/references from Teutonic militarists like Friedrich von Bernhardi and Carl von Clausewitz (the man who wrote the popular aphorism "War is the continuation of Politik by other means"), as well as a crude and rather cynical quote from kraut commie playwright Bertolt Brecht, *Cross of Iron* is also a rare American directed World War II flick in the fact that it actually takes the time to study the 'enemy' and his history as opposed to merely hysterically harping on the holocaust and presenting Hitler as the devil incarnate and the German people as his decidedly demonic disciples. Oftentimes regarded as director Sam Peckinpah's last great film as a drastically declining filmmaker with a seemingly suicidal case of dipsomania and a softspot for cocaine, *Cross of Iron* is a brazenly bloody and brutal, ultra-violent tale of an angst-ridden anti-hero who tries to save his and his platoon's hides while dealing with the perniciousness and pretentiousness of a cowardly Prussian aristocrat officer and seemingly endless hordes of Soviet soldiers.

Opening with a collage of various glorious Nazi propaganda scenes juxtaposed against the horrific stock-footage of the brutal, bloody and body-ridden reality of the Eastern Front with the German children's folk song "Hänschen

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klein” playing in the background, *Cross of Iron* lets the viewer know from the get go that Uncle Adolf and the rest of the Nazi bigwigs were living lives of luxury while the average German was just hoping to survive the next day without facing starvation, frostbite, and/or Bolshevik bullets. After the black-and-white collage, *Cross of Iron* seamlessly segues into a bloody neck-slicing battle introducing anti-hero Rolf Corporal Steiner (James Coburn) and his men, who have killed every single man in a Bolshevik brigade, except a blond preteen Russian soldier boy (Slavko Štimac) who they spare due to his young age. Things change for the worst when a prick of an aristocratic Prussian officer named Captain Stransky (Maximilian Schell), who applied for a transfer from occupied France to have an opportunity to win the coveted Iron Cross, is made new battalion commander in the Kuban bridgehead on the Eastern Front and ultimately becomes the commander of a man that will prove to be his arch nemesis, Steiner. An absurdly arrogant aristocrat with appalling airs of superiority, Captain Stransky, despite his aversion to the ‘socialism’ of National Socialism and a classless society in general, still believes in the German cause and final victory, which baffles his superiors Colonel Brandt (James Mason), and his adjutant, Captain Kiesel (David Warner). Upon meeting Steiner, Stransky demands that he shoot the Russian boy that his platoon captured, which the antagonistic soldier refuses to do, thus ushering in their mutual hatred for one another.

When Captain Stransky gives Steiner the news that he has been made a ‘Senior Sergeant,’ the Prussian aristocrat seems baffled by the fact that the seemingly nihilistic NCO seems rather apathetic about his seemingly prestigious promotion. If Steiner cares about anything, it is the lives of the soldiers in his platoon. The only thing Stransky cares about is his pride and reputation, especially when it comes to obtaining the Iron Cross, which he needs to win or face irreparable shame from his family. When Stransky discovers his leather-fag-mustache-sporting adjutant, Lieutenant Triebig (Roger Fritz), is a crypto-cocksucker after catching him sensually stroking the neck of an Aryan twink named Josef Keppler, it gives him an ace up his sleeve. Of course, Stransky plans to blackmail Triebig for his own ends, which he will ultimately. An ominous and foreboding message is delivered to Steiner when he releases the captive Russian boy and the little lad is gunned down in friendly fire by his own Bolshevik buddies, who ultimately kill a number of Germans as well. While blueblood bitch Stransky cowers in his bunker, his adjunct Lieutenant Meyer (Igor Galo), who just celebrated his birthday, leads a successful counterattack which gets him killed that stops the Slavs from totally slaughtering their platoon, but Steiner is severely injured after attempting to save a wounded comrade, which lands him in the hospital. After awakening from a horrific coma involving phantasmagorical nightmares of Teutonic wraiths, he awakes to a beautiful nurse named Sister Eva (Senta Berger) who cannot resist his boorish charm, thus the two begin a brief romantic fling. While Steiner initially suffers from hallucinations of friends and comrades, as

well as enjoying the sexual company of the nurse, he turns down home leave and his new girlfriend Eva and decides to get back to work and war with his platoon. Upon arriving back to the Eastern Front, Stransky offers to let bygones be bygones and begin a new start with Steiner, but with a catch. Under the false pretense of claiming to have led that counterattack that was really led by martyr Meyer, Stransky has been nominated for the Iron Cross and needs Steiner as one of two signatures (blackmailed homo Triebig has naturally already agreed to sign) to corroborate the fictional story to get the award. Although Stransky offers to essentially make Steiner a rich man after the war, the noble yet nihilistic NCO turns him down. As revenge, Stransky intentionally neglects to notify Steiner's platoon of an incoming Soviet invasion of the German battalion that will mean very immediate death for anyone that stays. Although Steiner and his men survive the Soviet bombardment, they must take special precautions to make their way back to their battalion. On their way, Steiner's platoon happens on an all-female Red Army platoon whose uniforms they steal so they can disguise themselves as Soviet soldiers, but also results in the castration of a hated SS man via cock-chomping and the death of a teenage youth named Dietz, who is bludgeoned to death by a falsely flirting Soviet babe. When Steiner and his men eventually near their battalion, they have the foresight to radio ahead so as to avoid friendly fire due to the fact they are incognito and wearing Russian uniforms, but when Stransky catches wind of this, he orders Triebig to machine gun them down and act like it was an accident, which ultimately kills everyone in the entire Platoon except the subversive Sergeant and his two comrades Corporal Krüger (Klaus Löwitsch) and Private Anselm (Dieter Schidor), both of whom are incidentally played by Fassbinder actors. Naturally, Steiner blows away Triebig with a storm of bullets and Corporal Krüger finishes him off with a knife in the gut. When Steiner eventually confronts Stransky about his dirty and devilish deeds, he cowers like a scared puppy awaiting punishment. While initially intending to kill Stransky, Steiner arms the cowardly aristocrat for battle, but not after calling him an "aristocratic pile of Prussian pig shit!" To prove his dubious honor and show him "how a Prussian officer can fight," Stransky takes up Steiner's challenge to fight like a man for the first time in his rather posh life. While Steiner shows Stransky, "where the Iron Crosses grow," the aristocrat shows he is unable to even reload his MP40 submachine gun weapon with ammunition. Of course, Steiner has the 'last laugh' when he watches Stransky begging for help while being shot at by a preteen Russian boy.

Concluding with real historical photos of Germany's victims as well as victims of subsequent wars and finally the Bertold Brecht quote, "Don't rejoice in his defeat, you men. For though the world has stood up and stopped the bastard, the bitch that bore him is in heat again," Cross of Iron is not so much anti-Nazi as it is generically anti-war. Of course, while being 'anti-war,' Cross of Iron is no pussy pacifist piece as it the film's 'anti-hero'—a man that admittedly hates

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“all officers” (even those ‘enlightened ones’) and the “entire German army” and believes “God is a sadist but probably doesn’t even know it”—is also the greatest and most proficient killer in the entire film, thus making Peckinpah’s film not so much anti-war as it is anti-authority, anti-ruling class, and anti-aristocracy. In *Cross of Iron*, the ‘unknown soldiers,’ the German Wehrmacht, were finally given their due, so it should be no surprise that the film was very popular in Germany, being the biggest box-office hit since *The Sound of Music* (1965). Not unsurprisingly, *Cross of Iron* was a box-office failure in the U.S., which was in part due to the coinciding release of the feel-good blockbuster *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, which ironically utilized Riefenstahl-esque aesthetics. Described by no one less than Orson Welles as “the best war film he had seen about the ordinary enlisted man since *All Quiet on the Western Front*,” *Cross of Iron* is the aesthetic and sociopolitical antidote to the anti-kraut bloodfest and philistine sentimentalist propaganda of S. Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Of course, as demonstrated by the character Colonel Brandt’s remark, “The German soldier no longer has any ideals. He’s not fighting for the culture of the West, not for one form of government that he wants, and not for the stinking party. He’s fighting for his life. God bless him,” *Cross of Iron* makes the noble, if not somewhat naïve, attempt to disassociate the German soldier from National Socialism, which is something that Hollywood has rarely ever done (how many Americans can describe the difference between a German and a Nazi?).

What I found most unintentionally hilarious about *Cross of Iron* is the utilization of James Coburn—a man whose appearance and character scream grizzled American Scot-Irish—in the lead role as a sort of archetypal Western anti-hero and even the German Fassbinder actors featured in the film have a sort of redneck air about them. Undoubtedly, *Cross of Iron* is the closest an American directed World War II flick has come to somehow reconciling Germanness with Americanness, thus making it consumable for the most culturally retarded of American viewers, which was no small task on alcohol-addled director Sam Peckinpah’s part, who sunk \$90,000 of his own money into the film. Of course, Steiner’s anti-aristocratic remark, “If I remember correctly, Kant was the son of a saddle maker and Schubert’s father was a poor schoolmaster. Perhaps talent, sensitivity and character are no longer privileges of the so-called upper class,” will speak to the typical Yank filmgoer. American viewers, who have always displayed a sentimental softspot for the ‘underdog’ as perennial peasants themselves, also probably loved the fact that Peckinpah portrays the Prussian aristocracy as a bunch of pernicious pansies and cowering girly men, even if it goes against historical reality as demonstrated by “The Red Baron” Manfred von Richthofen—the top ace flying pilot of the Great War and arguably the greatest and most well known fighter pilot in human history—as well as German field marshal Erich von Manstein, a Prussian aristocrat, who is also regarded as one of Germany’s

greatest military strategists.

As demonstrated by the ever so wise Colonel Brandt's remark, "Steiner is a myth. But men like him are our last hope. And in that sense, he's truly a very dangerous man," Cross of Iron anti-hero Rolf Steiner is a 'man's man' and the sort of stoic and innately individualistic 'fuck you' kind of renegade ruffian that every (American) man wishes he was and thus acting as a 'stand in' for the American viewer to be able to sympathize with men in the German military, which no other Yank directed film has been able to do. Indeed, Cross of Iron is a celluloid cultural mongrel for sure, but that is also one of the things that gives the film its idiosyncratic nihilistic-nazi-cowboy character as a work that could have never been created within the kraut-contempting confines of the Hebraic Hollywood studio system. More than just a film, Cross of Iron is a coincidental celebration of Europeans of all stripes in its utilization of German, European-American, English, Slavic, etc. actors, which is all the more important considering the historical context of the film. Undoubtedly, World War II was a fratricidal war that led the world to turn into the worldwide multicultural sewer it is today, where even the victors of the war, Great Britain and the United States, suffer the infiltration of hostile rabble from the Third World. Of course, as the Occidental world grows ever darker, both literally and figuratively, with a soaring non-white birth rate and accompanying increase in crime levels and staggering decrease in collective intellect and ingenuity, I think more and more people are going to look to the once reviled German soldiers as heroes and the Americans, English, and French as shabbos goyim duped into murdering their own brothers for the benefit of a perennial enemy. For all the morons that like to gloat, "we'd be speakin' German if da Natzis had won da war!," what is so bad about that? After all, how many Nietzsches, Heideggers, Kants, Goethes, and/or Spenglers has the Anglo-American world produced?!

-Ty E

THE STEEL HELMET
THE STEEL HELMET

Samuel Fuller (1951)

Samuel Fuller's *Steel Helmet* is probably the most honest war film of its time. It presents honest character flaws, racism, inner demons, nihilism, and other very controversial ideas. *Steel Helmet* was able to offend both ends of the political spectrum. Fuller was also summoned by the Pentagon because of a scene in the film showing the shooting of a POW. America had never seen this side before, yet the *Steel Helmet* was loved by audiences. Fuller's honesty and brutality reached them. Race is central to the film's plot and confronted from the beginning. The film's not so likable protagonist Sgt. Zach, is rescued by an orphaned North Korean boy. Zach thinks little of the boy but eventually lets him tag along. Throughout the film slight signs give you the impression Zach is warming up to the boy. When the young boy is killed, Zach breaks down emotionally but tries to cover it up by blaming the boy. In an emotional rage Zach machine guns a POW for insulting a letter the boy has written. The barbaric Zach has finally broken through his strong emotional defense mechanism. Unconventional relationships like Zach's and the young boy had never really been portrayed in war films before *Steel Helmet*.

Another controversial part of *Steel Helmet* was baiting of a black and Japanese American soldier by the North Korean POW. The POW mentions to the Japanese soldier that America's put his people in concentration camps. He tells him that America does not like people with their eyes. The Japanese American seems to be already desensitized and accepting of the position he has taken as ethnically the enemy. The Japanese American considers himself American before anything.

The crimes of the United States and its allies (mainly the Soviet Union) had not been discussed publicly before the film. Dwight Eisenhower's death camps have been said to have killed up to 1.7 million German POWs by starvation and Josef Stalin's NKVD basically shot any German soldier they captured. Stalin also kept Auschwitz open for business.

America's alignment with the Soviet Union is one of the most disturbing things to consider. The worst part being we allowed Eastern Europe to be enslaved by Communism. The Soviet Union had produced countless Genocidal killers such as Leon Trotsky (real name David Bronstein), Lazar Kaganovich (man made famine starved 7-10 million to death in the Ukraine for resisting Communism), and Genrikh Yagoda which eventually lead to the deaths of up to 100 million Christians and Muslims throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These issues, with the Dresden and Tokyo fire bombings, could never convince me that World War II was a war of "Good" vs. "Evil." Such an idea is absurd. I found it interesting in the reading Franz Fanon was quoted in the reading. Fanon was very obsessed with the race issue being a Franco-African soldier fighting for France in World War II. Like the minorities in *Steel Helmet*, Fanon experi-

enced racial discrimination by a country he fought for. Race became central to his various writings. In the later years of his life, Fanon turned to nihilism. The questions that people don't want to ask caught up with Fanon just as the Japanese American and Black soldier in Steel Helmet. At the end of the film, important questions never truly get answered. The Steel Helmet end title "there is no end to this story" perfectly compliments its nihilistic themes. The writings also bring up the issue of Jews wearing blackface to become more "white" and "American." The writing attempted to excuse the Jew from acts of racism in regards to Hollywood blackface. Although persecuted, the Jew had a more privileged place in society. But then again, the Jewish/Black alignment during the Civil Rights era further complicate the issue. The alliance was most likely because both groups became powerful when together. The NAACP was formed by a collection of blacks, Jews, and a German American. Although all groups differ, they could work together for the same cause just as they do in Steel Helmet. This essay is in response to a boring article I read on Fuller.

-Ty E

THE NAKED KISS
THE NAKED KISS

Samuel Fuller (1964)

The Naked Kiss is a pulp gem directed by B movie auteur Samuel Fuller. A city prostitute takes up life as a small town nurse. She soon realizes that the little town is not as clean as she desired it to be. Sam Fuller always had an obsession with examining topics and situations that most people would rather pretend didn't exist. The Naked Kiss may be the most offensive of Fuller's long list of films. Young multicultural crippled children in pirate outfits surround the prostitute turned nurse's new life. Her new love Grant, has a disturbing attachment to these unfortunate children. Grant's family is famous in this small town and his secret may upset quite a few people. Even prostitutes can only tolerate so much. The Naked Kiss was obviously promoted as a lowbrow shock fest during its release. Although obviously catering to its intended audience, The Naked Kiss is much more than a cheap thrill. City boy Samuel Fuller may have contempt for the small town. It is doubtful that he bought into the wholesome values of such a foreign area. Cultural Marxist morons may have even called him a "xenophobe" if it fit their agenda. Samuel Fuller was obsessed with political commentary, sleaze, and the dark depths of humanity. The Naked Kiss features all of Fuller's signature qualities. Like many of his films, it would also be considered a Neo-Noir, considering it was released 20 years after the peak of that genre. Quentin Tarantino, Martin Scorsese, and Brian De Palma borrowed a lot from the late director. Fuller's influence on filmmaking should be more recognized. Expect disturbing a children's song when watching The Naked Kiss. Don't expect graphic violence, nudity, and perversion. The Naked Kiss does more alluding than showing. Fuller knew how to get around the censors.

-Ty E

WHITE DOG

Samuel Fuller (1982)

Part Neo-noir and part blaxploitation, *White Dog* is all bite. After snagging a copy on 5MTL.com, I watched this film with at least zero expectations after baring witness to dog-attack dreck such as *Rottweiler* and *Man's Best Friend*. The film has recently been given a release sometime in 2008 on the Criterion Collection's roster. Just the sound of this melts avid DVD collectors ears and repositions our dreams. Lately, I have noticed Criterion just releasing Kurosawa diarrhea and thought the label's originality had dried up. But with news of *White Dog* being released, all my hopes were fulfilled.

White Dog is a film about two things - racism and primal instinct. When these two go hand in hand, we wind up with a film of this caliber. A single woman, while driving on the wet road at night, hits an albino German Shepard. She quickly gets out of her car and throws the wounded pup in the passenger seat. Upon taking him to the mild-mannered veterinarian, she is slapped with a bill and decides to hold onto him. Her Bruce Springsteen look-alike boyfriend eventually convinces her to set up a flyer displaying the beautiful found dog. After tacking them up for the duration of a couple scenes, the poor girl almost gets raped by a home intruder. What makes this scene so amazing, you ask? The suspense and tension builds up like a wildfire and uncorks it in your face. The dog is sitting on a chair sleeping, with a war film in the background. We witness a struggle and the dogs eyes flicker. Cannons and rifles are screaming across a battlefield. When the battle dies down, the man screams. This nice furry dog that we have seen turns into a bloodthirsty hound bent on ripping this man's throat out. Just when you think the rapist escapes, this dog jumps through a glass window. Upon the man getting arrested, she loves the dog and decides to keep it. While the single woman is filming a scene in a movie, we notice the co-actor who is black. The dog's face contorts into a sheer mask of fury and attacks her viciously. Luckily, she doesn't press charges. The poor woman is confused as to why it attacked her and decides to sleep it out. The scene then cuts to a black delivery driver who gets mauled by the dog then crashes into a store. After a few more incidents, she realizes this is an attack dog. Seeking help, she runs into a colored gentleman with her dog muzzled and leashed. The dog escapes and begins to try to bite the hapless man. All you can really hear is black people screaming about a "WHITE DOG". So, we find out that when this dog was a puppy, the owner hired black junkies to beat it rendering it hateful of the black skin. Enter Keys, a black lion trainer who decides to use the power of soul and redemption and makes it a personal challenge to try to convert this dog. They way they described this dog's "sickness" made it sound as if it were an urban legend. The final scene in this film is horrifying and basks in it's on brutality. Now, this film worked for so many reasons. The dialogue is sharp and

WHITE DOG

tactful while the actors are borderline great or decent. The score was composed by Ennio Morricone. It really completes the mood of the film. You'd think the star of this film would be Key's character but truth be told, it is the White Dog that steals the show. These dogs might be the most incredible acting team ever. These dogs jump through glass, attacks black people, and can act rabid on a single whim. They used 6 different dogs in this film to play our vicious lead. Samuel Fuller is a wizard behind the camera. Bizarre angles invade your screen and shows you a scene in an entirely new way. If only one film had the right to display Black Power, it would be this one. It doesn't shove morals in your face, it just explains to you that it is wrong. The film starts off mellow but then turns into a fast paced noirish film laced with scenes of horror. This film was made in 1982 but was shelved for several years due to the racy elements. Samuel Fuller touched down with his own fears on this film. Just as in *The Steel Helmet*, he shows his opposition to racism, him being a Jew and all. Many film makers have shown their inspiration and gratitude towards Fuller such as Tarantino, Godard, and Jarmusch. He is truly a relevant director who is talented in his own regards. This film was adapted off of a book from author Romain Gary who wrote the book about his own dog. *White Dog* is a powerful film that is not ought to be missed. Expect an amazing transfer from Criterion here soon and save your money for this film. *White Dog* is a brutal, realist film that shows the horrors of mankind in a whole new light. This is easily the best "When Animals Attack" film ever made.

-mAQ

PIN

Sandor Stern (1988)

When I was an angry young man with a unrefined sort of visceral hatred, I listened to a lot of punk/hardcore bands from the late-1970s/early-1980s like Black Flag, Minor Threat, The Misfits, and the Youth Brigade. Not to be confused with the less popular Washington D.C. hardcore band of the same name, Los Angeles-based Youth Brigade was comprised of Jewish (non-racist) skin-head brothers named the Sterns, who even had their own pseudo-fascistic Hitler Youth-esque organization entitled BYO (Better Youth Organization), which also served as their record company, as well as a promoter of their 'Peter Pan Punk' Weltanschauung that used such slogans as "youth is an attitude, not an age" and "every generation has a responsibility to change what they feel is wrong in the world." Anyway, not until a couple years ago would I realize that the Stern brothers of the Youth Brigade had a Canadian-born filmmaker father named Sandor Stern who among other things, wrote the script for the original *The Amityville Horror* (1979) and was the winner of the 1979 NAACP Image Award for "best screenplay" for the now all but forgotten basketball flick *Fast Break* (1979), but more importantly, he was the director/screenwriter for the absurdly aberrant Canadian cult horror-thriller *Pin* (1988) aka *Pin: A Plastic Nightmare*. A patently perverse horror flick in the tradition of the Pinocchio legend, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), *Magic* (1978) starring Anthony Hopkins, and WASP unfriendly horror Hebrew Larry Cohen horror flicks that is based on the 1981 novel of the same name written by V.C. Andrews' ghostwriter Andrew Neiderman (*Child's Play*, *The Devil's Advocate*), *Pin* is a patently contrived horror flick with a Nickelodeon's *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*-esque (incidentally, both are Canadian productions) aesthetic with a cast of characters wearing anachronistic, dandy-like Ralph Lauren wardrobes of the perennial preppy sort, yet it has something curiously captivating about it as a sort of perverted propaganda of the conspicuously kosher variety. Featuring a wayward white bread bourgeois family comprised of individuals that all have striking and seemingly artificial blond hair and blue eyes, *Pin* is a peculiar pseudo-Freudian assault on the Aryan middle-class that is full of sexual impotence, incest, sexually-depraved schizophrenia, frigid housewives, agalmatophilia, fascist fathers, and just about every other libelous attack that Judaic Freud-Marxist maniac Wilhelm Reich made against the goys of Germany. A rather simply assembled and easy-to-follow flick that was clearly made to be palatable for young children, *Pin* is a piece of accidentally absurd aesthetic terrorism geared at influencing the most impressionable and innocent of minds, even if it features fathers giving daughters abortions, mothers molesting life-size anatomically correct medical dummies, brothers controlling their sisters' sex lives, and nephews intentionally giving their bitchy aunts heart attacks, as director Sandor Stern assembled himself a putrid piece of hypnotic

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Hebraic propaganda that is more complex and intricate than it would seem upon a mere superficial glance as the kind of work that psychologically debased and destroyed an entire generation of the Occident.

Dr. Frank Linden (Terry O'Quinn)—a stoic man of ostensibly Germanic descent—is a creepy authoritarian WASP who teaches his children about the 'birds and the bees' and other unflattering bodily functions via ventriloquism through a human-size anatomically correct medical dummy named "Pin" that looks like a real skinless human on superficial glance in the spirit of Clive Baker's *Hellraiser* (1987). Unfortunately, Linden's son Leon (David Hewlett) believes that Pin is a living and breathing guru of immense and all-knowing wisdom, but his little sister Ursula (Cynthia Preston) is certainly not so naïve. On top of the fact that he has no friends because his acutely anal retentive mother reprimands him for playing outdoors and "getting dirty" (all furniture in the Linden household is encased in plastic), Leon is also apparently an undiagnosed schizophrenic with traits of disassociative personality disorder, thus Pin makes for the ultimate plastic imaginary friend. Needless to say, Leon is totally traumatized when he accidentally witnesses his father's nurse raping the anatomically correct dummy Pin, which apparently has a protruding plastic pecker. Just like any serial killer or wicked sex fiend, little Leon naturally grows up to be a much more deranged young man and his ultimately malicious mental illness does not do his sexually active little sister any favors.

Now an angst-addled 18-year-old senior in high school, Leon becomes rather enraged when he discovers a couple of wisecracking jocks have written "if you want an easy screw, Ursula will do!" on his locker and not long after he discovers his 15-year-old sister fornicating in a car with a gentlemen that the teenage schizophrenic brutally beats up to a bloody pulp. Naturally, Leon gives his sister an ultimatum, stating to her, "I don't want a sister who's a tramp. If you ever do it again you can forget I'm your brother." Being a loyal sis, Ursula ultimately abides by brother Leon's demand, but unfortunately she is already pregnant. Leon recommends that they go to Pin for advice as they did as children and the dummy, which the schizo teen now acts as a ventriloquist for after learning the trick from his father, states, "The doctor is a truly scientific man. I don't think morality will affect his attitude. You made a mistake and it must be rectified." Indeed, doctor dad Frank Linden rectifies the mistake by personally performing an abortion on his own knocked-up daughter, even asking his son "Aren't you going to observe, Leon?" in regard to his sister's first child being ripped out of the womb by its physician grandfather. Dr. Linden may be an emotionally vacant fellow who seems to be suffering from socially-retarding Asperger syndrome, but he has enough sense to get rid of Pin when he finally figures out the perturbing degree of his son Leon's penetrating psychosis and rather ridiculous relationship with the doll, but unfortunately the good doctor and his wife are killed in a car accident en route to a medical school (where the doc planned to leave the dummy)

where the man of the house was to give a speech. Being a martial wasp of the pathologically clean-cut and ultra-conservative kind, Dr. Linden hated being late and was driving rather fast and erratically to get to the medical school on time, hence why they crash, but while the Linden parents perish, Pin naturally survives and soon takes over the Linden household.

At first, the Linden children, especially Leon, feel rather liberated by their parents' deaths and immediately take the plastic off the family furniture and Ursula jokes that, in regard to her mother, "I bet she is telling god to take off his shoes." Unfortunately, the fun is short-lived as Leon and Ursula's bitchy and nosey aunt Dorothy (Patricia Collins) moves in, but luckily Leon realizes that she has a heart condition and literally scares her to death via Pin. Ursula takes a job at a library and soon meets a nice and sensitive gentleman named Stan Fraker (John Pyper-Ferguson), which infuriates her brother Leon, who firmly believes the new boyfriend wants to swindle the Linden family inheritance and institutionalize the boy shizzo in a sanitarium. Leon, an aspiring epic poet, also does not take kindly to Stan's negative critique of his novel-in-progress about a "modern day Beowulf" named 'Testes' who "creates as much progeny as he can" and uses rape (including against his sister "Ursula") to do so. Jealous and lonely due to his little sister's hot and steamy relationship, Leon feebly attempts a date with a girl named Marcia Bateman (Helene Udy), but he can only think and talk about Pin when the gal gets undressed and attempts coitus with the schizophrenic sexual coward. Extremely jealous and wanting to keep his sister for himself, Leon drugs Stan and bludgeons him with a wooden statue when he attempts to fight back. Leon concocts a bullshit story about Stan leaving town to altruistically visit a sick friend, which Ursula initially believes, but it does not take long for her to discover her brother's loony lies and she eventually attacks him with an axe as if haphazardly attempting to impersonate Jason Voorhees. In the end, Leon enters a comatose state and takes the identity of Pin.

A virtual pseudo-psychoanalytic celluloid catalog of stereotypically Jewish diagnosis of Nordic pathologies in the form of a seemingly humble horror-thriller, Pin brings to life in ridiculous melodramatic form scatological Semite Norman Mailer's analysis, "The mind of the Wasp bears more resemblance to the laser than the mind of any other ethnic group... To wit, he can project himself 'extraordinary distances through a narrow path. He's disciplined, stoical, able to become the instrument of his own will, has extraordinary boldness and daring together with a resolute lack of imagination. He's profoundly nihilistic. And this nihilism found its perfect expression in the odyssey to the moon—because we went there without knowing why we went." Indeed, while the only normal member of the Linden family is Ursula—a 'progressive' girl who has sex with a number of men at a young age before marriage—everyone else in the family, especially father Frank Linden and Leon, both suffer an unhealthy detachment from reality and communication with other people. While Dr. Linden lacks

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emotional connection and sexual maturity to such a degree that he must teach his children about sex by proxy through a medical dummy as opposed to speaking directly to them like a normal and loving father would, Mother Linden is a sexually repressed wench who suffers from such a bad case of obsessive compulsive disorder that she prevents her son from developing friendships, thus helping to lead to his debilitating psychosis and dumb dummy fetishism. As originally theorized by late 19th century Viennese Jewish intellectuals like psychoanalyst 'soul doctors' like Sigmund Freud, Sandor Stern depicts Dr. Linden's brilliance as a physician and Leon's talent as a perverted poet in *Pin* as the result of unhealthy mental pathologies and not as true genius, which are the sort of libelous claims that have become rather absurd clichés in modern academia that speak more about the mental state of the intellectual than the person being 'analyzed.' Indeed, Mailer's description of the WASP mind being more like a "laser than the mind of any other ethnic group" is certainly readily apparent in the character of Dr. Linden and his son Leon in *Pin*—a virtual work of celluloid Kabbalah black magic unleashed on the soul of Faustian youth, just as multicultural merry shows like Nickelodeon's *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* worked in a similarly malicious anti-Occidental fashion, albeit to a less gratuitous and perverse degree that does not feature nurse-on-dummy action and father-on-daughter abortions. Undoubtedly, if there is anything 'scary' about *Pin*, it is not its psychological horror show about an unhealthy boy with a curious relationship with a dummy, but the degree to which director Sandor Stern goes to metaphysically defile traditional Nordic man and his culture, religion, and achievements. Featuring a villain with an archetypical Hitler Youth-like appearance and haircut that fantasizes about impregnating as many young ladies as possible in the spirit of the SS Lebensborn in a totally white world of physically immaculate blond and blue-eyed people with something ugly and incestuous yet sexually-repressed hiding just underneath the surface, *Pin* is what happens when an Aryan-hating Hebrew does Hitchcock and creates something unintentionally enthralling as if directed by Woody Allen's humorless, horror-movie-loving third cousin. If one is looking for a more objective approach to Jewish versus Aryan families, compare the fictional Nordic family depicted in Sandor Stern's *Pin* to the real-life Hebraic pedophile ring of foul family in the documentary *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003) directed by Jewish auteur Andrew Jarecki. Admittedly, I had a lot of fun watching Nordic lunatic Leon going deranged with his dummy comrade in *Pin*, but the film did not even remotely horrify me like the child-deflowering father-son duo in *Capturing the Friedmans*.

-Ty E

BATMAN: DEAD END

Sandy Collora (2003)

Batman is a superhero with a real weakness. Not some moon rock or a certain material weakness; Batman is emotionally vulnerable. Seeing him masquerade around in film is often embarrassing. In the Kilmer/Clooney films, he was a bit of a tart. Personally, I didn't enjoy Batman Begins as much as i wanted to. It was the much-needed origin, but it bored me far too much, and the costume of Scarecrow was mega disappointing. Batman: Dead End is exactly what the Batman films needed. The streets are given a dimly lit atmosphere in which his pain is the only thing he wallows in. The Joker has escaped from Arkham asylum and is as crazy as ever and is one of the more faithful live-action renditions of the Joker, save for Heath Ledger's terrifying character. This tortured character realizes that what the Joker has become was his fault. Cue the Aliens and the Predators. About the far into this short, my brain exploded. I was a fan of the Batman VS. Aliens/Predator comic books but the authenticity of such a situation always flabbergasted me. There is no way any mortal man could kill something of this caliber. Let's face it, Bruce Wayne isn't an Aryan superhero like Schwarzenegger. The budget was at around \$30,000 dollars and this definitely shows in it's graphic novel lighting. The Predators look faithful to the original and the Xenomorph's are amazing. Batman proves he is a bad ass. For once, I was rooting for this short film to magically expand. A knife fight scene to reckon with. Regardless if you like Kevin Smith or not, This is the definitive Batman film. That is, until The Dark Knight is released.

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Sandy Tung (1991)

As far as I am concerned, there is no such thing as a bad Dennis Hopper film, at least if the legendary (and somewhat infamous) actor is portraying one of the central characters. Indeed, in his quite remarkable ability to turn otherwise shitty films into something quite enjoyable, including clichéd anti-Southern leftist garbage like Stephen Gyllenhaal's *Paris Trout* (1991), Paul Schrader's hopelessly kitschy pseudo-Lovecraftian made-for-TV turd *Witch Hunt* (1994), and Jan de Bont's big blockbuster booger *Speed* (1994), Hopper almost had alchemical powers as an actor. Arguably, the best example of Hopper's singular talent as an actor is the rarely seen experimental antiwar drama *Tracks* (1977) directed by Hebraic wuss Henry Jaglom (*A Safe Place*, *Last Summer in the Hamptons*), who is a strikingly self-exploitative and nauseatingly narcissistic auteur that I admittedly have a special sort of hatred and contempt for. A self-described "male lesbian" (notably, in the doc *Who Is Henry Jaglom?* (1997), Candice Bergen describes Jaglom as having physically resembled a "samurai transvestite" during the 1970s) who thrives on making gynocentric low-budget melodramas featuring singularly repugnant broads and bitch-boys whining and complaining in a thoroughly self-indulgent fashion that hints the director probably missed his true calling as a quack psychoanalyst, Jaglom is a master of the intricately melodramatically mundane, yet somehow his second feature is a mostly continuously enthralling flick that even has a bit of good old fashioned testicular fortitude. Shot guerrilla style on various trains without permits and with Jaglom's accountant (his brother Michael Emil) and producer (Zack Norman aka Howard Zuker) playing important roles (in fact, both men would portray a comedic criminal duo in the director's subsequent feature *Sitting Ducks* (1980)), *Tracks* was considered so controversial and in poor taste upon its release since it was made not long after the end of the catastrophic mess that was the Vietnam War that it is the sole film in the director's oeuvre that never received theatrical distribution (which is saying a lot considering Jaglom has made so many embarrassingly horrendous films that no one would want to watch). Not surprisingly, the film was not Jaglom's first excursion in anti-Vietnam War cinema, as he was responsible for buying and distributing the Academy Award winning documentary *Hearts and Minds* (1974) directed by Peter Davis after Columbia Pictures refused to distribute it, or as Peter Biskind wrote in his book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998), "BBS sued Columbia for various monies allegedly owed, and to force [David] Begelman to released HEARTS AND MINDS. Eventually, Jaglom ponied up \$1 million, which he and his partner, Zack Norman, had laboriously raised from dentists and plastic surgeons over the course of five years to produce his own Vietnam-themed picture, TRACKS, to star Dennis Hopper. He bought HEARTS AND MINDS from Columbia, then turned around and en-

tered into a distribution deal with [John] Calley, who released the film in December 1974, in time to qualify for the Oscars.” Luckily, *Tracks* is nowhere near as lame and emotionally manipulative as a lackluster far-left agitprop piece like *Hearts and Minds*. In other words, Hopper completely dominates the film and, at the very least, should be considered a secondary auteur, as a true mensch who blessed Jaglom’s flick with an ample degree of precious lifeblood that is completely nonexistent in the director’s other films.

Forget the sappy sentimentalism of Hal Ashby’s *Coming Home* (1978), Jaglom’s film utilizes Hopper’s visceral acting prowess to violently express the sense of abject defeat and dreary disillusionment that many Vietnam War veterans felt upon returning home after oftentimes barely surviving battle and discovering no big parades or packs of beautiful women waiting for them. For anyone that is familiar with Jaglom’s oeuvre, it is quite obvious that Hopper took over *Tracks* and made it his film (in fact, in the audio commentary for the Paramount DVD release of the film, the filmmaker reveals that Hopper tore up a long monologue that he had written for the ending and instead completely improvised the dialogue for the unforgettable final scene). While, quite unsurprisingly, never an actual soldier himself, Hopper was the son of a Master Sergeant in the OSS during World War II, so it is somewhat fitting that he portrays a deranged Army First Sergeant (1SG) in the film. Edited down to 90 minutes from a 4 hour and 15 minute cut first cut (somewhat ironically, Jaglom’s first film job was being involved in the reediting of Hopper’s debut feature *Easy Rider* (1969), which apparently originally had a 4+ hour running time), *Tracks* is a sort of raw and erratic cinematic ride from post-hippie hell where Hopper, who was at the height of his substance abuse problems at the time of shooting, gives a truly tenacious and fittingly emotionally tyrannical tour-de-force performance that epitomizes why he is best remembered today as a wayward acting legend who was able to channel his real-life mental idiosyncrasies into his performances. Indeed, if Hopper ever experienced anything resembling boot camp, it was probably his experience working on the film where, despite being in his early 40s at the time of shooting, seems like a genuinely troubled young man that suffers from some serious sexual hangups. Jaglom’s only film featuring an action sequence, *Track* is a semi-surreal psychodrama about a soldier that, despite being on the brink of complete mental deterioration, is on a special assignment to escort the corpse of his comrade to his hometown and takes a long train ride across the country where he meets various curious characters and even makes a desperate attempt at love when he is not suffering debilitating hallucinations that involve phantom female killers in military drag, jovial gang-rapes, and interracial kidnappings, among other uniquely unforgettable things that you would never expect to see in a film by the director of such excruciatingly feminine whine-fests as *Eating* (1990) and *Babyfever* (1994).

At the very beginning of *Tracks*, quasi-antihero 1st Sgt. Jack Falen (Dennis

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Hopper) is depicted sitting on a train, asking an unseen person, "Do you think about your childhood often?" and then awkwardly remarking, "I think about mine...when the going gets rough. I think about my childhood at the strangest times." Indeed, as an American boy from a poor rural town who grew up regularly exposed to heroic and triumphant World War II propaganda, Falen has a rather romantic of war that is completely contrary to his personal experiences as a soldier that saw action in the Vietnam War and now suffers from a pernicious case of posttraumatic stress disorder as a result. Throughout the film, Falen is depicted carrying around a small radio that is incessantly blasting classic WWII propaganda pop songs sung by the likes of Glen Miller, Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore, Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, etc., as if he is attempting to live in another time and place that exists solely in his imagination. Of course, Falen listens to these obscenely outmoded anti-jap and anti-kraut pop tunes for largely therapeutic reasons, as he oftentimes finds himself needing to find a 'happy place' as a result of the PTSD he has received from his brutal wartime experiences. Despite all evidence to the contrary, in Falen's mind, his dead buddy is going to receive an extremely warm reception as a 'hero' when he is delivered in a coffin to his hometown. In short, Sergeant Falen suffers from a horrible case of denial because, if he were to accept that his traumatic experiences and the deaths of his comrades were totally pointless and completely in vain, it might lead to the irrevocable disintegration of his extremely fragile psyche. Luckily, before elements of reality begin seeping into his rather thick skull and his head eventually figuratively explodes, Falen manages to have some fun with the colorful collection of characters that he encounters on his epic train journey to hell.

Since he is a fairly morose guy with glaring anxiety issues and low-esteem that seems like he could explode into a homicidal rage at any moment as a result of the most minor personal discomforts, it is a good thing that Sergeant Falen's train is occupied by wisecracking middle-aged Hebrews and a couple hot young chicks, among other eclectic individuals. Indeed, aside from a balding blond Judaic dude named Emile (Michael Emil) that likes philosophizing about chess and masturbation and a bald and swarthy land-peddling swindler named Gene (Zack Norman), a beautiful young brunette named Stephanie (Tyronne Power's daughter Taryn Power, whose final film appearance was incidentally in Jaglom's *Eating* (1990)) and her somewhat less attractive friend Chloe (Topo Swope of Edwin Sherin's *My Old Man's Place* (1971), which is also about a deranged Sergeant with PTSD) are just a couple of the passengers that Falen somewhat reluctantly befriends on the train. Hardly a natural lady's man, the seemingly sexually inexperienced army sergeant is introduced to Stephanie and her friend Chloe by an effeminate lady's man that dresses like a disco fag named Mark (Dean Stockwell, who of course would later join Hopper in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) where he would sport similarly flamboyant clothing). When Mark randomly pays Falen a friendly visit in his room to shoot the shit, the protagonist

describes how he is accompanying his friend's corpse across the country and describes how he and his dead comrade would "get high from Thai weed" while hanging out in foxholes and "watch [ing] the tracer bullets flash over us." In a rather revealing scene that demonstrates how delusional the protagonist is, Falen also states quite romantically regarding his dead friend, "I saw him do the most incredible things. I mean, this man was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. But the way he bought it, the way he 'Katie'd by the door.' A tracer bullet, like, went right into the foxhole, and, like, it was like a flare coming out of him, and he was running around crazed. That's the way he bought it, and I'm taking him home. He's gonna have a band, he's gonna have a parade, he's gonna... He's..." Of course, Falen is in for a rude awakening when he finally comes to the bitter realization that not a single person, including family members, gives a shit about his dead buddy.

Unfortunately, when Falen joins Mark and the two girls for dinner one night, he almost suffers a panic attack and abruptly decides to exit the table to hang out with an inordinately wise young black bartender. When Stephanie gets up from the table and asks the bartender for some olives for her cocktail, Falen seizes the opportunity and awkwardly tell her how she looks like a girl "in a wheat field, with a hammer and a sickle" that he once saw on a commie propaganda poster in East Berlin. From there, Falen acts even more bizarre and unnerving, stating to the little lady in a somewhat creepy fashion like a deranged schoolboy with an unhealthy crush, "I think you're beautiful. I know that's very corny these days, to think somebody's beautiful, but you are. God, I want to hold you and talk to you and feel you, but I don't know how. See, I'm really shy, and this is very hard for me. I think I'd like to see you in my room." While Stephanie ultimately reluctantly agrees to follow Sergeant Falen back to his room, the protagonist makes a serious ass out of himself by kissing and licking her in a grotesque fashion in what is indubitably one of the most absurdly awkward make-out sessions in cinema history, thereupon inspiring the young beauty to abruptly flee the scene as if she just encountered a perverted three-dicked devil. Undoubtedly, the most pathetic aspect of this scene is that Stephanie gives Falen multiple chances to arouse her and treat her with the romantic attention that she desires, even asking him "Can I show you how I like to be kissed?" and then clearly showing him what she likes with her supple lips, but unfortunately the protagonist is a sad and pathetic sexual autistic who seems to have nil carnal knowledge. Luckily, the next morning, a wealthy yet fairly unattractive woman that is simply credited as 'The Lady' (Jaglom regular Barbara Flood) more or less jumps on Falen's cock while violently tonguing him in the same grotesque fashion that the protagonist is quite talented at. While kissing the lecherous lady, Falen discuss how garter belts turn him on because his mother wore them, even salaciously stating in regard to his Oedipal obsession with his progenitor, "I wanted her so bad." Indeed, Falen is both a literal and figurative mother-fucker if there ever was one.

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As one can expect for a Jaglom film, a number of degenerates have small but memorable cameo roles, including a dorky tarot card reader (actor/director Paul Williams, who is responsible for directing forgotten cinematic works like *Out of It* (1969) and *Dealing: Or the Berkeley-to-Boston Forty-Brick Lost-Bag Blues* (1972)), who attempts to impress a group of attractive young gals by stating regarding the “The Star (XVII)” card, “See that. You got all the fluids going on inside of you. It’s not really fluids, it’s energy. You’ve got to put that energy right in the perineum. Perineum. You know where the perineum is? The perineum is right between the anus and the vagina. Now if you can get that energy into your perineum, see, and then bring it up your back into your head, then drop it through your head back down to your solar plexus, and then let it drop back down to the perineum again. You never have to make love again. ‘Cause you could just circulate your energy right around. You’ll never have to make love again.” Needless to say, the girls practically shit their pants laughing while the tarot reader preposterously pontificates on the power of the perineum (actually, contrary to what Mr. Williams states, the female taint is quite weak and often suffers trauma during childbirth). While playing cards with Emile, Gene, and a couple other guys, Falen attempts to impress a big burly middle-aged black man by passionately stating, “I’m escorting a coffin. Across the country. It’s a black man in that coffin. It’s a great black man. He saved my life, and I’m taking him home. I’m taking him home a hero. He’s gonna be Jackie Robinson when he gets home.” Naturally, Falen is not too happy when the negro gets visibly agitated and states, “I lost 21 guys in Korea. They’re buried over there. 21 out of 30. Why in the hell do you think you have the monopoly on feeling sorry for yourself? You only have one. I had 21. Sergeant, get off my back with this bull. I’ve lived a lifetime. A lifetime with 21 dead men,” thus further wounding the protagonist’s sense of pride. In fact, Falen is so upset by the jigaboo ex-GI’s less than sensitive remarks that he suffers a horrific hallucination where he imagines seeing Mark and a couple other guys laughing while gang-raping Stephanie in the back of the train car. Of course, Falen’s visions only get all the more disturbing from there as he becomes more and more aware of the harsh bitter truth.

During a rather revealing scene that manages to be both sad and pathetic, Falen’s exposes his fairly desperate reasons for joining the army by stating to Mark in regard to his impoverished childhood, “I wanted to know where the trains were going. I wanted to know where they were going [...] ‘Cause I couldn’t go anywhere. We were real poor. I couldn’t go anywhere, and I wondered where they were going. And so I joined the Army.” While Falen and Mark share a fairly sentimental moment of camaraderie after the two realize that they are both child runaways, their friendship comes to a swift and ugly end when Falen goes crazy upon seeing some MPs on the train. Indeed, after stripping off his uniform and scaring guests by walking around completely nude, Falen attempts to evade the military men by putting on civilian clothing and hiding in his room,

so naturally he freaks out and refuses to help Mark when his friend randomly appears while in a clearly distressed state and begs him for help in what is ultimately a darkly hilarious scene juxtaposed with Carson Robison's singing the anti-Japanese WWII propaganda song "We're Gonna Have To Slap The Dirty Little Jap." Indeed, upon abruptly showing up at Falen's room, Mark reveals he is a fugitive yippie Abbie Hoffman type on the run and that he is attempting to evade being captured by government operatives, declaring while in a terribly panicked state, "I'm not what I seem. I'm not the guy that you've even met. I'm political, very political, radical political. And I mean, all my jewelry and stuff, it's just a cover, 'cause I'm underground, very underground. And there's someone on this fucking train that's a fink. So all you got to do is hide me. Will you do that for me?" Of course, Mark's revelation causes Falen to suffer serious cognitive dissonance to the point where he eventually becomes exceedingly enraged and somewhat irrationally screams at his new friend, "My buddy died because of guys like you. You're the guys that killed him. You're the guys that killed him! I want you out in the hall" and then throws him out of the room." After a semi-slapstick oriented chase sequence that involves the outlaw revolutionary jumping out of the train and attempting to board another, Falen passively watches from his room window as Mark is captured and manhandled by Gene and a couple Gestapo-esque hippie-hating MPs. Indeed, to the surprise of both Falen and the viewer, it turns out that Gene is actually a 'fink' government agent. As for Falen, he later rationalizes his treachery by remarking in regard to Mark that, "It's guys like that that have to be sacrificed, no matter how much you like them," though it is clear that he is actually wracked with guilt.

While Stephanie opts to ditch her plans with Chloe to stay on the train with Falen, the protagonist badly botches the clearly doomed romance. Notably, Stephanie reveals to Chloe that she is only interested in Falen as a sort of pity fuck, stating to her friend, "I just want to give him something nice, just once. He's had nothing nice in his whole life," as if she is a premium piece of pussy that is on a Christ-like mission of sexual altruism to sacrifice her glorious golden cunt to a lowly lumpenprole loser who probably does not even know where to insert his prick. Unfortunately for Falen, when it comes to finally prodding Stephanie's prized puss, the good sergeant suffers a sort of drugless trip during mid-coitus where he begins shouting in regard to betraying Mark, "It's guys like that that have to be sacrificed, no matter how much you like them," thus inspiring the little lady to scream "you're crazy" and "get away from me" and then runaway like her life depended on it. Of course, considering the sex scene is somewhat surreal and inordinately ethereal as a result of taking place in the curious setting of a sunny and scenic grassy hill, the film hints that this is just another one of Falen's hallucinations, though it is unquestionable that the foredoomed romance has ended as completely Stephanie disappears from the film after her truly nightmarish erotic encounter with the angst-ridden antihero. As can be expected at

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this point in the film when the antihero's behavior and actions are increasingly unpredictable and nonsensical, it becomes harder and harder for both the viewer and Falen to discern between reality and delusion. In one of the more darkly comedic hallucinations scenes, an old rich woman attempts to calm Falen's worries by patronizingly stating to him, "Don't you know that everything's going to be just fine? You're going to forget this in no time flat. Why, good heavens. I've seen this happen to so many people, and some of them can't take it, but you can take it. I can see it right in your eyes. You're a courageous little boy, and you've nothing to worry about, believe me," only for two high yellow negro train workers to appear out of nowhere, pick up the old woman as if they are terrorists kidnapping a hostage, and then disappear with her just as abruptly as they appeared. Additionally, when Emile disappears from the train and Falen asks Gene where he is, the land-peddler-cum-government-agent acts like he is crazy and says he does not know anyone named "Emile," thus causing the viewer to call into question every single thing that they have watched previously in the film.

If the trip was a decided downer, Falen's homecoming is a soul-crushing nightmare where he is brought face-to-face with the bitter realization that he has been trying to ignore during the entire film, thereupon eventually causing the antihero to go completely berserk like a real ancient Germanic berserker that is tripping on acid. Indeed, upon arriving to his hometown and exiting the train with his dead comrade's coffin, Falen is shocked to discover that there is no large crowd of people waiting there to welcome him and his postmortem friend as heroes. After his less than glorious arrival, Falen gets somewhat nostalgic and decides to revisit all the important places from his childhood, including his elementary school and family home, though he does not find a single person at either of these locations. Undoubtedly, it almost seems if Falen is trapped in a ghost town. Notably, while all this is going on, Falen is carrying his portable radio and blasting WWII propaganda songs, as if it will make him feel more like the hero that he expected to be treated as for his service in the war effort. In a pathetic symbol of Falen's sub-meager family background, there is a wooden sign on the wall of his home that reads, "Poverty Is No Crime" (although mere speculation, somehow I doubt a real poor person would own such a sign). Upon entering his childhood bedroom, it becomes quite apparent why Falen joined the military, as the room is full of World War II propaganda posters and armies of toy soldier figurines that clearly imprinted the protagonist with a deep fetishization for boots and bullets at a very young age. Of course, quite unlike the Vietnam War, World War II was the supposed 'good war' where American soldiers ostensibly proved that good could truly triumph over evil by stopping the sinister krauts, japs, and guidos from taking over the world and were thus warmly welcomed as morally pristine first-class heroes when they came back home. When Falen finally goes to his comrade's funeral, he is shocked to see that no one is

there aside some cemetery workers and a couple middle-aged men that the protagonist previously met at the train station. As a man that expected a lavish parade full of pageantry and thousands of highly sympathetic mourners for his friend, Falen is naturally disturbed by the low turnout at the funeral and screams, "He's the biggest hero that's ever been here. No one showed up. No one." After scaring off the handful of funeral attendants by demanding that they leave, Falen begins stating to himself in an increasingly irate fashion, "I love. I love. I love. I really love. I really do love. I really do love. I love. I love. I love. And I hate. And I hate. And I hate. And the guys I love. 'Cause I love I hate! 'Cause I love I hate! 'Cause I love! 'Cause I love! You motherfuckers!" while bizarrely entering his dead friend's grave. From there, Falen opens his comrade's casket and finds weapons, an army uniform, and a Vietnamese flag instead of his black buddy's body. When Falen emerges from the grave, he begins charging an imaginary enemy while sporting full military regalia and wielding a weapon in a symbolic scene that demonstrates that the protagonist has finally entered a metaphysical hell and embraced full-blown insanity.

While Jaglom is as distinctly ball-less as filmmakers come as a sort of spiritual eunuch whose films make those associated with the dreadful mumblecore movement seem like aesthetically audacious expresses of rampant masculinity, *Tracks* is indubitably dripping with irate testicular fortitude, albeit of a somewhat unhinged drugged out sort that only an insanely intemperate nut-job like Dennis Hopper could be capable of. Although the film predictably makes a couple attempts to make stupid left-wing statements, I think it ultimately manages to say more about the war and zeitgeist than most antiwar flicks of its time due to its overall abstract and keenly chaotic nihilistic spirit. After all, there is nothing more phony, pathetic, and patronizing than a film that attempts to coldly intellectualize the horrors of war. Not surprisingly, according to Jaglom, the only fans the film had when it came out was Vietnam War vets, who were probably desperate to find some sort acknowledgement of their miserable plight as men that risked their lives to fight in an uniquely unpopular war that completely divided the nation to the point where these soldiers were looked at as outcasts and even war crimes (of course, kitschy big budget Hollywood twaddle like Brian De Palma's *Casualties of War* (1989) would later help to perpetuate this social stigma). Also according to Jaglom, who had the film reels of the flick shipped to *The Godfather* director, *Tracks* apparently partly influenced Francis Ford Coppola to begin working on *Apocalypse Now* (1979), which of course ultimately featured Hopper in a more harmless but all the more patently pathetic role. Somewhat surprisingly (or not so if you are familiar with the fact that Jaglom was friends with her), erotic novelist Anaïs Nin, who was herself married to American experimental filmmaker Hugh Parker Guiler (aka 'Ian Hugo'), was also a fan of the film and once wrote, "TRACKS takes you into the heart of the American Nightmare." Arguably, more interestingly, Peter Biskind, who heavily

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documented Hopper's borderline insane behavior during the late 1960 through 1980s in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998), paid the film and its lead a great compliment when he wrote that it featured, "The best, most powerful performance of Dennis Hopper's career!" While not exactly a conventional war film by any means, I, for one, would certainly rather re-watch *Tracks* over so-called classics of the genre like *Coming Home* (1978), *Platoon* (1986), *Hamburger Hill* (1987), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *Casualties of War* (1989), *Heaven & Earth* (1993), and the various other covert agitprop pieces that remind me why I usually cannot watch a film about the Vietnam War without feeling the urge to stomp some Hollywood producer to death.

Naturally, considering both films feature the actor involved in strange behavior while roaming around a train like a mental patient that escaped from a loony bin, it is only fitting that Hopper also portrayed Tom Ripley in Wim Wenders' Patricia Highsmith adaptation *Der amerikanische Freund* (1977) aka *The American Friend* the same year that *Tracks* was released, though the *Easy Rider* director strangely seems like he could be nearly twenty years older in the German-French coproduction (incidentally, the next year Hopper would appear in the obscure French flick *L'Ordre et la sécurité du monde* (1978) aka *Last In, First Out* directed by Claude d'Anna, which also features a train setting). As someone that has proudly gone to the effort to hunt down Hopper's more obscure films, including such unloved flicks as Silvio Narizzano's psychedelic quasi-giallo *Las flores del vicio* (1979) aka *Bloodbath* aka *The Sky Is Falling* and Roland Klick's unfortunately somewhat botched rock business flick *White Star* (1983), I can say without hesitation that Jaglom's film contains the most criminally overlooked and underrated performance of the self-destruction dipsomaniacal actor's singularly uneven career. Indeed, even as a proud and unrepentant anti-Jaglomite, I cannot deny that *Tracks* is a wickedly wild and waywardly whimsical cinematic ride that almost makes me wish I could take a cross-country trip on a train with a deranged war veteran and a couple eccentric Mel Brooks-esque heebis. While the filmmakers of the New Hollywood era like to style themselves as original arthouse auteurs that were following in the footsteps of Godard and Truffaut, Jaglom's feature, which oftentimes feels wholly improvised and features a fairly anarchic narrative structure to the point of having a fairly unforgettable oneiric essence, undoubtedly makes the cinematic works of Coppola, Scorsese, and Bogdanovich seem quite contrived and classically Hollywood-esque by comparison.

In his directing of *Tracks* and backing of Peter Davis' doc *Hearts and Minds* yet vocal support of Zionism and Israel, Jaglom represents the height of hyper Hebraic hypocrisy that epitomizes Hollywood. Indeed, Jaglom's first film was actually an amateurish five-hour 8mm Zionist documentary featuring Israeli martial music that the filmmaker shot in the aftermath of the Six-Day War during one of his many trips to Israel (in fact, fellow wealthy kosher commie Bert Schneider, who was actually once Jaglom's Jewish summer camp counselor,

decided to hire him to reedit *Easy Rider* after seeing the doc and being impressed with the film's editing). In other words, Jaglom and virtually all of the other Jews in Tinseltown are not the loving humanistic peaceniks and pacifists that they pretend to be, as the majority of them are racially nationalistic Jewish supremacists who only bitch about war when it is a war against an ideology that they support like communism and other anti-European causes (notably, Jaglom's bud Schneider was a longtime financial supporter of the Black Panther Party and even helped Huey P. Newton to flee to Cuba after he committed the senseless non-political killing of an 18-year-old girl who offended him by calling him "baby"). Indeed, if hostile Vietnamese people surrounded Israel as opposed to Arab cavemen, Jaglom and his kosher kinsmen would certainly not pretend to shed tears for a bunch of dead gooks. Still, despite its occasional retarded and clichéd far-left sentiments (e.g. Dean Stockwell portraying an Abbie Hoffman-esque Yippie type who is betrayed by the protagonist), *Tracks* is one of the few films about the Vietnam War that does not portray vets in a phony, sentimental, and/or patronizing fashion, which is largely the result of Hopper's ballsy no bullshit performance as a Kansas-bred man of Scottish stock who, quite unlike candy ass Martin Sheen in Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and his tranny-fucking son Charlie in Stone's *Platoon*, is someone that America's white majority can identify with. Forget other antiwar flicks, Jaglom's film ultimately makes for the perfect doubt feature with Hopper's similarly obscenely underrated feature *Out of the Blue* (1980). While Mr. Hopper may have never went to war, there was certainly a war going on his head, thus making it all the more fitting that *Tracks* is an allegorical flick that depicts in a delightfully deranged way one man's death march to hell. Undoubtedly, far more important than its dubious antiwar message, the film demonstrates that madness can be an art form, with Herr Hopper being a sort of all the more primitive van Gogh of acting.

-Ty E

ZINDA
ZINDA

Sanjay Gupta (2006)

If you are going to incredibly rip-off a film, at least do it right. Zinda is the infamous Oldboy copy. Except filled with shitty English here and there and horrible Indian actors. The turks remakes are classics compared to this pile of scathing shit. Nothing remotely interesting about this film arises. So what happened was, this film called Zinda was released and the similarities were all too familiar. Bollywood or not, i will never forgive the label. So this plot follows a man who is jailed for 14 years in a steel room with no explanation why. He is then released onto the roof top out of a trunk with clothes and a cellular phone and he has 4 days to find out why. Already sound familiar? So what is the prospect of India run off of? Taxi's. No matter how many New York stereotypes this fits, it is true. So he meets the female who drives him around to perform many hammer attacks. You really cant write anything about the similarities as it would give away too much of the plot and that is unacceptable if you still haven't seen Oldboy. While the idea of watching a straight copy and paste film of a classic does sound appealing, i urge you to never watch this film. Many remakes or inspirations dont fail too incredibly hard because they attempt to capture the "soul" of the film. The feeling of woe, despair, or utter happiness that the film provides. Zinda does nothing. It is filmed with a shitty camera, horrible camera shots, even worse fight scenes that look like they fit in a original Star Wars film, and the most horrible acting/action effects i have ever seen. Zinda is not a fun viewing film in the slightest. Not even to laugh at. Side effects include stuffy nose, irratated skin, considerably low self-eesteem, and temporary blindness. Proceed with Caution.

-Maq

YOU ARE NOT I

Sara Driver (1981)

Despite the fact that his films, especially his debut *Permanent Vacation* (1980) and *Broken Flowers* (2005), would probably lead most viewers to assume that he could never be tied down by one single woman over a long period of time, Jim Jarmusch has been with the same exact dame for most of his life. In fact, this woman, Sara Driver (*Sleepwalk* aka *Year of the Dog*, *When Pigs Fly*), is a notable filmmaker in her own right who, at least during the early 1980s, seemed like she had the potential to become a more respected auteur than her white-haired neo-bohemian beau, or so that is the impression that Jonathan Rosenbaum gives in his somewhat obscure text *Film: The Front Line 1983* (1983). Indeed, as Rosenbaum noted in his book, Driver received the ultimate compliment for a young avant-garde filmmaker when rootless cosmopolitan European alpha-avant-gardist Jean-Marie Straub said to her at an early screening at the 1982 Rotterdam Film Festival regarding her hypnotically haunting early work *You Are Not I* (1981), "I like your film ten times better than Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe movies." As to what Driver's 50-minute black-and-white film has to do with Poe or Corman, Rosenbaum attempted to make a connection when he argued, "Insofar as it uses narrative ambiguity and foregrounds some of its formal elements, *YOU ARE NOT I* demands a certain amount of collaborative work from the spectator. At the same time, it adopts the method of a Poe story, which requires the virtual submission of the reader/spectator to the will and power of the narrative voice." Not unlike with her boyfriend's first feature *Permanent Vacation* (1980), which she briefly appeared in and worked on as a production manager, Driver made her film while attending New York University's graduate film school with the help of a Louis B. Mayer grant (the film had about a \$12,000 budget). Based on the 1948 short story of the same name written by queer Beat Generation writer Paul Bowles about a schizophrenic woman that escapes from a mental institution and ultimately gets her sister to take her place that Driver liked so much upon reading it for the first time that she immediately knew she wanted to adapt it into a cinematic work, the film certainly gives one the impression that the auteur might have become the female David Lynch instead of a fecund Jarmusch. Despite being a relatively huge critical hit in Europe that had a long ride on the film festival circuit and was even described as one of the best films of the decade in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *You Are Not I* was actually considered lost for nearly thirty years after the original negative was burnt in a fire in the warehouse where it was stored and the only other copy had deteriorated due to being screened one too many times. Luckily, source writer Bowles, who apparently regularly exchanged letters with Driver while she was assembling the film, was such a fan of the film that he had a pristine print, which was found in 2008 by a fellow named Francis Poole when he traveled to

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the writer's old apartment in Tangier, Morocco to gather things for the University of Delaware's library collection. While I am not that familiar with Bowles' work, I have a feeling that he was more pleased with Driver's *You Are Not I* than he was with capitalist-minded Guido commie Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Sheltering Sky* (1990).

A sort of avant-garde post-Gothic psyche-horror flick with seemingly nil direct cinematic influences (though Driver has credited German Expressionism, Chris Marker's *La jetée* (1962), and John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974) as inspiring her in different ways), *You Are Not I* might be described as the female Eraserhead that Lynch's own daughter Jennifer Chambers Lynch failed to make when she released her badly botched and laughably misandristic but nonetheless fleetingly entertaining debut *Boxing Helena* (1993). Indeed, if there is such a thing as true estrogen-charged arthouse horror, it is Driver's film, which is what you might expect if Danièle Huillet had kicked her pansy hubby Straub to the curb, listened to some Joy Division and read some Flannery O'Connor, dropped the pedantic Marxist idiocy, and assembled a film that truly tapped into the darker depths of the innately irrational and labyrinthine female psyche. More specifically, *You Are Not I* is one of those handful of seemingly inexplicable female 'psychic transference' flicks like Ingmar Bergman *Persona* (1966), Robert Altman's *3 Women* (1977), Michael Almereyda's *Nadja* (1994), and Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) that hints at the melding of two different female identities. While co-penned, co-produced, and shot by Jarmusch (who also later acted as the cinematographer of Driver's first feature-length effort *Sleepwalk*), the film has thankfully virtually nothing to do with the No Wave Cinema movement, which the filmmaker herself more or less confirmed in a December 2011 interview with George Siskar of *Senses of Cinema* where she stated, "There were a lot of movies about the scene, but I was not interested in that kind of representation. In a way, the film was part of the No Wave movement because we all worked on each other's movies, we were all in the scene together, but I never liked the kind of cliquish, who's cool and who's not setups." Indeed, *You Are Not I* is far too aesthetically elegant, masterfully stylized, apolitical, and idiosyncratic to be associated with the proudly amateurish and dilettantish of No Wave figures like Amos Poe, Eric Mitchell, James Nares, Scott B and Beth B, etc. Unlike many of the major films of the No Wave movement, which were very much a glaring product of their particular zeitgeist, Driver's film has a truly timeless quality that, not unlike Eraserhead and the better films of Straub-Huillet like *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968) aka *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* and their Franz Kafka adaptation *Klassenverhältnisse* (1984) aka *Class Relations*, totally transcends (and was quite atypical of) the era when it was made. As for Driver's own objective in terms of adapting Bowles, she confessed in 2011, "I just wanted to tell the story. I was interested in telling stories in a new way. My only intention was to make something that I thought

Paul Bowles would be proud of and I would be proud of. And also make a movie that would get me to the next film, which I did. I mean, I think I felt so strongly about the story and what I was going to do, that I did not think what impact it was going to have.”

A film that seems to completely psychologically imprison the viewer inside the uniquely unreliable psychotic mind of its ‘paranoiac’ (anti)heroine, *You Are Not I* is surely one of the most consistently fiercely foreboding films that I have ever seen and even by the very end of the work, I was not able to shake off the borderline severe sense of unease that it almost perniciously permeates. A sort of contra *Girl, Interrupted* (1999) in virtually every regard, *Driver*’s delectably dispiriting yet no less eccentric work features a gratingly homely lead of the somewhat ominous sort who through narration, strange facial expressions, subtle physical gestures, and highly personalized esoteric rituals forces the viewer to enter her metaphysical hell and ultimately confront a couple conspiring rural womenfolk, including her rather repressed looking sister. If I were to guess, *Driver*’s amply atmospheric Bowles adaptation is a sort of allegory for the filmmaker’s sense of alienation with female family members and her childhood community, as well as typical so-called gender roles in general, though the film thankfully lacks any sort of discernible feminist subtext. As Rosenbaum rightly noticed, “...*YOU ARE NOT I* begins more or less the way *PSYCHO* ends—with a schizophrenic in close-up remaining absolutely still while explaining everything off-screen.” Unlike Norman Bates in Hitchcock’s proto-slasher masterpiece, the unnervingly loony lady of *Driver*’s film immediately plunges the viewer into her uniquely unhinged psycho-neurotically nightmarish realm of morbid esoteric inwardness, as the film seems to take place entirely in her head. Notably, *Driver* would state regarding the very conscious influence of Cassavetes’ *A Woman Under the Influence* on her film, “I think it’s because of the study of timing between people in that film [...] It’s not stylistic, it’s just a gut emotional reaction—and wanting to involve and audience that much.” Indeed, despite the film’s excess of narration from the lead character, *You Are Not I* is an exceedingly visceral work that seems to have been made with the objective of haunting the viewer’s soul as opposed to picking at their brain or flattering their intellect (though the flick leaves the viewer with much to think about in the end). With the intent of attempting to depict a sinisterly sisterly territorial showdown of sorts between two diametrically opposed adult siblings—a schizophrenic free spirit and a grotesquely sexually repressed old spinster—*Driver* isolated lead actress Suzanne Fletcher from everyone else on the set and even had Melody Schneider, who plays the protagonist’s sister, bring personal items to the set to inspire an organic rivalry between the two actresses. Indubitably, *You Are Not I* is one of only a handful of films that I know of that effectively depicts the pathologically cryptic passive-aggressive ‘games’ that members of the so-called fairer sex play with one another. In that sense, *Driver*’s film, which has an intrinsically

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feminine touch to it, could have only been directed by an actual woman.

Featuring a female lead whose mind and motivations seem more arcane than that of 'The Gamin' played by Adrienne Barrett in the quasi-Expressionistic cult classic *Dementia* (1955) aka *Daughter of Horror* directed by John Parker, *You Are Not I* is a decidedly Delphic flick that stays with the viewer long after it has concluded. In an assumed attempt to make the film seem less enigmatic, Driver handed out a publicity flyer during screenings where she provided the following synopsis: "...It is the story of a young woman, Ethel, who escapes from a mental hospital during the chaos of a nearby multiple-car accident. She is mistaken for a shock victim by a rescue volunteer who finds her trying to place a stone in a dead woman's mouth. The volunteer drives her to her sister's house. The sister is confused and angered by the sudden arrival of the psychotic Ethel. Not wishing to be alone in the house with her, the sister brings two neighbor women over. Finally the sister calls the hospital and finds out that Ethel "wasn't released at all but somehow got out." They nervously await the attendants from the hospital while Ethel, refusing to speak, formulates a plan to stay in the house." Ultimately, the 'plan' that the lead carries out is arguably the most inexplicable and sphinxlike aspect of the entire film, but I guess that is what one should expect from a batshit crazy bitch who has a curious fetish for placing stones in the lifeless mouths of female cadavers.

You Are Not I opens with a still photograph of lead Ethel (Suzanne Fletcher of Bette Gordon's *Variety* (1983) and *Driver's Sleepwalk*) sitting on the ground and jotting notes juxtaposed with the character narrating, "You Are Not I. No one but me could possibly be. I know that. And I know where I have been...And what I have done. Ever since yesterday, When I walked out the gate during the accident." From there, Ethel somehow manages to get over the barbed wire fence located around the mental institution where she has been imprisoned and then wanders like a forlorn somnambulist to the scene of a tragic three-vehicle car accident where over half a dozen or so people have died. After thinking to herself, "Of course! This is just in man's world. If something real should happen...they would stop sinning," Ethel begins singing to herself like one of the little girls from Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and then steals and subsequently wears a pair of dress shoes that she finds on a male corpse. After also stealing a large coat from a cadaver that she will place a number of important stones in, Ethel begins roaming around the woods and complains to herself in her own mind, "I always hated cars. Hated to see them go by down there. Hated to see them disappear way off up the valley toward the next town. Made me angry to think...All those people moving from one place to another...Without any right to. Whoever said to them, 'You may go and drive your car this morning to Clifton. You may driver wherever you want.' No one. I know that. I know there's no chief that says things like that to people...But it makes it pleasanter for me...When I imagine such a person does exist. Perhaps

it would be... Only a tremendous voice speaking over a public address system set up in all the streets." Indeed, it seems as if Ethel welcomes and even derives a sense of schadenfreude from the tragic accident, which ultimately acts as the genesis of her fight for freedom.

Upon encountering six corpses lying side-by-side and covered with white sheets, Ethel begins placing stones that she has found in the woods inside the mouths of these unfortunate car accident victims. When a rescue crew member spots Ethel doing this to another corpse that she later finds, he sensibly yells to her, "What are you doing? Are you crazy?" and she reacts by self-righteously replying, "It's my sister and she's dead!" even though her sis is far from dead. After the medical volunteer has Ethel sit next to a couple wounded survivors from the car accident, she begins repeating to herself out loud every couple seconds, "She's dead." Notably, Ethel also reveals her innately insane sense of inwardness by curiously thinking to herself, "It seems to me that life outside was like life inside. There was always somebody to stop people from doing what they wanted to do. That was just the opposite of what I'd felt when I was still inside. Perhaps... What we want to do is wrong. But why should they always be the ones to decide? For once, I will decide what was right. And do it." After giving the rescue volunteer the address of her sister's house, Ethel curiously thinks to herself while being driven to the truly humble abode, "I managed to count the gas stations along the way. And I found... There was one more of them than I remembered." Naturally, Ethel's Sister (Melody Schneider) is quite angered when she shows up at her home and complains to the rescue volunteer when he asks her if she is alright, "She don't look well yet to me." Of course, Ethel is not only far from alright, but she also has big plans that defy both logic and reality.

While standing outside the house while turned in the opposite direction of her conspicuously cunty-looking sister, Ethel smirks in a sinister fashion while thinking to herself, "I often feel that something is about to happen... And when I do... I stay perfectly still... And let it go ahead. There's no use wondering about it... Or trying to stop it. At this time, I had no particular feeling that a special event was about to come out... But I did feel that I would be more likely to do the right thing if I waited and let my sister act first." Upon having her discernibly scared sister escort her inside the house as if she is a retarded child, Ethel is somewhat annoyed to see that everything in the house, including the rooms, has been somehow "reversed" by her sibling. After thinking to herself, "I decided to say nothing and let her do the explaining if she felt like it. It occurred to me that it must have cost her every cent she had in the bank," Ethel begins laughing hysterically about the prospect that her sis has wasted all her money on the seemingly imagined 'reversal.' After a couple of minutes, Ethel's sister tells her to sit down and then exits the house. Ethel's sister is almost deathly afraid of her and the mentally perturbed protagonist seems quite proud of that fact to the point where it becomes a source of solace for her.

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Looking for assumed ‘backup’ in case her estranged nutjob sibling blows a fuse, Ethel’s sister brings back an overweight old housewife named Mrs. Jelinek, who is also totally petrified by the protagonist even though she probably weighs twice as much as her. Under Jelinek’s recommendation, Ethel’s sister decides to “call the home” so she can give the head psychologist, Dr. Don, a piece of her mind about the fact that her sister looks no less deranged than when she was originally institutionalized and that she should never have been released from the psych-ward in the first place. After her sister goes to fetch another old fat woman named Kate Schultz, Ethel thinks to herself while humming like an autistic toddler, “I did not even look up when she went out [...] I had made a big decision...And that was to stay right in the house and, under no condition, let myself be taken back there. I knew it would be difficult...But I had a plan. I knew it would work if I used all my will power. I have great will power.” Resolving to “keep quiet” so as to “not break the spell that is starting to work,” Ethel thinks to herself like a true megalomaniac with delusions of grandeur, “I knew it was going to be a battle between my sister and me...but I was confident that my force of character and superior education had fitted me for just such a battle...And that I could win it.” Sort of like if Nietzsche had regained some of his mental faculties after his mental break and decided that he would use his philosophical prowess to free himself from his scheming sister’s care, Ethel decides that she will use her true ‘Will to Power’ to reclaim the house and banish her sibling.

After talking to Dr. Don, Ethel’s sister learns that she was never actually discharged from the mental institution but instead “somehow she got out,” so she wastes no time in making a call to have a couple fellows from the nuthouse come down to pick up her unhinged sibling. Meanwhile, Ethel proudly thinks to herself that neither Mrs. Jelinek nor Mrs. Schultz will dare have the gall to do anything to her unless they are willed by her sister, who is far too petrified herself to sick the two old farts on her sibling. As Ethel thinks to herself like a bat-shit crazy braggart of the cunningly sadistic sort, “For although I had never done her any harm, she had always been convinced that someday I would. It may be...that she knew now what I was about to do to her. But, I doubt it, or she would’ve run away from the house.” As all three women wait in a discernibly horrified fashion for the guys from the mental institution to arrive, Ethel begins planning for a brighter future of the domesticated suburbanite sort, thinking to herself, “The house was already ugly...But I was already getting ideas for making it look better.” Ethel seems to more or less look at the three women as insignificant maggots, thinking to herself with a sense of self-satisfied glee, “I could’ve laughed out loud when I thought of what they were really waiting to see. If they had only known it.” When the guys from the mental hospital finally arrive and proceed to take Ethel away, the protagonist stops in front of her sister, pulls out a stone from the pocket of the coat that she stole from the corpse at the accident

site, and then aggressively places the rock in her sibling's mouth. After Ethel's sister screams in abject horror, the screen cuts to black and the protagonist proceeds to narrate, "I felt that my front teeth were broken. I could taste blood on my lips. I thought I was going to faint. I put my hand to my mouth...and I knew...that this was the turning point. I shut my eyes very hard. When I opened them...everything was different and I knew I had won. For a moment, I could not see very clearly. But even during that moment...I saw myself sitting on the sofa. As my vision cleared, I saw that the men were holding my sister's arms...And she was putting up a terrific struggle."

In the end, Ethel's sister replaces her and is brought back to the mental institution instead. While being strapped to a stretcher in an ambulance before heading to the loony bin, Ethel's sister cries hysterically, or so the unreliable protagonist narrates in vivid detail as if she is the one that is actually being restrained. Indeed, despite still sitting at home in a chair, Ethel is somehow able to retrace her sister's every move while she is being transported to the mental institution, including regarding the EMTs that, "They kept promising her ice cream for dinner but she knew better than to believe them." Upon finally arriving to the nutward, Ethel's sister takes a stone out of a pocket of the coat that her sis had been previously wearing and then places it in her mouth, thus causing her to choke. Eventually, Ethel has a revelation of sorts and thinks to herself in a prideful manner regarding the seemingly inexplicable accomplishment of switching places with her sister, "The strange thing, now that I realize it, was that no one realized she was not I." Somewhat curiously, at the end, Ethel remains sitting in the same chair where she has sat for about the second half of the film because she lacks the drive and motivation to move and thinks to herself, "I could walk upstairs, and look into her bedroom, if I wanted to...But it's such a longtime since I've been up there and I no longer know how the rooms are arranged...So I prefer to stay down here." Meanwhile, Ethel's sister is portrayed jotting down what may or may not be the film's story in a very Expressionistic room in the mental institution that looks like it could be inside the lunatic asylum featured in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920).

It should be noted that Jonathan Rosenbaum speculated in his book *Film: The Front Line* 1983 that director Sara Driver would probably not have a successful filmmaking career in the United States due to her avant-garde approach to the artistic medium, writing, "More recently, she cites as the two films that have most impressed her Dreyer's *LA PASSION DE JEANNE D'AR* and Tarkovsky's *THE STALKER*, both of which might be regarded as archetypes of the European art film. Whether or not that tradition has a viable future in this country, Driver is clearly a filmmaker to watch; it'll merely be our bad fortune if we have to cross the Atlantic in order to see her work." Unfortunately, it seems that Rosenbaum fears were not unfounded, as it has been over two decades since Driver has directed a film, not to mention the fact that she has

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only managed to complete two features, which include *Sleepwalk* (1986) aka *Year of the Dog* once again starring Suzanne Fletcher and the German-Dutch-American coproduction *When Pigs Fly* (1993) starring Marianne Faithfull and Alfred Molina. Still, the two features that Driver has directed are notable for being a rare example of American 'magic realism' (or what Rosenbaum describes as works belonging to the 'fantastique' genre). Aside from her two features and the occasional short like the documentary *The Bowery, Spring 1994* (1994), Driver has unfortunately been mostly regulated to living in the shadow of her longtime boy toy Jarmusch, whose films she has worked on a variety of capacities that certainly seem to be beneath her talent as a rare genuinely talented American female arthouse auteur. Personally, I will take one Sara Driver over a dozen Sofia Coppolas any day. Indeed, as far as depictions of female schizophrenia go, *You Are Not I* can only really be compared to Teutonic auteuress Helma Sanders-Brahms' singular dark masterpiece *Die Berührte* (1981) aka *No Mercy No Future*, even if the two films have little in common aesthetically aside from featuring fairly homely and deathly pale she-schizos and sometimes transcending the line between reality and deluded fantasy. In other words, Driver's film features easily one of the most unsettling yet, at the same time, truly cinematic depictions of feminine mental derangement ever committed to bold black-and-white celluloid. In that regard, Driver's film(s) also has much in common with the cinematic oeuvre of Austrian artist Valie Export (*Unsichtbare Gegner* aka *Invisible Adversaries*, *Menschenfrauen*), though she has credited some more surprising personal influences. Indeed, at a retrospective of her work held by Anthology Film Archives entitled *Sleepwalking: The Films of Sara Driver*, the filmmaker had a couple of her favorite films screened, including the Val Lewton produced cult horror classic *Cat People* (1942) directed by Jacques Tourneur and Jack Hill's *Spider Baby* or, *The Maddest Story Ever Told* (1967). Of course, in terms of atmosphere, *You Are Not I* is pure and unadulterated oneiric horror cinema that owes just as much to Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) as it does an avant-garde work like Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943). Simply judging by her films, I would most certainly more enjoy raiding Driver's DVD collection than that of her lover Jarmusch, who probably owns one too many French New Wave flicks for my taste.

When mentioned by an interviewer at *Senses of Cinema* that some critics interpreted her film as telling a story that manages to "question our notions of insanity and it is a play between real and dreamy" while other critics though it was "simply about depersonalization and identity confusion," Driver revealed regarding her personal thoughts on *You Are Not I*, "I'm very boring, it was very pure. It was very surprising because I found out it was being shown to a group of psychiatrists as an example of schizophrenia (laughing). But I think in their early twenties, a lot of women go through this; they sort of have a little bit of obsession with women and madness – you go through your Sylvia Plath thing,

and you go through your Zelda Fitzgerald thing, but I did not look at madness that closely.” Apparently, source writer Bowles claimed that he sired the story while in a semi-conscious state that was, “a second between waking and sleeping, or sleeping and waking,” but I find that somehow irrelevant to the film, as Driver transformed it into her own highly personalized and even metaphysical story that is comparable to Lynch’s *Eraserhead* and Guy Maddin’s *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) in terms of being a highly intimate auteur piece of the totally transcendental and seemingly allegorically psycho-autobiographical sort. In terms of its literally and figuratively dark post-Gothic aesthetic, unconventional time running time, fiercely foreboding and paranoiac ‘Kafkaesque’ tone, macabre quirkiness, and otherworldly phantasmagorical ‘modernist horror’ approach, *You Are Not I* also deserves comparisons to criminally underrated Dutch auteur Adriaan Ditvoorst’s 48-minute Willem Frederik Hermans adaptation *De blinde fotograaf* (1973) aka *The Blind Photographer*. Although it might seem like a strange comparison, both Driver and Ditvoorst’s films reveal that they even beat Kubrick at his own game in terms of transforming someone else’s story into something that is completely and unmistakably their own. Indeed, after watching *You Are Not I*, I can only assume that Mr. Jarmusch is with a woman whose mind is much darker, stronger, and labyrinthine than his own, hence why he managed to reach the mainstream yet Driver’s filmmaking career fizzled out before it ever really got to blossom. Of course, if the schizophrenic protagonist of her film is in any way autobiographical, I can see why Driver might find a hard time finding funding for her films. After all, *You Are Not I* features what is probably the most innately horrifying and intimidating frail young woman in cinema history and I say that as someone that regularly sees a literally skeletal young woman every day with the unfortunate wasting away illness of Crohn’s disease who puts the average holocaust survivor to shame in terms of resembling a walking and talking corpse.

-Ty E

GUINEA PIG: DEVIL'S EXPERIMENT
GUINEA PIG: DEVIL'S EXPERIMENT

Satoru Ogura (1985)

Guinea Pig is the godmother of extreme Japanese cinema. For a film as influential as this, it hasn't aged well. What was once shocking the vulnerable masses, it hasn't aged well and time seems to be Devil's Experiment's worst enemy. The Guinea Pig series has many rough patches all around closing with only two solid films that are worthy of any recognition. Devil's Experiment is sadly one of the disreputable entries. For being a film revolving around the beauty of violence and having a clever premise promising brutal poetry, deterioration of the sense actually boils down to cool shaded Japanese "dudes" stage slapping a woman for 10 minutes then moving on to some assorted ridiculous task including tying a woman up and spinning her "to death". This exciting "experiment" can be mimicked at home by taking a broom and dust pan outside attempting to sweep up all the dirt. Devil's Experiment did pave the way for the rest of the series to extend upon a concept of symbolism, blood, and art. Five sequels were developed as well as two unofficial titles. When you single the less than established films, the odds are against them but as a collection Guinea Pig stands strong as a fierce competitor to any lexicon of violence. Guinea Pig wouldn't hit cinema puberty until the release of Flowers of Flesh & Blood which eventually led to the boom in popularity thanks to a Mr. Charlie Sheen. To bring it around full-stop on my thoughts on Devil's Experiment, the film is definitely a far cry from modern conventions in the mid 80s. Devil's Experiment is indeed a rough experiment, though I can't vouch for its notoriety being worth its weight in this modern era. It's a film I am glad to have seen and it kick started a Japanese gore and roughie phase -- Without it, exploitation and faux snuff wouldn't be where it is now -- but this regrettably isn't anything to write home about, but it remains a must see for being historic.

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SLEEPWALKER

Saxon Logan (1984)

Without question, the last thing the world needs is another leftist horror flick, especially those of the effortlessly effete British persuasion, but somehow I managed to find a tinge of preternatural potency in the less-than-feature-length blood-soaked Thatcher era satirical scare-fest *Sleepwalker* (1984) directed by white Rhodesian-British auteur Saxon Logan, who was influenced to become an 'auteur' by his much more famous comrade and mentor, filmmaker Lindsay Anderson (if...., *O Lucky Man!*). Considered lost for nearly three decades until the BFI rescued the sole print of the film from the director's attic, restored it, and released it in late 2013 on DVD/Blu-ray under the BFI Flipside label along with two of Logan's earlier shorts *Stepping Out* (1977) and *Working Surface: A Short Study (with Actors) in the 'Ways' of a Bourgeois Writer* (1979), a 69-minute 2013 interview with the forgotten filmmaker, and Rodney Giesler's thematically similar 45-minute short *The Insomniac* (1977), the quite literally bloody Brit satirical black-comedy-cum-horror-show was assumed to be even hearsay by some, as very few people had actually seen it and it had only been referenced in print form by English journalist/film critic Kim Newman (who, incidentally, is a big promoter of BFI Flipside and hosted the label's screening of the 2010 'sampler documentary' *Kim Newman's Guide to The Flipside of British Cinema*) some 14 years after its release in the FAB Press release *Ten Years of Terror: British Films of the 1970s*. Quite ironically yet most fittingly, the film owes its past obscurity to the very regime that the film ruthlessly critiques whose pro-big-business policies ultimately led to the work's rejection by British film distributors (who found the film's horror-satire style inexplicable and thus unprofitable), as well as the termination of a government subsidy to theater owners promoting the showcasing of British-made shorts before feature presentations (notably, Logan's 1977 experimental short *Stepping Out* played before screenings of Roman Polanski's *The Tenant* (1976) in UK theaters). A sort of poor man's take on Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), albeit more literate and cultivated and minus the supernatural elements, *Sleepwalker* has been advertised by the BFI as an "outrageous mix of biting satire and stylish horror" that "recalls the work of otherwise unlikely bedfellows, Lindsay Anderson and Dario Argento," yet the film has more obvious influences, namely James Whale's *The Old Dark House* (1932), German expressionism, and Hammer horror films. Partly inspired by a true anecdote from Logan's life about a rural retreat when his friend's wife uncomfortably revealed to him and their mutual friends while tipsy that her husband once attempted to murder her while he was sleepwalking, *Sleepwalker* is a largely metaphorical work that was heavily inspired by Anderson's underrated box-office failure *Britannia Hospital* (1982)—a work that uses a hospital as a metaphor for Britain—featuring characters that are

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more or less archetypes/allegorical figures and set at an old quaint country home that acts as the “embodiment of the United Kingdom” (as described by the director) about an unhappily married, mis-matched couple who come to visit their ‘friends’ in the countryside, only to fall prey to a somnambulist-based slaughter after a nasty night of venomous verbal class warfare.

Opening with a classic eerie nightmare scene involving blood-covered broken glass and a person being strangled to death in a bathtub that would probably lead the viewer to assume they are about to watch a classic Gothic haunted house film, *Sleepwalker* then cuts to a grey-haired chap named Alex Britain (played by Scottish director Bill Douglas, who is best known for an autobiographical trilogy about his working-class upbringing) preparing an insulin injection and milk and cookies for his bedridden sister Marion Britain (TV actress Heather Page), who has spent all afternoon in bed and who is the one who suffered the nightmare during the phantasmagoric introductory montage. Although initially seeming like an old (and regrettably) married couple, Alex and Marion are actually brother and sister who opted to move in with one another after their mother croaked and they inherited the North England rural estate ‘Albion’ (which is, somewhat notably, the oldest known name for Great Britain). The two siblings are expecting company, Marion’s friend Angela Paradise (Joanna David of Italian auteur Roberto Faenza’s *The Soul Keeper* (2002) aka *Prendimi l’anima*, which depicts the romance between psychoanalyst C.G. Jung and holocausted Jewess Sabina Spielrein) and her cannibalistic pseudo-conservative capitalist hubby Richard Paradise (Nickolas Grace of the classic dystopian cult sci-fi TV movie *Max Headroom* (1985) and the hit 1998 fantasy-adventure TV mini-series *Merlin*), who works “in video” (surely, a jab by Logan and his co-writer Michael Keenan at the desecration of cinema via the video boom). On their way to Albion, the Paradises get lost and Richard demonstrates his innate asshole and callous control of his wife by screaming at Angela, “Just let me remind you that this rural blood retreat was your idea. They’re your fucking friends. You find the place!” just before almost running over an old man on a bike. When the married couple finally arrives at the estate, it is quite apparent that emasculated bleeding heart socialist wimp Alex cannot stand alpha-asshole Richard’s audacious airs of arrogance. Since Marion’s planned evening of “al fresco” has been ruined by the rain and an exploding light bulb and shattered window which destroyed the kitchen, the four emotionally volatile adults are forced to spend the evening at a local restaurant where Richard uses the opportunity to loudly espouse his quite humorous homo-hating and sweatshop-saluting *Weltanschauung* and Alex demonstrates that he is a tired old leftwing weakling who is all talk and no bite just like so many others of his cuckold kind.

Upon arriving at the restaurant, Richard declares, “The place is full of bloody queers. Didn’t know they had them this far north” after noticing the elderly old queen waiters and proceeds to tell the following joke that would have probably

upset queer auteur Derek Jarman: "What does G-A-Y stand for? 'Got AIDS yet?'" In an exceedingly feeble attempt to verbally battle Richard, Alex remarks that he recently read an article in the 'New Scientist' stating that AIDS is not an "exclusively homosexual" disease. From there, Richard demonstrates he is not a true conservative or traditionalist by revealing he is a sadistic sort of multiculturalist who advocates sweatshops and complains regarding country living that it is "luddite rubbish" and "sheer antiquated claptrap" and gives a toast by declaring "Here's to microwaves." Needless to say, Richard is not impressed with Alex's sentimentalist speech about living in the country and being proud of his country home. Eventually, Marion reveals that her brother Alex once attempted to murder her when he was sleepwalking. Additionally, Marion, whose job involves reading the works of prospective writers for a publishing house, describes how she suspects that her brother submitted a thriller novel, "about a woman who has a dream about peeling tomatoes. Then, when she wakes up, she's sliced her husband to bits with a carving knife." After declaring in regard to her brother that "translators don't have style," Marion states that she suspects that the novel was written by her brother due to certain "technical details," including "Russian expert. German expert. But particularly well up on sleepwalking." Clearly, the two couples are mismatched, which auteur Logan emphasizes by sitting the two assholes (Richard and Marion), as well as the well-meaning weaklings (Alex and Angela), together during the dinner scene. Indeed, like Richard, Marion also hates the country and complains that she was forced to move to Albion when she was 13 after her estranged father abandoned the family and, "pissed off to Africa. About a century too late." Richard is so excited by what Marion says, that he declares, "damn right. Big pond for big fish. It's the only place to be in this country. Money. Massive unemployment. Marvelous! I'll drink to London," which rather irks Alex. The last straw for Alex is when Richard states he is a proponent of Thatcher era unemployment, stating, "bloodletting...Sucking the poison out of the system. Dog eat dog. If you can't go to work, go to hell." When Alex asks him if he is serious, Richard replies, "Deadly. Don't you know your own history?" and then proceeds to berate his adversary, calling him a "kept man" and "a bloody pimp, a bloody little pimp who thinks all prostitutes ought to be virgins." From there, Alex, who has had a little bit too much to drink, gets up to pay the bill and passive aggressively tells Richard to "don't get up," as if he has the testicular fortitude to fight him or something. Needless to say, the guests don't tip so well, or so complains the waiter to his fellow "arch queen."

When the four frenemies get back to Albion, Alex uses the excuse that he needs to chop some wood and Marion follows, with Richard begging his wife to leave that night, but Angela refuses because she feels the need to pay back her friend for her support for when she was in the hospital. Indeed, although never mentioned explicitly, it seems that Angela has some mental problems that no Valium overdose could cure as she met her fellow mental cripple Marion there.

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Angela also feels sorry for fellow mental invalid Alex, but she soon becomes frightened of him after seeing him chopping wood with a sort of murderous rage and screaming “bastard” in regard to Richard, as if carrying out some sort of murder. When Angela confronts her friend about her brother’s behavior, Marion reveals that she and Alex met with a psychiatrist who diagnosed the latter with suffering from “deep-rooted trauma” which is “all the result of a deeply insecure childhood.” Marion also trashes Alex’s bibliophilia and Teutonophilia, remarking regarding her brother’s book collection after Richard asks about it, “Von Kleist’s stuff of Alex’s. German dramatist. Death, rot, misery. Right up his street.” Marion also reveals her more morbid side by quoting from Edgar Allan Poe’s short story *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, which is about a hypnotist who puts a man in a suspended state of hypnotism as he dies. After Alex calls his sister a “bitch” and walks out of the room and she responds by calling him a “dog,” Marion begins hitting on Richard right in front of her friend Angela, who becomes quite dismayed upon accidentally turning on negro porn and subsequently goes to bed. While Richard is prepared to cheat on his wife and commence coitus with his kindred cruel spirit Marion, she screws it up by complaining that her brother called her a “prick teaser,” thus hinting there is a somewhat incestuous relationship going on between the two disharmonious siblings. After their failed attempt at romance, Richard and Marion head to bed and the real fun begins.

During the final ten minutes or so of *Sleepwalker*, everyone falls asleep and dark dreams ultimately degenerate into deadly real-life nightmares. First, Angela has a nightmare of Alex coming into her room and disemboweling her hubby Richard, whose guts he pulls out with his bare hands (according to auteur Logan, while shooting this scenario he, “had a slight problem with Bill Douglas; he hated blood and gore of any sort” and even fainted after shooting the scene). Next, Marion has a recurring nightmare about her brother strangling her to death in the bathroom. From there, Marion sleepwalks into the Paradieses’ room and undresses in front of Richard, who becomes so aroused that he begins licking the somnambulist’s armpit and then proceeds to suck on her tits, but the fun soon ends when Richard is sliced up with a butcher knife, presumably. Shortly after, Angela wakes up, steps in a huge puddle of her deceased hubby’s blood, goes to the kitchen, and eventually takes a butcher knife to the back of the head. The next morning, Alex wakes up from a nightmare and goes downstairs where he notices blood dripping from the ceiling. Before he can do anything, sleepwalking Marion appears and stabs Alex in the chest with a butcher knife and he cries out “wake up...wake up...Please, wake up!” just before he dies. In a metaphorical scene, blood covers old Victorian furniture. Maybe if Richard had cheated on his neurotic wife and banged unconscious psychopathic killer Marion, the midnight massacre could have been avoided.

As exceedingly heavy-handed socio-political subtexts of most of the works of

mainstream ‘masters’ of horror George A. Romero and Wes Craven demonstrate, horror and politics do not mix well together and the last thing a jaded gorehound wants to see are zombies ripping out and eating the hearts of pansy bleeding heart liberals. Indubitably, if Saxon Logan’s *Sleepwalker* does anything even remotely notable, it is creating an unholy cinematic marriage between scathing political satire and blood-drenched phantasmagoria of the shadowy anti-Thatcherite sort. Politically speaking, the film is notable for ruthlessly reaming all aspects of the mainstream British political spectrum during its time, with mainstream ‘conservatives’ (as personified by Richard) being depicted as deracinated psychopaths of the globalist technocrat sort whose only loyalty is to money and their own egos; socialists (as personified by Alex) being depicted as introverted emotional cripples who prefer to hide in an imaginary utopia and cower before their enemies; the British middle class (as personified by Angela) being portrayed as well meaning yet hopelessly feeble pushovers and cuckolds who support corrupt regimes despite knowing better; and Britannia (as personified by Marion) as an emotionally erratic and savagely snide whore and murderess who walks through life aimlessly and unconsciously slaughters both friends and foes. Notably, the film’s co-writer Michael Keenan was a diehard commie, as Logan revealed in the interview *O Lucky Man: Saxon Logan in Conversation* (2013) regarding his collaborator: “...I would say that most of my education in cinema came from going to movies with him. He was phenomenally intelligent and we enjoyed each other’s ideas, and although he was an avowed Marxist, we still managed to get on. And he brought to our work a kind of rigor that perhaps wouldn’t have necessarily been part of my work if I had been solely the author.”

Although the film was an abject failure commercially speaking, Logan initially had high hopes and thought he was “made” upon completing *Sleepwalker* having it screened at the opening of the Berlin International Film Festival (aka *Berlinale*) where it received a standing ovation, but when he later brought the work back to England and screened it, it was even hated by the filmmaker’s friends, thus reflecting the longstanding hatred Brits, especially of the elitist sort, have for the horror genre (after all, the classic horror-thriller *Peeping Tom* (1960) more or less destroyed auteur Michael Powell’s career). Of course, Logan’s filmmaking career never even began and *Sleepwalker* reflects the promising formative work of an auteur who could have developed into something much more interesting and provocative than the various hack filmmakers that were working in England at the time, though I doubt he would have become the next Lindsay Anderson (who, incidentally, was supposed to have a cameo role in the film but injured his ankle while in NYC and could not make the flight back). Notably, in a September 2013 interview with *Celluloid Wicker Man*, auteur Saxon would reveal that his somewhat admirable but undeniably unmarketable intentions with the film were as follows: “I had a great deal of freedom to make whatever film I wanted. I love Britain and care about it deeply. That is why I chose to make

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SLEEPWALKER. I naively thought it would be a “wake up” film that would be entertaining, too. It is not entirely rooted in Thatcher’s time nor does it knock the aspirations of the young and thrusting. Instead, it knocks rapacious and unthinking greed, spineless idealism, and meek acquiescence. I feel it is still relevant now. For all its surface appearance Britain is dilapidated. There is a cold aggressiveness to the culture. Politically the current parties are like high street banks: in the same business only differentiated by the colour of their debit and credit cards. I think “Albion” is incrementally decaying while the rich concentrate on getting richer, the middle class acquiesce and the poor can just go to hell. Bill Douglas got the script in one. He came up to me and said: “Marion is Britannia gone mad, is she not?” Too eloquently directed, sophisticated, and restrained for the average video nasty junky and far too gory, politically incorrect, and cynical for the average art fag cinophile, Sleepwalker is ultimately an uneven celluloid enigma that is nowhere near as bad as it sounds but is also nowhere near as important as the BFI believes it to be, as a cult film without a cult. For those sadistic bastards that jumped for joy and sang “Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead” when the “Iron Lady” croaked in 2013, Sleepwalker is, next to Peter Greenaway’s *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989), probably the most clever and creative anti-Thatcher flick ever made.

-Ty E

BLACK BOX

Scott B (1979)

For those that have seen the film, it might seem completely unbelievable but Andy Warhol's autistically minimalistic feature *Vinyl* (1965)—an experimental 'freeform' 70-minute black-and-white adaptation of Anthony Burgess' dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) featuring Edie Sedgwick in an early speechless role that predates Kubrick's adaptation and was basically shot from one single camera angle—had a major influence on various New York City filmmakers, not least of all those involved with the mostly overrated No Wave Cinema and Cinema of Transgression movements. Indeed, French-born auteur Eric Mitchell's debut feature *Kidnapped* (1978) is more or less a Super-8 remake of Warhol's film about political terrorism that features a group of scrawny punk deadbeats torturing a businessman and was seemingly also partly inspired by the works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Mitchell's compatriots, Scott B (aka Billingsley) and Beth B, would also take strong influence from *Vinyl* and cinematically fetishize sadomasochism and torture, among other things that seem fairly banal when compared to Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinematic swansong *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975). Midwestern art school dropouts who met and married one another in NYC in 1977, Scott and Beth B more or less seem to have dedicated their early filmmaking career to incessantly reworking Warhol's *Vinyl* and Mitchell's *Kidnapped*, albeit in a somewhat more aesthetically inventive and carefully stylized way, at least up until their first 16mm feature *Vortex* (1982) before subsequently parting ways both romantically and professionally (while Scott would go on to become a TV hack of sorts, Beth went on to direct quasi-mainstream films like *Salvation!* (1987) starring Viggo Mortensen and *Two Small Bodies* (1993) starring Fred Ward and Suzy Amis before her career fizzled out). If their third collaboration *Black Box* (1979) is in any way indicative of the sort of romantic relationship that Scott and Beth had, I am surely not surprised that they ultimately parted ways after being together for about half a decade. Indeed, the film mainly features bloated hipster she-bitch and proud gutter whore Lydia Lunch (*Death Valley 69*, *Submit to Me Now*) gleefully verbally rebuking and physically torturing an unclad blond deadbeat with a Nordic physique, which naturally led me to the assumption that the directors shared a sort of sadomasochistic relationship of the gynocentric sort, but I digress. Undoubtedly, *Black Box* is a 'great' work for Scott and Beth novices as it is quite typical of their work due to its radically repetitive combination of preposterously executed political terrorism, fetishistic yet ultimately fairly softcore S&M/BDSM imagery, halfhearted anti-authoritarian/anti-technocratic message, and near celebration of post-industrial decay and nihilistic libertinism. If there is anything that I have learned from *Black Box* or any of the filmmakers' other 'para-punk' films, it is that Scott and Beth seem to delight in dehumanization and sexual dys-

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function, among various other beaten-to-death motifs that countless other film directors have tackled in a more sophisticated and aesthetically (dis)pleasing way.

Notably, in his article on the directors featured in the book *Film: The Front Line 1983* (1983), Jonathan Rosenbaum mocks the unoriginal, pseudo-rebellious posturing of Scott and Beth and their contemporaries, stating, "In New York, English film theory and SCREEN contributor Stephen Heath is 'out' because it is felt that in London he is 'in'; whether Heath is useful in relation to looking at or thinking about film is clearly felt to be a secondary issue. This helps to explain some of the crudeness and nihilism of New York in relation to non-turf considerations, in which the preoccupations and habits usually thought to dominate lower forms of animal life are made fashionably compatible with liberal-humanist (and even would-be socialist) and intellectual standards of behavior. The basic message: New York is in love with its own rudeness, and new ideas aren't wanted if the beat belongs to someone else." Naturally, when I read in Rosenbaum's same article that Scott and Beth were both art school dropouts, I could not help but laugh to myself, as *Black Box* seems like the conspicuously crude expression of vain cynics and pedantic posers who seem more interested in superficial attention-seeking and delighting in debasing the viewer for a cheap narcissistic thrill rather than producing truly revolutionary cinematic works that deserve the label 'avant-garde.' Indeed, after watching a truly idiosyncratic masterpiece like Teutonic dandy Werner Schroeter's early high-camp epic *Eika Katappa* (1969) or Frans Zwartjes' *Pentimento* (1979), it is hard for me to label *Black Box* an avant-garde film. Still, the short is by no means unpalatable, as it works as a sort of unintentionally mirthful romp that manages to unwittingly mock the filmmakers themselves to the point of self-parody. Indeed, the B's film is a perfect example of the seemingly perennial curse of Warhol and his 'anti-aesthetic' filmmaking technique on the NYC avant-garde and experimental filmmaking scene of the late-1970s through early-1980s.

Promoted with the decidedly dystopian tagline, "The culmination of many years of research into the breaking point of the human organism," *Black Box* attempts to make some sort of inane message about the U.S. government's 'occult war' against its mentally degraded citizenry yet it ultimately seems like a contrived pseudo-snuff film directed by a sadistic woman and masochistic man. The film begins banally enough with the vaguely handsome nameless protagonist/hostage (played by musician Bob Mason, who scored a couple of Scott and Beth's films, including *Black Box*) lying on a bed in his dilapidated apartment with his discernibly homely, horny, and high girlfriend while she recollects a fairly senseless dream that she only vaguely seems to remember where she dreamed her beau became a "fish or something." After the girlfriend describes how he transformed into a pelican and she became an elephant in the same exact dream, she complains that "someone was watching us all the time" and it was "just really weird." Of course, a blinking literal 'Big Brother' sign that can be seen

outside the apartment attempts to signify that the film is set in a dystopian world of paranoia and authoritarian surveillance, but the directors fail in their attempt to even vaguely express this emotional tone, thus making the film oftentimes feel like some sort of homemade sci-fi films that was directed by a collective of stoned squatters who just happened to come upon a Super-8 camera. After briefly making out with his girlfriend before becoming hopelessly bored, the protagonist watches *Mission Impossible*, asks his girlfriend if she wants anything at the store (to which she agitatedly replies, "Go on, get out," since he rebuffed her sexual advances), and leaves his apartment to go get cigarettes, but almost immediately upon hitting the streets, a dubious dude sporting a leather jacket and black sunglasses puts a revolver under his chin and he soon finds himself being put in the trunk of a car and being kidnapped by a couple of ostensibly suavely dressed Baader-Meinhof-esque thugs that work for the government.

After being brought to an undisclosed underground location, the protagonist is routinely beaten and tortured while being forced to smile and say "I like it" like some sort of masochistic BDSM fetishist. To the lead actor's credit, his acting seems more believable than that of average sex slave in the typical S&M fuck flick. During a brief break from being beaten, the protagonist is told by a fairly fat fellow with a mullet that describes himself as 'Doctor' that, "I'll tell you why we brought you here; to cure you. To free you from error. No one whom we bring to this place, and survives, ever leaves without a complete purity of mind. We're not interested in the petty crimes you committed [...] the thought is all we care about. We don't merely destroy our enemies, we modify them." Indeed, the protagonist is literally beaten into psychological shape and, as the Doctor states in an exaggeratedly sadistic fashion, "Things will happen to you from which you will never recover. Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feelings. Everything will be dead inside of you. You will be hollow. We'll squeeze you empty and we'll fill you with ourselves." Somehow, I suspect that the intention of the filmmakers was to leave the viewer feeling like they are "dead inside," which *Black Box* manages to accomplish to a certain degree, albeit in an unintentional way where the directors' seeming soullessness and passive nihilism is channeled onto the viewer.

While the Doctor breaks the protagonist in with fairly standard torture methods, a fairly fat 'postmodern femme fatale' in all black played by Lydia Lunch will ultimately destroy him. While Lunch, who certainly looks like she has never missed lunch, beats the protagonist with a whip while he is hanging upside down, she self-righteously declares to him, "We're specialists in the application of stress, damaging anatomical and physiological components of body functions, progressively impairing the working of the brain and hastening the collapse of will and morale." From there, Lunch begins talking about an eponymous torture device called the 'Black Box,' which was apparently used against members of the Vietcong during the Vietnam War and was apparently later utilized by authoritarian

BLACK BOX

regimes in Chile, Uruguay, and Iran. While the protagonist agrees to “confess anything” and even pathetically cries, “I will tell you anything you want to hear,” Lunch just mocks the hapless hostage and the world of pain that he is about to be in by repetitively repeating “Black Box” over and over again like a snotty toddler that is begging for attention. For what is six minutes of the film’s twenty minute running time, the protagonist is tortured by Lunch while completely naked inside the titular torture device, which features an obnoxious blinking light and radiates a sort of grating ambient noise that is controlled by the heavysset ‘government dominatrix’ via a small sound mixer. As to what ultimately happens to the protagonist after his various intimate sessions in the black box, it seems to hardly matter as the character is nothing more than an empty vessel that is just as much a depersonalized object to the filmmakers as he is to the character played by Lunch and the handful of other people that torture him during the film.

While featuring a sort of superficial anti-authority punk message regarding government-sanctioned torture and brainwashing of the generically Orwellian sort, *Black Box* feels like it is shot from the perspective of the torturers, which is underscored by the fact that the protagonist seems like nothing more than a useless eater, not to mention the fact that Lydia Lunch ultimately steals the show. Notably, Scott B once stated regarding his and Beth’s intention with the film, “We wanted to confront people...not only in an intellectual way but on a gut level.” Of course, the short only really achieves the latter and in a way that will probably lead most viewers to assume that the filmmakers might have been better off going ‘all the way’ and directing fully pornographic fuck flicks instead of pretending to be edgy avant-gardists with something edgy and provocative to say. It should be noted that in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, Scott B not only describes his and his (ex)wife’s films as being outmoded, but also says the same thing about the films of his spiritual mentor Richard Kern and the Cinema of Transgression movement, stating, “Richard was willing to go to places that our films didn’t, but now that you look at the kind of films that pass as mainstream films, these films are tame by comparison.” To Scott and Beth B’s credit, their cinematic works are surely more aesthetically pleasing and technically competent than those directed by the likes of Kern, Nick Zedd, Tessa Hughes-Freeland, David Wojnarowicz or any of the other of the filmmakers associated with the obscenely overrated Cinema of Transgression movement, which took the more (pseudo)subversive themes of the No Wave Cinema and executed them in a decidedly dumbed-down fashion that would even make weirdo Warhol blush with *Fremdscham*. Indeed, for better or worse, Scott and Beth B were at least the sort of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet of the NYC film underground.

For those looking for a truly idiosyncratic approach to sadomasochism and political terror, Sapphic Teutonic-Hebraic auteur Ulrike Ottinger’s experimental epic magnum opus *Freak Orlando* (1981) makes *Black Box* seem like kinder-

garten recess. Additionally, the largely unsimulated hermetic sadomasochistic horrors of *Pig* (1998) co-directed by Nico B. and Christian Death frontman Rozz Williams expose the B's short for the fleeting softcore dilettante excursion in would-be-excess that it is. According to Jonathan Rosenbaum, the B's subsequent Super-8 features *The Offenders* (1980) and the Nietzschean *The Trap Door* (1980) are probably the directors' greatest works, but they seem to be totally impossible to find, thus I have to say that *Black Box* is the filmmakers' most rewarding and worthwhile work to date, though I certainly do not plan to watch it ever again. While it would have never happened in a proudly jaded and left-leaning cement zoo like New York City, Scott and Beth B and their compatriots would most certainly have been better off mimicking the genuinely subversive anti-counterculture cult comedies of underground cinema saint Paul Morrissey than following in the plodding dead-end filmic footsteps of his autistic monetary-motivated producer Warhol. As perfectly personified in *Black Box* and most of the B's oeuvre, Morrissey revealed in his (counter)culture critiques disguised as camp comedies that liberalism produces a toilet (pseudo)culture of the innately impotent and superlatively nihilistic sort that is completely devoid of real morals and ideals, not to mention cultural, political, and sexual potency. While I would hardly call myself a Freudian, I think the seemingly endless torture and sadism that is unleashed on a somewhat handsome Nordic-looking fellow in *Black Box* really reveals where Scott and Beth B's values (or lack thereof) really lie, as well as the lies in their art, which I would argue is the most intriguing aspect of the film. As far as I am concerned, I find the fact that the film is actually considered avant-garde cinematic art to be more disturbing and more representative of dystopian times and Western decline than the authoritarian torture it supposedly exposes. Indeed, thank god there are not currently any contemporary NYC avant-garde filmmakers that I know of that are making films in the sterilely sordid spirit of *Black Box* and fetishize Guantanamo Bay detention camp or the short life and adventurous times of Trayvon Martin, but then again nothing could be more wretched and repugnant yet simultaneously banal than the the masturbatory audio-visual atrocities of over-privileged half-breed Jewish American princess Lena Dunham.

-Ty E

VORTEX
VORTEX

Scott B (1982)

Compared to the great European films movements of the same era like German New Cinema, the NYC-based 'No Wave' cinema movement seems like a totally forgettable and mostly irrelevant footnote from America's rather barren avant-garde cinema history. In fact, I cannot think of a single No Wave film that could be described as even remotely resembling a 'masterpiece,' but then again, I hate jazz, fat chicks with stupid haircuts, and Hebraic 'punk' rockers, so I might be a tad bit prejudiced when it comes to assessing such works. Regardless, I decided to view what is oftentimes regarded as the last No Wave film ever made, *Vortex* (1982) directed by Beth B and Scott B, as it seemed to have more 'meat' than the average piece of absurdly amateurish art-school-project-gone-awry celluloid puffery typical of the mostly mundane movement. Shot on 16mm film stock (as opposed to Super-8mm as was typical of most No Wave films) with a budget of around \$70,000 given by the National Endowment for the Arts grant through Colab, *Vortex* is a sort of nihilistic neo-noir flick with a tinge of camp and a tidalwave of static phantasmagoria. Starring avant-garde artist/actor William "Bill" Rice (Decoder, Coffee and Cigarettes), movie Mafioso wop bad boy James Russo (Donnie Brasco, Django Unchained), loudmouthed lardo Lydia Lunch (Mondo New York, Kiss Napoleon Goodbye), and performance artist turned mainstream actress Ann Magnuson (Desperately Seeking Susan, Tank Girl), *Vortex* was a crossover work of sorts for most of those individuals involved as it proved that artists involved in the No Wave scene were capable of more professional and accessible works and, indeed, many of those involved with the film went on to more illustrious careers. A sort of hokey pseudo-Lynchian celluloid hallucination featuring mischievous midgets, fat and frigid femme fatales of the emotionally dead yet bitchy sort, and a quirky corporate/political conspiracy that is bound to tickle the toes of the average half-educated art school dropout, *Vortex* is a cool film made for the cool people that ultimately no long seems cool. The last film that the directors made together before both their romantic and artistic relationship dissolved into oblivion, *Vortex* certainly has a foreboding lovelorn feel that reminds viewers why hipsters make rather banal lovers.

At the beginning of *Vortex*, a portly politician named Congressman White (David Kennedy) is electrocuted to death with a state-of-the-art taser-like weapon by a menacing midget bartender named Peter (played by Brent Collins, a dwarf who suffered from Marfan syndrome and who died of a heart attack as a result of the disorder in 1988) who moonlights as a corporate hit man. Little Peter was sent by his secret employer Frederick Fields—the crippled and equally deranged CEO of the weapon-manufacturing Fields Corporation—to kill Congressman White because he made the fatal mistake of talking to rival weapon manufacturer NAVCO. A cryptic cripple who lives a pathetic, if not pernicious,

existence that seems to fall somewhere in between that of Howard Hughes and William S. Burroughs, Fields now relies on his hotheaded Guido ex-limo driver Tony Demmer (James Russo) to carry out his day-to-day affairs, which include murder, terrorism, and espionage. Indeed, a brutish proletarian turned elite corporate servant, Tony takes his job as Fields' right-hand man very seriously, so when a would-be-wanton woman gets in the way, things get rather ugly for everyone involved. While Tony is a charismatic master of romantic manipulation who is able to treat much classier woman, like Fields employee Pamela Fleming (Ann Magnuson), like total shit and get away with it, he ultimately finds himself no match for a rather rotund private investigator named Angel Powers (Lydia Lunch). When not taking self-flattering masturbatory bubble baths while doing dubious investigative research, pussy power Powers is verbally assaulting her wop junky ex-boyfriend for asking for dope money.

One day, Angel gets a knock at the door from some strange fellow who wants to hire her to investigate the mysterious murder of Congressman White. Angel also learns about the billion dollar beef between FieldsCo and NAVCO and how both companies are competing to create a super weapon called the 'BFW' for the United States government. Eventually, Angel makes her way to the FieldsCo company bar and intentionally bumps into Tony Demmer, who she pseudo-seductively asks, "So, you wanna fuck or not?" as if she is god's gift to man (which she most certainly is not!). Of course, Tony wants to fuck, but his cockblocking cripple boss Field makes that impossible because every time the crude chauffeur goes in for the fuck, his boss calls and asks him to do something for him. A marvelously misogynistic man with a high strung heart of garylucky coal, Tony strangely begins to fall for fatso femme fatale Angel and even shows her his beloved pet Boa constrictor. Needless to say, being a virile Italian-American conman with the self-control of a rabid pit-bull, Tony eventually loses his cool, wastes his cockblocking cripple boss, and blows up the NAVCO company building with a super laser. Of course, Angel tries to stop him and when Tony yells to her, "Your brains are up your ass...you don't even know how to use that gun," she eloquently responds by yelling back, "I'll blow your fucking head off." After Angel loses control of her gun, Tony shows her his genetic talent as a born wifebeater and gives her a couple punches to the face. With his boss dead, Tony also manages to slip his prick into Angel via forced entry while the poor gal is semi-unconscious, but she inevitably awakes from her slumber and the goombah corporate gangster eventually loses his life after his true love electrocutes him and knocks him off a very high building.

As co-director Beth B stated in the somewhat recent documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier regarding the troubled production of *Vortex*, "That was the last film Scott and I made together and I think that it suffered because our collaboration was really not working, although it got a lot of attention." Personally, I think *Vortex* is the best film Beth B and Scott B ever made together

VORTEX

and that their deteriorating romantic relationship only added to the starkly stylized pessimism and misanthropy of the film. After *Vortex*, Beth B would go on to make what is arguably her 'masterpiece,' *Salvation!: Have You Said Your Prayers Today?* (1987) starring a relatively unknown Viggo Mortensen and his future wife/ex-wife Exene Cervenka of the Los Angeles punk rock band X. A highly sardonic satire of televangelism featuring an excellent soundtrack by New Order and Cabaret Voltaire, *Salvation!* is no less 'punk' in spirit to the films of the No Wave and, unlike most of the dime-store cinematic works of the NYC-based art movement, actually manages to rise above the level of totally tasteless pseudo-subversive juvenile celluloid swill. Indeed, while I do not regret watching *Vortex*, I have seen similar films (i.e. postmodern neo-noir punk work), like *Be-taville* (1986) directed by Alyce Wittenstein, which manage to do much more in much less time. Indeed, ultimately, *Vortex*, not unlike Beth B's subsequent features *Salvation!* and *Two Small Bodies* (1993), seems like a short film stretched out to an ungodly length. That being said, I must give *Vortex* some credit for being the only film I have seen featuring Lydia Lunch that did not inspire me to fantasize about herding corpulent feminist cunts into cattle cars and dropping them off in crack and AIDS-ridden black ghettos, which is certainly no small achievement!

-Ty E

ELLIE

Scott Coffey (2005)

Early on, I found myself baring a remarkable attraction to the fruits of tragedy. To watch one's life being systematically destroyed from the inside out is something that draws ones full and undivided attention. In an episode of Gantz, we witness Kei Kurono's head land on a subway platform. In the blink of an eye, schoolgirls and businessmen draw their cellphone cameras to snap a picture of this morbid curiosity. The very same message can be said about nihilistic film making and with that I present Ellie. Ellie is a rather dreary looking teenager of an unknown age. She lifts weights before heading off to catch the bus. Her angst bleeds through her sweaty tank top. As the tag line reads, some questions will be answered but many more will be asked. This 30 minute short film will inevitably explode into a cataclysmic tale with nowhere to turn but to stare yourself down in the mirror and question your very existence. I'd heard of many needing showers after watching films but Ellie left me feeling a level of filthy. One of which that no amount of soap would ever wash away. In one scene, Ellie attempts to purchase whiskey at a general store. After being denied for lack of proper identification, a fellow convenience store worker asks "How bad do you want it?". For anyone that has experienced some trauma that "the real world" offers, we know what road this is heading down. Ellie is a self-conscious teenager and screams when her shirt is attempted to be removed. Each transpiring scene is more heart-wrenching than the last. The teenage rebellion starts off with baby steps, the beginning of nihilism if you will. First comes smoking, then drinking, then premarital sex. Then the events of Ellie get progressively worse. I'll leave it to your imagination to piece together the rest, that is caked in moral ambiguity. Minimalism aside, Ellie is a masterwork in low budget film making. Taking cues from films like Thirteen and In My Skin, Ellie transforms destructive human potential into the true definition of an American tragedy - all this with a young bag of meat. Marking each viewer's soul with relentless imagery of a tortured child, Ellie is an exercise of an independently thought grand scheme re-assessing depression into something unglamorized by popular media. My thanks to the vocally articulated ideas of director Matthew Garrett. Unannounced and practically unheard of, Ellie is one of the most toxic experiments I've ever witnessed.

-mAQ

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

Scott Derrickson (2008)

From the director of such bargain bin bullshit as *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* and *Hellraiser: Inferno* (!) comes a remake of one of humanity's favorite science fiction films - *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Led by an all-star cast of Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly, and (ugh) Jaden ~~Pinkett~~-Smith, this film aims to recast the hectic environment of post-Cold War conflict to more modern times, although not having the balls to confront a certain topic. To expect much from this film is your first mistake. As menacing and hardcore Gort looked in the trailer, it was inevitable to embrace the idea that the effects would be the only grand thing about the film. The special effects are gracefully majestic and groundbreaking, but the character acting is beyond horrendous. The film stood afloat, that is until Jaden Smith started trying to act. The film hits an all time low. Think of Dakota Fanning's role in *War of the Worlds* except add a bit of emancipation proclamation and that's the stench of humanity. I'll be the first to admit that I haven't seen the original "masterpiece". My intentions of seeing it only stretch so far. I love my classics, but time is of the essence. When ever I get a Blu-Ray player, I'll have to check it out, but until then I will save my breath. "Klaatu Barada Nikto" mutters Dr. Bensen moments before Earth's destruction. We know this much. As I eagerly awaited this infamous line, the silence grew heavy with wisps and grinding noises. The cult phrase was nowhere to be found. For a popcorn film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (2008) manages on its own. It can be a tedious time in the theaters though. The decision to create an IMAX Experience of this motion picture has its pluses and cons. The film features intense scenes of action, CGI, and spectacular deterioration's, but the film tends to drone on Kathy Bates' character as geriatric and cross-eyed as she is. I have many complaints with this film but Keanu Reeves made me appreciate this film a lot more. I can't really recommend this film but I will acknowledge there's substance for some to enjoy. A surefire technical achievement, but not much else.

-mAQ

DRIVE

Scott Dittrich (1974)

Over three and a half decades before mainstream Danish auteur Nicolas Winding Refn delicately assembled his 2011 synth-fueled neo-noir arthouse flick of the same name starring heterosexual alpha-twink Ryan Gosling, unrivaled 'master of narrative gay porn' Jack Deveau (*Left-Handed*, *A Night at the Adonis*) directed the avant-garde X-rated psychedelic fag fuck flick *Drive* (1974) starring a gigantic gay cast of no less than fifty longhaired cocksuckers. Not unlike Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*), Peter De Rome (*The Fire Island Kids*, *The Erotic Films of Peter De Rome*), Jacques Scandelari (*Beyond Love and Evil*, *New York City Inferno*) and more recently, Bruce LaBruce (*The Raspberry Reich*, *Otto*; or *Up with Dead People*) and Todd Verow (*Frisk*, *Bottom X*), Deveau—who had a background in architectural and graphic design and who got into the movie business after being convinced by his Sicilian-American sodomite actor friend Sal Mineo (*Rebel Without a Cause*, *Exodus*)—was essentially an artist who made pornography, thus his cinematic works would ultimately hold up much better today than those of many of his sleazy celluloid contemporaries, with *Drive* being arguably his most accomplished celluloid work as a film that works best today as sadomasochistic camp of the radically raunchy retrograde sort. Featuring a rather vainglorious and psychopathic cock-castrating Candy-Darling-wannabe drag queen as the main villain who could be Marlene Dietrich's demented fag-hating fag grandson and who is conspiring to destroy the sex drive of every person alive (hence the film's title, which is also a reference to the sports-car-loving hero), *Drive* is one of those oh-so rare and ridiculous gay porn flicks that is not only a perversely 'penetrating' piece of patently celluloid quasi-art, but a work of crudely and conspicuously corrupt black comedy, albeit of the cheesy science fiction sort. Part tribute to bad sci-fi b-movies from the 1950s, part degenerate dick-dangling disco cabaret show, part sodomy-saluting S&M dungeon debauchery, and part sass-saturated slapstick skin flick, *Drive* is the sort of insanely idiosyncratic celluloid work that needs to be seen to be believed, as a work that forever stays with the viewer no matter how much they would like to barf it out of their brain. A pre-AIDS, disco-digging dick-fest featuring double-fist anal penetration, debauched dungeon orgies, and decidedly disgusting drag queen histrionics, *Drive* is also a work of absolutely aberrant agitprop made when assaulting heterosexual America and establishing a sort of gay pride of the anti-bourgeois was vogue. Humorous homo hedonism from hell, *Drive* is like taking a bath in the contaminated sweat taken off the floor of a cocaine and popper fueled gay bar.

As the blonde drag queen villain Arachne (Chris Rage aka Mary Jim Sstunning) of *Drive* reveals in a long and drawn out sassy suicide letter/public service announcement right before putting a bullet in his/her makeup-adorned head,

DRIVE

“Dear World: ARACHNE will tell you the truth because I am the only one that understands the truth. By the time the official version has been announced and interpreted by the press, the facts will be distorted beyond recognition. It is the duty of the few who hear the voice of truth to speak to the masses. The masses hear nothing. And so I speak to you. I will begin with a scientist...He invented the drug...A drug that terminated the sex drive. It was the government’s idea to misuse the drug for birth control in underdeveloped nations. I sent my men to capture this scientist for it was my idea to use the drug to liberate the world. Scientists will not listen and governments are too busy talking to hear. If I had been forced to deal only with the scientists it would have been simpler but there was another man. His name was Clark and he was one of those special agents that the government is so fond of employing. I have hidden cameras that give me access to the files the government keeps on men such as Clark. His file described him as intelligent and unquestioningly obedient. I thought he was quite beautiful. I began on work with one theme and a simple pattern and then, as circumstances allowed, I spun a more complex web. I am a rational person.” Indeed, without Arachne’s narrated confessional at the beginning of the film, it would be nearly impossible to follow what is going on in *Drive*, but plot and storyline are secondary in such a visually visceral and exceedingly extremist work that is nothing short of aesthetic terrorism of the foully frolicsome sort.

Aside from opening with Arachne’s nauseatingly narcissistic letter to the world, *Drive* also features a bloody montage of the psychopathic tranny grabbing the cock and balls of an unfortunate gentleman and slicing them off in a very careful and dainty manner with a kitchen knife. As Arachne reveals during the film, s/he was not always a creepy cock-chopper, but previously someone who longed for love in all the wrong horny men and has since then dedicated his/her life to masterminding a conspiracy to destroy all sex drives. When not perniciously plotting destruction, Arachne moonlights as a campy cabaret singer in a disco hall where horny homos hump each others’ legs. Though seeming to lack even the most meager inkling of humor and humility, Arachne also is known to wear a gorilla outfit on stage. Using his/her less than androgynous minion Androgene (Peter Fersen), Arachne hopes to steal the liquid castration formula that will destroy all men’s sex drives, sinisterly stating, “I will have the formula... I will succeed. The world will remember Arachne...,” but rather unfortunately, a government secret agent named Clark (Kirk Luna) gets in the way. While attempting to steal the formula from its creator, Dr. Vincent Hardison (Sydney Soons)—a hippie-like degenerate who looks like a more gawky, zit-faced version of Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro—Arachne’s plans are thwarted, thus resulting in the death of one of his minions and a pole-smoking scientist. To relieve the stress of failure, Arachne fondles glass cases carrying castrated members s/he has carefully collected. In between cruising for cocks while driving around Manhattan in his red Lamborghini and engaging in full-force fisting in foggy

gay bathhouses (even using government money to foot the bill!), Clark is on the glittery trail of Arachne. In the end, Clark find Arachne's secret dungeon and stops the deranged drag queen before s/he can hack off a young twink's prick. Of course, with all the torture devices in the makeshift Milligan-esque dungeon, Clark makes sure to sexually service the tied up prisoners before freeing them. As for Arachne, s/he has more red liquid on his/her face after sucking on a handgun and pulling the trigger (rather unfortunately, one does not get to see the drag queen's post-suicide facial).

A sort of celluloid missing link between Steven Arnold's *Luminous Procureess* (1971), *Women in Revolt* (1971) directed by Paul Morrissey, Michael Kalmen's *Elevator Girls in Bondage* (1972), and Troma brand cinematic sleaze, *Drive* seems like nothing short of a filmic anomaly today as a work created during a time where they seemed to be an overlap between pornography and the avant-garde. The fact that *Drive* also features avant-garde pornographer Peter De Rome (Adam & Yves, *The Destroying Angel*) only adds to the film's curious cult cred. Ultimately, *Drive* is the sort of film that Russ Meyer would never had the balls, nor the love of balls, to make. Of course, being a debauched hardcore flick, *Drive* is sometimes slowed down and aesthetically subverted by its explicit sex scenes, yet compared to the average fuck flick, Deveau has an uncommon balance between buggery and storyline, as if the director really wanted to make a cult flick, but found himself a little bit too infatuated with the 'actors.' Featuring melodic mono orchestral music and foreboding synthesizer-driven sci-fi-like sound effects, as well as Riefenstahl-esque trapeze artist imagery superimposed over semen-soaked sauna room orgies, *Drive* is like being thrown into director Deveau's diseased brain and wondering if one is lost in a sort of pandemonium between homo heaven and Hades. Featuring a deranged drag queen who vomits at the sight of two sauna room sodomites ejaculating in unison and disco dick-suckers who live for unsafe promiscuity, *Drive*, aside from being too artsy fartsy, is far too politically incorrect to have been made in contemporary times as the sort of sodomy-sanctioning work created by proud poofs who had nil interest in getting married, joining the military, or any of the other culturally conservative cocksucker crap promoted by the LGBT propagandists in the mainstream media nowadays, which is just one of the various reasons why Deveau's work is worth checking out if you wallow in extremist cinema.

-Ty E

BEHIND THE MASK: THE RISE OF LESLIE VERNON
BEHIND THE MASK: THE RISE OF LESLIE VERNON

Scott Glosserman* (2006)

One thing about me, I love surprises. When I watch a film that I expect to be utter crap, and it turns out to be good, let alone amazing, my heart skips a beat. This little gem is everything that was used to success in a film like *Evil Dead II*; part comedy, satire, and a mean horror film. *Behind the Mask* is a mean film to an extent. The first half of the film encompasses a mockumentary of sorts, depicting a would-be serial killer. This first half can be highly related to Belgian's *Man Bites Dog*, and then out of nowhere, it shifts horrifically. *Behind the Mask* takes place in a fictional world in which Jason Voorhees, Michael Myers, Chucky, and Freddy Krueger all exist. This world is also inhabited with reporters willing to follow around a young serial killer who wants to make his mark. Such clichéd rules are explained which often end with humorous results. The "Survivor girl" and "Ahab" are explained. While this should have been a stale approach which can be read in books such as *How to Survive a Horror Movie?*, It is true that the aforementioned absurdities commonly occur in slashers. Slashers. I hate that title. I hate the genre. Just the very word brings up painful memories of the chances I have given, and the hours that I have wasted attempting to adapt to the modern horror film. Even though I appreciate the slasher-esque ending, I can't help but discriminate against it as a whole. The twist in the film certainly was predictable, but that doesn't mean it wasn't good. Once again, Horny teenagers find themselves trapped in a horrifying situation. Things might have not been so bad if they would stay away from substance abuse. As with any Anchor Bay release, you can expect a cameo from Robert Englund as Leslie's "Ahab" These days, "cult" icons probably get pitched a couple hundred to a thousand dollars to appear in the next bargain bin horror film. Ken Foree's role in *Devil's Den* comes to mind. I do respect Robert Englund's role and career though. He has that face that is recognizable. His grizzled facial hair makes for a good supporting actor for films such as these. This isn't a perfect film, nor is it great. Being a good film is still tough business. Nathan Baesel (Leslie Vernon) is one of the most over-charismatic, pompous asses I have ever experienced in a film. Near the climax of the film is the only time when he acts as an iconic horror villain. I do appreciate his mask though. For the task of creating a memorable mask, Scott Glosserman has created a chilling caricature of a muppet skull. *Behind the Mask* is a film that stands out on its own. No matter how many other films are titled this, whether they be Slipknot films or documentaries on Rob Zombie's *Halloween*, this is a film that deserves its title and brandishes playful originality. Speaking of originality, I loved watching the credits. Too bad a really shitty band was playing in the background, or It might have had the benefit of being creepy.

-mAQ

SOCKET

Sean Abley° (2007) Socket is one of the few original sci-fi ideas lately. Director Sean Abley tapped in real nice with the regulars on his brave new outing. With his inspirations and influences in tow, he sets out to create a gay sci-fi film actually worth mentioning. Brilliant Surgeon Bill Matthews gets struck by lightning and ends up in his hospital, currently recovering. His young intern nurse hands him a card for "people like us". When he is at home, he is attracted to static from the TV, goes on an energy high, cleaning his entire home. With this event, he decides to check the meeting out, which leads to a group of people who love absorbing voltage to go club-hopping and making out with each other. The basic storyline has recurring elements of the films about drug addiction and the seedy side of ecstasy, which has its fun times, but is too overdone. Socket doesn't add any new emotions to the character's addiction. Many influences can be traced so deeply, that the film loses many of its originality points. The secret cult theme can be lead to Cronenberg's Crash and even the ridiculous surgery (body horror themes) can be lead back to Cronenberg as well. I even sense a slight ode to Electric Dragon 80,000v. Socket is a marvel of a gay film for the simple fact that it doesn't revel in the fact that it is a gay film. Most gay/lesbian films focus less on the story and more on the accept of them in our society, as sort of a "look at me" scream. You barely notice that the film is gay-themed and serves as a testament that there is a market in gay films. Aside from being a breath of fresh air, Socket is a film that can hold its own throughout the onslaught of sci-fi films to come. With recurring themes of body horror, dark perversions, and looking for the ultimate high, Socket is a science fiction film to reckon with.

-Maq

THE LOVED ONES
THE LOVED ONES

Sean Byrne (2009)

What kind of deranged bitch asks a guy to the prom? Apparently, the kind that likes to take her would-be boyfriends prisoner and keep girly scrapbooks of her man murdering escapades. *The Loved Ones* is an Australian film that features this kind of torture lusting she-bitch (named Lola) from down under. The unfortunate victim of this teen-girl psycho is a young man named Brent who finds it hard to cope after inadvertently killing his father in a head-on car collision with a tree. Of course, car accidents have unfortunate consequences but one never expects near death because they turned down a weird girl down for Prom. As you find out early in *The Loved Ones*, Brent has a loving girlfriend who has no problem letting him know he's appreciated by spreading her tender thighs, so there was no need for him to be so desperate as to flirt with freak girl.

The Loved Ones is certainly a film that borrows elements from earlier horror films, most notably *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The People Under The Stairs*. In fact, most of *The Loved Ones* plays out in a similar way to the family dinner torture sequence near the conclusion of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Only in this film, instead of featuring a family of inbred Texas degenerates having a jolly good ol' thyme playing torture, *The Loved Ones* presents an odd Father and daughter duo who like to play murderously with teenage boys. Lunatic Lola must have one hell of a sex drive and a lot of pent up libidinal frustration for her to decide kidnapping and torturing the opposite sex is a proper way to achieve sexual release. Lola's sexual perversion is most likely heavily influenced by her weasel-like Father who seems to have extremely intimate feelings for his aggressive debutante daughter. If there is any message of intrinsic value to *The Loved Ones*, it is that weak Fathers produce deranged and hostile daughters.

Daddy's Girl

I must admit that I found crazy Lola to be extremely attractive and find it unfortunate that Brent did not agree to go to the prom with her. Had Brent gone to the prom with Lola and broken open her meat curtain afterward, maybe he wouldn't have had to endure a nightlong torture session. After all, if Lola needed anything, it was to be submissive at the hands of one of her imagined Gentlemen callers. Even after getting hit by a car, Lola still finds enough gall to crawl with a knife (her phallus of choice) to stab the man that stood her up. Despite being the villain of the film, Lola is certainly the most interesting and complex character featured in *The Loved Ones*. Of course, being a sensational horror film, we are barely introduced to the character of Lola and what makes her tick. On the other hand, the ambiguity of Lola's character also gives the film a certain power that may have been lost had the director of the film decided to reveal more about the teenage angel of death.

Female serial killers are a rare breed and I would like to seem more featuring

them like *The Loved Ones*. After all, the world needs more films featuring the deepest and darkest fantasies of your typical post-female Feminist. *The Loved Ones* certainly borrows conventions and characteristics of earlier horror films but executes these traits in a new way, resulting in a film that is sadistically entertaining from beginning to end. Maybe there is re-animated hope for the mostly sterile horror genre as recent shockfests like *The Loved Ones* and *Deadgirl* have given me some optimism.

-Ty E

I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW
I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW

Sean Donnelly (2008)

Unfortunately, I was formerly friends with a pathetic perverted fellow (lets just call him "Big H") that claimed he was in love with famous women that he had obviously never met. To show his delusional imagined love for porno star Riley Mason, big H wrote her a pop song on his folk guitar with melodies inspired by Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys. Big H also talked incessantly about the various women that he would never meet, let alone fornicate with. Unsurprisingly, Big H had many vivid sexual fantasies involving being sexually degraded by the women of his often advertised dreams. Once, Big H boasted that he would love to drink a freshly pissed cup of redheaded miscling Alyson Hannigan's urine. Naturally, I became very tired of Big H's pathetic behavior as it was no longer funny. Fortunately for Big H, he finally found a girlfriend (despite being a 23 year old virgin at the time) in the ferocious form of a husky rich bitch Jewess. To Big H's fanatical glee, his Jewish American princess physically abused him during sex and he would show off the battle wounds covering his grotesque body with overstimulated pride. I bring up Big H as he reminds me of the mentally perturbed Tiffany fans in the documentary *I Think We're Alone Now* directed by Sean Donnelly. Not since the vintage days of my friendship with big H have I felt embarrassed by the pitiful sounds of a gravely lonely person as I did after viewing this documentary.

Before watching *I Think We're Alone Now*, I had never heard of 1980s pop singer Tiffany nor her smutty pop songs. Tiffany's greatest aesthetic achievement was not her forgettable music but being featured in the April 2002 issue of *Playboy* magazine, a desperate comeback publicity stunt that she apparently had a hard time explaining to her 9 year old son. Tiffany's appearance in *Playboy* also probably did not help her already annoying problem with fanatic fans like Jeff Turner and Kelly McCormick, the two graceless 'stars' of *I Think We're Alone Now*. Jeff is a 50 year old uber-nerd-turd that suffers from Asperger's syndrome, a social disorder which allows him to live off the generous fruits of the taxpayer via welfare. Since Asperger's causes the individual to become immersed in various obsessions, it no doubt plays a huge part in Jeff's life commitment to Tiffany. Fellow *I Think We're Alone Now* subject Kelly is a hermaphrodite that also has the government foot the bill for her pseudo-career of swooning over Tiffany. While watching *I Think We're Alone Now*, I found myself completely repulsed by both Tiffany fans. The fact that both of these wackjobs live off public assistance while actively stalking a 1980s pop singer almost caused me to forget the fact that disproportionate members of certain minority groups exploit the welfare system.

Being the slightly more masculine of the two, Jeff is the more assertive and aggressive Tiffany fan, even having security guards subduing him at one of the

singer's appearances. At the very beginning of *I Think We're Alone Now*, Jeff states quite confidently, "Tiffany and I have known each other most of her life and we are in love with each other." It is quite obvious that Jeff is a mastermind of self-deception but not so much when it comes to deceiving others. Jeff also believes that Tiffany can time travel and talk to different various alien races from outer space. Despite having a hard time speaking coherently, Kelly is marginally less annoying than Jeff. Although born with both the key and the hole, Kelly lives 'her' life as a woman, albeit as a lesbian woman that is infatuated with Tiffany. I think Kelly may have been exaggerating a tad bit when she describes herself as the most popular person in High school. Let's just hope that when her former classmates see *I Think We're Alone Now* that they do not drown her in the punch bowl at their class reunion. Kelly also used to be some kind of high school track star but she runs so awkwardly (whilst acting like quite the braggart) in the documentary that I thought she might be wearing a diaper. When Jeff and Kelly meet up for a Tiffany appearance, there is an unspoken rivalry of social retards that reaches a climax when Jeff ruins an extra special reflection moment of Kelly's.

I Think We're Alone Now was obviously made on a used shoestring budget with next to no production values. In fact, the documentary features no titles but instead film pieces of paper with writing on them. Of course, the minimalist approach taken no doubt works to the advantage of this highly engrossing yet disturbing documentary. I am sure some would see *I Think We're Alone Now* as exploitation but the documentary is far from it. The filmmaker could have decided to not mention Jeff's Asperbergers but instead the documentary features various insights into his life, including interviews with friends and church leaders. At the end of *I Think We're Alone Now*, Kelly comes out on top as the greater Tiffany fan. Despite having more contact with Tiffany, Jeff never seems to fill the lonely void that is at the center of his dubious fanaticism, even becoming a fairweather stalker by later deciding he would rather wed Alyssa Milano. Kelly seems to fill an enormous portion of her empty life just by meeting Tiffany, coming away from the experience with a noticeable amount of new self-esteem. At the end of *I Think We're Alone Now*, both Jeff and Kelly are still alone but isn't everyone (even Tiffany) to some extent?

-Ty E

BENT
BENT

Sean Mathias (1997)

Once long ago, the now deceased singer of a fascistically iconoclastic yet decidedly degenerate grindcore band with the positively poetic name “Anal Cunt” wrote a song entitled “Hogging Up the Holocaust,” which features the rather insightful lyrics regarding the greedy victim of God’s chosenites, “Other people were fucked with too...But all you care about is you...Faggots, gypsies, others too.” Of course, the faggots, as well as their ostensibly female counterparts (who the Nazis did not typically harass), are now undoubtedly only second to the Hebrews in getting a piece of the persecution pie because, in terms of being a political collective with a discernible agenda like their Judaic allies, they are pushy, politically subversive, relative wealthy, love to whine, and hold victimhood as the height of moral superiority, thus it was only natural that they would begin telling their “holocaust story” in celluloid form. In terms of homo holocaust flicks, probably none is ‘greater’ than *Bent* (1997) directed by gay British theatre director Sean Mathias and based on the blockbuster 1979 play of the same name written by gay Jewish American screenwriter/playwright Martin Sherman, who also acted as one of the film’s producers. Technically a British-Japanese co-production, *Bent* features an Anglicized National Socialist Germany featuring popular (and rampantly heterosexual) English actor Clive Owen in the lead role as a bourgeois bugger who takes on the false identity of a Jew and wears an ugly yellow star of David in a concentration camp rather than admit to being a homo and wearing a pink triangle as a wide-receiver on the fluff team. Following the tradition of Italian maestro Luchino Visconti in unabashedly portraying Nazis in an absurdly eroticized and fetishized fashion and featuring erratically exaggerated anti-reality melodrama that would even make Fassbinder’s stomach churn in disgust, *Bent* is surely a penetrating, if not oftentimes plodding, piece of sadomasochistic ‘persecution porn’ that seems more interested in enticing the viewer with salacious sex scenes and bodacious bloody violence than promoting the apparently ‘good fight’ of the poofer plight. Indeed, in terms of resembling reality and authentic human emotion, *Bent* is about as historically authoritative in sensitively portraying the horrors of the Second World War as Spielberg’s *Schindler’s list* (1993) and even Liliana Cavani’s *The Night Porter* (1974) and *The Berlin Affair* (1985), but all the more fetishistic, suavely stylized, and entertainment based. Essentially beginning on the Night of the Long Knives aka Röhm-Putsch—Hitler’s treacherous purge of the Nazi Strasserite ‘left-wingers’ and largely homosexual led *Sturmabteilung* (SA) that took place between June 30 and July 2, 1934—*Bent* focuses on a sexually promiscuous and supremely narcissistic sodomite from a wealthy family who finds himself a marked man after having an affair with a blond beast of a brownshirt. Featuring a cameo from Jude

Law as a one-eyed SA brownshirt with nonsensical SS insignia, SS men hanging out in and brutally raping and torturing prisoners in a relatively empty cattle car headed to Dachau concentration camp, old rock queen Mick Jagger in radically repulsive hagsploitation-esque drag, and a conspicuously British cast that look like they could be the cast of a Derek Jarman film, *Bent*, not unlike the TV movie *Christopher and His Kind* (2011) based on British author Christopher Isherwood's 1976 memoir of the same name, is a relentlessly culturally and historically retarded and superlatively sordid tale of Teuton buggery after the purge of the big bad butt-darting brownshirts.

Max (Clive Owen) is a dandy degenerate gay boi and black sheep from a wealthy German family who, judging by his rather promiscuous sexual behavior, is itching for a poz-cock as he spends a good portion of his time hanging out in Weimar Berlin cabarets and engaging in sodomite orgies. Despite the glaring jealousy of his four-eyed and effortlessly effete dancer boyfriend Rudy Glass (Brian Webber II), Max does not think twice about starting a solely sexual relationship with a handsome blond Nazi brownshirt named Wolfgang Ganz (German-Danish actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), but little does he realize that it is the eve of the Night of the Long Knives and his new piece of Aryan Übermensch meat is also the boyfriend of Berlin SA leader Karl Ernst, an ex-bouncer of a gay bar who will be one of Hitler's homo victims. Naturally, since Ganz is Ernst's boy toy, the SS comes for him and slits his throat right in front of Max and Rudy at their apartment, so the two make a run for it and go into hiding. Not long after, Max and Rudy discover that their old drag queen friend Greta (Mick Jagger), the star of their favorite gay cabaret is an opportunistic tranny traitor, who sold out Wolfgang Ganz to the SS and put his own friends in jeopardy after being bribed. Greta, who was awarded handsomely by the SS for his treachery and has burned his entire drag queen/cabaret wardrobe in a rather ritualistic fashion as a way to say sayonara to his past life as Berlin's most glamorous queen, gives Max the sound advice to accept the fact that in Nazi Germany, "Queer is out. Queer is dead" and that they should pretend to live their lives as heterosexuals as he has already started to as demonstrated by his new butch suit and name. Uncle Freddie (Ian McKellen) has given him new papers to hide his identity, but the naïve nephew refuses to leave his bitchy boyfriend Rudy behind. In a rather anti-völkisch action scene filmed in a seemingly haunted and phantasmagorical German forest that seems like a horror-like take on the mystical Germanic woods of the National Socialist propaganda flick *Ewiger Wald* (1936) aka *Enchanted Forest*, Max and Rudy are caught by the SS and sent on a train headed to Dachau as homosexual criminals. Rather absurdly, Rudy is forced to break his own glasses and is routinely tortured by an SS officer who also sports glasses because the naughty Nazi assumes that his lack of vision is a sure sign that he is a member of the intelligentsia. Max, who keeps telling himself like a scared child that "it isn't happening" as he sees his boyfriend routinely

BENT

beaten to a bloody pulp in the cattle car, is forced by the sadistic SS officer to also beat Rudy, who is inevitably killed by being thrown out of the moving train. A traitor to his lover, Max also becomes a traitor to his homosexuality after he is forced by the SS to copulate with the corpse of a 13-year-old girl. For his daring display of heterosexual necrophilia/pedophilia, as well as bribing the SS men, Max is rewarded with the supreme honor of wearing the yellow star of David label as opposed to the dreaded pink triangle because, apparently, being a poof is worse than being a Jew at Dachau concentration camp.

Not long after arriving at Dachau, Max begins to fall in love with a less than handsome homo named Horst (Canadian actor Lothaire Bluteau), a mentally tough fluff who wears the pink triangle proudly as an activist of gay Jewish sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld who was naturally sent to the concentration camp due to his political commitment to cocksucking. Not unsurprisingly, Horst initially finds Max to be a repulsive character for being a self-loathing sodomite who pretends to be a Jew to save his own skin, but things change over time as the wealthy conman proves his commitment to his new comrade. A homo hustler of the supremely shameless sort, Max bribes the SS men and manages to get Horst a relatively easy job with him pointlessly carrying rocks from one side of a room to another, work designed to break the will and spirit of the prisoners. In a patently ridiculous scene of the quasi-supernatural sort, Max and Horst manage to reach mutual orgasms while standing side-to-side without even looking or touching one another nor themselves, but merely by talking dirty to one another and using their wanton will to power. Eventually, Max and Horst develop debilitating colds, which mark them as dead men as far as the concentration camp guards are concerned. To get medicine for Horst and himself, Max gives a blowjob to an SS officer. After finding out how Max was able to procure the meds, Horst refuses to take the drugs and the same SS officer who his boy toy blew begins to taunt him. Realizing he is about to die, Horst charges the SS man and is shot dead on the spot by a guard, but not before scratching the statuesque face of his seemingly gay Aryan persecutor. With his lover dead, Max finally gets enough courage to accept death like a Third Reich era German soldier would and he commits suicide by grabbing on an electronic fence in a morbidly melodramatic fashion worthy of Elie Wiesel's diluted literary fantasies.

A shamelessly sensationalized and even exploitative tale of cocksucker concentration camp blues, Bent expresses the sentimentalized message that it is better to die an open faggot than it is to live as a closet colon-choker. Undoubtedly, considering the sometimes surreal and theatrically stylized setting of the film, as well as the somnambulist-like movement of the characters, Bent resembles more of a Nancy boy nightmare than any sort of serious depiction of kraut fairies being fag-bashed by Hitler's heroes. Indeed, although penned and produced by a Jewish mensch, I would assume that most Jews (Shabbos Goys like Roger Ebert included!) would consider Bent to be a piece of holocaust heresy that uses kitschy

and high-camp tableaux, as well as unwaveringly decadent eroticism and gratuitous ultra-violence to enthrall the viewer in what amounts to loony celluloid libertinism with a sorry shade of senseless sentimentalism, thus overpowering its rather weak and meek pro-homo message. In fact, Bent goes so far as to not only turn sodomite stormtroopers into super sensual sex objects, but also sado-masochistic SS men, one of which literally grabs the testicles of a prisoner in an S&M fashion and another one, arguably the most archetypically handsome and Nordic man in the film, receives head from a man he assumes to be a Jew. In what amounts to a rather insightful scene, protagonist Max remarks to his homo homeboy Horst regarding the sexual persuasion of a Svengali-like SS man, "Of course, he could be queer, but you don't like to think about that. You don't want them to be queer," thus discrediting the absurd idea that all queers are as morally supreme as Hollywood and MTV would lead one to believe. Although probably inadvertent on the director's part, Bent even hints that if the Sturmabteilung brownshirts, most of whom are portrayed in a reasonably positive light in the film, ruled Nazi Germany, the nation would be a virtual homo heaven on earth. Either way, Bent, like Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) and Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), is just one of many reasons why Nazis will live on to be the most potent and fetishized objects of artsy camp cinema. Unfortunately, kraut fag Führer Michael Kühnen, a man inspired by the struggle of slayed gay SA leader Ernst Röhm, died of AIDS before he could see what would have probably been his favorite film, Bent, a virtual romance flick for sodomite Strasserites.

-Ty E

CRONICAS
CRONICAS

Sebastián Cordero (2004)

Is the news media run by assholes? Does the media have the ability to mold public opinion? Does the media outright lie or withhold horrible crimes that may benefit them? Does the media think that the general public is a bunch of morons that barely know how to wipe their own asses? Obviously, I would have to say “yes” to all these questions. Naturally, Hollywood has produced a few films criticizing and satirizing the media. Hollywood hack Oliver Stone’s *Natural Born Killers* comes to mind. Funny, I thought that Stone was a disinformation guy with some type of agenda. Anyways, the Ecuadorian film *Cronicas* is the first film to appropriately address the conspiring clowns that run the media. In *Cronicas*, John Leguizamo plays an arrogant video journalist who is attempting find a child murdering and raping serial killer from Ecuador. I have never been a fan of Leguizamo but always felt he was good at playing asshole midgets. He seems to be a natural method actor of sorts. Of course, Leguizamo’s role in *Cronicas* as a self-serving news journalist is perfect for him. He also works with another man and woman who also happen to be a couple. Being the prick that he is, Leguizamo’s character is screwing the woman in the news crew making it very obvious to her real partner. Leguizamo saves the life of the ambiguous serial killer in *Cronicas*. An obese man attempts to set the killer on fire for killing his son (the killer accidentally killed him with his car). Soon afterward, Leguizamo’s character starts a sort of mutual beneficial relationship with the killer. The killer is attempting to get out of jail before he is murdered and Leguizamo is attempting to get his best news story yet. It is obvious that Leguizamo’s character only cares about his career and WISHING he was suave. The revealing of Leguizamo’s true self is what makes *Cronicas* a good commentary on those that make a career on bringing us “breaking stories.” *Cronicas* does have its fair share of flaws. I guess it wouldn’t be considered a “flaw” that *Cronicas* is one of the most aesthetically repelling films that I have ever seen. I thought the America’s inner cities were some of the biggest manmade waste piles in the world. That was until I saw the jungle and swamp “villages” of Ecuador. I guess the ugliness of the settings of *Cronicas* goes great with a film about a child serial killer. Still, there is only so much ugliness that I can take. Aside from the visuals of *Cronicas*, the film also seemed a little unevenly paced. Before you know it, the film is over before you feel it reaches its full “thrilling” potential. *Cronicas* is certainly a film I am glad I saw but most likely will never watch again. It is also a film that proves that John Leguizamo is talented but also an annoying little turd. It is about time someone made a film criticizing the ethics of the media while being somewhat subtle about it. *Cronicas* is able to combine “social commentary” and “psychological thriller” for an interesting hybrid. I just wish I didn’t feel a little sick from all the ugliness after watching it.

-Ty E

MADAME O
MADAME O

Seiichi Fukuda (1967)

For the past several days I have been plagued with fluish symptoms. During this brief period of hell, I had managed to view quite a number of films with *Madame O* being one of the more memorable ones. Not just because I, too, shared a "rot" of sorts with the main objector of the film but also because of the pulp decadence that played a part of this early entry in pinku. Past polygamy, Seiko harnesses the terror grained in her roots from a savage rape to fuel her moonlight attacks on men. Depicted only during a single and short scene, *Madame O* makes sure not to stick so much as to the erotic nature of her molestation as to focus almost exclusively on the stylistic composition of the film. After all, without the pseudo-noir and the toggled monochromatic/color, why, *Madame O* would have been left a sizzling piece of stale pink, as non-titillating as could be. Due to the absence of logical Japanese perversion and fetishistic truths, *Madame O* is counterfeit Americana picked up for Western soil via Audubon Pictures. It is in this vein that makes *Madame O* seem unfitted for any proper audience. You can herd it any which way you'd like but *Madame O* will never feel or be at home. No, *Madame O* was clearly made for a different species of being and in this context I'd imagine it getting the vast recognition it almost deserves.

Labeled as a killer and outcast as a saint, Seiko's livelihood makes up of two key activities: performing complicated surgeries, saving the lives of many, and seducing and transmitting her syphilis (given to her upon the rape) while the male contender rests peacefully after an explicitly PG-13 night of consensual sex. The surgical precision in which Seiko applies her "scorned woman" archetype is as devious and calculated as it gets. She is a simple and stupid creature, labeling all men as chauvinist pigs and dealing them her inner-rot via cotton swabs. For these terrible attacks on men, you'd assume the violation she suffered through would have been a grueling experience but due to the foolish and prudish handling of *Madame O*, the rape scene is presented as a slightly eschewed game of ring-around-the-rosie, baring only a small amount of breast and retaining full dignity, syphilis withheld, of course. Seiko's life is challenged, however, when she finally transcends teasing death and actually murders a potential blackmailer. She then not only becomes a legit killer but picks up a note of love with a young doctor employed at her clinic. Once married, Seiko doesn't rest easy as she begins to suspect her husband being of questionable intention. Again, the utilizing of two separate palettes really draws the line between art and proto-sleaze, black and white representing the drama and color to visually resonate with the graphic (at the time) images on display.

Madame O was, at times, breathtaking in its dazzling display of crisp cinematography. There is no denying its powerful images, including the silly throes of passion which barely stand for second base by today's standard. Whether or

not you would enjoy it depends largely on your taste. Hailed as being cutting edge and graphic, Madame O is really neither - a fossil, more or less. Its value relies largely on its history and not so much the internal worth. Despite ending on a chord so silly and sudden that all dignity self-defenestrates upon credits, Madame O remained a worthy textbook pink film with rather unconventional decisions progressing itself in the art market. But if misandrištic cinema is what you are looking for, Madame O can only satiate a small portion as there is no real revelation as to the reason of her madness, other than Seiko's whines of an unfortunate incident which have, no doubt, happened to millions of other people. This facet plays perfectly with her narcissism and leaves the air about the character unsettling and curious. I still don't how to feel about Seiko's resentment towards men other than blaming it on naivety. Recommended for a single viewing but no more. To learn more about Madame O or more Asian cult cinema, visit Synapse Films.

-mAQ

I LOVE YOU, I DON'T
I LOVE YOU, I DON'T

Serge Gainsbourg (1976)

If there is anything more repellant and repulsive to me than Serge Gainsbourg's bisexed, apish face and Franco-Semitic hyper-ambisexuality, it is his overblown and over-esteemed creative output, so I was not exactly delighted when I realized that I made the unconscious commitment to watch one of his cinematic auteur pieces. This month, I decided that it would be quite regaling challenge to view every single one of Joe Dallesandro's post-Warhol European period flicks (mid-1970s to early-1980s), so naturally I caved in and decided to view Gainsbourg's directorial debut *Je t'aime moi non plus* (1976) aka *I Love You, I Don't*; a work starring the Italian-American junky hunk as a perverted Polak who decides to give women a try after a lifetime of unadulterated blue-collar male buggery. Undoubtedly, Dallesandro gave some of his greatest and most prestigious performances during his stay in Europa because, as he has stated in various interviews that unlike while working with Warhol and his mostly untalented weirdos – who saw him as nothing more than a beautiful brutish bohunk and unofficial factory bouncer – European directors treated him as a serious actor, hence his eclectic performances in such notable works as Vittorio Salerno's *Savage Three* (1975) aka *Fango bollente*, Louis Malle's *Black Moon* (1975), Walerian Borowczyk's *La marge* (1976), Fernando Di Leo's *Madness* (1980) and Jacques Rivette's *Merry-Go-Round* (1981). Out of all of his European films, *I Love You, I Don't* quite arguably features Dallesandro at his most intimate, vulnerable and yet decidedly brutal. Also featuring Gainsbourg's then-wife Jane Birkin in an unflattering yet notable performance that would get her nominated for a Best Actress César Award, *I Love You, I Don't* is a work of Arcadian libertinage where the conventions of sex and sexuality are mixed in a blender for a most potent, if slightly poisonous, ultra-erotic cinematic cock-in-tail. Originally banned in the UK in its uncut form upon its initial 1976 release, *I Love You, I Don't* is a cinematic work that is not so much infamous for its graphic nudity as it is for depraved sexual scenarios, recalcitrant relationships, and deluging lack of sentimentality. Unsurprisingly, featuring an unremarkable score and songs composed by Serge Gainsbourg himself, which proves to be one of the weaker points of the film, *I Love You, I Don't* – much like Godard's *Contempt* (1963) – is one of those rare films where I was able to put aside my unwavering antipathy for the artist and judge the film somewhat objectively on its own merits.

Over two decades before rather rotund fanboy Kevin Smith directed what is arguably his most serious film, *Chasing Amy* (1997) – a reasonably ridiculous and infantile quasi-fantasy work about a lipstick lesbo who temporarily switches to smoking poles instead of licking labias – Serge Gainsbourg released *I Love You, I Don't*; a more-bitter-than-sweet love story about a sad-eyed Slavic sodomite named Krassky (Joe Dallesandro) who experiments with heterosexual-

ity after he meets a girl that seems to be man-enough for his sexual druthers; or so s/he seems. Johnny (Jane Birkin) may not have a cock, but she does have a tight pink hole and that proves to be good enough for Krassky's knob, at least for brief period of time. In *I Love You, I Don't*, Polish Garbage truck driver Krassy and his beau boi Padovan (Hugues Quester) – a hysterical queen who is the absolute female in the relationship – make a pit-stop at a rural French diner where the two meet androgynous Johnny; a boyish-girl that seems intrigued by the mysterious muscular Slav. Johnny is warned by her coarse yet upright boss that the two Poles are bona fide poofers, but that doesn't stop her from hopelessly crushing over the stoic yet swaggering homophile. Despite all the terrible biological odds against them, sassy Krassy and jejune Johnny eventually 'hook-up', but not in the conventional way as the homo Pole is unable to extend his pole when confronted with his lady friend's wet womanhood. Instead, the couple gets entangled in a steamy liaison of debauched scatology which – to her credit – Johnny takes like a the man, even if her cries of extreme discomfort during anal sex stir outrage from various neighbors as neither of the two lovers have enough foresight to utilize the lubricating wonders of spit like the gay cowboys in Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). Heartbroken, hysterical, and horny due to his lover's absence, prissy prima donna Padovan tries to find a rebound stud in the form of a well-endowed bestialist (played by Gérard Depardieu in a hilarious yet bewildering cameo role) with a predilection for penetrating horses. Thoroughly dismayed by his failed sexual conquests and totally humiliated by his lover's newly found interest in the much more beautiful, fairer sex, pansified punk Padovan decides to take sadistic and spiteful revenge against Johnny with the most surprising of consequences for all three parties involved. Indeed, there are few, if any, more bizarre love triangles in cinema history than the one featured in *I Love You, I Don't*; a virtual romantic-comedy for fiendish fetishists, ardent anti-romantics, and depraved homophiles. Needless to say, *I Love You, I Don't* is not the sort of film one should show to a prospective lover on a first date, unless they happen to be someone like Sasha Grey or Genesis P-orrige.

It should be no surprise that swarthy Serge Gainsbourg was a bit startled by iconic hunk and authentic alpha-male Joe Dallesandro's manly manhandling of his wife as the singer-turned-filmmaker was apparently stricken, "with jealousy during some of ...Jane's sex scenes with Dallesandro" as detailed in Sylvie Simmons' biography *Serge Gainsbourg: A Fiistful of Gitanes* throughout the production of *I Love You, I Don't*. Aside from fellow French auteur Joël Séria's dubious uses of his soul-mate Jeanne Goupil in *Marie-Poupée* (1976) aka *Marie, the Doll*, I cannot think of another filmmaker who has so scrupulously humiliated and dehumanized his lover for the sake of cinema as Gainsbourg did with Jane Birkin in *I Love You, I Don't*, and for that alone it makes for an interesting and worthwhile cinematic work, but it is more than just a typically cheap French thrill as the film poses many serious questions; most specifically, compatibility

I LOVE YOU, I DON'T

between sexes, especially among those individuals with abnormal sexual tendencies. Although fairly forgotten nowadays due to his contemporarily unpopular ideas regarding the female sex and Judaics, Jewish-Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger proposed in his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character* that all humans are more or less 'bisexual' (having elements of both femininity and masculinity) and that prospective lovers are attracted to individuals with complimentary sexual persuasions (e.g. a male that is 70% male/30% female would be best compatible with a woman that is 30% male/70% female), thus making Gainsbourg's experiment in *I Love You, I Don't* seem relatively reasonable all the more provocative on hindsight, especially when compared to similarly themed works like *Chasing Amy* and Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* (1992). Ultimately, *I Love You, I Don't* is undoubtedly one of the most serious, valiant, uncompromising and incensing yet titillating looks at transgressive sexuality in cinema history that is bound to affect even the most jaded and perverse of cinephiles; and for that alone, Gainsbourg at least deserves a lengthy footnote in film history. If one can learn anything from *I Love You, I Don't*, it is that one should never piss of a poof, especially when their manhood comes into question, as few things can compare to the seething wrath of an exceedingly enraged androphile.

-Ty E

CHARLOTTE FOR EVER

Serge Gainsbourg (1986)

To his credit, Viennese Jewish actor and director Fritz Kortner was so angered by Uncle Adolf and his gang making him flee Germany that when he returned to the Fatherland in 1949, he exploited his glaring Jewishness on stage, intentionally acting as an obscenely sinister Shylock in a 1960s production of *The Merchant of Venice*, even stating of his respect for the fictional anti-Semite-inciting Hebraic Venetian moneylender, “he stands up and he is a terrifying Jew, and that’s why I play him. He does not whine for mercy... I am an untimidated Jew... I have found out that you succeed with this perspective rather than trying to sneak in.” While Kortner’s antics were surely subversive in terms of overtly agitating the very same people that considered him a member of a hostile enemy group only a couple decades before, they pale in comparison to the way degenerate French Judaic singer and songwriter Serge Gainsbourg routinely exploited the more unsavory stereotypes of his seemingly forsaken tribe throughout his entire highly obnoxious and proudly obscene career. Apparently, Gainsbourg was deeply affected as a child by having to see his fellow Jews wear yellow stars as a result of the German occupation of France during the Second World War and his work certainly reflected this as especially demonstrated by his 1975 album *Rock Around the Bunker*, which is completely dedicated to National Socialist themes and features song titles like “Nazi Rock,” “Yellow Star,” and “S.S. in Uruguay,” yet the singer more oftentimes used more ‘cryptic’ approaches to attacking and morally degrading the ostensibly antisemitic goyim. Certainly, both in physical appearance and behavior, Gainsbourg put the Jewish caricatures featured in Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher’s tabloid newspaper *Der Stürmer* to abject shame and it is certainly no small coincidence of history that he produced a bastard brood with the grandniece of German Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus of the Battle of Stalingrad, which is oftentimes considered the event that sealed the tragic fate of the Occident.

Indeed, from turning innocent blonde beauty Francis Gall into a sucker by getting her to record the song “Les Lucettes” aka “Lollipops”, which the yé-yé singer thought was about suckers but was really about sucking cock, to recording the French national anthem “La Marseillaise” in a reggae style to infuriate right-wingers and nationalist veterans of the Algerian War of Independence, Gainsbourg thrived on being a culture-distorting kosher creep who deracinated French kultur by Americanizing music and giving it a perversely pornographic tone, but arguably his most radically repugnant publicity stunt was recording an incestuous duet with his then-12-year-old daughter Charlotte Gainsbourg entitled “Lemon Incest” in 1984. Aside from the song evolving into an equally degenerate music video featuring the father and daughter in bed together in their underwear, Gainsbourg also directed a largely forgotten film entitled *Charlotte*

CHARLOTTE FOR EVER

for Ever (1986), which features, among other things, his then underage teenage daughter Charlotte topless, as well as engaged in would-be-lurid lesbo love, which her unhinged incestuous father watches up close in complete amazement. *Charlotte for Ever* is more or less a pathetically preposterous artsy fartsy chamber piece featuring Hebraic homeboy Gainsbourg as a widowed weirdo writer of the desperate dipsomaniac sort that lurks around his home with a Michael Jackson-esque leather glove and lusts over his daughter and her schoolgirl pals when he is not begging for money and berating his long suffering buddies. Surely seeming like a cheap and tasteless gimmick compared to the singer turned filmmaker's surprisingly decent directorial debut *Je t'aime moi non plus* (1976) aka *I Love You, I Don't* starring Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro as a 'bisexual' Polack garbage truck driver and Jane Birkin as a tomboyish waitress with a dyke cut, *Charlotte for Ever* is ultimately a reminder that the only reason Charlotte Gainsbourg is a screen sex icon is because she is the progeny of a world famous pernicious pervert who taught her at an early age to sexually degrade herself on film and not because she is even remotely attractive, not even as a little *Lolita* (of course, Gainsbourg makes the carelessly cliched mistake of namedropping Nabokov's obscenely overrated novel).

Stan (Serge Gainsbourg) the swarthy little man is a washed up screenwriter who apparently paid his dues in Hollywood and now spends most of his time getting drunk, lusting over and denigrating his daughter Charlotte (Charlotte Gainsbourg) and feeling up her middle school comrades, talking trash to and scamming money out of his friends, and having sex with morbidly obese prostitutes that would probably suffocate him if they sat on his rather repulsive rat-like face. Ever since he killed his wife in a car wreck where he collided with a large truck, Stan has been immersed in a personal hell that neither whisky nor his daughter's itty bitty preteen titties can save him from, or so it seems. At the beginning of the film, Stan begs his bud Herman (Roland Dubillard) for a \$10,000 advance because he is broke even though the screenwriter has already been given an advance and instead of producing a script, he was only able to finish "three lousy pages." When Charlotte gets home from middle school, literally and figuratively dirty old men Stan and Herman take turns hitting on her and she eventually flips out and cries, "I want my mom. I want to see my mom." Naturally, poor Charlotte blames her incestuous pedophile father for her belated mommy's tragic death.

As one can expect from a pretentious screenwriter of the daughter-lusting sort, Stan likes quoting Nabokov's *Lolita*, which Charlotte has read because she proudly stole a copy of the book from her school library. After Charlotte blames her father for her mother's death, Stan slaps her in the face and then reveals in a melodramatic fashion that he wears a leather glove because, as he states, "I tried to drag mom out of a pile of metal and burned my hand." Of course, the viewer suspects he wears the glove because he is a pretentious prick who wants to give off

the image that he is a perverted sadist of the ultra chichi sort. When Charlotte and her nerdy school friend Therese (Sabeline Campo) decide to play bowling in the house by using wine bottles as pins in a game where the loser must show the winner her pussy, Stan gets mad after finding broken glass on the floor and punishes his daughter's friend by making her cleanup and subsequently opening up her shirt and feeling her small breasts. When his daughter's friends are not around to manhandle, Stan has a morbidly obese prostitute who is so fat that she waddles come over so that he can revel in the malodorous pheromones of her smelly rotten lard cunt. Although a predatory heterosexual, Stan is friends with a fat old queen named Leon (Roland Bertin) who is suicidal because his hustler boy toy has broken up with him. Needless to say, when Stan remarks to Leon regarding his boyfriend, "Your Stephen is an asshole...And he doesn't like guys, it's obvious" and "He used his ass to pay the dealer," he has a little queer bitch fit and asks his friend if he has any humanity. After crying about his parents, wife, and dog being dead, Stan the untermensch then cries, "And any day now Charlotte will have a kid or bring a guy home...some worker, black or Asian, it'll be just great," thus revealing that he is against miscegenation, even though his progeny is the product of such an unnatural union. Meanwhile, Charlotte physically assaults and rips off the bra of her friend Adelaide (Anne Le Guernec) because she is jealous her pal has been getting banged by her father. Needless to say, Stan gets a kick out of seeing his daughter on top of a topless young girl that he has been banging and gets closer to the young ladies to get a better look.

Near the end of *Charlotte for Ever*, Gainsbourg allows his daughter to put a handgun to his head, but unfortunately she does not pull the trigger. Notably, the very end of the film features father and daughter lying in bed together, with the former stating to the latter, "You're a little shit" in a scene that seems to express Gainsbourg's frustration with wanting to defile his daughter but not being able to bring himself to go all the way (although he confesses to groping her breasts while drunk). Indeed, in terms of delighting in defiling innocent little dames of the underage sort, Gainsbourg only transcends fellow Hebraic holocaust survivor Roman Polanski, but unlike the *Rosemary's Baby* director, the Judaic frog songwriter seems to take great pride in his pathological perversion. Not surprisingly, Charlotte Gainsbourg continued playing in relative-directed incest-themed films as she later starred in her British uncle Andrew Birkin's Ian McEwan adaptation *The Cement Garden* (1993). Of course, Lars von Trier would later provide Charlotte with the cinematic surrogate father she needed after cinematically exploiting her in works like *Antichrist* (2009) and *Nymphomaniac* (2013). Of course, only someone as uniquely unsavory as Serge Gainsbourg could ever think a swarthy sub-homely horse-faced lady like Charlotte would ever make for a stunning sex symbol of the silver screen. Undoubtedly, what makes *Charlotte for Ever* interesting is that the film demonstrates that the eponymous pseudo-diva has always seemed like a dark, damaged, and depraved

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gawky gal who probably has the talent to turn rampant heterosexuals into gynophobic queens, but I guess one should not expect anything less from the mongrel progeny of a monster like Monsieur Gainsbourg. Of course, directed by Gainsbourg or not, *Charlotte for Ever* is unequivocally the sort of preposterously pretentious and pathologically plodding film that gives arthouse films, especially of the French persuasion, a bad name.

-Ty E

THE COLOR OF POMEGRANATES

Sergei Parajanov (1969)

Admittedly, I have next to nil interest in Armenian culture and history, yet after just viewing *The Color of Pomegranates* (1968) – a strikingly singular ‘Soviet’ avant-garde film of the seemingly inconspicuous ‘high-camp’ persuasion that aggressively, abstractly, and positively poetically depicts the life and poems of Armenian mystical troubadour Sayat-Nova aka “King of Song” (born Harutyun Sayatyan 14 June 1712, Tiflis – died 22 September 1795, Haghpat), a secular Christian known for his romantic expressionism and lyricism who was ordained as a priest in 1759 by the Armenian Apostolic Church and brutally slain in 1795 at a monastery by the invading army of Mohammad Khan Qajar, the Shah of Iran, for stoically refusing to denounce Christianity and convert to Islam – I can honestly say it is one of the most organic depictions of a national kultur ever captured on celluloid, albeit oftentimes hermetically and homoerotically so, so it is all the more ironic that it was created in an anti-nationalist communist dictatorship where “Socialist realism” (slave-morality driven works glorifying the ‘proletariat’) were en vogue and the only style of filmmaking sanctioned by the state. Directed by Sergei Parajanov (*Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, *Ashik Kerib*) – A Georgian-born bisexual of ‘wise blood’ who originally started as a professional filmmaker of “Socialist realist” works in 1954, but later disowned any work he created before 1964, describing them as simply, “garbage” – *The Color of Pomegranates* is oftentimes regarded as the filmmaker’s cinematic masterpiece; yet due to its highly cultivated depiction of a national kultur, a romantic viewing of archaic Christianity and an enduring race of an ancient people, the film would inevitably inflame the authoritarian Soviet censor, thus resulting in the film being banned more than one time. Originally titled “Sayat Nova” after the title character, *The Color of Pomegranates* was assembled by Parajanov under meager conditions with a virtually nonexistent budget in 1968, but was immediately banned for its being perceived as ‘inflammatory,’ so the dedicated director reedited the footage and renamed it under its current title, only for it to be banned again in 1969. The cut of *The Color of Pomegranates* that exists today – Parajanov’s ‘director’s cut’ – on DVD (via Kino) that was first officially released in 1992 is the banned second cut under the present title. Soviet documentarian/cinematographer Mikhail Vartanov – a personal friend of Parajanov’s who spent his life defending his comrade and who directed the banned documentary *The Color of Armenian Land* (1969); a now mostly lost work, in part about the making of *The Color of Pomegranates*, that got the filmmaker on the KGB’s blacklist – would write quite eloquently in 1969 regarding the Armenian arthouse flick, “Besides the film language suggested by Griffith and Eisenstein, the world cinema has not discovered anything revolutionarily new until *The Color of Pomegranates* ...” Indeed, forget the acid-addled auteur pieces of

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self-glorifying occultnik and would-be-messiah Alejandro Jodorowsky, persecuted poofster Parajanov is the real deal and he did not have to rape a woman to get that way, or as film critic Alexei Korotyukov wrote, "Paradjanov made films not about how things are, but how they would have been had he been God," whereas Mr. El Topo is merely the false messiah.

If any film provides ample evidence that historically, homosexuals get a kick out of subverting the regimes they live under – whether it be of the political right or left, or individualist or collectivist – *The Color of Pomegranates*, as well as virtually all of Parajanov's cinematic works created after 1964, makes for a potent and poetic yet pleasantly peculiar example. A virtual 'fag fascist' in the eyes of Soviet censors due to his unrepentant ancestor-worship and respect for religion and the perennial nature of certain cultures and customs (despite the materialist communist fallacy that all people are 'malleable' material that can be molded into anything, especially after the eradication of their culture, religion, and castes), and lack of pontificating in regard to the perceived 'nobility' of penniless proletarians, Parajanov probably left his Soviet overlords in a state of complete and utter stupefaction with *The Color of Pomegranates*; a keenly culturally conscious yet mostly metaphysical celluloid work that is probably the greatest expression of the Armenian (or any other racial/ethnic/cultural group) collective unconscious ever cinematically concocted, despite the fact the director once admitted in a speech in Minsk that he doubted the contemporary Armenian public would understand it, but that they, "are going to this picture as to a holiday." Indeed, an opiate-like celluloid oneiric of the sometimes vaguely ominous but always otherworldly and aesthetically rapturous, *The Color of Pomegranates* is a rare piece of cinematic art where none of the meticulously (yet rather unnoticeably minimalist) tableaux go to waste in a work that follows Sayat-Nova aka King of Song as he comes-of-age, discovers and falls in love with the female form, falls in love with a woman, and enters a monastery for what will be eternity after dying in an 'anti-biopic' of a person, as well as a people, told through aesthetic-driven esoteric rituals, glances, gestures, and pure poetry. Starring Paradjanov's very versatile muse Sofiko Chiaureli in no less than six of the roles, both male and female, including Sayat Nova as a youth, the poet's lover, muse, and mime, as well as the 'Angel of Resurrection,' *The Color of Pomegranates* is a work featuring archetypes as 'characters' and in which the 'color of pomegranates' is symbolic of blood (which is featured in the film quite prominently) – the innate and perennial soul of people and a people's memories – a color that 'Red' communists ironically wear as their official uniform, but for which they know nothing. As film critic Frank Williams wrote in the book *World Film Directors Volume 2: 1945-1985* (1988), Paradjanov celebrates the survival of the Armenian people under relentless and unwavering waves of oppression (with the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916 being relatively recent), writing, "There are specific images that are highly charged — blood-red juice spilling from a cut pomegranate into

a cloth and forming a stain in the shape of the boundaries of the ancient Kingdom of Armenia; dyers lifting hanks of wool out of vats in the colours of the national flag, and so on.”

Ironically, while the Soviet Union – a real-life dystopia rooted in class warfare and genocide that no one will miss – is gone, Sergei Parajanov’s films, like the culture he depicts in *The Color of Pomegranates*, will live on, if only cinematically so, which is good enough for me. Apparently, a longer cut of the film exists somewhere in the vaults of Armenfilm (an Armenian film studio in Yerevan), so until it is unearthed (if it is ever unearthed), the current cut of *The Color of Pomegranates* will work just fine as one of the most idiosyncratic works of cinema history that redefined film as an artistic medium and what it is capable of. Arrested in 1973 on dubious charges of rape, homosexuality and bribery for which he served 4 years of a 5 year sentence, and again in 1982 for bribery for which he spent less than a year in jail, Parajanov finally was able to direct two more cinematic masterpieces – *The Legend of the Suram Fortress* (1984) and *Ashik Kerib* (1988) before his death from lung cancer in his homeland of Armenia on July 20, 1990 at age 66, thus leaving behind the uncompleted film *The Confession*. With such prestigious filmmakers like François Truffaut, Luis Buñuel, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Andrei Tarkovsky (who was a personal friend) coming to his aid during times of persecution and influencing modern ‘arthouse’ auteur filmmakers like Theo Angelopoulos, Béla Tarr and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Parajanov will certainly be one of the least forgotten ancestors of his people as not only the greatest Armenian filmmaker to live (sorry Atom Egoyan!), but also one of the greatest cine-magicians to have ever lived, with *The Color of Pomegranates* being his finest performance. As the Armenian equivalent of German auteuress’ Ulrike Ottinger’s kraut-dyke-freak masterpiece *Freak Orlando* (1981) – a work of hermetic tableaux where the lead actress plays at least five different characters – except featuring the obsessive attention to aesthetic details and archetypal religious symbols of Kenneth Anger’s Crowleyite masterwork *Lucifer Rising* (1972), *The Color of Pomegranates* is a rare cinematic work that reminds one that ancient alien cultures, including archaic Christian ones, can be aesthetically and sexually subversive, with auteur Sergei Parajanov himself being the modern-day Sayat Nova; a romantic Georgian-Armenian poet and mystic plagued by Soviet savagery (as opposed to the Islamic sort faced by his predecessor) who managed to create rather refined and transcendental pulchritude in a completely compromised climate of aesthetic banality and barbarism.

-Ty E

ASHIK KERIB
ASHIK KERIB

Sergei Parajanov (1988)

Ashik Kerib is an aesthetically wonderful and pleasurable film directed by Russian Soviet auteur Sergei Paradjanov. The film is based on a 19th romantic tale of the same name which was inspired by Turkish and Caucasian folklore. Director Paradjanov turned the tale into a wonderful art piece of luscious colors of a forgotten culture. The film also features a dark yet soothing combination of traditional and contemporary Russian music forms. Unlike most films dealing with history, Ashik Kerib merely focuses on the aesthetic elements of the past allowing for the visual power of a culture to speak for itself. The protagonist Ashik Kerib is denied his true love when his lover's father rejects him due to his humble proletarian background. Due to his failure in love, Kerib is forced to roam the land aimlessly for 1,001 nights. After this happens, I got lost in the aesthetic devices employed by the unconventional director. Paradjanov uses images of early Russian artwork and strategically choreographed scenes to capture a mystical world of captivating art. Sergei Paradjanov seems to be influenced by the surrealist works of Federico Fellini. Parajanov also claimed to be inspired by the works of Pier Paolo Pasolini and fellow soviet Andrei Tarkovsky. All of these influences are apparent as Parajdanov was a director that focused on visual expressionism as opposed to story and dialogue driven plots. Few directors (especially after the silent era) have had the courage to emphasize film as a strictly visual art (at least in an artistic way). Director Sergei Paradjanov decided to end Ashik Kerib with a tribute to the memory of master director Andrei Tarkovsky and his cinematic legacy. Paradjanov experienced a variety of film production setbacks before directing Ashik Kerib. In 1973, the director was arrested on rape, homosexuality, and bribery charges. Ashik Kerib was the last finished film from the controversial director (his final film *The Confession* went unfinished). Gay subversives have always made some of the best and most innovative film directors. F.W. Murnau, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Kenneth Anger, John Waters, and Sergei Parajanov are just a few homosexual directors to spark collective outcry and public hatred. Gay has recently been mainstreamed with films like *Brokeback Mountain*, *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, and *Boys Don't Cry* (transgendered people are gay too despite what some wiseass cultural Marxist has to say about it). May Sergei Paradjanov's cinematic legacy be better documented in the books of cinema history.

-Ty E

ONE WOMAN'S LOVER

Sergio Bazzini (1974)

Only a film directed by an innately iconoclastic Italian auteur could manage to include such a cinematically chaotic combination of lapsed Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro (*Flesh for Frankenstein*, *Black Moon*), slightly chubby French art-house diva Andréa Ferréol (Fassbinder's *Despair*, *The Tin Drum*), a sadiistically sardonic satire of both communist and fascist extremism, and a curious cocktail of politically incorrect humor, including obese Italian men with Down syndrome studying pornography and the needlessly nonsensical bodily dismemberment of cute bunny rabbits, along with unhealthy sexual perversion, including obese blue-blood fascists and proletarian housewives screwing young hunk terrorists, as such is the case with the unfortunately barely ever acknowledged and long forgotten Italian-French-West German co-production *Donna è bello* (1974) AKA *One Woman's Lover* AKA *Woman and Lover*. While I could only manage to track down the heavily edited British release (although I managed to view the cut scenes in the official Italian VHS release of the film) of *One Woman's Lover*, the film left me laughing hysterically at, among other things, a rather rotund aristocrat with a flatulence problem, a mentally retarded man of the odiously overweight variety who has a rather hard time telling the difference between a penis and a vagina, a woman whose first encounter with her future lover involves said woman unwittingly urinating on his face, a fascist terrorist sexually defiling a Marxist MILF housewife, and much more. Created around the middle of the so-called 'Years of Lead' (which name may have been inspired by the film *Marianne and Juliane* (1981) by Margarethe von Trotta, of which the Italian title is *Anni di piombo* aka 'Years of Lead') in Italy when both fascists and communists were trying to take over the government via terrorism and which ultimately led to almost 2,000 deaths between 1969 and 1981 as a result of assorted bombings, assassinations, and street warfare between rival militant factions from all political persuasions (anarchists/nihilists included!), *One Woman's Lover* is a rare sort of anti-fascist/anti-communist farce of the flagrantly fucked sort that, although leaning more to the left, is mostly a nefariously nihilistic radical celluloid romp that gives a greatly grim prediction of Italy's future where virtually every single male character is left dead, including the female protagonist's great love. Like *The Climber* (1975) aka *L'ambizioso*, *La Marge* (1976) aka *The Streetwalker*, and *Born Winner* (1976) aka *L'ultima volta*, *One Woman's Lover* is one of the many rare and criminally forgotten Joe Dallesandro European era flicks that has fallen in the celluloid garbage heap of history that, in terms of acting talent, proved the Warhol Superstar was capable of more than simply laying around naked with a flaccid member in a drug-addled stupor as he mostly did in the "Paul Morrissey Trilogy" (*Flesh*, *Trash*, *Heat*). Sort of like the younger and more sensitive brother of the psychopathic killer he played in Fernando Di Leo's

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exploitation-thriller *Madness* (1980) aka *Vacanze per un massacre*, Dallesandro demonstrates in *One Woman's Lover* that mass-murdering right-wing terrorists can have style and sex appeal long before Anders Behring Breivik made media headlines.

Poor proletarian servant Ottavia (Andréa Ferréol) leads a rather banal and exceedingly uneventful life as a sexually repressed married woman with a cold and committed communist husband who cares more about realizing the revolutionary doctrines of Lenin (whose portrait symbolically hangs in their bedroom) than making love to his erotically-deprived wife, on top of having to take care of her morbidly obese and porn-addicted retarded adult son named Pierre with a drastically debilitating case of Down syndrome who she spends much of her free time taking care of. On top of that, Ottavia is the servant of a beyond chunky and exceedingly effeminate Count who is the father of a perverted preteen boy who gives pornography to the sad servant's mentally retarded son and attempts to bribe her into showing off her naughty bits in return for an elegant pair of high heels (where this young man got these shoes or knew the woman's size is anyone's guess). On one beautiful and sunny day while in a discernibly depressed mood, Ottavia decides to discretely urinate on some hay inside a barn, unwittingly drenching a right-wing terrorist bomber named Walter (Joe Dallesandro), who is hiding from the law after his latest terrorist attack. Both sexually repressed and markedly miserable, Ottavia decides to give sexy stranger Walter, who is, tired, sick and hungry, shelter at her dilapidated home. Hoping to impress Walter, Ottavia decides to flash her puss to her boss' little boy so as to acquire the sparkling high heels the boy had previously offered, but the seemingly impenetrable terrorist does not even notice, so she let's him know that he must leave the next day. After thinking to himself "bitch kicks me out...and I'm fucked," Walter decides to fondle Ottavia's genitals from behind, thus ushering in their unhinged romantic relationship. A lovelorn man who has never gotten over the fact that his 57-year-old 'great love' committed suicide after swallowing sleeping pills and laying down on a train track (her head was apparently never found), Walter seems rather disinterested in love, but at least he knows how to give Ottavia a wild and wanton time like she has never felt before.

Eventually, Walter reveals to Ottavia, whose husband is a commie away participating in political activism in Russia, that he is a neo-fascist terrorist by blowing up a little bunny after attaching it to a tractor battery. Of course, Walter's career path does not sit well with Ottavia, especially after seeing an ostensible victim of a terrorist bombing hanging out at a hair salon with no legs, but she is hopelessly in love with the terrorist and she sticks by him. Unfortunately, Ottavia's retarded son attempts to kill Walter, symbolically using a hammer and sickle (☒), which foreshadows the two lovers' tragic fate. Walter works for Ottavia's blueblood boss and wants out of the terrorism business, telling his homo Hitlerite employer over the phone that, "I'm tired of placing bombs for \$150 a

month. What do I give a damn about fascism in Italy. Nothing,” and demanding that he pay him 50 million lire or he will go to the police about the rich fascists’ funding of the bombings and conspiracy to throw over the Italian government. Unfortunately, Walter does not realize that the fascist Count’s henchmen are standing right behind him during the phone call and hear everything. Naturally, Walter is bound and covered in explosives by his ex-comrades, but rather absurdly, it is Ottavia who accidentally detonates the bomb. When Ottavia’s husband finally gets him, he brings his Russian Marxist friend and she decides to poison the two after realizing their political activity is no different from Walter’s, especially after her hubby absurdly states regarding the family rooster, “Hey, he’s one of a kind. The only one...Like our party. The only one that makes revolutions,” thus demonstrating the man’s mundane one-track Marxist mind and his incapacity for seeing blatant parallels between his own political persuasion and that of neo-fascists. Of course, in terms of using terrorist tactics that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people in Italy and expounding an intrinsically idealistic collectivist philosophy, the Italian commies and fascists are one in the same, albeit the retarded Reds (indeed, it is no coincidence that Ottavia’s son Pierre is retarded) believe they are somehow morally superior and ultra-modern in their tinkering. Ottavia also pays a visit to her glutton of a boss, who mocks her retard son’s Pierre’s death by joking, “Come on...you can have another child..with a nigger! Ha Ha Ha!” and who proudly proclaims regarding his relationship with Walter, “Did he also tell you that I was partial to that cute little ass of his my dear...lovely isn’t it?!” Of course, Ottavia poisons the fat, fat cat fascist as well by putting something less than kosher in his tea, but not before passionately calling him a “murdering fascist pig.” In the end, Ottavia, who has been totally transformed by the events and seems totally emotionally impenetrable, leaves her home and travels to the city assumedly to start a new life without a militant man. Like the female protagonist played by Hanna Schygulla in Marco Ferreri’s *The Future Is Woman* (1984) aka *Il futuro è donna*, the violent anachronism of Marxist politics and politically-obsessed self-destructive men has turned Ottavia into a postmodern woman and a ‘metaphysical feminist’ by default.

An acutely anarchic attack on both the militant left and right that takes no prisoners, *One Woman’s Lover* belongs in the company of incendiary and iconoclastic Italian cinema of the 1970s like the films of Alberto Cavallone (*Blue Movie*, *Zelda*) and Salvatore Samperi (*Mother’s Heart* aka *Cuore di mamma*, *Ernesto*) by combining seedy sex, sickening social aberration, and a pre-apocalyptic atmosphere that reflected the fragile and dubious future of Italy during the ‘Years of Lead’ (late 1960s – early 1980s). Of course, what makes *One Woman’s Lover* stick out alongside Cavallone and Samperi’s films is the inclusion of Joe Dallsandro, as well as the use of ‘stupidly’ scatological material, thus it a work that is quite accessible to the layman filmgoer. While *One Woman’s Lover* is worthy seeing simply to see Little Joe portray a jaded neo-fascist mass murderer with

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a super sensual side, the film also makes for one of the most charmingly trashy absurdist political allegories to have ever been distinctively defecated out by the Italian film industry. As a depiction of a woman whose son is impotent and retarded, whose Count boss is a wealthy (sexual) exploiter, whose husband is a cold and patronizing communist pig, and whose 'great love' is a murderous neo-fascist, *One Woman's Lover*—a work certainly following in the Marco Ferreri's "Cinema of the Absurd" school of supremely scathing and scatological satire à la *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) aka *The Grande Bouffe*—manages to depict through a rather risqué rural microcosm the capitulation of a country via very real political absurdity of the terrorist sort. Notably, Dallesandro's right-wing character is resentful of an elder lover from his past who taught him everything he knew about sex and life, which is undoubtedly a reference to Russian-Jewish-Italian communist activist Angelica Balabanoff, who was the older lover/teacher of Benito Mussolini before his socialist pre-fascist days and rise to power, thus making *One Woman's Lover* a rare work in that it dares to quasi-esoterically expose the common link/root between communism and fascism. While the marvelously mundane TV miniseries *Benito* (1993) aka *Il Giovane Mussolini* starring Antonio Banderas, which depicts the affair between Mussolini and Balabanoff, also exposes the mutual root of the radical left and right, I personally prefer Little Joe and raunchy retard and fart jokes of the sardonic scat sort when it comes to learning history via celluloid, which *One Woman's Lover* certainly accomplishes.

-Ty E

IN THE FOLDS OF THE FLESH

Sergio Bergonzelli (1970)

Based around a Freud excerpt of his interpretation of flesh (brain flesh), *In the Folds of the Flesh* is a proclaimed "gialli" exploitation film. When not focusing on a mother/whore dichotomy, this film manages to top any impulsive genre organizing you may have had. Any dysfunction that you thought was absurd or any mind game that was too taboo is broken in this onslaught of emotional pain. *In the Folds of the Flesh* is truly a film that captures the essence of physical beauty only to distort it with malignant madness. On the sunny beach side of an old Castle structured building, horrific events unfold that I couldn't dare begin to try explaining without ruining the plot completely. A very disturbed family lures men into their home in order to kill them inexplicably to prevent a truth to be known. In this spider webbed plot you will encounter pet vultures, early 70s psychedelics, and enough perversions to leave a lasting imprint on you. Pier Angeli was the true shining ray of this film. A film of classic sleaze needed that Polaris to its empty sky. Angeli had dated James Dean during the filming of *East of Eden*. They reportedly broke up after complications with her parents. A year after her role in *Nelle pieghe della carne* (*In the Folds of the Flesh*), she died of a barbiturate overdose. Explosive controversy ensued over whether it was accidental or not. The *National Enquirer* supposedly posted lines from her alleged suicide note but it appears to be just sensationalism. It's a shame that a star of such beauty fell victim to pulling a Heath Ledger. In spite of the departed star, much of my dislike comes from the Nazi exploitation used in this film. Random plot points are set up intended to shock and offend. A character has reoccurring flashbacks of a Nazi death camp flashback in which many naked women are gassed to death including her mother. While not meant to be titillatingly, I couldn't help but laugh at the "Jewish" victims jumping around with their breasts jumping every which way. Not only a mood killer, but arousing in a perplexing sense. *In the Folds of the Flesh* is a film that starts out rough but smooths itself out by the end. *In media res* is how it begins, so the confusion is necessary for the spool to unwind, so to speak. While not being a masterpiece, *In the Folds of the Flesh* satisfies me in many ways - materialistic and not. A must-see for any fan of bizarre head-trips and Pier Angeli admirers.

-mAQ

PLAGIO

PLAGIO

Sergio Capogna (1969)

Long before dirty commie dago Bernardo Bertolucci (*Last Tango in Paris*, *Last Emperor*) demonstrated with *The Dreamers* (2003) that he has a fixation with Michael Pitt's pecker and has yet to get over his fetishism for the 1968 student movement, a fellow forgotten Guido auteur named Sergio Capogna (*The Consequences* aka *Le conseguenze*, *Diary of an Italian* aka *Diario di un italiano*) directed a somewhat unique and captivating, if not somewhat stereotypically histrionically acted, movie, *Plagio* (1969), about a melancholy and forlorn bizarre love triangle turned ménage à trios starring blond Anglo-Guido stud Ray Lovelock (*Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*, *Live Like a Cop*, *Die Like a Man*) as a strange rich 'student protester' who finds himself infatuated with a young couple and begins a tragic threesome that ultimately leaves all three of them broken, albeit in considerably different ways. Unlike other Italian films made in the spirit of 1968 like Bernardo Bertolucci's *Partner* (1968), Lilians Cavani's *The Year of the Cannibals* (1970) aka *I cannibali*, and Lucio Marcaccini's *Hallucination Strip* (1975) aka *Roma drogata: la polizia non può intervenire*, Capogna's unjustly forgotten work, not unlike maestro Luchino Visconti's *Conversation Piece* (1974) aka *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*, has aged relatively gracefully over the nearly half a century since its initial release, which largely has to do with the fact that it is not an avant-garde agitprop piece but a mid-high drama that merely uses the far-left student protests as a backdrop for an undeniably unforgettable darkly tragic romance about an unloved and somewhat unhinged rich boy who develops a rather dangerous admiration for his two new friends' love for one another. In fact, in its depiction of a semi-deranged young man whose mental illness is, at least partially, the fault of his belated 'modern' feminist mother, Capogna's film would probably be considered 'counter-revolutionary' by certain less sophisticated viewers. Although completely unknown in the United States and hardly a success in its native Italy, *Plagio* was such a huge hit in Japan that star Ray Lovelock, whose performance is nothing short of hauntingly penetrating, became a teen icon among horny Jap teens and even had a fan club dedicated to him. Ultimately, *Plagio* is a sort of shockingly entertaining proto-Emo-fag melodrama of the vaguely bisexual sort where the two boys are 'prettier' than the girl and sleazy drama is more satisfying than sex. Featuring a soundtrack including *Symphony No. 5* by Gustav Mahler, a hit single by Peppino Gagliardi, and songs by surprisingly unknown Guido rocker Johnny Davil (whose songs "Morning" and "I've Lost You" are just as important ingredients to the film as Ennio Morricone's were to Cavani's *The Year of the Cannibals*), *Plagio* is a distinctly aesthetically pleasing work with a highly complementary soundtrack that paints the pleasantly melancholy portrait of a decadent generation that thought "free love" was free, not realizing bizarre triangles are called 'bizarre love triangles' for

reason.

Plagio opens in fall with a somber young lady named Angela (played by Mita Medici, who later became a popular Italian TV host) walking down a park path and saying to herself: "Already a pale sun warms this morning. Soon leaves will cover the branches of these dry trees. But none of this...will help us to forget the bad things...that against our will we were forced to live through...and for which we were not responsible. Of course, our poor dramas have no use but it is our awareness that helps us...that gives us the strength to fight...to continue. And even your memory will help me...because nothing is more pure in this world...than the love of a child." The "child" Angela speaks of is a tragic young man named 'Guido' (played by Ray Lovelock in a standout role where he bears a striking resemblance to Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro) who she and her boyfriend Massimo (played by French actor Alain Noury, who is probably best known for his roles in Alfred Vohrer's post-Edgar Wallace works and Just Jaeckin's 1975 *The Story of O* adaptation starring Udo Kier)—a sort of Mediterranean post-black-male Michael Jackson look-alike—will get to know very well after the two befriend and eventually fall in love with the young man. Flashback a couple months and Massimo, who is driving in a car with Angela that was borrowed from his friend Roberto, saves a young protestor who is getting beaten by three fascist MSI members. The young protestor is a Nordic-like goombah Guido and despite the fact that Massimo and Angela have helped save his life, he ends up stealing the car that they borrowed from Roberto (Dino Mele). Roberto's father sues Massimo, but luckily Guido shows up out of the blue with a brand new car to give to Roberto. Indeed, Guido is the heir to a paper mill dynasty and he is quite generous when it comes to money, even buying his new friends Massimo and Angela an apartment to stay at when they are in Bologna (they two are originally from Rimini and Massimo travels there quite often). Guido is a somewhat perturbed young man who seems consumed with the memory of his deceased parents. While describing his belated father as a "good guy," Guido is less generous towards his mommy, stating that she was, "young, modern, open-minded...Hardly a mother at all, in fact. She was madly in love with her husband." Like many gay men, Guido seems to suffer from an inverse Oedipal complex which has damaged his ability to start and maintain friendships and romantic relationships, but with Massimo and Angela he seems to have found the best of both worlds, or so he initially believes.

Ultimately, Guido seems to see Massimo and Angela as sort of surrogate parents whose love for one another he deeply admires to disturbing degrees to the point where he actively attempts to become a part of it. After failing to be aroused by a prostitute named Edera (Cosetta Greco) that Massimo is a friend/patron of, virgin Guido decides to seduce Angela when her boyfriend is away in Rimini studying for an exam. When Angela learns that Guido is a virgin, she is the one that ends up doing the seducing. While she enjoys having sex with

PLAGIO

Guido, she also confesses to him, "I don't understand why I can't love you and want him. Because I love him as before, even more. Is that wrong?," hence why she never even considers breaking up with her boyfriend. Ultimately, Guido plots to have Massimo walk in on him and Angela together in bed, as he wants them to form a ménage à trios, but knows that his friend is far too 'bourgeois' to accept such a thing were he to ask him about it. Of course, Massimo freaks out and runs away upon seeing his best friend and girlfriend in bed together. While Guido attempts to convince his hurt friend that the three can live together as a threesome, Massimo agrees that he is a "banal bourgeois" who cannot stomach such things and decides to take the next train back to Rimini.

After talking to his prostitute friend Edera and having some time to cool down, Massimo eventually agrees to join Angela and Guido at the latter's luxurious country villa where the three ultimately consummate a threesome. While Massimo basks in the majesty of the large villa, Guido tells him he is "naïve" because he had such an unhappy childhood that no amount of comforts or riches could make up for. Guido also reveals to both Massimo and Angela hints that he killed both of his parents, as they died in a car accident as a result of a busted tire, even though the tires were brand new (in an earlier part of the film, Guido pops one of his own tires). Guido is still resentful about his parents, stating of them, "I told you, they loved each other. I always came second. And they managed to die together. They even excluded me from that." Of course, Guido will die alone. Indeed, after engaging in a passionate threesome with his two friends, Guido wakes up and tries to sneak out of the villa, but Massimo catches him and asks him what he is doing. Guido claims that he is going to buy cigarettes even though the store is not open and when Massimo asks if he can join him, he says no. Ultimately, like his parents, Guido dies in a dubious car accident, albeit alone. After Guido's funeral, Massimo cuts off all contact with Angela. When Massimo finally attempts to talk to Angela, she infuriates her (ex)boyfriend by insinuating that Guido committed suicide due to his gay love for him. After revealing his love for both her and Guido, Massimo states of the latter that he was, "perhaps, better than me. He was like you." In the end, Plagio concludes with Massimo shedding a tear for Guido as Angela walks away all by her lonesome.

Unlike a lot of the largely trashy exploitation films that he later starred in, Plagio was a sort of 'labor of love' for star Ray Lovelock, who later stated of the film that it, "really was a very special film: in fact I almost regret having made it so early in my career, perhaps I was a bit too immature for the character, which really was a great creation. Maybe if I'd had a bit more experience I would have been better equipped to do it justice." Of course, Lovelock is selling himself short, as his performance in the film is arguably the best of his career and certainly one of the strongest attributes of the film, though auteur Sergio Capogna's direction is also nothing less than striking and certainly better than the famous Italian auteur filmmakers from the same era like Bertolucci and Cavani. In fact,

Lovelock credits the director's passion for the film's aesthetic majesty, stating, "I was completely guided by the director, Sergio Capogna, who had also written the story. At a certain point, the money ran out and most of the crew left rather than work for nothing. Only 12 of us stayed on so for a week we made the film 'on the road' with just the director, the cameraman and the actors. I even had to operate the clapperboard!" Despite its sometimes histrionic overacting, *Plagio* is certainly a lost classic of Italian cinema that is dying to obtain cult status. While researching the film online, the only thing I could find were Japanese fan sites. Considering the strangely 'immaculate' and almost plastic-like beauty of the leads to the point where they somewhat resemble anime characters, I can see why Japs would swoon over such a film. Like a bisexual Guido Jules and Jim (1962) from the counter-culture generation, *Plagio*, unlike old perv Bertolucci's botched jerk-off piece *The Dreamers*, almost makes the rather repugnant zeitgeist that it depicts seem almost exciting and romantic, which is certainly not something I can say of many films. Arguably a so-called 'counter-revolutionary' work where the two most 'sexually liberated' characters, Guido and Angela, are depicted as coming from broken homes (whereas "banal bourgeois" Massimo comes from a highly supportive family and only becomes a mental mess after being coerced into taking part in a ménage à trios), Capogna's startlingly overlooked film more or less depicts the protests of 1968 as being a latent reaction to poor parenting and lack of familial cohesion, which only makes sense considering the fascists love of the Father(land). If one thing is for sure, it is that the student revolutionaries of '68, who are now members and leaders of the very 'system' that they once rivaled against, have turned the Occident into a degenerate dystopia plagued by broken families, gender disharmony, nihilistic sexual perversions, multicultural chaos, childless female careerists, authoritarian political correctness, cultural vacancy, and a dying indigenous population that is being replaced with largely hostile aliens from the third world. With that in mind, *Plagio* absurdly seems like a sentimental depiction of the good old days.

-Ty E

OSTIA
OSTIA

Sergio Citti (1970)

Throughout film history, there has been a number of films that people have wondered and speculated who was the real 'auteur' behind the film, especially in the case of works produced and/or written by a master filmmaker for his young protégé or assistant, including the popular and/or artistically merited cinematic works *The Thing from Another World* (1951) aka *The Thing* directed by Christian Nyby and produced by Howard Hawks, *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968) directed by Andy Warhol and written and produced by Paul Morrissey (the factory filmmaker is a rare case where the so-called 'master' took credit for the work of his supposed 'pupil'), *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* directed by Ulli Lommel and produced by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and *Poltergeist* (1982) directed by Tobe Hooper and *The Goonies* (1985) directed by Richard Donner; both of which were produced by Steven Spielberg (the former film was also co-written by Mr. Holocaust). Out of all the presumably 'ghost-directed' films that I know of, Pier Paolo Pasolini presents *Ostia* (1970) directed and co-written by Sergio Citti and produced and co-written by P.P. Pasolini – a curiously comedic yet exceedingly eerie and ghostly work when examined from a historical perspective – is one of the most interesting examples of the maestro presumably acting as the master over his young apprentice's first feature-length film. Of course, it would be nothing short of a boldfaced lie to not mention Sergio Citti's early influence on the great poet, filmmaker, philosopher, linguist, and all-around Renaissance man Pier Paolo Pasolini, as the young pupil was described by his talented teacher as a "lexicon of the Roman dialect" due to his contribution to dialogue and screenplay collaboration in important works like *Accattone* (1961), *Mamma Roma* (1962), *The Grim Reaper* (1962) aka *La commare secca* directed by Bernardo Bertolucci (this was the filmmaker's directorial debut but it was ultimately penned by Pasolini and Citti), and *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975). After completing *Ostia*, Citti directed one more film of his own – the castration-anxiety-driven comedy and excursion in eunuch entertainment *Bawdy Tales* (1973) aka *Storie scellerate* – in the early 1970s, and eight more after Pasolini's death in 1975, but the director's first flick would ultimately be one of his most personal, especially for his master whose forlorn fate uncannily paralleled that of one of the main characters in the film.

Considering he and his younger brother Franco (who was an actor that was also schooled by Pasolini and would go on to star in over 40 films, including as one of the leads in *Ostia*) grew up in the squalid and slimy sub-proletariat slums of Rome, Sergio Citti made for an apt teacher in street smarts to the effete Marxist intellectual Pier Paolo Pasolini; a motivated man who was by no means the typical armchair leftist revolutionary whose only interaction with the workers of the world was when they mowed his lawn or cooked his brunch. Of course,

the relation, which sprouted in the early 1950s when Pasolini was already a published poet, was mutually beneficial as Citti once matter-of-factly remarked, "If I hadn't met Pier Paolo, I'd have probably ended up as a delinquent," so it was only natural that the novice filmmaker's first film would be about the gutter-level unlawful antics of plebian hooligans – a duo of criminally-inclined anarchist marauder brothers to be exact. Centering around biologically bonded blood bros Rabbino (Franco Citti) and Bandiera (Laurent Terzieff) – not unlike the films of Pasolini – features themes of oedipal obsession, ghetto sexual and social debauchery, loving and loathing of all-things-Catholic, a dichotomy of the mother and the whore (mother Mary and Mary Magdalene), ferocious family feuds, and – of course – suitably saccharine and sweet moments of love and solidarity. Originally intending to direct it himself, Pasolini handed over *Ostia* to Citti to direct as he was working on *Medea* (1969) – an adaptation of the classic Euripides play of the same name starring the renowned Greek-American soprano opera singer Maria Callas that was the final entry of the director's "Mythical Cycle" (proceeding *Oedipus Rex*, *Teorema* and *Pigpen*) – yet the film bears all the trademarks of a work by the ill-fated filmmaker who once stated: "The mark which has dominated all my work is the longing for life, this sense of exclusion, which doesn't lessen, but augments this love of life."

The anarchist brothers Rabbino (Citti) and Bandiera (Terzieff) have been close since birth, but especially so after mutually killing their father while still grade school students by pushing him out of a window for slaughtering and eating their beloved pet ewe, so close that there seems to be a perverse sexual component to the relation, thereupon making *Ostia* all the more of an intimately 'incestuous' work considering that real-life brothers Sergio and Franco Citti worked closely on the film together as actor (Franco) and director (Sergio). Although sibling-sibling incest is often regarded as the most common form of intra-familial abuse, it has rarely been the subject of films before the 1970s with the couple exceptions being *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), *Bunny Lake is Missing* (1965), and *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969), thus making *Ostia* a very 'special' and 'singular' film in that regard, especially considering it is of the homosexual brothers sort, but the topic is only subtly portrayed and more implied in Citti's film, most notably when one of bros mentions how the two kin kissed, "like two lovers in a trench" as their matching underwear hangs side-by-side on a clothesline in the near distance of their shared jail cell. The devastating downfalls of the brothers does not occur as a result of their pathological petty criminality (stealing and lying) but because of a bitchy blonde bombshell named Monica (Anita Sanders) who was herself the victim of a number of unreported sex crimes, thereupon morphing her into a horny harpy of sorts with predilection for easy prey: the sexually-confused anarchist brother. After their mentally feeble friend finds Monica – whose own father had just raped her after becoming sexually aroused after passively witnessing an Italian soldier molest

OSTIA

her – the two brothers bring the seemingly catatonic woman to their home and allow their friends to sexually ravage her while they remain rather dubiously sexually restrained downstairs. Although not fornicating with her themselves, the brothers and Monica eventually begin a platonic ménage à trios that climaxes calamitously on the beach of Ostia, inevitably leaving one of the brothers dead in a manner strikingly similar in setting and brutality to the real-life murder of Pasolini only five years later and tearing apart the tragic threesome irrevocably and breaking away the brother's beautiful bond for eternity, which is undoubtedly a trademark strategy of the devil himself.

One of the more interesting and superlatively autobiographical elements of Ostia is that of the ferocious femme fatale and her fatalistic encounter with the brothers. Throughout the film – not unlike Federico Fellini's segment "Toby Dammit" from *Histoires extraordinaires* (1968) aka *Spirits of the Dead* – the archetypal blonde beauty is portrayed as a bloodsucking succubus and a disciple of Satan, first in a painting of an alluring fair-haired, bare-skinned lady riding a winged devil, and later with Monica standing unclad on the beach smirking smugly in front of flames as if she is a loyal servant in Hades. Somewhat strangely and fortuitously, the Citti brothers would eventually marry blonde Swedish women, both of whom were coincidentally named Anita, and whose marriages would end disastrously with both ladies moving back to their Nordic homeland. Of course, the most engrossing and stranger-than-fiction foreboding premonition featured in Ostia is the death of one of the leads on the beach via brutal beating. Since Pasolini himself was the one to pen the script for the film, this foretelling scenario of sadistic savagery on the beach of Ostia all the more muddles the waters. While many film critics and Pasolini have recognized that the director's final work *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) gives some evidence that the renegade Renaissance man could foretell his forsaken future, Citti's Ostia features an almost literal presentiment of the poet's death. In May 2005, when Sergio Citti – who was now confined to a wheelchair and hard of hearing – learned that the young male prostitute, Pino Pelosi, who was convicted of murdering his friend and teacher Pier Paolo Pasolini, recanted his original testimony and admitted that he was not the only man on the beaches of Ostia that night over 30 years ago, he was naturally infuriated and one can only assume the film Ostia immediately came to mind. As the only authorized and authentic auteur to Pasolini's ultra-realist, proletarian-promoting film aesthetic, Citti was indubitably followed by a friendly ghost throughout his life which assuredly reached its peak when recollecting on his directorial debut Ostia. Despite its afflicting content and all the more dispiriting climax, Ostia does conclude on a positive and even uplifting note that is both celestial and deific, where the sun beams through the clouds as if heaven is opening its gates for the belated brother. Although his closest friend and blood brother is dead, the remaining brother is free to live his life as an individual of freewill who has to make de-

cisions on his own, just as the director of *Ostia* would after Pasolini's death in 1975, which eventually led him to working with such big names and respected actors as Jodie Foster, Malcolm McDowell, Vittorio Gassman, Philippe Noiret and Harvey Keitel, which is not bad for a poverty-stricken peasant. Although barely known and rarely seen, *Ostia* – a minimalistic tragicomic Italian 'neo-neo-realist' minor masterpiece – is indubitably one of the most curious filmic chapters in the lives of both Pasolini and Citti. At worst, *Ostia* will have you begging for the answer for the perennially unanswered questions: who killed Pasolini?!

-Ty E

CASOTTO
CASOTTO

Sergio Citti (1977)

Aside from the fact that they are both abersexuals, one would assume that there were no real connections between Italian poet/auteur Pier Paolo Pasolini (Accattone, Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom) and mainstream Hollywood Academy Award winning actress Jodie Foster (The Silence of the Lambs, Panic Room), yet they have one notably secondary link in the form of the fairly underrated and unique Italian (anti)sex comedy Casotto (1977) aka Beach House aka The Beach Hut aka In the Beach House. Indeed, the film stars an almost amorous, teenage pre-dyke Foster and on top of being directed by Pasolini's only true cinematic protégé and heir Sergio Citti (Il minestrone, Happy Hobos aka Due pezzi di pane) and starring his brother Franco Citti (who regularly appeared in Pasolini's films), the film was made at the very same beach, Ostia, where the Salò director was mysteriously brutally murdered and run over with his own car multiple times five years before in late 1975. Notably, Citti's directorial debut, Ostia (1970), which was co-penned and was originally supposed to be directed by Pasolini, ends in an exceedingly eerily prophetic manner with one of the protagonists being brutally murdered on the beaches of Ostia in a fashion not unlike how the great Italian Renaissance man would perish five years later. Of course, although compulsively crude and even grotesque in parts, Casotto is fairly light-hearted in comparison to the beautiful brutality of Ostia, which is steeped in allegorical religious imagery and is quite dark despite its fleeting moments of classically Citti-esque comic relief. Sergio Citti and his brother Franco were members of Rome's sub-proletariat and grew up in a slimy Roman slum where they were discovered during the 1950s by Pasolini, who called the former brother the "lexicon of the Roman dialect," as he helped him write the dialogue for his first two films Accattone (1961) and Mamma Roma (1962) and eventually became his assistant director on important works like Porcile (1969) aka Pigsty, Medea (1969), The Decameron (1971), The Canterbury Tales (1972), and Salò (which was apparently originally Citti's idea). As Sergio would later remark regarding Pasolini's imperative influence on his life, "If I hadn't met Pier Paolo I'd have probably ended up as a delinquent." Instead of becoming a small-time con, Citti transferred his subversive vulgarian tendencies to the screen by directing what one might describe as 'proletarian arthouse' works that feature pathologically perverse and oftentimes tragicomic themes, albeit in a sort of Pasolinian style. For example, after his debut Ostia, Citti directed the four-story 'castration comedy' Storie scellerate (1973) aka Bawdy Tales characteristically starring the director's brother Sergio in one of the lead roles. Casotto was Citti's third and arguably most 'idiosyncratic' and internationally successful work, as a film featuring not only a rather young and nubile Jodie Foster, but also French diva Catherine Deneuve. Featuring a wealth of cock jokes and about 100 minutes

of people in the most unflattering and compromised positions while getting undressed, among other things, in a public beach changing room, Citti's frolicsome flick is surely the best fun you will ever have at the beach without actually going into the water.

Early in the morning the beaches of Ostia just outside of Rome seem like a quiet and serene place located on the furthest tip of the world, but as soon as the armies of exceedingly extroverted squawking Guidos arrive, the place turns into a virtual improvised comedy show of the superlatively sleazy and fetish-fueled sort. After Pasolini's man muse Ninetto Davoli uses the beach changing room door to spark a match to light his cigarette, people begin storming into the yellow and blue shack to change into their bathing suits and do much less savory things. After a morbidly obese authoritarian gym coach that resembles an elderly pug dog marches his team of nubile teen beauties into the beach hut like they are soldiers in boot camp, a goofy looking dude with red muttonchops knocks on the door and informs him that they are using the wrong room. After the coach and his teenage concubines exit the building, muttonchops man drops his shorts while changing into his swimming trunks and reveals that he has two cocks (!) and a virtual jungle of pubic hair. After mutton mensch leaves the building so that he can read in peace and quiet on the beach, two goofy pussy-starved pals that work at a gas station together, Gigi (Gigi Proietti) and Nando (Franco Citti), enter the building with two borderline homely guidettes who are literally trying to use the two dimwitted dudes to get a free lunch. Indeed, redhead Gloria (Julia Sebestyan) and dark-haired Jole (Clara Algranti) are two unscrupulous skanks scheming for free food but they are not willing to give up any poontang to get it and one of the girls even goes so far as to insult Gigi's dead mother after he asks to see them undress in a semi-joking fashion. Since the two less than ladylike ladies have no bathing suits and are apparently wearing transparent underwear, Gigi and Nando are forced to buy them bathing suits, but the two girls are soon stolen by two arrogant and seemingly ambiguously gay blonde Nordic-like Milanese military men. One of the them has a borderline micro-penis (which, like the double dick, is clearly fake and made out of cheap prosthetic material), so he stuffs his speedo with tissues to make his bulge seem bigger. The same Milanese micro-penis fellow also absurdly carries around a white Chihuahua named 'Zaza' like he is some old queen. Needless to say, the Chihuahua eventually defecates in the beach house and a couple of the beach patrons, including the man with two penises, have the hilarious misfortune of stepping in it.

Of course, love is also in the air at the beach house, as especially personified by a candy ass cherub-like middle-aged mamma's boy with a chode (which, unlike the other two abnormal cocks, is real) named Carlo (Carlo Croccolo) and his secret young and rather petite redhead girlfriend who he has been hiding from his parents for over a year and cannot wait to screw seeing as he seems like

a virgin. Carlo and his girlfriend plan to commence coitus in the beach house, but people keep interrupting them every time they strip their bathing suits off and go to seal the sensual deal. Two prostitutes also attempt to hustle money out of a pudgy would-be-suave insurance agent named Alfredo Cerquetti (Ugo Tognazzi of Marco Ferreri's *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) and Édouard Molinaro's *La Cage aux Folles* (1978)) by offering him their reasonably enticing bodies, but they eventually learn that he is wearing a locked chastity belt, as he has been cuckolded by Catholicism and believes that his abstinence is part of god's plan because, as he self-righteously proclaims, "Paradise exists, and it will be my reward." Luckily, the two career whores manage to get Cerquetti's chastity built off, as well as some of his money. When Jodie Foster finally appears in the film, the viewer soon discovers she is a newly pregnant teenager whose grandparents want to pawn her off to her half-retarded cousin Vincenzino (Michele Placido) so that her unborn child is not born a complete bastard. Aside from being a mentally challenged fellow who never seems to realize that his testicles are hanging out of his bathing suit, Vincenzino is a sexual invalid who describes to his cutesy blonde cousin Teresina Fedeli (Foster) how he has failed to ever be aroused by a woman. Luckily, moronic pervert Gigi will eventually take Teresina out of Vincenzino's impotent hands.

When Gigi bangs his head on a small boat that a couple people are carrying after running full speed out of the beach house like a spastic dunce, he eventually begins having fantasy dreams involving nine unclad Nordic babes, as well as his face becoming the image of the million aka 'miglione' lire bill. After becoming the miglione man, Gigi is greeted in his dream by a blonde bombshell named 'Naivety' (Catherine Deneuve), who proclaims her love to him but he initially rejects her since he thinks she is lying to him since a pulchritudinous babe like her could never be interested in an ugly swarthy moron like him. In revenge for Gigi rebuffing her love, Ms. Naivety absurdly attempts to commit suicide by holding her breathe, which inspires the gregarious Guido to come to the aid of the dream damsel in distress. When Gigi eventually awakes from his strange slumber, his oneiric rendezvous with Naivety will eventually come in handy for Teresina's grandparents, who pawn their granddaughter off to the unwitting gas station attendant. Indeed, Gigi almost immediately falls for Teresina, especially after she lies to him and tells him that she has never kissed a boy before, thus making him think that the knocked up teen is a virgin who only he will have the distinguished honor of deflowering. Gigi's giant black dog 'Rocco' also gets lucky at the beach house, as he finds dinner in the form of the white Chihuahua Zaza whose defecating bothered the cannibalistic canine. Naturally, when it begins raining and pouring outside, everyone at the beach immediately heads inside the beach house and begins getting dressed. During all the commotion, it is revealed that the man with two pricks and muttonchops is actually a priest, thus making his duo of dicks a total waste. After crying about losing his ticket

to paradise after being defiled by two abnormally aggressive money-grubbing whores, Alfredo Cerquetti finally gives into sin, cheers up, and decides to leave with the two lovely little lecherous ladies. Of course, the last person to leave is Ninetto Davoli who, overall, seemed to have a fun day in the sun because he drilled holes in the beach house walls and spent most of his time playing peeping tom and watching the girls in the teenage swim team getting undressed and ritualistically combing their pubes.

Admittedly, as someone that lives at the beach and fell in love with my greatest love largely around my oceanside town, I could not help but rather enjoy Casotto, even if we do not have those huts like the ones in Citti's film where I live. Unquestionably, there is a certain singular 'humanity' to Citti's raunchy and ribald humor that the sort of scatological comedies starring the likes of unsufferable Zionist jackasses like Seth Rogen and Jonah Hill that Hebraic Hollywood regularly plops out certainly lack. While Casotto is very Guido-ish in terms of its comedy, the film also has a pure and unadulterated 'proletarian' essence about it that would make the film palatable to even the lowest of perennial lumpenproles, namely Americans, though I suspect that they might find some things lost in translation. Indeed, Citti's work is probably the only feature-length celluloid quasi-chamber piece I can think of that mostly relies on crude cock jokes and absurdist nudity scenarios, as a 100-minute film that almost entirely takes place in one single room. Of course, Citti does not deserve all the credit for the film's overload of merry degeneracy, as the work was primarily written by Vincenzo Cerami, who would go on to script hit Roberto Benigni flicks like *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) and *The Tiger and the Snow* (2005). In fact, Benigni played the protagonist in Citti's underrated dago 'trash classic' *Il minestrone* (1981), which was also co-penned by Cerami. Casotto is also notable for featuring Jodie Foster at her least frigid and most seemingly sensual, as surely no one that saw Citti's charmingly tasteless and bawdy celluloid beach party when it was originally released would have suspected that she would grow up to become an alpha-carpet-muncher. The film also reveals Citti's fetish for tall statuesque Nordic blondes, as reflected in the fact that most of the unclad ladies in the film are of such a pedigree (notably, both the director and his brother Franco were married to Swedish women with the name Anita). Undoubtedly, one of the aspects of Casotto that I found most intriguing is its anti-Milanese sentiments, which reflect the age old racial/cultural tensions between the more Germanic northern Italians and Romans (and especially southern Italians, like Sicilians). Of course, Lina Wertmüller's *Swept Away* (1973) aka *Travolti da un insolito destino nell'azzurro mare d'agosto* tackled similar themes, albeit in a more banal intellectual sort of way. Indeed, when comparing the films of a Northern Italian auteur like Michelangelo Antonioni to that of the works of Citti and a film like Ettore Scola's *Brutti, sporchi e cattivi* (1976) aka *Ugly, Dirty and Bad*, it is almost like comparing Leni Riefenstahl to some third world filmmaker like Ousmane Sembène. Ulti-

CASOTTO

mately, Casotto is the arthouse equivalent of junk food, as a film that certainly tastes good and is easy to devour but is probably not all that good for you, though at least, unlike the beach, the film won't give you skin cancer or a sunburn.

-Ty E

DJANGO

Sergio Corbucci (1966)

The western is a genre that offers me not type of thrill or inspiration. When I do decide to watch a western, it is of the Italian persuasion. Spaghetti westerns added new elements to the western. They double the violence and emphasize atmospheric artistry. The contrived stoicism of John Wayne has always made me sick. That man never once fought in any American war yet propagated war time propaganda. Django is a western that I can get into. Any rebel cowboy that drags a coffin deserves recognition. Django wastes no time in wasting over thirty men and an equal amount of seconds. He is a heartless criminal that does everything in effort to benefit his own interests. He makes John Wayne look like a disgruntled sideshow cowboy clown. Mexican target practice is an exciting event found in Django. American filmmakers wouldn't dare feature such a politically incorrect act (a little in the early Hollywood studio system days). I can only assume that the Mexicans were played by Sicilians. Northern Italian has always considered them second class citizens. Pier Paolo Pasolini was most likely the only director to show them love. Like the majority of Italian films, Django features an impressive soundtrack. The Django theme is quite triumphant. I couldn't help cheering for psycho killer Django. Out of all the gringos in westerns, Django might just be king. That's why he has his own theme song. Cannibal Holocaust director Ruggero Deodato acted as assistant director on Django. He seems to have taken a couple cues from Django in his obsession with brutal violence. I would argue that Django is more of an Italian exploitation than the typical spaghetti western. Quentin Tarantino borrowed the ear cutting in Django scene for his film Reservoir Dogs. We all know that Tarantino is an exploitation thing.

-Ty E

BEAST WITH A GUN
BEAST WITH A GUN

Sergio Grieco (1977)

Around the time his filmmaking career began to totally peeter out, American cult auteur Curtis Harrington (*Night Tide*, *Queen of Blood*) began directing episodes for classic trashy American TV shows like *Charlie's Angels* (1976-1981) and *Dynasty* (1981-1989), where on the latter television series he had the distinguished opportunity to work with Austrian proto-twink actor Helmut Berger (*The Damned*, *Salon Kitty*). In his posthumously released autobiography *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood: The Adventures of an Aesthete in the Movie Business* (2013), Harrington wrote regarding Berger and his experience working with the actor, "I felt sorry for Helmut Berger in another way. He was easily the most feminine actor I have ever worked with. Most gay actors of that time, like Rock Hudson, had a very strong masculine persona, even if it didn't mirror their real-life behavior. Berger seemed to have none. I couldn't tap into a masculine core. He was soft and willowy and feminine in his voice and gestures." For those that do not know, Harrington was no alpha-male either as a man who dressed in drag as a teenager during the early 1940s for his first film *Fall of the House of Usher* (1942), who quite literally came in touch with his inner femininity in the avant-garde horror short *Fragment of Seeking* (1946), was a pioneer of the campy and mostly homosexual 'Grande Dame Guignol' subgenre, and was openly gay at a time when it was not cool to be gay. That being said, for Harrington to describe another male as "easily the most feminine actor I ever worked with" is the height of emasculation and it seems quite unimaginable that such an effortlessly effete Euro-twink would have the opportunity to play a leading man, let alone a low-class psychopathic thug, in any type of film yet Herr Berger did just that for the somewhat bizarre Italian poliziottesco flick *La belva col mitra* (1977) aka *Beast with a Gun* aka *The Mad Dog Killer* aka *The Human Beast* aka *Wild Beasts with Machine Guns* aka *Street Killers* aka *Ferocious* aka *Ferocious Beast with a Gun* directed by Guido writer/director Sergio Grieco (who is probably best known today for directing the *Secret Agent 077* series of super schlocky James Bond parody films such as *Agent 077 From the Orient with Fury* and *Agent 077 - Mission Bloody Mary* under the Anglo pseudonym 'Terence Hathaway') in what would ultimately be the filmmaker's celluloid swansong.

A man with a uniquely unhealthy addiction to dago exploitation trash, alpha-fan-boy auteur Quentin Tarantino would pay tribute to *Beast with a Gun* by including stock footage, as well as a snippet of the striking score created by Umberto Smaila, in his pretentious and plodding postmodern neo-Blaxploitation flick *Jackie Brown* (1997), including in a scene where Samuel L. Jackson absurdly asks to a blond pothead surfer girl, "Is that Rutger Hauer?," in regard to Helmut Berger (apparently to blacks, all blonds must look the same). Indeed, *Beast with a Gun* has about four major things going for it: its ridiculous casting of Aus-

trian queer Helmut Berger as a psychopathic guido prole rapist/killer, numerous catchy, if not ridiculous, alternative titles (with *Beast with a Gun* undoubtedly being the best), amateurish anti-realism and over-the-top rape/violence, and unequivocally an amazing and addictive primitive electronic musical score by maestro Smaila. While *Beast with a Gun* is not quite up to par with the best works of Fernando Di Leo in terms of the ostensibly 'fascistic' Italo-crime films go, the film manages to somewhat unintentionally transcend the Guido sub-genre due to its hysterical blond beast star and seemingly unintentionally idiosyncratic direction and nonsensical dialogue, which borders on the surreal. Loosely based on the crimes of celebrated Milanese mobster Renato Vallanzasca, who was once a pretty boy but nowhere as pretty as Berger, *Beast with a Gun* ultimately proves that, long before Sicilian-American filmmaker Martin Scorsese had the novel idea to cast lapsed twink Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Departed* (2006) as a ballsy bad ass of sorts, wops from the old world had the gall to cast a hysterical Aryan Adonis as a goombah gangster thug. A sort of quasi-campy (where there is Helmut Berger there is always camp, no matter what the genre!) take on the nasty nihilistic violence of Mario Bava's punishing piece of unhinged Guido grit *Rabid Dogs* (1974) aka *Cani Arrabbiati* with a marvelously melodic soundtrack that rivals Riz Ortolani's score from *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), *Beast with a Gun* is a rare piece of celluloid trash that will probably be more of interest to fans of 1970s European arthouse films than bloodlusting poliziottesco addicts.

Statuesque psychopathic conman Nanni Vitali (Helmut Berger) who sports a lethal leather-jacket and aviator glasses, along with three of his burly goons with stereotypical names like 'Bruno' and 'Mario,' have just made a successful jailbreak and they have rape, murder, torture, and bank robbery in mind, but first the '*Beast with a Gun*' wants to settle an old score with a bitch ass snitch. Nanni was sentenced to prison for 23 years for killing a lowly security guard after a groveling stool pigeon named Barbareschi squealed to the cops, so naturally he wants to torture and kill the little rat. When Nanni and his merry meathead men catch bitch boy Barbareschi, he is found with his girlfriend Giuliana Caroli (played by Austrian actress Marisa Mell, who is best known for her role as Eva Kant in Mario Bava's *Danger: Diabolik* (1968)). Needless to say, Nanni savagely sexually ravages Giuliana while Barbareschi is forced to watch. Of course, Nanni wastes the snitch and takes his bitch, making Giuliana his involuntary old lady. While she would not admit it in a million years, quasi-cougar Giuliana seems to be hot for Nanni and the two have sex more than just once, but she is also somewhat afraid of him as he makes incessant threats to kill her. Not exactly the brightest of blonds, Nanni convinces Giuliana to help him rob a bank where her estranged father works as a security guard, but she tells a police commander named Giulio Santini (played by Richard Harrison, who is probably best known for his work with Antonio Margheriti) about the robbery beforehand, thus botching the psychopath's grand plans as the cops set a trap. Indeed, while

BEAST WITH A GUN

Nanni and his crew manage to take a van full of teen beauties hostage, Giuliana helps the girls escape and everyone in the Beast's gang is caught and arrested except the beast. After a temporary reunion with his seemingly hysterical sister Rosa (who he talks into telling the cops lies about his whereabouts) and hooking up with a young and dimwitted protégé named Bimbo Pacesi (Alberto Squillante), Nanni kidnaps Commander Santini's father (Claudio Gora), who also happened to be the judge that sentenced him to prison, and sister Carla (played by Marina Giordana, the daughter of Claudio Gora), thus making it personal for the police officer in what is ultimately one fucked family affair. On top of that, the Beast with the Gun attempts to assassinate Giuliana with a sniper rifle, but she merely receives a fleshwound in the thigh and she absurdly brushes the energy off as if she were a super soldier. Needless to say, Santini hunts down Nanni like he is a rabid dog, but before that happens, the Judge is shot by Bimbo and the Beast mutilates sister Carla's nubile young breasts. When Santini catches up with Nanni, he threatens to cut off Carla's tits and even displays the bloody topless girl for her cop brother to see in what is a quintessential scene of Guido celluloid sleaze. Of course, the big brother gives the big bad beast an impassioned beating before he is arrested and the Judge and Carla survive the ordeal, though the damage that has been done to the young lady's olive color bosoms is clearly permanent.

In his autobiography *Nice Guys Don't Work in Hollywood*, Curtis Harrington also remarked about Helmut Berger regarding his problematic experience working with him on *Dynasty*, "It did not help that he seemed totally at sea being in America, almost as if he had come from another planet. Unfortunately, all of this was evident on the screen. It was not long before most of his lines, if they had to be retained as plot points, were taken away from him and given to other actors. I wondered at the genius of Luchino Visconti, the Italian director of *The Leopard* and *Death in Venice*, who was Berger's real-life lover. Luchino had made him seem very strong and masculine when he directed him wearing a Nazi uniform in certain scenes of *The Damned*." While I would not exactly describe Berger's performances in Visconti's films as seeming "very strong and masculine," I do think Harrington was right when he insinuated that Herr Berger was not someone who could easily be imported for American television. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Berger portrayed the eponymous characters in Massimo Dallamano's *Dorian Gray* (1970) aka *The Secret of Dorian Gray* and Visconti's *Ludwig* (1972), as he had the aura of a decidedly debauched and exceedingly narcissistic old school European aristocrat, which is certainly something the mongrelized, perennially proletarian place that is the United States cannot appreciate. While Berger undoubtedly makes for a poor choice for a mad Mediterranean mobster, the actor's role in *Beast with a Dog* ultimately gave him the perfect platform to go wild and wickedly wayward with his fierce flamboyance and nancy boy narcissism. While Berger does not do go all out with

a mean Marlene Dietrich impression like he did in Visconti's *The Damned*, he certainly brought some nasty Nordic swag to the played-out Italian poliziottesco films with *Beast with a Gun* that was never seen before nor was ever seen again in the sub-genre. Even though I rather like the title of *Beast with a Gun*, I think a more apt named would have been 'Blond Beast with a Gun' as Berger manages to channel a sort of visceral Nietzschean nihilism as an actor who, to quote Zarathustra, demonstrates, "one must still have chaos within oneself, to give birth to a dancing star."

-Ty E

ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA
ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA

Sergio Leone (1984)

Hollywood has plenty of dago wop-fest mafia films, but is certainly lacking in regards to the much more powerful and organized Jewish mafia. Leave it to to Spaghetti Western master craftsman Sergio Leone to make the greatest Jewish mafia (and possibly greatest mafia film in general) ever made, *Once Upon A Time In America* is as classy as gangster films get, quite the accomplishment indeed. Despite taking place mostly in the young ghettos of New York City, most of *Once Upon A Time In America* was shot in Italy and Spain. Director and co-writer Sergio Leone spent a lot of time and great detail recreating NYC, a version of the city that looks more aesthetically power than the real city itself. Apparently, Leone used paintings from such iconic American artists as Norman Rockwell as a frame of reference when designing the set for *Once Upon A Time In America*. Maybe researching art history can be of some value after all. I have never really thought of Robert De Niro as much of an Italian, but as more of a philistine working-class Jew. In *Once Upon A Time In America*, De Niro does a brilliant job playing the Rapist Jew Noodles. Noodles is a man who seems unable to truly get close with anyone, including his best friend Max and his life-long love interest Deborah. Of course, Noodles cannot be blamed for his criminal behavior and unconventionally smooth antisocial tendencies, for he is a product of a particular time and place. Noodles has turned into a man already in his early childhood/teenage years, killing an older mafia hood named Bugsby and even stabbing a cop, but those are just the consequences when playing rough. After serving time and getting out of jail as an adult, Noodles is even less emotional towards people in his personal life and more importantly whilst committing crucial crimes. Despite his peculiar form of criminal stoicism throughout his whole life, Noodles appropriately comes to terms with his dubious history in an elegant manner at the end of *Once Upon A Time In America*, making him a rapist and murderer one cannot help but like. Noodles uses words sparingly, but what the few words he does choose to use tell more than the most revealing of biographies. The real dirty psychopath Yid of *Once Upon A Time In America* is mafia mastermind Max. Like many of the top IQ individuals members of his kinfolk, Max suffers from a form megalomaniac madness that helps him to be a real top criminal. Noodles maybe a rapist and killer, but he certainly plays the game of morality more nicely than his bandit buddy Max. By the end of *Once Upon A Time In America*, it becomes very clear that Max was always a one-man team, just using his partners as temporary tools for personal gains. Unfortunately for Max, he is well aware of his insanity (and well aware of his late Father's) and does not take kindly to Noodles telling him that he is 'crazy.' Crazy is as crazy does, but Max does it fairly successfully, going from a poor Ghetto Jew to one of the richest businessmen/politicians in America. Max is a

wonderful symbol for what it truly takes to become success in America, a purist in regards to achieving the much sentimentalized "American dream." I find most epics to be epically disappointing, films full of aesthetic fireworks yet lacking in solid and rich storytelling. *Once Upon A Time In America* maybe be the most complete and richly layered story ever told in the form of masterly crafted celluloid. A lot of the great and legendary auteur filmmakers end their careers on a weak note, no longer capable of the same artistic vitality that made them brilliant filmmakers. Sergei Leone is certainly an exception to this unfortunate trend of legendary directors burning out. As a master dictator auteur, Sergei Leone died with his boots on, proving to Hollywood and the world that artistic integrity will always stand the test of time in comparison to mere highly financed technical innovation. After all, who else could have created the brilliant work that is *Once Upon A Time In America*, one of the most American films ever made directed by a cultural outsider.

-Ty E

ONE MAN'S WAR
ONE MAN'S WAR

Sérgio Toledo (1991)

In many ways, the German World War I memoir *Storm of Steel* (1920) by Ernst Jünger is a spiritual antidote to Franco-German author Erich Maria Remarque's absurdly popular pussyfoot anti-war literary diatribe *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928); a work that would be utilized and adapted as anti-Teutonic filmic-ammo by the glorified gangsters of Sunset Boulevard. Not only was Jünger a superior writer but his work would have a much greater influence on the German populous than Remarque's cowardly defeatist work. Although known for his romantic view of war, Jünger would later become quite disillusioned with the Second World War and most specifically; National Socialism and Adolf Hitler. Apparently, Jünger even played an exceedingly shadowy role in the Stauffenberg bomb plot against Hitler. If one thing is for sure, Jünger never attempted to capitalize off his celebrity as a distinguished and nationalistic anti-liberal writer during the Third Reich era, thus one can only conclude that he was a man of honor who never fell so low as to compromise his idealism for the personal benefit of power and monetary return like so many artists and prominent German figures of his generation. In fact, the most telling example of Jünger's character is that he refused an offer to head the German Academy of Literature and was subsequently banned from writing during the Nazi era. Like sage Radical Traditional Baron Julius Evola (who admired and wrote a book on Jünger), Jünger advocated a sort of aristocratic individualism called "Anarch" in response to an increasingly chaotic and totalitarian world. Jünger also defied the stereotypical conventions of a German nationalist by regularly experimenting and writing about drugs, including (but not limited to) cocaine, weed, and LSD (he even went on "trips" with Albert Hofmann; the inventor of the drug). During the German-occupation of France, Jünger was assigned to an administrative position in Paris. Although banned from writing, Jünger kept an intimate diary about his personal experiences in the slimy frog city and his (for the most part, pessimistic) thoughts on the war. In the experimental documentary *One Man's War* (1982) aka *La guerre d'un seul homme* directed by Argentine auteur Edgardo Cozarinsky, narrations of Jünger's Parisian diaries are cleverly juxtaposed with German and Vichy propaganda newsreels.

Upon first viewing *One Man's War*, it will be quite obvious to the fanatic cinephile that the documentary is a lot like Max Ophüls' overrated documentary *The Sorrow and The Pity* (1969); the main difference being that Cozarinsky's work is all the more potent and groundbreaking due to its inclusion of Jünger's narrated diaries. From his earliest diary entries on, it is apparent that Jünger feels his job in Paris is dubious at best. In between meeting fellow artists like poet polymath and cine-magician Jean Cocteau and fellow right-wing anarchist Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Jünger experiences the grand pleasure of witnessing a

handsome German deserter being executed via firing-squad and hearing rumors about the mass liquidations of Jews in the East. Jünger also does not shy away from describing a friendly chat he had with a comical French prostitute who jokingly saluted him as if she were a patriotic German soldier. The newsreels featured in *One Man's War* range from the latest in tacky Parisian fashion to footage of numerous Frenchmen boarding trains to join the German National Socialist military campaign. The greatest irony of the documentary being that Jünger – a committed lifelong proponent of war and a lover of pain (After all, Jünger is the author of the pro-pain/anti-bourgeois book *On Pain*) has no faith in the greatest war of the twentieth century and fails to take pleasure in occupying a country which has arguably been Germany's greatest enemy throughout all of European history. In the excellent book on the intellectual history of National Socialist ideology, *Metapolitics: from Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler* (1941), written by German-American Peter Viereck (the son of Nazi propagandist/Philo-semitic and purported bastard Grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm I; George Sylvester Viereck), the author makes the claim that German nationalism largely sprung from an inferiority complex Germany obtained by being so severely beaten and brainwashed (with ideas of "liberty") by the French throughout a number of wars over a number of centuries. I don't know about other people but I personally derived some pleasure from seeing various newsreels of the snobbish French being occupied by a nation that they had once felt infinitely superior to.

Edgardo Cozarinsky also added some more subtle contrasting ingredients to *One Man's War* that might not be apparent to most viewers upon first viewing the film. Throughout *One Man's War*, scores by Aryan composers like Hans Pfitzer and Richard Strauss are coalesced together with music works by Jewish degenerate musicians like Franz Schreker and Arnold Schonberg. Surprisingly, the blending of varying musical styles is fairly unnoticeable and is undoubtedly complementary of the film itself. Speaking of blending Aryans and Jews, a rare newsreel of ¼ Jewish-British fascist propagandist John Amery is also featured in *One Man's War*. Not only was Amery a committed fascist of royal Jewish ancestry (his father was Lord and conservative UK MP Leo Amery) but he was also a well known sexual libertine who – like many of the prominent French Vichy collaborators (writers Pierre Eugène Drieu La Rochelle and Robert Brasillach included) – was executed for treason by his respective nation of origin at the conclusion of World War II. That being said, *One Man's War* not only proves to be an intriguing and solacing portrait of Vichy France but also an important and equally inventive quasi-Cinéma vérité cultural and artistic visual testimonial like no other. I certainly can not think of another film that so seamlessly weaves cinematic poetry with historical document for a most celestially unruly mix. Despite the sometimes depressive narration of Jünger's writings and the war torn brutality of the imagery, *One Man's War* is for the part a relaxing and mellow

ONE MAN'S WAR

cinematic timeline that offers a quite pleasurable experience for World War II fanatics (myself including) and cinephiles alike. Although Jünger's tone may be melancholic and pessimistic throughout *One Man's War*, he certainly proves comic (whether intentional or not) in his random ramblings, especially when he remarks in a cynical manner regarding Mongolian volunteers (Germany had the largest multicultural army in human history at the time), "whole tribes of yellow ants have been enrolled." If one is to learn anything from *One Man's War*, it is that the authoritarian racial collectivism of the National Socialist regime was not up to par with Ernst Jünger's aristocratic Anarch Weltanschauung.

-Ty E

THE NIGHT PORTER

Sewell Collins (1930) Before I start this review I would like to begin with this quote about *The Night Porter* from Pulitzer prize winning Film Critic Roger Ebert: "as nasty as it is lubricious, a despicable attempt to titillate us by exploiting memories of persecution and suffering." Knowing this is a good enough reason alone to watch *The Night Porter*. It seems as if Roger Ebert was so disgusted with himself for liking the film and feeling it had artistic merit that he had to somehow redeem himself with an emotionally fueled review. I will admit that I both enjoyed the film and felt it had much artistic merit. The film was directed by female Italian auteur Liliana Cavani, starring (the English stars) Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling. Not a bad line-up for a fan of European films of the 1970s. In 1962 both Bogarde and Rampling starred in another dark Third Reich tale, *The Damned*, directed by Luchino Visconti. Having seen *The Damned* gives an especially appropriate introduction to watching *The Night Porter*.

The Night Porter has a fairly straightforward and linear plot. What makes it different is its various flashbacks which seem more like decaying pastel dream sequences. These scenes have a power unmatched by any film trying to portray this time of history. These scenes range from an SS Man doing ballet for a large group of his comrades, to Max giving the head of an enemy prisoner in a box to his lover/prisoner. Never has the SS been so romantic. Expect to also see a Joseph Goebbels (Nazi Minister of Propaganda) look alike performing ballet for a group of SS men. This scene is both eerie and chilling. It makes Nazism look like a fetishist's art. This character later becomes an enemy of Max and still a driven Nazi. It is all so very strange in this world. The sex scenes are violent and animal like. Broken glass and blood make scenes of disturbing sex more real than what you might see in your latest slasher flick. This relationship truly has passion. Knowing that they could be killed at any second makes their relationship even more fun as they are finally living completely for each other. The effects of the war never truly go away. *The Night Porter's* score perfectly compliments the film. It is a melody that is as haunting as the protagonist's past. Throughout the film, the melody constantly reminds you of the film's tragic mood. I wouldn't expect anything less from Italian production. Even Italian exploitation films have excellently composed music. The ending of *The Night Porter* is as romantic as a film can get (of the sadist sort). I don't know whether or not Steven Spielberg would be happy with it, but don't expect juvenile sentimentalism. *The Night Porter* isn't out to make the viewer feel like everything is alright at the end. Postwar European film has a lot of darkness and nihilism involved. *The Night Porter* is like Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS meets European art film. I don't think you can get much more different or offensive than that. Although flawed, *The Night Porter* has become one of my favorite films over the past couple of years.

-Ty E

THIS IS ENGLAND
THIS IS ENGLAND

Shane Meadows (2006)

This Is England is quite the appropriately titled film. The reason is that this film actually attempts to portray the working class English and the socio-political factors affecting that group. This Is England is not some piece of superficial trash featuring the faggoty Charm of Hugh Grant or the proud integrity of Ralph Fiennes. This Is England takes a look at those that represent the true majority of the English collective during the early 1980s. The film specifically looks at the skinhead subculture and how it ironically morphed from a multicultural influenced movement to a Neo-Nazi movement. The first English film I saw that attempted to take a personal look at the English Neo-Nazi skinhead was Alan Clarke's *Made In Britain* starring Tim Roth. This film features a powerful performance by Roth and gives small hints into what turned the young man into a vicious skinhead. This Is England, however, takes a more holistic approach to exposing the variables that turn young men into unlawful racist rebels. Many of the skinheads have lost a parent and are now living in a fragmented and defunct nuclear family. The film's young protagonist lost his father in the Falklands War. A war that is recognized in the film as one that was worthless and not in the interest of the common Englishmen. The only thing This Is England lets us know about the war is that a young boy lost his father in it. During the film's conclusion, real stock footage of dead English soldiers who perished in the Falklands is shown. This is England also takes a look at immigrant infiltration of England that is promoted by criminal bankers and corporations (like in the United States). Due to the fact that non-English Diaspora immigrants have jobs and are mildly successful in England, the common Englishman has become enraged and adopts fascism. The reality is that the immigrant shouldn't be blamed. The internationalist criminals that promote it are the source of such acts against the ordinary man. They expect and even promote racial tensions so that they can loot the countries while commoners battle it out with whatever little resources they can get. International bankers have always exploited the citizens of each nation they have infiltrated and brought them to war for monetary profit. The skinhead subculture in This is England is presented as a movement that was originally heavily inspired by black Jamaicans via ska, rock steady, reggae, and soul music. Even one of the skinheads featured in the film is of mulatto origin. This young man's assumed death acts as the symbolic transformation of the skinhead group from working class multiculturalists to hateful Neo-Nazis. Of course, the agitators that run the international news media (good ol' Murdoch) aren't interested in acknowledging this distinction. The news media has always used the contrived façade of "white collective racism" in attempts to stir up racial tensions and stifle the average white into a state of fear of being labeled a racist. The international news media has never attempted to put racial conflict

into a realistic context. That wouldn't be good for their conquest of international slavery. This Is England also presents the English working class as similar to that of its American counterparts. The English skinheads love getting into trouble by wrecking abandoned houses, fucking with one another, and making the best of a not so bright looking future. This Is England is not a false Hollywood portrait of the English as linguistically refined and classy shadows of the Royal family. The lying and agitating opinion forming trash that is American Hollywood will never attempt to give a voice to the typical proletarian white. The reality is that the average white is far from rich and just as much of a slave of the system as many so-called "minorities." Finger pointing at the white collective only takes peoples eyes off the real criminals (the same criminals that pushed imperial colonialism, hegemony, and internationalism). This Is England is the most emotionally powerful and dramatic English film that I have seen since the titanic masterpiece A Night To Remember (1958). It is rare nowadays to find European national cinema that actually attempts to look at the common people of those prospective nations. Hollywood has made it their goal to buy out any international talent before they start a powerful film industry of their own. Hollywood has complete contempt for international culture and attempts to hide its hatred by making offensive inaccurate portrayals of "exotic backwards cultures" and the rich selfless altruistic whites that have dedicated their lives to helping those "savages." The young protagonist of This Is England doesn't seem to have a bright future and he knows it. This Is England is less about a nihilistic message than it is about a realistic message. A tragic story about a young man's loss of a father and the unfortunate future he faces as a proletarian white in anti-nationalist England. It is a rare event when a film like This Is England reaches international acclaim. Anyone that loves national cinema (or cinema in general) should watch this heartbreaking film.

-Ty E

AMATEUR PORN STAR KILLER 2
AMATEUR PORN STAR KILLER 2

Shane Ryan-Reid (2008) APSK 2 (Film Version) is a difficult film to review. The main reason is it being unfaithful to its own sub genre in faux-snuff. The narrative is several title cards placed throughout the 83-minute running time explaining the federal information on this killer. What we gather are his name, victims, and minor details. A man named Brandon meets up with a young girl in a new town and decides to fool around. That is the plotline right there. What separates this one from the rest is the utmost sincerity of the project. There is no rivers of blood; no exaggerated killings involving intestines. There is just a young man who is driven by his own disturbing sexual aura to murder and rape these young women. The movie version features overkill editing, which gets pretty frustrating while you are watching it. The filters switch from negative, to night vision, and to many more before this film is over. It gets so damn hard to adjust constantly, but then again, that only saves us from the boring details. This man talking to her involves realistic dialogue, which later leads to realistic sex. This cut is not the snuff version. Do not expect Dogme 95 killing here. This one is very edited, but still carries the majority of the emotion and power. The film version also features a score and soundtrack. The score is very impressive. I was amazed at how this independent film, especially of its genre, managed to grasp such a mesmerizing score and carry it throughout, never dulling; not even for an instance. One reason why this film series came under so much heavy fire from horror fans is that they assume that this director was trying to cash in on the notoriety of the August Underground series. Wait; now that I think about it, they claim everything is a rip-off of AU. The Poughkeepsie Tapes and Scrapbook are two examples. Hell, I'm sure that if 8MM came out several years later, it would be deemed a knock off too. Lets face facts gentlemen, AU didn't invent the snuff genre, nor do they deserve the mascot status either. The snuff genre stands on its own, bearing no owners or creator. APSK 2 (Film Version) is a flawed, yet extremely corrosive film depicting real brutality to real people. The ending scene will haunt you, due to the eyes of a young murderer. If only Myspace photos could be that haunting.

-Maq

AMATEUR PORN STAR KILLER 2

Shane Ryan-Reid (2008) APSK 2 (Snuff Version) is the blander, bastard child of the film version intended for audience's eyes. This goes to show, that this is the runt of the litter. Just because it is boring, void of a soundtrack besides the young man's charisma and her cock-teasing ways, doesn't mean this is a tacky entry. This film does what the original August Underground did, sans several butchered bodies and a horrible outdoor punching scene. What stands out is the personality emitting from the characters. Real chemistry is going on. The violence in this film doesn't go over-the-top, which makes me respect these even more. As I recall, director Shane Ryan doesn't even enjoy these types of films, which goes to show his lack of influences. This can only help his film path. This version is tedious, but it is without the misplaced color scopes and annoying title cards labeling the victims as if it were some game show. The only reason gripe I have this version is the way the "found tape" is edited. Events that have happened are all out of chronological order, and if they aren't, that only means they were in the film version. Despite being slow moving, this is the brutal and unflinching version. Expect cruder blowjobs, longer chokes, and his forced psychosexual temptations to eventually transgress onto her. Brandon is a pretty realistic role for Shane Ryan. I can see pent up aggression in his eyes. When he becomes this character, it does seem to overtake him. APSK 2 is a portrait of a perhaps soulless killer whose motives are unknown. To say that these films are microbudget would be a severe understatement. This film was made for 20 dollars and the first, 45 dollars. The snuff version is less rewarding from the film version, but it is still a damn good watch and effort from an independent director. I wonder how much this film was made for? Whatever the budget was, Terry Hawkins would be proud. Not everyone can do it as amazingly as he can.

-mAQ

SPLENDOR
SPLENDOR

Shari Springer Berman (2003)

To seamlessly blend his style of surreal and perverse sexuality into the mainstream was a 2-step program. Gregg Araki settled upon us a fine film depicting a titillatingly road trip not complete without a Ménage à trois of madness and murder. Araki took the same concept existent in *The Doom Generation* and layered it over a chic film along the lines of *Clueless*. The result is pertinent to the outcome of his latest film, *Smiley Face*. *Splendor* is a film that reminds me vaguely of the Edward Norton film *The Painted Veil*. Both films have a slow build up subversively hinting towards the stupidity and errors of women. In *Splendor*, you will watch as a "good girl" fucks and teases a literate "tortured artist" guy who eventually turns into a final form of Chris Kattan, and also a lug head band drummer with spiky blond hair. Both of these men seem to be very personal to Gregg Araki as he spends most of the film building atop their relationship and heterosexuality is challenged and "love" comes from all angles. Our main female is given many narrative segments in which she sits in a pristine white backdrop and discusses her many mistakes. Filters and after-effects are digitally added to give her eyes a sparkling halo within and a virgin-esque aspect of her perfect face. For once, Araki is approaching the situation at an entirely new angle, but this move is fatal on his mainstream career. A year later, he will have directed a pilot for MTV of a show that marveled with surrealism and oh-so quirky situations. He finally perfected his mainstream endeavors but at a fatal time. He would later release *Smiley Face*, a film starring the retarded Anna Faris as a pothead who winds up in "outrageous situations" with the Communist Manifesto. To call *Splendor* romantic is as much of a sin to call *A Night at the Roxbury* romantic. The only difference between the two is that one retains humor and by the tone of my writing, you can guess the latter takes the award home. *Splendor* is a doctrine of misled misandry. The females in the film are over forced to be the exquisite saints but the truth is far from. The female lead in *Splendor* is a spoiled, slutty princess who abuses men and later giggles about it. The same could be said with most of the younger female population. They cover the sexist discrepancies with a half-spoken message of true love. *Splendor* ends with a cookie cutter version of everyone's favorite motif - Girl loves guy, girl leaves guy(s), girl realizes she is a dumb whore and reunites to a happy ending. Araki isn't one for these measly stereotypes and is better off without them. Rather than suiting the mainstream, Araki should continue "sticking it to the man". He's one of the few auteur's producing homosexual, heterosexual, and everything in between that I can appreciate. *Splendor* is entirely passable and isn't even worth a viewing, even for fans of angst and antirealism.

-mAQ

WATER POWER

Shaun Costello (1977)

I wouldn't call myself an enemy of enemas, at least when it comes to proper medical uses, but I certainly cannot see how anyone would be sexually stimulated by such toxic and downright terribly repulsive material in pornographic form. After watching the cult porn flick *Water Power* (1977) aka *The Enema Bandit* directed by Shaun Costello (*Midnight Desires*, *Dracula Exotica*) – a decidedly politically-incorrect adult hardcore work loosely based on a real-life “enema bandit” and his manure-ophile mania – I haven't changed my mind about defecation as a distinctly deplorable aphrodisiac, but I must admit it was a gratifying and especially exhilarating X-rated work that most certainly transcends the usually fine line between pornography and a gritty cult flick. Starring avant-garde porn legend and AVN Hall of Fame member Jamie Gillis (*Through the Looking Glass*, *Nighthawks*) in a typically fitting sleazy role (although there is nothing 'typical' about the role itself) as “Burt – *The Enema Bandit*,” *Water Power* is indubitably as nasty, nauseating and aesthetically nefarious today as it was upon its original release over three decades ago. As far as vintage pornography is concerned, *Water Power* is undoubtedly one of the most – if not the most – brutal work of the Golden Age of Porn, even beating Shaun Costello's previous, aptly-titled effort *Forced Entry* (1973) to a shitty and bloody pulp in terms of its loony lewdness, spunky libertinage, and unsightly urban austerity. In short, *Water Power*, like *Bacchanale* (1970) directed by the Amero brothers, *The Sex Garage* (1972) and *LA Plays Itself* (1972) directed by Fred Halsted, *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) directed by Jonas Middleton, and *Café Flesh* (1982) and *Dr. Caligari* (1989) directed by Stephen Sayadian, is one of those rare embarrassing erotic works that one does not need to be necessarily turned-on by to fully appreciate, thus making it deserving of recognition in the pages of film history, alongside the audacious metropolitan early works of Robert John Downey Sr. (*Chafed Elbows*, *Putney Swope*), Martin Scorsese (*Who's That Knocking at My Door*, *Taxi Driver*), and Abel Ferrara (*Driller Killer*, Ms. 45).

Very loosely based on the eminent enema escapades of real-life serial enema-ist Michael H. Kenyon – a fecal felon who managed to get away with forcibly cleaning the colons of around two dozen unsuspecting female college students for over a decade – *Water Power* was made under almost similarly morally “dirty” circumstances. Propositioned by Sid Levine, the front-man of the porn division of the infamous Gambino crime family, the mafia family felt that Shaun Costello – their largest and most distinguished supplier of pornography – was the right man for the sensitive and surly scatological job. Always displaying a true professionalism as a pornographic performer like a true method actor in the spirit of Marlon Brando and Robert De Niro, Jamie Gillis even attempted to meet the real Michael H. Kenyon, the man that *Water Power* was based on, in prepara-

WATER POWER

tion for the ambitious role, but he was unfortunately turned down. Similar in character to sexually debauched loser 'anti-heroes' like Harry Reems as the Gas Station Attendant (Forced Entry), Travis Bickle (Taxi Driver), Jimmy Fingers (Fingers), Reno Miller (Driller Killer), and Frank Zito (Maniac), "Burt – The Enema Bandit" (Jamie Gillis) is a socially alienated and inept degenerate who discovers his love for flying feces after happening to catch a pseudo-doctor performing an erotic enema at brothel he frequents in what is easily one of the most fiercely frolicsome scenes even captured on gritty 16mm celluloid. Undoubtedly a life-changing experience as exemplified by his absolute state of ecstasy as he wanks off to high-pressure fecal matter as if he is Dr. Frankenstein watching the reanimation of his creature, Burt is no longer satisfied with \$10.00 blow-job special from homely hoes of his local whorehouse and decides to dedicate his already dastardly life to the misunderstood art of anal-induced "water power" so as to ceremonially purify the "filthy whores" of Manhattan in an ostensibly 'spiritual' manner as if he some sort of ultra-reformed messianic Rebbe. Like most real-life pathological fetishists and assorted perverts, Burt has self-deceptively convinced himself that his actions are not only morally justified, but also have an otherworldly purification property that only he is aware of and ordained to administer. In preparation for his eccentric excremental excursions, Burt scans issues of faux-porn mags like "Water & Power" to find worthy dirty dames, mumbling to himself that he plans to, "Clean em' out...shove it all the way up their ass and get all that shit out." With a nod to Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), Burt also engages in masturbatory socophilia by spying on a neighbor in the apartment building across from his. A staunch true believer and rebel-with-a-prehensible-cause, bombastic Burt stalks Manhattan in a more sinister and body fluid manner than big brutish boy Jason Voorhees ever could. After all, unlike Mr. Voorhees, Burt knows what to do with a beautiful defenseless woman.

Needless to say, *Water Power* is one of few quasi-slasher flicks where the victim would have been better off dead. Equipped with a better-than-average 'horror' score (stealing shamelessly from Bernard Herrmann's musical compositions from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*) and creepy yet inadvertently comical narration, *Water Power* – much like a lot of Costello's pornographic works – is a discernibly 'cinematic' film directed by a man who seemed to know more about mainstream movie history than the typically amateurish pornographic works. Like any classic cult/horror film, *Water Power* is a wildly engrossing work that demands constant replaying, as epitomized by highly quotable lines like, "I know it sounds simple, but giving an enema is an important responsibility. After all, its my job." and "I need to clean out these bitches as much they need to be cleaned." Although essentially unclassifiable, I would describe *Water Power* is a violently sardonic and misanthropic blacker-than-a-firebombed-Dresden-housewife black comedy that is conscious of horror and action conventions that is disguised as

an ultra-adulterated hardcore porn flick. After all, most fans of the film seem to agree that the sex scenes are unequivocally anti-erotic and even downright despicable, which is no surprise when one considers the odious and toxic nature of human dung, especially when flying gloriously through the air while a mischievous maniac ejaculates simultaneously, but most proponents of *Water Power* tend to agree that it is an awfully facetious and sometimes satirical work that lampoons similarly-themed works like John G. Avildsen's *Joe* (1970) in its overblown absurdity of sexual violence and grotesquery. In an era where scatological pornography is easily accessible to elementary school students via the internet and flaunting aberosexuality is considered a badge of honor and the height of personal liberty, *Water Power* makes for all the more relevant and biting work. Alfred Hitchcock may have ruined the showering experience for an entire generation of women with *Psycho* (1960), but *Water Power* is probably the only film that makes showering seem like a frightfully grimy and vomit-inspiring prospect.

-Ty E

THE STREET FIGHTER
THE STREET FIGHTER

Shigehiro Ozawa (1974)

In most of my articles or reviews of film, i search out some intelligent core of a film; perhaps a personal trait to the director, perhaps even the coming of a new auteur. In this review, i will completely disregard that, because there is none of these available. However, we do have Sonny Chiba kicking so much ass, that in order to span this epic series, would take 2 sequels in order to properly dose you with the right amount of bloodshed and action. Terry Tsurugi is a martial arts mercenary who gets hired by the mafia to kidnap the only heir to an oil tycoon, a pretty lady. The mafia didn't like Terry's price so they did the only imaginable thing, to try and kill him, but oh no no! You can't kill Sonny Chiba! They find this out the hard way as he takes on the entire mafia to get her back. Just to outline how badass Tsurugi is, i will highlight this one particular scene. Boy can't pay Terry, doesn't have enough money. Terry throws boy out window. Sells sister for prostitution to pay him back. Nuff' Said. The design of this film is to take the "oh-so-bad" mafia, and show them getting destroyed by a one man army, much like what the Rambo sequels were designed for. It's films like these that make you stand up against innumerable odds for thoughts of a better future. Despite being a film that has no real motivation, the film is also quite racist in a scene. The only black person in the film is a drooling about-to-be rapist, that is before Terry castrates him with his bare hands. That scene adds to the previous rating of "X" which it received in the USA. Street Fighter is a multi-talented film. It takes some awesome kung-fu scenes, adds Chiba's berserk facial expressions, throws in some flashback footage of his father being murdered, and tries to implement the fact that he is a superhuman due to his half-breeding of Chinese and Japanese. The Street Fighter is a kung-fu classic that has stood the test of time. Quentin Tarantino actually uses this film as an influence, which is a blasphemy to say the least. I always said to leave the classics alone, but did this stop him from using Hatori Hanzo in Kill Bill or remaking Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!? I think not.

-Maq

BLACK HOUSE

Shin Tae-ra (2007)

Immortalizing celluloid psychopaths seems to be a step that every film director wishes to take. They explore these stereotypical situations in order to show us that a "psychopath" can be living amongst us, in some attempt to keep us living under fear. Black House is no exception, other than that this one is actually filmed aesthetically stylish, although relying on every twist in the book in an attempt to create the master thriller. The thing about Asian thrillers or horror films for that matter, is that they love to incorporate the average man or business man. Think about it. Save the Green Planet!, Tetsuo: The Iron Man, and Premonition are just a couple out of many. The average Joe archetype can only work so much. My only guess is that it's another scare tactic to show that these amazing and fantastical things can happen to anyone and refuse to have favoritism towards sinners. The story line consists of the usual Korean flair; stylized rain and splattered blood. Jeon Juno is an insurance investigator who lives in constant guilt due to the young suicide of his brother. This leaves him tacked down with nightmares and intimacy issues. After witnessing a client's son commit suicide, he begins to wonder if it was really suicide afoot or perhaps a deeper, darker secret. The title at hand here is accurate. The centerpiece of the film is a large, black house which resembles an archaic Gothic creation. The film sets its self up with effective tension and leads up to a lackluster ending but is wholly satisfying, so there's not much to complain about. While the film is decent, it isn't anything we haven't seen before in Western cinema - Albeit, they do it better. Some of the voyeurism scenes and coming back to the apartment broken in are reminiscent of the grand film The Life of David Gale. The film also has its inaccuracies due to the script being sacked and re-written. This goes in with the immense list of novel adaptations to the screen. The villain set-up is marvelous and then switches in full gear, leaving many questions and actually works to the films advantage. This film also houses one of the most grisly slaughter rooms seen in recent film. This one gives the original Texas Chainsaw Massacre a run for its money. Black House is a moderately effective film teeming with the stereotypical thriller works, but manages to bring style to light.

-mAQ

GANTZ
GANTZ

Shinsuke Sato (2011)

If I could list one archetype I'm never pleased to commune with it, it would be an avid Anime fan. Rather, anyone so obsessed with Eastern culture that they feel this profound itching to venture to a Sanrio store to pick up Pocky or a bottle of Ramune. These rabid fans cling to their manga and 25 dollars-a-volume-disc containing three episodes of their recent Japanese animated obsession. For me, this was a niche I spent most of high school struggling to avoid. It seemed no matter where I ran off to, cat ears or skunk tails twitched atop heads and derrières. I finally settled on a specific series as an introduction, however. When a friend boasting tastes I knew not to be poisonous summed up Hiroya Oku's Gantz in a nutshell, I had become smitten with the general outline. What about an after-life spent slaving over the corpses of aliens with advanced weaponry and lavish nudity/violence doesn't appeal to your palate? Regardless, the tale of Gantz that was serialized with hand-drawings was something unique and addictive. This live-action abomination does nothing in place of what the original Gantz had strewn about with precision.

For any of you out of the loop, Gantz (2011) is a film you wouldn't want to happen upon without prior knowledge to the more intricate mechanics of the series. The basis of Gantz involves two old friends reunited in death, obliterated by a subway train after saving a drunken vagrant who stumbled onto the tracks. Upon death, they are warped into an empty apartment high above the city, overlooking the Tokyo Tower. Among Kei and Kato are other recently deceased patrons and a obsidian sphere. This sphere is known as Gantz and is outfitted with a hostile and cynical conscious towards its participants. Not much else is known about the game, other than they have a time limit to execute aliens scattered around the city in an alternate realm. Taking something so wrapped up in childish fantasies of senseless brutality and sneering sexual overtones should be very easy to replicate within film, that is, before the plot really kicks into gear. The fact that the two lead characters are students should lend to their blossoming and whiny characteristics. However, in the live-action Gantz interpretation, our characters are very passive, only to flex hints of inspiration accordingly to the scene of combat. Which brings up the atrocity committed to our lead character, Kei.

At the very beginning of the show, Kei was animated as an insolent pervert who often fantasized about his teacher and classmates in the nude. The thesis of Gantz was built around his rite of passage; losing his virginity. So already Gantz has one over the average animated science fiction actioner. It caters to both adults and those experiencing puberty which leaves it effortlessly accessible to any demographic. Kei eventually becomes desensitized to the plight of the expendable "refills" Gantz accordingly drops into the room. As the mysterious

character Nishi before him, Kei will not be bothered to explain repeatedly that they're trapped within an alien purgatory. After all, who would believe him or anything of the other babbling contestants limited to hysterics? Naturally, *Gantz* (2011) fits the bill bestowed upon most all other live action films based on anime. These characters were created solely as cartoons, therefore inheriting outlandish features and personality traits that should not, in any case, ever be replicated onto film. For example, take L's character in either *Death Note* film. The "wacky", untamed eccentricity can only go so far before being limited by flesh. This very same logic applies to every character within *Gantz* (2011). The director Shinsuke Sato cared enough to cast several characters that were obviously modeled after the drawings. This was all in vain though for the prominently white features of the persons within the series/manga do not translate to the Yellowkin within the film.

Reprising my statement towards the emptiness of Kei's character, in the film, we're only given two instances of a possible sexual side to our hero. No longer bellicose, Kei glances at a subway advertisement depicting a woman in the nude and in a scene with Kishimoto, he grabs a condom. A character included in the series, Sakuraoka, whom Kei has sex with in spite of Kishimoto's willingness to childhood friend, Kato, does not exist in this canon. This in turn renders Kei just as flaccid an attribute to *Gantz* (2011) as is the disappearance of rules and limitation to their game; mainly, the boundaries of the fight and the strange realm they exist in. The realm in which your actions affect the surroundings on both planes as well as your incarnation being invisible to the human eye. These elements are largely ignored by Shinsuke Sato, who must have been whistling a tune while approving the screenplay. It is also my firm belief that the Japanese are without an acting pool, so to speak. Most every Japanese film features unbearable facial gestures and *Gantz* (2011) is no stranger to this. The enigmatic Nishi contorts his jaw in a sarcastic manner as if to belittle his opponent. Absent in the show, the only thing this addition provides is a bit of irritating culture shock to even the most jaded Eastern film connoisseur.

Gantz (2011) is a complete, all around failure. It has absolutely no redeeming qualities save for the brief and disconnected scenes of alien mayhem. The absence of many characters could easily be overlooked on my part but I find myself so perturbed at the general embodiment of flesh within *Gantz*. For being a fan of the animated show, the release of this film marks a sad day for fans of *Gantz* worldwide, even if they are sniveling parasites wearing eyeliner and hair extensions. The strange lack of sexuality and even nudity strips *Gantz* (2011) of the very things that made up its grandiose package of teenage masturbatory fantasies including attempted rape, weaponry that triggers a delayed implosion effect, and attitude. *Gantz* (2011) is a lifeless being, devoid of any substantial traits as its predecessor boasted lovingly and I am not looking forward to its sequel. This is something that cannot be realized within the confines of reality.

GANTZ

Something as seamless and open-ended as animation is exactly why the more ludicrous ideas are transposed on paper and not celluloid. Leave this one to the artists.

-mAQ

THE PHANTOM OF REGULAR SIZE

Shinya Tsukamoto (1986)

AKA Futsu saizu no kaijin This film, more than likely, won't ring any bells or sound familiar at all. The Phantom of Regular Size is actually the prototype of the classic cyberpunk film Tetsuo: The Iron Man. Seeing as it's a rough draft of sorts, there are differences aplenty. The soundtrack is completely different. Most of it rests on an early theme from Chu Ishikawa. Rather than it being industrial sounding with clanking and pistons, it sounds more produced. The rest of the soundtrack is composed of weird grinding noises with some English lyrics in the background. This soundtrack in no way is comparable to the finished product but the tribal harmonics are enjoyable. The finished product of Tetsuo focused more on the entity of flesh fused with metal, whereas his early vision was more of a metal inspiration. Perhaps his inspirations changed course after viewing Cronenberg's Videodrome. In The Phantom of Regular Size, jaunty metal protrudes from yellow flesh and covers most of his body. In Tetsuo, we are given the black & white treatment, mixed with body sores that are masking metal. Dreamlike cognizance is the formula for his madcap Super8 adventures. Shinya Tsukamoto made homosexuality a relevant cause in Tetsuo, but masked it well. In his prior outing, he manages to create some darkly provocative scenes, such as when Salaryman drills his wife, Tsukamoto comes up behind him and grabs his drill penis while giggling. The plot is much more linear in this short. When you watch this film, make sure to watch Tetsuo again because a lot will be explained. While Tetsuo is more on the visually erotic side, The Phantom of Regular Size manages to at least give out a small percent of the original thoughts on viewing his masterpiece. Tsukamoto is a hard person to analyze. His contributions to cinema seem unprovoked. Perhaps that is why when I saw a Woody Allen poster in his room during this short, I was shocked and had to pause the film. The effects are amateurish and can be dismissed. The drill penis scene is more primal and results in a lustful rape and the untimely death of his girlfriend. After viewing this, there is no doubt that Tetsuo is the homosexual's surreal metal masterpiece.

-Maq

DENCHU KOZO NO BOKEN
DENCHU KOZO NO BOKEN

Shinya Tsukamoto (1987) The title might not seem familiar to you but if you have seen Tsukamoto's cult film TETSUO, you will recognize many scenes of this to be on the TV screen in TETSUO. This is one of his earlier Super 8 SHORT films. This film isn't perfect but it is highly entertaining while keeping the art and surrealism in place and can be viewed as a stepping stone to his genius personified in TETSUO. This title is about 47 minutes in length and has circulated the trader's circle under the title of "THE ADVENTURES OF ELECTRIC ROD BOY" The film opens up with a young man with an electric rod protruding out of his back. It gives him clumsy characteristics and has made him the target of the school bullies. His female friend Momo scares away the kids and in return, he gives her a time machine. Not before using it accidentally and whisking himself to 25 years in the future. This wouldn't be too bad if the world wasn't overtaken by metal vampires who have started an experiment named Adam that wipes out all natural light. It is now up to Electric Rod boy, who is from a long line of similar messiahs, to cleanse the future and spread his legacy through out time. Apart from having a funny story, the film bares Tsukamoto's trademark stop-motion animation and the wonderful surrealism that has left an impact on his entire filmography. From A Snake of June to Tetsuo II, his influence spreads through his career similar to Cronenberg's. This one strays from its bleak feel and dabbles in a bit of black comedy. This atmospheric science-fiction film is also outfitted with a wonderful score that fits very well. Expect many stop-motion chase scenes and pre-puberty rape scenes. This is the most interesting vampire tale i have seen. Not since Vision's of Suffering have i seen such an avant-garde vampire tale.

-Maq

TETSUO II: BODY HAMMER

Shinya Tsukamoto (1992)

With a lack of continuity and a thematic indulgence in reincarnation, Shinya Tsukamoto returned to his esteemed cyberpunk steam which spread like a panicked wave through cult and arthouse circuits with the smithy-porn *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer*. The idea on paper reads as such, juxtaposing itself alongside the original homoerotic male rapture aided with fleshy physicality that we all know as *Tetsuo: the Iron Man*, *Body Hammer* concerns itself as an allegory on reincarnation if you will, same characters grown up with different connections and an all too similar string of genetics. Perhaps lay blame on the subversive assimilation into one rusted being at the climax of the original. Both the roles of Tomorowo Taguchi and Shinya Tsukamoto as the salaryman and Yatsu, respectively, are reprised by the same actors from the original *Tetsuo* film. The metal fetishist, however, is given a name and a past. Branded as Yatsu and adorning the same shirt with an "X" emblazoned upon it, Yatsu is the skinhead leader of a group of bodybuilders who seek the scholarly fortunes of an elderly scientist in order to create the godlike body mechanics artificially. Or something along those lines.

As Tsukamoto and top film analysts would spread it, *Body Hammer* isn't a sequel but an evolution of both character and the regurgitated-and-not-improved aesthetic used within, which sadly, siphons most of the originals mark left upon the initial viewing. The stakes were certainly raised with the promise of a sequel, both on and off the set. With a salaryman confined in a sterile and concrete building instead of a sweaty shack, the bourgeois household and family matters are put to work quite efficiently. That is, before Tsukamoto bleeds this sequel like a stuck pig expecting expectations to be forgotten and weeding every promising aspect in favor for a sordid creature feature towards the end with coherence and narrative despite the successful nature of the sensory-overload that is the *Iron Man*. Not just the notion of ousting black and white in favor of a smeared color palette yet to be perfected, but for removing the blatant sexuality of the original in an attempt to channel pre-Tokyo Fist idealizations of macabre masculinity.

Foremost, color was never meant to be existent in the universe of *Tetsuo*. The grainy and obscured visuals of steaming coils, leaking faucets, and wire-rotting junk atop sordid soil was breathing the monochromatic horrors that *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* effortlessly exposed in a daring and culturally unheard-of fashion. The addition of hues flattens the lucid transgressions of the oddity that was the *Tetsuo* namesake. To set further in motion and to evolve my previous argument of narrative, *Tetsuo II* is more of a film than the original film ever aspired to be. With theories of gangs turned to manifesting flesh alchemy and the surplus scenes of tripe chest-piece manipulations with body cannons exploding with roadside sparklers and soaked fireworks, *Body Hammer* is not to be taken as a

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serious project. Perhaps a foot in the door as an aspiring film maker and not just an extended music video project for Chu Ishikawa's incredible hammer-to-anvil noisemakings, our pal Shinya has (decidingly) created some stale, albeit enjoyable, creations but Tetsuo II: Body Hammer finds no time to entertain except for a handful of scenes. Proving to be a failure on near all fronts, Ishikawa's return to scoring the post-science world of the Iron-beings is a haggard attempt at "evolving" the now "advanced" prototype of real industrial. Given inspiration from a poster with frogs(?), Ishikawa's ideal representation of the soundtrack to Tetsuo II sounds more as if a Super Nintendo track was recorded in midi format under several feet of water.

Tetsuo II: Body Hammer lives up to neither the title of Body Hammer or Tetsuo. As later experienced in the break-up masterpiece Tokyo Fist, Tsukamoto's obsession with bulging and grotesque muscles was still premature in the womb. With the exception of a couple of training montages, Body Hammer's addiction to the physique is quite absent and is perhaps rotting somewhere on a cutting room floor. The skinheads involvement in the film is quite absent and serves as a preinvention of the parable, Tokyo Fist - the perfected worship of dripping machismo. Body Hammer opens a note of remote tangency compared to the affable circus-scud of the predecessor. A salaryman in his marble chamber, a solid life in contrast to the squalid exploits of Taniguchi past. To break formation and sing some praise, the first 40 minutes is wholly better than the terrible drivel that makes up the climax and Tsukamoto is best to reference the first sequel as a portfolio for some terrific arm mutations and exquisite practical effects in an era that is overrun by the need for computers and technology to run rampant over expression. That being said, if you admire the audacity of the groundbreaking precursor, avoid at most costs.

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TOKYO FIST

Shinya Tsukamoto (1995)

It has been said that authors only have one book in them and usually keep writing the same book but in a different way. To some degree, I think that is also true with auteur filmmakers. Japanese film director Shinya Tsukamoto is probably best known for his cyberpunk masterpiece *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*. Twice, Tsukamoto has tried and failed to recapture the hypnotic industrial majesty of *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* with two very forgettable sequels. Finally, with *Tokyo Fist*, a boxing film, Tsukamoto was able to once again capture the misery but eventual triumph of a bodily transformation that was so beautifully yet grotesquely expressed in *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*. Like *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, the protagonist of *Tokyo Fist* is trapped in a world of abstract industry and technology. Only with an atavistic reawakening of nature can both protagonists in each film reclaim what is so organically theirs. In *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, the protagonist turns into a machine and decides to destroy industrialized Tokyo, his only true option for reclaiming nature. In *Tokyo Fist*, the protagonist bulks up (pure muscle, no metal needed) and becomes an excellent fighter so he can destroy his former friend in a desperate attempt at winning back his ungrateful fiancée.

No matter how well a woman deceives herself (often marrying a man because of his prestige and income), she is still an instinctive animal that is attracted to testosterone and muscles. In *Tokyo Fist*, the fiancée (Hizuru) of the film's protagonist Tsudo (played by Tsukamoto) decides to leave her man when an aggressive boxer named Kojima (played by Shinya Tsukamoto's brother) beats up her husband-to-be. After all, her fiancé Tsudo lives a mechanical and monotonous life selling insurance door-to-door and there is surely nothing exciting about that. Unfortunately for infatuated Hizuru, Kojima is only interested in getting close to Tsudo and the traitorous woman is merely used as bait. Due to creaming her pants out of excitement, after seeing Kojima's undisputable martial prowess and ability to kick her fiancé's tiny Jap ass, Hizuru violently pierces her own ears and even gets a tribal tattoo on her arm. The psychological/physical transformation of his dame becomes a great concern for Tsudo and he decides pushing his fists (instead of just pencils) will be the way to get back his wife.

I never expected the Japanese to be great boxers but *Tokyo Fist* certainly packs cinematic punches. Unsurprisingly, the film is full of the quick hitting editing that originally helped gain notoriety for *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*. There is no doubt in my mind that boxing (like metal) is a fetish of director Shinya Tsukamoto. Right from the beginning of *Tokyo Fist*, the boxer Kojima and his body becomes highly stylized. If there ever was a director that could make the gushing of blood a poetic art, it is Shinya Tsukamoto as the film *Tokyo Fist* testifies to. In philosophy, *Tokyo Fist* is a lot like the overrated film *Fight Club* but only less blatant (yet more blatantly homoerotic) in the way Tsukamoto was able

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to execute the film. Only by reclaiming their masculinity can the men in both of these films feel content in a world of cosmopolitanism and technological bureaucracy. A great example of the celebration of masculinity featured in *Tokyo Fist* is when Hizuru tells Kojima to forget about the boxing match, he states, "You'll be my foe in the ring? Since when do you have balls?" After Tsudo starts to bulk up and beat men to a savage pulp, Kojima surprisingly begins to realize his life is at stake. When Hizuru happily cheers on Kojima in regards to the boxing match with Tsudo, Kojima angrily yells, "You stupid bitch, you know nothing about it. A human life is at stake." Whereas Kojima only wanted to make a man out of his friend, Tsudo is ready to battle to the death, all because of a woman that could care less about which man is left dead.

At the end of *Tokyo Fist*, Tsudo is left with one-eye but he now carries a smile of confidence that he lacked at the beginning of the film. Technological Tokyo almost completely effeminized Tsudo but it took a deadly challenge with a caring friend to reawaken the man that was trapped in his emaciated body. Unlike Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*, *Tokyo Fist* is paced well enough to work as a boxing film and makes Scorsese's film feel like ungraciously aged antiquated cinema by comparison. In his *Futurist Manifesto*, F. T. Marinetti wrote "Beauty exists only in struggle. There is no masterpiece that has not an aggressive character. Poetry must be a violent assault on the forces of the unknown, to force them to bow before man." *Tokyo Fist* is certainly a film that makes poetry out of violence, no doubt a lesson for your typical samurai-lapsed Americanized Japanese man to learn from.

-Ty E

BULLET BALLET

Shinya Tsukamoto (1999)

Existing on the fringes of cinema is Shinya Tsukamoto, the Japanese nothing-but-an-auteur who (arguably) developed the resolute be-all end-all body horror in its finalized and post-cocooned state. With such a bevy of silver horrors underneath his exasperated arms, Tsukamoto set out to tackle the Japanese youth rebel boom of the 90s. Following in the wake of the mutinous children, *Bullet Ballet*, *Battle Royale*, and much more were created to chronicle the horrors of moonlighting young killers. Ordinary teenagers by day with jobs beneficial to the community of Tokyo as a whole (or so they thought), only to turn into rough-tough muggers, looters, and overall monsters who seek a supposed rapture of youth through sex, drugs, and violence. Supposedly Tsukamoto was mugged by a gang of the aforementioned. Like the absolute madman that he is, he didn't resist or pity himself. Feigning confrontation even with his peak physical condition, he observes their actions, their emotions, possibly the wild excitement in their eyes. This is the same voyeuristic approach from Tsukamoto that I'd expect nothing less of, especially from the famous Japanese auteur with his disillusioned peace-in-rebellion mindset. After the dust and fear settle, *Bullet Ballet* is born . . . in a frenzied statement and fictional documentation on the addicting pleasures of anarchy. But every rose has its thorn, as Douglas Jerrold put it, free from context. The question is, does *Bullet Ballet* qualify as entertainment?

First and foremost, *Bullet Ballet* is as wonderfully in touch with the flickering brilliance of black and white as demonstrated in *A Snake of June* and the better half of Tsukamoto's poetic yet fluctuating career. Chu Ishikawa marks his frequent return in most of all Tsukamoto's works and doesn't disappoint with the resurgence of his trademark twisting and hammering metal in a noise-punk admittance of layered guitar additions. With the aesthetic dissected from *Tetsuo* and the better half of his early Super8 shorts, *Bullet Ballet* looks and feels the way a black & white film regarding the regression of anger but cannot fit the part of a classic example of experimental Japanese filmmaking. The story revolves around a self-centered television executive who stumbles home in a stupor only to realize that his girlfriend of ten years committed suicide. Unable to come to grips with the resonating fact that her death is at the hands of his oblivious and domicile nature, Goda becomes enraged and seeks to find the exact model of gun, the .38 special, so he too can commit suicide. This was the plan, however, until he gets mixed up with a gang of youthful and irritable speed-freaks.

(*Tetsuo: the Iron Man*)

(*Bullet Ballet*)

Rather than sticking straight with the fetishism of metal and the likes, Tsukamoto hones it down to a specific artistry of steel - guns. The gun metal fixation from Goda presents some very serious symptoms of *Taxi Driver* melodrama with the

BULLET BALLEt

scene of phallic extensions from his self-goading in the mirror to the shirtless pantomime trigger-teasings, it's obvious that Bullet Ballet was made with a special significant nod to the Western cultures while steadily embracing the Eastern side of things, mainly referring to the great lengths and difficulties Goda endures to finally land his hands on his prized possession, whereas it's remarkably easy to purchase a weapon in the States. After stumbling upon a young punk named Chisato, whom Goda rescued from falling on the subway tracks days earlier, Goda is tormented by her and the gang religiously, being mugged and beaten over the course of the entire run time. Strangely, I feel no sorrow towards Goda in the slightest making Bullet Ballet seem like a nicely shot student film with a budget fit nicely behind it. Perhaps it's this or the wistful fact that Chisato reminds me of an old flame - so blindly wrapped in selfish exploits proceeding a future fueled by "art" and circlejerk meditation on photography, all the while juggling men to both extremes of friendship and romantic entanglement. These ample musings of the hipster millennium crowd are the driving force behind my indifference to the character of Chisato and her fate.

Many flaws surround Bullet Ballet, whether it's the pedestrian filling surrounded by an excellent opening and climax, the events transpiring in the midst of this dark drama are ultimately forgettable and not worth even viewing. For lack of a better description, Bullet Ballet is a lost idea, wandering alone on a desolate stretch of highway with no real place to go but to follow asphalt. Following the temperament of Tetsuo: the Iron Man, the camerawork becomes frenetic during periods of high volume, so much that what action and throttled stress does compose within Bullet Ballet is strewn across the screen wildly leaving me bewildered and wondering what just happened. Rather than dismissing Bullet Ballet as the weaker film of Tsukamoto's art archives, I find myself able to compassionately appreciate this ill-received film as an exorcism of conflicting ideas of youth and violence and violent youth.

Only in the final ten minutes does Bullet Ballet even out and become a moving work of beauty. The mistakes we make and the consequences we hope to escape are brought to the stand. Tsukamoto created this rapid descent in quality with a fervor that I must commend and in part to his signature promise of bringing it all together in the end. If not as a rousing piece of entertainment, then certainly Bullet Ballet can be transcribed as an ill-sought meditation on the aggravated assimilation into the violent underbelly of the mutinous city inhabitants. Bullet Ballet is perhaps his weakest solid effort, not counting the visual afterbirth that is Tetsuo II: Body Hammer, but regardless of the quality (or lack thereof) Bullet Ballet is still a consequential ceasefire to the rampant youth of Japan. What better way to retaliate upon a large group of people than to construct a film showing them in their most instinctive and amorous state.

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TETSUO: THE BULLET MAN

Shinya Tsukamoto (2009)

The finished product of *Tetsuo: The Bullet Man* seems to be up in the air for viewers and fans of the original groundbreaking Japanese film. Some see it as a rehash of the original with newborn steel while general consensus sees it as it really is; uninspired, contrived, ultimately a dismal failure on all planes of production. Only in the last 15 minutes does this 80 minute kindergarten class for expired surrealism repay the incredible support given to Tsukamoto by the art-house collective. Touted and sickly spread as being canon to only the first film, these ideologies of Raimi's whiteboard-wipe *Evil Dead II* tactic are fruitless pleas to direct attention to something undeserving of the most trivial festival award. *Bullet Man* is no more a continuation to *Iron Man* as *Halloween III: Season of the Witch* is to the Carpenter original. Taking chunk sectors of *Body Hammer* and expanding them vicariously, all to an ill effect, is the crime guilty of severe punishment. The *Tetsuo* condition worked amply enough as a spiritual and physical possession, not some traced cliché of a government funded scientific project, and that is the core concept in a new metal shell.

White scientist uses an attractive assistant to the *Tetsuo* Project, little does she know she is associating in the creation and corruption of genome into a biological weapon. Sort of like the *Guyver* except nowhere near as cool. A generation later, salaryman reborn but married to a Japanese hypochondriac who prophetically suffers from dreams of their son being murdered. He then is. Rather than stocking up on wholesale sympathy as Tsukamoto should have done to somewhat give the story emotional padding, Tsukamoto breaks out neo-romance as utilized in *Tokyo Fist* and to a similar degree, the wife becomes disgusted with Anthony's weak visage and attempts to impart her own vengeance on her son's mysterious murderer. Cue in Tsukamoto's reprisal of *The Guy*. Only in these scenes does something of a clout situate the steady leak *Bullet Man* suffers from since the show start. *The Guy* is as aimless as ever. In *Iron Man*, a purpose was served and punishment was carried out. Post-*Iron Man*, be that as it may, marks the feminization of metal and homoeroticism void. Too bad Shinya had to tuck his yellow tail in between his legs for he captured something as equally psychotic as the people who appreciate his rabid streams-of-consciousness. But to give sparse recognition, the action in *Tetsuo: The Bullet Man* is well-shot with much energy to spare. Previous metamorphosis of *Tetsuo*, however, against the glaringly sterile Toyko cityscape, are obviously rubberized and no longer echo coils, rust, and sewage pipes. Wave goodbye to the raw rust aesthetic that popularized the first two of the *Tetsuo* (now)trilogy. In its place is stock footage and re-shootings of key scenes from the first *Tetsuo* and added with the format of *Digital*, really proves a shocking blow to experimental integrity of DIY filmmakers around the globe.

TETSUO: THE BULLET MAN

Making a return is Chu Ishikawa to score the film with his once-inspiring piston-repetition and slamming synth beats to reflect industrial labor. But something is amidst, Ishikawa's score for Iron Man was grainy, deconstructed, and hazardous. But this trite excuse of redoing something that was always perfect is indefensible to this now-digitally filtered and smooth soundtrack that reeks of glazed electronica. Consider me unimpressed throughout. However, Trent Reznor and Shinya Tsukamoto finally got together to do that collaboration they had been talking of since before the release of Body Hammer. Perhaps if I was a Nine Inch Nails fan, would I have more to speak on but for now it's simple facts. These include the vast departure taken from the soul of steel. A mint filtering has been applied to the busy streets of Japan which neglects the spirit of Tetsuo entirely and debunks Tsukamoto's previous obsession with sweat. Where Tetsuo: The Iron Man reflected major elements of The Fly, Bullet Man clearly mirrors The Incredible Hulk, what with his infinite power, infinite rage element about him. And that is precisely what Tetsuo has become - a superhero.

It's sad to surrender so soon for Tsukamoto's career but it's becoming increasingly apparent that through the years, his heart softens and his once youthful rage and vision have become replaced with luxuries and family reconciling. After countless classics, after the warmth of kinetic hostility and psychosexual behavior spiced with fetishism, it all comes to an end due to an Americanized Tetsuo for the brainwashed masses. Accessible? Maybe, but the likes of which will never be on par to Tokyo Fist, Tetsuo: The Iron Man, A Snake of June, or, dare I say it, Bullet Ballet. Tetsuo: The Bullet Man isn't a final encore to body horror nor does it indulge in a pleasurable universe. I never push perfection but this is so far from it. Bullet Man serves as an obituary for Tsukamoto's artistic prowess. Rest in peace, Iron Man. We hardly knew ye.

Tetsuo: The Iron Man ≠ Tetsuo: The Bullet Man

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S/&M HUNTER

Shūji Kataoka (1987)

Bondage and Superhero are two terms that normally don't mix unless you are viewing Sentai pinku or digging deep enough in Japanese fetishdom. Since both S&M Hunter and Sentai pinku come from the same culture, maybe it's best that you familiarize yourself with the term pinku and the variety of pleasurable oddities it provides. Pinku is a style of softcore theatrical film. Most catering to the fetishists in us. Always vulgar and always appealing, even in a disgusting sense. The most popular subsidiary's of pinku include rape and Japanese rope bondage, which is a lost art. This is how S&M Hunter springs to mind. A caped bondage superhero simply dubbed S&M Hunter has been recruited by a man to retrieve his gay partner from an all girl gang called The Bombers. These women have kidnapped his partner for forced sex in order to get back at the species they hate; men. These fiery feminazis (taken too literal at one point) have literally been raping the kidnapped man for days. Now this may be every mans dream. Naked women arm-wrestling over a blade towards the prize of fucking a male that is submitted on a table with no where to go. These leatherheads claim to hate men but their actions prove they are needed. This is a recurring message throughout S&M Hunter. Despite being sexy smut, S&M Hunter is laced with intricate lines from what could be poetry detailing the weaker traits of the female. S&M Hunter is yet another showcase of the Japanese obsession with Nazi regalia. In most pinku films, the swastika flows freely as a sign of forecoming and current themes rooted in breaking taboos. S&M Hunter is a vulgar exercise in the art of the fetish. While letting off a scent of the serious topic, things get increasingly wacky, creating a manga-like experience for all those that are involved. A low budget badge is something to wear proud. The effects of the rope play are prodigious, only strengthened by the enigmatic anti-lead of the S&M Hunter. Just when things were looking rough for the pinku market on American soil, the new office of Pink Eiga has opened up, thus opening our options extremely in turn. Sporting such provocative and outrageous material as Semen Demon and Whore Hospital, my only recommendation for this company is to pick up the license for the masterpiece of pinku cinema - Captured for Sex 2. S&M Hunter is everything that I could imagine or desire from a self-referential sex piece that features wonderful rope artistry. And the finale where the Dungeon Master's revelation considers you, the viewer, to be the ultimate sadist? That's a legendary scene in meta film making. If you weren't a sadist, why else would you be curious about a film such as this?

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EMPEROR TOMATO KETCHUP
EMPEROR TOMATO KETCHUP

Shūji Terayama (1971)

While Japanese culture and cinema is full of all sort of sick and seemingly nonsensical scatological imagery, including petite ladies with big bulging pricks, feces-fueled necrophilia, electric robot sodomy, lesbian nuns with unholy uses for cock-sized crucifixes, and just about any unhinged rape scenario that one could ever imagine, radical Japanese Renaissance man Shūji Terayama's dystopian avant-garde trash piece *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* (1971) aka *Tomato Ketchup Kōtei*—a work that was originally only as a short film at 27 minutes upon initial release in 1971, but was later edited into a 75 minute feature (modeled after a lost 1970 "director's cut") in 1996, 13 years after the director's death—is certainly a standout work in terms of seemingly lunatic Jap libertinage. A dual assault against both the left-wing and right-wing that were making news around the time of the film's release, especially novelist Yukio Mishima and his failed coup and tragic suicide, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is nothing short of being an absurd and aberrantly audacious piece of celluloid aesthetic anarchy about deranged children in revolt who have taken over the Japanese empire and carry out cruel revenge against adults in the name of "children's joy." Featuring totally taboo images of borderline child pornography, including adult women that look like asiatic Werner Schroeter-esque drag queens fondling grade school boys and boy soldiers supping on mature diva nipples, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is as offensive and morally repugnant as films come, even putting Dušan Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) to shame in terms of its woman-whippersnapper wantonness and exceedingly erratic esoteric political message of the quasi-incoherent variety. Described by director Shūji Terayama himself as, "A joke but not a comedy," *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is like *Lord of the Flies* meets *Harmony Korine's Gummo* (1997) as a sort of superlatively scatological and sadomasochistic children's film for the apocalypse made for infantile and hedonistic adults of the putrid postmodern age. Unlike his keenly kaleidoscopic works like *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* (1974) and *Fruits of Passion* (1981), *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is an innately amateurishly directed black-and-white (although later color-tinted) work with unwaveringly gritty footage that is oftentimes overexposed and even indiscernible that looks somewhere in between an early 1960s 'pink film' (softcore porn) and an archaic silent film from the birth of cinema as assembled in post-samurai Japanese Sodom by Satan himself after overdosing on bath salts. For better or worse, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* is certainly the sort of uniquely uncompromising celluloid that reminds cinephiles of the power of cinema as a potentially unsettling and subversive art, even if it looks like it was directed by some of the bloodthirsty rebellious youths that star in it.

As one learns towards the 'zany' conclusion of *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*, "if you have a beard, you can have an empire," even if you're a 7-year-old sadist

with a fake beard. Resembling Werner Herzog's kraut cult classic *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) in its crude pseudo-cinéma vérité aesthetic, except all the more anarchic and socially deformed, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* depicts what might happen if a bunch of jaded Jap youth were to run a successful revolution and restore the Japanese empire, albeit with an infantile hedonistic focus on aberrant activities you might expect from youngsters who were the victims of sexual abuse might perversely partake in. In the name of some delusional God that seems to have an Adderall-addled persuasion, loves having fun with feces, and engaging in subversion for subversion's sake and self-indulgence for self-indulgence's sake, children as a collective are king and have the following freedoms: freedom of conspiracy, freedom of treason, freedom to practice sodomy, and the freedom to use the bible as toilet paper. Opening with a dubious quote from Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, "Capitalism is destroyed at the base if its motive is pleasure, not the accumulation of wealth" as if one of the main motivations of achieving wealth was not the desire to achieve pleasure, and featuring a pretty pink pastel pecker on the title scene thus indicating neo-pagan worship of the phallic, *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* immediately establishes an antagonism for what seems to be American capitalism and the so-called sexual revolution it ultimately helped sire. In the film, the nice and cheap blood-colored condiment ketchup is the sacred national symbol in the eccentric empire of oversexed child killers with a keen proclivity for camp aesthetics. As the true people and proletariat, the child rulers have declared false messiahs like Mao and Marx, as well as Jean Harlow and Mikhail Bakunin, to be enemies of the state. Fairy-like ladies in goofy wigs and preposterous pancake make-up provide sacred sexual rites and carnal knowledge to novice child nymphomaniacs and any adult that makes the mistake of impeding on a kid's right to eat, fuck, or fight is executed without mercy. For the upper echelons of the militaristic child society, absurdist and sadomasochistic games of "rock-paper-scissors" (or "Janken-pon" in Japanese) are played to the death and one especially heated game is played by a Jap imperialist and a Jap nazi with a sacred swastika armband, who drop rocks and trash in one another's underwear, but not before engaged in a strikingly scatological game of gymnastic sodomy. Language has also been revamped and defined by the kiddy rebellion. For example, the word "cat" has many new and inventive definitions, including (but not limited to): "Cats are...ruminators with excessive hair growth...carnivores that can't be eaten...mystery authors who don't write...hedonists with no property...the only political domestic animals...descendants of Machiavelli..." Clearly inspired by Yukio Mishima and his early predilection to sexual perversion, the children also engage in S&M bondage, tying up statuesque naked individuals with a sculpture-like physique and putting them on display for all to see, while more grotesque adult's corpses are merely dragged through the streets like dogs. If America destroyed irreplaceable buildings, monuments, and aristocratic DNA when they nuked and

EMPEROR TOMATO KETCHUP

firebombed the Japanese into the oblivion and infected with the country with a cannibalistic blend of consumer-based capitalism, the creepy yet strangely charismatic kids of Emperor Tomato Ketchup have undoubtedly secured the apocalyptic end of the alpha-East-Asian race.

As a man who once brazenly admitted that Yukio Mishima “should have died at cherry blossom time” (apparently a reference to the fact that Japanese fighter pilots reference to themselves as “falling cherry blossoms”) and with a depiction of a muscular man in bondage that is clearly modeled after the ill-fated novelist, it is quite clear that director Shūji Terayama used Emperor Tomato Ketchup as both an aesthetic (no matter how perverse Mishima’s literature ever was, it pales in comparison to the film) and thematic assault against the writer’s desire for Japan to return to the way of the samurai and restoring the order of the ancient emperor. Of course, while depicting Mishima as an outmoded fool who promoted an anachronistic worldview, Emperor Tomato Ketchup is no more flattering to Trotskyite types who made up a large segment of revolutionary leftist types in Japan at that time. Groups like the “Sekigunha” (aka Japanese Communist League-Red Army Faction), who desired a permanent global revolution, not unlike those in Germany at that time (Red Army Faction aka Baader-Meinhof Group), were engaged in much more treacherous and deleterious activity than Mishima ever was, including plane hijackings, hostage taking, and coldblooded political murders; the sort of idiotic behavior quite reflective of the crazy children of Emperor Tomato Ketchup—a film that portrays Japan as a maniac microcosm where lack of self-control is used as a pretext for sexual savagery and social insanity. The irony of these loony leftists in Japan at the time is, while loathing their parents for their the Rape of Nanking and what not during the Second World, their behavior was no less violent than their parents, which director Terayama symbolically portrays via Nazi armbands on a boy general in Emperor Tomato Ketchup. Indeed, like the German leftists of the late-1960s, the Japanese Marxist epitomized self-loathing and ethno-masochism to an ungodly extreme, so it is no mistake that the Tomato Ketchup Constitution includes the line: “We despise Our Imperial lineage.” Even in the context of Emperor Tomato Ketchup, if Mishima was a sexually depraved reactionary then the Marxist left was merely retarded.

A self-described, “revolutionary terrorist of the imagination,” Shūji Terayama proved with Emperor Tomato Ketchup that he was very capable of celluloid iconoclasm in its purest form, yet the film is far from his greatest work as a filmmaker, even if it is his most arcane, anarchistic, and unrelenting work. An S&M and scat-driven satire of the most sardonic, subversive, and snarky sort, Emperor Tomato Ketchup is in good company with the films of Christoph Schlingensiefel (*Mutters Maske*, *The German Chainsaw Massacre*), Dušan Makavejev (*W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*, *The Coca-Cola Kid*), and even Paul Mor-

rissey (Trash, Madame Wang's), though something will undoubtedly be 'lost in translation' to Occidental viewers. If nothing else, Emperor Tomato Ketchup provides evidence that there might be more to the foul fetishistic fixations some Japanese have for eyes in vaginas and filming themselves molesting young girls in public.

-Ty E

PASTORAL: TO DIE IN THE COUNTRY
PASTORAL: TO DIE IN THE COUNTRY

Shūji Terayama (1974)

As far as I am concerned, *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* (1974) aka *Pastoral Hide and Seek* directed by Shūji Terayama – a work that manages to bring together the masterful technical precision and craftsmanship of Akira Kurosawa and Stanley Kubrick and the salient surrealism of auteur filmmakers like Arrabal and Buñuel – is one of the greatest, most original, and downright creepiest Japanese films ever created. Not only is *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* a film of Japanese origin but it is also a complex cultural dichotomy of ancient rural life and the technocratic Westernization of the tiny Übermensch Northeastern Asian nation and an intimate personal history of the country as expressed so vividly yet abstractly by Shūji Terayama. To say that each individual scene and segment of the film manages to illustrate critical issues that post-post-modern Japan is facing would be an one-sided understatement. Of course, being the refined artistic Renaissance man that he was, Terayama brings up these issues in a most wonderfully carnal-carnavalesque and self-indulgent manner that would even bring a blush to Maestro Fellini's tanned ½ Roman face in this brilliant film-within-a-film. Transcending all cinematic conventions, genres, and forms of storytelling, *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* is a work that revamps cinema in general and demands unwavering attention and commitment from the viewer. But more than anything, the film is Shūji Terayama's reflective post-pastoral quasi-tribute and personal-obituary to Japanese rural life and culture. Like fellow Japanese artist Yukio Mishima, Terayama especially focused on his awkward and hopelessly petrified adolescent encounters with members of the extra-fairer-fairer Japanese sex. In the city, the confessing protagonist is merely a nameless and faceless ant in an intimidating ant metropolis, but his disheartening past life in the country lives on in his memory as if the tortured souls of formerly known ghosts have taken residence in his often tormented mind.

In the world of *Pastoral: To Die in the Country*, mothers stare in joyous awe at their deceased fetuses, elder women rape young boys, bare-bottom beastesses/temptresses roam wild and the narrator contemplates killing his mother over 20 years after various traumas had taken place during his ominous adolescence. For the thoroughly perturbed protagonist, the past violently bleeds (both literally and figuratively) into the future. Whereas the rural world of *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* is a kaleidoscope of cut-throat colors and nefarious intrigue, the urban world is a culturally-retarded realm of restricting electronic-based banality where technology has seemingly trumped and triumphed over nature and has turned man into a mere insignificant cog in the machine. Unsurprisingly, this post-industrial phenomenon has left a somewhat appreciated hole in the soul of the protagonist. For most people, nostalgia is something to be cherished and retained, but for the protagonist of *Pastoral: To Die in the Coun-*

try, past memories are an agonizing and tormenting army of ghosts who have taken his mind hostage. Despite all the unwanted memories that have conquered his mind, the protagonist also seems to have a vague bit of fondness for a past that he has no option of forgetting. Most violently tattooed on his mind's eye are the protagonist's various female encounters; the most penetrating being the unforgivable sins of his sadistic mother. As a child, the protagonist tells his mother, "Mommy, I want to get circumcised." Of course, this young man would grow up to live in a spiritually and culturally circumcised post-World War II Japan, a time and place where the ancient code of the Samurai was disposed of in a manner as careless and unsentimental as outdated technology. The folk of the protagonist's rural hometown also suffer from mental and physical degeneration as they no longer have the spirit and organic health that enabled the humble peasants of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) to fight for the livelihood and preservation of their community. The world featured in *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* is certainly symbolic/symbiotic of German historian-philosopher Oswald Spengler's quote, "It is the Late city that first defies the land, contradicts Nature in the lines of its silhouette, denies all Nature. It wants to be something different from and higher than Nature. These high-pitched gables, these Baroque cupolas, spires, and pinnacles, neither are, nor desire to be, related with anything in Nature. And then begins the gigantic megalopolis, the city-as-world, which suffers nothing beside itself and sets about annihilating the country picture."

Pastoral: To Die in the Country is a work that certainly demands a lifetime's worth of re-viewings as the man who created certainly assembled of lifetime-size collection of autobiographical mise-en-scènes that encompass the joys of madness, misery, and menacing mammary glands. The fact that *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* remains a somewhat obscure work in the Occident is nothing short of baffling. Predating the Japanese Cyberpunk explosion by around a decade, *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* is certainly a first-class film that has failed to get its due as a revolutionary artistic and cultural work of the most grand cinematic kind. If it were not for *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* – a splendidly freaky flick that acknowledges the miserable death of the country and the birth of the technocratic bureaucracy – it is doubtful that the inevitable birth of the Cyberpunk genre would have been so timely, potent, and necessary. In short, *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* makes Akira Kurosawa's nostalgic *Dreams* (1990) seem like the innocent childlike recollections of a kindly old man suffering from Alzheimer's disease. I know if I ever live long enough to suffer the retarded delights of that mind-disintegrating old timer's disease, I will still be mentally cognizant enough to name *Pastoral: To Die in the Country* as my favorite film from the Land of the Rising Sun.

-Ty E

DEATH NOTE
DEATH NOTE

Shūsuke Kaneko (2006)

The fundamentals of making an adaptation aren't hard to abide by. Take a source topic, remain at least quasi-faithful, carry themes, and provide equal entertainment. The first live-action Death Note film does none of these things. It even goes as far as to stick up for its favorite film I Am Legend to make even worse special effects and incorporate abysmal CG in place of a story. The anime is something that i had recently become addicted to. Death Note (Anime) is something that i feel no shame in admitting that i loved it more than many things. At times it was frustrating and bleak, but it was also uncanny and intelligent; a quality that is more rare than the most perfect metals. The live-action takes the perfect elements and rusts them over with a dull coat of annoying-as-fuck Japanese teenagers. You might recognize the main character as well. He is well-known for playing the main bitch Shuya Nanahara in Battle Royale. In the first film, he ran from conflict, promoting pacifism and homosexuality both in the medium runtime. In the second, he was doing the same, except in a more violent way. No matter how many hair-metal sporting gooks he killed, it doesn't detract from his horrible acting. (Failed eccentricity) With Anime, everything is up to creative control. You might not like the obnoxious attitudes of the style of cartoon, but it presents the greatest colorful aesthetics around. Rain pounding on a busy street and lights illuminating the seedy slums; it's a beautiful thing. Light Yagami is an honorable student who discovers a "Death Note" on the ground. Many rules apply, but the gist is, the name you write in it, dies in a certain short time. It's more or less a Linkin Park infused soundtrack with some of the worst acting ever. In Anime, you can get away with ridiculous situations with the highlighted moving-background that is ever so common; it doesn't work so well in live-action. This film is no Ichi the Killer. Teen angst is abundant and is staler than the ever so well aged Heathers. In the show, the main conflict was 34+ episodes of an extended battle of wits and a shocking game of cat & mouse. This film is just over-styled heads drooling over case files. Gay. Moral of the story, kids; don't become power-hungry and waste your life. I cannot explain how the show made me feel, for it is completely different to the retarded workings of this rework. It doesn't even close off right for the sequel. Many things were changed for the worse. Oh, and L looks like a retard in this. True believers, Stay away!

-mAQ

CRACKLE OF TIME - CHRISTOPH SCHLINGENSIEF AND HIS OPERA VILLAGE IN BURKINA FASO

Sibylle Dahrendorf (2012)

As leftiŝt loon Marie-Hélène Gutberlet wrote in her article *In the Wilds of the German Imaginary: African Viŝta* featured in the BFI Modern Classic work *The German Cinema Book* (2008) regarding the late great Teutonic Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensief (Mutters Maske, *The 120 Days of Böttrop*) and his scatological satire *The Slit* (1996) aka *United Trash*: “A further exception is Christoph Schlingensief’s *Die Spalte* (1996) an ironic look at the military, shot in Zimbabwe. The film’s international title, *United Trash*, sums up Schlingensief’s rationale and his blatant disregard both for issues pertaining to the Nazi paŝt, and for political correctness. The film pursues the implications of the UN deployment in Africa, which has brought German troops once again to foreign soil. German soldiers fire a human-powered V2-rocket at the White House, with Udo Kier and the film critic Dietrich Kuhlbrodt playing a pair of perverse, Prussianesque generals who surround themselves with dancing ‘natives’ in short straw skirts. The film’s ‘trash’ aesthetic met with widespread incomprehension, and was indeed responsible for a brief suspension of diplomatic relations between Germany and Zimbabwe.” Of course, Schlingensief ultimately did more for the Dark Continent than all the kraut-hammering Hebrews and culturally cuckolded krauts of the Frankfurt School combined as he managed to receive funding from the German government and began building an opera village in Burkina Faso that had neither a school nor hospital, thus bringing not only Wagner and Bayreuth but also education and medicine to some of the world’s most isolated and impoverished negroes. On top of that, Schlingensief only had one lung, was on a steady dose of the hardcore pain killer fentanyl, and was dying of cancer when he made it literally his life’s mission to take on the seemingly impossible project. In the documentary *Crackle of Time - Christoph Schlingensief and His Opera Village in Burkina Faso* (2012) aka *Kniŝtern der Zeit - Christoph Schlingensief und sein Operndorf in Burkina Faso* directed by Sibylle Dahrendorf, the many problems associated with Schlingensief’s opera village—a project inspired by the director’s hero Joseph Beuy’s “social sculpture” idea—is depicted in candid detail. Aside from being a wonderful depiction of positive post-Hitlerite ‘Wagnerian colonialism’ in motion, *Crackle of Time* is a must-see doc for serious Schlingensief fans as it depicts the lapsed filmmaker’s rather idiosyncratic and seemingly possessed (not that he did not always seem possessed by something) state of mind while staring death in the face.

With the help of black Berlin-based Burkinabé architect Diébédo Francis Kéré, Christoph Schlingensief is determined to literally work himself to death in his quest to transform a small Burkina Faso village near Ouagadougou into an art-addled opera village equipped with a theater, school, and small hospital,

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among other things. Starting building in January 2010, Schlingensief is fully conscious that he is living on borrowed time and will not last much longer. In a scene early on in the documentary, a tiny black boy on a shadowy theater stage angrily shouts to an all-European audience the following scornful words: "You Europeans are all perverse! All of you! You escape to your dreams to avoid the catastrophe of your real lives. You dream of me because you can't stand your own dreams. But what you'll encounter in your shitty dreams will be much worse than all the altruism you imagined possible. And it begins like this: You only dream because you're not tough enough for reality. In the end you'll return to a reality all of your own because you can't stand your dreams. Yesterday's dreams are today's harsh realities. The gallows await you! Me, I'm real. And I can even bear it. Shit. To hell with you! To hell with you!" Of course, fun-loving aesthetic terrorist Schlingensief fed the little boy the lines of what is ultimately a self-deprecating speech written by a terminal artist chasing one last dream. On top of hoping to "steal something from Africa," Schlingensief gives the following tongue-in-cheek reason for wanting to bring Wagner to Africa: "At some point I started worrying about how I could create a monument to myself. Of course I want people to revere me after my death. I want editions of Geo history magazine written about me." Having 13 large containers shipped from Germany to Togo, which are then driven by 13 large trucks to Ouagadougou and eventually dropped off at their remote rural destination, Schlingensief manages to bring a theater to the small Burkina Faso village. As for the exact location of the opera, the renegade artist declares, "I'm now standing on the opera hill. Thank god it's not the green hill. It won't be a green hill. This won't be Bayreuth, I guarantee that. I'll swear an African oath on that." Schlingensief does not want the locals to become pseudo-Teutonic Uncle Toms, but organically-inclined individuals with artistic passion who sire art from their heart and souls. For a time, Schlingensief attempts to teach the villagers how to create art, encouraging them to come up with Wagnerian raps and directing films and creating multimedia installations with them, but his dream of seeing his project is not completed as he finally succumbs to cancer on August 21, 2010 in Berlin, Germany at the premature of age 49. Luckily, Schlingensief's Finnish wife and long-time assistant Aino Labrenz continues the project and the school is finished in October 2011. With continued fundraising and support from artists ranging from Patti Smith to Marina Abramović, the opera village project is still in progress to this very day.

In what is probably the most reflective segment of *Crackle of Time*, Schlingensief confesses regarding his intended legacy with the project and the insights a lingering death brings to one's mind: "The world is at its most elevated when you're about to die or leave. It's the moment of super-heightened awareness. All the trips and this project mean that I can think about the future, and fantasize, which is wonderful. To look into the future, to see yourself in the future and

ask: What's important for the others to know when I'm gone? Who built this road? Who put this seat here? But it's clear...I've also learnt that if other people hadn't stuck their neck out for me, I wouldn't be able to do this. And I'll take that example and say, I'll carry on building, so that others can continue after I've gone. And no one has to learn my name then. They can't pronounce it. Here, I'm called Singelfinger. Schlingensief is too complicated. I'm Singelfinger. "Mr One Finger." That's wonderful." Rather unfortunately, it seemed Schlingensief was at the height of his artistic prowess while working on the opera village, thus making his premature death all the more tragic. Long before the end of his life, the aberrant artist found it impossible to direct films as demonstrated by his documentary *The African Twintowers* (2008) where the filmmaker fails to complete what would have been his final feature (also called 'The African Twintowers') as he was a man whose energy was too untamed and his vision too grand to be confined to the passive artistic medium of film. A sort of scatological contra Hitler who, like the Führer, was inspired by the operas of Wagner to construct the ultimate real-life and practical 'Gesamtkunstwerk' where art and life become merged into one, Schlingensief was arguably the last great German artist and the cultural void that was left when he died will never be filled. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Schlingensief described his last feature *The 120 Days of Bottrop* (1997)—a work that features the AIDS-ridden 'ghost of Kurt Raab'—as the 'last German Cinema Cinema' as a work that one might describe as a coup de grace to Teutonic cinema in general. A real-life Teutonic Fitzcarraldo who managed to take German kultur further than Syberberg but in a paradoxically ludicrously lowbrow fashion, staged a race-based Big Brother-like TV show in the heart of Vienna, remade Veit Harlan's 1944 National Socialist masterpiece melodrama *Opfergang* (which was apparently the favorite film of Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels, who Schlingensief claims is a maternal relative of his) as a spastic scat-fest, and staged Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* for the Bayreuth Festival after rather shockingly being invited by the actual Wagner family, among countless other singular achievements, Schlingensief is the last truly great Germanic iconoclast and I cannot help but smile thinking some young and impoverished pickaninny from Burkina Faso will remember him forever as the man who brought opera, education, medicine, and art to his hometown.

-Ty E

THE DARK ANGEL
THE DARK ANGEL

Sidney Franklin (1935)

When it comes to the Golden Age of Porn, you can pretty much guarantee a film is a classic or at the very least interesting if it stars Jamie Gillis (*The Opening of Misty Beethoven*, *Neon Nights*), as he proved that porn stars could do much more than bust loads in gaping bungholes and receive sloppy, wet blow jobs while being only semi-erect from busted old slags with aesthetically displeasing platinum blonde dye jobs. Indeed, Gillis did not enter the blue movie realm until he was already in his early-30s, yet he became one of the most demanded, commanding, and captivating actors, as a sort of David Hess meets Harvey Keitel of hardcore flicks who could humor viewers just as much as he could horrify. Indeed, from the incestuous patriarch ghost of Jonas Middleton's *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) to the excrement-enamored 'Enema Bandit' of Shaun Costello's *Water Power* (1977) to the Faustian pact-making businessman of Roger Watkin's *Corruption* (1983) to the punk-rock-pussy-plagued old dork of Gregory Dark's *New Wave Hookers* (1985), Gillis always demonstrated with his multidimensional roles that he probably wasted his talents in the 'adult film' world when he probably could have easily made it big in Hollywood were one of his Hebraic homies to have hooked him up (of course, Gillis did appear in a couple mainstreams films like the 1981 thriller *Nighthawks* starring Sylvester Stallone and Rutger Hauer). Of course, as a Hebrew that was spawned on the same day as Hitler, Gillis was practically born for the dark and depraved world of pornography as demonstrated by his innovation of 'gonzo porn' as an auteur of sorts. With that being said, it is only natural that the sexually versatile 'actor' would play a role where he would fall in love with the devil. Indeed, in the forgotten phantasmagoric fuck flick *The Dark Angel* (1983) aka *The Devil Wore High Heels* directed by auteur-pornographer Pieter Vanderbilt (*Blue Dream Lover*, *Woman in the Window*) Gillis plays a wealthy and wanton businessman who degenerates into something nothing short of wickedly obsessed after spotting a mysterious blonde babe who is really Satan in super sensual female form. Featuring multicultural mental institution orgies with black chicks in whiteface, mystifying midnight gang rapes, and satanic shoe fetishism, *The Dark Angel* is one of those rare semi-surreal and sometimes artful blue movies where it almost seems like a shame that is a porn flick, as this eloquently sleazy erotic flick surely deserves some type of cult following.

As wealthy businessman Leland Keller (Jamie Gillis) describes while caressing a single red stiletto while sitting in the back of his car next to an ocean side cliff near San Francisco, "You wouldn't think that this simple object keeps me from total insanity...but it does...because there's something real. This solitary red shoe haunts me because it was left behind...in my dream." Flashback many months back and Leland is receiving a blowjob from two pseudo-cultivated

chicks at the same time while his chauffeur watches on. As the protagonist explains, "My friends call me 'Lee.' I was the original golden boy. Everything I touched seemed to have 'success' written on it. The world was mine for the taking. And I took. If I wanted something, I'd buy it. If it couldn't buy it, I'd find another way to get it." Of course, when Leland encounters something he cannot simply buy/own, he begins losing his sanity, or as Leland explains himself, "I was riding a glittering wave of success...the future seemed seamless. And then I saw her for the first time. It was one of those San Francisco nights. My chauffeur and I were coming home from a party...she was standing underneath a streetlight. I felt a rush pass through me like an electric charge. She looked right at me, like she could see through my very soul." While Leland would continue to drive by the spot where he first saw the girl (played by Desiree Lane), who was sporting a red witch-like cape, in the hopes of attempting to swoon her, she would never be there, though he would later spot her at the most random spots in San Francisco. Indeed, obsessed with the mystery blonde in red like James Stewart was with Kim Novak in *Vertigo* (1958), albeit in a much darker and depraved manner in a San Francisco that barely resembles the sunny city of Alfred Hitchcock's classic, Leland is finally going to see what it feels like to be infatuated with flesh that he cannot find, let alone fuck.

As Leland describes to his friends regarding the mystery woman in red, "I don't know if I want her because she is just that beautiful...or because I just can't have her." In the hopes of attempting to get get him to kick his sick infatuation with the mysterious chick, Leland's friends set up an orgy party for their opulent friend, but it only makes him more enamored with the satanic chick. Hoping to spice things up, Leland has a friend let him stay in a nuthouse with an eclectic group of raving nymphomaniacs, which include a bull-dyke-like amazonian chick with a mullet, a high yellow black chick sporting whiteface, and a crazy cutie who incessantly stares at a mirror-less mirror. Of course, Leland's naughty night with the nymphs at the nut ward does nothing to diminish his deep-seated desire to defile the mystery girl in red. When one of Leland's female friends does an erotic dance in a warehouse that ultimately ends with her getting mock gang-raped (indeed, unbeknownst to Leland, his friend hired the fake rape squad) by a threesome of degenerates in demon masks, the posh pervert is hardly affected, or as he subsequently states himself, "I no longer have any feelings. I knew this was what she [the mystery woman] wanted from me."

Hoping to liven things up, Leland gets involved in S&M and even bites a woman's nipple off, stating of the meta-erotic experience, "I also enjoyed something else about myself that night...I enjoyed hurting people [...] had a taste of blood. I knew I was crossing over into some other reality...losing all control." With his sadomasochistic violence getting out of hand, Leland concludes, "I had to go somewhere and think," and heads to the beach where he spots the mystery woman in red standing on a rock. After the mystery woman mocks Leland for

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not realizing who s/he is, the desperate man follows his obscure object of desire up a hill as s/he strips and tells her that he will give her “anything” to be with her. Of course, the devil dame asks for Leland’s soul, which the hyper horny businessman is more than willing to give. Of course, after making strangely intimate love on an otherworldly bed in a bright white room, Leland never sees the sensual satan again. Flash forward about sixth months later, *The Dark Angel* comes full circle and ends where it began with Leland sitting in his fancy car while caressing satan’s stiletto and stating to himself, “All that was less than six months ago. I’ve been coming here every day since then...in hopes that I may catch another glimpse of her...but I never have. All I have is this memento [red shoe] to remind me of the night I slept with the devil.”

A sort of superlatively sordid celluloid marriage between Goethe’s *Faust* and Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* with an oftentimes silly synth-driven score that sounds like it was taken from some third rate 8-bit NES game (unquestionably, the film would have benefited from featuring the song “Fucked by the Devil” by the L.A.-based deathrock band 45 Grave), *The Dark Angel* is ultimately a tasteless, if not sometimes aesthetically intriguing, tale of a tragic horn dog with a voracious sexual appetite of the satanic sort. While not Gillis’ greatest film, auteur Pieter Vanderbilt’s aesthetically and thematically pernicious porn flick certainly seems like it was specially tailored for the aberrant adult film star. Part metaphysical horror, part pulp (one reviewer rightfully compared the nuthouse scene to Samuel Fuller’s 1963 cult classic *Shock Corridor*), part film noir, and part salacious satire of Reaganite preppies, *The Dark Angel* is certainly one of the more underrated works of the late ‘porn chic’ era as a fuck flick that may not be as good as *Nightdreams* (1981) and *Café Flesh* (1982), but it is certainly more sophisticated, horrifying, and titillating than the majority of slasher/horror flicks that were coming out at that time. As a mensch who was not really plagued by the various ills that seem to be an innate part of his trade (e.g. drug addiction, AIDS/STDs, mental illness, suicide, etc.), as well as a fellow that seems to have genuinely enjoyed his job of getting countless onscreen blowjobs, Jamie Gillis certainly seems like the #1 candidate in terms of a porn star who would have/could have sold his soul to devil. Indeed, with his devilish charm and appearance, less than kosher Hebraic background, seemingly lunatic love of libertinism (aside from being involved with scat and S&M, he was an open bisexual who sometimes boned bros), seemingly demonically-possessed persona, and virtually immaculate talent for portraying evil sensual beings in already fucked fuck flicks, Gillis most certainly would have been more fitting for the role of the devil in *The Dark Angel* than some pseudo-blonde bimbo like Desiree Lane, but then again, the *Fallen Angel* is the master of deceit.

-Ty E

THE ENTITY

Sidney J. Furie (1982)

There's a lot on my mind after my fresh and initial viewing of this loose adaptation of what is known as the most extraordinary phenomenon to ever occur in parapsychology. It starts off as simple as this, when I was a child I thrived off of books of the occult, paranormal, and plain horror. When I was around ten years old, I received two things from a box in the attic - 1) Complete set of Man, Myth, and Magic and 2) A dusty hardback copy of The Entity. Excited more for the paranormal and plain weird rituals that exist within the pages of Man, Myth, and Magic, I gleefully opened the first volume I grabbed to find this insidious photograph of a doll stuffed with human blood and possibly innards. Needless to say, I opted for The Entity at the time, at least until I grew a pair. Now before I get started, know that I never actually read the novel and only skimmed through it. No matter the charges, what I read still stayed with me for some time. Not terror, no, but a prepubescent arousal of the strange. This feeling of wrong dominated by lust has only been felt twice, once while "reading" the book and the other while watching the film based on the same perpetrating book. During the scene of the first attack, while you watch a wonderfully aged Barbara Hershey apply lotion to her legs, that stare as if she knew she wasn't alone. It ripped, the smack too. Her frail body then flew back on the bed and a pillow applied over her head. While she writhed in agony, I felt for the first time, deliriously turned on and terrified at the same time. Such a weird intake of emotions kind of left me in a daze that only grew with each attack. It's hard to pinpoint what it is about the events. Maybe it's how helpless Carol Moran was. Maybe it's the fact that her true-to-life character still experiences these attacks. Whatever it was, it turned me on for all the wrong reasons.

Much of The Entity's power comes from all directions. The complacent family at the beginning. The degradation of a perky single mother. The riveting and intense score created by Charles Bernstein. Watching her sweaty and defeated face stare off, Barbara Hershey's lifeless stare scorching through your soul. Watching invisible fingers knead her breasts. It's all there - The Entity is the perfect mix of both supernatural and erotica and it's a shame that a tasteless taboo-cracking version hasn't been released. Instead we get a Bollywood remake entitled Hawa and I'm still not too happy about that. What the remake tries to do is to keep the attacks, lessen up the intensity, and in general, dumb down the fear-provoking process of watching The Entity in the first place. The Entity did one thing for me that so many have failed to do before - terrify me beyond any explicable explanation. For the duration of this film I had tears in my eyes from the chills shooting up my spine constantly. This is the effect of a great scene set up and a masterful score of pounding guitar.

I haven't too incredibly much to say about a story that has existed since the

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late seventies. My connection with this tale goes for me in such a ludicrous and drawn out manner that I'm surprised I never cared to watch this sooner. In part, I blame *The Nest* for that - such an incredible novel and such a sub par film. *The Entity* excels at showing the horrors and delights of rape without all the awkward male grunting and obtrusive fingers and hands getting in the way of the real prize - repulsive perversions. This, quite frankly, is a horror movie for most but a porno for sociopaths. I lie somewhere in between on what to think of this film but I can state one thing for certain, this is a film I will never show my fiancé lest I want her to never sleep with me as I can imagine this being the harbinger of "I'm not in the mood." *The Entity* is a cruel film of bold horror and sexuality and within that lies the essence of something shocking. Now that I have pinpointed it, It should be much easier to find something truly nerve-shredding. To keep it short, the best ghost film I've seen.

-mAQ

THE FUGITIVE KIND

Sidney Lumet (1960)

For most individuals, it seems the biggest draw to the movies for them is the cast. Whether it be middle aged women looking to drool over George Clooney's salt n' pepper hair, not to mention pseudo-suaveness, or 90 pound Wiggers looking to see bling-bling-baboon 50 cent trying to get rich with money he can't even count, people seem most magnetized to a film for whose on screen as opposed to who concocted what is on screen. Personally, I usually look to see who the director or auteur of the film is, before I waste my time watching another banal flick. After all, I do not want to accidentally catch myself watching another film directed by Hitchcock-clone/Hollywood Hack Brian De Palma.

I do like a couple actors however, although they tend to have been from Hollywood's less blatantly degenerate days. Marlon Brando and Anna Magnani happen to be two of my favorite silver screen stars. Before Brando was bloated and too overly belligerent, he was the best rebel to catch on screen. In her cinematic prime, Italian actress (with a surprisingly aesthetically successful mix of Egyptian and Judaic blood) Anna Magnani was a woman aggressive for what she wanted just as much as any man. It was a brilliant idea for these two stars to play lovers in Tennessee Williams's *The Fugitive Kind* directed by the extremely overrated filmmaker Sidney Lumet. It is apparent that Mr. Lumet understood nothing of the Southern Gothic, but with the chemistry of Brando and Magnani, plus with the perfectly dramatic play writing skills of Tennessee Williams, *The Fugitive Kind* still ends up coming out as one of the best southern Gothic films that I have had the extreme pleasure of passionately enjoying.

In *The Fugitive Kind*, Marlon Brando plays a man that excretes coolness. He is not cool because he wears a snake skin jacket (certainly more cool than Nicholas Cage wearing one however) or plays the guitar, but because he lives life the way he wants to wherever he wants to, even if that makes him homeless. When he meets an eccentric Italian woman who happens to own a shop with her "more than a little red in the neck" husband, Brando's character starts a relationship with a woman he never expected. Brando uses the Italian woman because he needs work and the Italian woman uses Brando because she needs a potent man unlike her bed-ridden hick husband. *The Fugitive Kind* differs (or more like the complete opposite in convention) from most Hollywood love stories in that the man is uninterested in love and the woman is doing everything she can to catch the man's fancy.

Apparently, back in the good ol' days in the South, if you sold bootleg alcohol to Negroes, it could result in a personal holocaust via being burnt alive by angry rednecks. The poor Italian lady in *The Fugitive Kind* lost her father due his altruistic willingness to diversify his customer base. Magnani no doubt does a splendid job playing a woman hurt and letdown by all the men around her, from

THE FUGITIVE KIND

the father that left her too soon to the rednecks that inhabit the town she lives in to the men she fornicates with that drop her because of olive-colored skin, she cannot find a man she can truly trust. Who else then, but Marlon Brando to fill her void for a new kind of man? Not only is Brando his own man, but he's willing to wage war on all other men, including the ones that Anna Magnani's character despises. The ending of *The Fugitive Kind* may not be the ideal happy ending for the mindless masses, but it is certainly appropriate for the unconventional true love found between manly Marlon Brando and alpha-aphrodisiac Anna Magnani. I rarely find middle aged women attractive personally, but Anna Magnani in *The Fugitive Kind* is certainly a lady I would have brought home to Mom.

Marlon Brando did a little more than a good job portraying a polack barbarian by the name of Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* so I only had to assume he would also be brilliant in another silver screen adaption of a play written by Southern Queen Tennessee Williams. I just wonder why *The Fugitive Kind* has not gotten the recognition it deserves like just like *A Streetcar Named Desire* receives. *The Fugitive Kind* also certainly deserves more praise than Brando's performance in the iconic *The Wild One*. I guess *The Fugitive Kind* maybe just a little "too gothic" for a southern Gothic, especially for the undeserving American audiences that saw the film for the first time in 1959.

-Ty E

GINGERDEAD MAN 2: PASSION OF THE CRUST

Silvia St. Croix (2008)

A film I never thought I would enjoy. It's funny when sequels topple over the previous effort of an original idea. *Gingerdead Man 2: Passion of the Crust* is not an original idea. In fact, It heavily borrows so much from Troma that I'm surprised Lloyd Kaufman hasn't made an embarrassingly amount of blogs slandering Silvia St. Croix's work. Taking a huge chunk from the story of *Terror Firmer*, the once-dead and of course reincarnated cookie has wound up on the set of a low-budget horror film called *Tiny Terrors 9: Purgatory of the Petite*. I guess the director in the film is inspired by a young Charles Band, and yes, the douchieness is present. The characters last name is Cheatum, which brings a hilariously true element to the film which highlights the "down and dirty" business that is indie horror. Add a side of the same attitude present in *Poultrygeist* and you get the best work that Full Moon has had in a while. The *Gingerdead Man* kills many crew workers in this weirdly-paced satire film. The attempt at being controversial doesn't work very well with independent studios. The surname isn't offensive and the cookie raping a fag with a hair curler isn't offensive either, just disgusting. The hardest thing I've had to do lately is writing this review without "cooking" up any puns concerning the recipe used to make this delicious campy horror film. The film's only main problem is the horrible pacing. The film picks up in the first 10 minutes and really doesn't explain anything. Some busty "Scream Queen" brings a box of cookies to a Buffy the Vampire Slayer looking cast and on top is our favorite cookie. No explanation as to how he came about or anything. Plot holes galore! The ending was rock-bottom on the cliched scale as well. Perhaps the biggest change in film is the lack of Gary Busey. Don't get me wrong, I hated the first film, but Gary Busey was the *Gingerdead Man*. Without his screen presence, we just have a cookie with stale one-liners, and that is what I settled for. The animatronics in this film were either bad or acceptable. The *Gingerdead Man*'s mouth rarely moves along with what he is actually saying. *Gingerdead Man 2: Passion of the Crust* is a great Troma film not made by Troma. It sounds confusing but once you view this film, you'll get my drift.

-mAQ

BLOODBATH
BLOODBATH

Silvio Narizzano (1979)

During his less than personally flattering, if not 'legendary' and artistically fruitful "tormented maniac" period during the 1970s after the abject personal, artistic, and financial failure of his film *The Last Movie* (1971), burned out yet still bodacious Hollywood hophead Dennis Hopper gave a number of less accessible and just damn strange performances in movies all around the world, including *Mad Dog Morgan* (1976), *Tracks* (1976), and *The American Friend* (1977), but undoubtedly the most wildly idiosyncratic and seemingly nonsensical film he ever appeared in was the Spanish production *Bloodbath* (1979) aka *Las flores del vicio* aka *The Sky Is Falling* directed by Italian-Canadian auteur Silvio Narizzano (*Die! Die! My Darling!*, *Senza ragione* aka *Redneck*). Directed by a relatively unknown director who mostly worked in British television and earned his greatest hit with the then risqué and sassy swinging 60's London-based romantic comedy *Georgy Girl* (1966), *Bloodbath* is certainly not the sort of film one would expect from a for-hire TV hack, though one must certainly credit screenwriters Gonzalo Suárez (*The Exquisite Cadaver*, *Don Juan in Hell*) and Win Wells (*The Call of the Wild*, *The Greek Tycoon*), who also happened to be the director's live-in boyfriend (they shared a place in Mojácar, in Spain's Andalusia, which was also the location of the film), for the film's brazenly bizarre nature and somewhat esoteric themes. A spoof of Pier Paolo Pasolini and other leftist European filmmakers' obsession with the 'noble savage' meets a lampoon of Dennis Hopper's drug-addled stupor played by none other than herr Hopper himself, *Bloodbath* rather facetiously yet ingeniously pits innately superstitious peasants of the quasi-medieval Spanish sort against a high-strung middle-aged hippie heroin addict and a variety of other eccentric expatriates, including a washed-up (quite literally, even making her first appearance in the film on the beach) Hollywood diva, a bitter and emotionally brutal Brit WWII vet, and a flaming fag with an unhealthy fetish for dark black Amerikkkan meat. A hallucinatory horror show for posturing peace-loving hippie bastards and a delightfully dark comedy of the Buñuel-esque beatnik-beating sort for happy hippie-haters and oddball European arthouse fans alike, *Bloodbath* features a delightfully deranged dichotomy between poor peasants that are totally untainted by modernity and technology and the debauched cosmopolitan Wasp 'Westerners' that pose the very potential deleterious threat of irrevocably tainting them. Described by *Penthouse pussy* magazine of all sources as follows, "This is Dennis Hopper at his best! A fantastic performance in an amazing movie," *Bloodbath* is undoubtedly a work that deserves just as much cult notoriety as *Mad Dog Morgan* (1976), *Out of the Blue* (1980), *River's Edge* (1986), and *Blue Velvet* (1986), but is just so unrelentingly bizarre, aesthetically schizophrenic, and hard-to-find (I, myself, secured a seemingly bootleg VHS with a horrendous transfer) to ever develop

a serious cult following as a rare quasi-gonzo (or more like 'anti-gonzo') work that actually does not suck as a totally unclassifiable celluloid work that is like early Curtis Harrington meets Alberto Cavallone (*Blue Movie*, *Man, Woman and Beast*) as directed by a man that seems to only have hatred and contempt for the counter-culture generation of "peace and love" and other great lies.

Chicken (Dennis Hopper) is a totally debauched hippie who is addicted to heroin and bad poetry and both of these terrible vices are affecting his acid-addled brain, but not as much as the backward native locals of the beachside Spanish village he is staying at, who are waging a magic war against him. Naturally, Chicken likes eggs, so his Negro girlfriend surprises him with some, but after shooting some good junk, he cracks them over his thoughtful jigaboo gal's head and tells her, "Okay nigger. You start singing now. You start singing now...Mammy's little baby loves shortnin' shortnin', Mammy's little baby loves shortnin' bread," which she naturally does without hesitation as a totally spooked spook. Chicken, a proud community college graduate who was brought up a Southern Baptist but later converted to libertinism as a victim of the counter-culture age, also has a number of hallucinations that spark hysteria in his terribly tortured pseudo-artistic soul, including from his religious extremist "momma," which are sparked by the black magic-practicing peasants of the archaic village he lives in. After one hell of a night of attacks via Spanish sorcery and heroin, Chicken is found half-dead on a beach by a fallen Hollywood diva named "Treasure" (Carroll Baker, who also starred in *Giant* (1956) with Hopper), who brings him back to her humble abode and tells him about her rise and fall as a one-time Tinseltown superstar. Treasure describes how she received her stage name and career after screwing a grotesque Hebraic studio head with a Yiddish accent at the ripe age of 16-years-old. While Treasure used to do three movies a year and have the telephones ringing nonstop due to her popularity, now she is a dried up old hag of the hyper horny and fanatically narcissistic sort in the spirit of Gloria Swanson from *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) who has her own younger 'kept man' and dreams hopelessly of the big executives of Hollywood once again ringing her on the telly. A disgruntled and patently pretentious yet secretly salacious British World War II veteran named Terence (fallen British leading man Richard Todd) and his "bitch" (as he calls her) dipsomaniac dipshit wife Heather (Faith Brook), a suicidal chick whose mental instability is fueled by her love of alcohol, are also exiled on the Spanish beach. One also cannot forget a queenish homo named Allen (played by Bloodbath screenwriter/Narizzano's lover Win Wells), a flamer and borderline transvestite that Treasure describes as her "favorite fag," who is also another expatriate and he has a thing for Negro men, especially those that whip him like a white slave. Indeed, all of these individuals seem to have found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, but one cannot feel that fate of the fatal sort has brought them together for one last big party.

While Bloodbath is essentially a curious collection of oftentimes surreal and

BLOODBATH

sometimes campy montages of nihilistic hedonism of the self-annihilating sort as especially emphasized in a quote by English metaphysical poet John Donne during the beginning of the film, "But I do nothing upon myself...and yet I am mine own Executioner," the major 'plot' of Narizzano's work takes the form of all the major forsaken Wasp expatriate characters beginning new romantic relationships with random and mysterious seemingly supernatural strangers who will ultimately lead them to their tragic yet inevitable and fitting ends. Reluctant race-mixer Chicken is happy to hook up with a young blonde Spanish babe named Buenaventura (Inma de Santis) that he tells "I wanna rape you!" (and she tells him he should) and even falls in love in an 'old fashion' sort of way, Treasure hooks up with a young and tanned beefcake who thankfully has never seen one of her horrible movies, Terence drops his bitchy wife and gets with a young ditzy Asian girl with ostensibly dubious motives, and glittery gay boy Allen finds himself a big black buck of the charming yet ultimately nefarious sort. A pesky little blond boy who is listed in the film's credits as "Mongoloid child" also appears throughout Bloodbath and is quite similar to the rather annoying androgynous kid from *The Day of the Locust* (1975), especially in that he meets a grizzly end. Of course, not a single character survives in a movie entitled Bloodbath.

Featuring blood-soaked white-boy-loving black broads hanging in pieces like swine in a cadaverous peasant slaughterhouse, Dennis Hopper overdosing on heroin after too many Oedipal complex inspired nightmares and flashbacks, fags being whipped by Negroes and gored to death by phantom bulls that drive their horns in horny homos, degenerate divas dying in an orgy of ringing telephones and a luxurious swimming pool, and proud anti-kraut war vets going to their deaths via firing squad quite proudly in dedication to their love for oriental girls, Bloodbath is a macabre yet inexplicably merry metaphysical horror flick of the spacey surrealist sort where the self-fulfilling deaths of overripe Westerns is merely sped up by pernicious peasants who have had enough of their infectious and dispiriting degeneracy. As the black buck tells his effeminate victim when he begins to whip him, "it's what you want" and, indeed, the masochistic man-woman embraces the brutality from the S&M spiritual negro to the point where it costs him his rather worthless life. Indeed, Bloodbath is certainly a bummer, but also side-splitting and singularly 'seductive' in its cynical surrealism and flimflam melodramatics. Like its cast of vice-ridden anti-heroes, Bloodbath was doomed from the beginning as a sort of gonzo giallo of the insanely idiosyncratic sort that will only appeal to the most marginal of audiences. Indeed, while this film might interest hippie and beatnik types with its scenes of counter-culture god Dennis Hopper absurdly stating "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted" in anti-tribute to Hassan-i Sabbah/William S. Burroughs, it is quite unmistakable that director Silvio Narizzano is portraying such frivolous flower child swill in a rather negative light, hence why the original title of the film, "Las flores del vicio," translates to "flowers of vice" in English. After all, hippie types

always talk about 'karma' but they never stop to think of the consequences of their own senseless and self-absorbed hedonism as if 'free love' and hard drugs don't have consequences, but they might if they watch *Bloodbath*, a celluloid slap across the face for deadheads and other deluded degenerates. In a sense, not unlike the supremely underrated Hopper directed/starring flick *Out of the Blue* (1980), *Bloodbath* is the perfect antidote to the naïve hippie romanticism of *Easy Rider* (1969). Additionally, you will not find a more drugged-out and degenerate Dennis Hopper than in *Bloodbath*, a work featuring the then-quasi-psychotic star covered in stinking sweat and slime and high out of his mind like a scared little child (who literally calls for his "momma") that totally iconoclastically shatters his seemingly legendary status as a counter-culture god, especially when his character states during a bad trip, "Looking in the mirror has fucked me up!" A twilight of the Anglo-American degenerates, *Bloodbath* is a wildly whimsical and anti-wanton wanton reminder why the Occident and its former colonies have now become cultural graveyard and colonies for the Third World.

-Ty E

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

Simon Rumley (2006)

Schizophrenia is a common showcase in thriller/horror films. They create these one layered villains and slap the illness on them to give some insight or explanation for their deeds. Director Simon Rumley pulls out all the stops in delivering us a new kind of mental and medicinal evil. The story is an unfamiliar one. After the father of an ill family goes bankrupt, he must leave to take care of his assets, thus leaving poor James in charge of his mum. This is such a saccharine thing to do, but then he is plagued by his ill mother who is bedridden. Determined to keep her healthy on his own means, and becoming the man of the house in the process, he decides to lock the nurse out and quit taking his medication. This begins a spiraling decay of character as reality is blurred with nightmares. This is but another film to bring the Oedipus Complex to the cinemas but with horrifying context. This isn't a children's tale. There is nothing to grab your attention other than the acting and the fun house rapid-fire frantic music. This one is purely a family study. Not just focusing on the ill son, it expands into the terror of the father and the mother. The theme of family dysfunction is not new, in fact, it is used too commonly now a days. Since the release of Baumbach's *The Squid & The Whale* and maybe even before that, dysfunction has been commercialized to be a great footnote to a story. Examples can be seen in *The Host*, *Running With Scissors*, and *Donnie Darko*. The difference here is this film is a wasteland of emotions. Nothing good in sight, and the worst kind of emotional torture around. This won't be the last time we see dysfunction in a film but i'll be damned if it will have anywhere near the effectiveness of this. Leo Bill as the schizo mothers boy, James Brocklebank, is a godsend to the shrinking list of actors who can play out a sickness amazingly. The last one who did this amazing was Ewen Bremner from the Dogme 95 film *JULIEN DONKEY-BOY*. The father strangely reminds me of Donald Pleasance and the mother is amazing in her role, playing a frail, tormented mother. The scenes where he starts to lose his sanity and when the hyper-camera work is implemented, make me feel as if my brain is leaking. I really must hand it to *Danger After Dark* for releasing some of the most melancholy films i have seen recently. Films like *Strange Circus* and *The Living and the Dead* is the reason why i love film so much.

-Maq

HARLEY DAVIDSON AND THE MARLBORO MAN

Simon Wincer (1991)

Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man is the embodiment of all that reigns in American pastime cinema. The first portion of the film is fueled on the long roads of patriotism. We open to a biker awakened next to a beautiful naked woman grabbing all his belonging, most of which are cigarettes, keys, and lighter. He lights his cigarette in hand to his scarred reflection being illuminated by fireworks. Most of their journey is met with hilarious racial stereotypes. We have the Indians who flock to the bar as if some light attracted them. Of course, they also sport denim and feathers. They pick bar fights with the invented rural America character; The Marlboro Man. He exists in the film as the womanizing advertisement for cigarettes and work boots that require much duct tape to hold them together. Again, Duct Tape to add the feel to this illusory "redneck." The main teaser for the film, is the two factions of modern America, rural cowboy and the freedom biker. One believes in justice and freedom and the other is the belligerent half, who is an alcoholic. I'm actually surprised there isn't a Jewish intellectual who enjoys a game of chess. That would be the other stereotypical force of America. Ah, the all too similar bar scene. This is the scene in which I saw my first pair of breasts, in a seedy environment with smoke lingering in the air and mugs clinking. This might have had an adverse effect on the way I view women in today's society. This film does a great job of showing women as weak and pitiful, but at the same time, uses very noir-ish techniques to build up the female police officer. Girls with guns being controlling is in the top of most people's books. To top off the ridiculous stereotypes, the villains of the film are drug peddling Italians with their flashy suits, greased hair, and crime rings. It seems Australian director Simon Wincer decided to mock his own characters in his beloved epic Lonesome Dove. Another hilarious aspect is the main heist black man who is a clone of Jimi Hendrix, of course, his name is Jimi. So besides being sexist and racist, Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man is a campy action film which is a thrill a minute ride and is still an ideal viewing for children, so they may grow up to be like me.

-Maq

BLOND, BLUE EYES
BLOND, BLUE EYES

Simone De Vries (2006)

When it comes to the cinematic ingredients that I consider most imperative when creating a great film, I have always found directors to be more consequential than actors. Even as a young child, I was cognizant of what a Tim Burton or Steven Spielberg looked like, although I didn't exactly know what a film director was. Of course, there have always been certain actors that I have admired, but they are few and far between. One of my favorite actors is Dutchman Rutger Hauer; an actor probably best known for his performance as alpha-replicant leader Roy Batty in Ridley's *Blade Runner* (1982). Despite seeming like a distinctly evil robot killer for most of the film, by the end of *Blade Runner* one is ultimately surprised by Batty's final display of noble empathy and forgiveness. For the final scene in *Blade Runner*, Hauer improvised his performance in the form of a visual poem instead of using the long and drawn out speech that was originally intended for the conclusion of the film, henceforth dreaming up what is arguably the most potent and memorable scene in the entire movie. If there is one thing that all of Hauer's performances have in common, it is the eccentric and unconventionally complex nature of the characters he plays. Like the fictional characters he has portrayed in nearly one hundred different films, Rutger Hauer is an enigma of sorts who finds no pleasure in having his personal life advertised to the entire world. In the documentary *Blond, Blue Eyes* (2006), Dutch filmmaker Simone de Vries followed Rutger Hauer around the world and interviewed the actor about his successful career as an international film star who – unlike most mainstream actors – refused to whore himself out to the glorified pimps that run Hollywood. During *Blond, Blue Eyes*, Rutger Hauer allows fans to enter a more personal and intimate side of his life, but as one can expect from a documentary about the somewhat secretive actor; the viewer shouldn't anticipate something in the vein of an episode of MTV's *Jersey Shore* where a glorified Guido micro-mob masochistically exposes their grand philistine pomposity and animalistic vulgarity. After all, Rutger Hauer is a stoic Nordic Dutchman of Frisian descent and not a shameless exhibitionist, thus his emotions are in check and collected throughout most of *Blond, Blue Eyes*.

One of the things that Rutger Hauer reveals in *Blond, Blue Eyes* that I was most glad but unsurprised to find out is that he essentially "played himself" for his role as the Dutch sculptor Eric in Paul Verhoeven's *Turkish Delight* (1973); a film that deservedly won the award for Best Dutch Film of the Century in 1999. Despite his internationally critically acclaimed performance in *Turkish Delight*, Hauer's parents found the performance to be quite dubious due to the various scenes of nudity featured throughout the film and neglected to appear at the premiere of their son's highly revered film. In fact, the only part of *Blond, Blue Eyes* where Hauer seems somewhat depressed is when he discusses his

parents; both of whom left all of their children in the care of nannies during their childhoods as they were more interested in their own self-centered careers. In fact, Rutger Hauer's father was a failed actor of sorts, thus, I don't think it would be a stretch to say that he was more than a tad bit jealous of his son's early success. As Rutger Hauer describes in *Blond, Blue Eyes*, he originally had no pretensions of expecting to make acting a legitimate lifelong career for he found such a goal to be ultimately unrealistic. Of course, Hauer ended up being one of the greatest – if not the greatest – Dutch film star to have ever lived. At the very least, Rutger Hauer is the most popular Dutch actor in film history. Personally, I see Hauer as the Dutch equivalent of Swedish actor Max von Sydow, as both European actors proved they were competent at playing leads in everything from Nordic arthouse flicks to mediocre mainstream Hollywood movies. As you learn in *Blond, Blue Eyes*, Hauer has always been repelled by the petty politics and socially-synthetic nature of Hollywood. According to Hauer, if you accidentally turn your back to the wrong person at a party in Hollywood, your acting career could very possibly end then and there. Due to his aversion to Hollywood and its unwarranted airs of insider superiority, Hauer chose to maintain his main home in his homeland of the Netherlands. Not only has Hauer stayed true to his ancestral roots, but he has also managed to stay wholly committed to the woman that he has been married to for the greater part of his life. For an odious club that prides itself on sexual depravity, decadence, and deceit; Rutger Hauer is surely an odd man out in Hollywood, but that is because he has integrity as an actor and as an individual.

Anyone who is a fan of Rutger Hauer already knows that he is an extremely private individual, therefore, it will be no surprise that the documentary *Blond, Blue Eyes* is not exactly a totally revealing portrait of the dignified Dutch actor. Still, the documentary does offer the viewer a side of Hollander Hauer that has been yet to be revealed before. As is no surprise to most of his fans, Hauer has always desired to play serious roles but also enjoys playing the occasional goofy role and has been also known to play undesirable roles just to pay the rent. It is revealed in *Blond, Blue Eyes* that for most of his career, Hauer filmed “behind-the-scenes” footage of the movies he acted in. Although I am sure most of his fans (myself included) would love to see that footage, I doubt Hauer has any interest in releasing it, as he keeps it tucked away in a Hollywood apartment closet. Contrary to seeming like a deadly serious individual, Hauer has a giant statue of Mickey Mouse standing in his home. I don't know about most Rutger Hauer fans but I was extremely happy to see Dutch actor as the lead in the sadistically sensational pseudo-Grindhouse trash flick *Hobo with a Shotgun* (2011). If Hauer were to never act again, his reputation as one of the greatest actors of the post-World War II era would be guaranteed merely for his role as Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* alone. As Hauer candidly discusses in *Blond, Blue Eyes*, he improvised the iconic and unforgettable pigeon scene at the conclusion *Blade*

BLOND, BLUE EYES

Runner, which is indubitably one of the greatest scenes in cinema history. In fact, if that undeniably indispensable scene were to have never been included in the film, it is doubtful that Blade Runner would be regarded as the neo-noir science fiction masterpiece that it is today. In my opinion, Hauer gave his greatest performances in his lesser seen films with Paul Verhoeven (*Turkish Delight*, *Soldier of Orange*), but of course, that is to be expected of most modern films that were not shot in the English language. Anyways, I am excited to see whatever Rutger Hauer has in store for the future. Admittedly, it would be quite nice to see Rutger Hauer and Paul Verhoeven collaborate on one more film together.

-Ty E

SUICIDE CLUB

Sion Sono (2001)

Welcome to the club. Suicide Club, that is. Without a doubt, this is the most influential piece of cinema I've seen. Not because of the quality or the violence, but the motivation this film gave me to seek out more foreign horror films that defied conventions with ridiculous violence that once was stomach churning. This was a notorious title for me back 2 years ago. It's a shame that that popularity of this film never flourished more although Sion Sono has experienced a fruitful career. Suicide Club is the rental replacement for Faces of Death. It's about time a successor be known. The infamous opening scene still remains as one of the most shocking sequences of violence depicted on film. A smiling cluster of Japanese schoolgirls casually gossip along a subway rail. Grinning, they all join hands euphorically and leap in front of a train only to soak the entire station in saintly Asian blood. For its time, Suicide had leapt from being a sacred subject to hyper-violent satire thanks to Japan's most shocking auteur of taboos; Sion Sono. Keep in mind this is the man behind Strange Circus, which might be the sole nihilistic brainfuck to ever remember. Literal translation. Suicide Club is a film that most people have seen. Word of mouth travels a very extensive way. While being a personal favorite of mine, the faults won't get past the inner cynic in me. The film rotates around a contemporary and thorough exaggerated view of the effects of pop-culture on the masses. The "twist" in the film is one which is impossible to predict. In nature, one would laugh heartily at the mere idea of Sono's revelation, but the truth is actually fierce which resulted in a sequel entitled Noriko's Dinner Table (I haven't seen it yet). The highlights of the film range from the narcissistic suicidals to the extreme depicted violence to the character actors on screen. Other than these traits and some unmentionables, the rest is a filler detective plot line which seems really out of place. It's always nice to see Audition's Ryo Ishibashi get more work in extreme Japanese cinema though. Although not the first, Suicide Club is one of the earlier films to have a horror/satire plot revolving around the Internet ala the website that predicts the suicides. Mechanics such as this can be seen in Danger After Dark's Feed and Yo-Yo Girl Cop, which was recently reviewed. Suicide Club might be the most daring Festival film to come out of Japan. With enough blatant simulated blood and gore to satisfy the deepest blood craving, Suicide Club offers a horrific tale of hysteria with a perfect mix of intellectualism. After watching this film, ask yourself if you have a sickness of the soul. It is also a great reflective piece to round out an afternoon and serves as a great treat to give to "virgin" cinema-goers. I don't know what's worse, the fact that Suicide Club has an important message or the fact that it's based off of truthful unexplained suicides in the land of the highest suicide rate; Japan.

-mAQ

EXTE
EXTE

Sion Sono (2007)

Perhaps the most natural return to form for me would be to write reflexions of a Sion Sono film. As assuredly you all know, Sion Sono is my personal favorite auteur, with his each and every film reaching beyond the boundaries of reality returning with visual prose of weightiness. Pairing his talent of avant-garde poetry with the camera was a match made in heaven, whatever that may be. Following *Suicide Club* 6 years in the making is *Exte*, an idea that must have stemmed from a deleted subplot in *Suicide Club*. During the trailer of *Suicide Club* exists a scene in which blood and hair protrude from a printer in grotesque fashion. Seeming all too surreal for the very [sub]rational elements within *Suicide Club*, this attention to the supernatural with digital dreads would have made for *Suicide Club* to be rebranded entirely. Not just teetering on subliminal messaging but mechanical possession? Why, it seemed only logical to take his scorned ideas and to mutate them into something else - *Exte*, the greatest horror satire that was ever to be. Starring Chiaki Kuriyama (*Kill Bill*, *Battle Royale*) and Ren Ôsugi (*HANA-BI*, *Audition*), *Exte: Hair Extensions* is a wild, trope-smashing migraine of Japanese horror cinema. Ostensibly too muddled and tongue-planted-too-firmly, *Exte* has but been exiled into scraps of J-Horror excess which serves as every bit a crime as child abuse is.

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Exte is certainly nasty business, all involving the fine undead follicles of a dead girl. You'd hope Sono's "extensions" of horror would be safe from phobias. Well you can say goodbye to that notion as Sion Sono gives us another reason to fear physicality and being. Scenes to mention would be when a hairdresser discovers a strand of hair distending from beneath her eyeball. Grasping softly and tugging, the tension on the strand of hair has enough impact as to leave even the most jaded gorefiend emphatically wringing their fingers and begging for the images to succumb to a tone lighter than its current. On a strict plot basis, Exte is too weird for its own good, that is, this disjointed exhaustion of traditional Japanese curses and crude possessions is every bit bizarre as the mental image of a decomposing body's wounds exuding tufts of hair would be. A trichophilic morgue watchman, whose activities involve trimming the hair of the recently deceased to create hair extensions, discovers the corpse of a young girl whose organs were harvested by Yakuza and due to her flowing raven locks, Yamazaki steals the body and takes her home. This is just where the madness begins though. As the body appeared in a shipping box of hair, you might assume that this hair is a collection but her rage in an unhampered fashion may prove otherwise. Sion Sono doesn't answer these questions you might have. The terrible fate of the girl is hinted at during short, soiled segments. Exte would just rather tell the story of an inspiring hair stylist and her abused niece.

Now from the standpoint of a Sion Sono enthusiast, Exte is his most critically shamed film to date. I've had several like-minded fans of his auteur signature tell me that Exte really didn't contain all too much worth spare a couple scenes of hair-terror. I was colored very surprised, though, with Exte as it continues Sono's reign as king and proves to be his most established and separate taste to date. I have always witnessed Japanese films attempting to fit the mold of a direct, picturesque adaptation of manga to the screen. It is the Eastern equivalent of Hollywood buckling towards comic books aesthetics which you have seen in *Punisher: War Zone* and less-effectively, Zach Snyder's *Watchmen*. To be honest, the most recent of these films turned ink would be *Hobo with a Shotgun*. The inky pastels of blue and yellow taint the screen and create for an unsettling backdrop for the extreme violence. In Japan, many films have struggled to suit such a label including *Ichi the Killer*, *Marronnier*, and *Uzumaki*, just to name a few. Granted, these ideas seem more in tune with comics because several are based off of such and not just splashed with tinges of vibrant colors. With that in mind, Exte is the closest I have ever seen the medium of film succumb to a comic sickness. Ren Ôsugi's portrayal of Yamazaki is worthy of the film textbooks. Yamazaki is a character that, to an intellectual level, can only be described as batshit insane and no amount of brooding upon the volume of raven black hair

AN ERROR OCCURRED.

can change that asset of his character.

Returning to the idea of a Suicide Club with technologically inclined spirits, Japanese horror cinema has been all about "grudges". In their market lies much room for mistakes. Catering entirely to the feeble-minded cowards of the West, it is hard for me to believe that anyone in the land of the East takes their own horror genre seriously. After all, the only atmosphere to be found is ample servings of soft focus and pajama garbed girls with knotted wet jet-black hair. In that instance in which the hair parts ways with raw data and projects itself out of a machine, I felt inspired to write about *Exte*, a film that has undeservedly been cast out among the Tartan filth of global cinema enthusiasts. *Exte* cannot be grouped up with any Kairo or its more suited companion *The Wig*. No, Sion Sono's *Exte* is all his own creation. Even the beauty shop comedic elements to this tale of sisterhood comes as a sigh of fresh air. I have spent so long avoiding J-horror for all of my worth when, in the process, I had foolhardily swept *Exte* under the rug as well. Not just for its extra-dimensional static cling, *Exte* is a unifying reason to pity the dead. That single tear escaping from the empty socket of a once beautiful girl marks the existence of a soul, which, even if in cinema, gives me some hope for an after-life. *Exte: Hair Extensions* is skin-crawling with emphasis applied to every syllable. Sion Sono borrowed the game just to humiliate the "masters" and further solidifies his placement on a pedestal.

-mAQ.

LOVE EXPOSURE

Sion Sono (2009)

While discussing *Sion Sono* with a friend, he inquired if I'd seen his newer film *Love Exposure*. I meekly responded with a "no" and as he began to tell me tales of a near 4 hour long film with satirical and over the top qualities, my interest was peaked with barely a mention of the synopsis. After viewing the scrapbook style trailer, I decided to let my instinct take the reigns and promptly found the film available for viewing. What unraveled over the course of four hours is not just what has been called "epic" or "a masterpiece" but a film that defies the very notion of time. With such a daunting run time of 237 minutes, the film seems to play for an average running time of 2 hours. With that considerable amount of time on hand, the delving into specific characters wields a remarkable level of detail that really sparked within me as I begrudgingly counted down until this outstanding achievement had finally reached its unwanted end. If you, like me, wish to have this dazzling array of absurd culture in an untouched virgin form, cease reading this following summary of just some of the events transpiring in a religion-torn Japan. Yu Honda is the devout son of a priest who has recently lost his mother. Before her untimely death, she told her affable son to find his own "Virgin Mary." With that, he remained entirely devoted to the idea of a single woman. After his father converts a homely whore, she arouses a faltering faith as he begins to slowly fall in love with this mysterious woman. As Yu's father begins to slowly deteriorate following her eloping with a younger man, he begins to call Yu ritually into the confession booth to purge the sins from his innocent mind. As Yu realizes he never really sins, he decides to rig his life with pain and mischief as to make his father happier. This involves joining a gang, learning to fight, and with the recommendation of his dear friend, totatsu (aka the art of peek-a-pantie voyeurism.) After becoming the apprentice of a lonely master of acrobatic totatsu, our lovable Yu now employs rather wacky methods of getting pictures of panties in a search of both acceptance from the shell of his father and his search for his "Maria." What eventually becomes of him is madness, a brainwashing evil cult, lesbianism, incest, castration, and most importantly, drag queen slaughter. *Love Exposure* is really, in every sense of the word, a sprawling epic. I had my doubts as its main recurring theme is love and religion. With the two topics in each hand as if being judged by my divine authority, I can't decide which one is more widely regarded as a myth. As Yu struggles harder for the love of his soon to be sister, Yoko, he's eventually driven over the edge and is faced with innumerable obstacles that most people wouldn't dream of approaching. This paired with the fact that this film is based on the life of director Sion Sono's friend really makes you scratch your head in an effort to discover which is fact and which is fiction. What Yu faces in his quest for supreme love is only so much an exaggeration. Their fateful meeting

LOVE EXPOSURE

was all because of a bet on who could take the best pantie photo. After losing to his own pupil, Yu struts down the street in a black trench coat, black wig, and a large hat. After aiding and abetting the volatile woman, he kisses her and adopts the moniker of "Miss Scorpion." Soon thereafter, he discovers that everything that has happened in his life as of recently has been orchestrated by a sadistic sociopath named Koike who has been pulling the strings with a larger scheme in mind. In debt to the impeccable job that Sion Sono had performed at establishing characters from the rawest roots possible, I found myself becoming increasingly more and more distressed as Yu's life spiraled into mad turbulence. So I did what any panic-stricken male would do; begin drinking. After hitting several shots of 99 Black Cherries and 99 Grapes, I was finally at ease and could relax my tense and sore muscles. Love Exposure is that sort of film; the one where you are vulnerable from the same oppression as the lead absorbs like a magnet for everything evil in the world. What really drives the film in an already incredible direction is the masterful soundtrack and where the irony lies is that there is no soundtrack. It's composed entirely of eloquent pieces of classical works (with the exception of the theme track) ranging from Ravel's Bolero to various works of Taizé. The fact of the matter is that within two hours of watching Love Exposure, I knew that this was one of my favorite films of all time. Now I've always been partial to the works of Sion Sono but after seeing so many of his films and highlighting a trend of consistency, I have to say that he is one of my favorite auteurs. I mean, just look at his script for Love Exposure (see below). With Love Exposure recently in mind, it appears that I've reached a level of cinematic enlightenment. The pure replay value of this film is retarded and there is no other way to put it. With just the mention of Tak Sakaguchi directing the action sequences, my hard-on soared just as that of Yu's whenever he sees or thinks of his darling Yoko. Never has a film made me want to run out and kick ass except that of Die Hard and other various Bruce Willis films. The innocence in Yu's eyes always remains true, even after he is knighted the "Prince of Perverts." I can really grasp the feel of this epic as I've witnessed first-hand the insanity that plagues the female species and that's what these films all seem to be about. You take near any film and deconstruct it just far enough, and you'll find the fault of a woman. Take the recently viewed Park Chan-Wook masterpiece Thirst. Once the abused and damaged woman is given just a little power, she loses her shit and becomes damn near a psychopath. It's literally painful to watch the damage Yoko commits to Yu's entire existence due to her stubbornness to understand anything other than her hatred for all men. The very idea of her being duped into being a lesbian says a lot for the standards of gays all around the world.

As for the definitive evil bitch role, Koike does marvelous in her ability to turn an innocent "high school voyeuristic photo-maniac" into a simple "maniac." After stealing and manipulating everything he loves, our Yu would do what any

other would - punch a woman in the fucking face. While Sion Sono does superb in the field of wringing your very soul of any positive emotion, he is also skilled at re-inflating it, instating a feeling of euphoria, if you will. As Suicide Club dealt with issues concerning subliminal messages and brainwashing, the very common ground between these two films is one of many reasons that I never wanted this film to end. I stand ground with each and every individual character. I love, I spite, and I cry at each turn of events. I have equally been assimilated into the universe of Love Exposure and for once, I found a home comfortable enough to revisit at any time. I never use this phrase with an exception of a small handful of films but Love Exposure has charmed, captivated, and horrified me. This will go down as one of my favorite films of all time. Other than that, I don't really know what to say that hasn't already been said about this grandiose pièce de résistance. You owe it to yourself to delve into Love Exposure and I cannot wait to view this elusive six hour cut.

-mAQ

LIQUID SKY
LIQUID SKY

Slava Tsukerman (1982)

After viewing the Austrian cyber-dyke flick *Flaming Ears* (1992) and taking heed of a film recommendation from my culturally refined lady friend, I decided to finally give the New Wave sci-fi work *Liquid Sky* (1982) directed by Slava Tsukerman (*Stalin's Wife*, *Pereščroika*) a serious viewing. Tsukerman decided to create the film after his previous project *Sweet Sixteen* – also a science fiction film designed with the New Wave style in mind that was to feature Andy Warhol – never received the funding the director needed, thus he became resourceful and merely used the cast of the aborted project for *Liquid Sky*, including star and script co-writer Anne Carlisle (*Perfect Strangers*, *Crocodile Dundee*). Although often associated with the punk subculture, *Liquid Sky* – which was released the same year as the Hollywood cyberpunk classic *Blade Runner* (1982) – has more in common aesthetically with the U.K.-based New Romantic fashion movement of the early 1980s as the film most certainly looks like it could have been directed by Visage frontman Steve Strange himself. Somewhat surprisingly, *Liquid Sky* was instead directed by a Soviet-born Jew who created TV movies and documentaries (he would later have a successful career in Israeli television) before assembling the avant-garde libertine sci-fi comedy that would gain him the most notoriety as a filmmaker because on top of being extremely influential culturally, *Liquid Sky* was the most economically profitable independent film of 1983. Materialistic monetary matters aside, *Liquid Sky* obtained a steady cult following over the years, not least due to the film's bittersweet cocktail of dazzling psychedelic special-effects, plentifully perverse humor (the lead anti-heroess is repeatedly the victim of rape), sometimes silly computer generated soundtrack and inter-sexual New Romanticist imagery. Taking its name from the English-translated American Indian saying for heroin, *Liquid Sky* is an often absurd and authentically campy sci-fi farce about a group of tiny and invisible junk-addicted space aliens (whose spaceship is about the size of a dinner plate) who come to earth to harvest the endorphins created in the human brain during sexual orgasm – which are apparently similar in chemical structure to heroin – by using an androgynous bisexual lady named Margaret as a vessel for obtaining orgasmic juices via her surly and sadistic sexual partners. In the process of obtaining their opiate-like pheromones, Margaret's sexual partners die post-orgasm after a crystal blade appears protruding through their skulls that is used by the aliens to extract the pleasure molecules. Needless to say, *Liquid Sky* is not the sort of sci-fi flick that was made with virginal fanboys and turdsh trekkies in mind, but instead junkies, perverts, pessimists, and degenerates of all sorts.

Liquid Sky begins at a newer-than-new-wave fashion show featuring model Margaret (Anne Carlisle) and her equally sexually ambiguous archenemy/doppelgänger Jimmy (also Carlisle); a fairy of an effeminate fellow who has a hard time fueling

his life-consuming addiction to heroin. Luckily for Margaret her butch gal pal Adrian (Paula E. Sheppard) is a hip heroin-dealer. Being a linguistically elegant and articulate lady of high Manhattan culture, Adrian describes her girlfriend as an, “uptight wasp cunt from Connecticut.” Indeed, miss Marge came of age in New England suburbia and had a relatively mundane upbringing as expressed by various childhood photos of her featured in *Liquid Sky*. It was not until Margaret moved to the city with overtly delusional aspirations of being the next David Bowie that she became an increasingly masculine, drug-addicted drama queen with a less than lavish libertinage lifestyle. Luckily for her, Margaret finally gets her big break in show biz, at least in her own mind, when an alien spaceship lands on the roof of the penthouse apartment that she shares with her stocky and cocky Alpine-shaped girlfriend Adrian. Indeed, Margaret wants to become a space oddity of sorts and she has no qualms about fucking people to death to appease her extraterrestrial masters (although she initially theorizes that an Indian God is guiding her). During her wild night of sexual seduction and depravity, Margaret helps the alien secure the endorphins of a rapist opera actor, an ex-hippie college professor, a failed artist who likens himself to French poet Jean Cocteau, among various other individual that probably deserve to die. Meanwhile, a socially inept German scientist named Johann Hoffman (Otto Von Wernherr) flies into Manhattan from Berlin as he has been monitoring the space aliens for some time now, but he has a hard time convincing the citizens New York City’s most densely populated borough that they are under attack by miniature junky spacemen. While attempting to find a view adjacent to Margaret’s apartment so as to monitor the space alien’s dubious activity, Johann is welcomed in the apartment of Sylvia (Susan Doukas) – a television producer who also happens to be the mother of jerk junky Jimmy – and carries the rest of his UFOphile voyeurism in her window. Clearly a sexually-deprived masochist, Sylvia is especially turned on by the fact that Johann is German and she is Jewish, thus she spends the rest of the night trying to get in the pants of the seemingly asexual Teutonic Scientist. Needless to say, there are a variety of outré sexual liaisons featured throughout *Liquid Sky*, but very little of it is mutually reciprocal, thus the aliens are the only group the truly benefits from the counter-culture phenomenon of free love in world were souls are vapid and emotions are artificially altered via downers and uppers.

One thing that most viewers will notice almost immediately upon watching *Liquid Sky*, aside from the quasi-schlocky futurist fashion imagery, is the curiously cynical comedic tone of the film, as if director Slava Tsukerman truly longed for the colonization of earth by endorphin-fleeting extraterrestrial beings. In an interview featured in the book *Destroy All Movies!!!* (2010), Tsukerman stated in regard to his satirical objective with *Liquid Sky*, “Criticism of the scene was not intended...criticism of our entire civilization was intended.”

LIQUID SKY

Unequivocally, from the emotionally sterile Faustian scientist to the deadbeat opiate-driven would-be artist, *Liquid Sky* is an aesthetically hypnotic yet delightfully scornful condemnation of the culturally-vacuous and technocratic Occidental world. With highly quotable lines like, “Cocteau was Cocteau before he ever did drugs” and “I kill with my cunt. Isn’t it fashionable?”, it is easy to see why *Liquid Sky* has remained a popular work among both cinephiles and sexually ambiguous New Wavers alike since its initial release three decades ago. Equipped with what Tsukerman describes as, “the first computer-generated music score in the history of film” and a number absurd avant-garde fashion styles that Lady Gaga has stolen and repackaged over the years, *Liquid Sky* is like all great works of science fiction; a fantastic but unsentimental window into a dystopian future that has subsequently revealed itself. A work influenced by heroin abuse that often looks like an acid trip, *Liquid Sky* is delicious cyber-candy for the eyes and a delightful despoiler for the soul.

-Ty E

THE WARRIORS WAY

Sngmoo Lee (2010)

With the extended release of products like *The Matrix*, *Rush Hour*, and *The Last Samurai* did Hollywood finally make its presence known and its intentions accepted. Accepting the appeal of cross-continent theater fares, it seemed overnight that the formula of East + West = "cool". Perhaps it was the technozen of the messianic "One" or even the sudden and obnoxious intrusion of Brett Ratner's smash hit *Rush Hour*. Regardless of the streamlined roots of this craze, one that has always been hidden beneath the dormant floorboards of the box office, one thing was for certain - American audiences devoured it. Enter the effects of the Wu-tang Clan, translated anime cassette tapes, the circlejerk that is *Kill Bill*, and Sanrio's mass roll-out of memorabilia and what you will find is that as often as the East is credited to adopting a largely Western ideal, we too, have exhibited symptoms of an impression left on us (although not in a traditional sense). For us it seems to be a fanaticism with no real intention on becoming permanent. This became apparent with the release of *Ninja Assassin* (2009), an idea so laughable it transcended novelty and leapt directly into its tomb where scripts go to die. Films like these play hooky with the thought of Asiatic stoicism/vigilantism then return home safely with no harm done - utter child's play. One could think that our Western vision is impervious of foreign influence (but how wrong you'd be). What *Ninja Assassin* adopted was a Western approach to romantic/action storytelling and with coating it with the sauce of Orientalism, had hoped to create an enigmatic character likable enough for a box office Eastern feast. As you can imagine, *Ninja Assassin* proved to be one of the worst films of 2009. With the slate wiped clean Sngmoo Lee debuted with *The Warriors Way*, the very same principle except overdosed on steroids reeking of sickening stylization.

Starring Dong-gun Jang, a personal favorite whose many roles encompass several classics (*Friend*, *The Coast Guard*, *Taegukgi*), *The Warriors Way* took to creating a hybrid all-too literal by crossing a shadowy ninja clan and thrusting them directly into a wild west scenario guilty of minuscule steam-punk influences. After slaying an entire clan on orders of his own, *The Sad Flutes*, Yang is frozen in his tracks at the sight of the sole surviving member, an infant. Putting his sword to rest and freeing the infant of its cradle, Yang flees the country after severing threads with his clan and jumps aboard a ferry navigating blindly across the stretch of sea. As wanderers do, Yang suddenly finds himself in a sleepy, sickly town whose only life is a waning carnival act. After learning the ways of these people as well as withstanding ridicule and expressing these questionable traits known as emotions, Yang's new home is stalked by his past as well as the town members' own. Like *Lone Wolf and Cub* before it, *The Warriors*

THE WARRIORS WAY

Way idly juxtaposes beast & baby with a hint of babe (Kate Bosworth) in one of those senseless demonstrations of the monster-with-a-heart device. The film essentially just sputters along with images of the "greatest swordsman who ever lived" performing trivial tasks like "bonding" or doing laundry. The entire ruse of cheating the runtime builds up to the last 40 minutes in which the nature of time is slaughtered in favor of slo-motion scenes of Yang catapulting through the air with delayed spurts of arterial spray following in his jacketed wake. Once the villainous Danny Huston and his bucking cowboy crew meet the Sad Flutes, the level of silly skyrockets into the territory of being wildly unbelievable. For all it had going for it, strictly being on a scale of hardened entertainment, I feel that *The Warriors Way* wasn't as unnecessarily violent as I would have liked it to be. You never get the sense that his blade and all its soul-sadness, can do any real harm. There's visual mention of the rare head or arm tossed about but only a handful of quick images to support the timid nature of its existence. In fact, *The Warriors Way* could have just as easily been a PG-13 rated flick and not had any qualms with the idea.

When it boils down to the story of Yang's blade, the action is represented only by blood splatters. I imagined severed limbs, multiple decapitations, and rowdy brutality, something in the same vein as *Ninja Assassin* (the opening scene being the only decent thing in this case). What I got instead was akin to picking a shy, conservative dame of many Eastern-Western broads. Of this particular formula I'd have to say that *The Warriors Way* was of the more enjoyable go-arounds with entertaining a ludicrous synopsis. I don't mean to put a spin regarding the actual quality of the film. *The Warriors Way* is what you'd imagine from the looks of it - stupid, overloaded with digital set-pieces, lacking any distinct aesthetic, overburdened with time manipulation, and to top it all off, boasting a pitiful excuse for romance. When and if you can manage to set aside your differences with the artificial nature of this film, however, you can find it within yourself to actually become engaged by this hammy and juvenile procedure in extirpation of conventions. If you, like me and many others, were sickened and revolted by the excess of *Ninja Assassin* then mayhaps the candy-painted ninja-western *The Warriors Way* can provide to you what the aforementioned couldn't. To a degree of certainty, I can validate a sort of inner-warmness towards Yang's plight-with-fight and would enjoy seeing more of his bloody adventures in the future. If your wish is to see an inventive film relating to a ninja assassin the answer shouldn't be anymore clearer than it is with this. *The Warriors Way* may be shit but it's shit that I don't mind enjoying, even advocating, and in the end, that's all that really counts.

-mAQ

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Sofia Coppola (2003)

Sofia Coppola never had to “struggle” as a budding director because her father Francis is one of the most famous American filmmakers to ever live. She is best known for her horrible acting performance in her Daddy’s film *Godfather III*. Filmmakers should take note that just because you love your daughter doesn’t mean she should have a leading role in a very popular trilogy despite her lack of professionalism. It can be assumed that after her failure as an actress, she thought it would be a good idea to hide behind the camera as a director. After all, if the films she directs are embarrassing, at least she didn’t have to show her face. *Lost in Translation* was Sofia Coppola’s third film and it won the Academy Award for screenplay and three Golden Globe Awards. The film maintained a certain amount of hype even causing redneck types to watch something they didn’t expect to get into. I once recall seeing an angry blue collar man demanding a video store clerk to give him another rental because *Lost in Translation* was not funny. Well, that redneck was pretty accurate in his film analysis. *Lost in Translation* is the type of film cosmopolitan feminists and weak baby doll shirt wearing males rave about. The reason is obvious; like themselves the film is soulless. The film follows Bob (Bill Murray) and Scarlet Johansson (Charlotte) as they feel lost in the “culture shock” world of digital metropolis Japan. The young Charlotte feels like she is having second thoughts about her marriage with her wussy photographer husband. Leave it to a cynical and alcoholic Bob (who is in Japan to shoot a Whiskey advertisement) to save Charlotte’s plague of social awkwardness and loneliness. The two new friends frolic around Japan and have the most quirky fun of their life. I can imagine a young hipster guy with contrived nerd glasses saying to himself, “now that’s humanity.” Sofia Coppola’s portrayal of Japan is just silly and borders on offensive. Had the film been set in the Congo, looking at the country in a similar arrogant context, there would have been a yeast infection fueled outcry among all of America’s coffee houses. Sofia Coppola, like Jim Jarmusch in *Mystery Train*, seems to think of the Japanese as cultureless materialists that have adopted a distorted version of American culture. I guess that’s what happens when America drops a few Atom bombs on Japanese cities. So yes, two people you would never expect to get together do just that, because they feel lost in Japan. How quirky and cute. I was just waiting for Bob to “give it to” Charlotte but I think too much alcohol and lack of overall energy has made the man impotent. Maybe the film would have been more interesting if two rednecks were stranded in Hispanic populated Los Angeles with no way out. Possibly, they would come together for the benefit of humanity and expose real American gringo patriotism to hostile slightly-literate, Spanish speaking teenage gang members. That would be a true American comedy about things that get “*Lost in Translation*.”

LOST IN TRANSLATION

-Ty E

UTOPIA

Sohrab Shahid Saless (1983)

Out of all the countless books I have read about German New Cinema, very few have even bothered to mention the name of Sohrab Shaheed Salles (Hans - Ein Junge in Deutschland, Anton P. Cechov - Ein Leben), an Iranian auteur filmmaker who was educated in Vienna and Paris and who directed most of his films in West Germany about ghetto-dwelling Germans. Rather unfortunately, but not surprisingly, most of Salles' films are nearly impossible to find today and usually can only be found in poor quality bootleg form without English subtitles. Luckily, I recently managed to snag a copy of the director's kraut whorehouse epic *Utopia* (1983); a corrupting celluloid work that is almost Brechtian in its slowness and innately static direction, yet never wallows in banality and ultimately packs a penetrating punch. Somewhat unfittingly compared by some reviewers to Pier Paolo Pasolini's scatological swansong *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) and described by German critics as a "hard ghetto film," *Utopia* is a sort of nasty neo-neorealist film about a pernicious pimp who wants to establish his own unhinged 'utopia' in the way of a would-be-high-class whorehouse and is willing to smack any bitch up who gets in his wayward way to do so. Made a year after German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder's tragic death, *Utopia* certainly helped to fill void that he left in terms of portraying rather desperate and hysterical women as it portrays five female prostitutes who, for various (and oftentimes dubious) reasons, endure use and abuse not only from their prick pimp, but also their mostly perverted Johns. Indeed, while empathetic in its portrayal of street whores, *Utopia* does not exactly feature a flattering portrayal of the so-called fairer sex and thus follows in Fassbinder's quasi-anti-feminist filmic tradition. A nearly 200-minute chamber piece set in plodding pussy-peddler pandemonium, *Utopia* not only takes bitter swipes at capitalism, but West German society in general, depicting the post-Nazi nation as a clearly class-divided pseudo-democracy where bourgeois boobs go to operas and working-class heroes go to whores. Clearly a work directed by a man who is both a physical and internal exile with next to nil respect for the Heimat, *Utopia* is an intentionally painfully slow moving and brazenly brooding celluloid work with the aesthetic flare of a docudrama on downers. A decidedly debasing depiction of dumb broads who prefer the security of sexual slavery to a real-life of social and economic freedom, *Utopia* is a radical realist horror whore show that is bound to act as an audacious anti-aphrodisiac for even the most depraved of sexual sadists.

Opening with a beautiful blonde Aryan opera singer performing a soulful solo for a bunch of stiff and uptight upper-middleclass krauts in a fancy Berlin opera house, *Utopia* soon snaps the viewer back into reality and introduces brutal pimp Heinz (Manfred Zapatka) as he smacks one of his bitches up right outside

UTOPIA

said opera house. Heinz has just opened up a new bordello with a bar named 'Club Arena' in a dilapidated old building and, due to the various costs that go into the pussy-peddling business, he is mighty worried about money and is quite quick to smack a bitch if she makes a snide remark or refuses to follow his stern demands. Naïve college girl Monika (Birgit Anders) is the newest addition to Heinz's whorehouse and she is so deluded that she tells a stranger on a train ride to the bordello that, "I made myself a promise: Now, I want to live!" as if selling one's flesh and soul makes for a truly life-affirming experience. Of course, by the end of Utopia, Monika no longer wants to live as she makes a rather bloody attempt at suicide via straight razor to the wrist. The oldest and most pessimistic worker of Heinz's bordello is Renate (Imke Barnstedt), who can rarely attract customers due to her advanced age and who was tricked into the streetwalking business after the pimp pretended to be her boyfriend. As Renate tells the other girls regarding Heinz, "In thoughts I killed him a thousand times. Everytime differently. I'd favor cyanide. It's quick and foolproof." The most unruly of the girls is Susi (Gabriele Fischer), who has her own apartment and does not live in the whorehouse, thus giving her a tad bit more freedom and personal integrity. Eventually, Susi quits and Heinz beats the shit out of her and does not give her a dime of her hard earned cunt cash, but ultimately she comes crawling back to her miserly misogynist monster a couple days later after realizing she cannot make it on her own. The most dimwitted of the girls is Helga (Johanna Sophia), who rather enjoys it when Heinz forces himself on her. After having sex, Helga attempts to flirt with Heinz and he responds by stating, "Fuck off dumb cunt or I'll rough you up." Indeed, Heinz rules with a firm iron-fist as if he is a former concentration camp commander, but being a majorly miserable man, it does not take much for him to want to make people feel just as melancholy as he does.

Naturally, as a man that gets a kick out of beating women, Heinz has his own problems, namely random unexplainable (and seemingly psychosomatic) debilitating headaches that cause him to lie around for hours with his hands wrapped around his head like a sad little girl. Of course, these headaches only compound Heinz's innate irritability and he wastes not time to dehumanize his dames when they get out of line. A key to Heinz's undying hatred is a dream that he has about his dead daddy that he tells to Renate after beating up her and ripping her haircut, which he describes to her as follows: "I dreamed about that asshole. If he was still breathing, I'd strangle him ten times. Are you listening?... The dream... I was little, about six or seven. I was walking with him in an alley. He was constantly babbling the same bullshit. All of a sudden, a man walks towards us. He had a big dog, a shepherd. The man comes closer. Suddenly, he kicks me right in the stomach. I try to yell for my father, but no sound's coming out. I realize, the dogs on my chest and has grabbed my throat. And then...what then? Fuck." Indeed, it seems Heinz's father was ungodly dictator, yet he ultimately grew up to be even worse than the man he hates with an oedipal passion. Not long af-

ter, Renate decides enough is enough after Heinz wakes her up and forces her to have sex with him, as she repeatedly stabs him with a pair of scissors in the gut. While dying of blood loss, Heinz tells his whores, "I'll take you with me, you cheap whores! Just wait, I'll show you!...All of you slits...All of you" as they hide together in the brothel hallway. In the end, Heinz calls all his girls "fucking cunts" as he bleeds out on the floor and the gals proceed to collectively kill him like wild animals using chairs, knives, guns, and anything else than can get their hands on to finish the job. Indeed, if *Utopia* proves anything, it is that slaves are oftentimes much more cruel and relentless than their masters. In a biting sardonic twist, the girls keep the brothel open for business and Renate—the old fat prostitute who initially stabbed Heinz—becomes the new pimp (or madame) of the whorehouse, thus demonstrating with every revolution, the new leaders always become just as repressive and authoritarian as the people they overthrew, if not more so.

With the legalization of prostitution in Germany in 2002, *Utopia* is indubitably more relevant day than it was when it was first released some three decades ago, though considering the sorry Americanized state of contemporary kraut cinema, it is doubtful most modern day viewers will have large enough attention spans to get through all 3+ grueling hours of the film. While I doubt it was intentional on the director's part, the villain Heinz has a lot of similarities with R.W. Fassbinder, namely that the auteur was once a pimp (both Udo Kier and Irm Hermann worked for him at various points), beat women, and had a rather regrettable relationship with his father, even basing the sadistic husband played by Karlheinz Böhm in *Martha* (1974) on his papa. Of course, unlike the character of Heinz in *Utopia*, as well as director Sohrab Shaheed Salles, Fassbinder actually had a sense of humor, which the hooker epic completely lacks to the point of acting as a sort of agonizing aesthetic torture against the viewer. In its depiction of a prick pimp virtually enslaving and constantly degrading female hookers, only for the girls to revolt and one of the female hookers to ironically take his place in the end and continue the cycle of sexual slavery, *Utopia* is a sort of allegory for the emasculation and feminization of Deutschland after the World War II (with many men dead or imprisoned) and with the so-called 'Wirtschaftswunder' when German women played a large part in rebuilding the country and ultimately realized they no longer had any use for men. Indeed, many directors of German New Cinema, including Fassbinder with *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) and Helma Sanders-Brahms with *Germany Pale Mother* (1980), had already cinematically depicted the declining power and influence of men in post-WWII Germany, but *Utopia* takes this to a whole new brutal and uncompromising extreme. Like John Cassavetes' *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976) meets the underrated West German teen hustler flick *The End of the Rainbow* (1979) aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens* directed by Uwe Frießner, *Utopia* ultimately anticipates the films of Gaspar Noé and the films of

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the New French Extremity in general, thus making it mandatory viewing for any serious subversive cinephile. In its outsider's portrayal of Berlin, Utopia certainly ranks up with Turk queer auteur Kutlug Ataman's Fassbinder-esque work *Lola and Billy the Kid* (1999) aka *Lola + Bilidikid* as an outstanding and singular, if not totally unflattering, depiction of metropolitan Teutonia by a swarthy Ausländer from the Islamic world. Indeed, in a strange sense, Utopia is a sort of cinematic revenge for the death of El Hedi ben Salem due to its exploitative portrayal of the kraut exploiter.

-Ty E

DOG BITE DOG

Soi Cheang (2006)

Surely inspired by the success of *Danny the Dog* aka *Unleashed*, Soi Cheang created the hard-boiled Hong Kong thriller *Dog Bite Dog* with extreme prejudice towards the Hong Kong Police Force. I had first viewed this film several years ago fresh off the shelves of its *Dragon Dynasty* release. I wouldn't consider it a blind purchase though. I had first caught wind of the film in the guise of a broken DVD shell in a friend's trailer, complete with CATIII warning and printed box art. I had previously reviewed this film but was distressed with how unsatisfying my words had been. That seems to be the way with most of my dated entries. Having forgotten though allowed me to rewatch the film and herd some critical brainstorming as to the very violent nature of the two men and just how far gone both are in different respects. Walking a very thin line, the plot is a straight shot of vengeance. A detective goes to all ends of purgatory in search for a feral assassin who has murdered everyone close to him. You'd think the leeway would constrict the movement of the film but defying all odds, *Dog Bite Dog* remains an excellent resource of novelty cat-and-mouse games.

The differing audacity of Eastern and Western directors to allow police officers to be slain on film really gives the former the upper hand in scheming brutality for the screen. In Soi Cheang's *Dog Bite Dog*, virtually every character on the "good" team is slaughtered by the dog-like hit man, played by Edison Chen. 2 years after *Dog Bite Dog* saw release was the infamous sex scandal in which Edison Chen was the key player. What had happened was Edison Chen took to a computer technician his laptop to be repaired. Upon opening his laptop, said technician discovered hundreds of raunchy and lewd pornographic images of several Chinese celebrities. Had this instance unraveled in the U.S., the measures to be taken would have seemed lenient in regards to what officially happened. Sure this situation might not seem to be as heavy as it indeed was, most of the celebrities and singers involved were endorsed for their "squeaky-clean image", catapulting the red carpet district of Hong Kong into disarray. Surely Edison Chen's bad boy image added to the universal appeal of the star but the question begs; was this laughable incident a smear campaign or perhaps something more?

On terms of grim brutality, *Dog Bite Dog* might as well be a protégé of "Beat" Kitano's *Violent Cop*. Both films express a sexual deviancy and irresponsible nature towards human life. The crooked tactics utilized by Wai (Sam Lee) eventually rub off on his department which sticks as a fascinating transformation. Just as peer pressure and mass hysteria synchronize, his friends, who once doubted the length of extremes he vaulted, are seen letting loose and joining in on the "fun". Soon after the conflict escalates from childlike Pang attempting to escape to all sorts of turmoil as he "murders" a father living in a landfill who was pulling a "Fritz" and raping his daughter several times a day. After he ensnares the chubby

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lass with his domineering and firm, assertive behavior, she begins to follow him and dream big with their impromptu honeymoon on a sea-bound vessel towards Cambodia, where Pang was bred into the killer he is today. This introduces one of the very few flaws plaguing the rampage of Dog Bite Dog - the woman. I'm sure by now you're perceptive of my views towards women but this inclusion of romance where romance needn't fit drains the effervescent vitality straight from the vein. The bitch is borderline vegetable, blind to everything but her own gain. I admit the term "damaged goods" comes to mind but this portrayal of such is so flaccid and irritating. Her introduction to the story serves as the sole inciting antagonist towards the script-necrosis that takes effect during the last ten minutes.

Dog Bite Dog is an engaging and visceral experience in Hong Kong action cinema. Much of the effort on the part of Soi Cheang is lost due to these casual mistakes but all is forgivable. Apart from the assorted nitpicking of the incredibly rushed ending, so protruding from the overall flow that it's equivalent to tripping on an upturned stone. To close while reflecting paragraphs past, Dog Bite Dog is a film that withstood much malevolent hate within me these years of it evaporating from my memory banks. Having rewatched it with more of an understanding of the Eastern "filmsophy" I am more keen to the tale of despair it whispers. To rip a withstanding quote from my previous review, "If a film could work as sandpaper, Dog Bite Dog would be a carpenter's choice."

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ACCIDENT

Soi Cheang (2009)

The last time I witnessed a role of Louis Koo's was in SPL's pseudo-prequel *Flash Point*. Within that film, Louis Koo demonstrated an uncanny ability to remain noticeable besides Donnie Yen's vacuum-like cinematic pull, abnormal in filmic science. It's within Koo's juggling of sidekick, comic relief, and tragic appeal that made me interested in seeing just how versatile this actor could be. With that in mind, *Accident* stars the aforementioned Louis Koo as the "Brain" of a crack-team of assassins with the specialty of creating "accidents" out of contracts. These recurring instances are where the title is derived and *Accident* offers many set-pieces in which to act out the *Final Destination*-esque moments with a searing taste for suspense and brief and brutal ways to depart from this mortal coil. *Accident* is a Hong-Kong superthriller from Soi Cheang, the man responsible for the plague-ridden *Dog Bite Dog*, and produced by the prolific Johnnie To. The credentials are enough to give *Accident* a pass from interrogating the Internet for reviews and scores because no matter who you show *Accident* to, it will incite a different perspective and sentiment. But one thing is consistent, *Accident* is a hell of a drag to any and all who view it.

The main team of assassins consists of Brain, Uncle, Fatty, and a nameless beauty. Brain carries with him a sick melancholy due to his wife's death, hinted at in flashbacks. Expressing the loss of a lover by ritual of rigging elaborate traps to uncork prolonged bouts of suffering is both conniving and bittersweet. The best part? It works. In the opening scene, a car suffering a flat tire blocks a bustling one way street. Perturbed, the man directly behind this car cuts his steering wheel and moves past through another street, getting water splashed onto his hood from a delivery truck. Once his vehicle trips a mechanism, a banner from several stories up flutters and lands atop his hood, stopping him in his tracks. Getting out, he tugs at the banner, breaking a pin and showering him with broken glass, lacerating an artery and leaving him immobilized and bleeding out in the street. Meanwhile, several spectators feign attraction to this "accident". You wouldn't normally consider that this grievous fatality was a murder, would you? Least of all committed by someone in your very near proximity. This moment of fatal paranoia is what *Accident* tackles full-force and dutifully.

After an accident goes terribly awry which costs the life of one of his team, Brain begins to slip into a paranoia on account of the synchronous nature of his trade. This opens the portal to the last act of the film, one that schemes to alter the texture of *Accident*. What was once a vessel for ridiculous, elaborate murder switches gears all too easily to a moody intellectualized "whodunit" that has you questioning the motives and sanity of everyone involved. *Accident* simply echoes *Milkway* production to a "T", excavating suspense out of the most mild-mannered situations backed by sinister and studious prowess. Unfortunate

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event after another, Louis Koo's character slips into a state of reclusive suspicion towards an insurance agent. Was the death of a friend an "accident" or an accident? The flawless style of Accident makes up a great half of the cool composure held by Louis Koo and his cohorts. The other half is clockwork misery with a light classical score to better aid the musings of our somber and conservatively existential lead. Accident may certainly have flaws under its skin but you'd have a hard time discerning them from the clinical depression left behind by the finale. Easily one of the best Hong-Kong thrillers you've never seen.

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THE SEX OF SELF-HATRED

Solomon Nagler (2004)

Despite the fact that he is a largely forgotten self-loathing Jew whose theories regarding Jewry were so subversive that they were even, to some extent, promoted by the National Socialists and eccentric antisemitic figures like Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, tragic Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger—a troubled and intellectually intense mensch that committed suicide in 1903 at the premature age of 23 shortly after the fairly lukewarm release of his magnum opus *Sex and Character* (1903) aka *Geschlecht und Charakter*, which would eventually inspire many important Occidental thinkers, most notably Austrian-British-Jewish philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and Swedish playwright August Strindberg—has inspired at least two fairly sympathetic modern films about his singular spiritual struggle, rather refined sexual ambivalence, singular self-hatred, and rather lonely yet strangely poetic self-slaughter, among other things. Indeed, both *Weiningers Nacht* (1990) aka *Weininger's Last Night* directed by Austrian actor and sometimes director Paulus Manker (*Schmutz* aka *Dirt*, *Der Kopf des Mohren* aka *The Moor's Head*) and *The Sex of Self-Hatred* (2004) directed by Canadian experimental filmmaker Solomon Nagler (*Gravity and Grace*, *Black Salt Water Elegy*) not only happen to be about the great self-extinguishing antisemitic semite and the somewhat shadowy circumstances surrounding his suicide, but also are indubitably two of the most intriguing films ever made about a philosopher, but then again it takes a particularly preternatural artist to even consider directing a film about such an infamous, albeit largely forgotten, figure who is undoubtedly the antithesis of the archetypal Hollywood hero. After all, the last thing the Jewish studio heads and producers in Tinseltown want to do is make a film about an insanely impenetrable self-hating Israelite that argued that most Jews males are soulless pansies that think and act like lecherous neurotic women, but I digress. Certainly, of the two films, Nagler's is the most overtly and hermetically Hebraic, but such is to be expected from a Jewish auteur that has made a number of films with strong Jewish themes. An important influence on early twentieth-century intellectual figures ranging from lily-licking bull-dyke Jewesses like Gertrude Stein to decadent National Socialist poets like Gottfried Benn, the tragic Judaic philosopher was apparently once described by Adolf Hitler during a 1941 conversation with Henry Picker in the *Wolf's Lair* in the following fashion: "This destructive role of the Jew has in a way a providential explanation. If nature wanted the Jew to be the ferment that causes peoples to decay, thus providing these peoples with an opportunity for a healthy reaction, in that case people like St. Paul and Trotsky are, from our point of view, the most valuable. By the fact of their presence, they provoke the defensive reaction of the attacked organism. Dietrich Eckart once told me that in all his life he had known just one good Jew: Otto Weininger, who killed

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himself on the day when he realized that the Jew lives upon the decay of peoples." Undoubtedly, Weininger is a rare case of a Jew whose radical rejection of his own people and religion was innately intertwined with both his intricate personal *Weltanschauung* and rejection of life, with his suicide being arguably the truest form of post-religious Jewish transcendence and spiritual rebirth. In fact, the exquisitely ethno-masochistic philosopher even converted to Protestantism about a year before his suicide in what seemed like a failed last ditch effort to shed his inner Jew and become a noble Christian Aryan. Of course, this conversion was a failure as Weininger soon committed self-slaughter by shooting himself in the heart in the same exact room where his Aryan hero Beethoven died 76 years earlier, yet he still received a Christian burial, with his tombstone fittingly reading: "This stone marks the resting place of a young man whose spirit found no peace in this world. When he had delivered the message of his soul, he could no longer remain among the living. he betook himself to the place of death of one of the greatest of all men, the Schwarzschanerhaus in Vienna, and there destroyed his mortal body." Whether his intention or not, Weininger picked a quite auspicious time to commit suicide, as his self-ordained premature death and the strangely poetic circumstances surrounding it made him a cause célèbre in the German-speaking world to the point where he inspired numerous copycat suicides and his timeless tome *Sex and Character*, which was initially poorly received, finally achieved the critical acclaim it deserved. A true martyr of modernity who argued that men—be they Jew or Aryan—should completely emancipate themselves from the spiritual plagues of Judaism and femaleness, Weininger might be described as the purest and most authentic of philosophers as it can be easily argued that his suicide was merely an full-fledged execution of his philosophy. Indeed, quite unlike the countless culturally corrosive Judaic thinkers ranging from Marx to Derrida to Adorno that have contaminated the Occident with carefully calculated deceptions, pathological anti-European iconoclasm, culture-distorting, and asininely abstract word games, Weininger actually believed what he wrote, hence his tragic yet seemingly inevitable fate.

Needless to say, both of the films about Weininger are rather dark and forlorn as cinematic works that quite predictably conclude with the protagonist killing himself, but the most recent, Nagler's *The Sex of Self-Hatred*, is easily the most eerie and ethereally esoteric, as if the director was attempting to assemble a neo-Expressionist obituary to be played on a loop at the philosopher's graveside so that people might be able understand why a young Jewish bachelor with a very potentially intellectually prodigious career ahead of him decided to off himself while he was at the height of his intellectual prowess. The second film in the highly self-consciously Jewish director's 'Jewish elegies' triptych (which also includes *Perhaps/We* (2003) and *Fugue Nefesh* (2007)), the 9-minute 16mm short is like an aesthetically acidic marriage between German Expressionism, the pseudo-Fidus-esque Zionist eugenic art of Ephraim Moses Lilien, kosher

counterculture poet Ira Cohen's experimental psychedelic film *The Invasion of Thunderbolt Pagoda* (1968), and the savagely nightmarish Figurative paintings of Irish-born Brit Francis Bacon. Ostensibly set mostly in the dark and dreary Vienna room where Beethoven had kicked the bucket about three generations before, *The Sex of Self-Hatred* begins simply enough with the rather revealing quote "self hatred is the best foundation for self examination" and might be described as a sort of celluloid Judaic purgatory where one very lonely and fiercely forsaken Jew's all-consuming guilt, paranoia, and self-loathing reaches its zenith and erupts into a sort of morbidly morose act of self-martyrdom, with the singularly provocative philosopher both literally and figuratively sacrificing himself for his own ideals via an irreparable gesture that would ultimately determine his fate as both a man and philosopher.

Like a humorless Hebrew Guy Maddin or an all the more macabre Judaic Deco Dawson, Nagler is a Canadian experimental filmmaker that seems to reject most modern filmmaking technology and techniques and instead uses archaic and anachronistic filmmaking methods that make it seemingly possible to tell when his films were actually made. Thankfully, Nagler's quixotically quaint cinematic techniques are put to rather effective use in *The Sex of Self-Hatred* which, at least in my less than humble opinion, is easily the director's most accomplished and immaculate film to date. Indeed, to the film's great credit, one can almost delude themselves into believing that it was actually made in 1903, with the actor playing Weininger even bearing a strikingly resemblance to the (in)famous self-loathing Jew who developed the theory that Jewishness and femininity were one and the same. Like Manker's Weininger flick, Nagler's film alludes to the philosopher's rather intricate form of self-hatred by featuring a post-suicide drag king Weininger. In fact, right after Weininger blows his brains out (indeed, although the real Weininger committed suicide by shooting himself in the heart, he shoots himself in the head in Nagler's film in a fictional scenario that points to the philosopher's great mental suffering), he is depicted lying on the ground with bare tits, as if the philosopher's suicide really was an attempt to rid himself of both his Jewishness and femininity, or as contemporary self-loathing Jew Gilad Atzmon once speculated in his essay 'Sex and Anti Semitism,' "Otto Weininger was just twenty-three when he committed suicide. One may wonder how he knew so much about women. Why did he hate them so? How did he know so much about Jews, and why did he hate them so? The answer can be elicited from Weininger's thoughts, though not from his own words. He hated women and Jews because he was a woman and a Jew. He adored Aryan masculinity because he probably lacked that quality in any significant amount in his own being. This revelation probably led Weininger to kill himself, just a month after the publication of his book. Very likely, he had managed to understand what his book was all about." To Weininger's credit, his writings do hint that he was well aware of his intrinsic lack of Aryan manhood, which is especially apparent in the fol-

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lowing excerpt from *Sex and Character*, “We do not hate anything with which we have no affinity at all. Often the other person only makes us realize the ugly and mean features we have in ourselves. This explains why the most rabid anti-Semites are found among the Jews. For only the completely Jewish Jews, like the totally Aryan Aryans, have no antisemitic disposition whatsoever.” While Weininger once wrote, “The real Jew, like a real woman, lives only within his species, and not as an individual,” he would unequivocally demonstrate with his self-slaughter that he was innately individualistic and hardly a passive follower of an ancient death cult that strives towards mindless collectivism, in-group self-worship, and ethnic chauvinism above all else. After all, women commit suicide on a much smaller scale than men and when they do get the gall to kill themselves they very rarely do it in a violent fashion that involves using a gun.

One of the more bizarre aspects of Weininger’s internal struggle that is subtly alluded to in *The Sex of Self-Hatred* is that, towards the end of his life, he had an unhealthy obsession with a barking dog. Indeed, according to friend Arthur Gerber, Weininger once confessed to him: “I spent a night in a hotel room in Munich once. I could not sleep. Then I heard a barking dog. I have never heard a dog bark in such a terrifying way. It must have been a black dog. It was the evil spirit. I fought with it, I fought with it for my soul. In sheer terror I bit the sheets to shreds that night. Since that time I have known that I am a murderer. That is why I must kill myself!” In fact, the dog began to symbolize death for Weininger, which is apparent in some of his writings. Notably, a barking dog can be heard in Nagler’s film just before Weininger collapses and prepares to put a bullet in his brain, as if a hound of hell has commanded the philosopher to seek self-obliteration. As Weininger wrote in his rather bizarre essay *The Dog*, “The eye of the dog irresistibly evokes the impression that the dog has lost something: it speaks of him (as does the dog’s whole bearing) of a certain mysterious relationship to the past. What it has lost is the I, self worth, freedom...The dog has a remarkably deep connection to death.” Of course, Weininger is speaking of the dog’s deracination and domestication by humans, but one suspects that he is projecting his own feelings as an involuntary member of the perennially uprooted and abstract Jewish (anti)race. Indeed, no other race is more uprooted, cultureless, and abstracted than the Hebraic race and Weininger—a man with a distinctly Aryan education who was heavily influenced by the *völkisch* writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain—was certainly more aware of this than anyone else. In a sense, one could argue that Weininger’s writings were the equivalent of the dog’s bark.

In less than ten minutes, Nagler’s film more or less attempts to do what Manker’s *Weininger’s Last Night* attempted in 105 minutes, albeit in a less personalized and more esoteric, Expressionistic, and even cabbalistic fashion. At the beginning of the film, we see Weininger in a rather dark and dreary room featuring a desk with a menorah with lit candles and a large open Talmud, as

if to allude that the philosopher was never far from his ancestral religion, especially when he was trapped in his deepest and darkest of thoughts. By the end of the film, Weininger has killed himself, the menorah candles have been burned out, and the Talmud is shut, thus alluding to the fact that the only way that he could truly destroy his Jewishness was by destroying himself (after all, as the famous Jewish saying goes, "Once a Jew, always a Jew"). Not surprisingly, especially considering Jews do not believe in an afterlife, suicide is considered a major sin in the Talmud as indicated by the following excerpt: "For him who takes his own life with full knowledge of his action [the Hebrew word is *b'daat*] no rites are to be observed. . . There is to be no rending of clothes and no eulogy. But people should line up for him [at the end of the burial ceremony] and the mourner's blessing should be recited [as the family passes through] out of respect for the living. The general rule is: Whatever rites are [normally] performed for the benefit of the survivors should be observed; whatever is [normally] done out of respect for the dead should not be observed." In one of the film's more striking and eerily erotic scenes, the viewer is exposed to a naked green-skinned Jewess lying in a tree whose rather shiny unclad body is covered in Tefillin straps as if they were bondage. Of course, these is a rare scenario of celluloid Hebraic hereticism as Tefillin (aka 'phylacteries,' which translates from Ancient Greek to "to guard, protect") are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah that are worn by religiously observant male Jews during weekday morning prayers and hardly objects that should be wrapped around busty unclad babes sitting in trees. By featuring a scene with a Hebraic harlot with nice tits covered in a religious object that is strictly worn by Jewish males, Nagler is probably alluding to the inherent misogynistic traditions of Judaism and how Weininger might have, somewhat ironically, inherited some of his attitudes regarding women from his ancestral faith. While his Hebrewess goddess would probably be somewhat alluring to most heterosexual males, Weininger would clearly be horrified by this lecherous lady who seems like she might suffer from *vagina dentata*. Notably, in Midrash in Ecclesiastes Rabbah it states: "When God created the first man he took him and showed him all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him, 'See my works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. And everything that I created, I created it for you. Be careful not to spoil or destroy my world—for if you do, there will be nobody after you to repair it.'" Of course, what better way to destroy God's creation than to have a seemingly lecherous Hebraic hoe lying on it in an erotically inviting fashion?! On a more simple level, this scene seems to be symbolic of Weininger's association of Judaism with his own supposedly warped sexuality, with the philosopher being just as repulsed with the obscenely outmoded dualistic laws of his ancestral faith as the scent of warm wet kosher cunts.

As auteur Nagler noted on his website in regard to *The Sex of Self-Hatred*,

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“It’s 1903, and Otto Weininger, Vienna’s most infamous self-hating Jew has decided to kill himself in a room containing Beethoven’s deathbed. He has just published his first book *Sex and Character*, and has yet to witness an acknowledgment of his self-assured genius.” Somewhat ironically, Weininger believed Jews were incapable of genius. Additionally, Weininger’s philosophical disciple Ludwig Wittgenstein, himself a self-loathing Viennese Israelite, once wrote, “Amongst Jews ‘genius’ is found only in the holy man. Even the greatest of Jewish tinkers is no more than talented. (Myself for instance.) I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively. I don’t believe I have ever invented a line of thinking.” Of course, in a sense, Weininger was a sort of Hebraic holy man trapped in an innately Aryan world that he never could really be a member of, no matter how desperately he tried. Notably, in the second book of his two-volume magnum opus *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918-1922) aka *The Decline of the West*, Oswald Spengler—a Prussian nationalist of sorts that also heavily influenced Wittgenstein—was careful to separate Weininger from the tradition of Occidental philosophy and instead designated him as one of the three great saints of Jewish mysticism following Baruch Spinoza and Baal Shem. Indeed, as Spengler provocatively wrote, “...Otto Weininger, whose moral dualism is a purely Magian conception and whose death in a spiritual struggle of essentially Magian experience is one of the noblest spectacles ever presented by a Late religiousness. Something of the sort Russians may be able to experience, but neither the Classical nor the Faustian soul is capable of it.” Aside from Spengler, fellow German Conservative Revolutionary movement figure Gottfried Benn—an Expressionistic poet that once supported but was later persecuted by the Third Reich—regarded Weininger as one of the three Jewish figures that he recognized as true geniuses. To put Benn’s respect for Weininger in perspective, it should be noted that he saw Franz Kafka as merely a “talent of the first order” as opposed to a true literary genius.

After watching *The Sex of Self-Hatred*, I have to say that it is probably impossible to fully appreciate the film if you are not already familiar with Weininger’s writings and lonely and pathetic yet nonetheless rather remarkable and singular life. Somewhat fittingly, the film concludes with the Weininger quote, “Whoever detests the Jewish disposition detests it foremost with himself,” which hints that Nagler believes that there is something innately Hebraic about Weininger’s kosher brand of antisemitism. While Weininger was indubitably the most famous and intellectually gifted of the so-called self-loathing Jews of his time (in fact, his case has been studied by various Jewish thinkers ranging from philosopher Theodor Lessing to child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim), he certainly was not the only Jew that suffered from a sort of spiritually schizophrenic metaphysical affliction. According to Israeli journalist Amos Elon in regard to *Sex and Character*’s ultimate influence, “(Weininger’s) book inspired the typical Viennese adage that anti-Semitism did not really get serious until it was taken up

by Jews.” Indeed, Viennese Jew Arthur Trebitsch (1880-1927)—the son of a wealthy Jewish silk industrialist—was heavily influenced by Weininger’s writings and he would eventually help to set up and fund the Austrian branch of the National Socialist party during the early 1920s. Despite his glaringly Jewish background, Trebitsch was apparently temporarily considered for the role of the Führer of the Austrian Nazis and he was even a personal acquaintance of both Hitler and his junky poet mentor Dietrich Eckart (who was also heavily influenced by Weininger). Additionally, great Austrian Jewish satirist Karl Kraus—a man that is sometimes described as the H.L. Mencken of the German language—was oftentimes described as a self-loathing Jew due to his attacks on Zionism and Freud and psychoanalysis (which he more or less regarded as a pseudo-scientific form of Judaism), among other things (somewhat ironically, Kraus oftentimes described Zionist founder Theodor Herzl as an “anti-Semite of Jewish origin,” which was actually a phrase Herzl coined in his revolutionary work *Der Judenstaat* (1896) aka *The Jewish State*). Although not necessarily a self-loathing Yid, Italian-Jewish philosopher Carlo Michelstädter (3 June 1887 – 17 October 1910) followed Weininger’s lead by penning his sole tome *La persuasione e la rettorica* (1910) aka *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, which is more or less an absurdly arcane suicide letter disguised as a philosophical tome, and then subsequently killing himself before he could see how his work would be received. Notably, like Weininger, Michelstädter committed suicide when he was only 23 years old. Incidentally, also like Weininger, Michelstädter would have a huge influence on self-described “super-Fascist” Julius Evola, who cites both tragic Judaic philosophers a number of times in his imperative work *Il Cammino del Cinabro* (1963) aka *The Path of Cinnabar: An Intellectual Autobiography*.

If Spengler was right in his belief that Weininger’s life and writings are not something that the Aryan mind can completely grasp, one suspects that the same can probably be said of *The Sex of Self-Hatred*. Of course, Nagler’s use of Hebrew and Jewish mysticism confirm that the auteur did not intend to make a film that would be accessible to the wretched goyim. If one thing is for sure, the film, which is practically dripping with the gash gravy of a wayward Jewess in certain parts, indubitably affirms Weininger’s posthumously published aphorism, “Science is asexual because it absorbs; the artist is sexual, because he emanates.” Quite ironically, Nagler’s film also brings great credence to Weininger’s theory that Jewishness and femininity are one and the same and that both women and Jews are more or less sex personified and lack the capacity for true individualism and transcendence, or as the philosopher wrote, “Both the genuine Jew and the genuine Women live only in the species, not as individualities.” Indeed, as virtually every notable Jew from Freud and his fellow Hebraic psychoanalysts to the hack writers and directors of the most loathsome of kosher Hollywood comedies demonstrate, Jews see all human psychology as being solely guided by sexual impulses and nothing more, which is quite ironical when one considers

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Weininger's rather wise words that, "The Jew is always more lecherous, more lustful, than the Aryan man, although, strangely enough and possibly in connection with the fact that he is not really of an anti-moral disposition, he is less sexually potent and certainly less capable of any great lust than the latter." While surprisingly respectful to its subject in many ways, *The Sex of Self-Hatred* falls into Weininger's philosophical trap in regard to the innately sexually degenerate and effeminate nature of the Jew, but then again that was probably Nagler's objective, as if he wanted to proudly embrace the stereotype of Judaic androgyny and frivolous sexual obsession that the *Sex and Character* condemns. In other words, Weininger's idea of Hebraic hell is Nagler's vision of heaven.

Notably, in the chapter entitled "Judaism" in his magnum opus *Sex and Character*, Weininger eerily noted regarding to the increasing degeneracy of his age, "Our present age shows Judaism at the highest peak it has climbed since the days of Herod. The spirit of modernity is Jewish, wherever one looks at it. Sexuality is affirmed and today's species ethic sings the wedding hymn to sexual intercourse [...] women and Jews are matchmakers: their aim is to make humanity guilty. Our age is not only the most Jewish, but also the most effeminate of all ages; an age in which art only provides a sudarium for its moods and which has derived the artistic urge in humans from the games played by animals; an age of the most credulous anarchism, an age without any appreciation of the state and law, an age of species ethic, an age of the shallowest of all imaginable interpretations of history (historical materialism), an age of capitalism and Marxism, an age for which history, life, science, everything, has become nothing but economics and technology; an age that has declared genius to be a form of madness, but which no longer has one great artist or one great philosopher, an age that is most devoid of originality, but which chases most frantically after originality; an age that has replaced the idea of virginity with the cult of the demivierge. This age also has the distinction of being the first to have not only affirmed and worshiped sexual intercourse, but to have practically made it a duty, not as a way of achieving oblivion, as the Romans or Greeks did in their bacchanals, but in order to find itself and to give its own dreariness a meaning." Of course, with the destruction of all of the great Western European empires as a result of both World Wars, the dubious official recognition of the State of Israel in 1948, and malignant cultural hegemony of virtually the entire world via Hebraic Hollywood and Zio-American warmongering, things have gotten much worse than Weininger could have ever dreamed of. While *The Sex of Self-Hatred* demonstrates in a fittingly preternaturally elegant fashion that Weininger was a severely mentally disturbed individual that suffered from a perverse pathological fear of pussy, he was also one of the most daring and painfully honest Judaic thinkers who has ever lived as a rather rare intellectual who was almost Christlike in terms of his arguable willingness to sacrifice his life to overcome his Jewishness (notably, shortly before he died, Weininger somewhat strangely wrote, "The old man is a false eternity:

age. The good (and the true and the beautiful) is eternally young. That was also what Wagner knew as his own incompleteness; he was Wotan. Siegfried and Parsifal have not yet appeared. The completely good man (Jesus) has to die young.”). As the above quote from *Sex and Character* also proves, Weininger was alarmingly prophetic to the point where one suspects that one of the reasons he committed suicide was because he could not bear to see where the world was headed. Indeed, it is a true sign that we live in (pre)apocalyptic times when a modern-day Sodom known as Hollywood regularly defecates out films where grotesque overweight heebs like Seth Rogen and Jonah Hill Feldstein discuss important things like their friends’ cocks and scheme to find ridiculously craven means to get in the unkosher panties of unwitting drunken blonde shiksa skanks. Of course, a world as culturally corrosive and decidedly degrading as the one where sapless scatological schmucks like Rogen and Feldstein are famous could not produce a Weininger, thus underscoring the importance of a film like *The Sex of Self-Hatred* where a genius of the past is given new life in an era when his theories are needed most.

-Ty E

WINTER SILENCE
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Sonja Wyss (2008)

When it comes to Germanic nations, I am going to have to assume that the Netherlands is the country that is the least in touch with its ancient pre-Christian pagan roots. Indeed, it should be noted that Sicilian philosopher Julius Evola—a man that had a more spiritual as opposed to biological view of race who was once contracted by Mussolini to start a journal entitled *Sangue e Spirito* aka Blood and Spirit that promoted a ‘Roman’ approach to race theory that contradicted the supposedly ‘materialistic’ view of race espoused by the racial theorists in National Socialist Germany—once argued in his work *The Path of Cinnabar: An Intellectual Autobiography* (1963) using the Dutch as an example of a people that, although racially pure in biological terms, had become completely spiritually uprooted, stating, “I rejected the fetish of merely physical racial purity, on the grounds that the purity of the external race of an individual is often preserved even when his inner race has dimmed or deteriorated (a common example of this is that of the Dutch and Scandinavians).” While the Dutch tend to be obnoxiously proud of their rampant irreligiousness and nihilistic atheism, their rigid approach to moral principles that they had adopted from centuries upon centuries of Calvinism seems to have become an innate part of their collective character, so the last European country that I would think would produce films with pre-Christian pagan themes is the Netherlands, yet there have been a couple of such unlikely cinematic works that have been produced there over the past decade or so and luckily they do not wallow in new age buffoonery. Indeed, aside from graphic novelist turned cinematic auteur Guido van Driel’s darkly comedic arthouse gangster flick *De Wederopstanding van een Klootzak* (2013) aka *The Resurrection of a Bastard*—a work set in Friesland that makes reference to the sacred Germanic pagan tree ‘Donar’s Oak’ aka ‘Thor’s Oak’ (which has been linked to the ‘world tree’ of Norse mythology, Yggdrasil) and the murder of the Christian missionary that cut it down, Saint Boniface—the Netherlands is also responsible for producing the ‘experimental Heimatfilm-cum-mountainfilm’ *Winterstilte* (2008) aka *Winter Silence* directed by video artist turned filmmaker Sonja Wyss in what would ultimately be her debut feature. To be fair, Wyss’ film is not as decidedly Dutch as some might assume as the director is actually a Swiss woman who has been living in the Netherlands for about the past couple of decades or so, not to mention the fact that the work was shot in a snowy mountainous region of Switzerland that hardly looks like the Lowland Netherlands. My interest in the film came upon researching it after it was recommended to me by a Dutchman and subsequently reading comparisons to the Nazi era work *Der verlorene Sohn* (1934) aka *The Prodigal Son* directed by Luis Trenker, who also played the lead role as a Tyrolean mountaineer who comes from a small Catholic village that, much like the one featured in Wyss’ film, still holds onto some of its

pre-Christian beliefs, myths, traditions, and customs. A rare work shot on HD digital video that radiates a certain classic beauty and refreshing traditionalist perspective that makes one temporarily forget all the ugliness, deracination, degeneracy, narcissism, noise, phony post-Christian moral systems, and nihilism that plagues the largely irreligious (post)modern Occidental world, *Winter Silence* ultimately offers the viewer an all too brief return to rustic simplicity that does not revolve around cheap beer and cheap women.

Notably, Wyss stated after finishing the film, "In my previous work I had no interest in working with dialogue, neither was there, from my point of view, any need for it. In *WINTER SILENCE* the essential is told with an eye movement or the gesture of a hand. Adding even a single word would have destroyed the tension of the gesture. So not only did I not have a need for dialogue in my work, it was worse, I disliked it." Indeed, with next to nil dialogue yet featuring a meticulously constructed sound landscape that is as bold, intimidating, and entrancing as the literally and figuratively cold mountain region where the film is set, *Winter Light* is an eloquently and obsessively assembled experiment in cinematic composition that offers more in terms of poetry than storytelling, though it tells a story and has a message that will certainly appeal more to members of the fairer sex, especially those that have had a more traditional upbringing that involved a father, a mother, and some sort of traditional moral compass. Set in a remote forgotten world where atavistic pagan instincts begin to slowly but surely thwart Nazarene abstractions, the film tells the shockingly transcendental story of a newly widowed post-menopausal matriarch who is reluctant to let her four adult-aged daughters flee the nest and begin living real lives of their own.

Winter Silence begins with a shot of a rocky snowy mountain juxtaposed with an inter-title featuring the following lyrics from Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria" aka "Ellens Gesang III": "Ave Maria! stainless styled. Foul demons of the earth and air, From this their wonted haunt exiled, Shall flee before thy presence fair. We bow us to our lot of care, Beneath thy guidance reconciled; Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer, And for a father hear a child! Ave Maria." It should be noted that the lyrics were taken from Scottish poet/playwright Sir Walter Scott's once-popular six cantos epic poem *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). During the film, the mother character will ask for the intercession of the Virgin Mary after her daughters become the personal playthings of a group of mysterious deer-men who summon the girls at night in a fairly ritualistic fashion. Set in a small isolated Swiss mountain village during the beginning of the winter, the film immediately introduces the quaint morality of its characters near the beginning of the film when a young man playfully throws a snowball at a girl and she responds in an overtly flirtatious manner by slightly pulling up her dress to reveal a couple inches of bare skin on her calf. Ultimately the tiny isolated world of the central family is knocked out of equilibrium when the bearded patriarch (Werner Imhoff) accidentally slips and falls off the side of a snowy mountain and dies

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as a result, thus leaving his wife and their daughters to wallow in a sometimes nefarious nightmare of archaic superstition and folklore. Before she is even told of her husband's accident, it seems as if the matriarch (Gerda Zangger) could sense that something had happened, just as she will later sense that a couple guys sporting cloaks and antlers are lurking outside her homestead and intend to inseminate her daughters with semen and a new-found sense of freedom. At the father's funeral, a mysterious masked pagan female figure with a white festive suit covered with bells embroidered with flowers randomly appears as if to indicate that, with the patriarch no longer around to maintain order, the moral fabric of the family will be ripped to shreds and the four nameless sisters (Sandra Utzinger, Brigitta Weber, Katalin Liptak, Sarah Bühlmann) will enthusiastically succumb to their baser instincts, thereupon causing them to transform into independent women in the process. Indeed, it's all over for the adult virgins when the ostensibly devilish deer-men cum.

After the patriarch perishes in a somewhat anti-climatic fashion, the somewhat overweight widow and her equally less than talkative and mostly homely daughters attempt to keep up appearances and go on with business as per usual, which includes things like killing, skinning, and eating rabbits, as well as regularly praying in an almost pathologically masochistic fashion. Indeed, while standing next to one another with their rosaries hanging from their hands, the girls and their mother collectively chant things like, "I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters...that I have failed to do good, and have done wrong. I have sinned in my thoughts, my words and my deeds. My thoughts, my words and my deeds. My thoughts, my thoughts, my words and my deeds." The daughters also collectively knit together a large large white quilt featuring deer designs, but when a single drop of blood stains the cloth after one of the sisters pricks her fingers in a scene that could symbolize both menstruation and/or the breaking of hymen, things begin to get a little bit ominous around the small house full of assumedly horny and surely sexually mature yet sexually inexperienced young women who no longer have to worry about their father watching their every move. Of course, the seemingly all-knowing mother understands dark and potentially even demonic things are about to be unleashed on her humble abode, as she spots a band of seemingly menacing deer-men lurking outside her home while her daughters sew together the quilt, which may or may not have summoned the wild beast men, but she cannot do much in the way of defending her daughters aside from hailing Mary and treating her daughters like sacred porcelain dolls that must be guarded at all costs from being tarnished.

When bedtime arrives, a teenage neighbor girl arises from her sleep like a somnambulist and climbs out of a window where a mysterious owl had just been sitting previously, as if the bird summoned her to let her know that it is time for her to fly the coop. It should be noted that this scene is juxtaposed with a sorrowful folk song sung by a girl about a virginal Polish maid who kissed a

“worthy cavalier” and ultimately paid for it with her life. The owl also later pays a couple visits to the widow as if to inform her that the time has come where her daughters must leave home. When the four sisters go to bed, one of them decides to look at herself in a mirror on their bedroom wall which is curiously covered with a piece of cloth, but when she takes off the cloth and proceeds to look at her reflection, she does not see her own face reflecting back at her but that of a young man that is about the same age as she is. Distressed yet seemingly equally enticed by the quasi-mystical experience, the girl decides to hide the mirror under her mattress and then proceeds to sleep with one of her sisters. Meanwhile, the mother goes to bed while holding a giant crucifix in her hands, as if it will protect her and/or her daughters from being raped by the deer-men. As the deer-men literally float across the landscape in an almost demonically poetic fashion in what is indubitably one of the most perniciously yet aesthetically pleasingly potent scenes in the entire film, two of the sisters decide to run outside as if lured there where they both meet ‘deer-men,’ though neither of them is wearing antlers and they are not beastly monsters but young men who the girls are quite happy to see. Needless to say, they have savage sex.

The next day as the sun rises, the entire lyrics to Handel’s “Ave Maria” are sung while one of the girls who got defiled by one of the deer-men smirks in ecstasy while her frigid sisters wash clothes in a rather robotic fashion. Indeed, it is quite obvious that the two girls that were deflowered by the deer-men have completely changed as a result of their erotic experiences, as they play around while doing their work and, unlike the other two sisters, actually smile instead of looking all morose and dead inside. When one of the sisters gets sick and vomits, it becomes obvious she is pregnant, so her mother decides to lock her in a barn where she cries and begs in vain to be let out. Meanwhile, the mother starts acting all the more eccentric and begins doing bizarre things like shaving flakes off of a ceramic Mother Mary statue and putting them into a cup of water which she makes one of her daughters drink as if to cure her of her undying thirst for cock and copulation. Of course, the mother’s efforts are ultimately in vain because by the end of the film, all four sisters are seemingly pregnant and locked in the barn, but they are certainly not sad. Indeed, not only do the sisters laugh amongst one another in an exceedingly jovial fashion, but they also use their bare feet to touch eggs that cover the barn floor that surely symbolize that they are gestating. Notably, the deer-men’s antlers now lie on the beds where the girls once slept, thus reflecting that the sisters have finally left home, at least in the metaphysical sense. In a fairly happy flashback sequence that will certainly catch the viewer by surprise as it is quite unexpected and is in stark contrast to most of the rest of the film in terms of its wholly positive ethereal pulchritude, the widowed mother looks at an old portrait of her and her husband and remembers when she became a woman after her happy marriage to her belated spouse. In the end, the mother smiles after finding flower petals in the snow that seem to

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not only symbolize the changing of the seasons but also the new chapters in her daughters' lives. In the end, each sister is depicted standing stoically on a different mountain while wearing a new fancy white pagan coat, as they have finally become 'independent' and are ready to lead their own lives and start their own families. Although paganism seems to prevail over Catholicism in the end, everyone is at least happy, including the widowed mother, who has also entered a new phase in her life.

Although a somewhat hermetic work that demands the viewer's undivided attention and really needs repeat viewings to be fully appreciated, *Winter Silence*, which might be best described as a 'neo-fable,' ultimately tells a relatively simple story in an exceedingly elegantly stylized and nicely nuanced way that is quite refreshing, especially considering all the static digital video twaddle that passes for European arthouse cinema nowadays. After all, nothing is more heretical in the contemporary Western European art and cinema world than works that attempt to establish a respectful link to one's cultural heritage and were the film directed by a man instead of a woman, I'm sure some sneering mainstream far-left film critic would have condemned the film for being 'fascistic' or something preposterous like that. Despite its sometimes dark and ominous themes and oftentimes strikingly foreboding tone, *Winter Silence* is ultimately a gentle and sensitive work with a discernible female touch that expresses a sort of sense of wonder that only women and children seem capable of. In fact, director Sonja Wyss' own personal comments regarding the production express a certain child-like intrigue and rather refreshing lack of pretense, especially her remark, "The shooting period was nonetheless a dream which was being realised. Some people claim that it is better for dreams to remain dreams than that they become reality. In this case I do not agree. It was and is still terrific to see my story becoming reality. Sometimes magical moments occurred during shooting, where we, the crew, were spectators astonishedly looking at what was unfolding before the camera." Indeed, I have no doubt in my mind that, in some sort of obfuscated way, the film is an expression of Wyss' own transformation into woman, so it is only fitting that it was her first feature. Undoubtedly I think Wyss was being totally honest when she stated, "Trained as a visual artist, I've made one feature film and am working on a new one. I know where my strengths and talents lie, working in this medium that's new to me, but I also know my limits." I can certainly see Wyss one day inhabiting a place somewhere in between Mai Zetterling and Leni Riefenstahl in terms of the great female filmmakers of cinema history, so let's hope that she maintains a sensible perspective regarding her strengths and weaknesses as a film director.

While one cannot be completely sure about everything, some of the pagan symbolism in *Winter Silence* is quite obvious, especially in regard to the deer-men, with many cultures having their own version of the man-beast with antlers, including the Pashupati of the Hindus and the Deer Kachina of the Hopi Indi-

ans, but clearly Wyss' film is obviously in reference to a European spiritual tradition. Indeed, aside from the 'Horned God'—one of the two primary deities found in the contemporary European neo-pagan 'religion' of Wicca—Europe also has the horned Gaulish god 'Cernunnos' aka 'Horn the Hunter' of Celtic polytheism. Like many deities of ancient pre-Christian European pagan religions, no one knows for sure what Cernunnos' cult or significance was, but some have speculated that he is a god of nature and/or fertility. Of course, Wicca's 'Horned God' was obviously influenced by Cernunnos and symbolizes nature, wilderness, sexuality, hunting, and the life cycle. Notably, Renaissance literature scholar Richard Sugg theorized that, in relation to its prominence as a recurring symbol in women's literature, the Horned God is, in Jungian terms, a symbol of the 'natural Eros' and masculine lover that 'subjugates' the social-conformist nature of the female shadow, thus encompassing a combination of the shadow and animus. Certainly Sugg's theory works in the context of the deer-men's role in *Winter Silence*, though it might not have been a conscious idea on Wyss' part. Indeed, I would actually find it more interesting if the film was more a product of Wyss' collective unconscious than something she merely contrived by doing banal research. In terms of its mystifying, phantasmagoric, and slightly horror-tinged depiction of the female characters' bewildering transformation from virginal girls that are figuratively still attached to their mother's umbilical cord into grown women who have obtained spiritual and sexual womanhood, *Winter Silence* is in good company with Jaromil Jireš's *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) and Richard Blackburn's *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973). In terms of its rarely sentimental but surely sensitive look at old pagan pre-Christian Europa, the film also makes a great double feature with Russian's Aleksei Fedorchenko's rather underrated work *Nebesnye zheny lugovykh mari* (2012) aka *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari*. While the work managed to earn a 'Golden Calf' (the Dutch equivalent to an Oscar) at the 2008 Netherlands Film Festival for sound design, it is doubtful that such a work would ever earn a large following in Holland or elsewhere, so Wyss might end up becoming an undervalued misfit of Dutch cinema like Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth, but I, for one, will certainly keep my eye on her already rather singular filmmaking career.

-Ty E

PUPPET MASTER: THE LITTLEST REICH
PUPPET MASTER: THE LITTLEST REICH

Sonny Laguna (2018)

As much as I would not want to admit it to my rather naive childhood self, horror franchises—or, more specifically, movie franchises in general—are a cynical insult to filmgoers and their intelligence, especially when one really considers how unbelievably horrible these solely monetary motivated sequels really are, but few better demonstrate such an obnoxious talent for churning out pointless no-budget sequel after pointless no-budget sequel than semitic smut-peddler Charles Bands' uniquely worthless Full Moon Features. Indeed, the production and distribution company, which almost makes Troma Entertainment seem like Warner Bros Studios in terms of sheer artistic bankruptcy and lack of creativity, is notable for producing a number of strikingly terrible horror franchises over the past couple decades that seemingly no one watches or desires, as if the company is simply a laughable front for some money-laundering operation or something. Indeed, Full Moon is so shameless in terms of its patently pathetic propensity for defecating out mindless and worthless direct-to-video duds that it actually created a rip off its own Puppet Master franchise—the company's first and most successful series—with the rather literally named Demonic Toys, as if the Puppet Master films were not bad and unimaginative enough. Needless to say, I never thought I would bother to ever watch, let alone review, another film from the franchise, at least until relatively recently when I found a pretty good reason. A series reboot that was penned by talented auteur S. Craig Zahler (Bone Tomahawk, Brawl in Cell Block 99) and that thankfully has virtually nil association with Full Moon (though Charles Band acted as a hands-off executive producer, it is actually the very first film of the Fangoria Films relaunch), Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich (2018)—a delectably anti-politically-correct horror-comedy co-directed by Swedish duo Sonny Laguna and Tommy Wiklund (Wither, Animalistic)—is unequivocally the greatest, most intelligent, and idiosyncratic film in the entire series. Vaguely artsy, gleefully gory and amoral, and even somewhat eccentric, the film is what you might expect from a counter-kosher nihilist that hated the Puppet Master franchise so much that he decided to completely dishonor its dubious legacy by making a malefic Mumblecore-like killer quirk piece where the very same puppets that fight Nazis in previous films became genocidal Jew-slaughtering toys of lilliputian Hitlerian terror. Indeed, if there ever was a no-budget trash flick that seems like it was meant to bitingly troll superlatively sanctimonious shoah gatekeepers like Eli Wiesel and Abe Foxman and play them like marionettes, it is this film.

Indeed, anyone familiar with Full Moons knows that, aside making retarded entertainment, they have always had a sort of insufferably insipid anti-Nazi fetish, which is surely the result of the company's owner Charles Band—a Litvak-descended Jew—who, among other things, apparently talked director David

Schmoeller into changing *Crawlspace* (1986) from an anti-Vietnam war tale to anti-Nazi one with Klaus Kinski portraying what is assuredly one of the most absurdly and inexplicably deranged National Socialist true believers in cinema history. Of course, Band did not stop there as he eventually introduced Nazis to his most famous franchise with *Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge* (1991). In fact, Band even created an entire sub-series of totally unwatchable anti-Nazi *Puppet Master* films known as the 'Axis Saga,' including *Puppet Master: Axis of Evil* (2010), *Puppet Master X: Axis Rising* (2012), and *Puppet Master: Axis Termination* (2017). While the classic puppet characters like 'Blade' and 'Pinhead' fought against the Nazis in the original films, *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* manages to disrespectfully mutilate and ultimately murder the entire *Puppet Master* mythos by having these very same puppets, as well as their eponymous creator André Toulon, portray Nazi spy killers that specifically target Jews, black, gays, and even gypsies. Probably to the great chagrin of Band, the anti-untermenschen motives of these characters ultimately makes them more intriguing than in the original films where they just seem like, well, mindless automatons. In fact, the puppets of the film oftentimes have more character (and even likeability) than the actual human characters, which was probably Band's (ultimately failed) intent with the original films. Gorehounds will probably also be pleased to know that the film has the highest body count of all of the *Puppet Master* films, though what fans of the franchise like seems pretty irrelevant when one considers that this film was clearly was not made with fanboy nostalgia or sentimentalism in mind. In that sense, it can be compared to the recent *Star Wars* franchise films like *Rogue One* (2016) and *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (2018), albeit in a good way. After all, whereas the new *Star Wars* films were an insult to George Lucas and the white heterosexual male target audience that made the series so popular in the first place due to being totally tainted with social justice warrior agitprop and grating displays of gynocentrism, the newest *Puppet Master* film paints a big beautiful bloody swastika onto the souls of both Charles Band and the franchise's original fans.

Despite the fact that he unfortunately had nil involvement in the actual directing of the film, screenwriter S. Craig Zahler—a relative novice that has demonstrated with only a handful of films that he is one of the best genre filmmakers working today—probably deserves the most credit for the spirit and overall positive qualities of the film. A music journalist turned filmmaker whose novels have been lauded by figures ranging from genre maestro filmmaker Walter Hill (*The Warrior*, *The Driver*) to legendary actor Kurt Russell to horror novelist Jack Ketchum, Zahler reveals much character in *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* in spite of the film's seemingly nonexistent budget and somewhat dubious direction (notably, co-directors Laguna and Wiklund have mostly dabbled in no-brain/no-budget digital horror trash and simply cannot be seen as true 'auteur' filmmakers). With his directorial debut *Bone Tomahawk* (2015)—a sort

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of seamless horror-western hybrid of John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), Wes Craven's *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977), and Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980)—Zahler demonstrated a natural directing talent for nuanced depictions of human failings and visceral ultra-violence. With his second feature *Brawl in Cell Block 99* (2017)—a moody and broody cinematic work with a fitting Siegel-esque title—Zahler revealed he could outdo his heroes like John Carpenter and Walter Hill by bringing a smidgen of arthouse cred and artful nuance to brute violence, gross criminality, and extreme character conflicts. Had Zahler directed *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*, it would have unequivocally been a much better film, even if the auteur is not exactly known for his dark humor. Although I can only speculate his motivations, Zahler's screenplay feels like a fun exercise in anti-fanboy postmodernism where the writer gleefully destroys a mostly worthless and forgettable franchise that probably has some sort of nostalgic significance to him but he felt was in desperate need of killing. After all, there is nothing more 'safe' and banally conformist than a film about puppets killing Nazis, so naturally the opposite scenario—in a sort of completely unexpected Mumblecore form no less—makes for a provocative film as demonstrated by the various obviously offended reviews from both professional and amateur (as well as Jewish and goy) reviewers.

In fact, some people are so offended by Zahler's work that, despite the fact he is Jewish, they have accused the auteur of being a neo-Nazi of sorts. Indeed, in a stereotypical whiny and pathetic article entitled 'Is S. Craig Zahler a White Supremacist?', a young autistic Jew-boy complains, "It's pretty clear that S. Craig Zahler has a formula for his fiction. Irredeemably evil minorities + damsel in distress threatened with sexual violence+ heroic Aryan(s)+ violent climax= jackpot!" Of course, what this hysterical Hebrew is really complaining about is the fact that Zahler prefers working within traditional western themes and does not contaminate his work with the social justice disease, Marxist sermonizing, nor phony token nonwhite characters, which is typical of contemporary Hollywood. Of course, as a member of the chosen tribe that has confessed that his favorite filmmaker is Sidney Lumet—a socially conscious Jew that directed such classic unAryan titles as *12 Angry Men* (1957), *The Fugitive Kind* (1960), and *Serpico* (1973), among various other examples—Zahler would have hardly made the cut if he had a time-machine and traveled back to the Third Reich in a desperate attempt to get a job with Dr. Joseph Goebbels' studio (though, as recounted by the filmmaker himself in Godard's *Contempt* (1963), it should be noted that half-heeb Fritz Lang claimed that he was actually offered such a lofty position). Clearly a sane and masculine-minded individual that is able to appreciate art despite the politics of a particular artist, Zahler once revealed in an interview with the self-described 'extreme music journal' *Worm Gear* in regard to his preternatural interest in counter-kosher art, "I'm a (non-practicing) Jewish dude, but reviewed bands with white power or fascist leanings, because I have

an ‘art over politics’ viewpoint, and even though Mike G was sensitive about this stuff, he and Wagner still ran reviews—often positive—of this material. People have a right to hate whomsoever they want to hate and also to express that feeling. Charles Dickens has a ton of anti-Semitic shit in his work, and he is a writer I like who was an inspiration to me as a young fiction writer. I’ve just never felt the best way to respond to intolerance is by returning the sentiment—partially because that is the desired response to intolerance.” Undoubtedly, if most Jews and left-wingers had a more reasonable attitude like Zahler does, the United States would not be on the brink of a second civil war, which is somewhat ironic considering that *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* depicts dolls waging a war against the very same sort of oh-so sensitive people that would want such a film banned and, for that very reason alone, it is much more important than the average hokey horror-comedy turd.

Just like most of the films Zahler has been involved with, Teutonic Überqueen Udo Kier—an unquestionably strangely charming chap that, not unlike fine wine, seems to get better with age—plays a small but unforgettable role in *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* as the eponymous figure André Toulon. Of course, in this (anti)sequel, Toulon is more of an antagonist than protagonist, but I could not help but root for him, as Herr Kier almost always comes off as distastefully likeable. A effortlessly effete ex-Nazi spy of half-French/half-German parentage, Toulon is depicted at the very beginning of the film slumming it at a soulless hipster bar in Postville, Texas in 1989. When Toulon tries to strike up a conversation with a female bartender and she gleefully attempts to piss him off by making out with her dyke friend, he mumbles “disgusting homosexuals” and subsequently summons his Nazi puppets to dispatch the extra county carpet-munchers. The cops eventually later catch Toulon in the act in his Hitler house of horrors using occult powers to kill subhumans, so they naturally kill him out of impulsive disgust. Flash forward three decades later to present day in Dallas, Texas and beta-boy divorcee Edgar Easton (Thomas Lennon)—a comic book nerd that writes comics and works at a comic store owned by his insufferably snarky semitic friend Markowitz (Nelson Franklin)—plans a road trip to a convention to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the infamous Toulon Murders because he owns one of the original Toulon puppets and plans to sell it there. Unbeknownst to Edgar, the ‘Blade’ puppet, which he finds in his deceased brother’s room, was also responsible for killing said deceased brother. Unfortunately for him, Edgar mistakes the uniquely unwitting mistake of bring his Jewish pal-cum-boss and new hot blonde girlfriend Ashley (Jenny Pellicer, who is the half-Norwegian niece of suicidal One-Eyed Jacks (1961) star Pina Pellicer) to a convention that is eventually blitzkrieged by a motley crew of nasty National Socialist puppets. Needless to say, as a place that details the history of an infamous Nazi where various expensive knickknacks and dolls are sold, the convention is flooded with Nazi-obsessed Jews so the puppets naturally decide

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to carryout a rather nasty Säuberung worthy of the Dirlwanger Brigade. While none of the puppets resemble Dr. Dirlwanger, Blade somewhat fittingly resembles a corpse-like Dr. Goebbels.

While Edgar might technically be the lead character, Markowitz is, for better or worse (I'd certainly choose the latter), certainly the most dominant and unforgettable, namely because he is a whiny neurotic loudmouth kosher cuckold of the stereotypically slave-morality-ridden sort that has Nazis on the brains, thereupon making his (rather pathetic) inevitable murder at the hand of a Hitlerian marionettes all the more grotesquely fitting. For example, when Edgar tells him that he will not be able to play his favorite music (e.g. grindcore) in the car and that he will have to pay for gas if he accompanies him to the convention, Markowitz retorts in a stereotypical smartass fashion by calling his goy pal "Genghis McHitler." Likewise, when the friends check into the convention hotel and the front desk clerk remarks, "You must be Markowitz," the Hebraic nerd bitchily retorts, "Why? 'Cause I look like a Jew?," thus underscoring his glaring lack of self-esteem and paranoia when it comes to his race-cum-religion. In short, Markowitz is what Woody Allen might be like if he was a chubby millennial anime nerd. When the puppets start killing, Markowitz—a grade-A four-eyed wuss with a flabby body and poor motor skills—declares in what is undoubtedly one of the most unintentionally hilarious one-liners in cinema history, "I got about six million reasons why" in regard to his decision to man-up and take on the terrifying toys that are exterminating his race. Needless to say, things do not go too well for Markowitz.

While it takes a little bit too long for the Hitlerian puppets to start killing, once it begins it feels like it never stops. The first notable death scene at the convention involves a yarmulke-sporting Jew named Jason and his wife. While looking for his missing 'Kaiser' puppet in the room, Jason rationalizes his somewhat curious collection of Third Reich material to his wife by arguing, "Lots of Jewish people collect Nazi memorabilia – medals, pamphlets, posters, stuff like that. My Uncle Shelley does. It's a reminder, sure, but there's also a feeling of empowerment there, you know? Like saying to the Nazis, 'Your big plans of genocide and world domination didn't work, and now your symbols are nothing more than trinkets for us, to collect, souvenirs of your failure and our survival.'" Rather ironically, only seconds after making his boastful Jewish power declaration, Jason finds his Kaiser, which proceeds to literally torch both him and his wife in what proves to be a literal two-person holocaust. Indeed, aside from knocking off his yarmulke, the flames reduces the faces of the couple to mere bone (or a sort of kosher 'totenkopf'). In a nearby room, a flying puppet named 'Autogyro' decapitates a gypsy while he is taking a leak and the headless gypsy even manages to piss on his own head after it falls into the toilet. After that, 'Blade' disembowels and slits the throat of a drunk blond gallery-owning queer shortly after he lies to his mother on the telephone about quitting drinking. In

another room, a fat bull-dyke calls out for her girlfriend 'Anne' in the bathroom and is naturally dismayed when she finds her blue naked corpse in bathtub in what initially seems like a suicide but is ultimately something much stranger. In what is undoubtedly the most grisly and unforgettable killing scene, a puppet named 'Money Lender'—an archetypal hook-nosed rabbi-like Jew with claws that match his schnoz—enters a pregnant negress' vagina and eventually exists her bloated stomach with the woman's fetus in its hands in a scenario that surely can be seen as symbolic of the millions of black babies aborted by Jewish doctors in the United States since the landmark legal decision of *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court in 1973. Undoubtedly, this scene is almost as shocking as Hebraic ex-abortionist Bernard Nathanson's classic anti-abortion doc *The Silent Scream* (1984), but I digress.

While *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* naturally does not have much in the way of a plot, it does have a lot of lame hipster-esque one-liners and whining, especially from Jew Markowitz, who states to protagonist Edgar after getting his fat neck slit by Blade, "Dedicate your next comment to me: to a great...Jewish hero. Shalom, amigo." Before croaking, Markowitz, who is certainly no hero, makes a rather pathetic beta-boy attempt at courting a uniquely unattractive Asian girl named Nerissa (Charlyne Yi) who, like the ill-fated Jew, has an unhealthy anime obsession. In what is undoubtedly one of the most (seemingly unintentional?) hilarious scenes in the film, Nerissa dies brutally as a result of her skull hitting pavement after making a failed attempt to jump out of a two-story window and into a dumpster in what feels like a sad commentary on the athletic capabilities of nerdy Asian fangirls. After all, Nerissa is the only character whose death is not the result of a Nazi puppet. Aside from possibly a negro bartender named 'Cuddly Bear,' who is brutally savaged by the puppets but whose true fate is never really revealed, none of the non-white/non-straight characters survive the genocidal puppet show. Being the white heterosexual male protagonist, it is naturally up to Edgar to save the day, but he's too much of a stereotypical modern-day spiritually castrated pussy to even accomplish that. Indeed, upon somehow magically realizing that Toulon is somehow alive (or, more specifically, 'undead') as a zombie and that he's using occult powers to control the puppets from the luxury of his resting place, Edgar crashes his car into the extra necrotic Nazi's fancy mausoleum. While this causes the puppets to lose their powers and thus stop killing, it quite predictably pisses zombie Toulon off and he instantly begins trying to kill Edgar and Ashley. While Edgar tries in vain to put up a valiant fight, Toulon grabs a luger out of a special Nazi suitcase and puts a bullet in Ashley's brain. In the end, Ashley is dead, Toulon gets away by slowly fleeing into nearby woods, and Edgar translates his story into a heart-broken issue of his comic series 'Madame Lightning.' While signing copies of his cryptically autobiographically comic, a young fan asks Edgar if he plans to write more comics and he replies, "Yeah, probably. I don't feel like things are

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fully resolved” and then the film predictably concludes with an inter-title that reads, “To Be Continued.”

As someone that is relatively familiar with various forms of National Socialist aesthetics and occultism/esotericism, I was somewhat disappointed that *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* did not really exploit this material. For example, at the very least, Toulon’s lair and/or mausoleum could have featured *völkisch* symbols like the ‘Schwarze Sonne’ (aka ‘Black Sun’), runes, and/or the quite alluring Ahnenerbe emblem. Additionally, aside from the skull-faced ‘Blade’ (apparently, three different versions of the puppet were used for the film) and ‘Money Lender,’ most of the puppets were simply too goofy to be taken seriously, especially ‘Happy Amphibian,’ ‘Grasshüpfer,’ and ‘Mr. Pumper.’ Undoubtedly, the filmmakers probably should have sought inspiration from Prussian auteur Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s magnum opus *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), which features genuinely creepy puppets of Nazi bigwigs like Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, and Göring. In fact, I would argue that the life-size puppets in the criminally-underrated British Angela Carter adaptation *The Magic Toyshop* (1987) directed by David Wheatley are much creepier than the ones in *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*, but then again, a pretty large percentage of audience members would probably find the film to be too disturbing if it took a more serious approach. After all, it is first and foremost a kitschy and sometimes even sardonic dark-comedy, as it would probably be impossible to take it serious if it was anything else, hence one of the various reasons why Zahler probably opted to not direct the film himself.

While I doubt it was the filmmakers’ conscious intention (though it might have been, at least partly, especially screenwriter Zahler’s), *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* can certainly be seen as an ‘unconventional’ commentary on the Holocaust and the legacy of Third Reich in the modern age, especially in regard to young American Jews that have no real connection to that era. Personally, I was somewhat shocked to learn that Zahler was a Jew after seeing his features like *Bone Tomahawk* and *Brawl in Cell Block 99* they are highly masculine and testosterone-fueled cinematic works with traditional western themes that feature none of the insufferable sort of Judaic slave-morality sermonizing or race hustling that you expect from the stereotypical contemporary Jewish filmmakers ranging from Spielberg to Judd Apatow to J.J. Abrams, so I find it especially interesting that the Jews featured in *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* are unlikeable Holocaust-obsessed neurotics and narcissistic wimps that seem driven by a pathological obsession with antisemitism, hence the nerdy Jew named Jason who brags that he collects Nazi memorabilia specifically because it provides him with a certain “feeling of empowerment.” I do not think it is any coincidence that he is the first character killed in the film as his mentality and overall demeanor epitomizes what gentiles find most loathsome about Israelites. While various Jewish intellectuals ranging from Karl Marx to Otto Weininger to Gi-

lad Atzmon have theorized about the motivation behind Jewish self-loathing and self-obsession, Charles Manson, who knew a number of prominent Jewish gangsters in prison, of all people once provided one of the more interesting arguments behind this. Indeed, in a 1989 interview with Penny Daniels, Manson, who sometimes made insightful statements in between his esoteric gibberish, remarked in regard to the Jewish tendency of Hitler (anti)worship and the strange tendencies in relation to his Jewish cellmate Jerry Milman, “How do you have peace on this earth? You can’t have peace on this earth unless you let the Second World War die. You wanna keep the Second World War going?! You wanna keep selling and buying Germans and dead Indians on TV every day? You know, that’s got to stop. The Second World War’s got to stop. And its got in the Jews. The Jews won’t let the Second World War stop. They keep the Second World War going [...] they keep perpetuating it because they’re making money! As soon as the Second World War was over, they never stopped the brainwashing. The brainwashing they were selling the American public was making money [...] Their not gonna stop making money! If the combination is there to make money, their gonna keep selling it. They’ll sell it all the way until I’m in the cell with a guy name Milman. Jerry Milman. And he’s got pictures of Hitler and Japanese and things and all . . . and I said, ‘Boy, Hitler must’ve been a hell of a guy,’ and he said, ‘Hitler was terrible. I hate him! I hate him!’ I said, ‘Why do you hate him?’ He said, ‘I’m a Jew.’ I said, ‘Why do you enshrine this guy? Is he your daddy?’ And he looked up to his mother’s fear. And his mother’s fear was Hitler. Hitler was like his father figure. He loved Hitler . . . but he hated Hitler. He needed Hitler to hold him up. Because Hitler was holding his hate up. Because, without his hate, he didn’t exist. He didn’t have no reason to live unless he had some hate. He didn’t have any reason to buy and sell unless the money held him up. If you took the money away from him, if you took the hate away from him . . . he’d be gone.” Clearly, *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* is a film that is a venomously sardonic assault on the very sort of archetypal Jew that Manson mentioned in his rant. Notably, more recently, Jewish American Olympian wrestler Mark Schultz, who was depicted in the *Foxcatcher* (2014), made a similarly and no less academically unsound argument when he offended his fellow Jews on Twitter by writing on August 14, 2018 (in a now-deleted tweet), “Jews win by sticking together against divided gentiles. Jews love persecution. It justifies offense and reinforces the need for strength in numbers to divide and conquer gentiles.” While just speculation, I can only assume that Zahler’s intention with the film was to drive a proverbial stake through the the perennial Hebraic vampire of Judaic victimhood, which the original *Puppet Master* franchise undoubtedly contributed to.

Undoubtedly, despite its surely shallow anti-Nazi angle, *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* is—whether intentional or not (I can only assume the former)—a critique of American post-holocaust Jewry and its own sick propensity towards

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neurotic self-worship. Just as the Halloween or Friday the 13th slasher flicks depict dumb pretty Aryan teenagers being dispatched for committing sins of the flesh, the Jews and other 'minorities' in the film become victims of their own sinful Hebraic hubris. While it would be easy to write-off screenwriter Zahler as a stereotypical self-loathing Jew, that would be too simple and ignores the rest of his highly masculine (read: unkosher) and master-morality oriented oeuvre. In short, Zahler seems to have mostly transcended his Jewishness, hence why he had no qualms about casting living legend Mel Gibson in his latest feature *Dragged Across Concrete* (2018). Indeed, as the great Otto Weininger once wrote, "The antisemitism of the Jew, then, proves that nobody who knows the Jew regards him as lovable—not even the Jew himself. The antisemitism of the Aryan supplies the no less significant insight that Judaism must not be confused with the Jews. There are Aryans who are more Jewish than many Jews, and there are really some Jews who are more Aryan than certain Aryans." Surely, considering Zahler's less than hysterical attitude towards antisemites and antisemitic art, it can be said that he has, at least partly, transcended his own innate Jewishness. Likewise, the typical Jewish filmmaker could not have created a film like *Brawl in Cell Block 99* where a white blue collar worker commits a sort of twisted modern Christ-like sacrifice and, as Weininger also wrote, "Christ was a Jew, but only in order to overcome Judaism in himself most completely, since the firmest believer is he who has overcome the most powerful doubt, and the most positive affirmer he who has risen above the most dreary negation."

Unlike a lot of cinema, Zahler's films, including *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*, reject the metaphysical diseases of modernity and as Weininger wrote over a century ago in regard to modernity, "Our present age shows Judaism at the highest peak it has climbed since the days of Herod. The spirit of modernity is Jewish, wherever one looks at it. Sexuality is affirmed and today's specifies ethic sings the wedding hymn to sexual intercourse. The unfortunate Nietzsche is certainly not responsible for the grand union of natural selection and natural fornication, whose despicable apostle is called Wilhelm Bölsche. He appreciated asceticism and thought its opposite more desirable only because he suffered too much from his own. But women and Jews are matchmakers; their aim is to make humanity guilty." Aside from being responsible for a cinema that emphasizes heroism and strength over guilt and neuroticism and family love over soulless lust, Zahler creates films that promote sacrifice over self-worship and thus cannot be seen as in any way characteristically Jewish. While David Mamet—a right-wing Zionist Jew that attacks any Jew that rejects his race and/or religion—might have once wrote, "The quiddity of the self-loathing Jew, the opted-out Jew is his grotesquerie [...] his efforts at assimilation foiling the possibility of contentment with a group to which he actually belongs"—Zahler seems content due to the fact that he has transcended his Jewishness and not simply because he has fallen victim to 'assimilation.' After all, how could a Jew assimilate into an industry and

culture that is covertly, if not overtly, kosher?! Additionally, Zahler is not helping his career by creating films involving Jews being blow-torched by puppets or muscular white proles exterminating entire gangs of Mexicans singlehandedly, so one can only come to the conclusion that he is an unequivocal auteur that is driven to create a deeply personal, albeit genre-oriented, that comes straight from the soul. Undoubtedly, the subversive nature of *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* becomes clear when one compares it to John Landis' surprisingly pathos-ridden *An American Werewolf in London* (1981)—a clear expression of culturally schizophrenic Jewish-American identity—where the auteur reveals his deep-seated Jewish paranoia in a nightmare scenario where a brigade of demonic Nazi werewolves quite literally holocausts his entire family in a dream-sequence that seems somewhat out of place in the film, at least if one does not realize it is a cinematic work that is fundamentally about Judaic introspection. Where it is clear that Landis is obsessed with Nazis and antisemitism in his classic kosher werewolf flick, *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* is a film that makes a mockery of such sentiments by gleefully depicting the most seemingly benign children's playthings brutally liquidating an eclectic collection of victim-mentality-ridden *untersmenschen*, thereupon killing the very spirit and essence of Charles Band's franchise in the process.

In preparation for this review, I attempted to (re)watch *Puppetmaster* (1989) and *Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge* (1991) but, unlike *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*, I found myself being unable to really concentration on the banality of it all. Indeed, I am willing to go as far as saying without even the slightest bit of exaggeration that the famous final segment "Amelia" of the classic made-for-television anthology horror film *Trilogy of Terror* (1975) features more delightfully deranged doll action and eccentric excitement than all of the original *Puppet Master* films combined. It is also no surprise that *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich* shares something in common with *Trilogy of Terror*—a film where a so-called 'Zuni Fetish doll' takes on a dumb bitch chick—in that, on top of the fact that it features a puppet taking over the body of a human, it utilizes Lovecraftian tier fright tactics in its utilization of historical socio-cultural racial paranoia and animosity to stoke fear (whereas *Black Devil Doll From Hell* (1984) fails in that regard because it was made for blacks by blacks and thus comes off as superlatively silly). Notably, one of my earliest movie memories is being exciting about the fact my parents were able to grab a new release copy of *Child's Play 3* (1991) at a local store video store, yet now it is nearly impossible for me to take any of these toy horror shit seriously thus making it seem like a miracle that I was even able to enjoy *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*. Interestingly, in his book *The Mask Jews Wear: The Self-Deceptions of American Jewry* (1973), Reform Judaism Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz—a philosopher from a more liberal strand of Judaism that is arguably atheistic and promotes a assimilationist tendencies—reveals a certain shame and repulsion towards Occidental civiliza-

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tion, arguing, "I therefore have much sympathy for the concept of Black Power. As a Jew, I know personally that one can never truly be a person as long as he looks at himself with the eyes of those who hate him. I do not see how Jews can dodge the fact that, religious and social traditions aside, much of the best of Western literature from Marlowe to T.S. Eliot sees the Jew as intruder or enemy. So, every Jew appropriating even the best of this civilization must sooner or later come to terms with the scandal, the disgrace of his Jewishness. And this is one reason why we wear Marrano masks with such fixity—they enable us to escape from our stigmatized inner selves; they proclaim us to be just like everyone else." When I watch Zahler's films, I certainly don't sense this shame or repugnance towards the West, as they are cinematic works that express the opposite. For that reason alone, I certainly would nominate Zahler to 'Honorary Aryan' status, even though his favorite filmmaker is Sidney Lumet. As for a potential sequel that is hinted at quite blatantly at the conclusion of *Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich*, the possibilities seem endless but I think the coolest concept would involve the puppets heading to the nightmarish Unite the Right of 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia. After all, the counter-protestors were comprised of a rather eclectic collection of degenerates that the puppets would clearly love targeting, though somehow I think they would go after Richard Spencer too.

-Ty E

APOCALYPSE ACCORDING TO CIORAN

Sorin Ilieșiu (1995)

During the beginning of the ethereal yet gritty documentary *Apocalypse According to Cioran* aka *Apocalipsa dupa Cioran* (1995), the exceedingly morose quote “World history is nothing else than a repetition of catastrophes waiting for a final catastrophe” appears on the screen among real war scenes of death and destruction. Those familiar with Romanian philosopher Emil Cioran’s work will be anything but surprised by the quote, but for the initiated, such a quote might seem a tad bit misanthropic. Also during the introduction, Cioran makes an appearance with his head tilted down and with his hands covering his head. Such a dramatic pose would lead many to suspect that the elderly man had just lost his wife to cancer or any other of a number of tragedies that usually affect those people in their barely shimmering golden years, but, alas, Cioran is in his typical and virtually lifelong state of despair; a cursed gift that enabled the Romanian-turned-unenthusiastic-Frenchman philosopher to write a number of books that are often considered the last great philosophical works of the Occident. Cioran has been described as the “King of pessimists”; no doubt a title that he deserves as he both wrote and practiced his disdain for living for most of his adult life like no man before nor after him. In the film *Apocalypse According to Cioran*, fellow Romanian philosopher (of a later generation) Gabriel Liiceanu (who also wrote a book on his elder) visited Cioran during his last year on earth at his humble apartment in Paris, France; a city the Romanian philosopher had been living in since a self-imposed exile 53 years earlier and described as an “Apocalyptic Garage.” Despite living in France for the far greater portion of his life, Cioran refused to allow a French film crew to interview him, so one might wonder why he left his homeland in the first place if he only seems trusting towards those that share the same ancient Slavo-Latin peasant blood. During his twenties, Cioran supported the Iron Guard; a mystical Romanian fascist movement led by the undeniably charismatic and equally handsome Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. As expressed in *Apocalypse According to Cioran*, Cioran’s emigration to France was largely the result of his disillusionment with the Iron Guard and its notorious acts of bloody murder and selfless martyrdom. While living in Berlin, Germany in 1933, Cioran approved of Adolf Hitler’s execution of the Night of the Long Knives; a cannibalistic purge resulting in the murder of most of the Nazi SA brownshirts leadership but mass murder in his homeland caused great regret and shame in the Romanian philosopher; the sort of discomposure that causes a man to leave his homeland for good.

Like his imperative influence Friedrich Nietzsche, Cioran was the son of a religious man who made no qualms about disavowing his father’s faith. Also like Nietzsche, Cioran’s words are those of a nihilist prophet. Like many great ancient religious texts, Cioran’s works are packed with infinite wisdom and are

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worthy of much consideration and constant critical contemplation. During his fascist years, Cioran wrote the book *The Transfiguration of Romania* (1936); a Spenglerian (and, indeed, the works of fellow pessimist Oswald Spengler were a huge influence on the young Cioran) text that calls for the cultural rejuvenation of Romania in the hope of assembling a rich destiny like France and a large population rivaling that of China. As explained in *Apocalypse According to Cioran*, the Romanian philosopher's fascist activism was largely the result of his belief in the inferiority of Romania and its relatively uneventful history. Cioran felt that Romania acquired most of its culture from alien peoples and nations and had nothing of its own, thus, he saw the Iron Guard as an active road towards revamping his homeland and putting it on a path to the sort of greatness associated with Germany and France. Of course, one cannot blame Cioran for his sentiments as *Dracula* is probably what Romania is best known for on an international level nowadays. Like *Dracula*, Cioran would also spend his nights wide awake. In fact, in *Apocalypse According to Cioran*, Cioran cites insomnia as the unwanted inspiration that sparked his despair and irregularity; the two uncomfortable states that would help develop and fine tune the prowess of his poetic pessimistic philosophy. As Cioran explains in the documentary, insomnia stirs lucidness and conflict in the sufferer, henceforth creating a wholly atypical and conflicting perspective in the individual. Like many (if not all) great artists, Cioran created works of philosophy mainly for therapeutic reasons, thus, it should be no surprise that his works became all the more dark after his brief and regretful flirtation with fascism. Cioran also cites megalomania as one of the inspirations behind his works and his inevitable break with fascism. In the documentary, Cioran explains that for most of his life he believed that everyone except himself lived under illusion. Naturally, an extremely pessimistic hyper-individualist is going to eventually realize that their philosophy is incompatible with a dangerously altruistic collectivist movement.

During his youth, Cioran made a morbid hobby of collecting human skulls and using them as soccer balls, which is indubitably a purely coincidental metaphor for his pessimistic yet often humorous and strangely joyful writings. Naturally, prophets of doom tend to have a distinct and refined sense of humor for such individuals would find life totally unbearable if they were unable to find amusement in things that also happen to be stabbing at their lost souls on a 24 hour basis. As he makes bluntly clear in *Apocalypse According to Cioran*, futility and death are the two themes that can be found in all of Cioran's works and have haunted the unromantic Romanian for most of his life. *Apocalypse According to Cioran* features a soundtrack reminiscent of the score featured in Herk Harvey's surrealist horror masterpiece *Carnival of Souls* (1962) which might sound strange to those reading this review but it is undoubtedly nothing short of complimentary when considering the real-life horrors and despair Cioran lived and wrote about on a day-to-day basis. Whereas one could consider Mircea Eliade the Martin

Heidegger of Romania (both philosophers never apologized for their political activism yet both thinkers have retained most of their prestige as distinguished thinkers); Emil Cioran is surely the Oswald Spengler of his homeland as both apocalyptic philosophers originally desired a nationalist revolution in their nation but eventually lost total faith in the cause and died in a state of loneliness and hopeless impotence. Of course, Cioran, unlike Spengler, is still considered a highly revered thinker today as even the wretched Jewess Susan Sontag, who once proclaimed "the white race is the cancer of human history," stated of the Romanian ex-fascist that he is "one of the most delicate minds of real power writing today. Nuance, iron, and refinement are the essence of (Cioran's) thinking." As one would expect from a documentary about Cioran, *Apocalypse According to Cioran* is not an embarrassingly emotional sentimentalist look at the nihilist priest but a complimentary celebration of his relatively uneventful life and irreplaceable work.

-Ty E

HESHER

HESHER

Spencer Susser* (2010) In a way, Heshher reminds me of Kubrick's *Lolita*, in which Peter Sellers gives a typically varied comedic performance that takes up a lot of screen time in a story that does not at all require his services. You get the sense that Kubrick would have been better off trimming the Sellers footage and making it into a separate film, perhaps "The Pink Pantherphile" or something. Same deal with Heshher- Joseph Gordon-Levitt gives a pitch-perfect, career-best performance as the ur-headbanger- a shittily tatted, long-haired pyromaniac who speaks in monosyllabic grunts and feels most at home clad only in his underwear on someone else's couch eating their cereal when he's not zooming around town in his souped-up van blaring "Battery". It is an instantly recognizable archetype, heightened to almost cartoon levels, but brought to life so effortlessly by a nigh-unrecognizable Levitt (Gordon-Levitt?) that one wonders why the fuck the filmmakers found it necessary to drop so awesome a character into so saccharine and unbearable a tepid family drama. I get the sense they were going for a sort of *Visitor Q*, "Teorema"-lite, the whole 'family in peril shaken out of their routine by enigmatic stranger' deal, only in this case instead of tit-milk orgies and homosexual dalliances with Terence Stamp we are treated to that guy with the big forehead from *The Office* looking stricken and miserable for two hours and one of the more grating child performances in recent memory.

Young TJ's mom dies and he has trouble coping and so he oh-so-quirkily becomes obsessed with owning the car she died in and runs afoul of this kid who works there who bullies him and he lives with his doting grandma whom he totally takes for granted and his dad who sits around in his underwear all doped up on pills, possible side effects of which include having a huge fucking forehead and only being amusing on *The Office*, intermittently at that, and so one day all angsty and unable to cope and shit TJ throws a brick through a window at a construction site and totally exposes Heshher in the process as that's where the dude was squatting so Heshher plants himself in TJ's house with the threat of bodily harm to TJ and in the process teaches TJ and his family about being a family, sticking up for oneself, AND he gets to totally plow away at Natalie Portman (Heshher that is, TJ totally wants to get at it, but he's like fucking 12 and she's Natalie Portman). So yeah, real TV Movie of the Week stuff, TJ dealing with grief, his shitty home situation, and being bullied with Heshher incongruously pasted onto the scenes, with nary a reaction from the cast. Heshher plops down on the couch across from dad, dad just kinda shrugs, Heshher watches TJ getting forced to eat a urinal cake at school, the bully hardly bats an eye. He also implicates TJ in some arson or something and TJ is the one taken to the police station. Up until the point we see Heshher and the grocery store clerk Portman plays going at it, I was pretty much convinced Heshher was just a creation of TJ's subconscious, like a live-action Calvin and Hobbes where instead of pissing on a Honda decal

Calvin has just lost his mom and grows his bangs all shaggy like so they can hide his tears. Which reminds me, this TJ kid is fucking annoying- I think the only direction given to the kid playing him was "alternate between looking like your mom is not taking you to your dad's for the weekend so you'll have to wait a week to play the new Halo game and looking severely constipated."

Which sucks, because Heshher is an awesome character. Take for instance the scene where Heshher, chomping away at the dinner table, chastises TJ for not walking with his grandma by talking about how he heard about a "granny rapist" and proceeding to explain in graphic detail what being a granny rapist entails- hilarious! Or the scene where without rhyme or reason Heshher demolishes some random household's pool, throwing in all of the patio furniture and setting it ablaze, and since Portman is on hand during this it brings to mind the pool scene in Garden State, that sterile slice of linoleum masquerading as "indie" cinema, and in a way it's like Heshher is saying FUCK Garden State and fuck you, Ms. Portman, for producing THIS steaming pile, fuck Heshher, I want out. Dude has a horrible tattoo on his chest of a stick figure flipping the bird and blowing it's brains out! Heshher, the character, deserves a much better starring vehicle than Heshher the After School Special provides. By the time the finale rolled around, with Heshher the holy ghost to TJ's son and forehead guy's heavenly father pushing a coffin in slow motion as mood music blares on the soundtrack, I half prayed for Heshher, so vivid and malevolent and METAL, to flip the coffin over, grab the dead grandmother's corpse (oh yeah, SPOILER!) and drunkenly facefuck her, revealing himself to be the granny rapist, before cracking Dwight from The Office's bulbous dome like an egg and making TJ eat a piece of his cranial discharge, SATAN! But no, we are merely placated with the footnote of Heshher leaving behind "Heshher was here" in spray-paint on the roof of the house, har har, as TJ and dad look on all misty-eyed and appreciative and shit. What a waste.

-Jon-Christian

DO THE RIGHT THING
DO THE RIGHT THING

Spike Lee (1989)

Due to the corrosive nature of Spike Lee's most controversial film, to discuss the film would be to humor the happenings with analytical discussion. In other words, if you haven't seen or plan to see *Do the Right Thing* I don't recommend reading any further as I will reveal many plot points. *Do the Right Thing* is Spike Lee's most critically acclaimed film to date and for good reason. Concocting a heatwave aesthetic, the burning asphalt leaps off camera and scalds your senses. This was Spike Lee's aim with the bright orange backdrops and sweat-covered hood rats marching up and down the block - it's quite obvious that he succeeded. The heat mirrors two purposes: to allow the boiling point of racial tension a visual metaphor and to accentuate the "hottest day" of the summer in which the film is set in. Rewind back to 1989 and you'll see the release of *Do the Right Thing*, a racially conscious masterpiece of urban life that terrified critics as fears and rumors of the film's release inciting real riots spread. To fully understand *Do the Right Thing* requires two key elements: being black and acquainting yourself with the many characters that Lee immortalized. As I am not African-American (but can speak jive), I must rely heavily on the second aspect in order to absorb any intended effect that Spike Lee had set out to burn into the brains of naive white liberals.

Allow me to introduce a selection of the colorful cast of characters now. Mookie, played by Laurence Fishburne, is a passive manipulator. Mookie also moonlights as a dead-beat father to his Latino girlfriend who has two volumes, squabble and mute - no in between. He is employed at Sal's Famous Pizzeria located in the projects of Brooklyn. Mookie is what can be considered a terrible human being, which is especially apparent at the film's end. He not only takes extended breaks while on the job but whines incessantly about having to deliver the pizza up and down the block - a task of which he is graciously paid but fails to understand the idea of trade. It comes as a surprise that he maintained his employment for as long as he did. Sal is a compassionate yet fiery Italian-American who maintains his business regardless of the racial climate that the area has turned towards. Considered not a dangerous neighborhood but a belligerent one, Sal feeds off the thoughts of his pizza feeding generations of children, surely a sweet man with the thickheaded and proud visage of an Italian. His pizzeria is what fuels the fire that rages throughout the second half of the film. Sal's two sons, Pino and Vito, are the typical Italian brothers, feuding amongst each other and getting into a homo-erotic fights now and again. *Buggin' Out* is the catalyst for the perilous episode that befalls the block and seems to reflect the ignorance of director Spike Lee, but we'll get to that topic in point later. Rounding out the cast is Da Mayor, a humble old drunkard whose wisdom makes up for his lack of decision-making skills and intelligence shared by the rest of the cast, and finally, Radio

Raheem, a philosophizing street preacher who sermons on the relationship of Love & Hate - Spike Lee's homage to Night of the Hunter.

As I mentioned before, Buggin' Out is the main offender in the film and the cause of substantial structural damage and the death of a brother. After purchasing a slice from Sal's Famous Pizzeria, Buggin' Out becomes highly offended when he notices no "brothas" on the Wall of Fame within Sal's Italian establishment. Sal responds "You want brothers on the wall? Get your own place". This is a perfectly logical retort from someone who manages and performs upkeep on his own shop. Seeing how Buggin' Out is so concerned with "staying black" and avoiding responsibility, you'd think an infraction could be laughed off as juvenile and redundant. But no, that isn't enough for Buggin' Out, who enlists the help of Radio Raheem to boycott Sal's Famous Pizzeria. The irony involved is that Spike Lee demonstrated the same indomitable Negro spirit as Buggin' Out did by ousting Clint Eastwood. "He [Eastwood] did two films about Iwo Jima back to back and there was not one black soldier in both of those films," said Spike Lee during an interview. Clint Eastwood responded how any self-respecting legend would and told the idiot to "Shut his face". What does one expect when someone in a league of his own such as Eastwood falls victim to a state of radical racial malaise. In one fell swoop, Spike Lee dropped his facade of intelligence and proved without a shadow of a doubt that he is as hypocritical and aggressive as the characters he creates. Furthermore, Do the Right Thing failed in regards to sympathize with the blacks. For most, if not all, white viewers, by the end of Do the Right Thing, one cannot help but to weep for Sal and his former famous pizzeria - victim to the destructive force of the black community. If what Spike Lee expects of his brethren to be true, by films end, blacks would be cheering on the destruction in quasi-brainwashed fashion while weeping for Radio Raheem, a man of no distinguishable humanity.

Radio Raheem is the whistle-blower to the climax. Herded into the climactic boycott of Sal's Pizzeria like cattle, Radio Raheem's stubbornness and general inconsiderate behavior lent to the greatest tragedy in Do the Right Thing - the death of the ghetto-blaster - the consequential relic of the film. Had Radio Raheem known that this confrontation led to his future death, would he have changed anything? Probably not. His character seemed to give priority to "keeping it real" over his own life. I find myself hardly empathizing over Radio Raheem's death, a scene that which later greatly inspired Mathieu Kassovitz's La Haine - as he never applied himself to anything other than "hood". The scene in which Radio Raheem enlightens Mookie on left hand, right hand is one of the more fascinating scenes to be found and proves that had Radio Raheem straightened out and garnered even a sliver of responsibility, he could have done something, anything other than loitering and listening to Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" on repeat. In the end, Mookie reveals himself to actually be the Antichrist of urbanites when he incites a riot by throwing a garbage can through

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the pizzeria window. As I mentioned before, Sal blesses Mookie with a job. Something that seems so irrelevant and passé to Mookie is actually a necessary element of escaping the cycle that all black youth are born into. As Spike Lee records via stream-of-consciousness in his companion volume to the film, "I gots to get paid. Mookie repeats this often. When he delivers pizzas, he refuses to leave until he gets a tip. You can believe that." Lee then calls him an "instigator, a rabble-rouser" and then expects us to back up the motivations that drive Mookie to destroy a positive influence to a rotting community. Spike Lee also scowls in the directors commentary that he "has only ever been asked by white viewers whether Mookie did the right thing; black viewers do not ask the question". He is also accredited to saying that those who question Mookie's irrational actions "are implicitly valuing white property over the life of a black man." This brings me to the conclusion that Spike Lee's ignorance is a cause for concern. Had black youth caught wind of the sweltering hysteria of Do the Right Thing, why, we'd have hordes of blind militants storming the streets "doing the right thing" and amassing millions in property damage stemming from persuasive hatred.

Tied together with Samuel L. Jackson playing narrator via the radio waves, Do the Right Thing is an exceptional package, often confused as well, which makes the film and its legacy truly hilarious. Spike Lee attempted to rationalize the bellicose blacks. What is left behind the rubble is a question asked and an answer nowhere to be found. Traditional white values are not to blame for interpretation, rather, the brilliant set-up as you watch the local Negroes, built to support, inevitably cause the structure to crumble. No more Sal's, no more pizza. The prospect of any self-respecting eatery was launched out the window when they formed a misguided uprising and destroyed what very little they had. The problem of Do the Right Thing is also its greatest aspect - it's a definitive racially polarizing masterpiece of cinema. It is the heat that gets to you. All the water in the world, nor the Popsicles can cool the racial tension that boils under the city streets in Do the Right Thing. When you take a step back and glance over the picture in retrospect, Ossie Davis as Da Mayor captures the only "good" force within Do the Right Thing. Da Mayor was passionate, wise, levelheaded, and intelligent - a saint amongst sinners. Is Do the Right Thing culturally important and a modern masterpiece of American cinema? Yes, but for reasons unintended by Spike Lee. I wouldn't go as far as to say Radio Raheem was murdered by hate, but instead: irrational stupidity.

-mAQaveli X

SUMMER OF SAM

Spike Lee (1999)

While Italian and Italian-American auteur filmmakers, including such diverse filmmakers ranging from Alberto Cavallone and Martin Scorsese, have made endless incriminating and unflattering portrayals of their own neighborhoods and people, lifelong race-hustler and honky baiter Spike Lee (*She's Gotta Have it*, *Malcolm X*), undoubtedly the single greatest Negro filmmaker who has ever lived, probably created what is the most epically Italo-incendiary "Wopsploitation" ever made, *Summer of Sam* (1999)—a work centering on a blue collar Guido community in the Bronx set around the backdrop of the so-called "Son of Sam" serial murders carried out by deranged Jewish-American serial killer David Berkowitz. As someone who has already displayed a more brazen and glaring contempt for 'sub-white' types like Italians, Jews, and the Irish as opposed to WASPs and Nordic types as demonstrated in his classic works of heated race-hate, including *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Jungle Fever* (1991), *Clockers* (1995), *Bamboozled* (2000), *25th Hour* (2002), and *Miracle at St. Anna* (2008), *Summer of Sam* is undoubtedly the most uncompromising and unwaveringly malicious assault on the American gumbas, which is quite ironic considering, as Todd McCarthy of *Variety* wrote regarding the melodramatic crime-thriller, "this is the closest Lee has yet come to Scorsese territory!", as Scorsese is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Guido American filmmaker to ever live with classic films like *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976), and *Goodfellas* (1990). Of course, with films like *Raging Bull* (1980) and his classic mafia flicks, Scorsese has been known to give strikingly shuddersome portrayals of his fellow Sicilians, but it seems that Lee's *Summer of Sam* is celluloid revenge of sorts for the Italian-American filmmaker's nefarious portrayal of savage-like and conspicuously criminally-inclined negroes in *Taxi Driver* as never have I seen such an eclectically retarded cast of garlic-eating wop retards than in *Summer of Sam*—a perturbing portrait of NYC's Little Sicily as a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah, except where the pervert protagonist can only 'rise to the occasion' for every wop whore aside from his wife. Starring Colombian-American actor John "Spic-O-Rama" Leguizamo—a man of marginal Italian ancestry but who describes himself as being of "Amerindian and Mestizo heritage"—as a flamboyant and semi-faggy heterosexual hairdresser, and the blatantly much taller and more attractive Mira Sorvino as his wife, *Summer of Sam* follows what happens when a bunch of deluded Guidos become paranoid because of a homicidal Hebraic serial killer is killing brunette babes around town. Offending the families of the victims of Berkowitz, as well as prideful Italian Americans, who left racially-charged and anti-Spike Lee graffiti around the production during the making of the film, *Summer of Sam* is the Negro filmmaker's bitter unlove letter to the rotten Big Apple's Sicilian community. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Spike

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Lee once wrote in his *Do the Right Thing* companion book regarding a Eddie Murphy sketch that, "The most truthful thing he said is that Italians act like niggers more than niggers do. It's true, they certainly act Black and don't even know it," as *Summer of Sam* is a virtual quasi-pornographic Guido show for the American racial apocalypse.

It is the summer of 1977 and everyone in New York City is freaking about the sensationalized Son of Sam serial killer case, which is dominating media headlines. Set around a group of half brain-dead and delinquent Dago dumbasses in the Bronx (filmed in the Throgs Neck/Country Club section of The Bronx, which is apparently more German/Irish than Italian in real-life), including protagonist Vinny (John Leguizamo), a hyper horny hairdresser who gets hard for anal sex, but falls flaccid when it comes to his beautiful wife Dionna (Mira Sorvino), *Summer of Sam* shows what happens when you're born Sicilian-American and never get out of the neighborhood. During the beginning of the film, Vinny, dressed in gay disco clothes, goes to a night club with his girl Dionna, but being a sexual psychopath of sorts, he offers to drive his wife's Italian cousin back home and makes a pit stop to screw in her car. Vinny goes back to the club and picks his wife up and on the way back he runs into a crime scene where the Son of Sam has just unleaded bullets on a couple in a flashy sports car. Dionna smells the vaginal juices of her cousin on her hubby's mouth and immediately suspects his infidelity, but being friends with a group of dumb Goombah bastards, Vinny the ginny also runs into trouble with his friends as well. Vinny's friend Ritchie (Adrien Brody) is now a punk rocker with spikes in his hair who speaks in an absurd contrived British accent in tribute to the Sex Pistols, which baffles his vulgar archetypical wop friends who symbolically stand next to a sign that says "Dead End" as they aspire to nothing aside from dealing drugs and having an aimless identity in their own little Italian neighborhoods. Being more ambitious than his racial compatriots, Ritchie begins living a second life as a gay stripper/hustler/punk rock singer and gets another Italian girl from his neighborhood, a whore named Ruby (Jennifer Esposito), involved with prostitution and the punk lifestyle, which leads his small-minded neighbors to eventually suspect that he is the Son of Sam serial killer. Ritchie's girl Ruby may be a moron of the major sort, but she is intelligent enough to rhetorically ask the boys of the neighborhood, "Don't you assholes ever grow up?!" It would seem, at least according to Spike Lee, when you're Sicilian-American, you never grew up, but your childhood friends might beat the shit out of you if you get a stupid haircut as it scares their old world sensibilities.

While Vinny cannot get over his pathological and Catholic inspired obsession with "butt-fucking, 69," which he refuses to ask his wife Dionna to do, Ritchie dives deeper and deeper into a state of hedonistic nihilism and pawns his man-puss to buy Fender Stratocaster guitars (or as he describes it, "A fuckin' new Fender!"). Meanwhile, after being asked by a member of the NYPD to help,

a local mob boss named Luigi (Ben Gazzara), who eats at an Italian restaurant where Dionna works as a waitress and that her father owns, takes it upon himself to take crime into his own hands by trying to identify and kill the Son of Sam killer. Unfortunately, Vinny's man-children wop friends, including their leader Joey (Michael Rispoli), also tries the same and based purely on his perverse punk lifestyle, nonsensically implicate raunchy Ritchie as the murderer after devising a list of possible suspects. Of course, the real killer, David Berkowitz, who calls himself the "Son of Sam," is into pseudo-occult mumbo jumbo, and is partly inspired to kill from a talking dog that he thought was possessed by a demon, is certainly no punk rocker but a pudgy beta-male of the physically repulsive and swarthy sort. After temperatures reach 100°F and a mass blackout hits the five boroughs, tons of black riots break out and mob boss Luigi holds a block party to cool things down while his Mafioso muscle patrols the streets for the Son of Sam. After attempting to see Ritchie's band play at CBGBs, Vinny and Dionna are pushed out by a group of pissed punks and they end up at an orgy instead, where vice-ridden Vin accuses his gal of being a whore after they both blow other people and snort blow up their nose, thus resulting in their separation. In Spike Lee's mind, Dionna finds the wild black snaked of a "soul brother" in a "big black Cadillac" with a "big black dick" is more sexually appetizing than Vinny's "linguini dick." In the end, Ritchie is severely beaten by his friends (Brody's Ashkenazi beak was actually broken during the fight sequence), despite the fact that the Son of Sam has already been snatched by the cops, thus acting as the climax of what is the wildly retarded and wanton Wopsploitation melodramatics that is Summer of Sam.

More than anything, Summer of Sam seems like Spike Lee's greatest fantasy come to life, a deranged poor Hebrew killing a bunch of wanton wop women while a bunch of wops with dead-end lives, to quote the filmmaker, "act like niggers more than niggers do," but as Guidos constantly say themselves, "Italians do it better." Indeed, I am certainly not the only one that believes this as I recall talking to a less than brilliant wop dude from New Jersey who told me that he and his pothead, drug-dealing father walked out of a screening of Summer of Sam in disgust due to its less than flattering portrayal of Italian-American garlic-eaters. Despite his clearly negative opinion of 'racist Italians,' Spike Lee seems to have a peculiar fetish for them as demonstrated by how many naked wops—both male and female, including a number of appearances from Italio-Mestizo John Leguizamo's bare ass—are featured in compromised sexual positions throughout Summer of Sam. Featuring a quasi-magical Scorsese-esque montage featuring the song "Baba O'Riley" by the Who and footage of wops being killed by the Son of Sam, Adrien Brody selling his ass to buy guitars as well as playing said guitar, jaded Guido junkies shooting up, retarded baseball worship, wops waxing their cars, trannie Dago potheads getting stoned, wops beating wops, and John Leguizamo pathetically praying to a Mother Mary statue, Summer of Sam is

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irrefutable proof that a black man, and a flagrantly racist one at that, can be rich and famous in America and make a move denigrating Italians—descendants of the old and great Europeans—into oblivion in a manner worthy of Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß*. What one learns while watching *Summer of Sam* is that while Negroes kill people for new kicks so they can be stylin' for about a week, wops sell their willies to buy guitars, thus making the Guido seem slightly less pathetic, at least according to Mr. Lee's pseudo-moralistic celluloid pleas. Anyway, maybe its about time some real white filmmakers should take notice of Spike Lee's films, especially *Summer of Sam*, and embrace racial stereotypes and entertaining race hate once again.

-Ty E

BAMBOOZLED

Spike Lee (2000)

While I do not typically tend to following the behavior of old independent filmmakers as all my favorites long ago croaked, I could not help but smirk upon passively coming across an attack against Spike Lee by old school auteur Jon Jost (All the Vermeers in New York, The Bed You Sleep In) on facebook on June 13, 2020. As an elderly lefty draft-dodger that seems to think he is still living in a different era, Jost is not exactly someone I find myself tending to agree with on even the most fundamental level yet he has proved with underrated films like Last Chants for a Slow Dance (1977)—a rather intimate and aesthetically idiosyncratic depiction of a small-time sociopathic criminal—that he is a singular and uncompromising artist and his recent rant against little Lee is fairly respectable and surprising considering the current state of the decidedly degenerated (dis)United States. Indeed, as Jost wrote, “I was never a Spike Lee fan. I met him once, long ago when I was running, for no money, a collective stand for American independent filmmakers at the Berlin Film Festival - 1979-80, I think I did it for 3 years. I tried to get Spike to join with his first short film, WE CUT HEADS. He was too busy hustling for himself to be bothered, and brushed it off. It had I think less to do with race than class – he comes from upper middle class Brooklyn and it shows. He is releasing a new film, DA FIVE BLOODS. Along with it, for Covid times, he put out a short, NEW YORK NEW YORK, which lasts as long as the Sinatra song. Shots of an emptied New York, taken from archival footage. The song, shots with dissolves and cuts. Real lazy-ass filmmaking totally leaning on the song. Bad filmmaking. Of course it has been praised as blah blah blah. Nostalgia is cheap. Sinatra is good. Spike is a ho, doing his best to prove he is a down black bro. It is an act and always has been, the well-off now very wealthy (40 mil) guy proving he’s one of the gang. Spike, like Mr Zimmerman, is now a very rich man. And like Dylan he’s made his wealth commenting on, describing, using the misery of America as his subject and topic. This is one of the magical aspects of America, in which it is always the wealthy who are allowed to speak for the poor.”

Admittedly, I found Jost’s sentiments, which I mostly share, humorous enough to inspire me to finally get around to re-watching Lee’s savage satire Bamboozled (2000), which was recently released on Blu-ray by the Criterion Collection for the first time on March 17, 2020. While I was not as impressed with the film as I was when I first saw it well over a decade ago at a more impressionable time in my life when I had less refined taste and now see it as somewhat of a mess of a movie that oftentimes plods and succumbs to unintentional absurdity at its somewhat pointless 135-minute running time like so many other unpleasantly grotesquely garish Spike Lee Joints, I can still safely say that it is unequivocally the proudly angry Afro-American filmmaker’s most ambitious and subversive

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cinematic to date and in stark contrast to his recent curiously kosher conformist crap like *BlacKkKlansman* (2018) where he seemed to be atoning for the virtual career-long accusation of 'antisemitism' that began with the ADL and various Hebraic film critics attacking the director for his unflattering but historically accurate depiction of Judaic nightclub owners in *Mo' Better Blues* (1990). To his credit, Lee refused to apologize for these comically sound kosher caricatures and instead opted to up the ante in terms of ostensible anti-Semitic content with his most shameless and subversive film to date, *Bamboozled*, thereupon predictably resulting in tons of negative reviews and accusations of antisemitism despite his propensity to get away with virtually all other forms of racial antagonism. Following his most Scorsese-esque film to date, *Summer of Sam* (1999)—a film that is, rather ironically, also Lee's most anti-guido film to date—the film represents the director at the height of his most gleefully bombastic and hyperbolic race-hate powers as a film that does for both mainstream television and Hollywood in general what John Schlesinger's *The Day of the Locust* (1975) for Golden Age Hollywood, albeit to a more racially ravenous degree.

Undoubtedly, the selective outrage against Lee by film critics of a mostly similar persuasion becomes quite clear when one considers the predictable silence in regard to filmmaker's fetish for goombah-bashing as is glaringly clear in films like *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Jungle Fever* (1991), and *Summer of Sam* despite the filmmaker borrowing his entire style from his supposed Sicilian-American friend Martin Scorsese. Of course, if Lee's films—or at least his best ones—were not ridden with raw race-hate and demented *Der Stürmer*-tier racial caricatures of virtually all races (including his own), they would hardly be worth watching and simply cheap expressions of glittery bloated budget kitsch (in fact, Lee's fairly unknown sometimes-filmmaker brother Cinqué Lee demonstrated a greater dedication to serious art fagdom with his film *Window on Your Present* (2010)). While oftentimes genuinely funny (albeit sometimes unintentionally so), *Bamboozled* is indubitably a fiercely fucked flick that is fueled by tastefully toxic racial venom and full of a very calculated yet primitive contempt where Lee demonstrates his nauseating sense of unselfconscious narcissism by repeatedly referencing to himself and his various enemies (e.g. Quentin Tarantino), but of course such superlatively senselessly shallow self-aggrandizement is one of the things that makes Lee's films so interesting, even if it does not exactly endear one to the filmmaker's character (or lack thereof). An unintentional racial exploitation film supposedly satirizing Hollywood's history of racial exploitation, *Bamboozled* is, in many ways, a virtual cinematic train wreck polluted with mostly corrosive racial cultural debris of both the long ago past and present and it is simply impossible to look away. Simultaneously critiquing the Anglo blackface action of early WASP maestro D.W. Griffith and Hebraic Hollywood while exploiting the most idiotic cultural trends among the modern-day black ghetto subproletariat, Lee's never-sweetly-sardonic satire is ultimately a surreal expres-

sion of racial neurosis and nihilism where the somewhat deranged director characteristically incessantly critiques yet never offers any serious answers aside from condemning the actions of ‘uncle tom’ types like the film’s unconventionally pathetic (anti)hero . In short, Lee’s pleasantly perniciously playful neo-minstrel movie reveals that the filmmaker suffers from a sort of racial psychosis which, as the film vividly demonstrates, is only natural for an innately inorganic ‘multicultural’ nation where the minority is forced to live at the behest at the majority; or so the fucked filmmaker wants you to think.

Undoubtedly, Lee’s racial psychosis becomes clear simply when one realizes that *Bamboozled*—a film that might have single-handedly destroyed the dubious legacy of Hebraic blackface icon Al Jolson had it been more popular—was dedicated to Jewish-American screenwriter Budd Schulberg (*On the Waterfront*, *The Harder They Fall*). While it does make sense that Lee would dedicate the film to Schulberg when one considers that the film was clearly heavily influenced by Elia Kazan’s *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)—an inordinately cruel satiric dramedy about the propensity for TV networks to create and celebrate loathsome grifters that the screenwriter is celebrated for penning—it does seem rather absurd when one considers that a major theme of the film is how Judaic writers, directors, producers, and actors have historically exploited blacks and negative black racial stereotypes. In fact, speaking of Hebraic writers, there is even a scene in the film where the (anti)hero played by Damon Wayans expresses his disdain for lack of black writers on his neo-minstrel TV show by contemptuously proclaiming to a Hebraic underling, “If I had my druthers, they’d be at least one negro writer in this room, and that afro does not qualify you, my Jewish friend.” Needless to say, the counter-kosher references do not stop there as one of the most despicable characters in the film is a seeming sociopathic Jewess named Myrna Goldfarb (Dina Pearlman) who postures as a good little racial freedom fighter by bragging in an obnoxiously condescending manner to the black protagonist in regard to her ancestral civil rights cred, “my parents marched in Selma, Alabama, with Dr. King” while simultaneously suggesting means to exploit exceedingly grotesque (anti)black racial stereotypes on television. In fact, the character of Myrna Goldfarb is more loathsome than anything you might find in Veit Harlan infamous NS classic *Jud Süß* (1940) as the villain of that film at least has his positive traits, so it should be no surprise that Lee was routinely accused of antisemitism by various film critics. Notably, Lee actually based Goldfarb on a real person, or as the filmmaker explained in *Spike Lee: Interviews* (2002), “There was an article in their *VANITY FAIR* or *NEW YORK* magazine about these young Jewish women publicists for the Wu-Tang Clan, and she was sort of patterned after them. That’s another thing, getting back to what we were talking about before, I’m supposed to be anti-Semitic. Because *BAMBOOZLED* has a publicist named Myrna Goldfarb, that’s another example of my anti-Semitism! That’s what Amy Taubin said in the *VILLAGE*

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VOICE.”

Aside from possibly Goldfarb, the character of Thomas Dunwitty (portrayed by obnoxious Hebraic philistine Michael Rapaport)—a gleefully racist wigger TV executive that has happens to be the boss of the film’s ‘uncle tom’ protagonist Pierre Delacroix/Peerless Dothan (Damon Wayans)—is probably the most decidedly despicable as a rude and raunchy race-fetishizing fiend that literally gets off to routinely shouting “nigger” at blacks in between strategically bragging about the fact that he has a black wife and mulatto kids. Playing it safer with Dunwitty—or ‘dumb whity’ as the name less than subtly suggests—the character is more covertly kosher as demonstrated by his use of stereotypical Yiddish phrases like “Mazel tov” and unforgettably unflattering portrayal by low IQ Hebraic hothead Rapaport who is just as notorious in both acting roles and real-life for shamelessly ‘acting black’ as is probably exemplified in the singularly horrendous film *Zebrahead* (1992). Dunwitty hates “white-bread” shows about black people and considers the idea that a healthy black middleclass even exists as being patently absurd and beneath contempt as the character takes an almost a demonic delight in lowbrow black dysfunction. Fed up with the fact that Dunwitty rejects and cancels any show that he writes about intelligent bourgeois black types, Pierre Delacroix—a racially conflicted type that was born ‘Peerless Dothan’ but decided to change his name to sound more ‘white’ (it seems Lee has never heard of famous black American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux or French colonialism)—conspires to create a modern-day minstrel show that is so ruthlessly racially repugnant that he can escape his contract by being fired while, at the same time, somehow exposing the racism of the TV network. Of course, in the tradition of Melvyn Kaminsky’s *The Producers* (1967), Pierre’s preposterous scheme does not exactly work out as planned and instead he unleashes a sort of culturally terrifying televised negro nightmare that ultimately destroys his entire life and confirms that many (white) Americans (still?) believe that blackface is beautiful (or something). While obviously a satire, Lee, who was partly inspired to create the film as a result of being disturbed upon seeing such cinematic classics as D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and Victor Fleming’s *Gone with the Wind* (1939) in film school, clearly wants the viewer to see the film as, at least in part, a horror film of the aberrant agitprop sort where whity has his face rubbed in the cultural disgrace of the blackface of his ancestors (which is made quite clear in a vintage blackface montage at the very end of the film). When lead Pierre declares to his bitch boss Dunwitty, “And as Mark Twain so fully understood, satire is the way if we are ever to live side by side in peace and harmony. So my show that I’m pitching is about promoting racial healing,” he is clearly expressing the opposite of Lee’s sentiment and intent as *Bamboozled* is unequivocally a ‘race hate’ film that can only inspire racial hatred, nihilism, and gaslighting. Still, I would argue that it is Lee’s unequivocal *pièce de résistance* and a tastefully trying testament to the racially apocalyptic essence of the

decidedly (dis)United States of American. A satire-within-a-satire (as well as a satire of satires), the film ironically (attempts to) underscore how racial satires can have the opposite effect of their artistic intent, or so the uniquely unhip and hapless protagonist Pierre learns upon exploiting the great American culture of taboo blackface with the noble objective of ruthlessly squashing negative black stereotypes and ultimately discovering to his great chagrin that America loves said stereotypes, hence the popularity of hip hop and household name status of such dubious buffoons as Snoop Dogg and Lil Wayne who certainly represent a sort of neo-minstrel phenomenon of sorts.

Notably, in his insightful yet oftentimes historically dishonest text *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (1996), Judaic far-left political scientist Michael Rogin—the progeny of union and pinko activist types—attempts to downplay the severity of the Yiddish role in blackface and Al Jolson's (in)famous performance in *The Jazz Singer* (1927) (which of course is routinely referenced in *Bamboozled*). Indeed, in regard to the 'musical miscegenation' of Jolson and company, Rogin argues, "Like the Jewish struggle for racial justice, the black-inspired music of urban Jews was a declaration of war against the racial and ethnic hierarchy of Protestant, genteel culture." In other words, the proto-wigger minstrel routine of Jolson, warped 'white negro' hipsterdom of Norman Mailer, and hokey hip hop hijinx of the Beastie Boys, among countless other examples, can be seen as at least partly informed by Hebraic hatred for mainstream white America. In *Bamboozled*, Hollywood executive types like Dunwitty and Myrna Goldfarb reflect the chutzpah and arrogance of this bizarre form of cultural appropriation that is expressed with a sort of gleeful contempt for the very same race of people that they are pretending to be in solidarity with. Driven by a sort of 'psychological blackface' sociopathy where they do not seem the least bit concerned about hurting or disrespecting the very same race of people they are ostensibly paying tribute to, these characters humorously manage to make a mockery out of both their own race and the one they are poorly attempting to pantomime. Blinded by an almost hypnotic level of hubris, they cannot even see black people as actual people with actual feelings as if 'being black' is simply an identity the one can purchase at the local mall when one feels ashamed at the banality of their own race. Needless to say, with *Bamboozled*, Lee exposes this cruel culture-distorting phenomenon while, at the same time, fighting fire with filmic fire. In fact, this was not Lee's first attempt at fighting back, or as Rogin complained, "No African American put on Jewface in a Hollywood film, to my knowledge, until Eddie Murphy's Jewish barber in *COMING TO AMERICA* [...] When Spike Lee turned the Jewish blackface tables in *MO' BETTER BLUES* (1990), with barbed, comic ethnic stereotypes of two brothers in the entertainment business, Josh and Joe Flatbush, the outcry about anti-Semitism sounded in a historical vacuum."

As one would expect from any of Lee's better films, *Bamboozled* does to some

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extent encourage personal responsibility among colored folks by ruthlessly critiquing its more self-destructive and otherwise deleterious elements. Indeed, aside from constantly attacking lead Pierre Delacroix for being an uncle tom that sold his soul to the very same pernicious people that profit from the exploitation of his race, the film also attacks the antihero's antithesis in the form of a militant rap collective named the Mau Maus—a group named in tribute to the Mau Mau Uprising (1952–1960) when black Kenyans successfully revolted against whites and the British Empire—that promote a moronic mix of pseudo-Marxist revolution and primitive ghetto culture that promotes drug addiction, illiteracy, and all-around stupidity. Notably, the group is lead by a charming chap named Julius 'Big Blak Afrika' Hopkins (Mos Def) who happens to be the brother of lead Pierre's self-described "little lamb" personal assistant/ex-lover Sloan Hopkins (Jada Pinkett Smith) in what ultimately a symbolic representation of black interfamilial conflict and the two self-destructive extremes of contemporary black identity. For example, when Julius dares to describe his sister Sloan as a "house-nigger" after she tells him he "sounds retarded" and is "embarrassing" due to his vulgar black nationalist rhetoric, she tells him to get his "field-nigger-ass" out of her home. While ostensibly on different sides of the spectrum of black society, both characters have virtually sold their souls as Sloan is a borderline sellout that works for a TV network that denigrates her people while Julius represents a lowbrow lunatic fringe that marinates in malt liquor, senseless black-on-black murder, and pseudo-Marxist moronacy. Needless to say, it is fitting that all of these characters meet tragic ends, though Sloan arguably 'redeems' herself by 'unintentionally' killing her boss Pierre who of course must pay for being the mastermind of the popular *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show* where black actors in blackface make a great mockery of their race for mostly adoring white American audiences. Hiring two haplessly desperate street performers named Manray (Savion Glover) and Womack (Tommy Davidson)—largely ignorant and pathetic characters that are desperate to get the latest 'Timmi Hillnigger' jeans—that he proudly rechristens 'Mantan' and 'Sleep 'n Eat' respectively, protagonist Pierre Delacroix boldly exploits and debases everyone with his new minstrel show as if he is on some sort of holy mission. Needless to say, Pierre also thoroughly debases himself and in the end pays the ultimate price. Indeed, in what is arguably a symbolic depiction of Mother Africa getting revenge against race traitors, Pierre is gunned down by his beloved Sloan who, as an unintended consequence of the protagonist's neo-minstrel show (which she reluctantly worked on), loses both her lover Manray and brother Julius. In short, *Bamboozled* does not have a happy ending because Lee (probably rightly) believes that there is probably no happy ending to America's racial disharmony as virtually all of past human history has confirmed, hence the cathartic need for comedy of this inordinately cruel and conflicted sort. Undoubtedly, the successful but short-lived sketch comedy show *Million Dol-*

lar Extreme Presents: World Peace (2016)—a so-called ‘post-irony’ TV series that was also ruthlessly attacked (and ultimately blacklisted) under the dubious charge of antisemitism—achieved something similar to Lee’s film, albeit for a largely young white racially-conscious audience. When Pierre declares at the very ending of the film, “always keep ‘em laughing,” one cannot help but think it is the only way to endure this American racial Armageddon.

While Bamboozled certainly mocks minstrel-esque rappers that profit from making a mockery out of their race by being grotesque racial caricatures of the drug-addled, crime-prone, and sub-literate sort, director Lee certainly could not foresee the rise of mainstream rappers like Tekashi 6ix9ine and Nicki Minaj as they are indubitably infinitely more exploitative and spiritually bankrupt than any of the acts featured in the *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show*, which at least advertises itself as a comedy. Indeed, say what you will about the blackface buffonery depicted in a D.W. Griffith flick or a jazzy Jolson vehicle, but they seem fairly milktoast compared to the phenomenon of ‘twerking’ and gang murders that plague the sick and retarded anti-human joke that is modern hip hop (pseudo)culture. Of course, while Lee would probably attempt to argue otherwise, this killer kitsch (pseudo)culture is just as toxic to whites and other races as is to blacks (after all, the troll-like being known as Tekashi 6ix9ine is actually Latino). Notably, one of the arguments among proponents for desegregation was that it would help to uplift blacks, but as the popularity of rap music certainly demonstrates, it had the complete opposite result as demonstrated by the countless working-class, middleclass, and even wealthy whites that have adopted the culture of the poorest blacks in which is ultimately of vicious circle of spiritual blackface debasement where everyone loses. After all, one can only guess how many lives were ruined as a result of naive white kids embracing Eminem—a rather milk-toast moron nowadays who parrots mainstream media talks and routinely cries about Donald Trump and his shame at being melanin-deprived—during the late-1990s and mindlessly adopting the rather retarded (non)life that he so grotesquely glorified. Arguably, the deleterious and all-around nihilistic nature of this strange distinctly American (yet constantly exported) form of cultural miscegenation is best epitomized by the short and tragic life of SoundCloud rap/Emo rap figure XXXTentacion—a rather popular figure among melancholic and effete Xanax-addled white boys from broken middleclass homes—who ostensibly promoted anti-racism in a video where he hangs a white child and who brutally beat women and robbed people before he was gunned down at the age of 20 in 2018. While it is easy to write-off somebody like XXXTentacion as a wayward wastrel that got what he deserved, his popularity is the real concern as it means that audiences are just as unwittingly doomed as the dumb asses that make the minstrel show a big hit in Bamboozled.

A ruthlessly renegade musical of rancid racial razzmatazz where virtually every single (black) characters meets a miserable end, Bamboozled is not a product

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of the merry Martin Luther King Jr. School of Filmmaking where a deluded manufactured dream is dispensed like a condom from a machine in some shady truckstop but closer to the 'anti-communist communist' film collages of Dušan Makavejev like *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) and *Sweet Movie* (1974) in terms of pleasantly preposterously pessimistic perspective. Of course, Lee's film is about dreams, albeit of the doubly dark deranging sort where the intrinsic impossibility of (inter)racial harmony is sardonically exposed in the way characters of all races (but especially the black race) react to the most mindless sort of race-denigrating mainstream entertainment as they eat broadcasted shit with sadistic glee without even properly digesting it, therein finding themselves in a particularly precarious situation when it is far too late. Somewhat curiously, Warren Beatty of all people pulled a similar savagely satiric stunt with his somewhat slightly underrated flick *Bulworth* (1998)—a rare Hollywood film that also dares to point out Hebraic Hollywood hypocrisy—but little Lee goes all the way with a film that is the cinematic equivalent of a pitch black nuke as detonated by the crack-and-acid-addled son of Huey P. Newton. While the film might contain all the rage of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X, it is channeled through the lunatic lens of *MAD* magazine marinated in malt liquor meets the peculiar plastic pathos and socio-politically revolutionary aesthetic artifice of Paul Schrader's *Patty Hearst* (1988). Shot on atrocious Mini DV digital video (with faux TV commercials curiously shot on 35mm), the film is, in many ways, absurdly aesthetically atrocious, which is fitting for an aggro Afro-American anti-cinematic work that basks in the nadir of kitschy cultural debris. In that sense, the film is like a cruel culturally apocalyptic cinematic counterpoint to James Whale's *Show Boat* (1936)—an inordinately romantic musical with exquisite expressionistic cinematography based on the novel of the same name by leftist Jewess Edna Ferber and penned by mischling maestro Oscar Hammerstein II that deals with themes of miscegenation (as personified by a tragic mulatta) and features famous black actors Paul Robeson and Hattie McDaniel—as a film that uncompromisingly shatters the liberal dream of 'equality' and does so in the manner of absurdist anti-art agitprop. Speaking of Whale—a cinematic maestro that was himself the victim of the historical curse of a marginalized identity via Bill Condon's defamatory yet somehow worthwhile fictionalized biopic *Gods and Monsters* (1998)—*Bamboozled* also tells a simple tale about the perils of creation and that there is always the danger that what you create might turn monstrous and escape your grasp as Pierre Delacroix learned the hard way.

As the various harshly negative reviews of the film and artistic stagnation of his career demonstrates, *Bamboozled* is the closest thing to a filmic Frankenstein monster that the Afro-auteur Lee has ever made as none of his later films would even come close to the venomous iconoclasm and subversion of his morbidly merry neo-minstrel movie. In regard to attacks from various Jewish critics, Lee once stated in an interview, "The easiest way to discredit the work of a filmmaker

whose subject matter is race is to call him a racist. Simple. There is an unwritten code, especially if you're not Jewish, that if you have a Jewish character who is not positive, you're automatically considered anti-Semitic. But I'm not going to be handcuffed like that or be forced to falsify a situation. You mean to tell me that in the history of the music industry there have never been any white managers who deliberately exploited black artists? That in *BAMBOOZLED*, while I can have rappers going around smoking herb, drinking malt liquor, and killing people, I can't have a Jewish publicist whose character might be a little shaky?" Of course, as a good percentage of contemporary movie and TV trash ranging from *White Chicks* (2004)—a rare example of 'whitface' of the trans-racial/transsexual sort—to *Dear White People* (2017-present) to the singularly wretched Simon Kinberg/Jordan Peele *The Twilight Zone* (2019-present) reboot unequivocally confirm, anti-white racism is not only perfectly acceptable but totally vogue in the totally culturally, artistically, intellectually, and spiritually bankrupt cesspool that is modern-day Hollywood, but Lee is totally right about counter-kosher sentiment, which probably explains why he opted to direct the surprisingly philo-semitic *BlacKkKlansman* by kosher mini-mogul Jason Blum's innately anti-white Blumhouse Productions. In short, Lee seems to have learned some hard lesson as a result of *Bamboozled* about who he can and cannot attack and now he has ironically become a sort of Pierre Delacroix, albeit one that still postures as a subversive. Needless to say, to describe the film as 'woke' would be an insult to its artistic and intellectual integrity as such a film would never ever be made today as it at least partly contradicts the corporate-backed sapphic sista blm narrative.

For a director that has borrowed most of what he knows from great mainstream Italian-American filmmakers like Vincente Minnelli, Frank Capra, and Martin Scorsese—members of the group Spike has had a career-long obsession with treating in a minstrel-esque fashion (including this film, which includes an obnoxious Sicilian-American character in blackface boasting about the dark skin of his fellow Sicilians)—*Bamboozled* seems especially bizarre as a flick that feels like Federico Fellini meets *Dogme 95* as directed by an angry black kid that just read the Nation of Islam (NOI) classic *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* (1991). In short, that such a film even exists is nothing short of a movie miracle and indicative of how once cherished things like 'free of speech' and 'artistic integrity' have become somewhat of an anachronism in the past two decades or so. While I have very respect for Lee as a man and only slightly more for him as a filmmaker, *Bamboozled* at least reveals that he might have become a serious artist if frivolous and superficial things like posturing and guis-dploitation tactics were not his main motivations. When I compare the film to his more recent celebrated antifa-approved conformist turd *BlacKkKlansman*, I cannot help but reminded of Pierre Delacroix's final words as he dies after taking a bullet to the gut, "As I bled to death, as my very life oozed out of me, all I

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could think of was something the great Negro James Baldwin had written: 'People pay for what they do, and still more for what they have allowed themselves to become, and they pay for it, very simply, by the lives they lead.' Indeed, one cannot deny that Jon Jošt was at least partly right when he declares, "Spike is a ho, doing his best to prove he is a down black bro. It is an act and always has been, the well-off now very wealthy (40 mil) guy proving he's one of the gang."

While he also committed the liberal sin of 'cultural appropriation' by borrowing virtually everything he knew from Europeans while ironically making films against European colonialism, Senegalese auteur Ousmane Sembène—the undisputed 'father of African film' and director of such notable works as *La noire de...* (1966) aka *Black Girl* and *Xala* (1975)—at least was the real deal in terms of organic black revolutionary cinematic art. In terms of somewhat overlooked black American directors that do not need to exploit black racial stereotypes to make authentic black cinema that culturally empowers, Lee simply cannot compare to Charles Burnett and his classic films like *Killer of Sheep* (1978) and especially the mystifying folk comedy *To Sleep with Anger* (1990). Additionally, Carl Franklin has proved a special talent for using Hollywood genre conventions to explore black (and sometimes white) racial issues with classics like *One False Move* (1992) and *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995). Even when it comes to goofy black filmmakers like half-kraut mulatto Michael Schultz, his films like *Cooley High* (1975), *Car Wash* (1976), *The Last Dragon* (1985), and *Krush Groove* (1985) have more 'soul' than most of Lee's films and do not seem like the conflicted expressions of someone suffering from a terminal case of racial resentment, but I digress. Undoubtedly, in terms of exploiting the worst aspects of black prole kultur, Lee probably most closely follows in the footsteps of Melvin Van Peebles of *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) infamy. In fact, Lee even more or less copied Van Peebles' debut feature *The Story of a Three-Day Pass* (1968) aka *La permission* with his uneven miscegenation movie *Jungle Fever* (1991). To Lee's credit, he is still a much better filmmaker than Van Peebles, who seems to have never learned the basics of cinematic technique and has thoroughly debased himself with such retarded pseudo-erotic neo-minstrel shit as *Vroom Vroom Vroom* (1995). When it comes down to it, Lee is just doing the black mainstream equivalent of Scorsese and Robert Zemeckis (who Lee has curiously routinely criticized) and cannot be seen as any sort of innovator as even the low-budget films of a forgotten 'race film' director like Spencer Williams, including *The Blood of Jesus* (1941) and *Go Down, Death!* (1945), are considerably more idiosyncratic when looked at through the context of cinema history. Still, it takes a special sort of brutal bastard to direct a film like *Bamboozled* that was clearly meant to be an assault on the greater part of humanity and for that—and pretty much that alone—Lee deserves more artistic cred than 99.9% of Hollywood whore filmmakers, even if *BlacKkKlansman* is the ultimate expression of black-blackface shabbos goy whoredom and a disgrace-

ful insult to the legacy of trash auteur Ted V. Mikels' exploitation excrement *The Black Klansman* (1966). Indeed, probably the only way Lee could redeem himself at this point is by remaking the West German exploitation classic *Born Black* (1969) aka *Der verlogene Akt*—a film that, incidentally was directed by a part-Hebraic exploitation hack by the name of Rolf von Sydow who, despite his partial kosher pedigree, fought in Uncle Adolf's army—as both the film and its director represent the sort of hyperbolic racial nihilism that America's #1 most famous black filmmaker does best. While *Bamboozled* is indubitably Spike Lee's most intellectually rewarding and layered film to date, somehow I think most viewers would find the cinematic experience more rewarding if they took heed of gentleman junky queer William S. Burroughs' words, "Exterminate all rational thought," for such is the only way to accept the innately irredeemable culturally miscegenated clusterfuck that is American (pseudo)culture lest you go insane with abject disgust and disillusionment, among other things. After all, whether Lee wants to admit it or not, Hollywood and the mainstream media has bamboozled everyone, especially America's infuriatingly voiceless and disenfranchised silent majority, hence the very real nightmare that has replaced the American Dream that exists today.

-Ty E

DA SWEET BLOOD OF JESUS
DA SWEET BLOOD OF JESUS

Spike Lee (2014)

I'm not one to take an affirmative action based approach to reviewing movies, so when I state that I think Bill Gunn's black bloodsucker flick *Ganja & Hess* (1973)—a work made during the Blaxploitation era that is always lumped in with such celluloid swill, mainly because it was re-edited and promoted as a black exploitation film under the title *Blood Couple*—is one of the strangest, most idiosyncratic, atmospheric, phantasmagoric, artful, cultivated, literate, and creative negro films ever made, you can be rest assured that it is a film I actually appreciate and not something I'm giving unwarranted puffery-plagued credit to because it was created by and for so-called 'people of color.' Of course, when I learned that Spike Lee (*Do the Right Thing*, *Summer of Sam*)—a small and spiteful little spade who, for better or worse, is probably the greatest and most prolific negro filmmaker that has ever lived—was planning a remake of Gunn's film, I was somewhat intrigued but even more surprised, as the last genre I would expect the filmmaker would ever work within is horror, especially considering the innately European nature of the genre. Of course, considering how absolutely dreadfully horrendous his *Oldboy* (2013) remake was (keep in mind I am not even a fan of Park Chan-wook's original 2003 film, so it was not like I went into the film already hating it), I set my expectations for his *Ganja & Hess* remake, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* (2014) aka 'The Newest Hottest Spike Lee Joint' (as it was originally advertised in promotional material), considerably low, especially after learning it was a fairly low-budget work funded via Kickstarter and shot over a mere 16 day period despite being about two hours in length. Luckily, despite being hardly a horror flick in the tradition sense (it is somewhat misleadingly listed as a 'comedy-romance-thriller' on imdb.com, though it does have elements of all those genres), Lee's film stays fairly true to the spirit of its source material (Lee even credited Gunn as the co-writer even though he died in 1989) in its extra 'Afro chic' updating of *Ganja & Hess*. Undoubtedly the most notable thing about *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* is that it is probably the most thematically ambitious, esoteric, philosophical, subtextual, and 'arthouse' orientated film that Lee has ever made, even though it makes use of horror elements, including extra bloody murder scenes, so the fact that it was shot on such a low-budget is a blessing in disguise, as it enabled the auteur to do whatever they hell he wanted to. Indeed, for all his fiercely frivolous lowbrow race-hustling (for some reason, I seriously doubt Lee has read Fanon or studied the films of Ousmane Sembène), Lee has rarely transcended the sort of hate-charged lumpenprole 'Guido vs. negro' scenarios he is best known for, but in his remake of Gunn's masterpiece he takes a look at opulent pseudo-aristocratic blacks, the deleterious effects of black assimilation, the dichotomy between ancient pagan and Christian negro spirituality, jigaboo lechery and sexual promiscuity, addiction, and even the highly

controversial issue Afro-faggotry, among various other things. In other words, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* is a film that most people will probably find somewhat inexplicable, including those individuals that love partaking in Spike Lee joints. Notably, Lee has been fairly evasive in interviews when he is asked what the film is actually about aside from claiming that the film is about 'addicts' and not vampires, even though said 'addicts' are undead supernatural bloodsuckers who can turn other people into undead supernatural bloodsuckers by drinking their blood.

Centering around a completely deracinated rich negro intellectual who has nil real friends and no experience with 'Da Hood' yet has managed to establish a sort of contrived black identity by dedicating his life to studying ancient pre-Christian African culture and religions and collecting priceless art and artifacts, Lee's film is ultimately a sympathetic assault against a seemingly imaginary and largely metaphorical 'American negro aristocracy' that has sold out its race for a life of personal wealth, luxury, and sophistication. Surely Lee's most overtly 'arthouse' oriented work since his low-budget debut feature *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), as well as his most daring and sophisticated film since the brutal anti-anti-Semite-inciting satire *Bamboozled* (2000), *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* also bleeds a sort of strange sensuality and cultivated style that hints that Lee tends to hide a huge part of his personality with his big budget works so as the appeal to the lowest common denominator as his most popular works reveal with their lowbrow humor, pedestrian race-baiting, juvenile rants, and stereotypically dumb characters. Featuring unnerving homoerotic overtones, black sister vampire lesbianism, a sort of quasi-Jungian look at the African(American) collective unconscious, spade sexuality sans twerking and including sadomasochism, pathological Kubrickian dead-center framing, and a black antihero hero with a blood addiction as opposed to a crack addiction whose brain actually overpowers his blue-veined porridge gun, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* is not only Lee's most idiosyncratic film to date, but also easily one of most preternatural American vampire flicks ever made, even if the director denies that the characters are actually vampires.

Dr. Hess Greene (played by Jamie Foxx clone Stephen Tyrone Williams, who is probably best known for his role in the gay Bahamian flick *Children of God* (2010) directed by Kareem Mortimer) is probably the most pedantic Afro-centric fellow in the entire world, as a reasonably powerful and influential sage of ancient Africa who seems to have no other interests in life, including love, sex, and romance. Indeed, despite his pathological obsession with his ancestral heritage, Hess is the complete opposite of the stereotypical American negro male. While Hess is obsessed with all-things-African (or as he states while hanging out with his rich white pseudo-friends, "Africa is my passion"), he has virtually no real exposure to any sort of real black American community, as he is independently wealthy as a result of his deceased parents being the first black family to

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own a firm on Wall Street. Indeed, the closest Hess ever gets to any real black community is when he sits in the very last row of a Brooklyn Baptist church and watches silently and unemotionally as the elderly vaudeville-like preacher gives ridiculous sermons where he screams things like, “pick up that Bible and put down that .22 [...] put down that Uzi...you don’t need no AK47.” During one of these sermons at the beginning of the film, the preacher foreshadows Hess’ future life as a member of the dually dark undead by quoting a vampiric verse from John 6:56, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” While Hess is a practicing Christian, his faith seems somewhat dubious. While he has a pad in Brooklyn where he likes to take pilgrimages when he gets bored with rural island life, Hess’ mostly resides at his large ‘40 acre’ estate in Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts where he is the sole negro inhabitant and curiously lives the life of a ‘confirmed bachelor,’ with his only companion being an inordinately handsome and seemingly gay manservant with a sassy attitude. When Hess has a fellow negro nerd scholar named Lafayette Hightower (Elvis Nolasco of Lee’s *Clockers* (1995) and Steven Soderbergh’s *Che* (2008)) stay at his home after the rather wacky brother becomes his assistant, both his spirituality and sexuality will ultimately be tested.

A wealthy collector of ancient African art and artifacts who seriously believes, “Art is god’s ally...science [is] god’s natural foe,” Hess comes into contact with Lafayette upon purchasing an ancient Ashanti dagger that was used by an infamous negress queen who suffered from a blood disease and thus needed constant blood transfusions. Naturally, the queen used the blood of the healthiest members of her tribe for her blood transfusions, but she eventually began to use so much blood that her victims started to bleed to death and eventually a “pernicious anemia” plagued the Ashanti people, who inevitably became collectively addicted to blood and began waging violent ‘blood wars’ against neighboring tribes. It becomes immediately apparent that weirdo dork Lafayette—a rare negro who seems to suffer from Asperger syndrome—is more interested in Hess than the Ashanti tribe or Afrocentric. Indeed, Lafayette is a mental case who has been in and out of nutwards and his psychological affliction seems to be the result of being a sexually repressed latent homosexual as hinted at in bizarre remarks he makes to Hess like, “I suppose if I believed in desire, it wouldn’t frighten me so much.” During Lafayette’s first night at the protagonist’s home in Martha’s Vineyard, Hess is alarmed to hear loud unnerving crying from outside in the middle of the night and when he goes outside he finds his colleague squatting on a branch at the top of a large tree with an old school KKK-esque noose around his neck as if he is planning to kill himself. Lafayette is considerably intoxicated and when Hess tells him to get out of ‘his’ tree, he shouts like a mad megalomaniac drunk on Christ, “this is almighty god’s tree.” Ultimately, Lafayette eventually pussies out, accidentally falls from the tree, and subsequently confesses to Hess about his long history of mental illness. The next day, Hess awakens to find

Lafayette running into his room and attempting to butcher him with an axe. During the struggle between the two negro pencil-pushers, Lafayette eventually stabs Hess in the heart with the Ashanti dagger and then subsequently begins crying after realizing what he has done. After expressing his repressed homosexuality by kissing seemingly dead Hess on the lips in a darkly erotic fashion, Lafayette ritualistically baths, brushes his teeth, and then proceeds to commit self-slaughter by blowing his brains out while still naked. The Ashanti dagger must still have its sinister mystical blood powers after thousands of years of lying dormant because Hess wakes up at the exact moment Lafayette fires a bullet into his skull and soon realizes that there is somehow no wound on his chest. When Hess finds Lafayette's unclad corpse, his immediate reaction is to begin licking the blood from the floor. Indeed, like his ancient ancestors, Hess is now a savage black bloodsucker who will do anything to get his fix.

While Hess initially finds creative ways to get blood like starting a fire at a hospital and subsequently robbing the blood bank while the doctors and nurses are scrambling to prevent their building from burning down, he soon decides to take a more visceral approach to feeding and begins frequenting a seedy black bar where he finds his first victim. Of course, first Hess has to develop a charismatic mack daddy persona if he plans to glamor prospective negress victims into coming home with home, so he buys a new stylish wardrobe and develops a sort of super suave alter-ego. The first person Hess picks up is a dyke-like dame with an unflatteringly deep voice and ridiculous blonde wig with the ironical name 'Lucky Mays' (played by real-life dyke and convicted killer Felicia 'Snoop' Pearson of HBO's hit show *The Wire*) under the pretense of buying her busted-up meta-ghetto booty, but instead of having sex with the trashy used-up hooker, the protagonist strangles her to death, pierces her throat with a corkscrew, and then proceeds to drink her blood, which makes him deathly ill since his victim is a pillpopper with contaminated blood (undoubtedly, Lee seems to pay unlikely homage to Paul Morrissey's *Blood for Dracula* (1974) as reflected in the film's various darkly comedic scenes where Hess gets extremely sick from drinking despoiled vital fluids). While Hess is perfectly fine living a solitary vampire life that is not much different from his previous life as a human as it still revolves around taking rides in his vintage Rolls-Royce, briefly attending shallow local parties where hyper horny rich old white twats with jungle fever attempt to jump his bones, and having his racially ambiguous British accented lapsed twink manservant Seneschal Higginbottom (played by Egyptian-American actor Rami Malek, who is coincidentally best known for playing a gay character on the FOX comedy series *The War at Home*) do petty bitch work, he has a sort of sexual awakening when Lafayette's ex-wife Ganja (Zaraah Abrahams) comes to Martha's Vineyard looking for her dead hubby. Although a brazen mouthy bitch that gets a real kick out of figuratively breaking men's balls, Ganja more or less causes Hess to fall in love with her at first sight, which seemed somewhat un-

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likely considering his dubious sexuality and seemingly emotionally impenetrable essence.

As her name surely hints, Ganja loves rolling big fat joints and smoking dope, though one would not assume so merely judging by her physical appearance and character as she is a high yellow black Brit with a posh accent and a razor sharp wit that constantly catches spade sage Hess off guard with her invasive questions and snide remarks. Naturally, when Ganja asks Hess if he is a homo, he gets pissed and complains, "Why does everyone think a man my age who isn't married is homosexual?" in a rather whiny fashion that seems a little bit too defensive, thus indicating that the protagonist is not very secure in his sexuality. When Ganja coerces Hess into smoking weed with her, the protagonist breaks down and confesses that Lafayette has committed suicide, but the little lady seems less upset about her late hubby's death than the fact that her next prospective lover is a glaring weirdo and complains, "How come every rich man I meet is so fucked up? Why can't you be sane? Normal? Anything but bonkers." While Hess is initially shy about having sex with Ganja due to his blood addiction and tendency to kill people during coitus, he eventually manages to make passionate love with Ganja without murdering her and the two fall deeply in love with one another in what ultimately seems like an idyllic romance between two physical and intellectual equals who compliment one another perfectly. Of course, Hess has to maintain his blood addiction and, in an allegorical scene that seems to symbolize the exceedingly abusive and exploitative way black men treat black women, especially of the desperate single mother sort, the protagonist seduces a young mother and then proceeds to kill her and drink her blood right in front of her baby. Meanwhile, Ganja finds the frozen corpse of Lafayette in Hess' basement freezer and begins to suspect that the protagonist murdered her ex-husband, but when she confronts him about it when he gets back from hunting single mothers in Brooklyn, the protagonist 'reassures' her that he did not kill her ex-spouse but merely drank his vital fluids, confessing, "I'm an addict...I drink blood." Not surprisingly considering her rather thick skin and deep love for the protagonist, Ganja seems fairly happy with Hess' explanation as to why her ex-husband's corpse is in his freezer and she even helps him dump Lafayette's corpse in a river; and if that is not true love then I don't know what is.

Of course, Hess and Ganja eventually get married and have a small Afrocentric wedding that takes place on the protagonist's beach and is attended merely by a black preacher in Kwanza garb and manservant Seneschal. On their honeymoon night, Hess decides to give Ganja immortal life by drinking her blood and turning her into a vamp, with the protagonist stating to his wife while she lays unclad and lifeless after he bites into her throat, "I want you to live forever." When Ganja finally wakes up, she is terribly ill and immediately begins fiending for blood. In a somewhat shocking way to reveal to her that she is now an immortal vampire, Hess stabs Ganja in the gut repeatedly with a knife and then

proceeds to point out to her that she has no wounds. Not surprisingly considering she is a more emotionally impenetrable individual with a strong sadistic side, Ganja begins to enjoy being a bloodsucker more than Hess does. When Hess invites an old high yellow mulatto ex-girlfriend named Tangier Chancellor (Naté Bova)—a woman who jokes regarding her exotic racial characteristics, “My mom’s black, my dad’s Irish. Black Irish, there you go”—over for a long awaited get together, Ganja uses Sapphic seduction tactics to make the blue-eyed negress her easy prey. After smoking a joint while watching Tangier taking a shower, Ganja initiates sex with her victim and when the masochistic mulatto asks her to choke her, she uses the opportunity to strangle her unwitting prey to death. After Ganja is finished killing Tangier, Hess joins his wifey in slurping the McBlack half-breed’s blood off the floor. Of course, Tangier also becomes a member of the darkie undead, which is important as she later becomes an imperative presence in Ganja’s life in the long-run. Although developing a visceral hatred for Christianity after becoming a vampire as expressed in remarks like, “The cross is only an implement of torture. Its shadow is the darkness it casts,” Hess eventually has a crisis of faith and decides to head to Brooklyn and attend a sermon at the Baptist church that he used to frequent. Ultimately, Hess is so deeply affected by the bodacious Baptist minstrel show that he is exposed to at the church that he realizes that he can no longer turn away from Christ, so he decides to kill himself by abstaining from blood while sitting under the shadow of the cross. While what little is left of her cold black heart is shattered when Hess commits undead suicide, Ganja, who ultimately becomes a symbol of black womanhood, is much stronger and more ruthless than her hubby and perseveres in the end. In a concluding scene straight out of a Jess Franco or Jean Rollin flick, undead unclad Tangier joins Ganja on the beach, thus symbolizing that the two are now full-blow lipstick lesbo vamps who no longer need weak and meek black man.

I must admit that *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* has made me question Spike Lee’s sexuality, as the film has about just as much queer content as the average François Ozon flick, not to mention the fact the filmmaker oftentimes acts like a raging queen that is in desperate need of some midnight tearoom action, but I digress, as the film has something more important about it that is worthy of a public dialogue among both blacks and whites. Indeed, throughout its jigaboo vampire microcosm, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* highlights the dysfunction and deleterious chaos that has not only plagued the black family, but also American negroid gender, sexuality, and romantic relationships. Surely it is no coincidence that the male lead is a rich middle-aged mensch with no children who is, among other things, racially deracinated, spiritually sick, and possibly latently gay or bisexual, not to mention the fact that he is weaker than his lover. As for the female lead, she suffers from all the afflictions of a ‘modern’ woman—be it white or black—as a bitchy, frigid, and hyper-materialistic dame with no maternal

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instincts or empathy who ultimately converts to lesbianism. I hate to admit it but I have watched a number of videos from prominent black personalities on YouTube like Tommy Sotomayor and one thing that they seem to always bring up is that most ghetto black single mothers engage in a lesbo relationship after getting tired of black men. These same YouTube personalities also always complain about how more and more black men are becoming crypto-homo/bisexuals (or what they call being 'on the down low' aka 'DL'). Of course, the way the protagonist of Lee's film ruthlessly drains the blood of a young single mother right in front of her baby is symbolic of both how black 'sims' treat women in the black community, as well as how young single mothers are so desperate for men that they will invite any strange man into their home (notably, it only takes a minute or so for Hess to coerce the woman to have 'sex' with him upon first meeting him). Of course, in its depiction of the protagonist being an addict and even taking a HIV test (which is administered by Lee's sister Joie Lee), *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* ultimately uses a variety of creative methods to cram all the vices plaguing black America into one single film in an original way that Bill Gunn must be credited for pioneering, at least as far as the virtually nonexistent film style of 'Afro-American arthouse' cinema is concerned. As the film demonstrates, it is not the big bad and all-powerful white that has destroyed the American black community but the vicious circle of addiction. Indeed, not unlike white America, albeit to a more deleterious degree, blacks have become self-destructively addicted to mindless sex, money, fame, and drugs, which *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* ultimately at least partly attributes to a loss of religion and true spirituality.

It should also be noted that, despite its damning critique of virtually every aspect of black American society and culture, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* has a semi-cryptic black power message that is expressed in its reference to the Ashanti tribe. Notably, out of all the countless tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Ashanti people were arguably the strongest and most advanced as they were one of the only 'kingdoms' to put up any serious sort of resistance against European colonizers. In fact, during the so-called 'Anglo-Ashanti Wars' between 1823 and 1896, the Ashanti kings were able to hold their own against the British and it was not until 1901 that they were defeated and incorporated into the Gold Coast colony as a protectorate. Despite their nearly century long war with the British, the Ashanti also maintained strong interactions with Europeans and because of this they have the greatest amount of recorded historiography out of all the tribes in sub-Saharan Africa. Ironically, unlike most African tribes, contemporary Ashanti people have become increasingly irreligious and atheistic. Of course, as depicted in *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus*, spiritual degeneration leads to degeneration in every regard, though the film ultimately sends mixed messages in terms of what religion is most beneficial, but what is clear in the film is that people cannot go back to dead religions that were practiced by their ancient ancestors

and expect positive results. After all, religions die for a reason and there is nothing more pathetic than a contemporary deracinated white American of dubious Germanic ancestry proclaiming to be an Odinist and committing the less than Odin-like act of trolling a Christian on an internet messageboard. Notably, the main characters in Lee's film do not have all that hard of a time adopting the bloodsucking rites of their ancestors because they were already so debased and morally bankrupt before turning into vampires that their transformation more or less seems like the next logical step for them to take in life, thereupon highlighting the spiritual and cultural degeneracy and psychopathic essence of today's world. While many nonwhites, especially American blacks, tend to think of Europeans and European-Americans as innately evil, what they do not realize is that Nietzsche declared god was dead well over a century ago in Europe for a reason, as the white world became spiritually impoverished long ago, hence the decline of the Occident and why figures like C.G. Jung and movements like communism and National Socialism attempted to fill the void that the disappearance of religion left, just as the Jews today subscribe to Zionism as they no longer have true Judaism. Like with everything else, blacks are just now beginning to catch up with whites in terms of spiritual impoverishment. While *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* is surely not up to par with its cinematic progenitor *Ganja & Hess* in terms of overall importance, aesthetic integrity, and providing a totally transcendence experience, it is indubitably much more relevant to the problems of today's world.

Unquestionably one of the things I found most baffling about Lee's film is that it lacks the surrealist dream-sequences and oneiric tone that made Gunn's film so particularly potent and memorable. Indeed, *Ganja & Hess* feels like it is set in some sort of perpetual negro purgatory that falls somewhere in between heaven and hell. Instead, Lee took the easy way out by replacing the more arcane elements of the original film with Wilder-esque humor and 'sassy' dialogue as if to appeal to the lowest common denominator of audiences who would otherwise understand nothing else about the film. Negative qualities aside, *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* ultimately makes for a great argument as to why serious contemporary auteur filmmakers should consider using Kickstarter instead of working with producers with last names like Goldberg and Roth, as crowdsourcing enabled Lee to make a striking, original, and seemingly highly personalized work where he did not have worry about being fucked in the ass by a shady producer or losing final cut. Whilst Lee has gone as far as to say that his work is not even a bloodsucker film (I guess vampires and vampire mythology are too European for him), *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* still deserves credit for defiling classic vampire mythology to such a startling degree that it is comparable to what a band of a dozen or so Zulu warriors would do upon finding a bare big-assed colonial cracker bitch walking in the woods.

-Ty E

A SERBIAN FILM
A SERBIAN FILM

Srdan Spasojević (2010)

Ah, *A Serbian Film*. What could I possibly say that many of the sickened festival attendees haven't? Even the news of a disgusted film distributor leaving the theater only to stumble and fall breaking his nose scrapes the controversy of the film. Strangely, I'm not here to talk about the controversy because frankly, I don't care what others think about this film. This Serbian film is something that isn't an argument of taste or ethics. What you see is what you get and in this case, close your eyes, swallow, and accept your gift of pure and unadulterated venomous misogyny wrapped in a crunchy shell coated with a (so called) political allegory. A friend of mine coolheadedly recommended me to view this maelstrom of cruelty with no previous knowledge of the events or mishaps that may occur within. Much to my chagrin, *A Serbian Film* not only impacted me into a state of realized delirium but shook me to my core as I sought out to insure the stability of my future nuclear family. Even for the jaded business-casual wreck, this film should offer something contemptuous to feed upon your psyche. To redefine the plot within a spoiler-free confine, *A Serbian Film* offers up a family's story on a burner of esoteric deception. Milosh is a hardly working retired porn star who is struggling to support his beautiful wife and cheerful son, who is experiencing a sexual awakening in part of his dad's films, and is bleeding out his revenue on silly things like singing lessons. Scared of his family's future, he agrees to film a final piece out of retirement, one that is wholly unknown filmed by a mysterious man named Vukmir. As the "official" synopsis would treat it, the director's intention might not be as peachy and straightforward as the art would have it. As far as Milosh's odyssey of sexual humiliation is shown in graphic detail of ambiguity, I too have been in a situation entirely interesting and chilling to the bone, but not so much as depraved as this experiment in film-making. Some time ago on a forum, a beautiful woman began speaking to me in philosophical tongue. She had been new to the forums and keenly dismissing most of the horny teenagers making passes. As she private messaged me and our conversations raged on for days, she inferred me to a organization (cult?) known as Yellow-1. After much searching the Internet and not coming up with nothing, I linked my friend to the website and he returned with an IP. Tracing that and the location, we discovered that this organization was apart of Neurocam, which is known secretly as a strange affiliation that plays cryptic games of delivering and receiving anonymous packages. Almost like a real life courier game that is bizarre and unknown to most. After inquiring on their own personal web-board, I was plummeted with woefully profound messages asking me to question my own goals and needs, that brand of horseshit. After acquiring an application to join Yellow-1 in my mailbox, I dropped the topic with chills down my spine and moved on. Much of what I experienced cannot be trans-

ferred into mere words as it would rain down skepticism and diatribe on my end. We all fear something and it's always lurking. This story of mine is very congruent to Milosh's feelings as well, without the sodomy of the peculiar. What I ravished in was the descent into madness that this male, like many males with their formidable lust and power, have fallen victim to. A Serbian Film isn't the kind of film an overweight loser from Pittsburgh can make. While this film has a body count, it doesn't act as an exclusive accessory. Take the cult "classic" August Underground for example. With a mere mention it sparks a communion of underground horror fans chanting about "severed penises" and "cut-off nipples." While these facets do occur within Fred Vogel's creation, you must understand that these scenes make the film and the hype. When you mention this pseudo-snuff trilogy, you don't say to yourself "Oh, that's that movie with the climatic character-intrusive depth and ravaging climax?" Those compliments are reserved for an endeavor worthy of the title "art." Taking what I know and what you don't, it would seem that the only fitting label for A Serbian Film is high-velocity punishment. Vukmir would have been so proud of what his creators have created for this is what art is - Consequential. What Irreversible is largely known for is its brutal rape/fire extinguisher scene and the music. Thomas Bangalter (half of Daft Punk) created for Noé a collection of the finest and grittiest electronic music ranging from the glitch-pop repetition that is Spinal Scratch then onto the bass-thumping dominance of Outrun. Surely the composer of the eclectic soundtrack of A Serbian Film took notice to this soundtrack, at least enough to incorporate grinding low frequencies in order to churn intestines. For all you noise fans as well, there are better sequences of clenched-teeth dispositions of transgressive savagery marked to the sweet sound of what could be Aphex Twin with unleaded gasoline and vinegar destroying its engine. For what it's worth, Vukmir rants and raves mid film about the languorous state of his mother country; art, film, life. The ravings of a cinema obsessed lunatic have never been detached so clearly from a perspective planted in reality to a character created and given life from a sheet of paper. While he screams about the fragility of being a victim and how victims sell, he reassures Milosh that he is the only one in the picture that isn't a victim. I believe after viewing all what this film has to offer, that his assertion is intelligently correct because whether we like or not, we all fall victim to the seething nihilism that A Serbian Film has to offer.

Creativity is a divine force in the directorial business. You can take any idea and shift it towards either a gifted individual or an inexperienced twit and the result would always show of quality or deterrence. Had any other director taken this film, I'd imagine the end result to pop up of Cinemageddon with observations of its Z-grade no holds barred trash aesthetics. Gladly, I gloat the artistic exhibitionism of this fine barrel ride into a disparage of sadism and Twin Peaks infused scenes of degrading fellatio and cock prosthetics. What really drags me to me senses is the display of disheveled and abused women, crawling towards

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another cock to suck, another man to please. In this account of what 8mm could have been like had Joel Schumacher been on more coke, the folds of misogyny are ironed out into something so irrevocably clear and direct. The several disenfranchised women throughout A Serbian Film are real women - bitchy, painted, and repulsive in their impulses. For better or worse, A Serbian Film is a real organic piece of hatred with a genre dividing atmosphere for better placement. This is the definition of love it/hate it and I can only give this my highest recommendation. This being the film containing the ending that nearly got me in a car accident on recollection and which killed my sobriety as I wanted, no, needed to consume copious amounts of rum just to get the images out of my head.

-mAQ

TOYS ARE NOT FOR CHILDREN

Stanley H. Brassloff (1972)

Immediately after receiving a reader entitled *Misogyny in the Western Philosophical Tradition* recommended to me by Ty E, I noticed a blurb from the works of Schopenhauer which read "big children their whole life long". What I didn't realize, however, was just how in tune the "misogynist" texts written by Schopenhauer were with Stanley Brassloff's *Toys Are Not for Children*. Released on a double feature disc from a vanguard in schlock, *Something Weird Video*, *Toys Are Not for Children* is possibly the most shocking film I've seen in lieu of lowered standards to date. On a blind whim I decided to watch this film remembering nothing but the poster art that titillated me and left me drooling for an indication as to what would go in in such a picture. Opening with a dimly lit outline of a bed with writhing legs atop it, the camera pans slowly up the fair body to put on display a young female clutching and grinding with a large toy soldier, all the while moaning "daddy". This sets the tone quite nicely, even more so when Jamie's tyrannical mother bursts through the door, disgusted and furious. Spouting hostilities through clenched teeth - such as "unnatural" - (which corrupts the "daddy complex" further), Jamie soon grows up clinging onto the toys given to her by her father, carrying them with her even into her marriage to a boy named Charlie with whom she worked with in a toy store.

Complications arise on the honeymoon when Jamie refuses to make love to Charlie. Being a man of sexual impulse, the same as Jamie's father, Charlie soon drifts apart from his disconnected wife and starts visiting clubs. What else could a man do when dating a true-to-life doll such as Jamie. Why, she begs to be tucked in and refuses to sleep without her toys, a child through and throughout. Shown during stumbling flashback sequences, light is shed upon Charlie and Jamie's relationship, even highlighting a playful game of chase which is interrupted upon the discovery of naked lovers in the brush. Scarring and frightening Jamie, she runs home to her mother, sobbing. Charlie follows suit but is greeted by a knife-wielding mother who is all too eager to console her unnatural daughter. Her entire life, Jamie has been running from sex, whether it be hormonal invasion or wedlock advances. It takes a real snake and an aspiration to reunite with her father to get the pants off Jamie and when this finally happens, *Toys Are Not for Children* receives a turbulent makeover and leaves you stranded into some kind of torturous waters. When it comes down to brass tacks, Jamie Godard is another victim whose innocence is spoiled without the proper helping of masculinity to guide her throughout childhood. When hooker friend Pearl comments on being without father - "I didn't have a dad and I turned out just fine!" - the class of misogynists quietly snicker.

It is the involvement of this character, Pearl, that shapes Jamie's future endeavors with various "Johns" and "pulling tricks". Armed with a childlike sense

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of wonder and a face contorted of salient glee, Jamie arms her complex into her "unnatural" career path and plays twisted lolita games with her clients. You cannot simply classify *Toys Are Not for Children* as exploitation for it is not guilty of any recurring facet of the idea. It is an archaic figure of disturbing qualities, sure, but that doesn't stoop the film's standards down to the level of garbage. *Toys Are Not for Children* has taste and is a mature look into the female condition, starved of masculine nutrients her whole life and force-fed brutish feminism and hatred. Edna Godard, Jamie's atrocious mother, couldn't even predict the horrible events forthcoming. "He still thinks you're a baby!!" she scowls during the opening of the feature. This strikes a tune that resonates until the very end, the final scene in which Jamie's eyes glaze over to that of a doll's lifeless eyes, these being her instrument of comfort throughout her life up to this point. Marcia Forbes has the role of Jamie down pat. It is an absolutely incredible performance when you notice the balance of innocence and easy virtue she puts forth. Rather, her vicissitude into steaming harlot is entirely credible as the playful promiscuity is a path I've seen countless women wander on. The transformation alone is evident in a simple hair cut; from long-haired daddy's girl to darling stylish "daddy's girl" who moonlights as a bashful objector.

Toys Are Not for Children is a film experience lavish with substance but lacking in a dynamic style. Directed in 1972, I wouldn't expect much in technical achievement but all in a consistent storytelling. This sexy shocker falls victim to its lack of narrative adhesive; you will find this out in due time as scenes transition without mention to past occurrences. Though martyr to stubborn editing, *Toys Are Not for Children* is a wonderful film boasting a crude and untamed view at the standard of women afflicted with an unfortunate, selective case of being raised by a single mother. What lies in store for the characters within is honestly harrowing and of the utmost importance. Stanley Brassloff's film is further evidence that once a woman topples over into the territory of sluts, there is no turning back. The very feminine nature behind this work aids the testament to "loss of innocence" more so than films made of a similar caliber decades later - truly ahead of its time. To close on a note of reprisal, as Schopenhauer put in his philosophical texts, "in a word, they are big children all their life long - a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the full grown man, who is 'man' in the strict sense of the word." *Toys Are Not for Children* is unequivocally a staggering experience and a key example of retro cinema done masterfully.

-mAQ

SHIP OF FOOLS

Stanley Kramer (1965)

Ship of Fools is a nice little short film directed by Danny Ledonne from a story written by Ted Kaczynski, the infamous Unabomber. The short tells the tale of a group of seamen (sea "people" to be in tune with the theme of the film) as they head north to ultimately face death by drowning. The reason why this "diverse" group of individuals are on their way to die is because they care more for complaining about petty individual problems than more important things (like preventing death). The short film was done uniquely with Lego figures on a toy ship. Using the toys of children instead of real actors was quite appropriate as the seamen are childlike in their demands. Everyone is a victim nowadays. Chances are if you're living and breathing (and not a heterosexual Anglo male) you qualify for victim status! Sexism, Racism, Homophobia, Ageism, and other inequalities are all horrible forms of cancer that plague our society today! Or at least the seamen featured in Ships of Fools believe so. The main agitator of the ship is your typical impotent and hostile liberal college professor. He rallies the seamen to make protests to the ship's captain. Naturally, the seaman spout childish ad hominem attacks and slurs typical of irrational "victim" behavior. The Unabomber may have been off his rocker, but he sure understands American society better than the average Joe American. Seeing how the college professor is portrayed in Ships of Fools, it is quite obvious why he sent homemade bombs to real ones. Kaczynski's characterization of the college professor is realistic. Most of these sad individuals should be institutionalized so that they don't damage other minds like their own. It is no surprise that members of the hippy liberal terrorist group the Weather Underground have now taken up the teaching profession.

Ship of FoolsShip of Fools has the beaner that demands to speak "Spanish" instead of "English." The short also has a "native" American that demands reparations for the stealing of his "ancestral lands" and a fruit that demands to "suck cock openly." And one can't forget the monkey that was kicked by an evil human being! Ship of Fools is a short about contemporary America as a whole right now. All these Gay rights parades nowadays are quite unnecessary and counterproductive considering our nations current state. So are all those illegal aliens demanding full rights and other handouts. America is going down the shitter and no one seems to care. They only care about not being labeled a "fascist" or a "homophobe."The media masters, the same individuals that promote these "special" interest groups, are also related to the same people that are flushing America down the drain. These petty "equality" activists are just tools for those subversive individuals with larger and more corrosive goals. If only someone would shut these people's mouths for them and actually do what needs to be done to save America. But in America, we are a Neo-Marxist slaughterhouse of

SHIP OF FOOLS

cattle ripe for butchering.

-Ty E

KILLER'S KISS

Stanley Kubrick* (1955) Even master Stanley Kubrick had humble beginnings. His second feature length film (just over an hour long), *Killer's Kiss*, finds Kubrick at a time when he had yet to develop his craft. It was also the last film where Kubrick had written a completely original screenplay (not adapting the film from a novel or short story). Later in his life, Kubrick would call *Killer's Kiss* 'a dumb story with bad actors.' I would, to some degree, have to agree with Kubrick's assertion.

Killer's Kiss seems to have had a crucial influence on fellow New Yorker Martin Scorsese. The boxing scenes in the film have an aesthetically similar feel to that of Scorsese's *Raging Bull*. The boxer also suffers from isolation that haunted Travis Bickle in the *Taxi-Driver*. The overall visuals of *Killer's Kiss* got me thinking about the early films of Martin Scorsese and the crucial impact Stanley Kubrick had on him (and countless other filmmakers). Of course, *Killer's Kiss* lacks the perfectionism and concrete construction that have turned Stanley Kubrick into a household name. I became a Kubrick fan in elementary school before I even knew who he was or what a film director did. *The Shining* and *Full Metal Jacket* I would regularly watch on cable television. *Killer's Kiss* only interests me as a fan of both Stanley Kubrick and film noir. The film offers nothing new to the film movement except some notable lighting designs (especially during the scene with the mannequins) and an odd negative image (using undeveloped film) dream sequence. Stanley Kubrick was able to capture the grittiness of New York City streets and characters that reflect it with *Killer's Kiss*. The film is nothing special in the way of cinematic achievement or even quality. *Killer's Kiss* also features horrible sound quality that can be attributed to post-sync sound. I am sure Kubrick is rolling around in his coffin thinking about all the fine tuning that he needs to do on *Killer's Kiss*. Only then will the legendary director rest in peace.

-Ty E

PATHS OF GLORY
PATHS OF GLORY

Stanley Kubrick* (1957)

Paths of Glory (directed by Stanley Kubrick) is about one of the biggest scams in world history (World War I). Kubrick proved to be an agitator after its release with it being banned, criticized, and condemned globally. It was an anti-war film in a time when pacifism was not a national virtue. The cold war was on and war seemed eminent at any second. With the film's quality and controversy, Paths of Glory was Kubrick's first "masterpiece."

Paths of Glory was important because its intention was to make aware the cattle the soldiers played during the war. The generals' only concern was making a career for themselves no matter what human cost. To these generals, a soldier's life was a mere statistic. The generals seemed to be in a form of psychosis and completely free of any sort of human empathy. Of Kubrick's war films, Paths of Glory is most effective in its intentions. Spartacus was just a way to make some cash. Dr. Strangelove came out as a nihilist's satire. Full Metal Jacket was nothing new. Paths of Glory was a bold defiance against the right timing. It was also the film where Kubrick started to develop his style and obsession to detail. Although Kubrick's The Killing showed a promising director, Paths of Glory confirmed a new talent and master craftsman.

The battle scenes throughout Paths of Glory felt like the most realistic to that doubt. Bodies piling upon bodies and eardrum-blowing explosions echoed the feeling of old 16mm Bolex stock footage. Paths of Glory just made it feel more clear. Kubrick was successfully able to articulate what he felt was a true battle scene.

Kubrick seems to be more of a realist than the stereotypical liberal idealist. He has claimed that Paths of Glory isn't an anti-war film and that he isn't a pacifist. Paths of Glory was merely the displaying of the irrationality and career-obsessed mentality of opportunist generals. The film has nothing to do with why the war being fought is bad or for what reason the war is even being fought for. Paths of Glory is concluded appropriately with the singing of a captured German girl. She is able to communicate with the French soldiers on a universal emotional level, through song. This song gives a sign of hope for humanity, although this wasn't successful with the second world war. Kubrick just seemed to be showing that irrational history has a way of repeating itself. Paths of Glory stands among Kubrick's greatest films. Many of Kubrick's films could be considered excessive in length. Paths of Glory is quite short at less than ninety minutes. Kubrick was able to say a whole lot more when having to cram his film into a smaller budget.

I found Paths of Glory to be the most interesting and true American anti-war film. Films like Platoon and Apocalypse Now make war still seem exciting and even mythical. Paths of Glory presented human error at its least empathetic mode. The circumstances are presented and they are absurd. Most anti-war

films are unable to show the absurdity of war. Kubrick succeeded.
-Ty E

EYES WIDE SHUT
EYES WIDE SHUT

Stanley Kubrick* (1999) *Eyes Wide Shut* may be master craftsman Stanley Kubrick's most hated film. It was also his last. *Eyes Wide Shut* finally takes Freud's obsession with dreams into interesting depths. *Eyes Wide Shut* is based on the 1926 novella *Dream Story* by the Austrian writer Arthur Schnitzler. Schnitzler was a friend and correspondent of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Stanley Kubrick was obviously still an old horny man before he died. *Eyes Wide Shut* features the most explicit sex scenes out of any of Kubrick's films. He also wasted no time getting Nicole Kidman to drop her clothes for the film. Kubrick must have known the power of art as he obviously utilized it.

I wouldn't say it is too farfetched to say that *Eyes Wide Shut* was inspired by the films of David Lynch. Stanley Kubrick was a huge fan of Lynch's *Eraserhead* and he made no effort to hide it. *Eyes Wide Shut* is full of the mystery, perversity, and dreamlike nature that makes David Lynch a great director. It would be no doubt interesting to see Lynch's reaction to *Eyes Wide Shut*.

Eyes Wide Shut also deals with secret societies and assumed freemasons. The sex orgy scenes of the film make you really wondering what secret societies are about. The cloaks and masks these individuals wear are interesting to say the least. I would even go as far to say that the secret society meeting is the best part of *Eyes Wide Shut*. I still find the scene intense every time I revisit it.

Was *Eyes Wide Shut* a good film for Kubrick to end his career and life with? I think so. It may not be Kubrick's greatest film but offers much more than *Spartacus* (which Kubrick just did for the money). Tom Cruise contrives his niceness and is quite annoying. The only disappointment for me in *Eyes Wide Shut* was that Tom Cruise didn't get killed at the sex orgy.

-Ty E

FORKLIFT DRIVER KLAUS

Stefan Prehn (2001)

"The First Day On The Job" Forklift Driver Klaus is without a doubt, one of the most entertaining and visually magnificent shorts ever. There is only one problem to this claim, it is an instructional video. It was released in Germany as a parody/spoof of the safety videos. Never has one shown you what not to do in such vivid blood and GORE-o-VISION. Apparently, there is a series of these. My interest is peaked. The beginning shows the poster child of factory workers. Meet Klaus. Klaus is well-groomed, well-mannered, and well-taught. This is the day when he first gets his forklift operating license. He begins his first day of work bright and early, whistling a happy tune. Surely nothing could go wrong. Then the film stops its serious route and goes for a more Final Destination feel. We watch as the worst freak accidents occur around Klaus. Why? For breaking the set rules. The film is a parody but indeed has a valid point. Never break the rules in a work zone! Doing so could lead to your severed-in-half co-worker's upper torso getting gutted by a run away chainsaw. This film is well acted, with a surprising amount of Gore and schlock to boot. Also, has a stomach flinching scene of a box cutter blade being broken while dug into someones skull. The end scene is a classic scene due to the watercolor background and the two impaled people screaming while being steered off in the wonderful sunset. Forklift Driver Klaus is a good reason why Germany remains at the top of the great producers of cinema.

-Maq

STAR SUBURB: LA BANLIEUE DES ÉTOILES
STAR SUBURB: LA BANLIEUE DES ÉTOILES

Stéphane Drouot (1983)

Even as a little kid who enjoyed little kid things like action figures, I used Star Wars and its middle school mythos as a sort of unconscious personal litmus test to decide whether or not a person was lame, banal, and/or otherwise annoying. Although I had yet to see any of the films as a young kid because I was absolutely repelled by what little I did know about them and did not want to endure a movie with a retard-sounding hairy dog-man and a green midget alien with big ears that resembled a cross between an elderly shtetl bum and a giant booger, I became painfully aware at an early age that the bigger the Star Wars fan, the more likely person was completely insufferable and/or autistic. When I finally got around to seeing Lucas' first film in the franchise after being forced to watch it in a high school film class (!), I was somewhat shocked that it was not nearly as horrendous as I expected it to be, though I was equally surprised that such a decidedly derivative, hokey, and somewhat sloppy piece of seemingly asexual pseudo-spiritual celluloid had become so absurdly popular, at least until I realized that it owed a good portion of its fame to strategic merchandising, which Lucas would indubitably become the grand Dark Lord of the Sith of as a man that sired a virtual consumer religion with its own gods and pseudo-biblical tales and parables, thereupon turning an entire generation of American youth into materialistic zombies that worshiped Luke Skywalker as their Christ and could use Darth Vader as an excuse to hate their more masculine fathers (not surprisingly, as detailed in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* (1998) by Peter Biskind, Lucas loathed his father, who once described his son as a "scrawny little devil"). The intentional sellout picture of a failed avant-garde filmmaker who once gleefully stated, "Emotionally involving the audience is easy. Anybody can do it blindfolded, get a little kitten and have some guy wring its neck," Star Wars is cinema as a calculated consumer good and a work that, aside from Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), has done more than any other film to destroy American cinema and turn it into an industry that produces feature-length commercials for a seemingly endless array of autism-inducing consumer products ranging from children's underwear to Band-Aids to diapers. Indeed, as Paul Schrader—a true auteur filmmaker that is one of the very filmmakers of his generation to never completely sellout and give up on making personal films—once stated regarding the film and its decidedly deleterious effect on the auteur oriented New Hollywood movement, "STAR WARS was the film that ate the heart and the soul of Hollywood. It created the big budget comic book mentality." Undoubtedly, there are many reasons to hate the film, including its black-and-white cardboard morality, idiotically idealistic and delusional emphasis on the perennial triumph of good over evil, conspicuously castrated view of love and sexuality, beta-boy father complex themes, and cinematically sacrilegious fan-boy jerk-off nods to much superior works ranging

from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) to Akira Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* (1958), but arguably the most heinous and unforgivable thing about *Star Wars* is that it peddles feel-good lies to children and sets them up for psychological defeat and/or disappoint once they realize that life is not nearly as simple or magical as the film(s) so shamelessly depicts.

Of course, the franchise only got all the more phony and irredeemable when it was Judaized after being sold to Disney, with Hebraic hack J.J. Abrams' *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (2015) being the most radically retarded and anti-reality one yet as a soulless and sapless social justice warrior orgy where a singularly vapid all-competent-ingénue is the most immaculate and powerful person in the entire universe despite having nil training or personal experience and a burly black brother with a bad case of prognathism is naturally said all-competent-ingénue's right-hand negro man (interestingly, Lucas has gone on to describe to bash the new film and its creators and describe kosher culture-distorters Bob Iger and Abrams as "white slavers," thereupon potentially alluding to Jewry's long tradition of slave-trading, including in contemporary Israel where Eastern Europe girls are a great unkosher delicacy). Of course, when I recently happened upon a sort of low-budget arthouse-ish anti-*Star Wars*, I naturally found myself completely embracing it, even if it is French. Indeed, the French dystopian sci-fi short *Star Suburb: La banlieue des étoiles* (1983) directed by one-time auteur Stéphane Drouot tells the sad yet sardonic and socially scathing tale of a teenage girl that lives in a French orbital suburb in outer-space who, after flipping through an American magazine, fantasizes that she is a glamorous Princess Leia-like figure, only for her to suffer a catastrophic mental meltdown after her dreams are squashed when reality sets in. Notably, I discovered the film by accident after doing some research on Gaspar Noé and reading that it was one of his favorite films. In fact, Noé and his wife, arthouse filmmaker Lucile Hadžihalilović (*La Bouche de Jean-Pierre*, *Innocence*), were good friends with Drouot until his death in early 2012. Needless to say, as the same man that also introduced me to the criminally underrated Austrian serial killer flick *Angst* (1983) directed by Gerald Kargl and who regards Stanley Kubrick's magnum opus 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968) as his all-time favorite film, I knew I could trust Noé's opinion on the film. Described by a *Cahiers du cinéma* writer as being like "ERASERHEAD and STAR WARS," *Star Suburb* was amazingly shot entirely in Drouot's apartment, with the auteur's then-girlfriend Sophie Herr (who also acted as a set designer) acting as a driving force of the production (the fact that Drouot only completely one film hints that she should have probably stayed with her). Despite his girlfriend's imperative influence, the film is indubitably a true auteur piece as a work that was written, directed, art directed, set decorated, and shot by Monsieur Drouot. Directed by a tragic momma's boy who never knew his father and strange social recluse who spent a good portion of his sad and pathetic life getting drunk and high in his apart-

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ment, *Star Suburb* not surprisingly depicts a fairly forlorn looking and highly introverted teenage girl that suffers from insomnia who ultimately breaks down in a fairly tragic way when her dreams are irrevocably shattered.

A film that earned its auteur a coveted César Award—the French equivalent to an Oscar—for “Best Short Film – Fiction” (*Meilleur court-métrage de fiction*) in 1984 and various other awards, *Star Suburb* unequivocally demonstrated that Drouot was a talented young filmmaker with a distinct vision who had the capacity to bring a darker and more socially perceptive layer to the then-*quite-vogue* *Cinéma du look* movement. Notably, the filmmakers associated with the movement, including Jean-Jacques Beineix, Luc Besson and Leos Carax, were heavily aesthetically influenced by late era New Hollywood works, especially Francis Ford Coppola’s super glossy and technically ambitious style-over-substance pieces *One from the Heart* (1982) and *Rumble Fish* (1983), so it is only fitting that Drouot would choose *Star Wars*—a work that was more or less responsible for destroying the integrity of the American New Wave—as a film to ruthlessly deconstruct and smash to pieces. Indeed, *Star Suburb* is a somewhat covertly iconoclastic work that uses *Star Wars* imagery and motifs to savagely attack the sinister nature of Lucas-esque advertising and merchandising. In short, not only does Drouot’s short demystify the fantasy and pageantry of the Lucasian celluloid universe, but it also reveals in a rather extreme way that Hollywood style advertising and merchandising instills highly deleterious dreams and expectations in young people that can only lead to them eventually encountering abject disappointment, or worse. A simultaneously cynical and pessimistic yet warm and empathetic work, Drouot’s film is a short but sweet 27-minute coming-of-age sci-fi piece where the future looks like a fairly gloomy place, even for cutesy teenage girls.

Opening with a shoot of a desolate moon-like planet and then panning to a decidedly dystopian vision of a series of large cold and clinical looking neo-suburban housing blocks that are numbered and divided by nationality, the film then zooms in on the French quarters where a light is flickering in an almost throbbing fashion from one of the building’s windows. From there, the viewer enters inside the window where a little frog girl named Mireille (Caroline Appéré, who is probably best known for her small role as a cashier in George Sluizer’s *Spoorloos* (1988) aka *The Vanishing*) is rudely awakened by her growling pet mutant cat, which looks like the progeny of a rabid gremlin raping a kitty. While the protagonist lives in what is supposed to be a sort of futuristic suburb as indicated by the film’s title, it seems more like a sterile hole-in-the-wall space-ghetto, as Mireille shares a conspicuously cramped room with multiple brothers (at least one of whom has large elf ears, thus hinting that humans have bred with extraterrestrials) that seems even smaller than a train car. When a light blinking all of the colors of the rainbow begins beaming into her room, Mireille stares at it while in a seemingly hypnotized state and then proceeds to exit her room and

investigate. As indicated by the large black circles under her eyes, Mireille is an insomniac and she has a very tragic and melancholic essence about her that makes you immediately feel for her, as it is almost a tragic sight to see a cute girl that is so young and pure yet so sullen and wounded. After exiting her room, a large book flips open as if begging to be read, but Mireille does not take the hint and instead shuts it and sticks it back on a bookshelf. As the somewhat pretty yet pedomorphic teenage protagonist will soon demonstrate, she is only interested in reading magazine advertisements, as it provides her with a much needed source of escapism from a life that she seems to completely loathe. Indeed, after examining the water and pressure gauges of her suburban spacecraft, Mireille heads to the kitchen where she grabs a can of Coca-Cola style soda and a grotesque looking Oreo-cookie-colored burger that is wrapped in McDonalds-like packaging. Naturally, as a fast food addict, Mireille is also a loyal fan of trashy magazines that are full of sleazy suggestive advertising. While she lives in outerspace in a spaceship, Mireille's mind dwells in the idiotic imaginary fantasy realm of yellow press magazines, thus demonstrating that there is truly no escape from the pernicious influence of Hebraic mind-raper Edward Bernays.

While mindlessly chowing down on her less than organic looking burger, Mireille looks like she is in complete ecstasy as she carefully flips through a glamour magazine that features the headline: "Lydia's Wedding with Prince Xan." As is quite clear to anyone watching the film, Countess Lydia is a Princess Leia clone and Prince Xan is a sort of boyishly blond Luke Skywalker man-boy figure, albeit somewhat more aristocratic and unquestioning less obnoxious looking. Acting as if she has never seen any advertisements before, Mireille stares in fawning admiration at generic fast food, cigarette and lipstick ads. Undoubtedly, Mireille seems most impressed with an advertisement featuring Countess Lydia promoting futuristic IKEA-esque furniture that somewhat looks like the kaleidoscopic furnishings that were typical of 1970s French fuck flicks like Paul Vecchiali's erotic thriller *Change Pas de Main* (1975) aka *Don't Change Hands* and to a lesser extent Didier Philippe-Gérard's *The Kinky Ladies of Bourbon Street* (1976) aka *Mes nuits avec... Alice, Pénélope, Arnold, Maud et Richard*. Notably, a makeup ad for a company called "Royal" advertises its red lipstick as the, "Greatest Creation For Women." Rather pathetically, Mireille seems to completely believe the hype of the puffery-plagued advertising.

When a bunch of colorful lights begin beaming into the spaceship, Mireille becomes so petrified that she turns off the lights in the kitchen and briefly hides under a table. Upon investigating by looking out of a window, Mireille spots a dark red spaceship with "RK2" written on it and then proceeds to refer to her magazine, thereupon confirming her suspicions that it is a popular radio station that describes itself as the, "best radio in the galaxy." Naturally, Mireille then decides to turn on a radio to listen to RK2 where an English-language DJ with an American accent named Toby reveals they are holding a "lightning window

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game” for “5,000 tokens.” Indeed, the only thing that Mireille has to do to win the prize is turn on her light while the RK2 spaceship is hovering outside of her home. Naturally completely convinced that she will win the prize, Mireille then begins falling into a deep daydream that is indubitably the centerpiece of the film where she imagines that she is Countess Lydia and that she is literally inside the phony worlds featured in the advertisements that she admired in the magazine. Towards the end of the exceedingly ethereal and solacing yet nonetheless tacky dream-sequence, Mireille joins Prince Xan on his throne where he proceeds to gracefully put a wedding ring on her finger while members of the paparazzi snaps photographs of them. When the Prince Xan has a hard time placing the ring on Mireille’s finger, the film then abruptly cuts back to reality and the female protagonist then proceeds to attempt to claim her prize. While Mireille manages to flash her lights in front of the RK2 spacecraft, she must also contact Toby via telephone before she can officially win the prize, which ultimately proves to be an impossible task. Indeed, it seems that no one in Mireille’s neo-lumpenprole family paid the phone bill.

Unfortunately, when Mireille attempts to phone RK2, she is quite distressed to discover that her phone line is down. Extremely upset that she might lose the prize, Mireille runs to her elderly overweight godmother’s room and hysterically screams to her about how she won a radio contest, but cannot claim her prize because the phone line is down. Rather annoyed at being so rudely awakened at such a late hour, Mireille’s godmother does not even pay attention to what the emotionally intemperate teen has to say and instead simply tries to fall back to sleep. Needless to say, Mireille completely breaks down when Toby eventually announces that a woman named Mrs. Gloz from the Spanish building is the winner of the prize, thus completely destroying the protagonist’s rather preposterous dreams about becoming an opulent and glamorous space princess. After announcing that Mrs. Gloz is the winner of the prize, Toby quite fittingly plays a song entitled “The Chance of My Life” while Mireille sobs hysterically and then proceeds to hatefully scream the winner’s name. In the end, Mireille pours a bowl of milk for her pet mutant kitty cat and then assumedly kills herself via electrocuting herself by putting an electric object that resembles a tiny lightsaber into a pot of water. Notably, in keeping in tune with the film’s fairly potent light motif, the light flickers and then goes out after Mireille makes her seemingly successful attempt at self-slaughter. In a cute and lighthearted yet nonetheless vaguely haunting twist before Mireille’s fairly melodramatic final act, the protagonist’s godmother’s husband is revealed to be a grotesque space alien that somewhat resembles the asexual extraterrestrial humanoid portrayed by Academy Award-winning negro Louis Gossett, Jr. in Wolfgang Petersen’s *Enemy Mine* (1985). Unlike the lame crypto-commie message of inter-species harmony in Petersen’s film, it is quite obvious while watching *Star Suburb* that Drouot saw America as a completely negative influence on France.

While winning a César Award and apparently beginning production on various more ambitious film projects, Stéphane Drouot never completed a single other film after *Star Suburb* and instead lead a considerably sad and pathetic life of perpetual stagnation that ended on January 22, 2012 when he died of complications relating to AIDS. Indeed, instead of pursuing a notable filmmaking career, Drouot contracted gay cancer and apparently spent much of his life battling alcoholism and drug addiction, among other problems. The sad thing is that, not unlike the female protagonist of *Star Suburb*, Drouot apparently began living in a fantasy world as a recluse with big dreams (including various failed projects, like an unfinished film entitled *Johanna B.*) but no means or drive to realize them. As a born bastard that never knew his father, Drouot also suffered from extreme Oedipal issues and apparently completely deteriorated after he mother died. If it were not for his young fan Gaspar Noé, who gave him cameo roles and 'honorary' credits in virtually all of his early films, Drouot would literally have no other film credits after his debut short. Aside from providing him with a 'film adviser' credit for his featurette *Carne* (1991) and a 'special thanks' credit for his first feature *Seul contre tous* (1998) aka *I Stand Alone*, Noé also provided Drouot with a cameo role at the beginning of *Irréversible* (2002) where Philippe 'The Butcher' Nahon has a drunken pseudo-philosophical conversation with him about incest. Admittedly, before even knowing anything about him, I assumed Drouot was some sort of real-life AIDS-ridden doper when I first saw this scene and I would have never suspected that he was ever an obscure cult filmmaker, but that just goes to show how bad a man can degenerate if he succumbs to defeat and drifts through life like a forsaken ghost. Of course, knowing this makes *Star Suburb* seem all the more haunting and prophetic, especially in regard to Drouot's atrocious fate.

Undoubtedly, if you need unequivocal proof that Drouot was not very sound of mind, Noé's minimalistic documentary short *Intoxication* (2002) is a must-see. Arguably the most seemingly pointless and uneventful film in Noé's entire oeuvre as a glaringly hastily assembled piece of painfully candid celluloid that would surely only interest fans of *Star Suburb*, the doc is nothing more than a single 5-minute master shot of Drouot, who resembles a deranged yet harmless and completely incapacitated junky hobo and whose apartment is cluttered with trash, staring at the ground while mumbling and taking AIDS medication. *Intoxication* is more or less a somewhat incoherent and longwinded stream-of-consciousness rant where Drouot attempts to explain why he has never made any other of films, stating, "...I'm taking this medication, a product that allows me to live with being HIV-positive, or with similar types of things [...] 12 years ago, I directed a film thanks to an unbelievable producer, who, I was going to say 'also', died of AIDS, something that affected the completion of a complex production that lasted three years, a relationship that I wasn't able to establish with other producers, who were too quick to let me know that, since I had only

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directed two actors in that film, two actresses, I couldn't be responsible for a group of 40 characters and therefore couldn't make the films I was assigned to work on." Arguably the most bizarre thing Drouot states, especially considering his previous sci-fi short, is how he thinks he would be good at directing films with, "the obsessive vision of a woman who's 50 or 60 years old, or in the style of Chantal Akerman or of a few other directors, or women directors." Of course, then again, there is a sort of feminine essence to *Star Suburb* and I would not be surprised if the female protagonist—a seemingly melancholic dame with insomnia who literally loses all hope in life in a matter of mere minutes—was a sort of transexualized stand-in for the auteur. It is also interesting that Drouot mentions Akerman, as they both had extremely close yet troubled relationships with their mothers to the point where they more or less lost the will to live after their progenitor died.

Somewhat not surprisingly, upon doing research on *Star Suburb*, I could not find a single English language article or review on the film. Additionally, French-language writings on the film are also fairly scarce. Notably, one of the French comments about the filmmaker that stuck up in my mind loosely translates as follows, "Stephane Drouot is one of the geniuses of France, like Rimbaud, Artaud, Baudelaire. The great poets, visionaries, artists are doomed to death today more than ever. He understood very quickly. His film is morally and politically an act of war against the annihilation of individuality by a totalitarian society already well established." Indeed, while I somewhat doubt that Drouot was an artistic heir of Rimbaud, a certain poetic sadness and hopelessness does permeate throughout *Star Suburb* that is quite fitting when one considers how the filmmaker lived the rest of his fairly lamentable life. Of course, to attack *Star Wars* in a retarded age where people look at the film franchise as a religion that is not to be questioned, Drouot also proved to be quite the iconoclast. Indeed, thankfully *Star Suburb* makes Mel Brooks' *Spaceballs* (1987) seem like a mindlessly masturbatory homage to *Star Wars* by comparison. Brought up in Americanized post-WWII France when ancient frog poets like Rimbaud and Baudelaire certainly could not compete with the frighteningly fraudulent fantasies of George Lucas, Drouot meticulously and obsessively assembled a film that feels like a haunting cry of desperation and disillusionment from an artist trapped in an absurdly artless age of cultural deracination, American cultural hegemony, and mass infantilization. Surely, the great irony of Drouot's films is that, were it not for its cynical references to *Star Wars*, probably no one would remember it today. Another great irony of the film is that Caroline Appéré makes for a much sexier Princess Leia than Carrie Fisher did, but I guess it would be unfair to compare American mischlings to French femmes. With its venomously bittersweet combination of pop chic aesthetics with a decidedly dejecting tone and patently pessimistic themes, *Star Suburb* is ultimately like the cinematic equivalent of a cyanide capsule wrapped in a Godiva chocolate bar wrapper. While

Lucas' failed debut feature THX 1138 (1971) depicts a dystopian future where sex is illegal and everyone wears the same exact mundane uniform, little did he realize that he would help give birth to a very real nightmare involving masses of virginal middle-aged men that live in their parents' basement who wear t-shirts and collect toys based on a film that he made specifically for kids. Of course, Star Suburb depicts an even darker side to Lucas' legacy and, for that reason alone, I find it considerably more intriguing than any of the frog sci-fi flicks that were ever directed by punk avant-gardist F.J. Ossang or multicultural-friendly wimp Luc Besson. While it might be going too far to say that Drouot died for the sins of George Lucas, the failed French auteur ultimately did something more interesting by poetically exposing the cultural and cinematic sins of Star Wars, which is like the AIDS of world cinema, albeit more deceptive and less treatable.

-Ty E

MIRA CORPORA
MIRA CORPORA

Stéphane Marti (2004)

Although the virtual 'king' (or some may say 'queen') of Super 8 mm film, French auteur filmmaker and cinematographer Stéphane Marti (*Diasparagmos*, *Purple Kiss*) is all but totally unknown, even among cinephiles and his countrymen, which is rather unfortunate considering he is responsible for directing an insanely idiosyncratic and aesthetically iconoclastic Super 8 remake of sorts of German master auteur F.W. Murnau's Gothic horror masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) aka *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*. Indeed, a keenly kaleidoscopic and debauched Dionysian 45-minute meta-queer take on *Nosferatu* that rather blatantly uses vampirism as a metaphor for (homo)sexual desire, *Mira corpora* (2004) is easily the most esoterically homoerotic blood-sucker flick I have ever seen, but more importantly, it is a work of pure and unadulterated cine-magic of the totally transcendental yet rather impenetrable sort. Directed by a film professor and arguably the world's foremost proponent of Super 8 film who has used the dying film format for nearly four decades (despite spanning over four different decades, virtually all of Marti's films look like they were made around the same period), *Mira corpora* is a rare piece of celluloid Baroque beauty in the pre-apocalyptic age of social and cultural day that takes a rather romantic look at the celluloid past. Featuring less than inconspicuous references to not only Murnau's *Nosferatu*, but also Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), including iconic images of 'Scarlet Woman' Marjorie Cameron, *Mira corpora* is ultimately the sub-underground progeny of queer cinema's greatest masters of celluloid semiotics and allegorical tableaux. Not unlike Eric De Kuyper's *Pink Ulysses* (1990), *Mira corpora* not only utilizes clips from silent masterpieces from gay filmmakers of the past, but also 'vampirically' deconstructs cinema history as a whole (namely, vampire films in this context), exposing the sodomite subtexts that may (or may not) have been hidden in works created by fag filmmakers like *Nosferatu* and *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (actually, it is quite apparent that Anger's Crowleyite film is most homoerotic). Featuring a big gay bald Mediterranean dude wearing a dress without any underwear, an avant-garde ballet dancer frolicking around gaily, a neon-redheaded Scarlet Women performing lovelorn destruction rituals against an ex-lover that looks like Satan himself, and a curiously queer leather-adorned *Nosferatu* who dwells in the catacombs of piss-drenched Paris, *Mira corpora* is classical European beauty meets deathrock and dark romantic Delphic homo horror. Arguably auteur filmmaker Marti's celluloid magnum opus, *Mira corpora* is like the vampire flick Derek Jarman never directed as edited by a gay and slightly less spastic Guy Maddin.

As somberly narrated by the Thomas Hutter/Jonathan Harker character (played by actor/auteur Samuel Ganes) at the beginning of *Mira corpora* after he walks

through a post-industrial garbage dump in the spirit of Jarman's *The Last of England* (1988), "Then there came over the crest of the hill a man tall and thin. I could see so much in the distance. When he drew near the horses, they began to jump and kick about then to scream with terror... They bolted down the road. I watched them out of sight, then looked for the stranger, but I found that he, too, was gone." Indeed, it seems that in only a vague instance, Hutter has fallen under the Svengali-like homoerotic spells of Nosferatu, who dwells in a catacomb where he screens movies on bare human bodies for his own seemingly petty parasitic enthrallment. To make matters worse for the reluctantly entranced Hutter, it is Walpurgis Night, a terrifying time when the devil is abroad and when the graves open and the dead come forth and walk. Indeed, various strange high-camp beings inhabit the spiritually lascivious Luciferian realm of *Mira corpora*, including witches, quasi-cross-dressing vampires (or frog fags with fangs), half-naked ballet dancers crossing forbidden seaside paths in a most merry way, and young twink boys lurking in the dark catacombs as if prophesying their own fantastic deaths via hermit homo bloodsucker. A celluloid rituals of sorts, *Mira corpora* opens with an anti-social punkette 'Priestess' (Sarah Darmon) introducing the viewer to the macabre yet mystifying world of Marti and closes with another 'Priestess' (Elodie Jane) destructively closing the cinematic ceremony. The queer Nosferatu (belated actor/auteur Marcel Mazé, who somewhat fittingly died on Valentine's Day in 2012) of *Mira corpora* has nil interest in Ellen Hutter/Lucy Harker, who is nowhere to be found, as he is a subterranean sodomite cinophile of sorts who rather enjoys projecting images of Murnau's Nosferatu on young androgynous boys and swarthy brown bears inside his lecherous lair and hardly has the time to waste on draining the vital fluids of virginal Victorian beauties in their bedrooms. In the end, the sky turns blood red and homo Hutter/Harker, who looks like a cheap gypsy hustler, dances on top of a canal bridge while wearing a vampire cape in solidarity with gay Nosferatu, gay Nosferatu successfully screens horror films on young naked male flesh and basks in the bawdy beauty, and a young Priestess symbolically smashes a glass heart-shaped ornament into pieces against a portrait of gay Nosferatu as if blaming the rat-like undead fag fiend for stealing her emo boy toy.

A Poetic and lyrical but ultimately anti-literary celluloid work, *Mira corpora* is first and foremost a trying yet tasty 'tribute' to Murnau's Nosferatu that totally deconstructs and destroys the themes and conventions of Bram Stoker's classic novel *Dracula* (1897) to achieve something more visceral, arcane, and otherworldly in character in what ultimately amounts to a metaphysical micro-movie drained from the blood of a cinematic poet. Featuring an original score by Marti collaborator Berndt Deprez, as well as compositions by Igor Stravinsky and Gustav Mahler, and excerpts from/references to Murnau's Nosferatu and Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, *Mira corpora* is indubitably a piece of pomo homo pretentiousness, yet it still manages to work perfectly as if crafted by the

MIRA CORPORA

world's most lonely unsung master auteur. During his nearly four decade long career as a filmmaker, auteur Stéphane Marti has only managed to direct one feature-length film, *La cité des neuf portes* (1977), among countless shorts, but I can say without hesitation that *Mira corpora* is easily his most accomplished, ambitious, and aesthetically pleasing work to date as an incredibly kaleidoscopic yet phantasmagoric celluloid piece that manages to reconcile the seemingly absent homoeroticism of F.W. Murnau's films with the flagrant yet partly hermetic homo celluloid hypnotics of Kenneth Anger. In other words, *Mira corpora* is not only mandatory viewing for patrons of Murnau, Anger, Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Federico Fellini, Steven Arnold, Carmelo Bene, Lionel Soukaz, Luther Price, James Bidgood, and Derek Jarman, but also fans of the Super 8 sinema of perverse heteros like Jörg Buttgerit and Guy Maddin. As someone with a deep and undying love for the aesthetic of Super 8, I was naturally instantly addicted to the films of Stéphane Marti upon first discovering them about a year ago or so, but *Mira corpora* is the only film of his that did not repel me at some point with some swarthy Mediterranean man's hairy bare ass, which are featured quite prominently in a number of his other cinematic works. An old film-within-a-film dripping with bloodsucker cliches (but no blood!) and Dionysian decadence, *Mira corpora* is not only a film about the vampiric power of sex, but also a wonderfully wicked work about the vampiric power of cinema, thus making it a sort of more queenish yet classical celluloid stepbrother to Spanish Iván Zulueta's masterpiece *Rapture* (1980) aka *Arrebato*, which not only features some Super 8 footage (Zulueta also made a number of shorts in this medium), but also a sinister Super 8 camera that allegorically drains a young filmmaker of his body and soul. As someone who has on more than one occasion wrecked my life in circumstances revolving around my unhealthy obsession with cinema, *Mira corpora*, despite its innately cryptic symbolism and nightmarish nonlinear storyline, felt a tad bit too close to home for me, thus making it a horror film in the truest sense of the word! If you ever felt that Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) aka *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* was too literal of a remake of Murnau's 1922 masterpiece, I guarantee that Marti's *Mira corpora* will inspire you to never look at *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* the same way again.

-Ty E

KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE

Stephen Chiodo (1988) *Killer Klowns From Outer Space* is one of the most memorable films from my early childhood (before elementary school). I have never been afraid of clowns. I have always just thought of them as conspiring killers and murderers with a slight silent charm. *Killer Klowns From Outer Space* may have warped my mind at a young, but also introduced me to the weird world of carnival horror. I was always more terrified by musicals like *The Sound of Music*.

Turning people into gigantic cocoons of cotton candy was great idea by the Chiodo brothers (who acted as the writers, producers, and directors of KKFOS). I still haven't decided whether or not I would consider the *Killer Klowns* vampires. Drinking blood through a child's straw isn't quite Gothic enough. Many people I know can't even watch *Killer Klowns From Outer Space* due to their clown phobia. I don't see what is so scary about killer popcorn. It excites me.

Killer Klowns From Outer Space features a score by overrated punk band *The Dickies*. The theme song that they provide for the films is by far their greatest effort. It adds another angle to the films cartoonish and fun filled horror. One of my favorite scenes is when a clown plays a police officer like a ventriloquist dummy. This scene has a weird and perverse sexual element. Finally the "asshole" cop seems to have entered (or someone else's hand has) a happy place. This scene was one of the most terrifying to me as a young child. *Killer Klowns from Outer Space* also pays tribute to Alfred Hitchcock's tranny Oedipal Rex masterpiece *Psycho*. Instead of the shower scene, we experience that wrath of a toilet. Alfred Hitchcock had a phobia of eggs. I doubt he would have wanted to lay one in the toilet featured in *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*.

-Ty E

DYN AMO
DYN AMO

Stephen Dwoskin (1972)

Plagued with and ultimately crippled by polio at the mere age of 9, which forced him to become enslaved to an iron lung, having brutal muscle transplants and never really ever recovering, even being confined to crutches and later a wheelchair for most of his life, American avant-garde auteur/documentarian Stephen Dwoskin (*Central Bazaar*, *Trying to Kiss the Moon*) was a man that knew all too well what it meant to suffer and his strikingly somber yet exceedingly ethereal cinematic works, especially *Dyn Amo* (1973) aka *Dynamo*—an ominously oniric off-arthouse work voyeuristically depicting the physical and metaphysical degradation of four somnambulist-like strippers in a superlatively seedy yet strangely dreamy titty bar that would be the director's first feature-length film—certainly demonstrate this in a marvelously macabre manner. Based on the stage play of the same name written by Chris Wilkinson and even featuring the same actors that appeared in the live performances of the play, *Dyn Amo* is a minimalistic yet mesmerizing piece of celestial celluloid misery and master-slave relationships that depicts the self-imposed misery of women who sell their bodies, soul, and dignity for money and the sort of patently pathetic, perverse, and sometimes pernicious men that pay money for a peek at these lost ladies' lecherous souls. Like an all-nighter at a Gothic strip joint co-owned by Werner Schroeter and David Lynch where only the most swarthy untermensch degenerates in town are invited, *Dyn Amo* is an absolutely aesthetically dynamite, if not daunting and dreary, depiction of human sexuality, primitive sexual politics, and loneliness in its most pathetically capitalist form where not only clothes are stripped, but also the soul of not just the performers, but the viewer as well in a pseudo-salacious cinematic work that acts as the closest thing to avant-garde anti-pornography. Featuring an immaculate synth-driven ethereal soundtrack by eclectic English composer Gavin Bryars that eerily complements every single second of the film, *Dyn Amo* is a cinematic work that is not big on plot (it has none!), but instead wallows in atmosphere of reckless pseudo-wantoness where god's most lonely and desperate women make a miserable living by fulfilling the dubious fantasies of erratic erotomaniacs who nonsensically think that their money buys them genuine love and adoration, thereupon inevitably acting upon such ill illusions in a most shuddersome yet strangely and innately intimate manner that screams perturbing psychology pathology. A rare cinematic work that forces the viewer to be an active participant as opposed to a mere spectator due to its literally in-your-face depiction of female agony and despondency, *Dyn Amo* reminds the viewer of the power of cinema as an unparalleled, nuanced language without words that can express universal truths through mere physical gestures.

Not knowing what I was jumping into (I previously viewed director Stephen Dwoskin's documentary *Pain Is...* (1997), but it could not have prepared me for

this film), I turned on *Dyn Amo* while in a somewhat sleepy mood and was instantly magnetized to the screen as I viewed a statuesque Nordic stripper dancing in a rather robotic manner while jerking-off a chain as if bored by the routine of her 'job' but also as if she had blocked out any potential for emotion between herself and other human beings, which is probably one of the most imperative tricks of the trade for strippers, hookers, porn stars, and other so-called 'sex workers.' For the first hour or so of *Dyn Amo* (the film clocks in at just under two hours), one mostly just sees a number of close-ups of the blatantly sad and objectified strippers who, as demonstrated by their blank stares and curiously mundane gestures, seem to be experiencing a sort of self-imposed out-of-body experience so as to get through their jaded 'night job' without going completely insane. Every once in a while, the viewer gets a glance of the more than demanding audience at the strip joint, which is mostly comprised of sleazebag types with greasy black hair who sport dark sunglasses, assumedly to hide their sickening stares as they swoon and fawn over women that would never give them the time of day in real life, thus the club offers them a contrived forbidden pleasure so as to temporarily appease their discernibly fierce fetishism. Of course, as *Dyn Amo* progresses, the sunglasses-adorned spectators, in their deluded erotomania, begin to take a more aggressive role as 'active' audience members, eventually joining the strippers back stage and then tying them up in bondage and completely humiliating and degrading them, with tears and terror eventually becoming quite apparent on one of the woman's faces in an overwhelming scene without cuts (*Dyn Amo* has few noticeable cuts, giving it the semblance that it was shot in real-time with one mere take) that tests the filmgoer's ability to live vicariously through the misery of a nameless woman who never speaks a word, but wears her perturbing pangs of pain on her unclad sleeve. One of the sadistic spectators even goes so far as blaming the stripper for his perversions and guilt for having said perversions, hostilely yelling at her, "You stupid bitch...virgin murderer...whore...hussy..." as if it is his god given right as a pathetic patron of perversity. After being bound for displeasure, one of the strippers is featured in an extended face close-up, sobbing with a most melancholy facial expression and moving her mouth without saying a single word, as if pleading to be put out of her misery. In the end, one of the unclad strippers is striking a heretical allegorical pose as if crucified like Jesus Christ while her patron/persecutors stand around her as if they are her executioners.

Featuring a song by The Rolling Stones set to a cowgirl-style stripper towards the beginning of the film, *Dyn Amo* is certainly a film of its time in terms of its uniquely unadulterated aesthetic and avant-garde experimental style, yet its overall message regarding the degradation of woman has only become all the more relevant since its release, especially considering we live in a sad, sexually dysfunctional society that includes sexual innuendos in children's films and expects grown women to have to shave their naughty bits in order to resemble

DYN AMO

prepubescent girls. Somewhat kitschy and campy in aesthetic but anything but humorous, *Dyn Amos*—with its meta-voyeuristic camera angles and decidedly decadent yet dreamy sets—is a film that features socially conscious scopophilia and static dead time reminiscent of Paul Morrissey and the tasty and aesthetically titillating operatic high-camp tableaux of Germanic auteur filmmakers like Werner Schroeter, Daniel Schmid and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. A singular celluloid work that will paradoxically appeal to both morbid male sadists and pissed feminists but also chivalrous empathetic men and debauched female masochists, *Dyn Amo* is a rare avant-garde experiment of its time that has aged quite gracefully, which in part has to do with its universal theme of female debasement and the males that love to debase them, but also due to its intensely idiosyncratic style that reminds the viewer of the seeming limitlessness of cinema as a means of artistic expression. In a review from 1972 written by female film critic Ros Spain (who later worked as a location manager on Dwoskin's work *Central Bazaar* (1976)) for *Cinema Rising* regarding *Dyn Amo* and its effect on her personally as a woman, "The film, especially towards the end, is very harrowing. The camera persistently strips each girl both physically and emotionally, and in sometimes violent ways; as a woman, I found the implication of my sex's frailty and the film's denial of female will and sex-drive disturbing," thus demonstrating the absurdity of feminism on a real and practical level where the shackles of social-engineering are 'stripped' and humans revert back to their innate instincts. Despite being Dwoskin's first feature-length work, *Dyn Amo* is also easily the greatest film the disabled director ever made as a work that is every bit as fetishistic and preternatural in its form and direction as the curious characters featured in it. If you're looking for a post-silent era flick that is big on atmosphere to the point of being fiercely foreboding like the great films of German expressionism, but set in the sort of sinister cinematic women-in-trouble realm typical of David Lynch, you will never find a film quite like *Dyn Amo*, an odious yet otherworldly celluloid ode to the warped women who are willing to sell themselves to survive and the meager men that are more than willing to exploit these lost ladies' rather undesirable and unfortunate circumstances.

-Ty E

BILL / & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Stephen Herek (1989)

"History is about to be rewritten by two guys who can't spell" is an appropriate tagline to American sci-fi fiction comedy *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. I believe this because contemporary history that is taught at even the graduate level is absurd (i.e. recycled trash pseudo history books about the evils of honkies). Whether it be the liberal fantasy that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves (over 40,000 Blacks fought in the Confederate armed forces and some blacks owned black slaves of their own) or that the Soviet Union liberated Eastern Europe in the second world war, history is now seen through the lenses of irrational neo-Bolsheviks bent on focusing on out of context emotionally sensitive issues rather than logic and reason. *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* completely exploits a variety of historical figures (many horrible individuals) as subversive heroes.

Many of the historical figures found in *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* are notorious for their rebellious behavior and destruction of western European "constructs." The big trend in academia nowadays (and since the degenerate late 1960s) is to bash anything that came out of Western Civilization. All things in the past (and now) considered failed, persecuted, disenfranchised, disadvantaged, and a variety of other things associated with weakness are now considered virtuous. Novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand calls this irrational trend promoted and funded by international bankers, "The Age of Envy." So how do *Bill & Ted* fit into this equation? These two young slackers carry the torch of pathetic white (despite their obvious Asiatic features) liberalism and altruism. Individuals that believe that good music and good drugs will bring forth the ideal Utopia. For *Bill & Ted*, working and thinking are quite bogus activities (as they are for most white slackers). Instead of actually studying for their oral presentation, it is easier just to travel back in time and pick-up historical figures. *Bill & Ted's* band the Wyld Stallyns are said to hold the key to world peace and ultimate truth. When the two impotent young men travel to the future, they realize the truth of their great contribution to the world. But the reality is, the sex and drugs peace movement of the late 1960's (and there after) contributed most to the hedonistic degeneracy we take for granted today. Of course, I would be a liar if I didn't admit that I partake in such activities. Pacifism, tolerance, Kantian anti-reason, drug use, and "Rock N Roll" are in fact weaknesses. No great society has ever been built upon weakness. Hence, the chaos and trash so commonly accepted in today's society. "Humanistic" idealism is easy to follow when it only requires chanting stuff like "peace" while stoned on your favorite herb. *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* is the ultimate Sci-Fi flick because it portrays weak, lazy, stoned, and dumbfounded whites as the liberators of humanity. Obviously I can't blame the filmmakers for their daft

BILL /& TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

message. On the contrary, Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure provides comedic escapism from the true consequences of "Sex, Drugs, and Rock N Rock." The sight of revolutionary and mass murderer Napoleon Bonaparte having fun at a water park with young children will without a doubt bring a smile to anyone's face. Not to mention the cute sexual perversion of Sigmund Freud and his obsession with psychoanalyzing young women. Figures like these are considered the greatest heroes of history. Individuals that subverted and destroyed the old institution only to bring sorrow to mankind. The message of Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure is clear; promote bullshit anti-Western civilization idealism and you will be a success. Unfortunately, most of the real Bill and Ted's in the world most likely end up sleeping on a mattress in their best friends trailer. Hollywood has released a lot of propaganda period pieces that have the stench of Bolshevik (the real Bolsheviks attempted to destroy all of Russian history) lies all over them. At least Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure lets the viewer know it is historical fantasy.

-Ty E

TUBE

Stephen Hopkins (1999) First off, I'd like to debunk any speculation as to this film's roots lying deep in the action hall-of-famer's such as Die Hard or Speed. In fact, Tube is a blatant rip-off of Bullet Train (predates Speed) with Jason Statham infused action scenes such as insane train hopping and riding motorbikes where they need not be. What kind of title is Tube anyways? Tube starts off like any Asian action movie; a gun fight between cops and crooks. Our lead Cop, name of Jay, shoots a terrorist's woman and he becomes very pissed. Due to some triple twist implanted in the film later, the terrorist sieges a subway and has bombs on each individual car with some nefarious plan to scowl and blow up hundreds of people unless the Prime Minister sacrifices his life. With Jay and Kay and some other weird characters that fit rhyme schemes, it's up to them to stop the train and save everyone's life. I'll start the review section off by stating my vast love for all cinema Korean wise. I have been presented with the golden treasures such as Friend, The Host, Save the Green Planet!, and Oldboy. As I went into this film a die-hard Korean film fan boy, I came out slightly unnerved with my recent memories of Tube. Like the title, I found Tube to be lacking any form of substance that would make it stand out and a bland exercise in a police thriller. When Tube's credits rolled, I found myself on the verge of tears. The ending is a pretty depressing one. It really doesn't fit in with the other parts of the film at all. Tube is an intricate little action film with little tidbits of raw emotions scattered around. The result is alarming and always surprising. While I didn't love Tube, I was entertained and found it to be an above-average outing in Korean cinema.

-mAQ

CAFÉ FLESH
CAFÉ FLESH

Stephen Sayadian (1982)

After re-watching the avant-garde cult art-porn flick *Nightdreams* (1981), I felt it was about time that I watch another film created by Austrian-born American auteur Stephen Sayadian aka "Rinse Dream" (*Dr. Caligari*, *Party Doll A Go-Go!*) and the obvious choice was his delightfully decadent and deranged directorial debut *Café Flesh* (1982); a dystopian fuck flick of the darkly dippy and fiercely farcical sort set in a post-apocalyptic hellhole of hyper-horniness where most people are sexually impotent (aka "Sex Negatives" aka "Erotic Casualties") and thus seek the erotic entertainment of the sexually virile ("Sex Positives"). Indeed, while *Café Flesh* is a more narrative-driven work that has developed a larger cult following, I must admit that I still prefer *Nightdreams* and its truly eclectic collection of erotic and anti-erotic petite vignettes and terrifying yet titillating tableaux. That being said, I still regard *Café Flesh* as a merrily misanthropic and culturally pessimistic masterpiece of quasi-arthouse pornography. The first fuck flick to fully crossover as a Midnight Movie as a hardcore porn work that played at repertory movie theaters in the United States and Europe throughout the 1980s, *Café Flesh* follows in the aberrant aesthetic footsteps of Georges Bataille in transcending the typically fine line between pornography and art. A sort of more lurid and loony *Liquid Sky* (1982) meets *Vicious Lips* (1986) and *Total Recall* (1990) for those filmgoers that do not mind a cum shot here or girl-on-girl cunnilingus there in their cinema, *Café Flesh* is a fucked fetish-fueled fantasy for the pre-apocalyptic age that makes a potential upcoming Armageddon scenario seem like a slightly less perturbing prospect. Like *Nightdreams*, *Café Flesh* is a rare porn flick that was shot on 35mm film (auteur Sayadian recently claimed only two prints were made of the film, with the only surviving print being located at the Kinsey Institute at the University of Indiana) and even managed to replace cult masterpieces like John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* (1972) and David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977) in Midnight Movie theaters across the country. A curious celluloid combination of German expressionism, old school film noir, 1950s b-movie sci-fi, and vaudevillian-esque satire of the quasi-Spenglerian sort, *Café Flesh* is pornographic celluloid chaos at its most ridiculously risqué yet wrongfully refined. A wonderfully wantonly wayward work made at the inevitable end of The Golden Age of Porn, *Café Flesh* was a failure as a porn flick but a startling success as an aberrant art flick and rightfully so. Indeed, *Café Flesh* is nothing if not an exceedingly anti-erotic piece of sardonic sexual sadism of the superlatively surreal and even spectral sort that could probably only arouse the nefarious naughty bits of a sadomasochistic sexual psychopath who masturbates to footage of atomic bombs and concentration camp footage. Featuring rat-like humanoids licking ladies' lilies as if it were cheddar cheese, voyeuristic man-baby werewolves with human-bone rattles, and

human-pencils that know how penetrate a bored and frigid secretary, *Café Flesh* is a socially scathing celluloid treasure trove of high-class art-porn-trash as if directed by a bawdy and bodacious Beelzebub with a brutal sense of humor and an unwavering and unhinged hatred of humanity, thus making it mandatory viewing for any serious (and semi-sick) cinephile.

As narrated at the very beginning of *Café Flesh* by a seemingly aroused but ultimately impotent lady narrator, "Able to exist, to sense...to feel everything—but pleasure. In a world destroyed, a mutant universe, survivors break down to those who can and those who can't" and "99% are Sex Negatives. Call them erotic casualties. They want to make love, but the mere touch of another makes them violently ill. The rest, the lucky one percent, are Sex Positives, those whose libidos escaped unscathed." Indeed, it is 5 years after World War III and a coitus-castrating Nuclear Holocaust, and with the majority of the human population dying to get their degenerated genitals wet, they all gravitate to sex clubs, or as the fecund-free female narrator states, "After the Nuclear Kiss, the Positives remain to love, to perform...And the others, well, we Negatives can only watch...can only come...to...CAFÉ FLESH..." but, of course, none of them can cum as perennial voyeurs who can do nothing but watch in resentful admiration. Indeed, as one would assume by its rather blatant title, the majority of *Café Flesh* takes place at the eponymous *Café Flesh*, a patently and perturbingly yet playfully perverse playpen of pleasure where one can witness a "tableau of desire in decline" and see real live libertines of the superlatively sexually virile post-apocalyptic sort unload their loads in a lunatically lecherous fashion of exquisite anti-erotic excess that would even tickle the toes of the Marquis de Sade.

The quasi-heroes of *Café Flesh* are Sexual Negative couple Nick (Paul McGiboney) and Lana (Pia Snow aka Scream Queen Michelle Bauer), who used to share a hot and steamy sexual romance before the cock-nuking apocalypse and are now rather reluctant regulars at the futuristic fuck club. Nick is Brando-esque 'tough guy' with a sensitive side who cannot get his manhood up for his little lady Lana, so he gets all moody and broody whilst watching Sex Positive superstars perform at the café. The Master of Ceremonies at the Café is a charismatic yet hyper-cynical smart-mouthed jerk-off who cannot jerk-off named Max Melodramatic (Andy Nichols, who played the male doctor in *Nightdreams*). While mad Max misanthropically verbally reams any individual who has the decided dishonor of catching his warped gaze, he is kept in check and casually cuckolded by the café's matriarch owner Moms (Tantala Ray, who has starred in such classic porn flicks as *The Rocky Porno Video Show*), who forces the mischievous MC to get on his knees and recite the following line in a most humiliating manner in front of patrons: "I'm little Maxie...The star of the show, but under my boxers nothing will grow. There's pozzies and neggies, but I'm in between cause I lost my weapon in World War III." Meanwhile, a young and beautiful debutante named Angel (Marie Sharp) arrives from the devastated nuclear South to

CAFÉ FLESH

become a regular at Café Flesh, but she is a virginal Sex Positive fugitive and is eventually arrested by a prick with no prick named 'The Enforcer' (Dennis Edwards) and is ultimately forced into sexual slavery, but she ends up enjoying it in the end after having her truly priceless cherry popped. When a Sex Positive superstar named Johnny Rico (Kevin James, who ironically died of testicular cancer in 1990) shows up to perform at Café Flesh, Nick and Lana's sexless relationship is tested by the newcomer's legendary testicular prowess. Unbeknownst to Nick, Lana is a closeted Sexual Positive and Johnny Rico gets her all hot and bothered. In the end, Lana gives in and gets prestigiously publicly pounded by Mr. Rico, but not before getting her little lily licked by a lesbo 'cunning linguist,' and naturally Nick leaves the Café Flesh forever in abject embarrassment.

Followed up by two worthless shot-on-video/direct-to-video sequels—Café Flesh 2 (1997) and Café Flesh (2003)—that auteur Stephen Sayadian had nil involvement with, Café Flesh would ultimately go on to win "Best Art Direction – Film" at the 1984 AVN Awards and would later be inducted into the XRCO Hall of Fame, yet the idiosyncratic fuck flick really demands more attention than the small and ultimately worthless speckle bestowed upon it by the artless void that is the ghettoized porn world. After all, if the Criterion Collection can release aesthetically/thematically/historically worthless works featuring unsimulated sex like *I Am Curious (Yellow)* (1967) and *I Am Curious (Blue)* (1968), they should have the gall as good little progressive leftists to release Café Flesh; the 'virtual Casablanca (1942) of pornography' (actually, I think Café Flesh has more artistic merit and wit than that absurdly overrated anti-German Humphrey Bogart flick). As director Sayadian, who somewhat recently developed a rare terminal strain of hepatitis C and thought he would die of cirrhosis of the liver in less than a year, revealed in a 2013 interview with twitchfilm.com, "In 2008 I finally got a liver transplant. I took about a year to bounce back, and once I did I went and adapted Café Flesh as a stage musical." According to Sayadian, he also recently got the go-ahead to direct a new film, which he stated of, "We just finished the script and getting it ready to shoot. I think it's something dying to be released. Not because I'm doing it, but because nobody else is." Indeed, with the world of avant-garde art-porn being all but totally dead, I am certainly looking forward to Sayadian's newest cinematic effort, even if it will probably not hold up to the perverse cynicism of *Nightdreams*, *Café Flesh*, and *Dr. Caligari* (1989). Co-written by *Bad Boys II* (2003) writer Jerry Stahl (Sayadian purportedly stated to friend, "I forgive you for writing *Bad Boys II*, but you'll never be forgiven for using your real name!"), immaculately accented by a standout synthesizer-driven new wave-ish musical score by prolific mainstream musician/recorder producer Mitchell Froom (*Meet the Parents*, *Toy Story 3*), and featuring Judaic actor/stand-up comedian Richard Belzer (*Homicide: Life on the Street*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*) in an undignified small role as café audience member, Café Flesh is ultimately a downright bizarre piece

of celluloid story made at a time when some Americans actually preferred audacious aesthetics and comical cultural pessimism over mere gigantic tits and dicks, thus indicating that we are probably closer to doomsday scenario than we really think.

-Ty E

DR. CALIGARI
DR. CALIGARI

Stephen Sayadian (1989)

Not surprisingly, Robert Wiene's cinematically revolutionary German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) aka *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* has spawned countless cinematic remakes and tributes including the horrendous British non-remake *The Cabinet of Caligari* (1962) penned by Psycho writer Robert Bloch, the self-reflexive midwestern-inspired postmodern work *Caligari's Curse* (1983) directed by documentarian Tom Palazzolo, the modernist dystopian silent musical-horror-spoof *The Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez* (1991) directed by American theater director Peter Sellars, and the quasi-plagiaristic 2005 American remake *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* directed by David Lee Fisher (who shot the entire film in front of a green screen, with scenes from the original 1920 film being superimposed in the background), but undoubtedly the greatest and most insanely idiosyncratic of these films is the quasi-sequel *Dr. Caligari* (1989) aka *Dr. Caligari 3000* directed and co-written by Austrian-born auteur-pornographer Stephen Sayadian aka 'Rinse Dreams' (Nightdreams trilogy, *Café Flesh*) and co-penned by Jerry Stahl (*Twin Peaks*, *Bad Boys II*). Indeed, not only is *Dr. Caligari* a somewhat worthy, if not more wayward and only semi-serious sequel to Wiene's silent masterpiece as well as director Sayadian's first (and last) non-pornographic work, but also a sister film of sorts to the filmmaker's first major work *Nightdreams* (1981), as it features the reappearance of the mentally perturbed and severely sexually repressed housewife character Mrs. Van Houten. Sort of like Richard Elfman's *Forbidden Zone* (1982) albeit keenly kaleidoscopic and with a more Euripid as opposed to Judaic sense of humor, as seemingly directed by the sinisterly sardonic bastard love child of David Lynch and Carmelo Bene, *Dr. Caligari* is a rude and raunchy nightmare of the psychosexual, psychodramatic sort that thankfully pays tribute to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* more in name and reference as opposed to simply mimicking the aesthetics of its German expressionist namesake. A rare and somewhat artistically successful example of a pornographer leaving the aesthetically unmerited ghetto that is the porn world to create a quasi-arthouse work, *Dr. Caligari* proves that it was no fluke that Sayadian's apocalyptic porn flicks *Nightdreams* and *Café Flesh* (1982) managed to achieve cult status and be played at Midnight Movie screenings. Like both *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nightdreams*, *Dr. Caligari* is set in a surrealist loony bin where the distinction between the doctors and patients begins to blur, but unlike the two other films it features such succulently unsavory things as Cronenberg-esque birthday cakes with animated guts, chicks with mutant prick arms who see it fit to anally rape their hubby, banal doctors who turn into trannies with a taste for cunnilingus after being injected with granular brain fluids, and one of the most exquisitely dressed and sexually sinister villainesses of cinema history. Directed by an Austrian-born auteur who

once stated regarding old school Teutonic cinema, “That period between 1919-1938, it’s in my brain. It’s so much a part of who I am and what I do and how I look at things,” Dr. Caligari is a singular work that manages to reconcile German expressionism with a quasi-punky New Romanticist aesthetic straight out of Slava Tsukerman’s equally culturally pessimistic sci-fi cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982). The late great eponymous character of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* might be dead, but his shockingly sexy femme fatale great-granddaughter of the same name (Madeleine Reynal, whose only other film role was in the *Mystery Science Theater 3000*-approved sci-fi romance *Space Mutiny* (1988)) has the same demented DNA and when it comes to mental patients she likes to play quite perniciously in a fiercely fetishistic fashion that puts the deranged divas of *Nazploitation* and *women-in-prison* films to complete and utter shame.

Debauched diva Dr. Caligari is the queen psychotherapist of a pandemonium of a mental institution named the *Caligari Insane Asylum (C.I.A.)* with the motto ‘Better Living Thru Chemistry’ and she is in for quite the treat when a seemingly impotent husband named Les Van Houten (Gene Zerna) decides to have his wanton wifey committed to the surreal sanitarium for two weeks due to her unnerving nymphomaniac-like proclivities. Dr. Caligari has grand plans for Mrs. Van Houten, but two robot-like busybody rivals docs, Ramona Lodger (Jennifer Balgobin of 1980s cult classics like Alex Cox’s *Repo Man* (1984) and John Hughes’ *Weird Science* (1985)) and her hubby, Dr. Lodger (David Parry), prove to be a thorn in her side. Luckily for Dr. Caligari, the head doctor, Ramona’s somewhat stern but fair father Dr. Avol (Fox Harris, who is probably best known for playing J. Frank Parnell in *Repo Man*), is not wise to her wayward ways of mental medicine. Ultimately, Dr. Caligari—a mad megalomaniac madam who proudly brags, “I’m the most celebrated psychotherapist in the country. Dr. Wilhelm Reich, Dr. C.G. Jung, Doctor....Caligari”—decides to ‘cure’ her patients by balancing out the particular mental illness of one patient with the particular opposing mental illness of another via hypothalamus injections, with Mrs. Van Houten swapping her psychosis with the equally opposing psychosis of a shock-therapy-loving lunatic of a cannibal named Gus Pratt (John Durbin, who got his big break in film playing ‘Zombie Corpse #1’ in *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985)). Dr. Caligari also decides to mess with pussy psychotherapist Avol’s mind after he tries to confront her, thus turning him into a carpet-munching tranny and the literal lily-licking lapdog of the good doctor after injecting him with the exceedingly erotic and feminine Mrs. Van Houten’s nympho psyche. Since she has made the unwitting mistake of preserving her great-grandpa’s brain of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* fame, Dr. Caligari is in for quite a surprise when Mrs. Van Houten decides to inject herself with a bit of the Caligari genius. In the end, Van Houten manages to not only take on the psyche of Caligari, but also injects Dr. Caligari with her own horndog psychosis via a hypothalamus shot. In a psychodramatic twist, the lunatics take over the

DR. CALIGARI

loony bin, though the difference between doctor and patient was always blurred from the very beginning.

As with most of auteur Stephen Sayadian's porn films, *Dr. Caligari* is an innately grotesque absurdist work of the culturally pessimistic persuasion that is more anti-erotic than erotic, which the director himself seemed to recognize when he stated of his work in a recent interview with twitchfilm.com, "But I think the art world was always too turned off by the porn, and the porn world too turned off by the art. Which if you think about it, is the perfect formula for failure." Additionally, *Dr. Caligari* is far too patently perverted, scatological, and tastelessly tongue-in-cheek to speak to the souls of certain humorless arthouse fans, thereupon making it a work with a rather marginal, if not loyal, audience. Shot in the studio of Sayadian's friend Ray Manzarek, the keyboardist of *The Doors*, on a meager budget of \$175,000 over a six week period utilizing a misleadingly static camera (as the director confessed, "I figured, instead of losing time with fancy camera moves, we could just put the actors on platforms and the sets on wheels. There are lots of shots that look like dollies or cranes but are just static."), *Dr. Caligari* is a striking example of what a creative filmmaker can do with rather limited resources. Indeed, that being said, I do not think it is a stretch to say that Sayadian is one of the few filmmakers in cinema history whose experience working in porn with small budgets and limited studio sets gave him an advantage when it came to making a serious feature film for virtually pennies. Rather unfortunately, while *Dr. Caligari* received mostly rave reviews from mainstream press sources like *Entertainment Weekly* and *NY Post*, Sayadian would never make another non-pornographic work and was forced to create cheap shot-on-video works like *Party Doll A Go-Go!* (1991) and *Untamed Cowgirls of the Wild West Part 1: The Pillowbiters* (1993) before giving up filmmaking entirely.

While I cannot say that I think all, or even half, of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* fans will enjoy the film, *Dr. Caligari* is certainly a work that will leave no one feeling like they endured a complete Jean-Luc Godard retrospective nor Ron Jeremy marathon. In other words, its relation to Wiene's silent film is not much more than a nice little novelty for obsessive cinephiles, as a work that stands quite well on its own and never bores with pedantic intellectualism nor contrived eroticism. Compulsively convoluted in the best sort of way and more aesthetically subversive and immaculate than anything directed by the pretentious humdrum hacks of so-called 'Cinema of Transgression' like Richard Kern and Nick Zedd, *Dr. Caligari* is like a vulgarian neo-vaudeville show set in anti-Reaganite hell that is occupied by David Cronenberg, Hans Bellmer's autistic son, a bunch of 'psycho-chic' chicks that look like Sean Young's character from *Blade Runner* (1982), a couple swarthy closet queens that look like they could be related to Conrad Veidt, and Kenneth Anger's irreligious heterosexual brother. An un-hinged depiction of "unending torment" (or at least that is how lead Mrs. Van

Houten describes her life) where an odious oriental bitch in a neon pink strait-jacket describes how her supposedly German grandmother “made all the potato salad for Himmler’s picnics...Goebbels too” and where the authentic melancholy and despair of German expressionism is reduced to the level of a naughty neo-surrealist scat show, albeit with a sometimes foreboding atmosphere comparable to Lynch’s *Eraserhead* (1977), Dr. Caligari personifies true cult cinema like no other yet it has yet to develop true cult status, which is a shame that the American filmgoing public must bear. As auteur Sayadian recently revealed in the same twitchfilm.com interview, “Since I stopped I don’t think anybody picked up the mantle. I mean, Lars von Trier, he’s superimposing heads [in his upcoming *Nymphomaniac*], why would you do that?...Just about a year ago I got the go-ahead for a new film. We just finished the script and are getting it ready to shoot. I think it’s something dying to be released. Not because I’m doing it, but because nobody else is...So I really can’t wait.” With that acknowledged, one can only hope that Sayadian is still the sort of man that enjoys archaic kraut cinema and has a fetish for murderous man-sized baby dolls.

-Ty E

DEEP RISING
DEEP RISING

Stephen Sommers (1998)

One thing that was always consistent is my infatuation with high seas terror. Included in the past several decades are many of the quintessential selections of these low-brow nautical creature-features. With a catalog spanning such titles as *Deepstar Six*, *Leviathan*, *The Beast*, and *Deep Rising*, my love for the genre is timeless and dates back to the first horror obsession I ever had, *Jaws/Orca*. Having the chance to revisit *Deep Rising* was a dose of nostalgia that was fluttering and had begun rekindling many fond memories of the excellent creature design. I recall the release of *Deep Rising* faintly. The praise was irregular but the excitement was unanimous. To add to the suspense, I caught wind of a still featuring one of many of the invading tentacles and my interests were beyond aroused. One might be able to link my fascination with unnatural marine life to a deep-rooted sexual anonymity that is present in the abyss. Not to call phallic on tentacles but within the deep, dark mystery of the world's blinded oceans exists something that we cannot imagine. What I'm referring to can not be simply labeled a "monster", rather, worthy of life and instincts just as we are. This conception of bizarre and terrible life is what makes these films so animated and grotesquely plausible. It's as if unfortunate marine life is a fail safe for horror films, something one cannot debunk as easily.

What Stephen Sommers set out to do with *Deep Rising* was to finally put to tape an action/horror film that is worthy to the legacy of *Aliens*. In that regard, Sommers failed miserably. *Deep Rising* channels none of the atmosphere, claustrophobia, or extraterrestrial nihilism of James Cameron's sequel. With *Deep Rising*, he abandoned the dream of fleshy beasts and created a creature entirely out of digital animation. Dated now, *Deep Rising* was actually a marvel and a bit of a breakthrough for its time, plastering the magazine pages of *Fangoria* and *Cinefantastique*. For whatever it is worth, *Deep Rising* is not a bad film in any way. In regards to the quality, once must keep in mind the aged, immature characters and the inferior visual effects are glaring. But, as it is, *Deep Rising* might also pack the most punch of any of the bio-horror realms within the oceans. It doesn't contain the suspense or gall of the crew aboard the *Orca* in *Jaws* but *Deep Rising* features a wonderful force of opposition and the comical deaths of many nuisances.

In case you've never heard of or seen *Deep Rising*, a short synopsis is in order. Treat Williams stars as Finnigan, the captain of a dodgy transport vessel who just so happens to be employed by a group of hijackers armed with torpedoes planning to plunder the *Argonautica*, the greatest luxury ship of its time. Once aboard the ship, the villains notice immediately that there is no sign of life on this once bustling ship. Ring of Koontz's *Phantoms*, anyone? Using this opportunity to hurry the process of looting the valuables, several confined survivors are

discovered and begin to blabber nonsense about an infestation of killer "...things." With Famke Janssen and Kevin J. O'Connor, *Deep Rising* only begins roll call with the recognizable cast of Djimon Hounsou and Cliff Curtis, not to mention Wes Studi's scarred visage illuminating a scene in which his last bullet in the chamber is wasted towards spite instead of ending the misery of his own. *Deep Rising* isn't perfect, though. Through the affable corridors of the sinking cruise liner are many flaws and obstacles known for impeding the joy of this oceanic carnage. For one, Treat Williams' archetype has been stamped vigorously for an element of "cool", leaving his character without a word of wisdom but with an unsuited ego that spells out popcorn suicide.

Yet another strong aspect of *Deep Rising* is the general ambiguity of the creature. But with further research, this cloud of mystery can be fanned away. The ship's creator mentions in the film that it is "some kind of strange offshoot of the Archaea *Ottoia* family." When you juxtapose this information with a snippet taken from an interview with Sommers, "I shot a whole opening sequence about underwater nuclear testing that's created something beneath the ocean.", the answer and origins are given. It's a shame this scene wasn't detailed in the final print but seeing as how *Deep Rising* already suffered so much at the hands of the merciless box office, this could-of is easily shrugged off. One can hope that the day *Deep Rising* does get a proper video release comes. Perhaps Sommers will have warmed to his masterpiece enough to complete his vision. Late 90s horror films don't get much better than *Deep Rising*. Committed to shocking and severing many-a-victim, the tentacles in *Deep Rising* represent a high point in monstrous creativity. If you could not muster the characters quirks and oafish lines, perhaps watching them be digested would serve an excellent experiment in catharsis.

-mAQ

WATCH OUT
WATCH OUT

Steve Balderson° (2008)

From the bowels of cult independent cinema comes the shining Polaris at last. Critically acclaimed director Steve Balderson has crafted an instant classic from the foundation of a controversial novel from Joseph Suglia baring the same title. Ranging from extreme narcissism to blatant and well thought out monologues preaching an insane misanthropy, Watch Out is a surefire hit in every way.

With the flick of a switch, Watch Out propels you deeply into the mindset of an auto-erotic (fascination and arousal by ones self) preteen named Jonathan Barrows who, from a young age, shows an extreme disinterest in any sex. As his parents force him to acquire a girlfriend and lose his virginity, he becomes increasingly more distant from any plane of social interaction. He is god to himself and through two acts, we come to learn his cause and his mission. The film presents itself with a stream of non-stop narration through Barrows' often sexual interactions. His philosophies are very un-PC and solid to a point. To him, people are flesh and he is the closest thing to a god. Only he can satisfy his deepest lust; a bizarre craving for his own flesh. This urges him to tape an image of his gorgeous face on a blow up doll whom he fondles and caresses while forgetting how desirable he is to the undesirable. Before I even had a chance to call it, Watch Out mocks the Fight Club generation, laying author created improvised speeches on Marxist ideals. We really do act like insects, don't we? Scurrying about our boring average lives. This film not only changed the way I viewed things; It rocked me to the core. Part demented philosophies, part American Psycho; Watch Out is a sensation that any gender can enjoy. I don't think I've ever seen sexual surrealism used to such a medium as Watch Out does. What really sells the madcap mood is music created by keyboard aficionado Rob Kleiner, who is know for his work in such bands as Tub Ring and Super 8-Bit Brothers. If you've heard any of his work, you can come to expect an eerie pulsing of sideshow inspiration that is almost as frenetic and paced as their live performances. This is the ultimate compliment to Riddlehoover's jaw dropping performance as our anti-hero. Riddlehoover braved a lot of ground playing our astoundingly flamboyant denizen of his own fantastical fantasies. This role required an absurd amount of male nudity and extreme sexual situations. I myself wouldn't have enough balls to do what Matt did. Watch Out is one of the best films to have been released this year. It sets new ground in the genre of psycho-sexuals and their exploits. A masterful artifact of directing led by bizarre visions chronicling the death of the average good Samaritan. In other words, a must see.

-mAQ

MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

Steve Bendelack (2007)

This film is simply brilliant because it is simply British.

-mAQ

PAUL BLART: MALL COP
PAUL BLART: MALL COP

Steve Carr (2009)

Why do I even bother? Why am I reviewing this damn film? I asked these questions pending my safe return home after screening this film. Sure, the trailers spared no justice at all and made Kevin James (a funny guy) look a damn fool starring in a children's film released during the wintry season. After Black Friday no less (the events took place during that day). His, at the time, pretentious comment calling his film "comic version of Die Hard" had passed through one ear out the other. I scoffed aloud. Nothing could capture the magic of the Bruce Willis titans. Paul Blart: Mall Cop follows an obese and disgusting pig of a man who cracks a few jokes here and there in some disgusting self-loathing experiment to make you laugh with him at quips relating to incidents in which "peanut butter fills the cracks of his heart...go away pain". We may "blart" out an unwelcome chuckle occasionally but this is never remedied with a true hearty moment of serene comedy. For the most part, this film is a slug casually admiring the scenery until the heist conflict occurs. Everything until this part can be easily discarded for lighter weight. This film as a product would have been more successful on websites like FunnyOrDie. With the situation of modern comedy either being overkill or child's play, Paul Blart: Mall Cop is an offender in a uncelebrated instance of neutrality. In many instances, you will see him getting incredible drunk and thanks to his hypoglycemia, passing out or having the effects of alcohol being "super effective!". The real magic of Paul Blart: Mall Cop doesn't come until maybe with a scarce 30 minutes remaining. In true lesser-than-average Joe manner, Paul Blart "hilariously" (Not in any way shape or form) manages to shock into submission all of the mall terrorists akin to Die Hard. Bruce Willis is a much for "fit" hero for the excursion of action. Within the final 10 minutes of actual film time, Paul Blart: Mall Cop simply escalates into a ridiculous Die Hard 2 montage of Adam Sandler produced parodies. From the betrayal to the plane fight and the search for Holly, the film's only golden moments are when you realize that the purpose of this film is to parody the greatest action film of all time, eventually. Every other regard can be monotonously tossed out the window. If you're as big of a Die Hard fan as me, you owe it to yourself to see this film...eventually. As in, illegally downloading it and not spending any form of currency on it. Not even trading furs would make this a worthy buy.

-mAQ

MIRACLE MILE

Steve De Jarnatt (1988)

Miracle Mile is many things: a comedy, a romance, a tragedy. But what it is mostly is a testimonial of the stupid things we men do for women. This very similar approach to looming catastrophe was utilized in the neo-Kaiju film, Cloverfield. Following the same schematics, Miracle Mile/Cloverfield is about the discovery of impending disaster, whether synthetic or organic, and a twerp who vows to himself to venture into ground zero in hopes of reuniting and escaping with a woman they love. In Cloverfield's case, the woman in question is the erotic, exotic Odette Yustman. In Miracle Mile's, we get . . . Mare Wingham sporting a mullet. Both films are starkly similar and both feature a helicopter crash near the same fraction of run time. Miracle Mile unravels like an 80s-controlled game of Perfection, meaning that regardless of what happens, shit's gonna pop. With such a drastic turnabout in tone, Anthony Edwards portrays quirky, obsessive Harry, a suit and nothing more. At least, until he answers an idly ringing phone outside of a diner. The frantic voice on the other end at first mistakes the number for his father's. Realizing his error, he issues a warning of a missile launch and then gunshots echo through the telephone lines. Harry then decides that he must retrieve a woman that he recently fell in love with . . . after their first date.

Opening on a cheery narrative is what creates the jolting effect of Miracle Mile. L.A.'s peaches-and-cream, regardless of current crime rate. When the phone is answered and fate rears its ugly head, the tone of Miracle Mile turns tar-black and characters are introduced only to do atrocious things, like burn two cops alive after their near-discovery of stolen car stereos. This character's name is Wilson. Wilson's trade is a street vendor, that jive-talking Negro who breaks into cars and rips out head units for quick cash. After being hijacked by a frantic and bleeding Harry (oh, how the tables have turned), Wilson demands to pick up his sister before the supposed Armageddon. Returning later in the urban response to the legacies of Bonnie & Clyde, Wilson departs as a hilarious and researched African archetype - a deadly stupid creature. This attempt to humanize the "cop-killer" was an effort too late. As previously mentioned, the film is essentially a countdown, alike to the previously reviewed Proto-nuke film, Ladybug, Ladybug.

Approaching from every possible angle, Miracle Mile is a strange oddity of action. Opening with an ugly romance between suit and beast, the fangs are eventually bared. Upon traveling to the woman's apartment, he discovers her drugged in her own bed, victim to her own Valium. Wasting no time, he picks up the grotesque ginger and places her in a shopping cart, scurrying them both out of the apartment plaza. It's at this awkward stage of cinematic puberty that Miracle Mile suffers the most grievous of wounds. What once was an interesting

MIRACLE MILE

take on the bourgeois and the effects of mass hysteria is eventually transformed into a romantics crisis control babble. To further spread the leak of quality, the race against time turns into an aggravating escort mission. Say what you will but this couple's fates are sealed due to the insolence of Julie. Against his panicked orders to stay still until Harry finds a helicopter pilot, Julie is later seen wandering the streets, hassling passer-byers. This amongst other incursions is the death of Miracle Mile. As if an end of the world situation isn't stressful enough, we have to deal with the ignorance of a tramp.

Don't misconstrue my negativity as shrugging Miracle Mile off. There is much to enjoy about Miracle Mile, whether it be the slap to the face - the facade of felicity stripped as the news of impending disaster creeps, or the excellent musical composition by Tangerine Dream. Only in the later scenes does the exciting effect of hysteria become a problem for Harry. With cocktails and weapons, the citizenry attacks bistros and electronic stores, looting and creating visual anarchy for our greedy cinematographer. Time being a luxury they don't have, these civilians of L.A., particularly those on Miracle Mile, begin to revolt and riot, which creates the last glimmer of cinematic marvels found in Miracle Mile. I don't dare dispute the effect of the climax on those cinema goers in the early autumn of '88. However, to today's standards of bleak and nihilistic film fascination, Miracle Mile stands to me as a cheery time capsule of squandered proportions.

-mAQ

12 YEARS A SLAVE

Steve McQueen (2013)

In terms of black auteur filmmakers, I cannot think of one more so seemingly deracinated, racially unconscious, and 'Europeanized' than black Grenadian Brit Steve McQueen (*Hunger*, *Shame*), so naturally I was quite intrigued, if not hesitatingly so, when I discovered he decided to tackle the subject of American slavery with the film *12 Years a Slave* (2013). Indeed, during his days as an unknown video artist, McQueen briefly touched on the subject of post-colonialism with his short *Western Deep* (2002)—an experimental Herzog-esque work depicting the virtually slave-like conditions of mostly black coalminers in a South African goldmine—but the director, who has emphasized that race has never been a priority of his work, always manages to take a detached yet paradoxically visceral approach to the subject, as if he is a chameleon that is able to cinematically walk in anyone's shoes, including hunger-striking IRA men in *Hunger* (2008) and a successful advertising executive who moonlights as an unsavory sex addict in *Shame* (2011). Unlike black filmmakers like, say, tiny spade agitator Spike Lee (*Do the Right Thing*, *Summer of Sam*), McQueen, who is married to a white woman and has a mulatto daughter, seems to be reasonably color blind, at least relatively speaking, especially considering we live in an absurdly xenophilic age plagued by political correctness where the smartest thing a nonwhite artist can do to further their career is to create something to make Caucasian racial cuckolds cum with ethno-masochistic delight. Indeed, while I believe *12 Years a Slave* will prove to be a nice masturbation aid for some university cultural anthropology professor and features enough evil white slave masters to keep both sub-literate race hustler Jesse Jackson and pseudo-white anti-white agitator Tim Wise happy, it certainly does not feature the sort of virile anti-white hatred typical of a work like *Amistad* (1997) directed by Steven Spielberg, which professes to be historical yet shamelessly wallows in Hebraic fiction. While *12 Years a Slave* is also largely a work of fiction pretending to be stylized nonfiction in motion, it at least has some, if not rather dubious, artistic merit. Indeed, a sort of 'Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom of American slavery movies,' *12 Years a Slave* is like Euro-artsploitation meets mainstream Hollywood as a work dripping with ultra-violence, but also with aesthetically solacing scenes of Southern fields and deleterious caterpillars crawling on rotten cotton. Produced by dubious individuals ranging from Shabbos goy boy toy Brad Pitt to arrogant Israeli spy Arnon Milchan, *12 Years a Slave* is indeed an epic piece of agitprop but unlike most works of its kosher produced kind it manages to slightly rise above the level of slavery-fetishizing leftist swill and offers a more ambient S&M-driven side to slavery.

It is the year 1841 and Solomon Northup (Chiwitel Ejiofor) is a cultivated bourgeois-like free negro man who makes a decent living as a carpenter and vio-

linist and lives reasonably comfortably with his wife and two children in Saratoga Springs, New York. On a rather unfortunate day, Northup is approached by two effortlessly effete Wilde-like white men, Mr. Brown (Scoot McNairy) and Mr. Hamilton (Taran Killam), to perform in their traveling circus as a fiddler for a rather lucrative sum, which ultimately takes him to Washington D.C. for a brief period. After a hedonistic night drinking with his two new seemingly gay white friends, Northup awakes to find himself a chained and enslaved man and before he knows it he is on a slave ship to New Orleans. Rather ridiculously, Northup witnesses a slave played by Michael K. Williams (*The Wire*, *Boardwalk Empire*) being stabbed to death by a lowly white sailor while attempting to intervene during the suspected rape of a black female slave, as if poor whites had the god given right to kill expensive property (i.e. black slaves) owned by wealthy whites whenever they felt like it. Ultimately, Northup is forced by a Svengali-like slave trader named Theophilus Freeman (Paul Giamatti) to take the name "Platt," which is the name of a runaway slave from Georgia. Indeed, while it rather sucks that he is now a slave who has lost all his freedom and is forced to do manual labor, Northup manages to become the personal property of a uncommonly benign plantation owner named William Ford (Benedict Cumberbatch), whose only personal flaw seems to be his cowardice. Unfortunately, Ford has employed a cracker carpenter named John Tibeats (Paul Dano) who does not take kindly to the fact that negro Northup has a larger vocabulary than he does. Eventually, Tibeats and Northup have a softcore showdown and the former nearly lynches the latter with the help of two equally lowly white lumpenprole friends. To save him from the white wrath of Tibeats, master Ford decides to sell Northup to a religiously devout fellow named Edwin Epps (played by McKraut Michael Fassbender, who in real-life has an affinity for dark meat). Unfortunately for Northup, master Epps believes slavery is biblically sanctioned and that there is no sin in treating property (i.e. slaves) like trash. On top of everything else, Epps is in love with one of his pieces of property, a young negress slave named Patsey (Lupita Nyong'o), which naturally does not sit well with his vindictive sexually repressed wife (Sarah Paulson). Indeed, when not raped by master Epps, Patsey is physically abused by jealous Mary. At one point, Patsey attempts to persuade Northup to assist her in killing herself but the ex-freeman is devoutly religious and refuses to damn himself to hell. Later, Patsey leaves the plantation to get a bar of soap and Epps, who blames his 'forced lover' and the rest of the slaves for his recent misfortunes (an outbreak of cotton worm has destroyed his crops), decides to take his anger and jealous out on her. Egged on by his pathologically jealous and sexually frustrated wife, Epps forces Northup to brutally whip Patsey, who is tied to a pole naked, but ultimately decides to finish the job himself, which almost leads to the brutalized black girl's death. Luckily, Northup's life changes forever when a cocky Canadian laborer named Bass (Brad Pitt) comes to the Epps plantation to work on a pavilion. After going

on a feel-good anti-slavery spiel that pisses off Epps, Bass eventually convinces Northup to tell his personal story. Ultimately, Northup begs Bass to write his friend in the north about procuring his freeman documents and the Canadian abides. In the end, Northup gets his freedom after a dozen years as a slave and is rather happy to learn he is a grandfather.

As can be expected from such a work, *12 Years a Slave* is riddled with horrendous historical inaccuracies that transcend mere artistic license, ridiculous 'evil redneck' caricatures that could have only been dreamed up by an individual who is too afraid to leave the city, and even a tad bit of superlatively superficial and vomit-worthy Spielberg-esque sentimentalism, yet compared to Lee Daniels' *The Butler* (2013) and turd Tarantino's cheap cuckold epic *Django Unchained* (2012), McQueen's movie is a semi-tolerable piece of Hollywood pseudo-arthouse cinema. Of course, compared to McQueen's two previous features, *Hunger* and *Shame*, *12 Years a Slave* seems like a 'for-hire' sell-out flick where the auteur was only able to shine as a filmmaker as much as his slave-master producers would allow him to, yet he manages to shine nonetheless. Of course, in its revoltingly flattering depiction of white northerners as saintly nephrofiles who would gladly lick the boots of a black man to prove their godlike capacity for racial tolerance, *12 Years a Slave* is meant to appeal to the slave-morality-driven sensibilities of moronic white liberal dupes who falsely believe that human history is the story of 'progress' against racism and adversity. Apparently, as indicated by his own ghostwritten 1853 memoir, the real-life Northup was nowhere near the respectable black bourgeois gentleman that he is portrayed as in *12 Years a Slave*, but a perennially unemployed black bum with a knack for fiddling around with his fiddle. Although never mentioned in *12 Years a Slave*, when the real Northup disappeared, his family did not even bother to report him missing as they expected him to do something so superlatively shady as to abandon his family. In fact, as revealed in the demystifying book *Solomon Northup: The Complete Story of the Author of Twelve Years a Slave* (2013) written by David A. Fiske, it is believed that Northup hooked up with some white criminal cronies and made a scam of selling himself into slavery à la *Skin Game* (1971)—a comedy where a white man routinely sells his free black friend into slavery at the highest bidding and then springs him loose at night time. As revealed in Fiske's *Solomon Northup*, Northup's hometown newspaper *The Saratoga Press* concluded that the free black man's enslavement was the result of a skin game scam gone awry as indicated in the following excerpt: "...it is more than suspected that Northup was an accomplice in the sale, calculating to slip away and share the spoils, but that the purchaser was too sharp for him, and instead of getting the cash, he got something else." Of course, like any Hollywood spade slave period piece, *12 Years a Slave* portrays the protagonist as a morally pristine hero of outstanding stoicism and immaculate character whose only flaw is he had the grand misfortune of encountering devils in melanin-deprived flesh.

12 YEARS A SLAVE

Of course, as *12 Years a Slave* even reveals, no one knows what happened to Northup during his remaining years or where/how he died, but it is assumed he perished disgracefully (in his wife's obituary, it is stated that Northup became a "worthless vagabond"). Indeed, it seems that if Northup was a slave to anything, it was his own moral degeneracy and lack of work ethic.

Of course, Guido auteur heroes Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi's *Goodbye Uncle Tom* (1971) aka *Addio zio Tom* is and will most likely always be the only truly honest, uncompromising, and eclectically iconoclastic depiction of the pre-Civil War South and why getting involved with the African slave trades was one of the biggest mistakes Whitey ever made. Ultimately, *12 Years a Slave* manages to work as a minor artsploitation work on steroids, but only Hollywood-lobotomized philistines, ethno-masochistic white leftists, and black folks could find the film to be anything more than an artistic con meant to prey on man's more base emotions. A sort of *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) for culturally cuckolded liberal humanists featuring insipid anti-white caricatures and agitprop-style violence typical of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), *12 Years a Slave* was even not surprisingly promoted by postmodern minstrel entertainers like Kanye West and Sean Combs. One can enjoy *12 Years a Slave* for its scenic depiction of the Southern sun and rural lands, but take heed that McQueen's film, which was written by Hollywood Afro-hack and neo-bolshevik agitator John Ridley (*Undercover Brother*, *Red Tails*), comes from the Howard Zinn and Jesse Jackson cultural marxist school of filmmaking. Maybe it is about time Steve McQueen uses his talents elsewhere to make the ultimate negro-directed arthouse-splatter flick, but with the commercial and critical success of *12 Years a Slave*, it might already be too late as he played Uncle Tom and sold his soul to the Hebraic Hollywood devil.

-Ty E

DAY OF THE DEAD

Steve Miner (2008)

Steve Miner is a name some of us has heard before. He directed several Friday the 13th sequels as well as Lake Placid and Warlock. As the list shows, these films should not be taken seriously. So what happens when a shitty director takes a serious remake. Well, we wind up with Nick Cannon fighting zombies along with a bunch of teenagers. We all know the plot, a group of survivors hold down a military bunker in hopes for the zombie outbreak to stop. As per usual remake fares, we have tons of over-editing and useless grain in the shots. To be honest, Ving Rhames is nothing without his mustache. That was a horrible move for the director. The reason I would even want to bother with this film is for the Ving kicking ass like he did in Dawn of the Dead. Mena Suvari might be a good actress, but not in this film. Her acting was some of the most flawed I have seen. Of course, I blame the director, for making such a weak script. For thickness on the characters behalf, they enlist such traits as "afraid to fire their weapon" to try and get some depth to them. Of course, we have the cutout characters, such as the punk kid with spiked hair. Of course the characters are stupid. Loaded with inane dialogue, this film breaks so many borders on how to make a horrible film. Not being a fan of Romero in the first place, I still couldn't see this film failing so hard. Barely entertaining, the film only has key highlight moments. FUN FACT: Dead People can apparently stand up. When you finally see the first glimpse of a zombie, it makes a similar noise as the Sand People in Star Wars create. Talk about a genre killer. This has so many bullshit scenes that it is impossible to take this film seriously. I didn't know Molotov cocktails melt your skin instantaneously. From the way this film looks, it appears that Miner invested most of the budget in shitty special effects and CGI gore. That was not a wise move, if anything, he should have invested in a CGI story. The only way I could ever recommend this film is by promoting the neat decapitations. It's hard to recommend a film only on gore value. That is truly how you know horror is on the rocks. Much of the gore is digital but we are treated to lots of exploding heads and melted flesh. Many little nods are thrown around, referencing Return of the Living Dead and even Snyder's update on Dawn of the Dead. The zombies in this film are premiered by a glimpse inside the blood cell as this totally hypothetical transformation gene is created. They now can drive cars, leap & climb ceilings like Spider-Man, and their flesh mutates instantly. There is also a vegetarian zombie in this film who bears a similarity to the national mascot for all Romero films. See; Bub. This is worse than your average low budget fare, no wonder it was given to straight-to-video release. I never thought I would say this, but the only thing that actually made this film any better, was Nick Cannon. Day of the Dead without Nick Cannon's racist remarks would be like a zombie movie that didn't make sense. Wait...

DAY OF THE DEAD

-Maq

GUYVER: DARK HERO

Steve Wang (1994)

The Guyver is an instant cult icon in any category that you wish to throw at it; horrible melodrama, quirky action, even arterial slashings. The fact that Kaiju, Sentai, and American kung-fu films can all be meshed in an explosive Venn diagram only adds to the enormous entertainment that Guyver: Dark Hero adds. The perfect fusion of Western settings and Japanese art has been created with this sequel. Guyver: Dark Hero has been hailed as "Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers" but with an R rating. This is a highly correct assumption that we have no choice but to agree with as soon as the film opens with the slaying of an innocent security guard and the New Guyver slashing the culprit's throat with his BAD ASS arm blades - reminiscent to the monstrosity that was Baraka (Mortal Kombat II). The sequel to The Guyver follows the manga/anime much closer thus dissolving a proximity issue. This is almost spoiled when the horrible acting dawns upon the viewer, but it is highly forgivable. By the end of this film, it will even be cherished. A horrible sub-love plot involving an archaeologist bogs down most of the script which serves as a pleasant entrée to fans of cryptozoology, like myself. The theory of werewolves and other entities being Zoanoids is a welcome addition to the psyche of a skeptic or conspiracy theorist. It adds this realism to an already outrageous adventure of discovery and soap opera love. The tortured character of the Guyver is portrayed by David Hayter. His performance is so cleverly disguised as amateur work that it pleases all senses, both mapped and unknown. There lies a deep satisfaction behind this film and the zany action and horrible production sets. Here's a fun fact. The actor that you criticize? David Hayter? Well he's actually the writer for the Zack Snyder directed Watchmen feature film. This is one I'm heavily anticipating seeing as how the novel is one of the greatest pieces of literature ever crafted by an elitist Brit. Guyver: Dark Hero is a spotlight for incredible monster action mixed with often-violent outcomes. For any fan of science fiction, this is a must-see of the genre. I'm torn between hating David Hayter for his predicted destruction of Watchmen. Seeing as how he wrote The Scorpion King, the chances aren't looking too bright. Guyver: Dark Hero is basically essential viewing for any organic life form. That's the only real way to put it.

-mAQ

LUMINOUS PROCURESS
LUMINOUS PROCURESS

Steven Arnold (1971)

Admittedly, the very sight of an image of the commie hippie drag queen troupe, The Cockettes (led by Hibiscus and his would-be merry man-ladies) is to me the height of radical repugnancy, aggravating aesthetic and biological disharmony, and well beyond redeemable human depravity, so naturally I was quite reluctant to watch the rarely-seen lecherous experimental in arthouse excess *Luminous Procuress* (1971) starring Pandora and the terribly torturous tranny team, and directed by multi-media artist Steven F. Arnold (*The Liberation of the Manique Mechanique, Gomorrah Borealis*); a rather queenish yet refined fellow who had the distinction of being voted "Best Dressed" one year by the L.A. Weekly. Upon first seeing the film none other than famed surrealist Salvador Dalí described *Luminous Procuress* as "a work of genius" and took on auteur Arnold as his young protégé (who he referred to as his "prince"), thereupon resulting in the young artist's involvement with the painting and opening of the Dalí Theatre and Museum in Figueres, Spain. Despite Dalí, as well as Andy Warhol delighting in the visual luxuriance of *Luminous Procuress*, the revolutionary work is scantily referenced in the documentary *The Cockettes* (2002) directed by Bill Weber and David Weissman, which is quite telling as the film owes more to the avant-garde auteur behind it than the exceedingly effete faux queens that rock-out with their cocks-out in the spiritually salacious and sinful cinematic work. Indeed, *Luminous Procuress* does feature aesthetically displeasing men that look like creepy caricatures of Courtney Love and Amy Winehouse, as well as hedonistic hippie degeneracy and lecherousness love-in lunacy, but this rather experimental celluloid art piece is also comparable to Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972), and Ulrike Ottinger's *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* (1978) due to its keen kaleidoscopic imagery, hermetic homoeroticism, and overall unwavering intimate idiosyncrasy. Essentially beginning where Jack Smith left off with *Flaming Creatures* (1963) with a reasonably healthy serving of Milliganesque low-camp eroticism, except to a more heightened degree (the film features unsimulated sex of the somewhat serious stripe), *Luminous Procuress* – a film that dared to portray phantasmagorical cunnilingus and intensely iconoclastic imagery (including a Satanic pope bugging a bent over nun) – is a vehemently vagarious and heteromorphic work of celluloid carnality of the absolutely assiduous abberosexual sort.

Although I cannot say I agree with his political persuasion nor hermaphroditic fashion sense, I undoubtedly believe that Steven Arnold was practicing what he preached, at least in terms of aesthetic authenticity, when he stated, "art is revolution or it's nothing," as *Luminous Procuress* is indubitably the sort of cinematic work where the auteur fought tooth and (broken) nail to bring his uniquely

unruly and ruthlessly risqué images to life as if he was engaged in a cinematic crusade for the reevaluation and reinvention of the artistic medium of film. Unfortunately, due to the influence of certain financial backers of the film who wanted the cinematic work released asap, Arnold was apparently removed from the production of *Luminous Procuress* not long after the film's principal photography was finished, or so says Warner Jepson, the man who was responsible for assembling the haunting, hypnotic, and hallucinatory synthesizer score for the work. On top of composing the music for the film, Jepson and Victor Barberi were responsible for editing it together, which probably explains why *Luminous Procuress* is even more nonlinear in structure than the works of Jack Smith. With the dialogue recorded for the film being deemed useless due to the noise of trolley buses and voices interfering with the recording of sound at the studio in which it was originally mixed, Jepson and Barberi opted for dumping the original dialogue and replacing it with foreign (a sort of mishmash of pig French and Slavic languages) and mostly indecipherable voices, henceforth further adding to the otherworldly esotericism of *Luminous Procuress*. Despite Arnold's lack of involvement in the post-production aspects of *Luminous Procuress*, the film is undoubtedly his auteur-piece as made apparent by the unmistakable aesthetic essence of his previous black-and-white quasi-psychedelic surrealist shorts like *The Liberation of Mannique Mechanique* (1967), *Messages, Messages* (1968), and *Various Incarnations of a Tibetan Seamstress* (1969), with the subsequent film starring *The Cockettes* – the only work he shot in color with the exception of the impossible-to-find work *Gomorrah Borealis* (1984) – being his cinematic opus magnum. Far too murky, menacing, meditative, mystical, and lacking in mock-heroic humor and musical numbers to be a mere cheeky *Cockettes* cinematic concerto piece, the members of the fag drag gang purely act as peculiar yet surely potent props for *Luminous Procuress*. Influenced by historically revolutionary artists ranging from pioneering French illusionist filmmaker Georges Méliès (*A Trip to the Moon*, *The Impossible Voyage*) to Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo, Steven Arnold was certainly an artist with a grandeur artistic vision, certainly more so than a group of campy commune communists of the superficially sardonic and mostly senseless sort.

As an assuredly ambitious artist who sought to “save the world” and create a “new mythology” through his audacious artistic creations, it is beyond question that Steven Arnold's *Luminous Procuress* is a work of metaphysical, if soundly self-indulgent and sensual, cinema. In the brief 10-minute ‘video portrait’ Steven Arnold's *Heavenly Bodies* directed by Stephanie Farago, Arnold proclaims that his great and grandiose goal with his art was: “creating things for people to look up to...young people...and giving them miracles, giving them hope, giving them shrines and giving them hope, giving them new forms of religion and new ways to believe and believing in all things.” As a sort of perverse quasi-Jungian prophet of the notably homophile persuasion, *Luminous*

LUMINOUS PROCURESS

Procuress is Arnold's virtual cinematic holy writ and certainly a singular and strikingly stylized work in the history of American film that deserves greater recognition as being – not unlike the works of James Sibley Watson (*The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Lot in Sodom*), Kenneth Anger (*Scorpio Rising*, *Lucifer Rising*), and Paul Morrissey (*Trash*, *Women in Revolt*) – a rare example of cultural mongrels creating authentic and seemingly organic art in a most mercenary and materialistic nation with next to nil kultur nor history. Seemingly too ominous for fans of *The Cockettes* as a sort of "bad trip" and "post-hippie nightmare," *Luminous Procuress* is conspicuously the sort of work that cinematic dreams are made of, hence the film's virtual consignment to the celluloid garbage heap of history; a realm of no return better suited for the likes of high-priest hippie Hibiscus and his horrid flock of serenading and springing fashion victim faggots.

-Ty E

LEPRECHAUN: BACK 2 THA HOOD

Steven Ayromlooi (2003)

Leprechaun: Back 2 tha Hood is the fifth sequel to the original cult classic that first featured Jennifer Aniston in a leading role. To reprise the terror he already inflicted on the ghetto's of America, the leprechaun goes "back 2 da hood" aimed with the sole challenge of inwardly killing more of the lower class black society. For an urban horror film, this one doesn't hit the spot as opposed to its direct predecessor with such stars as Ice T and Coolio, which in turn makes it a true to life urban horror film and not one that just exploits black unknowns they may have picked up off "tha street". Despite turning the Leprechaun into a mere shadow of the running gag that he was, the film maintains its own eccentric humor throughout the running time and manages to provide ample entertainment for such a disgusting film. Whether the Leprechaun is hitting on them bootylicious black babes or smoking some of that fine ganja, his adventure will always be wanted time and time again, In fact - I couldn't seem to grow weary of these miscellaneous sequels. It's very profitable towards the film industry machine to create these sequels that surprisingly have a remnant of a replay value. Warwick Davis returns in his titular role of a smaller stature aimed with protecting "his preciouses". Throughout this film, you will be host to a cruel experiment designed with degrading blacks worse than any previous installment of cinema might have (I still haven't watched Hood Angelz). In Back 2 Tha Hood, even the protagonists are whiny little shits that don't care about education, economy (In a falsified scene, they pretend, but as quick as that subplot was there, it's gone), or the benefit of mankind. If the white race ever intended to create a propaganda video glorifying the master race, this would surely work its charm, and that's all the film really has. The film has worked its Irish magic well as it has turned the black society into the laughing stock of the internet. In Mobile, Alabama in 2006, many "urban thugz" claimed to have seen a Leprechaun in a tree alerting news vehicles to find a circus of sorts. The only problem is that if you gaze in the Leprechaun's direction, it vanishes. What a double negative. After this video hit the video sharing sites, it exploded into one of the more popular meme's around, creating shirts, buttons, and many Cafepress stores where you can get the iconic idiot's face plastered on any daily product.

And I quote an iMDB forum post. "wtf the reason they end up bad is because a caucasian production team takes over and cn't actually capture the OUR culture how it shud be !!! so dn't get it twisted! and all the slang is just a stereotype on all US caribbean/african heritage's" Sure, the easy way out of the hole they dug was to market Leprechaun 6 as a "black comedy". While I'll give it the benefit of a doubt, there are surprisingly several funny scenes. The problem is that I can count them on my fingers. Leprechaun: Back 2 tha Hood is another cash cow for the DTV industry. It was cleverly marketed towards people who cannot

LEPRECHAUN: BACK 2 THA HOOD

define an exquisite taste of horror films or cinema in general. Some brainless horror fan might try to spark a debate by screaming how this film is "so bad it's good" but my best advice is to coldly ignore said person/s. This is nothing but a degenerative piece on black culture. Or lack there of, seeing as how director Steven Ayromlooi thinks so little of them.

-mAQ

AUTOMATON TRANSFUSION

Steven C. Miller (2008)

With a name like Automaton Transfusion you might brainstorm a young director with a head full of brilliant ideas to reinvent the horror genre. Or you could think of a numskull with a large budget making cinematic shit even more violating than Pasolini's Salo: 120 days of Sodom. For a pseudo-intellectual title that circles round to translate simply into "Zombie", this film only unleashes bland characters, annoying neck bitings which brings to question why zombies always go for that body part, and the most annoying cinematography ever committed to an idea. Automaton Transfusion was reportedly made for 30 grand which doesn't show. Much of the budget must have been spent on coke parties with the cast and crew. The frame rate of the film making is at such a low speed that the film is constantly jumping everywhere and not in the shaky-cam way but in the "OH GOD! Is my brand new DVD skipping?" To close this argument, if you bought this DVD you're a damn fool. Just because the "messianic" Bloody-Disgusting hailed this as a masterpiece and claimed it to be the Independent horror dream come true, doesn't mean everyone else will feel this way. In fact, I don't think anyone else will feel this way about the film. This is an entirely unlikable exercise in publicizing zombies even further. As if conformity didn't exist. The main symptom of viewing this film. A black mingler with brass knuckles, a faux hawk sporting pothead, and a whiny slimy sniveling "geek" all group up together in the most embarrassing friend circle during an unknown zombie onslaught. The only highlight of this film is when the Negro star isn't being disgustingly told what to do in each scene. When the black guy utilizes his ignorance, the screen shines with honesty. It's something that isn't seen that much. As much of a cultured citizen as I am, I can tell that "urban" audiences will feel right at home. I can't say much more about this film because I want the invading thoughts to flee in agony expressed physically when I pissed acid on this DVD (In my mind). Don't believe any of the hype. Bloody-Disgusting only adds to the list of film review sites that get bribed into reviewing a "good" film. I don't appreciate lies and slander as much as I don't appreciate an absolutely horrible film that steals "innovative death scenes" from every other zombie classic. Do stay away from this garbage. Don't even look at the case.

-mAQ

TRAILER PARK OF TERROR
TRAILER PARK OF TERROR

Steven Goldmann* (2008)

Slasher films have always been known for their iconic deconstruction of many racial or social class propaganda. A popular example that is always revisited is the "hillbilly" class. Rural working class America has never been so terrifying. In vein of Herschell Gordon Lewis and John Waters, this campy splatterpiece is born, devoid of all morals and offers a heart-breaking back story. The film launches an exuberant campaign with its tongue-in-cheek humor and the classic "You have sex, you die" get-up. This only fits in these pro-American trashy movies. A foul redneck rampage has never been so messy, up until now. The film leans mostly towards the Yankee's but features a trivial confederate flag in a scene, just to spice up the scenery. The film itself, is actually based on a comic book pressed by Imperium Comics. The glamorous southern bell Nichole Hiltz plays the deep fried Dixie dominator Norma, who starts off as a vengeful bombshell who later turns up with her undead friends to prey on young teenagers, similar to Two Thousand Maniacs, or even the recent 2001 Maniacs. Film starts off easy, echoing hints of vengeance and nihilism, then switches into a sex-comedy, then to a barbaric slaughter fest involving skinning teens and deep frying them; all to add to this cannibalistic redneck illusion. Norma is the perfect female; one who is intelligent and beautiful, but also knows when to not take any shit. The perfect monster has been created, along with her ragtag group of cannibalistic, guitar-playing scouts. Trace Adkins also makes an appearance as a Sam Elliot-esque mysterious man who is always there to drive the story. Director Steve Goldman came a long way from his turf as seen in Broken Bridges. Hopefully, he adopts into the horror genre in order to churn out more prime beef. Hard Rock Zombies seems to be the case here, mixed with a heavy dose of the bloody mess that is From Dusk Till Dawn. Trailer Park of Terror is the perfect horror hybrid, brimming with sadistic masseuses, beef jerky, and a rocking soundtrack.

Playing at the 17th Philadelphia Film Festival www.phillyfests.com

-Maq

THE PARK IS MINE

Steven Hilliard Stern (1985)

The Park is Mine is an early Made-for-TV HBO production casting a pre-fame Tommy Lee Jones in his precipitated approach to act as a tortured and disgruntled Vietnam vet. His sagging features and rough voice only aid the appearance of a perturbed individual securing both hostility in his visage and the hereditary ability to look 30 years older than he presently is, at any time. Tommy Lee Jones doesn't aggravate me as much as I'd intend to express in this film and this surprised me to my very core. I've grown to loathe the man after appearing in some A-list Hollywood trife over his spanning career that grows from Cobb to Lonesome Dove then settles out with No Country for Old Men. To trade in his roles from such trashy cinema like Volcano would be a godsend to a high degree and I would gladly take the retardedly underrated The Hunted over shit like Men In Black any day.

In a post-First Blood veteran sympathy plea, action is churned simply like butter offering emotional demons and firefights with intentions of never harming a soul. For this reason, the action in The Park is Mine is simple, effective, and pure of heart. Now, this might dishearten the "die hard" action fan as, let's face it, we love watching people getting riddled with bullets, but with the empathy directed towards television viewers and sticking it to the man, The Park is Mine is largely entertaining film that was made with nary a sore spot. Just examine First Blood closer and notice the large budget of 15 million US dollars. This is by no means large by today's economical standards but for a film featuring no killing, few explosions, and a natural set, First Blood's budget seems to be roughly inflated perhaps even to pay off the star power of Stallone and Deneuve. But to be fair to both The Park is Mine and the comparable First Blood, First Blood offers much more depth into madness and chaotic order (is their any other kind?) of the Vietnam veteran and The Park is Mine follows more intently on corrupt office officials and the adverse effects of media. Both of these films have simplistic appliance of rough style and aesthetic that grants a loose leash for a reimagining based off some other novel. The Park is Mine bee-lines a sympathetic TV-MA venture into a disgruntled vet and his second-hand decision to hold Central Park hostage using a series of already-set explosive devices rigged around the perimeter. What could have been a hostile takeover of this disgusting place occupied by degenerate killers and rapists is turned into something you'd expect from your local TNT station. The body count is so incredibly low but features 2 more killings than First Blood. The Park is Mine has one suicide and two cases of self-defense but First Blood had Sly running afoot in a forest crippling and incapacitating crooked police officers but do not fear, The Park is Mine depicts a fashion of low-cost productions that concern themselves on pristine quality - one of the greatest television movies that comes to mind,

THE PARK IS MINE

in fact. Conceitedly so, *The Park is Mine* centers itself around well-positioned vantages covering both aspects within the park, outside the park, and the public opinion of this vigilante who is working towards something of a meaningful cause. The persona's begin piling up only before exploiting the pigeonholed "corrupt politician" ploy that eventually begins to unravel to the duration of the film leaving a very, very frustrated Tommy Lee Jones with an assault rifle and a fistful of spiteful hand grenades. But remember, he doesn't want to hurt anyone! For some time now, I've been becoming increasingly tired with the preprocessed programming inciting "social commentary." I could just muster enough air for a sigh of relief, thanks the powers that be to see there wasn't a "Racially charged beating of an honest Negro," cause let's face it, there's never an honest one in situations such as these. This is no Die hard, people. A cute and clever Argyle is never something to expect in hazardous situations such as these. Fantastical elements of co-existing cultures don't appear like they do on film and that contributes to the phrase "movie magic." Only in film can you watch the world burn and life prosper in a 4 hour block double billing of Roland Emmerich disaster "classics." To the unkeen eyes, *The Park is Mine* is a passable production that will entertain occasionally but to someone with a knowledge of antiquities in cinema, you'll find much to appreciate and reflect on as this film abruptly ends leaving that amazing score from Tangerine Dream softly echoing in your skull. This remains one of Tommy Lee Jones' best roles following with *The Hunted* and *Small Soldiers*. It's in his vocal ability to both intimidate and inspire. His voice remains one of the greatest in Hollywood and gave much to the title villain in *Small Soldiers*. Included in this review is the YouTube presentation of this hard-to-find classic of cable productions. It's within your best interest to watch and absorb this film if you favor the sort of *First Blood* filmmaking that this embraces. Bare in mind, this is no Rambo but *The Park is Mine* is an important film and should be a lesson to all making a TV movie.

-mAQ

THE HORSEMAN

Steven Kastrissios (2008)

Ah, the fear every father adopts with the arrival of a newborn daughter - that his little angel will turn into an indifferent slut. Steven Kastrissios, a 26 year old first-time director, expresses and sketches similar fears in his ultraviolent "revenge" thriller, *The Horseman*. Constructed from the opening shot of the explosion of a degenerates home, *The Horseman* took flight once a short film of the matter was received well in film festivals. Acquiring budget and a further enraged vision, Kastrissios began to slowly stoke the fires under *The Horseman*, leading to a nice composition of heightening suspense and brutality. *The Horseman* is also quite a polarizing film, leaving many of the fence with its cruel depictions of humanity. Critics and audience members seem to either laud or loathe the sheer savage nature of this father's massacre as well as his intentions. Obviously titled from the idea of a harbinger of death and destruction but of mortal coil, Christian Forteski only sought solace from the mysterious circumstances of his only daughter's death. But when an anonymous source mails him a pornographic film entitled *Young City Sluts* and he witnesses his princess, obviously drugged, getting taken advantage of, Christian takes it upon himself to pursue and destroy the indirect attackers of his pride.

First off, you'll instantly notice a strong point of *The Horseman* is its seamy aesthetic of dimly colored grayscale. *The Horseman's* color palette mainly consists of shades of gray, complimenting the ashes of his daughter to which he seeks to spread somewhere on this barren and merciless rock. This decision to leave the colors dry and the lighting strong and natural makes for sickening detail to pores, sweat and other bodily fluids. The blood featured in *The Horseman* isn't bright red gush, rather, inky dark substance, quick to congeal and scab. A strange aspect of Christian's quest is what he seems to be killing towards; his confused motive. One would generally suggest to avenge the death of his daughter, but it doesn't seem to be the case with select scenes playing evidence to a hidden picture. Christian isn't killing for the sake of his deceased daughter - in fact, the only real memories he carries as baggage are flashbacks to her in her purest concentrate - toddler. He doesn't ponder thoughts of the rebellious years as a teenager or even preteen. Christian's wake of bodies is to cover the shame left by this creation of addiction. In desperate times, he even purchases every last copy of the film starring his lovely whore directly from the distributor for the sole purpose of destroying every last copy. Christian seeks out every last phallus that tasted the flesh of his bloodline to eradicate the trace of this smear on his good name. The presentation of the in-film film *Young City Sluts* is dramatic and dripping with enough fetish to warrant the suffering of the father - no lobotomized precursor to heroin fueled fucking. *The Horseman* is a very au-

THE HORSEMAN

thetic experience in depravity, but at the same time, there seems to be no sense in mourning. Jessie is just another case of the father unable to control the wild lusts of his fledgling harlot. Along the way, a female mulatto hitchhiker is given a lift who reminds him of his daughter, though leagues ahead with this thing not common in women called "self-respect". Little does she know that her first-class accommodation is on a vessel that will inevitably lead her into the darkest crevices of desire and murder.

Quite evident of showmanship, *The Horseman*, like many other films, stutters near the final act with sensationalistic tendencies. What were once murders, individual, powerful, and unsettling, became something of a body count tally as Christian weaves through a compound leaving numerous corpses in his wake. If there could be one inspiration to cite it would assuredly be Joel Schumacher's *8mm* - a tale of an investigator tracking down the source of a purported snuff film, though without the premeditation of murder at the hands of a grieving father. The action scenes tend to foster giggles as well, being shot in a very hyperactive fashion as to obscure impact leaving space for the lack of choreography to deceive. When Christian isn't tackling husky men to the ground and miraculously gaining the upper hand on them, he's committing various acts of genital torture. Such household instruments as fishhooks and tire pumps create harrowing expressions of pure agony. *The Horseman* is raw bodily nihilism with its perverse tortures and savage seduction. To continue the trend of dissecting the few flaws *The Horseman* carries would be to challenge the inclusion of the hitchhiker, who arguably only stands to be a crutch to cutting, an act of self-mutilation attributed mainly to teenage girls, which leaves Christian with some explaining to do. Ending on a note of helplessness and violation, the act that preceded the final images was above average at best but includes a scene of bone breakage that would leave any grown man wincing. I can't help but to still look up to *The Horseman* with stars twinkling in my eyes. Regardless of the faults, no blame can be directed as the feature is a debut work and inspired by anger so furiously, that I claw at the arm of my chair in anticipation of conflict.

-mAQ

MUM /& DAD

Steven Sheil (2008)

Using most all of my collective willpower, I had struggled to avoid this British horror film with dread of its contents. Everything about the film rubbed me the wrong way; the teaser poster artwork, the seemingly juvenile minimalism in torture, and even the paunchy lead of 'Dad' - all these played a part in recalculating my course. That is, until, what I had quaked from, happened - Mum & Dad was recommended to me from a source less than trusted but succinct all together. The narrative of Mum & Dad is quite simple; a polish immigrant named Lena works at an airport cleaning with a bubbly and insecure Birdie. This very night, Lena misses her bus ride home (from what we don't realize, an excellent diversion) and is offered a ride home from Birdie, promising that if she accompanies her home, her father can give her a lift home. As obvious as horror can be, once Lena enters the home sweet.. abode and basks in the solitude of silence, no sooner is she hit over the head and fades into obscurity. When awoken, to her horror, Lena discovers the sadistic secret behinds Birdies scars and her brother Elbie's muteness - a pair of possible victims of postpartum depression trapped in a holy communion that kidnaps teenagers and submits them through extreme rehabilitation. When Mum & Dad eventually reaches its peak, and it will, it turns into trite British run-off. The only positive trait the film has that isn't on a superficial level of horror filmmaking (e.g. blood, torture, etc.) is the pair of Mum and Dad; stripped of their flesh - they represent two very different forms of psychosis which really makes for interesting connections.

As far as the torture featured in Mum & Dad goes, endurable entertainment, but if you happened upon this film in hopes for a feather of storytelling, it will not be found in this film. It doesn't appear to be first-time director Steven Sheil's fault. The film of which he striven to break out into the market is so singularly one-dimensional that the 'ingenuity' behind the title is the high point of imagination. Rubbing against the grain of Stockholm syndrome, Mum & Dad boils down into a teenage race for affection from oppressive, aggressive murderous parents. The ambiguity behind the parents and their purported children is something that can be smiled on in the end. Just know that Mum & Dad's weaknesses lie in the hands of both short-sightedness and ultimately weak filmmaking. One of the most enraging aspects of Mum & Dad is the shoddy symbolism embellished by Sheil. The director decided to blend their airport employment ruse with the visual metaphor of freedom by transitioned almost every single scene with a brief clip of an airplane landing whilst creating a sound vacuum. If your television happens to be very fickle with audio presentation, you'll find that the chatter is presented at a low volume, thus you turn up the dial only to have an airplane clip within 5 minutes near blow your ears. Someone really should create a drinking game out of this aspect of Mum & Dad but I fear it would either

MUM /& DAD

lead directly to alcoholism or to the morgue - either of which would be a great method of escaping the tyrannical immature clutches of Mum and Dad.

To put it simply, Mum & Dad cannot find it within itself to look past humiliation and scenes of torture followed by words of comfort. Perhaps in some alternate reality this would be enough to appease my sanctioned taste but not this life, not this world. All this is slapped on top of a wholly unsatisfying presentation. Granted, there are highlights of the film which includes things of which my mind has purged in light of the plane tangent. Nevertheless, what occurs within Mum & Dad isn't something you would need to search out in order to personally critique. It represents that blind horror filmmaking that allows you to select any recent film with torture in the tags and keywords just to wind up at the very same conclusion. Mum & Dad has a somewhat of a happy ending, lord only knows the scars inflicted upon poor Lena will never heal and with her emotional baggage in tow, I doubt she will feel trust in women any time in the near future. Then again, who cares? That happens to be the beauty of shallow fiction - as soon as it is absorbed it can be expunged. I don't hate Mum & Dad. I simply just dislike it. If you ever happen to be in the mood for torture lacking fetishistic qualities then I might offer a very slight nod towards its morose presence on a shelf but other than that, I'd suggest looking elsewhere for quality torture and/or storytelling involving the macabre.

-mAQ

THE GOOD GERMAN

Steven Soderbergh (2006)

I have always found Steven Soderbergh to be an overrated director. He is one of those Hollywood directors that slightly sticks out from the rest of the whorish bunch so he gets massive amounts of artistic credibility. I had yet to see a film from Soderbergh that was thought provoking and warranted serious respect for him as a director until I saw *The Good German*. I would be lying if I didn't admit that he is a technically competent director who makes well crafted films. Soderbergh's recent film *The Good German* is a minor Hollywood masterpiece of sorts. *The Good German* centers around a German Jewish woman who also happens to be the wife of a SS man. Due to the postwar destruction of Germany, she has to sell her enticing goods to U.S. troops to survive. A variety of men become obsessed with her and quickly decide they will do anything for her including putting their lives on the line. George Clooney (who I have always hated) stars as an American journalist who does anything to save the woman. *The Good German* was filmed in aesthetically pleasing black and white with various real postwar footage scattered throughout. Steven Soderbergh almost perfectly captures the essence and power of Film Noir cinema of past generations. *The Good German* is more of a tribute to early film noir than it is a Neo Noir. The film's poster art also takes cues from that of *Casablanca* (which is much more a romance film than film noir). The end of the film is also blatant tribute to the Hollywood centerpiece. *The Good German* was also inspired by Nazi SS scientist Wernher Von Braun. The actual "good" German in the film is an associate of a SS scientist responsible for inventing special rockets. He's also the husband of the German Jewish prostitute that has caught George Clooney's fancy. Nazi SS scientist Wernher von Braun was primarily responsible for the U.S. landing on the moon. He also was known for employing slave labor during his Nazi years. *The Good German* is a slick, thrilling, and engulfing film from the most interesting part of history during the last century. It is also a worthy tribute to the original film noir era. I honestly had low expectations for the film originally and now I am considering revisiting Soderbergh's lexicon. I just hope that Soderbergh believes that there's more than one "good" German.

-Ty E

ARK
ARK

Steven Spielberg* (1981)

Short films have been a recent commodity in my hectic schedule. There is nothing like sitting down for minutes at a time absorbing such potent and ever present emotions that you can't always salvage out of an hour-and-a-half train wreck of a film. Café FX's very own Grzegorz Jonkajtys has used his knowledge of his structured craft to manipulate pixels and textures to create a personal animated barrage of rapid-fire emotions and an apocalyptic tale very dear to my heart.

In a time of an unknown virus which has devastated the human population (Centuries of inter-racial breeding has given us green pigment and Neanderthal facial structures), the last of the human race have piled on an ark which sails the sea's looking for uninhabited land for a new colonization. These foreign chaps always shift the odds of creating a good film out of a tired genre against our land. Many things happen in this film which I would rather not illustrate. The effect of the film is it's own bold statement. Any one else delivering the feel of this film would be a forgery of all that is grand about cinema. 8 minutes is the checkpoint in this shorter-than-short short. Rather than being its own film, he should have gotten it released through Pixar - they've already hit the critical line in their maturity with *Geri's Game*. Unnerving with a realist's viewpoint, *Ark* (*Arka*) is a bold step for a first time director. Stunning animation mixed with cleverly articulated backgrounds super-imposed over-top a magnificent story arc. This is as every bit as epic as one would be led to believe. A highly recommended piece of sensitive, yet corrosive adult animation.

-mAQ

THE COLOR PURPLE

Steven Spielberg* (1985)

The following was something I did for a Feminist film theory class. It should be a good laugh to all:

Black males viewers have denounced the *The Color Purple* as stereotypical representations of black males. They have stated that it is the most racist film since *Birth of a Nation*. This has caused a feud between black feminist critics and black male viewers also. Even most left-wing publications have denounced the film. They have stated that the film is misleading in its representations of blacks of that time period. Gay rights groups have also objected to how director Steven Spielberg dealt with Lesbianism in the film.

The wide acceptance of a cultural myth and how it functions as a cultural belief system characterizes as the myth of the exotic primitive. With that, all types of convictions have some sort of mythology working with it. The myth associated with black people are they are naturally childlike, oversexed, and are savages taken from a culture relativity low on the scale of human civilization.

The "subject" differs from the individual in that the individual is a biological being produced by nature. The subject, however, is a social theoretical construction that is used to label individuals in regard to their significance in a political or theoretical sense. The subject is more based on assumption whereas the subject is based on a much more complex view.

The principle of articulation is used to explain how individuals within a particular society at a specific historical moment battle dominate forces in a culture and attain authority over their lives for themselves and for others within their social group. In *The Color Purple*, the protagonist is constantly fighting such things and finally becomes in complete resistance to her expected position as a black female. The whole story is a battle against a black female's role as a black female. This is why the color purples in a excellent example of the prince of articulation.

The Color Purple can have both a positive and negative oppositional response because its relative to what individual is watching the film. The black female can be proud of the film for its representation of a black woman's strength and courage. A black male can look at it as stereotype black males as dictating and oversexed wife beaters. With that, the white viewer can see it as a myth that works on their own myths. The film is relative to whatever background you come from.

-Ty E

Hook
Hook

Steven Spielberg* (1991)

What if Peter Pan grew old? Steven Spielberg invites you into a wonderful world in which this can actually happen. I'm not partial to Spielberg's filmography at all. I've enjoyed a few films here and there. Hook is without a doubt, one of the greatest live-action children's films ever made. Many may hail other films as being more entertaining or more appealing to this generation, but none will ever capture the emotional intensity of Hook. Robin Williams plays Peter Banning, a lawyer who cannot donate much of his time to his eager family. After Captain Hook (A wonderful Dustin Hoffman) kidnaps his children, Banning must go back to Never Never Land and learn how to crow again with his rowdy group of Lost Boys if he wants to see his family again. I'm not too prepossessed on the myth and facts of pirates. I find it to be an annoying Y2K fad which consists of the Internet youth group drooling over Ninja's vs. Pirates. Dante Basco is the star at hand here. He plays the skunk-haired misfit named Rufio. In this loose adaption of the classic tale, they created many new and wondrous things about it that are as engaging as can be. The key phrase "BANGARANG" or the powers of blue custard and the imagination. Many adventures are had as this desk jockey gets trained by fly, fight, crow, and make jokes. An adventure featuring seductive mermaids and a rascal pack of kids (Neanderthal Lord of the Flies) highlighted by the joyful, obese black kid whose pivotal role is rolling down a ramp, creating a classic punchline for fat people all around the world. The pirates are all book-stereotypes of "ARGH"-ing all the time and being drunk and belligerent. The "Boo Box" scene actually horrified me when I was a child. The swordplay in the film is disappointingly sub-par. Much of the film features amazing visual effects but is occasionally bogged down by the slow motion melon flying at his head. Hook could be treated as a sequel to a story, which would go down as the greatest sequel in history. Death lingers in this story, and so does mischief. I doubt your kids would watch this and not have any conniving ideas to torture you with tricks and games. This is no Cutthroat Island - a film that had one of the biggest reported budgets ever which also created the biggest box office flop in history. Despite the director or the star, Hook is a marvel. I enjoy the occasional film directed by a hack. It just happens that way. One example could be me enjoying Michael Bay's Transformers. Hook is the greatest Fairy Tale story ever put to film. Dear god, please bring Rufio back.

-mAQ

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Steven Spielberg* (2005) If there is two things that are over-played, It's disaster films and remakes. I lost count long ago how many times I've seen Earth destroyed. It's a boring fashion for Hollywood directors to squeeze their itchy CGI finger. Armageddon, The Core, The Day After Tomorrow, Cloverfield, Independence Day, etc, etc. I could fill a novel with the title's and a brief synopsis of every disaster film. Finally, yet crudely, a film takes the worst of both film spectrum's, and brought forth a beautiful piece from an ugly cocoon. I never though I'd say this during the millenia, but Bravo Mr. Spielberg. Based on a myriad of various related works (I.E: Novel, Shorts, Radio Plays, Television Shows), Spielberg has crafted the bastard child of the series but somehow stands above the rest. His apocalyptic vision has even succeeded into making me fear the unknown and that is most likely what he was aiming for. Tom Cruise is an All-American construction worker who loves Baseball cause he is American. Don't worry, his cliché's don't stick long. Soon he's stuck with his two kids as he attempts to fit in and play the father figure. His "punk rebel" kid steals his car while moping and listening to his mp3 player. I hate this generation's youth, eve more, I hate this generation's youth captured on film. These senile directors love to exaggerate their every action and making them seem like scum who eventually breaks into a polished, disciplined gentleman. His daughter is a screaming girl who has to have a handicap to slow down their adventure; as if trying to stay alive in the midst of an alien invasion wasn't enough of an obstacle. Many reasons why this version of War of the Worlds is looked down upon is the family drama. I admit, I hate Dakota Fanning and I hate these kids and all the bullshit morals. In fact, I wanted Tom Cruise to punch his Ex-Wife in the face on several occasions. I can see him roundhouse kicking his daughter in the face, this being a prelude to that wonderful scene in The Wicker Man. (Remake) More remakes need extreme misogyny. One thing that sticks out of this film is the actual chaos depicted. When the streets crack, people are curious. When things get worse, people go ballistic. People push and shove their way home. All the meanwhile, a menacing tripod unearths itself from the earth to create violence and a whole new "Red" planet to harvest their vegetation. It's easy to see the social commentary implanted within the film as it illustrates various Cannibal Holocaust quotes within the 21st Century. Moral of the Story: Men become monsters when pushed to the edge. No film is complete without the subtlety of a nice suburb, and of course, it's only right to show man's safest zone being completely under attack and ravaged. A crashed plane? C'mon Spielberg. That's a bit much. With any post-9/11 disaster film, you're going to hear the word "terrorists" once, and oh boy, will you groan. These scenes of worldwide destruction are simply breathtaking. Spielberg exploits the death of billions of humans and man made creations for the "ooh's and ah's" of his viewers. What a fine

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specimen of humanity! Although, I'm not complaining. The fine detail that went into the actual sets, such as the rubble, is flawless. Each individual rock, pebble, piece of metal, or debris seems as if that is where it fits or blasted to. This film is patriotic horror at it's finest. While the attacks are happening else where, we really don't care. When we see our flags burning and our beer being blown up, it pulls a tear duct into a rage fit. Rural citizen Tim Robbins accepts Tom Cruise into his home for shelter, only to be murdered by the city fellow for trying to dig a hole. While insanity is never a good thing, I still see Cruise as being an unjustified midget. I guess anarchy brings out the best in citizens. The aliens of the film come in two forms. The fleshy version and the tripod vehicular husk that lurches all around with its powder beam. The fleshy creatures are curious individuals who resemble the ID4 aliens and enjoy participate in the cliché "Hiding behind an object only to have the enemy lean really close to it, smelling." (For an example on this, recall The Fellowship of the Rings, in which the Ring Wraiths did the exact same move.) The tripods are a wonderful invention of Spielberg's staff's part. These are menacing titans of unstoppable power. The acting from Cruise's side is frankly amazing. His role as an alien-killing American is very contradictory to his Scientologist beliefs. I wonder if Xenu is frowning from space right now. You really can't doubt the Scientology-forced views considering the role of Ray was written for Cruise. Much of his insanity can be clearly foreshadowed in the blissful insanity erupting from his eyes during his heartfelt reunion with his douche son. This film marks many things in modern cinema. For one, the beginning of Spielberg's rise to the top and ironically, also his downfall. Spielberg doesn't cross my radar anymore. Jaws was a triumph and with a few exceptions, everything else is horrible. This is a powerful and almost traumatizing view at a ravaged United States of America narrated by none other than Morgan Freeman. This comes highly recommended for any fan of science-fiction or horror.

-mAQ

TAMMY AND THE T-REX

Stewart Raffill (1994)

Once in a blue moon, modern cinema will purge all normalities and excrete on the idea of a mercy rule to what films should be green lit. Out of this chaos erupts what is known as a "sleeper hit" and with this holy grail of cinema does film academia find itself a barren oasis. Film making techniques can no longer benefit society. The only thing left is a flourishing vat of knowledge called Tammy and the T-Rex. From this experience, you will gain gusto and marvel at subversive techniques at creating homosexual tension and race discrimination once more. It's once again cool to laugh at the queers as you watch a black, gay, only child get mocked by his father's deputies warning each other not to drop anything. Think Carnosaur with a touch of sexually charged Howard the Duck moments. This divine interaction of both man and machine warrants a strict emotional hard hat zone. From the mental concept of Tammy and the T-Rex, the words "Hallmark" and "ABC Family" spring immediately to mind. Furthermore, you'd be a damn fool to expect a family friendly environment from this film. Soon into the film's precious running time, you're treated to excessive homophobia and a mock Kwanzaa enthusiast. Before you have time to catch your breath from the colorful, yet subversive hate speech you are soon catapulted into a "testicular standoff" with a young Paul Walker wearing a crop-top and a virtually unknown George Pilgrim. After seeing this scene, we begin to make conjectures as to why Mr. Pilgrim had such a short acting career. The answer? He couldn't handle the immense popularity he no doubt received from starring in this dinosaur arthouse experiment. Who's awesome? You're awesome! Seen here, Paul Walker was an early example of motion capture technology. As you see Walker-Rex awkwardly waddle down a green screened street, it's easy to imagine Paul Walker making these same awkward movements especially if you've seen his long jump in the new Fast & the Furious trailer pre-Soulja Boy version. If any of this were the truth, Paul Walker would had to of had his shins bludgeoned with a nail bat in order to recreate the painful movements created by the animatronic crew. Mechanical puppeteers have never before been witnessed to create accidental art other than in the case of Tammy and the T-Rex. Before I get carried away on the royal excellence of many subjects advocated in this trash piece, allow me first to alleviate confusion that I've caused with this review of a grandiose opera. Paul Walker is the rebound bitch to a young Denise Richards. Her ex-boyfriend doesn't like this very much so one night he kidnaps Paul Walker and leaves him in a wild animal reserve to be mauled by a lion. Enter mad scientist Dr. Wachenstein who hatches a plan to burgle Paul Walker's brain to transplant it into a mechanical T-Rex. After awaking to find himself in the body of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, Walker-Rex decides to get his girlfriend to help him find his body. Also, Dinosaurs dialing pay phones. Knowing what

TAMMY AND THE T-REX

you know about the contents within this explosive package, do you find yourself brave enough to have your expectations blown out of the water? I didn't, in fact, I walked into this film with no knowledge of the synopsis other than an image of Denise Richards straddling a Mesozoic creature with her infamous grin that shocked fanboys alike with her performance in *Starship Troopers*. In case you haven't seen *Starship Troopers*, Denise Richards plays the "piteous bitch" who broke Johnny Rico's heart. While *Tammy and the T-Rex* unfolded, I found the many thematic twists and turns to be utterly shocking. So many scenes with differing emotional weights do nothing but leave you in a constant state of sensitized whiplash. With my final words approaching, the viable labels for placing this film in a specific genre could be range from anything. For instance, *Tammy and the T-Rex* could be the greatest and only contemporary film noir with dinosaurs. *Tammy and the T-Rex* reminds us exactly why the moving image was created and crafted into the largest form of entertainment today. This is a film that will throw some light romance at you, mix in some gang violence, pop out some premature urban humor, and then ravage the light-hearted mood with a botched castration via T-Rex foot. Some people beg to reveal to thyself the meaning of life. I, however, find myself asking what the meaning of cinema is. Well, my friends, the meaning of cinema is *Tammy and the T-Rex*. This is dutifully illustrated by the scene following a fight in which Denise Richards lets out a guttural wail that sounds as if a Yeti throat fucked her upon birth. I have long awaited the eventual reinvention and postmodern prototype of the directorial process and this is it, no strings attached...cause it's animatronic. Get it?

A very special thanks goes out to Nachtraaf for uploading this beauty.

-mAQ

RE-ANIMATOR

Stuart Gordon (1985)

Probably no writer's work has been more raped, defiled, bastardized, and stolen from (indeed, who knows how many budding horror hacks have adapted his work without attribution) than that of Anglo-American master of horror H.P. Lovecraft, who would also be rolling in his grave if he knew that his work was so reluctantly liked by deep-voiced trannies, morbidly obese cosplay pansies, and pathologically pierced ethno-masochistic communist hipsters and also so thoroughly emulated, albeit very poorly, by emotionally crippled multiculturalist dork writers that have been 'influenced' by the monstrous literary universe known as the Cthulhu Mythos. While this might sound like some sort of sick exaggeration, the unintentionally dejecting doc *Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown* (2008) directed by Frank H. Woodward makes it quite clear that the majority of Lovecraft's would-be literary disciples are loathsome losers that violently reject many of the Cthulhu Mythos maestro's defining qualities. Indeed, despite the fact that Lovecraft was a mostly humorless and seemingly sexless racist that was heavily inspired by the writing of Teutonic prophet and philosopher of Occidental decline, Oswald Spengler, and was also inspired to write some of his greatest stories after temporarily living in the wretched multicultural east coast hellhole, Red Hook, New York City, wherein he was left totally disgusted by all the swarthy untermenschen and racially dubious mystery meat that inhabited the area, various horror hacks have decided to add goofy, irreverent humor, less than sexy gratuitous sex and nudity, curiously cliché anti-puritan messages, and cheap gore when cinematically adapting his stories while completely excising them of any seriousness and truly Lovecraftian themes like cultural pessimism and the complete collapse of civilizations as a direct result of multiculturalism and miscegenation. A perfect example of this pathetic phenomenon is *Re-Animator* (1985) directed and co-written by Stuart Gordon (*The Pit and the Pendulum*, *King of the Ants*) and produced by fellow horror hack/Lovecraft-defiler Brian Yuzna (*Society*, *Return of the Living Dead III*), which is loosely based on Lovecraft's short Frankenstein parody *Herbert West—Reanimator* (1922), albeit with an updated setting, and which is (in)famous for a scene of the undead decapitated head of a puritanical WASP doctor briefly performing cunnilingus on a nubile young blonde while said nubile young blonde's zombie father watches on. Of course, as a zombie-comedy, horror homage, and extra loose Frankenstein reworking, Gordon's film is quite fun and certainly one of the best films of its kind, but it has about as much to do with the spirit of Lovecraft as Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *Lincoln* (2012) have to do with historical fact.

Gordon's ultimately auspicious directorial debut, *Re-Animator*, was originally intended as a somewhat serious gritty 16mm semi-avant-garde work to be shot

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on stage at the director and his wife's Organic Theater company (indeed, somewhat surprisingly, Gordon started out founding and managing a series of theaters, including the counter-culture-themed Screw Theater where he directed a degenerate hippie reworking of Peter Pan featuring nudity and acid trips that got him arrested, as well as a somewhat serious Chicago-based theater that was responsible for premiering David Mamet's Off-Off-Broadway play *Sexual Permissivity* in Chicago), but the serious theater actors there were having none of that, so the filmmaker had to rethink the project and after meeting budding producer Brian Yuzna, he was convinced to make the film in Hollywood. Using much of the crew of James Cameron's *The Terminator* (1984) and using no less than 25 gallons of fake blood, Gordon, much like a mad scientist, assembled an unhinged and out-of-control monster of a movie that attempted to outdo George A. Romero, Wes Craven, and Abel Ferrara's *Driller Killer* (1979), while also paying homage to Alfred Hitchcock (indeed, Full Moon Features Führer Charles Band's brother Richard's opening score 'borrows' heavily from Bernard Herrmann's iconic score from Hitchcock's 1960 masterpiece *Psycho*) and, to a lesser extent, Stanley Kubrick. Arguably the greatest slapstick splatter-fest since Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* (1981), *Re-Animator* is proof that you can take the Yid out of vaudeville but not the vaudeville out of the Yid.

At University of Zurich Institute of Medicine in Switzerland, a young medical student named Herbert West (played by Jeffrey Combs, who would go on to star in virtually all of Gordon's other films)—an uptight and obnoxiously obsessive megalomaniac that might suffer from Asperger syndrome and seems to be a parody of H.P. Lovecraft (incidentally, Combs would later play the *Weird Tales* master in the 1993 horror omnibus film *H.P. Lovecraft's: Necronomicon*, which was co-produced and co-directed by producer Brian Yuzna)—successfully reanimates his dead teacher, Dr. Gruber (Al Berry), with a neon green corpse-reanimating serum, but since the undead professor was given too large of a dose, his eyes start popping out and he dies a second horrible death only seconds later (or as one doctor states with a pseudo-Germanic accent, "er ist tot"). All of this is witnessed by the staff of the institute, with one doctor accusing West of murdering Gruber, to which the novice mad scientist definitely replies, "No, I did not. I gave him life." Ironically, West got a lot of his ideas from Dr. Gruber, but he must leave the more sophisticated and experimental schools of the German-speaking world for backwards Miskatonic University in New England due to the whole disastrous botched corpse-reanimating incident in Zurich. Upon relocating to New England, West rents a room in the home of his virtual opposite, fellow medical student Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott of *Bad Dreams* (1998) and *Bride of Re-Animator* (1990)), who is a kind and caring young man on a medical scholarship who plans to marry his beautiful blonde fiancée Meg Halsey (scream queen Barbara Crampton) once he gets his MD. Meg is the daughter of the dean of the medical school, Alan Halsey (Robert Sampson), who his daugh-

ter describes as “the world’s last living Puritan” and who has a grudge against Dan since he is banging his daughter. Dean Halsey is a comrade of hack professor Dr. Carl Hill (British screen villain David Gale) and on the first day of class, Herbert West accuses his theories of being derivative of Dr. Gruber’s theories from the 1970s, adding, “in fact, it’s so derivative that it would be considered plagiarism in Europe.” Dr. Hill lets West know that it will be a pleasure failing him. Little do both men know that they will later be involved in a deadly zombie game involving corpse-based cunt-chomping, killer intestines, and headless servants.

A rather normal young lady who enjoys sneaking over to her boyfriend’s house to have passionate orgasms with a film poster for the experimental Talking Heads documentary *Stop Making Sense* (1984) directed by Jonathan Demme hanging over her beau’s bed and who dreams of living a simple life in suburbia with her boyfriend involving a white picket fence and 2.5 kids, Meg rightfully immediately becomes unnerved by Herbert West’s presence and when her cute little black kitty cat goes missing, she immediately suspects the glaringly strange medical student. Upon investigation, Meg finds Rufus’ corpse in a refrigerator in the basement of the house, which West has turned into a makeshift lab. Of course, West walks in on Meg’s discovery and threatens to tell Dean Halsey about Dan’s carnal excursions with his daughter. That night, Dan wakes from a nightmare and after hearing some noise in the basement, heads down there with a baseball bat to investigate, only to find West being attacked by a zombie cat in a superlatively schlocky slapstick scene. After they kill the killer kitty, West once again reanimates its completely crippled corpse to prove to Dan that his neon green serum has the power to reanimate the dead. Finally convinced of West’s seemingly unbelievable claims, Dan goes to Dean Halsey with the discovery, which is promptly rewarded with his scholarship being rescinded, potential criminal charges, and the demand that he write a formal letter of apology. As for West, he is expelled from the school. Of course, Dean Halsey’s actions are clouded by his anger regarding the fact that Dan is ostensibly defiling his daughter. Unable to continue school without his scholarship, Dan becomes determined to prove the soundness of his wackjob roommate’s wild theories, so he sneaks West into the university morgue and they foolishly decide to reanimate the largest and most muscular corpse there. Of course, Halsey goes to stop them and is killed when the corpse, ‘Melvin the Re-Animated’ (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger’s personal stuntman, stand-in, and friend Peter Kent), goes berserk, knocks down a door, grabs the Dean, bites off some of his fingers, and slams him around until he is dead. Trapped in a precarious situation that can result in murder charges, West naturally comes up with the idea to reanimate Dean Halsey’s corpse, which immediately attacks him and Dan just as Meg walks in. West accuses Halsey, who is now in a terribly confused retarded zombie state, of going insane and attacking them, so the undead dickhead dean is put in a padded cell and observed by his

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ostensible friend Dr. Hill, who has him lobotomized and eventually comes to the conclusion that he is dead, thus causing him to realize that his much hated ex-student has found a way to reanimate the dead.

When Dr. Hill, who is ultimately the real villain of *Re-Animator* (and not Herr West as the viewer suspects during the first half of the film), goes by Herbert West's basement lab to blackmail him for his reanimating serum and research, stating, "I'll have you locked up as a mad man...or a murderer," things get a bit complicated between the old fraud and the young genius. Needless to say, West would never allow for his extensive research on his favorite subject to be stolen by an arrogant old fart that does not have a single original idea of his own, so he hits Dr. Hill over the head with a shovel and subsequently decapitates him with it. Of course, West decides to reanimate Dr. Hill's decapitated head, but also makes the mistake of reanimating the corpse, which the prick professor manages to be able to control when he is reanimated. Using his own body as his evil henchman, Dr. Hill has it sneak up behind West while he is taking notes and knock him unconscious. After stealing West's serum and research, Dr. Hill has his body carry his head back to his office where he studies the groundbreaking theories of reanimation. Using mind control techniques, Dr. Hill also turns undead Dean Halsey into his own personal slave and has him kidnap his own daughter Meg and bring her back to the university morgue where he has created a heinous yet rather retarded lobotomized zombie army using an eclectic collection of morgue corpses, including an ashy negro and a grotesque obese bitch (who, unfortunately, is not the only unclad lard ass lady featured in the film). When zombie Halsey comes back with Meg, Dr. Hill has her stripped completely naked, put on an operating table, and, in the most infamous part of the movie, the "head giving head" scene (which Gordon has dubiously described as the "world's first visual pun"), the debauched decapitated head performs cunnilingus on her for a split second while her undead daddy mindlessly watches on. While Dr. Hill is in the middle of giving head, West storms in and Dan soon frees his girlfriend while the animated head is distracted. From there, Dr. Hill reveals his brigade of brazen lobotomized corpses, who he uses mind control to attack his enemies. Luckily, lobotomized zombie Dean Halsey has enough human memory to hear his daughter Meg's pleas and responds by fighting off the multicultural zombie gang and by crushing Dr. Hill's head, which thwarts his mind control powers. West also gets the bright idea to inject Dr. Hill's body with an overdose of the reanimating serum, though his plan backfires and the headless corpse's intestines wrap around him and begin to kill the young mad scientist, who pleads to Dan to save his research. Dan does what West tells him to do, which ultimately seems to be quite auspicious as Meg is soon strangled to death by a burnt zombie, so it gives the grieving boyfriend an opportunity to revive his girlfriend. When Dan and his fellow doctors fail to resuscitate Meg the normal way, the shattered beau uses West's green juice, thus causing the undead

dame to wake up screaming. Needless to say, Dan is not the sort of the guy to partake in necrophilia.

As you can expect from any successful (and oftentimes less than successful) horror flick, *Re-Animator* was followed by two watchable yet innately inferior sequels, *Bride of Re-Animator* (1990) and *Beyond Re-Animator* (2003), both of which were directed by producer Brian Yuzna and once again starring Jeffrey Combs as Herbert West. Director Stuart Gordon has also, not unlike Yuzna, practically created a career out of directing super schlocky and uniquely unfaithful Lovecraft adaptations, which include the films *From Beyond* (1986), *Castle Freak* (1995), and *Dagon* (2001), as well as the *Masters of Horror* episode *Dreams in the Witch-House* (2005) and a musical version of *Re-Animator* entitled *Re-Animator: The Musical* (2011) that he produced, co-wrote, and directed on Broadway. Unquestionably, I am somewhat of a reluctant fan of *Re-Animator* and, as a fan of punk/deathrock music and unclad punk-goth girls dancing on tombstones, I considered *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) directed by Alien (1979) writer Dan O'Bannon (who, incidentally, also directed *The Resurrected* (1991) aka *Scatterbrain*, which is a surprisingly faithful adaptation of the Lovecraft story *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*) infinitely superior and much more re-watchable. Personally, I can never forgive Gordon for sanitizing Lovecraft's work and making it absurdly silly and ridden with spastic scatological slapstick routines and incredibly unsexy gratuitous nudity and moronic gore. As a Hebraic ex-hippie, it should also be no surprise that when he directed *Stuck* (2007)—a film based on a repugnant real-life incident where a nasty meta-negligent negro named Chante Mallard hit a homeless white man, Greg Biggs, with her car while high on marijuana, ecstasy and alcohol, thus leaving his body lodged halfway through her windshield and parked inside her garage before the poor forsaken man bled to death and his corpse was disposed of in a park by the cunty culprit and her bastard beau—Gordon opted for changing the race of the rather revolting villain from black to white, with a wiggerized and miscegenation-practicing Mena Suvari absurdly playing the role modeled after a bloated butch negress.

In *Re-Animator*, Gordon—a racially conscious man not unlike his Zionist comrade David Mamet (whose politically incorrect 1982 one-act play *Edmond* Gordon cinematically adapted in 2005) who proudly received a belated Bar Mitzvah in 1997 and who staged Howard Schwartz's Hebraic horror anthology *Kabalah: Scary Jewish Stories* in 1999 in an attempt to get in touch with his Jewish roots—makes it blatantly clear what he thinks of WASPs (aka the American majority), as they are all almost unanimously depicted as outmoded puritans, scheming psychopaths, and hyper hypercritical crypto-perverts (notably, in the audio commentary for the Anchor Bay DVD release of the film, Gordon describes actor Robert Sampson as resembling a Republican spokesman for Ronald Reagan). After all, how else can one explain why Jewess Pauline Kael—

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an intolerably pretentious film critic who was largely responsible for promoting anti-establishment films that undermined both the mores and morale of American's white Christian majority—would give the film puffery-plagued praise, even absurdly describing it as “pop Buñuel” in her review. Notably, Gordon also revealed that he originally intended to hire what he described a “blond Aryan type” to play the role of Herbert West but was so impressed with Jeffrey Combs' that he decided otherwise. Unquestionably, National Socialist era auteur Frank Wisbar (who directed the Nazi era classic expressionist horror flick *Fährmann Maria* (1936) starring tragic Teutonic diva Sybille Schmitz) would have made a more fitting adaptor of Lovecraft's work. Like his kosher comrade Walter Kaufmann has done with Friedrich Nietzsche, Gordon has virtually devoted his entire career to warping and Judaizing the work of an Aryan master (or as the late great Jonathan Bowden described him, an “Aryan mystic”). Aside from Gordon, it seems that all so-called ‘Cthulhu Mythos’ writers (aka Lovecraft wannabes) and various other novelists and filmmakers inspired by Lovecraft spend most of their time complaining about how much of a racist he was as demonstrated by shitty documentaries like *Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown* (2008) where a bunch of these slave-morality-ridden hacks complain about the perfectly logical, albeit now unfashionable and unpopular thoughts of the great Aryan master of horror and fantasy. What none of these hopeless morons seem to get is that racialism and anti-miscegenation sentiments are an innate and imperative attribute of Lovecraft's work and—as fellow anti-leftist Michel Houellebecq noticed in his excellent text *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life* (1991)—the true source for the “poetic trance” quality of his greatest stories.

More recently, a group of rather resentful and mostly nonwhite untermenschen commie fantasy and sci-fi novelists lead by people like Brooklyn-based mestizo would-be-writer Daniel José Older (who no one ever heard of until he started the pathetic petition), English neo-Trotskyite hipster dork China Miéville (who Modern Library Classics absurdly got to write the introduction for their 2005 edition of Lovecraft's Spenglerian novella *At the Mountains of Madness: The Definitive Edition* just so he could complain about how much of a big racist meanie the writer was) and Nigerian-American Nnedi Okorafor (who dubiously won the award in 2011 in what one might describe as a case of crypto-affirmative-action) have attempted to gain unwarranted attention for themselves to the point of actually somehow receiving support from the mainstream media by demanding that the World Fantasy Awards award for ‘Lifetime Achievement,’ a goofy caricature bust of H. P. Lovecraft, be replaced with the unsightly mug of no-talent hack Octavia E. Butler—an Afrocentric negress that is best known for her postmodern Afrofuturist racial polemics (which only have superficial sci-fi trappings and hardly feature a distinct and revolutionary literary universe like Lovecraft's work) who is not even worthy of smelling the Aryan alpha-horror writer's postmortem farts and whose less than beauteous appear-

ance would have certainly inspired one of the beasts from the Providence-based wordsmith's Cthulhu Mythos (not to mention the fact that most sci-fi and fantasy fans could care less about Butler's work and she would already be totally forgotten by now were it not for the fact that she was a race-hustling far-leftist who is adored by soulless establishment academic types). With that being said, it would certainly be poetic justice if someone reanimated Lovecraft Re-Animator-style so he can seek good old fashion Anglo-Saxon revenge against his hordes of thankless ex-colonial defilers. If anything is for sure, it is that, while Older, Miéville, Okorafor, and Butler will be forgotten in a couple decades (not that any of them is really that famous now), Lovecraft, whose writings have influenced everything from psychedelic rock bands to left-hand path based religions to some of the best horror films ever made, will still be looked at centuries from now as one of the greatest and most revolutionary writers that the horror genre has ever produced.

Above: Stuart 'The Poor Man's John Landis' Gordon curiously sporting an Adolf Hitler 'European Tour' t-shirt. As for Gordon's Re-Animator, while I think that it is an abject disgrace to the Lovecraftian Weltanschauung and everything Lovecraft stood for during his all-too-brief and all-too-human life, it still makes for a great, if not majorly misleading, philistine introduction to the Weird Tales maestro's singular oeuvre. Indeed, I, for one, owe credit to Gordon's film for introducing me to the wonderful of H.P. Lovecraft, so I will always have a slight soft-spot for it. When it comes down to it, Re-Animator is probably best described as an absurdly ludicrous Lovecraftsploitation flick as directed by a man who probably has more of an interest in reading from the works of Norman Mailer and Philip Roth and the Talmud than from the Necronomicon. After all, Gordon has done a hell of a job getting blonde Shiksas to disrobe for him for his schlocky cinematic works, with Re-Animator probably being the most notable example of this. Certainly, one can never forget a uniquely unhinged zombie flick where an undead head gives head to a blonde Nordic beauty.

-Ty E

DOLLS
DOLLS

Stuart Gordon (1987)

Dolls is a very peculiar antique from horror maestro Stuart Gordon. This film saturates the screen with horror "no-no's" and comes out on top victorious and blood-soaked. There was a boom in the 80's consisting of rental dominator's. This little genre was Toy horror. Not limited to: Puppets, Dolls, Toys, Dummies, and many many more. Dolls is a film that I have always meant to see, but time was of a factor when I was in high school. I finally devoted an hour and 17 minutes to watching this film and I was pleasantly surprised. I went in expecting a moronic debut of drivel wrapped tight around a story that drives people (like me) giddy in ecstasy. I wasn't kidding when I said I loved killer toy films. There's this essence lurking amongst the idea that a child's vice could have "killer" psychological side-effects. Dolls follows the same formulaic response to weary travelers that most of the genre seem to encompass. Picture this; A couple with a child is broke down outside an old house, they go in to find creepy old people that are immensely hospitable. Soon, the party van arrives with more victi-err..., more guests for the fun night that never seems to end, which is a recurring line in this film. "The longest night" Dolls has certainly created a kind eye towards horror. Dolls went as far to inspire Sprackling's cult horror-comedy Funny Man (or at least I assume.) The main doll of Dolls is named Mr. Punch (A jester doll) and is later called a "Funny Man" which, 2+1 = obvious. The cast is quite alarming when you're first introduced. You have Ralph, the hero man-child. Judy, the heart-warming child in distress, and our very favorite Guy Rolfe aka Andre Toulon. Dolls is an effective horror film that features a fairy tale like environment that eventually culminates into that creepy house where endless deaths occur. The shining light here isn't the actors, creepy casio themes, or the setting, but rather the amazing special effects consisting of masterful stop-motion animation. I can imagine the crew spending endless hours capturing every detail flawlessly to create that fluid movement that was only evident in the first Puppet Master. The ending of Dolls, to me, is the happiest ending I've ever seen. Every one of the vicious parasites was exterminated and added to a mausoleum of horror while the two survivors hint towards a possible future and family together. This wasn't the happy scene, the real show-stealer was the fact that the "villains" happened to harbor a beautiful philosophy and managed to seem so nice. Truly a pair of more memorable movie maniacs. This films scare factor hasn't aged so well. Only Isabel's death managed to unnerve me a bit. That "Dollman" scene from Child's Play 2 still manages to freak the fuck out of me. Dolls is a very surprising find for me. It's a killer doll film that has some artistic integrity hiding behind the script. This film's a keeper. From now on, I'll be glad to sleep in a room full of "antiki" dolls.

-mAQ

EDMOND

Stuart Gordon (2005)

Don't judge a film by its DVD artwork cover. Edmond is easily the most inventive and best film directed by Stuart Gordon since Re-Animator. I must say, however, that more credit probably goes to the writer of the film David Mamet. One cannot also forget that the casting for the film was quite appropriate. Mena Suvari as a whore and Julia Stiles as a stupid cunt make for great small roles. The character of Edmond is also played by the very annoying William H. Macy. He is the right man to play a character whose night only gets worse and worse as it progresses. David Mamet thankfully forgot about political correctness when writing Edmond. The character of Edmond encounters a variety of slick talkin' Negro swindlers, less than savory whores, and the anti-human atmosphere of the urban jungle. Edmond is fed up with his boring life and not so pleasing wife. Early in the film, Edmond leaves his wife for good and finds out that his life really can get worse. Edmond encounters a man that looks to be Sicilian-American in a bar and they agree that black men have it good because they have no responsibility. By the end of Edmond, the title character finds out what it truly means to have a "simple" life. Julia Stiles hasn't been getting very good roles since Save The Last Dance for obvious reasons. Her role in Edmond couldn't have been better and her final scene in the movie finally made a "man" of William H. Macy. Edmond proves that he can do more damage to a girl with his WW1 knife than he can with his own member. He has sort of an accident with the knife that will cost him his freedom and force him to share a room with a domineering Negro. Edmond proves that Charles Manson is NOT the only prison philosopher! Edmond is the perfect film to watch during the night. The film transports the viewer to a place of degeneracy without bodily injury and loss of possessions. Seeing how someone like Edmond fairs in the more shady areas of the city offers an unpredictable journey that does not get boring upon re-watching of the film. For once, in a film featuring William H. Macy, I didn't hope for his character to somehow spontaneously combust.

-Ty E

STUCK
STUCK

Stuart Gordon (2007)

Stuart Gordon is the maestro of murder behind *Fortress*, *Re-Animator*, *Edmond*, and *Dolls*. His short resume can be summed up into quality horror and suspense films. *Edmond* was a penetrating view into a man whose mental state plummeted in an array of stylized violence and madness. He takes a bit of those personal emotions evident in *Edmond* and sticks them into *Stuck* - the story of something almost normal happening and escalating into the insane. *Stuck* is primarily based off a true story with some fictitious elements thrown in the mix. A nurse (Mena Suvari) specializing in senior citizen care gets offered a promotion to NA Captain. A parallel plot line is introduced by a man named Tom. After his company downsized, he was left without a job and eventually became homeless. After a horrible day when luck shined the other way, these characters meet when drug-induced Partying up one night, Brandi takes a hit of ecstasy and drinks alcohol. On the drive home, she hits poor Tom, sticking him right in the windshield, and drives home. She doesn't tell anyone that a man is stuck in her windshield and tells no one. As you can imagine, still being alive, survive is the only thing on Tom's mind and he will at all costs. *Stuck* takes the best attributes of all horror films and stirs them together. We have cringe-inducing scenes of small glass fragments stuck in Academy Award winner Stephen Rea's sides and we have nerve-wracking suspense as he struggles to get attention while once normal Brandi is struggling against a frequent downfall as her relationship to thug Rashid, her job, and her friendships are challenged. Many objects of *Stuck* can be considered racial "fattening" of the film. When we later meet Rashid, he climbs out of his SUV while blaring rap music. As the camera pans away from the vehicle, the scene shifts only to focus on the Cadillac symbol. Unintentional? I beg to differ. We then have the little Mexican kid who finds the man in the garage wriggling free. When he tells his parents, they refuse to call the police for fear of being deported. Humorous? Yes. Racial driven? Of course. Along the way, Stuart Gordon belittles blacks, Mexicans, and homosexuals. Truth be told, I wouldn't have it any other way. *Stuck* is a marvelous little film that had a limited theatrical run courtesy by Image Entertainment and THINKfilm. After this stint, no doubt it will recede into rental chains only to sadly be passed up. Rather than spend too much time predicting the fate of this gem, I'd recommend this film if you fancy macabre films in which people burn for their sins. Films like *Stuck* make me glad we have the self-defense clause. It's like a license to kill, but more satisfying.

-mAQ

PRISONER OF PARADISE

Stuart Sender (2003)

Various trashy films have been made about evil sadistic Nazis on exotic deserted islands ranging from Ken Wiederhorn's somewhat inordinate Nazi zombie flick *Shock Waves* (1977) to the unintentionally wacky kraut WiP flick *Die Insel der blutigen Plantage* (1983) aka *The Island of the Bloody Plantation* directed by Fassbinder superstar Kurt Raab and starring various other Fassbinder superstars like Barbara Valentin and Peter Kern as evil neo-Nazi prison guards who torture and molest poor nubile Filipino girls for sport, but probably none of these films is as patently ridiculous and horribly 'Hollywood-esque' as the relatively big budget hardcore porn flick *Prisoner of Paradise* (1980) aka *Nazi Love Island* aka *Nassau* starring porn chic era legends John C. Holmes aka 'Johnny Wadd' and platinum blonde gutter diva Seka (*Dracula Sucks*, *Ultra Flesh*). Ostensibly co-directed by supposed female pornographer Gail Palmer and Chinese-American Bob Chinn (who was responsible for directing the 'Johnny Wadd' series that made Holmes famous), the film was actually co-directed by the latter and a singularly scummy fellow by the name of Harry Mahoney, who is probably best known as the founder of the company *Déjà Vu* which owns and operates 132 different strip clubs around the United States. Indeed, it was later revealed by various credible sources (including playwright Peter Sagal, who was contracted to ghost-write a still unpublished book for her) that Palmer, who was originally a *Playboy* playmate, never actually directed any of the films she was credited and that she was merely a front for her mob-backed porn distributor/producer boyfriend Mahoney, who ghost-directed the flicks for her (in fact, in 1984 Palmer sued him for not giving her any of the profits for the films). The first fuck flick that Palmer was credited for was the blaxploitation-hardcore hybrid *Hot Summer in the City* (1976), which is about a white god-fearing virgin Christian girl who is gang-raped and turned into a sex slave by a group of honky-hating militant black nationalist types. Naturally, considering its subject matter in regard to bestial mandingos raping a little white girl, it should be no surprise that Palmer's first credited feature was apparently once described by enthusiastic ethno-masochist, perennial cuckold, and shameless negrophile Quentin Tarantino as, "The Greatest Porno Ever." Of course, *Prisoner of Paradise* also features the timeless porn gimmick of miscegenation, albeit of the 'yellow fever' oriented sort, with Mr. Holmes plowing tight pink Oriental orifices with his semi-erect 13-inch liver-lifter when he is not being ruthlessly ravaged by some carpet-munching Hitlerite sluts who like cunt more than cock.

Admittedly, I got the moronic idea to watch *Prisoner of Paradise* after seeing a somewhat provocative screenshot from the film featuring a Nazi girl holding a Luger next to her pussy, but after getting around to actually watching the not-quite-classic hardcore flick I can safely say that the film had virtually

PRISONER OF PARADISE

nothing else to offer aside from the fairly brief gun-gash segment. A sort of horrendous abortive mix between the considerably crappy concentration camp sitcom Hogan's Heroes and the insufferably sappy Marlon Brando vehicle Sayonara (1957), Prisoner of Paradise is a totally tedious combination of outmoded vaudeville-esque Teutophobia, unsexy and considerably sanitized sleaze, classic Hollywood style phoniness, and retarded token pro-American sentiment that was typical of WWII era Hollywood war films. As an embarrassing piece of pseudo-melodramatic hardcore kitsch, the film makes the exploitation flick that obviously heavily influenced it, Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS (1975), seem like Pier Paolo Pasolini's swansong Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975) by comparison. Indeed, no other film makes pussies and totenkopfs seem as cheesy yet hopelessly banal as Prisoner of Paradise. The plodding tale of a lovelorn Jap-loving American sailor who ends up stranded on a remote South Pacific island near the Philippines (though the film was actually apparently shot in Hawaii) after his Navy battleship is bombed and who eventually finds himself the sex slave of a boorish kraut SS commander and his two lethally lurid lily-licking blonde beastesses, the film is ultimately less erotic than Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia (1938). In fact, I would argue that Prisoner of Paradise is less arousing than the majority of cheap Nazisploitation films like Lee Frost's Love Camp 7 (1969) because at least they have some minor S&M/BDSM appeal. In short, probably the only notable aspect of the film is that it somehow manages to not mention Jews or the holocaust a single time, but that probably has to do with the fact that it is a rare all-goyim porn production.

Prisoner of Paradise begins unimpressively enough with protagonist Joe Murry (John Holmes) washing up onto a remote island with nothing but a raft and the torn sailor's outfit that he is wearing. As revealed in flashback scenes that were swiped from the Pearl Harbor flick Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970) directed by Richard Fleischer (with additional co-directing done by Japanese filmmakers Toshio Masuda and Kinji Fukasaku), Joe's ship was bombed by the Japs. Despite being at war with the dreaded harbor-bombers, Joe is in love with a Japanese prostitute named Sue Lee (Mai Lin) who he planned to marry, but she was tragically killed in an Allied bombing raid. As can be expected from a fuck flick, there are various flashback scenes in the film where Joe recalls fucking Lee before her ill-fated demise. As depicted in the flashback scenes, only seconds after Joe walked out of her front door after hinting to her that he planned to ask her to marry him the next time he saw her, Lee was tragically killed in the bombing raid (notably, pseudo-director Gail Palmer is featured in a cameo role during this scene where she is in 'yellowface' and dressed like a Jap streetwalker). During the first day or two that Joe is on the island, the only company that he has is his bittersweet memories of his beloved yellow pussy-peddler. During his second day at the island, Joe does fairly mundane things like take a shower under a waterfall and cut down coconuts from a tree with a machete that he just

happens to have with him. Of course, when Joe happens upon two completely unclad blonde beauties bathing in a creek, Joe cannot help but investigate, even if they lack the yellow skin that he has a special fondness for.

When Joe follows the two mysterious blondes, he discovers that they are Saphic SS sluts that are under the command of a short and bloated SS commander named Hans von Shlemel (Gail Palmer regular Elmo Lavino credited under the pseudonym 'Heinz Müller') who has a special fetish for cracking his whip, especially on the asses of female prisoners, but for whatever reason he does not like to take a hands-on approach when it comes to female flesh. Hans' two guards are named Ilsa (Seka) and Greta (Sue Carol) and they especially love dining on yank prisoner cuntlet, though they decide to make a special exception when they eventually see Joe's extra long joy prong. Aside from Ilsa and Greta, a tiny yet super stoic Japanese girl named Suke (Jade Wong) is absurdly responsible for guarding the entire Nazi base with a single rifle. Needless to say, Joe is disgusted when he watches an American army nurse named Gloria (Brenda Vargo) being ruthlessly eaten out by Ilsa while Greta forces her to say, "I love the Führer," as if Uncle Adolf has turned cunnilingus is a form of National Socialist patriotism. As a cultured mensch that jovially declares, "Wagner will be here when Germany conquers the world...and so will I," Hans routinely plays the music of Richard Wagner when the lurid carnal 'tortures' are carried out. While snooping around the Nazi base, Joe eventually finds another imprisoned American army nurse named Carol (Nikki Anderson) who he naturally promises to help. Ultimately Joe decides to attempt to save both nurses by starting a fire to create a diversion and running inside the Nazi headquarters to get Gloria while Hans and his gals are scrambling to put out the fire. While Joe manages to get both Gloria and Carol off the base and take them to a seemingly safe place in forest, he and the girls are soon found and brought back at gunpoint by Suke after they make the mistake of taking a temporary break in the woods when the nurse complain that they need to rest.

When Joe and the nurses are brought back to Nazi headquarters, Nazi she-bitch Greta immediately pats the protagonist down and mistakes his cock for a concealed weapon, which Ilsa subsequently pulls out, thus inspiring Hans to joke, "They thought you had a gun down there. Pretty good joke, yeah?" Of course, Joe does not find Hans very funny, especially after the Nazi commandant attempts to rationalize his sexual sadism by stating that, "it is rather boring on this island. If we did not amuse ourselves, we could go crazy this far from civilization." After Hans declares, "American girls are lovely creatures. They're so full of fight and spirit. You should perhaps try a German girl sometime. You ever try a German girl? They have their high-points too, you know...cunning, intelligence, and obedience. They will do anything you want, like Ilsa and Greta here. And right here, my friend, it appears that they want you," Joe is forced to sexually service both of the SS dykes, with the protagonist first eating Greta's pussy while she

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has her Luger pointed at his head and then fucking Ilsa whilst she moans with barely concealed anti-American hatred. Right before Joe blows his load, Ilsa screams, "Don't you cum in me you American swine," so he ejaculates on her stomach, thus assuring that the feisty Fräulein will not be impregnated with the mongrel spawn of a stupid American.

As is fairly predictable, Japanese guard Suke eventually begins falling in love with Joe and even starts grinding her rifle with her crouch while watching him fucking one of the Nazi guards. For his own voyeuristic pleasure, Hans forces to American nurse Carol to suck Joe's cock, which rather enrages the superficially gentlemanly all-American sailor boy. Hans also forces Joe to fuck Carol and then busts on her face by threatening him and stating, "You want her to live? You'll put that thing in there." When Hans declares that he will be whipping Carol after Joe reluctantly blows his load on her face, the protagonist becomes completely irate and declares, "You jerry bastard, I'm gonna kill you, you and those dyke cunts of yours." Although Hans does not physically torture the protagonist for making the major mistake of insulting a German officer, he does call Joe a "frankfurter-sucking friend" and then informs him that his, "girlfriend will pay dearly" for what he has done. When Joe is led back to his prison, Suke's panties seem to be soaked as she immediately declares her love for the protagonist and the two proceed to fuck while the protagonist experiences flashbacks in regard to plowing the puss of his dead Jap hooker girlfriend (after all, apparently all Asians look the same, so it is not hard for Joe to imagine that the guard is the same person as the dead gutter slut that he fell in love with). When Suke is subsequently accidentally killed in a scuffle after Ilsa starts a bitch-fest due to her jealousy over Greta's Sapphic infatuation with Carol, Joe becomes exceedingly enraged and finally starts beginning to act like a real man. Indeed, when Ilsa runs to Hans for help after Joe manages to grab a gun, the protagonist screams at her, "Stop, you kraut bitch, or I'll blow your head off," but of course she does not listen. Luckily, Joe does not have to do any work in terms of combat (he is a sailor after all), as Ilsa accidentally starts a fire at Nazi headquarters after knocking over a lamp that leads to all three of the evil nasty Nazi dying instantaneously. Indeed, just as Greta mindlessly runs into the burning building to join her comrades, it conveniently explodes. In the end, the film concludes with the epilogue, "Three years after the end of World War II, one American sailor, two army nurses and five children were rescued from a remote South Pacific island near the Philippines...no further details are available at this time," thus revealing that sailor Joe finally got over his seemingly incurable case of yellow fever.

Aside from featuring virtually nil genuinely erotic scenes, *Prisoner of Paradise* has to have what is one of the least charismatic 'heroes' of cinema history. Indeed, Mr. Holmes' (in)famously long dong does not save him in the film, though his character certainly seems like the sort of insecure white dude that is fairly common nowadays who chases after Oriental skirts. Intrigued by how

truly terrible Holmes' performance was in the film, I decided to check out the documentary *Wadd: The Life & Times of John C. Holmes* (1999) directed by Cass Paley where the 'King of Porn' is revealed to be a sort of super loser and outrageous compulsive liar with psychopathic tendencies who was incapable of ever achieving a full erection and who intentionally failed to disclose to his Italian co-stars the fact that he had AIDS when he appeared in the Guido fuck flicks *The Rise of the Roman Empress* (1987) and *The Devil in Mr. Holmes* (1987), which would be the last two pornos he starred in before dying of gay cancer (it is speculated that Holmes might have contracted AIDS while starring in various gay porn flicks, including *The Private Pleasures of John C. Holmes* (1983) where he fucked experimental pornographer Fred Halsted's longtime boyfriend Joey Vale, who notably died of AIDS in 1986). In the *Wadd* doc, a number of the talking heads argue that one of Holmes' greatest appeals to men was that he seemed like a fairly normal and unpretentious chap who did not act like a prick because he had a big dick, which does seem somewhat apparent in *Prisoner of Paradise* when his character does seem genuinely displeased when he is forced to fuck the ferocious Fräuleins. As the doc also reveals, Holmes apparently completely lost interest in sex in general and refused to ejaculate unless he was getting paid for it, thus demonstrating how completely and utterly soulless his life had become. Certainly, the only captivating character in *Prisoner of Paradise* is Seka's Ilsa as she genuinely seems like a sexy little Nazi bitch who gets whatever she wants (notably, Hebraic hardcore leading man Jamie Gillis once described Seka as a "white trash queen" that thought she was "a bit above porn"). After Holmes croaked, Seka decided to get out of the porn business out of the fear that she might also contract AIDS, which is a somewhat strange thing to think about when you watch her get manhandled in the film by Johnny Wadd while she has an expression of savage ecstasy on her face.

Somewhat ironically considering the film's fairly tasteless depiction of the Second World War and National Socialism, there was later an award-winning documentary made entitled *Prisoner of Paradise* (2002) about German-Jewish actor Kurt Geron, who was coerced into directing a Nazi propaganda film about Theresienstadt concentration camp entitled *The Führer Gives the Jews a City* (1944) in the hope that he and his family would be spared from a very certain death at Auschwitz. Undoubtedly, the hardcore flick is even more absurd in terms of historical accuracy than Geron's deluded doc (which was never released, though a 23-minute fragment survived and can easily be found online), but I guess that is what one should expect from an American porn flick that was filmed in Hawaii and that immediately concludes with an advertisement for supposed Gail Palmer flicks, including *Ecstasy Express* and the Chaucer reworking *The Ribald Tales of Canterbury*, even though the former does not exist and the latter was actually directed by porn star Hyapatia Lee's husband Bud Lee. It should also be noted that Holmes spent about three years living in West Germany while

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he was enlisted in the U.S. Army before he became a porn star, yet Prisoner of Paradise does not exploit any German that he might have learned during his stay in Krautland (though he makes a botched attempt at saying about two words in Japanese). If you are looking for Nazisploitation oriented erotic/porn with some actual teeth, there are countless other films to choose from, including José Bénazéraf's *Bordel SS* (1978) aka *SS Bordello*, Tinto Brass' *Salon Kitty* (1976) and *Senso '45* (2002) aka *Black Angel*, and Phillip Marshak's *Blue Ice* (1985), just to name a few. Of course, if you ever got the urge to beat your meat to Hogan's Heroes and/or you are one of the many white American (beta)males that suffers from yellow fever, Prisoner of Paradise is probably just the film for you.

-Ty E

THE GREEN ELEPHANT

Svetlana Baskova (1999) Russian director Svetlana Baskova directed a rough war horror film based on the Bolshevik Gulags (Death Camps). The film circulates around two unidentified men in prison. They discuss various meaningless facets of life such as shit and flies. This is Quite an amateurish move for the director to have made. The director could have pulled a smarter move by discussing point metric systems in fast food and would have not been as ridiculed as much. This inane dialogue continues for around 50 more minutes until the film gets at least a little entertaining. These two bickering men decide to try and rape one another and attempt to slaughter each other while pissing on their bodies. The only real contingency to the film is the shock factor, which is present. It's not everyday you see two hairy Russian men try to grope and slaughter one another. The film was banned after one showing in it's homeland due to its scatophile, coprophilia, necrophilia, and extreme mutilation. Perhaps the only really interesting fact about this film is imagining hundreds of Russians running from the screening vomiting and the director getting banished. To see a film of this quality made in 1999 is in many ways depressing. Quality of film in other countries sure has fallen steep. The Green Elephant AKA Zeleniy Slonik is a trash effort and should not be regarded as a piece of war cinema. Avoid this film if you expect any cinema seriousness. CLIP Thanks to BlagTheRipper for a copy.

-Maq

DEAR MR. GACY
DEAR MR. GACY

Svetozar Rištovski (2010)

I used to be friends with a hot young lady (like Soiled Sinema, she has the initials SS) that was pen pals with pseudo-Satanic serial killer Richard Ramirez during her high school years. Being the sweetheart she was, my friend scanned the letters she received from Ramirez and sent them to me online so that I could read them. I immediately realized Ramirez's letters were completely and utterly unintentionally hilarious. Aside from being sub-literate like most Mexican metalheads, Ricky Retardo's letters were full of childish questions such as asking my friend what her favorite color was. In the film *Dear Mr. Gacy*, we see the true story unfold of a college student named Jason Moss who starts hustling (for a college thesis) the cunning yet obnoxiously bloated serial killer John Wayne Gacy through via snail mail. Unfortunately for Jason Moss, when you start playing games with big gay Gacy, you're playing for keeps as the disgusting killer leaves no young man untouched.

Jason's present to Gacy

I really do not understand the American obsession of worshiping serial killers as Sainly media darlings. After all, John Wayne Gacy has become as popular and iconically American as Hollywood cowboy John Wayne. Aside from torturing, sodomizing, and slaughtering adolescent males on the side, John Wayne Gacy was living his life as an upstanding American citizen, juggling multiples roles (businessman, community organizer, and clown), even taking a photograph with former first lady Rosalynn Carter. For those that hate clowns, John Wayne Gacy also makes the ultimate devil as contrived funnyman "Pogo The Clown." I found out about Gacy's crimes as a young child and I have not been able to look at clowns the same way ever since. The only clowns that have horrified me in a similar despicably vainglorious way as Gacy is those horrendous Dago jokesters featured in Fellini's *I clowns* (1970). In the humorless words of Morrissey, *That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore* in regard to the John Wayne Gacy featured in *Dear Mr. Gacy* as the man now wears the uniform of a dead man walking. Of course, Gacy has his last young male suitor in mind in this film, even if it is just to get into the college boy's dangerously inquisitive mind.

Dear Mr. Gacy was directed by Macedonian director Svetozar Rištovski who cites auteur directors ranging from Robert Bresson to Stanley Kubrick as influencing his own brand of filmmaking. When watching *Dear Mr. Gacy*, nothing is really impressive about the filmmaking, aside from the dark shades of colorlessness featured throughout the film which compliments the overall dark feeling that this motion picture resonates. Immediately, unlikeable protagonist Jason Moss attempts to entice John Wayne Gacy, sending him erotic photographs of himself (taken by his own brother) and writing the sad sadist clown provocative letters. Jesse's becomes obsessed with Gacy and ruins his relationships with his

girlfriend in the process. Gacy is played charismatically by William Forsythe, expressing the various dimensions (and multiple personalities) of the all-American serial killer. I do not know whether or not it was the director intention or not but near the end of the film, Gacy becomes a more likeable character than Jason. Like Gacy, Jesse has proven that he is willing to screw over anyone to get what he wants. The difference is that Jesse lacks the testicular fortitude to carry out his desires whereas Gacy has gone all the way, hence why serial killers seem to be so well respected by their American admirers.

Jason Moss and John Wayne Gacy, 1994

Not only did the real-life Jason Moss correspond with Gacy but he also traded letters with other notorious serial killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Henry Lee Lucas. Moss came up with the extra cliché title *The Last Victim* for his memoir as a serial killer fanboy. What makes the title especially cliché is the fact that Jason Moss would take his life years after writing his memoir. This makes one wonder what exactly lead Moss to suicide, the guilt of dealing with God's unholy men or the weakness of his own mind giving way after being exposed to those with mental aberrations worse than his own. Whatever the reason, knowing the background behind *Dear Mr. Gacy* makes the film much more interesting but does not save the film from being a piece of subpar cinema. After all, I found Mark Holton (Pee-Wee Herman's nemesis in *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*) to be a much scarier Gacy in the direct-to-video release *Gacy*. When it comes down to it, no one makes a creepier cinematic clown than unsweet transvestite Tim Curry.

-Ty E

CASTLE KEEP
CASTLE KEEP

Sydney Pollack (1969)

I must admit that the prospective of a Gothic World War II flick does sound most appetizing for the eyes and ears, but the successful execution of such an ambitious work is quite dubitable as demonstrated by unevenness of Michael Mann's *The Keep* (1983), especially if it is directed by someone as seemingly ill-equipped as Sydney Pollack, director of *Tootsie* (1982); a work featuring Dustin Hoffman in drag. Of course, during the beginning of his filmmaking career, Pollack directed the notably manly Western masterpiece *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972); a film about an Injun-extermimating mountain-man who is unwaveringly determined in his personal campaign to conquer land, man, and beast. Before ever gaining praise for directing *Jeremiah Johnson*, Pollack assembled the eccentric esoteric Gothic war dramedy *Castle Keep* (1969); a film based on a William Eastlake novel of the same name about a squad of American soldiers who squat in a phantasmagoric Belgian castle under the more or less superficial pretense that they will guard it, and its aristocratic Count owner and his beautiful Countess wife from advancing German forces. The setting of the film is during the Battle of Bulge, yet the owner of the castle (and the castle itself) seems many centuries old, which is unequivocally an anachronistic tool symbolizing the old political and physical infrastructure of Europe. Aside from combining conventions from the WWII flick with elements of a traditional Gothic castle tale, *Castle Keep* is, most importantly, a cinematic death certificate for Europe, albeit a ferociously facetious and flagrant one. Admittedly, I have been hoping to find a film that addresses this critical global power-shifting, but little acknowledged, post-Spenglerian phenomenon for some time now, so I was entirely taken aback when I randomly found this theme in a mostly disregarded war flick directed by Sydney Pollack of all people. Unsurprisingly, Pollack, being a proud Israelite, was ostensibly unsympathetic towards the land and peoples of Europe, most especially those terrible testosterone-fueled Teutons whose accents and affinity for kultur are mocked in a malicious manner that rivals *South Park* and *Family Guy* throughout *Castle Keep*, but that did not stop the filmmaker from portraying American GIs as hopelessly impenetrable philistines who, like islanders that were shipwrecked many generations ago, missed out on imperative cultural and intellectual advancements that were long ago established in Europe.

Upon arriving at the castle they will keep thoroughly occupied like a meth-fueled rapist with a hogtied virginal victim, the soldiers are quite vocal about their absolute disillusionment with the war. One soldier states that they have all already died twice, while another admits he has no idea as to what they are actually fighting for. These opening sentiments set that tone for the rest of *Castle Keep*, an acutely nihilistic and strikingly idiosyncratic quasi-existentialist work with misanthropic undertones. I would not be surprised if Sidney Pollack had a

smug smile and fat joint in hand throughout the production of *Castle Keep*, as the film has the feel of a culturally refined vaudeville act disguised as European arthouse film. If one were to watch the film without audio it would seem like a totally different film, not too dissimilar from Harry Kümel's dreamlike Gothic castle masterpiece *Malpertuis* (1971). Thankfully, *Castle Keep* has plenty of black humor and gorgeous pseudo-Baroque imagery to adequately counter its all-encompassing philosophical and intellectual unpleasantness. Indeed, *Castle Keep* features an aristocratic buffet of laboriously prepared rotten food for thought, but such morbid ingredients are quite welcome from a film industry that thrives on gross disingenuousness. In the ridiculous realm of *Castle Keep*, American soldiers indulge in the fruits of the European aristocracy without any actual understanding of these rare cultural treats. Anything these soldiers can't eat or fuck, they break, including priceless art, architecture, and landscapes. Undoubtedly, *Castle Keep* and its many absurdist scenarios act as a singularly demurgic and enthralling analogy for American involvement in the Second World War. Despite contributing to the dissolution of Europe as the world's most powerful political and cultural entity, and the dismantling of all remaining European empires, to this day, most Americans and American veterans are at a loss when trying to come up with a complex explanation (aside from, "The Japs bombed us!") as to why their nation was involved in an overseas fratricidal quasi-Civil War, nor the political and cultural magnitude of the war's outcome. By the end of *Castle Keep*, the castle and its many cultural treasures lay in ruins, as do many of the American GIs, and for what? So one half of Europe can be occupied by culture-distorting international capitalists and the other half by culture-destroying international communists; two alien powers contra to the continent's ancient cultural and socio-political traditions. These sort of issues are discussed nonchalantly by the soldiers throughout *Castle Keep*. In one particularly important, if random (like most of the film), scene, a soldier states, "Europe is dying" and, in turn, another soldier matter-of-factly replies with, "No, she is dead. That's why we're here. Don't you read the newspapers?" Indeed, Europa is dying but the American GIs of *Castle Keep* are too busy raping her daughters and killing her sons to take much notice, let alone, care.

Despite the quasi-apocalyptic nature of the content featured throughout *Castle Keep*, these morbid and melancholy movie moments are coated in a certain addictive bittersweet comedic cynicism that distances the viewer from the true grim reality of the content. In the film, countless people are killed in a variety of body-dismembering ways, a civilization's art is burned like trash to forever disappear from the world, and a continent is all but irrevocably annihilated, yet these surly circumstances are portrayed in a fashion that is ultimately comedic, thus proving that any subject, no matter how deplorable or taboo, can be made hilarious given the right creative mind. Of course, *Castle Keep* does have its moments of pure and silly comic relief. For example, a bonhomie hillbilly GI literally falls

CASTLE KEEP

in love with a semi-supernatural Volkswagen Beetle in a scene that reflects the peculiar American redneck obsession with imported wheels. Although two soldiers attempt to kill the enemy car via shooting and drowning, they are no match for the Aryan automobile's superior Germanic engineering. Even though featuring a wealth of physical slapstick comedy, the majority of humor featured in *Castle Keep* is contained within its sharp and witty dialogue. The film especially reminded me of William Peter Blatty's *The Ninth Configuration* (1980), except it is more coherent and slightly less serious than its sometimes overly spasmodic predecessor. Like *The Ninth Configuration*, *Castle Keep* is a military-related work that will most likely leave most genuine military men left dumbfounded with its keen philosophical insights and reflections, atypical tragicomedy style, and all-around ambiguity. That being said, I would love to hear what a couple of real-life American WWII veterans would have to say about *Castle Keep*, as they are a secondary (with the Europeans being the first) butt of the joke, whether they acknowledge it or not.

It might come as a revelation to some people, but few people probably know that popular Hollywood director Mike Nichols, director of *The Graduate* (1967) and *Closer* (2004), is the maternal grandson of Gustav Landauer, the Shakespearean scholar and communist-anarchist (if that oxymoron of a political persuasion makes any sense) who became the 'Commissioner of Enlightenment and Public Instruction' for the short-lived and traitorously created Soviet Republic of Bavaria that was created during the so called "German" Revolution of 1918-1919. When indigenous Germans finally recovered the city of Munich and Bavaria state, the communist leadership, which was made up of mostly alien Judaic traitors, was subsequently arrested and executed, including Landauer, who was stoned to death on May 2, 1919. I bring up Mike Nichols grandfather to illustrate the sort of mentality and politics that have dominated Hollywood throughout its existence. The people who run Hollywood are not merely moderate 'left-wingers' and kindhearted humanists who want to repair the heart of the world, but individuals who are fundamentally hostile to traditional European culture and morality, as exemplified in everything from their crude Hebraic neo-vaudevillian comedies to their quasi-Trotskyite period pieces. Although Jewish commentators and academics often boast about their ethnic group's contribution to science and cultures, they pale in comparison to the achievements of Europeans, hence their collective resentment towards European and Occidental kultur. As the great German-American iconoclast H.L. Mencken once stated, "The Jewish theory that the GOYIM envy the superior ability of the Jews is not borne out by the facts. Most GOYIM, in fact, deny that the Jew is superior, and point in evidence to his failure to take the first prizes: he has to be content with the seconds. No Jewish composer has ever come within miles of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms; no Jew has ever challenged the top-flight painters of the world, and no Jewish scientist has equaled Newton, Darwin, Pasteur or

Mendel....The GOY does not, in fact, believe that the Jew is better than the non-Jew; the most he will admit is that the Jew is smarter at achieving worldly success. But this he ascribes to sharp practices, not to superior ability.” Sydney Pollack, being of same generation and a similar cultural background (both of their families emigrated from Europe to the United States) as Mike Nichols, most likely shared a kindred personal hostility towards Europe as his compatriots, as vividly expressed in much depth in *Castle Keep*, a work that is saturated with quintessential Jewish humor. While portraying Europeans as impotent (the Count is literally infertile) degenerates with no future, the film depicts Americans (aside from a mostly misunderstood and despairing white art historian and a uncommonly witty yet supremely arrogant Negro author) as profound ignoramuses who don't even have the mental capacity to understand that their role in the Second World War will lead to the destruction of their ancient ancestral homelands, and, inevitably, white America's loss of cultural and political domination of the United States. After all, I doubt most white Americans from the 1940s would have agreed to fight in the war if they knew it would eventually lead to a future mulatto president and a perpetual deluge of immigrants from the third world. The Count of the castle in *Castle Keep* even calls the American soldiers traitors near the conclusion of the film, a statement these soldiers clearly fail to understand as communicated by their blank stares.

Castle Keep ends with a literal Holocaust and the castle inflames, which indubitably acts as an allegorical delineation of Europe as a whole after the conclusion of World War II. Everyone in America knows that, apparently, six million died during World War II, but very few can cite how many Europeans were senselessly slaughtered and what cities and landmarks were inexorably incinerated. While I find Pollack's political persuasion to be dubious, I must commend him for his refreshing honesty and his brilliant direction. *Castle Keep* is such an outlandish and solitary work that it is seemingly lacking in flaws. The typical lemming film-goer will probably criticize the film for its lack of character development and somewhat incoherent plot, but these complaints are basically irrelevant as it is plain to see that *Castle Keep* is a work where actors (even if they are big names like Burt Lancaster, Jean-Pierre Aumont, and Peter Falk) are used as props for delivering clever dialogue and the storyline is a mere palette for expressing an assortment of ideas and potent imagery. Neither pro-war nor anti-war, *Castle Keep* is an open-ended work that demands individual interpretation, hence the marginal popularity of the film in the United States. Naturally, American audiences detest films that make a mockery of their intellectual ineptitude and lack of cultural refinement, thus *Castle Keep* will undoubtedly be destined to the same fate as the European films it aesthetically mimics: in the celluloid dustbin of history.

-Ty E

JEREMIAH JOHNSON
JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Sydney Pollack (1972)

Jeremiah Johnson is quite possibly the best movie ever made. It just portrays such a gnarly character loosely based off of an even bigger bad ass. The real Jeremiah Johnson was terrifying. Homeboy ate the livers of the people he killed and wrestled bears. The Sydney Pollack film though, shows a lighter side of the mountain man who basically hated everyone, and wanted to live on his own in the mountains. Sound familiar? Into the Wild was a recently released movie about the same idea, but Emile Hirsch's character in that film has nothing on Jeremiah. The film starts out with one of the most awkward things you can sit down and watch in a movie, an overture. My suggestion for this part is to eat lots of steak, blast your own music (preferably metal), and drink heavily. By that point, you're ready for the first scene of Jeremiah Johnson. The film starts showing a clean cut Robert Redford heading out into the wilderness. As the film progresses, it shows Jeremiah go from shooting fish in a stream to killing bears at close range. He also takes shit to an all new level of brutal stumbling upon another mountain man frozen to death, and takes his gun. There are so many other awesome things this guy does, but you need to see it for yourself. The film builds up to the legend of this character that ate the livers of the people that crossed him, gambled, partied hard, and fucking kicked! Jeremiah Johnson was the only mountain man that would lay kicks down in a fight. The film is a tenderer look at this historical mountain man, but does a better job at portraying fighting for survival in the wilderness than any movie ever filmed. If you want to see bad ass in its purest form, see this film. It is long, but pay attention, and don't fuck this up! By the end of the movie, you will have probably grown fifty thousand beard hairs. When my kids hit puberty, I am not telling them shit about the birds and the bees. I am just going to have them watch Jeremiah Johnson.

-paw

ROCKY BALBOA

Sylvester Stallone* (2006) Rocky Balboa is yet another recent Sylvester Stallone franchise film directed by the man himself. Stallone has stated that the newest Rocky film is, "The End" so don't expect another film about the slowwitted and hard driven fighter. In Rocky Balboa, Rocky has long ago already reached his fighting abilities peak. His beloved wife Adrian has died of "woman cancer" and he merely spends his days running his fancy restaurant. Rocky's son Robert has a fairly cold relationship with his father and has become a corporate asshole. All in All, Rocky's world seems to be less than ideal, and of course unexciting.

The city Rocky lives in is now your typical American urban ghetto. The locals of the city that he grew-up in are less than admirable. In a bar, Rocky encounters a young lady that is fairly fluent in Ebonics and after denied a "free drink" by rock she irrationally states, "you ain't not better den me." Rocky seems more disturbed by this situation than anything. He soon makes his way out of the bar with "little" Marie (her character is featured in the original Rocky film stating, "screw you, creep"). When Rocky realizes "big" Marie now has a mulatto son, he looks a little shocked by it, and of course he attempts to downplay his reaction. Rocky's brother-in-law Paulie isn't in too good of shape either. When Rocky invites Paulie to have a "special" at his restaurant he replies, "Italian food cooked up by a bunch of Mexicans ain't so special." Paulie's statement reflects the feelings of most blue collar workers and seems like a direct blow to Rocky for hiring them. Essentially, Rocky Balboa shows how America, American Unity, and American communities have gone down the drain because of weakling guys like Rocky's son. Of course, all the negative things turn around as can be expected in a film of typical Hollywood conventions. Rocky gets back into boxing and fights a much younger boxer. One can only wonder if this is reflexive of Stallone's own personal mid-life crisis. Rocky Balboa has various references to the original and this is appropriate as this is the last film and second best film. Sylvester Stallone found the perfect way to end the "fight your way up" American dream series.

-Ty E

RAMBO
RAMBO

Sylvester Stallone* (2008)

Within every genre, there are select films that earn the title of "Best in the Genre". For romance we have Casablanca, Drama we have Citizen Kane and American Beauty, and for horror we have The Exorcist and Jaws. The fourth outing of Sylvester Stallone's Rambo series is among the placeholder of best action films. Now when I heard of JOHN RAMBO (Alternative Title) I about pissed myself. Having seen the trailer once, I quickly rewatched it for about the length of the film itself. Not only does it entertain on a visual level but the sheer amount of carnage and limbs flying around only make it better. Having left off with Rambo III, we return with our beloved Anti-hero John Rambo working in Thailand. He has his own boat and just wanted "The quiet life". He is confronted by a handful of solid missionaries wanting to go into the dreadful land of Burma. Mr. Rambo refuses because it is a place of genocide. After some breaking, he decides to take them in due to the kind eyes of a looker. After killing a pirate ship (Don't laugh) and dropping them off at the shore, the missionaries are quite unimpressed with his barbaric style of NOMERCY killings. Ten days later, a priest from a church in Colorado wants Rambo to take a group of mercenaries to the point where he dropped them off at for an extraction mission. Turns out the idiots who wanted change without weapons and killing got the ass-end of the deal. So looks like it's up for not only Rambo to save the idiot American's lives but the lives of the mercenaries as well. So for all the critics and citizens alike who complain that there is no plot or fiber to the film, that it is all blood and extreme violence, you are seriously missing the entire point of the film. It's not a happy film by any means. Things like this actually take place in the world. Too bad we don't have any John Rambo's to make it better by blasting, ripping, and stabbing our way to a better future. As the tagline for the third film goes. "First was for himself, Second was for his country, This time....it's for his friend". This chapter adds a fourth line. The last time, is for the world because that is what Rambo believes in. He eventually comes to terms that he is a war-bred machine. Expect an amazing ending to a perfect film. The only thing that could make this film better would be Rambo standing on a cliff, banging his chest letting loose a guttural war cry. Contrary to that, we have plenty of Rambo being a badass motherfucker, not involving scenes of him escaping a massive explosion on foot, ripping out someone's throat, or the 50 caliber carnage scene that will leave fans of Braveheart and Saving Private Ryan squirming in their cribs. It's funny how the line in this film "Killing is as easy as breathing if you are pushed" is the most accurate statement someone with natural instincts can make. Anyone can kill. Watching the breakdown of some of the Catholics as they have no choice but to kill is an effective scene. Expect many dead Asians. "Live for nothing.....or die for something" These words not only mean the most to a person, but actually might

inspire a revolution similar to the one depicted within. Upon the film's release, Rambo was banned in Burma. However, that hasn't stopped DVD pirates from selling thousands of copies below the military's un-keen noses. This film might even push into a full scale revolution. Now how epic would that be?

-Maq

SKULL /& BONES
SKULL /& BONES

T.S. Slaughter° (2007)

Enter the appropriately named director T.S. Slaughter, director of the gay "HOMO-cidal" film SKULL & BONES. Upon getting my screener copy i had no idea what i was in for. It is impossible to say this film is a horrible film, while i was damn near entertained, i only had a few annoyances. You meet Nathan and Justin, two gay sex buddies who live a dull life in a local university. Due to their love for serial killers and their hatred for Ivy League preps, they take it upon themselves to rape and humiliate anyone who dare crosses them. What makes this film so special is its use of political incorrectness and its avid conspiracies being thrown into the mix. Nathan and Justin are pretty normal guys who live and lust. Justin is the underling and looks up to Nathan. This is shown in several horribly acted segments. "You are SOO awesome, Nathan". Derrick Wolf who plays Nathan is an absolute blast to watch. From his maniacal laughter and his Peter Sarsgaard sounding voice, he is but a pillar to hold this movie. One gripe i had was the coffin. It was made with bits of cardboard it seemed, and had over the top creaking-dungeon-door sound effects added in. Later in the film, we see a slide show slide of some of the more famous real life serial killers. Many are noted as being homosexual. Could this be a undertone saying that homosexuality spawns homicidal urges? Do not expect anything from this film without knowing anything more than the plot. But expect Gay rape scenes involving political caricature masks, pretty pythons, the same hilarious baiting scene used four times, and every fruit known to mankind used to sodomize these poor richies. I also loved the deep message it conveys, basically saying that in every male is a homosexual side. Despite the sometimes horrid acting and shitty set design, Skull & Bones manages to be a good indie horror gem with a very different type of feel; hence it not sticking to a specific genre. I also enjoyed the use of exotic animals to build almost a primitive and classic horror feel, similar to the films of Coffin Joe or the more widely known, The Serpent & The Rainbow. As said in Scream, "Now Sid, don't you blame the movies, movies don't create psychos, movies make psychos more creative!" Let's see what Mr. Slaughter can do with a "butt-jet" Get it?

Website Trailer

-Maq

SEXUAL PARASITE: KILLER PUSSY

Takao Nakano (2004)

Only the director of unofficial Uratsuki-dôji spin offs (ExorSister) could direct something this sexually menacing. Sexual Parasite: Killer Pussy is a bit of softcore Japanese weirdness. Bringing back the Vagina Dentata superstitions, this is a valiant and more enticing film than remake Teeth could ever hope to be. The idea of a grotesque creature transferring bodies to rape and devour men is Oscar worthy in itself. Running a short 60 minutes, Sexual Parasite is defiantly erotic in some very strange senses. You might even question your own fetishes after seeing a mongoloid tapeworm invade every orifice of the body. Sexual Parasite borrows a similar theme of foreign invasion as seen in Dead Alive. The very similar plot line follows a group of teenagers who go into an abandoned jungle and in an abandoned warehouse. They soon find themselves in a heap load of trouble when a menacing creature threatens their lives... and sexuality. Sexual Parasite fashions many gore scenes out of the usual deviant arousal films including castration and... wait, that's about the only thing really featured in the film and it's honorable. A killer pussy can only do so much. In a ridiculous last several minutes, the lead actress (blessed with marvelous breasts) goes Rambo with various tools and blades in order to take care of the evil parasite. The facet I admire most is the weapon fashioned to her arm as a nod to Die Hard and the average hero. I will be the first to admit the cat fight at the end is ridiculous and directed by a 9th grader. Had Takao Nakano not been given the option for digital effects, much of the film would have a fluid flow rather than out of place scenes of wobbly eyeballs and awkward parasite transfer scenes. Sexual Parasite promises sex and parasites and it doesn't disappoint. The sheer amount of bloodshed and topless females makes up for near any error that an independent film could make. How shallow of me. Sexual Parasite is every bit of an homage of Evil Dead, Dead Alive, and every perversion-horror film ever made. It should be viewed as a director's purposeful piece of work and not as a film made for fans. The demographic for this specific set of fans doesn't seem wide enough to warrant a DVD release from Discotek but surprisingly, the genre fans find themselves irrevocably drawn to this. To be honest, if I saw a film called Killer Pussy, I too would lunge at the chance to buy this. On term of film making as an art, this film fails miserably. It's brash, crude, salacious, and the equivalent of a Shock-O-Rama feature meets The Karate Kid. All this equals a sometimes fun, most times irritating, but competent film worthy of a viewing. That is, if you can brace for what a film called Killer Pussy has to offer.

-mAQ

GODZILLA 2000
GODZILLA 2000

Takao Okawara (1999)

Godzilla is a fine example of an alignment dubbed Chaotic Neutral. At times he will save the world and other times he exhibits an extreme nihilism towards the human race, such as what is displayed in the resurrected once more Godzilla 2000. We last saw Godzilla suffer defeat at the hands of Destroyah. He was since resurrected due to the huge flop that Emmerich's Godzilla envisioning was (The only thing it had going for it was Jean Reno). In Godzilla 2000, It's a cold fact that in a franchise of 20+ films, you're going to have several stale entries surrounded by unbridled monster mashes. Godzilla 2000 is a feeble attempt at kick starting life into a series that was abruptly ended thanks to his nuclear heart. Much of my dissent is born from a metaphorical H-Bomb as I discovered my DVD didn't feature original Japanese audio. This just goes to show how sadistic and close-minded Sony Pictures can be at times. Godzilla 2000 is plagued by poor writing. I recall in one scene while detailing the destructive force of a new man made weapon, the designer retorts "I guarantee it will go through Godzilla like crap through a Goose!" I don't know if it is just me or what, but that sentence makes no sense. Many of the characters are type casted as hell from pulling off their glasses slowly while whispering "Oh my god..." to a picturesque happy ending until this somber moment is shattered by Godzilla's fury. The design on Godzilla this time around has been overall improved. Horrible Sci-fi Channel-like CGI is noticeable around every corner and this is the poison that slowly drains this film of nay old-school Kaiju combat. If I wanted to watch Godzilla awkwardly rampage through Green screens and swim underwater while doing several new positions thanks to computer graphics, I'd just wait for Godzilla 3D. The ending of this film has Godzilla mercilessly murdering his human rival while the hero embraces his newborn family. After this tender moment, Godzilla decides to Atomic breath the living shit out of Tokyo, murdering millions in the process. I don't know which depraved genius mind thought this up but he is in order for an award. As a Villain, Orga is just an attack on the TriStar release of Godzilla. Roland Emmerich is that one director who created filth like Independence Day and 10,000 B.C. Orga's space craft is seen perched over top buildings sapping all of Tokyo's data and information from the supercomputer's network. After this, he steals Godzilla's "Regenerator G1" and morphs into a Godzilla clone. Godzilla plays around with the idea of letting this impostor get the upper hand and then mutilates his mouth with his signature breath. This is really "sticking it" to the studio that thought remaking a film that has more than enough offspring's, prequels, re-boots, and sibling videos a good idea. Godzilla 2000 at times is honestly pathetic. The effects range from hideous to glorious. I'm really digging on Godzilla's new spine spikes. They capture the feel of a monster more than an awkward rubber lizard. When not being dragged to its grave, Godzilla 2000 can

be a competent sequel with some amazing shots of Godzilla doing what he does best; surviving. There is enough potential in this to at least recommend to fans, though.

-mAQ

IMPRINT
IMPRINT

Takashi Miike (2006) Showtime's *Masters of Horror* is far from a collection of short films from the "masters of horror." Most of the directors involved in this series are second rate Hollywood directors and/or horror directors that the seasoned horror fan "knows of." I will give Don Coscarelli, Dario Argento, and Takashi Miike the credit of being "masters of horror." In fact, Miike's *Imprint* is the best one out of the series. Takashi Miike seemed more focused on aesthetics with *Imprint* than most of his other films. Beautiful colors and fetuses makes for a soothing experience. Only in a fantastic dream could one find a variety of colorful flowers surrounding a fresh stream of abandoned babies. *Imprint* reminded me of Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*. I think that I prefer Takashi Miike's dreams. Things also get confusing during storytelling with another possible Kurosawa influence *Rashomon*. Japanese cinema has changed dramatically over the past half century. I believe it is for the better. Showtime cowardly decided not to air *Imprint* on cable television. They prefer showing softcore porn and Suburban drug dealing fantasies (*Weeds*). What a shameful act on their part. What American would not want to see the floating body of a pregnant woman on their way to a whorehouse? I don't even need to go into the cutesy topless Asian girls being tortured by their madams. I think America is finally ready for Takashi Miike. Next season *Masters of Horror* needs to feature Jorg Buttgereit, Nacho Cerda, Jim Van Bebber, Shinya Tsukamoto, and possibly even Nick Palumbo. But that probably won't happen. Realistically you can expect the director of *The Fog* remake and executive producer of the *Grudge 2*.

-Ty E

SUN SCARRED

Takashi Miike (2006)

Been a while since I've written anything down with the exception of several snail-mail letters to my significant other. Truth be told, I don't really recall how this transference of thought-to-virtual paper operates anymore. In light of Soiled Sinema's hiatus, I've managed to watch fewer movies than I should have. My big kick as of recently has been the Death Wish franchise which is a bumpy ride at that. During my in depth immersion into the world of Paul Kersey, vigilante-for-hire with a 1/8th motivation of revenge, I've become stricken with the media craze of revenge. Perusing through articles and films alike, hell, even thumbing through "ex-girlfriend" web pages, I've become acquainted with this idea of violent retaliation and in a sick sense, I can't wait for my chance to thrive off of a blood lust. With these fundamental ideas in mind, my reception of Sun Scarred (Scars of the Sun) might differ from those Miike enthusiasts but I promise to appreciate this film's accidental approachability while embracing the fevered flaws that pepper most of Miike's modicum. What started off as a seasonal viewing some odd months ago, I got about halfway through Sun Scarred when some random event arose and I had it on an indefinite pause until now. While I feel as if this film wasted itself away with its high-rise levels of intensity to bottom out to watching paint dry, I feel had the film had a stronger opening, I might have never had paused it for little-to-no reason. The story is about as parallel to most revenge films as you'd imagine. The formula is altered in the way that our Japanese "salaryman" (aren't they all?) breaks up a group of youngsters attacking someone and winds up falcon punching a lollipop-toting metro-sexual whose very idea is a rip off of popular anime/manga character "L" from Death Note. This incredibly obvious tracing is the main reason why I can't take this certain character for all the ruthlessness they aspired to have him offer. If not for the lollipop then the terrible quirkiness attempted and the squeakiness of his annoying Oriental voice. With that being riffed to death, we'll move onto the continuation of the story arc. After punching the effeminate Kamiki several times and receiving all the blame as he is a minor, Kamiki kidnaps our hero's (Katayama) daughter and murders her off screen. Racked with guilt and terrible oppressive media, Katayama's wife hurls herself off the roof of a building in a scene that I can only describe as shocking. The effectiveness of this particular scene is the general disgust and phobia that comes with death attributed to falling. Or perhaps that's just my acrophobia talking? When filmed correctly and as harrowing and swift as the event is, the final result is unnerving. For more crashbang attempts at this science of brutality, note both [rec] films as being leaders in this under-appreciated moving portrait of living fast and dying hard. Combined with the blood dripping and his later breakdown, Katayama doesn't really sell his chops enough to be the miserable man that he is aiming to

SUN SCARRED

be. After all is said and done, Kamiki finds himself being released 3 years later for good behavior. Being a vengeful sprite, Katayama sets out on his obsessive quest to bring his own hard boiled justice to Kamiki and his youthful accomplices who are itching to kill. What consistently works in Sun Scarred is often shadowed over by what doesn't quite work. Being helmed by cinema's love-him-or-hate-em master of whatever he does exactly, Miike's impression is definitely left on this blank faced revenge tale that serves as a commentary on youth violence more so than it does on the faults of the justice system or the importance of violence in every ones life. While Sun Scarred doesn't play too head on with the issue of violence in youth or that children kill for nothing, a few key scenes really comb through the problem with a fine teeth. One scene in particular is when Katayama disarms a child with a pistol and beats him around a bit. When he attempts to withdraw pertinent information from the child, the kid remains on the ground holding his bloody nose crying for his mother. Combine this layered aesthetic of "youth in revolt" with perhaps one of the more satisfying paybacks in recent cinema, Sun Scarred is an exceptional entry in the revenge thriller sub genre while not being bogged down by a decent opening and a terribly slow middle; but it's the calculatingly furious finale which proves that Miike still has what made him one of Japan's angriest directors as of recent but even so, with this wild card expect heaps of unwatchable trash with bits of fine metals littering the piles.

-mAQ

SUKIYAKI WESTERN DJANGO

Takashi Miike (2007)

Takashi Miike is critically acclaimed for an estimation of about 5 films. Little does anyone realize, that he has directed about 70 films that don't matter, each getting shittier than the last. Sukiyaki Western Django is his remake of classic spaghetti western film DJANGO. Someone who is known to have no style to his films should never remake a film such as DJANGO. This film has a wayward plot concerning two rebel factions in a town searching for a treasure while wearing ridiculous outfits, muttering broken "engrish". A lone gunman mercenary battles gang member after gang member to no end while frilly swordfighters complain about the fear of death. This remake was made for English audiences in Japan, which can lead to complications. Such as the all Japanese cast speaking horrible English. I found it silly to make a film designed for the lack of subtitles, when you need subtitles to even grasp what they are saying. The beginning opens up with Quentin Tarantino sitting on a log in picturesque background (literally painted for the hyper stylized look). He is surrounded by men and begins to tell a classic tale of the two warring gangs in a horrible accent. It is obvious that Tarantino had a small say in what he says due to the horrible pretentiousness reeking off the script. Japanese films lately have become too full of themselves. They prance around quoting Shakespeare, acting cool with piercings. Due to the Americanization of the film, a villain dubs himself "Henry". It's hard to not laugh when the similar scene from Kung-Pow comes to mind. One pivotal character is a woman who has lost love due to the reds. We then see a scene where she gets fucked staring at her dead husbands body and watching her son cry over it. She now chain-smokes and bar-dances to gloriously capture the agony of her soul. Sukiyaki Western Django is a film that is a bold disgrace to both the art of the Samurai and the essence that westerns carry. After this film, Miike should be exiled into Japan, for it is clear that the influence of Tarantino has ruined his already lacking style.

-Maq

THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN
THE LAST FRANKENSTEIN

Takeshi Kawamura (1991)

Fresh off my acquisition with the incredible *The Man Who Stole the Sun*, I hopped right back onto similar terrain with Takeshi Kawamura's *The Last Frankenstein*, a film I have been encouraging myself to watch for some time but only recently attaching subtitles. Taking the bare blueprints of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Kawamura, an avant-garde playwright (supposedly wrote the screenplay for a similarly take on classic horror - *My Soul is Slashed*), took a great deal of fantastical liberties with the progress of a manmade ... man. In *The Last Frankenstein*, a science teacher named Sarusawa continues to mourn the death of his wife, victim of suicide, and is forced to adapt to a way of life with his telekinetic daughter, Mai. The fragile bond the two share and the city are thrown into turmoil once the recent rash of suicides have been scientifically linked to a disease that is spreading - an epidemic of persuasive death. Seeking out Dr. Aleo, a mad genius whose philosophies of the continuation of our species involve creating, from scratch, new super-humans and forcing them to copulate, Sarusawa hopes that his twisted mind can bring the eventual fall of man to a halt. *The Last Frankenstein*, if one thing, is certainly Japan's own. Taking post-modernism and Western influence into account, Kawamura has been crafting subversive stage plays using these similar aesthetics of J-culture and Western persuasion since the 80s, *The Last Frankenstein* being an earlier theatrical production of his own design. For reasons he saw fit, perhaps due to the epic apocalypse within, a feature length film was made.

Opening on *Moonlight Sonata*, *The Last Frankenstein* establishes itself as a film that has intentions to move, which surprisingly, it does. Even the avant-garde absurdist nature of Kawamura's lovechild never gets in the way of a larger effect on the humanity of the viewers. The warnings came early with the appearance of various strings of "suicide clubs" that crept along the city streets simply chanting "death" to the point of irrepressible audible meltdown. To understand the very fractured way of life expressly lead by Sarusawa, one must realize the burden left on him by his wife's suicide. Certainly a selfish act, or was it? With word that the suicides can be linked to a disease, a bodily manifestation of a virus leading one to take their own life, surely his wife couldn't have carried this same bug, or could she? Carrier, perhaps - This question and more are asked very subtly by director Kawamura. Never is it stated but always does it resonate. The pure melancholy of it all achieves a far greater emotional impact than more than half of engaging international cinema past millennium. A leading intellectual on the school board mentions the mad Dr. Aleo and reassures Kawamura of Aleo's notoriety. Upon leaving his study, a gunshot rings through the hallway causing Sarusawa to pause, drop the collected works of Aleo, and sprint back into the

room, only to find an apology letter and brain matter on mahogany. This is just one example of how the collected effect of *The Last Frankenstein* ranges from humorous to frightening. Witnessing a hunchbacked assistant prowl the streets at night, in order to kidnap women, Sarusawa gives chase to the hissing abomination. This eventually results in Sarusawa's extended stay at Dr. Aleo's castle, which, more or less, is the near death experience for *The Last Frankenstein*.

Here lies my only problem with *The Last Frankenstein*. Originally conceived as a theatrical stage play in 1986, the filmic rendition of Kawamura's inspired reaction to increasing Japanese suicide left him three separate acts, each with their great strengths. The first act, discovery of the death religion, bears a great weight on human empathy. Staying silly, but not too silly; builds up to a boiling confrontation with death, eventual, of course. The second act stays strong with the impending doom of complete self-annihilation of, not just Japanese culture, but the world. Balancing both comedy and tragedy, the second act is the strongest of all. The third act finds itself around an hour and a half into the feature with Sarusawa's stay welcomed and his daughter being used in the creation of the creatures. Romance is fleeting and the script gets flighty. Balance is the main issue I have with the finale. *The Last Frankenstein's* final moments toss out recognition of previous events. In fact, the suicide virus is mentioned briefly, as Aleo refuses to help humankind, rather, let them die out in order to kick-start a new race, and the cult only returns in one swift scene and disappears entirely from the film. For spending the better half of an hour on such tragic events, only to cast them out in favor of absurdism and repetitious scenes of two sewn bodies of "perfection" watch pornographic material, you'd think *The Last Frankenstein* would have some grand plan up its rotted sleeve. Regardless of this, which I didn't favor, *The Last Frankenstein* is still an utterly excellent film. Marvelously acted, weighty, and gloomy, it surely has to be seen in order to believe.

-mAQ

SONATINE
SONATINE

Takeshi Kitano (1993)

I'd like to start this review of one of Takeshi Kitano's indisputable masterpieces with a quote from prolific French actor Alain Delon -- "this is not an actor [...], he only got three facial expressions and he almost doesn't talk on top of this". This, of course, is an indirect retaliation towards a recommendation from a French publisher. You would think Delon would know something about the beauty of stoicism, if harnessed correctly, and Kitano is indeed an expert in his craft of cruelty. Words like these bring about an image of immaturity. Something you can recall faintly on a recess yard, something that conjures mental remnants of runny noses, tattletales, and soiled jeans. The error in part of Delon's was not to rival Kitano's picture, which may or may not have offended his delicate and pampered sensibilities, but the lack of effort on his part to embrace something that switches between cold and warm on a whim. What I am referring to is Kitano's excellent chemistry with the camera. *Sonatine* is one of many masterpieces that Kitano himself wrote and directed. Taking a natural and personal turn in utilizing stoic suicide as the centerpiece, *Sonatine* marks the film before his near-fatal motorcycle accident that Kitano himself referred to as an "unconscious suicide attempt". This, no doubt, can be partially blamed on the incredibly bleak and nihilistic atmosphere of his earlier pictures. Continuing on, *Sonatine* is a scrapbook of the best and the worst of what life has to offer - a stunning collaboration between the warm embrace of life and the fleeting triumph of death.

Sonatine concerns its pivotal character Murakawa and his ever-increasing dread. A ruthless and emotionless Yakuza, Murakawa and his gang are sent to the tropical island of Okinawa to mediate between two warring clans. Knowing better, Murakawa senses danger, a waft of betrayal. Sure enough, Murakawa and his gang are ambushed and having nowhere else to go, retreat to a seaside cabin and spend their time exploring the inner reaches of playfulness - successfully rekindling a comfort that they had long since forgotten. Essentially, *Sonatine* is about men regressing back into boyhood, the polar opposite of your standard coming-of-age story. *Sonatine* takes this formula and rewinds it, thus making it a point to connect with our inner child instead of aggressively chasing after dreams of mortgage, responsibility, and the ever-looming presence of total and utter detachment. Murakawa experiences this the most out of all his fellow criminals. Seen earlier on, resulting in the life of a rival, Murakawa now spends his time playfully bantering with a woman he rescued from a rape situation and engaging in activities that border on both extremes, e.g. a game of fortified roman candle warfare turns sharply as Murakawa smiles and unloads his weapon in the

general vicinity of his rival team, still his own men, mind you. Another example would be the game of William Tell quickly turned even more sinister with Murakawa's implementation of Russian Roulette rules mixed with a splendid game of Rock-paper-scissors.

Suits are abandoned for Hawaiian shirts, past discrepancies are wiped away - all that is left in *Sonatine* is a group of kids with weapons. Contrast that with both Kitano and Murakawa's wavering will to live and you have a poetic piece of self-doubt and what was once imprinted on celluloid, will now be imprinted upon your memory banks. Kitano is an accomplished actor and a cultural icon, one of which you have seen before. Either the uncultured in film will recognize him from the likes of *MXC* or *Johnny Mnemonic* or ones suited to Japanese cinema will recognize him from *Battle Royale*, *Izo*, or any of his sobering directorial efforts, such as his debut film, *Violent Cop*. *Sonatine* also happens to be influenced by *Sympathy for the Underdog*, directed by Kinji Fukasaku, the director of *Battle Royale* and a portion of *Battle Royale II* (before his passing). This might be in part to Fukasaku's backing out of directing *Violent Cop* originally. Kitano just so happened to pick up the project and severely rewrite the script, thus equating in the masterwork that is "up there" with the gloomiest motion pictures in existence. It is the touch that Kitano presents that takes his films from the ordinarily twisted into such an extreme and intimate nature. And as I mentioned before, the profound impact isn't from the spent shell casings clattering on the floor nor the projectiles ejected from the weapon, it's the unflinching eye of Kitano's, evident in any scene of violence that he himself partakes in. It's the smile he bares on occasion and it's the beauty and honor of his bloodshed.

The finale of *Sonatine* is of grave importance to Murakawa's condition. After watching his men get picked off one by one, it stands a silence that is hardly a whisper. Murakawa must act now. Not only has he been betrayed for greed and his men left to die, the principal of such is nonexistent. Murakawa isn't a good man, he is a cold killer, but honor has been a constant in Japanese society, and so Murakawa must persist. *Sonatine* is Kitano's career paradoxically perfected - a tender assault on the senses. The breadth of his visual lyricism is compelling and the classical soundtrack is a beaut. *Sonatine* channels light and dark exquisitely and creates characters so temperamental, brash, and endearing that as they drop like flies, you can't help but to focus on the better times and withhold moments of vulnerability, as per Murakawa's hardened behavioral traits. This is largely evident in a scene in which Murakawa, resting peacefully and hidden by the hull of a beached boat, stares at the horror-stricken face of a comrade as he receives a bullet directly in his forehead. *Sonatine* promises to assuage any and all desires for explicable artistry in film. It is the peak of Kitano's directing career and bittersweet to the very last frame. Kitano's acting style may seem odd to the third party audience member but when examined at a closer distance, becomes something that no one has ever achieved before - a keen ability to smile in the

SONATINE

face of death. Sonatine is perfect.

-mAQ

NEGATIVE HAPPY CHAINSAW EDGE

Takuji Kitamura (2008)

Japan's answer to the nerd-chic counterculture lies within *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge*. What I'm referring to is the demand for such backwards absurd material bordering the idea of zombie ninjas vs. pirates with talking wigs. If you're salivating at the mention of that idea, please leave this website. *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge* is based off an unheard of manga that concerns a boy who follows a warrior-schoolgirl to various locations at night to fight a Chainsaw-armed cloaked wraith that falls from the sky, prompting snow. While the idea is, at times, enjoyable, *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge's* low fuel tank sputters occasionally in key plot driven scenes, not just a hiccup here or there, but comes to a standstill position that leaves itself vulnerable to attack, much like our irritating subhuman lead.

From the opening scene of snow drifting down slowly then stopping, beautifully frozen in time, we witness a hulking and dreadfully intimidating figure wielding a chainsaw. His lumbering pace over a bridge brings him in contact with his mortal enemy, schoolgirl Eri-chan. Yamamoto decides to prove his virility to his dead friend by accompanying her on future nightly missions of CGI-injected masturbatory dreams of chainsaw-dagger deflection starring the presence of a prepubescent klutz that is completely soulless and unlikable. The former is the greatest wound to the enormous ego of *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge*. Every minute that Yamamoto is present on the screen, the more entertainment this film loses. Soon you'll become so tired of his pathetic countenance that you will consider him a plague of sorts. I can imagine putting this single character in American classics just to watch the film crash and burn, whimper and die. What an experiment that would be!

On terms with other East Asian splurges of stylized violence and CGI misuse, *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge* stands victor over some of the other abominations as *Tokyo Gore Police* and *1/2 of Meatball Machine*. Now in *Negative Happy's* defense, *Chainsaw Edge* features a storyline that is interesting, trampled at worst, and adds tissue to the characters. The idea of a Super Shredder-like wraith that grows larger based on emotion is a stellar idea and I'd love to see this concept more based around an action-oriented foundation, rather than a bumbling romantic-chainsaw-comedy. Try as it might, *Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge* never fully develops into a prime piece of film, as in beginning, middle, and ending. It stays developed within its own cocoon and struggles for life in a strictly metaphorical sense. It might have the aesthetics to embellish it within the cult and foreign fan base but there's not really much to admire other than sometimes-slick visuals from a first time director. Imagine a similar octane style to *Wanted*, except rationed out in extremely tiny increments. In battle, the chainsaw wraith will throttle his mechanical appendage which results in a detailed and

NEGATIVE HAPPY CHAINSAW EDGE

hyperkinetic autopsy scene showing the implausible mechanization of his deadly arm. This leaves much to be expected but sadly deploys the overused cop-out method of Eri throwing a quartet of daggers only to swat them out of the way using slow motion. I'm not exaggerating - we see this same scene up to near three times. For being a later incarnation of the ancient Nikkatsu studio, I expected more, however, I was treated to a more story-based envisioning of new-wave Japanese absurdities. Had this been created with a youthful, angry approach rather than being characterized as timid like a mouse, Negative Happy Chainsaw Edge would be visitable over and over again. I don't regret watching the film but its priorities are severely out of wack.

-mAQ

NIKU DARUMA

Tamakichi Anaru (1998)

Also known as *Psycho: The Snuff Reels*. Also known as *Tumbling Doll of Flesh*. Amidst the J-sploitation onslaught that ravaged gorehounds leaving them stirring in their sleep, Tamakichi Anaru created some of the more prolific films. You may have heard of *Suicide Dolls*, *Womens Flesh: My Red Guts*, or his masterpiece - *Niku Daruma*. One can only assume from the sur-title "Snuff Reels", the transfixed idea had been brainstormed for a short period of time. A *Hole in My Heart*, this is not. A copy of subtitles has been scavenged for since the dawn of this film. I prefer the lack of words to be honest. It creates a false sense of security and births tension so thick that you could cut it with a knife. Had video art films had commentary explaining what each shot means and forcing you to interpret it one way, the mysticism would be gone. The unknown is much more satisfying, pointed out by Fox's comment on *La Cabina*. If *Unearthed Films* ever decides to release this film, the subtitles should be turned off by default. The plot in a nutshell is a home video tape of an amateur porn shoot in which an ugly ass Asiatic woman (with Dolphin teeth) gets picked up for a home video. It starts off normal enough with the trademarked Japanese mosaic covering the genitals, but then they begin to sodomize her and practice Japanese rope bondage. She doesn't take too kind to this and leaves for the bathroom. Upon entrance, she is hit upon the head with a bat and tied up to star in her greatest - and last performance. In the arsenal of graphic imagery at hand, there comes many newcomers to cinema in general. Such infamous scenes as the potato peeler scene populate *Niku Daruma*. A male fucks a drugged woman while she becomes a multiple amputee. Her screams were voted to be cut short by swift way of potato peeler to her tongue in graphic and shocking detail. A hole is cut in her stomach then fucked by the male porn star only to ejaculate a crude mix of sex fluids and blood. The scenes of violence are aided with the hand of the sound of her curdling cries choking on blood. The real question is, would you except death for pleasure? Think *Flowers of Flesh & Blood* but sleazier. *Niku Daruma* will undoubtedly leave a horrendous taste in your mouth. Tamakichi "Anal" Anaru has transformed shoddy directing into a disgusting art form, not quite on the scale of visual performance pieces but a perfected Jess Franco technique, though shocking to the touch. *Niku Daruma* has nauseated people across the globe (that is, if they can find it). This film has inspired some truly pathetic talent such as horrorcore rapper Sutter Kane (from *Carpenter & Lovecraft*). His newest album is called *Cyco: The Snuff Reels*. I'd prefer to avoid this material. In any case, this film has received some less-than-favorable reception, but then again, most people that watch these films always seem to miss the depth and beauty of sex & death. It would be reasonable to say I have an aesthetic fascination of such topics.

NIKU DARUMA

-mAQ

SUICIDE DOLLS

Tamakichi Anaru (1999)

Chances are that you've heard of Team Psycho, that is, if you follow exploitation or foreign smut closely. Their film *Psycho: The Snuff Reels (Tumbling Doll of Flesh)* is the most well known, followed by the harakiri short *Womens Flesh: My Red Guts*. The other effort of theirs is called *Suicide Dolls*. Now first off, I must hand it to them for some very creative and depraved titles. *Tumbling Doll of Flesh* would make a great bumper sticker. *Suicide Dolls* takes a failed *Der Todesking* approach on suicide. It follows three women who commit suicides three different ways. Rather than focusing on the effects of deterioration or even madness, this takes a silent aspect of the method of suicide. Without subtitles, we aren't missing much. Team Psycho aren't well known for having story-driven films, i can assume. The first woman has a newly purchased apartment and seems to be bored out of her damned mind. She is surrounding my towering boxes of her belongings, none of which she has unpacked. Time passes slowly as we begin to yawn and feel the same blueness that our bedazzling heroine is feeling. Just like *Loſt Highway*, it was the directors idea to create a boring atmosphere. This woman answers her phone, chats for a minute, and resumes her boring life. Eventually, she finds a handgun in her possessions and while playing with it, blows her brains out. Then her doorbell rings. Then we encounter a hanging and last but not least, some good ole' fashioned harakiri including a last minute eyeball scooping scene. Team Psycho is known for their extreme amount of pornography and explicit gore and violence, and it is not like them to disappoint. As usual, the sets fucking blow. The style of film making is bland and leaves a tart taste in your mouth. While being a fan of J-sploitation though, I can't hold the technical aspects against this film. *Suicide Dolls* does what it intends to do; shock and offend. The scenes after the suicides are also extremely unsettling due to the silence and monotone environment surrounding the recently departed. *Suicide Dolls* opens up with an eerie stop motion animation and ends with the same, leaving us with a spooky message of death. *Suicide Dolls* is a trip worth delving into.

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WOMEN'S FLESH: MY RED GUTS
WOMEN'S FLESH: MY RED GUTS

Tamakichi Anaru (1999)

Tamakichi Anaru, the director behind the more infamous Niku Daruma and Suicide Dolls, directed this short film alternatively titled *Watashi no akai harawata (hana)*. It follows two traumatized females and their own quest into various forms of self-mutilation. This is typically a film you can only get on the glorious trails of the world wide web, so have fun searching. The film opens with a block of Japanese text which has a date. There are currently no subs for this film so as to what it says, i have no idea. The first scene is a static flash of light over a woman in a bathroom. She seems to be in a state of shock, barely noticing the flickering light up ahead. She begins to stand up and notices the toothbrush in it's respected cup. She takes it out and begins to play with it, slowly massaging its tip and then deep throating it. The build up almost seems reminiscent of the similar scene in *Cutting Moments*. After salivating it up some, she begins to insert it inside her, toying around. This scene could have been repulsing had the director decided to fix the huge goof in which she manages to penetrate herself while wearing underwear. I can see that this is due to the anti-genitalia laws in Japan. After teasing she begins to prod and stab at her womanly parts until blood and tissue fall out. If this sounds bad, wait till she begins to chew the tip of her index finger off. For some reason, that really got to me. Something about tearing joints and fountains of blood being gargled that bothers me. We then switch to victim # 2 who begins stabbing herself with a fork. Seems these women have a thing for mutilation. We see harakiri being performed. At first, her intestines greatly resemble the old "sausage link under shirt" but as soon as she bites into them, i lost track of what they were. After this, she decides to cut her tongue off. Funny thing is, is that she didn't even hold it. I don't care how much you love pain, you need to hold it or else your instinct will be to retreat it in your mouth. Even the great Kakiyama knew to hold it. After all is said and done, we seem a panning camera detailing their dead bodies, zooming into the violated parts and switching editing styles faster then a Michael Bay film. *Women's Flesh: My Red Guts* is a decent splatter film. Nothing to really hold it together though. Only a couple flashback scenes with imperceptible phrases. After the main feature, we have another short film from *BAROQUE* which is a 10 minute long scene with random dead people on the streets including deformed babies. An entertaining film compilation for the most part. Could have skipped a couple of the scenes and the "repetitious zoom in to the same action being performed to add to the shock value" mentality of the director. See this as an addition to watching extreme J-sploitation films.

Special thanks to Louis over at *The Coroner's Report* for this upload.

-Maq

THE SPERM

Taweewat Wantha (2007)

Thai films are loaded with promise now-a-days. We got the amazing martial artist Tony Jaa, mixed with the new upcoming Martial Arts meets autism film Chocolate. It was no surprise to me that the film The Sperm was going to be great, I just had no idea it was going to be this damn quirky. Suthin is an average American youth, but Thai. He loves Slipknot, metal, and masturbation. Over a drunken clamor, he stumbles into the city streets and masturbates over a photo of the love of his life; An actress named Lammy. His sperm meets radiation and become crazy and multiply, bouncing around the streets impregnating women all over the capital of Bangkok. What makes this different is the fact that these babies grow within 24 hours. The Sperm is essentially a comedy, but is a mutt of sorts. It's main course is science fiction but is also a romance, sex comedy, and drama. The Sperm is the creation of a mix between Michel Gondry and Judd Apatow. The film never gets old and always keeps you the edge of your seat with it's own frenetic zaniness. It is loaded with visual flair and effects, including comic style introductory panels and a 50 foot tall masturbating clone of Suthin. You have never seen anything like this. The Sperm has acquired a couple of negative remarks from critics in Thailand, but it seems they don't appreciate original concepts and ideas just as Russia spites creativity. The film speaks of it's deep morals in a non-subversive way, teeming with anti-whore ads. It's basically an allegory for how these swim suit magazines and theories that sex sells are transforming our youth into sex crazed hormonal slackers. Which may or may not be true. For a script, it flows with creativity and pop culture references. It's truly is a beautiful sight. Respect goes out to the entirely original idea and concept. I forgot the last time a film pulled a double surprise on me. It built me up casually to it's ending. When i found out what happened, it did a complete u-turn and left me wholly satisfied. All in all, The Sperm is a zany, mad-cap look at modern sexuality, a sexual extremity in comedy, and one of the damn cutest films i have had the insane pleasure to view recently.

Playing at the 17th Philadelphia Film Festival www.phillyfests.com
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WAKE IN FRIGHT
WAKE IN FRIGHT

Ted Kotcheff (1971)

It has always been a dream scenario of mine to have some of the most effete, uptight, and culturally intolerant leftist pansies, social justice warrior dorks, and other mental cripples to be forced to spend a week or so in the company of highly hospitable hardworking and hard-drinking rednecks, as it would probably be very beneficial to their mental health and help to demystify their grand delusions in regard to their supposed enemies and how the world works as a whole. Thankfully, the classic Australian artsploitation drama-thriller *Wake in Fright* (1971) aka *Outback* directed by Bulgarian-Canadian filmmaker Ted Kotcheff (*First Blood*, *Uncommon Valor*) features a somewhat similar scenario in its delightfully daunting depiction of a pretentious, uptight, and exceedingly effete school teacher portrayed by real-life gay boy Gary Bond—an English actor of Welsh extraction that died of AIDS on 12 October 1995 at the age of 55, exactly one month after his boyfriend Jeremy Brett's death—that finds himself descending into complete and utter moral depravity and mental derangement after being stranded in a proudly blue collar mining town located in the hellishly hot and arid Australian Outback. A cinematic work that some native Australians somewhat rightly argued exploited their people and culture, Kotcheff's fourth feature is a rare cinematic work that manages to be made of equal doses of both art and trash in the best sort of way imaginable. Despite its fairly distinct and organic regional setting, the film is also a rare film that features a rather realistic and uniquely unsentimental yet nonetheless empathetic depiction of the white working-class (as director Kotcheff has noted in various interviews, he and his crew more or less lived like the locals throughout the film's production). Indeed, while I have never been to Australia, the characters in the film were in many ways shockingly familiar to me in terms of their aggressive hospitality, exaggerated extroversion, hardcore dipsomania, playful fighting and wrestling, and strong zest for life despite living fairly meager existences due to my personal experiences with the working-class whites I grew up with. In fact, when I first saw the film, I was shocked by how much similar these characters were to some of my real-friends who degenerated into hardcore alcoholism after succumbing to a life of full-time lumpenproletariatism. Made at a time before wiggers, OxyContin, crystal meth, and tolerance towards miscegenation, *Wake in Fright* manages to portray the good, the bad, and the ugly of the white working-class in a manner that would actually appeal to said white working-class while, at the same time, exposing the hypocrisy, effeminacy, and overall soullessness of certain members of the sheltered bourgeois.

A classic cinematic work that is like the missing link between the Australian New Wave and Ozploitation (not unsurprisingly, the film has been somewhat rightly credited as belonging to both movements), *Wake in Fright* is like a uniquely

unkosher Kafkaesque fever dream full of cheap beer and bloody kangaroos that reminds the viewer that man is an animal and being an animal is far more preferable to being a spiritually castrated cosmopolitan cocksucker that merely complains about life instead of actually living it. Arguably the greatest and most emotionally daunting 'drinking film' ever made aside from possibly John Huston's underrated Malcolm Lowry adaptation *Under the Volcano* (1984), the film is like a coming-of-age piece depicting a 30-something-year-old wuss whose testicles never dropped and ultimately receives a most ruthless rite of passage into unadulterated manhood that includes kangaroo slaughtering and booze-fueled homo rape, among other less than polite things that do not typically involve a pansy school teacher. Adapted for the screen by Anglo-Jamaican screenwriter Evan Jones (*Modesty Blaise*, *Funeral in Berlin*) from the 1961 novel of the same name by Australian writer and documentarian Kenneth Cook, *Wake in Fright* hardly feels like a contrived and closely scripted work as it features many real-life Aussie Wildmen as extras and in unforgettable secondary roles that add to the film's distinct charm. Additionally, the film features seemingly nil bogus film sets and was shot in buildings and homes that reek of postcolonial decay and cultural decrepitude. Of course, the film is also (in)famous for featuring real-life nocturnal kangaroo killings despite the director being a vegetarian, but one should not expect anything less in a cinematic work that attempts to feature an accurate portrayal of Aussie rednecks who, not unlike their American counterparts, are and will forever be the only true representatives of their nation as men whose blood built that countries they live in. Needless to say, the film does not do anything to help Australia's reputation as being the land of the semi-feral white shackle draggers, but then again it is hard not to like many of these supposed dingo-fuckers once you have seen the film. While the film does not feature any characters that are as depraved as the eponymous antihero of Dutch-Australian auteur Rolf de Heer's classic cult item *Bad Boy Bubby* (1993), it does feature the sort of Aussie wild men that might make illegal immigrants think twice about flooding into Australia.

Notably, in his rather prophetic work *The Passing of the Great Race: Or, The Racial Basis of European History* (1916), American lawyer, eugenicist, and conservationist Madison Grant wrote a century ago, "Australia and New Zealand, where the natives have been virtually exterminated by the whites, are developing into communities of pure Nordic blood and will for that reason play a large part in the future history of the Pacific. The bitter opposition of the Australians and Californians to the admission of Chinese coolies and Japanese farmers is due primarily to a blind but absolutely justified determination to keep those lands as white man's countries." Judging simply by *Wake in Fright*, one would assume that Australia has more or less the same hearty no bullshit racial stock that Grant speaks of, but of course, like all of the West, the nation has since had a deluge of undesirables and untermenschen from various third world hellholes. In Kotch-

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eff's film, the viewer is exposed to a fairly primitive type of Nordic stock that seems to still carry the mirthfully barbaric spirit of its Viking ancestors. Indeed, forget the absurd Hollywood stereotype of the dark-haired hero, *Wake in Fright* features true blue blond beasts of prey that hunt, kill, and fuck just for the instinctive thrill of it all. Undoubtedly, Nietzsche certainly describes the kangaroo hunters of the film when he describes the ancient Nordics as follows, "at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast, prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness." Not unlike various parts of rural America, New Zealand, and other ex-colonies, the Outback is place where archaic European instincts have the opportunity to be shamelessly exercised, or so one learns while watching *Wake in Fright* where a pansy ass prick is forced to come in touch with his more visceral and even murderous side after being egged on by proudly boorish men that seem to have been passed by a couple centuries worth of advancements in European civilization.

While *Wake in Fright* is full of wild and reckless blond beasts, the deracinated blond Nordic protagonist John Grant (Gary Bond) is certainly no Übermensch as he is a smug yet impotent, intelligent yet weak, and cultivated yet cultureless cosmopolitan white man that is quite typical nowadays, especially in Europa. Naturally, it is only most fitting that Mr. Grant is portrayed by a cocksucking Brit as opposed to an Aussie as the character is symbolic of spiritually castrated, morally decrepit, and innately suicidal contemporary Europe, which has lost all touch with the sort of instincts that once made it great. Additionally, while John has blond hair and a typical tall Nordic physique, his eyes, which look more like they belong to a neurotic Mongolian little girl than a proud Europid man, are a clear window into his hopelessly effeminate and decadent soul. An anally retentive introvert that does everything by the book despite his disdain for authority who spends his free time drawing, reading about Plato, and hopelessly dreaming of going to the beach with his Sydney-based girlfriend, John is relatively impotent chap that gets the shock of the lifetime when he spends some quality time with a clan of working-class heroes with big balls and loudmouths. As a result of being a self-described "bonded slave of the Education Department," John is forced against his will to teach at a tiny grade school in a small Outback hellhole named 'Tiboonda.' Luckily for him, John has six weeks off for Christmas break and plans to spend it with his girlfriend in Sydney. Rather unfortunately, before flying to Sydney, John makes the unwitting life-changing mistake of spending the night in a small isolated hick city named Bundanyabba (aka 'the Yabba') that ultimately swallows him up and violently vomits him out.

Not long after arriving in the Yabba, John meets a seemingly nice and gregarious local cop with a subtle sinister undercurrent named Jock Crawford (popular Aussie actor Chips Rafferty in his final acting role) at a local bar that uses his passive-aggressive charm to force the protagonist to get drunk with him to

the point where he gets stupidly drunk. While Jock is friendly with John, it is obvious that he thinks the protagonist is a pretentious and whiny little twat. Needless to say, John has a smug response when all of the patrons stop drinking and gambling at the bar to engage in a nightly “Lest We Forget” ritual in tribute to fallen Australian military men that are glorified with a fancy plaque on the wall. Even in a thoroughly inebriated state, John cannot help but reveal his sense of superiority over Jock and the rest of the Yabba locals, but it is ultimately these working-class philistines that have the last laugh. Of course, little does John release that Jock is a sly fellow that, not unlike a degenerate dope dealer, is slowly but surely getting the protagonist immersed in a hermetic realm of nightmarish hick hedonism and self-destructive lowbrow decadence that eventually inspires both desperate murderous and suicidal impulses in the fairly fragile character. After begging Jock to take him to a place to eat where he buys a nice fat juicy steak, John meets a super degenerate hobo philosopher of sorts named Clarence ‘Doc’ Tydon (Donald Pleasence of Halloween (1978) fame), who passively states regarding the Yabba locals, “All the little devils are proud of hell.” When John asks Doc what he means, he reveals his strange empathy for the locals by replying, “Discontent is a luxury of the well-to-do. If you gotta live here, you might as well like it.” When John reveals his intolerance of the locals by stating, “I’m just bored with it. The aggressive hospitality, the arrogance of stupid people who insist you should be as stupid as they are,” Doc ridicules his pretenses by replying, “It’s death to farm out here. It’s worse than death in the mines. Do you want them to sing opera as well?” While John does not know it yet, he and Doc will soon become disturbingly close in a way that neither will ever forget.

When John foolishly loses all of his money in the “Biggest two-up game in Australia” in a desperate attempt to earn enough cash to pay off his bond as a teacher and leave the redneck Outback for good, he finds himself coming to the bitter realization that he is stranded in Yabba pandemonium indefinitely and naturally becomes a completely intolerable prick as a result. In fact, John acts like a complete dickhead to an old guy named Tim Hynes (Al Thomas) after he asks him to drink with him at a bar, but the insulted working-class hero lightens him up by buying him endless drinks, albeit not before screaming in his face that he will pay for his drinks. When Tim later takes him back to his house, John meets his lecherous debutante daughter Janette (Sylvia Kay), who carefully stares him down and eventually makes a botched attempt at fucking him only hours after first meeting him. Unfortunately, John is incapable of even commencing coitus due to a rather embarrassing vomiting fit. At Tim’s house, John is also introduced to two handsome and muscular yet barbarically gregarious dudes named Dick (Jack Thompson) and Joe (Peter Whittle) who assume the protagonist is a poofster because he strangely prefers talking to Janette to drinking beer with the boys. Despite his initial flaky behavior at Tim’s house, John eventually joins the party and ultimately gets so drunk that he is surprised to wake up the next day at

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4pm in Doc's dilapidated shack with a killer hangover that he reluctantly nurses with more booze and kangaroo meat. On top of revealing that he does not even actually own the shitty shack he lives in, Doc tells John his entire patently pathetic life-story, stating with a sort of subtly ironic pride, "Shall I satisfy your curiosity? I'm a doctor of medicine. And a tramp by temperament. I'm also an alcoholic. My disease prevented me from practicing in Sydney, but out here it's scarcely noticeable. Certainly doesn't stop people from coming to see me. I charge no fees because I'm not interested in money. Anyway, I'm unreliable. But I'm accepted socially because I'm an educated man . . . of character. I get me food from my friends. My requirements in beer. Which, with some measure of self-control, is the only alcohol I allow myself. It's possible to live forever in the Yabba without money. As you probably noticed, some of the natives are very . . . hospitable." In short, Doc is a shameless social parasite of the highly educated sort that lives off of the generosity of proletarian drunks that take pride in buying another man a beer. Naturally, Doc wants something from John, but it is something that is a bit more personal and intimate than cheap beer.

As Doc makes quite clear, he loathes "little puritans" and states regarding Janette that she is "an interesting biological case" and that "If she were a man, she'd be in jail for rape" due to her rather sexually aggressive behavior. As a fellow outcast and virtual sexual outlaw, Doc sees Janette as a kindred spirit of sorts and is probably the only mensch in the Yabba that truly has respect for her. While he picks on him for his puritanical and anally-retentive behavior, Doc also seems to see a kindred spirit in John and he is bent on getting the protagonist to engage in increasingly degenerate and debasing activities so that he will be more like him. As a result of boasting while drunk the night before that he once "won a silver medal at school for target shooting," John find himself going on an alcohol-fueled hunting expedition of sorts with Doc, Dick, and Joe that involves the extremely violent liquidation of half a dozen or so kangaroos. When Joe demonstrates he is a cool bad ass by 'boxing' and then personally slitting the throat of a large and quite pugnacious kangaroo, John feels obligated to demonstrate his seemingly nonexistent masculinity and takes on a poor animal that he himself describes as "badly wounded" and "just a baby." Clearly uncomfortable with killing the virtually defenseless creature, John hysterically cries and punches the kangaroos while Doc and his friends laugh hysterically at his seemingly bizarre melodramatic behavior, though the protagonist eventually gets the gall to slit the poor animal's throat. After John kills the kangaroo, Doc reveals his approval by stating to himself in an almost sinister fashion, "Well done" and then the entire group declares to the protagonist, "Now you're one of us." To celebrate their reasonably successful roo-slaughter campaign, the boys go to a local seedy bar where Dick and Joe engage in some fairly brutal play-fighting that involves blood while Doc philosophizes with a hammer and reveals he is a sort of Cioran of the Outback by aggressively proclaiming, "Progress? Vanity spawned

of fear. A vanity spawned by fear. The aim of what you call civilization is a man in a smoking jacket, whisky and cider, pressing a bottom of . . . a button . . . to destroy a planet a billion miles away, kill a billion people he's never seen." After John passes out, Doc, Joe, and Dick get involved in a hilarious anarchic three-way brawl that more or less results in the destruction of the entire bar. Of course, Doc's savagery does not end there, as he opts to sexually seduce John when they get back to the shack in what can probably be best described as gay redneck date rape. Needless to say, John is more than a little bit perturbed when he wakes up the next day lying next to a pantless Doc and realizes that he has just been involuntarily sodomized by a stinky old wino.

Naturally, John hightails it out of Doc's shack when he realizes he is a victim of homo sodomy, but not before grabbing a rifle that was gifted to him by Dick and Joe for his senseless killing of the little kangaroo. Indeed, while roaming around downtown Yabba with the rifle in his arms and his body and clothes covered in dirt as perplexed onlookers stare at him in disbelief, John looks like a desperate derelict that has just been gang-banged by an entire motorcycle gang. Of course, John is desperate to get out of the Yabba by any means possible, but before he does he bumps into his old cop pal Jock, who supplies him with some much needed nicotine and beer in between questioning about his dubious behavior and plans. While John manages to hitch a ride 50 miles out of town from a less than dapper toothless hick, he treats the poor guy like shit by refusing to have a drink with him and then complaining, "What's the matter with you people, huh? You sponge on you . . . You burn your house down, murder your wife, rape your child, that's all right. But don't have a drink with you, don't have a flaming, bloody drink with you, that's a criminal offense, that's the end of the bloody world." Ultimately, John offers a trucker his new prized rifle for a ride to Sydney, but when he finally arrives at his ostensible desire location, he realizes he is in the Yabba again as a result of a miscommunication between him and the less than sophisticated driver. Luckily, the trucker lets John keep the rifle due to the miscommunication, so the protagonist irrationally decides to use the weapon to kill Doc, as if it will somehow redeem him of being rectally reamed. Unfortunately Doc is not at the shack when he gets there, so John changes his plans slightly and turns the gun on himself in what ultimately proves to be a badly botched attempt at improvisational DIY self-slaughter. On top of surviving the suicide attempt despite having the barrel of the gun pointed directly at his head at ultra-close-range, Jock, who is not too fond of his hometown's high suicide rate (apparently, in real-life, the Yabba had a female suicide rate that was five times the national average during the 1970s), decides to coverup said suicide attempt by writing a phony police report that John signs that declares that he shot himself by accident. When John finally recovers from his injuries and gets out of the hospital, Doc greets him and declares, "You'd think a bloke who'd won a silver medal at target shooting could hit himself in the head at a range of three

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inches.” In the end, the film comes full circles, with going back to Tiboonda and drinking with a local bartender-cum-slumlord named Charlie. As to what the future holds for John, I certainly would not be surprised if he degenerated into a sort of more anally retentive version of Doc and became a perennially wandering lost soul that is fueled by cheap alcohol and plagued by regrettable sexual encounters.

While Nicholas Roeg’s first solo feature *Walkabout* (1971) is indubitably a seemingly immaculate flick that is to the Outback what Arnold Fanck’s *Der heilige Berg* (1926) aka *The Holy Mountain* is to the Teutonic mountain film and what Sergio Leone’s *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) is to the spaghetti western, *Wake in Fright* is arguably the single greatest and most entrancing Outback flick ever made, even if it was directed by a guy that would go on to direct such hokey Hollywood kitsch as *Weekend at Bernie’s* (1989) and *Borrowed Hearts: A Holiday Romance* (1997), among other less than artistically significant cinematic works. Indeed, the film might be somewhat exploitative in its portrayal of the Outback and its seemingly forsaken inhabitants, but it certainly does not make a pathetic mockery of ‘Australian Aryan noble savage’ myth like a carelessly goofy Hollywood flick like *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), which incidentally seems like the sort of film Kotcheff might have directed later in his career. Despite not being nearly as big of a commercial success as his later films like *Weekend at Bernie’s*, Kotcheff more or less confesses in the audio commentary for the Drafthouse Films DVD/Blu-ray release of the film that it is his greatest cinematic work, as well as the movie that he had the most fun working on. Kotcheff is also quite proud of the fact that *Wake in Fright* is one of only two films to have ever been screened twice in the entire history of the Cannes Film Festival (notably, Martin Scorsese, who originally saw the film when it had its world premiere at the festival in 1971, used his clout as the head of the Cannes Classic department to have the film screened in 2009 after it underwent a much needed restoration). Aside from being what is arguably the most endlessly entrancing, shocking, and unforgettable film about the Outback, Kotcheff’s cult classic is, aside from possibly Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil* (1985), the most innately un-Christmas of Christmas films, even if it is a cinematic gift that keeps on giving in terms of sheer replay value. Somewhat surprisingly, *Wake in Fright* is not the only classic Australian cult flick directed by a Slavic outsider that features references to Christmas time, as Dusan Makavejev’s underrated absurdist comedy *The Coca-Cola Kid* (1985) features Italian-Australian actress Greta Scacchi stripping off a Santa Claus outfit so that she can fuck Eric Roberts. While fairly different films in terms of message and emotional tone, *Wake in Fright* and *The Coca-Cola Kid* surely make for an immaculate double feature.

In the audio commentary for *Wake in Fright*, auteur Kotcheff noted that the working-class Aussies that he interacted with on the film were no different than the lumpenproles he knew growing up in Ontario, Canada in terms of their proud patriarchal love of beer, fighting, fucking, and merry violence. As

an American that grew up in a nice rural area just below the Mason–Dixon line yet was born a good number of decades after Kotcheff’s Canadian prole buddies, I can still concur that the working-class whites that I sometimes hung out with during my early adult years are strikingly similar to the ones featured in the film, even in terms of bizarre quasi-homoerotic behavior. Indeed, aside from their tendency to fight and wrestle each while usually sweaty and shirtless, I once witnessed a fellow holding a friend’s penis while he was peeing because he was supposedly too drunk to hold it himself. Of course, *Wake in Fright* is in many ways a sort of degenerate modernist Männerbund movie that would highly appeal to born-again Androphiles and Jack Donovan fanboys, but arguably most importantly it demonstrates probably better than any other film why Australia is, in terms of the landscapes and eccentric people, one of the greatest places in the world to shoot movies. In fact, as mentioned in Mark Hartley’s mildly amusing doc *Not Quite Hollywood: The Wild, Untold Story of Ozploitation!* (2008), Kotcheff’s film was probably more influential than any other cinematic work in terms of making Australians realize that their country-cum-continent was the perfect place to create great movies. Surely, no other place could have produced such organically atmospheric cinematic works ranging from Peter Weir’s *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and *The Last Wave* (1977) to Colin Eggleston’s *Long Weekend* (1978) to George Miller’s *Mad Max* (1979) to Albie Thoms’ rarely-seen psychedelic avant-garde films like *Rita and Dundi* (1966) and *Marinetti* (1969), among seemingly countless other examples. Thankfully, Kotcheff’s film also lacks of the sort of xenophobic white guilt, misguided abo-philia, and anti-Anglo sentiment that is prominent in some of the films of Hebrew Philippe Mora (*Swaštika*, *Mad Dog Morgan*) and Fred Schepisi (*The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*), among countless others. Notably, the only part of *Wake in Fright* that features an Australian Aborigine person is an early scene where the protagonist is depicted sitting on a train by himself just like an abo man in a symbolic scenario scene that insinuates that both characters are outsiders in mainstream white society. In its depiction of an effeminate white educator being in the same figurative boat as an Aborigine man, the scene reminded me of a quote from Ted Kaczynski’s classic anti-technology text *The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future* (1995) in regard to why white liberals, who typically come from privileged backgrounds, have a special affinity for racial minorities, “Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals), or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit it to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with their problems. (We do not suggest that women, Indians, etc., ARE inferior; we are only making a point about leftist psychology).” Likewise, people like the protagonist of Kotcheff’s film loathes rednecks due to feelings of

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inferiority in regard to strength and masculinity and not simply because they see working-class whites as insufferable philistines. After all, protagonist John Grant developed a certain degree of much needed masculine confidence and self-esteem after hanging out with the Outback boys.

A work that might be described as a sort of arthouse action-adventure-drama-thriller hybrid for Australian proles that has the capacity to entertain and provoke people of virtually every persuasion, *Wake in Fright* is certainly as timeless and endlessly enthralling as films come, especially when compared to many Australian films of the same era. Notably, I first saw the film about four years ago when I was at an inordinately happy point of my life. After recently rewatching the film in what is undoubtedly a low point in my life, I can say that it had an even bigger impact of me. Indeed, suddenly I miss the redneck friends of my youth and getting drunk by a bonfire, even if I did not have much to talk about with them aside from the size of a girl's ass and the hilarity of racist jokes. The fact that a tough, visceral, and uncompromising cinematic work like *Wake in Fright* was directed by a Bulgarian-Canadian filmmaker that is best known for Hollywood hack work and kosher comedies like his Mordecai Richler adaptations *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974) and *Joshua Then and Now* (1985) certainly makes the film seem all the more magical and enigmatic, as if Ted Kotcheff, not unlike protagonist John Grant, was somehow consumed by the collective unconscious of the Yabba's inhabitants while directing the film. After all, you know a filmmaker is indubitably doing something right when he manages to make a film featuring the unsimulated slaughter of cute kangaroos that does not feel tasteless or pointlessly exploitative. Somehow, I also suspect that *Wake in Fright* is more accurate in its depiction of the sort of cowboy mentality that was responsible for conquering and taming the wild west than any Hollywood western ever could be.

-Ty E

FIRST BLOOD

Ted Kotcheff (1982)

*Spoilers for the original Morrel novel of the same name*Regardless of what any one's reasons are for not liking Rambo, their opinion is void on this film. First Blood is not what you'd expect it to be; It's not a brainless action film with a musclebound invincible warrior. It's an incredible story of survival from one of the most emotionally detached action heroes in America. God bless Rambo. First Blood is the relative story most of us have heard, but with more of a vengeance bite. John Rambo is a Vietnam Veteran who won a congressional medal of honor and is an ex-Green Beret. Like most vet's of their time, he is shunned in his society and all of his friends have abandoned him or are now deceased. Rambo is drifting through a quiet suburban town, when a fat fascist pig (played by Brain Dennehy) picks him up, denies him food, and insults his appearance. He drops Rambo off at the edge of town and tells him to walk another 30 miles for food. Rambo being the bad ass that he is, he don't take no shit, and marches back in the town. Seeing this, the Sheriff gets all hyped up and arrests him. In jail, things turn towards the worst when many of the officers get rough with Rambo, using him as a pawn in their sick game. Rambo freaks out, injures many officers, and escapes in the woods which results in one of the most intense survival films ever made. This movie comes from a vicious book sharing the same title, written by David Morrel. The stories are the same, but the differences are many. Rambo kills almost every police officer he comes against. He ever guts an officer with a straight razor. He had it coming. Another difference is that Rambo does not survive in the novel. As that would have been fitting, it would have pissed a lot of simple-minded Yankee's off, and warranted no sequels. This isn't a brainless action film at all. There are explosions, but the maniacal face of Rambo illuminated by the smoldering remains of a society that neglected him is a beautiful image. If only every town had their own Rambo. It seems his films do good things for society, in all honesty. Rambo does what he does best; home-grown propaganda. The music for the film is done by Hollywood's musical slut Jerry Goldsmith. It is an exceptional score which sets the mood for his adventures aloft in the jungle of his soil. Richard Crenna plays the only confidant that Rambo has, his maker. Colonel Trautman is a stern man, who has much appreciation for his soldier. He is the only intelligence throughout the film. As Rambo said "They drew first blood", it sets the tone that has also been felt in such films as La Haine. Many of these police officers feel incredibly real, from having their head stuck up their ass, and the bewilderment from being incapacitated by the Italian Stallion. Just like Friday the 13th, and Halloween, the sequels became more and more silly, involving cartoonish Russians over-acting and using torture techniques. His newest film, aptly titled Rambo, improves and actually delivers a similar feel to the original classic. His original film has been looked

FIRST BLOOD

down upon due to his "Gung-ho" classic sequels. Quite a shame, but damn are they entertaining. It's official, anyone who says Stallone cannot act, is a fucking retard. That, or they haven't seen the ending of this film. Either way, no one cares about their opinions and should be shot immediately. Rambo is a one man army, who is only beset by his harrowing experiences in 'Nam which gave him haunting visions of the past and his inability to create a future. Rambo is everything that embodies an American; brutish looks, kindness, arrogance, and the ability to look bad-fucking-ass in a bandana.

-Maq

RAGDOLL

Ted Nicolaou (1999)

If you're feeling generous enough to tell me that a film "so bad it's good" doesn't exist, I'll direct you to the nearest copy of Full Moon/Big City's Ragdoll. Perhaps the most pitiful film attempting to capture the soul of urban society, Ragdoll remains a foul embarrassment to Africans all over the globe with Jiggaboo Jones following for a close second. When Big City Pictures banded together, they began releasing Full Moon budgeted films directed towards the "urban" crowd such as Ragdoll, Killjoy & Killjoy 2, and The Horrible Doctor Bones. I don't need to point out how bad their experiment failed, do I? Ragdoll is one of the most ill-received films in the Full Moon lexicon. Whereas more hatred should be channeled to the likes of the last 3 Puppet Master films and anything that has come out in the past year, people decide to "player hate" on Ragdoll for "telling it like it is, dawg". While Ragdoll consists of A) The most atrocious acting this side of America and B) The worst editing known to man, I still derive so much satisfaction at watching these crazy Negroes stumble around talking about rap and voodoo magic. Big Pere is the local crime boss. He wants to control the success of Kwame's rap group. In retaliation, Kwame' sends a rather rude shout-out to Big Pere one night at a local concert. When a group of thugs send his witch doctor grandmother into critical care, Kwame' invokes the magic of the killing kind and summons the Shadow Man to possess a Ragdoll into murdering each of their black asses. The contingency of the plot is water thin. Nothing is explained as to how Gran is his grandmother and what happened to Kwame's mother. The Ragdoll is controlled by the worst animatronic crew I've never heard of. It scuttles around the floor with a plastic looking knife shrieking a sound never quite heard before. It sounds sort of like what I'd imagine a rabid Ewok sounding like. I prefer the mental image of a blood thirsty African doll though. This isn't Tales from the Hood, no matter how much it tries to be. I first picked up Ragdoll at a pawn shop in the neighboring shopping center. The level of how much I enjoyed this film came as a great shock to me. I found Ragdoll to be quotable, absurd, retarded, laughably-bad, and an all around great time. I've shown this film to some select friends. Some liked it, others condemned me to get face cancer. Either way you look at it, Ragdoll is what it is and excels at doing just that. With no visual direction, It's safe to say the fictional characters of Kwame' and co. got washed out in Hurricane Katrina. Too soon?

-mAQ

PUPPET MASTER vs. DEMONIC TOYS
PUPPET MASTER vs. DEMONIC TOYS

Ted Nicolaou (2004)

Never has versus material been cooked so raw and horridly. The approach for Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys was taken with no interest to the namesake of Full Moon or Puppet Master and I lay blame entirely on Charles Band for selling the rights to such an epic showdown to the lucrative SciFi Channel. This has long been in the works and even a stockpile footage fest like Dollman vs. Demonic Toys would have been an ideal set up for a tiny terror war. Another thing in the works was a line of Puppet Master figures gone cyber. These toys were prototypes of robotic puppets with lethal tools of murder. This, sadly, never became much of anything, only a "What if?" SciFi, after laying claim on what could have been great, starts off with an idea of combining demons, puppets, Corey Feldman in his boxers, the cybernetic puppets, Christmas, and any other antonym into a huge cauldron. Out comes the finish product and boy is everyone unhappy with it. I don't think I've ever read a positive review on this film. People who aren't fans of the originals loathe this film enough, us Full Moon aficionados got it the worst. This vehement wind of cheesy nostalgia dissects both series, discovers what makes it tick and their strengths, then mercilessly removes that. You liked Jack-in-the-box? He's been gutted and turned into a baby clown face. Same has been done to Baby Oopsie-Daisy as he is a rubber prick. The puppets' metamorphosis is the most atrocious. Pinhead now appears like one of those Homie figurines, Blade has long scraggly hair, Tunneler's no where to be found as with Torch. Jester is a cheap imitation and Six Shooter's sly grin has been replaced with something that cannot be described and isn't even painted right. Remember when Pokemon and Dragonball Z's popularity surged and much bootlegged merchandise came forth? The tiny stars of Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys show promise of being one of the offspring's from the copycat boom. The worst thing about this is that the dolls don't even really battle. At all. 2001 Cyber Puppet photos courtesy of Ween. Corey Feldman walks a path under the steady eye of Ted Nicolaou - director of the much maligned Ragdoll. The only difference here is that Ragdoll was a fiercely racist horror/comedy depicting retarded stereotypes that sadly are existent in our current society and Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys doesn't really show you anything other than how malformed Pinhead looks. Why Feldman still has remnants of a career is beyond my comprehension. He's giving us classics in the past but mainly relies on cute cameos poking fun at his 80s cult status. Vanessa Angel plays the villainous role of Erika. After viewing her filmography, I'd say her most notable role is stemming from SuperBabies: Baby Geniuses 2. Nice pants, ass. Puppet Master vs. Demonic Toys features a plot about Christmas terror; dolls with the intention of Christmas day world domination. To say that this product isn't a pastiche would be lying to yourself. Nicolaou has created something absolutely fervidly

disappointing on all parts and I would even go out of my way to protect anyone from seeing this film. I once thought about buying this used off of Amazon for a low, low price of 5 American dollars. I can see now that it would have been a grave mistake punishable only by humility then death. Feldman has even taken the Toulon name and befouled it with an utterly terrifying performance riddled with horrible accents, forced persona's, and slimy narcissism. This is arbitrary cinema terrorism at its peak.

-mAQ

GO TELL THE SPARTANS
GO TELL THE SPARTANS

Ted Post (1978)

Go Tell the Spartans is a Vietnam war different from most that I have seen. The fact that it was shot on such a low budget worked to its advantage. This gives it a more realistic feel in comparison to other Vietnam war films (or War films in general). I still don't know whether I like it or not, but at the very least, I think it is an important film. The army's not accepting of Major Barker as the general didn't really matter to me. From the Major, you get an important realization of Vietnam in comparison to others. When Barker states, "Too bad we couldn't show you a better war" you realize the insignificance and worthlessness of the Vietnam war. Not only was the war a waste of life and money for the United States, but it was also a military embarrassment. Go Tell the Spartans makes no lies about that. At the end of the film when Barker is laying dead and naked, it couldn't get any more embarrassing and dehumanizing than that. At no point in the film does the war seem appealing or heroic. The men over time become more fed up and emotionally unstable, one higher officer even commits suicide. The soldiers look out of place in Vietnam just as they were. It never looks like they are helping anyone, and certainly not themselves. In the beginning, it is interesting how the soldiers make fun of France for their failures. America ending up doing nothing in Vietnam and its arrogance is revealed in Go Tell the Spartans. The film just left me feeling bitter. At least it was more honest than Oliver Stone's rich kid cry-fest, Platoon. But even then, I think I was still entertained and enjoyed Platoon a lot more. I don't even really consider Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now to be a Vietnam war film. It may be set in Vietnam, but comes off more as a bizarre nightmare. The fact they repeatedly tried to receive support from the U.S. military is a joke. I can respect him for trying, but I don't see how that film could benefit the United States or its military. Coppola claiming that Apocalypse Now was "honest, mythical, pro-human, and therefore pro-America," was the funniest reasoning for why it should be supported. Although I think Apocalypse Now is a fun film, I would never want the government to waste money on it (among other things). When comparing Go Tell the Spartans and Apocalypse Now, they are about as different as Vietnam war films can get. Go Tell the Spartans is as realistic and banal as a war film could be. Apocalypse Now is more like a fantasy. I find myself going back to Apocalypse Now once every couple years. I don't think that I will revisit Go Tell The Spartans.

-Ty E

EXQUISITE CORPSES

Temístocles López (1989)

The National Socialists and their kindred spirits may have been wrong about a couple of things, but they were totally right in regard to the debasing and degenerating power of cities, or as Teutonic Conservative Revolutionary philosopher Oswald Spengler—a man who prophesized a number of the societal ills that now plague the Occident—once wrote, “Long ago the country bore the country-town and nourished it with her best blood. Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country.” Indeed, the soul-sucking metropolis has the power to turn a rampantly heterosexual country cowboy into a morally corrupt campy cocksucker who moonlights as a drag queen, or so one learns in a much neglected celluloid cult item. In the fiercely farcical piece of unfortunately but unsurprisingly forgotten psychotronic low-camp celluloid *Exquisite Corpses* (1989) aka *Deadly Cabaret* directed by Venezuelan auteur Temístocles López (*Chain of Desire*, *Bird of Prey*) just that happens, as a work that follows a conservative country boy of the happily heterosexual sort who relocates to NYC and degenerates into the kept-man of a conspicuously gay casting agent, who transforms the sub-literate cowboy into a flamboyant cabaret singer in what is indubitably one of the most wanton and whacked-out reworkings of *Pygmalion* ever made. I do not know how many *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) rip-offs exist, but *Exquisite Corpses* most certainly has to be the most insanely idiosyncratic one, as a work that is part erotic thriller, part cabaret musical with Vaudevillian undertones, part campy dark comedy of the innately immoral sort, and part political satire of the loony left-wing variety. As one can expect from such an aesthetically and thematically ambitious low-budget film that attempts to do a million things at once, *Exquisite Corpses* is a major mess that falls apart at the seams, yet that is one of its greatest appeals as a marvelously mystifying and never mundane mess of a would-be-midnight-movie that deserves a cult following, if only a minor cult following as a work that was made with seemingly no audience in mind aside from diehard cinephiles with an appreciation for unhinged camp, genre mutilation, and/or the belated beautiful bad girl Zoë Tamerlis Lund. Directed by a man who worked as a stage director in the mid-1970s and directed classic plays as varied as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Cocteau’s *The Knights of the Round Table* and Goethe’s *Faust* and who co-penned the script for the Salvador Dalí biopic *Dalí* (1991), *Exquisite Corpses* was clearly helmed by a man with a vast understanding of European art, culture, and cinema, yet it is a film that wallows in conscious bad taste and reeks of 1980s low kultur cheese, cardboard kitsch, and all around thematic and aesthetic tomfoolery of the pomo homo sort. I discovered the film by happenstance after reading an article about junky actress/model/writer Zoë Lund, who

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is probably best known for her iconic role in Abel Ferrara's artsploitation flick *Ms. 45* (1981) and co-penning the script and shooting up junk in *Bad Lieutenant* (1992), and I must admit that the tragic little lady steals the show as a lethally lecherous femme fatale who ultimately proves to be no match for the always conspiring minds of communist spies and jealous shitstabbers. An exotic Europid of half Swedish and half Romanian extraction, Lund demonstrates in the film her talent for enticing an eclectic selection of men, but being a queer work, she ultimately meets a tragic fate in a work that uses a role reversal of typical film noir conventions, thus also making the film a work of resentful and somewhat misogynistic fag fantasy.

Tim Lee (Gary Knox) is a confederate cowboy who moonlights as a tromboner that moves to seedy late-1980s Manhattan because he plans to marry his stereotypically dumb blonde girlfriend Sue (Ruth Collins), yet on his first day there, not only does he get dumped by his fiancée for a decidedly dumb rocker named Jim (played by David Ilku, who made his acting debut in the cult classic *Liquid Sky*), but he also gets robbed by a gang of rowdy metal head degenerates. When Tim goes to a bar the same night, some hustler scams him out of most of his money for something called 'megabucks,' which he naturally does not deliver and a Call Girl (Zoë Lund) attempts to swindle the rest of his money, but he does not have enough to give. When Tim plays his trombone in public in a pathetic attempt to beg for cash, a blond art fag/urban alchemist asks him to stand next to a pile of dog feces that he has spraypainted gold so that he can take a photo. Indeed, the Art Fag is working on a pretentious art project entitled 'Freud Redux,' describing the major theme of the project as follows, "Freud had this theory equating excrement with money...anally retentive nature of capital...excrement is money, gold is excrement, excrement is gold thing." Later on that day, Tim turns down a ponytailed pansy club owner (ironically, played by Zoë Lund's rampantly heterosexual husband Robert Lund) down for a job because he cannot see himself working for a flaming 'fag' at a club frequented by a bunch of flamboyant fruits and fairies. When Tim is approached by a gay casting agent named Lou (Frank Roccio) and flattered with the compliment "I can tell...by your bone structure. You have a very expressive face," he agrees to demonstrate his 'talent' for the horny homo. When Tim goes to Lou's apartment, the sexually voracious queen begins feeling him up, with the moronic cowboy asking, "What...is this some kind of method exercise or something?," as if it was not patently obvious that the cultured poof wanted to get in his pants. Needless to say, Tim leaves without a job because he has yet to become desperate enough to sell his pole and hole to a flagrant fairy. Out of abject desperation, Tim tries in vain to get jobs ranging from working at an Art Deco gallery to slavishly serving at sleazy restaurants, but no one will hire him and he eventually becomes homeless, even losing his much cherished trombone and all his other possessions in the process after being evicted for failing to pay his rent. Tim

is even robbed at scissorpoint by a raving whack-job with a horrendous haircut, but he has no cash to give his exceedingly eccentric attacker. While walking the streets, Tim meets an eccentric old homeless spoken word artist with a pet chihuahua who teaches him to love with a pure heart and even wish his enemies good luck. Of course, Tim eventually becomes the unwitting victim of both friends and foes, but luckily he develops a pseudo-romantic relationship with a faithful fag who will save his loser life.

Finally fed up with being homeless and seeing bums dying while sleeping with trash bags for blankets, Tim opts for going back to gay casting director Lou, who gives him a complete queer-eye-for-the-straight-guy makeover, including a new wardrobe, accent, and, most importantly, new pompous prick attitude, but it comes at the cost of his rampant heterosexuality and unique urban cowboy persona. Indeed, Tim sells his soul to sodomy and almost instantly becomes a cultivated cocksucker and hit cabaret performer, who even dresses in drag from time to time, after becoming Lou's slavish lover. While at a tryout session for a club gig, Tim bumps into his ex-girlfriend Sue and her boyfriend Tim, who is playing with his band and demonstrates his undeniably unique talent by farting into a microphone. While Lou is ostensibly his boyfriend/mentor/sugar daddy, Tim begins a romance with a fellow cabaret performer named Belinda Maloney (Zoë Lund), who he previously met when she was working incognito as a high dollar hooker and who is married to a rather wealthy fellow named Pat Maloney (Chuck Perley). Of course, although he gives her three orgasms a sex session, Belinda has ulterior motives for fucking Tim as she wants to use him to kill her hubby, but little does she realize that husband Pat has also hired him for his own ends. While Tim does ostensibly murder Pat by shooting him in front of Belinda, the man is really not dead as the whole thing is part of an elaborate charade to fool the femme fatale. Among other things, Pat is really a Soviet spy and he is in cahoots with the CIA. As a Yiddish spy named 'Spitz' (who is really Pat in disguise) tells Belinda regarding Pat, he is apparently, "the most honorable and brilliant Russian spy to ever set foot in this country. Unlike the Reagan administration, he has never been caught in his multiple and varied secret deals. As a matter of fact, he just completed his final assignment with the willing collaboration of the pentagon. Thanks to him, the Kremlin now possesses the ultra Star Wars secret plans." Eventually, Tim is arrested for the dubious murder of his lady lover by a sleazy Policeman (Robert DiTillio), who has been spying on the lapsed Cowboy's affair with Belinda and has secretly recorded everything they have done together, that is working with Pat (the two do a secret chant, "Until victory or destruction, with secret devotion, the world will be ours."), but luckily lover boy Lou comes to his rescue while in drag and demands while pointing a gun at the corrupt cop, "I want you to set my baby free." In the end, Tim gets out of prison and goes to Paris with his ex-girlfriend Sue and Lou as strikingly attractive ménage a trios. To go back to Spengler regarding the sort of person it

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takes to survive in NYC (a common theme throughout the entire film): “In place of a world, there is a city, a point, in which the whole life of broad regions is collecting while the rest dries up. In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is a new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially that highest form of countryman, the country gentleman.”

Undoubtedly, aside from the absurdly underrated Belgian-Dutch-French co-production *Mascara* (1987) directed by Patrick Conrad and starring Charlotte Rampling, which is like a Werner Schroeter film meets a Hollyweird murder mystery, *Exquisite Corpses* is one of the most ambitious attempts at mixing camp with film noir genre clichés. Apparently, auteur Temístocles López was such a queen on the set of the film that star Zoë Lund described him as, “an impossible director.” Ultimately, *Exquisite Corpses* seems like a sick sodomite fantasy covered in grotesque glitter and glam as a work where a manly cowboy is converted to homosexuality out of desperation, the femme fatale who steals a man from a man is murdered, and a flagrantly faggy fellow becomes the main hero in the end. A sardonically playful piece where characters are more like intentionally shallow stereotypes/crude archetypes than actual individuals with real emotions and the CIA is portrayed as an even more innately evil entity than the KBG, Temístocles’ film is certainly a work that was sown in deep, if not obscured, hatred, but it is also inconspicuously sprinkled with sod sugar on top so as to make it more palatable for so-called ‘heteronormative’ people. Of course, Temístocles failed in that regard as *Exquisite Corpses* is far too campy, convoluted, and just downright debauched to appeal to the tastes of the typical Hollywood-lobotomized automaton, hence why the film is all but totally unknown today, except among diehard Zoë Lund fans. The most audacious reworking of George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (1912) since Radley Metzger’s porn chic hardcore flick *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* (1976) starring Constance Money and Jamie Gillis as a camp-ridden black comedy musical farce where a conservative cowboy is inexplicably transformed into a charming and cultured avant-garde cabaret artist virtually overnight, *Exquisite Corpses* is nothing, if not a piece of patently perverse postmodernism that actually manages to rise above pretense and puffery, as it buries its eclectic source influences under a playfully putrid pile of eccentricity and pageantry. Like the films of kraut queer auteur filmmakers like Rosa von Praunheim (i.e. *Tally Brown*, *New York, Überleben in New York aka Survival in New York*), Walter Bockmayer (i.e. *Flammende Herzen aka Flaming Hearts*), and Monika Treut (i.e. *My Father is Coming*), *Exquisite Corpses* features a romanticized outsider’s depiction of the rotten Big Apple that lingers between heaven and hell in terms of its various subcultures and (non)mores. With that being said, one must also note that the film is more effective in capturing the essence of NYC than virtually any of

the films associated with the so-called Cinema of Transgression and related film movements, even though it employs camp and satire in a patently preposterous fashion. Indeed, *Exquisite Corpses* features a sort of sometimes nefarious neo-Weimar microcosm where sexual and monetary deceit is the name of the game, thus making the film like the *Cabaret* of obscure NYC cult flicks, albeit infinitely more outrageous, if not nonsensical, not to mention the fact that Zoë Lund gives what is arguably the most mystifying performance of her short but nonetheless notable acting career. That being said, *Exquisite Corpses* is mandatory viewing for any self-respecting camp connoisseur and/or Lundphile.

-Ty E

CHAIN OF DESIRE
CHAIN OF DESIRE

Temístocles López (1992)

Before the obnoxious trend of humanist we-are-the-world-and-everyone-is-connected films like that putrid piece of multiculturalist trash *Crash* (2004) where one sees how various seemingly unrelated characters of all colors and creeds are magically linked together in the end, Venezuelan-born cult queer auteur Temístocles López (*Bird of Prey*, *Home - The Horror Story*) made a little movie that is now all but forgotten featuring an eclectic all-star cast entitled *Chain of Desire* (1992) that depicted how various perverts with different perversions who did not know each were all connected via genital juices and STDs. Indeed, like Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993), except with AIDS, sexually flexible gays, neo-cabaret, and a tinge of high-camp, López's film seems like a superficial soft-core flick upon a superficial glance, but as a work that features Malcolm McDowell as a TV journalist who screws young twink prostitutes behind his sexually repressed wife's back, Elias Koteas as a lecherous Latino family man who finds time to bang fine white chicks in between cleaning crucifixes, and Cassavetes veteran Seymour Cassel portraying a hack modern artist in the spirit of Julian Schnabel who has made a second profession out of screwing every woman aside from his wife, *Chains of Desire* is cultivated kitsch with a number of titillating and anti-titillating twists and turns that manages to be both erotic and provocative despite featuring next to nil nudity and largely taking place in crummy apartments. Featuring a somewhat intricately spun web of wantonness during a time and place where even heteros were scared of contracting gay cancer, López's work is certainly packed with cultural pessimism that is quite liberating and the perfect antidote to the ungodly aesthetic sins of Hollywood sentimentalism. When auteur López came out of the closet at the ripe age of 18, his machismo-oriented padre gave him the following fatherly advice: "There's only one thing for you to do: shoot yourself," so it should be no surprise that many of the characters featured in *Chain of Desire* use sex as a self-destructive and even sometimes suicidal force, with virtually everyone screwing up their life in some fashion by screwing. Featuring a purgatory-like cabaret where a creepy, semi-drag-queen acts as the Master of Ceremonies and declares with a grating Brooklyn accent that, "The sex apocalypse is upon us," *Chain of Desire* is a debasing descent into the NYC underworld where nearly everyone has made a figurative pact with the devil of debauchery. Whereas López's first feature *Exquisite Corpses* (1989) was a warped campy reworking of both *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) and George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, *Chain of Desire* is an unhinged update of Max Ophüls' Arthur Schnitzler adaptation *La Ronde* (1950). Directors including Roger Vadim, Otto Schenk, and Fernando Meirelles would also attempt cinematic reworkings of the original Schnitzler play yet none of these films are quite as slimy, grimy, immoral, and dejecting as *Chain of Desire*, which is a work

where the characters are indeed chained to something, but it is hardly love.

Sassy yet classy Guido gal Alma D'Angeli (Linda Fiorentino) is upset that her ex-boyfriend Michael, who she is still in love with after all the years, keeps calling her, so she goes to a church and cries about it. A savior of a Hispanic custodian with the rather apt name Jesus (Elias Koteas) sees Alma crying and consoles her and before they know it, the two olive-colored strangers are having passionate sex around the little lady's apartment. After getting done playing with the nice Italian girl, Jesus goes home to his family and is yelled at by his mother for describing their ancestral background as "third world." Jesus' young wife Isa (Angel Aviles) helps give her hubby a bath, thus unwittingly washing away the carnal juices of another woman off his body as he discusses how he will one day achieve the American dream by becoming a business owner. Isa is a maid and one day her TV producer boss Jerald Buckley (Patrick Bauchau) catches her looking at an antique copy of the Kama Sutra. Of course, Jerald gets aroused at the sight of a sub-literate third world girl attempting to read erotic literature, so he forces Isa to drive her high heel into his genitals until he achieves orgasm. Needless to say, Isa quits the job and Jerald pays her off so that she does not tell anyone about their depraved 'sexual' encounter. Naturally, Jerald hires a new maid named Linda (Grace Zabriskie), but he does not pay her as she is a sexually repressed housewife that is looking to spice up her nonexistent sex life. In fact, Linda's husband, Hubert Bailey (Malcolm McDowell), is a hack TV journalist who works for Jerald and the two have just finished a series on JFK's extramarital affairs. Among other things, one learns that JFK had a thing for arrogant Jewesses, forced ladies that he foolishly knocked up to get abortions, and had a fleeting fetish for negresses, with one black mistress complaining, "It was bam bam, thank ya' man, except he didn't say, "thank you"." Regarding the JFK tabloid trash he produced, Hubert states, "It was a disgusting masquerade. All those women were fakes" and confesses to his wife, "I hate this goddamn business." That night, the husband and wife discuss the lack of passion in their relationship, with Linda even admitting she is screwing Hubert's boss Jerald, yet he does not care for reasons that will soon be revealed. Linda tries in vain to get her husband to have sex with her, even telling him how he was the best man she ever slept with, but Hubert falls asleep. Of course, Hubert no longer sleeps with his wife because he is a closet homosexual who regularly has hustlers sent to his apartment. The next day, Hubert has a young twink from Iowa named Keith (Jamie Harrold) delivered to his door, but their little get together is abruptly aborted after the hustler's pimp calls and attempts to blackmail the journalist out of \$20,000 by threatening to tell the media about his secret poof proclivities. After Keith leaves, he goes and smokes some crack and gets in a scrap with his pimp, who he beats up, but he loses his shoes and what little is left of his dignity in the process. Keith is later approached by a gay government worker with a broken leg named Ken (Tim Guinee) whose job is to find homes for young

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homeless homos. As *Chain of Desire* makes quite clear, NYC is not a very nice place for sensitive young gay boys looking to escape from their conservative hometowns. Of course, Keith learned that the hard way.

Ken takes Keith with him back to his apartment where he lives with his bisexual rocker/cabaret singer boyfriend David Bango (Dewey Weber), who does not take too kindly to young homeless homos crowding up his home, so he goes and stays with his hot virgin friend Diana (Holly Marie Combs), who offers him her virginity but he respectfully declines because he "couldn't be 100%" with her, plus they are both high on ecstasy. Instead, Diana hooks up with a successful yet totally talentless modern artist named Mel (Seymour Cassel). Meanwhile, Mel's sexy Spanish wife Cleo (Assumpta Serna) is waiting for her husband to come home so they can celebrate their anniversary, but he has forgotten it and is too busy trying to get in Diana's panties. Unfortunately for Mel, Diana is unimpressed with the con-artist, especially after he says, "Let's not talk about art, it's a bore," thus revealing he is a fraud with no interest in art. When Mel attempts to give Diana what he describes as the "Lolita treatment" upon learning that she is a virgin, she laughs in his face and leaves. Of course, when Mel gets back home, his wife threatens to divorce him due to his pathological lying and cheating. The next day, Cleo goes by Mel's art studio and discovers evidence that her husband was cheating on her after Diana calls and leaves a message. Suddenly, Cleo gets a devilish smirk on her face, walks up to a muscular worker named Joe (Kevin Conroy) that was hired by Mel, puts her hand up his shorts, and begins jerking him off. Needless to say, the two begin to have sex and ruin one of Mel's degenerate paintings while rolling around it. Of course, Mel walks in on them and fires Joe, but Cleo merely laughs in her husband's face, stating, "That was a lot of fun. My very first...but a lot of fun." Out of work, Joe takes up the respectable trade of being a phone sex worker where he pretends to be everything from an Italian stallion with a heavy Guido accent to a psychopath WASP Wall Street stockbroker, but he really is not cutout for the job. After failing to turn on ladies via telephone, Joe begins peering out of his window with a pair of binoculars at the people that live in the apartment complex across from him and eventually his eyes catch sight of a black chick that he finds arousing, so he begins masturbating in front of his window in plain sight. In easily the sleaziest homage to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) ever directed, Joe and the black chick, Angie (Suzanne Douglas), have non-contact sex via window-to-window voyeurism session, with a young teenage wop boy even joining in. At the end of *Chain of Desire*, the work comes full circle when all the characters come together at a cabaret and it is revealed the first character featured in the film, Alma, is a friend of the final character Angie, as the two friends work at the club together as singers. Alma receives another phone call from her ex-boyfriend Michael while at work just as she did at the beginning of the film and this time she actually agrees to here what he has to say. Ultimately, Michael

reveals to Alma that he has AIDS, which causes her to break down. Although Alma refuses to sing that night, Angie eventually convinces her to do so because, after all, the show must go on.

In describing his film *Chain of Desire*, director Temístocles López once offered the following insights: “My film is about desire, with moments of love...I wanted to say that no matter what your sexuality, there’s no wrongs or rights, sex is to be seen as a force—relentless—which has no boundaries of any kind. It is true that the gay material was longer than any other part of the script, but that is what I wanted as a gay director.” Actually, the film is only 40% gay-themed and virtually none of these scenes feature sex, not to mention the fact that it does not exactly include the most flattering depictions of gay life. Indeed, while an ostensibly erotically-charged work, *Chain of Desire* ultimately leaves one with the feeling that they need to take a shower after watching it and not in a good way, as the film is inhabited by dead souls whose whimsical sexual encounters are mostly a form of desperate escapism from their decidedly dreary and insufferably humdrum lives. While *Chain of Desire* is clearly a more coherent and cultivated work, the director’s first feature *Exquisite Corpses* proved to be a much more rewarding experience for me as a work of contemptible camp that never wallows in misery and melancholy in the malignant fashion that the director’s second film does. Indeed, a sort of *Basic Instinct* (1992) meets *Cabaret* (1972) for the morbidly depressed, López’s *Chain of Desire* is like a romance for hopeless heterosexuals that live sexual lifestyles similar to those of gay men and is thus, rather unfortunately, more relevant today than when it was first released. Co-produced by Scottish actor Brian Cox (*Manhunter*, *Rushmore*) of all people, *Chain of Desire* is a rare erotic drama that has the power to scare people away from promiscuity. It is also notable for being a rare semi-gay-themed work where it is the heteros and not the homos that become victims of AIDS. Needless to say, I doubt Rosa von Praunheim would approve.

-Ty E

DAYS OF HEAVEN
DAYS OF HEAVEN

Terrence Malick (1978)

Out of Terrence Malick's small lexicon of films, *Days of Heaven* is easily his greatest achievement. The film takes in the Texas panhandle circa 1916 when America still had much of its natural beauty. A manual labor conman named Bill, his sister, and girlfriend leave Chicago after the man is assumed to have killed his boss. While in Texas, the three runaways end up working seasonally for a nice young Aryan farmer. Bill finds out that the farmer is about to die so he decides to whore out his girlfriend. The farmer falls in love with Bill's lady and the three peasants start living the good life. *Days of Heaven* is a film featuring a truly bizarre love triangle set at a time in America when things were thought to be more "wholesome." But with a man of a questionable ethnic background and unwarranted peasant arrogance such as Bill, things get a little ugly. I can imagine a young Marxist idealist finding *Days of Heaven* to be an anti-proletarian and pro-capitalist film. But the farmer in *Days of Heaven* is a swell young business man and Bill is a pathetic schemer. Destructive and irrational politics aside, *Days of Heaven* is an aesthetically pleasing experience. Linda Manz stars as the young sister of peasant criminal Bill, and she also narrates the film. This is an appropriate job for Manz as her character is stuck in the middle of the love triangle. Although she is the sister of the conman who organized the fake love affair with the farmer, she is merely an onlooker to the unpleasant situation. Linda narrates the film as if she has no real strong opinion on anything. Even at the end of *Days of Heaven* as an orphan, her attitude towards life has not changed. The strongest point of the film is when a storm of locusts hit the farm. The locusts cover the farmer's field and are soon appropriately dealt with. In the process, the farmer confronts Bill and ends up accidentally burning down his whole field with the mere swing of a lantern. The arrival of the locusts introduces the climax between the love triangle. The firestorm that erupts in the field reminds one of hell on earth and the aftermath of the fire is unfortunately appropriate. Farm owners should always be weary of wanting peasants. The beauty of nature truly conflicts with the unholy thoughts of man in *Days of Heaven*.

-Ty E

THE THIN RED LINE

Terrence Malick (1998)

The Thin Red Line (directed by Terrence Malick) is quite different than most World War II combat films (or the combat film in general). The film comes out more as a collage of images and poetry lacking most conventions associated with related material. This is no surprise as Malick accomplished similar things in *The Badlands* and *Days of Heaven*. Malick was able to refresh the stale World War II film with a somewhat anti-war approach. Most films dealing with the second World War to at least some extent glorify war. As everyone knows, America won World War II therefore, going into *The Thin Red Line* you expect a triumphant victory at the end. Instead, the war ends with another company of soldiers going into war. The war never ends also in the respect of all war in general. There is the chaos of man just as in the chaos of nature (which is brought up in the film). I found the ending of *The Thin Red Line* to be very human. Unfortunately it wasn't the most uplifting. The sacrificed soldier by Witt at the end of *The Thin Red Line* emphasized the impact of the individual in war. By acting as a decoy, Witt (James Caviezel) was able to save his company. When surrounded by Japanese he raises his rifle and is instantly shot. I thought it was interesting that Caviezel played sort of a savior in *The Thin Red Line* and *The Passion of the Christ*. The character of Witt to me, was the most important as although he was uninterested in serving in the war (in the beginning he is AWOL living among Melanesians), he becomes the biggest hero for his fellowman. When he swims among the Melanesian children in a dreamlike sequence after he is killed, he seems to have found his peace. *The Thin Red Line* also made war look a lot messier and chaotic than most World War II films. In the film most things are unpredictable. The sergeants and colonels come up with plans just as the fighting goes along. This chaos parallels a lot of what is going on in many of the soldiers' heads. All of these men are scared, confused, and on the brink of insanity. The difference in the men comes in the form of what they are willing to sacrifice for their fellow soldiers. Other men are killed fast and forgotten. Another interesting element of *The Thin Red Line* was its presentation of the Japanese. It takes a good while in the film to actually see these soldiers. Before we see Japanese soldiers, it feels like a never ending death machine wiping out American soldiers. When the Japanese soldiers are finally captured in their bunker they are very scared and helpless looking. This element of the film really stuck out to me. It showed how quickly man can change when facing different situations. One other scene that really stuck out for me was the baiting of a dying Japanese man by one of the American soldiers. The American soldiers tell the Japanese man that it's all over. That he will soon be eaten by various birds in the sky. This scene was important in *The Thin Red Line* as it showed the hatred man can be pushed to in war. Out of all the World War II films that I have seen, this was the only one

THE THIN RED LINE

to feature such a hateful yet attractively powerful scene. The Thin Red Line may now be my favorite American World War II film. Its unparalleled battle artistry introduced a new style in the World War II film. The only thing that hurt the film was its use of big name actors which in my opinion, take emphasis of the film itself. It's quite odd to see stoner surfer Spicoli (Sean Penn) in the middle of a chaotic World War II battlefield.

-Ty E

BRAZIL

Terry Gilliam (1985)

Somewhat pathetically but not surprisingly, at least to me, it has been such a longtime since I have been truly in the Christmas spirit that I literally cannot remember the last time that I got a natural high from things like Xmas lights, eggnog, nutcrackers, chocolate covered cherries, the smell of fresh pine needles, and incessant re-watching of seasonal classics like *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965) and Bob Clark's *A Christmas Story* (1983), so naturally I decided that I would watch a film during this so-called 'holiday season' that would be more in tune with my more morose and misanthropic than merry spirit. While I initially settled upon attempting to warp my brain with old school American avant-garde works like Gregory J. Markopoulos' *Christmas USA* (1949) and Barbara Rubin's *Christmas On Earth* (1963 - 1965), the former proved to be too arcane and had virtually nothing to do with Xmas and the latter was nothing more than completely worthless and uniquely unsexy Jewish aberrosexual anti-Christmas agit-prop porn, so I decided that I needed to watch something with a more nostalgic quality, thus leading me to revisiting the keenly kaleidoscopic and scathingly satirical dystopian epic *Brazil* (1985) directed by proud lapsed American Terry Gilliam (*12 Monkeys*, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*), which is not only set during a particular mirthfully morbid Christ's Mass, but is also a work that I incidentally first saw for the first time exactly twelve years ago during a remarkably miserable Yule. Admittedly Gilliam is a filmmaker that I have always had mixed feelings about, but after re-watching what I would describe as his unequivocal magnum opus, I cannot deny that it is a somewhat shockingly timeless cult classic that has only gotten more relevant since when it was first released three decades ago and, quite thankfully, surely only gets better with each subsequent viewing. Surely, Gilliam's greatest talent as a filmmaker also seems his greatest weakness as sort of Anglo-American Fellini (in fact, the film once had the somewhat more fitting working title *1984 ½*, which was in tribute to both Orwell's 1949 novel of the same name and Fellini's autobiographical masterpiece *8½* (1963)) whose films are oftentimes too visually overwrought and aesthetically decadent to the point of completely burying the storyline, but *Brazil* ultimately proves to be a nearly immaculate combination of visuals and storyline as the sort of rather ideal big budget film that Hollywood might regularly produce if Americans did not tolerate regularly consuming celluloid shit and the studio heads and producers were not a bunch of culture-distorting parasites that look at the general public as a group of collectively retarded ADHD-ridden toddlers.

An arguable piece of decidedly decadent defeatist dystopia where the true horror is not in the form of an ominous Big Brother figure but instead a sort of ludicrously labyrinthine pre-apocalyptic bureaucracy and absurdly pernicious self-perpetuating machine that exists solely for the nihilistic purpose of propa-

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gating itself and its own cancerous growth and, not unlike most far-leftist collectivist governments, thrives on enemies (e.g. terrorists) and its own failure (e.g. the rise of crime and poverty) to sustain its seemingly perennial growth, the film is certainly more relevant today than ever in a seemingly pre-apocalyptic age where America's phony double-bastard mulatto puppet president's solution to the rapid decline of the country is creating more worthless bureaucratic government programs and flooding the country with racially hostile rabble from the third world who just happen to be the same sort of people that are waging an international terror campaign against the country. Set in a completely culturally vacant, innately materialistic, emotionally barren, and spectacle and slogan oriented retrofuturist pandemonium that is simultaneously anachronistic in both a sort of Dickensian and Rockwellian fashion (among other retro cinematic influences ranging from German Expressionism to Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) to 1940s/1950s film noir) and ominously Orwellian in an almost grotesquely cartoonish way (in fact, Gilliam, who has always maintained that the film depicts the present and not some foreseeable future, once described the film as a "political cartoon"), *Brazil*—a virtual popcorn movie for cultural pessimists—tells the fairly aesthetically pleasing tale of a hopelessly naïve dreamer of the day that gets immersed in a real-life nightmare after unwisely getting involved in rectifying the wrongful government-ordained death of a poor prole and ultimately encountering by happenstance a butch babe that he somewhat preposterously believes is the literal woman of his dreams. A quite apt antidote to the putrid piece of true celluloid dystopia *Star Wars: Episode VII* (2015) directed by pernicious kosher culture-distorter and human-gargoyle J.J. Abrams, Gilliam's gorgeously grotesque masterpiece is ultimately a fantasy film for people who, like myself, hate most fantasy films because they act as sort of Huxleyan celluloid soma for overweight lemmings and virginal fanboys. Indeed, *Brazil* is one of the few fantasy flicks that you can watch without potentially succumbing to the guilt or pathetic weakness of embracing mindless fanboy twaddle, as an eccentric piece of aesthetically and narratively erratic anti-escapism that ultimately tricks the viewer into embracing the unfortunate reality of the forlorn present and the all the more fiercely foreboding future.

Set in a unnamed technocratic anarcho-tyranny "somewhere in the 20th Century" that seems like a parody of 1950s America as sodomized senselessly by the sad and pathetic ultra-P.C. post-European surveillance state that is modern-day multicultural England, *Brazil* begins with a Christmas time terrorist explosion that blows away a guy dressed like a film noir extra that is pushing a car full of worthless junk. After the explosion, an elderly wheelchair-bound cripple named Mr. Helpmann (Peter Vaughan, who is probably best known nowadays as Maester Aemon on HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011-2015))—a happy-go-lucky pseudo-paternal dictator of bureaucracy that has the distinguished title of 'Deputy Minister of Information'—declares on public television that, in regard

to the mysterious terrorist bombing, it is purely the result of, "Bad sportsmanship. A ruthless minority of people seem to have forgotten good old-fashioned virtues. They just can't stand seeing the other fellow win. If these people would just play the game." Indeed, not unlike contemporary America and Western Europe where people are legally forced to pretend that all people, no matter how savage or sexually/morally degenerate, are 'equal' and where you can be completely socially ostracized and/or even be imprisoned for sharing unpopular ideas, Brazil is set in a wholly socially engineered nightmare realm where one either has to be an automaton or sociopath to get ahead as success is based purely off of the ability and willingness of the individual to follow all of the rules of the game, no matter how absurd and self-debasing. Hapless protagonist Sam Lowry (Jonathan Pryce of *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1992) and Christopher Hampton's *Carrington* (1995)) is vaguely more admirable than most people, as he begrudgingly plays the game just enough so that he can get by and sustain himself, even though his slutty mother, Mrs. Ida Lowry (Katherine Helmond), is a socially prestigious society woman that is a longtime friend of bigwig Mr. Helpmann and could easily get him a decent job as a member of the supper echelons of the bureaucratic machine. As a man that seems to be passively revolted by everything about his society, Sam prefers to hide in a cramped office and engage in abstract paper-shuffling as a mid-level white collar serf. When Sam's mother uses her connections to get him a nice employment offer, he initially turns it down, but he later changes his mind after a series of situations that lead him to devoting all of his time, effort, and resources to hunting down the woman of his dreams. Unfortunately for Sam, his love interest is a suspected terrorist, thus it is only a matter of time before he and she are swallowed up by the machine after attempting to consummate a love affair in a loveless world where romantic relationships are nothing more than cold and strategic business transactions.

Sam is a fairly physically and intellectually unimpressive fellow with no ambition and a somewhat passive-aggressive mentality who prefers to rot in an office than to grab life by the balls and make something great out of himself. The only source of solace that Sam has in his life is his dreams where he is a sort a classically heroic angel-knight with heavenly cloud-caressing wings who regularly saves and embraces the woman-of-his-dreams/damsel-in-distress (Kim Greist). Unbeknownst to Sam, there is actually a real-life sub-lumpenprole dame with a dyke haircut named Jill Layton (also Kim Greist in a performance that Gilliam was quite dissatisfied with) who looks exactly the same as the woman-of-his-dreams, albeit she is somewhat dirtier and remarkably less feminine. At the beginning of the film, Jill bears witness to the violent window-smashing and door-crashing nightmare arrest of her downstairs neighbor Mr. Archibald Buttle (Brian Miller) by a brigade of rather robotic Gestapo-esque thugs that sport all-black futuristic SWAT gear. Indeed, as a result of an absurd technical malfunction involving a fly getting jammed in a printer and accidentally printing the

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name 'Buttle' instead that of a supposed terrorist named Archibald 'Harry' Tuttle (Robert De Niro in arguably the most bizarre role of his career as the true hero of the film), the quite literally poor family man is arrested and ultimately mysteriously murdered while under interrogation for a dubious crime he did not actually commit. Sam is a mid-level officer clerk and as a favor to his weak, meek, and pathetic boss Mr. Kurtzmann (Ian Holm of Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979)), the protagonist agrees to travel to the post-industrial ghetto where Mr. Buttle's wife lives and personally deliver to her an 'overcharge receipt' in an attempt to fix the 'clerical error.' Indeed, in the absurdist realm of Brazil, criminals are expected to pay for their own arrests, but since Mr. Buttle was accidentally arrested, his widow is owed a monetary refund. After surviving a virtual urban battlefield where barbaric little kids rob and kidnap other barbaric little kids with machine-guns, Sam manages to arrive at the Buttle's apartment, which is located inside an architectural monstrosity known as Shangri-La tower, and is quite disturbed at the sight of a grieving Mrs. Buttle, who screams at the protagonist, "He hadn't done anything. He was good. What have you done with his body?" and then begins crying hysterically. After Mrs. Buttle's grade school son abruptly attacks Sam, the protagonist is in for the joyous shock of a lifetime when he randomly catches the reflection of the woman-of-his-dreams in a broken piece of a mirror, though she unfortunately runs away before he can actually catch up with her. After unwittingly talking to Mr. Buttle's daughter, who is waiting in the street in vain for her father to come home, Sam learns that the woman-of-his-dreams is named 'Jill Layton.'

Much to the chagrin of his revoltingly effete boss Kurtzmann, who almost seems to have homoerotic feelings for the protagonist, Sam decides to accept the job offer at 'Information Retrieval' because he believes it will give him the technical resources he needs to dig up more information about Jill and her seemingly dangerous background. Unfortunately for Sam, Kurtzmann has forged a rejection letter for the job, so the protagonist opts attend a party at the lavish home of Mr. Helpmann, who surely can use his unique power as Deputy Minister of Information to get him the new position. Luckily, Sam's cosmetic-surgery-obsessed high-class whore mother, who is regularly followed by her fittingly Judaic named surgeon Dr. Jaffe (Jim Broadbent), is more than willing to help procure distinguished employment for her loser son via Herr Helpmann. Ultimately, Sam reduces himself to the level of helping handicapped Übermensch Helpmann take a leak in a urinal and even zipping up his fly, but it is a small price for him to pay to get closer to tracking down Jill. As Helpmann (pseudo)sentimentally states to the protagonist during their meeting, Sam's father was once his boss and best friend before a dubious terrorist bombing cut his life short. Strangely, Helpmann describes Sam's dead father as always been in his presence, even going so far as to describe him as, "A ghost in the machine." Unfortunately, Sam is also on his way to becoming a tragic phantom in

the technocratic penitentiary.

Clearly completely unaware of what he is really up against or the fact that he is being regularly followed and monitored by shadowy figures in trench-coats, Sam does not think twice of befriending ostensible terrorist Archibald 'Harry' Tuttle when he randomly drops by his apartment after intercepting a call that the protagonist makes to report that his air-conditioner is broken. Harry is a sort of anarchic electrician who seemingly works for free and when Sam foolishly asks him why he just does not get a normal official position with the government, he proudly expresses his seething hatred for paperwork and sums up his overall Weltanschauung as follows, "I came into this game for the action...the excitement. Go anywhere, travel light, get in, get out...wherever there's trouble...a man alone. Now, they've got the whole country sectioned off...you can't move without a form." While Harry swiftly fixes Sam's air-conditioner, two vindictive government workers (one of which is notably played by Bob Hoskins of the decidedly dumb dystopian dud *Super Mario Bros.* (1993)) from 'Central Services' later completely destroy it in revenge against the protagonist for asking them for the appropriate paperwork. Sam ultimately makes a mysterious mistake by befriending Harry, as his new comrade has been officially classified as a wanted renegade terrorist by the very same government bureaucracy that the protagonist has just begun working for. Ever since Sam decided to break protocol and personally visit Mrs. Buttle to give her the overcharge receipt, he has been being followed by a mysterious figure in a trench-coat who has been keeping tabs on everything he has done, including his attempts to find information about Jill, who has also been designated a fugitive terrorist as a result of running her mouth about the wrongful arrest and death of Mr. Buttle. As a previously quite apathetic mensch that is now obsessively in love with a woman that he faithfully worships, Sam naturally does not have much time to pay attention to small details like his quite sinister surroundings, even if it could result in his arrest or even death, or so he eventually learns after unwittingly poking his nose in a pernicious place that it does not belong.

As a deleteriously naïve chap that does not have a single emotional connection with anyone, Sam is completely oblivious to the fact that his longtime best friend Jack Lint (Monty Python regular Michael Palin) is a seemingly psychopathic opportunist who is responsible for interrogating and torturing suspected terrorists. As a fairly successful extrovert and obscenely opportunistic go-getter that is married with children and is wholly willing to utilize his glacial charms in his ruthless mission to abide to the rules of the bureaucratic game for personal gain, even when it involves coldblooded murder, Jack is the complete opposite of an introverted underachiever like Sam, who opts to do the bare minimum to get by and would prefer it if no one acknowledged of his pathetic existence. After beginning his new job at Information Retrieval where Jack also works, Sam foolishly questions his phony friend about Jill and Tuttle and even asks him if

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he is responsible for the death of Mr. Buttle. Although he does not deny killing Tuttle, Jack refuses to take responsibility for his death, snidely stating to Sam, "Information Transit got the wrong man. I got the *right* man. The wrong one was delivered to me as the right man, I accepted him on good faith as the right man. Was I wrong? It wasn't my fault that Buttle's heart condition didn't appear on Tuttle's file." Jack describes Tuttle as being involved with the questionable crime of "freelance subversion" and then accuses Jill of being a terrorist, stating, "She witnessed the Tuttle—Buttle arrest. It seems she's been going around making wild allegations, obviously trying to exploit the situation. She's working for someone, and I don't think it's us." While Sam manages to coerce Jack into giving him Jill's government file, he ultimately does not need it as he subsequently finds his lady love at the front-desk of the Information Retrieval building where he narrowly saves her from getting arrested by some gun-wielding NKVD-esque thugs.

While one would assume that Jill might be at least somewhat thankful to Sam for saving her from being imprisoned and even potentially killed, she immediately attempts to run away from him after he gets her to safety. Of course, hopeless loverboy Sam is persistent and manages to jump inside Jill truck where he proceeds to absurdly declare his love for her, stating in a fairly neurotic fashion, "You won't believe this...and...I know it's going to sound incredible, but I've been dreaming about you. No, not like that. I mean, I love you. In my dreams, I love you." Not surprisingly, Jill replies to Sam's pathetic declaration of love by literally kicking him out of her truck while it is moving, though the protagonist manages to grab onto the side of the vehicle and write "I love you" with his finger on a dirty window. After nearly killing Sam, Jill eventually calms down and begins feeling sorry enough for him to cease her dangerously bitchy behavior. Needless to say, Jill is far from the warm, loving, and embracing angelic beauty from Sam's otherworldly dreams, but that does not stop the protagonist from believing that she is indeed the woman-of-his-dreams. Unfortunately, Sam soon begins suspecting that Jill is a terrorist when she takes him to a highly dangerous construction site where a strange fellow gives her a dubious package. When a terrorist attack later occurs at a shopping mall that they later opt to hideout at after killing a cop or two after a dramatic chase scene, Sam becomes quite hysterical and immediately blames Jill, only to soon realize that he is completely wrong. After attacking a boorish cop that manhandles Jill, Sam is predictably knocked out and arrested. While Sam is taken back to work instead of prison due to his prestigious government position, he is separated from Jill in the process and subsequently repeatedly verbally reamed by his boss and co-employees due to his questionable behavior. In fact, Sam's so-called best friend Jack more or less tells him to fuck off, stating, "Sam, we've always been close, haven't we? Well, until this all blows over, just stay away from me." Naturally, as a man that is in love with a terrorist and friends with another, it is only a matter of time

before Sam faces the cold wrath of the bureaucratic system due to his glaring incapacity to be like everyone else and “just play the game.”

When Jill pays him a visit at his apartment after work, Sam is naturally extremely overjoyed and decides to provide her with sanctuary by taking her to his mother’s lavish home. Since his mother is spending Christmas with her plastic surgeon, Sam has free reign over her apartment, which he believes will be a secure hideout for his lady-love. While Jill seems fully willingly to strip off her redneck dude wardrobe and finally share her carnal knowledge with Sam after he is thoughtful and caring enough to provide her with safety at his mother’s flat, the protagonist decides that the long-awaited fuck session must be temporarily postponed until he can try everything within his means to protect his lover by going to Mr. Helpmann for help. While Helpmann is not there, Sam foolishly decides to hack into his boss’ computer and falsify Jill’s records to make it seem like she has died. When Sam gets back home, he is delighted to find Jill all dolled up just like the woman-of-his-dreams and then happily informs her, “You don’t exist anymore. I killed you. Jill Layton is dead.” Naturally, when Jill asks him, “Care for a little bit of necrophilia?,” Sam immediately eagerly jumps into bed with her and then the two proceed to assumedly make love. The next morning, Sam is exceedingly enthralled to find Jill in bed with him wearing nothing but a ribbon over her tits, but the fleshy fun comes to an ugly and violent end when a bunch of sinister SWAT team goons crash through the windows and arrest the lovers. After being arrested and knocked out in the process, Sam later awakens to finding himself hanging from a hook while trapped inside a sort of futuristic straitjacket while about half a dozen or so different lawyers give him questionable legal advice about such ludicrous things as pleading guilty to various charges so that he can save some money. Among other things, Sam has been charged with, “Wasting ministry time and paper.” After that, Sam is placed in a padded cell where he is visited by Mr. Helpmann, who is dressed in a Santa Claus outfit and generously offers him a bottle of, “barley water.” When Sam begs Helpmann to prove that he is worthy of his surname by helping him, the perennially smirking old fart replies, “I’m doing everything in my power...but the rules of the game are laid down. We all have to play by them. Even me.” Needless to say, Sam breaks down after Helpmann informs him that Jill was gunned down while supposedly attempting to resist arrest. After that, Sam is hauled to an extremely large, open, empty, and ominous cylindrical room to go undergo interrogation. When the finally interrogator arrives, Sam is shocked to see that it is his supposed friend Jack, who is attempting to hide his identity behind a creepy baby mask. After Sam begs him for mercy and cries, “I feel frightened,” Jack exposes his true psychopathic self by stating, “How do you think I feel? You shit.” Luckily for Sam, just before he undergoes some sort of torture method, an unseen terrorist puts a bullet in Jack’s brain and then Harry Tuttle and a band of terrorists/freedom-fighters subsequently magically appear and proceed to rescue

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the protagonist.

After escaping from Ministry headquarters and blowing up the entire building on the way out, Sam and Harry head to a local mall where the latter curiously disappears into thin air after being consumed by a mass of flying scraps of paper, thus hinting in a fairly obvious fashion that the entire situation might be a fantasy. Indeed, from there, Sam ends up at a lavish high-camp funeral for his mother's similarly cosmetic-surgery-addicted friend Mrs. Terrain and is frightened to discover that his mommy now looks exactly like Jill and is being fawned over by half a dozen handsome young gentlemen callers. After haphazardly falling into Mrs. Terrain's open casket, Sam falls through a seemingly bottomless pitch black abyss that ultimately brings him to a fairly familiar urban nightmare realm from his dreams, which is covered in piles upon piles of post-industrial junk and inhabited by grotesque baby-faced monsters and a giant neon Kurosawan samurai beast. Luckily, Sam manages to evade the beastly beings via a pile of flex-ducts where he ultimately finds a door at the top that magically leads him to the trailer of Jill's truck. From there, Jill drives Sam out of the city and the two begin a new simple traditional life upon taking refuge at a quaint trailer located in a perfectly pastoral fairytale-esque mountain region. Of course, as the viewer somewhat suspects, this all-too-happy-ending has nothing to do with reality. Indeed, from there, the film cuts back to the interrogation room where Mr. Helpmann states, "He's got away from us, Jack" and Jack replies, "I'm afraid you're right, Mr. Helpmann. He's gone." As it turns out, Sam has suffered virtually the same exact pathetic fate as Nietzsche and has succumbed to a sort of blissful insanity where he is depicted with a stupid smirk while humming the theme song "Brazil."

Like any halfway decent piece of dystopian science fiction, *Brazil* is in many ways more relevant today than when it was first released, even if it completely fails to do what Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) by depicting the Occident as a virtual corpse that is being fed on by hordes of gutter-dwelling third world rabble who have replaced the indigenous Europic population (in fact, I did not notice a single non-white person in the entire film). There is also a great irony in the fact that Gilliam's film was produced by Israeli producer Arnon Milchan, who would reveal in late 2013 on Israeli TV that he was a real harbinger of dystopian times by bragging that he was a Mossad spy that engaged in espionage, big-ticket arms-dealing, and obtaining sensitive technology and materials for Israel's quite apocalyptic nuclear weapons program. While the mainstream media and American politicians constantly complain about how dangerous and horrific it would be for towelhead nations like Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, Israel already has them and various Israeli leaders have threatened to destroy the entire world, including their so-called allies in Europe, were the security of their nation to be compromised. Indeed, as Israeli military historian Martin Levi van Creveld once gleefully stated in regard to his Hebrew homeland's ominous Samson Op-

tion, “Most European capitals are targets for our [Israel’s] air force....We have the capability to take the world down with us. And I can assure you that that will happen before Israel goes under.” In other words, Milchan’s criminal deeds have helped to give his nation the means to unleash a nuclear holocaust. Certainly, the fact that Milchan produced both Gilliam’s film and various other Hollywood dystopian works like David Fincher’s *Fight Club* (1999) only gives these films an all the more absurd and disturbing essence that makes it seem as if all sides have been compromised and that there is a controlled-opposition, hence why there are virtually no films that deal with the serious and oftentimes quite blatant issues that are contributing to a real-life dystopian world like so-called multiculturalism (translation: racial conquest), racial miscegenation, philo-Semitism (which is a spiritual virus that, as indicated by his memoir, Gilliam seems to suffer from), socially engineered sexual and cultural deracination, rampant culturally/racially suicidal altruism, political cuckoldry, spiritual retardation, and xenophilia/ethnomasochism, among other fairly flagrant yet rarely cinematically depicted social and cultural diseases that Hollywood has played a central role in promoting and incubating via Bernaysian manipulation of the American psyche. Of course, Brazil gets a number of important things right in regard to the social decay and dysfunction of the modern age, including the corruption of religion (e.g. as reflected by a shot of a “Consumers for Christ” flag during a parade), inefficiency of technical efficiency, rise of postmodernism and cultural nihilism, gender inversion (while Sam is weak and passive, his lady love Jill is butch and aggressive) and disharmony between the sexes, trend of vain and superficial environmentalism (e.g. a petty old woman ruthlessly yells at Sam for dropping mere papers on the street even though the air is so bad that there are public oxygen dispensers), extreme pathological vanity (e.g. Sam’s mother’s plastic surgery addiction), the sexualization of children (e.g. a little girl played by Gilliam’s daughter Holly states to Sam in a quasi-salacious when he prepares to change his clothing, “Put it on, big boy. I won’t look at your willy”), social justice warrior style sloganing, thought crimes, and total intolerance from dissenting opinions, among other things.

As a result of recent experiences, I found the ending of *Brazil* to be extra putridly poignant, especially in regard to the quasi-catatonic protagonist humming to himself the eponymous theme song while looking like a blissful retard. Indeed, one day recently while I was at work, I noticed a less than sophisticated middle-aged co-worker loudly humming to himself a completely indecipherable mess that I assume was supposed to be some stupid pop rock song, only to encounter three or four other employees humming their own equally incoherent version of the same garbled mess over the course of the next couple of days, thus confirming to me that most people—not matter how intelligent or cultivated—have innate herd mentalities and tend to mindlessly consume and pantomime whatever worthless garbage that passes their general orbit. Of course, the most

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obvious example of this is how it seems to be a favorite pastime of Americans to quote stupid movie lines, even if they do not understand and/or have never seen the movie in question (after all, it seems that very few of the people that use the classic Hollywood insult “schmuck” in their vocabulary realize that it is actually Yiddish slang for “penis”). While the tendency of individuals to both consciously and subconsciously copy other people is surely an ancient survival instinct, the mainstream media, radio, television, Hollywood, and even public schools exploit these instincts and infect the masses with these self-destructive trends. Certainly, stupid yet catchy pop songs are excellent tools for putting a population under a sort of collective spell so that they will make for loyal and unquestioning worker bees that will tolerate being regularly shit and pissed on, as the music acts as an unconscious reflex that provides emotional support during times of stress or anxiety, with the protagonist of *Brazil* experiencing such a brutal degree of psychological trauma that his mind completely deteriorates and he falls into this escapist reflex permanently. As Gilliam’s film reveals, while the West may be an extremely overpopulated place where ‘teamwork’ is considered one of the highest virtues, especially by governments and employers, it seems that very few individuals have the capacity to have real and intimate connections with other people, with the hapless quasi-autistic protagonist not even realizing that his ostensible lifelong best friend is an uniquely unscrupulous psychopath who makes a living torturing people to death for a godless bureaucratic machine. Despite the absurd name of Hebraic lawyer turned Hollywood culture-distorter Sid Sheinberg’s completely butchered “Love Conquers All” cut, *Brazil* depicts a world where true love is, at least socially speaking, impossible and women are nothing more than mere proud consumer goods that strive to enhance their physical appearances via plastic surgery as a means to attract more desirable male buyers, who are naturally always looking to upgrade their female flesh, whether it be by buying a new babe or upgrading an existing one with fake tits or new lingerie. Indeed, love and emotional compatibility never enter the equation in the wholly materialistic sexual economy that is sardonically depicted in Gilliam’s flick. Quite like real-life, protagonist Sam and his shieldmaiden Jill would have no problem spending a beautiful lifetime together had they lived during a much simpler time when men were men and women were women and no one was confused about their role in life, but every aspect of the dystopian nightmare realm that they live in has made this innately impossible for various reasons.

I must confess that I am not really a fan of Terry Gilliam as either a man or a filmmaker as I find him to be somewhat of a perennially posturing left-wing pussy that acts like it is profoundly heroic to obnoxiously express impotent political statements that are, quite unlike with a lower-middleclass man that lives paycheck-to-paycheck, fairly safe and easy to make if you’re a respected wealthy man with dual-citizenship and multiple homes around the world, yet

I cannot deny that I regard *Brazil* as both a sort of personal Christmas time favorite as well as one of the few important films to come out of Hollywood during the 1980s. Indeed, Gilliam's film is like a *It's a Wonderful Life* for Cioranites and the rare sort of tough-minded individuals that can read Pentti Linkola yet still maintain a sense of humor. Arguably the last great 'American' anglophile, Gilliam almost seems like the kind of culturally confused Frankenstein monster that would be sired as a result of a decidedly disharmonious anti-romance between Peter Greenaway and Steven Spielberg as a strange bird that seems to think he can get away with creating Hollywood blockbusters for straight edge art fags, bourgeois anarchists, autistic libertarians, virginal middle-aged math teachers, and teenage nihilists. Undoubtedly Gilliam's most personal cinematic work to date, *Brazil* is ironically a film about a sort of sub-beta-boy that was directed by a man that would eventually become an alpha-male of sorts, albeit in a sort of absurd nerd fashion, thus underscoring the social dysfunction of our very real dystopian world, which artificially elevates people that would have failed miserably in previous societies. After all, chances are that someone as radically physically revolting like Spielberg clone J.J. Abrams would be peddling soiled socks out of a suitcase in a Polish ghetto only a century ago. In other words, like in *Brazil*, the 'game' is completely rigged and people like Abrams and Michael Bay do not become rich and famous because of talent or artistic prowess, but because of a certain combination of ruthlessness, nepotism, psychopathy, and/or greed, hence the glaring difference between the history of Hollywood and European arthouse cinema. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, Gilliam is a sort of glorified court jester who would have probably had his throat slit in more primitive times for running his mouth at a less than auspicious time, but of course, the difference between him and Hebraic hacks like Abrams and Bay is that he is actually an artist with a personal vision, hence why he has been less monetarily successful and has routinely battled with studios over his projects. Like a manic Monty Python molestation of Orson Welles' *The Trial* (1962) and Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963) as directed by a yank anglophile with goofy delusions of grandeur and a curious case of cultural amnesia, the film also seemingly unwittingly demonstrates why virtually anything of cultural value that is produced in the United States tends to have deep European influences (after all, even a proud leftist like Gilliam could not help but turn into a European). Likewise, in its bizarre yet quite fitting mix of British and American actors and ambiguous and anachronistic settings, the film demonstrates is an assumedly unintentional way that the cultureless mongrel known as the United States is largely responsible for the decay and deracination of the Occident, as a cancerous ex-colony that has begun to consume the very motherland that gave birth to it. Rather unfortunately, globalization and Americanization is transforming the entire world into a sort of all-homogenizing anarcho-tyrannical toilet that every single individual is expected to submit to, or as Robert De Niro's character sardonically states to

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Brazil protagonist Sam, "We're all in it together."

-Ty E

12 MONKEYS

Terry Gilliam (1995)

Or Twelve Monkeys, whichever you prefer. I missed this film for many years meaning that I didn't see this film till about a couple weeks ago. I'd put off re-viewing it until the time being as to let the theories and ideas of Terry Gilliam soak up in my brain. I'd consider myself a fan of Terry Gilliam but I'm more a fan of the esteemed Bruce Willis who plays the lead man James Cole as he drifts through time to prevent an apocalyptic crisis. To note, I'm not necessarily a fan of Brad Pitt. I admire some of his roles in films such as The Mexican, Kalifornia, Snatch, and of course Cool World. His performance as the viably insane antagonist chilled me to the nerves. Everything about his character rubbed me the wrong way - most notably his crazy eye. To say the least, Mr. Pitt outperformed every character in this movie. While Bruce Willis played the miserable role on key, it wasn't enough to topple to heavyweight champion of the film. Do pay attention to the synchronicity between Bruce Willis and Madeleine Stowe. After watching 12 Monkeys, I can see that I've been missing out for some time. The ending of 12 Monkeys is titanicly bleak and morose. I even pitied myself as the credits began to roll leaving a misty haze rotating around each individual thought. I viewed this film during my break at work so you can imagine most of my motor functions being rusted. I knew David Morse was a chilling man but I never expected to be so horrified by one of his characters. The punchline of the joke is that the characters aren't even the highlight of the film. In the story lies a tragedy of unforeseen proportions. 12 Monkeys is intriguingly similar to the avidly popular web game Pandemic 2. The idea of spreading a virus to each corner of the world isn't a very explored path of misery. Some of Gilliam's previous archetypes are indulged upon. The very similar future scientists are akin to many of Brazil's offered oddities. 12 Monkeys is a defined curio in the realm of many post-apocalyptic mainstream endeavors. I frequently beat myself up for not viewing this film sooner. I predict that had I seen this many years ago, I would have been beyond disturbed. 12 Monkeys tackles many identifiable flaws in the theory of time travel. For instance, diseases that might not have been tackled by immunity some years later. Even while Terry Gilliam creates many ideological theories about his course of time travel, the very figment of fourth-dimension traveling can be scientifically argued upon. 12 Monkeys isn't a film explaining the theories of time travel per say. The institutionalized may not always be the crazies you discover them to be. 12 Monkeys is a harrowing trip through time that still creeps along your spine to this day.

-mAQ

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS
FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS

Terry Gilliam (1998)

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas is a mildly entertaining book written by the late Hunter S. Thompson. I can imagine the book was “revolutionary” when first released for its overwhelming drug content and contempt for authority. Now these “subversive” ideas and acts of Thompson have been mainstreamed and common place in American society. Thankfully Terry Gilliam decided to spice up Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas with an ambitious cinema adaptation. I have to say that Johnny Depp makes a more interesting Hunter S. Thompson than the real man. Depp narrates the words of Thompson in a way that brings a whole other element to the feel of the novel. Depp makes a drugged out “character” of Thompson while creating new life to the “Gonzo” journalist. Benicio del Toro, an actor I have always hated, is successful in his comical role as Thompson’s attorney suffering from a horrible “racial handicap.” Director Terry Gilliam is notorious for being obsessed with creating a powerful and overwhelming mise en scène in his films. As can be expected, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas is no exception. Gilliam created a world in Las Vegas that brings new power to the words of Hunter S. Thompson. I especially enjoyed the scene in which Thompson sees a group of blood thirsty humanoid Lizards at the bar with him. Only Terry Gilliam could have imagined such an image in his mind to be put on celluloid. Of course, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, like many of Terry Gilliam’s other films has its flaws. Gilliam spends so much time obsessing with the image that the film is almost weighed down by aesthetics. Throughout the film, I would noticed myself nodding off or forgetting that I was watching the film. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas does get better with each viewing. Terry Gilliam did a much better job balancing the image and story with his master Brazil. Although many drug users and addicts love Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, I didn’t find the film to make illegal substances appealing. Hunter S. Thompson is in a constant state of paranoia and confusion. I will say that the book and film do a good job portraying the “effects” of drug experimentation. I was really hoping that Hunter S. Thompson dropped the radio in the bathtub of his Samoan attorney as “white rabbit” by Jefferson Airplane peaked. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas no doubt had an appropriate soundtrack. After all, you would have to be on drugs to enjoy much of the music featured in the film.

-Ty E

TIDELAND

Terry Gilliam (2005)

Anglophile Terry Gilliam claims that his inner child is a little girl. I have no doubt of this as his most recent film *Tideland* (2005) is his masterpiece. This dark film follows a young girl who has lost her parents due to drug overdoses. Her father even has her help shoot up so that he can go on "vacation." The little girl is more than happy to oblige. Eventually the little girl becomes stranded at her Grandmother's abandoned country house.

A mentally retarded young man by the name of Dickens eventually befriends the little girl. For me his character was quite disturbing. As a child I was always scared yet fascinated by mentally retarded children. In fact, they became sort of an obsession for me. Dickens has that same effect on me in *Tideland*. Terry Gilliam truly was able to capture the innocence of a child in a dark and twisted world. The little girl sees strange thing after strange thing yet is able to maintain her personhood.

The little girl's best friends are the doll heads that she wears on her fingers. Her interaction between the heads can be quite revealing to the strange mind of a little girl. The actress who played the little girl (Jodelle Ferland) gave an amazing performance. She must have great parents. It will be interesting to see what roles she does in twenty years from now.

Terry Gilliam has always been a director that is more obsessed with visuals and aesthetics than any other aspect of filmmaking. *Tideland* is no different however it is more successful in its attempts than any of Gilliam's other films. The surreal visuals of the film work hand and hand with its child perspective. Most of Gilliam's suffer from his utilization of fisheye lens and odd shots. One can't get past the image to enjoy the film. *Tideland* finally does what Gilliam set out to do right.

Tideland is a film that is obviously both love and hated. I plan to revisit it every so often. Whether you like it or not, it's a new and different experience. Something you have to invest yourself in. I doubt Terry Gilliam will ever make a film to top it. Making films about little girls at age sixty can't be topped.

-Ty E

FLESH FOR THE BEAST
FLESH FOR THE BEAST

Terry West (2003)

Naked women are generally a given when it comes to most contemporary horror films. For a lot of horror films, success depends on their combination of nudity and gore. *Flesh For the Beast*, directed by Terry M. West, is no exception. What makes *Flesh For the Beast* different is its employment of shoddy childlike masks not even worthy of Wes Craven's *Swamp Thing*.

Any hypnotic sexual appeal from these exposed harlots is lost as soon as they turn ghoulish and harness bargain bin Halloween masks. Terry M. West must be a fan of both R.L. Stine's *Goosebumps* series and Lucio Fulci's *City of the Living Dead*. Weak costumes and semi decent gore don't really match. Twenty years ago Terry M. West may have been able to get away with it as a novelty. Now he just seems like another unimaginative fan boy hack.

A Ken Foree clone and Sergio Leone henchman(Aldo Sanbrel) attempt to sparkle but fail in bringing even the most slightly plausible performance. If either had done something interesting, it wouldn't have rescued *Flesh For the Beast* from being the mediocre and banal bore-fest that it is. The film fails in all attempts to pay homage or even steal from other films. Terry M. West seems like the type of horror director who saw a couple of the great Lucio Fuci and Dario Argento films and thought he could recreate aspects of those films surely. Instead, he created a weak contemporary model for underground horror film-makers to come.

Surprisingly, the films soundtrack courtesy of KFCphile Buckethead, compliments its frenetically flawed editing. When I started watching the film and saw that it featured music from Buckethead, it made my expectations for *Flesh For the Beast* to be low. After viewing the film, it was one of the very few redeeming qualities . It added a sort of comic element to the film that was in contrast to the films literal attempt at comic relief in the form of a weasely documentary film cameraman.

Overall, *Flesh For the Beast* is another passable disk. Filled with uninteresting films and even more uninteresting extra features, it makes you even more aware of the stagnant independent horror film world. Although excellent underground films are being produced, films like *Flesh For the Beast* seem to be the most promoted(it has been released in a special edition set and two other releases). Watch it so you don't let your film turn out this way.

-Ty E

BLIND BEAST VS. KILLER DWARF

Teruo Ishii (2001)

Allow me to experiment a bit with this film writing. This isn't some attempt to bash a film but rather, a calling out to cinema-goer's of all types who appreciate film for more pretentious values. I've done it before. I've loved certain films because of how they look or the plot devices used. It's rare to find someone that hasn't had this guilty pleasure. This isn't so much a review as it is a testament to how wrong this film was made. Regardless of inspirations, the first thing I noticed about this film was how horribly they butchered the source material for the classic serialization of *Blind Beast*, let alone the masterpiece in Roman porn that Masumura created. To kick it off, imagine (if you have seen it) *Blind Beast*. We can all agree that it was a solid masterpiece and could be the poster child for any perverse or sadistic fetish that no one had the gumption to admit having. *Blind Beast* was a mosaic of perpetual sexuality. The Set's alone were among the most disturbing pieces I have ever encountered. Imagine if you will, Taking true art and pissing all over it. For instance; Any Warhol painting or Tarantino film. (Although I did enjoy *Pulp Fiction* regardless of how many ideas he stole from short films) Teruo Ishii has taken the setting of the tortured artists studio and dulled it down with embarrassing sculptures that I could even re-create. (*Blind Beast*: 1969) (*Blind Beast vs. Killer Dwarf*: 2001) I first blame Rampo for this. Being the writer who penned the serialization of the original story; *Blind Beast*, It is quite saddening to see this raping of a classic. This is almost as bad as when George Sluizer remade his own masterpiece (*The Vanishing*) into another rife Americanized film which debases art or originality in cinema while forcing you to spend 60 minutes staring at a younger Kiefer Sutherland in tight blue denims. I'll be the first to admit I haven't seen any of this directors other films. Judging by his filmography and cult status, I understand that he might have been a great director, but this last film before his death due to lung cancer stunk to high heavens. Like the "great" Tarantino, it seems that Ishii had decided to mesh a few good ideas stolen from original movies to create an even more original film. Not even science would allow such an abomination to occur. Now more onto the film, It's filmed in a generic soap opera style, the acting is abysmal, there is no engaging experience, and the dialogue feels like it is written by a children's book author. The next plot point is a Killer Dwarf who walks around parks at night dropping a woman's arm cut off to the shoulder. A noir detective played by legendary Shinya Tsukamoto (Shame on you!) attempts to follow the midget around various set So Ishii and Rampo teamed up to create a cross between *Blue Velvet*, *Blind Beast*, and every "curious author who wants to find the truth in an extremely risky situation" film. So they've done that, now what? You think a detective following a midget samurai around is bad? Wait till you find out that this midget also played *Godzilla's* son in one of the many sequels. What

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a resume. As my original argument stated, I don't understand how people can conform to a certain film for bare bones aesthetics. I guess that same could be said for my love on Švankmajer's Alice. While I never tire of the film, I can understand how the annoying dub and some of the scenes can rub a cinephile's skin the wrong way. It definitely wasn't his best work, but I still hold a fan-boy crush on all of his works. Another example could be Slaughtered Vomit Dolls. This is a remarkable achievement in vomit cinematography but that's really about all the steadfast weight it carries. It does have deep meaning and several underlying themes which chill you to your bones, but when you watch Slaughtered Vomit Dolls, face it, you're watching it for the gore. More examples are Santa Sangre from auteur Jodorowsky, Pretty much any Miike film, most of Argento's work, and most of Lynch's later works. While these films lack in substance or any narrative, most people still flock to these films due to the popularity of his other works. Obscurity is the new fad and it won't stop with the birth of the term "Indie Rock" or "Indie Films" True Story: Ty E and I saw 1408 in Target with an Indie sticker. What has the world come to?

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Tessa Hughes-Freeland (1994)

While nowadays associated with degenerate (sub-beta)male auteur filmmakers like Nick Zedd (*We Eat Scum*, *The Bogus Man*) and Richard Kern (*You Killed Me First*, *Fingered*), the Cinema of Transgression movement apparently had a less ballsy and more gynocentric flavor when it originally began, or as one of the female members of the scene, Casandra Stark Mele, complained in an interview featured in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, “When I first met up with other filmmakers I felt these concepts were shared. I remember a lot of diversity, a lot of unique filmmaking going on at first. And it was not, at the beginning, male dominated. Tessa Hughes-Freeland and Ela Troyano organized all the downtown, underground film showings, as well as making and screening their own films. Quite a few women I recall were working and showing their films: Alyce Wittenstein, Beth B, Phoebe Legere, Leslie Lowe, Kembra Pfahler, Penelope Wehrli, etc, quite a few. It didn’t feel male dominated to me at all. It was later that certain egos seized opportunities to dominate, by the usual means of manipulation and feigning appearances as being the biggest, meanest, baddest, loudest; the usual infantile perversions.” Indeed, apparently the little known female auteur, who is (in)famous for denouncing and disassociating herself from the Cinema of Transgression scene, blames Zedd, Kern, and their dimestore cum-bucket diva Lydia Lunch for the degeneration of the NYC underground film movement. Admittedly, I was so intrigued by Mele’s candid shit-talking that I decided to hunt down as many as films directed by female filmmakers associated with the would-be-avant-garde cinema movement that I could find, thus leading me to viewing some of the most insanely inept and directionless Super-8 films that I have ever seen (and I say that as a fan of works like J.R. Bookwalter’s *The Dead Next Door* (1989), Leif Jonker’s *Darkness: The Vampire Version* (1993) and John R. Hand’s *Frankenstein’s Bloody Nightmare* (2006), among other shot-on-Super-8 schlock). While I did not mind seeing Mele’s largely aimless anti-romance short *Wrecked on Cannibal Island* (1986) where a dumb ass dude named Natz performs cunnilingus on the filmmaker (notably at the end of the short, there is a brief shot of Mele’s bushy guidette beaver, which has “Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here” above it over the artist’s womb), I found most of these hopelessly D.I.Y. works to be decided duds that seem like they were directed by mental patients who were handed Super-8 cameras during some art therapy experiment gone awry. Indeed, for every somewhat interesting film like Alyce Wittenstein’s fairly memorable dystopian flick *Betaville* (1986), which is like Godard’s *Alpaville* (1965) as molested by Slava Tsukerman’s *Liquid Sky* (1982), there is a considerably childish homemovie experiment like Lung Leg’s 2-minute celluloid turd *Worm Movie* (1985) where the seemingly autistic underground

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pin-up model turned would-be-auteuress thinks simply filming herself with a worm in her mouth while making rather retarded faces is edgy enough to qualify as 'avant-garde' cinema. Out of all the female-directed films that I have seen that are associated with the Cinema of Transgression scene, the fiercely farcical feminist neo-fable *Nymphomania* (1994) directed by British-born experimental filmmaker Tessa Hughes-Freeland (*Baby Doll*, *Rhonda Goes To Hollywood*) and written by and starring Holly Adams is certainly one of the more timeless yet nonetheless idiosyncratic films to have sprung from the mostly mediocre movement, even if it seems like it was assembled in a couple hours while the film crew took turns passing around a joint.

While many, if not most, of the films associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement seem quite typical of their particular zeitgeist and, in turn, have aged less than gracefully as a result, *Nymphomania* features a classic silent era aesthetic that seems to fall somewhere in between F.W. Murnau's swansong *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas* (1931) and Kenneth Anger's *Rabbit's Moon* (1950), albeit with graphic nudity and cunt-stabbing violence, though it certainly pantomimes elements from the very beginning of film history, even if it naturally looks hopelessly amateurish compared to something like Georges Méliès' masterpiece *Le Royaume des fees* (1903) aka *The Kingdom of the Fairies*. Indeed, in that sense, the 9-minute black-and-white silent short has way more in common with the works of Jack Smith (*Flaming Creatures*, *Normal Love*) and James Bidgood's kaleidoscopic high-camp micro-masterpiece *Pink Narcissus* (1971) than the sub-lowbrow trash works of Zedd and Kern. Rather unfortunately, the film comes equipped with an extremely moronic one-dimensional misandristic message that could have only slithered out of the same NYC art fag ghetto as the likes of Karen Finley and other chicks that seem pissed that they do not have dicks. A work that depicts an ostensibly graceful fairy with a dyke haircut who is literally fucked to death by the great god Pan, who is depicted as sort of brutally buffoonish sex demon with a radically repellent melungeon-like appearance and a long yet skinny dagger-like prick, *Nymphomania* is notably described on Hughes-Freeland's official website as follows: "The original idea for this film came about as a reaction to a sense of violation experienced through a love affair gone wrong." Indeed, it seems that the film is a clichéd hysterical female response to a botched love affair where the big mean male, who is literally portrayed as a murderous monster with the IQ of a gnat in Hughes-Freeland's work, is held completely culpable for the perennial disharmony between the sexes. Of course, if interpreted as an expressive depiction of one woman-child's post-childhood disillusionment with the storybook romance of fairytales, *Nymphomania* is much easier to digest.

Nymphomania, which is somewhat fittingly set to Claude Debussy's "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune", begins in a sort of classic Golden Age Hollywood fashion with a shot of tree branches that quickly disappear from the screen to

voyeuristically reveal a scantily dressed winged fairy nymph (Holly Adams), who awakes from sleeping on a large rock in the middle of a forest and then proceeds to perform a graceful ballet dance that demonstrates the elegance and angelic splendor of the character. Seemingly completely naive to the oftentimes brutal nature of the world, the nymph surely makes for easy prey for any half-serious predator. Meanwhile, in a less aesthetically pleasing area of the forest, pernicious pervert Pan (Bob Mook)—a fairly grotesque and loathsome looking being that resembles a sort of crack-addled demonic metalhead—wakes up with morning wood and makes an exaggerated face of abject disgust, as if he got drunk on too much fairy dust the night before. A bestially carnivorous devil of the violently impulsive sort, Pan satisfies his voracious appetite for live meat by biting into a cute furry animal and then vulgarly spitting some of its less appetizing guts out. Naturally, when Pan spots the nymph prancing around the forest, he seems to interpret the dance as some sort of exotic mating ritual, becomes instantly aroused and begins fiercely filing his fun-rod as if he has never seen a female fairy before. Of course, when the naughty nymph strips off her clothes and then proceeds to carry on her pseudo-provocative prancing, Pan becomes all the more ferocious in his recklessly wanton wank routine. When the naked nimble nymph eventually notices Pan staring at her in a less than savory fashion while he is bludgeoning his beefsteak and notices the bestial lust in his eyes, she naturally immediately attempts to run away from him, but it does not take long for the predatory beast with the dagger-like dick to grab her by the leg and begin manhandling the completely helpless fairy in a savagely sensual fashion. Unfortunately for the poor fairy, Pan has a rather large member and while forcibly plowing the playful forest princess' magical puss, his pernicious prick manages to pierce completely through her tiny abdomen, thereupon killing her in the middle of coitus. As she dies, a tear of blood runs down the nymph's face. In the end, Pan triumphantly blows his horn as if to celebrate his act of inter-species rape turned accidental necrophilia.

In an admirably no bullshit approach to analyzing her own film and, in the process, unwittingly exposing her own misguided misandry, auteur Tessa Hughes-Freeland wrote regarding *Nymphomania*: “Hoping to express the conflict between the feminine experience of sex as a loving unifying event and its corruption by the male's base animal instincts. The female body is not necessarily portrayed as a sexual phenomenon. It is the male who transforms the nude female form into an image of sexuality. The inclusion of nudity and penetration in film is often perceived as and labeled pornographic, in this instance, nudity and penetration are not intended to arouse or stimulate the audience. Instead, it invites the viewer to contemplate the relationship he or she has to his or her own sexuality.” Since Hughes-Freeland's film has apparently invited me to contemplate my own sexuality, I must say that the short did not in any way arouse me, but only made me think that the director seems to absurdly believe that women are sexless

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children and men are rabid rape-mad monsters who live solely to eat, destroy, and fuck, even if innocent fairies happen to get killed in the process. Indeed, despite its scenes of nudity and inclusion of a big devilish dick, Nymphomania seems almost puritanical in its portrayal of sex and sexuality, thus giving credence to the timeless stereotype that feminists are frigid cunts that fear and loathe cocks and cannot stand the fact that women typically take a fairly passive role when it comes to carnal acts. In fact, the film's allegorical portrayal of the male sex is so absurdly over-the-top that the short ultimately feels like a parody of post-Dworkin feminism, thus making it tolerable to those sane cinephiles that think Laura Mulvey is an annoying twat and consider popular feminist flicks like Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames* (1983) and Rose Troche's *Go Fish* (1994) to be the celluloid equivalent of a STD. Still, one must give credit to Nymphomania for being a truly all-female flick in terms of both spirit and film crew (Hughes-Freeland even gave herself the politically correct credit of 'cameraperson'), with Rachel Amodeo, who went on to direct and star in the fairly decent post-Cinema of Transgression melodrama *What About Me* (1993) featuring NYC underground figures ranging from Johnny Thunders and Dee Ramone to Richard Hell and Nick Zedd, acting as the film's special effects assistant. With her short *Rest in Peaces* (1991), Amodeo would manage to assemble a Gothic horror work with a style more akin to Carl Th. Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1931) than to the preposterously juvenile post-punk celluloid puke of Zedd or the beta-boy junky (sado)masochism of Kern, thus making the film a great double feature with Nymphomania.

While probably not the greatest film directed by a female filmmaker associated with the Cinema of Transgression movement (Jeri Cain Rossi's savagely sardonic Flannery O'Connor adaptation *Black Hearts Bleed Red* (1992) is certainly better), Nymphomania is, for better or worse, one of the few true classics of the NYC underground movement as a work that is nearly immaculate in its quaint D.I.Y. amateurishness. Notably, the film, as well as Hughes-Freeland's early burlesque oriented short *Baby Doll* (1982), was included in Cinema of Transgression 'canon' featured in the bilingual English-German book *You Killed Me First: The Cinema of Transgression* (2012), which was a companion piece to the movement's first collective exhibition at the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art in 2012. Of course, compared to other films that also utilize anachronistic cinematic techniques, like the works of a filmmaker Guy Maddin or even the queer New Zealand short *Twilight of the Gods* (1995) directed by Stewart Main, Hughes-Freeland's anti-fantasy short seems somewhat weak and infantile, but of course that is part of its charm as a kitschy girly film with teeth. Indeed, as director Hughes-Freeland stated in an interview featured in *Deathtripping*, "In terms of the sensibility of the people involved, I think that people regarded the Cinema of Transgression as infantile, which it undoubtedly was, with all the fun involved in being completely fucking infantile, completely irresponsible." If

Nymphomania proves anything in regard to the gender politics of the Cinema of Transgression, it is that at least some of the lady filmmakers associated with the movement had more class and eloquence than both Kern and Zedd combined, but I guess that does not really say much.

-Ty E

WILD ZERO
WILD ZERO

Tetsuro Takeuchi (1999)

Wild Zero is known to me solely for the very similar traits to that of Versus and in part of the Lightning Bolt/Guitar Wolf 7" Split that I jubilantly indulged in during the height of my musical adolescence. I discovered many questionable traits to distinguish appeasement from guilty pleasure and on this quest for the ultimate thrill I weakened my standards to include, not up to glorious entertainment with an ethnic propagandic twist seen only in Japanese trash cinema. Stereotypes of Italy leading in as the full purveyor of trash are dutifully ill-informed and in this preposterous lie the truth comes to light: all Japanese films excluding a few are trash. Trash meaning of a trashy aesthetic, cheese, and B-habits such exhibited in Wild Zero. The Japs courageously stepped upon unstable ground and have managed to mold a market out of second-rate zombie films and low-budget J-horror films that have no elements of terror other than vanishing, stoic figures with jet black hair. In many pieces of eccentric Pan-Asian video experiments, the Japanese will also stroll through their native city limits, come across an electric guitar, pick it up and be instantly transformed into an egomaniacal slant-eyed badass with enough attitude to slick his hair into a quiff. This acute extension of pride has had many recent offenders? Detroit Metal City, Electric Dragon 80000v, the hit video game Gitaroo Man, and yours truly, Wild Zero. In regards to the previous statement of instrument phallicism, Detroit Metal City hangs weight as a stark example. Soichi-san has dreams of creating Swedish pop music but upon his failing talent at such, he picks up an electric guitar and is transformed into the formidable Johannes Krauser II. Acoustic guitar: homosexual, Electric guitar: heterosexual badass - See the manifestation of transferring sexual orientation? It's all too clear to just be a stroke of accidental recurring themes in the midst of Asian rock. Their attempts to create an Eastern rockabilly fashion in Wild Zero is laughable at best and that's the kick that lies in the taste of this scintillating query of oddball antics that eventually spirals into sexual confusion as our "lovable" hero, Ace, who doesn't play guitar, turns into a homosexual by films end. Pushed to beliefs that "love knows no genders" by Guitar Wolf himself, Ace drops his own perception of targeted affection in order to snootily follow a beeline placed before him by a band of Japanese noise-punk musicians. Let it be known that I'd first eat my own shoe than take relationship advice from someone from Japan. Apart from the amount of sheer complacency, Wild Zero soon matures into a prime piece of zombie cinema that had a rough start without the help of Guitar Wolf to even the ties. With Guitar Wolf's absence, Wild Zero would have been just another Tokyo Zombie. All play and no work makes zombie films sour to the core and in this statement I'd like to approve Wild Zero's cause of non-stop play to have something of a productive nature in building a semi-serious film - serious as in the way it was

created, not marketed. Wild Zero is basically pure immature adrenaline in personified film form. With aliens, rock shows, and zombies, the odds were against Wild Zero for succeeding with so much inclination for the absurd and for the better, it did. To top off this piece of brilliantly sub-par cinema, a scene with a topless femme fatale is included, shower and all. Wild Zero is the apotheosis of a hypothesis : an intellectually scarred vision of how modern Japanese absurdity should be confined into a single shell casing that features everything one could hope to achieve with the promise of "over the top." If you can manage to look past the homosexual force fed flair (trust me, I did,) then you might come out of this film in grand working condition. Don't let my stoicism get to your inner workings. I am merely a jaded cynic with a fiery temper to boot. Wild Zero offered me everything I needed to cool down and in the end I found this film to be an utmost necessity to the Japanese cult movement. Any tag line that reads "Jet rock 'n' roll" must boast a swift undercurrent of zany entertainment that can only be extinguished by the saddening (old) news that Bass Wolf died of natural causes in 2005.

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CONFESSIONS
CONFESSIONS

Tetsuya Nakashima (2010)

Selected as the Japanese entry for Best Foreign Film in the 83rd annual Academy Awards, Tetsuya Nakashima's most recent work in "pop filmmaking" is *Confessions*, a twisty diorama of revenge and manipulation. I would be lying if I didn't admit that the first 30 minutes of *Confessions* leveled my expectations, comprising of a teacher's confession to her classmates. I plan to open my review in the same vein that the teacher Ms. Moriguchi scolds her students and dive right into the meat and matter of the story. Near the end of the term, Ms. Moriguchi speaks under the bustling homeroom of shrieking girls and boasting boys to mention that she is retiring from teaching. After rebutting the claim that she is avoiding responsibility, she then mentions her status as single mother, going on to reiterate her daughter's death that occurred not too long ago. The film gets tricky when Ms. Moriguchi reveals that the death was no accident and that the killers are seated among the very demographic before her. What is so strange about *Confessions* is the manner in which it is produced and compiled. The central components aiding the accessibility is the inclusion of the Radiohead song *Last Flowers till the Hospital*, instrumentals from Boris, and the frequent usage of slow-motion and melancholy as to capture fleeting moments with ardor.

There are a few points in *Confessions* that did make me question the need for such grandeur. While Nakashima is predominately known for his pop art with film, as *Kamikaze Girls'* popularity bleeds through, the repetition of slow-motion acts and ambient streams of instrumentals makes it feel like you are watching the same instance over and over again, which you are. The narrative of *Confessions* is what grabs hold and justly so. After Moriguchi's confession to her class, the story progresses past into the next year to show the aftermath but halts mid-step and backs up a bit, replaying the events from different perspectives and confessions. So essentially, *Confessions* is much in tune with a broken record, although being one that doesn't inflame your senses. When conceptualizing *Confessions* from a novel to a feature length film, Nakashima visualized Takako Matsu as Ms. Moriguchi and vowed only to proceed with filming if her name was attached to star. I find such dedication to a vision flattering the very meaning of cinema. *Confessions* is many things: tragic, compelling, accessible, empowering, and true to the spirit of teenage years. Nakashima invokes teenage gossip so well that I found myself reminiscing my own high school years while watching *Confessions*. Culturally and worlds apart, sure, but the cruelty of children remains intact regardless of landmass, this I know. Employing scenes of text messages to scatter the harsh opinions of fellow classmates, *Confessions'* student body is essentially a pack of piranhas, eager to devour any and all forms of life upon breaking the water.

What it boils down to is a boisterous stage drama. *Confessions* boasts many

wonderful set-pieces, is filmed with a keen eye for wide shots, and gift-wraps its "psychological thriller" package with a fantastic palette of vivid colors. It is what you'd expect of a Hollywood film but living up to its promise of intrigue. Most self-proclaimed psychological thrillers couldn't hold a flame to Confessions and the many darkly-comic passages of teen angst that resides in its sterile walls. Not all things can be hidden with style and polish though. Confessions is malnourished Japanese cinema down to its core - call it culturally deficient. Replace the characters with American actors and you'd hardly recognize the drastic change of casting. I can appreciate the effort put forth into Westernizing it and the budget saves it from piling atop the amateur and dry stack of most Japanese filmmakers but what I want with Japanese films is something that cannot be replicated outside of its walls, hence why I explore international film in the first place. This isn't all bad though as this, in turn, morphs Confessions into an excellent gateway exception for even the most prudish of snobs who refute the idea of "reading while watching". But for what it is worth, Confessions is presented perfectly; it's a film that is a cultural chameleon, can be enjoyed by near anyone, seemingly impossible to dislike (invalid to opinion unless you dissect for dissent), and a precise mixture of woe, humor, and MTV. Look forward to this release from Third Window Films, can you ever go wrong with their catalog?

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BANGKOK DANGEROUS
BANGKOK DANGEROUS

The Pangs (2008)

****Major Spoilers in the 4th paragraph**** Bangkok Dangerous is that film; the one you lampoon and crack witty jokes before the release while laying a claim of hatred upon something you haven't seen. Whether it be Nicholas Cage's awful hairdo (Almost rivaling Tom Hanks' in The Da Vinci Code) Every year, a multiple amount of films were released away from prying eyes but this didn't stop uneducated word of mouth to demolish a film's box office chance. This is the story of one film that got a last laugh by being a somewhat enjoyable film experience. Now I haven't seen the original yet, but it's in my queue. I expect the original to blow this out of the water and force me to look down disappointedly on this Nicholas Cage hair vessel. When this motion picture isn't being bogged down with repressive noir monologues (from a character that was intended to be deaf & mute), extremely predictable situations, and flawed and immature side characters, the film retains some substance. The film assumes some condescension over the original by making the lead character speak fluidly and wear a ridiculous cowboy hat. It also doesn't help the fact that some American guy named Joe, the ONLY white man in Bangkok, is an international hitman. Being a hitman is about stealth and creating a disguise and/or alter-ego. I guess Cage never thought ahead too well or he could have called this one from afar, sticking out like a sore thumb and all. It's the final moment of the film that seals its fate. Watching Nicholas Cage wounded in a car with his last target, sitting beside him with a dead silence about them both is a mesmerizing scene. One of which you silence your friends to watch what happens next. He puts the gun to his head and pulls Surat's head parallel to his. With a squeeze of the trigger, we see the back seat explode in a fire flash and blood. Nicholas Cage's limp arm is seen recoiling and death twitching through the rear window. This is an image you won't soon forget. Alternate Poster that I thought deserved a view The action is a weird mix of styles. You can notice the fact that two directors are at work. One produces wonderful techniques such as seeing bullets pierce a body in a boat, then a quick cut to the murky depths below as we see bullets trail through the water. The water then turns a dark shade of red as blood begins billowing out of the holes. The other director is the Michael Bay type who has a fetish for people standing on top of exploding motorcycles while aimlessly shooting water jugs in a strafing manner. Allow me to be biased and irrational for a moment's time. If Nicholas Cage didn't sport such a god-awful toupee and cowboy hat, I would have respected The Pang Brothers re-envisioning a hell of a lot more. Bangkok Dangerous is riddled with flaws, I won't lie, but there is something behind the thin shell that is more meaningful than I could have imagined. A punk Joaquin Phoenix could have been a much better sidekick to Nicholas Cage in Bangkok Dangerous than Kong ever could.

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SPEED RACER
SPEED RACER

The Wachowskis° (2008)

Kicking off the summer season is a list of long awaited blockbusters directed by some of Hollywood's biggest names. Remakes and adaptations are the biggest craze in the film industry, so it comes as no surprise that Speed Racer would be green-lit. The directors and stars were juggled around for several years until they found the duo with the perfect intentions. The Wachowski Brothers are very well-known for their cyber trilogy The Matrix. Together, these brothers create a breathing world for what was once a series of drawings. This breathing world features amazing schemes of colors that were created with a massive amount of green-screening. We have cars with elaborate safety devices similar to the ones featured in Demolition Man. We have a great depth of a crime ring reminiscent to Dick Tracy's villains. Part Sonic the Hedgehog and Part Kung-Fu, Speed Racer is like a clashing of classic entertainment to create an action smoothie. When the film's trailer was released, many fans of the huge series groaned and were disappointed. While the film did do very bad at the box office, this lies blame to the release of the mega hit Iron Man and also the fact that the people viewing this film expect some intriguing plot for something that is potentially a story that could never have any depth. Speed Racer is what it is; eye candy. The visual effects are so off the wall and gorgeous. Speed Racer is a kaleidoscopic retina rapist outfitted with amazing performances from Richard Roundtree, Matthew Fox, and Emile Hirsch. Granted, the film has its own problems but this film still sprints to the finish line. It serves as a childrens film and even has something for adults. Many one liner's grace the screen. The most memorable would be John Goodman calling a ninja a "nonja" Some of the scenes suited for children will literally leave any adult facepalming due to the flagrant marketing to children. I long dreaded the day the word "cooties" would be used in a film again. As every film should have, Speed Racer also has it's share of controversy. During filming, the Chimpanzee bit the stand-in for Spritle and due to this, the chimp got hit. I would like to say beaten up for comedic value but it was simply a strike. Due to this ridiculous incident, the AHA rated Speed Racer unacceptable. Speed Racer is an experience unlike many. The plot is quick and delivers a smooth road to the action which is sprinkled through out the film nicely. Matthew Fox is Racer X. After my recent LOST obsession, It's nice to see Fox play another role besides Jack. Speed Racer will make you laugh, wow, and near tear up due to the montages of inspirations. It is arguably a great film. It depends on your idea of fun. Relive your childhood and enjoy this.

-mAQ

HER NAME WAS LISA

Theo van Gogh (1979)

A couple years before his depraved dream collaboration with Hebraic hardcore star Jamie Gillis (*Through the Looking Glass, Water Power*) that produced the two nastily nihilistic blue movie masterpieces, *Corruption* (1983) and *Midnight Heat* (1983), artsploitation auteur turned rather reluctant pornographer Roger Watkins aka 'Richard Mahler'—a troubled and truly underground figure best remembered today for his brutal and majorly misanthropic Manson-esque exploitation flick *The Last House on Dead End Street* (1977) aka *The Cuckoo Clocks of Hell*—made his directorial debut in the wayward fuck flick world with the considerably gritty and undeniably unnerving work *Her Name Was Lisa* (1980) starring archetypical 'porn bitch' Samantha Fox (*Jack n' Jill*, *Babylon Pink*) and Hispanic negress Vanessa del Rio (*Foxtrot*, *Maid in Manhattan*). A former streetwalker and call girl, del Rio is probably best known for having a grotesquely large clitoris, so it was probably to Watkins' benefit that he refused to shoot the sex scenes for his first porn flick. Unfortunately for the viewer, Watkins had his financial backer/cinematographer Dave Derby shoot these scenes and for whatever reason, the money man thought it would be a good idea to spend most of the sex scenes doing super close-ups of the performers' mostly unflattering rectums, cunts, and clitorises. As Watkins described in an interview with interview with David Kerekes featured in *Headpress 23: Funhouse* (2002), he accidentally got involved in the porn industry after going with his friend to collect money from Mr. Derby, who asked him "You wanna do some porn?" after hearing that he was a filmmaker. Of course, Watkins, who had money trouble for most of his life, agreed with the stipulation that he would not direct the fuck scenes, later recollecting regarding the rather strange and somewhat depraved experience of directing his first porno, "So I made this film called *HER NAME WAS LISA*, which I thought was pretty perverse because Derby had a daughter named Lisa. He says to me, "I have this daughter. I see a film that opens up with this girl called Lisa in a coffin, and I want to see how she gets there." That was what he wanted to do. So I wrote this thing, which took about two hours—because how much dialogue can there be in a porn film? I remember he paid me \$2,500 and I thought "God, this is great!" Then he lost the script [...] He called me up and I just wrote it again and he gave me another \$1,000." Of course, *Her Name Was Lisa* was a big hit and would lead to Watkins becoming one of the most 'respected' auteur pornographers of his time, which is no small accomplishment since it was era of 'porn chic.' A rather morbid and less than titillating (anti)pornographic tale told through a series of flashbacks about how a lowly massage parlor slut who went from becoming a successful model and 'kept woman' of a perverted publisher, only to degenerate into a junky lesbo who died prematurely after getting hooked on heroin after being introduced to it by

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her nefarious negro girlfriend, Watkins' film might be described by some as a cautionary anti-drug piece, but it is just too plain dark, depressing, and needlessly nihilistic to convince anyone to stay off drugs. Instead, it might inspire some more less-than-stable junkies working in the so-called adult entertainment industry to blow their brains out.

Opening with a seemingly somber young man named Paul (Rick Iverson of Roberta Findlay's *Justine: A Matter of Innocence* and Charles Larkin's *The Love-In Arrangement*) attending the Catholic funeral viewing of a beautiful young brunette named Lisa (Samantha Fox), the viewer soon questions how the young girls ended up in a wooden box in the first place. Indeed, through a series of episodic pseudo-erotic flashbacks, the viewer will soon find out what led poor Lisa to a semi-lavish life of lechery that ultimately turned tragically lethal. Flashback to an unspecified period of time in the near past and little Lisa is a bitchy and seemingly stuck-up prostitute who works at a 'massage parlor' where clients pay \$20 to spend 15 minutes receiving a quick carnal thrill from the girlish hooker. When a young, vaguely handsome, and superficially charming photographer named Paul pays \$20 to "talk" with Lisa about the prospect of becoming one of his models, her life is, for better or worse, changed forever. Indeed, although finding the photographer's intentions to be somewhat dubious at first, Lisa comes by Paul's studio and witnesses bloody naked chicks with guns being photographed to the soothing Teutonic electronic sounds of "We Are the Robots" by Kraftwerk. While Lisa and Paul develop a pleasant professional, as well as sexual, relationship, that all changes when the latter's employer decides that he wants to meet the new model.

Stephen Sweet (David Pierce of *Debbie Does Dallas* and Carter Stevens' *Double Your Pleasure*) is a successful publisher and entrepreneur and Paul owes his career to the perverted businessman, who regularly buys nudie photos from the small fry photographer, who cannot say no to his prestigious pompous boss' demand to see his latest model. Against Paul's will, Mr. Sweet comes to meet Lisa, who he has become obsessed with her since seeing nude photos of her. Before she can really say anything, Mr. Sweet begins feeling up Lisa and bragging about how successful of a businessman he is. While Lisa claims that she is "nobody's fool" and tries to hold her own against the rather persuasive Svengali-like businessman, she soon becomes the virtual sex slave and 'kept woman' of Mr. Sweet, who gives her a fancy apartment stocked full of expensive alcoholic beverages, sex toys, and other lavish, if not decadent, creature comforts. After showing Lisa the apartment that he has bought specifically to keep her semi-imprisoned in so that he can use her as his own personal whore, Mr. Sweet makes the following stipulation to his sassy sexual serf, "Alls I ask in return is that you're here when I want you to be." Indeed, a pathologically punctual man, Mr. Sweet demands that Lisa be at the apartment at no later than 10pm that night and that she get acquainted with "a few odds and ends in the bedroom,"

which includes whips, a leather gimp mask, and other stereotypical BDSM related items. When Mr. Sweet returns that night, Lisa demands that Mr. Sweet strip of all his clothes and then she proceeds to tie him to the bed, but not before slapping him across the face like a little bitch. Of course, being a social sadist who is really a closet masochist like so many other successful businessmen and lawyers, Mr. Sweet rather enjoys the decidedly degrading experience. After strapping Sweet to the bed and putting the gimp mask over his head, Lisa hatefully whispers to him "I'm not going to let you cum...even when you beg me, I'm not going to let you cum." Indeed, after pouring wine over his body and less than impressive prick, Lisa forces Mr. Sweet to lick her "nice ass," which he does with gusto for a number of minutes in a rather grating scene that features less than flattering close-ups of Ms. Fox's tail. When they are finished doing what some might describe as 'fucking,' Lisa hatefully states to Mr. Sweet, "Get out and don't come back until your tongue grows another six inches." Of course, born sexual dictator Lisa is not amused when he brings two of his friends, 'Doc' (played by Samantha Fox's common law husband Bobby "Clown Prince of Porn" Astyr) and 'Dopey' (Randy West of Kim Christy's Squalor Motel), over to gang-rape her. Indeed, after giving Lisa some pain killers in what is her first step towards drug addiction, Mr. Sweet masturbates to his concubine being devilishly defiled by depraved duo Doc and Dopey in a variety of eclectically damaging and degrading ways.

Luckily, Lisa has just made friends with a big black beastess that she met at an otherworldly spa named Carmen (Vanessa del Rio) and she will help her take revenge against Mr. Sweet because, as she states, "I hate seeing beauty being abused." Indeed, one night, Mr. Sweet is delighted to see Carmen randomly show up with a long whip and leather S&M garb while Lisa, whose thighs are covered in large bruises, ferociously masturbates on the floor in a rather acrobatic fashion. After declaring like a true pompous posh pervert, "My, my...I guess the evening won't be a waste after all. Let me compliment you on your choice of friends, dear," Mr. Sweet joins Lisa and Carmen for the carnal escapades but before he knows it, he is being raped in the rectum by a vengeful woman. Indeed, While Carmen pins Mr. Sweet down and declares, "Get it all the way up there...fuck his ass," Lisa hate-fucks him with a thick strap-on while he begs for mercy in vain, though the viewer suspects the majorly masochistic businessman enjoys being viciously bum-bugged by a woman. While Carmen earned Lisa's love and affection by acting as her savior and helping her take her revenge against Mr. Sweet, she is really a disturbingly deceptive and conniving little Sapphic cunt of the certifiably psychopathic sort and she wastes no time in getting her new 'friend' hooked on heroin. Indeed, as the film ultimately reveals, compared to Carmen, Mr. Sweet seems like a slightly depraved little angel. In an offbeat scene featuring an orgasmic opium haze juxtaposed with the fitting sounds of "Dazed and Confused" by classic rock degenerates Led Zeppelin, Lisa begins

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peddles her pussy to a threesome-inclined husband (Ron Hudd Cecil Howard's 1982 classic *Scoundrels*) and wife (played by Robin Byrd, who later hosted the 'adult oriented' cable talk show 'Robin Byrd Show') so that she can fund her devastating drug habit. Looking for a fix after she can no longer seem to sell her gash for cash, Lisa soon comes crawling back to wanton wench Carmen, who immediately remarks upon seeing her fallen friend, "you look like hell," to which the withdrawing junk replies in a meek fashion, "I feel like hell. That's why I am here." After Lisa begs for some dope in a groveling manner so that she can inject it into her arm to temporarily relieve the pain of heroin withdraw, Carmen demands a kiss, but when the jaded junky gives her psychopathic non-friend a passionate peck on the lips, the nefarious negress does not kiss back but merely looks at her desperate victim with abject contempt. After giving Lisa a cold figurative kiss of death, Carmen states, "I'll let you help yourself" and hands the forsaken beauty a needle with the heroin that she will ultimately unwittingly kill herself with. As one might suspect, *Her Name Was Lisa* ultimately concludes coldly with a shot of the eponymous anti-heroine's casket.

Despite being one of Roger Watkins' greatest artistic efforts, be it fuck flick or otherwise, the filmmaker had mixed feelings on his wicked little pornographic debut *Her Name Was Lisa*, stating in an interview featured in *Headpress 23: Funhouse*: "I don't like the film very much. It had some things I like quite a bit: it has a scene where Vanessa Del Rio is injecting Lisa was heroin and stuff. And I like the ending, it's pretty bleak." Indeed, Watkins' was so disappointed by Dave Derby's direction of the porn sequences that he later decided to break his rule that he would never direct porn scenes, stating regarding the poorly directed sex segments: "But what I don't like is Dave Derby's photography and directing of the sex. And its tempo. It looks like a Mexican Super-8 loop or some shit. That's why some of the later pornography I did I directed everything. If I've got to do it, it's going to look good." On top of directing some of the most sexually unflattering porn scenes in film history, Derby was apparently part of a sleazy social scene that was just as degenerate as the one featured in *Her Name Was Lisa*, with Watkins later remarking regarding working with him on the production of the film: "Here we are, Easter Sunday, 1979. There are derelict coke-heads lying on the floor, some bitch got mad at Samantha Fox, picked up a knife, threw it at her, it went in the wall about this far from her head. There are drugs all over the place. I'm turning around and some guy's dick is standing there..." Not surprisingly, Fox also led a drug-addled life comparable to that of her character in Watkins' film, though she apparently eventually got off the hard stuff and in 2003, she had the distinct honor of being inducted into the AVN Hall of Fame.

Unquestionably, in terms of its aberrant 'aesthetic' brutality, cultural cynicism, psychosexual ultra-violence, unwaveringly nihilistic essence, and misanthropic undertones, *Her Name Was Lisa* comes closer than any of Watkins' other films

to resembling the depraved tone of the director's maniacal magnum opus *The Last House on Dead End Street*. Interestingly, the films have a couple similarities, with the most obvious probably being that the character 'Stephen Sweet' in the porn flick is clearly named after the actor of the same name who played the rich fag porn producer character Steve Randall in *The Last House on Dead End Street* who is tortured and humiliated by being forced to deep throat a deer hoof that is worn by a crazy topless bitch. Rather interestingly, as the exploitation flick demonstrates in its depiction of sociopathic ex-con (played by Watkins himself) that takes revenge against a society that he believes has wronged him by torturing and killing porn producers and other untermensch rabble, it is as if Watkins—a man who once bragged that he spent the entire budget of his first feature on drugs—foresaw his own timely degeneration into a resentful pornographer. Indeed, long before he ever made his first porn flick, Watkins dealt with themes of post-Manson sexual violence, sadomasochism, and nihilistic sex, so I see it as only natural that he got in the business, even if he claimed that he initially never had any plans to do so. A protégé of Hollywood bad boy Nicholas Ray (*Rebel Without a Cause*, *Bigger Than Life*) who once penned a Sapphic reworking of Thomas Mann's classic novel *Death in Venice* for female porno/exploitation director/producer Roberta Findlay and directed an extra-loose pornographic adaptation of Richard Wagner's opera *Das Rheingold* under the title *Corruption* (1980) starring Jamie Gillis, Watkins epitomized more than probably anyone of his time what one might described as the "fallen artist" as a considerably cultivated man with genuine artistic talent that loved opera and German classical music but who got mixed up in hard drugs, nihilism, and a dark and depraved underground scene that probably contributed to his premature death in 2007 at the age of 58 from a heart attack before he could make a real comeback (indeed, with the long-awaited release of *The Last House on Dead End Street* on DVD in 2005 by Barrel Entertainment and various planned collaborations with contemporary horror filmmakers, it seemed like Watkins would have at least directed a couple more films). As a fan of the seemingly accursed director's oeuvre, I can certainly imagine a great biopic being made about Watkins' life under the title *His Name Was Roger*, though I somewhat hope it would not be pornographic.

-Ty E

LUGER
LUGER

Theo van Gogh (1982)

Upon reading up on assassinated Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh (Loos, Blind Date), I encountered an unintentionally hilarious article written by some do-gooder leftist pussy type where the slave-morality-driven author makes various pathetic attacks on the director's personal character. In regard to van Gogh's first feature Luger (1982), this certain hysterical and culturally cuckolded writer, who will go unnamed, made the following complaint: "Already in his first movie [...] Van Gogh, with sadistic pleasure, had a gangster push his pistol in a woman's vagina." Indeed, to the limp-wristed pansy liberal's credit, van Gogh's first feature is a limp-wristed pansy liberal's worst celluloid nightmare (in fact, when the film was first released, various Dutch film critics used the typical pathetic neo-Trotskyite buzzwords like "fascist" and "anti-Semitic" to criticize the film), as a work that not only features not a single so-called "person of color," but also includes rather uproarious jokes at the expense of women, cripples, negroes, innocent animals, and other specially protected groups that devout leftists (aka spiritual eunuchs) with slave moralities feel the need to hysterically defend as if they are protecting their gods. Of course, considering that most active left-wingers are completely humorless, the hysterical libertine humor of a film like Luger would be totally lost on them. A severely sardonic (anti)film noir flick that makes a total mockery of the entire classic Hollywood film style it parrots starring now-popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman (Dogville, Black Book) in his first 'major' film role, van Gogh's daring directorial debut is a rare cinematic work that features uncompromising contempt for virtually everyone and everything. Hell, auteur van Gogh would once even confess regarding his intent with the film: "There was no intent or purpose. We wanted just a movie, as politically incorrect as possible. The more sacred cows we killed the better." Since one of Van Gogh's angry ex-girlfriends threw one of two total existing prints of the film into a canal, the film was impossible to find until rather recently after the surviving print was discovered at the filmmaker's home after he was assassinated by a ticked-off towelhead in 2004. Naturally, after having South Africa auteur Aryan Kaganof, who collaborated with van Gogh on a couple projects (the Dutch filmmaker appeared as a freaky foot fetishist in Kaganof's 1992 avant-garde short *La séquence des barres parallèles*), tell me that Luger was an "absolute masterpiece," I had to see it and after actually viewing the work, I can happily report that it is as charmingly fucked as I expected it would be, albeit in a fiercely farcical fashion that one might describe as the sort of slapstick comedy that an ex-SS man with Alzheimer's disease might enjoy, as an innately iconoclastic piece of strangely aesthetically potent black-and-white celluloid grit that makes a valiant attempt to offend all viewers, despite whatever race, class, sex, gender, and/or creed they may belong to.

In the first couple minutes of Luger, the viewer is introduced to the eponymous antihero played by Thom Hoffman (back when he used to go by the name "Tom Ancion") as he liquidates a bunch of bleach blonde babes at a night club in what is truly a disco bloodbath. When Chris Luger slowly and gently puts his prized black leather gloves on a ritualistic fashion, you know he is about to kill someone, but otherwise it is hard to know what his next move will be because he is as cold as ice to the point of parody and he has a fiercely flat affect, especially when murdering or committing some other sort of wicked act. The antihero hates modern Hague as the city is "getting black" and "speed heads are too lazy to work," not to mention the fact that he apparently works for "men who sit on their asses all day," but that does not stop him from collecting a monthly negro-approved welfare check. As Luger explains, his ultimate goal is to get rich quick so he can buy a castle in Palm Spring and tell his butler: "James, throw another nigger on the fire." After failing to take the "cherry" of a crippled 21-year-old "spoiled bitch" named Eve in front of her sailor grandfather (he was quite excited about seeing the untimely deflowering of his granddaughter and even paid the deranged Dutch gangster to do it), Luger learns from a friend that: "Jews don't deal in gold but in diamonds. Gold is too heavy. They have to travel light. That's why they're into diamonds." Luger decides he also wants to "travel light" like a member of god's chosen tribe, so he conspires to kidnap the retarded daughter of a millionaire named Marsjaupt so he can ask for a ransom of "half a million in diamonds," which he plans to sell to a wealthy "freaked out faggot" named Repsure that he knows from Central Park. Unfortunately, Marsjaupt is a miserly old bastard and he is not going to give away half a million dollars worth of "girl's best friend" to save the retarded daughter that he is probably more than glad to get rid of in the first place. On top of not getting his ransom money, Luger has to clean and bath mental invalid Lelia (Laurien Hilderling) who, being a worthless retard and all, constantly shits and pisses in her panties like a newborn baby. Of course, the psychopathic would-be-gangster does find some use for Lelia, as he gets her to help him kill a couple cats just for kicks by putting them in a dryer. Meanwhile, Luger starts a bizarre relationship with an overweight ex-nurse named Esther (Frieda Ysebaert) who proclaims to love the pope and seems to have latent lesbian tendencies (or so one would assume based on her bull-dyke-like appearance and lack of dainty dame qualities). Of course, Luger ultimately finds himself falling for Lelia.

At one point, Luger attempts to get Lelia to rape Esther, but he ultimately decides to put his pistol in the old slag's pussy instead, hilariously stating, "you have to cock it first" before putting a hole through her fleshy hole. Upon first meeting Esther, Luger confesses that he wishes he could be reincarnated as a legless SS man, stating: "I'd come back as an SS officer without legs. I'd be called Hocus Pocus. Hocus Pocus in a wheelchair. I'd ride along the beach with little boys on my lap. I'd give them my gun and say: Shoot the fish. But

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give me your fishing rod. I'd tie it to my wheelchair with your Tampax on the hook." When Luger manages to get what he believes is diamonds and attempts to sell them to queer criminal queen Reppure, he is told they are nothing but worthless glass. Reppure also tells Luger that he is a third rate criminal and "talented whore" who should know that, "Diamonds are for Jews. Not for a bastard like you." Needless to say, Luger puts the "freaked out faggot" in his place. While Luger never achieves the great wealth he so eagerly craved, he does end up exterminating a number of people and even seems to fall in love with a retard, who he lovingly adorns with a dog collar. Ironically, in the end, invalid Lelia kills Luger. Indeed, during what seems like a mock symbolic wedding at a train station, Luger makes the major mistake of handing his trusty Luger to his prisoner Lelia who, despite being rather retarded, immediately shoots and kills her crazed kidnapper. No doubt, Lelia ultimately proves to be the most subtle and calculating yet simultaneously exceedingly retarded femme fatale in film noir history in the end. Undoubtedly, it is hard to discern whether or not Luger has a happy ending, but it certainly has a hilarious ending to what is overall a hilarious film.

In her book *Radical State: How Jihad is Winning Over Democracy in the West* (2010), kosher conservative journalist Abigail R. Esman wrote: "Theo van Gogh's first film, LUGER, premiered on April 8, 1982. It was by no means a great film, or even, by many accounts, a good film. It was, however, certainly a controversial one, one which would have allowed its producer plenty of notoriety and recognition no matter what his last name might have been: it was for LUGER that Van Gogh created his infamous scene, with the two cats in a washing machine. It was tasteless. It was an unnecessarily dramatic performance in the breaking of rules. It was shock for shock's sake. But it was quintessential Theo: he had something to say, and he was damn well going to say it." Of course, what the Jewess forgets to mention about van Gogh's film is that it features many jokes at the expenses of Judaics like herself, which is a big "no, no" in the pathetically philo-Semitic Netherlands. Indeed, aside from criticizing Jews for always complaining about the holocaust and incessantly using the 'Shoah card' to deflect attention from Israel's less than kosher treatment of the Palestinians and what-not, van Gogh wrote hilarious pieces about "copulating yellow stars in the gas chamber" and even once wrote an article during the 1980s for the Amsterdam University magazine *Folia* about Dutch Jewish writer Leon de Winter regarding something called the "Treblinka love game" where the Semitic scribbler put a "piece of barbed wire" around his already mutilated circumcised member. Indeed, maybe the director's assassin Mohammed Bouyeri should have considered van Gogh's more anti-Zionist qualities before killing him, as few other Dutchman have the gall to question the Jewish question. Apparently, the director was convinced that, despite receiving death threats from crazed camel jockeys after the release of his short film *Submission* (2004), no one would ever actually kill him

because, "Nobody kills the village idiot." Indeed, Luger is certainly the perverse product of a village idiot, but a rather jovial idiot who was too sophisticatedly sardonic for his own good, hence why a group of medieval-minded muzzie morons did not get his jokes. Somewhat in the spirit of Fassbinder's early 'avant-garde' gangster flicks like *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) and *Gods of the Plague* (1970) due to its European-flavored deconstruction and wicked mutation of the film noir style, albeit replacing Teutonic Weltschmerz with distinctly deranged Dutch dark humor, Luger may not be a cinematic masterpiece, but it is certainly a masterpiece of ideally iconoclastic absurdism. For those interested, the film also features a Hitchcockian cameo by van Gogh from his pre-beer-gut years.

-Ty E

A DAY AT THE BEACH
A DAY AT THE BEACH

Theo van Gogh (1984)

Hebraic hebephile Roman Polanski and assassinated Dutch iconoclast Theo van Gogh are about as different as filmmakers and individuals as two people could be, with the former being a small and swarthy avant-garde auteur turned major Hollywood blockbuster director and the latter being a tall, blond, blue-eyed, and beer-gutted born subversive who never seemed to tame with age, but they both have one major thing in common and that is cinematically adapting the novel *A Day at the Beach* (1962) by Dutch writer and poet Simon Heere Heeresma. While most cinephiles and cineastes would probably assume Polanski's version is infinitely superior, they would be oh so terribly wrong, at least in my less than humble opinion. To Polanski's credit, he only penned and produced *A Day at the Beach* (1972), as he apparently opted to have his Danish friend Simon Hesera—a first-time filmmaker whose sole other film before giving up filmmaking altogether was the curiously titled documentary *Ben Gurion Remembers* (1973)—direct the film instead due to 'extenuating circumstances' in his own personal life. Indeed, the film was apparently originally intended as Polanski's directorial follow-up to *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and was only given to Hesera to direct after the director's wife Sharon Tate and unborn son were there victims of the murderously maniacal Manson family. Receiving only a limited theatrical release in Europe and assumed lost by Paramount Pictures for 20 years due to a supposed 'paperwork error' until it was tracked down by the director in 1992, the Polanski version certainly had no influence on van Gogh's version and thankfully so as a work that, although not featuring the novelty of Peter Sellers as a queenish queer store owner like the original adaptation, was certainly made to be filmed in its native language and location. Despite being adapted twice, Heeresma's novel has ironically been described as an 'unfilmable' novel, yet *Een dagje naar het strand* (1984) aka *A Day at the Beach* is arguably the most mature, malignantly melancholy, aesthetically accomplished, and decidedly Dutch film ever directed. Van Gogh's second feature following his pathologically politically incorrect anti-noir debut *Lüger* (1982) starring popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman (*Dogville*, *Black Book*) as a fascist gangster who kidnaps and starts a loony love affair with a retarded heiress, the equally darkly humorous yet dejecting work follows the day in the life of a super cynical and sadistically shameless dipsomaniac who takes his crippled daughter for a play date at the beach where he spends most of his time scamming booze and getting drunk while constantly losing track of his poor progeny in the process. Like Ingmar Bergman meets Luis Buñuel in its curious cocktail of dark drama, unhinged humor, and even sometimes sardonic surrealism, *A Day at the Beach* demonstrates in a far from preachy and shockingly intricate sort of way why alcoholism is a fate worse than death and why a boozier should never get a broad pregnant, let alone attempt to

raise a kid.

Bernd (Cas Enklaar) is such a pathetic and hopeless alcoholic that he wakes up still drunk from the night before on the day that he is supposed to take his estranged prepubescent crippled daughter Walijne (Tara Fallaux), who wears a leg brace, to the beach. Poor Walijne calls the antihero 'Uncle Bernd' as her mother Medusa (Helen Hedy) married another man named Carl (Emile Fallaux) who agreed to adopt the girl and call her his own before she was even born since her biological father is a good-for-nothing boozier who is just not father material. As Bernd thinks to himself before his disastrous playdate with his daughter, "Thousands have each other; I only have my drinking." While talking with his ex-lover/baby-momma Medusa before taking Walijne out, Bernd causes the mother of his daughter to cry as it is clear she is depressed over the fact that she had to leave him for a banal old groveling cuckold like Carl. Notably, Bernd plays the old school video-game Frogger, thus reflecting his inability to give anyone his completely undivided attention, as well his propensity to engage in childish games. When Bernd meets with Walijne, they both give each other a huge hug even though the little girl thinks the man is her uncle and not her daddy. Unfortunately for both of them, this is the extent of how intimate their relationship gets as their ultimately botched day at the beach demonstrates.

Before even getting to the beach, Bernd is beaten in front of his daughter at the bus stop due to not paying an outstanding liquor tab he owes. Walijne does the best that a crippled little girl can do after he is beaten and Bernd seems to lap up the special attention. Although it is not exactly the best day to go to the beach due to the fact that it is rainy and dreary out, it certainly immaculately matches the melancholy yet strangely beautiful tone of the film. Upon arriving at the beach, Walijne soon gets lost playing in wicker chairs while Bernd is approached by a blonde named 'Babs' who works as a waitress at her mother's seemingly closed restaurant. Babs provides Bernd with bottle after bottle of beer and when he perversely recommends regarding the next bottle she brings out, "Warm it up under your armpit...or in another intimate spot" by stating absurdly that it is "an old custom, honored by the people I belong to," the waitress' mother asks the antihero, "How peculiar, are you Jewish perhaps?" in an unintentionally humorous fashion. Bernd takes the woman's question as "an unexpected compliment" and then hallucinates her sitting in the lap of a young handsome blond SS officer while she describes how her father kept 25 Jews at her house during the Second World War. To get out of paying for all the bottles of beer he has drunk, Bernd accuses Babs and her mother of being prostitutes and runs away without paying. Indeed, if there is any talent Bernd has aside from being perennially inebriated, it is finding a way to get inebriated without having to pay a cent.

When Walijne loses a souvenir seashell that her father has given her, he goes to a seashell shop to buy her a new one where he is immediately repelled by the

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two owners, an elderly old gay queen and his overweight middle-aged beau who is missing one of his front teeth. When Bernd asks the old queen, "Hey you fag, do you sell beer?," he agrees to get him some from his "private stock" for "such a charming man" and his fat beau goes in the back to get the booze. While the toothless queer is getting the beer in the back, the old queen complains to Bernd regarding his much younger lover, so the antihero helps the elderly poof by telling his beau when he gets back with the booze, "Each time he meets a nice little boy the most delightful...and promising contacts are ended by your vulgar appearance. You stink and even the mildest people would wish to punch you in the face...so, do change, Papi." While Bernd is happy to have gotten both a new seashell for his daughter and more beer, he is quite distressed when he notices his daughter is missing after leaving the store and, as the narrator of the film states regarding the alcoholic antihero, "He went cold with fear" because "You don't lose a child like an old hankie." Luckily, it does not take long for Bernd to find his progeny again, but he soon suffers the annoyance of a small elderly man calling him a "rat" for not paying to use wicker chairs on the beach, so he threatens to murder the old miserable fart and bury his bones in the sand. Before threatening the old man, Bernd asks him, "Does my lack of character show on my face that clearly?" thus reflecting his own rather low opinion of himself, as a man who has figuratively crawled into a beer bottle where he plans to ultimately die a most lonely and pathetic death.

Arguably, the true depth of Bernd's moral bankruptcy is revealed when he bumps into his poet friend Nicholas who shows up at the beach in a tiny, goofy European automobile not much bigger than a bumper car with his reasonably attractive blonde wife Toni and their young and rather sickly seeming child. Among other things, Bernd coerces Nicholas into leaving his wife and child behind in the rain while they predictably take a drive to a local bar. It is clear that Bernd does not think much of Nicholas as both a poet and painter when he remarks to him, "Poets are most receptive and often drive their friends desperate. They listen so intensely to their inner voices...that they mistake a voice from outside...as coming from within them. To avoid this, Nicholas, I took your watch as...so that no woman can coerce you...which you'll regret later!" On top of taking Nicholas' watch, Bernd also lies to him and tells him that he will buy him his first round of beer. When Nicholas' wife Toni arrives at the bar, Bernd begins kissing her passionately while his 'buddy' is passed out. Nicholas also tells Toni that her husband has "no personality at all" when she mentions that Nicholas wanted to try smoking heroin after hearing that Lou Reed did the same. Indeed, Bernd may be a boozing bastard but he certainly seems like more of an authentic poet and artist than Nicholas, who cannot even stop his wife from kissing another man right in front of him. While at the bar, Bernd also calls his daughter's mother Medusa and states, "This morning I wanted to kiss you very hard on your lips," thus revealing that, despite his rudeness to her earlier

that day, the antihero actually loves Walijne's mother and were it not for the fact that he was a self-destructive and nihilistic dipsomaniac, he might have actually made a serious attempt at becoming a husband and father instead of giving his only child to another man to raise.

After parting ways with Nicholas and his family, Bernd naturally makes his way to another bar and of course he leaves his daughter Walijne in the rain while doing so. At the bar, Bernd strikes up a conversation with an old white man from Ghana who he confides in by stating, "I drink because I have great sorrow...but mainly because I'm predisposed to it. I am not afraid of a hangover." The old man is less interested in personal interests and responds by stating, "The British are the heaviest drinkers. The Americans too...but they are noisy anyway, drunk if sober. But you will not hear the English...and you will not notice anything." When Bernd annoys the barmaid by mocking her dyed hair and comparing her less than favorably to negresses by stating to the old man, "Think of the negro girls in Ghana [...] in which no calculation is hidden," the antihero finds himself unwanted at the bar and inevitably leaves, soon finding Walijne outside being watched by a group of concerned old women. After coercing an old liquor store owner into selling him some beer after hours after proclaiming to have an ostensible "vitamin B deficiency," Bernd, who is so drunk that he seems to be on the brink of alcohol poisoning, calls Walijne's mother Medusa to let her know that he will be bringing their daughter home late. The next day, Bernd wakes up still drunk on the beach and he is rather shocked to learn that little Walijne is nowhere to be found. *A Day at the Beach* concludes with the following intertitle regarding the film's perturbingly pathetic antihero Bernd: "A few stopped to look at him. Another eccentric training for the decathlon, cheering himself on. It occurred to nobody to impede this sportsman's progress."

Admittedly, I have an innate intolerance towards alcohol and alcoholics and I cannot fathom how someone can tolerate living the life of a drunkard, yet after watching the preternaturally compassionate work *A Day at the Beach*, I certainly feel that I can better understand what might inspire someone to crawl inside of a beer bottle and stay there. As someone who dropped out of law school due to drug and alcohol abuse and spent his entire life agitating people with his ruthless remarks, van Gogh unquestionably had a special understanding of the character Bernd in his film. Indeed, despite being oftentimes obscenely humorous, Theo van Gogh's film is easily one of the most malignantly melancholy films I have ever seen and I have a feeling that it reveals more about the filmmaker's true essence than any of his other cinematic works. I sincerely believe that had his assassin been able to absorb (which is rather unlikely) the sensitive yet equally biting emotions that van Gogh expressed in *A Day at the Beach*, he probably would have never been able to get the gall to murder the filmmaker in such a savagely sadistic and coldblooded fashion. Surely van Gogh's film is all but infinitely superior to the version of Heeresma's novel that Polanski penned, which

A DAY AT THE BEACH

is somewhat ironic considering one of the Dutch filmmaker's favorite films was *Repulsion* (1965). As Annemarije Heijerman revealed in her article *THEO VAN GOGH: Director, Storyteller and Auteur* regarding Heeresma's story, van Gogh had stated, "Why this story? Because it is brilliantly written, it is my guiding book," thus highlighting his uncommon respect for the source novel. Interestingly, Heeresma also considered van Gogh's version to be far superior to Polanski's adaptation. Unlike Polanski's film, van Gogh's *A Day at the Beach* is dark in the way that could have only been made so by a true criminal, misfit, outcast, and subversive just like the antihero of the film who, like the director, was probably an intriguing person to be around, but brought trouble and destruction to wherever he went, hence his early grisly death. Apparently, van Gogh still stopped by to see the little girl that played the antihero's crippled daughter years after the film was released, which does not surprise me as *A Day at the Beach* has a certain truly 'idiosyncratic humanism' to it that, despite van Gogh's lifelong tendency towards making hateful and misogynistic comments, also demonstrated that he truly loved people, especially those that no one else seemed to love.

-Ty E

CHARLEY

Theo van Gogh (1986)

Long before larger hordes of Muslims had invaded the Netherlands and towelheads became an easy, if not politically incorrect, target for criticism, Dutch Auteur Theo van Gogh—a born iconoclast who felt the savage wrath of Allah after he was assassinated and almost beheaded with a butcher knife in November 2004 at the age 47 after some crazed Moroccan Islamist got offended by his short *Submission* (2004)—directed black-and-white avant-garde absurdist works of the darkly hilarious and seemingly rather morally bankrupt sort. For his debut feature *Luger* (1982)—a fiercely fucked no-budget film noir of sorts starring the now relatively popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman—van Gogh told the seriously sardonic story of a suavely dressed ‘fascist’ psychopath who kidnaps the retarded yet reasonably attractive daughter of a miserly millionaire who refuses to pay the ransom, with the director later confessing regarding his objective with the film, “There was no intent or purpose. We wanted just a movie, as politically incorrect as possible. The more sacred cows we killed the better.” Undoubtedly, with his third feature *Charley* (1986), the debauched Dutchman opted for slaying, cooking, and eating more sacred cows, as it is a sickly sardonic and statically directed cinematic work about a mute Aryan beauty of the decidedly deranged sort and her lesbian girlfriend/partner-in-crime who routinely lures horny and mostly socially defective men into their home, poison them, and fry and eat their body parts. Featuring an eponymous antihero with looks that can kill but who is as quiet as a dead mouse, van Gogh’s film also dares to present the homicidal man-hating lead as an innately infantile molestation victim who was raped by her own father while she was only toddler. While a discernibly unrealistic work that has a bizarre and sometimes semi-surreal atmosphere that is somewhat comparable to the later works of Luis Buñuel, albeit done in a distinctly Dutch fashion, *Charley* is rather accurate in its depiction of female serial killers because, as history demonstrates, women typically like to kill their victims in a cowardly and passive fashion via poison for oftentimes financial reasons (indeed, one of the top Dutch female serial killers, Maria Swanenburg, who was suspected of killing over 90 people via poison, did it so she could collect her victims’ insurance and/or inheritance money). Unlike Fassbinder’s similarly themed work *Bremen Freedom* (1972), which depicts 19th century kraut female killer Gesche Gottfried as a misguided proto-feminist of sorts, van Gogh’s *Charley* portrays its killer in a much more ambiguous, if not somewhat strangely empathetic, light that reminds one why the auteur was no fan of medieval-style Muslim misogyny. Of course, van Gogh’s film is not exactly the sort of work that will make a feminist’s panties wet either.

When blonde mute beauty *Charley Pasja* (Marie Kooyman) was only just a toddler, her working-class mechanic father decided to molest her in the shower

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and ever since then she has continued to have sex with daddy dearest. It seems that, like many molestation victims, Charley has not mentally matured much since the first time when her father first raped her, as she carries around a baby doll as if it is a real baby and likes to play with little boys on swings, among countless other childish things. While Charley is repelled by all other men aside from her father, she is in a hot and heavy lesbian relationship with her criminal accomplice/roommate Berie Werie (Rosita Steenbeek), who sometimes watches her girlfriend have sex with her dad in the shower (indeed, for whatever reason, Charley's father only likes molesting her in the same place where he once took her virginity). Despite looking completely different (Charley has fair-skin and platinum blonde hair and buxom brunette Berie almost looks Latin), people oftentimes confuse the two Sapphic sisters for biological sisters, as no one seems to suspect they a lesbian lunatics who seem to have taken Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto (1967) quite literally. As for their modus operandi, the two lure men to their home, Berie has sex with them and poisons them, and then they both subsequently drop their victims' corpses on train tracks so as to make the men's deaths look like suicides. While disposing of their victims, Berie likes to make goofy jokes like, "You know what they found in Regan's belly?...Rock Hudson's watch!" One day, the girls encounter a majorly misogynistic Taxi Driver who calls them "grumpy bitches" and who self-righteously declares, "women are worthless," so needless to say, they kill him by giving him poisoned caviar, but not before Berie bumps his fuzzi. A rather passive and seemingly introverted young lady, Charley likes to listen in on the men's deaths via a downstairs baby monitor while Berie sexually defiles their corpses in their bedroom. The girls live in a small home owned by Charley's comic publisher uncle and he has no clue that they have turned his place into the Dutch equivalent of the quaint home from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Although Charley likes to play with her prepubescent nephew Max, she becomes rather infuriated when the little lad pushes pins through her precious baby doll's eyes. Despite the fact they are both coldblooded killers, Charley and Berie act like a bunch of feminist hypocrites and tell Max's father that he is a sadist that is in need of some teaching. Unfortunately, it seems the boy is far too young for them to kill.

One day, the two girls go to a bar and listen to the patently perverted scatological poetry of a seemingly demented dude named 'Brother Gabler' who swoons Charley with the following poop-preoccupied poem: "What abstinence forbids, as I saw my shit in the loo...I thought: no runny shit this time, but a healthy turd decorating the bowl. Fat and streaming in the poet...can I not feel my dick groping up my groin? That brown boy turns me on. My heart thumps as saliva I spawn. I think I'll wank above the turd...because my sphincter when I cum makes itself heard. I think I'll flush. Yes, an old fashioned flush. I lost my heart. A modern jerk is not better than a fart." In fact, Charley loves the poem so much that it causes her to smile for the first time in the entire film,

though Berie is less than impressed and berates her girlfriend for approving of such frivolous filth. Of course, Berie does not mind boning and killing Gabler. When a group of Gabler's mindless disciples arrive at the girls' flat looking for their pseudo-Rimbaudian messiah, Charley decides to poison every single one of them. With their relationship falling apart, Berie eventually ends up dead after being bedridden for a while and Charley somehow learns how to talk in the process, as if her lesbo lover had previously stolen her voice (indeed, Berie was certainly the dominant of the two lethal lipstick lesbos). When Charley is asked by the police to come to a mental hospital to meet a man named Larive who she and Berie stole money from a couple days before, she naturally poisons the gent. While at the hospital, Charley is introduced to an ambiguously gay fascist police inspector named Beerekamp (Michiel Berkel) who seems suspicious of the Sapphic psychopathic killer. While her beloved Berie is dead, that does not stop Charley for sleeping with her corpse and wheeling it around in a wheelchair. In the end, Beerekamp and his buffoonish cop comrades discover that Charley is a serial killer after finding countless corpses in her humble abode. After concluding with the following epilogue: "Inspector Beerekamp was promoted for heroism. He's Head of the narcotics brigade. Charley was given life. She's in therapy with her fauther and makes progress every day," a grotesque drawing by Dutch cartoonist Eric Schreurs appears featuring an exaggerated-looking demonic female putting a dismembered dick in her large negro-like mouth.

Somewhat like a sordid celluloid marriage between the absurdism of Herbert Achternbusch, the female trouble of John Waters, and the unhinged grotesquery of Christoph Schlingensiefel as directed by the more comically-inclined son of Frans Zwartjes, Charley is an indisputably original and belligerently daring work that somehow even manages to make incestuous father-daughter pedophilia seem funny. Of course, not a single one of the characters in the film is realistically portrayed, as the film feels like what might if someone tried to translate a sardonic libertine comic into cinematic form. Indeed, Charley is almost terroristically tongue-in-cheek, as if van Gogh made the film solely to see how much he could get away with artistically, so it quite easy to see why some humorless camel jockey would get so enraged by his work that he would violently slaughter the filmmaker. As is especially apparent during the hysterical conclusion, a good part of van Gogh's film was improvised. Indeed, apparently the director's publisher van Wulften (who had just published a book of the director's poetry featuring illustrations by Dutch cartoonist Eric Schreurs) not only gave him funding for the film, but also the use of his house, workshop, employees, and even children (during the first couple seconds of the film, a naked toddler wearing a party hat appears). While not exactly a masterpiece, Charley is a truly underground comedy in the spirit of early Robert John Downey, Sr. flicks like *Chafed Elbows* (1966) and *Putney Swope* (1969), albeit more subversive and iconoclastic. Indeed, as far as I know, van Gogh's film is the greatest Sapphic

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cannibal serial killer flick ever made.

-Ty E

Loos

Theo van Gogh (1989)

Although I saw Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* (1992) as a tiny tot and vividly remember the (in)famous scene in the film where the Sapphic femme fatale played by Sharon Stone spreads her legs in a rather provocative fashion, I never thought of the Dutch, especially rather rotund and goofy Dutchmen, as being masters of dark erotic thrillers, but I change my mind the more I dig into the relatively eclectic oeuvre of the late and sometimes great auteur Theo van Gogh (1-900, *Blind Date*). While I have been engaged in a sort of unofficial van Gogh marathon for the past week or so, I must admit that I recently decided to watch the director's eccentric erotic thriller *Loos* (1989) aka *No Potatoes* aka *Wild* because I am an ass man and could not resist watching the film after seeing its poster art, which features a pair of long legs and a reasonably large unclad derriere. Luckily, van Gogh's film is not merely a soft core flick disguised as a conventional thriller, but an absurdist S&M-tinged 'arthouse' thriller contained within a wayward world that falls somewhere between Lynchian and Anderssonian, but is decidedly Dutch in its curious cynicism and almost psychopathically dark humor. Notably, van Gogh stated in a 2004 issue of *Esquire Magazine* regarding his personal taste in cinema: "In the top 25 of DVD's one has to have, there will always be at least two parts of *THE GODFATHER*, something by Kubrick, something by Woody Allen. And I know that those gentlemen are great filmmakers in their own way, who as the cliché indicates: 'can't be ignored.' I don't like war films; neither do I like fighting films. I fell asleep while I watched *KILL BILL*. I don't care about nature films, films about music don't attract me, not even *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*, and porn makes me yawn. Even worse are seriously intended science fiction films, except *ALIEN*. A disgrace, yes, but we have to face the bitter truth; I am more attracted to films in which people talk to each other, instead of people beating each other up or shooting at one another, with raping, kidnapping, or both. Not because I am a coward, I think, but because I grew up with the idea that there doesn't exist a more exciting adventure than the fight between two people that is called 'love.'" Indeed, van Gogh's *Loos* may be a borderline deranged erotic thriller featuring Jap tranny weirdos running around in campy clothing, naked morbidly obese women bound to poles, gritty snuff film footage, foul-mouthed little blonde girls who hate their fathers, sadomasochistic prostitutes who like to be walked around on dog leashes, homo-queen bartenders with sassy mouths, and a guy having a nail hammered through his foreskin and into a piano by a blind cripple, but the film is also about "the fight between two people that is called 'love,'" and it is quite a dark, loony, and labyrinthine one that demonstrates the superlatively self-destructive lengths that men will go for the women they love. A work that was advertised by describing auteur van Gogh as the "Fassbinder of the Low Countries" (notably,

Loos

van Gogh's comrade Edwin Brienen would later be described as the "Dutch Fassbinder"), Loos is the story of an eponymous lawyer who finds himself a forsaken slave of a sort of Dutch Sodom known as the Rotterdam underworld where he is coerced into defending a purported 'sex-murderer' and falls in love with a dangerously whimsical sadomasochistic coke-addled prostitute that is in some way connected to his scumbag client. Unquestionably, Loos makes Basic Instinct seem like hokey and hopelessly banal Hollywoodized neo-noir barf by comparison.

Loos opens with a hot Aryan blonde seductively asking some nameless/faceless person, "Can I undress for you? Can I kneel for you?" and said nameless/faceless person hatefully replying by stating, "You fucking white slut!" following her into a closet, and strangling her to death with a rather flamboyant multi-colored handkerchief that looks like it would be owned by a sassy old Afro-American lady. The woman that was strangled to death is a 26-year-old saleslady named Marlies Benninkmeijer (Heleen Hummelen) and judging by the fact that her killer/sex partner called her a "fucking white slut" before snuffing her out, one would assume the murderer is not a native white Dutchman, but a savage untermensch of some sort. A rather ugly man with a mustache that looks more like he is from Southern Italy named Harry Wery (played by actor/journalist Max Pam)—a proud pervert that owns an S&M-themed strip club called Showcase—is charged and arrested for the murder and he naturally wants Rotterdam's best lawyer, Tommie Loos (van Gogh regular Tom Jansen), to defend him. When weasel Wery sends his rather gaunt and goofy yet sinister righthand man De Vries (van Gogh regular Cas Enklaar of the underrated masterpiece *A Day at the Beach* (1984)) to meet with Loos, he refuses to represent the club owner as he is tired of doing "rapist and sex-murderer" cases as he feels "too old for it" and he does want his young daughter thinking he defends bad guys. Unfortunately, Loos' daughter Angelique does not think much of him and yells "Daddy, you're an asshole!" when he goes to pick her up at a pool. Indeed, Loos' ex-wife hates him and has brainwashed their daughter Angelique to think he is "not a real man." Unbeknownst to Loos, another member of the 'fairer sex' will also question his manhood, albeit in a fashion that he will soon come to find delight in.

While hanging out at a fancy pseudo-futuristic bar, Loos is approached by a wanton woman named Anna Montijn (van Gogh regular Renée Fokker of *Blind Date* (1996) and *Baby Blue* (2001)) who kisses the lawyer and then takes him to a ritzy hotel where she jumps his bones. When Loos wakes up the next morning after experiencing the best sex of his life, he finds both Anna and his keys gone. When Loos talks to the front desk attendant, he learns that Anna's room was paid for by someone named "Rubico in Brussels." On top of finding nothing about the whereabouts of Anna or his keys, Loos suffers the distinct humiliation of standing around a group of exceedingly effete Japanese men in drag

complaining that, "All dildos are taken." When Loos goes back to his house, he finds De Vries, who has clearly gotten the attorney's keys from Anna, sitting at his desk wearing a child's chicken beak mask on his face. After proclaiming, "The blackmailer called to say that the pictures are ready," De Vries shows him sadomasochistic footage of a woman driving her high heel into Anna's throat. After that, Loos finally decides it's probably a good time to visit Wery in jail where he learns that the murder victim used to work for the strip club owner. Needless to say, after Wery threatens his daughter, among other things, Loos reluctantly decides to represent him, even though he seems to believe that his client killed Marlies. That night, Loos goes to Wery's club Showtime where a celebration is being held for a crippled 'star' named Nicolette's 31st birthday. On top of the birthday girl receiving the gift of being allowed to hammer a nail through some poor dude's foreskin in a Schramm-esque fashion in a seemingly unstimulated scene of genital mutilation, Loos witnesses morbidly unclad morbidly obese woman tied up in chains and a flaming fag bartender who is chained to the bar. The fag bartender reveals to Loos that the police never bothered to come by and investigate Showtime Club after the sex-murder, so the lawyer decides to get in contact with his cop friend.

If Loos has anything even remotely resembling a real friend, it is a old troll-like cop named Dorrius (Leen Jongewaard) with whom he demonstrates some sense of solidarity as the two take a leak next to each other in a communal urinal wherein he describes how much he wishes his ex-wife would croak. Dorrius is convinced Wery is the killer and he demonstrates to Loos why by showing him a quasi-snuff film shot by the club owner featuring an unclad woman bound to a bed being cut up with a butcher knife. Dorrius also gives Loos the keys to Wery's home where he discovers a snuff film and and Polaroids of the club owner, the dead chick, and a large negro. Loos soon learns that the large negro is named Frank Benninkmeijer (Edgar Cairo) and he is the widowed husband of dead girl Marlies. Loos goes to question Frank at a gym, but when he makes a joke about the sizable spade being a pedophile, he is physically assaulted and does not get any of the answers he is looking for. Upon talking to Dorrius, Loos learns that Frank has an alibi as he was "swinging from trees of the gym" during the day of the murder and "20 apes can confirm it." Dorrius is rather confused about the fact that Loos wants to defend a scumbag like Wery and asks him if he would even defend Klaus Barbie, to which he stoically replies, "that's what lawyers are for."

Of course, Loos continues looking for his mysterious ladylove Anna and when he goes back to the same bar he originally met her at, a super tall blond begins reaming him in the ass, as if raping him with a giant strap-on dildo. After opting to sleep with a third rate prostitute, Loos is summoned by Anna via taxi. Upon arriving at the hotel room where Loos is staying, he finds his object of desire standing naked on a large box-shaped purse which her feet have been

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strapped to. After yelling at Anna for stealing his keys and stealing a vial of cocaine that she has hanging from a necklace around her neck, Loos decides to take a stroll at a degenerate 'modern art' museum where he is assaulted by visions of large black-and-white Robert Mapplethorpe pictures featuring rather nasty naked obese women and a woman sporting futuristic bondage and strap-ons, among other things. The next day, Loos goes back to see Anna and discovers she is still standing naked on her pursue, so he forces her off and manhandles her, thus ushering in the beginning of their tragic romance. Anna asks Loos if he loves her and he replies by saying, "I never loved a woman that cheated on me." When Loos takes Anna out to a fancy dinner, he manages to give her a spontaneous orgasm by telling her that he would like to "buy" her and wrap up her body so that no one could ever see it again. After their unconventionally decadent dinner date, Loos takes Anna back to his place where she tries to coerce him into snorting coke, but he proudly proclaims "a healthy mind in a healthy body" and opts out. When Loos intentionally sneezes on Anna's coke, the little lecherous lady goes berserk, begins beating her beau, and forces him to snort a line. When Loos later asks Anna, "Will you stay with me, always?" the majorly masochistic prostitute becomes exceedingly enraged and forces the lawyer to walk her around Rotterdam on a leash. Upon arriving at a subway station, Loos locks Anna to a vent and tells her he will come back in a couple hours to get her, but when he does, she is gone. From there, things get even more bizarre for the eponymous protagonist and Loos does not exactly conclude on a happy note.

After watching Loos, I find it hard to believe that it was not a huge influence on Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct*, which may have been penned by Hungarian-American screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, but certainly shares a lot with Loos in terms of tone as a subversive neo-noir with sadistic sapphic femme fatales. Notably, Verhoeven fought Eszterhas over including a lesbian love scene in *Basic Instinct*, thus that he might have taken influence from van Gogh's film, which in terms of innate transgressiveness, makes the Sharon Stone flick seem like superficially stylized fluff that was specially tailored by a European arthouse fag to make Americans feel somehow chic and cultivated. Somewhat ironically, van Gogh filled the vacuum that Verhoeven left when he moved to Hollywood. Of course, right from the get go with his directorial debut *Lüger* (1982) starring popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman as a suave fascist psychopath, van Gogh demonstrated that he was a more incendiary, iconoclastic, and insanely idiosyncratic filmmaker than Verhoeven and with Loos, the auteur proved that one could produce mainstream works that are just as demented as the most avant-garde of avant-gardist works. Indeed, van Gogh's erotic thriller is like a more rampantly heterosexual version of the underrated Belgian-Dutch-French coproduction *Mascara* (1987) directed by Patrick Conrad and starring Charlotte Rampling were it directed by the more jovial and goofy brood of Dutch experimental

filmmaker Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*) and R.W. Fassbinder. Like with the more socially vicious and brutal works of Fassbinder, Loos depicts love at its most deleterious and lethally masochistic and people at their most pathologically pernicious, but like virtually all of his films (aside from, ironically, *Submission* (2004), which was the work that got him killed), van Gogh depicts these unsavory things with a sharp smirk. Flagrantly politically incorrect with negroes being referenced as 'Zulus' and carpet-munchers being depicted as the coldest and most ruthless yet strangely passionate of killers, Loos is ultimately proof that, in the right hands, a film from one of the most cliché-ridden and self-conscious of film genres (i.e. film noir) can be turned into something that not only borders on the avant-garde, but is also endlessly enthralling.

-Ty E

FALSE LIGHT
FALSE LIGHT

Theo van Gogh (1993)

For a fat goofy dude who did not exactly seem like he would be a superstar stud in the bedroom, assassinated Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh (Interview, 06/05 aka May 6th) was extremely preoccupied with sex, love, eroticism, and tragic romances, as if he lived vicariously through the forsaken femme-fatale-fucking characters of his films. Of course, as the director once famously stated in regard to his eruditely erotic 'phone sex romance' 06 aka 1-900 (1994): "I don't like messages that much. I prefer covering the war between a woman and a man." Van Gogh must have been on the losing side of a perennial total war of love because during the shooting of his flick *Vals licht* (1993) aka *False Light*, as his then-wife decided to cheat on him with the star of the film, *Ellik Bargai*, who is not exactly the most charming nor handsome of men, though I guess he was a bit thinner and younger than the director at the time, plus stupid people tend to care more about actors than directors, as if films somehow make themselves. In fact, van Gogh, who even had a sense of humor when Islamist were threatening to kill him, alludes to this exceedingly embarrassing fact in the film in a semi-cryptic fashion during a scene where the following message is broadcasted at a railway station: "Mr. Bargai, please contact Mrs. Van Gogh." While van Gogh was cuckolded on his film, his embarrassment and naivety is nothing compared to that of the protagonist of *False Light*, who absurdly thinks he can tame a pathologically whorish Swedish hooker and self-destructive 'fallen woman' with shady underworld connections and turn her into a respectable monogamous woman who does not feel the need to sell her flesh and soul for a few shekels. Based on the 1991 "AKO literatuurprijs"-winning novel of the same name written by Dutch modern novelist Jooft Zwagerman, van Gogh's ostensibly wild and wanton flick but ultimately culturally cynical and even misanthropic anti-romance about a charmingly wicked woman unequivocally demonstrates that there is no hope for whores or the men that moronically love them, as it is fairly common knowledge that lying, thieving, and scheming sluts that are so dead inside that they are willing to routinely sell themselves to strange men can never be changed, let alone be transformed into nurturing mothers or marriage material. As the great Austrian Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger recognized, the 'prostitute' is more of a mindset than a profession. *False Light* is also a work that indubitably demonstrates that despite their well known 'liberal' attitudes towards prostitution, among other things, the Dutch do not exactly have much empathy for so-called 'sex workers,' though van Gogh seemed to have more sympathy for them than most Dutchmen as a subversive outsider that was able to understand a fellow group of outsiders, but of course that does not mean he fails to portray pussy-peddlers in a less than glamorous light, for no sane person could come away from the film thinking it is reasonable to date a woman who has about

as much as respect for her own naughty bits as a toilet. Indeed, like many of his works, van Gogh's Zwagerman adaptation demonstrates why he was once called, "Fassbinder of the Low Countries," as the auteur had an understanding of the warped female psyche that few filmmakers, especially heterosexual ones, can boast, hence another reason why he would probably be hated by Islamist goatfuckers and liberal hysterics.

Simon Prins (Ellik Bargai) is a 21-year-old college student from Amsterdam who suffers the curse of having a hopelessly banal and seemingly sexless girlfriend of the relatively homely sort named Antoinette, so he spends a good portion of his time voyeuristically gazing at a strikingly statuesque yet forlorn-looking prostitute (Swedish actress Amanda Ooms of Carl-Gustav Nykvist's *The Women on the Roof* (1989) and Jan Troell's *Everlasting Moments* (2008)) at the apartment building across from his in a Rear Window-esque fashion via a telescope. Like most young men, Simon is obsessed with sex and naturally offends his academic girlfriend by remarking, "They saw whores love doing it with Alsatians. They're faithful. But a Rottweiler licks better," thus causing his little lady to leave abruptly without even saying "I love you" back to her loving beau. When his brazenly bitchy girlfriend rudely leaves without even giving him so much as a second-rate hand-job, would-be-sex-fiend Simon gets the gall to approach the prostitute in building across from his, though he has no idea that this random meeting will ultimately plunge him into an unpredictable labyrinthine erotic nightmare of delusional love, lies, criminality, cocaine, violence, murder, and, of course, steamy sex. The prostitute says her name is 'Janice' and Simon, who tells her his name is 'Eric,' absurdly attempts to show off his literary prowess as a Dutch major by bringing up popular novelist Willem Frederik Hermans, but the lecherous lady of the night has no clue who the writer is. Somewhat strangely, Simon impresses Janice by just paying to see her half-naked body and not actually having sex with her like most her Johns, thus letting the seemingly amiable hooker know that he is a so-called 'nice guy' who can probably be easily manipulated by an attractive woman. Janice is Swedish and she tells Simon that she decided to come to Holland because, "The Swedish think me too bony," as if the Dutch and the Swedes are not two of the most racially similar peoples in the world, especially when it comes to height and weight. After paying to see Janice's not-too-large tits, Simon leaves, but he decides to go back to the prostitute after noticing two criminal-like fellows going into her building and then leaving abruptly, as if they have just done something that they do not want to get caught doing. As it turns out, the two degenerate dudes smacked Janice around a little bit and Simon decides he is going to 'save her for from herself,' even telling her, "I come to save you" and then pretentiously reciting the quote from Dutch poet and classicist J.H. Leopold, "In this Love, Death shall be but sleep peaceful sleep. Waiting for you, be but waiting," to which she somewhat humorously replies to by crying and saying, "I'm so dumb." Simon also absurdly

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says to the professional pussy-peddler, “to me you’re not a whore,” thus making her realize that he is the perfect cuckold and a ‘mark’ that she will use and abuse for her own conniving conspiratorial ends.

As it turns out, Janice does not actually live across from Simon, but is merely using the apartment as a special place to sell her gash for cash. As it also turns out, the aggressive hooker’s real name is not ‘Janice,’ but Lizzie Rosenfeld—a rather Jew-y sounding name—and she lives in a rather lavish apartment with a giant aquarium containing large exotic sea turtles. Before he knows it, Simon finds himself spending all his time at Lizzie’s flat where he eventually meets her coke-addled ex-boyfriend Wesley (popular Dutch actor Thom Hoffman, who starred in van Gogh’s directorial debut *Lüger* (1982)), who he mistakes for a pimp after the debauched ‘cool guy’ offers him some nose candy upon introducing himself. Wesley makes his living as a photographer who, among other things, takes pornographic photographs of unclad ditzy dames in wheelchairs spreading their legs and striking intentionally retarded-looking poses. Needless to say, jealous Simon is not too happy when Wesley threatens him by stating in a preposterous illeist fashion regarding Lizzie, “Take good care of her or Wesley will be angry.” Of course, Lizzie is a femme fatale and she does not believe that she needs to be protected by any man, bragging to Simon regarding her curious career choice, “I’ll say it just once. I’m not ashamed of what I do. I’m not on drugs, I have no AIDS and I have no pimp.” Naturally, being a pathological liar, Lizzie later somewhat contradicts herself by claiming that she originally became a prostitute to support her and her then-husband’s lavish lifestyle of exotic vacations and cocaine addiction. Being a jealous little boy, Simon decides to track down Lizzie’s ex-husband Jasper, who tells him that “Lizzie is bad news” and denies that his ex-wife ever had a drug problem, stating, “Lizzie is only addicted to one thing...herself.” When a gangster-like fellow named Philip (Tom Jansen of van Gogh’s *Return to Oegstgeest* (1987) and *Loos* (1989)) randomly shows up at Lizzie’s apartment when she is not there, he decides to make a statement by having his goons dangle Simon out of a window by his feet while sardonically stating, “They say that dying is as nice as coming. At least when you’re hung. Seems to give you a hard-on.” Needless to say, Simon is not too happy about being almost killed and confronts Lizzie about it, so she tells him an extravagant bullshit story about how Philip is an ex-John who has been threatening her ever since she lost a suitcase of his that he told her to hold at one point. Indeed, apparently Lizzie mindlessly gave the suitcase in question to someone that claimed to be Philip’s friend and when Philip found out, he decided to brutally beat the prostitute’s then-boyfriend Wesley, hence why he left her. Naturally, since Simon is Lizzie’s new swain, he will now also serve as Philip’s new punching-bag.

After almost being dropped from three stories by Lizzie’s ex-John, Simon decides to dump her, but not before hatefully stating to her, “You’re a bitch. You’ve known they [Philip and his goons] were coming all this time. You’re

lying. Junkies always lie. You're just a common whore. How could I ever have thought you weren't. You can't even have an orgasm." When Lizzie subsequently moves away, Simon cannot handle it and soon begins obsessively searching for her, ultimately finding her at a high-class whorehouse in the South Holland city of Hague where the two make passionate love, though the protagonist pays(!), and somehow the seemingly emotionally dead prostitute even manages to have a real orgasm, thus hinting that she might actually slightly love her cuckolded beau. Due to the fact that Philip and his thugs are looking for them, the two loony lovebirds decide to runaway together, but when Lizzie makes the mistake of going to her ex-boyfriend's apartment to pickup her stuff, Wesley forces Simon to fuck the prostitute in the ass at knifepoint. Seemingly unphased by being forced into performing spontaneous sodomy in front of a knife-wielding lunatic, Simon subsequently takes Lizzie to meet his parents at a fancy restaurant and his sleazy father (Cas Enklaar of van Gogh's *Een dagje naar het strand* (1984) aka *A Day at the Beach*) immediately begins hitting on and feeling up his son's girlfriend, who naturally lies and tells her beau's proud progenitor's that she works as a nurse instead of a call-girl. After the dinner date with daddy and mommy, Simon takes his girlfriend to a college party and Lizzie intentionally insults her boy toy's ex-girlfriend Antoinette by asking her, "what is it like to be a virgin at your age?," thus demonstrating her absurd sense of jealousy despite being a chick her makes her living selling her body to strange dirty old men. Needless to say, Simon gets in a fight when one of his friends reminds him that his girlfriend is a hooker. After the pansy brawl, Lizzie thanks Simon for defending her, but he gets rather agitated and hysterically screams "You're lying!!!" like an agitated little cuck. Ultimately, Simon gets Lizzie to quit whoring and attempts the seemingly impossible by making her a sort of domesticated "kept woman," but with Philip and his goons still looking for them, the two decide to escape to France. When Simon asks his father for money for the trip, he replies by telling his son that he knows Lizzie is a hooker by remarking that he "knows the type." Somewhat irked but determined to get money to fund his and his girlfriend's getaway, Simon strategically asks his father if he was one of Lizzie's customers, which the old man does not deny, and then makes a rather dramatic attempt at begging for money by absurdly arguing, "If you paid for her then, why not now?," but big daddy refuses to pay because, after all, he is not getting any pussy out of it. Eventually, Lizzie's hooker negress friend double-crosses her and tells Philip about her and Simon's whereabouts, so the two go on the run and spend a good amount of time hiding in a museum. In the end, while Simon does his girlfriend's dirty work by 'confronting' Philip and his pals in a hysterical storm of bullets that results in a shattered turtle aquarium and the discovery of about half a dozen or so large bags of cocaine, Lizzie strategically avoids the violence by flying to Cannes. After countless pointless deaths and lethal lies, Simon finally realizes that Lizzie's love for him was a fantasy and delusion and he ultimately

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gives up on their relationship, though it is quite clear that he still loves the conniving cunt despite everything that has happened. Of course, lethally lecherous whore Lizzie gets what she wants in the end and does not even break a single nail in the process.

While not exactly Theo van Gogh's greatest film about a deluded dude that falls under the spell of a career slut, *False Light* is certainly a sort of underrated classic of decadent yet strangely aesthetically dignified Dutch neo-noir. Indeed, like with van Gogh's somewhat superior and certainly more idiosyncratic work *Loos*, the film puts the Hollywood erotic-thrillers of blockbuster screenwriter Joe Eszterhas to shame in terms of mere subversiveness and gall, especially in regard to its insights about the less savory and more unscrupulous members of the so-called fairer sex. The fact that van Gogh's then-wife cheated on him during the production of *False Light* with lead Ellik Bargai only add to the film's perverse potency in terms of its dissection of the darker elements of the 'feminine mystique.' In its depiction of a compulsively scheming, conniving, and lying whore who has nil interest in children and plays men like chess pieces to get what she wants, van Gogh's politically incorrect Dutch take on film noir more or less cinematically depicts Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger theory of the 'prostitute archetype' in a way that can be easily understood by the layman. Personally, I have never found the sort of woman that downs a dozen dicks a day that appealing, no matter how delectable her body may be and I certainly would have no desire to attempt to 'save' such a less than fresh and overtly unsalvageable woman, so van Gogh's film ultimately offered me an experience that I would never want to have otherwise in a fairly 'safe' sort of way that did not involve potential hazards like herpes or vengeful dope-dealers. While women get into prostitution for various reasons ranging from poverty to social awkwardness to sexual enslavement, it certainly takes a special kind of women who does it because she genuinely wants to as *False Light* so devilishly demonstrates. To go back to Weininger again, he once wrote, "Great men have always preferred women of the prostitute type." Of course, that statement says just as much about men as women. Indeed, van Gogh's film may feature an uniquely unflattering depiction of a certain kind of woman, but it also contains a provocative portrayal of various sorts of men who, despite their differences, all mindlessly fall prey to the same exact thing: pussy. As for Mr. van Gogh, one can only wonder whether or not it was worth it to him lose his wife as a result of directing *False Light*, but then again, as the film demonstrates, no man can control the whimsical essence of women.

-Ty E

COOL!

Theo van Gogh (2004)

While his final feature *06/05* (2004)—a subversive fictionalized account of the assassination of gay Dutch anti-multiculturalist politician Pim Fortuyn by a seemingly ethno-masochistic animal rights extremist that incriminates the Dutch Secret Service in the politician's death—received some degree of popularity and critical praise because it was released in the wake of his grisly assassination by a super swarthy towel-headed Moroccan untermensch terrorist (though some believe he was the victim of more shadowy circumstances involving the Dutch Secret Service), Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh's penultimate feature *Cool!* (2004) is fairly unknown, which is somewhat peculiar since it is more or less about the same good-for-nothing second-generation third world degenerates that the iconoclastic artist's assassin belonged to. Without a doubt, van Gogh was killed as a direct result of directing the Islam-unfriendly short *Submission: Part I* (2004)—a low-budget production made in collaboration with lapsed muslim Somali-born feminist writer and politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali featuring a nude Arab woman whose body has been painted with verses from the Quran—but if I was a young towel-head of Moroccan or Turkish mongrel stock, I would have surely been more offended by *Cool!* which accurately depicts the Dutch-born Arab youth non-culture as something akin to that of American negroes. Indeed, the teenage untermenschen of van Gogh's surely ironically titled work are hip-hop and crime worshipping illiterates of Berber, Moroccan, Turkish, and Caribbean negro stock who live in a liberal Occidental society they can never possibly survive and thrive in by any legal means, so they rob banks owned by evil rich white people when not grunting out sub-literate rap lyrics and defiling homely second-rate white chicks that no self-respecting white man would ever touch. A sort of Dutch teenage anti-Scarface that demonstrates why there is no real place in the West for people spawned from women that are forced to always wear medieval do-rags over their seemingly empty heads, the work ultimately demonstrates why its director once stated, "This is what our multicultural society has brought us: a climate of intimidation in which all sorts of goatfuckers can issue their threats freely." Of course, with the recent January 2015 killing of twelve people that worked at the French leftist satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* by three delinquent Islamists, including a dope-smoking aspiring rapper, *Cool!* is surely more relevant than ever, as a work that reflects the sort of crude and savage criminality that a country and, in turn, continent, begets when it becomes 'tolerant' of the innately intolerant and ultimately intolerable. Indeed, the fact that the great-grandnephew of artistic royalty like Vincent van Gogh would ever direct a film featuring teenage Turks rapping in Dutch just goes to show the decidedly deleterious effect that the malignant social cancer known as multiculturalism has had on the Netherlands. Filmed at a real-life juvenile

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delinquency facility and starring a couple real-life juvenile delinquents, *Cool!* is filmic realism in its most radically repugnant and endlessly anti-entertaining form, as a sort of cinematic equivalent to spending 90 minutes or so in Islamogangster pandemonium.

A clique of teenage 'people of color' totally botch a bank robbery and in the process kill an elderly Dutch bank manager after he suffers a heart attack when one of the outlaw youths nonsensically fires a firearm into the air, so the superlatively swarthy homeboys are sent to a juvenile detention facility called Glenn Mills and there they celebrate by singing rap lyrics like, "...keep cool in all you do...I have to keep cool and fuck the rest...smoke ganja every day against the street..." as they're being driven to their new home. As the film soon reveals, the colored would-be-gangsters are led by a Hitler-loving white wigger that sports a FTW (aka "Fuck The World") beanie named Prof (Johnny de Mol), who demonstrates his love for his girlfriend Mabel (popular half-caste Dutch-Chinese-Surinamese actress/singer Katja Schuurman, who previously starred in van Gogh's popular 2003 film *Interview*) by giving her a "real bolshevik" bracelet "from Russia." Prof seems to have about the same opinion of Arabs as director van Gogh as he jokingly tries to coerce his Nosferatu-esque homeboy Najib (Najim Laoukili) into fucking a goat, but when his colored comrade fails to comply, he shoots the poor animal with his handgun. Unfortunately for Prof, his main bitch Mabel has a thing for a pube-headed turd named Abdel (Fouad Mourigh) that works for him. Clearly, Abdel, who is one of Prof's underlings, forgets the truism "bros before hoes" in what ultimately makes for a pointless and putrid (un)romantic subplot. Of course, there is no honor among thieves, especially if they come from the third world and wigger wuss Prof luckily eventually gets what he is asking for.

Like criminally-inclined American negro youth, the 'colorful' characters of *Cool!* also talk about things like "respect" and "pride" as if they have any idea what such words really mean. After being sent to Glenn Mills for their roles in the botched bank robbery, a couple of the characters like Abdel and his negro friend Jeffrey (Julien de Roover) are forced to learn 'respect,' 'discipline,' and 'self-control' so they can get out of the detention center, which makes Abdel especially crazy because he wants to bone his wigger boss Prof's girlfriend Mabel. Meanwhile, Prof moronically plots a bank robbery for one million Euros at the same bank where Mabel works and which Abdul and his pals previously failed to rob. To make a long, banal story short, the bank robbery is intentionally botched and Abdel is killed while shielding Mabel from his bullets. Luckily, alpha-wigger Prof is also killed by the cops. At Abdul's hip-hop funeral, one of his friend raps, "death is our friend but Abdul did not deserve this end." Not surprisingly, Mabel is impregnated by Abdel's similarly short, swarthy, and pube-headed comrade Mohammad (Farhane El Hamchaoui). As for the rest of the camel jockey gangsters, they predictably continue being proud criminals.

Unquestionably, the story behind *Cool!* is much more interesting than the film itself, especially in regard to the real-life thugs that played some of the lead roles. As documented in his book *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (2006), Anglo-Dutch-Jewish journalist Ian Buruma, who is incidentally the nephew of Anglo-Jewish auteur John Schlesinger (*Sunday Bloody Sunday*, *Midnight Cowboy*), took the time to interview some of the stars of van Gogh's film, most notably Farhane El Hamchaoui, who engaged in gangster gang-bangs, the mugging of elderly white Dutch people, and even the robbing of the headmaster of the 'special' school he was sent to as a juvenile delinquent before becoming an actor. Despite the fact that van Gogh gave him his first big break by giving him his first acting role as one of the leads in *Cool!*, El Hamchaoui stated regarding the Dutch filmmaker and his assassination as a result of directing *Submission*, "I would never support Mohammed Bouyeri. But about the film he was right. No Moroccan respects Mohammed Bouyeri. To commit a murder during Ramadan — that is totally unacceptable." Indeed, because van Gogh directed a film featuring verses of the Quran painted on an unclad body, El Hamchaoui believes it was totally justified that the Dutch filmmaker was savagely assassinated and, even more absurdly, only takes any sort of disagreement with the assassination because it took place on Ramadan, thus reflecting his innately Islamist worldview. Of course, El Hamchaoui is no Muslim extremist and he is as assimilated as 'Dutch Moroccan' people come yet he believes the senseless slaughter of a goofy Dutchman that jumpstarted his career was justified simply because said Dutchman had the gall to direct a short film that might hurt the typical towel-head's feelings. Interestingly, when Buruma asked El Hamchaoui if he "ever felt Dutch," he replied that he felt "neither Dutch nor Moroccan," though when it comes to the Dutch playing the Moroccans in soccer, he replied rather revealingly by stating, "Then I'm for Morocco, for sure! But if I had to choose between a Dutch passport and a Moroccan one, I would choose the Netherlands. You have to think of your interests. A Moroccan passport would be useless. But with soccer I can choose for my own blood." Indeed, unlike the decidedly deracinated Dutch and most other Europeans, Arabs and virtually all other people know that blood comes first in terms of loyalties and the only reason that non-whites are in Europe in the first place is to suck on the tender teat of the welfare system, which subsidizes the large and largely non-working and uneducated families of foreigners while taxing the hell out of the indigenous white population so they cannot afford children of their own, hence the declining birth rates in not only the Netherlands, but virtually every single other European nation on earth.

Indubitably, compared to van Gogh's earlier more subversive and experimental features like his debut *Lüger* (1982), sardonic Sapphic serial killer flick *Charley* (1986), and darkly comedic sadomasochistic thriller *Loos* (1989), *Cool!* seems like a culturally confused mongrel of a movie directed by someone who has

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given up on their own idiosyncratic artistic vision and has become obsessed with a racially alien element that has made him feel like a stranger in his homeland. Of course, as his other later works like the 2002 television play *Najib en Julia* (a reworking of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* featuring a love affair between a rich white girl and Moroccan prole), *Submission, 06/05*, and unrealized drama series *Duizend en één dag* aka *A Thousand and One Days* demonstrate, van Gogh was absolutely obsessed with the Islamic ghetto that his tiny Germanic lowland nation was degenerating into to the point where he found it almost unbelievable. Indeed, even after receiving multiple death threats, van Gogh found it inexplicable that someone might murder him for asserting his right to freedom of speech, apparently stating, "Nobody kills the village idiot," but of course a medieval-minded dune coon proved him wrong. It is surely a bad sign of a race's survival instincts when a proud queer like Pim Fortuyn, a pathologically rude nihilist like van Gogh, and racially mixed Zionist of partial Indonesian Asiatic stock who dyes his hard blond like Geert Wilders are the only public figures in a nation that have enough testicular fortitude to make light of the fact that their country is devolving into a hotbed for third worldization, Isalmification, deleteriously decadent late-stage liberalism, and racial suicide.

As the grandson of a 'racially insensitive' Dutch WWII resistance fighter, I see the general Dutch passive reaction to the third world Muslim deluge in their country as patently pathetic because if previous generations were willing to fight in vain against the Wehrmacht and Schutzstaffel, ridding themselves of literally barbarian-minded uneducated third world rabble who swoon over Mohammad should be a no brainer. Notably, ever since his father was assassinated, Theo van Gogh's son Lieuwe has been the target of multiple attacks from Moroccan and Turkish 'youths' yet the Dutch police refuse to protect him. At least Lieuwe can look back proudly on the fact that his padre was one of the few Dutchmen that had the balls to 'call a spade a spade' and demonstrated via his films, books, and TV appearances that goatfuckers have no place in a healthy Holland. Indeed, while I found the film fairly intolerable due to its retarded rap songs, pimple-plagued teenage towel-head stars, and anticlimactic bank heists, *Cool!* ultimately does what van Gogh intended to do via what might be described as an 'Islamic neo-minstrel hip-hop show' by demonstrating that no amount of liberal-minded 'reforming' programs will ever be able turn the spawn of Turks, Moroccans, and negroes into real Dutchmen, let alone law-abiding citizens who contribute to society instead of defile it with an antisocial crime-glorifying pseudo-culture that has done more to harm the untermenschen than any form of colonization or nonwhite pogroms.

-Ty E

MAY 6TH

Theo van Gogh (2004)

Rather ironically yet quite fittingly, the last film Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh (*Blind Date*, *Interview*)—the great-grandson of the art dealer brother of tragic post-impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh—directed before he was himself assassinated was a political thriller based on the assassination of so-called ‘right-wing’ populist politician Pim Fortuyn, who was supposedly gunned down by a pansy vegan animal rights activist who felt his victim was a racist who was using towelheads as ‘scapegoats.’ Indeed, despite being openly gay, Fortuyn was one of only a handful of Dutch politicians who had the testicular fortitude to admit that the Netherlands had a serious immigrant problem (in fact, he once wrote a book entitled *Against the Islamization of Our Culture* (1997)) yet he was a pro-market kind of guy and his views on immigration were rather liberal compared to serious nationalists (for example, he had no problem assimilating non-whites). Naturally, as someone that was a personal friend and supporter of Fortuyn, van Gogh was able to assemble a film that is more personal, intimate, and intriguing than similarly themed works. Indeed, while certainly no masterpiece (let alone anything close to the director’s greatest film), *06/05* (2004) aka *May 6th* aka *The Sixth of May* manages to depict the exceedingly erratic essence and socio-politically schizophrenic multicultural-inspired inner turmoil of a culturally degenerating democracy that prides itself on its ‘openness,’ ‘liberalness,’ and dedication to free speech. Featuring a decadent journalist as a protagonist who is more or less a parody of Dutch liberalness and who has no serious problem with his teenage daughter dating an exceedingly ugly Moroccan thug, *06/05* is a quasi-labyrinthine story in a semi-docudrama style of the hermetic craziness that ensues when a reporter attempts to uncover the dubious assassination of fallen ‘fascist fag’ Fortuyn and finds himself immersed in a dangerous world involving the Dutch Secret Service (aka AIVD), animal rights activists, defense contractors, members of the Bilderberg Group, and scheming American businessmen with glaring hook-noses. A realist depiction of the aftermath of what some might describe as the Dutch equivalent to 9/11 shot in a documentary-like 3-camera-setup technique style and featuring real stock footage of Fortuyn (including when he was once the victim of pieing that would somewhat humorously foreshadow his death) and old newsreels, *06/05* is, quite unlike Oliver Stone’s sophomoric conspiracy turd *JFK* (1991), plausible in terms of its message as a work that demonstrates that many people in politics, business, and the Muslim world had much to benefit from the ill-fated fag fascist’s tragic death. Perhaps even more interestingly, the film also brings up questions regarding van Gogh’s own assassination, which took place exactly 911 days after Fortuyn’s, with the work being released posthumously about a month after the director’s violent death (somewhat notably, *06/05* was the first to be released

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online before it hit the theaters in the Netherlands).

Jim de Booy (Thijs Römer) is an exceedingly cynical 32-year-old divorced photo journalist and while doing a photo shoot with a hot actress model named Birgit Maas (Georgina Verbaan)—a lecherous little lady who talks about her unsavory yet stereotypical goal of attempting to find a ‘sugar daddy’ and how her father remarked regarding her performance in a Harold Pinter play, “I didn’t get it, but you’ve got a nice ass”—in Hilversum, North Holland, he becomes an unwitting witness to controversial Dutch anti-Islamist politician Pim Fortuyn’s untimely assassination by a seemingly deranged animal rights activist named Volkert van der Graaf. While Jimmy boy fails to take pictures of the actual assassination, he does notice a number of dubious individuals hanging around the general area of the curious killing. Meanwhile, a young Turkish-born animal rights activist that belonged to a group called ‘Green Offensive’ named Ayse Him (Tara Elders), who just got out of jail after serving an 18 month prison sentence for her questionable involvement in the death of a night watchman, is packing all of her things to move out of her apartment, which is adorned with far-left propaganda posters reading “Pim the Savior – Stop Racism” depicting Fortuyn as Hitler. Two of Ayse’s lovers, a degenerate Dutch Aryan animal rights activist named Wouter Heemskerk (Gijs Naber), who was the one that was actually responsible for the death of the night watchman, and a middle-aged Turkish far-left journalist/terrorist named Erdogan Demir (Cahit Ölmez), were near the general location at the time when Fortuyn was assassinated. When Erdogan walks in on Wouter attempting to drown Ayse in a bathtub, he kills him and gets his girlfriend to help dump the degenerate Dutchman’s body in a canal. Upon arriving at the crime scene to take photos when the corpse of Wouter, who was placed in his car as if he accidentally drowned after driving into the water, is pulled from the sea, Jim realizes he is one of the strange people that he spotted at the site of Fortuyn’s assassination. Meanwhile, members of the Bilderberg Group and Dutch Secret Service, as well as Jewish-looking businessmen, discuss the future of Dutch politics in the wake of Fortuyn’s death.

After Jim turns into a sort of degenerate Sherlock Holmes and does some detective work with the help of his teenage daughter Marije (Caro Lenssen), Jim learns about Ayse and begins watching her every move. Unfortunately, two Secret Service men—a lard ass named Van Dam (Jack Wouterse) and his pernicious pint-sized minion ‘Wester’ (Marcel Hensema)—realize that Jim is on to their sour scent. Unbeknownst to Ayse, her new boyfriend Erdogan is in cahoots with the sinister yet rather silly acting Secret Service men that were involved with the conspiracy to liquidate Fortuyn, who more than likely would have won the upcoming election for Prime Minister, which would have caused major trouble not only for the members of the Dutch SS, but liberal politicians, globalists, shady American businessmen, Muslims, and other culture-distorting rabble who want to turn the entire planet into a worldwide third world inhab-

ited by raceless, sexless, soulless, cultureless, materialistic brown serfs. When Jim eventually catches up with Ayse at a crowded water park and essentially saves her life, he finds himself a marked man, with his friends and family members also being victims of their wrath. While a statuesque Secret Service woman attempts to kidnap Jim's daughter Marije but fails, the SS men do manage to kidnap the journalist's co-employee John van Gaal (Johnny de Mol), who they talk into believing that his photo journalist friend was involved in the assassination of Fortuyn. While Jim's daughter manages to find shelter in the home of her towelhead boyfriend Hamid (Fouad Mourigh)—a swarthy aspiring rapper who writes pro-terrorist/anti-Dutch/anti-gay lyrics regarding Fortuyn's assassination like, "They say Left sent the bullet but I don't believe it...Pity Al-Qaeda didn't shoot him dead along with all the queers in bed. Volkert – your country needed you...Heroes aren't born, but you'll do"—the Secret Service guys eventually track her down, though they fail in a fight against a group of stoned stupid Muslims. In the end, it is revealed that Pim Fortuyn was probably assassinated due to his disapproval in participating in the development of a U.S. jet (aka Joint Strike Fighter project). Indeed, after he was assassinated, Fortuyn's carefully selected successor approved of the jet plan.

While a rather aesthetically unimpressive political thriller with an absolutely horrendous soundtrack and oftentimes unintentionally unnerving acting performances, *06/05* is a consistently enthralling work that probably does a better job than any other film of the past decade or so in terms of depicting the precarious political and cultural situation in the Netherlands today. Indeed, depicting a seemingly insane world where white Dutch girls date unsavory Arab rappers and where politicians literally wish death upon their political contemporaries for holding pro-Dutch politically incorrect political views, van Gogh's film demonstrates that post-WWII liberal democratic values have dissolved the cultural fabric of the Netherlands and turned it into an increasingly troubled place where hostile foreigners are given special treatment over the indigenous Dutch, who, with the assassination of Fortuyn, have no voice to fight against the rising tide of color in their densely populated Germanic nation. Undoubtedly, one of the most potent and incriminating scenes of the film is a montage featuring carefully selected real news footage of Fortuyn's enemies wishing death on him, including one politician who sadistically states, "I think Fortuyn has hurt himself. I hope he hurt himself. I hope the wound is so deep, it doesn't stop bleeding before May 15." Of course, one of the politicians attempts to paint Fortuyn as a neo-Nazi by quoting Anne Frank and comparing the assassinated politician's anti-immigration policies to those carried out by the Nazis during the holocaust. No doubt, the most hateful of Fortuyn's detractors is a popular Dutch TV personality named Marcel van Dam (of course, van Gogh named the fat Secret Agent after this fellow), who unsuccessfully attempted to have his scene cut from the film where he accuses the politician of being "an extremely inferior

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being” and “rabble-rouser” who seeks to, “exploit potential xenophobia among Dutch people.” Of course, as auteur Theo van Gogh’s own assassination by an ugly *untermensch* Moroccan demonstrates (which was carried out because said *untermensch* was offended by the director’s controversial yet ultimately unimpressive short *Submission* (2004)), the only active xenophobes are the Muslims, not to mention the fact that so-called ‘xenophobia’ is a completely rational feeling for the Dutch to have seeing that they have been displaced within the confines of their own tiny nation. Interestingly, some suspect that van Gogh was not assassinated by a camel jockey, but by the Secret Service (interestingly, the SS was aware of his assassin Mohammed Bouyeri, as he and his terrorist group were under surveillance). Indubitably, after watching *05/06*, which depicts the Dutch Secret Service (AIVD) in an exceedingly unfavorable light, it does not seem all that implausible that they would want to kill the filmmaker. Ironically, van Gogh’s father Johan van Gogh served in the AIVD (when it was known as the ‘BVD’), thus the filmmaker probably had certain insights regarding the Secret Service that influenced his rather damning film. Indeed, apparently Fortuyn was hated by the Dutch elite (which van Gogh also hated, as a man that belonged to a political party that calls for the abolition of the Dutch monarchy), who called a boycott against him a couple years before his assassination. Before his death, polls indicated that Fortuyn would have won the 2002 election for Prime Minister and of course he would have taken his revenge against the elite.

Assassinated exactly 911 days after Fortuyn was assassinated, Theo van Gogh, who was arguably the most controversial public figure in the Netherlands at the time of his death and certainly a thorn in the side of not just Islam but Zionism and American imperialism, certainly seems like the sort of individual that certain people wanted to have permanently snuffed out. Ultimately, by whom and why he was assassinated is irrelevant as all of these entities are of the same odious anti-Occidental disease and should be treated as such (as they say, if you don’t kill cancer, it spreads). When van Gogh was assassinated, the Jewish Zionist extremist mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, had the gall to call for the unity of the Dutch and Muslims, absurdly remarking, “People can be cynical about this, but I can’t do anything about this.” Also, Cohen, who was publicly attacked by van Gogh (who once compared him to a Nazi collaborator due to his weak stance on Islamic terrorism and the Islamization of the Netherlands), was notorious for refusing security to any public figure that held ‘right-wing’ or ‘nationalist’ views while at the same time demanding that the Dutch, “fight nazism and racism.” It should be noted that *05/06* also depicts miscegenation in a negative light, with the protagonist Jim rhetorically asking his daughter regarding her ‘romantic’ relationship with a Muslim, “A nice shit Moroccan? Or are you his whore?,” while at the same time not realizing that his lack of parenting skills is largely responsible for his progeny’s degenerate choice of sexual partners. Of course, Jim is also depicted as a negligent father/husband who divorced his wife so he could

play 'Don Juan,' thus indicating his daughter's raunchy race-mixing is a form of self-destructive rebellion. Indeed, despite being a lifelong free speech activist who directed some of the most iconoclastic Dutch films ever made, van Gogh seemed to begin to understand the decidedly deleterious effect that liberalism, multiculturalism, Zionism, and globalization were having on his nation. Since it seems rather appropriate, I am going to conclude this review with a remark that Fortuyn made on TV that is featured in 05/06 regarding his revolutionary and much needed dream for the Netherlands: "I reflect an important feeling in Holland. What is wrong with saying that? This is one of the most densely-populated countries. I understand all too well, as I have repeated, I should repeat it more clearly, if I say we should stop [...] But it's essential, if we want to dam the excesses because there's a massive influx pressuring integration and security, using education, health care, and our social security provisions. If you don't want the structure to collapse, and I don't... then we should prevent more from coming in." If more popular public figures need to be assassinated for Europeans to wake up once and for all to thwart the pervading malignancy that is turning Europa into a third world sewer, then so be it.

-Ty E

SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT
SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT

Theodore Gurshuny (1972)

Featuring Warhol Superstar Mary Woronov (Chelsea Girls, Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills), as well as fellow factory fairies and fag hags Ondine, Candy Darling, Kristen Steen, Tally Brown, Lewis Love, flaming filmmaker Jack Smith (Flaming Creatures, Normal Love), degenerate artist Susan Rothenberg, and John Ford star John Carradine, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1972) aka *Night of the Dark Full Moon* – a dispiriting proto-slasher horror flick set during the eve of Jesus Christ’s birthday – is not exactly the sort of film you would expect to see with so much talentless star talent. Directed by Woronov’s then-husband Theodore Gershuny (Kemek, Sugar Cookies) and co-produced by tro-maniac Lloyd Kaufman (The Toxic Avenger, Tromeo and Juliet) and a couple other Hanukkah-honoring Hebrews, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is the sort of innately antagonistic anti-family affair that is more likely to inspire more suicides and patricides during the holiday season than Christmas caroling and kissing under the mistletoe. Somewhat resembling an old school American home-movie due to its scratchy, grainy, and deteriorating film stock, as well as startlingly cinematically seductive sepia-tone flashback scenes which add to the film’s overall ominous aura of domestic dismalness, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is a wicked work that feels like it was directed by someone with an alien, adverse, antipathetic feeling towards Christmas and the typical American yokel family that celebrates it during the yuletide season. Featuring completely kosher horror genre clichés like rural-based incest, horrid and hidden familial secrets, peculiar peasant paranoia, small town small-mindedness, anti-Anglo hostility, and intrinsic distrust of all things traditional white Christian America, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* was a relatively ‘revolutionary’ horror films for its time, predating (although released in 1972, the film finished shooting in 1970) Wes Craven’s *The Last House on the Left* (1972), Bob Clark’s *Black Christmas* (1974), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), John Carpenter’s *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980), and countless other related works, but that does not necessarily mean it’s a superior work, just an overlooked one (relatively, speaking of course!) As amateurishly assembled as it is thematically aberrant, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is a Christ Mass flick for Christ-Killers, Warhol factory addicts, and those seasonally sadistic spiritually stagnant individuals who are more naughty than nice.

Aside from all the Hollywood and mainstream media propaganda regarding slavery among a marginal and mostly wealthy minority of men mainly of English, Irish, and Jewish descent, few films have depicted the maniac and mongrelized microcosm that is the a good portion of the United States population; a citizenry descended from criminals, outcasts, political and religious fanatics, and savages and barbarians. In short, a nation of people so desperate in their life of misery

and squalor that they were willing to risk everything, including their nationality, culture, customs, familiarity, extended family, and even their lives, in a gambling attempt at bettering their lives. Whether intentional on the director's part or not (I would go with the former), if any horror film allegorically portrays the 'esoteric' genetic history of America and its inhabitants in an effective manner, albeit in a fiercely fictionalized and absurdly ridiculous manner, it is *Silent Night, Bloody Night*; a work where the most ostracized of social outcasts, mental patients, escape from the loony bin and make up the entire population of a small town. Centering around the dark and tragic history of a small Massachusetts town (although filmed on location in the Hebraic haven of Long Island, New York), *Silent Night, Bloody Night* begins with the story of a once prestigious patriarch named Wilfred Butler (Philip Bruns) who returns to his majestic maniac mansion, which had been turned into an institution for the criminally insane, on one fateful and ultimately fiery Christmas Eve where he is set on fire and burned alive on that very same night. Flash forward to the present where the manor, now uninhabited but with all the original family's nicknacks and what-not adorning the walls, is now in the hands of Wilfred Butler's grandson Jeffrey (James Patterson), who inherited the house via his grandfather's will and now wants to sell it, but the suspicious locals, including the mayor and sheriff, seem rather overprotective of the house. The mayor's daughter Diane Adams (Mary Woronov) narrates the story and the doomful day inheritor Jeffrey and an escaped serial killer come to the Butler mansion just in time for Christmas. As all the characters in *Silent Night, Bloody Night* find out, the murderous lunatic is out to celebrate a venomous and violent "season of vengeance," with a slick big shot lawyer and his exotic European wife being the first victims.

"That's what usually happens in America" says the beautiful wife to her lawyer husband when he remarks that no one seems to remember what the "monument" (i.e. old family photos, antiques, furniture, etc.) in the Butler mansion is for. Indeed, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is just a fictional version of so many forgotten tales of dubious founding fathers and the curious origins of everyday citizens. Although the locals of the town claim to be mostly the descendants of people who came to the town during the depression, their origins are much more ominous with their history of settling being more unsettling. While surely an uneven film that is somewhat slow to pick up pace, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* proves to be a dirty diamond in the rough among the sea of slasher sewage, especially when it comes to the film's last 30 minutes where the morbid mystery of the mad manor is revealed to the audience via the narrated writings of Wilfred Butler and delightfully deteriorated sepia-tone footage that reveal the macabre and monstrous history of the town and its inhabitants. This sleazy yet strikingly stylized scene probably could be described as a "Night of the wanton Warhol Superstars" as this is when most of the factory burnouts make their appearance with Candy Darling – who despite having a penis, is easily the most beautiful

SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT

“woman” in the film, thus making the seedy cinematic work hardly of interest to the oh-so many horror fans looking for some cheap carnal thrills – being the most visible. Ultimately, both Christmas and Warhol’s weirdos are only incidental to the story of *Silent Night, Bloody Night*, but these seemingly discordant ingredients also make the film worth seeing. Indeed, by no means a masterpiece in any traditional sense of the word, *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is, at best, a neglected proto-slasher flick and a curious cult item and, at worst, a miserable money-motivated propaganda film assembled by a conglomerate of hostile entities whose artistic ingenuity is no greater than their love of Christmas. More gritty than *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984), more gruesome than *Christmas Evil* (1980), and featuring a more marvelous mythos than *Black Christmas* (1974), *Silent Night, Bloody Night* is one of few remotely redeeming slasher flicks that is not overblown nor overrated. After all, how many other no-budget slasher flicks feature an arthouse tranny that has starred in Paul Morrissey and Werner Schroeter films and a back-story that is quasi-Lovecraftian in its essence regarding tainted towns and bloodlines. Just don’t watch *Silent Night, Bloody Night* after just realizing that you’re significant other kissed someone else under the mistletoe, as you might find yourself intentionally overdosing on your alcoholic eggnog.

-Ty E

1000 ROSEN

Theu Boermans (1994)

If you ever wondered how the Netherlands became a seemingly forsaken land that is mainly associated with great legal weed, prostitution, euthanasia, government subsidized sex changes, and virtually any and every form of disgustingly degenerate neo-liberal socio-cultural rot, the little known Dutch feature 1000 Rosen (1994) aka 1,000 Roses aka Duizend Rozen directed by Theu Boermans will certainly lead you in the right direction. In fact, it is the only film I can think of that tells it like it is and—instead of portraying Americans as the great liberators—exposes the fact that the United States turned Western Europe into its own museum-cum-whorehouse after the World War II. Based on the 1990 play of the same name by Austrian playwright Gustav Ernst—a man probably best known in the cinema world for penning the Austrian cult flick *Exit... nur keine Panik* (1980) aka *Exit... But No Panic* and its sequel *Exit II - Verklärte Nacht* (1995) aka *Exit II - Transfigured Night*—the film was fairly critically successful in the Netherlands where it won three Gouden Kalf in 1994, including Best Actress, Best Actor and Best Film, yet it remains completely unknown even among seasoned cinephiles outside the Dutch speaking world. Indeed, despite winning the Dutch equivalent of an Oscar in three major categories and various other coveted prizes in other festivals, Boermans' film, like the seeming majority of great Dutch cinema, has never been released outside of the Netherlands, which is rather unfortunate considering it features an absolutely scathing socio-political message that is very much relevant to contemporary Western Europe and various other parts of the world. A political parable disguised as a black dramedy featuring bittersweet moments of lusciously colored magical realism that somewhat ironically symbolizes the collective death of an entire population and its history, 1000 Rosen depicts the swift and savagely painful yet nonetheless beautiful death of a long dying town as a result of a devilishly duplicitous American company coming to town and completely dismantling the entire place. Depicting a necrotizing microcosm plagued by rampant fatherlessness, alcoholism, pedophilia, and various other forms of all-too-common social dysfunction and cultural decay, Boermans's striking debut—a cinematic work based on a play that the director began performing in 1990 with a troupe of actors that would partly make up the film's cast—is a pleasantly political incorrect work that depicts American hegemony and globalization as something akin to a nuclear holocaust, albeit somewhat more aesthetically pleasing. A fairly amazing debut for a theater actor and stage director with seemingly nil film directing experience, the film can be certainly compared by cinematic works by Alex van Warmerdam, Adriaan Ditvoorst, and Roy Andersson in terms of their aesthetics and darkly comedic depiction of the decline of the Occident, yet Boermans' film can hardly be described as derivative, even if seem Dutch film critics have criticized it for

being supposedly too contrived and formulaic. Ultimately, 1000 Rosen reveals why Francis Parker Yockey was right when he wrote in 1953 in his book *The Enemy of Europe* regarding the decidedly deleterious effect of America on Europe, “The Europe of 2050 will be essentially the same as that of 1950, viz. a museum to be looted by barbarians, a historical curiosity for sightseers from the colonies; an odd assortment of operetta-states; a reservoir of human material standing at the disposal of Washington and Moscow; a loan market for New York financiers; a great beggars’ colony, bowing and scraping before the American tourists.”

While I have never even visited the Netherlands, I have known my entire life that something horrible happened to the tiny Lowland nation as a result of the Second World War because my grandfather was a Dutchman who regrettably left his homeland for the United States of America in the 1950s. Indeed, I was always told as a child that my grandfather came to the U.S. because he was thoroughly depressed by what had become of his homeland, but it was only until I was much older that I truly began to realize how the Netherlands degenerated from a relatively powerful empire with colonies all around the world into becoming an overcrowded neo-liberal hellhole that is being invaded by third world barbarians and savages that would love nothing more than to exterminate the country and people that subsidize their mostly parasitic existences. While the Germans—a longtime foe of the Dutch despite their shared blood and history—typically gets the blame for the Netherlands’ decline due to the Nazi occupation during the Second World War, 1000 Rosen demonstrates in a wonderfully wicked sort of way that it was ultimately the Americans that raped and destroyed the country and turned it into, not unlike the rest of Western Europe, a servile vassal state with no true sovereignty of its own. In its depiction of a classically tall, dark, and handsome Clark Kent-esque American businessman from Minnesota named Mr. Marshall who comes to a destitute Dutch town as an elusive all-powerful savior and ultimately proves to be the worst sort of wolf in sheep’s clothing by buying out the main factory and deindustrializing the entire area, the film reveals in a fantastic allegorical fashion how the so-called Marshall Plan (aka the European Recovery Program, ERP) dismantled the country’s infrastructure, industry, culture, traditions, and self-determination, among other things. Indeed, 1000 Rosen is anything but a tribute to the false song of globalism and its assorted social afflictions like multiculturalism, pop culture, feminism, and various other forms of deracinating nation-destroying degeneracy.

Depicting a morally inverted world where unmarried mothers put their own petty concerns over that of their much loathed fatherless bastard daughters and featuring an extra eerie conclusion where a little girl and a pedophile banker that is obsessed with said little girl are the only survivors and thus leave town together in what is indubitably a hauntingly sardonic conclusion, 1000 Rosen might be rather dark and depressing yet it also quite entertaining, humorous, and aesthetically pleasing, not to mention a rare quasi-mainstream Dutch flick

that dares to reveal that post-WWII Netherlands became the desperate whore of the pernicious bloodsucking pimp that is the United States of Zion. Indeed, a rare piece of anti-American cinema that, quite unlike a bombastic agitprop piece by archetypal American liberal slob Michael Moore, is not innately insipid, juvenile, or cynical in an impotent leftist sort of way, the film depicts in a semi-surreal fashion the last gasp of the land that produced Rembrandt and both van Goghs in a manner that can be understood by children yet appreciated on a deeper level by pretentious art fags. While I hate to quote the old bitter kosher commie culture-distorter, the film is also thankfully a rare cinematic work that manages to contradict Adorno's statement regarding modern art, "[A]rt no longer has the task of representing a reality that is preexisting for everyone in common, but rather of revealing, in its isolation, the very cracks that reality would like to cover over in order to exist in safety; and that, in doing so, it repels." In fact, *1000 Rosen* features both literal and figurative cracks of a rather grim reality regarding the slow and painful secret ethnic cleansing of Western Europe by generic looking American men with phony smiles that operate under the pernicious guidance of hidden forces that would love to transform every church into a McDonald's and replace every native Dutchman with an automaton-like Indian or Chinese slave-wager.

Rather fittingly, *1000 Rosen* begins relatively wholesomely with an unseen dipsomaniac putting the finishing touches on a wooden mouse maze. The maze was created by a working class zero named Harry (Jaap Spijkers) as a birthday present for his longtime girlfriend's daughter Liesje (Tessa Lilly Wyndham). As the film eventually reveals, no one seems to know who Liesje's biological father is, but it is hinted that her so-called 'uncle'—a sleazy and creepy bank director named 'Otto' (Hannes Demming)—might be the little girl's true progenitor. Likewise, it is also hinted that Otto is the father of Liesje's mother Gina (Marieke Heebink), as he apparently has a sexual history with both the mother and daughter. Indeed, not only is Otto a predatory capitalist, but he is also a unabashed sexual predator who has no problem feeling up a prepubescent girl while in the company of said little girl's grandmother. As a self-absorbed bitch that lives a pathetic existence and wants someone to blame, Gina naturally resents her daughter Liesje because she has no life as a result of getting pregnant at 18 and being forced to work at the local wiring factory instead of pursuing her dream of studying languages and traveling abroad. Despite loathing her life, Gina is better off than most people in the area since she is the manager of the local factory, which is the town's main source of income. Not surprisingly, Gina's mother (Marianne Rogée) also resents her for similar reasons, though she loves her granddaughter Liesje and even confesses to the little girl, "When you were born, I knew right away...that the best part of my daughter was you." As the mouse maze at the beginning of the film alludes to, all of these characters are trapped in a perennial maze of insufferable redundancy and, not unlike the mice,

they will inevitably die mostly slow and painful deaths in their proletarian prison, though not before suffering the misguided delusion that they might escape after the yanks come to town and ostensibly save the day.

The film is set in an anachronistic world with aspects of both the early 1960s and early 1990s where Low German (aka ‘Nederduits’)—a dialect of Northern Germany that can be understood with relative ease by Dutch people—is spoken and children are virtually nonexistent. Little Liesje—an inordinately adorable yet tragic child that has already clearly suffered much suffering in her short and seemingly rather static life—seems to be a mute as she does not speak at all and seems to be quasi-autistic yet at the same time she displays almost mystical insights that, quite unlike the dysfunctional adults that surround her, give her the capacity to realize that her town is on the brink of a catastrophic disaster. Obsessed with staring at a painting of a red rose on her blood-colored bedroom wall, Liesje notices everything that the adults cannot seem to see, including random appearance of quasi-apocalyptic cracks in the earth and plants sprouting in the most random of places. When a group of Americans led by an almost mythical figure named Mr. Marshall (Rik Launspach)—a shadowy yet handsome and seemingly all-powerful character that is always symbolically depicted standing behind doors and windows—the plants become more prominent and random citizens begin coughing up blood for seemingly no reason as if consumed by some sort of mysterious plague that ultimately seems to be more metaphysical than physical in origin. Indeed, the unexpected arrival of the Americans, including a couple well dresses negroes, completely corrupts the equilibrium of the town, especially in regard to romantic and familial relationships. For instance, Liesje’s mother Gina soon drops her longtime boyfriend/pseudo-husband Harry—a sub-literate forklift driver that seems to mean well but is just too much of a dumb and dangerous drunk to ever be a truly decent husband/father figure—for a meek, weak, and pathetic white knight computer nerd named Kernstock (Bert Geurkink) who is married to a large, masculine, and grotesquely overly domineering nurse named Rita (Marisa Van Eyle) who calls him “little bear” and gives him unwanted blowjobs. Aside from giving distinctly disgusting blowjobs where it seems like she might suck off her husband Kernstock’s cock, Rita does think think twice about giving passive handjobs to elderly patients while simultaneously carrying out wifely duties like frying eggs. As Kernstock reveals regarding his life ambitions, “I always thought one half of me would work...and the other half would prepare for a Canary Island. One half sold to the factory and the other half able to live.” Unfortunately for Kernstock, like virtually everyone in the town, his dreams are about to degenerate into a horrendous nightmare that makes the final days of the German occupation seem like a gentle stroll in the park by comparison.

Aside from Liesje, her grandmother, who is a stereotypical old-timer that hates change of any sort, seems to be the only other person that has a strong

feeling that the Americans will bring disaster to the town. Indeed, grandma even reacts violently when her daughter Gina buys a used computer from Kernstock for accounting purposes at the wiring factory. Grandma has dedicated her entire life to working at the factory and as she proudly screams at Harry and Gina regarding her seemingly indomitable work ethic, "At your age I was up at five! You're weaklings! No Bones! [...] I've stood all my life! I never laid down! Even when I laid down! I remember myself as only being upright." When Gina goes behind her back and gets a large loan from 'uncle' Otto so that she can buy her own land and house, grandmother kicks her out of her home, which is incidentally located inside the same building as the factory, and throws all of her belongings into the street, thus forcing her to sleep in her work office. Not surprisingly, Gina does not seem to be concerned with the fact that her daughter Liesje continues to live inside her mother's home. Meanwhile, Harry is left seriously hospitalized after crashing his work truck into a billboard after getting in a fight with Gina over her relationship with Kernstock and her refusal to move inside his Winnebago. While Harry originally purchased the Winnebago so he would not have to live under the same roof as Gina, Liesje, and the grandmother, the loss of his ladylove to Kernstock finally made him realize how important she was to him, hence his desperate suicidal decision to crash his truck into a billboard advertising to "invest now" in the dubious American corporation. Of course, Gina is one of the fools that opts to invest and her banker uncle Otto even gives her a fairly decent sized loan which she suspects is an attempt for him to make amends for the fact that he molested her when she was a little girl, though he charges her 11% interest because, as he matter-of-factly states in a slightly sinister fashion, "Only death is for free." Needless to say, Gina and virtually everyone she knows will receive this once-in-a-lifetime freebie by the end of the film. Not long after hotheaded Harry's rather convenient accident, Kernstock gets completely fed up with his raunchy ratchet wife Rita and leaves her for good after she gives him a rather nasty involuntary blowjob from under his computer desk. Notably, while receiving the completely grotesque unwanted face-fake, Kernstock states to Rita in a rare moment where he displays some level of testicular fortitude, "It's slim legs I think of, if you must know...and tight cunts I think of...and not your barn hole." To add insult to injury, Kernstock not only takes Harry's woman but also takes residence in his beloved Winnebago. When she and her mother later visit Harry in the hospital, Liesje confirms that Gina is fucking Kernstock, even though they have not technically sealed the sexual deal yet (as is quite apparent throughout the entire film, Gina has her eye on Mr. Marshall and is simply using poor cuckold Kernstock as a sort of slavish life-planner due to his supposed economic intelligence and prowess behind a computer). Eventually crippled Harry and Rita proceed to begin a grotesque 'rebound relationship' where they both declare to take murderous revenge against their ex-lovers. Indeed, while Harry vows to kill Kernstock in a most gruesome fashion, Rita brags in a rather venomous

fashion how she plans to kill her hubby in his own bed whilst giving him one of her infamous handjob. Meanwhile, Gina and Kernstock are so happy about their would-be-bright future together that they literally slow dance together on top of graves in the local graveyard in a darkly humorously symbolic scene that seems to reflect the absurdly misguided, blind enthusiasm that the post-WWII Dutch had for mindlessly of disposing their nation's entire history and culture and forgetting their ancestors in the hope that they would monetarily benefit from the Americanization of their homeland. Of course, in the end, the scheming Americans, who have no organic kultur and are solely monetarily motivated and thus anti-Occidental, not only bring them deindustrialization and destitution, but death and total destruction.

In the last 30 minutes or so of the film, 1000 Rosen takes a sort of fantastic apocalyptic turn for the worst that has its genesis in the American corporation secretly dismantling the industry of the entire town literally over night and leaving to go back to the United States in what is undoubtedly a symbolic depiction of America's pernicious predatory effect on a rather vulnerable post-WWII Western Europe. When Liesje's grandmother witnesses firsthand the dismantling of the factory that she has slaved away at her entire life, she hysterically screams, "I knew it! I knew it right from the start!" and then sets her eyes on treacherous banker Otto and rightly yells at him while he watches pathetically from the comfort of his office window, "And you did too! You've ruined us! All of us. The town, me, Gina! You and your bloody friends!" just before killing herself by throwing herself in front of one of the trucks that is hauling away the equipment from the town as her haunted granddaughter looks on. Notably, while all this is going on, Gina is spending a splendid vacation at the beach where she finally gives Kernstock what he wants by less than passionately fucking him. Indeed, instead of being there for her traumatized daughter Liesje, who has just witnessed the brutally tragic suicide of her grandmother, Gina is busy riding the cock of a cuck that she seems to have nil sexual or emotional interest in, but of course one should not expect anything less from a modern liberated woman who puts self-interest above all us. The next day after the Americans have completely abandoned the area and shipped all of the local factory's machines and equipment to some shithole on the Dark Continent (notably, when Gina later asks Otto why the Americans would be interested in such "junk" machines and equipment, the sleazy pedo banker replies that they are, "Good enough for Africa"), the town is in a fully apocalyptic state where every single person is trying in vain to evacuate the region before they croak. Indeed, when Rita finally arrives back to town from her vacation with Kernstock, she is somewhat startled to find corpses hanging from ropes, dead bodies in the street, buildings on fire, and everyone in acting with the utmost animalistic desperation. In the film's somewhat surprisingly ultra-violent and forebodingly atmospheric climax, little Liesje takes a sort of prophetic revenge against the adults that failed her by locking her mother

Gina, pseudo-father Harry, Kernstock, and Rita in the abandoned factory and unleashing two black hellhounds on them. Notably, before the Americans left the area for good and the entire town went to hell, Liesje seemed to have a premonition of the tragedy that would ensue after looking at the maze mouse she received for her birthday and discovering that all the mice were dead. Both distressed and angered by the sight of the dead mice, Liesje smashed the maze to bits in a rather violent fashion, as if she had a reluctant emotional longing for the destruction of the people and entire world that failed her. Now trapped in the mazelike factory like scared rodents, the adults in Liesje's life have become the mice and of course now they must die, or so Liesje seems to believe as demonstrated by her actions. Indeed, after Harry brutally slaughtering Kernstock with a chainsaw, Liesje's dogs maul Rita to death while she is sobbing and caressing the corpse of her dead hubby. When Gina dares to rebuff his love and declares she is making a new life for herself in America after he corners her in the factory, Harry, who has become murderously lovesick, uses a forklift to crush her body against a wall. As for Harry, his fate is no less gruesome as Liesje blows his brains out with his own shotgun, which is somewhat ironic considering he was the one responsible for teaching the little girl how to shoot in the first place. In the end, the entire town transforms into a sort of inordinately beautiful and dreamy graveyard after it is completely overgrown with wild plants and red roses. As for little Liesje, she tragically but not surprisingly follows in the footsteps of her grandmother and mother by becoming Uncle Otto's whore and leaving the town with him in what is ultimately a hauntingly stunning conclusion to a deceptively dark and morbid film where lecherous humor and raunchiness is cleverly utilized to make the prospect of the slow and painful American-funded extermination of an entire Dutch town easier to swallow.

While undoubtedly a decidedly dark and grim cinematic work that might possibly drive more sensitive and vulnerable minds to suicide, *1000 Rosen* is unequivocally a classic of Dutch comedy, though it would be unfair to describe it as simply a comedy as it totally transcends both genre conventions and expectations as an unpretentious arthouse work that seamlessly weaves elements of comedy, melodrama, romance, fantasy, and even horror in an elegant yet nonetheless ultimately brutal fashion. In terms of depicting a post-WWII Dutch town as a culturally and morally decaying hellhole in a strangely humorous fashion that reminds the viewer why the Netherlands has never recovered from the Second World War but instead mutated into a virtual Americanized graveyard, the film is comparable to works like Adriaan Ditvoorst's quasi-biblical anti-liberal epic *De Mantel der Liefde* (1978) aka *The Mantle of Love*, Rudolf van den Berg's somewhat uneven Gerard Reve adaptation *De Avonden* (1989) aka *Evenings*, Alex van Warmerdam's *De Noorderlingen* (1992) aka *The Northerners*, and Martin Koolhoven's *Suzy Q* (1999), yet it also features surprising moments of magic realism comparable to the films of Belgian auteur filmmakers like Harry Kümel

and Baron André Delvaux (incidentally, the film was mostly shot in the historical town of Bois-du-Luc in southern Belgium). Interestingly, contemporary Belgian auteur Koen Mortier—a filmmaker whose debut feature *Ex Drummer* (2007) takes a darkly comedic approach to depicting the abject moral and cultural deterioration of contemporary Belgium—worked on 1000 Rosen as a location manager and it seems that being involved with this film inspired his entire approach to filmmaking. It should also be noted that auteur Theu Boermans was born in the ‘Dutch Caribbean’ of Netherlands Antilles, thus he probably has a somewhat different and distinct perspective on the decline on the Netherlands. Boermans, who is certainly better known as an actor and stage director than as a filmmaker, would demonstrate his versatility with Dutch dialects by portraying a tragic Limburg farmer in Frouke Fokkema’s underrated anti-Heimat piece *Kracht* (1990) aka *Vigour*, which features a number of the same actors as 1000 Rosen and was produced by the same production company. If *Ex Drummer*, *Kracht*, and 1000 Rosen all have something in common, it is that they depict a sick, senile, and decrepit Europa where even small towns and villages in the countryside are not immune from the spiritually, culturally, and economically deleterious effects of Americanization.

In his arguable magnum opus *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998)—a highly personal 8-part video project about the history of cinema that the auteur took over a decade to complete—French alpha-auteur Jean-Luc Godard brings forth the rather reasonable yet rarely acknowledged historical thesis that both Germany and the United States were in competition during World War II for total world domination, or as kosher film critic Richard Brody noted in a typically whiny Judaic fashion in his tome *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life Of Jean-Luc Godard* (2008), “Though Godard was obsessed with the Holocaust as an unparalleled horror, he relativized the monstrosity of the political force that brought it about. As Godard asserted in *ALL THE STORIES*, the war resulted in not one but two attempts at world dominion—Germany’s unsuccessful military conquest, and America’s successful cultural one: just as ‘after the First World War, Hollywood destroyed French cinema, after the Second World War Hollywood destroyed all the cinemas of Europe with television and money.’ On-screen, Godard flashes the word *Endlösung* (final solution), suggesting that, while Hitler had used the cover of war to try to exterminate the Jews of Europe, the United States had used it to wipe out the national movie industries of Europe. He shockingly presented these two deeds as parallel, as motivated by a similar sense of national self-righteousness and drive for hegemony. Thus, rather than considering Germany alone to have been the invaders and the United States the liberators, Godard saw wartime France and the other European nations as innocent victims caught between these two behemoths.” Of course, Brody’s glaring hysterical Hebraic outrage aside, Godard is mostly right, hence the importance of a film like 1000 Rosen that dares to propose that America has had a largely

catastrophic effect on Europe and European culture. It should also be noted that Godard rightly believes that Hollywood is largely run by Jewish gangsters and criminals, so naturally American movies should be considered nothing more than toxic culture-distorting trash that is used by an alien people to not only deracinate and debase Europeans with degeneracy, but also the American white majority and virtually every other group of people in the world. Indeed, while the United States might have officially won the Second World War, it was ultimately a loss for Western Europe and European-Americans in the long run as they came under the influence of a hostile anti-Occident people, or as Francis Parker Yockey noted in his magnum opus *Imperium* (1948), "The result of all this is a powerful spiritual influence on the American people. This people reads the books which aliens write or edit for it. It sees the plays and cinemas it is allowed to. It thinks the thoughts that are put into its head. It is thrown into wars against American interests, which it can only lose. The issue of war and peace, life and death, is decided for America by the Cultural alien. America has been given a semitic countenance. Americans who hold power hold it in the deference to the alien. To oppose him dare no public men. Americans were told that they must be concerned with the partitioning of Arabia, and no national channel existed through which an American could deny fundamentally the world-picture which supported such a policy." While Yockey wrote these words in 1948, they clearly ring true today. Notably, Godard, himself a lifelong leftist and ex-Maoist, also believed that the Third Reich had the last truly and organically European cinema, even once stating in a 1991 interview with *Le Monde*, "The German cinema under Nazism is the only cinema that wanted to be European . . . The German cinema is the only one that fought against America, that did what Jack Lang would like to do." Undoubtedly, one of the things that makes *1000 Rosen* such a liberating cinematic experience is that it is innately anti-Hollywood and, in turn, totally Judenfrei (somewhat ironically, the French politician that Godard mentioned, Jack Lang, is descended from a family of Jewish freemasons, thus hardly someone that you would expect to be an advocate for a Renaissance of a truly French cinema).

While *1000 Rosen* subtly credits the Marshall Plan as destroying Western Europe, the film fails to mention a much more pernicious and malefic conspiracy known as the Coudenhove-Kalergi Plan that entails the 'passive extermination' of the indigenous European peoples as envisioned by the demented and philo-semitic half-breed Austrian-Jap aristocrat Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, who might be best described as the spiritual father of the dystopian anti-imperium known as the 'European Union.' Like many racially mongrelized individuals, von Coudenhove-Kalergi—a staunch philo-semite whose friendship with Baron Louis de Rothschild led to him being funded in his anti-Occidental political pursuits by Judaic banker Max Warburg—was rather sensitive about his dubious pedigree and arrogantly sought for the systematic destruction of the in-

digenous European races via race-mixing while at the same time hypocritically advocating Jewish racial purity as reflected in his unhinged words like, "The man of the future will be of mixed race. Today's races and classes will gradually disappear owing to the vanishing of space, time, and prejudice. The Eurasian-Negroid race of the future, similar in its appearance to the Ancient Egyptians, will replace the diversity of peoples with a diversity of individuals [...] Instead of destroying European Jewry, Europe, against its own will, refined and educated this people into a future leader-nation through this artificial selection process. No wonder that this people, that escaped Ghetto-Prison, developed into a spiritual nobility of Europe. Therefore a gracious Providence provided Europe with a new race of nobility by the Grace of Spirit." Rather curiously, von Coudenhove-Kalergi's hateful anti-Aryan dreams have largely become true and it should be no surprise that he was the first to be awarded the so-called Charlemagne Prize, which has been only awarded to the most treacherous of Zionist-approved leaders like Henry Kissinger, Tony Blair, and Angela Merkel.

While 1000 Rosen does not depict the flooding of Europe with hostile aliens from the third world, it does hint at the racial hostility of the shadowy leaders of the United States in a scene where American negroes in fancy business suits pay off the leaders of the town with suitcases full of cash, thus reflecting the racial treachery of the U.S. and how white Americans disgraced their own peoples by treating them lower than American blacks after the Second World War. Needless to say, the film has never been released in the United States despite the various prestigious awards it has won as such a provocative film goes against the interests of left-wing and largely Jewish-owned foreign film distribution companies like the Criterion Collection, Kino Lorber, and Cohen Media Group. Of course, it is no surprise that the Netherlands is also the country that produced Theo van Gogh, who was assassinated for directing a short that simply exposes the brutally misogynistic character of the Koran. Van Gogh was notorious for his vocal criticism of both Jewish and Muslim influence on the Netherlands, thus making his death all the more tragic yet unsurprising. Likewise, the nation is also responsible for Edwin Brienen whose feature *Revision - Apocalypse II* (2010) features a female protagonist that argues that contemporary neo-liberal West is worse than any of the horrors of the Third Reich. After all, although they might have been deeply impacted by American hegemony, the Dutch are among the most brutally blunt people in the world and largely lack the naivety and delusional guilt that plagues their German neighbors, though the country still certainly has its fair share of leftist lunatics, cucks, and exceedingly emasculated ethnomasochists. In its delectable combination of morbidly dark humor, uncompromising anti-American political incorrectness, magical realism, brutal violence, and beautiful surrealist flower arrangements, 1000 Rosen is not only one of the most important and entertaining Dutch films of its era, but also a pure and unadulterated reflection of the best and worst aspects of the Dutch

national character, thereupon making it mandatory viewing for anyone with an interest in true Western European cinema.

-Ty E

THE PIG FUCKING MOVIE
THE PIG FUCKING MOVIE

Thierry Zéno (1974)

AKA One Man and his PigAKA Wedding TroughAKA Vase de noccesMany have heard the boasting of the great enigma film-maker David Lynch and his talks of how Eraserhead is 100% original and uninspired, but I see flaws in that statement. It seems our very underrated obscure film "The Pig Fucking Movie" has some very... familiar scenes in it, to say the least. This is a Belgian Art-House film that is only existent through a VHS tape being reprinted onto a DVD which is in the trader's circle. The plot is derived from what we, the viewers, take in visually. We meet a lonesome man who lives on a rural farm. He has no lover, no children, and no real responsibility as it seems. He spends all day performing surreal acts of the twisted sort and tending to his ill-natured perversions, such as morbidly putting baby doll heads on pigeons and organizing jars of weird relics similar to the Sawyer's residence in the original Texas Chainsaw Massacre. In case you didn't know, this film is known by many names. This is one reason that attests as to why this film is so hard to get a hold of. One title aptly being The Pig Fucking Movie. So as you can guess, he falls in love with his sow in glorious black & white. While this degree of zoophilia might turn people off from viewing this film, It really would be a shame for you to miss this experience. While it does hold itself a little bit pretentious by calling it art, most people don't examine the outer scenes. If you spend the majority of the runtime scoffing aloud and not paying attention to every grainy detail in this film, I could imagine getting pissed off too. Thierry Zéno lead an arcane film career. Not much is known, but it seems he has been blacklisted for creating this film. When you take the context of the film, you are given a horrifying love story and a film of the utmost tragedy. When I was not basking in this film's horrible, wretched noises or grainy quality, I was paying attention to the soil. Every step along the way, Zéno has a way of visually capturing your attention on the most trivial of things. While you are supposed to be watching this weird, macabre love story, you find yourself staring off into the background items. The Pig Fucking Movie is more or less, about a man that makes love to a pig and produces hybrid spawn. Hence my relation to Eraserhead. Mind you, I have more than one reason to suit my claim while The Pig Fucking Movie is not exempt from my cynical wrath. I can clearly derive a bit of Un chien andalou from some of the scenes. This film is a wonder to behold and will not leave your head for a while. Watch for a gratuitous amount of feathers being collected in jars for a symbolic good time. If for nothing else - a tragic love story that bleeds familiarity to another classic, Fando y Lis.

-mAQ

VASE DE NOCES

Thierry Zéno (1974)

Call me heartless, but in my experience, autistic people have easily been some of the most blatantly depraved and morally bankrupt people I ever met, including a childhood classmate who eventually hogtied, raped, and slit the throat of his cousin, an adopted Colombian toddler who kept babbling on about cutting off angel heads and setting their holy bodies on fire, and a nearly thirty year old virgin fanboy with a virtual army of action figures who would spontaneously start kissing and feeling up girls that had enough empathy to actually talk to him, so naturally I was quite intrigued when I discovered the infamous Belgian arthouse film *Vase de Noces* (1974); a wonderfully wacked-out gritty black-and-white cinematic work without dialogue (and only dissonant and disarranging score) about an autistic farmboy with a perverse proclivity towards porking and 'wedding' a pig on a post-apocalyptic farm with no other humans in site. Best known as *The Pig Fucking Movie* among sick cinephiles everywhere, *Vase de Noces* directed by Belgian auteur Thierry Zéno is generally called *Wedding Trough* under its English title, as well as *One Man and His Pig* and *Der Hochzeitstrog* in German, but until relatively recently, only a miniscule number of moviegoers even knew about this film, let alone had seen it, but like a lot of ostensibly obscure cinematic works, the internet has given this sometimes sardonic swine skin flick a rebirth of sorts. Oftentimes described as "one of the most obscure movies that is not a lost film," *Vase de Noces* was recently unearthed by both a German and Swedish distributor, thus making the seedy swine sex flick readily available for those individuals who know how to find such films, thereupon somewhat demystifying this holy grail of horrid hog-humping in the process to some extent. Admittedly, I had next to nil interest in watching a scatological swine flick about a half-retarded fellow fornicating and falling in love with a piggy and only until relatively recently – out of sheer boredom – did I get around to seeing it so as to scratch it off my mental list of infamous cinematic works that tests one's psyche to a particularly penetrating, if not superficially perverse level. Now, I can safely say that *Vase de Noces* belongs in the same incendiary idiosyncratic category of low-budget aberrant arthouse work as Jörg Buttgeriet's *Nekromantik* (1987), *Pig* (1999) directed by Rozz Williams and Nico B., and Marian Dora's *The Angel's Melancholia* (2009) aka *Melancholie Der Engel*; as a work too artsy fartsy for the average horror fan/gorehound and too extreme for the average granola-bar-nibbling arthouse poof. A phantasmagorical rite between autistic pervert and a sweet swine, *Vase de Noces* rightfully earned an X-rating despite being an arthouse flick and was initially banned in the outback, until director Thierry Zéno was able to convince the censor board of the film's anti-erotic esoteric merit, only to be banned again.

The fellow simply credited as the "Farmer" (played by Dominique Garny)

VASE DE NOCES

in *Vase de Noces* has a lot of problems. Aside from being what seems like the last man in the world in some desolate post-apocalyptic wasteland where only farm animals seem to have survived, he is also autistic (as described by director Zéno), so although he has no more problems with disturbing people with his seemingly retarded and unhinged behavior now that everyone is gone, he is no better communicating with animals, hence his positively perverse proclivity for affixing doll-heads onto pigeons and chasing a pig around as if he wants to do something unsavory with the sow, which he most certainly eventually does. On top of being a pig man, the fucked feces-fondling farmer is a scat-man as well and certainly a fellow who does not allow any part of an animal to go to waste, including animal reproductive systems. A protrusive pig porker, the farmer somehow manages to get his miss piggy pregnant, thereupon siring a collective of three cute little piglets, but the fellow is certainly not father material, thereupon leading into the most swinish of consequences akin to a ham holocaust via pig sty hanging. An inquisitive autistic fellow who will try anything just to find out the consequences, the frantic Farmer is always literally and figuratively digging into something, but the only thing he seems to ultimately discover, aside from how soothing flying a kite can be, is death and defecation: waste (with his idol existence being the biggest of biological junk). A pathological partaker in coprophagia cuisine, which is ironic since the ancient Chinese used to feed pigs human feces and garbage (the "Pig Toilet" which is still used today the Indian state of Goa), the Farmer finds himself turning more and more like a common swine as he realizes that his piglets have an incapacity for taking on human characteristics as his autism won't allow him to comprehend. In the end, the frightened farmboy does what many most frightened failures of fathers do. Needless to say, I would not recommend *Vase de Noces* to fans of *Babe* (1995) or even the darker sequel *Babe: Pig in the City* (1998), as this obscure little arthouse work will remind, at least to some extent, the price one must pay to eat bacon and then some, as the Farmer loves his sexy swine with a side of saucy shit.

By no means as depraved and daunting as one would assume knowing the film's fiercely foul subject matter, *Vase de Noces* will more likely than not bore those views just looking for sensual sow sensationalism. As explained by director Thierry Zéno in the documentary *Of Pigs and Men* (2009), one of the greatest influences for *Vase de Noces* was Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), which is no surprise considering the gay Marxist Italian Renaissance man was known for his use of rather grotesque and sensational semiotic techniques. Zéno cites the pig as a quite sweet symbol of femininity and the Farmer's feces feasting as a sick sort of atavistic awakening and an absurdly anomalous attempt at athanasia via alchemy. That being said, *Vase de Noces* may be the most seemingly unpretentious, pretentious film ever made, thereupon making it mandatory viewing for any venturesome cinephile, but probably not the sort of filmgoer who would describe Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) as one of their top ten favorite

films, nor the sort that would describe Wes Anderson as one of the greatest contemporary arthouse directors nor George A. Romero the king of horror, but someone looking for a new pile of celluloid pieces. Essentially, like *A Boy and His Dog* (1975) meets *Eraserhead* (1977) meets *Nous étions un seul homme* (1979) aka *We Were One Man*, *Vase de Noces* is certainly a decidedly diacritic cinematic work and not just because it features a socially retarded reject porking Miss Piggy, but because it also features an audacious antagonistic and antithetical atmosphere that does the opposite of what most films are supposed to do: embarrass the viewer, at least if one does not happen to suffer from autism nor Asperger syndrome. With a warped score that sounds strikingly similar to the one from the PBS children's TV-series *Reading Rainbow* (1983-2006), albeit had it been played by a schizophrenic science fiction fan with an unhealthy addiction to synthesizers, *Vase de Noces* is a hard film to take literally, but a wholly worthwhile one if one is interested in getting lost in a colorless celluloid pandemonium of pig-and-poop based pathology.

-Ty E

THE DITVOORST DOMAINS
THE DITVOORST DOMAINS

Thom Hoffman (1992)

Due to the fact that I am unrepentant cinephile who has watched so many films that I rarely come across cinematic works that I haven't seen that ultimately end up leaving a deep impression on me, it is not often that I discover a film that immediately becomes one of my favorite flicks, so naturally when I do I make sure to hunt down ever single film, no matter how obscure or marginal, associated with the director of such a shockingly good work. Indeed, such is certainly the case with tragic Dutch auteur Adriaan Dittvoorst whose cinematic swansong and magnum opus *De Witte waan* (1984) aka *White Madness* I now regard as, at the very least, one of my top ten favorite films of all time even though I only first saw it about a month ago. About three years after the release of his final masterwork, Dittvoorst committed suicide by swallowing some pills and drowning himself in the Scheldt River near his hometown in Bergen op Zoom after decades of struggling with drug addiction, unemployment, cultural pessimism, and the inability to get any of his projected film projects off the ground as a man who originally intended to make 3,000 films during his life but ultimately only managed to realize nine. Despite the fact that his directorial debut *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* (1965) aka *That Way to Madra* was one of the sixteen films added to the prestigious Canon of Dutch Cinema (aka 'Canon van de Nederlandse Film') and his work was revered by some of the most important and influential European arthouse filmmakers of his time, including Pier Paolo Pasolini and Jean-Luc Godard, Dittvoorst is still a marginal and mostly unknown figure in his small homeland of the Netherlands, which is demonstrated by the fact that *The Cinema of the Low Countries* (2004) edited by Ernest Mathijs—one of the very few serious English-language academic books on Dutch cinema—does not even feature one single reference to the filmmaker or his work. Luckily, Dutch actor Thom Hoffman, who was a personal friend of Dittvoorst and played the lead role in *White Madness*, decided to pay distinguished respect and uncompromising tribute to the criminally neglected filmmaker by making an unusually candid, strikingly poetic, and provocatively insightful, if not somewhat dejecting, arthouse documentary about his life and work. Indeed, part experimental documentary, part neo-Gothic docudrama, and part filmic funeral, Hoffman's *De Domeinen Dittvoorst* (1992) aka *The Dittvoorst Domains* is not only a beautiful tribute from one artist to another and an endearing yet 'no bullshit' look at Dittvoorst's lebensmüde existence and totally singular oeuvre, but also a rare film that takes a serious look at post-WWII Dutch cinema history that features highly memorable and refreshingly less than sentimental interviews with various filmmakers and cinematographers, including Jan de Bont, Robby Müller, Wim Verstappen, Pim de la Parra, Rene Daalder, and token Guido Bernardo Bertolucci (who was an early proponent of Dittvoorst's work), among various others. The sometimes

pathetic portrait of a man who, in terms of under-recognition during his lifetime, poverty, internal suffering, and self-destructive tendencies, was most certainly the Vincent van Gogh of his era and artistic medium, *The Ditvoorst Domains* presents Ditvoorst as a somewhat enigmatic and impenetrable phantom-like figure who struggled with his existence until he finally gave up and walked into the sea for eternity.

A child of war that was born in January 23, 1940 to a lower-middleclass Catholic from Bergen op Zoom in the southern part of the Netherlands where people tend to be darker and slightly shorter than people from the northern part of the country, Adriaan Ditvoorst first met tragedy in 1950 when he was still just a relatively young lad after his father was killed in a car accident, with the event affecting him in such a catastrophic way that he felt as if “the world stood still.” For whatever reason, Ditvoorst theorized that his father’s death was really a suicide which he committed to “hurt his mother and to hurt him,” yet as the director’s friend and collaborator Jan de Bont theorizes in *The Ditvoorst Domains*, “It was a bit weird. I never believed it. Why would a father do that? He had a family, children...All seemed normal when I visited them. I felt his imagination played him parts. He seemed to need pain. Sometimes he invented pain. I didn’t always believe him.” Unquestionably, unrelenting internal pain is the name of the game when it comes to Ditvoorst’s oeuvre as demonstrated by the fact that most of the (anti)hero’s of his films choose death over living a life of indomitable *Weltschmerz* and perpetual existential crisis. Redheaded dame Pamela Koevoets, who played the leading lady in the director’s debut feature *Paranoia* (1967) and appeared in most of his other films, lovingly describes Ditvoorst as a handsome “black romanticist” with “green wolf eyes” as if she is in love with him. Of course, any great artist, not matter how poor and pathetic is, at least to some extent, a lady’s man. While Ditvoorst’s filmmaking career would progressively deteriorate as the years slowly passed by, his debut work *Ik kom wat later naar Madra* aka *That Way to Madra* temporarily made him a superstar auteur of sorts who was regarded as the best filmmaker in the Netherlands and who was admired by Godard, Bertolucci, Pasolini, and Ivens, among countless others in and outside his country (notably, forgotten American avant-garde auteur Peter Emmanuel Goldman would pay tribute to Ditvoorst by including scenes from *Paranoia* in his 1969 work *Wheel of Ashes*).

At the beginning of *The Ditvoorst Domains*, director Thom Hoffman narrates, “This is a story about my dearest friend: Adriaan Ditvoorst. In October 1987 he committed suicide. I was stupefied. Aristotle said that a solitary man was either a savage or a god. Adriaan lived in seclusion in an attic with the freedom he always sought. While looking for an explanation, I talked to his intimates” and then asks, “Could his suicide have been prevented? How lonely was he when he walked into the waves? What drove him to it? Who was my good friend...Adriaan Ditvoorst?,” thus setting up a poetic objective for

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his doc. Somehow, I doubt Hoffman received any new insights about his comrade after directing the film, but of course that is part of Ditvoorst's appeal as a mysterious and idiosyncratic fellow whose very being is the thing that artistic legends are made of. Rather strangely considering he was so innately anti-authority, Ditvoorst served in the Dutch army from 1963 to 1965 and during that time he got bored and ultimately found himself wandering into the Amsterdam Film Academy where his life was changed forever. Heavily inspired by Alain Resnais' masterpiece *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959), Ditvoorst felt that he had found the greatest and fullest art form for expressing himself, as he looked at the cinematic medium as a cross between poetry and painting and he did not care if people were able to identify with what he expressed, as a sort of metaphysically anarchistic Über-auteur with a lot of pent up Catholic guilt. Indeed, highly influenced by the then-trendy auteur theory as promoted by the French New Wave, Ditvoorst once wrote regarding his ambitions as a filmmaker, "Filming is settling accounts...Riding yourself out of obstacles...Obsessions begging for solutions...Screaming for a climax. I want to make 3000, three thousand films!," yet he ultimately only made nine films because he absolutely loathed producers and virtually all his films were flops, thus naturally nobody wanted to give him any money. If it were not for certain highly sympathetic film critics and film societies, as well as friends that worked in the film industry, it is highly dubious as to whether or not Ditvoorst would have been able to direct half as many works as he did. Somewhat ironically, Ditvoorst was friends with monetary-motivated Suriname-born Sephardic Jewish writer, director, producer, and quasi-Marcusian crusader Pim de la Parra who collaborated with Wim Verstappen on a series of successful and pseudo-artsy counterculture-tinged exploitation flicks like *Blue Movie* (1971) and *Frank en Eva* (1973). Somehow, it is refreshing to hear someone like De la Parra say regarding Ditvoorst, "He had great talent, that cat," as it demonstrates that despite having a much more monetarily successful career than his compatriot, he recognized his failed friend's artistic genius. Also to De la Parra's credit, he was responsible for starting a film journal in the spirit of *Cahiers du Cinéma* called 'Skoop' that totally revolutionized the way people, especially filmmakers and cinephiles, looked at cinema as it started "a revolt against cinema de papa" that brought Dutch cinema into the modern age. Of course, where De la Parra and Verstappen merely broke sexual taboos with their works, Ditvoorst took things a number of steps further and created audaciously avant-garde works that the masses thought were too dark, disturbing, and shamelessly personal.

As Hoffman narrates regarding Ditvoorst's life in 1970, "Adriaan at the peak of his career. He received a scholarship from Ingmar Bergman. He met the love of his life: Jacqueline. He filmed Camus' *THE FALL* for TV. A lawyer ends up in the gutter, after failing to stop a suicide." At this point in his career, Ditvoorst had only directed one feature, the 1967 *Willem Frederik Hermans*

adaptation *Paranoia*, and three shorts. After directing the sleekly assembled and somberly colored Camus adaptation *De Val* (1970) aka *The Fall*, the auteur directed the more or less immaculate dark yet humorous phantasmagoric medium-length neo-Gothic absurdist flick *De blinde fotograaf* (1973) aka *The Blind Photographer* which, despite being another Hermans adaptation, looks like something that might have inspired David Lynch when he was assembling *Eraserhead* (1977). As Ditvoorst once wrote, “I despise everything superficial” and in *The Blind Photographer* he transformed the banal and everyday into the brazenly bizarre and murderously eccentric. After failing in 1973 to realize an ambitious project penned by Polanski’s longtime screenwriter Gérard Brach entitled *De Idioten* aka *The Idiots* that was about “two poor devils living since the dawn of time” who argue about whether or not the world is about to end, Ditvoorst twiddled his thumbs for a couple years and eventually decided to make the one artistic compromise of his career by directing the relatively conventional Tim Krabbé adaptation *Flanagan* (1976)—a revenge-themed gangster flick with the structure of a Greek tragedy—but it was also a major flop that caused the director to fall into a deep depression that his friends say he never fully recovered from. Not unlike the characters featured in *Flanagan*, Ditvoorst began living a sort off-the-grid outlaw lifestyle that pushed him even further away from mainstream society.

After moving to a secluded attic near Vondelpark in Amsterdam, Ditvoorst began living the loser lifestyle of a perennially unemployed nocturnal hermit libertine by the second half of the 1970s. With the love of his life abandoning him for good and his latest film a major flop, the filmmaker became a self-destructive drug addict and bar-dwelling alcoholic and even served some stints in jail, or as Jan de Bont remarks in the doc, “He was ashamed a creative man like himself had ever been in prison. Adriaan was a conventional person. It was clear to me that it involved a homosexual relationship. He refused to talk about it. Unable to utter a word about this...he left it for others to discover.” While I somehow doubt that the director was ever a “conventional person,” he certainly was not an ordinary fellow by the late-1970s as demonstrated by the fact that he befriended a drug dealer/porn producer named Luc Bijkerk who produced his next feature *De mantel der Liefde* (1978) aka *The Mantle of Love*, which is an (anti)religious epic set in contemporary Holland that takes a somewhat Pasolini-ian/Citti-ian approach to ‘adapting’ the Ten Commandments, albeit in an all the more sardonic and sexually depraved fashion (notably, Guido porn maestro Lasse Braun co-produced the film) and with added bonus of a soothing synthesizer-driven original soundtrack by Vangelis of *Blade Runner* (1982) fame. Probably the most savagely satirical, sacrilegious, and merrily grotesque Dutch film ever made, *The Mantle of Love* is described by Hoffman as a work where Ditvoorst, “revenged himself with a cheerful comedy” due to his crumbling personal life and commercial failure. Of course, that film was also a flop,

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but those lucky few that are familiar with the work consider it an unmitigated unhinged masterpiece.

Although directing the aesthetically decadent and somewhat high-camp work *Lucifer* (1981)—a seemingly impossible-to-find adaptation of Dutch Golden Age playwright Jooſt van den Vondel's 1654 play of the same name that centers around "the unbridled ambition of Lucifer, adept in human failure"—Ditvoorſt was spending moſt of his time lurking at his favorite bar and picking up "common broads" (apparently, his favorite type of women at this point in his life). During the laſt 30 minutes or so of *The Ditvoorſt Domains*, a series of candid interviews with a couple of the less than savory friends that the filmmaker made during his final years paint a fairly bleak portrait of his worldview at the time, with one notably ſtating, "Adriaan's prophesies were not optimistic. He ſaw all beauty deſtroyed. He feared decay, ſaw it everywhere. Saw himſelf living in a nightmare. He could not be part of it. It meant making compromises. The firſt compromise was participating in life. This he reſused." For his final maſterpiece *White Madness*, Ditvoorſt went ſo far as to depict heroin (ab)uſe as, to quote Hoffman, "...a ſymbol of freedom. A ſymbol of flying, release from reality. Release from the world, the fuſs, people." Indeed, when the film's painter junky protagonist Lazlo ſhoots junk into his arm, he fantasies about himſelf as an eagle ſorrowing through the ſky. Like the character of his film, Ditvoorſt dreamed of a personal utopia of ſolacing ſelf-impoſed ſolitude and otherworldly aethetics that drown out all the ugliness and decay of the modern world. Notably, *White Madness* was Ditvoorſt's final deſperate attempt at ſtarting both a personal and artiſtic new beginning and while the film would eventually develop a loyal cult following, it was a complete failure upon its initial release, thus ſealing the filmmaker's already rather forlorn fate as a fellow that always dreamed and talked about ſuicide and finally found the perfect time to carryout his morbid lifelong fantasy. Ditvoorſt rightfully recognized *White Madness* was his beſt work, ſo for ſuch a uniquely ambitious and truly ſoulful film to receive ſuch an underwhelming reſponse was a fatal blow to his very being and thus he ſpent the final years of life rotting away in complete ſolitude, hanging out with heroin-addled hobos and antiſocial ſkinheads, and preparing to meet his date with the almighty Scheldt. Before killing himſelf, Ditvoorſt viſited his mother who had he not ſeen in about two decades and mailed a ſuicide letter to various friends reading, "When you read this, I will have entrusted my body to the waves. All is ſilence. There is nothing elſe." As *The Ditvoorſt Domains* reveals, although the filmmaker oftentimes diſcuſſed his fantasies of ſelf-ſlaughter and even confided to Jan de Bont about two decades before he committed the irreparable act that he would like to commit ſuicide by drowning himſelf in the Scheldt, everyone was ſtill quite ſhocked when he decided to make himſelf fiſh food.

Unlike moſt modern Occidental artiſts and filmmakers working today who ſeem to go out their way to prove that they are groveling xenophiles, philo-

Semites, spiritually castrated cultural cuckolds, and/or ethno-masochists, Adriaan Ditvoorst apparently had a strong and unwavering deepseated connection to European kultur, or as the director's friend Arend Holm states in *The Ditvoorst Domains* regarding the auteur's undying love for his people's culture, "Letting go, means letting yourself go...Believing in anything but the importance of European culture and film was impossible for him." A man who adapted works ranging from a Luciferian play by 17-century Dutch playwright Jooſt van den Vondel to short stories by popular post-WWII novelist Willem Frederik Hermans, Ditvoorst ultimately paid tribute to the greater part of Dutch art history and one could probably argue that it is quite fitting as he was quite possibly last of his kind as a born anarchist that understood the importance of cultural heritage and artistic tradition. In that sense, the title of Ditvoorst's final film could be looked at as having a secondary meaning, for the work certainly bleeds the decadence, senility, and metaphysical rot of the post-WWII Dutch as a truly 'Fin de siècle' work of 'White Madness' that manage to encapsulate and communicate the fatally forlorn feeling of it's seemingly apocalyptic zeitgeist. Incidentally, *The Ditvoorst Domains* director Thom Hoffman's ex-comrade, filmmaker Theo van Gogh (who apparently ended his friendship with Hoffman after he began starring in crappy mainstream films, or as the actor-turned-documentarian explained, "He called me an S.S. officer with Vaseline up my ass"), appears in Ditvoorst's film as a fiending junky who literally murders for dope. The fact that a respected filmmaker and public figure like van Gogh could be brutally assassinated in his own country by a Dhimmitude-inciting racial alien from a third world shithole who should not be even be in the Netherlands in the first place just goes to show the rapid cultural degeneration of the country in such a short time, for only an ethno-masochistic, defeated, apathetic, and spiritually comatose people would tolerate such culturally suicidal tendencies. As someone who had a lifelong aversion to authority, especially of the spiritually based sort, one can only guess how Ditvoorst would have responded to the Muhammadization of his nihilistically liberal welfare state of a nation had he lived long enough to see it. While various filmmakers in *The Ditvoorst Domains* theorize that Ditvoorst might have had a more successful life and career had he moved to a more filmmaker-friendly country like France, I cannot fathom the idea of him working anywhere but the Netherlands as even his Camus adaptation is hopelessly Dutch in persuasion. Indeed, Ditvoorst working outside of Holland is as unthinkable as Pasolini working outside of Italy or Fassbinder working outside of Germany. Of course, the irony is that, despite the innate Dutchness of Ditvoorst's work, it also guaranteed he would have a dead-end career in his own homeland, or as Wim Verstappen noted in Hoffman's doc, "If you do something well in Holland, you don't get any credit. Making films in small countries is a lifelong struggle. I have the deepest respect for people who try it. Adriaan feel victim to it." If there ever was a filmmaker that was a kindred spirit of Ian Cur-

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tis, it was Ditvoorst and like the Joy Division frontman, he probably would have reacted negatively to achieving commercial success. Of course, the real tragedy is not that Ditvoorst was neglected in his own homeland or even that he killed himself, but the fact that he did not get the opportunity to make more films and fully realize his artistic potential.

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COLONY MUTATION

Thomas Berna (1995)

I thought something was afoot when I received a copy of *Colony of the Dark* (1995) in the post from Apprehensive Films. I had stared at the cover art for what might have been minutes - a drawing obviously from a sketchbook neophyte containing a big-breasted woman getting groped by severed limbs with an eerily Teutonic head licking the side of her face with an expression of utter pain. I perused the back of the box to divulge the plot when I realized I'd heard this before. Earlier on, I had gotten a hold of a copy of a film known as *Colony Mutation*. When I attempted to back up the film's original title with research I discovered another title! This time they dropped the subtitles and stuck to a simple *Colony*. Either way, none of these titles can make up for what might be the most irredeemable piece of shit I have ever attempted to sit through in my cinephilic life. I was teased and tickled with the idea of a Super8mm grainy horror film which involved phallic self-dismemberment and copious episodes of seduce & destroy but what I was so ungratefully given is a film so unwatchable that I am sure *Flesh Eating Mothers* is a tour de force in comparison.

Given that I only ingested a short 40 minutes of this film's running time before I pried the DVD tray open with a fork only to subsequently hurl the disc down the hallway, I can only comment so much on the film without treading into presumptive territory. Jim Matthews is a dolt as a husband and a scientific researcher. For the past several months he has been bedding down with his strong-willed secretary behind his wife's back. This leads to problems when his wife discovers the infidelity from an exaggerative paper-trail. In an outrage, she grabs the nearest unprotected beaker of experimental serum and splashes it in his face. This leads to terrifying bodily mutations as Jim discovers an unquenchable hunger within him, one that can only be suppressed with raw meat and the soft, tender flesh of whores. I'm not really a nit-picker in regards to horror films anchored in scientific illiteracy. I can handle all the hotel affairs or implausibility that the next guy can. Why, though, would someone waste premium, superior Super 8mm film stock on a tale that doesn't even tell itself? Since I never finished the film I can't rightly say. I don't even blame the lack of oozing creature effects, either. No, my infernal hatred stems from elsewhere, in the script, maybe. The characters find themselves in situations so problematic that it takes a hardened patience and a lack of anything better to do than watch this. For example, a scene that really chafes me is when Jim uses his credit card to get a hotel room with his secretary and then his wife receives the credit card bill later the same night. I could really go on and on but I will not put any more effort into writing about this disaster as I did watch it.

Add the fact that Jim's wife has a mustache that can be faintly outlined with the grainy footage and you have yourself another reason as to avoid this film.

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I find that is already too easy to ignore. You might not have heard of it for a reason. The only scene of merit I can find myself to comment on without forced persuasion [gun to my head] is the iconic scene of scorned fellatio - everyone's favorite. In a rage over his wife's serum transmogrifying his body into a living, breathing Mr. Potato Head, Jim gives her a good beating and then while she's crying on the floor, unzips his pants and while she sits there weeping, grabs her head and performs irrumatio. Before his member devours the inside of her face, that is. This scene was a glimmer of hope for me. Perhaps Colony [Mutation] [of the Dark] could have been something of note, even in idle conversation but alas, I found myself forgetting about the film as soon as it begun. I then sat in silence bordering awe at the complete disregard for vision and the general anti-aesthetic. I wouldn't recommend Colony Mutation to any soul living. Hands down, the worst film I've seen since in the past 3 years.

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WUNDKANAL

Thomas Harlan (1984)

If any filmmaker dedicated his life and art to the seemingly pathetically paternally pathological by belittling his father in oblivion and acting as the repellent archetype of the self-loathing post-WWII kraut, it is Thomas Harlan; the rather regretful son of German auteur Veit Harlan, who is best known for his National Socialist melodramas *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süss* and *Opfergang* (1944). As for his son Thomas, if he is remembered for anything, at least as far as cinema history is concerned, it is his bewilderingly incriminating Baader-Meinhof Group-deifying quasi-docudrama work *Wundkanal* (1984) aka *Gun Wound* aka *Wound Passage* that involved the decidedly dishonest and arguably demented director into conning an ex-SS officer named Alfred Filbert – who like Veit Harlan was charged with war crimes – to go under interrogation under patently false pretenses about his involvement with the death of around 11,000 Jews in Eastern Europe. As a crew member for *Wundkanal* explained in the documentary *Our Nazi* (1984), he deeply felt that Thomas Harlan and the production crew were, "doing really monstrous things and he has no idea; he doesn't know what the purpose of this movie is. He feels he has a truth to tell and we won't let him," in regard to how Dr. Filbert was treated during the direction of the "war criminal-exploitation" film. Of course, as it became quite clear while watching the film, *Wundkanal* was made as a sort of warped pretext for Thomas Harlan to channel his lifelong loathing of his father Veit, who had already been dead about two decades upon the release of the film. Although Veit Harlan was acquitted of "crimes against humanity" for his role in directing the notorious Nazi propaganda melodrama *Jud Süß*, it seems that son Harlan was not happy with the outcome so he finds his father guilty by proxy via Dr. Filbert in his venom-laced work of sicko son celluloid patricide *Wundkanal*. Although Thomas Harlan had the rare honor of meeting Adolf Hitler when he was 8-years-old and would, unlike most Germans of his time immediately following the absolute devastation of his Heimat during the Second World War, grew up relatively comfortably due to his father's success as a filmmaker, the fortunate son would spend the rest of most of his adult years dwelling on his contempt for his father and Fatherland's legacy. One can only guess where this radical resentment of the patriarch began, but it probably starts with the fact that Thomas' father divorced his actress mother Hilde Körber due to political reasons relating to his dedication to National Socialism and married Swedish actress Kristina Söderbaum – the buxom blonde star of *Opfergang* (1944) and *Kolberg* (1944) – not long thereafter. Not unsurprisingly, Thomas was not the only one to prove that hatred and biological resentment ran deep in the Harlan family as his sister Susanne Körber converted to Judaism and married a holocaust survivor and would inevitably kill herself in 1989. Needless to say, I doubt brother Thomas' film *Wundkanal* did much to

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stifle her hatred of the infamous man who sired her.

Long before directing *Wundkanal* and physically degenerating into what would resemble a bitter old obese lesbian, Thomas Harlan began his highly personal campaign of obscenely obsessed 'intellectual Nazi hunting,' which quite possibly began with a symbolic trip to Israel with Klaus Kinski of all people in 1952. Although Thomas was given the opportunity to collaborate with his father on a screenplay for the the cinematic work *Verrat an Deutschland* (1955) aka *Betrayal to Germany* – a surprisingly symbolically titled work that would make for a great biography title for the third-rate arthouse director's contribution to Teutonic cultural history – which Viet Harlan also directed, the two battled over the content of the script and the son's contributions to the written work were distorted to some degree, thereupon probably putting the final nail in the coffin for their ill-fated father-son relationship. By 1959 hysterical Harlan was being sued left and right by various ex-Nazi-turned-West-German-politicians for libel and by 1960 had moved to Poland to do fanatical research on concentration camps and as a feverish and forbidding far-left activist ultimately collected enough information on undetected war crimes to help bring about over 2,000 criminal proceedings against fellow Germans, but proving his commitment to personally heedless, needless, and senseless self-destruction, the self-stylized would-be-revolutionary was put under house arrest for one year for breaching Polish state secrets and would also be denied a German passport for ten years and was not allowed to enter the Federal Republic of Germany for using classified German interrogation records in Polack publications. A decade after suddenly giving up his research on the holocaust, Harlan displayed his ever so erratic and all-consuming ethno-masochism by traveling to the Amerikkkas and hooking up with a number of Marxist and far-left terrorist groups, including joining the Chilean resistance movement against anti-Castro Chilean president Augusto Pinochet, but it would ultimately be *Wundkanal* that would prove to be the 'high' point in his artistic career and the root to the failed artists' perverse paternal-based pathologies. As explained by American film professor Anton Kaes in his left-leaning book *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (1989) in regard to the demented 'daddy-deprecating' dialectic of *Wundkanal*: "the more we become aware of the hatred and vindictiveness of the son, the more we pity the father; his vulnerability engages our interest more than the moral rigor of the son, whose violent revenge scenario proves ultimately to be self-destructive."

To get the whole picture in regard to the production of and intent behind *Wundkanal*, one must watch the companion documentary *Notre Nazi* (1984) aka *Our Nazi* directed by American Jewish documentarian Robert Kramer; a man who despite being of the Judaic faith, shows more sensitivity and compassion to the elderly old Jew-killer than the seething sadomasochistic son-of-a-Nazi who directed it. Aside from physically and emotionally torturing ex-Nazi

Dr. Alfred Filbert, exquisite ethno-masochist Thomas Harlan explains to an orthodox Jew on the film set in a groveling manner regarding the SS man while in a fit of hysterical hatred that: "this movie has been made to burn into the earth and in the heavens the fragment of truth that we can find inside this barbarian, who remained a barbarian. You're not facing a human being. You see the earthly remains of a man who no longer exists, and who never existed as a man." Naturally, Thomas Harlan, no doubt a hopelessly naïve humanist whose discordant moral compass is dictated by a victim-based mentality, goes on to describe Dr. Filbert as one of the worst humans in history to earn kudos points from the seemingly apathetic Hebrew, but unlike the much more objectively assembled work *Our Nazi*, one does not get a true sense as to what extent the father-hating would go to such cowardly and pathetic extremes while watching the slickly assembled yet aesthetically vapid minimalistic work *Wundkanal*; an unbelievably wicked work of exploitation of the elderly and self-glorifying masturbation of the worst phony leftist kind where the deranged director even taunting that the old man commit suicide via asphyxiation with a plastic bag supplied to him (which, he in fact wraps around his head), on top of having the man put a handgun at the back of his head self-execution style (apparently, many of Filbert's victims died under dubious suicides). Such torture of old terminally ill war criminals, both in film and real-life, has become quite trendy as of recently as displayed by Israel's decades long hounding of Ukrainian-American John Demjanjuk (a man who was deported to Israel in 1986 and falsely found guilty and sentenced to death there in 1988, but was eventually released due to mistaken identity), among countless other naughty 'no spring' Nazis, who was wheelchair bound and on his deathbed when he died while facing dubious charges based off Soviet falsified evidence, as well as the would-be-quirky-and-cute Hollywood cryptic-holocaust-propaganda drama *This Must Be the Place* (2011) directed by Paolo Sorrentino where a seemingly autistic and gender confused ex-rock star modeled after Robert Smith of the Cure named Cheyenne (played by far-left mischling Judaic Sean Penn; a master of playing filmic retards and psychopaths) forces an elderly former SS Officer to strip naked and run in the snow in a scene not unlike the sort you find in Steven Spielberg's showy shoah epic *Schindler's List* (1993), all because the man caused the half-retard rocker's father – an apparently miserly and hateful man who left his son a socially inept bastard – to inadvertently piss his pants while in a concentration camp.

Of course, if Thomas Harlan can be credited for any 'cinematic innovation,' it is utilizing the medium of film as a morally dubious method for exploiting the elderly in a precarious manner so as to dastardly denigrate one's father as translucently depicted in *Wundkanal*; a film that proves artistic talent is not always inherited by sons. While Veit Harlan's films featured vivid Technicolor, themes of love and sacrifice, an appreciation for beauty, nature, and kultur, and love for life, his son Thomas made visually unprepossessing, aesthetically and thematically

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mechanical, and ultimately lifeless films not unlike contemporary Hollywood action and sci-fi flicks with contrived moralizing and megalomaniacal preaching that would probably only appeal to the singularly and unsoundly self-indulgent filmmaker himself. Interestingly, scenes from Veit Harlan's films featuring the director's wife Kristina Söderbaum (the woman that replaced Thomas' mother) are featured in *Wundkanal* and are reminisced on fondly and nostalgically by the old SS officer, thereupon linking Thomas Harlan's with the propagation of genocide as tools for entertaining and providing therapy Nazi facing the stresses of war. At one point in *Wundkanal*, the old Nazi cries when recollecting the dubious death of his brother in a Buchenwald concentration camp and the complete and utter incineration of his sister-in-law in an allied firebombing campaign, which Thomas Harlan vehemently concludes is a totally disingenuous display of emotions and that the elderly man was merely weeping for himself due to the fact he didn't get a promotion while in the SS. I found this scene to be especially relevant as Harlan's assumptions seem to be a symbolic projection of his own 'artistic' career and leftist crusade as a man who claimed to be exposing evil Nazis and bringing them to justice and fighting the good fight for the Jews and other disenfranchised folks, when in reality it is quite apparent that he had ulterior motives and that his guiding motivation was seeking revenge against his infamous/famous father who, on top of divorcing his mother, brought irrevocable shame to his family name due to Germany's defeat in the Second World War.

In Europe, there is a saying that Germans will never forgive the Jews for what they, the Germans, did to them. Had Germany won the war and Veit Harlan retained his respectability as one of Germany's greatest filmmaker's during that period, it is highly doubtful that Thomas Harlan would have turned out the way he did, just as it is doubtful that a peculiar national phenomenon like the Red Army Faction – a group of morbidly ethno-masochistic 'rock star' terrorists who hated their fathers' generation for being Nazis and thus rebelled via mostly directionless and meaningless murder and mayhem – would have ever been spawned, as such individuals are undoubtedly akin to symbolic spiritual syphilis of a defeated nation with a severely suicidal collective unconscious. Despite the physical and emotional torment he faced at the hands of the innately manipulative, manic, and malicious Thomas Harlan via *Wundkanal*, Dr. Filbert would apparently go on to state that his "experience with the movies had been the greatest moment of his life," which is an outcome that the director was surely not hoping for, thereupon making the ex-Nazi seem like a more rational, warm-hearted, and reasonable person than the perturbed person who shamelessly tried to 'expose' him under dubious conditions of contempt. Although Dr. Filbert spent 18 years in prison for his alleged war crimes before being released due to poor health and working on *Wundkanal* shortly thereafter, his conscious was certainly more clear than Thomas Harlan; a man whose own family members

concluded he wasted his whole life dwelling on his overwhelming malice for his father as depicted in the documentary *Harlan: In the Shadow of Jew Süss* (2008) directed by Felix Moeller. Of course, I guess it should not be that big of a surprise Thomas Harlan led the loser life he did as he was one of the few personal friends of the infamously crazy actor Klaus Kinski; a German national of Polish descent who was ambivalent towards his homeland after making the conscious decision to desert his soldierly duties in the German Wehrmacht, whereupon he was subsequently caught, court-martialed, and sentenced to death, but eventually escaped and intentionally had himself captured by the British and remained a POW for the rest of the Second World War. It is often said that the Jews were the greatest victims of World War II, but one only has to watch *Wundkanal* and countless other German films to see that it was probably the Fatherland's sons that have suffered the most, especially in regard to the soul. After all, I cannot remember the last time I saw a film directed by a Jewish filmmaker depicting the slaughter of millions of white Russian Christians by Jewish bolshevik hangmen, nor an Israeli auteur directing a work about the liquidation of Palestinian children by IDF men.

-Ty E

A BIG GREY-BLUE BIRD
A BIG GREY-BLUE BIRD

Thomas Schamoni (1971)

With my recent re-watching of Jerzy Skolimowski's lost post-counterculture masterpiece *Deep End* (1970) featuring music by krautrockers Can, I decided it was about time that I got around to seeing the similarly wrongfully forgotten West German-Italian coproduction *Ein großer graublauer Vogel* (1971) aka *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* aka *Un grosso uccello grigio azzurro* aka *Bottom* co-written and directed by Thomas Schamoni (Charly May aka Karl May in Spain, *Der Eisberg der Vorsehung*) who, although an important and pioneering member of New German Cinema that helped fund the filmmaker-led film distributor *Filmverlag der Autoren*—a company known for producing some of the most important works of its era, including Werner Herzog's *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), and the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978)—is all but forgotten today. Although a film about two rival gangs, one hippie and pacifistic and the other 'fascistic' and murderous, that fight each other while they both attempt to find five pieces of an earth-shattering scientific discovery held by five reclusive elderly scientists, Schamoni's *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* is also nothing short of a culturally and cinematically revolutionary act of the rather inexplicable sort. A metacinematic avant-garde psychedelic anti-sci-fi-political-thriller of the jet-set/counterculture sort partly inspired by French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud's poem "Bottom" featured in the libertine wordsmith's uncompleted collection *Illuminations* (1886) and co-penned by underrated German auteur Uwe Brandner (*I Love You, I Kill You* aka *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich, 50/50*), writer/director Hans Noever (of the popular German TV series *Tatort* (1989-2002)), and screenwriter Max Zihlmann (*Detektive, Rote Sonne* aka *Red Sun*) that stars Teutonic bad boy cult auteur Klaus Lemke (*Negresco - Eine tödliche Affäre, Rocker*) in the lead role as a prophetic, if not badly burnt out, beatnik poet, Schamoni's absurdly offbeat flick is not only one of the best kept secrets of its era (although a financial failure, the film earned various awards at the 1970 German Film Awards, including Schamoni for "Best New Direction" and cinematographer Dietrich Lohmann for "Best Cinematography"), but it is also a virtual "who's who" of pre-Fassbinder kraut cinema. Starting production after auteur Schamoni—a seemingly eccentric mensch born into a virtual filmmaking dynasty of ancient Italian extraction whose father Viktor Schamoni was a film critic/filmmaker who made at least one successful film during the Third Reich and whose two brothers, Peter Schamoni (*Montana Trap* aka *Potato Fritz, Frühlingssinfonie* aka *Spring Symphony*) and Ulrich Schamoni (*It* aka *Es, Chapeau claqué*) were important filmmakers in their own right—just finished producing then-unknown German New Cinema alpha-auteur Fassbinder's first feature *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* (1969) *Love is Colder Than Death, A Big Grey-*

Blue Bird offers an intriguing look into the drug-induced delusion of grandeur that young filmmakers suffered at the time, as a work about a commune-based film crew of socio-politically idealistic, anti-authoritarian counterculture types that believe they can build a 'utopia' upon learning about a group of Nazi era scientists who proposed a theory that would give them the power to manipulate the space-time continuum, but must wage a psychological war against ostensible friends and a group of super blonde Aryan and sleazy Guido gangster types while attempting to hunt down the reclusive scientists, who have intentionally had their memories erased to forget their own scientific formula but can be reminded of it if they hear the words of the poem "Ein großer, graublauer Vogel," hence the title of the film.

A sort of kraut sci-fi-thriller counterpart to Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg's counterculture masterpiece *Performance* (1970) featuring a score and sound landscape by krautrockers Can, exceedingly erratic Burroughs-esque 'cut-up technique' style editing, an innately non-linear multi-media 'film-within-a-film' structure that juggles realist documentary-like footage with highly stylized neo-romantic imagery and tableaux, and a relatively fresh look at the obscenely outmoded zeitgeist it depicts, *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* also offers a hint of where German Cinema might have headed had the work been shown to mainstream viewers and had the plans of the 1962 Oberhausen Manifesto (of which, Schamoni's brother Peter was one of the 26 filmmakers that signed) been fully realized, as an absurdly nuanced, multilayered, and subtextual work that attempts many things at once that more or less manage to create "a new language of film." Indeed, along with Brandner's *I Love You, I Kill You* (1971), Fassbinder's *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire* and Vojtech Jasný's *Wir* (1981), Ulli Lommel and Peter Moland's *Haytabo* (1971), and Wolf Gremm's *Kamikaze 89* (1982), Schamoni's work demonstrates how the Teutons were assembling more deranging and paranoia-inducing celluloid science fiction dimensions than *The Matrix* (1999) at a time when Andy Wachowski and his tranny brother were still playing with Barbies and jerking off to comic books.

If *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* features anything resembling a central protagonist, it is super suave poet Tom-X (German auteur Klaus Lemke), who seems to suffer narcolepsy and/or smokes too much ganja as he passes out at the most random times, including after his apartment is destroyed by a group of gangster goons. Right before being snatched up by said gangster goons, Tom-X manages to escape from the apartment via the balcony with the help of his documentary filmmaker comrades which include lanky longhaired cinematographer Knokke (played by real-life cameraman/director Bernd Fiedler, who shot various films for 'New Munich Group' filmmakers like Lemke and Rudolf Thome) and Bill (played by cult actor Marquard Böhm of Roland Klick's 1970 'acid western' *Deadlock* and Fassbinder's 1971 hit *Beware of a Holy Whore*). Tom-X has teamed up with the film crew in his search to find four of the five surviv-

A BIG GREY-BLUE BIRD

ing German and Italian Axis era scientists who disappeared and erased their identities and memories after the Second World War after solving the 'Weltformel' (aka 'Theory of Everything' aka ToE), which enabled them to manipulate the space-time continuum because they did not want the formula to get into the wrong hands. Tom-X and his comrades managed to track down one of the scientists, 'Belotti' aka Dr. Scheinfeldt (Walter Ladengast of Herzog's *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) and *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979)), and interview him for a documentary, but he committed 'suicide' shortly thereafter. Tom-X and his crew are also hooked up with a goofy Guido journalist named G.O. Gio (Thomas Braut, who dubbed the voice of antihero Steiner in the German-language dubbed version of Sam Peckinpah's classic 1977 WW2 flick *The Cross of Iron*), who has placed the footage of Belotti in a vault in a Swiss bank for safe-keeping. After declaring, "It's a game of chess. Either we go below the ground or into the air," Tom-X, his girlfriend Luba (Austrian model Sylvie Winter of Lemke's *Sylvie* (1973) and *Paul* (1974)), Knokke, Bill, and Gio get on a helicopter flown by a bleached blond beast of a gangster named Lunette (veteran German actor Rolf Becker of Peter Zadek's *I'm an Elephant, Madame* (1969) and Uwe Brandner's 1971 anti-Heimat sci-fi flick *I Love You, I Kill You*) and fly to an ancient scenic villa in Switzerland that Belotti bequeathed to his niece Diana (Serbian actress Olivera Katarina of Michael Armstrong's *Mark of the Devil* (1970) and Konrad Wolf's 1971 DEFA Goya biopic *Goya or the Hard Way to Enlightenment*) to meet up with a shady scientist named Morelli (Italian actor Umberto Orsini of Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) and *Ludwig* (1972)) and a second team made up of dubious gangsters that are also looking to find the four surviving scientists. Of course, as Tom-X and his comrades soon find out, the other group is not looking to play nice and are willing to kill anyone who gets in their way in their campaign to find the scientists.

Unbeknownst to Tom-X and the filmmakers, scientist Morelli and Lunette's gang work for an evil elderly wheelchair-bound cripple named Cinque (Swiss actor Lukas Ammann of Adrian Hoven's horrendous *Mark of the Devil Part II* (1973) and *Tatort*), who will do anything to find the scientists, solve the poem, and thus have the formula to have omnipotence over space and time. To earn Tom-X's trust, fairly conservative-looking fellow Morelli—the kind of guy that hippie types would suspect of being a narc—begins smoking pot and engaging in orgies with him, Luba, and Diana. Despite incessantly pestering him about what he knows about Belotti and the poem, Tom-X will not tell Morelli anything aside from pseudo-esoteric hippie jibberish. Meanwhile, Knokke and Bill take advantage of the hedonistic luxuries of the villa engaging in fine dining and drinking expensive wine under the moonlight. When Gio leaves rather dubiously after explaining that he has to fly to Munich to continue his research, Tom-X and his men begin suspecting that the gangsters have unsavory motives, so Knokke attempts to escape but the criminal thugs soon catch him. After im-

prisoning Knokke, Lunette tries to bribe the cinematographer into joining the gang and working for them as a cameraman, but like a true hippie, he rejects the offer and states, "I only work in public, and for the public." Since Knokke refuses to collaborate, Lunette has his henchmen Herbert (Italian actor Mario Novelli of various Fernando Di Leo flicks) and O'Brian (Sigi Graue of *Baal* (1970) and Fassbinder's *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970)) kill the cinematographer, who films the gangsters shooting at him before he is shot off a cliff. While Knokke is the first to die, he certainly will not be the last.

In a major plot twist, head gangster Cinque has Tom-X brought to him and reveals to the poet that he is one of the four surviving scientists and he wants to know if Belotti revealed to him the missing word(s) from the poem. Meanwhile, Gio also discovers that Cinque is one of the scientists (or as Gio states, "one of the five wise men") and makes a deal with Lunette to betray his master and go public with their discoveries. After his concubine Luba manages to bribe Herbert, Tom-X manages to escape from the old Nazi scientist turned gangster's home and the two meet up with Bill, Gio, Morelli, and Diana to hold a press conference regarding Belotti's mysterious death and Cinque's true identity. Of course, Cinque sends his men to the press conference and when Bill begins to reveal the truth, one of the mob shoots him in the gut while he is on stage, thus fatally wounding him. In an intentional satire of what hippies and far-left revolutionaries would assume a fascist might say, one of the gangsters declares, "Resistance is futile. All exits are blocked," and then demands that all the journalists and members of the press get on stage with the threat that they will be shot if they attempt to leave. As it turns out, Lunette has betrayed Tom-X and has him and Morelli kidnapped and driven to an ancient mountainside castle by Herbert and O'Brian. Cinque has his three elderly scientist comrades imprisoned at the castle and he expects Tom-X to be their "fifth man" and "Belotti's heir." Indeed, Tom-X knows the single word from the poem that will reactivate the scientist's memory so that they can remember the formula. When Tom-X and Morelli arrive at the castle, the former puts a gun to Cinque's head while Herbert and O'Brian describe the "great stuff" (aka weed) that the poet had given to them a couple days before. After Morelli puts a bullet into Cinque's brain, O'Brian, who was bought by the other side, attacks his comrade Herbert. While Tom-X, Morelli, and O'Brian manage to escape in a convertible while being chased by an army jeep full of gangsters and subsequently hook up with Diana and Gio, Lunette soon arrives with a machine gun via helicopter and exterminates every single damn person. Indeed, in the end, ruthless gangster killer and seeming philistine Lunette proves to be the "master of the game" and "deus ex machine." After digging through the back pocket of Tom-X's corpse, Lunette finds the complete poem and laughs maniacally upon learning that the missing word is "aqua." Of course, one can only assume what lunatic Lunette will do with the formula to mastering the space-time continuum. Indeed, for

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better or worse, one cannot watch *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* without the feeling they have been brutally attacked by a semi-cryptic metaphysical force that leaves no physical scars.

While indubitably somewhat convoluted, overly ambitious, and plagued by unintentionally goofy characters with obscenely outmoded wardrobes and retro-grade hairdos, *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* is certainly a masterful cinematic work in its own right as a splendidly self-indulgent dream project that simultaneously attempts to say everything it can say about post-WWII German cinema, kultur, and politics in a meager 90 minutes or so, thus making it all the more tragic that auteur Thomas Schamoni would never again get the opportunity to direct another feature-length film and would be forced to work for the rest of his career in the purgatory-like realm of television. In fact, the commercial failure of the film was largely responsible for influencing Schamoni to co-found the filmmaker-owned film distributor Filmverlag der Autoren so that auteur film directors would have the opportunity to have complete artistic control over their own work. Indeed, Schamoni even attacks the West German film production system in a seemingly insignificant but rather notable scene in the film where the gangsters steal cinematographer Knokke's Arriflex 16mm camera and taunt him by pointing the gun at him just before they kill him in an allegorical scenario representing the robbery of artistic freedom from the artist. In another notable scene, one of the gangster goons drives a small camera into a scientist's throat as if it is a gun. As Tom-X remarks at the beginning of the film, he and his comrades carry cameras while others carry guns, thus reflecting Schamoni's superlatively serious perspective on the art of cinema as a weapon.

Although appreciating the film and the music and sound editing he contributed to the work, Can member Irmin Schmidt found *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* to be somewhat impenetrable, or as he stated in an interview with *Screenslate* regarding the flick, "...although this film was not such a big success because it's much too crazy, and even understanding German, you can't follow the story. It's quite confusing. But it is in a way a very nice and hippie-esque version of Germany at that time. It's not that dark, like most of Fassbinder's work. It's pretty strange and crazy." More than just a beatnik meditation on late-1960s/early-1970s West Germany, Schamoni's flick is a work that follows in a long Teutonic tradition of romanticism, which Schmidt noted when he remarked regarding the Can song "She Brings the Rain" that he contributed to the film, "It's a very romantic song, and I think the film is actually very romantic. It's in the German 19th century Romantic tradition." A sort of culmination of everything Schamoni's comrades of the so-called 'New Munich Group' like Rudolf Thome, Eckhart Schmidt, Max Zihlmann, and Peter Nestler accomplished in the 1960s with their films (indeed, it is no coincidence that the greatest and most rebellious of these directors, Klaus Lemke, plays the lead character in the film) that somewhat absurdly attempted to make avant-gardism palatable for the masses (Scha-

moni attempted to blame the film's commercial failure on Germany's production system, but there is no way such an untamed flick could appeal to the average filmgoer), *A Big Grey-Blue Bird* is certainly ripe for discovery by any serious cinephile as a work that makes the genre-bending and cinematic vocabulary of Jean-Luc Godard seem rather tame and hopelessly pedantic by comparison. Certainly, the work is a filmic fore-bearer to Fassbinder's dystopian science fiction epic *Welt am Draht* aka *World on a Wire* in terms of style, spirit, and message, but also has the grand distinction of being probably the only counterculture-themed flick I have ever seen that actually makes the late-1960s/early-1970s actually seem 'cool.' After all, it is not often that you get to see a group of fashion savvy dope-addled hippies attempting to hunt-down ex-Nazi scientists and coerce a bunch of murderous gangsters into smoking dope and engaging in foursomes.

-Ty E

FIRECRACKER
FIRECRACKER

Thomas Schlamme (1989)

True American 'folk films' are hard to come by, especially campy gay-themed ones set in small town Kansas, so I was quite intrigued when I discovered Midwestern auteur Steve Balderson's intensely idiosyncratic and vaguely Hitchcockian psycho-thriller *Firecracker* (2005); a keenly colorful slice of ridiculous incest-ridden celluloid American pie shot on succulent Super 35mm film stock that – whether intentional or not (judging by the director's debut 1998 feature *Pep Squad*, I have to assume the former) – made me laugh for all the wrong reasons. Featuring both mainstream feline-like scream queen Karen Black (*Family Plot*, *House of 1000 Corpses*) and eccentric experimental musician Mike Patton (of the proto-wigger metal group *Faith No More*) starring in dual roles, *Firecracker* is the sort of strikingly quirky (and not in the mundane 'mumblecore' sort of way) cinematic work that most viewers will either love or hate, but surely never forget, like *Pleasantville* (1998) on cock-sucking crack meets *Tod Browning's Freaks* (1932) and *David Lynch's Twin Peaks* as directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder's dimwitted yet delightful American mongrel cousin. Featuring a divinely deranged dichotomy between the black-and-white banality of small town Christian American and the colorful yet equally contrived world of a freak-inhabited carnival, *Firecracker* is an aggressively anachronistic work that reminds the viewer that some perversions are perennial, especially those bred in brotherly blood. Watching *Wamego: Making Movies Anywhere* (2004) – a 'making of' documentary on *Firecracker* – one would never assume the film that the Balderson family (Steve's father co-produced the film and his sister stars in it) discusses their intrinsic involvement in via candid yet characterless interviews is the same one praised by none other than bloated film critic Roger Ebert as "original and peculiar" and "haunted," especially when one considers the subversive and jovially brutal incest scenarios and overall grotesque nature of the film, not to mention the very real human freaks, absurdist allusions to genital mutilation, and overall campy carnivalesque character that pleasantly plagues the picture. Quite honestly, I found the documentary *Wamego* to be hopelessly inane, uninspiring and a virtual unintentional parody of the American Midwest featuring sentimental local yokels who seem to have no clue as to what sort of film they are working on, thus making youthful auteur Steve Balderson seem like some sort of master manipulator of family and friends. Of course, to be honest, *Firecracker* is not exactly the most palatable of motion pictures, at least as far as the masses are concerned, not least of all due to its hyper-homo-ization of the barely cinematically mentioned American Midwest, interestingly inclusion of Mike Patton as a barbarous brother-buggering blond beast, and carnally campy cotton candy colors. Described as a "Steve Balderson Tragedy" (as opposed to a mere Greek Tragedy or a Shakespearean Tragedy), *Firecracker* reminds one why

growing up a sexual pervert (Steve Balderson is, indeed, as queer as a two dollar bill) in Kansas might have downright deleterious effects for an individual. After all, just ask the BTK killer.

Firecracker opens with a black-and-white cinematic cliffhanger in a secluded suburban neighborhood in small town Wamego, Kansas. Something seemingly unsavory and smelly (at least judging by a female police investigator's nose-grabbing reaction) is buried in a shabby tool shed in rural Midwestern suburbia, but one will have to wait until the mystifying and hyper-melodramatic conclusion of Firecracker to find out what and why. The film centers on two rather emotionally ravaged and culturally withered realms of curious American quaintness that irrevocably collide; one being black-and-white, drab, decayed and depressing and the other being charismatically colorful, freakishly populated yet featuring equally dark secrets under the superficial surface. Mentally perturbed protagonist Jimmy (Jak Kendall) – a super sensitive fairy of a fellow from a superlatively sad family – acts as a misguided guide between both worlds. The youngest son of a deteriorating Christian family in a blasé b/w world of quasi-medieval moralizing, Jimmy becomes a fiercely feeble yet mostly gregarious guardian angel of sorts for his melancholy mommy Eleanor (Karen Black), but he is no match for his menacing, malicious, and ultra-masculine elder brother David (Mike Patton); a brutal barbarian of sorts who never misses a chance to belittle (and even bugger) his infantile baby bro. With the father of the family in a determinedly deteriorated and innately impotent state of virtual mental and physical immobility, David acts as the uniquely unkind king of the emotionally decrepit household. David is completely and utterly repulsed by little Jimmy's delusional dream of making a living with his "sissy-boy piano recitals" and will stop at nothing to 'make a man' out of the tiny twink of an obscenely gay, pansy boi. Since it is the Fourth of July, the joyous melodies of the carnival have come to the quiet Kansas town and Jimmy is quite excited, even if his deranged blood brother teases him about his new seasonal infatuation. The highlight of the carnal carnival is a "French singer" and an "oddity of nature" named Sandra (also played by Karen Black, if not in a more lively and lecherous manner), who remembers gentle Jimbo from summer's past. Unbeknownst to Jimmy, his big brother David banged and impregnated saucy Sandra the summer before, which infuriated sexually sterile, whip-cracking circus owner Frank (also played by Patton as another nefarious prick) – a malicious megalomaniac with a peculiar yet potent penchant for propagating misery around his masquerade microcosm – henceforth resulting in the absolute abortion of the festival-spawned fetus, as well as the singer's sense of sensual pleasure. After Jimmy attempts to save virtual slave Sandra from bodacious brother David's dastardly advances, he is penetrated like a common prison punk by his bum-happy blood brother. Clearly anally and emotionally despoiled, Jimmy is soon comforted by Sandra – a strong sexual slave if there ever was one – who acts as a strong surrogate mother of sorts for the sad sod.

FIRECRACKER

While mentally set on literally running away with the circus as a carny piano performer, Jimmy is ultimately destined to save his family and himself from his macho maniac of a brother while Sandra faces a similar fate with fuckface Frank; a virtual spiritual son of Frank Booth à la Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986). Forget the celluloid cult item *Carny* (1980) starring Jodie Foster, *Firecracker* is the real phantasmagoric murder-mystery deal.

Featuring triad-titty temptresses, decisively deformed dainty divas, pussy-pushing and purring human pussycats, terribly tattooed reptile-men in the shifty spirit of the Biblical Judas, jerk-off giants with grisly goatees, and other miscellaneous humanoid miscreations and genetic aberrations, *Firecracker* certainly contains a curious celluloid circus of sorts, but the most malformed of men in the film are those with severely spiteful and swinish souls; both of whom being played by Mike Patton. Of course, I would be lying if I did not admit that I found perdurable pansy protagonist Jimmy to be a most ridiculously repellent and intrinsically irritating character as a capaciously cowardly emotional cripple whose lack of courage is only rivaled by his compulsive crying campaigns and sorry, sniveling oversensitivity, thereupon making *Firecracker* one of a handful of films where I was able to enjoy a film in spite of my hatred for the hysterical homo 'hero.' A chromatic cinematic work of wildly whimsical mid-camp Midwestern melodrama of the freakishly sodbufter, twister-fodder völkisch persuasion, *Firecracker* is an extraordinary eccentric explosion of aesthetic ingredients not out of touch with seemingly untouchable cinematic works like Werner Schroeter's *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* and Daniel Schmid's *La Paloma* (1974), if not to a less cultivated and less serious and distinctly American Midwestern degree. In short, I don't think it would be a senseless stretch to describe *Firecracker* as a minor masterpiece of kaleidoscopic killer colors that gets to the very 'heart' of middle America and molests, mutilates, mangles, and ultimately rips it apart in a manner that the hostile racial aliens of Hollywood never could. As a certain famous Kansas farm-girl character played by a Midwestern-born, barbiturate-addicted 'camp icon' once so eloquently stated in one of the first films I ever saw: "There is no place like home."

-Ty E

CABIN FEVER 2: SPRING FEVER

Ti West (2009)

On a recommendation, from my mom of all people, I put aside the negative hype and decided to check out *Cabin Fever 2: Spring Fever*, the sequel to Eli Roth's masterful debut, helmed but disavowed by indie-horror darling Ti West (*House of the Devil*, *The Innkeepers*). While I've only recently been compelled to investigate what precisely went wrong with the production, from the word go West seemed an odd choice to turn out a sequel to *Cabin Fever*. *Cabin Fever* played as a particularly well-done homage to the grindhouse films of old, mixing in humor at appropriate intervals and featuring a fairly strong cast, the best being Soiled Sinema posterboy Giuseppe Andrews as the horndog, party hearty Officer Winston. Evil Dead setting, Cronenbergian body horror, soundtrack featuring re-recordings of David Hess' songs from *Last House on the Left*, all served up with Roth's expert touch; Tarantino with far more subtlety and less obnoxious dialogue wouldn't be far off. Ti West on the other hand couldn't be further from the fanboy former Gorezone-subscriber. At his best (*House of the Devil*, *The Innkeepers*), West works with the kind of restraint that drives most teenage death metal fans up the wall, using a slow, slow burn effect that unnerves subtly. He still manages to pay homage to influences (note the aesthetic in the eighties-set *House of the Devil*), but stylistically, there couldn't be someone further from Eli Roth. Contrast their beginnings- Roth wrote *Cabin Fever* while working on Howard Stern's *Private Parts*, whereas West began his career under the guiding hand of subtle-horror stalwart Larry Fessenden. What the producers saw in a film like *Trigger Man* that made them think West would be a perfect fit for a *Cabin Fever* sequel is beyond me, but what makes it on-screen (West shot the majority of the film but left during the editing process when asked to do re-shoots) is surprisingly good, goofy, GORY fun that proves that West can do big, dumb horror with the best of 'em. This could have been one of the best gonzo eighties-style horror flicks in years, right up there with the original and *Piranha 3D* in terms of pure horror geek nirvana, but unfortunately the director bailing definitely shows up on-screen, with tacky flash animation book-ending the action and a rushed denouement and tacked-on "sting in the tail" that effectively undercuts all of the goodwill that has accumulated throughout. That said, the footage directed by West looks great, it features another stellar comedic turn from Giuseppe Andrews, and has wall-to-wall honest-to-goodness PROSTHETIC gore to spare.

As the film opens, Paul, the sole survivor of the original film, a bloated, unrecognizable mess from the water-born pathogens that killed his friends, escapes from the forest only to be mowed down by a school bus. Deputy Winston in first

CABIN FEVER 2: SPRING FEVER

on the scene, dismissing the remains as those of a moose, but in time through a series of incidents (including West mentor Fesserden going to goop in a diner) realizes what is really going on- a local bottled water company has packaged the pathogen and shipped it out, the first stop being the local high school, which is gearing up for prom. John (Deadgirl's Noah Segan) is our protagonist, hopelessly in love with the pretty, smart girl with the doucheboy boyfriend, Cassie (Alexi Wasser) and best buds with some fat comic relief, Alex (Rusty Kelley), who manages to be a lot less annoying than most characters of his ilk. The plot sets up some decent rivalries, red herrings, and makes room for some fun cameos (Mike Borchardt is always a welcome sight, especially in something with a budget over \$20), but then midway through the prom, which should be the centerpiece of the film, everything speeds up and feels incredibly rushed. The shadowy disease control agents from the first film show up, put the town and school under lockdown, and it effectively feels as if we've teleported from act one to act three.

That said, what keeps the film from completely derailing is the marvelous effects work and absolute pandering to its demographic. Nary a five-minute stretch goes by without vomit, soggy, distended organs sloughing off, bountiful, bouncing breasts, liberated fingernails, table-saw amputation (definite nod to *Evil Dead 2*, and thus, a nod to the first *Cabin Fever*), heads being smashed open a la *Irreversible*, more vomit (only bloodier), and one of the most cringe-worthy shots of penis-discomfort this side of *Antichrist* (seriously, if you've ever had gonorrhea, the scene in question will be particularly impossible not to squint through)(which isn't to say that I'VE suffered through gonorrhea, female readers, and if I ever had had it, antibiotics cleared it up, so fuck off). It is gloriously offensive, well-lit, and whenever Officer Winston appears for breaks from the main action, uproarious. I hope that if the proposed further sequels ever get off the ground that they manage to snag Andrews- not only is he the perfect, skeezy mascot for an imperfect, skeezy series, but the payout would enable him to make about fifteen more of his own films. Whether rhapsodizing about pussy, nodding to the first film over a plate of pancakes or sending a clueless Judah Friedlander out to meet his doom via disease control firing squad, Andrews exudes a Southern slimeball charm that betrays his Florida birthplace and adds just the right amount of continuity to tie *Spring Fever* in with the original (also keep an eye out for the giant bunny Paul sees in the hospital in *CF*, here acting as the mascot for the high school). In fact, the whole cast is pretty able, the aforementioned Rusty Kelley surprisingly likable as a porcine pussyhound and Noah Segan proving his versatility in playing a goody-two-shoes character who is a complete 180 degree turn from his sociopathic sex fiend in *Deadgirl* and coming across just as likable. The supporting cast plays it pretty broad, but it works, creating an eighties John Waters vibe (no surprise as long-time Waters editor Janice Hampton took over the reins upon West's exit) that makes it all the more

charming.

But alas, all is not well, and saving the worst for last, no review of *Spring Fever* should pass without mentioning the abysmally animated opening and closing scene, which are about as well-animated as an e-card and serve no purpose aside from making a decent-budgeted flick look considerably tackier than it really is. West apparently wanted to open and end the film this way (perhaps a tribute to *Creepshow 2?*), but these eyesores definitely reflect some post-production half-assery. Even worse is the "sting in the tail" just prior to the ending animation, featuring an infected stripper high school girl passing on the disease, which is horrendously shot and acted and has none of the manic drive of the West-shot footage. This five minute scene seriously felt longer than the film that preceded it, especially when the ending, as in the ACTUAL ending, with the major players meeting their makers, is so rushed and nigh-incomprehensible that we aren't granted the knowledge of what actually happens to our male lead (whereas the female leads "rescue" makes no sense whatsoever given the priorities of her "rescuers"). The suggestion is there, but alas, this isn't the Ti West of *House of the Devil*, and not right for this type of loud-and-proud TRASH in ALL CAPS. As it stands, *Cabin Fever 2: Spring Fever* still manages to be an excellent time-waster, and proves that West is a pretty versatile guy, capable of yuks and yucks but opting for a more "high brow" approach, which is great- he's one of the better young horror directors out there today. One can only hope that series producer Lauren Moews will find another energetic up-and-comer for the proposed third and fourth installment; perhaps one who won't feel sullied by having made something completely unlike his other work?

-Jon-Christian Yates

THE GATE
THE GATE

Tibor Takács (1987)

Out of all the people I have ever known, only one person truly gave me the distinctly visceral feeling that, on some strange and indescribable spiritual level, I knew them my entire life, as if our souls were always intertwined long before we had ever actually met. Indeed, aside from arriving at more or less the same political views and wonderfully warped yet refined sense of humor, our aesthetic tastes were pretty much the same whether it be paintings, films, or music. In a sort of innate and instinctual fashion, I could always pretty much predict what this individual would like or even used to like as a kid. In fact, even as children, we had many of the same favorite flicks, including ludicrously lame shit like the fantasy romcom *Mannequin* (1987) starring a considerably less STD-ridden Kim Cattrall as the titular character. Out of all the childhood movies that stand out in my mind, the quasi-*Lovecraftian* Canadian ‘supernatural horror’ flick *The Gate* (1987) directed by Hungarian-Canadian Tibor Takács (*I, Madman* aka *Hardcover*, *Spiders 3D*) is certainly best of the films that we both loved as kid. Not unlike with the pleasantly primitive stop-motion celluloid nightmare *The Equinox... A Journey into the Supernatural* (1970) directed by Jack Woods and Dennis Muren and Don Coscarelli’s *Phantasm* (1979), Takács’ film is one of those oh-so-rare phantasmagorical horror fantasies that I randomly watched at a very young and impressionable age which left me in a virtual trance due to its surreal imagery and sometimes oneiric essence, yet it would not be many years later until I learned the actual name of the film and was able to finally re-watch it. Unfortunately, unlike *Phantasm* and, to a lesser extent, *The Equinox*, *The Gate* is not nearly enthralling for me as an adult as I discovered during a recent viewing, though I would still argue that it is one of the greatest, if not greatest, ‘kiddy horror’ flick ever made as a cleverly constructed cinematic nightmare that was clearly specifically tailored for the nuances and specific fears of the vulnerable juvenile mind. Centering around a boy that is only concerned with his dog, family, and nerdy best friend, the film is a strangely beautiful reminder of the simplicity of childhood and the grave seriousness that some kids have for things that adults barely even think about. Wholesome in the best sort of way but hardly politically correct (for example, the timeless word “fag” is thrown around a couple times), Takács’ film very well may be the best introductory film for both child horror movie novices and adolescent would-be-metalheads. In short, showing a little kid *The Gate* is indubitably the cinematic equivalent of handing them a CD of Slayer’s classic third album *Reign in Blood* (1986), though you certainly do not need to be a budding metal-fag to enjoy the film.

Fairly similar to the innately inferior and horrendously directed Canadian horror flick *The Pit* (1981) aka *Teddy*—a major mess of a movie directed by one-time filmmaker Lew Lehman (who notably directed his own daughter in a nude

scene!) about an insufferably autistic preteen whose only friend is a teddy bear and who feeds people to bloodthirsty ‘troglydytes’ (or what he calls “Tra-la-logs”) that live in a pit near his house—Takács’ film is certainly not an auteur piece as a highly collaborative effort that was the brainchild of screenwriter Michael Nankin (*Midnight Madness*). In fact, Nankin originally intended to direct the film himself and envisioned it as a much darker and more adult orientated film about bad kids who sadistically kill animals and ultimately rightly face a sort of demonic justice. Needless to say, adult oriented films featuring kid protagonists are not exactly popular, so the film was later changed into a soundly sentimental yet quasi-satanic scare-fest about kids that was made for kids. Indeed, Takács assembled a film with a little kid cast that virtually every kid can identify with, including a sensitive yet likeable wuss protagonist, his sexually developing big sister, and four-eyed metalhead nerd friend. A somewhat surprisingly allegorical film that examines the most common fears and anxieties associated with childhood, *The Gate* screenwriter Nankin once notably described the demonic monsters in the flick as follows, “The demons in most good horror films are metaphorical [and] representational for darker feelings, darker emotions; they are the demons within us. *THE GATE* is about guilt and is about Glen the hero kid’s fear of abandonment . . . His parents leave for the weekend . . . His sister is drifting away from him. Everyone’s leaving him. And these fears are basically what are the catalyst for the demons to come out.” Indeed, the boy protagonist of the film played by a very young Stephen Dorff—the mischling star of popular cinematic works ranging from *Blade* (1998) to John Waters’ *Cecil B. Demented* (2000) to Sofia Coppola’s *Somewhere* (2010)—has some serious yet fairly realistic psychological issues that include guilt and an unwavering fear of abandonment. A rare 1980s horror movie that is devoid of scatological stupidity, hokey humor, retarded jokes, and tasteless titillation, *The Gate* is a somewhat startlingly emotional horror-drama for kids about a well meaning wimp with strong principles that is forced to develop a certain degree of testicular fortitude after he and his four-eyed comrade unwittingly reawaken the Old Gods in the former’s backyard.

While many film critics and reviewers seem to assume that *The Gate* was Takács’ debut feature, the Magyar film director actually began his feature-length filmmaking career with the rarely-seen kitschy yet vaguely avant-garde sci-fi-musical-cum-dystopian-parable *Metal Messiah* (1978), which was based on a controversial stageplay by fellow Hungarian Stephen Zoller (who later produced Takács’ totally trying turd *984: Prisoner of the Future* (1982)) and advertised as the, “ultimate space rock spectacle of the 1970’s.” Undoubtedly, watching *Metal Messiah*—a film that has never been released on DVD and thus only exists today in extra shitty quality VHS form—a couple years ago was, to some extent, somewhat akin to first watching *The Gate* was a kid in the sense that I found it to be a somewhat unpredictable and strangely beautiful phantasmagoric night-

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mare that suggests that Takács might have had the potential to become a sort of bargain bin Fellini of genre cinema had his career taken a somewhat different and less television orientated route. While not exactly a true 'auteur' since he penned none of his best films, Takács is certainly a talented artisan with a distinct vision as is clearly apparent in his greatest films, including *Metal Messiah*, *The Gate*, and *I, Madman*, though both his artistic prowess and opportunities seemed to have fizzle out by the end of the 1980s just like the horror genre in general. Indeed, while *Metal Messiah* suggests he was a somewhat idiosyncratic artist with a special knack for creating otherworldly cinematic realms, it seems the surprise commercial success of *The Gate* resulted in Takács being left pigeonholed and relegated to directing corny kiddo crap, including various episodes of *Sabrina*, the *Teenage Witch* (1996-2003) starring Melissa Joan Hart and *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* (1998-1999), among other hack work. Not unlike with kiwi auteur David Blyth, who went from directing sardonic avant-garde punk flicks like *Angel Mine* (1978) to subversive cult horror like *Death Warmed Over* (1984) to episodes of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, it seems Takács was forced to completely dispose of his artistic integrity to pay the bills. Of course, one cannot blame the filmmaker for being unable to top what is like suburban little kid equivalent to Fellini *Satyricon* (1969), as *The Gate* offers the ultimate surrealist aesthetic overload for kids and acts as a virtual celluloid gateway drug to the wonderfully aesthetically decadent. In that sense, it is only fitting that lead Stephen Dorff would go on to play Warhol superstar and alpha-tranny Candy Darling in Mary Harron's *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996).

Although he may look like the average little kid from the suburbs, 12-year-old *The Gate* protagonist Glen (Stephen Dorff in his very first feature-film role) is a neurotic mess who has an overwhelming fear that his parents and 16-year-old sister big sister Alexandra aka 'Al' (Christa Denton) will soon abandon him. Indeed, Glen seems to have an ever growing hole in his somewhat wounded heart, which only gets bigger when an ominous hole appears in his backyard. At the very beginning of the film, Glen has an intricate nightmare where here comes home and discovers that his entire family has mysteriously vanished without a trace. In the same dream, Glen gets the scare of a lifetime when he enters his treehouse, which is immediately hit by lightning after he picks up a creepy vintage babydoll. Rather inexplicably, the next morning when he wakes up from the nightmare, he discovers that his treehouse was indeed hit by lightning and a big ugly gash is left in the ground where the tree once stood. Naturally, Glen is excited, if not somewhat perplexed, to discover a Geode rock has been unearthed at the site. Of course, Glen opts to dig further into the ground and is immediately bombarded with a deathly reek that absolutely repels him. Unfortunately, Glen bleeds near the hole after pricking his finger on a piece of wood. While Glen has no clue yet, he has unwittingly begun to reawaken the long dormant Old Gods that have been imprisoned in an infernal underworld. Luckily, his weirdo

nerdy metalhead friend Terry Chandler (Louis Tripp)—a kid that is rather cynical for his age due to the fact that his beloved mother recently died—has the knowledge and tools to fight these primordial demonic beings in the form of a very special European heavy metal band that might have inspired a very young Varg Vikernes of Burzum.

Unlike many kids his age, Glen becomes rather depressed when his parents tell him that they will be leaving for three days and his sister will be babysitting him. For whatever reason, Glen has an irrational fear that there is a very good chance his parents will never come back if they leave. Although Glen clearly deeply loves his sister, she has been recently treating him in a condescending fashion because she is a sexually budding teenager that wants to impress her lame friends and has a crush on some dude jock dude. At one point early in the film, Al can be seen briefly admiring her own breasts and derriere, though she abruptly stops as if she is ashamed of her own behavior. Naturally, since her parents are gone, Al decides to throw a party the night they leave, though she does not let Glen or Terry join in on the festivities, at least at first. While his sister and friends are hanging downstairs and discussing the occult, Glen and Terry manage to break the Geode, which causes strange incantations written in an arcane foreign language to magically appear on a notepad. Of course, the boys are also somewhat taken aback when the inside of the Geode begins to glow as if it has some sort of magical powers. Needless to say, Glen and Terry foolishly decide to read the incantations, thus further summoning demonic powers to invade the house. When Al's obnoxious teenage friends opt to attempt to levitate Glen during the party and it actually works so well that the protagonist manages to break a light upon floating up to the ceiling, they unwittingly perform another ritual that further awakens the Old Gods. At this point, the Old Gods have enough power to emotionally terrorize the protagonists with phantoms and highly personalized nightmarish hallucinations. Indeed, that night, Terry is visited by an apparition of his dead mother and immediately embraces her, only to soon realize in a horrifically heartbreaking fashion that it is actually Glen's beloved dog Angus and that he has accidentally strangled the poor creature to death. Meanwhile, as Terry dances with the demonic phantom, Glen is awakened by ominous moths and watches in abject bewilderment as the walls of his room begin to stretch as if they have come alive. At this point, it is obvious that the house has become an extension of the demonic gate. Of course, by killing Glen's beloved canine friend and sadistically teasing Terry about his tragic longing dead mommy, the Old Gods are seeking to emotionally destroy and isolate the little lads so that they can be easily defeated and enslaved by demonic forces, but luckily they are tougher than they look. Considering Glen's worst fear is losing his friends and family, it is only a matter of time before the Old Gods come for Al and Terry. Indeed, unbeknownst to Glen, he is a passive pawn in a demonic game of quite literally hellish proportions.

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Terry may be a ludicrously lanky four-eyed turd of a boy that bitches like a sex-starved middle-aged woman and seems to suffer from Asperger's syndrome, but he is not afraid to embrace the dark side and is a rather devoted fan of obscure metal groups, especially a quasi-Satanic European group named 'Sacrifyx' whose foolish occultnik members all died in a plane crash shortly after releasing their first (and ultimately last) album. By using Sacrifyx's mysterious first album, which features excerpts from the 'The Dark Book'—a sort of bible of demonology that features striking medieval demon art—Terry is eventually able to convince Glen that they have awakened the 'Old Gods' and thus they must seriously prepare for the worst lest they succumb to the darkness. Unfortunately, some handsome yet unbelievably stupid and careless teenage boy that is friends with Al tosses Angus' corpse into the hole in the backyard, thus giving the Old Gods the power to begin unleashing various demons. While the boys recite excerpts from The Dark Book in the hope of stopping the Old Gods and naturally assume their problem is over with after noticing the hole is filled, the depositing of the dog's corpse ultimately acted as an imperative final sacrifice to summon the demonic gods. Indeed, from there, the serious demonic trickery begins and various menacing demonic entities begin lurking around the house for prey.

That night after reading from The Dark Book and wrongly assuming their problems are over, the boys get a rude awakening in the form a violent swarm of moths crashing through Glen's bedroom window and Angus' glowing corpse magically appearing in Terry's bed. Naturally, Al finally realizes things are not quite when grotesque demon arms almost pull her under a bed, but thankfully Glen and Terry manage to save her from the demonic being and then inform her of the sinister dark forces that are beginning to infiltrate their less than humble abode. Indeed, small and absurdly diminutive demonic beings known as 'Minions,' which resemble a cross between an ape, frog, and elderly ghetto negro, begin invading the house and taunting the protagonists. As depicted in ancient images featured in The Dark Book, the Minions are savagely sadistic creatures that enjoy collectively dismembering human victims, among other things. On top of that, two demons in the form of Glen's parents appear outside the house and the one in the form of his father begins choking the protagonist. When Glen fights back, the demonic pseudo-father's face falls apart and a white semen-like liquid gushes from his neck. After Al is almost attacked by a virtual army of Minions upon daring to investigate the backyard, Terry forces everyone into the basement in the hope of finding a way to defeat the demons and close the gate in The Dark Book, but it spontaneously bursts into flames, so they are forced to settle on a Bible. While Terry resolves to read from Psalm 59 and the gate seems to begin to close, he is a goofy know-it-all nerd and thus predictably falls into the hole before he can finish reading. After being bitten by a Minion and two brutally crushing one of them by rapidly stomping on it, Terry somehow manages to crawl out of the hole and read from Genesis, which seemingly

seals the hole for good, or so the heroes naively think. That night, the boys get quite the surprise when a rotten 'Workman' (Carl Kraines)—a zombie-like being based on fictional suburban folklore about a worker that ostensibly died while working on Glen's family home—crashes through a wall and soon begins attacking the particularly petrified yet nonetheless pugnacious preteen protagonists. Unfortunately, the Workman soon pulls Terry inside a wall where he is trapped inside. The Workman also appears in a mirror while Al is admiring her own reflection, but she is a bad little bitch and soon destroys the zombie prole by throwing a stereo at him, though his body subsequently disintegrates into a dozen or so rather speedy Minions that scramble in different directions like cockroaches. Somewhat similarly, when one of the Minions loses its arm, the limb disintegrates into a dozen or so speedy sperm-like creatures. In other words, the demonic beings seem to be immortal.

Before the two know it, Terry reappears in an Übergeek demonic form and attacks Al, but it is ultimately the Workman, who reappears in a seemingly stronger form, that drags her to hell, thus leaving poor Glen to fend for himself. Before succumbing to the Workman, Al seemingly kills the demonic Terry by violently stabbing him in the eye with the legs of a cheap plastic Barbie doll in a surprisingly shocking and subversive scene. As a result of both his big sis and best bud being consumed by the gate, Glen's single worst fears—being alone and helpless—comes true. As a result of both Terry and Al being 'sacrificed,' the gate finally fully opens and a large and grotesque serpentine-like demon named 'The Demon Lord' appears and literally congratulates Glen for unwittingly opening the gates for the Old Gods by warmly patting him on the head like a good boy. Indeed, in what proves to be a more bitter than sweet moment of dark irony for the young protagonist, the demon leader credits Glen for the infernal invasion and treats him as a comrade. As a result of having his hand touched by the Harryhausen-esque alpha-demon, an erratic eyeball appears on the palm of Glen's hand. Naturally, the demon is not too happy when Glen acts like an awful ingrate, rejects his new demonic status, and opts to stab his new tweaker-like hand-eye. In what ultimately proves to be an absurd, albeit fitting, *Deus ex machina* of sorts, a powerful toy rocket—a symbol of the protagonist's love for his sister and vice versa (or what the protagonist describes as, "love and light")—is ultimately used by Glen to kill the dreaded Demon Lord. In fact, the rocket not only kills the big bad demon by blowing its body into seemingly millions of pieces, but it also closes the gate for good. In what ultimately proves to be the most patently absurd yet reasonably fitting of happy endings, Al, Terry, and even dog Angus emerge from closets and return to Glen in the end. Naturally, Glen is so happy to have all his loved ones back that he is not even worried about the fact that his parents' house is completely destroyed and that he will probably be grounded for the rest of his childhood. Of course, the entire experience has not only brought him closer to his sister and best friend, but has also transformed Glen from a

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whiny wimp to a real mensch.

Admittedly, recently re-watching *The Gate* proved to be an extremely, if not quite unexpectedly, bittersweet experience that stirred emotions in me that I did not really anticipate, namely a sort of melancholic nostalgia that came as a result of my realization that I have become quite cynical and have lost all innocence. While it is easy to make fun of the boy protagonist and his sheltered suburban life, the film was certainly made with clear good intentions and is surely not the production of some scheming producer that was looking to make a quick easy buck on morally bankrupt cheap thrills. Indeed, the film might be silly, sappy, and sentimental in certain regards, but it does have a genuinely wholesome message about the importance of friends and family in a cinematic work that truly proves the platonic love conquers all and that the only thing that really matters in life is your love ones, including your dog. Indeed, forget Jack Clayton's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983), Joe Dante's *Gremlins* (1984), *The Monster Squad* (1987), the classic Stephen King miniseries *It* (1990), and even Nicolas Roeg's classic Roald Dahl adaptation *The Witches* (1990), Takács' film is indubitably unrivaled in terms of its purity of soul and spirit as far as authentic kiddy horror is concerned. It goes without saying that I certainly cannot imagine such a film being made nowadays, as it would probably be plagued by a morally dubious message, token non-Europids and/or mystery meat mongrels, and repugnant video-game-like CGI effects (of course, it should be noted that Judaic Brit Alex Winter has been planning to direct a 3D-remake for a number of years, but thankfully it no longer seems like it is happening). Unfortunately, I can only recommend Takács' innately inferior sequel *Gate 2: The Trespassers* (1990), which only features Louis Tripp, to die-hard fans of the first film and nihilistic horror film completists.

Undoubtedly, *The Gate* was probably the last film to feature great and uniquely unforgettable stop-motion animation special effects in the spirit of German-American maestro Ray Harryhausen. Aside from that, the film is also notable for being the last filmic work to feature matte paintings created by British master Albert Whitlock, who previously created striking visual effects for classic Alfred Hitchcock flicks like *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Birds* (1963), *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971), Hal Ashby's *Bound for Glory* (1976), John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982), David Lynch's *Dune* (1984), and countless films by Disney and Universal Studios. Additionally, the main special effects guy behind the film was Randall William Cook, who did some interesting work on cult flicks like Larry Cohen's *Q* (1982), Tom Holland's *Fright Night* (1985), and Ate de Jong's underrated neo-Orphic horror-fantasy *Highway to Hell* (1991) and would later become famous for his work on Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Somewhat surprisingly, Cook and director Takács mention in the featurette *THE GATE: Unlocked* that, in terms of the film's somewhat understated comedic content, they were influenced by old school Hollywood

greats like Ernst Lubitsch, Preston Sturges, and Billy Wilder and not the sort of kitschy low-camp crap that is typical of horror.

If the bastard grandson of Jean Cocteau attempted to direct a sort of Lovecraftian neo-fairytale for angst-ridden preteens from American suburbia, it would probably resemble *The Gate*. Indeed, in terms of the film's idiosyncratic use of practical special effects, including mirrors, it can be compared to classic Cocteau flicks like *Beauty and the Beast* (1946). While the big kids and adults of the 1980s may have had the luxury of experiencing the surrealist slasher scenarios of the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* films, the little kids certainly got an equally cool, surreal, and playfully phantasmagorical equivalent in the form of Takács' film. Indeed, I can imagine many of the fans of the film would, for better or worse, grow up to become Aleister Crowley and/or Anton LaVey fanboys and fangirls. I certainly cannot deny that the film probably had some influence on my lifelong love of the dark side, whether it be the early albums of deathrock band Christian Death, the satantic Nietzschean strangle tales of Hanns Heinz Ewers, or my unhealthy, albeit rather eclectic, taste in horror cinema ranging from German Expressionism like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) to old school American cult horror like Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) to no-budget kraut artploitation like Jörg Buttgerit's *NEKRomantik* (1987). Undoubtedly, if I ever have kids, which is questionable due to my increasingly shitty health and complete and utter disillusionment with dames and relationships, I will be sure to show them *The Gate* at a very young and impressionable age. I can certainly remember my somewhat hidden excitement when the girl that shared the same political, aesthetic, and comical tastes as me revealed that she also loved the film as a child, which is rather fitting since she reminds me of a more beauteous version of the character Al. Indeed, although I certainly do not want to sound like some faggot feminist cuck that gives girls credit where credit is not due, *The Gate* also has the distinction of featuring a rare example of a likeable and memorable teenage girl character and not the sort of completely phony and fiercely feminist all-competent 'Mary Sue' archetype that is quite typical of Hollywood films nowadays. In short, it is hard to find anything to dislike about the film, but one should not expect anything less from a surreally demonic Pandora's Box story where teenage girls say sassy things like "fagging off," a morbidly cynical preteen metalhead slow dances with a dead dog that has taken the form of his dead mother, and a very young and neurotic Stephen Dorff cries like a little girl after falling victim to the darker side of levitation.

-Ty E

DER SAMURAI
DER SAMURAI

Till Kleinert° (2014)

Far from the anti-bourgeois Artaudian melodramatics of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, hysterical aberosexual agitprop of Rosa von Praunheim, diva-obsessed aesthetic decadence and cultivated kitsch of Werner Schroeter, the autistic avant-gardism of Michael Bryntrup, and the AIDS-ridden gutter punk degeneracy of Michael Stock, *Der Samurai* (2014) directed by Till Kleinert (*The Longest Night*, *Boys Village*) demonstrates that kraut cocksuckers are a great deal less serious nowadays than they used to be and have been nurtured on a steady diet of Hollywood celluloid junk, yet somehow that does not mean that the film is totally unoriginal or uninspired. Indeed, although like a mix of classic homo horror flicks *The Hitcher* (1986) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (1985) meets Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011) and Adam Wingard's *The Guest* (2014) that is quite flagrant with its American influence, Kleinert's film also has quite Teutonic roots that thankfully predate the Nazi era (in fact, Kleinert has described F.W. Murnau as his favorite German director) as a work featuring not only elements of German Romanticism and the Brothers Grimm fairytales, but also the much maligned Heimatfilm genre. Directed by a young queer that grew up in East Berlin as his 'graduation feature' for film school, *Der Samurai* is a rare German flick with a rare sense of German identity, which is usually a no go zone for most German filmmakers, who will typically do anything to avoid being perceived as 'nationalistic' or discernibly 'Germanic.' As most of his oeuvre demonstrates, Kleinert has a sort of fetish for the East German countryside and quaint rural village living, which he seems to be simultaneously infatuated with and horrified by, thus making for a strangely mystical and fantastic view of the Teutonic wilderness in his films. Of course, *Der Samurai* is no different as it depicts what happens when a young passive-aggressive pussy policeman of the latent homosexual sort is forced to hunt down a dress-wearing and sword-wielding eponymous killer who comes to his small village out of nowhere and starts wrecking havoc in a rather drastic attempt to get the protagonist's attention, thereupon forcing him to confront his long repressed fagdom. An oftentimes irrational and romantic work that ultimately communicates a message in an allegorical way similar to a fairytale, the film is being promoted by its American distributor Artsploitation Films as recalling "early David Lynch," but Kleinert's film is probably better described as an absurdist (anti)Heimat horror flick as directed by a young East German that has more of an appreciation for 1980s American horror than New German Cinema and post-Godard European cinema in general. While by no means a masterpiece of any sort, *Der Samurai* thankfully demonstrates that not all German filmmakers have become soulless dilettantes and succumbed to lame filmmaking trends like the so-called 'Berliner Schule.' Featuring arguably the most patently pathetic cop in cinema history as

the protagonist and a sort of cross-dressing micro Kinski as the villain, Kleinert's work probably has the potential to become a kraut cult classic of sorts, though American filmgoers might not be able to accept an unhinged and ferociously flirtatious quasi-tranny twink as a serious slasher killer of sorts, but then again anyone who looks at the flick as a horror movie will certainly be going in with somewhat misguided expectations, as *Der Samurai* works best as a stylish and somewhat sardonic savage comedy that forces the viewer to laugh at things that would otherwise be considered sick and depraved.

Jakob (Michel Diercks) is a self-loathing, uptight, and anally retentive social misfit who is denial of the fact that he is resented by most of the people in his small village and is constantly mocked by everyone despite the fact that he is an officer of the law. Despite the fact that he is denial of his dubious social status, Jakob secretly and seemingly unconsciously demonstrates his empathy and solidarity with fellow outcasts by regularly buying large quantities of animal guts from a butcher and leaving them in a local forest for a wild wolf that is hated by most of the locals who regularly complain to the protagonist's police station about the wild beast. With both of his parents dead and having literally no real friends, Jakob spends his free time doing banal things like playing cards with his grandmother (Ulrike Hanke-Haensch), who suffers from dementia and who he takes care of. Ultimately, Jakob's suffocating humdrum life changes dramatically when he receives a strange package at his work. Indeed, after playing cards with his beloved grandmother one night, Jakob receives a random phone call from the owner of the package who tells him to listen to the howl outside and requests that he bring him the box. When Jakob goes to hand deliver the package to the mysterious owner, he ends up wandering into a house where he finds a man wearing a dress—the eponymous 'Der Samurai' (Pit Bukowski of Kleinert's *Cowboy* (2008))—who asks him "Like what you see?" while applying red lipstick to his lips in a manner that makes him seem like some sort of cheap bargain bin she-male bimbo. Although Jakob has no clue who the goofy transvestite is and what he wants from him, the superlatively strange fellow seems to know everything about him and he is determined to convert him to cocksucking, but the protagonist is determined to stay a hidden homo even though everyone else in his life seems to realize he is gay. Seemingly like the Teutonic son of "Buffalo Bill" of *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), albeit with a twisted sense of humor and a more extroverted personality, the samurai is a mensch on a mirthfully malefic mission to prove he is the right lebensmensch for the protagonist and he plans to destroy tons of property and kill tons of people with his sword while trying.

When the samurai confesses that the house he is in is not actually his, Jakob tells him to leave or he will have to arrest him, but before he can do anything the unhinged mensch in the dress opens the package, whips out a sword from inside the box, and then makes his way outside where he begins running towards an oncoming train as if he has a death wish. Needless to say, Jakob reluctantly

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follows the psychotic samurai, who dodges the train at the last second and heads for the woods. Of course, Jakob follows the samurai through the woods and into another village where he knows he is on the right path when he eventually finds his elderly friend's decapitated golden retriever lying in the street. While Jakob almost blows the samurai away with a shotgun upon tracking him down at a sort of sewage treatment site, the twisted tranny manages to dodge the bullet, asks the protagonist if he is ready for "the baptism," and manages to get away by jumping in the sewage water. While attempting to track down the samurai after his rather dramatic escape, Jakob eventually happens upon a blonde babe on the side of the road who has a flat tire, so he changes said tire and then saves the fair lady from a deer that he mistakes for the maniac in the dress. As the viewer suspects, the blonde ultimately gives Jakob a ride back to his village and on the way she discusses how there are still wolves in Eastern Europe and then somewhat annoys the annoyingly uptight protagonist by commenting regarding his area that it, "Must be terrible [...] Everybody knows everybody. Everybody making sure no one steps out of line." Of course, Jakob refuses to accept that he secretly loathes his neighbors and they loathe him. Before dropping him off, Jakob fantasizes about kissing the blonde babe in a hopelessly contrived fashion and then she bequeaths him with the fitting nickname, "Lonely Wolf," which he seems somewhat offended by even though his best friend is a wild wolf. Not surprisingly, Jakob will also eventually call the samurai Lonely Wolf, thus signifying that he unconsciously realizes that he has a deep connection with the dress-adorned whack-job.

When Jakob gets back to his village, he is disturbed to discover that the samurai has destroyed virtually everything in the neighborhood with his sword and he does not even bother to stop his nihilistic rampage when he sees the protagonist. Upon attempting to reason with the clearly psychotic tranny, Jakob makes a deal with the samurai that he will destroy his neighbor's trashy plastic pink flamingo lawn ornament if he agrees to stop destroying everything. Naturally, the samurai watches with glee as Jakob destroys the pink flamingo in a surprisingly impassioned fashion, as if the lunatic is starting to actually have a sinister influence on him. After the trashy lawn ornament is destroyed, Jakob decides to question the samurai about what his "crusade" is about and the deranged dress-donning dude begins to get somewhat esoteric and tells the protagonist to imagine if they had met at a local party earlier that night and slow-danced with one another in front of all of his neighbors. Naturally, closet-queen is somewhat unsettled by the prospect of looking like a pansy poof in front of his neighbors and when the samurai accuses him of being in a "narrow prison" for altogether rejecting the idea of them dancing together, the protagonist becomes enraged, assaults him, and handcuffs him to a fence where he proceeds to punch him after he makes more homoerotic remarks and accuses him of deriving sexual pleasure from beating him. Eventually, Jakob becomes so enraged with the

samurai's rather aggressive flirting tactics that he storms off into the woods while the man in the dress yells, "Where do you think you're going? We're not done yet." Meanwhile, Jakob's asshole homo-hating boss Horvath (Uwe Preuss) calls him on his cellphone and curiously asks him if he is the one that neighbors have seen "wrecking havoc" around the village in a dress. Of course, Jakob denies the accusation and assures Horvath that he has caught the culprit, but when he goes back to check on the samurai, he discovers that he has escaped from the handcuffs by cutting off his own thumb.

In a somewhat humorous scenario worthy of Little Red Riding Hood, the samurai decides to visit Jakob's dementia-ridden grandmother and play cards with her just like her grandson does but things soon turn ugly when he becomes dissatisfied with the elderly woman's slow pace when it comes to shuffling cards. While the samurai does not kill granny, he decides to give her a little scare and then goes in the protagonist's room and burns up a miniature village that is an exact replica of the neighborhood that Jakob has painstakingly assembled. When Jakob comes home to find his grandma petrified and cowering in a corner, he becomes quite distressed, especially when she yells at him, "Go away!" and accuses him of not being her grandson, as if the samurai has taken his place. Meanwhile, a group of young 'redneck' bullies on motorcycles that are about the same age as Jakob and regularly taunt him spot the samurai and decide to pick on him since he is wearing a dress. The leader of the gang Schöllli (Christopher Kane), who Jakob seems to have repressed homoerotic feelings for even though he regularly berates him, decides to mock the samurai by moronically asking him, "What's going on...Halloween?," to which the mensch in the dress humorlessly replies, "You're dogs." While Jakob attempts to warn the bullies about how dangerous the tranny is, Schöllli soon knocks him down for pretending to be a hero and at the same time the samurai begins slicing up the unwitting crotch-rocket-riding jocks, who never fathomed that a man wearing a dress could be so ultra-violent and bloodthirsty. When Jakob regains consciousness, the samurai runs up to him and decapitates Schöllli only inches away from his face, thus leaving the perturbed protagonist in a daze.

After going by his police station to obtain a handgun and some bullets, Jakob goes looking for the samurai and ultimately finds him at a hellish bonfire that he has started at a local park. On top of discovering that the decapitated corpses of his neighbors have been placed in the bleachers and postured in a creepy fashion as if they are watching everything that is going on, Jakob finds Horvath hanging upside down from a soccer goal with his arms and legs bound and his mouth taped shut. After leaving Horvath literally hanging after assuring him that he will take care of everything himself, Jakob soon finds the samurai lurking around the bonfire. After the samurai states regarding all the people he has killed, "Look closely. These are the miscreants. They are like corks to our bodies, keep the spirit bottled in. It is our duty to get rid of the blockage once and for all" and tossing Schöllli's

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decapitated head to him like it is a soccer ball (rather inexplicably, the head somehow says to the protagonist, "Easy, Jakob, easy. We've got everything under control"), Jakob points his gun at his forehead, but cannot bring himself to kill the terroristic tranny. When the samurai wipes blood against the protagonist's head in a sensational fashion and then asks him, "What do we do now?," Jakob strangely responds, "I still owe you a dance" and the two absurdly start dancing like autistic zombies from far away from one another. While Jakob eventually embraces the samurai and begins romantically slow-dancing with him next to the bonfire, he eventually becomes disgusted upon seeing the decapitated head of the blonde who gave him a ride earlier burning in the fire, not to mention the fact that Horvath is watching him getting all touchy-feely with a dress-adorned queer serial killer. While the samurai states regarding Horvath, "I left him for you," Jakob refuses to kill his boss even though he is a dickhead, stating, "He's innocent. They are all innocent." While Jakob agrees to leave with him if he leaves his boss alone and then throws his gun and bullets to the ground as a demonstration of his sincerity, the samurai decides to hack off Horvath's head when he sees police cars coming down the road. While police soon arrest the samurai and they begin taking him and the protagonist back to a police station in separate police cars, the tranny manages to escape by jumping through one of the backseat passenger windows after the wild wolf creates a diversion by coming out of the woods and randomly attacks the cops. Ultimately, Jakob decides to steal a police car and track the samurai down. Upon finding the samurai completely naked and sexually aroused while eating the butcher guts that he has left in the woods for the wolf, Jakob goes completely berserk and decapitates his gay buddy with his own sword, thus demonstrating that the crazed cross-dressing cocksucker was at least somewhat successful in his crusade to instill the protagonist with a much needed sense of psychosexual aggression and visceral testicular fortitude.

While some might assume that the eponymous killer of *Der Samurai* is not actually a real person but merely a manifestation of the seemingly sexually schizophrenic protagonist's feeble and highly conflicted mind, director Till Kleinert assures the viewer in the audio commentary for the Artsploitation Films DVD release of the film that the cross-dressing swordsman is indeed a flesh and blood character, though he also acknowledges that the character could not exist without Jakob sort of summoning him from the woods, as it is a film with a sort of classic fairytale logic that is totally absent from contemporary German cinema. Indeed, if Kleinert accomplished anything with the film, it is most certainly creating the greatest filmic fag fairytale ever made and what makes it all the more impressive is that he does it in a fairly subversive and apolitical way. After all, as a work that features a defiantly gay serial killer who sports a goofy dress, gorges on raw guts, and attempts to goad a guy into converting to the pink by decapitating everyone he knows, *Der Samurai* is not exactly going to appeal to the dubious agendas of those sort of special interest groups with retarded acronyms

like 'LGBT' that promote gay marriage and other hopelessly banal things that would have absolutely disgusted gay activists from previous generations. Arguably the most bizarre aspect of the film is that, although it features certain arthouse attributes, it is quite obvious that the director was trying to make the work as accessible to as many as people as possible, yet he still opted to include quasi-pornographic images of authentic erect cocks as if that is the kind of thing that the average horror fan wants to see. Of course, as Kleinert has revealed in interviews, he actually gets a thrill out of shocking heterosexual audiences with homoerotic horror material that goes completely against their expectations and *Der Samurai* certainly succeeds in that regard. Although Kleinert has concluded some of his films with unexpected happy endings like in *Cowboy* (2008), *Der Samurai* ends in such a curious and somewhat nihilistic manner that it is nothing short of unforgettable. While Kleinert is certainly no Hanns Heinz Ewers as far as Aryan homo horror masters are concerned, he clearly has a genuine love for horror and a sort of idiosyncratic knack for injecting a certain sincere sexual perversity and wicked humor into the genre. Indeed, I cannot really imagine a film like *Der Samurai* ever being made in the United States where true originality in horror is considered more or less heresy. In its depiction of a long-haired stranger coming to town and ultimately being killed by a self-loathing sod after knocking the social structure of the area's equilibrium, the film certainly bears strikingly superficial similarities with the underrated dystopian anti-Heimat flick *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich* (1971) aka *I Love You, I Kill You* directed by Uwe Brandner. Undoubtedly by comparing *Der Samurai* with *I Love You, I Kill You*, one certainly gets a strong sense of how much Hollywood films have influenced Germany cinema since the death of New German Cinema. Hopefully, Kleinert will not become the next Tom Tykwer or, even worse, Roland Emmerich, but judging by his latest feature, that is somewhat doubtful. Indubitably a formative work that was directed by a relatively young auteur, *Der Samurai* is an undeniably entertaining and unforgettable work that, although somewhat uneven, demonstrates that Kleinert is a filmmaker to lookout for in the upcoming years. Arguably, the greatest compliment that I can pay Kleinert's film is that it demonstrates more budding talent and originality than Fassbinder's first feature *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod* (1969) aka *Love is Colder Than Death*. As far as homo horror auteurs go, Kleinert has certainly already transcended the competition (i.e. Tim Sullivan, Bruce LaBruce, David DeCoteau, etc.), so we will just have to see if he has what it takes to be the next James Whale or F.W. Murnau, which is somewhat more dubious.

-Ty E

LEAVES OF GRASS
LEAVES OF GRASS

Tim Blake Nelson* (2009)

Upon learning that Edward Norton starred in *Leaves of Grass*, a dark comedy about marijuana dealers, I expected the chameleon-like actor to have reached an all-time low in his Hollywood acting career. After finally viewing the film, I can proudly admit, not only did I enjoy this cleverly concocted dark comedy; I was also extremely impressed by Norton's acting versatility, schizophrenically playing two different characters (twin brothers) with two conflicting personalities. *Leaves of Grass* was written and directed by Tim Blake Nelson, who previously directed *The Grey Zone* (2001), a film about a Jewish Sonderkommando unit that played a traitorous role in helping the Nazis liquidate fellow Jews at Auschwitz concentration camp. Nelson, whose own maternal grandparents apparently escaped from the Nazis before the start of World War II, once again returns to a very personal subject in *Leaves of Grass*. Like the Jewish drug kingpin Pug Rothbaum in the film, Tim Blake Nelson also belongs to the Jewish community of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Taking cues from the Coen brothers' *A Serious Man* and *Fargo*, *Leaves of Grass* is a capricious portrait of an unconventional region that Hollywood generally neglects.

In *Leaves of Grass*, a pretentious pedantic college professor reluctantly goes back to the area of rural Oklahoma he grew up in, under the false impression that his pot-dealing brother was killed with a crossbow (which is apparently a popular weapon in Oklahoma). While brother Bill is your typically boring introverted academic professor, who finds enjoyment in writings scholarly reviews of other fellow professors scholarly reviews; brother Brady is an extroverted hick who also happens to be a mastermind in the illegal marijuana manufacturing business. That best scene in *Leaves of Grass* that most clearly illustrates the oppositional psyches between the two physically identical twins occurs early on in the film after the brothers are reunited and partake in a pot-smoking session. Despite having a limited and slang-filled vocabulary, Brady admits to Bill that he has read all of his brother's academic publications. Instead of being happy that his twin cares enough to read his banal work, Bill belittles Brady for his inadequate pronunciation skills. When Brady asks his brother about his thoughts on Martin Heidegger (whose name Brady pronounces in an absurd manner), Bill becomes noticeably irked and condemns the German philosopher for his support of National Socialism (Nazism). I have a feeling that Bill also dislikes Heidegger because, like himself, the German philosopher also came from humble rural beginnings, a fact that Billy boy is ashamed of, yet the German philosopher fully embraced. One of the main reasons Heidegger was an avid supporter of National Socialism was due to the fact that the Nazi ideology advocated a return to nature ("Blood and Soil") and natural instincts (as originally advocated by Friedrich Nietzsche), two things Bill has fought throughout his life to es-

cape from. Brady, being a pot growing wizard and completely in tune with his natural habitat, would have certainly been student of Heidegger's philosophies had he went on to college like his brother. Whereas Brady uses his intellect for completely pragmatic and utilitarian (albeit criminal) purposes; Billy uses his intellect for novelty academic purposes, consciously deracinating himself from area he used to call home.

Brady may be an excellent gardener, but he's completely ignorant when it comes to running a monetarily self-sufficient personal drug operation. Due to the fact that Brady only utilizes the most state-of-the-art pot growing equipment, he ends up owing a hefty amount of cash to a prominent Jewish businessman named Pug Rothbaum. When finally meeting up with Pug and his Hebrew henchmen, Brady illogically attempts to break off his contract with the keen businessman. After hearing Brady's decision to quit drug running, Pug is thrown into an angry tirade regarding the historical persecution of Jews. Instead of shouting the famous post-holocaust chant "never again", Pug hilariously recites with a Tulsa slang twang, "We ain't gonna taken advantage of no more." Pug also goes on a rant about how Christians historically refused to deal with money, hence why he ended up having to fund Brady's operation in the first place. Indeed, Jewish wealth is the result of Christians originally banning practices of usury and money lending, enabling Jewish international bankers to eventually gain a monopoly on the most vital banks in in Europe. It should be noted that Tim Blake Nelson shot a scene in *Leaves of Grass* where the camera focuses on a Pug's blood-soaked pictures of former American presidents, both democrat and republican, which will seem pointless to most viewers. Although most Americans argue amongst one another regarding the petty personal issues relevant to the two main populist political parties, neither side ever acknowledges the key issues that all mainstream politicians agree on; the unconditional protection and support for the state of Israel. Pug Rothbaum angrily explains to philistine goy boy Brady that he gives all of his money to Israel, as his most imperative goal is to guarantee the preservation of the Jewish people. As his personal presidential portraits symbolically make clear, Pug could care less which political party the president belongs to; all that matters to him is that they support Israel and protect the tiny state from it's Muslim neighbors (as we are today in Afghanistan and Iraq). After all, Jewish sources provide over 2/3 of the money for the democratic party and over 1/2 of the money for the republican party. Just as Brady manufactures and sells drugs for Pug, the United States fights wars for Israel.

Leaves of Grass is a clever comedy in that under the veil of what seems to be another stupid stoner flick lies a humorous display of the inter-workings and cryptic-infrastructure of the United States. Unfortunately, just like the Coen brothers' *Barton Fink* and *The Big Lebowski*, the multilayered Judaic narrative brilliance of *Leaves of Grass* will be lost on most American viewers. In the introduction to Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Anti-Christ*, Baltimore sage journalist

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H.L. Mencken (who was the first to translate the book into English) stated, "On the Continent, the day is saved by the fact that the plutocracy tends to become more and more Jewish. Here the intellectual cynicism of the Jew almost counterbalances his social unpleasantness. If he is destined to lead the plutocracy of the world out of Little Bethel he will fail, of course, to turn it into an aristocracy--i. e., a caste of gentlemen--, but he will at least make it clever, and hence worthy of consideration." Pug Rothbaum, being a successful businessman and highly regarded public figure (with public restrooms dedicated to him), certainly belongs to the plutocracy Mencken speaks of. After all, history has shown that democracy, a political system that appeals to the lowest common denominator and gives equality to the unequal, can only result in a culturally impotent society where wealth is the sole determinant for political power. As *Leaves of Grass* and the excellent HBO series *Boardwalk Empire* make clear, you can be an immoral opportunistic criminal and still reach the peak of the American dream. After all, mob bosses like Meyer Lansky and Al Capone are as American as apple-pie.

-Ty E

PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

Tim Burton (1985)

Pee-wee's Big Adventure is one of the first films I remember seeing. As a child, Pee-wee Herman was someone I could identify with because he acted like an exaggerated adult man-child. Most children would love to have an adult that they feel they could understand personally. Pee-Wee not only acts like a child, but lives in the ultimate child fancy home. And of course, in Pee-wee's Big Adventure, like any child fantasizes about, Pee-wee goes on a "big adventure." On the way, Pee-wee has various surreal nightmares involving horrible and disgusting clowns. Pee-wee's Big Adventure director Tim Burton was also the first "auteur" I became acquainted with. I didn't know what an "auteur" or a "director" was back then, but I knew some of my favorite movies were Beetlejuice, Batman, Pee-wee's Big Adventure, and Edward Scissorhands. I also knew that I loved all the music in these film but didn't know Danny Elfman composed it. Of course, films seem to be more magical when you don't know people are consciously behind the production of them. After just watching Pee-wee's Big Adventure again (after who knows how many times in my life), I still love it. The film is one of few that can somewhat transplant me back to my childhood. Pee-wee's Big Adventure exerts a real childlike sentiment that transcends the line between childhood and adulthood. One could say that Pee-wee actor Paul Reubens is a magician of sorts. His acting abilities and situational humor have much more put into them than just "talent." Too bad Reubens got caught doing naughty things in an adult movie theater that people who have reached puberty do. That one public "performance" essentially caused the death of the undeniably lovable Pee-wee Herman. Over years I had become a huge fan of Italian maestro and auteur Federico Fellini. I couldn't help notice the "Felliniesque" nature of Pee-wee's Big Adventure. Director Tim Burton obviously utilized Fellini's obsession with the cinematic circus for Pee-wee's Big Adventure flamboyant and "in your face" showman nature. Danny Elfman also found some influence in Federico Fellini composer Nina Rota. I found Pee-wee's Big Adventure and it's score to influenced by Fellini's 8 1/2. The difference between Tim Burton and Federico Fellini's approach is that Burton was able to make his film accessible to all audiences. Also unlike Fellini, I don't think Tim Burton likes clowns very much as the evil clowns of Pee-wee's nightmares demonstrate. Pee-wee goes on his "big adventure" to find the bike that a fat fellow man-child Francis has stolen from him. When Pee-wee and Francis childishly bicker it is reasonably cute. Even knowing that Pee-wee has a somewhat prudish childish attitude, he is still a lovable character. Pee-wee describes himself as "a loner, a rebel." He also seems very comfortable while sporting drag in attempt to fool cops (which of course he does). Dottie, the girl that loves Pee-wee, he can't seem to love back. Pee-wee's "sexuality" is very questionable. Not only was Pee-wee actor Paul Reubens

PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

arrested for public masturbation in 1991, but in 2001 Paul Reubens was arrested in 2002 for child pornography. Reuben denies that he was attempting to acquire pornography as he is a collector of "vintage erotica." Paul Reubens public response to his child pornography arrest is as follows, "One thing I want to make very, very clear, I don't want anyone for one second to think that I am titillated by images of children. It's not me. You can say lots of things about me. And you might. The public may think I'm weird. They may think I'm crazy or anything that anyone wants to think about me. That's all fine. As long as one of the things you're not thinking about me is that I'm a Pedophile. Because that's not true." I hope that Reuben is not a Pedophile because I think that it would hurt his character Pee-wee's feelings.

-Ty E

CHOCOLATE

Tim Burton (2005) From the action genius Prachya Pinkaew who created many action films in Thailand and recently broke out and tapped the Western market with films such as Ong Bak: The Thai Warrior and The Protector comes his newest film. After a fallout with fellow actor Tony Jaa over disputes over directing Ong Bak 2, he decided to raise a new Muay Thai machine. With this he provides an even greater twist; it's a girl.

A member of the Yakuza elopes with a traitor and creates an autistic offspring. Like most autistic children, this one is a tad bit special. Upon growing up, she finds an uncanny love in three things; her mommy, chocolate, and martial arts films. While watching these films, her brain develops and allows her to memorize every single move, turning her into an unstoppable killing machine. Bone-crunching scene after bone-crunching scene, our female star crushes every opponent. Her skills are unmatched in terms of combat. Being a female, she is naturally nimble which allows her a lot more flexibility than predecessor Tony Jaa. Pinkaew doesn't scorn the idea of keeping his inspirations intact, which allows for some of the characters viewing pleasure to be The Protector and Ong Bak. So while she is jumping around she makes note to even imitate Bruce Lee's "Hwaa!" The choreography at hand, is simply stunning. Many injuries occurred on set and were even welded into the film which gives it that realist aspect. Like most of Pinkaew's films, the stories are ridiculous, over-the-top, and a bit flat. It seems that Pinkaew is doomed to suffer the same fate as many action directors; too much of a good thing bogged down with a deadpan storyline. In regards to the plot, it isn't the characters, it's the events. A mother who is stricken ill and whose autistic daughter goes to collect money from past debts only to get entangled in the mafia doesn't really scream autuer work. Pinkaew's older Thai films had a lot more spirit. Chocolate in a nutshell is The Protector adopting Mercury Rising. The autistic elements are driven well in the story line. The lead character is cute, dangerous, and extremely terrified of flies, which gives her this existing innocence. This film does lack the gold that Bruce Willis endows with each film that he graces his presence with. Chocolate is indeed as sweet as it sounds. I cannot recall action as vicious as this. Imagine watching a mentally handicapped female take on the entire Yakuza. That's Chocolate.

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SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

Tim Burton (2007)

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street is the best Tim Burton film to come out in over a decade. The film takes chances (which I though Tim Burton gave up on) and succeeds. I have always hated musicals. I doubt that there are five that I can even stomach. After viewing the Sound of Music in elementary school I was sick and disturbed for the rest of the day. Sweeney Todd isn't your typical musical. It has a beautifully woven combination of plot, sound, and picture. I recall a teacher I once had comparing the format of a musical to a porno. I would have to agree with that assertion. Sweeney Todd, on the other hand, is an exception to that rule.

Watching a throat slitting musical can be quite entertaining and especially hilarious. I am sure this was Tim Burton's intent. Releasing the film just in time for Christmas was another bold move by the Hollywood auteur. After watching David Cronenberg's Eastern Promises (which is somewhat of a masterpiece), I have been really getting into throat slitting barbershops visits. Throat slitting was the first thing I thought of as a child when I saw an elderly barber give a middle aged man a razor blade shave.

Johnny Depp's performance was excellent as Sweeney Todd. In the past couple years Depp has been taking on many cartoonish characters (I assume because he has children now). Although I hate many of these recent performances, with Sweeney Todd I have no complaints. Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman, and Timothy Spall also give interesting performances. Mr. Burton loves directing character (odd ones) driven films so you can guarantee an appropriately casted film.

Sweeney Todd also echoes back to Edward Scissorhands (another Johnny Depp/Tim Burton collaboration). Eddie Scissorhands was a gentle, passive, and childishly romantic. Sweeney Todd on the other hand is bloodthirsty, fed up, and revenge driven. Both characters made great barbers. I doubt Johnny Deep would make a good barber as reflected by his hairstyles in recent years. Tim Burton seems to have the same problem.

Tim Burton has always had the ability to make the sick hilarious. Pee-wee's Big Adventure, Beetlejuice, and Ed Wood are proof of this. Sweeney Todd takes it to a different level with blood gushing throats. But it doesn't end at the death of the individual. They also take a dive head first via trapdoor (hidden behind the barber stool) into a basement. There the bodies are grinded and cooked for meat potpie. Most people will watch Sweeney Todd and not realize the sick perversity of the film (and maybe the director?). Tim Burton has always had the ability to do that.

I know have faith that Tim Burton is still capable of producing good films. With a Frankenweenie stop-motion remake scheduled for the future, Burton

still hasn't given up on creating. Not bad for someone that I expect to have great deal of money. His licensed items at Hot Topic alone must bring him in million upon million of dollars every year. In twenty years from now, I hope Paul Ruebens and Tim Burton get together for one more collaboration.

-Ty E

FRANKENWEENIE
FRANKENWEENIE

Tim Burton (2012)

Tim Burton made his cinematic debut (his first project was the 6 minute animation Vincent) with the 30 minute short Frankenweenie. A film that takes the Frankenstein story and sets it in American suburbia. Disney fired Tim Burton after viewing Frankenweenie claiming the short was a “waste of company resources.” I guess they were offended by the subject matter. Quite odd when considering that Disney world now has honeymoons for gay couples. Everyone knows that kids love their dogs. Dogs are the super animal heroes and rescuers of small children. What a tragic experience it would be for a young child to witness the death of their canine companion (I wonder if this happened to Burton?). The only option for such a horrible event is the re-animation of K9 Sparky. The boy in Frankenweenie comes up with the idea during his science class where his teacher resurrects a frog via electricity. Tim Burton has the mind of a gothic child. Only he would come up with the idea of a cute and cuddly electric zombie dog. Like all dog films, Frankendog Sparky saves his child human companion. This act of bravery (filmed on a Plan 9 From Outerspace style set) creates acceptance in the once repulsed neighbors of the boy and his undead dog. Tim Burton has always had a sweet spot for “dark” outsiders. Ironically, Tim Burton has signed a deal with Disney to direct a feature length 3D stop-motion animation remake of Frankenweenie. I guess Disney has no problem with the film when they know they can cash in on it. Tim Burton’s most recent animation film Corpse Bride didn’t live up to my expectations of the Hot Topic icon director. Hopefully the animated remake of Frankenweenie will even be comparable to Burton’s brain-child A Nightmare Before Christmas.

-Ty E

RIVER'S EDGE

Tim Hunter (1986) *River's Edge* is to me, many things. It is the proper telling of a story similar to *Bully* (Larry Clark's horrible film), only not flaccid and bare boned. It is a story of the 80's style of life, seen through the group of rockers and druggies. Age is clearly not an issue here. Keanu Reeves (In his second best performance) plays Matt, a lone wolf slacker who enjoys smoking dope and screaming at his step dad. Matt is only one of a close-knit group of ragtag friends that spend their time doing the same things. John is an overweight asshole who tells his friends he killed his girlfriend. They don't believe him, who would? Meeting up with Layne, (Crispin Glover in a life changing performance) they decide to see if he is all talk. After grabbing a group of friends to go see the body, everyone is shocked to find out he was serious. He strangled her to death for talking bad about his mom. I will make a note on this scene. It is actually pretty disturbing in it's own right for featuring what might be the most realistic dead body without a huge budget or using the real thing. Eyes are filmed over and nails long and dirty. Truly a saddening view. Layne thinks she deserved it. Layne is obviously too naive in his nature to understand the situation at hand. He wants to hide the body, but John has no interest in hiding from the police. So Layne does the only thing one man could do in this situation, hide John with the local nut. Meet Feck. Dennis Hopper plays a pothead ex-murderer who is in love with a blowup doll named Ellie. He is also missing his left leg. Not only does the set-up promise one of the more quirkiest and insane characters but it actually builds a lot to the film. We learn motives behind both killers and the difference between love and loss and the methods of killing. The film *River's Edge* was the only good thing to come out of Tim Hunter's career. He seemed to have dropped out of film early and has directed episodes for the most popular shows around. Such as *Twin Peaks*, *House*, *C.S.I.*, and *Law & Order*. It's easy to note his detective work behind the camera on these shows. The real star material here is Dennis Hopper and Crispin Glover. They deliver a mean son-of-a-bitch acting job. First we have Hopper, who is a delusional man that suffers every day of his life in what appears to be a loose connection to his character in *Easy Rider*. I frown upon people who still think his role in *Blue Velvet* is his finest. They obviously have not seen this film. Then we have Crispin Glover, who might be the most aggressive actor ever filmed. His body language fits perfectly with his moods. His screams and whines echo long after the movie is over and he has the most screen time. *River's Edge* is the perfect teen drama. It takes the true story and amplifies it with characters probably more interesting than the actual case. Not too deep for the average viewer but just enough to satisfy the obscure cinephile."Check's in the mail"

-Maq

KILLER: A JOURNAL OF MURDER
KILLER: A JOURNAL OF MURDER

Tim Metcalfe (1996)

Although I have known about serial killer Carl Panzram for many years now, I did not learn about his story until I read Moors killer Ian Brady's excellent work of serial killer psychoanalysis *The Gates of Janus* about a year ago. In the book, Brady discusses how after running away from at age 14, Panzram was gang raped by a group of hobos. Obviously marked by the event, Panzram would eventually go on to admit that he sodomized over 1,000 men and killed over 20. After being arrested for burglary in Washington D.C., and voluntarily admitting he had killed two boys, Panzram was finally incarcerated for the last time. In prison, German-American Panzram developed a close friendship with pacifistic Jewish-American prison guard Henry Lesser, who eventually convinced the unremorseful killer to write his memoirs. In the film *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, the relationship between Panzram and Lesser is dramatically portrayed in a most tasteful manner. James Wood, who always seems to give his greatest performances while playing deranged criminals, is excellent as Panzram. With *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, director Tim Metcalfe was able to assemble a cultivated serial killer bio-pic, which is certainly no small accomplishment. Metcalfe is probably best known for writing the story for *Revenge of the Nerds*. In *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, Metcalfe shows that out of all the people that tried to knock some sense into Carl Panzram, the most unlikely a person - a Jewish socialist nerd - was able to somewhat reach him.

As dramatized in *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, Carl Panzram openly admitted he would kill any man that bothered him in prison. After brutally beating to death prison foreman Robert Warnke in the prison laundry room, Panzram finally fulfilled his wish of being sentenced to death via hanging. Showing he would not allow his much desired opportunity of dying stoically go to waste, Panzram threatened to kill human rights advocates that attempted to spare his life. Despite his savage behavior, Panzram was a fairly intelligent and well-read man who could be described as the "Nietzsche of serial killers." In fact, as shown in *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, German-American sage journalist H.L. Mencken, himself a student of Nietzsche, felt Carl Panzram's autobiography was a work of brilliance, despite concluding that no publishing company would have the gall to publish such a sadistically subversive work. If one is to learn anything from *Killer: A Journal of Murder*, it is that once an individual is "marked" by a certain event in their life, no amount of "rehabilitation" is going correct such a life changing taint. Once Panzram was victimized in a traumatic psyche-destroying fashion, his future fate as one of America's most brutal criminals was sealed.

Despite being far from a masterpiece, *Killer: A Journal of Murder* is one of few top notch serial killer films worthy of recognition. After all, even when a film

director attempts to portray a serial killer in a serious manner, most of these films end up being unintentionally hilarious exercises in celluloid bungling. *Killer: A Journal of Murder* is not a work of comedy, but one of those very rare serial killer films that manages to keep the viewer on the edge of their seat from beginning to the neck-snapping end. Despite being two men from different species, Panzram (Woods) and Henry Lesser (Robert Sean Leonard) have an undeniable chemistry in the film that will engage even the most uninterested of viewers. Through tragedy, Panzram was able to tap into his atavistic instincts and develop the lust for blood that brought infamy to his beserker ancestors. Through the pacifistic and nonthreatening personality of Henry Lesser, Panzram was able to reveal what was left of his pre-sadist humanity. If you hate Hollywood farces like *Twins* (1988), yet desire seeing a serious film containing the most unconventional of odd couples, *Killer: A Journal of Murder* will provide you with a delectable, yet ultimately deranged experience.

-Ty E

2001 MANIACS
2001 MANIACS

Tim Sullivan (2005) 2001 Maniacs is much better than Herschell Gordon Lewis' 2000 Maniacs. This was no surprise to me as I thought 2000 Maniacs was complete trash (not even good trash). Lewis no doubt has a serious phobia of the south. 2001 Maniacs director Tim Sullivan at least has some lowbrow talent (as proven with 2001 Maniacs). It is most likely that Lewis' eyes become dilated with dollar bill signs when he keep up with the idea to do cheap gore. Blood Feast is still a classic regardless of its gimmick.

Nothing would please me more than a bunch of college students being murdered by the ghosts of Civil War Southerners. Unfortunately for them they would no long be able to play beer pong, poker, or watch football (which they have never played in their entire lives). For them, the South threatens their hedonistic obsessions. The film features a variety of big natural breasted Southern women that trap the university clowns into a trance of lust. These Southern women don't need to buy their sexual goods. The most slutty of the Southern madams even has an extra pair of teeth to prevent the act of sodomy. The old South sticks to it's conservative roots. Camcorder auteur Giuseppe Andrews exuberates Charm with a twang in 2001 Maniacs. Andrews always delivers the goods. Robert England sports a "stars and bars" eye patch like no other. England's 2001 Maniacs charismatic performance is even comparable to his role as Freddy Krueger in the Nightmare on Elm Street films. To be honest, most of the performances by the Southerners are excellent. I can't say that about the northerners. Their deaths put a genuine smile on my face. Eli Roth makes a appearance (I hate when he does that) in 2001 maniacs as a very silly armadillo throwing fellow. I would have to say that 2001 Maniacs is better than both Hostel 1 and 2. Roth seems to take himself seriously as a director. I believe that Tim Sullivan was just glad he could make a film that he and other people could enjoy.

-Ty E

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SINNER

Timothy Carey (1962)

Blasphemy in cinema has a severe consequence most times. Recent films like *The Golden Compass* or even semi-newer films as *Bruce Almighty*. It can kill a film, or only strengthen its status and reputation. The effect is a unpredictable wild card that is a force to be reckoned with. Timothy Carey's shoe-string budget personal masterpiece "The World's Greatest Sinner" is the most blasphemous film i have ever seen. The plot follows an everyman insurance salesman who gets bored of the game and decides he wants to do something new with his life. Accompanied with Satan dubbing over a snake as the narrator, Hilliard goes from being in a band, getting into politics, and eventually giving himself and everybody as their own god. The cult hysteria is shown in full force as a harsh reminder of an era when mankind was so gullible as to follow another man, ruining their lives in the process. It's a very weird experience to hear Carey being referred to as "God". Even the stitched insignia of God on his sleeve is every bit insane as it sounds. Carey slanders and destroys the golden rule of life and the need to pray. Then he preaches that man is superhuman and god is nonexistent. He seems like a mad dictator. Seeing God running for president has never seemed so ominous. "Don't worry God, We will win by a landslide!" The idea of family is gone, and the basic morales are annihilated. Child molestation is allowed for a god. Carey even goes as far as to make out with an old woman. This film shows that there is a market for every Radical and every thought. People are spineless beings that conform when confronted with fear. "You must understand God, you must make the people know that you are not an atheist" The image of social commentary is present. The fact that he first goes to a concert and sees the crowd go wild for these "rebel" figures is as much proof as we need to realize that these figures in media have more power than politicians themselves. Robert Johnson did it better than the rest though. It's hard to be in the shadow of the original blasphemous musician. The film has a classic score featuring a very young Frank Zappa. Pre-Mothers of Invention, mind you. Timothy Carey is a classic actor who appeared in Kubrick's *The Killing*. His stare, voice, and demeanor is enough to electrify the audience despite the films wear & tear. He is the ultimate classic independent director. He backed out of many big opportunities to finish this film. Just a fictitious document of how we as humans, rely on some belief. *The World's Greatest Sinner* is a good film beside the controversy, which is more than many films can say. Not easy to watch at first, you must get used to the horrible editing and respect the film for what it is. Man becomes a monster in the span of weeks. See this film. It is worth the cult following. It is a realistic tale which seems like a hardcore re-envisioning of *The Devil & Daniel Webster*. In four words, "One of a kind" Special Thanks to Pete Cann for this film.

-Maq

WANTED
WANTED

Timur Bekmambetov* (2008)

When I think of action films, the phrases "Fuck the rules" and "Yippie Ki Yay, Motherfucker!" come to mind. Now not every film can be Die Hard, Hell, there will never be one as good as the original, but Wanted is a valiant effort from a director who understands exactly what men want in film; Women, guns, stunts, and amazing special effects. Wanted would best be described as a masturbatory shoot-em-up, only not as horrible as Shoot Em' Up. Wanted succeeded where Clive Owen's film failed miserably. Wanted is the definition of nihilism on screen and presents itself as The Matrix meets Fight Club. This is a most over-used comparison, but it happens to be the best. Geek chic meets bullet-time assassin hellbent on revenge. That's what this film mainly is; a revenge film. Wanted is the kind of film where you walk into the theater expecting fancy gun play and gratuitous expletives, and oh boy, does it deliver! James McAvoy plays a loser cubicle jockey who suffers from bad anxiety attacks. After a shoot out in a general store/pharmacy, he is recruited under a fraternity of assassins led by the esteemed Sloan (Morgan Freeman) to track down and kill his fathers murderer. Based on a controversial graphic novel, this is but a loose adaption. Had it been faithful, there would be an A-list celebrity being brutally raped. If only. Wanted is a film that is extremely successful due to it's enormous star appeal. Not too long ago, my mother expressed her wishes to see this film, to which I exclaimed "NO!" My mother is the type that resents violence, and thanks to the wise casting choice of Morgan Freeman, I guess she assumes it's a normal film that has morals. Could she be any more wrong? An action lovers wet dream; Wanted features insane stunts that could not possibly be considered due to the law of physics, although Sloan does have a point challenging the straight path to a bullet just as Sam Neill's character challenged the quickest way to get to a destination (Folding space/time) in Event Horizon. Wesley Gibson (McAvoy) starts off in the film as an embarrassment to humanity, then later morphs into a beautiful butterfly balanced with banging ballistics. I'm not kidding. This man goes bat shit insane resulting in one of the most over-the-top rampages I've seen since Rambo. If you're new to extreme nihilism, repeat "Fuck the world" before you see this film and prepare for a balls-to-the-wall action experience of which likes I've rarely seen. Don't expect calculated shots or artistic scenery in this summer blockbuster. This is the first in a trilogy from the director of the Russian smash series Night/Day/Dusk Watch. Be warned. I needed a change of underwear after this film.

-mAQ

THE HOWL

Tinto Brass (1968)

Before becoming one of the most internationally renowned celluloid smut-peddlers and arthouse-pornographers, and disastrously getting involved with working with poor novelist Gore Vidal and Penthouse magazine publisher Bob Guccione on the ultimately botched Italo-American erotic epic *Caligula* (1979) starring Malcolm McDowell, Guido auteur Tinto Brass (Salon Kitty, *Senso* '45), not unlike many European filmmakers of his 'bobo' (aka bourgeois bohemian) generation, made exceedingly experimental and revolutionary socio-politically-charged cinematic works, with *L'urlo* (1968) aka *The Howl* being arguably his most aesthetically ambitious and accomplished, if not innately incoherent, cinematic work to date. A work that gave Brass the distinguished honor of being nominated for the 'Berlin Golden Bear' award at the 1970 German International Film Festival (aka 'Berlinale'), *The Howl* is an exceedingly erratic and explosive celluloid bomb of the aesthetically terroristic sort that iconoclastically assaults everything that old school Hollywood stands for. Indeed, like fellow goombah artsploitation filmmakers like Alberto Cavallone with *Quickly, spari e baci a colazione* (1971), Salvatore Samperi with *Cuore di mamma* (1969) aka *Mother's Heart*, Franco Brocani with *Necropolis* (1970), and Liliana Cavani with *The Year of the Cannibals* (1970) aka *I cannibali*, Tinto Brass demonstrated with *The Howl* his solidarity with the dope-addled far-left student movement of the late-1960s and the anti-establishment spirit of his decidedly degenerate post-nationalist zeitgeist. Starring European arthouse counter-culture superstar Tina Aumont (Modesty Blaise, Fellini's *Casanova*)—the proud progeny of French Jewish actor Jean-Pierre Aumont (*The Cross of Lorraine*, *Castle Keep*) and Dominican-born Hollywood diva Maria 'The Queen of Technicolor' Montez (*Arabian Nights*, *Cobra Woman*)—in the role of a bride-to-be who decides to bail out on her wedding with a wayward revolutionary and go on an orgasmic psychedelic odyssey of no-return ostensibly involving the mind, body, and soul, *The Howl* is the sort of unwaveringly surreal quasi-metaphysical black comedy that could have only been sired in early-1970s Italy. Politically and morally speaking, *The Howl* is unequivocally one of the most ridiculously retarded and patently preposterous celluloid works I have ever had the bittersweet opportunity of seeing, but aesthetically speaking, it is an insanely idiosyncratic celluloid work that deserves to be compared with the films of Federico Fellini, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Luis Buñuel, Fernando Arrabal, Dušan Makavejev, and Vera Chytilová, yet still manages to stand on its own as a singular, if not oftentimes pretentious and pompous, piece of culturally corrosive and aesthetically explosive celluloid TNT. Produced by Dino De Laurentiis (*The Serpent's Egg*, *Blue Velvet*), *The Howl* was actually the bizarre result of director Brass—a proud member of the so-called 'Italian Radicals' aka 'Radicali Italiani' political party—convincing the

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producer to produce a film based as a political manifesto as opposed to a conventional screenplay. Declaring, "The time has come to blow up the screen!" Brass ultimately created a curiously creamy counter-culture wetdream featuring hippies "fucking the muck" (aka copulating with dirt), wind-up toy fascist dictators, sexually impotent anti-war activists (one lady states she does not have to care about the war since she cannot achieve an orgasm), strikingly gorgeous quasi-gothic runaway brides, dirty and literally tree-hugging hippie cannibals, and other gloriously grotesque things that prove that at one point in his early film-making career, the Italian filmmaker had the potential to be a 'Guido Christoph Schlingensief' of sorts.

Proto-gothic gal Anita Annigoni (Tina Aumont) has been arrested for 'revolutionary' activity in the past and her corporate executive boyfriend Berto (Nino Segurini) knows all about it because she detailed to him at his request how she was gang-raped by the cops, which is depicted in Warhol-esque black-and-white newsreel-like flashback scenes. Anita's tragic story about how she was porked by a pernicious pack of pigs arouses Berto so much that he proposes marriage to her, which she reluctantly accepts. Starting where Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* (1967) left off, Anita realizes her mistake during the wedding ceremony and decides to leave her hubby-to-be at the altar and run-off with a degenerate counter-culture type named Coso (Gigi Proietti), who sports classic jail stripes and describes himself as, "a heavenly dog." Anita and Coso hitch a ride with the sort of banal bourgeois couple that the runaway bride would have become part of had she married Berto, but the two strange strangers are soon kicked out of the car due to their erratic and scatological behavior. After taking a double-decker bus into a sort of surrealist Sodom and Gomorrah, the two new non-lovers, who took advantage of the bumpy bus ride by boning on the way, temporarily take residence in a semen-themed hotel from hedonistic hell where every room has its own preternatural sex fetish theme. Assumedly parodying the ancient period pieces of P.P. Pasolini (indeed, I doubt it is a coincidence that Berto is an executive at a company called 'P.P.P.'), Anita and Coso later get all nice and cozy with some nudist cannibals in love in a 'family tree' (in a possibly a Marxist allegory against racial purity and nationalism?!) In a scene with segments intercut from Roberto Rossellini's *Paisan* (1946), the two social renegades also go to a Jodorowsky-esque village where people are ritualistically murdered and a would-be-wanton woman complains, "Why should I give a damn about the war, if I continue to have difficulty reaching the climax?," as if her out-of-order pussy is the most important thing in the world. Anita and Coso also enter a dark theater stage where a toy Uncle Adolf dressed like Napoleon goes on an egomaniacal rant in a scene where absurdist images of Hitler and Mussolini are intercut with that of a monkey. During what is undoubtedly her most iconic commie revolutionary impersonation in a scene that anticipates the infamous bank robbery photo of fallen heiress Patty Hearst, Anita and her comrade Coso kill toy Hitler

with a storm of neo-bolshevik bullets. While taking a pilgrimage in a scenic graveyard, Coso is approached by a bitter Negro who matter-of-factly states, "When shit is worth something, negroes will be born without assholes!" as if he has seen one-too-many Robert Downey Sr. flicks. In the end, Anita dies in a car wreck after driving around carelessly in a sports car while sporting her bridal dress, with her newly cold-corpse being devoured by flames and an off-screen narrator tragicomedically declaring, "A beautiful girl, intelligent but nuts, had a terrible ending. I knew it, poor girl. Terrible ending...better than I expected. Also, it's not all her fault. We live in an age of syncretism. Whose fault is it? Everyone's and no one's. In fact, A is to B as B is to me. Me is to C as C is to believe. Is it clear? See is to believe. See is to believe. Nice. Very nice. Nice. Nice, nice, nice. In any case, nice."

A merry yet morbid celluloid Magical Mystery Tour that seems like it was directed by a spastic and acutely schizophrenic Trotskyite with an actual sense of humor but also just as much pretense, *The Howl* not only makes for an excellent case against hallucinogenic drug use and loony left-wing politics, but also demonstrates that a serious celluloid artist once lurked inside cinematic titillator Tinto Brass. Rather unfortunately, a decidedly deluded utopian dreamer of the far-left sort also lurked in Brass as reflected in the audio commentary given by the director for the Cult Epics dvd release of *The Howl* where he pathetically namedrops such slave-morality-loving revolutionaries as Rousseau and Mao Tse-tung. On top of that, *The Howling* derives its name from Judaic pederast Allen Ginsberg's obscenely retarded 1956 poem of the same name. Like Ginsberg's putrid poetry, *The Howl* would ultimately land Brass in trouble with the law due to obscenity, thus resulting in a four-year ban of the film, as well as a 2-minute segment from the sperm hotel scene being excised from the work. With all the characters, including the beautiful yet mostly mute Tina Aumont, being nothing more than mere ciphers used by Brass to spread the incendiary ideas of his megalomaniac movie manifesto, *The Howl* ultimately takes the idea of the cinematic 'auteur' to pseudo-messianic extremes as if the filmmaker was play-acting at being a communist dictator, so it is only all the more ironic that he would find his niche in the usually undignified realm of high-class pornography. While not even a minor masterpiece, *The Howl* is certainly a hysterically humorous celluloid treat for the more adventurous cinephile. Apparently, Brass was asked to cinematically adapt *A Clockwork Orange* but turned it down to direct *The Howl* (!), which is just one more reason to respect the existence of the film as it would have been nothing short of a cinematic tragedy had Kubrick never got the chance to adapt Burgess' novel. Featuring great one-liners like, "what a wonderful smell of smegma," "Latin is simply manipulative action of the class system," "contemplation is a bourgeois attitude," "fucking the muck, fucking the muck," "long live the married couple," and "Your order is the order of logic. And logic is always false like morale, coherence," *The Howl* also makes

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for a great unintentional satire of the truly 'reactionary' and regressive (and now thankfully retrograde) phenomenon that is far-left idealism.

-Ty E

nEROSUBIANCO

Tinto Brass (1969)

After recently re-watching and reviewing Italian auteur-pornographer Tinto Brass' avant-garde counter-culture flick *L'urlo* (1968) aka *The Howl*, I felt it was about time to dig deeper into more of the filmmaker's pre-porn experimental works, with the *Nerosubianco* (1969) aka *nEROSubianco* aka *Attraction* aka *The Artful Penetration of Barbara* aka *Black on White* aka *Barbara the Yes Girl* being the most provocative, if not thematically and aesthetically putrid, choice. Presented by Jewish American arthouse pornographer Radley Metzger aka Henry Paris (Camille 2000, *The Opening of Mišty Beethoven*) via his distribution company Audubon Films under the less than charming title *Black and White* (which was later changed to the suavely sleazy title of *The Artful Penetration of Barbara*), *Nerosubianco*—a work produced by Dino De Laurentiis (Dune, Hannibal) that was not surprisingly almost universally panned by critics, thereupon falling into relative obscurity fairly fast after its release—is a sort of avant-garde agitprop flick that is part 'collage film', part musical, part incoherent quasi-commie celluloid manifesto, part surrealist/avant-garde cinema tribute (with references to everyone from Luis Buñuel to Federico Fellini to Jean-Luc Godard) and all counter-culture puffery that manages to reconcile the works and film theories of Sergei Eisenstein with the spastic surrealism of the Panic movement and Fernando Arrabal and the carnal celluloid cheese of the sexploitation subgenre. A thematic and aesthetic heterosexual equivalent to great Guido auteur Alberto Cavallone's hit miscegenation-themed lesbo artsploitation flick *Le salamandre* (1969), *Nerosubianco* is proudly 'progressively' degenerate counter-culture crud about a gorgeous goombah gal who cruises the streets of Swinging London while her husband goes sightseeing elsewhere, only to become infatuated with a lone American Negro. Although not very popular with the general public upon its official release, *Nerosubianco* was a big enough hit when it premiered at the 1968 Cannes Film Festival that it inspired some of the big wigs at Paramount Pictures to fly auteur Brass all the way to Hollywood to discuss with him adapting Anthony Burgess' dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Of course, it would ultimately be Stanley Kubrick (and, well, Andy Warhol also previously directed a strange static version of the novella in 1965 under the name *Vinyl*) who directed *A Clockwork Orange* and Brass would ultimately enter the less than dignified realm of erotica (and later working with Malcolm 'Alex DeLarge' McDowell on the epic erotic celluloid abortion *Caligula* (1979)), but at least with *Nerosubianco* he demonstrated that at some point in his somewhat uneven filmmaking career that he was a semi-serious artist. Rather unfortunately, the film also proves that Brass is a cultural and spiritual cuckold who gets off to the idea of black brothas banging his beauteous countrywomen.

Set to twelve mostly retrograde quasi-psychedelic tunes by the British rock

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band Freedom (a group made up of members of Procol Harum), Italian broad Barbara (Anita Sanders, who got her big break in acting appearing in Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965) in a small uncredited role) walks aimlessly yet contemplatively around London whilst her wanker four-eyed husband Paolo (Nino Segurini) plays by himself elsewhere. Ultimately, Barbara's urban journey in for-*once-sunny* London begins becoming interesting when she catches the sight of a yank Negro (Terry Brown, who is probably best known for his role in Jack Hill's blaxploitation *Foxy Brown* (1974)). Indeed, Barbara has an acute case of jungle fever, but she has not been 'penetrated' hard enough by the perverse propaganda of counter-culture cultural cuckolds to give into dipping into the mud. Instead, Barbara engages in a seemingly schizophrenic psychodrama of the particularly pathological sort revolving around anti-war, anti-fascist, and anti-bourgeois subjects that always have some sort of pseudo-Freudian angle. While the anti-bourgeois Barbara is at a lavish bourgeois spa, she thinks to herself, "Who knows why people who are afraid of pubic hair are the same people who hate Negroes, Jews, homosexuals, beatniks, and hippies." Little does Barbara realize that in only a couple decades, the same homo, heeb, and dirty hippie lovers that run the porn industry will also become afraid of a full healthy bush of genital hair. While in a beauty salon, Barbara sees all the women getting their hair done turn into large goofy cows, thus demonstrating the bourgeois babes are nothing more than beautified bovines with a lot of money to waste on nothing (or something). Later in the day, Barbara is approached by a little commie Chinaboy who gives her a couple of Mao's red manifestos (which, as Barbara discovers after opening the book, is really the English translation of commie frog filmmaker's Jean-Luc Godard's script of *La Chinoise*) and the black man returns the favor for her by giving the East Asian pinko a copy of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, thus demonstrating his solidarity with dominating cracker bitches and the black power movement.

Throughout the day, Barbara sees a number of bizarre things like a father throwing his infant out the window and said infant's mother subsequently committing suicide as a result of her homicidal hubby's insane act of infanticide. In a scene that seems like a poor man's take on a Carmelo Bene film, a dorky vampire priest appears with his buddy the Grim Reaper and the Mummy and preposterously declares, "Encourage people to make love because it's dangerous, but it's not forbidden, even though more dangerous than encouraging them to make war, so from this moment dangerous and forbidden pictures of love scenes will be substituted by pictures dangerous but not forbidden of war scenes," while an Eisenstein-esque collage (aka "pornography of violence") featuring stock-footage from various 'fascistic' wars appears to inanely drive home Brass' hippie philistine point. In another one of the countless random rants featured in the film, Barbara narrates how sexual violence is big in the USA, stating, "U.S. incidents of sexually related torture are reported in the cases of women. The torturers shove

as many fingers as possible or a foreign object into the vagina and twist and tear brutally. This is also done with the anus. A tube is inserted into the anus and warm water driven into the prisoner under very high pressure. In the case of men, beatings on the genitals with long thin sandbags have frequently been reported. One trade unionist was beaten so much that a testicle was driven up in his body." Meanwhile, the American Negro sinisterly laughs at an image of a white woman's clean shaven pussy. Brass reveals the reason for her interest in the jigaboo gentleman when she complains regarding her hubby Paolo's apparently contrived coital and puritanical tactics, "He always wants silent, darkness, mystery...but what mystery? That's the whole trick...they invent mystery where there isn't any. This is their great discovery; keep everything hidden, keep everyone in the dark until mystery breeds mystery and fear." Luckily, black never truly gets on white as Barbara is far too bourgeois to allow herself to be defiled by an American Negro (though surreal dream images of such a scenario briefly appear), so the black buck assumedly goes home with blue balls and an even greater affinity for brother Malcolm.

Despite featuring miscegenation-championing images and emasculating songs lyrics like, "Free your women, let them do...anything and everything they want to do" featured throughout the film, Nerosubianco thankfully never seals the dirty dago deal in terms depicting explicit jungle fever between a Guido gal and a black brother, though the film whimsically wallows in foreplay regarding such sad sentiments. Undoubtedly, compared to auteur Tinto Brass' subsequent avant-garde agitprop piece *L'urlo* (1968) aka *The Howl*—which although similarly playful, is a much more grim and grotesque work featuring next to nil hippie happy-go-lucky bullshit—Nerosubianco is a somewhat more lighthearted work that 'teases' in a similar type fashion to the filmmaker's later erotic works. Undoubtedly, with its curious combo of big tits and asses with equally redundant holocaust footage, not to mention its flagrant fetishization of interracial sex and various other forms of modernist sexual debauchery, Nerosubianco is now ironically what the mainstream establishment is all about. Indeed, nowadays even a music video featuring sickly slag Miley Cyrus seems more edgy than Brass' film, but then again the only intrinsic value Nerosubianco has today is as a piece of novelty celluloid waywardness created during a terribly delusional zeitgeist when anything seemed possible, even a multicultural utopia orgy where impotent hippie homos and suavely dressed American negroes are the foremost liberators of the world. Advertised with the it's-too-retarded-to-be-true tagline, "a motion picture for the stoned age" when it was released in America by Radley Metzger under the rather unfortunate Toback-esque title *Black on White*, Nerosubianco also acts as a sort of intriguing historical celluloid artifact that demonstrates just how wrong counter-culture types were about their 'progressive' theories and how they, and only they, could and would 'liberate' society from injustice, poverty, racism, and self-control. Of course, with the birth of millions upon millions of

NEROSUBIANCO

bastard mulatto babies and various other mixed miscegenated beings, the apocalyptic arrival of AIDS, the total selling out of the hippie generation, and the virtual total death of the Italian film industry since the film's release, Nerosubianco now seems as eclectically naïve as films come, even putting the more fanatical of Eisner era Disney films to shame, but that is one of the things that makes the film so surprisingly entertaining. Indeed, a rare film that namedrops Martin Luther King, Che Guevara, black power, and Karl Marx that manages not to totally suck, Nerosubianco, with Brass' two other frenzied free-association films from around the same time *Deadly Sweet* (1967) aka *Col cuore in gola* and *The Howl*, is a superlatively spastic celluloid pop-art piece that really reminds the viewer how screwed up the brains of the Baby Boomer generation were.

-Ty E

SALON KITTY

Tinto Brass (1976)

Fitting somewhere inexplicably between big budget low-camp, superlatively salacious satire of Euro-sleaze arthouse flicks like Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) aka *La caduta degli dei*, Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* aka *Il Portiere di notte* (1974), and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) aka *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma*, a controversial cinematic uncovering of curious events regarding the history of the Third Reich, and blockbuster pornography, *Salon Kitty* (1976) aka *Madame Kitty* directed by Italian maestro auteur of epic X-rated films, Tinto Brass (*Caligula*, *The Voyeur*), managed to homogenize sex, style, and the secret and sordid sins of the *Schutzstaffel* in a morbid yet merry manner that has never been seen before, nor since. Bringing cinematic extravagance to National Socialist excess, *Salon Kitty* is indubitably one of the most subversive and sardonic films ever made as a rare work that would have infuriated Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels just as much as it would the Shoah business saint Steven Spielberg in its frantically farcical, Felliniesque playfulness and decided disregard for sensitivity for certain terribly taboo topics of twentieth century history, thereupon making folly not only of fascism but also its victims. Directed by a self-proclaimed anarchist who once stated, "I am always on the side of the losers," and a rebel of the cinematically risqué sort whose country belonged to the Axis powers during the Second World War, *Salon Kitty* is a succulently stylized piece of subversive cinema that is just as much of a satire of humanity as a whole as it is of Adolf and his infamous gang. Admittedly, a film I did not much care for upon my initial viewing a decade or so ago, *Salon Kitty* has grown on me over the years in a manner similar to unhealthy junk food in that the more and more I indulge in it, the less I care about its deleterious effects on my health. Of course, featuring blatant homages to master works of cinema, including an appearance by Aldo Valletti, who played the scatological president in Pasolini's *Salò*, as a penis-dart throwing brothel perv, *Salon Kitty* is certainly a so-called Nazisploitation with preternatural class and sass, unlike kosher concentration camp SSkin flicks like *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1975) produced by a funny filmic flesh-peddler named David F. Friedman (who was credited in the film under the pseudonym 'Herman Traeger' for obvious reasons). At its worst, *Salon Kitty* is the sort of film that might have influenced Italian Jew Theodor Adorno to rethink his deluded dictum, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," because there are few things more poetic and cultivated than a scene featuring a leather-clad Helmut Berger during a magic moment of magnificent megalomania as a lunatic libertine of Uncle Adolf's 12-year-old millennial Third Reich.

Based on Peter Norden's novel of the same name, which was based on a real-life high-class Berlin brothel run by the SD (the intelligence agency of the SS

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and the Nazi Party) for espionage purposes that was bugged with hidden microphones to listen on the secrets of prominent members of the military and foreign diplomats while they patronized prostitutes, *Salon Kitty* only presents fantastic fragments of truth that are totally overwhelmed by Brass' brazen brand of fetishism of fascism. Indeed, while Joseph Goebbels was apparently keen on seeing lecherous lesbians in action and SS commander Sepp Dietrich proved he was just as good at commanding streetwalkers as he was at SS men due to his involvement in twenty girl orgies, *Salon Kitty* – with its images of blonde beastesses bedding deformed midgets, bloody butcher shop orgies, heated homoerotic SS sauna scenarios, eccentric eroticizing of dead hookers and Negroes, and inclusion of hysterical homo Helmut Berger as a fetishistic whorehouse Führer – is far too tongue-in-cunt to be taken too literally. Like in the stranger than fiction real-life story regarding Hitler's harem of harlots, a certain business woman named Madame Kitty (played by Ingmar Bergman diva Ingrid Thulin of *Wild Strawberries* and *Cries and Whispers* fame) employs a number of prostitutes to pleasure a number of important men, but, unlike the real "Kitty Schmidt" who actively worked with the Nazis, she does not realize that the Gestapo is listening in on her high-profile clientele's incriminating secrets. Ordered to work for the greater good of National Socialism or face financial disgrace, Madame Kitty, to her decided disliking, has her business model and inventory revamped by a certain Mr. Wallenberg of the prestigious SS. Bored with the new Nordic girls and their stoicism and lack of sass forced onto her by the Third Reich, Ms. Kitty gives them delightful makeovers, especially in between their legs. Of course, Helmut Wallenberg (played by a flagrantly fag-sciistic Helmut Berger) – named after real-life SD chief Walter Schellenberg who ran espionage at the brothel – is the one really running the show and he has no shame in trying out the voluptuous 100% Aryan meat merchandise, even if he considers them nothing more than wayward whores not even fit to shine his Gestapo boots. After making the mistake of enlisting a sassy seductress named Margherita (Teresa Ann Savoy), who falls in love with a treacherous German Luftwaffe officer named Hans Reiter (Albanian actor Bekim Fehmiu) who wants to defect to the enemy side due to his distaste for certain war crimes, Wallenberg's wild and wanton world of sadomasochistic SD decadence is set on a course of destruction. Facing a dastardly debacle of war torn romance not all that different from that of protagonist Willie of Fassbinder's Third Reich epic *Lili Marleen* (1981), Margherita must show her loyalty to the Third Reich as an informer while attempting to spare the life of her lover. When she finds out that her beloved renegade of the Reich Reiter has been executed for grand treason, Margherita begins her own war of murder and mayhem and enlists her cunning boss Madame Kitty to help, who is only too happy to oblige after learning her beloved brothel is bugged by brutal and sinister SS thugs. In a world where one cannot "piss in peace," only the lurid, lascivious, lunatic, libertine and, ultimately, lethal undercover lover activi-

ties of laced mutton Margherita and her malicious madame can provide a more cryptic cloak-and-dagger campaign against the highly secretive SS, at least in Tinto Brass' ridiculous realm of Iron Cross coochs and super stiff swastikas.

Of course, things come tumbling down for Helmut Wallenberg when a secret recording of a candid conversation between him and Margherita is delivered to members of the Gestapo with the incriminating statement, "My wife's grandfather was a Jew, not to mention the confession that in regard to many members of the Nazi leadership, including Himmler, he knows, "every single weakness of each of them...The type of cocaine they use...Their impotence, their perversions...the larcenies, the betrayals, their rivals...A variety of cowards!" Of course, Wallenberg – a man who recklessly and unwaveringly wallows in wantonness – dies in a compromised position fit for a SS twink, thus making for a climatic conclusion to *Salon Kitty*; a certainly sinful cinematic take on less known anecdotes from history. Of course, the most incriminating and insightful segment of the racy recording of Wallenberg's words, even more so than the revelation of his racially impure, 2nd degree Mischling (1/4 Jewish) wife, is his statement regarding the creation and social infrastructure of the Third Reich: "I don't give a shit about National Socialism...just as none of our leaders gives a damn. It's a means to an end...All of them have just one goal: power!...There are no ideals, no belief system!...You are the one who has illusions, Margherita...You, and millions of Germans like you who believed in us...It was a way to put all of you at our feet...You...a middle-class girl...at the mercy of a pimp...To get you and all that you represent, I've reduced you to my level...Just like all the others...Reduced to a world of gangsters...We turned everyone of you into a criminal...murderers, thieves, corrupted accomplices...and slaves." (A paraphrasing between both English-Italian versions of the film). Despite being a work of epically erotic and nonsensically naked National Socialism, one could argue that *Salon Kitty* features more hard truths regarding not only National Socialism and its leadership, but also any and every political system more or less, than Hollywood World War II epics like Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) ever could. Although no one wants to admit, if the United States of America were to turn into a neo-fascist empire with a race-based ideology, both pimp politicians, cuckold celebrities, and the prostituted populous would fawn for the new Führer in no time just as the ethno-masochistic white liberals and non-white minority groups swoon over Chairman Obama today.

Spawning an unofficial remake/rip-off almost immediately entitled *SS Girls* (1977) aka *Casa privata per le SS* directed by guido exploitation auteur Bruno Mattei (*SS Extermination Love Camp*, *Zombi 3*), as well as countless other forgettable and totally worthless and innately impotent Nazisploitation knock-offs, *Salon Kitty* is certainly the filmic Führer of seedy SS skin flicks featuring crude concentration camp campiness and radically risqué renderings of the Aryan race. An exceedingly aesthetically enthralling yet equally exploitative combination of

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salacious and satirical ingredients from the monumental authoritarian Nazi imagery of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1934), the double-screen celluloid pop-art of Morrissey/Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966), the cultivated cinematic camp of Visconti's *The Damned* (1969), the psychotic cynicism of *Castle Keep* (1969) directed by Sydney Pollack, the debauched disregard for historical reality of Werner Schroeter's *Der Bomberpilot* (1970), the aberrant and aesthetically antagonistic Aryan Aktionism of Otto Mühl and Kurt Kren's *SS and Star of David* (1970) and *The Lascivious Wotan* (1971) aka *Der geile Wotan* and the fiercely foul fetishism of fascism of Pasolini's *S&M swansong Salò* (1975), except with the superlatively singular and strikingly stylized sleazy of excess of Tinto Brass, *Salon Kitty* is certainly an epic enigma of film history created during a zany zeitgeist when an ostensibly healthy medium between celluloid art and trash still seemed possible and would even be taken to a greater extreme with the filmmaker's subsequent and ultimately abandoned work *Caligula* (1979). More campy and comical than Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940), more debauched than Visconti's *The Damned*, more provocative, penetrating, and scatological than Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), and more aesthetically stunning and historically sound than Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), *Salon Kitty* is a film that deserves to be seen at least once by every self-respecting cinephile as a reminder that cinematic sleaze can be both ravishing and refined, even when depicting one of the most taboo subjects of human history as more of a hot yet humorous whore show featuring nubile Nordic nudes as opposed to a hysterical and horrendous horror show comprised of sad, starving, swarthy, and stripped Semites.

-Ty E

SENSO

Tinto Brass (2002)

The female cuckold is certainly an underused figure in cinema, especially nowadays, which is probably partially the result of feminism and other sorts of social plagues that prop up women in a superficial way, but whatever the reason, it is certainly a damn shame. Out of all the films about cucks with cunts that I can think of, two classic melodramas especially stick out in my mind: William Wyler's *The Heiress* (1949) and Luchino Visconti's *Senso* (1954). While both films feature wealthy yet naïve women who become almost willing victims to Don Juan-like characters that were played by bisexual men, Wyler's film seems like classless counterfeit twaddle compared to the aesthetically aristocratic majesty of maestro Visconti's visually orgasmic celluloid opera. An aesthetically revolutionary work for Guido cinema that also marked the director's transition from commie-inspired neorealism to lavish and kaleidoscopic melodramas that make the great Technicolor of the Hollywood Golden Age seem like pumped up kitsch masquerading as high kultur, *Senso* was also Visconti's first color film, yet it looks like the product of a seasoned master of colors who approached cinema the way a Renaissance painter would a painting. Based on the decadent 1882 novella of the same name written by Camillo Boito—an Italian architect and engineer of half Polish extraction who also happened to be a talented art historian and novelist who dabbled with dark themes like incest and necrophilia—*Senso* is a salacious slice of high-melodrama about ill-restraint, lust, treachery, decadence, and deceit set around 1866 in Risorgimento-era Italy during the end of the Italian-Austrian war of unification about a proud yet sexually repressed middle-aged countess in an unhappy marriage with an old fart who falls for an Austrian suave and dapper young Austrian Officer of the manipulative man-whore sort. Featuring *Symphony No. 7* by Anton Bruckner as adapted by Nina Rota as a musical score and an antihero named in tribute to Gustav Mahler, the work also was one of the director's first films where he would flex his Teutonophilia (of course, both the composers mentioned were technically Austrian, but the film was made with a post-WWII context kept in mind, as Bruckner's music recalled the German occupation to viewers at the time the film was released). A work that somewhat attempts to 'rehabilitate' Italian nationalism, albeit from a revolutionary leftisti/'proto-Bolshevik' perspective, *Senso* makes an attempt at connecting the Italy of yesteryear to the present by using references to timeless feuds (i.e. Aryan occupation of Italy) and important historical locations (i.e. Salò, which is where the Nazis set up their puppet state in late 1943 after the Allies beat Mussolini's ass) that would certainly be pertinent to Guido filmgoers when the film was first released. Originally featuring an ending that was banned by censors in the Italian government due to its unflattering (yet probably realistic) depiction of Austrian soldiers as drunken horndogs and eager defilers of women, *Senso* is a

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masterful example of subtle and elegant cinematic subversion with a truly timeless aristocratic flare.

Opening at La Fenice opera house in Venice during a colorful performance of Giuseppe Verdi's 1853 opera *Il Trovatore* aka *The Troubadour* during on May 27, 1866, *Senso* immediately lets the viewer know they are about to watch a rare operatic melodrama that seems like an immaculate reproduction of the time it depicts. At the conclusion of the character Manrico's reciting aria *Di quella pira*, the opera is rudely interrupted by a brazen and belligerent bunch of Italian left-wing nationalists who not only want the Austrian occupiers out of their country, but also the Austrian troops out of their opera house, for no Aryan could possibly understand the great Goombah opera. The rowdy protest was organized by an aristocrat named Marquis Roberto Ussoni (Massimo Girotti), whose unhappily married countess cousin Livia Serpieri (played by Italian diva and real-life Baroness Alida Valli, who was of partial Austrian aristocratic ancestry) is also in attendance at the opera, though unlike her flamboyant relative, she hides her patriotism and merely watches her cousin do all the work while she charms Austrian military men. As a result of his subversive activity and insulting an Austrian officer named Franz Mahler (played by American actor Farley Granger, who is best known for his roles in the Hitchcock classics *Rope* and *Strangers on a Train*), Roberto is sentenced into exile, but that does stop his sexually repressed cousin from starting a secret lurid love affair with the Austrian soldier who got her beloved relative banished. An oddball and decidedly deracinated officer who openly admits to his lover that he couldn't care less about the military, has no sense of patriotism/nationalism, and is described by his comrades as a predictably unpredictable philanderer who oftentimes disappears for long periods of times with strange women, Franz is not exactly the most ideal mensch for a cheating woman to fall in love with, but Countess Livia—a woman married to a wealthy Italian collaborator who kisses the ass of the Germanic occupier—is no longer in control of her emotions or so she learns when it is already too late, thus making her the perfect prey of a scheming Aryan Don Juan, who is quite conscious of his narcissism and even openly admits to his mistress: "I never pass by a mirror without looking at myself."

While Livia initially manages to keep her hot and steamy love affair a deep dark secret by renting out an apartment on the other side of the city and meeting Franz there so they can make love, the Countess becomes crazed with heartbreak and jealousy when the Austrian officer fails to meet her at one of their planned sensual sessions and goes all around town looking for her sweetheart, even visiting his military barracks and making a fool of herself. With war breaking out, Livia is forced by her husband to flee to the country so as to avoid possible death, but before she leaves, the Countess is told by a maid that a man has come to see her, so she gets excited and goes to meet her. Livia's husband follows her, but the Countess does not care and confesses to her cuckolded hubby about her af-

fair. Unfortunately for Livia, the man that came to see her was not Franz but her cousin Roberto, who has come back from exile and is more politically active than ever. Believing that his wife was only attempting to hide her cousin, Livia's husband ignores his wife's confession of extramarital deceit and attempts to win Roberto's favor, as he knows that as an Italian collaborator, he may face a bitter backlash from his fellow Italians. Upon her bittersweet reunion with his cousin Roberto, Livia is told to temporarily hold a jewelry box full of money and jewels which will be used to supply weapons for partisans who intend to fight the Austrian occupiers. Of course, little does Roberto realize that his cousin has become a slave of love to the very man that was responsible for his exile.

Although Livia flees to the country, Franz somehow finds her whereabouts and pays her an unexpected visit that will ultimately determine her romantically tragic fate. Of course, Livia is exceedingly happy to see Franz, who is only there to ask for money from his "wealthy patron." A coward as well as a con man, Franz tells Livia about how certain Austrian soldiers can get exempted from battle by bribing corrupt doctors who certify that they are unfit for battle. Naturally, as a desperate woman who does not want her love to die on the battlefield, Livia gives Franz the money that Roberto told her to hold that was intended to fund the Italian partisans, who are destroyed as a direct result of her actions, as they are too ill-prepared to battle Aryan Übermensch. Indeed, Livia is guilty of a double betrayal, or as she confesses herself, "Now I was irrevocably tied to him. For his sake I'd forsaken and betrayed everything for which the others were so desperately fighting – those dreams for which they had struggled so long to make reality." While the Countess receives a letter from Franz saying he is safe, he warns her not to visit him, but her anxiety has gotten the best of her and she does so anyway, even traveling through hordes of injured soldiers returning from battle to see him. When Livia arrives at Franz's apartment, she immediately notices he is living a life of luxury and lechery, as a would-be-playboy who is drunk with alcohol and guilt. After Franz states to Livia, "You shouldn't have come. You were wrong to come, and you'll be sorry you did. You see...I'm not an officer now. I'm not a gentleman now. I'm a drunken deserter. And I stink to high heaven of cowardice and vice!" the Countess hears the voice of a young woman crying out her lover's name. Indeed, Franz has been using Livia's money to pay for a regular prostitute named Clara (played by Marcella Mariani, whose acting career was tragically cut short when she was killed in a plane crash at the mere age of 19), who is much younger and more beautiful than the aged Countess. After forcing Livia to meet Clara and hatefully proclaiming, "I'm not your romantic hero. And I don't love you anymore. I needed money and took it – that's all," Livia runs out of her meta-treacherous lover's apartment while he calls her a "trollop" and even tells her break her neck on the way out. Hysterical, heartbroken, and on the verge of insanity, Livia decides to go to the headquarters of the Austrian army to reveal that Franz is guilty of treason. After telling an

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Austrian general her story, Livia warns that her actions will make her nothing short of a murderer, but she does not care and tells the military man to carry out his duty. In the end, Franz is executed by firing squad and Livia runs into the night while calling the name of the man she condemned to death.

Notably, director Luchino Visconti originally intended to cast Ingrid Bergman and Marlon Brando for the lead roles. While I think that Alida Valli made for a wise replacement for Bergman, the less than Aryan looking Farley Granger was not exactly the best choice for the role. Rightfully determined to find a blond actor to play a blond Don Juan beast, Visconti apparently tried to hire various other popular heartthrobs for the role, including Tab Hunter, but he ultimately settled for Granger, whose hair he even attempted to dye blond. But then again, Granger was perfect for the role if one interprets the film from a less than philo-Semitic angle. Indeed, aside from the fact he is rather swarthy and played a character loosely based on a real-life gay Jewish child murder in Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), Granger plays a role in *Senso* that Visconti intentionally named after the late-Romantic Jewish composer Gustav Mahler (indeed, in Boito's source novel, the character's name is 'Remigio Ruz'). Additionally, Granger's character could not be more anti-Aryan and stereotypically Jewish in character, as a cowardly and deracinated draft-dodger who is afraid of battle, as well as a cunning schemer who debases women from other nations, with the aristocrat always being the main target of the wandering Jew. Somewhat ironically, Visconti chose to use Anton Bruckner—a composer heavily associated with National Socialism who had a lot in common with Uncle Adolf (they were both Austrian-born Wagnerites from peasant backgrounds)—instead of the seemingly more fitting Mahler for the score. As Roger Hillman noted in a chapter on *Senso* in his book *Unsettling Scores: German Film, Music, and Ideology* (2005): "In a Viennese musical journal of October 1932, one critic takes to task the New York Bruckner Society for spreading propaganda for Mahler alongside Bruckner. He sees this as an affront to European sensitivities, and he counterpoints the two composers as "the Aryan Bruckner, our German composer, and Mahler, with the disintegration attendant of his Jewishness... On the one hand edification, on the other a destructive tendency, even modernism! This, too, makes interesting reading when approaching the sundered character of Visconti's figure Mahler, who appears to the strains of Bruckner."

Although producers hoped *Senso* would be a hit in the United States (hence its America male lead), it never really received a proper release in America, as it was only played at a couple Italian-language theaters that catered to unassimilated Guidos, thus making the film a lost masterpiece of sorts, at least among the Yanks. Somewhat interestingly, a butchered 94-minute English-language version of the film featuring dialogue written by Tennessee Williams and Paul Bowles was released in England and later the United States under the somewhat sleazy sexploitation-like title *The Wanton Countess*, but of course the

film somewhat betrays Visconti's original vision. Additionally, nearly a half a century after the film's initial release, quasi-pornographer Tinto Brass (*Salon Kitty*, *Caligula*) also remade *Senso* under the title *Senso '45* (2002) aka *Black Angel*, though he made the story much more cynical, replaced Bruckner with an original score by maestro Ennio Morricone, and changed the setting from Risorgimento-era Italy to the Fascist era, with the female protagonist falling for an SS officer instead of a first lieutenant in the Austrian army. On top of that, frog Television hack Gérard Vergez adapted Boito's novel for the French TV series *La grande collection* (1991-current) in 1993 under the original title *Senso* in a work starring Chiara Caselli (who Americans probably best know for her roles in Gus van Sant's 1991 masterpiece *My Own Private Idaho* and Liliana Cavani's 2002 hit *Ripley's Game*) as the lead and featuring Jean-Pierre Aumont. A socio-politically-conscious melodrama like *Gone with the Wind* (1939) of the lavish, luscious, and sensually-charged sort, albeit much more cultivated and aristocratic, *Senso* is a rare look at history and class from the perspective of a true blue, blue blood who ultimately proved he was right when he said, "Melodrama has a bad reputation because it has been abandoned to schematic and conventional interpretation." Indeed, it is harder to think of a film that is more simple yet sophisticated, as a work with a misleadingly simple storyline that is layered with subtext and allegorical aesthetic references that only the most cultured of viewers will understand, at least in any more meaningful way.

-Ty E

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SENSO '45

Tinto Brass (2002)

Leave it to Italy's foremost 'erotic auteur' aka pornographer, Tinto Brass (*Salon Kitty*, *Caligula*), to take a classic Italian film like Luchino Visconti's luscious Risorgimento-era melodrama *Senso* (1954) and turn it into a quasi-campy fuck flick set during the end of the Second World War featuring sensual SS men as played by Guidos with glaringly fake blonde hair and Nazi whores urinating into bedpans. Ironically, Brass claimed one of the reasons he decided to 'remake' the film was because he did not like Visconti's version and felt the director took a too liberal approach to Camillo Boito's 1882 source novella of the same name. In other words, Brass probably felt Visconti's film had a homo essence and had far too much histrionic acting and not enough hairy beavers and supple big sippers. To Brass' credit, his remake/re-adaptation, *Senso '45* aka *Black Angel* (2002), is apparently more faithful to Boito's novel, though both film version make the female lead older and more sympathetic, as if the films were specially tailored for old bourgeois trollops who want to reminisce over the good old days when they had affairs with handsome and sexually virile young men. On top of being another *Senso* adaptation and arguably Brass' last 'masterpiece,' *Senso '45* is a work of self-reflexive cinema that acts as a 'fascist-film-within-an-antifascist-film' with various references to the director's previous works, especially his (in)famously salacious Nazisploitation flick *Salon Kitty* (1976) incidentally starring Visconti's Austrian boy toy Helmut Berger. Featuring gratuitous pussy shots of the corpse of female partisans who have been executed by fascists troops, a blond SS man selling pornographic watercolors by degenerate German artist Georg Grosz to a morbidly obese Jew, underwater shots of an SS man's hairy balls and bunghole, and various other of forms of Brassian celluloid bawdiness, *Senso '45* is, if nothing else, the most elegantly degenerate and lavishly lecherous Nazi-occupation film ever made. Indeed, a truly 'libertarian' work (Brass is affiliated with the 'Italian Radicals') in that it mocks pretty much everyone, including the aristocracy, bourgeois, fascists, commie partisans, and Italian industry, Brass' film certainly deserved the 1.6 million Euros given to the film's overall budget by the Italian Minister of the Arts and Culture, as a quasi-erotic war epic that puts Liliana Cavani's somewhat similarly themed work *The Berlin Affair* (1985) aka *Leidenschaften* to abject shame in terms of sensuality, aestheticism, and socio-political critique. Featuring a scene where, "Cinema is the strongest weapon," is featured on the chalkboard of a film studio, *Senso '45* demonstrates that—for better or worse—European cinema has come a long way since the days when Joseph Goebbels oversaw the production of melancholy Veit Harlan melodramas.

Unlike Visconti's film, *Senso '45* features black-and-white scenes from the 'present' where protagonist Livia Mazzoni (Anna Galiena) tells how she feel

head-over-heels for SS man Lieutenant Helmut Schultz (Gabriel Garko). Beginning on, "March 25, 1945, Year 23 of the Fascist Period," with Livia riding in the car of family lawyer Ugo Oggiano (Franco Branciaroli)—a man she has made a "wicked pact" with—as they drive to get Helmut, the film is mainly comprised of color flashback scenes chronicling the almost always carnal, sometimes comical, and even sometimes accidentally corny rise and fall of the protagonist's extramarital romance, as well as the German occupation of Guidoland. While watching a horrendous play with her old fart yet opulent husband Carlo (Antonio Salines) where commie partisans stormed the stage and dropped leftist leaflets, Livia first set eyes on Helmut, whose mere stare managed to not only wet her panties, but give her an orgasm. As described by Ugo, Helmut got his elite position in the SS as a member of the German Film Unit and his status as a "stud who fucks them all" by acting as Joseph Goebbels' pimp, even hooking up the Minister of Propaganda with his Czech mistress Lida Baarova. That night, Livia is forcibly fucked behind by her husband while she stares at the moon, but her hubby finishes in a couple seconds, so she masturbates while thinking of Helmut to achieve an orgasm. While her husband tells Livia while he is fucking her that Helmut is, "amoral, cynical, a gambler, a degenerate, with women too," the horny middle-aged countess does not care. Luckily, the next day, Helmut stalks Livia as she walks down the road, follows her inside her home, and immediately begins manhandling like a major champ while declaring to her "you're mine," thus commencing a hot and steamy yet short and bittersweet romance.

As Livia in all seriousness states regarding her ridiculously risqué romance with Helmut: "Venice acted as pimp to our love." Of course, Helmut has a different view of things, as he treats the city as his own personal whorehouse where he buys morphine that is supposed to be used for partisans so he can get high and where he ultimately uses Livia as his southern 'sugar momma,' as she offers to pay his way, including funding his drug use and gambling habits, among other things. Before Livia offers to pay his way, Helmut makes money doing dubious things like selling a stolen George Grosz paintings to grotesquely fat Jewish art dealer for 20,000 liras. After the transaction, the Jewish art dealer lets Helmut know that he forgot his suitcase, to which the sardonic SS debauchee says he can keep it, hilariously stating to the Israelite, "A memento of Dr. Goebbels, as a gift from me." Indeed, Helmut is a shameless opportunist who, although he has a macho Apollo-like appearance, is really quite the degenerate who couldn't care less about the National Socialist cause as demonstrated by the following rant he makes to Livia while bugging her bum: "to fuck the whole world in the ass. Fuck Hitler! Fuck Mussolini! Fuck Stalin! Livia, I'm drunk on your ass! Fuck the priests! Fuck the bosses! I want to go crazy in your ass! Tell me it's drunk! Say it!" Needless to say, Livia's husband and lawyer Ugo soon realize that she is regularly humping Helmut, but the wanton aristocrat does not care as indicated by various confessions she makes like, "I realized I was entirely dependent on

him. Even giving him money made me cum." Unfortunately for Livia, Helmut is more interested in her cash than her gash, which she ultimately realizes when it is too late, thus resulting in tragic, if not tastelessly titillating consequences.

A would-be-playboy who loves gambling all his hard stolen and blackmailed money away, Helmut eventually realizes he can use Livia for large sums of money. Indeed, after Helmut gambles all of Livia's money away at a campy drug orgy featuring chicks roaming around wearing giant golden strap-on dildos and SS uniforms sans pants, his mistress agrees to gamble herself to a lesbian actress named Elsa (Simona Borioni) if he loses. Of course, Helmut loses and Elsa penetrates Livia with a strap-on dildo, but the debauched blue blood babe does not care, as she is high on cocaine and feels like she is proving her love to her boy toy by "sacrificing" her heterosexuality. Naturally, when Livia is told by her cuckold husband that they must move to their chateau in the country because the war is getting bad, she nearly cracks, as she cannot stand to be without her sensual SS man. Before Livia moves, Helmut comes by her home and tells her that he needs 1 million liras so that he payoff some quack doctor so that he can sit the rest of the war out. Of course, Livia obliges Helmut and after handing him the money, she proceeds to give him a rough blow job.

Needless to say, Livia does not handle being away from Helmut too well after moving to the country, so she offers her lawyer/husband's friend Ugo sex if he agrees to drive her to Venice to see Helmut. Of course, being grovelingly in love with Livia, Ugo agrees to the "wicked pact" and the two head to Venice. When the two finally arrive in Venice after their car breaks down and they hitch a ride from a truck of fascist soldiers, Livia stops by Helmut's apartment, only to walk in on him screwing a young prostitute and discussing to the somewhat average-looking streetwalker how he does not love his mistress and merely uses her for her money. Hysterically heartbroken, Livia decides to head to local Nazi headquarters to tell a Nazi general that Helmut is a deserter. When the General questions her motives and tells her regarding Helmut, "You're signing his death warrant, Livia coldly replies, "I've done my duty. Now do yours." When Helmut is arrested and brought to Nazi headquarters to be executed via firing-squad, Livia takes Ugo to watch the big event. A coward to the pseudo-kraut core, Helmut shouts, "I don't want to die!" and attempts to escape, but is shot down almost instantly like a rabid dog, with his young (and topless) prostitute soon running out to hug his corpse while crying hysterically. Rather hurt by seeing the prostitute crying over Helmut's death, Livia demands that Ugo fuck her right then and there in a desperate attempt to dull her own pain.

Despite being a quasi-pornographic remake of Visconti's melodramatic masterpiece, *Senzo '45* was heavily inspired by the Italian neorealist films of Roberto Rossellini, especially *Rome, Open City* (1945), or as director Tinto Brass stated himself in the featurette, *The Making of Black Angel*, regarding his film: "There are many cinematic elements. Other than character typing, there are scenes, trib-

utes to those I consider my masters. Other than the fact that it can be retraced to Visconti...In fact, the language of the film is more Rossellinian. I was more influenced by Rossellini, who was my master since I was his assistant director. One sequence explicitly refers to the one when Magnani is cut down by machine gun fire as she runs after the van that is taking her husband away." Of course, there is little about Brass' film that is socially redeeming aside from the fact that it demonstrates the upper-classes are literal and figurative whores who will join any political movement, even communism, if it is ultimately to their social and monetary benefit, or as protagonist Livia states while quoting Mussolini: "The people are like women...they go with the winning man." Featuring an original score by Italian maestro Ennio Morricone, countless references to classic Italian films and painters (somewhat notably, Brass received his nicknamed 'Tintoretto' from his grandfather Italo Brass, who was a celebrated Gorizian painter), and seemingly immaculate technical direction, *Senso '45* is certainly not your typical Nazisploitation flick as a work that unequivocally proves that Guidos are probably the only masters turning sleazy and oftentimes senseless eroticism into relatively respectable celluloid art. Indeed, for all those individuals that are tired of seeing cliché World War II films that milk the holocaust, portray commie partisans as morally pristine heroes, depict all SS men as humorless bureaucrats and/or coldblooded killers, and present WWII as a clear cut example of holy and righteous battle against evil, *Senso '45* ultimately offers something more morally ambiguous and absurdly amorous, as a rather risqué Rossellini-esque dark epic romance of the Hightalian quasi-impressionistic sort.

-Ty E

THE BITCH IS BACK
THE BITCH IS BACK

Tjebbo Penning (1995)

Never would I have thought I would be having so much with a short little Dutch film. *The Bitch is Back*. The title reminds me of an early John Cusack film. The plot line takes a morose and quirky turn as a perverted lone service worker is stalked by his blow-up doll while she attempts to brutally murder him while quoting popular movie lines. It's like watching Schramm, like any normal cinephile would, and then witness that torso sex doll flip over and massacre the already fated killer then and there. Essentially, the film is one big experimental pun. Say the doll picks up a corded phone in a vain attempt to squeeze the life out of you. The doll would then rasp "E.T... phone home." That's the way the film works and manages to vastly entertain with each individual pleasantry. I wasn't expecting much. Perhaps a Z grade schlock fest that can be hardly called entertaining. What I was hand delivered, was in fact the camp film of the decade. There isn't much to this film other than a tacky premise and suspenseful situations. Things get down and dirty as the man fights for his life against a blow up doll. Keep in mind, this doll seems to be made of metal. Watch as it headbutt's him, breaking his nose on impact. These increasingly noticeable flaws are easily overshadowed by the plot at hand. I mean, how often do you see a film like this? *The Bitch is Back* is a pop-culture slaughter smörgåsbord. A film that is the complete opposite of what I Love the 80's is. Not the best short film I've ever seen, nor does it compete, but it made me feel two things - suspense and humorous. No film is sacred. *The Exorcist*, *E.T.*, *The Shining*; all classics of all genres are explored leaving room for many moods. I want this bitch to be back...for a big-budget sequel.

-mAQ

RUTHLESS REVENGE

To Man-Bo (1979)

As I had explained on the Soiled Sinema facebook, I received a tip that led me to a thrift shop up the road with a large handful of martial arts films. Among these rare Ocean Shores Video Limited tapes was *Ruthless Revenge* (1979). Boasting wild cover art of two extraordinarily goofy gentlemen trading blows with a bearded fellow, I decided that *Ruthless Revenge* would be the first of the many to set sights towards. Also known as *Invincible Kung Fu* and *The Two Tricky Kids*, *Ruthless Revenge* passively employs physical farce much akin to *The Three Stooges* which lightens the action and makes for a truly enjoyable motion picture. In the opening, a drunken fool pickpockets a student of kung fu aboard a ferry. Transplanting his funds into the pocket of another martial artist, the drunken "wizard" knowingly orchestrates a burning rivalry between the two that persists even ashore. Once there, these two "masters" ("Bruce" Leung of *Kung Fu Hustle* fame and Kwok Choi Hon) compete in a ridiculous sparring match in which one trumps the other on a basis of turns. Bruce Leung's secret weapon is a weathered book detailing forms and styles of martial arts dependent on kicks and Kwok Choi Hon's previous master taught him the strengths of fist combat. This sets a handicap for each other to duel endlessly as they are equally skilled. Only when the two squabbling masters come together can they overcome a greater enemy.

After this primary round of sparring meets its end, the two are offered their own "kwoon" - school of kung fu. With both buildings positioned adjacent to each other, a line is drawn in between, separating the buildings and the teachings. When a local criminal leader discovers that the two kung fu masters seek to move in onto his territory he sends groups of thugs to straighten them out. Bouncing between the territories marked before the buildings, the two masters slap and reduce their enemies into pulp, all the while deploring one another with obscene insults. It is this intense slapstick that makes the comedy so effective in *Ruthless Revenge*; not even just the incredible choreography which features the two men vying for a particular item in a juggling-like fashion but the general insults slung at each other. The two on-screen persona's that endlessly bicker create such a wild world for the kung fu shenanigans to take place within. After defeating the local lord, help is sent for and the two masters are made homeless by the lord's elder relative. Only the help of the drunken master responsible for their conflict of interests can aid them in defeating their new enemy. And so is the plot of *Ruthless Revenge* - quite a product of narcissistic escapism. Mindless fun is the only thing to be had here so anyone expecting the flair of other Oriental productions such as *Shaolin & Wu Tang* might want to explore other venues of complicit Chinese design. *Ruthless Revenge* even ends on such a ridiculous and compelling note as getting slapped on the wrist and sent home empty handed.

AN ERROR OCCURRED.
AN ERROR OCCURRED.

Try watching this video on www.youtube.com, or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.

I have mentioned before the seemingly cold remove of the Asiatics towards domesticated creatures. Not quite cattle nor slaughterhouse material; the Eastern continents have no problem grievously harming creatures on camera for, in this case, HK authenticity. A very similar case would be *Men Behind the Sun* or even *Don't Play With Fire* - both feature cruelty to felines, although, in *Men Behind the Sun's* case, we witness the death of the cat, whereas in *Don't Play With Fire*, a cat is simply tossed out of a high window. I bring this up because *Ruthless Revenge* unspools a similarly petrifying scene of unfortunate injury to a domestic cat. The scene suddenly came out of left field. Here I was, enjoying a kung fu farce that is obscenely simplistic when, all of a sudden, my American sensibilities were challenged when, to prove a point, a drunkard thrusts a cat in a cramped cage with an irritated goose and snake. Despite being tonally thrashed during the climax of said scene, *Ruthless Revenge* remains an oft-hilarious excursion in slapstick and creative combat. Even for being cast adrift chink tropes, *Ruthless Revenge* was quite endearing to me, even if it ended on such a sudden cue that you're left blinking in disbelief. Way to force morality upon enthusiasts and students of an ancient art.

-mAQ

EGGSHELLS

Tobe Hooper (1969)

Long before he became the absolutely artless and innately inept self-parodying horror hack he is today, Texas-born filmmaker Tobe Hooper (*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *Poltergeist*) was actually a serious and inventive auteur who attempted to test the bounds of cinema as an art form, with his first feature *Eggshells* (1969) aka *Eggshells: An American Freak Illumination*, which he co-wrote with Kim Henkel (who was also responsible for co-writing the script for *TCM*, as well as writing/directing *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation*), being his most uniquely uncompromising and aesthetically ambitious celluloid effort to date. Apparently screened no more than 50 times upon its release before it fell into obscurity for nearly half a century, *Eggshells* was finally rediscovered, screened for the first time in 42 years, and recently re-released at the end of 2013 as an extra feature on a 3-disc limited edition Blu-ray release of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* distributed by the UK company Arrow Films and luckily I managed to track down a copy of the film. Described by Hooper as “a hippie movie” and producer David F. Ford as a “head movie,” *Eggshells* was advertised as a “time and spaced fantasy film” and “an American freak illumination,” which are both rather fit descriptions for this shockingly idiosyncratic, if not decidedly discombobulating, piece of undeniably penetrating psychedelic pretense. Like Donald Cammel and Nicholas Roeg’s *Performance* (1970) meets fellow Texan Richard Linklater’s *Slacker* (1991) as aesthetically molested by Kenneth Anger’s *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969) and Stan Brakhage’s *Dog Star Man* (1961-1964) cycle, *Eggshells* is an uneven mix of spacey cine-magic, plodding psychedelic retardation, counter-culture cinéma vérité, superficial Swinging Sixties comedy, and a dose of supernatural horror/sci-fi conventions. Indeed, while not Hooper’s greatest film, *Eggshells* is unquestionably the director’s most unique, complex, esoteric, and aesthetically ambitious, so it is quite unfortunate that the entire film is essentially a pseudo-spiritual tribute to dope smoking, albeit with stereotypical ‘free love’ and left-wing counter-culture politics thrown in for good measure. A softcore degenerate depiction of a small group hippie of slackers in their early 20s that live in a haunted commune house inhabited by the spastic spirit of a brain-dead beatnik artist who lives in another dimension, *Eggshells* is best viewed as a ‘cinematic experience’ as opposed to a film with a linear narrative (which the film does sort of have, but it is only of secondary importance). Featuring everything from real-life deluded hippie protestors to phantom swords fights to Texas-fried Jewish weddings, *Eggshells* is a film that is screaming for cult status as work the makes Hooper ‘classics’ like *Eaten Alive* (1977) and *The Funhouse* (1981) seem like worthless celluloid trash by comparison. Indeed, if nothing else, *Eggshells* is ample evidence that the director’s career might have taken a much different path had he not directed the film that

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would prove to be his prematurely created magnum opus, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974).

It is the late-1960s and none of the pansy beatnik boys living in Austin, Texas want to fight in the Vietnam War, so they impotently rebel by protesting in front of government buildings, listening to shitty music, smoking dope, and having sex whilst under the influence of said dope. The first piece of evidence that *Eggshells* is not a normal movie comes in at about the 10 minute mark when a young dirty hippie bastard named 'Toes' (played by co-writer Kim Henkel) throws a paper airplane in the air which ends up exploding against his house as if it is 'napalm' in what is probably one of the most bizarrely moronic anti-Vietnam War scenes of film history. Although it might be hard to discern while watching the film, the meager man that threw the airplane is a spirit from another dimension who now haunts the house in a manner not unlike the Aubrey Beardsley character from George Barry's equally bizarre counter-culture cult classic *Death Bed: The Bed That Eats* (1977). The house that the hippie haunt Toes haunts is the central setting of *Eggshells* and, rather unfortunately, none of the other characters are nearly as interesting as the stoned spook. Unbeknownst to the people living in the house, a crypto-embryonic hyper-electric presence lurks in the haunted abode and has major influence over its oftentimes inebriated inhabitants. Essentially, there are no real main characters in the film, thus giving it a celluloid 'commune' vibe, though a philistine hippie couple probably has the most screen time. Allen (Allen Danziger) and Sharon (Sharon Danziger) are engaged to be married, but the problem is that the former does not like the latter's anti-communist gentile father, so the two lovebirds impotently bicker amongst one another in a bathtub in a scene mimicking the iconic celluloid mundanity of *Godard*. In fact, the hippies do a lot in the bathroom, including typing propaganda on a typewriter while sitting on a toilet in a pseudo-Henry Miller-esque fashion and making would-be-passionate love, among other equally uninteresting things. Meanwhile, the lonely hippie spirit Toes battles phantom spirits with a sword (which he finds sitting next to a toilet) and admires degenerate modernist self-portraits that he painted of himself. Eventually, the spirit discovers egg-like tubes in the house's basement and is sucked into one and sent into some sort of psychedelic orbit. In another standout scene, a THC-addled hippie writer decides he wants to be totally 'free,' so he beats up his car with a sledgehammer, strips off his clothes, and ultimately blows up his rainbow-colored eggshell-adorned beatnik-mobile like pseudo-rebellious artistic action hero without real a cause. Eventually, Allen and Shiksa Sharon 'sell-out' and get married at a very public outdoors Jewish wedding (and, indeed, the scene is actually a document of their real-life wedding, though the two apparently got a divorce not long after). In the end, most of the characters of the film enters a balloon-covered forest, sit in what looks like a semi-futuristic beauty salon hair dryer machine attached to a porta-potty and are sucked up by said machine and

spit back out in the form of a black liquid that looks like oil, while their spirits take on a formless smokey haze. In the sometimes insightful audio commentary for *Eggshells*, auteur Tobe Hooper states regarding the character's seemingly degenerative transformation: "They get purified." Apparently, the smoke is a "pure spirit disguised as marijuana smoke," thus indicating Hooper was a proud dope fiend when he directed the film.

In describing the film himself, director Tobe Hooper stated the following pretentious gibberish: "Eggshells, An American Freak Illumination Time & Space Fantasy of the exploding Austin inevitable crypto embryonic hyper-electric presence dueling with itself as Vince Sobrosek is in the bathroom yelling "listen to yellow dog, goddamn yellow dog!" The devil's hose dog tongue loops and lollies through a glory hole to your uninvited dinner guests and the bedroom paints itself on it's way to the wedding as your girlfriend and her lover dance beneath the hemoglobin balloons the writer-man takes an axe to the exploding windshield the naked man makes bathes the girl he loves for her breasts and they all grab a seat under the protoplasmic hair dryer transmogrifying as Vince proclaims, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." Indeed, Hooper's own description is a better synopsis than any for an audacious and innately abstract avant-garde flick that, for better or worse, provides a totally singular celluloid experience of hippie Austin during the late-1960s. Rather unfortunately, Hooper originally intended for *Eggshells* to be a much more darker and intricate work, but opted for getting rid of various scenes and subplots, including a curious character named the 'traveling prophet.' Indeed, I am sure that I would have enjoyed *Eggshells* much more if it was more in the spirit of *Messiah of Evil* (1973), but Hooper had yet to realize his niche in horror cinema.

Still, I was rather shocked by *Eggshells* as it made me realize that there was actually a time in Hooper's mostly forgettable career when he had a passion for making truly passionate, personalized, and highly experimental cinematic works. Described the filmmaker himself as "being a mixture of Andy Warhol's *Trash* and Walt Disney's *Fantasia*" and shot on a reasonably meager budget of around \$100K, *Eggshells* is a true testament to the fact of how Hollywood morally and artistically corrupt filmmakers. After all, 13 years after releasing *Eggshells*, Hooper would become the meek pawn of Steven Spielberg while 'directing' *Poltergeist* (1982) and apparently even allowed the Hebraic producer to take control of the film as a sort of ghost-director. In fact, Spielberg had the gall to publicly insinuate that he was the real 'auteur' behind *Poltergeist*, commenting, "Tobe isn't... a take-charge sort of guy. If a question was asked and an answer wasn't immediately forthcoming, I'd jump in and say what we could do. Tobe would nod agreement, and that become the process of collaboration," thereupon making Hooper seem like a stoned stupid shabbos goy with a kosher-contaminated philistine brain. Yiddish midget Zelda Rubinstein also confessed that during production of *Poltergeist*, Hooper apparently "allowed some unac-

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ceptable chemical agents into his work” and that “Tobe was only partially there.” Undoubtedly, in the audio commentary for *Eggshells*, Hooper sounds like a badly burnt out egomaniac and even gets discernibly offended anytime the interviewer, David Gregory, mentions any other filmmakers aside from himself as if he is some sort of marvelous messianic auteur. Indeed, while a interesting experiment, *Eggshells* is riddled with hippie pseudo-metaphysics that—as Hooper’s horrendous post-*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986) filmmaking career certainly attests to—in the end proved to be pure bullshit, as the director’s youthful worship of weed and crap slave-morality-driven counter-culture politics ultimately contributed to the total evaporation of his artistic talents. The then-novice director’s very own Texan take on *Zabriskie Point* but with an experimental flare comparable the films of Werner Nekes, *Eggshells* is pre-hack Hooper before the curse of hard drugs and Spielberg, and thus much be watched accordingly. Assumedly, the title ‘*Eggshells*’ is an allegorical reference to the director’s belief that people are delicate and must be handled like ‘eggshells.’ Of course, if that is the case, it seems that Hollywood hedonism caused Hooper to crack and fry long ago.

-Ty E

EATEN ALIVE

Tobe Hooper (1976)

Blind purchases were a thing of the past. Upon my first job many years ago, I found myself becoming a consumer whore, buying every film that peaked my interest. I have had nothing but pleasant experiences for Dark Sky Films. They release quality films with quality transfers. That and amazing editions. The Steel book Texas Chainsaw Massacre is truly a collectors dream come true, that is, until the "Seriously Ultimate Edition" came out. And yes, I am serious. Up until now Dark Sky has amazed me (Besides from Henry II, but I can allow this misconception to pass, seeing as how they released the original). Eaten Alive is a follow up film to The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Tobe Hooper created the definitive horror piece which still stands strong today. The icon of Leatherface still lives on and the horror never quite fades. What better way to add onto his success than making a better film? That doesn't happen, though. Eaten Alive might be the biggest over-rated piece of shit horror film ever created. Over-rated can be a deceptive label. One might construe the idea that is loved by all. This is the most common usage. When I say over-rated, I mean that anyone enjoying this film is a blasphemous result. There is absolutely no redeeming material about this film. Not even Robert Englund's role as Buck or the line he produces that has been "noddod" at by the likes of Tarantino, can justify the existence of this film. Eaten Alive is purely a film that has no merit at all. Watching Eaten Alive might be the equivalent of a Circus midget cart-wheeling into a Hippopotamus's mouth. And yes, this actually happened. Eaten Alive has a clever marketing strategy - It has 14 different titles across the globe. Do the math. 14 different names is 14 different chances to be fooled into purchasing one of the most absolute disappointing films to be released in this decade. I might agree with the idea of a psychotic war veteran owning an inn to be a cool idea, Hell, I even think the Crocodile is a bit of innocent fun. But when these two mix, it unleashes a fiery hellspawn onto your screen that just smells, tastes, and looks bad. I don't think it would be a gross exaggeration to call Eaten Alive the biggest piece of shit filmed from a respected director. The characters are as generic as they come and the deaths aren't exciting. Chainsaws were pretty rare to be seen in horror cinema. What Hooper did with the chainsaw, he attempts to do with the lengthy scythe. While the scythe is a formidable and daunting weapon, its usage is ineffective as displayed in the film. What a waste of what could have been quality kills. Eaten Alive is no more worth a watch than having your family abducted, sodomized, and ground to a pulp. Think of the circus midget. Would Od want you to watch this? No. He wouldn't.

-mAQ

LIFEFORCE
LIFEFORCE

Tobe Hooper (1985)

Until rather recently and in part due to its questionable reputation, I had never seen Tobe Hooper's science fiction horror epic *Lifeforce* (1985). Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for this is due to the fact that, aside from *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and its silly yet sardonic sequel *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (1986), I have always considered Hooper a hack and Hollywood hooker (with Spielberg being his one-time pimp) of horror especially considering that he has yet to direct a decent film for the genre in nearly three decades, not to mention the fact that he sold his soul to the celluloid devil himself, Steven Spielberg. Of course, a great film is a great film no matter who directed it nor whether the film was a commercial failure that lost a celluloid battle at the box-office with retard Ron Howard's empty elderly-ploitation flick *Cocoon* (1985). Indeed, I was so shocked by how enthralling my initial viewing of *Lifeforce* was that I actually watched it again the next day – a compulsive childhood habit that I broke with long ago, even with films I like – and, to my amazement, the film was still just as potent with its big-budget killer, albeit accidental, kitsch of the curiously charming and infectious celluloid space vampire sort, thus making a sort of "2001: A Space Odyssey of horror." Based on British 'New Existentialist' novelist/philosopher Colin Wilson's novel *The Space Vampires* (1976) – an unconventional sci-fi/horror hybrid inspired by the supposed phenomenon of 'psychic vampirism' about a group of ill-fated astronauts who make the mistake of investigating a beautiful castle-like alien spaceship full of vampiric extraterrestrials who can take human form, thus inadvertently exposing the hostile yet erotically hypnotic beings to planet earth where they take the bodies of human beings – and a screenplay written by Dan O'Bannon (*Alien*, *The Return of the Living Dead*) and Don Jakoby, *Lifeforce* is a rare epic of science fiction that actually contains an erotic component in the form of a female vamp from outer space played by French model/actress Mathilda May (*Naked Tango*, *The Tit and the Moon*) who is totally au naturel for the majority of the film, hence her lethally lecherous life-draining properties. Originally planned to be titled *The Space Vampires* instead of the lifeless "Lifeforce" (Cannon Films felt the original title sounded too much like the low-budget exploitations they were known to release), the cinematic work was the first film in a three picture (*Invaders from Mars*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*) deal that Hooper had with Cannon Films that would ultimately signal in the beginning of the end of his prestigious Hollywood horror filmmaking career, but at least he proved before his fall that someone could actually direct a film featuring aliens, vampires, and zombies that appeals to people other than those who spend their lifesavings on getting autographs from faded stars at fanboy horror conventions.

You might as well be cursed when you're a member of a space shuttle named

Churchill, or at least such is the case for the astronauts of a spaceship named after Great Britain's most famous bloated drunkard. After discovering a 150-mile long spaceship, members of the Churchill investigate and find a dead army of mummified bat-like creatures and three nude Eurypid humanoids – a beautiful woman (Mathilda May) and two twink males (Chris Jagger; Mick's brother, and Bill Malin) – seemingly in a comatose state suspended vertically in something that looks like a glass coffin. Clearly not something they should just leave behind in space, the crew takes the three sensual somnambulist-like creatures back to earth, but on the way, mission control loses contact with the shuttle, which is badly burnt when it finally reaches the home planet with the three aliens being the only things that remain. The exotic extraterrestrial beings are taken to the European Space Research Centre in London and in no time the fem-alien has sucked the "life force" out of a gully security guard and eventually escapes from the seemingly secure building, thereupon wrecking havoc upon the British city. It is revealed that the three aliens are from an ancient and highly aggressive race of shape-shifting space vampires who prefer draining the "spirit" of the person as opposed to mere hemoglobin like your typical Eastern European bloodsucker. It turns out that one man, redneck Texan Colonel Tom Carlsen (Steve Railsback), did survive the Churchill spacecraft via an escape pod. Naturally, Carlsen is flown to London where he reveals how the "life force" of his crew was drained over time. Under hypnosis, it is also revealed that Carlsen has a special psychic link to the venomous space vamp, thus allowing him to have some metaphysical insight into finding the soul-sucking succubus. Carlsen hooks up with SAS Col. Colin Caine (Peter Firth) and they travel to a psychiatric hospital in Yorkshire, but the out-of-this-world femme fatale has only deceived them and the American astronaut is instead treated to an unwanted kiss from Patrick Stewart (playing a hospital manager who has been put under a spell by the aberrant alien). While flying back to London, the succubus (contained inside Star Trek Stewart's body) inevitably escapes from her humble host. Meanwhile, the two male aliens have escaped the Space Research Centre by shape-shifting into the soldiers that were guarding them and they penetrate the city, causing what Morrissey might call 'Panic in London' by turning its perturbed populous into zombies who further spread the disease by trying to drain the life of other humans. It is revealed that the male aliens are merely the 'worker bees' of the female alien as they deliver all the life force to her, which she transfers to a spaceship in earth's orbit. The queen bitch alien is eventually found on a church altar delivering the human energy to her spaceship. While Caine fights off the male aliens, Carlsen struggles to 'penetrate' the evil alieness and fight mind over cock and balls to savemankind.

Since the release of *Lifeforce*, Cannon Films (and its parent company The Cannon Group Inc.) has gone out of business and Tobe Hooper's filmmaking career has plummeted to the point where he has resorted to remaking exploitation

LIFEFORCE

films like *The Toolbox Murders* (1978) that are inferior to his own breakthrough horror film *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) released around the same time. While Hooper's greatest financial success as a filmmaker was undoubtedly *Poltergeist* (1982), co-writer/producer Steven Spielberg's celebrity and 'E.T.' imprints can be seen all over the film thus eclipsing the horror director's notoriety and earning Mr. Shoah of show biz all the glory. According to Hebraic midget Zelda Rubinstein, Spielberg was the 'de facto director' of *Poltergeist*, in part, due to the claim that Hooper was high on the set, or as the actress stated, "allowed some unacceptable chemical agents into his work." As Spielberg in a maniacal fit of Aspergers induced narcissism candidly stated of Hooper himself while working with him, "Tobe isn't... a take-charge sort of guy. If a question was asked and an answer wasn't immediately forthcoming, I'd jump in and say what we could do. Tobe would nod agreement, and that become the process of collaboration." Indeed, being a cuckold of S.Spielberg is probably not the most prestigious way to be remembered as a filmmaker, but I will always remember Hooper as the man who created the only two decent TCM films, as well as the one fellow who directed the single redeemable vampire-alien-zombie horror-sci-fi hybrid, even if *Lifeforce* is the cinematic equivalent of reading one of H.P. Lovecraft's less wonderful *Weird Tales* while sitting on the balcony of an expensive vacation resort at night while under "unacceptable chemical agents."

-Ty E

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2

Tobe Hooper (1986)

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 was released in 1986 as a promising sequel to one of the scariest films of all time. What the audience got was not the promised messiah but perhaps the most misunderstood film in the history of celluloid. This remains the only Texas Chainsaw Massacre sequel to uphold to the original timeline of the horrific incident that occurred in the summer of 1973. Mainly focusing on family excursions, a now lost side-story revealing Lefty to be Stretch's illegitimate daughter was completely erased. This might have boasted a scene of powerful emotions between the eccentric and disc jockey but I digress otherwise. The saw is family is what the tag line promises, but what they failed to mention is how many rewrites the original script had. So much original material was canned due to Cannon Films' not being appreciative towards a satire classic. If the first film was the landmark for horror, then the second is the landmark for horror-comedy. While not being mainly humor, there is enough grue and taboo material to satisfy the deepest blood lust. A rich blend of satire and an equal dose of horror leaves you in shock. You don't know whether to laugh or flinch. The first archived TCM body count consisted of irritating hippies and the most obnoxious ass hat in a wheelchair ever. The fact that a character this annoying whilst handicapped gave me a temporary hatred for the movement-impaired. To make a complete full turn from the original material, the newly elected cattle has been handpicked by Tobe Hooper and the writer to be yuppies. After all, these are almost completely opposite character types. One's dirty and sleazy, relying on nature and beauty while the other is stuck up, a fruit cake, and completely dependent on technology. This marks the huge generation gap. In Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2, Leatherface is given a colorful personality outside of being a psychopath with a chainsaw. He meets Stretch and falls in love. What ensues is a beautifully erotic scene of chainsaw foreplay. Clutching the almost phallic instrument of wood-cutting and death, he caresses her inner thigh with the sharp edges of the saw teeth. The result is a blissfully erotic scene in a lampooned horror film. Much of these "out of place" scenes actually give the film its own place to settle down. One of the sparkling new additions to the TCM lore is the arrival of the new iconic character - Chop-Top. Bill Moseley from House of 1000 Corpses and The Devil's Rejects fame stars as the screwy character with a metal plate in his head. He dishes out some A grade dialogue and livens up every scene he is in. I don't know what's better - watching Chop-Top scratch the cusp of his skin where it meets flesh with a hot coat hanger or Dennis Hopper dual-wielding small chainsaws with war in his eyes. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 boils down to a hilarious parody of its former self and I gladly accept the new transition. What follows this film is two incredibly horrible sequels that depict our lovable anti-hero as a cross-dressing

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2

homosexual. Tobe Hooper has created gold with the first two Texas Chainsaw Massacre films and created cinematic atrocities such as *Eaten Alive*. The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 features everything to love about the horror genre with a truly terrifying scene of Leatherface storming out of a record vault ready to maim. With a starring role from an insane Dennis Hopper and Bill Moseley as the lovable Chop-Top, this remains a bold classic that is true to itself.

-mAQ

SPLINTER

Toby Wilkins (2008)

Remember that film released not too long ago called *The Ruins*? Yeah, that was a disappointment on some level. So visual affects designer Toby Wilkins decided to direct a loose adaptation of the general could-be theory of a vegetative parasite that attaches itself to humans. The rules might have been changed but the final product is a wholly entertaining spectacle with some down-right vicious effects that makes my nerves twitch. It's as if *Cabin Fever* and *Goosebumps' Stay Out of the Basement* had a wonderful Mandrake child that is as vicious as it was cute. A loving couple of awkward clichés get taken on a hostage trip when their original plan of camping gets trampled on. From this point on, they will stop at a gas station to give witness to a new genetic strain of parasite - one leaving its mark on horror society by sprouting vicious quivering spikes and practicing the art of symbiosis with victims in order to create a vicious spiny creature. The infection is spread through contact with blood stream. Typical horror rules apply. Sever the limb and avoid contact. Survive as long as you can until help arrives. While *Splinter* is your average horror film in most ways, this still makes it better than 83% of horror films nowadays. Statistically speaking, horror sucks now. The oasis of fruitful ideas to bring terror on screen is in a drought thanks to modern directors. That passion of film is barren and dry. Brainstorming only generates dust. There are still many great untapped ideas that haven't been completed successfully and this was one of them. *Splinter* falls prey to it's own appetite for destruction but ends on a relatively disappointing explosion. The final product is a vibrating mess that found itself victim to the "shaky-cam" syndrome. Due to this small flaw, we are denied any substance known as tension or suspense when we see a thorny and bloody monster rampaging after us. This could have been almost nerve-shattering but the full transcending never took place. Can you imagine having roots and splinters invading your mortal flesh? Stuff made of nightmares, folks. When the light dims, *Splinter* is a competent creature feature film featuring a pretty decent cast. For being a list of unknowns, the convict resembles Henry Rollins in fierceness and masculinity while the savvy lead seems more like an innocent Daniel Stern in the *Little Monsters* era. If you're looking for a monster movie or an infection film, look no further. For being hatched in the dull year of 2008, it's nice to have something to smile back on.

-mAQ

FREAKS
FREAKS

Tod Browning (1932)

Freaks is probably the most daring film ever made in the early Hollywood studio system. Even with its very simple and linear plot, it keeps you amazed throughout. The "freaks" stun in everything they do. They are the other and that is always strange to us. The film completely relies on them.

Freaks was directed by Tod Browning who earlier directed Dracula starring Bela Lugosi in 1931. After he directed Freaks in 1932, he sealed his fate as a director. The film was a commercial failure even after many edits of material considered controversial and disturbing. It was later hard for Browning to find projects. He would never again be able to achieve the quality of his earlier films.

There seems to be a trend of films featuring German midgets. Everyone is grotesque and brilliant. Even Dwarfs Started Small directed by Werner Herzog, and The Tin Drum directed by Volker Schlöndorff are two other masterpieces. Both films are also mandatory viewing for anyone interested in extraordinary and pocket-sized human abstractions.

The pinheads in Freaks may be the most frightening characters in any film ever made. They speak a language of slurred babble and have the movements similar to that of an excited puppy. Tod Browning was admirably heedless in his direction of undesirables. Somehow in the end he has us rooting for these malformed humans. Whether its our sympathy for them and/or hatred of their swindlers is unimportant. It's their strength in the end that is most significant. Got a light? At sixty-two minutes in length, Freaks is digestible on a regular basis. It can be viewed over and over again with same replay strength as The Evil Dead or Night of the Living Dead. Each further viewing is a nostalgic experience. It is no surprise that Freaks was selected for the National Film Registry's archive of important American Cinema. Freaks is a film that should be viewed by all fans of horror. It stands alone as a film that fits into no type of horror subgenre. Your getting more than your average early Hollywood studio system flick. Little Hans should be forever honored.

-Ty E

VELVET GOLDMINE

Todd Haynes (1998)

Velvet Goldmine is a rock film directed by suave Jewish homosexual Todd Haynes. The film takes its name from the David Bowie song of the same name. Velvet Goldmine takes a fictional look at homo glam rockers. The main character of the film is based on David Bowie's 'Ziggy Stardust' persona. Velvet Goldmine also features references to Oscar Wilde as the gay Irish poet that was one of first gay "pop icons." A young Christian Bale stars as a cross dressing journalist that is obsessed with glam rockers. His obsession hits an all time low when his father walks in on him masturbating to the images and music of his favorite "glam rock" star. It is said that Bale's character is modeled after the journalist featured in Orson Welle's Citizen Kane. Of course, Christian Bale's character isn't "in the dark" as much as the journalist from Citizen Kane. Velvet Goldmine features an exciting and rockin' soundtrack guaranteed to entertain anyone that remotely likes music. Velvet Goldmine is essentially a musical that works. The story perfectly compliments the music thus resulting in a solidly constructed film. Most musicals seem to have a similar format to pornography. Velvet Goldmine could be considered soft pornography. Velvet Goldmine is a perfect film to watch back to back with Hedwig and the Angry Inch. Both of these sexually depraved musicals follow in line a long tradition of perverted musicals. Todd Haynes was the right man for the job for directing Velvet Goldmine. After watching the deranged melodrama featured in Far From Heaven, I knew Velvet Goldmine wouldn't be short of original and entertaining.

-Ty E

HATED: GG ALLIN AND THE MURDER JUNKIES
HATED: GG ALLIN AND THE MURDER JUNKIES

Todd Phillips (1994) GG Allin (Born Jesus Christ Allin) was no doubt one of the greatest American comedians of the past century. His untimely death broke the hearts of thousands of Americans. Thankfully Hollywood hack Todd Phillips was able to document some of GG's remaining years in Hated: GG allin and the Murder Junkies. Phillips went on later to direct banal comedies Old School, Road Trip, and Starsky & Hutch. Five minutes of Hated has more comedic spirit than all of Phillips other films combined.

GG loves to expose his master chode while fondling it with his own shit. GG Allin recycles this same shit with his mouth. He also manages to fight his fans naked at various concerts (many times resulting in trips to the hospital and prison). I guess that would make Mr. Allin a real "punk rocker." Punk enough to scare Dee Dee Ramone out of the Murder Junkies just a couple days after joining. Maybe GG, Dee Dee, and Joey Ramone are covering Joe Meek songs in hell right now (Mr. Meek is obviously in Heaven playing to angels).

Hated is also possibly the best music related documentary ever produced. The documentary is obviously low budget and even amateurish. That doesn't matter considering the brilliance in the documented concert footage, interviews, and piss drinking. It's also great way to get a glimpse into the loyal followers of the fallen GG Allin Army. Fan Unk is a true American patriot and drinker of piss water.

Unk the Punk

When GG was in High School he enjoyed dressing in women's clothing. Near the end of his life he started sporting daisy duke shorts and Nazi-style helmets. His war was fought heroically. Was GG a true American revolutionary? Did GG Allin have the potential to start a second American Civil War? No way in hell. GG Allin was just a man that gave the fringe of society something to get beat up to. He also did a good job beating women. SKIN IS LIKE PAPER!

Hated is one of the greatest all-American comedies ever made. Before Jackass ever existed, GG Allin gave Americans true national comedy. Mr. Allin never contrived his behavior. This is what made him a true artist. He was one of the very few "stand-up" comedians. Taking hostages on stage will never again be done with such passion. Todd Phillips should have gone into law after directing Hated: GG Allin and the Murder Junkies.

GG Allin (29 August 1956 - 28 June 1993)

-Ty E

FEAR, ANXIETY /& DEPRESSION

Todd Solondz (1989)

Long after his childhood years when he seriously contemplated being a rabbi and long before he became the greatest cryptic cinematic social critic of the American Jewish bourgeoisie, New Jersey bred cinematic satirist Todd Solondz (*Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Dark Horse*) attempted to be a sort of more repel-
lently neurotic, hyper hysterical, and melodramatically lovelorn Woody Allen. Indeed, Solondz's first feature *Fear, Anxiety & Depression* (1989) starred the severely sardonic and curiously cynical auteur as a lovelorn loser and would-be-playwright who absurdly writes Samuel Beckett in a feeble attempt at a possible collaboration. Solondz ultimately abandoned his first feature, yet it is quite arguably the director's most personal, intimate, and 'sentimental' work to date, as a self-reflexive work of patently pessimistic metacinema. Unfortunately, the film lacks the critically keen political incorrectness, especially of the Judaic bourgeois and 'Americanism' that has come to define his work. Like cinematic quasi-father-figure Woody Allen, Solondz is a frail, weak, whiny, and uniquely ugly four-eyed neurotic Jewish dork with a deleterious soft spot for shikshas (indeed, it should be no surprise that one of the director's favorite writers is Philip Roth), or so one learns while watching his strikingly self-debasing, if not rather uneven, cinematic debut *Fear, Anxiety & Depression*. Thankfully, Solondz's cinematic persona is quite different from Allen in many respects, namely that he is less paranoid (there are no phantom anti-Semites in his film) and egomaniacal and is not plagued by airs of superiority, not to mention the fact that he seems to lack a taste for degenerate jazz (in fact, the director created his own goofy Daniel Johnston-esque soundtrack for the film). Indeed, as a sullen yet satirical celluloid molestation of classic Allen works like *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Manhattan* (1979), the film not only depicts the patently pathetic protagonist's loser love life, but also makes a mockery of various NYC/East Village art scenes/subcultures, including the Club Kids, degenerate kosher capitalist hack painters like Julian Schnabel, no wave, the no-talent juvenile pseudo-iconoclasts of the Cinema of Transgression, and the cocksuckers of Christopher Street. An equal-opportunity hater, Solondz depicts all these groups/movements as more or less equally untalented, pretentious, bombastic, shallow, trivial, senseless and only deserving of scorn and ridicule. Indeed, *Fear, Anxiety & Depression* may be the only film ever made where a Hebraic geek ultimately comes out looking more sympathetic than a hot punk chick. In short, Solondz's first feature is a lost cult film in desperate need of some sort of cult following.

30-year-old aspiring playwright Ira Ellis (Todd Solondz) is such a weak and pathetic looking dork that he seems like he might suffer a heart attack if he merely sneezes. During the first couple minutes of *Fear, Anxiety & Depression*, Ira writes a letter to Irish avant-garde playwright Samuel Beckett reading: "The

FEAR, ANXIETY /& DEPRESSION

reason I'm writing to you is two-fold: 1. To inform you of my particular respect for your work and the uncanny kinship I feel it shares with mine. 2. To see if you would like to read my most recently completed play *DESPAIR* and then, perhaps, meet to discuss perhaps a potential collaboration." Like Beckett's writing, Ira's life is plagued by unending tragicomedy and gallows humor, albeit of the Judaic as opposed to paddy sort. On the advice of his pretentious yet marginally talented painter friend Jack (played by Max Cantor, who previously appeared in *Dirty Dancing* (1987) and died in 1991 at the age of 32 from a heroin addiction while writing an article on drug addiction for *The Village Voice*), who remarks, "You're an artist and if you want to be an artist, you have to suffer. All great artists suffer, starve, and live miserable lives and you, Ira, will yet be a great artist," Ira decides to quit his blue collar job and dedicate his life to that of an artist by living with constant fear, anxiety, and depression. Subsequently, Ira's play *Despair* is a huge flop, not least of all because it features a guy dressed like an angel incessantly stating, "Life...Life...Life...Death...Death...Death..." while a group of cloaked men with goofy masks stand under nooses and act as an exceedingly grating chorus. While Jack tells Ira his play is a great "post-Beckettian" work, he tells his aspiring actress girlfriend Janice (Alexandra Gersten) that his friend's play is totally unoriginal, with the title being "right out of Nabokov."

Of course, Ira's play receives horrendous reviews by the press, with one reviewer absurdly writing, "The homophobic Mr. Ellis has attempted to supplement his own abnormal neurosis into a work of art. What a mistake." Even Ira's parents disapprove of the play as they feel it features a false portrayal of his upbringing and they ultimately 'cut-off' their son so he no longer has free time to work on his art, with his father telling him that he might be able to write another play one day if he becomes successful after working for decades at a string factory. To add insult to injury, Ira soon learns that his dullard schoolboy 'friend' Donny (Stanley Tucci) is now a critically and monetarily successful playwright who is constantly compared to his hero Beckett. Of course, Ira's life is no less calamitous, as his exceedingly whiney and seemingly half-retarded girlfriend Sharon (played by Jill Wisoff, who later composed music for Solondz's 1995 cult hit *Welcome to the Dollhouse*) is a clingy ex-pill-popper who the aspiring playwright has been trying to break-up with for some time, but every time he tries, she attempts to commit suicide. Meanwhile, Ira becomes obsessed with a degenerate half-braindead punk-goth 'club kid'/performance artist named 'Junk' (Jane Hamper)—a walking and talking art school cliché—who grew up in the suburbs yet says moronic things like, "living in suburbia was such a degrading experience, I mean, like I had to wear a dress" and who proudly states, "Maybe I'm junk...but at least I'm not trash like you" and "I don't do junk, I am junk." Junk is an unwitting fag hag that is suspicious that Ira might be gay because virtually every single one of her boyfriends in the past were gay, except for one with whom she "used to share syringes." When Ira sets up a date with Junk at the 1988 New

York Gay Film Festival at Bleecker St. Cinema, she naturally does not show up. Of course, Ira's night only gets worse when he ex-girlfriend Sharon attempts to commit suicide by downing various pills with Jack Daniels, but he brings her to Beth Israel Medical Center in time, so unfortunately she survives and continues to nag him with histrionic threats of self-slaughter. While Ira manages to start a quasi-romance with Junk, the pathetic playwright's 'Jack' soon steals her away from him. Luckily, Ira manages to get with Jack's ex-girlfriend Janice, who he has always had a thing for, but that does not last long. Meanwhile's Ira's successful 'friend' Donny agrees to help him become a revered playwright, though he warns him regarding the art world, "They are not into truth, they are not into art, they are not into beauty...it's all self-promotion and bourgeois protection." To Ira's surprise, Donny is now dating his ex-girlfriend Sharon, who is now a successful mime. While Ira attempts to get Sharon back, telling her he never realized how "beautiful" she is, his once-desperate ex ultimately turns him down. In the end, Ira goes back to working his blue collar window installing job and falls out of a window, though he finally receives a reply from Samuel Beckett, who writes, "Dear Ira, keep on writing."

Luckily, after *Fear, Anxiety & Depression*, director Todd Solondz continued writing, as all his subsequent works are undoubtedly superior to his debut film, yet it still has its merits as a reasonably mirthful piece of naked neuroticism with camp elements that makes for a marvelous mockery of the rotten Big Apple and its superlatively overrated and always degenerate art subcultures. In many ways, the film features Solondz at a more innocent and less unhinged point in his career when he had yet to become completely enamored with the spoiled and increasingly dumber Jewish bourgeoisie, American Zionism, multiculturalism, pedophilia, black-on-white rape, and other assorted untouchable but increasingly pertinent subjects that no gentile could get away with cinematically portraying. Indeed, Solondz has become like the bad bastard prodigal son of tragic Austrian Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger and Woody Allen, as a man who has more or less cinematically depicted virtually every deranged Judaic pathology known to man, hence why his films have become less than popular and more absurd and esoteric over the years. Interestingly, the auteur once stated of his work, "My movies aren't for everyone, especially people who like them." Of course, it is quite apparent while watching *Fear, Anxiety & Depression* that the film, as a highly personal auteur piece, was made for the director himself, thus making it all the more ironic that Solondz ultimately abandoned the work. Indeed, I think it was wise for Solondz to give up the Allen routine early on in the game and stay completely behind the camera, as, I for one, can only handle looking at Hebrews that resemble caricatures for National Socialist propagandist Julius Streicher's tabloid magazine *Der Stürmer* for so long before feeling like I am trapped in some sort of autistic Freudian pandemonium. Indeed, *Fear, Anxiety & Depression* is certainly a nauseatingly neurotic Hebraic nightmare of sorts,

FEAR, ANXIETY /& DEPRESSION

but it is also a Solondz flick and of course that makes all the difference.

-Ty E

HAPPINESS

Todd Solondz (1998)

Todd Solondz is easily one of the most controversial contemporary American filmmakers. Despite his perverted sensibilities and obsessions, Solondz seems to rarely receive negative criticism from film critics. I guess the rationality is as long as it's contributing to the decline of morals in the United States and abroad, it's OK. Todd Solondz's *Happiness*, which isn't a happy film at all, attempts to dissect various Americans real hidden sexual perversions and embarrassments.

One of the main characters of *Happiness* is an upper middle class psychiatrist name Bill who likes to masturbate to magazines featuring "cool" pre-teen boys. Like many psychiatrist's, Bill really isn't too mentally stable himself as he likes drugging and raping young boys. Todd Solondz paints Bill's family as the ideal American family in upper middle class suburbia. Only Mr. Solondz could make such a sick joke out of the most seemingly typical of nuclear families. Dr. Bill has a bitch for a housewife that seems to have some pent up aggression from her lack of sexual activities. It must suck for a wife when her husband would rather fuck young boys.

Phillip Seymour Hoffman does an extraordinary job as a pervert that likes to jerk off whilst making dirty phone calls. This man is obsessed with his next door apartment neighbor and is willing to make a complete degenerate ass of himself while trying to obtain her love. This perverted prank caller also happens to have a beast of a woman infatuated with him. A woman that is raped by a tiny Latino man name Pedro who is about 1/3 her size. She also likes to mention how Pedro lost his penis.

Sick Pedophile or just your average psychiatrist?

Happiness features a variety of other perverts that are guaranteed to make the most desensitized of viewers feel uncomfortable. Todd Solondz managed to create an ordinary looking and constructed film that is full of the most depraved sexualities ever captured celluloid. When I say depraved sexualities, I don't mean the type you would expect to see in a Mexican surrealist film. I mean the type that you would expect to hear about on the five o'clock news. Todd Solondz is a director that does the opposite of what most directors do; he confronts the harsh and unmentionable realities of our society.

-Ty E

STORYTELLING
STORYTELLING

Todd Solondz (2001)

Todd Solondz's *Storytelling* tells two special stories blending "fact" and "fiction." In today's so-called "postmodern" world, fact and fiction have started to blur. A piece of filth like Michael Moore's *Sicko* is a great example of something claiming to be "fact" but going in the direction of "fiction." YouTube is also full of videos that make one wonder what is real and what isn't. In today's world, it doesn't matter if something is real. What matters is if someone is willing to believe it's real. Todd Solondz takes a somewhat politically incorrect approach to examining the difference between "fact" and "fiction" with *Storytelling*. The first half of *Storytelling* is called "fiction." This half of the film follows a white girl at your typical liberal arts school. She dates a boy with a physical handicap, she has pink hair, and she promotes various forms of diversity (or weakness). Essentially, this girl is your typical naïve college girl that falls prey to the lie that is liberal arts cultural Marxism. Eventually she lands into the bedroom of her very angry and large Negro college professor. He has written a book called *A Sunday Lynching* and is typical of your angry black professor. "NIGGER FUCK ME HARD" is what the black professor forces his pupil to say while reaming her from behind. The girl fought racism by getting raped by her black teacher as she has embraced multiculturalism to its fullest. Sadly, she goes back to her handicapped boyfriend and cries. Fortunately, the unexpected sexual experience enables her to do the best writing of her life. The students are offended by the "fictional" story, then the girl blurts out that it actually happened. The Negro professor then affirms that once something is on paper, it is fiction. The second half of *Storytelling*, "Non-fiction," follows a well off Jewish Zionist family from New Jersey. The son in the family, Scooby, is a very apathetic fellow. He allows homosexuals to blow him for just the hell of it. He also enjoys categorizing his CD collection on weekends. Scooby seems to have an admiration for Adolf Hitler as if it wasn't for Hitler, Scooby would have never been born. Director Todd Solondz was brought up a Jew and had ambitions of being a Rabbi at an early age. With "Non-fiction", Solondz doesn't hold back in his critique on the modern day American Jewish family. "Non-fiction" follows a loser documentary filmmaker filming a documentary about Scooby and his family. The documentary almost immediately becomes an exploitation as many documentaries are. American Movie documentary star Mike Schank is also featured in "Non-fiction." This is no surprise as Schank was kind of exploited in *American Movie*. I recall a bitchy young Jewish liberal professor I once had that fell into hysterics as she laughed at such a pathetic man of European descent. Still, *American Movie* is one of the greatest American documentaries. An elderly Hispanic woman takes revenge against a Bourgeoisie Jewish family in *Storytelling*. Todd Solondz has yet to make a bad film, and *Storytelling* is a great example of that. In these modern

days of cultural Marxism and authoritarian censorship, it is hard to find an artist that is willing to stand up to Hollywood. Todd Solondz is just lucky that he had a Bar Mitzvah, as he has a little more freedom. When watching Selma Blair get plowed by a gigantic Afro-American, just remind yourself "It's only a movie."

-Ty E

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Todd Solondz (2004)

Certainly, virtually every little girl with a truly feminine soul dreams of growing up to be a mother. The inclination to care for another being, especially one of your own flesh and blood, is so strong from an early age that little girls are inevitably stereotyped as playing with baby dolls, an innate desire which eventually prepares them for future motherhood. Of course, the real, tangible future fruition of this childhood, feminine fantasy—having a real baby and the point in time in which one chooses to do so—is determined by numerous, intertwined factors: genetic predisposition first and foremost perhaps (the possibility that our genes are more in control of guiding our destinies than the conscious mind) but with the strong or subtle influence of environmental factors such as one's family dynamic growing up, surrounding peer pressure, delaying child birth in order to pursue career aspirations, or an unexpected, accidental (or not so accidental) teenage pregnancy. Thoroughly cynical American Jewish auteur Todd Solondz (*Welcome to the Dollhouse* (1995) and *Happiness* (1998)) masterfully portrays this topic in *Palindromes* (2004) with his brilliantly cast showcase of American degeneracy covering the rather unpleasant and controversial subject of abortion as well as pedophilia and kooky, cultish fundamentalist Christians, all delivered in his typically sardonic fashion; this time, however, he delivers with a bit less humor than usual and a much more biting and serious tone which will surely elicit pangs of sympathy and possibly even horror-filled empathy from pro-choice and pro-life women alike, especially those woeful ones of the fairer sex who have themselves undergone an ill-fated abortion (or elicit pride in the thankfully small minority of deluded feminists who believe that abortion is a sacred and celebrated rite of passage which all young women should undergo).

Intended as a sequel to Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse* (1995), *Palindromes* opens by paying homage to the former's main character, Dawn Wiener, the paltry and pathetic protagonist who has apparently committed suicide after being date raped and falling pregnant with some misbegotten offspring (it is worth noting that Solondz had originally intended for Heather Matarazzo to reprise her role as Dawn but she adamantly refused, leaving him with no choice but to kill off her unfortunate character). Dawn's brother, Mark, donning stereotypical Jewish garb with mournful Hebraic prayers being sung in the background (and who has apparently become a full-fledged pedophile), steps up to a pulpit beside her casket to deliver a pitiful eulogy to his ever doomed sibling. The scene then cuts to Joyce Victor (played by Ellen Barkin (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Ocean's Thirteen*) and who looks very believable in the part with her cosmetically "enhanced" face and Botoxed to hell trout pout blowjob lips), the do-gooder, liberal Jewish matriarch of the one-child Victor clan, which is of direct relation to the Wiener family, consoling her chubby, adopted black

daughter Aviva after Dawn's funeral as she tucks her in for the night (the entire scene, while appearing utterly ridiculous, is entirely plausible as it is so much the norm nowadays for deracinated whites to be seen gingerly caring for the offspring of other alien races). Aviva joyfully proclaims that she doesn't want to be anything like Dawn, a total loser, and that it is her greatest and not so unusual wish as a little girl to someday "have lots and lots of babies!" ushering in the main theme of the film: Aviva's undying maternal yearning and ultimate journey to go about having a baby at any cost, even if it means awkwardly sleeping with and becoming impregnated by virginal, under-aged, spoiled Jewish boys or perverted pedophile, racially ambiguous truckers with sickeningly hypocritical Christian bents.

Of important mention here is Solondz's use of multiple characters of varying ages, sexes, and races to portray Aviva at various points in her journey. I found this unusual and radical filmic device—which calls to mind Luis Bunuel's *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) in which two actresses alternate in playing the same lead—to be somewhat interesting, but a bit pretentious (while some reviewers take the rather predictable and absurd standpoint that this technique was employed solely to test the viewers' biases toward certain characters who are facing the same difficult situation, Solondz himself noted, "I just think it's a neat idea" and also noted how frequently it is used in soap operas and television series, but never "in the movies.") The film is sliced into chronological chapters, aptly titled with either a blue or pink baby theme and name, to represent whichever incarnation of Aviva will manifest herself, ranging from "Judah" Aviva (who in my eyes represents the most true-to-life Aviva as a young, unattractive, frizzy-haired Jewess of presumably Russian extraction in actuality); to "Henry" Aviva (played by a gawky, red-head who looks like an ardent fan of Blind Melon and who probably believes she died at Woodstock in a past life); to "Huckleberry" Aviva (who is apparently a male but appeared entirely female to me upon initial viewing of the film); to, perhaps most shockingly of all, "Mama Sunshine" Aviva, a morbidly obese negress who bears a striking resemblance to Gabourey Sibide of *Precious* (2009) fame; to "Mark" Aviva, played by Jennifer Jason Leigh who, in spite of being roughly 40 years old at the time of filming, very effectively pulled off the whole gawky and awkward adolescent girl look, among several other versions of Aviva. In spite of the actors' vast physical differences, each very effectively and uniformly pulls off being Aviva in spirit: a gawky, 12-year old Jewish girl from New Jersey with a penchant for wearing too tight pants and midriff tops and who is painfully, neurotically soft-spoken, and who, in spite of her bourgeois Jewish upbringing in the suburbs, intrinsically wants nothing more than to live and die by the penis, not as a sex-crazed teenage slut you'd see on the Maury Povich show, but above all else, so that she can become an unwed, teenage mother with "lots and lots of babies."

Aviva's journey begins as "Judah" Aviva, a chubby 12-year old Jewess who

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could easily fit in as the homely, teenage wife of a Rebbe in New York's Diamond District. Aviva, wearing a too-tight, belly baring shirt and ill-fitting jeans out of which her belly fat seems to pour (as she does throughout the film), attends a summer get-together with her parents at the home of some fellow Jews where she enjoys some alone time with Judah, the other family's spoiled, overweight, and horny virgin son who has posters of fake-breasted, faux-Aryan porn stars plastered all over his bedroom walls. After rather awkwardly viewing a pornographic film together (and both being seemingly unimpressed with it), Judah and Aviva decide to partake in carnal knowledge together for the first time, albeit for entirely different reasons—Judah, to prove his prowess and finally “make it” with a girl, and Aviva, to get pregnant. Somewhat miraculously, in spite of Judah lasting barely more than 30 seconds, and despite it being her first time, Aviva pulls it off and gets pregnant, giving some credence to the oft-spoken mantra of high school sex-ed that “it only takes once.” After falling ill with morning sickness as the newly incarnated, red-headed “Henry” Aviva, she is found out by her furious parents who, in spite of her pitiful, naive protests to keep the baby, insist that she have an abortion, which her thoroughly leftist, pro-choice mother Joyce justifies by revealing that she herself aborted Aviva's little brother many years before, citing rather insignificant financial reasons for slaughtering the baby, and that the cluster of cells rapidly dividing within her womb to form into a new human being is, “not a baby—not yet; it's like it's just a tumor!” Aviva winds up seeing the same Jewish abortion doctor, aptly named Dr. Fleischer (meaning “butcher” in German) who aborted her baby brother years before, who proceeds to take care of Aviva's little problem, albeit accidentally giving her a hysterectomy in the process. Upon waking after the ill-fated procedure, Aviva's parents begrudgingly reveal to her that her misbegotten offspring would have been a girl, opting to leave out the unfortunate, life-transforming bit about her inability to ever conceive a child again. In the aftermath of this traumatic situation, and still with the undying desire to have a baby at any cost, Aviva decides to run away from home and hitchhike to wherever she may find some easily obtainable, wanton, and wayward source of biological gold (semen).

As “Henrietta” Aviva (who looks very much like “Judah” Aviva), the desperate teen attempts to hitch a ride with any stranger who is willing to pick her up on a busy New Jersey freeway. Coincidentally, Dawn Wiener's pedophile brother, Mark, who is driving an old clunker Mercedes Benz, picks her up at the side of the road, imploring her to let him take her home. She coldly and adamantly refuses, and he goes on to explain to her that her name is a palindrome, meaning that it's spelled the same way backwards as forwards (as the director put it, “this functions as a loose metaphor for the ways in which we don't change...the nature of the film explores that part of ourselves which does not change, which is one of the film's central themes: change vs. stasis”). Aviva agrees to wait in the parking lot in his car while he runs some errands. Instead of waiting, how-

ever, Aviva jumps into the back of a truck in the parking lot having no clue, nor caring, where it may eventually lead her. Aviva winds up in the front passenger seat with the truck driver many miles into the journey (presumably somewhere in the south), and that night, the pernicious, yet awkward pedophile winds up defiling her the Catholic way in a budget motel. The next morning, "Joe," a somewhat strange, racially ambiguous cross between a wop and a redneck with a predilection for flannel shirts, deserts Aviva leaving her on her own again, sexually satisfied yet obviously fearful of being caught for his thoroughly perverse butt-buggering of a preteen girl. Like most idiotic teenage girls who come into contact with pedophiles, Aviva seems rather enamored with and fawns over the much older, lascivious lumberjack-like trucker, seemingly the first male to give her any real attention, softly remarking before he makes his stealthy exit that for her, "last night was...beautiful," not realizing he's a filthy pervert who's only looking to take advantage of her. Abandoned and dejected, Aviva is incarnated as "Huckleberry" Aviva, in actuality a boy who looks like a dykey mid-western teenage girl, and traverses by foot the nearby countryside, eventually hopping on what appears to be an abandoned Fisher-Price children's boat in a lake and floating, somewhat symbolically in a biblical sense, downstream, destination unknown.

Awakening on a shore in the middle of the woods as perhaps her most curious incarnation, "Mama Sunshine" Aviva, a morbidly obese, middle-aged black female, Aviva meets Peter Paul, an overly friendly and helpful, cystic-fibrosis addled youth who has stumbled upon her (of obvious Semitic extraction and who could easily pass for Ben Stein's son), who unquestioningly welcomes her into his adopted family, the Sunshine clan, a group of fundamentalist Christians (and very obvious contrast to Aviva's liberal, Jewish family), who have adopted a motley crew of assorted retarded and deformed children (who would have otherwise been aborted had their mothers not been totally out of their minds on drugs, retardation, and/or religion), including a blind, albino Nordic girl, a creepy and flagrantly faggy twink with a boyish bowl cut (who seems to have nothing wrong with him except that he looks like he could have easily starred in some degenerate trash twink porn), an Indian midget with a barely intelligible lisp, a characteristically chipper boy named Skippy with Down Syndrome, and a mulatto flipper baby, all of whom are cared for by "Mama Sunshine," a kind and matronly big-bosomed, Borreby Jesus fanatic who presumably couldn't have children of her own and so graciously took on "the Lord's work" by adopting and caring for a veritable zoo of every type of retard known to man. Soon after arriving at the Sunshine home, Aviva falls into a deep sleep, during which Mama Sunshine has her examined by the family physician, "Dr. Dan", who determines that she is sick from dehydration. After waking up and rather flagrantly but convincingly lying about her dubious origins (citing that her parents had been killed in the 9/11 attacks, that her kindly grandmother died of brain cancer, and that her

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cruel, evil foster parents abused her), Aviva is warmly welcomed into the family by Mama Sunshine who dresses her in a matronly pink dress that when adorned by this particular incarnation of Aviva very effectively evokes the image of the shrimp n' grits makin' "Mammy" caricature of the antebellum south.

Aviva takes a walk with Peter Paul in which he leads her to a nearby, abandoned tract of land where the dismembered parts of aborted fetuses are illegally disposed of in plastic bags, along with various other assorted garbage. Horrified and screaming after Peter Paul innocently picks up a bag of guts to show to her, the two kneel down and say a prayer for the unborn children, which is bizarrely punctuated with a kiss as Peter Paul seems to have an unrelenting crush on Aviva. Around this time, he also reveals to her that the family has a good friend, a man named Earl, who was once a convict but has since reformed himself as a born-again Christian, who lives in a trailer near the family's property. Later that day, after being welcomed into the physically deformed, yet spiritually perfect family and even joining the family's Christian pop group, "The Sunshine Singers," in which the children ecstatically sing (sometimes almost eerily erotically so in mainstream pop fashion a la Britney Spears or N' Sync) of their love for Jesus, Aviva shockingly learns that Earl is actually "Joe," the same man who took her anal virginity in a hotel room and abandoned her just days before, after he shows up with Dr. Dan while the children are performing a dance routine in the family's basement. The two make eye contact but say nothing to each other, and later that night, as she is spying on the male head of the household, Mr. Sunshine, Dr. Dan, and Earl in a private room in the basement, she learns that Dr. Dan had rather disgustingly taken photos of her genitals while she was unconscious, which he shows to Mr. Sunshine and Earl, remarking with this photographic evidence that Aviva is clearly a "child whore." The three then begin discussing their plans to assassinate Dr. Fleischer in New Jersey, the very same abortion doctor who very recently performed Aviva's ill-fated procedure just weeks before. Aviva, still eager to win Earl's love and affection and hoping to be impregnated by him still in spite of how niggardly he treated her, ventures out into the woods that night to Earl's trailer, and the two refine the nefarious plan to kill Dr. Fleischer together as a team. The ill-fated duo again embarks for New Jersey, all the while with Aviva coaching doubtful Earl of what he must do, egging him on that it's god's will and that the awful abortionist must pay "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" style. Earl, a misguided soul who is ever hesitant and indecisive over just about anything he does, quietly pulls up to the doctor of death's suburban home with his rifle and Aviva at his side, walks up a sliding door and hesitantly pulls the trigger, accidentally shooting Dr. Fleischer's young daughter in the head and subsequently downing Dr. Fleischer with the second shot. In the terribly tense and uncomfortable scenes that follow, Earl is markedly upset and suicidal over what he's done as the two find themselves holed up in a local hotel room, with Earl vomiting and lamenting "I did the wrong thing...God hates me...I'm go-

ing to fry...I could change, but now I'm going to die." Like all hormone-addled adolescent girls, Aviva foolishly implores Joe to stop spouting such nonsense and with her undying love and devotion for him, she states that she is willing to take the blame for the murders. Of course, the cops show up in no time and when Joe unwisely goes to the door with his rifle in tow, he intentionally or not commits self-slaughter when he opens the door to a round of bullets puncturing his guts from every which way.

Palindromes begins to wind down with the final incarnation of Aviva, "Mark" Aviva, played by Jennifer Jason Leigh (who, at nearly 40 years old very convincingly plays the angst-addled yet soft-spoken adolescent). It seems at this point that, given her tender age, Aviva was able to legally bypass any responsibility for the events that had transpired in the weeks before, and perhaps in casting her as an older woman, Solondz is demonstrating that Aviva has grown up to some extent, that perhaps she has even changed and matured. However, in this particular segment of her journey, during a family birthday party held for Aviva by her parents, the naive young lady has a rather nihilistic and despairing conversation with Dawn Wiener's brother, Mark, a recently convicted and now much loathed pedophile who is being entirely ignored and/or reviled by other guests at the party, who wisely asserts and again harkens back to the main theme of the film that, "People always end up the way they started out. No one ever changes. They think they do but they don't...it makes no difference. You're essentially the same in front, from behind, whether you're 13 or 50." Nowhere is this more penetratingly evident than in the penultimate scene of the film in which Aviva has a clandestine meeting with Judah in the woods who assures her, "I'm a changed man... I think I've matured a lot," who then proceeds to unzip his pants and again have his way with her, only to again fail in lasting any significant amount of time, and with Aviva imploring him to try again, as quickly as possible, because she's still as eager as ever to have a baby.

In conclusion, *Palindromes* reminded me somewhat of another Jewish-directed effort, *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003), directed by Andrew Jarecki in that, much like that film, which rather ambiguously handles the subject of pedophilia, Solondz makes no clear indication with *Palindromes* as to where he stands on abortion. While he very accurately, yet somewhat negatively portrays the Christian fundamentalist Sunshine family as all out bible-thumping wackos with murderous desires to annihilate abortion doctors, he almost portrays them—a family which cherishes even the most unloved and unwanted of children—in a more sympathetic light compared against the much more liberal Jewish Victor family (a family dynamic with which he is much more intimately familiar) in which unwanted children, physically defective or not, are completely disposable. While on the surface it seems that Aviva's parents are overwhelmingly caring and only looking out for the best for her (with her own mother even self-critically lamenting toward the end of the film that perhaps she had been a horrible mother,

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and that she still had the ability to change for the better), it is made obvious by Joyce Victor's rather callous statements about her own abortion (that she'd done it to financially protect Aviva, such that she'd have as many material possessions as possible growing up versus the much more fulfilling love and memories of a sibling) that perhaps it was rather ironically and hypocritically this decision and her means of raising her daughter that ultimately instilled Aviva with the overwhelming desire to get pregnant, to have a child of her own who would love her unconditionally. In the end, one may never know exactly what it is that drives Aviva so strongly toward conceiving a child in her early adolescent years, but such an insatiable itch is really rather pervasive in the decadent and perverse West, only now most teenage girls are taking it a step beyond simply having a baby, and desperately trying to conceive a very special, ill-fated sort of baby of the brown bastard variety, since it is not simply their own family which has rendered them unloved, but their entire race as a whole. And lastly, while one can argue that all of Solondz's films have a decidedly Jewish bent about them, and while Palindromes may take a somewhat ambiguous position about abortion, one thing is certain: unlike other Jewish directors, Solondz is hardly sympathetic or kind in his portrayal of his own tribe, instead invariably opting to very honestly and at times crudely portray them, warts and all, as a neurotic group which, while responsible for much of the degeneracy and decline of the west, may ultimately find itself on the same doomed sinking ship in the same stench-filled, muddied waters of multiculturalism and "die-versity" which threaten to drown the whole world.

-Magda von Richthofen zu Reventlow auf Thule

DARK HORSE

Todd Solondz* (2011)

I, much like the film *Dark Horse*'s "primary" character of study, Abe, have been left with this deep burning hole within my core. The reason being is that *Dark Horse* is a film of tremendous talent from both sides of the camera but the actual events that transpire on film are what left me polarized and puzzled; I'm unable to manifest a concrete decision on how dearly I hold this film. For Abe, this sentiment is shared with life, for me, my thoughts on the film itself. With *Dark Horse* comes Todd Solondz's most challenging film to digest to date, released during the years which seem to be the fall of the American elite. With Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis*, Ferrara's *4:44: Last Day on Earth*, and Solondz's *Dark Horse*, semi-independent cult cinema is shown to be artistically swaying due critical and commercial failure all but nigh. After all, these director's careers weren't built off of glowing puffery in newspapers, as the director's got their start in the marginal underground. Unlike the earlier referenced 'fallen auteur directors' for example, *Dark Horse* shows signs of multi-layered cinematic hemorrhaging and begs questions to be asked long after the credits roll, which is more than the other films could hope to achieve. *Dark Horse* is similar to a typical Solondz film but with more hallucinatory qualities, say, more in tune with Dylan Baker's dream of murder in *Happiness*. It is also more explicitly Judaic than his previous work and, like the others, has scripted alumni returning to form a cohesive web of quirky characters in a singular universe of dysfunction (e.g. the lead actress Selma Blair portraying Miranda) but as the closing credits note (Formerly "Vi"), meaning Storytelling's Vi - the original "Nigger Lover".

The partial setting of *Dark Horse* is a small business climate which is abused by Abe, a spoiled Jewish 30-something (but looks more like a 40 or even 50-something) who is on the verge of pathos and far more repellant than a colicky infant hungry for its mother's tit. Abe is absolutely infuriating to watch on the screen. There is no doubt that Todd Solondz himself views Abe as a cancer of sorts, even to his own "people." Day in and day out, Abe browses the Internet looking for hot deals on action figures, presumably to further complete his sheltered man-child escapism, as indicated by the Gremlins and the Simpsons memorabilia that decorate his juvenile room. Abe's parents are a divisive pair, the father being played by Christopher Walken and the mother being Mia Farrow, with their discussions of Abe's empty future as two separate strings of their son's case is hopeless. The father quietly exudes possible malice aforethought and somberly stares at a television in the peace of his own home. Abe's mother is the polar opposite of the father and much of the interaction with her son involves her coddling the track-suit-sporting thirty-something toddler into an ignorant stupor. This typically culminates into his instinctive inability to see himself as the self-loathing abscess of human waste he is. Other than the sometimes in-

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comprehensible approach Solondz took while filming *Dark Horse*, I found the most difficult obstacle *Dark Horse* had to offer was the character Abe himself. Abe is an utterly revolting creature who cruises the streets in a blindingly yellow Hummer blasting candy-sick pop music who frequents Toys"R"Us to complain about minuscule defects on *Lord of the Rings* action-figures. The fact that Abe is such an amateurish collector that he would open an action figure mint-on-card to later complain about a chip in the figure states a lot about the lack in discipline of his character.

In order to understand the other main character, Miranda, Abe's love interest, one must draw a connection between her character Vi and where she left off in *Storytelling*, and her current social status. There is no spin I could apply to this deplorable transition that could make it any easier for you, the viewer, to grasp. *Storytelling* left off with Vi, an idealist liberal who had been recently "raped" by her Pulitzer Prize-winning Negro professor, believing that she had a chance of being an incredible writer, emotional dead-weight in tow. Combine that thought with her own demented and adverse sense of altruism (e.g. "Fuck me, Nigger! - also, having a relationship with a product of Cerebral Palsy) and we can paint the image ourselves, but with *Dark Horse* following her tragic blip of wasted youth. *Dark Horse* finds her as a failure who moved back into her parents who has since contracted an STD from a homosexual Indian who refers to himself as a "Westerner". Another film, another collage of multicultural horrors unmasked as Todd Solondz has already shown us how, without effort, this is his signature that leaves us wanting. Reverting discussion back to Abe, his character is first shown at a Jewish wedding which is appended with a choreographed scene of dance-floor disruption to the too-loud musical seances of an over-produced urban cacophony, namely, mundane pop group Kid Sister's song *Right Hand Hi*. Spanning from this to Abe's fashion comes the various examples of the many ironies exhibited within *Dark Horse*. Essentially, everything about Abe is a product of postmodern America; a product of a spoiled generation's waste. But then again, during the rise of network TV's latest addiction - the grotesque white-trash *Honey Boo Boo*, what isn't to be expected when the ideal of standards is literally favored towards mediocrity and cultural decay? Overweight and overzealous, Abe devours the limelight as television's pop parasites have, and will continue to do.

During the middle mark it becomes apparent that there is something quite strange about the architecture of *Dark Horse*. I, for one, chalked it up to a loss of steam; a stream of obtrusive offenses against the film that had mighty to do with the film's occasional and more frequent dipping into the waters of the surreal. It was only after *Dark Horse* ended that I had this nagging itch that I had missed something that was right in front of me for the majority of the film. At this moment in the review is where I will begin to submerge into a theory that will completely and utterly spoil the film for those who have not seen it, so tread

cautiously. *Dark Horse* is primarily told from Abe's perspective; his woes, troubles, loneliness, and disparity. Near the end of the film, Abe's psyche becomes so hopelessly wounded that he begins having casual conversation with characters who do not exist in his relative space. Abe's appearingly involuntary arguments with characters that do not exist near his material state drop in and out, becoming more and more of a frequent activity closer to the ending. These events didn't begin suddenly but were introduced sporadically, with previous examples that were, at first, ones to shrug off. For instance, after leaving Miranda's house following a first date marriage proposal, Abe's father's secretary, Marie, sprints towards his car and, without breath, hands him a stack of spreadsheets that his father had been pestering him to complete. This and other instances of Marie's "guardian angel" apparitions are what tilt *Dark Horse* towards something that isn't incipiently recognizable as what could be perceived as a sub-textual film shedding its translucent disguise. This is dramatically heightened once you realize that Abe is dying/dead due to a scene earlier in which Miranda admits to being a carrier of Hepatitis B. What has been presented as a plausible theory is that *Dark Horse* is not illustrated from Abe's perspective but from Marie's, capturing on film her own desires and motherly instincts taking full, malicious control of her psyche. This can be attested to in the multiple screen personas of Marie, as Abe views her as a loose-virtued "cougar", motherly figure, caretaker, and labor-driven sexpot. What this is equating to is also evidenced by the fact that, during one of Marie's out-of-character revelations, she reveals that she was a mother of twins who have since been deceased. Her following closely behind Abe's metaphorical coattails would explain the middle and the end, and as for the beginning, well, that could be argued as the first clashing of personalities. Unless, of course, Marie was viewing his *Thundercats* action figure-filled browser history while he was away from the office and thus getting a more personal understanding of him, as he was often due to chronic temper tantrums. This candy colored painting of conflicting identities is further highlighted with the final shot of Marie, devastated by Abe's death, staring off into emptiness while the office scurries about with business as usual. Her face frozen in silence properly demonstrates the void of Abe's infantile office drama as there is no more Abe.

Since the release of his feature-length debut, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, Todd Solondz has shown insights in the understanding of the importance of music to moving images to synchronize/amplify thematic patterns as often as he injects irony and vigor into helplessness. Not leaving anything to chance though, Solondz outfits *Dark Horse* with its musical trump card who goes by the name of Michael Kisur. Michael Kisur's song "Who You Wanna Be" rings out as the most eerily infectious of the bunch. It captures perfectly the, at times, Abe's infantile, self-indulgent optimism. "Who You Wanna Be" can be described as playground tunes of a Ritalin-ridden pre-teenster whose positive outlook on life is second only to the artwork of early nineties Trapper Keeper-alum Lisa Frank.

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Truthfully, it must be heard to be believed. In Dark Horse, Todd Solondz has surely created something original. The formula isn't the same as the prior events are left with much to be desired, thus explaining my aforementioned alienation. Taking Dark Horse entirely at face-value is how I had initially interpreted it and I was left wanting more. Notwithstanding, after tinkering with the idea that I have fleshed out in the previous paragraph, Dark Horse becomes an entirely different beast. Somehow Abe's inconsistencies and de facto flaws become less enraging as a different character's perspective is realized. With this perception of Dark Horse comes a new form of insights and without official address from Solondz, leaves Dark Horse as a superlative conversation piece.

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FRISK

Todd Verow° (1996)

Gay serial killers seem to be a dime a dozen, especially when it comes to the exceedingly sexually erratic sort of lone-wolf exterminator, yet there seems to be a lack of homo-cidal murderer movies and even less that take an unwaveringly intimate approach to this absurdly unspeakable subject, thus I was quite impressed when I discovered abberosexual American auteur Todd Verow's sod sex slayer *Frisk* (1995); a film where one man's fiendish fantasy for mutilated flesh turns into a life-consuming obsession of the most ominous and – at least for the character – odorous sort. The virtual 'American Psycho of gay serial killers films,' *Frisk* is ultimately more gritty and controversial and less cartoonish in comparison to the feminist-directed and lesbian co-penned black comedy, not least of all due to the fact that Verow's film takes a matter-of-fact approach to the subject that was not meant to spare anyone, hence why the wanton work was condemned by a sizable segment of politically correct poofs. In short, *Frisk* has no moral compass, let alone a fag fabulous political agenda. Featuring a sicko sad-ass jock type with a redundant tribal tattoo as the calculating blood-lusting, cock-busting serial killer of swinging punk Sodom, *Frisk* has a lot in common with the aberrant German arthouse flick *Prince in Hell* (1993) aka *Prinz in Hölleland* in terms of featuring the sort of severely subversive depiction of Dorian Love that most uppity and hysterical pc homos would like to see put back in the closest, so it should be no surprise that Michael Stock – the writer/director/star of the curiously crude cock-sucking kraut flick – also plays a Teutonic hustler twit in Verow's film. Indeed, featuring fag-murdering fags and Aryans, and lacking any sort of stale sentimentalist social commentary, *Frisk* is not exactly the sort of flick that would have been distributed by the Weinsteins. Featuring a less than uplifting but certainly catchy and complimentary soundtrack by post-industrial group Coil whose lead singer John Balance was so similarly self-destructive of a homo as the hopeless hustler in Verow's film that he died rather randomly after falling from a two story balcony (apparently, as the scatology-spirited singer serenaded many times before, "there was too much blood in his alcohol"), *Frisk* is a fag flick that isn't actually 'faggy,' at least in the prissy and pretentious sense, as it transcends the STD-riddled ghetto of mainstream gay 'culture,' opting for being perversely provocative over poofster pussyfooting, stern sadism over sappy sod sentimentalism, bodacious brutality over barren buggery, hate over happiness, and fleshwounds over fecal matter in a work that never demands tolerance, but instead that one have enough gall and balls to sit through the whole thing.

Based on the 1991 novel of the same name by Dennis Cooper – a punk poof writer whose early written works were heavily inspired by the *Psychopathia Sexualis*-worthy writings by Marquis de Sade and Arthur Rimbaud – Todd

FRISK

Verow's sin-saluting cinematic adaptation stays true to the roots of the novel, at least in spirit, but at that same time it is an original work in its own right that features experimental editing with distorted video imagery and a soundtrack that lecherously livens up the psychopathic pig room celluloid party. Centering around completely crazed yet curiously charming anti-hero Dennis (Michael Gunther) – a stoic homo that began developing a fetish for dead bodies and murder after checking out some snuff magazines when he was only an highly impressionable teenager – Frisk automatically lets the viewer know from the get go that it is not your typical serial killer flick as the work is from the first-person perspective of the necrophiliac butt bandit himself. Most of Frisk is narrated through a series of letters written by Dennis to his surely sick yet slightly less sadistic sometimes-boyfriend and dubious best friend Julian (Jaie Laplante); a fiercely foul fellow who has quasi-incestuous relationship with his own younger brother Kevin (Raoul O'Connell), who himself is gay thanks to his brother's warped mind, on top of seeming rather autistic. Needless to say, when Julian moves to Europa, Dennis – a cunning alpha-fag that is always conspiring a plan to transcend his already rather perturbing perversity – moves in on Kevin and earns his trust and love even more so than his own brother ever could. Of course, Dennis' main motivation in life is man-handling and mutilating corpses of timid teen twink, but he needs to build up enough confidence and further desensitizes his already terribly tainted conscience to go from simple cock-sucking to corpse-fucking. After a young hustler named Henry (Craig Chester; who played the infamous Jewish homosexual child murderer Nathan Leopold Jr. in Tom Kalin's *New Queer Cinema* classic *Swoon*), who Dennis originally intended to kill but chickened out is murdered by a bourgeois leather-fag, the novice necro decides he no longer wants to play gay games and inevitably murders his first hustler; a bleached-blond cum and beer chugger. After his German hustler friend/fuckbuddy Uhrs (played by Michael Stock) catches wind of his original plan to kill and dismember him, Dennis' trail of rent boy blood is tracked via the killer's letter by the kraut cock-sucker and his nihilistic female friend Ferguson (Parker Posey). Motivated more by her perverse and unquenchable hatred of humanity than a fetishistic fondness for blood and guts, Ferguson and her creepy fag friend end up joining Dennis for a *Ménage à trios* of murder and mayhem. Writing off Dennis' letters as being the "same old apocalyptic porn," feminist femme fatale Ferguson brings a certain "logical approach divorced from emotion," thus enabling the necromantic to evade the law. In one especially stand-out scene, pre-tranny Robert "Alexis" Arquette plays a punk hustler that is so fucked up on 'Cocteau's kick' that he does not realize that the three psychopaths are in the process of murdering and dismembering him as they collectively strip him while wearing latex surgical clothes so as to not get their oh-so dainty hands dirty. After Dennis barebacks the punk gigolo (who states "that's the best you can do, big boy" while getting sodomized sadistically), the terrible threesome

ties him up and guts him like a pig. Of course, Dennis has more personal motivations than his two intellectually insipid compatriots, so he looks to his best friend Julian's younger brother Kevin for macabre answers.

What I noticed immediately upon watching *Frisk* is that it seems like libidinous lunatic Luka Rocco Magnotta – the gay Canadian porn star and homo go-go dancer who murdered and dismembered the body of a cock-sucking Chinese student named Lin Jun and mailed his body parts to the offices of various Canadian political parties and even an elementary school, thus earning the title of “Canadian Newsmaker of the Year for 2012” after there was an international manhunt when he fled his own country for Europa – must have watched Verow's film and viewed it as a kind of spiritual blueprint before carrying out his frenzied campaign for necrophile fame, as such a rather raunchy and wretched murder-romanticizing work would surely give the extra push needed for less than a psychologically stable individual to carry out their carnal corpse-caressing fantasies. As one can expect from such a uniquely uncompromising work, *Frisk* has been condemned by a number of hysterical homophile film reviewers as being ‘homophobic,’ as if showing one's fist up someone's ass or eating shit is not bad enough. A virtual “film for all and none,” *Frisk* may feature a lot of homo-sadist imagery and whatnot, but it is surely not a distinctly ‘gay film,’ at least not in any conventional sense, sort of like William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), albeit causing more shit-stirring (pun intended), if not at a more marginal work being an independent film. Unfortunately, director Todd Verow has yet to direct another film with the same idiosyncratic intensity and awfully aberrant aesthetic imagery as *Frisk* and has settled for directing more softcore, low-budget fag-friendly films for his production company Bangor Films. As the son of a Northern New England politician who became a hustler after swooning over a punk streetwalker as depicted in his later work *Between Something & Nothing* (2008), Verow did lend a certain autobiographical authenticity to *Frisk*, so it's a shame he later settled for being a relatively unknown hack filmmaker as opposed to leading a life like the anti-hero in his infamous sodomite serial killer film. If *Frisk* is anything to go by, Verow would have at least been more successful in his libertine lust-killing than murderous attention whore Magnotta. At the very least, Verow could go back to his roots and cinematically redeem himself by directing a bodacious and brazen biopic about Mr. Magnotta and his macabre man-meat-mutilating monkey business.

-Ty E

ANONYMOUS
ANONYMOUS

Todd Verow° (2004)

After valiantly enduring subversive homo-auteur Todd Verow's dauntingly deranged documentary *Bottom X* (2012) – a worse than wretchedly wanton work about a decisively depraved bug-chasing HIV-positive poof who has an unhealthy obsession with having his diseased 'man-cunt' creamed with equally soiled, STD-ridden seed – I figured it was about time that I checkout some of the firebrand fairy filmmaker's celluloid back catalog, thus leading me to his debauched digital video work *Anonymous* (2004); a film about a miserably masochistic fellow who lives to be fucked in most unflattering ways in public places. Starring director Todd Verow (Frisk, *Bulldog in the Whitehouse*) himself as the patently pathetic protagonist 'Todd' – a severely sensitive and surely sad fellow who enjoys masturbating whilst chatting on his cell phone with prospective sex partners and being borderline raped in public bathrooms – *Anonymous* is a seemingly semi-autobiographical work directed by an auteur filmmaker who, not unlike Bruce LaBruce (*Super 8 ½*, *The Raspberry Reich*) but all the more in the gay gutter, seems to wallow in his own sexual insanity. In part filmed at the movie theater that Verow actually worked at during the film's production, and featuring displays of erratic homoeroticism that are undeniably authentic, *Anonymous* is an audaciously gritty piece of gay guerrilla filmmaking. A veteran of New Queer Cinema who, unlike many of his cinematic compatriots, still swims in the seedy semen-drenched cesspool as a filmmaker who knows no budgets and certainly no sexual mores, *Anonymous* acts as a virtual digital video manifesto for the auteur filmmaker's one-man revolution against absurd authoritarianism of mainstream fagdom. With his early sadomasochistic sodomite serial killer *Frisk* (1995), Verow inspired flaming fag-on-fag hatred and groundless accusations of 'homophobia' by prissy politically-correct poo-packers, so it was only natural that the filmmaker would write the following in a filmmaking manifesto entitled "No More Mr. Nice Gay": "No more Mr. Nice Gay! Aren't you tired by now of these buff, shiny, happy, pretty pretty gay people in (alleged) comedies about hooking up and being shirtless and oh-so-pretty and oh-so-vacant. No more documentaries about gay marriage and about "how just like everyone else" we are. No more conformity... We are outlaws, we are outsiders and we always will be. You don't need a cock just a camera (and it doesn't have to be a big camera but you have to have the balls to face down the status quo.). Pull it out. Stroke it. Dare the audience, the critics, the programmers, etc. to suck it. Create like there is no tomorrow (in this modern world, you never know) and shoot, shoot, shoot!" Indeed, with *Anonymous*, vehement Verow both shot and sucked and, judging by all the public sex, probably committed a couple copulation-based crimes, but he certainly did not do it incognito. As he would later reveal in his insightful manifesto, "looking back now I think af-

ter making *FRISK*, I wasn't ready or able to make another gay film until it was something personal, something painfully real. I was ready to do that when I was single again and moved back to NYC in 2001. I bared all (not just my ass but heart and soul) in *ANONYMOUS* (Berlinale 2004). I decided that if I was going to take shit from people it would be for something personal," and, indeed, few films are so incriminatingly intimate as *Anonymous*; an agile, if not oftentimes aesthetically agitating, auteur piece from the bowels of the homocore underground that will probably make most male viewers think twice about using a public restroom.

Todd has led a fairly pathetic and miserable life, which is probably rooted in the fact he was maliciously molested at the impressionable age of 12-years-old. As director Verow candidly admitted to kraut queen auteur Rosa Von Praunheim in 2008 during their televised date on the German-French Arte show *Into the Night with...* (2002-present), he also faced a similar real-life harrowing fate as a young child at the hands of a sick sexual predator and the byproduct of this life-changing experience certainly bleeds through in *Anonymous*; a delirious digital diary about a damaged and emotionally destitute man whose only source of solace in life is sodomy, sucking, and being verbally and physically abused. A 36-year-old man (that tells everyone he is 32) who works as the night manager of a Manhattan movie theater, Todd uses his work hours to masturbate, get manhandled by random men in the bathroom, and perform flamboyant stripteases solely for himself, but during his free time, especially when he goes back at his apartment with his boyfriend, depression kicks in. Naturally, Todd has a hard time keeping up with all the men he gets screwed by and so does his boyfriend/roommate John (Dustin Schell). As Todd states in a most monotone yet melancholy manner, "John works during the day and I at night, which has probably kept us from strangling each other over the last five years...although, that would be a welcome change now." Of course, it seems things were not as bad in the past and there used to be some romance in the relationship as demonstrated by his confession, "We had so many plans for fixing this place up...but we never really got around to it." Indeed, the only thing that terminally tragic Todd gets around to doing is being buggered senselessly in begrimed bathrooms by anonymous men for such is the lonely yet lecherous life of a supremely salacious sex addict/sex abuse victim whose only method of connecting with others is being anally reamed and cummed on. One day, Todd's wanton world comes tumbling down when his much more conservative boy toy John surprises him at work and catches him receiving a glory-hole blow-job from another boy in the libertine latrine. Furious and fuming, John brutally beats, strips, and writes "FUCK HERE" (which another fellow does relentlessly later that night) on Todd's butt cheeks. Needless to say, John locks Todd out of the apartment and throws all his ex-beau's belongings into the street, so he spends the night at an old trick's house and is buggered by the brown man most belligerently. After stealing a pair of

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Wizard of Oz-style 'magical ruby slippers' from an unconscious woman, Todd is fired from his job when the movie theater management discovers that he is engaging in torrid tearoom sessions in the public bathroom (not to mention the fact that an auditor discovers that he has been stealing). Luckily, Todd makes a couple extra bucks doing some poofier pin-up photos prior to the termination of his employment and makes some friends in the process. Of course, not all things are bad for Todd as he and his new group of debauched friends play an erotic game of Red light/Green light.

Although not Todd Verow's most accomplished (let alone most subversive) effort, *Anonymous* is an excellent place to start to understand the avant-garde auteur behind the camera as a self-exploitative exposé and an exceedingly explicit and engrossing sort of contemporary American equivalent to Frank Ripploh's queer kraut cult classic *Taxi zum Klo* (1980). Essentially, *Anonymous* depicts a patently pitiable man with a lurid yet ironically lackluster life who lacks even the will power to commit suicide (or so he admits with an anecdote at the conclusion of the film). Neither a pretentious work, nor a vainglorious piece of mundane movie masturbation (although weirdo wanking is featured throughout), *Anonymous* is an equally hopeless yet humorous film that is hard to forget, whether one would like to or not. As someone who makes a living from his micro-budget movies and managing a movie theater part-time, Verow's decision to be the main character in *Anonymous* – a rather ridiculously reflective work – surely makes the filmmaker not so 'anonymous' anymore. One of the very last heretical hardcore auteur filmmakers, Verow partly fills a void in an increasingly Hollywood-influenced phenomenon of homogenizing homos in the United States that, on top of turning the United States of America into a neo-bolshevik authoritarian nation, stifles creativity and individuality and fosters mediocrity and conformity, especially among a historically artistically-inclined minority group. As a filmmaker who wrote in his manifesto, "I have a natural instinct to destroy in the name of creativity. Besides, we had a blast shooting a big "fuck you" to the growing political correctness of the 90's, and to the mainstreaming of gay culture which started then. A riot broke out at our screening during the San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, the editor of *The Advocate* magazine said I should be shot," and "To me, experimental or underground film and queer film were synonymous," Verow certainly proved that he practiced what he preached with *Anonymous*; a digital video depiction of one damaged dude's desperate desire to down gobs of dicks in a depraved and depressing fashion that will remind you why the word "gay" has totally lost its original meaning.

-Ty E

BOTTOM X

Todd Verow° (2012)

Undoubtedly, I have seen my fair share of decidedly deranged and delinquently debauched films, but I can state without the slightest hint of hesitation that – for better or for worse – New England homo-auteur Todd Verow’s surpassingly sickening *cinéma vérité* documentary *Bottom X* (2012) is the most ghastly and revolting film that I have ever endured in my entire life and I tend to watch no less than three movies a day, most of which are in some way subversive and/or unkosher. Based on the real-life personal blog “confessions of a bareback cunt” written by the pseudonymous wayward interweb writer “bare_whore24,” *Bottom X* is a soul-damaging DV document about one HIV-positive human cum-bucket’s real-life sadomasochistic encounters with superlatively seditious sodomites and semen-demons who are living the discrete dirty ‘dream’ of creaming an already disease-ridden man with their spoiled Satanic seed. An uniquely unsettling doc on clearly sexually and emotionally damaged individuals, *Bottom X*, despite being a no-budget work shot on diarrhea digital video, more resembles a nefariously nauseating *Dogme 95*-style science fiction nightmare that is more perturbing, piggish, and (unfortunately) penetrating than any surrealist genital landscape that Swiss artistic H.R. Giger could dream up about a fiercely foul fellow who describes his life’s work as being a cryptic yet committed “cum dump.” Bent bastard bare_whore24 sums up his lethally lecherous life at the conclusion of *Bottom X* with the perversely proud statement of a self-crowned semen-sanctifying champion: “First 50 load weekend. I feel like the biggest cum dump on the planet.” By “50 load weekend,” this aberrant anonymous ‘anti-hero’ means that he had no less than fifty strangers of Sodom come to his bare-bones apartment in New York City and ream his ripped rectum with their diseased ramrods, but not without saving their spudwater so he could squirt it out of his ass for the candid cocksucker camera. Needless to say, *Bottom X* is as close as films come in making the viewer feel as if they have been vehemently violated as a victim of a vile virtual virus that not even a triple viewing of *The Adventures of Milo and Otis* (1986) could neutralize.

Who is “bare_whore24” and how the hell did he get so fucked up? Was he raped with a dildo at the ripe age of 6 by his half-retarded step-uncle? These are the questions that I compulsively asked myself while watching *Bottom X*; a debasingly damning document of one S&M maniac’s masochistic obsession with sinisterly swimming in a creamy cesspool of contaminated man-juice. A proud poz-cock pervert whose asshole is a veritable petri dish for breeding the most ungodly sorts of super bug STDs yet known to man, the shameless subject of the documentary is clearly not satisfied with simple computer viruses, so he actively recruits renegade aberrosexuals off wacked-out adult classified websites and has heretical homos literally waiting in line to pack his rancid fudge within a mere

BOTTOM X

10 minutes. Indeed, *Bottom X* goes well beyond simple poofier pornography as something more venomously and viciously visceral as a morbid and moribund document of the sexually insane featuring disturbingly defiled individuals whose idea of eroticism has the inverse result of standard sex because instead of producing progeny these wretchedly wanton fellows consciously spread disease and inevitable death, thus bringing true meaning to the quote at the beginning of the documentary by Romanian 'Theatre of the Absurd' playwright Eugène Ionesco: "Suffering and fear are born from the repression of the death wish." As written on the back of the DVD case of *Bottom X*: "None of the scenes were staged, re-enacted or directed by the filmmaker or subject. Everyone presented in the film is over the age of 18 and consented to being filmed." Indeed, *Bottom X* is a rare documentary work where one not only sees the sadomasochistic spread of deleterious disease via bareback buggery, but also severely stomach-turning footage of a man squirting STD-ridden spunk out of his broken brown-eye and snorting it up his nasty nose. A completely corrupt cum collector who probably has a larger quantity of population paste than the average inner city sperm bank, the pathological poof known as "bare_whore24" is nothing short of a dedicated harvester of dead biological souls and an ungodly grotesque grim reaper of suicidal Sodom. A mystical masochist who believes that, "it's not important" how many loads he shoots because "it's all about my bareback cunt," bare_whore24 is a real-life example of the more unsavory sodomites who live on the more wayward and wicked side of Brokeback Mountain, so Hollywood homos be advised, *Bottom X* is bugger blasphemy to p.c. pansies and limp-wristed LGBT loonies.

Forget *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975), *Water Power* (1977), *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980), *Niggas' Revenge* (2001), *The Life and Death of a Porno Gang* (2009), *Melancholie der Engel* (2009), and *A Serbian Film* (2010), Verow's *Bottom X* is aesthetic warfare of the completely creepy and incapacitating sort and the only film that has caused me to cringe and wince since my more innocent grade school years. That being said, I never plan to see *Bottom X* again, as the mental misery and metaphysical malady that is this decisively diseased digital documentary has already done enough damage to my soul for a lifetime. Admittedly, after seeing Verow's somewhat recent work *Between Something & Nothing* (2008) not too long ago, I thought the subversive sodomite auteur might have gone soft since directing S&M serial killer flick *Frisk* (1995), but *Bottom X* is as aesthetically brutal, beastly, and sleazy as films come as a fetid visual feast of fatality fetishism. Featuring voice manipulated narration by 'star' bare_whore24 that sounds like Jeffrey Dahmer talking through a vocoder in some sort of homo Hades and a direful portrayal of the human body that totally transcends the biological absurdity of genuine autopsy videos and abhorrent Viennese Aktionism, *Bottom X* is an absolutely odious yet obscenely objective portrayal of a man who has stared into the semen abyss and unflinchingly decided to jump in head first and bring as many other hexed homos with him. As an accidental anti-

AIDS PSA, Bottom X might be the only film ever made that could stop some man-juice starved homo from swapping sperm with the first guy to answer his craigslist ad, or even de-recruiting him from fagdom altogether, for not only is this one of the sickest movies ever, but also one of the most unflattering portrayals of homosexuality ever crafted. Much like Rosa von Praunheim before him and his cock-sucking cinematic compatriots John Greyson and Bruce LaBruce, Todd Verow portrays Kinsey 6 sex in a passionately perverse manner that puts to shame the sort of anti-pooof propaganda that any Pentecostal pastor could ever produce. Bottom X is a deathly decadent depiction of death sex, and nothing more and nothing less.

-Ty E

THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITY OF SKY
THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITY OF SKY

Todd Verow° (2012)

As far as gay American auteur filmmakers are concerned, Todd Verow is undoubtedly the least tamed and infected with the politically correct LGBT mainstream that has homogenized the homos and turned them into an automaton collective that is no less banal and braindead than Evangelical Christians. Leaving his big and infamous impression on the independent/ New Queer Cinema world with his sweetly scandalous sodomite serial killer flick *Frisk* (1995), a wicked work based on the seemingly unfilmable 1991 novel of the same name by poofer punk author Dennis Cooper, Verow has displayed an almost pathological and superhuman knack for churning out films like Rainer Werner Fassbinder and, naturally, like the German New Cinema alpha-auteur, many of his films are 'hit or miss.' While I thought Verow had gone flaccid with queer melodramas like *Between Something & Nothing* (2008) and *The Boy with the Sun in His Eyes* (2009), he has created a number of idiosyncratic and sexually iconoclastic works of the delightfully disturbing sort, including the documentary *Bottom X* (2012) and *The Endless Possibility of Sky* (2012), in the past year or so that are worthy of serious attention. While *Bottom X*, a sort of quasi-anthropological study of an AIDS infected "bareback mancunt" who has fifty different strangers sodomize him over the course of a weekend without using rubbers, is a virtual real-life horror show about a muscular maniac of a homo with a serious death wish, *The Endless Possibility of Sky* is an aberrant arthouse flick full of lunatic libertinage that takes a look at a group of self-destructive fags with self-absorbed swag who consume any and every drug they can find when not (but also often-times while) engaging in suicidal sex and addiction-inspired prostitution. A sort of strangely hypnotic piece of arthouse (anti)erotica featuring scenes of kaleidoscopic yet minimalistic anti-hipster animation of the pop degenerate variety, *The Endless Possibility of Sky*, as expressed in its allegorical yet matter-of-fact tagline "Once you reach the sky...it's all downhill from there," shows what happens when too much sex, drugs, and indie rock consume a small clique of cocksucking compatriots who rely on a demented fag hag for their daily doses of hardcore narcotics. An innately nihilistic piece of anti-Wes Anderson-esque arthouse meets hysterical hagsploitation and Halsted-esque S&M art-erotica, *The Endless Possibility of Sky* (2012) is the sort of uncompromising 'no bullshit' work of queer cinema that, much like an AIDS-infected shot of semen, strikes pulsating, penetrating fear into the quivering, angst-ridden hearts of "we're just like everybody else" gay rights activists and phony pro-egalitarian art fag hipsters alike.

Drew (Brad Hallowell) is a gay man from the middle-of-nowhere Waterville, Maine, so he naturally finds himself addicted to a life of vice after becoming part of little Sodom subculture in New York City. A former Christian churchgoer from an isolated and sheltered background, Drew eventually adopts a simple

nihilistic and hedonistic philosophy in NYC that he describes as follows, "Life and all that other bullshit doesn't matter. It's just the stuff that gets in the way in between parties because there is no afterwards. The party must never stop. I'll do anything to keep it going...sex with strangers who have more...sex for money to get more. Steal money...steal drugs...sell drugs. Whatever it takes not to have to stop...that feeling is too good to just go away." Drew, like his sexually fiendish friends, is a patron of a psychotic woman who claims to get her drugs from aliens and is a self-described 'venture capitalist' named Mistress Datina (Verow 'diva' Philly), a wreck of a woman who invites "clean" (she sprays their penises at the door!) albeit AIDS-infected homos over for sexual and narcotic debauchery as she has never gotten over the death of her son, thus her fag friends, who engage in meaty manwich orgies right in front of her, act as sort of surrogate sons. A fellow with a certified 'poz-cock,' Drew valiantly admits "I don't know when I became positive" as it "doesn't matter," after having one too many lewd libidinous encounters with dozens of other lascivious bugchasers; later on, he learns that his first great lover Christian (Michael Vaccaro) is also HIV positive and he has no interest in taking the drugs that will save his life, but he certainly has a perturbing proclivity for popping the pills that will put him in an early grave. Mohawk-sporting Mestizo Rob (Rob Ordonez) is a punk rock poof that gets carnally involved with Christian, even popping his so-called "slam cherry" by shooting him up with his first shot of "Tina" aka crystal meth and then proceeding to assfuck him silly while he's high as a kite. Rob is not a particularly intelligent individual and almost finds himself cut up into tons of tiny pieces after he overdoses at Mistress Datina's pleasure dome, but he survives the ordeal, only to become the sex slave of a Dionysian 'Poppa Bear' fellow who looks like Peter Kern after he is drugged and repeatedly sodomized over a number of days. Indeed, trouble in poof paradise comes to the gay boi hustlers, porn stars, and badly damaged dick-stabber druggies of *The Endless Possibility of Sky*, a film that explicitly but not (too) exploitatively demonstrates that with every great high, be it erotic or narcotic, once must come down and very likely fall very hard in the process. In the ridiculous libertine renegade realm of *The Endless Possibility of Sky*, once someone enters a figurative hell, there is virtually no return, unless you come back as a self-righteous recovering addict who is willing to literally kill to prove a point.

Near the beginning of *The Endless Possibility of Sky*, protagonist Drew sums up the wanton Weltanschauung of him and his copulating compatriots as follows, "I felt like an outlaw...like before being gay become all mainstream...before gay became so fucking boring...getting married, having kids, being in the military...back when they would have sex in late night parks, in dark restrooms, trucks...there was a danger, there was an excitement. Yeah, I know...full of self-loathing and internalized homophobia. But it's bullshit...trying to fit in, trying to copy straight bourgeoisie culture...that is self-loathing, that is homo-

THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITY OF SKY

phobia. We're animals, we are the new sexual outlaws. The knowing looks...the codes...the secrets...the only difference is that now, it's all about the drugs...not the sex." Indeed, like all of Verow's digital dime-store works, *The Endless Possibility of Sky* features no phony LGBT sermonizing or far-left diatribes as the characters of the film are neo-leather-fags (minus the leather) of the designer drug age who form an erotically erratic elite, at least in their own drug-addled minds as they engaged in ritualistic bacchanalia of the boy-buggering variety. While I personally find the severely sadomasochistic behavior portrayed in *The Endless Possibility of Sky* to be rather repulsive and even reprehensible, the film itself is a thematically liberating affair that bows down to no one, especially the mainstreaming cocksucking queens in Hollywood that have created a pre-packaged pansy 'gay culture' that seems to be all the more loathsome and hideous than a couple of anti-p.c. poofs who are proud to have diseased poz-cocks like those featured in Verow's film. Unlike sell-out sods like Gus van Sant, Todd Verow rightfully seems to realize that Fred Halsted is infinitely more important and less deleterious to both gay and straight culture than Harvey Milk. Undoubtedly, *The Endless Possibility of Sky* features vulgar people doing vulgar things, but it has more aesthetic grace than Hebraic homo sitcoms like *Will & Grace*.

In a manifesto entitled "NO More Mr. Nice Gay" that he wrote for the Berlin Film Festival Teddy Awards, Todd Verow concluded with the following words: "No more Mr. Nice Gay! Aren't you tired by now of these buff, shiny, happy, pretty pretty gay people in (alleged) comedies about hooking up and being shirtless and oh-so-pretty and oh-so-vacant. No more documentaries about gay marriage and about "how just like everyone else" we are. No more conformity, (whatever that is) and whatever happened to "We're here we're queer get used to it!" Stop pretending that AIDS (or at least the devastating effects of AIDS), homophobia (outside and inside the gay culture), violence, rape, oppression, murder, censorship, don't exist. We are outlaws, we are outsiders and we always will be. You don't need a cock just a camera (and it doesn't have to be a big camera but you have to have the balls to face down the status quo.). Pull it out. Stroke it. Dare the audience, the critics, the programmers, etc. to suck it. Create like there is no tomorrow (in this modern world, you never know) and shoot, shoot, shoot!" And, indeed, if we were to judge him by his work *The Endless Possibility of Sky*, Verow is thankfully a man that practices what he preaches, so much so that it is rather incriminating, but, more importantly, culturally iconoclastic. However, one can only hope that Todd Verow doesn't have quite the same deleterious death wish as most homos but that, if he does, he's not going to quite such extreme lengths as the curiously debauched poz-cock possessing, "bareback mancunt" of *Bottom X* or the deliriously drug-addled Christian of *The Endless Possibility of Sky* so that he can continue producing some of the most aberrant and incendiary American-made homo films of our time.

-Ty E

EROTIKUS: A HISTORY OF THE GAY MOVIE

Tom DeSimone (1973)

Before becoming a semi-decent exploitation auteur and directing post-The Exorcist Linda Blair in hokey horror flicks like *Hell Night* (1981) and tasteless TV series like *Freddy's Nightmares: A Nightmare on Elm Street: The Series* (1988-1990), filmmaker Tom DeSimone (*Reform School Girls*, *Angel III: The Final Chapter*) was a prolific gay pornographer who directed skin flicks with curious titles like *How to Make a Homo Movie* (1970) and *Swap Meat* (1973) under the less impressive pseudonym 'L(ancer) Brooks.' In fact, DeSimone cited his formative poof porn years with nostalgia and fondness, once stating, "I did some really good work in those days, considering the budgets and conditions. I learned to shoot fast and from the hip." Personally, I have next to nil interest in DeSimone's cinematic oeuvre—be it gay porn or otherwise—but I decided to watch his documentary *Erotikus: A History of the Gay Movie* (1973) when I learned it starred my favorite porn-auteur Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*) as its mumbling and masturbating host and narrator. Advertised in its press release as follows, "the naked narrator, Fred Halsted... guides the viewer through decades of all male erotica," *Erotikus* was ultimately denounced by Halsted, not least of all due to the fact that the doc reedited the conclusion of his legendary film *LA Plays Itself* (1972) in a manner that depicts sadomasochistic sodomy in an unflattering light by associating it with the Manson Family murders (a shot of a 1969 Los Angeles Times headline reading "New Weird Cult, Link to Tate Murder" concludes the excerpt). Starting out with Master Halsted fully clothes, the auteur-turned-narrator begins to drop his clothing and choke his chicken as *Erotikus* progresses, ultimately concluding with a climatic fireworks-like cum shot. Of course, as queer auteur/gay archivist William E. Jones (*Finished, Tea-room*) revealed in his Halsted biography *Halsted Plays Himself* (2011) regarding *Erotikus*, "At the end of the film, he masturbates and reaches a climax during a montage of cum shots set to the theme of Ravel's *Bolero*. DeSimone was not satisfied with Fred's performance in this capacity, so he used a double with a larger endowment and more impressive ejaculation. Presumably this was DeSimone's excuse for paying Halsted less than his promised fee, to Halsted's enduring resentment." Indeed, more than anything, *Erotikus* is an advertisement for DeSimone and—to a lesser extent—Halsted's porn flicks than an eclectic and all-encompassing history of celluloid homoeroticism. A seemingly 'prejudiced' work excluding important fucked fag flicks that had yet to be released like Roger Earl's *Born to Raise Hell* (1975) and the plot-driven 'arthouse' works of Jack Deveau (*Left-Handed*, *Drive*), *Erotikus* ultimately seems like a plodding premature ejaculation of a poorly edited mix-tape narrated by a man who clearly is much more charismatic and commanding when fisting young twinkles in the ass than when delivering an oral history of blue movie buggery in a most monotone

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manner.

Beginning in a somewhat satirical storybook manner typical of films from Classical Hollywood cinema era, *Erotikus* then introduces the film's chapter titles (Chapter 1: Where Do We Go From Here?, Chapter 2: The "Barriers" Are Down, and Chapter 3: The Spectaculars!) and finally Mr. Fred Halsted, who only seems semi-interested with his job as the decadent doc's homo hunk host. As Halsted humbly reveals, homos had to buy 35 cent 'fitness' magazines before the aberrant arrival of hardcore gay porn flicks during the early 1970s. An American bodybuilder named 'Ed Fury' (born Edmund Holovchik), who starred in 'sword and sandal' flicks in Italy during the 1960s after following the lead of fellow muscleman Steve Reeves, was also apparently big with gay boys. A forgotten fellow by the name of Monte Hanson was purportedly the first to pose totally nude (minus erections) and was filmed doing so whilst reading nudist magazines in his bedroom. Eventually, some pervert opened up a place called Park Theater that played softcore porn flicks directed by a fellow named Pat Rocco. From there, *Erotikus* basically jumps forward all the way to the 1970s and Halsted presents excerpts from DeSimone's debauched S&M-themed flick *The Collection* (1970), an explicitly wanton and even deranged work of sadistic sod celluloid grit about a demented dude who kidnaps young men and keeps them as his own personal sex slaves, among other things. One also sees clips from DeSimone's *Assault* (1974)—a home-invasion-themed homo hardcore flick—as well as excerpts from the director's work *Duffy's Tavern* (1974), which features bleach blond hippie homos playing pool and proceeding to penetrating one another with a different sort of stick. Other DeSimone films featured in *Erotikus* include the cynical ethno-masochistic/miscegenation-themed gay-western *Dust Unto Dust* (1970) and the fittingly titled *Confessions of a Male Groupie* (1971), which was the first gay porn flick to feature a Milligan-esque fag hag in one of the leading roles. Of course, *Erotikus* also gives a gentle nod to Wakefield Poole's popular crossover flick *Boys in the Sand* (1971), which was one of the first porn flicks to receive mainstream credibility, even predating *Deep Throat* (1972) starring Linda Lovelace and Harry Reems by a year. Director DeSimone must have been jealous of Halsted's idiosyncratic aberrant-garde skin flicks as *Erotikus* only features a couple minutes of *LA Plays Itself*, which has the grand distinction of cinematically introducing fisting and almost singlehandedly popularizing the S&M subculture. In the end, *Erotikus* concludes with Halsted narrating, "Gay movie... innocent... poetic... commercial... erotic... artistic... all of these or none of these, it remains today the essence of the Greek erotic hope...the adoration and glorification of the male animal's finest moment," which is followed by an overly long scene of a climatic cum shot that was ejaculated by someone paid to pretend to be Halsted's cock and balls.

Ultimately, the only real value *Erotikus* has today aside from the obvious is its inclusion of long excerpts from various long out-of-print Tom DeSimone

skin flicks that will probably never ever again be released due to copyright issues relating to the use of surprisingly mainstream music (i.e. The Rolling Stones). Of course, compared to Halsted's own films, namely *LA Plays Itself* (1972), *The Sex Garage* (1972), *Sextool* (1975), and *A Night at Halsted's*, as well as work by other auteur pornographers like Jack Deveau (*Strictly Forbidden* aka *Le musée*, *A Night at the Adonis*) and Jacques Scandelari (*New York City Inferno*, *Cock Story*), *Erotikus* seems rather tame in terms of aesthetic prowess. In fact, *Erotikus* does not amount to much more than a sort of 'Tom DeSimone's Greatest Cocksucking and Buttfucking Hits,' but I guess the auteur did not feel he was charismatic enough to actually host the film itself, so he got then-popular-porn-superstar-auteur Fred Halsted to do so for him. As someone whose solely aesthetic interest in porn does not really transcend porn chic works like *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) and *Water Power* (1977) aka *Enema Bandit*, as well as the shockingly artful auteur pieces of Halsted and Deveau, *Erotikus* did not amount to much more than an outmoded novelty for me. The fact that Halsted denounced *Erotikus* only made it all the more unappealing, as he may have been a sexually violent pervert, but he was neither a prude nor pretentious and would have never started a career making cheap exploitation flicks like DeSimone did. That being said, *Erotikus* is the only DeSimone flick I have ever managed to finish viewing in its entirety, so I think the filmmaker should have stuck with what he knew best – fucked fuck flicks.

-Ty E

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Tom Ford° (2016)

While I would not really expect a flaming fag fashion designer that once recommended that all straight men suffer the supreme debasement of taking a dick in the ass at least once in their lifetime to know much about the nuances of serious heterosexual relationships, Tom Ford—a Texas-born queen that was once absurdly described as “the straightest gay man in the world”—has demonstrated with his second feature *Nocturnal Animals* (2016) aka *Tony and Susan* that he is somehow capable of crafting one of the most emotionally true and undeniably unforgettable of contemporary dark tragic romances. Indeed, Ford’s debut feature *A Single Man* (2009) is so good in terms of emotional resonance and maturity that it would probably trick many people into thinking that gay men have the same exact wants and needs when it comes to love as straight men, yet I really did not suspect that he had the interest or insights to understand the nuances and dynamics of the sick sad joke that is contemporary Western heterosexual love and its badly misbegotten bastard son known as lovesickness, but his latest cinematic effort certainly proves otherwise. Not surprisingly considering his last film, Ford’s second feature also reveals that he has a keen queer eye for the aesthetically rich and sometimes just plain downright cinematically decadent. In terms of his knack for brutally honest melodrama that swiftly and coldly pierces the heart like a seasoned serial killer on a midnight stroll in the red light district, Ford might be best described as the American Fassbinder of fag high-fashion, though his newest film also reveals some flirting with genre conventions, namely that of the western and film noir. Of course, it is hard to imagine that someone that would appear in a pseudo-zany Ben Stiller vanity piece like *Zoolander* (2001) would have even a shred of artistic integrity or brilliance, but it seems that designing tons of fancy female clothing and hanging out with tons of fucked up beautiful models with coke problems and severe daddy issues equipped Ford with the carefully crafted tools to assemble a film with the masculine prowess of a John Ford flick but the strange sensitivity for socio-sexual politics of Douglas Sirk. Ford also seems to have a hard-on for hicks, as *Nocturnal Animals* features an intentionally sexy yet savagely murderously sadistic redneck gang that has more in common with James Dean and early Marlon Brando than NASCAR and Marlboro Reds when it comes to sheer style.

A film that demonstrates the absolutely devastating effects of the callous and oftentimes romantically fatal female instinct of hypergamy and how it leads to the destruction of true love and the abject emotional nightmare of loveless and sexless marriages, *Nocturnal Animals*—a relatively faithful adaptation of the novel *Tony and Susan* (1993) by belated novelist and literary critic Austin Wright (1922–2003)—is a revenge tale of the heart where a redheaded rich bitch that has everything but orgasms and a husband that loves her receives her just

deserts in the form of a cleverly crafted literary assault by her ex-husband who reveals via a fictional narrative the unwavering sense of betrayal and heartsickness that he has suffered as a result of being thrown away like rotten trash by his oh-so-bourgeois ex-wife nearly two decades ago. Simultaneously a neo-western, ghostless ghost story, neo-noir nightmare, allegorical romantic tragedy, and metaphysical revenge flick, Ford's second feature is like a Bergman flick like *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973) if it were made for genre-obsessed American philistines, though it would be somewhat dishonest to say that the majority of American filmgoers enjoyed it (after all, imdb.com is flooded with countless highly negative, emotionally-charged reviews). A virtual obituary for a savagely raped and slaughtered romance in the form of an emotionally grotesque revenge fantasy where no one really wins in the end, Ford somewhat surprisingly reveals a certain latent primitive masculinity behind his weepy yet ruthless melodramatics. I also suspect that Ford had some influence from Douglas Sirk classics like *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) and *Written on the Wind* (1956), though the film probably owes more to the Coen brothers' debut *Blood Simple* (1984) in terms of aesthetics and atmosphere when it comes to the eponymous novel-within-a-film.

Auteur Ford might make a living designing insanely expensive superficial clothing for superficial rich people, but in *Nocturnal Animals* he deals a coldly precise and unrelentingly deadly blow to the sort of vanity that fuels such an innately soulless industry. In short, Ford seems to have modeled a number of the characters after people he personally knows (in fact, he has described the female lead as being of a somewhat autobiographical nature). A film that might teach some girls not to listen to their insufferably cynical and materially motivated mothers and instead embrace both who and what they genuinely love, Ford's flick might sometimes succumb to certain irritating clichés, but it also demonstrates in a decidedly emotionally devastating way that true love is worth all the wealth in the world and that the greatest tragedy is that most people will probably not realize this until it is far too late as they have already disposed of their beloved for a terribly banal yet insanely well paying career and fake philanthropic husband. Indeed, the film's sharp-witted yet virtually terminally melancholic fire-croched protagonist Susan Morrow (Amy Adams)—a stinking rich art gallery owner from LA that peddles absurdly priced pseudo-artistic degenerate trash that would probably only appeal to kosher capitalists—has everything a gal could want materially speaking, but her fiercely forlorn eyes reveal that she is deader inside than a Muslim gang rape victim. Somewhat ironically, Susan was at her happiest when she was at her poorest and still married to her struggling writer ex-husband Edward Sheffield (Jake Gyllenhaal), but she eventually got tired of the fact that her beloved was more creatively than monetarily motivated so she divorced him for some fake preppie fuck and dedicated her life to advancing her career. As revealed at the very beginning of the film by her

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tragic cold stare during a campy degenerate art exhibit at her gallery that involves naked morbidly obese women dancing around in anachronistic cabaret hats, Susan is completely dead inside and lately she has been thinking about the estranged ex-husband that she dumped 19 years ago. In short, Susan is an unloved and unsatisfied middle-aged beauty that suffers from a serious case of *sehnsucht*, though only a handful of her friends seem to suspect this. In fact, not even Susan's husband or daughter seem to realize that she is in the middle of a deep and dark existential crisis. In what proves to be a cruel yet fitting instance of *kismet*, Susan is somewhat bewildered to receive a package containing a manuscript written by her long estranged ex-husband that is dedicated to her. Featuring a provocative eponymous title, Susan instantly knows that the novel is about her due to the fact that her ex-hubby Edward used to call her a "nocturnal animal" due to her tendency towards sleep deprivation. Needless to say, upon beginning reading the novel, Susan finds her insomnia getting worse as she soon discovers herself the deserving victim of an intricate form of literary-based revenge that only she can truly understand on an any intrinsic level. Indeed, while Edward's novel is getting published and might be a big success, he was clearly mainly motivated to write it as a semi-hermetic means to express to Susan in a deservedly emotionally vicious and barbaric fashion that she put him through a sort of perennial pandemonium of lovesick lunacy as a result of betraying him nearly two decades ago and divorcing him in a most devastatingly despicable fashion. Indeed, not only did Susan divorce Edward, but she took his family away and destroying all of his hopes and dreams, at least those not pertaining to writing.

Just under two hours in length but feeling like a dark romantic epic, *Nocturnal Animals* ultimately offers two relatively elegantly interwoven films (and three subplots) in one. Indeed, aside from depicting Susan's present-day humdrum life and flashbacks from her failed marriage to Edward, the allegorical story contained in her ex-husband's carefully tuned manuscript is depicted as she reads it, thus adding an extra layer of pathos that ultimately expresses more about the essence of the aborted romance than the flashback scenes. Indeed, by the end of the film, the viewer not only learns why and how Susan ruthlessly sabotaged her marriage with her ex-husband, but also the violently visceral emotions Edward felt after being cravenly betrayed by his one-true-love. Somewhat provocatively, Edward is never depicted in the present, yet his spirit ultimately dominates the film via his novel, which is naturally more exciting than Susan's insufferably phony and contrived real-life life. Vaguely Lynchian in character and containing a sort of neo-retro/neo-noir aesthetic comparable to the underrated crime-drama *Cold in July* (2014) directed by Jim Mickle, the novel-within-the-film is certainly the most enthralling aspect of the flick and acts as a nice contrast to the sad and pitiful banality that is Susan's post-love (non)existence. Naturally, Jake Gyllenhaal portrays both Edward and the tragic hero Tony Hastings of Ed-

ward's titular novel, as the character is semi-cryptically autobiographical. Not unlike Edward, the protagonist of his novel, Tony, loses his family, albeit in a much more brutal and cinematic fashion that underscores the novelist's long brewing deep-seated rage, irrevocable sense of sorrow, Weltschmerz, obsessive self-loathing, and undying thirst for the ultimate form of revenge. In the novel, Tony's wife Laura (Isla Fisher), who bears a striking resemblance to Susan, and bratty teenage daughter India (Ellie Bamber) are brutally raped and murdered by a fearsome redneck threesome that includes head honcho hick Ray Marcus (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) and his two swarthy and similarly poorly shaven underlings Lou Bates (Karl Glusman) and Steve 'Turk' Adams (Robert Aramayo). After being forced off the road by the gang in the middle of the night on a secluded highway in West Texas, Tony finds himself being immediately intimidated and ruthlessly emasculated by Ray Marcus and his mad mongrel crew. Indeed, without the protagonist even putting up any sort of a fight, Tony's wife and daughter are kidnapped and he is forced by Lou to drive himself to a secluded desert dumping ground where he would have surely himself been killed himself had he not had the foresight to immediately hide from his stupidly sinister redneck tormentors. Of course, it is not long before Tony discovers what has happened to his wife and daughter and he is immediately wracked with severe guilt, which is only nature for a poor mensch that lost his entire family in the most dehumanizing of fashions without even putting up a fight (just as Edward did not seem to put up much of a fight when Susan divorced him for another guy). Luckily, a bad ass cowboy named Detective Bobby Andes (Michael Shannon)—a character that acts a symbolic voice for Edward/Tony to take action/get revenge—that believes in justice at any cost is assigned to Tony's case. While Detective Andes eventually catches the killers (sans 'Turk,' who is killed in a botched robbery), shady judicial politics leads to them being set free due to lack of evidence. Dying of lung cancer and unwilling to lose his final case as a proud man that is being forced into early retirement against his will, Andes offers Tony the rare opportunity of vigilant justice and he naturally takes it. In the end, Tony manages to get revenge against the men that raped and murdered his wife and daughter, but he ultimately dies soon later in a freak accident that involves him shooting himself with his own gun upon falling on the weapon following becoming blind after an injury he sustained during his final showdown with mad dog Ray Marcus.

Undoubtedly, it is no surprise that the protagonist Tony of Edward's novel dies in the end, as the character's miserable yet strangely triumphant demise is symbolic of the novelist's own sort of post-marriage spiritual death. Indeed, as he communicates to her in a somewhat hermetic fashion in his novel, Susan killed all of Edward's hopes and dreams in regard to having a family, thus leaving him with a non-existence that is arguably worse than death. As the film eventually reveals towards the end that really underscores the true extent of the heroine's cravenly self-adsorbed treachery, Susan not only divorced him but also went

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completely behind his back and aborted his child without even telling him she was pregnant. To add insult to injury, Edward caught Susan with her new secret boyfriend Hutton Morrow (Armie Hammer), who she later married, sitting in a car together outside of the abortion clinic right after she had done the dirty deed in what is indubitably one of the cruelest scenarios of cuckoldry in cinema history. Naturally, the teenage daughter that is raped and murdered in Edward's novel is symbolic of the unborn daughter that Susan so callously aborted (notably, Susan has a daughter with her husband Hutton that was clearly conceived not long after she aborted Edward's child). As to why Susan divorces Edward, it can probably be summed up simply in Nietzsche's words, "Whom does woman hate most? – Thus spoke the iron to the magnet: 'I hate you most, because you attract me, but are not strong enough to draw me towards you.'" Indeed, while the love was clearly mutual between the husband and wife, Susan eventually began to resent Edward for not being 'strong' enough for her as a spouse as a man with a mediocre book store job and lack of monetary ambition. While the film features a number of cruel ironies, arguably the cruelest is the fact that Edward is only able to gain the strength to be a great and successful writer after Susan has destroyed his life and turned him into a perennial bachelor that devotes himself completely to his work and lives a life of relative solitude (or so the viewer can only assume). Undoubtedly, Edward's completion of his magnum opus *Nocturnal Animals* was his best revenge against Susan, as she never had faith in him as a writer and largely dumped him because he valued his art over mere monetary gain. Of course, it is a perverse irony that the perennial lovesickness that Susan caused him would ultimately equip him with the highly personalized inspiration that he needed to pen such a provocative pathos-ridden work. Naturally, Susan is left completely devastated by Edward's morbidly tragic novel, but that does not stop her from setting up a fancy dinner date with her ex-husband. Unfortunately for Susan, who got all dolled up for the special reunion, Edward does not show up for the date and she is left to look pathetic and lonely at the restaurant while waiting in vain for the man she loved but senselessly threw away. Susan is clearly crushed as a result of Edward blowing her off, as the date is the only thing she seemed to look forward to in the entire film. Additionally, by being stood up by Edward—a man that she once crushed like a fly and destroyed his entire life without much hesitation—Susan must come to the dreaded conclusion that no one loves or cares about her anymore, including the overly emotional ex-husband that wrote an entire novel dedicated to her. As for Edward, the viewer never sees him in the end, but I think it is safe to say that he is quite happy to be finally free of the red beastess and that his carefully executed existential revenge is complete.

Surely, one of the more intriguing aspects of the film is that it dares to depict the deleterious effects that mothers can have on their daughters. Indeed, as depicted in a flashback, Susan's mother Anne Sutton (Laura Linney) made a

rather aggressive attempt to talk her daughter out of marrying Edward despite the fact that he is a longtime respected family friend. As the best friend of her estranged gay son, Anne always felt that Edward was too weak and surely not adequate material for her strong, energetic, and entrepreneurial oriented go-getter daughter. While Susan only had bad things to say about her mother and somewhat pathetically describes her as, "religious, conservative, sexist, racist, Republican, materialistic, narcissistic, racist," Edward somewhat ironically noticed that the two have 'positive' similarities and even once stated to his beloved, "you both have the same kind of sadness in your eyes. You and your mother. Oh, I'm sorry. I don't mean to offend you. I just . . . She just always seemed sad to me. She has sad eyes. And I've thought that since I was a little boy. You have the same eyes. They're beautiful." While Edward attempted to encourage her to be a vulnerable artist that was willing to express herself instead of selling out and establishing a safe career, Susan's mother ruthlessly mocked such sentiments and recommended that her daughter play it safe and keep her eye on the money like a good bourgeois whore. Unfortunately, it seems Anne understood her daughter better than Edward ever could, as she is a spoiled poor little rich girl that grew up living a life of luxury and thus incapable of maintaining a happy marriage with a romantic starving artist type. In fact, Susan's mother made an accurate prediction when she warned her regarding her materialistic tendencies and how it would ruin her marriage in the long run, "I know you think that we don't care about the same things, but you're wrong. In a few years, all these bourgeois things, as you so like to call them, are gonna be very important to you, and Edward's not gonna be able to give them to you. He has no money. He's not driven. He's not ambitious. And I can promise you, if you marry Edward, your father's not gonna give them to you either." As the brutally bitter breakup of Susan's first marriage revealed, Anne was quite right when she somewhat ominously stated to her daughter in regard to her beloved Edward, "The things you love about him now are the things you'll hate in a few years. You may not realize it, but you and I are a lot more alike than you think." Of course, it probably came as a great source of shame for Susan when she remembered her emotionally glacial mother's foreboding words, "We all eventually turn into our mothers." Naturally, it should be no surprise to many viewers that queen auteur Ford has described Susan as a sort of stand-in for himself, as most gay men seem to take after their mothers.

In his magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*, suicidal Viennese semite Otto Weininger put forth the provocative thesis that the archetypal woman is both innately soulless and lacking any sort of true individuality, or as he wrote in his book, "Undine, the soulless Undine, is the platonic idea of woman. In spite of all bisexuality she most really resembles the actuality. The well-known phrase, "Women have no character," really means the same thing. Personality and individuality (intelligible), ego and soul, will and (in-

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telligible) character, all these are different expressions of the same actuality, an actuality the male of mankind attains, the female lacks." Undoubtedly, heroine Susan epitomizes Weininger's harsh remarks, as a hopelessly weak and impressionable dame that ultimately gives up the love of her life and her art to become a mindless and lifeless bourgeois bitch that has passively dedicated her life to vomiting bromide to her equally fake friends (including a dumb twat that is proud of the fact that she is married to an effeminate gay man that literally sports Tom Ford designer clothing) and projecting a safe yet lame image of opulence. Had Susan had even an inkling of personal integrity and, in turn individuality, she would still be married to the man she loves, but she just cannot find it in herself to be a genuine human being in the way a serious man can, hence why she is a character that can hardly be described as sympathetic. In short, Susan is a sort of archetype from the perennial tragedy that is womanhood. Indeed, Susan ultimately adapted herself to her new materialistic husband Hutton and inevitably became something she always dreaded and ultimately hated, but as Weininger noted, "As a rule, the woman adapts herself to the man, his views become hers, his likes and dislikes are shared by her, every word he says is an incentive to her, and the stronger his sexual influence on her the more this is so. Woman does not perceive that this influence which man has on her causes her to deviate from the line of her own development; she does not look upon it as a sort of unwarrantable intrusion; she does not try to shake off what is really an invasion of her private life; she is not ashamed of being receptive; on the contrary, she is really pleased when she can be so, and prefers man to mold her mentally. She rejoices in being dependent, and her expectations from man resolve themselves into the moment when she may be perfect passive." Of course, Susan ultimately chose the wrong man to be influenced by, as he is philandering prick that does not even attempt to hide the fact that he cares more about money than her. While *Nocturnal Animals* adequately demonstrates why Susan ultimately decided to divorce Edward and abort his unborn child, anti-feminist Jewess Esther Vilar surely provided further insight as to why their relationship was an abject failure when she wrote in her classic text *The Manipulated Man* (1971), "As a result of 'love,' man is able to hide his cowardly self-deception behind a smoke screen of sentiment. He is able to make himself believe that his senseless enslavement to woman and her hostages is more than an act of honor, it has a higher purpose. He is entirely happy in his role as a slave and has arrived at the goal he has so long desired [...] Since once can expect nothing from a woman but love, it will remain the currency for any need she might have. Man, her slave, will continue to use his energies only according to his conditioning and never to his own advantage. He will achieve greater goals and the more he achieves, the farther women will become alienated from him. The more he tries to ingratiate himself with her, the more demanding she will become; the more he desires her, the less she finds him desirable; the more comforts he provides for her, the more indolent, stupid

and inhuman she will become – and man will grow lonelier as a result.” Indeed, aside from never realizing that love was never enough for Susan, Edward never considered that most women are innately materialistic and expect real physical currency as opposed to the largely imaginary sort that women so effortlessly and passively provide. As to why Susan wanted to so desperately see Edward after reading his novel, she wrongly (and quite arrogantly) believed that he—the effete emo-fag-esque loser she once threw away like outdated clothing—would be her virtual ‘security blanket’ and provide her with the love and emotionally support that her philandering husband, seemingly slutty daughter, and army of servants were incapable of providing her with. Undoubtedly, if Susan is the victim of anything in the end, it is her own hypergamic female instincts just as Edward was a victim of the deluded male belief that ‘love’ means the same thing to women as it does to men.

Admittedly, *Nocturnal Animals* somewhat surprised me and left a fairly deep impression on me for largely personal reasons, namely in relation to how the heroine shares many of the tragic irrational feminine qualities that some of my ex-girlfriends had. For example, I have been in relationships with women that, despite having genuine artistic and intellectual talents and political views that were sometimes at the right of Savitri Devi, could not bear to quit a ‘multicultural’ corporate job that they hated because they instinctually prioritized the material over the spiritual, cultural, emotional, and artistic, as if they were possessed by a evil tormenting spirit that geared them towards masochism and nihilism, among other things. Indeed, this intrinsic material need seemed to outweigh virtually any other consideration, including their own future and fertility. Not unlike the lead heroine, one of these girls that I knew was totally brainwashed by her similarly cold and seemingly soulless mother, who was not beneath using emotional blackmail and monetary threats against her daughter. Of course, the greatest tragedy is that she opted to waste her intellect and artistic talents when she clearly had the talent to be a notable writer that used her talent for good instead of contributing it to a sinister globalist realm full of semites, arabs, indians and other untermenschen that she could not even bear the sight of. Like Susan, she listened to her deluded mother and never even once seemed to consider that she had genuine talent that could be used for good. Admittedly, unlike the male protagonist of the film, I never felt the need or desire to ‘get revenge’ against this girl after she betrayed me because there was no question in my mind that her own irrational actions and cowardly self-betraying conformist behavior would lead to her own misery. In that sense, I see the male lead’s literary revenge to be somewhat effeminate and pathetic, even if I can empathize with his plight. In fact, I am ashamed to admit it, but I cannot shake my empathy and compassion for her to this day.

Notably, in an interview with deadline.com, auteur Tom Ford—one of a number of fashion designers that have been heavily influenced by the films of R.W.

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Fassbinder—revealed he has always had refined tastes in cinema when he stated, “You know fashion designers are probably some of the greatest experts on film that you can imagine because every time we start to design a collection, that is an inspiration. I have built entire collections around Fassbinder’s BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT. We know film backwards and forwards, and images and sets and clothes and costumes and people and characters, and so we’re storytellers in that sense.” Indeed, *Nocturnal Animals* does not seem like the work of a second time filmmaker, just as *A Single Man* did not seem like the work of a first time filmmaker. Aside from Fassbinder’s clear melodramatic influence, the high-camp opening of Ford’s flick featuring grotesquely obese naked women is so disgustingly degenerate that it would probably even make Werner Schroeter blush as a result of suffering from an acute case of *fremdschämen*. Indeed, while Schroeter was certainly not beneath casting chunky spinsters and horrifying trans-weirdos in his films, I doubt that he could seriously stomach the truly all-American Wal-Mart-esque white whales featured in the singularly loathsomely campy opening of Ford’s flick. Not surprising, Ford has had kind things to say about these extra big-boned (sub)human blimps, as he sees them as the polar opposite of the tragic heroine in the sense that they completely embrace who they are to the point of gleeful self-exploitation. While the film has been sold as a sort of drama-thriller-mystery hybrid, *Nocturnal Animals* is pure and unadulterated melodrama of the vaguely masculine sort. Like his Mongol-eyed Aryan hero Fassbinder, Ford thankfully believes more in real pathos and realistic endings than Hollywood-esque sugarcoated happy endings, hence why the film seems to have sharply divided both professional film critics and lemming filmgoers alike.

Tom Ford might be a flaming faggot fashion designer, but he is not that much of a pretentious twat as he has no problem admitting what his film is truly about, or as he stated quite clearly in the short featurette *The Making of Nocturnal Animals* in regard to the central theme of his film, “This story, for me, is really about not throwing people away. You know, we live in a culture where we throw everything away, it’s so disposable. We throw people away. And, so, Susan’s at a moment in her life where she’s achieved everything that she thought she should achieve, from the outside of what her life should look like, yet she’s dead inside. And then all of a sudden, this novel arrives, and it reawakens a lot of things that she’s already feeling. You know, it’s really the last straw that frees her. And, um, so that’s the central theme, and to me that’s an important one. When you have someone important, someone that you love, don’t throw them away, don’t let them go. And, to me, that was the thing, really, essentially about the story that spoke to me.” Indeed, the film depicts the most tragic yet all-too-human of wastes and reveals that regret is one of the most decidedly debilitating of emotions. In that sense, I would argue that *Nocturnal Animals* is one of the few contemporary films that has the capacity to provide the viewer

with a borderline traumatizing experience depending on the background, especially when it comes to the perils of love. On the other hand, the film can also provide certain lovelorn male viewers with a strangely optimistic message. Indeed, when Nietzsche wrote, "Sickness is a powerful stimulant – but one has to be healthy enough for it," he might as well have been explaining the formula for turning lovesick misery into a potent aesthetic weapon, which Edward surely accomplishes in the end.

-Ty E

FINGERED
FINGERED

Tom Green (2001)

If assassinated Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh's *06* (1994) aka *1-900* is the most strangely charming and cultivated phone-sex flick ever made, the quite literally titled work *Fingered* (1986) directed and co-written by Richard Kern (*Nazi, You Killed Me First*) and starring and co-written by Lydia Lunch is easily the most overtly sleazy, scummy, and stupidly sinister film on the subject. Booted off stage when it had the honor of premiering at the 1988 Berlin International Film Festival, Kern's 25-minute (anti)erotic micro-epic is pure and adulterated celluloid trash that one might describe as the hokey heterosexual hick equivalent to the avant-garde serial killer short *Pig* (1998) co-directed by Nico B. and Rozz Williams, as a gritty black-and-white piece of fiercely fetishistic celluloid road kill set in Death Valley not far from where Manson and his minions engaged in psychedelic orgies, siring various bastard kids, and ostensibly planning an apocalyptic race war. A sort of thematic sequel to Kern's *The Right Side of My Brain* (1985) as a work where 'co-writer'/star Lydia Lunch once again engages in sleazy but hardly steamy unsimulated sex acts with white trash dudes that like sporting sunglasses in dark and shadowy rooms, albeit more 'hardcore' (while Lunch sucks cock and feels up East Asian tits in the earlier film, she gets fucked in both her pussy and asshole by her ex-boyfriend Marty Nation in the later film) and slightly more artistically ambitious, the unsavory short was apparently intended to be anti-pornographic, or as the auteur said himself in the documentary *Blank City* (2010) directed by Celine Danhier, "The title sounds like a porno film, but the whole point was to make people feel bad about sex, so it's supposed to be anti-pornography." Indeed, probably the only people that would diddle themselves to *Fingered* are murderously misogynistic psychopaths like Edmund Kemper and Ted Bundy, and/or misandristic wenches like Lunch herself who regularly describe men as 'pigs' and 'assholes' yet get hopelessly wet at the prospect of an abusive prick violently bending her over and demonstrating who is truly the dominant sex with his hard dick (indeed, such is the overtly salacious scenario that plays out in *Fingered*). Admittedly, when I first saw the film about a decade ago or so, I thought it was a worthless pile of celluloid shit that senselessly wallowed in being offensive for offensiveness's sake, but after re-watching it recently I realized it has some genuine character and charm as a wild and wanton white trash artsploitation piece where real whores portray screen whores and real working-class lowlifes portray screen working-class lowlifes. Featuring perennial dumb cunt Lunch having a revolver violently reamed up her crusty old cuntlet and dirty dimestore diva Lung Leg being violently sexually assaulted in a way that the (non)actress/sometimes filmmaker would later describe as degrading (despite her rather vocal hatred of men, Lunch is apparently no less harsh in her dealings with members of the so-called fairer sex), *Fingered* ultimately

manages to juggle visceral hatred and decidedly dark humor in such a way that is guaranteed to leave most viewers feeling defiled, emotionally schizophrenic, and/or discombobulated.

In *Fingered*, Lydia Lunch more or less plays herself as a phone-sex slut that moonlights as a gutter prostitute in what is arguably the most fitting role of her entire acting career (notably, Lunch would later state in the doc *Blank City* regarding the importance of her quasi-pornographic performance(s), “THE RIGHT SIDE OF MY BRAIN and FINGERED were like public psychotherapy because no one else was talking about this attraction to fear. It was about a violent expulsion bred by the riots, by Charles Manson, by the Son of Sam, and instead of turning the trauma inward, I turned it outward. You’re battered... You battered back”). At the beginning of the film, a fiercely foul fat slob (poof poet Emilio Cubeiro whose 1989 spoken word album *The Death Of An Asshole* was produced by Lunch) calls up Ms. Lunch while sitting pant-less in a chair in his apartment and declares to her while talking like a baby that sounds like it was raised in a 42nd Street gutter, “I want to speak to my mommy” and she replies, “I can only put mommy on, Joey, after you’ve given me the credit card number and the expiration date. You know it takes money to talk to mommy. She taught you that, didn’t she? Now, go ahead, Joey, give me the number.” Of course, the man-baby inevitably gives Lunch his credit card number (though he claims it is his “father’s” because he is “too young” to have a credit card of his own since he is ostensibly a baby) and joyously talks about sucking his mommy’s “big brown nipples.” Of course, since Lydia is a ludicrously lazy phone-sex whore who takes a less than lackluster approach to pretending to be the man’s mommy, the obnoxiously Oedipal urban ogre soon becomes fairly hostile and angrily bitches about how his mother was a “fucking pig cunt” who ignored him as a child so she could fuck an “asshole Irish insurance guy,” “Mexican slime delivery kid,” and “fucking black janitor with a dick bigger than his brain,” among various other eclectic losers. After declaring, “that foul cunt I came out of. It makes me, even me, cringe to even think about it,” the momma’s boy proclaims, “I don’t want to fuck your cunt. No no no no no. I want to fuck your pink republican asshole. Your sweet Avon pink Republican butthole” and soon Lunch hangs up on his sorry infantile ass. Luckily, the next man that Lydia talks to gets her so terribly turned on that she actually gives him her address so he can come by and finger-fuck and sodomize her in person.

Upon subsequently phone-sexing with a longhaired metalhead-looking degenerate played by Marty Nation on the phone, Lydia proudly declares, “I’m the hottest fucking slut in town... you know that” and her patron responds while masturbating, “You were born to worship my fucking cock and to slurp on my knob and tongue my fucking ballsack and just take my load of spew in your fucking face.” After the phone sex gets too hot to handle, Lydia gives Marty her address and tells him to meet her in 20 minutes. When finally Marty arrives,

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Lydia lies on a table while opening her legs in a spread eagle position while the ostensibly ultra-macho longhaired moron says things like, "I always get what I want because I fucking take it." To get Lydia's pussy all warm and wet, Marty whips out a switchblade and carefully cuts off her fishnet stockings with the knife. Despite being fairly overt in her unwavering hatred towards all thing male and masculine, Lydia sure likes her men to be almost maliciously macho and misogynistic as demonstrated by the flagrantly flirtatious fashion in which she asks Marty, "A big fucking man like you must have a lot of whores, right baby?" and is naturally quite sexually thrilled when he replies, "That's right. I like whores. I know what they want and I give it to them." Lydia and Marty seem like the perfect match made in hell as far as couples are concerned, as she likes a man with a "big fat cock and a pocket full of cash" and he prefers pussy-peddling sluts, or as she states, "Most fucking bitches are whores. A whore just asks for it right up front. A whore is just a little bit more honest than most bitches." As Lydia lets Marty know regarding whores, "Not more honest, baby. They just lie better." After the two talk dirty to one another for a couple minutes in a joyously vulgar manner that seems much more authentic than a foreplay scene from the average 1980s porno flick (apparently, Lydia and Marty began dating when the latter was only 16-years-old and the two remained friends after they broke up), Marty bends over savagely sassy slut and begins fiercely finger-fucking her while she ecstatically screams, "make me fucking cum you fucking pig. Fuck me. Fuck me." While Marty eventually mounts and buggers the swarthy streetwalker, he seems to get a little bit excited in the process as it is not long before he expels his load and then proceeds to fist-fucking Lydia. Indeed, while Marty violently fists Lydia, who sounds like a horny hog in heat, she screams, "make me fucking cum, you filthy cock. Do it!" and then proceeds to have an orgasm.

After the two equally depraved strangers complete coitus and leave the apartment, Lydia is immediately approached by a sleazy middle-aged pervert on the street who grabs her arm and asks her, "Hey, baby, how much?," to which she hostilely replies, "Get your filthy hands off me. You can't afford it." Needless to say, the would-be-john is pissed and retorts, "Well, fuck you. You whores coming around here ruining our neighborhoods with your goddamn faggot boyfriends." Unfortunately for the sidewalk sex scavenger, Marty pops out immediately after he says, "goddamn faggot boyfriends," and threatens the man by angrily stating, "Hey, you got a problem, buddy? Fat ugly motherfucker." Although just initially threatening to kill the man due to his rather rude behavior, Marty gets a little bit too excited and stoically slits the sorry sap's fatty throat with the ease and precision that one would expect from a barber who is giving a customer a quick shave. While Lydia seems somewhat afraid of Marty after he violently murders the stranger in cold blood, she meekly follows his orders when he demands that she "Get the fuck in the car" and then proceeds to take a little road trip with him in Death Valley that ultimately has savagely nihilistic consequences that even a

morally bankrupt ghetto whore like her could not predict. While riding in his car, Lydia has the nerve to ask Marty, "What's your goddamn problem? You didn't have to do that, you know. What are you trying to prove, anyway?," but he merely replies in a self-satisfied fashion, "He got in my way and had to pay." Indeed, Marty has a malevolent plan that involves having some good clean fun with Lydia and some friends, but of course the two encounter a couple 'detours' on the way that somewhat predictably have rather deleterious results.

The first place that Marty takes Lydia is a place called 'The Snakepit' where the working-class antihero soon spots a redneck comrade of his lifting weights outside while listening to cheesy country music, which inspires the character to ask his friend, "What's this cowboy shit?" Naturally, the poorly dressed desert weightlifter is quite pleased to see Lydia and immediately says to her with a sort of L.A. hillbilly twang, "Looky, looky, nice fresh nooky," to which she whorishly replies, "If you can afford it, it's yours." Of course, Marty's friend is immediately pawing at Lydia and playing with her tits, thus inciting animosity between the two sub-lumpenprole pals that eventually erupts into senseless violence. Indeed, while his friend is carrying Lydia and playing with her unclad mammary glands, Marty stabs him in the thigh and then forces the dirtbag (anti)diva to get back into his car, thus bringing a swift end to their trip to the so-called Snakepit. Not surprisingly, Lydia gets pretty angry at Marty at this point and bitches at him, "I'm sick of your macho bullshit. A real fucking hard guy. Fuck you!," to which he characteristically replies, "You know, you talk a lot of shit, you dumb fucking cunt." While Lydia continues to bitch incessantly in a manner that would put even a morbidly obese black ghetto welfare queen to shame in terms of sheer obscenely odious obnoxiousness and intolerability, Marty thankfully decides enough is enough, violently drags the lecherous unlady out of his car, bends her over the hood of said car, and then proceeds to ram his loaded revolver in and out of her seemingly putrid poontang, which she seems to rather enjoy despite bitching, "you stupid fucking macho pig." After using his assumedly well greased gun as a sort of redneck dildo, Marty penetrates Lydia's discernibly loose asshole while she shoots off rounds from the revolver in what ultimately proves to be a particularly absurdly humorous orgasm that makes it seem like lowlife criminals are masters of improvised carnal fun.

When Marty spots a greasy haired teenage waif (Lung Leg) with torn white clothing while driving in the desert, he gets extremely excited, announces to Lydia, "Yo, check it out! Some teenage flesh hitchhiking," and then proceeds to coerce the seemingly petrified girl into getting into his car. It must be the worst day of the discernibly shaken teen's life, as she has no idea that Lydia and Marty are sadomasochistic sexual outlaws and immediately tells them a sob story about how a menacing man wielding a large knife got violent with her and threatened to rape and kill her. Fairly predictably, the hot twat hitchhiker's glaring fear and tragic story make both Lydia and Marty fairly aroused and they decide that

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they want to complete what the would-be-sex-killer failed to accomplish. While Lydia and Marty promise to drive the hitchhiker back to her house after she begs them to, the two scheming white trash degenerates soon begin manhandling the hysterical teen while they are driving down the road. Although the hitchhiker manages to put up a good fight against her sexually aberrant attackers, it does not take long before Lydia is sitting on top of her body in the desert and ripping off all her clothes like a Sapphic sadist who gets a kick out of raping young nubile girls that cannot fight back. Needless to say, Marty masturbates over the hitchhiker while Lydia feels up her tits and pulls down her panties and exposes her bushy beaver to the arid desert air. When the teen manages to break free from Lydia's savagely sensual grasp, Marty chases her down and starts brutally beating her while yelling psychopathic things like, "You dumb fucking cunt... You shouldn't have blown it. Fucking idiot, what are you fucking doing this for?! You brought it upon yourself. Goddamn fucking cunt. Why did you have to blow it? This is what you fucking get." Indeed, while blaming his victim for the senseless brutality that he is unleashing on her, Marty angrily declares with a discernible degree of seething psychosexual hatred and frustration, "I could fucking kill you." After brutally beating the hitchhiker within an inch of her life to the point where her skin and clothes are completely soaked in blood and dirt, Marty is rebuked by Lydia, who seems to realize she might be in some serious trouble due to her role in maliciously molesting the waif and complains to her lunatic loverboy, "Macho asshole jerk. I didn't even want to come here to begin with, you big fucking dick." In his defense, Marty says to Lydia in regard to beating the hitchhiker to a bloody pulp, "She fucking blew it. She had to pay." In a twist Hollywood-esque ending that seems somewhat tacked-on and that I feel makes *Fingered* somewhat weaker in a sort of pseudo-moralistic sense that contradicts the film's overall aggressively nihilistic tone, an off-screen cop randomly says to Lydia and Marty while they are arguing, "Freeze! LA County Sheriff!"

While it is just speculation on my part, I doubt Hollywood films like Dominic Sena's *Kalifornia* (1993) and Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994) could have ever been made without the imperative influence of Kern's *Fingered* (in fact, Stone's film seems like a sort of Hollywood postmodern pastiche of a number of Kern's films). Indeed, while films like Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Leonard Kastle's *The Honeymoon Killers* (1969), and Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973) certainly predate the epic short in terms of works about outlaw lunatic lovers, Kern's superlatively sleazy slice of gutter grade celluloid featured a whole new dimension of grittiness, nihilism, human ugliness, and visceral sexual depravity that makes the other works seem like hopelessly contrived Hollywood romantic-comedies by comparison. Notably, the film largely owes its raw, rugged, and even psychopathic essence to the fact that virtually all of the actors more or less played themselves, or as Kern stated in an interview conducted by the insufferable left-wing hipster hacks at *Vice*, "Believe me, in

FINGERED, Marty Nation was exactly like that, no exaggeration. The guy who's lifting weights, he was like that. Everybody was real. Lydia Lunch was like that. Lung Leg was like that. The story was based on Lydia and Marty's travels when she was 16 and they would hitchhike and get picked up by somebody, and Marty would take his knife out and start stabbing and cutting up the upholstery in the car, looking at the guy. All those guys were really scary. The guy who's lifting weights in it got killed about two years ago, somebody shot him finally."

Additionally, Lung Leg would accuse Lydia Lunch of taking delight in authentically abusing her while making the film, or as she explained in an interview with Duane Davis in the book *Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground* (2008) by Jack Sargeant, "I played only one role as Victim...in FIN-GERED...I was really taken for a ride in this movie...Unfortunately there was no script, if I had seen the script I wouldn't have had anything to do with it. Half way through the film I realized, this woman, Lunch is not making a film, Lunch is playing some kind of board game; with me and the other people involved...maneuvering...manipulating...etc...and for that reason I would never want to work with her again. She is abusing the medium. She obviously tried to make me appear ugly so I wouldn't get her Boys, and in so doing reduced greatly the quality of the film." While I believe that Lunch's organic sense of sadism actually adds extra layers of psychosexual horror to the film, I can certainly understand why Ms. Lung would still be upset about the fact that crusty old cunt Lunch beat her up and pulled her panties down. More or less half anti-pornographic chamber piece and half pseudo-snuff horror road movie, *Fingered* is ultimately a work that has few contemporaries as a sort of poor pervert's take on Jon Jost's classic flick *Last Chants for a Slow Dance* (1977) meets the fierce filmic fist-fucking of the experimental S&M porn flicks of gay pornographic auteur Fred Halsted like *LA Plays Itself* (1972), *The Sex Garage* (1972), and *Sextool* (1975). Indeed, if you're interested in experiencing a sort of metaphysical death-by-sex via celluloid in post-Manson Death Valley, Kern's film makes for a great triple-feature with Teutonic dandy Werner Schroeter's (anti)feminist arthouse horror flick *Willow Springs* (1973) and Nico B. and Rozz William's experimental S&M serial killer flick *Pig* (1998). Although I felt that *Fingered* was nothing more than frivolous fetishistic trash masquerading as art when I first saw it about a decade ago, I now must accept the fact that it is one of the very few great and memorable (anti)erotic white trash artsploitation horror flicks, even if I hate to admit it. Of course, John Waters probably gave the film its greatest accolade when he stated in *Blank City* that it was, "The ultimate date movie for psychos...it is. If you had your first date and took the girl to see *FINGERED* and afterwards she said, 'That was really good,' you know you were gonna get laid, but how were you gonna get laid?! That's the problem." After all, if there is any female quasi-actress that is truly believable as an evil, wanton wench who

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gets a sick kick out of defiling little girls to impress her equally evil and classless beau, it is Lydia Lunch, who demonstrates in Kern's film that she likes to be both fingered and doing the fingering.

-Ty E

FREDDY GOT FINGERED

Tom Green (2001)

Freddy Got Fingered is such a singularly caustic, anarchic pipebomb of surreal tastelessness it is a crying shame many will simply relegate it to the dustbin of recent pop cultural history wherein the rest of Tom Green's career resides. Whatever the merits of Green's love-him-or-hate-him persona, however unavoidable was the refrain of "my bum is on your..." in the summer of '99, whether or not it is fair to blame (or pity) him for the subsequent success of Jackass (which utilized many of the most notable elements of Green's MTV show- parental abuse, skateboarding, and go-for-broke gross-out gags- while in turn dropping the more challenging, surreal aspects in favor of giggly teen boy fauxmoroticism), there is no denying that for a few glorious weeks in 2001, cinema audiences the nation over were treated within minutes of the opening credits of a major studio produced comedy the sight of a man so inspired by a glimpse of an erect equine cock that he stops his car, hops a fence, and jiggles and jerks the massive member with eye-rolling glee. Why does he do this? Why not? Like the early punk anthems that form much of the film's soundtrack, Freddy Got Fingered blasts by on a pure, unadulterated urge to shock with a manic pace that never lets up. Green directs himself as Gordy, a 28-year old sociopathic manchild who dreams of nothing more than to see his senseless doodles translated into small screen success. Gordy's dad (Rip Torn!) wants nothing more than for Gordy to follow the example of his younger brother Freddy and get a job and move out of the house. In the struggles of wills that ensues we are invited to witness Rip Torn bare his ass while goading Green to fuck him (which manages to somehow be far more horrifying than an earlier scene of Green cutting open and then prancing about in the carcass of a dead deer), the hilarity that ensues when Gordy falsely accuses his dad of molesting said younger brother (hence the title), a cloyingly cute child actor brutalized in increasingly-violent turns of fate, Gordy licking a friend's open leg wound, Gordy delivering a baby against the mother's will (biting the umbilical chord with his teeth and swinging the gore-drenched stillborn around his head to revive it), and a pachyderm sperm-soaked reconciliation between father and son that must rank in Rip Torn's mind as the absolute nadir of a once-promising career. In Roger Ebert's scathing indictment of a review he rightly recognizes that "the day may come when Freddy Got Fingered is seen as a milestone of neo-surrealism" while going on to add "The day may never come when it is seen as funny." On that count, I would have to disagree- the humor in the film is well-balanced between Green's off-the-cuff weirdo asides, scatological mania, and a more successful go at the politically incorrect humor of, say, a Troma flick. The only reason my laughs were muted throughout was that my jaw was dropping at unprecedented rates, not just in terms of how genuinely disgusting much of the imagery was, but in the utter

FREDDY GOT FINGERED

strangeness of scenes like Gordy rigging a sausage-pulley system to his fingers so he can play off-tune piano, eat breakfast and draw at the same time, or when an attempted blowjob is delayed by the discovery of a piece of umbilical cord duct-taped to his stomach. Werner Herzog fell over himself praising Harmony Korine for the piece of bacon taped above the bathtub in Gummo, but what of the umbilical cord taped to Green's stomach? It's a shame Werner never got a load of this one; not unlike Gummo, this is the work of an artist burning to tell a tale as only he can tell it, a purging of deep-seated weirdness and fantastic imagery that will never be equalled in his oeuvre. Hollywood chewed Green up and spit him out into the made-for-tv children's comedies and reality game show hell we've forged for those who are no longer relevant, but frankly Freddy Got Fingered is as succinct and subversive a statement as the guy will ever make, so fuck it. Why not? Lastly, one can't review Freddy Got Fingered without mention of Green's love interest Betty (Marisa Coughland), perhaps the most perfect female specimen to ever grace the big-screen: an endlessly supportive, blowjob-obsessed, wheelchair-bound doctor/amateur rocket-scientist who loves nothing more than being beat in her useless legs with a bamboo stick (to orgasm). "But Gord, I don't care about jewels, I just want to suck your cock." Through what mad alchemy did Green arrive at a girl that exemplifies the very ethos of Soiled Sinema?

-Jon-Christian

TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN

Tom Huckabee (1982)

Undoubtedly, in terms of William S. Burroughs related films, you cannot find a more rare work than the American-UK co-production *Taking Tiger Mountain* (1983) aka *Trechi Mynydd y Teigr* co-directed/co-penned by Tom Huckabee and Kent Smith. Based on the Burroughs novella *Blade Runner* (a movie) (1979), which is regarded by some as a 'closet screenplay' and which has no relation to Ridley Scott's 1982 science fiction flick of the same name (though the producer's did purchase the title 'Blade Runner,' which in the novel is a reference to smugglers of medical supplies like scalpels, etc.), *Taking Tiger Mountain* is a decidedly disorientating and deranging black-and-white dystopian anti-agitprop agitprop piece set in the futuristic time of 1990(!) starring a rather young (and oftentimes naked) Bill Paxton (*Aliens*, *Frailty*) as an involuntary assassin who is sexually lobotomized by a London-based bourgeois feminazi 'think tank' looking to establish a 'world matriarchy' and sent out on a suicide mission to assassinate a military major/prostitution commissioner and supposed tiger-keeper at a prostitution resort town in Wales where even old slags manage to turn six tricks in under an hour's time. Originally intended as a film inspired by the 1973 kidnapping of American 'golden hippie' J. Paul Getty and aesthetically influenced by French New Wave films and writings of ex-patriate writers like Paul Bowles, *Taking Tiger Mountain* started production in 1975 as a totally improvised experimental film after co-director Kent Smith (who attended UCLA with Jim Morrison and made a living creating films for *Encyclopedia Britannica*) and then-unknown American actor Bill Paxton decided to travel to Tangiers on a whim and create a true celluloid odyssey, but after the two men found themselves bribing their way out of a Morocco prison and without any film stock left, they handed the film project over to Tom Huckabee, who decided to recruit his favorite novelist, W.S. Burroughs, to piece together a narrative of the patently perverse and paranoid sort out of the 10 hours of footage he had to work with. As Jon Dieringer at screenslate.com noted regarding Burroughs, "His novels *Blade Runner: A Movie* and *The Last Words of Dutch Schultz* expressly represent varyingly unorthodox attempts at screenwriting craft. Yet to date, *Taking Tiger Mountain* is the only feature film bearing direct writing credit for William S. Burroughs," yet Jack Sargeant's comprehensive study of Beat related films, *Naked Lens: Beat Cinema* (2009), does not feature a single reference to Huckabee's film, thus demonstrating the rarity of the work as a true 'lost film' that only a handful of people have seen, at least until recently. Indeed, a film that was originally made with a totally different (non)script, abandoned (with the original soundtrack lost), and taken over by Huckabee, who apparently hired lip readers to fill in blanks in the script and added his own off-screen character dialog to fill in the film, *Taking Tiger Mountain* managed to more or

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less unwittingly utilize Burroughs' literary 'cut-up technique,' albeit in a manner that is discernibly more coherent. As for Burroughs' actual contribution to the film, Kuckabee stated as follows in an interview, "Burroughs came to town and watched what I had on a flatbed moviola. He said, 'I think you've got something there, kid,' and gave me the rights to his material for \$100. He even offered to appear in the film, but like an idiot I said there wasn't really a part for him." A marvelous mess of a movie of the quasi-metaphysical sort that arguably does Burroughs better than any other film to date, including Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch* (1991), *Taking Tiger Mountain* portrays a whacked out world of the apocalyptic sort where fecund-free feminists transcend towelhead Islamists in terms of terrorist activity, thus making it quite arguably the most bizarre and idiosyncratic piece of misogyny ever committed to celluloid.

Set in a chaotic world where America and Russia have finally decided to show off their nukes and World War III is in full swing, *Taking Tiger Mountain* centers on a 20-year-old anti-social Texas-born hippie draft-dodger named Billy Hampton (Bill Paxton) who, like most Americans of his time, especially draft-dodgers, sought refuge in West England from the chaos of World War III, but ultimately became the human guinea pig of a feminist terrorist 'think-tank' that claims to be attempting to 'reinstate a long lost balance between the sexes.' As one of the frigid feminists states at the beginning of the film regarding their odious objective, "The female is sociocentric. The male is egocentric. But we have found that men can be adjusted...improved permanently. And we can alter the gene pool in such a way that only convivial men can be born. Gender is a learned thing. First we need to understand the male sexuality identity. We need to know which parts are intrinsic and which are conditioned. And we need to learn what parts are essential so the rest may be scrapped away and excised." Indeed, over a 738 day period, the fiendish feminist hags used a series of aphrodisiacs and psychotropic drugs, electric shocks, and gay porn on Billy to turn him into a gynophobic homo and even had him surgically castrated, but somehow they managed to repair him back to normal as they are using him as an assassin to kill a Minister of Prostitution in Wales named Major Whitbread. Billy is programmed to believe that Major Whitbread is a 'tiger keeper' (who is also "actually a tiger") sent by god who killed his father (who really died of a heart attack) and plans to kill him. Believing he is going on a trip to a village in Wales to experience a 'sex vacation,' Billy has no clue what sort of maze of madness he is about to get involved with.

As Billy candidly states at the beginning of *Taking Tiger Mountain* regarding sex, "How does an orgasm make me feel? It makes me feel...it makes me feel like god, man. When I cum...no, not like god...more like Elvis Presley or something." While Billy enters the Welsh village thinking he will be experiencing an odyssey of heterosexual orgasms, what he actually experiences is psychological torture, horrific hallucinations (including, imagining his eye is being plucked out

by a vulture), sadistic gay violence, superlatively shady characters, and multiple deaths. Upon entering a brothel, Billy runs into an old madam who runs the place named Mrs. Davis, who brags that she can “turn six tricks an hour...no matter what, young or old, I'd get them off before I got going.” Mrs. Davis gives Billy an aphrodisiac and proceeds to discuss how Major Whitbread prevented her from marrying her great love. From there, Billy is taken to a prostitute auction by a gay teenage prostitute slave-boy named ‘Sally John’ who recommends that he choose a girl named Judy Church because ‘she is the Major’s favorite.’ Of course, Billy chooses Judy Church and is led to her house by a little boy. Upon arriving at her humble abode, Billy confesses to Judy that he is nervous since it has been a while since he last had sex, but the two end up making passionate love (believe it or not, the scene actually features Bill Paxton receiving an unsimulated blow job from the non-actress). Assumedly as a result of the feminist brainwashing he has suffered, Billy ends up regrettably falling in love with a weird and sexually sadistic Welsh outlaw boy named Tony Boyle, who is almost Satanic in his charm, but he fights his urges. Out of nowhere, Tony begins cutting up his own lip with a pirate knife, which irks Billy, who threateningly states to the boy, “What are you trying to do, you think I get off to that? Blood doesn’t mean nothing to me. You’re no hero, man. Nobody cares what you do.” Welsh boy Tony then proceeds to cut up Billy’s lip in a discernibly homoerotic fashion, but some people scare him off before he can kill the American draft-dodger. After a number of hallucinations, street fights, and lonely days/nights sleeping on the street, Billy finally meets the Major at bar and accuses him of spying on him and attempting to make him into a male prostitute. Of course, the Major denies all these claims and tells Billy he is free to leave on the latest train out of Swansea, but Billy decides not to. After meeting with a fellow American who fled the United States after being busted for selling dope to college students, Billy is chased by terrorist assassins and his new friend is gunned down in cold blood. Billy ends up going back to Mrs. Davis’ house and she and her husband attempt to get him to hook up with their daughter Barbara. While Billy bangs Barbara, he decides to go against Mrs. Davis’ wishes and leaves her home. Ultimately, Billy confronts Tony Boyle and then proceeds to chase down Judy Church at some ancient ruins, as if she is some sort of seductive ghost. In his hunt for Judy Church, Billy ends up falling off of a cliff, but somehow reappears again alive on a beach where he attempts to beat gay outlaw Tony to death. In the end, Tony stabs Billy to death on the beach and the American draft-dodger whispers, “paradise...,” as if his demise has finally brought him solace.

Featuring automaton-like prostitutes that work for the government and a lead protagonist that candidly states, “You can’t trust anybody, really, anything real personal...because the only people that ever fuck you are the people that really care about you,” *Taking Tiger Mountain* is undoubtedly a singular dystopian flick in that it actually manages to conjure up a paranoid state where the personal

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and impersonal have become one in the same, with even the sex act itself becoming something that one cannot do without feeling that there is some dubious ulterior-motive related to the act. In terms of predicting the future, *Taking Tiger Mountain* manages to demonstrate how out of hand feminist culture-distorting has become. Indeed, while modern day feminists do not typically surgically castrate men and send them on assassin missions as depicted in the film, one has to wonder about a world where a deranged Jewish feminist like Sheryl Sandberg, who is chief operating officer of Facebook, seeks to have the word “bossy” banned because she believes the word somehow prevents women from seeking leadership roles because they are afraid of being called the B word (personally, I know another 5-letter word that starts with B that is more fitting for Sandberg). Socio-political concerns aside, *Taking Tiger Mountain* is quite arguably the most ‘trippiest’ film ever shot in black-and-white, which is no small accomplishment for a work that was filmed using the discarded short ends from Bob Fosse’s Lenny Bruce biopic *Lenny* (1974) starring Dustin Hoffman. Filmed with the real Welsh townspeople playing themselves (indeed, ‘Judy Church’ was played by Judy Church) in an area full of ancient ruins that seem untainted by modernity, *Taking Tiger Mountain* is like *The Wicker Man* of Beat movies meets the anti-sci-fi action of Godard’s *Alphaville* (1965), albeit actually entertaining and paranoia-inspiring, which is partially due to the disorientating soundtrack by Radio Free Europe and the incessant audio clips from fake news reports. Featuring references to how the so-called ‘Christian Democratic Government of the U.S.’ are planning to execute 11 people (including actress Shirley MacLaine, actor Richard Dreyfuss, and former CIA officer turned whistleblower John R. Stockwell) on September 11 (!), *Taking Tiger Mountain* has certainly aged quite gracefully in a rather strange way and is thus begging for a new cult audience, though it is questionable whether or not modern day viewers will be accepting of the film, as not many people appreciated it upon its release, or as director Tom Huckabee stated in an interview, “I know that some of the bigger fans [of *Taking Tiger Mountain*] were gay and bisexual men that seemed to get it better than maybe other demographics. And then recently when I showed it here at the theater where Lee Harvey Oswald was caught—there were a bunch of ex-film students in their 30s that all studied experimental cinema, and people like that tend to get it. I think when it first came out, it was just too weird. People mostly didn’t understand where it was coming from. I think when I show it these days, people tend to get it more.” Aside from giving me a new sense of respect for Bill Paxton, *Taking Tiger Mountain* has also proved to me that John Boorman’s *Zardoz* (1974) is not the only decent UK-based semi-pagan-themed dystopian science fiction.

-Ty E

SWOON

Tom Kalin (1992)

Swoon is a film about the 1924 'thrill killing' committed by gay Jewish lovers Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb. These two wealthy sick perverts had the luxury of attending the University of Chicago and were both considered "geniuses." Inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's Übermensch concept, the two Hebrews decided they would show their superiority by killing a 14-year-old fellow Jew by the name of Bobby Franks. Swoon takes a look at the Franks murder in a more accurate way than any before it. Whereas Alfred Hitchcock's Rope takes a look at the psychological reasons for the murder only, Swoon focuses on the gay relationship between Leopold and Loeb in context to the murder. Rope came out at a time when degeneracy wasn't the norm so good old Hitch had to be ambiguous about the relationship between the two "friends." Swoon features in-your-face gay sex, Negro drag queens, and a violent child murder via chisel. Swoon director Tom Kalin didn't hold back when portraying the real life child murder by two spoiled perverts. Tom Kalin made the right decision when he decided to shoot Swoon in vintage style black-and-white film stock. The film also features real stock footage from the time of the real Leopold and Loeb child murder. Swoon is a successful experiment in the power of combing old film equipment with new to achieve a film that captures the viewer in a forgotten time when murders like these were considered taboo. Swoon also features footage of phrenology tests showing how to tell by a persons head and facial experiments whether they were gay, Jewish, or even a murderer. Phrenology is now considered a pseudo science, which is fair considering the recent trend of producing mongrel children. With all the "diverse" faces, it would be impossible to categorize all the "mental illnesses" associated with them. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb killed Bobby Franks in a rental car. In a friendly and cunning manner, the two sociopath perverts invited Franks for a ride. Upon entry, one of the young men hit the boy in the head with a chisel causing a bloody mess. After knocking Franks unconscious, they shoved a sock in his mouth and he died shortly afterwards. Although the evidence is inconclusive, it is assumed that the two men performed sexual acts on the dead boy's body. They also poured acid on the boys face, genitals, and a scar on his body so that he could not be identified. Unfortunately for Leopold and Loeb, they weren't as smart as they thought as Leopold left his distinct glasses at the scene of the crime. Swoon goes into depth on all these things in much detail (except the pedophile necrophilia of course). The Real "Dickie" and "Babe" As can be expected, when both lovers were caught they blamed the other person. Neither "men" wanted to take responsibility for their "genius" dirty work. In Swoon, the impression you get is that Richard Loeb was the mastermind of the killing and Nathan Leopold was his passive bitch. Director Tom Kalin examines the characters roles in the murder and how they relate to the sexual roles of their

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relationship. Swoon is certainly a masterpiece of "New Queer Cinema." I wasn't surprised by the leniency of the courts in the Leopold and Loeb case. Nathan Leopold was released after serving 33 years in prison. Richard Loeb died in prison when a fellow prisoner slit his throat with a straight razor. According to the authorities, the man had killed Loeb in self-defense (sexual perversion was involved). Ed Lahey of the Chicago Daily News stated in a homophobic manner, "Richard Loeb, despite his erudition, today ended his sentence with a proposition." I wish newsman were that honest nowadays. Swoon is an artistic film about a very brutal and disturbing event in American history. Director Tom Kalin succeeded in making an honest and original film that most people would cringe if they even knew the film existed. Out of the films based on a true crime, Swoon might possibly be the best. I rarely see films of such a repellent subject matter that have as much cinematic power as Swoon.

-Ty E

THE RAPE AFTER

Tom Lau Moon-Tong (1984)

Ever since my initial viewing of Centipede Horror, I have had a change of mind concerning ancient horror films, ones of the supernatural element that is. Ghosts and Spirits just are not my cup of tea. While i appreciate the theory of their existence, I don't believe they fare well on the silver screen. Since Centipede Horror, I have reconsidered my preconceived notion, and now with the viewing of The Rape After, I am positive that there is a frightening ghost tale. Ma Hsien-Sheng is a photographer of models. He also has a hobby of owning religious artifacts and during one of his photo shoots, manages to steal one of a particularly nasty looking demon. When he brings it home, the church is in an uproar and he invites an upcoming model, Shu Ya, over to his house in hopes of getting lucky. After many drinks, they both vomit and pass out. During their slumber, the statue morphs into a demon goblin and rapes Shu Ya while she is sleeping. When she awakes, she has no recollection of the night before and assumes that they had sex. Upon the news of her pregnancy, she immediately claims it as Ma's child and fearing his religious girlfriend finding out, he takes her to an abortion clinic. After a failed attempt, the demon attacks the staff and Ma runs away. Already proving how much of a coward he is in the face of imminent death, Shu Ya drops contact with him until months later. She requests to be taken to the hospital. On the way, the emotional woman begins to hit Ma causing the car to steer off the road and flip, throwing Ma from the car. After he attempts to free her from the confines of twisted metal, the car explodes, leaving Shu Ya burning alive in the car whilst uttering a curse upon Ma. Along the ride comes zombies (Haitian style), flaming crows, gooey cannibalism, and really bad haircuts. The Rape After has all the attributes of a cheesy horror film, but something about it manages to get under your skin. I'm saying that this film managed to unnerve me. The atmosphere present throughout this film feels like poison. The zombies and the charred corpses recall from a time where FX was labored over, not created with a huge budget. Ears ripped off and devoured, which reminds you of the scene in Dead Alive, except this scene wins the prize. I have noticed that in near every old Hong Kong horror film, they introduce a scene that features vomiting of a disgusting paste and sometimes creatures. Is this some sort of 80's craze? or just one of Asia's hidden fetishes? As normal, this cursed man brings his problems onto a group of other people and leaves many dead in the wake. Due to the bleak outlook of the story, It is wholly depressing and misanthropic. One scene is reminiscent of Ghoulies, In which a monk goes to the bathroom and while he is relieving himself, a demon grabs him and pulls him in his own brewery for some foul scares. While the theme of the film is nihilism, we can thank the dank lighting for creating efficient moods and the sinister score for holding the suspense. Ma is a coward, this we know, but my real problem lies with Shu Ya.

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It was her own fault to assume that it was his child. The entire film is about her revenge when in fact, It wasn't even his fault. Sure, he stole a demonic statue, but she didn't have to be a trifling whore. The Rape After is a film that is overlooked due to it's provocative name and a VCD classic. If you can overlook the Lifetime Women's Channel morals, then you're set for an eerie supernatural classic.

-mAQ

THE 4TH DIMENSION

Tom Mattera, Dave Mazzoni (2006)

The 4th Dimension originally started out as a student film. This was no surprise for me as it is well known Mr. Lynch's feature length debut masterpiece *Eraserhead* came out of a similar situation (Lynch received a grant from AFI for the film). The 4th Dimension follows a path laid out by David Lynch, James Fotopoulos, and Darren Aronofsky (the artistic poser and hack). One can't help to look at those experimental films before when evaluating *The 4th Dimension*. Unlike most contemporary films, *The 4th Dimension* features very long and calculated shots. These welcoming drifting shots bring the viewer on a ride to the unknown. *The 4th Dimension* also features various nicely set-up wide angle shots that Stanley Kubrick would be proud of. The creators of *The 4th Dimension* seem to have actually learned important techniques in film school (unlike most film school directors). Like its predecessors, *The 4th Dimension* was filmed in black and white film stock (including some color film during the end). The images are crystal clear and complimentary of the film's protagonist Jack's unemotional neurosis. I also got the feeling that David Lynch's *Elephant Man* lent some influence to *The 4th Dimension's* atmosphere. *The 4th Dimension* is a character study of an individual with an introverted personality. Only during the film's conclusion do we find the truth behind Jack's ambiguous and complicated character. Various childhood flashbacks help to build up pieces of Jack's background. As a young child, Jack was a child genius and prodigy. He eventually becomes obsessed with Albert Einstein's unified field theory. Jack's obsession with time is a result of very depressing and hopeless circumstances revolving around his mother. During the film's climax, Jack finally realizes his forgotten past and unleashes an explosion of pent up emotions. He finds himself in an abandoned mental hospital that could believably be housing various ghosts of former patients. *The 4th Dimension* could even be a tribute to the decayed past of a building from hell. The end of the film is unexpected yet complimentary. The film begins in ambiguity and ends in a collected package. Quite a change for the experimental film. *The 4th Dimension* was written, produced, and directed by Tom Mattera and Dave Mazzoni. I find it very unrealistic that two collaborators could create a film with a linear flow of ideas. *The 4th Dimension* succeeds in its team of two fellow students. The film features an array of beautiful cinematography, suited acting, and lonely yet warm luscious dream sequences. I will be looking out for the filmmakers further work in the future. I suggest you do the same.

-Ty E

THE CHILDREN
THE CHILDREN

Tom Shankland (2018) I encountered a sturdy revelation in the final moments of *The Children*. Contrary to what Jervaise Brooke Hamster declares insistently, the British film industry has had some bloody reinventions recently marking intense extremes within the horror community: Most recently, *Eden Lake* and 2008's *The Children*. In both of these rather marvelous contraptions, scenarios that are normally shunned are given proper treatment over a spread amount of time. In *Eden Lake*, we watch a group of young Chavs terrorize a couple in the woods over a disputed murder of a rottweiler and in *The Children*, we encounter a Christmas party gone horribly awry when an uninvited virus turns the youngsters into murdering charlatans. Think *Children of the Corn* but without that goofy retro aesthetic that overkills the sand-colored film stock. The most alarming and fundamental aspect of *The Children* is the uninformed marketing of an unexplained virus. Some might get offended at the lack of insight into this epidemic but I find the air of mystique to be quite welcoming. In fact, *The Children* almost reminds me of equal parts *Children of the Corn*, *Cabin Fever*, and Stephen King's *Cell*. The moments of toddler terror even brought to mind Cronenberg's horrifying film effort *The Brood*. At our local Wal-Mart exists a crane game that emits a horrifying child laugh that sends shiver up and down my spine. It's official, children are the most terrifying villain ever put to screen and it's the most fresh kill count. For instance, I've seen every method of human dispatch. Watching an adult get axed or anything similar to casual hack n' slash is too deadpan for my taste. We've seen it all before and it lacks shock value. But watching a child die is like kick starting the horror genre. Only with the death of our youth will horror be once again fresh and uncompromising. To be fair to horror and *The Children*, this is one of the most terrifying movies to be released recently. If there were ever a film to diagnose me with parasomnia, *The Children* would be the culprit. The fact that the parents refuse to acknowledge their seed, their parasites, to be the villain is frighteningly realistic. Only till death will these fools see the murdering lot their children have been converted to. For that matter, after watching this film, I stumbled out into my living room in order to be greeted by stares from two children. Needless to say, I immediately thought about locking them in the attic and impaling their tiny faces on shards of glass. It's recommended prior to viewing to rest easy for several minutes before encountering children. What might cause this brief form of sibling dementia is the casting and performances itself. Very rarely do I find myself enthused about child acting but the roles of these demon children are simple astounding. Evil has never been personified in children as well as this.

As I previously stated, *The Children* is a testament to the rebirth of an unnerving kill count. Watching people that don't deserve to die, in fact die, is something that will cause an unsettling amount of distress. *The Children* is a

film that will no doubt upset parents and people with escapist values but if you look past the premature version of child murders, *The Children* is a film that will no doubt horrify the ever-living shit out of parents. My mother refuses to watch her ex-favorite horror movie, *Poltergeist*, due to the violence directed towards children. If you feel the need to taint the maternal instinct of your loved ones, *The Children* is the cure for the common parental cold. I've seen the future of horror and it is a hot "goth" bitch killing off five year olds. *The Children* also features one of my personal favorite endings that caps off a frightening film with a frightening post-premise resulting in a superb naturalist pandemic of toddler Armageddon that has a fresh and visceral approach to snowbound blood splatter. Easily one of the best uses of a snowy atmosphere.

-mAQ

ROSAKINDER
ROSAKINDER

Tom Tykwer (2012)

As a man who has spent virtually his entire filmmaking career demonically prodding and probing the subjects of his films, especially his oftentimes depraved documentaries, Rosa von Praunheim (*I Am My Own Woman*, *Neurosia: 50 Years of Perversity*) has been long overdue for the same treatment for some time and in the documentary *Rosakinder* (2012) aka *Rosa's Children* aka *Pink Children*, not one, but five very different filmmakers do just that. Indeed, directed by five of von Praunheim's former students from the Film & Television Academy (HFF) in Potsdam, the document presents a rare vulnerable and sentimental von Praunheim who becomes an object of love, hate, and ridicule. Made in tribute to the sod senior citizen's 70th anniversary, *Rosakinder*, which was commissioned by WDR and ARTE, is an experimental film of sorts in that each of the five directors (Chris Kraus, Axel Ranisch, Robert Thalheim, Tom Tykwer, and Julia von Heinz) involved directed a short which appears in the documentary regarding their typically troubled relationships with Herr von Praunheim. Indeed, believe it or not, the Hollywoodized MTV-addled hack who directed *Run Lola Run* (2008), Tom Tykwer, regards von Praunheim as his greatest mentor, even if his films have about as much in common with his ex-professor's as the blockbuster celluloid bile of Michael Bay have to do with the works of Ingmar Bergman. As one learns while watching *Rosakinder*, von Praunheim taught his students to, among other things, hate their fathers, make serious gay films even if they are heterosexual and, most importantly, to make honest and passionate films yet, as each filmmaker's respective short demonstrates, the pink kraut queen's influence did not exactly have a positive influence on his mostly heterosexual and hopelessly normal pupils. While watching the documentary, you don't learn that von Praunheim is the loveable old fag next door, but a seasoned master of dealing out misery and ridicule to his friends and pupils alike. Of course, as a man who openly admits he was quite relieved when nemesis Rainer Werner Fassbinder tragically dropped dead, von Praunheim does not pretend to play nice in the doc, but he does seem to be a bit confused and out of his element as a flaming old fairy surrounded by much younger heterosexuals. Indeed, as Deutschland's number #1 queer agitator who has quite arguably pissed off more people than any other German filmmaker in history (including Veit Harlan!), it almost seems silly that a group of mostly heterosexual bourgeois filmmakers are paying tribute to him, as if the mensch who directed *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971) aka *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* has somehow become respectable and is not the same man who filmed himself having sex with his sod friends in front of film students when he was teaching a class in San Francisco during the 1970s. In *Rosakinder*, it is von Praunheim that is lovingly roasted

and for that reason alone, the documentary makes for mandatory viewing for anyone that has ever wanted to beat the shit out of the pink Teutonic poof.

As described at the beginning of *Rosakinder*, Rosa von Praunheim has been flaunting himself in front of the camera for 70 years “and this camera shows a sex-obsessed man-eater with colorful hats who shoots scandalous films and does gay stuff. But this camera shows nothing of what the people see who perhaps know him best, fear him most, and love him unconditionally: his children.” After detailing how they met the filmmaker and presenting a short film in (anti)tribute to him, all five filmmakers conclude the documentary by singing von Praunheim’s favorite Christmas song (“O Tannenbaum” aka “O Christmas Tree”) while sporting goofy costumes that the director picked out specifically for them. Indeed, at the end of the doc, one sees the man who directed *Run Lola Run* sporting an aesthetically repugnant hyena clitoris outfit. Tom Tykwer met von Praunheim in 1988 while working in a movie theater and screening the filmmaker’s documentary *Überleben in New York* (1989) aka *Survival in New York* and they have apparently been best buds ever since. Filmmaker Chris Kraus (*Shattered Glass*, *Vier Minuten* aka *4 Minutes*) details how he wanted to beat von Praunheim’s ass around the time they first met and how he is shocked that no one has ever given the *A Virus Knows no Morals* (1985) director a good beating. Probably because she is a semi-attractive woman, Julia von Heinz (*Was am Ende zählt*, *Hanna’s Journey*) was constantly told by von Praunheim that her films were phony and Hollywood-like. Bearded beta-male Robert Thalheim (*Netto*, *Weßkind*) was in constant fear of the gay professor because he thought his teacher would think he was too ‘bourgeois.’ Undoubtedly, the youngest of the group, Axel Ranisch (*Heavy Girls* aka *Dicke Mädchen*, *Reuber*)—a considerably swarthy and morbidly obese gay boi who loves to get naked in his own films—has the most love for von Praunheim, as his professor helped him to come out of the closet and not feel ashamed about making films where he exposes his unclad fat flab for the entire world to see. Not surprisingly, by the end of *Rosakinder*, von Praunheim says to all 5 filmmakers, “I see you as human beings and as friends. But if we take Axel, for example...In terms of my work, I naturally feel a closer proximity to what he does,” thus demonstrating the cocksucker credo that all fags must stick together and that the director probably should have started his own pink film school.

During the beginning of *Rosakinder*, filmmaker Chris Kraus states that von Praunheim is, “the godfather of lousy taste, of lousy craftsmanship.” Despite Kraus’ less than flattering remarks regarding his teacher’s oeuvre, he was responsible for co-penning von Praunheim’s awful agitprop-docudrama *The Einstein of Sex: Life and Work of Dr. M. Hirschfeld* (1999) aka *Der Einstein des Sex*. As Kraus—a middle-aged man who says rather childish things like, “I hate fathers. I hate authority. I hate paternal authority” despite the fact that he is himself a father—mentions during the doc, he sees von Praunheim as a father figure,

ROSAKINDER

even though he is a flagrant fairy. In fact, there is a chance that Kraus and von Praunheim might be related as the former's SS Sturmbannführer grandfather may have boned the latter's biological mother. Indeed, the two worked together on the documentary *Two Mothers* (2007) aka *Meine Mütter - Spurensuche* in Riga after von Praunheim learned he was adopted in 2000 and wanted to find out who his real parents were. Claiming he already has a large enough burden in terms of collective guilt regarding the holocaust, von Praunheim opts for not discovering whether or not Kraus' Sturmbannführer grandfather was also his father. Undoubtedly, what all the five filmmakers of *Rosakinder* have in common is that they are products of the post-nationalist, postmodern ethno-masochistic disease that has transformed Germany into a cultural graveyard inhabited by dead souls who seem to know nothing about their own country's rich cultural and cinematic history, with the meticulously stylized yet ultimately soulless films of Tom Tykwer reflecting the height of this perturbing culturally apocalyptic phenomenon. Even von Praunheim seems to realize this as demonstrated by his typically scatalogical remarks regarding his student's films, "It's like a baby that's had a poo and loves his pile of poo. It's all steamy, and the baby beams with joy. It was the same with the students' films too; they were like their little poos. And when you took away their joy, they hated you." In other words, none of these pampered filmmakers have anything to say and are merely parroting the cosmopolitan post-Auschwitz bullshit they have been spoon-fed since birth.

Tykwer—a rampant heterosexual who used to date Franka Potente, the star of his films *Run Lola Run* and *The Princess and the Warrior*—has deluded himself with so much politically correct bullshit that he claims that the decidedly depraved homo celluloid scat pieces of von Praunheim have had the most imperative influence on him as a filmmaker. Undoubtedly, Kraus is even more pathetic as he credits von Praunheim for helping him to hate his once-beloved Sturmbannführer opa, stating, "My grandfather and his brothers weren't just Nazis. They weren't just in the SS. They were part of the Holocaust" and "I often cry about my grandfather, who I dearly loved as a child. And that love almost made me a Nazi forever." Ultimately, *Rosakinder* reminded me of the absurdity of mainstreaming homosexuality and shoving sodomy in everyone's face. After all, why should any majority have to 'tolerate' and 'embrace' the lifestyles of a minority that they, as heterosexuals, would otherwise find completely repugnant?! Indeed, whereas Tykwer probably would have learned more from Volker Schlöndorff and Julia von Heinz more from Helma Sanders-Brahms as film professors, they were all stuck with a college dropout like Rosa von Praunheim for what can only be described as dubious political reasons. After all, only a gay (and maybe black, Jewish, and/or transvestite) film professor could get away with telling his co-professor to go kill themselves by jumping out of a window as von Praunheim apparently once did (in fact, one of his colleagues even sued him). Indeed, von Praunheim is at his greatest as a filmmaker when he is at his most unrepentantly

raunchiest, and the last place his 'idiosyncratic' brand of filmmaking needs to be is at a film school.

-Ty E

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN
LET THE RIGHT ONE IN

Tomas Alfredson (2008)

I've been putting this film off for quite some time, perhaps even since its release. When I first attempted to watch it, I was in an undeniably irritated mood and this chore was too great an obstacle to get through, especially when the run time begrudgingly stared back at me through my flat screen computer monitor. These over hyped "indie" arthouse films have begun to rub my nerves raw with the sandpaper-ish reception of critical praise. Such over used phrases calling a film a "genre masterpiece" and other abominations of writing. I mean, I'm no James Joyce, but as every film with individual thoughts gets viewed, I believe that every creative thought is deserving of its own. In case you've been under a rock or new to festival favorites, *Let the Right One In* is based off of a popular Swedish novel of vampires, love, and pre-pubescent emotions. Oskar, a bullied, tormented, and awfully alone child seeks revenge and companionship through a 12 year old girl he met named Eli. This little girl he has fallen in love for her is a master at puzzles such as the daunting Rubix Cube. Oh, and she's also a vampire who has been feasting off of members of Oskar's little snowy town. The bond these two share is pure and adolescent in nature. To call any film heartfelt other than *Let the Right One In* would be a crime. This eventual Swedish masterpiece marks the birth of a masterful spinster of tender emotions and critical resolutions. Tomas Alfredson has directed mainly unknown productions unknown to anyone outside of his homeland. With a script that breathes raw life into wonderful characters and cinematography so glamorous that it makes violence feel like a necessity, this film is proudly as stunning as hyped up to be. I can only imagine from the explosive unseen potency of *Let the Right One In*, that Tomas will in fact will begin directing Hollywood budgeted films and will eventually sacrifice artistic integrity for a bigger paycheck. Such woe is the infection of Hollywood. The lore of the vampire is perfected with a hybrid of beliefs. While technically not considered a vampire in the novel, this was just a precaution taken by the author to create one of those mysterious atmospheres by allegedly creating a new species of similar instinct but whole new morals. This prototype of vampiric being doesn't quite reach the suspense of *Count Orlok* or the terrifying appearance of those in *30 Days of Night* but Eli and co. are ruthless in nature which results in extremely shocking scenes of violence that would never be expected from such a delicate romance. This is a frightening new age tale of vampirism that reaches a plan of eroticism unheard of all part to its extremely young cast. This fusion throws all needless baggage of in memory of the death of the modern vampire film. Say hello to post-vampirism and its many fruits. *Let the Right One In* is simply a fairytale that needs proper recognition (which it has seen more than enough). This must be seen to believe. To simply apply details to the face of this film, one might choose to mix equal parts

of dynamic execution, a forbidden romance, and a brutal level of violence creating something you'd never begin to expect and a film almost worthy of family viewing. Any character of any social status can find gusto in this modern horror/romance. For many, *Let the Right One In* put Sweden back on the map. What a luxury it is to view a vampire film that doesn't embrace a rock n' roll Hot Topic lifestyle.

-mAQ

DEAD SNOW
DEAD SNOW

Tommy Wirkola (2009)

Norway is in the midst of a horror boom. Only just recently did it appear to be crafting horror film after horror film, each with an advanced form of cinematography unheard of for what seems to be among the first experiments in horror. Due to the alarming festival buzz, a new Norwegian horror film is wholeheartedly accepted, especially when it's a Nazi zombie film. Dead Snow is not to be mistaken for the "viral" trailer of Worst Case Scenario, which looks to be an absolute masterpiece in presentation. As I expected it to be Worst Case Scenario, I was disappointed when I found out this was not the one and the same film I had been hoping for. In fact, what I got was yet another snowy horror film taking advantage of the fluffy white terrain to shed some much needed blood. Dead Snow is a tidy little film but the modus operandi reveals this film to be lacking in every aspect. Dead Snow depicts 7 (+1) medical students vacationing in the snowy mountains for some festivities including drinking and fornication. After a traveling old hiker warns them of the evil lurking in the woods, most likely belonging to the wrath of Colonel Herzog and his SS officers who were chased into the mountain hills after plundering the citizenry for their shiny treasures. After time, they just assumed they froze to death. Boy were they wrong. After a dark and wintry night of disgusting sex acts including fucking a fat man prior to him taking a shit; he's still on the outhouse seat no less, we find that humanity is about to fall victim to the terror of the Third Reich once more. I wish the film had taken a pulp approach such as the last line illustrates but truth be told, the "Nazis" in Dead Snow are no more Nazis than they are Vampires. You'd think a "Seig Heil!" would be in order. Hell, this state of desperation would have me even begging for Die Hard actors but alas, there's no authenticity to be found. By end's time, we're just given Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Putty-lookalikes donning Nazi regalia. Stick to Call of Duty: World at War for the true blooded Nazi zombie experience. Dead Snow's only real strength isn't even a natural one. The constant bloodshed is this film's only point of endurance. Had these "evil Germans" aspire to do the horrific acts that history books never let us live down, then maybe this film would have something to talk about. These Nazis don't want to "gas" Jews or cause pain and suffering. They just want their preciouses. The offensive nature of the Nazis in Dead Snow is brought on by theft of the Nazis valuables. This common theme is what makes Leprechaun such a tacky and light-hearted series. For a Nazi to commit such childish acts is a disgrace to script-writing everywhere. I'm sure Jane Goody could have written more three-dimensional characters as these.

Among many flaws is something of a comedy abstaining all elemental races of horror or vice-versa. At times a more favorable approach would be to make a "69" gag or clever zombie lore antics. While comedy is normally a first-rate piece

of thematic in modern horror, Dead Snow does give way for the occasional scare and by occasional I can only point towards one scene in particular that had any tension behind it at all. Besides being a shallow hole and doused with pop-punk Norwegian equivalents to Linkin Park, Dead Snow prevails for being a slice of delicious entertainment. I refuse to take this film serious in any way and will only use this motion picture to bide my time for the highly anticipated Worst Case Scenario. Other than that jazz, Dead Snow also features a captivating and violent showdown scene of a hemophobic film nerd going batshit wild with a chainsaw. Dead Snow is a film that will charm the schieze out of most zombie fans and from this, a blindness will envelop, obscuring the many present fans from an ADHD generation. Perfect for people with low-attention spans.

-mAQ

ONG BAK 2
ONG BAK 2

Tony Jaa (2008)

From time to time, strange events catapult me into an unexplainable mood that borders a body high and the effects of emotional void. No emoticon designed for Myspace and Facebook could describe even the vacant stare on my face. My inner workings are as mysterious to myself as the readers of Soiled Sinema are to us. Knowing perfectly well that Ong Bak 2's hands were not guilt free, Tony Jaa's directorial debut, finally at long last, served as the irrational catalyst for what some could call a "strange day." Awaiting Ong Bak 2 had become part of my routine film updates. Eagerly awaiting for any festival news of this became a hobby. Normally, I purge my mind of international releases as they mercilessly boast foreign treasures equipped with insane action, marvelous cinematography, and rampant yet dignified humor. These are, in fact, the very reasons why I abhor Twitchfilm.* Their extensive database of trailers and previews showcase the finest moments in globalized cinema or in other words, a collected hivemind of stylish and brutal antiques ranging from every genre. If there were a form of getting cinema blue balls, Twitchfilm would be the purveyor of such harm. Their seasoned gift of the Ong Bak 2 trailer baring ribbons & bows left me speechless. I began salivating precariously; incapacitated to the point of becoming oblivious to the animalic routine of eat/drink/fuck/sleep.

After the festival premiere of Ong Bak 2 came and went, I found myself with hardly anything left to anticipate. Sure, the film was an austere showcase of martial arts being simultaneously fused within a fighting orgy but to date, my thoughts are very scattered on this film and requires a bit of esoteric analysis to be fit into my schedule. Undoubtedly, the greatest contribution that Ong Bak 2 has presented to film is the resonating effects of the anti-triumphant ending. This ending in question breaches past atypicalities and into a sarcastic fate denouncing valor and the very generic form of diplomatic immunity that most action heroes seem to find themselves coated in. The tale of Ong Bak 2 seems to mostly manifest within the creative confines of a loosely adapted Count of Monte Cristo-like story of revenge, redemption, and inner growth. The creative genius of Alexander Dumas is partly what Ong Bak 2 must award the most credit, not just the [amazing] action choreography and the tedious and trivial back story/flashbacks. While taking a gander at several festival and randoms reviews, I noticed that many people seemed to lash out at this film as if some vendetta had boiled to a fiery temperament. Most of the negative energy seemed to circulate around the plot (or the lack of one by their offense). If you would, for a second, recall back on Jaa's previous efforts: Ong Bak - A man must reclaim his traditional heirloom by going to a city and kicking people's faces in. The Protector - A man must reclaim his traditional elephant by going to a city and kicking people's faces in. Knowing what you know now, consider this: is calling a film

lacking in substance, that strays far from previous works, a down right low blow on behalf of Tony Jaa, who left the team of Pinkaew as to escape from his one-note fate? Not even I stretch an idea of no-mercy as far as the gripping "fan base" of Tony Jaa. Ong Bak 2 stands steady as Jaa's own piece of period piece action while being stylishly fierce and a distant mirage compared to his previous starring roles. It also successfully made the jump from mindless action to thoughtful action, paying debts to lovers of classic literature and a bravado piece of epic brutality aided by the bestial visage of Tony Jaa. Real fight is back and Tony Jaa's tearing up the martial arts world with unapologetic body beatings that can be compared to bungee-jumping into a pool of straight razors. Have mercy on this film for its flaws as it won't do the same for you. Final Note: mAQ is, in all actuality, is an avid reader of Twitchfilm and in no way persuades you to not read their news updates.

-mAQ

SPLIT SECOND
SPLIT SECOND

Tony Maylam (1992)

Akin to 80s bio-horror film *The Kindred*, *Split Second* is another blast from the past for me. The picture perfect video box art still resonates fresh within the corridors of my mind. After my maturity, I hit a memory peak where I had begun to forget the titles of the films that were most dear to me. Thanks to the IMDB plot search and Netflix, I began to track down such titles with vigor. *Split Second* is one of the few lucky ones that survived in my memory, ironically enough.

With a few details still fresh in my mind like I'd seen it yesterday, I began to brainstorm what exactly I remembered. A heartbeat in a distant flooded metropolis. A monolithic, though rotund man wielding incredible futuristic weaponry. Did I mention a 10 foot tall sentient alien creature armed with razor nails that give the fear of blades a whole new meaning? With a being of this magnitude, plus its adaptability towards souls and weapons, *Split Second* turns B-grade sci-fi horror into something of a treasure. Created in 1992, *Split Second* was one of the earlier films theatrically released to endorse the idea of global warming, soon followed by the much maligned *Waterworld*. The running commentary depicted in *Split Second* focuses on London as it rests several feet under water. The critical controversy wouldn't really reach a peak until the inception of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. But between the two films, *Split Second* is far more invigorating, horrifying, and judgmental on the human species thanks to the *Blade Runner* inspired set pieces and the ambient bar scenes. The cold spirited show stealer is not the man himself, Rutger Hauer, but rather the alien creature he is in fact chasing. While showing signs of extraterrestrial life, this specimen seems to be sea-borne and thrives off of the old occult myth that eating one's heart will allow you to absorb their soul. This symbiotic life form features a stunning array of costumed effects that could easily be mistaken as the handiwork of the late & great Stan Winston with a dash of H.R. Giger's fantastical alien sexuality. What *Split Second* has going for it the most is how fascinating the film pretends to be, but then ever-so-delicately cradles your attention span. Rather than mad libbing the film with filler dialogue and useless violence, *Split Second* constructs an entirely adaptable fictional universe in which life can sustain in. Futuristic automatic combat shotguns, dreary and damp environments, and post-Cantina citizens; *Split Second* is a pure breed pedigree of 90s science fiction. I was hooked the instant Hauer stopped an attacking Rottweiler with a badge while muttering "Police, dickhead".

-mAQ

HELLBOUND: HELLRAISER II

Tony Randel (1988)

Most horror films stream parallel to one existing subclass genre. In question, Psychological horror (which engages the mind in non-casual thinking) and gruesome horror (which shocks and offends with violent body imagery chronicling death and other similar facets). Clive Barker is renowned for challenging that staple within his Hellraiser films, being the first two. Hellraiser II is a nightmarish fairy tale crafted explicitly for adult fans of the macabre. For a Barker tale more suited for children or people prone to take offense, I suggest the Candyman saga. Filled with religious symbolism and themes that echo intense evil that knows no boundaries, Hellraiser still manages to be a hair raising experience even as the years fly by. The leitmotif present in the first two tales monitors a strict sado-masochist rule. For any person housing a perverse fetish in secret, you'd be surprised how much of this film can be psycho-sexually appealing. One could derive satisfaction from these grisly acts of torture and conforming the sexual undertones from some of these memorable scenes. It's not uncommon to question the ending circumstance delineated in a previous episode. That mysterious outcome that leaves you stuck on a cliffhanger or questions pertaining to a justice side of horror. Surely the authorities would refuse to swallow the tall tale of a demonic massacre and soul harvesting. That's beyond most religions which sadly determines the lengths of one's beliefs. Poor Kirsty never had a chance for judicial redemption and this is how this story depicting a bout of grue begins. The Cenobites are without a doubt the showcase of the films. The stories lie as a vehicle to propel these horrifying fiends at our retinas. Cliver Barker and Tony Randel worked together to create premium special effects. The dedication of horror fans bleeds through as goopy messes and graphic body horrors are stomach-churning and very vulgar. It's odd how films made in the 80's such as Hellraiser manage to disgust more than any new-age horror film that claims to push the edge. Hellraiser II may be one of the greatest sequels of all time. One might argue Aliens in term of my favor, but that withheld nothing from the pristine original other than names and faces. They butchered the atmosphere that was constructed for explosions and gunshots. Hellbound: Hellraiser II is the average Joe's nightmare and the sado-masochist's wet dream.

-mAQ

MADemoiselle
MADemoiselle

Tony Richardson (1966)

Films about female psychopaths, especially good and realistic ones, are not exactly easy to come by, which one can certainly expect in a mixed world where 'feminism' (or at least some bastardized form of it) reigns and where the white male has become the cinematic archetype of sociopathy. Undoubtedly, if I were to select a single film as the greatest depiction of sociopathic behavior displayed in a member of the fairer sex, it would be the French-UK coproduction *Mademoiselle* (1966) directed by British auteur Tony Richardson (*The Loved One*, *The Hotel New Hampshire*) and starring Jeanne Moreau (*Jules et Jim*, *Diary of a Chambermaid*) as a sexually repressed femme fatale from rural frog hell whose propensity for arson and other forms of rural terrorism make for a rather melodramatic substitute for good old fashion coitus. Based on a script entitled *Les Rêves Interdits/L'Autre Versant du Rêve* by French sodomite thief novelist Jean Genet, who originally gave the screenplay as a wedding gift to French actress Anouk Aimée (who married Nico Papatakis and who Genet served as his "best man") in 1951 but ultimately sold the script three times without telling Aimée, *Mademoiselle* was later reworked by French writer/director Marguerite Duras (*Les enfants*, *Nathalie Granger*) and had a number of different filmmakers set to direct it, including Georges Franju and Joseph Losey, though Tony Richardson ultimately proved to be an apt auteur. Out of all places, I discovered *Mademoiselle* while reading the excellent Andy Milligan biography *The Ghastly One: The Sex-Gore Netherworld of Filmmaker Andy Milligan* (2003) by Jimmy McDonough, which the gutter auteur, who himself directed Genet theater adaptations during his pre-film off-off-Broadway days, described as follows, "MADEMOISELLE. THE SICKEST THING YOU EVER SAW. Stuff like that impressed me." On top of impressing real-life psychopathic sadomasochist Andy Milligan, *Mademoiselle* is also apparently a personal favorite of John Waters, yet despite being a fairly mainstream production, the film is fairly forgotten today, which is probably not a surprise considering it was a commercial and critical failure of sorts that was booed at its premiere at the 1966 Cannes Film Festival, though the work rightfully won a BAFTA award and was featured in a 2007 Brooklyn Academy of Music French film retrospective. Part morbid and melancholy melodrama, part psychosexual/psychoanalytic horror-thriller, and part anti-redneck/anti-heimat lynch mob flick, *Mademoiselle* follows a beautiful yet psychopathic school teacher of the dangerously virginal variety with a pernicious proclivity towards committing atrocities around her small village who develops an undying erotic obsession with an Italian immigrant logger that inevitably results in tragedy.

Mademoiselle (Jeanne Moreau) is an undetected psychopath whom, with her cutesy good looks and job as the village schoolmarm, no one in the town suspects

of the arson attacks that have plagued their rural village, but who is in fact considered an upstanding citizen who is sexually desired by every living and breathing man in the area. Considering she opens the floodgates that ravage the village and its farm animals during the first couple minutes of the film and subsequently smashes a couple bird eggs and puts them back in the nest with a certain sadistic glee, Mademoiselle immediately establishes her complete and utter lack of conscience right from the get go of Mademoiselle. Of course, Mademoiselle has a hard time totally hiding her sociopathy in front of the villagers at all times, as she uses her respected job as a school teacher to torment children, namely an Italian immigrant boy named Bruno (Keith Skinner), whom she mocks for his poverty and shabby clothing. Of course, a strange situation brews when Mademoiselle becomes infatuated with Bruno's widowed logger father Manou (played by Ettore Manni in a role originally given to Marlon Brando). In part, it seems one of the reasons that Mademoiselle lights fires is that she gets wet from martially masculine Manou putting them out. Not surprisingly, the redneck villagers instantly start suspecting Manou of committing the crimes as the locals feel there are "too many foreigners" in town, even causing one local yokel to complain that, "One of them is carrying the Holy Virgin today" during a medieval-like church procession in a field. Meanwhile, Mademoiselle continues to torment little boy Bruno so bad that he flips out and beats a cute little bunny rabbit to death in a fierce fit of rage. Considering Mademoiselle lurks around the woods and spies on the Italian logger as he works, Manou eventually approaches her and even tries to seduce her a number of times, but she is far too cold and callous to reciprocate her feelings, though she clearly wants to yet lacks the instincts. On top of that, Mademoiselle is into self-flagellation and does rather bizarre things like putting tape over her nipples and fanatically declaring the saintliness of Joan of Arc to her pupils while in a megalomaniacal state as if she were a nefarious nun from hell. While his son Bruno is quick to realize that Mademoiselle is a certified psychopath with her own personal scorched earth policy, Manou, being the typical horndog Guido with a reckless weakness for pulchritudinous ladies, is totally ignorant of his would-be-lover's lack of sanity. After a lovely night together where the two lovebirds spend an entire night flirting with one other in a strangely innocent and even heartwarming manner, Manou reveals to Mademoiselle that he and his son are moving back to Italy, so the lovelorn sociopathic schoolteacher falsely denounces the proletarian stud for her cruel crimes, thus resulting in his brutal death via a gang of hostile hicks who hack him up and cover up their dastardly deeds. In the end, Mademoiselle leaves the village totally unscathed with Bruno, who is now orphaned, being the only one who knew of the beautiful bitch's true character, even spitting in her direction in decided disdain when she leaves.

Apparently making a number of references to writer Jean Genet's childhood village of Alligny-en-Morvan (a place that had a whopping population of 735

MADemoisELLE

citizens in 1962) in central France, *Mademoiselle* is undoubtedly an unflattering portrait of the French rural peasantry that echoes the hick-hating sentiments of films by Claude Chabrol, but also has much in common with the anti-*heimat* films of German New Cinema like *Hunting Scenes From Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* directed by Peter Fleischmann and Hollywood flicks like *Deliverance* (1972) directed by John Boorman, but what makes Tony Richardson's film a strikingly singular and unforgettable film is its rare 'völkisch-noir' depiction of a superficially 'angelic' schoolteacher as a sort of lethal human black widow who conspiratorially lures strong men in and destroys them when they are at their most vulnerable, thus the cinematic work will not exactly be a favorite among feminists. As a fan of most cinematic adaptations of Jean Genet's writings, I have no problem admitting that *Mademoiselle* is easily one of my favorite films penned by the literary outlaw, even if Marguerite Duras probably molested the original story, thereupon bastardizing its original essence to a most deplorable degree. Notably, *Mademoiselle* lead Jeanne Moreau would later go on to appear in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's final film *Querelle* (1982), a campy cinematic adaption of Genet's 1947 novel *Querelle de Brest*, though her performance in Richardson's film is infinitely memorably monstrous. A psychosexually perverse cinematic parable of sorts featuring a variety of erotically-charged allegorical imagery (a snake wrapped around Manou's waist over his genitals, etc.) that quasi-blasphemously blames sexual repression for the literal and figurative 'fall of man' (or in this case, the fall of a man), *Mademoiselle* is macabre melodrama at its most cruelly cockblocked and exquisitely anticlimactic.

-Ty E

THE BORDER

Tony Richardson (1982)

Any film that enables me to emphasize with the plight of drug-smuggling illegal aliens from South of the border must be doing something right. Thus, it is to my surprise that *The Border* (1982) directed by Tony Richardson is an undeservedly unknown work, especially considering that it stars veteran actor Jack Nicholson and fellow classic Hollywood macho men like Harvey Keitel and Warren Oates. Equipped with a most delightfully brutal climax that is guaranteed to make any biker whore wet, it is no wonder that Peckinpah player Oates is featured in the film. Walon Green – co-writer of the screenplay for *The Wild Bunch* (1969) – also contributed his maverick screenwriting talents to *The Border*. Although set in contemporary Texas on the U.S.-Mexico border, *The Border* is essentially a testosterone-driven neo-Western with sentimentalist socio-political undertones that paces quite gracefully, like a true proud and stoic cowboy on the prowl. Jack Nicholson plays Charlie Smith, a California transplant who continues his career as a U.S. Border Patrol agent in the luxurious land of steers, queers, and illegal aliens. Early on in the film, Smith learns that dirty beaners are not the only vehemently reeking outlaws of the Lone Star State as a couple of his fellow Border Patrol pals foster the sort of third world criminality that they swore oppose. After dealing with pressure from his corrupt superiors and his unabashedly materialistic dunce wife, Smith eventually gives in to conforming and decides to get in on the action of embedding illegal drug and human trafficking, prostitution, and related degenerate unlawfulness, but he soon realizes that such dastardly deeds only further contribute to his misery as a lone cowboy amongst legally employed, disguised outlaws.

Aesthetically, *The Border* resembles the French New Wave-inspired look of revered counterculture works like Stuart Rosenberg's *Cool Hand Luke* (1967) and Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969). That being said, I would not be surprised if *The Border* was overlooked during its time due to its seemingly outmoded aesthetic that died hard during the reign of Hollywood big blockbusters during the second half of the 1970s and the extremely materialistic and oftentimes fantasy-driven flicks of the 1980s. Like its raw and gritty outlaw predecessors, *The Border* is big on atmosphere due to its almost documentary-style visuals. Unlike the early counterculture works, *The Border* lacks the sort of pseudo-rebellious "rebel-without-a-cause" posturing that made the original films famous and influential on American society. In fact, *The Border* is a tale of rebellion against unlawful rebellion where a marginally crooked Border Patrolman straightens back up and forever annihilates the forever jagged and morally-ragged amongst his authoritarian kind, thus the film was probably not very popular with anxiety-ridden youth like the original counterculture flicks. Another interesting and unconventional aspect of *The Border* is Jack Nicholson's hum-

THE BORDER

ble performance as the Ted Bundy-esque actor refrains from personifying the charismatic cool guy caricature he is eternally famous for. Charlie Smith is a fairly simple man who – unlike his wife and co-employees – is totally satisfied with living a peaceful and humble life of monotonous platitudes. It is only when Smith firsthand encounters the rotten fruits of corruption and exploitation that his rather mundane existence is given greater meaning. Smith, in the tradition of great American renegade heroes like Travis Bickle and David Sumner, takes the law into his own hands when he attempts to rescue an infant that is on the black market so that he can reunite the cute baby cholo with its exceedingly destitute mother.

If one is to learn anything from *The Border*, it is that corrupt whites (whether black market dealers, border patrol lackeys, or politicians) are the central partakers and promoters of illegal immigration and the slave-driven black market in the United States. Although it is Mexican black marketers and drug cartels that import crime and human suffering via South of the border, they would not be so unpleasantly prosperous without the help of thoroughly monetarily-intemperate Americans with golden dollar signs for pupils. In *The Border*, Smith's partner Cat (played brilliantly by Harvey Keitel as per usual) acknowledges that the Mexicans have their "own way of doing things." I found this scene to be especially symbolic of the film as a whole. While blatantly expressing the dubious facade of being morally and culturally superior to Mexicans, these Border Patrol agents neglect to walk the walk and talk the talk of their assumed gringo superiority. A film like *The Border* only makes it all the more obvious as to why your typical illegal alien feels that they are owed something by the nation they broke laws to land in. These illegal immigrants would not come to the United States in the first place if it were not for the supremely miserly business owners and globalist corporations that so eagerly and criminally employ them. Of course, as *The Border* makes clear, a life in virtual slavery in America is still preferable to living in an unsanitary desert ghetto in Mexico, so one cannot honestly blame these people for risking their lives to come here in the first place. In a lot of ways, Alex Cox's *El Patrullero* aka *Highway Patrolman* (1991) seems to be a loose remake of *The Border*, only set on the other side of the border where crime and political corruption is all the more rampant and socially acceptable. Making its debut nearly three decades ago, at a time when illegal immigration and governmental illegality was somewhat less glaring, *The Border* is indubitably more relevant today than it was upon its initial (largely ignored) release.

-Ty E

THE HUNGER

Tony Scott (1983)

Admittedly, old school Deathrock aka Gothic rock has always been one of my favorite subgenres of music, so it should come as no surprise that I have made a point to watch Tony Scott's debut-feature film *The Hunger* (1983) – one of few mainstream works to pay tribute to the often mocked but rarely seriously examined music movement – a number of times over the years. In the film, blood takes on a orgasmic ejaculatory quality that for vampires is an afflicting addiction that comes with a viciously vexatious withdraw if an undead addict fails to adequately indulge in these vital living fluids. Opening with the song “Bela Lugosi's Dead” – which is often regarded as the first Gothic rock single ever released – by British Deathrock group Bauhaus, as well as iconic footage of the band (mainly singer Peter Murphy) itself, *The Hunger* is an extravagantly stylized, erotic phantasmal work that pays more than apropos tribute to a music subgenre that is often maliciously maligned (if sometimes deservedly so) and endlessly ridiculed, but rarely objectively diagnosed for its actual aesthetic attributes and influence. Fittingly, proto-Goth David Bowie plays a starring (but progressively relinquishing) vampire role in *The Hunger*, as does French actress Catherine Deneuve; the ridiculously resplendent international film goddess that starred in Roman Polanski's early dark masterpiece *Repulsion* (1965) and Luis Buñuel's popular work *Belle de Jour* (1967). Susan Sarandon also co-stars in *The Hunger* as the lesbian love interest/prey of Deneuve's character. Of all the filmmakers that could have been chosen to direct a modern Deathrock-inspired vampire flick, I would have least expected Tony Scott – a filmmaker best known for vapid blockbuster films like *Top Gun* (1986) and *Man on Fire* (2004) – but then again, the Hollywood auteur got his start creating successful television commercial advertisements, thus making him quite germane for directing the radiantly stylized montages and overly expressive horror/erotic interludes featured throughout *The Hunger*; a chimerical shadow play shot on celluloid. In fact, Scott cites the feverishly decadent and schizophrenically-structured work *Performance* (1970) directed by Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg and starring Bowie's one-time boy-toy Mick Jagger as one of the greatest influences behind *The Hunger*. Breaking with convention and expectations in almost every regard, *The Hunger* is a vampire lesbo flick on a gloriously grotesque cocktail of LSD and steroids that borrows liberally from every subversive bloodsucking flick of the past, including F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) and Hammer Horror classics like *The Vampire Lovers* (1970) and *Twins of Evil* (1971). Watch out delusional Afrocentrists, *The Hunger* features an ancient Egyptian vampiress of Indo-European stock whose glaring lack of melanin could be only that of an agathokakological undead honky. I do not think it would be a stretch to speculate that pseudo-sinister sodomite Aleister Crowley's

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ultra-hedonistic quasi-religion Thelema – which adopted a triad of deities from ancient Egyptian religion – also influenced the audacious aura, libertine themes, and Kenneth Anger-esque music video mysticism of *The Hunger*.

Indubitably, I think *The Hunger* would have somewhat benefited from having been set in New York City or Los Angeles, California as opposed to London, England. In fact, Tony Scott wanted to shoot the entire film in NYC, but due to monetary constraints, the English filmmaker settled for the dreary urban streets of his own homeland. As someone who has always had a greater affinity for American west coast Deathrock groups like Christian Death, T.S.O.L, and 45 Grave over Goth groups from over the pond, I feel that *The Hunger* could have had a more ‘magickal’ cosmopolitan feel of wandering-endlessly-through-undying-eternity had it been set in relatively rootless, amoral, and ahistorical Southern California. Despite having to compromise in regard to location setting, *The Hunger* still often has an anomalous essence that tends to transcend national boundary. In fact, Tony Scott regards the closing shot of London in the film as geographically ambiguous, as if the film could have taken place in any modern metropolis. The personal home of the lead vampire lovers Miriam Blaylock (Catherine Deneuve) and John (David Bowie) has a culturally-refined aristocratic quality that is decidedly timeless, yet at the same time startlingly futuristic. Tony Scott also made congenial use of artistically eclectic Art Deco architecture around London to further compliment the delectable yet decadent atmosphere of *The Hunger*; an unwonted vampire flick that, unlike Bowie’s character in the film, has scarcely shown its age over the years. Upon its original release, *The Hunger* was critically lambasted by the majority of film critics, including the always pompous and never less-than-charming Roger Ebert who described the film as, “an agonizingly bad vampire movie.” David Bowie himself even had doubts about the film stating, “I must say, there’s nothing that looks like it on the market. But I’m a bit worried that it’s just perversely bloody at some points.” As the test of time has undeniably proven, the popularity of *The Hunger* has only steadily risen over the years, not least due to the film being one of the most scrupulously polished and ideally idiosyncratic vampire lesbo flicks ever made, but it also very possibly the greatest and most cultivated abstract filmic expressions of the Deathrock movement. Unless Miloš Forman, Oliver Stone, or Gus Van Sant decides that a lavishly-produced Rozz Williams biopic will be their most ambitious attempt at directing a celluloid opus magnum, I ingenuously doubt that the world will see a more vitalizing dark love letter to the long spiritless Deathrock movement than *The Hunger*.

Quite honestly, the first time I viewed *The Hunger* about a decade ago or so, I felt the work was ridden with pulsating pomposity and unrealized artistic pretensions, but the film has certainly grown on me over the years, so much so, that I always look forward to re-watching it and discovering elements of the film that I had yet to notice before, sort of like with Tony’s brother Ridley’s mas-

terpiece *Blade Runner* (1982). Indeed, in terms of aesthetic overload and plot incoherence, *The Hunger*, especially for a mainstream vampire film, is exceedingly self-indulgent, but so are a vast percentage of the most illustrious films ever made. Aside from *True Romance* (1993), *The Hunger* is the only Tony Scott film that I can wholeheartedly recommend, which makes it all the more interesting when one considers that it was the mostly hackish filmmaker's first-feature. Devastated by the harsh reviews that *The Hunger* received upon its initial release, one can only wonder whether or not Scott's career as a filmmaker would have went a different, more artistically-ambitious route had the vaulting vamp flick received the mostly positive praise it deserved. Although Scott concluded *The Hunger* on an ambiguous note hinting at a potential sequel, such a project would not even begin see the light of day, although the film would inspire a mediocre softcore TV horror anthology of the same name also starring David Bowie (at least for the second season). In 2009, Warner Bros. announced that the world would soon see an unnecessary remake of *The Hunger* based on a screenplay written by Whitley Strieber; the horror author whose novel the original film was based on. Although I find the idea of a remake to be dubious and – at best – monetarily-inspired, it would be interesting if Tony Scott followed in the footsteps of Alfred Hitchcock and re-made his own film, especially after almost three decades of overwhelming mediocrity and mundanity as a filmmaker.

Like *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), *The Hunger* is one of the oh-so unsurprisingly few lesbian vampiress flicks that rises above being aesthetically-pleasing smut and for that alone, it is a noble cinematic triumph worthy of postmortem eulogy. Although most of Tony Scott's films epitomize everything that is deplorable, soulless, and humdrum about Hollywood, at least he directed what is very possibly one of the most transcendent vampire flicks of the 1980s, as well as one of the most high-class and hunky-dory vampire films ever made.

-Ty E

TRUE ROMANCE
TRUE ROMANCE

Tony Scott (1993)

It is not much of a revelation to say that most action films suck and lack any thing of value in any way. That being said, the best action films are those that do a good job strictly attempting to entertain the audience. Hollywood hack Tony Scott is most notorious for his laughably horrible air force propaganda film Top Gun. I don't have much respect for Scott as a director. Maybe Tony Scott should have taken some cues from his brother Ridley (Blade Runner, Alien) who is a much better studio director. I doubt anyone would ever call Tony Scott an "Artist" so I go into his films knowing not to expect anything resembling culture. Scott, however, did direct one highly entertaining film known as True Romance written by a young and somewhat less arrogant Quentin Tarantino.

I believe that Quentin Tarantino's greatest contribution to film is his writing for True Romance. Sure the story is sleazy trash but it is highly entertaining and well written trash. What other film do you find a Negro cop yelling "wop?!" What other film do you find a coked up Jewish Hollywood producer in the middle of a big deadly drug deal? True Romance is a script written in bad taste full of hilarious racial stereotypes and lacking the "nigga is cool" feel of the films directed by Quentin Tarantino. I also believe that the True Romance story may be Tarantino's most personal piece of writing. I mean come on, a loser fan boy's life turns into the plot like five action genre films in one. Walken the Wop? My favorite scene in True Romance involves a dialogue between Dennis Hopper (who plays a cop) and Christopher Walken (who plays a Sicilian mafia leader). In this highly offensive scene, Hopper explains that Sicilians are "spawned from niggers." I found this writing from Tarantino interesting as he is a "man" of Italian descent. Tarantino's Italian-American father left him a bastard so maybe this anti-Italian scene is a little payback to his neglecting padre? Either way, not even Spike Lee, the man who directed the Italian-American exploitation film Summer of Sam, could have made a more derogatory scene against Sicilians. Quentin Tarantino has even stated that the Sicilian scene is one of his proudest moments. Tarantino stated "I had heard that whole speech about the Sicilians a long time ago, from a black guy living in my house. One day I was talking with a friend who was Sicilian and I just started telling that speech." Tarantino then realized, "Wow, that is a great scene, I gotta remember that."

The Sicilian Scene True Romance also features an "all-star cast" of sorts. A stoner Brad Pitt takes bong hits on a couch he seems to be glued to just as philistine Jew Michael Rapaport seems half retarded. A young and somewhat slim James "Tony Soprano" Gandolfini also makes an appearance in True Romance as a sadistic mafia hit man. One also cannot forget about a young and naked Patricia Arquette playing a dirty prostitute love interest. I also found Gary Oldman's role as a wigger-rafa-wannabe to be quite amazing. Like most action flicks,

True Romance features a disgustingly horrible soundtrack that is dated to say the least. Whether it be the lame tunes by Aerosmith or the fruity score by Hans Zimmer, I felt my ears looking for mercy throughout the film. One also can get tired of Christian Slater's annoying voice which reminds me of some low ranking drug dealing swindler. With all the horrible noise in True Romance, I would have even preferred an Elvis Presley (someone I have no interest in) soundtrack sung by Val Kilmer. Kilmer did a swell job portraying and singing as Jim Morrison in Oliver Stones The Doors. Is True Romance a film written by a lonely romantic by the name of Quentin Tarantino? Is True Romance an ideal fantasy of Tarantino's ultimate "True Romance?" Something tells me this is true and that True Romance, despite only being written by Tarantino, is his most intimate film. For a man so obsessed with film, I have always thought that Quentin Tarantino has horrible taste in film. It is evident that Tarantino is mainly into "escapist" cinema so it is no surprise that the story to True Romance would be a somewhat personal one.

-Ty E

NEXT OF KIN
NEXT OF KIN

Tony Williams (1982)

As far as 1970's/80's exploitation films go, few continents/nations have created greater works than the Aussie auteur filmmakers of the wild outback. With such great Ozploitation films as *The Devil's Playground* (1976) and *Long Weekend* (1979) – works that transcend the usually fine line between atmospheric art and tasteless trash – one could honestly argue that the Australians even gave the ever so artistically prodigious garlic-eaters a run for their money. Out all of the Ozploitation works ever created, Tony Williams' whodunit horror-thriller *Next of Kin* (1982) is indubitably one of the most severely underrated and equally unseen. Sophisticatedly stylized but also totally demoralizing, *Next of Kin* is a sleek Kubrickian quasi-slasher flick featuring a cryptic coldblooded killer who lusts after elderly hemoglobin. Instead of arrogantly flaunting his fetishistic dastardly deeds, the senior-slayer attempts to make his crimes seem like everyday accidents that happened as a result of the aged victim's golden year senility. After her mother dies, protagonist Linda (Jacki Kerin) – being next of kin – inherits a retirement home that she seems to be somewhat ill-equipped to deal with, not least due to less than fond memories she had acquired there as child. Banished from the family estate 20 years earlier for reasons she fails to remember, Linda engages in an increasingly fermenting internal war that would intrigue any serious psychoanalyst. As *Next of Kin* progresses and Linda begins to come to terms with her distressing childhood, her personal quandaries are further compounded by the stark realization that a murderous maniac is lurking underneath her roof. Not unlike Roman Polanski's early masterpiece *Repulsion* (1965), *Next of Kin* is a slow but steady and often menacing and claustrophobic mood piece that engulfs the viewer in the impending hysteria suffered by the female lead. Unlike the stunning Franco-Nordic beauty featured in Polanski's film, Linda is an extremely intelligent and intuitive yet homely lady that is surely scared for her life, but that does not impede her from defending herself from the loony longings of a pernicious prick. Needless to say, if you're expecting an equally artless and aesthetically repugnant Australian equivalent of *Friday the 13th* (1980) with a senseless body count and lackluster direction, *Next of Kin* is probably not the film for you.

In my humble opinion, *Next of Kin* features one of the greatest endings ever featured in an Ozploitation film and, arguably even in horror cinema in general. As explained in the somewhat recent and extremely worthwhile documentary *Not Quite Hollywood: The Wild, Untold Story of Ozploitation!* (2008) directed by Mark Hartley, the adrenaline-rushing conclusion of *Next of Kin* was partly the consequence of happenstance due to a miscalculation in timing by one of the special effects men, which is quite the revelation when one considers the immaculate nature of this truly stunning and singular scene. In fact, I was

so impressed by the ending of *Next of Kin* that I have re-watched it by itself no less than 100 times since I initially viewed the film. Comprised of televised ballroom dancing, a pyramid of meticulously stacked sugar cubes, a shotgun blow to the head a close-range, and an aesthetically-pleasing explosion that no big-budget Hollywood film crew could have contrived, the nitroglycerin-heavy finale of *Next of Kin* combines hypnotic celluloid poetry with gritty human brutality in a cinematic marriage that synthesizes the best attributes of Ozploitation. Unfortunately, like most horror films, even the greatest ones, *Next of Kin* is not without its flaws. Due to the fact that the film features a number of memorable desultory sequences throughout, *Next of Kin* sometimes loses steam in between phantasmagorical dream-sequences and its handful of elaborate death scenes. As explained by a commentator in *Not Quite Hollywood*, the film has been often compared to Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), which is no small compliment, but regardless *Next of Kin* is an original film in of itself that has few contemporaries, even within the Ozploitation movement.

Featuring a musical score composed by prolific krautrock musician Klaus Schulze (Tangerine Dream, Ash Ra Tempel), *Next of Kin* is a film that sounds as lugubrious and ethereal as it looks, thus it is a cinematic work that is notably trance-inducing throughout; an imperative trait that any worthwhile horror film should have but few can boast. Then again, *Next of Kin* is not merely a horror film, but a sui generis work created during a certain period at a certain place that totally (or at least as far as I can tell) captures the radical zeitgeist of its respective era. Created during the middle point of the Ozploitation and Australian New Wave movements – undoubtedly the most stimulating and innovative period of the nation's film history – *Next of Kin* is a newfangled work that shares equal attributes from both sectors of the Aussie film renaissance, henceforth inevitably leading the way for much grittier (if less ambitious) future atmospheric films like Greg McLean's *Wolf Creek* (2005) and Justin Kurzel's *Snowtown* (2011). What makes *Next of Kin* conspicuously unparalleled among most Australian horror films is its striking supernatural/surreal scenes and overall labyrinthine essence. While featuring some of the sunny scenic realism typical of Aussie films, especially from the Ozploitation and Australian New Wave movements, *Next of Kin* also manages to have an ominous metaphysical aura that lingers like a foreboding malediction throughout. Needless to say, *Next of Kin* leaves a persisting imprint on the viewer that – like the childhood memories of the film's lead protagonist – can never be cleaned away.

-Ty E

ANITA: THE SHOCKING YOUNG NYMPHOMANIAC
ANITA: THE SHOCKING YOUNG NYMPHOMANIAC

Torgny Wickman (1973)

Anita: The Shocking Young Nymphomaniac (1973) is a sexploitation masterpiece from Sweden. The film stars the beautiful Christina Lindberg of Thriller: A Cruel Picture (1974) fame. Lindberg plays the role of a 17 year old teenage girl with the burden of being a nymphomaniac. She compulsively seeks men that can't even get her off. Only Swedish master actor Stellan Skarsgård can give a horny girl what she needs. A group of six Italians and Spaniards can't even get the job done. Sweden must be too cold for Southern European romantics.

Unlike most exploitation films, Anita takes itself seriously. The disorder of nymphomania is looked at in a serious manner and not just as a reason for Christina Lindberg to fuck every man in sight. That or Sweden has to put effort in to justifying cheap sex. Christina Lindberg's nude body speaks for itself. When you watch Anita, you're watching it to see her. Without Lindberg and maybe Skarsgard, you would have no reason to see the film.

Anita is also not up on her studies. Her cold father becomes angered at her for not knowing who Erwin Rommel is. Anita's homely sister of course knows who he is. Anita's nymphomania is caused by her family troubles. Anita has a truly positive family message. Tons of sex = really shitty family. Nordic folks have always been fans of sexual repression.

Unfortunately Anita doesn't live up to the quality of the masterpiece that is Thriller: A Cruel Picture. Hardcore pornography, eye gouging, and mass killings are nonexistent in Anita. I would even go as far as to say that Anita is lighthearted (especially in comparison to Thriller). Anita is still worthy of being watch, especially if you're a fan of Christina Lindberg. Real tits always beat silicone.

-Ty E

PORNOSTAR

Toshiaki Toyoda (1998)

Titled *Pornostar* with little explanation and no visible connection to pornography in the slightest, Toshiaki Toyoda's debut feature finds an inexplicable script defining allusion towards the revolting youth of our Eastern brethren. Redubbed *Tokyo Rampage* for a US distribution seemed to be the only logical choice concerning the ill-kept and illogical titling of *Pornostar* but as quickly as the film begins, we're thrust into a story relying heavily on symbolism of unexplained hatred and prejudice against the Yakuza. Arano appears to be of mental deficiency, stalking the bustling streets with little to no human contact. Only with the appearance of a Yakuza does he resemble a human, and a violent one at that. Unexplained and unkempt are the only two traits this film abides by as it breaks all preexisting boundaries of film by offering no explanation and no mercy from the belligerent "storytelling" and sometimes shockingly beautiful scenarios. But not even raw ore can fulfill the needs of a cinematic miner as he/she struggles to find something more than rabid hatred to embrace.

Briskly acquiring speed via a narrowing view of a high-traffic crosswalk in Shibuya, the camera eventually centers on a coated figure with a blank expression of terminal sincerity. Arano is established first-and-foremost as a generic vision of troubled youth in Shibuya with modern "punk" sensibilities but a taste for bleeding the Yakuza as they are "not needed." These two words make up most of the muttered lines sprinkled across the film as he stabs and slices his way through criminal ranks until he happens across Kamijo, a Yakuza "tough guy" archetype who is troubled with the idea of stripping one of their life, which mixes beautifully with the tense brotherhood that Arano and Kamijo create. Within this bond of fluctuating intensity lies a deep-seated fear of grievous injury, seeing as how Arano was created with the intention of psychotic tendencies which even leads him to stabbing a child upon the discovery of his enrollment in Yakuza Youth. Later on during the events of alternatively titled *Tokyo Rampage*, a murky pretense of plot is discovered when a woman decides to hitch Arano along for a ride by skateboarding and stealing a ghetto blaster loaded with LSD, to which is later applied to a humorous context as she nearly overdoses and is repeatedly kicked in the stomach as her gaze fixates on the ceiling while her tender body lurches on the bathroom floor, creating an oddly erotic effect.

Strangely enough with the lack of non-violent confrontations, the bizarre symbolism abroad finds a way to redeem the film's lacking efforts with zeal. Scenes of somber, ritualistic killings are followed by a torrential rain of knives, clattering to the streets avoiding the body of Arano and his compulsive and brutal nature. With his psychosis immortalized on the screen, one must wonder if he is the hero or the villain of this tale. After all, Kajimo has been personalized with the

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sad weight of his father's funeral on his shoulders which commits heavily to his reluctance to murder. The quickness of which Arano's moods shift is exhilarating and repulsive as demonstrated during a scene of drug trade. Refusing to lower the prices for a weighty amount of LSD, Arano and Kajimo's underlings engage in a laughing fit which prompts for a bracing stature the moment Kajimo mutters "Not these guys. Don't shoot." Contrary to his request, Arano's bloody and gashed face contorts to an expression of pleasure as he pulls out a gun, shooting both dealers in the head. Further possible scenes of symbolism revolve around Arano's catatonic nature on the couch of Kajimo's loft as he continuously lights matches to watch them burn out, then throwing them to the floor preoccupied by a large amounts of tomatoes. Kajimo's worrisome nature kicks in as he steps on the matches but in the process squashing tomatoes which can be taken as heavy foreshadowing to the amount of red we will be treated to later.

Only to add insult to injury is the usage of gnarling and dreamlike guitar as a backdrop into the mind of a youthful killer. Pornostar is a bizarre debut picture from a director who later establishes himself with films entirely unlike Pornostar which circumvents the illusion here that more is better. Perhaps the stringy substance of narrative is entirely unnecessary given the right techniques and social hamstrings to sever. Or maybe this is all an experimental facade to see how far the audience is willing to accompany Toyoda on his nihilistic stint with cruel rebellion. Regardless of intention, Toyoda has created something born into the world with a fervor to live. Instead of questioning the filmic biology of life and whether or not Pornostar should be, one must embrace the existence of such a film to turn shoulder and dodge the bullets of formulaic cinema processing. For these and many other reasons, Pornostar is a film that I grow more fond of the longer I ponder about the rampant anger that Arano has distilled upon me and all who view, regardless of opinion.

-mAQ

FUNERAL PARADE OF ROSES

Toshio Matsumoto (1969)

Admittedly, there is something rather creepy and repellant about drag queens and trannies (hence why they are always the subject of jokes and mental derangement, especially in the pre-p.c. gay world), which probably has to do with the fact that no matter how much makeup they wear and how much money they waste on mutilating themselves with plastic surgery, their Y chromosomes will always have control, even if they have an ostensibly 'female soul,' yet it seems Japs in drag—for whatever reason (but most likely due to 'delicate' and petite overall look of the entire Japanese race, both male and female)—have a much easier time pulling their gender-bending off, especially in comparison to their Aryan and Negro counterparts, or at least that is what one would be led to believe after watching *Funeral Parade of Roses* (1969) aka *Bara no Sōretsu* directed by Toshio Matsumoto. A criminally underrated and under-seen work of avant-garde Jap pop-art of the cinematically hybridized experimental and cinéma vérité sort that schizophrenically blends elements from melodrama, horror, agitprop, and documentary, as well as fiction and reality, *Funeral Parade of Roses* would go on to inspire none other than Stanley Kubrick, who utilized aesthetic and thematic elements of the Japanese film for his masterpiece of dystopian ultra-violence *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), yet Matsumoto has only gained a marginal reputation in the Occident for his debut-feature-length masterpiece of the gender confused. The Japanese equivalent to what Warhol was doing cinematically in NYC at the time with works like *Chelsea Girls* (1966) and *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968), except all the more technically competent and all the more degenerate and morally reprehensible, *Funeral Parade of Roses* takes place in a superlatively seedy and socially subversive underground Sodom of late-1960s Tokyo, where gay men that are called "queens" dress in women's clothing yet hate the fairer sex and will stop at nothing to steal their men. An innately aberrant and sardonic cinematic adaptation of the Sophocles' Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, except with a twist where the anti-hero murders his mother instead of his father due to his incestuous homosexuality as opposed to heterosexuality, *Funeral Parade of Roses* is a wild and wanton window into a post-WWII Japan – a place where the ancient legacy of the samurai is no more and where "men" are more willing to wear dresses and makeup and violently attack women than flying a plane into an American battleship. The first and probably the greatest gay Japanese film ever made, *Funeral Parade of Roses* is—not unlike many Jap films—a work that is simultaneously a goofy and grotesque piece of oriental psychopathia sexualis in celluloid mosaic form that is greater than the sum of its equally sordid and satirical parts. As a filmmaker character in *Funeral Parade of Roses* states, quoting Jonas "the godfather of American avant-garde cinema" Mekas, "All definitions of cinema have been erased..." and the same can be certainly said in

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regard to Matsumoto's magnetic and mystifying gay Jap masterpiece of the merily macabre.

Eddie (played by real-life transvestite "Pitá" aka "Peter" who later played 'Kyoami the Fool' in Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985)) is a mixed up "Japanese Michael Alig" who does what he wants whenever he wants, especially if it is going to fulfill some sort of hedonistic desire and/or further cement his infamous reputation as a rabid drag queen of the unhinged Tokyo underground realm. A pathological narcissist who stares at himself in the mirror all day and night, Eddie has taken his stereotypically female character traits to such extremes that he is willing to do anything to calm his estrogen-driven jealousy, including bitching out women with real boobs and even brutally murdering them, including the woman who gave birth to him. Being the fierce femme in the relationship, Eddie relies on 'butch' alpha-queer Gonda (Yoshio Tsuchiya, who starred in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, *Throne of Blood*, and *High and Low*)—the criminally-inclined owner of the fittingly titled "Bar Genet" who is involved in prostitution and drug dealing—for sex, drugs, and rock n roll, but a rival drag queen named Leda (Osamu Ogasawara in his sole film role), who runs the bar, wants to tear the terrible twosome apart. When it comes down to it, Eddie is an attention and pleasure seeking whore will do anything and everything for a meager inkling of fame and fortune, including being the subject of a documentary on Tokyo Trannies and underground porn films that are pinker than a pussy lady-boy in a kimono and go-go boots. Of course, erotomaniac Eddie's life was not always so glamorous as his belligerent bitch of a mother (Emiko Azuma) was not amused when she found her fairy son putting on her makeup and posing like a true poof in her mirror, so she naturally beat the shit out of him, but proving to be the true "queen bitch," the prodigal son turned perverted daughter paid her back by symbolically stabbing her in the womb. Plagued by his matricidal past and his deep-seated desire to be a real biological woman, deranged Eddie is naturally on the verge on detonating and with the sort of drug-addicted drag queens and fag pimps he surrounds himself with, it is only a matter of time before he explodes in a cinematic climax fit for a jaded Japanese queen. so it is only a matter of time before his As a schizophrenic film-within-a-film with pseudo-documentary and sex scenes from the porn flick Eddie is starring in, *Funeral Parade of Roses* is essentially like an erratic adventure through the abberosexual anti-hero's perturbed yet playful mind, where his transvestite persona and 'true self' get lost somewhere in a bittersweet maze of madness, misery, and ecstasy. Taking its central theme from the verse "I am the wound and the blade, both the torturer and he who is flayed" from the poetry volume *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857) aka *The Flowers of Evil* by Charles Baudelaire, *Funeral Parade of Roses* offers a sympathetic, albeit now politically incorrect, perspective of what it is like being a sexually confused Japanese man whose very essence is out of wack with his biological body, thus leading to the most brazen and, quite literally, bloody of consequences of a

mixed-up man-woman who no longer wants to 'see' reality for what it is.

In regard to his use of real newscasters, hippie drug addicts, drag queens and whatnot in *Funeral Parade of Roses*, director Toshio Matsumoto offered the following insight regarding his technique with the film, "They appeared as real people...half acting in the roles in the film...and half portraying themselves in a real situation. That's the kind of style in which I wanted them to appear. I certainly didn't have the budget for it...so I just asked them as friends to appear in the film. However, it's very difficult to tell when you're watching the film...what exactly is a real situation and what is fictional...what I mean is that...not everything in the film...is neatly arranged within a frame of reference." Indeed, *Funeral Parade of Roses* is aesthetically anarchic as it is morally and sexually, as a delightfully deranged and discordant work featuring Cocteau-esque camera tricks, Warholian wantonness, a protagonist more psychosexually disturbed than Norman Bates of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), homo human creatures as camp-ridden and flaming as in Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963), yellow cocksucking criminals as callous and corrupt as those featured in the novels of Jean Genet and morbidity and grotesquery as aesthetically pleasing as the words of Baudelaire, and a postmodern celluloid montage technique that puts the works of Alexander Kluge to shame. Indubitably, it is no coincidence that novelist Yukio Mishima—a quasi-closeted gay man who worked in various avant-garde artistic mediums that would eventually become extremely right-wing and nationalist and lived by the bushido (the code of the samurai), even forming his own private army, the Tatenokai ("shield society")—committed ritual suicide via seppuku only a year after the release of *Funeral Parade of Roses*, thus making him, arguably, the last Japanese public figure to commit self-slaughter in such an ancient fashion. With apocalyptic quotes like, "I wish the whole country would sink underwater" and "The world is reaching its end," *Funeral Parade of Roses* acts as a sort of campy cinematic last rites for everything that was traditional in Japan before because, as where in the past men merely dressed in women's clothing for Kabuki theatre, now they have literally taken on female identities and adopted degenerate Occidental counter-culture garbage. Indeed, it may have been a great human tragedy when the Americans nuked the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War, but the greatest tragedy caused by the war was the disintegration of the nuclear family, traditional Japanese culture, and the way of the samurai, and a film like *Funeral Parade of Roses* just happens to be one of the few good, if not odious and ominous yet sardonically side-splitting, aesthetic occurrences to come out of this steady cultural degeneration, but as the conclusion of Matsumoto's film reveals, things in the "Land of the Rising Sun" may get rather ugly if these cultural trends do not end. After all, something has to be going terribly wrong in a nation where one can buy used female panties in a vending machine.

-Ty E

RUBIN /& ED
RUBIN /& ED

Trent Harris (1991)

A film that wasn't made for anyone in mind, Rubin & Ed is one of the few films that throttled Crispin Glover's career into a bizarre mix of mainstream Hollywood films to independent comedies, which led to self-financed blasphemous surrealist pictures. The tactic to give notice to, was his appearance on the Late Show with David Letterman. What was supposed to be a simple television appearance turned into a hilariously quirky in-character performance from his new film, *River's Edge*. Donning Rubin's attire from the film, he presents himself in a stuttering and loony fashion. He then decides to present his ability to almost kick Letterman in the face with a pair of platform shoes on. When asked about this near 5 years later, he swears it was his evil twin. He even presents a trying story to an interviewer with hilarious results.

It's been 21 years since that incident, and he gets even more eccentric with each tick of a clock. What Glover dramatized on that show could be a prehistoric trace of viral marketing. Not only did it create an insane hero in the cult circle's eyes, but it also created his career. What we have here is a non-conventional buddy film. One that flashes glimpses of infinite brilliance, and at times runs a tad bit slow. Rubin is a reclusive blast from the past, clad in bell bottoms, box frame glasses, long flowing locks, and platform shoes. His mom takes away his stereo and tells him to get a friend. He meets would-be Mr. Success. The meeting of these two people with no common ground propels them into the desert on a mission to bury Rubin's frozen cat. The character of Ed seems like the mold used in Adam Sandler's *Happy Gilmore*. I can spot several similarities between Ed and Shooter McGavin. Toupee, pyramid scheme, success, and similar attitude. As with many Crispin Glover films, the film follows a straight line with a specific impediment. This doesn't stop him from creating a dream-like sequence with in each film which demonstrates groundbreaking surrealism, symbolism, and the quirkiest quotable's in film. "I am the king of the echo people!" and "My cat can eat a whole watermelon!" spring instantly in mind. The genre of Math rock can be compared to the directing of this film. Various obtrusions come into play but that doesn't stop Trent Harris from delivering scenes with impeccable pride and some stunning imagery using the horizon of a phallic desert as his playground. As with another Glover film, the music delivers the mood almost one hundred percent. Distorted children songs are playing harmoniously in the background which Rubin drinks dead cat fermented water in the desert. Some of these scenes are shockingly disgusting, no matter how staged they are. Wearing bell bottoms, It's possible to see Crispin Glover's body mass in his skin-tight garb, and he is ripped. As seen on the Letterman video, I wouldn't want to fuck with Crispin Glover. For all I know, He'd pull a Shinya Tsukamoto in *Ichi the Killer* and rip my face off with some hidden fatality. My

favorite aspect in this film, is knowing that Glover had the role of Andy Warhol in Oliver Stone's *The Doors*. With that in mind, several scenes are meticulously placed in the film displaying graffiti boasting "Andy Warhol sucks a big one!" It's obvious this is even Crispin Glover's thoughts on the subject. He even goes as far as to call him a "famous fraud" and I completely agree. Painting soup cans is completely expressive. Whether you like your bizarro cinema medium-rare or medium-well, Rubin & Ed has something for everyone, even your house cat. The only missing piece is a DVD release.

-mAQ

JACK FROST
JACK FROST

Troy Miller (1998)

As a toddler, the idea of a killer snowman always made my imagination laugh. I much preferred the ones displayed in Calvin & Hobbes (See Attack of the Deranged Mutant Killer Monster Snow Goons). The cover of Jack Frost displayed a truly ridiculous "evil" snowman that screamed horrifying and deadly. Although the one in the film is...cuddly. No likeness in between the two. False advertisement is a bitch. A conveniently placed toxic truck crashes with a prisoner transport truck. $1 + 1 = 2$ (Horror formulaic equation) and a killer snowman is born and on the loose in a small town looking for revenge to the sheriff who imprisoned his human form. These ideas always look good on paper but never turn out well. Jack Frost is another premature horror film that came too soon from the industry womb with a ridiculous villain that never should have been. I don't know what's more threatening, Jack Frost or Gingerdead Man? The highlights of these cheesy rental horror films are kills no doubt, so let's have a look at some of them. Jack Frost can manipulate his molecular structure which results in a really cool icicle shooting appendage. That's a pretty nice addition to an otherwise boring and silly film, but for the most part the kills are stupid and barely humorous. One-liners go into overkill mode in attempt to make this snowman an iconic slasher villain. Thankfully, that never happens. I can't tell if it's satire or not, but Jack Frost "dies" many times in this film. When I quote die, I mean when the hero disposes of him but never does the finishing blow. That scene happens 3+ times as Jack Frost gets melted, shot, soaked up, and finally anti-freezed to death. The methods of his annihilation were entertaining as well as the ingenious storing him in bottles to bury. Jack Frost is pure rental fodder. I could never recommend this as it is not memorable in any sense, but it is a fine novelty.

-mAQ

RED

Trygve Allister Diesen, Lucky McKee (2008)

Jack Ketchum's been seeing some of that "proverbial phat cash" recently with the highlights of his written works being adapted to the screen. It's easy for someone of his writing caliber to see a film adaptation due to the emotional intensity that wraps around every plot of his novels. Red is about an old timer whose best friend is his dog, Red. After some teens kill his dog for no reason, Avery sets off on a mission of revenge and redemption. When I was a child, I'd grown quite partial to our canine friends. In Elementary school, I fell deeply in love with the novel *Where the Red Fern Grows*. Its intimacy for animals and human nature is a marvel in literature. This is the same substance that resonates from Red which ultimately makes it a fine film overwhelming with a deep emotion and frustration towards Generation X-ers. Red is a strange mix between *Death Wish* and *Where the Red Fern Grows*. For some inexplicable reason, this mix creates a revenge concoction like no other. Brian Cox is a very talented actor who plays the reclusive man, but fans of any form of cinema will pay note to another cameo by Robert Englund who plays father to one of the boys involved. Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man villain Tom Sizemore plays almost the very same role and attitude as he denies his sons involvement up and down. The score that accompanies the film is a bland choice; just elevating levels of orchestra that don't hit any real chords with the viewers. The ending is well structured and heart-breaking. After watching this film, I feel the need to go read the book. I wonder if a cat lover would still appreciate this film's emotional aesthetics? Red isn't an art piece nor an important film. Its sole purpose is to make you think and feel and it does just that quite well. For everyone who has ever enjoyed the outdoors or the simple treasures of a country life, Red will sparkle in your eyes over other films that deal with the thought of separating from your loved ones. It is a satisfying film experience that challenges the idea of forgiveness to the core. If someone can do so much harm and not feel any sympathy, why forgive them for their mistakes when a God surely wouldn't? Red is not complete without its scripting flaws or pacing issues, but it is a damn fine film that makes me feel the need to play a game with my canine counterpart after viewing.

-mAQ

THE CAT HAS NINE LIVES
THE CAT HAS NINE LIVES

Ula Stöckl (1968)

When one thinks of feminist filmmakers associated with German New Cinema, they typically think of frigid hags like Margarethe von Trotta (*Rosa Luxemburg*, *Rosenstrasse*) and Helke Sander (*Der subjektive Faktor*, *BeFreier und BeFreite*) who seem to think that making their actresses seem as homely and emotionless as possible somehow makes them seem more 'intelligent' and 'liberated,' but Ula Stöckl (*Popp and Mingel*, *A Woman with Responsibilities*) not only made feature films before both of these women, but also had no problem depicting women as both beautiful and naturally feminine. A cofounder of the *Verband der Filmarbeiterinnen* (Association of Women Film Workers) who was taught by top GNC auteur filmmakers like Edgar Reitz and Alexander Kluge, she would go on to direct what she herself described as "the first women's film in West Germany." Indeed, Stöckl's *The Cat Has Nine Lives* (1968) aka *Neun Leben hat die Katze* is a rare 'poetic' feminist flick without all the empty political slogans and bargain bin misandry. Innately feminine in character but featuring alluring enough women and direction to appeal to male cinephiles, Stöckl's film has more in common with the works of Czech avant-garde auteur Věra Chytilová than that of the mostly aesthetically sterile and petty propaganda-laden kraut feminist flicks that would follow it. Unlike von Trotta, Stöckl flirts with both male and female viewers alike, even if *The Cat Has Nine Lives* is a rather 'girly' film focusing on the romantic troubles of a group of eclectic friends who all come from some particular form of 'female trouble,' or as the auteur stated in a 1984 interview with Marc Silberman of *Jump Cut*: "In *NEUN LEBEN HAT DIE KATZE* I chose the characters as types: the not-yet-married professional woman, the recent divorcee confused about her future, the career woman, the deceived wife and the ultimate dream woman — a legendary Circe. In this film the women seem to be sleeping because each thinks only of herself and that she has an advantage over the other. Each one thinks she has a recipe for happiness, or that being unhappy is her own fault because she's too dumb to be happy. In other words, these women cannot see their anxieties as having something to do with the society in which they live. They exhibit a lack of knowledge about how one could behave differently." Ironically, the film ultimately reveals that women have an innate incapacity for unity and solidarity because they are far too self-absorbed and delusional. Quite shockingly, instead of just blaming men for all the problems that women have, Stöckl's work demonstrates that, in many ways, members of the so-called 'fairer sex' are their own worst enemies. Indeed, as the film reveals, women hate nothing more than to encounter a woman who is more beautiful than they are. If you ever wanted to know why it would be an absolute catastrophe if women were ever to rule the world, just checkout *The Cat Has Nine Lives*.

If *The Cat Has Nine Lives* features anyone resembling a main character, it is recently divorced French would-be-free-spirit/proto-hippie Anne/Marianne (played by Kristine De Loup, who would later star in a couple small roles in later period Fassbinder flicks like *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Lili Marleen*), who is slowly but surely giving herself a lobotomy via women's lib lunacy. Although she would never admit it, Anne is jealous of her friend Magdalena, who is more or less happily married to her hubby Stefan (Jürgen Arndt), even if he is always trying to get in other women's panties. Indeed, while a guest diner at the husband and wife's home, Anne is in such a bitchy mood that she has the gall to ask Stefan whether or not he loves his wife, even going so far as to insinuate that he is in love with her and their other female friends Gabriele (Heidi Stroh, who appeared in Mario Bava's 1964 masterpiece *Blood and Black Lace*) and Circe. To Anne's credit, Stefan does freely confess that he is in love with both Katharina and his faithful wife. Stefan also has no problem admitting, "There's nothing we can do, our eroticism is patriarchal."

When Anne and her best friend Katharina are together they enjoy saying crude things to each other like, "A cow pissing in a tub is rib-busting but also disgusting. So... Is that bad?," but they also get rather serious about their trouble with men. Anne has come from France to stay with Katharina and her seemingly sexless journalist friend, who is easily the most uninteresting character in the entire film. Undoubtedly, the more sophisticated of the two women is Katharina, but she is aging fast and seems to be afraid of marriage. When Katharina complains, "I always approach things through my feelings. I haven't got the manual skills, the scientific know-how to get something going," her boyfriend uses the opportunity to ask her to marry him, stating, "Well, maybe you haven't got your confidence for studying things, but rather from the human angles, for instance from marriage, it doesn't have to be a formal marriage, but maybe a relation that gives you security, a certain," but she naturally turns him down. Like many beautiful women, Gabriele, who is a singer by trade, oftentimes faces hatred from her fellow women, complaining to her friends, "Women hate me...right off. Almost always. It's usually hate at first sight. Then, when they see I am different, laugh and act natural, they like me," but she has rather high standards when it comes to men, stating of her ideal lover, "An extraordinary one. He must be extraordinary...don't laugh...I've always thought if Jesus had loved women, I'd have liked to love him." When it comes down to it, although all of these women are friends, they are really only concerned with their own desires and needs and are thus losing a true sense of solidarity with their sisters.

Of course, considering that it was made in the late-1960s, *The Cat Has Nine Lives* features an obligatory 68er-Bewegung anti-Vietnam war protest scene, which includes a bunch of ethno-masochistic krauts carrying around Martin Luther King, Jr. signs and screaming about imaginary Nazis. While Anne, who is certainly no student, goes to the German student protest because she pro-

THE CAT HAS NINE LIVES

claims that she wants to help, “to create a world revolution,” she really uses the opportunity to cavort with a young kraut named Manfred that has caught her fancy. While Manfred seems to fall in love with Anne almost instantly, he later comes to the realization that, “having been waiting so long for a woman like Anne, when the time finally comes, you are only very tired.” Meanwhile, the Journalist gets in an argument with a daycare center employee about the pros and cons of childhood masturbation. While the Journalist believes that, “auto-eroticism makes you more independent of your partner,” the daycare teacher more soundly responds, “A child that is told it can masturbate freely, I would say...the damage done is as great as... the confusion that it causes is as great as the effect of repressive upbringing,” with the scene concluding in a controversial manner by featuring a group of completely nude pre-kindergarten boys and girls more or less humping pillows. Meanwhile, towards the end of the film, two of the friends discuss the arrival of Circe, who is apparently so beautiful and such a “wonderful, strange woman” that she can do whatever she likes whenever she likes and could get away with “blowing up the Eiffel Tower” if she wanted to. It is also learned in that end that Stefan has been cheating on his wife with one of her friends. Indeed, Stefan is such a sly devil that he visits his wife’s friend at the hospital when she is sick so he can prey on her during a moment of weakness, even going so far as to feel up her titties while she is on a hospital bed. Of course, Anne hates Stefan and states of him, “Stefan ought to dream that all women have vaginas on their foreheads....then he could run around the world, going bang, bang, bang...” In the end, Anne goes back to Frogland and concludes that she is “so sad.”

Undoubtedly, if there is one single line from *The Cat Has Nine Lives* that sums up the entire aesthetic essence of the film, it is “Beauty always makes me sad.” While noted for being, “feminist before feminism,” Stöckl’s film would most certainly offend the repugnant aesthetic sensibilities of many contemporary feminists with proud ‘fattitudes’ because not only does the film feature not a single unattractive nor overweight dyke, but it also portrays men as people with weaknesses and dreams just like women. While the film was clearly directed by someone with a strong feminine sensibility, the cinematographer also does much credit for the film’s orgasmic aesthetics. Indeed, shot by one of the greatest cinematographers of German New Cinema, Dietrich Lohmann, who largely earned his reputation by shooting virtually all of Fassbinder’s early films and also worked with Volker Schlöndorff, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Robert van Ackeren, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Edgar Reitz, and Peter Lilienthal, *The Cat Has Nine Lives* is certainly a work that owes a great deal of its lyricism and celluloid poetry to its cameraman, as a work that is not big on plot or storyline, but flows together almost immaculately like a river. Virtually totally unseen when it was originally released in 1968 because the film’s distributor, which originally secured 600 cinema dates, went out of business, *The Cat Has Nine Lives* is a rather

rare example of filmic feminism that rises above the level of Andrea Dworkin's feces in terms of charm and pulchritude. Indeed, Stöck's film is not a prosaic political pamphlet written in cinematic form, but an honest attempt by a woman to examine why so many Fräuleins were unhappy during her zeitgeist. In its incessant commentary on German tradition and strikingly splendid depictions of pastoral (anti)romance(s), *The Cat Has Nine Lives* is very likely the first and last 'feminist Heimat' flick ever made, thus making it an important and imperative piece of Teutonic cinema history. Featuring the use of marionettes that prefigures Syberberg, bizarre silent flashback scenes of a young girl witnessing the mutilation of farm animals by her farmer father, highly sensual scenes of female nudity directed by a woman that would actually appeal to a man, and reasonably realistic female characters that act neither like ciphers nor rocket scientists, *The Cat Has Nine Lives* is certainly one of the more overlooked works of German New Cinema and I say that as a staunch anti-feminist.

-Ty E

CHRISTIANE F. – WIR KINDER VOM BAHNHOF ZOO
CHRISTIANE F. – WIR KINDER VOM BAHNHOF ZOO

Uli Edel (1981)

While American's Generation X has the softcore suburban sentimentalist angst-comedies of John Hughes, including *Weird Science* (1985) and *The Breakfast Club* (1985), as well as some more radical, working-class come-of-age flicks like *Over the Edge* (1979), *The Wanderers* (1979), and *River's Edge* (1986), West Germany's Gen X had the much grittier and unglamorous work, *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) aka *Christiane F. – We Children from Bahnhof Zoo* aka *Christiane F.*; a relatively low-budget and decidedly depressing piece of unsentimental realist melodrama about a damaged and barely-teenage junky girl who, like her discernibly dirty and mentally-ungifted boyfriend and equally inebriated and physically emaciated friends, sells her body to buy heroin, among other undignified things. Directed by then-unknown German filmmaker Uli Edel (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*) – who replaced the original director Roland Klick (*Deadlock*, *Supermarkt*) after he was fired by producer Bernd Eichinger (co-scriptwriter/producer of the 2004 Hitler epic *Downfall* aka *Der Untergang*) during pre-production – and based on the ghostwritten autobiography (journalists wrote the book using two months worth of candid audio-recording interviews with the junior junky) of German 'outsider celebrity' Christiane F. (born Vera Christiane Felscherinow), Christiane F. earned an instant cult following among West German youth, but also shocked older audiences into realizing that virtual children were living a lurid libertine lifestyle where they were pathetically and pathologically peddling their flesh on a day-to-day basis just so they would not have to endure opiate withdrawal. The film was released not long after a heroin epidemic hit Western and Central Europe during the mid-1970s, thus making it one of the first, if not the first, junky melodrama to unsettle the ever so stoic Teutonic soul, although gritty pseudo-cinéma vérité coming-of-age flicks like Klaus Lemke's *Rocker* (1972) and Uwe Frießner's *The End of the Rainbow* (1979) aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens* were nothing new in Germany. Featuring a concert performance (which was actually filmed in New York City) and musical score by post-Ziggy Stardust David Bowie, *Christiane F.* – not unlike fellow kraut auteur Eckhart Schmidt's *Der Fan* (1982) aka *The Fan* starring Désirée Nosbusch – ironically, to some extent, glorifies the same superficial and pseudo-spiritual rock 'n' roll lifestyle it rather relentlessly condemns, so it should be no surprise that both the character and the real-life Christiane F. would go on to become a 'rebel role model' and degenerate celebrity in the Fatherland. Needless to say, seeing your boyfriend being penetrated by a posh poof is probably not a particularly pleasant way for a little lady to remember the coming-of-age of her womanhood, but everyone knows that no one can stop a young and naïve teenage girl from making irrational sacrifices for her first boy toy in the name of idealistic young love and that

certainly holds true in the pussy-pawning, toilet-bowl-clenching, vomit-friendly world of Christiane F.

The year is 1975 and 12-year-old Christiane Felscherinow (Natja Brunckhorst) lives in a cramped Western Berlin condo unit with her little sister and single mother who is always at work. With no real father figure around, Christiane latches on to worshipping glam rock messiah David Bowie; an androgynous fellow who is quite pretty for a boy despite being well into his thirties. When she discovers 'Sound,' a new disco in the city center with the unbeatable reputation of being, "the most modern discothèque in Europe," Christiane, despite being not old enough to gain legal entry, gets all dolled up with lecherous lipstick and super high-heels, and manages to get into the virtual rock utopia with an older friend from school who is a regular at the club. As fate would have it, Christiane meets the her soon-to-be-boyfriend Detlef (Thomas Hausstein) – a seemingly half-braindead degenerate who has an affinity for popping pills and tripping on LSD – and his curious crew of exceedingly gulky and gangly teenage losers who commit petty robberies while high on who knows what mind-altering chemical substances. When neo-dandy rocker god David Bowie comes to the Fatherland, it proves to be an extra special night for Christiane as she meets her virtual doppelgänger Babsi (Christiane Reichelt) and rather reluctantly tries heroin for the first time by insufflating it, so as to see what her junky beau Detlef feels like and thus getting one step closer to full-blown junkydom. Before she knows it, Christiane is equally hooked on heroin as she is in love with Detlef, despite the fact he prostitutes himself to a suavely dressed sodomite who has an unhealthy obsession with Tom of Finland drawings and looks like one of the corrupt capitalist cocksuckers from Fassbinder's *Fox and His Friends* (1975). Christiane rarely comes home to her mother's condo and instead squats with Detlef at a junky friend's dilapidated apartment that is covered and trash and dirty syringes. The lanky girl and her corrupted comrades also become regulars of the Bahnhof Zoo scene – a superlatively seedy subway station where sex and drugs are regularly sold – because Christiane also needs to peddle her flesh to unconventionally ugly brown men to maintain her habit or at least so she wouldn't suffer the heated horrors of "H" withdraw. As she learns while trying to kick heroin addiction with her gay-for-pay boyfriend – opiate withdraw is a dreadful thing that makes one dream of death just to stop the pain – but the terrible twosome somehow manages to get through it, only to relapse not long after they have detoxed. Pawning her personal belongings (including the precious David Bowie album her beau bought her), stealing from her family, and losing all her dignity and a number of friends to drug overdoses are just a couple of the things Christiane must go through during her life as a juvenile junky, but it only when she walks in on her dick-peddling boyfriend Detlef being savagely manhandled by a major queen that she seems to come to her senses. Needless to say, Christiane F. has come a long way in a mere two years as someone who began as an innocent

CHRISTIANE F. – WIR KINDER VOM BAHNHOF ZOO

David Bowie fan and turned into teenage junky who sold her soul and body for more than just rock 'n' roll.

Although *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* concludes with a postscript revealing that Christiane finally got straight and clean, the real-life teenage junky never really got over her heroin addiction and has served various prison sentences and is still in German newspaper headlines from time-to-time for drug-related arrests, though she did have a marginal musical career in the 1980s under the band name *Sentimentale Jugend* (with her then-boyfriend Alexander Hacke of the popular German industrial group *Einwärtsende Neubauten*) and would also star in the German cult muzak movie *Decoder* (1984) directed by Muscha and also starring FM Einheit (also a member of *Einwärtsende Neubauten*) and American avant-garde artist William “Bill” Rice (*Manhattan Love Suicides, Coffee and Cigarettes*) and featuring a cameo from Junky guru William S. Burroughs. Natja Brunckhorst, who played the title role in *Christiane F.*, unlike most of the other teen actors in the film, would go on to have a marginal acting career, including appearing in German New Cinema auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s final film *Querelle* (1982) and playing secondary roles in popular German films like *The Princess and the Warrior* (2000) directed by Tom Tykwer (*Run Lola Run*), but never again having the success and popularity she did with her first role as West Germany’s most iconic teenage junky. Director Uli Edel would go on to portray 1950s Brooklyn junky shemales in the Hollywood production *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1989); a delightfully debauched cinematic adaptation of Hubert Selby Jr.’s novel of the same name, but not to the same grueling and grimy extent as in *Christiane F.*; probably the only film featuring David Bowie that radically depicts to the viewer that being drug-addled, destitute, and half-dead is not exactly a good thing, not to mention being the only quasi-“After School Special” that is actually intentionally entertaining and reasonably effective in its de-glorifying of the teenage street junky lifestyle, even if it did inspire a couple kraut teens to get hip to what lifelong junky novelist William S. Burroughs called “Cocteau’s kick.”

-Ty E

WIR

Uli Edel (1981)

Although best known nowadays, especially in the English-speaking world, as the mad scatological scientist with an affinity for sewing rectums to mouths in Tom Six's *The Human Centipede (First Sequence)* (2009), seemingly half-crazed and reptilian-like kraut actor Dieter Laser was once quite a serious actor of German New Cinema, appearing in important cinematic works like *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* (1975) co-directed by Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta and the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978), but undoubtedly his lead role in the dystopian sci-fi flick *Wir* (1981) aka *We* is one of the greatest and most important of his career, even if few people have actually seen it. Directed by Czech auteur Vojtěch Jasný (*Až přijde kocour* aka *The Cassandra Cat*, *The Great Land of Small*) and based on the novel *We* (1921) written by science fiction/political satire writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, *Wir* is a film that wastes no time criticizing authoritarian collectivism, especially of the *comie* sort. With the source novel being the very first book to be banned by the Soviet censorship board and the author Zamyatin being referred to as one of the first Soviet dissidents, *Wir* is, not surprisingly, one of the few 'overtly anti-communist' films of German New Cinema, albeit with little anti-fascist nuances like gas chambers and whatnot thrown in so as to assumedly appeal to the vogue far-left that dominated culture in the Fatherland at that time. Featuring a superlatively soulless world of transparent glass walls and architecture where everyone can see everything and no one has privacy, emotions and art for art's sake is a crime, dreams are considered symptoms of madness, and the people worship a megalomaniac of a charlatan who literally drains what little bit of humanity they have left via psycho-surgery, *Wir* certainly deserves a place somewhere in between *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire* directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Traumstadt* (1973) aka *Dream City* directed by Johannes Schaaf and *Die Hamburger Krankheit* (1979) aka *The Hamburg Syndrome* directed by Peter Fleischmann as one of the greatest works of dystopian science fiction of German New Cinema. Adapted for the German *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) on a discernibly low-budget utilizing archaic video technology and primitive yet aesthetically pleasing special-effects, *Wir* is all but impossible to find nowadays by any official means, but is certainly worth the search, even if by quasi-illegal means.

One State—a quasi-urban artificial nation comprised almost entirely of glass—is a virtual prison community where everyone wears the same exact aesthetically displeasing uniforms (greyish blue sweatsuits where their genitals hang loosely out) and people have numbers instead of names. A somewhat grotesque-looking fellow 'named' D-503 (Dieter Laser) is the chief engineer of a spaceship named *Integral* that will be used to takeover and occupy extraterrestrial planets. Whilst

WIR

working on the Integral, D-503 also keeps a journal about his day-to-day activities and his thoughts, which he will somewhat unreliably narrate Wir with as the film progresses. Like a human computer addicted to Adderall, D-503 is sort of a like an empty vessel who impulsively spouts propaganda slogans that has little opinion on anything aside from what he has been programmed to think, the source of which being the decided dictator of One State, the 'Benefactor.' D-503 is 'friends' with and does absurd Kraftwerk-esque exercises with a fellow named R-13 (Giovanni Früh), a slavish so-called 'State Writer' who is employed to read verses at executions and who is against art and artistic geniuses and regards the individualistic non-robotic sort of creator as heretical, stating, "poetry is civic service, poetry is useful," thereupon making him a sort of aesthetic nemesis of Arthur Rimbaud. One day while exercising with his comrades in a scenario that looks like some early 1980s music video, D-503 runs into a chick named I-330 (Sabine von Maydell) and the two eventually reunite later at a place called the Ancient House—a Victorian-like home that acts as a museum in regard to how 'ancient' homes once looked—and the little lady commits the unsanctioned and unholy act of putting on a dress and acting in a spastic, albeit happy, manner. Despite the seeming deadness of his soul, D-503 begins to fall in love with wild weirdo I-330 and before he knows it, he is 'registered' (indeed, all sex is setup and scheduled by the government) to share his cold and calculating carnal knowledge, but the model citizen is more than a tad bit startled when he sees his federally registered fuck buddy partaking in the 'marvelous poison' of liquor, as well as cigarettes, both of which are serious crimes punishable by death in One State.

Enslaved by his growing love for I-330, who it turns out is a political revolutionary and member of a radical group called MEPHI that is looking to wipe out the One State, D-503 is taken through a tunnel inside the Ancient House and introduced to a rural and natural world outside his technocratic city-state, where dandy-like poets, hippies with folk guitars, naked chicks, and other beatnik types called the "Forest People" frolic in the grass gaily and live naturally, which scares the engineer because, as he states, "they look like the figures in the Human History Museum," yet they are real, living and breathing people with personal freedom. Meanwhile, D-503's assigned girlfriend O-90 (Susanne Altschul), who is considered by the government to be too short to reproduce, convinces the peculiar protagonist to impregnate her, or so she hopes. On top of that, a more hideous than homely redhead chick named U-27 (Hanna Ruess) seduces D-503 and before he knows it, he is betrayed and put under house arrest, thus making him unable to be around for the first test flight of the Integral spaceship he designed, so he can only think to himself, "Kill...Kill...Kill." Naturally, D-503 blames U-27, who has apparently read his journal, for the treachery that has been bestowed upon him, so he goes to lunge at and attack her, but she flashes her tits and the Benefactor calls him right after, so he decides against

killing her, at least for the moment. D-503 is forced to go see the leader of the One State, the Benefactor, who puts the young engineer in his place. Not long after, D-503 meets up with his lady love I-330, who tells him, "The thing at issue is bigger than us. It's not about your individual happiness. But the happiness of many others," thus demonstrating she is just as much of mindless collectivist as her enemies. Not unsurprisingly, D-503 goes mad and attacks a friend and is thus given psycho-surgery, which turns him into a reason-obsessed robot who is proud to admit the high-tech lobotomy made his head feel "light, empty" and that "reason must prevail" in a seemingly possessed fashion. Of course, it is revealed that U-27 told the Benefactor about everything that was written in D-503's journal, including I-330, revolutionary group MEPHI, and their plans to lead a counter-revolution against the cosmic communists at One State. As a treat for unwittingly toppling the MEPHI with his incriminating journal, D-503 has the distinguished pleasure of watching I-330 being tortured by the Benefactor via the "famous gas chamber." Unwilling to give up her comrades, I-330 refuses to confess under the pain of the gas chamber and D-503 lives happily on as a sophisticated zombie of sorts.

Based on a novel that influenced and/or has thematic similarities with works like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (1938), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952), and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), *Wir* might seem rather redundant to the uninitiated in terms of dystopian films, but with its absurdly minimalistic yet ominously oneiric sets, unforgettably unhinged performance from lead Dieter Laser, and the strange vintage video format the 'film' was shot on that only adds to the tone and aesthetic of the work, Vojtěch Jasný's striking micro-budget science fiction flick certainly deserves a place in science fiction history as a crudely charismatic kraut cult film that deserves to be rediscovered and rereleased. In terms of its sociopolitical message, *Wir* makes for a clever indictment of commie collectivism, but also bureaucracy, technocracy, passionless productivity, soulless sex and 'utilitarian relationships,' hyper-realization, and eradication of emotion, thereupon making it a film that has become all the more relevant since its release, even if it is outmoded in other ways. Aside from being a clearly low-budget work utilizing primitive technology, *Wir* has a vague hippie element to it as the "Forest People" in the film, who are essentially 'progressive' types, are dressed like cliché hippie scum with stupid haircuts and Jesus sandals. With star Dieter Laser's recent and rather surprising popularity as an iconic cult horror villain as a result of his role in *The Human Centipede*, one can only hope that interest in the actor will result in people digging up *Wir* from obscurity and proving the German actor is capable of playing more than just Mengele-esque characters like he did in Tom Six's films, as well as Volker Schlöndorff's *The Ogre* (1996) aka *Der Unhold*, but also a mundane engineer who becomes more interesting after receiving a lobotomy.

W_{IR}

-Ty E

LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN

Uli Edel (1989)

As a lifelong loather of New York City and everything it stands for, I have always appreciated films that have anti-romantically depicted the superlatively shitty city in all of its glaring degeneracy and multicultural chaos, especially in the historical sense where the aberrant area is portrayed as a place that has always suffered from a certain cultural malignancy, so naturally I have developed an appreciation for *Letzte Ausfahrt Brooklyn* aka *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1989), a film based on the 1964 cult classic novel of the same name written by Hubert Selby, Jr. Directed by German for-hire hack Uli Edel (*Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo*, *The Baader Meinhof Complex*) and produced by kraut alpha-producer Bernd Eichinger (*Hitler: A Film from Germany*, *Downfall* aka *Der Untergang*), *Last Exit to Brooklyn* undoubtedly owes a great deal of its idiosyncratic and incendiary depiction of NYC due to being created from a total outsider's perspective that makes no attempt to glorify the miscreant multicultural metropolis. Featuring hysterical tranny junkies, fag-fucking union men, less than gregarious Guido gangs, lovelorn gangbanged hookers, and an aptly apocalyptic atmosphere that could have only been sired in a so-called American 'melting pot,' *Last Exit to Brooklyn* is a sort of Teutonic tragicomedy that is bound to inspire a certain Schadenfreude in certain viewers, including myself, as a sordid cinematic work with such a hysterical hodgepodge of human depravity scenarios and nauseating NYC ugliness that one can only laugh when everything is said and done. Despite receiving mixed reviews upon its release in the United States, *Last Exit to Brooklyn* ultimately received the German Film Award for Best Feature Film in 1990 and star Jennifer Jason Leigh won Best Supporting Actress awards from the New York Film Critics Circle and Boston Society of Film Critics, thus making for a major breakthrough for the actress' career. Filmed mostly in Red Hook, NYC, a multicultural hellhole that inspired American alpha-horror writer H.P. Lovecraft's short story *The Horror at Red Hook* (1927) and his infamous remark regarding its citizenry, "The organic things -Italo-Semitic-Mongoloid- inhabiting that awful cesspool could not by any stretch of the imagination be call'd human," *Last Exit to Brooklyn* ultimately does for 1950s New York City what Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980) did for late-1920s Weimar Republic Berlin, albeit to a less remarkable and less personal degree, in its meticulously stylized and sometimes even phantasmagorical depiction of an unflattering and unhinged yet ultimately captivating zeitgeist that is probably best left forgotten, yet makes for curious celluloid tales.

It is Brooklyn during the 1950s and a long-term strike in the city has left most of its virtually collectively hapless citizens broke, pissed, and irrationally violent. During the beginning of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, a gang of petty philistine

LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN

criminals, including Vinnie (Peter Dobson), Boyce (Jerry Orbach), Sal (Stephen Baldwin), Al (Same Rockwell), and Freddy (James Lorinz) beat up a Southern sailor because he calls one of the wild wops a “nigger-loving bastard.” To earn most of their petty dirty money, the degenerate gang uses a hot blonde prostitute with big bosoms named Tralala (Jennifer Jason Leigh) to lure drunk sailors out of bars and rob them by smashing a bottle over their head and emptying their pockets. Meanwhile, a union activist/shop steward named Harry Black (Stephen Lang) is approached by a Greek-American tranny named Georgette (played by real male-to-female transvestite Alexis Arquette) while holding his cock and taking a piss. Clearly turned on by the uniquely ugly chick with a dick, Harry becomes aroused and essentially rapes his wife that same night. Friends with members of the local gang, Harry goes to a Dionysian druggy party with the masculine hoodlums that is hosted by sassy shemale Georgette and her tranny compatriots where he meets and starts a relationship with an extremely effete queen of a less than humble homo named ‘Regina’ (Bernard Zette). After meeting a nice and handsome sailor, the seemingly unlovable streetwalker Tralala also finds temporary solace and love for the first time in his life, but rather unfortunately, loverboy is sailing for the Korean War in a couple days.

Meanwhile, a fat and belligerent wop family man named Big Joe (Burt Young) has learned that his obscenely overweight daughter Donna (Ricki Lake) is pregnant and he successfully forces the unlucky man named Tommy (John Costelloe) who got her pregnant to marry her. While everything seems to be getting a little nicer for the urban hoodrats of Brooklyn, all good things must come to an end and when workers are brought in to replace the strikers, all hell breaks loose. After sleeping in with his boi toy Regina, Harry is late for a strike rally that ultimately erupts into a full blown riot and forgets to acknowledge his boss, so he is demoted and forced to pay back all the money he has blown own his high dollar man-whore. Of course, Regina dumps Harry after he no longer pays for her fine wine and hard drugs, so the union activist falls into a morbid melancholy state, attempts to molest a preteen boy, and is ultimately beaten an inch from his life by a group of men for his sick indiscretions with the young man. After Tralala’s saintly sailor leaves for the Korean War, she is snapped back into reality, gets drunk at a bar and announces that she has “The best tits in the Western world” and allows herself to be gangbanged senseless by dozens of degenerate barflies. At unpleasantly plump patriarch Big Joe’s daughter’s wedding, the father of the bride gets in a fist fight with the groom, thus ushering the beginning of a long and painful dysfunctional relationship. Towards the conclusion of Last Exit to Brooklyn, a lovesick teenage boy who is hopelessly in love with Tralala spots the hooker’s seemingly lifeless post-gangbanged body lying on a pier, thus resulting in the loss of the boy’s innocence and marking a fitting end for the film. Before the credits role, the workers on strike finally go back to work and life goes on.

A film where virtually every character is both a perpetrator and a victim, Last

Exit to Brooklyn is a sort of pre-apocalyptic period piece that never falls into sapless and superficial sentimentalism nor politically correct provocations, but instead depicts a distinctively stylized hell-on-earth in a manner that, to the film's credit, owes much to German expressionism and classic film noir. While I would not call myself a fan of Hubert Selby, Jr.'s novels, I can state with nil hesitation that *Last Exit to Brooklyn* is innately more interesting and genuine than Darren Aronofsky's cinematic adaptation of the Selby novel of the same name *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), as well as Nicolas Winding Refn's pseudo-Lynchian work *Fear X* (2003), which was based on a screenplay by Selby, Jr. Interestingly enough, Hubert Selby, Jr. has a cameo in *Last Exit to Brooklyn* as a taxi-driver who unintentionally runs over and kills tranny Georgette while s/he is looking for he/r lover in a hopeless heroin haze as if the nihilistic novelist himself were the grim reaper himself come to collect lost souls and save them for their deleterious dead-end lives of lifeless lecherousness and monumental misery. While penned by an American, shot in America, and featuring an all-American cast, *Last Exit to Brooklyn* would most certainly not have been as nearly a brutal film had it been directed by some random Hollywood hack, even if director Uli Edel is no Fassbinder nor even a Roland Klick. Essentially, while *Last Exit to Brooklyn* is drenched in black humor, which some American filmgoers can appreciate, Edel's film is the celluloid antithesis of what most Hollywood films stand for due to its lack of clear-cut villains and heroes, as well as its lack of a happy ending, and less than flattering and far from romantic depiction of America and American urban history. Despite all the incessant mainstream media, Hollywood, and government propaganda to the contrary, so-called 'multiculturalism' is not America's strength but its unnatural and nefarious curse and will ultimately lead to its irrevocable ruin and *Last Exit to Brooklyn*—a work depicting 'eclectically ethnic' NYC before the arrival of every dark shade from the third world as a result of the insidious Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965—features nothing short of a cultural and biological sewer where everywhere everyone is metaphysically cursed and trapped in some sort of figurative hell.

-Ty E

HAYTABO
HAYTABO

Ulli Lommel (1971)

Undoubtedly, it says a lot about the state of a filmmaker's career and overall reputation as an artist when an arthouse dvd company ('Arthaus') releases your first feature-length film – a work that has been rarely seen and pretty much totally inaccessible for about 40 years – with everyone's name written large on the cover except the auteur himself and such is the case with Ulli Lommel's avant-garde sci-fi flick *Haytabo* (1971) aka *Falscher Verdacht*; undoubtedly a singular and standout work in the German-born director's rather eclectic yet discordant filmmaking career. Featuring Peter Moland as a 'collaborating' director/writer and Rainer Werner Fassbinder as a peppy poet in a purple shirt, as well as many recycled cast members from the German New Wave alpha-auteur's semi-autobiographical work that was released the same year *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) including Eddie and Tanja Constantine, Hannes Fuchs, and Katrin Schaake, the exotically titled cinematic work *Haytabo* is an outlandish celluloid oddity that makes for a must-see work for fans of the Fass-bande. Shot on a virtually nonexistent budget of \$5000 over the course of two weeks with only a mere 120 minutes of film stock to utilize, Lommel only had the opportunity to shoot one take for each scene of *Haytabo*, thereupon making it quite the challenge considering much of the film was improvised, which is most apparent while watching the film. Shot almost entirely in rural Bavaria during the winter season, *Haytabo* often feels like a postmodern psychedelic German mountain film of sorts and what Arnold Fanck might have assembled had he read some Jean-Paul Sartre, consumed a potent dose of mescaline, lost his shooting script, and become preoccupied with French existentialism as opposed to völkisch mysticism. Featuring late-1960s kraut counter-kultur icons Rainer Langhans – founder of *Kommune 1* (an anti-bourgeois commune that inspired the libertine living habits of John Lennon and Yoko Ono) – and his muse Uschi Obermaier (the leftist icon of the so-called "1968 Generation" and fashion model/actress who later became Keith Richard's muse), and music ranging from Deep Purple and The Moody Blues to Vivaldi, *Haytabo* is an indubitably "hip" work of Science Fiction and this is coming from someone who wholeheartedly despises hippies and everything they stand for, but I cannot deny that this is a hypnotic and hallucinatory, albeit oftentimes muddled, piece of filmmaking. That being said, I do not think it would be a stretch to state that *Haytabo* is undoubtedly one of Lommel's most diacritic and experimental films.

Haytabo centers around a scientist/biochemist (played by Eddie Constantine – who being the star of Godard's *Alphaville* – was no stranger to avant-garde sci-fi) that – using the research of a professor from the 19th century – believes he is on the verge of finding the universally pondered sibylline secret for human immortality, but still is missing important information for the formula. With his wife

(played by Katrin Schaake), Constantine's character "Professor" decides to take a journey to the village where the 19th century professor (played by Rainer Langhans) once did his rather revolutionary research and eventually discovers that the primordial prober is still alive, thereupon culminating into a metaphysical and philosophical 'trip' of sorts for the contemporary prof and his fair lady, the ancient sage and his extra-elderly wife, and a couple more preternatural characters that tag along in this quasi-futuristic flower child freakout flick. To make things a bit more offbeat, a space alien (played by Hannes Fuchs) – who just looks like a neo-beatnik bastard typical of that time period – also joins the motley kraut crew and helps assist them in their erratic existential journey and from there on, most of Haytabo involves the folk frolicking around on the bewitching Bavarian landscape like some sort of neoteric (for that time) Fidus-esque painting come to life. An especially notable scene from the film is when Eddie Constantine and his charming consort encounter a spastic and seemingly schizophrenic music teacher who conducts a live orchestra before the couple's bewildered eyes. Of course, Eddie and his babe have yet to realize the secret to perennial bliss is not in actual immortality, but a feeling that the curious conductor – despite his odd behavior – has already tapped into. Ultimately, Haytabo is a moral tale where quality of life is portrayed as more meaningful than quantity. Ironically, one inevitably comes to the same epiphany when comparing the lives and cinematic works of Lommel and Fassbinder.

To paraphrase the 19th professor played by white gypsy guru Rainer Langhans in a most fitting role, the ultimate message of Haytabo is: "feeling good and thus enabling everyone to feel good. That's actually everything." Of course, such a seemingly shallow and sentimental sentiment is certainly not something I can take seriously, at least in the irrational 'free spirit flower power' context of the film, but that did not stop me from digging the aesthetically-pleasing allure of Ulli Lommel's lost hippie flick Haytabo; a work that is essentially the Neuer Deutscher Film equivalent of Conrad Rooks' Chappaqua (1966), albeit less phantasmagoric and frantic, but undoubtedly just as innately incoherent. Speaking of Chappaqua, like Rooks, Lommel would also develop a spiritual bond with American Indians after his immigration to the United States, even declaring on his personal facebook page that he was, "reborn December 21, 1984 at the Apache Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico as "Dataa Shigan" meaning "First Hand", since I am the first "Pale Man" to be asked by the Apache Shaman to report from "The Front"." Of course, considering that Lommel's celluloid magnum opus is the strangely shuddersome and sexually sadistic serial killer film *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*, his most commercially successful work is the supernatural slasher flick *The Boogeyman* (1980), and that he works almost exclusively within the horror genre today (albeit in a notably 'professional' and artistically uncompromising manner), the tall, dark, and handsome Svengali-like figure most certainly has a down-seated

HAYTABO

darkside, which is only hinted at in Haytabo; a work that would foretell the ambient atmosphere of Cocaine Cowboys (1979) and the heterodox social and storyline structure of Absolute Evil (2008).

-Ty E

THE TENDERNESS OF WOLVES

Ulli Lommel (1973)

Based on the exceptionally bestial acts of pederast German serial killer Fritz Haarmann aka the Vampire of Hanover – who molested, murdered, and cannibalized upwards of 27 boys and young men between 1918 and 1924 – *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* directed by Ulli Lommel (Haytabo, *The Boogeyman*) and produced by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*Satan's Brew*, *Querelle*) is undoubtedly the greatest 'horror' film of Neuer Deutscher Film. Following in the hard-to-supersede footsteps of Austrian auteur Fritz Lang's self-proclaimed masterpiece *M* (1931) – a work also based on the real-life murder of Haarman, but also fellow post-WWI bloodlusting serial killers Carl Großmann, Peter Kürten, and Karl Denke – *The Tenderness of Wolves* takes a more realist and Fassbinder-esque approach as opposed to the big-budget German expressionist aesthetic assembled by the *Metropolis* (1927) director. Starring Fassbinder superstar Kurt Raab (*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, *Beware of a Holy Whore*) in the leading role as a bald-headed bastard Haarmann, the character bears a striking, albeit more sinister and strapping (relatively speaking), appearance to Peter Lorre's character Hans Beckert in Lang's *M*. Decidedly anachronistic in nature due to unavailability of costumes and props from post-WWI era, Lommel opted for setting *The Tenderness of Wolves* amid the debris and devastation of ground zero Germany soon after the conclusion of the Second World War, thereupon giving the film a much more nihilistic, fiercely forlorn, and overall harum-scarum feel that is more harmonious with Fassbinder's deracinated Deutschland of the socially and emotionally inharmonic than the post-empire/pre-nazi years. Of course, the most obvious and important difference between *The Tenderness of Wolves* and *M* is that, unlike Lang's work, Lommel's film is decidedly dripping with blood, but more fascinatingly yet appallingly, gratuitous and seedy scenes of exposed young male bodies, including that of a particularly venerable preteen boy. That being said, I don't think it would be a stretch to say that not only is *The Tenderness of Wolves* one of the most aesthetically callous portrayals of a serial killer ever captured on celluloid, but it is also the sort of film that a real-life lust-slayer would see as the most potent and gratifying of arthouse pornography. In other words, *The Tenderness of Wolves* is to the chickenhawk serial killer what the kiddy arthouse flick *Maladolescenza* (1977) directed by Pier Giuseppe Murgia is to the debauched bourgeois pedophile. Needless to say, *The Tenderness of Wolves* is not the sort of 'horror' film that appeals to those pedestrian horror fanatics who spend their saved up allowance money dressing up in unflatteringly fitting Michael Myers costumes and going to Friday the 13th conventions.

Like William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980), Todd Verow's *Frisk* (1995), and Marian Dora's *Cannibal* (2006), *The Tenderness of Wolves* is the sort of un-

THE TENDERNES OF WOLVES

compromising homicidal homo flick that would be especially unsettling to modern prissy political correct viewers, not just because of the serial killer's sadistic sodomite persuasion, but also the pathetic way his life; or lack thereof. Living in a terribly cramped, decrepit, and filthy apartment adorned with human bones, rancid meat, and kitschy angel paintings, Fritz Haarmann (Kurt Raab) is not exactly the most hygienic fellow, thus he has no problem butchering the tender bodies of his young prey and selling it on the black market in a manner that anticipates the cannibalistic family in Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974); a work that was released one year after Lommel's film that would do for Texas farmhouses what Lommel's did for German ghettos. Haarmann also has an opportunistic bisexual boyfriend named Hans Grans (Jeff Roden) that looks somewhat like director Ulli Lommel due to his dapper appearance and who merely uses his cannibalistic friend as a source of tasty twink patties and over black market goods. Needless to say, Haarmann is a patently pathetic pervert, thereupon giving a certain 'humanity' to his mostly chilling character and thus making *The Tenderness of Wolves* all the more of a vexing experience for the viewer. Like "British Jeffrey Dahmer" Dennis Nilsen, Haarmann – a cunning creature of the most bestialized yet godforsaken sort – works with law enforcement, thereupon enabling him to shield his crimes, at least for an extended, mass-murdering period of time. Considering the cops themselves have come upon hard times in post-WWII Germany, they remain absolutely apathetic towards Haarmann's proclivity for penetrating young boys as they see him, so long as the baldheaded brute provides them with the sort of petty slum policing they are looking for. In fact, Germany is so devastated and depleted by war that an Arab black marketer (played by Fassbinder's tragic Moroccan lover El Hedi ben Salem) of all people has the audacity to tell Haarman that, "Germany is kaput," which is indubitably true considering an untermensch barbarian can now bed a German woman for a package of cigarettes in a country that previously put a premium on racial eugenics only a few years before. In short, *The Tenderness of Wolves* does for the German New Wave what Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948) did for neorealism: depicting the post-war Germany in a most unsentimental light where the common man is a degraded beggar and the average woman is a worn-out whore, albeit Lommel took particular advantage of these stark circumstances – soundly synchronizing horror movie genre conventions with real-life horror – henceforth creating one of the greatest Teutonic horror flicks since, well, Fritz Lang's *M*.

Due to his artistic degeneration into an acutely amateur auteur of such digital diarrhea direct-to-DVD horror flicks as *Zombie Nation* (2004), *Zodiac Killer* (2005), *B.T.K. Killer* (2005), *Green River Killer* (2005), *Baseline Killer* (2008), and other similarly generically titled and hastily assembled, wretched works, some fans of *The Tenderness of Wolves* question if it was actually Fass-

binder in the director's seat as he was certainly on the set of the film as both producer and a co-star. In an interview featured in the book *EyeBall Compendium*, Lommel states in regard to Fassbinder's contribution to the film: "He actually didn't want to make the movie himself, but he had respect for our affinity for it. He didn't want to do it and it didn't fit into his career, really, and he thought it was too controversial...What I got from Fassbinder was everyone who ever worked for Fassbinder. All the Fassbinder superstars are in this movie, except for Hanna Schygulla." Indeed, after re-watching *The Tenderness of Wolves* not long ago, as well as some of Lommel's later works *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979), *Blank Generation* (1980), *The Devonsville Terror* (1983), and *Strangers in Paradise* (1984) and a marathon of Fassbinder's movies, there is no doubt in my mind that the arthouse-turned-shithouse auteur directed it. On top of being more gory, gritty and downright vulgar – traits that dominate Lommel's contemporary films, although in a rather retrogressive manner – than anything Fassbinder has ever directed, *The Tenderness of Wolves* lacks the sort of signature naked melodrama that even predominates in the *Fox and His Friends* (1975) director's lesser works. A malicious and oftentimes misanthropic cinematic work of vicious aesthetic and thematic vulgarity, *The Tenderness of Wolves* is probably the only German New Wave flick that did for horror what Fassbinder's films did for melodrama: unshrouding the collective soul of a defeated, dehumanized, and demoralized nation, which Lommel's friend/producer Marian Dora would continue with *Cannibal* (2006) and *The Angel's Melancholia* (2009) aka *Melancholie Der Engel*. I might be a tad bit optimistic, but maybe its about time Ulli Lommel goes back to the Fatherland and returns to his artistic roots, as the murderous mystique of cock-chomping cannibal Armin Meiwes and aberrant Austrian Aryan Josef Fritzl beckons....

-Ty E

COCAINE COWBOYS
COCAINE COWBOYS

Ulli Lommel (1979)

Although almost a total and abject failure as a would-be audacious auteur that, aside from possibly Uwe Boll, is probably considered the worst German filmmaker who ever lived, few film directors can boast a career as interesting and diverse as Ulli Lommel (*Adolf and Marlene*, *Diary of a Cannibal*). Beginning his long and relatively fruitful (if thoroughly rotten) career as a promising protégé of German New Wave auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder and starring in his directorial debut *Love is Colder than Death* (1969) among some 20+ other film collaborations, Lommel eventually helmed the director's chair and found critical and artistic success with his third film – the Neuer Deutscher Film horror classic *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*; an extremely loose remake/tribute to German expressionist Fritz Lang's serialkiller masterpiece *M* (1931) that was based on the real-life murders of putrid cannibalistic pedophile Fritz Haarmann. Unfortunately, *The Tenderness of Wolves* would prove to be Lommel's greatest film, which has led some people to speculate that the crudely carnal and cruel cinematic work was ghost-directed by Fassbinder (who on top of appearing in the film, also acted as its producer). The year 1977 marked the beginning of the end as far as Lommel's artistic integrity was concerned, as the filmmaker moved to the United States and hooked up with none other than pop-con-artist Andy Warhol, who produced the German director's films *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979) and *Blank Generation* (1980); two films centering around then-popular music subcultures. While neither film features the uncompromising direction and eventual cult status *The Tenderness of Wolves* would obtain, the paralleling story behind *Cocaine Cowboys* is interesting nonetheless, so much so that it is actually stranger and more captivating than the movie itself. Featuring inane weirdo Warhol as himself and eternal bad boy of the silver screen Jack Palance (*Contempt* aka *Le Mépris*, *City Slickers*) as a mafia-connected music manager in a film about cocaine-smuggling rock stars, *Cocaine Cowboys* is a film that sounds much better than it actually is. Filmed on location at Warhol's panoramic seaside manor located on Montauk, Long Island, *Cocaine Cowboys* is soulless yet a sparingly entertaining example of life reflecting artless cinematic art and vice versa.

While working on post-production for his monotonous punk flick *Blank Generation* starring punk icon Richard Hell, Ulli Lommel was approached by his passive collaborator Andy Warhol to meet a young millionaire named Tom Sullivan at Studio 54 who was keen on making an inherently narcissistic, self-glorifying movie focusing on his unknown band and rebellious angel dust-slinging lifestyle as a scantily charismatic cocaine cowboy. Needless to say, Lommel obliged and instead of creating anything resembling a script, the German filmmaker used his dubious reputation as a profound European 'artiste' and assembled a hur-

ried, brief story on a tape recorder for what would be *Cocaine Cowboys*, which started shooting a mere week later. Unbeknownst to Lommel, Sullivan made his millions, including the funding for the film, by smuggling cocaine on the international black market. While in the middle of the shooting for *Cocaine Cowboys*, Warhol's estate was raided by FBI and DEA agents because they thought the film was a front for a major cocaine operation, which – judging by the film's made-over-a-weekend quintessence and lack of coherence – may have been true, but, naturally, Lommel wholeheartedly denies it. Not one to hold a grudge, Lommel offered the officers roles in the playing their con-catching selves, which they happily obliged. In *Cocaine Cowboys*, it is the always quietly conspiring Andy Warhol of all people who uncovers the operation by mere chance while passively taking a series of Polaroids in what is probably his greatest, if stereotypically lackluster, screen performance. In the film, Destin (Tom Sullivan) and his manager Raphael (Jack Palance) – the frontman of an up-and-coming rock band and a major drug trafficker – wishes to get him and his bands out of the cocaine business, but they must do one more big deal before they can permanently sever ties with the Italian mob. When the band loses \$2 million dollars worth of coke in a totally nonsensical way (the film has more than one plot hole), they must scramble to find the drugs as angry Cosa Nostra henchmen encircle Warhol's plush waterfront pad. Throughout *Cocaine Cowboys*, the band members roam the beach on their horses as degenerate contemporary cowboys. Instead of being *Easy Rider* (1969) with its promise of sly and cool cocktail of Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll, *Cocaine Cowboys* is ultimately a post-hippie abortion of the ceaselessly aimless kind, but then again, for such a soulless era of vacant cock rock, masturbatory guitar solos, unimpassioned sex, unruly drug abuse, and bird-brained haircuts, the film – whether intentional or not – is a reflection of that particularly repugnant zeitgeist, thus making it an innately lackadaisical, bromidic, and superficially stylized cinematic artifact from a thankfully bygone but still influential era.

Ulli Lommel and Andy Warhol on the set of *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979)

Not long after completing *Cocaine Cowboys*, Ulli Lommel received a phone call from its star and financier Tom Sullivan asking if he could borrow \$10 thousand dollars from the German director. Of course, Lommel turned him down and would later find out not much longer after the call that the once-successful cocaine cowboy died destitute in a Brooklyn gutter like a common hobo at the ripe age of 23, thus starkly contrasting the determinedly debauched dead-end lifestyle he sought to glorify in *Cocaine Cowboys*; a film that is almost as equally forgotten as the would-be rock star anti-hero is. Seemingly an opportunist who merely wanted to direct whatever films he could, Lommel subsequently displayed the sort of music he really loved with the highly personal sci-fi musical *Strangers in Paradise* (1984); the director's vaguely punk equivalent of Brian De Palma's *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974) about a German hypnotist (played by

COCAINE COWBOYS

Lommel) that is cryogenically frozen to escape Hitler, only to be thawed out by a group of Californian Reaganites. Of course, Lommel scored his greatest American hit with the 'video nasty' *The Boogeyman* (1980) and subsequently went on to direct a series of irredeemably horrible direct-to-video horror flicks and the rest is history, although the filmmaker did temporarily return to Germany and the music world with the downright deplorable digital diarrhea work *Daniel – Der Zauberer* (2004) aka *Daniel – The Wizard*; a film starring Bavarian pop-trash-icon Daniel Küblböck of whom the German director described as: "I know that from my childhood: In Germany we were taught this way: You must not do certain things. You have to behave yourself. And now there is Daniel and he isn't willing to take those fixed bourgeois roles. He creates his own role. He breaks taboos, makes himself up, dresses like a girl. He cries, is clownish, is hysterical. For short: He doesn't behave himself. And because he does this in public, I think some consider this as a salvation and love him and others can't bear this and hate him." Indeed, on top of trying to capitalize off of Küblböck's less than glorious newfound infamy, it seems that Lommel also found a kindred spirit in the contemptible German celebrity. I, for one, know that no matter how uniquely unbearable and unwatchable Lommel's films are, I can't help but liking the loony kraut and following his singularly stagnating filmmaking career.

-Ty E

BLANK GENERATION

Ulli Lommel (1980)

Paul Morrissey (*Flesh, Blood for Dracula*) is not the only filmmaker alpha-pop-con-artist Andy Warhol worked with during his somewhat passive, if not singular, filmmaking career. Aside from his amateur filmmaker boyfriend Danny Williams, who the artist pushed into suicide as disturbingly depicted in the rather incriminating documentary *A Walk Into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory* (2007) directed by Esther Robinson (Williams' niece), Warhol also had his boyfriend Jed Johnson (who was an interior designer and protégé of Morrissey and would later die in the TWA Flight 800 explosion) direct the final Factory film, the Waters-esque black comedy *Andy Warhol's Bad* (1977), yet there is another auteur he worked with that is often forgotten. Undoubtedly, the most seemingly unlikely filmmaker Warhol worked with was German actor turned auteur Ulli Lommel (*Haytabo, The Boogeyman*), who started working with the pop-pop-artist after receiving acclaim for his dark arthouse horror masterpiece *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* (1973) aka *The Tenderness of Wolves*, cutting his ties with his longtime collaborator Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and moving to the United States in 1977. Apparently, Warhol was a fan of *The Tenderness of Wolves* and offered to produce Lommel's next film, or as the Teutonic auteur stated himself: "When the *New York Times* wrote in 1977 that "*Tenderness of the Wolves*" reminded them of Andy Warhol's work, only better, Andy attended the next screening and after the movie we met and he asked me what my plans were. I invented a love story at dinner with Warhol, Truman Capote and Jacki Kennedy called 'Blank Generation.'" Indeed, for a moment during the late-1970s/early-1980s, Lommel was Warhol's "soup du jour" and produced two of his films, *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979) and *Blank Generation* (1980), which would ultimately become two of the most nihilistic and idiosyncratic cult rock films ever made, as unintentionally damning documents of post-counter-culture American youth movements as seen from a voyeuristic Teutonic gaze. Needless to say, neither of these films are masterpieces, but they are certainly among Lommel's most interesting and experimental works, with *Blank Generation* being the most ambitious and artistically successful of the two films. Mixing Richard Hell & The Voidoids with Mozart and Beethoven and featuring a love story between punk rocker Richard Hell and French arthouse actress Carole Bouquet (*That Obscure Object of Desire, Day of the Idiots*), *Blank Generation* is a curious and then cutting edge mix of high and low kultur (aka European and American culture) that reminds one how absurd American cultural hegemony is considering krauts were creating great symphonies for European royalty centuries ago while American punk rockers were composing two minute songs with three power chords riffs for urban sub-prole rabble during the late-1970s/early-1980s. Named after the debut 1977 Richard Hell & The Voidoids album of the same

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name, Blank Generation has been routinely attacked since its release by its star Richard Hell—a mischling Jew who grew up in Kentucky and was a major influence on punk (non)fashion—who once stated of the film that, “there’s not a single authentic, truthful moment in the movie.” Personally, I could say the same thing about Mr. Hell’s music, but that is beside the point, as punk rock is merely a background to a dejecting arthouse romance directed by a man who was then in a relationship with the lead actress, Carole Bouquet, who personifies what one might describe as a mentally perturbed woman of the hysterical, detached and hopelessly scatter-brained sort who does not know what she wants. Lommel’s most ‘Godardian’ work (the director even goes so far as name-dropping the frog commie auteur), Blank Generation is like Wim Wenders’ *Alice in the Cities* (1974) meets Steven Soderbergh’s *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (1989) with a tinge of Andrzej Zulawski’s *Possession* (1981), albeit set in a fashion-obsessed and emotionally and culturally vapid punk world where no one has a soul.

Opening in Times Square with a giant glowing billboard featuring the film’s title (Lommel would also use this somewhat alluring technique for *Cocaine Cowboys*), Blank Generation immediately attempts to give an almost mystical feel to New York City, as if one is about to enter a magical fantasy world not unlike *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), yet the film ultimately attempts to blur the line between fiction and reality, as a sort of punk rock equivalent to Godard’s *Masculin Féminin* (1966), albeit about the children of Sid Vicious and poorly painted Campbell’s Soup Cans instead of Marx and Coca-Cola. Overly emotional proto-emo-fag Billy (Richard Hell) has just started a relationship with a French filmmaker named Nada (Carole Bouquet) that he met while she was filming a documentary for French TV about him and his punk band. Right from the get go, it seems like Nada is quasi-possessed by some kind of frigid frog demon that hates men, as she almost instantaneously starts fighting with him, thus causing him to complain, “We’re together for 5 minutes and you start fighting.” Meanwhile, Billy is getting fed up with being a popular punk frontman and decides to walk off stage during the middle of a performance, fire his manager Jack (Howard Grant), and complain that he is “fed up” with the whole rock star lifestyle. Billy’s manager later gives him the following ultimatum: “You got two choices: life with a French girl or platinum records. I’ve also got to remind you that you signed a number of contracts.” Needless to say, born loser Billy chooses the French girl and moronically sells all the rights to his lyrics/songs for a measly \$5000. Nada calls him stupid for selling his music rights for such a pathetic amount and subsequently dumps him in a cold and antisocial fashion by leaving a ‘video letter’ where she states that he is “driving her crazy” and she is “not the right woman” for him, concluding the tape with the following words: “forget this tape...it shows the beginning and end of an impossible dream.” Indeed, Billy’s punk rock dream is degenerating into a lovesick nightmare. Meanwhile, a German journalist from Hamburg named Hoffritz (Ulli Lommel) arrives in NYC to interview Andy

Warhol and Nada immediately goes to him and they start a less than romantic relationship, thus siring a more banal than bizarre love triangle. One day after a show, Billy is followed around by an annoying punk would-be-filmmaker named Lizzy Liebenfeld (Suzanna Love), who claims to be making a pretentious documentary on “episodic film on chance.” Since Lizzy looks vaguely like Nada, Billy somewhat humors her company, though he embarrasses her by taking her wig off and smearing her makeup in a pathetic attempt to make her resemble his French ex-girlfriend. Billy also describes to Lizzy how cold and whimsical Nada was during their brief relationship, complaining, “When she was really interested, she would never say so [...] it was like it had nothing to do with us personally...she’d make the most intimate moments look like business [...] When she finally left, she didn’t talk to me...she said goodbye on a tape, in close-up on herself, and just vanished.” Lizzy speculates that Nada might still be in NYC, so Billy goes looking for her and soon finds her, symbolically giving her a blank tape for her birthday. Meanwhile, Nada’s kraut journalist boyfriend Hoffritz is about to conduct an interview with Warhol, but a goofy queer guy with flashing goggles who calls himself “Andy’s Assistant” shows up instead and begins playing discordant melodies on an electric violin. When Warhol finally does show up, Nada interviews him for TV, asking him in sub-literate English, “I’d like to know what you think about the sentence of Godard who says that cinema is a place for crime and magic,” to which the pop-artist replies while tripping over virtually every word he says: “Ummmm...Well, I still don’t understand the crime part of the question but, uh, I always think it...about the magic part of the question is when, uh, it really it shows, uh, magic, you know? And when, especially people...some people have that magic that when a camera goes on you...there’s an extra energy or something...for some people, you know, beautiful people...it makes such a difference and when they can get that extra magic on the screen, I don’t understand it but it happens.” After mumbling out his answer in a marvelously mundane and monotone fashion, Warhol asks to take a photo of Nada so he can add it to his growing Polaroid collection. In the end, Nada decides to leave NYC with Hoffritz, though she gets Billy to drive her to the airport. At the last minute, Nada decides to leave Hoffritz and stay with Billy in NYC, but the punker is already gone. In the end, chance and mere unfortunate circumstances dissolve a passionate, if not destined to be doomed, love affair.

For anyone familiar with Blank Generation and its history, it is well known that star Richard Hell absolutely loathes both the film and director Ulli Lommel, with the punk rocker confessing in an interview featured in the book *Destroy All Movies!!! The Complete Guide to Punks on Film* (2010) that he more or less tried to sabotage the film with a poor acting performance, stating: “I got so disgusted that my method of dealing with it was just to kind of go passive. Like passive resistance. I just would not let any expression into anything I did. And it all

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really was just completely inappropriate. Nothing that happens from one minute to the next—including the dialogue—makes sense. Again, it's all non-sequiturs. It's ludicrous [...] None of it has any relationship to anything that could ever happen in real life." Apparently, Hell was originally very interested in starring in the film after seeing Lommel's masterpiece *The Tenderness of Wolves*, but he ultimately found the director's European style of filmmaking intolerable, complaining: "The only thing I could see that he brought from Fassbinder was this bitchiness and this glory in getting petty little feuds started, playing on people's insecurities on the set. That was something Fassbinder was famous for...this queeny, bitchy cliché gay world. It may not be politically correct to say that, but it's just a face. And in Fassbinder's hands, it resulted in some amazing movies, but it's pretty ugly to me as a world. I didn't like being part of that way of dealing with other people, insulting them all the time and playing them against each other. It's kind of like the Warhol Factory world a bit. I felt pretty immune to it because I just thought it was annoying and I wouldn't buy into it, but that was his style." When the interviewer of *Destroy All Movies!!!* offered to edit out what Hell said about Lommel, the resentful punk responded by stating, "I don't think I'd edit anything out about Lommel, though...he's a real low life." When Lommel was interviewed for the same book, he only had good things to say about Mr. Hell, stating regarding his interest in making *Blank Generation* and the NYC punk rock scene: "I spent lots of time at CBGBs with Andy Warhol, watching the Ramones and Blondie. And then came Richard Hell and I fell in love with his poetry. And I was a big fan of the Sex Pistols and I also hung out with William S. Burroughs, the first punk of them all. I lived at the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan, the punk rock hotel."

Personally, after watching the film for the third time (it is certainly more enjoyable on subsequent viewings), I have to side with Lommel, as he may not have depicted Hell in a totally realistic fashion, but he certainly did a decent job portraying the emotional and cultural bankruptcy of the moronically nihilistic scene Richard Hell & The Voidoids belonged to, as a work that demystifies pre-hardcore NYC punk. Indeed, as someone who grew up on hardcore punk groups like Black Flag and Minor Threat, I find Hell's contribution to the genre to be little more than a superficial (and rather degenerate) fashion statement. You know a guy is not too interesting when a borderline autistic fellow like Andy Warhol, who only makes a mere cameo in the film, shows him up in terms of charisma and intellectual depth. Additionally, while I found the songs by Richard Hell & The Voidoids to seem more like terribly degenerate traditional rock music than revolutionary and truly subversive punk rock, I must praise Elliot Goldenthal, who would later earn an Academy Award for his contribution to *Frida* (2002), for his rather ethereal and angelic musical score. A work of vaguely melancholy meta-cinema where a young female frog filmmaker literally lives her life through a camera because she lacks the emotional courage to deal with real-life love and

romance, as well as a playful piece of cult cinema history featuring arguably the greatest screen performance ever given by Andy Warhol as himself and director Ulli Lommel playing an arrogant kraut, *Blank Generation* is pretentious self-reflexive cinema at its least pretentious, as an uneven, if not sometimes intriguing and curious, marriage between Godard and punk rock. Somewhat recently, auteur Lommel wrote, "The two movies that keep me company to this very day are "Tenderness of the Wolves" and "Blank Generation". The first one brought me to Warhol and the other one celebrates my collaboration with him." Indeed, it was only natural that there would be a link made between Warhol and Fassbinder, as both men mastered the art of celluloid Superstars and Factory style communal filmmaking. Of course, no one would ever suspect it would be a rampant heterosexual (who not only shared carnal pleasures with Carole Bouquet, but also Godard's muse Anna Karina, Margit Carstensen, and countless other screen beauties as well) that would establish the historical link between the two revolutionary filmmakers.

-Ty E

THE BOOGEYMAN
THE BOOGEYMAN

Ulli Lommel (1980)

While German actor-turned-auteur Ulli Lommel (*Haytabo*, *Cocaine Cowboys*) never received the same singular fame or fortune as his former collaborator Rainer Werner Fassbinder, he did manage to make it to Hollywood to create a somewhat 'successful' horror franchise that started with the highly derivative yet paradoxically strange *The Boogey Man* (1980) aka *The Boogeyman*, an international hit that made \$25 million worldwide despite its mere \$300,000 budget and also had the honor of making the UK's 'Video Nasties' list and spawning two sequels. Made directly after Lommel moved from Deutschland to the United States and collaborated with Andy Warhol on two cult flicks, *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979) and *Black Generation* (1980), *The Boogeyman* was mostly filmed in bumfuck Southern Maryland, undoubtedly one of the last places one would expect a Fassbinder superstar to end up. Co-written and starring Lommel's then-wife, DuPont heiress turned actress Suzanna Love (*Olivia*, *The Devonville Terror*), who made a number of films with the director the decade or so when the two were still married, *The Boogeyman* is a no-budget supernatural horror film of sorts that was made in the wake of the success of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978), but also displays discernible influence from *The Exorcist* (1978) and *The Amityville Horror* (1979). Directed by the man behind what is arguably the greatest horror film of German New Cinema, *Tenderness of the Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*—a work co-starring and produced by Fassbinder based on real-life Weimar era cocksucker kraut serial killer Fritz Haarmann—*The Boogeyman* was certainly a career changing work for Lommel in that it not only made him a lot of money and set him up in Hollywood, but it is the first work where he shed his European arthouse cred and became forever pigeonholed as a horror hack and director of artistically unmerited celluloid junk, which is rather unfortunate for a man who worked with Fassbinder and Warhol and who directed a delightfully diacritic and decadent horror masterpiece like *Tenderness of the Wolves*.

Indeed, I would be lying if I tried to pass off *The Boogeyman* as anything aside from semi-supernatural quasi-schlock, yet the film has a certain crude charm to it as a work directed by a deracinated kraut who seems to have next to nil interest in the horror genre as a whole. Centering around one of Lommel's self-proclaimed favorite themes—childhood trauma and how such traumas haunt one for the rest of their lives—*The Boogeyman* is also a somewhat cryptically personal work for the director as a man who came of age in war torn Germany, stating of his less than ideal birth in Berlin in December 1944, "It was 20 degrees below zero. My mother wrapped me in a carpet because she had no blanket. Around us other babies were dying. Yet I survived, and ever since I always seem to find myself in the eye of the storm." After meeting and living next door to

Elvis Presley, whose rock music ‘liberated’ the director and inspired rebellion in him, Lommel ran away from home at the mere age of 16 in what would be a life-changing and somewhat tragic experience that created an irreparable rift with the filmmaker’s father. As revealed in an interview in June 2012 conducted by Rory MacLean for the Goethe Institute London, Lommel’s father Ludwig Manfred Lommel—a rather famous German radio comedian who was described as the ‘German Charlie Chaplin’ and who was quite popular during the Weimar and National Socialist periods—called the cops on his son after he ran away from home, and when the angst-ridden 16 year old found out, he telephoned him and yelled “How could you do this to me, you old Nazi?” in what would be the last words he ever said to his father. In *The Boogeyman*, the themes of childhood trauma and a nasty irreparable break with one’s parents are explored in a most brutal supernatural fashion in its depiction of a killer mirror, thus expressing in a cryptic way the pain that Lommel undoubtedly laments on via the unlikely form of seemingly nonsensical cult horror.

As depicted at the beginning of *The Boogeyman*, when they were mere tiny tots, siblings Willy and Lacey watched through an outside window their masochistic and alcohol-addled mother having sadomasochistic sex with her degenerate boyfriend, and when the two loony lovers finally noticed the two child peeping toms, the boyfriend savagely gagged and tied the little boy to a bed. In a Michael Myers-esque revenge, Willy stabbed to death his mother’s boyfriend via a butcher knife after his sister untied him from the bed. Unfortunately, aside from being the one who untied her brother, thus acting as an involuntary accessory to the bloody butchering of her mother’s batshit crazy boy toy, Lacey actually witnessed the killing in a mirror and the reflection will prove to haunt her—both literally and figuratively—for the rest of her life. Flash forward twenty years later and Lacey (Suzanna Love) is married to a cop named Jake (Ron James) and has a young son of her own. Unfortunately, Willy (played by Suzanna Love’s real-life brother Nicholas Love) did not grow up to be as ‘well adjusted’ as his sis as he has been a mute ever since he committed the murder and now does menial labor at a farm owned by his Aunt Helen (Felicite Morgan) where his sister and her family also lives. Since Lacey has never gotten over the night that her brother brutally murdered her lecherous mother’s boyfriend, she has horrible nightmares where she is stalked with a knife and tied to a bed like her bro Willy once was, so, at the recommendation of her loving hubby Jake, she decides to consult a psychiatrist named Dr. Warren (John Carradine, whose son David Carradine would later star in Lommel’s *Absolute Evil – Final Exit* (2009)) so she can deal with and confront her irrational fears. After speaking with the psychiatrist and going through hypnosis, Lacey, with the help of her husband, decides to go visit her mother, who she has not seen since the murder, as well as the flashback-inducing house where she grew up in that has haunted her for entire life.

THE BOOGEYMAN

When Lacey arrives at her quaint childhood home, she and her husband Jake talk with the new family living there and everything seems alright until the young mother sees the reflection of her mother's dead boyfriend in a mirror upstairs and panics, smashing the mirror in the process with a chair. Rather absurdly, Jake has the bright idea to keep the broken mirror (with the consent of the owners, of course), including all the shattered glass, in an attempt to get his wife to get over her fear and the two leave to go back home with it, but a piece of the mirror is left behind, which glows red and, in no time, an unseen metaphysical force brutally slaughters the entire family living in Lacey's old childhood home. Meanwhile, seemingly autistic Willy begins to paint all the mirrors at his family's farmhouse black and after seeing his reflection in a mirror in a barn, he strangles a female friend of his sister who tries to get in his pants, almost killing her in the process. When Lacey and her hubby get home, Jake puts all the pieces of the mirror back together, but a couple pieces get loose, ultimately resulting in the darkly romantic deaths of a teenage couple on a nearby beach after Lacey's son's shoe, which contains a shard of glass from the mirror, shines in the teen lovers' direction. When Jake finally becomes convinced the mirror is evil, they have the family priest, Father Reilly (Llewelyn Thomas), come by to see if an evil spirit haunts the broken mirror and sure enough, Lacey and Willy's Uncle Ernest (Bill Rayburn) is killed after taking a flying pitchfork to the throat and not long after, Aunt Helen is found strangled to death with a hose wrapped around her corpse. After Father Reilly touches the broken mirror, it turns the entire room red and a shard of glass magically flies off, landing on Lacey's eye and she becomes possessed with the sinister spirit of her slutty mommy's dead lover. Eventually, husband Jake is burned up when the shard of glass covering Lacey's eye projects a neo green laser beam onto him and Father Reilly, taking a lesson from *The Exorcist*, pulls out a cheap toy-like crucifix and waves it in the possessed pretty girl's face in a lackluster attempt to exorcise the S&M-inclined evil spirit from her soul. Luckily, Father Reilly manages to get the sinister shard of glass out of Lacey's possessed peeper, but he dies as a result of his effort, and Willy and Jake throw the rest of the smashed looking glass in a well. In the end, Willy finally gets over his acute autism and begins to talk again for the first time in twenty years and he and his sister visit the tombstone of their deceased aunt and uncle, but a red shard of glass shines in the cemetery as they leave, thus hinting at a *The Boogeyman* sequel.

Indeed, thus far there have been two sequels to *The Boogeyman*, including *The Boogeyman 2* (1980), which was co-directed (albeit by Ulli Lommel), and *Return of the Boogeyman* (1994) aka *Boogeyman 3*, for which Lommel was an uncredited co-director and for which about half of the film was comprised of recycled footage from the original *The Boogeyman* film, not to mention the insertion of a bathtub murder scene from the director's cult horror flick *Brain-Waves* (1983) aka *Shadow of Death*. On top of that, Lommel released a 'direc-

tor's cut' of *The Boogeyman 2* in 2003 entitled *Boogeyman 2: The Directors Cut* aka *Bogeyman 2 – Redux* with approximately 90% of the footage being from the original *The Boogeyman*, in between glaring shot-on-video pseudo-documentary footage of the director pretending to talk to police in a room that is clearly his own house (as Lommel revealed in an interview, most of the original cut of *The Boogeyman 2* was actually shot at his house!). Interestingly, in a recent interview, Lommel revealed that junky queer 'literary outlaw' William S. Burroughs helped him edit *The Boogeyman*, so one can only wonder if the novelist's 'cut-up technique' had an influence in the editing of *Return of the Boogeyman* and *Boogeyman 2: The Directors Cut* as they are both essentially rearrangements of *The Boogeyman*, albeit with a couple (and mostly pointless) added scenes. Lommel is also apparently working a remake currently titled *The Boogeyman: Grail of Evil*, as well as a fourth film entitled *Boogeyman 4D*, or as the auteur revealed in an interview with *Soiled Sinema* a couple months ago, "Next year I'm making **BOOGEYMAN 4D** - why 4D? It plays in the fourth dimension, Sci-Fi /Adventure genre and not R-rated but PG-13. Budget \$24 million to be filmed in 3D," thus proving that *The Boogeyman* never really dies. Maybe it is because I grew up near the area where it was filmed and I appreciate Lommel's 'outsider' perspective on Americans, but *The Boogeyman* is a quasi-guilty pleasure of mine and certainly a work I regard in much more esteem than overrated supernatural schlock like *The Amityville Horror*, even if it not up to par with the aberrant aesthetic perniciousness of the auteur filmmaker's Teutonic serial killer masterpiece *Tenderness of the Wolves*. In a recent interview, Lommel confessed, "I think that art can heal" and while making *The Boogeyman* might not have refurbished the filmmaker's torn soul, it might have allowed him to exorcise some demons relating to his traumatic childhood as a war baby of a defeated and destroyed nation and his lack of reconciliation with his father, on top of the fact that the film made him rather wealthy. As arty and atmospheric as genre films from the late-1970s/early-1980s of the supernatural horror sort get, *The Boogeyman* is one of the only films to get me in the Halloween spirit this October.

-Ty E

OLIVIA

OLIVIA

Ulli Lommel (1983)

Before becoming an object of hateful ridicule and scorn amongst mostly virginal American fanboys who know nothing of the filmmaker's previous career with international cinematic greats like Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Andy Warhol, German-born auteur Ulli Lommel (Adolf and Marlene, Cocaine Cowboys) directed a couple Hitchcockian thrillers with his then-wife Suzanna Love (Hair, A Smile in the Dark), a Dupont/Standard Oil heiress, after the huge success of his cult slasher flick *The Boogeyman* (1980). Interestingly, the best of Lommel's 1980s Hitchcock-esque erotic-thrillers, *Olivia* (1983) aka *A Taste of Sin* aka *Prozzie* aka *Beyond the Bridge* aka *Mad Night* aka *Double Jeopardy* aka *Faces of Fear*, was made on a whim while Lommel was getting ready to shoot *Boogeyman 2* in Arizona and was shocked to discover that the 'London Bridge' was staring back at him across the Colorado River. Indeed, as Lommel would learn upon doing some research, the original 1831 London Bridge, which spanned the River Thames in London, England, was dismantled stone-by-stone in 1967 and reconstructed in Lake Havasu City, Arizona in 1971. Seeing this as the perfect opportunity to make a film ostensibly set in London and using the bridge as a sort of metaphorical image for a film about a woman who decides to change her identity and move to another country, Lommel decided to temporarily ditch *Boogeyman 2* and use the film crew for that film to shoot what would ultimately evolve into his nihilistic psychosexual thriller *Olivia*. Like most of Lommel's films, *Olivia* is a work that dwells in the misery of the past, especially in relation to a tragic event during childhood, and how it affects the future, which is certainly a personal theme for the filmmaker.

Born in 1944 in the chaos of the Second World War to Ludwig Manfred Lommel—a popular German comedian and radio personality who was sometimes described as the 'German Charlie Chaplin'—Lommel ultimately became a prodigal son and decided to rebel against his father (who disapproved of his son's dream to become an actor), so he quit school and ran away from him to seek a new and exciting life. When his concerned father called the police to help search for his son, Lommel telephoned him and yelled, "How could you do this to me, you old Nazi?" in what would ultimately be the last words he ever spoke to his papa as the comedian died three years later. Naturally, Lommel's unresolved break with his father would have an imperative influence on his work as a filmmaker and as he would later remark in an interview with Rory MacLean of Goethe Institute London regarding the importance of art: "Within every one of us is a painter, a dancer, a storyteller. I believe that if every individual's artistic side was nurtured at school, it could channel much frustration and anger, and change the way people live their lives. Change even the way a potential serial killer might have lived his life. Maybe this is just an illusion. But I really do

believe that art heals.” Indeed, it is probably for the better that Lommel never became a sadistic serial killer and instead opted for directing one of the greatest kraut psycho-killer films ever made, *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe*. A stylish reworking of Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* (1958) inspired by the shadowy yet kaleidoscopic and mirror-obsessed camera work of Fassbinder’s cinematographer Michael Ballhaus (who, like Lommel, would leave Germany and make Hollywood his new home), *Olivia* is the unsettling and equally unhinged story of a young woman who witnessed the brutal slaying of her prostitute mother while a young child and now hears voices from said dead prostitute mother telling her to kill. Trapped in a nightmarish marriage with an abusive rapist husband who will not let her get a job, the eponymous antihero decides to start prostituting herself around the London Bridge and in between killing unsuspecting Johns, she falls in love with a successful American man, thus ushering her attempt to fully reinvent herself and begin a new life.

While just a wee little girl, London native *Olivia*—the bastard child of an American and an English hooker—witnesses her working-girl mother (Bibbe Hansen) being brutally murdered at the hands of an American soldier (Nicholas Love) during a game of bondage gone terribly wrong. Flash forward 15 years later, *Olivia* (Suzanna Love) is now in figurative bondage as the unhappy housewife a control-freak, rape-obsessed husband who won’t even let her get a job as a mere bar maid. To pass the time, *Olivia* looks with almost envy as local streetwalkers peddle their fleshy goods around the London Bridge and after hearing voices from her dead mother persuading her to peddle her puss, the unemployed housewife becomes a hooker as well, but she is more interested in the metaphysical side of blood and mayhem than mere material cash-money. After brutally murdering a strangle fellow with a bizarre mannequin fetish straight out of *Maniac* (1980) starring Joe Spinell, *Olivia* goes on a random ‘date’ with a charming and considerate American gentleman named Mike Grant (Robert Walker Jr.) and the two make passionate love. Indeed, for the first time in her decidedly deplorable existence, *Olivia* feels true love and empathy, thereupon giving her a totally new outlook on life. Of course, all hell breaks loose when *Olivia*’s husband discovers his wife’s affair with the quasi-ugly American. While attempting to murder Mike, *Olivia*’s husband falls to his death from the London Bridge, or so the viewer assumes. Traumatized by the series of events, *Olivia* runs away from her true love Mike into the night and eventually starts a new life by moving to America and taking on a new identity as a blonde and sophisticated quasi-feminist babe. Flash forward four years later after that deadly night in London, Mike spots what seems to be *Olivia*’s doppelganger working as a successful Arizona realtor. Like Jimmy Stewart in *Vertigo*, Mike obsessively stalks the *Olivia*-look-alike and tries his damndest to get her to open up to him, which she eventually does with a bit of reluctance. Eventually, *Olivia* reveals her true identity to Mike and the two make passionate love all around the latter’s

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home. In a tragic twist, Olivia's husband is magically revealed to be alive after all and he wastes no time in brutally murdering Mike and subsequently raping his wife once again. In the end, Olivia gets the strength to murder her equally homicidal hubby, but nothing will repair the damage that has been done her fragile mind and forsaken soul.

In an interview featured on the Image Entertainment dvd release of *Olivia*, auteur Ulli Lommel states: "I think the big difference between Hitchcock and the way I make movies is definitely... Hitchcock has the audience in mind and I, for my films, never have the audience in mind." Indeed, *Olivia* certainly concludes too cynically and depressingly for the average American viewer as a film that is ultimately more nasty and nihilistic than Lommel's German New Cinema horror masterpiece *The Tenderness of Wolves*. In fact, *Olivia* was such a personal work for Lommel that he ended up hiring and firing eight cinematographers before deciding to become director of photography himself. While going on the record as stating that *Olivia* is his "most favorite movie of the 80s," the film would ultimately bankrupt the auteur and probably help sire the 'slippery slope' that plagued the rest of his filmmaking career. Indeed, as a man who went so far as directing a scene featuring Robert Walker Jr. of *Easy Rider* (1969) fame performing cunnilingus on his wife, Lommel was certainly not screwing around when he made *Olivia*. As to the reason why the auteur has made a filmmaking career out of depicting debased and deranged individuals in the tradition of Peter Lorre's character from Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), Lommel stated, "Since my childhood I've felt uneasy with the demonizing of an enemy. In my work I find myself standing up for the outsider, the accused. Again and again I want to understand their perspective," and *Olivia* does just that as a rare cinematic work that dares to empathize with a female psycho-killer. Indeed, while not exactly an unsung masterpiece, *Olivia* certainly goes farther than Hitchcock in terms of psychosexual sickness and makes the films of Brian De Palma seem like soft-core Hitchcockian celluloid bubblegum filled with artificial flavoring. In other words, *Olivia* was clearly directed by a troubled man with a lot of pent up hatred, acute internal pain, and a seemingly strong fetish for sadomasochism and bondage. Not unlike Fassbinder's early masterpiece *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), *Olivia* is an obscured autobiography of the transsexualized sort featuring an antihero who, like Lommel himself, is plagued by a childhood trauma relating to the parent of the same sex, so she tries to move to a new country and "assumes another identity hoping the future will be better than the past" (Lommel's words, not mine). While *Olivia* certainly did not rid herself of her inner demons and achieve the American dream upon moving to the United States, Lommel did not seem to do half bad as he outlived both his masters, Fassbinder and Warhol, and can at least say he has lived a totally singular life as a man born at a time when most of the babies of his nation were starving to death. Arguably Lommel's greatest post-Warhol flick, *Olivia* and the direc-

tor's other Hitchcockian flick *BrainWaves* (1983) aka *Shadow of Death* certainly make welcome exceptions to the banality of slasher schlock and swill typical of the 1980s.

-Ty E

STRANGERS IN PARADISE
STRANGERS IN PARADISE

Ulli Lommel (1984)

Without a doubt, the musical is my least favorite film genre, in part due its similar conventions with the fundamentally artless film classification of pornography. After all, both film formats typically feature a minor plot and/or storyline as a weak backbone for holding together what is designed for cheap thrills. Of course, my main reasons for loathing musicals so much are their overall aesthetic unpleasantness for the eyes and ears as a source of sickening sensory overload, coupled with grating second hand embarrassment for the cartoonish performers with their superficial shit-eating grins and distinctly deranged puffer dancing, so naturally I never thought I would find even the remotest bit of merit in a melodious sing-a-long movie by Ulli Lommel (*Adolf and Marlene*, *Cocaine Cowboys*) of all people. Undoubtedly one of his most ambitious and personal works, Lommel's politically-charged yet unpretentious sci-fi musical *Strangers in Paradise* (1984) aka *Rock America* aka *The Hypnotist* is a film about a talented yet somewhat contemptuous hypnotist named Dr. Jonathan Sage (played by Ulli Lommel himself) who has himself cryogenically frozen after Adolf Hitler (also played by Lommel) offers him the job of providing his marvelous mesmerist skills to use against enemies of the Third Reich. About 40-years later, Mr. Sage is defrosted by a group of rabid and conspiring Reaganites who hope to utilize his hypnotizing talents as a magical means to radically reform socially subversive types, thereupon turning homos into heteros, punks into preps, prostitutes into puritans, etc. Totally ignorant of contemporary societal trends, habits, and mores due to his prolonged hibernation, Sage is ill-equipped to deal with technology of the modern world and soon, even he – a talented magus – is brought under the nefarious narcotizing spell of television. As he is told by a friend shortly after his reawakening that in regard to TV, “there was once a time when it imitated life, now life imitates TV” as everyone now seems to be a groveling slave of the videodrome. But as Sage states quietly immediately after awaking from his solitary slumber, quoting Edgar Allan Poe, “all that we see or seem... is just a dream within a dream.” Comprised of a variety musical numbers written by Moonlight Drive aka William Pettyjohn (a The Doors cover band) that schizophrenically shift between chic “progressive” music (rock ‘n’ roll psychedelic, punk, new wave, etc.) and “backwards” traditional music (country, folk, etc.), *Strangers in Paradise* is a lighthearted tribute to the mongrolized kultur and people of a country that Ulli Lommel would eventually call home.

The son of Ludwig Manfred Lommel – a popular comedic performer and radio personality who was once regarded as the “Charlie Chaplin of Germany” and whose popularity reached its peak during the Nazi era – Ulli Lommel certainly does not share his father's political persuasion, especially when one considers that the protagonist of *Strangers in Paradise* not only refuses a prestigious posi-

tion utilizing his talents for the benefit of National Socialist Germany, but goes as far as having himself frozen, henceforth literally and figuratively freezing his life and gambling with his fate. As someone who sponsored the building of a veteran home for disabled German soldiers and helped form a relief organization for Germanic Silesians who had been expelled from Poland by communists after World War II, Ludwig Lommel was certainly not someone who was ashamed for being a purported 'Nazi' and patriot of sorts. As for Ulli Lommel – a Teuton who somehow managed to rid himself of most of his German accent less than a decade after emigrating to the United States and who has made a number of films attacking Nazism (Adolf and Marlene, Strangers in Paradise, Eva Braun: Her Life with Adolf Hitler) – he is not exactly a man who is loyal to the Fatherland like his national hero father (who was awarded the Officer's Cross, or Merit Cross 1st Class during his 65th birthday). In Lommel's 'lost-masterpiece' Adolf and Marlene, German traitor Marlene Dietrich (played by Fassbinder Superstar Margit Carstensen) gives Uncle Adolf (played by Kurt Raab; star of Lommel's 1973 horror masterpiece The Tenderness of Wolves) hell, but in Strangers in Paradise, Lommel as Jonathan Sage – who initially is happy to turn gay Californians into heterosexuals, but has a change of heart after realizing that boi's just wanna have fun too – unleashes a metaphysical rampage of the counter-cultural music kind against Reagan's warriors, turning yuppie yahoos into flaming and feisty fairy faggots via mass communal broadcasted hypnosis with his TV remote, which acts as a postmodern magic wand of sorts. Needless to say, most of the charm associated with Strangers in Paradise is derived from its absurdly anachronistic (even at the time at its release) after sitting in obscurity for nearly 30 years. Featuring songs that rip-off/pay tribute to The Beatles, The Doors, Devo, X, and Siouxsie and the Banshees, among others, Strangers in Paradise is a diverting and unconventionally delightful, if determinedly dated depiction of the generational pop culture and political wars in America (and Britain) as seen through the startlingly silly yet strangely spellbinding and even unsettling personal gaze of deracinated Teuton Ulli Lommel.

Although I am probably not the best person to confide in regarding such films, I can state without any hesitation that Lommel's Strangers in Paradise – a wildly wacky and tacky wayward work of Americanized melodic kraut comedy – is easily one of the most underrated and overlooked musicals of the 1980s as a sort of The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) for alienated suburbanite punks of that era and certainly more entertaining and imaginative than related works like The Apple (1980), Can't Stop the Music (1980), and Footloose (1984). A piece of curiously corny camp for the entire family, Strangers in Paradise is an accidental indictment of the petty non-problems of Americans from the 1980s, where jock vs. nerd and carny Christian vs. suburban punk dueled it out in a totally Hollywood contrived battle of the American dimwits, while citizens from Soviet bloc countries were waiting in line for their weekly bread and egg rations. Featuring

STRANGERS IN PARADISE

actual stock footage of Germany and London in ruins during the Second World War juxtaposed with paranoid Americans partying in bombshells, *Strangers in Paradise* does a good enough job itself, if inadvertently so, of illustrating the comparisons between Hitler and the Third Reich with Ronnie Reagan and the American materialistic “right-wing” – which Lommel makes quite blatant with his musical number “The Same Old Song and Dance,” especially with the lyrics from the concluding verse, “it’s the same old tune played in 4/4 time from 1939” – is an absurd one, but then again, maybe the director merely wanted to get back at Hollywood for defaming his nation. Say what you will about big H, but at least he was no prude nor posturing puritan, but instead a proponent of the arts, culture and sexual promiscuity (if Aryan children were sired as a result, of course), unlike failed actor Ronnie Reagan.

Incidentally, the real Adolf Hitler did have a hypnotist friend named Erik Jan Hanussen who also was a mentalist, occultist, astrologer, and all-around con-man that helped teach his Führer friend how to win over the German people via contrived dramatic performance. Despite claiming to be a dapper Danish aristocrat, Hanussen (real name Hermann Steinschneider) was in reality a lower-middle-class Moravian Jew whose father was a caretaker at a synagogue, yet that did not stop him from earning the friendship of the Sturmabteilung (SA) brownshirts. Hanussen has been dramatized in a number of films, including *Hanussen* (1955) starring and directed by O.W. Fischer, *Hanussen* (1988) starring Klaus Maria Brandauer and directed by István Szabó, *Invincible* (2001) starring Tim Roth and directed by Werner Herzog, and *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* (2005) featuring the voices of Toshio Furu-kawa and Troy Baker. Needless to say, *Strangers in Paradise* is quite different from these films and only makes minor allusions to Hanussen, not least of all because Ulli Lommel undoubtedly modeled his character Jonathan Sage as a sort of fantasy self and sci-fi alter-ego of the most imaginary persuasion who is contra to his own father in just about every way, aside from his expertise of entertaining. Interestingly, at one point in the film, Sage remarks that he wished they had left him frozen, especially since the character undergoes artificial hibernation around the same time Ulli Lommel was born. Like a mix between Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* (1940) minus the preachy cheap talk and Brian De Palma’s merry yet macabre musical *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974), *Strangers in Paradise* is a ‘cute’ (for lack of a better word) and corny escapist science fiction rockfest that offers a tad bit more fresh food for thought than your average Hollywood sing-a-long flick, without resorting to the sort of Teutonophobia that prevalent in the works of Mel Brooks. Incidentally, according to Ulli Lommel’s website, the German-born filmmaker is planning a “Hollywood Musical about young people dedicated to changing the world” entitled “SCHOKO BEARS ‘N’ YUMMIE CATS” that, to paraphrase, includes, “among other important changes, introducing alternative candy and chocolate, without all the poisonous

fats and sugars” and will be a ”film in 3-D for the entire family with 10 song-and-dance numbers.” Although I don’t know how I feel about a film that sounds like a kitschy Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory (1971) clone for vegans, I will give Lommel the benefit of the doubt that it will at least be as patently peculiar and personal as his lost cult musical Strangers in Paradise; a work that indubitably needs serious reexamination by cinephiles who relish in the cinematically psychotronic.

-Ty E

ANIMAL LOVE
ANIMAL LOVE

Ulrich Seidl (1996)

I don't have much in common with most people, but one thing I do have in common with them is my love of dogs. Indeed, not unlike many people, I prefer man's best friend to man because, while dogs may lick each others' asses and smell rather repugnant when they are wet, canines typically tend to make better company and are certainly less full of shit, even if they tend to shit a lot, yet the decidedly daunting avant-garde documentary *Tierische Liebe* (1995) aka *Animal Love* directed by Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl (*Hundstage* aka *Dog Days*, *Import/Export*) certainly made me second guess my relationship with man's best friend. Seidl has directed orgy scenes featuring unsimulated sex between fat middle-age people (i.e. *Dog Days*), as well as of rather rotund 50-year-old women looking in awe at young Kenyan hustlers' dongs (*Paradies: Liebe* aka *Paradise: Love*), but all of this seems fairly tame to the pathological quasi-bestiality of *Animal Love*. Poetically complimented by none other than Bavarian wild man auteur Werner Herzog with the following words, "...Never have I looked so directly into Hell," *Animal Love* features an eclectically eccentric collection of Viennese untermenschen suburbanites who have given up on searching for love in their fellow humans and instead have found their soul mates in furry yet highly domesticated members of another species. A subjectively directed experimental documentary (Seidl does not believe in objectivity when it comes to documentary film) of raw and aesthetically rancid realism that is so bizarre and preternatural that it takes on a surreal form, *Animal Love* is a rude celluloid wake-up call that is as equally disturbing as it is hilarious. Described by auteur Seidl in his official 'Filmmaker's Statement' as follows, "The original idea for the movie was quite radical. I imagined a film in which a man or a woman would do with their pets the things that married couples do: talk, eat, cuddle, care for each other and sleep together. And in the whole movie there would be absolutely no communication between people," *Animal Love* does indeed feature people talking to one another, albeit with a certain glacial coldness and impenetrability that one would expect from someone in a comatose state. A sort of aesthetically abhorrent Aryan take on the grotesque realism of eccentric Hebraic artists like photographer Diane Arbus and filmmaker Harmony Korine, *Animal Love* features such an unflattering postmodern depiction of Uncle Adolf's homeland that it would probably make for more effective anti-Aryan propaganda than the hook-nosed Heeb caricatures in Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* of the Jews. Indeed, *Animal Love* even makes the contrived antics of the Viennese Aktionists seem rather tame by comparison, but then again, Seidl's work features real people and not suicidal art fags.

Animal Love begins innocently enough with a mangy young man lovingly wrestling with his dog and then taking said mangy young man taking his dog

for a walk and training his furry friend to heel and whatnot, but the aesthetically aberrant documentary soon gets ugly when dubious people on the fringes of society begin popping up and doing things with their pets that would even make a monkey-lover like Michael Jackson cringe. Before that though, the viewer is briefly introduced to the insanity of animal rescue centers, which are notorious for making outrageous demands for a person to adopt a dog, with a pet owner—an old gay queen who has a violent dog and equally irritable, old boyfriend—featured in *Animal Love* reading the following adoption ad from a newspaper: “the decision to acquire a dog must be thought over carefully, it must not be made on a whim. You must be prepared to spend all of your free time with your dog; barely ever coming home during the week...and going away on the weekends – is not an option! You have to have regular working hours, so that the dog never has to be alone for more than 8 hours at a time. The dog needs an established and familiar place...of his very own in the apartment.” Rather depressingly, most of the unsettlingly ‘idiosyncratic’ subjects featured in the documentary can easily pass the petty prerequisites named in the pet adoption ad.

Without any doubt, two of the most pathetic people featured in *Animal Love* are two young and swarthy drifters, one of whom claims to have been born in a Viennese dumpster. In one of the various schemes to con people out of money so they do not starve to death, the seemingly half-braindead dumpster-baby goes around with his pet bunny at a train station and preys on peoples’ emotions by asking them if they will give him money so he can ostensibly buy a bunny cage. The two drifters live in what looks like the bowels of a post-apocalyptic third world basement amongst a number of rats, which crawl around their furniture, but that does not stop one of the men from becoming a sort of avant-garde exhibitionist and masturbating amongst such filth for the cameraman (notably, Austrian auteur Michael Glawogger of *Workingman’s Death* (2005) and *Whores’ Glory* (2011) was responsible for acting as cinematographer for most of the film). Eventually, a man who claims to be the stationmaster busts the two drifters at the train station for soliciting and ‘fencing’ and they all get into a quasi-philosophical debate about the inability of longtime panhandlers to find real jobs. The two bums also have a philosophical debate about the nature of the word ‘cunt’ and how one of the dude’s ex-girlfriend slapped him in the face for using the word in what was supposed to be a complimentary fashion. In what seems to be old versions of the young bums, two borderline elderly dog lovers/homosexual queens read pet classifieds ads and bicker about their incapacity to pay their electric and phone bills, among various other debts. Meanwhile, a bunch of old people in a retirement home receive bunny rabbits to play with in their hospital beds, but they seem less than interested in their new furry friends as they all look like they have dementia. Unquestionably, two of the most repellent characters in *Animal Love* are a swinger couple that look like they are in their mid-30s but describe themselves as, “a loving, attractive couple, ages 25

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and 30. SHE: flexible, lingerie-loving, looking for another nice couple between 18 and 35...for lust-filled partner-switching games, especially gentle cuddling, French style, and picture-taking." Naturally, being swingers, the couple does not mind having sex on camera and of course they do it doggy style for the viewer's viewing displeasure.

On the other side of town, a middle-age alcoholic with a huge gut gives his girlfriend an ultimatum that she must get rid of all her pets or else he will stay with his other girlfriend. The girlfriend makes the claim that he 'keeps her like a pet' and the aggressive, if not slow-witted and less than mobile, alcoholic retorts by stating, "I don't even want to come back to you" and "if you think I want to fuck you, I'll fuck you long and hard." Of course, *Animal Love* would not be complete without a full funeral ceremony for a little dog who the owner pays sentimental tribute to by saying, "You were our little girl," as if his child had just died. In what is one of the more humorous segments of the documentary, a married middle-aged couple that look like human pugs take turns using their pet pug as a source of therapy and solace, bashing their partner while talking to the little dog. The wife even offers the pug, whose name is 'Mopsi', a 'puggy-girl' so he can have pug pups, so long as her hubby is kicked out of the house. In a scene that might scare Israelis more than other viewers, a dead dog is cremated in an oven by an Aryan cremator. Rather strangely, the most attractive and wealthy, if not past her prime, woman in *Animal Love* is also the one who comes closest to committing actual bestiality. On top of dancing with her husky dog to Italian opera music and reading it love letters from her admirers, the somewhat unhinged would-be-aristocrat bourgeois cougar French kisses her doggy while declaring her love to him while rolling around with the carnal canine on her bed. In one of the more disturbing scenes towards the end of the film, a man that owns a pack of Afghan Hounds—one of the oldest yet dumbest recognizable dog breeds in the world—shows the viewer how he forces one of the dogs to run on a treadmill with a rope fastened around its neck for what is the equivalent of 10km (over 6.2 miles) a day. In what is one of the anti-Heimat scenes shot in cinema history, a less than homely woman of the sexually ambiguous and racially Alpine sort (i.e. short, stocky, round-headed, etc.) sits in front of a wall-sized picture of the Austrian Central Alps and stares into space with the blankest of stares, thus acting in stark contrast to the idealized Austria of the past, which has been eclipsed by the Americanized post-industrial and socially dysfunctional Austria of today. Indeed, while watching *Animal Love*, the viewer can almost imagine to themselves seeing Austrian auteur Ulrich Seidl stating to himself sarcastically, "There's No Place Like Home...There's No Place Like Home," as he directed his countrymen for this deranging document of Viennese decay.

Indubitably, one of the major themes of *Animal Love* is the social-retarding effect that technology and urbanization have had on humanity, with the Austrian zoophiles featured in the documentary being unintentionally entertaining,

if not decidedly depressing, products of an abstract and man made society that is at odds with nature and even man's own organic essence. Aside from man himself, man's best friend is the second most foremost victim of urban domestication, so it is only natural that when humans get fed up with other humans, they turn to dogs, who almost seem embarrassed by their owners in Seidl's film. With its curious collection of subjects, including two quasi-beatnik bums, an old queen couple, distastefully wanton white trash swingers, and a pseudo-aristocratic husky-humping over-the-hill sexpot, *Animal Love* demonstrates that misanthropy and disillusionment with modern life have reached all parts of postmodern Occidental society. In one rather insightful, if not still hilarious, scene, the white trash swinger dude goes on an anti-technocratic rant, stating, "We destroy nature with our own hands; at some point nature will take revenge and then we humans will be the losers. The animals will be the ones to survive. Not us. We say we're the crowning touch to creation, but what are we really? Nothing. We're no better than the chimpanzee in the jungle, the hyena in the Savannah...or the deer, stag and hare in the forest. Whatever. We extinguish our own living space with our so-called borders, our so-called morality. In our arrogance we call the animals' way of living immoral. Actually they have a higher moral code than we humans." Indeed, while the degenerate swinger is clearly out of his mind and a loser who is just trying to rationalize his animal-like existence of humping like a rabbit and living in squalor, he has a point. With its typically Seidl-esque, carefully stylized head-on shots and various scenes of subjects reading off dialogue from paper, it is sometimes hard to discern what percentage of *Animal Love* is pure and unadulterated documentary and what is carefully constructed by the documentarian, but what is quite obvious is that Seidl is a patent pessimist and major misanthrope, though who and what he hates and why is never clear. Of course, judging by his treatment of the Austrian bourgeois in his *Paradies aka Paradise Trilogy* (2012), it is clear that Seidl is no more critical of the pup-penetrating lumpenproles than he is of the upper-middle class. An artful ethnology in the postmodern age where even dogs suffer pathologies from living an inorganic, abstract existence that is controlled by technology and rigid routine, *Animal Love* ultimately demonstrates you do not have to travel to the deadly jungles of South America like Werner Herzog did in the 1970s to encounter captivating, if not somewhat debasing, human phenomena.

-Ty E

PARADISE: LOVE
PARADISE: LOVE

Ulrich Seidl (2012)

Austria's answer to Harmony Korine (of course, he's been around much longer), Austrian aberrant-garde arthouse auteur Ulrich Seidl (*Animal Love* aka *Tierische Liebe*, *Import/Export*) has made a career out of creating curious *cinéma vérité* and ridiculously raunchy realist works of the trashy tragicomic sort about the less than flattering aspects and individuals of his post-Nazi nation, but with his more recent films, he has taken his countrymen out of his country, thereupon depicting a globalized world of exploiters and the exploited and slaves and masters ripe with eccentricity and absurdity. With *Import/Export* (2009) – a work about a Ukrainian nurse who goes to the West to find a better life and an Austrian man who heads to Eastern Europe to attempt the same thing – Seidl quasi-pornographically demonstrates in a highly intimate and indelicate manner that both ends of Europe have degenerated into vapid, culture-less cuckolds of capitalism, albeit with the German-speaking world being in a superior, if not more culturally senile and stale, situation where they can buy down-and-out Slavs for pennies. Naturally, Seidl takes things further with *Paradise: Love* (2012) aka *Paradies: Liebe* – the first chapter in the filmmaker's "Paradise Trilogy" (three films that focus on three different women from the same family) which was co-written by the filmmaker's seemingly equally cynical and salacious wife Veronika Franz, someone who has indubitably added a feminine touch to these cinematic works – as he finally travels to the dark continent, most specifically Kenya, a place where apparently lonely and sexually repressed European women go to patronize young black bucks who are young enough to be their sensual sweethearts, but for a price that literally could support a whole family. An innately anti-erotic realist tale in an exotic land about the pros, but mostly cons of globalization, multiculturalism, and so-called post-colonialism, *Paradise: Love* is a uniquely ugly film ironically set at a beautiful beach resort about our miserably materialist times where bought flesh of the foreigner kind makes for a seedy substitute for organic love of the domestic kind. A potent antidote to the creepy 'cougar' craze that somewhat recently molested the Occidental world via the always horny and sexually dysfunctional folks in hollyweird, as well the recent phenomenon of young African Negroes swindling extremely lonely, desperate, and naïve European women out of their money with hollow promises of love and exotic primitive potency, *Paradise: Love* is a radical and risqué reminder as to why the nonwhite world no longer respects its now-impotent and dwindling ex-masters, even if a rather dubious 'relationship' is still in place, albeit in a determinedly degenerating way.

Contemporary Austria is certainly not the world Uncle Adolf envisioned, as mongoloid Aryan dudes with Down syndrome can be seen riding around in bumper cars at amusement parks and 50-year-old Nordic mothers see Kenya –

an East African land of Negroes – as the perfect place to take a vacation, or at least protagonist Teresa (Margarethe Tiesel) of Seidl's *Paradise: Love* does. After all, with all the young men in Austria being seemingly retarded, what is a lonely and lascivious lady supposed to do?! Spurred by a desperate and deep-seated desire to be loved and desired, Teresa cannot help but be flattered when young Kenyan men approach her romantically on her immediate arrival, even if she does not believe they find her sexually attractive and all considering she is somewhat overweight and certainly past her prime in terms of attractiveness, but those blonde goldilocks are virtual gold on the dark continent as they are the sign of a wealthy tourist looking for the ultimate erotic Negro experience. As Teresa learns upon arriving in Kenya, the most important words for a foreigner to learn is the Swahili phrase, "Hakuna Matata" (literally "There are no worries," but more akin to "no problem" in American English), yet the vacation proves to be nothing but problems of the lonely and heartbroken sort as the less than fresh Fräulein confuses prostitution with a genuine relationship and love with fleeting lust. Indeed, Kenya has some slick playas who know a thing or two about how to hustle a horny and romantically hopeless European women into thinking they actually have started a serious relationship of mutual affection, because instead of being blunt gigolos who bugger old babes for an upfront fee, the hustlers merely ask for financial support for family members. After being hassled by a number of brothers whose aggressive hustling methods throw her into a state of hysteria, Teresa finally meets a more mellow and mild-mannered young man named Munga (Peter Kazungu), who despite being married, inevitably cons the Austrian woman into supporting his whole family, but things naturally take a turn for the worse when the charismatic Kenyan's 'hustle and flow' is revealed, thereupon leading to heartbreak of the humiliating sort for the aged Aryaness and a couple blows to the brotha's grill. Unlike her three blonde friends – who know what they are paying for and have no qualms about doing so – Teresa is looking for a little more than a virile brotha' with a big black bush-beater, thus her impenetrable loneliness and age-based lack of self-esteem is all the more compounded by her sordid and steamy but ultimately senseless sabbatical. Naturally, the absurdity of Teresa's quest for love reaches its peak when her friends give her a birthday present in the form of a jolly and bestially gyrating Negro in his birthday suit who shakes his dick for dollars, or as one of lecherous lady's says quite jubilantly, "He is all yours, from head to dick," in what amounts to a determinedly daunting and debasing scenario that is probably the most patently pitiable scene in *Paradise Love*; a film that reminds the viewer that the death of the west will probably not be through genocide, but suicide via materialism and moral and cultural devaluation brought about by capitalism and globalization. Indeed, the flesh-flaunting Kenyan's body is all Teresa's, "from head to dick" for a couple minutes, but his heart and soul remain somewhere else.

Undoubtedly, *Paradise: Love* is not the first film of its kind and certainly

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not the last, but it is undoubtedly the best and most authentic of its kind, especially in context with contemporary times. While Alberto Cavallone's *Le salamandre* (1969) depicted the patronizing and inevitably tragic master-slave dynamic between a racially mixed black-white couple, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) portrayed the forlorn future of a 60-year-old German widow and an illiterate Moroccan in his late-30s, Werner Schroeter's *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* (1980) revealed the deplorable consequences of a lost-in-translation, 'give and take' miscegenation-based relationship, and Laurent Cantet's *Heading South* (2005) presented sexual tourism as a necessity in a deteriorating third world society where sexually and romantically desperate women are able to buy young boy toys they could not purchase elsewhere, *Paradise: Love* manages to pick up on all these taboos themes that have become all the more relevant in our increasingly globalized world where social alienation and isolation is rampant, but executed in a minimalistic and understated manner that is neither preachy nor pretentious but plainly penetrating in a cultural pessimist sort of way that recalls Schopenhauer and Cioran. In fact, throughout *Paradise: Love*, protagonist Teresa attempts at various times during her trip to contact her adult daughter via telephone but receives no response, thus her sorrowful solitude is not merely the result of a lack of sexual and romantic affection, but an all-encompassing heartache and melancholy sparked by the fundamental structure of society itself where everything has a price, but nothing has any intrinsic value, hence people's confusion between sex and love in the modern world. In a sense, *Paradise: Love* is the cinematic adversary of *Age of Consent* (1969) directed by Michael Powell and starring James Mason – a film about an old artist (Mason) who is fatigued by the soulless hustle and bustle of NYC, so he goes to Australia and eventually finds inspiration in the fair-skinned and fecund form of a vulnerable and voluptuous teenage girl (played by a very young and shapely Helen Mirren in her first major role) in what becomes a relatively innocent relationship – as while Seidl's film is a positively pessimistic work that offers no solace from sorrowfulness aside from contrasting scenery and blacker-than-a-Kenyan dark comedy, the older film promises hope for the hopeless. Although not Seidl's greatest cinematic effort, *Paradise: Love* is quite unmistakably one of the director's most accessible works, thus making it a more than worthy introduction for naïve virgins of Austrian cinematic nihilism and negativity of the strikingly compelling, if not corrupting, sort.

-Ty E

IN THE BASEMENT

Ulrich Seidl (2014)

After directing a series of more accessible narrative features, including *Import/Export* (2007) and the highly celebrated 2012 *Paradise* trilogy, Viennese auteur Ulrich Seidl decided to return to his more cinéma-vérité oriented roots with the delightfully debasing and quaintly stylized 80-minute quasi-documentary *Im Keller* (2014) aka *In the Basement*, which has been advertised as “A Film Essay” and was made over a five year period where the auteur searched all over Austria for his country’s most ‘cinema worthy’ basement environments. Undoubtedly, with the Josef Fritzl scandal that emerged in April 2008 where a seemingly normal Austrian old fart was revealed to have kept his own adult daughter imprisoned in a secret corridor in his basement for 24 years and regularly raped her in a seemingly unreal real-life horror scenario that resulted in the birth of seven children and one miscarriage, it is no surprise that Seidl would direct a film about spending time in the most conspicuously quirky and peculiarly personalized of arcane Austrian lairs. It should be noted that in his official statement on his personal website, Seidl wrote regarding the film, “The basement in Austria is a place of free time and the private sphere. Many Austrians spend more time in the basement of their home than in their living room, which often is only for show. In the basement they actually indulge their needs, their hobbies, passions and obsessions. But in our unconscious, the basement is also a place of darkness, a place of fear, a place of human abysses.” For those familiar with Seidl’s somewhat singular oeuvre, *In the Basement* has more or less the same laid-back, free flowing and ostensibly structureless structure as the filmmaker’s early classic *Tierische Liebe* (1995) aka *Animal Love*, albeit it focuses on the basements of eccentric people as opposed to the pets of eccentric people. Of course, just as *Animal Love* does not solely focus on people getting down and dirty with their beloved doggies, *In the Basement* is also set in places that transcend the damp, dark, and dirty abysses in the subject’s homes. As someone that lived in a windowless basement room for a number of years and did many things down there that most people would not do in any place, Seidl’s work had a somewhat more personal resonance for me than any of his other works, though, in terms of domestic absurdity, I do not think I can compare with most of the things the aberrant Austrians do in their secret cellars in the film. Indeed, as I personally discovered, the basement can be a calming and soothing place where one can lose themselves and forget the world exists, but too much time down there can be highly psychologically deleterious as most of the subjects of *In the Basement* insightfully, if seemingly unwittingly, demonstrate. Featuring a soft-spoken so-called gun nut of the philosophically Weiningerian and opera singing sort, a suburban tuba-playing Hitlerite of the dipsomaniac sort who fantasizes about living in Austria’s glorious past from the relative comfort of his meticulously decorated mensch-cave, an elderly reborn

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doll pseudo-mom who keeps a number creepy rubber babies hidden in boxes around her cluttered basement, a rather repulsive female masochist who has a tendency towards getting her husbands stabbed or imprisoned after sustaining one too many brutal beatings, a grotesque fat and bald male slave who regularly has heavy weights applied to his testicles by his equally repugnant mistress-cum-wife while washing dishes and doing other emasculating wifely duties, and a couple more subjects that truly make one wonder if Austria would have been better off if their most infamous prodigal son Uncle Adolf had won the Second World War and erased anti-Aryan figures like Freud from history, Seidl's degrading doc is another almost perniciously potent remainder why the auteur describes himself as a, "director, scriptwriter, producer, voyeur, misanthrope, cynic, social pornographer, blackguard, provocateur, pessimist, and humanist," on his personal website.

Fritz Lang might like lurking in dark corners like his famous filmmaker namesake, but I sincerely doubt that he has a negative view of technology as depicted in *Metropolis* (1927). Herr Lang owns and operates a state of the art underground shooting range where, in between operatic singing sessions and rants about how he would have been good at singing the "great in-between roles" in operas, he plays a sort of unsimulated version of the old school NES game *Duck Hunt* that involves shooting projected images of men with real loaded weapons. As expressed by his strangely eloquently delivered monologue, "A man is always young and trim. For him time stands still. Meanwhile his wife will age. Pointless to express outrage or mourn her youth or shed tears, in truth. For what's left of her days as she helplessly decays while he, with vigor blessed, beats on his heroic chest. He feels again his vigor grow, his manhood stiffens down below. Whenever a lass he spies, a superman, he feels with pride since ere the world began its highest principle is man," Lang has probably spent some time reading Nietzsche and tragic Jewish Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger's magnum opus *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) aka *Sex and Character*. Of course, Lang's friends are no less 'politically incorrect' as demonstrated one man's remark regarding the dubious loyalties of an Austrian-born Turk, "He says, 'I'm Austrian.' I go, 'Sure, but at the European Cup you scream 'Turkiye, Turkiye!' He says, 'Yeah, I'm Austrian, but I'm Turkish.' You see? But he's more Turkish. Even if he was born here." The man also complains of, "100,000 Turkish malcontents screw our girls if they're blondes in miniskirts" and his fat friend concurs, adding, "And they proudly declare, 'We're fucking your women!' As men that agree that Muslims have historically raped the women of their enemies as a form of psychological warfare and make their own women sport burkas because they are "Jealous, insecure men," it is easy to see why these guys would hang at Lang's shooting range, as they seem to expect a race war of sorts, especially with the growth of illegal immigration and rape in Austria. Although Austrians, Lang's friends are merely echoing the thoughts that most honest and normal white men

in the West have. While Seidl's own political views are dubious at best (he contributed a segment to the largely worthless anti-Jörg Haider agitprop piece *Zur Lage: Österreich in sechs Kapiteln* (2002) aka *State of the Nation: Austria in Six Chapters*), he dares to depict Austrian society at its least sanitized, thus making him a sort of heir to Pier Paolo Pasolini, albeit without the gay gaze.

While Josef Ochs—a man that shares the same exact name as an infamous SS-Obersturmführer who was involved in the deportation gypsies and was present in the Berlin Führerbunker during the last dark days of Hitler—does not talk candidly about the Muslim menace like Lang and his comrades, his basement is a sort of lavishly decorated National Socialist shrine that features various framed portraits of Uncle Adolf, a couple models dressed in different uniforms from the Third Reich era, and various other forms of Nazi memorabilia that are probably quite hard to come by in the contemporary Aryan world due to the strict anti-Nazi laws. Of course, Ochs does not just love the Führer, as he also has framed portraits of Richard Wagner, his patron King Ludwig II of Bavaria, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, and various other important Germanic historical figures hanging on his garage wall that demonstrate that he has deep Austro-Teutonic roots and feels like he is part of rich and deep culture and tradition that goes back many centuries. For nearly two decades, Ochs has been taking yearly pilgrimages to Germany to visit the Führer's headquarters at the Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden and, as a result, the Stasi-esque kraut police (which he accidentally describes as, "The Gestapo") have put him on a watch list, or so he complains in a half-annoyed/half-joyous fashion. On top of his Führer fetish, Ochs is a hardcore tuba player that plays in a brass band with his comrades, who he regularly drinks with in his quaint Nazi dungeon where they discuss the good old days when one could be prideful of being Austrian and taking part in Germanic cultural traditions without being labelled a "Nazi" by some emasculated brainwashed cultural cuckold or sapless ethno-masochistic xenophile. As some might assume considering he is an old dude that spends a lot of time hanging out with his friends in his basement, Ochs is also a self-confessed alcoholic, with the subject revealing regarding his daily drinking schedule, "I do like my drink. It goes hand in hand with playing. It's a given. A morning break drink. Before that, three spritzers just so I can talk. Then, with the morning break drink, 10 spritzers. And afterwards a few shots, because everything's gone so well. But I'm predisposed because my whole family drinks." Indeed, if there ever was a greater plague to the Aryan people than the ideas of Hebraic culture-distorters like Marx and Freud and their intellectual spawn, it is alcohol.

While there are other subjects in the doc that certainly come close, masochistic lard ass Gerald 'love slave' Duchek and his proudly sadistic 'mistress'/wife Alessa are probably the most innately repugnant individuals in the film, as their exceedingly sloppy and sub-homely physical appearances are only transcended by their seemingly senseless sexual habits, which seem to involve everything aside

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from actual sex. A totally bald and rather heavysset man who may lack hair on his head but is a virtual bear when it comes to the rest of his burly body, Gerald works security at a local fancy theater by day, but when he comes home he becomes a 'love slave' who is forced by his pink-haired Wal-Mart-esque wife to clean the entire house while completely unclad (sans various torture devices attached to his flaccid genitals) and crawling on all fours like the figurative swine that he is. When stoic she-beast Alessa urinates, she forces her anti-hunk hubby to lick her festering vag clean and he even thanks her for the orally odious opportunity. As Alessa candidly states regarding her S&M marriage with anti-gentleman Gerald, "I absolutely adore my love slave... And the opposite is also true: He worships me. It doesn't affect our love – on the contrary. Only with total devotion and love can something like this work. If I don't have absolute trust in this person... And similarly if he doesn't have trust in me, his mistress, he can't let go completely and can't serve me 100%. It's a huge sign of trust. Of course I'm aware that I'm responsible for everything here and that can only work if it's based on absolute love." When Gerald first began his relationship with Alessa, he was forced to always wear a chastity belt and was allowed nil form of sexual release, but now that their darkly obsessive romance has evolved he is allowed to masturbate when his proudly wicked wife gives him the get-go. While debauchery occurs all around the Duchek house, the basement, which has been transformed into a dungeon that puts any of the settings described in Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's classic S&M/BDSM novella *Venus im Pelz* (1870) aka *Venus in Furs* to abject shame, is where the real hardcore depravity occurs. On top of having a luxurious cabinet full of fancy strap-on dildos and butt-plugs that Alessa uses to peg and prod her beastly beloved's bunghole, the dungeon features a makeshift torture device where poor perennial cuck Gerard is lifted off of a table by his testicles, thus causing him to bring new meaning to the slang phrase 'blue balls.' While they are unquestionably grotesque people that do grotesque things, it is nothing short of undeniable that Gerald and Alessa are made for one another and seem to share a mutually loving and joyous romance where both of them are able to express their unfortunate sexual idiosyncrasies.

Notably, spliced randomly throughout *In the Basement* is footage of an unnervingly eccentric old woman named Alfreda Klebinger, who is, among other things, the proud 'mother' of a number of lifelike vinyl dolls called 'reborn dolls,' which over the past couple of years or so have become a strange trend among certain lonely woman of the Occidental world who seem to have a maternal urge that they cannot fulfill because they are too old to have children or have some sort of other problem (it is believed the some women use reborn dolls a means of grieving a child that has died). Why Alfreda collects the dolls is never actually mentioned, but it is glaringly obvious that she is too damn old to get pregnant and have a baby of her own. For whatever reason, Alfreda keeps the dolls hidden in cardboard boxes around her basement. With her hubby, Alfreda has appar-

ently traveled all around the world and while baby talking to one of her reborn dolls while pointing at a large world map, she states regarding India, "It was so filthy, he [her husband] didn't like it either." Like Alfreda, a rather rotund hunter named Manfred Ellinger that is featured prominently throughout doc has also done a lot of traveling around the world, though he has regulated most of his time to the Dark Continent to hunt exotic animals, which he proudly describes as managing to kill with a single shot and include mostly furry creatures like nyalas, waterbucks, kudus, white-tailed gnus, warthogs, jackals, and bonteboks, among countless others. Naturally, the taxidermied heads of Manfred's prized kills have been mounted to his basement wall, which looks fairly absurd due to how many eclectic animal heads of varying sizes have been concentrated to one small area. Surely not the stereotype of the Hollywood-esque wasteful white expedition hunter, Manfred describes how he has personally eaten virtually all these animals, even getting his wife to make Wiener Schnitzel out of a warthog, though he admittedly refuses to dine on baboon. Undoubtedly, to some degree, Manfred reminds me of the expedition hunters that Austrian avant-garde auteur Peter Kubelka mocked in his classic experimental documentary short *Unsere Afrikareise* (1966) aka *Our Trip to Africa*, which almost certainly had to be a major influence on Seidl.

Undoubtedly, Seidl's doc is also notable for featuring the most morbidly obese yet happy hookers in cinema history since the ones that briefly appeared in David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990). One of these unpleasantly plump women, Cora Kitty, describes how she decided to become a professional pussy-peddler after getting fed up with having to be nice to nasty people while working in retail, which she absolutely loathed like any sane person would. The conspicuously corpulent prostitute makes no lie of the fact that she absolutely loves her job of selling her gash for cash as it gives her the distinguished opportunity of regularly meeting many different types of men, including guys with big and little cocks, as well as dudes that shoot mighty and miniscule loads. Cora Kitty is depicted engaging in a sort of pap smear-esque session of cunnilingus where her body is strapped into a gynecological device with a small and weasel-like weakling with a rather fitting pervert mustache who is apparently able to please many hookers, who apparently let him enter their meat-curtains for free because he has a special talent where he is able to bust a powerful load where his cum splashes over the gal's thoroughly used and abused vaginal walls, or as the creepy fellow explains himself in an autistic monotone fashion, "My potency lies in, as I discovered at some point, that I can shoot off a very powerful load of semen. With it I've left many women pretty amazed." Indeed, he may be a rather pathetic looking fellow, but the tiny mustached man certainly must have a special talent if he is able to get call-girls and bar-hogs to spread their legs for free.

If there was one subject in *In the Basement* who rubbed me the wrong way the most, it is a self-described "masochist" named Fraud Sabine who is featured

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having heir ass and pussy lips whipped by a fairly old and racially Alpinish fellow named 'Maſter Walter' aka Walter Holzer who sports a prized pair of lederhosen while brutalizing the old broad's bum. Notably, the nearly elderly masochiſt, whose beat up body is far from a wonderland, goes on to describe how she ſtabbed her firſt husband because she got fed up with him regularly beating her and later she had another hubby imprisoned for four years after he got too rough with her. Somewhat curiously but not ſurprisingly considering her own background, Frau Sabine is a Caritas Internationalis aid worker who provides help to battered Catholic women. Undoubtedly, Sabine has an unhealthy fetish for exceedingly abusive men, but one cannot help but wonder if there is a little bit of closeted ſadiſt in her in that she would ſtab one hubby and ruin the life of another. It ſeems that the masochiſt hooked up with Maſter Walter as a means to control her voracious appetite for pain in a more ſafe and controlled environment where deadly violence never comes into play. Arguably, the moſt bizarre thing about Frau Sabine is that she ſeems like ſomeone that could be an office manager at ſome ſort of bureaucratic corporation, ſo it is not exactly a pleaſure to ſee her unclad ſaggy derriere being whipped by Maſter Walter in a moſtly lackluſter fashion. Notably, towards the end of the doc, while getting waſted with his brass band comrades, basement Fñhrer Josef Ochs makes the hilarious official declaration while in an exceedingly inebriated ſtate, "I am the Fñhrer of this party." Of course, the doc would not be complete without Miſtreſs Aleſsa having her ſwinish love ſlave hung from his balls. As demonſtrated by his ambiguouſly erect choad, pig Gerald moſt certainly wallows in the puniſhment.

As can be expected in a ſo-called democratic modern European nation like Auſtria, In the Basement ſubject Josef Ochs was apparently facing being charged with 'Wiederbetätigung' (a ſuppoſed act of (re-)engagement in National Socialiſt activities) after the film was released as a reſult of the Nazi memorabilia he has in his suburban Fñhrerbunker. To auteur Ulrich Seidl's credit, he has pretty much only had good things to ſay about Herr Ochs, who would later complain that the director opted to focus eſpecially on his Nazi regalia inſtead of the various portraits and memorabilia that he has in tribute to figures like Ludwig II and various Auſtrian noblemen (it ſhould be noted that Ochs never actually makes any pro-Nazi ſtatements). Although I have not gotten the chance to ſee it ſince I have yet to find a copy with English subtitles, there is a ſeemingly worthwhile documentary entitled Ulrich Seidl und die böſen Buben (2014) aka Ulrich Seidl: A Director at Work directed by Conſtantine Wulff that depicts the legendary 'Seidl method' as the filmmaker works on both In the Basement and the play Böſe Buben/Fieſe Männer for theatre. As Ochs' remarks demonſtrates, Seidl is by no means a 'documentarian' (which is a label that he himſelf thankfully rejects) in the conventional ſenſe, as it is quite clear he ſtages and highly ſtylizes his cinematic ſcenarios, which moſt certainly depict real people doing what they love beſt, albeit from a highly ſubjective perſpective where the film-

maker manages to add his own somewhat subtle and oftentimes cynical social criticism via the way he opts to direct and edit a particular scene. In that regard, Seidl is like an Aryan equivalent to conspicuously kosher confederate arthouse carny Harmony Korine, whose masterful directorial debut *Gummo* (1997) implemented a similarly highly stylized approach to documentary-like scenarios (of course, Korine's film also features a number of completely fictional scenarios).

It should be noted that *In the Basement* features a couple scenes where Austrian teens do banal things in their basements like have less than chatty parties where they drink and smoke in a particularly passionless fashion like automations who have seen one too many Hebraic Hollywood frat-boy scat-comedies. Indubitably, compared to their elders who love lurking in a cement abyss of the 'ungeheuer,' the teens seem to be totally lacking in character and individuality and are assumedly completely out of touch with their 'Heimat,' which one can only assume is the result of the deracination of Austria via Americanization. After all, these kids not only have a glorious historical past, but also tons of great contemporary filmmakers to enjoy like Seidl, Michael Haneke, Michael Glawogger (RIP), Peter Kern, Paulus Manker (who surely needs to get back into the directing game), Markus Schleinzer (who undoubtedly made the ultimate Austrian basement feature with his debut *Michael* (2011)), avant-gardist Peter Tscherkassky, Gustav Deutsch, and various others who remind one that even a small European nation can have a more artistically important and intriguing film industry than the global cinema gatekeepers of Hollywood. If there is anything that one can learn from *In the Basement*, it is that the Viennese Aktionists look like a bunch of hopelessly bourgeois art fag posers when compared to the basement-dwelling proles in Siedl's film who do what they do for the mere pleasure and not to make of spectacle of themselves. Indeed, Seidl might be a sort of distant cinematic descendant of Aktionist filmmaker Kurt Kren, but he seems to have long realized that there is more intrigue and idiosyncrasy among seemingly normal everyday people than narcissistic 'artiste' types who seek attention for attention's sake. If *In the Basement* gave me any insights into how unbelievable dungeon crimes as committed by sinister individuals like Josef Fritzl and Wolfgang Priklopil could have occurred in Austria, it is probably the rampant social alienation that is caused by so-called democracy, capitalism, and multiculturalism, not to mention the fact that unity inspiring movements like nationalism and especially pan-Germanism have become quite taboo as a result of the defeat of the Third Reich during the Second World War. Indeed, when it is illegal for a man to own a portrait of a national historical figure in his home, there probably has to be some sort of collective psychosis in that country. While Fritzl pathetically attempted to blame his singularly sick behavior on the discipline he learned as a child during the Nazi era, his actions undoubtedly seem like those featured in a Weimar era newspaper or Fritz Lang flick. Luckily, Austria still has his fine folks like the Fritz Lang featured *In the Basement*.

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-Ty E

MEIN PAPA

Ulrich Thein (1988) Jörg Buttgerit's *Mein Papa* (1982) might be his most disturbing film. The short film (around 7 minutes) was shot over a period of 20 years. Buttgerit secretly directs his father who has become quite obese over the years (the film also shows a picture of Papa young and slim at his wedding). He also becomes quite intolerant of noise. 20 years later Papa is found dead in front of his TV with some of his favorite snacks. We also find out about Papa's declining health over the years due to tumors on his brain.

Mein Papa features a poppy yet haunting score that suits the film's unemotional tone. Buttgerit did not have a good relationship with his father and the short was made in spite of him. He wanted a room of people laughing at his father without him knowing. With *Mein Papa*, Buttgerit has immortalized his contempt for his father. It's quite interesting taking that into context when watching the short. Soon after watching *Mein Papa* for the first time a couple years ago I soon forgot about it. I just wrote it off as an early cheap super 8 short from a budding Buttgerit. Revisiting *Mein Papa* a couple times in the same day I realized its power and uniqueness. The film also reveals more about Buttgerit than any of his masterpieces feature length films could.

It is about time that Jörg Buttgerit got back to directing. I am finding that my obsession over his short films is fairly desperate. Starz should have given Buttgerit the opportunity to direct an episode of *Master of Horror*. In my opinion, he's a far better director than John Carpenter, Tobe Hooper, and the other "legendary" horror directors. The majority of the *Master of Horror* directors are hacks.

-Ty E

MADAME X: AN ABSOLUTE RULER
MADAME X: AN ABSOLUTE RULER

Ulrike Ottinger (1977)

Admittedly, pirates have never really floated my boat and I certainly cannot think of films as extravagantly aesthetically repellent as the Pirates of the Caribbean series and Spielberg's quasi-pederastic work *Hook* (1991) for such works could only appeal to small children and bugging butt-pirates. Needless to say, Johnny Depp as proto-hippie slime-bag Captain Jack Sparrow makes for a rather pathetic pirate Lord of the Seven Seas and Dustin Hoffman makes for an even worse pirate than he does as a drag queen à la *Tootsie* (1982). That being said, I never would have thought that my favorite seafaring freebooter flick would inevitably turn out to be that of the campy fantasy lesbian sort, but then again I would have never expected anything of the sort to exist in the first place. Co-directed by aberrant Aryanness auteur Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Taiga*) and her then-girlfriend Tabea Blumenschein (*Zagarbata*) – the statuesque stoic Sapphic punk goddess that would play an imperative part in the creation of her ladylove's most prolific works, including the cross-genre arthouse epics *Ticket of No Return* (1979) and *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* (1984) – *Madame X – Eine absolute Herrscherin* (1978) aka *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* is not only one of the most ideally and intensely idiosyncratic buccaneer flicks ever made, but it is also the lesbian answer to the male action-fantasy film, albeit of a more absurdist, avant-garde persuasion. Unlike your typical lesbian/feminist film whatever genre of subgenre it may be in, *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* is not a pirate-themed pity party of the decisively slave-morality-driven dreadful and regretful sort, but a wonderfully wayward wild woman wonder where the will to power and pleasure is the guiding philosophy. Lacking in petty sentimentalism, cliché political messages, and glorification of the weak and meek but instead the criminally rich and aesthetically wondrous, *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* is a delightfully deranging Dionysian comedy of sorts that makes for the next best thing to a full-fledged lesbian fantasy fascism flick. Suffice to say, *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* does for female swashbuckling filibusters what Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1964) did for motorcycle and fetishistically fascistic leather-fags.

During the beginning of *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, a number of diverse but equally unsatisfied women receive hidden telegraphic messages in everything from newspapers to a box of Brillo pads (steel wool scouring pads used for cleaning dishes) to the pocket of an institutionalized mental patient suffering from 'disturbed narcissistic personality' offering the lonely ladies the following: To all women – stop – offer world – stop – full of gold – stop – love – stop – adventure – stop – at sea – stop – call Chinese Orlando – stop! The characters include everything from bored, sexually-repressed housewives to overly-intellectualized psychiatrists with physical appearances as diversified as raving beauties to gawky

dyke pilots with bad haircuts, but they are united by their overwhelming dissatisfaction with their lives and professional/gender roles. To join the beautiful yet barbaric Madame X (Tabea Blumenschein) on her dilapidated ship Chinese Orlando, they must sacrifice their previous lives which none of them think twice about doing, but none of them are prepared for enduring the dictatorship of the determinedly dick-less where totalitarian tough love and topless tits reign supreme. Upon first joining Madame X on the ship as corsair crewmembers, the conspicuously cute but callous captain – using the help of a vocal and automatic figurehead, an exact replica of Madame X (also played by Blumenschein), assembled with the utmost care by a Numidian and witch doctor of great talent – displays her “absolute authority and power” via her doppelganger at the prow of the ship reciting: “Gold. Love. Adventure.” Indeed, Madame X – a muted and multipotent miss of the most magnificent mystique, and material and metaphysical magnetism – makes good on her three promises, but not without a little bit of slapstick and swashbuckling misery, heartbreak, and murder thrown in for good measure. In a backstory early on in the film, it is revealed that Madame X initially decided to give “her soul to the devil and Satanic sea arts” after her prized beauty Orlando was killed after being engulfed in the toxic tentacles of a rare and deadly jellyfish, which subsequently resulted in the loss of the Captain’s right-hand, hence her prosthetic bladed-hand. Miss X eventually became the cruelest pirate Führer of the Far Eastern sea, thus he has to be most stern and even unfair with his new novice buccaneers. Naturally, Madame X is extra hard on a flaming faggot fairy who joins the crew as a groveling man-maid after they find him floating in the sea by his lonesome, but at least he has the opportunity to admire the charming yet sometimes cantankerous Captain’s nude body, including her erotic blonde bosom hair. As far as obtaining glorious gold is concerned, Madame X and her eclectic collection of underlings happen upon a boat full of booty-full, banal, bourgeois types (one of which is played by Peggy von Schnottgenberg aka Frank Ripplöh; director of *Taxi zum Klo*) whom they glamour and titillate – the sort of people that incessantly and robotically repeat small talk clichés like “well, how about that?” and “What do ya know?” – and subsequently ransack at night and execute in a most Fellini-esque fashion. Naturally, Madame X: An Absolute Ruler – probably the only film where someone rides the plank in a wheelchair – is not your slap-happy alcoholic grandpappy’s sort of pirate film.

As the Chinese Orlando’s in-boat psychiatrist states in a most tongue-in-cheek manner: “The age-old oppression of woman which had consolidated the habits of passivity and dependence in their character structure, made them docile tools in the hands of Madame X, a charismatic personality eaten up with narcissism and whose lust for power grew with the quasi-masochistic submission of the women beyond all bounds.” Of course, whether victims of Madame X’s megalomaniacal majesty or not, breast-flaunting buccaneers of Madame X: An

MADAME X: AN ABSOLUTE RULER

Absolute Ruler certainly have a lovely, if loaded, journey where the charismatic captain's three promises of gold, love, and adventure are ceremoniously fulfilled. Aside from the gold, Ulrike Ottinger makes good of her character Madame X's promises as well, which I would have never suspected from a muff-diving auteur, especially of the sometimes socio-politically-charged sort. In fact, I do not think it would be a stretch to say that not only is Ottinger the most demiurgic female German director of the post-WWII era, but also – regardless of sex – the greatest kraut master of postmodern celluloid mythmaking. That being said, it is quite a shame that Ottinger's personal/artistic relationship with Tabea Blumen-schein had to end, as I surely regard Madame X: An Absolute Ruler, as well as their collaborations, Ticket of No Return and Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press among my favorite arthouse 'fantasy' flicks, and I am not exactly a fan of Ani DiFranco or Ellen DeGenerate. Indeed, unlike Robin Williams in Hook, not all seamen are starved for sea-salty semen; rather, some are horny, unloved housewives, pompous pussy-licking psychiatrists, and sadomasochistic Orientalists of the bearded clam diving, cunning linguist persuasian.

-Ty E

TICKET OF NO RETURN

Ulrike Ottinger (1979)

As much as I would like to deny it, I am fond of Germanic lesbian surrealist flicks, especially of the secretive and semiotic yet borderline psychotic sort, especially those directed by butch blonde Aryanness Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Joan of Arc of Mongolia*); the daredevil dame director who seems to have better taste in women than her fellow male New Wave kraut compatriots Fassbinder, Herzog, and Volker Schlöndorff, and more an imagination than lady auteur filmmakers Margarethe von Trotta and Monika Treut. Recently, I had the pleasure of viewing Ottinger's audacious alcoholic arthouse flick *Bildnis einer Trinkerin. Aller jamais retour* (1979) aka *Ticket of No Return*, a fashion keen surrealist odyssey about one lovely lady's lunatic drunken antics as she cruises Berlin-Tegel, Germany in search of booze, boobs, and bodacious bustle while dressed to impress (mostly herself) in immoderately chic new romanticist style. Predating the succulent sci-fi fashion of Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky* (1982) and the frantic lesbo lunacy of A. Hans Scheirl's *Dandy Dust* (1998), *Ticket of No Return* is a marvelous cinematic passport with a big aesthetic return if you're looking to see a highly cultivated form of cinematic degeneracy. Opening with the following narration, *Ticket of No Return* only gets more incoherent as it develops: "... She, a woman of exquisite beauty, of classical dignity and harmonious Raphaellesque proportions, a woman, created like no other to be Medea, Madonna, Beatrice, Iphigenia, Aspasia, decided one sunny winter day to leave La Rotonda..." Starring Tabea Blumenschein – who previously co-directed *Laokoon & Söhne* (*Laokoon & Sons*), *Die Betörung der blauen Matrosen* (*The Enchantment of the Blue Sailors*) and *Madame X – Eine absolute Herrscherin* (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*) with Ottinger and would later star in her work *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (*Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*) – *Ticket of No Return* is a work that is more than easy on the eyes due to its beauteous, if often belligerent and balmy, lead actress. Also featuring appearances from such great German New Wave actors as Magdalena Montezuma, Kurt Raab, Volker Spengler, Eddie Constantine, Günter Meisner, Nina Hagen, and Paul Glauer (one of the taller merry midgets from Herzog's *Even Dwarfs Started Small*), *Ticket of No Return* is a film that will interest any serious fan of post-WW2 German cinema, even if you're not a lesbian or alcoholic.

Seemingly an esoteric artsy fartsy cinematic essay campaigning for the acceptance of debauched alcoholism of the active sightseeing sort, *Ticket of No Return* is a film that will not only discombobulate most viewers with its heterodox fidelity for booze and lilly-licker hermeticism, but also its unequivocally avant-garde nonlinear structure. Although unmistakably female in appearance and in fashion sense, "She" is a stoic yet smashed street warrior with a proclivity towards older proletarian women, as expressed with her relatively unsuccessful

TICKET OF NO RETURN

bath and sleeper with a considerably less attractive and seemingly more mature lady. In fact, aside from a monotone chorus trio of statistic and fact spouting ladies in futuristic yet mundane grey flight attendant outfits named “Social Question” (Magdalena Montezuma), “Accurate Statistics” (Orpha Termin), and “Common Sense” (Monika von Cube), “She” never has any sort of steady esprit de corps, but instead merely meanders around like a perennial wandering Jew that is deracinated from all land and all human company. Of course, Ms. She doesn’t exactly need friends as she has no problem finding formidable fun, which includes – aside from her delightful drunken buffoonery – a not-exactly-high-wire balancing act and riding on the hood of a daredevil driver’s stunt into a wall-on-fire. Fitting somewhere in between Federico Fellini’s *Amarcord* (1973) minus the nostalgia and Werner Herzog’s early realist-surrealist masterpiece *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) in terms of narrative (or lack thereof) and its ostensibly absurdist aesthetic, yet a work of undeniable idiosyncrasy all of its own, *Ticket of No Return* is one of those rare works that reminds the viewer that the artistic medium of film is not exactly as limited and played-out as latest American ‘indy’ film would leave us to believe.

Ultimately, I think the strangely delectable she-devil anti-heroess of *Ticket of No Return* is sort of what Marcello Mastroianni is to Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960) and *8 ½* (1963), as a sort of vivid express of Ulrike Ottinger’s ideal alter-ego; a lady of stunning beauty with an exquisite fashion sense (which the director certainly lacks), but also aloof, venturesome, and wholly autonomous (fitting more in tune with the lady auteur’s predilections, at least as an artist). Of course, she’s ‘inner self’ and butch doppelgänger – a leather-clad man-boy akin to the unsavory fellows featured in Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising* (1964) and William Friedkin’s *Cruising* (1980) – reminds her that despite how beautiful and stylish she is on the outside and no matter how shitfaced she is, an instinctive masculinity consumes her soul. Personally, I cannot think of anything more unappealing in a prospective lover from the fairer sex than an aggressive alcoholic with an acute case of muteness yet with the help of Ottinger’s curious yet calculating direction and the films fashion designer, Tabea Blumenschein is nothing short of seductive as “she,” even if she seems like she might bite. Always climbing to a literal and figurative stairway to some sort intangible heaven of sorts, “she” is inevitably lost in a human storm of metropolitan lunacy and absurdity. Indubitably, a semi-autobiographical cinematic work of the decisively obscured and transcendental sort, not unlike works by fellow queer kraut auteur filmmakers Werner Schroeter (*Day of the Idiots*, *Malina*) and Rosa von Praunheim (*A Virus Knows no Morals*, *Anita: Dances of Vice*), *Ticket of No Return* is a one-way ticket to somewhere in between lesbian life-everlasting and limbo in the lower world.

-Ty E

FREAK ORLANDO

Ulrike Ottinger (1981)

After searching for years in vain for a copy of Ulrike Ottinger's *Freak Orlando* (1981) – an apocalyptic cinematic epic of the exceedingly eccentric – I can happily admit that I secured and viewed a copy of the film, albeit with a positively piss poor VHS transfer (who knows what generation), yet that did not stop me nor my girlfriend from thoroughly luxuriating in what is undeniably one of the most loony, lecherous, and lovely lesbian fantasy films ever made. More freaky than Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), more campy and obsessively stylized than Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963), more marvelously mystical than Don Chaffey's adaptation of *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and more carnally carnivalesque than Federico Fellini's *City of Women* (1980), *Freak Orlando* is indubitably one of the most ideally idiosyncratic cinematic works ever made that has no contemporaries, aside from auteur Ulrike Ottinger's other Sapphic spiritual films (e.g. *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*). Set in the fleeting fantasy world of 'Freak City' – a weirdo world of self-flagellating leather fags, bodypaint-covered midget artists, big bearded women, two-headed singers who sing in two-part harmony, and rival Siamese twins, among various other merry yet oftentimes miserable mother nature made miscreations – *Freak Orlando* is a "small theater of the world" and allegorical history of the world depicted in a marvelous maniac microcosm of the macabre yet magical. Told in five different acts of varying waywardness, the film centers around an innately unconventional protagonist named *Freak Orlando* aka *Mrs. Orlando* Mr. Orlando aka *Orlando Capricho* aka *Orlando Orlanda* aka *Orlando Zyklopa* (all played by Werner Schroeter's muse *Magdalena Montezuma*), who seems to have more lives than a black magic pussycat. On her wild and delightfully dangerous entrada, Orlando encounters a number of bestial, bloodlusting enemies and futuristic lipstick lezzy lovers, with the outcome of her literally out-of-this-world odysseys being virtually the same: love, loss, and finally enduring the lap of the gods. Featuring a quasi-medieval dystopian setting of the decidedly deformed and daunting sort – not unlike John Waters' *Desperate Living* (1977), except with more testosterone and meticulously assembled sets and costumes designs – *Freak Orlando* is a fiercely phantasmagorical film full of flaky fashion and tumultuous tragedy that reminds one of why people watch fantasy films in the first place.

Created after a series of co-directions with her doily dyke collaborator/lover *Tabea Blumenschein* (*The Enchantment of the Blue Sailors*, *Ticket of No Return*), *Freak Orlando* is a seemingly more melancholy and misanthropic work than her previous efforts, if stoically and mirthfully so. Although featuring a virtual carnival of undraped bodies, the film is less focused on glorifying the fiery femme fatale beauty than in, for example, *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*

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(1978) where brutish blonde bombshell Tabea Blumenschein plays an integral role. Whereas in *Ticket of No Return* (1979), the female anti-heroess 'She' seems to be a fantasy character composite of both Ottinger and Blumenschein, Orlando of *Freak Orlando* – as a stalwart alpha-female of uncompromising personal integrity, individuality, and honor – is most certainly Ottinger's filmic alter-ego. As a feisty and agile anvil-striking Führer of a heptad of dwarf-shoemakers, a two-headed singer of melodies, a fierce freedom fighter against the Spanish Inquisition, a merry but sometimes malevolent man who feels one head is better than two when it comes to bumping heads with Siamese twins, and campy entertainer with a queer quartet of playboy bunnies, Orlando is a renegade renaissance woman with a rugged interior and a oftentimes fetishistic quasi-New Romanticiŝt exterior. Like a wandering Jew hopped up on Ritalin, romance, and fervent freak righteousness, arduously anomalous Orlando attempts to bring oddball order and beauty to a mostly rural city in ruins that – despite its freak-only population – seems to hardly accept her, at least until the conclusion of the film. Her greatest enemies are the ferocious yet faggy flagellants – a curious collective of self-punishing, sadomasochistic, semi-savage leather fags that sport matching black pleather uniforms (aside from one curious fellow in white) – who brutally beat and decapitate Orlando during the first act of *Freak Orlando* after she refuses to become their leader when the original 'ŝtylite' lord (played by Eddie Constantine) falls to his much-desired death. Judging by her portrayal of the flagellants in the film, I think it is quite blatant that Ottinger is an opponent of leather fags everywhere, a group that homo-maniac auteur Rosa von Praunheim described as the male abberosexual group whose, "masculinity is damaged the most" in his documentary *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971). During the second act of *Freak Orlando*, Orlando Orlando muŝt save two acrobats from the flaming flagellants and deter their dreams of hatred, which are fueled by male inadequacy; an all-consuming character flaw the Ms. Ottinger seems to be hardly stricken with. In the end, Orlando leaves the city just as she came, admiring a topless lady flower with marvelous mammary glands.

Unfortunately, aside from a minority of unhealthily fanatical cinephiles, *Freak Orlando* is a film that is more often talked about and dreamed of than actually seen. After what seemed like a lifetime worth of waiting, I finally had the grand opportunity to watch this grandiose occult cinematic exposition and I cannot say I was left wanting. Considering that *Freak Orlando* is comprised of five decidedly distinct acts, the film is sometimes 'hit' or 'miss' in what it seeks to achieve in terms of the moral of the story due to its excessive esotericism, but one would be hard-pressed to argue that a single second of the film is anything less than enrapturing and awe-inspiring. Like Federico Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969) meets Werner Herzog's *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970), except with a superlatively Sapphic persuasion, *Freak Orlando* paints a pulchritudinous, if peculiar, portrait

of the history of the world that is about as literal as a soundly asleep paranoid schizophrenic's most sordid and starkest dreams. A singularly preternatural cinematic escape from the banality of the technocratic, cosmopolitan globalized world featuring a city-sized cabaret of spastic yet spectacular characters, *Freak Orlando* is a film that deserves a broad fan-base outside of the pompous academic and lesbian underground world.

-Ty E

DORIAN GRAY IN THE MIRROR OF THE YELLOW PRESS
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Ulrike Ottinger (1984)

Part love letter to the icon masterpieces of German expressionist cinema, most specifically Paul Wegener's Golem trilogy (*The Golem*, *The Golem and the Dancing Girl*, *The Golem: How He Came into the World*) and Fritz Lang's Dr. Mabuse trilogy (*Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, *The Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse*), part camp-ridden postmodern cyberpunk flick, and part ostensibly ominous quasi-Wagnerian opera with Oscar Wilde's iconic literary figure Dorian Gray as a tom-boyish Siegfried-like anti-hero, Sapphic German auteuress Ulrike Ottinger's *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *The Image of Dorian Gray in the Yellow Press* aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* – a work released most appropriately during the Orwellian year of 1984; a splendid time for a lesbo dystopian flick – is a film of epically eccentric proportions that does the seemingly unhinged and certainly most sexually-antagonistic by casting one of Germany's best known supermodels, Veruschka von Lehndorff (*Blow-Up*, *Casino Royale*), in dandysette drag as a character with a testosterone-deprived sideshow swag. Both the final film in her "Berlin Trilogy" (preceding *Ticket of No Return* and *Freak Orlando*) and the last cinematic collaboration with her one-time lesbian lover and partner in aesthetic crime Tabea Blumenschein (*Laokoon & Sons*, *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*) – who would subsequently end up homeless for a period of time – before their irreparable breakup, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* also marked the close of a chapter in Ulrike Ottinger's filmmaking career right before she would go to travel the Orient and direct such works as the documentary *China. The Arts – the People* (1986), the adventure-romance-documentary hybrid epic *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* (1989), the 500-minute ethnology document *Taiga* (1992), and the documentary *The Korean Wedding Chest* (2009), among various other quasi-anthropological real-life fairy tale works. Most glaringly, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* is Ottinger's last distinctly 'Germanic' counter-culture work, albeit of the pre-nazi/post-nazi persuasion, as both a tribute to the films and underworld kultur of the Weimar Republic and the dangerous, chaotic, and sinister sociopolitical climate of that time, as well as a delightful, daring, and damning dissemination of the power of mainstream multimedia in all facets of life following the conclusion of the Second World War. Centering around a pomo and ambiguous homo Dorian Gray (played by Veruschka von Lehndorff) – a figure whose striking suave playboy celebrity is contrived and subsequently shattered at the wretched whim of Frau Dr. Mabuse (played marvelous mad scientist style by French feminist Delphine Seyrig); the fierce female Führer of a all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-propagandizing international media empire – *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* is like Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire* meets

Massimo Dallamano's *Dorian Gray* (1970) starring Helmut Berger, but more importantly, it is the sort of strikingly singular aesthetic and gender deconstructing work that could have been directed by Ulrike Ottinger.

As Dr. Mabuse states at the beginning of *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*: "Our organization will create a human being whom we can shape and manipulate according to our needs. Dorian Gray: young, rich and handsome. We will make him, seduce him and break him." With crucial help from her cunning computer specialist "Assistant Golem" (played by Werner Schroeter's muse Magdalena Montezuma), as well as "Assistant Passat" (Fassbinder's typecast "repressed" lady Irm Hermann) and "Assistant Susy" (Fassbinder's "beautiful bimbo" Barbara Valentin), Dr. Mabuse has every resource she needs to make, manipulate, and murder her dear and dapper cipher Dorian Gray. Ottinger stated in an interview that her archetypal Dorian Gray is effectively, "The narcissus, the dandy, especially the dandy has his feminine side. Therefore in art – I am thinking here of Proust, Oscar Wilde, Gustave Moreau, Reynaldo Hahn, who are all indirectly cited in my film – these were among the first artists who as men made aesthetically manifest feminine qualities." Indeed, the gender/sexuality of the "s/he" in *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* is never made clear, thereupon making it all the more of a provocative and, at times, trying and terribly teasing work. With his only 'family' member being a Chinese servant named "Hollywood" (Toyo Tanaka), who also acts as a narrator for the film, Dorian Gray – a boyish yet athletic extrovert of the spontaneous sort – is more than willing to take up the malicious Ms. Mabuse on her ingeniously generous offer, thereupon skyrocketing the lonely and ego-deprived orphan onto a literal and figurative world-stage of great fame and prestige. As the last of the famous international playboys, Dorian naturally acquires a beautiful and blonde lover named Andamana (played by the notably rather skinny and oftentimes almost completely naked Tabea Blumenschein) who Dr. Mabuse has employed as a seductive sly spy slut, and who the media closely follows with the more intimate and loving moments, as well as scandalous and risqué, of their grandiose ballad-ridden bond being broadcast for the entire world to see from the comfort of their living room. With his new life behind the candid camera and in the yellow press, Dorian also must make various planned public appearances, including "press balls," an aptly named event where everything, including the wallpapers, flowers, and wine glasses are made out of newspapers and where, through the misguided guidance of Miss Mabuse, he is also able to indulge in the wonders of the world, including kosher animal mutilation, Amerindians cohabiting in sewers, and his lover luridly trading tongues with a new lesbian ladylove of the less than ladylike sort. As Dr. Mabuse states herself, "The willful Italians are hard to control," but with hunky-dory Dorian posing in the world spotlight, even hot-headed Hightalians "fall for Nordic beauty." Needless to say, the whole world adores Dorian Gray and he exults in the extravagant lifestyle of an entertain-

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ment superstar, but all good things must come to an end and Dr. Mabuse is a master at managing melodramatic meltdowns of the magnificently and morbidly marvelous mass media mishmash.

In *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, the three virtues of journalism – being “independence,” “non-partisanship,” and “objectivity” and who Dr. Mabuse assumes to be retired – are frail and shriveled old men with equally withered genitals who wear women’s Sunday church hats in a symbolic scene that more than speaks for itself. In combining iconic figures from German expressionist cinema and classical opera with images of grand grotesquery, including large and in charge au naturel amazonian women goose-stepping for \$1 bills, screaming punk rockers in tattered clothing, and a little boy dragging a decapitated pig’s head with a string, Ottinger ironically gives resonance to her bitter-sweet Svengali character Dr. Mabuse’s words, “art is anachronism...ridiculous rollie.” A stringently semiotic work of immense scale, Ulrike Ottinger’s *Dorian Gray* meets and greets technocratic globalized media in a strikingly sardonic and socio-politically sharp cinema effort of clever and keen kitsch meets high operatic art about an ambiguous (in more ways than one) character who the viewer never really gets despite his highly publicized and personalized appearances throughout the film. In a 1997 interview with Austrian writer Sissi Tax, Ottinger stated of her Brummel-esque protagonist: “It remains undecidable whether (*Dorian Gray*) doesn’t also fall in love with himself, with the performance, with the mirror in the frame...,” but if one thing is for sure about the frisky fellow – an individual who survives the human sewage of subterranean sodomite hell, desolate deserts with a morbid mix of mammal corpses and human and furry four-legged hyenas, and his sadomasochistic sexual activities being exposed for the world to see – he is an individual with a strong sense of self-preservation, so much so that after the fat lady literally sings, he literally crashes his own funeral in his blood red Mercedes Benz sports car. The final culmination of a rich and fruitful collaboration that resulted in countless photographic collaborations, two short featurette, and three feature length films, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* also marked the final collaboration between Ottinger and Blumenschein, so it is only befitting that the character Andamana (played by Blumenschein) states, “On this path you must continue alone,” which are indubitably poetically symbolic works that would mark a break in the German auteuress’ oeuvre. Of course, as Dr. Mabuse states at her manipulated man-muse’s funeral: “Dorian, for me you live on.”

-Ty E

JOHANNA D'ARC OF MONGOLIA

Ulrike Ottinger (1989)

After finishing her "Berlin trilogy" (*Ticket of No Return*, *Freak Orlando*, *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*), German Sapphic auteur Ulrike Ottinger decided to venture outside of her native Germany and outside the restraints of both narrative fiction/documentary with her postmodern Trans-Siberian epic *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* (1989) aka *Joan of Arc of Mongolia*. Essentially like Ottinger's first feature-length work *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler* (1978) except with Mongolian lesbos of the seemingly sexually-repressed sort instead of a wild assortment of pussy-plundering female pirates, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* is quirky yet relatively restrained and sentimental for an Ulrike Ottinger celluloid saga in that it depicts the lighter side of a cultural clash between two strikingly different groups: 'Western' women (including a European ethnographer and her young 'companion,' a trio of three Jewish klemzer, a naïve German teacher/tourist) and barbarian nomadic Mongols. Described in the past as a "lesbian Lawrence of Arabia," *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* is indeed one of Ottinger's most truly 'epic' and professionally executed and directed works, but with a glaring lack of freak worship (which is replaced with philo-semitism and Mongol-mania) and the subversive idiosyncrasy that drive her previous efforts. In turn, the film also happens to be one of Ottinger's most accessible works as the sort of film a 7-year-old girl could watch and enjoy, at least in the superficial literal sense. Mixing 19th and 20th century American and European Jewish Yiddish culture with ancient Mongolian traditions and rituals performed by authentic modern day nomadic Mongols, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* also lacks – probably in part due to the severance of her relationship with her long-time lover/collaborator Tabea Blumenschein – the sadomasochistic abberosexual essence that dominates her previous works (although to be fair, Ottinger is half Jewish, through her mother, and her trans-continental epic would be the first time the female director would portray overtly Judaic themes in her films). Part neo-Yiddish musical and part Mongol-philic action-adventure romance flick, *Joan of Arc of Mongolia* – despite its aesthetic and thematic weakness – is just another example as to why Ulrike Ottinger is the greatest and most strikingly singular female German auteur of her generation.

Starring Delphine Seyrig as the ambiguous lesbian and cultured ethnologist Lady Windermere in her last Ottinger film (preceding *Freak Orlando* and *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*) and last screen appearance before her premature death from lung cancer at the age of 58 in 1990, as well as Fassbinder graduates Irm Hermann as a secondary-school teacher named Fräulein Mueller-Vohwinkel and Austrian Peter Kern as an affluent Jewish fat cat and Yiddish neo-vaudevillian tenor/entertainer, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* brings the stars of European arthouse and Neuer Deutscher Film to strikingly strange scenery

JOHANNA D'ARC OF MONGOLIA

– sort of in the spirit of Christoph Schlingensiefel's *Tunguska - Die Kisten sind da* (1984), except less sardonic – where very few filmmakers and actors dare to tread. Set on the Trans-Siberian Railroad, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* begins as an eccentric Yiddish musical of sorts, with the introduction of a merry cast of Fellini-esque characters, including Lady Windermere (Delphine Seyrig), Ms. Mueller-Vohwinkel (Irm Hermann), a beautiful peasant girl named Giovanni (later called Johanna) played by Spanish actress Inés Sástre, a 1930/1940s style musical star named Fanny Ziegfeld (Gillian Scalici), the Kalinka Sisters which Ottinger described in an interview as being “like a traveling Yiddish version of the Andrew Sisters,” Mickey Katz (Peter Kern), and a Soviet Russian officer (Nugzar Sharia) who is a direct descendent of collectivist anarchist philosopher Mikhail Bakunin and his young attaché (Christoph Eichhorn). Of course, like most of Ottinger's films, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* is fundamentally a femme fling flick where women (this time against their own will) fulfill their wildest fantasies.

A wealthy quasi-Victorian aristocrat of immense independent wealth, Lady Windermere travels in her own private and lavishly furnished train boxcar and seems like she suffers from Aspergers syndrome due to her incessant and patently pedantic rambling off of facts regarding Mongolian nomads. Resembling Marlene Dietrich in her androgynous explorer outfit, Windermere takes a special liking to Giovanni and lets her join her private boxcar. After having some fun by playing a number of Yiddish musical hits, including performances by the Kalinka Sisters and the morbidly obese Mickey Katz, the train riders' diversion comes to an abrupt end in Mongolia when the train's passage is halted by a Mongolian princess and her henchwomen, who have strategically deposited a large hill of sand in its tracks, bringing the train to a complete stop. Led by Princess Ulun Iga (played by Xu Re Huar), the she-warriors demand that all female members of the train get off and be taken hostage, thus ushering in the sheltered western women's wild and wonderful journey. From here on, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* more resembles a documentary with slight shades of action and romance as opposed to the semi-surreal and intentionally artificial first chapter set on the aesthetically anachronistic train (which was filmed in a singular and strikingly stylized studio set reminiscent of Ottinger's short “*Superbia - The Pride*” contributed to the feature-length feminist film anthology *Seven Women, Seven Sins* (1986)). Princess Ulun Iga is a greatly feared woman among Mongols everywhere who has conquered and destroyed various male Mongolian tribes, so much so that a diplomat from an enemy tribe begs the stoic she-beast not to destroy their terror-ridden tribe. The western women seem barely phased by the fact they are taken hostage by the medieval-like Mongol hordes as if suffering from an acute case of Stockholm syndrome. Luckily for the passive ladies of the Trans-Siberian express, the Mongol princess, despite her apparent ferocity, takes a keen liking to her captives, especially Giovanni and eventually makes

the Mediterranean peasant girl her princess in plundering and pillaging, thus renaming her Princess Johanna, hence the title of the film *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*.

Admittedly, aesthetically and thematically, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* was not my celluloid cup of tea, as old school Yid mu-sick and Mongolian barbarian kultur is not exactly something that I digest well. Personal preferences aside, there are many 'disconnects' in the film, most glaringly the shift between the inside of the postmodern high-kitsch of the inside of the Trans-Siberian train and the ethnographic realism of the Mongolian nomadic scenes. Assuredly a softcore work of semi-subversive cinema for Ulrike Ottinger, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* ultimately feels like campy children's fairy tale meets National Geographic; a sentiment that both my girlfriend – who is hopelessly obsessed with the German auteuress' *Madame X: An Absolute Ruler and Freak Orlando* – and I could not deny. Despite its rather sentimental and playful tone, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* does feature a brutal real goat killing set to traditional Mongolian musical that is equally as disturbing and disgusting as the slaughterhouse scene from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *In a Year of Thirteen Moons* (1978); a film that Ottinger apparently found quite "interesting." Personally, my favorite scene in the film is when the Mongolian princess grabs the genitals of a horse and is kicked to the ground. Apparently, certain politically correct film critics took offense to *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* due to its supposedly offensive depiction of certain Jewish stereotypes, especially in regard to the large and in charge Mickey Katz; a pompously plump and bodacious braggart of immense wealth who is essentially harmless aside from his repellant character and physique. Ottinger would follow-up *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* with the exceedingly epic 500-minute ethnological documentary on Mongols entitled *Taiga* (1992), which the director described as being, "like a fairy tale." Although not as gripping and tragic as the tale of the real "The Maid of Orléans," *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* is a superlatively symptomatic work that could have only been directed by Ulrike Ottinger, thus making it at least worth seeing for fan of the dandysette explorer auteur.

-Ty E

COUNTDOWN
COUNTDOWN

Ulrike Ottinger (1990)

Without question, Ulrike Ottinger (*Freak Orlando*, *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*) is one of the most innately idiosyncratic and adventurous female auteur filmmakers working today and quite arguably the greatest lady director since Leni Riefenstahl, be it in Germany or elsewhere, especially in terms of the epic essence of her work as a rare 'hands-on' type of woman who is not afraid to get her hands dirty and trek around the globe to create truly singular celluloid works. Indeed, in that regard, Ottinger is sort of like a lesbian Werner Herzog, albeit of ½ Jewish instead of ½ Croatian extraction. Indeed, while a mischling Jew, Ottinger certainly takes after her Aryan side as her father Ulrich Ottinger, who hid the filmmaker and her Jewish mother during the Second World War, was an artist-painter who belonged to a circle of artists that included German expressionist Otto Dix. Undoubtedly, up until her sexually anarchistic love letter to Oscar Wilde and German expressionism, *Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse* (1984) aka *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, and before her breakup with her longtime girlfriend/muse Tabea Blumenschein (who starred in virtually all the filmmaker's works between 1975 and 1984), Ottinger's films had a distinctly Teutonic essence, albeit of the post-empire Weimar-esque and largely sadomasochistic camp-ridden sort, but somewhere along the way the filmmaker became a pathological orientalist with a special interest in the Jewish Diaspora, with her seemingly new-found affinity for the historical legacy of German Jewry being quite apparent in her 3+ hour documentary *Countdown* (1990). An exceedingly long chronological document in ten parts set in Berlin during the ten days leading to the reunification of German currencies (aka 'the first stage of German reunification') on July 1, 1990, *Countdown* ultimately portrays a rundown metropolis plagued by cultural and social decay as opposed to a magical place on the brink of a long-time-coming revolutionary 'family reunion.' Instead of focusing on interviewing indigenous Berliners on their thoughts on the reunification, Ottinger opts for dwelling on Hebraic ghosts and the general cultural/racial outsider, beginning by focusing on the 'Einsteinurm' aka 'Einstein Tower' (an astrophysical observatory built by German Jewish architect Erich Mendelsohn to test Albert Einstein's relativity theory) in Potsdam and the Jewish Cemetery Weißensee (the second largest Jewish cemetery in Europe that has been rarely used since 1955) and focusing on foreign gypsy peddlers hanging out at the Bahnhof Zoo on the third day. Essentially seeming like a multiculturalist tourist diary shot by an individual who forgot they turned on the 'record' button and kept filming for way too long, *Countdown* is far from Ottinger's greatest work (in fact, I would argue it is her worst) as a documentary that aesthetically murders the subversively glamorous movie magic and mystique the filmmaker brought to Berlin with *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin-Aller Jamais Re-*

tour (1979) aka Ticket of No Return.

A couple years ago, my girlfriend went on vacation in Germany and she described her two-day stay in Berlin as the biggest disappointment of her trip because, aside from a couple old monuments and ancient architecture that was not destroyed in the Second World War, she found the city to be not all that different from a degenerate American urban cesspool due to its influx of immigrants from the global south and McDonald's fast food restaurant on every corner. Undoubtedly, the Berlin of Ottinger's *Countdown* seems even worse than what my girlfriend described. With the GDR thankfully becoming history, swarthy Slavs peddle commie kraut relics in the form of badges, uniforms, and hats for virtually nothing to blonde teenage boys who want to use these now-worthless items as quirky souvenirs. Young boys also work eagerly to destroy remnants of the wall, though it is dubious whether or not they are doing it for any political reason because, like many young men, they probably get a kick out of destroying stuff, especially things that symbolize authority. In one particularly allegorical scenario, a man in a wheelchair sits next to a young boy holding a tricolor 'Bundesflagge und Handelsflagge' flag of Germany in a ruined section of East Berlin that seems like it has yet to be repaired after the ravaging of the Second World War. Meanwhile, a synagogue that seems to have seen better days on the other side of Berlin seems to act as an uneasy metaphor for the disastrous relationship between Germans and Jews in the post-Auschwitz years. Instead of Jews as its outsiders, Berlin now has the luxury of hosting impoverished Sinti, Roma, and Poles, who beg for money while hanging at the virtual human zoo that is the Bahnhof Zoo station. Undoubtedly, the only solacing scenes of *Countdown* take place in scenic parks that act in stark contrast to the seemingly epidemic urban decay that has spread around the city like Wotan's wildfire. Anticipating Ottinger's more recent documentary *Prater* (2007)—a truly 'carnavalesque' work about the Würstelprater amusement park in Vienna, Austria that was destroyed in the Second World War but subsequently rebuilt after the war—*Countdown* also features footage at a Berlin amusement park, which includes shots of a rather cool looking haunted house rides, among other things. Ultimately, the documentary concludes with footage of Germans, both young and old, relaxing at a placid lake located in southeast Berlin (Treptow) next to a glaringly ugly factory emitting toxic fumes in a scene that reminds me of the Oswald Spengler quote, "Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, until it wearies and dies in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country."

Aside from director Ulrike Ottinger's curious choice of locations for shooting, *Countdown* is undoubtedly an objectively directed work with nil narration nor discernible political messages, yet at the same time, the documentary cannot help but depict post-Cold War Berlin as a decidedly dreary place inhabited by people who, for the most part aside from collectively smashing the Berlin Wall,

COUNTDOWN

never smile and go about their business in an almost zombie-like fashion as if they were victims of prison rape. In fact, I find it rather ironic that the only person that stuck out in my mind smiling for an extended period of time in the doc was a somewhat creepy gypsy dude who was peddling worthless junk on the street as a foreign man who came from a foreign land who can afford to smirk as he has taken full advantage of post-Nazi Germany's lack of community and increasing deracination, not to mention very generous brown-baby-funding social welfare system. Undoubtedly, a glaring sign of Germany's undying ethnomasochism is the fact that Karl-Marx-Allee—a monumental 'socialist boulevard' that was originally named 'Stinallee' (until, of course, the 'man of steel' went out of fashion as so many commie dictators do) featured in the final section of *Countdown* that was built by the GDR between 1952 and 1960—has yet to be de-marxized despite the fact that it bears the name of arguably the most deleterious thinker of German history and a man whose dubious ideas left East Germany (not to mention every other country east of the Fatherland) under virtual slavery for nearly half a century.

In his puffery-plagued work *Ulrike Ottinger: The Autobiography of Art Cinema* (2008), Frankfurt school-lobotomized American shabbos goy intellectual Laurence A. Rickels wrote regarding *Countdown*: "What comes out in the wash or watch of this document of reunification is both the viewing of the spectral Jewish cemetery and the return of Sinti and Roma minorities. This return is marked by the phobic static already or still on the lines of their reception but also set aside, as the film closes with portrayals of everyday life in the outpost-towns of the former GDR. We are offered glimpses of an existence that will, for a historical change, be passed over and allowed to survive," thus demonstrating the sort of petty hatred the documentary inspires in mainstream hack intellectuals who make a living out of reviving the already maliciously molested ghosts of Germany's past (it should be noted that Rickels is probably best known for writing a three volume piece of Freudian pseudo-history entitled *Nazi Psychoanalysis*). Demonstrating his 'humanistic' insistence that Germany still needs constant reminders that its forefathers were big bad Aryan butchers who got what they deserved for not loving the saintly *untermenschen*, Rickels also stated regarding what he believes is most important regarding *Countdown*: "The allegorical status of the divided city, of what was once upon a time in the recent past the circumcised, displaced, cosmopolitan, ghostly capital of old Europe, was being functionalized literally with a vengeance, with a revenge Nietzsche defined as directed "against the 'It was' of time." That no sizable portion of the wall—one of the great monuments in history—was left standing speaks volumes about the official plan for reunified Berlin, against which Ottinger's document can be seen to offer a stay of execution." The retarded remarks of neo-commie-Freudian cultural cuckolds aside, *Countdown* does offer a sometimes insightful and even poetic, if not incessantly meandering, depiction of Deutschland's somewhat aborted rebirth in

1990. In many ways, Countdown is like like Dutch alpha-documentarian Johan van der Keuken's 245-minute doc Amsterdam Global Village (1996) because, aside from both being exceedingly long and whimsical yet minimalistic works, both documentaries demonstrate how major European capital cities have so drastically degenerated since the Second World War, with the metropolises suffering from similar distinctly European social sicknesses (i.e. multiculturalism, social and cultural deracination, social alienation, increasing overpopulation yet dying out of the indigenous populations, etc.). Indeed, I do not know how much Berlin has changed since the release of Countdown over two decades ago, but if I ever take a trip to the Fatherland, it will probably be to Bavaria instead.

-Ty E

CODE BLUE
CODE BLUE

Urszula Antoniak (2011)

Out of all of the people I have known in my life, the most discernibly hopelessly dejected one I can think of was a middle-aged unmarried barren woman who lived life vicariously through her sisters and sisters' children, who would become the closest thing she ever had to children of her own. To an extent, I can understand this because a woman has to be a true failure to lack children and a husband, even if feminist-brainwashing has taught the ostensible fairer sex that they don't need either to live a happy life. It is not often spoke of but naturally 'old maids' have made for some of the most conspicuously creepy yet paradoxically tragic characters in cinema history as demonstrated by works ranging from Robert Altman's underrated early classic *That Cold Day in the Park* (1969) starring Sandy Dennis to the rarely-seen short William Faulkner adaptation *A Rose for Emily* (1983) starring Anjelica Huston to Michael Haneke's *The Piano Teacher* (2001) starring Isabelle Huppert to the minimalistic Lars von Trier co-produced Dutch arthouse work *Het zuiden* (2004) aka *South* directed by Martin Koolhoven to countless campy hagsploitation flicks. Indeed, there is certainly something distinctly unnerving about an unhinged old maid who has nothing else to do in this world except to rot away in both the mind and body. The other day I masochistically subjected myself to what might be described as the ultimate work of 'old maid-mania' in celluloid form and I can honestly say that I cannot remember the last time a film made me feel so superlatively sick to my stomach. Indeed, the Dutch-Danish coproduction *Code Blue* (2011) directed by Polish-Dutch female auteur Urszula Antoniak (*Nothing Personal*, *Nude Area*) is such a uniquely and incontestably unsettling piece of arthouse aberrance that a warning sign reading "Some scenes may hurt the audience feelings" was posted outside its screening room when it premiered at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival Directors' Fortnight. A work that both revolves around and connects sex and death, Antoniak's anti-romantic piece of morbidly erotic angst tells the progressively perturbing tale of a skeletal Dutch middle-aged nurse of the desperately and ultimately deathly lonely sort who works at the terminally ill quarter of a hospital and has an almost fetishistic obsession with her most sickly patients that involves putting said sickly patients out of their misery, even sometimes against their will (or lack of). Ultimately, the 'protagonist' (or some might say 'anti-heroine') is irrevocably connected to a violently narcissistic young kraut after the two are united by happenstance (or what others might call 'fate') via an instance of sadomasochistic voyeurism revolving around a small gang-rape, thus erupting in a fierce 'romantic' fling that throws the somewhat loony lead over the edge and into a personal pandemonium of no return. A work with obvious Polish influences like Krzysztof Kieslowski, Andrzej Zulawski, and Jerzy Skolimowski, but also popular contemporary arthouse filmmakers like von Trier and Haneke, as

well as a work with a morbid approach to eroticism that is vaguely in the spirit of the beautifully odious oeuvre of Teutonic aberrant-garde auteur Jörg Buttgerit, *Code Blue* is a cold and cruel celluloid dance with death that is guaranteed to deject, distress, and disturb any viewer whose heart is still beating. Indeed, forget the work of Catherine Breillat, Lucile Hadžihalilović, and Chantal Akerman, *Antoniak* is the real deal in terms of a dame director that dares to depict the brutality of life, namely female life.

In her own pathetic yet empathetic way, Marian (Belgian actress Bien de Moor of Henri Xhonneux's bizarre de Sade adaptation *Marquis* (1989)) lives for death as a perennially lonely nurse in the terminal ward of a sickeningly sterile Dutch hospital who somewhat eagerly euthanizes patients, thus giving her a sense of power and importance that her personal life lacks. Although she tells coworkers that she has a daughter and provides evidence in the form of a vintage photograph that is probably of herself as a little girl, Marian is a barren woman who gets depressed merely by seeing footage of penguins laying eggs as it reminds her that her time is up in terms of being a mother, thus she must live a forsaken non-existence of the largely inward sort. Morbidly lonely and exceedingly sexually repressed, Marian likes to sit around her apartment naked while fondling a tiny inch-long pencil, as if she is so desperate for cock that she is willing to accept a minuscule needle dick so long as she receives some sort of male member, no matter how mediocre. While riding on a public bus, it is quite obvious that Marian would just love to start sucking the protruding fuck muscle of a man whose nether-region is only inches away from her face. When the man randomly walks away, Marian even gets out of her seat and looks for him at the back of the bus, as if she is suffering the delusion that she somehow missed out on an imaginary erotic encounter of sorts. After the sexually tense bus ride, Marian heads to a local video store when she spots a marginally handsome young German man named Konrad (Lars Eidinger), who she spies on while hanging around the Orson Welles section of the business, with copies of *Touch of Evil* (1958), *The Trial* (1962), and *F For Fake* (1973) being in plain view on the shelf, thus revealing some of auteuress *Antoniak*'s assumed favorite films. Marian does not know it yet but Konrad lives in the same apartment building as her and the two will eventually come together in a most decidedly disgustingly disharmonious way.

Marian's favorite movie is David Lean's overrated epic *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and while at the video store she rents a DVD copy of that and a random porno flick, which somewhat puzzles the man working at the counter, who passively heckles her. That night, Marian first watches *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and then turns on the fuck flick, though she does not actually watch it as she lets it play while she paints her door blood red, as if to save her from the Angel of Death, who she seems to sense that she has an upcoming date with. The next day, Marian helps a patient by giving him an injection that ends his life and when

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another nurse asks her if she tended to the dead dude, she totally denies it. A somewhat passive-aggressive and seemingly jealous old boot of a broad, Marian starts a senseless scene of sorts at a grocery store because she is overcharged a mere 80 cents. The girl at the register is a somewhat attractive young lady that Marian is plainly jealous of as demonstrated by her bitchy attitude to her despite the fact that she is extra nice to the store's handsome young male manager. Since Marian has no life and seemingly no relatives, she has seen it fit to keep little tokens and knickknacks from her patients/victims like brush with hair on it and a small cracked mirror, which she stores in a special cabinet in her apartment. The only person Marian seems to connect with his an elderly old woman that she just befriended who lives in the same apartment building as her named 'Willie' (Annemarie Prins), who she seems to respect due to her shared loneliness and refreshing openness, especially regarding sexuality, despite being an old fart. Indeed, when Marian asks her if she is afraid someone might break into her apartment due to the fact that she has a key to her apartment barely hidden right outside her front door, wild Willie responds, "If it were a young, handsome man, I would not mind." Willie also seems to sense Marian's sad and lonely life as demonstrated by her half-joking remark to her, "I don't know who is more tired, you or me." Of course, like with everyone else, Marian cannot help but lie to Willie by telling her she has a "tender" lover. When Marian goes to euthanize an elderly fellow that she has been giving somewhat sensual sponge bathes everyday and the rotting old-timer responds rather aggressively by busting up her face and causing her to bleed all over her face, she confesses her guilt to Willie and the old woman attempts to console her by telling her "I forgive you," even though she has no clue that the protagonist is in the business of offing old folks just like herself. When Willie randomly commits suicide, Marian finds her corpse, caresses it in a creepy fashion, and eerily stares into the dead woman's eyes as if she is longing for the same thing.

When Marian looks out her apartment window one night and accidentally sees two masked men gang-rape a chick, her life ultimately takes a dramatic change. While watching the violent vaginal pillaging, Marian is spotted via an apartment window nearby by the young German man Konrad that she saw at the video store. As it turns out, Konrad lives in the same apartment building as Marian and also seems somewhat 'aroused' by the rape. Since both of them seem to derive voyeuristic pleasure from the attack and neither of them bothers to call the police, Marian and Konrad both seem to intuitively realize that they are kindred carnal spirits of sorts, or so it seems at first. The next day, Marian visits the rape site where she finds a used condom that one of the rapists senselessly left behind. In a rather revealing scene that demonstrates that Marian unequivocally has more than a few screws loose, the uniquely unhinged protagonist empties the dubious semen from the used rubber onto her vagina and begins masturbating with it. During the same scene, it becomes apparent that Marian has some other

serious issues as reflected by all the various scars on her thighs, thus hinting that she is a 'cutter.' Naturally, Marian develops a deep, dark, and disturbing obsession with Konrad that involves her cutting a tiny hole in her blinds so that she can regularly spy on him without him knowing it. As demonstrated by the fact that he is constantly standing at his window, Konrad seems to sense that Marian is always watching him and wallows in such attention. When Konrad randomly calls up to Marian's apartment and begs, "I'm lonely. I'M LONELY!" and "I'm so lonely. I want to help you. Please," the protagonist is too afraid to respond and walks always from the call-box. Ultimately, Marian will be forced to encounter Konrad by chance at a party. Indeed, after breaking down to a young coworker named Anne (Sophie van Winden) and confiding to her that she is afraid that there is "something approach her," Marian is told, "You have to be good to yourself. If you aren't good to yourself...you can't be good to others either" and is subsequently invited to a party.

Like Konrad, Marian is invited to the same party by a "friend of a friend" and when they bump into one another, they mention nothing of their shared witnessing of the rape. Of course, Konrad acts totally charming and tries to flatter Marian by telling her she looks "like an actress" instead of a nurse. Konrad is a stage manager and, somewhat curiously, he informs Marian that his favorite movie is also Doctor Zhivago, henceforth making it clear that he is attempting to prey on her emotions. Needless to say, Marian and Konrad soon go back to the former's apartment to passionately fuck, but in the middle of making out, the young kraut curiously randomly stops and states, "I'm sorry...I think I'll leave," which inspires the protagonist to desperately yell, "No, you can't" like a disappointed child and try anything she can to convince her male suitor to stay. When Konrad heads for the door, Marian literally jumps on his cock and starts fiddling with it, but that does not last long. Indeed, Konrad begins fiercely masturbating and won't let Marian touch his member, but instead demands the protagonist "watch me," adding when he becomes disappointed with her gazing, "Just watch me. Watch me. Not my face, stupid bitch, my dick. Watch it." Naturally, when Konrad demands that Marian "talk dirty" to him and she says things like "come to me my love," he becomes extremely annoyed and bitch slaps her. At this point, Marian becomes pathetically desperate to get fucked by seeming psychopath Konrad, who is so narcissistic that he is only interested in fucking himself, that she strips off all of her clothes in an extremely fashion fashion and attempts to more or less jump on his cock, but he responds by beating the shit out of her. While lying on the floor naked and bloody, Marian looks more physically and metaphysically dead than one of the patients from the terminal ward. In the end, while Konrad lies in bed with a soulless expression on his face, Marian frantically slits her wrist in a purposeful fashion.

Notably, in an interview at cineuropa.org, auteuress Antoniak stated regarding the significance of Code Blue protagonist Marian's various questionable acts

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of euthanasia, “Marian’s patients are terminally ill and she wants to include herself in their death. Which is more what many families do for their loved ones. One patient allows her to inject him, another resists and fights. In the first case she is “Death according to Heidegger,” the experience we are consciously approaching. In the second one she is “Death according to Levinas,” a murderer approaching at night. The second experience leaves Marian in doubts. It’s the beginning of her becoming human.” While Antoniak can philosophize all she wants regarding her protagonist’s actions, when it comes down to it, the protagonist is a decidedly deranged dame whose psychological decay only seems transcended by the deterioration of her antiquated reproductive system. Of course, the fact remains that, like the protagonist of the film, a good percentage of female serial killers were either nurses and/or used poison as their inconspicuous method of murder, thus bringing new meaning to the phrase ‘feminine touch.’ While the protagonist of *Code Blue* is certainly, at least to some extent, empathetic towards her patients/victims, her actions are those of a warped woman with a death wish who ‘lives’ vicariously through the elderly folks that she carefully exterminates. As reflected by the fact that her husband Jacek ‘Luter’ Lenartowicz—a musician turned screenwriter that founded the popular Polish punk rock bands *Deadlock* and *Tilt*—died in 2004 after a long and painful struggle with brain cancer, director Antoniak was certainly personally obsessed with death, hence the malignant yet strangely eroticized melancholy dripping from *Code Blue*, which is without question one of the most hysterically hopeless and fiercely forlorn films I have ever seen. In fact, in her interview with *Cineuropa* she admitted the film was inspired by the death of a loved one, stating when she was asked when she started working on the work, “It starts for me with an experience that gets into my system and gives me stuff for reflection. In the case of *CODE BLUE*, it was death of someone I loved. As a director you climb the mountain again with each film. But with *CODE BLUE* I consciously took more risk by choosing the taboo subject of death. *NOTHING PERSONAL* was lyrical, *CODE BLUE* is challenging, controversial.” While the film managed to win the ‘Golden Calf’—the Dutch equivalent to an Oscar—for “Best Cinematography” and “Best Sound Design” at the 2011 Netherlands Film Festival, *Code Blue*, quite unlike Antoniak’s much lauded and largely life-affirming first feature *Nothing Personal*, seems to have severely offended the majority of candy ass mainstream film critics, which is certainly a good sign, but it is certainly no surprise considering that the flick is rather politically incorrect and, whether intentional on the director’s part or not, is a feminist’s worst nightmare as it exposes many fears and weakness of women in a uniquely uncompromising way, thereupon indicating that Antoniak is a serious and genuine artist and not someone that is attempting to win a popularity contest. Indeed, *Code Blue* is the film that the critics wish Michael Haneke’s overrated work *Amour* (2012) was, as a work that, for better or worse, fully and unsentimentally embraces death and never looks back.

-Ty E

HEART OF AMERICA
HEART OF AMERICA

Uwe Boll (2002) I'll start off by saying that I don't hold a grudge against Uwe Boll. Hell, I find his video game adaptations to be hilarious. People don't put in perspective, that if Uwe didn't direct them, hype would be present, and the let-down would be incredibly severe. Uwe Boll's name is a warning label for film. Little know, that before the critically acclaimed release of *House of the Dead*, he made many "serious" films, one of which is about a school shooting. I was hoping for Boll to wise up. With his promise of it not focusing on video games and rock music, he loses his New Year's resolution quickly and embodies the rock aspect. When our young troubled pre-pubescent angst-y teen wakes up to his heavy metal music. He gets a phone call. He tells them to hold on, puts the phone down, and takes a long exaggerated yet exasperated sigh of emotion. Boll lost most of his audience right there. The opening credits are lined with techno-metal tracks that for the most part. Issues fair warnings that kids are time-bombs. They then bombard the screen with pointless title card statistics on the amount of deaths that correlate to some random incident that no one cares about. This boy then logs onto his instant messaging device. The screen name which I am not quoting goes along these lines (vAMPIREmETAL6669) Already, Boll has incorporated that he is a satanist, or damn well wishes he was. After using his password "metal" and discussing today's events with much mystique, he ventures out to begin his day. The common suburbia is the easiest setting for a film. If you use it right, it can even provide instant "depth" and "allegory's" to your film. Boll needs to learn something from cinema's masters of expressionism. His scenes are quaint and have total disregard for any substance. This suburbia does include the following; joggers, skateboarders, paper boys, white picket fences, and the beautifully trimmed grass. After we meet several characters, we meet one named Dara. Dara is the one who lives in the biggest house on the block, but she is what as known are "Gothics" Her mom is never there so she must rebel against the world in any way she can, which may or may not include whoring herself out to jocks at gas stations. I think this scene was the only scene that really had emotion or even grabbed my attention. Boll makes his attentions clear that *Heart of America* is presumptively an anti-drug film. Dara buys some drugs from local dealer Wex. When Wex gets caught, he tells his counselor "Hey! What's the worst that can happen?!" Cut to the scene of Dara standing on top of the school. She looks as if she is contemplating suicide and is doing so by copying poses that make her look as if she watched *The Crow* too much. The whole "medicated angst" theme is recurrent in most 90's films, such as *Heathers* and *Girl, Interrupted*. I could imagine what Boll wanted from this film but it all falls flat. *Heart of America* is that one film that has nothing in it to even give it credit as an auteur's work. It is bland, full with inane dialogue, and manages to bring nothing new to the school shooting phenomenon. Maybe if Boll stopped

creating much-maligned cinema, kids wouldn't lash out against their peers.
-mAQ

FAR CRY
FAR CRY

Uwe Boll (2008)

Uwe Boll is without a doubt the Ed Wood* of our time. He creates video game film after video game film and legions of furious fans retaliate with lewd, crude comments towards his film making. The real kicker is that none of these "horrible" adaptations are based on good games so we're not missing anything really. The House of the Dead was a terrible, repetitive game and same with the film but for the films sake, reloading wasn't tiring, in fact, reloading never happened. We just popped the DVD in and let the rest unfold. Bloodrayne is an annoying and also repetitive vampire 3rd person action game. I'd rather waste my time on Soul Reaver. This was also an intolerable film. Far Cry marks one of the first quality video game renderings he has done and you know what? It's actually insanely dim-witted but charming to a point of excellence. This made me realize his vision of adaptations was a true and reflective vision of said piece. No one else can bring something of this caliber to film making and keep it legit. A true auteur. Now Far Cry came as a surprise to me, of all people. I'd seen the poster and the protagonist playing Jack Carver looked similar to Kim Sørderholm so I just assumed it was him. Upon viewing it, a very similar nasally voice exploded out of Jack Carver's mouth and it was then that I realized it was the very same Til Schweiger who had a part in SLC Punk in which he infamously screamed "Sink you fool!!" He has recently been cast to appear in Tarantino's unrelated "remake" of Inglourious Basterds. I can only assume he appears as an evil Nazi that gets his head smashed in by some Jew with a corny nickname that borders "Bear Jew." It was Schweiger and Schweiger alone that carried this film to B-movie greatness. While he doesn't portray the "badass" as well as should have been, he makes the film quirky, eventful, and overall fun as shit. I'd played Far Cry a bit and it was built off impressive graphics and streamless landscaping. Now the film doesn't actually scope out these attributes but features an entirely Germanic atmosphere (something not seen in recent cinema) and exhilarating action sequences, which is unheard of for an Uwe Boll movie. No matter how hard the gun play tries, nothing can hold this film up like the lead casting role of Til does. His snarky one-liners and mediocre action scenes (normally involving a handgun) draw in a questionable amount of humorous ethics each bounding to a certain subject; sex, romance, scientific experimentation, stereotypical "wrong place/wrong time" character developments, and an outrageous sense of right and wrong. Sealing this film's Teutonic credo is the antagonist casting of Udo Kier who, of course, plays the egomaniacal tortured artist who spreads his vision of recreating human nature in the form of genetically altered super soldiers, rabid paintings, and genetic mischief. Fuck Bruce Campbell. Long live Til Schweiger. If you haven't played Far Cry, the plot goes as such. Jack Carver, an alcoholic boatman ex-special ops agent, gets hired to bring a reporter to an island known for conspir-

acy theories based on genetic engineering. He soon finds himself in a heap of trouble. That's the basic of basic right there. With a cast of "Oh, I've seen them before" characters, Far Cry provides endless fun at no additional cost. For an Uwe Boll film, the result is actually hearteningly tacky. It's obvious that he has been honing his skill down into a dire form of get-money produce-quality film making but even this post-processed slice of B-movie cheese is beyond my comprehension. Far Cry is home to very funny times with some scenes with decent choreography. As I said, without Til Schweiger this film would have died on the operating table but somehow, a proverbial phoenix rises from the ashes to bring us one of the biggest surprise hits of our time. And I use "hit" very, very loosely.

*Some restrictions may apply

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RAMPAGE
RAMPAGE

Uwe Boll (2009)

I have had many aggressively nihilistic friends over the years, young men who have a hellish fireball of hatred towards modern America and everything that it stands for. Of course, what young white man with a set of testicles and two functional eyes would not be repelled by seeing the land their forefather conquered be turned into a de-industrialized third world that is looted by parasitic diaspora tribes from around the globe. Take that in consideration with all the violent action films Hollywood is pumping out and one won't be surprised to realize there is essentially an underground unorganized army of very pissed off white men. Most of these young men unfortunately use their pent up unharnessed hatred towards their own self-destruction. A friend of mine once blew up a bomb in the parking lot of Wal-Mart only to find himself sharing a jail shower with a group of Negroes. Why couldn't he have been more creative? German Ed Wood Uwe Boll seems to have some hope for these young men in his new action-packed trash masterpiece Rampage, a film that holds no hostages and offers no condolence to America's happy Hollywood-ending loving audiences. All of Uwe Boll's improperly channeled hatred for America and Hollywood has been finally appropriately expressed in his film Rampage. The victims of Rampage are the American majority philistine population, the majority of people that will watch it, the film letting the audience know that not everything is alright at Starbucks or the hair salon. The lead "anti-hero" Bill is a young psychopath with a grudge against society that won't be vaporized merely by taking a massive bong-toke. It is apparent from the get go that Billy boy has a secondary manifesting character that is begging to be unleashed on the society as the film progresses. By the end of the film, one realizes that Bill is a lone wolf that only sees himself as a fellow comrade. In a society where alienating anyone that does not believe in the fantastic myth of a multicultural Utopia and the fallacy of world peace, deranged individuals like Bill are only growing exponentially everyday. The question is who is to blame culturally: Eli Wiesel and Oprah Winfrey or David Duke and Minister King Samir Shabazz? Despite his slight mental instability, Travis Bickle, the Anti-hero of Martin Scorsese's masterpiece The Taxi-Driver, saw some hope for the world. Even saving a young teen prostitute from a weaselly pimp was at least a virtuous deed. Flash forward a couple decades later and most of that urban vigilante hope is now at the level of the bowels of a New York City sewer. Bill of Rampage is not interested in helping anyone, he's just in it for the money. In America, one can make millions by putting a taser to their testicles on TV for the viewing pleasure of America's barbaric programmed audiences. If a jackass like Johnny Knoxville can become rich and famous by degrading himself (as well as degrading his audience), why not just take the money and run whilst unloading bullets? Rampage has a very stupid and generic metal soundtrack that accentu-

ates the films overall feeling of unrelenting pathological hatred. The Taxi-Driver had a beautiful Jazz score (and I hate Jazz) that was able to touch more than one nerve. One only has to follow the historical emotional degeneration of film (from The Taxi-Driver to Rampage) to see the overall deluge of American 'kultur.' Is Rampage a work of anti-social action-packed art or a capitalist German Anti-American's most repulsive cinematic fart? The film is merely what it is at face value, an aggressive emotional response to an uncertain occidental world. I have no doubt in my mind that Rampage will set some idiot off on a killing Rampage and I would not be surprised if that was one of Uwe Boll's intentions with the film. The world is no longer feeling sorry for the United States, a country that prides itself on unwarranted arrogance and hating any place/people that prides itself on its cultural achievements. I almost fear that Rampage is an expression of more hideous things to come in America, for there is no evidence to the contrary. Since Hollywood is not interested in expressing American truths (but more interested in covering them up), leave it to an honest hack like Uwe Boll to so glaringly reveal them.

-Ty E

AUSCHWITZ
AUSCHWITZ

Uwe Boll (2011)

When I saw the minute longish trailer for Uwe Boll's upcoming film *Auschwitz* – a B-grade cinematic work that portrays death camp death via Zyklon B and postmortem incineration via unkosher oven – I was more than a little bit intrigued. In the trailer, Uwe Boll can be seen dressed up in SS garb while guarding the gas chamber door in an unintentionally hilarious manner. Upon first watching the trailer, I thought *Auschwitz* was an exploitation film as the deaths are portrayed in a manner that would probably bring a tear to Spielberg's Asiatic eyes and incite unrelenting ecstasy in the blackest of hearts (especially members of the Black Israelites). In reality, *Auschwitz* is a docudrama that was supposedly designed to spark fear in the souls of thoroughly desensitized American audiences, as well as sinister historical revisionists. In various interviews, Boll has remarked that films like *Schindler's List* are no longer emotionally and aesthetically potent enough to leave a powerful mark on modern moviegoing audiences, thus, the German director thought it was his duty as a good German to make a film that would provoke fear, sympathy, and historical knowledge in common apathetic folks and demonic anti-Semites alike. Boll has summed up his cinematic mission with *Auschwitz* as follows, "The movie is made for the people who deny or don't know enough about the holocaust. It will possibly be tough for survivors to watch that movie, but I think they will agree that the movie is important." Showing his true commitment to historical authenticity, Boll even went as far as hiring a real holocaust survivor to play an extra in the film, stating "We actually had a survivor in the gas chamber, and he was overwhelmed with the situation. If you see the movie, he is the old man just standing there while everybody was flipping out." *Auschwitz* is divided into separate parts; a dramatic portrayal of the Teutonic murder mills and a segment where Boll interviews German high school students to find out how well versed they are in Holocaust trivia; no doubt a deranged dichotomy. Unfortunately, these two separate segments are from seamlessly interconnected; thus, the film sometimes feels like a jumble mix of anti-pornographic Jew-slaughtering and abandoned footage from an aborted after school special. During the beginning of *Auschwitz*, Boll makes the questionable claim that various academic professors have congratulated him on being "German" due to his Fatherland's history of Jewocide. Of course, anyone who has ever had the misfortune of being involved with the modern academic world knows that such views can only result in career suicide, so I am somewhat dubious of Boll's claims. Additionally, I doubt many people will buy Boll's purported empathy for the Jews while watching *Auschwitz* as he seems to have made the film for the sole purpose of stirring sensationalism that sells. I certainly cannot think of another film where naked prepubescent corpses are run through an easy-incinerate oven. I honestly would not be surprised if Boll viewed Agustí

Villaronga's sicko masterpiece *In a Glass Cage* (1987) religiously for inspiration throughout the production of the *Auschwitz*. The fact that *Auschwitz*, like Boll's politically incorrect satire *Blubberella*, was made with the leftover set from *BloodRayne 3: The Third Reich*, only makes the film seem all the more insincere yet, at the same time, strangely charming.

One mustn't forget that Uwe Boll is infamously known for heckling and baiting three of the biggest Jewish filmmakers in Hollywood: Steven Spielberg, Michael Bay, and Eli Roth. Of course, most liberally inclined individuals, especially modern cosmopolitan members of the self-loathing post-Holocaust Germanic race, tend to refrain from verbally assaulting members of the Judaic persuasion yet bodacious Boll has publicly bullied members of God's chosen race like a jubilant SA brownshirt who got lost at a Hebraic wedding. In short, Uwe Boll's empathy for his subjects in *Auschwitz* seems about as honest as Spielberg's emotions would be had he directed a film about the Anglo-American firebombing of Dresden, Germany (aka the "German" Holocaust) during World War II. Although Boll may be less than honest in regard to his condemnation of Germany's infamous past, that does not mean that *Auschwitz* is a film that is totally devoid of historical accuracy. In fact (and unsurprisingly), most viewer will learn more about the Holocaust and National Socialism watching Boll's B-grade death camp flick than by watching Spielberg's Shoah epic; *Schindler's List*. Although post-World war II German youth may have had their brains lobotomized via Americanization of the Fatherland just like American adolescents do, they are certainly more proficient in history than their former "freedom loving" occupiers. Aside from the non-Aryan (aka *Ausländer*) German high school students featured in *Auschwitz*, most of the ethnic German teens featured in the film seem to know quite a bit about *Das Dritte Reich*. For example, a goofy hippie Aryan teen discusses Austrian rune-master Guido von List's occult influence on National Socialist ideology; a subject that is no doubt unknown to your average American history professor. Of course, films like *Schindler's List* are designed to stir the emotions of goys and god's special girls and boys alike, thus, one cannot criticize Spielberg for directing a film that is nothing more than big budget and expertly disguised agitprop. When it comes down to it (and this is very low, I might add!), *Auschwitz* is one of the most bold and uncompromising looks at everyone's favorite death camp. After all, what other German director would have the glorious gall to include himself in a film about *Auschwitz* as a German guard who is "just following orders." I don't think I am the only one that would agree that Boll has a striking resemblance to Rudolf Höss; the real-life first commandant of *Auschwitz* concentration camp. I certainly would not complain if Boll decided to direct and play the lead role in a biopic about Höss; *der todesking* of the Holocaust. After all, it is the duty of every good German citizen to honor the legacy of their ancestors.

AUSCHWITZ

At the beginning of his filmmaking career, and while still a thoroughly confused work in progress, Uwe Boll directed *Amoklauf* (1994); a pretentious artsy farty serial killer flick that attempted (but failed) to steal the psychopathic cinematic brilliance of films directed by fellow Aryan auteur filmmakers Michael Haneke, Gerald Kargl, and Jörg Buttgereit. Of course, Dr. Boll soon realized that if he ever wanted to have a financially successful career in filmmaking, he would have to make films that could further wet the lips of drooling American buffoons, therefore, making *Auschwitz* was only the next logical step in his somewhat successful and equally notorious filmmaking career. The name of the game when working in Hollywood is prostitution and Uwe Boll has certainly proven to be quite the ghetto gigolo yet unlike most individuals working the streets of Sunset Boulevard, he has been able to maintain some dignity due to the dubious ambiguity and subversive subtexts of his films. It is pretty much a given that most audiences will find the production line murder featured in *Auschwitz* to be a glaring exercise in mores-shattering bad taste, but it is also the most rewarding and memorable aspect of the film. I think that Uwe Boll might want to consider creating a director's cut of *Auschwitz* by exterminating the high school interview segments from the film. At the very least, *Auschwitz* is worth viewing just for the trip down Heaven's Street. Some film critics have already described the film as a work of "torture porn" but *Auschwitz* – with its assortment of ghastly nude bodies of every age and size; which are more horrifying than the actual Nazi gassings – lacks even the slightest inkling of eroticism (unless you have some sort of bizarre pedophile/necrophiliac dual-fetish). If Boll was aiming for all-encompassing ugliness with *Auschwitz*, he most certainly achieved it. Of course, as one finds out while watching the film, Mr. Boll certainly did not lose his appetite while standing around nude and supremely emaciated death camp slaves. Now I just wish I could hear Steven Spielberg's thoughts on *Auschwitz*.

-Ty E

BLUBBERELLA

Uwe Boll (2011)

If there is any modern day film director who has a special talent for bullying the American-public-hating cynics that run and make films in Hollywood, it is Aryan schlockmeister auteur Uwe Boll. In his 2011 film *Blubberella*, Boll once again displays his venomous yet jestful hatred for Tinseltown swindlers by parodying their film parodies. The German director humbly summed up the synopsis of his film as follows, "The first female fat superhero ... She will kick major ass - with her major ass ... All the BLOODRAYNE fans will love that movie!" *Blubberella* takes its title from the obese and obscenely repellent American ½ vampire-½ human protagonist of the film who lusts after food more than she lusts after blood. *Blubberella*'s rapist psychiatrist (whose name is Dr. Freud) believes that she substitutes food for sex, but that doesn't stop her from trying to manhandle any swinging dick that has the misfortune of passing through her rather large general radius. Like most obese white chicks, *Blubberella* was voted in high school as the girl most likely to fornicate with black boyz. In the 70 + year tradition of endless anti-Aryan Hollywood films, *Blubberella* is a film about a protagonist who is on a mission to exterminate as many Nazis as possible, especially those that won't share their extra-meaty foot-long subs. Although it may seem far-fetched that an extremely large and equally slow white girl is able to kill entire squads of Nazis, it is no more improbable than Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009); a film with such an absurd premise that it portrays a group of Judaic mensch as SS-crushing-super-commandos. In between killing American and British actors portraying Nazis (another Hollywood favorite Boll pokes fun at), *Blubberella* unsuccessfully attempts to pick up Jewish perverts on a dating website (no doubt, poking fun at Friedberg and Seltzer's *Date Movie*). Boll's inclusion of modern technology in a film that is set in the Nazi era is indubitably his way of mocking the fact that Hollywood is obsessed with keeping the fear and evil of the long-dead Nazis alive, thus *Blubberella* could be best described as Boll's noble attempt at creating an anti-*Inglourious Basterds* (like the Jewish Basterd's in Tarantino's film, *Blubberella* cites "killing Nazis" as one her favorite hobbies). To describe *Blubberella* as a ridiculously retarded movie would be an understatement, but that doesn't mean that Uwe Boll failed to assemble the ultimate cinematic attack against Hollywood and loathsome audience-denigrating hack filmmakers like Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer.

Like most retrograde Hollywood satires, *Blubberella* playfully assaults the usual subjects: Nazis, Hitler, gays, blacks, charming gentlemen, and everything else Americans are supposed to be concerned with. Of course, Uwe Boll's portrayal and execution of these subjects is quite different when compared to post-modern Hollywood satires, as *Blubberella* is far from politically incorrect and ultimately a big German, "Fuck you!" to neo-vaudevillian Hollywood. In one

BLUBBERELLA

especially reflexive and self-conscious scene, a Nazi officer retorts to Blubberella the blimp that Germans do have a sense of humor, thus mocking Hollywood's portrayal of Germans (especially Nazi officers) as uncomical authoritarian buffoons. Boll is well known in the cinema world for challenging various Hollywood blockbuster directors and film critics to boxing matches, but – being the girly men that they are – have all declined to partake in the German Ed Wood's challenge. Instead, Boll features a film critic in Blubberella – who also happens to be a rat-like vampire that somewhat resembles Count Orlok from F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) – being cruelly experimented on by an enthusiastic Nazi doctor. Boll also refrains from exhibiting the sort of Negrophilia that is typical of a Hollywood director. Throughout Blubberella, various white actors appear in blackface (an early trade of Jewish Vaudevillian performers and Hollywood actors) and act like harlequin tools with chips on their shoulders. In a nightmarish dream sequence in the film, Brendan Fletcher (who is in blackface) – the star of Boll's *Rampage* (2009) – aggressively mumbles about how many times he has been shot (while speaking to Claus von Stauffenberg) as if it is some sort of honor. The wee blackface man also states (after a white man mentions the Congo; possibly the most crime ridden nation in the world), “why you gotzta always be talkin bout da Congo?” I can only assume that Boll was lampooning the way Hollywood filmmakers often portray black characters as domineering, thus causing nervous laughter and fear in white American audiences via unconscious sublimation. Boll also had the wonderful gall to satirize the quasi-blaxploitation drama *Precious* (2009). During this exceedingly grotesque scene, a white man in blackface portrays Blubberella's heckling and sadistically abusive mother (the inverse of the Hollywood trash comedy *White Chicks*). After watching Blubberella, it will be apparent to the viewer that Germans do have a sense of humor, for in Boll's world, Hollywood-invented America rightfully becomes the central butt of the joke.

Although I expected Blubberella to be at least mildly humorous, it far exceeded my relatively slim expectations. It is not often that a filmmaker successfully satires the unsaintly satire saints of Hollywood, thus beating them at their own cynical game. Of course, Boll has been one of the greatest international rivals of Hollywood since the beginning. With his 2003 piece-of-celluloid-excrement *House of the Dead*, Boll managed to make a pretty penny at virtually no cost to himself via German government funding and virtually nonexistent production values that rival the goofy splatter flicks of Herschell Gordon Lewis. For Blubberella and *Auschwitz* (2011), Boll merely recycled the sets from his film *Bloodrayne: The Third Reich* (2010), henceforth, proving his keen business sense. Although Boll's cameo in Blubberella as an unconventionally blissful and mirthful Adolf Hitler might seem a tad offensive to certain viewers, his appearance in *Auschwitz* as an SS guard who tends the Jew-incinerating ovens at everyone's favorite death camp will certainly cause heads to explode. If you're

looking to see a severely retarded comedy where political correctness has been disposed of in a Nazi-era urinal, Blubberella is bound to provide you with a splendid and farcical post-postmodern time. I suspect that Auschwitz may turn out to be Boll's masterpiece, but until then, watch Blubberella; a film that lets sentimental American audiences know that fat girls need love too.

-Ty E

I LOVE YOU, I KILL YOU
I LOVE YOU, I KILL YOU

Uwe Brandner (1971)

In describing the pseudo-sci-fi dystopian anti-Heimat film *I Love You, I Kill You* (1971) aka *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich* directed by unfortunately forgotten German New Cinema auteur Uwe Brandner (Blinker, 50/50 aka Halbe-Halbe), Austrian-born Jewish-American cineaste Amos Vogel wrote in his magnum opus *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974), "Through stylized acting, mysterious silences, disrupted sentences and frozen action, an atmosphere of alienation and stagnation permeates what the director ironically calls "a picture-book story of our Vaterland -- a vicious satire of the sentimental German "Heimat" films of the past." Personally, I think Vogel is at least half-wrong and merely spurred by his hatred of Teutons and the fact he was forced to flee Austria as a teenager due to Uncle Adolf's Anschluss in 1938, as *I Love You, I Kill You* is less a satire than a conspicuously culturally pessimistic depiction of the Fatherland's deluge as a result of the Second World War as directed by a filmmaker who, like so many of his generation, was kicked out his hometown (Brandner was born on May 23, 1941 in Reichenberg, Sudetenland, Germany, which was later turned into Liberec, Czech Republic after Stalin expelled all the Germans) at a young age and forced to accept Americanized West Germany as his new home. Ironically, the Heimatfilm ("homeland-film") genre—a sentimentalist film style that was popular from the late-1940s to early-1970s that promoted healthy rural living, family, clean morality, and traditionalism—was largely made for the 12 million Germans (known as "Vertriebene"), like director Brandner's family, who were kicked out of their homes located in former eastern territories of the Third Reich and were longing for a sense of kinship and community in their new adopted hometowns in the West. With *I Love You, I Kill You*, I felt little, if any, sense of satire and more of an apocalyptic depiction of a 'fascistic' village imploding from within, as if director Brandner was attempting to create a post-Nazi Heimat flick that allegorically depicts the fall of the Sudetenland as a result of National Socialism tendencies, but strategically disguising the work as counter-culture-themed anti-Heimat flick so as to appeal to cinematic trends of that time. The völkisch yet simultaneously anti-völkisch tale of an effeminate teacher who comes to a small rural village to teach and who starts a homoerotic romantic relationship with a masculine hunter, only to be betrayed by said hunter, *I Love You, I Kill You* was once described by *Time Out* magazine as a "L'Age d'Or for the valium generation" and "a rural version of *Performance*," but such descriptions betray the film's distinctly and innately Teutonic roots and thematic complexity. A sort of less reductionist-driven take on Peter Fleischmann's 'classic' anti-Heimat flick *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* meets *The Wicker Man* (1973) and *The Hamburg Syndrome* (1979) aka *Die Hamburger Krankheit*, *I Love You, I Kill You* is a darkly romantic Heimat flick that

falls somewhere in between rural kraut homo Heaven and Hell.

I Love You, I Kill You begins in an atmospheric Bavarian field where a fellow simply known as the 'Hunter' (Rolf Becker, the super Aryan blond father of popular Mischling Jewish actors Ben and Meret Becker) has just shot a man dead with his shotgun in a film somewhat sardonically described in its opening credits as "Eine Bildergeschichte aus der Heimat" (aka "a pictorial story from the homelands"). A handsome blond man with a beautiful blonde girlfriend that he enjoys making sweet love to in the scenic countryside, the Hunter's world is ultimately turned upside down when a swarthy and effeminate Teacher (Hannes Fuchs, who only starred in two other films, Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) and Ulli Lommel and Peter Moland's *Haytabo - Falscher Verdacht* (1971)) who looks sort of like a gay wop Jim Morrison comes to town to teach grade school children. Apparently, the Teacher has come to the town to replace the nameless/faceless dead man featured at the beginning of *I Love You, I Kill You*. As the film vaguely hints, the Hunter, whose job is to kill wild wolves and wolf dogs before they prey on wild game, is plagued by a vicious circle of sexual confusion where he befriends, falls in love, and ultimately kills each teacher that comes to town and only at the end of *I Love You, I Kill You* does he find a perverse form of redemption. Upon first seeing the Teacher, the Hunter whistles at him as if he were a hot chick with big tits and a voluptuous ass. Total opposites (the Hunter is masculine, fair-skinned, and blond, while the Teacher is rather effete, tan, and dark-haired), the Hunter and Teacher seem to compliment one another perfectly as if they are the gay yin-yang of the Bavarian countryside, but things take a turn for the worst when the former teaches the latter to hunt, thus disturbing the natural order of things in the curiously quaint community. Indeed, only the Hunter is allowed to hunt and for whatever inexplicable reason, he teaches the Teacher—a 'progressive' man who has a complete and utter incapacity for following orders and obeying timeless laws—to hunt despite the fact that it is illegal for him to do so. Ironically, it is not homo-sex but hunting that ultimately leads to the Teacher's annihilation.

Ruled over rather ruthlessly by two half-crazed Gestapo-esque cops in fascistic black leather uniforms, the people of the village are kept in check in a Brave New World fashion by being force fed dubious prescription drugs in a manner that has become startlingly common in the contemporary Occident. When an old man who forgot to take his meds declares, "I'm going to kill all of you. I'm so full of anger!" the police simply give him some drugs and he is back to 'normal,' even apologizing to the men in blue for his verbal transgressions. Unfortunately, many of the people in the town seem like retarded robots due to the drugs, as demonstrated by the fact two local men incessantly repeat, "How do you do?" in a seemingly passive-aggressive and somewhat Lynch-esque manner after bumping into the Teacher. While teaching the Teacher how to hunt, the Hunter demonstrates how brainwashed by the state he is by giving the following speech

I LOVE YOU, I KILL YOU

to his new friend: "The government loves our woods. And they show us their appreciation. That's why we have to keep the wolves and wild dogs in line. We can't use poison. The game would perish as well. And then, no more government help. And we wouldn't know what to do." In a rather prophetic scene, a town elder writes, "Maybe someday, we will run out of medicine. That will be the Last Judgment. We have obeyed the laws and need not fear any judge." Of course, Judgment Day comes sooner than expected when the Teacher decides to disobey the rules and rebelliously hunts wild beasts on his own, thus ultimately turning the novice hunter into the hunted when his boyfriend finds out. Despite his steamy sodomite love affair with the Teacher, the Hunter decides to betray his lover and turns him over to the authorities where he is nonsensically machine-gunned down like a rabid dog. Despite betraying his lover in a manner that led to his death, the Hunter flips out and kills the two cops in cold blood immediately after they execute the Teacher, thus concluding *I Love You, I Kill You* in a rather explosive and anarchistic fashion that more than hints at a dubious future for not only the Hunter, but the entire village as well. Indeed, the Hunter may have finally found the 'redemption' he was looking for, but not before killing at least two of his boy toys and destroying order in the town in the process.

Despite being one of the first films of German New Cinema to receive a commercial international release, *I Love You, I Kill You* is all but totally unknown today anywhere outside of the German-speaking world and has yet to be released in any home media format in the United States, thus succumbing to the same sad fate as a good portion of the masterpieces of the Teutonic New Wave. Interestingly, despite seeming like the work of a master, *I Love You, I Kill You* was the first feature directed by auteur Uwe Brandner, who was chiefly a science fiction writer (though he previously worked as a journalist and jazz musician), ever directed and it is nothing short of a shame that his filmmaking career essentially fizzled out before it ever really started. Concluding in a 'redneck lynch mob' fashion not unlike *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*, *I Love You, I Kill You* ultimately iconoclastically breaks with anti-Heimat film convention (the films typically conclude with the loony lynch mob winning) during the final couple moments, thus ending with a rather revolutionary, if not nihilistic, message that begs the viewer to break with outmoded traditions before it is too late and you have killed you beloved sod soul-mate. Indeed, despite its cynical portrayal of the village, *I Love You, I Kill You* is, at least aesthetically speaking, one of the most poetic, atmospheric, and metaphysical 'Heimat' films I have ever seen as a sort of more coherent but no less mystifying take on what Werner Herzog would later try with *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas*. Featuring ethereal country landscapes that are immaculately accented by the sounds of unseen wind chimes and totally silent village buildings and rooms that capture the foreboding calmness of the village, *I Love You, I Kill You* sincerely attempts to capture the distinct aura of rural Bavaria instead of simply maliciously parodying it like

in *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*. Interestingly, Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his landmark work *New German Cinema: A History* (1989) regarding *I Love You, I Kill You* that it is “a bold attempt to bring the existentialism of Kafka’s *Castle* to bear on the setting of the *Heimat* film. The very self-conscious and literary use of genre makes the film chiefly interesting for the way it introduces the figure of the Double, and with it a play on identification and otherness which may have influenced Fassbinder in the conception of *Despair* (1978).” Personally, as a full-fledged Fassbinder fanatic, I would rather re-watch Brandner’s *I Love You, I Kill You* over *Despair* any day.

Indeed, more than anything, *I Love You, I Kill You* seemed to me like a schizophrenic take on the *Heimat* film with a dichotomous love-hate relationship for the kraut country directed by a man who was uprooted from his Eastern hometown by force while just a little lad. While the character of the Hunter is a sort of symbol of traditional man (masculine, lawful, stoic, adventurous, etc.), the Teacher is a symbol of decadent modern man (effeminate, disorderly, unkempt, hysterical, etc.), so naturally when the two men unite it results in complete and utter catastrophe, thus *I Love You, I Kill You* expresses a sort of obvious counter-culture message that the ‘old Germany’ and ‘new Germany’ cannot live together peacefully and that the geographically butchered nation is destined for a cataclysmic future (which would soon arrive in the form of far-left terrorist groups like the Baader-Meinhof Group not long after the film was released). Indeed, *I Love You, I Kill You* might have an anti-authoritarian message, but it also has no real answers, thus (unwittingly) hinting that a Germany without traditional culture and tradition has no future at all, which the present-day German film industry pretty much confirms, at least culturally speaking. A rather reluctant parable about freedom against fascism, *I Love You, I Kill You* ultimately made me question what sort of film Uwe Brandner would have directed had Uncle Adolf won the war and had his family not been expelled from the Sudetenland, as the director’s ‘anti-Heimat’ flick may cast a critical eye on the kraut countryside, but it is also a work that longs for and worships the natural beauty of rural Teutonia. A contradictory love-hate depiction of a land where the ‘blood and soil’ has been despoiled by a completely catastrophic Second World War, *I Love You, I Kill You* is probably the most thematically complex and conflicted ‘anti-Heimat’ flick ever made, thus making it mandatory for anyone interested in the particular Teutonic zeitgeist when it was made. Of course, in its dystopian depiction of a people that have to be ritualistically drugged so they do not run amok, *I Love You, I Kill You*, like any decent work of classic science fiction, will seem strikingly and frighteningly prophetic to American viewers.

-Ty E

THE END OF THE RAINBOW
THE END OF THE RAINBOW

Uwe Frießner (1979)

Before seemingly half-autistic American queer auteur Gus van Sant (*Drugstore Cowboy*, *Elephant*) managed to coerce teenage heartthrobs River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves into playing down-and-out prick-peddlers with his pseudo-Shakespearean hustler flick *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), a totally unknown German TV director named Uwe Frießner (*Baby*, *Der Drücker*) directed a Teutonic teen hustler flick of the truly realist sort with mostly non-actors entitled *The End of the Rainbow* (1979) aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens* that depicted late-1970s Berlin as a post-industrial wasteland inhabited by forsaken human scavengers with nasty nihilistic attitudes. Indeed, sort of the real *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981) as a gritty 'kid leather' work that does not make the major mistake of sensationally wandering into exploitation territory, *The End of the Rainbow* managed to snag the film award in silver for "Outstanding Feature Film" ("*Beste Spielfilm*") at the 1980 *Deutscher Filmpreis* (German Film Awards) and despite being a non-actor in his first film role, lead actor Thomas Kufahl won the film award in gold for "Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role" ("*Beste darstellerische Leistung - Männliche Hauptrolle*"). Despite its initial critical and commercial success, *The End of the Rainbow*—not unlike so many great German flicks of its era—is all but totally forgotten today as a work that, rather unfortunately, might be best described today as piece of kraut celluloid cultural debris. Directed by a seemingly cultivated fellow who studied geology, philosophy, and literature and worked as a roofer and deep sea fisherman before studying film at the German Film and Television Academy (DFFB) and becoming a marginally successful filmmaker, *The End of the Rainbow* is a genuine proletarian picture and not some sort of phony leftist filmic polemic disguised as sophisticated arthouse work. Dedicated to the wasted unlife of a born loser who committed suicide at the ripe age of 18 after "years of trying in vain to master his own life," *The End of the Rainbow* is not a film that follows in the tradition of German New Cinema but has more aesthetically in common with pathologically gritty anti-intellectual/anti-arthouse works like Klaus Lemke's *Rocker* (1972), Roland Klick's *Bübchen* (1968) and *Supermarkt* (1974), and the 'hard ghetto' West German films of Iranian auteur Sohrab Shahid Sales (*Reifezeit* aka *Time of Maturity*, *Tagebuch eines Liebenden* aka *Diary of a Lover*). An ambitiously aimless *cinéma vérité*-like depiction of an aimless and equally snotty teen hustler rebel without a cause, *The End of the Rainbow* is a rare rent boy flick without a single scene of gratuitous sold sodomite sex, yet it still manages to be a visceral celluloid experience that gets to the bottom of a young fellow's forlorn soul.

As depicted in the first couple minutes of *The End of the Rainbow*, long haired 17-year-old teen rebel Jimmi (Thomas Kufahl) makes a meager living ped-

dling his prick and conning people out of their cash. Put in a youth home while just a still wee lad after his prole papa routinely brutally beat him, Jimmi graduated on to thieving from department stores at age 13 and breaking into cars and stealing car radios at the age of 15. Innately antisocial and no less self-destructive, Jimmi has a complete and utter incapacity for empathy and developing genuine relationships with other human beings despite the fact that he has older adult friends who support and encourage him to better his loser life. When not engaging in petty crime with his swarthy Turk-like twink friend Bernie (Henry Lutze), Jimmi takes sanctuary at the apartment of his ambiguously gay friend Dieter (played by Udo Samel of Reinhard Hauff's *Knife in the Head* (1978) and Michael Haneke's *The Seventh Continent* (1989)), his partner Monika (Sabine Beck-Baruth), and their mutual artist friend Jörg (Heinz Hoenig), who bares a striking resemblance to Bavarian filmmaker Herbert Achternbusch. On top of providing Jimmi with free food and shelter, Dieter tries in vain to get his young hustler friend to speak and dress properly and seek gainful employment opportunities, but the hapless hustler fails time and time again as he lacks the confidence, self-control, and common sense to do simple things that most people take for granted. Ostensibly gay-for-pay, Jimmi eventually begins a romantic relationship with an equally aimless and lazy Slavic teen named Gabi (Slavica Rankovic) who, among other things, is a drug addict (with valium being her choice high) who once made a failed attempt at suicide by swallowing an entire bottle of sleeping pills. Jimmi and Gabi's relationship officially starts after the two get it on doggy style in an abandoned warehouse and the hustler romantically asks the little lady, "Are we a couple now?" as if that is the sole determinant for ushering in a love affair. Not long after, Jimmi manages to secure a real job doing menial labor at a small factory, thus his life actually begins to derive some meaning and security but it is only short-lived. After losing his job on his second day of work due to pathological laziness and complaining, Jimmi's relationship with Gabi also begins to crumble as she is too high all the time to give a fuck. With the help of his less than loyal buddy Bernie, Jimmi goes to the apartment of Gabi's grandmother (Johanna Karl-Lory) to steal some things, but things go wrong when granny catches them redhanded in the cowardly act of thievery. A quick witted fellow, Bernie punches granny in the face and assumedly kills her. In the end, Jimmi and Bernie run out of dead granny's apartment with the stolen property. Ultimately, *The End of the Rainbow* concludes with the following depressing epilogue: "This film is dedicated to Andy. After years of trying in vain to master his own life, as an 18 year old, he decided to master at least his own death. With a carefully thought out plan, succeeding for the first time in his life after weeks of preparations, he ended his life between the 15th and the 18th of February 1976." Indeed, Jimmi/Andy finally made it to the end of the teen rebel rainbow and what he found on the other side was a perennial void.

A work that, whether intentional or not, totally demystifies the retarded

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

romance associated with teen rebellion, *The End of the Rainbow* acts as sort of strikingly somber celluloid antidote to pseudo-zany kiddy-criminal-saluting Hollywood youth rebellion flicks like *Over the Edge* (1979) starring Matt Dillon. Of course, while auteur Uwe Frießner was more discreet and subtle in handling such depictions, the protagonist of *The End of the Rainbow* is undoubtedly eroticized in a sort of semi-cryptic way like Dillon in *Over the Edge*, albeit in a more 'tasteful' fashion. In its depiction of ostensible 'good guy' Dieter as a fellow that helps antihero Jimmi but also wants to get in his pants (even though he never does, even if Jimmi does his damndest to lead him on), *The End of the Rainbow* ultimately portrays a decidedly dismal and dejecting post-Wirtschaftswunder world where no one is innocent and where everyone can be bought and sold. Additionally, in its portrayal of an old woman being escorted off a train by the police for not having a ticket, *The End of the Rainbow* presents the German Federal Republic as a dreary dystopian nightmare of the nonsensically bureaucratic sort that, although managing to routinely bust normal citizens for petty indiscretions, cannot even manage to put a single dent in a major epidemic of teenage homelessness, drug addiction, and prostitution. Luckily, *The End of the Rainbow* does not pretend to offer any answers to said epidemics, but merely presents such nationally unflattering societal problems in a uniquely objective fashion without the glaring pain of a superlatively shallow leftist message. Indeed, in terms of its social realism, Frießner's flick is like the 'Bicycle Thieves (1948) aka *Ladri di biciclette* of German Queer Cinema,' only all the more relevant and modern in its essence. Unlike similarly themed German films like Peter Kern's *Gossenkind* (1992) aka *Street Kid*, *The End of the Rainbow* does not seem like it was directed by a depraved degenerate drooling over spoiled youth and is thus a work that transcends the ghettoized label of 'queer cinema.' Indeed, forget the heroin-packed David Bowie fan worship of Christiane F., *The End of the Rainbow* is the real Teutonic teen flesh-peddling deal and the sparingly used soundtrack is not bad either.

-Ty E

KANAKERBRAUT

Uwe Schrader (1983)

Who gives a shit about the white working-class? Certainly not the white bourgeoisie nor the rich, but especially not members of the white working-class itself as demonstrated by their plague-like tendency for mixing with other untermensch races, alcoholism and drug addiction, prideful ignorance, etc., or at least someone would assume so much after watching a cinematic work so decidedly depressing as *Kanakerbraut* (1984) aka *White Trash* directed by rather unsung German auteur Uwe Schrader (Sierra Leone, *Mau Mau*). Shot on Super 16mm film stock, *White Trash* is the 56-minute tale of a desperate and drunk unemployed member of the alcoholic Berlin working-class whose wife has left him and who must find a number of pathetically creative ways to obtain money so as to not starve to death, or at least not suffer from alcohol withdrawal. Following in the anti-German New Cinema tradition, *White Trash* is a sort of urban-decay-driven work in the 'no bullshit' kraut celluloid spirit of Roland Klick (*Bübchen*, *Supermarkt*), Klaus Lemke (*Rocker*, *Arabian Nights*), Uwe Frießner (*The End of the Rainbow* aka *Das Ende des Regenbogens*, *Baby*), Canadian-Austrian John Cook (*Artischocke*, *Ich Schaff's Einfach Nimmer*), and Iranian exile Sohrab Shahid Saless (*Ordnung* aka *Order*, *Utopia*). Indeed, like Italian neorealism minus the Mediterranean sentimentalism, *White Trash* is the sort of film that stands against everything Hollywood is all about as a work of gritty anti-fantasy that forces the viewer to dwell in the despair of the Aryan ghetto to the point of virtual suffocation in what amounts to a somewhat short film that has more genuine emotion and truth than all three films in the entire *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) trilogy directed by Peter Jackson. A daunting depiction of late Cold War era West Deutschland where illiterate Turks get more Teutonic pussy than the average proletarian Aryan and the only escape from the misery of their lives is beer and bratwurst, *White Trash* is ultimately a work that makes Uncle Adolf's Beer Hall Putsch seem like a beauteous memory of the good old days by comparison. Indeed, *White Trash* is the social realist equivalent to the infamous drunk krauts of Reeperbahn Strasse, Hamburg scene featured in *Mondo cane* (1962), albeit minus most of the dark humor (not that Schrader's film is not humorous in its own way).

Berlin-based out-of-work Teutonic everyman Paul (Peter Franke) is watching porn loops but he is too melancholy to really give a shit. A 40-year-old man with far too much alcohol in his blood (or too much blood in his alcohol), Paul has always been a degenerate dipsomaniac but it was not until he lost his job that his beloved wife Babs left him and, in turn, left him in the sorry state he is in today. Still convinced she will come back one day, Paul sends her a card for their anniversary in which he wrote his estranged beloved the following pathetic words: "Yesterday I saw Eva and your mother. I was standing behind a hedge

KANAKERBRAUT

and watched my own daughter like a criminal. When I think about the way things used to be, then, it tears my heart apart.” Paul’s best friend is an unreliable petty criminal named Guenther (Alfred Raschke) who likes naïve underage girls and is prone to being arrested by the police at the most random moments (indeed, the first scene in which Paul’s friend is introduced, he is also soon arrested). One day, Paul goes to the same bar he always frequents and decides to talk to an old used-up slag named Lisa (Brigitte Janner) who is depressed because her towelhead Turk boyfriend has left her and is now doing dangerous work somewhere in Sudan. In defense of her pathological miscegenation, Lisa states regarding her raunchy love of Turks, “they still have this emotion, you know,” as if Deutschland is inhabited by dead souls. While one would assume their mutual lovelorn loneliness should bring them together, Paul is too negative and depressed and Lisa is too bitchy and slutty for the two develop anything resembling a mutual love (or even friendship) for one another. While hanging out with one another in a bar, Lisa cuckolds Paul by getting with a fat businessman (Nikolaus Dutsch), who she states of, “Oh, so there are still nice people in this country of ours.” All three end up taking a taxi back to the businessman’s apartment and on the way Lisa hypocritically states while channeling Travis Bickle, “One should take a giant hose and wash all the scum off the streets,” as if she was not a STD-ridden skank. Of course, Lisa and the Businessman begin making repulsive lard ass love, but the former decides to take a break to verbally berate Paul about his wife leaving him. Not unsurprisingly, Paul calls Lisa a “slut” and “floozy” and she retorts by saying he, “will end up at the salvation army in the antisocial division.” Of course, Lisa and the businessman finally tell Paul to “piss off” as they want to screw, so he leaves. More desperate than ever, Paul makes a failed attempt at a robbery with a toy gun and donates blood to make some money. In the end, Paul once again drowns his sorrow in alcohol, but manages to shed a smile after being given a free drink by a Turkish man celebrating the marriage of a relative. Indeed, it seems that Paul learns that multiculturalism has at least one advantage.

Advertised as “a really big little film,” *White Trash* would ultimately win auteur Uwe Schrader the ‘Film Award in Gold’ for “Best Direction” at the German Film Awards (aka Deutscher Filmpreis) in 1984 and would also be nominated for “Best Feature” at the Chicago International Film Festival the same year, but the work seems to have fallen into obscurity ever since. Although, aesthetically speaking, *White Trash* is not exactly anything special, the film does manage to communicate the misery of the working-class in a seemingly sincere fashion that an intellectually pedantic and emotionally vapid cappuccino communist like Alexander Kluge could only dream of. Additionally, compared to similarly themed works of its time, *White Trash* is far from politically correct as demonstrated by a scene in the film where the protagonist is listening to a comedian who proudly states, “UN...In German that’s the ‘Unorganized Na-

tions.' They want to help underdeveloped countries, those that just aren't that far yet, through advice and action. And you have to say those Negroes are good at taking. Everything, really. And they keep developing. And how! And they're grateful, those Utschebbses [racial slur]." Indeed, it certainly says something about a nation when it cannot help its own working-class, yet feels the need to help some melanin-rich, food-poor AIDS-addled untermensch from the third world so as to prove they are cuckolded to America and prove that their country no longer has any evil Hitlerite ideals, especially those that might benefit the white proletarian majority. Of course, White Trash is just as much, if not more so, about America as it is about Germany. After all, on top of the fact that the majority of America's white working-class has either succumbed to alcoholism and/or drug addiction, miscegenation has also become quite trendy among the fatherless white whores from this background. That being said, the main difference between the protagonist of White Trash and his contemporary equivalent is that the latter would be an illiterate negrophiliac wigger who has never had gainful employment in his entire life but probably has a bastard kid or two, while the former was at least at one time gainfully employed and married to the mother of his daughter. The white trash of White Trash seem a lot more tolerable than the fat ass, rap-blasting, mud-dipping white negroes of today. Celluloid sociology by a cynic with a heart (albeit, a somewhat dark one), White Trash is a film that one might suspect Jim Goad (ANSWER Me!, The Redneck Manifesto) would direct if he was a kraut instead of mere bottom-of-the-barrel Irish-American white trash.

-Ty E

SIERRA LEONE
SIERRA LEONE

Uwe Schrader (1987)

Undoubtedly, one of the best-kept secrets of post-Fassbinder German cinema is the so-called 'Proletarian Trilogy' of kraut auteur Uwe Schrader. For whatever reason, aside from an obscure short entitled *Phantom* (1979), the documentary *Kein Mord, kein Totschlag* (1985), and a couple other mysterious works that have been neglected to be added to imdb, Schrader is only responsible for directing the three films in his trilogy—*Kanakerbraut* (1984) aka *White Trash*, *Sierra Leone* (1987) aka *Seeking a Purpose – Sierra Leone*, and *Mau Mau* (1992)—yet these little 'social realist' works pretty much unequivocally prove that this almost criminally underrated auteur is one of the most important celluloid cultural critics of his post-kultur zeitgeist. In fact, auteur Wim Wenders (*Wings of Desire*, *Paris, Texas*) once described Schrader as a filmmaker in the tradition of Fassbinder who managed to carry the revolutionary, socially scathing spirit of German cinema of the 1970s into the 1990s. Indeed, with his second film in the trilogy, *Sierra Leone*, Schrader demonstrates that Teutonia is a post-industrialist technocratic nightmarish of the culturally and spiritually vacant, socially alienating, and prole-hating sort where, to quote the neofolk outfit *Death In June*, "It Is The Fate Of Our Age That We Fight In Isolation." Centering around a wandering working-class Teuton who moves back to his decidedly depressing urban hometown in West Germany after spending three years working in an exotic land in West Africa, *Sierra Leone* keenly depicts the lapsed Fatherland as what neo-Wagnerite Hans-Jürgen Syberberg once described as being, "spiritually disinherited and dispossessed... a country without a homeland, without 'Heimat'," where *Weltschmerz* has spread like the plague, *Fräulein-fucking* mongrel soldiers from an ex-colony still occupy the nation a number of decades after the Second World War, man and woman have become irreparably alienated from one another, and the nuclear family has become a pastiche memory from a time when people still had a desire to live and even reproduce. Despite being a conspicuously pessimistic work that seems like it could have been directed by Teutonic prophet of decline Oswald Spengler's culturally disinherited grandson, *Sierra Leone* does not wallow in melancholy and self-pity but instead takes a stoic approach to social sickness in the *Heimat* that is bound to act as a sort of celluloid torture for those filmgoers that find themselves able to get lost in Spielberg's superlatively superficial celluloid dream worlds.

Baldheaded yet hardheaded Aryan lumpenprole Fred (Christian Redl, who is probably best known for portraying Generaloberst Alfred Jodl in Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (2004) aka *Der Untergang*)—a mostly miserable and unemotional man described by one of his girlfriends as having "no faith in human nature"—has spent the last three years doing field installation work in the West African nation of Sierra Leone and after saving up a nice sum of money for his

efforts, he heads back to his hometown on the outskirts of an unnamed and increasingly de-industrialized West German city to reacquaint himself with the life he, for whatever irrational reason, left behind on a whim. Little does Fred realize that his confrontation with his old life will prove to be a real-life nightmare as he bears witness to the discernible degeneration of his city and the disillusionment with life among his friends and ex-girlfriends. The first person Fred meets upon arriving back in Germany is his ex-wife Rita (Constanze Engelbrecht, who bears a striking resemblance to German-American Hollywood star Katherine Heigl), who he left 3 years ago without notice or subsequent contact, though he was at least responsible enough to wire his unloved beloved money each month. Quite naturally, Fred's ex-wife rules out any potential prospect of ever getting back together (after all, she has moved on by hooking up with the enemy, an American GI), so he goes on his merry way and checks into a sleazy hotel run by a semi-trashy young chick named Alma (Ann-Gisel Glass, who got her start in film acting playing the eponymous role in the French-Italian exploitation rip-off of *Christiane F.* (1981), *Hanna D.: The Girl from Vondel Park* (1984)). Alma is supported by a rather grotesque and abusive sugar daddy with male breasts (aka 'bitch tits') who is old enough to be her father and owns the hotel she works at, but she will ultimately find a new 'love' prospect in the form of Fred. Meanwhile, Fred hooks up with his ex-girlfriend and true 'great love' Vera (Rita Russek, who starred in Ingmar Bergman's underrated West German flick *From the Life of the Marionettes* (1980)), but all that comes out of their reuniting is rough sex that inspires the lady to yell, "are you insane?...Ouch...You're hurting me!" in discernible discomfort. As he reveals to Vera, Fred has mixed feelings about being back in Germany, confessing, "It's crazy. When you're here, you want to be somewhere else. And once you're gone, you long for this place." While on what will ultimately be his final date with Vera at a bar, Fred follows an American GI, who is the new boy toy of his ex-wife Rita, into a bathroom and channels all his pent up hatred on the soldier, beating the unwitting soldier while he is taking a leak in what is easily the most blatantly emotional scene of *Sierra Leone*, a film where hatred and bitterness are the only real forms of visceral passion.

Feeling nostalgic, Fred also decides to visit his old job at a factory, where the foreman states regarding 'changes' around the company that there are, "more and more machines...Fewer and fewer people. They've just fired some more. You can be happy that you made it out of here. Things aren't too rosy here anymore." When Fred goes to his favorite bar to hangout with all his old friends, he is in for further disappointment after one of his 'friends' insults him by stating, "You always thought you were better. You asshole." The same friend also remarks regarding Fred's self-imposed exile on the Dark Continent, "AF-RI-KA...That's where they sent the ones who weren't right in the head." And, of course, there is certainly something missing in Fred, but it seems to be more related to his soul. Indeed, Fred must admit to himself that in terms of being back in his

SIERRA LEONE

homeland, "So much has become strange," and he himself has become all the more stranger as a sort of living and breathing corpse walking amongst fellow zombies who just haven't realized they are dead yet. Another friend gives Fred some support by offering the following insight: "Shit always floats on top...I don't talk like that to offend you. You know that. But if you ask me, people around here don't like you...They've suppressed how miserable they are," and, indeed, while it is often said misery loves company, the protagonist of Sierra Leone has tapped into some meta-misery that would even put kraut liberals suffering from ethno-masochism and post-Auschwitz angst to shame. Ultimately, Fred starts an affair with young dumb Fräulein Alma who, on top of having a tat of her criminal ex-boyfriend's on one of her tiny tits, also reveals that she was forced to give up her sole child to the authorities after her ex-beau was busted by the police. While Fred and Alma seem to get along great at first and decide to leave the city to start a new life together, the drifting prole eventually comes to the ominous realization that he is destined to be alone after observing the misery of an elderly married bartender and ditches his new lover by hitching a ride with a trucker to nowhere land, thus repeating his vicious circle of alienation, deracination, and aimlessness that is his forsaken non-life.

In its unwaveringly unsentimental depiction of Germany as a post-industrial, post-cultural, post-happiness, post-Heimat hellhole, Sierra Leone is indubitably one of the most important, if not almost entirely culturally unflattering, Teutonic cinematic works of its zeitgeist. Indeed, like Werner Schroeter's neo-neorealist urban epic *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* (1980), Sierra Leone depicts post-WWII 'democratic' Germany as a half-dead technocratic monster with a broken computer that devours the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of its inhabitants, namely its working-class population, while also depriving them of gainful employment and thus driving its citizens to alcoholism and race-hate, among other things. Thankfully, unlike an Alexander Kluge or Helke Sander flick, Sierra Leone is not a pedantic leftist masturbation piece created by a person who has probably never done a day's physical labor in their entire lives, but a gritty no-bullshit flick that seems like it was actually directed by one of the 'working-class heroes' it so candidly depicts. Undoubtedly, protagonist Fred is an angsty, sometimes arrogant and even sometimes unlikeable character and that is exactly what makes him so interesting and strangely sympathetic, albeit not in a superficial sentimental fashion typical of similarly themed films that insincerely attempt to side with the struggle of the ever degenerating Lumpenproletariat. Indeed, in the sole English language review I could find on Sierra Leone, the reviewer described the film as a 'the German answer to *Five Easy Pieces* (1970)', but I think it would be a disservice to Schrader's film to compare to an unrealistic and, in my opinion, rather overrated Jack Nicholson flick. Unless you're a Fassbinder and/or Herzog fan, or like the gritty non-German New Cinema works of more obscure 'hard ghetto' auteur filmmakers like Iranian exile Sohrab Shaheed Salles, Uwe

Frießner, Roland Klick, Klaus Lemke, and John Cook, Sierra Leone will probably prove to be a reasonably painful and disconcerting experience for you, sort of like a spiritual root canal. After all, not many people like seeing their nation being portrayed in a less flattering light than that of a West African slum, but of course, Sierra Leone is not escapist entertainment but an innately insensitive celluloid 'wakeup call' that the German populous clearly did not take heed of. Indeed, when future historians and anthropologists are trying to figure out why Germany committed suicide and disappeared into history with not even a whimper, Sierra Leone would certainly help them fill in some blanks. A filmic journey into the fall of the rank-and-Faustian man, Sierra Leone ultimately does for post-GNC cinema what Spengler's short work *Man and Technology: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life* (1931) did for critiquing technology, but as contemporary history has demonstrated, very few people have listened to either the filmmaker or the philosopher.

-Ty E

MAU MAU
MAU MAU

Uwe Schrader (1992)

If someone reworked and updated Rainer Werner Fassbinder's masterful Sirkian melodrama *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974) aka *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* about two decades later and completely extinguished the film of all hope, beauty, dignity, and true romance, it would probably resemble *Mau Mau* (1992) directed by underrated German auteur Uwe Schrader. The third and final chapter in Schrader's 'Proletarian Trilogy' (following *Kanakerbraut* (1984) aka *White Trash* and *Sierra Leone* (1987)), *Mau Mau* not only features a brown Islamic 'Gastarbeiter' named Ali with a stereotypical weakness for white women, but also conspicuously unflattering lower-middle class krauts that would even make Fassbinder himself cringe in abject disgust. Indeed, while the previous two films in Schrader's trilogy might be exceedingly disconcerting and unwaveringly culturally pessimistic in their own right, *Mau Mau* seems to take the moldy cake in terms of being the director's most eclectically melancholy-inducing work, yet at the same it is also his funniest and most accessible to date. Unfortunately, *Mau Mau* is also Schrader's swansong thus making it a sort of cinematic eulogy for auteurism in Deutschland as a work in the spirit of the great films of German New Cinema, as well as a work that quite fittingly depicts the Fatherland as a drunk and senile cultural, spiritual, and emotional void of a nation with no hope, let alone a future. Starring Peter Franke, who previously played the lead in the first film of the director's trilogy, *Mau Mau* demonstrates that the vicious circle of poverty, alcoholism, loveless sex, spiritual retardation, American trash culture worship, multiculturalism-based race-hate, and melancholy have only become all the more malignant since the eight years when the director first debuted his archetypical 'everyman' working-class kraut hero via *White Trash*. A revolting social realist work about revolting people doing revolting things and not thinking twice about doing them, *Mau Mau*—a work centering around a sleazy strip club that is facing being shut down permanently due to poor business—is the sort of authentic and unflattering yet truly 'humanistic' proletarian cinema that commie and neo-commie agitpropagandists ranging from Dziga Vertov to Helke Sander were too disingenuous to cinematically portray. In other words, *Mau Mau* is a loving (anti)tribute to all the hard working people who drink, fight, and fuck like they won't live to drink, fight, and fuck the next day.

Heinz (Peter Franke) is an emotionally beaten down man who has never gotten over the fact that his career as a professional soccer player ended prematurely after he suffered a complex fracture of his leg a couple decades back. At the same time he injured his leg, his girlfriend Inge (Marlen Diekhoff) left him, thus adding insult to injury and also ruining his perspective on love and romance. Flash forward decades later, Heinz is now in a 'complicated' relationship with Inge, who owns a titty bar named 'Mau Mau' that she blows a good amount

of her ex-soccer star boyfriend's money on. The strip club has certainly seen better days and Inge hopes to save her failing business by glamouring an elderly and rather repulsive religious man named Kowalik (Henryk Bišta), who follows a charlatan South American preacher named Brother Miguel and has a fancy flashing crucifix light at his apartment, into giving her all his money. Heinz is friends with a rather repulsive pug-nosed conman named Ferdi (Peter Gavajda) who, in between scamming old acquaintances out of money and nasty slags out of their panties, is busy getting his best friend beat up by people he owes money to. Aside from strippers with itty bitty titties, Inge's foremost employee at Mau Mau is a swarthy skank named Rosa (Catrin Striebeck) who, being a dirty gutter queen who is willing to give her body to anyone, dates an abusive Arab who everyone calls 'Ali' and who is fully committed to debasing white women as demonstrated by his remark regarding a lady of his own race, "You're better off dead than with one like her." When Ali ends up beating Rosa one too many times (a black eye is a big 'no, no' in regard to her profession), the lecherous lady decides to start screwing Heinz, but, as can be expected when in a seedy environment where alcohol is drunk as freely as water and romantic attachment and monogamy are virtually nonexistent, the affair is short-lived. Meanwhile, one of Ferdi's friends parades around his Thai prostitute girlfriend, 'Honey', like a true slave of jungle fever like so many weak-minded white men do nowadays. When Ferdi remarks regarding the Asian quasi-hooker, "Imported, after all... They still obey at least," her sub-Aryan sugar daddy replies that oriental chicks are not a submissive as he thinks, stating of his relationship with his girlfriend, "No money, no honey!" as if it is an honorable thing to be a pseudo-high-class hooker. Like all stupid chicks who are attracted to physically abusive guys, Rosa attempts to get back with Ali, but he has already found himself another desperate white woman, so she bashes out her bastard ex-beau's apartment windows and tries to hook up with a rich Dutch degenerate with a pansy ponytail who firmly believes, "Italy is dirty." As a woman who lives by the sophisticated, bitter bitch Weltanschauung "fuck all men," Inge decides to sell her body and soul to old man Kowalik by marrying him, thus saving her strip club from going out of the business. In the end, Heinz tries to kiss and grope Inge in front of elderly cuck Kowalik and hundreds of other people and he almost gets the beating of a lifetime from a gang of untermenschen bouncers as a result. Still, Heinz goes back to Inge, though whether she lets him back in her apartment again or not remains to be seen.

A sort of post-Fassbinder anti-Cheers from Teutonic prole drunkard pandemonium featuring arguably the most physically and mentally repugnant kraut characters in German cinema history, Mau Mau ultimately makes early-1990s metropolitan Deutschland seem like a post-industrial ghetto on the brink of becoming a third world nation, hence its thriving Negro and Turk populations. Indeed, as reprehensible as he is, darkie Ali is no that different from most of the white characters of Mau Mau, aside from the fact he moronically punches

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women in the face as opposed to merely smacking them around like gutter-level conman Ferdi (who, not suprisingly, later hires Ali to help him steal goods from other whites). Additionally, aside from hapless antihero Heinz, not a single character is fair-skinned and blond-haired, let alone resembling archetypical Aryan beauty, which probably has to do with the fact that many of the characters in the film are played by Slavic actors. Of course, *Mau Mau* is not total unwavering ugliness, as the film features a punk rendition of “My Way” in German by East German mischling Nina Hagen that sounds a lot like musically retarded junky Sid Vicious’ cover of the song, albeit slightly less goofy. Unfortunately, the semi-good music ends there as the film features a number of American pop rock hits that one would expect to hear at any blue collar bar in the United States, thus demonstrating that postmodern rebbe Karl Marx might have been on to something when he described how the workers of the world had a lot in common, though the failed bourgeois philosopher seems to be wrong about them actually uniting as the characters of *Mau Mau* would not rebel against their overlords if their lives depended on it, as they much rather get thoroughly inebriated and date rape some sub-homely married chick with genital warts.

Undoubtedly, as a person who has always despised drunks and the barroom lifestyle (I once worked as a bouncer and despite the ease of the job and relatively decent pay, I would never do it again), I found *Mau Mau* to be my worst nightmare come to life and the fact that it is set in Germany—a nation I regard as being the most culturally rich place in Europe, at least as far as the last couple of centuries are concerned—made it all the more of a dirty and unsettling experience, as if witnessing post-sanity Nietzsche staring into space and smiling moronically while laying in his hospital as his nurse takes hits of rum from a flask. Indeed, *Mau Mau* is Deutschland stripped away of all kultur and dignity, where the lumpenproles and untermenschen have become one after being thrown into an American-made multicultural blender mixed with cheap booze and Cyndi Lauper mix-tapes. Aside from depicting the long-term consequences for the German working-class as a result of the nation’s defeat during the Second World War nearly half a century later, *Mau Mau* is also a misery-ridden melodrama about the slow and painful death that is aging, as demonstrated by such lines as titty bar owner Inge’s remark to her on-and-off-again boyfriend Heinz, “My god, you used to be such a hunk. I was proud of you. You had such a spring in your step. What happened to it? What happened to us?...” If I were to guess, I would assumed the used-up, downtrodden, and decidedly degenerate characters just got out of a Soviet gulag, but they are merely the victims of their own failure, inaction, and addictions. In what is indubitably one of the most important scenes of *Mau Mau*, Heinz visits his father, who pleads to his son, “I want an anonymous burial. No flowers, no gravestone. That only costs money. Bury the urn in the yard. No cemetery maintenance for you. You don’t have time for that anyway,” as if he wants all evidence of his existence erased from

history like he is too ashamed of his misspent life that he will somehow feel shame even when he is dead. Of course, as a nation of people that is incessantly reminded by Hollywood and the rest of the world that an Austrian peasant with a Charlie Chaplin mustache led them into wasting six million Jews (and quite a bit more Russians, though they do not seem as resentful about it), it is easy to see why Heinz's papi would express such an extreme wish. Personally, I cannot possibly see how the Germany depicted in Mau Mau is superior to that of the Third Reich, but then again I think Steven Spielberg is autistic asshole.

-Ty E

MARK OF THE DEVIL
MARK OF THE DEVIL

Val Guest (1984)

Undoubtedly, you know a movie is a tasteless piece of trash when it was promoted with the marvelously moronic gimmick of handing out vomit bags to viewers at movie theater screenings upon its release and such is certainly the case in regard to the West German exploitation flick *Mark of the Devil* (1970) aka *Hexen bis aufs Blut gequält* aka *Witches Are Tortured To Death* aka *Burn, Witch, Burn* aka *Satan* aka *Austria 1700* aka *Hexen* ostensibly directed by British auteur Michael Armstrong (*Horror House*, *Screamtime*) and ghost-directed by one-time Fassbinder actor Adrian Hoven (*World on a Wire*, *Fox and His Friend*), who also acted as producer, actor, and production manager of the film, among other things. Admittedly, the sole reason why I decided to watch *Mark of the Devil* is because I recently saw director Armstrong's first film *The Image* (1967)—an excellent avant-garde horror short that has the distinction of being the first film David Bowie ever appeared in—which I was so impressed with that I decided to dig up the filmmaker's entire oeuvre. Rather unfortunately, I discovered that not only was *The Image* the best film Armstrong ever directed, but also that his role as 'auteur' of *Mark of the Devil* was dubious at best, as producer Adrian Hoven pulled a David O. Selznick and made the film his own by secretly directing scenes on his own with his friend cinematographer Ernst W. Kalinke without the official director's permission, as well as canning the original ending of the film. To Hoven's credit, he was originally attached to direct *Mark of the Devil* (rumored to having been originally titled "*The Witch Hunter - Dr. Dracula*"), but the financiers of the film wanted a British director so they could easily distribute the film in England, so they hired Armstrong, who wrote a new script that was also eventually bastardized by the producer. Made to cash in on the success of *Witchfinder General* (1968) directed by Michael Reeves, *Mark of the Devil* is a proto-torture-porn period piece of sorts set during the 18-century featuring conventions typical of the WiP (*Women in Prison*) subgenre about a motley maniac crew of severely sadomasochistic witch-hunters of the pseudo-Christian sort who falsely denounced people as heretics, witches, and sorcerers so they can appease their unquenchable thirst for both blood and money. An awe-inspiringly morally retarded work that seems like it was directed by a pathological psychopath with ADHD, *Mark of the Devil* is plagued by gratuitous sex and violence, poor dubbing (which sounds like British people attempting to speak with American accents), shockingly artificial emotionality, and carelessly cliché anti-Christian and left-wing preaching, among countless other glaring problems, though I will give it credit for utilizing an authentic ancient Austria castle (which was actually a museum full of authentic furniture and tools that were utilized for the film). Indeed, a sort of Ken Russell's *The Devil* (1971) for deranged philistines, *Mark of the Devil* is ultimately a reminder that

exploitation cinema tends to be a cracked mirror image of the shady anti-artistic business practices of Hollywood.

Opening with a group of virginal nuns being brutally raped by wayward witchfinders, *Mark of the Devil* instantly lets the viewer know that it is a piece of totally tasteless, tactless, and sensationalized celluloid trash of the history-raping sort. Of course, the nuns are falsely denounced as evil witches and are subsequently ritualistically burned at the stake by self-righteous witch-rapists and following inter-titles appear immediately afterward declaring, "In Europe, between the 15th and 19th centuries, it is estimated nearly eight million people were convicted of heresy and executed by fanatical witch hunters, in order to save their souls," as if the viewer is supposed to take the film seriously as a work of historical social commentary. Eventually, twink-like witch-hunter hero Count Christian von Meruh (Udo Kier), who is waiting for the arrival of his father-like teacher Lord Cumberland (Herbert Lom), arrives at a small ancient Aryan town and he discovers the lead witch-hunter of the village, Albino (played by Austrian actor, Reggie Nalder, who is unforgettable due to his literally disfigured chin with glaring burns/scars covering his face), is a bloodthirsty butcher who falsely denounces people as witches just so he can torture and murder them. After a wop-like barmaid beauty named Vanessa (Olivera Katarina) is denounced by witch-hunter Albino as having had "illicit intercourse with the devil" and putting a curse on local men to render them impotent, Christian comes to her defense and the two begin a 'romance' that was ultimately never meant to be. When Lord Cumberland arrives, it becomes quite apparent that he is a holier-than-thou type who uses his pernicious power to murder people and steal their money, including a young aristocrat Baron Daumer (Michael Maien), and unlike Albino, who accepts the fact he is a sadistic scumbag, the Lord truly believes he is a devout Christian who is carrying out the work of the real Lord. Meanwhile, the local witch-hunters arrest an entire noble family (with the family patriarch being played by producer Adrian Hoven) for putting on 'satanic' puppet shows, which ultimately results in the father of the family having to endure Chinese water torture in what is easily one of the most memorable scenes in the entire film. Eventually, Christian loses his faith in both his religion and charlatan father-figure after witnessing Lord Cumberland strangling to death Albino after the fellow threatens to blackmail him by telling everyone that he is sexually impotent. Indeed, in typical Judaic Freudian fashion, violence and brutality are associated with impotence and sexual frustration in *Mark of the Devil*. Naturally, Christian decides to rebel against the 'Lord's work' and proceeds to help save Vanessa and the other prisoners. Ultimately, *Mark of the Devil* ends in a strikingly cynical fashion after Vanessa, who escapes her imprisonment, hypocritically leads her own Bolshevik-esque witch-hunt against the witch-hunters that ironically results in the brutal and bloody death of her best beau Christian, who becomes the most prized victim of a savage peasant lynch mob that his

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lover formed. Quite notably, director Mark Armstrong originally intended to conclude *Mark of the Devil* in a seemingly nonsensical manner featuring zombie heretics (i.e. the victims of the witchfinders) arising from the ground and pulling Udo Kier down with them, but luckily producer Adrian Hoven stopped him.

Undoubtedly, I think star Udo Kier best summed up the importance and intrinsic value of *Mark of the Devil* in the documentary featurette *Fear and Loathing in Austria* (2004) when he stated of the work and its troubled production history with the following insightful words: "With producers it's always about money. How much do I invest? How much will it make in the end? It's always been this way. Probably not with Lars von Trier and Fassbinder, because for them, film is art. But *MARK OF THE DEVIL* is a commercial movie and what's important is how much money it makes." Personally, I never expected Adrian Hoven to be a money-grubbing parasite as he had the gall to portray a Jew-gassing Nazi drag queen in the Fassbinder penned arthouse masterpiece *Shadow of Angels* (1976) aka *Schatten der Engel* directed by Daniel Schmid, but then again, he also starred in Jess Franco films. Rather humorously, Udo also stated regarding *Mark of the Devil* in the same short 2004 doc: "I always thought that my close-ups were the single most attractive thing in the movie, with all the blood just adding up. Regarding the torture scenes, tongue tearing and all that, you knew before, this was strong stuff which would generate publicity." Udo's charming narcissism aside, *Mark of the Devil* certainly seems like an outmoded work of old hat trash sensationalism nowadays, especially considering mainstream Hollywood horror films go to even greater extremes in their artless depiction of soulless aesthetic savagery nowadays. In retrospect, *Mark of the Devil* proved to be a popular enough work as it produced one official sequel, *Mark of the Devil Part II* (1973) aka *Hexen geschändet und zu Tode gequält*, which was also produced (and this time officially directed) by Hoven, as well as countless pseudo-sequel rip-offs, including a couple of the chapters from Amando de Ossorio's *Blind Dead* series. More recently, the popular FX channel horror television series *American Horror Story* paid tribute to *Mark of the Devil* by naming the fifth episode of the third season "Burn, Witch. Burn!" (which is one of the various alternate titles of the film). Indeed, with its gratuitous violence, sexual perversity, and less than flattering depiction of witchfinders, *American Horror Story: Coven* (2013-2014) certainly follows in the trashy tradition of *Mark of the Devil*, although at least the contemporary TV series has wit and character. While I cannot pay any great compliments to *Mark of the Devil* beyond saying it was a sometimes entertaining way to waste 90+ minutes or so, I certainly thought it was better than *Witchfinder General*, but then again, I have always had an aversion to left-wing revisionist history and effete rapists wearing campy 18th-century clothing. Hell, even Ulli Lommel made a more sophisticated leftist revisionist witch-hunter flick during his post-arthouse

years with his feminist-themed work *The Devonsville Terror* (1983), a work that portrays ancient New England witchfinders and their contemporary ancestors as self-righteous sadists of the murderously misogynistic sort. Of course, the only thing more repellant than leftist horror-comedies is preachy leftist exploitation flicks, so maybe I can understand why they handed out vomit bags for *Mark of the Devil* after all.

-Ty E

MONIQUE
MONIQUE

Valérie Guignabodet (2002)

If some sadomasochistic sodomite like Andy Milligan, except slightly more technically gifted as an auteur, remade Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) and set it in the leather-fag metropolitan netherworld of *Cruising* (1980) directed by William Friedkin, it might resemble *Monique* (1978) aka *New York After Midnight* aka *Flashing Lights* directed by French art-sploitation auteur/gay pornographer Jacques Scandelari (Macédoine, *Homologues* ou *La soif du male* aka *Man's Country*). A superlatively sordid, maliciously melodramatic, and absurdly anti-romantic celluloid work based on a real-life case history reported in the April 1974 publication of 'Le Journal de l'Association des Psychologistes (Lyon, France), *Monique* is a seemingly totally trashy yet totally serious film about a 35-year-old French spinster who is rather desperate to get married and conceive a child, but the problem is that she is slightly insane due to a repressed childhood memory and when she does end up meeting up with a seemingly marvelous man, he turns out to be as straight as a circle as a gold-digging, butt-darting schemer who has nil interest in producing kin folk, thus resulting in serious trouble of the homo-homiciding sort. Starring sub-diva Florence Giorgetti of Marco Ferreri's *La Grande Bouffe* (1973) in the title role, *Monique* is essentially a rather restrained hodgepodge of director Jacques Scandelari 'greatest' films. Featuring the disco and S&M faggotry of his NYC hardcore leather-fag celluloid magnum opus *New York City Inferno* (1978) aka *Cock Tales*, the grotesque Hans Bellmer-esque baby doll art featured in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (1971) aka *Beyond Love and Evil*, and the dark and shadowy noirish sexual sadism of *Vice Squad* (1978) aka *Brigade mondaine*, *Monique* is a rare work of considerably competently assembled exploitation cinema that actually takes itself seriously, even if the 'true story' the film is apparently based on seems like the subplot of some sort of subpar Troma direct-to-video garbage. Misleadingly advertised as a generic slasher flick under a number of dubious titles, *Monique* follows in the trend of Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965), which was also attempted later by Ulli Lommel of all people via *Olivia* (1983) aka *A Taste of Sin* and countless other less successful filmmakers, in depicting a beautiful yet deranged debutante who suffered a childhood trauma and cannot help herself from killing men, especially those she is romantically involved with. Featuring gay porn star turned disco singer turned AIDS victim Wade Nichols (aka Dennis Parker) giving a Village People-esque performance of his deplorable disco song "Like an Eagle" and a number of female-perpetrated disco bloodbaths, *Monique* is what happens when highbrow celluloid trash meets crappy cocksucker kitsch.

Monique Raymond (Florence Giorgetti) is a relatively successful 35-year-old French professional with a trust fund who lives in relative luxury in New York City and even has a second home in Long Island, but her personal life is a sad

joke, or at least she constantly tells her bitchy Jew-y therapist Dr. Charles Mandel (Barry Woloski). Feeling like an old spinster who has no chance of ever getting married, Monique is more than ready for Prince Charming to roll by, but more than anything, she wants a baby of her own. Indeed, a certain Prince Charming does arrive for Monique in the form of a hack artist named Richard Lewis (John Ferris) who constructs infantile 'infant art' (or what he calls 'erotic art' as if deformed babies have some sort of sexual appeal) that, as a rival/ex-lover reminds him, is a total rip-off of German degenerate artist Hans Bellmer's pubescent female doll work, but he is a little too charming and his motivations seemed to be rather dubious to say the least, especially considering he is much younger and less rich than his professional trust-fund babe. Believing she has met the more than marvelous man of her dreams, Monique does not think twice about marrying Richard on a random and semi-secret whim Las Vegas-style, but problems soon arise when Richard decides he would rather spend his spare time creating vulgar art, exploiting and leading on his hyper horny manager/mentor Helen Kahn (Robyn Peterson) to further his career, hanging out at hip gay discos at night, and having an affair with someone else—another man and an exceedingly effete one at that. On top of the fact her husband is a two-faced twink of the terribly temper-tantrum-throwing sort, Monique regularly has debilitating childhood flashbacks of when her mother was killed right before her weary eyes as a fragile froggy toddler, so before she knows it, she is wandering the semen-soaked streets of NYC and slaughtering salacious sodomites left and right, and only her prissy therapist has enough insight to stop her. When a jealous ex-lover of Richard's—a pole-smoking poof of a polak named Karl Zebrowski (Rayner Wallwork)—reveals to Monique that her hubby is a well known player on the pink team, and even—rather inexplicably—attempts to rape her, she bludgeons him in the gut with a butcher knife in a Norman Bates-esque fashion. Of course, when Richard has the audacity to bring his secret boyfriend to their scenic beach house in Long Island for Christmas, Monique gives him a bit of a fatal fag-bashing that he will never forget. Apparently, Monique's French father is also a fag, thus proving like husband like father-in-law. Monique's mother was accidentally killed in a scuffle with her father and his handsome male lover, so it was only natural that the French girl would grow up to be an anti-gay serial killer of sorts, thus eliciting metaphysical vengeance for her dear mère. In the end, Monique spends 8 years in a facility for the criminally insane for her murderous acts of involuntary homophobia, but later devotes her life to teaching Yoga in what is a semi-happy conclusion to an unhappy, childless life.

A rare work of 'fag noir' with a sort of 'gay male femme fatale,' Monique is like William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) for fag hags minus the cop drama. To be quite honest, I would not be surprised if director Jacques Scandolari did the casting for Monique at a sleazy NYC leather-fag bar as virtually every single male character, including the ostensibly heterosexual therapists, looks virtually

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the same as they are all skinny, tall white men with Village People-esque mustaches that seem like extras from the director's homo hardcore flick *New York City Inferno*, albeit minus the leather and fetishistic cop uniforms. Although not Jacques Scandelari's greatest flick, *Monique* is a consistently entertaining, if not sometimes unintentionally so, prototype for the sleazy and seedy artsy exploitation flicks Abel Ferrara would later specialize in. The fact that the protagonist is a woman who kills male homos as opposed to heterosexual rapists like in Ferrara's *Ms. 45* (1981) makes Scandelari's *Monique* all the more sweetly scandalous, especially considering the politically correct climate of today where any negative portrayal of a limp-wristed fairy is considered a virtual sin. A debauched depiction of what Rainer Werner Fassbinder's most dreaded nightmare might have been like with an aesthetically disgusting Discotheque backdrop in a pre-AIDS time before hysteria and death hit the gay world with the force of two fists to the ass, *Monique* is indubitably from an era best left forgotten, but thankfully it is full of blood and bitterness. Of course, *Monique* also brings murder, melancholy, and mayhem to the world of the NYC bourgeois and Dorian love discos, which is worthy of any exploitation fan's time, though I would not recommend the film to mothers-to-be or sad French spinsters suffering from childhood traumas. Probably the only film ever made where a gay group of disco-delighting leather-fags attempt to gang rape a nearly-middle-aged woman, *Monique* is a piece of morally retarded cinema with style and an inkling of substance that reminds one why everyone needs a dose of trash celluloid in their lives.

-Ty E

BLACK JESUS

Valerio Zurlini (1968)

When it comes to Blaxploitation cinema, I tend to only like the serious and mostly negro-directed films that do not actually belong to the subgenre, but are labelled as such for the sake of convenience. Indeed, despite being Afro-centric black power works with vague 'arthouse' pretenses that were made "for us, by us," Melvin Van Peebles' pioneering work *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) and Bill Gunn's semi-experimental metaphysical negro vampire flick *Ganja & Hess* (1973) are labeled Blaxploitation flicks simply because they are politically incorrect and provide the viewer with a taste of the 'exotic primitive.' Of course, Blaxploitation cinema only became mainstream after *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* became an unexpected success and inspired the Hebrews in Hollywood, along with exploitation hacks like Roger Corman, to capitalize off of the phenomenon and begin churning out works that ultimately negatively affected Afro-America by perpetrating negative stereotypes and glorifying criminality, lechery, and debauchery. As far as I can tell, the only non-white filmmakers of the late-1960s/early-1970s that attempted to give any sort of authentic voice to the black world were the Italians and French, with Jean-Luc Godard's Rolling Stones documentary *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968) aka *One Plus One* and great Guido artsploitation auteur Alberto Cavallone's debut feature *Le salamandre* (1969)—an iconoclastic Frantz Fanon-inspired agit-prop piece disguised as a sexploitation flick featuring a ménage-à-trois between a Swedish-American blond bombshell, a black model, and a middle-aged French psychoanalyst—being more notable representations of this largely forgotten about and rather 'idiosyncratic' phenomenon. Unquestionably, one of the most bizarre and seemingly unbelievable examples of Italian style black power is the epic filmic fable *Black Jesus* (1968) aka *Seduto alla sua destra* aka *Out of Darkness* aka *Seated at His Right* aka *Super Brother* directed by Valerio Zurlini (*La ragazza con la valigia* aka *Girl with a Suitcase*, *Il deserto dei tartari* aka *The Desert of the Tartars*). Advertised in the United States with majorly misleading tag lines like, "BLACK JESUS has black power!" and "he who ain't with me—is AGAINST me," Zurlini's *Black Jesus* is an excellent example of the superlatively sleazy talent of American exploitation film distributors to try to pass off serious cinematic art as mindlessly entertaining fuming filmic feces.

Originally intended as a segment of the Italian-French omnibus film *Amore e rabbia* (1969) aka *Love and Anger*—a somewhat uneven work featuring segments directed by Pasolini, Godard, Bertolucci, and Bellocchio, among others—Zurlini's film was eventually expanded into a brutal biblical depiction of the torture and execution of Congolese independence leader and pan-African revolutionary Patrice Lumumba, a man described by Malcolm X as "the greatest black man who ever walked the African continent" and who was the first democrati-

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cally elected Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, only to be deposed twelve weeks later during the Congo Crisis and executed a little over four months after that. Directed by a man who was described as “the Poet of Melancholy,” and who mostly directed relatively apolitical melodramas, the film is indubitably an oddity in Zurlini’s oeuvre and certainly in more ways than one, as a serious film that bombed at the box-office and was re-released in America during the 1970s in ‘grindhouse’ theaters under titles like ‘Black Jesus’ and ‘Super Brother’ and marketed as a sensationally violent and racially-charged exploitation flick to capitalize off of the popularity of Blaxploitation films. Starring black American decathlete/football star turned Hollywood actor Woody Strode (Spartacus, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance) as the Christ-like Lumumba figure and sub-proletarian Pasolini actor Franco Citti (Accattone, The Godfather) as a meek thief who befriends and comforts the protagonist when the two end up sharing a cell in a hellish-like prison that more resembles a medieval torture chamber, Black Jesus is sort of like an ‘arthouse-BlaxploItalian’ precursor to Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ (2004) in terms of its ultra-violent emphasis on the eponymous lead’s gruesome martyrdom. Part quasi-Marxist hagiography, part pioneering torture-porn flick, part ‘arthouse’ fable, part prison-based chamber piece, and part dichotomous meditation on love and hatred, Black Jesus is what you might expect if the bastard progeny of Gillo Pontecorvo and Luchino Visconti was hired to shoot a biblical epic in the holy land about the crucifixion of Christ, but instead decided to travel further south to the Dark Continent and make a pseudo-Fanonian war-melodrama hybrid about Lumumba instead.

Maurice Lalubi aka ‘Black Jesus’ (Woody Strode) is a perennially wandering Christlike pan-African revolutionary who moves from town to town spreading the gospel of African liberation and, as such, the new ostensibly black-run government wants to have him liquidated immediately. Lalubi is confident that he will survive as he cannot imagine one of his loyal peasant followers selling him out to the white man, but he does not realize that he has a scheming Judas among his leadership. Indeed, for whatever reason (his motivations are never explained), this Black Judas tells the ‘Colonel’ (Belgian actor Jean Servais of Jules Dassin’s Rififi (1955) and the Darryl F. Zanuck produced 1962 WWII epic The Longest Day)—a Dutchman hired by the Congolese government to hunt down the revolutionary—the whereabouts of Lalubi and even provides him with a map of the entire area, but he is not awarded with any money in return. When negro Judas refuses to tell the Colonel why he has decided to betray his leader, the military commander becomes so enraged that he states, “this is a country of liars...you lie when you baptize your children.” Of course, Lalubi is soon captured and he does not even bother to resist arrest, but not before the white soldiers kill all the villagers in their area and senselessly burn down their homes. Upon being brought to a local prison, which is really just a makeshift torture chamber that is run by thugs and sadists, Lalubi gives a knowing smirk to a

white prisoner named 'Oreste' (Franco Citti), who has been arrested for stealing an army truck and selling it to some of Black Jesus' revolutionary disciples. While Lalubi is a relatively famous and powerful black man, Oreste is quite the opposite as a loser white lumpenprole who dropped out of school at age 9 and has done a variety of degrading jobs, including "rough trade for homos" and "even served mass," among other things. As two men that are routinely tortured by boorish Belgian thugs and who face the very real prospect of death, Lalubi and Oreste will become extremely close over the next day or so.

Not long after arriving at the prison, Lalubi is sent to the office of the Colonel who attempts to pick the negro revolutionary's brain to see what makes him tick and to judge the true quality of his character. Lalubi pleads in a discernibly worried fashion, "Let me go, Colonel...I have a feeling that something serious is about to happen to me," to which the commander replies, "that depends on how you answer my questions." When the Colonel asks the revolutionary to reveal information on his black nationalist comrades, Lalubi denies he has any and explains that he merely gives speeches to people and these people in turn spread these ideas from village to village. In fact, Lalubi goes so far as describing himself as a "pacifist," adding, "I'm not a man of war and I hate violence." Lalubi also has no sympathy for the white victims of his political ideas, callously remarking when the Colonel mentions that a group of his disciples tortured, skinned, and killed two of his soldiers, "you can tell their mothers that they died here and not in Belgium," thus reflecting his belief that not a single cracker should be in Africa. The Colonel is so offended by Lalubi's rather cavalier remark that he responds in an equally ruthless manner by stating, "You mean we should have remained at home? When white men abandon these countries, what happens? I'll tell you... They shed enough blood to overflow the rivers of the Congo." After revealing that he is neither Belgian or French, but an old Dutchman who feels lost, tired, and homesick for his home city of Amsterdam, the Colonel offers to spare Lalubi's life if he merely signs a document ordering his followers to put down their arms and give up their murderous attempts at revolt, but the pan-African messiah refuses to even read it, let alone sign it. After that, the Colonel gives Lalubi an hour to think it over, or else he will face immediate torture that night and death the next day. Of course, Lalubi has no intention of signing the document and is merely biding his time until he is executed.

While waiting the 60 minutes that will ultimately result in him being tortured at the hands of young sadistic Belgian soldiers whose only form of solace is torturing and killing the negroes that want to torture and kill them, Lalubi gets to know Oreste who, due to his sorry lot in life and lack of education, is essentially a "white nigger" who is not even worthy of kissing the black power advocate's boots. Needless to say, Oreste is quite taken aback by the fact that another person, especially one who is as famous as Lalubi, would ever want to get to know him. Knowing they are both doomed to an unspeakable fate, Lalubi

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and Orešte try to make the most of their hour of peace together. At the end of their talk, Orešte somewhat pathetically asks the revolutionary, “say now, when you get important, will you remember me?,” to which Lalubi replies, “I promise you...Orešte...when we get out, we will meet again and we will be a lot happier.” At the end of their talk, Lalubi thanks Orešte with the utmost sincerity for “making that hour go by so quickly.” Of course, after refusing to sign the document when the hour is over, Lalubi is tortured so badly that he can neither walk nor see when the odious ordeal is over. Like J.C., Orešte also has nails driven through his hands. Meanwhile, one of the Belgian soldiers is arrested and put in the jail cell with Orešte, who attempts to make small talk with the new prisoner (Stephen Forsyth), but he acts like a total asshole and says nothing. When broken, beaten, and blind Lalubi is brought back to the cell, Orešte becomes hysterical and tries in vain to comfort his new friend. Hoping to ease Lalubi’s suffering, Orešte calls for a prison guard and offers him ten pornographic photos if he brings him back a mess tin full of oil to treat the revolutionary’s wounds. While Orešte receives the pseudo-medicine, a senseless fight with the seemingly half-deranged soldier prisoner results in the oil being spilled on the floor.

In easily the most subversive and racially-charged segment of *Black Jesus*, the Colonel has a heated conversation with the puppet leader of the Congo, who is clearly modeled after Belgium-U.S.-backed Congo leader Joseph-Desiré Mobutu that had the real Lumumba liquidated. While the Colonel has second thoughts about having Lalubi executed, the Mobutu character threatens to take away his job while rubbing it in his face that he is now a deracinated man without a nation by remarking regarding his European homeland that it is, “an almost forgotten land...and one that most certainly has forgotten you.” When the Colonel states regarding Lalubi, “Let us make no martyrs...it would be better,” Mobutu remarks that the Christlike leader “has a great deal of charm” but that his people will soon forget him because, “We are not white men. Our people are much more simple and direct. They accept what they see...believe in a man because he is there, not because he was there. Believe me, Colonel, eliminating a black leader is child’s play.” Of course, the Colonel finally gives into Mobutu’s demands when he replies regarding Lalubi’s next day execution, “We ourselves will supply the executioner if that will ease your conscience.” Not surprisingly, the Judas “Uncle Tom” who sold Lalubi out is now one of Mobutu’s aides.

The next morning, the Belgian soldiers put Lalubi, Orešte, and the soldier in a prison truck and drive them to a remote building in ruins. While Orešte pretends that the Belgian soldiers are “nice guys” who mean them no harm, Lalubi has already accepted his death and accepts it stoically. Indeed, Lalubi is marched into the building where he meets a negro with a dagger who drives it into his gut. Seemingly because he is jealous that another black man gets to kill the great black nationalist leader, the main Officer (Pier Paolo Capponi of Francesco Rosi’s classic 1970 WWI flick *Uomini contro* aka *Many Wars Ago* and Dario Argento’s

1971 giallo *The Cat o' Nine Tails*) finishes Lalubi off with a submachine gun. When Orešte hears the gunshot blasts from outside, he manages to escape from the Belgian soldiers after attacking them and runs inside the building where he finds Lalubi's still warm corpse. Of course, it is only a matter of seconds before the Officer catches up with Orešte and liquidates him. Not satisfied with killing Lalubi and his white cuckold, the Officer also kills the soldier prisoner so there will be no witnesses, even though the unlucky fellow is one of his comrades and racial kinsman. While driving back to the prison, the soldiers spot a young negro and the Officer complains, "damn, another prisoner" and commands the lad to come to him but he runs away. Naturally, the soldiers start firing at the boy, but somewhat inexplicably, he manages to get away in an allegorical scene that seems to reflect that director Zurlini was a tad bit too optimistic in regard to the Congo's future.

Despite the film's quasi-Marxist black power message, *Black Jesus* ultimately depicts a curious character who calls himself a pacifist but whose words of collectivist race-hate and class warfare have resulted in the worst kinds of atrocities, including the skinning and burning of people while still alive, among virtually every other form of 'cheap' torture that is accessible in the third world. Unquestionably, the protagonist's greatest sin is lurking from village to village to spread his message while knowing damn well that these villages will be treated with an extermination-based 'scorched earth' policy. Additionally, the Dutch Colonel character that has the protagonist captured and sentenced is also treated in a somewhat sympathetic fashion, as he is depicted as a troubled old man who suffers major guilt and tries to spare Lalubi's life but cannot because he is merely a pawn in the game and a military bureaucrat who really has no power and can only carry out orders from his superiors like any 'loyal' military man. Notably, star Woody Strode would go on to describe his role in *Black Jesus* as the most challenging of his career, which is something that spaghetti western maestro Sergio Leone noticed as he subsequently hired the American actor to star in *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968). If the 1968 Cannes Film Festival, which Zurlini's film was supposed to compete in, was not cancelled as a result of the so-called 'May 1968 events in France' as carried out by Trotskyites and their fellow far-left allies, *Black Jesus* might be better known today, which is somewhat ironic considering the political nature of the work. Luckily, despite its somewhat superficial Trotskyite sentiments, Zurlini's flick actually has heart and does not feel like it was directed by some pedantic commie like Godard but rather a halfway sensible fellow who is, at the very least, more honest and objective than ardent crypto-agitprop hacks in Hollywood. Aside from Zurlini's film, black Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck directed two films about Patrice Lumumba, including the documentary *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1990) and the melodramatic biopic *Lumumba* (2000) starring Cameroonian-French negro Eriq Ebouaney as the eponymous lead, but, at least artistically speaking, *Black Jesus* will probably

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be the film about the martyrdom of the Congolese pan-African leader that will prove to stand the test of time. A film where only two of the characters have names and none of the characters' backgrounds are really ever disclosed, Black Jesus is ultimately a filmic fable featuring archetypes as opposed to a historically faithful biopic, thus giving the film a more timeless quality than some might suspect. Indeed, as far as black nationalist biopics are concerned, while I don't plan to watch Spike Lee's deceptively mythmaking hagiography *Malcolm X* (1992) ever again unless I'm feeling terribly masochistic or I'm being forced to do so at gunpoint, I would not mind spending some time with *Black Jesus* in a couple decades from now.

-Ty E

INVISIBLE ADVERSARIES

Valie Export (1977)

Undoubtedly, arthouse sci-fi-horror flicks of the feminist alien invasion sort are not exactly the most popular subgenre, but if someone were to create such an innately ridiculous work, Uncle Adolf's homeland of Austria would probably be the right place for such a seemingly idiotical and inane idiosyncratic film as the ethno-masochistic birth place of Viennese Actionism and the static and nihilistic anti-völkisch celluloid sermons of German-Austrian Michael Haneke (*Time of the Wolf*, *The White Ribbon*). Indeed, Austrian feminist auteur Valie Export (*Menschenfrauen*, *Die Praxis der Liebe* aka *The Practice of Love*) directed such an anti-climatic science fiction work as her debut feature-length film entitled *Unsichtbare Gegner* (1977) aka *Invisible Adversaries*, a film about an undainty and somewhat deranged feminist artist suffering from schizophrenia who, on top of facing romance troubles with her equally left-wing yet unloving boyfriend, believes extremely aggressive space aliens known as 'Hyksos' have invaded earth and the bodies of humans in a pernicious plot to destroy the world. Directed by an associate of the Viennese Actionist movement who de-christened herself "Valie Export" in tribute to her favorite cigarettes and in anti-tribute to her father and husband or as she once explained herself, "I did not want to have the name of my father [Lehner] any longer, nor that of my former husband Hollinger. My idea was to export from my 'outside' (heraus) and also export, from that port. The cigarette package was from a design and style that I could use, but it was not the inspiration," *Invisible Adversaries* is a vaginally-charged celluloid collage utilizing various artistic mediums, including video, still photographs, radio broadcasts, etc. of the fiercely feminized and foully fetishistic variety that is clearly aesthetically and thematically inspired by commie frog Jean-Luc Godard in its minimalism and cliché far-left politics. A woman who thought flashing her own and other women's bushy beavers around in various Actionist-inspired films and public performances (including infamously entering a Munich art cinema wearing crotch-less pants), as well as allowing strangers to touch her breasts through a curtained box which she documented with her 1 minute short *Touch Cinema* (1968), would prove how absolutely liberated she was from the Aryan patriarchy, Valie Export, much like her Austrian and German feminist compatriots, rather ridiculously thought she could battle the supposed still lingering taint of female complacency of her mother's generation during the Third Reich and with *Invisible Adversaries*, she seemingly unconsciously associates feminism with mental illness by way of a character whose growing contempt for men and the ghost of National Socialism is only transcended by her mental illness. That being said, *Invisible Adversaries* only works today as an accidental comedy (although the film does feature some scenes of intentional comedy, but it is just not nearly as effective) of the terribly dry and absurdly pretentious sort due to its

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Godard-esque minimalistic direction and set-design and lack of special effects, as well its innately inane diatribes against authority, patriarchy, Nazism, and the apparently black "Vienna heart." The sort of soulless celluloid work created by dead souls for dead souls from a disenfranchised generation that self-righteously blamed their National Socialist parents for their own cultural disillusionment and self-hatred, *Invisible Adversaries* is just one of the many cinematic reasons why ethno-masochism and Frankfurt school intellectual swill have degenerated Europa into the uncultivated and cultureless corpse it is today. Indeed, if anything, *Invisible Adversaries* is a sort of artsy fartsy celluloid suicide note that declares in a rather debauched manner the death of traditional Austrian kultur and community.

As one learns during an off-screen and imaginary broadcast at the beginning of *Invisible Adversaries*, "An invisible power...An important announcement...Population...As we've just learnt...well-founded suspicion...An invisible adversary...a foreign, perhaps otherworldly power...An invisible enemy occupied the town and transformed people." These supposed 'invisible adversaries' are known as Hyksos and are "hardly distinguishable from real humans" and "anyone could already be a Hyksos," which strikes fear, paranoia, and self-subjected isolation in a female artist suffering from schizophrenia named Anna (played by Susanne Widl, who also starred in Export's *Menschenfrauen* (1980) and the segment "lust" of the feminist omnibus film *Seven Women, Seven Sins* (1986)). On top of worry about the anti-human Hyksos threat, Anna and her intellectually pedantic pseudo-revolutionary boyfriend Peter (played by degenerate far-left artist Peter Weibel) obsess over Vienna's ostensibly crypto-Nazi government and authoritarian police who, among others things, masturbate in front of a mirror in public in a scene director auteur Export must have felt was an ingenious and rather arousing allegory for patriarchal narcissism and whatnot. To prove his commitment to the anti-fascist commie cause, Herr Peter senselessly argues with a cop and is issued a citation as he proudly claims to his girlfriend Anna that he is willing to pay anything for "freedom of expression," even if it proves to be a rather impotent, idiotic, and unrewarding display of individualism on his part. When not arguing with Anna via mundane mental masturbation, Peter playfully rubs his head on Anna's vagina and rectum, remarking afterwards that "my hair stinks. I have to wash it."

A postmodern rebel without an organic artistic cause, Anna spends her time defiling traditional European art history by making aesthetically vulgar collages using classic paintings and magazine advertisement clippings, but also by making photocopies of her own vagina and looking at pictures of naked prepubescent boys and deformed children. In a rather vulgar display of penis envy (or what director Export probably absurdly believes is the opposite), Anna also cuts off her pubic hair and glues it to her face so as to create a mustache. Displaying her disgust at the idea of being a domestic housewife, Anna also cuts (or at least imag-

ines so) turtles, beetles (which, to the dismay of modern vegan leftists, were exterminated for the sake of Export's film), fish, and parakeets with a kitchen knife. In a relationship with a girly and bitchy *untermensch* who, although he shares her anti-authoritarian political beliefs and 'liberated' counter-culture views on sexuality, firmly believes "women are parasites," Anna naturally has a number of fights with boyfriend Peter, which inevitably results in the severance of their sterile and less than steamy love affair of pubic hair sniffing, thus throwing the little lady in a deeper abyss of paranoia and fear of Hyksos, including the belief that an alien *doppelganger* is trying to snuff her out, but luckily she meets a female video artist and is introduced to the vaginally stimulating films of feminist documentarian Helke Sander (*Break the Power of the Manipulators*, *The Trouble with Love*), which gives her a false sense of empowerment in the face of her failed relationship and mental illness. Of course, being constantly blitzkrieged by news about the war in Vietnam, persecution of barbarian towelheads by Israeli Zionists (whose founder Theodor Herzl was inspired by the Jew-hating in Vienna), and Austria's supposed crypto-fascism (unlike the kraut, the Austrians were never 'de-Nazified' by the Allies), Anna is ultimately more a victim of the media than some sort of imaginary alien menace. Personally, I think Anna, like virtually all of the degenerate artists of her disillusioned and born-defeated and guilt-ridden degenerate generation would not be suffering the mental illness that has totally consumed her if her Uncle Adolf won the Second World War. That being said, I do not think it is a stretch to say that *Invisible Adversaries* is the cultural symptom of a defeated people that is no longer able to take pride in their nation's kultur, so they react relatively ridiculously by destroying said culture and making assholes of themselves by creating ugly films about ugly people doing ugly things.

At various points in *Invisible Adversaries*, a number of seemingly random yet thematically imperative references are made to Austria's naughty National Socialist past, including in the first couple minutes of the film when a radio announcer states: "Moscow – Vienna. The Soviet News Agency TASS accused the Austrian Radio of serving the goals of fascist propaganda. The fact that former Hitlerite colonel Rudel could appear on T.V. must be seen as Part of the re-activation of neo-Nazi elements and anti-Semitic tendencies. Whilst in a recent T.V. discussion Henriette von Schirach, widow of the former Hitler Youth Leader, was given screen time for fascist propaganda," thus underscoring the pathetic manner in which Austrians were expected to disavow their past history and heroes, which auteur Valie Export does with self-flagellating glee. In fact, Export goes so far as attacking all of mainstream Austrian cinema (as well as the Austrian collective with it), especially the dreaded nostalgic "Heimat-film," with the following nation-negating narration during *Invisible Adversaries*: "From 1939-45 Austria produced revoltingly sickly, dishonest films, known typically as "Viennese films", and the elite of the Burg Theatre acted them. The same

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crew produced after the war the popular country and folklore films. This smooth transition from Nazi Austria to the 2nd Republic is typical of the hypocritical mentality of the country.”

Oftentimes described as a sort of feminist version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Invisible Adversaries* can probably be better seen as the uniquely ugly manifestation of a lost generation of Austrian women who blame Austrian men for both the loss of the Second World War and national dignity and thus have lashed out in a seemingly nonsensical manner of waving their unclad twats as a way to prove they no longer need a mensch to survive in this world. Ironically, protagonist Anna of *Invisible Adversaries* is most perturbed by her supposed alien doppelganger, thus demonstrating an intrinsic fear of herself, as well as herself being her own worst enemy, a fate that many feminists seem to suffer from, yet ultimately assign men the blame for. Aside from her early shorts like *Mann & Frau & Animal* (1973) aka *Man & Woman & Animal*, which features a woman masturbating in a bathtub as well as a nasty case of what seems to be a vaginitis on a putrid pussy and a rather gory case of menstrual blood flowing out of a gash, *Invisible Adversaries* is indubitably Export's most artistically subversive and least banal work, which I guess does not say much considering the unspectacular nature of her cinematic oeuvre as a whole, but at least the film kept me moderately entertained, if not for all the wrongs reasons, the two times I viewed it. A less than wonderfully wanton window into the post-WWII Austrian female (feminist) psyche, as well as an accidental deconstruction of the Aryan feminist mind in a state of seeming panic, *Invisible Adversaries* is not only probably the best introduction to Valie Export's art (be it film or otherwise), but also Austrian/German feminist film in general. If nothing else, *Invisible Adversaries* will make it quite clear there has never been a skyscraper in the shape of a penis flytrap.

-Ty E

PARIS, JE T'AIME

Various (2006)

Paris, je t'aime is an film collaboration between various directors and cast members from around the world. Basically its 18 shorts films that take place in Paris, France and go nowhere. The directors range from Gus van Sant to Wes Craven making for an unfocused and sloppy compilation. Stars such as Elijah Wood and Natalie Wood are used to lure in people who don't usually watch those irritating subtitled foreign films. It's been trendy now for a while for big stars to get token "artistic" roles. France has produced a lot of films that talk about pointless bullshit (existentialism?). Paris, je t'aime is no different. Jean-Paul Sartre's grave even appears in the film to give the film intellectual credibility. The only thing that was missing was testimonials from old French Bolshevik resistance fighters. Paris, je t'aime is about the new multicultural society and it reflects the crumbling on French culture. It is doubtful that France will ever produce another film talent such as Jean Cocteau.

I still can't figure out why Paris, je t'aime was even made. The audience it aims for seems to be those so-called "progressive types" that consider European film ethnocentric. Paris, je t'aime has enough foreigners in it to pass the Globalization multicultural test that Neo-Marxist's also claim their against (global revolutions makes a difference when international trade is involved?). I think Gaspar Noé's Irreversible makes for a better representation of modern day France. Too bad no one in Paris, je t'aime went into the "rectum." Paris, je t'aime can be summed up with "Robert Altman having celluloid diarrhea in Paris." Nothing weaves the scenes together. The segments go together about just as much those the various cultures featured in the film. Experimental films seem to generally fail in their directions. Paris, je t'aime isn't that experimental and it no doubt fails. I would love to see a resurrection of European national cinema. The majority of films that come out of Europe nowadays buy into the same bullshit propaganda as the trash that comes out of the United States. Paris, je t'aime is a dull film that offers nothing new to the viewer. It goes perfect with the German film Good Bye! Lenin directed by Wolfgang Becker.

-Ty E

OPFERGANG
OPFERGANG

Veit Harlan (1944)

I hate to admit it, but despite wanting and expecting to discover a rapturous experience with German auteur Veit Harlan's National Socialist arthouse melodrama *Opfergang* (1944) aka *The Great Sacrifice* aka *Rite of Sacrifice*, I merely witnessed what I found to be semi-surreal high-schlock of the superficially sorrowful and surprisingly sybaritic sort and certainly not the neglected Nazi-era cinematic masterpiece I was led to believe it would be by both nazis and anti-nazis alike. Admittedly, I tend to procrastinate when it comes to first seeing films that are regarded as masterpieces, seemingly personal, and/or otherwise significant in some way, in part due to my deep cinephile dread that I will be consumed with chagrin by what was supposed to be 'life-altering' cinematic work and I can honestly say that *Opfergang* fulfilled all of my fears about the potential of being greatly disappointed by a major motion-picture. With quasi-Nietzschean themes, beautiful blonde beastesses, Nazi 'camp' aesthetics, mystical völkisch imagery, a bizarre Nordic love triangle, and being directed by Veit "the baroque fascist" Harlan – the infamous director of the melodramatic Jew-baiting flick *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß* and the homoerotic-themed pro-gay post-war work *Different from You and Me* (1957) aka *Anders als du und ich* aka *Bewildered Youth* – it came as quite a shock to me that not only would I list not *Opfergang* on a list of my top 100 favorite films, but I would not even regard it as one of the greatest films of German cinema history and apparently I am not alone in that sentiment. In fact, Veit Harlan's own son Thomas Harlan (Torre Bela, Wundkanal) – a filmmaker and author, as well as a rabid anti-Nazi who publicly denounced and denigrated his father throughout his terribly troubled life – described *Opfergang* as a "kitsch melodrama" that merely succeeded in "creating artificial sentiment and lending it...credibility" in the documentary *Harlan – In the Shadow of Jew Süß* (2008) directed by Felix Moeller.

Of course, not everyone was disenchanted with the film as Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels – who essentially had total control over what films were made and screened in Germany – regarded *Opfergang* as a highly personal possession thereupon causing the delay of the film's release, although it did have a limited run in a small selection of movie theaters, in part due to the scarcity and expensiveness of color film stock. In the documentary *Christoph Schlingensiefel und seine Filme* (2005) aka *Christoph Schlingensiefel and His Films*, prematurely deceased modern German filmmaker and absurdist Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensiefel (*Menu total*, *The 120 Days of Bottrop*) – who created a freeform scatological remake of Harlan's film entitled *Mutters Maske* (1988) that sardonically satirizes a number of scenes from Harlan's film – also believed that German New Wave master Rainer Werner Fassbinder was more influenced by *Opfergang* than he was by Danish-German Douglas Sirk's popular 1950s Hollywood melo-

dramas (e.g. *All That Heaven Allows*, *Written on the Wind*). Indeed, although an anti-climatic experience for me in general, I would be lying if I did not admit that *Opfergang*'s keen kaleidoscope of calming and chilling colors did not have a nice trance-inducing effect on me, but these moments of ecstasy – not unlike the sort featured in *The Red Shoes* (1948) directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger and the Crowleyite shorts of cine-magickian Kenneth Anger (*Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, *Invocation of My Demon Brother*) – were abruptly broken by sand bar characters, redundant dialogue, and the sort of abhorrent aristocratic degeneracy and excess that debauched Italian blueblood auteur Luchino Visconti (*The Leopard*, *The Damned*) would do much better and more honestly.

Opfergang centers around a positively posh and prissy protagonist Albrecht Froben (played by Harlan regular Carl Raddatz), the less than homely heir of a wealthy shipping company based in Hamburg, Germany. Honestly, I already knew the film was inherently tainted when introduced to the character of Herr Froben, a man who – despite his wealth and prestige – is certainly no charming gentlemen, hero, nor scholar, let alone a dashing Aryan *Übermensch* of the racially pure sort but the radically repellant Mr. Raddatz; a rat-faced fellow with a thick little Richard mustache, hence why grisly Goebbels probably could identify with the character. After all, if it were not for their power and prestige, neither of these men would have been able choose from the frisky and foxy Freyja of their wildest, Teutonic dreams. Also, like the little *Döktor*, fab Froben has a keen weakness for the ladies, especially when it comes to Nordic buxom blondes that look like they could have given him quite the beating, so naturally both men became Aryan adulterers; indubitably a mortal sin in the Fatherland. Despite his rather frail frame, Albrecht is an anti-intellectual and worldly adventurer of sorts who has traveled to the former German Afrikan colonies and Japan, which has given him a new lease on life of ceasing the moment and what-not. Although Froben is married to a seemingly introverted, intelligent, stoic beauty named Octavia (played by Irene von Meyendorff aka Baroness Irene Isabella Margarete Pauline Caecila von Meyendorff) who his oddball orientalist cousin Matthias is semi-secretly madly in love with (he has an out-of-place portrait of the dame in his room of oriental knickknacks) and whose Latin name he finds to be quite annoying, to his dismay but also delight, he discovers that he is really in love with an extroverted Swiss miss of the extraordinarily and similarly extroverted and adventurous sort. Unfortunately for Albrecht, the love of his life is terminally ill, on top of the fact that he has a faithful wife.

In *Opfergang*, the ill-fated and tediously tangled love triangle is sparked one Sunday afternoon by happenstance while the character Albrecht is visiting his cousin Matthias (Franz Schafheitlin) at his home on the Elbe. Supervised by Octavia's elderly and somewhat nihilistic intellectual father, Senator Froben (Otto Treßler) in what is described by one of the guests as "our spiritual hors d'oeuvre

OPFERGANG

before the Sunday roast,” Albrecht seems quite blasé by the supremely sedentary even which is given a Chopin score by way of Oĉtavia cultivated chops and personal obsession; pianoforte. Albrecht eventually loses it and almost commits the lace curtain sin of ‘verbal assault’ when Senator Froben reads what he describes as “Dionysian dithyramb by Nietzsche” and “Nietzsche’s death premonition, one of the deepest poems ever written,” which – in fact – is an abridged version of the tragic Anti-Christ’s poem *The Sun Sinks* aka *Die Sonnie sinkt*. Albrecht agrees with his fellow guests that the poem is “very beautiful,” but also feels that “it’s terrible” as he finds it rather passive, pessimistic, and dreary for his tastes and opens a curtain to a serene and scenic lake outside that almost has a celestial and ethereal essence to it, thereupon asking the rhetorical question of his cultured compatriots, “Can someone tell me why you’re sitting here every Sunday feeling gloomy?” Finally fed up with talking about philosophical matters for three hours on a sunny Sunday and listening to the written words of a tragic German genius who conceived the poem shortly before he went mad, Albrecht – a man of action and few words (and, in turn a spiritual ‘National Socialist’) – decides to practice *Carpe diem* and subsequently goes rowing in the seemingly sublime lake, henceforth discovering an au naturel Swedish ‘mermaid’ symbolically clinging on to the end of his tiny dinghy, *Älskling Flodéen* (played by Harlan’s real-life wife *Kristina Söderbaum*); the woman that will – for better or worse – irrevocably change his life forever.

Although described as a film with various subtle National Socialist themes, most specifically the virtues of selfless death and sacrifice – which is symbolized by Albrecht’s acceptance of *Äls*’ illness and subsequent death, as well as his commitment to staying with the mismatched wife he does not love – *Opfergang* is more a cinematic work of curiously creamy and cosmopolitan *crème de la crème* society than a cinematic work innately equipped with a nasty and nefarious expression of Nazi ideology. In fact, with its prominence of an unfaithful philandering posh protagonist, wealthy yet hedonistic families and bastard children (*Äls* has a fatherless daughter), colonialist cosmopolitan characters (Albrecht is an active member of German Colonial Association and his cousin Matthias a bookish orientalist), and glaring glorification of the anachronistic German aristocracy (NS was supposedly a vehemently *völkisch* ‘people’s movement’ glorifying personal merit over inborn and unearned class distinctions), *Opfergang* hardly seems like the sort of film that would have been enjoyed by the everyday brownshirt Wehrmacht soldier or worker after arriving home from the drudgery of civil service and cracking open a bottle of *Krombacher Brauerei*, but the sort of cinematic vision that would have been designed for the delight of high-ranking National Socialist party leaders and officials, thus making it no surprise that Joseph Goebbels – who knew the tide of war had changed and his end was very likely near – wanted to keep the film for himself so that no other people aside from the Führer himself could so thoroughly and perceptively identify with the

film.

As explained by his elderly children in *Harlan – In the Shadow of Jew Süss*, Veit Harlan idolized and worshiped his wife Kristina Söderbaum's beauty, even if she was 'sacrificed' in a number of his films, including *Opfergang*; a work that most certainly seems like a tribute to the lead actress' penetrating pulchritude, if not annoying and seemingly adolescent-like acting. Incidentally, Harlan's first wife, Dora Gerson, a Jewish actress and cabaret singer, perished in Auschwitz with her family, not to mention the fact that two of the filmmaker's daughters would marry Jewish men, one of which converted to the Hebraic faith and inevitably committed suicide in 1989. Harlan's niece Christiane Susanne Harlan would also ironically marry Stanley Kubrick (2001: *A Space Odyssey, Eyes Wide Shut*); arguably the greatest Jewish filmmaker who ever lived. Thus, it goes without saying that Veit Harlan has a number of Jewish grandchildren and great-grandchildren, among various other non-Aryan ethnicities as depicted in Felix Moeller's documentary. Of course, with the sort of familial degeneracy featured in *Opfergang*, it seems only fitting that Veit Harlan's family's future turned out the way it did. Needless to say, Harlan ultimately sacrificed his own progeny's ability to lead a normal life with his legacy as a blacklisted filmmaker, most specifically because of *Jew Süss*, which is a shame because if *Opfergang* was as half as decent as I expected it would be, it might have been worth it. Of course, not all sacrifices are sanctified.

-Ty E

BEWILDERED YOUTH
BEWILDERED YOUTH

Veit Harlan (1957)

Undoubtedly, Post-World War European art, especially from defeated nations like Germany, Austria, and Italy, oftentimes depicted a people who had degenerated to such a curious level that certain artists' work, both in theme and aesthetic, created pieces that barely resembled the kind of work that had previously been created and filmmakers were certainly not exempt from this rule. Out of all of the European films I have seen, probably no other film more exemplifies this peculiar and perturbing problem than *Bewildered Youth* (1957) aka *Anders als du und ich* directed by ex-Nazi auteur Veit Harlan (Opfergang, Kolberg), Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels' favorite filmmaker and the man who directed the infamous National Socialist melodrama *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süß*. Charged with so-called 'crimes against humanity' in 1949 for his part in directing *Jew Süß* – a work oftentimes considered a superlatively sinister and cacodemonic piece of mayhem-inspiring melodramatic cinema – Harlan was essentially blacklisted in the filmmaking world for his artistic involvement with the Third Reich, but he would direct nine more films between 1950 and 1958 before his death in 1964, with *Bewildered Youth*; a black-and-white film that caused more controversy in Germany upon its release than *Jew Süß*, at least before 1945. Using a homosexual emancipation activist named Hans Giese as a 'scientific adviser' for the film, *Anders als du und ich* was originally intended as a quasi-pro-gay film designed to change public opinion about paragraph §175 of the German Criminal Code, which criminalized homosexual acts between consenting men and was not entirely revoked until 1994 after German reunification, but the original cut of the film was banned and it would go through various different and dramatically conflicting cuts with very different messages because the FSK (Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle; a German movie rating system equivalent to the MPAA) believed Harlan's vision would "foster perversion" and promote "decadent weaklings." Harlan – who decided to tackle the subject of male-on-male buggery in a brazen attempt to rehabilitate his filmmaking career – made his intentions very clear with the film when he sent a letter to the production company regarding the original script by Felix Lützkendorf entitled *Eltern klagen an* (Parents Accuse) that the film is based on, stating: "I think what's missing in the script is the fact that there are two types of homosexuals - namely those who have been handicapped by nature, and those who criminally violate nature. The latter act based either on innate immorality or for material gain, or because of damnable weakness. The former, however, deserve our complete sympathy. If we want to be a magnanimous people, we must regard their lives as tragic, and the film must not condemn or persecute them based on any narrow-minded viewpoints. We may prosecute them only in the instances when they seduce youngsters whose nature is basically normal." After various scenes were

cut, scenes shot, and various voices redubbed, the film was released under the title *Anders als du und ich* (§175) aka *Different from You and Me* (§175), but in Austria, the original more 'pro-gay' cut played under the original title *The Third Sex* aka *Das dritte Geschlecht*. A dubbed cut of the film more in the spirit of the uncut original Austrian version was also released under the titles *Bewildered Youth* and *The Third Sex* in the United States in 1958. Essentially a kraut queer equivalent to the popular teen rebellion flick Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) minus the warm Warnercolor kaleidoscopic colors and CinemaScope frames, *Bewildered Youth* is an unintentionally entertaining and flaky footnote from history that reminds one how the Teutonic Fatherland's *Übermensch* campaign and societal inhibitions sank after losing the Second World War.

17-year-old Klaus Teichmann (Christian Wolff), an excellent student in school, comes from a traditional bourgeois family that has the most pressing concern over their son, so when he befriends an extremely effete fellow named Manfred (Guenther Theil) – the bastard son of a poor single mother who is not exactly the most studious pupil in school, his overprotective family begins to worry. After all, less than manly Manfred loves art and even has one of his girly man poems published in the school newspaper, so naturally trouble starts to stir in suburbia when the Dorian Grayish boy brings Klaus to the exotic house of a middle-aged queen queer and antique dealer named Dr. Boris Winkler (Friedrich Joloff); a super suave sodomite with an unhealthy interest in innocent adolescent boys. A ridiculously refined and cultivated man whose home is a virtual museum of artistic treasures and aesthetic pleasures, uniquely urbane Winkler, a wanton wanker, has unlimited resources when it comes to luring in young boys to add to his personal collection. A man who probably modeled his surely striking life of gay Conservative Revolutionary poet Stefan George – a German guru sage who headed literary circles whose members included philosopher/psychologist Ludwig Klages and would-be-Hitler-assassin Claus von Stauffenberg – Winkler impresses the teenage twinks with his dignified knowledge, masterful manners, proto-Kraftwerk electronic avant-garde music sessions, and ostensibly homoerotic indoor Greek wrestling matches between nearly naked men that would certainly tickle the tummy of Yukio Mishima, but Klaus Teichmann's parents are less than impressed with their son's pseudo-fatherly friend, so after talking to a psychologist who recommends that they save their son from turning into a salacious sodomite, a war of morals begins. Klaus' concerned father Werner (Paul Dahlke) grounds his son, but the rebellious teen escapes through a window. When Werner realizes this, he wanders through the wanton world of abberosexuality, including Winkler's house and a degenerate club featuring a drag show, thereupon leading the concerned father to a feel for filth that he cannot stand. Clearly a spiritually castrated cuckold not unlike James Dean's character's father in *Rebel Without a Cause*, wobbly wuss Werner (undoubtedly, the direct source of his son's lack of masculinity) is upstaged by his wily wife Christa (Paula Wes-

BEWILDERED YOUTH

sely) who has the decisive full-proof plan to recruit the Teichmann family housemaid Gerda (Ingrid Stenn) to seduce her son, thus actively recruiting Klaus to heterosexuality. Of course, mother knows best as beautiful Gerda makes a man out of Klaus, but heated homo Boris Winkler, being an effeminate queen who won't dare allow for one of his beautiful boys to be put under the spell of the female enemy, gets Christa in trouble with the law for her part in conspiring with the housemaid in what is nothing short of middleclass fleshpeddling, but such is the world of *Bewildered Youth*.

Although tame by today's standards, *Bewildered Youth* is nothing short of a remarkable, if not ridiculous, revolutionary work for its time and certainly a film that, at least artistically speaking, managed to rehabilitate auteur Veit Harlan to some extent as a filmic artist who is just as competent at directing debauched high-camp National Socialist melodramas as he was at directing aesthetically and thematically provocative teen rebellion flicks, especially when compared to Hollywood films of that time like *The Wild One* (1953) and even later works like *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), thus signifying Germany's social decay after the conclusion of the Second World War. A work that depicts the good, the bad, and flamingly faggy of the homosexual underground (when it was still somewhat in the underground), *Bewildered Youth* features a message that is, at least in part, not all that different from raging rump ranger Rosa von Praunheim's gritty celluloid manifesto *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), because like the less than genteel gay German New Cinema auteur filmmaker's seedy PSA of politically potent poofdom, Harlan's strangely sound swansong argues against the dangers of narcissistic rich gay men, who with their unlimited funds and cultivated art collections, merely derive a strong superficial satisfaction from buying young boys in a manner no more meaningful than their need acquire worthless knickknacks. Harlan certainly did his job as a filmmaker as it also hard for the viewer to deny the charms of Boris Winkler – a dapperly dressed man of immaculate manners and endless knowledge who is no less suave than Satan himself – because he is easily the most interesting and multifaceted character in *Bewildered Youth*, so much so that the viewer would like to see him get away with his dastardly deeds, even if he ruined a couple of lives in the process, which he apparently does in the original cut of the film until German censors stepped in, thus denying the film near melodramatic perfection of the majestically absurd lapsed National Socialist sort. Although I found his claim to be a bit dubious upon first hearing it, absurdist Aryan auteur/renege Renaissance man Christoph Schlingensiefel (who directed the 1988 film *Mutters Maske*; a fiercely facetious freeform remark of Harlan's 1944 melodrama *Opfergang*) may have been on to something when he stated that German New Cinema master of melodrama Rainer Werner Fassbinder was more influenced by the films of Veit Harlan than the Hollywood melodramas of Danish-German auteur Douglas Sirk, as both kraut auteurs were

versatile filmmakers who, on top of being accused of anti-semitism for their portrayals of money-grubbing, Shiksa-seducing capitalist Jews and adapting to the changing times, cinematically depicted – for better or worse – an uncompromising celluloid window of the psyche of the German collective that, unlike the majority of Teutonic filmmakers, has stood the test of the time. After all, who else but Veit Harlan has managed to go from a race-mixing Jew lover (his first wife was the Judaic actress/cabaret singer Dora Gerson), to being the hottest filmmaker of the Third Reich and Joseph Goebbels' most prized auteur, to being accused of communist sympathies for *Verrat an Deutschland* aka *Der Fall Dr. Sorge* (1954), to creating the first important homosexual-themed film of the post-WWII era. That being said, aside from his sexual proclivities, somehow I think Harlan and Dr. Boris Winkler have a lot in common.

-Ty E

FRUIT OF PARADISE
FRUIT OF PARADISE

Věra Chytilová (1970)

With authoritarian communism rearing its ugly culture-distorting redhead in Czechoslovakia with the Soviet invasion of the country in 1968, foremost female Czech New Wave auteur Vera Chytilová (*O necem jinem* aka *Something Different*, *Kalamita* aka *Calamity*) found her highly creative and insanely idiosyncratic filmmaking career put on hold just at the time it began to both nationally and internationally flourish. After completing her most well known and critically revered work *Sedmikrásky* (1966) aka *Daisies*, which was banned upon its initial release in 1966 until 1967 largely due to its gratuitous waste of food (!), Chytilová directed one more film, *Ovoce stromů rajských jíme* (1970) aka *Fruit of Paradise* aka *We Eat the Fruit of the Trees of Paradise*, before she was unofficially blacklisted and was forced to work in the undignified world of television commercials using her husband Jaroslav Kucera's name just so she could make ends meet. *Fruit of Paradise* was the first Chytilová film I ever saw and in my opinion it is the filmmaker's masterpiece as a uniquely uncompromising and thematically/aesthetically intricate work that even seems to transcend *Daisies*. Like much of Chytilová's oeuvre, especially *Daisies*, *Fruit of Paradise* is often-times incorrectly described as a feminist flick when, in fact, as the auteur has mentioned in various interviews, it is an anti-Soviet parable. An innately anarchistic yet equally operatic reworking of the biblical Adam and Eve story set in a hippie-like outdoors health resort of the exceedingly if not somewhat misleadingly ethereal sort, *Fruit of Paradise* managed to be entered in competition at the 1970 Cannes Film Festival, but not unsurprisingly, the work was poorly received because apparently nobody could understand it. Indeed, as much as I appreciate anti-communist flicks, *Fruit of Paradise* succeeds most in its daringly decadent and superlatively self-indulgent aestheticism as a keenly kaleidoscopic work that manages to even rival the high-camp *Kulturscheisse* films of kraut dandy Werner Schroeter. Not unlike American auteur E. Elias Merhige's rather uneven black-and-white experimental flick *Begotten* (1990), *Fruit of Paradise* begins with a positively penetrating 10-minute prologue that is a virtual film in and of itself and could easily work as a stand-alone short, but what really makes *Fruit of Paradise* is that it is endlessly enthralling as a sort of beautiful lunatic celluloid love child of Kenneth Anger and Gábor Bódy. A work that essentially proves that Chytilová is the only rightful heir to Maya Deren and an anti-communist flick from a leftist that is no less hyper hermetic than the works of Dušan Makavejev, *Fruit of Paradise* is ultimately a film that reminds the viewer why the devil wears red. And as they say, better dead than red...

For the first 10-minutes or so of *Fruit of Paradise*, one watches unclad Adam and Eve as they quite angelically tread through a magic, psychedelic forest with ever-changing kaleidoscopic rainbow colors illuminating the flora and fauna. Es-

entially, a solacing yet semi-salacious introduction to Chytilová's radical retelling of the Fall of Man, *Fruit of Paradise* then cuts at about the 10-minute point to the present and introduces protagonist Eva (Jitka Nováková) and her somewhat impotent husband Josef (Karel Novak). After fiddling with a little Satanic snake that looks more like a grotesque worm, Eva makes the mistake of biting into a forbidden piece of fruit, but hubby Josef does not feel like taking bite, though he has a taste for something he cannot describe. Shortly after her date with the apple, Eva climbs a wall out of ostensible paradise and meets a Svengali-like fellow named Robert (Jan Schmid)—a dandy devil and serial killer—after he nearly urinates on her little pug-like head. Eva seems somewhat afraid of but intrigued by Robert and for good reason, so she goes her separate way when the fellow rebuffs her, but it will be far from the last time she meets the mischievous man. Living in a hedonistic fantasy outdoor health resort/spa that is like a sort of naturalist neo-pagan hippie heaven, Eva and Josef surround themselves around equally naïve grown adults who, not unlike the two girly girl antiheroes of *Daisies*, act like children and have rather voracious appetites when it comes to whimsical pleasure and entertainment. After attempting to plant carrots for her husband, Eva once again bumps into Robert in what seems to be fate, but the little lady blows him off and runs away. Being a Satanic mack daddy, Robert hits on a number of women, including a wheelchair-bound 78-year-old elderly woman, but as a man of refined taste, he rejects other women. One day, Eva and her husband play a game with friends of what seems to be anarchic volleyball with a giant orange balloon and during the game a key falls out of Robert's pocket. Always looking to get deeply involved with something she should not be doing, Eva steals Robert's key and enters his home where she finds a stamp, which she nonsensically stamps her thigh with, thereupon leaving the number 6 permanently imprinted on her leg. As Eva soon learns after reading a newspaper with some friends, a local serial killer has been killing blonde women and stamping their bodies with the number 6. Of course, Eva, who is a blonde, comes to the natural conclusion that Robert is the killer. Not long after that, Robert notices Eva has the number 6 imprinted on her thigh and realizes she knows he is the killer, so naturally he decides he must kill her as well, even if she is not a blonde. Meanwhile, Eva realizes her hubby Josef is a dirty liar and leaves him, as if he is a more deplorable individual than an actual bloodthirsting serial killer. Totally in tune with her own female logic, Eva stupidly decides to go chasing after Robert again. Of course, Eva later goes back to Josef as she seems to have a hard time making up her mind. Later, Robert decides he wants to kill Eva, but she ends up killing him instead and failingly attempts to climb over a wall back to paradise, which she has ultimately eternally lost. In the end, Eva goes back to Josef and they both agree that they do not want to know the truth. *Fruit of Paradise* concludes with the following words being sung by an unseen fellow with a deep voice: "And both their eyes were opened, and they saw they were naked. And

FRUIT OF PARADISE

they heard the voice of God walking in paradise in the cool of the day. And the man and the wife hid themselves the presence of the Lord among the fruit trees of paradise.”

Indeed, for all the aimless academic talk about *Fruit of Paradise* being a feminist flick, the film certainly portrays the female protagonist as a scatterbrained nitwit of the pedomorphic sort who cannot make up her mind about anything and always seems to find herself in deleterious situations, though I would be lying if I did not admit that the work portrays men in no less of an unflattering light. Sort of auteur Vera Chytilová's cinematic equivalent to *Fando y Lis* (1968) directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky except all the more aesthetically and thematically intriguing, *Fruit of Paradise* is a rare work that managed to create a new cinematic language, thus making it all the more of an artistic tragedy that the film was lost for some time and Chytilová's filmmaking career dissolved right after the film's release. Of course, like *Daisies*, *Fruit of Paradise* features its fair share of Slavic slapstick-like humor, albeit thankfully to a less overwhelming degree. In a somewhat recent interview, Chytilová stated that she created *Fruit of Paradise* to speak about “the ideological situation of that time” and that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was metaphorically told via the biblical story of Adam and Eve. In the same interview, Chytilová described how the Czech people had to “live in a lie” and that they were “violently raped.” Of course, the antagonist of *Fruit of Paradise*, Robert the Devil, is a perennial liar who attempts to seduce, swindle, and slaughter virtually every lady that passes his warped gaze and he does not support a red outfit for nothing as a seductive symbol of communism who is just as charming as he is cold and callous. Aside from its singular aesthetic majesty and totally tasty idiosyncratic and iconoclastic tableaux, *Fruit of Paradise* also acts as the perfect antidote to the Marxist fanboyism of films produced in countries like West Germany and France at the same time. While idealistic idiots like Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Marie Straub, and Alexander Kluge were fetishizing Marxism from the luxury of spoiled capitalist nations where one could certainly afford to wallow in such utopian far-left ideals, Chytilová had to come up with a creative and cryptic way to express the fact that her nation was being senselessly culturally and socially sodomized by the Soviets. Indeed, I would not be surprised if the lousy reception *Fruit of Paradise* had at the 1970 Cannes Film Festival was more the result of the critics being offended by the film's anti-communist message than their inability to comprehend the film. The closest thing to an anti-communist take on *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (1970) and a work that proves that Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid (*La Paloma*, *Shadow of Angels*) was not the only European filmmaker of his degenerate generation to make timeless aesthetically-pleasing parables bashing the left, *Fruit of Paradise* is certainly a lost masterpiece ripe for rediscovering for more discerning cinephiles.

-Ty E

JOSHUA

Vic Armstrong (1993) I consider Joshua to be an unofficial sequel to Williamson's Boss Nigger. Apart from having a different name, let alone a name at all, he dons the same clothes and hat to take on the persona of The Black Rider. This film is a film glorifying all that is holy and bad ass about the Hammer. You will watch Fred Williamson sneak through a desert in a very Italian cinema feel for an hour and a half and you will be entertained. Joshua is coming home from servicing in the army and plans to see his mom; a slave owned by a loving and hospitable white family. Before he gets a chance to see her, a group of roughnecks kill his mother and kidnap his mail-order bride and begin raping her constantly throughout the film until she succumbs to a loony case of Stockholm Syndrome. Due to the bleak nothingness that this film's philosophy encompasses, much of the run time of this film will be slow and uneventful but will flourish in a wonderful climax that features a truly heart-breaking final line. This film makes me feel more for elderly colored folk than the entire film of The Color Purple would ever hope to achieve. The most surprising element of Joshua is the rape element. Not graphic or raw, the rape is seriously implied in several scenes. His beautiful innocent bride will be gang-raped in the desert by non-hygienic cowboys and it is very depressing. Shocking to say the least, she eventually mutates into a simple plot device and is soon forgotten about. Joshua is a vessel for Fred Williamson to further his cult status. It works to a degree. While not being a great film, Joshua gets by being entertaining and a wonderful blaxploitation spaghetti western. The only real solid problem I had with this film is the same theme playing consistently through the entire film. You won't not hear it. Joshua is his mother's son, and he is on a quest for revenge.

-mAQ

DEATHWATCH
DEATHWATCH

Vic Morrow (1966)

Long before he and two little Chinese girls were the victims of John Landis' deleterious directing and died tragically after being decapitated by a helicopter rotor during the filming of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983), *Combat!* (1962–1967) star Vic Morrow directed an early gay prison flick starring Hebraic mongrel alien Spock. Indeed, believe it or not, in 1966, Morrow adapted flaming fag frog criminal Jean Genet's early play, *Deathwatch* (1949) aka *Haute surveillance*, starring Leonard Nimoy, who also co-produced the work, in one of the lead roles. Co-written for the screen by Morrow and his then-wife Barbara Turner (who, with Morrow, produced actress Jennifer Jason Leigh), *Deathwatch* is based on a predictably prison-fetishizing play that cocksucking ex-con Genet apparently rewrote no less than four times between 1943–1946 (due to this, some argue that it was his first play). A claustrophobic low-budget chamber piece featuring a couple dream-sequences (including one where Nimoy wallows in a one-man pearl necklace orgy of sorts) and depicting a truly bizarre love triangle between three very different colon chokers, the film features not a single scene of bum chum buggery and only suggests the presence of sod sexual savagery through incessant glances, slang lingo, and foreboding sexual tensions. In short, *Deathwatch* takes a completely different approach from what Genet did with his first and last film, *Un Chant d'Amour* (1950) aka *A Song of Love*, which is more or less a pathologically poetic prison-themed porn flick that highly benefited from cine-magician Jean Cocteau's stunning singular cinematography. While it may seem odd that a rampantly heterosexual geezer with a name like 'Vic' would make his directorial debut by adapting a French poof play, it is not so strange when one considers the actor turned auteur, as well as Nimoy, played one of the lead characters when the work first made its theatrical premiere in 1958 at Theatre East in New York City. In fact, in a somewhat recent podcast interview with Nimoy conducted by fatfreefilm.com, the actor (who also starred in the 1963 film version of Jean Genet's play *The Balcony* starring Shelley Winters and Peter Falk) credited his part in the 1958 theatrical version as being responsible for helping his acting career blossom. Quite comparable to gutter auteur Andy Milligan's sub-avant-garde short *Vapors* (1965) in terms of its static and dreary colorless aesthetic and rather uncomfortable depiction of malignant maneater melancholy, angst, and *weltschmerz*, Morrow's little fudge-nudger film is not exactly the sort of wanton work that will inspire a sexually deviant fellow to head to the public restrooms for some raunchy anonymous joy boy buggery, as a work that makes prison seem like a sort of real-life pandemonium of contagious misery that drives people to sexual inversion and even coldblooded murder. Basically, the story of two gay prisoners who are attempting in vain to vie for the fleeting attention of a completely illiterate and majorly macho murderer who is too dumb to even realize that his

cocksucker cellmates want to be his sex slaves, *Deathwatch* is ultimately a dejecting work about intolerable loneliness that ends in senseless tragedy. Indeed, if you are expecting the action-packed ass-reaming of HBO's *Oz* (1997-2003), Morrow's superlatively stagy work will ultimately prove to be a double downer of sorts.

At the beginning of the film, annoyingly quiet introvert Jules LaFranc (Leonard Nimoy) is herded into prison while wearing shackles and a KKK-esque hood over his face and is forced to do pointless exercises that involve him walking around aimlessly with his co-prisoners in a caged room. One of the prisoners, Emil (played by *The Love Boat* star Gavin MacLeod), gets so fed up and out-of-breathe from these terribly tedious exercises of physical and psychological torture that he attacks a guard and is thus subsequently repaid for his efforts by having his head decapitated frog-style via guillotine. After Captain Stubing literally loses his head at about the 10 minute mark of the film, the title screen finally appears and the viewer is soon imprisoned in a majorly miserable celluloid ménage à trios between an effete bitch, an antisocial beta, and a barbaric alpha-beast. Indeed, Greeneyes (Michael Forest, who made a name for himself working with Roger Corman) is the baddest brute in the entire prison and he is scheduled for a date with the guillotine as permanent punishment for 'unwittingly' strangling a young girl to death in what some might describe as a crime of passion. While he won't admit it at first, LaFranc is completely infatuated with Greeneyes, but he lacks the social skills and martial prowess to appeal to the rather aggressive alpha-inmate, so he reads and writes letters for him instead to demonstrate his loyalty and sense of respect for the macho murderer. Indeed, Greeneyes is an illiterate, so he makes LaFranc his bitch and has him write letters to his girlfriend for him. Unquestionably, most of the tension in the cell is caused by a queenish fairy named Maurice (played by Paul Mazursky, who previously co-starred with Morrow in Richard Brooks 1955 work *Blackboard Jungle*), who is proud to call himself Greeneyes' "punk." A perennially jealous man, Greeneyes wants Maurice to kill his girlfriend because if he cannot have her, no one can have ever. Unfortunately for him, Maurice, who would gladly liquidate the little lady as he is jealous of her, will never get the chance to declare his love to Greeneyes by exterminating his girlfriend, as his days are numbered.

Greeneyes is so irrationally paranoid and completely clueless regarding the motivations of his cellmates that he accuses both LaFranc and Maurice of attempting to steal his lady love, even though the two less than manly men are really madly in love with him. Greeneyes has nil respect for either of his colonchoking comrades because they are both in prison for petty pansy offenses, with LaFranc being a failed jewel thief. As Greeneyes declares while in an enraged trance-like state just before attacking his two sissy cellmates, "I am the prison! In thy cells, I guard the convicts...soldiers...plunderers...pimps [...] I am the prison and I stand alone! I'm getting ready for my own execution!" thus demon-

DEATHWATCH

strating his deranged mind and lack of sense of reality. Greeneyes is so respected that even the prison guards like him, including one sharply dressed fellow (Robert Ellenstein), who warns LaFranc to stay away from the big men in prison while waving a baton in his face as if it were a cock. When Greeneyes learns that LaFranc has a tattoo on his chest with the word "Avenger," he develops a small degree of respect for the less than intimidating jewel thief, telling him that he must commit, "A genuine murder" if he ever wants to be a top dog in prison as "nothing else will do," when it comes to being a big player in the penitentiary. Of course, Maurice gets jealous and reveals that LaFranc's tattoo is a fake that was drawn with crayon. Needless to say, LaFranc strangles Maurice out of anger for making him look like a pathetic poser, but also to impress Greeneyes. Of course, Greeneyes is unimpressed by LaFranc's murder and berates him for senselessly killing a mere "punk." In his misguided megalomania, LaFranc declares his unwarranted sense of superiority over Greeneyes and his comrade 'Snowball' (who never actually appears in the film) by self-righteously stating, "I understand...I'll never be what you are...but I am stronger than any of you." Indeed, whereas Greeneyes strangled a girl to death on impulse without even realizing it, LaFranc "willed" his murder of Maurice, thus making him feel ostensibly superior. In the end, LaFranc states, "I'm all alone" after realizing his attempt to impress Greeneyes by savagely strangling Maurice failed to pay off and has only made him feel all the more alienated from his comrades.

It should be noted that *Deathwatch* is not the only adaptation of Genet's play, as undeservedly forgotten French artsploitation auteur Pierre-Alain Jolivet later directed a version of the work under the title *Black Mirror* (1981) aka *Haute surveillance*. Judging merely by his previous sadistically salacious cinematic efforts, including his Fernando Arrabal adaptation *Le grand cérémonial* (1969) aka *Weird Weirdo* and the S&M-flavored quasi-arthouse flick *La punition* (1973) aka *The Punishment*, I am going to have to assume that Jolivet's *Haute surveillance* adaptation is probably a more subversive and aesthetically superior work, though Morrow's film certainly does make for one of the most strangely interesting and seemingly unbelievable footnotes of Genet-themed cinema history. Essentially, Genet's own film *Un Chant D'Amour* says virtually everything *Deathwatch* attempt to say, albeit without words and in a more debasingly direct and exceedingly 'honest' sort of manner where highly expressive crypto-poof prisoners and hyper horny guards feed off each other's sexual energy in a work depicting a decidedly degrading, less than private, and terribly claustrophobic all-male environment where sexual tensions are king and where the social hierarchy is based solely upon a person's masculinity and criminality. Genet was not the only person who romanticized and fetishized his time served in prison, as Canadian playwright John Herbert wrote a play in 1967 entitled *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, which was based on his experience as a prisoner and was later adapted into a film in 1971 that has a similar essence to *Deathwatch* due

to its glaringly theatric and conspicuously cramped tone. In a somewhat recent interview with star Leonard Nimoy, the actor described *Deathwatch* as being a “grim, dark movie” that he believes was not warmly accepted up its release due to it being a, “Very tough, very tough film...not cinematic at all...It feels like a filmed stage play.” Indeed, while I can certainly recommend the film to Jean Genet, Leonard Nimoy, and gay prison flick fans, Morrow’s all but forgotten directorial debut is not exactly the sort of film I would even recommend to most cinephiles, even if it does have a somewhat of a Samuel Fuller-esque feel about it. Advertised with the absurdly sensationalized taglines, “The Strangest Triangle Ever Filmed!” and “MIASMA of homosexuality...constantly electrifying!” *Deathwatch* ultimately reminds the viewer of how much American society has ‘progressed’ over the past half-century or so, as one can now see negroes savagely raping Guido mobsters in a contemporary TV series like *Oz*.

-Ty E

SEX WISH
SEX WISH

Victor Milt (1976)

It seems the golden age of pornography has finally caught up to me this month. What, with all these mid-70s roughies that have found their way of falling directly into my lap. Following *Sex Wish* was *The Intrusion* but to discuss that gem would be best saved for another time. *Sex Wish* was directed by Victor Milt under the pseudonym of Tim McCoy and starred at least two prominent adult stars, Harry Reems (best known for *Deep Throat*) and Zebedy Colt. What should be quite obvious of *Sex Wish* is that it is a pornographic rendition of the classic vigilante film *Death Wish*. What shouldn't be obvious is how of quality the film actually is and the lengths of extremes both male adult stars traverse to prove that they have other talents aside from 'dropping loads'. Opening with a soapy bathtub massage, Ken (Reems) writhes in pleasure under the commissioned hands of a committed fiancée as he discusses his vacation (business and pleasure) when the topic changes to that of geisha girls. "Uhh, yeah! Most everything they say about those geisha girls is true!" A fun fact of *Sex Wish*'s would be that this nod to geisha girls and Ken's trip is later made into its own little adult film tentatively titled *Harry and His Geisha Girls*. The possibilities of the canon could be endless, if the character reprises a similar past. Whether or not it was an influenced notion or an actual predecessor is unknown to me but fun to imagine, be it as it may. The act of foreplay turns into erotic conquest and then changes locations within the apartment frequently, ending with them on the floor. A charming aspect of *Sex Wish* isn't the graphic penetration but rather the incredible chemistry the two lovers share. I found it to be a bit odd that I was so interested in the idle banter and pillow talk. Following the course of action required by the title, Ken's exit from the premises rebounds with Zebedy Colt's entrance, severing Ken's happiness. Ideally, *Sex Wish* could serve as a document to the Night-Walker's intimidation of female sexuality. Being a notable gay adult star, Zebedy Colt is no stranger to depravity and arts considered taboo. Directing the infamous *The Farmer's Daughter* the same year that *Sex Wish* saw release, it can be seen as obvious that both lent an air of inspiration to the opposing role. Playing both rapist and father of a daughter in the span of a year, Colt proves vividly that no role can be too above his charisma. Just take *Sex Wish* in account, where Zebedy Colt channels retardation exquisitely as he coos for mother and punishes women for teaching dirty tricks to her sweet boy.

Whether or not masturbation is your muse, *Sex Wish* is a marvel of plot-driven pornographic detail. Reems' mourning seems to resonate awfully sound with the male species, if not being a bit too comically poetic. Ken soon slips down the slippery slope of uncommitted sexual encounters realizing that the

greatest salve is the anonymous embrace of the common whore (duh). After subsequently taking a drunken crawl from melancholy to bedding down two hookers, Ken begins a sporadic crusade of searching for the man last seen in his complex with a cane and briefcase. Partitioning this with a tender and well-shot and scored scene of lovemaking - Sex Wish then throws something that was never evident in Paul Kersey's world of urban rot - passion. With Ken and his lovely neighbor offering each other both their bodies and a bed (supplied by the latter), the two quickly succumb to one of their most primal instincts. One of the more memorable scenes for certain, Harry Reems' character shows that there is much more to covet than satin sheets or canopies, although the film itself is guilty of utilizing these with a lucid intention. Perhaps it was for a princess effect lost amidst the muck and depravity. Further emphasizing Zebedy Colt's "killer" performance is the use of what sounds to be wailing theremin, creating a suffocating atmosphere, especially when you take in account the obscene ways Colt brutalizes his victims, whether it's using a dildo for a vaginal thermometer or the alleged cut scene of Colt forcing a woman to eat the severed genitals of her lover. Pure speculation though, but I wouldn't be surprised as he is caught castrating a Negro. Moments of fleeting brilliance and a touching and obsessive conclusion are afoot in Sex Wish. It is a must that you see it through to completion, otherwise it's memory will be awash with tedious sexual encounters. This is a porno, after all. Although it was born of this nature, there does exist, behind the curtain, a reason and a means. Sick and twisted? Of course. If you stumbled in on Sex Wish searching for any sense or sort of decency then your disappointment will be your own betrayal, not the film's. For what it is worth, I greatly enjoyed Sex Wish and I cannot wait to track down more featuring Zebedy Colt.

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MEAT
MEAT

Victor Nieuwenhuijs (2010)

With the relocation of controversial avant-garde auteur Aryan Kaganof back to his South African homeland in the late-1990s and the Allah-approved assassination of Dutch auteur Theo van Gogh (Charley, *Submission*) in 2004 by a crazed Moroccan Islamist whose appearance personifies the timeless Teutonic word ‘untermensch,’ Dutch cinema indubitably received a heavy blow in terms of true cinematic subversion and avant-gardism. Indeed, aside from a couple of somewhat obscure filmmakers like Edwin ‘Dutch Fassbinder’ Brien (Terrorama!, *Lebenspornografie*) and the husband-wife collaborative team Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth—two filmmakers who, for whatever reason, have co-directed a number of films together over the past couple of decades, including the highly eroticized black-and-white Leopold von Sacher-Masoch adaption *Venus in Furs* (1994), *Lulu* (2005), *Crepuscule* (2009), and, most recently, *Cat and Mouse* (2014)—the Dutch film industry might as well be kaput. While I am not exactly that impressed with Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth’s entire oeuvre, I have not been able to get their absurdist black comedy *Vlees* (2010) aka *Meat* out of my mind ever since I first saw it about a year ago. While *Meat* borrows from David Lynch, Peter Greenaway, and even Luis Buñuel, the film ultimately reminded me of what might happen if experimental Dutch auteur Frans Zwartjes (*Visual Training*, *Pentimento*)—a criminally underrated avant-gardist whose wildly idiosyncratic cinematic aesthetic prefigured the deathrock/goth subculture by at least a decade—attempted to make a modernist murder mystery. Indeed, the salacious yet sardonic story of a fat middle-aged butcher who is mysteriously butchered, but not before bugging a little blond babe half his age, Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth’s tragicomic work portrays sex as something that is about as beautiful as a slaughterhouse. A rather original film-within-a-film, the work stars a crazy little blonde girl who enjoys, among other things, filming her coworkers having sex and being molested by a dirty old butcher who, although fat as the pigs he routinely slaughters, has the sexual stamina of a man half his age/size. Also featuring a police detective played by the same actor (Titus Muizelaar, who is a favorite of the directors) as the butcher, *Meat* also features a provocative doppelgänger theme where two totally different men inevitably become one (or, should I say, one of the men dies and the other takes his identity). A work that somehow manages to make sex and animal slaughtering seem like they are one and the same, *Meat* depicts an exceedingly emotionally vacant world where people are more or less nothing more than metaphysically dead meat that see other people as nothing more than delectable meat. Featuring the sort of callously comical and innately cynical tone that only the Dutch seem capable of, the work is ultimately like an uniquely unholy celluloid marriage between Tobe Hooper’s *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and Alain Robbe-Grillet’s *Suc-*

cessive *Slidings of Pleasure* (1974) aka *Glissements progressifs du plaisir*, albeit with a hyper-cynical comedic tone that is more venomous, if not less sophisticated, than the films of Hebraic iconoclast Todd Solondz.

A nameless and physically bloated middle-aged Dutch Butcher (Titus Muizelaar) likes to work hard and play hard and he is even good at doing them both at the same time, as demonstrated by the fact he has sex with his girlfriend Tiny (Wilma Bakker) in a walk-in freezer during the middle of work. When the Butcher notices a young blonde coworker named Roxy (portrayed by Nellie Benner, who played the oftentimes nude lead of *Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth's* previous feature *Crepuscule*) filming him having sex with Tiny, he begins to routinely sexually assault the young lady by talking dirty to her with crude remarks like, "I'll caress you, lick you 'till you're wet and glistening" and putting his big fat hands over her smooth and silky bodacious body. After discovering his much hated boss Jan (Hugo Metsers of *Aryan Kaganof's Wasted!* (1996) aka *Naar de klote!*) has sexually defiled his girlfriend, the Butcher finally gets the gall to seduce Roxy and the two have passionate (and seemingly unstimulated) sex in a shower stall at the slaughterhouse that concludes in a rather messy and ultimately murderous fashion. After sharing cross-generational carnal knowledge, Roxy hovers over the Butcher's rather grotesque unclad body and films herself urinating on him, yet the middle-age pervert barely responds, as if he has somehow become paralyzed. That same night, the Butcher dies in the very same spot and position where Roxy blessed him with a youthful golden shower. Ultimately, a rather lethargic and unhappily married policeman named Inspector Mann (Titus Muizelaar) is in charge of the case relating to the Butcher's death and he will also fall under Roxy's sassy, sensual, and seemingly sinister spell. Indeed, if *Meat* proves anything, it is that overweight old dudes will do anything to be with a cutesy young girl that is young enough to be their daughter.

A fat slob with a shaggy haircut who seems more or less impotent and who routinely denies his sexually repressed girlfriend love, sex, and affection, Inspector Mann may perfectly resemble the Butcher in general physical appearance, but the two men are total opposites in terms of personalities (with the Butcher being rooted, virile, and extroverted and the cop being deracinated, impotent, and introverted). When the Inspector's cold shoulder proves to be too cold for his much suffering wife, she decides to commit suicide by leaping off her apartment balcony in a rather hilarious fashion. Of course, Herr Mann barely even takes a glance at the still warm corpse of his wife after she falls to her melodramatic death. A perennial loser with the spirit of a Canadian eunuch, Mann is also routinely emasculated by his handicapped mother, who venomously berates her son's lack of literal and figurative testicular fortitude by complaining, "You can't even procreate. You're not a man, you're nothing. You're a total failure." Of course, considering the Inspector's intrinsic impotence, it would probably be a mistake if he decided to reproduce. Needless to say, while investigating

MEAT

the murder of the Butcher, Inspector Mann brings Roxy in for questioning and soon falls madly in love with the mysterious butcher babe. Among other things, Mann learns that Roxy was raped by a nerd wearing a skull mask and has a rather swarthy and violent Turk boyfriend named Mo (Gürkan Küçüksentürk), who suffocates his Aryan girlfriend with her own shirt while hate-fucking her in a racially-charged fashion. When Mann brings in Mo for questioning, he tries to kiss the turd-like Turk's feces-colored ass by patronizingly remarking like the true cultural cuckold that he is, "I sympathize with you guys, unlike others around here." Ultimately, Mo denies being Roxy's girlfriend, as he claims he barely knows her and is planning to get married in Turkey in two months, to which the Inspector replies, "So you're thinking...I'll just dump the Dutch slut?" Towards the conclusion of the film, Mann nonsensically strangles Roxy, who is wearing the same skull mask her rapist wore, in the same forest where the young lady was sexually pillaged. By the end of the film, Mann gets a much needed haircut and looks completely identical to the deceased Butcher. After being told by a coworker that he has been taken off the murder case and is being charged with manslaughter, Mann goes to the slaughterhouse, strips off all his clothes, and slits his own throat with a butcher knife in the same exact place where the Butcher died, with Roxy, who is characteristically unclad, watching the entire scenario play out while sitting on a stainless steel butcher table nearby.

While I am hesitant to describe *Meat* as a masterpiece of any sort, the somewhat impenetrable film does offer much carnal/carnivorous food-for-thought and is quite comparable to David Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) in terms of being a darkly erotic celluloid puzzle of sorts. Indeed, had the film been made in the 1970s, I sincerely believe that it could have become a minor midnight movie, as it features most, if not all, of the qualities of a cinephile's wet dream as an arcane, absurd, and aberrant yet highly humorous celluloid nightmare. A work featuring seemingly random and pointless scenes like a hot young chick pissing on an over-the-hill slob and a pig taking a whiff of the piss of another urinating pig, Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth's film is also a majorly misanthropic work that associates humans with hogs and treats human tragedy (i.e. rape, murder, suicide, social alienation, etc.) as innately comical, thus making for a severely sardonic film that dares to point out many of the social ills of our age, especially in regard to the undead corpse that is Western Europe. Indeed, a film featuring a compulsively cute girl who can only find borderline obese middle-aged men and swarthy and uniquely ugly Turks as prospective lovers, *Meat* depicts a spiritually and emotionally bankrupt world of social and sexual dysfunction that reminds one why contemporary Dutch women are so warped that they see having kinky haired and brown-eyed racially mixed bastard babies to be an appealing prospect. While I can only guess the political persuasions of the directors of the film, *Meat* certainly depicts the 'romantic' relationship between blonde Roxy and Turk Mo as a rather abusive and exploitive one that is even less ideal than that

of a relationship between a nubile babe and a grotesque old fart. Indeed, *Meat* certainly features something to offend virtually everyone, especially the sort of people that are easily offended, including anti-rape activists, vegans, feminists, beta-male men's rights activists, so-called 'guest workers' (aka non-white aliens), postmenopausal women, cuckolds, practicing Calvinists, and countless others, thereupon making for a rare modernist work that deserves to be described as innately iconoclastic. Needless to say, I plan to follow directors Victor Nieuwenhuijs and Maartje Seyferth's careers, though I find it somewhat inexplicable that two different minds could sire a film that is as wildly idiosyncratic as *Meat*. Indeed, I would not be surprised if Seyferth manipulates Nieuwenhuijs in a similar subtle fashion to how Roxy manipulates the two character played by Titus Muizelaar in the film. Among its various other striking qualities, *Meat* also features what is probably the most autistic femme fatale in cinema history.

-Ty E

CREPUSCULE
CREPUSCULE

Victor Nieuwenhuijs, Maartje Seyferth (2009)

Female mental illness and hysteria is a subject that is very rarely treated in cinema in a fashion that transcends unintentionally goofy caricatures and banal clichés as epitomized in overrated Hollywood films like *Girl, Interrupted* (1999) where a real-life bat-shit crazy broad like Angelina Jolie portrays a fictional bat-shit crazy broad in an exceedingly phony fashion. Of course, there are certain European arthouse filmmakers like Ingmar Bergman and Rainer Werner Fassbinder who had a talent for depicting the more mentally deteriorated members of the fairer sex, but they, not unlike American auteur John Cassavetes with *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), took a highly theatrical and largely literal approach to the subject. It seems that only a couple exceedingly effete gay male filmmakers like Werner Schroeter have even dared to depict ladylike lunacy in a more visceral, abstract, and esoteric fashion as reflected in the German director's works like *Day of the Idiots* (1981) and *Malina* (1991), which no heterosexual man could have ever directed. Probably due to the fact that there are not many female filmmakers, especially genuinely talented ones, there are also hardly any worthwhile films about demented dames directed by dames aside from a couple notable exceptions like Helma Sanders-Brahms' *No Mercy, No Future* (1981) aka *Die Berührte*, a couple works by Valie Export (*Unsichtbare Gegner* aka *Invisible Adversaries*, *Die Praxis der Liebe* aka *The Practice of Love*), and Marina de Van's *Dans ma peau* (2002) aka *In My Skin*. Of course, considering most female filmmakers seem to tend to be feminists (including most of the ones I mentioned above), a lot of their works tend to blame men for female mental instability as reflected in the works of Margarethe von Trotta, Helke Sander, Chantal Akerman, Mary Harron, and various others. If there seems to be any female auteur that has cinematically tackled feminine mental illness in a fairly original and hopelessly honest fashion that is devoid of any sort of glaring socio-political bias, be it feminist or otherwise, it is Dutch auteur Maartje Seyferth who, with her real-life partner Victor Nieuwenhuijs, has directed five features over the course of the past two decades or so that oftentimes tap into the darker side of femininity. With their debut feature *Venus in Furs* (1994)—an adaptation of Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's classic 1870 S&M/BDSM themed novella of the same name—Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth depicted feminine erotic cruelty and the masochistic men that enjoy receiving it, but it was not until their similarly stylized black-and-white feature *Crepuscule* (2009) aka *Twilight* that the couple dared to change gears and dive into the deep, dark, arcane, labyrinthine, and seemingly bottomless abyss of a distressed debutante's perturbed psyche. Aside from Nieuwenhuijs co-penning *Venus in Furs* and *Lulu* (2005), Seyferth has been the sole writer of the couple's scripts and in none of their works does this seem more apparent than in their

carefully cultivated b/w ‘crazy chick flick.’ While Seyferth is undoubtedly the true ‘auteur’ (aka author) of the film in terms of its themes and decidedly dispiriting spirit, *Crepuscule*, like all of the couple’s works, was shot by Nieuwenhuijs and thus the aesthetic essence and *mise-en-scène* is more or less his. Notably, Nieuwenhuijs once studied under Dutch avant-garde master auteur Frans Zwartjes (*Living, Pentimento*) at the Free Academy at The Hague and the teacher’s influence on his student is readily apparent in the film which, like virtually the entire oeuvre of his mentor, is completely free of dialogue and more or less the modern equivalent of a silent film as a work that makes full use of what cinema does best by communicating what cannot be expressed through mere words or photos, but only through the moving image. A sort of female neo-noir Dutch take on Marco Ferreri’s *Dillinger è morto* (1969) aka *Dillinger Is Dead* as a work where a hopelessly bored and equally mentally unstable protagonist goes through a sort of bizarre mental transformation after randomly discovering a revolver, *Crepuscule* undoubtedly features the sort of brazenly ambitious and uncompromising artistic integrity that has rarely been seen in European cinema since the early-1970s, hence why the filmmakers are hardly household names in the homeland of the Netherlands.

A 70-minute one-woman show starring cutesy blonde babe Nellie Benner—an actress that would go on to play a no less demanding role in Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth’s later darkly comedic absurdist work *Vlees* (2010) aka *Meat*—in what would be her very first acting role before she went on to star in a series of Dutch TV shows, *Crepuscule* is a malignantly moody and somehow simultaneously melancholic yet erotic meditation on the slow-burning disintegration of one cracked chick’s fragile mind. In the handful of reviews I could find about the film, the work is described as a literal take on the popular cinephile quote attributed to Jean-Luc Godard, “All you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun” (actually, Godard borrowed this quote from D.W. Griffith) but of course that would like be describing Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* (1941) as a film about an old dying man and a sled or Robert Bresson’s *Au hasard Balthazar* (1966) as a drama about a girl and a donkey. While the nameless waif in the film never speaks, she is what one might describe as an ‘unreliable narrator’ and ‘non compos mentis’ as a couple things happen in the film that make absolutely no logical sense. Aside from never learning the protagonist’s actual name, one also never learns literally nothing about her background or why she abruptly decides to move to Amsterdam at the very beginning of the film. Indeed, as far as the viewer can tell, the protagonist could be a spoiled rich girl from Sweden who ran away from home, or a failed American academic who just got out of drug rehab, though it seems more likely that she is a victim of sexual violence that needed to get away from a scary place that reminded her of an unfortunate past life. Despite the lack of background information in regard to the young heroine’s life, the viewer will get closer to her in a way that reminded me of great Viennese

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Jewish philosopher Otto Weininger's words: "No men who really think deeply about women retain a high opinion of them; men either despise women or they have never thought seriously about them." Insensitive remarks about womanhood aside, *Crepuscule* is certainly a work that forces male viewers to confront aspects of femininity that they would probably be better off not knowing. While it is true that the film's protagonist does not act as a representative of all of womankind, her mental derangement is discernibly and incontestably female.

If there is one thing that one immediately notices about the nameless protagonist of *Crepuscule*, it is that she is a deleteriously introverted young lady who mostly lives inside her somewhat unhinged head and only feels comfortable when she is in her apartment by herself as demonstrated by the fact that she is almost always completely stark-naked whilst all by her lonesome. Indeed, the cutesy girl strategically dresses like a sloppy tomboy in public and constantly tugs at the hood of her hoodie in vain to cover as much of her face and hair as possible, as if to disguise the fact that she is a beautiful blonde babe that most men in the world would happily defile. Of course, as the film reveals as it progresses and the protagonist's mind further deteriorates, she is indeed hopelessly afraid of men to the point of hysteria, as if she was the victim of a brutal gang-rape or some similarly brutal sex crime. After moving to a small dimly lit one-room studio apartment in Amsterdam that is furnished with a large dirty mirror, large rug, and electric organ, the leading lady takes a rather unladylike dead-end job at a gas station where she pumps peoples' gas and washes their cars while looking discernibly miserable. Stereotypically Dutch in her pathological frugality, the girl digs through trash to find new furniture for her apartment and creates coat-racks by merely nailing hammers into the wall. Later in the film, the protagonist also nails wooden boards over her windows to make sure that no one can get in from the outside and potentially sexually ravage her. When the protagonist meets a less than charming and rather rotund middle-aged man (played Titus Muizelaar, who also starred in *Nieuwenhuijs* and *Seyferth's Lulu and Meat*) while washing his minivan at work, she becomes rather unnerved by his seemingly harmless presence and based on no evidence whatsoever, assumes he is a sinister stalker and soon develops a progressive pathological obsession with believing that she is being routinely stalked by the portly fellow. That night while sleeping, a random hand mysteriously place a revolver on the heroine's pillow and while in a somnambulist state, she picks up the weapon and masturbates with it in a superlatively sensual fashion as if it is a vibrator. After playing with the revolver in a thoroughly intrigued and equally aroused fashion as if she is a horny teenage virgin who got to fiddle with a throbbing cock for the first time in her entire life, the protagonist points the weapon at the viewer in what is easily one of the most erotically enticing gun scenes in all of cinema history. With the gun, the heroine obtains a pseudo-phallic of sorts that will empower her enough to where she can conjure up a darker yet more confident and intimidating alter-

ego, as if she has suffered a schizophrenic split in her mind that was created so her superlatively sensitive psyche would not altogether crumble as a result of the recent overwhelming stress, paranoia, and melancholy she has suffered as a petrified girl in a cold, dark, and merciless neo-noir world.

After receiving the gun, the heroine begins developing a new nocturnal persona which she compliments by buying a dark wig and a pair of high-heels that give her a more amorous yet predatorial appearance that screams “fuck me but don’t fuck with me.” While looking confident and even domineering for the first time in the film, the protagonist stands in front of her mirror while wearing nothing but her wig and high-heels and while fondling her revolver in a rather risqué fashion that makes it quite clear that she has an eroticized view of violence. With her new ‘femme fatale’ alter-ego, the heroine decides to have a drink at a local outdoor café where she even shouts “Pow! Pow!” (notably, the single two ‘words’ of dialogue in the entire film) while pointing her finger in the air and pretending to shoot an imaginary gun, as if she has finally gained enough confidence to confront society but is incapable of actually properly expressing said confidence. Of course, this film-inspired brand of contrived confidence is fairly short lived. After senselessly smashing a glass of champagne at the café as if to exercise her newfound self-esteem and to temporarily break the tedium of her strikingly dull life, the heroine heads to a local bar but leaves abruptly as soon as she sees the fat man that she absurdly believes is her stalker. While taking a bus ride home, the protagonist once again sees her imagined stalker, so when she gets back to apartment and someone knocks on her door, she decides to answer the door with a revolver, but no one is there.

As symbolically depicted in a Fassbinder-esque shot where the protagonist gives off the appearance of having two head because her face is next to a mirror, the lonely little lady seems to be suffering from a split-personality. With her femme fatale alter-ego being an abject failure, the protagonist decides to take things one step further by dressing in drag and sporting a drawn-on Adolf Hitler/Charlie Chaplin mustache and then once again proceeds to brave Amsterdam during the late night, but this midnight excursion ultimately has psychologically tragic consequences and throws the female lead further into a penetrating psychodramatic nightmare where paranoid obsession gets the best of the socially alienated blonde beauty. Indeed, while walking down the road dressed like a man, the heroine is grabbed by her supposed stalker and pulled down a stairway, though the viewer hears no screams or sounds that might indicate she is being physically and/or sexually savaged. When the heroine finally emerges from the stairway after half a minute or so, she begins running back to her apartment and on the way she becomes so startled upon seeing a cyclist that she takes cover behind a tree and impotently fires a couple of shots from her revolver into a nearby bush. When the mentally perturbed protagonist finally gets back to her apartment, she pathetically beats her bed with a pole and begins waving her

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gun in the air as if to defend herself against an army of imaginary adversaries. In the end, the heroine takes a midnight stroll to a local pier and puts her revolver-cum-dildo in one of her fleshy orifices, though one never knows if she ever got the gall to pull the trigger.

In the various negative reviews that I have read on *Crepuscule*, it is claimed that the film is nothing more than a sort of sophomoric film school rip-off of the early works of Godard, but aside from the black-and-white cinematography and the whole “a girl and a gun” deal, the comparisons simply end there. Indeed, if anything, the film is anti-Godardian to the core as a work that, aside from being refreshingly apolitical, portrays the fairer sex at its most hopelessly scared, weak, vulnerable, unstable, erratic, waywardly whimsical, and emotionally destroyed whereas the work of the famed frog commie filmmaker portrays women as oftentimes strong, hypnotic, and deleteriously alluring femme fatales and seductresses who merely need to flaunt their bodies to mentally enslave an alpha-male type. While the female lead of Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth’s work may flaunt her bare derriere in a fashion not unlike Brigitte Bardot at the beginning of *Contempt* (1963) aka *Le Mépris*, she does it for the complete opposite reason as she feels most safe and secure while unclad all by herself and immersed in her own hermetic inward world and she certainly does not do it to beguile a man like the character played by the busty blonde French babe. Instead of using her body as an empowering tool like in *Contempt* where Bardot’s character strokes her own ego by asking her hubby things that she already knows the answer to like “Do you like my ass? Do you like my breasts?,” the cracked chick of *Crepuscule* feels completely scared and vulnerable because of her wholly and delectably body and the way it makes men salivate, hence her strange proclivity towards wearing over-sized hoodies and bulky jackets in public. Of course, as a film, *Crepuscule*, much like the films of co-director Nieuwenhuijs’ mentor Frans Zwartjes, is not a highly self-conscious work that was made with the intention of appealing to trendy pedantic left-wing intellectuals like Godard’s films, but instead it is a visceral and uncompromising artistic expression that hits you at the gut-level and never resorts to banal outmoded political ideologies or barely veiled subtextual sermonizing. Like Zwartjes’ work, the film is also not the sort of thing you would screen in a feminist film class, as it is far too enigmatic and ambiguous for it not to cause certain misguided misandrist types to suffer from cognitive dissonance as a result of its intricate and esoteric depiction of a haunted female psyche. Of course, the film’s strikingly flattering depiction of the unclad female form might also incite rage in certain ugly and resentful hags. A work that takes its title from an old fashioned 14th century word for “twilight,” Nieuwenhuijs and Seyferth’s celluloid psychodrama ultimately depicts modern Occidental femininity at its most literally and figuratively stripped and bare in what can be seen as a sort of *Götterdämmerung* of the European female collective unconscious as personified by one particularly damaged dame who is scared of the ‘light’ and ul-

timately succumbs to the 'dark' (or what Jung described as the "shadow aspect"), only to fall further into an all-consuming abyss of self-obliterating whimsical hysteria, paranoia, dejection, and confusion.

-Ty E

CLOWNHOUSE
CLOWNHOUSE

Victor Salva (1989)

Hollywood is full of perverts, degenerates, and antichrists. I can only imagine Steven Spielberg dressed in a messianic cloak surrounded by such satanic showmen as Michael Bay, James Cameron, and Jerry Bruckheimer. Their chore boy would be Clownhouse director Victor Salva. During the filming of Clownhouse, Salva thought it would be ok to molest 12 year star Nathan Forrest Winters. I always thought the random shot of Winters ass in the film was out place and slightly disturbing. Victor Salva left his dirty stamp on it. It has also been rumored that during the filming of Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola and Victor Salva would have sex with a 14 year old prostitute from the Philippines. That's probably the reason it took so much money and time to finish Apocalypse Now. All the excitement may have even given the heartache Coppola suffered during the films shoot. Love is a heartbreaker. Clownhouse is a somewhat awkward film. Three undesirables escape from a mental institution and decide to put on clown outfits. The clowns decide they want to kill a couple kids. Clownhouse has the feeling of a kids film gone wrong. Bad brothers get the punishment they deserve. Director Victor Salva is a man that has values! He know how to differentiate between good guys and bad guys. Nathan Forrest Winters is the young boy on the far right. Clownhouse is nothing new. The film was obviously the work of a textbook film school technician. Clownhouse has the same contrived and calculated feel as John Carpenter's Halloween (which I am still a fan of). The only real appeal of the film is if you know the dark behind the scenes story surrounding the film. Hollywood has confirmed that it is pro-pedophilia. Despite what Victor Salva did, he still continues to work in Hollywood. He is most famous for Powder (Nathan Forrest Winters tried to start a boycott at it's release) and the Jeepers Creepers franchise. Hollywood could easily get thousands of different other "director for hire" filmmakers. Instead they choose to keep giving Salva work. It's not the most pleasant thing to think about when considering that Hollywood virtually sets the moral codes for America.

-Ty E

THE PHANTOM CARRIAGE

Victor Sjöström (1921)

While I would not exactly call myself a silent cinema connoisseur and I tend to only be willing to sample the best that the pre-sound era has to offer, I have to admit that the greatest of these films has a singular hypnotic quality that sound cinema seems to somehow lack. Apparently, actor turned one-time-auteur Charles Laughton believed this too and was heavily inspired by both the great cinematic works of film pioneer D.W. Griffith and German expressionist films of the 1920s when creating his directorial debut *The Night of the Hunter* (1955). Undoubtedly, my initial viewings of Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), Carl Th. Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), Jean Cocteau's *Le sang d'un poète* (1930) aka *The Blood of a Poet*, and F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) and especially *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) proved to be such profound cinematic experiences for me to the degree that I found myself questioning the power of a cinema and ultimately coming to the natural conclusion that it is an artistic medium that is truly unrivaled when it comes to pleasurable imprisoning the subconscious and putting the viewer in a waking trance of sorts. Hell, even a largely forgotten silent short like *Das Wolkenphänomen von Maloja* (1924) aka *Cloud Phenomena of Majola* directed by Teutonic mountain film maestro Arnold Fanck has a certain exceptional ethereal quality that seems impossible to reproduce nowadays. While it had been a number of years since I had a comparable experience with silent cinema, a somewhat recent first time viewing of the fairly influential Swedish horror masterpiece *The Phantom Carriage* (1921) aka *Körkarlen* aka *The Phantom Chariot* aka *The Stroke of Midnight* aka *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness* directed by and starring early silent maestro Victor Sjöström (*The Outlaw and His Wife*, *He Who Gets Slapped*) reminded me of the singular power and pulchritude of pre-talkie cinema. Like a virtual Nordic Gothic antithesis (and virtual prototype) to Frank Capra's classic *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), the film tells the surprisingly darkly morose and unwaveringly grim yet ultimately moral tale of a belligerent wino learning the hard way that life is worth living after a serious brush with death that involves a scythe-wielding Grim Reaper figure in a hooded black cloak teaching lessons as opposed to a lovably jolly, if not seemingly semi-autistic, angel without wings named Clarence like in the Hollywood flick. More a dysfunctional family drama about the perennial homewrecker known as alcohol than any sort of 'pure' horror flick featuring cheap scares and banally enigmatic monsters, *The Phantom Carriage* is not only one of the greatest silent films ever made but also one of the greatest, if not the greatest, film on the subject of alcoholism and its deleterious effects on friends and families.

Indeed, as much as I hate being around drunkards (aside from having various friends that degenerated into alcoholics, I was once a bouncer), I would be lying

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if I did not admit that some of my favorite films, including John Huston's underrated Malcolm Lowry adaptation *Under the Volcano* (1984), are about the perils of dipsomania, and I would certainly argue that Sjöström's film is unequivocally the best of the best despite being one of the first films to seriously tackle the subject. In fact, what makes *The Phantom Carriage* so effortlessly brilliant and striking is that it manages to relatively seamlessly merge the metaphysical horrors of alcohol with conventions of the horror genre in a fashion that is more or less timeless, hence why it is still one of the very few films of its era that still packs a pleasantly pernicious punch. Surely, Sjöström's flick is *Häxan* (1922) tier as far as silent Nordic horror is concerned, albeit with a more innately important message. Based on the novel *Körkarlen* (1912) aka *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness!* written by Nobel prize-winning Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf whose works auteur Sjöström had already cinematically adapted three times previously, the film is like a gothic proto-psychedelic fable on acid-laced steroids where the good, the bad, and the ugly of humanity is depicted and where human frailty in the face of both addiction and disease is handled with a refreshing lack of sentimentalism, at least in comparison to other films from that era. Among other things, the viewer is exposed to suicide, deadly drunken brawls, deathbed hysteria, deadbeat dad style family dysfunction, and a decidedly dark climax involving an extremely lonely and desperate mother getting ready to execute a filicide-suicide scenario while her unwitting children sleep nearby with baby dolls with cracked plastic heads in their beds. A fairly preternatural morality tale about redemption with a surprisingly non-linear structure involving a number of flashbacks (and even flashbacks-within-flashbacks) that depicts a literal daunting date with death that a drunkard must take on one rather auspicious New Year's Eve to learn the error of his way so that he can reform and, in turn, save his family before it is too late, Sjöström's penetratingly phantasmagorical flick is probably the only ghost story where man in his natural habitat is more horrifying than the gothic supernatural elements. Additionally, you will not find a more effortlessly artful or aesthetically refined cinematic depiction of alcoholism and I say that as one of the few people that has probably seen Ermanno Olmi's underrated alcoholic odyssey *La leggenda del santo bevitore* (1988) aka *The Legend of the Holy Drinker* starring Rutger Hauer.

Undoubtedly, one of the most poignant things that I personally took away from *The Phantom Carriage* is that it made me become more aware of the fact that I have been, mostly subconsciously, haunted by alcoholics for almost my entire life. Indeed, while I have thankfully never had the misfortune of having alcoholic parents, the three most important women in my life were the daughters of pathetic boozers. While I have met two of these men, it is, somewhat ironically, the one that I have never met that has haunted me the most, so naturally I was somewhat startled when I first watched Sjöström's film and discovered that the quasi-antihero bears a striking resemblance to this man in both appearance

and character. A smart and charismatic yet oftentimes savagely sadistic bastard that prefers hanging out with his wino buddies at a sleazy bar to spending time with his family, the lead character's behavior so closely mirrors the description that the woman in my life constantly gave of her own father to such a startling degree that it almost felt like the film was an occult form of déjà vu and specially made for me as a form of esoteric art therapy. Undoubtedly, watching Sjöström's cinematic masterpiece is probably the closest I will ever come to meeting the miserable man that unleashed so much senseless trauma on the woman I loved. In that sense, I found the film's hopeful conclusion to be somewhat contrived and its greatest weakness, as the abusive alcoholic can never make up for all the pain and suffering he has caused, even if he has accomplished the seemingly impossible task of getting completely sober as internal scars are forever. Naturally, as a film with an alcoholic lead, one of the major themes of *The Phantom Carriage* is how an unrepentant drunkard negatively affects his friends and family. In short, I have never felt so haunted by a film, especially one that oftentimes takes place in haunts where dipsomaniacs act like boorish buffoons and beat the shit out of each other for the most trivial reasons. While the film was made nearly a century ago, it ultimately makes a relatively modern alcoholic film like *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) directed by Mike Figgis seem like a slapstick comedy by comparison in terms of sincerely expressing the spiritual sickness, emotional decrepitude, and psychological depravity that comes with alcoholism. Likewise, the short American 'silent sermon' from around the same era, *Episodes In The Life Of A Gin Bottle* (1925) directed by Bela von Block, seems like something on par with Louis J. Gasnier's *Reefer Madness* (1936) in terms of being an unintentional joke at the expense of its anti-substance-abuse message. Of course, one expects a certain degree of singular artistic prowess from a film that was such a huge influence on a master auteur like Ingmar Bergman that he hired its star-auteur to star in his own films. In fact, Bergman was so obsessed with *The Phantom Carriage* that he directed a TV-movie entitled *Bildmakarna* (2000) aka *The Image Makers* based on auteur Sjöström and writer Selma Lagerlöf's collaboration on the film.

Despite technically being a 'horror' film, *The Phantom Carriage*—a cinematic work that is certainly not a slave to genre conventions—begins in a somewhat melodramatic, if not downright histrionic, fashion on a somewhat morbid New Year's Eve night with a tragically beautiful Salvation Army sister, 'Edit' (Astrid Holm), pleading on her deathbed to her fellow Sister Maria (Lisa Lundholm) that she receive one final wish involving a final meeting with a drunken bum named David Holm (Victor Sjöström), who is not even worthy of shining the gorgeous god gal's shoes. Indeed, as depicted later in the film in a flashback, Sister Edit made David promise to meet her on the following New Year's Eve in the somewhat spiritually delusional hope that he would have a "good year" despite his self-destructive alcoholic ways. Although the year is technically not over

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yet, David—a belligerent bastard that has a nasty knack for making everyone around him just as miserable as he is—has had a rather horrendous 364 days of self-induced misery and depravity as a result of his rather aggressive alcoholism, which has destroyed his entire family and left him a lonely gutter-dwelling bum who is only tolerated by other similarly hopelessly debauched gutter-dwelling bums. Unbeknownst to daftly dickhead David, he is unwittingly responsible for Sister Edit being on her deathbed as she contracted tuberculosis last New Year's Eve as a result of committing the selfless act of touching his dirty jacket so as to clean and repair it. Indeed, while David was sleeping at the local Salvation Army center the year before, Sister Edit took it upon herself to mend the jacket for the protagonist and he repaid her kindness by destroying her fine stitch work right in front of her face and then stating in a sadistically sarcastic fashion, "It's a shame you went to all that trouble, Miss, but I'm used to have it like this." Although David ultimately agreed to visit Edit the next New Year's Eve, he had less than savory reasons, or as he snidely remarked to the poor sister, "Oh, I'll be there. I'll come to show you God didn't give a fig for you or your twaddle." Of course, being a typical unreliable drunkard that cannot even bother to remember to take a daily shower, David fails to show up and when Edit's colleague Gustafsson (Tor Weijden) goes out looking for him and finally finds him, the prick protagonist refuses to honor the poor sister's last dying wish and instead focuses on getting all the more hammered with his friends in a spooky graveyard. Somewhat ironically, it is only when David himself comes face to face with death that very same night that he desperately wants to speak to Edit and atone for his past wrongs.

While Edit is praying for his arrival as she slowly but surely succumbs to her sickness, David is getting wasted with his friends in a graveyard and telling them about a local legend that was once told to him by an old scholar friend named Georges (Tore Svennberg) who was deathly afraid of being the last person to die on New Year's Eve because he believed his own story that the person in question would be foredoomed to drive Death's ghostly carriage and collect the souls of every single individual that dies the following year. Rather ironically, Georges was the last person to die the previous year and David soon discovers that his old comrade has taken up the unwanted supernatural position of the local Grim Reaper. In fact, not long after telling the story, David is accidentally killed just before the clock strikes twelve after one of his boozier buddies hits him over the head with a bottle during a heated drunken brawl. Indeed, when David wakes up from the deadly blow, he is somewhat baffled to discover that his soul has exited his body and that he is being confronted by Georges and the phantom carriage. With the creepily dispassionate help of his ghostly friend, David is forced to confront all the evil that he has sired during his mostly pathetic lifetime in a series of pivotal flashback scenes. While originally a happy and loving family man with a decent job at a local sawmill who spent his free time joyously playing with his children

in the scenic countryside, David more or less completely destroyed his entire life overnight after becoming a full-time drunkard, which eventually led to the loss of both his job and family. Naturally, David caused much familial collateral damage in the process, though he was mostly too drunk to notice. Developing an almost demonically depraved alter-ego as a result of his dipsomania, David eventually began to derive an almost sadistic glee from abusing his family, hence why his wife Ann (Hilda Borgström) eventually absconded to another town to get away from her aggressively assholeish hubby. Needless to say, like most bitterly resentful drunk bastards with nothing left to lose, David refused to take responsibility for his own actions and thus was not about to let his wife get away freely.

Notably, the final straw that inspired Ann to leave was David turning his own younger brother into such a bad drunkard that he accidentally killed someone during a brawl. Needless to say, David is wholly deserving of the karmic fate of eventually dying the same way as his brother's victim, but luckily for the protagonist, *The Phantom Carriage*, quite unlike Rainer Werner Fassbinder's early Sirkian masterpiece *Händler der vier Jahreszeiten* (1971) aka *The Merchant of Four Seasons*, is a strangely optimistic film about the power of redemption where it is argued that even the most devilishly debauched of haunt-haunting troglodytes can embrace teetotalism and dedicate their lives to wholesome good instead of gutter-level beer-chugging bacchanalian buffoonery. Indeed, it is only when David hits literal rock bottom in the form of an ancient tomb where his lifeless body collapses after being fatally struck with a bottle that he begins to see the error of his ways. Thankfully for David, his suicidal wife is masochistic enough to give him one more final chance in the end. Rather revealingly, David—a man that has already been given a number of recklessly misspent second chances—is only able to convince his wife of his sincerity in regard to wanting to change because he sobs hysterically during a moment of sort of transcendental meekness, or as Ann states to him herself, "It is hard to believe, David, but I do believe you. Your tears convinced me. I won't truly be happy until my sorrow is drained." Repeating something his undead friend Georges said to him earlier in the film during a philosophically insightful supernatural carriage ride, David concludes the film by stating while his wife Ann is lovingly resting her head in his lap, "Lord, please let my soul come to maturity before it is reaped," thus underscoring one of the most important themes of the entire film. Just as the great Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung theorized after decades of dealing with numerous hopeless alcoholics, the film ultimately reveals that alcoholism is more of a spiritual sickness than a social or biological disease, hence the importance of David's date with death.

Notably, Aryan Christ Jung was an important philosophical influence on the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) due his promotion of theory that certain hardcore alcoholics would never be able to completely quit the booze un-

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less they had a life-changing “spiritual experience,” as he believed that the addiction had more to do with a certain void in the soul than a simpler hopeless thirst for alcohol. Indeed, as Jung wrote in a 1961 letter to Alcoholic Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson, “You see, alcohol in Latin is spiritus and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: spiritus contra spiritum.” Notably, Avon Products heir Conrad Rooks was only able to get over his terrible alcoholism and substance abuse via a sort of spiritual reawakening, which he would depict in his hermetic counterculture flick *Chappaqua* (1967). Undoubtedly, judging by his masterpiece *The Phantom Carriage*, Victor Sjöström seems to have a similar theory to Jung in regard to the metaphysical roots of alcoholism. In that sense, supernatural horror is in many ways the perfect genre for tackling the subject of the misery of methomania. Aside from his masterful direction, Sjöström’s performance as the extremely emotionally erratic alcoholic lead is among the greatest, if not the greatest, in cinema history, especially when compared to unintentionally hilarious displays of demented dipsomania like Nicholas Cage in *Leaving Las Vegas*. Undoubtedly, Figgis’ film seems like Bobcat Goldthwait’s decidedly dumb *Shakes the Clown* (1991) in terms of depicting the nuances of dipsomania when compared to the brilliance of Sjöström’s silent masterwork. In terms of sheer pathos and sensitivity towards the drunkenly insensitive, I can only really compare Sjöström’s film to Paul Schrader’s fairly underrated *Affliction* (1997). Notably, in the essay *Phantom Forms: The Phantom Carriage* by screenwriter and Nicholas Roeg collaborator Paul Mayersberg (*The Man Who Fell to Earth*, Croupier) speculates that Sjöström’s performance was influenced by his own much despised womanizer and defrauder father Olof Adolf Sjöström who he apparently closely resembled in physical appearance. Indeed, the film might have been based on a work by Selma Lagerlöf, who Sjöström apparently constantly quarreled with during the production, but it has an undeniable highly personalized quality to it, as if the auteur used his performance to perform a sort of personal exorcism from all the metaphysical pain and suffering that his prick padre caused him. Throughout the film, Sjöström seems possessed by an almost demonic drunken rage that is quite disturbing in its seeming authenticity, so I do not doubt the auteur was using the role as personal therapy for past traumas.

I think it is safe to say that Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman, who would cast his cinematic hero Sjöström in both his early work *Till glädje* (1950) aka *To Joy* and masterpiece *Smultronstället* (1957) aka *Wild Strawberries*, probably paid the film and its auteur-cum-star its greatest compliment when he stated in the documentary *Victor Sjöström: A Portrait* (1981) directed by Gösta Werner, “My encounters with Victor Sjöström—at first, by way of his films, and later on, when I met him in person—these encounters affected me deeply. *THE PHANTOM CARRIAGE* was an early encounter. It completely overwhelmed me. I was shaken to the core by the movie. Not necessarily because I understood

it, but quite simply, it affected me . . . by way of its incredible cinematic power. For me, it was an all-encompassing emotional experience. Certain sequences and images have left an indelible impression." Undoubtedly, anyone familiar with Bergman's singular oeuvre can easily see how Sjöström's film had such an imperative influence on the younger filmmaker. Indeed, the influence is so great that it is comparable to Douglas Sirk's influence on Rainer Werner Fassbinder or Alfred Hitchcock's on Brian De Palma in terms of the latter's films being somewhat unimaginable without the influence of the former. From the obsession with iconic "sculpted close-ups" to signature depictions of Death personified, Bergman can certainly be described as a hopeless Sjöströmian who, rather deservedly, eventually transcended his master in terms of fame and influence. Rather absurdly yet not altogether surprisingly considering the oftentimes hyper self-critical nature of many great artists, Sjöström apparently thought little of his own great cinematic masterpieces, or as Bergman recounted in *The Magic Lantern: An Autobiography* (1987), "He had never thought GIVE US THIS DAY, THE PHANTOM CARRIAGE or HE WHO GETS SLAPPED were especially remarkable. He mostly saw the failings and was annoyed by his own sloppiness and lack of skill." Incidentally, in the same book, Bergman explains how he filled Sjöström with "senile anger" during the shooting of *Wild Strawberries* for failing to provide him whisky that he had promised. Aside from Bergman, *The Phantom Carriage* seems to have also been a crucial influence on Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), most obviously in regard to the famous scene where a demented Jack Nicholson breaks down a door with an axe in a manner quite like Sjöström's character in his silent horror masterpiece.

Notably, in his classic novel *The Long Goodbye* (1953)—a work that Robert Altman wonderfully cinematically adapted in 1973—Raymond Chandler, himself a terrible drunk, wrote, "A man who drinks too much on occasion is still the same man as he was sober. An alcoholic, a real alcoholic, is not the same man at all. You can't predict anything about him for sure except that he will be someone you never met before." Undoubtedly, *The Phantom Carriage* certainly expresses Chandler's sentiment in its depiction of the unpredictably unhinged behavior of the protagonist while he is drunk. Even more relevant to the film than Chandler's quote is an excerpt from the anti-alcoholic *Alcoholics Anonymous* tome *The Big Book* by Bill Wilson that reads, "As we became subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of his mad realm, the chilling vapor that is loneliness settled down. It thickened, ever becoming blacker. Some of us sought out sordid places, hoping to find understanding companionship and approval. Momentarily we did—then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horsemen—*Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair.*" Indeed, *The Phantom Carriage* not only offers a delectably hallucinatory cinematic cocktail of terror, bewilderment, frustration, and despair, but also a stoically humanistic depiction of alcoholism that does not seem like it was

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created by some self-important 'self-help' leftist phony. In that sense, the film is like a Nordic arthouse proto-*The Twilight Zone* on Gothic Dickensian LSD in terms of being a phantasmagoric horror movie with a moral ending. Undoubtedly, when poet and avant-garde filmmaker James Broughton wrote his collection of cinema aphorisms *Some Fruits of Experience*, he was perfectly describing the aesthetic prowess and importance of a film like Sjöström's as indicated by words of cinematic wisdom like, "Cinema is a lie which makes us realize a truth" and "Movie images are dim reflections of the beauty and ferocity in mankind." After all, *The Phantom Carriage* forced me to confront dipsomaniacal phantoms that have, in various ways, haunted my own life yet it also managed to provide me with a deceptively narcotizing experience that reminded me of the singularity of cinema as an artform. To go back to Broughton, his poetical film book *Making Light of It* (1992) features a quote from the pseudonymous Early German Romantic poet, mystic, and philosopher Novalis that reads, "The seat of the soul is where the outer and inner worlds meet." Of course, the titular ghostly carriage in Sjöström's film is undoubtedly a morbid poetic symbolic reflection of the "seat of the soul" that Novalis spoke of. While he would have never admitted it himself, Sjöström was not only a great actor and auteur, but also a closet poet as indicated by *The Phantom Carriage*—the ultimate cinematic marriage between methomania and the macabre—and great later works like the fairly idiosyncratic silent western *The Wind* (1928) starring Lillian Gish. I certainly like to think Sjöström's masterpiece is set in a world that Edgar Allan Poe might have dreamed up (and/or inhabited), as I can certainly see Death's carriage strolling the streets of Baltimore for him on the night of October 7, 1849 after he died a dubious alcohol-related death.

-Ty E

THE SINFUL DWARF

Vidal Raski (1973)

"The Mother of all 'Dwarfsploitation' films!" is what is pasted across the DVD sleeve. The new Severin release of *The Sinful Dwarf* marks a title that isn't Jess Franco and isn't entirely sexploitation (roughly). This film's release has been significant to most of us cult film fans as its controversy with midget coalitions has spread outwards in a blazing hail out backwards promotion. Or so we thought. With a short interview on the Severin disc, we get inside the shallow mindset of a "genre fan" who did too many drugs and watched this film in some summer of some year but this story nonetheless equates with him and his friend being traumatized by a film that presents nothing but absurdity, not terror, but we'll get into that later. The LPA [Little People of America] must be shitting bricks about now. The plot of *The Sinful Dwarf* is unrelated insanity. "Unrelated to what?" you ask. The theory of being, my friends. For the sake of entertainment value, I'd like to construe the ridiculousness with choice words from the tag line. "Young Bride," "Lewd Passions," and "Evil Dwarf" are the most eloquent of quote grabs I could find. Of course, I only excluded six words from the entire quote to join this stringy bit of meat known as a "blurb." What we get is a ubiquitous XXX version of *Being Captured*, regardless of the predated 10 year difference. Props must be transmitted to *Being Captured* for one upping *The Sinful Dwarf* by including a midget in a sailors costume cause as well all know, sailors outfits "look pretty damn gay." In a way, Torben is commensurable to a canine, better yet, a mutt. Brought in from the hazardous eye of society and a hazardous environment, this mutt will most likely take full advantage of the blessing he has received and soon will diminish the need for appreciation towards his saving grace. Given his obedience to the scar-lady, the difference is not much. With his physical and quite literal stature attributing to the likely metamorphosis into beast, It's really no wonder that dwarfs are revolting against this release. Even I'm a bit disgusted by a sadistic "little person" with a sneering grin that could burn stone. Too bad the world is on stilts and no one's likely to hear their little voices from down there. Though Torben is hailed as a Jack Black lookalike I find his appearance to fit more of a Chucky from Child's Play schematic. In fact, the joint visage is uncanny as they are both short, have medium length similar hair color, and that damned demented grin that devours souls faster than the Negaturkey [not really.] As perfectly evidenced here, rape is a charitable service to the progressive societal structure, cinematically and at times, present reality. Further more, it even acts as another weight for that aforementioned balance of good/evil. Danish(?) darling Anne Sparrow's first and only screen appearance was in *The Sinful Dwarf*. Reasons unknown but the culprit has been declared as *The Sinful Dwarf* by trash fanatics screaming at the "evil legacy" of this film that prevailed over the indomitable beauty. [SPOILERS] From the get-go, we

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knew Sparrow's (Mary) character was doomed. After all, she was the only soul to notice the scratchings at night and the weird sounds that enclosed her paranoia. Even though our vantage to Mary is through a celestial viewpoint and as much as we love her, we still yearn to see her trembling body uncovered in her god-given beauty. I'm sure Sugar & Spice has tribute to give Anne Sparrow and it's everything nice. Degradation is imminent and the countdown is suffered through by infantile squeaks of many toys littering the dank wood flooring the attic. We underestimate just exactly how much she will suffer that it dawns on us. I couldn't believe my eyes. A heroine is supposed to revolt causing a panic and disarray just in time to hold her lover by quarrels end, but alas, this never comes. We watch her get drugged and raped by a stranger whose face is never realized on camera. As stunned as I was, this experience proved to be erotically soothing. While my instincts are bewildered with thoughts - something akin to a flower being obliterated by an atom bomb. This demonstration of a feminine holocaust is an attack on unapparent promiscuities at the core. The Sinful Dwarf has an impact and it relied solely on the rape of Anne Sparrow. Call me evil and perverted but you're watching The Sinful Dwarf for the same reasons. [/SPOILERS] For a EuroCult title the direction is astounding and visually arresting. The opening credits has title cards with such vibrancy that it revokes memories of the early workings of Technicolor and revolves around motorized toys galloping about, squeaking exhaustively, all to a cherubic track of childhood noise. Meanwhile, we witness a teenager playing hop-scotch. We see Olaf (Torben) lead her to his abode of evil with promises of toys in his attic. As you'd have it, he quickly hits her over the head and subjects her to constant rape and drugs. If this isn't a classic case example of the perversion of the innocent then I don't know what is. Maybe I'm blind to the cultural significance of The Sinful Dwarf or maybe I've lost my perpetual taste. The answer is neither nor. The Sinful Dwarf built up as a passable excursion in Euro sleaze with handicapped dementia but soon soared into a whole new light, unveiling this as more of a morbid curio shot with carny aesthetics. Nihilism in tow, this film will drag you down with disturbing thematics with just the right portioning of tragedy and comedy; If not for the haunting portrayal of midgets then surely for the pseudo-Joan Crawford/Mommie Dearest visions of an ex-starlet past her prime running a sexual slavery business in her attic. A funny look at the complex and barbaric nature of man but sensationalized with a seedy eroticism. A hopeless masturbatory fantasy of lucid film stock cured by a neurotic dwarf. What better way to spend a rainy day?

-mAQ

NEKRO

Vince Roth (1999)

I won't jerk your chain around one bit, this film is awful. In the opening shot, we have a faux trailer for a film that was never made. With a provocative title like Don't Go in the Fucking Woods, how could you go wrong? That is a promising title and alone might show what's to come. With this trailer, you see admiration in their work and the ability to slack around on camera, with Nekro, they take it too seriously. You might be asking "How can making a film be too serious?" Well, when the homicidal maniac does nothing but growl and scream while his voice is altered into death metal shrieks for around 15 minutes straight, you begin to look for the strongest Ibuprofen lying around. Vince Roth intended to create a contender for such classic art films documenting necrophilia and in attempting, succeeded in dumbing down the morbid act of love. (All of this is incorrect and lacking punctuation. The only truth is that the plot is simple) Nekro is an exploitation film at its worst. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the idea of creating a piece of Super 8 trash which fits in the quality niche of German splatter, but I'm sorry to say that Nekro is a disappointing short. Nekro involves a Cradle of Filth fan dragging a pudgy woman up the stairs. He screams some and hits walls. He stabs her over 30 times and has sex with her in the missionary position. *Insert mayonnaise squishing sounds* *Insert implausible Shyamalan twist ending* SCENE Nekro is graphic, violent, and throttled with sex with a gored body. This doesn't make it good. In fact, I'm rather glad that Don't Go into the Fucking Woods was never created. I'm sure you can only tolerate a single dose of voice distortion that is prescribed in Nekro. The plot is a metaphor for the entire film. You may be able to fuck what is dead, doesn't mean it will be satisfying. Nekro is a dead film that didn't make me cum.

-mAQ

BUFFALO '66
BUFFALO '66

Vincent Gallo (1998)

Vincent Gallo is an extremely sensitive man. He's not sensitive like little bitch Clay Aiken, but sensitive like, say Adolf Hitler. Vincent Gallo's film Buffalo '66 is the director's most sensitive of portraits. Gallo's character in the film Billy Brown, like Gallo himself, is an extremely neurotic narcissist who has traded in rationality for whatever his warped impulse demands. Despite being a kidnapper and overall prick, you grow to love Billy Brown as Buffalo '66 progresses. Billy Brown has just been released from prison and now wants revenge in the form of killing some "has been" football player who now owns a strip joint. Billy's parents have no emotions for Billy and his only friend is a semi-retarded man who goes by the name of Goon. Billy Brown makes his best life decision when he decides to kidnap a voluptuous blonde ballerina named Layla. Layla seems to take an immediate liking to Billy but he is unaware as he is too neurotic and depressed to accept it. Buffalo '66 is a semi-autobiographical film that tells the demons of an artist's emotions instead of an exact portrayal of his life. Billy Brown makes it clear that he doesn't like faggots looking at his dick while he pisses. After telling an overweight male ballerina to stop checking out his privates (they are both using urinals), the marshmallow boy states, "but it's so big." Billy Brown violently throws the tubby ballerina out of the bathroom thereafter. The real-life Vincent Gallo has some shame in his earlier years as gay bar go-go dancer and has been arrested various times in his younger years for indecent exposure. The awkward bathroom scene seems to mark a low point in Gallo's real life. Billy Brown kidnaps the girl Layla so he can show her off to his parents as his girl. Billy's parents are the most emotionally cold and unloving parents a boy could ever have. In many interviews, Vincent Gallo has made it very clear his contempt for his parents. Despite being kidnapped and just meeting Billy, Layla shows the most concern for Billy. Billy's father is an old wop pervert who brags about singing at the same joint as Frank Sinatra in his younger years. This old dirty dego makes sure to grab all over Layla every chance he gets. He's the type of fellow that is unintentionally hilarious but not funny to poor Billy Brown. It is obvious in Buffalo '66 that Billy has lost (or never had) his father's approval a very long time ago. Billy's Mother loves the stupidest game around, American football. She tells Billy that she wishes he was never born because he caused her to miss an important game. Billy's mother also has no clue about any of Billy's interests and life in general. One has to give respect to Vincent Gallo for his unflattering and embarrassing portrait of his cold family. No wonder Vincent Gallo gave discounts on his own sperm on his merchandise website to women "who can prove she has naturally blonde hair and blue eyes" and "anyone who can prove a direct family link to any of the German soldiers of the mid-century." Vincent Gallo has made it clear that he is one self-loathing Sicilian. Buffalo '66 features

various experimental montages and surreal scenes. I especially liked the vintage and dreamlike solo singing performance from father Brown. One also has to take note of Layla's tap dancing solo at a grungy bowling alley. Vincent Gallo did an excellent job inserting surreal scenes that are seamless and relevant to the overall feeling of the film. Billy Brown is a lonely and depressed man, but he still has an urge to love. In Buffalo '66, Vincent Gallo reveals more of his complex personality than your typical American filmmakers. Despite being American born, Gallo's heart seems to be in Europe. Vincent Gallo has revered such filmmakers as Pier Paolo Pasolini and Robert Bresson. He has also showed his love for the Italian futurists. I believe that Vincent Gallo is capable of being a legendary auteur filmmaker but his narcissism may not allow it as The Brown Bunny proved. Whatever the future holds for Gallo, Buffalo '66 is still an American art house masterpiece.

-Ty E

THE BROWN BUNNY
THE BROWN BUNNY

Vincent Gallo (2004)

Maybe it was because he was a staunch and groveling Spielberg apologist or perhaps because he was the man responsible for co-penning Russ Meyer's pseudo-sexy, scatological satire *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) thus lacking a serious appreciation for cinema as an art form, but the late and less than great film critic Roger Ebert must have been suffering from serious cases of both penis and artistic envy after initially smearing Sicilian-American Renaissance man Vincent Gallo's second feature-length film *The Brown Bunny* (2003) by describing it as the worst film in the history of the Cannes Film Festival. Of course, it would take a cancer hex put on Ebert, who inevitably died from the disease after a long and miserable battle that forever silenced his catty voice, for the rather rotund (or as Gallo himself described him, a "fat pig with the physique of a slave trader") film critic to drastically change his opinion of *The Brown Bunny*, which had been reedited (cutting 26 minutes of what was originally a 118-minute film), ultimately giving it 3 out of 4 stars and a "thumbs up" rating despite his ongoing war of words with the film's director. While I never had the opportunity to see the infamous Cannes cut (which was apparently an uncompleted workprint that Gallo's Japanese producers forced him to screen) of *The Brown Bunny*, I did recently watch the film for a second time (my initial viewing was around the time of the original DVD release) and can safely say it was no less a harrowing yet hypnotic experience than my initial viewing of the film about a decade ago or so and I can see the work being regarded as an unsung masterpiece in decades to come. Although most (in)famous for its doubly climatic conclusion featuring writer/director/editor/producer/star Vincent Gallo—a misunderstood man who, despite his rather unflattering reputation, is undoubtedly one of America's few great artistic polymaths—receiving an unsimulated blowjob from his real-life ex-'lover' Chloë Sevigny (who Gallo claims was never actually his girlfriend, but they did previously date/fornicate), *The Brown Bunny* is about as far from erotic as films come as a maliciously melancholy 'fever nightmare' that slowly but surely gets under one's skin and eventually tears at one's psyche via the director's startlingly naked reflection of his own terribly tormented and undeniably provocative soul. Featuring many cryptic autobiographic nuances from Gallo's own life, including scenes shot in the small Pennsylvania town where the director's mother grew up (but which the director never visited previously), authentic footage of the auteur doing his own 'stunts' on his motorcycle (Gallo was a professional Gran Prix motorcycle racer in the 1980s), and graphic sexual acts between an ex-partner, *The Brown Bunny* is nothing less than indisputable proof of the validity of the auteur theory. Indeed, Gallo may be a neurotic 'narcissist' with delusions of grandeur as is oftentimes libeled against him by his mostly jealous detractors, but such seemingly negative qualities make for unwaveringly

uncompromising filmmakers who bend the knees for no one, especially in regard to people—namely left-leaning American and British film critics, as well as the majority of the American populous—who have no respect for the medium of film as an art form, but instead see it as the modern equivalent of a peasant circus. The superlatively somber and dispiriting cinematic tale of a motorcycle racer who carries around conspicuously crippling memories of a great love perennially lost due to tragedy, chance, and—most importantly of all—inaction on the protagonist's part during a moment of emotionally-charged self-doubt and disgust, *The Brown Bunny* is the American heterosexual equivalent of what German auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder cinematically achieved in regards to sensitively depicting the emotional torment and cognitive dissonance of women, homosexuals, and transsexuals in a manner that mere words cannot express.

Bud Clay (Vincent Gallo) has just lost a motorcycle race in New Hampshire and is headed on a one-man road trip to Los Angeles, California to compete in another race, which also happens to be near where he once shared a small home with his lost great love Daisy (Chloë Sevigny). A lost soul grudgingly treading through life, Bud will do anything to relieve his inner torment, which includes approaching three random female strangers on his trip in what will prove to be futile attempts to fill the gaping metaphysical wound that was left by his oh-so dear Daisy. Like Daisy, all three of these women superficially share flowery names, hence Bud's initial yet self-deceiving interest in them. Bud's first victim/sexless fling is a 'homely' (Gallo himself described this girl that way) gal named Violet (non-actor Anna Vareschi), who the melancholy motorcyclist meets at a New Hampshire gas station and convinces to join him on his road trip to California. Upon dropping Violet off at her house so she can collect her belongings for what was suppose to be a romantic road trip between two strangers, Bud coldly drives off and leaves her behind without looking back. Positively possessed by mostly bittersweet memories, Bud makes the mistake of visiting Daisy's parents' home, where he grew up in the house next door, but he is in for a rather awkward surprise when he learns that his great love's mother does not remember him at all, but at least he gets to see her pet brown bunny. After the visit with his could-of-been parents-in-law, Bud goes to a animal shelter and learns from the clerk that bunny rabbits only have a life expectancy of 5-6 years, thus realizing even the cutest of creatures eventually perish and that when Daisy's brown bunny dies the last physical remnant of their relationship will disappear. While making a brief pitstop at a public bathroom, Bud seems magnetized by the glaring misery of a blonde milf named Lilly (played by veteran model-turned-actress Cheryl Tiegs) and proceeds to comfort and kiss the crying stranger, which causes him to cry and leave abruptly, never looking back again. After racing at Bonneville Speedway in a scene that looks like a man fading into a beauteous abyss of nothingness that recalls the hopeless yet breathtaking atmosphere of Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar* (1972) aka *La cicatrice intérieure*, Bud drives through a seedy Las Ve-

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gas ghetto and picks up a seemingly untainted streetwalker named Rose (played by real-life working girl Elizabeth Blake) due to his fondness for her flowery name (which she wears proudly on a necklace), but the miserable motorcyclist wastes no time in kicking her out of his van a couple seconds later. Undoubtedly, Daisy's ghostly presence has damned the sad speed-racer to a lonely life of romantic disconnections and miscommunications as she has become the irreplaceable model for which Bud will judge all future prospective lovers.

After dropping his motorcycle off at a LA garage, Bud heads to Daisy's small suburban home, which is clearly abandoned, and hangs a letter on the front door. Bud spends some time in her driveway reminiscing about kissing Daisy and subsequently checks into a hotel in a hapless manner as if he has finally accepted defeat. While lying around depressed all by his lonesome, Bud is magically visited by the seemingly elusive Daisy and the source of the melodramatic motorcyclist's paralyzing misery finally begins to unravel in a dreadful fashion akin to a mortician's scalpel cutting through a rotting corpse during an autopsy. After nervously running into the bathroom and taking a couple hits from a crack pipe, Daisy asks Bud if he wants to get some beer, which he flatly turns down because he does not drink anymore due to 'what happened' the last time they were together. Daisy professes her undying love to Bud, but he starts an argument with her for supposedly "kissing other boys" in the past. Bud proceeds to undress Daisy and she passionately fellates him, even sensually swallowing he seed, but he flips out upon climax and verbally assaults her by stating, "You're a fucking whore. You're a whore... You fucked them. You fucking asshole. I hate you so much. I hate you so much." Bud then starts an argument with Daisy accusing her of having sex with other men at a druggy hipster party the last night they saw one another. Daisy tells Bud that the men seemed friendly and they offered her some bud to smoke, but that she had no intention of sharing carnal knowledge with them. Bud accuses Daisy of killing their unborn child due to her drug use and drinking at the party, but things are much more complicated than he wants to remember. Apparently, what really happened, which is revealed in a series of stomach-churning flashback sequences, was that Daisy passed out at the party and the men took her into a bedroom against her own will, stripped off her clothes, and took turns raping her while she was unconscious. Although Bud walked in on the rape, he figured the worse and did not intervene, but instead left the party, only to discover Daisy's dead corpse being hauled into an ambulance when he returned. It is revealed that Daisy was DOA before she was ever raped after she choked on her own vomit (thus making her rapists unconscious necrophiliacs) and that she never really appeared in Bud's hotel room and his nasty night with her was merely a figment of his imagination as a man who carries a crippling burden of guilt for not only failing to save the love of his life, but also that of his unborn child and sole progeny.

Describing the film as being 'in the tradition' of classic 'adult cinema' like

Last Tango in Paris (1972) and Midnight Cowboy (1969), Vincent Gallo certainly achieved something much more honest, visceral, and stripped down with The Brown Bunny than Bertolucci and Schlesinger did with their respective Hollywood-star-driven films. Not only does The Brown Bunny display deep aesthetic influences from European arthouse films of the 1970s, but it also shares similar aesthetic/thematic similarities with obscure Italian art-sploitation films, especially the lurid libertine tragedies of Alberto Cavallone (Quickly, spari e baci a colazione, Blue Movie), whose wickedly wanton and patently forlorn work *Zelda* (1974) centers around a suicidal motorcycle racer whose weakness for women ultimately leads to his downfall. The Brown Bunny, which features blatant aesthetic influence from the films of Paul Morrissey/Andy Warhol (the trailer for The Brown Bunny featured a split-screen technique like Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966)), also seems innately influenced by the European period films of Italian-American actor/Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro, especially Walerian Borowczyk's titillating yet terribly tragic erotic arthouse flick *The Streetwalker* (1976) aka *La marge* and Aldo Lado's homoerotic motorcycled-themed crime flick *Born Winner* (1976) aka *L'ultima volta*. Indeed, as an auteur piece with the artistic integrity of the great works of old school European arthouse cinema, The Brown Bunny was bound to repel not only a good percentage of the American film-going audience, but also pathetic perverts looking to see a cheap smut flick featuring a famous diva devouring a dick. By combining an unsimulated sex scene with merciless melodrama between two ill-starred and irrevocably severed lovers, The Brown Bunny, not unlike the films of Paul Morrissey, is more anti-pornographic than pornographic, because the last thing a porn addict wants to see during a strikingly sordid and steamy sex scene is a wounded man moan in lovelorn agony like a dying animal while having his manhood mouthed. As Gallo stated himself regarding the scene in an old interview with Rebecca Murray at About.com, "Matthew McConaughey does 600 pushups before he does his shirtless scene. I haven't even worked with a fucking make-up person in films. You think I made myself look great? Do you think it's fun to show your cock in a film for ten billion to scrutinize for eternity? Do you think I get off on that? I was interested in the film for the purpose of the film, and I moved past my insecurities, my self-doubt, my self-hate, my incredible privacy that I value. I pushed that aside to achieve the goals that I had in the movie. And I think they're very clear in the film. I think if you see that film, it's clear that my intentions were to create disturbing effects around intimacies – both metaphysical and personal intimacies with this character's life." An amazing mirthless metaphysical melodrama and allegorical 'ghost story' that is like a healthy medium between Monte Hellman's *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971), Philippe Garrel's *The Inner Scar* (1972) aka *La cicatrice intérieure*, Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984), and Serge Gainsbourg's *Je t'aime moi non plus* (1976) aka *I Love You, I Don't*, and Cavallone's *Zelda*, yet totally idiosyncratic and tragically transcendental in

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its own right, *The Brown Bunny* is a positively pinning yet crippling celluloid road trip to purgatory directed by one of America's few true auteur filmmakers. As Gallo stated in an audio commentary track for the Japanese DVD release of *The Brown Bunny*, he "didn't spend 3 ½ years making a movie to get a blowjob from Chloë," despite what beta-male and fecund-free feminist film critics want to believe. Unlike most films, *The Brown Bunny* has a heart and soul, but also a famous chick choking on a self-described right-winger's cock, which makes for an irreconcilable combo when it comes to Hollywood liberal types, sexually repressed feminists, Wes Anderson and Sofia Coppola fans, and other culture-distorting rabble.

-Ty E

THE SECRET

Vincent Perez (2007)

The Secret is a so-called "thriller" directed by actor Vincent Perez. The film stars David Duchovny in a role that the actor has yet to have since the X-Files. The film also stars the horrifying Lili Taylor and new talent Olivia Thirlby. The Secret is a film about a family's heartbreaking yet somehow confusing loss. A teenager and her mother end up critically injured in the hospital after a car accident. Both Mother and Daughter end up dying in the hospital. Miraculously, the teenage girl becomes alive again and survives the hospital ordeal. The problem is that the Mother of the teenager has entered the girls body. The father (played by Duchovny) has had enough agony and won't accept that his wife is trapped inside of his daughters body. When the father finally accepts this unfortunate "supernatural" situation, he becomes even more irrational. Actress Olivia Thirlby does a wonderful job mimicking the grotesque attitude of Lili Taylor. I found it a good idea to "kill off" Taylor's role in the film during the beginning as she has a face only an inebriated father could love. David Duchovny also does a great job as the Father who has to resist having sex with his own daughter's body. Maybe this situation had something to do with Duchovny recently checking himself into a rehabilitation clinic for being too much of a Sex Addict. As I mentioned before, the acting performances in The Secret are nothing short of engrossing. Seeing as an actor directed the film, it really benefited the performances of the actors. The Secret could have been easily a piece of garbage if the film had been ended up in the wrong hands. The film is surely a family affair. I just hope Hollywood realizes that David Duchovny has much more acting in him (as The Secret proves) than his character Fox Mulder.

-Ty E

CRAIG
CRAIG

Vincent Sherman (1950)

Films that are abrasive to the retina's are to come by. We have Gary Oldman's debut, *Nil By Mouth*, which is as explosive and corrosive as you'd be led to believe by looking at some of his roles. Just as a great actor released a brutal film that never compromises quality, Kim Sønnerholm has done the same. *Craig* is a film chronicling the spiral descent of a man who is very much like many of us. *Craig's* parents were killed in a house fire that left his sister comatose. Unable to cope with the weight of the world, people begin to abuse *Craig's* kindness till he falls into withdrawal madness. *Craig* is relatable to most. Being frequently cast out of society, women use every attempt to walk all over him which leads to much sexual frustration and confusion. *Craig* is a film that surprises, scene after scene. *Craig* rises above the norms of a drama and incorporates surrealism, black humor, and chronic drug use & addiction. Every film now-a-day's has a cameo from Lloyd Kaufman, and *Craig* makes good use of the goofy Jew by using him as his subconscious weatherman. A distinguishable feature in *Craig* is the shared emotions. These horrible things committed to *Craig*, only drive you into fits of panic and frustration. Our anti-hero *Craig*, can be noted as a socially inept version of the Butcher from *I Stand Alone*, except for the vulgarity. *Craig* could be seen as misogynistic, due to it's blatant attacks on women. This would be a preconceived notion upon reading the summary, but if you look at "the big picture", It's used in a poetic context. On a technical note, *Craig* features wonderful cinematography that is occasionally disrupted with an increasingly edited drug binge scene. The score is a pulsing beat that takes on it's own flesh form and the soundtrack is enough to make any industrial fan or foreign metal fan squeal. The soundtrack resonates youth, which is something that is not awarded often. With Kim Sønnerholm proving his worth as being an incredible method actor, it's congenial to see him being successful as a director. At scenes, his face contorts into a diabolical expression worthy of Lou Ferigno's role as *The Incredible Hulk* (Circa 80's.) *Craig* is raw; purely nihilistic and devoid of a single positive emotion. We live in a hostile world and Sønnerholm's *Craig* is a testament to that.

-mAQ

ELEVATED

Vincenzo Natali (1996)

Elevated marks the first production directed by Vincenzo Natali, director of *Nothing* and *Cube*. Working tidily with minimalism and many restrictions, *Elevated* masterfully holsters tension in a convenient manner while letting it build up. The result is an entirely collected glimpse at true terror. With David Hewlett looking oddly like a neurotic, blood-soaked Devon Sawa, his performance elevates *Elevated* into the heavyweight championship of extremely tense and claustrophobic short films. Think about it this way, *Elevated* is the "Road Warrior" of unknown-horror short films and it's obvious to see the cinematic equivalent of photosynthesis for Natali's career in sizable horror phobias.

Ellen is on her way to the bottom floor of an unknown building. Along the way, a discomforting man named Ben tags along for the ride, mumbling guttural sounds. Soon, a security guard named Hank charges and screams into the elevator and insists on going to the top floor as so the "creatures" don't get them. From there on, it's an implied roller coaster ride into short endeavors and brief character development as we see who we should really fear; man or beast. Only after beginning to explain the nourished plot does the entire debacle of detail seem extraordinary. *Elevated* doesn't need to be narrated to be understood, in fact, quite the opposite. *Elevated* will unravel precisely aided only by time - 17 minutes to be near exact.

To reveal more claustro-horror shorts, might I recall memories of the terrifying and manic-depressive *La Cabina* which left me in awe at the surprising cleanliness of the whole unexplained ordeal. As you will witness here, *Elevated* will not answer questions. You could mope and complain, whinging on the lack of questions answered but by the end mark you'll be begging for more questions to be proposed. *Elevated* is short, to the point, uncomfortable, and entirely mad-cap with its performances of the three key characters; Hank, Ben, and Ellen. *Elevated* keeps it short, sweet, and utterly simple and that's how I want to present my review, except for the blue monochromatic light. Don't listen to me, watch it for yourself above. Thanks to his incredible filmography, I'm officially excited for his new film - *Splice*.

-mAQ

SPLICE
SPLICE

Vincenzo Natali (2009)

"Species" you might be joking, science fiction film it is, skin-romp hybrid thriller this isn't. Splice comes from the mind of Vincenzo Natali, the minimalist director behind the voracious paranoia of Cube and the ideological wit of Nothing. Splice is his newest foray into films that chronicle the broad aspect of science. Cube didn't so much tackle the theme of science as it was more of an ambiguous and unseen threat whereas Splice hosts Dren who is both worldly and terrifying. Capturing the star power of Adrien Brody as the awkward Clive and Sarah Polley as Elsa, Splice already has two things going for it. Fresh off the high that Predators left me frantically searching for in other studio pictures, it was nice to rewind to him with hair, and emotion. Natali has come along way from his oddball films with singular ideas and it glows transparently as Splice harnesses too many ideas leaving the film with a slight attitude of a bewildered newborn. That is, until the second part of the film. Starting out, Splice jumps right ship into the fairly mundane zone of the film and normally every motion picture has these, whether they are necessary or not. If judgment came down to brass tacks then I'd choose to be wowed in the end than in the beginning. Being the pessimist that I am, I find more comfort in closings. After the science terminologies are passed around rather fervidly between the married couple, Elsa projects this crazy idea for moving onto the next phase by incorporating human DNA into their "The Mist" inspired flesh beasts with unsurprising results. Viola! The "mistake" is created in an artificial chamber that sports very creative imagery of artificial birthings and goopy sound effects. Once they discover a mutating age ratio amongst the beastchild, the consequential happenstances come out to bite them in the ass. Dren, named after the company for whom they are employed under (N.E.R.D. but backwards), begins to evolve at an incredible rate and becomes increasingly more feminine and borderline aggressive. As far as the tale of Splice goes, lets just say I'm glad this bat-out-of-hell never hits menopause. Once the fire of passionate yet pretentious storytelling fades, the sinister and wondrous special effects of Splice take heed as the sole proprietor of the audiences attention and will remain so until the controversial copulation scene that had me wincing and feeling like a psychosexual deviant for not turning away. Not only does the CGI of the older Dren look so disgustingly fleshy but her body has been paid strict attention to detail, even so far as down to the terrestrial breasts on her unnatural body. All this was led up to with very critical scenes of masterful suspense and banal foreshadowing which is why Splice hit me as hard as it did, excusing the latter. Had I not cared about this creature or its rotating affection for either Clive or Elsa, I wouldn't have been so damned creeped out by its juvenile affections towards either surrogate. Just watching it spell words with Scrabble letters had me urging to break out of the trance I had been placed in to do something

more productive than watching some flustered equality-of-sexes-my-ass motion picture encompassing that awkward "alien" sexuality that the Species series is so known for. Speaking of psychotic women in film, Splice is one of the more recent contenders. Not only are Elsa's intentions not as they appear, she splits mid-film into a baby crazy bitch whose mind and matter are both disproportionate to what they were at the beginning of Splice. Which is not to say that the ending of Splice came as a surprise, which it did, but could have easily been presumed and predicted well before the finale of this film. Splice is that film that if you venture in with an elitist nit-picking attitude trying to discern true science behind a quasi-creature feature then you'd be sorely mistaken. While not breaking any new ground with the monster mash near the end that invokes memories of Jeepers Creepers 2, however this time with no racial purging, Splice does many things right and these are all brave grounds that Species didn't penetrate. While the seduction was in place, Natasha Henstridge could never compete with Delphine Chanéac's harrowing and childlike sexual demeanor. The problem with Splice isn't so much within the film itself but in the audience. While I admit I wanted to hate this film for its melancholy and disastrous ending, I found this to be the reason why I enjoyed this film so much. It's an affable piece of genetic destruction if I'd ever seen one and it was directed by someone with talent; a fleeting feat indeed. Just don't expect a sing-song ultraviolent masterpiece with this one.

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THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS
THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS

Vittorio De Sica (1970)

I never thought I would say it, but recently I saw a holocaust film that I found to be rather aesthetically alluring and traditionally beautiful to the point where I watched it no less than three times in one week to make sure that I was not hallucinating. Of course, leave it to Italy—a country that has somehow managed to elevate sleazy horror, western, and action genre trash to the level of art—to be responsible for such an inordinate cinematic work that seems like it was made with more intent than to simply spread the gospel of the (anti)Occidental post-religion of holocaustianity. Indeed, *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* (1970) aka *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* directed by Italian neorealist maestro Vittorio De Sica (*Bicycle Thieves*, *Umberto D.*) is an excellent example of what happens when a real artist projects his own humanity onto the plight and suffering of an alien people that could not have done a better job on their own, but of course it was naturally produced by chosenites, including Arthur Cohn, Gianni Hecht Lucari, and Artur Brauner. The first film that the auteur directed after becoming estranged from his regular screenwriter Cesare Zavattini, De Sica's strangely delectable feature is based on the semi-autobiographical novel of the same name by Ferrarese Jew Giorgio Bassani, who notoriously loathed the film adaptation. On top of being uniquely unkosher in its direction and overall execution, the film features the patently absurd novelty of featuring highly attractive (and mostly blond) Aryans with mostly noble demeanors portraying rich spoiled Jews that are just too decadent and terminally introverted to sense the rise of fascist antisemitism. In short, the film was clearly made to cater to tendencies of a naive all-goy audience, as if it would be too much of an aesthetic risk to feature real live Jews portraying Jews (at the very least, they could have cast handsome half-heeb Vittorio Gassman). In fact, while the film features characters sporting Star of David necklaces, synagogues, and various references to the growing tide of Hitler-inspired Italian fascist antisemitism, I was never able to truly able to embrace complete suspension of disbelief and sincerely feel that I was watching a movie about the holocaust, thus underscoring De Sica's innate dedication to humanism and cinematic art. In short, I was somehow able to rather enjoy the film in spite of its Hebraic holocaust theme.

Winner of various coveted awards, including the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1972 and the Golden Bear at the 21st Berlin International Film Festival in 1971, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* was indubitably a comeback film of sorts for auteur Vittorio De Sica, who had not had a hit since *Matrimonio all'italiana* (1964) aka *Marriage Italian Style* and spent a number of years directing mostly worthless mainstream comedies after long abandoning his neorealist roots due to commercial success. While it would be an exaggeration to say that the film is as good as his previous masterpieces like *Ladri di biciclette*

(1948) aka *Bicycle Thieves*, *Miracolo a Milano* (1951) aka *Miracle in Milan*, and *Umberto D.* (1952), it is arguably De Sica's last great film, though some less kind critics were not that at all impressed, including David Thomson, who argued in *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (1975), "But his work in the 1960s was slick and tasteless. The pictorial grace and the emotional severity were both abandoned in a series of concocted comedies about sexual hypocrisy. *THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS* was a regeneration only in that it was a serious, literary subject that de Sica transcribed with rather hollow rectitude. He stands now as a minor director." To Thomson's credit, the film does seem a bit flaccid and pathos-poor when compared to the auteur's masterpieces, but there is not denying its great enrapturing pulchritude and somewhat provocative depiction of Italian Jewry, which are certainly the main reasons I enjoyed it. Indeed, forget the sappy sentimentalism and silly humor of Roberto Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful* (1997), De Sica's film thankfully never feels like a gross exercise in emotional manipulation as the *Dead Sea Pedestrians* are depicted with great sensitivity to character flaws, warts and all.

It has been speculated that the 15th-century Italian noblewoman Simonetta Vespucci—a blonde beauty that tragically died at the mere age of 22 who was regarded as the most beautiful woman in Northern Italy during her time—acted as the inspiration for a number of famous paintings, probably most notably *The Birth of Venus* (1484-1486) by Sandro Botticelli. Undoubtedly, French fashion model turned actress Dominique Sanda was a sort of equivalent to Vespucci in terms of late-1960s/1970s European arthouse cinema as the always stunning star of such important cinematic works as Robert Bresson's *Une femme douce* (1969) aka *A Gentle Woman*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *Il conformista* (1970) aka *The Conformist* and *Novecento* (1976) aka *1900*, and Fred Haines' underrated Hermann Hesse adaptation *Steppenwolf* (1974), among various other examples. Simply due to her sheer beauty, Sanda even manages to virtually steal the entire show in her all too brief uncredited cameo in Luchino Visconti's late era anti-jet-set flick *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (1974) aka *Conversation Piece*. Undoubtedly, if Sanda demonstrated any great talent, it was portraying a deceptively elegant, slightly venomous, and strangely sophisticated cocktease, which she does to great effect in de Sica's film as a terminally spoiled and deceptively frigid wealthy young Jewess who ultimately rejects the romantic propositions of her lifelong Judaic friend for a much more masculine and aggressive guido of the hopelessly hairy goyish commie sort. Indeed, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*—a film set on the eve of the Second World War in 1938 Ferrara, Italy—is the beautifully bittersweet story of a young lovelorn Jewish writer who faces the dually degrading experience of being repeatedly rejected by the woman he loves while he and his people face discrimination from the increasingly counter-kosher fascist government. Oftentimes feeling more like a strangely warm dystopian romance as directed by the wop grandpa of John Hughes than the typical Spielbergian cellu-

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loid shoah showcase, the film ultimately succeeds where most holocaust movies fail in that the Jewish characters, who are all conspicuously flawed, do not seem like an exotic 'other' that the viewer is expected to virtually worship in a mystical fashion. On top of successfully humanizing the eternal Hebrew, the film thankfully does not dwell on depicting dagos as dastardly demons worthy of eternal damnation, but I guess one should not expect anything less from a filmmaker that got his start during the fascist era. If the film has a villain, it is not an individual but instead collective fear and apathy, which of course are universal emotions.

Naturally, as a (quite regrettably) college-educated American, virtually every true blue Israelite that I have ever encountered was relatively rich and spoiled. Indeed, the denigrative weaponized label "white privilege" that is oftentimes used by Judaic cultural Marxist types that pretend to be white like Tim Wise, Noel Ignatiev, and their spiritually castrated shabbos goy lackeys would certainly be an apt description for the average American Jew. While the characters in *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* are also plagued with an inordinate degree of kosher privilege, they are not nearly as repellent or loathsome as the various American tribesmen that I have had the grand misfortune of meeting. For example, instead of shitting on European culture, these characters mostly embrace it to the point where some of them, including the male protagonist's father, are fascist party members. Of course, these characters represent the last generation of true European Jewry before the holocaust and mass immigration of Jews to the United States more or less completely destroyed the culturally schizophrenic peoples. In that sense, the film acts as a virtual collective epitaph for European Jewry, most specifically Italian Jewry, hence why the film concludes with a dreamlike montage of all the characters that have perished. Actually set in Europa instead of some annoyingly fake Hollywood set, the film also radiates a certain authenticity despite its very specific stylization and cast of aesthetically gifted Aryans portraying rather rich Red Sea Pedestrians. In fact, even auteur De Sica felt the film was too beautiful, or as he stated in an interview with Charles Thomas Samuels, "That's right. The second half shouldn't be so beautiful. I should have made it grey or reversed *THE LAST JUDGEMENT* and made the first part color and the second black and white. That's a good idea. I wanted to achieve effects like those in Huston's *REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN EYE*, but my cameraman was incapable." Apparently De Sica was unable to completely realize his entire aesthetic vision due to a lack of time and money, thereupon resulting in the most glaringly gorgeous holocaust film ever made. Needless to say, such a film would never be made today.

After beginning with an immediately strikingly blood-warm autumnal opening credit sequence that sets the film's aesthetic tone of diffused delectability and soft-focus melancholy, the viewer encounters a couple bourgeois tennis dorks in

all-white on bicycles as they approach gates of the large estate of the wealthy Jewish Finzi-Contini family, with one of the friends half-jokingly declaring that, "...the Finzi-Continis never leave their kingdom." When the group finally enters the estate, they are greeted with an otherworldly Edenic paradise of sorts, though communist Malnate (Fabio Testi)—a masculine gey boy that boasts to his Judaic comrade in regard to his fetish for class warfare, "But the middle class I don't care for. They're all of them more or less fascists. Except for you Jews...understandably...considering—but at least the works at my place...are almost all antifascist"—acts less than impressed. A friend of the family's sole son Alberto (Helmut Berger)—a sickly and painfully introverted blond chap who doesn't like leaving home because, as he states, "I always felt I was being spied on...envied"—Malnate soon develops a romantic interest upon meeting his pal's sole sister Micòl (Dominique Sanda), who is somewhat rightly described by a Hebraic comrade as, "Very beautiful: tall, blond...but unpredictable." To make matters more romantically complicated, the film's Jewish protagonist Giorgio (Lino Capolicchio) falls in love with Micòl, who also happens to be his childhood friend as both are members of respected local Jewish families. While Micòl gives Giorgio the perfect opportunity to fuck her in her family's automobile as her nipples can be seen through her wet white shirt after the two seek shelter from the rain, it is ultimately the notably more masculine Malnate that manages to mate with her right before being drafted into the Italian army and being killed in combat in Russia. Although Giorgio fails miserably in terms of attempting to get his virginal shylock cock wet by dipping into Micòl's premium grade kosher cunt, he is the only one of his tennis friends to survive the ordeal and escape Italy before being herded into a cramped cattle car. Undoubtedly, the great irony of Giorgio's young life is that, despite succumbing to a crippling degree of lovelorn dejection, he will live on while the woman that he believes he loves will die and eventually become nothing more to him than a fading bittersweet memory of unrequited love during a chaotic war torn period in what is ultimately a sort of Jewish Götterdämmerung.

Although pathologically preoccupied due to being terribly lovesick, Giorgio seems to be one of the only characters in the film that is acutely aware that an ominous fate awaits the Jews. Indeed, even Giorgio father's (Romolo Valli)—a fascist supporter with ties to the local government—seems to be in denial about the situation as demonstrated by his preposterous attempts to rationalize anti-Jewish laws. When Giorgio accuses his padre of having a "pet mania" and believing that, "That our Mussolini is better than Hitler...our fascism better than Nazism!," his father replies, "Well, it's true!," and then subsequently argues without even the slightest hint of irony that it is ok that they are, "Third-class, if you will, but still a citizen who can...enjoy his basic rights." The only other Jew that seems totally horrified by the anti-kosher climate of Italy is Micòl's insufferably introverted Alberto, who seems to be so deeply metaphysically plagued by the

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growing counter-kosherism in the air that he eventually becomes terribly sick and eventually dies of the antisemitic storm, or so the film makes it seem. Aside from repeatedly dispassionately rebuffing Giorgio's various meek and largely pathetic romantic advances, Micòl cannot even be bothered to say goodbye to her brother Alberto, who she seems to have incestuous feelings for, when he is on his deathbed. Although she declares to Giorgio before a failed half-hearted attempt at seducing him, "I like to feel I'm a woman," Micòl's words are clearly those of wishful thinking as she is such a hopelessly spoiled brat that she cannot be bothered to suffer the grand indignity of stepping outside the innately internal fantasy realm she has created on her family estate, hence why it becomes all the more disturbing yet strangely fitting when the goombah Gestapo finally arrives at her less than humble abode to take her and her family away. A clear victim of bourgeois decadence and the apathy it inspires, Micòl does not bother to even attempt to put up a fight when her black-clad persecutors arrive. Indeed, she seems like she would agree with Rimbaud's words, "I found I could extinguish all human hope from my soul." Undoubtedly, Micòl seems to suffer from a certain unspoken self-loathing due to her particularly privileged background, which explains her disgust for a fellow wealthy Jew like Giorgio and sexual interest in a good masculine *guido gentile* like Malnate. In fact, she more or less expresses as much when Giorgio declares he loves her and Micòl angrily responds, "But I don't love you! Lovers have a drive to overwhelm one another. But the way we are, alike as two drops of water...how could we ever overwhelm or tear each other to pieces? It would be like making love with a brother. Like with Alberto. You and I are not normal people. For the two of us...what counts more than the possession of things—how shall I put it?—is the remembrance of things...the memory of things." Of course, the brutal irony is that if Micòl had hooked up with Giorgio and fled Italy with him, she would not have joined the supposed six million in the *Endlösung*.

To some extent, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* is a 'message' film and Vittorio De Sica manages to more or less outline most of its central themes in a single scene at the end where protagonist Giorgio's father—a man that seems to realize his life is over—reconciles with his son and gives him the following fatherly words of advice, "If I may say so...as families go, the Finzi-Continis are not for us. They're not our sort. They're different. They don't even seem Jewish. Micol—Maybe that's what attracted you to her. That she's superior to you socially. It'll pass. You'll get over it. And a lot sooner than you think. I can imagine what you're feeling now. Yet, in a way, I rather envy you. In life, in order to understand...to really understand the world...you must die at least once. So it's better to die young, when there's still time left...to recover and live again. When you're old, it's much worse. Why is that? There's no time to start over from zero. And our generation has made so many, many mistakes. A few months and it will seem as if none of this had ever happened to you. You may

even end up being glad. You'll feel richer, one might say. More mature." As if he predicted the future (or was committing a sort of passive suicide), Giorgio's father is rounded up by the fascists just like the Finzi-Continis, though he manages to send his family away to safety. Although a Jewish fascist that supported a political party that persecuted his own people, Giorgio's father ultimately comes off in the end as seeming like the most honorable character in the entire film.

While surely entertaining and aesthetically delectable to a certain degree, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* cannot be fully appreciated without a certain understanding of the history of Italian Jewry and its relationship to Italian fascism, which is a bit more complicated and dubious than that of German Jewry to the Third Reich. For example, Giorgio's father—a man that seems to be just as proud of being Italian as he is Jewish—seems to be symbolic of the Turin banker Ettore Ovazza, who was not only a diehard fascist from the very beginning, but he also bankrolled Mussolini and his movement. Not unlike Giorgio's father, Ovazza seemed to have been at least partially in denial when it came to growing fascist antisemitism, which he and his family ultimately paid for with their lives with after the Schutzstaffel caught up with them in late-1943 near the Swiss border. As depicted in the rather flaccid and banal TV miniseries *Benito: The Rise and Fall of Mussolini* (1993) starring Antonio Banderas as the eponymous lead, Mussolini was the sexual and political protégé of communist Jewess Margherita Sarfatti, who acted as an imperative propaganda adviser of the National Fascist Party as well as Il Duce's biographer. Notably, fascist General and war hero Italo Balbo, who was from Ferrara just like the characters in the film, was strongly opposed to anti-Jewish laws due to his own favorable personal experiences with the long assimilated Ferrarese Jews. Although the film makes it seem as if every single Italian Jew was rounded up and exterminated in a concentration camp, only ninety-six of Ferrara's 300 Jews were actually deported, hence how the film's source writer Giorgio Bassani was able to survive the war despite being an active resistance fighter. Of course, considering their oftentimes similar phenotypic traits, especially in the south, it was probably easier for Jews to hide among Italians than among Germans. As far as Hebraic guidos and tennis are concerned, Trieste-born Jewish tennis star Uberto De Morpurgo—a somewhat handsome fellow of aristocratic stock that would certainly be at home with the characters of De Sica's film—was named Italian Commissioner of Tennis by Benito Mussolini in 1929.

Due to their pathetic passivity and seeming complete and utter disinterest in even leaving home, the titular family of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* almost seems to long for death, as if they have been waiting their entire lives for a one-way ticket to Auschwitz. Notably, this seems especially true of the young intellectual Alberto, who has the luxury of kicking the bucket before ever getting into nazi hands and thus dying a slightly more dignified death. Indeed, thinking about Alberto, I could not help but reminded of the tragic Italian Jewish

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philosopher Carlo Michelstaedter, who killed himself by shooting himself with a pistol only hours after completing his sole book *Persuasion and Rhetoric*—a doctoral thesis that, not unlike American Jew Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note* (2010), reads like a hermetic philosophical suicide note—at the mere age of 23 in 1910. Like his Viennese Jewish counterpart Otto Weininger, who killed himself at the same exact age on the same exact month almost seven years before, Michelstaedter was, despite being descended from rabbis, a totally deracinated irreligious Jew that had adopted a completely Occidental cultural and intellectual perspective as a student of Plato and Aristotle. Although just speculation, but I think Michelstaedter was probably like how Oswald Spengler described Weininger in that he was a sort of post-religious Jewish mystic of late religious consciousness destroyed in the agony of a sort of schizophrenic Magian dualism as a result of being a racial/spiritual alien with a carefully cultivated European sensibility. As Daniela Bini noted in *Carlo Michelstaedter and the Failure of Language* (1992), “Twelve years after his death his close friend Vladimiro Arangio Ruiz developed an interpretation along a more philosophical line. In speaking of Carlo's suicide Arangio Ruiz used the very words Carlo himself had written in his autobiographical pages: that he had died ‘for overwhelming abundance of life.’ He emphasized the great demands Carlo had made upon himself, that he had elevated his own being to a height and expected from himself a perfection that cannot exist in human life. He was made of the same stuff of which heroes and saints are made. In this view emphasis was also placed on Carlo's youth, when idealism reigns uncompromised.” Of course, it can also be argued that the film's titular family—decadent intellectuals that are even looked at as virtual aristocrats by other Jews due to their wealth and lack of stereotypical Jewish characteristics—also succumbed to ‘overwhelming abundance of life,’ as their bloated opulence and detachment from the struggle of life and survival leads to accepting a horrific fate that is right in front of their faces. Quite notably, both Weininger and Michelstaedter were a major intellectual influence on self-described ‘superfascist’ Julius Evola, who received financial backing from Mussolini to start a racialist journal entitled *Sangue e Spirito* aka *Blood and Spirit* that featured a distinctly ‘Roman’ (as opposed to German) view of race that blended Sorelianism with a Mussolinian eugenic ideal. Somewhat ironically, despite his influence on Evola and other fascist thinkers, Michelstaedter's entire family, including his mother and elder sister, died in the holocaust. Of course, had Michelstaedter not killed himself, he probably would have also ended up at Auschwitz.

At the beginning of his magnum opus *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, Michelstaedter arguably provides another insight into the titular family of the film when he writes, “Nor is any life ever satisfied to live in any present, for insofar as it is life it continues, and it continues into the future to the degree that it lacks life. If it were to possess itself completely here and now and be in want of nothing—if

it awaited nothing in the future—it would not continue: it would cease to be life. So many things attract us in the future, but in vain do we want to possess them in the present.” Throughout the family, most of the members of the Finzi-Contini family seem to be living completely in the present, as if they, quite unlike protagonist Giorgio, have nil interest in a future and have thus accepted a sort foreboding self-obliteration via passive contentment that ironically leads to their deaths. While Michelstaedter certainly could have not predicated the holocaust, it as if he understood the sort of hopelessly fragile Jewish bourgeois mindset that would make its implementation possible. Not unlike Czar Nicholas II of Russia, who was executed under the command of Jewish Bolshevik thug Yakov Yurovsky, the Finzi-Contini family is simply too spoiled, weak, and out of touch with reality to deal with a glaring threat that would ultimately completely engulf them. Of course, the sort of self-slaughter committed by Michelstaedter is certainly more honorable than being another statistic in the shoah, as it at least demonstrates a certain will power.

While Vittorio De Sica was not exactly a politically correct guy in some respects (when asked in an interview why he did not develop a scene of homoerotic love in his film *Shoeshine* (1946), he simply replied, “Because it revolted me”), he did seem to suffer from a certain ethno-masochism when it came to fascism, or as he stated in an interview with Charles Thomas Samuels featured in *Vittorio De Sica: Contemporary Perspectives* in regard to *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, “After the disaster of *SUNFLOWER* I wanted to make a true De Sica film, made just as I wanted it. I accepted this subject because I intimately feel the Jewish problem. I myself feel shame because we are guilty of the death of millions of Jews. Why were they killed? Because a criminal, a lunatic wanted that. But the Italian Fascists are also guilty. So am I. I wasn’t a fascist, but I belong to the country that collaborated with Hitler. I wanted, out of conscience, to make this film, and I am glad I made it.” Judging simply by his comments, De Sica—a mensch that freely admitted that he was inspired to direct the ‘fascist’ film *La porta del cielo* (1945) aka *The Gates of Heaven* because, “it was a film made only to save me from the Fascists”—seems to have failed in his artistic intentions with the film. Indeed, instead of being the stereotypical holocaust agitprop piece, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* is a film that dares to reveal Jewish-fascist collaboration and at least partly blame the Jews for their own downfall. On top of that, the film—a sort of contra Shoah (1985) in virtually every way imaginable—is just too patently aesthetically pulchritudinous, seraphic, and luscious to inspire the doom and gloom of gas chambers and dubious things like Herr Doktor Joseph Mengele’s supposed twin fetish. Of course, exploiting the holocaust and the Third Reich for monetary and/or aesthetic reasons is a great legacy of Italian cinema history as demonstrated by everything from Guido Arthouse films like Liliana Cavani’s *The Night Porter* (1974) to Corrado Farina’s comic book adaptation *Baba Yaga* (1973) to the the countless

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films of the mostly worthless Nazisploitation (sub)genre like Sergio Garrone's *SS Experiment Camp* (1976). For me, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* is less a melodrama about the holocaust than a sort of celluloid death poem for European Jewry; or, more specifically a thoroughly Europeanized Jewry that no longer exists but once produced people like Michelstaedter, Weininger, Karl Kraus, Edmund Husserl, and Egon Friedell, among others. Indeed, I am far from a philosemite, but I think the film does pay respectable tribute to European Jewry, even if it fails in its holocaust agenda. As to why the film was superior to many of the filmmaker's many previous artistic failures, De Sica probably said it best when he stated in an interview, "I am happy that I made it because it brought me back to my old noble intentions. Because, you see, I have been ruined by lack of money. All my good films, which I financed by myself, made nothing. Only my bad films made money. Money has been my ruin."

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YOUNG TÖRLESS

Volker Schlöndorff (1966)

Love him or loathe him, German auteur Volker Schlöndorff (*The Tin Drum*, *Swann in Love*) almost singlehandedly rebooted Teutonic cinema during the post-WWII era with his debut feature *Young Törless* (1966) aka *Der junge Törless* starring a young teenage Mathieu Carrière (who had attended the same Jesuit boarding school in France that the director previously attended) in the eponymous lead role. Indeed, along with Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966) aka *Abschied von gestern* and Ulrich Schamoni's *It* (1966) aka *Es*, *Young Törless* was such a striking cinematic revelation among the West German public that it was dubbed by the media as something totally new, 'Young German Cinema,' which would eventually become New German Cinema. Learning the cinematic craft from working as an assistant director for French New Wave auteur filmmakers like Louis Malle and Alain Resnais and desiring to make a sort of celluloid bridge between his zeitgeist and that of the great Germanic filmmakers of the silent era like F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang, Schlöndorff assembled the somber black-and-white coming-of-age flick *Young Törless*, which was adapted from Austrian writer Robert Musil's 1906 literary debut *The Confusions of Young Törless* (1906) aka *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*. Indeed, impressed by the writer's unfinished two-volume magnum opus *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* aka *The Man Without Qualities* (1930–43), Schlöndorff decided to checkout and ultimately cinematically adapt and update Musil's prophetic novel *Young Törless*, which not only interested the auteur because he attended a boarding school like the protagonist of the book (albeit, a French Jesuit one as opposed to an Austrian military one), but also because, as the director described in the featurette *A German Movie*: "The other thing that attracted me in Musil's novel is that it seemed like a metaphor for what happened much later in German history, meaning the dictatorship of the Nazis and the abuse and the holocaust." Heavily influenced by Fritz Lang's late era expressionist masterpiece *M* (1931), *Young Törless*, which is set during the pre-WWI era at a military boarding school located in a remote rural region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, follows an inquisitive teenage protagonist with a 'beyond good and evil' mentality who watches passively as his new friends and classmates routinely physically, sexually, and emotionally torture a weak and cowardly student who was caught stealing by one of his cornholing comrades. Casting a real Jew named Marian Seidowsky (who would later star alongside Fassbinder in Schlöndorff's 1970 adaptation of *Baal*) whose Polish Jewish family managed to survive the Second World War in the role of the victim Anselm von Basini in a performance modeled after Peter Lorre's pathetic pedophilic serial killer character Hans Beckert from Fritz Lang's *M*, Schlöndorff's cinematic debut is a vaguely S&M-themed political parable that allegorically depicts via a small military academy micro-

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cosm how the German bourgeoisie (as represented by protagonist Thomas Törless) watched passively during the National Socialist takeover and the discrimination of Jews. A work that proved that Teutonic filmmakers still had testicular fortitude (although, the director would eventually lose this testicular fortitude), *Young Törless* was such a subversive work upon its release that it caused the West German counselor in Paris to walk-out during its screening at the 1966 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the FIPRESCI Prize, and slam the door while shouting, “This is not a German movie.” *Young Törless* is also the first film where Schlöndorff would attempt to establish a dubious link between fascism and faggotry, thereupon making it a work that might offend more weak-minded LGBT-lobotomized viewers.

Teenage intellectual Thomas Törless (Mathieu Carrière) is a young man who has probably misread too much Nietzsche (notably, Musil was heavily influenced by the “philosopher of the hammer”) and believes himself to be above ‘good and evil.’ Törless’ father believes his son is too indecisive and asks a more militaristic and conservative student named Beineberg (Bernd Tischer)—an ideologue and master race type of the old school Prussian sort—to watch over his progeny when he drops him off at the military academy. A born iconoclast of sorts, Törless is punished during his first day of school for mocking the banal nature of his teacher’s lecturing techniques and is thus forced to copy out Horace’s sixth ode by the next day. Meanwhile, the most pathetic and cowardly student in the entire military academy, Anselm von Basini (Marian Seidowsky)—the stereotypically Jewish acting/looking son of an impoverished widow—is threatened by a nasty young man named Reiting (Fred Dietz) who demands that the degenerate aristocrat pay him back money that he owes him by the next day, or else he will become his personal slave. Needless to say, Basini makes the desperate mistake of stealing money from alpha-male Beineberg’s drawer to payback Reiting. When Reiting accuses Basini of theft, the meek boy, who clearly suffers from a persecution complex of sorts, reacts in a stereotypically Hebraic manner by retorting, “How dare you say that! What a nasty thing to say! That’s vile slander! You’re just picking on me because I’m weaker.” After much arguing, Basini eventually confesses to the crime, but absurdly claims that he did not steal the money, but “only borrowed it in secret.” Meanwhile, Beineberg takes Törless to meet a single-mother prostitute with a bastard baby named Bozena (played by English Gothic horror actress Barbara Steele, who starred in Mario Bava’s *Black Sunday* (1960) and Corman’s Poe adaptation *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), among countless other classics of the genre), who hates the Austrian bourgeoisie, especially the Viennese (her baby is the unwanted product of an affair she had with a Viennese bourgeois gentleman). Bozena can sense the young student’s unease and seeming sense of superiority, so she remarks to Törless while making out with Beineberg, “You don’t like me talking about your mother? You people always think you’re better than us. You don’t think your mother and I are alike,

huh? [...] You're wrong...terribly wrong. I know your families better than that. I spent enough time in Vienna. I know what goes on there." Bozena also tells the boys that they are just like their parents as, "hypocrites, cowards and liars" who pretend to be respectable and dignified, but act quite differently behind closed doors. As Törless will soon find out, Bozena is quite right. Bozena also alludes to the fact that certain young military cadets are involved in homosexuality by stating in defense of the fleshy 'goods' that she has to peddle: "It is better than what you do in your dorms." Indeed, Törless will also learn that sadomasochistic sodomy is a timeless secret tradition at seemingly benign Austrian military schools.

During the night, a hermetic world comes to life in an attic at the Austro-Hungarian military academy where an unofficial secret society of students smoke from hookahs like proto-beatniks, dream of taking pilgrimages to India in an Hermann Hesse-esque fashion, discuss sex and look at pornography, and—most importantly—make future cryptic metapolitical plans for their school and classmates, with Beineberg being the uncontested Führer of the group. During one of their nightly attic meetings, Reiting discusses how "a lot of pleasure can be had from him" regarding criminal Basini, but idealist Beineberg wants the thief formerly exposed and kicked out of the school, as he has a more conservative view regarding crime and punishment. Ultimately, the conspiring friends agree to have their fun with Basini, whose thieving hand they whip the next day. On top of being physically assaulted, Basini is told by Reiting and his crew that they have decided not to squeal to the school authorities regarding his crimes, but that he will now have to live the lonely life of a virtual slave and plaything who's every action with other classmates will be the subject of their consent and whose expenses and income will be strictly scrutinized. When Beineberg discovers that Reiting has been looking at pornography and engaging in violent gay sex with Basini in the attic, he becomes enraged and decides he wants to also take part in torturing the pathetic slave, stating, "What I've got in mind is pure asceticism. To rise above this world, you must kill off everything that enslaves you to it." While fondling a knife in a fetishistic fashion, Beineberg declares he must "kill off" all the supposed "superfluous emotions" (aka pity, empathy, forgiveness, etc.) that he has for Basini and become hard like a true Aryan Übermensch. In a scene modeled after the underworld trial scene at the conclusion of Fritz Lang's *M*, Beineberg, who resembles one of Erich von Stroheim's various portrayals of Prussian villains that sport fancy gloves and super spiffy uniforms, presides over a secret show trial in the attic against Basini where he is charged with committing a break-in, stealing money, acting on his own against his comrades expressed wishes, attempting to set comrades against one another, and placing himself in the sexual servitude of a dimwitted degenerate like Reiting. For his crimes, Basini is beaten and tortured, and Törless even gets in on the action at point, forcing the slave to say, "I'm a thief," but the protagonist will ultimately slowly

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but surely come to realize he has become a silent perpetrator in a sick game.

Of course, later Törless realizes the severity of the brutality he has engaged in and writes in his journal, "I muß be sick, insane. Why else would things that others find normal disgust me?" That night, Törless takes Basini to the attic where the slave immediately begins taking off his clothes, as if he expects to be sexually manhandled by the rampantly heterosexual protagonist (of course, in Musil's novel, the protagonist does get involved with homosexuality). After yelling at Basini for undressing, Törless berates the bitch boy for subjecting himself to Beineberg and Reitling's brutality. Törless also becomes disgusted by Basini's lack of guilt when it comes to stealing and engaging in aberrant sexual servitude. Undoubtedly, Basini is a hard person to feel sorry for yet his treatment at the violent hands of young authoritarian homos is also unjustifiable, hence Törless' moral and philosophical dilemma regarding the entire situation. Naturally, Beineberg's thirst for torturing Basini only grows with each passing day, so he decides to see how far he can take it by hypnotizing the boy and stabbing him with a needle. When Basini falls over while being tortured under hypnosis, Beineberg accuses him of faking it and has his friends beat him to a bloody pulp. The next day, Basini begs for Törless' help and Reitling witnesses the interaction and accuses them of having a secret alliance. Of course, Törless tells the truth regarding his relationship with Basini and when Reitling demands that he also get in on the sexually sadomasochistic action, he refuses to as he finds the whole situation boring, stating, "Things just happen. Anything's possible. There's not an evil world and a good world. They exist together in the same world. That's the whole truth." Later that day, Beineberg threatens Törless by telling him that if he does not get involved with torturing Basini, he will tell everyone at the school that he is the thief's accomplice. While Törless attempts to warn Basini that night that he is in for a world of hurt, the cowardly thief is not prepared for the lynch mob style torture he will suffer the next day. Indeed, after some students block off all the doors and exits of the school gymnasium so as to prevent any teachers from interrupting their acts of mob-mentality-based collective torture, all the pupils of the school gang up on Basini and Beineberg, who leads the mob, mocks his widow mother by reading out a pathetic letter she has written regarding the family's dire monetary situation. When Basini makes a fruitless attempt at fighting back for the first time in his entire life, he is beaten up by all the boys and hanged upside down in a mock lynching of sorts in a perniciously playful scenario that one of the teachers at the school describes as "downright diabolical." While Törless attempted to save Basini during the attack, his efforts are ultimately too little and too late. Shaken up by the whole situation, Törless runs away from the school and seeks solace in prostitute Bozena. When Törless finally goes back to the school, he explains his actions to the school's headmasters by going on a pretentious speech about his reasoning for never tattling on Basini and how he has learned from the entire experience that good and evil

are natural everyday events that one must be on guard for. After giving his little philosophical spiel and abruptly leaving the room, the main headmaster declares, "This young man is under such emotional strain that this school is no longer the place for him. His intellectual nourishment must be monitored more carefully than we can do here." In the end, Törless happily leaves the school after his loving mother picks him up in a horse and carriage. If the protagonist learns anything by the end of the film, it is that one cannot be a passive spectator to human brutality, as it leads to dictatorships, atrocities, and whatnot.

Interestingly, while Schlöndorff portrays the Basini character in *Young Törless* as a victim who suffers unnecessary punishment at the hands of sadistic proto-fascist crypto-homos, the character is also depicted as a morally retarded thief and groveling coward who more or less welcomed his poof punishment, thus hinting that the director thought that certain Jews were indeed guilty of certain crimes after World War I, though they did not deserve the punishment they ultimately received. As the director explained in the featurette *A German Movie*, he had some reservations about casting a real Jew for the role of Basini, explaining regarding his eventual decision to cast Marian Seidowsky (who had been introduced to the director by his classmates): "And, of course, what could I say? I mean, these were 15-year-old boys in the middle of the 60s who came and brought to me, as the victim, a Jewish boy living in their school. I was, first, too scared to use him...I thought that we were getting too close to the metaphor here...and, on the other hand, I had taken such a liking to him and he was so eager to do the part that I started working with him." Apparently, the other teenage cast members, who were also non-actors (except for Mathieu Carrière, who previously appeared in Rolf Thiele's 1964 *Thomas Man* adaptation *Tonio Kröger*), told Schlöndorff that Seidowsky would be perfect for the part because he was a real-life crybaby who epitomized the character of Basini. While Seidowsky would go on to star in two more of Schlöndorff films, including *Baal* (1970) and *Morals of Ruth Halbfass* (1972) aka *Die Moral der Ruth Halbfass*, as well as the early Fassbinder flicks *Gods of the Plague* (1970) and *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971), he developed cancer at the premature age of 29 and subsequently committed suicide by shooting himself at a hospital in Munich (or so Schlöndorff would describe in his autobiography *Licht, Schatten und Bewegung*). Of course, *Young Törless* was not the last film Schlöndorff directed that followed in the anti-Teutonic spirit of quack Hebrew psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich by depicting militarists/fascists as sadomasochistic sodomites, as he would later portray German Freikorps soldiers as cold-hearted misogynistic homos in *Coup de Grâce* (1976) and would even include a boy-buggering SA Brownshirt pederast in his Academy Award winning work *The Tin Drum* (1979) aka *Die Blechtrommel*. Indeed, Schlöndorff was not the only promoter of this ethno-masochistic, if not homo-hating, trend of attempting to depict Prussianism and fascism as sort of proto-leather-fag subcultures, as German

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leftist sociologist Klaus Theweleit released a two volume Reich-inspired work in 1977 entitled *Männerphantasien* (which was later translated into English in 1987 under the title *Male Fantasies*) that attempted to portray masculine *Freikorps* soldiers and National Socialists as sick and sexually sadistic sodomites who derived sexual pleasure from torturing and killing people. Whatever I may think of Schlöndorff's hopelessly cliché post-WWII 68er-Bewegung-esque politics, I cannot deny that *Young Törless* is a revolutionary work of Teutonic cinema that helped sire one of the greatest and most important film movements in German history, not to mention the fact that the work would surely be considered ostensibly 'homophobic' by today's prissy PC standards, thus demonstrating how out of hand politically correct authoritarianism and the Pink Gestapo has gotten.

-Ty E

A DEGREE OF MURDER

Volker Schlöndorff (1967)

Undoubtedly, statuesque German-Italian junky model/actress Anita Pallenberg (Barbarella, Dillinger Is Dead aka Dillinger è morto) is one of the most, if not the most, deadly groupie/muses of counter-culture generation, as a wild and wanton woman whose child and lovers/ex-lovers randomly died from tragic and oftentimes dubious circumstances, including her 17-year-old male concubine Scott Cantrell, who shot himself in the head with a gun owned by Keith Richards (the model's lover at the time) in what some suspect was a game of Russian roulette gone awry and which resulted in the bad girl being arrested for manslaughter (which she was ultimately cleared of). Before her loved ones started dropping dead under rather bizarre circumstances, Pallenberg starred in the somewhat strangely prophetic kraut counter-culture work *Mord und Totschlag* (1968) aka *A Degree of Murder* where she plays a moronic anti-heroine who 'accidentally' kills her boyfriend and subsequently cuckolds two equally moronic men (who can now be seen as stand-ins for Brian Jones and Keith Richards) into helping her dispose of her belated beau's dead body. The second feature directed by Volker Schlöndorff (*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, *The Tin Drum*) following his award-winning Robert Musil adaptation *Young Törless* (1966), *A Degree of Murder* was spoken highly of in a 1974 interview with Rainer Werner Fassbinder, which the authors of *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema: Adaptation, Politics, and the Movie-Appropriate* (2002) speculated was for the following reasons: "Given his sense of rebellion, the young Fassbinder probably liked how *A Degree of Murder* broke with the past. Schlöndorff used the success of *Young Törless* as a springboard to introduce, with his second film, a new element of pop culture visual splashiness into the German film." A big hit upon its release among Swinging Sixties types, which is largely due to the fact that the Rolling Stones founder/Pallenberg's-then-boyfriend Brian Jones composed a shockingly good original soundtrack for the film that would be the sole solo album of the tragic musician's career (though Jimmy Page and various other musicians would also play on the album), *A Degree of Murder* has essentially fallen into the ash heap of celluloid history, which largely has to do with the fact that neither the film nor soundtrack have ever been released in any official home media formats. For better or worse, a work heavily influenced by auteur Schlöndorff's experience work during the early 1960s as an assistant director on films directed by top directors of the French New Wave (Louis Malle gave him his first job and he would go on to work with Alain Resnais and Jean-Pierre Melville), *A Degree of Murder* is indubitably one of the most important and revolutionary works of early German New Cinema as a sort of Teutonic counter-culture take on François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962) meets Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande à part* (1964) aka *Band of Outsiders*, albeit much more nihilistic and pessimistic

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as a work that wallows in the pathological alienation of post-WWII Germany.

Munich-based waitress Jean (Anita Pallenberg) is not exactly the most intelligent girl in the world and her vapid personality, apathetic attitude, and annoying ditzy yet bitchy demeanor do not exactly help her case in terms of being a woman that men would want to be around, yet she is reasonably beautiful and statuesque in appearance, so she has no problem attracting men, especially of the passive cuckold sort. One day, Jean's ex-boyfriend Günther (Hans Peter Hallwachs) shows up to her apartment to collect his personal belongings and while the dumb dame initially refuses him entry, she eventually lets him in after he appeals to her narcissism regarding the perfume she is wearing. A reasonable fellow, Günther wants to have sex with Jean one more time before they leave each other's lives forever, but the erratic ex-girlfriend disagrees. Annoyed at Jean's refusal to partake in breakup sex, Günther begins to get physical and the little lady pulls out a revolver, which the ex-boyfriend ironically gave to her for her birthday, and points it at her ex-beau. While Jean finally calms down, Günther becomes enraged that she would try to pull on a gun at him, so he attempts to hurl a wine bottle at her and she logically returns fire with a bullet. A self-absorbed bitch that only cares about herself and her already dubious reputation, Jean refuses wounded Günther's pleas to take him to the hospital and she even yells at him for making noise that the neighbors might hear. After Jean halfheartedly claims her innocence by stating, "I didn't really mean to do it, honestly" and acting pseudo-maternally by saying, "Come on, I'll put you to bed" as opposed to taking her critically wounded ex to the hospital like a normal person, Günther naturally drops dead. Although she is borderline half-retarded, Jean is at least wise enough to know not to call 911 at this point and instead opts for playing female fatale. Indeed, Jean gets all dolled up, puts on a pair of sunglasses to ostensibly hide her identity, and goes to a local bar where she meets a dude named Hans (Werner Enke) who she offers \$500 to "do something easy" (aka help dispose the body of Günther). Although a bit hesitant at first, Hans is ultimately convinced after Jean attempts to flatter him, stating BS to him like, "The minute I saw you come in, I said to myself, 'That is a man you can depend on'." After going back to the waitress' apartment, Jean and Hans have naughty sex next to Günther's bloody corpse. Since they do not have a driver to transport the corpse in, Hans borrows a car from his work and recruits his friend Fritz (Manfred Fischbeck) to drive.

After wrapping up the corpse in a fancy rug and getting past a nosey neighbor sporting a traditional Bavarian hat, Fritz drives Jean, Hans, and Günther's deteriorating body to the country but, of course, on the way, their car breaks down. After reaching a gas station and getting their car fixed, *A Degree of Murders* turns into an anti-Heimat/road trip hybrid of sorts. Ultimately, the ménage à trios dumps Günther's corpse at a road construction site on the Autobahn and Jean says, "so long" to her dead boy toy. After dropping the dead dude, the three

hapless proto-hippies hang out at Fritz's aunt's country home. After talking with a good-humored hillbilly he knows and seeing a farmer finger picking wax out of his ears while riding on his tractor, city boy Fritz complains regarding his kin-folk, "I'll never understand how they stand it here...get fat and work and sleep." On their way back to Munich, Hans throws the murder weapon out the window of the car and the three degenerates subsequently almost get in a car crash after Fritz tailgates a dump truck full of gravel. In the process of almost dying via car crash, their windshield is partly knocked out and they bump into another car on the road in the process, thereupon causing scratch on some anally retentive snob's car. Of course, Fritz pulls off the road and he confronts the bourgeois family whose car they barely grazed and pays them for their troubles. Jean gets in a bitch fight with the posh woman in the car, who states, "You should have children but your kind will do anything to avoid it," to which the murderess replies, "with a face like that you're lucky you even found a man." After Fritz smashes out the rest of the car windshield, Hans has a hissy fit and the two get into a sissy fight involving smacking and, in the pointless skirmish, they lose the money Jean has given them for helping to dispose of the corpse, thereupon being accessories to murder for nothing. Of course, Hans and Fritz soon make up and agree regarding their philosophy to life, "Just keep on going...live fast, die young, and have a good looking corpse." When the three get back to Munich, they stop by Jean's place first and say their goodbyes. Although Jean tells Fritz that she has feelings for him, he is not interested and gives the following excuse, "Yeah, you're alright too, but there's no point in it. I'm kind of restless, you know? I've gotta' keep trying something different." In the end, *A Degree of Murder* concludes with Jean smiling like a ditz at a bar while flirting with ugly losers, along with a darkly humorous shot of a crane carrying Günther's bullet-ridden body.

Although auteur Volker Schlöndorff would describe *A Degree of Murder* as being influenced by "American action movies of the thirties," albeit with "no great dramatic conflicts," the film is ultimately a multi-genre-convention-breaking work of intentionally lackluster celluloid hipsterdom, or as the director himself stated regarding his intent, "I was interested in the discontinuity. At first, there is a murder, then there's laughing again. The basic idea is the surprise assault against traditional biases. There no longer is a five-week mourning period." Indeed, like many early French New Wave flicks and the early films of Fassbinder, *A Degree of Murder* feels like a playful piece of cinephile diletantism directed by a then-semi-subversive auteur who had yet to become the Hollywoodized artisan that his later superlatively superficial and intolerably formulaic works would demonstrate. Although certainly no masterpiece, *A Degree of Murder* is easily one of Schlöndorff's most iconoclastic works, though Baal (1970) certainly goes a bit further in terms of cinematic experimentation and anarchistic themes. Aside from inspiring Fassbinder, *A Degree of Murder*—with

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its 'alienation nation' themes, crude counter-culture aesthetics, and deconstruction of the genre—would go on to inspire a number of German filmmakers, most notably Klaus Lemke (*48 Stunden bis Acapulco* aka *48 Hours to Acapulco*, Paul) and Rudolf Thome's cult flicks *Detektive* (1969) and *Rote Sonne* (1970) aka *Red Sun*, as well as possibly Eckhart Schmidt's first feature *Jet Generation - Wie Mädchen heute Männer lieben* (1968), which was released the same year. In its damning depiction of everyday Germans throwing the corpses of their loved ones away as if they were rancid maggot-infested trash, *A Degree of Murder* also brings to mind lone-wolf auteur Roland Klick's early masterpiece aka *Bübchen* (1968) aka *Der kleine Vampir* aka *The Little Vampire*. Of course, *A Degree of Murder* would also sire a much more famous and superior British brother film entitled *Performance* (1970) co-directed by Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg which, on top of featuring Anita Pallenberg as a wild and wanton woman who manipulates men with her flesh, also features members of the Rolling Stones, albeit this time Mick Jagger (who was apparently screwing Keith Richard's girlfriend Pallenberg at the time, thus aborting what was originally suppose to be a soundtrack by all the members of *The Rolling Stones*). While I would argue that *Performance* is the ultimate counter-culture flick and a cinematic masterpiece of sorts, *A Degree of Murder* is more of a nice little celluloid novelty and footnote of German cinema history, though I must admit that I much preferred Brian Jones' score to the one created by Jagger from Cammell's dark masterpiece.

In an interview with director Volker Schlöndorff, the filmmaker described his collaboration with Brian Jones on *A Degree of Murder* as follows: "When the editing was done, Brian came back to Munich and sat in the editing room with me as we discussed, just as with any other professional movie composer, where to put music and what kind of music. It was just the true story of a girl who accidentally kills her boyfriend with his own gun, but instead of going to the police she hires two men for a few hundred marks to drive the corpse to the country where they bury him in the construction site of an autobahn. No moral implications, no guilt trips. It's more like an outing on a beautiful autumn day. Brian's score then was to provide a reflection of those rather callous feelings, while somehow managing to hint that of course she was mourning her boyfriend's death." Indeed, Jones' score is undoubtedly one of the film's greatest attributes as a combination of jubilant and upbeat instrumental jingles with a tinge of melancholy and dissonance thrown in good for measure, thus being quite reflective of its warped zeitgeist where peace and free love lingered on the outside but with a dark rotting heart at the center of things. A postmodern pastiche piece in the counter-culture spirit featuring Hitchcock's dark humor (especially *Rope* (1948) and *The Trouble with Harry* (1955)), French Nouvelle Vague-inspired nods to Hollywood film noir/crime flicks, aesthetic and thematic influences from Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), and small elements of the anti-Heimat films that would become trendy during the late-1960s/early-

1970s (with director Schlöndorff directing a couple of these films, with the most ambitious being *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) aka *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*), *A Degree of Murder* was certainly upon its release, “in every respect the youngest of all Young German cinema films,” as it was once described by a film critic. Essentially one big mockery of counter-culture crud that was ironically made for said counter-culture crud, *A Degree of Murder* depicts a nation in the early stage of being on the brink of a cultural civil war, with the 68er-Bewegung student movement and later far-left groups like the Baader-Meinhof Gang appearing after the film was released. Indeed, director Volker Schlöndorff may be a misguided leftist idealist but *A Degree of Murder* demonstrates that he understood the German youth of his age were morally retarded nincompoops who would nihilistically kill and gladly follow stupid chicks with nice tits to slaughterhouses.

-Ty E

BAAL
BAAL

Volker Schlöndorff (1970)

I have never been much of a Volker Schlöndorff (*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, *The Handmaid's Tale*) fan nor his mostly superficial and obscenely sentimental quasi-communist consumer-g geared films, but one of his films, *Baal* (1970)—a modern reworking of kraut commie Bertolt Brecht's 1923 play of the same name set in late-1960s Munich and starring a rather young leather-clad Rainer Werner Fassbinder as the eponymous antihero—has been at the top of my mental list of most-wanted films for some time. Rather unfortunately, *Baal* had been out of circulation for over 40 years because Bertolt Brecht's kosher cunt of a widow Helene Weigel, who owned the rights to her dead shegetz hubby's work, found Fassbinder's performance "dreadful" and had the film immediately banned. In fact, Weigel had the gall to state of Fassbinder's performance, "If he thinks that a leather jacket and a cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth makes him like Brecht...!", as if her bolshy beau Bert was some sort of handsome rebel as opposed to an archetypical pencil-necked, four-eyed Dinaric dork. Indeed, catching the premiere of *Baal* when it was screened for the first (and ultimately last) time on April 21, 1970 on West German television, Weigel wasted no time in calling the proper authorities on the very same night and used her legal authority to have the film stashed away in a vault indefinitely, as if the film had been adapted by naughty National Socialist Veit Harlan. While Weigel dropped dead the next year, it would not be until her daughter Barbara Schall-Brecht, who took over the rights to father's work, came to the conclusion that Fassbinder is probably now more popular than her father and sent an e-mail to Juliane Lorenz—head of the Fassbinder's Foundation—in 2011 reading, "The reputation of W. Fassbinder is indeed very big. I would now allow the film to be released on DVD." Flash forward to March 2014 and *Baal*—the virtual 'Holy Grail of German New Cinema'—has finally been released to the general public, at least in Germany. Created when Fassbinder was only 24 and his first feature-length film *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) had just received a less than outstanding ovation at the Berlinale (sneering audience members accused Fassbinder and star Ulli Lommel of being "dilettantes") *Baal* is, at least in my less than humble opinion, a true lost masterpiece and quite arguably the greatest and most artistically ambitious film Herr Schlöndorff ever directed. Indeed, shot for television on a meager budget of 160,000 German marks (which was less than half of what was typically spent on TV productions back then), *Baal* is a visceral vice-ridden piece of decidedly decadent avant-garde delirium where Brecht meets counter-culture meets anti-Heimat that demonstrates for once and all that Schlöndorff has more artistic integrity than most of his post-*The Tin Drum* (1969) works would indicate. A sort of artistic rebellion on Schlöndorff's part, or as he described in Fassbinder's memorial essay *It Doesn't Pay To Be*

Nice: "I had just failed in MICHAEL KOHLHAAS with a large American production and wanted out of the structures of the movie industry. In protest, I filmed Baal with a 16mm handheld camera, almost entirely with nonprofessionals, without well-known actors," Baal is a wildly poetic and even wicked work that manages to capture everything that was 'great' about the counter-culture generation, namely its supposed individualism and dedication to artistic experimentation. Starring Fassbinder as the eponymous lead in a role based on a play that his Danish filmmaker friend Christian Braad Thomsen summed up as being as follows, "Brecht's portrait... is an astonishingly accurate picture of Fassbinder. Baal is a celebrated poet who does not feel at ease in polite society. He's a loner, a wandering troubadour who prefers bars and the open sky to literary salons. He is strangely attractive to both men and women, who commit suicide because of him. His honesty can be brutal and cold and yet people like his company," Baal is an eerily prophetic work featuring the Teutonic wunderkind in a pre-fame performance as a sort of demonic dandy (hence the title of the film!) who, like the actor/auteur himself, died a lonely death that was nothing if not inevitable.

A late-expressionist work heavily influenced by the proto-Romantic Teutonic Sturm und Drang literary tradition, Brecht's Baal (which was written in 1918 but did not make its theatrical debut until 1923) is notable for not only being the playwright's first feature-length play but also a work created before the communist theatre practitioner developed the dramaturgical techniques of epic theatre that he is best known for, thus ultimately making for a more apolitical and intriguing work. Of course, Schlöndorff's Baal is innately political as a penetrating piece of thematically and aesthetically subversive counter-culture iconoclasm that features everything from a mockery of Warhol's Campbell's soup cans and proto-Nazisploitation elements (in one scene a topless stripper dances on stage while wearing a Nazi officer's hat), but luckily it does not resort to the sentimental Hollywoodized leftist celluloid twaddle that would plague most of the director's subsequent films. Shot by the director on a handheld 16mm camera with a foggy Maddin-esque lens (thus giving the film an ethereal and even otherworldly feel), Baal looks like no other Schlöndorff film that I have ever seen, as an avant-garde work with an ideally idiosyncratic aesthetic that falls somewhere between Kenneth Anger's Scorpio Rising (1964), Dennis Hopper's Easy Rider (1969), and Fassbinder's very own Berlin Alexanderplatz (1980). Despite Schlöndorff's surprisingly raw and striking direction, Fassbinder is undoubtedly the 'secondary auteur' of Baal, as his absurdist Artaudian acting antics are just as an important ingredient as the spacey camera work and quasi-oneiric tableaux.

Beginning with Fassbinder as Baal strolling down a dirt trail with a sort of discernible defiant swag that tells you he does not give a shit about anyone as a The Doors-esque psychedelic rock song composed by Klaus Doldinger (Das Boot, The Neverending Story) with lyrics like, "To the bloated vultures Baal squints up, as they circle high above a corpse called Baal, sometimes Baal plays dead,

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vultures land to eat, Baal dines in silence on vulture meat” plays triumphantly in the background, Baal immediately lets the viewer know they are in store for unadulterated kraut counter-counter angst and anarchy. Baal is a born anarchist and sexual outlaw who proudly proclaims the following personal Weltanschauung, “You have to let out the beast, let him out into the sunlight.” In a scene that looks sort of like it could have been taken from Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), Baal goes to a bourgeois party at an art salon in tribute to his poetry, but he has nil interest in being published and is just there to eat the fine cuisine, even telling admirers that he lives on ‘64 Sewer Street’ (he actually lives in an ancient attic that looks like something out of a Slavic horror film) and couldn’t care less about being published. With kitschy modern art in the form of an Adolf Hitler stamp collage and crappy Warhol-esque Campbell’s soup can paintings on the wall, Baal is not exactly digging the vibe of the place and when a rather rotund gentleman (Walter Sedlmayr) patronizingly remarks, “Ladies and gentlemen, I admit I am shocked to find such a man living in such modest circumstances. I discovered this maestro as an employee in my office. I’m not scared to say it’s a scandal for our town, to have such luminaries working for a daily wage.” After being told by some young dork that his poetry is ‘Homeric’ and that he is a “precursor of the European poetry messiah,” Baal proceeds to hit on a chick named Emilie (Miriam Spoerri), who also happens to be the wife of Mech (Günther Neutze), the owner of the art salon and the man who planned to publish the impoverished poet’s work. Needless to say Baal ruins his chances of getting published, but as tells the character played by Sedlmayr, “I can’t help it if you ply me with wine. Must I swallow your nonsense so I can fill my belly?” and at least Emilie comes to see him later that night at his favorite seedy bar where he reads degenerate scatological poetry to truckers. Indeed, with a certain deranged glee, Baal reads the following grotesque lines to his prole follows: “Orge said to me the dearest place on Earth for him was always the latrine. A place where one is content with stars above, and dung below. A place of humility, where you realize that you’re just a man who can’t keep anything. There you recognize what you are, a man who’s munching on the latrine.” A born sadist who worships sexual deviance, Baal tortures Emilie by forcing her to kiss a Negro trucker (played by Günther Kaufmann, whom Fassbinder first met on the set of *Baal* and with whom he soon started a torrid one-sided romance) and when his young friend Johannes (Marian Seidowsky) brings his 17-year-old virgin girlfriend Johanna (Irmgard Paulis) to the bar, the poet begins persecuting the unsuspecting young girl. Naturally, being a proud defiler, Baal, who previously told his friend to not take away the virginity of his young girlfriend, steals Johanna from Johannes and deflowers the naïve young girl. The next day Baal learns from two chicks that he is about to have a threesome with that Johanna committed suicide by jumping into a river. Not one to cry over spilt milk, Baal soon acquires a new sex object named Sophie (Margarethe von Trotta) who he actually professes his love to

and soon impregnates. Of course, being a debauched bisexual, Baal eventually throws her away for a man.

Reasonably impoverished, Baal ironically begins working as a woodcutter, going from a man whose words could have been printed on paper derived from the very same wood he cuts down had he not intentionally burned all his bridges and screwed up his publishing deal with Mech. One day while reasonably drunk on Schnapps (which is the dipsomaniac antihero's drug of choice) and a nasty dose of narcissism, Baal rather rudely plays with the corpse of a man named Teddy who was killed after a tree ostensibly fell on him, though the other woodcutters have their suspicions and the pernicious poet is soon out of his job. Now joined by his Jesus-like comrade Ekart (played by Sigi Graue, who previously starred in films directed by Kluge and Syberberg), Baal ditches pregnant Sophie, who is still in love with the sadistic scribbler despite his physically and emotionally abusive behavior against her. Ekart offers to help Sophie, but Baal ultimately rules, thus leaving the little lady in the lurch. Like two drunk pervert prophets, Ekart and Baal, who are a sort of a Teutonic Rimbaud and Verlaine, roam the countryside, with the latter eventually raping the girlfriend (played by Werner Schroeter superstar Carla Egerer). Later, when Baal and Ekart go back to their favorite bar where Sophie now works as a waitress, things take a terribly tragic turn for the worst. After catching Ekart and Sophie kissing, Baal attacks his comrade as he declares his quasi-homoerotic love (with Ekart proclaiming, "am I not your lover?"). Needless to say, jealous Baal kills Ekart by cowardly stabbing him in the gut just before Sophie attempts to break the two men apart. A fugitive murderer with his best friend's blood covering his clothes, Baal once again heads to the woods where he falls ill from what seems to be a metaphysical affliction. While dying a dubious and pathetic death, Baal is mocked by the prole woodcutters he once worked with. When the woodcutters find Baal's corpse in a bush outside, one states, "Gone to the dogs. That's really something. Going out to die like that. Hats off!" in a scene of pure tragicomedy.

In his Fassbinder memorial essay *It Doesn't Pay to Be Nice*, Volker Schlöndorff wrote regarding the star of Baal: "It isn't easy for me to write about RWF, because he always was a challenge to me. Even physically. I eat and drink in moderation, never took drugs, and before writing this, I climbed over the fence of a sports field to run my 4000 meters. We could not have been more different from one another." Indeed, while watching Baal, you can easily see that Fassbinder's domineering attitude and brazen persona have hijacked Herr Schlöndorff's production. Ironically, despite Fassbinder's clear physical and spiritual dominance over Baal, the actor/director partly agreed to star in the film as a means to learn how to direct, as well as to teach the members of his Anti-Theater (antiteater) to learn how to work on a film set, or as Schlöndorff wrote: "Almost all the supporting parts were played by people of his group. I took over his cameraman, Dietrich Lohmann, and even a few members of his crew. He wanted

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to turn them into professionals and asked me to hire them. As paid help, so to speak. Now I understood much better what he had in mind, for most of them didn't have a clue, not about acting or about filmmaking." Although Fassbinder would later have a small role in Schlöndorff's made-for-TV anti-Heimat film *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) aka *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, the two would not work together again until nearly ten years later when they both collaborated on the omnibus film *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978) aka *Germany in Autumn*, with the elder director stating of his experience working with real-life Baal on the terrorism-themed film: "Together with Margarethe, I had been the one who had visited prisons, joined Red Help and committees on solitary confinement, etc. But it was he who felt persecuted and acted it out in the movie. At the time, I found this rather unpolitical and egocentric. Later I understood that having spent ten years living on the edge of German law, he knew more about persecution and antisocial behavior in the sense of Genet than I did with my highly respectable protest attitude." Indeed, despite the ostensibly 'edgy' and 'revolutionary' nature of most of Schlöndorff's German films, I have always found most of them rather tame, conspicuously contrived, and calculatingly formulaic, hence why he went on to work in Hollywood. As a hopeless hater of dork Bolshevik Brecht and a sometimes detractor of Schlöndorff, I can say without the slightest bit of hesitation that I think Baal is a lost masterpiece that is actually deserving of its reputation, but I must admit that I think Fassbinder is owed the greatest debt in terms of the spirit and overall integrity of the work. A film that makes the perfect double feature along with *Kamikaze 1989* (1982), which featured the auteur in his last screen appearance in which he put on more than a little bit of weight, Baal is a sort of announcement of Fassbinder's belligerent blitzkrieg-like arrival in the cinema world and just like the eponymous antihero, the filmmaker would leave this world just as abruptly as he arrived, but not without leaving a couple bodies behind (to Fassbinder's credit, while Baal only inspired one suicide, he inspired at least two). Featuring countless highly quotable lines like, "Jesus loved evil" and "I see the world in a mild light. It is the excrement of dear God," as spoken by Fassbinder's girlish lips, Baal is Brecht with an actual soul, which is certainly no small achievement. Indeed, compare Fassbinder's performance to that of David Bowie in Alan Clarke's BBC-produced Baal (1982) and you will witness the difference between visceral untamed genius and carefully choreographed neo-dandy dilettantism. While Fassbinder might be long dead, the world is just catching up with his work and there is probably no better introduction to the auteur's marvelous and seductive, if not unflattering, persona than in Baal—the greatest film you have never seen and easily one of the most important works of German New Cinema.

-Ty E

THE SUDDEN WEALTH OF THE POOR PEOPLE OF KOMBACH

Volker Schlöndorff (1971)

In his revolutionary cineaste book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974), American film critic Amos Vogel wrote regarding West German auteur Volker Schlöndorff's subversive TV Movie *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* (1971) aka *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach*, "An excellent example of a particularly interesting new genre of young German cinema; bizarre, deadly serious variations on the reactionary German "Heimat" films of yore – those insufferable, sentimental "kitsch" prosodies to Fatherland, Soil, and Family. This fully realized work effectively upsets this tradition by recounting a tale of oppressed 19th-century German peasants who become rebels against the state out of poverty, revealing (instead of romanticizing) the brutal degradation of German rural life at the time. Particularly audacious is the presence of an itinerant Jew peddler as mastermind (!) of the conspiracy, predictably leading to (unfounded) charges of anti-semitism against a young director who has dared to reintroduce the Jew into German dramaturgy." Indeed, being a Viennese-born Jew himself who got the hell of Austria after the Nazi Anschluss in 1938, Vogel most certainly had a special sensitivity regarding all things Jewish and German and his remark about the nationalistic Heimat film speaks loud and clear regarding his feelings toward Teutonic unity, so it should be no surprise that the films of Volker Schlöndorff (*Young Törless*, *The Tin Drum*)—an ethno-masochistic kraut and flagrant Francophile who has spent a good portion of his filmmaking career promoting feminism and far-left politics, as well as cinematically denigrating his own nation and people—would catch his fancy. Following in the anti-Heimat trend popular among West German far-leftist filmmakers, which began with *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* directed by Peter Fleischmann and including works like *Nachtschatten* (1972) aka *Nightshade* directed by Niklaus Schilling and *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas* directed by Werner Herzog, *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* essentially demystifies German history from a materialistic quasi-Marxist angle, depicting nineteenth-century Teutonic peasant life as innately miserable, hard work as evil (a false assumption undoubtedly inspired by Marx's Jewish background as recognized by Oswald Spengler), and government and the state as being ruled by slave-driving proto-fascist sadists. Starring a number of important auteur filmmakers of German New Cinema, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*The Marriage of Maria Braun*, *Querelle*), Margarethe von Trotta (*Rosa Luxemburg*, *Hannah Arendt*), Reinhard Hauff (*Knife in the Head*, *Stammheim - Die Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe vor Gericht*), *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* features an outmoded stoner-inspired Krautrock-like score, whiny men with horrendous hippie haircuts, and a cookie-cutter 68er-Bewegung message that was certainly made to appeal to even the most braindead

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of drug-addled degenerates belonging to the kraut counter-culture movement. The story of a junk-peddling Jew of the proto-Bolshevik variety who concocts a clever criminal conspiracy to rob a government carriage containing tax money in the forests of the Hessian hinterland and convinces a bunch of uneducated German peasant farmers, laborers, and soldiers to help him do the majority of the dirty work as any sensible chosenite would, *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* is a sort of allegorical Trotskyite fairytale loosely based on a true story that ends in tragedy where the Germans ultimately die by the sword due to their affinity for Teutonic land and incapacity for deracinating themselves, but the rootless cosmopolitan Judaic manages to get away scot-free and make his way to America.

It is Fall 1821 and while cutting the grass for some rich portly fellow and minding his own business, blond Aryan superman Jacob Geiz (Karl-Josef Cramer) is approached by a religious Jewish peddler named David Briel (Wolfgang Bächler) who calculatedly states, "Jacob, I know a way to help both of us if we can get some trusty people" and, like the devil himself, tells him of his criminal plot to rob a carriage carrying tax money through the Hessian forests. Jacob agrees and gets his farmer father Hans-Jacob (Georg Lehn), brother Heinrich (far-left filmmaker Reinhard Hauff), farmer friend Johannes Soldan (Harald Müller), as well as two laborers Ludwig Acker (Harry Owen) and Jošt Wege and a soldier to join the outfit. While all men are poor and need the money, especially due to a rise in taxes, many of them have their own personal reasons for joining. For example, Heinrich Geiz had a baby out of wedlock with a gal named Sophie (Margarethe von Trotta), but cannot afford to pay for a wedding and the soldier is in a similar boat. The Geiz family is also more broke than usual due to a bad season for crops. As narrated by an off-screen Marxist-trained female narrator, the peasants "kept ignorant throughout the centuries, and they were unable to see the cause of their misery. Only emigration to the New World, poaching, or treasure hunting were seen as a way out of poverty," and sophisticated Semite David Briel gives them hope by reading them a letter from a Jewish friend in America that absurdly reads, "America is the land of milk and honey. The cows are grazing on evergreen meadows. You find honey in hollow trees. You can have as many cattle as you want. You don't have to get food from them, only in the winter. And the land is so good, you don't need any fertilizer. You can grow anything every year after plowing it up, that's enough. And it's not like in Germany where they take away what little you've got in taxes and whatnot. Here the farmer is his own master. We eat more meat than you eat bread, and drink coffee and wine like you drink water. Milwaukee, 1821." Of course, as time will tell, unlike the wandering Jew, the kraut proletarians have an innate incapacity from uprooting themselves from their land and immigrating to the lovely land of milk and honey.

The conspirators make their first attempt at robbing the tax carriage on Christ-

mas night 1821, but the snow causes them to fail. The men fail/abort attempting to pull off the robbery a number of other times as well, including after coming to the realization that there is no money inside the carriage, after spotting too many soldiers guarding the carriage, and getting stuck in a thick mist that blinds their vision, etc. Eventually, everyone decides to abandon the master plan, but they decide to give it another retry and finally succeed, acting rather humanely in the process, making the mistake of sparing the lives of the soldiers and the man driving the carriage. Much more clever than his goy kraut criminal compatriots, David Briel warns the German peasants not to go around spending the money right away as it will look suspicious to the authorities being that poor men do not have money to purchase expensive things, poetically preaching, "How beautiful is the world. So they built a house, put in chairs and tables, and a kitchen with a fireplace where you can find coffee, milk and sugar and beautiful plates, and that's all of it for us! It's just like a fairytale. Just you beware. Think of the golden ass!", but they naturally do not take heed of the Hebrew's wise words. Heinrich has a large wedding with a grand feast, which makes everyone in Kombach suspicious. A Gestapo-esque judge named Richter Danz (Wilhelm Grasshoff) is brought in to solve the mystery of the tax carriage robbery and immediately assumes it was committed by peasants and puts a look out for any poor person spending big bucks. Danz also offers an award of 300 guilders to anyone who provides evidence leading to an arrest and after Jacob Geiz makes the inevitably fatal mistake of giving a couple coins to a starving elderly man, the old man pays back him back by immediately going to the judge for the award money and tattles on the young altruistic farmer. Eventually Jacob and his brother and father are arrested, but admit nothing to Danz. A perennial coward in the face of fear, Ludwig Acker soon turns himself in and confesses everything, thereupon incriminating all his comrades in the process. Before they can be tried and convicted, two of the men commit the unpardonable sin of suicide, one by hanging and the other by firearm. In order to end their lives with the last rites, repentant and in a state of grace, the men also confess where the bank robbery money is hidden, except for Heinrich, who fights with his brother and father, who attempt to get him to repent. Heinrich also physically assaults the judge during the trial after being sentenced to death while cowardly friends and family watch in an exceedingly impotent fashion. When his wife Sophie tries to get him to repent, Heinrich proclaims like a true Marxist martyr that he refuses to because, "That's how they break you." In the end, the men are executed by being decapitated via sword, but before he "dies like a man" (as indicated by the narrator), Heinrich states, "Like my life will be torn, so must you be torn," thereupon figuratively spitting in the faces of his executioners.

Out of all the characters featured in *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, only Jewish conman David Briel gets away, concluding regarding the whole ordeal, "The money made me free. The farmers couldn't use the money

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because they only knew their land. When they touch the land, they know if it's good for potatoes or corn. But when they touch money, they don't know how to handle it. They can't show it, because a poor man with money is suspect. And a farmer can't go to another place, because his land won't follow him and he fears what he doesn't know. But I am free. I have no home or land to hold me. I got where I want to go. The New World is waiting for me. New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Mississippi, New Orleans, Florida, Buffalo, Arizona, Ohio, Texas, Arkansas..." Undoubtedly, judging by the character of David Briel, it would not be a stretch to conclude that Volker Schlöndorff is a groveling philo-Semite who seems to believe that Jews make the ultimate political revolutionaries due to their innate rootlessness and lack of attachment to German soil and culture, which is at least one thing I can agree with him on. Of course, it is easy to see why some critics found Schlöndorff and his work *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* to be anti-Semitic as the film essentially makes the same argument as the Nazis regarding the subversive/criminal nature of Jews and their treachery towards host nations, the difference being that the director respects them for this as opposed to hating them. As Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who ironically has a cameo in *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, once infamously stated, "philosemitism is anti-Semites who loves Jews," which can certainly be said of Volker Schlöndorff and his ex-wife Margarethe von Trotta, whose works *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986), *Rosenstrasse* (2003), and *Hannah Arendt* (2012) are easily some of the most shabby goy-esque cinematic works ever made.

As mentioned in *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, about 1/10 of the Hessian population left Germany in the nineteenth-century, a good percentage of which immigrated to the United States and shed their Teutonic identities forever. In fact, despite not being common knowledge, according to 2009 census studies, 50 million Americans (17.1% of the American population), myself included, are of German extraction, thus making them the largest ancestry group in the country, even ahead of the Scots-Irish. The fact that despite being the majority population, German Americans have fully assimilated into America and have all but totally disappeared in the white population just goes to show the deracinating power of the United States, thus one can argue that there is something distinctly Jewish about America, which is hinted at in *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* and is further supported by the fact that America has the largest Hebraic population in the world and is the largest supporter of Israel. Of course, America is essentially a cultureless and materialistic nation with a mostly peasant collective. With *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach*, director Volker Schlöndorff, who undoubtedly has a materialistic Marxist view of history, reduces nationhood and religion to nothing more than slavery, presenting it as a sort of figurative ball-and-chain, completely ignoring the beauty of blood and soil, but also culture and tradition.

In fact, *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach* depicts religious people as moronic and superstitious *untermensch*, on top of portraying peasants as savage wife-beaters and rapists. Of course, America has never produced a Martin Luther, Goethe, Nietzsche, Beethoven, Murnau, or even Herzog, as such a mongrelized 'multicultural' country lacks organic culture material to sire such greatness. As the Great Sicilian Baron Julius Evola once write, "America ... has created a 'civilization' that represents an exact contradiction of the ancient European tradition. It has introduced the religion of praxis and productivity; it has put the quest for profit, great industrial production, and mechanical, visible, and quantitative achievements over any other interest. It has generated a soulless greatness of a purely technological and collective nature, lacking any background of transcendence, inner light, and true spirituality. America has [built a society where] man becomes a mere instrument of production and material productivity within a conformist social conglomerate." Taking the magical Baron's quote into consideration, the greatest irony regarding Volker Schlöndorff and his film-making career is that, despite his worship of materialism and lifelong cinematic denigration of his German Fatherland, he could never have made a film like *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach* outside of Europe. Maybe it's my partial peasant blood talking, but it is also very doubtful that a peasant would direct a film like *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach* where their entire existence is reduced to miserable serfdom. After all, it is usually members of the bourgeois like Karl Marx himself, who never worked a single day in his life, that treats work as an unholy sin. A sort of insipidly idealistic 'red Robin Hood and his less than Merry Marxist Men' in the bleeding heart anti-Heimat vein, *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach* is undoubtedly well crafted and even engrossing, if not for all the wrong reasons as a work that incriminates the Jew in its flagrant philo-Semitism, thus making it interesting to rightists as well as leftists. If one learns anything from *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Korbach*, it is that following the lead of a subversive Hebrew might lead to your destruction.

-Ty E

A FREE WOMAN
A FREE WOMAN

Volker Schlöndorff (1972)

In 1970, German auteur Volker Schlöndorff (Young Törless, The Tin Drum) directed would-be-actress Margarethe von Trotta in his masterful Baal adaptation starring Rainer Werner Fassbinder and a year later he would marry her, thus ultimately cuckolding himself as both a man and a filmmaker. Indeed, after the auteur directed his made-for-TV spaghetti western inspired anti-Heimat film The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach (1970), virtually all of his films from then on until the mid-1970s revolved around his wife, with their last major work together being the pro-bolshevik period piece Coup de Grâce (1976). By giving von Trotta the opportunity to co-direct The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum (1975), which was the first big mainstream hit for both the directors and German New Cinema in general, Schlöndorff enabled his wife to establish herself as a filmmaker, thus she, as a proud feminist, no longer needed her hubby to further her career. Out of all the films the two collaborated on together, none better epitomizes Schlöndorff's innate emasculation and artistic cuckoldry than A Free Woman (1972) aka Strohfeuer aka Summer Lightning, which is quite ironic considering it is one of the director's most unconventional and least literary oriented works. Co-written by and starring von Trotta in a semi-autobiographical work loosely based on the ugly aftermath of her first failed marriage, A Free Woman is a hopelessly bourgeois feminist flick that might as well have been directed by the star herself as it resembles her early mundane melodramas. Luckily, due to her reasonably good looks and seemingly authentic portrayal of a disgruntled dame, A Free Woman does not reach the intolerable level of 'broad power' banality that plagues most of the actress-turned-director's works. Of course, the film also seems less phony and ethno-masochistic because, unlike films like Rosa Luxemburg (1986), Rosenstrasse (2003), and Hannah Arendt (2012) where the director preposterously attempted to put herself in the Hebraic shoes of Jewesses, A Free Woman is a discernibly honest expression of von Trotta's vulnerability and not a dubious piece of heavy-handed humanistic posturing. Undoubtedly, the film will seem rather ridiculous to many modern viewers, as the prospect of a woman ending up on the losing side of divorce nowadays seems about as likely as the Congo turning into a world power or Ireland colonizing Europe. Shot in a naturalistic and sometimes even documentary-like style typical of early works by kraut feminist filmmakers like Helma Sanders-Brahms and Helke Sander, albeit minus most of the agitprop elements, A Free Woman is undoubtedly one of the most softcore feminist films ever made, thus making it an all-around less repugnant work that seems like it was created by semi-reasonable people. Indeed, if one were to compare all the problems von Trotta's character in the film faces to the reality of how the legal system favors women today; one would think the feminist dream has been fully realized. After all, how else could one explain

how a director as consistently banal and vapid has gone on to become one of the most famous directors in Germany, as well as one of the most revered female auteur filmmakers in the entire world, yet one of the major themes of *A Free Woman* is how artistic institutions are purportedly male-dominated.

As demonstrated by the fact that she peddles to divorce court on a bicycle while wearing high heels and ultimately arrives late as a result, Elisabeth Junker (Margarethe von Trotta) does not exactly make the most sensible of decisions. As she admits herself, Elisabeth's first mistake was marrying when she was far too young. While testifying in court, she confesses that her divorce from her husband Hans-Helmut (Friedhelm Ptok) was solely of her own free will and has nothing to do with abuse or anything of that sort. In fact, while pregnant with her son Niki, Elisabeth temporarily left her husband and began sleeping and living with a swarthy hippie musician named Wolfgang, thus demonstrating Hans-Helmut's humiliating long-standing cuckoldry. Despite everything, Hans-Helmut is still in love with Elisabeth and even after they have officially divorced, he still tries in vain to get her back. Educated as a foreign language correspondence clerk, Elisabeth has not worked since she has been married and basically has to start from scratch in terms of a career. Immediately after her divorce trial, she buys a red wig as a sort of symbolic act of her 'new life' as an ostensibly free woman and begins dating a fairly nice, handsome, and charming red-haired chap named Oskar (Martin Lüttge) who looks like an Aryan lumberjack and makes a reasonably decent living as a civil engineer, yet she suffers from nausea and random barf attacks due to various anxieties, namely relating to the custody of her young son. Elisabeth also suffers the wraith of her mother, who is mad that her daughter made the decision to get a divorce for seemingly no reason. Not exactly the most puritanical of mothers, Elisabeth has no problem talking about sex arguing with her ex-husband, who blames her for ruining his writing career (indeed, before marrying her, he aspired to be a great novelist, but now he is a mere editor), in front of her preschooler son. Due to her lack of experience and dubious work history, Elisabeth first attempts to be a tourist guide for Japanese businessmen but she is not cutout for it and does not like taking photos with strange Jap dudes, so she is forced to take a lowly job as an entry level sales associate at a fancy fur shop run by an annoying queen of a fellow (played by gay Bavarian character actor Walter Sedlmayr, who was violently murdered by two half-brothers in 1990) where she befriends a young homo who writes pornographic stories (a sample of his writing reads as follows: "Now the vagina raped through the gates of hell and primly spread its handle-ends") and has a nasty fur fetish, hence his choice of employment. Meanwhile, Elisabeth takes singing and dancing lessons, as she dreams of starring in a Hollywood musical. In a bizarre black-and-white dream-sequence that is quite unbecoming for a Schlöndorff film that resembles the Swinging Sixties aesthetic meets an Italian Giallo flick (minus the murder, of course), Elisabeth sings the following

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childish lyrics while a literally colorful troupe of multicultural female shoppers dances around her: “Man is man. But woman is not woman. Woman is vamp. Or she is a house wife. Woman is bed bunny. Or she is a rascal. If she’s elegant, then she’s called lady. [...] A woman is never a woman. Only man is man. I don’t want to be a vamp. And certainly no Cinderella. Neither a bed bunny nor a rascal. And a lady I don’t want to be either. I just want to be a woman such as a man can be a man. I just want to be woman.”

While she does not seem to have that great of a relationship with her son, Elisabeth stresses a lot over the fact that Niki lives with her ex-husband. When she discovers a loophole in the law that prevents a man from taking custody of a child that is not biologically his, Elisabeth attempts to talk her ex-boyfriend into lying by making a declaration upon oath that Niki is his son, thus demonstrating her complete and utter lack of morality, as if she is a psychopathic child who will go to any unsavory extreme to get whatever she wants. Meanwhile, Elisabeth and her overweight friend begin frequenting Alte Pinakothek art museum in Munich where they receive free lessons from a rather rotund Leninist feminist art historian (played by real-life Marxist art historian Konrad Farner, who once defended kraut commie playwright Bertolt Brecht due to his support of Stalin) about the historically misogynistic character of western art. For example, Farner uses a late Gothic masterpiece by Masolini of baby Jesus and Mother Mary to prove that “woman is basically a nothing” and that “she has to always remain in the house,” as well as a work by Flemish master Rogier van der Weyden of a woman breastfeeding to prove the ‘passivity in extension’ that women have supposedly suffered under European Christendom. Additionally, Farner shows the women an eponymous 1752 painting by François Boucher of Louis XV of France’s young mistress/baby-momma Marie-Louise O’Murphy and when Elisabeth remarks the subject of the painting, who is totally unclad with her derriere being the most prominent aspect of the painting, has a “dull-witted face,” the art historian replies, “Yes, one could say her face doesn’t really look intelligent, but her bottom was famous. They envied Ludwig XV for this bottom. And all of Paris admired it in the parlor,” thus highlighting the singular semi-cryptic power that women, even of the proletarian pussy-peddling sort, have always wielded over men. Somewhat hilariously, Farner trashes a print created by degenerate French feminist modern artist Niki de Saint Phalle (who once co-directed the film *Daddy* (1973) with Peter Whitehead where she demonstrated her hateful, if not insanely incestuous, feelings for her father) by describing it as a parody of female emancipation. With the help of her ex-husband, Elisabeth manages to get a new job that she actually somewhat enjoys working as a translator at an art gallery. When she goes on a trip with an overweight art dealer named Schmollinger (Austrian-born actor/director Georg Marischka) who, being brainwashed by the whacked writings of Jewish psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, believes he has the god-given right screw any and every woman he wants to

despite being married, Elisabeth faces unwanted sexual advances from the foul fat fellow. On top of her career looking brighter, Elisabeth is also treated to a romantic vacation to Italy from her boyfriend Oskar, whose undying love for her is unquestionable. Ultimately, Elisabeth's ex-husband uses the fact that she is constantly away on trips for work (not to mention the fact she confessed to the law that she was living and sleeping with another man when she was pregnant) as a means to take custody of Niki. To further add salt to Elisabeth's internal wounds, Hans-Helmut is also getting remarried to a kindergarten teacher who the social workers in charge of their case see as an ideal stepmother. In the end, Elisabeth gets married to Oskar, though whether or not the marriage is successful is dubious at best. After all, Schlöndorff and von Trotta's marriage did not last.

Ironically, while auteur Volker Schlöndorff was such an empathetic (aka cuckolded) husband that he directed an entire film dedicated to his wife's pain and struggles during divorce, Margarethe von Trotta would also divorce him a little less than two decades after *A Free Woman* was released. Keeping that in mind, one can only assume that it is probably a film the filmmaker regrets directing, though, I for one, would not mind seeing a sequel, as it would give Schlöndorff the opportunity to direct an artistically authentic work that does not seem like another mere phony literary adaptation like most of his films, especially the more recent ones. The virtual kraut Brechtian feminist equivalent to *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), albeit vaguely more tolerable since von Trotta was more aesthetically pleasing than Meryl Streep was at the time, *A Free Woman* is also, quite strangely, Schlöndorff's closest attempt at directing a Bergman-esque work, which largely has to do with the fact that the film was shot by Swedish master cinematographer Sven Nykvist. It should also be noted that not all the feminists were satisfied with the film, with Hebraic journalist/film critic Marjorie Rosen (author of *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies, & the American Dream*) complaining regarding protagonist Elisabeth's decision to get married again at the end of the film: "by marrying again she makes a peculiar trade—surrendering her independence, her most precious freedom, out of disproportionate concern for friends' momentary discomfort. This suggests that her passivity is simply due to ambivalence, or that at bottom she never wanted the burden of freedom in the first place," as if marriage does not afford many women a rare form of freedom totally unknown to most men where they do not have to waste their greatest years slaving away at a soul-sucking job, among countless other benefits. As for von Trotta's consistent failure with marriage, it probably has to do with the fact that her painter father Alfred Roloff never married her mother (whose aristocratic surname she adopted), thus giving her an 'unconventional' perspective on male-female companionship and marriage. Indeed, as Hans Bernhard Moeller and George L. Lellis wrote in their book *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema: Adaptation, Politics, and the "Movie-Appropriate"* (2002) regarding the lessons

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commie feminist art historian Konrad Farnert gives Elisabeth in *A Free Woman*: “The art historian suggests, perhaps, von Trotta’s own father, who was a painter. Indeed, at one point Elisabeth affectionately tells him that she would love to have had a father like him (a statement that takes on added resonance if one is aware that von Trotta’s father never married her mother).” In my mind, von Trotta’s adoption of feminism as a lifelong *Weltanschauung* and her propensity for getting involved with failed marriages with weak men seems to mostly have to do with the fact that she had a negligent father and not because of some sort of all-powerful institutional patriarchy. In other words, it is not powerful men that made the filmmaker resent men, but feeble fellows who failed to live up to their responsibilities as both husbands and fathers. Indeed, aside from some lady lemmings who go to college and get brainwashed by some dyke professor with a bone to pick with men, how many women who are satisfied with their boyfriends/husbands actually end up becoming frigid feminists?! Indeed, as Otto Weininger theorized well over a century ago, feminism and so-called female emancipation has more to do with societal decadence, male emasculation, and the feminization of the workforce (i.e. office work) than any sort of phantom patriarchy. After all, the naughty Nazi government, which put a premium on having a collective father figure known as the Führer rule over the Fatherland, did not prevent Leni Riefenstahl from becoming the greatest female filmmaker who has ever lived, as a woman whose literal artistic adventures make the von Trottas and Valie Export of the world seem like bitter bourgeois housewives by comparison.

-Ty E

THE LOST HONOR OF KATHARINA BLUM

Volker Schlöndorff (1975)

Being a child of his time, German auteur Volker Schlöndorff (Baal, *The Tin Drum*) was more or less a supporter of far-left German terrorist groups and felt that West Germans were living under a sort of kraut McCarthyism and were plagued by American “Konsumterror,” which the director would go to great pains to depict in his hit Hollywood-like agitprop flick *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, or: *How Violence Develops and Where it Can Lead* (1975) aka *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum oder: Wie Gewalt entstehen und wohin sie führen kann*. Co-directed/co-written by Schlöndorff’s then-wife Margarethe von Trotta (*Rosa Luxemburg*, *Rosenstrasse*) and based on the 1974 anti-propaganda propaganda novel of the same name (a work that Schlöndorff once described as being, “not really a novel, almost like a pamphlet”) written by Nobel prize winner Heinrich Böll (an ex-Wehrmacht soldier who became a sort of father figure for the far-left 68er-Bewegung student movement), *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* is typically considered the first big hit/crossover flick of German New Cinema, thereupon demonstrating how many young Teutons sympathized with radical far-left terrorism during the 1970s. A sort of arthouse political crime thriller without the thrills and any serious discussion of politics, the film essentially follows a naïve, frigid, and even bitchy young broad whose life is turned upside down after she has a one-night stand with a supposedly violent bank-robbing terrorist and subsequently becomes the object of police and media scrutiny. Unlike Fassbinder’s two feature films on the same subject, *Mother Küsters’ Trip to Heaven* (1975) and *The Third Generation* (1970), *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* makes no attempts to criticize the terrorists themselves, but instead features a superlatively superficial and one-dimensional attack on the West German police and media, as well as the supposed patriarchy (indeed, virtually every male character in the film, aside from the terrorist, is depicted as a crypto-fascist pig). In fact, the film makes no attempts to pretend it is even remotely objective, as it concludes with the following disclaimer that was also featured at the beginning of Böll’s source novel: “The characters and action in this story are purely fictitious. Should the description of certain journalistic practices result in a resemblance to the practices of *Bild-Zeitung*, such resemblance is neither intentional, nor fortuitous, but unavoidable,” with *Bild-Zeitung* being a popular German tabloid newspaper comparable to the *National Enquirer* in terms of trashiness (but also *USA Today* in terms of circulation) that is notable for featuring photos of topless women. In a survey conducted in 1971 by the Allensbach Institute of Public Opinion, it was revealed that one out of every twenty West German citizens agreed that they would be willing to commit a major crime by harboring a far-left terrorist fugitive (i.e. Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin, etc.) for the night. In protestant northern Germany,

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the figure was even higher with one out of every ten citizens agreeing that they would hide a terrorist in their home, thus demonstrating the seemingly unbelievable amount of Germans who saw members of the Baader-Meinhof gang and related groups as heroes. In fact, in September 1976 auteur Schlöndorff was rightfully described as a “Baader-Meinhof-Sympathisant” in the Axel Springer (a sort of West German William Randolph Hearst, who owned Bild-Zeitung and was hated by the German left) flagship daily Die Welt, so it should be no surprise that when the director’s Böll adaptation was released, it was described by Die Welt film critic Hans Habe as follows: “Schlöndorff’s Katharina Blum-Film belongs to the most evil propaganda reels of the present. . . .A leftist Jew Süß.” Personally, I consider Habe’s remark an insult to Veit Harlan’s 1940 National Socialist melodrama, as The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum is not even remotely as nuanced or thoughtful as the Nazi propaganda flick (after all, unlike the cops/journalists in Schlöndorff’s film, Jew Süß at least has some likeable traits), but is instead, a mostly mindless neo-Bolshevik political thriller with vomit-worthy feminist overtones that acts as a virtual prototype for contemporary Hollywood political thrillers and action films, so it should be no surprise that the film was shot by German cinematographer Jošt Vacano (Total Recall, Starship Troopers).

It is February 5, 1975 and a military deserter turned terrorist named Ludwig Götten (Jürgen Prochnow of *Das Boot* (1981) and *The English Patient* (1996)) is on the run and being monitored 24/7 by the cops. While at her aunt Else Woltersheim’s (Regine Lutz) Mardi Gras party, a young divorced maid named Katharina Blum (played by Angela Winkler, who starred in a number of Schlöndorff and von Trotta’s films) meets and essentially falls in love with terrorist Ludwig at first sight. Needless to say, the two have a one-night stand and the next morning Katharina finds her apartment raided by the police, who are portrayed as a sort of moronic neo-Gestapo (one of the cops accidentally fires his weapon, which scares the shit out of the other cops). After her apartment is searched (they find “typically bourgeois literature” like shitty romance novels) and a female cop examines her naughty bits for potential hidden weapons, Katharina is taken into a police station for questioning where she faces the ‘brute’ verbal tactics of a superficially misogynistic anti-leftist cop named Kommissar Beizmenne (portrayed by perennial screen villain Mario Adorf). Like a naïve little girl who has just fallen in love for the first time, Katharina childishly refuses to talk to Beizmenne as if he is some sort of pestering stepfather she hates. A girl that is described as shy and introverted by his friends, Katharina is asked by Beizmenne why she, as someone with the nickname the “Nun,” would have a one-night stand with an outlaw terrorist, but she has no answers and demands that she be placed in a jail cell and, of course, the Kommissar is happy to oblige her. The first thing Katharina does upon entering the jail cell is cleaning what looks like feces and vomit off the toilet located in her little cage (this scene is totally pointless and

seems to have been inserted in the film to ostensibly demonstrate how 'hellish' German prison cells are). Meanwhile, a superlatively sleazy 'right-wing' journalist named Werner Tötges (played by Dieter Laser of *The Human Centipede (First Sequence)* (2009) fame) swoops by Katharina's place with flowers and begins asking neighbors questions about the girl and soon learns that her father came back from WWII to die and her brother is in prison. From her employer Dr. Hubert Blorna (Heinz Bennent), it is revealed that Katharina is "stiff as a board" and is "too square and too shy" to allow someone to "pinch her ass." It is also revealed that her ex-husband divorced her on grounds of desertion. Personally, I cannot see why any self-respecting mensch would tolerate her mousy bitch bullshit.

When Katharina is released from prison, she begins receiving pseudo-misogynistic prank calls asking about her "pussy" and threatening letters are also left at her front door by anonymous neighbors. After being asked to meet with her minister, Father Urbanus (Walter Gontermann), at his church, Katharina soon realizes it is a trap setup by her old admirer/lover, Alois Sträubleder (Karl Heinz Vosgerau)—a wealthy industrialist that is well into his 50s—who offers to help her, but she is not interested in his help, as she is hiding something that she does not want him to find out. In fact, Sträubleder's only interest in helping Katharina is that he does not want his name connected to terrorism via Katharina, as he is a powerful man who cannot afford to have a bad reputation. When Svegnali-like yellow journalist Tötges sneaks into a hospital wearing doctor scrubs and bombards Katharina's terminally ill mother with sensitive questions about her daughter, it ultimately causes the old woman to drop dead from stress, with the grieving daughter later complaining to her mother's doctor regarding the press, "These people are murderers. All of them! It's their very business to rob innocent people of their honor, often to take their lives. Otherwise nobody would buy their papers." To make things worse, Katharina begins receiving tons of hate mail with messages like, "where Stalin didn't succeed, you won't either" and "commie's whore," thus inspiring rage in the young lady that provokes her to wreck her own apartment.

Meanwhile, Alois Sträubleder confides in Dr. Blorna, who also happens to be his lawyer, and tells him that he believes that Katharina has given the key to his country home to terrorist Ludwig. Indeed, when they were lovers, Alois decided to give Katharina the key to his vacation house, not realizing she would eventually use it to harbor a terrorist hunk. Of course, the cops soon bust Ludwig at Alois' country house and take him into custody. Afterwards, it is revealed that Ludwig is a deserter from the Bundeswehr (German military) who did not rob banks as was once suspected but helped himself to the pay of two military regiments and as Dr. Blorna tells Katharina; the young fugitive will probably serve 8 to 10 years in prison for his crimes. Against the wishes of her ex-lover/sugar daddy Sträubleder, Katharina decides to do an interview

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with her tormentor, journalist Tötges, as she claims that she wants to see what “such a guy looks like,” but she really has more pernicious plans. On the way to the interview, Katharina is attacked by various drunkards, who call her an “anarchist” and tell her that “she belongs in the gas chamber” (as if any post-WWII German would say such a thing in public), so naturally by the time she goes to Tötges’ apartment, she is exceedingly pissed and certainly ready to carry out the daſtardly deed that she came there to commit. Upon arriving at the journalist’s messy apartment, Katharina is bombarded with absurd advice from Tötges, who tells her she is “the news” and she needs to “exploit that” so that she can profit monetarily. When Tötges attempts to get into Katharina panties by stating in a rather vulgar manner, “how about fucking for a ſtart?,” the young unlady-like lady nonsensically kills him by unloading some bullets in his ſtomach. While being escorted to prison, Katharina bumps into her big bad boy toy Ludwig and the two try in vain to make out, but the big mean prison guards pull the lunatic lovers apart. In the end, the film concludes with an epilogue depicting journalist Tötges’ funeral where an oſtensibly hypocritical speech is delivered about Freedom of the Press by the owner of the newspaper, Dr. Lüding (Achim Strietzel), who ſtates: “The shots that killed Werner Toetges didn’t hit him alone. They were aimed at Freedom of the Press [...] And these shots [...] they ſtrike us juſt as they ſtruck him [...] Freedom of the Press is the core of everything: well-being, social progress, democracy, pluralism, diversity of opinions – and whoever attacks The Paper attacks us all.”

Interestingly, despite the obsession that moſt of the filmmakers of German New Cinema had with radical far-left politics, Thomas Elsaesser—arguably the foremoſt scholar of the poſt-WWII German film movement and German film in general—would note in his comprehensive work *New German Cinema: A History* (1989) that *The Loſt Honor of Katharina Blum* and films like it are pretty much worthless when it comes to understanding the political climate of the Fatherland at that time, or as the film scholar wrote himſelf: “For despite the prevalence of social issues, the New German Cinema is actually rather poor in sociological detail; very few films give a convincing idea of Weſt Germany’s political reality or the workings of its social inſtitutions. Even in the films of Schlöndorff, Hauff or Petersen (the moſt conventionally ‘realiſtic’ directors in the 1970s), one learns little about the political eſtabliſhment. Schlöndorff’s *THE LOST HONOUR OF KATHARINA BLUM* is not an illuminating film about the German preſs, any more than Hauff’s *STAMMHEIM* (1986) conveys a convincing picture of German judges and the legal profeſſion.” In fact, in the featurette *The Loſt Honor of Heinrich Böll* featured on the Criterion Collection dvd release of the film, *The Loſt Honor of Katharina Blum* co-director Margarethe von Trotta would go ſo far as deſcribing the relationship between the eponymous female protagonist and yellow journalist Werner Tötges as being of a ſpiritual and wholly morally righteous nature, with the fem-

inist filmmaker stating that the work depicts, "...Good and Evil in the religious sense...the journalist becomes the devil and she becomes a real Madonna and she has to fight the devil," thus demonstrating that the film is nothing more than a pseudo-religious propaganda piece directed by two Marxist true believers who have no sense of objectivity and who suffered from the same sort of inverted and, dare I say, ethno-masochistic, morality that was typical of young Germans at that time. After all, even the National Socialists would not have gone so far as to make a propaganda piece where a young lady murders a journalist in cold blood because he depicted her negatively in a piece he wrote. Indeed, despite the fact that the film shows that the cops were right all along regarding Katharina Blum and her criminal behavior, the police are still depicted as loathsome misogynistic fascist pigs that have nothing better to do than ruin a young lady's promising love affair with a fugitive criminal. Indeed, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* is a film that only political philistines, useful idiots, and devout disciples of Marx, Trotsky, Adorno and/or Böll will be able to appreciate, as a postmodern religious work that makes about as much sense as the resurrection of Christ (and Ms. Blum is certainly no Christ, nor is she the "Madonna" that von Trotta described her as). Rather absurdly, the film was remade in America under the title *The Lost Honor of Kathryn Beck* (1984) by CBS as a TV movie starring Kris Kristofferson. Indeed, when it comes down to it, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* seems like a kraut Lifetime movie on Trotskyite steroids. One must also note that the work features Volker Schlöndorff at his most culturally and sexually cuckolded, as a beta-male who directed a misandry-plagued work for the emotional and monetary benefit of his then-wife. Of course, the film would jumpstart von Trotta's singularly banal directing career, which would be plagued by exceedingly vapid and hopelessly formulaic Hollywood-like dramas glorifying man-hating feminists, RAF terrorists, anti-German Jewish commie revolutionaries, and miscegenating Aryan women. Indeed, if you want to see a good example of the sort of mass psychosis that young Germans suffered during the 1970s that would ultimately lead to the degenerate fatherless Fatherland that exists today as a result of these same young Germans becoming the actual establishment, checkout *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*.

-Ty E

COUP DE GRÂCE
COUP DE GRÂCE

Volker Schlöndorff (1976)

After starting my recent obsession with *Baal* (1970) starring Rainer Werner Fassbinder, I felt it was about time I start watching more films directed by kraut master celluloid craftsman Volker Schlöndorff (*Michael Kohlhaas - Der Rebell*, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*), with *Coup de Grâce* (1976) aka *Der Fangschuß* being the first film I decided to indulge in. Based on the 1939 novel of the same name written by Belgian-born French bisexual novelist Marguerite Yourcenar, *Coup de Grâce* was co-penned by and stars Schlöndorff's then-wife Margarethe von Trotta and thus, as can be expected, features a glaring feminist leftist slant that is somewhat at odds with its source material. Indeed, while Yourcenar's novel was intentionally apolitical and written from the perspective of a closeted homosexual soldier named Erich von Lhomond, Schlöndorff's *Coup de Grâce* treats the female character Sophie de Reval (not surprisingly played by von Trotta in all her degenerate blueblood glory)—a spoiled and salacious countess who becomes a Bolshevik because the German soldier she lives with is in love with her brother in what is ultimately a bitter and cold bizarre love triangle—is treated as a progressive woman and a true heroine. Although not politically correct nowadays, *Coup de Grâce*, like Schlöndorff's other films *Young Törless* (1966) and *The Tin Drum* (1979), attempts to establish a dubious Reichian link between homosexuality and fascism/militarism, as if enjoying militaristic camaraderie and killing commies is a prerequisite for taking a dick in the ass. Set between 1919 and 1920 in Kratovice, Latvia, *Coup de Grâce* depicts the plague-like spreading of bolshevism across Eastern Europe and the destruction of the Baltic German aristocracy in a fashion that makes it clear that the writers and director have more sympathy for atheistic Asiatic hordes than their own ancestors. Indeed, a film that has the gall to depict a rather lecherous lady who betrays her friends and family and hook up with a Bolshevik Jewish intellectual and join the Reds against the waning Prussian aristocracy that she is also part of, *Coup de Grâce* is indubitably ethno-masochistic leftist swill, albeit strikingly stylized celluloid swill of the richly photographed black-and-white sort that reminds one that Schlöndorff has always been a master of his craft, but also a major moron when it comes to politics and history, as if he suffers from a sort of metaphysical Stockholm syndrome that has compelled him to spend his entire filmmaking career assembling Teutonic period pieces trashing his nation in tribute to his Franco-Jewish mentor Jean-Pierre Melville (of whom *Coup de Grâce* is not coincidentally dedicated to). A sort of 'Teutonic Gone with the Wind' (with a smidge of *Doctor Zhivago* thrown in for good measure) set at the end of a civilization about a hysterical woman who cannot have man she wants so she raises hell as an impotent and ultimately tragic last resort, *Coup de Grâce* is a bold and beautiful black-and-white with an aesthetic prowess comparable to Billy

Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) yet with a one-dimensional thematic complexity (or lack thereof) akin to Spielberg's epic agitprop piece *Schindler's List* (1993). Indeed, had *Coup de Grâce* been more in the spirit of the great Baltic-German aristocrat Roman von Ungern-Sternberg, it might have been a masterpiece.

It is 1919 and the Bolshevik beast is beginning to spread like cancer into the Baltic, but thankfully some German Freikorps soldiers have landed there to protect a chateau that belongs to one of the soldier's families. Indeed, the home is owned by the family of young Aryan aristocrat and unflinching patriot Konrad von Reval (Rüdiger Kirschstein), who has come back to protect his idealistic countess sister Sophie (Margarethe von Trotta) and eccentric old maid aunt Tante Praskovia (played by German Jewish cabaret performer Valeska Gert). Konrad has brought his childhood best friend and fellow aristocrat Erich von Lhomond (played by Matthias Habich, who would go on to star in mainstream WWII films like *Enemy at the Gates* (2001) and *Downfall* (2004)). Sophie is deeply in love with Erich, but little does she realize that her brother Konrad is also in love with him. Naturally, hardcore conservative Erich rebuffs the rather blatant and even desperate advances of Sophie. To complicate things further, Sophie is a good friend of a blond Jewish commie revolutionary named Grigori Loew (Franz Morak), who feeds the spoiled yet bored Contessa's thirst for knowledge with copies of works by suicidal Austrian Expressionist poet Georg Trakl. Unfortunately, Sophie takes Grigori's advice after he gives her a copy of Trakl's *Die Dichtungen* with the following words inscribed, "Always follow the voice of your heart." A hyper horny single lady of childbearing age who wants to marry a man just like her brother, Sophie becomes a moody and broody succubus of hysteria and irrationalism. As Erich soon learns, a Lithuanian sergeant recently raped Sophie and thus her sexuality seems all out of whack because of it. Naturally, seeing the sorry state of her quasi-senile spinster aunt Tante every single day only further inspires Sophie's dedication to making Erich her man and she is willing to go to a number of self-destructive extremes to get him, even if it kills her.

In a feeble and stereotypically female attempt to get Erich's attention, Sophie begins screwing other soldiers, including a fellow named Franz von Aland (Frederik von Zichy), who is killed in front of the chateau only a little while after having a premonition of his own death and seeking carnal knowledge with the Countess. Sophie almost manages to get Erich to screw her after hatefully stating, "Responsibility and discipline! Everything else inside you is dead. You're incapable of passion," but their attempt at intercourse is ultimately interrupted. When a young soldier named Volkmar (Mathieu Carrière)—a man whose father is apparently gay and purportedly had sex with Rasputin—arrives at the chateau, Sophie starts a lurid love affair with him, which only proves to irritate Erich, but does not make him any more interested in her as a lover. When Erich slaps Sophie in the face at a Christmas party for whoring herself out to all the men

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there, Volkmar “demands satisfaction,” but the duel never happens. That same night, Erich makes a promise to Sophie that he will come back to her after a military mission and that they will start a new life together. When Erich sends Volkmar back to the chateau to report a message, the young gentleman caller proposes to Sophie but she declines, as she believes she will be getting with her true beloved. Hurt by the Countess’ rejection of marriage, Volkmar spitefully tells Sophie that Erich and her brother Konrad are gay lovers who apparently did more than just kill commies in Riga. Naturally, when Erich comes back to the chateau, Sophie calls him out on his homosexual affair with her brother. As a Bolshevik-brainwashed spoiled little girl with too much time on her hands who is quite open about her sympathy for the red and believes regarding her family and other Baltic-Germans, “The new era has no use for our tradition,” Sophie leaves the chateau permanently, hooks up with her Judeo-bolshevik friend Grigori, and becomes a communist terrorist. Meanwhile, Sophie’s brother Konrad is killed. When Erich and his soldiers capture a bunch of red terrorists hiding in a shack, they kill Grigori like a dog and capture Sophie. While Erich offers to save Sophie, she turns him down and treats him with disdain. Like all captured bolschy thugs, Sophie and her commie comrades are to be executed. As a special request, Sophie asks Erich to execute her in what can be seen as a final declaration of love from a desperate woman (as well as a sort of haunting revenge ensuring that Erich will always live with the fact he killed his gay lover’s sister), which he does with the same sort of robotic apathy with which he has always treated her, not even looking at her when he puts a bullet in her brain. The End.

Maybe it’s just me, but I have always thought Margarethe von Trotta seemed like a disgruntled bitch and this certainly lends to her shockingly notable performance in *Coup de Grâce* where she proves she can do more than just take her clothes off like she did in Fassbinder’s *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971). Indeed, I have also always chalked up women taking on a feminist *Weltanschauung* as a sign of bitter disappointment in men (namely fathers, lovers, etc.) and von Trotta’s character Sophie certainly fits this mold. Admittedly, I was rather shocked that I found myself feeling empathy for Sophie, which is certainly not something I can say of Vivien Leigh’s queen bitch character from *Gone with the Wind* (1939), thus leading me to suspect that under von Trotta’s hard feminist exterior lies a vulnerable woman who has built a wall around herself. While the seemingly immaculate direction of *Coup de Grâce* is owed to auteur Volker Schlöndorff’s mastery of the cinematic craft, the film is also clearly a von Trotta film. After all, after co-directing the quasi-pro-leftist-terrorist flick *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1975) with her then-hubby Schlöndorff, von Trotta would almost exclusively focus on hard yet hysterical female characters that traded in their femininity for far-left/feminist idealism. Luckily, since Schlöndorff is a much more competent director in comparison to von Trotta, *Coup de Grâce* manages to get its dubious message across without falling

into aesthetic banality. If von Trotta's surname is any indication of her ostensibly noble heritage, one can only assume that *Coup de Grâce* is a barely inconspicuously personal work co-written by and starring a woman fed up with not only men, but also her nation, culture, and people. After all, the Bolshevik revolution led to not only Germany's loss of power of the Slavic lands, but also led to the circumstances from which would lead to the birth of National Socialism (indeed, it is no coincidence that National Socialist philosopher Alfred Rosenberg was a Baltic-German who witnessed the revolution firsthand). In its dedication to Jean-Pierre Grumbach and inclusion of degenerate kosher cabaret artist Valeska Gert as the kooky aunt of von Trotta's character, not to mention its unflattering depiction of Prussian Junkers and ridiculous sympathy for aristocrat-extermimating Bolshevik thugs and Judaic Trotskyite conspirators, *Coup de Grâce* demonstrates a degree of unrivaled Teutonic philo-Semitism that is simply awe-inspiring and would be funny were it not for the fact that such exceedingly ethno-masochistic tendencies were representative of young educated Germans of that time. In some ways one of the more underrated works of German New Cinema, *Coup de Grâce* ultimately seems rather outmoded due to its reductionist approach to politics and history. That being said, Schlöndorff still has time to redeem himself by directing an objective von Ungern-Sternberg biopic, but that is about as likely as his ex-wife making a film that did not seem like it was directed by some nameless hack in Hollywood.

-Ty E

THE TIN DRUM
THE TIN DRUM

Volker Schlöndorff (1979)

The Tin Drum is a film directed by self-loathing German New Waver Volker Schlöndorff and adapted from the novel of the same name by Günter Grass. A few years ago Grass finally came clean about his service in the Waffen-SS, one of Germany's most brutal killing machines, and international pansies were unanimously outraged. It seems that the literary world was furious when they found out they were "tricked" into liking novels written by a Nazi butcher. Despite Grass's very anti-Nazi novel The Tin Drum, the art fag and vain altruistic crowd may never forgive him. Schlöndorff's The Tin Drum is one of the greatest masterpieces of German New Wave cinema. The film shared the 1979 Cannes Film Festival Palme d'Or with Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now. Like Apocalypse Now, The Tin Drum combines real wartime drama with fantasy elements. Although I had considered Apocalypse Now one of my favorite films for a good portion of my life, I now consider The Tin Drum (among other European war films) a much superior film. The world of The Tin Drum is a much more distant and dark world than Apocalypse Now could have ever hoped to be. The Tin Drum mainly focuses on the time period before the rise of the Nazi party and the eventual destructive fall of Germany. On his third birthday, Oskar has decided he has contempt for the adult world and vows to never grow up. On that some birthday, Oskar receives a tin drum which he bangs on in an act of defiance against all that he hates (especially Nazis). He also has the ability to break glass with his girly high pitch screaming. One thing is for sure; little Oskar is one disturbing little turd. I must say that I don't care much for the character of little Oskar. He lacks any type of rationality and unintentionally leads his family into harmful situations. I almost felt cheated when the young chap survives the war at the end of the film. I was hoping some large building might topple over Oskar and his wretched drum. He never really learns how to play it.

-Ty E

THE OGRE

Volker Schlöndorff (1996)

Moving to Paris in his late teens, German New Cinema auteur Volker Schlöndorff (*Young Törless*, *The Handmaid's Tale*) graduated with a political science degree and then studied at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques, where he met and became the protégé of Louis Malle, who gave the then-young Teuton his first film job as an assistant director on *Zazie in the Metro* (1960) aka *Zazie dans le métro*, where he would ultimately go on to become an AD for such important French films as Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) and Jean-Pierre Melville's *Léon Morin, Priest* (1961). Eventually, Schlöndorff would return the favor to Malle by dedicating his work *The Ogre* (1996) aka *Der Unhold* to Louis Malle, who ultimately set the German filmmaker to later be one of the most internationally renowned German directors of the post-WWII era, but he would also demonstrate his undying gratitude to his teacher by becoming a rare kraut Francophile filmmaker who essentially made the absurd attempt to shed his Teutonic skin and become a pseudo-frog of sorts. Even Schlöndorff's most recent work *Calm at Sea* (2011) aka *La mer à l'aube*—a film about Nazi Huns liquidating poor innocent French commies—unmistakably displays a greater sympathy for the French than the seemingly half-deranged director's own people. On top of his decided dedication to flagrant Francophilia and far-left politics (the man was married to insufferable feminist filmmaker Margarethe von Trotta for two decades for godsake!), Schlöndorff has also demonstrated that he is willing to go the unforgivable route of becoming a Hollywood-esque hack of sorts who, despite being a native European, opts for shooting historical European films in English with alien American stars, which is taken to a most horrid and aesthetically and culturally reckless degree in his German-French co-production *The Ogre*, the work he ironically dedicated to monsieur Malle. Based on the book *The Erl-King* (1970) by French novelist Michel Tournier, *The Ogre* is a leftist revisionist historical celluloid fairytale about a seemingly autistic halfwit Frenchman played by John Malkovich with an unhealthy obsession with children who by happenstance goes on to become a personal slave of sorts for National Socialist bigwig Hermann Göring and eventually becomes a creepy caretaker/child-snatcher at a Hitler Youth military academy located at an ancient storybook-like castle, only to realize that by saving a spastic and equally autistic Jewish child can he be truly redeemed. Sort of like a shamelessly propagandistic mix between Sydney Pollack's supremely sardonic and underrated "firmly pro- and anti-war" *Castle Keep* (1969) and the hugely hokey Hollywood blockbuster *Forrest Gump* (1994), *The Ogre* is a potent example why Hollywood Hebrews like Steven Spielberg do not even need to bother denigrating the name of the German people when native ethno-masochistic krauts directors like Volker Schlöndorff do a much better and bizarrely hateful job of doing it them-

THE OGRE

selves. Featuring Fassbinder Superstar Volker Spengler of *In a Year of 13 Moons* (1978) fame in the role of Hermann Göring, *The Ogre* is really a stunning example of how both German New Cinema and the idea of a German National cinema in general has rotted since the premature death of Fassbinder, as well as the great lengths that some self-flagellating filmmakers like Schlöndorff have gone to atone for the ostensible sins of their fathers and grandfathers.

After wishing to a statue of Saint Christopher for the Catholic school he attends to burn down, oddball orphan kid Abel Tiffauges got his wish, but it also resulted in the death of his sole friend, an obese boy addicted to food named Nestor. The year is 1939 and Abel (played by the ever so annoying and gratingly soft-spoken John Malkovich), now 28, naturally grew up to be an even more eccentric and socially retarded individual who has no problem admitting, "All I want to do is help but somehow I always inspire fear in people," even if his brand of help always results in tragedy. After befriending a spoiled and bratty preteen girl named Martine, Abel finds himself being arrested after the young she-devil falsely claims he molested her, which probably seems like a reasonable allegation to the police as the Frenchman's man-child essence seems like that of a conspiring child molester. Instead of going to jail, Abel is given the option of joining the French army because of the outbreak of the Second World War, which he gladly accepts, but since those froggy rifle-droppers cannot fight and literally prefer wine and fine-dining on the battle field, he and his compatriots are soon made prisoners of war by German soldiers and sent to an East Prussian labor camp. While roaming around like a moron and frolicking with moose, Abel runs into a German officer named Chief Forester (Fassbinder superstar Gottfried John), who respects the Frenchman's uncommon sensitivity towards wild beasts and hires him to take care of animals at National Socialist queen Hermann Göring's luxurious hunting retreat. Naturally, Göring (Volker Spengler, who having gained more than a couple pounds since his Fassbinder years, makes for a splendidly grotesque caricature of Herr Göring) is nice when high on morphine and engages in ridiculous hedonistic behavior like immersing his hands in large bowels of diamonds and jewelry, eating deer turds, and hunting large game with his slavish comrades, but the radical Reichsmarschall loses it and must leave when things change for the worse on the Russian front for the Fatherland. Forced to go back to Berlin, Göring fires all of his employees, which leaves Abel without a job, but luckily Chief Forester hooks him up with a more prestigious position at a Hitler Youth military academy for boys located in the fairytale-like Kaltenborn Castle. Indeed, at this juncture in his life, Abel becomes closer and closer to living the dream of Michael Jackson.

Before he knows it, Abel proves himself to be an imperative player at the military academy as a sort of 'Grand pimp at the Hitlerite House of Boys' as a menacing and malicious man called "The Ogre" by local Prussian peasants due to his propensity for kidnapping little blond proletarian boys by force and bringing

them back to Kaltenborn Castle, where they are forced to join the Hitler Youth and told by SS leaders that they no longer have parents and that Uncle Adolf is their new father. Of course, Abel's self-described "secret affinity with children" is burdened when one of the peasant boys he snatches up is later horrifically burned in a military demonstration gone bad. Additionally, when Abel learns from the owner of the Kaltenborn castle, an aristocrat Count von Kaltenborn (Armin Mueller-Stahl) of royal ancestral (one of his ancestors apparently converted 10,000 Prussians to Christianity in a single day) who hates the National Socialists and is arrested for his alleged part in the failed 20 July Hitler assassination plot aka Operation Valkyrie that was carried out by Claus von Stauffenberg, that the Russians are coming and that all of his beloved Hitler Youth boy toys will be killed, Abel decides to take matters in his own hands. After finding a religious Jewish concentration camp survivor boy named Ephraim laying half-frozen and half-dead on the road, Abel absurdly brings him back to Kaltenborn castle and attempts to order the Hitler Youth boys to abandon the academy and head West to save their lives from Ruski revenge, but the young Aryans are far too indoctrinated with the National Socialist creed and one of older boys hits the frog freedom-fighter in the back of the head with a rifle, thus knocking him out and putting an end to his would-be-virtuous plan. Instead, Abel decides to strangle to death a Hitler Youth boy who has discovered his saintly Semite boy. In the end, all the Hitler Youth boys, who fought valiantly against the Bolshevik beasts, are left dead and Abel escapes from Kaltenborn castle, which is ultimately burned down, with Ephraim sitting on his shoulders while reciting aesthetically repellant Yiddish prayers. Although Abel proudly and seemingly perversely admits during *The Ogre* that "I love nothing like I love young boys," through direct and indirect actions, he is ultimately responsible for leading to the deaths of countless young lads.

While *The Ogre* is ultimately a meticulously tailored piece of pomo fairytale propaganda, the film does make an important, if not blatant, point when the character of Count von Kaltenborn declares, "This whole beautiful country, to which we have given our souls, is utterly doomed. It's going to be wiped out of human memory. Our entire heritage, even our name, our ancestors' names, wiped out, all wiped out!" as the Second World War not only destroyed Germany both physically and culturally, but the rest of Europe as well, hence why such a patently pussified and exceedingly ethno-masochistic propaganda piece like Schlöndorff's film could and would get made in the first place. A sort of senselessly sentimental and culturally mongrelized anti-Heimatfilm that would probably most appeal to leftist pederasts (Schlöndorff intentionally portrays the Hitler Youth in a homoerotic pseudo-Riefenstahl-esque nature as they 'work out') and cultural critics at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, *The Ogre* ultimately has the deplorable and dubious message of: "yeah, so a bunch of kraut kids died, but they deserved it and the most important thing is that a single Jewish life

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was saved.” In fact, *The Ogre* goes so far as hinting the German soul itself in its purest form is innately evil in a scene where an SS doctor/eugenicist named Professor Blättchen (played by Dieter Laser of *The Human Centipede* (2009) fame) makes the remark, “brightness is not a characteristic of the German race. We don’t want brightness! People say, ”Oh, so-and-so is so bright, he has such a clear mind!” No. We mistrust this brightness, this clarity. Let the new African races cultivate brightness. Our sources are in darkness. That is what drives us to unparalleled creativity,” referencing Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche as examples of said dark Teutonic genius. Of course, something leads me to suspect that director Volker Schlöndorff would prefer belonging to the kosher school of cosmopolitan brightness.

While featuring the same cynicism towards German suffering during the Second World War as Volker Schlöndorff’s masterpiece *The Tin Drum* (1979), *The Ogre* all but lacks a soul and seems like it was directed by a member of the George Lucas school of filmmaking and not a man who learned his craft from French celluloid heavyweights like Alain Resnais and Louis Malle, who would have probably been disgusted that such an eclectically vapid and hopelessly contrived work was made in tribute to him. Ultimately, the ‘protagonist’ (or more like insufferable anti-hero) Abel of *The Ogre* is a disastrous man-child, pathological turncoat, and odious opportunist who brings pain even to those he claims to love and with an actor so innately and distinctly sickening to hear and see with such a stultifyingly effeminate presence as John Malkovich playing such a radically repellant role, it makes the experience all the more unbearable, but that does not matter to the Hollywood-lobotomized filmgoer who has been trained to know the most morally supreme film that can be featured in a film is that of a ‘righteous gentile’ who literally risk both his and other people’s lives to save a Jew. Undoubtedly, the final scene of *The Ogre* featuring protagonist Abel treading through a swamp with a holocaust survivor firmly attached to his back, as if a hungry parasite controlling the every move of its host, makes for not only a great metaphor for self-loathing shabbos goy filmmakers like Volker Schlöndorff, who have dedicated their career to denigrating their ancestors and worshiping the chosen amongst God’s chosen and propagating far-leftist Jewish politics in the Frankfurt school, but also the modern day white man in general, who can be a corrupt and philandering businessman and traitor to his own people like Oskar Schindler in *Schindler’s List* (1993), so long as they place a special premium on the children of Israel. Of course, Schlöndorff long ago demonstrated with his iconoclastic anti-Heimatfilm TV movie *Der plötzliche Reichtum der armen Leute von Kombach* (1971) aka *The Sudden Wealth of Poor People of Kombach*—a work that depicts a Jewish peddler as the heroic proto-bolshevik who masterminds a criminal conspiracy were he coerces dumb German peasants to help him stage a robbery where, in the end, only the Hebrew survives while the moronic krauts are executed for their role in the crime—that he suffered

with a perverse form of Philo-semitism that transcends simple holocaust worship. Still, with its depiction of a mousey man-child who has an healthy love of children and is accused of child molestation, *The Ogre* makes for a marginally novel affair in that it is perhaps the closet a film has ever come to being an allegorical fairytale about the life and times of Michael Jackson, and when looked at from that perspective, it ultimately becomes all the more enthralling, if not all the more ludicrous, but, of course we live in ludicrous times where fairytales are treated as fact and facts are treated as fairytales, thus making Schlöndorff's film a strangely apropos format for depicting the Second World War.

-Ty E

WAKEFIELD POOLE'S BIBLE!
WAKEFIELD POOLE'S BIBLE!

Wakefield Poole (1974)

Obviously largely for monetary reasons (after all, apparently around 90% of the world's population is heterosexual), a number of gay men directed heterosexual pornography during the Golden Age of Porn era. Indeed, erotic auteur filmmakers like Chuck Vincent (*Roommates, Voyeur*), Michael Zen (*Reflections, Falconhead*), and the Amero Brothers (*Bacchanale, Blonde Ambition*) are just a couple of the homos that proved they could make better hardcore 'breeder' flicks than most of the heteros. In fact, even homo auteur Wakefield Poole (*Bijou, Moving!*)—a true pornographic pioneer whose directorial debut *Boys in the Sand* (1971) was the first gay porn flick to ever receive crossover success and gain mainstream credibility for fuck flicks, even predating Gerard Damiano's *Deep Throat* (1972), which successfully attempted to capitalize on the former's success—also took a stab at making a straight skin flick with his considerably underrated and misunderstood erotic arthouse work *Wakefield Poole's Bible!* (1973). Originally intended as a hardcore flick (the director changed his mind due to legal trouble that the porn industry was having with the government at the time), Poole's softcore biblical blue movie is a three segment work with a similar structure to *Boys in the Sand* that focuses on three classic stories from the Old Testament, though it is shockingly 'lighthearted' and even silly for a work that takes an innately sensual approach to the supposed word of god. Indeed, not unlike the biblical cinematic adaptations of Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Bible!* takes a relatively respectful approach to the bible though, aesthetically speaking, the film has more in common with the frolicsome surrealist costume pieces of maestro Federico Fellini. A work that more or less destroyed the filmmaker's career (Poole once described it as the, "greatest porn disaster ever"), the flick proved to be too artsy fartsy and softcore to achieve mainstream crossover success and was only well received by critics and European countries like Germany (Poole also once described the film as his, "masturbation film" and "jerk-off movie," as it was his most artistically ambitious project). Directed by a sod son of the South who spent every Sunday as a child singing in church, *Bible!* may be somewhat underwhelming where erotic takes on the Old Testament are concerned, but it is certainly subversive in the sense that it was adapted from a "woman's point of view" in that it rationalizes the treacherous behavior committed by fairer sex in the bible. Indeed, in Poole's wanton world, Eve naively bites into the apple because she gets rather horny after Adam gives her a good fucking, Bathsheba cheats on her husband Uriah the Hittite with King David because she is sexually repressed and her hubby is cheating on her with a low-class handmaiden and Delilah, who is portrayed by a black woman with a shaved head that somewhat looks like Grace Jones, betrays Samson because he is a heartless bully who had the gall to kill a cutesy Fellini-esque midget. Sort of like Poole's erotic equivalent to Ken-

neth Anger's crowning celluloid achievement *Lucifer Rising* (1972), *Bible!* is not only an epic piece of sensuality spirituality, but also a conspicuous piece of cinephilia that is virtually silent (like Poole's previous work *Bijou*, the film only features one single line of dialogue) and pays tribute to classic works of film history, including Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Oscar Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), and Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956). Indeed, in Poole's unabashedly bawdy and aesthetically overwhelming orgasmic biblical realm, god's voice is an orchestra and the world is created via a pink atomic explosion, thus also making the film sort of like a counter-culture approach to the Old Testament, albeit minus the drugs and psychedelic rock.

In an organically heavenly scene shot in the Virgin Islands, the world's first man Adam (played by Bo White, who is probably best known for role in Christopher Larkin's 1974 gay melodrama *A Very Natural Thing*) climbs out of the "bowels of earth" and makes his way to a scenic beach where he eventually collapses on the sand due to physical exhaustion. Meanwhile, Eve (played by model Caprice Couselle, whose sole other film role was in the 1975 gay cult flick *Saturday Night at the Baths*) rises from the ocean in a scene modeled after Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and makes her way to the beach where she finds zonked out Adam. Having never met other humans before, let alone those ones from a different gender, the two begin to experiment by touching and caressing each other in a totally intrigued fashion that eventually climaxes into full-on sex. After they share carnal knowledge for the first time, Eve remarks, "I'm so hungry" and the film seamlessly segues into the Bathsheba segment, which is in a salacious screwball style and begins with the sexually repressed eponymous character (played by Georgina Spelvinan of *Devil in Miss Jones* fame) and her warrior hubby Uriah (Robert Benes) eating breakfast together in a scene that is an homage to the famous scene from Welles' *Citizen Kane* depicting the gradual dissolving of the antihero's marriage. Bathsheba does what she can to get her husband's attention, but her efforts are in vain as Uriah is carrying on a hot and heavy affair with a trashy handmaiden with a talent for tempting men with her sleazy burlesque dancing. Ultimately, Bathsheba decides she will tryout her temptress talents as well by stripping in front of King David (John Horn), who is playing peep tom from above her bathtub. While Uriah briefly interrupts the carnal game of voyeurism and exhibitionism and David briefly leaves a result, Bathsheba eventually gets her deep-seated desire of being bedded by the King after the latter chases the former around a room in a scene that is in the style of goofy sped-up silent era chase scenes.

Unquestionably, the greatest, most aesthetically ambitious and just plain bizarre segment of *Bible!* is the third and final act, which depicts Samson (Brahm van Zetten) as a big bad humorless bully who gets his just deserts after he ruthlessly kills a playful midget (Willie Hermine). Indeed, in a simple prank that turns tragic, the daring midget steals Samson's dagger and pays with his

WAKEFIELD POOLE'S BIBLE!

life because of it. With the help of her master Delilah (played by model turned actress Gloria Grant who later became a makeup artist that worked on big mainstream films like Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* and *I Am Legend*), the midget's female lover (Cathy Hermine) will get her revenge. Indeed, after Delilah seduces Samson by stripping and giving him a super sensational sponge bath, the burly brute falls asleep and the vengeful little miss midget and her flamboyant headdress-adorned philistine comrades avenge the death of little Willie. While Delilah pleasures Samson as he falls asleep, the midget cuts seven locks of hair from his head with a dagger and a group of homoerotically dressed philistines blind the giant with fire, thus concluding the final segment of the film. For the epilogue of *Bible!*, the Mother Mary (Bonnie Mathis) receives immaculate conception after a scantily dressed male angel (Dennis Wayne) chases her down in a desert and touches her with two gigantic wands, which causes flicking lights to cover her body that impregnate her with god's mongrel bastard son. In the final and rather tongue-in-cheek scene of the film, a neon sign appears reading "No Vacancy" at the Bethlehem Inn.

While auteur Wakefield Poole hoped *Bible!* would do for Women's Lib what his hit homo crossover flick *Boys in the Sand* did for gay emancipation, the film met the deplorable fate of bombing at the box office and almost immediately falling into obscurity, thus virtually destroying the director's career in the process. Indeed, while Poole subsequently attempted to revive his career by directing a number of relatively low-budget homo hardcore flicks, including a sequel *Boys in the Sand* with the rather predictable title *Boys in the Sand II* (1984), his fate as a filmmaker had already been sealed and he decided to totally give up the trade after the big AIDS scare began (indeed, among countless other male porn stars, *Boys in the Sand* star Casey Donovan and Bijou star Ronnie Shark eventually succumbed to 'gay cancer'). Unquestionably, *Bible!* demonstrates that Poole was an artist who just happened to direct porn as opposed to a hack pornographer attempting to be 'artsy,' for the flick permeates a sort of exquisite erotic cinematic eloquence that makes the works of big pornographic auteur talents like Radley Metzger and Cecil Howard seem like decadent exploitation trash by comparison, and it is not simply because it is a softcore flick. Indeed, like much of the director's oeuvre, *Bible!* demonstrates that Poole was nothing short of a cinematic poetic, albeit one who found his source of inspiration in carnal sensuality and especially big dicks. Featuring the pathological body worship of Leni Riefenstahl, the high-camp eccentricity of Federico Fellini and Werner Schroeter, the respectable religious heresy of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Derek Jarman, and the throwback silent era style aesthetic majesty of Kenneth Anger, Poole's work is just not the sort of film that was made to be a cheap jack-off tool for the sort of lonely proletarian men who lurked around 42nd Street in NYC during the 1970s, hence why the film was much better received in more cultured countries like Germany (or so Poole describes in an interview featured

in the 2013 Vinegar Syndrome release of the film). Only marginally spiritually subversive, the film seems to be in the spirit of Pasolini's famous 1966 quote, "If you know that I am an unbeliever, then you know me better than I do myself. I may be an unbeliever, but I am an unbeliever who has a nostalgia for a belief." Indeed, despite what some medieval-minded American Christian Evangelists have to say, I like think that if there is a god, he would welcome Poole into the Kingdom of Heaven simply for being the creator of Bible!, which certainly has a more metaphysical feel than Mel Gibson's big budget splatter flick *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). Indeed, if you're looking for a biblical flick with more homoerotic undertones, you would most certainly be better served with one of Cecil B. DeMille's Technicolor epics.

-Ty E

THE BEAST
THE BEAST

Walerian Borowczyk (1975)

Indubitably one of his most, if not his most, celebrated and simultaneously controversial works, *La Bête* (1975) aka *The Beast* directed by mock-mystical-minded Polish pornographer, stop-motion animator, and arthouse auteur Walerian Borowczyk (*Goto, Island of Love, Behind Convent Walls*) is a brazenly blasphemous erotic film that manages to combine drama-horror-fantasy-comedy in a uniquely unruly and ruthlessly unhinged faux-fairytale featuring heated horse sex, burlesque blueblood bestiality, loony and lurid libelous attacks on the aristocracy, and recessive genetic degeneration of the inadvertently Lovecraftian kind. Upon my initial viewing of *The Beast* about a decade or so ago, I remember being bored to death (with the exception of a heated horse humping scene) for what seemed to be the first hour, but was soon on the edge of my seat after seeing a black furry beast of the savage semen demon sort brutally bugging a beauteous well-bred babe with a wig in what is quite possibly the most cum drenched montage in all of cinema history, so I thought it was about time to revisit the film, especially after thoroughly enjoying Walerian Borowczyk's tragic yet titillating erotic romance *La marge* (1976) aka *The Streetwalker* starring Joe Dallesandro and Sylvia Kristel rather recently. Often assumed to be an erotic celluloid adaptation of the classic French fairytale *Beauty and the Beast*, Borowczyk's *The Beast* is nothing of the sort, but it does feature a lethally lecherous moment between a woman and beast and the dysgenic generational result of this superlatively sordid sex session in the French forest, thus the film works as a sort of 'anti-Beauty and the Beast' that Anglo-American Spenglerian horror novelist H.P. Lovecraft might have enjoyed, were it not for the aesthetically erratic 'erotic' scenes that would mostly certainly offend his super sensitive quasi-Victorian sensibilities. A curiously quaint marriage between preposterous patrician perversity, highbrow kitsch and erotic elegance, and pomo fairytale storytelling for adults, *The Beast* is a rare cinematic work that reminds the viewer that the cinematically risqué, repugnant, and, quite frankly, retarded, can also be ridiculously refined in the manner of a story that only half-barbarian Slavs can pull off.

Lucy Broadhurst (Lisbeth Hummel) is quite beauteous and she is about to be filthy rich, so long as she marries physically disabled and less than delightfully dimwitted French aristocrat Mathurin de l'Esperance (Pierre Benedetti), who runs his family's horsebreeding business. Opening with a horrifically hung horse blowing its super load in a female horse's seemingly lipsmacking vagina, *The Beast* immediately establishes sex as the most intrinsic, instinctive, and bestial act of animals, and humanity, being no less preoccupied with everything sex, is just another stupid and instinct-driven beast, albeit of the more sophisticatedly savage sort; or so a certain rapist monster learns when he encounters a cultivated aristocratic woman who not only knows how to pleasure a fiendish phallus with

the glory between her legs, but also with her frisky feet. Mutant man Mathurin lives at a dilapidated chateau with his conspiring father Marquis Pierre de l'Esperance (Guy Tréjan), nymphomaniac sister Clarisse (Pascale Rivault), and a young black servant named Ifany. Miscegenation seems to be a pathological mania in the decidedly decadent de l'Esperance family as jaded blueblood bitch Clarisse has jungle fever as a positively posh proto-wigger with braided black broad hair who uses her 'exotic primitive' servant Ifany as a more than willing sex slave, but, unfortunately, he is always called during mid coitus to do real work around the house, so she constantly has to finish herself off by mounting her bedpost. When Lucy, who seems like a strung out Warhol Superstar like Viva due to her hyper-hedonism and erotomania, and her aunt Virginia (Elisabeth Kaza) arrive at the de l'Esperance manor, they are royally greeted with two big black horny horses humping, but the prospective wife is never going to experience such bestial bliss with mangled Mathurin – a freakish frog of the feverishly feeble-minded persuasion. Instead, Lucy will become transfixed with one of Mathurin's ancestors, Romilda de l'Esperance (Sirpa Lane) – a luscious lady in white who was buggered by a beast 200 years ago, yet ultimately prevailed in the end. Lucy learns about the ridiculously risqué tale of Romilda after noticing the large collection of zany Zoophilia art scattered around the marvelous, albeit moth-eaten, maniac mansion and questioning elderly wheelchair-bound cripple named Duc Rammendelo de Balo (Marcel Dalio of Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* and *The Rules of the Game*), who Mathurin takes care of, so, naturally, he wants to destroy the wedding, thus he is more than willing to expose the fantastic and flaky fetishism of the historically flatitious family. Lucy becomes absurdly aroused by the story of Romilda and her ridiculously raunchy rendezvous with a rapist beast, which is depicted in an absurdist harpsichord-driven dream-sequence scene where the beast's meaty member is the real star. Romilda inadvertently enables the beast to reach climax via her feet as she kicks his giant genitals in an attempt to escape, only to make the cursed creature all the more aroused, thus he is far from finished after one explosive orgasm as a potent personage, so he relentlessly rapes the positively petrified peeress and, to his superlatively salacious surprise, she begins to enjoy it, so much so that she becomes more bestial than the beast himself, and, quite ironically, fucks the ferocious feral fiend to death. Dreaming of Romilda, Lucy masturbates her 'rosebud' with a red rose, henceforth bringing ecstasy to her flesh flower, but her enjoyment won't last long as she will soon learn something rather repugnant about Mathurin and his foul family's monstrous genetic legacy.

Like Spanish surrealist auteur Luis Buñuel, perverted polack Walerian Borowczyk surely does not seem to have much veneration for the French upper-classes as especially exemplified in *The Beast* – a horrifically heretical yet suavely sardonic cinematic work that portrays froggy patricians as cripples, perverts, and mongrel mutants of miscegenated cross-species blood. What makes *The Beast* especially

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interesting is that it portrays Frenchmen, especially of the poorly aged aristocracy, as those suffering from innate impurity of the insidious sort as they have a long history of colonizing various non-Europeans and creating hybrid races that, in some instances, would be the root of their own demise. For example, many of those that led the so-called Haitian Revolution, including Haitian founder father Alexandre Sabès Pétion and André Rigaud, were mulattos who were the spawn of wealthy French aristocrats who mated with Africans and thus were wealthy and educated and ultimately helping to lead the slave revolt against their fathers and fathers' homeland, thus bringing credibility to the satiric quote in William Klein's filmic farce *Mr. Freedom* (1969) that, "The French are the white man's burden," and not a problem just for people of the third world. Of course, like the guiding influence of H.P. Lovecraft's novels – a hatred of race-mixing and an obsession with lost and dead civilizations that fell as a result of intermingling with racial monsters and beasts and thereupon spawning horrendous humanoids of the super subhuman and savage sort – *The Beast* is mainly rooted in the fear of tainted blood and the genetic degeneration such ungodly racial mixing sows. As the character Cardinal Joseph do Balo states upon learning of Mathurin's bestial taint, "Bestiality, that is to say, copulating with an animal, is the most odious crime because it debases man, created in the image of God. It is most contrary to the laws of nature. That is why Leviticus...punished by death not only the guilty man or woman but also the beast itself." Needless to say, the disastrously debauched de l'Esperance developed a perennial curse that day Romilda rolled around the grass with a beast some two centuries before. That being said, whether director Walerian Borowczyk's intention or not, to me, *The Beast*, is the great pornographic parable about the perturbing perils of lustful jungle fever, because, after all, when you mate with an ill-equipped untermensch, all your subsequent ancestors will pay the price for a couple moments of savage copulation.

-Ty E

LA MARGE

Walerian Borowczyk (1976)

While Warhol Superstar and sex icon Joe Dallesandro (Flesh, Blood for Dracula) is probably the last person I would peg as capable of portraying a French bourgeois family businessman from the country, he would ultimately give one of his greatest and most underrated performances in such an unlikely role during his post-Warhol period while living it up in Europa. Directed by Polish stop-motion animator turned arthouse pornographer Walerian Borowczyk (Goto, Island of Love, La bête aka The Beast), *La marge* (1976) aka *The Margin* aka *The Streetwalker* would feature Dallesandro teamed up with his European female equivalent, Dutch 'actress' and sex icon Sylvia Kristel of Emmanuelle fame in a tragic erotic arthouse romance about a happily married family man who falls under the spell of a Parisian prostitute after learning his young son has drowned and his wife has committed suicide as a result. Totally incapable of getting over his dead wife and holding to his promise to never betray her, Dallesandro's character is incapable of sharing genuine emotion and tenderness to other women, so to fulfill a 'biological' need for sex, he goes to a femme fatale of a fleshpeddler played by Sylvia Kristel that bears a striking resemblance to his wife. A total critical and commercial failure upon its initial release, *La marge*—arguably auteur Borowczyk's most valiant attempt at entering the mainstream—would be a rare work for the director in that it is not a perverted period piece, but a strikingly modern movie featuring music by Pink Floyd, 10CC and Elton John. Based on the popular 1967 novel of the same name written by Parisian novelist André Pieyre de Mandiargues, whose work Borowczyk would cinematically adapt no less than five times, *La marge* failed during its premiere in France during the summer of 1976, so the producers had the bright idea to re-title the film *Emmanuelle 77* in certain regions to capitalize off of Sylvia Kristel's role in the film, and when it was released in the UK and USA, where it also failed miserably, it was totally butchered via editing and renamed *The Streetwalker*. To further taint the reputation of the eccentric erotic celluloid masterpiece that is *La marge*, Borowczyk would later direct *Emmanuelle 5* (1987), which on top of not featuring Sylvia Kristel, proved how far the Polish auteur filmmaker's career and artistic integrity had stagnated to the point where he had to degrade himself to the level of being a for-hire hack pornographer as opposed to one of the greatest makers of idiosyncratic and beautiful blue movies the world has ever known. A film that somehow manages to reconcile misery and melancholy melodrama with rather refined (anti)eroticism, *La marge*, like a number of Borowczyk's films, is all but indisputable proof that fine and fetishistic celluloid art does indeed exist.

Sigimond Pons (Joe Dallesandro) is a bourgeois stud and wealthy businessman with a dream life as a more than happily married man with a beautiful, loving wife named Sergine (Mireille Audibert) and a cute little blond baby boy named

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Antonin (André Falcon). While making love to his wife Sergine and dropping flowers on her face and pubes, Sigimond proudly confess to her that she is both a “giver and gift,” for which she responds, “I promise never to betray you.” Not unsurprisingly, Sigimond responds to his wife by stating, “And I promise you never to betray you,” which ultimately prove to be famous last words (or so the viewer thinks). A man used to living in a quiet place in the country, Sigimond is probably married to the most stunningly statuesque lady in his region, so he is in for quite the surprise when he goes on a business trip to Paris and encounters proletarian prostitutes who are even more gorgeous than his beloved wife. Naturally, Sigimond falls under the succubus-like spell of a wild and wanton working girl named Diana (Sylvia Kristel) who bears a striking resemblance to his wife and on his first night in Paris, he buys her, but soon learns that one time is not enough when erotic electricity comes into play. Revisiting Diana for her services, Sigimond ‘reunites’ with the super sensual streetwalker at a brothel where an elderly woman gets a free show via keyholes and fetishizes every part of her body, rolling chicken eggs around her genitals in a Bataille-esque manner, kissing and licking her legs and feet for an extended period of time, and eventually penetrating her softly from behind. Naturally, Diana’s pimp becomes enraged when his living property has fallen for her John, which certainly makes for bad business. Luckily for the pimp, both Diana and Sigimond are too far gone and cursed as people to last as a couple.

While many viewers of *La marge* seem to think that Sigimond is cheating on his wife with Diana due to the film cutting straight from being with his family to picking up prostitutes in Paris, this is simply not the case. Indeed, while Sigimond does discuss traveling to Paris for business at the beginning of *La marge*, this is not the actual trip depicted in the film, which is not revealed until near the conclusion of the work, but a subsequent one after the protagonist has learned his son has drowned and his wife has committed suicide due to her grief. Even in her death, Sigimond stays faithful to Sergine, hence why he buys a prostitute (simply to satisfy a sexual need) and most importantly and tellingly, a prostitute that looks very much like his deceased wife. When Sigimond and Diana’s ‘relationship’ begins to take on a more emotional feel, including the buying of presents and the prostitute giving her John a blowjob, it naturally falls apart as neither character is able nor willing to love the other as they are both emotionally destroyed individuals whose internal wounds have never healed. Realizing he will never be able to go on and forget his wife, Sigimond naturally decides to commit suicide by shooting himself one early morning in his luxury sports car, but not before showing his anger at God by stating, “And yet I’ve never killed...never hurt anyone, never stolen or told many lies. I don’t recall ever having harmed anybody” and turning down an eager streetwalker that not does not even bear the slightest resemblance to his sweet Sergine. Naturally, Diana continues doing what she does best: pawning her puss to the highest bidder.

Featuring black midgets basking in fat French divas singing on TV, posh pedomorphic twinks arrogantly attempting to get down and dirty with Dallesandro, pretty prostitutes trying desperately to peddle their soft goods via free samplings, hotel maids playing with their tits in front of mirrors, and a clearly sexually repressed old woman who gets her kicks by peeping through keyholes, *La marge* is not just a decadent downer, but a totally titillating, borderline tragicomedy with strikingly strange surrealist moments that make Borowczyk's film the closest thing to a melodramatic Dadaist skin flick. Like a patently pessimistic European erotic arthouse take on the criminally underrated American cult flick *Buster and Billie* (1974), *La marge* is a defiantly dark romance that will chill the viewer to the bones in its visually gorgeous yet emotionally grating depiction of a highly likeable man who loses everything that is dear to him and a cold and ultimately unlovable woman whose 'career' requires her to sell her soul and sensuality and refrain from real human warmth and love. Despite its exquisite depiction of eroticism and the unclad female form, *La marge* is ultimately an audaciously anti-erotic work in retrospect featuring ominous and foreboding tableaux and melancholy melodrama that makes sex seem like a perennial sickness in its depiction of a lethally lovelorn man who, despite his undying love for a dead woman, still needs to fulfill a biological need, which he does by turning sex into a commodity that he can buy. Considering Dallesandro's background as an ex-hustler and Sylvia Kristel's background as a victim of child molestation at the age of nine, the two leads of *La marge* also bring a certain tragic authenticity to the film that could not have been contrived by mere method actors. Bringing a sort of nihilistic empathy to the prostitute and John like no film before or after it, *La marge* is an aesthetically radical reminder of the sort of broken and wounded people who get involved in buying or working in prostitution. For those who might get a cheap thrill by seeing Joe Dallesandro receive an awkward blowjob to Pink Floyd, *La marge* will prove to be a major disappointment akin to a botched orgasm as a perverse parable that will more likely pierce your soul than arouse your prick.

-Ty E

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MISS OSBOURNE
THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MISS OSBOURNE

Walerian Borowczyk (1981)

I am not going to bullshit, my favorite cinematic adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic Victorian Gothic novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) is sadomasochistic sod and gutter auteur Andy Milligan's marvelously misanthropic and all-around mean-spirited British era work *The Man with Two Heads* (1972), but then again I cannot think of another single version that I actually like, or at least until very recently after finally seeing the pleasantly perverse adaptation directed by a certain Polish "genius who also happened to be a pornographer" that I have been waiting to see for much time. Indeed, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* (1981) aka *Docteur Jekyll et les femmes* aka *Bloodlust* aka *Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* aka *The Blood of Doctor Jekyll* aka *Le cas étrange du Dr. Jekyll et de Miss Osbourne* aka *The Bloodbath of Doctor Jekyll* aka *The Experiment* aka *Borowczyk's Bloodbath of Doctor Jekyll* aka *Dr. Jekyll and His Women* aka *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* aka *Dr. Jekyll and His Wives* aka *The Blood of Dr. Jekyll* aka *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Lady Osbourne* directed by master animator turned cinematic auteur Walerian Borowczyk (*Goto*, *Island of Love*, *Lulu*) was available in a butchered extra-low-quality VHS copy with Dutch subtitles, which I refused to watch, until recently with its released on Blu-ray by the U.K. distributor Arrow Video, which does for cult and exploitation films what the Criterion Collection does for classic masterpieces and arthouse works. Admittedly, I am neither a serious fan nor foe of Borowczyk or his oeuvre, but I must admit that my favorite work by the auteur is also probably his most unconventional, so I feared I might not like his R.L. Stevenson adaptation in that it follows in the tradition of most of the filmmaker's other films as flick featuring people dressed up in goofy archaic costumes and make-up engaging in oftentimes absurd, if not sometimes genuinely erotic, sexually debauched acts. Indeed, unlike virtually all of the director's other films, *La marge* (1976) aka *The Streetwalker* aka *The Margin* starring lapsed Warhol superstar Joe Dallesandro and Dutch diva Sylvia Kristel is not a period piece featuring lavish costumes but a completely modern work set in the present and featuring a modern musical score, hence why I probably found it remarkably more palatable the most of the director's works (it also does not hurt that Dallesandro and even Kristel give great melancholy performances).

Of course, Borowczyk is unfortunately best known his bodacious bestiality piece *La bête* (1975) aka *The Beast*, but it ultimately pales in comparison to the somewhat goofy (anti)Victorian Gothic eloquence of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne*, which is arguably the director at his best, at least as far as his period based works are concerned. Notably, one of the most obvious differences between the Polish filmmaker's version and other cinematic

adaptations of Stevenson's classic tale is that Borowczyk opted to get different actors to play Jekyll and Hyde, with kraut queen of the cult silver screen Udo Kier playing the former and an authentically grotesque looking French Hebraic named Gérard Zalberg fittingly playing the latter. Since Herr Kier and the genuinely horrifying looking Hebraic fellow have similarly petite frames, this novelty actually manages to work quite well, especially if you have ever seen one of the grotesque caricatures from Julius Streicher's infamous tabloid *Der Stürmer*, as Zalberg looks like he was truly found in some sort of synagogue of Satan. The film is also notable for being a biting satire of Victorian mores where each character is more like an archetypal caricature that personifies some negative quality of that zeitgeist (e.g. colonialism, Darwinism, materialism, etc.) than an actual fully developed individual. Indeed, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* features a scathing assault on Puritanism where virginal teens and crypto-homo twinks are literally fucked to death by a sort of proto-bohemian scientist who has combined science and metaphysics to transform himself into a lethal libertine lunatic whose cock can literally rip someone's insides to shred. In other words, the film is probably Borowczyk's most amorously absurd and jovially wicked work since *La bête*, but is arguably most notable for being the filmmaker's most Gothic, as well as fittingly dream-like and phantasmagoric, flick as a piece of strangely addictive cinema with signature oneiric cinematography by Noël Véry (*Contes immoraux* (1974) aka *Immoral Tales*, *Collections privées* (1979) aka *Private Collections*) and sinisterly seductive synth-based score by Bernard Parmegiani (whose song "Dedans dehors" was used by Gus van Sant in *Paranoid Park* (2007)).

After featuring Gothic text stylized credit sequences and an inter-title reading, "There was something strange in my sensations, indescribably new and incredibly sweet. I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be tenfold more wicked and the thought delighted me like wine," that immediately exposes the fact that the eponymous young scientist with the split-personality actually embraces his truly monstrous evil half, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* opens in a fairly subversive, although not all that gratuitous, fashion with a little girl being chased by a dandy-like mystery man who ultimately corners the scared child, brutally beats her to death with his cane until said cane smashes into pieces, and then finishes things off by proceeding to sexually pilage her tiny body. Of course, the killer is played Mr. Hyde (played by genuinely horrifying looking Hebraic frog Gérard Zalberg, who is probably best known as the guy that cuts a faceless chick's head off in Jess Franco's rather retrograde *Eyes Without a Face* (1960) remake *Faceless* (1987)), but he will not be making his official grand appearance until much later in the film. Eponymous young scientist Dr. Henry Jekyll (Udo Kier in another classic cult role where he betrays his rampant homosexuality) is engaged to get married to his beloved brunette bimbo fiancée Miss Fanny Osbourne (Marina Pierro of Borowczyk's *Immoral*

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Women and Jean Rollin's *The Living Dead Girl* (1982)) and to celebrate he has a engagement party the night before the wedding, but unbeknownst to his friends and even his beloved, he has much bigger plans than just dinner and a glass of expensive aged wine, as he is a mad scientist with a murderous thirst for flesh and he plans to brutally bugger and ultimately kill every single person at the rather quaint get-together. The party is attended by a number of important friends and acquaintances that Dr. Jekyll seems to hate just as much as he likes, so it does not seem all that strange that he decides to get a little bit of revenge against them by getting in touch with his atavistic side by transforming into his less than handsome yet savagely sexually virile alter-ego Mr. Hyde. Indeed, Dr. Jekyll is kind of a passive aggressive pussy who even seems like a pansy compared to his effete and overweight Reverend friend, so his decision to go beyond good and evil seems like a highly personal one, as it affords him the rare opportunity to carry out all of his most depraved and grotesque fantasies and fetishes while incognito while also using the opportunity to seek revenge against his dubious compatriots. Of course, Dr. Jekyll's activities while come at a high prize, namely his original identity.

In an imperative scene where each character is more or less an archetypal aspect of Victorian culture, virtually all the male characters and none of the female characters, who would not dare to open their mouths when male intellectuals are speaking, argue about science, religion, and materialism. When Dr. Jekyll's rival/associate Dr. Lanyon (Howard Vernon of Jean-Pierre Melville's debut feature *Le Silence de la Mer* (1949) and Caro and Jeunet's *Delicatessen* (1991)) argues that "nature prohibits metaphysics," a certain ostensibly devoutly religious man named Reverend Donald Regan (Clément Harari of Radu Mihaileanu's *Train of Life* (1998)) becomes rather annoyed and replies, "What do you say when patients are cured when in a transcendental state?" in a fairly bitch fashion. Dr. Lanyon is a proud materialistic atheist who believes he is rather courageous due to his spiritual impoverishment, thus he is rather annoyed by the fact that Dr. Jekyll has attempted to combine science with spirituality, stating to his associate in a self-righteous manner, "...as a man of science, you cannot believe in this transcendental medicine. You seek the alchemist's goal but using modern scientific research results obtained from other men's research. A bit lazy, wouldn't you say?" Naturally, Dr. Jekyll is not too happy with Dr. Lanyon insinuations, so he defends himself by proclaiming, "History will prove me right, at least I hope so [...] I shall not cease working until you all have been completely shown that transcendental medicine is no threat to empiricism...But rather it permits action that paves the way to transcendentalism..." Ultimately, the dinner concludes on a humorous note when an elderly highly decorated military man known simply as 'General' (Patrick Magee of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and Barry Lyndon (1975)) stating in a conspicuously comical fashion, "Finish off this war, Sir. Only peace assures progress."

After dinner, Fanny declares, "It's ruined our night" after it is revealed that the little girl featured at the beginning of the film was murdered right outside on the street not long ago, but the party guests attempt to keep up the semblance of a happy and celebratory attitude by giving various priceless gifts to the engaged couple. Dr. Jekyll's mother gives her son and his fiancée a once-lost painting by Dutch painter Johan Vermeer that was apparently hidden in a basement for two centuries which Reverend Regan is rather fond of as reflected in his rather pretentious remark regarding the work that it is, "The apotheosis of all humanity in my opinion." When Fanny attempts to prove she is not completely brain-dead by describing the painting as "transcendental," she is berated by her social-climbing mother for having the gall to be a woman who actually expresses her opinion about something. When Mrs. Jekyll shows off a 13th-century Teutonic warrior helmet, Germanophobia comes out in full force, with Dr. Lanyon describing the artifact as "The quintessence of collective fear" and the Reverend describing it as, "A work of an artist guided by Satan." Unfortunately, all the bourgeois posturing comes to a swift end when someone brutally rapes and kills a petite virginal teenage girl who performed a dance at the party before the dinner. To demonstrate his knightly chivalry, the General demands that all the women be locked in rooms and have their doors guarded. Naturally, it does not take the General long to overact, as he accidentally kills Mrs. Jekyll coachman and he apologizes in a somewhat absurd and less than sincere manner by remarking, "Misfortune follows misfortune. Madame, I have murdered your chauffeur. My humblest apologies. It's war. It's like war. The soldier fires...the good lord carries the bullets." Upon inspect the dead teenage dancer's corpse, it is revealed that her vagina was ripped open to the point of making a hole five times its original size. On top of that, the phantom-like murderer's mysterious meat-cleaver was so long and sharp on the end that it pierced through the teen's stomach from the inside.

While the General acts like he is leading a major war campaign around Dr. Jekyll's humble abode, he becomes so deathly afraid upon being confronted by the considerably grotesque-looking Mr. Hyde that he does not even have the testicular fortitude to shoot him. Ultimately, Mr. Hyde decides to have a little fun with the General by ripping off all his prized medals from his military tunic and stomping on them and then ties the old military fart to a chair and declares, "You will be transported to paradise old man." Indeed, Mr. Hyde proceeds to hump the General's hot slut daughter from behind while forcing the rather sexually repressed military man to watch the debauchery. Needless to say, the General is rather perturbed to see a monster member that is as long as a sword go in and out of his debutante daughter's naughty bits. While the cock killed the teenage dancer, the General's daughter demonstrates she has more martial prowess in her pussy than her father has in his entire body by wallowing in being rammed from behind with Mr. Hyde's ludicrously large liver-lifter. When Mr. Hyde

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eventually gets bored and leaves, the General promises not to punish his daughter if he unites her, but when she frees him the military man unwittingly reveals his decidedly dysfunctional (and some would say incestuous) sadomasochistic sexual proclivities by bending over his little girl and brutally savagely whipping her bare ass. Meanwhile, Mr. Hyde demonstrates he is half-homo by savagely sodomizing Dr. Jekyll's young blond twink friend Mr. Moore to the point where he is almost killed and puddles of post-anal-virginity blood surround his limp body. Mr. Hyde also murders Dr. Jekyll's Arab servant 'Apu' when he attempts to go to the police to get help, but the man with the monster cock might be a tad bit xenophobic as demonstrated by the fact that he penetrates the towelhead with a sword instead of his cock.

When Reverend Regan delivers a letter to Fanny from Mr. Hyde where he tells his fiancée that it will not be possible for him to see her that night and that she needs to wait for him to come to her, the little lady gets suspicious and decides to investigate. Ultimately, Fanny finds her beau in his lab and watches him transform into Mr. Hyde upon taking a somewhat hysterical bath in liquid that looks like sewer water. Needless to say, Fanny is petrified when she sees Mr. Hyde emerge from the bathtub and declare, "Fill me with hatred." As Mr. Hyde, the quasi-supernaturally schizophrenic character proceeds to torture and kill any and every person he can find in the house, including his mother, who he forces to endlessly play the piano while he is terrorizing people. When Mr. Hyde finds Fanny, he sinisterly states to her, "My dream is to watch you die" and "My pleasure is seeing your dead body" and ultimately severely injures her hitting her with a poisonous African arrow that was given to the two love birds by the Reverend as a wedding gift. Naturally, when Mr. Hyde bumps into the General and his daughter, he kills them both with the poisonous, even though the latter declares her love to him since she loved being fucked by him. When Mr. Hyde runs into Dr. Lanyon, he convinces him to follow him to his lab and plays a phonograph where Dr. Jekyll demands that he give his 'friend' a certain chemical if he ever wants to see him again. Of course, Lanyon reluctantly obliges and when Mr. Hyde transforms into Dr. Jekyll upon drinking the serum, the old materialistic scientist is so shocked by what he sees that he cannot believe his eyes, thereupon causing him to suffer a heart attack that he drops dead from.

After his old buddy/nemesis Dr. Lanyon abruptly drops dead, Dr. Jekyll retrieves his ladylove Fanny even though she complains, "You're not really here, Henry. You're dead [...] You're wounded me. You said you pleased in seeing me dead," so he attempts to calm her fears by remarking, "Both of my faces are me. They're both me and each of them is perfectly sincere. I am not more myself when I throw off inhibitions, plunge into wickedness, than I am when I work long hours to acquire knowledge to alleviate suffering from pain." While Fanny rests on a bed, Dr. Jekyll begins running a bath so that he can transform again and while he is doing so he explains to her, "I'm rather pleased with my body as

it is. Each experience costs me five years of life and I know, little by little, I am losing control of my original, my higher self, more and more I identify with Dr. Edgar Hyde, my second bestial self." Fanny must really like what Jekyll has to see about getting in touch with his "bestial self," as she storms in the bathroom, pushes her beau out of the way, and jumps into the thus bathtub, thus transforming her into a salaciously sadistic beastess with startling red and yellow eyes. Of course, Dr. Jekyll does the same thing and the two celebrate by completely destroying everything inside the house, including the priceless Vermeer painting and all their other wedding gifts. Of course, they also make sure every single person in the house his dead, including a negress maid, whose unclad corpse is hung upside down from a rope while blood drips out of its cuntlet (which, for whatever reason, auteur Borowczyk opted to get a super extreme close-up shot of). After setting the house on fire (in one particularly potent shot, a book reading "In Celebration of the Engagement of Doctor Henry Jekyll and Miss Fanny Osbourne" burns), the two loony lovebirds get in a coach and proceeds to passionately fuck while licking one another's wounds in a literally and figuratively climatic closing scene juxtaposed with otherworldly orgasmic music that immaculately accentuates the 'eccentrically evil' sort of ecstasy the two characters are experiencing. What the two lovers do afterwards is anyone's guess, but one must at least assume that they end up fucking a number of people to death. Personally, I find that *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* concludes on a rather romantic note as Jekyll/Hyde and Fanny become united for eternity in debauchery (as Hyde reveals before they both transform for the last time, he has ran out of the antidote that allows to morph back to normal).

Undoubtedly, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* makes the perfect triple feature with Paul Morrissey's Warhol produced monster movies *Blood for Dracula* (1974) and *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) because not only do all three films feature Udo Kier portraying a classic monster movie villain, but also because they are all sadistically satirical subtextual works that play with genre conventions in a most subversive way to the point of making a mirthful mockery out of its Victorian source material. Of course, whereas Morrissey's films are culturally cynical anti-leftist works that cleverly, if not callously, criticize everything from communism to the counterculture movement, Borowczyk flick features a full-force antisocial assault against not only Victorian culture and mores, but the British Empire and old school English character in general. Indeed, in its depiction of Arab and negro servants as symbolic as Britain's colonialism and inclusion of an arrogant psychopathic General, hypocritical pervert Priest, and smugly materialist scientist, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* manages to cover most of the uniquely unflattering elements of what was once the largest and most powerful empire in the world. Of course, the fact that Borowczyk changed Dr. Jekyll from a sort of philanthropic humanist who tragically develops a second evil alter-ego after taking the serum like in Robert

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Louis Stevenson's novella into a somewhat unhinged pansy pervert scientist who delights in being able to commit grotesque sex murders while in the inconspicuous guise of an evil alter-ego demonstrates what little respect the Polish auteur had for 'Victorian gentlemen' and humanity in general. Indeed, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* is certainly more effective than any of the anti-British Nazi propaganda films I have ever seen. One could certainly interrupt the end of the film where the titular antihero and antiheroine destroy everything they own, set the house on fire, and then proceed to copulate in a coach as Borowczyk's histrionic tribute to the death of the Victorian era.

One of the most striking aspects of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* is that it manages to juggle classic Victorian Gothic elegance with decidedly depraved kitsch debauchery involving giant erect monster members and mutilated negress meat curtains, among other things. In that respect, aside from marginal (and inferior) works like Giulio Questi's rarely-seen *E.T.A. Hoffmann* adaptation *Vampirismus* (1982), the only film I can really compare it to is Leslie Megahey's Sheridan Le Fanu adaptation *Schalcken the Painter* (1979) as both works feature classic aesthetic influences ranging from Vermeer to the use of chiaroscuro as seemingly influenced by the works of Early Netherlandish painters like Jan van Eyck and Hugo van der Goes with scenes of seedy psycho-sexual horror, but of course Borowczyk's film is much more debauched (notably, Megahey described *Schalcken the Painter* as being highly influenced by Borowczyk's *Blanche* (1972)). While Megahey's film features a fairly traditional music, the score created by Bernard Parmegiani for Borowczyk's film is fairly ambient and hypnotic and oftentimes resembles the musical pieces created by Bobby Beausoleil and The Freedom Orchestra for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* (1972), thus further accentuated the film's already ominously oneiric yet orgasmic tone. Indeed, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* feels like it was directed by a goodhumored Jack the Ripper with a hatred for the English that transcends that of the average drunken IRA member. Personally, I think that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are sort of stand-ins for Borowczyk himself, as the former reflects the normal everyday man and the latter represents him as the cinematic auteur who sires the most waywardly wanton and elegantly of celluloid dreams, with *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* most certainly being one of his most accomplished fetishistic filmic fantasies as a work that boldly blurs the line between the artsy fartsy and the aberrantly absurd.

-Ty E

THE PENALTY

Wallace Worsley (1920)

The Penalty (1920) is an American silent Horror classic that examines the psychology of a legless American gangster by the name of "Blizzard." This gangster has become full of hatred due to the accidental amputation of his legs as a young child. Blizzard's ultimate sinister plans are to take the legs of the surgeon's (the one that cut off his legs) daughter's fiancé and start an anarchic uprising in the city of San Francisco. Only a man with such repressed hatred could conspire such plans against his fellow man. Lon "The Man of a Thousand Faces" Chaney was appropriately cast as the gangster Blizzard who is bent on misanthropic revenge.

The surgeon's daughter also sculpts a statue of Blizzard in the form of Satan. Blizzard is proud to be immortalized in the rock form of the prince of darkness. He is a man that is well aware of his hatred and his obsession with destroying the lives of others. Blizzard's lack of legs is a constant reminder to himself that he can only do the devil's work. He rabidly laughs in hatred when plotting and discussing destruction. Lon Chaney does a superb job expressing the maniacal laughter of this legless madman. But what is "The Penalty" of a man who has made his life's goal to destroy the lives of others? The price that Blizzard pays is honestly honorable and admirable. Blizzard confronts a fate that has been handed to him by his own actions. Fate unfortunately caused Blizzard to become legless as a child. When Blizzard became older he consciously decided to act cruel and heartless. The reality is that many hateful men like Blizzard die richly without confronting one of their sins. But then again, who knows what is really going on those men's minds. Do they really have the courage to confront who they really are? The Penalty is without doubt one of the finest American silent horror films. My taste in silent horror generally stays in the realm of the masters of German expressionism. The Penalty utilizes psychology horror in a similar way to the German silent masters (I.e. F.W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh*) yet lacks the intricate set designs. The real wealth of *The Penalty* lies in Lon Chaney's performance as the sadistic gangster. I honestly haven't divulged too much into his acting career. It is about time that I do.

-Ty E

Wally Koz (1988)

555 is a 1980s shot-on-video horror flick that appeared before the age of digital video. One of the best things about the old days of horror films was that not just anyone could go out and make garbage. Garbage that has now flooded the independent horror world. Until recently, you at least needed a decent chunk of change to create even the lowest quality gore fest. 555 is in the same wretched boat with shot-on-video horror movies like Crazy Fat Ethel 2 and Redneck Zombies. Although these films are complete pieces of zombie shit, they at least offer the viewer something to be entertained by. The most brutal scene in 555 is featured on the direct-to-video VHS release cover. It features a young man's head in the hand of the killer that just decapitated him. The truth is, 555 is low on gore and high on horribly contrived dialogue. For some reason a group of cops are convinced that a Vietnam vet and former POW is a psycho killer that dresses up like a pussy hippy. They are more interested in getting the guy locked up (or more likely killed) than actually providing evidence that incriminates the ex soldier. The pathetic bickering between the cops, an ugly whorish news reporter, and some other clowns takes up most of 555.

The killer resembles something between a homosexual Charles Manson and Rasputin in drag. This lame and fragile looking killer is funnier than he is scary (actually he's not scary at all). Every time this turd popped up on screen I couldn't help but laugh and even feel relieved. The killer's massacring of young couples adds relief from having to hear the genius cops act tough amongst one another. The killer also carries a dagger/knife that looks like a child's toy. The blade on the dagger has a phallic shape that looks like it could be similar in shape to Lucifer's special hot poker. 555 director Wally Koz recently died and apparently he also had a job as a miner/gold inspector. Unsurprisingly he had no film making experience prior to directing 555, which he made with the help of his friends and family. I got the feeling that 555 was more of a "labor of love" than a serious effort in horror film making. The film is something that can be put on when watching with drunk and/or stoned friends. If you don't feel like watching the movie but want to see the handful of killings, forward toward the end of the film as all they killings are recapped. Maybe Wally Koz was trying to help horror fans out with the ending.

-Ty E

THE INHERITORS

Walter Bannert (1983)

When the typical sub-literate American hears the words “German” or “Germany,” Nazi is most likely the first thing to cross the American public school indoctrinated citizen’s thoughtful mind. You can graduate an American high school without ever actually reading a book but you will no doubt know about “the holocaust” and the evils committed by the Teutonic devils during the second World War. For some reason, even Germans of today are held responsible for the deeds of their grandparents and great-grandparents. That being said, one has to be 100% hateful and anti-Social to be a German Neo-Nazi. This is what makes the 1982 German film *The Inheritors* directed by Walter Bannert so entertaining.

Despite being from Germany, *The Inheritors* has the same typical cheesy Hollywood productive values so prevalent during the 1980s. The film features long haired Nazis and young men wearing jeans that would look more appropriate on a trailer park Grandma. *The Inheritors* features very few Aryan looking Germans. In fact, one may even mistake some of these New Wave National Socialist lads as Kosher boys. I like to think that just maybe *The Inheritors* was a huge hit in the tiny state of Israel. Nothing fuels the homicidal energy of an IDF soldier than thinking about how poor Jews were led like sheep to the gas chambers. With the quality of the Neo-Nazi recruits in *The Inheritors*, however, one shouldn’t expect a second holocaust. *The Inheritors* feature two troubled and lonely young men as they pick up the hobby of goose stepping and holocaust denying for fun. The boys are from very different social backgrounds, but they come together for their love of the Fatherland and hatred of their parents. The rich young man featured in *The Inheritors* has a bitch of mom who can’t help but belittle her son every chance she gets. At least with fatherly Neo-Nazi leaders, the boy seems to have people that care about him. Not only does he have a big group of social misfit friends of all ages, but he also gets to wear a cool red armband. Probably the most offensive scene in *The Inheritors* is when one of the young and stoic Neo-Nazi teenagers sports an SS regalia uniform minus wearing pants or a shirt. He then forces a willing girl to perform fellatio on him in dedication to the fuehrer (or at least one can only assume). A boy also fucks a girl who couldn’t care less if her suitor is a Nazi. Later the German patriot finds out that the girl used him merely for fun and she now has another man. Neo-Nazi Germany will have no tolerance for sluts that are just in it for the sex and are unwilling to produce Aryan superbabies for the good of the Teutonic race. Despite being about Neo-Nazis, *The Inheritors* unfortunately does not feature much hate driven political rhetoric or minority beatings. The group is portrayed for the most part as a fringe group that takes photos of anti-patriot German traitors then later beats them to a bloody pulp. *The Inheritors* kind

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of reminded me of a John Hughes film without intentional comedy and whiny spoiled American teens. At the end of The Inheritors I felt something truly hateful was missing, but it was a good way to waste 80 minutes or so.

-Ty E

THE CALIFORNIA REICH

Walter F. Parkes (1975)

Whenever the mainstream media documents a group of neo-nazis, they always look for the most impotent and pathetic racist rabble they can find. The prerequisite for a neo-nazi to be on television is homemade swastika armbands, inarticulate philistine idealism, and the blind worship of Adolf Hitler as an invincible Christ-like figure. In the 1975 documentary *The California Reich*, a group of neo-brownshits hilariously bastardize the American pledge of allegiance with the following catchy jingle, "I pledge of allegiance to Adolf Hitler, the immortal leader of our race and to the new order for which he stands. One great cause, sacred and invincible, the hope and future for all Aryan men. Heil Hitler!" The subjects featured in *The California Reich* look a little different from the typical modern day media image of bald-headed-albino-neo-nazi-baboons roaming for lone minorities to drag from their beat up Japanese junker trucks as many of the neo-nazi troops featured in the documentary seem like hippies that had a bad trip on acid and forgot about the brilliant metaphysical philosophy of karma. The neo-nazis that do not look like lost Jerry Garcia fans seem like early comic book fans that took the ideology of Superman too seriously and decided to save the world from the reign of Tschandala. In fact, the neo-nazis featured in *The California Reich* make most of the white nationalists featured in the 1991 documentary *Blood in the Face* seem like an elite Aryan aristocracy.

In 1966, Garrity exposed the Canadian Jewish Congress's role in organizing Neo-Nazis

While watching most of these neo-nazi SS-schlock-fest documentaries, I always wonder how these gangs of misfit untermensch ever get organized in the first place. One leader of a 1970s era neo-nazi party, Frank Collins, was discovered to have been born Jewish in Dachau concentration camp. In 1979, Collins was arrested for molesting one of the members of his Hitler's Youth group. Despite being a holocaust survivor himself, Collins planned to march his crew of nazi neurotics through Skokie, Illinois, an area that had the most concentrated Jewish population in the United States during that time. Despite winning a landmark legal battle (which gave him undeserved media coverage) to march through Skokie (an area that had a large holocaust survivor population as well), Collins decided to call the march off. It is without question that like his Talmudic brothers, Collins had an instinctive knack for marketing and exploiting legality. Recently, it was revealed by Jewish neo-conservative author Ezra Levant in his latest book, *Shakedown*, that the Canadian Jewish Congress paid an ex-cop (John Garrity) to infiltrate a Neo-Nazi organization. Garrity was used to build up the membership of the neo-nazi group and professionally organize them so that they would at least be worthy of sensational media coverage. The ultimate goal of the Canadian Jewish Congress was to give to the appearance

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of a perceived neo-nazi threat so that Canadian freedom of speech would be partly demolished (eventually resulting in Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act) to satisfy the conspiring Judaic organization's desire to criminalize criticism against Canadian Jewry. Knowing this cryptic propaganda war led by a prominent Jewish organization, it is not hard for me to question who funded and organized the group of degenerate fan-boy-fascists featured in *The California Reich*. In fact, the American Nazi party unit commander in Los Angeles, California was at one time a Jewish homosexual named Leonard Holstein, a fact that American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell (whose father was a Vaudevillian comedian that was friends with Jewish propagandist Walter Winchell and Groucho Marx) was well aware of. Crypto-Jew Daniel Burros, the man that was the inspiration for Henry Bean's engaging film *The Believer*, was also the American Nazi Party's greatest propagandist.

Aside from a couple of the sapless stormtroopers, none of the neo-nazi leaders featured in *The California Reich* seem to be of the chosen race. Neo-nazi leader of the San Francisco movement, Allen Vincent, is clearly a schizoid individual who openly admits that he developed a second personality while being detained in various reform schools and prisons. Facts like these make *The California Reich* an often unintentionally hilarious documentary, certainly not a production capable of recruiting functioning individuals for the neo-Hitlerite movement. I especially enjoyed a scene in the documentary where a man wearing a swastika Santa Clause costume comes into nazi headquarters and gives out presents to good little Aryan boys and girls. Easily, the individual with the most martial prowess and discipline featured in *The California Reich* is Ken McAllister, a factory worker and former small arms instructor for the marines. The most delusional (but seemingly harmless) neo-nazi featured in the documentary is Paul Raymond, a good ol' boy who lives in a small town (only a square mile in size) and drives around in his brother's intimidating military truck (with a swastika on the door). Raymond brags about how not many towns can claim they have an active neo-nazi movement, proving that even rural Americans have wild dreams. What all of the neo-nazi leaders featured in *The California Reich* have in common is that they have no idea how impotent their situation is and no matter how many times they pray to their homemade altars of Adolf Hitler, nothing will change their hopeless cause.

The only thing that slightly disturbed me about *The California Reich* is the behavior of the neo-nazi's children in the documentary. One parent asks his 5 year old child what he wants to be when he grows up and he replies, "Police-man." When the parent asks the child why he wants to be a policeman, he simply replies, "Kill Niggers." It is one thing for the neo-nazis to teach their children racist views but another to ingrain them at an early age with such barbaric and pointless racial slurs that only further compound the social problems that are bound to come about revolving around their 'unconventional' upbringing. I

would actually like to see a documentary featuring the children of The California Reich as they are now. I doubt they haven adopted the esoteric Hitlerism occult philosophies of Savitri Devi and Miguel Serrano as it is doubtful their parents ever took the time to read (let alone understand) Mein Kampf. It would be no surprise to me if these children grew up to be crackheads and enthusiastic participants in miscegenation. After all, if any racial pride should exist in white folks, it should be in European kultur, honest work, and cultural achievement, not in the materialistic obsession with the lack of melanin in ones skin (something that afrocentric types always obsess over). The Third Reich may have only lasted 12 years but the California Reich never existed. Modern day California could be best described as reconquista-California-wreck.

-Ty E

MANHUNTER
MANHUNTER

Walter Grauman (1974)

I would be lying if I did not confess that, despite my lifelong interest in true crime and dark subjects in general, I oftentimes get an instantaneous sense of guttural disgust every time I hear about films that—whether intentionally or unintentionally—superficially depict and/or glorify serial killers like David Fincher’s *SE7EN* (1995) and most of the Hannibal Lecter franchise flicks, so it comes as somewhat of a slightly dark irony that *Manhunter* (1986) directed by Michael Mann (*The Last of the Mohicans*, *Heat*) is, at least in some ways, one of my favorite films of all-time, but, then again, I love it more because of its style and mise-en-scène than its savage subject matter. Indeed, while I also have some nostalgic affection for Jonathan Demme’s *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991)—the second and certainly most popular cinematic adaptation of Thomas Harris’ ‘Hannibal the Cannibal’ novels—Mann’s inordinately corpse cold yet cool and visually mystifying movie is certainly the one I find myself coming back to most often as a serial killer flick that manages to be more stylistically slick than it is thematically sick as if directed by a super sophisticated extraterrestrial with a detached perspective of *Lustmord* and human emotions and behavior in general. Once described favorably by a reviewer from the *Financial Times* as, “If Dostoevsky had been hired to script an episode of *MIAMI VICE*,” the film was actually (but, somehow, unsurprisingly) a commercial bomb that achieved more successful in Europe than the United States and would not achieve the cult status it has today until years of cable TV syndication and various home video releases and of course the great commercial and critical success of *The Silence of the Lambs*.

Originally filmed under the same name as Harris’ source novel *Red Dragon* (1981), *Manhunter* was, to the chagrin of auteur Mann, rechristened at the behest of Dino De Laurentiis as the (in)famous Italian producer did not want the film to be confused with Michael Cimino’s shockingly underrated and rather racially based box office bomb *Year of the Dragon* (1985). Needless to say, the title of the film is not the only thing that De Laurentiis defiled as the same producer, who previously reedited both John Milius’ *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) and David Lynch’s *Dune* (1984), also had Mann’s movie cut for time yet luckily the standard cut is arguably more immaculate than the director’s cut (which is less than ten minutes longer) as it flows better and has a more otherworldly alien vibe due to missing various exposition scenes. Apparently heavily visually influenced by the ‘high style’ of great production designer Ferdinando Scarfiotti, who was behind such great works as Bernardo Bertolucci’s *The Conformist* (1970) and Luchino Visconti’s *Death in Venice* (1971), around the time he started *Miami Vice* (1984-1990), Mann had certainly yet to develop his signature aesthetic when he directed his first (made-for-TV) movie *The Jericho Mile* (1979),

but his first two theatrical releases *Thief* (1981) and *The Keep* (1983) unequivocally demonstrate a singular visual worthy of an old master that feels like a sort of Kubrick-meets-Friedkin neo-expressionist chic (incidentally, according to Friedkin biographer Nat Segaloff, Mann originally wanted the fellow Chicago Jewish filmmaker to play Hannibal).

While the novels of source writer Thomas Harris are clearly based on real-life serial killers to the point of gross cliché, *Manhunter* is completely contra John McNaughton's *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986) when it comes to aesthetic refinement. Indeed, as Mann once stated himself in regard to his special school of serial killer filmmaking, "I get bored if I treat the events realistically. I'd rather try to conceptualize them. The torments of the human mind included. I think that I express the fantasies in an expressionist way, which always brings me to the fantastic." For example, instead of depicting the serial killer's more aberrant ritualistic/fetishistic behavior like ejaculating at the site of his less than festive family slaughters and placing glass in women's vaginas like in Harris' source novel, Mann's morosely mad Francis Dollarhyde has a super chic new wave bachelor pad where he blasts Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" while attempting to blow bullets into the boys-in-blue during the film's semi-surreal climax. Additionally, whereas *The Silence of the Lambs*—a film that is, somewhat ironically, undoubtedly Demme's most critically and commercially success work yet arguably intentionally least overtly 'Demme-esque'—is a coldly clinical yet surprisingly 'light' serial killer flick that feels like it could have been directed by its serial killer 'antihero' Hannibal (after all, he is the true hero of the film), Mann's movie is marvelously Mann-esque in the best sense as a singularly stylish cinematic work where, unlike the auteur's previous unfortunately uneven gothic-horror-holocaust hybrid *The Keep* (1983), the auteur seamlessly assimilates his style to its source novel (though Harris apparently does not feel the same and apparently only had positive things to say about Scottish actor Brian Cox's performance as Hannibal). While it might be fair to describe *Manhunter* as virtual audiovisual porn for hopelessly 1980s nostalgic aesthetes, it is also one highly memorable movie that, arguably quite unlike the arguably contrived, cold, and calculated *The Silence of the Lambs*, rewards the viewer on subsequent viewings. In short, *Manhunter* is, contrary to bien pensant film dorks and lamestream film critics alike, the most idiosyncratic and masterful of the 'Hannibal Lecter' (or, in this case, Hannibal Lecktor) films and it is also, somewhat ironically, the least faithful to its source novel (not surprisingly, *Hannibal Rising* (2007) is the only film that Harris penned the screenplay for and it is indubitably the worst film in the uniquely uneven franchise), not to mention the fact that it does not even feature Sir Philip Anthony Hopkins (who seemed to want to blot out fellow Brit Brian Cox's Hannibal from cinema history when he cynically opted to appear in zio-hack Brett Ratner's patently pointless 2002 'remake' *Red Dragon*).

MANHUNTER

I have to confess that it is probably Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* and its inclusion of songs like "Alone" by Colin Newman and "Goodbye Horses" by Q Lazzarus (which was later covered in a Buffalo Bill-esque fashion by the Tollund Men) that sparked my initial interest in goth, deathrock, and darkwave music. and thus I see it as a sort of early formative film in my life as a cinephilic aesthete but I also simply cannot deny that *Manhunter*—a film with its own similarly crucial and potent (yet sometimes admittedly goofy) soundtrack—is, for me, the stronger, more immaculate, and idiosyncratically aesthetically satisfying film in almost every single way. Also, Mann's movie does not have the unintentionally campy cartoon antics of Anthony Hopkins to throw one out of the film. Indeed, while he might not be much more than a creepy cipher, I have to confess that I am more of a Buffalo Bill bro than a Lecter lover (Of course, the same could be more or less said for Cox's Lecter and Francis 'The Tooth Fairy' Dollarhyde, though Cox never becomes cartoonish). Whereas Demme's film is a slick adaptation of Harris' novel that features just enough artistic flourishes and 'pop pathos' to make it memorable and satisfying enough to be a highly re-watchable classic, *Manhunter* is a film that is, not unlike like Stanley Kubrick's horror classic *The Shining* (1980), an exemplary example of an auteur totally transcending the source material and creating something great in spite of its obscenely overrated source writer. In short, *Manhunter* feels like a stand-alone film and certainly not the forgotten first film of an increasingly sociopathic and sleazy film-cum-TV franchise that, at least in thematic and aesthetic terms, seems rather ironically committed to spiritual cannibalism. Still fresh after forty years (whereas *Rat(n)er*'s remake is hopelessly and painfully typical of the 2000s in every single way, including its absurd casting of perennially hokey human dildo Ed Norton as Will Graham), Mann's movie might as well be the creation of an extraterrestrial entity as it has a look and feel the screams uncanny utopia despite technically diving deep into dark hearts and demented delirium. Indeed, somehow *Manhunter* manages to put scenic oceanic sunsets on the same aesthetic, and in turn, emotional, plane as serial killer bachelor pads without seeming too schlocky or silly and this is exactly one of the reasons the film is so great.

While certainly a rare film where the style almost creates the substance, *Manhunter* still has an interesting storyline that touches on some aberrantly compelling themes. Indeed, the story of an (ex)FBI profiler named Will Graham (William Petersen) who reluctantly gets back in the game to catch a super sick family-slaughtering serial killer simply known as the 'The Tooth Fairy' (Tom Noonan) and, even more reluctantly, seeks the professional criminal profiling advice of another serial killer by the name of Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Brian Cox) who was responsible for causing him to abscond to a heavenly Florida beach from his prestigious G-man position due to a mental breakdown caused by a

near deadly altercation while apprehending said homicidal Herr Döktor, the film largely successfully manages to juggle both the internal struggles of the protagonist and the killer he is trying to catch whilst wowing the viewer with an aesthetic package that is no less meticulous than a Kubrick flick. As the film's title, which undoubtedly has a dual meaning referencing both protagonist Graham and the Tooth Fairy, certainly indicates, *Manhunter* is also a film about the soul-draining psychological struggle of the hunt, albeit in a somewhat less obvious way than say the 1932 pre-Code classic *The Most Dangerous Game* (notably surprisingly, David Fincher would make reference to the film in his uneven *Zodiac* (2007)). Notably, the film also confirms Georges Bataille's words, "Sacrifice though, while like war a suspension of the commandment not to kill, is the religious act above all others," albeit in a somewhat sick ironical way where the serial killer's preternatural self-stylized religious views result in pretty much the opposite of his intent. While featuring content that is less sexually subversive (for example, the Tooth Fairy is a virtual necrophile in the book and a "secretor" that, among other things, wedges a piece of glass in a female victim's labia) and an ending that is certainly happier than its source novel, Mann's movie is only superficially normie-friendly, hence its somewhat fitting relegation to the cult realm.

Due to SE7EN and various numerous *The Silence of the Lambs*-inspired virtual crappy carbon-copy clones and cons like Hebraic hack Jon Amiel's feminist filmic feces *Copycat* (1995) and Dominic Sena's conspicuously anti-Southern/anti-white trash-masquerading-as-art *Kalifornia* (1993), the serial killer (sub)genre has largely become an all-around artistically bankrupt trend and the singular stylistic majesty of a film like *Manhunter* in comparison to such frivolous filth really underscores that (a great example of the nadir of the (sub)genre is the Gary Busey vehicle *Rough Draft* (1998) aka *Diary of a Serial Killer*). Indeed, I recently watched *The Golden Glove* (2019) aka *Der Goldene Handschuh*—a film based on the excremental escapades of Hamburg-based dipsomaniacal serial-whore-killer Fritz Honka—and it is not simply because of its tiresome Turkmite auteur Fatih Akin's glaringly grotesque anti-kraut angle that the film is so painfully insufferable (after all, Iranian auteur Sohrab Shaheed Salles' epic morbid whorehouse (anti)melodrama *Utopia* (1983) is hardly Teutonophile-friendly yet it is a virtual unsung masterpiece of sorts). While *The Golden Glove* is surely a sick and repulsive film that does not inspire one's faith in humanity, it is also a rather redundant piece of cinematic rehash that owes absolutely everything to German *Lustmord* cinema history of the past ranging from Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) to Robert Siodmak's *The Devil Strikes at Night* (1957) aka *Nachts wenn der Teufel kam* to Ulli Lommel's *The Tenderness of Wolves* (1973) aka *Die Zärtlichkeit der Wölfe* to Jörg Buttgerit's *Schramm* (1993). Likewise, Austrian one-time auteur Gerald Kargl's *Angst* (1983)—a film that, among other things,

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heavily informed Argentinean-French auteur Gaspar Noé's entire style and practically single-handedly reinvented the serial killer (sub)genre (though few people noticed aside from Noé and Buttgereit)—makes *The Golden Glove* seem like primitive child's play by comparison in terms of its seemingly immaculate combination of enterprising technique and viscerally grotesque subject matter, but I digress. Of course, the serial killer subject matter of *Manhunter* almost feels secondary, if not irrelevant, as the film is an exercise in pure unmitigated style, which becomes apparent when one watches director Mann's previous different genre works like *Thief* and *The Keep*.

While *The Silence of the Lambs* is noted for being a crucial influence on *The X-Files* (1993–2018), especially before the show turned into a bad (and oftentimes unintentional) joke (incidentally, Tom 'The Tooth Fairy' Noonan would also appear as a serial killer in the great fourth season *The X-Files* episode 'Paper Hearts,' albeit of the all the more putrid pederastic sort), few seem to recognize the imperative aesthetic and thematic influence that *Manhunter* had on the show's creator Chris Carter's following series *Millennium* (1996–1999). Described by some as a sort of 'The Thinking Man's *The X-Files*,' the show is decidedly darker and more esoteric than Carter's hit extraterrestrial-centered excursion and, not unlike *Manhunter*, centers on a moody and broody (ex)FBI agent that has a special talent for entering the oftentimes highly hermetic minds of serial killers, though it comes at the hefty metaphysically-draining price of destroying both his mental health and family life (indeed, as Harris describes the character of Will Graham in his novel, "He viewed his own mentality as grotesque but useful, like a chair made of antlers."). Of course, both *Manhunter* and William Friedkin's similarly aesthetically potent and idiosyncratic *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985) would lead actor William Petersen to a lifelong career as a fictional cop, most notably (but unfortunately) the almost lethally lame CBS drama series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–2015). While it is a damn shame that Petersen later opted for such light and lame roles in shit shows that are made to further pacify braindead boomers, he apparently had his reasons, or as he once claimed in regard to symbolically committing character hara-kiri, "After *MANHUNTER*, I had to actually kill off the character. I cut off most of my hair and dyed it blond. I changed my whole look just to get rid of him." Aside from television, *Manhunter* apparently had some influence in the English neofolk scene as Tony Wakeford's main musical outfit *Sol Invictus* (in collaboration with *Evil Twin*) sampled dialogue from Brian Cox's *Hannibal Lecter* for the epic 15-minute song "A Palace Of Worms."

Not unlike his fellow working-class kosher Chicagoan William Friedkin, Mann stands out among the stereotypical Hebraic Hollywood filmmaker in terms of his complete and utter lack of bullshit, sharp yet fair cynicism, and

unwavering commitment to certain streetwise truths. For example, Mann's underrated NBC series *Crime Story* (1986-1988)—a dark and gritty show that depicts a virtual anti-romance between an destructively obsessive wop cop and his guido gangster 'other-half'—depicts, among other things, Judaic leftist lawyers, Hebraic hoods and gangsters (notably, Ted 'Buffalo Bill' Levine even portrays a proudly koserh thug that literally moonlights as a lounge singer) and the auteur-cum-producer even had the gall to allow Abel Ferrara to direct the show's feature-length pilot episode. In *Manhunter*, Mann also cleverly cast Stephen Lang as degenerate tabloid journalist 'Freddy Lounds' in a pitch perfect performance worthy of *Der Stürmer* that totally blows away Philip Seymour Hoffman's lazy lame duck performance as the same character in rat-boy Ratner's patently pointless 're-make' *Red Dragon*. Needless to say, it is no small surprise as to why *Manhunter* received its greatest initial success in Europa where hubristic phoniness is more frowned upon and where the film was described by some as a masterpiece and favorably compared to Dostoevsky at a time when mindless and/or childish big budget blockbusters were vogue and escapism was the norm.

Speaking of *Miami Vice*, the hit NBC show touched on the theme of the thin line between art and criminality with its excellent fourth season episode 'Death and the Lady' where a pretentious art-porn auteur named Milton Glantz virtually anticipates Teutonic artsploitation auteur Marian Dora by making an artsy fartsy pornographic snuff film. Of course, *Manhunter's* Francis 'The Tooth Fairy' Dollarhyde is an aberrant avant-garde artist of sorts that, as inspired by his warped quasi-spiritual metapolitical influence from William Blake—a genius that Camille Paglia once somewhat rightly described, especially in the context of the film, as, "...the British Sade, as Emily Dickinson is the American Sade"—leaves behind ambitious artistic creations in the form of his grisly crime scenes (notably, Scottish auteur Donald Cammell touched on similar themes in a more overt way with his underrated third and ultimately penultimate film *White of the Eye* (1987)). Undoubtedly, what makes *Manhunter* different from all the other Hannibal Lec(k)tor films is that it makes art out of the socially aberrant phenomenon of *Lußtmord* while recognizing the (failed) transcendental potential of *Lußtmord*. Indeed, while the Tooth Fairy believes that, as Hannibal explains, "if one does what God does enough times, one will become as God is," he is left dead in the end lying on his back with worthless 'wings' of blood instead of achieving the beautifully brutal Blakeian *Red Dragon* of his deep dark dreams. As Mann himself explained himself in regard to the sort of person that degenerates into a serial killer, "...when people are not human anymore, they become bits... of matter." Had the Tooth Fairy not degenerated into a virtual black void of a man that finds it hard to even maintain a successful romantic relationship with an overly eager blind chick that is completely willing to overlook his social retardation, he might he became an artist worthy of making something in the vein of a great cinematic work like Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960)—a

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film that features a filmmaker ‘antihero’ of sorts that, not unlike Dollarhyde, enjoys shooting footage of his victims—instead of wasting his life on senselessly wasting other people. In fact, I would not be surprised if Mann’s films—most of which feature some sorts of criminal antihero—were the direct result of some pathological therapeutic need to express some criminal tendency. Also, I am pretty sure that there are tons of morons out there that consider films like *Thief*, *Manhunter*, *L.A. Takedown* (1989), *Heat* (1995), *Collateral* (2004), and *Public Enemies* (2009) to be more obscene than actual criminal acts.

As has been more than obviously alluded to throughout this review, the serial killer film has become a mostly banal ghetto genre that provides the mindless masses with an appeal to their more base instincts while simultaneously conveniently offering them an alibi for their darkest desires via disgustingly disingenuous pseudo-moralistic sermonizing, hence the importance of a film like Kargl’s *Angst* where, quite unlike Fincher’s *SE7EN*—a film that depicts its ‘John Doe’ character portrayed by Kevin Spacey as having virtual godlike powers in terms of keen intelligent and ascetic devotion—the killer is revealed to be not much more sophisticated than a drooling retard in terms of his thoughts and social skills. Undoubtedly, the genius of *Manhunter* is its equal distribution of aesthetic refinement, entertainment value, and moral integrity as a rather revolutionary serial killer flick that transcends the genre ghetto while somehow simultaneously paying tribute to it. In that sense, Mann’s movie anticipates the first season of *True Detective* (2014), though it provides you with a completely different aesthetic experience as a film that, despite its dark and dejecting true crime-inspired subject matter, is an absolute narcotizing joy in terms of sheer audiovisual prowess. Indeed, in that sense, Francis Dollarhyde might as well be Mann speaking to the filmgoer in regard to *Manhunter* when he defiantly declares: “It is in your nature to do one thing correctly: Tremble.”

Indeed, while that might sound like it is plagued with puffery, I dare anyone else to name another film where the filmmaker somehow gets away with depicting a superlatively sexually dysfunctional and atypically autistic creep as the sort of Beau Brummell of serial killers. Additionally, Mann’s movie certainly passes Paglia’s test in terms of genre as demonstrated by her words, “Gothic horror must be moderated by Apollonian discipline, or it turns into gross buffoonery. The run-of-the-mill horror film is anti-aesthetic and anti-idealizing. Its theme is sparagmos, the form-pulverizing energies of Dionysus. Horror films unleash the forces repressed by Christianity—evil and the barbarism of nature. Horror films are rituals of pagan worship.” Of course, *Manhunter* is both an expression and cautionary tale about such expressions of atavistic pagan worship where a damaged serial killer dudes self-destructive under the weight of his own increasing Dionysian drunkenness. Admittedly, Mann’s movie is similar to most serial killer films (aside from, say, *Zodiac*) in the sense that it demonstrates that is only

a matter of time before a serial killer fucks up. Unfortunately, the same can also be said of Mann's post-Heat career. After all, Manhunter may seem like a rather bleak film for the 1980s as an era that personified feel-good escapism and pie-in-the-sky utopias, but it seems rather uplifting compared to something like his Miami Vice (2006) movie reboot and his dreary Dillinger Gang flick Public Enemies. Undoubtedly, Mann's serial killer film is pure 1980s in the best sort of way as the auteur arguably exemplified the zeitgeist more than any other American filmmaker, so it almost seems like an artistic sin that he would work past the 1990s, let alone well into the 2010s, hence the steady drastic decline of his work.

-Ty E

THE LAUGHING MAN - CONFESSIONS OF A MURDERER
THE LAUGHING MAN - CONFESSIONS OF A MURDERER

Walter Heynowski (1966)

If there was ever a German soldier whose life vaguely resembled that of the character of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz played by Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), it is most unequivocally Siegfried Müller aka "Kongo" Müller; a veteran of the Wehrmacht who emigrated to the Republic of South Africa in 1962 and became a lethal Lieutenant for "Mad" Mike Hoare's mercenary outfit during the Congo Crisis in 1964. Although Müller never developed the murderous mania that would propel the character of Kurtz into acting as a virtual God for psychotic Southeastern Asian savages and revolting against his own country, the Teutonic trooper did wallow in a world of alcohol-fueled murder and souvenir skull collecting, thus leading some to believe he hit the terminal Third World nation with a tidal wave of Teuton terror. After being first featured in the documentary *Kommando 52* (1965), Müller – a supposed 'alive and well Nazi' hunting wild buck Negroes in the Congo – become an easy (with his Nazi medals and all) yet dubious icon of Western 'neo-colonialism.' Cinephiles might remember Kongo Müller and his death's-head obsessed mercenaries from Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi's *Mondo* masterpiece *Africa Addio* (1966); a devastating yet delightful documentary of discourteous death chronicling the bitter and brutal end of the colonial era in Africa. Müller was also the inspiration for the character of Henlein (Peter Carsten) from the underrated mercenary war-action flick *Dark of the Sun* (1968) aka *The Mercenaries* directed by Jack Cardiff, but unlike the fictional character created in anti-tribute to the German soldier, the real-life warrior was far from a pompous psychopath who attempted to slaughter his own multicultural compatriots as a true soldier's soldier who took care of all his men despite their continent of origin. In the East German documentary *Der Lachende Mann - Bekenntnisse eines Mörders* (1966) aka *The Laughing Man - Confessions of a Murderer* directed by Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann, one is treated to a focused face-to-face interview with Siegfried Müller about his strikingly singular life as one of only a handful of men who fought on both the Eastern Front during the Second World War and saw the African colonies crumble before his vivacious eyes. Condemned as an out-and-out Nazi who never severed his relationship with the swastika due to his insistence on proudly wearing the Iron Cross 1st Class he earned from the Third Reich during the Second World War despite now siding with the United States, Müller is treated like a born-again Aryan assassin in *The Laughing Man* by the completely compromised East Germany communist directors, but in the end, the charismatic career soldier would have the last laugh.

Beginning the production under determinedly dubious and totally false pretense by posing as a West German TV production team, deluded documentarians Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann lost any sense of journalistic

objectivity before even beginning to shoot a single frame of film for *The Laughing Man*, but I guess one should not expect anything less from corrupted kraut commies who masterfully massage the Slavic hands that feed them. Aptly titled *The Laughing Man* due to Kongo Müller's seemingly permanent smirk, it probably would not be an exaggeration to say that the German mercenary has a grin that would cause Conrad Veidt's character Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) to curtail his razor sharp Comprachico-constructed grimace. The son of a Lieutenant colonel in the German Wehrmacht (army), Prussian commando Siegfried Müller was born for war and, indeed, he waged it like a rebel warrior from the postcolonial era long before the European colonies ever capitulated. As someone who fought on the Eastern Front for the better part of the Second World War, Müller disguised himself as a Polish peasant by day, thus utilizing guerrilla rebellion tactics of 'undercover war' before desperate yellow, black, and brown people ever had the chance to murder their masters. Müller had his "Baptism of Fire" during the outbreak of World War II in 1939 on the Silesian-Polish frontier, earned the rank of 'First Lieutenant' on Hitler's birthday, and would conclude with war in 1945 by being partially lamed via a bullet in the backbone at the time of the Fatherland's apocalyptic defeat. After managing to escape from the East and becoming an American POW, Müller served with the Americans in the so-called Industrial police for two years, served with NATO in German units during the Korean war, and worked as an assistant manager at a hotel and restaurant (especially focusing on the bar as he likes a "good drink"), but the Congo was calling and he heroically answered as a European commando on permanent vacation in Africa with a special self-proclaimed interest in "revolutionary war." In the communist eyes of Heynowski and Scheumann, Kongo Müller is nothing more than a rare live killer Nazi on the loose who is bringing the same devastation to African negroes as he purportedly did to Eastern European Hebrews and their Slav compatriots. As for Müller, he believes his campaign in Africa is only similar to his tours of Europe in one manner: anti-bolshevism. Indeed, Müller makes no lie that he and his men, "are fighting in Africa for Europe" and that he it would be a "great pleasure" for him to join a Vietnam Legion and battle the Viet Cong. As a matter-of-fact kind of guy, especially when drinking his favorite alcoholic beverage (apparently, he adopted his affinity for firewater due to the "stagnant water" in Africa), Kongo Müller states quite proudly that it was, "necessary to show the blacks that white men were there, since the whites still have a fantastic name in Africa." Aside from discussing his bloody battles against rebels and his hobby of head-hunting and totenkopf trophy-collecting, Müller also discusses his strong relationship with the Goethe-Institut (aka Goethe Institute) and the need to spread Teutonic kultur around the world. Needless to say, killer cool commando Kongo Müller is a proud kraut through and through who brought carnage and charisma to the decidedly dark continent.

THE LAUGHING MAN - CONFESSIONS OF A MURDERER

Originally banned in West Germany for a number of years, *The Laughing Man* was quite hard to track down for many years for obvious reasons, but with the fall of the Berlin wall and 1990 German reunification, the documentary is nothing more than a curious piece of celluloid history. Essentially, directors Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann use Kongo Müller as propaganda 'proof' that West Germany, its master the United States, and its allies were run by crypto-fascists/capitalist-pigs with the career soldier – a man who proudly sports his Nazi Iron Cross – acting as sadist symbol of this worldwide 'Fourth Reich' of the free world. Inter-splicing photographs of mutilated Mandingo men and white men carrying white African skulls, the directors of *The Laughing Man* make it more than clear that Commie propaganda is all about Freudian projection as Müller's battles against rebels only deserve a feeble footnote when compared to Holodomor (a man-made Bolshevik-led famine that killed upwards of 7 million Ukrainians between 1932 and 1933), Maoist famines (which killed no less than 30 million between 1958 and 1961), and the countless communist campaigns of carnage that have raged throughout the African continent during the second half of the twentieth century. Now a cult film of sorts due to influential cineaste Amos Vogel's inclusion of the documentary in his revolutionary film history book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1972), *The Laughing Man* is now guaranteed a cinematic legacy of sorts, but, of course, being a politically radical Viennese Jew who was involved with early socialist Zionist groups as a youth and fled Austria during the National Socialist Anschluss in 1938, the film critic probably had his own personal reasons for including the documentary in his movie manual magnum opus. While Kongo Müller must have been Vogel's most daunting daytime nightmare in documentary form, I found the infamous mercenary mini-Führer to be an engaging relic of the past that is no longer relevant in the contemporary world. A micro-statured yet marvelously murderous man's man who found himself ill-equipped to live the civilian life after spending every single year of the Second World War battling Bolsheviks, only to see his beloved nation experience defeat, Kongo Müller naturally resumed his anti-rebel activities as a career mercenary in the Congo. If one thing is for sure, it is that Müller had marvelous taste in movies as indicated by his remark that Gualtiero Jacopetti – a man surely of greater artistic cinematic talent than Heynowski and Scheumann – is a "good director." Still, *The Laughing Man* is a must-see for history buffs and it certainly features more than a couple of laughs. After all, Kongo Müller manages to finish a bottle of Pernod by the end of the documentary as a bodacious blond beast who brought the antidote to the bolshevik bug in Africa. Unfortunately, diseases travel rather quickly in the Third World.

-Ty E

THE WARRIORS

Walter Hill (1979)

I must be slacking in regards to Hollywood philistine cinema because until the other night I had yet to see *The Warriors*. Going into the film, I did not have any serious expectations as far as quality cinema goes. Now after watching *The Warriors*, I must admit it is a fun barbaric flick full of cheesy gang romanticism. Essentially, *The Warriors* is the perfect film for those people that can only tolerate the first 1/3 of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. *The Warriors* has all the ultra-violence minus the intellectual pessimism that most Americans do not seem to be too fond of. Sure, *The Warriors* maybe a dystopian gang war film set sometime in the near future but I find such a world ideal. After all, there is no diversity in the modern world (most gangs taking their "cultural" cues from the American Negro) but the world that the *Warriors* battle in is as colorful as a rainbow on fire.

Like *A Clockwork Orange* before it, *The Warriors* immediately influenced vandalism (and even death) when it was initially screened in theaters for American audiences. Any film that influences violence and death is certainly doing something right for all great cinema has the ability to change reality. In a way, *The Warriors* director Walter Hill is a postmodern magician, an individual who through the power of cinema has manipulated reality with his own auteur vision. Of course, there is nothing brilliant or intellectually exceptional about the film itself. *The Warriors* is like a drug that brings excitement and potent entertainment from beginning to end, certainly positive cinematic qualities few films hold.

One of the most interesting aspects of *The Warriors* is that each gang has their own distinct wardrobe. Sure, most of these urban warfare uniforms look quite tacky nowadays but they certainly beat the jungle "uniforms" most modern gangs wear. After all, for all the talk of diversity in America, this country is becoming quite homogenized and mongrelized. The world of *The Warriors* features wild boy homo Dingos, effeminate Negro pimpz, baseball clowns, and multicultural skinheads. The protagonist gang, the *Warriors*, wear a humble yet masculine uniform of leather. The *Rogues*, the enemy gang of the *Warriors*, would have been better described as *The Scorpio Rising* gang in tribute to the Kenneth Anger film of the same name. The *Rogues* is led by a little loudmouthed turd by the name of Luther (played by David Patrick Kelly of *Twin Peaks* infamy) who is easily the most memorable yet despicable character in the film.

Another positive aspect of *The Warriors*, strangely enough, is the "love interest" Mercy. Unfortunately for Mercy, she is from a part of town where the loser gang the *Orphans* reside. When the *Warriors* walk through *Orphan* territory, Mercy makes sure to check out every swinging dick, finally catching her lovely

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eyes on alpha-warrior Swan. Like a lost kitten, Mercy stalks the the Warriors even after they attempt to throw her away various times like a used condom. Mercy is like a femme fatale minus the brains for her only desire is sex with an alpha and possibly a better life, certainly a girl that does not aspire to be much aside from living in the moment. Angelic (but not angel) Mercy is the kind of woman all feminists should aspire to be.

Apparently, hack action director Tony Scott is planning a loose remake of The Warriors set in Los Angeles. Scott hopes to use real gang members in his dubious remake of the 1979 classic. With all the vintage character of The Warriors, a remake only seems like it could be at best a rotten piece of stillborn cinema, a film that should have never be born and that should be soon forgotten. Of course, with the solely monetary-driven businessmen at Hollywood any remake guarantees an audience (and financial success). It will surely be a dark day for cinema when some Hollywood producer has the audacity to remake A Clockwork Orange. On a more positive note, at least we still have the originals as I will surely be re-watching The Warriors sometime again this year.

-Ty E

UNDISPUTED

Walter Hill (2002) As a rabid fan of cinema, my knowledge of film knows no bounds. I watch at least 1 film a day, regardless if I'm even at work. In my frequent studies, I have generated an endless repertoire of cinema related know-hows and likings. What started as a lust for arthouse films and avant-garde oddities soon expanded into the undying action genre, not just any action, but black action. Undisputed is a contender for heavyweight action film of the world. It's one of those films that have no limits on entertainment or career-turning performances. Undisputed is that one popular film amongst urban audiences that hasn't generated much publicity and bombed in the box office thanks to Shyamalan's Signs. In the year 2006, a DTV sequel was released which I had no interest at viewing and purposely avoided like the plague. Undisputed is a simple structured film based on the legacy of reputation. The plot in a few sentences: Ving Rhames is the heavyweight champion of the world, gets convicted of date rape and is sent to Sweetwater prison. There, he gets in a prison match with former champion and undefeated Monroe (Snipes). This film is, at heart, a boxing film strategically forged to please action fans. Walter Hill (The Warriors) has created a film that not only entertains me, but also moves me. You might be oblivious to the emotions behind this film, but I'm not. The melancholy that is always apparent within Monroe is only an addition to his fighter spirit. Undisputed owes a lot to similar film In Hell starring Van Damme. Both of these are worthy prison fighting films but In Hell is a much darker experience. Undisputed is a sucker punch in the face for anyone who expects any less. This is a film that throws in various makeshift elements in order to diversify the film, the only difference is that it works. Wesley Snipes plays a spiritual fighter who builds toothpick structures and Ving Rhames plays the bad ass douche bag, and together they create the greatest boxing film ever.

-mAQ

THE WALL MAN
THE WALL MAN

Wataru Hayakawa (2007)

There's something entirely fascinating with watching absurdities and surreal ideas being transposed to the format of film. A strange necessity of awkwardness makes the experience a bizarre one; one that can't be mimicked by another format unless you're passionate enough. Such is the experience I had with watching *The Wall Man*. I'd attempted to watch it several times over the course of a night but always blacked out. This film doesn't really get interesting till 20 minutes or so in. The visual tirade known simply as *The Wall Man* does one thing flawlessly; it successfully alienates the audience in a way that can only be described as an out-of-body experience. Imagine the general idea that Lynch has always aimed for but with an Asiatic mentality. The statuesque figures of wrinkled old men are replaced with Japanese men that photograph blank walls endlessly. If a film could ever bare the title of "Lynchian", this would be a definitive case. *The Wall Man* is a work reflecting what's great about David Lynch. The execution might not be top-notch but the atmosphere is dense; so dense that you could slice it with a knife. The only real blame could be laid on the wacky acting performance by lead actress Mayumi Ono. Her enthusiasm is the same illness that plagues many of the more aspirational Asian actor/ress. A script this intense and thought out couldn't have been birthed directly as a script. If you must know, the original source data is derived from a short piece of Japanese manga, like most absurd stories. While the legendary Hideshi Hino mainly adapts tales of macabre grotesque horror, *The Wall Man* is more of an avant-garde psyche piece of supernatural fiction. A reporter for a rumor tabloid program receives a postcard telling the short, but sweet story of the Wall Man; an entity living in the walls that watches everything. The level of fiction is surpassed involuntarily on several occasions as the leads play off on many visual metaphors, many of which seem to proclaim us, the viewers, as the Wall Men. After all, we do watch their charades endlessly and we are everything. Apart from the depth that at times feels contrived, *The Wall Man* is an excellent piece of bizzarro fiction. Again, the film is not without its flaws but the latter can be overlooked effortlessly as long as "slow" films don't overload your minuscule attention span. If you enjoy arthouse films, this deserves an immediate viewing. He's captured the general idea that Lynch has been chasing for years. Think the insanity of *Inland Empire* but honed to an earnest execution that amiably entertains while nourishing. *The Wall Man* is often unnerving and always mysterious. You might not get it and you never will. Art is rare and fallible. You must look past what you don't appreciate and scope it out from a different vantage. After all, who could really enjoy *Begotten*? That film serves more as lure for sexy "indie" females than a generous film experience.

-mAQ

A JOURNEY INTO BLISS

Wenzel Storch (2004)

After being introduced to the films of Wenzel Storch by Nekromantik producer Manfred Jelinski, I immediately hunted down the three feature-length works that were lovingly created by the German avant-garde auteur. If you ever wondered what a German mind would be like on LSD, the rainbow-colored surrealist fantasy films of Mr. Storch will no doubt provide you with such a seemingly bizarre, yet heavenly combination. Wenzel Storch – an acid-freak Aryan auteur – is a man of eclectic interests with an impeccable knack for homogenizing his obsessions and melding them into totally original cinematic works. Storch's favorite song is "Paranoid" by revolutionary doom metal group Black Sabbath, but he also holds a special love for the delinquent freestyle rapping antics of world famous American wigger Eminem, and the sinister lounge music of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey. When it comes to inspirational works of cinema, Herr Storch has equally eclectic favorites; citing both *Münchhausen* (1943) – a fantasy-comedy epic directed by Josef von Baky that was commissioned by Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels for the 25th anniversary of UFA studios – and the ultra-trashy exploitation flick *The Last House on the Left* (1972) – an extremely loose remake of Ingmar Bergman's pagan revenge film *The Virgin Spring* (1960) that was directed by a very young Wes Craven – as two of his top-ten favorite films. In Wenzel Storch's third feature *A Journey Into Bliss* (2004) – the final chapter in the director's "Jürgen Hühne (the star actor of all three films) trilogy" – one, indeed, takes a glorious odyssey through the mystical world featured in the eccentric German filmmaker's expertly crafted flick, a work that was unsurprisingly written under the influence of LSD. Although *A Journey Into Bliss* is a dreamy rainbow of austerely assembled colors, the film – featuring excessively crude imagery and perverted dialogue – lacks the sort of auteur pretensions that is often associated with such an original and inventively elaborate work. *A Journey Into Bliss* manages to mix elements of popular American stop-motion animated Christmas specials from the 1960s (*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Frosty the Snowman*) with aesthetic/thematic qualities featured in popular phantasmagorical fantasy films (from *Münchhausen* to *Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory*). To top it off, *A Journey Into Bliss* features a musically-inclined tribe of black-face primitives that give famous degenerate Jazz singer Al Jolson a run for his money. Despite its ridiculous and raunchy material, *A Journey Into Bliss* is the kind of film a young child would love to get lost in, as it is a totally imaginative work that includes witty talking animals, time-traveling, excessive gross-out humor, grownups acting like buffoons, and a family of clever children (who are quite good film critics). Naturally, *A Journey Into Bliss* – a totally chimerical work of (oftentimes lowbrow) celluloid absurdity – is not a film that everyone will admire, yet it unrelentingly assaults

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(for better or for worse) every person who dares to watch it.

According to his equally bizarre website, German auteur Wenzel Storch was supposed to be a country star, but was born on the wrong continent, hence his unconventional career as Germany's most bizarre filmmaker. In Storch's *A Journey Into Bliss*, a husky captain named Gustav lands his snailship - which also carries his eccentric wife Eva, their many small progeny, primitive musicians ("believed to be extinct by scientists") from the Congo, his first mate (a grumpy, but kind hearted talking grizzly bear), various animal lackeys, and two ministers of propaganda suffering from bladder problems - on a mysterious island in the hope that it will make for a relaxing and luxurious retirement spot. Unfortunately for Gustav and friends/family, the exotic island they have landed on is ruled by evil King Knuffi, an inbred and royally degenerated megalomaniac who rules from beneath the flag of a carpet-beater. Being a member of a decadent royal family, King Knuffi has a loyal mini-army of erotomaniac grandmas. Indeed, sexual perversion is somewhat prevalent on the mysterious island featured in *A Journey Into Bliss*, thus it is no surprise that German necrophile auteur Jörg Buttgerreit (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*, *Schramm*) and members of his film crew (composed of Michael Romahn and Marcel Caspers) created the psychedelic special effects for Storch's fantasy freak-out flick. In fact, Buttgerreit has a small, yet notable cameo in *A Journey Into Bliss* as an effeminate curly-haired nobleman whose head explodes after he eats quail. Of course, all gross-out and perverted scenes featured in the film are of an absurdist and ultimately comical nature. Wenzel Storch is like a German Guy Maddin, as both directors tend to concoct postmodern worlds of nonsensical immorality where the most tragic of scenarios are portrayed in a unconventionally humorous light. After all, I can't think of another film where two long-haired ministers of propaganda piss on a group of child to get their attention. Nor can I think of any other German that so wickedly satires the history of the Third Reich. In *A Journey Into Bliss*, the two hippie-like (both in character and dress) ministers of propaganda show their dubious support of the Nazi party (while wearing stylistically out-of-place swastika armbands) by stating to the evil king, "real far out party boss. A day and night party" and "They're really cooking with gas.....They're into some serious shit." Indeed, Wenzel Storch is a German auteur who has the splendid gall to poke fun at the holocaust and for that alone, he should be unanimously commemorated in the underground sinema world. Of course, Storch's wicked Teutonic humor is only a small part of the director's unique vision as a filmmaker.

Jörg Buttgerreit before his head explodes

"Acid House" Aryan Auteur Wenzel Storch

Like all great fairy tales, the evil king featured in *A Journey Into Bliss* is defeated by the protagonist of the film, yet this is not the true climax of the film. Instead, a totally deranged scene in *A Journey Into Bliss* where a certain snail becomes sexually aroused by a church (and does the unthinkable) seems to be

the true climax of the film. Indeed, Wenzel Storch – an ex-altar boy for his local Catholic Church – playfully attacks religion in a most clever, yet wild manner, henceforth not seeming like a humorless atheist who is out to destroy the faith of all true believers. From beginning to end, *A Journey Into Bliss* is a truly jovial cinematic affair that is worthy of its title. After all, Wenzel Storch seems to be (judging from his photographs and films) quite a jubilant individual with a slightly dark side (no doubt, the unfortunate result of growing up in post-WW2 Germany). By comparison, *A Journey Into Bliss* makes the 1984 surrealist family film *The Hotel New Hampshire* (based on a novel by John Irving) – which shares a lot of similarities (both feature a peculiar, yet playful family and an extraordinary bear) with Storch's film - seem like a work of sterile Victorian manners. Hell, *A Journey Into Bliss* even makes Italian maestro Federico Fellini's fantastic work of decadent sea-fare, *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), seem relatively sane and mild-mannered. If you have a desire to feel like an excited kid again (minus ignorance towards sex and drugs), *A Journey Into Bliss* is mandatory viewing. Of course, that is not the only reason why the film is worthy viewing, as *A Journey Into Bliss* is an exotic delicacy for the eyes. Cinephiles who appreciate works that feature an intricate *Mise-en-scène* – typical of films directed by directors like Kenneth Anger, Sergei Paradjanov, and Federico Fellini – will indubitably find comfort in the cinema of Wenzel Storch. I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say that debauched auteur Wenzel Storch is very possibly the most flamboyant German filmmaker (both in character and aesthetic) that ever lived.

-Ty E

SIGNS OF LIFE
SIGNS OF LIFE

Werner Herzog (1968)

As a longtime appreciator of Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog's idiosyncratic cinematic oeuvre, I felt it was about time that I watch his first feature-length film *Signs of Life* (1968) aka *Lebenszeichen*, a breakthrough work that also proved to be the director's first critical and commercial success, even earning him the Silver Bear Extraordinary Prize of the Jury at the 18th Berlin International Film Festival. Admittedly, I was more interested in seeing *Signs of Life* because it is the director's sole work set during the Second World War than because it is Herzog's first flick, but rather unfortunately, as the director stated himself, "The film is set during the Nazi occupation of Greece, and inevitably some people will want to suggest that the film is something like a 'historical drama'. Of course, it is nothing of the sort." Indeed, *Signs of Life* is far from a conventional 'war film' as it depicts soldiers of National Socialist Germany, even mentally deranged ones, with an uncommon degree of humanity, or as Herzog explained himself, "How often do you see German soldiers acting as decently as this in a war film? I think that using the war as a backdrop enables the audience to see the absurdity and total violence of what went on during the Second World War in a different light, one we are not used to seeing. It is not a metaphor, but like *Invincible* which is set just before the era of the Third Reich, *Signs of Life* uses the absurdity of this situation – showing the interactions between an occupying army and the locals – to make what is a more 'existential' point." Indeed, aside from humanizing the horrendous homicidal Hun, *Signs of Life*, although loosely based on the story *Der tolle Invalide auf dem Fort Ratonneau* (1818) aka *The Mad Invalid at Fort Rattoneau* written by Prussian Romantic poet Ludwig Achim von Arnim, was an extremely personal work for Herzog as the film is set at a real 14th-century fortress built by the Knights Hospitaller where the director's grandfather Rudolf Herzog, who apparently went mad later on in life, worked as an archaeologist for a number of years publishing translations of ancient Greek engravings, which even appear in the film.

A fairly conventional and even sometimes mundane flick for the first hour or so, *Signs of Life* ultimately turns into a positively penetrating psychodrama during the last 30 minutes when the anti-hero Stroszek goes berserk and runs amok in a most pathetic manner. A sort of German New Cinema equivalent to Stephen King's *The Shining*, *Signs of Life* depicts the wonderful whimsicalness that occurs when a boyish beta-male who can only dream of being an Aryan alpha finds himself with a screw or two loose and believes he has debts to pay to invisible adversaries, thereupon futilely attacking everyone in his path. Far from seeming like a formative work, *Signs of Life* is hopelessly Herzogian to the cracked kraut core as a work that features the hallucinatory physical and metaphysical madness of *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), the bold

black-and-white insect fetishism and exotic island eccentricity of *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970), the charming chicken hypnotism of *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), the breathtaking windmill landscapes of *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), and the wacked out war weariness of *Rescue Dawn* (2007), not to mention the fact that the lead protagonist's name is Stroszek, the same name as the protagonist of Herzog's Amero-kraut masterpiece *Stroszek* (1977), both of which were named in tribute to a classmate that helped the director cheat on a test while he still was a underage student. The absurd story of a man with the intensity to exterminate an entire army, but is far too impotent and only manages to kill a mere donkey in the end, *Signs of Life* is a celluloid parable of sorts about the insane impotence that ensues when a spiritual cuckold forgets his place in society and ultimately loses everything, especially his sanity, in the process.

It is the Second World War and an injured paratrooper named Stroszek (tightrope walker Peter Brogle) is sent to the ancient Greek city of Kos with his foreign Greek wife Nora (Athina Zacharopoulou) where two other injured Teutonic soldiers, Meinhard (Wolfgang Reichmann) and Becker (Wolfgang von Ungern-Sternberg) are also temporarily residing to recover from their injuries. Basically, the men do nothing aside from pretending to protect a stone fortress that they are not even worthy of setting foot on. While Becker helps translate ancient Greek inscriptions, Meinhard creates a somewhat dubious yet effective makeshift cockroach trap. Somewhat controversially married to a non-Aryan woman of swarthy Mediterranean stock, Stroszek is weaker than his wife, who helps him take precious gunpowder from grenades to make Roman candles and other fireworks. In one especially foreshadowing scene, Stroszek seems immensely disturbed by a young blond Aryan (played by Herzog longtime musical collaborator of Florian Fricke of *Popol Vuh*), who describes "Chopin as evil," while playing Chopin on his piano, thus suffering a minor mental breakdown, but the best is yet to come. While Nora attempts to refine her German, Stroszek, who seems to suffer from both boredom and an unwavering feeling of impotency, complains to his commanding officer and is reassigned to guarding the countryside where, after spotting a virtual army of windmills, he loses what is left of his sanity. Later that day while eating a lovely dinner with his wife, as well as his comrades Becker and Meinhard, Stroszek accuses them all of being secret spies out to get him and haphazardly chases them with his rifle, failing to injure any of them in the process. While Stroszek's behavior is wildly whimsical and uniquely unpredictable, if one thing is for sure, it is that he has an incapacity for doing any real damage to anyone. In fact, in the end Stroszek only manages to kill a donkey. For all the horror stories regarding the German military during the Second World War, Stroszek is treated rather respectfully by National Socialist commanders during his standoff, where he literally states, "I don't know what duty is." In the end, *Signs of Life* concludes with the following words, "His rebellion had set something colossal in motion, and his adversary was much more

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powerful than he was. So, like many others before him, he had failed miserably,” which may or may not be a thinly disguised reference to Uncle Adolf.

While not exactly Werner Herzog's greatest accomplishment as a filmmaker, *Signs of Life* is certainly no small debut cinematic effort, but a positively penetrating celluloid psychodrama that, at least in my mind, depicts how the director might have acted were he forced to fight for the Fatherland in the Second World War. Indeed, Herzog could not have chosen a more diacritic setting and context for a WWII war film as *Signs of Life* seems like another universe that is equal parts paradise and pandemonium. In terms of a first feature from the great director of German New Cinema, Herzog's *Signs of Life* certainly beats Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966), Wim Wenders' *Summer in the City* (1970), and even Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969) as a work with an audacious auteur signature that has not been dated by anachronistic far-left politics nor aesthetic influences from the French New Wave (thankfully, unlike his contemporaries, Herzog was never inspired by Godard). As for what *Signs of Life* means for Herzog himself, he stated the following in an interview, “One thing to say about *Signs of life* – and maybe other filmmakers felt this way about their first films – is that I have always had the very strong feeling that it was made somehow as if there was no history of film preceding it. As such it is my only really innocent film. Something like this happens only once in your lifetime because, once this innocence has been lost, it can never be recovered.” Undoubtedly, compared to a monolithic mainstream artistic work like *Invincible* (2001)—a film that is easily the director's most artistically compromised and phony cinematic one to date—it does indeed seem like Herzog has certainly lost a bit of innocence since *Signs of Life*, but he would also go on to direct a number of masterpieces of world cinema, including (but certainly not limited to) *Stroszek* (1977), *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), *Fitzcarraldo* (1982). The perfect work to deprogram oneself from both the anti-German WWII propaganda and formulaic aesthetic vapidness of Hollywood, *Signs of Life*—with its crazed cocktail of gypsy conmen who claim to be kings, a pathetic platoon of National Socialist nerds and nihilists, a creepy cameo from the musical mastermind of Popol Vuh, and an odd appearance from an old Turkish man that was the last surviving worker from Rudolf Herzog's archaeological project—is just one of the many reasons why Werner Herzog is not only one of the greatest filmmakers of German New Cinema, but cinema history in general.

-Ty E

EVEN DWARFS STARTED SMALL

Werner Herzog (1970)

While my appreciation for Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog (*Nosferatu the Vampyre*, *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*) has somewhat waned in recent years, I still revere him for being a man who has directed some of my absolute favorite films and documentaries and with the possible exception of the wildly idiosyncratic celluloid portrait of Teutonized Americana, *Stroszek* (1977), his aberrant absurdist black-horror-comedy dystopian flick *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) aka *Auch Zwerge haben klein angefangen* is the reason why the adventurer auteur will always have my respect. In fact, I would go so far as saying that next to *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, Herzog's most popular works like *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), and *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) seem like slightly above-average action flicks for jaded hippie stoners who listened to one too many overly long krautrock songs. Not unsurprisingly (at least to me), Herzog himself admitted that compared to *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, his work *Aguirre* "looks like kindergarten," even if the former film features grown adults who are for the most part shorter than kindergarteners. A gritty and sometimes grating *Cinéma vérité*-like black-and-white flick filmed on the Canary Islands, at Lanzarote, a desolate and seemingly dead area that was deforested and turned into an island desert of sorts by various volcanoes throughout the 1700s and 1800s, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* follows a motley crew of crazed kraut midgets who escape an institution and wreak havoc and start a nonsensical rebellion against the director and guard of the institution, stirring a micro-apocalypse of sorts that results in dead pigs and chickens, the torture of blind midgets with goggles, and the destruction of every organic and manmade object in sight. Apparently banned upon its release in West Germany, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* also apparently inspired death threats from supposed 'white supremacists' (or at least that is how Herzog described them), but the director ultimately faced the most hatred from members of the far-left, namely the 1968 German student movement (aka 68er-Bewegung), or as Herzog described it himself, "Some of the fiercest opposition I had against this film was from the dogmatic left, which believed that this film depicted...was somehow ridiculing and depicting the world revolution, which was failing and which was ending in destruction and catastrophes...and they were the fiercest opponents and at the same time racists." Additionally, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* also proved that Herzog was not willing to play nice as a representative of German New Cinema and refused to utilize cinema to disseminate Trotskyite/Marxist like far-left propagandist like Alexander Kluge, Volker Schlöndorff, Helma Sanders-Brahms, and Margarethe von Trotta, whose oftentimes politically pedantic films are bound to inspire banality in those who do not subscribe to such outmoded and intrinsically idealistic politics. As Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his compre-

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hensive work *New German Cinema: A History* (1989): “Not all film-makers agree with this interpretation of a film’s function. *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, for instance, was Herzog’s way of representing his isolation after the 1960 Oberhausen Festival. The film issued a challenge to the German Left about what Herzog saw as the impossibility of combining political revolution with radical subjectivity.” In other words, Herzog was an uncompromising individualist and lone wolf among calculating cultural collectivists and red-flag-wavers and *Even Dwarfs Started Small* was proof that he was, with the exception of fellow Bavarian auteur Herbert Achternbusch (whose story Herzog adapted into the film *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas*), quite possibly the most intrinsically iconoclastic kraut filmmaker of his generation.

With its entire cast of German midgets, it should be no surprise that *Even Dwarfs Started Small* was heavily influenced by the truly carnivalesque American Pre-Code horror flick *Freaks* (1932), but as Werner Herzog stated himself, he found Todd Browning’s depiction of malevolent and malicious midgets to be a tad bit politically correct in its seemingly reluctant use of little people (to Browning’s credit, *Freaks* ultimately ruined his filmmaking career). Essentially plotless in structure, the film follows an agitated army of deleterious and sometimes deadly dwarves that, assumedly due to much time spent locked up in a dubious institution, go unrelentingly wild and reckless once unleashed, ultimately becoming more barbaric and inhumane toward their former captors, thus demonstrating the truism that a slave is oftentimes much more cruel than his master once the tables are turned. Although lacking in leadership structure, one could argue that the leader of the rebel runts is a micro-man around 2 ½ feet tall named Hombré (Helmut Döring, who later appeared in Herzog’s 1974 film *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*), a fendishly funny fellow whose smile is more sinister than that of Conrad Veidt in the Hollywood silent masterpiece *The Man Who Laughs* (1928). Of course, as demonstrated by a scene where he fails to climb up a bed to have sex with a female dwarf that bears a striking resemblance to Anne Frank, the other dwarves have a hard time respecting Hombré’s authority because, after all, he is the smallest member and most mentally unhinged of his rebel group. Not unsurprisingly considering his failure with real-life erotic pursuits, Hombré also has a problem keeping his eyes off of 1930s Spanish pornography, stating to himself pathologically whilst looking at the nubile Latin babes, “Yeah, yeah, pretty girl!...Lovely tits!” The archenemy of the deranged dwarves as a fellow named ‘The President’ (played by Pepi Hermine, who also played the president in Robert Downey Sr.’s supremely sardonic sociopolitical satire *Putney Swope* (1969)), who has traded roles with his patients/prisoners and has been locked inside the institution by the rebels and has another dwarf named Pepi (Gerd Gickel) bound to a chair. The President makes serious threats of killing Pepi if he is not let free, but his pleas and threats are met upon deaf ears by the innately irrational rebels, who only increase their tedious terror and cold carnage. One

of the larger dwarfs, a film noir mobster-like fellow named 'Territory' (Gerhard Maerz) rides around the institution on a motorcycle and eventually rigs a truck to run around tediously in circles while his compatriots use it as a makeshift playground of sorts. After having a mock religious feast, the midgets start smashing plates, including hurling them at the spinning truck. Meanwhile, the rebels kill a gigantic pig and torture blind midgets with futuristic goggles, who are assumedly employees of the President. Like mad berserkers attempting a sort of anarchic baptism by fire, the rebels also set a number of potted plants on fire and attack them, thus demonstrating with each violent attack, their ecstasy for chaos and destruction only grows larger. Amongst all the needless destruction of flowers and trees, the instincts of farm animals are subverted by man's destruction, including baby piglets who attempt to nurse from their dead mother and chickens who try to cannibalize each other. With his pint-sized pals following behind him, Territory mocks Christ's crucifixion by walking around with a cross with a live monkey tied to it. In the end, Hombré almost laughs himself to death while watching a large camel defecating. When the President finally escapes from the institution, he is so wacked out of his own mind that he attempts to bark orders at an inanimate tree, thus demonstrating that all forms of order and structure have been subverted and turned meaningless.

In its depiction of literal midgets with a need to overthrow authority despite having an incapacity for establishing order themselves and who become more senselessly sadistic than their captors, *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, whether auteur Herzog's intention or not, ultimately acts as an audacious absurdist allegory for the 1968 German student movement who, while attempting in vain to create a commie utopia of sorts, almost plunged West Germany into chaos and spawned moronic terrorist groups like Baader-Meinhof Group. Indeed, as Herzog's film demonstrates, these spoiled and self-absorbed 'mental midgets' of the far-left were not inspired by serious societal reform, but senseless and nihilistic destruction, as well as a petty and pernicious desire for power that they were willing to achieve through any means possible. Considering the public outcry to *Even Dwarfs Started Small* from the supposed 'progressive' German far-left, it seems that Herzog was totally on point in his depiction of political rebels as small savages with an innate incapacity for self-control and discipline whose actions reflected a certain derangement of the post-WWII German mind and a visceral and irrational chaos in the Teutonic collective unconscious. Sociopolitical considerations aside, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* is a merrily macabre masterpiece in terms of aesthetics alone, as a nightmarishly surreal piece of chilling yet comical celluloid slapstick and a foully flavorsome fever dream from post-Hitler Hades where reality has become more deranging and devastating than any dream. It should be noted that director Werner Herzog has stated often that he rarely dreams during sleep and felt a strong fear that his nation would plunge into chaos, thus one could argue that, with the Sapphic cinematic freak shows of Ulrike Ot-

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tinger like *Freak Orlando* (1981) and *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* (1984), *Even Dwarfs Started Small* acts as the most unpleasantly pure and audacious unadulterated depiction of post-WWII Aryan neurosis and nihilism ever captured on celluloid. Going on to influence American aberrant-garde art-house flicks like Harmony Korine's *Gummo* (1997) and Crispin Glover's *What Is It?* (2005), *Even Dwarfs Started Small* inevitably foretold the apocalyptic atmosphere that would eventually reach not only the rest of the Occident, but also the United States and the rest of the extra-European ex-colonies. Indeed, if there ever was a film that was made to prepare one for a very tangible doomsday and laugh in the process, it is undoubtedly *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, a work which director Werner Herzog even had to admit, "Yes it is, but it's the darkest of comedies you can imagine...yeah, I find it very funny...something of it is very, very funny, but at the same time, I feel my stomach ache when I start to laugh." As a work that was only his second fictional feature-length work, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* which he directed while in his late-20s, Herzog was somehow able to reconcile barren and brutal yet breathtaking landscapes that fall somewhere in between the world of Michelangelo Antonioni (*L'Avventura*, *Eclipse*) and Dutch Renaissance painters Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder with a cast of characters too weird and sinister for Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969), as well as deranged diacritic artfulness that totally transcends Browning's *Freaks* (1932) and a surreal satirical tone that would probably even shock Luis Buñuel, so I will always have a special affection for the wacky Bavarian auteur, even if he is, rather inexplicably, a staunch Steven Spielberg apologist.

-Ty E

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD

Werner Herzog (1972)

Shot on a 35mm film camera Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog stole from a Munich film school, and based on a screenplay the director wrote in a mere 2 ½ days after reading a book he borrowed from a friend about historical adventurers, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) aka *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* is oftentimes considered one of the greatest films of German New Cinema, as well as film history in general, even making *Time* magazine's "All Time 100 Best Films," yet I have never felt it was nearly as interesting as the director's more idiosyncratic non-period pieces like *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) and *Stroszek* (1977), and I am certainly not the only person. My girlfriend, who also enjoys much of Herzog's work, tried in vain to watch *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* twice, ultimately concluding "This is a poorly put together period piece about a bunch of assorted, boorish redneck seeming guys and noble non-whites fucking around doing nonsensical shit in a jungle," which is hard to deny for anyone who has tried to watching the film in a mere sitting. Featuring an atmospheric soundtrack by Herzog's favorite German krautrock band *Popol Vuh*, and a cast comprised of effete, obese adventurers with mullets, mulatto slave philosophers, and other curiously racially mongrelized characters, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* certainly has a somewhat anachronistic feel and its pacifistic anti-colonist counter-culture message only makes it feel all the more dated as a work of its time. Even so, Herzog still must be commended for becoming a fierce Faustian adventurer auteur for shooting on location in the Peruvian rainforest on the Amazon River during a clearly hectic five-week period utilizing a meager budget of \$370,000 (a third of which paid for deranged star Klaus Kinski's salary). An imperative influence on Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), as well as the films of the Italian exploitation subgenre, including *Cannibal Holocaust* (1980) and *Cannibal Ferox* (1981), *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, whether one enjoys it or not, is an undeniably important and groundbreaking work of film history. Although based on the real-life 16th century Spanish Basque Spanish conquistador Lope de Aguirre, a minor official who inevitably mutinied and become the murderous megalomaniac leader of an expedition to find the mythical El Dorado ("Lost City of Gold"), Herzog has admitted virtually all of *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* is based on his fabrications and throughout the film it certainly shows as an anti-"bergfilme" ("mountain film") in the anarcho-mystical spirit of Herbert Achternbusch (whose original story Herzog later adapted into the 1976 work *Heart of Glass*) minus the humor that replaces uncompromising Aryan mysticism of movie mountaineer works by filmmakers like Leni Riefenstahl and Arnold Fanck with a sort of negating nihilism and negativity that associates Occidental man's will-to-power and instinct to conquer as something akin to demonic possession, hence why the director cast his self-described "best fiend"

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD

Herr Kinski, a man he once described as having a “great demonic intensity,” in the lead role.

The year is 1650 and a brutal band of Spanish conquistadors, who have just wasted a bunch of Inca Indians and their backward empire and have taken a number as injun slaves, are marching down the Andes mountains en route to the mythical El Dorado in search of gold under the leadership of commander Gonzalo Pizarro (Alejandro Repullés). For whatever reason, in spite of rampant obesity among the troupe’s members, and the unimaginably oppressive heat and humidity of the tropical climate, it seems inexplicably sensible for the conquistadors to wear heavy armor, including chain mail and helmets, and to haul around canons, horses, and dainty women down the thickly forested mountains and through turbulent rivers. Although originally being comprised of a thousand men, Pizarro concludes that it will be much easier to send a party of forty men down the river in four rafts, including Don Pedro de Ursúa (Ruy Guerra) as the commander, Don Lope de Aguirre (Klaus Kinski) as his second-in-command, grotesquely overweight aristocrat Don Fernando de Guzmán (Fassbinder actor Peter Berling) representing The Royal House of Spain, and corrupt Catholic brother Gaspar de Carvajal (Del Negro) as a record keeper who keeps a matter-of-fact diary of the trip. Although Pizarro has enough common sense to argue against it, Ursúa’s mistress, Doña Inéz (Helena Rojo) and Aguirre’s young daughter, Florés (Cecilia Rivera, in her first and only film role, which is no surprise as a master of monotone expression) also go on the expedition in search of the “Lost City of Gold.” Not long after starting their expedition, one of the rafts is lost in a wicked whirlpool and is never found, while the entire group on another raft is mysteriously exterminated at night by what is probably a naked army of wild savages. A Catholic ‘true believer,’ Ursúa argues that the dead men should be given proper Christian burials, but Aguirre understands the bigger picture and realizes such a superstitious act will only waste more time so he fires a cannon at the raft of dead inquisitors thus finishing the conquistador corpses for good and everyone goes on their merry way. Naturally, everything goes to hell on the trip, including the destruction of the remaining rafts and the disappearing of supplies, so Ursúa orders the men to give up on their expedition and go back to the main group, which propels the power-hungry Aguirre to declare mutiny against the leader. Ultimately, Ursúa and loyal soldier are shot and Aguirre talks the rest of the men into electing fat ass aristocrat Don Fernando de Guzman—a debauched degenerate who eats large feasts while his men starve around him—as the leader and even declares him “Emperor in the New World.” Ursúa is given a bolshevik-style show trial, but lardo wuss Fernando offers the fallen leader mercy. Aguirre becomes a fanatical proto-fascist leader who kills everyone that disagrees with him, aside from Ursúa’s mistress Inéz, who has the soldier’s sympathy. The insanity of the Catholic church is also displayed when the monk of the raft orders an Indian and his wife be killed for the blasphemous acting of claiming that the

bible “doesn’t talk” (in reference to the brother’s remark that it is “the word of god”). Starving to death and suffering from hallucinations, someone kills fat fuck Fernando for being a glutton via strangulation, thus Aguirre proclaims himself the Führer and finally has Ursúa executed via jungle lynching as his first act as raft king. Not long after, the starving Spaniards and their equally emaciated minions burn down an Indian village but tons of their men also die in the process after natives shoot them down with arrows and Inéz, clearly distraught by her man’s death, disappears into the woods for eternity. Aguirre also decapitates a traitor who whispers he rather “join the Indians” than fight him for him and magically the head without a body speaks upon hitting the ground. After seeing an eerie premonition in the form a ship smashed to bits in a tree, the Indians launch a rainforest Blitzkrieg that kills all the remaining inquisitors, except Aguirre, who is even more of a megalomaniac and valiantly declares to a group of tiny monks, “I, the Wrath of God...will marry my own daughter...and with her I will found the purest dynasty...the earth has ever seen...together...we shall rule this entire continent...We will endure...I am the Wrath of God...Who else is with me?”

An extremely minimalistic micro-epic celluloid work with a good percentage of unrehearsed and improvised scenes (one of which resulting in the continuity error of a rather blatant appearance from Herzog’s hand), Aguirre, the Wrath of God owes most of its cinematic potency due to real-life psychopath Klaus Kinski portraying a “true homicidal megalomaniac,” as well as mountain man Werner Herzog’s daring utilization of the Amazon river and its surroundings, thus lending a certain ‘authenticity’ to the film that not a single Hollywood film has. One must also give Herzog credit for threatening to kill Kinski and then turn the gun on himself after the demented Polish-German actor threatened to quit the production of Aguirre, the Wrath of God as the average Hollywood director would probably quit working a production due to the positively terrible threat of bad food catering or a minor monetary return. Undoubtedly, an allegorical depiction of Werner Herzog’s thoughts on Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich in its hallucinatory depiction of a monomaniac of a mad man who manages to bring his people to total ruin as savages from every angle attack them on their raft, Aguirre, the Wrath of God is assuredly the director’s greatest expression of his own ethno-masochism, which would take on more patently pathetic forms in his stupendously stupid and sentimental anti-Nazi flick *Invincible* (2001) and his rather absurdly groveling vocal support of Steven “the showman of the shoah” Spielberg. Unfortunately, while Aguirre, the Wrath of God is a film that I would love to love, it has grown on me very little over the past decade or so when I first saw it, yet Herzog films like *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) and *Stroszek* (1977) have only become all the more important for me. Its now rather redundant and curiously cliché message of “colonialism = evil” and “savages = noble” only strips the celluloid work of its authenticity and integrity because, after all, you would never see one of the Indians featured in Aguirre, the Wrath of God di-

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recting a film about how their ancestors were cannibals that practiced sick sexual ritual, as ethno-masochism seems to be a distinctly European affliction. Considering Herzog was born “Werner Herzog Stipetić” to a Slavic Croatian mother (an *untermensch* in National Socialist eyes) and a German father he despised as he abandoned his family, his hatred of Nazism seems more visceral and personal than that of his celluloid compatriots in German New Cinema, especially considering he is a less political and intellectual filmmaker who never exhibited the sort of pedantic leftist politics of quasi-Marxist types like Alexander Kluge and Helma Sanders-Brahms. A horribly humorless indictment of the ‘evils’ of European colonialism and the Catholic church, *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* is celluloid cuckoldry at its finest and most esoteric, thus putting it miles away from the pop-Frankfurt school swill of Herzog’s self-loathing kraut contemporaries, but also leaving it with the undeniable stench of slave-morality senselessness from a man with enough testicular fortitude to climb mountains and travel down rivers to direct films yet inexplicably ashamed of the fact that his ancestor’s conquered the world and did it with great gusto. Indeed, while I consider colonialism to be one of the worst decisions Faustian man ever made as it has inevitably resulted in his own indigenous nations transforming into multicultural third worlds with the degenerating phenomenon of miscegenation, among countless other ungodly things, there is no need to cry over spilled Incan blood as Herr Herzog does in *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, a film where the director displayed his solidarity with the savage cause by literally casting a mentally retarded Indian playing a toy-like musical instrument in a rather noticeable role as Kinski’s pet injun.

-Ty E

THE ENIGMA OF KASPAR HAUSER

Werner Herzog (1974)

If I had to pick a least favorite Werner Herzog classic, it would most certainly be *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) aka *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* aka *Every Man for Himself and God Against All*, even if I still consider it an unrivaled masterpiece in its own right as a revolutionary and standout work of German New Cinema. Of course, next to my favorite Herzog flicks like *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970), *Stroszek* (1977), *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), and *Woyzeck* (1979), *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* just seems too tame and old hat. A work that won Herzog 'The Special Jury' Prize (aka 'Silver Palm') at the Cannes Film Festival, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* also has the distinction of being the first Herzog film to feature 'outsider artist' Bruno S. (real name Bruno Schleinstein), a mentally ill forklift operator and street musician who was born a bastard to an abusive prostitute (who beat him so badly at the age of 3 that he temporarily went deaf) and spent most of his childhood in mental institutions. Based on the eponymous real-life figure Kaspar Hauser—a feral teenager who randomly appeared on the streets of Nuremberg on 26 May 1828 who claimed to have been brought up in total isolation in a dark cell and who was mysteriously murdered on 17 December 1833 after being stabbed by an unidentified killer (though some speculate he did it to himself for attention)—*The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* is most interesting in its rather unconventional 'realism' due to its sometimes daunting depiction of a real-life feral man depicting a feral man (in fact, Herzog originally thought about titling the film *The Story of Bruno Hauser*). As can be assumed, Herzog caught a lot of flak from leftist do-gooder types for casting real-life wild man Bruno S. to play Hauser, not to mention the fact that the middle-aged (non)actor absurdly portrayed a 16-year-old (notably, when an interviewer asked Herzog about the age discrepancy, he replied: "But Bruno looks like a sixteen-year-old, Goddammit!"). Although there are countless books on the Hauser case, Herzog opted for doing little research, proudly stating in an interview with Paul Cronin: "The Kaspar Hauser archives are in Ansbach, the town where he was killed, but I never went there. There are about a thousand books and more than ten thousand articles and research papers that have been written about Kaspar, but I asked myself whether I really needed to get involved with such extraneous scholarship." Indeed, like his subsequent feature *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas*, Herzog attempted to find 'ecstatic truths' with *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*; a work that creates its own post-WWII Teutonic (anti)Heimat mythos. A tragic depiction of a wild bastard boy who is unwittingly coerced into becoming a son of the Fatherland and forced into being integrated in German bourgeois society, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* is an audaciously anarchistic avant-garde period piece that Herzog himself described as his own celluloid equivalent to Carl Th. Dreyer's silent masterpiece

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The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928). Of course, more importantly, The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser is one of the few authentic films about a mensch who has been forced to live a life lower than that of a beast.

Feral man Kaspar Hauser (Bruno Schleinstein) lives in a dark dungeon cellar and for whatever reason unbeknownst to the world to this very day, his Master—a dubious fellow who sports a Svengali-like overcoat and top-hat and thus somewhat resembles Dr. Calgari—has decided to let him go free in Nuremberg. Before being introduced to sunlight and the world in general, Kaspar spent his imprisoned days playing with a toy horse and being spoon like a baby by his Master. Before letting him go, the Master teaches Kaspar how to walk and a couple phrases, but none of these things can prepare the wild man for the absurdity of civilization and its anti-organic idiosyncrasies. At first, Kaspar seems to learn best from child after entering Nuremberg and being introduced to its populous, but his journey will cause him to run into various curious characters, including prominent members of the aristocracy, church, and academia as they all seem him as an entertaining novelty. After it is decided that he must pay his own way as all men should, Kaspar becomes an exotic exhibit in an exceedingly eccentric freak show, which includes a midget named 'The Little King' (played by Helmut Döring, who starred in *Even Dwarfs Started Small*) and a catatonic blond boy named 'Young Mozart' (Andi Gottwald). Eventually, Kaspar is rescued by a kindly and highly patient fellow named Professor Daumer (Andi Gottwald), who tries his damndest to make the feral man into a respectable member of bourgeois. Indeed, Kaspar goes from being a 'noble savage' to a novelty member of the nobility after a gay gaunt English aristocrat named Lord Stanhope (Michael Kroecher) temporarily adopts him, but the now-cultivated feral man ultimately feels like a perennial outsider and gets tired of being paraded around like a glorified sideshow freak. Eventually, Kaspar develops into a sort of 'outsider Renaissance man' and forms idiosyncratic theories on philosophy, metaphysics, and music, with the latter of which being his true great love. Of course, all good things must come to an end and after Kaspar is attacked and brutally beaten by the same mystery man that originally brought him to Nuremberg, his days seem to be numbered. And, indeed, the man comes back and fatally stabs Kaspar in the chest, but not without leaving a note stating: "Hauser can tell you exactly what I look like and where I come from. To save him the trouble I'll tell you myself where I come from and even what my name is. M.L.O." In the end, Kaspar has splendid visions of nomadic Berbers in the Sahara Desert while lying on his death bed. After Kaspar dies, an autopsy is done that reveals that the strange feral man had deformities in both his liver and brain.

The preternaturally romantic antidote to senseless Hollywood sentimentalist schlock like *Forrest Gump* (1994) and *Radio* (2003), *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* actually manages to bring true personality and individuality to a 'mental invalid,' demonstrating that such a freak can develop a unique *Weltanschauung*

due to his singular perspective. Indeed, one of the most 'humorous' scenes of the film is when a professor played by kraut character actor Alfred Edel (*Supermarkt, Hitler: A Film from Germany*) asks Kaspar Hauser a philosophical question and the stoic feral man responds in a strangely sophisticated manner that is instantly rejected by the 'properly educated' prof as being not a conventional enough answer. Indeed, in many ways, the character of Kaspar Hauser seems like a stand-in for Herzog, as the director has always styled himself as a semi-civilized mountain man who for most of his career has rejected any sort of 'proper' and 'formal' brand of filmmaking, which is also quite clear in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, especially in his utilization of super-8 film stock footage shot by his brother Lucki Stipetic and experimental filmmaker Klaus Wyborny. As Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his comprehensive study *New German Cinema: A History* (1989): "The fact that the dream visions of the dying Kaspar Hauser are actually super-footage shot by Klaus Wyborny and commissioned by Herzog for his film can be seen as the acknowledgement of a debt, rather like that of Fassbinder to Schroeter. Had he not achieved international success with *Aguirre*, Herzog might well have concentrated his career more on making fantastic-surreal documentaries like *Land of Silence and Darkness* (*Land des Schweigens und der Dunkelheit*, 1971), or visionary films like *Fata Morgana* (1974), whose vicinity to the romantic traditions of the American avant-garde is more in evidence."

As for the "Unknown Soldier of Cinema" (Herzog's loving nickname name for Bruno S.), the money he earned from starring in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* enabled him to become economically independent and obtain an apartment (the very same apartment of his character in *Stroszek*), piano, and become a celebrity of sorts in Berlin. Ultimately, Bruno S. would only star in one more Herzog film, *Stroszek* (1977), which in my opinion is one of Herzog's greatest and most important masterpieces. After his fame started to fade away, Bruno would go on to complain that "Everybody threw him away" and he took up painting and continued playing music, though he would star in a couple more films before he died of a condition relating to heart trouble on August 11, 2010. Shortly after Bruno S. died, Herzog paid him the greatest compliment a filmmaker could give to a (non)actor by commenting, "in all my films, and with all the great actors with whom I have worked, he was the best. There is no one who comes close to him. I mean in his humanity, and the depth of his performance, there is no one like him." Indeed, while I hate when people throw around word 'humanity', it is certainly undeniable that Bruno S. demonstrated a certain singular authenticity in his performances that not even the most talented of method actor could reproduce. While not my favorite Herzog film, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* is an undeniable masterpiece that has no contemporaries. For German New Cinema fanatics and Teutophiles, the film is also notable for featuring cameos from German auteur filmmakers Herbert Achternbusch (*The Last Hole, Heilt Hitler!*) and Reinhard Hauff (*Knife in the Head, Stammheim - Die Baader-Meinhof-*

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Gruppe vor Gericht), as well as performances by Fassbinder superstar Brigitte Mira (Ali: Fear Eats the Soul, Fox and His Friends) and krautrocker Florian Fricke of the avant-garde electronic project Popol Vuh. Indeed, among other things, The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser is nothing less than a celluloid treasure trove of post-WWII cracked kraut kultur.

-Ty E

THE GREAT ECSTASY OF WOODCARVER STEINER

Werner Herzog (1974)

Werner Herzog is probably best known for his ability to find unconventional individuals and capture them on film, whether it be a documentary or a work of fiction. Herzog has quite possibly introduced more extraordinary characters for the world to see than anyone else. *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* (1974) is one of Herzog's first documentaries and it captures a daring individual that is searching for more in life than the average person. The film follows Swiss ski-jumper Walter Steiner as he attempts to set a world record as a ski-jumper. First, I would like to state that I get fairly bored watching sports, especially team sports. Football and the NFL are the most mindless forms of entertainment one can watch. Unfortunately, Americans are obsessed with football thus resulting in the "sports mentality" that most Americans have. This sports mentality is probably the main cause for the average American adult having the contemporary political science knowledge of an elementary school student. Most Americans care more about the NFL than they do about the endless war going on in the middle east. I bring all this up because I want to compare it with my respect for individualist sportsman Walter Steiner. Walter Steiner is an individual that has personal goals. He is a ski-jumper first and foremost for himself. Steiner has an extra ball of energy that forces him to do what he does. As revealed in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*, Steiner has always been a dreamer. As a student Steiner would constantly daydream in class, unaware of what was going on around him. At a young age, it was obvious that Steiner would be destined to do something different with his life. He would become a ski-jumper world record breaker! A very young Werner Herzog narrates and appears in *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*. Of course, Herzog is completely serious in the insane way that you can expect from the odd Bavarian. Herzog almost seems as concerned with Walter Steiner's success as Steiner is. One can't help but be consumed by Herzog's enthusiasm. Werner Herzog is one of the few documentary filmmakers that makes the documentary more interesting. *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* features atmospheric and highly appropriate music by German kraut rock band Popol Vuh. Werner Herzog has used music from Popol Vuh for a variety of his masterpieces so you know that you can expect a great soundtrack for *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner*. Scenes become especially beautiful when slow-motion shots of Walter Steiner during his gigantic ski-jumps are combined with the emotional soundtrack. Werner Herzog knows how to truly construct a film like no other. Like Werner Herzog, Walter Steiner is a man on a mission. It's not a question of why these men do what they do. These men do what they do because they have to. Both Herzog and Steiner have a drive in them that makes them go the extra distance in life. *The Great Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner* concludes on an endnote that sums

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up the entire documentary. Walter Steiner is an influence to all that are looking for something more to life.

-Ty E

HEART OF GLASS

Werner Herzog (1976)

Heart of Glass (1976) aka Herz aus Glas was the second Werner Herzog (Even Dwarfs Started Small, Stroszek) film I ever saw and I must admit it was a decidedly disappointing experience that caused me to feel reluctant in regard to watching any more films directed by the Bavarian auteur, but over a decade after my initial viewing of the film, I can certainly say my opinion has changed rather dramatically, even if the film is a fundamentally flawed work. Loosely based on a chapter from the novel *The Hour of Death* written by Bavarian Anarcho-mystic auteur Herbert Achternbusch (*Das Gespenst* aka *The Ghost, Wohin?*), which was, in turn, based on an old Bavarian folk legend about a Nostradamus-like southern kraut prophet named Mühlhiasl (who may have been legendary Bavarian cow herder/seer Matthias Stormberger (1752-?)), who predicted the end of the world, Heart of Glass depicts the cultural chaos that occurs in a small town that thrives on ruby glass when the master glassblower dies and the mysterious secret to creating the glass is lost, thus sending its peasant populous into a sort of mass hypnosis of the somewhat homicidal yet also somewhat humorous sort. Utilizing what some might describe as a dubious gimmick, director Werner Herzog claims to have hypnotized virtually every actor (except the lead and some professional glassblowers), and directed them as such during the entire production of Heart of Glass, thus making for a strikingly strange celluloid work of the slightly oneiric, strangely ominous and atmospheric, and morbidly frolicsome variety where the characters move around like possessed somnambulists walking slowly but surely to their decided doom. Probably the most flagrantly 'völkisch' flick the director ever created, Heart of Glass is essentially Herzog's outsider answer to the once-trendy anti-Heimatfilm subgenre of German New Cinema as a work that somewhat reluctantly follows in the tradition of *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) directed by Peter Fleischmann, *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970) co-directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Michael Fengler, *The Sudden Wealth of Poor People of Korbach* (1971) directed by Volker Schlöndorff, and *Bierkampf* (1977) aka *Beer Chase* directed by Herbert Achternbusch. In reference to the film's title, Herzog stated of Heart of Glass, "It seems to mean for me an extremely sensitive and fragile inner state, with a kind of transparent glacial quality to it," which certainly describes the peasant characters of the film who, after losing their livelihood (i.e. ruby glass), degenerate into a sinister and savage-like state, killing each other and turning their quaint Bavarian town into mere ruins, thus presenting an assumed allegory of sorts of both World Wars.

Set in a late-18th-century Bavarian town, Heart of Glass begins with a perturbing premonition from a Bavarian peasant prophet named Hias (Josef Bierbichler)—a discernibly melancholy yet stoic and half-crazy man who carries the curse of being able to foresee the future—who states towards the beginning of the film,

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"I look into the distance, to the end of the world. Before the day is over, the end will come. First, time will tumble, and then the earth. The clouds will begin to race...the earth boils over; this is the sign. This is the beginning of the end..." and proceeds to haunt the townspeople with his poetic prophecies. As soon as a fellow named Mühlbeck—the foreman of the town glass factory—suddenly dies without warning, the secret of the ruby glass is lost forever as the glassblowing artisan has ultimately brought the secret behind its creation with him to his grave. Immediately, the townspeople start acting insane, as their 'hearts of glass' are easy to shatter, which first reaches its most disturbing breaking point when two friends drinking some brewskis at a Bavarian bar together attack one another, one smashing a glass over the head of another and the other retaliating by pouring beer on his head. Of course, not long after, one of the men is dead after his comrade smothers him to death. A young broad with a shaved head who resembles and has the quirky mannerisms of a sort of 'holocaust survivor mime' has trouble keeping her clothes on as she has a peculiar propensity for standing on tables and stripping while in a sleepwalking state. The town is run by a young Master who is the most profoundly affected by the loss of the Ruby glass secret, declaring in a foreboding fashion "Now what will protect me now from the Evil of the universe?" while in a most melancholy state. The young Master essentially worships the glass, declaring while praying in church, "Glass has a fragile soul. It is unstained. A crack is the sin; after the Sin, there is no sound," thus the disappearance of the Ruby glassmaking secret is essentially the death of God for the young aristocrat. At the Master's side is his eccentric elderly servant Adalbert (played by early Herzog regular Clemens Scheitz, who also appeared in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), *Stroszek* (1977) and *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979)), whose mental deterioration already seemed well underway before the town's mass psychosis.

Desperate to find the Ruby glass secret, the Master does a number of insane things in desperation in the hope of finding the formula for the glass, including having plans for foreman Mühlbeck's house to be demolished and eventually burning down the glass factory, thereupon totally destroying any chance of ever producing the Ruby glass ever again. The young Master even considers having Mühlbeck's body dug up and his brain examined by Hias. In fact, the Master offers Hias the job of replacing Mühlbeck if he can figure out the formula for the Ruby glass, declaring to the prophet, "I need a glass to contain my blood, or it will trickle away." Hias attempts to warn the Master's female servant Ludmilla (Sonja Skiba) to leave the town before the madness swallows her up, but she does not abide his wise words and ultimately pays with her life after the mad Master pierces a dagger into her neck, declaring of her Ruby red blood, "That is the pure ingredient" as if he is a vampire. Declaring, "Hias has wished this calamity on us" and "he has Devil's eyes, he has the Evil Eye. Lock him up!", the deranged townspeople imprison the Bavarian prophet not long after the Master

burns down the glass factory. While in prison, Hias loses his prophetic prowess as the cell is much too dark and the woods are what speaks to his soul, but luckily the Master comes by and declares to the prophet, "I like you. You have a heart of glass" and the Bavarian prophet is finally able to go on his merry way, where he goes to a cave and wrestles and stabs an imaginary bear, later 'roasting' the said imaginary bear in what amounts to a biblical cliché. In his late vision, Hias sees a small rocky island far out in the sea where forgotten men live who, due to their remoteness, do not know that the earth is round and think it is flat, so they decide to "risk the ultimate" and set sail on a small boat to "reach the edge of the world, to see if there is really an abyss," assumedly sailing to their deaths. Heart of Glass closes with the quote, "It may have seemed like a sign of hope...that the birds followed them out into the vastness of the sea..." thus demonstrating the absurdity of superstitious thinking yet its undeniable power in influencing the human will.

In his work *New German Cinema: A History* (1989), German film scholar Thomas Elsaesser wrote, "Heart of Glass was Herzog's attempt to find the strangeness of myth and legend in the heartland of the Heimat film. Based on a story by Achternbusch, it shows (between these two at first sight very similar 'folklorists') a radical difference of perception of the genre. Not one of Herzog's successes, the film might have been better had it been written by its director or directed by its writer. Heart of Glass never seems to be able to resolve whether it is a Heimat film turned inside out, showing the bigotry and rivalries in inbred communities, or whether it celebrates harmony and a oneness-with-nature of the elect. Herzog's tendency to distance his characters at all costs, even if it means fashioning for them a halo of mystical remoteness (apparently achieved by hypnotizing the cast) runs counter to Achternbusch's drastic debunking." Indeed, unlike most anti-Heimat films, Heart of Glass, although critical of the peasantry and its ostensibly 'outmoded' lifestyles and customs, demonstrates a much greater sympathy for its characters, namely Hias (who is somewhat of a stand-in for Herzog), and their way of life as opposed to 'moralistically' depicting Bavarian peasants as a group of rabid redneck racists of the lynch-mob-oriented sort like in *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*. Additionally, while Achternbusch tends to portray Bavarian peasants as inbreeding alcoholic morons of the politically and religiously retarded sort in films like *Bierkampf* (1977) aka *Beer Chase* and *Heilt Hitler!* (1986) aka *Heal Hitler!*, Herzog simply portrays them as simple folk whose entire world can be destroyed after one small part of their daily life disappears, which is a trait that can be said of all of humanity, not just a bunch of hillbilly Aryans from the south. Seeing as Herzog shot the film not far from the area of Bavaria he grew up in, has incessantly stated throughout his career that he has a deep affinity for the Bavarian landscape, and was brought up on the sort of Teutonic mystical folk stories told in the film, Heart of Glass is ultimately more of a modern apolitical Heimatfilm as opposed to a leftist lynch mob anti-

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Heimatfilm, thereupon making it a strikingly singular work in the subgenre that breaks with convention. Another attempt by Herzog to find the “ecstatic truth,” Heart of Glass is a ‘hypnotic’ tragicomedic work of the Germanic quasi-mystical persuasion featuring Caspar David Friedrich-esque like romantic imagery that, while it may not be the director’s greatest film by any means, surely makes for one of his most impenetrable, on top of being one of the most mystifying and aesthetically alluring ‘heimat’ films of the post-WWII era. Intentionally using a musical score by his longtime krautrock collaborator Popol Vuh in the hope of further achieving his objective of hypnotizing his viewer, Werner Herzog may have been attempting a cheap gimmick via Heart of Glass, but regardless, the celestial celluloid work still has a titan Teutonic cinematic heart that is quite indicative of what separates the Bavarian auteur not only from his countryman and collaborator Herbert Achternbusch, but also every other filmmaker in cinema history.

-Ty E

STROSZEK

Werner Herzog (1977)

Originally intending to cast Bruno Schleinstein (better known as Bruno S.) – the feral-like forklift-driver-musician-turned-actor and star of his previous cinematic work *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) – as the lead in his planned adaptation of German dramatist Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog eventually realized the role was better suited for Klaus Kinski and put the production of the film on hold for a couple years. Out of shame and embarrassment, Herzog decided on the spot seconds after giving Bruno S. the bad news on the phone that he would make it up to the outsider artist by making a rather different film with him as the lead. This film inevitably became *Stroszek* (1977), which Werner Herzog wrote in a mere 4 days specifically for Bruno S., including the use of his real flat, music and musical instruments, and his time spent in prisons and mental institutions. The bastard son of a prostitute, the Bruno S. was institutionalized at the age of 3 in an asylum for mentally retarded and insane children because he suddenly stopped talking as a toddler because his mother beat him so much. Spending 23 years of his life in a mental institution – a traumatizing event that further drove the actor into social isolation and a pathological distrust of other people – Bruno S. was eventually released from prison at the age of 26. That being said, the actor essentially plays himself in *Stroszek* as an intensely introverted and idiosyncratic individual whose utter mistrust for his fellow man bleeds through onto the screen in a manner that is simultaneously chilling, confounding, and captivating. Also starring in *Stroszek* is Fassbinder graduate Eva Mattes (*The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *Wildwechsel*, *Effi Briest* and *In a Year of 13 Moons*) – who Herzog later had a daughter with – as a somewhat sad but ultimately callous and calculating Berlin prostitute, and the quasi-insane elderly man Clemens Scheitz who, like Bruno S., starred previously in *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* and two other Herzog films (*Heart of Glass*, *Nosferatu the Vampyre*). Set in contemporary times and in two different counties (Germany and the United States), *Stroszek* was a notable departure from Werner Herzog's previous films, most of which were exotic period pieces. Incidentally, the film would be regarded as one of the director's greatest masterpieces. Often described as 'anti-American' and an astute critique of capitalism, Herzog denies these claims, stating in an interview for the book *Herzog on Herzog* (2003) that, "The film does not criticize the country; it is almost a eulogy to the place. For me *Stroszek* is about shattered hopes." And indeed, although quite mirthful in a curiously quirky way, *Stroszek* is ultimately a most disheartening and dejecting cinematic work, so much so that Ian Curtis – the epileptic frontman of the post-punk group Joy Division – committed suicide on the eve of his band's first American tour shortly after watching the film as depicted in *24 Hour Party People* (2002) directed by Michael Winterbottom

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and *Control* (2007) directed by Anton Corbijn.

During the beginning of *Stroszek*, protagonist Bruno S. is released from prison, assuring a skeptical social worker with his “great Hungarian word of honor” that he won’t drink alcohol (the source of his random and belligerent criminality) and that he will make an effort to keep his pants zipper zipped and keep his general appearance kempt, all of these of course being things he will inevitably fail to do. Soon after leaving prison, Bruno meets prostitute Eva (who has a penchant for sexually servicing swarthy Turkish men at deep dick discount prices) at his favorite bar and tries to console her after her pimps (the more domineering of the two is played by Wilhelm von Homburg, best known for his performance as Vigo the Carpathian in the film *Ghostbusters II*) abuse her. Before long, the oversexed Eva begins a relationship with the empathic Bruno, which is of the seemingly sexless sort as Herzog made nil attempts to portray the odd couple in an intimate light. After Bruno is humiliated and virtually tortured, Eva is repeatedly beaten by the pernicious and pugnacious pimps, they decide that moving to America is their best prospect for avoiding further degradation and starting a better life, thereupon making a desperate and naive attempt at the so-called ‘American dream.’ Bruno’s elderly and exceedingly eccentric friend Scheitz (Clemens Scheitz) – a talented piano player with a number of obscure scientific theories – was already planning to move to Wisconsin to live with his American nephew Clayton, so the street musician and his ex-streetwalker sweetheart decide to accompany him. When the now-merry Teutonic trio arrive to America, they are happy as can be as they now have their own very mobile home – a true dream to the post-war German according to Werner Herzog, despite seeming like quite the cynical joke to the average American – but the protagonists’ dreams dissolve quickly once they must face the reality of a mortgage, low wages resulting in Eva’s once again adopting the lifestyle of a prostitute, and the social isolation that eventually explodes into violent madness when both Bruno and Scheitz become convinced that there is a conspiracy being waged against them. These actions become all the more eerie when one realizes that the location of Bruno’s trailer is at the spot of Plainfield, Wisconsin where infamous German-American serial killer Ed Gein carried out some of his necrophile nights. During one of his drunken but poignant trailer-park ramblings, Bruno S. states quite belligerently, “I thought America would be different, and we could get rich quick,” but inevitably the distress incurred growing up in an institution in Nazi Germany was less vicious and vexatious because they “hurt you openly back then” yet in the United States they do it with a smile, causing a sort of “spiritual pain.”

One thing that seems quite absurd in *Stroszek* to many viewers, including myself, is that one is supposed to believe that tall Nordic redneck Clayton (played by Clayton Szalpinski) – an intrinsically unintellectual extrovert of the proud American peasant sort – is the nephew of tiny heterodox dilettante genius Scheitz;

an effortlessly effete fellow that looks like he could be the surviving member of German poet Stefan George's literary circle 'George-Kreis.' But then again, America seems to have that deracinating power, especially in regard to Northern/Western European immigrants and their progeny. Personally, I have known people who were the direct descendants of European aristocrats who were sub-literate wiggers and skinheads whose daily activities revolved around bong hits, beer chugging, and siring bastard babies, but I guess such is the degenerating effect of a culturally and racially mongrelized nation with American Indians that exhibit the pantomimes of hillbillies and secluded areas with a population of 480 that spawn five serial killers/murders as depicted in Herzog's *Stroszek*. Featuring Wisconsin mechanics who pull their teeth out via automotive pliers, territorial farmers who battle over a small plot of land while brandishing loaded shotguns on tractors like modern-day medieval knights, spasmodic and surreal yet authentic vocally proficient auctioneers (Herzog describes the auctioneer words as the last form of poetry; the "poetry of capitalism"), dancing chickens and piano-playing rabbits, and diner truckstops that act as underground prostitution rings, *Stroszek* is a flavorsome piece of American cinematic apple pie imported from krautland.

Admittedly, since the first time I discovered his cinematic works about a decade ago or so, I have been somewhat disillusioned with Werner Herzog, not least of all because of sentimentalist, ethno-masochistic films like *Invincible* (2001) and the patently pretentious, curiously contrived and absolutely awful experimental film like *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), not to mention his seemingly groveling puffery of Steven Spielberg of all innately capitalistic, global homogenizing, anti-kultur filmmakers, yet I have to admit that *Stroszek* – which I hadn't seen in over 5 years – only gets better with each subsequent viewing and still stands as one of the filmmaker's greatest films to date. My girlfriend was also quite smitten with the film, so much so that she literally fell on the floor and almost threw-up laughing at the film's anomalous and terribly tragicomic ending. Although Herzog is quite adamant that *Stroszek*, "is not one of those movies trying to make Americans look bad," it would probably be hard for most U.S. viewers to think otherwise in a work where the country is depicted as the land of the feral and the economically enslaved. Still, one gets the feeling that Herzog truly enjoys the company of the mostly non-actors that star in the film and he even remarked that the best Americans are from the Midwest citing Marlon Brando, Ernest Hemingway, and Bob Dylan as notable examples. As for Bruno S., although he delighted in some minor fame for his performances in Herzog's films, he would later state that he felt, "everybody threw him away." Shortly after Bruno S.'s death on August 11, 2010 due to a failing heart, Herzog paid the belated 'actor' the deepest display of posthumous respect, stating, "in all my films, and with all the great actors with whom I have worked, he was the best. There is no one who comes close to him. I mean in his humanity, and the depth of his

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performance, there is no one like him," which is quite the compliment to pay to a formerly institutionalized non-actor from a director who has worked with Klaus Kinski, Bruno Ganz, Udo Kier, and Michael Shannon, among many of the best actors that the world has to offer.

I hate playing favorites, especially when it comes to films by my favorite (and formerly favorite) directors, but Stroszek is without question my favorite Herzog film, not least of all because it may be the only film that manages to do the seemingly impossible by seamlessly capturing the essence of two distinct subcultures from two very different nations; one that I have an unhealthy obsession with and another that I grew up in and (somewhat reluctantly) call home. Although a self-described "crazy kraut" who grew up in an isolated area in the mountains of Bavaria, with Stroszek Herzog was able to channel the 'essence' of America, albeit a marginal and oftentimes maligned (especially by Hollywood) segment, which has been rarely portrayed on the silver screen before or after, thus it was of little surprise that the German filmmaker would remark regarding Hollywood-actor-turned-trash-art-auteur Giuseppe Andrews's feature Trailer Town (2003), "This place, this trailer park, I have a feeling that this is the real America." After all, Herzog mobilized the magical and mystical qualities of the mobile-home first via Stroszek; his most majestic yet mystifying and merry yet melancholy cinematic postcard from America.

-Ty E

NOSFERATU THE VAMPIRE

Werner Herzog (1979)

The German expressionist masterpiece *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922) aka *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* directed by F.W. Murnau will always remain permanently impressed upon my soul, not least of all because it was both the first silent film and first German film I had ever seen, but also because the film features what I consider to be the most physically grotesque yet strikingly iconic creature in film history. Needless to say, the idea of a remake of *Nosferatu* sounded like an interesting yet ridiculous prospect to me when I first came to this realization after seeing Murnau's film while still just a preteen, even if the film itself was illegally adapted from Bram Stoker's gothic horror masterpiece *Dracula* (1897) and has been adapted in various, less impressive, and oftentimes more ridiculous forms from the blaxploitation *Blacula* (1972) to Paul Morrissey's anti-communist satire *Blood for Dracula* (1974), yet the Bavarian filmmaker belonging to German New Cinema by the name of Werner Herzog (Even Dwarfs Started Small, *Stroszek*) managed to breath new life into the classic undead German expressionist flick. Indeed, Werner Herzog's version, entitled *Nosferatu the Vampire* (1979) aka *Nosferatu: Phantom der Nacht* aka *Nosferatu: Phantom of the Night*, is not so much a remake of Murnau's *Nosferatu* as it is an idiosyncratic adaption and tribute, or as the crazy old Southern kraut stated himself, "I never thought of my film *Nosferatu* as being a remake. It stands on its own feet as an entirely new version. It is like both Dreyer and Bresson, who made films about Joan of Arc: one is not a remake of the other. My *nosferatu* has a different context, different figures and a somewhat different story. It is a very clear declaration of my connection to the very best of German cinema..." And, indeed, *Nosferatu the Vampire*—a work released more than half a century after Murnau's version—is the closest thing to a postmodern neo-völkisch horror flick that, unlike most of the films and filmmakers of German New Cinema, takes pride in its cinematic ancestral heritage, whilst adding new ingredients, including krautrock music by Herzog favorite Popol Vuh, a perversely post-Spenglerian message that makes *Nosferatu* (1922) seem like a feel-good fairytale, and actors of mixed Germanic racial stock, including Klaus Kinski (of Polish descent via his father), Isabelle Adjani (of Algerian and Bavarian blood), and Bruno Ganz (of German-Swiss and Northern Italian stock). As Herzog stated in an interview, "I have said many times that as children growing up in post-war Germany we had grandfathers but no fathers to learn from. Many men had been killed in the war or were in captivity. My own father was alive but not around for much of the time, and Fassbinder's father abandoned his family very early on. As filmmakers coming of age in the early and mid-1960s, we were the first real post-war generation, young Germans with no one around who could give us points of reference," thus he looked toward the grandfather

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generation, which was led by F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang, deciding to cinematically adapt the former's most popular film *Nosferatu* (1922), stating of the work, "For me, *Nosferatu* is the greatest of all German films, and feeling as strongly as I did that I needed to connect to this 'legitimate' German culture in order to find my roots as a filmmaker, I chose to concentrate on Murnau's masterpiece, knowing full well it would be impossible to better the original." Indeed, while I concur with Herzog that no one could top Murnau's *Nosferatu*, it is hard to think of a 'remake' as respectful to the original while also authentic in its own right, yet immaculately tailored for the post-Hitler zeitgeist where there are no happy endings, but only the strangely hypnotic stench of death and destruction.

Beginning with eerie footage of real-life mummies on display at the Guanajuato museum in Guanajuato, Mexico that were victims of a 1833 cholera epidemic that director Werner Herzog personally took out of their glass display cases and propped against the wall, *Nosferatu the Vampyre* immediately establishes itself as a gorgeously grotesque work that unflinchingly wallows in death, decay, and madness. Set in Wismar, Germany (it was actually shot in Delft, Netherlands, but Herzog pays tribute to the original 1922 Murnau flick, if in name only, which was filmed in Wismar, though set in the fictional city of Wisborg), *Nosferatu the Vampyre* initially centers on the protagonist Jonathan Harker (Bruno Ganz), a gentlemanly real estate agent who loves his wife Lucy Harker (Isabelle Adjani) so much that he takes a dubious offer from his exceedingly eccentric boss Renfield (French-Jewish artist/writer Roland Topor, a founder of the Panic Movement) to travel eastward over the Carpathian mountains to Transylvania (although Herzog shot the scenes in what was then Czechoslovakia because the Ceaușescu regime prevent Herzog from filming in Romania proper) to meet with a seemingly nefarious nobleman named Count Dracula (Klaus Kinski) who wants to buy property in Wismar. Showing no inkling of fear for "wolves, bandits, and ghosts," Harker makes his way east with his pack of deeds and documents that will be ostensibly used for Dracula to buy a house and on the way, the eager beaver estate agent stops at a village full of medieval-like gypsies, who warn him not to go to the Count's apparently cursed castle. Indeed, it says a lot about a person and place when gypsies see it as horrifically evil, but Harker is no superstitious untermensch, so he makes his way to Count Dracula's ruined yet lavishly decorated castle. Undoubtedly, Dracula—a pale as a ghost and greatly grotesque rodent-like being who seems perennially lonely and macabrely melancholy—makes Harker feel rather uneasy, especially after the Count sucks blood from his finger after the real estate agent cuts himself while eating, but luckily the aberrant aristocrat instantly decides to buy the home in Wismar, especially after realizing the Harkers will live next door (the Count seems especially interested after seeing a small portrait of the ethereal, lovely lady Lucy in Jonathan's locket). During the night, Harker suffers a number of perturbing phantasmagorical encounters with the Count, while simultaneously, all the way

back in Wismar, Lucy is plagued by fierce and foreboding night terrors of the penetratingly prophetic fashion. When the sun rises, Harker goes to investigate around the Gothic castle and finds Count Dracula sleeping in a ruined coffin, thereupon confirming he is a vampire. Meanwhile, Renfield is unsurprisingly committed to a mental institution after biting a cow and attempting to attack a guard, all the while spouting nonsense like “blood is life” in between rampant bursts of maniacal laughter. At night, Count Dracula packs a bunch of black coffins with cursed dirt, rats, and himself and makes his way to Wismar via ship, thus siring in the pernicious plague that will ultimately obliterate the small Teutonic town.

Weakened by his stay at the horrifying home of the bloodsucking blueblood Dracula, Jonathan Harker feebly attempts to leave the castle but realizes he is locked in, so he creates a makeshift rope via bedsheets and attempts to climb out a window, but severely injures himself in the process, thus leading to the beginning of the end of his sanity. While sailing to Wismar, Dracula kills the entire crew of sailors manning the ship, making it seem as if the deaths are merely the result of the plague, but as the captain (Jacques Dufilho) notes regarding the dubious deaths in his ship log, “A rumor of a mysterious stranger on board scares everyone to death.” When the plagued ship of the dead finally arrives in Wismar with no one aboard aside from the corpse of the captain who has tied himself to the helm in a manner not unlike Stoker’s source novel, Renfield announces from his cell that “the master has arrived” and a couple doctors, including vampire hunter Abraham Van Helsing (Walter Ladengast), decide to investigate the curious fate of the ghost ship, finding a ship-log in the process that reveals clues in regard to the dead sailors’ fate. On top of bringing death in the form of Count ‘The Lord of the Rats’ Dracula, the ghost ship has also brought an ugly underground army of rodents that totally occupy Wismar, at which point darkness and destruction totally consume the town, killing virtually all of the unsuspecting inhabitants in no time. Meanwhile, Harker, who has a rather nightmarish stay in a Transylvania hospital, finally arrives in Wismar, but he is now deathly pale and his mind seems to have been replaced with that of a babbling old man with Alzheimer’s disease. Seeming to suffer from amnesia, Harker no longer recognizes his wife Lucy, but Count Dracula certainly does and attempts to get some from the little lady, absurdly commanding to her, “Give me some of your love which you give Jonathan,” but she respectfully declines, stating, “I never will. I won’t even give that love to God,” for she is a woman that knows all too well the purity and faithfulness encompassed in true love, especially among soul mates such as herself and her now unfortunately brain-damaged hubby. Horrified by the Count’s sinister presence, Lucy suspects that Dracula might be involved with the deaths in Wismar and tries in vain to warn the townspeople, who pay her no mind as the mayor and all the government officials are dead and the rest of the people are more interested in burying the ostensibly diseased corpses and dining

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on fine wine in what they suspect to be their last feast as their very probable fate with the grim-reaper awaits. Probably the most selfless femme fatale who has ever lived, Lucy states to herself: "And if a pure hearted woman, diverts his attention from the cry of the cock...the first light of day will obliterate him" in regard to what she needs to do to rid the world of the vile vampire. Making good on her statement, she lures Count Dracula into her bedroom and hopes to distract him until his undead immortality can be vanquished at dawn, but in the process, she sacrifices her own life when the creature drains her blood. Though dead, Lucy is victorious as the first beam of light of the day causes Count Dracula to collapse to his death and not long after, Van Helsing drives a stake through his cold black heart just to make sure atrocious aristocrat is dead. On his way out of the house, Van Helsing is stopped by Jonathan Harker, who has the good doctor arrested. Jonathan Harker is now a vampire himself, stating to himself "I have much to do. Now!" and leaves Wismar in a hasty manner on horseback to assumedly continue his master and maker Count Dracula's work.

Rather ironically, out of all the films I have ever seen featuring Klaus Kinski, never has the infamously lunatic actor appear so subdued, sensitive, and sympathetic as his role in *Nosferatu the Vampire*, even if it is portraying a ghastly bloodsucking humanoid parasite who resembles a rat-like death camp survivor, as it seems the sadistic star, who was indubitably a 'psychic vampire' in real-life, felt right at home as a conspiring creature of the night who drains people of their vital fluid at their most vulnerable moments. That being said, what largely thematically differentiates Herzog's *Nosferatu* from Murnau's original 1922 film is that *Nosferatu the Vampire* 'humanizes' the vampire, portraying him as not merely soulless and insensitive but as an accursed walking corpse of sorts who, as he states himself, suffers in the following manner, "Time is an abyss... profound as a thousand nights... Centuries come and go... To be unable to grow old is terrible... Death is not the worst... Can you imagine enduring centuries, experiencing each day the same futilities?.." and is naturally willing to do anything to overcome his undying loneliness as an ancient aristocrat who has not had sun and sex in centuries. At the same time, *Nosferatu the Vampire* also shows how a good man, Jonathan Harker, can degenerate into a brutal beast of pure, pernicious evil, thereupon making Herzog's work a more thematically intricate film that is ultimately fittingly updated and more reflective of our more nihilistic and uncertain times, where parasitic 'blood-sucking' behavior is a given in the innately materialistic and capitalistic Occident. Of course, more than anything and most importantly, *Nosferatu the Vampire* is a grand aesthetic achievement that, in the rather seemingly simple form of a hallucinatory horror film, manages to combine the best elements of Teutonic art and culture from the past couple centuries or so, including the music of darkly romantic compositions of Richard Wagner and celestial krautrock outfit Popol Vuh, a seamlessly hybridized hodge-podge of cinematic ingredients from German expressionist and mountain films

by the likes of Arnold Fanck and Leni Riefenstahl of the 1920s/30s, but also the anti-heimatfilm of German New Cinema (which Herzog himself previously contributed to with his work *Heart of Glass* (1976) aka *Herz aus Glas*), and ethereal landscapes scenes echoing the paintings of German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich and the dark otherworldly völkisch mysticism of symbolist painters like Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach, so it should be no surprise that director Herzog stated of his objective with the film, “What I really sought to do was connect my *Nosferatu* with our true German cultural heritage, the silent films of the Weimar era and Murnau’s work in particular. If his *Nosferatu* is a genre film then mine inevitably is one too. In many ways, for me, this film was the final chapter of the vital process of ‘re-legitimization’ of German culture that had been going on for some years.”

Undoubtedly, one of the great ironies of the career of Werner Herzog—a filmmaker who has always blurred the line between fiction and nonfiction and documentary and narrative cinema, and rarely acknowledges genres—is that one of the greatest and most iconic, if not the most iconic, films of his career, *Nosferatu the Vampyre* is a classic horror genre flick, yet still manages to be pure Herzogian in its ominous oneiric yet rapturously romantic essence as a cinematic work that could have only been realized by a man with a deep connection to nature as a radical Bavarian peasant artist who would become one of the most important German filmmakers of the post-WWII era. Herzog’s *Nosferatu the Vampyre* was followed up with an in-name-only sequel entitled *Vampire in Venice* (1988) aka *Nosferatu a Venezia* aka *Nosferatu in Venice*, which was also based on F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* and starred Klaus Kinski, but the Italian production went through many directors (producer Augusto Caminito took over after director Mario Caiano quit due to being rather tired of Kinski’s insults and belligerent behavior) and is ultimately a mess that is just as aesthetically troubled as the film’s production itself. Indeed, as he proved with not only *Nosferatu the Vampyre*, but also *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), *Woyzeck* (1979), *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), and *Cobra Verde* (1987), Herzog was the only one that had what it takes to tame the blond polack beast Kinski. Undoubtedly, with the obvious exception of Murnau’s *Nosferatu*, *Nosferatu the Vampyre* is indubitably the greatest cinematic adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* ever made, even making the immortally iconic *Dracula* (1931) directed by Tod Browning and starring Bela Lugosi seem rather tame, banal, and contrived by comparison, but especially exposing Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Ford Coppola for the phony and truly ‘soulless’ pseudo-Victorian joke that it is. In his rat-like appearance and propensity for bringing the ‘plague’ (Jews were blamed for poisoning wells and spreading the plague in medieval times) from the semi-Asiatic east, it is no surprise the film theorists time and time again have recognized *Nosferatu/Dracula* as a sort of Jewish figure, so it seems a great irony that a Hebraic Hollywood director was never able to concoct the ultimate *Dracula* flick, but

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rather two very different krauts did so instead. Of course, after Nosferatu the Vampyre, it seems pointless for anyone to attempt Stoker's Dracula ever again, especially considering the sorry state of German cinema today.

-Ty E

WOYZECK

Werner Herzog (1979)

When I first discovered the cinematic oeuvre of Bavarian adventurist auteur Werner Herzog (*Even Dwarfs Started Small*, *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*) about a decade ago, I could not get enough and made a point of seeing all of the director's classic films immediately and out of all of these films, the only one of these films that did not really impress me too much was *Woyzeck* (1979) starring Klaus Kinski and Eva Mattes. Since it has been about a good ten years since I initially viewed the film, I recently decided to give *Woyzeck* another chance and while I enjoyed it much more than before, I can safely say it is not one of Herzog's finest Teutonic masterpieces but a secondary work and minimalistic minor masterpiece from a filmmaker who can afford to make a flawed flick or two. Indeed, knowing the background history of the film, one would think it was inevitable that the film would have been a short and sweet but somewhat sloppy work from the Bavarian celluloid Duke. Starting shooting a mere five days after Herzog completed *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), Kinski (who replaced Bruno S. of *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974) after Herzog decided Kinski would be better suited for the role) and the rest of the film crew were naturally exhausted when they began working on *Woyzeck*, yet as the auteur explained during an interview with Paul Cronin, the film completed shooting in 17 days (most scenes were filmed in a single take!) and it only took another five days for the work to be edited, as the director wanted to take advantage of his time in Czechoslovakia (Herzog shot *Nosferatu* there and instead of seeking new film permits, he began to shoot *Woyzeck* but gave the false impression that he was still working on the vampire flick). Based on an unfinished 'working-class tragedy' of the same name written by German playwright/revolutionary Georg Büchner that was written in 1837 but not first published until 1879 after it been bastardized and heavily reworked by assimilated Austrian Sephardic Jewish novelist Karl Emil Franzos, *Woyzeck* is very much a Herzogian work in that, like the director's very first feature *Signs of Life* (1968) aka *Lebenszeichen*, it centers around a disillusioned Teutonic soldier suffering from debilitating *weltschmerz* and social alienation who slowly but surely mentally deteriorates until the point where he must seek a sort of visceral and innately irrational revenge against society.

A dark and patently culturally pessimistic sort of urban anti-Heimat flick, *Woyzeck* has been described by Herzog as his most intrinsically Germanic film, stating in an interview: "My film of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* is probably my simplest connection to what is the best of my own culture, more so than *Nosferatu*, which was more an explicit connection to a world of cinema. Though I have always worked within German culture, making a film of *Woyzeck* meant to reach out to Germany's most significant cultural history, and for this reason there is something in the film that is beyond me. It touches the very golden

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heights of German culture and because of this the film sparkles. Yet all I did was reach up and touch these heights." And, indeed, while I am more than hesitant to describe *Woyzeck* as an immaculate masterpiece, it still easily ranks up with Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Effi Briest* (1974) and *Bolwieser* (1977) aka *The Stationmaster's Wife* and Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Heinrich* (1977) in terms of German New Cinema period pieces that pay tribute to great Teutonic literary works/figures of the past. Featuring dipsomaniac kraut barroom philosophers going on pessimistic quasi-existentialists rants that would put Schopenhauer to shame, a Jewish merchant who firmly believes "death should be cheap" and sells a cheap knife to a deranged soldier so he can bludgeon to death his wife, and a soldier antihero who shares about as much solidarity with the Prussian military ideal as a philo-Semitic commie like Berthold Brecht, *Woyzeck* features a cinematic portrait of old Germania that is about as romantic as the rape of Berlin by Soviet Asiatic hordes.

No-rank German soldier Franz *Woyzeck* (Klaus Kinski) suffers from a 'fever' that both his 'friends' and employers seemed rather concerned about, but no one seems to acknowledge the fact that the man does not suffer from a virus, but a foreboding mental illness that signals the fellow might murderously explode at any time. For starters, *Woyzeck* is a cowardly cuckold with a whorish mistress named Maria (Eva Mattes) with whom he has a bastard child. *Woyzeck's* main source of employment is doing degrading jobs for a military Captain (Wolfgang Reichmann), who berates his discernibly meek employee for having a child out of wedlock and lacking a strong moral compass. As the Captain rightfully, if not patronizingly, tells the *Woyzeck*, "you always have that hunted look in your eye. A good man doesn't have that. A good man has a clear conscience," and whereas the Captain professes to have "only joined the war to affirm my love for life," the life of a soldier has only confirmed *Woyzeck's* growing hatred for life and humanity. To supplement his meager income and support his impoverished family, *Woyzeck* is also the slavish guinea pig of a quack Doctor (Willy Semmelrogge) who severely scolds the soldier for routinely urinating in public and pays him poorly to try out an eccentric experiment where he only can eat of diet of peas and nothing else. Meanwhile, *Woyzeck's* lecherous mistress Maria spends her days voyeuristically drooling at the sight of handsome soldiers and eventually begins having an affair with a handsome and masculine Drum Major (Josef Bierbichler) who is everything that her hapless cuck baby-daddy is not. When *Woyzeck* confronts Marie about her slutty behavior and goes to strike her for her lack of remorse, she responds with the utmost contempt by stating, "Hit me, Franz! I'd rather have a knife in my body than your hand on me," which prove to be rather prophetic words on the unclean maiden's part. When *Woyzeck* makes a feeble attempt to confront the Drum Major, he is first verbally assaulted with the remark "I'll knock your nose up your ass!" and eventually beaten by the man in a rather dehumanizing manner. While holding *Woyzeck* in a headlock,

the Drum Major sadiſtically quips to him, “Should I leave you enough air for a grandma’s fart?,” thus further adding to the ſoldier’s abjeſt humiliation. After bizarrely declaring to himſelf “Today I am 40 years old...7 months and 12 days” and giving ſome of his belongings to a friend, Woyzeck goes to a Jewish ſhop owner to buy a weapon and ſince he lack the funds to buy a gun, he opts for a knife. Rather humorouſly yet ſtrangely poetically, the all-wiſe old Jewish peddler (Wolfgang Bächler) ſtates to Woyzeck regarding the knife, “I give it to you as cheap as the next. Death ſhould be cheap, but not for free! You ſhould have an economical death.” When Woyzeck leaves, the old Jew mumbles to himſelf, “There! Like it was nothing, and yet it’s money. The dog!” Ultimately, Woyzeck takes Marie to a ſcenic lake and when ſhe rebuffs his warm yet pathetic embrace, the ſoldier ſtates “How hot your lips are. Hot...whore breath. And yet I’d give heaven to kiſs them one more time...” and proceeds to brutally and viſcerally ſtab his miſtreſs as if uſing the knife as a ſubſtitute for his neglected member.

Conſidering Georg Büchner died prematurely at the mere age of 23 from typhus before he could complete *Woyzeck*, Herzog decided to piece together the fragments of the play in a manner he ſaw fit, or as he ſtated in an interview: “I had wanted to make a film of *Woyzeck* for ſome time. For me there is no greater drama in the German language. It is of ſuch ſtunning actuality. There are no really good English translations of *Woyzeck*, nothing really completely ſatisfying. The drama is a fragment, and there has been a very high-calibre debate within academic circles as to which order the looſe, unpaginated ſheets ſhould go in. I uſed an arrangement of ſcenes that made the moſt ſenſe as a continuous ſtory and I think moſt theatrical productions uſe this ſame ſhape.” Indeed, deſpite the paſſages that are loſt-in-translation with English ſubtitling, *Woyzeck* has a number of deeply poetic excerpts, with the following ſpeech from a drunken vagrant-like fellow being one of the moſt marvelouſly miſanthropic: “But...when a wanderer, leaning againſt the ſtream of time...or answering to himſelf with divine wiſdom...is ſaying to himſelf, why does man exiſt? Why does man exiſt? But honeſtly, I’ll tell you...how would the farmer, the cobbler, the doctor live...if God hadn’t created man? How the ſoldier, if he waſn’t endowed with the deſire...the deſire...the deſire to kill his own kind? Therefore, doubt not. All things of this world are evil. Even money decays. Finally, dear congregation...let’s piſs croſſway ſo a Jew dies!” Of courſe, in *Woyzeck*, no Jew dies, but inſtead merely provides the weapon for a lovelorn lunatic to kill his unfaithful lover.

In terms of acting, *Woyzeck* features eaſily one of, if not the moſt, patently pathetic performances ever given by Klaus Kinski. Apparently, Herzog exploited Kinski’s exhaustion from ſhooting *Nosferatu the Vampyre* previously to get the infamous egomaniacal actor to give the kraut cuckold performance of a lifetime, which he certainly did. Like his character *Woyzeck* in the film, Kinski ſeems to have loſt all control of himſelf and has been denigrated to the level of a poſſeſſed

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demonic being who only has the capacity for erratically reacting without thought. In terms of anti-völkisch hallucinatory psycho-dramatic horrors, Woyzeck can only really be compared to Uwe Brandner's brutal anti-Heimat sci-fi flick *I Love You, I Kill You* (1971) aka *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich*, though Herzog's film lacks even the most meager glimmer of hope and redemption. If I did not know better, I would assume that Herzog was living vicariously through the character of Woyzeck, as he gets to psychosexually slaughter Eva Mattes, who was the director's real-life mistress and baby-mama (Herzog and Mattes are the parents of photographer Hanna Mattes). Regardless of whatever influences went into the making of *Woyzeck*, it is undoubtedly one of the most darkly poetic and pathologically perturbing films of German New Cinema as the sort of work a sterile and glacial filmmaker like Michael Haneke, who somehow manages to make cinematic murder seem about as interesting as a vacuum cleaner commercial, wishes he had directed. In *Woyzeck*, passionate murder is of Wagnerian proportions, or as the film's closing inter-title reads: "A good murder, a real murder, a beautiful murder; as beautiful, as any man can hope to see. We haven't had one like this in ages."

-Ty E

COBRA VERDE

Werner Herzog (1987)

The fifth and final cinematic collaboration between what is easily one of the greatest, if not mutually deleterious, actor-director partnerships in film history, *Cobra Verde* (1987) aka *Slave Coast* directed by Werner Herzog (*The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, *Fitzcarraldo*) starring Klaus Kinski (*Zoo Zéro*, *Nosferatu the Vampyre*) also happens to be one of the weirdest and mystifying films about the African slave trade, making it sort of a nice arthouse epic companion piece to *Goodbye Uncle Tom* (1971) aka *Addio Zio Tom* directed by marvelous Mondo Cane maestros Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi. A doomed film production from the get go, *Cobra Verde* marked the height of the already well known hostility and hatred between Herzog and Kinski, who was more interested in his own pet project *Kinski Paganini* (1989), which would ultimately be both the actor's directorial debut and the last film he starred in before his death via heart attack at the age of 65 in 1991. In fact, as Herzog described in his documentary *My Best Fiend* (1999) aka *Mein liebster Feind - Klaus Kinski*, Kinski wanted the Bavarian auteur to direct *Paganini* (but Herzog ultimately found the script to be "unfilmable"). Herzog felt that Kinski's obsession with the *Paganini* project was so all-consuming that it caused him to have an "alien air," which affected his performance in *Cobra Verde*. Based on the novel *The Viceroy of Ouidah* (1980) by British writer Bruce Chatwin and filmed in Africa, Brazil and Colombia, *Cobra Verde* was so acutely accursed by Kinski's menacing and megalomaniacal wrath that original cinematographer Thomas Mauch, who previously shot Herzog classics like *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) and *Stroszek* (1977), quit the project after facing too much abuse from the pathologically petty and pissed Polish-German actor and was replaced with Czech cinematographer Viktor Růžička. Herzog himself was no less disillusioned with the project, stating regarding *Cobra Verde*, "the production was, simply, the worst in my life and I publicly swore after filming that I would never again work with Kinski. At the time I thought to myself, 'Will somebody please step in and carry on the work with this man? I have had enough,' There was something about Kinski's presence in the film that meant a foreign stink – his stink – pervaded the work we did together there, and *Cobra Verde* suffers somewhat because of this." An unwaveringly unflattering look at the white man, black man, and humanity in general, *Cobra Verde* is essentially the dark continent equivalent to *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), albeit nowhere as ethereal and hallucinatory but certainly more depraved and (unintentionally) hilarious in its depiction of such unsavory things as an unpleasantly plump Portuguese plantation owners who defile African slaves and collect mulatto progeny, Catholic priests that pimp out Negro preteens, and savagely sadistic African kings of the tribal sort who exterminate every single man who has the same name as him as he wants to be the 'one and only' with

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the name.

Featuring 'trout pout' lipped crazed kraut Kinski in the role of a degenerate and deadly Brazilian bandit who literally makes women, children, and priests scatter with his mere presence, I, for one, think that the actor's real-life mental derangement contributed greatly to his uniquely unsettling and intimidating performance as a curious career criminal of the loony lone-wolf sort who is the only white man willing to physically work with Negroes doing degrading slave labor. Francisco Manoel da Silva aka "Cobra Verde" aka "Green Snake" (Klaus Kinski) is best at being a bloodthirsty bandit in the Brazilian sertão so when he makes the mistake of performing honest work for a gold-mining company and is not paid by the foreman, he kills said foreman and goes on his merry maniac way. After screwing a random aristocratic Negress he spots while wandering to seemingly nowhere, Cobra Verde subdues a runaway slave by his mere penetrating glance and poetic words, which impresses a lardo sugar baron named Don Octavio Coutinho (José Lewgoy) so much that he gives the bandit a job overseeing the slaves on his 600-negro strong plantation. While Don Coutinho loves banging black broads himself as demonstrated by the fact he has three young mulatto daughters, he does not tolerate Cobra Verde's mania for miscegenation after the bandit gets all three of the Don's half-caste debutantes pregnant. After confessing that he not only impregnated all three of Don Coutinho's high yellow honies but that he is also the infamous Cobra Verde, the bandit is sent on a suicidal mission to attempt to re-open the slave trade in Dahomey, West Africa, where a killer tribal king named Bossa Ahadee (real-life African king Nana Agyefi Kwame II) rules who had previously exterminated the entire white population. When Cobra Verde arrives in Africa, he states, "Thus far, Africa's quite a disappointment" and soon runs into the only white man, bloated and debauched Catholic priest Bernabé (Peter Berling), who gives holy communion to goats and pagan Negroes that wear devil horns and who moonlights as a pimp of nubile African girls. Cobra Verde befriends a black ex-soldier named Taparica (King Ampaw, who previously worked with Wim Wenders and Ulli Lommel), who sets the bandit up in a ruined Portuguese castle (shot at Elmina Castle in Ghana) and who helps him gather slaves by trading guns to King Bossa via a middleman.

To his enemies' surprise, Cobra Verde manages to make slavery profitable and successful again, but on his second mission, the bandit and his pal Taparica are captured by the King Bossa's men for the unsubstantiated crime of greyhound-poisoning, which they will assumedly be executed for as expressed by the wishes of the maniac monarch. Cobra Verde is put in blackface by his captors as a white man can apparently only be decapitated while looking like Al Jolson and King Bossa, who dually rules with an imaginary yet pampered fellow named the 'Bush King,' taunts the defeated bandit with the remark, "The devil is white. The devil is white. All whites are ½ dead." Luckily, King Bossa's bug-eyed renegade

nephew saves Cobra Verde and Taparica at night before they can be executed as the young buck wants the bandit to lead a revolution against his unhinged uncle and the two make a multicultural blood alliance to demonstrate solidarity. Cobra Verde absurdly trains a giant army of topless female warriors with spears and ultimately topples King Bossa, whose personal concubines ritualistically strangle him after being defeated by a white devil. Bossa's nephew initially gives Cobra Verde a noble title and makes him rich with the slave trade, but the bandit eventually falls out of favor with the new king, who one day sends the white men polio-stricken cripples as opposed to the healthy black bucks he typically sends him to sell. Somewhat surprisingly, Cobra Verde is given a shade of hope after the Portuguese outlaw slavery and seize his assets, and the British put a price on his head, as it gives the bandit a chance at a new beginning of sorts, remarking "Finally something's happened." As for his disillusionment with his life in West Africa, Cobra Verde writes, "I cannot begin to describe this cretinous existence of mine. Nor how lonely it is to be without family or friends. The only white man in this country...perhaps on this whole continent. Meanwhile I have become the father of sixty-two children...but this gives me no satisfaction. Perhaps next year I shall come back and marry. I would live in the lands of ice and snow...anywhere to be away from here...The heat here is mean and inescapable. It courses through the bodies of the people like a fever – and yet my heart grows colder and colder." In the end, Cobra Verde attempts to leave Africa in a small boat to start a new life, but collapses and dies in the process. As a man who states quite un sentimentally of the Africa, "In this place, the dead are more alive than the living," Cobra Verde's unexpected death is nothing short of a blessing. After an abhorrently allegorical scene of a disfigured native who apparently was stricken with polio as a child as he crawls on all fours across the beach and a group of nude nubile native nun women chanting some silly song, Cobra Verde concludes with the quote, "The slaves will sell their masters and grow wings."

In one particularly symbolic scene featured in *Cobra Verde*, the bandit's business partner gives a toast to human bondage, stating, "To slavery...the greatest misunderstanding in the history of mankind." Indeed, if *Cobra Verde* depicts something new in cinema history that Hollywood has gone to great measures to consciously ignore and totally obfuscate, it is the fact that black Africans played an imperative and central role in the African slave trades and without their help, the capturing, enslaving, and importing/exporting of blacks around the world could have never have run so smoothly. In another particularly telling scene in the film, Cobra Verde remarks, "Slavery is an element of the human heart... To our ruin!" thus reflecting not only the innate greed and inhumanity of humanity, but also the fact that slavery did no favors for the white world in the long run as demonstrated by the racial chaos that pervades today not only in Africa, but also the Occident, where every European nation is facing a sort of reverse-colonialism where people from the Third World are illegally immigrating to and slowly but

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surely turning first world nations into crime-ridden multicultural hellholes. In the film's depiction of real-life African tribe kingdoms where the king himself is adorned in gold-chains and other 'bling' like a pimp and the tribesmen are engaged in a sort of pompous savage-like pageantry, including 'twerking', that is typical of modern day rap 'music' videos, Cobra Verde also demonstrates that wherever they may be—be it in rural West Africa or once prosperous European cities like London or Paris—blacks display the same sort of behavior just as the age-old saying goes, "you can take the African out of the jungle but you can never take the jungle out of the African." Notably, while demonstrating a deep respect for them and their culture, director Werner Herzog even goes so far as describing the Africans featured in his film as "savages" in the audio commentary for the Anchor Bay DVD release of the film.

In the interview book Herzog on Herzog (2002), Werner Herzog stated in reference to Cobra Verde and the African slave trades, "The fact is that in Ghana, where we filmed, slavery is still something of a taboo subject, unlike colonialism. In the United States and the Caribbean there is much debate about slavery, in Brazil too, but in many places in Africa the wound of slavery is so deep and painful that hardly anyone speaks about it in public. It is an almost untouched subject. I have always suspected that one reason for this is the well-established fact that African kingdoms were involved in the slave trade almost as much as the white traders. There was also a great deal of slave trading between the Arab world and black Africa, and even within African nations themselves." While thought of by many people, including fanatical fans of the Bavarian auteur, as the least impressive film of the five cinematic collaborations between Herzog-Kinski, I would argue that it is the most overlooked and underrated and certainly an immensely superior work to *Woyzeck* (1979). Undoubtedly, compared to Herzog's sentimentalist Zionist propaganda flick *Invincible* (2001), *Cobra Verde* seems like an unsung masterpiece and certainly one of the most honest cinematic depictions of the African slaves trades ever made. With Hollywood constantly pumping out black-inciting films like *12 Years a Slave* (2013) directed by Steve McQueen, *Cobra Verde* is undoubtedly a rare voice of reason and relative objectivity in a Semitic sea of pseudo-suavely stylized 'slavery porn' of the stupidly sentimental Spielberg-esque persuasion. Like a Spaghetti Western (in fact, Sergio Leone's stuntman Benito Stefanelli acted as a stunt coordinator for the film) meets an Italian cannibal exploitation flick meets *Africa Blaxploitation* as if created by Leni Riefenstahl for National Geographic but with a *Mondo Cane* flair for not pandering to the pussified and pathetically politically correct, *Cobra Verde* reminds the viewer that not all 'magical negroes' are nice and not every cracker slave trader gets a kick out of selling, buying, or blasphemously boning negresses. Undoubtedly, engaging in slavery and colonialism was one of the biggest mistakes Europeans ever made that led to the cultural chaos that plagues the Occidental world today and even though Werner Herzog stated,

“Cobra Verde is about great fantasies and follies of the human spirit, no colonialism,” the film does a better job than any Hollywood film I can think of, especially when compared to Spielberg’s agitprop fantasy flick *Amistad* (1997), of portraying the macabre beginnings of the multicultural virus that has proliferated so strongly and so brutally ravaged the world in which we live today.

-Ty E

INVINCIBLE
INVINCIBLE

Werner Herzog (2001)

Undoubtedly, even great filmmakers can make an astonishingly bad cinematic failure from time to time, yet I cannot think of a film more unwaveringly revolting, sentimentally reprehensible and phony, aesthetically asinine, culturally and historically dishonest, intellectually insipid, and eclectically shallow and unrewarding from a world-class filmmaker than *Invincible* (2001) aka *Unbesiegt* directed by Bavarian auteur Werner Herzog (*Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, *Nosferatu the Vampyre*). Essentially a Zionist propaganda flick made to be palatable to the most naive of children directed by a shabbos goy in the guise of fairytale-like historical fiction, *Invincible* is a film centering around two very different real-life European Jewish showmen from the early twentieth-century—Polish Hebrew strongman and Jewish folk hero Zische Breitbart and Moravian Jewish clairvoyant/hypnotist and National Socialist supporter Erik Jan Hanussen (born Hermann Steinschneider)—*Invincible* establishes a dichotomy between the “good Jew” and the “bad Jew” in the Israeli Zionist sense. Of course, the good Hebrew is a strong man with a deep sense of loyalty to his own racial kin and the bad Hebrew is a weak and ostensibly self-loathing Jew who hides his identity and supports the enemy of his people for personal gain as so shallowly and soulless depicted in *Invincible*. Considering that Werner Herzog is German and directed a film that denigrates his own people and works as a propaganda piece for an alien race that was undoubtedly made for his own personal gain, one could easily argue that the Bavarian auteur is not much different from the villain Erik Jan Hanussen he portrays in *Invincible*, the sort of exceedingly ethno-masochistic work that could have only been directed by a post-WWII European. While *Invincible* was not exactly a monetarily successful work, it certainly helped get Werner Herzog in Hollywood as the director went on to direct somewhat mainstream (and thankfully superior) works like *Rescue Dawn* (2007), *The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* (2009), and *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* (2009). Culturally cuckolding himself to the level of depicting his own people as crazed krauts of the quasi-demonic sort that is no less caricature-ridden than *Schindler's List* (1993), *Invincible* is essentially the celluloid equivalent of Herzog self-castrating himself and personally handing his *Wienerschnitzel* to Steven Spielberg in a feeble attempt at atoning for the holocaust. A film that in no way, shape, or form seems like it was directed by the man behind *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) and *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), *Invincible* is the film that made me do the once seemingly unthinkable act of second guessing Werner Herzog's integrity as a filmmaker and a man. An English language UK-German-Irish-American co-production filmed all around the world featuring Brits playing Krauts and gentiles playing Jews, *Invincible* is also a calculatingly marketed and manufactured celluloid cultural mongrel that was meant

as a sort of big comeback film for Werner Herzog, but ultimately signaled the wild Bavarian auteur had very possibly sold his semi-Slavic soul to some devil in Hollywood.

Zische Breitbart (played by gentile Finnish strongman Jouko Ahola, who hardly seems 'Jewish' in any sense of the word) is a rather rare Orthodox Jewish blacksmith with a low IQ but immense physical strength who lives in a Jewish medieval-like Shtetl in rural Eastern Poland and after a couple of cliché 'white nigger' anti-Semites pick on him and his weakling genius 9-year-old brother Benjamin (played by the rather Aryan-looking one-time actor Jacob Wein) at a restaurant, the super sensitive Semite superman wrecks the eatery during a idiotic brawl and is forced to work as a strongman in a carnival to make up for the damage he has done. A talent agent spots Zische at one of his performances, and before he knows it, the strong and stoic yet sensitive Hebrew is walking all the way to Berlin, Germany to seek his fortune as a celebrated showman and on the way groups of fellow Jews follow him playing music as if members of some Teutonized Zionist Wandervogel group. When Zische reaches Berlin, he is assigned against his own will to work with carny conman mystic/hypnotist/mentalist Eric Jan Hanussen (Tim Roth), a superficially suave egomaniac who owns a luxurious cabaret-like building called Palace of the Occult and styles himself as a Danish aristocrat but is in fact secretly a Moravian Jew named Hermann Steinschneider whose father is a lowly caretaker of a synagogue. Hanussen lets Zische know from the get go that "No Jew should be as strong as you are" and "we will Aryanize you." After all, most of Hanussen's greatest fans and friends are members of the Sturmabteilung (SA) brownshirts, so Zische is forced to take on the Aryan persona of dragon-slaying Germanic hero Siegfried, by wearing a ridiculously Marilyn Monroe-esque wig topped with an old Norse Viking helmet. In no time, Zische is soppily and slavishly swooning over Hanussen's melancholy mistress Marta Farra (Russian classical pianist Anna Gourari, who resembles Herzog's baby-momma Eva Mattes), who is constantly physically and emotionally degraded by the naughty Jewish Nazi mystic, which saddens the saintly Jewish strongman.

After Zische's mother and little brother Benjamin, who is disheartened by his brother hiding his Judaic background and not being proud of being a member of God's chosen tribe, visits him in Berlin, the strongman has a random freakout on stage during a performance, takes off his Aryan gear, and admits he is not Aryan and calls himself the new Jewish Samson, which rather pisses off both Hanussen and the nefarious Nazis in the crowd. Naturally, Zische's absurdly executed act of Hebraic defiance makes major headlines and proud Jews begin to flock to Hanussen's mostly Nazi-occupied Palace of the Occult, thereupon making an absurd audience that is half kosher and half kraut, which naturally erupts into a full-on brawl of the pre- Kristallnacht sort. Despite being Jewish, Hanussen's ultimate aim is to be the "Minister of Occult" for Uncle Adolf, so when he

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takes National Socialist bigwigs Heinrich Himmler and Joseph Goebbels on a yachting trip and Zische gets peeved when the mystic tries to whore out Mara to the future Nazi Minister of Propaganda, things get a bit ugly. Although initially intending to shoot Zische on the spot after the Jewish strongman calls him a fraud, the Nazis convince the counterfeit mystic that it will be best if they take such libelous matters to court. During the trial, it is revealed that Hanussen is not only a fraud, but a Czech Jew who has gone under a number of false aliases and fake professions during his conman career. Inevitably, Hanussen is taken away by a couple boorish brownshirts and soon executed and his mangled corpse, which has been partially eaten by wild boars, is identified by Zische for the police. In the end, Zische goes back to Poland and tries to convince his fellow Jews to get strong as he foresees a holocaust of sorts, preaching, "We have to get strong. We shall need a thousand Samsons," but unfortunately the Jewish strongman dies shortly after in a rather ironic and weak manner after getting an infection from a rusty nail. In a rather retarded Spielberg-esque dream-sequence that concludes *Invincible*, Zische's picks his brother Benjamin up by the shirt and hurdles him in the air, whereupon the kosher kid literally flies away in the air as if allegorically escaping from the wrath of the Shoah or whatever.

Despite concluding with an inter-title that states that Zische died on January 28, 1933, two days before Hitler took power in 1933, the real-life New Samson died in October 1925, not to mention the fact he died and was buried in Berlin (but not before obtaining American citizenship) as opposed to his home-shtetl in East Poland. However, the real Zische Breitbart and Hanussen were indeed real-life rivals of sorts that took each other to court for 'slander' and other stereotypically Hebraic things (contrary to being in love him, Farra filed a slander suit against Zische after the Jewish strongman did the same to Hanussen), but contrary to the romantic depiction featured in *Invincible*, the two men inevitably reconciled their differences. As for Breitbart, his greatest contribution to his people was providing his services to various Zionist fundraising groups, which Herzog conveniently left out of *Invincible*, not to mention the fact that he was hardly the Hebrew Hulk Hogan depicted in the film, or as American theater professor/Weimar Scholar Mel Gordon wrote in his his book *Erik Jan Hanussen: Hitler's Jewish Clairvoyant* (2001) regarding the Semitic strongman, "Breitbart projected something gentle, almost feminine, in his sunny stage persona and was often compared with the silent film star, Rudolph Valentino. Moreover, Zische's proud and unassimilated espousal of his Mosaic faith (through his scenic characterizations of Goliath, Samson, and Hebrew gladiators, together with his Zionist proclamations in Yiddish) represented a fresh archetype: the twentieth-century Jew as noble savage." Undoubtedly, judging by the fact that only the historically-inclined Jew would know about Zische Breitbart's true accomplishments as a propagandistic son of Zion who was supporting the state of Israel before it even existed, which *Invincible* does not even touch on but instead por-

trays the man as a unwitting dullard, it seems like Werner Herzog made the film to send a special message regarding his commitment as a shabbos goy.

As depicted in *Invincible*, Hanussen was indeed “Hitler’s Nostradamus” and the “Prophet of the Third Reich” as he successfully predicted Uncle Adolf’s takeover in Germany in an August 1932 edition of his popular astrology weekly. Ironically buried in a Catholic graveyard in Stahnsdorf, Hanussen’s Jewish identity was ultimately revealed by communist tabloid journalists, whose claims meant the beginning of the end for the rather popular seer. As Dr. Walter C. Langer—an America psychoanalyst who worked for the Office of Strategic Services, which was a predecessor to the CIA—wrote in a psychoanalytic study of the Fuhrer in 1943 for the OSS, “... during the early 1920’s Hitler took regular lessons in speaking and in mass psychology from a man named Hanussen who was also a practicing astrologer and fortune-teller. He was an extremely clever individual who taught Hitler a great deal concerning the importance of staging meetings to obtain the greatest dramatic effect,” which, if true, makes for a great irony of human history considering the world’s top anti-Semite was taught his political craft by a self-loathing Jewish swindler. Undoubtedly, Hanussen’s greatest feat as a kosher clairvoyant was predicting the Reichstag fire, which enabled then-Chancellor of Germany Adolf Hitler to seize absolute power in 1933 and completely secure the Nazi takeover of Deutschland. Some rather dubious evidence also points to the fact that Hanussen may have been involved with the Reichstag fire and had hypnotized Marinus van der Lubbe, the half-retarded Dutch pyromaniac/communist who was convicted and executed for the crime. Of course, the facts of Hanussen’s life as Germany’s Hitlerite Houdini are much stranger than Herzog’s celluloid fiction. Two biopics including, *Hanussen* (1955) directed by O. W. Fischer and Georg Marischka and *Hanussen* (1988) directed by István Szabó, as well as the anti-Goebbels propaganda film *Enemy of Women* (1944) directed by Alfred Zeisler, preceded *Invincible* in depicting Hanussen and all of these films are infinitely more interesting than Herzog’s positively putrid piece of philo-Semitic puffery. A hopelessly hokey and aesthetically horrendous celluloid Zishe Breitbart hagiography that attempts to depict the eccentric essences of two of the oddest German-based Semitic showmen of the early twentieth-century and falls miserably on both accounts, *Invincible* is so shockingly abominable that I still have a hard time believing to this day after initially watching the film over a decade ago that it was directed by the same man that tamed blond beast Klaus Kinski and had a steamship pulled over a hill without special effects in his film *Fitzcarraldo* (1982).

-Ty E

BAD LIEUTENANT: PORT OF CALL NEW ORLEANS
BAD LIEUTENANT: PORT OF CALL NEW ORLEANS

Werner Herzog (2009)

No better place for an American Bad Lieutenant to be committing crimes and smashing skulls than New Orleans. Not only does this Bad Lieutenant lurk in the shadows of America's wet bastard little France, but he stalks post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, right after god flushed his bowels for the benefit of humanity. Despite the toilet being flushed, it seems that New Orleans still has a bunch of Creole turds floating around. The Bad Lieutenant in *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* is investigating the execution-style murder of a poor Senegalese Negro family who seem to have gotten caught up in heroin sales. This is pure luck for the Bad Lieutenant, for he loves nothing more than drugs, especially cocaine and heroin.

Nicholas Cage is my kind of cop, a little bit deranged but more importantly he is fucking hilarious. Anyone who has had to wait for a prescription at a pharmacy can get a tad annoyed by the slowness and unwarranted arrogance of the pharmacists. Luckily, a Bad Lieutenant played by an extra anxiety-filled Nicholas Cage has zero-tolerance for waiting for his Vicodin and takes action by going behind the counter with his extra big handgun. If this country had more cops that did what was needed to be done like the Bad Lieutenant, the streets would at least be a little cleaner. Unfortunately, one of the Bad Lieutenant's co-worker cops is played by a very sloppy and disheveled Val Kilmer. I believe that Mr. Kilmer can no longer pass for Jim Morrison.

Apparently, *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* is not a remake nor is it a sequel to Abel Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant*. It is obvious however that *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* takes more than a couple cues from the original *Bad Lieutenant*. Mr. Ferrara did not take too kindly to the idea that someone was making a film similar to his own and stated: "As far as remakes go, ... I wish these people die in Hell. I hope they're all in the same streetcar, and it blows up." In his kind Bavarian heart, legendary auteur Werner Herzog and *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* director made the gentlemanly response: "I would like to meet the man," and "I have a feeling that if we met and talked, over a bottle of whisky, I should add, I think we could straighten everything out." Personally, I would not mind attending the whisky talk between the two legendary auteurs if the talk were to actually occur.

Mr. Cage and Mr. Herzog

With *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*, Werner Herzog once again proves he can do "Hollywood" if need be. Although for the most part in standard Hollywood cop film form, *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* features a couple Herzog-esque shots such as a shot from the perspective of a real live alligator staring at a fellow alligator who has become roadkill. I also enjoyed a scene involving a group of mafia-wops that get blasted away by a bunch of

fancy crack-dealing Negroes. After killing all the woparellis, the Bad Lieutenant hallucinates seeing the soul of one of the mafia men break dancing, a scene surreal in a manner that only Werner Herzog could successfully execute.

After seeing *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*, I wouldn't mind seeing additional *Bad Lieutenant* films made. In fact, it might be interesting to see a *Bad Lieutenant* Television series, as long as it is put in the hands of the right people. Of course, like the first two *Bad Lieutenant* films, any new films in the unofficial series should be directed by a fellow unique and true auteur. Harmony Korine could direct *Bad Lieutenant: Tennessee Trailer Town* and Vincent Gallo could direct *Bad Lieutenant: Buffalo New York Ripper*, for these films would be some of the best cops films ever directed, keeping in trend with the two earlier *Bad Lieutenant* films.

-Ty E

MY SON, MY SON, WHAT HAVE YE DONE?
MY SON, MY SON, WHAT HAVE YE DONE?

Werner Herzog (2009)

While a cinematic marriage between Bavarian adventurer auteur Werner Herzog and American celluloid surrealist David Lynch sounds like one of the most prestigious prospects for a film made in 'arthouse auteur heaven,' I must admit that I initially had my reservations for such a film, especially when considering my disillusionment with both directors' most recent work. While Herr Herzog has been churning out curious subpar cinematic works for about a decade now or so as a crazy kraut who has finally been accepted in Hebraic Hollywood (I guess all those years inexplicably kissing Spielberg's kosher ass finally paid off), loony Lynch seems more interested in promoting signature coffee beans and pseudo-spiritual meditative swill; two absurdly priced products that do not even equal the most nonsensical of episodes from the second season of *Twin Peaks* in terms of quality. Of course, when I learned that the Herzog directed and Lynch produced film *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* (2009) featured the charming yet seemingly cracked character actor Michael Shannon (*Shotgun Stories*, Herzog's *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*) as a maniac 'anti-hero' and celebrated German cult film poof Udi Kier (*Blood for Dracula*, *Ego-mania - Insel ohne Hoffnung*) in a more dignified role, as well as Willem Dafoe, Chloë Sevigny, Grace Zabriskie, and Brad Dourif, I could not help but anticipate the film. Although I initially saw *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* around the time it was first released, I decided to digest it and watch it a couple more times before writing on it, not least of all because I wanted to make sure I was not hallucinating what I found to be a fairly enthralling, eccentric, and – whether intentional or not – sadistically side-splitting film. Described by Herzog himself as, "a horror film without the blood, chainsaws and gore, but with a strange, anonymous fear creeping up in you," *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* fully exceeded my admittedly conflicting expectations, even if it does not even deserve to be described as a "masterpiece," but more like an audacious dramatic anti-thriller riddled with mostly excusable flaws that features a stunning and artistically subversive look at one severely sinking son's schizzo psyche as a curiously comical character study that ultimately brings up more questions than it actually answers, thereupon acting in complete contradiction to the typical Hollywood film of this sort.

Loosely based on the real-life story of a mentally ill fellow named Mark Yavorsky – a high school basketball star, scholar, and talented graduate student in drama – who on June 10, 1979, at the age of 34, stabbed to death his mother with a three-foot-long antique saber sword in a scenario strikingly reminiscent of the Greek tragedy "*Orestes*," *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* is a film that was long in the making before reaching Herzog's aesthetically heretical hands that began as a script by classics scholar Herbert Golder – a fellow heavily

inspired by Jules Dassin's *A Dream of Passion* (1978) – who began a somewhat personal relationship with the troubled fellow who committed matricide in an act that probably can best be described as the aberrant behavior of a maniac with an overwhelming anti-oedipal complex. After taking Werner Herzog to meet Yavorsky in 1995 for what would be one of his last meetings with the gifted maniac, as the Bavarian auteur found the mommy-slayer to be quite "argumentative" (not to mention the fact the filmmaker was quite perturbed to learn that the funny fellow had made a shrine in his mobile home in dedication to his film *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972)), Golder and the German auteur shopped around for producers but it would be until well over a decade later before the two conversed with David Lynch; a filmmaker that could most certainly relate to their artistic predicament. Agreeing that the film would be, thankfully, "a return to essential filmmaking," *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* was eventually sired by two of the world cinema's most sacred and subversive sons of cinema and the rest is film history.

A self-loathing white policeman who derives pleasure verbally bashing 'crackers cops' to his Hispanic compatriot Vargas (Michael Peña) as the sort of idiosyncratic half-intelligent/half-idiot you would expect from a Herzog film, Detective Hank Havenhurst (Willem Dafoe) has some serious identity issues, but they pale in comparison to Brad McCullum's (Michael Shannon) all-consuming cognitive dissonance. Unbeknownst to Havenhurst, mommy murdering maniac McCullum walks right by him in the chaos of a crime scene after fleeing the home of the black Aunt Jemima-esque neighbor where he just slaughtered the ostensibly overbearing woman that gave birth to him some 30+ years before. A burdened bastard boy who never knew his father (and refuses to reference him as such), Brad McCullum was still virtually attached to the umbilical cord of his perversely pampering and odiously overprotective mother until he literally 'cut her off' as one learns as *My Son, What Have Ye Done?* progresses. The sole survivor of a kayaking trip in Peru (filmed at a favorite spot of Herzog's where he filmed scenes for *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* and *Fitzcarraldo*) due to a penetrating premonition from God himself that he should stay behind and not go in the water, McCullum morphed into a megalomaniac with a messiah complex who saw images of the holy one on the front of Quaker Oats oatmeal containers, which he wastes no time in showing to the less than intrigued police officers and SWAT team members that have surrounded the home where he purportedly has taken two people hostage. Lee Meyers (Udo Kier) – Brad's theatre teacher – also lets Havenhurst know that his student started beginning to be unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality during practice sessions for the Greek tragedy he was supposed to star in, but was taken out of due to his exceedingly erratic and borderline violent behavior. Of course, in Brad's mind, the show must go on and he opts for more realistic options that are only all the more inspired when his half-crazy, homo-hating Uncle Ted (Brad Dourif) hooks him

MY SON, MY SON, WHAT HAVE YE DONE?

up with a fancy antique sword. Aside from Lee, Ingrid (Chloë Sevigny) – the unconventionally menacing mommy mangler’s finance – knows Brad the most intimately and is thus best equipped to describe to detective Havenhurst the perturbing process of her beserk’s beau’s brazen and belligerent break with reality. When it comes down to it and when everything is said and done, Brad seems most concerned about his “eagles in drag” aka pink flamingos than the fact he has just killed his mother and will most likely be staying in prison for a very long time with nefarious negroes who have very little tolerance for white weirdo witlessness. Needless to say, Detective Hank Havenhurst is certainly not interested in honkey nonsensicalness and thus deals with batty bad boy Brad accordingly. Told in a series of flagrant and frolicsome yet certainly serious and sometimes semi-surreal flashbacks, *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* has an undeniable classic hallucinatory Herzog feel to it, except set in the seemingly unlikely place of sunny Los Angeles, California; a region where David Lynch exercised phantasmagorical cinematic psychodramas time and time again via *Loſt Highway* (1997), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and *Inland Empire* (2006), thereupon making the Bavarian auteur filmmaker’s minacious murder mystery – whether a conscious decision or not – a tribute of sorts to the absurdiſt American auteur who brought true celluloid kultur to the ſtagnant and soulless City of Angels.

Herzog may have finally went ‘Hollywood,’ but as he explained in the audio commentary for the Anchor Bay DVD release of *Stroszek* (1977), he seriously feels that all the best Americans are from the Midwest, thus it should be no surprise that the Los Angeles, California featured in *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* seems more like a ſterile lunatic asylum that sows sadiſtic mother-sacrificing sons and policemen prone to self-flagellation than a place of marvelous mystique and intrigue as most films set in Tinseltown would lead one to believe. It should also be noted that for anti-hero Brad, it is visiting exotic places like the jungles of Peru (as well as Machu Picchu), City of Calgary, and Kashgar, China that prove to be life-changing religious experiences of sorts – something Herzog can oddly relate to considering his largely international cinematic oeuvre – that only inflame his hatred for the contrived suburban life that his smothering mother has made for him. As real-life mommy-slayer Yavorsky’s USD English professor Dick Peacock stated of his perplexing pupil: “He always seemed to have a classic, dramatic sense of life. He was an excellent writer and poet. Not rhymes about sunsets, but in the real, classic tradition of poetry. He wrote a lot about his father who had died, whom he had never known.” In *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*, Brad refuses to recognize the man who spawned him as his father (because he, “never knew the man”), but one can easily see that the displacement of his paternal progenitor had the most dire of consequences because like the forsaken son in the play “*Oreſtes*,” which he originally starred in before being booted out of for his belligerent behavior, he killed his mother in revenge for the death of his father. Yavorsky died in 2003, but his diſturbed

spirit lives on in *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*, even if, "About 70 percent of the script is false ... loosely made up" as Werner Herzog stated regarding the film. Nearly four decades before, Herzog released *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1970) aka *Auch Zwerge haben klein angefangen* – a stunningly surreal and startlingly subversive film that would have surely been described as a work of "degenerate art" by Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels about a group of deranged little people who escape from an asylum and wreck havoc upon the prison and its overseers – and with *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*, the German filmmaker returned to form and brought a similar cinematic controlled chaos to the suburbs of LA in a most palatable way for quasi-mainstream audiences and for that alone, he must be commended. Thankfully, unlike two of his previous more recent films, *Invincible* (2001) and *The Wild Blue Yonder* (2005), *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?* did not cause me to think to myself regarding the now-elderly Bavarian director: "What Have Ye Done?"

-Ty E

ULIISSES
ULIISSES

Werner Nekes (1982)

In my humble opinion, experimental filmmakers, especially the sort involved with extreme manipulation of celluloid via scratching and painting directly onto it, spasitic speedy editing, and working almost exclusively on short, nonlinear films (cine-magickian Kenneth Anger excluded) like Stan Brakhage (Dog Star Man series, Sartre's Nausea) and to a lesser extent Marie Menken (Eye Music in Red Major, Go Go Go) are somewhat akin to modern guitar virtuosos like Joe Satriani and Steve Vai in that although they have mastered their respective artistic mediums in a technical and highly sophisticated sense, thereupon entering creative territories explored by so very few, it seems nearly impossible for them to create a lasting and aesthetically gratifying work that would appeal to or impress anyone aside from people in the same field. Admittedly, I have had some minor enjoyment engaging in works created by technically revolutionary experimental filmmakers like Dziga Vertov (Man with a Movie Camera, Three Songs About Lenin) and Godfrey Reggio (Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance, Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation), but I typically rather watch the latest low-kitsch production from Aryan untermensch auteur Uwe Boll (Rampage, Auschwitz) or Ulli Lommel (Absolute Evil - Final Exit, D.C. Sniper) than endure 90-minutes of enervating and seemingly endless exercises in egotistical experimental excrement. That being said, I was quite reluctant about watching the innately impenetrable cinematic works of experimental German auteur Werner Nekes (Amalgam I-IV, Johnny Flash) – an avid collector of everything relating to pre/early film history who describes his approach to filmmaking as "light-theatre" – but I eventually gave in as the filmmaker would act as a mentor to fellow German filmmaker-turned-prestigious-polymath Christoph Schlingensief (Mutter's Maske, The German Chainsaw-Massacre), who worked as his assistant for a number of years, thereupon rationalizing to myself that the elder's filmmakers films can't be all that bad. After watching a number of Nekes' informative yet emotionally vacant, documentaries on pre-cinema technology like Film Before Film (1986) aka Was geschah wirklich zwischen den Bildern? and Media Magica I-V (1996), I figured it was about time that I watch one of his more experimental and ambitious works, eventually viewing Uliissee (1982); a sophisticatedly stylized but seeming schizophrenic nonlinear, quasi-Homeric odyssey through the 'history of film' that takes elements from James Joyce's Ulysses and Homer's The Odyssey and somewhat oddly, psychedelic poet/playwright Neil Oram's The Warp.

Part experimental film extravaganza, part ultra-vulgar neo-vaudevillian comedy, part slick skinflick, part kraut post-hippie hysterics, part particularly peculiar philo-semitic romp, and part fanatic fan-boy exposé of Neke's big boy pre-film toys, I would be lying if I did not admit that Uliissee (apparently a pun on

'it's Uli', Uli the photographer from the Ruhr, supposed grandson to protagonist Leopold Bloom of Joyce's *Ulysses*) was a work of cinematic genius, albeit of the 'mad scientist auteur' on LSD-addled masturbatory sort. All but totally incoherent in structure, one is best off looking at *Uliissee* as a collection of loosely and – in many cases – loonily related "petites vignettes" that ultimately make an "oddball odyssey" (or more like a torrid trip) dealing with quasi-counter-culture ideas relating to philosophy, religion, and social matters, albeit of the patently 'progressive' aka retrogressive sort that was oftentimes satirized by Paul Morrissey (*Trash*, *Madame Wang's*). That being said, it should be noted that Werner Nekes had the gall to describe his protégé Christoph Schlingensiefel's early feature-length work *Menu Total* (1986) aka *Meat, Your Parents* – a surreal scatological work featuring less than glamorous Nazis engaged in rape and murder, among other deplorable yet droll behavior – as "fascistic" despite every innate indication that expresses the counter to that positively preposterous perspective. In *Uliissee*, Nekes takes scornful and satirical blows at authority figures (a group of cops invade the genitals of a hostile hippie chick), Turkish Muslims (a religious Turk in full towel-head regalia is portrayed as an anti-Semitic baboon who states, "newspapers are run by Jews...very bad people"), and Hindi gurus (a guru with what seems to be fuming feces on his face is described as a "psychic fascist"), among various others, with most of these sardonic scenarios being corresponding postmodern interpretations of Homeric adventures. Thankfully, Werner Nekes saves the best for last with various spasmodic collages and montages of lavish lipstick lesbian Tabea Blumenschein (as Penelope/Molly) – Sapphic surrealist auteur Ulrike Ottinger's onetime lover/collaborator (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*, *Ticket of No Return*) and punk prostitute character featured in the kraut cocksucker classic *Taxi zum Klo* (1981) directed by Frank Ripploh – featured in various garmentless and somewhat compromising scenarios. The concluding scenes with voluptuous bimbo (or at least that's how she seems to be portrayed) Blumenschein are indubitably the most brilliant and bewitching scenes in *Uliissee*, as Nekes managed to incorporate images of the lovely lezzy with some of the most aesthetically enchanting yet eccentric experimental editing sequences in a lecherous 'Lighterature' (a word for the filmmaker's signature style of filmmaking) climax.

Although Christoph Schlingensiefel would later credit Nekes for helping to catch the "experimental bug," the Terror 2000 director would later parody his former mentor's eccentric experimental cine-mania in *Tunguska - The Crates are delivered* (1984); the final film in the late, great filmmaker's "Trilogy of Film Criticism - Film as Neurosis" (*Phantabus Go Home* and *What happened to Magdalena Jung?* being the first two films) about three decidedly deranged 'avant-garde researchers' (all of whom apparently being cryptic and not-so-cryptic stand-ins for Nekes) on the road to the North Pole to expose Eskimos to their films. Schlingensiefel once remarked regarding the inspiration behind *Tunguska*, "I thought,

ULIISSES

why should I become Nekes? What's with all this crap?...I wanted to separate myself (from him) and then I made the film... Tunguska - The Crates are delivered." If one would have to choose any certain Nekes film that encompasses the sort of cinematically-deranged mindset exhibited in the characters of Tunguska, Uliissee would undoubtedly be the most obvious work. As expressed in his farcical filmography, Schlingensiefel would eventually cite the Germans films of Herbert Achternbusch (*Das Gespenst, Wohin?*), Werner Herzog (*Heart of Glass, Stroszek*), and Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*Fox and His Friends, Satan's Brew*), as well as the independent American films of Kenneth Anger (*Fireworks, Scorpio Rising*) and John Waters (*Pink Flamingos, Desperate Living*), as being a greater influence on him than his experience with Nekes. Indeed, the experimental cinematic works of Werner Nekes, most notably Uliissee, are certainly worth seeing, especially for committed cinephiles, as the aggressively avant-garde filmmaker is certainly a master of manipulation when it comes to the celluloid medium, yet his work only offers an inkling of the endless entertainment and replay value, wonderfully wretched wit, curious 'carnal' charm, and reflexively and conscious "German" persuasion, of his former protégé Schlingensiefel; a one-man revolutionary filmmaker who not only eclipsed his former master, but also the entire medium of film itself. As for Werner Nekes, since Uliissee, he has almost exclusively stayed in the rather redundant realm of creating TV-documentaries about his proto-cinema toys.

-Ty E

ARGILA

Werner Schroeter° (1969)

If there ever was a small and palatable sample of the aesthetic Weltanschauung of high-camp excess, preternatural divas, and discordant audio/visual kitsch that was the cinematic realm of German New Cinema dandy auteur Werner Schroeter (*Eika Katappa*, *Malina*) that is perfect for the uninitiated, it is most certainly the filmmaker's 30+ minute Warhol-inspired featurette *Argila* (1968), a keenly kaleidoscopic double-projection work that makes sense of what is essentially a short but sweet Teutonic take on the largely asinine aesthetic gimmickry *Chelsea Girls* (1966), albeit with an oppressive operatic lovelorn tone. A darkly romantic work that reminds one why Schroeter was the most aesthetically decadent drama queen of not just German New Cinema, but European arthouse cinema in general, *Argila*, like virtually all of the director's cinematic works, is indubitably a raw and rapturous byproduct of the filmmaker's failed love affairs, albeit with his muses standing in for himself. Starring Schroeter's main muse Magdalena Montezuma (*Willow Springs*, *Freak Orlando*), as well as Carla Egerer (*Gods of the Plague*, *Der Bomberpilot*), who was married at one point to rampantly homosexual auteur Rosa von Praunheim (one-time a lover of Schroeter who once infamously publicly mocked his ex-lover in a scathing article), and then-middle-aged veteran theater actress Gisela Trowe, *Argila* is a virtual poetic obituary of the filmmaker's romantic relationship(s) clearly created by someone who has yet to get over the past as if haunted by a ghost. Made before Schroeter ever got involved with feature film directing (the director abandoned/never completed his first feature film *Nicaragua* (1969), which is now considered lost), *Argila* is decadent and dissident cinematic diletantism at its most refined, assembled by a filmmaker who had yet to create his avant-garde arthouse feature-length masterpieces like *Eika Katappa* (1969), *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*, and *The Rose King* (1986) aka *Der Rosenkönig*, but had already codified the innately idiosyncratic auteur signature style that he would be remembered for. Utilizing the black-and-white/color double-projection technique that Paul Morrissey employed for *Chelsea Girls* in a manner that actually makes aesthetic sense, *Argila* tells the emotionally distraught, psycho-romantic story of a tormented twosome of two very different ladies whose hearts still yearn for their Aryan twink ex-lover Hans, a stoic chap with a statuesque physique who seems to not give two damns for the various ladies he has dropped by the wayside like yesterday's trash.

After opening with Carla Egerer singing out-of-sync to some awful American pop music, *Argila* segues to a bizarre love triangle broiling between young Amazonian Aryaness Magdalena Montezuma, mature redhead Gisela Trowe, and a seemingly apathetic hunk named Hans (Sigurd Salto). As Ms. Montezuma states dozens upon dozens upon dozens of times during the film regarding Hans,

ARGILA

“You want me to die. You take no pity on me. You have no pity for me, I, who so worshiped you,” or so the not so little lady states while in an unwavering state of hysteria. Being a little older, Ms. Trowe is slightly less hysterical but no less melodramatic in her feelings regarding Hans, writing “Dear Hans, I love you, but differently now, and much more intimately. Now I understand you, and everything. Until recently I failed to realize that you embody death, for me at least. It is my destiny...I don’t know if I should be happy or sad, but I know what needs to happen.” Although Montezuma and Trowe are enemies of sorts in their undying obsession with the same Nordic dandy, they are in the same lovelorn boat, which is about to sink in a rough sea of abject misery and melancholy. In fact, as Trowe states, “Before the evening is through, a misfortune will hurl all three of us into the sea.” As Trowe tells Montezuma regarding her passionate yet deleterious romance with Hans and her eventual depression realization, “Then all I could see were stones. Red-hot, hard cobble stones. An endless path that blinded me. Then I knew I did not know him. That was the truth. He stands before me as he will again, and I will know over and over again that I do not know him. I will never know him. And the worst part is, and will always be that for a while I thought I knew him, and that we were one. The shock of this realization made me reel for a moment. It was as if I was caught in a suffocating grasp.” As for Hans, the viewer never knows what is going on his mind as if he is a mere handsome mannequin with a nasty knack for putting spells over women who did not nearly mean as much to him as he did to them. In the end, Hans lays, assumedly allegorically, dead on train tracks while both Ms. Montezuma and Ms. Trowe mourn for him, but finally seem to accept their loss.

Much like his friend Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971), which the director and his muse Magdalena Montezuma had small acting roles in, Werner Schroeter’s *Argila* certainly features a strong aesthetic influence from Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey, but naturally, the Teutonic dandy would take his celluloid *Kulturscheisse* to much more elegant and excessive extremes. Of course, while *Chelsea Girls* merely features a collection of human trash babbling about nothing while attempting to look glamorous, *Argila* is clearly a deeply personal work directed by a man who used cinema as an artistic medium to mourn his past failed romances, hence why he once created a documentary called *Love’s Debris* (1996) aka *Poussières d’amour - Abfallprodukte der Liebe*. Of course, seeing as it is one of Schroeter’s early works, *Argila* is certainly not as macabre nor hermetic in its ‘mourning’ of love than in the director’s later works like *Day of the Idiots* (1981) aka *Tag der Idioten*, where a woman makes false claims accusing her neighbors of being terrorists so she can be locked up in a mental institution because she cannot handle the lack of love and affection her boyfriend gives her, or *Malina* (1991), where a foredoomed woman burns herself up in her apartment. A man whose childhood lover committed suicide when he was only a teenage as he revealed in the documentary *Mondo*

Lux - Die Bilderwelten des Werner Schroeter (2011) aka Mondo Lux : The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter, which he also cinematically depicted in his autobiographical lesbian flick Deux (2002) aka Two, Schroeter was certainly a strange and sad man who found a sense of security in sorrow and in his alter-egos in the form of anachronistic divas. A sort of aesthetically sacrilegious cinematic waltz through the director's womanish Weltschmerz, Argila is probably the best bet for Werner Schroeter novices to get through one of the filmmaker's films rather unscathed without thoughts of slitting one's wrists and/or wishing death on Teutonic divas everywhere.

-Ty E

DER BOMBERPILOT
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Werner Schroeter° (1970)

If anything remotely resembling a Nazisploitation flick was ever sired by a filmmaker of German New Cinema, it is most certainly dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's salacious yet satirical exercise in swastika excess, *Der Bomberpilot* (1970) aka *The Bomber Pilot*—a wanton work about three exceedingly eccentric revue divas that make up a National Socialist cabaret that has about as much respect for historical reality as *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS* (1974) and *The Gestapo's Last Orgy* (1977). Of course, unlike the average, rather worthless and aesthetically nauseating Nazisploitation flick, *Der Bomberpilot* is a bawdy piece of high-camp celluloid that, not unlike naughty Nazi-themed arthouse flicks like *The Damned* (1969) directed by Luchino Visconti and Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), albeit to a more heightened degree, wallows in aesthetic indulgence and kinky yet cultivated kitsch, and contains a certain perverse passion for misery and tragedy that would put National Socialist auteur Veit Harlan to shame. A decadent and disconcerting work that features a titillating trio of sensual yet scatterbrained Nazi cabaret performers who face personal struggle and crisis after the annihilation of the Third Reich and decide to see how they will fair in the racially mongrelized USA, *Der Bomberpilot* is a rare Nazi-themed film that quite literally makes nil mention of concentration camps, Jews, or Nazi war crimes, but instead acts as a sort of apolitical and operatic, tableau-ridden equivalent to works like *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979) or *Germany, Pale Mother* (1980) in its depiction of the Nazi wartime and Adenauer eras. An audaciously anarchistic and anachronistic cinematic work featuring a variety of eclectic songs from Verdi, Strauss, the musical *West Side Story*, Bruckner, Sibelius, Elvis, Richard Wagner, and various German and American pop songs of the 1960s, *Der Bomberpilot* is a wonderfully vexing variegation of discordant and oftentimes disposed of aesthetic ingredients from the post-holocaust ash heap of history that makes no excuses for completely ignoring the less flattering yet most infamous facts of German mid-twentieth century history all together. For example, one of the female protagonists of *Der Bomberpilot* sings a version of the racially charged Johann Strauss II waltz "Wiener Blut" ('Viennese Blood' or 'Viennese Spirit'), yet Schroeter's intentionally tainted version of the song is all the more 'nazified' and concludes with the rather telling line: "What's done is done...The past is past...One doesn't discuss it..." A ridiculously wayward piece of campy celluloid revisionist history of the thankfully quite reprehensible sort, *Der Bomberpilot* is Werner Schroeter at his best and most blatant as a work, not unlike most of his oeuvre, that stresses aesthetic refinement of both high and low-brow kultur over 'official' historical reality, as well as kitschy tableau over a linear storyline. Forget a bunch of pedantic professors and jailed and elderly historical revisionists like Ernst Zündel, *Der Bomberpilot*—with its rather ridiculous and

raunchy Nazi revue girls that are in stark comparison to what everyone thinks they know about the Third Reich—is the real road for Germans and other Europeans to take back their history as an exaggerated anti-tribute to National Socialist kitsch and the culture-less American conquerors who destroyed it and replaced it with piss poor pseudo-Kulturscheisse.

As three beautiful yet erotically bodacious ladies who salute the swastika flag in a totally disorderly and narcissistic, half-nude fashion in devilish black and red corsets and black fishnet stockings, it is amazing the lewd and lecherous ladies of *Der Bomberpilot* have yet to be detained indefinitely in a concentration camp for their less than Aryanness-like ways. When wild child Mascha (played Mascha Rabben of Roland Klick's *Deadlock* (1970), Robert van Ackeren's *Harlis* (1972), and Fassbinder's *World on a Wire* (1973))—a feisty redhead who likes to get buck naked in the woods as a sort of nymphomaniac Nazi fairy who is far too untamed to belong to any official Wandervogel group, let alone be a member of the League of German Maidens—has a heated nervous breakdown that seems more like a childish temper tantrum of the superlatively selfish sort, the three hot and hedonistic divas have to quit their dream jobs as campy cabaret girls and go somewhat 'underground' in Nazi Germany. The other two luxurious ladies of the three person risqué Reich are Magdalena (Schroeter's muse Magdalena Montezuma)—the aunt of Mascha and the most 'professional' and mature one in the group—and Carla (early Schroeter regular Carla Egerer of *Eika Katappa* (1969) and Fassbinder's *Pioneers in Ingolstadt* (1971)), who is a tiny blonde beastess who is constantly plagued by personal tragedy and heartbreak due to her weakness for Viennese choirboys. While Mascha and Magdalena receive jobs as 'church restorers' who paint religious temples with Fidus-esque völkisch kitsch art, Carla splits off from the group and goes to Sopot to star in a Viennese tragedy and work at a pastry shop, where she faces personal tragedy after a gentleman caller (played by Schroeter himself) commits suicide after she blows him off. After Magdalena hears on the radio that "Our Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, has fallen in war," she attempts suicide via drowning herself in a lake, but by happenstance, her nubile, nature-loving niece Mascha spots her in the act and saves her life as a hilarious song plays in the background, with the lyrics, "...that an angel can be black? Many small negroes look pleadingly at you. Whether we are rich or poor we will all die. That shows that we're all the same when we stand at heaven's door." Indubitably, the strangely seductive song lyrics seem to be a premonition of sorts, as the erotic enfant terrible trio eventually decide to go to the multicultural United States of America and try their lot at racial integration mixed with Teutonism after smoking a filtered marijuana cigarette.

After the Second World War, the three gals take jobs as stenographers and attend a Bruckner concert where they debate a possible move to America, but Carla, "can only think back to the successes of 1943, to the Viennese operetta, with the choir boys." Carla's statement is especially telling as it shows her total ig-

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norance to history because during the beginning of February 1943, the German army was defeated during the Battle of Stalingrad and the 6th Army had completely capitulated, thus marking the beginning of the end for the Third Reich. Young Mascha is convinced that women's liberation, writing manifestos, and America are the way of the future, stating to her friends, "We three, who went through so much in Adolf Hitler's Reich, we could certainly formulate a manifesto and as a lecture series at a college or an American university, for the concept of Germanism...combined with racial integration...and recreate it for ourselves." Of course, the three have clearly never seen Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977) and as Carla states, "in sheer desperation, after breakfast we smoked a filtered marijuana cigarette and saw the possibilities of racial integration in a new light" and thus decided to immigrate to the Negrophiliac USA as visiting teachers to "stake their claim." Although initially suspected of being communists as many foreigners in the U.S. were at that time, the group's "credibility was undermined" after a German-American cook gave Nazi era pictures of the wild women during their "best days" to the American media, but it is ultimately "Mascha's affair with a bomber pilot" that puts an end to their residence permit. Due to their rejection in the 'land of the free' and philistines, the girls decide to embrace their past and get back into the cabaret act at an American officers' club in Landshut, albeit for the exploitative pleasure of American occupying forces, where Carla performs opera solos with filmmaker Daniel Schmid (*Tonight or Never*, *La Paloma*)—the one-time lover and lifelong friend of Werner Schroeter who also acted as the assistant director for *Der Bomberpilot*—on piano and another one as a transsexual sailor in the style of Genet's *Querelle*, Magalena does a topless and seemingly possessed 'snake dance,' and the three do kitschy avant-garde cabaret acts with mannequins. Unfortunately, all good things come to end and after Mascha's Amerikkkan bomber pilot boyfriend does the unthinkable by boning Carla, thereupon getting her pregnant which ends in a miscarriage that plagues her with a bad hip, the cabaret trio is tragicomedically crushed, thus signaling the total end for naughty Nazi revue girls everywhere in a world now dominated by American hegemony and the cult of multiculturalism.

Assuredly one of Werner Schroeter's most accessible, if not typically aesthetically and thematically discordant, works, *Der Bomberpilot* also happens to be one of his most distinctly 'German,' if rather reluctantly so, as well as (a)political works, as a carnal and campy kitsch piece that contradicts the Allies' version of history (as well as the Nazi version) through the exaggeratedly wacky and wanton antics of three politically ignorant girls whose sole passion is being highly desirable divas in spite of what regime happens to reign where they live. After one of the girls confesses after their failed attempt of freedom in the land of the free, "Our past also proved unfortunate during the legal proceedings, in which we were accused of almost everything. An auto-da-fé," thus demonstrating the unmentioned social repression Germans faced due to the fact that they have Aryan

blood (or in Carla's case, "Viennese Blood"). Indeed, the girls, especially Carla, cannot get over their nostalgia for the Nazi era, but not because of the slaughtering of Jews or their experiences as former Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) girls, but because they found personal happiness via past romantic flings. A trio of tragic philistines, the three women, being self-centered exhibitionists at stark contrast with the martial order of the Third Reich, are nothing more than mere victims of circumstances who, despite their decided decadence and hyper hedonism, ironically face more persecution from the 'peace-spreading' Americans than the authoritarian Aryans, thus acting in antagonistic contradiction, albeit in a cleverly campy form, to the 'official' history of the Second World War, thus making Schroeter's *Der Bomberpilot*, aside from the Wagernian celluloid epics of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg (Ludwig: Requiem for a Virgin King, Hitler: A Film from Germany), one of the most politically subversive works of German New Cinema as a film that makes nil groveling apologies for the infamous legacy of the Third Reich, but, instead, seeks to discredit history altogether via preposterous personalization of through three women who care more about their hair than how many Jews Uncle Adolf had liquidated in Auschwitz.

Originally made for television, *Der Bomberpilot* was apparently a huge hit among kraut leftists, but director Werner Schroeter, who was not a huge fan of the film himself, was rather apathetic by the positive response to his subversive Nazi revue girl flick, even if it stands, at least in my opinion, as one of the most underrated and relatively unconventional films in the filmmaker's cinematic oeuvre as an incendiary indictment of America's fond memory of turning the Fatherland into its cuckold bitch boy. Indeed, it's no coincidence that an American bomber pilot sexually defiles two of the girls in *Der Bomberpilot*, even symbolically severely injuring one of the girl's wombs after suffering a miscarriage caused by the alien seed of what would have been a racial bastard of a baby, as America has yet to recognize its never discussed war crimes of firebombing the cities of Dresden and Hamburg—an act with no military objective that was done solely to kill large percentages of the German civilian population—which like the holocaust, Schroeter makes no mention of in the film. Indeed, it is no coincidence that towards the end of his career that Schroeter would direct the documentary *Die Königin - Marianne Hoppe* (2000) aka *The Queen*—a documentary about the bisexual German actress Marianne Hoppe who was quite popular during the Third Reich due to her perceived Nordic beauty—as the subject of the film, not unlike the protagonists of *Der Bomberpilot*, was a victim of circumstance and her own genetic pulchritude who, despite her personal disdain for the Third Reich and lecherous libertine lifestyle and affinity for degenerate art, would always be remembered as a 'Nazi actress,' just as Schroeter would suffer the undesirable fate of being regarded as a post-Nazi 'German director.' In fact, Schroeter even once went so far as stating, "I have no intention whatsoever of playing a leading part [in the New German Cinema], and submit to the expectations of producing

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Kulturscheisse [literally, Cultureshit], even if it may be true that I carry around with me and into my films the past of this Kulturscheisse,” and no other film in his oeuvre better expresses this ambivalent attitude than *Der Bomberpilot*—the director’s first and final statement on the National Socialist question and how such historical infamy has weighed down heavily on every German, not just filmmaker’s, lives. As the girls of *Der Bomberpilot* learned, no matter how ‘American’ they tried to be (something Schroeter’s cinematic compatriot Wim Wenders spent his entire life trying to achieve but ultimately failed doing), the average American still sees a Nazi in every kraut. After all, who can differentiate between a German and a Nazi after watching a Mel Brooks film like *The Producers* (1968) or a Steven Spielberg flick like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) or *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)?!

-Ty E

EIKA KATAPPA

Werner Schroeter° (1971)

An aesthetically audacious and asynchronous cinematic symphony of the positively plush and perversely prestigious sort, *Eika Katappa* (1969) directed by dandy auteur Werner Schroeter (*Der Bomberpilot*, *Malina*) is indubitably one of the landmark works of New German Cinema. An innately and intentionally anachronistic and allegorical work combining high camp and cleverly concocted kitsch with seemingly discordant opera and pop rock music, as well as thematically schizophrenic audio-visual synchronization, including a superlatively monomaniacal and somewhat mystical tribute to world renowned opera singer Maria Callas and delightfully degenerate takes on Norse mythology, *Eika Katappa* would ultimately win the decidedly dapper director the Joseph von Sternberg prize for “the most idiosyncratic film” at the 1969 Mannheim Film Festival, which is no small achievement considering it was Schroeter’s first feature-length film. At 144 minutes in length, *Eika Katappa* is also a work of eccentrically epic proportions. A terribly torrid, tragic, trying, and sometimes even titillating collection of theatrical tableaux without any stages but the ruins of Europa as a border-less coliseum of effete excess and campy cultural decay, *Eika Katappa*, like most great cinematic art pieces, is indubitably a strikingly and singularly self-indulgent work by a true auteur filmmaker who clearly cares more about his own ostentatious obsessions than whether or not the viewer can catch up with him. Virtually impossible to see outside of Germany until relatively recently when it was thankfully restored and released by Filmmuseum München (who owned the only copies of the film on 16mm, which were screened only sporadically over the past couple decades in various obscure cinémathèques) in late 2010 with the imperative help of director Werner Schroeter (who passed away shortly before the actual release of the dvd), *Eika Katappa* is a rare work that managed to redefine and reinvent the artistic medium of cinema in a way not seen since the days of F.W. Murnau and Carl Th. Dreyer. Described by German New Wave master of melodrama Rainer Werner Fassbinder as a film he would have liked to have made in an interview with the German edition of *Playboy* magazine (April 1978, 53-68), as well as one of “the most beautiful” films of its post-WWII Teutonic zeitgeist, *Eika Katappa* would also inspire Schroeter’s film director friend to borrow his aesthetic and his muse Magdalena Montezuma for *The Niklashausen Journey* (1970), albeit with a patently political twist (Schroeter, like his friend/ex-lover Daniel Schmid and unlike most filmmakers of his era, rejected politics and escaped in aestheticism). Of course, as Fassbinder soon learned, it is most impossible to imitate Schroeter’s somber and supremely sagacious cinematic soul. A poesy pictorial of Schroeter’s inner pandemonium of lingering lost loves, nagging ghosts, and nauseating and sometimes nefarious nostalgia, *Eika Katappa* – a cinematic work not without its fair

EIKA KATAPPA

share of humorous haunts and hypnotic hells – is the closest thing to a celluloid dirge saga because it not only reminiscences over the byproducts of the director's failed romantic affairs, but also classical European kultur of yesteryear, if only in an aggressively aestheticist fashion of taking a couple ingredients and sacrificing the rest for the best.

If any cinematic artist found his own metaphysical spiritual icon in Saint Sebastian, especially Guido Reni's quasi-homoerotic high-baroque painting of the camp/Christian martyr, more than gentleman Jarman and far-right Japanese nationalist novelist Yukio Mishima, it was mostly certainly Werner Schroeter as ritualistically depicted in a number of sacrificial scenes from *Eika Katappa*; a sensual celluloid work more in touch with the secret of the soul than the abstract mind. Of course, Schroeter's scantily clad St. Sebastian is an emaciated blond twink who looks more like he died from anorexia than from some royal Roman arrows, but such is the highly personally stylized cinematic world of Werner Schroeter; an auteur filmmaker who authored his own cinematic language of sorts, hence the intrinsically impenetrable essence of his films. As with virtually all of his early films, Schroeter's unmistakable muse Magdalena Montezuma (*Day of the Idiots*, *Freak Orlando*) is indisputably the star diva of *Eika Katappa* as a modern silent screen starlet and a curiously charismatic chameleon of celluloid who, like most of the actors in the film, ceaselessly changes from character-to-character and even different sexes throughout the work, including depicting an extra deranged drag king version of Quasimodo from *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and a Gothic heroin chic take on buxom blonde Brünnhilde from the ancient Germanic *Nibelungenlied*. In *Eika Katappa* love, death, sacrifice and tragedy are perennial yet positively preposterously portrayed in a series of absurdly theatrical scenarios, thus many characters act as both morbid merry-makers and martyrs in a tidal wave of operatic tragicomedic allegory set to the intentionally asynchronous sounds of Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata* (1853) and Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* (1900). Although never depicted in any sort of literal light, the archetypal homosexual, especially in the context of Schroeter himself, is ultimately portrayed a symbol of eternal martyrdom in *Eika Katappa* as a Christ-like figure doomed to lifelong unhappiness, heartbreak, and innate social heresy. As Schroeter wrote in a synopsis for the seventh act of *Eika Katappa*, with the "history of two lovely young men, loving each other desperately," the director brings abstract allegorical meaning to King dandy Oscar Wilde's treacherous boy toy's Lord Alfred Douglas' famous phrase, "the love that dare not speak its name," a theme that was taken to a much darker and serious extreme in *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* where both Saint Sebastian and Jesus Christ act as homoerotic symbols of ostensibly macabre torture and martyrdom. Of course, Greek soprano Maria Callas' spirit weighs heavily on the overall aesthetically erratic essence of *Eika Katappa*, so much so that Schroeter inserted a still portrait of the diva at various points throughout the film that is most promi-

nently displayed at the very conclusion of the overwhelming cinematic work in a gesture that is no doubt a noble tribute from one artist to another as a film that could have never been conceived without the singer's imperative influence on the filmmaker at a young and fragile age. Interestingly, Werner Schroeter himself also appears at the conclusion of *Eika Katappa* directing his handsome yet melancholy Mediterranean star, thus unveiling the artist behind the highly personal and insanely idiosyncratic piece of celluloid art.

It is worth noting that Schroeter's filmmaker friend Rainer Werner Fassbinder directed a film entitled *Gods of the Plague* (1970) aka *Götter der Pest* where a character speaks the line "Life is very precious, even right now," which is spoken repeatedly throughout *Eika Katappa*; a celluloid collection of shattered fragments from the auteur filmmaker's cinematically self-sanctified soul. Indeed, as Fassbinder once wrote, "Werner Schroeter will one day have a place in the history of film that I would describe in literature as somewhere between Novalis, Lautréamont, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline," as a filmmaker whose vision and need to expression the seemingly inexplicable was always more important to him whether or not his films were even remotely accessible or financially profitable among general audiences, which, as time has proven, they are most certainly not. Similar to his previous but much shorter film *Argila* (1969) in aesthetic and sentiment, *Eika Katappa* is a figurative celluloid wound dripping with allegorical memories from beginning to end in the form of penetrating petite vignettes that inordinately obfuscate the personal with anachronistic aesthetic ingredients from both past and present in an intentionally anti-synchronal yet unfamiliarly harmonious manner. A hypnotic yet equally harrowing and humorous hermetic celluloid hybrid of high and low Occidental kultur, *Eika Katappa* – aside from being a collection of director Werner Schroeter's personal romantic recollections and aesthetic obsessions – is, whether intentional or not on the filmmaker's part, acts as cinematic obsequies for the Occident itself. A chaotic celluloid storm of what was once and will never be again, *Eika Katappa* is just as reflexive of Europe as a whole as Schroeter's own intimate love affairs. Released at the height of politically motivated peace and love campaigns in the then-wanton West, *Eika Katappa* stands the test of time because Werner Schroeter – an apolitical indulger in aestheticism – assembled a timeless cinematic work that is just as universal thematically as it is aesthetically, even as an unwaveringly acroamatic arthouse film.

-Ty E

THE DEATH OF MARIA MALIBRAN
THE DEATH OF MARIA MALIBRAN

Werner Schroeter° (1972)

In the documentary *Daniel Schmid - Le chat qui pense* (2010) directed by Pascal Hofmann and Benny Jaberg, Werner Schroeter – the royal queen of New German cinema excess and high-camp hypnotics – has the audacity to describe his friend and one-time lover Daniel Schmid (*Shadow of Angels*, *Hécate*), very possibly the greatest post-WWII Swiss filmmaker, in what is probably the one of the most blatant examples of Freudian projection as a “diva addict.” Indeed, diva fetishism is one of the many intoxicating idiosyncratic ingredients one can expect from a Werner “Mad Genius” Schroeter (as Fassbinder once called him) film with his intentionally kitschy yet equally cultivated cinematic effort *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran* – an anti-biopic that has little to do with the factual reality of the terribly tragic Spanish-French 19th-century mezzo-soprano opera singer who would go on to be a legendary historical icon after she died onstage at the age of 28 and whose whimsical life the film decadently and discordantly depicts – being one of the dapper film director’s most flagrant and flavorful examples of operatic goddess worship. Starring Schroeter’s towering yet trim Teutonic muse Magdalena Montezuma (*Eika Katappa*, *Der Bomberpilot*) in the lead role of Maria Malibran, as well as in transvestite drag as her character’s sadistic father Manuel García, *The Death of Maria Malibran* features the androgynous avant-garde actress at her finest and most eclectic, displaying the sort of peculiar propensity for playing diverse characters of each gender in the same film, a talent that would arguably reach its zenith in Ulrike Ottinger’s masterpiece of marvelous miscreation *Freak Orlando* (1981). On top of featuring Ms. Montezuma in a standout role, *The Death of Maria Malibran* also features Fassbinder’s ex-wife Ingrid Caven (*Ludwig - Requiem for a Virgin King*, *In a Year with 13 Moons*), Warhol Superstar Candy Darling (*Flesh*, *Women in Revolt*), Jamie Lee Curtis’ ex-stepmother Christine Kaufmann (*Escape from East Berlin*, *Egon Schiele – Exzess und Bestrafung*), and a variety of ludicrous pseudo-lesbian trannies, including an absurdly avoirdupois drag queen of extravagant grotesquery that puts John Waters’ man-muse Divine to shame in terms of terrifying character and aberrant appearance. Comprised of a number of rather random tableaux that were constructed from mostly fictionally contrived points of miserable Malibran’s short but relatively eventful life, *The Death of Maria Malibran* is mostly a collection of neutral-shot-style moving picture-perfect portraits and operatic solos and duos that reflect why Werner Schroeter was the closest thing to an ‘Arno Breker of camp.’

For Maria Malibran fans, especially those inclined towards faithful depictions of reality, viewing *The Death of Maria Malibran* will probably prove to be a problematic and even perturbing task, but for people like myself, who have nil interest in the ill-starred opera singer, let alone the authenticity of anecdotal details from

her life, the film makes for an extravagant experiment in campy celluloid excess and exceedingly effete eccentricity of the ethereal sort. As a man who made no lie of the fact that his personal yet puzzling cinematic poems were the artistic “byproducts” (Rosa von Praunheim, as an ex-lover and lifelong friend of the director, being one of these ‘byproducts’ of buggery) of past romantic relationships, I think it is safe to say that the Maria Malibran of *The Death of Maria Malibran* is more of an abstruse alter-ego of the filmmaker than an abiding tribute to the singer. After all, Schroeter’s perplexing penultimate film *Deux* (2002) aka *Two* is an ambiguously autobiographical piece in which the director’s life is portrayed by two different women, so it should be no surprise that *The Death of Maria Malibran* features a similar damning disdain for objective reality. Indeed, Magdalena Montezuma may have adopted a Mediterranean name (her real name was the notably less campy and magnificent ‘Erika Kluge’) that she utilized throughout her acting career, but I would never in a million years mistaken her for an off-white med-frog like the character she depicts in *The Death of Maria Malibran* due to her Bosch Nordic beauty and her rather aloof, if not exceedingly eccentric Germanic demeanor. In other words, the Maria Malibran of this exorbitant Epicurean epic of excess is indubitably more of a super surreal, superfluously stylish and self-stylized alter-ego of Schroeter living precariously through the beauty of his celluloid Madonna Magdalena Montezuma and for anyone to approach *The Death of Maria Malibran* from any other angle would be, at best, a misguided mistake, if not an all too common and reasonable one. Considering that Schroeter was always surrounded by death from an early age, especially those of his loved ones, including the suicide of his beloved grandmother, the Polish baroness Elsa von Rotjov, when he was only 13-years-old and the self-slaughter of his first boyhood crush around the same age and which incidentally was also around the same time he discovered his lifelong obsession Maria Callas aka *La Divina* – the world renowned 20th-century Greek-American soprano – it is only natural that the dismal dandy director would go on to craft a work so innocently and imaginatively tragic as *The Death of Maria Malibran*; a work that denies the pain of historical truth, if not purportedly based on the truth, for a sort of fantastic escapism and saturnine ecstasy.

As his seemingly unlikely colleague Wim Wenders – who went to film school with Werner Schroeter – explains in the documentary *Mondo Lux : The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* (2011) directed by Elfi Mikesch, “Death is the important topic in Werner’s films. “Eika Katappa”... There’s no other film where so many people die... He destroyed them, those storylines, by having people die and go on or die three times or die eternally. It’s obvious that the gesture is important for Werner. And it’s never about narration as such.” Indeed, in the same documentary, Schroeter himself admits, “I drove Rosa, Holger Mischwitzky, crazy with my tragic view of the world. I told Holger, ‘You have to accept it. My picture of the world is tragic.’ And, of course, I laughed about it.” Of course,

THE DEATH OF MARIA MALIBRAN

Schroeter's remark about his relationship with Mr. Rosa von Praunheim is characteristic of his early cinematic oeuvre, especially in regard to *The Death of Maria Malibran*; an audacious expression of absurdist tongue-in-tranny-cheek tragedy meets merry yet maliciously macabre camp and killer kitsch. For Schroeter, "The search is essentially for art and not the final product. There is no final product. There's a photograph, a picture, a composition. But there is never an aspect that resolves everything. That would be even worse. It would make death obsolete. And since we're all going that way, we'll only find our redemption in death but not in art." Indeed, to call his cinematic works 'self-indulgent' would be a fair assessment, but only so much that Schroeter put his entire being into the search for meaning and the ultimate act of aesthetic sublimity, or at least his idea of a seductive audio/visual solace every second of his films without thinking twice about alienating prospective filmgoers (i.e. the majority of filmgoers), with his oftentimes impenetrable personal idiosyncrasies. That being said, to watch a film like *The Death of Maria Malibran* or just about any other Werner Schroeter without understanding the filmmaker or the context of the film would be akin to attempting to fly a plane while on mescaline without a single flying lesson or attempting to read William S. Burrough's novel *Naked Lunch* (1959) because you feel that you shot up enough lethally laced junk into your johnson to feel like a kultur junky. An irrational and ravaging celluloid rendezvous of statuesque female beauties, aesthetically crude drag fags in menacing masks of unflattering make-up, Svengali drag kings, and inconspicuous shemales like Candy Darling who fit in somewhere in between, *The Death of Maria Malibran* is a ridiculously rhapsodic and rapturous work of keenly kaleidoscopic death worship that personifies the poetic words from the title of the popular Death in June song "Death Is The Martyr Of Beauty." Indeed, Werner Schroeter, Magdalena Montezuma, and Candy Darling may all be tot, but their anomalous aesthetic essence lives on in the guise of *The Death of Maria Malibran*; a moribund musical that makes for one of the most puissant and pulchritudinous cinematic excursions of what probably can be best described as 'metaphysical necrophilia.'

-Ty E

WILLOW SPRINGS

Werner Schroeter° (1973)

If German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, Palermo oder Wolfsburg) ever came close to making a horror film, albeit with thriller and even western genre conventions, it is most certainly *Willow Springs* (1973), a work that also has the distinction of being the only film the director shot entirely in the United States. Originally intending to come to the U.S. to do a documentary on a structural analysis of Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe prints with a ten-page script treatment he had written, Schroeter wisely decided to ditch the doc and create the "cheapest possible story," or as the auteur stated himself in a 2008 interview: "It was going to be called *THE DREAM OF MARILYN MONROE*. But instead of pictures of Warhol's work, I came back with this thriller, this western. They were floored. Nobody else has ever done that. And then they called the head of programming, Viehover, because the producers were totally frantic. He watched it and then he said, 'Thank you, Mr. Schroeter, for this extraordinary film.' I said, 'I can imagine.' A film like that for 80,000 marks? I mean, come on!" With a mere 80,000 marks given to him by the West German television channel ZDF that was intended for the doc, Schroeter not only managed to fund the film, but the traveling and living expenses for himself and his diva stars Magdalena Montezuma, Christine Kaufmann and Ila von Hasperg while living in Los Angeles during the two week period that it took him to direct *Willow Springs*. Aside from making the film, Schroeter also came to Hollywood so that his friend Christine Kaufmann could get back her children that her drug-addled ex-husband, Jewish-American star Tony Curtis (father of Jamie Lee Curtis), had apparently kidnapped from her.

Indeed, while it would be interesting to see what Schroeter thought of weirdo Warhol's dilettante prints, I am glad he opted for directing what is easily one of his darkest and most bizarrely penetrating films and a work Fassbinder apparently described as "an absolute work of art." A meditation on American feminism a decade after Marilyn Monroe's death, as well as a response to the infamous Manson Family murders, *Willow Springs* takes its name from the small ghost town in the Mojave desert where the film was shot. The unconventionally tragic celluloid tale of an ambiguously Sapphic death cult leader played by Schroeter's marvelously macabre and perennially melancholy muse Magdalena Montezuma who has two meek followers who help her lure men to their dilapidated home and brutally kill them as a sort of unhinged and pseudo-empowering form of feminazi blood sacrifice, *Willow Springs* is a hallucinatory and haunting film about three haunted women that discover the patriarchy can be much more macabre than the patriarchy. A sort of cine-magic marriage between the freaky female solidarity of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Robert Altman's *3 Women* (1977), the romantic acid-washed desert nihilism of Roland

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Klick's *Deadlock* (1970), the high-camp lesbian slumber party melancholy of *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), the mystical authoritarian lesbianism of *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), and the sunny California Oedipal problems of Curtis Harrington's *The Killing Kind* (1973), *Willow Springs* is nothing short of a lost masterpiece (apparently, the film has not been screened since 1973 when it was televised by ZDF in 1973) and thankfully the fine folks at Edition Filmmuseum have recently went to the trouble of restoring and releasing it on DVD. Indeed, you will not find a better anti-feminist feminist Manson-esque psychosexual western-horror-thriller than *Willow Springs*.

At the beginning of *Willow Springs*, one is given a glaring hint as to the source of lunatic lesbo-feminist cult leader Magdalena's (Magdalena Montezuma) murderous misandry and perturbing psychosis. As depicted in the first scene, Magdalena was brutally attacked and strangled by a swarthy Hells Angels-esque biker. Flash forward five years later, Magda is now a deranged dyke charlatan cunt and sole leader of the nefarious North Star Dhruva cult who derives internal strength from nonsensically killing any man that has the misfortune of passing by her home/bar in the desert and she uses two broken babes to help carry out her dirty deeds. As her underling Christine (Christine Kaufmann) states regarding her rationale for joining the cult, "I prefer to surrender responsibility for my life to Magdalena, because she loves pain and the beauty of her face is the beauty of pain. For the last five years, ever since I've been here, I no longer have any memories. I no longer have any memories. My life has only begun again since I came here." As Christine also states, "I have never loved anyone save for my child that died inside me before it was born. Since then, I know that life is like a wave on which you drift always being careful not to drown, only to die in the end after all," thus demonstrating her disillusionment with life, destroyed personality, incapacity for love and affection, and need to be led in life by someone else. The only other member of the killer carpet-muncher cult is the childlike dame Ila (Ila von Hasperg), who lives in a fantasy world that involves dressing like Marilyn Monroe and befriending kitty cats, which rather annoys Magdalena. In between being served rum and coke by sensual slaves and maliciously murdering men, Magdalena practices Sapphic esoteric rites and preaches to Christine and Ila at her dimly lit bar, where she declares like a true spiritually degenerate and schizophrenic megalomaniac: "I greet you, North Star. I greet you, cry of distant jackal. I greet you, loneliness of ours. Oh, my companions, preserve the purity of your hands that deny lascivious temptation. You possess the purity of those who spill the blood of others. The blood of the people we have killed is our protection. You will never be afraid again. I am the force that led you here. I am helping you. I love you more than I love myself." At mad Magda's demand, Christine and Ila repeat the chant: "She is the force through which we live... She loves us more than she loves herself... She is the force through which we breathe." Rather unfortunately for her, pseudo-messiah Magdalena is unable

to provide her girls with the sort of sexual satisfaction that a virile ex-con like Charles Manson was able to glamor gals with.

Of course, trouble arrives in paradise when a young and seemingly autistic momma's boy of the diary-writing and Hawaiian-born sort named "Son" aka "Lord Invader" (Michael O'Daniels) arrives at the North Star Dhruva compound after learning that his beloved mommy (also played by Magdalena Montezuma who in this role gives a Marlene Dietrich-esque performance) was turned down from the clit-hopper cult by Magdalena. While Lord Invader knows all too well that the women of the cult worship murdering men and make a living stealing said murdered men's property, he displays no inkling of fear when facing the ferocious females of North Star Dhruva and they ultimately seem to respect him for that very reason. To Magdalena's dykey dismay, both Christine and Ila take an instant lecherous liking to the strange young man. Upon meeting Lord Invader, Ila falls in love at first sight and states, "You must have been born on Christmas eve" as if he is the second coming of Christ. On top of everything else, Lord Invader challenges Magdalena's authority and Weltanschauung by stating, "but Magdalena, you have to have a reason to kill someone," to which the queen bitch replies, "if you don't get what I'm saying, shut up!" as if the fact he has a penis makes him incapable of understanding the cult leader's murderously matriarchal megalomania. Always lurking around the house and voyeuristically spying on her followers through outside windows, Magdalena loses her cool after walking in on Lord Invader and Ila making passionate love in a manner that she, as a cock-less wench, never could. In one of the especially telling and symbolic scenes, Magdalena strokes her pistol revolver as if it were a cock, thus demonstrating she uses the weapon as a substitute phallus. When Ila attempts to leave with Lord Invader, Magdalena jealously shoots both of the lovers to death out of sexual frustration. With her authority compromised and beloved follower Ila dead, Magdalena acts in classically hysterical female fashion and shoots and kills Christine as well, thus bringing a quick and tragic end to the short-lived, but nonetheless iconic and infamous, North Star Dhruva cult. Interestingly, during Willow Springs, Magdalena prophetically promises her two girls that, "When you are dead, I will be the one to care for you, to carry your bodies to their graves." Indeed, when it came down to it, Magdalena preferred having both Christine and Ila dead rather than happy and in love with a man as a feminist extremist with a pathological case of penis envy.

Undoubtedly one of auteur Werner Schroeter's most accessible and aesthetically delectable works, Willow Springs is haunting high-camp celluloid Americana of the decidedly decadent Teutonic sort. Featuring music ranging from Camille Saint-Saëns and Charles Gounod to Creedence Clearwater Revival and the Doobie Brothers, Willow Springs is certainly a savory celluloid slice of the signature 'Kulturscheisse' ("culture shit") pioneered by Schroeter as a strikingly seamless hodgepodge of high and low kultur as a low-budget work that brings

WILLOW SPRINGS

cultivation to a mostly cultureless nation. Made a couple years after the Manson Family murders, Schroeter's film depicts a wayward world where the utopian dreams of the counter-culture generation have deleteriously degenerated into absolutely abhorrent authoritarian gynocentrism of the mensch-exterminating sort. Indeed, I am sure Andy Warhol would have been rather disturbed by Willow Springs as the film seems like an aberrantly allegorical Texas Chain Saw Massacre-esque take on the insane radical lily-licker ideas expressed in the pop-con-artist's failed assassin Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto. An apocalyptic chamber piece from fecund-free post-Monroe/post-Manson pandemonium featuring Miss Montezuma sporting a glittery Grim Reaper-like cloak, Willow Springs is a virtual celluloid epitaph of excess for American feminism as a work that portrays the fairer sex as no more free nor happy under a matriarchal society, but just the opposite. Indeed, like Schroeter's mainstream effort *Malina* (1991)—a work based on Austrian feminist hero Ingeborg Bachmann's 1971 novel of the same—Willow Springs is a film that is not likely to please feminist idealists as it portrays a 'woman-ruled' society as a decidedly debasing dystopian wasteland where the typical woman is even more subservient and less individualistic than under National Socialist rule, albeit minus the god-given rights of vaginal penetration and sexual reproduction. A sort of equally cynical companion piece to Fassbinder's equally eerie and iconoclastic video film *Bremer Freiheit: Frau Geesche Gottfried - Ein bürgerliches Trauerspiel* (1972), Willow Springs wallows in the rotting corpse that is women's lib and ironically does it in an ominous operatic style that demonstrates how beautiful deadly women can be.

-Ty E

THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES

Werner Schroeter° (1978)

If one needed to see indisputable evidence that German New Cinema dandy auteur Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, *Der Rosenkönig* aka *The Rose King*) was more than a morbidly depressed diva addict with an immaculate and wildly idiosyncratic knack for communicating his campy cognitive dissonance on screen in a solely tableau-obsessed manner, one just needs to see his kraut-Guido neoneorealist flick *Nel regno di Napoli* (1978) aka *Neapolitanische Geschichten* aka *The Reign of Naples* aka *The Kingdom of Naples*—a decidedly decadent yet refined Teutonic look at the Southern Italian proletarian soul over a three decade period created by a German man who spent enough time in the city of Naples as a student to appreciate the most forsaken families of the intrinsically impoverished post-industrial wasteland. Schroeter's first feature shot on 35mm film stock and a work that would earn the filmmaker the 1979 German Film Prize for "Best Direction" in a country that thought of him as a "art cut," *The Kingdom of Naples* depicts a brother and sister from a poor-as-dirt family from their births at the time of the end of fascism in the city to the equally dystopian early 1970s, otherwise known as the "Bourbon era" of Naples, when it seemed like there was no hope for the hopeless in the spiritually devitalized, increasingly Americanized South Italian metropolis. Essentially beginning where Italian Freudian-Marxist auteur Bernardo Bertolucci's sickeningly sentimental and superficial com-symp epic *1900* (1976) aka *Novecento* left off, albeit using all Italian actors (both professional and non-professional), *The Kingdom of Naples* brings a certain 'pessimistic pep' via Schroeter's sharp operatic direction and dandy colorfulness to the seemingly static neorealist genre, thus giving the destitute characters of the film a certain sense of dignity that even eclipses the films of Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Mamma Roma*, *Teorema*), but without portraying them in a soulless, idealistic and propagandistic Marxist manner. While German New Cinema alpha-auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder found his friend Schroeter's second excursion in quasi-neorealism, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* aka (1980) *Palermo or Wolfsburg*, to be one of the "most disappointing" films of Teutonic cinema, he regarded his celluloid compatriot's flick *The Kingdom of Naples* as one of the best of the post-WWII Fatherland, even writing a highly flattering essay in tribute to the film and filmmaker behind it. In his 1979 essay "Chin-up, Handstand, Salto Mortale—Firm Footing: On the Film Director Werner Schroeter, Who Achieved What Few, Achieve, with Kingdom of Naples," Fassbinder wrote: "A great and important film. Incredible, after the terrible years of waiting, always on the verge of simply drying up. A film that without hesitation can be classed with *Ossessione* by Visconti, *La Strada* by Fellini, *Mamma Roma* by Pasolini, *Rocco and His Brothers* by Visconti, *Les bonnes femmes* by Chabrol, *Le diable probablement* by Bresson, *The Exterminating Angel* by

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Buñuel, and others like that.” Indeed, *The Kingdom of Naples* is indisputable proof that at least one German filmmaker, Werner Schroeter, was able to do the seemingly impossible by getting inside the most miserable pockets of the Mediterranean soul and exposing it for the entire world to see, thus illustrating that the Third World is not the only place where people are literally starving, but also ancient old world Europe.

Although a largely narrative-driven work with a fictional linear plot (albeit based on real-life events director Werner Schroeter personally read in newspapers) told in sixteen episodes, *The Kingdom of Naples* also acts as a seamless documentary film-within-a-film that chronicles the history of events that took place in Naples from 1943-1972 and that ultimately acts as the chronicled skeleton of the film. Beginning in 1943, the viewer learns that Naples was the first Italian city to be liberated by Italian fascism (apparently, they literally killed German soldiers for food, thus forcing the troops to abandon the city) and, naturally, by 1946 there were virtually nil jobs for men, but that is the least of the people's problems because as a bold and beautiful yet bitchy middle-aged lady named Valeria Cavioli (Liana Trouche) states—thus symbolically illustrating the matriarchal essence of Italian society—to a group of jobless men after the birth of baby named Vittoria Pagano, “What idiots, these men. During the war, all they can make are girls.” Vittoria has an older brother named Massimo and like their parents—the father (Dino Mele) being a fiercely fanatical anti-Catholic and the mother (Renata Zamengo) being a dearly devout Catholic—they are quite the opposites and they will grow further apart in political and social persuasion as they come-of-age in war-torn Southern Europa. Next door lives a callous widow named Valeria and her dainty daughter Rosa (Laura Sodano), whose malicious mother trades her damned daughter's virginity to a chocolate-wielding black U.S. sailor for a mere bag of flour with “U.S.A.” stamped on it, thus irreparably destroying the innocent girl's sense of person dignity for what will be the rest of her miserable life. Indeed, such dehumanizing acts are the norm in the impoverished ghettos of post-WWII Naples, where rich pedophiles conspire to lure in proletarian children with their exotic pet fish and fat cat Catholic priests wallow in their own gluttony as their followers starve in a ghetto right next door to the church. As narrated in *The King of Naples*, by 1948, “a progressive economic model, which turned out to be extremely reactionary in nature. Free reign for the employer who exploits the workers. Repression and exploitation in the factories... The Pope also prays to the Holy Mother to bring about a miracle, so the people vote for the Christian Democrats.” Of course, the potential “miracle” is not of a Christian Democrat persuasion, but an atheist Marxist sort. Not unsurprisingly, when mother Pagano dies in a martyr-like manner as she allegorically bleeds from her womb, her children inevitably respond to it in rather extreme manners, with Vittoria dreaming of being a nun, while her brother Massimo dreams of being a Marxist revolutionary.

When radical Spanish Marxist refugee and Franco opponent Alessandro Simonetti (Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid's one-time boyfriend Raúl Gimenez)—a student of Italian far-left revolutionary Antonio Gramsci who seems to worship the Italian Marxist martyr and onetime leader of the Communist Party of Italy like a Catholic would worship Christ—arrives in Naples, he inspires hope in the hapless folk in the Guido ghetto, including Massimo, who goes on to work for free at the communist revolutionary's party headquarters, and Valeria, who marries the charismatic would-be-messiah of leftist materialism. Vittoria attempts to be a nun, but her sternly anti-pope pop puts a quick end to that dream. Meanwhile, Massimo finds a surrogate mother figure in a French nurse turned prostitute Rosaria aka "Frenchie" (Pasolini regular Margareth Clémenti)—a family friend who was at the birth of Vittoria—who makes him pay to play with her voluptuous body. Vittoria herself almost becomes a prostitute at the age of 16 when a conspiring redhead bitch named Pupetta Ferrante (Ida Di Benedetto) who looks like a witchy drag-queen and owns a metal factory, hires her under the false pretense of being a cleaner and eventually offers the poor girl to move in her home to better job where she will meet countless "first class people." Desperate and against Marxist Massimo's wishes, Vittoria's father persuades his daughter to move in with Ferrante, but the teenage girl soon learns that she has been hired as a prostitute and thus she flees the nefarious bourgeois bitch's house. An all around con of a cunt, Ferrante refuses to pay her overworked factory laborers, which results in a scuffle that leaves the men dead and the quasi-femme fatale boss a coldblooded murderer. Valeria also attempts to whore out her daughter Rosa to seemingly gay, mama's boy attorney and Christian democratic big wig named Palumbo (Gerardo D'Andrea), but instead she calls her manipulative mother a "whore" and gets extremely sick, eventually pointlessly dying because there are no antibiotics in Naples. Enraged, Valeria blames and kills her failed Marxist revolutionary husband Simonetti for Rosa's premature and easily avoidable death because he promised a glorious Bolshevik worker's utopia, but failed to deliver anything but false promises and cheap charisma. Although Valeria only serves a short prison sentence, she is institutionalized in a mental hospital, where she admits to Massimo and Vittoria that she was gang raped by four men during the Second World War. Although Simonetti is dead, Massimo remains a stern communist and is ultimately arrested for his subversive political affiliations. In year 1970 as the narrator of *The Kingdom of Naples* states, "We have returned to a climate of uncertainty. Massimo has served his prison sentence. Will he still be a dreamer?" Now a husband and father of meager means who after about two decades of unflinching dedication to Marxism, is no closer to the commie dream, but instead witnesses the death of his beloved Frenchie and his holy sister settling for a career as a flashy flight attendant, Massimo leaves with the words of wisdom, "With so much sulphur in the air, people are destined to die. They dig from morning to evening in this filth. And the work robs you of

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all joy. What kind of a life is that?"

A nearly immaculate marriage between realist melodrama and documentary collage, *The Kingdom of Naples* achieves what German New Cinema co-founder Alexander Kluge has been trying to accomplish his entire career, but whose sterile and pedantic Marxist intellectualism, seeming lack of artistic spirit, and pomo posturing have always prevented him from realizing. Indeed, *The Kingdom of Naples* is a true proletarian flick, yet executed with the sensitivity and nuance of a true maestro and aristocrat of aestheticism with a genuine love and respect for an alien people. Of course, where *The Kingdom of Naples* is different from the Italian neorealist films, especially those by Pasolini, that inspired it is that Schroeter seems to have no love for communism nor the Catholic church—both of which are portrayed in *The Kingdom of Naples* as parasitic entities that make endless promises of salvation and an utopian future yet never deliver anything aside from false hope—but only the people of the region, whose survival is totally based on their desperate will to live and nothing more, hence why a mother gives away her virginal daughter away to a Negro American sailor for a mere bag of flour and a young girl grows up to be a stewardess instead of the holy nun she always dream of being. Indeed, *The Kingdom of Naples* has the sort of uncompromising cultural pessimism that could have only been assembled by a German filmmaker lacking a certain Mediterranean flamboyance and pomposity, so it should be no surprise that the film was not very popular in Italy as it was in Germany, even inspiring Schroeter's friend Fassbinder to state of his cinematic compatriot's first big commercial and critic hit, "So Germany has not only three, or five, or ten film directors to show off; it has now acquired another one who was certainly needed. One with a great deal to say. A great one, to put it simply." And, indeed, Schroeter says as much as an *Ausländer* can say about a strange foreign land in *The Kingdom of Naples*, to the point where I asked myself whether or not the poverty plagued population would have been better off with the fascism that once made the trains run on time, or simply being nuked into oblivion as few other films get at the heart of collective misery and tragedy, and stoically and unsentimentally let us know there is not a cure, despite what the communist party or Catholic church promises with their pseudo-altruistic verbal swill. Indeed, the Teutonic king of German celluloid kitsch proved with *The Kingdom of Naples* that every ghetto has its revolutionaries and divas, but instead of killing wealthy aristocrats and performing for sold-out operas, they are dumping trash into the sea and peddling their pussies for pennies on the dollar. With the economic crisis in Europe hitting the Mediterranean countries the hardest, *The Kingdom of Naples* might not make for the most inspiring film for contemporary Southern Europeans to watch, but it will certainly make them second guess worthless intellectual abstractions some messianic Marxist demigod is peddling like a glorified whore on a city street corner.

-Ty E

PALERMO ODER WOLFSBURG

Werner Schroeter° (1980)

Of all films, *Palermo oder Wolfsburg* (1980) aka *Palermo or Wolfsburg* – a kraut neo-Neorealist epic by German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, *Day of the Idiots*) – brought me back to my early childhood at a crucial and insightful point in my life when I realized the immense differences between cultures and the inherent impossibility of two very different groups being able to reconcile their innate cultural and ethnic differences. When I was in kindergarten, I started a fairly long friendship that would endure for about a decade (until I moved and rarely saw him again) with a fiery and flamboyant fellow named Phil whose mother was a Spanish-Cuban immigrant and whose father was Sicilian-American. Naturally, being of purely Mediterranean family, Phil had a strong Catholic background, despite the fact that he was basically a born psychopath who learned to unscrupulously lie, cheat, steal and aggressively hit on girls before he learned to tie his shoes. Anyway, although I considered him my best friend and vice versa, I will never forget the time when one of his Cuban friends came to town and immediately turned Phil into a totally different person from who I thought I knew, or at least from the person he always was in the most pure day-to-day form, while in the close company of cultural and racial compatriots. Practically speaking another language and with his break-neck linguistic rhythms and bombastic body language at a speed that would put to shame the gayest of effortlessly effete homo Negros, my friend carried on with his Cuban comrade as if reuniting with his long lost doppelgänger like I was in some real-life science fiction movie, so naturally I was rather enraged, but I inevitably realized at that point in my life that human being tends to get along best with people like themselves and such is certainly the case in Werner Schroeter's *Palermo or Wolfsburg*; a film about a young Sicilian peasant who moves from Palermo, Sicily to Wolfsburg, West Germany to financially support his impoverished family. Like Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Katzelmacher* (1969) and *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (1974), Helma Sanders-Brahms' TV-movie *Shirins Hochzeit* (1976) aka *Shirin's Wedding*, and the German era films of Iranian auteur Sohrab Shaheed Salles (*Empfänger unbekannt* aka *Addressee Unknown*, *Rosen für Afrika* aka *Roses for Africa*), *Palermo or Wolfsburg* was one of the first German films to deal with the still-taboo topic of Aryan-Ausländer relations, lost-in-translation communication (or lack thereof), and the oftentimes deleterious effects of culture shock. Despite being only a couple minutes shy of three hours in length (although the original cut was apparently eight hours!), *Palermo or Wolfsburg* also happens to be Schroeter's most accessible film and would earn the auteur the prestigious Golden Bear at the 30th Berlin International Film Festival, thereupon making him the first actual kraut auteur to win the award. Of course, as someone of partial Polish ancestry (his grandmother

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was a Polish aristocrat) whose cinematic works tended to be poorly received in his own country, hence one of the major reasons as to why he tended to work and live abroad, Schroeter must have felt a deep sense of satisfaction winning the Golden Bear for Palermo or Wolfsburg; an aesthetically and thematically antagonistic film that depicts the German Fatherland as a gloomy loony bin full of latent racists and softcore slave drivers. Featuring various theatric depictions of Jesus Christ, including iconic scenes of the Last Supper and his inevitable Crucifixion, Palermo or Wolfsburg is an audaciously allegorical tale where a wide-eyed Italian boy becomes a modern day Christ figure in a semi-cryptic cinematic tribute to Italian Renaissance Man Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Mamma Roma*, *The Gospel According to Matthew*) from his Slavic-Germanic spiritual son Werner Schroeter.

Like his previous feature-length cinematic effort *Neapolitanische Geschichten* (1978) aka *The Kingdom of Naples*, Palermo or Wolfsburg is a narrative-driven melodrama with a subversive socially conscious soul that was shot on 35mm film stock and follows the sad and tragic lives of Southern Italians, specifically that of a simpleminded Sicilian boy named Nicola (played by non-actor Nicola Zarbo in the tradition of Italian Neorealism) with a mustache who bears a striking physical and psychological resemblance to the character Pedro from *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004). With no work to be found in the Sicilian city of Palermo, and with a belligerent boozier for a father, naïve Nicola has no choice but to move to the young and sparsely populated (the city did not exceed 100,000 people until 1972) German city of Wolfsburg – the headquarters of the Volkswagen AG automobiles – so his family does not starve to death. Despite the overwhelming poverty of the collective populous of Palermo, everyone seems quite happy and has a deep and instinctive attachment to culture, tradition, religion, and – most of all – family in an ancient realm where little boys give singing solos while standing on top of a piano as grownups cheer him on, children are taught about famous Italian opera composers like Vincenzo Bellini, people ritualistically honor their dead ancestors, and the Catholic church plays a major part in their lives. In fact, before going to Germany, Nicola talks to a priest (real-life Catholic holy man Padre Pace) who warns him that German's, "moral standards are not up to ours," that family is the most important thing in a man's life, and to stay out of trouble in the foreign land, especially in regard to women as tragedies based in petty manners are often brought about by the fairer sex. Nicola probably should have taken heed of the padre's wise advice as his immigration to Wolfsburg ultimately results in the total ruin of his life. A long but endlessly enthralling celluloid epic that, not unlike the films of Stanley Kubrick, is separated into three different major parts – Nicola's life in Sicily, his hectic and humiliating life in Germany, and eventual trial for murdering two German boys – Palermo or Wolfsburg is a completely charming and captivating yet tragic tale about one man's personal demise in a strange land where no one understands the meaning of 'la dolce vita.'

Poverty might be a serious problem among the populous of Palermo, but it

seems to pale in comparison to the social alienation, cultural degeneracy, and technocratic tyranny of Wolfsburg; a place featuring a number of gigantic and glaring Volkswagen signs that are quite symbolic of the city's reigning corporatism and materialistic post-cultural modernism. Only a couple minutes after getting off the train upon arriving in Wolfsburg, Nicola is immediately hassled by some cops for apparently walking where he should not be, thus ushering a series of cultural mishaps and miscommunications that will lead to irrational murder and mayhem. Not knowing a single word of Deutsch, the Sicilian stranger has a hard time navigating around the city. Nicola plans to stay at his cousin's apartment house and when he actually finds the location after a number of hours aimlessly wandering around, his kinsman's German wife has him thrown out because, after all, none of her relatives leech off of her. Given 20 marks by his cuckold of a cuz, Nicola attempts to find an Italian-run hotel that accepts down-and-out guidos, but gets lost and decides to burn the little money he has for the hell of it in a display of irrational cognitive dissonance and subsequently beds down in a bush. The next day, Nicola discovers love at first sight in the form of a blonde, grey-eyed beauty named Brigitte Hahn (Brigitte Tilg; another non-actor in her sole movie role) – a teenage quasi-tomboy who works as a mechanic – who recommends that the Sicilian boy go to a nearby bar owned by a feisty Italian woman named Giovanna (Ida di Benedetto) who will ultimately act as the lad's Mother (Mary) figure. Of course, it does not take long for Nicola to be hassled by two German lads sporting punk/New Wave threads – the true love interests of Brigitte – who describe the down-and-out Sicilian boy as a “dago” and claim he is, “from Planet of the Apes,” and that “he came with a suitcase full of garlic,” being a dirty Italian and all. Luckily, Nicola also befriends a group of fellow Italians from Sardinia, who describe him as, “another victim” who has come to work and live like a dog as an unwanted guest worker in Deutschland. The Sardinians also warn Nicola about German women, stating, “this German girl had three Italians. She has a baby from each of them, she's very free. Her life is centered on her kids and not her husband...she wants money for the children,” because “she's a free woman” aka welfare queen who leeches off the state and the hard earned cash of poor immigrant workers. After getting a job at Volkswagen, Nicola finally feels like he is moving up in the world as he has money and is in love, but all good things must come to an end and uncontrollable factors, coupled with the Sicilian's childish naiveté, lead the young man to a crime of passion spurred by a broken heart. Naturally, it will be a German woman, as prophesized by Nicola's priest, who will be the source of simple Sicilian's fateful demise.

It becomes quite obvious early on in Palermo or Wolfsburg that Nicola's nefarious love interest Brigitte is a heartless sadist when she smiles in a self-satisfied manner after inspiring a bloody bar fight between Italians Nicola and pub owner Giovanna and the German boys who are vying for her attention, thus foreshad-

PALERMO ODER WOLFSBURG

owing the two murders that will occur at the hands of the humble man who made the inauspicious mistake of moving to a foreign land. Of course, more sinister than the German characters in the film is the Volkswagen Corporation – originally founded in 1937 by the Nazi trade union, the German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront) – which is portrayed throughout *Palermo or Wolfsburg* in a ominous manner as a symbol of Germany's National Socialist past that still dominates today. In fact, the VW logo is featured throughout the film as a surrogate for the swastika (a militant drum-driven 'Nazi Death March' even plays whenever the Aryan automobile icon appears) that is presented in an insidious and ill-boding manner akin to how the Nazi symbol is presented in Hollywood anti-Nazi propaganda films, thus making it no coincidence that the protagonist of *Palermo or Wolfsburg* hails from Italy; a minor power that allied with the Third Reich in a slavish and groveling manner in a master-slave relationship that still continues today via corporate power.

Undoubtedly, the final act of *Palermo or Wolfsburg* is the most Schroeteresque segment of the entire film as it features dissonant, surrealist, absurdist, and sometimes operatic tableaux, highly hermetic symbolism, an ambiguous ending, and other wildly idiosyncratic elements that one would expect from the renegade New German Cinema auteur. Despite being nearly impossible to follow in some parts, bar owner Giovanna delivers testimony regarding protagonist Nicola that essentially sums up the tone and message of *Palermo or Wolfsburg* that goes as follows: "Since the day he arrived I have watched over him like my brother. He brought the life of my homeland with him. And I didn't want to see him destroyed in this land without light, without sun, without song and without chatter." Answering the title questions "*Palermo or Wolfsburg*," it is most apparent that Nicola should have stayed at his hometown, as he may have remained poor, but he still had everything worth living for; friends, family, culture, and religion and would have lived out the rest of his life in happiness and relative freedom. Totally vulnerable in a hostile land where material gain, nonsensically bureaucratic law & order, and corporate security are more valued than family and kultur, and social alienation, especially in regard to foreigners, is the norm, Nicola – a totally unsuspecting and less than intelligent (even, arguably borderline retarded) fellow – was bound to explode, it was just a matter of when and where. As cosmopolitan and worldly as a person could be as someone who spent their childhood attending international schools and living the majority of his life abroad, director Werner Schroeter was someone who truly understood the cultural and racial chaos that is multiculturalism and globalization. Part culturally rich and transcendental Italian neo-Neorealist flick, part gloomy anti-capitalist New German Cinema flick, and part super surrealist Schroeter operatic montage, *Palermo or Wolfsburg* is an unpretentious yet meticulously assembled arthouse masterpiece that manages to charmingly synthesize all the best elements of post-WWII Occidental cinema in a feverishly foreboding film that warns about the

very probable suicide of culturally devitalized Europa via corporate-led globalization, thus making it worthy of any serious lover of culture and/or cinephile's time.

-Ty E

DAY OF THE IDIOTS
DAY OF THE IDIOTS

Werner Schroeter° (1981)

If there ever was a chick flick for schizophrenics and/or scat-inclined Sapphos, it is most certainly the fittingly titled work *Day of the Idiots* (1981) aka *Tag der Idioten* directed by Teutonic dandy Werner Schroeter (Eika Katappa, *Der Bomberpilot*). While a vocal proponent of Schroeter's work myself, *Day of the Idiots* is certainly a celluloid work I cannot stomach or so I learned after a second failed viewing of the film. Despite being nominated for a Golden Palm Award at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival and winning "best film" at the 1982 German Film Awards and ultimately being one of Schroeter's most critically successful works, *Day of the Idiots* disgusts me in a way that can only be described as the metaphysical equivalent of barfing my favorite cuisine as a work that, although directed by one of my favorite directors of high-camp surrealist kitsch and featuring one of my favorite kraut divas (Ingrid Caven), rubs me the wrong way, sort of the way I would expect an autistic *Star Wars* fan to react after watching a *Pasolini* marathon. Starring French actress Carole Bouquet, who is probably best known by fans of European cinema for starring in Luis Buñuel's classic surrealist satire *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977) and penned by politician/journalist and one-time screenwriter Dana Horaková, who was married to Czech New Wave auteur Pavel Juráček and later apparently became a 'Minister of Culture' for the city of Hamburg from 2002-2004, *Day of the Idiots* is nauseatingly neurotic celluloid estrogen on overdrive directed by an especially eccentrically effete fellow who, more often than not, was far too in tune with his effeminate side and this celluloid work is certainly the most glaring and grating example of the filmmaker's female soul. The morbidly morose and melancholy psychodramatic tale of a decidedly deranged dame who is so obsessed with getting her boyfriend's love and attention that she decides to call in false allegations denouncing her neighbors as terrorists to authorities so she can be institutionalized, *Day of the Idiots* is essentially a psychological fantasy flick for emotionally-wrecked women who romantically dream of suicide and/or are into lesbian urolagnia. If you ever wanted to see a Bond Girl (star Carole Bouquet played Bond girl Melina Havelock in *For Your Eyes Only* (1981) right before Schroeter's flick) fall into in to operatic and phantasmagorical psychodrama at a patently perverse psych-ward before inevitably deciding to commit self-slaughter by running into traffic and being plowed down by a car, *Day of the Idiots* might be the film for you, but I doubt it, because the film ultimately sounds more cinematically tantalizing than it actually is.

Despite her debilitating depression, crazy 'cutie' Carole Schneider (Carole Bouquet) must love the skin she lives in because she is constantly tearing off her clothes and walking around her flat naked. Unfortunately for her, Carole must also tear off her lazy boyfriend Alexander's (played by Mostefa Djadjam, who

looks like a director Werner Schroeter if he were a dirty Arab) clothes off just to get him to share some good old carnal knowledge with him. In fact, Carole fantasizes about cutting out a piece of her boyfriend's skull and placing a little window there so she "can see if he really loves me," or so she says to herself while in some sort of perturbing psychosis. While ostensibly in public, Carole cries out "Alexander must look at me!" in vain as her self-centered boyfriend is nowhere to be found. Unfortunately, her simple demands from her bastard of a boy toy go unanswered, as she later begs for Alexander to "Kill me! Please!," which also proves to be unfruitful. Luckily terrorism is big in Deutschland and Carole comes up with an absolutely brilliant plan to falsely denounce her neighbors to the police as conspiring terrorists, which ultimately gets her locked in a creepily curious and quaint quasi-lesbo loony bin. While in the nightmarish nuthouse, Carole discovers that things are much more interesting than in the 'free' world as she encounters suicide, post-menopausal women playing with dolls, Catholic weddings, imaginary ballroom dancing, amputated legs/feet in glass cases, female-on-female water-sports, collapsing walls, and a variety of others things that might cross the mind of a schizophrenic. With decidedly deranged nurses and doctors, including a certain Dr. Laura (played by Fassbinder's ex-wife/Daniel Schmid's diva Ingrid Caven), who seem hardly distinguishable from the inmates aside from their uniforms, Carole is hardly cured by her experiences in the meta-mental hospital, but only all the more sure that there is no society that she is fit to live in as an alienated modern woman with nothing nor no one to live for. Carole seems to ultimately come to the conclusion that she is not suffering from any serious form of mental illness, but that she cannot simply function in society, be it among the public or among imprisoned perverts, so she to take her future (or lack thereof) into her own hands. When the walls of the loony bin begin to literally fall down, Carole realizes there is nowhere to hide and after being set free by Dr. Laura she decides to commit suicide by running in front of oncoming traffic and being plowed down by a random unfortunate stranger in a small European car. In the end, the melancholy expression on Carole's corpse seems no different than when she was 'alive.'

A sometimes wanton and always wildly weird celluloid tale about a woman under the influence of too much Weltschmerz, *Day of the Idiots* is, at best, a haunting and hallucinogenic celluloid psychodrama about a hysterical female mind that cannot deal with the dispiriting nature of post-WWII Europa and, at worse, the innately incoherent and discombobulating piece of lavish cinematic angst concocted by a kraut queen auteur who rightfully deserves a place in film history as German New Cinema's foremost miserable sodomite. Though featuring an aesthetically exquisite and idiosyncratically nightmarish hodgepodge of meticulously assembled tableaux, *Day of the Idiots* ultimately seems like a bad parody of Schroeter's own idiosyncratic brand of hyper-aestheticism as a sort of ugly and slightly retarded celluloid stepsister to the filmmaker's later 'mainstream'

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effort *Malina* (1991) starring Isabelle Huppert. Unfortunately, while *Day of the Idiots* lead Carole Bouquet may have much fuller breasts than her French compatriot Huppert, she has nowhere near the same acting chops, thus making her performance seem not much more nuanced than that of a mannequin, and also making the actress more suitable for Schroeter's early masterpiece *Der Tod der Maria Malibran* (1972) aka *The Death of Maria Malibran*, where most of the actresses simply strike simple poses and maintain the same facial expressions. Indeed, there seems to be a potential 'high-camp horror' masterpiece lost somewhere in *Day of the Idiots* and I personally hold banal babe Bouquet partially responsible for the film's seemingly half-aborted essence. Made in the wake of the far-leftist terrorist era in West Germany that reached its peak in 1977 and was famously seriously commented on with the omnibus film *Germany in Autumn* (1978) aka *Deutschland im Herbst* by a number of major directors of German New Cinema, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff, and Edgar Reitz, *Day of the Idiots* ultimately acts as Werner Schroeter's unofficial reaction to the Fatherland in 'fall.' Not unlike *Germany in Autumn*, *Day of the Idiots*, though having many of the ingredients to be a unique and unmitigated masterpiece, also feels like a postmodern Teutonic arthouse abortion.

-Ty E

THE ROSE KING

Werner Schroeter° (1986)

Without a doubt one of German New Wave dandy auteur Werner Schroeter's (Eika Katappa, Day of the Idiots) most immaculately stylized and purely poetic works, which says a lot for a filmmaker who forbid the use of subtitles for many of his aesthetically paralyzing multilingual cinematic works, *Der Rosenkönig* (1986) aka *The Rose King* – a flawlessly fragmented cinematic effort about the piercing power of repression, obsession, possession, and the intangibility of aesthetic perfection – also happens to be one of the director's most personal efforts and a virtual epitaph for the film's lead actress Magdalena Montezuma who, knowingly terminally ill with uterine cancer and hoping to depart from the physical world while filming on location in Portugal, instead died a mere two weeks later at the premature age of 41 (all the while refusing morphine) after completing filming for the production. Although always a homophile auteur (despite rejecting politics, be it gay rights or otherwise) who was deeply compelled to create some of the greatest and most self-indulgent high-camp cinematic works ever assembled, Schroeter decided to go full-flaming fairy with the *The Rose King*, the first film he directed with overtly homosexual themes and imagery, albeit of the poetical semiotic sort the symbolically portrays the sadomasochistic relation between mother and son, as well as between man and man; or master and slave. Dedicated to his longtime muse Magdalena Montezuma (born Erika Kluge and hailing from Bavaria) – who appeared in virtually every one of Schroeter's films, including his early 8 mm shorts and his first feature *Eika Katappa* (1969), as well as films by fellow queer German New Wave icon filmmakers such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder (*Rio das Mortes*, *Beware of a Holy Whore*), Frank Ripploh (*Taxi Zum Klo*), Rosa von Praunheim (*Macbeth Oper von Rosa von Praunheim*) and Ulrike Ottinger (*Ticket of No Return*, *Freak Orlando*) – *The Rose King*, despite its lack of linear narrative, has an idiosyncratic essence of foreboding doom and gloom that seems all the more potently perturbing when one realizes that the lead actress longed "to die on the set" as she knew her departure from the world was imminent and that it would be the last time she would be able to express her moody and brooding whimsical beauty on the silver screen. Ironically, upon first viewing *The Rose King*, I remember distinctly how taken aback I was by her pulchritude despite her age and I certainly did not suspect that I was watching a terminally ill diva on her last dance with death. Indubitably, the greatest "silent actress" of the Neuer Deutscher Film, few screen queens can boast a greater swansong than that of Miss Montezuma in *The Rose King*.

Co-written by Schroeter and Montezuma, and featuring poetry by Edgar Allan Poe ("The Raven" as narrated by Basil Rathbone), *The Rose King* is a piece of unrelenting romantic death poetry that is set to a variety of ethnic and dirge-like music (including Strauss, Vangelis, Arabic pop) and a wonderfully wicked

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work that makes a bucket of blood seem like a beautiful bed of red roses and the violent murder of a kitty cat via shotgun and subsequent crucifying of said pussy resemble a compassionate act of sane sensitivity. In other words, no one could make misery, misanthropy, and murder seem so ravishingly refined and effortlessly elegant than the late, great Herr Schroeter, arguably post-WW2 Germany's single greatest 'filmic artist' and one of few filmmakers to expand a seemingly closed and limited, at least at that point in cinematic history, artistic medium. As can be expected by virtually every film directed by the impenetrable cosmopolitan kraut auteur, *The Rose King* is a carefully calculated and clandestine work that demands multiple viewings before one can properly appreciate the work, at least if one hopes to get more out of this gorgeous gut-wrenching celluloid poem than just the ostensibly high-camp imagery. The film centers around an opulent and cultivated yet mentally unstable mother and son duo – stoic yet spiritless German Anna (Magdalena Montezuma) and highly emotional yet standoffish Mediterranean Albert (Mostefa Djadjam) whose dull, if not decadent, lives – for better or worse – change drastically with the arrival of handsome young peasant Fernando (played by Antonio Orlando who – among other things – played one of the young victims in Pasolini's celluloid adieu *Salò*, or the 120 Days of Sodom (1975)).

Despite living under the same roof of an extravagant Portuguese estate that neither character wanders too far away from, Anna and Albert rarely speak to one another, aside from disagreeing over parabolic gardening philosophies and the overall aesthetic properties of roses, so when Fernando arrives and takes the plush yet perturbed young man's attention away from attempting to cultivate the most pretty perennial plant, the modest melancholy mother is especially disapproving and jealous of her son's dubious relationship with the blue-collar newcomer, so much so that she tries to buy him off so as to push him away from her sole and highly secretive progeny. Although widow Anna vows to devote herself to son Albert – whose father is deceased, and who she proclaims she does not miss one bit – the “shy” yet “aggressive” young man seems to rigorously resent his mother to the point that he refuses to even make eye contact with her or sit at the dinner table with her and break bread and drink red wine for a meal that she has prepared especially for him. While Albert is the prince of suggestive sass whose sole motivation in life is to 'crown' his "Rose King" while treating his mother as if she is already pushing up daisies, Anna is an absurdly withdrawn woman who befriends a gang of young Portuguese peasant boys – who being swarthy and tan, certainly resemble her sick scion when he was a wee lad during less tumultuous times – in a feeble attempt to fill the unquenchable void that has been left by her emotionally impervious son. As Anna tells him herself, Albert is, to paraphrase, “not a gardener, but a dreamer” who has to “destroy everything that doesn't match his ideal” and needless to say, his relationship with his mother is far from conventional, yet at the same time it fits into the cliché of

the overbearing mother – who due to her failed relationship with her husband (Anna admits she does not miss Albert's father) – has subconsciously sought a surrogate spouse in her son, thus pushing the boy to grow up to despise women and develop the insatiable need to find a “daddy,” in this case in the notably more masculine Fernando, in the form of a homosexual lover he is quite hesitant about touching. A deranged dreamer of the day and lover of the night, Albert has put his male compatriot on a pedestal that virtually guarantees that any sex act he might commit with the potent peasant would result in abject disappointment, on top of the fact that he seems rather afraid of authentic human touch, thus he opts for sacrificing the aesthetically sacred just as any good sadomasochistic gardener would in a manner not all that dissimilar from the ill-fated couple of Derek Jarman's *The Garden* (1990), a work more or less as personal and esoteric as Schroeter's *The Rose King*.

As Anna constantly reiterates throughout the film, “if two children kiss when they cannot speak, one of them will die,” or so seems the relationship of Albert and Fernando which reaches a bloody and bleak yet bewitching conclusion during the final minutes of *The Rose King*. Albert – a seemingly emotionally autistic young man – treats his relationship with Fernando as an arcane and sacrosanct one, first imprisoning him and then sacrificing his lover in a manner echoing both the crucifixion of Christ, but especially the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian in the vein of Guido Reni's baroque painting of the martyr, as well as Yukio Mishima (who worshiped Reni's Saint Sebastian) who built himself the perfect body, only to sacrifice it. Although against her own will due to tragic circumstance, high-camp diva Magdalena Montezuma also ultimately made the decision to immortalize and canonize her atypical allure via *The Rose King* at a time that she reached her peak in grace and glamour of character and exterior body, thereupon marking an irrevocable shift in Werner Schroeter's cinematic oeuvre and a decline in arthouse camp forever. The “Rose King” himself, Antonio Orlando – whose last film role would be as Fernando in *The Rose King* – would also die prematurely in 1989 and, after enduring cancer for a number of years, Schroeter would also see a similar fate to his marvelous muse dying at the age of 65 in 2010. In the documentary *Mondo Lux : The Visual Universe of Werner Schroeter* (2011) directed by Elfi Mikesch (who also happens to be the cinematographer of *The Rose King*), Schroeter stated in regard to Montezuma and Orlando, “Perhaps they live on in the pictures through the look they cast.” Personally, I cannot think of a more ‘moving’ – both literally and figuratively – perennial tribute to the memory of Montezuma and Orlando than *The Rose King*; a masterful cinematic work of fleeting filmic form and forlorn body fetishism.

As for Schroeter – a ceaselessly singular and markedly meticulous modern maestro of mise-en-scène – I think German New Wave König Rainer Werner Fassbinder summed up the morbidly romantic auteur filmmaker's contribution

THE ROSE KING

to cinema history when he stated in an interview for the book *The Anarchy of the Imagination: Interviews, Essays, Notes* (1992): “Werner Schroeter will one day have a place in the history of film that I would describe in literature as somewhere between Novalis, Lautréamont, and Louis-Ferdinand Céline; he was an ‘underground’ director for ten years, and they didn’t want to let him slip out of this role. Werner Schroeter’s grand cinematic scheme of the world was confined, repressed, and at the same time ruthlessly exploited. His films were given the convenient label of ‘underground’, which transforms them in a flash into beautiful but exotic plants that bloomed so unusually and so far away that basically one couldn’t be bothered with them, and therefore wasn’t supposed to bother with them. And that’s precisely as wrong as it is stupid. For Werner Schroeter’s films are not far away; they’re beautiful but not exotic. On the contrary.” Indeed, few films get as personal, albeit allegorically so, than Schroeter’s *The Rose King*; a majestic motion-picture monument of the miraculously macabre that reminds one that beauty knows no morals, as even the slow and agonizing annihilation of a man via towering fetishistic torture and terror takes on the form of terribly titillating divinity. Bringing morbid melodrama to the Oscar Wilde “art for art’s sake” school of aestheticism, *The Rose King* lets the viewer know that even the loss of life is worth the price of a commanding work of artistry.

-Ty E

MALINA

Werner Schroeter° (1991)

If I have noticed any striking similarities in personalities between self-described 'feminists,' it is that the source of their oftentimes hysterical hatred of men is the result of an impenetrable hatred, fear, anxiety, and all-encompassing disdain for their daddy and such is certainly the case regarding *Malina* (1991) directed by Werner Schroeter – a celluloid psychodrama based on an autobiographical novel of the same name written by tragic Austrian author/poetess and proto-feminist Ingeborg Bachmann – that depicts the mental disintegration of an intrinsically incapacitated, albeit successful, woman who, in between dividing her time among two very contradictory men, is failing at attempting to write a novel she will inevitably never finish. Based on a screenplay written by Austrian feminist-Marxist playwright/novelist Elfriede Jelinek – a woman whose Jewish chemist father provided his services to the Third Reich, thus probably contributing to her dubious relationships with men throughout her life – that was adapted from Bachmann's sole novel *Malina* (1971), Schroeter's less than literal cinematic adaptation *Malina*, despite being the first and only film he did not write/co-write the screenplay for, would prove to be denounced as misogynist by feminists for its less than flattering, if not exceedingly empathetic, depiction of a woman in panic on the verge of subconscious suicide, as they felt that the film, as written by Michelle Langford in her work *Allegorical Images: Tableau, Time and Gesture in the Cinema of Werner Schroeter* (2006), "had reduced a figure of feminist emancipation to a mere stereotype of an intellectual woman suffering a pathological disorder." Like the unnamed character of the film *Malina*, Bachmann would go out in a literal blaze of (un)glory after apparently unintentionally setting her apartment on fire via a lit cigarette (or so the police assume), which resulted in a three week hospital stay that ended in her demise (some suspect it was the result of drug withdrawal of an undetermined sort as she was a compulsive pill-popper), thus, not unlike Sylvia Plath, earning martyr status among depressed feminist girls everywhere looking for a hero with a sharp intellect and a sad sob story of the seemingly mystifying kind. While the female protagonist of *Malina* works on a novel with the same name as the one Bachmann was working on before her death, audacious auteur Schroeter, in his typically idiosyncratic high-camp and operatic fashion, created a work that delicately, if not decidedly decadently, deconstructed the film's source material and ultimately sired something intrinsically cinematic all of his own that transcends whatever message the source material may have conveyed and that was further accentuated via an avant-garde musical score by Italian composer Giacomo Manzoni Utilizing aesthetic and thematic techniques he introduced with *Day of the Idiots* (1981) aka *Tag der Idioten* and would subsequently develop to the furthestmost degree with his exceedingly eccentric and esoteric 'biopic' *Deux*

MALINA

(2002), Schroeter explores the dichotomous nature of human nature (i.e. male versus female, rationality versus irrationality, love versus hatred, etc.) with *Malina*, a cinematic work that can be best summed up in its female lead protagonist's personal confession, "I've never been happy, but I have seen beauty."

The female protagonist (played by Isabelle Huppert) of *Malina* has some serious problems that revolve around her father (or "vater" as depicted by Fritz Schediwy) that go all the way back to her childhood as depicted in the first scene in the film when the character's papa throws her off of a roof, but luckily her introverted and intellectual beau "Malina" (Mathieu Carrière, star of *Young Törless* (1966) and *Egon Schiele – Exzess und Bestrafung* (1980)) – a seemingly sexually sterile fellow with degenerated gray hair that seems to have nil sexual passion nor potency – is there not only to taunt, teach, and tease, but also to comfort her in a completely curious way with his dry wit and dandy persuasion. Although a relatively successful Wittgensteinian scholar and novelist, the protagonist of *Malina* is a woman on the verge of a total mental breakdown and who has lost touch with her senses and reality, so much so that she has to consciously tell herself, "I must breathe, I must breathe," a number of times throughout the film. Of course, being a phantom-like being who appears during the protagonist's daunting delirious daydreams and nightmares, the sexually ambiguously named Malina does not really seem to be her live-in boyfriend, but her Jungian animus (the word "animus" even being literally used at one point in the film during an extra erotic tableau) – the unconscious of the female that is expressed as a masculine inner personality. As a male-minded intellectual who has all but completely sacrificed her innate femininity for fame and prestige among a mainly male-dominated field – a clearly deep-seated decision inspired by her rejection by a father she cannot remember, but appears in various sinister surrealist forms and guises – the protagonist is overwhelmed by Malina's particularly pedantic and rather rational persona. Only in the masculine Ivan (Can Togay) – a father of young children who inspires fiery passions of the flesh in the seemingly frigid proto-feminist – does the protagonist find her womanhood and a flame to light her dormant female desire, but, like her father, Malina always seems to pop up and throw her further and further into existentialist crisis in a magnificent ménage à trios of misery that is largely of the mind or as the loony lady states herself, "Its always war...A never-ending war." In one especially telling scene, the protagonist states to her phantasmagoric papa, "Father! This time you'll listen to me!...Have you nothing to say?...I know you...He's no father, he's my murderer!," while in the same scene, the seemingly deranged daddy of death goes from wearing a judge's robe to a bloody butcher's apron to a Nazi uniform, thus personifying everything he was to her at one – her judge, executioner, and very literal Nazi (seeing as Bachmann was Austrian, it is likely her real father was a nazi, thus passing on the guilt to his daughter). In a number of scenes, the protagonist's child self is murdered by her father, but neither she nor her mother

succeed in saving the little girl, thus making for an audacious allegory for the annihilation of her femininity during her critical early childhood years and a fallen femininity that she pathologically tries to 'pick up the pieces' of and revisit via her fleeting romance with Ivan and her confrontations with her father, but, in the end, she comes to terms with the fact that her fecundity is forever forlorn.

Towards the conclusion of *Malina*, the female protagonist states, "I'll know how a condemned man feels," and, indeed, she does as a sort of female Nietzsche and ill-fated 'woman within' who suffers from an impenetrable introversion and an animosity-stirring animus who has so thoroughly taken over her personality that she can no longer differentiate between her 'true self' and the foreboding inner male that lives inside of her, hence the inevitable break in her personality and foreordained self-obliteration. Essentially, an inverse of Werner Schroeter himself – an effeminate homosexual and dandy, neo-Uranian – Isabelle Huppert's character in *Malina* is certainly someone the director could identify as his "anima" of sorts, hence why the director probably decided to cast the actress to depict himself for his avant-garde autobiographical film *Deux* (2002), which would be the auteur filmmaker's first film in over a decade after adapting the Bachmann novel. Although dividing film critics and most viewers and failing to win when it was entered into the 1991 Cannes Film Festival, *Malina* managed to win the German Film Award in Gold. Sort of like a Jungian adaptation of *Repulsion* (1965) as depicted from inside of the mentally perturbed female protagonist's menacing mind, albeit of the failed feminist flavor and minus the man killings, *Malina* is undoubtedly one of the most ambitious attempts at deconstructing the darkest abysses of the female psyche, thereupon making the cinematic work a celluloid goldmine for psychoanalysts, obsessive cinephiles, and lapsed feminist/born-again females alike, but will probably prove to be distressing to humorless feminazis, naïve women studies majors, Ingeborg Bachmann purists, and those with a general disdain for anything cinematically abstract. During the beginning of *Malina*, Huppert's character states quite hysterically, "What quirk of fate brought me to this? It can't be a stranger. It mustn't be for no reason. It would be fraud. It mustn't be true," which is sort of how I felt after first viewing the film a couple years ago, but like most of Werner Schroeter's oeuvre, I cannot help but come back and revisit the cinematic work and get lost in a visual universe where beauty and brutality have found common ground amongst controlled chaos.

-Ty E

THIS NIGHT
THIS NIGHT

Werner Schroeter° (2008)

While his penultimate work *Deux* (2002), an avant-garde autobiographical work utilizing female twin sisters to depict his life in a most allegorical way, was arguably his most personal effort, German New Cinema dandy Werner Schroeter's cinematic swansong, *This Night* (2008) aka *Nuit de chien* aka *Diese Nacht* based on the novel *Para esta noche* (1943) aka *Tonight* by Uruguayan novelist Juan Carlos Onetti, marked a final attempt at creating a highly personal celluloid mythology while on the brink of death. Beginning with the quote, "Of all the wonders that I yet have heard. It seems to me most strange that men should fear; Seeing that death, a necessary end, Will come when it will come," from William Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (1599), *This Night* follows a failed revolutionary hero named Ossorio (played by gay French actor Pascal Greggory) who returns to his home city of Santa María (a fictional city that was filmed on location in Lisbon and Porto, Portugal) one night in the hope of saving his lover Clara; a woman who the protagonist made the mistake of abandoning to fight for an abstract political cause that only sired failure and defeat. While in an apocalyptic city under the control of a terroristic militia led by a murderous mad man, Ossorio only has one night, "this night," to save the woman he loves, but she seems to be nowhere to be found. Assembled by Schroeter when he was facing the deleterious and debilitating effects of malignant cancer, which the director would finally succumb to in 2008, *This Night* is as unrelentingly bleak and as decidedly dystopian as films come, so it is no surprise that Christiane Peitz would write in the director's obituary that the film was, "a long journey into darkness, a hymn to life in the face of brutality and terror," as death was at every corner for the determinedly damned dandy who created it. With a brief scene in the beginning of the fatalistic film of a pissing sailor that seems like it was taken straight out of the director's previous work *Deux* (2002) and his aborted dream film of adapting fag frog novelist Jean Genet's novel *Querelle de Brest* (1953), *This Night* subsequently announces with its feverishly foreboding atmosphere that the viewer is about to witness a man's dance with death in the name of love; a love that may be already lost. As Schroeter wrote in his posthumously released autobiography, "All my films, including *Tonight*, bear witness to my quest for a form that communicates vitality, the pleasure of creativity and beauty, which is a gift of our profession. In beauty, in recognition of beauty resides a hope—malgré tout, despite all. It expresses a hope even though the theme of the film deals with the darkest night aspects of existence ... Without pain and a quest for truth there is no beauty," and, indeed, *This Night* wallows in nocturnal pulchritude, albeit of the particularly perturbing and pessimistic sort, and a coming to terms with personal pain and those destructive forces that serve to only further that perpetual pang. A fiercely fore-

boding phantasmagorical neo-noir of the dauntingly dystopian, arthouse sort as only Werner Schroeter could have assembled, *This Night* reminds the viewer that only when a person can transcend a fear of death can they achieve greatness and create beauty, even in a despairing realm of imminent disintegration.

A lot of things have changed in Santa María since 40-year-old doctor-turned-revolutionary Ossorio left his lover Clara behind to fight in a revolution against the system that ended in abject failure. Apparently, a 'hero of the revolution' among those who know of him, but an enemy of the current state, Ossorio is nothing more than a lone soldier in the city of Santa María; a fallen place where treacherous 'friends' will do anything to save their own hysterical hides, including selling out compatriots to a megalomaniacal dictator named Morasan (Bruno Todeschini), who does not think twice of slaughtering people left and right, as his militia has turned the city into a metropolitan graveyard that is about to be leveled to the ground by leaders on the mainland who want to do away with the renegade city. With a cholera outbreak and a trigger-happy militia going around blowing away beautiful babes and hysterical homos on every corner, Santa María is no longer the majestic Mediterranean metropolis its name hints at. 887 boat tickets exist for those lucky individuals who will be able to leave the virtual necropolis before it is blasted into oblivion and Ossorio plans to make sure he and his sweet Clara leave safely via the boat, hence his sole objective when he made the quasi-suicidal decision to return to Santa María in the first place. Unfortunately, Clara made the mistake of writing and publishing articles in sympathy of a counter-revolutionary named Barcala (Sami Frey), who she temporarily had an affair with, in a newspaper that was described by her dictator detractors as, "an insidiously subversive rag," thus being put on a master list of enemies of the militia, thus the possibility of finding her is dubious at best, or so Ossorio learns on his mission for love and redemption in a city where hatred, treachery, and fear reign supreme. On his rather unpredictable journey into the belly of the beast, Ossorio learns that Clara became the mistress of various other men, though she never found the love she lost when he went and fought in a failed revolution for a utopia that was not meant to be, thus also resulting in a love that was also not meant to be. Against his own will by unfortunate circumstances he cannot control, Ossorio's mission takes a different course and he decides to save a little girl, and after receiving a "going away gift" in the form of two boat tickets from paranoid rebel leader Barcala, he is on the way to completing his mission, but in Santa María, men wear many masks and a former comrade can also be a corrupted enemy, or so the failed revolutionary learns. In *This Night*, the iconic Schroeter 'diva' is nowhere to be found, even if the film is ominously operatic, thus making the film a rare exception in the filmmaker's cinematic oeuvre. Featuring music by Liszt, Mozart, and Rossini, *This Night* is Werner Schroeter at his most 'butch' and stoic in a cinematic story where the protagonist has one last chance, during one last night, to sacrifice one's life for

THIS NIGHT

love while faced with total uncertainty, as well as accepting responsibility for actions of the past that led to one getting in that particular predicament in the first place.

Interestingly, while *This Night* both begins and ends with the character of Caesar's dialogue from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, "Of all the wonders that I yet have heard. It seems to me most strange that men should fear; Seeing that death, a necessary end, Will come when it will come," Schroeter neglected to add the first sentence of the quote, which is, "Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once." That being said, what Schroeter's opted for leaving out of the quote in *This Night* is more revealing than what he decided to include, because in many of the director's films, especially his earlier works like *Argila* (1969) and *Eika Katappa* (1969), characters perish, only to return in subsequent scenes totally unscathed. Whether these characters were "cowards" or not remains to be seen, but if anything is for sure, it was with his cinematic swansong *This Night* that Werner Schroeter finally accepted the inevitability of death and braved it stoically in the form of fierce filmic fatalism of the delectably dystopian sort that is effective both on a personal and political level. As someone who was born a month and a day before Germany's unconditional surrender during the Second World War, Werner Schroeter virtually came-of-age in the sort of world he depicts in *This Night*, so it should be no surprise that a little girl, the director's virtual 'inner-child' as a gay man, is thrown into the madness of a metropolis on the verge of apocalypse. Although not his greatest film, *This Night* was the natural cinematic conclusion to a life of darkness that sought beauty amongst the chaos.

-Ty E

THE DARJEELING LIMITED

Wes Anderson (2007)

The Darjeeling Limited might be one of Wes Anderson's most beautiful works second to *The Life Aquatic*. This visionary collage of remarkable colors and spiritual extremes is a testament to the bonding of families, no matter how separated they are. The story line involves three brothers who have been separated from each other for years after their father's death. They are taking a life-changing visit on a train dubbed *THE DARJEELING LIMITED*. Together on this voyage, they will be involved in many hardships that will either strengthen or break them. Unlike most of Wes Anderson's movies, this one has a big heart. In all of his films, I have seen some character shallowness that limits their feelings to only the same dry humor used in every one of his films, this one however, bathes gloriously in its excess. Instead of being too discreet or loaded over with his quirky vision, this one is just right. It has enough of its own self to fully satisfy you. It has its own blend of humor, sadness, faith, and what a family is supposed to mean. The film is visually striking. Colors are immense and profound. It's hard to not be amazed by this film. The film challenges most of his normal film making with the repetitive soundtrack and film making techniques. The dramatic "zoom-ins" are fewer and are of greater impact and most of the film is steadfast in your head while watching it. The comedy is fertile and fresh. Little quips are given here and there, hereditary is of a greater means in this film. Lots of irony is asunder and heartwarming instances of bonding and even sadness make this film all the better. In some ways, I can even relate to the characters. Nothing is off boundaries. I cannot see Anderson making a film better than this, but I will be open for a surprise just in case. Another thing that is nice to see is the new addition to the Wes Anderson roster, Adrien Brody. He really shines in this film and should lead him to more abundant roles. *The Darjeeling Limited* is a masterpiece in its own regard. Visually appealing and of the most amazing editing I have seen in a recent film. Every movement by the actor's is a fluid device used to propel the film forward in its luke-warm mood. This is enough to make *The Darjeeling Limited* one of his greatest films and perhaps his most ambitious film. After seeing his mildly pointless films that mainly exploit a character's traits, it's refreshing to see him exploit their personality other than their habits.

-Maq

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT
THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT

Wes Craven (1972)

Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* (1972) was one of first "exploitation" style horror films I had ever seen so it is a film that has stuck with me over the years. Not that the film is a masterpiece or anything, but the film was brutal for its time. I always get disgusted watching the film and seeing the criminal Krug, played by "good Jewish boy" (his mother's own words) David Hess playing the role of a criminal "leader." *Last House on the Left* is full of unflattering nudity and less than sexy sex, unnecessary violence, and just plain "bad" stuff that Craven rubs in the viewer's face with the utmost malice. Wes Craven sure made the right decision when he decided to quit his career as a liberal college professor and take up the career of trash filmmaking. After over 25 years since the original release of *Last House on the Left*, Craven decided to produce the remake of his own "legendary" film. Obviously, I am not a fan of this continuing trend of horror remakes. That being said, I did not have to think hard to realize that the remake of *Last House on the Left* is my favorite of these "updating" of horror "classics." Let's face it, the original *Last House on the Left* was a horribly made and pathetically directed (if you can call it that) film. The power of the film lies in its sometimes realism and brutal nature. Naturally, the bigger budget update of *Last House on the Left* is fine tuned and more solidly constructed. Of course the remake lacks the "realism" of the original film for a cinema experience that is more "easy on the eyes." The biggest flaw for me in the *Last House on the Left* remake is Krug. No one can beat David Hess in his ability to play a sociopath criminal. I wouldn't be surprised if Hess had the relatives that were in charge of the Gulags in the Soviet Union. Whereas the Krug in the original *Last House on the Left* is more of a poor intercity criminal Jew type, the Krug in the update is more of a white trash/trailer park type. Although I hated the new Krug and felt joy during his brutal death, nothing beats the hatred I felt for David Hess. All the other characters, although different, were at least as interesting as the original. I just wish Krug's sidekick bull dyke was more of a carpet muncher in the remake. There are very few things more repulsive than a criminally minded lesbian. Unsurprisingly, my viewing of *Last House on the Left*, courtesy of mad dog mAQ, was packed with snickering colored folk. Once again, they added much more entertainment to the film. I especially enjoyed it when a certain character in *Last House on the Left* ends up having his head blown off. During this scene, a black brotha in the audience responded with "dats a crackhead." So, was the remake of *Last House on the Left* a revolutionary piece of filmmaking? Hell no. The film, however, is a good way to waste just under two hours of your spare time if you have it. I bet my boy Negro smiley enjoyed it.

-Ty E

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT

Wes Craven (1972)

While *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) is and almost always has been one of my favorite horror films of all time, I cannot say I was too sad to learn its director Wes Craven recently died in late August 2015 because I am not that big of a fan of his mainstream left-wing politics, dubious philosophies, and completely capitalist approach to filmmaking despite having some discernible talent as a filmmaker and fairly decent taste in cinema (for example, the random lamb featured at the very beginning of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is an homage to Luis Buñuel), not to mention the fact that he is largely responsible for turning mainstream horror into a sad, overly self-conscious and masturbatory pseudo-intellectual joke as is especially apparent in the *Scream* franchise. Indeed, whether it be portraying whites as racist inbred psychopaths who enslave poor nonwhites like in *The People Under the Stairs* (1991), culturally schizophrenic postcolonial white guilt like in *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988), or the decidedly disgusting negrofication of classic European myths like in *Vampire in Brooklyn* (1995) where colored comedian Eddie Murphy portrays what is arguably the lamest vampire in cinema history, Craven demonstrated that he was not all that different from his horror compatriot George A. Romero in that he was a slave-morality-oriented leftist ideologue who seemed to care more about disseminating dumbed down quasi-Marcusian and crypto-feminist propaganda and making quirky references to his previous films than directing truly innovative films that take horror cinema out of the genre ghetto that they have been confined to ever since the rise of slasher films. In other words, whereas German Expressionist filmmakers like F.W. Murnau contributed to an artistic movement with their 'horror' films that evolved aesthetically over the years, Craven merely contributed to creating a cinematic product model that he would later play around with in postmodern metacinematic works like Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (1994) and *Scream* (1996), as if the creative potential of the genre had already been extinguished and the only thing left was to direct playful porno films where autistic fanboys could feel special about getting all the various cinephile references to the soulless slasher flicks of yesteryear. Arguably Craven's greatest cinematic crime as a filmmaker was remaking Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman's *Jungfrukällan* (1960) aka *The Virgin Spring* into an ineptly directed and exceedingly aesthetically grating exploitation piece known as *The Last House on the Left* (1972) aka Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left* aka *Krug and Company* aka *Grim Company* aka *Night of Vengeance* aka *Sex Crime of the Century* starring various porno stars, pornographers, and sleazy Hebraic musicians.

Of course, I would be lying if I did not admit that it was one of my favorite Craven flicks, as a genuinely mean and brutal as well as superlatively sleazy piece

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of nihilistic celluloid that demonstrates that the auteur must have undergone some serious sort of spiritual and philosophical transformation as a highly educated man that was raised in a strict Baptist home and briefly taught as both an English and humanities professor yet would go on to direct some of the most infamous and ugly films of his era. Breaking into the film world by working on “many hardcore X-rated films” (or so he states in the doc *Inside Deep Throat* (2005) in various capacities under various pseudonyms) after quitting teaching, Craven received his first ‘official’ film credit as the producer of the sexploitation flick *Together* (1971) starring porn diva Marilyn Chambers (of the Mitchell brother’s *Behind the Green Door* (1972) and David Cronenberg’s *Rabid* (1977)) and directed by Sean S. Cunningham, who would reverse roles with his comrade by producing his debut feature *The Last House on the Left*, which was more or less intended as a means for both men to learn how to make a proper film. Indeed, as Craven once stated as revealed in the book *Wes Craven’s Last House On The Left: The Making of a Cult Classic* (2000) by David Szulkin, “When Sean Cunningham and I made *LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT*, our attitude was that we were going to do this tiny little film for a company in Boston, and it was only going to be shown in two or three theaters up there. Nobody was ever going to see it, and nobody was ever going to know that we did it. So we essentially said, ‘Let’s be as bad boys as we can. We’re going to show things that people have never seen before on a movie screen; we’ll pull out all the stops, and just do whatever the hell we want.’ And by doing this, we were basically going to teach ourselves how to make a feature film.” Needless to say, neither Craven nor Cunningham realized that the exploitation film would pave the way for two of the most popular and monetarily successful slasher franchises ever created: *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Of course, what separates *The Last House on the Left* from the two horror franchises is that it deals with gritty visceral horror of the almost cinéma-vérité-like sort as opposed to fanciful entertainment featuring some iconic slasher monster with a goofy costume, thus making for an undeniably unforgettable cinematic work that takes the filmgoer well out of their comfort zone and figuratively holds them at gunpoint for about 90-minutes or so.

Featuring one of the most authentically scummy and degenerate gangs of low-class gutter grade criminals ever captured on cheap 16mm celluloid, especially Jewish Elvis Presley songwriter turned exploitation actor David Hess (who composed a grating folk soundtrack for the film that makes it all the more disturbing), *The Last House on the Left* is an ugly film about ugly people doing ugly things that is plagued by awkward scenes of comic relief (including various contrived pseudo-intellectual references to so-called women’s liberation, the war of the sexes, Sigmund Freud, and Marxist class warfare), a ludicrous subplot featuring an oddball couple of buffoonish bungling country cops, and some rather bizarre casting choices (for example, a fellow Hebrew named Marc Sheffler portrays

Hess' son despite looking about the same age as him), yet it remains an undeniably potent film that permanently burns its ugly essence into one's memory like a traumatic event. Personally, the film certainly gave me the impression that Craven derived a sort of sadistic glee out of beating the viewer over the head with long extended scenes of violence and torture under the pretense of 'enlightening' the filmgoer and making them feel culpable for enjoying Hollywood violence. Of course, the irony is that Craven only ended up debasing himself more than any filmgoer by personally directing such a seemingly misanthropic work (apparently, actress Sandra Peabody was so terrified while shooting the film that she once even walked off the set). While the generic label 'torture porn' is oftentimes used to describe moronically gratuitously violent films like those directed by uniquely talentless Zionist psychopath Eli Roth, Craven's film is certainly the real deal as a work that would probably make a nice little masturbation aid for a budding serial killer, so-called 'Syrian migrant,' or Gaza stationed IDF thug. In other words, *The Last House on the Left* is not exactly an 'enjoyable' film as a work that takes the label 'horror' quite literally and features realistic figurative 'human monsters' as opposed to literal movie monsters of the fantastic sort.

Indubitably, one of the most effective aspects of *The Last House on the Left* is that it takes full advantage of the fact that it was made a couple years after the counterculture movement and so-called 'sexual revolution' reared their ugly heads and helped to transform America into the nihilistically hedonistic and culturally pre-apocalyptic multicultural sewer that it is today. Indeed, in the film, two bourgeois-bred teenage girls from sheltered backgrounds who have clearly been brainwashed by the three-headed counterculture scam of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll decide to go to the big city to procure themselves some premium dope, thereupon encountering some uniquely unsavory criminal elements that make the Manson family seem like a merry tribe of hippie folk musicians. While I can only speculate regarding Craven's intentions with certain aspects of the film, *The Last House on the Left* certainly makes it seem that the auteur has dubious thoughts regarding the counterculture movement and its rotten fruits in a bitingly ironic scene where three of the killers lie in the bed of the would-be-hippie teenage girl they have just murdered while sipping whiskey and bitching about the fancy silverware of their upper-middle class hosts while a silly peace sign featuring a white dove hangs over their heads. Part social criticism of middle class naivety and part commentary on the atavistic murderous impulses lying dormant in even the most deracinated of oh-so proper bourgeois pussies in a work that depicts class warfare via a mundane middleclass microcosm where both the proletariat and bourgeoisie are completely destroyed in the end, the film is certainly indicative of Craven's lifelong cynicism towards man and human nature in general, hence his appreciation of Bergman. Considering that Craven was an intellectual and ex-academic, the nihilistic message he sends in *The Last House on the Left* becomes all the more chilling as it reflects the pathetic dead-end

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path that Judaized American intellectuals had taken at that time. Surely, as his first feature clearly reflects, there is no beauty, spirituality, ideals, or redemption in the hopelessly forsaken world of Wes Craven.

All-too-American teen Mari Collingwood (Sandra Cassel, who previously appeared in softcore porn and sexploitation flicks, including Chuck Vincent's *Voices of Desire* (1972) and Gerri Sedley's *Teenage Hitchhikers* (1975)) is celebrating her 17th birthday and her rather respectable caring parents, Dr. John Collingwood (Richard Towers aka Gaylord St. James of Andy Milligan's *Fleshpot on 42nd Street* (1973) and Doris Wishman's *Deadly Weapons* (1974)) and Estelle Collingwood (Cynthia Carr), are worried about the fact that she will be heading to the big city with a questionable friend named Phyllis Stone (porn star Lucy Grantham, who appeared in Shaun Costello's *Loops* (1973)) to see some degenerate rock band play. Of course, Mari and her friend also plan to use their trip to the city as an excuse to score some good dope. Needless to say, Mari's parents are also not too happy with the fact that she proudly refuses to wear a bra and that her hard nipples are plainly noticeable to her fairly old fashioned father's eyes. Before leaving, Mari's parents give her a special peace symbol necklace for her birthday that will later play an important role in the film's story line. On the way to the concert, Mari and Phyllis hear an emergency broadcast on the radio about a prison escape involving a blood-lusting sadist named Krug Stillo (David A. Hess), his dopey dopesick bastard junky son Junior Stillo (Marc Sheffler), a suave child-molesting pollack sex criminal named Fred 'Weasel' Podowski (prolific porn star turned pornographer Fred J. Lincoln, who also appeared in Milligan's *Fleshpot on 42nd Street*), and a savage 'animal-like' bull-dyke named Sadie (Jeramie Rain, who was married to Hollywood star Richard Dreyfuss), though it clearly never crosses the girls' minds that they might actually encounter the fugitives.

While Mari and Phyllis do not think anything of the radio broadcast, they are ultimately kidnapped upon randomly encountering Junior Stillo by happenstance while walking around the seedy side of town, assuming he is a dope dealer due to his sloppy appearance and peculiar heroin-induced mannerisms, and foolishly attempting to buy drugs from him. While Junior is nowhere near as depraved as his father Krug and his misfit minions, he decides to take advantage of the situation because he knows that his father will reward him with heroin for his efforts, so he leads the two unwitting teens back to the gang's apartment by declaring he has "an extra ounce of good stuff" from the exotic South American hellhole of Colombia. Needless to say, the two girls are instantly kidnapped after Junior leads them into the apartment and immediately locks the deadbolt on the door. While Phyllis attempts to reason with the big mean ugly career criminals after making a failed attempt to bolt out of the apartment door, she fails to realize that her contrived middleclass morality and weak and unrealistic hippie Weltanschauung is totally irrelevant to decidedly debauched souls who long ago

disposed of any inkling of morality that they might have had left. Ultimately, Phyllis' naive rant results in her being the victim of a bisexual gang-rape that is perpetrated by Krug, Weasel, and Sadie. After the non-consensual orgy, Krug and crew lock their victims in their car trunk and begin driving to the countryside where they unwittingly choose a route that will ultimately get them all killed in the end. Meanwhile, at the wholesome Collingwood home, Mari's mom and dad decorate the house with items in tribute to the teen's birthday.

After Krug and company open the car trunk, Mari soon notices that she is right next to her family home when she sees her mailbox with her name written on the side in tribute to her birthday. A born fighter, Phyllis foolishly bites Krug on the hand when he opens the trunk. When Krug makes the deranged demand to Phyllis, "Piss your pants. I said, piss your pants!" and she fails to comply, they coerce her into soiling herself by stabbing Mari until she does it. At this point, Junior becomes somewhat upset by what he sees and self-righteously states in an unintentionally humorous way while slurring his words like a dime store dope fiend, "You're gonna kill someone if you're not careful! You guys got to be crazy, man!" and then recommends to Krug, "Make them make it with each other." Indeed, following the age old hippie motto "make love, not war" in a somewhat ironic way, the degenerate criminals force Phyllis and Mari to engage in forced dyke degeneracy in what is arguably the most awkward, anti-erotic, and unnerving sex scene ever filmed, which is accented by a grating ballad by Mr. Hess. Naturally, at this point, Mari begins losing her mind, so Phyllis attempts to comfort her while fondling her unclad body by stating, "It's just you and me here; nobody else." After the forced Sapphic sex, Krug leaves Weasel to watch the girls, so Phyllis comes up with the idea to run away so as to create a diversion so that Mari can get to safety and call the police. After Phyllis begins running through the woods while Weasel and Sadie are chasing after her, Mari attempts to ply Junior by giving him her new peace necklace, rechristening him the hippie 'Willow,' and promising to give him methadone that her doctor father supposedly has. Meanwhile, Phyllis manages to evade Sadie by hitting her in the head with a rock and calling her a "stupid dyke," but Krug eventually catches up with her in the fitting location of a graveyard where he and his crazed criminals cut her up with a machete and even go so far as to pull her innards out in a zombie-esque fashion. While Junior aka 'Willow' eventually reluctantly agrees to help Mari escape, Krug and company soon catch up with them. After Krug gleefully informs her that Phyllis did not manage to escape, Mari more or less gives up and accepts her deplorable fate. On top of torturing her by carving up her body and writing his name in her chest, Krug rapes Mari for no more than a minute before pathetically shooting his load. Knowing that she is about to die, Mari proceeds to say a prayer while Krug and his comrades seem genuinely ashamed of the abhorrent crimes that they have just committed together. In what is indubitably one of the most strikingly melancholic murder scenes in horror

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history, Mari slowly and meekly walks into a lake where Krug proceeds to put a couple bullets in her brain once she is almost fully submerged in the water.

In what is one of the most psychologically satisfying, if not all too convenient and somewhat unlikely, twists of horror cinema history, Krug and his friends unwittingly decide to seek sanctuary in the home of Mari's parents while pretending to be respectable 'plumbing insurance' salesmen whose car broke down. Of course, any moron can see that their cheap suits cannot hide the fact that Krug and his friends are uncultivated lowlifes who seem like they slithered out of some slimy cesspool in Brooklyn. Meanwhile, in a fairly inappropriate and unequally mundane subplot that provides ridiculously cheesy comic relief intermediately throughout the film, a morbidly obese Sheriff (Marshall Anker) and his much younger and dumber Deputy (Martin Kove of *Paul Bartel's Death Race 2000* (1975) and *The Karate Kid* (1984)) try in vain to locate Phyllis and Mari while attempting to hitchhike after they run out of gas while driving their patrol car. While hanging out in Mari's room after being placed there by her parents, Krug soon realizes whose home he is at after finding a couple photos of Mari and jovially remarks to Weasel while seemingly delighted by the revelation that he is exploiting the kindness and generosity of the parents of the girl he has just killed, "I wonder what the odds are on that." Of course, it does not take Mari's parents too long to figure out who they are really harboring in their home. Indeed, when Junior begins vomiting in a bathroom toilet because Krug refuses to give him any dope to cure his drug withdrawal, Mari's mother notices that the absent-minded junky is wearing the same exact peace necklace that she and her husband gave their daughter the day before. To confirm her worst worries, Mari's mother decides to go through her guests' suitcases and discovers soiled clothing with her daughter's blood on it. After discovering the bloody clothing, Dr. Collingwood and his wife run outside and soon find the freshly killed corpse of their daughter near a lake next to their house.

At this point, the devastated parents decide to dispose of their bourgeois moralities and exact revenge on the killers of their daughter. Indeed, after setting up various booby-traps around their house, Estelle manages to easily seduce blatant pervert Weasel while her hubby decides to corner Krug and Sadie in the dark in the room where they're sleeping. After luring Weasel outside under the pretense of fulfilling an ostensible sex fantasy involving giving him a blowjob while his hands are tied behind his back, Estelle first pretends to accidentally get the sex criminal's penis caught in his zipper and then proceeds to suck on his cock, but the oral pleasure does not last long. Indeed, pernicious pervert Weasel, who just previously had a premonition of his own demise in a nightmare where Dr. Collingwood and his wife hammer out his teeth with a chisel, gets his just deserts in the form of fatal fellatio where Estelle bites off his boner and then leaves him to bleed out while he still has his hands tied around his back. Meanwhile, Dr. Collingwood and Krug get in a brawl where the latter eventually

begins overpowering the former. When Junior attempts to put a stop to everything by pulling a gun on his father, Krug hatefully states to his son, "I want you to take the gun and put it in your mouth and BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT." Apparently, father knows best as Krug does indeed convince his son to blow his brains out. Luckily, after a long extended fight scene between the two similarly swarthy dudes, Dr. Collingwood manages to murder Krug with a chainsaw just as the local sheriff arrives. At about the same time her husband slaughters Krug, Estelle manages to slit Sadie's throat with her own knife after she accidentally falls in the family pool. Unlike in Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*, there is no real sense of redemption at the conclusion of *The Last House on the Left* as a work where the bad guys might perish in the end, but also where the good guys succumb to savagery and are assumedly ultimately emotionally and spiritually destroyed by their uncharacteristic behavior.

Admittedly, although a lot of the horror films that I cherished as a child and teenager, especially those directed by Craven and his contemporary George A. Romero, really do not do much for me anymore aside from providing a little bit of worthless nostalgia, I have to confess that *The Last House on the Left* proved to be just as brutal and unpleasant to me on a recent viewing as it did when I first saw it about fifteen years ago. Indeed, I would argue that, for better or worse, Craven's first feature is unequivocally one of the greatest and most important exploitation films ever made, as a work that exposed the inept silliness of a kosher clown like Herschell Gordon Lewis and ultimately proved that films could assault and implicate audience filmgoers by forcing them to wallow in the ugliness of violence, rape, and murder. In fact, this was Craven's intention with the film, or as the auteur stated in his audio commentary track for the 2009 MGM DVD release of *The Last House on the Left*, "My justification was that I wanted to show something about violence that was...quite nasty and ugly and protracted...That, you know, if you were in an ugly situation of violence in real-life you did not have the benefit of a cutaway or fading to black or anything like that...So these scenes were really designed or approached in a way that you would not cutaway, you would not stop, you would not cut to ten minutes later, you would just have to be there...And, in that sense, the audience was kind of suckered in. They came in thinking they're going to see a scary movie that was entertainment and ended up, in a way, being implicated by being there." While *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978) feels like a sort of proto-torture-porn flick without a soul where Israeli director Meir Zarchi seemed to derive some sort of sadistic pleasure from the degeneracy he depicted, Craven's film is equipped with a kind of suffocating (anti)humanism where the viewer is forced to feel the pain of both the victim and victimizer, which is not something the average Hollywood-spooned filmgoer was prepared to deal with, hence the outrage the film caused upon its release (on top of being banned several times in the UK and being completely banned in Australia for 32 years, prints of the film were oftentimes sent back to

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the distributor in pieces as a result of angry outraged theater owners chopping them up).

On top of being one of the greatest exploitation films ever made as a work that truly tested the bounds of cinematic brutality, *The Last House on the Left* inspired a lot of great, similarly sleazy celluloid due to its unexpected commercial and even critical success (somewhat shockingly, Roger Ebert, who was deeply offended by David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), gave Craven's film three and a half stars out of four and described it as a "tough, bitter little sleeper of a movie that's about four times as good as you'd expect"). Indeed, Roger Watkins' *Last House on Dead End Street* (1977), Guerdon Trueblood's *The Candy Snatchers* (1973), Pasquale Festa Campanile's *Hitch-Hike* (1977) aka *AutoStop rosso sangue* starring David Hess, and Ruggero Deodato's *The House on the Edge of the Park* (1980) aka *La casa sperduta nel parco* (also starring Hess) are just a couple of the worthwhile exploitation films that would probably not exist were it not for Craven's little pseudo-snuff horror-melodrama, which feels like what might have happened if a more hardcore John Cassavetes attempted to rework Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* (1971) using truly grizzled and debauched porn stars for an audience of prison inmates who were being trained to be a special secret Dirlewanger Brigade-esque military unit for the U.S. government. While patently pointless, the 2009 *The Last House on the Left* remake, which was shamelessly co-produced by Craven and Cunningham, is at least superior to most horror remakes, though it is far too polished and superficial to capture even a tiny inkling of the aesthetically pernicious essence of the original film. As a longtime fan of both Craven's film and its inspiration *The Virgin Spring*, I like to think each film is symbolic of their respective nation's culture, with *The Last House on the Left* reflecting the boorish brutality and deracinated post-Faustian cultural retardation of the mongrelized United States and Bergman's film reflecting the height of Swedish (and, in turn, Nordic) high cinema and culture at that particular time (of course, with its influx of barbaric Muslim untermenschen third worlders over the past couple decades, Sweden has become the rape capital of Europe and is thus becoming more in tune with Craven's film, albeit even worse due to the culturally apocalyptic racial dynamic). While *The Virgin Spring* portrays a somewhat spiritually schizophrenic world where post-viking pagan Europe was beginning to embrace Christianity, Craven's film portrays a nihilistic era of self-destructive collective hedonism where sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll had replaced Christianity. As a lapsed Southern Baptist that was brought up in a strict religious family (apparently, he based 'Krug' on his own father, who he deeply feared and resented, hence his loathing of all things 'patriarchy' and special affinity for creating absurdly strong female characters) who eventually became a left-wing academic and self-loathing pornographer (notably, he refused to ever reveal all the fuck flicks he worked on), Craven seemed to realize the precarious place the world was heading as most obviously reflected in *The*

Last House on the Left and, somewhat curiously, his porn flicks like The Fireworks Woman (1975) aka Angela Is the Fireworks, which he directed under the pseudonym 'Abe Snake' and which features various forms of surreal and allegorical nihilistic (anti)religious iconography. Of course, considering the visceral nihilistic spirit of his debut feature and the later hyper materialism of his filmmaking career as reflected in all the horrendous corporate horror flicks that he directed and/or produced during the last couple decades of his life, I think it is safe to say that Craven never found solace when he died, thereupon making him, at least in some metaphysical ways, not unlike the forsaken villains of The Last House on the Left who went to the grave plagued with guilt and sin.

-Ty E

THE FIREWORKS WOMAN
THE FIREWORKS WOMAN

Wes Craven (1975)

Probably out of all the film genres, none attracts more whores, pimps, gangsters, crooks, swindlers, shysters, morons, and just plain untalented hacks and frauds than the horror genre and I say that as a lifelong horror fan who is always looking out for a decent or at least somewhat entertaining slice of celluloid fear. While he has directed at least one masterpiece, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), as well as various classics like *The Last House on the Left* (1972), *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977), *The People Under the Stairs* (1991), and Wes Craven's *New Nightmare* (1994), horror auteur Wes Craven has produced even more dumbfounding duds, phony hack pieces, pseudo-intellectual leftist jerk-off-fests, superlatively shallow 'subtextual' satires, and shockingly horrendous 'for-hire' hack works, thus making him a filmmaker that is equally loved and hated by fans of the genre. Of course, Craven's personal life and professional history is ultimately much more curious than the uniquely inexplicable unevenness of his oeuvre lets on. Although raised in a strict Baptist household, Craven, like his contemporary George A. Romero, came of age during the counter-culture era and clearly received a Frankfurt School-approved lobotomy with him even working as an English and Humanities professor after receiving a graduate degree in Philosophy and Writing at John Hopkins University before trying his hand at a potentially lucrative career in horror filmmaking, which eventually became quite a success, but not before dabbling in the then-booming world of celluloid pornography. To Craven's ostensible artistic credit, he managed to employ his newly-found college-induced liberal humanist atheist Weltanschauung in these early works, or as John Kenneth Muir noted in his book *Wes Craven: The Art of Horror* (2004) regarding the nihilistic nature of Craven's exceedingly loose exploitation remake of Swedish master auteur Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *The Virgin Spring* (1960): "Terrible things happen to innocent people in *THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT* with regularity and even so-called "good people" such as the Collingwoods easily resort to brutal violence and bloodlust. Although Mari prays to God before she is murdered, in a scene staged in an almost identical fashion to Karin's rape and murder in *THE VIRGIN SPRING*, there is no salvation for her or redemption for her fallen parents. Unlike the Tores in *THE VIRGIN SPRING*, the Collingwoods are not enlightened in the finale by the existence of God or an awareness of divine method [...] The camera does not swoop heavenward to give the impression God is watching because in Craven's film. God is dead."

Indeed, on top of defiling a Bergman masterpiece and turning to proto-torture-porn of the savagely sadistic, if not nonetheless undeniably enthralling sort, Craven also proved he had a knack for indoctrinating the viewer with his quasi-existentialist philosophy via cinema's most aesthetically disreputable genre.

What few people realize, aside from horror/exploitation cinephiles, is that despite its already aberrant, sexually graphic and foully fetishistic essence, *The Last House on the Left* was originally intended as a hardcore porn flick and that Craven began his career in the seedy mafia-ridden porn world, even working in some capacity on Gerard Damiano's crossover 'porn chic'-launching classic *Deep Throat* (1972). Despite the black cat being out of the bag in regard to his fucked film career, Craven has been quite, well, craven, regarding his early years in the blue movie world, with him only admitting in the doc *Inside Deep Throat* (2005): "that he had made "many hardcore X-rated films" under various pseudonyms, and luckily at least a few of his filmic excursions into erotica have been positively identified. Indeed, aside from receiving his very first film credit as a co-producer on his early collaborator Sean S. Cunningham's barely soft core pseudo-documentary *Together* (1971) starring porn diva Marilyn Chambers of *Behind the Green Door* (1972), Craven co-wrote, edited, directed, and starred in the quite oneiric and vaguely avant-garde incest-themed porn flick *The Fireworks Woman* (1976) aka *Angela Is the Fireworks Woman* aka *Angela, The Fireworks Woman* aka *The Fireworks Man* under the pseudonym 'Abe Snake.' A fellow with the seemingly pseudonymous Nordic name Hørst Badörties was also responsible for co-penning and acting as the cinematographer for the film. While not exactly a master work, even where pornography is concerned, Craven's piece of unintentionally corny carnal celluloid, which was curiously directed in between *Last House on the Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes*, is a sometimes interesting formative piece from a budding auteur who, like Orson Welles protegee Gary Graver with *3 A.M.* (1975), somehow thought he could reconcile the heavy philosophical melodramas of Ingmar Bergman with lackluster unsimulated hardcore works featuring homely longhaired hippie-like people, including the auteur himself as the eponymous 'fireworks man' of the film's alternate title. The superlatively sordid and sacrilegious story of an incestuous young girl who, when not being defiled and molested by various people of all ages and both genders, attempts to vie for the love of her brother who is entering the priesthood, *The Fireworks Woman* is also notable for being Craven's most overtly anti-Christian and, somewhat paradoxically, most experimental work to date (indeed, the film features much heavy-handed symbolism, like a bible being rained on).

Beginning with a post-hippie Dionysian orgy presided over by auteur Wes Craven himself featuring a bunch of debauched beatniks running around waving fireworks and dancing in a seemingly demonic fashion, *The Fireworks Woman* then introduces pervert protagonist Angela (Jennifer Jordan aka 'Sarah Nicholson', who started in off-off-Broadway productions and would go on to star in Joseph W. Sarno flicks like *Misty* (1976)), who narrates about how she is deeply in love with her big brother Peter (Eric Edwards) of various porn chic classics, including Bo Derek's husband John Derek's artsy fuck flick *Love You!* (1979), the Amero Brothers' *Blonde Ambition* (1981), and various Cecil Howard flicks),

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who shares his sister's feelings but thinks he's more in love with Mary Magdalene and enters the priesthood. Set in a seaside Bergman-esque landscape that has an almost otherworldly feel that is as ominous as it is orgasmic, Craven's film features an esoterically erotic realm of the ridiculously risqué sort where Catholicism seems to be the only real vice, with the orgasm seemingly the most holy and transcendental of states, as if cumming is the closest way one can get to god. A seemingly Satanic beauty played by auteur Wes Craven, who sports a gothic top hat and resembles a sort of counterculture Edgar Allan Poe (though not as much as gay pornographer Peter De Rome, who incidentally directed a psychedelic homo hardcore horror reworking of Poe's 1839 short story William Wilson under the title *The Destroying Angel* (1976) the same year as Craven's fuck film was released), seems to be the one that is responsible for Angela's sensually hypnotic powers and he is never that far away from the protagonist. Angela apparently has the ambiguously magical power to sexually attract any person, no matter their gender or sexual persuasion, that has the (mis)fortune of crossing her seemingly erotically magnetic path, hence her brother's reluctant love for her. As Angela states of her and her brother, "we loved each other as children and nothing else matters" and "Nothing mattered to me but our love...it didn't matter to me then and it doesn't matter to me now that we were brother and sister." While Peter would have sex with his sister in the past, he would get angry and violent afterward as depicted in a post-coitus flashback scene where he smacks Angela in the face and indignantly declares, "this is all you're doing Angela...this would have never happened if you did not force yourself upon me. I want you to stay out of my life. And don't you ever try to see me." Of course, that doesn't stop Angela from seeing him, as she shows up at his church and confesses her love for her big brother in the confession booth, who declares her selfless and demands that she "submerge" herself "in serving others," which she subsequently does.

Indeed, Angela goes to work for a wealthy blonde blueblood bitch named Elizabeth Walters (Erica Eaton of the Amero Brothers' *Every Inch a Lady* (1975) and Gerard Damiano's *The Satisfiers of Alpha Blue* (1980)) who treats her worse than a dog and introduces her to the masochistic side of bisexual sadomasochism where she is forced to be the pretty little plaything of her boss and said boss' ugly dork friend. In a scene anticipating the blowjob-turned-castration scene in *Last House on the Left*, Angela smokes a man's pole so hard he screams like a wounded, dying animal. Of course, it does not take long before Angela is trying to blow her brother again and she even tells him to quit the Catholic Church because "they don't want or need you...they're vicious. They're hypocrites," but of course he just gets angry and kicks her out of the confession booth. Looking to escape, Angela sets sail for literal paradise and in a rather heretical dream-sequence, the protagonist is featured naked against the sail of her sailboat in a crucified position with the heavens beaming down on her body,

which then dissolves to an otherworldly shot of brother Peter also naked and in a Christ-like position standing in front of a completely white background. Indeed, director Craven seems to be implying the old real heaven is hedonism. While sailing on her somewhat small sailboat 'The Mystique,' Angela falls overboard and almost drowns, but luckily two bourgeois degenerates, Celeste (Helen Madigan of Jonas Middleton's *Illusions of a Lady* (1974) and Radley Metzger's *Naked Came the Stranger* (1975)) and her seemingly mute boy toy, salvage her from the water and the three begin a menage a trios involving banal barnyard buggery and communal cocksucking which the protagonist blasphemously describes as "some sort of communion between us." In what is easily the most degenerate scene of the film, Angela is brutally raped by a rather repulsive redneck fisherman credited as 'Fisherman in Red' (Lefty Cooper), who sexually pillages the young lady on ice covered with dead fish (I don't want to give Craven too much credit, but it seems he was attempting a pornographic pun with this scene, thus demonstrating the director's graduate degree came in handy). After raping Angela, the red-coated redneck flicks his cum at her, calls her a "cunt", and then adds insult to injury by asking her, "you liked it, didn't you?"

Of course, even with all the physical, emotional, and sexual trauma she has suffered, Angela still cannot get over her brother and his cock, though she has some pretty perturbing nightmares involving her bro, Ms. Walters, and the redneck fisherman beating her. By simply taking a bath, Angela seems to be cleansed of her trauma and proceeds to diddle herself while thinking about being penetrated by her brother Peter's peter. Meanwhile, Peter suffers a highly sensual nightmare involving his sister giving him a blow job while she is sporting a medieval monk outfit. Eventually, Angela begins being stalked by a sneering and seemingly pernicious cigar-smoking degenerate named Nicholas Burns (director Wes Craven), who has actually been secretly following her around for the entire movie in a top hat, although he is dressed in plain clothes when he approaches the protagonist. To get her brother's attention, Angela decides to hold a party involving the congregation of Peter's church. Of course, the Svengali-like character played by Mr. Craven calls Peter to let him know about his sister's swinging fuck-fest and then laughs afterwards in a maniacal manner not that unlike Freddy Krueger. After seeing his completely unclad sister being communally groped by about a dozen or so equally unclad people (including porn chic's leading Semitic screen psychopath Jamie Gillis), Peter decides to throw away the cloth and sail away to paradise with his sister. In a quite fitting end twist, it is revealed that Peter's fat old priest mentor who partially influenced him to quit the church and get with his sister is really the seemingly demonic character played by Craven.

Undoubtedly, it seems auteur Wes Craven's anti-Catholic Baptism upbringing suited him well when it came to directing a fuck flick that seems to rejoice in mocking Catholicism, but more importantly, it demonstrates that the auteur is a

THE FIREWORKS WOMAN

much darker dude than most of his largely horrendous and unintentionally hokey horror films would have us believe. After all, NYC crackhead auteur Abel Ferrara has no problem owning up to the fact that his first feature was the hardcore flick *9 Lives of a Wet Pussy* which, unlike Craven's film, features the director engaging in some rather kitschy unsimulated action (not to mention the fact that Ferrara also sports a goofy grey wig). Indeed, as the mensch responsible for such mediocre garbage as *Invitation to Hell* (1984), *The Hills Have Eyes Part II* (1985), *Vampire in Brooklyn* (1995), and *My Soul to Take* (2010), among other largely worthless and weak mainstream garbage, Craven certainly has nothing to really be ashamed of with *The Fireworks Woman*, which is essentially a slightly above average and shockingly original and well directed work from the porn chic era. One thing I found particularly interesting about the horror auteur's somewhat idiosyncratic blue movie is that most of the 'adult performers' in the film also worked with the Amero Brothers, whose early experimental psychedelic-gothic fuck flick *Bacchanale* (1971) starring blonde dime-store diva Uta Erickson, seems to have not only influenced *The Fireworks Woman* in terms of its central sister-brother incest theme, but also Craven's subsequently surrealist horror works, most specifically *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, which contains dark and shadowy nightmare realms as haunted by an ominous figure with discernibly dubious motives. Of course, more than anything, Craven's fuck flick proves that superior pornographers like the Amero Brothers and Cecil Howard could just as likely have entered the mainstream had things worked out for them differently. In its own way, *The Fireworks Woman* is more of an 'auteurist' work, as it reveals more about Craven and his vices, fetishes, religious views, and political views than *Scream* (1996), thus making it mandatory viewing for both fans and anti-fans alike of mainstream horror cinema's biggest unholy whore. Of course, any fuck flick directed by Wes Craven and featuring Jamie Gillis—the virtual David Hess of the Golden Age of Porn—is also mandatory viewing for any semi-serious subversive cinephile. Certainly, *The Fireworks Woman* has given me a new found respect for Craven, though I guess that does not say much considering I see the filmmaker as one of the most shamelessly money-motivated men of the horror genre as a clearly talented fellow who has a pathetic propensity for churning out vapid celluloid swill with his name on it despite being responsible for directing some of the most recognizable horror and exploitation films of his zeitgeist.

-Ty E

THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Wes Craven (1977)

I once read in an article on the original film that Craven was considered an "angry" director of his time. Apparently, Wes Craven had a message to show but i don't recall seeing anything of interest in any of his films except the same formula of teenagers dying. Craven has proved over the years, that his films more or less stay exactly the same, just with bigger budgets.1. Contrived dribble and annoying dialogue coming from current generation hipsters (I.E. Last House of the Left, The Hills Have Eyes, and the more recent Scream)2. Vulnerable women being exploited and has some direct connection with the proposed climax victory. (I.E. Most of them)3. Most of them are a spineless attack on Rural America. Whether it be the mildly "redneck"ish Billy from Scream, or the Inbred cannibals from The Hills Have Eyes. Regardless of the context or characters, Craven attempts to make you fear non-residential zones. After seeing the amazing re-vamp of Craven's said-to-be masterpiece, I had to see what all the fuss was about. Upon purchasing the film, I was greeted my Michael Berryman's huge face on the DVD. This shocks me as he is not the main villain, let alone a decently memorable one. If i wanted to watch something awkward run around speaking in tongues, I'd revisit the much better Coneheads. The film had originally been given an X rating. At first i was puzzled because last i checked, this film was less violent than any Saturday morning cartoon. Before you might doubt my opinion due to some notion leading you to the theory that i don't like this film due to the lack of brutality, re-envision this film. Ridiculous and retarded, even Craven didn't fully know how to direct with this film. The burning father scene was laughable at best. The camera placement in front of a fire in order to create the illusion of him "burning alive" gave me explosive diarrhea. Hillbillies bleed tomato soup and girls in shock prove to be less annoying than they used to be. Aja's remake not only bested the original material, but also took the nuclear aspect and in turn, had a better "commentary". I prefer them to blame science than lumberjacks. Wes Craven is not a master of horror (He got lucky with NOES) and it's a shame that most of the films he "Presents" are the better material. All in all, this film has not aged well. It is in dire need of being stripped of its "cult" status. I hope Craven becomes a "human French fry"

-mAQ

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

Wes Craven (1984)

If I were to only choose one film that has remained as potent as it was when I first saw it during my preschool years, it would undoubtedly be Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984); a surrealist slasher flick with a charismatic killer who – in terms of depth of personality and bloodlust – shreds all of his mass-murdering human-monster buddies to celluloid pieces. Unlike retarded-mute slasher killers like Mikey Myers, Jay Vorhees, and Pleatherface, Freddy Krueger is a mass-murderer who takes prides in his ability to execute a variety of quasi-illusionary psychodramas and phantasmagorical killings. Like in the much anticipated but dreadfully disappointing movie *Freddy vs. Jason* (2003), Herr Krueger would indubitably manipulate and ultimately enslave his rival slasher killers. But enough with the redundant and totally irrelevant philistine fanboy gibberish, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is much more than a great horror/slasher flick; it is a film that holds its own outside the hopelessly formulaic and schlock-based genre. Not since the delightful daydream delirium days of German expressionism has a film given so much mystique to a malevolent monster-man who finds solace amongst the shadows. Whereas German expressionist films turned reality into nightmare, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* sliced the seams of daytime and dreams in a manner that has brought psychological unrest to generations of moviegoers. To this day, I have fond memories from my childhood of my little sister waking up in the middle of the night and screaming in fear that Freddy K. would swallow her soul. The wonderful thing about dreams is that no matter how horrible they may be, one ultimately rests with the comfort of knowing that they will eventually awake and the subconscious constructed pseudo-reality is no more. What makes *A Nightmare on Elm Street* so particularly unsettling to the human mind is that self-assured insurance policy of mind-made REM is severed, thus opening a deluge of unimaginable possibilities during the most incapacitated of moments. Of course, as portrayed in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (and its various uneven sequels), cunning Krueger creates a variety of scenarios for his physically and psychologically petrified victims, hence the all-around originality of the franchise in general. What makes the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street* the greatest film in the series is that, unlike the less serious sequels, the horror is less tongue-in-cheek and more finger-knife-in-gut.

Although contrary to mainstream-media-formed public opinion, the baby boomers are easily the most pathetic and hopelessly degenerate generation in all of American history. Of course, subsequent generations of Americans have proven to be even less morally-inclined and spiritually-sound but it was the baby boomer generation that originally deracinated itself from what was considered sacred among the generations before it. The teens featured in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* are the first lost generation of children from the aimless, morally ir-

responsible and careless baby boomer crowd. In fact, before being tortured and murdered by his parent comrades, Freddy Krueger was also a baby boomer. Epitomizing the worst qualities of baby boomers to the most pathetic extreme, Mr. Krueger – a man-child in a state of infinite-infantilism and clearly bound only to self-gratification at whatever cost – treated children as his own person playthings that he used and abused before disposing them like a child does to broken toys. The virginal grade school children in white that jump rope to the infamous Freddy nursery rhyme (One, two, Freddy's coming for you...) in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and its sequels are ghostly reminders of Freddy's one-entity campaign to destroy the pure and innocent. As explained by Marge, the alcoholic mother of female protagonist Nancy Thompson in the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Freddy Krueger was murdered by (rightfully) vengeful parents after he was freed on a technicality after killing over 20 children during the late 1960s. The children of this suburban mob would go on to pay for the sins of the father (and mother), so to speak. What I find most interesting and telling about the parents in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and its sequels is that no matter how many of their children are sadistically slaughtered, they stay committed to total ignorance and denial as if they all suffer from a permanent blindness of the mind. Nancy's mother is an alcoholic, Tina's mother is a shameless whore, and Rod's parents are nowhere to be found. Wes Craven, a baby boomer with a strict Baptist upbringing who would go on to be a director of hardcore pornography (before his horror filmmaking days), certainly personifies the "loss of innocence" his generation is well known for to a quite notable degree, thus no other person could have been more suitable for the direction of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* than he.

On top of telling a unique story, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* features some of the most iconic and marvelous murders ever featured in a horror film. From the first anti-gravity killing of Tina Gray by a seemingly invisible killer to Freddy's bodily dismemberment of Nancy's boyfriend Glen Lantz in his own bed, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* thankfully ignores all of the clichés of the slasher genre. Of course, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* writer and director Wes Craven was no comic-book-addicted philistine like his mostly incompetent compatriots as he was an English professor before he ever sat in a director's chair. Craven has acknowledged that the lone sheep featured in the opening dream-sequence of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* was his tribute to Spanish surrealist auteur Luis Buñuel. I found the killing of Tina to be somewhat reminiscent of the absurdist wall-crawling featured in French poet auteur Jean Cocteau's early work *The Blood of a Poet* (1930). Before directing *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Craven directed an extremely loose remake, *Last House on the Left* (1972), of Swedish master filmmaker Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (1960). If future horror filmmakers can learn anything from the early films of Wes Craven, it is that a deep knowledge of film history can go a long way in the concocting of a truly dis-

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

tingt macabre movie. I certainly cannot think of another film aside from Philip Ridley's extremely underrated cinematic gem *The Reflecting Skin* (1990) that has been created within the past 25+ years that deserves to be compared to *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (although some could argue that the *Candyman* of the 1992 film *Candyman* is the "Negro Freddy Krueger").

Although created nearly three decades ago, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* still proves to be one of the greatest landmarks in American horror cinema history. The legacy of Freddy Krueger may have been beaten to death by a number of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* sequels, a tedious TV-series (*Freddy's Nightmares*) and an endless bombardment of consumer memorabilia (a phenomenon Craven responded to with the reflective 1994 film *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*) yet the burned phantasm in the red and green sweater still remains one of the greatest and most memorable villains of cinema history. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is also probably the only film featuring Johnny Depp where the much celebrated character-actor's performance is one of the less interesting attributes of the film. The distinct cinematic quality of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* only becomes all the more clear after watching the blatantly blasphemous 2010 remake; a cinematic abomination that makes the remake of *Friday the 13th* seem like the holy grail of slasher cinema. I just hope the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise is not bastardized and beaten-to-death to the point where Freddy finds himself fingering Madonna or Lindsay Lohan (with unrestrained and overly "ambitious" fanboy horror hack directors like Rob Zombie, anything is possible). Whatever the future holds for the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise, nothing can extinguish the uncanny yet strangely comforting hallucinatory horror of the original 1984 movie.

-Ty E

SHOCKER

Wes Craven (1989)

Ostensibly, *Shocker* is one of Wes Craven's most accessible film on DVD shelves thanks to double feature packs. This of course, is how I came about viewing both *The People Under the Stairs* and the aforementioned *Shocker*. *Shocker* is one of Craven's experimental films, per say. He equips many new tactics in film making, tactics influencing an ability to craft a custom rock soundtrack around the film and present undiscovered film thematics. As far as 80s modern horror goes, *Shocker* is avant-garde cheese. Craven rejects reality and creates 80s archetypes with their high school football and perfect suburban lives. When a mysterious family-killer slays his family after our he dreams it (Predates the entire beginning of *Final Destination*), he realizes he has a psychic link to the killer. After identifying him and his execution, he becomes a technological being capable of transferring through air waves and instruments of electricity. Think *pre-Ghost in the Machine*, but quirkier. A 2009 remake of this film has already been eyed by producers looking to ravage more classic horror films. Hollywood has hit an all-time low. Despite the fact that a pseudo-remake was already released with the title of *Fallen* starring Denzel Washington with an infinitely similar plot line, the Hollywood machine is forever flawed disgraced with some of the most pitiful directorial talent this side of America. *Shocker* is forever doomed to be mediocre but has spawned many films based off of *Shocker's* ideas alone. I approve. The strange ideology that plagues *Shocker* is the remorseless lead. Our football star hero loses his mother, sister, brother, and girlfriend all within a couple of days. Despite this setback, he continues on as monotonous as usual. *Shocker* is merciless in it's scenes of graphic brutality. Though present, always implied, never detailed. And that's the only gracious attitude present in *Shocker*.

For its age, *Shocker* is an uncompromising amusing horror film. With a climax disguised as an attack on censorship of violence in media, *Shocker* proves to be more "shocking" than the likes of such films as *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Last House on the Left*. An early appearance from Skinner on *X-Files* is the delectable star power here. Acting as Horace Pinker, Craven created a madman with a limp that will not stop and will kill anything in his path, be it children, women, or police officers. An early incarnation of the ruthless serial killer, *Shocker* is a film that was ahead of its time and remains a cult classic.

-mAQ

THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS
THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

Wes Craven (1991)

Wes Craven is known for many films, mostly *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Scream*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, and *Last House on the Left*. I admire him for creating many great tales of terror but I feel that many of his films lack of certain quality of horrific enjoyment. All these films have their commentary's but none of which is more evident than in *The People Under the Stairs*. I remember this film for the gimp suits (later stolen from Tarantino), combat shotguns, and the black lead kid. Other than that, the film was a blur in my head. I have begun treating myself to classics that I recall for that addicting concentration of nostalgia. Truth is, *The People Under the Stairs* is far from what I remember. Racially, few horror films top the culturally ridiculous situations this film provides. Under the guise of a fairy-tale, this film follows a Black family that is getting evicted all thanks to the evil greedy White family. Kwanzaa enthusiast Leroy (Ving Rhames) finds a treasure map during a liquor store robbery (He would). Enlisting the help of a child, he plans to demonstrate his lack of parenting skills by breaking in the house to find gold coins. Upon entering the evil whitey's house, people are killed and deformed feral creatures exist under the stairs with no exit visible. At the end of the film, the black community collaborates to purge the evil from the only white folks on the block. At first glance, one could skip over the fact that *The People Under the Stairs* is indeed an urban horror film. It's a bit bizarre for Craven to create a film like this. He's never done anything similar and he has recently talked about an upcoming sequel allegedly concerning an adult Alice. Ideally, a film from that standpoint couldn't be hard to make. Combine elements of *May* with that of the original script and you got yourself a decent follow-up of depravity. Aside from the racial absurdity, *The People Under the Stairs* finds itself being an amendable horror effort syncing insanity with fleshy disorders and a magical house of traps akin to a demonic version of *Home Alone*. This nuclear family from hell creates a true feeling of suspense as our tiny hero hides in labyrinthine crevices in the wall. The set pieces are truly marvelous providing a sense of marvel, mystery, and easily reflective of creating forts as a child. If you could permit a child to watch a single horror film, this would be almost kid tested - mother approved. *The People Under the Stairs* is a horror film that is easy to swallow and become engrossed in. This surreal fairy-tale of coming-to-age matter is nothing new but never been so starkly shot with such brutality behind it. This is perhaps my favorite Wes Craven film for it being so immersible in its own story. Horror reaches new levels of black comedy (not urban comedy, mind you). Everything ends smoothly if not for the disappointing ending of the C.H.U.D. looking creatures escaping into society with the intent of relaying a pointless message. *The People Under the Stairs* is Craven's greatest visual accomplishment as well as being a trippy horror film.

-mAQ

SCREAM 4
SCREAM 4

Wes Craven (2011)

I've caught wind of idle banter dissenting the Scream franchise recently. You won't find Craven's brand of fandom on my person but I know better than to make such groundless accusations claiming Scream "killed the slasher genre." Strong, spiteful words for such a spineless parade venturing away from popular opinion. In order to comprehend the slasher genre, one needn't wrack one's brain to discuss the finer merits. As humbly noted in Scream 4, the slasher began, as an idea, moreover an example, with Michael Powell's Peeping Tom and Hitchcock's Psycho and was later mutated with help from Mario Bava's Twitch of the Death Nerve, arguably the most influential film of the genre. What Mario Bava stoked was an ember of a slasher renaissance that would explode the following decade. Reducing art and applying bloodshed is hardly a fitting form to follow; no big brothers to speak of that don't insist on stalk and kill. Sure, there are gems but even the most unconventional distractions to the slasher film remain hampered by its limited mentality. Perhaps this was Wes Craven's modus operandi to lampoon the slasher genre with his humorous and grim take on teenage psychopathy. Once being a professor in humanities, Wes Craven has indulged himself a spotty career. You could unctuously compare Wes Craven to be that of an American Takashi Miike, whose cinematic endeavors are more likely to be shit than gold. Take last year's horror dead-weight My Soul to Take 3D and enjoy refuting my opinion aloud. Back on topic of the Scream franchise, one thing is consistent in every film - no deadpan delivery of mystery. Ideas can be tossed around, fingers pointed, and speculations rising but when it comes down to it the only thing you can do is sit, stare, and wait patiently. Scream 4 is certainly no exception to this rule of horror and suspense.

With the origins of Scream secured, to continue the canon of stabbing horror would be to continue with the classic cast utilizing the slogan "New decade, new rules". This can attest to Halloween H20 and Halloween: Resurrection, as well as Wes Craven's New Nightmare - basically the effects of the new millennium and the necessary evolution of convolution. What Craven prods at is so unrighteously defended, downtrodden with red excess and a continuing chase to cap last year's inventions in slaughter. This creates one hell of a cliché pile-up. Scream 4 had worlds to make up to, especially after the barbaric sequel Scream 3 - a film so forgettable that I often excuse flashbacks to Scream 2 as Scream 3. Could it be my subconscious battling to forgive and to leave one of Craven's many errors in hindsight? Scream 4 is so preciously wrapped in its satire that to bear a review without the supplied terms "meta" or "tropes" would be to turn cheek to the obvious and if there is one thing I am not, it is oblivious. Scream 4 is crafted as a reboot of the franchise, aimed down the sights at our current gen-X'ers whose horror dangles on the lines of such fodder as The Roommate or

Prom Night. It's a tell-all tale of an original cast up to new tricks. This wouldn't be my first time experiencing a similar occasion on film. You could even consider it momentous. A classic line in *Scream 4* - "Don't fuck with the originals!". This very same move was made by a blaxploitation picture years earlier. Pardon my train-of-thought taking a detour but I consider *Original Gangstas* to be an important piece that takes the early innovators of soul power and militancy and aggressively deploys them against their younger incarnates. This is the same chess play that Craven's appointed message of horror used within *Scream 4*.

All is not well in the infamous town of Woodsboro, whose white picket fences of fiction have harbored countless slayings and serial killers. Filling the need of a capable cinema mind, *Scream 4* introduces two cinephiles, thus replacing the need for the previous character of Randy who was tragically killed in the second *Scream*. One of these characters is even portrayed by a Culkín which adds a field of depth to his suave stature towards film. Returning are the three originals, Sidney Prescott, Gale Weathers, and Dewey Riley. Ten years after the events of *Scream 3*, Sidney Prescott returns to her quiet hometown on the last stop of her book tour when the murders begin again. With a bevy of beautiful babes, *Scream 4* begs for nudity, as well as one of the chief characters, but in good faith, is never delivered. Self-referential to an extreme degree, *Scream 4* is a charming sequel, reflexive with its stabs at the *Saw* franchise and the rise of "torture porn". Craven indeed points and laugh at the current status of horror and in the process, compiles ten years of brainstorming to put a wonderful close(?) to a trilogy because, as we all know, horror pounds past thrice now. The plot of *Scream 4* isn't what is so important. Constructed in a formula similar to mad-lib with a camera, I can remind you of every vengeance-ridden plot of slashers past and you can put the pieces together. No, what is important about *Scream 4* is how dedicated it is to its trend of trope-smashing while retaining a great deal of violence and humor. For the record, I am also quite partial to this installment as Bruce Willis is referenced and that right there guarantees a reaction out of me.

Opening on a note similar to a game of catch and release, Stab 6 & 7 are looped through whichever dimension being dominant to the canon. *Scream 4*'s opening retreats from a film within a film to a film within a film within, etc. Craven reassures you that he has still paid close mind to the topic at hand. While reprising favor to the original *Scream*, I also have to add that the first sequel tends to the still-open wounds of the characters. *Scream 4* plays medic as well, though I found the lack of Dewey's limp to be disturbing. I suppose physiotherapy could have played a hand in this, as many interpretations suggest. In *Scream 4*, Craven expands his influences and references. Not just *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street* but *Suspiria*, *Don't Look Now*, and the aforementioned *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom*. With the broadening of references, *Scream 4* also opens doors to new delights and is essentially a remake of the first film

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with familiarity playing a large role in collecting similar sentiments. This aspect of the film finds Sidney, not experiencing post-traumatic stress but a new woman. No love life here to contemplate guilt towards due to ever-lasting suspicion, Sidney Prescott is reborn. Same goes for Dewey's physical handicap. It has vanished, along with his bumbling rookie nature. Gale Weathers even seems to foster much more "humanity" than before. *Scream 4* is essentially a redoing of previous events, which in a strange way, casts out a copycat killer and authenticates the crimes to a formidable foe. To further the surprise, *Scream 4*'s final moments take place in a hospital - a move that many horror films employ. There is something terrifying about a place that promotes both sterility and malaise. Not much of a review but an overview - I simply speak to alert anyone with doubt that the integrity of the *Scream* franchise is safeguarded by the fourth installment.

-mAQ

METROPOLITAN

Whit Stillman (1990)

When it comes to releasing the masterpieces of world cinema, the Criterion Collection valiantly gets the job done well. However, when it comes to releasing modern films by the cinephile company, the films are usually hit or miss. I am still perplexed by the fact that Criterion Collection found Michael Bay's *Armageddon* and *The Rock* worthy of a lavish DVD release. Criterion certainly made the right decision when they chose to release Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*, a spearheading film that is destined to be revered as one of the greatest masterpieces of the early 2000s. I, however, cannot give praise to Criterion for releasing the mediocre 1990 film *Metropolitan* directed by Whit Stillman, a filmmaker known for influencing fellow "quirk-loving" auteurs of banality, Wes Anderson and Noah Baumbauch. All three of these filmmakers have a personal love for the slightly wealthy bourgeois; a class that tends to be less interesting than a lonely intercity laundry mat. After watching *Metropolitan*, a film that follows proletarian Tom Townsend as he reluctantly engages with an impotent pack of bourgeois socialites, I can say that I much rather watch a film portraying Spike Lee's side of town.

The whole tone and feeling of *Metropolitan* can be summed up in a scene where a young bourgeois named Charlie decries the bourgie-parodying nature of Luis Buñuel's classic *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. Charlie explains that after hearing the title of Buñuel's film, he was presumptively relieved that a filmmaker had finally documented a film about the charm of the bourgeoisie. Of course, as he explains to his friends, little lily Charlie was far from charmed by Buñuel's sensual surrealism. Not only does Charlie boy prove that he has no appreciation for the art of cinema; he also gives credence to Bunuel's ridiculous cinematic representation of the bourgeoisie. After telling his clique of debutantes and beaus about the horrors of *The Discreet Charms of the Bourgeoisie*, they all join in a verbal assault against surrealist artists, pretentiously describing them as "social climbers." Of course, the "social climbing" protagonist of *Metropolitian*, Tom, first finds the "proper" etiquette of his new friends to be rather ostentatious and patently ridiculous. Unfortunately, by the end of the film, Tom has grown fond of debs and begins to shed his political leanings associated with the color red (citing Charles Fourier's as his greatest influence on his political views).

During a scene in *Metropolitan* featuring Tom sleeping in his bed after a wild night with the urban haute bourgeoisie (Charlie's coined phrase for his group), a volume of Oswald Spengler's magnum opus *The Decline of the West* can be seen sitting next to an alarm clock. Of course, I could not help but to think of Spengler's theories whilst unenthusiastically viewing *Metropolitan*. Spengler saw a cultural decline in all classes of Western civilization and the characters of

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Metropolitan are certainly systemic of it. The closest thing to an antagonist in the film is a young baron that "doesn't like taking things seriously," aside from running a train on some naive teenage patrician (which is obviously not featured in the film, that would be too risqué). Long gone are the days of heroic young aristocrats like the Red Baron (Manfred von Richthofen) and the Bloody White Baron (Roman Ungern von Sternberg), for the baron of Metropolitan is about as threatening as a 7 year old black girl. I can only assume that the director of the film has given an accurate portrayal regarding the slow and monotonous times of the NYC bourgeoisie. After all, Metropolitan director Whit Stillman is the godson of E. Digby Baltzell, the man that popularized the acronym WASP. After suffering through the film, I have come to the conclusion that Karl Marx may not have been such a bad guy after all.

-Ty E

WESTLER

Wieland Speck (1985)

If Michael Stock's *Prince in Hell* (1993) aka *Prinz in Hölleland* explicitly and even grotesquely depicts the hardcore homo nihilism and junky hi-jinx that beset Berlin's proletarian gay male population after the Berlin wall came down, Wieland Speck's *Westler* (1985) aka *East of the Wall*—a work largely set in post-WWII Alexanderplatz—depicted in a rather lighthearted manner the division of kraut cocksuckers on both sides of the wall. The sappy and sentimental story of a somewhat cynical West Berlin sexual introvert who falls in love with an East Berlin twink with an Uncle Adolf-approved hairdo, *Westler* sub-melodramatically depicts the trouble the two Teutonic gay boys face with Stasi border control when attempting to carry on a romantic relationship divided by physical, legal, and social barriers. Shot by auteur Speck partly illegally in a guerilla style (Speck pretended to be a tourist shooting footage in East Berlin) and pseudo-documentary manner using a super 8 (it was illegal to record sound, so a number of the outdoor scenes feature no dialogue), *Westler* is a glaringly amateurish work that owes much of its marginal popularity to its immaculately timed pro-gay/anti-cold war political message and thus seems rather redundant and outmoded in our post-Soviet homophile times, especially compared to the aberrant-garde agitprop flicks of (in)famous butt-darting Berliner Rosa von Praunheim (who is a friend of Wieland as the two once produced 'safe-sex' pornography together). In fact, as director Speck revealed somewhat recently in an interview at the Goethe-Institut website regarding the reason for the film's popularity, "Sometimes a film has the luck to catch a generation at the right moment, just when it's opening its eyes. That was the case with *Westler*. It's an absolutely gay film in which, however, being gay isn't the main problem. This had a big effect back then. People who had never seen a gay film suddenly wanted to see the two boys in the film get together. I still have letters from young people who had their coming out after seeing the film." Indeed, very much like the mainstream pro-homo flicks churned out by Hollywood, *Westler* is the sort of sterile 'coming out' inspiring work that sappily sentimentalizes sodomites to such a mundanely melodramatic degree that one would assume it was a vanilla sex heterosexual love story were the main characters not two extremely effeminate twinks. In other words, *Westler* is essentially the 'Brokeback Mountain of 1980s pseudo-arthouse German flicks' with a complimentary punk/new wave/synthpop soundtrack (which is arguably the best thing about the film!)

Opening with West Berliner Felix (Sigurd Rachman) eating greasy KFC fried chicken while driving around in a vintage red convertible in Los Angeles aka 'smog city' with his rather loquacious American friend Bruce (Andy Lucas), *Westler* immediately establishes a sense of freedom in the United States that

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post-WWII Germany—a place ironically ripped apart partially by the USA—lacks, or so one will find out while watching the film. Of course, as many proud American rednecks often state, “Freedom isn’t free” and the injun-annihilating ferocity of the pioneers who gave up their homelands in Europe made this happen. After American Bruce states to his friend Felix, “For an American, the city represents the future...they thrive on growth” the German responds with, “For Europeans, a city signifies the past. That’s the end of America over there,” thus signifying the death of lifeblood in Europa. After going back to West Berlin, American friend Bruce mentions how he would like to visit backwards East Berlin and see how it compares to the decadent West, so the two head there and soon realize it is not like it is depicted in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Torn Curtain* (1966) and they eventually spot tiny blond beast twink Thomas (Rainer Strecker)—a young waiter who lives in a single room flat courtesy of the communist government—while roaming around the city. Needless to say, Felix and Thomas admittedly start a hot and heavy romantic relationship, but the commie curfew forces the West Berliner to have to return to his humble abode every night, thus making their relationship a pain in the ass. Over time, the East German stasi becomes suspicious of West Berliner Felix, so they begin forcing him to go under evasive procedures, including an inspection of his anal cavity by an anally retentive commie guard who does not take kindly to cynical capitalists. Meanwhile, Thomas is ordered to do manual labor at a Prenzlauer slaughterhouse, which being exceedingly effete, would surely be the emotional death of him, so he plots his escape to the West, but refrains from letting his best beau Felix know about his plans until the last minute. Eventually Thomas gets his Slavic bud Pavel to set him up with an escape route from Hungary to Yugoslavia, but in the end, *Westler* ends in anticlimactic ambiguity.

Featuring a barely recognizable Fassbinder superstar Harry Baer (*Gods of the Plague*, *Wildwechsel* aka *Jail Bait*) in a meager role as a bastard of a East German stasi border control guard who inspects poof protagonist Felix’s assumedly torn rectum, *Westler* is really a testament to the fact of how German cinema, especially of the queer oriented sort, totally degenerated with the abrupt death of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Sort of like a queer kraut equivalent of *Letter to Brezhnev* (1985) in its synth-addled, very 1980s depiction of impossible love between lovers from rival cold war countries, *Westler* is not much more than a novelty celluloid time capsule today, especially when compared to other Teutonic queer flicks from around the same era like Frank Ripploh’s *Taxi zum Klo* (1980) and Michael Stock’s *Prince in Hell* (1993). Indeed, like *Coming Out* (1989) directed by Heiner Carow—the first and last overtly gay-themed movie made in East Germany—*Westler* reveals nil new insights for modern viewers except that GDR drag queens are among the most radically repellant of lady-men in the world and that the West was far more decadent than the East. Not surprisingly a semi-autobiographical work for director Wieland Speck, *Westler* is a

terribly tame gay flick that almost even manages to make heterosexual sex seem subversive. A rare German filmmaker who had the degenerately distinguished opportunity to study film under homo trash auteur George Kuchar and who would go on to become the director of the “Panorama” section at the International Film Festival Berlin (Berlinale), Speck will ultimately be remembered more as a sideler as opposed to a notable auteur, though the filmmaker would go on to direct the docudrama *Die Erika und Klaus Mann Story* (2000) aka *Escape to Life: The Erika and Klaus Mann Story*—a work about the lives of German novelist Thomas Mann’s gay anti-Nazi son and daughter—which is ultimately a superior work to *Westler*, if not a less aesthetically vibrant one. Undoubtedly, if you need proof that German queer-themed works can be as softcore in their sodomy as those delicately defecated out by the shysters of Tinseltown, checkout *Westler*!

-Ty E

MANDRAGORA
MANDRAGORA

Wiktor Grodecki (1997)

In terms of hallucinatory hustler-sploitation of the quasi-pederaŝt variety, the Czech film *Mandragora* (1997) directed by controversial Polish auteur Wiktor Grodecki (*Him, Insatiability*) puts all others to shame in its melodramatic nihilism, slickly stylized Slavo-sleaze, and gratingly blatant, if not valid, anti-globalist/anti-American message. Director Grodecki originally became somewhat revered in the cinema world with his documentaries *Not Angels But Angels* (1994) and *Body Without Soul* (1996)—two works that more or less devastatingly, if not exploitatively so, depict the pathetic lives of teenage Prague male prostitutes—and the auteur would use those two docs as inspiration for his narrative feature *Mandragora*, the story of a rural teen who runs away from home to the big city, only to become the bought bitch boy of wealthy faggots from all around the world literally over night. Sort of like a *Breakfast Club* from homo Hades, *Mandragora* tells the story of an ambiguously gay angst-ridden 15-year-old who refuses to become a welder like his macho proletarian father, so he seeks his fortune in Prague and soon finds himself being drugged and anally deflowered by a sort of Slavic Uncle Feŝter, thereupon becoming a poof prostitute by proxy in the process, eventually even enjoying the life, only to fall hard and fast in a very real nightmare of drugs, beatdowns, and STDs. A gut wrenching work of sensationalized melodramatic aesthetic terrorism without hope and redemption, let alone a happy ending, that makes similarly themed works like *Midnight Cowboys* (1969), *Trash* (1970), *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (1981), *Forty Deuce* (1982), *Via Appia* (1990), *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), *Street Kid* (1992) aka *Gossenkind*, *The Basketball Diaries* (1995), and *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) seem rather tame by comparison, *Mandragora* is action-packed human depravity and cultural decay in a cheap yet strangely charming post-communist Eastern European package that quite literally depicts how Europa became a diseased gigolo of America and its cuckolded allies. As disturbingly depicted in William E. Jones micro-documentary *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* (1998), with the death of communism in the Slavic countries came the capitalist exploitation of young and rather desperate boys with no values except obtaining money at any cost, including self-degradation and voluntary exploitation. Ultimately winning a number of awards and even being lauded by playwright-turned-politician Václav Havel—the ninth and last president of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992) and the first president of the Czech Republic (1993–2003)—who personally wrote a congratulatory letter to Director Grodecki, *Mandragora* is what Michael Haneke once described as, “24 lies per second at the service of truth, or at the service of the attempt to find the truth,” albeit of the quasi-NAMBLA variety.

As demonstrated by the Backstreet Boys, Freddy Mercury, and Tom Cruise

posters hanging on his wall, 15-year-old Czech twink-in-training Marek (Miroslav Caslavka) is probably gay, thus he has no interest in becoming a blue collar welder like his father, so he runs away from his small village and seeks self-exile in Prague. After blowing all his money at arcades and casinos on his first night in the city, Marek is robbed and beaten by a gang of Slavic wiggers, so when a creepy, swarthy pimp wearing a large leather trenchcoat, with long, greasy curly hair, and a leather-fag mustache named Honza (Pavel Skřípal) offers him a 'job' by saying things like "I could use you... Nice boy... Beautiful boy...", the innocent teen naively takes his seemingly ominous offer as if making some sort of fag Faustian pact with the devil himself. Honza brings Marek to an exceedingly effete fat middle-aged queen's house, who puts roofies in the boys Coca-Cola and the next thing he knows, the teen awakes to the heavyset homo anally deflowering his rectum. After another brutal beating from a gang of barbaric hustlers looking to protect their turf, Marek meets the charming and 'popular' male prostitute David (David Svec), who shows him the ropes of man-pussy-peddling and ultimately helps him to get pimp Honza arrested, thereupon making him a free agent of his own ass. David's personal philosophy for prostitution is, "the most amount of money for the least amount of work," which also involves thieving, especially in regard to drunk Johns. Eventually, David and Marek start their own bordello of boys in a dilapidated communist era hotel. When David sets up Marek on a date with a debauched, wealthy and equally sadomasochistic Englishman of the Caravaggio-obsessed sort, who says of the boy "you don't know it but you are the true creator of art in the world" and reaches orgasm while watching the lad pose unclad with a sword, things get a bit ugly. After deciding Marek's "balls are much too big for a classical sculpture," the Englishman has the boy savagely beaten and mutilated. Bruised, bloody, and barely able to walk, Marek accuses David of being just like parasitic pimps like Honza and the two decide to end their small fuckboy business. To fund a trip back to David's small village, the two would-be-pretty boy prostitutes rob a "Czech-American pig," a rather repulsive Slav pedophile with a gigantic hook-nose who now stylizes himself as a cowboy after obtaining American citizenship and who only comes back to his homeland to blow young boys as such a rare delicacy is much easier to acquire in destitute ex-communist countries.

After drugging and robbing the swarthy Amero-Slav swine of not only his money, but cologne and electric shavers, among other things, Marek and David head to the latter's hometown, where they run into 'homophobia' from proletarian workers at a bar, one of whom says of the lecherous lads, "They suck dicks all week and here pretend to be macho!" which could not be more true. Broke and desperate, Marek and David rob an old lady in a cemetery to get back to Prague and when they reach the Slav sin city, they are warmly greeted by Honza, who is now out of jail and wants revenge, and his gang of boy gigolo soldiers, who almost beat the two to death. Ultimately, Marek and David become sex slaves

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of Honza again, but no Johns want them anymore as they are sick, washed-up, and far too old for the typical discerning boy bugging buyer. David gets addicted to cocaine/speed and convinces Marek to star in boy porno films made by an egomaniac cokehead family man named Krysa (Kostas Zerdolaglu) that are sold in Germany. While Marek does not want to be in the porn flick, David and Krysa convince him to do it, the latter of which eggs him on by stating, "Faggots are afraid of everything and hide in the corners...while heterosexuals don't care...and always come up with new ideas..." Marek ultimately becomes the star (i.e. guy that acts as the passive bottom) and rather regrets the experience. To make things worse, David, who is in a constant drug-addled stupor, unwittingly goes on a 'date' with the Czech-American pig he and Marek previously robbed and soon finds himself being raped by a pool stick, on top of being sent to jail. Alone, broke, and afraid, Marek begins using drugs and after stealing a large supply of cocaine from the local pornographer Krysa, whose home is raided by the cops, gets high and hallucinates that maggots are crawling on his arm, thus inspiring him to psychotically stab at his arm with a knife and unwittingly kill himself in the process. As he lay dead in the bathroom stall where he got high, Marek's father, who has been looking everywhere for his son, walks in the restroom to use the urinal, not knowing his son's postmortem corpse is only a couple feet away from him. As a prepubescent boy states near the conclusion of *Mandragora*, "Lot's of sick men around..." especially in this sick little piece of 'cautionary' Slavic hustler-sploitation.

After viewing Wiktor Grodecki's *Mandragora* a total of two times, I can certainly say without hesitation that it is easily the most depraved and debauched hustler flick I have ever seen as a work that rather nonsensically, at least intellectually speaking, both glamorizes and condemns the boy gigolo way of life. Undoubtedly, *Mandragora* is certainly a whacked out and wanton enough work to appeal to real-life pederasts as it borders on being a softcore skin flick. Still, one must respect auteur Grodecki for not copping out in the end with a contrived happy ending because, after all, there is typically no true redemption and hope for boy dick-peddlers as drug addiction, STDs and AIDS, and a very early death are almost guaranteed. An unhealthily enthralling portrait of an innocent and naive boy who learns all too soon the wicked ways of post-communist capitalist Prague and ultimately pays for it first with his dignity then his life, *Mandragora* also portrays a people figuratively and literally raped by America and its cuckolded European allies. Most notably, virtually all of the Johns featured in the film are not Czechs, but Americans, Brits, and Germans, especially leftist types, including a Heidelberg college professor and a Judaic NYC journalist. While watching *Mandragora* with my girlfriend, she could not believe the film was released in 1997 because the characters—with their mullet haircuts, Motörhead leather-jackets, Robert Smith-esque faggy button-up shirts, starter jackets, and vulgar sweat pants—seemed like they stepped off the set of some mid-1980s

direct-to-video NYC-based exploitation flick (and indeed that, coupled with soulless thumping euro techno and intermittent pity party Jewish violin music of the sort typically employed by Spielberg, added all the more to the film's all around grotesque feel). A sort of horrendously hypnotic psychosexual hustler horror flick that is half 'poverty porn' and half anti-American propaganda yet unwaveringly aesthetically unsanitary, Mandragora is probably the closet one can get to the Prague prostitution world without acquiring an STD and/or being robbed, though the film will most certainly hustle you out of your innocence if you still have it with its creepily captivating look at the one of the globalized world's most dirty secrets.

-Ty E

INSATIABILITY
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Wiktor Grodecki (2003)

After at least half a dozen futile attempts over the past two years or so, I finally managed to achieve the seemingly impossible by completely finishing watching the decidedly depraved, degenerate, and disgusting Polish dystopian flick *Nienasylenie* (2003) aka *Insatiability* directed by Wiktor Grodecki. Indeed, with its largely incoherent and convoluted storyline, incessant spasitic Polish verbal vomit, visual feast of fiercely foul (anti)sexual fetishes, completely kitschy yet simultaneously kaleidoscopic aesthetics, various lead actors playing multiple important characters, and rather retarded dark scat-romp tone, Grodecki's film is like the cinematic equivalent of receiving a root canal with the aid of acid instead of Novocaine. Admittedly, what inspired me to finally finish the film is the fact that it is based on the prophetic 1930 novel of the same name written by Polish artistic Renaissance man Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (aka 'Witkacy'), whose writings have been adapted into various highly worthwhile and idiosyncratic films. A decadent dandy who committed suicide in a manner not unlike one of his fictional characters on September 18, 1939 the day after the Soviet invasion by taking a fatal cocktail of drugs and slitting his wrists, Witkacy had a culturally pessimistic worldview of the quasi-Spenglerian sort that foretold the death of the Occident and this is even fairly apparent in *Insatiability*, even if Grodecki mostly used the film as a platform to express his own unhinged homophilia. Before daring to direct his uniquely uneven Witkacy adaptation, Grodecki directed 'serious' films on teenage male prick-peddler from Prague like the gritty docs *Not Angels But Angels* (1994) and *Body Without Soul* (1996), as well as the curiously eroticized and sleazily stylized feature *Mandragora* (1997), so the apocalyptic absurdism of *Insatiability* seemed like a dubious subject for the auteur to tackle, hence his grating over emphasis on the more perverted yet ultimately less important elements of the novel. Undoubtedly Grodecki's film is notable for at least one reason in that it is a post-communist adaptation of a 1930 dystopian novel that somewhat accurately prophesized the butchering and cultural retarding of Poland and it's populous via anti-Occidental bolshevism. Of course, as one can expect from a filmmaker who has dedicated her career to fetishizing swarthy underage hustler twinks with highly deleterious STDs, *Insatiability* wallows in a sort of innately and hypocritically morally bankrupt Reichian anti-fascism that ultimately depicts Polish nationalists as more sexually depraved and debauched than decadent aristocrats and genocidal commie chinks, thus making it a work that Witkacy would have indubitably disapproved of. A one-note wonder of wayward wantonness that skips over major themes and subplots of the classic source novel (e.g. the mind-controlling drug 'DAVAMESK B 2,' which is only briefly mentioned towards the very end of the film), *Insatiability* is like 'Witkacy for Retards' as a work that ultimately demonstrates that arthouse filmmakers can

created just as bastardized and disrespectful cinematic adaptations as the most monetary-motivated and artistically autistic of Hollywood hacks. Indeed, like Pasolini's *Salò*, or the *120 Days of Sodom* (1975) as mutated by the witless bastard Polack progeny of John Waters and Pedro Almodóvar, Grodecki's work is fleetingly enjoyable in its own fiercely fucked way, but is certainly not destined to become any sort of cocksucker cult classic. Featuring a superficially handsome blond Aryan specimen as the lead that would have surely been kidnapped by the SS Lebensborn organization had he been a boy during the German occupation of Poland and can hardly be described as the doppelgänger of Witkacy, Grodecki's film is ultimately more of the director's own masturbatory fantasy than an even remotely respectful adaptation of a classic novel.

As narrated at the beginning of the film regarding blond beast protagonist Kapen Genezyp de Vahaz aka 'Zypcio' aka 'Zip' (Michal Lewandowski), "Genezyp Kapen did not tolerate captivity of any kind." As a doctor warned the protagonist's father when he was just a wee lad, "People who love animals often hate their own kind. Zip must be brought up strictly or he'll turn out a monster!" Of course, by the conclusion of *Insatiability*, Zip will degenerate into a murderously sadomasochistic bisexual barbarian of the absurdly automaton-like sort, but first he has to spend some quality time with decadent artists and/or aristocrats and scatological proto-fascist psychopaths. At age seven, Zip became a reluctant onanist after discovering the pleasures of mutual masturbation with his male cousin Toldzio. To clean his body and soul, Zip would wash his hands with holy water after his jerk-off sessions with his cousin. While Zip would receive a good authoritarian education due to his rather wealthy father, his schooling was abruptly cut short after his school was abolished because the Poles needed new young military officers because, "the avant-garde of the Chinese commies stood at the Urals...one step away from Moscow, drowning in counterrevolutionary bloodbaths." Upon arriving back home at his family mansion at the age of 18 after the closing of his school, young and naïve Zip causes his wealthy father (played by Cezary Pazura, who also plays two other 'fatherly' characters that will ultimately have a deep influence on the protagonist during his formative years) to suffer from a massive heart attack after telling him that he has enrolled in Western Literature at a university and has no interest in going to a technical institute and following in tradition by taking over the family brewery. Indeed, Zip finds beer to be banal and dreams of becoming an important artist, yet his life will ultimately take a more destructive than creative route.

While his father is on his deathbed, Zip decides to have some fun at a local club where he meets a sexually predatorial aristocrat named Princess Ticonderoga Irina Vsievobodovna (Katarzyna Gniewkowska) who provides patronage to decadent avant-garde artists, including a perennially 'misunderstood' hunch-backed poof pedophile composer named Putrycydes Tengler (Cezary Pazura), as well as a soft and exceedingly effete poet with a sickening shit-eating grin

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named Sturfan Abnol (played by Arkadiusz Jakubik, who also plays one of the other main roles). After proudly stating, “unappreciated artists are my specialty” and asking the protagonist if he is an artist as if to express her interest in ‘sponsoring’ him, Princess Irina makes it quite clear that she wants to unzip Zip’s pants and steal his virginity, but sexually depraved queer composer Tengler ultimately gets to the lad first. After describing artists like himself as slaves and playthings of “the bored and corrupted members of yesterdays elite, but today’s scum, which only in our country miraculously stays afloat,” Tengler attempts to coerce Zip into not becoming an artist, even describing him as “too human” for such a debasing trade. Tengler is no less cynical about politics, stating regarding Poland’s dubious future, “For no matter who wins, our fascism or Chinese communism...not to mention the Western “democracy”...the outcome will be the same: a satisfied machine.” Zip seems to have a hard time comprehending what Tengler says to him as reflected in a rather naive yet impassioned short speech that seems inspired by Heinrich von Kleiſt’s ‘Lebensplan’ where he remarks, “I do care about my life...one of its kind, different and unpredictable...perfect even in its imperfection! If I fail I want it to be the greatest failure ever.” In a strange way, Zip will more or less realize this professed dream, but it will come at the price of his sanity, morality, and innocence, among other things.

After being more or less raped by Tengler at gunpoint and ‘suffering’ an orgasm that causes him to howl at the moon like a wolf, Zip goes to Princess Irina’s mansion and annoys the decadent demoness when he fails to get an erection, so she sticks the boy’s head between head legs and makes him perform cunnilingus on her in a surreal scenario that demonstrates that director Grodecki has a serious fear of pussy. After the particularly perverse princess kicks him out of her bed, Zip symbolically masturbates while staring at himself in a mirror and then goes back to Irina and sexually services her in a rather bestial fashion as if he is some sort of young Polish Tarzan. The next morning, Zip wakes up completely unclad and in the company of Irina’s entire family, including her elderly cuckolded Prince husband and seemingly gay son ‘Scampi’ (Mikolaj Krawczyk), who proudly declares, “Whores and horses...that’s the Polish Tradition.” In between babbling about his nihilistic nympho mother’s rather voracious sexual appetite, Scampi remarks, “The Chinese are fighting a new kind of war. They want to suck the white race out,” thus offering the first prophecy of the ‘Yellow Peril’ short of racial chaos that will soon consume Polackland. After being scared away by the Princess’ particularly perverse family and their strange Laissez-faire to sex and decadence, Zip goes home and literally laughs hysterically upon learning that not only has his father died, but also that his padre did not leave his family a single penny and instead gave it to his worker’s co-op. On top of that, Zip and his mother and sister are told that they must immediately vacate the family mansion and take refuge in the servants’ quarters. When Zip later goes to see his beloved Princess Irina, she tortures him by locking him in a transparent room

and forcing him to watch her have sex with his beloved cousin Toldzio Porayski (Miroslav Caslavka). When Zip goes home later that day, he gets the double shock of not only finding his mother in bed with a boorish servant with a bloated beer gut, but also that he has been drafted into the military, thus bringing a swift end to his laidback days of bisexual hedonism before he even had the chance to even cultivate himself into some sort of preposterous posturing art fag.

Upon entering boot camp, Zip is forced to do debauched things like collectively defecating with fellow recruits while being examined by an officer. The Polish military is run by a mad megalomaniac of the hyper-stereotypically 'fascistic' sort named General Kocmoluchowicz (also Cezary Pazura), who enjoys firmly grasping the bare genitals of new recruits while screaming insane pseudo-Nietzschean inspirational slogans in their faces like, "Cumulate power! You'll find the use for it sooner or later." Upon meeting Zip, the General curiously asks him if he has ever heard "Stabat Mater" by neo-Romantic composer Karol Szymanowski (who, between 1922 and 1937, had a 'Nationalist Period' where he incorporated folk music into his compositions) and then states upon realizing who he is, "Your father recommended you to me. In three months you're to report to me, you snotty brat! The worst in life is when you have to wait too long." While Zip and Kocmoluchowicz initially clash as demonstrated by the fact that the latter has the former imprisoned for two weeks for failing to wake up one day, the two will ultimately be united in madness and bloody murder. Meanwhile, Princess Irina, who the protagonist is mad at due to her fiery fuck fest with his cousin, starts a matriarchal group called 'The Syndicate' that seeks to cultivate an army of handsome and strong-willed Übermenschen that is at odds with Kocmoluchowicz's War Party. When Zip discovers that his prole-fucking mother is conspiring with the Princess to get him to become an adjunct of the Syndicate and spy on the War Party for the Chinese, he hatefully states of his progenitor, "This corpse of a dried up whore! To hell with my mother! Disgusting sperm-bag full of proletarian secretions of her lover! He can pour his body into her like into a coffin." Indeed, Zip becomes brainwashed by the irrational collectivist thinking of the General as indicated by his remark, "What a pleasure it is to have somebody to rule over you so you can trust him more than yourself! You're restoring my faith in a spiritual rebirth," but that somewhat changes when both men become pathologically obsessed with a sadomasochistic femme fatale actress named Persy (Weronika Marczuk-Pazura) who actually manages to coerce Kocmoluchowicz into dressing up in a baby outfit and engaging with coprophilia, among other things. Indeed, Persy is a dirty dame that enjoys feces-flavored French kisses and she has the power to tame any man, including raving egomaniacs like Kocmoluchowicz who stylize themselves as the next Napoleon.

While Princess Irina continues to attempt to get Zip to spy for her by stating things to him like, "If we fail, nothing will stop the Chinese, the Yellow Flood and the end of a white race," the protagonist is quite like contemporary deraci-

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nated American and Western European whites in that he is more interested in the short-term and chasing after pussy than thinking of the long-term and saving his people from genocide. In fact, Zip is so obsessed with Persy that he finds himself incapable of actually asserting himself upon attempting to rape her and thus cries like a little girl as a result. After a disastrous street battle between the Syndicate and the War Party that leaves the protagonist in the hospital, Zip meets a young nurse with a reasonably rack that he plans to marry, but the love affair does not last long as the young soldier ends up strangling his ladylove to death during a rather impassioned coitus session. Meanwhile, the followers of a yellow devil lover named Djevani begins brainwashing and drugging people, including Princess Irina, who describes herself as being “reborn.” As composer Tengler states regarding the phenomenon, “Djevani has been sent by Murti Bing – the same yellow monkeys who are devouring the whole of Europe! This religion has been invented to fool Great White Morons of the West and to produce a manure out of you...to fertilize yellow masses of the Far East.” When the Chinese finally takeover all of Eastern Europe and invade Poland, General Kocmoluchowicz suffers a completely incapacitating mental breakdown, so Persy has to whip him back into shape by bashing in his genitals with spiked torture devices and pouring hot wax on his body, among various other sadomasochistic methods. While the General has one of his men murdered by Zip after he attempts to convince him not to battle the unconquerable Chinese commie leader Mandarin Wang Tang Tsang (also Arkadiusz Jakubik), he later has an unexpected change of heart and cancels the battle, stating, “long live mankind!” like a true unhinged madman.

After cancelling the battle with Mandarin Wang, General Kocmoluchowicz and his followers are invited to a fancy multicultural breakfast where the Chinese leader declares regarding his masterplan, “You cannot govern yourself and you’re racially exhausted [...] We are exhausted too, not as bad as you, but still...And so we must refresh our race, we must swallow and digest you...and create a new yellow-white variation! And so we are introducing compulsory mixed marriages.” Indeed, the yellow peril wants forced white-yellow miscegenation, not realizing that many Slavs already carry Asian blood, especially of the Mongol sort. Kocmoluchowicz goes along with all of Wang’s demands, including the sanction of his own execution via decapitation. Indeed, after Wang states to him, “As much as I respect you, I must recognize you as a dangerous individualist belonging to a bygone era...And therefore in the name of mankind we must behead you,” Kocmoluchowicz replies, “The Mother of Fuck...What’s a life not lived on the tip of a blade stuck into the unknown? At the height of madness or wisdom” and then proceeds to ‘rape the totality of being’ by violently penetrating Persy doggie style. While banging Persy, the General has his head cut off by Zip with a samurai sword at the behest of Mandarin Wang. Although Persy initially cries over the General’s decapitated head, Zip brings her solace by sav-

aging fucking her and Wang pays tribute to the protagonist by describing him as “exemplary mad man.” In a stupid twist ending that makes the entire experience of the film seemingly patently pointless, it is revealed that most of the story was the protagonist’s dream. Indeed, after awaking from his dystopian nightmare, Zip states regarding his absurd and obscene oneiric experiences, “I won’t stand it alone. I won’t” while sporting the same goofy haircut he had before being drafted into the military.

Indubitably, next to the classic Witkacy adaptation *Pożegnanie jesieni* (1990) aka *Farewell to Autumn* directed by Mariusz Trelinski, *Insatiability* seems like a preposterously politically correct celluloid turd stain that was directed by a crypto-pornographer who feels all too unwarrantedly confident in his execution of cinematic humor, eccentricity, and excess. Indeed, ultimately Grodecki’s film seems like it is trying too hard to be weird for weird’s sake while simultaneously hypocritically bending over and taking in the ass from the anti-Occidental gatekeepers of cultural Marxist mania. In the Polish filmmaker’s attempt to ‘sanitize’ Witkacy and make his work palatable for postmodern pansies, Frankfurt School fanboys, and devout Freudians, Grodecki is comparable to Jewish philosopher and translator Walter Kaufmann who attempted to appropriate Friedrich Nietzsche from the Nazis for leftist and/or Jewish intellectuals after the Second World War and portray him as a sort of pathetic philo-Semitic humanist. Indeed, even the Gothic horror flick *W starym dworku czyli niepodleglosc trójkątów* (1984) aka *In an Old Manor House* or *The Independence of Triangles* aka *In the Old Manor House*, which is based on two of the Polish artist’s plays, is much more faithful to the spirit of Witkacy’s *weltanschauung* than Grodecki’s film. Of course, if watched as a sort of patently preposterous Polish take on the eccentric excesses of the *Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*, *Insatiability* ultimately offers a much more tolerable experience that rewards the viewer in terms of sheer raunchiness and vulgarity. Like virtually all of the director’s films, Grodecki’s blatantly botched Witkacy adaptation is highly and meticulously stylized trash masquerading as socio-politically revolutionary art. After all, how serious can one take a film featuring a protagonist that looks like Macaulay Culkin had he actually reached puberty, a military man jovially consuming feces while sporting a baby outfit, a monstrous vagina, and a morbidly cynical pedophile with a hunchback getting in a bitch-fest with a debauched diva-like princess with a rivaling fetish for virginal young blond boys, among various other forms of less than dignified debauchery. If *Insatiability* is considered a serious arthouse work in Poland then I can only assume remarks made by characters in the work like “Mediocre people keep Poland standing!” and “Whores and horses...that’s the Polish Tradition” are completely factually accurate. Of course, I have no doubt in my mind that the homo hunchback character of *Putrycydes Tengler* was speaking for auteur Grodecki when he states, “Is there anything more horrible than the Polish gentry?! They are infesting everything these days! I prefer the Jews

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any day and I'd like to see Poland Jewish rather than aristocratic," hence why the Screen Actors Guild of America awarded the director the SAG Best Indie Director Award in 2004. Indeed, there are few things that are more pathetic than a Slavic filmmaker attempting to suck the shriveled and diseased Rebbe-circumcised cock of the Judaized West.

-Ty E

MESSIAH OF EVIL

Willard Huyck (1973)

Bloodthirsty rodent-biting black albino Wagnerites, blind art dealers, walking and talking zombie-vampires, and heterosexual Portuguese-American aristocratic dandies are not exactly the most common of filmic characters, yet they are an innate ingredient of the charmingly creepily and uniquely unsettling celluloid tapestry that is *Messiah of Evil* (1973) aka *Dead People* aka *Messiah of Evil: The Second Coming* aka *The Second Coming* aka *Messiah of the Evil Dead* aka *Deep Swamp* aka *Revenge of the Screaming Dead* directed by husband and wife time Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz, who are probably best known nowadays for once collaborating with George Lucas by penning *American Graffiti* (1973) and later bringing the world big budget pseudo-surreal cinematic garbage like *Howard the Duck* (1986). Sort of like a counter-culture *Carnival of Souls* (1962) meets a cult horror take on Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) meets *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) on kaleidoscopic arthouse acid, *Messiah of Evil* is an obsessively ominous and oneiric cinematic work with Lovecraftian overtones about a young, bold, and beautiful bourgeois woman who travels to a degenerate beachside Californian village to find her estranged decadent artist father, only to discover the area is controlled by a depraved death-worshipping cult of undead degenerates with an overwhelming need to feed on the living, be it human or otherwise. Featuring art direction by Jack Fisk (*Badlands*, *Mulholland Drive*), who would go on to work for David Lynch and Terrence Malick, as well as editing and a cameo acting performance by experimental filmmaker Morgan Fisher (*Cue Rolls*, *Picture and Sound Rushes*), *Messiah of Evil* is also a curious celluloid oddity with a background story that is fittingly strange like the film itself. Originally set to be released under the silly title *The Second Coming*, *Messiah of Evil* was actually shot in 1971 and remained unfinished as a quasi-aborted film when the original financiers pulled their money out. Luckily, an opportunistic Frenchman bought the unfinished footage, edited it, and re-titled it *Messiah of Evil*, thereupon thankfully saving what is easily one of the most intensely idiosyncratic, fiercely foreboding, and sinisterly surreal American horror films ever made. As co-writer/co-director Willard Huyck revealed in the featurette documentary *Remembering Messiah of Evil* (2009), on top of being inspired by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft and old school Universal monster movies of the 1930s (as opposed to horror flicks of the 1970s, which the director hated), *Messiah of Evil* was heavily inspired by the films of Jean-Luc Godard and Michelangelo Antonioni as a work with a "strange sort of pretentious art film quality...at the same time it is trying to be a horror film." Indeed, aside from Richard Blackburn's Lovecraftian lesbian vampire flick *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural* (1973), *Messiah of Evil* is a singular arthouse horror flick with infinite replay value that deserves the title of being the most under-

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rated American horror film ever made. A largely incoherent phantasmagorical film that allows the viewer to create their own subtext and meaning, *Messiah of Evil* has been described by many people as an anti-Vietnam war flick, as well as a feminist flick, yet owing to its imperative influence from Spenglerian horror novelist H.P. Lovecraft, I believe the film works best as a demented depiction of racial, cultural, and spiritual degeneration. After all, few things are more primitively disturbing looking than black albinos.

Beginning with a disconnected prologue featuring filmmaker Walter Hill (*The Warriors*, *Southern Comfort*) having his throat slit by a homely young lady, *Messiah of Evil* segues to a statuesque young beauty Arletty (Marianna Hill)—a character named after the French actress that is probably best known for starring in *Children of Paradise* (1945)—discussing the horrible events that led to her mental breakdown and inevitable institutionalization in a loony bin with people who regularly urinate on themselves. Flash back in time, Arletty has just arrived in the quaint little oceanside town of Point Dune, California—a place described as a “piss poor little town” that is “deader than hell” by a redneck gas station attendant who seems to know more than he lets on—to find her reclusive father and when she arrives, she discovers his beach house is locked and her daddy in nowhere to be found, so she breaks in. While inside, Arletty discovers a diary written by her father addressed to her where he complains about how darkness is taking over Point Dune, how he is suffering from insomnia and obsessing over the grotesque, and that she should not bother looking for him. Of course, after having spent some time traveling to the California hick hellhole, Arletty is determined to find her father and she does not plan to leave until she does so. Figuring that someone at the local art gallery will probably know where her father is since he’s a notable degenerate and all (he does pretentious pop-art paintings of people like Lee Harvey Oswald), Arletty decides to make her way there, but the people there act rather evasive as if covering up some deep, dark secret. Of course, the art dealer is rather sketchy because, on top of being blind, she denies having ever sold Arletty’s father’s paintings (despite what a certain fellow named Thom has stated), but the arrogant assistant claims a group of people staying at a motel were also looking for him, so she decides to head there. After heading to the motel, Arletty runs into the people she is looking for: a pretentious Portuguese-American aristocrat Thom (gaysploitation actor Michael Greer), who stylizes himself as a sort of counter-culture dandy and wears an ivory 3-piece suit at all times, and his two dimwitted groupie sluts Toni (Joy Bang) and Laura (Anitra Ford). Thom is recording a interview with the town drunk Charlie (Elisha Cook, Jr.), who discusses the dark history of the area (Thom also believes races have their ancient tales and myths, including a backwards place like Point Dune), describing ‘the blood moon’ and ‘the dark stranger’, and how since it is the 100 anniversary of the town plunging into darkness, ‘the dark stranger’ will soon return. Unreliable drunk Charlie tries to get Arletty to avoid her father, who has

apparently joined the 'dark side' and is now 'one of them' and cannot be trusted. After letting Arletty know that the mysterious ghouls can only be killed via fire and that he was only able to survive amongst the death cult because they see him a mere harmless drunk, Charlie is killed only moments later, presumably for blabbing his mouth. After being kicked at the motel, Thom and his two gals force themselves into Arletty's father's home and squat there in luxury and lechery. Naturally, strange things occur around the house, including the vampire locals occupying the beach and staring at the moon at night during what is described as 'The Waiting,' where they devour every and any animal or human they can find, be it dead or alive. Meanwhile, Arletty learns from local authorities that her father has been picked up multiple times for wandering around in a deranged state, thus giving the little lady little hope that she will ever see her daddy again, at least as the same person she remembers him.

In one of the most iconic scenes of *Messiah of Evil*, Thom's groupie Laura, who hitches a ride from a Svengali-like black Albino who is blasting Richard Wagner on his radio while devouring rats, heads to the local supermarket, where she spots the depraved and ghastly locals devouring raw red meat like zombies and when the girl tries to make a run for it, she is captured by the hungry humanoid horde, who eat her in a Night of the Living-esque gore orgy style. In what is arguably the second most famous scene of *Messiah of Evil*, Toni goes to the local Point Dune movie theater all by her lonesome after Thom kicks her out so he can be all alone with Arletty. While watching a trailer for the garbage western *Gone with the West* (1975) starring James Caan, Toni is bombarded by a voracious horde of ghoulish vampire-zombies, who she does not even notice sitting right behind her. Although Thom attempts to rescue Toni after realizing she may be in trouble, he is a tad too late and things begin to stir into an all out otherworldly vampire nightmare, including the eventual appearance of the mysterious 'Messiah of Evil' (also played by Michael Greer) who is apparently an ex-minister and Donner Party survivor from the late 19th century who became a true believer of the corpse cause after resorting to cannibalism for survival and who ultimately reigns supreme as the alpha undead vampire-zombie. A creepy charlatan looking to start a sort of commie corpse revolution by spreading his unholy ravenous religion, the Messiah plans to lead the residents of Point Due inland. During all the corpse-addled commotion, Thom has the flesh on his neck ripped out by an undead blonde hag and two cops in riot gear fight a losing battle with a carnivorous collection of walking corpses, ultimately with one becoming a zombie-vampire and the other shooting his partner, whose corpse is feasted upon by the horde. After burning her undead father alive (as he said, he "tried to warn her"), Arletty loses her mind and even stabs Thom when he comes to rescue her. Despite being somewhat convinced she might also be a member of the undead, Arletty is eventually convinced to go to the beach house by Thom. Surrounded by an unhinged army of the dead, Thom and Arletty make the mis-

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take of attempting to make a getaway by swimming in the ocean. Unsurprisingly, Thom drowns and Arletty is captured by the man-meat-eating messiah, but he decides against her being "sacrificed to the Messiah" and lets her go to spread the message about the majesty of the death cult. Not unsurprisingly, Arletty is institutionalized after spreading the gospel and confesses how she dreads the day when the Messiah and his minions come back for her.

Despite the directors never getting to film the last scene (on top of editing it, etc.), which was supposed to be the most climatic scene and explain the whole story, *Messiah of Evil* somehow managed to develop into the semi-underground cult horror masterpiece it is today, not least of all due to the fact that the film features a sort of demented dream logic that incessantly fiddles with the poor viewer's subconscious. According to director Willard Huyck, *Messiah of Evil* was originally supposed to end with the 'Messiah of Evil' aka 'Dark Stranger', who as it turns out is really aristocrat Thom (hence why actor Greer played both characters), taking protagonist Arletty as his undead bride, thus ending on a beautifully bittersweet note (after all, the two had chemistry together!) In my somewhat humble opinion, *Messiah of Evil* is the ultimate piece of arthouse cult horror cinema as a radically refreshing work (despite its age and sometimes outmoded wardrobes) of celluloid eccentricity, aberrant artistry, and marvelous (im)moral waywardness that truly offers a singular experience that only gets better with subsequent viewings. Although featuring marginal gore/violence comparable to Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* and a nonlinear plot (or lack thereof) comparable to Jess Franco's *Necronomicon - Geträumte Sünden* (1968) aka *Succubus*, *Messiah of Evil* is certainly a work that will be more of interest to arthouse fans the philistine gorehounds. While I would be unquestionably committing an act of good old puffery to say that the film is without flaws (especially considering its dubious production history), in its own way, *Messiah of Evil* is truly immaculate in its eerie idiosyncrasy and relentless ambiguity as a work that can only marginally be compared to other films. After all, what other film features an albino negro who eats rats asking a scared white girl if she likes Wagner (hilariously pronouncing it Wag-ner)?! A delightfully demented yet dreamy depiction of indiscriminately hungry zombie-vampires who are 'clinging on to the old gods' and killing every living creature they see in the process, *Messiah of Evil* is cultural, racial, and spiritual degeneracy at its most hopelessly haphazardly hallucinatory as a work of macabre movie magic that both mystifies and tantalizes the viewer, ultimately leaving them with a sense of metaphysical dread as well as aesthetic delight in the end.

-Ty E

HOWARD THE DUCK

Willard Huyck (1986)

Howard the Duck presented itself as an avid surrealist experience for me. The film also served as a spiritual holistic medicine that had a very fast affecting rate. I'd always heard internet sites and common folk degrading the film and slamming it constantly. Having half a mind of a child suits me better, as I actually looked forward to watching the most embarrassing moment of George Lucas' career, besides *The Phantom Menace*. There I was, browsing the VHS selection at a pawn shop looking for exquisite 90s horror titles to review for the festive month of Halloween when my peripheral vision lay claim on a mint VHS of *Howard the Duck*. Scrambling, I snatched the film without a second glance. Paying for the bundle, I gave my first shot at *Howard the Duck*, but first I watched the trailer online just to get a glimpse of this "family" film. The future results left me shocked and horrified. Duck tits? This had to be the live-action equivalent of *Fritz the Cat*. When I was watching the film, It took no time to jump right into a cataclysmic event with no explanation. I found myself visually excited to see duck references to "classic film" with little time to get comfy in his alternate mallard universe. I kept repeating the name Willard Huyck in my head. Suddenly, It hit me that the name Willard Huyck rhymes with Mallard Duck. It's been said that Huyck wrote the script with his wife, Gloria Katz. Perhaps this is a pseudonym created by George Lucas, or a fake name. But I won't hold my breath. As we encounter the interactions between Howard and Beverly, the result is a bit of romantic chemistry between many dwarfs in a costume and a 80s vogue punk rocker. I was amazed with how cutting edge on adult humor this film was. Misplaced references to sex and alcohol are meticulously placed within the elongated running time of the film. *Howard the Duck* might be 10 minutes under 2 hours, but the film grants the illusion of it being twice as long. A bit near the end, the pacing seems to slowly chug, which ends my only fault with the film. *Howard the Duck* captures the punk rock scene as well as *Return of the Living Dead* did. The flashy studded leather jackets and the rebellious hair. You walk outside and you encounter this everywhere. The charm's gone and the novelty is non-existent. Something that was so risqué has become a necessity to become noticed. *Howard the Duck* was a pretty rad & sarcastic dude for being covered in feathers and only standing 3'something. To even add to the charm that *Howard the Duck* had, I experienced the film with an amazing person. To relive that childhood feel with someone you care about is a flashback to end all nostalgia. *Howard the Duck* has accidentally become a film very close to my heart, and not even because of its own aesthetics. There's no doubt that the film can't touch the rudeness of the comic, but what was created in its place was a brash and very mature film for all ages. Children's films don't have many cult classics, and it feels like *Howard the Duck* was the first.

HOWARD THE DUCK

-mAQ

NIGHT WARNING

William Asher (1981)

Teenager Billy Lynch has some serious problems: a 'homophobic' cop thinks he is a homo-cidal killer and both his hopelessly neurotic/psychotic aunt Cheryl and gay middle-aged gym coach want to fuck him. After his aunt Cheryl impulsively kills a closeted gay man (the longtime lover of coach Tom Landers) who ignores her emotional and sexual needs, Billy boy is suspected of being the prime suspect in a bizarre homo love triangle by an aggressive fag-bashing police detective named Joe Carlson. In the curiously exploitative slasher flick *Night Warning* (1982) directed by William Asher (who is probably best known for directing silly 'beach party' films like *Beach Party* and *Beach Blanket Bingo*), lustful murder, subconscious oedipal complexes, playful pederasty, awkward teenage sex, and virtually every other popular example of Freudian neurosis is assembled in a way that makes this underrated slasher film shine boldly in a subgenre that is well known for its mindless murder-driven mediocrity, and feeble and contrived formless formulas. Although amateurishly directed and devoid of any sort of genuine artistic merit, *Night Warning* is a film that calculatedly slaughters its mostly forgettable early 1980s contemporaries. Owing more to Alfred Hitchcock's proto-slasher flick *Psycho* (1960) than an intemperate undead retard in a hockey mask, *Night Warning* is a schlocky psychosexual romp through the domesticated sidewalk lands of unchecked suburban perversions. Many people have an eccentric, childless and single aunt in their family, thus *Night Warning* hits close to home as it exaggerates this relatively common phenomenon to a most pestiferous and ambiguously politically incorrect degree. For those that fancy sexually confused and erotically deviant quasi-slasher flicks like Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* (1972) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street Part 2: Freddy's Revenge* (a film that seems to borrow liberally from *Night Warning*), *Night Warning* makes for a pleasantly perverted family affair.

Apparently, *Night Warning* is a bastardized adaptation of the 1981 novel *Butcher, Baker, Nightmare Maker* (a title that is one of many alternative names in which the film was released under) written by Joseph Burgo and Richard Natale; a somewhat obscure literary item that, unsurprisingly, features more secondary characters, subplots, and crucial character back-stories than the simply structured, but audaciously themed film. *Night Warning* also has the distinction and horror fiend honor of being one of the original UK Video Nasty films on the DPP 72 list. Unlike a lot of the Video Nasty flicks (e.g. *Blood Feast*, *The Burning*), which are usually nothing more than plot-less platitudes with the occasional unwarranted murder of a scantily clad whore, *Night Warning* is one of the few works on this dubious, outmoded list that deserves its reputation as a veraciously coldhearted expression of vulgarity and debauchery as the film is an intransigent assault on society itself, especially the sheltered middle-class;

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the segment of society that is most often ideally portrayed in lighthearted, sentimentalist sitcoms. Billy, being a literal bastard and the unconscious desire of two divergently perverted minds, is an unwanted abstraction in suburbia, even if he is a nice chap. Additionally, in a traditional middle-class societies of the past, few individuals were considered more pathetic and repellant than a childless old maid past her aesthetic prime, aside from maybe a childless middle-aged homosexual. In *Night Warning*, all of these socially undesirable (but increasingly more common) ingredients are mingled in a slasher work that was surely prophetic of things to come in postmodern Levittown.

Following in the grand cult cinema tradition of neurotic female murderers, criminals, and sadists prevalent throughout the wonderful works of Poe-possessed auteur Curtis Harrington (*What's the Matter with Helen?*, *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?*), *Night Warning* is a film where sexual repression leads to insensible and wholly cockamamie malevolence of the killing kind. Behind the translucent façade of Aunt Cheryl's pseudo-motherly persona lies an aberrant mind fit for a lobotomy. Unlike most slasher films, *Night Warning* features pop-psychoanalytic reasoning as to why a seemingly normal woman of the suburbs is more fitted for being an unflinching murderer than a warm mother. One could argue that *Night Warning* is ultimately an early work of homo-philia with misogynistic undertones. While the killer is a man-hating suburban wench who literally prays to an altar of failed male conquests, the detective also acts as a sub-antagonist who sees all societal problems as the direct result of sadistic sodomy. Undoubtedly, the most sympathetic character in *Night Warning* is coach Tom; a man who acts as both Billy's surrogate mother and father. While little Bill's abusive aunt wants to keep him imprisoned for life in her provincial madhouse, coach Tom becomes a crucial mentor for the boy and, to the dismay of aunt Cheryl, even attempts to get the lonely lad a college scholarship. Whether Tom is an active member of NAMBLA or not remains to be seen, but what *Night Warning* adds up to is one gutsily outlandish and fortuitously worthwhile slasher flick that has unequivocally left a number of desensitized gorehounds in a startled stupor of perplexed emotions, and delayed and equally muddled responses. Although nominated for the Saturn Award for the Best Horror Movie of 1982 by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror, *Night Warning* failed to earn the prize. Naturally, this does not surprise me as subversive works like *Night Warning* are bound to rub a number of people the wrong way, especially the sort of slasher fan pedigree (I have personally met a number of these people) who fantasizes about being the masked (and often mentally deficient) killer. Of course, I doubt many people can relate to an incestuous middle-aged bird with a childlike fondness for 'playing house' in a real house, but she sure does know how to treat a guest.

-Ty E

SHANKS

William Castle (1974)

A couple years ago, I recall an ex-girlfriend and I having a merry conversation about how many holocaust stories—in their innate improbable absurdity—oftentimes resemble Grimms' Fairy Tales, as if Jews were trying to exploit the childhood fears of Germans (and whites in general) against them while injecting them with a sort of 'reverse of blood libel' via the shoah mythos (after all, as history surely demonstrates, world Jewry certainly knows a thing or two about blood libel accusations). In that sense, I was somewhat intrigued when I discovered that a corny kosher conman like William Castle (*House on Haunted Hill*, *13 Ghosts*)—a sort of poor Hebrew huckster's Hitchcock—concluded his film directing career with a bizarre Grimm-esque filmic fairy tale. Indeed, Castle's shockingly unforgettable and strikingly singular swansong *Shanks* (1974)—a film that, not all that surprisingly, was nearly impossible to find for decades until it was released on DVD by OliveFilms in 2013—is arguably the most covertly kosher fairy tale film ever made, as if the auteur was projecting his own perverted (im)moral perspective on the goyim via the timeless myths of the goyim. Indeed, hinting at heeb-on-shiksa pederasty worthy of *Der Stürmer* and turning the goyim into a sort of herd of morbidly mechanical cattle-cum-golems, the film might be PG-rated but it is unequivocally fucked up and a true testament to Castle's creepy kosher psyche, which is thankfully not camouflaged by too many tasteless gimmicks. With that being said, I still find it to be Castle's most rewarding and unforgettable film, if not for oftentimes seemingly unintentional reasons. A clever hack with an unquestionable talent for successful promotions and gimmicks that got people into theaters to watch films that very few sane people actually wanted to endure, Castle not surprisingly had his greatest hit as producer and not as an 'auteur.' Indeed, *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), which features the director-turned-producer in a Hitchcockian cameo, is undoubtedly the most noteworthy film that Castle ever worked on and he was thankfully smart enough to get fellow Israelite Roman Polanski to direct it. Of course, as a film based on a novel by fellow tribesman Ira Levin with both covert and overt Jewish satantists tricking some dumb young shiksa broad into being raped by the Devil and ultimately getting impregnated with the bastard son of Satan as a sort of anti-Mother Mary figure, *Rosemary's Baby* ultimately exposed Castle's sense of racial loyalty and playful contempt for the dumb goyim, albeit in a slightly more sinister fashion than the countless largely worthless schlock films that he actually directed. With *Shanks*, Castle not only revealed certain racial hostilities, but also some rather odd, if not downright odious, personal obsessions.

Undoubtedly, it is symbolic of Castle's talent-for-promotion-over-art and strong Judaic identity that he created publicity for a fake German play entitled *Das ist nicht für Kinder* (aka *Not For Children*) ostensibly penned by a fake aristocratic

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Jewish playwright named Ludwig von Herschfeld (also Castle's invention) starring self-loathing krautess Ellen Schwanneke (who apparently fled Germany after Uncle Adolf invaded Czechoslovakia) by vandalizing the outside of Stony Creek Theatre, which he just leased from none other than Orson Welles, with painted swastikas to make it seem as if he was being attacked by bloodthirsty National Socialists. In short, not unlike some ADL lawyer, Castle had a seemingly instinctual knack for exploiting persecution for profit, albeit in a vaguely artistic fashion. Apparently, swastika graffiti charade was a great formative experience for Castle as it taught him the power of publicity and even led to him being hired by much hated Hebraic studio head Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures where he eventually had the honor of working as an associate producer on his old pal Orson Welles' classic film noir *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947). Aside from his early work in theater and brief collaboration with Welles, Castle would not dare to dabble with something resembling real art again until the very end of his career when he produced *Rosemary's Baby* and directed *Shanks*. While I think very little of most of his work, these two films alone warrant Castle being remembered as a notable figure of American cinema. Needless to say, Castle's final film, which naturally features Judaic stars, deals with themes of persecution and radiates a certain (slightly hermetic) Hebraic essence. According to Castle in his own memoir *Step Right Up!: I'm Gonna Scare the Pants off America* (1976), he initially had no intention to direct *Shanks* and only decided to when the film's exceedingly eccentric star Marcel Marceau—a French-Jewish mime famous for his 'Bip the Clown' stage persona—talked him into it. Apparently wanting total control over the production, Marceau must have seen Castle as a weak director and exploited him thusly, hence why the film seems quite different from most of the other various entries in the director's fairly large and eclectic oeuvre (while best known for horror, the director worked in virtually every single genre while working as a for-hire studio hack before going independent in the late-1950s). Still, the film is pure and unadulterated Castle in terms of its shameless semitic schlock factor. Indeed, there is certainly a reason that John Waters has an eternal hard-on for Castle. Either way, *Shanks* features Castle's most Jewy character as a nebbish schlemiel and pathetic putz of the super schmendrick sort as portrayed by a literal kosher clown with a wild and wiry Jewfro.

In his book *Artists of the Right: Resisting Decadence* (2012), kiwi political scholar and esotericist Kerry Bolton notes in regard to the metapolitical Weltanschauung of the great American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft that he, "...saw Jewish representation in the arts as responsible for what Francis Parker Yockey would call 'culture distortion.' New York City had been 'completely Semiticized' and lost to the 'national fabric.' The Semitic influence in literature, drama, finance, and advertising created an artificial culture and ideology 'radically hostile to the virile American attitude.'" Undoubtedly, as both a horror fan and some-

one that can surely relate to Lovecraft, I must say that *Shanks* is a somewhat more esoteric expression of semitic culture distortion in celluloid form, so naturally it should be no surprise that it is also the sort of film that Freud might see as a mild masturbation aid due to its odd oneiric wet dream tone and focus on the complete and utter manipulation of other people as puppets. Indeed, if there is any film that more clearly depicts the stereotypical Judaic fantasy of completely controlling and manipulating the goyim like puppets, it is Castle's curiously, if not creepily, captivating swansong. While featuring outwardly Occidental story conventions of Grimms' Fairy Tales, the film is unequivocally covertly kosher in terms of its dubious sentiments/message and (lack of) morality, which of course is one of the main (yet less obvious) reasons as to why the film is so particularly anomalous. Aside from the film's strong covertly kosher character, it is also a sort of aesthetically schizophrenic cinematic artifact that might be best described as seeming like what might happen if the brain-damaged bastard son of Jacques Tati and Vampira directed a playful zombie film sans blood and guts. While the film technically does not feature what is conventionally called zombies, it does include undead beings of the reanimated corpse variety and they can kill. In fact, one might assume by reading the film's promotional material that it was a pro-zombie affair as indicated by the curious description of the film as, "a new concept in the macabre in which the Good come out of the grave and the Evil are sent to fill the vacancy." From a Hebraic horror angle, these sort of mechanized corpses certainly be seen as a twisted post-religious twist on the Jewish folklore tale of the Kabbalistic anthropomorphic 'golem' being (which, of course, is a story that has influenced a variety of films ranging from the German Expressionist classic *The Golem: How He Came Into the World* (1920) directed by Carl Boese and Paul Wegener to the mostly mediocre Roddy McDowell vehicle *It!* (1967), among countless other examples). While star Marceau attempted to make Castle promise that *Shanks* would not be a horror movie like most of his famous films, the film clearly straddles a refreshingly blurry line between horror and fantasy, which is undoubtedly one of its more positive attributes. In fact, it is easily the eeriest and most unsettling Castle film that I have ever seen (which I guess isn't saying much). Likewise, it is also the artiest and most idiosyncratic Castle movie that I have ever seen, as if the filmmaker just caught a Georges Franju marathon and forgot he wanted to be the hokey heeb Hitchcock for a second. In short, *Shanks* is something resembling art from someone I thought was incapable of art, but then again star Marceau (who notably plays two very different roles), screenwriter Randal Graham, and Academy Award-winning cinematographer Joseph Biroc (*It's a Wonderful Life*, *Ulzana's Raid*) also made serious creative contributions to the film. Interestingly, despite not even being well known when it was released, the film's musical score by Jewish composer Alex North (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Spartacus*), which incorporates motifs that were originally commissioned for (but notoriously rejected by

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Stanley Kubrick) for 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), was actually nominated for Best Music, Original Dramatic Score for the 47th Academy Awards in 1975.

Set in a world that, somewhat paradoxically, seems simultaneously anachronistic yet timeless, childish yet senile and perverse yet wholesome, Shanks is somewhat of an admirable failure that has much to interest cinephiles beyond its strange collection of collaborators. Indeed, aside from featuring elements of a trashed Kubrick score and notable performances like a very young and virile Don Calfa of *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985) fame as a sadistic biker bro, the film seems to be Castle's curious attempt at making a sort of silent film, which makes sense considering it stars a famous mime in the almost-too-fitting role of a simple-minded deaf-mute. While the film does feature some sparse dialogue, the story is told with the help of simplistic silent era style title cards and the film even features a sepia tone sequence in what is arguably the most 'darkly poetic' moment of the entire film. While Castle reveals very little respect for the actual art of filmmaking in his memoir, it seems like he actually had fun making Shanks, as if he knew it would never be any sort of hit and simply used the opportunity to do what he always wanted to do. Although just speculation, I cannot help but think the film was also largely inspired by Castle's nostalgia for the silent era films of his youth. After all, in 1963 Castle took the artistic risk of directing a subpar remake of James Whale's pre-Code horror-comedy *The Old Dark House* (1932). While directed by legendary gay Englishman Whale, the screenplay was actually penned by British Jewish playwright turned politician and Zionist activist Benn W. Levy, hence the kosher character of the humor that probably appealed to Castle.

As if he assumes the audience are retarded children (his lifelong career of cinematic gimmicks certainly hints at this), Shanks begins with a rather literal intertitle that reads, "William Castle PRESENTS A Grim Fairy Tale." Of course, the film is certainly Castle's equivalent to Curtis Harrington's *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?* (1971) in terms of its Grimm-esque adult fairy tale quality (also, both films are inhabited by quirky Judaic stars). At the very beginning of the film, deaf-mute puppeteer Malcolm Shanks (Marcel Marceau)—an expert lip reader with the spirit of a child who is surely an idiotic savant of sorts—is depicted giving a puppet show using marionettes modeled after friends and family members to happy kids while his beautiful blonde love interest Celia (Cindy Eilbacher) and an eccentric old inventor-cum-dandy named 'Old Walker' (also Marceau) watch on in ecstatic delight. While his sadistic sister Mrs. Barton (Jerusalem-born Belgian Jewess Tsilla Chelton, who was part of Marceau's troupe) and alcoholic brother-in-law Mr. Barton (Philippe Clay, who was also part of the troupe) see Malcolm as a loser and mock his peculiar puppeteer talents, Old Walker is so delighted with his puppet show that he takes him under his wing as a lab assistant at his rather quaint gothic mansion where he does morally dubious yet ultimately successful scientific experiments involving the use of electricity

to reanimate dead animals, including frogs and chickens. Naturally, when Old Walker unexpectedly croaks, Malcolm decides to use the reanimating method on him, thereupon symbolically becoming the master of the dead master (after all, Malcolm was Old Walker's protege). As a proud puppet-master, it is not hard for Malcolm to make the transition from fiddling with marionettes to the undead, though it is somewhat creepy how much unexpected joy it brings to his initially rather bleak and stagnant life. Of course, Old Walker is not the only corpse that Malcolm decides to reanimate as simple bad luck among certain fearsome family members eventually provides him with an entire troupe of completely subservient undead human-puppets.

As the sole breadwinner of his decidedly dysfunctional family, Malcolm naturally comes into trouble when he dares to withhold some money from his savagely stupid dipsomaniacal brother-in-law, who is such a mean-spirited bully bastard that he smashes an Old Walker puppet that hapless protagonist was in the process of making. Luckily, Malcolm gets revenge by (somewhat unintentionally) killing Mr. Barton with a surprisingly deadly zombie chicken in what proves to be an absurdly stupid Castle-esque death scene. Thankfully, Malcolm's luck doesn't run out that day as his similarly abusive sister is killed in a ludicrously lackluster suburban hit-in-run accident while she is, rather ironically, attempting to prevent her reanimated husband from getting hit by a car. While Malcolm eventually buries the corpse of Old Walker out of respect for his generous mentor, he takes great joy in cavorting around town with his reanimated sister and brother-in-law while completely controlling them just as they once controlled him. Not longer a violence dysfunctional family that trades punches and kicks for hugs and kisses, Malcolm even seems to have a lot of fun simply watching TV with his personality-less family members, which was not a privilege he was afforded when they were officially still alive. For whatever reason, Malcolm even thinks it is a good idea to flagrantly flaunt his undead family members and their odd (read: completely unnatural) body contortions to his childlike love interest Celia. Quite predictably, Celia—a seemingly underage little lass that practically radiates virginal purity and untarnished goodness—gets a little freaked out when she eventually realizes that the Bartons are literal dead meat, but she is also extremely excited about a birthday party that Malcolm has planned for her and, like women tend to do, is willing to overlook the dubious complexities of the undead family dynamic. For Celia's present birthday, Malcolm is preparing a cute marionette modeled after her. Unfortunately, she will not live long enough to properly enjoy it.

For her big birthday celebration, Malcolm prepares Celia a sort of lavish Victorian dinner where the guest of honor sports a beautiful white gown that was owned by Old Walker's assumedly-long-dead wife and the zombie Bartons act as both the servants and entertainment. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end and the fun and games come to a swift and ugly conclusion when the

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mansion is quite unexpectedly invaded by a small gang of bikers led by a big buff buffoon named Goliath (Biff Manard). While the bikers initially entered the mansion in a desperate attempt to revive their leader Beethoven (Phil Adams) after he fatally crashed his motorcycle on a road nearby the estate, the outlaws soon forget their dead leader and immediately begin following the lead of Goliath as he encourages them to fulfill stereotypical negative biker stereotypes like raping, pillaging, and even killing. Indeed, despite a noble attempt made by his haggard old lady 'Mata Hair' (Helena Kallianiotis) to stop him, Goliath decides to rape assumed virgin Celia. Meanwhile, a biker with the somewhat fitting name 'Einstein' (Don Calfa) plays around with Old Walker's experiments after Malcolm is beaten and tied up. When Malcolm eventually escapes from his bondage, he is greatly dismayed to discover Celia's corpse lying outside in the yard. While the bikers further demonstrate their affinity for mindless sadism by playing around with the undead Bartons using Malcolm's remote control, the vengeful protagonist opts to unearth Old Walker and uses him to execute a murderous revenge campaign against the savage biker outlaws. After zombie Old Walker strangles and drowns most of the bikers, Malcolm gets in an epic Rocky-esque fistfight with Goliath on top of the roof of the mansion that eventually results in the latter falling to his death. In a display of poetic necrophilia, Malcolm then reanimates Celia's corpse and the two begin to dance romantically in what is a literal *Danse Macabre* moment. Somewhat unfortunately, the film does not end there, but instead comes full-circle and returns to the very beginning, thereupon ultimately revealing that the entire story is bogus and was nothing more than the protagonist's sick twisted fantasy. In the end, the film concludes with a quote from the great British satirist William Makepeace Thackeray that reads: "Come... let us shut up the box and the puppets = for our play is played out." Interestingly, while Castle certainly did not know it at the time as he "felt 1975 would be a big year" for him as a filmmaker and he certainly did not plan for Shanks to be his swansong, Thackeray's quote ultimately proved to be a fitting coda to his filmmaking career.

Notably, in his memoir, Castle claims that Marcel Marceau, who was naively hoping that Shanks would "play forever," once asked after they finished the film: "Be truthful with me, Bill. Do you think that SHANKS will be better than ROSEMARY'S BABY?" It seems that Castle had a pretty good idea of his talents (or lack thereof) as a filmmaker and was not exactly satisfied with the final result of his film as he apparently replied to Marceau by stating, "I don't know, Marcel. You were great, but I think I might have failed you. Your world of mime and my world of horror may not mix. Only the audience will tell us." Unfortunately, after more than four decades, the audience has spoken as Shanks is hardly considered one of Castle's classic films, let alone any sort of horror classic or otherwise, which is rather unfortunate as, I for one, personally feel it is his

most artistically merited film. Indeed, the film is just too innately idiosyncratic for the masses, including film dork and seemingly most Castle fans.

While Stanley Kubrick was so cryptic and sensitive (?) about his actually quite stereotypical New York City Jewish intellectual background to the point where he would actively erase all Jewish traces from his source material (e.g. *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)), British Jewish film scholar Nathan Abrams argues in his insightful text *Stanley Kubrick: New York Jewish Intellectual* (2018)—a book that is, somewhat ironically, arguably as incriminating as Kevin McDonald's classic *The Culture of Critique* (1998) in terms of exposing the hermetic motivations of Hebrews—that all of the American auteur's films are, at the very least, covertly kosher. In fact, Abrams even argues that Kubrick actively sought to destroy all prints of his first feature *Fear and Desire* (1953) because the film is too overtly personal and, in turn, Jewish as is especially personified by the character Private Sidney (played by fellow Jew and future filmmaker Paul Mazursky)—a sort of implicitly Judaic stand-in for the filmmaker—who is hardly a flattering portrayal of a Hebrew soldier as he is a psychologically feeble intellectual that not only suffers from debilitating paranoia and posttraumatic stress, but he also senselessly murders a young fisherwoman (Virginia Leith) after disturbingly attempting to molest her. Undoubtedly, the titular character of *Shanks* will probably seem similarly disturbing to most white gentile viewers as his peculiar behavior and questionable motivations are similarly kosherly curious. Surely, it is no great irony that, whereas as a great filmmaker like Kubrick started his career with his most incriminatingly and unflatteringly kosher character, Castle concluded his career with such a character.

While the Kubrick and Castle had next to nil in common, there is still this glaring perennial Jewish connection and it is impossible to truly understand either filmmaker without taking it into serious consideration. In fact, just as Kubrick did with his films, Castle opted to drop any mention of Jewishness and antisemitism for his Crusades period action-adventure film *The Saracen Blade* (1954) despite those racially-charged elements being central themes of American negro Frank Yerby's source novel. Incidentally, both men also married blonde Aryan women (indeed, while Kubrick curiously married the niece of great Nazi era auteur Veit Harlan, Castle married a Dutch immigrant). Of course, all the main ingredients of Castle's swansong are completely kosher and, in my less than humble opinion, it is nearly impossible to completely appreciate the film without considering these facts. Whether it was inspired by ancient Aryan fairy tales or not, there is no way that a goy could have ever directed a film like *Shanks*. While I seriously doubt Castle would appreciate it, I cannot help think of the strangely otherworldly Judaic quality of the film and be reminded of Alfred Rosenberg words, "The life of a race does not represent logically developed philosophy nor even the unfolding of a pattern according to natural law, but rather the development of a mystical synthesis, an activity of soul, which cannot be explained

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rationally, nor can it be conceived through a study of cause and effect.” Indeed, it is easy to point to perversion and control fantasies when attempting explain the implicit Jewishness of Castle’s film, but it is ultimately more of a visceral metaphysical matter when it comes to such a particularly preternatural cinematic work.

Undoubtedly, Abrams’ book is not just helpful in terms of studying Kubrick semi-esoteric Jewishness, but also when it comes to Jewish films and characters in general, especially of the male persuasion. In that sense, it is no coincidence that the worst villains of Shanks are virtual a stereotype for all the things that Ashkenazi Jews have historically loathed about European gentile masculinity. Indeed, as Abrams explains in regard to the Jewish ‘ethnical’ code of *menschlikayt*, it, “...rejected goyim naches, a phrase that ‘broadly describes non-Jewish activities and pursuits supposedly antithetical to a Jewish sensibility and temperament.’ Literally meaning ‘pleasure for/of the gentiles,’ [...] It can therefore also be interpreted to mean a ‘preoccupation with the body, sensuality, rashness, and ruthless force,’ as manifested in such physical activities as bearing arms, horse riding, dueling, jousting, archery, wrestling, hunting, orgies, and sports in general. Denied the right to participate in such activities, Jews instead denigrated them, consequently also disparaging those very characteristic that in European culture defined a man as manly: physical strength, martial activity, competitive drive, and aggression.” While they might not be completely conscious of this while watching it, white gentile viewers will ultimately find Malcolm Shanks’ exceedingly inexplicable behavior, lack of masculinity, and almost pathological passivity to be the most ‘horrifying’ aspect of the film and not the dumb bikers, who are little more than muscular ciphers. Indeed, just as Henry Frankenstein is the true monster of James Whale’s *Frankenstein* (1931), so is the eponymous protagonist the real ‘monster’ of Castle’s film, though I seriously doubt Castle and Marceau—two Jewish outsiders—would agree with that as they surely highly identify with these cinematic creatures. But then again, the film was advertised with the poster tagline, “Deliciously Grotesque.” For better or worse, Castle is a sort of classic cult film legend. As demonstrated by his cameos in classic New Hollywood era flicks like Hal Ashby’s *Shampoo* (1975) and John Schlesinger’s *The Day of the Locust* (1975), Castle had already even achieved the respected cult icon status among great director of the era shortly before he died even though his horror films had already become quite passé. A couple decades later, Joe Dante would pay tribute to the filmmaker with the Castle-esque hero portrayed by John Goodman in *Matinee* (1993). Castle certainly earned his star Marcel Marceau’s lifelong respect, as the Hebraic frog states in the Jeffrey Schwarz doc *Spine Tingle! The William Castle Story* (2007) that, “I think he was a wonderful director” and he even describes Shanks as a film where, “Everything was poetic.” Indeed, in a sick twisted semitic way, like if Bruno Schulz had the spirit of an extroverted businessman, the film is the poetic final

word of a shameless schlockmeister that one would assume didn't have a single poetic bone in his entire body. In short, the film that manages to shatter certain stereotypes while also painfully upholding others. While I usually would not be able to stomach Judaized Teutonic fairy tales that are blessed with everything from the baroque to bathos, Shanks reminded me that sometimes effectively eerie fantastic horror is possible via cross-cultural mongrelization.

-Ty E

SIMON SAYS
SIMON SAYS

William Dear (2007)

From the director that brought us such clever classics (Sarcasm, can you dig it?) as *Wild America* and *Angels in the Outfield*, Director William Dear directs this straight to video slasher film. What makes a film horrible? It might be the lack of personal ambition put into a film but that seems hard to do anyways with a slasher film. This is a prime example of a film that undermines its own product thus creating a prompt and ultimately fun horror film. The plot might sound very familiar so I give you a warning of repetition. A group of muscle bound, stoner, super attractive friends go into the country to camp and have premarital sex. Wow, how cleverly original. What starts off as a superimposed horror film turns brainsy and ballsy with the introduction to Crispin Glover. Crispin Glover plays Simon/Stanley, a double role with the normal ferocity and madness that accompanies every Glover role or film. This stupid quintuplet of masculinity and naivety find themselves at a store in the middle of nowhere managed by the two brothers (Crispin Glover and Crispin Glover). Prior to this engagement, they meet up with two deus ex machina's who warn them of twins and murders. Of course, they don't listen. That decision should immediately be regretted. The body count rises due to flying pick axes. So there is the typical plot twist and surprise ending, but I didn't find it annoying at all. It only made the film that more enjoyable. So, to answer your question. Was it bad? Yes it was bad, but that does not stop me from telling you to watch this film at all cost. You might hate it and spread words about how stupid it is but frankly, that is what it is about; Unbridled fun. William Dear has created a horror film that promotes alcoholism, subliminally telling you to crack open a cold one while watching this. Now why should you see this one whereas ignore all the copycats? This film has a load of surprises. Grand scenery is one. The luscious outdoors were captured perfectly. As for the acting? Crispin Glover is a marvel on screen. He is truly an enigma on and off the set. His screams and signature anger spit are intact and creates the entire mood of the film. Without Glover, this one would have fallen flat on its face. If you enjoy buckets of gore, Crispin Glover, stupid people being slaughtered, flying pick axes, or wicked CGI booby traps with more fake limbs to shake a stick at, I definitely recommend this film. Just don't take it too seriously. Er.. Simon says don't take it too seriously.

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William E. Jones° (1997)

While I cannot be completely sure as I am not exactly a cocksucker connoisseur, I have to assume that American experimental filmmaker William E. Jones (Massillon, *Is It Really So Strange?*) is easily one of the foremost authorities on esoteric queer cultural history and anthropology and when it comes to his films, probably no other work demonstrates his lifelong obsession for hermetic homophilia than his somewhat minimalistic avant-garde doc *Finished* (1997). Described on the filmmaker's own website as "a detective story and a love story, a film noir bathed in sunlight," the somewhat dreamlike and disturbing yet sometimes strangely solacing doc attempts to deconstruct and reassemble the curious cocksucking life and seemingly senseless suicide of a deeply troubled Marxism-lobotomized French-Canadian gay porn star named Alan Lambert (né Alain LeBeau), who Jones developed a somewhat unhealthy infatuation after seeing him in an advertisement for a sleazy phone sex service. As a documentarian that studied under prominent American Structuralist filmmakers like James Benning (11 x 14, *Landscape Suicide*) and Thom Andersen (*Eadweard Muybridge*, *Zoopraxographer*, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*), it should be no surprise that Jones would become a sort of singular master of montage oriented meta-fag film essays, but what makes his work different from both his elders and contemporaries is that he dares to use this cultivated celluloid form to tackle seemingly ludicrously lowbrow subjects like suicidal sod porn stars, albeit in an almost pathologically personalized way that makes one speculate that the auteur may be the most loneliest and most obsessive queer filmmaker working today. While a seemingly cynically titled work for a film about an exceedingly nihilist homo porn star with delusions of grandeur who blew his brains out in public during the holiday season while he was at both his physical and intellectual peak, *Finished* is ultimately an inordinately empathetic postmortem love letter as written by a man with the spirit of a lovelorn teenage girl who has become decidedly disillusioned yet seemingly no less sexually infatuated with the somewhat enigmatic object of his desire, thereupon making for an uniquely unsettling yet strangely touching celluloid experience about the hollows of devotion, especially when you're a gawky art fag with the temperament of an elderly antique dealer. I have always assumed that most porn stars are fucked up people that probably got molested as children and my research has proven to me that my suspicions are not completely unwarranted, but tragic Canuck chuff chum Lambert was indubitably fucked up in his own special way, as a sort of self-stylized commie messiah with a seemingly split personality who only subscribed to Marxism because he hoped it would eventually lead to a sort of apocalyptic anarchism that left the entire world in flames (had he discovered the writings of Oswald Spengler, Lambert might have chosen to take a slightly different path in life). A man that can be adequately described as a

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remarkably less talented kindred spirit of Japanese warrior-poet Yukio Mishima, Lambert felt that ending his life at the mere age of 25 whilst at as his absolute personal peak as a beefcake neo-bolshevik was the right way to go because, as his suicide letter revealed, he adamantly believed that he would be reincarnated and thus did not have to fear death. A work that manages to do the seemingly impossible by making a connection between the films of Hollywood maverick Frank Capra with military-themed poof pornos and a sort of metaphysical approach to Marx, Jones' film is like a Mark Rappaport flick except with an uneasy heart and minus the shallow and obnoxiously self-conscious Jewish NYC post-modern intellectualism. A sort of elegant yet obscene poetical celluloid obit and last rites created by a total stranger that seems to have more care and concern for the departed than his own family members, *Finished* is a film that will ultimately cause you to never look at porn the same way again.

Somewhat curiously, before even featuring the somewhat strange and ironical inter-title "Starring Alan Lambert" (surely, the porn star would have been somewhat embarrassed by the film), *Finished* opens with an excerpt from the ending of Frank Capra's anti-fascist parable *Meet John Doe* (1941) starring Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck juxtaposed with auteur Jones narrating, "I once became infatuated with someone I could never know. He was a loner and rebel... a tragic character determined to sacrifice himself for some high purpose. Most people dismissed him as a lunatic or fraud, but they had been deceived by appearances. I wanted to fall into his arms and say that I cared about him for who he really was. He didn't have to throw himself into the abyss. Love could redeem him. The tragedy could have been avoided and a happy ending worthy of Hollywood. Unfortunately, it did not turn out that way... not for me, nor for the object of my desire." In the scene, Cooper's character is about to end his life by jumping off of a building, but Stanwyck stops him by passionately embracing him while declaring her love for him and sobbing hysterically like a little girl who has broken her dolly. As Jones will explain towards the end of the film, he sees tragic gay porn star Alan Lambert as Cooper's character and Stanwyck as himself (indeed, it seems Jones is a 'bottom'), but of course, unlike the Capra flick, there is no contrived happy ending at the decidedly dejecting conclusion of *Finished*, which ultimately reminds the viewer that infatuation can be a hefty emotional investment that rarely pays off (though Jones' certainly did, as it resulted in this film). Jones saw Lambert's image for the first time in a superficially salacious sex hot-line advertisement and he was so impressed with the seemingly hairless Canadian heartthrob's chiseled masculine beauty that he immediately cut out the photo, which is naturally featured prominently during the film. About a year after Jones began using the photo as an assumed masturbation aid, Lambert killed himself, thus leaving the filmmaker somewhat heartbroken, or as he states in the doc, "I was moved by Alan's death, even though I had never met him. For me, he existed as an image, not as a real person, but in a way that did

not make him any less important. Alan reminded me of the first time I remember seeing men having sex together. When I was young, I didn't realize that men did such things until I saw a pornographic magazine." Equipped with the somewhat esoteric research tools of about twenty different trashy gay porn flicks and a "rambling and pompous" ten-page suicide letter that the porn star had sent to various friends before offing himself, Jones hoped to unlock the mystery behind Alan Lambert and his untimely and inexplicable act of self-slaughter, but fate ultimately had different plans for the filmmaker that did not really involve really truly unmasking the mad mensch behind the mask. Indeed, instead of discovering a masculine dude that just happened to get down and dirty with other masculine dudes, Jones was confronted with an exceptionally troubled self-stylized loser and irredeemable rectal ranger who had a more extreme case of the perturbed psychological profile proposed by German-American social philosopher Eric Hoffer in his classic work *The True Believer: Thoughts On The Nature Of Mass Movements* (1951).

By killing himself a couple days before Christmas in a public park, Québécois queer Lambert revealed that he probably did not have a close relationship with his family and naturally found the holiday season completely intolerable for that very reason, yet the porn star apparently deluded himself into believing that his seemingly senseless act of self-slaughter was a deadly serious "political statement" that would allow him to be reincarnated after the birth of the sort of apocalyptic dystopian world that he strangely so deeply longed for, as if societal chaos would result in his attainment of moral refurbishment. As a man that starred in fag fuck flicks with predictably stupid and unimaginative titles like *Bare Bottoms*, *Beach Dreamer*, *Boot Camp*, *The Trenches*, and *Brother Trouble*, Lambert probably did not have much to be proud of, especially for a man that dreamed of getting a mundane bureaucratic civil service job. As highlighted in the film, the messianic Marxist sex worker was a "bottom" (aka the person that gets fucked) who once starred in a buggery based blue movie entitled *Brother Trouble* where, as Jones remarks in a rather random instance of porn trivia, "Chris Dano, a model who is half-black and half-Hawaiian, fucks Alan Lambert by a roaring fire in a mountain lodge. Shortly after this scene was shot, due to a change in law enforcement policies, it became illegal in the state of Georgia to sell videos in which a black man fucks a white man. Some producers discontinued sales in Georgia and others, wishing to sell their products in every state, stopped including interracial scenes in their videos." While Jones seems to think otherwise, it is quite indisputable that one has certainly reached rock bottom when they have been filmed being anally pillaged by an exquisitely mongrelized mulatto butt pirate. After starring in eighteen porn flicks between 1988-1990, Lambert decided to quit the industry for about a year and during that time he gained twenty-five pounds of muscle and got a tan in the hope that he could stage a big comeback that would ultimately only last two films, with the

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sod sex worker's pornographic swansong being a scene where he "fucks himself" with a giant dildo modeled from porn star Chris Lord's uncut cock. Ultimately, Lambert's final masturbatory scene proved to be a sort of morbid metaphor for his stranger-than-fiction life of intricate self-deception, intemperate narcissism, and inevitably nihilistic self-obliteration.

As Jones explains, a porn star named "L" (notably, virtually all the people mentioned in the film are described with pseudonymous single letters so as to protect their identities) was one of the last people to get to know and befriend Lambert, who he immediately was intrigued by because he proudly "said he was superior to normal people" and had interesting "apocalyptic speculations," including that he "anticipated the fall of capitalism in near future." While "L" and Lambert were set to star in a porn flick with one another, the latter was forced to quit the production after the former found a small hemorrhoid on buttocks, which was a serious cosmetic blemish for a power bottom that was to be filmed being fucked in the ass. The night before Lambert was forced to quit the film, he and "L" fucked and bonded over their mutual suicide fantasies with one another, but only the former actually acted upon his obsession with violent self-slaughter. As Jones states at this point in the doc, "Alan's name, his work in the sex industry, his air of superiority, his premature death... They all remind me of a quote from *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*: 'Beauty is a form of Genius—is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation.'" Of course, as his almost pathetic yet strangely admirable obsession with the subject potently demonstrates, Jones certainly needs an explanation and thus is not too delighted to learn that Lambert was more of a passive-aggressive commie crackpot than a true man of genius.

While Jones hoped that he would find some special insights into Lambert's character and actions upon reading his ten-page suicide letter, he was ultimately left even more confused, or as the director states himself while sounding like a hopelessly literal-minded and pedantic college English professor, "Unfortunately I found the letter completely baffling. Alan wrote in a convoluted styled and used words in a way I didn't understand. At times, it seemed as if he had invented his own vocabulary." Notably, Lambert's letter opens with the following sentences, "This text was written in the last hours before my death. It exists, on one hand, to try to explain to you why you must not associate my death with the despair of a man in the face of the absurdity of his existence and, on the other hand, it exists to permit whatever individual who, in retracing my path, would wish to make sense of my intentions." As a man that wrote a suicide letter featuring individual segments with titles like "Manifesto of the Communist Party" and "Hedonist," it seems that Lambert never realized that he was involved with the very same industry that his commie comrades might describe as the height of "capitalist exploitation." As Jones explains regarding the typical shelf-life of a gay porn star, "The career of a successful performer often follows a familiar tra-

jectory. At first, he breaks into the industry as rough trade; a butch type being serviced by his partners. Gradually, he will perform a greater diversity of sex acts on camera. Eventually, he assumes the role of a bottom; getting fucked by newcomers who will eventually become bottoms themselves. The same pattern repeats itself over and over because the strategies for butching it up inevitably wears thin or expose themselves as just that: strategies.” While Lambert was apparently at the best physical shape of his life when he put a bullet in his brain, his cocksucking celebrity was waning and apparently he was well aware of that fact. As a semi-butch beefcake bum chum that gave off the illusion of raw and adulterated masculinity yet was really a self-absorbed queen with a brain that seemed more scattered than that of the average Ritalin-popping teenage girl, Lambert, like many gay male porn stars, was what Jones describes as a ‘Muscle Mary’ and hardly the super stoic Übermensch that was dripping with testosterone that the filmmaker imagined he was, hence his seemingly split-personality as a messianic Marxist nancy-boy whose crowning achievement was offing himself during the most merry time of the year.

As Jones rightly notes regarding his subject’s somewhat hypocritical life, “In his pursuit of physical and spiritual perfection, Alan sought control and yet by his own choice he submitted himself to a system which consumed him.” Despite routinely taking pulsating purple-headed custard chuckers in the man-cunt from young twinks for a living, Alan somehow managed to convince some of his friends that he was a sort of “great intellectual” and misunderstand genius who would only achieve greatness when the world collapsed. Indeed, when Jones attempted to get information from two of these seemingly brainwashed friends, “R” and “D,” they treated him with great mistrust and more or less refused to volunteer any pertinent information for such a meager art film. As Jones humorously notes, “Alain wrote in his suicide letter, ‘If I had \$1 million bucks I would choose the best crew and realizes this fucking movie I’ve always wanted to see.’ Perhaps his two disciples were waiting for a call from a major studio.” Jones was eventually able to gain the confidence of a Montreal man named “M” who befriended Alan after the latter serviced him while working as a so-called ‘erotic masseur’ from the comfort of his own home. Apparently, while helping men experience a little sexual relief for profit, Alain would blast Mozart and discuss Marx in what must have been an absurd scenario to witness. According to “M,” Lambert attended a graduate program while financially supporting himself as both a hustler and peepshow dancer in Montreal’s gay village. Not surprisingly, Alan apparently saw sex work as nothing more than a “tedious necessity” and ultimately longed for a banal yet fairly comfortable life as a government bureaucrat/civil servant, but at the same time he firmly embraced the decline of the Occident and thought that any attempt to reverse said decline would only slow down the process and thus should be avoided at all costs. Of course, as Jones notes regarding Alan, “He was a would-be-revolutionary...defeated before he

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had even begun,” but I guess that is what one should expect from a man that delighted in the thought of Armageddon.

Towards the conclusion of *Finished*, Jones confesses that he failed in his mission to unravel all the details of Lambert’s lurid life and that he could not bring himself to uncover all the details of his life even if he had the capacity to because, as he rather frankly states, “I wanted my story of Alan Lambert, Porn Star Messiah, to remain intact.” Indeed, it seems that all of his research led to Jones becoming completely disillusioned and dejected by his subject as expressed by his sullen narration, “When I first encountered Alan’s letter, all my expectation were confounded. Instead of radical politics, I found an attitude of complete self-absorption. A distaste for the real work of politics had led Alan to embrace a passive and irrational position. The only way to imagine social change was through an apocalypse.” While Jones certainly does not have all the answers, he offers some provocative speculation as to what made Lambert tick and why he killed himself, narrating, “I began to suspect that Alan’s messianic fantasies served a prosaic purpose. As a sex worker, he sold his body and at the same time he wished to transcend his body. His philosophy may have been a means to escape the alienation of the sexual economy. His mystical preoccupations kept him from acknowledging that he was a mere tool...a cog in a machine.” Ultimately, at the end of the film, Jones neatly packages everything together by managing to establish a connection between cinema, Lambert, and *Finished* itself, narrating, “...in the intervening century, motion pictures did achieve a kind of victory over death, but in the case of Alan Lambert I am left with doubt about the human cost extracted in the process. Even as he died by his own hand, Alan may have known he would have obtained immortality by means of a cinematic illusion. What he could not know was the exact form of his reincarnation. Alan probably would have disagreed with the conclusion I have reached with my investigation. I’ve become disillusioned with a figure I once thought held great promise, but it’s possible that in some way Allan never could have predicted I fulfilled a modest part of his ambition.” Indeed, on top of outlining Lambert’s whacked-out metapolitical *Weltanschauung*, *Finished* is also probably the only film ever made that does not feature the French Canadian porn star being manhandled by some degenerate fuckboy.

During *Finished*, auteur William E. Jones states regarding his foredoomed subject, “I hadn’t expected such complex thoughts from a gay porn model,” but I suspect that filmmaker’s quip is exactly the sort of sentiment that pushed queer Queeb Alain Lambert completely over the edge in the first place as a young man that had good looks and apparently some brains yet had reduced himself to being rectally reamed on the sleazy sod screen for the viewing pleasure of poof perverts who saw him as nothing more than a hunk of meat that was only fit to be meticulously defiled like a prison punk in a post-Apartheid South African penitentiary. Undoubtedly, my impression is that director Jones finds Lambert to be a terribly

tragic figure because he cannot fathom that such a hopelessly handsome hunk would be so unhinged as to irrevocably destroy his striking body and wipe himself off the face of this earth for eternity. While Jones states, "The loss of his superficial attributes was his tragedy," he ironically would not have ever even considering directing the film were it not for Lambert's "superficial attributes," which are notably emphasized in a fetishistic yet somewhat ethereal fashion throughout the entirety of *Finished*. Indeed, after watching the doc, I cannot help but feel that Jones mourns Lambert a whole lot less than he does the loss of the fantasy fuck film stud that he initially encountered in the phone sex ad. Still, Jones' experimental doc is by far the greatest and most inordinately empathetic and shockingly heartbreaking film ever made about a gay porn star, as a work that makes something like Jeffrey Schwarz's *Wrangler: Anatomy of an Icon* (2008) seem like preposterously politically correct hagiographic twaddle. Of course, as the man behind the startlingly detailed biography *Halsted Plays Himself* (2011) on the sad sadomasochistic sod life of pornographic star/auteur Fred Halsted (*LA Plays Itself*, *Sextool*), as well as singular works like the video essay *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* (1998) that depicts the abject capitalist exploitation of young Slavic men in ex-Soviet territories, Jones is probably the greatest exponent of hardcore homo humanism in the world.

It should be noted that in 2012 a certain extraordinarily narcissistic fellow by the made-up name of Luka Rocco Magnotta transcended Alan Lambert as far as bizarrely unhinged Canadian poof porn stars go when he murdered and dismembered a gay Chinese international student and then sent the various Oriental body parts to elementary schools and political party offices and led the police on an international manhunt where the killer cocksucker was ultimately eventually caught looking up stories about himself on a computer at a internet café in Berlin, Germany. Personally, I would love to see Jones direct a film about Magnotta, but I digress. What Lambert and Magnotta have in common aside from their nationalities and sexualities was a self-obliterating form of narcissism that was mostly blatantly and debasingly epitomized in their porn careers. While Jones did not exactly completely deconstruct his subject, *Finished* does manage to unravel the layers upon layers of narcissism that enabled Lambert to wear a mask that his decidedly deleteriously actions betrayed. Certainly following in the mistakable tradition of the director's autobiographic debut *Massillon* (1991), Jones' experimental Lambert 'anti-biopic' also demystifies and ultimately brings a certain morbid poetry to the fuck flicks that the forsaken porn star appeared in by slowing down and obscuring these images to the point of being hypnotically static and painterly and where one would never know they were taken from homo hardcore flicks with titles like *Bare Bottoms* and *Summer Buddies*. Indeed, whether a homo or hetero, one would have to be awfully depraved to watch Jones' film and then indulge in one of Lambert's fuck flicks as a masturbation aid. A sort of botched orgasm at the director's expense in esoteric celluloid

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obituary form, *Finished* is certainly the sort of film you would expect from Morrissey had he been any openly homosexual experimental filmmaker as opposed to perennial closest queen. In fact, with the queen Derek Jarman being long dead, Moz might want to consider hiring Jones to direct his music videos. A work that is seemingly infinitely more intriguing and enigmatic yet at the same time alarmingly insightful than the post-counterculture Montreal sexual world depicted in Denys Arcand's *Le déclin de l'empire américain* (1986) aka *The Decline of the American Empire*, *Finished* is indubitably a film that actually dares to depict the true cost of so-called sexual liberation in the spiritually retarded age of late capitalism where everything and everyone has a price. In that regard, maybe Lambert had the right idea when he argued that the modern world is intrinsically irredeemable and is in dire need of a baptism of fire and apocalyptic scenario that will rid this planet of the decided degeneracy and moral bankruptcy that allows both Hollywood and the gay porn industry to thrive in the first place. Indeed, a man like Lambert was born to star in arthouse works in the spirit of *Lot in Sodom* (1933) co-directed by James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber, Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), Fellini *Satyricon* (1969), Werner Schroeter's *Eika Katappa* (1969), and countless other works where the male body is celebrated as opposed to being degraded and defiled like it was when the Canadian fuckboy allowed himself to be immortally cinematically emasculated in the form of a mongrel jigaboo ramrodding his snowfrog sod shit-box. With that being said, Lambert did manage to obtain the sense of dignity and empathy he probably never received in life with Jones' *Finished*, thus he can now finally rest in peace.

-Ty E

THE FALL OF COMMUNISM AS SEEN IN GAY PORNOGRAPHY

William E. Jones° (1998)

Undoubtedly, pornography has always made for a good, if not grating and oftentimes grotesque, source for gaining insights from everything from the cultural pathologies of a nation and people to how certain marginal groups fit into certain 'roles' in society as a whole, as well as the number of fetishes that have taken over a people in what amounts to a 'secretly sick' society, and homo-documentarian auteur William E. Jones' *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* (1998) – a 20-minute documentary analyzing perverse and dehumanizing trends in Eastern European gay porn following the collapse of the Soviet Union – certainly sheds a superlatively sordid light on a shocking trend amongst a sector of formerly proud Slavic men who have become gay-for-pay when their personal circumstances hit an all-time low with the rise of capitalism in the ex-commie Motherland. No stranger to studying the more disturbing, unflattering, and just plain weird aspects of gay subcultures, including the unsanitary bathroom behavior of everyday closet-case homos in the real-life 'found-footage' document *Tearoom* (1962/2007), the obsessive study of the life and death of a gay porn star with artsy fartsy celluloid collage piece *Finished* (1997), and the seemingly inexplicable proliferation of Mexican Morrissey/The Smiths fans in the documentary *Is It Really So Strange?* (2004), foremost fag fetish chronicler and abberosexual pseudo-anthropologist auteur William E. Jones (*Massillon, All Male Mash Up*) deconstructs the disturbing degeneration of Slavic male heterosexuality and how capitalism brought spiritual prostitution to Mother Russia and its neighbors after the fall of communism and with the rise of literal cocksucking capitalism. Taken from Eastern European gay porn films from 1993-1998 that made their way to American shores, including such salaciously and mockingly titled works as *The Vampire of Budapest*, *Russian Hard Work*, *Red Brigade*, *Perestroika*, *Moscow Dream Boys*, *Men of the Balkans*, *Czech "In & out"*, and *Comrades in Arms*, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* is certainly a mesmerizing yet muddling micro-document of the misery and decided dehumanization of young men that have, quite ironically, been warned their entire lives about the evils of capitalism and the wanton West and, indeed, would ultimately experience such monetary motivated melancholy. Not featuring a single throbbing member nor commie cumshot, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* still manages to be as repulsive as the most grimy of porn flicks in its decisive dissection of macho men in a state of panic who are willing to do anything, even sell and literally swallow their pride for a mere couple shekels for some perverted poofer producer, to survive in these uncertain times. Indeed, if anything, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* is irrefutable, if radically unconventional, proof that American 'right-wing' warrior-philosopher Francis Parker Yockey was right when he argued that Amer-

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ican 'culture' was more detrimental to the Faustian soul and the Occident than Soviet communism.

As William E. Jones wrote in his official statement for *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography*: "Around the time my first two films were released on video, I noticed the tape *Men of the Balkans* in my neighborhood video store. It made the intriguing claim of being the first gay porno shot in Bulgaria. The work of Jean-Noël René Clair, a major auteur of contemporary gay porn, *Men of the Balkans* was part of a flood of porno from former socialist countries that began appearing in U. S. video stores in the early 1990s. I wanted to make a work about this phenomenon, but I could not travel to Eastern Europe. Fortunately the material came to me; there was plenty of it to be found on the shelves of American video stores. I decided to make an "armchair" documentary, a compilation piece composed entirely of scenes from porno tapes, by reediting the material and adding only my commentary." Certainly short and bittersweet, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* may have been thrown together in a couple relaxed evenings, but its genius is 'reading between the flesh lines' and showing that everything has a price in the West, including the mind, body, and soul.

Starting with an image of a seemingly dignified Nordic-like comrade-in-cocksucking-arms symbolically standing under a portrait of Mikhail Gorbachev – the last leader of the Soviet Communist Party and the man largely responsible for dissolving the Soviet Union – and in a post-Soviet Russian army uniform, *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* soon cuts to the same man in a strikingly fallen state, engaging in some sort of lurid gay sex scenario with an expression of seeming abject disgust on his face. The viewer is also exposed to close-up face shots of various other Marxist-bred men in mid-sex scenarios with the majority of which seeming totally humiliated and decidedly degraded, with one young man looking like he is on the verge of tears and a total mental breakdown, which says a lot considering he 'came'-of-age in a totalitarian commie state where the individual is nothing. As for the appeal of such sickening debauchery, director William E. Jones narrates, "Spectators see "unspoiled" beauty when they look into the eyes of these young men," which is indubitably a pleasure fit for a sodomite sadist. According to Jones, these petrified post-pereestroika performers only make 1/10 the cash that their American counterparts make, which is no small amount to pay for what probably amounts to only a couple loafs of bread and a bottle of generic vodka. As Jones accurately states, "The West's image of communism in Eastern Europe was hardly one of sexiness and glamour...now the East is the scene of a thriving sex industry and many adult video companies have setup shop there," with the three central Slavic cities for gay pornography being Prague, Budapest, and Moscow. As Polish auteur Wiktor Grodecki (*Inferno, Nienasylenie*) revealed with his two documentaries on Czech hustlers, *Not Angels But Angels* (1994) and *Body Without*

Soul (1996), and his almost pornographically stylized feature film *Mandragora* (1997), debauched Americans, Brits, and Germans come to the Czech republic to cum and have sex with everything from prepubescent boys to violent, drug-addicted teenagers. Although not discussed in *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography*, many of the gay porn stars, especially in regard to Czech porn, are merely hustlers looking to earn a quick wad of cash via busting their wads and these fine fellows even see starring in blue movies as highly preferable to going on a 'date' with some dirty old man.

The Second half of *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* features a debauched old Brit interviewing rather reluctant Russian 'performers' in a startlingly sinister fashion, as if he derives the greatest pleasure from debasing young heterosexual men with his own sexual depravity. Proving the complete and utter desperation of the Slavic world, one young gentleman admits his mother is well aware of his pornographic pursuits and sees no need to stop him. Another young blond fellow admits he likes to fuck and get sucked by young women, but the dirty olde Brit tries to bastardize his words and make it seem like he likes get blowjobs from young boys as well. When the jaded Brit seems offended by the fact that one of the men says he does not like old farts watching him fuck and questions how he is able to perform for him by the camera, he states "I take it as work." And, indeed, with no more communist factories to work in and produce worthless junk, these men of steel are now precarious performers in a foul international flesh factory where their honor and heterosexuality goes to the lowest bidder and work involves such "jobs" as blow, hand, and rim. To top off the curious creepiness that is *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography*, the British bone-stroker of a pornographer (whose face is thankfully never shown) puts his hands on the meaty merchandise, thus ushering in the end of what is the most subversive document on how the former communist world has turned into a compliant cuckold of Western capitalism.

As someone who has worked with and lives in an area populated with Slavs from the former Soviet Union and its satellite states, I have personally witnessed the sort of highly detrimental degeneracy that capitalism has caused to these former collectivists turned capitalist 'individualists.' Sadly, despite many of them claiming to be the 'cream of the crop' of their respective nations, most of these Slavs (the word "slave" itself is derived from Slav) are quite happy performing unskilled labor and blowing their cash on beat up old cars (which they 'supe up' like American wiggers and other rabble), fancy new cellphones, Chinese food, and alcohol. Undoubtedly, the insights I gathered from my experience with Americanized Slavs and what I learned from *The Fall of Communism as Seen in Gay Pornography* are not all that different, but, of course, William E. Jones' petite 'anti-porn' doc makes for a much quicker and more enthralling excursion in 'Slavic post-Soviet serfdom 101' than having to hear an Americanized Ukrainian girl discuss how glorious the Ukraine is while bitching out her American 'hus-

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band' every ten minutes on her cellphone and flirting with every red-blooded American male that passes her semi-Asiatic gaze. Needless to say, I am not surprised that Russia now has the largest 'neo-nazi' population in the world as I am sure there are still some stoic Slavs out there that rather accept death than to star in a gay porn film directed by some sleazy American and/or Israeli. Indeed, it is an irony of fate that after destroying the Third Reich and literally raping millions of German woman, rampantly heterosexual Russians are sucking dicks for pennies on the dollar just to survive.

-Ty E

TEAROOM

William E. Jones° (2007)

With the tired deluge of faux “found footage” films over the past decade and more recently of a fantasy-driven supernatural variety like *Cloverfield* (2008) and *V/H/S* (2012), it is quite the relief when one gets to see an example of the real thing, especially if it is of a seedy and criminal/historical nature like *Tearoom* (1962/2007); a work featuring authentic footage taken by the Mansfield, Ohio police department during the summer of 1962 when they were trying crush the rampant anonymous male buggery in public restrooms. Originally launching the peculiar probe in an attempt to find an 18-year-old murderer of two young girls named Jerrell Ray Howell (who – incidentally – is more handsome than any of the ‘unconscious performers’ in the film), the police had no idea that so many men of differences ages, races, and creeds were engaging in the ancient art of spontaneous semen-swapping. *Tearoom* is filmed on color 16mm film stock by a hidden police camera man who used a two-way mirror to document the desperate acts of men with an unquenchable vice when AIDS was not a reality and taking a dick in the mouth and/or ass was considered the most deplorable and emasculating of unholy acts. The unintentionally candid acts of the carnal featured in *Tearoom* would result in all participating parties being charged and subsequently found guilty of sodomy, which during that time would result in a minimum of 1 year in a state prison; ironically, a virtual sanctuary for sodomy itself. While doing research for a documentary project, gay documentarian filmmaker (*Finished, Is It Really So Strange?*) and author (*Halsted Plays Himself, Tearoom*) William E. James randomly came across the footage from *Tearoom* and would eventually screen the film in its rough form (no sound, unedited) for small audiences at prestigious museums and film festivals around the world ranging from the Andy Warhol museum in Pittsburgh, PA to the Pornfilmfestival in Berlin, Germany. James described his agenda for screening the footage from *Tearoom* as follows in an interview, “My goal was to appropriate their film as something other than a pure instrument of domination, to make the film be about the men who are its subjects. I hope people can see more than oppression in *TEAROOM*.” Personally, what I noticed most consistently in the eyes and acts of the men of *Tearoom* is compulsive and ritualistic behavior performed by men who value their privacy, even if they are giving blowjobs and being sodomized in a public area. Before the time of internet porn and power gay political movements, *Tearoom* features fagdom before it was considered fabulous of which director W.E. James lamented, “I say that this is what gay sex looked like before porn. Now men look at porn and figure out how to fuck... These model images that we take for granted were not available to many men in 1962! *TEAROOM* is a representation of pre-porn gay sex, and in Mansfield, pre-gay bar sex, and for me that’s completely fascinating.” In short, *Tearoom* is

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'gay' at its most unglamorous yet uniquely 'human' and for that alone, it makes for a worthwhile viewing.

What makes *Tearoom* all the more interesting is that many, if not most, of the men featured in the document were married and some even had kids, so one can only wonder what happened to them after their exceedingly embarrassing and disgraceful prison sentence. Naturally, getting sodomized by a random Negro in a public bathroom during the early 1960s was a tad bit taboo, thus making *Tearoom* – for better or worse – one of the purest expressions of voyeurism and scopophilia ever released in the history of film. One can owe this distinct honor (if one can actually find a copy of the film) to a police camera man named Spognardi and his assistant, of whom *Tearoom* presenter W.E. Williams provided the following insight, “From the way the camera moves, one can surmise certain things, e. g., that some subjects interested the police more than others... During screenings, there are many laughs when an attractive man enters the restroom, and the camera begins to move frenetically. Were the police cameramen gay?...only a straight man could allow himself to be involved in the outrageously perverse scenario of waiting in a closet unseen in the hope of seeing other men masturbate and have sex.” Somewhat surprisingly, police cameraman Spognardi described the whole opinion-changing experience behind *Tearoom* in the following terms: “I changed my whole thought on it, as far as two consenting adults behind closed doors...What people do behind closed doors is their business.” Of course, the men in *Tearoom* were anywhere but behind closed doors, at least private ones, and this becomes more than obvious towards the end of the document when a little boy appears in the sandbox of sodomy, henceforth illustrating the complete and utter vulgarity of the underground sex station. While homosexuality has gained a lot of social acceptance and even political power in the form of ‘victim’-based special interest groups, it is highly doubtful that the perverse phenomenon of ‘cottaging’ that is featured in *Tearoom* has swayed over the years as testified by the 1998 arrest of popular British pop singer George Michael for “engaging in a lewd act” in a Los Angeles public toilet and the 2007 arrest of U.S. Republican senator Larry Craig for soliciting sex at a public Minneapolis, airport bathroom. After all, one of the main appeals of public sex – whether one is a flaming pansy or a hyper-heterosexual rapist – is the possibility of getting caught. Unfortunately, for the men of *Tearoom*, their sadomasochistic fantasies were fully realized and forever visually chronicled for the viewing (dis)pleasure of fanatic cinephiles, homophiles, libertines, and softcore sadists.

-Ty E

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

William Friedkin* (1971)

If there is one filmmaker that I initially misguidedly believed was an overrated Hebraic hack whose main objective was to profit off of cinematically assaulting the spiritual core of America's white Christianity majority, it is William Friedkin, who I now regard as one of my favorite filmmakers of the New Hollywood era. Of course, I had good reason to believe this since it seems more than a little bit dubious when a Jewish filmmaker directs a film like *The Exorcist* (1973) where a demonically possessed preteen girl fucks herself with a crucifix or an extremely gay film like *The Boys in the Band* (1970) where a rampantly heterosexual auteur, who was a well known womanizer, curiously attempts to empathize with exceedingly effete flaming homos that bitch and moan like neurotic preteen girls throughout the entire movie during an era when homo-hating was more or less the norm, as if the filmmaker was willing to reduce himself to the point of self-degradation in an attempt to rip to shreds the moral fiber of America (of course, Friedkin would later redeem himself with his S&M sod slasher flick *Cruising* (1980)). Naturally, one cannot also forget that Friedkin started out as a somewhat socially conscious documentarian whose most notable and revered doc *The People vs. Paul Crump* (1962) partly led to a negro murderer who killed a white security guard to get off of death row and eventually released from prison (notably, as he explains in *The Friedkin Connection: A Memoir* (2013), Friedkin felt colored killer Crump was innocent at the time he made it, but later came to the conclusion he was probably guilty). As his somewhat underrated serial killer flick *Rampage* (1987) demonstrates, Friedkin later changed his mind and now supports capital punishment in certain contexts. Not surprisingly, I also assumed that Friedkin's first big cinematic hit, *The French Connection* (1971), was an early example of a Hebraic leftist attempting to demonize white working-class cops, but after many viewings of the film and reading a lot about the director I have come to a more nuanced and appreciative view of the flick and its certainly subversive director, who more or less single-handedly reinvented the cop film sub-genre. Instead of being intended as a kosher cultural Marxist assault on white men in blue, Friedkin—an oftentimes fierce fellow who apparently loathed Israel so much that he complained while visiting the Jewish state during the 1970s, "I can't wait to get out of here, all these people are just so obnoxious. They're like many family"—had somewhat less pernicious but no less interesting objectives, including getting out of the arthouse ghetto and making a film that could be enjoyed by his Hebraic prole relatives from his hometown of Chicago.

While Friedkin was proud of what he achieved artistically with some of his early artsy fartsy works, especially his somewhat overlooked Harold Pinter adaptation *The Birthday Party* (1968), it was not really paying the bills and after a fateful meeting with Howard Hawks—a true mensch best known for classic Holly-

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wood works like *The Big Sleep* (1946) and *Rio Bravo* (1959) that was considered a big hero among the young filmmakers of the New Hollywood movement—the filmmaker decided to completely change the direction of his filmmaking career, even if he forever remained a perennial Francophile of sorts. Indeed, while making the almost insufferably histrionic cocksucker chamber piece, Friedkin began dating Hawks' long estranged daughter Kitty Hawks and eventually moved into her apartment. Despite the fact that she had not seen her father in nearly two decades, Kitty decided to bring Friedkin along when she opted to travel to Los Angeles in what would ultimately be a fairly somber reunion with her legendary maverick Hollywood filmmaker daddy. As revealed in *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'N Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (1998) by Peter Biskind, when *The Boys in the Band* was brought up, Mr. Hawks stated to Friedkin, "That's about those queer fellows." When Friedkin replied, "Yeah," Hawks unloaded a rant on the young filmmaker that would ultimately be life-changing, stating to the young and still naive filmmaker, "I don't know why you'd want to make a picture like that. People don't want stories about somebody's problems or any of that psychological shit. What they want is action stories. Every time I made a film like that, with a lotta good guys against bad guys, it had a lotta success, if that matters to you." Of course, Hawks' words did matter to Friedkin, or as the filmmaker confessed himself, "They really stayed with me. I would have embarked on a course of having made obscure Miramax type films before Miramax. But I had this epiphany that what we were doing wasn't making fucking films to hang in the Louvre. We were making films to entertain people and if they didn't do that first they didn't fulfill their primary purpose. It's like somebody gives you a key and you didn't even know there was a lock; it led to **THE FRENCH CONNECTION.**"

Unequivocally one of the greatest, most important, and iconoclastic cop flicks ever made, the film may have been made with Friedkin's less than cultivated deli worker uncle in mind (indeed, this how the filmmaker regularly described his post-*The Boys in the Band* output), but it is also a piece of visceral and sometimes refreshingly venomous celluloid art with a wonderfully wicked punch that is packed with keen cultural cynicism, albeit thankfully not of the sneering passive-aggressive leftist pansy sort. Heavily influenced by Friedkin's background as a documentarian, *The French Connection*—a partly fictionalized adaptation of the 1969 nonfiction book of the same name by Robin Moore—is also as realistic as cop flicks come. Indeed, less interested in Ernest Tidyman's script than the daily habits, behaviors, and idiosyncrasies of the mick-wop police duo it is based on, Friedkin hired NYC Narcotics Detectives, Eddie Egan and Sonny Grosso, to act as full-fledged technical advisors that coached their cinematic counterparts on how to act out of a scene (in fact, both men portray cops in the film, with Egan playing the boss of the character that is based on him). Based on the true story of how Egan and Grosso uncovered a major international drug ring that

involved the smuggling of \$32 million worth of uncut heroin from France to NYC that was hidden inside a car owned by a popular French TV personality named Jacques Angelvin, the film is a true blue collar masterpiece where testicular fortitude reigns supreme and where all forms of political correctness are exterminated in an oftentimes racially-charged frenzy of no bullshit street cop action and violence. Indeed, *The French Connection* is probably the only film that would simultaneously offend the extra sensitive sensibilities of limp-wristed vegan socialist faggots, Israel-supporting cuckservatives, and ghetto negro dope dealers.

Shot largely in a cinema-vérité style with tons of excitedly erratic handheld camera work and somewhat unpredictable elliptical editing and featuring an oftentimes ominous and discordant musical score by Don Ellis that is just as crucial and unforgettable as Bernard Herrmann's score in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), *The French Connection* is not only arguably the first great 'prole art-house police' flick, but also probably the most honest and authentic depiction of what it takes to be a truly masterful street cop who can strike fear into even the most mentally unstable of drug-addled negroid convicts and mob-connected goombah psychopaths. Indeed, the film's sometimes obnoxiously extroverted yet oftentimes hilarious (anti)hero 'Popeye' and his introverted wop partner 'Cloudy' are not socially inept dorks that do everything by the book but obscenely obsessive urban soldiers that do what they have to do to get that job done, even if a couple of flamboyantly dressed jigaboo dope dealers get their feelings hurt in the process. Far from having a low opinion of Popeye and his pal, Friedkin—a man from a humble Chicago working-class background who has openly admitted to engaging in his fair share of petty crime as a young lad—rather respected the two police officers that inspired the film and has even described Egan as a cop genius of sorts. As someone with veteran cops in my family that worked the streets of one of the biggest quasi-third world shitholes in the United States, *The French Connection* proved to be an almost liberating experience the first time I saw it as a gritty and in-your-face ride through NYC post-industrial purgatory that offers no easy answers and never succumbs to lame pseudo-moralistic posturing. In short, the film is certainly no phony piece of cultural Marxist twaddle like so many contemporary cop flicks where darkie dope dealer are portrayed as hyper-masculine neo-noble-savages who cannot help their choice of trade because they grew up with a social handicap and where the only good cops are old wise negroes, inordinately stoic women that can magically beat the shit of big strong men, or idiotically idealistic ethno-masochistic antiracist fucks who rather promote the absurdist fantasy of racial equality than uphold the law. Aside from being a preternaturally gritty yet artful crime-thriller that totally changed the (sub)genre as a Hollywood film that was mainly inspired by Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (1960) aka *Breathless* and Costa-Gavras' *Z* (1969), Friedkin's early masterpiece is also an early critique of the perennial abject failure that is

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the so-called 'War on Drugs.' Indeed, not only does the film demonstrate that war is a failure even when the 'good guys' technically win a symbolic battle by busting a drug ring, but it also makes it quite clear in its notoriously stoically cynical quasi-epilogue that the ostensible war is rigged and that none of the real bad guys are ever truly brought to justice because they are great comrades of the white collar crooks that are in charge of the system.

While the greatest police duo that NYC has probably ever known, Jimmy 'Popeye' Doyle (Gene Hackman) and Buddy 'Cloudy' Russo (Roy Scheider) are certainly men of the street that just as easily could have been crime bosses had their lives taken a slightly different course, but of course that is what makes them great cops as streetwise men with the subversive minds and intuitions of criminals. A beer-chugging mick alpha-prole that enjoys lecherous sadomasochistic sex with random lecherous sluts and prostitutes that he finds on the street who oftentimes has to be woken up and forced out of bed for work by his partner after a long night of hardcore drinking and fucking, Irish-blooded detective Popeye is an exceedingly erratic extrovert and born renegade who might not play by the rules of the unnecessarily bureaucratic legal game but he gets the job done, even though it is a completely thankless job that has many risks and dangers. Of course, the risks and dangers are exactly why Popeye is in the game. While Cloudy is somewhat of a sidekick, he is an imperative part of the partnership as he not only believes in Popeye and supports him on most of his somewhat seemingly crazed hunches, but he is also able to keep his comrade in line and make sure he is right on schedule when it comes to the work day, among other things. More than just a fearless and obscenely obsessive fellow of the brazenly bombastic sort, Popeye thrives on unpredictable danger and morbid excitement to the point where he pushes other cops out of the way to get in the middle of the action, as if he lives to challenge death. A somewhat sullen, pessimistic, and innately introverted man who, unlike Popeye, tends to think deeply before he acts, Cloudy might not be as brazen as his partner, but he is just as brave and is willing to follow him anywhere, including an extremely dangerous international drug trafficking conspiracy involving seemingly psychopathic professional hitmen, guido gangsters, and government-connected Jewish lawyers, among other upscale criminal rabble.

Beginning somewhat abruptly but quite fittingly in scenic Marseille, France, *The French Connection* starts with a literal bang in the form of a French police detective being shot in the head right at fairly close range upon walking into the front door of his home after spending the day trailing a local shipyard owner named Alain Charnier (Luis Buñuel regular Fernando Rey), who is a legitimate businessman that also happens to be in charge of the largest heroin-smuggling syndicate in the world. The French detective was killed by Charnier's suavely psychopathic personal hitman Pierre Nicoli (Marcel Bozzuffi of *Costa-Gavras'* *Z*) and the similarly dapperly dressed criminal duo will soon be traveling to New

York City to smuggle \$32 million worth of heroin hidden inside of a Lincoln car owned by a popular French television personality named Henri Devereaux (Frédéric de Pasquale), who has no idea what is hidden in the automobile and has only agreed to bring the vehicle to the United States as a favor to his friend. Charnier is selling the drugs to a sleazy mob-connected Jewish lawyer named Joel Weinstock (Harold Gary), who likes to keep his hands clean and thus uses a young guido named Salvatore 'Sal' Boca (Tony Lo Bianco) and his 19-year-old wife Angie (Arlene Farber) to do the extra dirty bitch work for him. Indeed, Sal and Angie own and operate a less than impressive working-class newsstand luncheonette as a front for their drug operation. Of course, Popeye and Cloudy spend a good portion of the film uncovering this somewhat intricate international criminal plot.

When we first are introduced to the lovably pugnacious protagonists, they are conducting an undercover narcotics stakeout in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn where Popeye is entertaining young negro children while sporting a Santa Claus outfit and Cloudy is running a hotdog stand as they covertly watch a drug deal that is going down in a nearby all-black bar. When Popeye gives him the signal after seeing the transaction take place, Cloudy proceeds to attempt to arrest the black criminal but the dope dealer manages to runaway after stabbing the wop cop in the arm. After a long chase through a trash-covered black ghetto that somewhat resembles a Vietnam War zone, Popeye and Cloudy manage to capture the shiv-wielding criminal and then naturally proceed to smack him around a little bit in retribution for his violent transgressions. Considering their virtually completely opposite personalities, Popeye and Cloudy are quite good at playing 'Good Cop, Bad Cop,' especially when dealing with less than sophisticated spooks, though they use a fairly bizarre and quite hilarious approach to these almost unintentionally avant-garde mind games. Indeed, while Cloudy asks the criminal legitimate questions about the crimes, Popeye throws him off by aggressively asking him about if he is guilty of "Picking Feet in Poughkeepsie." This technique proves to be quite successful, as Popeye's question petrifies the violent yet seemingly mentally feeble negro dope dealer so much that he is all too happy to answer Cloudy's questions. In fact, the heroin-dealing homeboy is so psyched out by Popeye that he also confesses to picking his feet in Poughkeepsie. After arresting the criminal and leaving work for the day, Popeye remarks to Cloudy in regard to the fact he was stabbed by a seemingly borderline retarded negro, "You dumb guinea. Never trust a nigger." When Cloudy replies, "He could have been white," Popeye reveals he is more of a vulgar misanthrope than a racist by replying, "Never trust anyone." Luckily for Popeye, Cloudy has an insanely inordinate degree of trust for him. Although Cloudy wants to go straight home after work because he is tired as a result of being stabbed in the arm, Popeye convinces him to go out for some drinks at the Copacabana where the biggest drug trafficking scheme ultimately falls into their lap by sheer happenstance.

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A man that quite literally lives and breathes policing as if it is an accursed sixth sense that brings just as harm and danger as happiness and joy, Popeye is always on the lookout for “dirty” guys even when he is off-duty, so naturally he is quite intrigued when he notices Sal Boca and his wife Angie, who he has never seen before, entertaining some mob-connected drug dealers at the socially prestigious jet-setter section of the Copacabana. When Cloudy notices an ugly swarthy middle-aged Hebrew, Joel Weinstock, at the Boca’s table flirting with a couple hot blondes, he cannot help but remark, “It’s Jewish lucky. He don’t look the same without numbers across the chest,” to which Popeye affirmatively replies, “That table is definitely wrong.” Somewhat predictably, instead of going home and resting for the night like most normal people that are terribly tired after a long and draining day of work, renegade workaholics Popeye and Cloudy decide to spend the rest of the night and early morning tailing the Bocas’ car and ultimately discover their dubious luncheonette. Needless to say, Popeye and Cloudy begin regularly spying on the luncheonette, with the latter even regularly even hanging out inside the restaurant and flirting with Angie, who offers to ‘model’ blouses for the undercover cop if he is willing to pay the right price. Upon doing a background check, the police duo discovers that Sal once attempted to rob a Tiffany’s in broad daylight but he ultimately got off the charge because the luxury jewelry store refused to prosecute, thus hinting that the seemingly lowly dago dumb ass has friends in high places, including Judaic lawyer Weinstock, who the cops also begin monitoring. After discovering from a Blaxploitation-esque negro informant with a goofy Afro that a major heroin shipment is coming to NYC, Popeye manages to convince his hard-ass supervisor, Walt Simonson (who is somewhat ironically played by the real-life ‘Popeye,’ Eddie Egan), to setup a wiretap on the Bocas’ phones, thus eventually leading them to discovering the ‘French Connection’ upon hearing frog accents. Unfortunately for Popeye and Cloudy, they are also forced to work with a federal agent that they greatly despise named Mulderig (played by Hollywood stunt-driver Bill Hickman, who was James Dean’s friend/driver and who executed the elaborate chase scenes in Bullitt, The French Connection and The Seven-Ups). Mulderig blames Popeye for the death of another cop, so it is only fitting that the protagonist accidentally kills him in the end.

Under the dubious pretext of coming to NYC to shoot a documentary about life in the rotten Big Apple, Devereaux arrives to the drastically deteriorating metropolis with a shiny new Lincoln Continental Mark III that he does not realize is full of a wealth of uncut heroin that will apparently keep both local dope dealers and junkies happy for at least a couple years. Devereaux brought the car as a special favor to his friend Charnier, who, upon a superficial glance, hardly seems like the sort of fellow that would be responsible for the world’s biggest drug smuggling operation. A supremely cultivated man and immaculately dressed virtual dandy who loves and is completely faithful to his beautiful young wife and

who lives for wining and dining at fancy frog restaurants, Svengali-like master criminal Charnier makes Popeye seem like a virtual barbarian by comparison, but of course the main theme of the film is the thin line between police and criminals. Of course, Charnier's sort of aristocratic smugness gives Popeye all the more incentive to take him down. Despite their stark differences in terms of cultivation and demeanor, Charnier and Popeye certainly make worthy adversaries, especially when it comes to playing the cat-and-mouse game. Naturally, Popeye almost immediately begins trailing Charnier when he arrives in NYC and it does not take long before the latter realizes this. Needless to say, Popeye is all the more determined to catch "Frog #1" (which is the nickname he actually gives the Frenchman) when he manages to outwit the protagonist in his own city and escape from his grasp while looking quite elegant and smug while doing it. Indeed, after a game of cat and mouse that results in the Frenchman escaping via public transportation, Charnier rubs his small victory over Popeye in his face by waving at the protagonist in a taunting fashion as he rides away in the subway shuttle at Grand Central Station. Upon failure after failure in terms of finding ample evidence to use against Charnier and his men, Popeye's boss Walt closes the assignment stating, stating to the protagonist in a particularly pissed fashion, "Jimmy, you wasted two months on this. No collars are coming in while you two are running around jerking off. Now, go back to work! You're off special assignment!" Luckily for Popeye, Charnier contracts his hit man Nicoli to kill him, thereupon making it quite clear that the international drug smuggling operation is the real deal. Despite the fact that Sal is extra paranoid as a result of being under police surveillance and having his phones tapped, among other things, his shadowy business partner, stereotypically pushy Jew Weinstock, talks him into carrying out the drug deal as planned.

While looking quite dejected upon walking back to his symbolically prison-like apartment complex, Popeye gets quite the surprise when a sniper's bullet kills a woman that is only a couple feet away from him. Of course, the assassin is Nicoli and instead of attempting to seek shelter, Popeye opts to aggressively hunt his would-be-hunter, thus ultimately erupting into one of the greatest and most insane chase scenes in cinema history. While Nicoli manages to outrun Popeye and evade capture by boarding an elevated train at the Bay 50th Street Station in Bensonhurst where he shoots and kills a negro cop that dares to try to stop him, the protagonist does not give up there and instead 'borrows' a car from a random civilian and uses it to chase the train in extremely dangerous rush hour traffic. Meanwhile, Nicoli makes his way to the front of the train where he hijacks the fairly elderly black driver at gunpoint. While Nicoli demands that he skip the next stop, the driver is so horrified as a result of having a gun pointed directly at his head that he suffers a heart attack and is knocked unconscious, thus causing the train to almost crash into another train that is parked at the next stop. When a stupid would-be-heroic young white train conductor dares to try

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to stop the armed frog hit man, Nicoli naturally shoots him dead. As a result of being violently thrown against a glass window after a emergency trackside brake is applied to prevent the train from crashing, Nicoli is left somewhat exhausted but he manages to exit the train. Unfortunately for Nicoli, Popeye has managed to cheat death after almost getting into numerous serious car wrecks during the chase. Indeed, while the car he borrowed is left more or less totaled, Popeye is left fairly unscathed and luckily manages to confront Nicoli not long after he exits the train. When Nicoli attempts to flee from the protagonist while standing at the tops of the steps of a train station platform, Popeye shoots and kills him with a single shot to the back of the head, thus causing the hit man's corpse to fall down the staircase where it fittingly lands next to the deadly detective, who also collapses due to exhaustion.

After Popeye and Cloudy impound Devereaux's Lincoln Continental Mark III after Sal Boca dubiously leaves it on a random ghetto street where it could easily be stolen, the protagonists find what they are really looking for after having a police mechanic completely disassemble to the entire automobile. Indeed, 120 pounds of heroin is found tightly packed in various small blue and green obloid packages inside the rocker panels of the car. Rather reluctantly, Devereaux eventually shows up at the police impound and threatens to portray NYC in a negative light in the documentary that he is supposedly making if the cop on duty does not give him back his car in a speedy fashion. Of course, the cop on duty finds Devereaux's effutely arrogant demeanor to be quite comical and treats the famous frog in a fittingly passive-aggressive fashion. After four hours of waiting, Cloudy eventually approaches Devereaux and informs the frog celebrity in an almost sardonic fashion that he has his car and it is pristine condition, stating, "It's in perfect shape, not a scratch. You must lead a charming life." Indeed, Popeye and Cloudy had the police mechanic reassemble the car with the heroin still inside so that they can later catch them in the act with heroin-filled automobile. Naturally both petrified and paranoid as a result of his experiences with the police, Devereaux returns the Lincoln to Charnier and tells him that he is no longer willing to do him anymore favors. While he originally planned to have Devereaux do the job for him, Charnier is forced to drive the car to an old factory on Wards Island to meet Weinstock, Sal, and about a dozen other similarly swarthy criminals to finalize the drug deal. Although the deal could not have gone more smoothly and Charnier is quite happy to receive two briefcases full of cash for his international conspiratorial efforts, the French businessman is in for the shock of a lifetime upon driving across the Wards Island bridge and discovering Popeye standing at the front of a police roadblock on the other side of the bridge.

With nowhere to escape, Charnier heads back to Wards Island and thus conveniently leads the cops directly to his American business partners in the process. While most of the criminals flee to one of the old factory buildings, Charnier

goes in the opposite direction and heads to a different ruined building where he seems to practically disappear into thin air. Naturally, while Cloudy and the rest of the cops go after the large group in the one building, Popeye predictably opts to hunt for his great rival Frog #1 in the other building. After getting in a gun fight that involves gassing out the criminals and shooting dumb wop Sal dead, Cloudy follows Popeye into the building. When Popeye notices a figure walking inside a room in the building, he wastes no time in unloading a storm of bullets on the individual, not realizing it is federal agent Mulderig. Somewhat humorously, Popeye is less than disheartened upon realizing that he has accidentally killed the very same enemy who accused him of getting other cops killed. When Cloudy remarks, "Mulderig. You shot Mulderig," Popeye totally ignores what he says, states while in a state of semi-madness in regard to Charnier, "The son of a bitch is here. I saw him. I'm going to get him," and then heads into the dark abyss of the ruined factory until he disappears from the frame. While the viewer subsequently hears a gunshot, it is never revealed where it came from in what is ultimately a poetically nihilistic conclusion to a poetically nihilistic film. In the end, the film concludes with an epilogue that reveals Joel Weinstock was indicted by a Grand Jury but the case was dismissed for 'lack of proper evidence,' poor celebrity pawn Devereux was convicted "guilty of conspiracy" and "Served four years in a Federal Penitentiary," and Alain Charnier was never caught and that he is believed to be living comfortably somewhere in France. As for the protagonists, "Detectives DOYLE and RUSSO were transferred out of the Narcotics Bureau and reassigned."

While one could certainly easily argue that *The French Connection* paints a somewhat unflattering and even sometimes perturbing portrait of early 1970s NYC cops, it indubitably features an exceedingly more disturbing depiction of the war on drugs and American legal system to the point where it hints that the government and American politicians protect and aid the very same criminals that it pretends to be fighting. Indeed, the protagonist and his buddy might be using dubious police methods that would probably horrify the average naive American citizen, but they still certainly come out looking like the only real good guys in the film, with Hebraic lawyer Weinstock—a fictional figure that is apparently a composite of multiple real-life criminals (the Jewish community in general?!)—being arguably the most repugnant character as a sleazy scumbag that contracts dumb dago fuck-ups to do his dirty work. Of course, the Jewish caricatures are no surprise if one considers that Friedkin's one-time fiancée/baby-momma, Australian dancer Jennifer Nairn-Smith, once stated regarding the filmmaker, "William denied his whole background. He hated being Jewish. Think Yiddish, dress British." Not surprisingly, as the historical documentary record unequivocally demonstrates, both wops and yids, who have a long and overlapping history together in organized crime, were involved in the real case that Friedkin's film is based on (notably, the slang term

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for heroin, 'smack,' is derived from the Yiddish word 'shmeck'). In fact, the real-life goombah mob underling that *Sal Boca* is based on, Tony Fuca, was the nephew of guido gangster Angelo Tuminaro who, due to his marriage to Jewess Bella Stein—the daughter of a powerful prohibition bootlegger and bigwig in the Jewish mob—acted as a liaison man between the Jewish and Sicilian mafias. Contrary to the great myth of 'noble' gangsters who refused to push dope as perpetuated by Hollywood films like Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972), the Ashkenazi and Sicilian mobs always sold drugs (in fact, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics had identified Tuminaro as a major narcotics trafficker as far back as 1937). While Hollywood has been very careful to portray organized crime as a largely Sicilian and sometimes Irish enterprise, the Jewish mafia has always been the most powerful and government-connected (somewhat ironically, Hebraic mob boss Meyer Lansky's granddaughter Mira Lansky Boland worked as the "law-enforcement liaison" for the powerful Jewish anti-free-speech group the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in the 1990's and even arranged expensive trips to Israel for certain influential American police officers who could potentially have something to 'offer' the ADL in return). After all, one must 'never forget' that Ukrainian-born Judaic mobster Semion Mogilevich masterminded the largest money laundering scheme in US history and managed to get away with washing 7 billion dollars through the Bank of New York, which is notably one of the owners of the so-called Federal Reserve System.

The French Connection is also notable in that it completely undermines the nasty little negrophiliac Hollywood myth that black drug dealers are strong, intelligent, and ultra-masculine Übermensch kings of the ghetto that have been forced to peddle dope dealers because of racism or some other absurd bullshit excuse. Of course, like all drug dealers, negro dope-peddlers are the worst sort of parasites as inordinately morally retarded psychopaths that profit off of the spiritual and cultural destruction of their uniquely forsaken communities. In Friedkin's film, these negroes come off as unwitting shabbos goy pawns and unconscious uncle toms who are so stupid that they do not even realize that the heroin that they are killing they own people with is provided to them via Jews, wops, and frogs. Quite hilariously, like the real-life contemporary black thugs featured in various videos all over the internet, after getting caught red-handed engaging in some preposterously stupid crime, the negroes in Friedkin's film literally bitch "I ain't do nothin'" (hence the recent popularity of the somewhat new pejorative term for blacks "Dindu") and incessantly talk back to the cops like a vile whiny bitch on the rag, which is surely something they learned from their government-subsided welfare queen single-mothers. In short, there is no confusion while watching *The French Connection* that, even what it comes to the drug trade, negroes are at the bottom of the food chain as low-level gram-peddlers that probably had no idea that the laced, watered down garbage that they are haplessly peddling originally derived from premium grade product from

France.

While *The French Connection* was followed by an innately inferior yet somewhat entertaining fictional sequel entitled *French Connection II* (1975) directed by John Frankenheimer and an all more pointless made-for-TV spin-off entitled *Popeye Doyle* (1986) starring Ed O'Neill instead of Gene Hackman as the titular lead, I personally regard *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985) as a sort of unofficial update of the aesthetic techniques and thematic motifs that Friedkin explored in the original film, albeit fittingly transported to the ultra-phony West Coast, which epitomized the worst of the Reaganite 1980s. Of course, in its featuring of various grotesque cripples and midgets (not surprisingly, Friedkin apparently owns original pieces of artwork by degenerate kraut commie artist George Grosz), an artist-cum-counterfeiter villain who creates quasi-Expressionistic art, and complimentary soundtrack by English new wave group Wang Chung, *To Live and Die in L.A.*—a cinematic work that also has an highly ambitious, refreshingly anarchistic, and unforgettable chase scene—has a somewhat bizarre arthouse meets Miami Vice vibe about it and thus somewhat lacks the unwaveringly visceral cinema-vérité essence of its 1970s East Coast predecessor. As someone that grew up around cops that worked some of America's worst streets, I can safely say that Friedkin is the only American filmmaker that I can think of that has taken a fairly realistic and reasonably objective approach to portraying real street smart police—warts and all—albeit without the phony Judaic anti-white liberal moral posturing.

Undoubtedly, *The French Connection* now seems somewhat antiquated in the sense that cops like the ones featured in the film no longer exist. As one veteran cop once told me, not even the toughest of criminals have the balls to fight cops anymore like they used to. Additionally, I have been told that one of the main reasons so many people have been shot and killed by the cops in recent decades is because police departments starting hiring small and physically weak cops due to complaints from the public that the police were beating the shit out of people. Of course, this backfired, as these small, weak, and oftentimes scared new cops, which include women, are much more likely to use their weapons than the old tough cops who were not afraid of brawling with violent black bucks on PCP (as any good cop can tell you, the only way to stop a deranged person that is high on angel dust is to knock them out). Additionally, as depicted in *The French Connection*, these old school tough cops were way less likely to ruin a negro's life by doing tedious things like busting him for a mere dimebag and instead used a more common sense approach to policing that usually involved merely destroying the drugs and letting the suspect(s) go free. I can also say that, although totally anti-drug, the police veterans I know are for the complete legalization and taxation of drugs because they consider the supposed war on drugs to be a bureaucratic joke, but I digress. Probably the only film about Jewish mobsters that quite deservedly won an Academy Award for Best Picture (as well as

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Best Actor (Hackman), Best Director (Friedkin), Best Film Editing, and Best Adapted Screenplay (Tidyman)), *The French Connection* undoubtedly makes Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984) seem like a Steven Spielberg movie in terms of its almost anarchic commitment to visceral authenticity in terms of the world of half-crazed cops and heroin-dealing wops. One must not also forget that, in terms of its splendidly unflattering depiction of the less Hollywood-esque segments of the city, the film indubitably demonstrates that 1970s NYC was a real-life dystopia that made the dystopian realm featured in 1970s sci-fi flicks like Richard Fleischer's *Soylent Green* (1973) seem like a silly leftist delusion as written and directed by individuals that wanted to ignore and obscure the real serious issues that plague the United States, especially American cities. Additionally, Friedkin's flick probably has the capacity to cause the mindless lemmings of the black lives movement to cry hysterically and/or suffer a serious panic attack. Also, it is hard not to love a film where Frenchmen are called 'frogs' by boorish Americans, especially when one of the frogs is portrayed by a rather respected Buñuel star who barely even spoke French.

-Ty E

CRUISING

William Friedkin* (1980)

Director William Friedkin is best known for his dated cop action film *The French Connection* and his overrated Antichrist horror-extravaganza *The Exorcist*. Friedkin's 1980 film *Cruising* is the overrated director's masterpiece. The film is one that came out way ahead of its time and was wasted on an American audience that couldn't appreciate the darker things in life. *Cruising* follows a cop (played by Al Pacino) as he goes undercover in the gay S&M subculture hoping to find a homosexual serial killer. This homosexual must be self-loathing, because his targets are always the men he engages in perverted acts with. These victims "made him do it." *Cruising* in a way reminded me of William Lustig's gritty and sometimes slow action film *Maniac*. That being said, *Maniac* star Joe Spinell also makes an appearance in *Cruising* as a misogynistic cop that forces drag queen prostitutes to perform fellatio on him. Not only does *Cruising* feature the depravity of the ultra macho S&M subculture, but it also features unexpected members of it. *Cruising* will be sure to scare anyone the next time they encounter a cop after watching it.

Al Pacino is best known for his performance as Michael Corleone in Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy. The American movie going audience cherishes the *Godfather* series as the peak of masterful filmmaking. I have no hesitation in stating that Al Pacino's performance in *Cruising* is superior to that of his performances in the *Godfather* series. Let's face it, any American wop on the street could have played the "stoic" godfather character just as easily. In *Cruising*, Pacino had to play the role of a cop and a man acting as a perverted homosexual. His performance in *Cruising* shows both his versatility as an actor and ability to take on daring roles. The whole Sicilian criminal and gangster thing, although hilarious, can get a little old after a while. Until I saw *Cruising*, I just thought of Al Pacino as your typical Sicilian American exploiting his race for financial gain. *Cruising* also features a notable soundtrack that compliments the overall chaotic nature of the film. Originally, the punk legends *The Germs* were supposed to contribute a number of songs to the film's soundtrack. I found it unfortunate that only one *The Germs* song (*Lion's Share*) made the film. The legendary singer of *The Germs*, Darby Crash, was also a sadistic homosexual that found his idols in Adolf Hitler, Oswald Spengler, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Charles Manson. With Darby Crash's style of dress and belligerent personality, he would have fit perfectly as one of the of the leather clad men looking to suffer permanent damage after a night at an S&M bar.

The gay community had a hissy fit upon the release of *Cruising*. People in the homosexual community felt that the film promotes violence and hatred against gays. I think that people who hate gays already have their mind made up on that issue regardless of the film *Cruising*. If anything, *Cruising* makes the gay

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community look a whole lot better than some show like *Queer Eye For the Straight Guy*. The mainstream homosexual media is a bunch of effeminate fairies that just give Americans more reason to hate them. I also checked out Amazon.com customer reviews for *Cruising* and an entire army of Gays excrement (lose bowels maybe?) their baseless claims that *Cruising* is a homophobic film.

Cruising easily has the most depth of any of the films William Friedkin has ever directed and will ever direct. The film takes a look at the psychological motivation of the gay killer and how his Daddy wouldn't give him any love. Al Pacino seems to find it hard not to get trapped in the world of gay S&M. The man has some serious scenes of self doubt in *Cruising* in which he explodes with homoerotic anger. The film also portrays the often domestic abuse between gay lovers quite accurately. I have had more than one cop tell me about a gay lover smashing in the face of another. *Cruising* should have been the first mainstream gay film put on a pedestal and not the viewer friendly gay romanticized love drama *Brokeback Mountain*.

-Ty E

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.

William Friedkin* (1985)

After the commercial and critical failure of his absurdly underrated \$22 million South American odyssey *Sorcerer* (1977)—a keenly kaleidoscopic remake of the classic black-and-white French-Italian thriller *The Wages of Fear* (1953) aka *Le salaire de la peur* directed Henri-Georges Clouzot—as well as his mostly forgettable crime-comedy *The Brink's Job* (1978) and his misunderstood sado-masochistic sodomite slasher flick *Cruising* (1980) starring Al Pacino in lurid leather-fag apparel, Chicago-bred auteur William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*, *Killer Joe*) fell out of favor in Hollywood and had a rather hard time obtaining film projects to work on, but he still managed to continue to direct some of the best and most subversive films to come out of Tinseltown, even if not many people took notice, with his obscenely stylish action-crime-thriller *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985) being a great example of one of the director's most neglected works. A sort of *The French Connection* (1971) for the 1980s, albeit set on the west as opposed to east coast and minus the swarthy bearded frogs and junky negroes, the film is based on the 1984 novel of the same name written by former United States Secret Service Special Agent turned Hollywood screenwriter Gerald Petievich (*The Sentinel*, *Boiling Point*) and is about a morally dubious adrenalin junky Secret Agent who goes to great lengths to bust a murderous counterfeiter who moonlights as a degenerate artist and who likes to burn his own neo-expressionist Schoenberg-esque paintings. Opting to hire Dutch cinematographer Robby Müller after being impressed with his work on Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* (1984) and intentionally filming it around a number of remote post-industrial wastelands in Los Angeles, Friedkin managed to assemble a totally singular and nastily nihilistic synthesizer-driven (anti)tribute to Reaganism that quite shockingly gives artfulness and even perverse poetry to the mostly aesthetically worthless action-crime-thriller subgenre. Featuring a most fitting, if not sometimes cheesy, soundtrack by new wave group Wang Chung, obscenely outmoded neon-colored titles and a quasi-new romanticist fashion sense, *To Live and Die in L.A.* is one of those oh-so rare films that gives me a little bit of nostalgia for the mostly odious 80s, even though I only first saw it a couple years ago. Starring a number of great actors at a time when they were virtually unknown, including eccentric master actor Willem Dafoe (*Antichrist*, *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done?*), perennial screen policeman William Petersen (*Manhunter*, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*), and goofy Guido John Turturro (*Do the Right Thing*, *Barton Fink*), the film also features rather striking performances as a hardcore crime flick where the characters truly go beyond good and evil and then some. Indeed, the film was also directed by a quasi-gangster-auteur who hired two real counterfeiters as technical advisors and who even used some of the “funny money” used in the film for his own personal use, or as the direc-

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tor hilariously confessed in his memoir *The Friedkin Connection: A Memoir* (2013), “When the film came out, there were news stories about people trying to make counterfeit money after seeing the step-by-step process in our film. I took some of the twenties, those printed on both sides of course, put them in my wallet, and spent them, in restaurants, shoe-shine parlors, and elsewhere. The money was that good.” Indeed, Friedkin is no limp-wrist poser and while watching *To Live and Die in L.A.*, it is quite clear that the auteur has a deep fascination with and seemingly identifies with the counterfeiter artist played by Dafeo.

Beginning with a cliché Zionist propaganda scene of sorts where a devout towelhead with a bomb strapped to his body declares, “I’m ready to die [...] Death to Israel and American, and all the enemies of Islam! [...] I am a martyr. I will bomb myself on you and all the enemies of Islam!” while being confronted by the film’s Secret Service agent antihero Richard Chance (William Petersen) and his soon-to-be-retired partner Jimmy Hart (Michael Greene), *To Live and Die in L.A.* certainly seems like another banal crime movie for the first couple minutes or so, but that soon changes after a semi-deranged counterfeiter and dilettante painter named Eric “Rick” Masters (Willem Dafoe) and his brutish bodyguard Jack (played by legendary LAPD officer Jack Hoar) waste a nosey Secret Service agent. Indeed, old man Jimmy makes the major mistake of staking out the counterfeiter’s home on his own and is soon blown away with a shotgun, so his partner Chance vows to exterminate Masters. Unfortunately, Chance, who loves being a man of the law so he can regularly break the law, is assigned a seemingly kosher rookie dork named John Vukovich (John Pankow) as his new partner who turns out to be a patent pansy who likes to do everything by the book. Aside from being a nauseating nerd of the crybaby sort who would have probably made for a much more successful bank manager, Vukovich screws up on his first assignment after falling asleep while monitoring Masters, who ultimately kills his double-crossing attorney Max Waxman (Christopher Allport)—a super scumbag who got rich by representing hippie degenerates in court—but not before mocking his love of primitive negro art and literally blowing his balls off. Chance receives much better help from his quasi-hooker parolee/informant fuckbuddy Ruth Lanier (Darlanne Fluegel), who uses her voluptuous body and criminal connections to learn of the latest big news in the intricate criminal underworld. While Chance loves bungee-jumping and Masters loves painting and religiously exercising, both men are somewhat the same in that they use their lecherous girlfriends to further their careers. While Chance’s lady friend is a low-class whore who is more or less a sex slave to the Secret Agent, Masters’ girlfriend Bianca Torres (Debra Feuer) is a scheming bisexual dancer who likes hanging out with Latino girls and deformed people when not making amateur porn flicks with her literally money-making boyfriend.

Unbeknownst to Chance, his partner Vukovich secretly meets with Masters’

psychopathic lawyer Bob Grimes (Dean Stockwell), who will do anything to earn a buck, including working with coldblooded murderers. After Masters pays some incompetent black gangsters to put a hit on his friend Carl Cody (John Turturro) while he is in prison, agent Chance attempts to ply the targeted inmate with a lighter prison sentence. When Chance decides to get Cody out of prison in return for helping him show where Masters keeps his money-making factory, he ultimately looks like a major fool as the prisoner beats him up and manages to getaway. Ultimately, Chance and Vukovich decide to pretend to be big bankers from Palm Springs in a daring attempt to try to coerce Masters into making \$1 million dollars worth of fake money for them, but the cunning counterfeiter demands at least \$30,000 upfront before he begins the job. Unable to obtain that much cash from his cheap employers at the Secret Service, Chance comes up with the ridiculous and rather illegal plan to rob a Chinese criminal named Thomas Lin (Michael Chong) after his informant girlfriend Ruth gives him a lead that the Chinaman will be at a train station carrying \$50,000 to purchase stolen jewelry, but when he and Vukovich kidnap the chink con, they discover he only has old phonebooks in his suitcase. On top of that, Lin, who is ultimately killed during a shootout, is an informant for the FBI, so Chance and Vukovich get in an insane car chase that almost leaves them both dead. After a police briefing about the death of informant Lin, whiny weakling Vukovich attempts to convince Chance that they should turn themselves in, but of course his partner is no anxiety-ridden wimp who plays by the rules and respectfully refuses. Of course, the two agents eventually bring Masters his money, through the counterfeiter seems suspicious of the cops. When Chance and Vukovich attempt to arrest Masters upon finally receiving the phony money, a struggle breaks out that leaves two of the men dead. Indeed, in a nasty little twist, Chance, like his deceased partner Jimmy, is annihilated after taking a close-range shotgun blow to the head, with Masters' scummy muscle Jack going down as well. After melodramatically crying to Chance's bloody corpse, "you can't do this to me!" as if his girlfriend had just broke up with him, Vukovich chases down Masters and discovers that the counterfeiter has set fire to his currency-creating warehouse. Before a somewhat anti-climatic fight breaks out that ultimately leaves the counterfeiter in mere ashes after accidentally setting himself on fire, Masters reveals to Vukovich that lawyer Grimes has been working for him all along. In the end, Masters' high dollar whore girlfriend Bianca inherits her late boy toy's estate and she celebrates by taking her mestizo girlfriend Serena (Jane Leeves) on a joy ride in her belated beau's sports car. As for Vukovich, he inherits his deceased partner Chance's hot whore informant girlfriend Ruth. Indeed, by the conclusion of the film, Vukovich has finally developed some testicular fortitude, but he has also degenerated into a quasi-psychopathic lunatic lawman who gets a natural high busting bad guys.

Unquestionably, one must give credit to director William Friedkin for killing

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.

off the charismatic antihero of *To Live and Die in L.A.* during an all-too-brief, if not rather visceral and explosive, fight sequence. Apparently, the film was originally suppose to conclude with prick Vukovich being slaughtered instead, which I would not have minded seeing as the character is exceedingly repugnant in both appearance and character, as a sort of cop Jerry Seinfeld, albeit minus the insufferable Hebraic humor. Of course, Friedkin's film is a rare crime-thriller that breaks all the rules, as a work that is innately contra to the autistic action flicks of Michael Bay. In my humble opinion, *To Live and Die in L.A.* not only tops *The French Connection* in terms of grittiness and moral dubiousness, but is also an overall superior film, as an audacious and aesthetically aggressive anti-buddy cop flick that more or less lets the viewer know that America is a land of outlaws where cops and robbers are one and the same and where a statuesque woman will jump on any psychotic dickhead's swinging dick, so long as he feeds her voracious thirst for cash, be it counterfeit or otherwise. While I find most cinematic chase scenes to be about as entertaining as McDonalds commercials, *To Live and Die in L.A.* features one such scenario that borderlines on poetry of the post-industrial sort. As to the sort of formula that makes for such a great chase scene, Friedkin wrote in his memoir, "The chase" is the purest form of cinema, something that can't be done in any other medium, not in literature nor on a stage nor on a painter's canvas. A chase must appear spontaneous and out of control, but it must be meticulously choreographed, if only for safety considerations."

Featuring a sexually ambiguous deformed midget cripple who delights in 'Entartete Kunst,' quirky insults to archaic negro art (in one scene, Dafoe sardonically remarks regarding a small African statue that his attorney has just hit him in the head with, "18th-century Cameroon. Yes, your taste is in your ass"), a lipstick lesbian femme fatale that anticipates the lethally lecherous anti-heroine of *Basic Instinct* (1992), Willem Dafoe during his pre-fame days as a deranged 'tortured artist' twink who pretentiously cries while filming homemade porn with his lily-licking lady friend, and William 'CSI' Petersen having his brains blown out, *To Live and Die in L.A.* demonstrates that crime flicks can actually be quirky and idiosyncratic without compromising adrenalin and unhinged brutality. As to why Friedkin thinks the film was such a commercial failure despite receiving mostly good reviews, the director speculated, "The film opened to low grosses, and MGM did nothing to support it. Ted Turner owned MGM then, and *TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.* wasn't his cup of tea; he was busy colorizing classic black-and-white films for his television networks, an unpopular idea that ended badly for him when he announced he was planning to colorize *CITIZEN KANE*." A perniciously potent work where redemption seems like something out of a Hollywood fantasy and where art, criminality, and insanity are provocatively linked (notably, one of Dafoe's character's paintings looks strikingly like the 1910 painting *Der Rote Blick* aka *Red Gaze* by Arnold Schoenberg, whose

art and music were considered the height of aesthetic degeneracy by the Nazis), *To Live and Die in L.A.* is ultimately a rare and distinguished argument for the artistic merit of action-packed cop flicks.

-Ty E

Bug Bug

William Friedkin* (2006)

Michael Shannon is easily one of my favorite modern day actors. Like Steve Buscemi before him, Shannon is able to spice up an otherwise dull film with his natural ability at playing a variety of wack-job and psychopath characters. In the 2006 film *Bug* directed by William Friedkin, Michael Shannon once again flawlessly plays a deranged character named Peter who schizophrenically believes he is a victim of biological experiments orchestrated by the U.S. government. In *Bug*, Peter escapes from a mental hospital and eventually finds himself in the motel room of Agnes, an emotionally unstable woman whose child disappeared years ago. Impressed with Peter's talent at properly using "big words" and the fact he is not an Ex-Con like her Ex-husband, Agnes starts a bizarre romantic relationship with Peter that revolves around keeping their hotel room bug-free. Like Agnes, the couple's motel room transforms to compliment Peter's fixation with destroying all bugs.

Despite the seemingly bizarre nature of their relationship, Peter and Agnes are not so different from most couples. After all, when a woman starts a new relationship with a guy, she soon begins to adopt the same interests as her man. Most women certainly would have no problem going from being a Neo-Nazi to a Wigger if she finds the appropriate Mr. Right to cause such an extreme transformation. In *Bug*, Peter just happens to be the perfect match for Agnes and she has no problem buying into her new man's delusional obsession with bugs, even if her new boy toy likes to self-mutilate himself in hopes of ridding imaginary bugs from his emaciated body. Also like most women, Agnes gets rid of friends that do not approve of her new boyfriend just as easily as throwing out rancid garbage. After all, all great relationships involve a large dose of obsession and Peter has enough obsessive behavior to go around. As their relationship builds up, so do the anti-bug decorations that crowd the once depressing (but now blue metallic) looking apartment.

I have never really been fond of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* nor *The French Connection*, the two films that the overrated director has gained most of his cinematic notoriety from. Although nowhere near a perfect film, *Bug* is a film that is big on atmosphere, something that Friedkin's most popular films lack. Despite the seemingly disturbing nature of Peter and Agnes's relationship, *Bug* is a truly romantic film. The couple may end up climactically in flames but their relationship never fades away, a common tragedy that plagues even the greatest of couples. For fans of Michael Shannon, *Bug* is also a notable film as it one of few cinematic works that the underrated actor gets to flaunt his magical eccentricity as the protagonist as opposed to his typical role as supporting character actor. I know future Michael Shannon performances will be hard to beat when comparing his performance in *Bug* where after (unknowingly) sexually healing

Agnes, he prances around her motel room naked whilst talking through his bug-
psychosis. My son, my son, Michael Shannon what have ye done!
-Ty E

KILLER JOE
KILLER JOE

William Friedkin* (2011)

Undoubtedly, if I were to sum up American New Wave 'auteur' William Friedkin (The French Connection, Sorcerer) and his greatest talent as a filmmaker, the best compliment I could possibly give him is that he is one of the best, if not the best, exploitation filmmakers who ever lived as a macabre vaudevillian magician-like director who is able to give a certain degree of class and cleverness to celluloid trash, turning gratuitous sex and violence into pure style with seeming substance and, undoubtedly, with his latest work Killer Joe (2011), he takes this to new extremes and excess in terms of bad ass, bad taste. Taking Fagsploitation to new homo-inciting extremes with The Boys in the Band (1970) and Cruising (1980), getting away with a possessed teenage girl pounding her own pussy with a crucifix with his Catholicsploitation The Exorcist (1973), romanticizing crime from both sides of the law in The French Connection (1971) and To Live and Die in L.A. (1985), and taking the white trash family feud to more hospitable yet hopeless and thematically horrendous extremes with his new effort Killer Joe, kosher king of celluloid criminality William Friedkin is probably the only filmmaker, aside from Quentin Tarantino, who proves that big budget exploitation films can be made in Hollywood and that exploitation films can reach a sort of creative and entertainment equilibrium where every second of the film can be masterfully directed and singularly interesting, as opposed to the average 42nd Street Grindhouse movie of the 1970s where, aside from a couple scattered scenes, most of the work is totally disposable and without a shred of aesthetic or intellectual merit. Well into his 70s as one of the rare few from his generation who continues to craft innovative and controversial works, Friedkin is a unique, elderly filmmaker whose age does not reveal itself in his work, especially in regard to his aesthetically sadistic Southern Gothic blacker-than-a-sunburnt-Somalian-in-blackface black comedy Killer Joe, a superlatively seedy piece of trailer park tragicomedy based on a novel-turned-screenplay penned by Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Letts where redemption and hope have been buried beneath an excess of untermensch waste in an overflowing Texas porter potty. The uniquely morally unredeeming tale of a swarthy, debt-ridden deadbeat white trash boy in his early 20s who plots with his half-retarded father and his wife to have a crooked psychopathic cop who moonlights as a contract killer kill his mother so he can inherit the insurance money, Killer Joe is a country-fried work of perversely and perniciously playful poverty porn Texan neo-noir where shockingly stupid decisions, inbred inborn bad luck, sex perversion of the criminal and incestuous sort, and undiagnosed personality disorders ultimately make for god damn deadly dumb ass circumstances. Sort of like the film Flannery O'Connor may have directed today were she alive in the modern era, and a filmmaker instead of a novelist and a totally nasty nihilist instead of a Roman Catholic, Killer

Joe features such a revolting and singularly ugly depiction of Southern ladies and gentlemen that the film could have never worked without a strong farcical flavor of the neo-Southern Gothic variety.

Dumb ass degenerate 22-year-old drug dealer Chris Smith's (Emile Hirsch) equally no class white trash mother Adele stole all of his cocaine, so he must come up with the money to pay back his lunatic redneck loan shark boss or face a very violent death, so he decides killing his coke-snatching mommy will be his best bet since, aside from deserving to die, she has a \$50,000 insurance policy. Although a total loser and magnificently moronic individual who flagrantly fails at everything he tries, Chris is nowhere near as intellectually impoverished as his seemingly brain-damaged father Ansel (Thomas Haden Church), so it does not take much for the boy to convince his pa to become involved with a criminal conspiracy to kill Adele because, after all, she is the man's trailer park queen bitch of an ex-wife. Although a large man of reasonably immense muscle mass, Ansel is a cowardly cuckold who has no problem allowing his wife Sharla (Gina Gershon) to walk around his son with her greasy ebony beaver hanging out, so naturally his wife is made a silent partner in the criminal conspiracy as well. Assuming the insurance money will be given to his pixie-like teenage sister Dottie (Juno Temple), Chris ultimately has to split the money four ways, minus the \$20,000 he has to pay police detective/contract killer "Killer" Joe Cooper (Matthew McConaughey) to kill his momma. A suave psychopath and Svengali-like Texan gentleman who dresses to impress and gives new meaning to the phrase 'tall, dark, and handsome,' Killer Joe hates deadbeats and bullshitters and can immediately smell such an unsavory sake-of-shit stench from Chris, and when the down-and-out drug dealer says he does not have the money upfront to pay for the contract killing upon their initial meeting, the creepily cold but cool-as-a-corpse cop essentially tells him to go fuck himself and pretend they never met. Somewhat surprisingly, Killer Joe changes his mind after remembering a brief meeting with sister Dottie and makes the deal with Chris and Ansel that he gets to keep the boy's sis as a retainer until he gets paid for his sinister services. A discernibly mentally unbalanced and seemingly semi-autistic lass who has been known to have imaginary romances with fat boys she has never spoke to (what she calls "pure love"), who creepily sleepwalks like a sassy schizophrenic somnambulist, and is eerily able to predict events before they happen in an almost clairvoyant-like manner, Dottie, in a strange sort of way makes for the perfect match for Killer Joe, who essentially falls in love with her at first sight and wastes no time deflowering her on their first date at the Smith Family mobile home.

Unfortunately, trouble in trailer park paradise begins to stir when Chris, who has intense incestuous feelings for his sister as insinuated throughout Killer Joe, decides he wants to call off the contract killing of his mom, so he can spare his little sis sexual slavery and keep her to himself, but unfortunately Joe has already done the hit and he forces the prodigal son Chris to help him get rid of momma

KILLER JOE

Adele's corpse in a body-blasting car explosion in front of some bourgeois red-neck BBQ restaurant. Rather unfortunately, after everything is said and done, and Adele's incinerated body parts are buried six feet under, it turns out the mangled matriarch did not leave the insurance money to her daughter Dottie, but her conspiring deadbeat boyfriend Rex, the same man that initially put the idea of killing off his girlfriend in the unwitting mind of pawn Chris. Being a masterful police detective, Killer Joe does some serious detective work, learning that perennial cuck idiot Ansel's conspiring cunt of a wife Sharla had an affair with Rex and convinced him to split the insurance money with him, which turned out to be \$100,000 instead of \$50,000 (the money is doubled in cases of accidental death). Knowing that the cocaine cowboy drug dealer he owes money to, Digger Soames (Marc Macaulay), plans to kill him and that Killer Joe probably will as well, Chris makes plans to run away to the south of the border and has convinced his beloved sister Dottie to come along with him. Meanwhile, Killer Joe confronts Ansel and Sharla at the Smith Family trailer and plays a game of physical and psychological torture against them. After Killer Joe reveals to Sharla that he knows about her scheme with Rex (who he alludes to having killed), the crazy cop beats the conniving slut to a bloody pulp and forces her to perform a simulated blowjob with a greasy fried chicken leg, which, as the sexually sadistic detective notes, she does like a true cocksucking champ and seasoned slut. Of course, seeing as his wife cuckolded him and cheated on him with his ex-wife's boyfriend, not to mention created a conspiracy to cheat the entire Smith family out of the insurance money, Ansel watches passively as Sharla is devastatingly degraded. Killer Joe makes the unflinching ultimatum to Ansel and Sharla that if they do not stop Chris from taking Dottie away, he will slaughter the entire family like pigs. When Chris inevitably shows up to pick up Dottie, a brawl breaks out and Ansel and Sharla attack Chris while Killer Joe proceeds to beat the boy to death. During all the commotion, Dottie, who is clearly out of her already fragile mind, picks up Chris' gun and ultimately shoots her brother and father. While pointing the gun at Killer Joe, Dottie tells her equally loony lunatic lover that she is pregnant and he will be a baby daddy. Killer Joe concludes in ambiguity, but if one thing it is for sure that Dottie's demon seed spawn will continue the white trash Smith/Cooper family legacy as the genetically tainted progeny of two unhinged hick Texans whose warped idea of romance is only transcended by their proclivity to go on violent murder rampages.

While it would be easy and tempting to peg William Friedkin as a typical Aryan-hating Hebrew in Hollywood who takes any opportunity to denigrate whites like many of his kinsmen in Hollywood, Killer Joe hardly seems like a piece of suavely stylized bolshevik-esque agitprop but the work of a man with an unhealthy affinity for the darker sides of humanity as demonstrated by past friendships with mafia members and his entire oeuvre, which contains a number of politically incorrect films, including *Cruising* (1980), which inspired hate

campaigns among militant gays, who went as far as attempting to interfere with the film's shooting and staging various protests. As revealed in an article at the site jewishjournal.com conducted with William Friedkin about Killer Joe and regarding the director's patently pathological obsession with violence and human depravity, "he began the conversation with a surprising revelation about his penchant for extreme plots and characters: "I could have been a very violent person," the 76-year-old filmmaker said of his childhood. "I had no sense of right and wrong." Despite the influence of Hebrew school and his loving parents, Jewish immigrants from the Ukraine, he said, "my peer pressure was such that I was involved in armed robberies as a young teenager." Of course, Friedkin was not the only Judaic involved with the making of Killer Joe as Emile Hirsch (of partial Ashkenazi extraction) and Gina Gershon are also Israelites, thus making the cinematic work a somewhat kosher piece of country fried comically-inclined crime grit. Sadistically stylized celluloid southwestern sleaze with a dried up and decidedly dead desert lonestar heart, Killer Joe is like the Tennessee Williams' penned classic Baby Doll (1956) meets the Coen brothers' Blood Simple (1984) meets The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (1986) meets Friedkin's own Bug (2007), with a little bit of Lynch's Blue Velvet (1986) thrown in for good measure. Maybe it is because I never cared much for The Exorcist (1973), but I do not think it is a stretch to say that Killer Joe is easily Friedkin's best film since Cruising. An unflattering allegory for everything that is distinctly and degenerately American as a cleverly crafted piece of sick and salacious celluloid sleaze directed by an elderly Hebrew and starring Semite stars in the dubious roles of America's dirtiest of white trash genetic turds, Killer Joe reflects a perennially medieval-minded peasant people with next to nil class or culture, but a sick obsession with procuring soulless sex and blood money at any cost, including matricide/familicide. A rare contemporary cinematic work that allows the viewer to laugh at the fact the world's greatest (former) world power is populated by beer-chugging, monster-truck-loving, money-grubbing morons and maniacs whose shortsightedness is only transcended by their lack of intrinsic values of any and every sort, Killer Joe is also a potent reminder of why America can be so easily run by criminals and/or foreigners and why the Southwest might as well be given back to Mexico. Featuring foul femme fatales of the tactless sort who con the boyfriends of their husband's ex-wife, shadowy trailer park alleyways illuminated only by busted lights, hardboiled hick crime melodrama of the irredeemable variety, and creamy c(o)unt-ry fried-kin cynicism and no hope for the hopelessly stupid, Killer Joe is the radical result of what happens when a blue-collar Jewish celluloid chef is put in charge of cooking up Southern Gothic film noir in the age of the Amero-pocalypse.

-Ty E

MR. FREEDOM
MR. FREEDOM

William Klein (1969)

If you're an American leftist filmmaker and you're looking to make a film denigrating your homeland, France is probably the best place to film or so thought Jewish-American photographer-turned-filmmaker and super cynical Semite William Klein when he decided to direct his second feature *Mr. Freedom* (1969), as well as virtually every other film he ever directed. Described by veteran American film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum as being, "conceivably the most anti-American movie ever made," *Mr. Freedom* is the sort of highly predictable Levite leftist revisionist view of history where the shadowy evil doers are determinedly depicted as banal, boorish, and barbaric waspy white Americans, but as history has proven since the over four decades since the film's initial release, the color, creed, and culture of the United States has changed for the discernibly darker, thus one of the many reasons why this would-be-sharply-sardonic cinematic work seems absurdly anachronistic and even asinine, at least to those people who do not borrow their sense of history and politics from *The Daily Show*, MTV, and/or mischling multiculturalist Tim Wise. Centering around a pseudo-superhero named "Mr. Freedom" who goes on a mission to France to save freedom-hating frogs from a commie takeover from Switzerland, *Mr. Freedom* attempts to go further in its aesthetic absurdism and flagrant farce of the Cold War than Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) and for about the first 30-minutes of the film, I was willing to give auteur Klein's work some serious consideration in attempting this rather respectable feat, but his film inevitably collapses faster than the USSR did in 1991. Offending Marxist-Leninist groups during its premiere at the 1968 Avignon Festival due to its racially-charged caricatures of the Soviet Union (depicted as a sneaky and sadistic swarthy Stalinist Cossack/Slav named "Moujik Man") and Maoist Red China (a gigantic inflatable dragon with chinky, sneaky eyes named "Red China Man"), *Mr. Freedom* never really developed a following in France and is virtually unknown in the United States, which is probably for a good reason as faux-Frenchman William Klein is certainly no Dušan Makavejev, but more like the slightly more sophisticated Godfather of horrendous Hebraic hacks Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer, except occasionally funny and marginally culturally astute. Starring French Feminist superstar Delphine Seyrig (*Last Year at Marienbad*, *Freak Orlando*) and featuring cameos from monkey-man musician Serge Gainsbourg, as well as semi-popular actors like Donald Pleasence and Philippe Noiret, *Mr. Freedom* is, at best, an exceedingly uneven footnote from film history, and, at worst, just another example of the intellectually bankrupt left, especially the post-Talmudic kosher cosmopolitan sort.

A work of low-camp comic book cinema of the completely cynical and contrived 'crazy' sort directed by a curiously cliché member of the "culture of cri-

tique,” Mr. Freedom uses established stereotypes to an exceedingly exaggerated extreme to both simultaneously discredit and validate them, depending on the race and persuasion of the stereotype. Of course, those individuals of the white conservative Southerner sort, like the ostensible ‘protagonist’ Mr. Freedom (played by American John Abbey, whose only other notable role was as a supporting character in Jacques Tati’s 1967 film *Playtime*), are those that confirm an unflattering stereotype in Klein’s cinematic tribute to everything he hates about Amerikkka, with the satirized faux-superhero acting as an allegorical composite of all his dislikes. A rough and tough sheriff by day and a commie, gook, and Negro-smashing, misogynistic superhero whenever he is vehemently vying for freedom under the the guidance of Dr. Freedom (Donald Pleasence) so as to annihilate the red, black, yellow, and brown menace around the world, Mr. Freedom sports an innately idiotic uniform that characterizes everything that is moronic about America, American football – a sport that promotes an impenetrable dichotomous/dualistic “sports mentality,” capitalism, worship of moronic and mundane meatheads, blind allegiance to “teams,” boorishness and anti-intellectualism, and, most of all, “Americanism.” During the beginning of Mr. Freedom, the hero crashes through the apartment window of a large family of JFK-loving Negroes and like a true old school confederate calls them “boys” and shoots one for shoplifting (but gunning down the rest on his way out of the window), but ultimately more stressing matters concern Mr. Freedom as he is called by Dr. Freedom from “Central Freedom,” which is symbolically featured at the top floor of a building featuring big corporate floors like Texaco, Shell, General Motors, Standard Oil, etc., in concern to the very possible red invasion of France. As Dr. Freedom tells his political soldier, “We have trouble in France. The Red commies are infiltrating from Switzerland...Let me tell you about the French. They are 50 million...mixed-up, sniveling crybabies who haven’t stood on their two feet since Napoleon. And that wasn’t yesterday. And Napoleon wasn’t even French...So the French are the white man’s burden. Our burden. We’ve had to carry them through two world wars already and we’re damn well gonna have to carry them through the next,” which is a sentiment I can generally concur with, but as Mr. Freedom learns himself, there is no hope for the hopeless.

Naturally, Mr. Freedom goes to Frogland and attempts to battle the commies with his crude and crass charisma, but the first thing he conquers (or so he thinks) is the heart, soul, and mind of a femme fatale named Marie-Madeleine (played by a decadently dolled-up and whored-out Delphine Seyrig), and he puts the busty broad in her place by aggressively remarking regarding her belief about the political futility of the Vietnam war with, “Listen, baby, there’s us and there’s them. We are Freedom, the real America. They are Red-ass, black-ass, Jew-ass farts who can’t even spell America.” Seeing as director William Klein is a ‘Jew-ass fart,’ he clearly establishes what “America” he identifies with and the intrin-

MR. FREEDOM

sically imaginary white Christian he hates and thinks is in control of the U.S., as symbolized by the super duper dumbass superhero Mr. Freedom. Not long after arriving in France, Mr. Freedom is honored by his French compatriots, "Friends of Freedom," at a sort of fratboy sports party featuring his self-described "white guards," including pink klu klux klaners, cheap dimestore whore cheerleaders, effeminate frog fascists, and a piano-playing Serge Gainsbourg who proudly proclaims, "I love freedom." Of course, not everyone enjoying a sabbatical in France loves freedom, as a number of commie assassins attempt to exterminate Mr. Freedom and his one-man counter-revolution against radical red rodents. Mr. Freedom also has John Wayne-style verbal showdowns with Stalinist Moujik Man, Maoist Red China Man, and a new growing threat, the anti-freedom FAF. Mr. Freedom also gives "Super Frenchman" – the ruler of France – an ultimatum of "us or them," which will also prove to be a source of his demise. Unfortunately, for him "Freedom" has lost a lot of credibility since its victory during the Second World War and Mr. Freedom is not winning any allies by mirthfully machine-gunning down French citizens for fun. Upon learning that his mistress Marie-Madeleine is a femme fatale and spy and that the FAF refuses to negotiate, Mr. Freedom declares an end to the Cold War and enacts a bomb-based blitzkrieg of offensive escalation (destroying at least half of France in the process). Of course, with France being full of pansy communist protestors, but especially a growing number of FAF anti-freedom terrorists, Mr. Freedom faces retaliation via the execution of all his French "Friends of Freedom," and inevitably goes out in a blaze a glory that is less than appreciated by the country he dedicated his life to.

Featuring real stock-footage of American race riots, the commie student uprising in May 1968 in France, white Americans backing the war in Vietnam, and other socio-politically relative material from that time (as a full-time photographer and sometimes filmmaker, Klein was foremost a documentarian, hence his incompetency with narrative cinema), Mr. Freedom is as blatantly out-of-date as it is embarrassingly comedically contrived, thus making for a film that is virtually the arthouse *Team America: World Police* (2004) of its time, albeit less iconoclastic and coherent. Essentially, William Klein took what was an interesting enough idea for a film and drowned it with his hysterical, Hebraic arrogance and, not unlike his own kinsman in Hollywood, portrayed the American majority (i.e. white Christian of European descent) as barbaric goy philistines who enjoy nefarious activities like family cookouts, golden retrievers, coca cola, and a good fight. Some 40+ years later since the films release, France is now the leftist utopia Klein long ago dreamed of as a culturally and racially mongrelized virtual corpse being fed on by hostile aliens from the Global South of mostly the Arab/African Islamic persuasion (who are quite keen on crushing that 'cultivated' cosmopolitan culture) and where a sort of virus of nihilism or 'mental AIDS' occupies the minds of its indigenous population and emasculated elite, including xenophilia,

ethnomasochism, and spiritual castration where the effete archetypal homosexual male is looked at as the height of ideal 'manhood,' while ideals like honor, loyalty, family, patriotism, and well, the actual will to survive, are looked at as outmoded ideals from a bygone misogynistic time. As for contemporary America and the spread of 'democracy' (aka pro-American regime) or New American imperialism, it is certainly not of the traditional 'white man's' (aka European) creed as expressed in its patent Pro-Zionist Philo-semitism and its war against Europe, including attempting to neutralize Russia (thus destroying any tangible relationship between Europe, which is the Pentagon's worse nightmare) and promotion of nonwhite/Islamic immigration (including promotion of historically hostile/non-white Turkey into the EU) despite the fact that towelheads are supposedly terrorists, not to mention how American leaders (both of the ostensible "right" and "left") promote the mongrelization of the nation via pro-illegal immigration of solely nonwhite peoples to replace the existing population of whites from every class level, including the growing under-classes (filled with Mexicans and other Indios and Meztizos, as well as virtually every other Third World 'immigrants' from around the world) and the upper-classes (with Indians and East Asians taking over technical fields). That being said, if William Klein wanted to update his Mr. Freedom character, it would need to be a racially dubious character of a brownish complexion (preferably a fellow who claims to be of the Hebraic faith, but of Kenyan, Irish and Ashkenazi heritage) who still sports the football uniform, but of blue and white coloring (in tribute to America's "greatest ally" Israel) and who advocates a hodgepodge of so-called 'Judeo-Christianity,' humanism, multiculturalism (which, would be better described as racial/cultural chaos at the benefit of multinational corporations), Noahide laws, Hollywoodism, corporatism, LGBT extremism, and seemingly inexplicable 'anti-Americanism' (of the traditional anti-Euro-American sort) and then maybe the director would be approaching something resembling actual reality as opposed to a hysterical Hebrew Weltanschauung.

-Ty E

MANIAC
MANIAC

William Lustig (1980)

While it is only speculation on my part, I can only assume that I was not the only one who was baffled to learn that turdsh child actor turned Hollywood hobbit Elijah Wood was to star in a remake of the celebrated cult horror slasher flick *Maniac* (1980) directed by William Lustig and starring/co-written by legendary grizzled guido Joe Spinell. As someone who only enjoys Lustig's *Maniac* due to its accidental camp value, sleazy and cheesy celluloid grit, rather retarded and ridiculous exaggerated violence, and the unintentional comedic value of seeing a big swarthy wop like Joe Spinell crying and playing with dolls, I especially had a hard time taking seriously the idea of a decent budget and lavishly stylized remake of the film, especially with an ostensible 'Frenchman' in the director's chair and a world class wiry wuss like Elijah Wood portraying a murderous mad man with an ominous Oedipus complex. Maybe because my first recollection of Wood is his unintentionally hilarious preteen performance as the good son in *The Good Son* (1993) or that I find Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy to be the most epically aesthetically revolting film trilogy in all of film history, but taking a pedomorphic pretty boy seriously as a schizophrenic serial killer makes as much sense to me as seeing Steven Spielberg directing a minimalistic arthouse film or Werner Schroeter directing big budget children's fantasy flicks for Disney. When I learned that the *Maniac* remake was a quasi-Horror-of-personality work filmed from the perspective of the killer via POV shots in similar fashion to the British horror masterpiece *Peeping Tom* (1960) directed by Michael Powell, it only made me think all the more that director Franck Khalfoun (*P2*, *Wrong Turn at Tahoe*) was utilizing the atypical technique to make the seemingly totally harmless Elijah Wood seem like a murderous misogynist with macabre mommy issues and after watching the film, my assumption seems to be correct. Maybe it is because we live in a positively pussified age where men dress like color blind women and women dress like gay men, but no matter how many Suicide Girl-esque chicks and dumb blondes Mr. Wood scalped in *Maniac*, I was not able to suspend my belief long enough to forget the actor seems about as threatening as a poodle puppy with rabies. Co-written and produced by Hebraic frog horror hack Alexandre Aja (*High Tension*, *The Hills Have Eyes*)—a man who loves remaking horror flicks/rehashing beaten-to-death horror conventions and has consistently emphasized undeniably alluring yet innately vapid style over substance and storyline—and featuring aesthetic and atmospheric similarities with contemporary cult classics like Gaspar Noé's *Enter the Void* (2009) and *Drive* (2011) directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, *Maniac* is undoubtedly one of the most aesthetically pleasing and meticulously stylized serial flicks I have seen this year, so it only makes it all the more of a cinematic tragedy that it is also a terribly derivative and poorly cast and written work that had many of the ingredients to

be an immaculate phantasmagorical horror fever dream but seems more like the typical horror remake nightmare, as if producer Alexandre Aja was the real man in the director's chair.

Momma's boy maniac mannequin dealer Frank Zito (Elijah Wood) comes from a rather idiosyncratic family background. Despite the fact that his mother owned a vogue mannequin sales business, which he inherited after her death, Frank's mother moonlighted as a sleazy streetwalker who had no problem sharing her extensive carnal knowledge with her prepubescent son, including cocaine-fueled threesomes with glittery Guidos and animalistic public sex. Like many boys with horrendous mothers, Frankie boy grew up to be a deranged dude with sexual problems, especially in regard to 'rising to the occasion' in the bedroom and confusing violence with sex. In fact, while recalling a bad memory of his mother boning two bros, he looks at his genitals, only to schizophrenically see that his lower half has been replaced with that of a mannequin and that he has a small stub where his penis and testicles should be. A spiritual eunuch, Frank has some trouble with a sexually aggressive girl he met on an online dating site, so when the lecherous lady attempts to give him a blowjob, he strangles her and rips off her scalp, as he thinks such actions are apparently willed by his dead mommy, or so the lunatic lad seems to think. Unfortunately, every time Frank freaks out, kills a chick, and puts her bloody scalp on one of his mannequins, the mannequin takes on the identity of the girl whose hair it bears, at least in his own mind, which naturally further strengthens the micro mad man's already overwhelming schizophrenia. Of course, things get a bit weird for the aberrant anti-Don Juan when he starts a friendship with a French photographer named Anna (Nora Arnezeder), when he runs into when the beautiful blonde and asks if she can take photographs of his marvelous collection of avant-garde mannequins. Unlike most girls, Anna finds Frank's peculiarities and idiosyncrasies to be endearing and even absurdly calls him "the last romantic" after he absurdly describes Robert Wiene's German expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) as having a "happy ending." It does not take long for fucked Frank to fall in love with Anna, so naturally the impotent serial killer helps her set up art exhibit using his mannequins. Of course, Frank does not take it well when he learns Anna has a black buck of a boyfriend, who insinuates the psycho killer is gay and played with dolls as a child when the two meet at the big art exhibit. At the exhibit, Frank also meets Anna's middle-aged mentor/art director Rita (Jan Broberg), who embarrasses the virginal man-boy by first attempting to seduce him and then accusing him of being a homo, so he scalps her too. Naturally, Anna is distraught when she learns of Rita's tragic death and Frank comes by her apartment to console her, but being a warped wack-job, the sloppy serial killer inadvertently admits he was responsible for the art director's death. After a number of ridiculous mishaps involving absurd car crashes, heroic gay brown boi actors, and whatnot, Anna and probably two other people are left dead, but

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the psycho killer makes sure to grab his lady love's beautiful blonde scalp. In the end, Frank, who is severely wounded after his altercation with Anna, goes home and puts his beloved's blonde weaves on a bridal scalp, but ultimately dies as a result of his wounds, hallucinating that all of his mannequins have come to life and are ripping him apart in a George A. Romero-esque fashion.

A largely typical postmodern genre film of its uniquely unoriginal zeitgeist, *Maniac* features a number of masturbatory fanboy references to various classic horror flicks, including *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Eyes Without a Face* (1960), *Peeping Tom* (1960), Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), thus making it a work of the Quentin Tarantino and Rob Zombie school of filmmaking, albeit with a Franco-torture-porn angle. Were a better suited (or even unknown actor) cast for the leading role of *Maniac* as opposed to eternally pouty baby boy Elijah Wood, I might have found the film more believable and enthralling, but instead I found it to be one big pretty piece of pomo puffery directed by a seeming cinematic savage with a knack for style but without a soul. Of course, director Franck Khalfoun revealed his seriousness as a cinematic artist when during a screening of *Maniac* where audience members fainted and vomited, the filmmaker gleefully stated regarding such bodily malfunctions that he took them "as a compliment," adding, "We had a screening here in Los Angeles and somebody passed out, which I pat myself on the back for. The movie had to creep on you – it's a different kind of fear; it's more of a nauseating fear. You really have the opportunity to maybe feel the [nausea] of committing crime rather than glorifying it just for the aspect of fun and thrill. The audience gets to experience for the first time how sick [it is to commit murder] – we're certainly not condoning it, but making a real statement about serial killers." Of course, *Maniac* makes nil new statements about serial killers and simply rehashes the Hitchcockian *Psycho*/Ed Gein angle of crazy-mommies-make-crazy-sons. Compared to highly original and innovative European art-house serial killer flicks like Gerald Kargl's *Angst* (1983) and Jörg Buttgerit's *Schramm* (1993), *Maniac* seems like a sort of celluloid 'Serial Killer Film For Dummies' designed to impress naïve horror novices and make veteran American horror fanatics feel falsely intelligent for being able to count all the various references to classic horror flicks. Undoubtedly, when a director decides to recycle the iconic song "Good-bye Horses" by Q. Lazzarus from *The Silence of the Lambs*—arguably the most popular serial killer flick ever made—it is quite apparent that the director has run out of fresh material. Assuredly, horror cinema will be officially dead when someone like Khalfoun remakes Buttgerit's *Nekromantik* (1987) utilizing the soundtrack from *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). At best, Khalfoun's tedious take on *Maniac* is an azoic big budget gonzo porn for jaded gorehounds and serial killer fetishists.

-Ty E

FAIR-HAIRED CHILD

William Malone (2006)

I recently acquired a free lot of Masters of Horror episodes on DVD. The horror series has become quite a fun way to spend my free time. It brings me back to my childhood days of watching nickelodeon's Are You Afraid of the Dark?. The majority of Masters of Horror episodes (which are really just low budget and practically full length films) are better than a majority of the contributing director's films. The reason for this is most likely due to the more concrete and collected approach taken by the director. The episodes use simple yet effective stories (fairytale like in nature) to produce engaging hour long thrill rides (like Are You Afraid of the Dark? did).

William Malone is possibly one of the worst horror directors ever. Malone's FearDotCOM is a "film" that I can't even remember one aspect of. The film is evidence that the Hollywood film industry is about who you know and not about what talent you may or may not possess (Malone is more than lacking). William Malone acted as one of the "Masters of Horror" directors. He happened to direct the episode Fair-Haired Child. This episode is by far the lacking director's single greatest moving picture achievement. With a small scale budget, it seems Malone actually had to put effort into the creative aspects of film.

Fair-Haired Child story looks to be made up from various source materials. In the beginning of the episode, we are introduced to high school aged social outcast by the name of Tara. Like Carrie from Brain De Palma's film of the same name, Tara is the object of ridicule by her fellow female classmates. From the get go, we know she is someone that thinks and acts independently due to necessity. Fair-Haired Child also owes credit to Wes Craven's People Under the Stairs. Tara is captured by a sadistic and highly educated white couple. Like the young boy in People Under the Stairs, Tara is trapped in a basement from hell. The boy she meets in his basement also lacks the ability to talk (like in the Wes Craven film). Finally (if I didn't miss any other influences), the film borrows the young boy drowning situation found in overrated slasher Friday the 13th. The teenage boy's parents are the people responsible for Tara's kidnapping. I won't go into why the sadistic kidnapped the loner girl.

A fetus looking demon appears in Fair-Haired Child as the killer of teenagers. The demon does so in attempts to fully resurrect the drowned teenage boy. Despite Fair-Haired Child's simple and contrived plot, it offers an entertaining one hour spent. I can also say the same about the other handful of Masters of Horror episodes that I have watched. Maybe mainstream horror directors should stick to television.

-Ty E

THE NINTH CONFIGURATION
THE NINTH CONFIGURATION

William Peter Blatty (1980)

Described by its writer/director William Peter Blatty as the true sequel to *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Ninth Configuration* (1980) aka *Twinkle, Twinkle, Killer Kane* may not feature a demonically-possessed Lolita ravaging her naughty bits with a wooden crucifix, but it is certainly no less controversial as a work featuring Jolson-esque blackface minstrel shows, racially charged jokes, and arguably the most strangely uplifting suicide scene in cinema history. Although it is set in a real Gothic castle, makes multiple references to Bela Lugosi, and features Joe Spinell of *Maniac* (1980) fame, *The Ninth Configuration* features a hysterical hodgepodge of genre conventions and aesthetic styles and they rarely, if ever, resemble those from the horror genre, especially the rather limited subgenre *The Exorcist* belongs to, though the film evolves into a rather dark and foreboding work during the second half. Indeed, the film is a sequel to *The Exorcist* in the mainly philosophical/theological sense, as while the first film deals with themes surrounding the existence of good and evil, *The Ninth Configuration* deals with the mystery of god and good and whether either of them actually exist. Blatty's directorial debut is also connected to *The Exorcist* in that the character of astronaut Captain Cutshaw is in both films, with the character playing a central role in *The Ninth Configuration* as a somewhat nihilistic fellow who doubts the existence of god and genuine human goodness. A work that writer/director Blatty himself regards as superior to *The Exorcist* (Blatty had many disputes with director William Friedkin and Warner Brothers over this film) as his most prized and beloved personal creation, *The Ninth Configuration* is certainly a singular and underrated work that personifies what a cult film is, as a film made for the few as a somewhat esoteric piece of celluloid with multiple layers, hence why the work was a commercial failure of sorts, even though it received a Best Picture nomination at the 1981 Golden Globe Awards and would ultimately earn the writer/director a Golden Globe for his screenplay. Based on the director's 1966 comical novel with philosophical/theological undertones, *Twinkle, Twinkle, "Killer" Kane*, *The Ninth Configuration* was originally supposed to be directed by William Friedkin, but none of the studios were interested in the rather unconventional screenplay, so Blatty decided to work with The French Connection director on *The Exorcist* instead. Of course, *The Exorcist* was a big hit and it gave Blatty the opportunity to realize the film he originally wanted to make, but before that he revised *Twinkle, Twinkle, "Killer" Kane* and republished it in 1978 under the title *The Ninth Configuration*, remarking, "After *THE EXORCIST*, I decided that I could develop the story a great deal. So I rewrote it and fleshed it out, Cutshaw became the astronaut in *THE EXORCIST* that Regan warns about going into outer space and fully developed the deeper implications and theological themes." After failing to find a studio brave

enough to take on such an insanely idiosyncratic work that would, at best, appeal to an extremely marginal audience, Blatty decided to put \$2 million of his own money into the production, with PepsiCo conglomerate putting in \$2 million more under the stipulation that the work be shot in Hungary (apparently, PepsiCo had block funds in that then-commie country and reinvested money from the film's production into a Pepsi bottling plant there). The most senselessly sardonic yet passionately philosophically serious film about a curious collection of eccentric soldiers occupying an ancient European castle since Sydney Pollack's similarly underrated masterpiece *Castle Keep* (1969), *The Ninth Configuration* is a strangely hopeful work that, despite its dead serious moments of melancholy and themes of suicide, nihilism, neuroticism, and general mental illness, ultimately uplifts the viewer in the end, as a work of Gothic-metaphysical-slapstick-psychodrama of the anti-Freudian sort that manages to touch on virtually every single human emotion and condition in a fashion that does not betray the work's overall message like one would expect from a typical phony Hollywood film. *The Ninth Configuration* also happens to feature what is probably the single greatest bar brawl scene in cinema history.

Due to an inexplicable amount of American soldiers suffering from psychosis during the Vietnam War, the U.S. government has setup a number of secret study centers/loony bins to experiment on the mental military men. Since the Vietnam War is an unpopular war, the government wants to find out if these soldiers are merely faking their mental illnesses or not. The eighteenth and final one of these hidden military mental hospitals is located at a large Gothic castle in the Pacific Northwest of the United States and a rather serious yet well meaning fellow named Colonel Kane (Stacy Keach), who is a former member of a United States Marine Corps special unit, has been sent there to treat a dozen or so patients with an eclectic array of mental disturbances. Kane is a stone cold serious and somewhat humorless fellow who almost seems to take his job too seriously, sort of in the manner of a 'true believer' type. Like most psychiatrists, Kane also has his fair share of mental problems, as he always has debilitating nightmares when it rains involving the violent murder of a boy in Vietnam. The patients of the castle are ordered around by a somewhat cynical fellow with a less than impressive IQ named Major Groper (Neville Brand) who seems to detest the mentally challenged soldiers, especially due to their erratic behavior, which includes (but is certainly not limited to) urinating while saluting a commander and undermining their superior's authority in rather wacky ways. Upon arriving at the castle, Colonel Kane is given a brief description of each soldier's mental peculiarities by a mostly serious yet sometimes sarcastic fellow named Colonel Richard Fell (Ed Flanders). Most importantly, Kane learns about a special patient named Captain Billy Cutshaw (Scott Wilson) who, as an astronaut, abruptly aborted a mission to the moon during takeoff after suffering from a major mental breakdown of sorts. When Kane meets with Cutshaw,

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he asks him why he decided to abort his trip to the moon but the ex-astronaut evades the question and instead says weird and whimsical things like, "Show me a Catholic and I'll show you a junky" and "The man in the moon tried to fuck my sister...The truth of the matter is...Custer..called Sitting Bull a spick," though he gives the psychiatrist his coveted St. Christopher medal as a literal and figurative symbol of respect. That night, Kane suffers a horrible nightmare and tells Colonel Fell the next morning how his nightmares are really those of a former patient of his who cut off a goofy-looking Vietnamese boy's head with a wire-trap and killed another couple dozen people with his bare hands. Kane also reveals that the former patient in question is named Vincent "Killer" Kane and that he is his brother, though he is dead.

Meanwhile, a patient named Lieutenant Frankie Reno (Jason Miller), who is currently working on a version of Shakespeare's Hamlet starring dogs instead of people, spots Colonel Kane staring into space in a seemingly psychosis-ridden state, so he tells Cutshaw and both mental patients conclude that the psychiatrist is crazy himself because, after all, shrinks are typically somewhat demented themselves and have the highest suicide rate of any profession. When Groper complains about having to wear a SS officer uniform during an experimental role-playing session where the psychiatrists portray Nazis and the patients pretend to be Allied prisoners of war, Kane flips out and yells at the Major like a mad man with a sort of venomous and seemingly murderous hatred, telling him he has to do what he is ordered to do and that if he tries to take off the aesthetically pleasing black uniform, he will "die in it." Eventually, Kane and Cutshaw have a heated debate about the existence of god, with the former arguing that human goodness proves the existence of god, stating, "You're convinced God is dead because there's evil in the world? [...] Then why don't you think he is alive because of the goodness in the world?" At the end of their talk, Cutshaw asks Kane, "If you die first and there's life after death, will you give me a sign?" and the Colonel agrees, albeit somewhat reluctantly. Cutshaw also asks Kane to take him to Catholic mass, which he does, and the astronaut seems to be getting better as a result of his new found religious devotion, as his neurotic behavior and wild outbursts begin to disappear, but that all changes when a new patient named Sergeant Gilman (Gordon Mark) arrives at the castle. When Gilman sees Kane, he recognizes him and calls him "Killer Kane," thus causing the psychiatrist to have a flashback where he recollects decapitating a gook boy, which causes him to collapse and become unconscious, though when he wakes up, he has no recollection of the incident. Indeed, as Colonel Fell explains to his staff, Kane is indeed the infamous "Killer Kane" who killed the Vietnamese boy and a couple dozen other people, which ultimately led to him suffering a complete mental breakdown and the complete disintegration of his personality, at least the 'evil' part. Fell also reveals that he is really the crazed killer's psychiatrist Hudson brother and that Kane was so overcome with guilt due to his murder-

ous behavior that he “killed” the evil killer part of his identity and developed the psychiatrist persona of his brother, thereupon subconsciously convincing himself that by curing other mental patients he would be able to atone for the sins of his past. The Army psychiatric staff decided to allow Kane to carry on his charade, even though Fell is the one that has been in command all along, with a fellow named Sergeant Krebs (Tom Atkins) even acting as “Kane’s keeper.”

Naturally, Cutshaw freaks out upon discovering that Kane is really “Killer Kane” as he feels he has been lied to and betrayed, and thus goes AWOL and heads to a bar where a biker gang (played by a real Viennese biker gang) led by a dumb dude that sports eyeliner named Stanley (Steve Sandor) and his sadistic buddy Richard (played by Richard Lynch, who in 1967 while under the influence of drugs, decided to set himself on fire, thus resulting in burn marks on 70% of his body) begin tormenting him by using him as their own personal “beach ball” after recognizing him as the astronaut who was all over the media after aborting his mission to the moon. Eventually, a waitress becomes distressed by how the bikers are treating Cutshaw, so she calls information, absurdly asking the operator, “Do you have a number for an asylum for marines or something?” Of course, when the psychiatrists get the call from the waitress about Cutshaw, Kane decides to head out to save him. When Kane gets there, the bikers also degrade him, forcing him to say stupid things like “marines are chicken” and “marines all suck.” When biker Stanley forces Kane to lick beer off the floor, one of the biker bitches hilariously calls him a “chicken shit turd.” Of course, Kane’s inner “Killer Kane” finally comes out when he sees the bikers attempt to rape Cutshaw (with Richard attempting to force his prick in the astronaut’s mouth) and he beats and/or kills every single biker in the bar, including the biker sluts, in what is easily the greatest bar brawl scene in cinema history. Kane brings Cutshaw back to the castle and the ex-astronaut finally confesses that he aborted his space mission because he was afraid to die alone on the moon, complaining he would have been, “really, really alone.” Kane then promises Cutshaw, “I’ll show you god exists...one example...and the others [...] to cure...try to cure them too. I don’t know...no other way now.” Ultimately, Kane kills himself to prove “god exists” by giving Cutshaw one concrete example of genuine human goodness. Sometime in the near future, Cutshaw, who is now cured, revisits the castle and sits in Kane’s former office where he reads the following letter written to him by the Colonel just before he committed suicide: “Captain Cutshaw, I am taking my life in the hope that my death may provide a shock that has carried a value. In any case, you now have your one example. If ever I have injured you, I am sorry. I have been fond of you. I know someday I shall see you again.” After leaving the castle and returning to his car, Cutshaw notices the St. Christopher medal that he gave Kane is sitting on the car seat, so he breaks down and begins to sob. Indeed, Kane fulfilled his original promise to give Cutshaw a sign if there is life after death.

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Interestingly, writer/director William Peter Blatty swears that the medal scene at the end of *The Ninth Configuration* was inspired by an event in his own life that occurred around the time his mother died and he had just started working on writing *The Exorcist*. Apparently, when Blatty's mother died, he took off one of two medals that were on his mom's corpse before she was buried, yet by some inexplicable miracle, he later noticed that he was wearing both medals, including the one that had supposedly been buried with his progenitor. As someone that is quite skeptical when it comes to anything and everything supernatural/spiritual, I find Blatty's personal story dubious to say the least, yet I must admit the way the director incorporated the story into *The Ninth Configuration* is nothing short of ingenious and highly inspirational. Indeed, the film is like a spiritual work for hopeless cynics that knows when to joke about morally repugnant things, but also when to be uncomfortably serious in a cinematic work that is like Christ meets Kierkegaard meets vaudeville. Indeed, as a work that features Academy Award nominated actor Robert Loggia (*Scarface*, *Jagged Edge*) in blackface singing Al Jolson's "Rainbow Around My Shoulder" while dancing around like a spastic retard on dope, actor/Dark Shadows producer George DiCenzo in nun-drag attempting in vain to give a Pepsi vending machine a half-assed exorcism, Shaft (1971) star Moses Gunn wearing a rather flamboyant superman outfit in assumed tribute to Nietzsche (the costume has an "N" on the chest instead of an "S", not to mention the fact that the German philosopher's ideas are expressed more than once during the film, albeit in a critical fashion), and featuring director Blatty himself in a cameo role as a perturbed patient with an unhealthy stethoscope fetish named Lt. Fromme, *The Ninth Configuration* is surely the most sardonic spiritual film ever made. As for the film's depiction of psychiatrists and other 'soul-doctors,' Blatty had the following to say regarding psychoanalysis in the audio commentary for the Warner Brothers DVD release of the work: "It's hardly a science [...] at best, it's an art and not a very convincing one, if you examine Freudian psychology." Indeed, aside from the brief Jolson parody scene (which, more than anything, is really more an unflattering mockery of Yiddish vaudeville than an actual tribute), *The Ninth Configuration* is a rare American comedy that is not only kosher-free and lacks degenerate Freudian influences, but also has something serious to say and goes about expressing it in a truly transcendental way that proves that cinema can be used as something other than art or entertainment, though the film manages to succeed with both of those things as well. Part tragicomic psychological thriller, part biker (anti)exploitation flick, part absurdist metaphysical Gothic melodrama, part schizophrenic giallo, and part politically incorrect surrealist psychodrama, *The Ninth Configuration* is indisputable proof that miracles can even happen in the uniquely unholy and spiritually vapid realm of Hebraic Hollywood.

-Ty E

BIO-ZOMBIE

Wilson Yip (1998)

Bio-Zombie has had it coming for quite some time. I recall viewing the trailer for this back in 2004 on the Tokyo Shock release of Versus. I hadn't explored Asian horror quite enough to be interested in the kooky Hong-Kong spoof of zombie foundations found within Bio-Zombie. Besides, the characters seemed too much like pestering caricatures and we know how much the East loves to include the "quirk" with the salivating annunciation of simple words. Having borrowed Bio-Zombie from a friend only yesterday, I felt obligated to finally put aside my differences and watch the film with absolutely no expectations. After all, Bio-Zombie is directed by Wilson Yip, the adrenaline junkie that basically handed Donnie Yen his international acclaim with such incredible vessels as Sha Po Lang, Flash Point, and Ip Man.

As if you couldn't tell, Bio-Zombie is a comedy centered around an undead outbreak in a mall. It's ultimately up to two Triad underlings to rescue their companions and try to escape the mall unscathed. The reason of Bio-Zombie's cult success can most likely be attested to the transfusion of pop-culture as popularized in Edgar Wright's filmography. These rebellious teens reference Sega Arcade title The House of the Dead quickly as their zombie situation turns deadly. The less-annoying "Crazy Bee" screams to a police officer to shoot the shuffling monster in the head. Such game devices are also attempted, as quick-edits of game footage are spliced parallel to carnage and a reload button appears on the screen after surveying a police officer's standard issue handgun. At first, I was very unsure of Bio-Zombie. I can credit the film towards looking better than the average Hong Kong horror endeavor of that time period. Wilson Yip certainly is skilled in aiming adventure towards a certain demographic (Romero fans) but the characters had irritated me and as expected, stained a foul misconception. But before I could further boil my disappointment, something . . . strange happened: the characters matured and grew from their experiences. The poisonous, inane, and belligerent cast of Bio-Zombie swapped roles in such an effective manner that literally left me stunned.

When the film begins, our characters Woody and Bee are tasked with minding the bootleg video shop for their mysterious boss. Even in a comedic and relevant introduction are we given insight to this. Bio-Zombie's opening credits are a handcam shot of a theater screen and it's implied that the latest film bootlegged by these goons is entitled Bio-Zombie. Woody is the personal growth that I've been regarding to. Starting out as a pest and eventually becoming the action hero of the film, Woody is a prime example that lowering standards early only to blast them out of the park later is a great way to pack on pounds of charisma by the film's break. Another intrinsic treasure of Bio-Zombie is the offbeat median of impact that explodes around the hour mark. Scrapping all

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humor and playfulness, Bio-Zombie becomes what most zombie films aim for - a personal tragedy. Many characters that have been adapted to your tastes, had you an appreciation of Eastern splatter, will die off in violent and tasteful ways. Never skipping the adoration of past characters, Wilson Yip maintains his respect and allows these characters to build sympathy towards them while also kindling several sweet, but short romances along the way. Bio-Zombie is a zombie film done with fervor and appreciation for its influences. Did anybody else get a Street Trash vibe with its Tenafly Viper allusions of toxic beverage?

Bio-Zombie is bad taste done right, this is for certain. After Sushi Boy's romance came to a sudden end, I was certain that Wilson Yip had it out for all his characters but after further evaluation, it became apparent that I was blind to an expectation of altruism. Yip too cared as much for these characters as I did, which explains the amount of depth put into such a band of deceitful miscreants. But he had to focus on the horror element of his cult opus. Had there been no bloodshed then there would have been no conflict. No conflict would have led to nil emotional struggle and without that then Bio-Zombie would have been useless zombie fodder. Just another film to accompany the rest of the undead genre. The humor basis may not spark an interest in the culturally-declined, or if you simply are not amused by slapstick antics from the East. However, Bio-Zombie is certainly special in its own regard. It starts off reflecting the own stupidity of its characters then settles out into one of the more bleak and surprising endings amidst soulless cinema. For what it's worth, I'm glad I waited until my tastes evolved to view this film. Had I viewed it back then perhaps the austere note Bio-Zombie's left on might have upset me. As it stands, one of the very few "Zombie" films I can tolerate, enjoy, even.

-mAQ

BLUE MOVIE

Wim Verstappen (1971)

I have to confess that 'Blue Movie' is certainly a film title that, although fairly generic and even a bit antiquated, has obsessed me for a number of years, namely because it is the title of three very different, albeit all technically erotic, films that I have had an interest in at one point or another. Indeed, aside from the Andy Warhol flick also known as *Fuck* (1969) starring Viva and Louis Waldon and the truly eerie and esoteric rape-ridden 1978 artsploitation of the same name directed by underrated aberrant-garde Italian auteur Alberto Cavallone, the Dutch sexploitation flick *Blue Movie* (1972) directed by Wim Verstappen has been on my radar for a number of years but it was not until the other day that I actually got the opportunity to watch it via the new Cult Epics blu-ray. As an inordinately obsessive fan of Dutch cinema, I naturally had been intending to watch the film for sometime as it is considered a key cinematic work in the Netherlands due to more or less single-handedly demolishing the censoring power of the Dutch film Ratings Board (which was officially dismantled in 1977) and thus influencing the more explicit films of greater filmmakers like Paul Verhoeven and ultimately becoming an unexpected huge hit as one of the most (monetarily) successful Dutch films of all-time, yet I also had certain reservations due to it being a (s)exploitation flick made in collaboration between Wim Verstappen and Pim de la Parra (aka 'Pim & Wim') via their production company Scorpio Films. While there is no doubt that the aptly titled *Blue Movie* features enough flaccid cocks, bushy beavers, and large pendulous big sippers to be at least considered a genuine softcore fuck flick, it luckily features enough food-for-thought to chew onto to imbue one with a respectable degree of toxic intellectual diarrhea. Indeed, for a film that ostensibly celebrated the so-called 'sexual liberation' movement that initially blitzkrieged the Occident in the late-1960s and ultimately caused more long-term social damage to Europe than the Soviets ever could, it unequivocally depicts the (im)moral phenomenon in an exceedingly negative fashion, which is especially curious when one considers that the film's Surinamese-Sephardic-Jewish producer de la Parra more or less spent his entire career peddling celluloid smut. Maybe it is because I am from a generation where porn has always been pretty easy to come by, but the only kind of people that *Blue Movie* might arouse is virginal middle school math teachers or young Mormon kids that has never seen a nice pair of shapely tits before. Luckily, the film was made in a (post)Calvinist nation where even ostensibly vogue erotica is impregnated with a certain discernible degree of pathological pessimism and cynicism. In short, if you are one of the oh-so-few unfortunate beings that manages to get aroused enough to bust a load while watching the film, you will probably feel exceedingly guilty afterwards as you stare at your cheaply misspent baby batter.

Indeed, despite obviously mainly being a huge financial success due to its

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then-shocking (anti)erotic genital-driven content and the predictable scandal it caused, would-be-auteur Verſtappen made a fairly intellectual plea as to why the film was more than mere disposable celluloid dung, or as Dutch film scholar Peter Verſtraten explained in his book *Humour and Irony in Dutch Poſt-War Fiction Film* (2016): “Director Verſtappen was dissatisfied with this decision and in a quite lengthy counter-plea he pointed out the scientific and religious purport of the film. BLUE MOVIE, he bluffed, should be seen as a loose adaptation of DE TOEKOMST DER RELIGIE [THE FUTURE OF RELIGION] (1947), a volume conſiſting of nine eſſays by the reſpectable writer Simon Veſtdijk. Verſtappen also attached an official American scientific research document, called THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY, to his apology, for he claimed that this was crucial source material. By explaining in his apology that ſuch extra-textual aſpects had been influential, which of course was hard to deny, Verſtappen provoked the Film Commission. Moreover, a psychologist was conſulted who thought the film made ſenſe from the perſpective of his profeſſion.” On top of being, relatively ſpeaking, almoſt ſhockingly ‘intellectual,’ the film is—by modern degenerate liberal ſtandards—fairly ‘red-pilled’ in terms of its rather frank depiction of male and female ſexuality and the ſocial influences behind ſaid ſexuality. In fact, the ſtrongeſt and ſaneſt voice of reaſon in the film is an old ſchool ‘faſciſt’ zoologiſt-cum-profeſſor that has come to the concluſion after ſtudying monkeys that, as far as human ſexuality is concerned, women look for ‘ſtatus’ (as provided by an alpha-male type) when it comes to men and men care more about the preſtige a beautiful woman (translation: ‘trophy wife’) gives him than the actual beautiful woman herſelf. On top of that, a hedoniſtic liſtyle involving orgies, fucking married women, and creating pornography ultimately leads the male protagonist to becoming impotent, at leaſt when it comes to a woman that he actually he loves in what ultimately proves to be a venomouſly ironical twiſt that is clearly meant to mock the raincoat crowd. In ſhort, this erotic film demonſtrates, ſo-called ‘free love’ is not free and, like ſo-called erotic films, can ſurely lead to the erasure of eros and a ſort of excremental approach to human ſexuality where ſexual release becomes ſomething akin to a bowel moment in terms of personal value.

Like a ſort of anti-Rear Window (1954) where the young and virile (as opposed to old and crippled) ‘hero’ ſpends his entire time fucking tons of (sub)debutantes in tons of different apartment building rooms inſtead of voyeuriſtically ſpying on them from the comfort of his apartment like Jimmy Stewart’s rather ſedentary character, Blue Movie might have been directed by a guy that has deſcribed himſelf as having been influenced by Hitchcock yet it can hardly be deſcribed as Hitchcockian, eſpecially as a cinematic work that utilizes explicit ſexual imagery over ſuggeſtive ſymbolism and hyper horny (yet oftentimes homely) whores and houſewives as opposed to cool and myſterious platinum blonde bimbos. While

Verstappen (with Martin Scorsese of all people!) co-penned his pal Pim's almost obnoxiously Hitchcockian Dutch-German co-production *Obsessions* (1969) aka *Bezeten - Het gat in de muur* starring German actor turned producer Dieter Geissler (who also co-produced *Blue Movie*), his oftentimes dually flaccid fuck flick is brutally bare bones aesthetically speaking and has about as much visceral thriller-mystery tension as a New England fast food line, yet that it is ultimately to its benefit in terms of demystifying the innately idiotic Marcusean counterculture myth of 'free love.' Indeed, not coincidentally concluding on a shot of the obscenely oppressive and clinic apartment complex, which fittingly resembles a dystopian prison, that the protagonist and his feckless fuck buddies and friends have turned into a virtual human sex zoo where sexual shame and self-control have been just as thoughtlessly disposed of as civilization itself, the film demonstrates in a sometimes devastating (yet oftentimes humorously depicted) fashion that free love has resulted in a sort of cleverly cryptic metaphysical enslavement of the West that controls people more than any religion, government, or dictator ever could. It is also probably no coincidence that the very same base instincts that led to the protagonist serving a jail sentence also lead him to relative financial and social success despite also causing him to being unlovable and impotent in the end. Indeed, as the film demonstrates in a relatively subtly sardonic fashion, the morally inverted world that the protagonist unexpectedly finds himself in after getting out of prison at the beginning of the film leads to his complete and utter retrogression as a human being; or, in short, the rather ironic consequences of so-called 'progressive' (sexual)politics. While the quite literally puritanical values of Calvinism that led to the once-powerful Dutch Empire are nowhere to be seen in the ostensibly hip and happening post-colonial Holland depicted in the film, flagrant philandering, treacherous cuckoldry, single mothers/bastard kids, porn addiction, sexual-shame-inspired suicide, and early age impotence, among other things, are so rampant that they can be found under the roof of one apartment building. In short, *Blue Movie* makes for a rather mirthfully morbid masturbation aid and if you are dumb and/or sexually retarded enough to beat your meat to such a devilishly dejecting movie, just remember that the filmmaker(s) would be laughing at you (and rightly so!).

Blue Movie hero Michael (Hugo Metsers)—a rather dumb and unwitting yet reasonably affable dude that thinks with his dick instead of his brain—was sentenced to five years in prison for having sex with a slightly underage teenage girl, so naturally he is in for quite the surprise when he is finally released from the slammer and discovers that 'free love' is now the norm and that no one would dare give a shit about such a carnal 'crime' in the new sexually liberated climate in the Netherlands lest they be deemed uptight reactionaries and/or dorks. As a somewhat handsome 25-year-old buck that has spent about half a decade of his most sexually virile years completely pussy-starved (in fact, the protagonist had to spend an extra year in prison after beating up a queer that tried to rape

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him), Michael naturally sees his fairly conservative parole officer Eddie (Helmert Woudenberg, who is the son of a Dutch-Waffen-SS Untersturmführer)—a well-meaning yet unintentionally comical and seemingly half-autistic nerd that makes a piss poor attempt at warning the protagonist about the moral degeneration that has hit the tiny Lowland country—as somewhat of an obstacle in terms of trying to find a nice warm hole to stick his extra eager bald-headed bandit into. Luckily, Michael's new apartment building, which resembles something you might expect to find in some obscure Soviet shithole, is packed with shameless whores that are completely down to fuck, including a number of married women. In short, Michael had no way to predict that he would be unleashed in a recklessly wanton world that is beyond his most lurid dreams, but unfortunately he is also in no way prepared to deal with the unexpected consequences of such widespread hedonism. Driven by a libido that is only transcended by a lack of IQ, Michael sometimes seems more like a giant pulsating penis than a man with a mind and personality. Despite respecting her zoologist husband Dr. Bernard Cohn (Kees Brusse)—a stoic scholar that acts as a sort of father figure for the protagonist—Michael finds himself reluctantly engaging in an affair with a mindless kraut cunt named Marianne (Ursula Blauth), who has no qualms about confessing to the hopelessly horny hero that she finds him especially attractive because he bears a striking resemblance to a brother that she had an incestuous childhood relationship with. While a genius when it comes to studying monkeys and their strikingly eerie similarities with humans, Dr. Cohn—a rather conservative chap with a Kohenic kosher surname that couldn't be less kosher in terms of attitude and demeanor—was clearly blinded by fine young female flesh when he dared to marry someone as young and dumb as Marianne, who is at least young enough to be his daughter. While clearly a failure when it comes to choosing the appropriate wife, Dr. Cohn ultimately eclipses parole officer Eddie in terms of acting as a sort of wise and sensible fatherly figure (in fact, he even acknowledges his foolishness in terms of choosing a young hot twat spouse). Clearly overwhelmed by the steady flow of warm-and-wet spunk-pots that are quite literally dropped off at his doorstep, Michael finds it to be impossible to turn down all the carnal traps and thus ultimately find himself turning into a virtual fuck-toy for his entire apartment building. In fact, the protagonist finds himself so deeply buried in gash that it eventually leads him to gaining an admirable reputation and, in turn, a ton of cash after he learns to monetize his carnal prestige by becoming a full-blown pornographer, though it comes at a somewhat hefty price: his soul.

For many, if not most, young men, sex is naturally the most important thing in the entire world and the one activity where one expends the most time and energy attempting to procure but, as Dr. Cohn attempts to explain to Michael, there are much more important things in life than pussy. Indeed, when Michael asks him if sex is important, Dr. Cohn, who clearly did not become a successful professional as a result of spending all his time getting drunk and banging bar whores,

bluntly replies, “Power, aggression is more fundamental” and even hilariously tells his wife—a hot twat harlot that seriously acts as if her gash is god’s great gift to the world—during the same heated conversation that, “Heaven doesn’t lie between your legs.” Needless to say, being part of a decidedly degenerate generation that has been strategically force-fed the bitter blue-pill of Marcusian mumbo jumbo, Marianne—the sort of impressionable yet not less self-absorbed I-got-my-head-up-my-add idiot that would believe Wilhelm Reich was a legit scientist—accuses her hubby scientist of being a big mean “fascist” for expressing traditional ideas that contradict her debauched tendencies towards extramarital excursions and consuming endless brotherly cock. As Dr. Cohn explains towards the end of the film upon confessing to Michael that he is fully aware that he has cuckolded him, “When you spend your life watching monkeys you learn about people [...] I find it terrible.” While Dr. Cohn attempts to give Michael some fatherly advice about life, he also warns him, “Maybe you’re a born bachelor. And then such value is nonsense.” It seems that Michael may indeed be an accursed perennial bachelor of sorts as he actually attempts to transcend his degenerate Dutch Don Juan status and hooks up with a single mother named Julia (Ine Veen)—a girl that he was initially extremely attracted to yet ultimately rejected due to the rather unfortunate problem of her bastard brood—but the love affair proves to be doomed from the get-go, at least as far as biology as concerned, as the hunky hero fails to even get a hard-on after a hot and heavy foreplay session that occurs at the end of the film. Indeed, it seems that too much pornography and poontang has left the once perennially potent protagonist impotent, at least when it comes to women that he actually loves. In short, sex has become nothing more than an impulsive bodily function like defecation for Michael and everything has turned to shit. In short, free love is far from free, or so the hapless protagonist learns after more or less losing his soul in a sea of semen-sucking skanks. As to the character’s rather quick rise and fall, Camille Paglia might have been onto something when she argued in *Sexual Personae* (1990), “Ironically, sexual success always ends in sagging fortunes anyhow. Every male projection is transient and must be anxiously, endlessly renewed. Men enter in triumph but withdraw in decrepitude. The sex act cruelly mics history’s decline and fall.”

One of the things I find most intriguing about cinema, especially old and/or foreign cinema, is its ability to act as a sort of virtual time-machine and express the fears, obsessions, trends, and zeitgeist of a particular era. Of course, not like an ancient cathedral, great cinema as created by master auteurs like Dreyer and Bergman was clearly made to stand the test of time but such timeless cinematic works are few and far between. Of course, this can certainly not be said of virtually all erotica, especially a film like *Blue Movie*, which was clearly made to cash-in on degenerate trends (if nothing else, producer de la Parra was a clever promotions man), hence why the film is almost forgotten today despite being

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technically one of the most (monetarily) successful Dutch films of all-time. Still, the film is more intriguing than I expected it to be, if not for oftentimes unintentional reasons, as it unwittingly exposes both the spiritual and sexual bankruptcy of so-called sexual liberation. After all, it is no coincidence that our so-called puritanical ancestors had more sex than we do despite the fact we apparently live in oh-so liberated and enlightened times. Also, compared to a decidedly degenerate film like Just Jaeckin's insultingly idiotic *Emmanuelle* (1974)—a film that is undeniably stylishly directed yet ultimately a disgustingly debauched piece of celluloid doo-doo that derives most of its false potency in its perpetual degradation of tragic Dutch diva Sylvia Kristel—*Blue Movie* is much maturer and realistic in terms of its message. Indeed, whereas Jaeckin's unintentional celluloid joke literally basks in cuckoldry and attempts to pass off Sapphic sex as the height of hipdom, Verstappen's surprisingly whimsical quasi-exploitation flick completely demystifies the entire sexual liberation (pseudo)ethos and hints at how the ostensible sexual utopia would lead to a degenerate dystopia. Indeed, leave it up to the Dutch to create a fuck flick that features figurative finger-wagging about fuck flicks and a both literally and figuratively anticlimactic climax where the Michael's flaccid pecker becomes the sort of viscerally pathetic anti-star of the protagonist's own worst nightmare; or, in short, the perils of metaphysically-induced castration anxiety and impotence. When it comes down to it, *Blue Movie* is, in many ways (and probably mostly unintentionally), an insanely aesthetically grotesque film that absolutely epitomizes everything that was obscenely ugly about early-1970s clothes, hair, and fashion styles, which is rather fittingly as these gratingly inane ingredients help to (unwittingly) underscore the equally inane ideas of the singularly deleterious 'save the whales and kill the babies' generation. In fact, the visuals of the film have aged just as poorly as the odiously sensually overzealous zeitgeist that it so vividly (and, somewhat surprisingly, viscerally) depicts. Notably, the Cult Epics blu-ray of the film includes an interview with *Blue Movie* lead Hugo Metsers' son Hugo Metsers Jr.—himself an actor that also happens to be the son of avant-garde filmmaker Maartje Seyferth (*Venus in Furs*, *Crepuscle*)—and it is somewhat incriminating in terms of revealing the effects that the Dutch porn generation had on its children. Among other things, Metsers recalls a somewhat traumatic childhood experience where he randomly encountered *Blue Movie* at the mere age of 10 on pirate television while at a friend's house and it devastated him so much that he instantly ran home and cried in his bed. In fact, Metsers describes his childhood as "lonely" due to his parents' careerist self-absorption and sums up the sexual revolution era as being "chaos" for him, which probably explains why he has lived a somewhat disastrous personal life that includes two failed marriages.

Despite technically being the fifth biggest native Dutch box office hit of all-time and demonstrating that sex—even marvelously mundane sex involving floppy flaccid cocks—certainly sells, *Blue Movie* also confirms that most pussy gets

pretty old pretty fast, hence the relative obscurity of the film today (and why it makes a worthy release for the vintage Euro erotica nostalgists at Cult Epics). Although Verstappen would go on to direct other erotically-charged material like *Alicia* (1974), quite unlike his pal-cum-partner Pim, he eventually demonstrated he was a somewhat eclectic filmmaker and would greatly mature with age as revealed by his largely genital-less aeronautical affair *Dakota* (1974) and rather unconventional Dutch Resistance flick *Paſtorale 1943* (1978). Indeed, as the sagely Peter Cowie noted in his text *Dutch Cinema* (1979), *Paſtorale 1943* was “his most successful from a critical point of view” and that “Verstappen formed with de la Parra one of the most significant partnerships in modern Dutch films, and there is a clearly discernible maturity about his later work.” As for Blue Movie producer Pim de la Parra, he would confirm certain unfavorable racial stereotypes by continuing to direct artless smut, including *Wan Pipel* (1976) aka *One People* which, aside from being the first feature ever made in the director’s homeland of Suriname, depicts a miscegenation-based bizarre love triangle between a negro, white Dutch woman, and brown Hindu broad. While Pim has revealed certain Godardian pretenses with his debut feature *De Minder gelukkige terugkeer van Jozef Katus naar het land van Rembrandt* (1966) aka *The Not Too Happy Return of Jozef Katus to the Land of Rembrandt* and even later works like *Paul Chevrolet* and the *Ultimate Hallucination* (1985), he never quite achieved the artistic prowess of Wim and can be seen today as a sort of slightly more serious ‘Dutch’ equivalent to Lloyd Kaufman in terms of degenerate schlock influence and curious combination of undeniable likeability and would-be-chic sleaze. As Cowie rightly noted when comparing the producer-cum-director to his former partner Wim, “Pim de Parra’s successes as a director have been more modest. He is primarily a catalyst, a centre of ceaseless energy and ideas for other to put into practice.” In that sense, he can certainly be seen as a sort of secondary auteur of Blue Movie, which makes for a good double feature with de la Parra’s own sardonically salacious *Swinging Amsterdam* flick *Frank & Eva* (1973) also starring Hugo Metsers and featuring Sylvia Kristel in her debut film role.

For being an early fuck flick that even predates the ‘porn chic’ trend sparked by Gerard Damiano’s obscenely overrated *Deep Throat* (1972), Blue Movie is ultimately strikingly prophetic, especially terms of its ending, as porn-induced erectile dysfunction (PIED) is apparently a serious problem among a lot of modern-day young men as pornography can change the way a man’s brain reacts to sexual arousal. In other words, pornography is not only largely pathetic, but can also result in sexual retardation, as if the touch and smell of a real woman has been completely neutralized by poorly directed images of a labia-less lady with giant silly silicone tits being blacked by some beefy bro named Tyrone. Indeed, before porn even became completely vogue in the Occident, Verstappen’s prick-filled flick deconstructed the porn myth of the daredevil dick and really underscored the true pathetic persuasion of porn and the so-called sexual revolution. In that

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sense, Blue Movie totally transcended any sort of expectations that I had for it (which were admittedly somewhat low). I certainly cannot deny that the film reminded me that the only way to not feel like an emasculated loser while watching porn is if you're doing it for 'aesthetic' reasons (e.g. experiencing true classics like Jonas Middleton's truly singular hardcore horrorgasm *Through the Looking Glass* (1976)) and/or in the company of a girl you are about to fuck. Also, there's something supremely cucked, if not downright gay, about watching some random coke-addled 'performer' plow some superlatively silly silicone-powered that's well-worn HPV-positive vade-mecum with his extra veiny Viagra-ridden ramrod, but then again I am the sort of guy that cannot help but be reminded of *Der Stürmer* when I see Ron Jeremy and can only speculate as to how any non-retarded man could find someone as intrinsically plastic and grimy as Jenna Jameson to be extremely sexually desirable. Of course, most young guys are not going to think of such things and it is no coincidence that the protagonist of Blue Movie is a fairly normal unthinking dude that never considered that there might be some negative aspects to 'free love' as he is innately irrational due to being perpetually high on hormones, hence the truly pernicious character of the sexual liberation movement and the rather grotesque and uniquely unsexy virtual gargoyles like Reich and Marcuse that provided the pseudo-philosophical framework to unleash it on Christian Europe. Speaking of psychoanalytic quacks, not unlike G. Jung with his former kosher mentor Freud, Wim did not really evolve and become an interesting filmmaker with his own distinct voice until after dropping Pim and rejecting a simply sex-obsessed approach to the medium. After all, Europe did not become great embracing sexual gratification but by deferring it, hence the absurdity of describing sexually degenerate ideas as 'progressive' when they are literally and quite unequivocally the opposite. After all, compare the post-Christian cinematic art of Wim and Pim to the countless great painters (and artists in general) of Dutch Christendom. Indeed, I do not think that it is an exaggeration to say that there's more dark erotic intrigue in a small fragment from a painting by Old Dutch Masters like Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel the Elder than there is in all of the films of Wim and Pim combined. Additionally, Wim and Pim's approach to the romantically lewd seems rather retarded when compared to one of Godfried Schalcken's more subversive chiaroscuro paintings like 'A Man Offering Gold and Coins to a Girl,' but that is exactly why Blue Movie is worth seeing as it painfully, if not playfully, highlights the twilight of Dutch Kultur and spirituality in an almost hypnotically crude fashion.

-Ty E

THE GOALIE'S ANXIETY AT THE PENALTY KICK

Wim Wenders (1972)

Personally, I have always considered Dutch-German auteur Wim Wenders (*The American Friend*, *Until the End of the World*) a deracinated dork of the hopelessly Americanized sort in comparison to top German New Cinema filmmakers like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Schroeter, Werner Herzog, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Herbert Achternbusch, and Helma Sanders-Brahms, and I see it as no coincidence that out of all his kraut cinematic compatriots, he was the one who was most 'successful' at making the transition from the Fatherland to Hollywood, even if he has not directed a decent film in at least two decades. Of course, as he demonstrated with his film *Kings of the Road* (1976) aka *Im Lauf der Zeit* where a character states, "The Yanks have colonized our subconscious," Wenders was all too aware of he and his fellow countrymen's precarious predicament as serious celluloid artists in an age of international Hollywood hegemony, but that does not excuse the fact that most of his films positively personify derogatory 'p' words like 'pretentious' and 'plodding.' Indeed, my biggest beef with Wim(p) Wenders is that most of his films are about as impassioned as a vasectomy. To be quite honest, I have yet to dig through Wenders' entire oeuvre as I have already seen enough to know that he is a one-note wonder who takes existential crisis to ungodly extremes of aesthetic impotence and brazen banality, with my recent viewing of his feature *Summer in the City* (1970)—a superlatively sterile and static student film that the director quite symbolically dedicated to The Kinks—only further discouraged me. Yesterday, I managed to find the patience to watch what is regarded as one of Wenders' most important German films, *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty* (1972) aka *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* aka *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, and indeed while as slow as the director's most pathologically plodding works, it also happens to be one of his rare unrivaled masterpieces. Adapted from the 1970 novel of the same German name written by Slovenian-Austrian writer/playwright/filmmaker Peter Handke (*Die linkshändige Frau* aka *The Left-Handed Woman*, *The Absence*) in what would be the first of a couple successful collaborations between the novelist and director that would eventually sire *Wings of Desire* (1987) aka *Der Himmel über Berlin*, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* is a so-called 'detective' story without any real detective about a wackjob soccer goalie of the deranged dickheaded sort who misses blocking a penalty kick, heads to Vienna, stalks and has sex with a movie theater cashier, senselessly strangles to death said cashier for no discernible reason, and gets on a bus and goes into hiding in plain sight in his childhood hometown as he ostensibly waits for the police to arrest him. The closest Wenders ever came to directing an 'anti-Heimat,' *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* depicts Austrian/Germanic rural life as a degenerative and primitive way of living on the brink of extinction, yet city life

THE GOALIE'S ANXIETY AT THE PENALTY KICK

is portrayed in no more of a flattering light manner. Unquestionably Wenders' most dark, dreary, and distinctly Teutonic cinematic work, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* is a decidedly Weltschmerz-rattled psychodrama without much actual drama about a corpse of an ancient nation that no longer has a 'Heimat.'

Joseph Bloch (Arthur Brauss) is a professional soccer goalie, but he seems rather apathetic while playing the game, so it comes as no shock to the viewer at the beginning of *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* that he is ejected from the field after being scored on. Seemingly unaffected by the situation, blockhead Bloch heads to the seedy side of Vienna and indulges in rather underwhelming forms of hedonism. Eventually, Bloch goes to the movies and seems enticed by the cashier (Erika Pluhar), but he won't make his move on her until later. Not long after, Bloch heads to a soccer themed sports bar and tells a girl he is semi-flirting with that the former ex-owner was a Austrian national forward who moved to America, joined a non-league American team, disappeared, and was last found living in a trailer in Tucson, Arizona, thus demonstrating what Wenders/Handke thinks about the American dream. In between getting mugged and being beaten without putting up a fight, Bloch goes back to the movie theater and flirts with the cashier once again. After watching the movie, Bloch lurks outside the theater and waits for the cashier to get off work, ultimately following her on a bus back to her apartment. The cashier does not seem at all disturbed by this and invites Bloch in her apartment and the two have sex and the goalkeeper spends the night. The next day, Bloch learns the girl's name is Gloria and the two strangers continue to small talk as she gets ready for work. Hoping to get lucky before she goes to work, Gloria begins to undress and wraps a rope that was around her waist around Bloch's neck in a provocative fashion, but he seems hardly aroused, at least sexually. Unfortunately for Gloria, Bloch does not seem the least bit turned on and decides to strangle the sweet young lady to death instead with the same rope she wrapped around his neck. Hiding in plain sight, Bloch decides to go to the movie theater one more time and ultimately gets in a physical altercation with an older male employee. Not long after, a cop arrives and questions Bloch about his unruly behavior, but the goalie is a good bullshitter and manages to convince the cop of his innocence.

Eventually, Bloch hops on a bus and flees to his rural hometown where his ex-girlfriend Hertha Gabler (Kai Fischer) runs a quaint and mostly vacant inn. Bloch and Gabler get chummy again, though they never rekindle their past relationship as the former seems to have nil interest in sex, let alone romance. When Gabler mentions that Bloch seems extra fidgety and cannot spend a second without standing up or sitting down and fiddling with things, he merely ignores her remark. Meanwhile, a mute child is found dead floating in a lake and a swarthy gypsy is arrested, but it is eventually discovered the death was the result of a tragic accident. Undeniably, the small village is degenerating as demonstrated by an

old man's remark to Bloch that the local children can only speak in monosyllables and are nothing short of illiterate. Bloch spends most of his time reading newspapers so he can follow both his soccer career and the investigation of unsolved murder he committed. When an almost immaculate criminal sketch of Bloch appears in the newspaper, none of the locals seem to put two and two together, even though they confess to also reading the daily paper. In the end, Bloch watches a local soccer game and chats with a fellow spectator, eventually asking the man, "Have you ever tried keeping your eye on the goalie and not the forwards?" to which the man explains how hard it is to do. In a rather metaphorical scene, Bloch then explains, "It's very hard to keep your eyes away from the ball. It takes a terrific effort. You see the goalie running backwards and forwards...bending over left and right...shouting at the backs. Usually you only notice him when the ball is shot at the goal. It's funny...watching the goalie running around without the ball," thus demonstrating all things are a matter of perspective and that when one is able to master seeing something from an unconventional perspective, things become quite clear that others might not be able to discern while looking at something in the more traditional fashion. Indeed, all of Bloch's friends had all the warning signs that he was the killer, including a sketch of him in the local newspaper and constant acts of violence he would exhibit in public (i.e. starting fights, throwing an ashtray in a man's face, etc.), but they lacked the perspective to see what was right in front of their eyes. And, indeed, in the end, none of the police detectives ever consider that the killer might be 'hiding' in plain sight in his hometown, just as Gloria never considered that Bloch might be a predator as a strange individual who went to the effort to stalk her all the way to her apartment.

Indeed, the viewer certainly pays close attention to the Goalkeeper throughout the entirety of *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, but one must ultimately watch the film from the same cockeyed perspective as one paying attention to a goalie during an actual soccer game if they want to get anything out of the film. That being said, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* is a film that demands repeated viewings. As someone who spent about a decade during my childhood playing a forward on various soccer teams, I can certainly attest that goalies were typically the most peculiar players on the team (indeed, I remember on more than one occasion getting into a fight with a goalie), just as drummers always seem to be the most odd and introverted members of bands. Like a kicker in football, the goalkeeper is like a lone soldier with a totally detached perspective from all the other players whose position is pretty much totally independent from the rest of the team. Considering I cannot think of a single other sports-themed movie I like, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* now holds the number one spot for my favorite sports flick. Undoubtedly, I never would have expected that Wim Wenders of all filmmakers would have directed not only my favorite 'soccer flick,' but a rather dark and foreboding one at that manages to

THE GOALIE'S ANXIETY AT THE PENALTY KICK

capture the complete and utter vapidness of post-Hitlerite Vienna. Indeed, as much as I tend to disagree with most of his reviews, Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* was certainly on point when he wrote about the film, "Since "The Goalie's Anxiety" was first shown in New York, Mr. Wenders has been represented by two later films seen at the New York Film Festival, "Alice in the Cities" and "Kings of the Road," but because neither has had the force and cool beauty of this film, I would assume he needs a collaborator of Mr. Handke's discipline and intellectual enthusiasm."

I have yet to see another Wenders flick that is so penetrating, yet at the same time so distinctly Teutonic, as *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* certainly ranks as one of the most idiosyncratic yet decidedly disturbing anti-Heimat films ever made, which I think largely has to do with the talents of writer Handke. Quite notably, Handke once wrote a piece criticizing Herbert Achternbusch (*The Last Hole*, *Servus Bayern* aka *Bye-Bye Bavaria!*)—a filmmaker/novelist largely unknown outside of the German-speaking world who Werner Herzog once described as the "most Bavarian filmmaker" and who has essentially spent his entire life making absurdist Southern kraut anti-Heimat films—in which he wrote: "Achternbusch ought to know better than any other writer. Why then does he content himself with fantasies taken from the pages of the local paper? The result: slavish – or in Achternbusch's case, simulating slavish – adherence to the culture cliché that nobody can be represented as an individual anymore, that we have all become damaged, perforated foils for anything and everything already illustrated and pictured: formless beings, ventriloquist existences. Does Achternbusch offer more than merely rhetorical, literally 'sub'-cultural challenge to the world of the newspaper . . . ? Or are his travesties of plastic mythologies a kind of resistance?" Indeed, while the anti-Heimat films of Achternbusch, Volker Schlöndorff, R.W. Fassbinder, Peter Fleischmann, and Werner Herzog typically go to great pains to present a rather unflattering depiction of rural life, most of these films feature a certain mythology, magic, and kultur in regard to village life, yet *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* features none of that as a work that depicts the hinterland as a rotting corpse plagued by death and banality. Anti-Heimat meets Hitchcock with nods to Howard Hawks (the goalie goes to see *Red Line 7000* (1965) starring James Caan), *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* is post-Hitler/post- Aktionist at its most unsettling and dispiriting as a sort of spiritual celluloid brother film to Fassbinder's *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (1970), albeit all the more draining, as well as a celluloid prototype from the more glacial works of Austrian auteur Michael Haneke, except more authentic and less pretentious. Probably the only film directed by Wenders that provides evidence that the filmmaker is more than the pompous wimp that the late great Christoph Schlingensiefel oftentimes parodied him as, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* is undoubtedly one of the most original and important works of German New Cinema.

-Ty E

ALICE IN THE CITIES
ALICE IN THE CITIES

Wim Wenders (1974)

Before the maddening minimalistic mundanity of mumblecore and the cinematic slacking of Richard Linklater's *Slacker* (1991), there was the innately superior deracinated Teuton Weltschmerz of German auteur Wim Wenders' *Alice in the Cities* (1974) aka *Alice in den Städten*, which is the first chapter in the filmmaker's 'Road Movie Trilogy' (preceding *Falsche Bewegung* (1975) aka *The Wrong Movie* and *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976) *Kings of the Road*) starring the perennially depressed and rather gawky Aryan wanderer Rüdiger Vogler. A sort of Teutonized melancholy take on Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) and to a lesser extent *Paper Moon* (1973) directed by Peter Bogdanovich, *Alice in the Cities* is the tale of a lonely German journalist on the brink of existentialist crisis who, through a series of dubious circumstances, finds himself traveling around New York City, Amsterdam, and various parts of Germany attempting to help a talkative 9-year-old girl, whose mother essentially abandoned her with the stranger, find her grandmother. A work in the post-WWII German New Cinema tradition of Werner Herzog's *Stroszek* (1977), *Flaming Hearts* (1978) aka *Flammende Herzen* directed by Walter Bockmayer and Rolf Bührmann, Rosa von Praunheim's *Survival in New York* (1979) aka *Überleben in New York*, and Monika Treut's *My Father is Coming* (1991) in its depiction of a physically and metaphysically uprooted German living temporarily in the cultureless nation that defeated and colonized his own after the Second World War (notably, auteur Wenders was born in Allied-occupied Düsseldorf in August 1945), *Alice in the Cities* is an intentionally aimless film about lost people without spiritual 'Heimat' where a disconcerted dude finds temporary solace in the most unlikely of places—a little girl who initially annoys the hell out of him. A film that is a virtual prototype for Wenders' arguable masterpiece *Paris, Texas* (1984), *Alice in the Cities* is, for better or worse, the director's most tender and heartwarming work, as a film that dares to depict a friendship between a white man and young girl that does not involve pedophilia. Indeed, a work that temporarily depicts a preteen girl swimming topless yet never attempts to sexualize the child as so many depraved Hollywood films and TV shows do, *Alice in the Cities* was made at a time when there was still some sanity in the world and European cinema, especially West German cinema, offered a voice of reason in a mostly Americanized celluloid cesspool before Great Satan Steven Spielberg jumpstarted the culture-distorting blockbuster phenomenon with *Jaws* (1975). Love it or leave it, *Alice in the Cities* is a rare arthouse film with the innocence of a child that can actually be enjoyed by a child, or at least those kids that have yet to be exposed to the low-class hoe Miley Cyrus and the prepubescent porn network otherwise known as the Disney Channel. Featuring a score by krautrock Can, *Alice in the Cities* is undoubtedly one of the most distinctly German films to be partly set

in the United States.

German exile Philip 'Phil' Winter (Rüdiger Vogler) has been assigned to write an article on his travels around rural America, but instead he has opted for taking countless Polaroid photos of seemingly mundane things like beaches and rundown gas stations, but these things seem rather real and organic to the grotesque brainwashing monster that is American television, which the protagonist is beat over the head with via commercials with such unintentionally hilarious pseudo-edgy lines like, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Give to the United Negro College Fund." In fact, Phil must have forgotten to take a chill pill, as he opts for smashing a TV in his motel room after suffering too much American philistine broadcasting. After selling his car for a mere \$300 to some sleazy scumbag, Phil visits his boss and tells him that he has not written a single line of his proposed article on America, which does not end well, with the journalist ultimately deciding to go back to Deutschland. Unfortunately for the homesick Teuton with a somewhat bizarre sense of writer's block, flights to Germany have been temporarily canceled, though Phil does manage to bump into a fellow German named Lisa Van Dam (played by Wenders' then-wife Lisa Kreuzer), who is married and has a 9-year-old daughter named Alice (Yella Rottländer). Being in a strange land, the trio come to truly appreciate one another's company as they wallow in the idea of getting back to Germany as the land of the free and the home of the brave has surely let all three of them down, but most especially Phil and Lisa. As Phil's female friend Angela tells him regarding his metaphysical affliction, "You lose touch when you lose your sense of identity. That's why you always need proof, proof that you still exist. You treat your stories and your experiences like raw eggs. As if you only experience things. And that's why you keep taking those photos. For further proof that it was really you who saw something," yet Lisa and Alice help him to temporarily fill that void in regard to his lackluster life of meagerness and meaninglessness. During a moment of deep insight, Phil remarks to Lisa, "The inhuman thing about American TV is not so much that they hack everything up with commercials, though that's bad enough, but in the end all programmes become commercials. Commercials for the status quo. Every image radiates the same disgusting and nauseated message. A kind of boastful contempt. Not one image leaves you in peace, they all want something from you." After revealing that she has lived in four different cities over a 2 year period, Lisa tells Phil "I can't sleep with you, but I'd like to share the bed with you" and the two sleep together in a less than erotic fashion, but the next day the mother vanishes and leaves her daughter and a note with the virtual stranger, thus beginning an odyssey for the German journalist that involves being the surrogate parent of a quite active 9-year-old girl.

Ultimately, Phil is forced to travel with Alice to Amsterdam in the hope of locating the girl's mother, which to his chagrin, proves to fail. Phil attempts to dump Alice at a police station, but deep down he knows he enjoys the girl's

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uncommonly warm company and the two tread on with not much more to go on than a couple old photographs. Instead, Phil goes to the Ruhr region of West Germany in the hope of finding Alice's grandmother, but instead finds tons of empty old homes which are set to be bulldozed. Seeing the quaint uninhabited homes, the wise young 9-year-old Alice poetically remarks, "It's too bad these lovely old houses have to be wrecked. The empty spaces look like graves... 'House Graves.'" After taking a swim at a public park where Phil teases the little girl by calling her a "Fish Face" and "Bed Pisser," Lisa asks her new friend: "I wonder if people take you to be my father?" To test her thesis, Alice asks a young woman who states "no" as she absurdly finds the scrawny journalist to be "too fat" to be her father. Phil and Alice end up spending the night at the woman's house and become a pseudo-family of sorts. Of course, Alice gets jealous when she notices Phil and the woman sleeping together. While on a boat to visit the journalist's parents, Phil randomly runs into the Dutch policeman (Hans Hirschmüller of Fassbinder's *The Merchant of Four Seasons* (1971)) he previously talked to upon arriving in Amsterdam, who reveals they have finally located Alice's mother. In the end, Phil and Alice take a train back to Munich, where the journalist plans to finally finish his article on America.

Another road movie from the kraut king of the road movie, *Alice in the Cities* probably does not have a single amazing camera angle nor thrilling plot twist, yet it still somehow manages to be nearly immaculate in its pace and direction, as if directed by some mumblecore moron suffering from insomnia who decided to give up on the hipster posturing and direct a sincere film for once. Indeed, sort of the German New Cinema answer to Vittorio De Sica's Italian neorealist masterpiece *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) aka *Ladri di biciclette*, albeit with the imperative added subtext of the disillusionment of the German mind in a capitalist American world, *Alice in the Cities* ultimately manages to be culturally and sociopolitically astute without being heavy-handed or preachy. In fact, I am still not exactly sure of Wenders' political allegiances, though he seems to understand from at least a metapolitical perspective American's corrosive effect on national cultural and cinema, especially in his own homeland. A partly autobiographical work in its depiction of an 'artistic' protagonist wandering between three nations (Germany being Wenders' homeland, the Netherlands his mother's homeland, and America being the director's adopted homeland), *Alice in the Cities* ultimately depicts the destruction of identity and roots in a world dominated by American anti-culture hegemony. *Alice in the Cities* is also noted for being influenced by Wenders' collaborator Peter Handke's life as a single father. Additionally, the film is also a playful response to Handke's *Short Letter, Long Farewell* (1972), hence the film's utilization of various random clips from John Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), which is referenced routinely in the novel. Undoubtedly, what both Handke and Wender's film demonstrates is that the melancholy hitchhiker character Robert Lander from *Kings of the*

Road was not bullshitting when he famously stated, "The Yanks have colonized our subconscious." Of course, since the release of *Alice in the Cities*, Wenders' lifelong undying sense of deracination must have only grown as demonstrated by his on-and-off again relationship with Hollywood and his virtual statelessness as a filmmaker, with his upcoming work *Every Thing Will Be Fine* (2014) starring James Franco being a German-Canadian-Norwegian co-production. A work that demonstrates that America is a place where World War II propaganda featuring Kamikaze Japs crashing into Americans is absurdly played along side commercials for worthless consume products as if Americans died in the Second World War merely to perpetuate the freedom of tasteless capitalism, *Alice in the Cities*, like most of Wenders' films, is ultimately about longing for the intangible, with the slow and pathetic death of the Occident via Americanization and globalization being a bitter(sweet) thorn inside the filmmaker's side ever since his birth in the untimely year of 1945 in Allied-occupied Düsseldorf. That being said, one can only hope the character Alice grew up to be better adjusted than her adult friend Phil, but judging by the current state of Europa today, it is quite doubtful and I would not be surprised if she now sells her body in one of those creepy display cases in the red light district of Amsterdam.

-Ty E

THE WRONG MOVE
THE WRONG MOVE

Wim Wenders (1975)

German auteur Wim Wenders (Paris, Texas, Wings of Desire) has surely directed a number of long and plodding films about seemingly nothing aside from moody and broody protagonists suffering from some sort of half-hearted (and sometimes seemingly half-autistic) existential crisis and, of course, some of these films are better than others, with *Falsche Bewegung* (1975) aka *The Wrong Move* aka *Wrong Movement*—the second film in the director's 'Road Movie Trilogy' (following *Alice in the Cities* (1974) and preceding *Kings of the Road* (1976)) shot by Robby Müller—being one of the filmmaker's most palatable works. Indeed, aside from being one of my favorite Wenders flicks, *The Wrong Move* also happens to be one of the auteur filmmaker's most discernibly Teutonic works as a loose adaptation of Goethe's second novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–1796) aka *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, as well as a work slowly but surely boiling in post-Auschwitz angst. Indeed, a work about a young German writer suffering from writer's block who states regarding an old ex-nazi he befriends, "My aimless rage was directed at the old man. I used his past as an excuse to myself," *The Wrong Move* depicts an emotionally, socially, spiritually, and culturally detached people with an incapacity for mourning and who thus wander aimlessly along like zombies in a Fatherland that no longer has fathers. Sort of in the passively morbid 'anti-Heimat' meets Hitchcock spirit of Wenders' second feature *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (1972) aka *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, which was also penned by Slovene-Austrian novelist Peter Handke, *The Wrong Move* is about a rarely likeable prick of a Weltschmerz-wracked protagonist who finds it rather hard to find inspiration for his writing, so he goes on a soul-searching journey for inspiration and psychological liberation (he is a momma's boy and his mommy is an oppressive yet wealthy wench), ultimately running into a motley crew of curious characters who test his humanity (or lack thereof) and influence him to make the 'wrong moves.'

Wilhelm Meister (Rüdiger Vogler) is a bitchy German boy from Glückstadt in Nordic Schleswig-Holstein, West Germany, who has so much pent up angst that he scares some old folks by nonsensically smashing his hand threw his window in broad daylight. Unquestionably, Wilhelm takes after his discernibly bitchy Mother (played by bisexual Nazi era actress Marianne Hoppe). When Mommy dearest decides to sell the family supermarket, she gives Wilhelm some money and tells him to travel, with his journey taking him to Bonn in North Rhine-Westphalia. When boarding the train, Wilhelm notices a beautiful blonde actress named Therese (Fassbinder diva Hanna Schygulla) who, like him, reflects the contemporary generation of Germany, which is lost and is constantly searching for something, but what that certain something is they cannot

seem to figure out. While on the train, Wilhelm starts a rocky friendship with an old street musician named Laertes (Hans Christian Blech), who confesses he ran the 100-yard dash in the 1936 Nazi Olympics and that he, like Uncle Adolf, would not have shaken the hand of American Negro Jesse Owens had he been given the chance. Laertes reflects the old generation of Germans as an unreformed National Socialist who is now without identity, purpose, and home, thus he wanders from place to place. With Laertes is a mute and seemingly dumb teen girl named Mignon (Nastassja Kinski in what was her first film role), who reflects contemporary German youth due to her being deaf and dumb. Wilhelm also catches the attention of an exceedingly effete and overweight Austrian poet-bum named Bernhard Landau (Peter Kern), who writes decadent verses like, "From my terror-stricken stiff member there shot sperm and dripped upon a white sheet" and proudly confesses regarding his life, "I've never amounted to much and hope I'll stay that way. I get injured once a year. This year I fell on the edge of a chair and gashed the corners of my mouth. It's healed up already." After walking aimlessly around a neighborhood in Frankfurt, Bernhard offers to take his friends to stay at his Uncle's castle, but when they arrive, they find not the poet's uncle but an industrialist (Ivan Desny) who is about to blow his brains out with a shotgun.

Somewhat strangely (and, in my opinion, darkly humorously) the suicidal Industrialist warmly welcomes his strange guests and describes how his wish for death is a consequence of his wife committing suicide not long ago. After an insightful chat with the Industrialist about "loneliness in Germany," Wilhelm goes in a dark room to have sex with Therese, but discovers mute Lolita Mignon instead and gives her a small smack across the face. The next day, everyone goes on a walk except for the Industrialist and Laertes reveals to Wilhelm that he was a concentration camp guard who killed Jews, stating, "I saved some Jews, if they were professionally qualified." When Wilhelm and his friends go back to the castle, they discover the Industrialist has committed suicide via hanging. From there, the crew of new wandering friends begins to fall apart and move with "idiotic panic," with Bernhard being the first one to leave. Among other things, Wilhelm comes close to killing Laertes after threatening to drown him in a lake due to his Nazi past and the writer is later confronted by Therese, who makes him the following ultimatum, "Help me, or leave me, Wilhelm! It's disgusting the way everything leaves you cold," and proceeds to physically assault him, destroying some of his melancholy writings in the process. In the end, Laertes leaves all by his lonesome, Therese and Mignon head to Italy with one another, and Wilhelm travels by himself to the very bottom of Southern Germany. While standing on the snowy Wetterstein Mountains in Zugspitze, Wilhelm contemplatively states to himself, "I told Therese I intended to stay in Germany...because I knew too little to write about it. It was only an excuse. I really just wanted so much to live my stupid life alone. I was waiting for an experience like a miracle. But there

THE WRONG MOVE

was no snowstorm. Why had I run away, why wasn't I back there with the others? Why did I threaten the old man instead of listening to his tale? I felt I had missed out somehow...and was still missing out with every new movement."

A decided downer of a movie that only a seasoned cultural pessimist could love, *The Wrong Move* might quite possibly be auteur Wim Wenders' most personally incriminating film, even if the themes are quite typical of his work, albeit with a more discernibly Teutonic tone. In what is unequivocally one of the most insightful, if not the most insightful, scene of *The Wrong Movie*, the suicidal Industrialist states to protagonist Wilhelm regarding the 'weakness' of Germans, "I'd just like to talk a bit...about loneliness in Germany. I think it's more hidden and...more distressing than elsewhere. Maybe the history of ideas here is responsible...which made people seek a way of life...that could help overcome fear. The propagation of virtues like...courage, fortitude...meant to distract attention from fear. Let's say it was that way. More than anywhere else philosophy could be used...as an ideology...so that the criminal methods required...to overcome fear could be legalized. Fear was considered vain...and shameful. That's why loneliness in Germany is...masked by all those revealing soulless faces...that haunt supermarkets, recreation areas...pedestrian zones and fitness-centers. The dead souls of Germany." After his long spiel, the Industrialist also states, "I refused to overcome fear," but of course he also committed suicide, thus demonstrating an 'overcoming of fear' is what made Germany so strong over the centuries and that succumbing to fear is for quitters. And, of course, angst-addled antihero Wilhelm is also plagued by fear, hence his writer's block, not to mention his innate incapacity for love and friendship. Indeed, it is especially interesting that *The Wrong Move* concludes with Wilhelm standing on top of a mountain in a scene that recalls German Romantic artist Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818), albeit with the film scene featuring a much more negative and nihilistic message in its allegorical image of a morbidly introverted man who has built such a large wall dividing himself from other people that it reaches mountainous heights. In one particularly revealing scene, Wenders demonstrates some somewhat naïve optimism for Germany's future when Wilhelm states to his love interest, "I know I shall love you very much someday, Therese," but of course the stagnant state of German cinema and kultur, as well as the already abysmal birth rate of the nation, tells this national love never came to be. A post-WWII Goethe adaptation featuring scenes from Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968) aka *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* and featuring more than one reference to suicide, *The Wrong Movie* is ultimately a depiction of kraut identity at its most pathologically conflicted and thus reveals Wim Wenders, who is ½ Dutch by ancestry, at arguably his most perversely personal. That being said, it should be no surprise that Wenders attempted (and ultimately failed) to trade-in his German identity and become an American film-

maker. Of course, after watching *The Wrong Move*, I must say that I almost don't blame him, as no one wants to be surrounded by suicidal art-fags like the protagonist of the film.

-Ty E

THE AMERICAN FRIEND
THE AMERICAN FRIEND

Wim Wenders (1977)

Compared to a Fassbinder, Schroeter, or Syberberg, Wim Wenders is, at best, only of minor interest to me when it comes to the great filmmakers of German New Cinema. Whether reading one of his books, listening to him doing an audio commentary or interview, or watching a good a percentage of his films, Wenders puts me to sleep with his plodding meanderings, pseudo-existentialist excursions, and seemingly prosaic and passive personality. Like many filmmakers of his generation, including Volker Schlöndorff who attempted to become French and Werner Schroeter who attempted to be totally cosmopolitan (although I believe his heart was in the Mediterranean!), Wenders, who has often-times referenced his steady diet of America culture growing up and did not direct a “Road Movie Trilogy” for no reason, attempted to dissolve his German identity (although, to be fair, he is ½ Dutch) and become an ‘American’ filmmaker, with his transitional film being the neo-noir West German-French co-production *The American Friend* (1977) aka *Der Amerikanische Freund*. Loosely based on a then-unpublished manuscript entitled *Ripley’s Game* (although the novel was ultimately released before the film in 1974) written by American psychological thriller novelist Patricia Highsmith, *The American Friend* would be Wenders’ first international breakthrough and provide him with the reputation that would ultimately land him in Hollywood and enable him to work for Francis Ford Coppola’s American Zoetrope studio. Featuring seven distinguished auteur filmmakers (although if one counts the director’s cameo as a bandaged man, it is really eight) playing the roles of criminals, including Nicholas Ray, Dennis Hopper (whose role was originally meant for John Cassavetes), Sam Fuller, Gérard Blain, Daniel Schmid, Jean Eustache, and Peter Lilienthal, *The American Friend* is a sort ‘filmmaker’s film’ and a cinephiles’ wet dream, especially for diehard fans of American film noir, old school gangster flicks, and French New Wave, which are not exactly my favorite film genres/movements, but all these cinematic ingredients surprisingly come together in Wenders’ quasi-arthouse take on Highsmith’s charismatic anti-hero Tom Ripley. In fact, with the possible exception of *Paris, Texas* (1984) and to a lesser extent *Wings of Desire* (1987), *The American Friend* is the only Wim Wenders flick that stops me from completely disregarding the self-loathing kraut expatriate auteur altogether.

Tom Ripley (Dennis Hopper) is a criminally wealthy and completely cunning and charismatic American psychopath living in the North German city of Hamburg and his current scheme involves driving up the bids of forged paintings created by an artist named Derwitt (*Rebel Without a Cause* director Nicholas Ray, whose slow and miserable death via cancer Wenders morbidly chronicled a couple years later with the 1980 documentary *Lightning Over Water*), who has

faked his own death. While attending an auction for one of the Derwitt fakes, Tom meets a picture framer named Jonathan Zimmermann (Bruno Ganz) who absolutely offends the charismatic conman by stating "I've heard of you" in a derogatory fashion and refusing to shake his hand. Tom learns from a friend that Jonathan is apparently dying of a rare and unmentioned blood disease, hence his rude behavior. Offended by Jonathan's belligerent behavior, Tom begins plotting a scheme so as to heal his wounded pride. After getting an unexpected visit from a French gangster named Raoul Minot (Gérard Blain), who asks him to murder somebody for him because he owes him a big favor, Tom finally finds a way to payback Jonathan's hospitality. While Tom tells Raoul, "Listen. I know rock musicians. I know lawyers. I know art dealers, pimps, politicians. But murder? I don't want to be involved. Period," the American comes up with a conspiracy that will solve both of their problems. Using friends and corrupt doctors, Tom spreads rumors everywhere that Jonathan is dying from the blood disease and that by assassinating a couple of rival criminals for Raoul, the picture framer can secure financial security for his family by working as a contract killer before he kicks the bucket. Since Jonathan is not a professional gangster but a mere picture frame shop owner, Minot also agrees with Tom that he makes for the perfect discrete killer. Although Jonathan initially turns Minot down for the offer to kill for cash, after getting a second opinion (which Minot ultimately has the doctor alter) on his illness at a high tech French hospital, he finally gives in after grief and realizing his family might not be taken care of. Jonathan's mission is to kill an "American Jew from New Jersey" (Highsmith was no fan of the Jews) named Igraham (Swiss high-camp auteur Daniel Schmid playing a rather unfitting but certainly provocative role) by stalking him around in a French subway and shooting with a gun hidden under his trench coat in what is one of the most intense and iconic scenes of *The American Friend*. When Jonathan comes back to Hamburg after his successful assassination of a Hebrew gangster, Tom pays him a visit at his picture frame shop and the two begin to develop an unlikely friendship. Of course, Jonathan is totally unaware that sick Yank psychopath set him up to become an assassin and spread the false rumors regarding his supposedly fatal condition. Due to his strange attraction to Jonathan, Tom becomes angered when Minot asks the picture framer to kill another gangster on a train using a mere garrote. Due to the complex and dangerous nature of the assignment (the gangster has multiple bodyguards), Jonathan expects to die while executing the second murder and tells Minot to give his wife Marianne (Lisa Kreuzer) the money. Jonathan nearly botches the job on the train, but luckily Tom randomly appears out of nowhere and helps him dispose of the gangster and his bodyguard. After the assassination assignment is completed, Tom finally has the decency to admit to Jonathan that he setup him up with Minot because he was offended by his behavior when they initially met at the art auction, stating, "Remember that day we were introduced at the auction? You said, 'I've heard of you.'" You

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said that in a very nasty way.” Tom even rejects the assassination money and when Jonathan asks what he wants instead, he states, “I don’t know what I could possibly want from you....I would like to be your friend...but friendship isn’t, uh, possible.”

Ironically, Jonathan begins confiding in Tom—the maniacal criminal mastermind who got the simple picture framer in the dangerous situation in the first place—regarding his problems with his wife, who rightfully believes that her husband was doing more than just going to doctor appointments while on his assassination missions. Jonathan also lets Tom know that he is scared about random anonymous calls he has been receiving at home, which he believes are from the mafia. After stumbling from what is clearly his declining health, Jonathan receives a visit from Minot, who tells him that his flat has been bombed by rival gangsters. Tom tells Jonathan to come to his house and they wait for the gangsters, who are led by an elderly American gangster (played by American cult auteur Samuel Fuller). Jonathan manages to kill a dorky gunman and not long after they spot the old Yankee gangster and his cronies hiding out in an ambulance. Jonathan and Tom manage to kill the gangsters in a somewhat anticlimatic manner (most of the deaths featured in the film are rather ‘softcore’), but a problem arises when Marianne somehow magically finds her husband and his American ‘friend’ at the scene of the crime. A truly devoted wife, Marianne agrees to help her husband and Tom, who is driving the ambulance full of bodies, to the beach so they can dispose of the criminal corpses. Assumedly, to payback Tom for his pack of lies, Jonathan leaves his criminal compatriot at the beach. Unfortunately and quite ironically, Tom’s lies prove to be true as Jonathan dies suddenly while driving at warped speed, almost killing his wife in the process. Of course, in the end, Tom Ripley comes out the situation rather unscathed, but minus one kraut ‘friend.’

A film about a wealthy and psychopathic American who completely corrupts an artistic and kindly family man who does not like “people who buy paintings as an investment,” *The American Friend* is a cleverly concocted allegorical work about the deleterious effects of America’s occupation, colonization, and continued cultural hegemony over not just Europe/Germany in general, but also Occidental cinema. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Swiss auteur Daniel Schmid, one of the most idiosyncratic filmmakers of his era as the man behind *Tonight or Never* (1972), *La Paloma* (1974), and *Shadow of Angels* (1976), played the first gangster killed in *The American Friend* as his excess-ridden high-camp auteur pieces could have never been made in America under any circumstances. Additionally, it is also no coincidence that American auteur Sam Fuller (*Pickup on South Street*, *Shock Corridor*) is the final gangster killed after a long and brutal fall down some stairs as he was a filmmaker whose work was essentially ignored for most of his life and was totally at odds with Hollywood and it was only until his works were praised by European film critics/filmmakers, especially those

involved with the French New Wave, that he developed a cult following and his oeuvre was regarded as having actual artistic merit.

Undoubtedly, *The American Friend*, which was incidentally the director's first film featuring an onscreen death, is easily Wim Wenders' most action-packed and 'thrilling' work, which I guess does not say much considering the filmmaker's initial association with German New Cinema and being the director behind such seemingly endless works as *Until the End of the World* (1991) aka *Bis ans Ende der Welt*. In my humble opinion, Wenders, the son of a doctor and a member of the German bourgeoisie, would have had little, if any, interest in film noir and other Hollywood genres had he not been born during 'Germany Year Zero' (1945) and forcibly spoon-fed American cinema growing up as a member of a conquered nation and colonized continent, hence why the director's work *The American Friend* is so aesthetically far removed from the genre it pays rather reluctant tribute to as a European film haphazardly disguised as an American genre flick. Ironically, what makes *The American Friend* most interesting and enthralling, especially for a born turncoat like myself, is its innate Europeanness, which is all the more underscored by its utilization of American stars/filmmakers and Hollywood genre conventions. Of course, the European character of *The American Friend* is all the more highlighted when compared to the big budget Highsmith adaptation *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999), which instead of feeling like an auteur work like Wenders' film, seems like a masturbation piece for star Matt Damon to show off his acting talents. In fact, upon first seeing *The American Friend* about a decade ago, I had not even the slightest idea it was based on the same character as *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, which might as well have been directed by a robot programmed by Steven Spielberg.

Despite Wenders' insights and negative view of American's culture-distorting influence on Europe, he decided to go to Hollywood after *The American Friend* and direct the Francis Ford Coppola produced work *Hammett* (1982), another homage to American film noir. Despite being a filmmaker himself, Coppola was just as malicious as any Hollywood art-antagonistic producer, only ultimately using 30% of the footage Wenders shot and reshooting the rest of the film himself, thereupon destroying the German auteur's authorship and film in the process. Although he already knew better before he ever arrived in the United States, Wenders stated regarding the artistic disaster of *Hammett*, "Coppola and I realized it after some time. Two different systems had clashed. I didn't want to give up my position as an independent director, and Francis wanted to be a producer the way he had pictured it. The American studio system and European auteur film are so different." Wenders' collaboration with Coppola was so bad that the German filmmaker's celluloid compatriot Rainer Werner Fassbinder even offered to beat the shit out of the director of *The Godfather* at the 1980 Oscars as payback for destroying *Hammett*. Of course, it would have made for one of the greatest anecdotes as well as metaphors in film history if Germany's

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greatest wunderkind auteur gave a beating to one of America's most overrated industrial filmmakers. That being said, maybe it is about time Wenders directs a loose sequel to *The American Friend* where a German general arrives in Iraq to train members of the 'multicultural' American army and the GIs ends up killing tons of innocent civilians, as well as their own men in 'friendly fire,' as it would make for a great allegory for how Hollywood aesthetically defiled the kraut auteur's vision when they remade his work *Wings of Desire* (1987) as the pile of philistine and sentimentalist celluloid shit *City of Angels* (1998) starring Meg Ryan and Nicholas Cage and directed by the cinematic genius behind *Casper* (1995). Indeed, only in America could a filmmaker responsible for directing children's films be given the opportunity to remake a commercially successful European arthouse flick.

-Ty E

LIGHTNING OVER WATER

Wim Wenders (1980)

Nicholas Ray was one of the few true bad boy directors that worked in the strict confines of the Hollywood studio system. Nick Ray directed *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) – arguably the greatest and most influential teen angst film ever made – so, one could say that the Hollywood auteur invented the “too cool for school” model for misunderstood American youth. Ray also directed the subversive western *Johnny Guitar* (1954), a film that features Joan Crawford playing a cowgirl who can fight with the most brutal of cowboys, thus one could argue the director was a nominal feminist of sorts. Like most great directors, Ray’s talents started to dwindle as he entered his not so sparkling golden years. Due to being a lifelong drug addict and alcoholic, Ray started to find himself being rejected by the strictly business businessmen of tinsletown during the early 1960s. In fact, Ray collapsed on the set of his film *55 Days of Peking* (1963) while intoxicated; no doubt one of the most embarrassing things that could happen to a serious filmmaker. If one thing stayed consistent in Nicholas Ray’s life (besides constant intoxication), it was his ability to fit in with and influence younger generations of filmmakers and actors. Ray is known for being extra considerate to the stars of *Rebel Without a Cause*, even allowing James Dean to give much creative input in the direction of the film (some have argued that Dean actually directed the film). In 1970, Ray met and smoked weed with the equally eccentric Dennis Hopper (who had a small role in Ray’s *Rebel Without a Cause*) during a Grateful Dead concert at the Fillmore East in Manhattan, NYC. At the time, Hopper was putting the finishing touches on his cinematic bomb *The Last Movie* (1971). Not long after the concert, Hopper landed Nicholas Ray a film studies professor job at SUNY Binghamton University in upstate New York. Just as he did with Hopper, Ray had no qualms about smoking weed with his film students. In fact, Ray and his students can be seen sharing a joint together in the director’s last work *We Can’t Go Home Again*; a film that the filmmaker worked on for about a decade, but never officially completed (although rough drafts of the work were screened at various film festivals). In the documentary *Lightning Over Water* (1980), German director Wim Wenders captured Ray’s remaining days on earth.

Seeing as I am a fan of both Wim Wenders and Nicholas Ray’s films, I expected *Lightning Over Water* to be a an oh-so rare work where two different directors from two different generations and two different worlds come together for a special moment in cinema history. Instead, *Lightning Over Waters* was one of the most painful and unrewarding films that I have had the displeasure of seeing. Basically, the documentary is about an arrogant young auteur who coldly documents the depressing deterioration of a once virile and rebellious filmmaker. Ray may have smoked pot and guzzled booze well into his senior

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years, but in *Lightning Over Water* he can barely even string together a simple and articulate sentence. During the beginning of this quasi-documentary, Wenders oddly states to mentally and physically gray Ray, "I thought I'd find myself attracted to your weakness and suffering." Indeed, it does seem like Wenders is deriving pleasure from Ray's mental and physical decline throughout *Lightning Over Water*. Although *Lightning Over Water* is a documentary, many of the scenes seem rather staged and horribly contrived, as if Wenders was attempting to make a minimalistic melodrama, but neglected to include a cohesive plot. If there is one element about the film that is truly authentic, it's Ray's delirium and dementia-ridden-like behavior. At one point in the documentary, Ray states, "Jesus Christ, I'm sick!", yet it still seems as if he can't completely understand what is happening to him. I am sure that Ray's lifelong hedonistic pursuits had worn his health to nil, though he still seems like the typical kind of elderly person that you can easily find at a full-care nursing home. Anyone who has ever watched a grandparent lose their health knows that it is not the most pleasant event to witness. If Wenders manages to do anything right with *Lightning Over Water*, it is documenting the all-encompassing melancholy and misery that often accompanies old age. I seriously doubt that the majority of serious cinephiles (be they fans of Ray and/or Wenders or not) will find any redeeming qualities - whether it aesthetically, thematically, or historically - in the entirety of the film. Despite being packed with gloom and hopeless despair, *Lightning Over Water* also manages to be extremely banal and quite the struggle to get through. The fact that the film - a highly intimate and extremely serious work - was screened out of competition at the 1980 Cannes Film Festival just goes to show how horrible of a film it really is. After all, if *Lightning Over Water* was at least half-way decent, the judges probably would have given it honorary critical acclaim due to its seemingly human portrayal of a once highly influential filmmaker. Wenders even failed to make the documentary a worthy tribute to Nicholas Ray's filmmaking career. *Lightning Over Water* does feature a couple snippets from Ray's large body of work, nevertheless, these scenes are completely bombarded and ultimately eclipsed by the filmmaker's stark geriatric degeneration; making it seem as if his entire filmmaking career was solely in vain. Although a lot of filmmakers experience a wane in artistic prowess as they reach old age, few filmmakers have concluded their career with a project that is as repellent and uncomplimentary as *Lightning Over Water*.

Nicholas Ray and James Dean

I am not one who tends to label films exploitative, however, *Lightning Over Water* is blatantly so. For Wim Wenders to claim that Nicholas Ray was a great friend seems a little more than dishonest. In a perfect world, Ray's career would have ended with the successful completion and critical acclaim of *We Can't Go Home Again*, but instead, his life concluded with the deplorable and disposable abortion *Lightning Over Water*. Of course, it will be superlatively obvious to

most viewers that Wenders' self-satisfied sadism bleeds throughout the entire documentary. For most of *Lightning Over Water*, Wim Wenders looks like a wimpy prick full of pretention and anal retention as he creepily and somewhat fiendishly lurks around the mostly oblivious Nicholas Ray. Near the conclusion of *Lightning Over Water*, Wenders forces Ray to call the cut of the film. Ray – being in an overt state of confusion – somewhat agitatedly, yet appropriately, responds with, “I am sick and you’re making me sick.....ok I’m finished.” It should also be noted that *Lightning Over Water* was directed and narrated in a manner comparable to a Werner Herzog documentary; minus character and spirit. Whereas Herzog’s documentaries are known for being quite empathetic and respectful in their portrayal of (often peculiar) subjects, *Lightning Over Water* offers an impudently aloof and aweless depiction of Nicholas Ray. Although I have enjoyed some of Wim Wenders’ films in the past (*Wings of Desire* and *Paris, Texas*), I would be lying if I did not admit my newfound disdain for the obnoxious German auteur. Maybe if Wenders is lucky, some young and obscenely arrogant up-and-coming filmmaker will document his remaining days on his deathbed in a manner as vulgar as his putrid portraiture of Ray in *Lightning Over Water*. Near the beginning of the documentary, Wenders mentions the budget he has to work with for an upcoming film; to which Nick Ray responds with, “For 1% of that, I could make..... lightning over water.” Unfortunately, Wim Wenders was the one that made *Lightning Over Water*; a film less appealing than cute piglets being led to their slaughter.

-Ty E

THE STATE OF THINGS
THE STATE OF THINGS

Wim Wenders (1982)

The same year his cinematic compatriot Rainer Werner Fassbinder tragically dropped dead after taking a fatal drug cocktail, German auteur Wim Wenders (*The American Friend*, *Until the End of the World*) finally caught up to his friend in a sense by making a work in the meta-cinematic spirit of *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971). Indeed, like Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore*, *Der Stand der Dinge* (1982) aka *The State of Things* is a highly autobiographical work partly set in the Mediterranean about the physical and, especially meta-physical, drain that comes with being a filmmaker and dealing with all the many problems that can go wrong while making a film. While *Beware of a Holy Whore* depicted how the commune-like way of life had to turned to chaos where Fassbinder and his underlings were concerned, *The State of Things* was the result of Wenders' less than ideal experience after coming to Hollywood and working on *Hammett* (1982) with Francis Ford Coppola, who ultimately took control and butchered the film (apparently, only about 30% of footage Wenders shot is featured in the completed version, with the rest being directed by 'executive producer' Coppola). In a rather interesting anecdote, Wenders tells in the documentary *Fassbinder in Hollywood* (2002), that apparently Fassbinder offered to beat the shit out of Francis Ford Coppola to avenge the Hollywood director's aesthetic destruction of *Hammett*, but of course the *Wings of Desire* director made sure to hide his 'American friend' from his brazen Bavarian bud. Wenders also chronicled his nightmarish experience with Coppola in *Reverse Angle* (1982)—a short that documents the two filmmakers butting heads—but with *The State of Things* the filmmaker would ultimately have his revenge, not least of all because he decided to go back to Europa to shoot this work. Set in Portugal, *The State of Things* was shot with a good portion of the cast and crew of Raúl Ruiz's arthouse horror flick *The Territory* (1981)—a production Wenders went to help out with after Coppola put the production of *Hammett* on hiatus after deciding the script needed to be rewritten. Shot by French cinematographer Henri Alekan who, among other things, was responsible for the phantasmagoric cinematography of Jean Cocteau's masterpiece *La Belle et la bête* (1946) aka *Beauty and the Beast*, *The State of Things* is arguably Wenders' most aesthetically accomplished black-and-white film, even if it is far from his best film. Essentially Wenders' 8 ½, albeit infinitely more melancholy and anything but Fellini-esque, *The State of Things* is a noir-ish passive aggressive (and some might say defeatist) reminder that Hollywood is run by swarthy criminals in fancy suits.

A fictional filmmaker lovingly named after German expressionist master auteur F.W. Murnau, Friedrich Munro (Belgian actor Patrick Bauchau), is shooting a Corman-esque sci-fi film in black-and-white arthouse style entitled *The Survivors* in scenic Portugal and he has just been told by his elderly yet quick

witted cameraman Joe Corby (legendary cult auteur Samuel Fuller) that they no longer have film stock left to shoot the film. On top of that, the film's eccentric New Jersey-bred Jewish producer Gordon (Allen Garfield) has disappeared without a trace, thus forcing the film production into indefinite limbo. Friedrich is told by his script girl Kate (played by Warhol superstar Viva), who the director is also screwing, that regarding comforting the rest of his crew about the dubious future of the production, he should, "just sweet talk them the way you sweet talk me," but it all proves to be in vain, as the production seems to hit a permanent standstill. With hysterical American queens, a pissed off screenwriter named Dennis (played by 'golden hippie' Paul Getty Jr., who was dubiously kidnapped in 1973 and had his ear cut off) who sunk \$200,000 into the production, depressed French folks, and a drunken cinematographer with personal problems, Friedrich decides to go back to Los Angeles to find producer Gordon. When Friedrich attempts to ask his lawyer (played by cult director/producer Roger Corman), who also happens to be the producer's lawyer, about what sort of trouble Gordon is in and his whereabouts, he is met with hostility. Friedrich eventually manages to track Gordon down on Sunset Boulevard hiding in a Winnebago. With Gordon's equally sleazy 'chauffer' Herbert (Monty Bane) at the wheel of the mobile home, the producer lets Friedrich know what happened to the production of their stillborn film on an aimless road trip that lasts from the late evening into dusk. As revealed during one of Gordon's many hysterical rants, the producer borrowed the money for the film from the mafia and they were not happy to see they funded an artsy fartsy black-and-white film, or as he complains to Friedrich: "Black and white, black and white...you mother fucker! I ought to have my fucking head examined...Talking me into black and white! Who the fuck makes black and white now, huh? An ice cream parlor, that's who makes black and white! Black and white." Gordon confesses that he 'loved' the film, "but that's irrelevant at this point my friend," as he owes money to money-grubbing kosher killers who don't take kindly to people who don't pay back with a large amount of interest. In what is undoubtedly the most hilarious and telling scene of film and the relationship between German filmmakers and Hollywood producers in general, Gordon also states to Friedrich, "I'll tell you, I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd be working with a German director, right. A Jew from Newark, New Jersey and a German picked up at the fucking Chateau Marmont. What the fuck are you and I doing with each other, huh?," thus demonstrating the absurdity of monetary-minded Hebrews working with art-minded Aryan filmmakers in the first place, as if such a relationship could sire anything but something corrosive and/or ultimately aborted. When the Winnebago road trip is over and Friedrich is dropped off at his car, the producer and director hug one last time. While they are hugging, a mafia sniper shoots Gordon in back and Friedrich jumps back up and points his film camera at the phantom sniper as if it were a gun. Of course, Friedrich is also

THE STATE OF THINGS

shot as well, with both director and producer literally dying for their art.

Despite being a small film made in the intermediate period when Hammett was in limbo, *The State of Things* went on to not only win the German Film Award in Gold for Cinematography and in Silver for Best Feature Film in 1983, but also the coveted 'Golden Lion' in 1982, which is the highest prize of the Venice Film Festival. Ultimately, with its iconic performance by legendary cult director Samuel Fuller, cameo by Roger Corman as a scumbag lawyer, typically bitchy performance by Warhol superstar Viva, and small performance as a camera operator by American underground filmmaker Robert Kramer, *The State of Things* is an anti-Hollywood cinephile's wet dream, even if a rather negative one where the German auteur is killed by Jewish gangsters in the end. The fact that Wenders had the gall to portray both the producer and gangsters (who are never shown, but whose names, like 'Stein', are referenced) as Hebrews in *The State of Things* has given me a new sense of respect for the Teutonic existentialist auteur that I never had before. More disheartening than François Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) and a virtually aesthetically contra work to Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979), *The State of Things* ultimately seems like Wenders' own personal take on Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* in terms of being a piece of self-reflexive meta-cinema, thus demonstrating the auteur had yet to lose his Teutonic roots, even if he had already been defiled by Coppola's almost entirely negative influence. As Wenders once stated, "All my films...have as their underlying current the Americanization of Germany," and indeed, in none of his films is this more clear than *The State of Things*. Of course, as Wenders' filmic alter-ego Friedrich Munro of *That States of Things* states, "Remember, I'm at home nowhere...in no house, in no country," thus demonstrating the German filmmaker's undying sense of deracination in an increasingly American world. Indeed, it is no coincidence that *The State of Things* was released the same year Fassbinder died, which is oftentimes regarded by film critics as the year that German New Cinema and, in turn, German cinema in general, died. I hate to say it (or maybe I don't), but sometimes I wish it was Wenders that died instead of Fassbinder and I would certainly have more respect for the Paris, Texas director if he died in the same manner as Friedrich Munro in *The State of Things*.

-Ty E

PARIS, TEXAS

Wim Wenders (1984)

Sometimes it takes an outsider's perspective for one to truly appreciate their own nation and its idiosyncrasies, or at least that is the conclusion that I and many other people have drawn after watching the West German-French-UK-USA co-production *Paris, Texas* (1984) directed by German auteur Wim Wenders (*The American Friend*, *Until the End of the World*). Indeed, while a work featuring a number of less than cultivated American characters that have been known to live in trailer parks and drink their fair share of whisky and beer, *Paris, Texas* also depicts the United States, namely the scorching Southwest, as a place with an almost mystical and fantasy-like landscape while simultaneously demystifying the region via its tragic and less-than-larger-than-life characters. In that sense, Wenders' film seems partially like an American (anti)Heimat film, thus making it all the more ironic that *Paris, Texas* was directed by a German of ½ Dutch extraction and shot by Dutch master cinematographer Robby Müller (*Die Wildente* aka *The Wild Duck*, *To Live and Die in L.A.*). Based on a curious character study written by Pulitzer Prize-winning American actor/playwright Sam Shepard, *Paris, Texas* is like a Teutonized slice of Lynchian Americana (the fact that Harry Dean Stanton and Dean Stockwell star in the film only adds to this), albeit minus the wayward and whimsical weirdness and goofy degenerate jazz scores. Probably the most successful example of German New Cinema meets Hollywood, *Paris, Texas* demonstrated that, for at least a second, Wenders—the undisputed master of road movies—was successful from making the transition from kraut auteur to Hollywood maverick (which he failed to do previously while working on *Hammitt* (1982) with Francis Ford Coppola) and that the European arthouse film could be made palatable for culturally-retarded Americans. Unanimously winning the coveted 'Palme d'Or' at the 1984 Cannes Film Festival, *Paris, Texas* has certainly obtained a rather prestigious reputation in the cinephile world, yet I would hesitate to call it a flawless masterpiece, let alone Wenders' greatest work, but it is indubitably one of the most important films of the 1980s as a picturesque, if not pathologically melancholy, celluloid postcard of some of America's most cinematically under-appreciated geography and landscapes. A more 'optimistic' take on what great American Guido Vincent Gallo would later attempt in his much hated arthouse work *The Brown Bunny* (2003), *Paris, Texas* follows an irreparably internally wounded man (who does not speak for the first 26 minutes of the film!) who is haunted by the past and is thus incapable of treading on to the future, thus being in sync with the post-WWII German New Cinema theme of the 'inability to mourn.' Dedicated to German Jewish film historian Lotte H. Eisner and featuring a small role by Austrian leftist auteur Bernhard Wicki (*Die Brücke* aka *The Bridge*, *The Longest Day*), *Paris, Texas* is also a sort of quasi-cryptic tribute to Wenders'

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roots.

Travis Henderson (Harry Dean Stanton) is a man suffering from a seemingly selective form of amnesia who collapses upon entering a saloon after hardly being able to bear the rather arid South Texas desert landscape. Travis is treated by a Germanic doctor named Ulmer (Bernhard Wicki), but refuses to answer the good doc's questions. After finding a random phone number on Travis, the doctor manages to get in contact with the seemingly mute man's brother, Walt Henderson (Dean Stockwell), who agrees to pick him up and bring him back to Los Angeles, California. As it turns out, Travis had been missing for four years and Walt assumed he was dead and decided to adopt his brother's little boy Hunter (Hunter Carson, who is the progeny of writer L. M. Kit Carson and actress Karen Black), who was abandoned by both his young mother and mentally ill father. When Walt arrives in South Texas, Travis has already fled Ulmer's place, but the concerned brother eventually finds his big bro wandering along the roadside all by his lonesome. Rather annoyed by Travis' silence, Walt attempts to verbally beat out some answers from Travis, but it is only upon looking at a map of 'Paris, Texas' (a place he theorizes is where he was conceived) that the ostensibly mute mensch breaks his silly silence. Since Travis seems to be suffering from a variety of autistic tendencies, he refuses to fly in a plane, so Walt is forced to drive his brother back to LA. When the two arrive in Los Angeles, Travis is reintroduced to his son Hunter and Walt's French wife Anne (Aurore Clément), with the former acting somewhat dismissive of his biological father and the latter doing her darnedest to comfort her seemingly impenetrable brother-in-law. After watching some old Super-8 home-video footage of himself, ex-wife Jane (Nastassja Kinski), and baby son Hunter, Travis begins to remember the former life he has tried so hard to forget. Acting like a skittish man-child, Travis gets some help from a Mexican maid on how to 'look like a father' and begins showing up at Hunter's school in an awkward attempt to break the ice with the son he once abandoned. Over the next couple days, father and son finally develop an almost childish bond and after Anne tells Travis that his ex-wife Jane deposits money for her son each month at a bank in Houston, Texas, the fallen family man gets it in his head that he will hunt down his beloved, with Hunter agreeing to help him with the almost juvenile search plan/adventure.

Without saying a word to Walt and Anne, Travis and Hunter hit the road and develop a rather heartwarming father-son relationship that seemed all but impossible only a couple days before. After spotting Jane at the bank in Houston that she deposits money at each month, Travis and Hunter follow her to what is ultimately a sleazy strip club. Forcing Hunter to wait in the car for obvious reasons, Travis enters the strip club and eventually comes face-to-face with his ex-wife Anne, but she does not know it, as she is the 'performer' in a one-way mirror peepshow room where she cannot see the 'customers.' Assumedly shocked by Anne's dubious choice of occupation and the fact this is the first time he has

seen his ex-wife in a number of years, Travis leaves the strip club without saying a word and instead opts for getting wasted at a bar and contemplating his next move. The next day, Travis leaves Hunter at the Meridien Hotel in downtown Houston and finally gets the gall to 'connect' with Jane. Once again entering the stripper peepshow booth with the one-way mirror he had entered the day before, Travis tells Jane a story about a young girl and a much older man who were deeply in love and who had a child together, but whose romance had imploded after the man became insanely jealous and alcohol-addled, thus forcing the young girl to make her great escape, ultimately abandoning her husband and young son. Eventually, Jane realizes that Travis is on the other side of the mirror and the two 'touch' in a symbolic scene where their hands are separated by a pesky mirror. Indeed, in this 'peepshow' scene, which is arguably the most important and certainly most climatic scene of *Paris, Texas*, Travis finally reveals the source of his initial wordlessness and amnesia as a man who made it up in his mind to go to a nowhere land "without language or streets." While Jane pleads for Travis to stay, he knows there is no hope for their relationship (after all, she makes her living peddling her flesh goods) and instead tells his ex-wife to reunite with their son at the Meridien Hotel. In the end, Jane and Hunter are reunited and Travis drives away all by his lonesome in what is a rather bittersweet ending.

In an interview with female filmmaker Allison Anders (*Border Radio*, *Gas*, *Food Lodging*) featured as an extra feature on the Criterion Collection release of *Paris, Texas*, she makes the somewhat impressive claim that Wenders' film almost single-handedly sparked the American 'Indie Film' movement that reached its peak in the early 1990s. Indeed, *Paris, Texas* would prove to be a hit film with many important American artists of the 1990s, with both Kurt Cobain and Elliott Smith naming it as their favorite film, which is rather ironic since both men committed suicide under dubious circumstances. Undoubtedly, in its innate existentialist angst, *Paris, Texas* is most certainly a 'bummer' of a film and I find it rather humorous that a German filmmaker would release a sort of aesthetic *Weltschmerz* plague on American artists, as a sort of metaphysical revenge for the Second World War and subsequent physical and spiritual colonization of the Fatherland by American forces. It is also interesting to note that star Harry Dean Stanton, who has spent most of his career playing support roles as a character actor, has named *Paris, Texas* as his personal favorite of the films he has acted in. Aside from inspiring suicidal grunge musicians, I think the creators of hit meth-themed AMC crime-drama *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013) certainly owe an aesthetic debt to Wim Wenders and his Dutch buddy Robby Müller, as the arid aesthetic prowess of the TV shows seems almost unimaginable were it not for *Paris, Texas*, a work that makes the epic of English auteur David Lean (*Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago*) seem superlatively superficial in their depictions of vast landscapes. Like a Europeanized western lacking cowboys and Indians and romantic views of the wild west that somehow still manages to

PARIS, TEXAS

be romantic in its rampant melancholia, Wenders' Paris, Texas is not unlike its cinematic grandfather F.W. Murnau's masterpiece Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans (1927), as a sort of cross-national anomaly of cinema history that demonstrates what a real cinematic artist can do with the resources of Hollywood. As someone who has always seen Wim Wenders, not unlike Volker Schlöndorff, as having always been more 'Americanized' than his contemporaries of German New Cinema like Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Werner Herzog, and Werner Schroeter, Paris, Texas certainly seems like the film the auteur was born to make, so it should be no surprise that the director stated of the film himself in an interview with Roger Willemsen, "Everything before was practice which enabled me to make this film. And all the other films taken together were a kind of platform for it." A film where the landscape and music (undoubtedly, Ry Cooder's score is nearly immaculate) are just as much, if not more so, characters in the film as the lead characters themselves, Paris, Texas is ultimately an 'existentialist' exercise in cinematic form and a work that belongs to the category of films Wenders once described as 'emotion pictures.' Of course, I must admit that my emotions are more in sync with a Herzog film than a Wenders flick, so the tone of Paris, Texas is somewhat alien to me due to its passivity, though it is an alien essence that I welcome from time to time by re-watching the film every couple years or so.

-Ty E

FÜHRER EX

Winfried Bonengel (2002)

Führer Ex is a German film based on the life of real-life former neo-Nazi and blonde beast Ingo Hasselbach. Hasselbach decided to quit the neo-Nazi scene after meeting Führer Ex director Winfried Bonengel during the filming of a documentary on contemporary German Nazis. Hasselbach felt that Bonengel was someone who “rebelled” against German democracy but also wasn’t a neo-Nazi. Hasselbach realized one could rebel against the German “democratic” state without being a neo-Nazi. One of the biggest reasons for Hasselbach’s involvement in the neo-Nazi scene in Germany was his contempt for growing up in Eastern Communist Germany and the prison time he served there just attempting to escape the Marxist prison-state. Führer Ex follows a young boyish blonde German Heiko and his friend Tommy as things get worse for them in Eastern Germany. They transform from just being antisocial punk rockers rebelling against a commie stasi police state to full fledged violent neo-Nazi street fighters. After being arrested for attempting to escape Eastern Germany and make their way west, they are jailed. During their early prison stay, Tommy is already part of the Nazi club (he was imprisoned before) and Heiko at first rejects Nazism. Heiko changes his position later when assaulted and raped by a Gay prisoner that pretends to befriend him. The Nazi gang virtually beats the gay prisoner to death after finding Heiko in a bloody and naked traumatized state. Heiko goes from being a sweet young Aryan to a hateful Nazi leader after getting out of Jail. He is the “Führer” of a neo-Nazi “terrorist” house in Germany. He has his own troop of contemporary Nazi SA brown shirt storm troopers in the form of ugly shaved head skinheads. These young brutes have an impulse for inflicting pain on foreigners and leftist/anarchist/commie rival gangs. Heiko’s friend Tommy eventually catches up with with him and he realizes he is not really a Nazi anymore. This starts to turn them into enemies as Heiko has turned ultimately into a Nazi idealist that has blocked off outsider empathy. Only during the conclusion of Führer Ex does Heiko figure out something that has come too late. Real-life ex neo-Nazi Ingo Hasselbach’s book Führer Ex is much different than the film. A lot of facts are obviously changed and made-up for entertainment purposes. Also, the constraints of having a feature-length tell Hasselbach’s story doesn’t help. The autobiography Führer Ex focuses on Hasselbach’s life growing up in Eastern Germany as an anti-social child to his time after the movement where former comrades tried to blow up his mother’s apartment. Ingo Hasselbach was also responsible for co-writing the script for Führer Ex. After reading the book Führer Ex, I found the film to be far inferior. Still, the film is highly entertaining and much better than most films of a similar subject matter. It doesn’t feature any blatant “in-your-face” moral message. It just merely shows situations and the results of those situations. With the book and film, Ingo Hasselbach seemed

FÜHRER EX

to capitalize a lot off his former taboo past. He seems as if he were someone that was more interested in destroying than being a “serious” neo-Nazi. After all, Ingo Hasselbach had no problem destroying his own past and his “life’s work.”

-Ty E

SKIN GANG

Wings Hauser (1994)

I finally got enough gall to watch a film by gay punk auteur Bruce LaBruce. After all, when I found out the film *Skin Gang* was about a bunch of queer-bashing Neo-Nazis who brutalize and gang rape a bourgeois race-mixing fag couple, I felt the film may reach a new extreme in total libertinism. Despite all the brutal buggery and explicit sexual deviancy featured in the film, the so called gay community mostly condemned *Skin Gang*, proving that the deranged ultra-macho masturbatory moving picture had to be doing something right. Showing his blatant abhorrence of political correctness, when questioned about the “Neo-Nazi stuff” featured in the film, LaBruce stated, “I personally think that ninety percent of current gay pornography is sort of fascist anyways.” *Skin Gang* is certainly the kind of film that Adolf Hitler’s strong arm Ernst Röhm (whose SA “Storm Battalion” militia provided Hitler with crucial protection up until Hitler took power in Germany) would have enjoyed watching whilst drinking a couple of beers with his Gay comrades after a day of beating up Jewish Communists.

Since most so called “progressive” bourgeois liberal and cosmopolitan types seem to think highly of themselves due to being proponents of pacifism, equality, peace, and other fantastically absurd pseudo-virtues, what better wake up call for them than being gang raped by a brigade of Neo-Nazis? After all, their pathetic belief that homosexuals are victims is destroyed as they become the victims of stormtrooping sodomites. When a person realizes that the vast majority of interracial rape victims are white women raped by Negro men, what better poetic justice for the impotent and totally effeminized white liberal male than to be brutally buggered by a battalion of boneheaded bootboys that radiate martial prowess. The skinheads in *Skin Gang* are a segment of the gay community that gay rights advocates prefer didn’t exist and Bruce LaBruce flaunts these men off in a way that makes the sadomasochistic fascists featured in Kenneth Anger’s *Scorpio Rising* seem tame by comparison. Of course, *Scorpio Rising* is more about fetishistic art whereas *Skin Gang* is essentially hardcore pornographic skinhead-ploitation.

During the beginning of *Skin Gang* we are introduced to a young skinhead who worships Adolf Hitler’s tome *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) with his cock. Bruce LaBruce certainly has a uniquely sadistic scene of humor when he shows this young skinhead engaged in an erotic one-man struggle before unleashing “liquid white power” via his own personal warhead (which resembles a German helmet). This scene starts out quite humorously with the song “They Saved Hitler’s Cock” by the punk band The Angry Samoans being played in the background. I doubt Bruce LaBruce is any type of Nazi purist or sympathizer as a copy of *Mein Kampf* was surely desecrated by the young skinhead. Although Bruce LaBruce portrays the skinheads in *Skin Gang* as absurdly idiotic barbar-

SKIN GANG

ian Hitlerites that literally jack-off to the Nazi gospel, it is obvious that the gay auteur finds this extremely erotic.

One of the major themes (probably the only theme in the entire film) of *Skin Gang* is the homo-eroticism often inherent in male bonding. Whilst attempting to give his Aryaness a good teutonic pounding, a young skinhead named Reinhold just can't seem to find the same excitement he does when hanging and banging with his fellow bootboys. Due to her blonde beautiful Barbie doll intuition, Reinhold's aggressive lady becomes irritated by his lack of enthusiasm when robotically manhandling her. Reinhold's byrd even yells in his face "don't fall asleep on me" during sex as a nude Negro Mandingo hangs ironically on the wall behind the physically joined but emotionally detached couple. It is not until his racist rudeboy comrades show up that Reinhold seems finally excited. In camaraderie, Reinhold and his buddies immediately start insulting the token female. Enraged by her lack of sexual fulfillment and out of jealousy of his male comrades, Reinhold's girlfriend starts calling the gang of skinheaded goons "closet-cases" and "fags." Of course, Reinhold promptly takes hold of the situation and throws his skinhead bitch (and her worthless belongings) out into the street, surely a hilarious scene showing male physical supremacy at the most fundamental level. Despite being Neo-Nazi skinheads, the only scene that could be interpreted as anti-Semitic is when the Neo-Nazi chick complains, "Who do you think I am, Monica Lewinsky (the most infamous of Jewess whores)," in reference to semen that has landed on her less than lady-like apparel.

Skin Gang may be a work of low-budget fiction but right-wing homo-eroticism is making its way into the mainstream. Artist and writer Jack Donovan (also known as Jack Malebranche), formerly a reverend in The Church of Satan, wrote a controversial work *Androphilia, A Manifesto* arguing against the effeminacy and feminism as promoted by the gay mainstream. With *Androphilia* (meaning "a love of men"), Jack Donovan advocates that homosexual males actually act like males (as opposed to sexually introverted "males" with female souls) and hang out with heterosexual males, something that seems to scare effeminate gays and buldyke lesbians. After all, for all the talk of "homophobia" by the gay mainstream, what these people seem to be most afraid of is males with testosterone, no doubt the true "homophobia." Pansy gay males (well, maybe not Bruce LaBruce) feel threatened by masculine gay men as do estrogen-deprived Femi-Nazis. After all, if there is any negative feeling that the typical heterosexual male has for effeminized gay males, it is a feeling of disgust and repulsion. To call this disgust of dainty gays "homophobic" is just another display of stereotypical gay narcissism.

Bruce LaBruce has also shown his disdain for the gay mainstream. In an interview, LaBruce stated, "I've been held back as much by homophobia within gay culture, probably more so than by straights. Certain elements of the gay

press and politically correct elements of gay culture have not held me back directly, but they've ignored me or tried to pretend that I don't exist." Surely, Skin Gang features those masculine gay males that Hollywood wants to sanitize and exterminate from existence. After all, for all the talk nowadays about persecution experienced by gays during the Third Reich, Hitler's rise to power could not have happened without his loyal homosexual SA warriors Ernst Röhm and Edmund Heines who put their lives on the line just as ancient gay Greek warriors did before them. Although I found myself forwarding through many "scenes" in Skin Gang (I wish I watched the re-edited softcore Skin Flick edition instead), I found the film to be a provocative and daring assault against political correctness, even if it is hardcore gay porn. It is not often that you see a group of Neo-Nazis raping a Negro and yelling "Let's get primitive, Afro-boy" and "Fuck the Monkey."

-Ty E

KAMIKAZE 89
KAMIKAZE 89

Wolf Gremm (1982)

Being a lonely, sluggish, and slob-like fellow in an absurd campy leopard-colored detective outfit is probably not the way German New Cinema master auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder expected to be last remembered, but such was his fate after overdosing on cocaine shortly after his final screen appearance as the lead protagonist in the softcore dystopian cyberpunk flick *Kamikaze 1989* (1982) aka *Kamikaze 89* directed by Wolf Gremm (*Death or Freedom*, Fabian). While many have mixed feelings about Fassbinder's final auteur-piece *Querelle* (1982) – a renegade cinematic reworking of Jean Genet's 1947 novel of the same name that more than hints at the fact that the ill-fated filmmaker was heading in a completely different direction aesthetically due to the film's elaborate expressionistic sets and international star cast, *Kamikaze 89* would prove to be an ostensibly depressing and even embarrassing celluloid affair; both for the fallen star (although the auteur personally enjoyed the experience and performance) and the audience. Based on the 1964 novel *Murder on the Thirty-First Floor* by Swedish Marxist journalist/crime novelist Per Wahlöö, *Kamikaze 89* was a cinematic work where Herr Fassbinder finally got to live out his lifelong dream of being a star hero of the silver screen and not a mere defeated victim like in his own self-directed works *Katzelmacher* (1969) aka *Cock Artist and Fox and His Friends* (1975) aka *Faustrecht der Freiheit*. As *Kamikaze 89* co-scriptwriter Robert Katz wrote in his biography on Fassbinder entitled *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1987), "while Rainer didn't quite direct himself, Gremm rarely restrained him from doing whatever he pleased," which is quite obvious for those that have seen it as the film essentially feels like a high-priced cinematic vehicle for Fassbinder to have fun and forget about the worries of directing serious films. Thus it should be no surprise that *Kamikaze 89* is like *Welt am Draht* (1973) aka *World on a Wire* for philistines as directed by post-Polyester (1981) John Waters (had he not failed out of film school) on sunny and sardonic cyberpunk steroids. Featuring Fassbinder's ex-boy-toy Günther Kaufmann (*Whity*, *The Third Generation*) as his sometimes sidekick and his favorite mature leading lady Brigitte Mira (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, *Mother Küsters' Trip to Heaven*) in another important role, as well as cameos from his friends Frank Ripploh (director of the 1981 gay cult movie *Taxi zum Klo*) and Juliane Lorenz (Fassbinder's young film editor who would later become the head of the Fassbinder Foundation) and cinematography done by Xaver Schwarzenberger (*Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Querelle*), *Kamikaze 89* is the Fass-bande gone kraut Hollywood.

Kamikaze 89 director Wolf Gremm described his collaboration with the German New Wave Superstar auteur as follows: "When I plan a film, I often think in terms of animal images for the characters. In conceiving *Kamikaze 89*, I always had Fassbinder in mind as a leopard, but I never told him this. At the

first costume fitting I showed him fifteen possible futuristic detective and police costumes of very different styles. It happened like this: He came in. I was smoking a cigar. I offered him a Camel cigarette. He looked over the costumes. I smiled. Then he looked at me and smiled too. He said, "You like this leopard one." And I said, "Don't you?" And he said, "Let me try it on." He looked at himself in the mirror and said, "I love me. Now I'm Lieutenant Jansen." From this point on, we never had to discuss the style of the film." Indeed, the style of *Kamikaze 89* is like technocratic mid-camp chic on cyber-crack as a sort of hyper-cynical science fiction flick for those that know, but absolutely loath the genre as a big-budget Teutonic brother to Slava Tsukerman's sci-fi cult classic *Liquid Sky* (1982). Indeed, if you loved any of the films in *The Matrix* trilogy and/or any of the aesthetically sterile, sentimentalist sci-fi flicks directed by Steven Spielberg, *Kamikaze 89* is most certainly not the film for you. In fact, if you felt like a born-again humanist after watching *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and/or *Soylent Green* (1973), you're probably better off watching the latest Roland Emmerich flick than watching Fassbinder fight cyber-crime, even if the German New Wave auteur – with his bloated belly, unkempt beard, and bad acne – did resemble a sci-fi fan-boy during the production of *Kamikaze 89*.

In the not-so-distant future during the year 1989, the Federal Republic of Germany is an undisputed Utopian dream on earth because, aside from being the wealthiest nation in the world, there is nil unemployment, inflation, nor pollution as "everything is right as rain" in the less than democratic nation. Of course, with the disappearance of harmful drugs and violent crime, *Kamikaze 89* features a world without worry, aside from police brutalizing those that dare to drink alcohol, at least until a bomb hoax forces a rather laidback campy cop/dandy detective named Jansen (Rainer Werner Fassbinder) to take a break from his half-ass hobby of living-room tennis. Apparently, set to detonate at the main headquarters of "the Combine" – a passive-aggressive authoritarian company that controls all of television (48 broadcasting channels), news, and paper and electronic media – Jansen and his dopey and less than devoted partner/sidekick MK1 Anton (Günther Kaufmann) are given a mere four days by their commander to uncover who was behind the seemingly nonsensical hoax and in the process, meet a number of dubious queer characters that run the media empire. With an ambiguous reference to 'Krysmopompas' – the underground enemies of the Combine – Jansen and his black Bavarian buddy only have a couple loony leads to go by. When the Human Resources Director (Brigitte Mira) of the Combine building mysteriously falls to her tragicomic death as the supposed first suicide in Germany in over four years, Jansen begins to suspect that there is something more malevolent going on in the socially mundane metropolis, thus sending him on a number of leads and misleads that tangle the plot of *Kamikaze 89* up in a maze-like manner that is made all the more muddling by the film's domineering aesthetics and half-serious and oftentimes satirical tone. Early on in the film,

the nephew of the man that is the head of the Combine confesses that he sent the bomb threat after being influenced by a Krysmopompas comic (in a manner similar to how present-day media blames movies and comic books for the actions of lone-nut killers), but this confession is ultimately false. After catching his partner-in-crime-stopping MK1 Anton snooping in his desk, as well as an order from his boss telling him not to trust anyone (not even the boss that gave the order), Jansen is sent on a tedious trail that is all the more suspect as he weaves through the wacky wonderworld. Battling tranny-molesters wearing ski-masks and neglecting medical attention criminal suspects (it is not the detective's style to waste time on dead-end leads), half-jaded Jansen is on his way to uncovering the hard truths of an insidious industry-run society of contrived immaculateness, but not without meeting with a blue-eye-busted ex-employee of the Combine named Weiss played by Franco Nero who worked on the mysterious 31st floor (often mentioned throughout the film as an inside joke/source of mystery) of the 30 floor Combine building. Apparently, some egocentric elitists at the Combine were unhappy with their bosses for "murdering" their "minds" while they worked on an artistic project for the "spiritual renewal" of the Aryan nation, thus erupting in anti-Combine comics featuring pornography and Der Stürmer-esque caricatures and eventually violence against the conspiring corporation. In the end, Jansen (or more like Fassbinder) stands all by his lonesome, smirking at the audience as the end credits role; no doubt a frolicsome farewell for the foredoomed filmmaker!

Featuring a technocratic metropolis with a quasi-New Romanticist aesthetic, Kamikaze 89 contains an undeniably visually enthralling world with a now-classic soundtrack by Edgar Froese (Tangerine Dream), so much so that the film is more a colorfully campy cinematic cuisine for the eyes and ears than a thrilling tale of sci-fi bureaucracy gone awry, which is probably the result of director Wolf Gremm's ineptitude at cinematic storytelling, hence why the would-be-auteur, who according to Robert Katz, "held the record for winning more frequently than anyone else the German film critics' Sour Lemon, presented to but never accepted by the director of 'the worst film of the year,'" was artistically excommunicated to the world of television and would never direct a feature-length studio film in Germany ever again. Still, aside from being "a footnote to film history" as described by New York Times star reviewer Vincent Canby, Kamikaze 89 is a somewhat strikingly symbolic work of cinema history that foretells the artistically sterile state of, not only German cinema, but international cinema as a whole after the tragic yet predicable death of Fassbinder and Hollywood's horrendous homogenizing effect on the world. Featuring an soul-deadening futuristic dystopia where 99.3% of households watch a twenty-four hours-a-day reality television game show entitled "the Laughing Contest" – a foul forerunner of brainless and tasteless popular 'reality TV' shows like Fox's American Idol (2002-present) – Kamikaze 89, like any worthwhile science fiction work, does manage

to predict the future; a cinematically fatalistic forthcoming that Fassbinder probably would have not fared well in. Interestingly, Günther Kaufmann's quadron son Davy Kaufmann – a rock and soul singer of sorts like his father – would go on to become a star of Germany's "Got Talent" in 2009, thus adding some credibility to the redundant robotic retard realm that is featured in *Kamikaze 89*. Of course, aside from being plagued with crime, population, pathological pill-popping, adolescent alcoholism, and racial/ethnic chaos, the contemporary world also fails to feature city scenery as aesthetically alluring as those in *Kamikaze 89*; a virtual science fiction flick for inebriated Werner Schroeter fans.

As for Rainer Werner Fassbinder's thoughts on *Kamikaze 89*, his biographer Robert Katz wrote that according to director Wolf Gremm and Juliane Lorenz, the German New Cinema auteur, "loved it, especially seeing himself in every scene," so much so that there was talk of two *Kamikaze* sequels and the *Querelle* director even, "kept the phony leopard-skin suit and wore it from time to time during the few remaining months of his life." Fassbinder also, "developed a big-brotherly fondness for Wolf, whose easily ignited childlike enthusiasm was sunshine in Rainer's leaden sky," so much so that *Kamikaze 89* director was staying at his filmmaker friend's house on the night of June 9–10, 1982; the nighttime hours when German New Cinema's Superstar director inevitably perished from his own excesses. Although Gremm did not earn the much prized Sour Lemon award for *Kamikaze 89*, he did manage to offer Fassbinder a couple months of irreplaceable joy from his short life of controlled chaos before the filmmaker finally lost his grip over personal pandemonium. A filmic farewell to Fassbinder, *Kamikaze 89* is probably only of interest to fans of the filmmaker, but quite remarkably, like most decent films (and I am not saying it is anything resembling a masterpiece, not even a minor one), it manages to get better with subsequent viewings.

-Ty E

HUNTING SCENES FROM BAVARIA
HUNTING SCENES FROM BAVARIA

Wolfgang M. Schwiedrzik (1968)

Like Hollywood with films like *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) and *Deliverance* (1972), German cinema of the late-1960s/early-1970s has its fair share of humorously hateful and cinematically libelous anti-redneck lynch mob flicks where rural southern folk persecute outsiders because their little itty bitty hick brains cannot handle being in the presence of weird folk, or at least that is what these films depict. In Germany, these films were described as anti-Heimatfilm/new Heimatfilm and are essentially a hysterical far-left/marxist reaction to the nationalistic Heimatfilm genre that was popular in Germanic countries like Germany, Switzerland and Austria from the late 1940s to the early 1970s and that depicted a sentimental and romantic view of peasant life, thereupon making these films cinematic poison for 'progressive' city folk and xenophiliac leftists. The first hit anti-Heimatfilm was *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1969) aka *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* directed by Peter Fleischmann (*Dorothea's Revenge*, *Hard to Be a God*) in what would be the filmmaker's first feature-length film and adapted from a play written by Martin Sperr, who also plays the leading role in the film. Although chosen as West Germany's official submission to the 42nd Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* did not receive a nomination for the award, but managed to earn two Bundesfilmpreise awards in 1969, including Filmband in Gold for Best Actor (Michael Strixner) and Filmband in Silber for Best Feature Film (Peter Fleischmann). Of course, considering it portrays Bavarians as barbarian untermensch bigots of the brazenly boorish and brutal beer-chugging sort, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* was not exactly popular with everyone in Germany, including the locals from the small village of Unholzing in Postau where the work was filmed, who apparently took a militant stance to the fact a leftist pro-fag/anti-redneck movie was being made in their hometown and denigrating the reputation of their tight community. As Fassbinder/German cinema scholar Thomas Elsaesser wrote in his book *New German Cinema: A History* (1989) regarding *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*, "Like *Katzelmacher*, the film is less the portrait of an individual than the study of a community. It is comparable to a cruel Chabrolian picture of rural France, or to red-neck films about Appalachian hillbillies and Alabama sheriffs, and it recalls William Faulkner at least as much as it recalls Brecht." And, indeed, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* is less a tribute to a victimized hillbilly homo than it is a pseudo-realist agitprop piece and a conspicuously callous and cynical condemnation of rural Southern German folk, who are unwaveringly depicted as nothing short of being Catholic-bred countryside cavemen who have the same hygienic standards and sexual appetites as the farm animals they slaughter. The story of a mild mannered and country-fried cocksucker who returns to the same village where he grew up and inevitably encounters hostile hatred from the peo-

ple who he has known his entire life after they realize he is more homo than hick, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* lets the viewer know that the National Socialist 'blood and soil' is alive and well in bumfuck Bavaria as it is an innate part of the kraut country character that was there long before an Austrian peasant named Uncle Adolf came to town.

At the beginning of *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*, the viewer is treated to a country Catholic church service where violent and bloody religious paintings are featured prominently, thereupon demonstrating the ostensible root for the Bavarian need to go hunting for homos and other unholy beings. After church, gay boy Abram (Martin Sperr) arrives at his hometown village via bus and everyone seems glad to see him except his mother Babara (Else Quecke), who will not even look him in the eye when he lovingly greets her because she seems to know something unsettling that the rest have yet to find out. Abram may be a fairy but he is a handyman of sorts whose repair talents are certainly needed in the town, even if the villagers find him a bit strange and passive. Abram is not the only misfit in town, along with the local whore Hannelore (German New Cinema darling Angela Winkler of *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* and *Knife in the Head*) who is constantly physically, verbally, and emotionally degraded by men who have no problem screwing her when no one is around. The local retard teenage Ernstl (Johann Lang) is also sometimes attacked, but he does most of the attacking, including pelting lumber at Hannelore and calling her a "whore." The town also has a couple Turkish 'guest workers' who like describing the locals as 'huns' but, aside from being mocked for being Muslims and their lack of Catholic church going, are generally treated with respect and like the villagers and vice versa. Of course, things begin to turn bad one day when a beautiful blonde busybody named Paula (Fassbinder's leading lady Hanna Schygulla in her first feature-length film acting role) tells the villagers that Abram apparently does "dirty things with men." One fine sunny day, Abram's mother tells him, "see that you leave the village. Get lost!," thus essentially disowning her boy in the process, but he respectfully replies, "I have the right to stay. Like you." Clearly offended by the sheer audacity of her sinner sodomite son's remark, Abram's mother hatefully replies, "You have no rights. You don't have rights when you're contrary to nature. I hope they beat you until you leave voluntarily. I hope they chase you out of the village. I wish it. Here in the village it's not like in town where that's modern. I know people are down on you...Just say you're doing it with men. Everyone knows it anyway." Hannelore essentially admits he is gay and proud to his mother, which makes him a marked man in the neighborhood, but that does not stop him as he soon attempts to make moves on teenage town idiot Ernstl while giving him a ride on his motorcycle, which does not go down well with the boy's parents.

Meanwhile, despite not providing any evidence for her claims, village whore Hannelore tells everyone that she is pregnant with Abram's baby, which is re-

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jected by many of the villagers, including a fellow that thoughtfully declares, "I'm not so sure that it's Abram's. First of all she's a whore. And second Abram only does it from behind." Since archaic villages are apparently full of sexually repressed old women who have not had sex in decades and have nothing to do but plot destroying people's lives, Abram's mother's friend declares she is going to take down the town homo herself because, as she states regarding the village's men, "Here they stand around, the men, and none of them does something," so she ultimately decides to take matters in her own hands. According to a feeble old-timer with a horrendous hooknose regarding how the villagers would have dealt with Abram the abberosexual in the past, "We'd have cut off his willy in the old days." Instead, Abram's mother's friend calls the police and manages to convince them to arrest Abram the next day. While Abram attempts to take the first bus out of town, he is a coward and allows a half-retarded redneck named Georg (Michael Strixner) and an elderly woman to pull him away from his one-way ticket to freedom, so he runs away like a little sissy girl. Hannelore follows Abram and when she finally finds him and tells him that he is going to be a father, he mockingly replies, "I have to throw up when I think of it...My child! You're a whore. You do it with anyone. Get lost or I'll beat you up." True to his word, Abram not only physically assaults, but stabs Hannelore to death after she refuses to leave him alone. Naturally, after killing the ostensible mother of his unborn child and said unborn child, Abram hides in the woods and a lynch mob, armed with rifles and Alsatian Wolf Dogs, goes hunting for him and eventually arrests him. In the end, after the death of pregnant whore Hannelore and the arrest of village poof Abram, everything returns to normal in the Bavarian village, including beer-chugging contests and a reelection speech from the village mayor, who simply states, "My election speech is very short....Everyone can drink a free beer on my account." As *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* sardonically demonstrates, when it comes down to it, it is not blood, soil, or even fascism that keeps a Bavarian peasant happy, docile, and reasonably harmless, but beer, beer, and more beer.

Almost as simplistically prejudiced and stereotype-driven as the barbaric Bavarian villagers it seeks to condemn and featuring a number of gratuitous scenes of farm animals defecating and fornicating as well as an extended pig-slaughtering scene, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* is essentially a patently pretentious, unintentional Hixploitation flick, thereupon making it ultimately much more entertaining than the typical anti-Heimatfilm, even if for all the wrong reasons. Marginally Herzog-esque/Korine-esque in its radical 'realism' and sporadically Schlingensief-like in its shameless stereotyping of kraut country bumpkins, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* only works today if approached like an absurdist satire work directed by anarcho-mystic Herbert Achternbusch (*The Last Hole*, *Heilt Hitler!* aka *Heal Hitler!*) because if taken seriously, Fleischmann's film seems like far-left intellectual insipidity at its most innately idiotic. Of course, as

demonstrated by his subsequent works *Dorothea's Revenge* (1973) aka *Dorotheas Rache* and *The Hamburg Syndrome* (1979) aka *Die Hamburger Krankheit*—a dystopian sci-fi flick that also incorporates elements of the anti-Heimatfilm—Fleischmann certainly has a sense of humor, even if of the sometimes sickening self-righteous leftist sort. Of course, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* is ultimately a film about so-called “everyday fascism,” depicting the hunting of a horndog homo by villagers as a metaphor for the SS cramming less than inconspicuous cocksuckers in concentration camps during the Second World. Undoubtedly, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* depicts the German peasantry as the ‘roots’ of fascism, which director Fleischmann and playwright Martin Sperr seems to think need to be ripped from the soil of Germany. Sort of the celluloid inverse of *Jud Süß* (1940) aka *Jew Süss* directed by Veit Harlan in its depiction of the German peasantry as opposed to money-changing Hebrews as the social plague of Germany society, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* is arguably the first big cinematic sign of how the Fatherland’s new generation of filmmaker’s had sided with the enemies and the victories of the Second World War and rejected their ancestral heritage, which still lingers on today in films like Michael Haneke’s neo-anti-heimatfilm *The White Ribbon* (2009). Of course, when it comes to violent and racist tribalistic behavior and crimes, especially of the hateful prejudiced sort, in contemporary Germany, its almost exclusively carried out by non-white (illegal) foreigners, including Turks, Kurds, and Middle Easterners, but no indigenous German filmmaker would ever dare to depict such a politically incorrect reality, lest they ruin their careers.

-Ty E

ZELIG
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Woody Allen (1983)

Undoubtedly, even the National Socialists could not have dreamed up a character so hopelessly and negatively stereotypically Jewish as Woody Allen. As a jazz musician, lifelong proponent of psychoanalysis, alleged pedophile, super dork, weakling, and emotional cripple, all while being annoyingly nasally neurotic with a rather repugnant persecution complex, Allen makes the eponymous protagonist of Veit Harlan's *Jud Süß* (1940) seem like a super cool pimp. In fact, with his second mockumentary (the first mock documentary the director made was the 1969 work *Take the Money and Run*), *Zelig* (1983), Allen more or less validated the ostensibly anti-Semitic point made in the Nazi propaganda film *The Eternal Jew* (1940) aka *Der ewige Jude* directed by Fritz Hippler that Hebrews have a chameleon-like talent for transforming themselves into whatever people they happen to be living around. Indeed, while *The Eternal Jew* depicts a stereotypical orthodox Jew morphing into a European simply by changing his clothes and getting a haircut, *Zelig* (a film with a rather ironic title that means "blessed" or "dear departed soul" in Yiddish) portrays Allen as an American ghetto-bred Jew who can completely physically and psychologically morph into whatever race, class, or creed of people he happens to run into. Of course, whereas Hippler's film portrays Jews as deceptive oriental parasites who pretend to be authentic Aryans so as to deceive and ultimately exploit the native European population, Allen's film depicts the Sellers-esque tendency of the Hebraic protagonist as a "marvelous protective device." Indubitably, one of the most embarrassingly Jewish films ever made, even for a Woody Allen work, *Zelig* is not just a rather personal work for the auteur, but also an allegory for Jewish assimilation in early 20th century America. Allen's *Forrest Gump* (1994) *avant la lettre*, the mockumentary features an aesthetic in the style of black-and-white 1920s film reels and oftentimes includes scenes of the director/writer/star inserted into old stock footage from authentic vintage newsreels. Featuring cameos from real-life Jewish intellectuals like bisexual feminist writer/film critic Susan Sontag, Nobel Prize-winning novelist Saul Bellow, Viennese psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, kosher quasi-commie writer Irving Howe, and various other important individuals playing themselves, as well as stock footage of countless historical figures, including everyone from Joey Goebbels to Pope Pius XI, *Zelig* is probably the most seamlessly and meticulously assembled (notably, in the time that it took Allen to edit the film in post-production, the director managed to film *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982) and *Broadway Danny Rose* (1984)), over-intellectualized, strangely nostalgic, and history-heavy mockumentary ever made. Indeed, *Zelig* is a playful pomo work where Allen took the opportunity to molest history, as a work where, among other things, the director appears as a stormtrooper who causes a ruckus while Hitler gives a speech at a Nazi rally.

Indeed, more than anything else, *Zelig* is post-holocaust American Jewish neurosis in celluloid form where a wacky and exceedingly neurotic Judaic with a cipher-like (non)personality tries to fit in and be accepted by pretending to be everyone except himself. If nothing else, the mockumentary is notable for featuring Woody Allen as both a Nazi and a negro, among countless other absurdities that make *Zelig* arguably the director's most ambitious film to date.

Leonard Zelig (Woody Allen) is a magical chameleon-like Jew who can instantly transform into whoever he wants whenever he wants, as a sort of quasi-supernatural defense mechanism. The first major sighting of *Zelig* was in 1928 when novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald saw him transform from a right-leaning Boston-bred aristocrat to a poor democratic kitchen worker in the same night. As the lilly-licking Hebraic intellectual/would-be-filmmaker Susan Sontag states of *Zelig's* legacy, "He was the phenomenon of the 20s. When you think that he was as well-known as Lindbergh...it's really quite astonishing." Commie social critic Irving Howe also chimes in regarding the kosher chameleon's legacy by stating, "His story reflected the nature of our civilization...the character of our times. Yet it was also one man's story...and all the themes of our culture were there—heroism, will, things like that—but when you look back on it, it was very strange." Like most 20th century Jewish figures that Jews and shabbos goys talk about in a puffery-plagued fashion, *Zelig* was born in a Jewish ghetto and was the son of a Yiddish actor, or as the narrator of the film states: "As a boy, Leonard is frequently bullied by anti-Semites. His parents, who never take his part...and blame him for everything, side with the anti-Semites. They punish him often by locking him in a dark closet. When they are really angry...they get into the closet with him. On his deathbed, Morris Zelig tells his son...that life is a meaningless nightmare of suffering...and the only advice he gives him is to save string." Ultimately, *Zelig's* father scared his son to be afraid of any and everything, especially other people, so the boy somehow learned how to become a "human chameleon" of sorts who can camouflage himself in his social surroundings, turning himself into a tough Guido gangster, negro jazz musician, potato-famine-obsessed Irishman and countless other things in an almost instantaneous fashion. Naturally, when the media caught wind of *Zelig's* talent, he became an overnight sensation, though it would come at the price of the hyper neurotic yid's privacy and personality, among other things.

With *Zelig's* growing popularity in the media, he becomes of interest to a female psychiatrist named Dr. Eudora Fletcher (Mia Farrow), who brings the nihilistically neurotic Hebrew in for testing and learns upon putting him under hypnosis that he has a uniquely unhealthy yearning for receiving approval from people around him, hence his peculiar proclivity towards perfectly mimicking them. As Dr. Fletcher concludes, "Like the lizard that is endowed by nature...with a marvelous protective device...that enables it to change color...and blend in with its immediate surrounding...*Zelig*, too, protects himself...by be-

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coming whoever he is around.” Of course, Zelig’s transforming power does not trick everyone, as a commie leader complains regarding the truly wandering Jew: “This creature personifies Capitalist man. A creature who takes many forms to achieve ends...the exploitation of the workers by deception.” The communists’ perennial enemies in the Ku Klux Klan also see him as a threat because he is, after all: “a Jew who was able to transform himself...into a negro or Indian” thereupon making him a “triple threat” to the KKK. Of course, as a mensch who transforms himself into other people, Zelig does not really have much of a personality or a personal life, even if his popularity had made him rich, or as the narrator of the film comments regarding the protagonist: “Though the shows and parties...keep Zelig’s sister and her lover rich and amused...Zelig’s own existence is a nonexistence. Devoid of personality, his human qualities long since lost in the shuffle of life...he sits alone, quietly staring into space...a cipher, a nonperson, a performing freak.” Despite being a Jew, Zelig is a hopeless philistine who, upon attempting to develop an authentic personality of his own, discovers that he prefers watching baseball to reading classic books like *Moby Dick*. When the Hebraic Human Chameleon falls in love with Dr. Fletcher, she becomes convinced that she will never be able to cure Zelig. Meanwhile, Zelig’s half-sister Ruth (Mary Louise Wilson) is killed in a bizarre love triangle gone awry involving a cowardly Spanish bullfighter and the Jewish chameleon disappears from both the United States and the public spotlight as a result of his shock from the tragedy. When Zelig is finally found, he is brought back to Dr. Fletcher, who inevitably falls in love with the little changing man who she later ostensibly ‘cures,’ though he temporarily develops a personality that is violently intolerant of all other people.

Naturally, Zelig and Dr. Fletcher become a celebrity couple and the two get engaged, which is documented by the media, but two weeks before the wedding, a showgirl contacts the media and claims to have married the lapsed chameleon in Baltimore the year before and even had his baby for which he has neglected to pay child support. Of course, countless other women come forward claiming to be Zelig’s wives/baby’s momma, thus ruining the little man’s reputation and romance with Dr. Fletcher. Indeed, ultimately the same news media that built Zelig up also breaks him down (rather ironically, this would also happen to Allen in real-life). In fact, one female Christian leader goes so far as declaring on live television: “Leonard Zelig sets a bad moral influence. America is a moral country. It’s a God-fearing country. We don’t condone scandals—scandals of fraud and polygamy. In keeping with a pure society, I say, lynch the little Heeb.” Plagued by bad press and overwhelming hatred, Zelig becomes ill again, disappears, and ends up in pre-Nazi Germany where he becomes a loyal brownshirt stormtrooper. In a Universal Newspaper newsreel entitled “National Socialists on the Rise,” Zelig is spotted by Dr. Fletcher, so she sails to Berlin, Germany the following week in the hope of rescuing her estranged patient/lover. During a

Nazi rally speech where Hitler is about to make a joke about Poland, Zelig, who is standing on the same stage with big H, interrupts the Führer upon seeing Dr. Fletcher. Although the SS plans to catch and torture the human chameleon for his stereotypically rude Jewish behavior, Zelig mimics Fletcher's flying talents in his final performance as a human chameleon and escapes back to the United States where the two are both declared national heroes. Naturally, in the end, Zelig and Dr. Fletcher get married. In the last scene of the film, the narrator remarks regarding Zelig's marriage: "In the end, it was, after all, not the approbation of many...but the love of one woman that changed his life." Of course, little did the narrator realize that Mia Farrow would spill the beans less than a decade after the release of Zelig regarding the fact that her then-lover had begun a rather dubious affair with her adopted daughter Soon-Yi, thereupon ruining the director's reputation permanently. Indeed, no one changed Allen's life more than the ethno-masochistic wench known as Mia Farrow, thus making Zelig seem strangely prophetic in retrospect.

In his 1983 review of Zelig, star New York Times film critic Vincent Canby wrote regarding Allen's film: "Though it runs a mere but delicious 84 minutes, 'Zelig,' his new, remarkably self-assured comedy, is to his career what the 15 1/2-hour 'Berlin Alexanderplatz' is to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's and the three-hour-plus 'Fanny and Alexander' is to Ingmar Bergman's. This incongruity in running time may be a law of nature. Woody Allen is much shorter than Mr. Bergman and never has he tipped the scales to equal the heft Mr. Fassbinder was carrying around in the years before his death." While Zelig may be one of Allen's most inventive, ambitious, and accomplished films, it is certainly not his best and surely not a work that deserves to be mentioned in the same sentence with unrivaled epic arthouse masterworks like Fassbinder's Berlin Alexanderplatz and Bergman's Fanny and Alexander. Indeed, aesthetically speaking, Zelig is a one-note-wonder that is not much more than an intellectual novelty filled with famous Jewish intellectual figures and, had the work been any longer than its 79-minute running time, it would be nothing short of intolerable, as the novelty gets old quick. Still, I must give credit to Allen for including a fake interview with the infamous SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl, who is treated just like one of the Jewish intellectuals that is interviewed and could not have been interviewed in real-life as he had been executed via hanging in 1951 for his involvement in running concentration camps. Undoubtedly, Allen's inclusion of Pohl in the film is one of his sickest jokes yet, so I must give him credit for that, especially considering the director is a persecution-complex-ridden man who seems to believe that everyone is a closet anti-Semite. Of course, one of the more comical and ironic aspects of Zelig, especially on retrospect, is that, while the eponymous protagonist is portrayed as an involuntary sex fiend who impregnated countless women while in his "human chameleon" state, the real Woody Allen has proven to be quite infertile and about as sexually virile as his

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weak and frail body indicates, as demonstrated by the fact that he probably has no real biological children of his own (it has been recently revealed that the director's sole supposed biological son, Ronan Farrow, is probably really the progeny of Frank Sinatra). Indeed, undoubtedly Allen's real-life story certainly pales in comparison to the fictional fantasy story he contrived for Zelig. With that being said, I think it is time that some iconoclastic video artist should come along and direct a pseudo-sequel to Zelig, albeit in documentary and opposed mockumentary form, where Allen's real legacy is assessed. Needless to say, such a film would hardly be a quirky comedy.

-Ty E

FRONTIÈRE

Xavier Gens (2007)

This is among one of the newer breeds of the French extreme new-wave horror movement. This along with *Inside* and *Haute Tension* are well on their way to being the classics that define a genre. This film-festival charmer has been bringing about quite some hype as to how brutal it was. I generally feel sorry to say that it definitely does not live up to the expectations of intensity that were paved for this film. This film is another film idea wrapped up in Nazi sensationalism. *Frontière(s)* plays out like *Calvaire* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* meets Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. The fact that they used Nazis in the film as the antagonist is a weak move for director Xavier Gens. I wish directors would incorporate new tactics in deriving fear out of people rather than getting chased by a big French butcher who claims to be a Nazi who prays to a rumpled copy of *Mein Kampf*. Not so much that they are just Nazis but that they are given the title of cannibalistic Nazis. I'm surprised that Jack Bliesener doesn't reprise his role from *Hard Rock Zombies* as Hitler. That might make the situation more believable and enjoyable. If it wasn't for a couple of conveniently short scenes and lines, you wouldn't even know they were Nazis. One of the young thugs notices a portrait of Hitler in the cabin and another meets the "Fuhrer" figure of the household. One humorous scene does involve a Muslim not eating the fried "pork" that they serve at dinner. When he declines due to his religion, the big guy asks feverishly "Are you Jewish!?" I would have liked to see where that would have went. On to the topic of how brutal it is, I wouldn't say it was as shocking as *Inside* or as creepy and sinister as *Calvaire*, but it is still a damn enjoyable film. Like most of the French horror before it, this film takes on a feminist outlook, portraying this lush and beaten heroine as a goddess and all the male cast like garbage. Is the newest craze to shave a woman's head and have her run around screaming? Suffice to say, Sigourney Weaver was the only one who could pull it off. The film's plot involves a very similar French feel to it, almost like *Sheitan*. Like *Sheitan*, it involves a group of young punks going to a remote country area to have sex and do drugs. The overview of the plots fit like a stencil. This film doesn't have the excellent performance that Vincent Cassel brandished for the film and only adds some less-than-memorable roles. In the direct synopsis, this film claims to have to do with a political election and right-wing liberals, but this is only explained in an archived riot footage that they call a "montage." This move to try and position intelligence upon it will only get it slandered. This film was actually rated NC-17. I cannot understand this seeing as how intense and provocatively violent *Inside* was. *Frontière(s)* is not something we haven't seen before. If you go into it expecting the brutality and hype that everyone has been assaulted with, there is no doubt that you will be disappointed. While not being perfect and relying on its own form of propaganda to try and make us hate

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Nazis once more, Frontière(s) is a damn fine thriller and you will enjoy every blood-soaked minute of it. That is, unless you expect something intelligent.

-mAQ

ASSAULT! JACK THE RIPPER

Yasuharu Hasebe (1976)

Successfully blending "ero"-level violence with sexual encroachment alongside the vast fetishistic kingdom as geographically marked by these pioneers of the Roman-porn industry, Yasuharu Hasebe returns from directing the film that marked a trend, Rape!. Hasebe perhaps never thought about the impact or the posterity that would be affected by his works back in the late 70s, the same instance goes for me as I never would have assumed I would have found such a liberating niche of films that encompass many ideas that vaunt about my mind on a day to day basis. Hasebe could be called the visual Georges Bataille of our time bringing to light an often invisible connection between sex, lust, and death. To better suit death as a broad spectrum, murder. Death is an essence that is everywhere; it can appear at any give place or time. We were all created to die, not to live, so why not stalk for personal satisfaction? Hasebe brings these temporal theories to mind with another of his infamous and stunning works of art. Assault! Jack the Ripper opens inside of a ~~restaurant~~ bakery(?) where, unbeknown to me at the time, is where our two future sadists would meet and become spiritually guided to their deprived enlightenment. Our lead actress is a pugnacious creature who is gifted with an incredibly motivating body but is cursed with a particularly obese face which gives more to her repugnant attitude and appetite. After purposely spilling coffee on a customer's lap after a failed pass, she goes in the kitchen and observes a (what must be mousy) employee work extensively on a cake, prepping it for what appears to be a wedding ceremony. The attention whore breaks silence with eye contact and presumes to drive the blade through his cake, severing the top and sparking the romantic destiny that progresses dangerously in the blink of an eye. At closing time, the evil little afro-troll begs the man for a lift home and harps him until he does. Along the way, they manage to pick up a female prototype of the hitchhiker from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre who rubs cake all over her underdeveloped breasts and slices her wrist open. Trying to flee from the society-inflicted broad, they accidentally kill her and discover an insatiable appetite for fucking hidden just under the cloak of silent sleep. From this point on, Assault! becomes a dearly departed exercise in psychopathic erotica. Exploring the sexual stimuli featured at the chronological beginning of Tetsuo: The Iron Man, Assault! takes no shortcuts to quenching this man's lust for sex & death. Soon he begins killing for an ulterior motive - hatred for women. After dealing with tubby yelling at him all day and dealing with her sexual needs, it seems he has discovered a new reason to kill; not to fuck but to purge - any and all women. His "cake blade" becomes a phallic extension of which he jams into his victims vaginae and becomes bewildered by this act of carnal retribution on his part. The best films to me are ones that can accept realities and while being fiction, stomping towards

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these taboos unwavering and that is exactly what Hasebe does. The soundtrack even boasts excellence as we are delightfully treated to a somber Oriental jazz funk that cloyingly humanizes his actions and escape. Should such a man exist with no consequential worries? Probably not but there really isn't a damn thing we can do about it. These evil, awful things happen in the world on a second basis and all we can really do is pray that our loved ones are not affected by the wrath's of the few. Nearing the end of Assault!, something occurred to me. Not only is Hasebe's Assault! Jack the Ripper a transgressive film in which intimacy is unrivaled in death akin to Georges Bataille's Story of the Eye, but the lead killer's skill transcends bloodshed into something . . . unnameable. In one particular home invasion scene, he makes neat and passion-blazed slices in her pretty abdomen as she struggles and spins against the outside window. Blood trails fleeing from her silk skin, tracing images on the glass panes - Hasebe has turned death into art! Where the killer was once satisfying his hatred for women, now he is applying lacerations to their canvases in what can only be considered fluid performance art. Happiness can he found in even the darkest of places. Hasebe has created yet another excellent film concerning rape with no third party intrusion. Rather than a cops-and-robbers story of a man on the run, this film is strictly interpersonal for its characters and this is such a glorious piece of sleaze you can't help but to cry.

-mAQ

RAPE! 13TH HOUR

Yasuharu Hasebe (1977)

The quest for manhood is led by many treacherous paths of righteousness. Each territory you cross into leads into a chain of cause and effect. There will be consequences for each and the one that Ishiyama chose is to become a serial rapists' apprentice in order to live the life of sex and riches. But the real problem here is getting Ishiyama to climax. The lil' bugger just doesn't have it in him and in this, he soon finds solace in the idea of rape. Rape's everywhere; it's in the newspapers, television, literature, and a frequent topic in film (See also; Any Yasuharu Hasebe film). Described is the first 10 minutes of Rape! 13th Hour and let me tell you; the odyssey that Crimson leads the emasculated cohort through is a dizzying journey through sleazy nihilism and avid selflessness. Dispersed through the film are beautiful poetic visual metaphors that can be a doozy to catch on to. Crimson's epithet is derived from his bright red jacket and his crimson rose tattoo on his forearm. In moments of sexual assault, Crimson's tattoo begins to slowly fill with red ink until his "flower blossoms." As indicated by these little gems, Rape! 13th Hour is no amateur film and a prime highlight in the idea of creating a stellar script around many sexual taboos. In the current high peak of Asian film reception, Miike's Visitor Q is hailed as an absolute masterpiece of taboo film making but the real champions (or underdogs) are trapped behind closed circuits with no release pending and the only really light these films will see is in the hopes of Mondo Macabro, Pink Eiga, or exhaustive searching online. Rape is a topic often visited by Nikkatsu films and ero-gro for that matter. Any Japanese pinku film mostly lingers around the concept of forced sexual relations and with good reason too. As much as you or any might deny it, there's definitely something unbelievably attractive about the domineering over a female. The beginning of the act (cemented by cinema) is a bit of flirtation with the idea - the fear, the struggle. It makes for beautiful film footage, given the right director. The only flaw with rape in film is that in most cases, it's made into something comical and not given life to the "terrible" act in which case, would make the act beautiful worthy of revelations of one's own sexuality. Hot on the tail of Crimson is a gang of homosexual thugs led by an ant king. After witnessing Crimson rape someone, he's decided to make a proposition one could easily turn down; fuck the gay leader or get turned into the police. To make matters worse, the trio is compromised by two larger fellows. Poor Ishiyama got himself in the middle of something spectacularly horrible. As Crimson struts down the street, eyes hidden by Lennon glasses and hands in jacket pockets; his countenance is especially intimidating. Maybe this is what fuels Ishiyama's competitive virility match with Crimson and thus leads us the the shocking climax that rivals A Clockwork Orange on a scale of sexual encounters under a storm of sifting feathers. Just a minute before, he pins a woman

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that Crimson had claimed to a mirror, with a strung out and patiently executed thrust, the mirror cracks behind him. This sets the mood for a mirror shot of them making unconditional love in time for the credits to roll. Blazingly brilliant in style and only inhibited by the era from which it was produced, Rape! 13th Hour is scarcely matched. There's no reason why anyone should be displeased with this 1977 Nikkatsu film. The title tells you the subject matter rather prematurely. You're but a fool if you walk into an experience such as Rape! 13th Hour and expect morals and tolerance for there is none. Gay-bashing aside, Rape! 13th Hour is a film with both violent and conscientious tendencies that rises to unnatural levels of both storytelling and sexual titillation. Abuse of women can be a structured act and Hasebe proves so with yet another film pertaining to the code of conduct displayed by serial rapists. With hints of My Own Private Idaho, A Clockwork Orange, and Straw Dogs, this film has every bit of sexual class and explosive depravity that you'd come to expect with the title boasting "rape" followed by an exclamation mark, as to say "Buy this! Rape turns you on!" - which it more than likely does.

-mAQ

OSOU!

Yasuharu Hasebe (1978)

Yasuharu Hasebe is an "unsung hero" of the pinku eiga genre. With films like *Rape! 13th Hour*, *Assault! Jack the Ripper*, or the unpretentiously titled *Rape!*, Hasebe has carved a niche in which to rest surrounded by the most subversive sleaze to be found, all his own creation. Though not sleaze in the general sense of the term, most of Hasebe's films juggle what which most people refer to as "misogynistic" tendencies *Osou!*, for example, is the tale of Kumiko, a police-woman who is brutally raped by a strange attacker after an automobile collision. Not stopping with one count of sexual assault, the stranger returns time and time again to penetrate her at her most vulnerable moments, eventually reaching the point in which she wholeheartedly looks forward to their next rendezvous. It's not about the how, it's about the why. *Osou!* takes a woman and places her in such a situation. Libidinous to a fault, her own desires mesh with the savagery exhibited by her non-consensual lover producing a whole new woman. Ideally, you'd imagine that with the right treatment, a woman could adapt to a similar sexual situation, if not for consent than surely for instinct. Kumiko pines for violation by *Osou!*'s halfway mark. She is mesmerized by force and blunt seduction, which is not an uncommon fantasy for most women. It starts off simple with compliance towards biting, minor rough play, and the ever-effective hands-around-throat. Once the seed of obscure practice blossoms, a warmer reception may be held towards more extreme activities. This isn't misogyny in the slightest, it's evolution.

Before the audacious assault of a policewoman in a police station, Hasebe makes sure to pamper his actress with backdrops of thick concrete jungles for her to explore and enough motive to warrant the aggravated attacks committed against her. In a word, Kumiko is kind of a bitch. Had you ever had a run in with a police officer, I'm sure you've whined and complained about the balance of fair and unfair. Perhaps you were traveling 50 mph in a 40 mph zone - Mr. Important has got an important date to keep. Kumiko flips through her previous tickets to interrogate possible suspects and on her quest, apologizes to many people she may have wronged or been unfair to. A parking ticket certainly isn't grounds for bodily repossession, correct? For Hasebe, uniform is key to the eroticism within *Osou!*. Most males, hell, women too for that matter, admit to being aroused by uniform and costume in the bedroom. For this reason alone, *Osou!* inhabits the very core of eroticism in rape and not some far off filmic plane of exploitative trash and senseless buggery. The rapist assuredly is committing an illegal and unanimously frowned upon act but Kumiko takes it without principle, without morality. She sheds away the layers of incorrectness to find the heart of

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the act; pleasure. One might spite my words and cry offense to them but I'll have you know my words are no more offensive than the film they are in response to.

Sex follows Kumiko everywhere. *Osou!* is essentially an odyssey of sexual appetite. You'd swear angelic Kumiko hadn't an idea of the act with her tight and proper appearance. Once she is raped though, things swiftly change. Confronting possible suspects, she is seated inside of a car, conversing with a man she had ticketed previously as he has sex in close proximity. Following this incident, Kumiko decides to spend the night at her sister's house but is awoken by her sister's husband, as he ravages her body with his tongue. Aghast, the sister thrusts Kumiko out onto the streets with tears brimming in her eyes. This is a documentation of a woman uncovering the beastly side of Japan, no, men, as she is manhandled at every turn and thrown into dizzying sexuality. Definitely a strong film of Hasebe's, *Osou!* manages to help us discover what it means to hold onto that which fractures us. Once Kumiko begins masturbating, she comes to terms with her impure bits & bliss. Aiding the frenzied attacks is an array of strongly composed classical pieces that flutter closely over the head of the mysterious black-gloved rapist. One would expect to be averse to the rape, as it is an act of territorial noncompliance. However, Kumiko has the self-defense skills of a muzzled orangutan which leaves sympathy nowhere to be found. That's not to pull a card of natural selection, simply, it's too damn silly, her falling into the traps of a secret admirer almost repetitiously. Yasuharu Hasebe reigns king over this land of forced sexual encounters and there seems to be hardly anyone who can hold a torch to his objectifying of women. *Osou!* is a classic of his standard.

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BLIND BEAST

Yasuzō Masumura (1969)

The world of touch... The world of insects... The lower orders such as the jellyfish... Those who venture to the edge of such worlds can expect only a dark, dank death to envelope them. A blind man who scorns the thought of sight. He alone relishes the art of feeling. After discovering the statue of a model, he becomes obsessed with finding her, at all costs. When she is captured and taken into his studio, they both become a victim of each other's desires. The mere concept of Blind Beast is something so beautiful, and so forbidden. The subject matter at hand is what we know as Stockholm Syndrome. Blind Beast features some of the most stunning set design I have ever seen. Michio's art studio features dynamic shading, bizarre sexual pieces which only the Marquis De Sade could fully appreciate, and perfectly resonates his own dire madness. Blind Beast is what you'd call a minimalist film; a film that shines in its own presence. For working on mainly one set, it constantly gives you more things to survey with the very same sight that Michio is without. Much of the emotion derives from the claustrophobia, the amazing acting, and the creepy score which is almost comparable to the haunting soundtrack to Nekromantik. Film makers should take cues from Hermann Kopp. He seems to be the definitive musical genius. Who knew that chamber music could make a film horrifying? The simple fight of Aki being kidnapped turns from a horrified state of seeming soulless, then turns into a dazzling display of psycho sexual torture. Together, these two destined lovers create a dizzying art piece, which rivals anything a Frenchman ever made. Attention to detail is Yasuzo Masumura's middle name. Every piece of this intricate puzzle fits out, leaving no questions but the most stern sickness. This film has a strict meaning of love behind lust. While many denounce such absurd perversions, Blind Beast cements the fact that such a thing does exist. Nothing is more beautiful than contact. Blind Beast proves this. Just to bring up a point Michio made, If seeing visual pieces can be considered art, and smelling exquisite scents can be deemed art, then why not contact?

-Maq

EYE IN THE SKY
EYE IN THE SKY

Yau Nai-hoi (2007)

Surveillance is a controvertible issue in todays society. Recently given a high profile makeover by films like *The Dark Knight*, Christopher Nolan explains in a key scene his extreme distaste for surveillance. Born in London, Nolan must feel that his privacy is being invaded. If there were cameras on every street corner here, I'd feel pretty pissed off as well. His aggressive resistance of a constantly watched area is exactly the same thoughts provoked in Hong Kong's *Eye in the Sky*. *Eye in the Sky*, or *Surveillance*, is directed by a Johnnie To protégé Nai-Hoi Yau. In a bizarre reverse collaboration, *Eye in the Sky* proves to be a solid debut directorial effort but lacks much substance; enough to call itself a "true" thriller. The by-product is watchable, enjoyable, and quite suspenseful and taut. Simon Yam, the character-driven star of *Dragon Dynasty's* own *Killzone*, performs as the lead character actor of our story in *Eye in the Sky*, code named Dog Head. Hiding behind a grizzled face and glasses, Yam is almost unrecognizable. A special police division exists. One so secret that the only citizens informed are the ones involved with the project. The group is called SU; short for Surveillance Unit, if you haven't guessed. A young woman was recently accepted into the group. The group utilizes cameras set up all over China so that these may aid the professional "actors" that are scattered around hot spots. For instance, if a pedophile was wandering around San Diego, a team of people would go undercover as a population in order to follow the culprit to their location. With the taste of pursuing and the stage acting, this apparatus of the film provides us the age old question of "What if?" For dizzying chase sequences lavishly placed in a fine sequential order, *Eye in the Sky* is your bidding. *Eye in the Sky* has that healthy share of violence that you need, but not too much. At least compared to *Dog Bite Dog*, which featured some rather brutal shots of action. *Eye in the Sky* is a fitting film for someone who appreciates Eastern action. Swearing accommodation and light-hearted moments as well, there is something for everyone to like. Just pretend this film is a rough draft of a brilliant idea, then the cynicism won't come out as much.

-mAQ

DEFAMATION

Yoav Shamir* (2009)

With the recent media outcry against Charlie Sheen (who recently revealed that he is Jewish) for supposedly making antisemitic remarks, it seemed like the perfect timing when I received a copy (courtesy of First Run Features) of the 2009 documentary *Defamation* in the mail. *Defamation* has deservedly won Best Documentary Feature Film at the 2009 Asian Pacific Screen Awards, on top of receiving wide praise from critics around the world. Of course, the Anti-Defamation League - the organization that is the central subject of the documentary - has condemned the documentary because they believe it "belittles the issue (of antisemitism)....and cheapens the Holocaust." After watching *Defamation*, it will be apparent to the viewer that by utilizing the historical suffering of Jews as a weapon to stifle any legitimate criticism against Israeli atrocities committed against Palestinians, as well as the stranglehold AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) lobby has over American foreign policy, it is in fact the ADL that compromises serious claims of antisemitism. During the beginning of *Defamation*, director Yoav Shamir admits that despite hearing about antisemitism and Nazis for what seemed to be everyday during his entire life as an Israeli, he has never personally experienced antisemitism. At the start of *Defamation*, Shamir states that his objective with documentary is to find out whether or not certain Jewish organizations (most specifically the ADL) are misusing the charge of antisemitism as a way to discredit all criticism of Israel and to see if there is any legitimacy to the claim that Jews are too preoccupied with the past (fixating on the Holocaust and historical antisemitism in general). As you learn early on in *Defamation*, it does not take Yoav Shamir long to discover the "defaming" answers to his borderline "blasphemous" inquirers.

Not too far into *Defamation*, Yoav Shamir interviews his 90+ year old grandmother regarding her thoughts on antisemitism and Judaism in general. Holding nothing back, grandma Shamir matter-of-factly states "Jews love money. Jews are crooks." Shamir's eccentric grandmother then goes on to discuss how she became an early Zionist (and eventually an Israeli) due the fact that her family felt Jewish nationalism was the only safe option for the Jews. The father of modern political Zionism, Theodore Herzl, an atheist that dressed like a cosmopolitan dandy, was originally a German nationalist (during his early adulthood he was a member of the German Burschenschaft—a nationalist fraternity that various Nazi leaders were also members of) who advocated the total assimilation (what some Jews have modernly described as the "silent Holocaust") of European Jewry. After following the infamous Dreyfus affair, on top of hearing negative remarks about the racial character of Jews from people like German philosopher Eugen Dühring (the first person to criticize Jews from a racialist perspective), Herzl came to the conclusion that Jews were a different race from Germans, and de-

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cided to utilize the German nationalist ideals he previously subscribed to in his codification of modern political Zionism; an idea that sought to give heroism and honor to the Jews in the spirit of King David's biblical Israel. Showing her true commitment to Herzl's original ideas, Grandma Shamir criticizes those Jews that live abroad. Grandma Shamir unapologetically remarks that Jews who reside outside of Israel are criminals who take advantage of their host nations by the way of the money business (usury, interest, selling liquor, etc.). According to Grandma Shamir, the prospect of having to actually work in Israel scares most Jews away. Out of all the staunch self-proclaimed Zionists featured in Defamation; Grandma Shamir seems to be the only one who has strictly adhered to Theodore's Herzl's original ideal.

After paying a visit to Shamir's bitter yet sweet Grandmother, Yoav Shamir travels abroad to meet ADL director Abraham Foxman at the group's main NYC headquarters. According to the ADL, around 1,500 cases of antisemitism against Jews are documented every year. Upon questioning the bigwigs of the ADL, Shamir soon realizes that most documented cases of antisemitism are dubious at best. According to the ADL, whenever a work place denies a Jewish person a day-off from work on a Hebrew holiday, it is indubitably an act of antisemitism. I am sure most America people will agree that virtually all employers demand their employees to work on certain holidays. After questioning various individuals at the ADL, Shamir does not find one case that involves a serious form (like rape, murder, beatings, victim of a suicide bomber, etc.) of antisemitism. Throughout Defamation, Shamir shows clips of a trip he took with a group of Israeli high school students to Poland. Shortly after arriving at Poland, the Israeli teens almost immediately begin to hallucinate imagery antisemitic attacks in various absurd and downright nonsensical forms. After talking to three old Polish men, two Israeli girls completely imagine that the elderly men have mocked Israel and called them "monkeys/donkeys." An Israeli boy makes the claim that Polish soldiers "move like Nazis" and have angry faces similar to the kind of genocidal SS soldiers you would find in a Steven Spielberg film. During his trip with the Israeli teens, Shamir makes it glaringly clear that the fear mongering tactics of groups like the ADL have completely distorted the worldviews of these impressionable Israeli adolescents to such a degree that like Pavlov's dogs, they have involuntary negative reflex responses to any person or place that is not 100% Kosher.

Defamation also features a variety of "academic antisemites." Two highly reputable college professors - John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt - received a public condemnation from the ADL for their co-authored book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, a New York Times Best Seller that reveals the crucial influence AIPAC has over American foreign policy. Even more absurd is the case of Norman Finkelstein, the son of two Jewish Holocaust survivors, who lost his job (after being denied tenure through the powerful influence of intellec-

tual rival Alan Dershowitz) as a professor at DePaul University, after writing the book *Beyond Chutzpah*; a work that counters Alan Dershowitz's claim that the Israeli's have an excellent human rights record. In 2008, after arriving at Ben Gurion International airport in Te Aviv, Israel, Finkelstein was arrested (and detained for 24 hours) and eventually shipped back to Amsterdam (his point of origin). Norman Finkelstein had been banned from Israel for 10 years for visiting Lebanese families during the 2006 Lebanon War. After being attacked by two of the biggest names in American Zionism - Alan Dershowitz and Abraham Foxman - Finkelstein is undoubtedly now hated by the Jewish diaspora in a manner comparable to that of Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza (who was kicked out of Judaism). In *Defamation*, Abe Foxman describes Jewish critics (referring to Finkelstein) of Israel as "insecure Jews." Of course, Foxman's derogatory statement against Jewish critics of Israel seem like a blatant projection on his part when you consider what religious Orthodox Jews have to say about the ADL's interpretation of "antisemitism." Throughout *Defamation*, a number of religious Orthodox Jews remark that the ADL is a money making scam that is perpetuated by nonreligious/mostly atheistic Jews. To add credence to the remarks of the Orthodox Jews, members of the ADL openly admit in *Defamation* that they get their greatest sense of Jewish identity, not by studying the Judaic texts of the Torah of the Talmud, but from remembering the Holocaust and historical antisemitism.

Abe Foxman

At the very least, *Defamation* is an honest documentary that respectfully analyzes the most critical issues regarding post-World War II Jewry. After finishing the documentary, I remembered an interesting passage that I read in the novel *My First Two Thousand Years*, written by German-American propagandist George Sylvester Viereck and Jewish novelist Paul Eldridge. In the book, a character remarks that it is strange how the Jews always seem kill their messianic geniuses (referencing Jesus Christ and Spinoza). I see Norman Finkelstein as a heroic voice of reason who has been metaphorically crucified by his own people. Abe Foxman of the ADL claims to be protecting World Jewry from acts of antisemitism, yet he fuels the flames of gentile resentment against world Jewry. The way the ADL cries wolf about antisemitism only weakens support for Jewry if a real attack of antisemitism were to occur. On a lighter note, I like how Abe Foxman remarks (regarding Yoav Shamir) "He's not gonna hurt us" upon making his initial appearance in *Defamation*. After a person watches the documentary, it is highly doubtful that they would see the ADL in a noble "hate battling" light. Norman Finkelstein claims that groups like the ADL are full of pathological narcissism, referencing the indisputable fact that Jews are the richest and most successful ethnic group in the United States. Yoav Shamir remarks at the conclusion of *Defamation* that Jews should look towards the future and refrain from obsessing over antisemitism of the past. After all, if Jews are as successful

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as Norman Finkelstein claims, they might as well enjoy it. For my information on Defamation, visit First Run Features.

-Ty E

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS: A MAN WITHIN

Yony Leyser^{o*} (2010)

Out of all the Beat Generation writers, William S. Burroughs is the only one that has left a serious lasting impression on me. W.S. Burroughs, being Harvard-educated and a little older than his fellow writers, also acted as the unofficial teacher of the Beats. Heavily inspired by the pessimistic historical theories of German philosopher Oswald Spengler, Burroughs saw Western civilization as being in the final cycle of its existence. In Spengler's essays *Pessimism?*, the warrior philosopher displayed annoyance in the fact that people would use his apocalyptic philosophies as an excuse to accept cultural defeat and inaction. The Beat Generation writers (especially Burroughs and Jack Kerouac) saw Spengler's prophecy as an opportunity to find unique contemporary minds that expressed the end-cycle feeling of Western Civilization. For a man that saw dying in battle during war as the height of nobility, Spengler would have undoubtedly been disgusted with the active hedonism and nihilism that the Beats fully advocated and shamelessly practiced. I do not think it is even the slightest stretch when I say that the Beats created a virtual religion that reflected the complete and utter degeneration of the Occidental world. In the 2010 documentary *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, novice director Yony Leyser rapturously documented the unquestionable influence junky High Priest W.S. Burroughs has had on the Western world for over half a century. I see it as no big surprise that while Oswald Spengler has been virtually forgotten in the intellectual world; William S. Burroughs has become almost a household name.

Not only is William S. Burroughs' extensive writing career a perfect example of cultural decay in the Occident; his destructive personal life as a rootless wanderer certainly is as well. Burroughs was from a somewhat wealthy background, due to his great Grandfather William Seward Burroughs I inventing the adding machine and founding the Burroughs corporation. Despite being born with "a silver spoon in his mouth," Burroughs took an entirely different route than what was expected of someone from his background. Showing a relentless disdain for bourgeois mores and "proper" conventions, W.S. Burroughs became a full-fledged libertine during his early adulthood, fully embracing homosexuality and a lifelong heroin addiction. Revolutionary psychoanalyst C.G. Jung once theorized that the growth of homosexuality in the modern Western world was nature's way of weeding out those genetic lines that were no longer fit to reproduce healthy stock. As discussed in *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, Burroughs was most likely molested in his childhood by the boyfriend of a maid that worked for his family. Regardless of the true driving force behind Burroughs' sexual vice; the Beat writer certainly embodied a lifestyle and literary career that even Oswald Spengler would have not foreseen as becoming culturally popularized in the future. In the documentary *William S. Burroughs:*

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A Man Within, various important modern day artists speak very respectfully of Burroughs; giving him credit where credit is due, as being the man that opened Pandora's box and unleashing a word virus that will never be "cured."

Despite his commitment to male buggery, William S. Burroughs was married (as a common law wife) to fellow drug addict Joan Vollmer. Burroughs displayed his occasional interest in the meat curtain by having a child, William S. Burroughs Jr., with the wife that mostly disinterested him. Reading Oswald Spengler's theories must have put a curse on W.S. Burroughs, as his own family disintegrated before his very eyes. Whilst living in exile (to escape detention from a Louisiana state prison) in Mexico city, William S. Burroughs accidentally shot and killed his wife during a drunken game of "William Tell." In William S. Burroughs: A Man Within, this tragic yet senseless tale is hilariously commented on by the Baltimorean "Pope of Trash" John Waters. Canadian auteur David Cronenberg, who is also featured in the documentary, would portray this accidental act of wife killing in his adaptation of Burroughs' Naked Lunch, a film that combines biographical details from the writer's life as well excerpts from the book. It is also made patent in William S. Burroughs: A Man Within that Burroughs' writing career is basically the artistic result of killing his wife. William S. Burroughs would later comment on the event that sparked his writing career, "I am forced to the appalling conclusion that I would never have become a writer but for Joan's death, and to a realization of the extent to which this event has motivated and formulated my writing. I live with the constant threat of possession, and a constant need to escape from possession, from control. So the death of Joan brought me in contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a life long struggle, in which I have had no choice except to write my way out."

William S. Burroughs' drug of choice may have been shooting heroin, but his son enjoyed the comfort of alcoholic beverages. Also establishing himself as a writer, Bill Jr. spent most of his life in a drunken state, prolonging his alcohol-fueled virtual suicide. After all, who could blame the poor lad, being the son of a junky homosexual that killed the Mother he never knew. The short life of William S. Burroughs Jr. is briefly talked about in William S. Burroughs: A Man Within. Despite having a liver transplant (one of the first ever performed), Billy Boy soon died in a drunken stupor. Before his death, Billy Jr. wrote an article in Esquire magazine condemning his Father for ruining his life and setting him up for failure. Despite his dysfunctional family/friends dying throughout his life, as well as never abstaining from his sexual/drug vices, William S. Burroughs managed to die an elderly, albeit lonely, man. As discussed by Burroughs' friends and former lovers in William S. Burroughs: A Man Within, the writer was especially careful when it came to his own life. Despite killing his wife with one, Burroughs held a lifelong obsession with guns and shooting, always carry a piece, whether it be in bed or whilst picking up a much cherished pre-

scription at a local pharmacy. Burroughs' "shotgun art" is also discussed in the documentary, an abstract "art" that Burroughs has no pretensions about, admitting that creative process merely involves shooting spray paint cans. Despite his unconventional love for tract-lines and assholes, Burroughs also never managed to contract AIDS. During *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, friends of the junky admit that he also made sure to take the first shot of heroin. In the documentary, various friends also admit that Burroughs, like Andy Warhol, had very keen survival skills due to being an open homosexual; during a period when such things were unheard of, let alone "cool," like they are today.

After watching *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, it will be apparent to the viewer that W.S. Burroughs was a true artist and visionary. Yet, to call Burroughs merely an artist would be a disrespectful understatement. As recognized in the documentary by Burroughs' comrades; the man was a religious figure that, for better or worse, completely reinvented Western culture and morality. In fact, Burroughs was a major influence on the occult "organization" Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth (TOPY) and their bible unholy THEE PSYCHICK BIBLE. Aesthetic terrorist Genesis Breyer P-orridge, the warped tranny behind TOPY, gives the most intimate commentary regarding the personal life of William S. Burroughs in the documentary. Proving that "her" sex change is complete, P-orridge speaks of Burroughs like a kind Grandmother. P-orridge mentions that right before Burroughs died, he wrote that the only important thing in this world is love. Of course, William S. Burroughs influenced countless artistic movements, not just wack-job trannys. After all, if William S. Burroughs had not existed, David Cronenberg would have never made films with monstrous body crevices resembling assholes and vaginas. *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within* also goes into depth about how Burroughs was the perfect antidote for hippies and political correctness, proving that you do not have to be a leftist to be a libertine. Burroughs' influence on punk rock has also never waned, beginning with proto-punks like Iggy Pop and still influencing various anti-social musicians today. Quite fittingly, the score featured in the documentary was created by members of Sonic Youth, real-life friends of Burroughs.

William S. Burroughs: A Man Within is a commendable tribute to the personal and creative life of William S. Burroughs. For a more detailed portrait of Burroughs' life, I recommend the fairly objective biography *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs* by Ted Morgan. For what it is, *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within* is as great as retrospective documentaries get, full of credible artists that were friends of the writer as well as those people closest to him. Burroughs was certainly a "man within," a very distinct and introverted fellow who most likely did not even completely understand himself. After reading most of his novels and essays, it is apparent to me that only a truly original and uncompromising individual could have written such works. As recognized in *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, to truly enjoy Burroughs'

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work, one must have a distinct sense of humor. I like to think Burroughs had a decadent "Faustian" wit, the kind that is able to laugh knowing that Armageddon is around the corner and a worldwide civil war is imminent. Novels like William S. Burroughs are quite inspiring in these uncertain times.

-Ty E

DOGTOOTH

Yorgos Lanthimos (2009)

Dogtooth is a Greek drama that centers around the confinement of a family, not just the three teenagers but for the mother and father as well. Why such a false habitat has been erected is not questioned nor answered. For these three children, two sisters and a brother, nothing exists other than family, fortitude, and a brooding sexuality jumping between each sibling. To sum up Dogtooth while giving away critical information is cinema blasphemy. But to not discuss the finer points and analyze this confined hell is a worse decision. After all, Dogtooth may be one of the most effective and poignant films of 2009. Opening with a cassette player, several words are announced and defined. Words that you and I know mean specific things, but to these deprived denizens of a sterile resort, a word as renown as "zombie" is dictated to be a small yellow flower. Immediately from the start, Dogtooth hooks you in with such an absurd way-point of life, the definitive dysfunctional family. Going beyond the boundaries of *The Truman Show*, Dogtooth employs similar principals of a grand reclusion but takes the game to a level of extremity that only Todd Solondz would occupy.

The meticulous details mean the most in Dogtooth. Director Yorgos Lanthimos takes great measures to support and adhere continuity to progression. Then he takes the next critical step by adjusting the formula of isolation, finally contorting it by taking logical events and putting an eerie spin on something as natural as an airplane over passing. They tweak such a common phenomena (to present standards) and make a bumbling race to retrieve the airplane that occasionally "crashes" in the backyard as an award the golden child. From this, similar instances are built around birth, cats, dogs, music, even film. There is no area left unscathed by the directing crew of Dogtooth. This film is, after all, undermining "the dangers of innocence". Thus, the main crack in their routine of absurdity is exploited by a security guard stationed at their father's workplace. Paid for sex and services, Christina is the common whore, one who exploits the eldest daughter's innocence for cunnilingus. Just as a child could sense that certain acts be deemed perverse or unnatural at such a young age, the eldest daughter too could eventually peer behind the veil of such a comically deranged situation. The eventual breakdown of Christina's will leads to the epiphany at the end of Dogtooth. Rather than revelation, the slow mental deterioration is shocking. Through an experience with her brother, the eldest languishes during an anniversary celebration, erupting in the most powerful scene in Dogtooth, save for the given: the ending. If you've seen the film, you know that of which I speak is the traditional Greek dance gone interpretive seizure.

Judging from the uniforms you'd imagine you're witnessing an unauthorized sequel to Haneke's *Funny Games*. Both films bare a slight resemblance from costume to sadistic trials, although *Funny Games* actually depicts a game of

DOGTOOTH

sorts. Dogtooth is just a cluster of taboos built to be broken. These taboos lead to scenes of graphic sexuality, which may or may not include heavy incest. Not to be a stickler, I admit finding myself increasingly aroused by several visions of Yorgos' put to film. Ambiguity is Dogtooth's strongest suit of all. You'll find yourself scratching your head during the frozen credits and this is after you question the motives of the parents. What could possibly drive the father, the successful man whose home be a haven, a paradise, to shelter and contain his children in such a way? Under these irresponsible conditions shines a light of true intentions, though. Forced to quickly consume two glasses of orange juice, the token son works out regularly and exercises to further his virility and his machismo for Christina's "special" visits. Also up for display is a very critical scene in which the elder daughter manages to secure two VHS films, Rocky and Jaws. The effects of the films on the infantile adult is astounding - her behaviors alter suddenly into violent mimicry and outbursts of anger. It's an important statement towards the effects of violence to the soft-minded but I refuse to martyr film, my biggest influence, as venomous.

As what Shyamalan visually degraded with his film The Village, Dogtooth pulls off to a remarkable degree. Some could argue that Dogtooth is a slow film. It's not a slow film in the slightest, it's steady, not slow. The pacing is concise to the scenarios of the nuclear family being exhibited indulging in debauchery. What Dogtooth does is something so sinister yet so appealing, the human child stripped of society, interaction, and the arts. What you witness is what could be a likely assessment to a post-holocaust situation. Strangely, Dogtooth seems to fit right in as a pseudo-dystopian atmosphere with uninhibited portentous magnetism. Quite simply, no words or comic monologue could substitute the effect that Dogtooth will leave on you. Whether disgust spreads or fetishes you didn't realize you had spring to fruition, the ending is certainly the mark to be left occupying this slice of serious Greek cinema. Dogtooth has been appropriated as a dark comedy. While the context is wholly humorous, you'd be pressed to find yourself laughing at that twisted going-ons. I've never seen a Greek film like this and it might be quite a while before we see another one, so dig in.

-mAQ

MEATBALL MACHINE

Yoshihiro Nishimura (2007)

Meatball Machine is exactly what you would expect from a title like this. It is slimy, has lots of red meat, and pockets of vibrant gore plastered all over it. Director Yudai Yamaguchi is also the noted director of the shit fest Death Trance, which just like Meatball Machine, had an amazing premise but failed to deliver what it promised. You may recognize this name when i mention his upcoming film "The Machine Girl" Another film that promises a lot but knowing this director, it might not be worthy of all this e-buzz. It takes a plot about the loner child who is in "love" with someone he has never met in his life. After his co-workers begin to attack her, he decides to stand up for her. After promptly getting his ass kicked, he retreats to a movie theater to watch a porn film. In his seat, a hermaphrodite begins to hit on him and he leaves. She/He walks outside and promptly kicks his ass too. That is when he finds a metal spider-like thing. From here is where the plot kicks into it's adrenaline fueled gore-spreed. It takes the budding romance story, holds it up, then unleashes a flaming punch in the face; temporarily disabling it. Throughout the story, it declines like a real relationship. At first, you are incredibly heartfelt and care too much but when it gets too repetitive you slowly back away allowing fate to take its course. This part i respected. Even the blood & guts was incredibly abundant. Meatball Machine is the equivalent of a cross-breeding of three specimens; Tetsuo: The Iron Man, American Gladiators, and Dead Alive. Much of the praise should be for the prosthetics. Wires, tubes, alien organisms, and spores decorate the invaded human bodies like moss on a rock. These alien creatures when symbiosed with human flesh look like an extremely disturbing, yet fucked up Power Ranger villain. Taking it's visual and fleshy influences from the likes of The Matrix and Star Trek, we meets several characters who are sympathetic to the cause of the "Necrobourgs" The film rushes through it's runtime and tries to present so much visual flair that in the end just seems like a TV dinner that exploded in the microwave. While this isn't a perfect film, i will admit it is a damn fun time. Meatball Machine is the definitive splatterpunk film of this generation.

-Maq

TOKYO GORE POLICE
TOKYO GORE POLICE

Yoshihiro Nishimura (2008)

I heard of this film quite some months ago on Twitchfilm. The premise sounded interesting aided only by the blatant tell-all title. Walking into this film, I should have guessed exactly what was in store for me but being a hopeful bastard, I expected more than I bargained for. Tokyo Gore Police is the absurd, reality-smashing film you'd come to expect but the almost-dystopian atmosphere is squandered for insanely over-the-top horseplay with prosthetics. Like *Cyborg* and many genre films before it, the adaptive environment for metropolitan dynamics are destroyed. The only thing futuristic in this film are the actor's costumes, set pieces, and anything within direct contact. Other than that, prepare to stare at boring buildings and unsettling normalities. Metaphysical horror has been turned absurd and sardonic in light of Japanese films. *Meatball Machine* and co. have been befouling a genre enforced by flesh-auteurs such as David Cronenberg and Shinya Tsukamoto. What was once lingering on the border of eroticism and grotesque fetishes has been replaced with a new-age organic Voltron experience. A paper-thin revenge plot with the average "How could you?" betrayal plot makes a transparent depth for them film. Films like *Black Devil Doll* that come out and admit their purpose of relentless nudity and copious amounts of vulgarity are a brave brand of cinema that don't beat around the bush. Much as my writing splurges are aided by coffee and alcohol, Tokyo Gore Police is only propelled by inane proportions of dismemberment's and exaggerative blood flow. Don't believe me? Watch the trailer included on the Tokyo Shock DVD release. You will watch close to 5 minutes of non-stop violence. This in fact is the shortened version of the film, the only thing really worth watching. Body explosions and redefining the term "overkill" is the sole mission of TGP. The extreme sadism behind the Japanese is always cleverly hid behind a gruesome comedy. Like Bill O'Reilly mentioning Hitler to Michael Moore, this is a cheap shot gag leaving you speechless. The sadism behind the Japanese isn't anything to really laugh at. Genetics have a horrible way of biting you in the ass. For a better display of Asian tortures, mentally and physically, check out Sion Sono's masterpiece *Strange Circus*. After *Meatball Machine* mimicked Tetsuo: The Iron Man, a race became evident as each next prosperous copies the idea before that and loses track of the predestined trail, much like the butchering of Bergman's classic *The Virgin Spring*. After several remakes, the film's idea has been reduced to torture porn as seen in the new *Last House on the Left* remake trailer. Must I mention the "microwave Saw trap"? Still though, with all the errors on part and the copycat effect, Tokyo Gore Police is not without its nihilistic fun. You will see cleverly positioned quad-amputee's on katana blades as stilts, later removed and attached with assault rifles in an attempt to mimic yet another body horror staple as shown in Rodriguez's *Planet Terror*. If you're eying a vivid

foreign blood soaked tale of something strictly brainless and child-like in birth, Tokyo Gore Police should not fail. While only able to be recommended so far, keep in mind that the ridiculousness captured on film looks unlike most things encountered before. That is, until you witness the bore of a present day city with no mind to capture in a beautiful light. The lack of the director's compassion for film is disturbing to say the least. Tokyo Gore Police is a bastard film accountable for every instance of treason available. Stealing from Planet Terror, Meatball Machine, The Machine Girl, Tetsuo: The Iron Man, Uzumaki, Party Monster and the Club Kids, Training Day and Max Payne (mentor gone wrong cop-out), and mannnnyy other films. The resume is extensive and Tokyo Gore Police owes a thanks to everything that it has stolen from. Anything well-received is sewn into the running time of Tokyo Gore Police and for this it becomes an insta-cult film. Needless to say, Tokyo Gore Police is not so much a film but rather a gag reel compiled by apes. This film doesn't take itself seriously so why should you?

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VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL
VAMPIRE GIRL VS. FRANKENSTEIN GIRL

Yoshihiro Nishimura (2009)

As I run with themes in tow, I will review yet another Japanese film as my hard drive recently crashed resulting in a massive loss of data. How I came to acquire the films I've currently been watching is all thanks to a friend who let me borrow several Asian films for me to watch while I squander some data while I attempt to recollect films to review. In this assortment of films came the title Vampire Girl vs. Frankenstein Girl and if you've ever provided a blind-to-cinema friend with a list of possible watches and the aforementioned title is in the mix, surely they're going to pick this inane title as films are always best when they're "so bad they're good." This speaks for the standards of so many gorehounds nowadays as companies like Asylum produce films like Mega Shark vs. Giant Octopus or even how filmmakers whose only credit are films like Tommy Wiseau's The Room or the clip-art endowed Birdemic. It's incredibly dreadful that these people are garnering fans like Jonah Hill and Kevin Smith while getting interviews as they nervously lie about their films not being "serious." Some time ago I reviewed the cinematic schlock known to Western fans as Tokyo Gore Police. This appalling mix of try hard dystopian themes mixed with a prosthetics/CG mix of action of violence only granted me a massive migraine and very little confidence in the creators future. Well, they return with their tail tucked in between their legs to produce a film of better quality and that quality is offensiveness. Like most of their other projects and the related sort, (Robogeisha, Machine Girl, Meatball Machine, etc. etc.) I got sick from the amount of unrestrained assortment of absurd overkill these Japanese pump into their lifeless films. What they do to film is like giving a blood transfusion to someone who has been dead for months. The end result is normally a product so lifeless that even I don't grieve for another wasted opportunity. It's just expected. Imagine my surprise when I my stomach came to terms with the film after the opening scene of grue and arterial spray. I actually came to approve of this amateur production and I find myself at equal with the humor presented. The summarize the plot of VGvs.FG would be callous of me as the plot is wafer thin. As this has been redundantly taken, this is not a bad thing for a versus film. Keep in mind the various clashing of titans Freddy vs. Jason or Alien vs. Predator. These weren't versus films and that was their doom. Some random Jap was forced into dating some random Gothic Lolita chick whose father is vice principal. After a mysterious exchange student registers under his class and gives him a chocolate from her own blood, she is revealed to be a vampire and now he is too thanks to her evil, conniving confectionery treat. When the Gothic Lolita dame finds out her father is a mad scientist and subsequently dies from falling off a building while confronting the stealing vampire whore, her father recreates her as a Frankenstein(?) girl. From there on, they duel with awkward results. Thus equals the equation of mediocre

absurdity. Thank god this film has it's own brand of condiments to spice up the plate. I consider myself a hateful person and I don't waste any time at ridiculing actions and decisions made by the average banal human. In VGvs.FG, many things are discussed visually with the appearance of scenes demonstrating the after school activities of several high school clubs - two to be exact. First there is the Cutting Club in which the Japanese girls moan about how life is a black void of depression as they systematically slash their wrists to a hilarious effect. After dating several cutters and just being clueless as to why someone would do something so stupid, this scene really lightened up the tone of damaged women and made me laugh aloud. The second and my personal favorite - the Ganguro Club. The Ganguro Club is based off a disastrously popular fashion in Japan that is basically a hybrid of Jersey Shore and Blackface. In VGvs.FG, the ganguro girls are led by more of an exaggerated pickaninny Negro with the big wrinkly lips, afro, and talk of her awesome Kenyan legs that will help her run for miles. While this may offend the weak willed, it turns a sub-par film into something that Troma would appreciate. Apart from the hilariously "offensive" racial humor of the film, VGvs.FG is still the same film of explicit and illogical gore but at least placed within a proper context of setting and fashion unlike the abysmal Tokyo Gore Police which took place during the future with a "modern" backdrop. While the characters are slightly likable and the Vampire Girl's face is a tad bit attractive, I just don't have yellow fever like most American males do. With a surprising twist near the end of the film and several tantalizing characters, VGvs.FG remains a watchable film that finds itself to be curiously entertaining while being entirely politically incorrect. To be completely honest, I could probably get used to the gothic lolita fashion sported by Frankenstein Girl in her previous evolution. Not so much the disgusting crane monster. I still can't get over the fact that I slightly enjoyed this film. I deserve a drink for accepting this film.

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GODZILLA: TOKYO S.O.S.
GODZILLA: TOKYO S.O.S.

Yoshikazu Ishii (2004) This is one of the newer films of our generation exploiting the destruction and terror caused by Godzilla. This is the film before Final Wars sealed the franchise temporarily so I went in expecting a film with a heavy dose of CGI, military action, and abnormal and awesome fight scenes. I got what I wanted but I found the basic alignment of the characters to be unnecessary and tedious. When I bring about positions of war, Godzilla is once again a villain-esque creature after about a 50 year year waiting period. He quickly affirms to old traditions and destroys most of Tokyo before Mothra and the military controlled MechaGodzilla comes onto the battlefield. Just as Puppet Master did with volumes 4 & 5, this film comes as a surprise and vastly differs from previous entries. Perhaps the honorable mention that this film deserves is for stepping on the chaos scale and creating miniature buildings that crumble and break off into a stone like texture which compliments the panic of Tokyo being leveled....again. Instead of being able to root for Godzilla in the slightest – Which was always possible due to his cemented anti-hero status – I found that the new Godzilla didn't have a purpose and was just used as the backbone of another Monster Island Faerie Twins driven plot line of some intense hallucination highlighting a disaster that is forthcoming. Supporting the story is a cast of rather annoying pests that swing around hopeless morals as they scurry around the screen; in other words; bad actors. The fight scenes in question feature an array of personalized combat skills that are relevant to the dire situation these creatures and machines are caught in. Godzilla whipping his tail attempting to wag off one of Mothra's larvae is a scene that comes to mind. I thank the special effects team greatly for increasing the production value which in turn boosts the fluidity of the monster movements and creates for a visually stunning Kaiju film. Godzilla: Tokyo S.O.S. is a conflicted film unsure of how it views its country's own mascot. Godzilla is a tender soul driven mad by the scum that inhabits his world. This is a great action popcorn sequel but I find nothing that could be used to drive the lore of Godzilla further other than the incredible scar that lines his rib cage or the after credit sequence which leaves an Alien Resurrection feel to it morphing a Godzilla film into a true Science-fiction mythos.

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GODZILLA VS. HEDORAH

Yoshimitsu Banno (1971)

This is considered to be the most radical spin-off of any Godzilla storyline and I completely agree. As I child, I explicitly remember being brainwashed with educational videos that spoke lightly of imminent destruction of nature if we didn't comply. Such is the case with Godzilla vs. Hedorah and another rare & self-banned Toho classic Prophecies of Nostradamus. The director of Godzilla vs. Hedorah is also the assistant director on Prophecies of Nostradamus, ironically enough. Godzilla has taken the form of a national icon within the story. The government no longer wants to kill him (as if) and children have taken a liking to him. Humans are a disgusting little bunch as they pollute Godzilla's world past the point of repair. From the sludge that we created comes Hedorah - a slimy creation of pollution. Some spores from a meteor mutated tadpoles in some rampant physiology experiment creating him. Oh yeah, and Godzilla learns how to fly. Of all the Godzilla films, this is one of the more violent ones. In most of the Lizard's films, the death toll is only implied. You see a city get destroyed and you think to yourself "Wow, many people must have died" but your suspicions are never answered. Hedorah possesses an ability to mist an entire area with sulfuric acid-like vapor killing hundreds of people. He vaporizes and nullifies entire populations. This is quite a morbid piece of hokey eco-fun. Godzilla is ultimately ineffective to Hedorah. Being a manifestation of sludge, Godzilla's fists go through him leaving his sneaky scales scarred and beaten. It's up to man to stop this creation using a bizarre science experiment charged by the powers of Atomic breath. This is considered the worst Godzilla film, but I don't see it. This film features amazing practical effects not limited to a giant mucky-looking tongue sliming down stairs and retreating, leaving a disgruntled undigested kitten. Godzilla vs. Hedorah is a completely different formula for a film of its kind. It reminds me of a film translation of those pop-culture children's books that featured characters like He-Man teaching kids to look both ways to cross the street, albeit graphic and nihilistic towards kind souls. In this film you will be subjected to a sing-along environmental song, Godzilla flying through the air, gratuitous violence towards teenage hippies, and Godzilla acting incredibly human. This is one of my favorite Godzilla films I've seen so far.

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BEAUTIFUL GIRL HUNTER
BEAUTIFUL GIRL HUNTER

Youichirou Shimatani (1989)

AKA Star of David Tatsuya is the respectable heir of his father's fortune. He resides in a manor as cold as the killer that hides within his eyes. He is not the product of love, but born purely as a product of hate, as his mother was raped by a killer. While growing up, his father-like guardian beat him and unleashed his sexual urges against his mother leaving her dead. With both of his parents out of the way, Tatsuya's grotesque carnal instincts are breaking free. With a title like this, it is very easy to pass this off as another piece of pinku sleaze, same with Captured for Sex 2 or Rape & Death of a Housewife. An interesting aspect of this film is the alternate title of the film "Star of David" At first, I figured it was referring to the hexagram and not the symbol of the Zionism movement, but my hopes were crushed when I found out our anti-hero also has a fetish for Nazi's. In his history class, while being fed sensationalism about the terrors of Nazi's and Hitler, he developed a morbid fascination with the National Socialists. Our friend Tatsuya even manages to masturbate all over a copy of Night and Fog (Nacht und Nebel.) With that being said, in a scene exchanging words with a friend, his friend has been brainwashed to pity the Jews who died. Tatsuya disagrees because he "hates masses" Throughout the entire movie, the symbol of Zionism is brought up frequently in usage of sado-sexual torture and madness. Ejaculation on Nazi's The authentic feel in Star of David is led only by the amazing array of bondage rope-games and bizarre set-ups that lead to sadistic rapes and tortures. Misogyny is practiced in his makeshift chamber everyday. Those crazy Japs seem to get off by Urolagnia in almost every pinku film ever conceived. Japanese people hold the torch for being some of the most deviant sexual practitioner's. Aside from the constant battering and use of Nazi's to make a film that much more evil, it is a landmark film in the beauty of sexual tortures. It shows the even the most malignant and putrid acts of torture has a shining side of the ultimate romanticism, more so than the pretentious French try to highlight in every one of their films. For once, I'd like a film to portray other villains other than the Germans. Like Blind Beast and most other Asian films concerning the macabre side of sex, this film is a chronicling of forbidden desires and I applaud it for its stunning use of religious symbolism. Other than that, this film is a "how-to" guide on how to degenerate a loved one. Misogyny might be hard to spell, but it's easy to practice.

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BATTLEFIELD BASEBALL

Yudai Yamaguchi (2003)

This trashy piece of Japanese cinema was directed by Yudai Yamaguchi, one half of the creative duo that is responsible for Meatball Machine. Battlefield Baseball is of course, another attempt to market on Versus fame as you can see through the cover art. They put various phrases like "FROM THE TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU "VERSUS" or "HEY DID YOU LIKE VERSUS?" and tries to pull us in. After watching the abomination that was Death Trance, I'm not so easy to fool. All this could easily be forgivable if they hadn't brought this film to it's knees. Battlefield Baseball thinks it is a clever film for trying to mix humor, with martial-arts, sports, and violence but i will get to that later. The plot revolves around the new kid, Jubeh. He sleeps upside down and has many rumors floating around his new school about him murdering his parents. He doesn't really care though seeing as how he is expelled from every school. Enter Seido High School, this is where we meet the eccentric principal who is in an extended state of shock from his childhood experience of Gedo High School, a school baseball team made of mutant killers who are able to kill legally. After Jubeh protects a weaselly player from a bully, "I hate bully's" (Wow, sounds just like Versus eh?) the principal witnesses Jubeh's power and flexibility. He then decides to beg Jubeh to join the baseball team so they might actually have a chance to win the competition. After a couple of horribly choreographed scenes, he decides to join even though he made a vow to his father who he killed with a pitch. In a couple of extremely painful flashback/near-death scenes, he makes amends with his father and with the help of respawning converted bad guy Bancho, Seido High School plans to put a stop to Gedo once and for all. Let me say for the record, that one element that kills this film is the ridiculous over-acting. It isn't funny and they should stop immediately. The principal is one of the most annoying characters in cinema history and should be lynched. Tak Sakaguchi is the key badass and the loner who eventually realizes there are more important things at hands such as family and singing! Yes, singing. Jubeh busts out in at least 2 musical numbers which flamboyancy rivals Moulin Rouge. Definitely not for the faint of heart. The make-up effects are horrifically amateur and make Herschel Gordon Lewis look like Tom Savini. Dismembered heads remind me of fun times with Marshmallow treats and there is no blood at all. No sex, and hardly and violence. We do see a couple of pre-inspirations for his better, later film MEATBALL MACHINE such as robot stomachs. The Gedo team are mostly unoriginal designs except for one who uses a really awesome voice box system, but they mainly look like rejected Beetleborgs. Near the end, the film obviously loses the feeling it wanted and turns into a Kung-Fu Hustle feel good comedy musical with a safe-for-the-whole-family type of violence. This film is a cluttered film that falls flat on it's face and shouldn't have been released on Re-

BATTLEFIELD BASEBALL

gion 1 regardless. Battlefield Baseball is flawed indeed, and has hardly any good. At best, the only reason to watch it would be a couple of funny scenes. Beware of this film.

-Maq

FLESH TARGET: RAPE

Yukihiro Sawada (1979)

Directed by Yukihiro Sawada, *Flesh Target: Rape* is an audacious slice of reverse-engineered sexual manipulation that leaves me alienated on how to actually approach the lingering sense of immorality left by the film's final moments. No stranger to pink film or the topic of molestation in cinema, *Flesh Target: Rape* managed to challenge a great helping of what I knew of the subject. While most of the similarly categorized films of the Nikkatsu lexicon handle and transfer the same sexually appeasing and socially vile topic of a split-consensual rape session, Sawada's target on rape is displayed with a juvenile grin and light-hearted approach to pinku eiga with the respects of women in his rear-view window and a supple-breasted woman tied up in his trunk. With nary a sense of plot, *Rape* follows a script-sculpted alcoholic salaryman who, in a sexually frustrated rage, hits the chairman of his firm in the face after an impromptu intervention in a bathroom during a corporate meeting of importance. Nezu, beaten but not broken, is demoted to a dead spot in the company, promised a continuing career with no possible way of advancement. In what I can only relate to as foreshadowed comeuppance after the opening, Nezu begins a wave of stress management via raping his co-workers and those female figures who sneer and snicker in his general position of company misery. *Flesh Target: Rape* is a prime cut of rape cinema, as to say, *Flesh Target: Rape* is rape singularly. The film only supports a stream of violation without a real sense of story, emotion, or consequence. Especially consequence. In fact, the ending of *Flesh Target: Rape* is so deliriously upbeat that I found the tempo to match a high spirited closure with a Hallmark twist/lust, but, you know, with serial rape.

As most films of a similar degree, *Flesh Target: Rape* has the one distinction that can be argued between parties for an eternity - displaying women in trouble as cloyingly accepting of their molestation - dirty damsels digging nails into their opponent. From victim number one and on, *Flesh Target: Rape* takes no time turning the tables on these hapless female's sexual drives. Screams of distress melt into vibrating coos in a blink of an eye. Some of these dames have it harder than others, such as the lesbian couple who are numbered and buggered as the opposing lover stares into the eyes of their partner as their sexual orientated individualism is stripped from them in a flash of stiff yellow. This and other moments of brilliance are what really make *Flesh Target: Rape* stand out from the crowd of post-coitus guilt-ridden and driven women left in the massacre of a company called Nikkatsu. For an example of brief originality with a punchline, but with hilarity sewn further into the scenario, Nezu decides he must lust on a pretty ring-waiting company woman that ends with him invading her apartment and throwing and trapping her head through a wall. During the process of penetration, Nezu forces the hole deeper and wider with each thrust, climaxing with

FLESH TARGET: RAPE

both of them collapsing through the wall, leaving splintered wood and damp flesh clinging to each other - a nice cohesive bond considering how underpaid the decorator must have been. Cinema can be such a sweet treat at times, especially with the morals left intact from viewing *Flesh Target: Rape*, the only film that creates a corporate ladder climbing solution that begins and ends with "rape co-workers" - an adverse cry of victory from the little man. With this mindset, *Flesh Target: Rape* offers the mental musings of a general "does what he has to do to succeed" idea with a dosage of competent filmmaking and gender caricatures that perform honest justice on a taboo topic to anyone with something to lose. Ah, those undesired desirables; I know too well of the topic.

Apart from sections dissecting sodomy, digital and penile penetration, and degradation without implication, *Flesh Target: Rape* is also gifted with an animated score of fleeting jazz building an aura of cool around our anti-hero of the cock - Jap meets Gould - A silent *The Long Goodbye*-dick with a cigarette at all times and a calm demeanor even while being tricked into a fellatio scenario. A classic shell-of-a-man whose arrogance and nicotine habits form thanks to cinematic evolution from an aggressor caresser to a pompous, free-wheeled go-getter who force-fucks the entirety of his female staff without alerting the attention of the authorities or the men romantically assigned to these ladies. Nezu is a joy to behold, whether he's making house calls to past victims who have accepted the idea of a free orgasm with guilt at no extra cost or flustering an employee hitchhiker before a big date. *Flesh Target: Rape* is a delight in the sense that it is so decidedly existent within its own set of anti-morals that it wouldn't be a surprise that any self-respecting woman should take heed from what would surely be labeled as "misogynistic trash" while dawdling at work dreaming of a divine rape fantasy made all the more acute by an absent boyfriend. For a rollicking good time and a literal use of the term "rape wrecking ball", *Flesh Target: Rape* is not to be missed by anyone familiar or adoring of this major, and forever prominent, staple in Japanese eroticism. Nezu has it all: one word damnations, rape requests, and hot flesh quivering on a platter. The only thing left wanted is a sequel to show just how far fictional rape can take a man and how cool one can be, with women relinquishing to a man whatever he might need.

-mAQ

PATRIOTISM

Yukio Mishima (1966)

Among his many other countless achievements as quite arguably the greatest Japanese Renaissance man of the 20th century, novelist Yukio Mishima—a true warrior-poet if ever there was one in the post-WWII era—directed a short 30-minute avant-garde black-and-white film that would prophesize his own ritual suicide via seppuku after a failed military coup d'état on November 25, 1970. Indeed, Mishima's first and sole film, *Patriotism*, or *The Rite of Love and Death* (1966) aka *The Rite of Love and Death* aka *Les Rites de L'Amour et de la Mort* aka *Yūkoku*—a work based on the novelist's 1962 short story of the same name—is not only notable due to its similarities with the creator's death, but it also happens to feature what is arguably the most poetic, romantic, and emotionally intricate yet strangely visceral depictions of suicide in cinema history. As a work where the Japanese novelist acted as the writer, director, star, producer, production designer, and translator (he apparently made four versions of the film, including English, French, and German language versions where he personally handwrote all the scrolling inter-titles featured in the film), *Patriotism* is a work that unquestionably personifies an auteur piece in a work that more or less blurs the line between celluloid autobiography and self-mythmaking. While Mishima went to great pains to establish himself as an iconic celebrity in Japan by way of what he described as “pranks” (i.e. wearing goofy Hawaiian shirts and hanging out with transvestites) and was quite successful doing so, the novelist was nowhere near as popular a figure in the Occident and the United States, thus he specially tailored *Patriotism* in a fashion to appeal to Europeans and Americans in the hope that his reputation would grow abroad. Indeed, while in the visual style of classical Japanese Noh theatre (the film was actually shot on a Noh stage), the film is silent/dialogue-less and features Richard Wagner's “*Liebestod*” (aka “*Love Death*”)—the final music of the 1859 opera *Tristan und Isolde*, which is associated with the suicide pact of German romantic poet Heinrich von Kleist and his lover Henriette Vogel—as a musical score, thereupon making the work rather more accessible for western audiences. Still today the most monetarily successful short film in Japanese history, *Patriotism* was not surprisingly taken out of distribution by the director's widow Yoko (who was originally thought to have destroyed the film) after the novelist committed suicide, but was luckily re-released on DVD in Japan in 2006 and by the Criterion Collection in 2008 after the film's executive producer Hiroaki Fujii discovered about 40 reels of the film in immaculate condition in a tea box at the late great novelist's home in Ota Ward, Tokyo in 2005. A sort of lurid yet lavish celluloid love story for cultivated sadomasochists where the auteur obscures his homosexual tendencies, *Patriotism* ultimately proved that an aesthetically innovative and timeless cinematic masterpiece could be made in a mere two days.

PATRIOTISM

As described in handwritten scrolls featured at the beginning of *Patriotism*, in February 1936, Tokyo was placed under martial law after a group of enterprising young military officers executed a coup d'état that resulted in the murders of various corrupt cabinet members. Although a young married fellow named Lieutenant Takeyama (Yukio Mishima) was a member of the secret society that carried out the coup d'état, he did not participate in the murders because his comrades knew how much he loved his beautiful wife Reiko (Yoshiko Tsuruoka) and they did not want to implicate him in the crimes. Since Takeyama is a member of the palace guard, it will be his responsibility to execute his friends who carried out the failed coup. Choosing death over dishonor, the Lieutenant opts for committing seppuku instead of killing his friends and his young wife has decided to join him. Before Takeyama can even tell her of his decision, Reiko can tell by the expression on her husband's face that he plans to commit suicide and she is more than prepared to go with him. After Reiko tells Takeyama, "I will follow you wherever you go," the Lieutenant responds by stating, "Thank you. We'll go together to another world then. But please let me die first, and then you follow. I mustn't fail." Indeed, the two feel that death is no longer terrifying and Reiko is so giddy about her premature demise that she states that she feels just like she did on her wedding night, as if sex and death bring about the same sort of highly climatic ecstasy. As an inter-title reads: "This is pure and passionate as a ritual conducted before the gods. They are able for the first time in their lives to reveal unabashedly their most secret desires and passions." Indeed, the two make passionate love one more time before their date with a literally gut-busting sword. Before disemboweling himself with the sword, Takeyama puts on his officer's uniform to prepare himself for the sweet taste of death. When Reiko sees her hubby's entrails bleed all over the floor of their mostly white home, she weeps like a waterfall yet her face remains stoic and determined. With her white angelic clothing covered with Takeyama's vital fluids, Reiko leaves the ritual chamber and goes to prepare for her own death by applying her face with make-up (or what Mishima described as her "death mask"), so as to look beautiful for the gods. Upon reentering the suicide room, Reiko proceeds to walk in a pool of blood and entrails, kisses Takeyama's post-mortem lips, and licks a dagger as if sexually aroused by the weapon. In the end, Reiko drives the dagger into her throat and her dead corpse lands on Takeyama, thus uniting the two lovers in death. As Mishima wrote regarding the conclusion of the film when the female protagonist takes her life: "she bids farewell to the fallen corpse of her husband; then at the moment when she takes her own life, the film leaps from one dimension to the next, spiriting the viewer from a heightened sense of this world to a realm where death and beauty are one. This was my plan, and thanks to Wagner's music I was able to accomplish it." Indeed, *Patriotism* is probably the most controversial marriage between Japanese and Teutonic kultur since the Second World War (interestingly, Mishima also wrote a rather interesting

play entitled *My Friend Hitler* (1968) where he depicted SA leader Ernst Röhm dying needlessly as a result of a sort of hopeless homoerotic loyalty to Hitler).

In a 1966 interview with Yukio Mishima shot for NHK Television in Japan, the novelist noted: “Rilke writes somewhere that modern man can no longer die a dramatic death. He dies in a hospital room, like a bee inside a honeycomb cell. That’s how I recall it, at least. Death in the modern age, whether due to illness or accident, is devoid of drama. We live in an age in which there is no heroic death.” Of course, as his failed coup d’état attempt (also known as the so-called “Mishima incident”) and subsequent ritualistic suicide indicates, Mishima was longing for death and glory in a zeitgeist of decided deracination (in fact, Mishima biographer John Nathan theorized that the whole coup was a mere pretext for the artist to commit ritual suicide and that he had no plans to survive the ordeal), with Patriotism literalizing the “drama” the novelist spoke of in his interview. It should be noted that Mishima was at the height of his physical and artistic strength at his death, thus more or less becoming a real-life version of Guido Reni’s painting of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, of which the writer revealed reaching sexual climax at the age of 12 in his autobiographical second novel *Confessions of a Mask* (1949). Of course, the young Mishima of the novel, who is more or less a self-loathing and sexually confused introvert, is quite different from the Mishima who created his own private mercenary army, used that army to carry out a failed coup d’état at the Tokyo headquarters of the Eastern Command of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces, and had one of his soldiers decapitate his head with a sword (but not before disemboweling himself, of course). In that regard, Mishima’s self-created persona—his most personal work of art—ultimately transcended his true/original self, with even his suicide being a publicity stunt of sorts. Patriotism is clearly a rehearsal for said suicide as a sort of premature death poem in celluloid form.

Undoubtedly, Patriotism is much like frog fag novelist Jean Genet’s quasi-pornographic sole feature *A Song of Love* (1950) aka *Un chant d’amour* in that it more or less cinematically expresses the writer-turned-director’s entire aesthetic essence and distinct Weltanschauung in under 30 minutes. At the beginning of an essay entitled *On Patriotism (The Rite of Love and Death)* that Mishima wrote in 1966 regarding the production of his film, the writer-turned-director noted: “‘Patriotism’ was published in January 1961 in the literary quarterly *Shosetsu chuokoron*. Though fewer than fifty manuscript pages in length, this short story remains etched in my mind, for it brings together in condensed form the basic elements of my writing. In fact, if I were to recommend just one work to a new reader, I would choose ‘Patriotism’ over more widely read novels like ‘The Sound of Waves’, because it embodies so many of my qualities as a writer, both the good and the bad.” Indeed, I would also argue that the film *Patriotism* is the perfect introduction to the life, death, and work of Mishima as a highly accessible avant-garde work that demonstrates that the auteur perceived

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death, especially a death that occurred when a person was at their physical and mental prime, as the height of beauty and majesty. Undoubtedly, the segment directed by British auteur Franc Roddam (*Quadrophenia*, *The Bride*) for the opera-themed anthology film *Aria* (1987), which not only features Wagner's "Liebestod" but also depicts two young lovers carrying out a suicide pact, is like a cheap Americanized rip-off of Mishima's film, as it lacks the innate intimacy with death that is quite apparent in *Patriotism*. For those that consider suicide the way of the failure, pansy, and/or loser, Mishima once summed up the difference between Occidental and Japanese perception of self-slaughter when he remarked: "Hara-kiri is a very positive, very proud way of death. I think it's very different from the Western concept of suicide. The Western concept of suicide is always defeat itself. Mostly. But hara-kiri sometimes makes you win." Indeed, in the end, Mishima seemed to win as he never physically and artistically degenerated with age like so many old artists do and people will also remember him as sort of the last samurai of Japan, with *Patriotism* being a positively poetic reminder of what death meant to the writer's life and work. While Paul Schrader's biopic *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985) is certainly a great source for anecdotal details regarding Mishima's life and work, *Patriotism* will give you a more authentic sense of the novelist's essence, as quite arguably the most darkly intimate and certainly most morbidly prophetic film ever directed by a writer. Indeed, the only thing that could have possibly made Mishima's sole excursion in filmmaking more sincere is if wife Keiko had been portrayed by a tranny.

-Ty E

TRISTAN ET ISEULT

Yvan Lagrange (1972)

Undoubtedly, my favorite cinematic adaptation of Tristan and Iseult aka Tristan und Isolde is Jean Delannoy's *L'éternel retour* (1943) aka *The Eternal Return* aka *Love Eternal*, which is based on a Nietzschean reworking of the myth penned by none other than Jean Cocteau. Certainly Delannoy's narrative-driven adaptation could not be more different from Yvan Lagrange's exceedingly rare and sometimes esoteric work *Tristan and Isolde* (1972) aka *Tristan et Iseult*, which, not unlike the films of Peter Emanuel Goldman (*Echoes of Silence*, *Wheel of Ashes*) until they were released on DVD a couple years back, has managed to earn a sort of mythical status among certain cinephiles, which is largely the result of its complete and utter lack of availability. Due to the efforts of a rather altruistic cinephile on the internet, I managed to see Lagrange's lost masterpiece and while I have to say that it is not exactly a work that lives up to its singular reputation, I cannot say I did not enjoy it. Not unlike Richard Wagner's famous 1865 epic musical drama poem, albeit in a quasi-counterculture-flavored and all the more archetypal and allegorical way, Lagrange's film reduces the Tristan and Isolde myth to its simplest themes and details it as a piece of cinematic poetry from the "Zanzibar Films" (Philippe Garrel, Patrick Deval, Jackie Raynal, Pierre Clémenti, Daniel Pommereulle, Serge Bard, etc.) school of filmmaking. Indeed, Lagrange's film is like Garrel's *La cicatrice intérieure* aka *The Internal Scar* (1972) sans Teutonic diva Nico and readapted as the Tristan and Isolde story as a largely plotless and abstract hermetic work set in an exotic land that trumps the most fantastic of Hollywood sets. Indeed, Lagrange's film is a 'magical' marriage between ancient myth and the most avant-garde of the French avant-garde. Ostensibly the tale of a warrior who is sent to Ireland from Cornwall to fetch the bride of the king, only to fall mutually in love with said bride after the two drink a love potion, Lagrange's *Tristan and Isolde* is more of an aesthetically romantic experience than a tragic love story as certainly no one will feel sorry for the doomed lovers when the film ends.

A somewhat cryptically personalized adaptation of the myth, the film stars the director and his Walloon wife Claire Wauthion as the doomed eponymous leads in what is ultimately a darkly romantic cinematic work that brings some much needed testosterone and masculinity to the exceedingly effete realm of early 1970s French art faggotry. Indeed, shot in both Iceland and Morocco, *Tristan and Isolde* features an otherworldly yet paradoxically totally organic realm with an atmosphere of foreboding melancholia where warriors not only battle to death with their swords, but also the bladed antlers of their helmets. Featuring an oftentimes unintentionally goofy operatic prog-rock score by classically trained drummer Christian Vander—a man who invented his own fictional planet of 'Kobaïa' for a ten album "space opera" with its own lyrical language

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called 'Kobaian'—of the French progressive rock/jazz fusion group Magma, Lagrange's *Tristan and Isolde* has certainly aged less than gracefully in some respects. Indeed, featuring a neo-medieval world where knights wear rather aesthetically vulgar uniforms of the quasi-hippie robe sort and helmets that seem inspired by the the horned Gaulish god 'Cernunnos' aka 'Hern the Hunter' of Celtic polytheism, Lagrange's film is shockingly violent and gory for a frog art fag flick yet the brutal imagery is somewhat unintentionally undermined by the flamboyant costumes to the point where *Tristan and Isolde* feels like a campy hippie take on the Pieter Bruegel the Elder masterpiece *The Triumph of Death* (1562). Innately anti-war to the core in a sort of post-Aktionist fashion, Lagrange's film is practically flooded with mutilated animal corpses and decapitated cow heads to the point where the end seems like a sort of surrealist slaughterhouse. Indeed, Lagrange's film is not so much a tribute or reworking of *Tristan and Isolde* as it is a mockery where the titular hero practically worships death and where the heroine does not do much more than cry and mourn when not fingering her flesh flower in a forest.

Tristan and Isolde begins simply enough with the two eponymous lovers staring straight at the viewer for no less than four minutes after the title screen appears in flames. *Tristan* seems to die about a thousand times during the film and *Isolde* naturally mourns him in the most hysterical and histrionic ways, but somehow he ends up always coming back and demonstrating his ambivalence to his lover any time she attempts to keep him around. Undoubtedly, the film creates a potent dichotomy between the active aggressive brutality of man and the passive and empathic sensitivity of woman, with *Tristan's* quenchable thirst for blood and glory of total war being the major problem that will destroy the two lovers and their somewhat dubious romance. Indeed, while *Tristan* inhabits a sort of metaphysical abattoir of perpetual death and destruction, *Isolde* is a born sensualist who masturbates in an almost ritualistic fashion whilst the sun beams over her body in a forest. When *Tristan* is wounded during the beginning of the film during battle, *Isolde* takes him back to a cave and nurses him back to health. In a bizarre scene that seems to be an allegorical reflection of woman's lowly position in life and man's ignorance and apathy toward said lowly position, *Isolde* washes a floor by hand while *Tristan* lays face down on a small set of stairs. In a 'large' battle between the hero's army and a rival group, every single person is seemingly killed, including *Tristan*, thus leaving *Isolde* to mourn all by her lonesome. In an undeniably beautiful scene set during the blue hour, *Tristan's* lifeless corpse hangs from a horse that is pulled by *Isolde*.

After *Tristan* dies (for the first time), the film begins making even less sense than it did before and delightfully degenerates into a sort of surrealist nightmare that seems to mix German Romanticism with the Viennese Aktionists and the early films of Alejandro Jodorowsky. Indeed, in one particularly perversely potent scene, *Tristan* carries *Isolde* through a room full of animal corpses. During

this deranged dream-sequence, Tristan also poses with a series of religious statues. In a scene that may or may not be a blasphemous reference to ichthys, Tristan grabs and bites into a fish that Isolde was admiring and practically salivating over. Out of nowhere, the film switches from being set into a phantasmagoric church to a small shitty shack where Tristan senselessly slits his wrist and abruptly leaves while Isolde cries hysterically. In a scene that starts initially rather romantically but devolves into abject heartbreak, Tristan and Isolde embrace in an Icelandic lake, but the former eventually becomes disgusted and leaves, but not before violently fighting with his beloved, who tries in vain to keep her boy toy with her and is ultimately knocked flat on her ass when attempting to restrain him. In the end, Tristan lies dead with a camel corpse while his intestines literally rot in the sun and Isolde lies on a rocky bed of flames.

Indubitably, “eternal return” has a much different meaning in Yvan Lagrange’s film than it did in Delannoy’s 1943 Cocteau reworking of the same name. Indeed, while Delannoy’s film begins with the words, “The Eternal Return [...] borrowed from Nietzsche, means here that even legends can be reborn unbeknown to their heroes. An eternal return of the very simple circumstances which comprised the most famous of all great love stories” and depicts the lovers’ downfall as a result of a series of unfortunate circumstances related to family and money, Lagrange’s depicts the ‘eternal return’ as Tristan’s unwavering bloodlust and self-destructive love of war. Indeed, Tristan dies multiple times in Lagrange’s film but what all these deaths have in common is a sort of nihilistic (self)destruction. Undoubtedly Lagrange’s Tristan is a sort of archetype of the innate warrior character of pre-liberalized man. Of course, Europe, especially France, is now full of spiritual eunuchs who take orders from homos, Hebrews, and third world untermenschen, so one could argue that the sort of ‘eternal return’ depicted in Lagrange’s work has proven to be less than perennial. As the rise of miscegenation and the dearth of indigenous French birthrates demonstrate, women are not attracted to pacified men that lack the will to fight. Indeed, ultimately the most tragic thing about Yvan Lagrange’s Tristan and Isolde is his effeminized view of masculinity, but of course such thinking was a cliché of French filmmakers of that type. Ultimately, the film’s brilliance lies in poetic imagery as a sort of operatic piece of the cinematically grotesque that somehow manages to make dismembered animal corpses seem quite beautiful. While the film may bask in making a mockery of classic Occidental myth, it still manages to be aesthetically exquisite enough to not seem like a putrid piece of postmodern posturing, but instead stands as a landmark work of its particularly misguided zeitgeist that certainly deserves to be remastered and rereleased so that future generations can savor its sullen sensuality and beauteous brutality. As his later film *Dérive 'Le naufrage de Vénus'* (1974)—a work that features arguably the most erotic depiction of a pregnant woman ever committed to celluloid—certainly demonstrates, Lagrange certainly had an eye for a sort of esoteric and sometimes eccentric

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eroticism that made him stand out among his contemporaries, with Tristan and Isolde certainly being his amorous magnum opus. Indeed, in terms of the best idiosyncratic Tristan and Isolde adaptations, Lagrange's wonderfully wayward work is king.

-Ty E

KILLER ME

Zachary Hansen (2001)

Killer Me is an independent psychological horror film that not only dazzled me with its wonderful premise but it is a story that could be the most awkward and rewarding love story put on independent film in a long while. The film is like a jawbreaker with many different elements and genres rolled into a tasty hybrid of new horror. The outer shell, of course, is the serial killer parts, with the center, being a budding love story between two confused souls.

The plot involves two people really, and uses their severed connections with the outside world as a setting for the story to unravel. Joseph is a brooding, unsettled man who takes criminology courses and works at a library. He is the kind of character we know nothing about and we only learn through fragmented flashbacks. Joseph enjoys long walks at night and macaroni TV dinners. Joseph is a serial killer. While this is not told to us directly, we have no choice but to get the idea. He wakes up, bloody, with a recent violent acquaintance dead. It has to be more than superior luck, Right? Well, he is a tortured soul, sporting around a fancy old style razor and i must say, in a couple of masterfully shot sequences, that razor had me on edge. This is when we are introduced to gorgeous Anna who has a ridiculously annoying hair cut. They begin to stare at each other through class. Innocently enough, she begins to try to start a conversation but he quickly recedes into his shell. He obviously doesn't want anyone to get hurt and that is the sweetest thing any one could do. He witnesses an almost rape one night and wakes up on the trail. You don't know what happened, but i felt fucking horrible. The sickness was spreading in my stomach. Easily, one of the more grueling scenes with such a lack of content. The lies get deeper as he adds more to his scrapbook of believed killings. He has a cut of his side which he burrows into more and more. Their relationship gets more personal and personal till it gets too much for him. The animal he bought for her is what is essentially keeping them together and his nameless fish is a heartbreaking character. If i were to talk any more about this creative film, it would be ruined. You don't really need to expect much but a damn good serial killer film that rivals HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER and a love story that rivals BLIND BEAST though not as perverse. For being a little to not heard of film, my expectations were shattered. It was released on a company called Vanguard. I would definitely check this film out if i were you. Zachary Hansen might be the best thing to happen to indie horror in a while. Taking on the extremely difficult task of directing, editing, and writing, he completes these with style. His cast of unknowns are the most amazing of which i have seen recently and produce excellent chemistry. One thing that did greatly piss me off is the fact that this film bills Anna as a young, lush, stalker when this is certainly not the case. Only a half-wit would deem her such. Just an innocent girl, with innocent

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emotions. There is no activity that could be describable as "stalking" Killer Me is a frightening look at vigilantism, serial killers, love, and the questions we face in our every day life. What do you see when you look into the mirror?

-Maq

VISIONS OF CLAIR

Zachary Strong (1977)

While I never have really put too much thought into, I can say without the slightest bit of hesitation that *Bacchanale* (1970) directed by the Amero brothers is one of my favorites, if not my favorite, fuck flicks, not least of all because it contains a completely singular phantasmagoric yet psychedelic hermetic netherworld of the orgasmic offbeat gothic sort that is big on atmosphere and low on cheap soulless sex and limp drug-ridden dicks. With that begin said, I am always on the lookout for hardcore flicks in the spirit of the Ameros' unsung masterpiece of celluloid lechery and luckily I just discovered one with a similarly sinister essence of foreboding aesthetic excess. Indeed, *Visions of Clair* (1977) directed by Zachary Strong (*Resurrection of Eve*, *Confessions of a Teenage Peanut Butter Freak*)—a sexually eclectic pornographic auteur who assembled both hetero and homo hardcore flicks and worked with in various different genres—is esoteric erotica at its finest as a somewhat inexplicable arthouse-hardcore hybrid that has the grand distinction of being the only fuck film produced by hardcore heavyweights Cal Vista that managed to lose money. Indeed, a sort of metaphysical blue movie that features, among other things, ancient archetypes, pseudo-spiritual hippie gibberish, psychedelic penetration and ejaculation, Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* and an ambient transcendental original score, pleasantly politically incorrect quasi-beatnik lingo, left-hand path lechery, and random references to ancient Egyptian mythology, *Visions of Clair* is a hallucinatory hardcore horror flick with wayward airs of aberrant aesthetic majesty. In short, there is no other film quite like it, be it obscure vintage fuck flick or otherwise. The closest things to a pornographic take on Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *Persona* (1966), albeit focusing on three seemingly mentally damaged dames as opposed to just two, as a work featuring arcane lipstick lesbianism, psychic vampirism, and metaphysical horror, Strong's work may be preposterously pretentious for a porno flick, but somehow it all more or less works as a filmic fever dream with a genuinely foreboding atmosphere and authentically sensual sex scenes. In its counter-culture-cultivated depiction of three very different yet seemingly equally internally wounded women becoming "one" and dichotomous use of gender archetypes, the film also surely owes a heavy aesthetic debt to Donald Cammell and Nicholas Roeg's *Performance* (1970). Originally advertised with the rather aesthetically misleading tagline, "a film in the style of *EMMANUELLE* but with the raw passion of *THE STORY OF O*," *Visions of Clair*—a work featuring pillows with decidedly decadent England dandy Aubrey Beardsley's iconic illustrations and images of the ancient Egyptian 'ankh' (aka "key of life," "the key of the Nile" or "crux ansata")—is a porno that, at the very least, cannot be properly pigeonholed, though it is safe to say that the creators had their fair share of recreational drug use and resentment towards masculinity

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and the male sex in general.

Visions of Clair begins simply enough with a frustrated young hippie-like artist named Ron (John Rolling) complaining to the young unclad model he is painting, Clair van der Meer (Annette Haven), that he is more or less incapacitated by her supposedly stunning beauty, even rudely stating to her: "Shit...I lost my momentum. I guess you're too beautiful for me, Clair. I mean, your beauty is not the kind I usually paint...it's too conventional. You're too womanish, Clair. Look at you...big tits, nice ass...beauty, pretty, or whatever...but not attractive to me. Alright, I rather not paint you in the nude. A costume perhaps. Anyway, most women don't commission nude portraits from me." When Clair asks the angst-ridden painter what it is about her body that really disturbs him, Ron irrationally replies, "It's not real...I can't even imagine having sex with your body...No, it's not real." In a noble attempt to calm down the agitated artist and to prove that he can indeed imagine having sex with her, Clair makes the mighty expiatory sacrifice of sucking off Ron and proceeding to fuck him, thus causing the seemingly sexually frustrated painter to liberate his seed. Shortly after they finish and the artist disrespectfully wipes his spilled seed on the model's dress, Ron's girlfriend Daphne (Bonnie Holiday) randomly shows up at the studio and seems quite bewildered by the fact that her best beau is cavorting with a blatant psychic vampire of sorts. Of course, it is only matter of time before bitchy 'artiste' Ron is out of the picture and Clair and Daphne become inseparable partners that even seem to share the same soul.

Flash forward four years later and Ron is now dead as a result of a supposed "accident" he had while he was drunk. Clair and Daphne have now become an 'item,' with the latter becoming the perennial 'shadow' of the former, as she is the ying to the other's yang. They live in Clair's mansion where they have all the time in the world to get wild and wanton, as neither woman seems to work. Meanwhile, a third woman, a seemingly borderline mute painter named Roahne (Susan Bates), has entered the picture as she has been commissioned to paint a somewhat amateurish Crowley-esque portrait of Clair, Daphne, and assumedly herself. Roahne is accompanied by an intolerably bombastic and vainglorious "bobo" (aka bourgeois bohemian) named David (Jay Gamble), who claims to have known Clair when he was younger, stating of her, "I've always been rather attracted to her. I mean, when I was a child, I thought of her as a god, you know? She was so unapproachable...I was actually in love with her. Still am, somewhat." When Roahne and David meet with Clair at a diner while the latter is buying a golden ancient Egyptian necklace from some swarthy hippie pansy, it results in rather awkward consequences. Indeed, upon entering the diner, David immediately goes up to Clair and rather rudely interrupts her while she is talking with the antique dealer and mentions how their families know one another, but she says nothing, which rather infuriates the young man, who later complains to his quasi-muse Roahne: "I can't get over how fucking rude she was. It's not

like I'm nobody from nowhere creeping up on her to demand a piece of ass or something. ...And then she takes a good damn mentally retarded nymphomaniac out of the gutter and then she has the gall to put on airs with me?!" David also accuses Roahne of being a "good damned zombie" due to her rather flat affect and her seeming aversion to mindless chit-chat, but little does he realize that he is a nuisance to the three women, who will come to form a sort of 'metaphysical ménage à trios' of Sapphic meta-womanhood. Indeed, whether it is by her mysterious golden necklace or own innate ominous yet orgasmic aura and penetrating sexual magnetism, Clair will lure Roahne to her secret world of quasi-satanic Sapphic spirituality.

Although they never seem to get around to actually talking, Roahne seems to know everything about Clair and Daphne, stating to herself, "Clair...a Goddess. Daphne...a Priestess. Her isolation...forms a shield...to which others' illusions are drawn and attached as to a magnet. Like a magnet. Lust...in its basic form." In a remark that makes it seem like she has seen Bergman's *Persona* one too many times while high on cheap acid, Roahne also declares, "To know Clair, I must become Clair." On top of painting her and her lover's portrait, Roahne is also to be ritualistically bequeathed with the gold Egyptian necklace that was bought by Clair from the antique dealer who David thinks is a fraud and describes as a, "fag-got hustler." When David attempts to "make love" with Roahne after she passes out after he makes her a dubious Italian dinner (David claims that his marginal amount of Guido blood has given him the innate power to be a master cook), he proves to be completely impotent and eventually dies while suffering what seems to be metaphysical 'cock block,' thus disappearing from the story entirely, as if Clair willed his pathetic demise via black magic. Towards the end of the film in what amounts to a semi-sadomasochistic lesbian montage, Clair and Daphne share a ritualistic dance together that evolves into passionate mutual cunnilingus while Roahne enters their home in a seemingly possessed somnambulist state to finish their portrait. Indeed, Roahne becomes a Sapphic somnambulist of sorts who masturbates with an ancient Egyptian dagger while Clair and Daphne devour one another's bushy naughty bits. In the end, Roahne finishes the painting and the three women become one, though cunt goddess Clair is clearly the true goddess of the superlatively sacrilegious spiritual threesome.

A lesbian horror flick where all the male characters, who are more or less exactly the same in their bourgeois-bred effeminacy and lack of virility, mysteriously drop dead and all the three female characters become one big Sapphic spirit of the sinisterly sensual sort, *Visions of Clair* is unquestionably one of the few lesbo fuck flicks that I have ever seen where the sex and sensuality actually seemed sincere as opposed to the conspicuously contrived counterfeit carpet-munching that one can almost always expect from such works. Of course, more importantly, the film is one of the most aesthetically intriguing, hypnotic, and wildly idiosyncratic porn flicks ever made, which is something that only Euro-

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pean filmgoers have seem to have taken notice of, as demonstrated by the fact that the handful of online reviews that exist on the film were written by Europeans. Notably, auteur Zachary Strong was bisexual, though it seems like he sides more with his female side in the film, as the two male characters are exceedingly arrogant assholes whose pathological narcissism seems to be a mere cover for their sexual inadequacy, which is demonstrated via the characters' literal and metaphysical impotency. It should also be noted that while the male characters are nothing short of spiritually retarded, the female characters, especially the eponymous lead, have almost supernatural intuition as if they have a sixth sense or something. Indeed, it is apparent while watching the film that Strong understands women very well and has a sort of jealous contempt for masculinity, which he only seems to understand in a sort of detached and deracinated fashion, thus making him a kindred spirit of sorts to Tennessee Williams in that sense. With *Visions of Clair*, Strong also makes it quite clear that while men are more literal and to-the-point in their sexuality, the so-called 'fairer sex' is more sensual to the point where sex is an (un)holy ritual for them that takes a wholly spiritual form, thus making the metaphysical overtones of the film not so ridiculous as they might seem upon a superficial glance. In terms of Western esotericism, *Visions of Clair* is clearly a work of the left-hand path, which is innately dark and feminine in its very essence. Indeed, if Christian Evangelists need a good example of true spiritual heresy in pornography, there is probably no better example than Strong's film which, on top of featuring entrancing lesbian orgies involving tender nipples being cut open with daggers, is certainly at odds with the benign spirituality of the right-hand path. Undoubtedly, for fans of classic porn chic era dreamlike hardcore horror/fantasy works like the Amero brother's *Bacchanale* (1970), Jonas Middleton's *Illusions of a Lady* (1974) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1976), Kenneth Andrews' *Night of the Occultist* (1973), Chuck Vincent's *Visions* (1977), Cecil Howard's *Neon Nights* (1981), Roger Watkins' *Corruption* (1983) and *Midnight Heat* (1983), and Pieter Vanderbilt's *The Dark Angel* (1983), Strong's sinisterly seductive skin flick is simply mandatory viewing, as a cream of the crop piece of surrealist celluloid sensuality from pussy-licking purgatory. Indeed, if you ever wondered what Robert Altman's *3 Women* (1977) might be like on X-rated acid, checkout *Visions of Clair*.

-Ty E

WATCHMEN

Zack Snyder (2009)

How would you have it? To be strict plot-wise or to double-dose on entertainment value? First off, allow a simple message to be construed; comic elitists, you can eat my dick. Now I've been braving the storm for Watchmen and yes, I didn't read the comic the instance it hit select shelves but I know a thing or two about pop culture superiority - it's expendable. Watchmen tells the brave story of one detective's search for the truth though not before wrapping his philosophical mind behind several ex-super hero's as their archetypes are deconstructed. Look anywhere, everywhere. You'll see the musings sprawled everywhere. Hell, the advertising for any sort of Watchmen memorabilia will appear on any site you choose to visit. Inescapably, Watchmen will always be there. Who will watch the Watchmen? You will [+1 for play on words that no doubt, everyone will be using]. Alan Moore was right. Watchmen is most surely an unfilmable property. As was the same that was said about Naked Lunch, but in retrospect, Naked Lunch didn't try to follow the book, instead, it chronicled the creation of the tale. Watchmen captures many things flawlessly but its inability to be omniscient such as Dr. Manhattan is where the plunge drops from the peak. This is but only due to the course of directing that Snyder takes in advance. Knowing full well that he [Snyder] was taking the pseudo-intellect's comic of choice and creating a film that uses enhanced digital graphics throughout. To start out, I'll admit to have reading several "lucky" viewers reviews. More or less, it equates with the same dry logic equivalent to "YEAHHHHH!!!" or "AWWESOMMME!!!" Me? I'm not fooled by such meanderings and I require a serious adaptation effort. If you know anything about Hollywood tool Zack Snyder, you know he has an erection for only two things: out-of-place soundtracks and vigorous slow-motion. Zack Snyder has walked into a death trap of criticism and lashings, but then again, he also walked into a bank with this film. Fun fact: His previous effort 300 has been reviled as a "homophobic" film by scribe Alan Moore. For starters, all the great scenes are there. What a great introduction we are treated to. We witness the death of the Comedian but to my disdain, loaded with much more fighting than needed be. Soon thereafter, we're given a frozen life slide show illustrating how the times are changing. The scene of the multiplying Dr. Manhattan and Laurie's disdain are all intact but yet, Snyder refuses to capture the golden moments, namely, the Squid. Yes, hark all you want but it's gone and this wasn't a clever, festering disinformation campaign. Also, many bones have been stripped of flesh. Rorschach's psychiatrist session has been ultimately cut short, even taking the balls out of the entire segment by not revealing the origin of his mask, therefore severing most ties and boiling the emotion and empathy out of his frivolous anti-character. Many scenes still arrive precisely on time without a moments delay and the pacing is remarkable. To the non-comic

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going fan of the trailers and marketing, this film will deliver upon your wildest dreams but to anyone that has read the graphic novel, which has been peer pressured at our retina's by stands in every major book store, we will be ultimately dissatisfied with the eventual ending and choice of key scenes. Overall, it's an amazing effort and I applaud Snyder for giving his all., Granted, no one could have done it like he had even if the film were minutes too long due to gratuitous scenes of slow-down fighting action. Another thing, I love the issues because the fight scenes were quick to the point and not rigorous in the attempt to entertain. It seemed more of a service to humanity rather than a visual feast. While I'm still on a high note congratulating the action, in comes the slo-motion, slowly, to ruin the excellent choreography. Thanks Snyder, for imagining the farce all wrong. You know it's bad when Nite Owl II's costume, which was made to show the absurdity of costumes, is redesigned to be conservative, sleek, and sexy. Now for the peak performance that you've all been waiting for; the ending. What do I think of it? Tis hard to say. It's a different breed, that's for sure, and I'm not very keen on the idea of Snyder taking creative liberties with a material that isn't his to plagiarize. That being said, the new ending works but it will never touch the horrific impact of the original, although nothing ever will. For what it's worth, Watchmen is a brilliant introductory piece to what is the lore of the Watchmen. No doubt that fans will be obscured by the post-9/11 visions of Snyder and the lack of the Black Freighter and the exclusive scenes with the New Frontiersman. Much is missing and one can only hope for an extended cut on DVD, hopefully one not compromising the intelligence of the original ending. If this adapted version of Watchmen had to offer anything, it would be a bitching rape scene on behalf of the Comedian, brilliant performances by both Rorschach and the Comedian, and the knowledge of several notable musical cues. The rest of the soundtrack can just be laughed at aloud just as DN's are giggling at the sight of a blue penis dangling about. I could go into detail on how this film doesn't even begin to live up to its predecessor but the result is futile. Several little jokes are spread through out, poking fun at us fans, just comically hinting to a Squid when we know full well there isn't such thing. It seems like this time, Zack Snyder got the last laugh. For more in-depth discussion, drop a comment.

-mAQ

SUCKER PUNCH

Zack Snyder (2011)

I regret to admit that my impulsive curiosity suckered me into watching Zach Snyder's lobotomizing celluloid drool Sucker Punch. I have never doubted Snyder's lack of vision as a filmmaker, but I had to see why even fans of the mind numbingly mediocre would-be auteur found Sucker Punch to be an absurdly loathsome and abundantly abominable cinematic affair. I see Snyder as the Michael Bay of fantasy/adventure films, as both directors seem to believe that the quality of a film is judged by how many expensive explosions, sterile CGI special effects, and corporate-packaged-action-packed scenes are contained within a movie. Just when I thought that Hollywood couldn't get anymore thoughtless and stylistically repugnant, Sucker Punch appears from the lowest nether regions of Hollywood to contaminate American minds. Snyder has described the film as follows, "though it's fetishistic and personal, I like to think that my fetishes aren't that obscure. Who doesn't want to see girls running down the trenches of World War One wreaking havoc?" I, for one, have never had an interest in seeing beautiful gals fighting on a battlefield for such a scenario is undoubtedly innately ludicrous, but I do concur with Snyder that many Americans, especially those of the pathetically undersexed and irredeemable fan-boy variety, will find many of their favorite masturbatory fantasies in Sucker Punch. However, I have never met a man with a drop of testosterone who enjoys seeing women waging war and "kicking ass" in movies, for such a scenario is only palatable to those who have never even considered engaging in a real fight. Like Tarantino's embarrassingly fetishistic flick Kill Bill, Sucker Punch is a film for those impotent fan-boys, who want to have their own pussy and eat it too. Of course, when it comes down to it, few things are more patently pathetic than combining two rightfully unrelated fantasies (being able to "kick ass" and obtain hot chicks) in the wacky way that Sucker Punch does. After all, throughout all of human history, it has always been men who have risked their lives in battle to obtain the respect of the woman that they desire. I could understand the appeal of Sucker Punch if it was marketed solely to martial lesbian bikers, but it is nothing of the sort (although, I suspect many carpet-munchers derive a grand source of sensual pleasure from the film). I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if a militant lesbian terrorist cell decided to use Sucker Punch as a recruiting video. Not only are the females characters in Sucker Punch portrayed as fierce and masculine warriors (despite their scant outfits), but the weak males in the film feature negative character traits (lying, conspiring, manipulating, etc.) that are most often associated with the fairer sex. At the most fundamental level, Sucker Punch is a relatively dry wet dream for hopelessly emasculated and deracinated males of the Occident. If I didn't know better, I would have assumed the film was directed by an erratic eunuch from France.

SUCKER PUNCH

If one wants a glaring example as to why Hollywood's hyper-postmodernism and the Americanization of the world are two vile and highly contagious diseases that need to be cured with extreme and unwavering prejudice, one just needs to watch 5 minutes of *Sucker Punch*. Equipped with regenerated Teutonic soldiers of the undead persuasion and cutesy deranged girls who throw kicks and punches in a state of retarded brick-wall ecstasy, *Sucker Punch* is a film that transports the viewer to a world of nonsensical escapism and feeble farcical fantasy. After watching the film, I felt as if I was a dupe in a cinema-induced lobotomy experiment conducted by the infamous culture-distorters of Hollywood, but that would be giving *Sucker Punch* too much credit. Not since I erroneously viewed James Cameron's Rousseau-esque neo-noble-savage-nightmare flick *Avatar* have I been astounded by a film's sheer ability to degrade the viewer via nonsensical-state-of-the-art--special-effects and an unimaginative imaginary realm of infantile delirium. I must admit that *Sucker Punch* only reaffirmed my belief that the Occidental world is on the brink of an irreparable catastrophe of world shattering proportions. *Sucker Punch* also strengthened my assumption that the unfortunate citizens of the United States will be ultimately stunned and equally unable to cope with said disaster for such an emotionally and culturally hollow film is an undoubtedly a reflection of the average Yank's prideful ignorance of the world as a whole and disdain for what is organic (be it art, kultur, spiritual beliefs, etc). To think that American soldiers are supposedly valiantly fighting in the Middle East and North Africa to bring Islamists the freedom of watching films like *Sucker Punch* is not exactly a reassuring feeling. Zach Snyder should have stayed in the zombie film world because he certainly has little understanding of live human beings aside from the most archaic of human instincts and emotions. Zach Snyder may think he is the next Fritz Lang (German era) or Federico Fellini, but his films are thematically and intellectually less complex than the early scat films of Balti-moron auteur John Waters.

Every time I decide to give the latest Hollywood lackluster blockbuster a chance, my seething contempt for such films generally multiplies yet *Sucker Punch* stirred a distinct sort of disgust in me that I haven't experienced before. If human beings manage to escape from nuking themselves into oblivion in the next century or so, one can only wonder what future film theorists and historians will have to say about films like *Sucker Punch*. Despite the hatred that is directed towards anything related to Nazism, film critics almost unanimously agree that Leni Riefenstahl's landmark masterpiece *Triumph of the Will* is one of the greatest achievements of film history yet I doubt anyone will have anything good to say about a film like *Sucker Punch*. Of course, future generations will surely think to themselves regarding the film, "No wonder the United States collapsed and entered a state of malfunctioning technocratic chaos comparable to no other time in human history." The greatest tragedy of contemporary American cinema is that despite being a time of twilight in the west and total trans-

formation of the world as we know it, Hollywood continues to stay adamant about producing films as dull and intrinsically worthless as Sucker Punch. I can only assume that if the United States were to breakout into a scorched-earth-style race war, Hollywood would neglect to refrain from producing sensational smut and misleading works about naively hopeful race relations. Despite the fact that America has been engaged in a war in the Middle East that has virtually bankrupted the country and thrown many everyday citizens into life-destroying turmoil, Hollywood has only pumped up their cretinous reign of celluloid terror. If you also had the terrible misfortune of viewing Sucker Punch, just pray to Wotan, JC, Muhammad, Morrissey, or whoever you worship that Hollywood's days are numbered because the last thing the world needs is another film like it.

-Ty E

ANGELS WITH BURNT WINGS
ANGELS WITH BURNT WINGS

Zbynek Brynych (1970)

Probably best remembered today for his holocaust-themed but hardly Hebraic (the film cleverly uses fascism as a metaphor to speak out against Soviet communism) Czechoslovak New Wave flick *The Fifth Horseman is Fear* (1964) aka *A pátý jezdec je stach*, Czech auteur Zbyněk Brynych (*Suburban Romance* aka *Žižkovská romance*, *Transport z raje* aka *Transport from Paradise*) is certainly less known for enjoying an equally interesting, if not artistically less serious, filmmaking career in West Germany, which rather unfortunately concluded with the filmmaker becoming a TV hack of sorts, but he managed to direct a number of culturally pessimistic kraut flicks in between, with *Angels with Burnt Wings* (1970) aka *Engel, die ihre Flügel verbrennen* aka *Angels Who Burn Their Wings* being arguably the greatest of these relatively forgotten high-brow quasi-exploitation works. A sort of anti-consumerist/anti-capitalist/anti-media satire disguised as a decidedly degenerate jet-set-themed psychedelic exploitation flick, *Angels with Burnt Wings* is paradoxically seductively yet sickeningly saturated with “Swinging 70’s” aesthetic repugnancy as a curious celluloid work that really knows how to polish a posh Teutonic turd. Centering around a bad bourgeois boy with some sort of now-prominent personality disorder who is quite jealous of his rich whore of a mother’s extramarital lovers, so much so that he beats one of them to death in a ritzy apartment complex thus spurring a search by the police for the culprit and an absurd narcissism-fueled media frenzy around said apartment complex, *Angels with Burnt Wings* seems like a kraut softcore flick upon a superficial glance, but it is really a truly dark and culturally damning work depicting a pseudo-zany zeitgeist of soulless self-worship, hedonism for hedonism’s sake, and fucked alienated families with a complete and utter incapacity for communicating with one another. Featuring an array of screwed up characters in fancy ass 1970s wardrobes who do whatever the hell they want whenever the hell they want and never think of the consequences until it is far too late, *Angels with Burnt Wings* is a celluloid work just as socially conscious and culturally critical as German New Cinema arthouse flicks by the likes of Fassbinder, Wenders, and Schlöndorff, albeit made palatable for the most ADHD-ridden of philistines. Featuring a then-hip soundtrack by Peter Thomas Sound Orchestra (in fact, the film derives its title from their song “Angels Who Burn Their Wings”) that is probably better known today than the film itself (Hollywood hack George Clooney would later use three Peter Thomas songs for his directorial debut *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind* (2002)), *Angels with Burnt Wings* is a seemingly unserious film about decadent and deracinated Teutons who live by the wanton Weltanschauung of “la dolce vita” and ultimately pay for the inevitable consequences of their lives of lascivious leisure and luxury, thus concluding in a terribly tragic manner that shocks the viewer back into reality

like a heart attack in a cinematic work far from the masturbation aid that some less discerning viewers might assume it is by looking at mere screenshots.

It is night but the South German city of Munich is brightly lit up and terribly troubled 16-year-old bourgeois boy Robert Susmeit (Jan Koeſter) is tailing the luxury car of his rich whore of a mother Hilde (Nadja Tiller) and her lateſt lover on his moped, ultimately leading him to a fancy yet aeſthetically ſterile flop-house inhabited by busybody bitches, old maids, and lonely and horny women ſtarved for attention. Naturally, Hilde Susmeit screws her lateſt boy toy as soon as they arrive at the hotel, and the young male whore decides to go for a swim not long afterward so as to assumedly wash off the fresh cougar juices covering his body, which proves to be a major miſtake as his femme fatale fuck buddy's son, Robert, is waiting for him at the pool. Before he knows it, Hilde's lover is brutally beaten to death with a hose by Robert as soon as he attempts to climb out of the pool, thus leaving his dead body floating in the water for some unfortunate individual to find. Unbeknownſt to Robert, a beauteous blonde girl about the same age as him, Moni Dingeldey (Susanne Uhlen), was playing 'Peeping Tom' at the pool and witnessed the murder. Inſtead of being repulsed by the grizzly crime of passion like moſt people would, Moni—the daughter of a rich businessman's widow (a woman described as "a rather merry widow," thus hinting she had something to do with her husband's death)—decides that renegade wackjob Robert is her soul mate and hides him in her mother's lavish apartment, ordering the crazed boy room service and whatever else he may desire as the two sit around and liſten to horrendous Hebraic folk music by Leonard Cohen. Meanwhile, the body of Hilde's lover is finally discovered, thus erupting into a media scandal of sorts and the arrival of police deſectives. As it turns out, a young and dashing college ſtudent named Mr. Kirr (Jochen Busse) has rented his apartment, which is packed with pornography, out to Hilde as a special place to bring her various young hunk boyfriends. Realizing that her son Robert is responsible for the killing, Hilde calls in her cuckold of a husband, Herr Bertram Susmeit (Werner Kreindl), to the apartment complex to look for their missing misfit son. In the process, Bertram learns his wife is a no good whore who has been screwing countless men while subletting Mr. Kirr's apartment, so he gives her a good slap across the face, but ſadiſtic Hilde merely laughs at his weakness, thus 'hinting' at why the Susmeit family, eſpecially son Robert, is so irreparably screwed up.

Of course, young Robert also finds himself following his father's footſteps as a cuck junior of sorts after being taken in by scheming debutante Moni, who makes him her virtual slave with little to no effort. Meanwhile Mr. Kirr comes to the ½ correſt conclusion that Hilde's lover was the miſtery man that was killed in the swimming pool and that her jealous husband did the killing, so he naturally blackmails the lecherous lady for sex, but ſuffers the ungodly ſhame of premature ejaculation after getting in bed with his high-class hussy of a tenant.

ANGELS WITH BURNT WINGS

As the film progresses, two detectives from the Criminal Investigation squad, a fellow that goes simply by 'Superintendent' (Siegfried Rauch) and his sidekick Gig (Karl-Otto Alberty), are led on a cat-and-mouse game by various inhabitants of the fancy flophouse, including histrionic sex-starved female artists and lonely old widowers. Like Kirr, the Superintendent also comes to the incorrect conclusion that Bertram Susmeit killed his wife Hilde's lover, but the cuckolded hubby calmly retorts the cop's claims by soundly stating, "Those... lovers of my wife, I never cared about them. I knew that she had them, I knew... that she went here with them, but... they didn't interest me!" which the officer instantly believes as no self-respecting man would make up such an unflattering lie. On top of confessing that he is a cuck, Bertram reveals to the Superintendent that he assumes his wacked-out son, Robert, was the killer of his wife's lover. Meanwhile, following her beau's excellent example, Moni violently beats her mother's latest boyfriend to death with a large wine bottle, which makes Robert's passion killing seem rather pansy-like by comparison. Eventually, all the inhabitants at the apartment complex learn of Robert and Moni's crimes and get in self-righteous lynch mob mode, ganging up on the deranged youths, and calling them "murderers" and demanding to "quarter them." Hated by everyone, destined for prison, and determined to remain soul mates forever, Robert and Moni run to the top roof of the apartment building and jump off with hand-in-hand, but being 'angels with burnt wings,' they merely fail to their premature deaths, thus callously concluding one merrily misanthropic movie.

In dreaming up a catchy headline to describe the inhabitants of the apartment complex featured in *Angels with Burnt Wings*, a journalist character named Andreas Stein (Wolfgang Völz) comes up with the more than fitting, if not severely sardonic, title 'High-Society-Kindergarten,' which is not only an apt description for the maniac metropolitan microcosm featured in the film, but the bourgeois Occident in general, with the occupying force of culture-less America being the rotten root of such culture-distorting degeneracy. Indeed, aside from the Superintendent, there is not a single sympathetic or redeemable character in *Angels with Burnt Wings*, with even the two child murderers seeming more empathetic, human, and logical than the superlatively spoiled, self-centered, and hyper hedonistic middle-aged adults featured in the film. Certainly ahead of its time, if not glaringly outmoded aesthetically, *Angels with Burnt Wings*, if nothing else, totally demystifies garbage American mainstream cultural trends like 'MILFS' and 'cougars' because, as the film reveals, for every middle-aged beauty looking to fuck young bucks is a cuckolded husband and a deranged son and/or demented daughter. Featuring an uncredited Hitchcockian cameo from director Zbyněk Brynych as a random man in the hotel lobby, *Angels with Burnt Wings* is a rather brutal depiction of capitalist American-occupied Deutschland from a Slavic auteur who was no less sympathetic to the commie cultural cuckoldry that engulfed his own nation. With all the completely and utterly worthless

Euro-sleaze exploitation flicks that have been getting lavish releases on dvd and Blu-ray, it is about time that *Angels with Burnt Wings*, as well as the two other German Brynych's films released in 1970, *O Happy Day* (1970) aka *Seventeen & Anxious* aka *Heiße Teens aus gutem Haus* and *Femmine Carnivore* (1970) aka *Die Weibchen*, get a decent release. From morbid and melancholy Czech arthouse to kraut jet-set and psychedelic exploitation, Zbyněk Brynych was certainly a 'chameleon auteur' of sorts who successfully managed to transition from working in the repressed commie East to the decadent Americanized West, and there is probably no better and more accessible introduction to his singular cinematic oeuvre than *Angels with Burnt Wings*; a semi-sleazy temporary celluloid antidote to American cultural hegemony.

-Ty E

ELEVATOR MOVIE
ELEVATOR MOVIE

Zeb Haradon (2004)

Upon inspection of this film, its impossible to not appreciate the aesthetics at hand. A simple story showcasing two humans trapped in a closed off space. After months of being caught in the elevator, they have many burdening questions that burn at their ego's. Why does the grocery bag never empty and better yet, why is Jim such a fucking creep? This doesn't make matters worse until lovely Lana begins mutating into a being of metal. Any cinema warrior could place a translucent link to La Cabina and Tetsuo: The Iron Man but production values quickly get in the way and remind you that a budget can be your worst enemy. Shot in 16mm, I'm sure that Zeb Haradon realized his choice and what limitations it would bring to his piece of film. In reality, he should have chosen the forgotten 8mm and hired a seasoned actor to take his role a Jim. The only real respect that the film allowed me to charitably give was the vaginal mutation. Zeb Haradon has proved to have some talent directing but his acting is another story. I don't think a film has ever given me a nurtured headache before Elevator Movie. His attempts at providing fodder for the cultured Lana to chew were all in vain. I hated both the characters solemnly and Jim flat out ruined the film for me. The awaited metamorphosis scene slowly turned into dread as I noticed Lana had aluminum foil feet. To say Tetsuo: The Iron Man inspired this is blasphemy. Elevator Movie seems more inspired by the likes of Home Improvement. Metaphors and symbolism are void in this film designed for surrealist pupils of the lamented kind. Elevator Movie never takes off enough for us to fully appreciate it. When I wasn't staring at the elevator backdrop waiting for it to crumble, my time was spent twiddling my thumbs waiting for this bleak monotone would be-bizzaro drama to end. The hardest part to swallow about Elevator Movie is not the fact that these characters have spent a gracious amount of time trapped, but the fact that you too are trapped in an increasingly boring nightmare as well.

-mAQ

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTERS

Zebedy Colt (1976)

Although it might seem patently absurd to the uninitiated, there actually are some advantages to homos directing heterosexual hardcore flicks, or at least there were during the Golden Age of Porn when fags like the Amero Brothers (Bacchanale, Blonde Ambition), Zachary Strong (Confessions of a Teenage Peanut Butter Freak, Visions of Clair), Chuck Vincent (Visions, Roommates), Michael Zen (Reflections, The Filthy Rich: A 24 K-Dirty Movie), and Zebedy Colt (The Devil Inside Her, Unwilling Lovers) and even trannies like Kim Christy (Dream Lovers, Squalor Motel) were directing some of the most subversive, artistically merited, and idiosyncratic fuck flicks of their zeitgeist. After seeing various works by these directors, I certainly have my theories as to why sods might make for more 'interesting' pornographers. Aside from probably being more interested in creating art or at least something more interesting than simply directing 'banal' and 'disgusting' heterosexual sex, queer pornographers seem to get off to depicting heterosex in a warped and exceedingly degraded fashion. Of course, it is not just gay pornographers that did this, as every homo auteur from Andy Warhol to Andy Milligan to Pier Paolo Pasolini to Rainer Werner Fassbinder to Pedro Almodóvar had a proclivity towards portraying straight sex as corrosive, abusive, and/or deadly. Among the aforementioned queer pornographers, few were nastier, more venomous, and just plain sadistic than 'Zebedy Colt,' who seemed to use pornography as an aesthetically terroristic tool to reap revenge against 'breeders' and rednecks who probably regularly kicked his ass when he was younger. Born Edward Earle Marsh and originally a Hollywood child actor who appeared in classics like Babes in Toyland (1934), The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938) starring Errol Flynn, and Cecil B. DeMille's The Ten Commandments (1956), Colt began using the pseudonym he is best known for in the late-1960s when he began innovating "queer cabaret" and recording the pioneering poof album "I'll Sing for You" with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, but it was not until he was middle-aged that he began using the name to direct and star in fuck flicks, with The Farmer's Daughters (1976) being arguably the most infamous of his decidedly depraved and debasing directorial efforts. Also notable for featuring pre-fame actor and literary figure Spalding Gray (Swimming to Cambodia, Gray's Anatomy)—a self-loathing Anglo who once stated in an interview, "I appear to be a Wasp Brahmin, but I'm really a sort of neurotic, perverse New York Jew" and who apparently was partially inspired to commit suicide by jumping in the East River after watching Tim Burton's Big Fish (2003)—as the leader of a gang of pussy-pillaging escaped convicts who leads the gang-raping of a poor farmer's wife and three daughters during a demented game of "Simon Says," The Farmer's Daughters is a fiercely fucked hardcore hixploitation flick that could have only been directed by a pernicious

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTERS

pissed off pansy faggot who wanted to take revenge against society and profit doing it.

Starring 'auteur' Zebedy Colt as farmer 'Shep,' wife Kate (Gloria Leonard) and three daughters, Martha (Susan McBain), Jane (Nancy Dare) and Beth (Marlene Willoughby), *The Farmer's Daughters* is indubitably one of the sickest filmic fantasies ever committed to celluloid. The film starts with wife Kate pleading to her hick hubby, "Not now Chip, not in the middle of the day," but farmer Shep cannot wait and states, "Shit woman, when I get horny, I want what's mine...now were gonna fuck" and proceeds to bang her in their bedroom while their three daughters watch outside. While initially less than interested in being defiled by her hubby, Kate eventually comes around and confesses to Shep, "You're a wicked man...I guess that's why I love you so much," to which he hilariously replies, "give me more poontang." Meanwhile, outside, a resentful farmhand named Fred (William Cort) says to the farmer's three daughters regarding their parents fucking talents, or lack thereof, "Shit, don't mean nothing. I've watched them fuck plenty of times. Don't know how to do nothing. Always the same way...him on top. You can't learn nothing from them." Assumedly horny after seeing their parents screw and wanted to see whether or not the farmhand is a 'good lay' or merely a 'lame fuck,' the three salacious sisters take him inside and gang-rape him, even 'queening' his face. After they make him bust his load after milking his cock like a cow udder, sister Martha spits Fred's cum in his face. After that, the three girls put him in bondage and whip him with a flyswatter. After warning him not to tell their parents, the triad of sicko sisters communally piss on poor Fred and proceed to rape him again. Of course, little do the three sisters realize that they are about to be on the receiving end of a gang-rape.

Led by their dorky pseudo-redneck leader George (Spalding Gray), three ex-convicts, including a negro named 'Butch' (John Black) and a Jew-y dork named 'Pat' (Philip Marlowe), make their way to Shep's farm by happenstance while evading police and immediately notice the farmer's frisky daughters. Before defiling the daughters, anti-gentleman George leads his mischievously merry men to Shep's bedroom and proceed to rape the farmer's wife, with black buck Butch being the first one to penetrate the disgraced matriarch with his mahogany mean meat. When dorky convict Paul attempts a little bit of violent irrumatio on Kate, she fights back by biting his boner. While Spalding Gray tells Shep "Just watch your lady have fun," the farmer must endure seeing his beloved wifey being vaginally debased by the depraved criminal delinquents. Eventually, the three daughters make their way back to the homestead and find their parents unclad and bound and Shep tells them to make a run for it, but the fugitives soon catch them. After one of the girls calls them convicts, the criminals proclaim that they are "underprivileged" victims who "didn't have a happy childhood like you kids," so Mr. Gray comes to the conclusion, "Yeah, we didn't get a chance to play no

game, so we're making up for it now" and forces the three sisters to play a twisted game of Simon Says involving the three sisters being raped by the three convicts while their parents watch.

Luckily for the traumatized farm family, farmhand Fred witnesses the sexually sinister game of Simon Says and pulls a shotgun on the convicts, but when the girls run to him for protection, the vengeful male rape victim yells in a hysterical fashion that makes him seem like a undersexed postmenopausal woman, "Get away from me you cunts. No one humiliates Fred Turner and gets away with it. I've hated you so long, this is going to be a pleasure." After shooting Butch for laughing at him, Fred forces mother Kate to give him a blowjob and declares, "It's not Simon Says anymore. It's Fred Says." After demanding that Beth lick his cum off her mother's face, the renegade farmhand forces the daughters to get in a Sapphic threesome with their mother. When Fred makes the mistake of putting down his guard after getting too overexcited upon forcing the two surviving convicts, George and Butch, to urinate on the girls, farmer Shep uses the opportunity to seize his shotgun and kill all the rapists. Of course, whether farmer Shep will ever get over seeing his wife and three daughters in a foursome together is questionable.

Without a doubt, *The Farmer's Daughters* is one of the most poorly directed and eclectically inept works that I have ever seen from the porn chic era. Indeed, it seems Zebedy Colt utilized shock value in a half-assed attempt to obscure his lack of directing talents. Of course, with his later works like *The Devil Inside Her* (1977) and *Virgin Dreams* (1977), he eventually became a slightly more capable 'auteur,' though his innate sadism and undying hatred for hicks surely remained. In fact, Colt was such a cold and callous cocksucker that he managed to strike fear in depraved Jewess Annie Sprinkle—a wickedly wanton woman who become infamous for holding something called a "Public Cervix Announcement" where she allowed audiences members to gaze at her cervix with a speculum and flashlight—of all people during the making of *The Devil Inside Her* to the point where she "never had any more rape fantasies" as revealed in the documentary *Herstory of Porn: Reel to Real* (1999). Colt's unwavering obsession with incest seems to more reflect his own sick mind than those hicks and rednecks that he dedicated his life to attacking with his hopelessly amateurish fuck flicks. Judging by his vulgarly kitschy and overly melodramatic queer ballads and failed acting career, Colt will ironically be best remembered for directing some of the most unsexy and odiously obscene 'breeder' blue movies ever made, with *The Farmer's Daughters* being arguably his crowning achievement as the most flaming queen of the porn chic era. A sort of masturbation aid for aspiring serial rapists and white trash serial killers like Henry Lee Lucas and Ottis Elwood Toole, *The Farmer's Daughter* is as radically repellant as old school fuck films can get as a work that makes *The Last House on the Left* (1972) seem like an episode of *Happy Days*. As for Spalding Gray, I almost have more respect for him after

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTERS

seeing The Farmer's Daughters, though I'd rather endure another Colt flick than suffer Swimming to Cambodia (1987) again.

-Ty E

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